

"simply another thing to keep clean": New Zealand Architecture in the 1990s

Christine McCarthy, Interior Architecture, Victoria University of Wellington

When Douglas Lloyd Jenkins wrote, in 2005, of the contrasting views of the deconstructivist stream that "literally flowed through the house between dining and living spaces" in Noel Lane's AB Gibbs House, he characteristically inflicted doses of reality and wit with his portrayal of the public's understanding of contemporary architecture as being: "simply another thing to keep clean."¹ This conference, dangerously close, given the involvement of too many of its participants in the era under examination, proposes to examine New Zealand's architecture in the 1990s - a decade, which began with the fervour of a sesqui-centennial² and a major economic recession (1991-92),³ and ended with the unrequited fear of Ken the Cockroach, New Zealand's face of the millennium bug.

The recession, following the 1987 stock exchange crash, caused "rapidly rising unemployment: 215,846 people were jobless in

¹ Lloyd Jenkins *At Home* p 285.

² Smith *A Concise History of New Zealand* p 240.

³ Jackson and McRobie *Historical Dictionary of New Zealand* p 31.

January 1992, reaching 279,834 at the start of 1993."⁴ Over this two-year period unemployment exceeded 10 percent.⁵ This hole in income was accompanied with a "significant reduction in social welfare benefits, higher pharmacy charges for prescriptions, and the raising of rents on state houses to market levels" as well as the end of the family benefit in 1990.⁶ In 1991 compulsory trades union membership ceased, the minimum wage for workers under 20 was abolished, student loans became institutionalised, and market rents were introduced for state houses.⁷ In 1992 a part user-pays system was introduced for healthcare, and state assets continued to be sold, with Telecom NZ being privatised in 1990.⁸

⁴ Leach *Kitchens* p 260.

⁵ Leach *Kitchens* p 260.

⁶ Leach *Kitchens* p 260; Jackson and McRobie *Historical Dictionary of New Zealand* p 31.

⁷ Jackson and McRobie *Historical Dictionary of New Zealand* p 31; McGuinness and White *Nation Dates* p 213.

⁸ Jackson and McRobie *Historical Dictionary of New Zealand* p 31; McGuinness and White *Nation Dates* p 196.

The recession also "wiped out many if not most of the commercial developers,"⁹ and few major public buildings were built¹⁰ making it difficult for architects to find work. Falconer refers to architects "designing their own homes," mentioning the Mitchell/Stout house (Freemans Bay, 1991), but also academics and students "embroiled in debates over complex theories such as semiotics and de-constructivism."¹¹ Schwass observed that in "these economically straightened times ... the boundaries between the design disciplines are blurring."¹² Lloyd-Jenkins likewise wrote that:

[t]o many architects the recession of the late 1980s and early 1990s had seemed endless ... they turned to furniture design, exhibitions of paper architecture ... and writing about architecture as ways of creating careers. Untrained in communicating through any other form than building ... they created a new and largely impenetrable form of architectural prose. ... Many architects ... stopped talking to [.. the public], deciding instead to talk only to each other. The only problem was that the wider New Zealand public couldn't care less.¹³

⁹ Falconer *Living in Paradox* pp 371-372.

¹⁰ Shaw *A History of New Zealand Architecture* p 200.

¹¹ Falconer *Living in Paradox* pp 371-372.

¹² Schwass "Crossing the divide" p 68.

¹³ Lloyd Jenkins *At Home* p 284.

Malcolm Walker likewise concluded, in one of his cartoons for *Architecture New Zealand*: "No, my son, architecture is not for the masses ... all that jargon and blurred photos - they just don't understand it ..."¹⁴

1990 was the sesqui-centennial of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, and the start of the first decade of Treaty settlements.¹⁵ These followed the Waitangi Tribunal's Ngāi Tahu Report in 1991, the 1992 Sealord deal, and the 1994 National government proposal for a "fiscal envelope" capping settlements - an idea abandoned in 1996, after the hui organised by Ngāti Tūwharetoa's Hepi Hoani Te Heuheu rejected it.¹⁶ The Ngāi Tahu and Tainui settlements resulted in "apologies from the Crown and payments of \$170 million in 1997 and 1995."¹⁷ As part of the Ngāi Tahu settlement, Mt Cook was renamed Aoraki-Mt Cook and returned to the iwi.¹⁸ That day Ngāi Tahu gifted the maunga to the country.¹⁹

¹⁴ Walker "No, my son [cartoon]" p 69.

¹⁵ Jackson and McRobie *Historical Dictionary of New Zealand* p 33.

¹⁶ McGuinness and White *Nation Dates* pp 131, 178; Jackson and McRobie *Historical Dictionary of New Zealand* pp 32-33.

¹⁷ Smith *A Concise History of New Zealand* p 236.

¹⁸ Smith *A Concise History of New Zealand* p 236.

¹⁹ Smith *A Concise History of New Zealand* p 236.

The decade also saw further development of urban marae, for example housing for elders, such as Whare Kaumatua (Pepper Dixon Architects, c1990), built at Awataha marae (North Shore, 1986).²⁰ Other projects to accommodate older people included the John Tait Village on Blockhouse Bay Rd, Avondale, the design of which was decided by a competition won by Melling Morse.²¹ On winning, Gerald Melling observed that:

[t]here is a popular misconception that architecture costs heaps, but this doesn't have to be the case. This competition takes architecture out of the elitist area and puts it more within everyone's reach.²²

The aim to put resources into the hands of those missing out also underpinned the Labour Party's 1999 Closing the Gaps election policy. It aimed to address the disparities between Māori and Pākehā. Similar thinking was proposed in architectural circles by Nigel Cook, who, in his concluding remarks in an article about Te Papa, stated:

The whole nature of 1990 Maori culture as it affects architecture needs discussion. We have pitifully few Maori architects. ... We have moved aside to make room

²⁰ "Across the Board: Urban marae" p 18.

²¹ "Village winner" p 19.

²² "Village winner" p 19.

for women students. It's about time we both moved aside to make room for Maori students.²³

It is not apparent that any comprehensive engagement with Cook's proposal gained meaningful traction across the architectural profession, but the word "biculturalism" came to be increasingly pervasive in architectural discussion during the decade.

Brown has identified several bicultural projects that she credits to the greater awareness of the Treaty resulting from the 1990 sesqui-centennial.²⁴ The most well-known of these is Te Papa Tongarewa, which is discussed in more detail below, but there was also an associated competition to design a national flag, and the resulting Tino Rangatiratira flag "graphically represents "the forces of nature in balance".²⁵ The architecture of the decade also included new buildings in tertiary education institutions, including Unitec's Pūkenga (Rewi Thompson, Auckland, 1993) and Massey University's Te Pūtahi-a-Toi (Royal Associates, Palmerston North, 1997). Brown states that Pūkenga comprised a male and female part:

²³ Cook "Nationalistic Expression" p 19.

²⁴ Brown *Māori Architecture* p 146.

²⁵ Falconer *Living in Paradox* p 228.

the female part of the building clad in natural wood and sometimes enclosing curved spaces, while the hard-edged male area comprises of three galvanised steel-clad classrooms, representing the three baskets of Maori knowledge.²⁶

She records Thompson stating that the building would have no meaning if there had been no observation of kawa.²⁷ Shaw's description of Te Pūtahi-a-Toi is focussed on the pou tokomanawa. He writes that it

was not carved but clad in wood and steel. It supported the ... tahuhu or ridgepole, but no longer bore a representation of any specific person. Instead, the whole complex was given the name of Te Putahi a Toi, a pan-tribal mythical ancestor.²⁸

Brown has written that:

[i]deas of encounter, based on the architecture of the marae and its meeting house, influenced the entrance to the ... [Mason Clinic extension (Worley Consultants, 1999)], as well as other healthcare facilities that Thompson has worked on, since the initial approach forms the users' first and most profound impression of their treatment.²⁹

This language draws from Thelma Rodger's postgraduate research which earlier suggested

²⁶ Brown "Instituting Biculturalism" p 108.

²⁷ Brown "Instituting Biculturalism" p 108.

²⁸ Shaw *A History of New Zealand Architecture* p 219.

