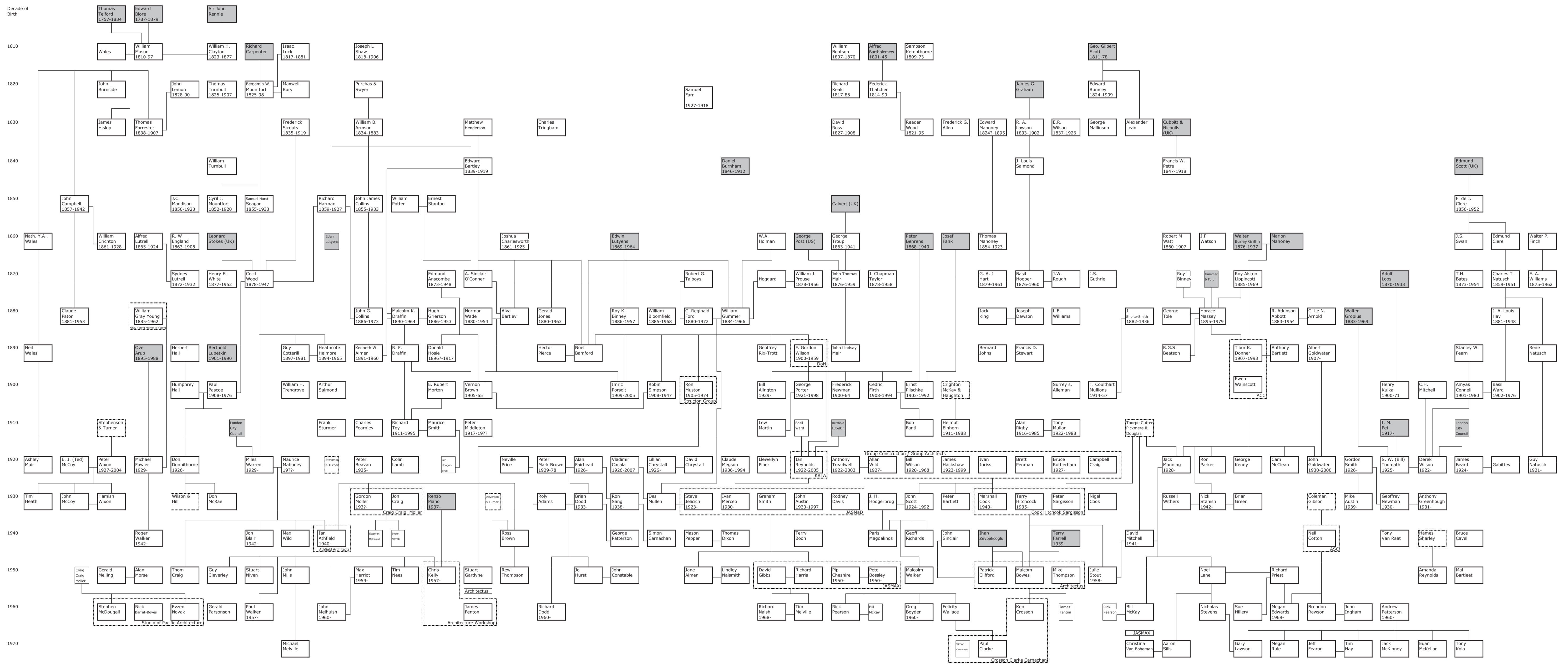


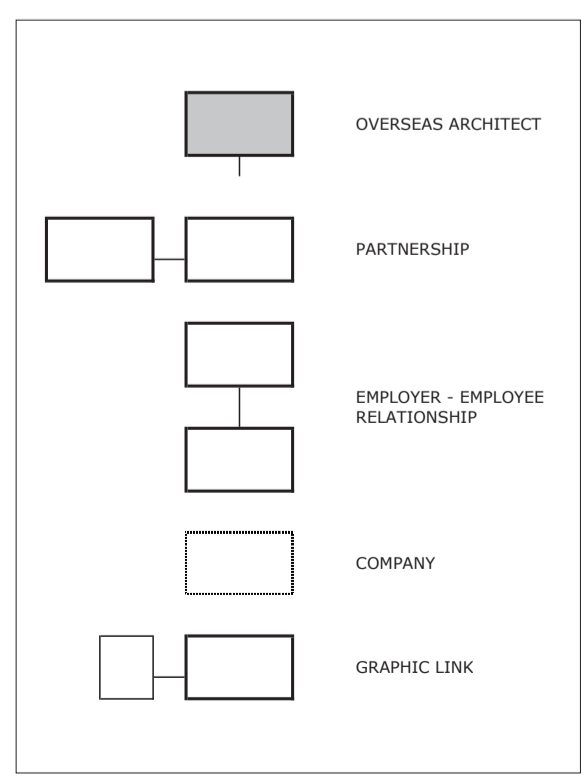
NEW ZEALAND ARCHITECTURE FAMILY TREE

VERSION 1.0 // MAY 2008



Browsing at a church fair recently, I found an old copy of *Home & Building* magazine dating from 1960. Flicking through it, one of the things that caught my eye was a list of NZIA Auckland Branch members. The list included a host of famous names – William Gummer, Richard Toy, Vernon Brown, Bill Wilson, and so on. The most striking thing about this list, though, was not the well-known names it included, but how few others; the list included just 100 architects. The NZIA Auckland Branch now has a membership of about 1,400. The lesson of this surprisingly short '60s list is that until relatively recently our architecture was produced by a very small community. Understanding the small size of our architectural fraternity may reflect the way we read the history of New Zealand architecture; our architectural history is less like the history of a nation, where we hear about only the most exceptional figures and extraordinary events, but more like the history of a family in which every moderately interesting story is included. The above diagram attempts to chart the genealogy of this fairly close-knit family – it shows who worked for and with whom. In Peter Shaw's *New Zealand Architecture*, our most comprehensive history text, Shaw notes the lineages of employment in successive practices that characterize the "Christchurch School" – the line, for example, that connects Mountfort to Hurst Segar and then Cecil Wood and Miles Warren. Shaw comments, however, that "New Zealand's architectural history is more notable for the number of individualists it has produced than the existence of separate schools or traditions". It is true that "schools" are difficult to identify in NZ architecture (very little seems to be passed from one generation to

the next) but the chart shows that lineages and groups are more pervasive than might be expected; almost all our key figures have connections into these lineages. The chart also shows the importance of horizontal connections – partnerships – with most architects having operated in joint or group practice at some point. It seems the romantic image of the Kiwi architect as rugged individualist – attractive though it may be to local sensibilities – rarely holds true. A number of historical patterns are revealed by the chart, perhaps the clearest being the "lost generation" – those architects born in around 1910 whose lives and careers were interrupted by World War Two. Architects of this generation went to war, many not to return, with those who stayed behind often having little work. When things did eventually return to normal, many of these architects found themselves overtaken by younger