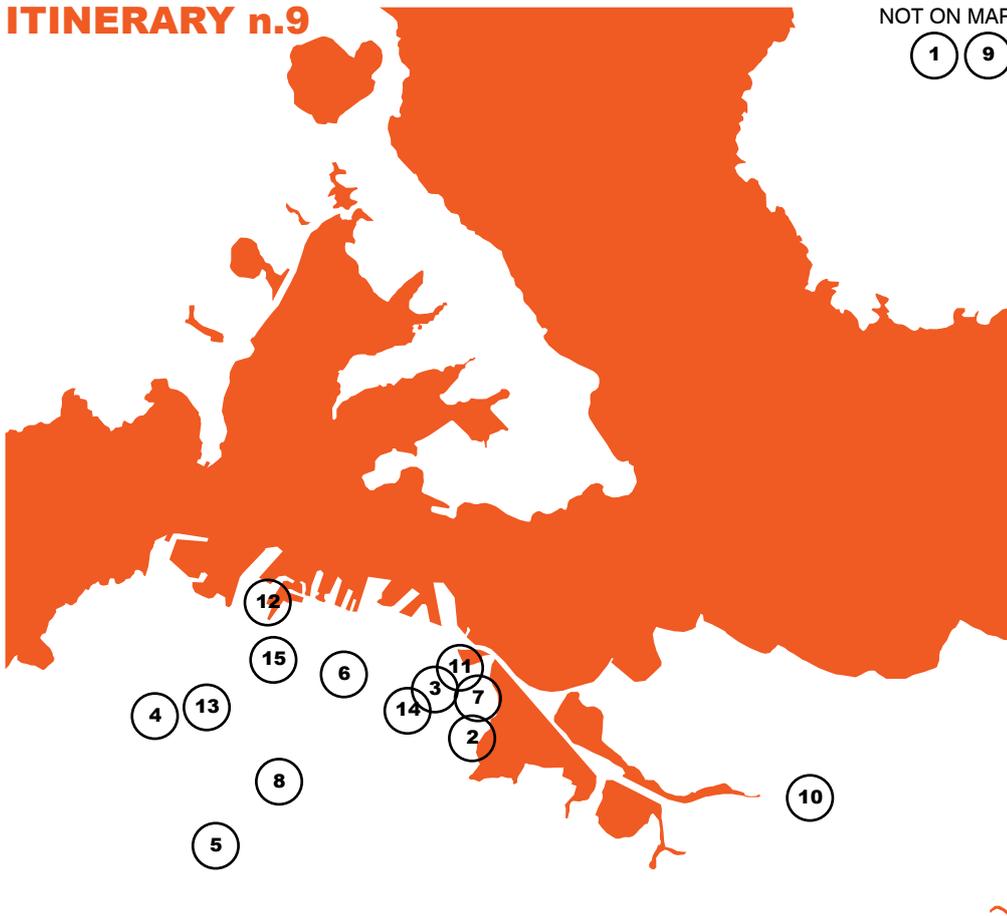


ITINERARY n.9



NOT ON MAP



Photo: Architects Patterson

Andrew Patterson in Auckland

Andrew Patterson has from his earliest days been one of New Zealand's most exciting young architects. His first house, designed while still a student at architecture school, earned him a Young Architect of the Year award, and his work since – encompassing a string of different approaches – has drawn a constant stream of awards.

In a move rare among Kiwi architects notoriously reticent about advancing a theoretical basis for their work, Patterson recently outlined three principles that guide his current work, each encapsulated in a bon mot. His principle of embracing Papatuinuku, or “Touch the earth lightly - not!”, expresses his desire to see human activity not as an intrusion into the landscape, but as an integral part of it, and signals the need to both literally and metaphorically dig in. Naturally this aggressive attitude to the landscape is most clearly expressed in his rural works (such as the bunker-like Lusk House, and his recent “underground” houses for Michael Hill in Queenstown), but his urban buildings display a similar assertiveness in their surroundings – they typically expand right to the limits of the site envelope, providing outdoor space as enclosed courtyards.

