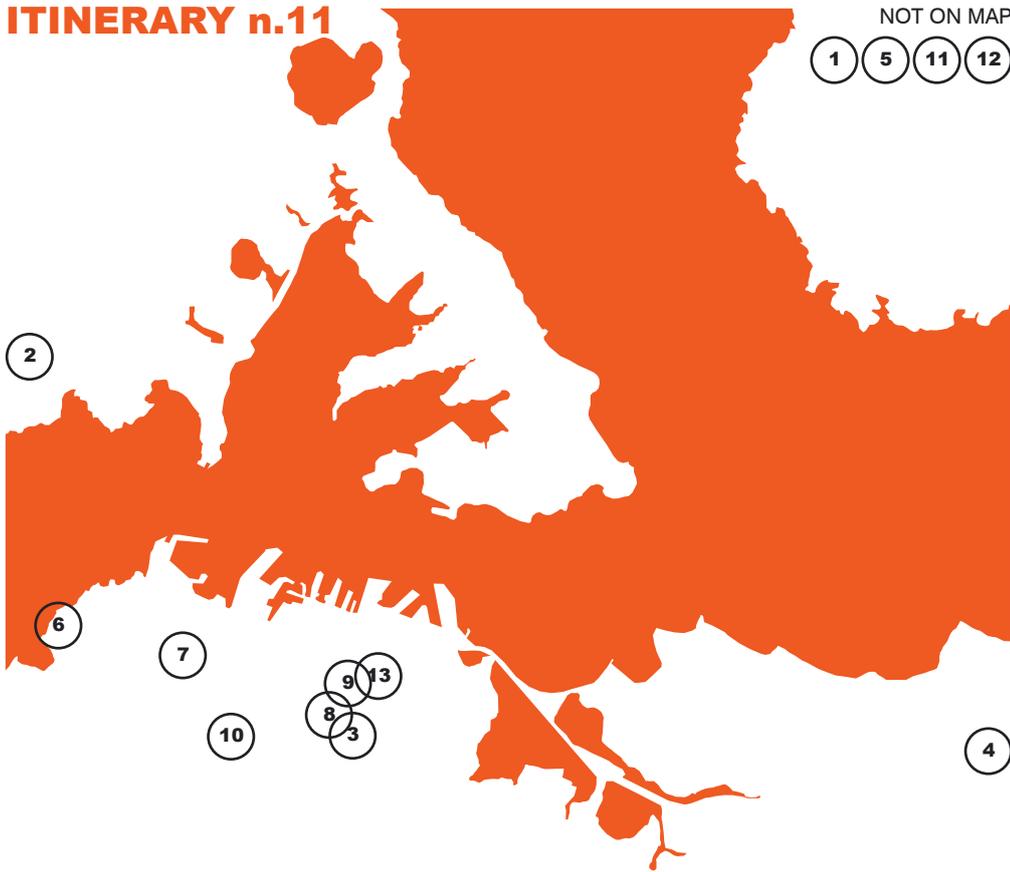


ITINERARY n.11



This week marks the 20th anniversary of the opening of Waipapa Marae, the University of Auckland's JASMaD-designed marae complex. The celebrations include a week-long series of events at the marae - see www.auckland.ac.nz

JASMaD in Auckland

Jelicich, Austin, Smith, Mercep and Davies was begun by a group of talented, ambitious and entrepreneurial young designers with the intention of combining their various connections and expertise to create a large, multi-disciplinary firm. With the variety of skills and personalities involved, the collegial firm was in many ways a collection of smaller practices rather than a monolith. The differences were often fundamental – as Ivan Mercep explains it, “John Austin did flat roofs and I did pitched roofs”. Despite this, a palette of forms, materials and details referred to in the 2007 *JASMAX* book as the “JASMaD vernacular” soon emerged. It was almost fully developed with International House, one of the firm’s earliest projects. The “JASMaD vernacular” owed a huge debt to Aalto’s work of the latter 1940s and the 1950s, notably the Saynatsalo Town Hall. Mercep has expressed his own admiration for particular aspects of Aalto’s work: “He used brick, strong horizontal forms, deep recesses, overhangs, edges – and also the way he expressed his roof timber structures internally.” This work has a real warmth to it and, while Aalto was influential in the development of ideas about regionally specific architecture, the buildings that followed Saynatsalo’s lead internationally are better described as humanist than regionalist.

Peggy Deamer reached this conclusion about Richard Toy’s work in her reconstruction of his last lecture, presented in Auckland Architecture Week 2007 and published in *Interstices 08*, and in some ways International House and other early JASMaD projects continued a line of development in Auckland architecture that can be traced back through Toy, who by the late 1960s had largely abandoned architectural practice. With their brand of humanism, JASMaD tended to rework institutional buildings in the image of houses. Many of these projects are fairly conventional large buildings – big sheds or concrete office buildings – with domestically-scaled elements such as pitched roofs, openable windows, and balconies arranged along their tops or around their edges.

