



10 2007

THE BROADSHEET OF THE AUCKLAND BRANCH OF THE NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

**BLOCK**

## A Week of It

### Sean Flanagan psyche's us up for Architecture Week

On a recent thunderous evening a large audience gathered to hear Julie Stout's penultimate presentation in the Fast Forward series. The crowd was further evidence that Auckland's architectural community is in good shape. In addition to the Fast Forward lectures, there have been impressive numbers at the many events that now mark the architectural calendar, from the Jasmx Film Festival, to the Pecha Kucha Nights with their growing fan base, to the regular array of overseas speakers hosted by the various schools and sponsors. One can surmise that rarely a week goes by without an opportunity to bag some CPD points. And now for Architecture Week.

To get a peek behind the scenes, we put a few questions to Pete Bossley, Chairman of the Auckland Branch of the NZIA and one of the organisers of the festival. The first question concerned the value of Architecture Week when considered in the light of the many events already on the calendar. In response, Pete pointed to the importance of a concentrated period for drawing to the fore the 'complex and multifarious' nature of the profession. The concentrated array of events demonstrates the discipline of architecture's great variety; a variety not readily apparent in a yearly calendar, but more easily grasped in an intense gathering. On the value of Architecture Week, he commented:

"For me it is a celebration of the many aspects of Architecture in which we get involved; for architects, other professionals and for the public. That is why last year, the first 'Week' compared with the earlier Architecture Days, was named the 'Joy of Architecture.' We wanted to stress the enthusiasm and range of activities and the many different beliefs. The Joy is in the dialogue, the difference and variety."

Building upon last year, we wondered if there were any changes that marked this year's celebration. Pete conveyed that this year the focus was more upon events rather than exhibitions. This was largely due to a lack of appropriate exhibition space in the Britomart locality; surely one of the pitfalls of a developer finding tenants for their buildings! Despite this, he stressed the ongoing importance of Britomart Square as an urban location that contributes to the intense experience vital to showcasing the profession's difference and variety. In particular he recalled last year's Friday night outing that kept the public, students and professionals flocking to different events around the Square, until almost midnight. One imagines there will be similar opportunities for night adventures this year with the return of student escapades in the form of the 'Urban Spoiler' constructions. The initial renderings of these 'sculptural pavilions' suggest Britomart Square will be worth another visit after dark.

To change tack a little, we asked Pete for his thoughts on Vernon Brown and Dick Toy, the subjects of separate exhibitions being held during Architecture Week:

"Vernon Brown was a historic figure for me (luckily I'm not quite that old) but Dick was a major influence, as he was still at the Auckland University School of Architecture when I was there, not only for insistence upon searching for architecture which responded to the topography of place (and in particular Auckland) but also for his lovely gentleness and sensitivity. Also indirectly because he was very influential on John Dickson, who was incredibly significant for me and for the School in general. "

Judging by the advertisements, both exhibitions are concerned with the discourse of nationalism in architecture. Toy is portrayed as the architect/educator enthusiastic about design that responds to Auckland's topography, while Brown represents the move to establish a distinctive NZ style. In this context, our final question concerned Pete's thoughts on the pursuit of a regional or national style:

"I think the pursuit of an Auckland or NZ 'style' was less important than the implication that architecture can be generated here rather than imported, and that it should be cognisant of context to an extent not often articulated here or overseas. This became extended beyond physical and climatic contexts to include historic and cultural contexts also. However, I think it is now possible to see that we need to move on to architectures which may adopt different attitudes towards context, as we re-evaluate the role of the so-called 'natural' landscapes or urban situations, and as we learn to acknowledge that these are already pre-designed contexts which may benefit from more radical responses."



Bloxes - The University of Auckland's Urban Spoiler

# A New Coach By X'mas?

## Pip Cheshire reflects on recent events on Symonds Street

It is probably pointless to unravel the events around Professor Peggy Deamer's exit from the Auckland School of Architecture, and it would be of little use; when large organisations make a decision they are invariably final and non-negotiable. Suffice to say that the Auckland University School of Architecture has lost a Head of Department who, in a very brief time, has managed to gather the support, respect and loyalty of much of the student body and of those in the profession who came in contact with her. While Professor Deamer's departure is a particular and significant loss to the school and, one presumes, to her too, it also suggests difficult times ahead for the school in its search for direction.