Patterson's use of decorative patterns, particularly in GRC and fibreglass panels but also through arrangements of repetitive tectonic elements, is directed by his second principle, “Pacific pattern language”. Here Patterson's work intersects most closely with international streams in contemporary architecture, which integrate structural, envelope and space-defining systems to produce almost decorative effects (for example, Toyo Ito's Tod's Building or Herzog & Meuron's Beijing Stadium). In contrast, Patterson's use of patterns seems resolutely non-structural, using patterns largely as a textured surface draped over relatively conventional frames. While this retains the essentially two-dimensional, decorative nature of his distinctive sources (tapa cloth, paintings, weaving, etc.), it is easy to imagine that developing patterns with deeper logics (structural, spatial division, environmental control, etc.) would produce buildings that broke new ground not just on the local scene but globally.

Patterson's third principle, “form follows whanau”, expresses a desire to create architecture that responds to the requirements of people. With this strong emphasis on responding to conditions – the programme and site, as well as the occupiers of the building – Patterson's architecture employs a wide range of aesthetics and approaches. In addition to avant-garde and aesthetically adventurous buildings, his office has also produced houses in historicist styles. Patterson is a genuine pluralist; he is equally adept at and comfortable with both streams of his work (indeed, his historicist work is so convincingly executed, that one of his buildings was mistakenly given heritage protection in the District Scheme!). Patterson's firm, Patterson Associates Ltd., is responsible for some of the most exciting buildings produced in NZ in the last two decades. This is evidenced in the inclusion of their work in several recent books surveying contemporary world architecture. Patterson's influence, though, is not confined to his own outputs. Although he is himself still a relatively young architect, his office has been a hothouse for new talent. Many of NZ's rising generation of architects – figures such as Jeff Fearon, Tim Hay, Gary Lawson, Jack McKinney, Tony Koia and Megan Rule – have worked with him. Through all such means, it is clear that Patterson will exert a key influence on the direction NZ architecture will take in the coming years. *Andrew Barrie & Julia Gatley*

Biography:

Andrew Patterson was born in 1960 in the Waikato, and went to school in Auckland. After a stint studying medicine at Otago University, he began an architecture degree at the University of Auckland. He was commissioned to design the Horrocks House during his last year at university. After graduating in 1987, he worked briefly for Sinclair-Johns and Colin Leuschke. Very soon after achieving registration as an architect, he established his own practice and quickly moved up in scale of work – only a few years separate the Knight-Klisser House and the Axis Building. His work has been showered with awards – he received the Young Architect of the Year in 1988, soon after starting his own practice, went on to receive CHH awards several years in succession, and has received numerous NZIA awards. His practice has passed through various partnership and staff ownership structures, but now numbers around twenty working on projects all around the country.

1

1987

Horrocks House
20 Karekare Road, Karekare



This house was the first of a series Patterson has built on Auckland's West Coast beaches. Owner Nigel Horrocks had decided to commission the top architecture student to design this house, and approached Patterson, then a final year student at the University of Auckland, with the job. A stunningly assured debut work, one commentator wrote of the house: "It demands to be noticed but clearly rejects intrusion. It is a refreshing and heroic gesture and its value is that it expresses something that is us." The house has played a key role in the history of New Zealand music – sometimes used as a recording studio, it has hosted the creation of albums by such acts as Crowded House and Shihad. See *NZ Home & Building* Oct/Nov 1988.

2

1989

Knight-Klisser House
3 Papahia St, Parnell



The citation for this house's 1992 NZIA National Award read: "A seductive solution to town planning constraints and a difficult site, this house generates excitement even before you enter inside. ... Breaking with traditional conceptions of rooms and hallways, this home is a 'living machine' full of warmth, grace, harmony and enchantment." The house also won a CHH Residential Award in 1991, and is visible from the Waitoa Street end of Awatea Reserve. See *Architecture NZ* Nov/Dec 1991 and May/June 1992, and *Home & Building* Dec/Jan 1991/92.

3

1991-92

Axis
91 St Georges Bay Rd, Parnell



The Axis project, which involved the adaptive re-use of Chilwell & Trevithick's Nestle Factory (1925-7), was a big step up in scale for the young Patterson, still a fairly recent graduate. Much of the old building fabric was retained in the makeover from factory to mixed-use metropolis, with Patterson's steel signage, gates, bridges, balconies and staircases all easily identifiable as new work. References to Batman comic books and Gotham City have been suggested. The building's oblique corner site gave rise to the two structural grids that together generate a sense of skewing and tension, most obviously apparent in the design of the central courtyard space. See *Architecture NZ* July/Aug 1993, and *Glory Glory* 1993.