²⁹ Brown *Māori Architecture* p 154.

that:

ideas of encounter and meeting, threshold and edge, provide one approach to a museum architecture that might embody bicultural aspirations and thus become distinctively of this country.³⁰

There were other gestures of biculturalism in the architecture of the decade. Jacob Scott's design work in the glass-fronted atrium at Auckland's Old Supreme Court³¹ is one example. Francis Clarke Architects' Māori Development Corporation (Newmarket, 1990) which incorporated "elements derived from a whareniui ... on the facade and inside the building"³² is another, but the decade also saw less orthodox engagements with bicultural architecture, space and landmarks in protests of destruction and deprivation, including the arson of Rangiatea (1848-51) in Ōtaki in 1995. Francis Shaw was convicted of this and sent to prison "for being party to the torching of Ōtaki's historic Rangiatea church."³³ Shaw stated that he had burned the building

³⁰ Hunt "Biculturalism, National Identity and Architectural Symbolism" p 23.

³¹ Campbell "Courthouse Composition [Auckland Old Supreme Court]" p 34.

³² Shaw *A History of New Zealand Architecture* p 219.

³³ "Four-year sentence for arson" np.

because it was a symbol of division between the Anglican Church and Maori. ... "I'm as patriotic as everybody else in the room, but I do believe we have an unhealthy relationship with the Crown. Courts cannot really address the underlying issues here - when's the next Rangiatea church going to happen?"³⁴

Rangiatea had been designed and built as the result of a collaboration between Te Rauparaha and Octavius Hadfield,³⁵ and the rebuilding was supervised by Royal Associates and Rewi Thompson.³⁶

The arson of Rangiatea was bracketed by Mike Smith chainsawing the lone radiata pine on Maungakiekie (One Tree Hill) on 28 October 1994 (the anniversary of the signing of He Whakaputanga) and again in 1999.³⁷ The initial attack had been an attempt "to launch the campaign against the fiscal envelope."³⁸ The 125-year-old pine had replaced Te Totara-i-ahua cut down by Pākehā in the 1850s.³⁹ Another protest was the political theft of

³⁴ "Four-year sentence for arson" np.

³⁵ Brown *Māori Architecture* p 44.

³⁶ Shaw *A History of New Zealand Architecture* p 219.

³⁷ Forbes "One Tree Hill tree chopper now has some regrets" np.

³⁸ Forbes "One Tree Hill tree chopper now has some regrets" np.

³⁹ Cowlshaw "New One Tree Hill grove safe from chainsaw" np.

McCahon's *Urewera Mural* in 1997. According to Lisa Reihana,

the theft signified the confiscation of lands, and further reinforced the point that the cultural value to Tūhoe was for their lands and its people. This was a political act to provoke more meaningful dialogue.⁴⁰

Brown has written that the painting had been criticised "in the 1980s and 1990s for its appropriation of Māori words and concepts."⁴¹ The mural's return was brokered by Tama Iti, Te Kaha and Jenny Gibbs.⁴²

However, perhaps the most controversial architectural act of the decade was the Museum of New Zealand (MoNZ). By the time it was built MoNZ had become Te Papa Tongarewa. The proposal had its beginnings in the National Art Gallery, a commission that Ted McCoy had won in 1984 that was abandoned "because the land on which it was to be built had been set aside in 1927 for a High Court."⁴³ Malcolm Walker's 1990 cartoon "The Great Competition" captures the flavour which news of the competition brought when he wrote:

⁴⁰ Reihana "Urewera Mural" np.

⁴¹ Brown *Māori Architecture* p 140.

⁴² Reihana "Urewera Mural" np.

⁴³ Somerset "The Real McCoy" np.

Times are tough for Turbo, Floss & Dollop ... suddenly ... the big chance ... "This is it!" "I can see it now ... a plan form of a Union Jack!!" "No.. No.. a koru!!!" "and an elevation like a geodesic dome!!" "No.. No.. a marae!!" "deep!"⁴⁴

The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act 1992⁴⁵ established the project; the designer (Jasmax), not the design, was the outcome of the 1989 competition,⁴⁶ and it was determined that:

the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa ... will be a national museum that powerfully expresses the total culture of New Zealand. It will express the bilingual nature of the country, recognising the mana and significance of each of the two mainstreams of tradition and cultural heritage ... The museum through all its activities and programmes will strive to be a source of pride for all New Zealanders.⁴⁷

It was, as Nigel Cook observed, "the first time for half a century that New Zealand architects have been asked to design a building of national significance."⁴⁸ The biculturalism that Jasmax deployed in Te Papa was:

⁴⁴ Walker "The Great Competition" p 63.

⁴⁵ McGuinness and White *Nation Dates* p 213.

⁴⁶ "Te Papa Tongarewa | Museum of New Zealand" p 31; Shaw *A History of New Zealand Architecture* p 200.

⁴⁷ "Te Papa Tongarewa | Museum of New Zealand" p 31.

⁴⁸ Cook "Nationalistic Expression" pp 18-20.

the "cleaving" of the building into tangata whenua and tangata tiriti (non-Māori) areas. The wedge of space between them contains a large facsimile copy of the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi.⁴⁹

Cliff Whiting's flamboyant polychromatic, customwood Te Hono ki Hawaiki outshone Jasmax's design and enacts and materialises what remains aloof in the building it stands on. Brown juxtaposes Te Hono ki Hawaiki with Te Hau ki Tūranga (Raharuhi Rukupō, 1840s), writing that the two whare whakairo

are intended to "activate" the tangata whenua wing of Te Papa, so that it is less of a space for art or ethnological artefacts, and more like a place for people to engage with cultural treasures.⁵⁰

After substantial debate, about its location, its name, the competition, the design, and the idea of bicultural architecture, Te Papa ("our place") opened on Wellington's waterfront in February 1998.⁵¹

The significance of this event was embraced by *Architecture New Zealand* which published a special issue totally devoted to this one building to coincide with the month of Te

⁴⁹ Brown *Māori Architecture* p 149.

⁵⁰ Brown *Māori Architecture* p 150.

⁵¹ Smith *A Concise History of New Zealand* p 243.

Papa's opening.⁵² After its completion, unflattering comparisons were made with Frank Gehry's Bilbao Guggenheim,⁵³ and an interview with Gehry published.⁵⁴

Unlike Te Papa, the earlier architecture for the 1990 Commonwealth Games, while being described as "our major sesqui-centennial event,"⁵⁵ does not appear to have felt any need for biculturalism. Built on University of Auckland land near Glen Innes, the Games Village prioritised the temporary and the mobile because the university required the land to "be returned to greenfield condition at the conclusion of the games."⁵⁶ Athlete accommodation was consequently "purchased by the Housing Corporation for relocation after the games,"⁵⁷ and appears to have been controversy-free. However, the controversies related to Te Papa's design and competition outcome were to be matched with the museum's opening exhibition, which included

⁵² Bohling "For the record [Editorial]" p 6.

⁵³ Beaven "Failure at Te Papa [letters]" p 8.

⁵⁴ Khiu "Making a Museum" pp 92-95.

⁵⁵ Stewart "Planned impermanence" p 7.

⁵⁶ Stewart "Planned impermanence" p 7.

⁵⁷ Stewart "Planned impermanence" p 8.

Tania Kovat's *Virgin in a Condom*.⁵⁸ As the *Dominion Post* reported:

a sculpture just 7.5 centimetres high, divided Wellington for a turbulent six weeks, during which time seven people were arrested for violent protests. ... A band of Catholics protested every Saturday in Te Papa's lobby or outside its front doors, building to a face-off on March 21 between 200 Christians and the counter-protest group Men Against Religious Hypocrisy ("Mary"). A truck rolled up outside the museum revealing a live Last Supper tableau with a topless woman playing Jesus. Others held placards reading "Mary wanted it" and "Praise latex."⁵⁹

Regardless of the advantages of publicity, it was likely not the kind of artwork envisaged in the introduction of planning bonuses in exchange for commissioning public art. An early example of this new scheme saw the National Bank invest in work by Richard Killeen and Mark Rossell. Referring to the selection, Warwick Brown noted that:

"Because they are designed to make people think, people who don't like to think will probably criticise them. But people who do like to think will find them engaging, interesting and a joy to live with."⁶⁰

⁵⁸ King *The Penguin History of New Zealand* p 515.

⁵⁹ O'Neil ""Virgin in a Condom" artwork provoked violence month after Te Papa opening" np.

⁶⁰ Brown quoted, "Parting Shots: But is it art?" p 104.