JASMaD’s rapid growth through the 1970s and 1980s coincided with the renaissance of Maori culture and the almost rise of Auckland as a Polynesian city. It seems that in the early days Polynesian and Maori commissions found JASMaD rather than being actively pursued by the architects, but the practice nonetheless became one of the first to engage in institutional-scale architecture for Maori and Polynesian clients. This work gave Maori and Pacific Islanders a public and enduring presence within the built and urban fabric of Auckland, South Auckland, and later around the Pacific. It included some of New Zealand’s first urban marae – a marae project in Otara led to Hoani Waititi Marae in Glen Eden and then to the University’s marae complex. Through its planning work, JASMaD developed strong connections to Polynesia, which led to projects such as Samoa House and a hotel in Rarotonga designed in collaboration with John Scott.

JASMaD produced many projects for the University of Auckland and other clients who valued their architectural talents and have looked after their buildings. They also did many infrastructural buildings and projects for developers. As is demonstrated by this BLOCK itinerary, many of these lesser known projects have been knocked about a bit. This has included changes in use, as well as additions and alterations, often done less than sensitively. Despite this, JASMaD has left us with a built legacy of excellent buildings, as well as the human legacy of JASMAX, a firm that developed into New Zealand’s largest and most consistent practice. *Andrew Barrie & Julia Gatley*

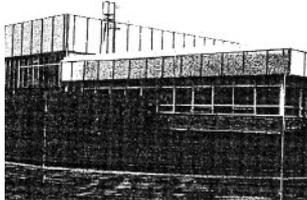
Biography:

JASMaD was formed as a multi-disciplinary firm of architects and planners with the explicit intention of becoming a big practice. The firm was formed in stages - beginning in 1963 - by Steve Jelicich, John Austin (1930-2007), Graham Smith (1930~ca.1985), and Ivan Mercep (1930-). Jelicich had worked with Vladimir Cacala and Milan Mrkusich at Brenner Associates. Austin, Smith and Mercep had worked together for a number of years at Kingston Reynolds Thom & Allardice. Rod Davies, a planner with the Auckland Regional Authority, joined the practice in 1966. John Sutherland joined the firm in 1965. Over the years, the practice formed a number of specialist divisions and offshoots, such as Environmental Research Ltd (which produced environmental impact reports, post occupancy evaluation, and other types of design research and analysis), an engineering division, and an interiors division. JASMaD Information developed Masterspec and technical literature for suppliers. In 1989 JASMaD transformed into JASMAX, when it merged with the practices of Bossley Cheshire and Gibbs Harris Architects.

1

1967

Ford Motor Co. Depot
70 Plunket Avenue, Wiri



Ford New Zealand purchased land at Wiri in 1964 and soon concentrated its vehicle assembly operations there. This vehicle parts and accessories depot was based on other Ford buildings built overseas. Over 450 feet (137 metres) long, it utilised standardised components to ensure rapid construction and allow for future expansion - thus it does not conform to the 'JASMaD vernacular'. The building earned JASMaD their first NZIA award - a silver - in 1967. Ford still occupy the building, for which Jasmx created a new street frontage in 2000, including a new entry, foyer space, and landscaping. See *Home & Building* July 1968 and *NZIA Journal* June 1967 and May 1968 July 1968.

2

1970

Birkenhead Trust Hotel
162 Mokoia Road, Birkenhead



This project followed earlier hotel commissions, including the DB Turangi, and in turn led to others. Original parts of the building conform to the 'JASMaD vernacular': walls are brick; the roof combines shallow hips with mono-pitches, both with Super 6 cladding; and windows come right up to the eaves. Low brick walls create oval-shaped seating areas and planter beds (the growth of the trees, presumably planted about 1970, has led to the cracking of some of these walls). The complex has been adapted for reuse as offices. The wave-like porte-cochere and entry were added in 1990. See *Designscape* 29 (Sept 1971), *Home & Building* Dec/Jan 1970/71 and Dec 1973.

3

1971

International House
27 Whitaker Place, City



JASMaD's first project for the University of Auckland, this hall of residence for 150 students was built before the adjacent motorway. Stepping down the slope, residential and amenity blocks have been arranged to incorporate the surrounding native bush and form a series of courtyards. The interconnected blocks form a labyrinthine, constantly unfolding interior - breaking the building down into blocks and inserting lounges at their junctions was intended to foster a community formed from a network of smaller social groups. The building received an NZIA Silver Medal in 1971 and a 25 Year Award in 1996. See *Home & Building* Sept 1970 and May 1971, and *Architecture NZ* May/June 1996.