4

1991

Summer Street House
2 Summer St, Ponsonby



In 1999, this house was identified by Douglas Lloyd Jenkins and Bill McKay as one of New Zealand's "top 50 homes". They commented that it "managed to appear both aggressive and defensive" at the same time. Wrapped in a metal casing, this inward-focused house responds to its gritty urban site and, in doing so, rejects the suburban cottage norm of not only Ponsonby, but indeed New Zealand. Within, two simple volumes and a colonnade of massive columns are gathered around a pool. The house received a CHH Residential Award in 1992 and a Resene Distinguished Architectural Design Award in 1993. See *Architecture NZ* Nov/Dec 1992, and *NZ Home & Entertaining* Dec/Jan 1999/2000.

5

1994-96

D72
72 Dominion Road, Kingsland



Developed for the same client as Axis, D-72 involved the refurbishment of a 1960s commercial building. It is celebrated for its contribution to the streetscape, a consequence of its new skin of woven, perforated aluminium strips that both turns the building into a local landmark and serves to limit solar gain internally. The weaving also signals Patterson's interest in taking inspiration from, and making reference to, Polynesian culture and patterns. The key change internally was the introduction of an oval-shaped courtyard space with a landscaped centre contained and framed by more woven strips and, in turn, the building's main horizontal and vertical circulation systems. The building received a BOMA Award in 1996, an NZIA Branch Award in 1999 and a NZIA Regional Award in 2000. See *Architecture NZ* May/June 1997.

6

1994

Freyberg Place and
Ellen Melville Hall
Freyberg Place, City



Freyberg Place was designated public space and named in 1946, when Baron Bernard Freyberg, described in the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography as "New Zealand's greatest soldier", was appointed Governor General. In Patterson's 1994 redesign of Freyberg Place, a military reference can be read into the bullet-shaped bollards. Other elements – in part inspired by a Mrkusich painting – can be read as either playful or chaotic: the mixture of straight lines and curves, the multiple axes, the five different kinds of paving tiles and a similar number of seating and bench types, the couple of trees, the stepped fountain. Shakespeare's words, "To thine own self be true", are more contemplative. See *Modern New Zealand* 1 (n.d.).

7

1994

House in Parnell
96 St Stephens Ave, Parnell



This house represents Patterson's lesser known historicist, and indeed classicist, side. In contrast to the contemporary massing, materials and details for which he is known, this house is symmetrical about a projecting entry bay, with plastered wall surfaces that are punctuated by vertically proportioned windows on either side of the entrance and capped by a classical frieze and cornice, and a hipped roof above. Beyond the single storey block that fronts the street, the site drops away, providing the opportunity for large, grand, double-height spaces. Such work shows Patterson is an architect happy to give clients what they want in a house, rather than forcing a signature house upon them.

8

1998

Site 3
30 St Benedicts St., Newton



Site 3 was Patterson's third project for the developer of Axis and D-72 (hence its name) and is one of only four NZ buildings in *The Phaidon Atlas of Contemporary World Architecture* (2004). It is an under-stated gem comprising five buildings, a courtyard and open-air staircases, laneways and bridges. It included the adaptive re-use of an historic stable building. Fair-faced concrete, zinc panels and shutters, and steel framing and mesh all ensure further richness and variety at the levels of surface, texture and detail. The colour palette – shades of grey – is mute and serves to emphasise the material attributes. The building received an NZIA New Zealand Award in 2002. See *Urbis* Autumn 2002, *Monument Commercial Special* 2002.

9

1998

Lusk House
Waitakere Bay, Bethells Beach



This isolated house was built for a member of the Lusk family - the Lusks are one of Auckland's oldest families and once owned much of this coast. Located on a point between just north of Bethells Beach, this house replaced a building which suffered an arson attack - security was therefore a key factor in its design. The oval-shaped house, built around a solid concrete core, has heavy wooden doors which can be closed so that no glass is exposed on the exterior when the owners are absent. The house is visible from the Te Henga Track which connects Bethells Beach and Muriwai, as well as from the beach at O'Neill Bay.