Te Papa was not the only significant exhibition architecture built in the 1990s. Athfield Architect's Adam Gallery at Victoria University opened in 1999,⁶¹ a competition was run for the new Christchurch Art Gallery (1998),⁶² and the Govett-Browster Gallery was expanded.⁶³ The Auckland War Memorial Museum (Noel Lane Architects) also underwent substantial renovation,⁶⁴ but it is likely that Logan Brewer's New Zealand Pavilion at Expo 92 topped all of these. At Seville New Zealand was to be represented by

[f]ibreglass pohutukawa trees [that] will cover the [12.5m] cliffs accompanied by simulated waves and blowholes with 30 mechanical gannets hovering overhead and model fish, starfish and kelp below.⁶⁵

It was all to promote "our clean Pacific location."⁶⁶

The decade, beginning as one of unemployed architects and a proliferation of competitions, was supported by the publication of the NZIA

⁶¹ "Across the Board: Art gallery" p 16.

⁶² "Across the Board: After Te Papa" p 12.

⁶³ "Theatre of Art" pp 42-47.

⁶⁴ Stratford "Behind the Scenes" pp 36-41.

⁶⁵ "Attention Grabber" p 112.

⁶⁶ "Attention Grabber" p 112.

"Competition Guidelines" in mid 1991.⁶⁷ The student and graduate architect culture for competitions was also strong, fuelling a broader range of exhibitions of paper architecture, including a visit to Wellington from Brodsky and Utkin, Russian paper architects, who exhibited their work at City Gallery in 1992.⁶⁸ The Architectural Centre revamped its 1989 "30 under 30" competition⁶⁹ into a series of thriving 20 under 40 competitions. These included topics such as The Urban(e) House, The Square Edge, Chaffers Beach, Pro Bono Public Beach and Hauntings.⁷⁰ These were matched in Auckland by the AAA's Urban Gaze competitions.⁷¹ It was from this context that the world would acknowledge an excellence in Aotearoa, with the Auckland School of Architecture being at first invited to exhibit at the Venice Biennale and then winning the inaugural Venice Prize in 1991.⁷²

⁶⁷ "Competition Guidelines" pp 26-27.

⁶⁸ "Brodsky and Utkin: Palazzo Nero" np.

⁶⁹ Brown "30 under 30" p 58.

⁷⁰ Schwass "The Urban House" pp 3-5; Walker "Quick-fire competition" pp 22-26; "The Square Edge" p 7. Anon "Chaffers Plan Unveiled" p 10.

⁷¹ Miles "On the town" pp 28-30; Reynolds and Haarhoff "Uncommon ground" pp 31-33.

⁷² Millar "Success in Venice" pp 76-77.

Other cultural sectors also produced important works. In film Merata Mita's documentary *Mana Waka* (1990), which told of Te Puea's centennial project to create replicas of three waka that had brought Māori to Aotearoa, was released, as were the Jane Campion-directed *The Piano* (1993), Peter Jackson's *Heavenly Creatures* (1994), and Lee Tamahori's *Once Were Warriors* (1994) based on Alan Duff's 1990 novel of the same name.⁷³ Tamahori had directed the 1989 Commonwealth Games promotion "Join Together," which imagined

the stirrings of Games spirit in the mud of the Western Front, 1917. Behind the lines, soldiers from various "British Empire" nations (Bruno Lawrence, Tony Barry and a young Joel Tobeck) lay bets to see who is the fastest.⁷⁴

The '90s was also the decade which hosted the notorious television episode of *Backch@t*, hosted by Bill Ralston, starring as adversaries Russell Walden and Tommy Honey, with Ross Jenner, Gordon Moller and Amanda Reynolds seemingly as backing vocals.⁷⁵ A

⁷³ Smith *A Concise History of New Zealand* pp 241-242.

⁷⁴ "1990 Commonwealth Games promo- Join Together" np.

⁷⁵ My thanks to Michael Dudding for reminding me of this episode.

transcript of the television episode was published in *Architecture New Zealand*. Watching the programme unfold was a curious event, with Russell Walden's frank announcement to the nation that he had "set out to glorify the architecture in this country and that is not an easy thing."⁷⁶

Academic conferences became an increasingly important venue for architectural publication following the PAPER (People and their Physical Environment Research) conference in July 1991.⁷⁷ The annual SAHANZ conference was held in Christchurch ("Regional Responses", 1991) and Auckland ("Loyalty and Disloyalty", 1996), and in Wellington ("Formulation Fabrication", 2000) at the beginning of the millennium. SAHANZ also first launched its journal *Fabrications* in the 1990s. In his review of its first issue, Ian Lochhead wrote that "[t]he editors have produced a journal that aspires to international standards of scholarship and production and have very nearly succeeded."⁷⁸ An equally ambitious venture was the *New Zealand Journal of Architecture*, proposed in 1995 to be "distributed periodically with

⁷⁶ "Everybody's talking" pp 114-118.

⁷⁷ "Call for Entries/Papers" p 102.

⁷⁸ Lochhead "Fabrications" p 63.

Architecture New Zealand magazine,⁷⁹ but it does not appear to have ever seen the light of day.

Auckland also hosted the international *Accessory/Architecture* (1995) conference initiated and organised by postgraduate students (supported by Mike Austin, Sarah Treadwell and Mike Linzey), with Mark Wigley, Jennifer Bloomer and Beatriz Colomina as keynotes.⁸⁰ *Accessory/Architecture* included an exhibition and proceedings, republished in *Interstices 4* on CDROM, an early digital issue of a journal. This was a result of Matiu Carr's suggestions to use html and pdf versions of each paper and digitally recreate the physical exhibition. The conference included the now famous essay by Vanya Steiner: "(Mis)appropriation in New Zealand Architecture: An Incriminating Cite," which derived from her masters' research. 1995 was also the first year that the Unitec Institute of Technology began teaching a degree-level course in architecture, and the Schools of Architecture and Design at VUW and Wellington Polytechnic combined in a novel inter-institutional collaboration in a

⁷⁹ "New Zealand Journal of Architecture call for papers" p 51.

⁸⁰ Daish "Effective accessories" pp 45-47.

Craig Craig Moller post-modern retro-fit of the former Air New Zealand cargo and office building on Vivian Street.⁸¹

Architectural writing thrived in book form with the publication of: Terence Hodgson's *Looking at the architecture of New Zealand* (1990), John Wilson and Linda Pears' *AA Historic Places of New Zealand* (1990), Peter Shaw's *New Zealand Architecture: from Polynesian Beginnings to 1990* (1991), Di Stewart's *The New Zealand Villa: Past and Present* (1992), Mark Wigley's PhD thesis published as *Derrida's Haunt* (1993), Jeremy Ashford's *The Bungalow in New Zealand* (1994), Gael Ferguson's *Building the New Zealand Dream* (1994), the Matthew Bradbury-edited *A History of The Garden in New Zealand* (1995), and David McGill's *Landmarks* (1997). Later in the decade saw the publication of Douglas Lloyd Jenkin's *The Textiles of Ilse von Randow* (1998) and *Mason handprints* (1998), and Peter Shaw's *Louis Hay, architect* (1999). The '90s was also the decade when Russell Walden received a National Award from the NZIA in 1993 for writing *Voices of Silence*.⁸²

⁸¹ *Exquisite Apart* p 219; "Across the Board: Educational Co-operation" p 12; "Schools of Architecture & Design, Wellington, Craig Craig Moller Ltd" p 22.

⁸² *Exquisite Apart* p 239.

According to Lloyd Jenkins, Shaw's *New Zealand Architecture* was "a revelation."⁸³ It "provided a readily accessible history of New Zealand architecture ... [f]or a new generation who knew, and had been taught, comparatively little about local architectural history."⁸⁴ Petry also reviewed Shaw's book similarly praising it, describing it as "this first comprehensive history of New Zealand architecture" and "a landmark in the study of New Zealand architecture."⁸⁵ In contrast, his review of Hodgson's *Looking at the Architecture of New Zealand* found the book's "drive to categorise rather than attempt explorative investigation a persistent limitation of the main text."⁸⁶

Lloyd Jenkin's books on Mason and Ilse von Randow, as well as the short-lived journal *modern new zealand* (1995-96), and its associated conferences at Unitec, reflected a wider interest of the 1990s in modernism and the 1950s,⁸⁷ apparent earlier in the decade with the 1992-93 *1950s Show* at the Auckland

⁸³ Lloyd Jenkins *At Home* p 289.

⁸⁴ Lloyd Jenkins *At Home* p 289.

⁸⁵ Petry "The Challenge of History" pp 119-120.

⁸⁶ Petry "Looking at the Architecture of New Zealand" p 118.

⁸⁷ Lloyd Jenkins *At Home* p 288.