4

1972

Mother of Perpetual Help
Catholic Church
510 Riddell Road Glendowie



It is difficult not to read a Futuna influence into this Catholic church building, which has a square plan, a major diagonal axis on which the entry and the altar are located and two banks of pews at right angles to each other, facing towards the altar. In addition, the roof combines hips and half gables, and the gable ends are glazed. Internally, a timber roof structure is tree like, with branches radiating out from posts to support the rafters. Futuna wasn't the only influence. Mercep has identified Aldo van Eyck as an inspiration in his use of diagonal axes. JASMaD also designed a number of later additions including a hall and the presbytery at the rear of the site. This building received an NZIA Branch Award in 1976. See *Home & Building* no. 1, 1976.

5

1974

Potters Wheel Tavern
19 Delta Avenue, New Lynn



This project stands as the transition between commercial and residential zones, and continues the natural materials - pale brick and exposed timber - of the JASMaD vernacular. When it was awarded an NZIA Auckland Branch Award in 1976, it was described by the judges as "an unpretentious low key development representing a return to reality and tradition in provision of an environment for social drinking with which the local suburb dweller can identify." The complex has been adapted for reuse as a medical center and kindergarten (it's startling to see the ease and effectiveness with which a pub can be converted to child care facilities). See *Home & Building*, no. 1, 1976.

6

1974

Terrace Houses
21 Marine Parade, Herne Bay



This block of four two-storey units steps down the site to a harbour frontage. The stepping form has been used to allow views while creating private outdoor spaces including roof terraces. Combining rough stuccoed concrete lower floors with cedar boarded timber framing above, the complex was designed to fit in with the substantial older homes in the surrounding area, many of which have now been replaced with far less deferential contemporary houses. The design, which received a AAA Monier Design Award, was attributed specifically to Ivan Mercep, who still lives in the complex. JASMaD also produced blocks of town houses in St. Mary's Bay - at the bottom of Curran Street in the early 1970s, and on London Street in the early 1980s. See *Home & Building* no. 12, 1972 and July No. 3 1976.

7

1976

Univ. of Auck. Student Housing
25 Collingwood St
Freemans Bay



In this project six flats have been arranged in two blocks which step down a steep hillside and enclose a V-shaped garden. The buildings demonstrate JASMaD's characteristically informal composition, on this occasion full-height party wall of white painted concrete block are interspersed with horizontal strips of windows, stained timber weatherboards, and timber decks. The complex received an NZIA National Award in 1977, but after thirty years of use by students, the buildings are in rather desperate need of maintenance. See *Home & Building* no. 6, 1976 and the *NZIA Journal* June 1977.

8

1976

NMLA Building
2 Whitaker Place, City



This building took JASMaD's multi-cultural modernism in a new direction, this time towards Asia - the flaring of the precast concrete spandrel panels suggests a pagoda. This six-storey office building was built by JASMaD as a speculative venture, and so sought economical construction (structural materials became interior and exterior finishes) and low running costs (openable windows and the use of spandrel panels as sunshading avoided the need for air conditioning). For many years JASMaD occupied the building's top floors, but the building has suffered in recent times - the car park has been closed in with a series of clumsy lean-tos and the whole building coated in a thick layer of beige paint. See *Designscape* 38 (July 1972) and *Home & Building* July 1972 and no. 1, 1976.

9

1977

UoA Recreation Center
17 Symonds Street, City



This complex includes including a large gym, workout gym, squash courts, martial arts and dance studios, offices, and lounges. The gym is housed in a large box which was partially buried so as not to dominate the then adjacent student union and houses. Support spaces are housed in informal lean-to structures around two sides. The multi-storey structure negotiates a number of levels such that many of the facilities are located below ground level and the entrances are on the upper levels - the many sitting areas have dramatic views down into the gym. The building has won a host of awards, including an NZIA National Award and Gold Medal in 1979 and an Enduring Architecture Award in 2003. See *NZIA Journal* Oct 1973, *NZ Architect* no. 1, 1979, no. 3, 1979 and *Architecture NZ* Jan/Feb 1989.

10

1980

Samoa House
283 Karangahape Road
Newton



Commissioned by the Government of Western Samoa to be a focus for the Samoan community, the complex includes the offices of the Samoan Consulate, a fale, a commercial shopping arcade connecting the two street frontages, and a penthouse apartment. The office building has been topped with a pitched roof and its corners recessed to emphasise its form as a 'house'. Other references to pacific forms range from the literal adoption of forms (be sure to check out the fale, which faces Beresford Street). The building received an NZIA National Award in 1980. See *Home & Building* No. 1 1980 and *NZ Architect* No. 5 1980.