10

1999

Aotea
21 Glen Atkinson St, St. Heliers



The first of what Patterson calls his "cloud" projects, this house appears as a series of huge white roofs floating over stone walls. These roofs were built upside-down (using boat-building techniques) in a warehouse and transported to the site, the largest roof in three pieces. The perimeter of the site is defined by stone walls, which arc back to define a formal entryway. The heavy stone work suggests the remains of a former occupation of the site, a reading reinforced by Patterson's long-standing interest in ruins and remnants. This house won an NZIA Resene Northern Regional Award in 2000.

11

1999

Cumulus
8a Cleveland Road, Parnell



One of Auckland's boldest new buildings, it is comprised of a stack of commercial offices and subterranean car parking. Another of Patterson's 'cloud' buildings, the upper levels of the project are wrapped in a white veil of glass-reinforced concrete (GRC) panels. Visitors to the building pass under the cloud and are delivered by lift to a "cloud garden" - a high-walled enclosed courtyard oriented primarily upwards to the sky. The eight commercial tenancies on the upper levels are arranged around this space, although the veil opens up at the rear to give some of the tenancies a harbour view. The project received an NZIA Supreme Award 2003. See *Monument* Oct/Nov 2003.

12

2002

Stratis
Lighter Quay



Another 'cloud'. See BLOCK Itinerary no 5.

13

2007

Mai Mai
39 Arthur St, Ponsonby



Playing with themes of birds and hunting, this house is tucked behind a thin façade of fibre-glass panels marked with an abstracted feather pattern. On the interior, a glass enclosed platform projects the occupants out into the city view.

14

2010

Geysler
90-106 Parnell Road, Parnell



This project combines urban and tectonic elements previously developed in Patterson's Site 3 and Cumulus buildings. Scheduled to begin construction in 2009 and intended to achieve a five-star green rating, this collection of low-rise buildings will house commercial office space on the upper levels, with retail and cafés at ground level and car parking below. The site has three street frontages and occupies the entire end of a city block, and a series of courtyards and alleys will allow pedestrians to move into and across the site. The façade treatments of the various buildings include double-layer fritted glass and textured GRC panels.

15

2010

Victoria Park Village
Victoria Street West, City



Over the years, several "gateway" schemes have been proposed for Queen Street - pairs of buildings facing each other across the street, only one of each pair ever being built. This project extends that tradition - it is comprised of two buildings on either side of Wellesley Street, both for the same client. A matching pair of black cylinders, these apartment buildings draw on the imagery of the Victorian-era industrial machines which originally filled the adjacent site on what is now Victoria Park Market.

Other Addresses:

Dowel House (1998)

24 Minnehaha Rd, Takapuna
This house, a NZIA Regional Award winner in 2001, is visible from the coastal walkway.

Alpe House (1999)

3 Tohunga Crescent, Parnell
See *Home & Entertaining* Dec/Jan 2005.

Mirage Apartments (2003)
86-88 The Strand, Parnell

Parihoa (2008)

Constable Road, Muriwai
Now under construction, the ARC attempted to prevent the erection of the house after issuing a consent. It is visible from the Te Henga Track which runs between Muriwai and Bethells Beach.



Sources:

The photographs are by Julia Gatley and Andrew Barrie; the renderings are courtesy of Architects Patterson. Many thanks to Andrew Patterson and Andrew Mitchell at Architects Patterson for their generous help in preparing this itinerary.

Patterson's many projects have been well published in the local journals of their respective times - particularly *Architecture New Zealand*, *Urbis* and *Home & Building*. Surprisingly, given Patterson's leading position in contemporary New Zealand architecture, his work has received surprisingly little critical attention at home - Patterson's projects received only a few column-inches in Peter Shaw's history of New Zealand architecture and just a single sentence in Douglas Lloyd Jenkins history of our domestic design. However, Patterson's work has been included in a number of important international surveys of contemporary architecture: his work was included in *The Phaidon Atlas of Contemporary World Architecture* (Phaidon: London & New York, NY, 2004), and he was the only New Zealand architect included in *10x10 2 100 Architects 10 Critics* (Phaidon: London & New York, NY, 2005).