City Art Gallery,⁸⁸ and the celebrations associated with the 50th anniversary of the Architectural Centre in 1996, including publications like the John Wilson-edited *Zeal and Crusade*, and the series of articles on Architectural Centre history published in *Architecture New Zealand*. There was also a particular fascination with Ernst Plischke. Linda Tyler had written a thesis on Plischke in c1986, and further interest by Peter Shaw, more publicly highlighting injustices to the émigré architect, generated substantial words.⁸⁹ Letters to editors⁹⁰ and even conference papers on the authorship of Dixon Street Flats, were penned, as historiographical camps seemingly formed around a debatable opposition between Plischke and Gordon Wilson.

Lloyd Jenkins describes this version of modernism as "a postmodern style,"⁹¹ writing that modernism was

no longer a programme of social reform; rather, it was a new style. Devoid of any specific morality, modernist

⁸⁸ Lloyd Jenkins *At Home* p 290.

⁸⁹ Shaw "Plischke in New Zealand" pp 61-64.

⁹⁰ Dawson "Plischke Recalled" p 9; Shaw "Plischke Sights [Letters]" p 9; Dawson "Plischke PR" p 5; Wild "Twopence" p 5.

⁹¹ Lloyd Jenkins *At Home* p 288.

style was more popular than the original version had ever been.⁹²

Shaw likewise connects the prioritising of an historicist understanding of modernism over its social agenda for this generation of students and young graduates saying: "they used [this] as a stepping stone for a rediscovery of the intellectual basis of architecture ... their interest increasingly lay in breathing new life into basic principles of form."⁹³ While there is some truth in these summaries, they conflate the specific experiences of the different schools of architecture.

The formalist interest in modernism was a perfect match with the stereotypical form of the bach, which for many looked like a Group House or the Architectural Centre's Demonstration House, rather than an actual bach. Lloyd Jenkins attributed the bach with having "special meaning" for architects of the 1990s:

The mythical "architectural" bach proved an ideal point of reference from which to develop the new consciousness, placing as it did an emphasis on materials and form rather than colour and decoration.

⁹² Lloyd Jenkins *At Home* p 289.

⁹³ Shaw *A History of New Zealand Architecture* p 200.

You could easily lose count of the number of architects who, during the 1990s, explained their work by referring to the bach.⁹⁴

As Forsyth wrote, in his review of two architect-designed bachs, they "still provide the clients with the key lifestyle options that were so important back in the 1950s"⁹⁵ - words like "client" and "key lifestyle options" perhaps demonstrating his earlier point that "Remuera does not sit comfortably in the sand."⁹⁶ Many of these baches received architectural awards, including Noel Lane's quite lovely Weekend house in Kaipara harbour.⁹⁷

This conflation of the 1950s, the bach, and (a monocultural) New Zealand identity was again exposed in the *Backch@t* episode. Reynolds, critical of Walden's list of New Zealand's nine best buildings, claimed that:

none of the, say, pre-1950 architecture says anything about New Zealand at all. ... Post-1950 I think we really should be finding pieces of architecture that say a lot about New Zealand. ... I'd particularly like to see some

⁹⁴ Lloyd Jenkins *At Home* p 291.

⁹⁵ Forsyth "Feet in the sand" p 86.

⁹⁶ Forsyth "Feet in the sand" p 84.

⁹⁷ Anon "[Auckland NZIA Branch Awards] Architectural Awards: Weekend House, Kaipara Harbour. Noel Lane" pp 20-21.

reference to the origins of New Zealand architecture, post-50s housing architecture and that's Vernon Brown, the Group, and then there's the baches. New Zealand baches are fascinating.⁹⁸

Alice Shopland also noted that, when she was interviewing him,

Pete Bossley ... got almost dewy-eyed about baches ... Building and council regulations now make it difficult for the average family to get a cheap section a few streets back from the beach and construct an even cheaper shack on it.⁹⁹

Perhaps it was as an antidote to this, that the travelling exhibition: *Connections: The House in the Auckland Scene* was curated, and accompanied by John Dickson, a known polymath, lecturing on the topic of: "Architectural Modernism in New Zealand 1960-1990."¹⁰⁰

Writing drove architecture in the 1990s in multiple ways. Wellington City Library was converted into the City Gallery (WCC Architects' Department and Gardyne Architecture), and recognised with a National

⁹⁸ "Everybody's talking" pp 114-115.

⁹⁹ Shopland "Decade of chaos" p 63.

¹⁰⁰ "Connections: The House in the Auckland Scene [advertisement]" p 97.

Award in 1994,¹⁰¹ while Athfield Architects had library designs built in Wellington and Palmerston North,¹⁰² both heralded as key to a refiguring of their cities: the Palmerston North library described as a landmark public building transforming "not only its immediate neighbourhood but the quality[sic] of the wider urban environment."¹⁰³ The new Wellington Public Library (Athfield Architect, 1989-91, and now under threat)¹⁰⁴ also envisaged a rethinking of the library as "a "supermarket of information," hospitable to the public but without the stuffy "be quiet" atmosphere normally associated with libraries."¹⁰⁵ It was part of the larger redevelopment of Wellington's Civic Square,¹⁰⁶ as the heart of the city and a home to its local government. Rewi Thompson and John Gray's magical City-to-Sea bridge would become a highlight securely connecting the redeveloped city centre to the city's harbour

¹⁰¹ *Exquisite Apart* p 218.

¹⁰² "NZIA National Awards for Architecture: Athfield Architects: Palmerston North Public Library" pp [40-43].

¹⁰³ "NZIA National Awards for Architecture: Athfield Architects: Palmerston North Public Library" p [41].

¹⁰⁴ "Across the Board: Wellington Civic Centre update" p 21.

¹⁰⁵ "Across the Board: Wellington Civic Centre update" p 21.

¹⁰⁶ *Exquisite Apart* p 239.

edge.¹⁰⁷

One of the most important changes in 1990s New Zealand was the replacement of the First Past the Post (FPP) electoral system with MMP (Mixed Member Proportional) after the 1993 referendum.¹⁰⁸ This followed a poll in 1992 which showed that public trust in politicians "had dropped to 4 percent."¹⁰⁹ MMP led to an increased number of political parties, with seven parties being represented in Parliament in 1995, due to fragmentation of the two larger parties in the lead up to the first MMP election in 1996.¹¹⁰ In 1990 the Green Party was founded.¹¹¹ In 1991 the Alliance Party (combining the Democratic Party, Mana Motuhake, and the New Labour Party) emerged.¹¹² In 1993 the Association of Consumers and Taxpayers (ACT) Party and

¹⁰⁷ Linzey "Metaphor and Narrative [The city-to-sea bridge, Rewi Thompson and John Gray]" pp 99-103.

¹⁰⁸ Jackson and McRobie *Historical Dictionary of New Zealand* p 32.

¹⁰⁹ King *The Penguin History of New Zealand* p 490.

¹¹⁰ Jackson and McRobie *Historical Dictionary of New Zealand* p 33.

¹¹¹ McGuinness and White *Nation Dates* p 167.

¹¹² McGuinness and White *Nation Dates* p 169. In 1992 the Green Party and the Liberal Party joined the Alliance Party. The Green Party left the Alliance Party in 1997.

the New Zealand First Party were founded.¹¹³ In 1995, the United New Zealand Party, and, in 1999, the Future New Zealand Party, both the origins of the later United Future New Zealand Party, began.¹¹⁴

This shift to a multiple-party environment required "altered seating arrangements in the chamber," however, prior to this, more substantial renovation and strengthening work had begun in the precinct, following "a public competition for strengthening and refurbishing the older buildings" in 1989.¹¹⁵ This included installing 417 base isolators, and, as Martin notes, it was "the country's largest conservation project."¹¹⁶ Warren and Mahoney, Holmes Consulting Group and Mainzeal secured the work, which aimed at "making the buildings key heritage structures for the nation," though at one stage Acting Finance Minister Doug Kidd "suggested it might be better to "bulldoze" the buildings, retaining only the facades, or to leave them empty until money was available for the refurbishment."¹¹⁷ This was a proposal that

¹¹³ McGuinness and White *Nation Dates* pp 166, 168.

¹¹⁴ McGuinness and White *Nation Dates* p 169.

¹¹⁵ Martin *The House* pp 319, 322.

¹¹⁶ Martin *The House* pp 322, 324.

¹¹⁷ Martin *The House* p 322; *Exquisite Apart* p 240.