The ruthless accounting of contemporary tertiary education funding has been hard on architecture; the space hungry requirements of lecture theatres, studio space and specialist workshop areas are a heavy overhead in a discipline with limited means of generating external revenue. The consequence has been a slow and inexorable decline in facilities available to students and an increasing feeling of embattlement by the staff, the relentless bureaucratisation of duties choking the enthusiasms of committed staff.

While the machinations at the School of Architecture might sound like business as usual to those with an infrequent contact with the school (was it only two issues ago I wrote of the protests against Professor Light's appointment as Head in the 1950s), the exit of Professor Deamer has to be seen as part of an inexorable change at the school; a change the profession has a significant interest in and should take a more significant role in shaping.

There are complex forces at work in University funding, forces that drive inter-University competition for scarce funding and which have spawned a plethora of numerical measures used to assess the performance of department against department, faculty against faculty, university against university and, ultimately country against country. Savvy university heads now manipulate course structures to achieve more favourable numbers in the measure of research work undertaken and the number of graduate versus undergraduate students.

There is little point in railing against such restructuring in pedagogical terms. The University's academic heads are as well versed in the strategies of funding as the accountants and are experts at maintaining the highest possible academic standards while creating the best scores in the various acronyms by which success and funding are linked. The Institute of Architects has a much more potent lever with which to affect some sort of change within the University: that of a customer, a user of the institution's graduates- it is high time this lever was employed.

Architecture is a sort of broad spectrum discipline; its location on the campus midway between engineering and fine arts being roughly representative of the mix within. While there are many in the profession who call for graduates to be equipped with greater craft skills, it is the development of the intellectual skills of enquiry

and research which are the truly valuable outputs of a university and which, when required, will facilitate the rapid uptake and assimilation of the profession's necessary skills.

The School and the profession have often struggled to reconcile these conflicting expectations, the profession sounding wheedling and pedantic, the school aloof and indifferent. A head of school with a clear vision of architecture, its education, its research and its profession can bring these disparate views together and see symbiotic growth rather than conflict. Professor Deamer saw the possibilities for both profession and school in closer engagement and sought to facilitate interaction through her presence at Institute meetings, the greater use of the profession in teaching and the initiation of a long overdue lecture series by local architects. It should not be necessary to remark on her presence in the studio too, but such is the administrative pressure her predecessors have been under that the regular appearance of the Head in a studio teaching role was a welcome change too.

One might argue that a single person does not make a school and indeed the School has generally maintained its quality of education through many ructions and the coming and going of many personalities. There is though no doubt that a strongly articulated vision of architecture and its education as Professor Deamer illustrated will strengthen the School in its ability to attract students and staff, to undertake research and education and in its relationship with the profession.

The Institute must engage with the University to ensure that the school is again led by someone who is able offer this vision, and to ensure that any future appointment be supported to meet the relentless administrative demands of the University. The loss of Professor Deamer will make it hard for the University to attract such a candidate again and we must do all we can to ensure that efforts are directed to find someone with knowledge, vision and experience - any new Head of School must have, and personify, an inclusive vision of architecture.

It may be that the Institute is at work lobbying the University Council, the Vice-Chancellor and the Faculty but I have my doubts; if I am wrong let us rank-and-file members have some hint of the action afoot. It is not enough to wait for the visiting reviews or to suggest the School is no longer top of the list for prospective students; these are too slow in their effect. The Institute Council should request a joint working party with the University, acknowledging the University's academic and fiscal responsibilities but acknowledging too that the profession the Institute represents has a significant interest in the quality and nature of the education offered.

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# The Fine Print

## Excerpts from the reports to NZIA Auckland Branch meeting held October 2nd, 2007.

### TECHNICAL ISSUES PORTFOLIO: Michael Middlebrook

#### *NZIA Auckland Branch Building Code Review Meeting*

The Auckland Branch held this meeting on September 25<sup>th</sup> to discuss the Building Code Review Performance Requirements document. Both John Sutherland and myself presented the key issues for Auckland Architects. Again, there was much valuable discussion and diverse opinion which we noted and endeavoured to cover within the Branch Submission.