designers that espoused new ideas and who were able to establish themselves in the post-war boom. A key difference between important architects and those who are merely talented stems from an ability to locate their work and themselves in wider contexts – including that of the development of architecture both internationally and locally. The family tree raises questions about how we attribute significance to people and events in the history of our architecture. It is clear, for example, that one of the most interesting indicators of the significance of a given architect is whether their lineage continued – did they produce architectural offspring? Paying attention to the social, economic, and historical context of work will inform not only how we go about making innovative buildings, but how we generate ideas and approaches that will have lasting impact. *Andrew Barne*



Diagramming: To ensure a level of objectivity, we employed some rules for the chart. Architects included in the chart appear in Shaw's *New Zealand Architecture*, have won an NZIA national award as a named director of the firm, or have a significant connection to an architect who qualifies by one of the previous two criteria. The only connections plotted are based on formal employer-employee relationships and of partnership, including teacher-student relationships or other kinds of informal influence proved both too complex and too subjective. These rules, however, sometimes create strange connections and disconnections – for example, there is no connection between Vernon Brown and the Group, but Ian Athfield is connected to Sir Miles Warren. It has also proved difficult to represent the often complex way in which relationships change over time – employees become partners, partnerships evolve and dissolve. Our goal has been to achieve a balance between completeness and clarity.

Open Source: We have labeled this family tree "Version 1.0" to acknowledge that it is only a first attempt at assembling and presenting this information. We present it in the hope that it becomes "open source" project that can be modified and extended by anyone with interest. We invite BLOK readers to send in any information or corrections – we'll then place the information online where it can be modified directly. Send any information to: nat@cheshirearchitects.com. For their kind assistance with this project, thanks are due to Dr Julia Gately, Bill McKay, Sir Miles Warren, Denys Oldham, Prof. Peter Bartlett, Chris Kelly, Dr Ian Lockhead, Pip Cheshire, Adam Wild, Wendy Garvey, Bruce Howie, Dr John Dickson, David Mitchell, Julie Stout, Marshall Cook, and Assoc. Prof. Linda Tyler. Grateful thanks also to our generous sponsors GIB, and the ever helpful folks at Copybook



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