Tony Watkins claimed to be a

single brilliant move ... [that] totally upstaged the architectural profession, the architectural theorists, and the Historic Places Trust. ... Doug Kidd has recognised an architectural solution so bold and daring that none of us would have dared to suggest it.¹¹⁸

Construction began in 1992, followed by a significant fire in October which "took hold in the library foyer and badly damaged the staircase, plaster work, stained glass and roof."¹¹⁹ Another fire "destroyed some original urinals dating back to the early 1880s in basement toilets at the rear of the library."¹²⁰

In the end the project created Māui Tikitiki a Taranga (the new Māori Affairs Committee room) at the front of Parliament Buildings, the Grand Hall from the former billiard lounge, and "the nineteenth-century lobby as the library's reception area and newspaper reading room."¹²¹ Parliament grounds was also redeveloped "to reflect the original style of the 1920s," organised around a number of existing pohutakawas and cabbage trees with

¹¹⁸ Watkins "Why not demolish Parliament Buildings?" p 12.

¹¹⁹ Martin *The House* p 322.

¹²⁰ Martin *The House* p 322.

¹²¹ Martin *The House* p 324.

views to Molesworth Street buildings created, and the removal of carparks on the Parliament forecourt.¹²² The restored buildings were opened by the Queen in November 1995.¹²³

The need to redesign the interior of the debating chamber, and provide more office space to accommodate the increased number of MPs, resulted in a competition, and the demolition of Broadcasting House, which had been located behind Parliament.¹²⁴ The proposed new building did not eventuate but an alternative to put the Beehive on rails and move it to the Broadcasting House site, in order to complete the unfinished 1918 Parliament buildings, was mooted. Instead, the lease on Bowen House was renegotiated.¹²⁵ However, the Beehive proposal had naturally been a subject of significant debate. On one occasion, in a debate chaired by Sean Plunket, Tommy Honey made the observation that: "'As any apiarist knows, if you don't move your beehives regularly, the drones will stop producing.'"¹²⁶

¹²² Martin *The House* p 324.

¹²³ Martin *The House* p 324.

¹²⁴ "MMP Accommodation" p 12; Martin *The House* p 324.

¹²⁵ Martin *The House* p 324.

¹²⁶ Honey quoted, Gatley "Droning on and on" p 33.

MMP also increased the diversity of politicians. For example, just prior to the first MMP election, Taito Phillip Field, New Zealand's first Pacific Island MP entered Parliament in 1993.¹²⁷ Soon after New Zealand's first MP of Asian descent, Pansy Wong, was elected on the National Party list in 1996.¹²⁸ As well as reflecting the potential of MMP, greater diversity also reflected a changing population. Lloyd Jenkins writes that:

Maori, Pacific Island and Asian populations grew quickly ... At the same time, the collapse of the ANZUS alliance with America and Australia and the disappearance of exports to Britain from the national consciousness meant that New Zealanders had long stopped thinking of themselves primarily in relation to either the United States or the United Kingdom.¹²⁹

He also traced the origin of a New Zealand Pasifika design to the 1990s' inner-city suburbs in Auckland, noting that "its eventual adoption by government departments such as Work and Income (Social Welfare), led to its rapid fall from favour among the style-conscious."¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Martin *The House* p 334.

¹²⁸ Smith *A Concise History of New Zealand* p 246.

¹²⁹ Lloyd Jenkins *At Home* p 282.

¹³⁰ Lloyd Jenkins *At Home* pp 282-283.

There appear to be few instances in architecture reflecting this shift in New Zealand's diversity in its population, indicating work to be done. Hugh Tennent's award-winning Bodinyanarama Meditation Hall and Cloister, Wellington (1994),¹³¹ is a rare instance. It might be that the focus on biculturalism in architectural circles has obscured other work, but Michael King suggests a more hostile environment. In recording that by 1999 40 percent of immigrants were "Asian, pre-dominantly from north Asia," King states that this increased immigration

from Taiwan, Hong Kong, China and Korea - reactivated anti-Asian prejudice which had been so strong 100 years earlier, particularly in Auckland, which received most of those new immigrants.¹³²

MMP also increased the number of female parliamentarians, and there were significant instances of women first occupying prominent positions of national leadership in this decade during which we also celebrated the centenary of women's suffrage in 1993;¹³³ when 21% of MPs were women. This number

¹³¹ *Exquisite Apart* p 216.

¹³² Smith *A Concise History of New Zealand* p 245; King *The Penguin History of New Zealand* p 504.

¹³³ Smith *A Concise History of New Zealand* p 240.

increased to 30% after the first MMP election in 1996.¹³⁴ In 1990, Ruth Richardson became the first (and so far only) woman to be New Zealand's Minister of Finance and Catherine Tizard became New Zealand's first female Governor-General.¹³⁵ Jenny Shipley became the country's first female Prime Minister in 1997, while Helen Clark became the first elected female Prime Minister in 1999.¹³⁶ That same year (1999), Jeanette Fitzsimons became the "first "Green" MP in the world to win a constituency seat."¹³⁷ At the end of the decade both the Chief Justice (Sian Elias 1999-2019) and the Attorney-General (Margaret Wilson 1999-2005) were women.¹³⁸ As Smith observes: "[m]ore significantly, the public did not think it odd to have women running the country."¹³⁹ It was this context in which significant legislation was passed, including the Employment Contracts Act 1991, the Ministry of Maori Development Act 1991, the Resource Management Act 1991, the Human Rights Act 1993, and the New Zealand

¹³⁴ Smith *A Concise History of New Zealand* p 240.

¹³⁵ Jackson and McRobie *Historical Dictionary of New Zealand* p 31; McGuinness and *White Nation Dates* p 208.

¹³⁶ McGuinness and *White Nation Dates* pp 208, 209.

¹³⁷ McGuinness and *White Nation Dates* p 208.

¹³⁸ Smith *A Concise History of New Zealand* p 240.

¹³⁹ Smith *A Concise History of New Zealand* p 239.

Historic Places Trust Act 1993, Te Ture Whenua Maori Act 1993, and the Privacy Act 1993.¹⁴⁰

The NZIA President at the beginning of the decade (1989-90) was likewise, for the first time, a woman: Helen Tippett, who had also been the first female professor of architecture in Australasia.¹⁴¹ A profile of Tippett in early 1990 acknowledged her VUW professorship as well as her being "commissioner on the government-appointed Building Industry Commission - a body which will complete its work in 1990, having well exceeded its intended lifespan."¹⁴² The Commission's work related to the new Building Bill, heralded as an opportunity for "innovative design."¹⁴³ Tippett would also receive the New Zealand Master Builders' Federation Leadership Award, where she proposed that the recession was:

"a different plateau of operation, smaller in terms of new

¹⁴⁰ McGuinness and White *Nation Dates* pp 192, 206, 213-215.

¹⁴¹ *Exquisite Apart* p 241; Gray "Helen Tippett Obituary, by John Gray" np.

¹⁴² Schwass "Helen Tippett - a committed optimist" pp 41-43.

¹⁴³ "Opportunities for innovative design; the Building Bill" pp 85-86.

building works and proportion of gross domestic product than before, and one in which we must be more efficient and effective across the whole range of design and building services we offer, not only in new work but in refurbishment, progressive maintenance and facility management."¹⁴⁴

Possibly taking its lead from Tippett's presidency, *Architecture New Zealand* commenced an occasional series on women architects, beginning in its January/February issue with Gillian McLeod's profile of Min Hall.¹⁴⁵ Other profiles of female architects included those of Judith Taylor, Ellen Brinkman, and Fiona Christeller.¹⁴⁶ These contrasted the images of women in some of the *NZIAJ*'s advertisements in which women were clothed as building products in 1995 (e.g. James Hardie bathroom tiles) or photographed lying on New Zealand Wool carpet in 1998 (Helena Christensen, Naomi Campbell, ... and Marge Simpson!).¹⁴⁷ Architectural metaphors of clothing and

¹⁴⁴ "Leadership Award" p 13.

¹⁴⁵ McLeod "Min Hall, Architect" pp 52-55.

¹⁴⁶ Schwass "A way of life [profile of Judith Taylor]" pp 46-47; Honey "Brinkman in Practice" pp 30-31; Honey "Fiona Christeller Architects" pp 44-46.

¹⁴⁷ "[Helena Christensen, New Zealand Wool advertisement]" pp 0-1; "[Naomi Campbell, New Zealand Wool advertisement]" pp 56-57; "[Marge Simpson, New Zealand Wool advertisement]" pp 0-1.

fashion stretched further with Charles Walker's 1998 article on cladding system technologies titled "New Clothes,"¹⁴⁸ the topic of an AAA debate at the Auckland School of Architecture (of which Sarah Treadwell concluded that: "The debate ... generally avoided the tougher connections between sex, fashion and architecture. ... The absence of excess and frivolity certainly suggests that fashion is a pretty serious event"¹⁴⁹), and, of course, the subject of ex-pat Mark Wigley's *White Walls, Designer Dresses* published in 1995.