#### *DBH Building Code Review – Performance Requirements Submission*

A copy of our submission is available to members on request. Both Alex Shaw of Avery Architects and myself (assisted in part by John Sutherland) put a lot of time and research into this, and the content has also been included in the NZIA National Submission which Chris Mason coordinated. Much of my time was facilitated by the generosity of Jasmx who were convinced of the need for a concerted effort due to the complexities of the Review document. I would also like to thank Regan Potangaroa of Unitec and Tony Watkins for their work and support.

#### *Building Code Review – Ongoing*

We need to keep momentum going on this and be involved both in the continuing development of the Code and in dialogue with the politicians to lobby for architects' interests. We will also be looking for closer alignment with IPENZ and other design professionals to ensure that we can provide strong and coordinated direction as the process continues.

#### *Building Control Issues - Regional Building Consents Meeting*

We missed the September meeting due to the Building Code Review but the Technical Issues Group will be attending the October meeting of the Auckland Regional Building Consent Managers. Issues to be raised:

- Information reasonably required supporting a Building Consent. Trade Literature when a brand statement would do.
- Practice Notes and policies for evaluating alternative solutions versus performance design.
- Amendments to BC's.
- Electronic Documentation to reduce paper, streamline processing and allow 3D submission for complex building geometries. North Shore City is trialling electronic documentation on a couple of projects. Ongoing.
- The possibility of some BCA's developing specialties in complex building types. Ongoing.

#### *NZIA Auckland Branch Meeting on Building Compliance Issues*

The Branch held its meeting on Building Compliance Issues on September 13<sup>th</sup>. We were unable to get Bob de Leur for the meeting as he was on holiday, but we presented some of our work and there was a lively discussion which highlighted some of the frustrations with the consent process.

#### *NZIA Auckland Branch Building Compliance Forum*

Following feedback from the Building Compliance Issues Meeting and to facilitate dialogue between Auckland architects and the

Building Consent officials we propose to organise a forum inviting the Building Consent Managers from Auckland, Rodney and one or two other regional cities to be held at D72 around the end of October. We would extend an invitation to architects from Rodney to attend.

### GRADUATE DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO: Nicole Tarlton

The presentation by three recently registered architects on September 19<sup>th</sup> went well. Prior to the presentation, I had a meeting with Justine Francis and Rosemary Geard of the NZIA. We discussed membership of the NZIA APL GDP and the seminars Auckland Branch has been running over the last several years.

### UNITEC REPORT: Tony Van Raat

#### *Architecture Week*

Progress continues on the built work for Architecture Week with serious construction on pavilions (one at full size and three at 1:5 scale) and on the assembly of other materials for display and presentation.

#### *Real World Projects*

A group of students and staff recently completed a design-and-build project on the Wanganui River. In collaboration with local iwi, they constructed a waka shelter and manuhiri shelter some 20km up the river from Wanganui City. Design and build projects with community groups are of increasing interest to students and staff and further such projects are planned.

Associate Professor Regan Potangaroa and two students have just returned from a humanitarian assignment to Andaman Nicobar Island (ANI) in India. The students, Anna Russell and Vicky Feng, were setting up a qualitative baseline (to measure the impact of providing new housing) and also developing potential alterations to houses provided for tsunami victims so that the houses better fit the demographic of occupants. The Indian Government is planning to build 9,500 houses in ANI and is taking a "one size fits all" approach; the same house is being provided for all families regardless of the family numbers, ages, gender and resources. It is anticipated that families will adapt this base house to better suit their requirements. For example, in Tamil Nadu (southern mainland India), occupants have been converting the inside kitchen of their one bedroom standard house into another bedroom and cooking outside. The work will assist occupants in deciding what level and stage of renovation they require.

#### *Staffing*

Professor Peggy Deamer will be working in the School on a part-time basis until the end of the year.

#### *Master of Architecture*

The new Master of Architecture (Professional) degree has now been approved by NZQA and funding has also been cleared by TEC. The degree will therefore commence at the start of 2008.

### COMMITTEE FOR AKL FAL PORTFOLIO: Stephen Martin

We are having a wrap up function for all participants tonight - the project team, advisors, migrants, mentors and specialist trainers.