11

1980

Hoani Waititi Marae
451 West Coast Rd, Glen Eden



One of Auckland's first urban marae, the complex was intended to serve a number of iwi. A long process of consultation and discussion meant that the project took eight years to complete. The original complex consists of three individual buildings: a fairly traditional whareniui capable of sleeping 80 people, a whare kai in an asymmetric, verandah-wrapped shed, and an ablution block. The marae originally stood isolated in an open paddock, but a primary school and many other buildings have subsequently been built around it, resulting a somewhat confused site arrangement.

12

1983

Cable Price Toyota
702-8 Gt. South Rd, Manukau



When this complex was built, car yard designs were normally governed by strict rules set out by Japanese corporate headquarters. This project was one of the first instances of designers being given a free hand, and JASMaD combined a plush showroom and administration area, with fairly utilitarian shed forms for the parts and workshops facilities at the rear of the site. The boldly coloured red exterior is now largely lost, but the supergraphics on the interior of the showroom remain. The building won an NZIA National Award in 1984. See *Home & Building* June/July 1984.

13

1984

UoA Arts & Commerce Bldg
18 Symonds Street, City



The building on the street side of the site was designed to fit in with the adjacent houses of Symonds Street and Grafton Road, while the larger building to the rear was arranged to screen the massive bulk of the adjacent Human Sciences Building. This concern for human scale, which takes on an almost domestic character, continues in a series of landscaped courtyards that thread between the buildings, stepping down the slope to Wynyard Street. Inside, a series of commissioned artworks were integrated to the circulation spaces. The building won an NZIA National Award in 1987. While visiting, stroll down Wynyard Street to see two other University buildings - JASMaD's Marae (1988) and JASMAX's Fale Pasifika (2004). See *Home & Building* Aug/Sept 1984 and *NZ Architect* no. 3, 1987.

Other Auckland Addresses:

Hillpark Kindergarten
55 Grande Vue Rd, Manurewa
See *Blg Prog* Oct 1972.

Polynesian Centre
90 Bader Drive, Mangere
See *AAA Bulletin* April 1973.

Friendship House
20 Putney Way, Manukau City
See *NZ Architect* No 3 1981 and *Home & Building* No. 5 1981.

Fisher Gallery
13 Reeves Road, Pakuranga
Now the Te Tuhi Centre for the Arts.

UoA Old Arts Bldg Refurbishment (1987)
Princess Street, City
This seismic upgrade and interior refurbishment won an NZIA 10 Best Buildings Award. See *Architecture NZ* July/Aug 1989.

Connector Systems (1987)
210 Khyber Pass, Newmarket
Standing on a busy street and adjacent to a motorway overpass, this building combines two approaches - a high, hard and forbidding street façade to Khyber Pass, with a series of roofs, windows and terraces stepping down to meet the neighbouring houses at the rear. See *Architecture NZ* Jan/Feb 1988.

Elsewhere:

De Brett Hot Pools Complex
Napier-Taupo Highway (SH5), Taupo
See *Home & Building* March 1968.

The Rarotangan (1975)
Aroa Beach, Rarotonga
Designed in a joint venture with John Scott, the resort references Cook Islands traditional architecture, creating a loose scattering of buildings in stucco, unfinished timber and shingles. The project received an NZIA Regional Award. See *Designscape 94* (Aug 1977).

General Properties Office
Ghuznee St, Wellington (1976)
See *Designscape* 79 (April 1976) and *NZIA Journal* no. 2, 1976.

Vacation Hotel (1977)
Fenton Street, Rotorua
This project won AAA Monier Design Award.

1982
Waikato Museum of Art & History (1982)
1 Grantham Street, Hamilton
A classic JASMaD amalgam of low pitched roofs, strip windows and brick, many of the gallery spaces offer views out to the adjacent Waikato River. The complex received an NZIA Local Award. See *Architecture NZ* May/June 1988 and June/July 1988.

Sources:

The photographs are by Andrew Barrie and Julia Gatley. Many thanks to Ivan Mercep for his generous help in preparing this itinerary.

The projects were well published in the journals of their times, but the best source on JASMaD is Stephen Strattord's recent book on JASMAX from the A4 monograph series - *Jasmax* (Auckland: NZ Architectural Publishing Trust, 2007). The book is focused on JASMAX's recent work, but includes many of JASMaD's key projects (strangely, it includes nothing by the other precursor firms, Bossley Cheshire or Gibbs Harris). The interviews with the remaining original directors are particularly informative.



Polynesian Center