Helen Tippett's presidency also brought another change, a greater emphasis on the technological aspects of architecture. The March/April 1990 issue of *Architecture New Zealand* announced extended coverage of technology and products: "According to NZIA President Helen Tippett ... the building materials and electronic communication systems that architects are now having to deal with are extremely sophisticated."¹⁵⁰ The new era of architecture, computer graphics, and firms like Cadabra, were part of this. Architects were accused of being slow to

¹⁴⁸ Walker "New Clothes" pp 85-90.

¹⁴⁹ Treadwell "Fashion statements" pp 95-97.

¹⁵⁰ Bucknall "1990 Fever [editorial]" p 12.

respond in this regard:

They ... are often myopic towards its potential in their profession and the impact that it inevitably will have. ... The application of technology to architecture must be accompanied by the adaption of architecture to technology.¹⁵¹

It appears that at times this application was superficial with form experimentation being "overdone when designers added complexity simply because the software allowed them to."¹⁵²

As Cadabra's director, Richard Simpson argued:

the application of CAD to manual procedures requires a complete reassessment of traditional practices. ... It must be considered as an essential part in the overall design process, not just a tool for handling the repetitive and precision tasks. ... CAD's potential for development is quite unlimited.¹⁵³

Malcolm Walker's "A Guide to C.A.D. for the over 30's" presented a different perspective describing office procedures following the arrival of CAD as: "buy the bloody thing

¹⁵¹ Simpson "Computer Graphics-delayed reactions" p 63.

¹⁵² Hutchinson "Screen Gems" pp 104-106.

¹⁵³ Simpson "Computer Graphics-delayed reactions" pp 66-67.

because everyone else has one ... and ... use it as a doorstop ... or try counselling er, I mean training groups."¹⁵⁴ Meanwhile some in the industry were of the view that "drawing boards will be obsolete by the end of the decade."¹⁵⁵

Despite the great promises foretold of CAD, it was the allure of the World Wide Web that seems to have particularly attracted the NZIA, which widely publicised the forthcoming launch of the institute's web page in 1998.¹⁵⁶ As one advertisement proclaimed: "If you're an Architect and have always wondered about the World Wide Web and how to get on it easily ... here's the answer."¹⁵⁷ In mid-1998 *Architecture New Zealand* even published two screenshots of the website to highlight the institute's progressiveness.¹⁵⁸ In 1996 16% of households had access to the internet, but by the end of the decade this would rise to about one million New Zealanders.¹⁵⁹ But more was yet to come. Mobile phones and affordable digital cameras were also new to the 1990s,

¹⁵⁴ Walker "A Guide to C.A.D. for the over 30's" p 128.

¹⁵⁵ Sheehan "CAD in Perspective" p 59.

¹⁵⁶ "NZIA CPD: NZIA launches web page" pp 36-37.

¹⁵⁷ "NZIA Professional Development 1998" pp 97ff.

¹⁵⁸ "Across the board: Websites" pp 16-18.

¹⁵⁹ Leach *Kitchens* p 263.

with *Consumer* magazine featuring mobile phones in 1995, and testing digital cameras in 1998.¹⁶⁰ But there was also the BRANZ "smart house" featured at the New Zealand Home Show in Auckland Showgrounds. It demonstrated

a system which allows [... occupants] to program and control their lighting, home security system, air conditioning, and television from a single outlet. No rewiring is required for installation.¹⁶¹

Cities in 1990s New Zealand saw expressions of elegant corporate wealth, the postmodern, and extreme materialisation of height. The former might be represented by both the Fay Richwhite Building on Queen Street (Peddle, Thorpe & Aitken, 1988-92)¹⁶² and Stephenson and Turner's BMW Import Centre adjacent to the southern motorway in Mount Wellington; with Athfield Architects' House at Oriental Terrace (1990), dramatically dismissed by Peter Shaw as "the last gasp of Post-modern glamour in New Zealand."¹⁶³ Other versions of post-modernism must surely linger in

¹⁶⁰ Leach *Kitchens* p 263.

¹⁶¹ "Smart House" p 80.

¹⁶² *Exquisite Apart* p 239; Anon. "Glass in Buildings: NZI/Fay Richwhite Building/Auckland" p 79.

¹⁶³ Lee "Highway Exposure" pp 40-43; Shaw *A History of New Zealand Architecture* p 202.

JASMAX/Manning & Associates' Majestic Centre (Wellington, 1987-91, 116m), and Warren and Mahoney Salvation Army Citadel (Wellington, 1989-90), with the tallest structure of the decade easily being Craig Moller's Auckland Sky tower (1994-1997, 328m).¹⁶⁴ The Sky Tower has been deemed:

an unmistakable emblem of Auckland ... a powerful yet elegant addition to the city's skyline ... [and] a unique architectural landmark in the urban landscape,"

though Warren and Mahoney's Television Centre for TVNZ (c1990) was similarly described as "[a] triumph of urban architecture."¹⁶⁵ Their Christchurch Railway Station (1993) appears more elegant, and Shaw praises its uncompromising form and sophisticated metal detailing.¹⁶⁶

Perhaps it was these sorts of buildings that were the target of Gerald Melling's views

¹⁶⁴ *Exquisite Apart* pp 239-240; Niven "Engaging the City - The Majestic" pp 49-55; "National Awards: Warren & Mahoney Architects Ltd: Salvation Army Citadel, Wellington" pp 70-71; "NZIA-Resene Regional Awards: Auckland Awards" pp 22-26.

¹⁶⁵ "NZIA National Awards for Architecture: Craig Moller: Sky Tower" p [45]; also "High Times" pp 24-25; "Television centre for TVNZ, Auckland." p 36.

¹⁶⁶ Shaw *A History of New Zealand Architecture* p 217.

expressed through his alter ego "Citizen Pain," who had addressed the earlier 1989 NZIA conference saying:

We think there are too many tourist buildings in Wellington, weighed down with international baggage and covered in the labels of the countries of departure. To us, they look quite lost. If we knew how, we'd be more than happy to put them gently on the next flight home.¹⁶⁷

For many, Auckland's Aotea Centre, which opened in 1990, might have been top of their list for that next flight out. As Walker's "Aotea Centre: 2015 an appraisal 15 years hence..." mused: "a building designed by a committee for politicians was doomed to success ... but what as?? certainly not a civic venue and concert hall."¹⁶⁸

Cities of course are not just buildings, and this realisation is explicit in the writings of the decade. Urban waterfronts and city centres, especially of Auckland and Wellington, also gained attention as being vital urban spaces. As Carol Bucknall wrote:

Auckland has been an exciting place to live lately. The arrival of the Whitbread fleet, the Commonwealth

¹⁶⁷ Melling "Citizen Pain" p 54.

¹⁶⁸ Walker "Aotea Centre: 2015 an appraisal 25 years hence ..." p 54.

Games and the start of the 1990 sesquicentennial celebrations have combined to produce a vibrancy that has hitherto been decidedly lacking in the City of Sails. ... the overall result was recognition that the city itself, not just the beaches and the harbour surrounding it, can be a place for recreation ... Various groups ... have come up with schemes for the waterfront area ... But while the different groups battle it out the Auckland public is still largely denied access to an area that has the greatest potential for recreational use of anywhere in the city.¹⁶⁹

Nigel Cook was characteristically direct when he stated that: "The harbour is the biggest park in Auckland. We don't need more surrogate countryside."¹⁷⁰

The Lambton development in Wellington was also comprehensive and included several projects which, in the end, never eventuated, including the Victoria Market Hall described in 1990 as "a light concrete structure with a gazed glass cupola, ... intended to become both a major source of revenue and one of the [Lambton Harbour] development's prime public facilities."¹⁷¹ The Boffa Miskell redevelopment of Frank Kitts Park had intended to include "[a] 10m wide tree-lined promenade ... built to follow the shoreline,

¹⁶⁹ Bucknall "1990 Fever [editorial]" p 12; also "Between city and sea" pp 24-25.

¹⁷⁰ Cook "Quayside Contentions" p 21.