Calder  Stewart  
Roofing



This is to present outcomes, communicate key learnings, thank all contributors and outline the legacy we hope our project will leave for Auckland and skilled new migrants to the city. Following this we are presenting our project at the monthly Committee for Auckland members meeting later this week.

#### URBAN ISSUES GROUP: Shannon Joe

*Notes of a meeting held at D72 on Tuesday September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2007.*

ARC Plan Change 6: Don proposed we support one of the submitters, and will draft the notice

Auckland International Airport: Contrary to a previous note in these minutes, BECA advise they are not involved in urban design at the airport.

Draft CBD Waterfront Masterplan: The Council presentation was viewed from CD and discussed. Although the plan itself seems to be good, there was a strong feeling that the timing was the wrong way around – Westhaven first and Queens Wharf last would ideally be reversed. Draft submission required. Submissions close October 12<sup>th</sup>.

Next Meeting : Tuesday November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2007 - 5,45pm at D72.

#### UNIV. OF AUCKLAND STUDENT REPORT: Sarah MacKenzie

*NICAI*

Since our last meeting, a group of students has met with Faculty Dean Sharman Pretty and Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) Raewyn Dalziel. Details of Ms. Pretty's written response to the questions raised at this meeting, kindly forwarded by Mr. Heap, and my own email to the committee regarding this meeting highlight the disparate views held by both student body and faculty management regarding the matters discussed. To follow up on this meeting, a group of twelve students (myself included) will be attending another meeting with Ms. Pretty tomorrow. For more information, please view the SOS website, [www.sos.derail.co.nz](http://www.sos.derail.co.nz).

#### *Modos 2007 Launch*

The launch for this year's Modos publication, "Quote/Unquote", will be held on Thursday October 4<sup>th</sup> from 6pm at the Gus Fisher Gallery. All are welcome. Further details may be found on the Modos website, [www.modos.co.nz](http://www.modos.co.nz).

#### ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP PORTFOLIO: Carolyn Savage

The September presentation was prepared by Alan Drayton, Bio Build. Geoffrey Richards and Tony Watkins ran the September meeting, and the following is Tony's report:

Complexity and diversity are the foundations on which sustainability is built. At this time when the new Building Code is nothing more than a straightjacket ensuring the demise of humane architecture, it was doubly refreshing to see the wide range of work done by Alan Drayton. His lecture went further and also became a history of the last thirty years of environmental design from the point of view of a person in the field trying to make sense of it all. His personal journey took him from building biology through sacred geometry to continuous experimentation with rammed earth or stone. Rather than the usual sustainability preaching, he discussed with good humour the discovery and delight of buildings giving form to stories and dreams.

When everyone else now seems to be writing either codes or performance standards to enshrine the continued failure of our built environment, Alan left the feeling that the only certainty about tomorrow is that it will be different.

Note: The October meeting will have two speakers covering 'zero waste' from construction and in the work place to the reuse of waste material in a building material which has a very high thermal factor while only having an R value of 0.9 - Jo Knight of Zero Waste and Steve Watts of Timbercrete.



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# BLOCK'S Architecture Week Top Five

BLOCK offers an urban-scaled "thank you" to Architecture Week organizers Pete Bossley, John Balasoglou, and their team. Here's Block's pick of the activities on offer. Enjoy the events, harvest the points, specify the sponsor's products. See [www.architectureweek.co.nz](http://www.architectureweek.co.nz)

1

## Architects on Bikes

7.30am Sunday 14th Oct. (starts 8.30am)  
Departs Britomart Pavilion



Frank Lloyd Wright drove a Cherokee red Lincoln Zephyr, Toyo Ito drives a purple Porsche, and Norman Foster flies a Cessna, one of several aircraft he owns. It seems that Auckland architects, who used to be easily spotted on the side of the road trying to restart their Citroens, have a new favored mode of transport – lycra. So get your Cannondale out, your yellow jersey on, and join this 70km tour around Auckland's best bits. Surely Architecture Week's hardest-to-earn CPD points, but the scenery will offer due compensation as you zoom past volcanoes, pa sites, heritage buildings, waterfronts, and parks. (10 CPD points)

2

## Urban Spoiler Constructions

Construction starts Saturday  
Britomart Carpark



A medical student flatmate once shocked me by asking to practice their injection technique on my arm. Required coursework, she said. My shock was not at the painful experience this soon became, but at the realization that as an architecture student, the School wouldn't have given me two bricks to put into a pile. Times have changed. Working with scaffolding companies and the structural whizzes at Holmes Consulting, each of Auckland's three architecture schools is producing a massive structure in scaffolding - the tallest is five stories high! These adventurous student-designed schemes were chosen in a competition, and the structures will host a display of all the competition proposals, as well as performances and other events.