¹⁷¹ Schwass "Lambton Update" p 21.

leading to a jetty for mooring small boats and fishing."¹⁷² Margot Schwass' review of progress noted: "[t]he frenetic pace of construction is being propelled by two major events: Wellington's street car race at the beginning of December, and the opening of the Sesqui celebrations at the end of February 1990."¹⁷³ The neighbouring Chaffers Plan, supported by Craig Craig Moller and Studio Pacific Architecture, proposed

140-170 terrace style units built on the waterfront at Chaffers Bay ... beginning in early 1996. Stage two will provide another 130 apartments, predominantly along the Cable St frontage.¹⁷⁴

The following decade would see this area become the green space of Waitangi Park.

The country's heritage systems came under particular scrutiny in the 1990s. There was a 1996 report from the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, and a ministerial review in 1998.¹⁷⁵ Jeremy Salmond gave his view on the state of heritage protection in his discussion of David McGill's

¹⁷² Schwass "Lambton Update" p 21.

¹⁷³ Schwass "Lambton Update" p 21.

¹⁷⁴ "Chaffers Plan Unveiled" p 10.

¹⁷⁵ Gatley "Politics of inheritance" p 22; Shaw *A History of New Zealand Architecture* p 220.

Landmarks:

The fact that so many of this country's fine buildings survive today is remarkable when one considers the pressures which conspire against them, including the indifference and lethargy of those organs of government which are charged with their care.¹⁷⁶

Prior to the mid-decade spotlight on heritage, local communities implemented specific protection initiatives. An early example was the use of heritage precincts that first occurred in Petone, using what Marc Bailey described as "a unique residential and planning consultative process."¹⁷⁷ He identified that the precinct concept, that was used in the district scheme, had enabled a level of protection not provided for in the Historic Places Act 1977.¹⁷⁸ Discussion began c1993 to establish a similar Savage Crescent Housing Precinct in Palmerston North.¹⁷⁹

At the same time the jurisdiction of architects as the "sole judges of architectural quality" and its role in heritage evaluation was being questioned. Salmond in raising this question

¹⁷⁶ Salmond "Landmarks Notable Historic Buildings in New Zealand [books]" p 120.

¹⁷⁷ Bailey "Patrick Street Historic Precinct" p 22.

¹⁷⁸ Bailey "Patrick Street Historic Precinct" p 24.

¹⁷⁹ Stewart "Preserving the model" pp 79-83.

claimed that "[o]ne reason that our cities have developed in a way which is widely regarded as unsatisfactory is the poor level of public debate about architectural or urban quality."¹⁸⁰ Salmond was also involved in proposals to redevelop Auckland Railway Station, having "produced a weighty conservation plan for the station which [... was] closely studied by all interested parties."¹⁸¹

The conversion of Auckland's Princes Street synagogue into a branch of the National Bank rejuvenated "a derelict building producing an outstanding example of the importance of adaptive reuse of historic buildings."¹⁸² However, the 1990s would bring a new strategy to the architecture of the National Bank, beginning with the Karangahape Road branch (Andrews Scott Cotton, 1993), which established a "deconstructivist" aesthetic in New Zealand's commercial architecture. This building is considered to be a landmark one, with Shaw pointing to its "early use of overlapping verandah roof segments," while Min Hall has referred to it "as having the sophistication and sense of style and adventure that we gain from international

¹⁸⁰ Salmond "Heritage Preserved" p 27.

¹⁸¹ "Across the Board: Casino talk" p 20.

¹⁸² "Old synagogue conversion, Auckland" p 40.

influences."¹⁸³ The series of National Banks that spawned throughout the country were often less successful, with Shaw ascribing the term "cliché" as an appropriate adjective.

Other important heritage projects included the redevelopment of the Bath House in Rotorua,¹⁸⁴ and the restorations of Dunedin's Municipal Buildings and the Old Government Buildings in Wellington by Opus, which was noted as having been "lovingly and faithfully - almost too faithfully - restored ... It is powerful proof that our architectural heritage can be preserved without becoming museum pieces."¹⁸⁵ Dunedin Railway Station was another comprehensively-renovated building, which Greg Bowron described as good commercial conservation because "[m]uch of the present work will restore existing building elements and the economic base provided by the tenants will ensure that maintenance continues."¹⁸⁶ Likewise commerce was a vital element of the BNZ Lambton Quay

¹⁸³ Shopland "Decade of chaos" p 59.

¹⁸⁴ "NZIA-Resene Regional Awards: Waikato/Bay of Plenty awards" pp 20-21.

¹⁸⁵ "Carter Holt Harvey Architectural Awards 1990: Municipal Buildings" p 43; "NZIA-Resene Regional Awards: Wellington awards" p 16.

¹⁸⁶ Bowron "Heritage [Dunedin Railway Station restoration]" p 100.

development which was a balancing act of commercial viability and costly restoration.¹⁸⁷ Alexandra Teague, meanwhile was proposing that "in this the age of cyber space, virtual reality, teleconferencing and home shopping, perhaps there is a case for virtual architecture and, logically, virtual conservation."¹⁸⁸ In Wellington, Ian Bowman used a "unique technique called "cratering" to determine the original paint colours" of the Wellington Rowing Club and Star Boating Club buildings as part of the Lambton Harbour development that included the relocation and refurbishment of these buildings, and an interest in building conservation was also reflected in the "Politics of inheritance" conference held at Unitec in November 1997.¹⁸⁹

However, the urban fabric was undergoing another more pervasive change. Lloyd Jenkins identifies the conversion of "tired" commercial properties into apartments as damaging "potentially unique city environments by poor-quality design and

¹⁸⁷ Gatley "Heritage [BNZ head office, Lambton Quay redevelopment]" p 106.

¹⁸⁸ Gatley "Politics of inheritance" p 26.

¹⁸⁹ "Lambton Harbour development" p 88; Gatley "Politics of inheritance" pp 22-26.

construction."¹⁹⁰ The desirability of the inner suburbs also prompted "postmodern infill," which was met with community uproar and council regulation favouring building imitating "the form and scale of the villa or the bungalow."¹⁹¹ Shaw uses the Auckland City Council's 1993 Residential I guidelines as his example of this, and attributes the idea of architectural contextualism for its underpinning.¹⁹² Dykstra House, Remuera was only one of several designs negotiating new planning rules, though architect Les Dykstra optimistically summarised the number of site restrictions as "so many in fact that they provided the solutions for the design."¹⁹³ Walker's "The Architect's Wine and Drink Guide" was perhaps more suggestive of the context: "Planning hearing submissions benefit from an iron pill, berocca and single malt cocktail ... and the bottle makes a useful negotiating tool later."¹⁹⁴ David Mitchell's review of the Resource Management Act and "the extended role of council planners and

¹⁹⁰ Lloyd Jenkins *At Home* p 286.

¹⁹¹ Lloyd Jenkins *At Home* p 283.

¹⁹² Shaw *A History of New Zealand Architecture* pp 201-203.

¹⁹³ Dykstra "Edge of the Envelope" pp 84-90.

¹⁹⁴ Walker "The Architect's Wine and Drink Guide" p 112.

urban designers"¹⁹⁵ was concise:

The libertarian was eclipsed by the authoritarian. ... They have given themselves the right to veto architecture on aesthetic grounds and they are using it with as much force as they can. ... Among planners, the aesthetics of gentility prevail. ... The new is vigorously resisted unless it looks old.¹⁹⁶

The result was infill inoffensively occupying the rear of suburban sections meaning that:

[i]t was possible to drive down a suburban street and see only bungalows built in the 1920s, when in fact on the rear ends of long, narrow sections there were now entire communities of new houses ... unobserved by the passing public.¹⁹⁷

Lloyd Jenkin's has written that reactive regulations to enforce heritage values resulted in villa alteration becoming the new architecture, and of the prevalence of white paint, polished kauri floors and redesigning the service areas at the rear of the house as creating the new idea of contemporary domestic spaces.¹⁹⁸ But he has also stated that "Tuscan infill housing ... became the most noticeable architectural feature of the

¹⁹⁵ Mitchell "Urban decline" p 51.

¹⁹⁶ Mitchell "Urban decline" p 51.

¹⁹⁷ Lloyd Jenkins *At Home* p 292.

¹⁹⁸ Lloyd Jenkins *At Home* pp 285-286.