3

## Steven Ehrlich Lecture

6.00pm Monday 15th October  
AGGS, Howe Street, Freemans Bay



Steven Ehrlich is a member of the generation of young architects that emerged in the wake of Frank Gehry's reinvigoration of Los Angeles architecture in the late 1970s. Compared with his contemporaries – Eric Owen Moss, Thom Mayne and Micahel Rotondi, Frank Israel, Hodgetts & Fung – Ehrlich's work is the most eclectic, ranging from cubic minimalism to Schindler-esque Cali-Mod to elegant corporate moderne, as well as projects that riff on vernacular architectures – Japanese, Mexican, American, African. Ehrlich's 'multicultural modernism' should offer some insights into an architecture responsive to our own cultural mix. Sponsored by Stevenson. Tickets \$25 from [www.ticketek.co.nz](http://www.ticketek.co.nz). (10 CPD points)

4

## Home of the Year Lecture Series

12.30pm, daily Tues. 16th - Fri. 19th Oct.  
Britomart Pavilion



One of the highlights of last year's AWA program was the discussion hosted by *NZ Home & Entertaining* magazine's editor, Jeremy Hansen. In a fascinating discussion, Hansen asked his panel to evaluate current trends and trace future directions in Kiwi architecture. Hosted by the about-to-be-rebranded magazine and based on its Home of the Year program, these sessions promise to be equally intriguing. The series features past winners and finalists – Mitchell & Stout Architects, Melling:Morse, Herbst Architects, and Stevens Lawson. Sponsored by *NZ Home* and Fletcher Aluminium. (10 CPD points a session)

5

## Pecha Kucha Night

8.20pm Friday 19th (doors open 7.00pm)  
Britomart Pavilion



When Pecha Kucha Night began in NZ back in April it proved an instant success, with attendances of more than 350 at events in Auckland and Wellington. The concept is simple: the night consists of a series of fast-paced, entertaining slide shows in which presenters from across the range of creative disciplines tell you their most interesting ideas. Confirmed speakers for the night include architect Andrew Patterson, historian Julia Gatley, installation artists Friendly Girls Society, and fashion designer Doris de Pont. This PKN is the feature event of Architecture Week's closing party – with a program that also includes three bands, it'll be a stellar evening. See [www.pechakucha.co.nz](http://www.pechakucha.co.nz). (10 CPD points)

## PRINT DESIGN CLASSICS



Pontresina Engadin travel poster.  
Herbert Matter, 1935.

In 1935-36 Herbert Matter produced a series of celebrated travel posters for the Swiss Tourist Office. Swiss-born Matter is regarded as the first to use the modern photographic poster in Switzerland, integrating photography in commercial graphics for advertising, which up until then had been drawn.

This example exhibits dynamic use of a close cropped, heroic head. The tanned face stares emotionlessly upward away from the viewer, conveying dedication to a higher power. The extreme contrast of scale of the photo against the skier at the lower left also adds strength to the piece.

Matter studied painting in the late 1920s before freelancing as a graphic artist and photographer.

In Europe during this period the creative scope of graphic design was boundless. Inspired by the work of El Lissitzky and Man Ray, Matter was intrigued by photograms, as well as collage and montage. In 1929 he was hired as a designer and photographer for the legendary Deberny and Piegnot concern. There he learned the nuances of fine typography, while he assisted A.M. Cassandre and Le Corbusier.

In 1936 Matter emigrated to the US, where he worked as a photographer for *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *Town and Country* magazines. During WWII he was commissioned by the US government to design posters.

Matter went on to hold many prestigious positions during a distinguished career.



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