1990s."¹⁹⁹ It was

poorly designed and built cheaply in materials with no long-term track record. To anyone driving the streets it was easy to believe that architects and designers had abandoned the city, in which most of them lived, in favour of richer pickings elsewhere.²⁰⁰

Prior to these planning changes projects like Noel Lane's AB Gibbs House (Westmere, 1991), and Andrew Patterson's Summer Street House (1992) - an unashamedly urban "hard-edged metal-clad box" - were built. Pip Cheshire's Congreves House, North Shore (1989-92) was another project from early in the decade and was tipped to have cost \$16 million during the recession.²⁰¹ But other models of housing were also proposed, Peter Beaven's Merivale Village project in Christchurch being perhaps the most well-known.²⁰² Through it Beaven championed "a planning system which puts the quality of the environment above the private greed of the

¹⁹⁹ Lloyd Jenkins *At Home* p 284.

²⁰⁰ Lloyd Jenkins *At Home* pp 290-291.

²⁰¹ Lloyd Jenkins *At Home* p 283; Shopland "Decade of chaos" p 54; Shaw *A History of New Zealand Architecture* p 210.

²⁰² "National Awards: Peter Beaven Architect: Merivale Village, Christchurch" p 65.

individual."²⁰³ Studio Pacific Architecture's Marion Square Apartments was likewise considered to be a new way of rethinking the city with infill sitting above city buildings rather than only down the back of suburban sections. One review of the Marion Square Apartments stated that: "[t]he innovative roofscape housing model is a successful concept ... Urbane living - undoubtedly New Zealand."²⁰⁴ The closing years of the decade saw the building of the considered Pugh House (Melling Morse, 1999) and the cliff-climbing Kelly House (1997) - both in Wellington. In 1996, Auckland's population reached one million.²⁰⁵ The same year (1996) over 81 percent of Māori lived in urban areas,²⁰⁶ and households had an average of 2.78 people, in contrast to 4.86 in 1901.²⁰⁷

Inside houses, kitchens were also undergoing change. In addition to the introduction of the bread-maker to many households, there was

²⁰³ Beaven "Village Vernacular [Merivale housing project]" pp 57-61.

²⁰⁴ "NZIA-Resene Regional Awards: Wellington awards" p 16; also Shaw *A History of New Zealand Architecture* p 205.

²⁰⁵ Lloyd Jenkins *At Home* p 305; Reid "Focus: 5 houses 5 decades" p 74; Falconer *Living in Paradox* p 456.

²⁰⁶ King *The Penguin History of New Zealand* p 470.

²⁰⁷ Leach *Kitchens* p 262.

increased use of gas for heating, water heating and cooking, and a 17% increase in the households with dishwashers (from 22% to 39% from 1991 to 2000).²⁰⁸ Helen Leach also documents specific spatial changes. She writes that:

[d]esigners and architects ... began to make provision for two or more cooks working together ... The solution was to fit in an additional sink and cooking appliance so that two work triangles were side by side, not overlapping. They shared one apex: the fridge-freezer.²⁰⁹

Leach also describes the prevalence of U-shaped and L-shaped kitchen bench layouts - with "the resulting work triangle interrupted by a route from one part of the house to another."²¹⁰ A result of this was open-plan kitchen-living areas with kitchens having only one, two or no walls: "[t]he wall-less kitchen was made possible by installing under-bench drawers rather than cupboards ... [and] defined by its benches," as the island bench, accommodating sinks, facet and dishwasher was also an increasing feature of new kitchens in houses in the 1990s.²¹¹ Leach also notes that culinary aspirations stretched into

²⁰⁸ Leach *Kitchens* pp 267, 274, 280.

²⁰⁹ Leach *Kitchens* p 288.

²¹⁰ Leach *Kitchens* p 288.

²¹¹ Leach *Kitchens* p 288.

professional allusions that shaped the selection of the aesthetics and capabilities of kitchen whiteware that, she writes, with respect to ovens, "tapped into the desire of many serious home cooks to have the equivalent of professional status."²¹² However, there was also a distinct shift in 1993 from eating out to takeaways, and Leach writes that "[b]y 1998 foods that were not prepared in the home kitchen absorbed 22.1 percent of household food expenditure."²¹³

The idea of environmental sustainability, in schemes such as energy-efficiency rating systems for household appliances, "gained new momentum in the 1990s," with "stickers displaying energy stars ... prominent as you walked around whiteware showrooms."²¹⁴ In 1996, the Manapouri Power Station was granted further resource consents with a 35-year term,²¹⁵ and in 1996 New Zealand's first commercial wind farm (Hau Nui) was built in the Wairarapa and began generating electricity in 1997.²¹⁶ Early the next year, starting in January 1998, Auckland

²¹² Leach *Kitchens* p 272.

²¹³ Leach *Kitchens* p 261.

²¹⁴ Leach *Kitchens* p 276.

²¹⁵ McGuinness and White *Nation Dates* pp 137, 196.

²¹⁶ McGuinness and White *Nation Dates* pp 137, 197.

experienced a five-week-long power outage, affecting most of downtown Auckland.²¹⁷ This was also the year when the theme for the IPENZ conference was "The Sustainable City," and the Waikato/Bay of Plenty branch of the NZIA recognised "Ekos Design" in its regional awards, "[a]n eco-friendly house ... [making] innovative use of local materials and artworks."²¹⁸ Better known however were Nigel Cook's "wind-rain" houses, the third being built in Ahipara. Cook was clear that these homes were

not glass-houses. They are glass and insulating-canopy and computer-monitored houses. ... I am trying to create a house skin that can respond dynamically to changes in the outside climate so those three elements will produce a comfortable but actual interior climate.²¹⁹

Publications, such as, *Design Guidelines*, produced by the Ministry of Commerce, provided "examples of the impact of design on building energy use," but the impact of humans on the environment was also apparent with the increasing depletion of the ozone layer, leading to the ban of

²¹⁷ McGuinness and White *Nation Dates* pp 138, 194.

²¹⁸ "Notebook: IPENZ 98" pp 16-18; Anon "NZIA-Resene Regional Awards: Waikato/Bay of Plenty awards" pp 20-21.

²¹⁹ Cook "Under glass" pp 76-80.

Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), that had been "used both as a refrigerant and to produce foam insulation [in refrigerators]" in 1996.²²⁰ In response to the Asian economic crisis, Saatchi and Saatchi was commissioned in 1999, by Tourism New Zealand, the result being the infamous "New Zealand 100% Pure" advertising campaign.²²¹

This all happened in the decade when New Zealand signed the Framework Convention on Climate Change at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992.²²² A contingent from the Auckland School of Architecture, led by Graham Robertson, attended Rio, which "committed the country to work actively to reduce carbon monoxide emissions contributing to the "greenhouse effect," and thus to global warming."²²³ Writing on the need for sustainable architecture, Robertson wrote: "Architects must become more aware before it's too late."²²⁴ This was the beginning of a resurgence of thinking which had been promoted in some quarters in the 1970s, perhaps most well-known in architectural

²²⁰ "Solar Houses" p 95; Leach *Kitchens* p 276.

²²¹ Falconer *Living in Paradox* pp 49-50.

²²² King *The Penguin History of New Zealand* p 445.

²²³ King *The Penguin History of New Zealand* p 445.

²²⁴ Robertson "The environmental response" p 127.

circles by Brenda and Robert Vale, who would take up professorships in Auckland in the mid-1990s.

But, as in all decades, there is no completely tidy summary. Some important events are difficult to elegantly fit into a finessed chronology. In April 1995, a traumatic and tragic failure of the built environment occurred when a viewing platform in Cave Creek in Paparoa National Park collapsed killing 13 students and a Department of Conservation (DoC) worker.²²⁵ The resulting Royal Commission of Inquiry found that DoC was

seriously under-funded and under-resourced" and that there were "systemic problems with the platform's construction, including the design and supervision of its installation, none of which was overseen by any qualified engineers or builders.²²⁶

These were not the only people relevant to this conference who passed during the decade. Others include: George Porter (1921-98), Dick Toy (1911-95), Graham Ford Dawson (1909-95), Mary Edwards (1909-95), the third woman to graduate as an architect in New Zealand, Claude Megson c1937-94, and John

²²⁵ McGuinness and White *Nation Dates* pp 136, 194.

²²⁶ McGuinness and White *Nation Dates* p 136.

Scott 1924-92, who was posthumously recognised in the first NZIA Gold Medal Award in 1999.²²⁷

²²⁷ Gatley "Passion and intensity" pp 14-16; "Richard Horton Beauclerc Toy (1911-1995)" p 12; "Obituaries [Graham Ford Dawson 1909-1995]" p 129; "Obituaries [Mary Dorothy Edwards 1909-1995]" p 129; *Exquisite Apart* p 240.

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