



08 2008

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

**BLOCK**

## Architecture Per Second

### **BLOCK** previews a new architectural direction

In surveying the rapidly developing history of architecture over the last century, one of the most intriguing trajectories to follow is the constantly shifting relationship between our profession's avant-garde and its mainstream players. There is normally a lag of more than a decade as new ideas transition from paper to small houses to office buildings and concert halls. Sometimes economic or social factors speed things up: in rapidly growing 1960s Japan, the bold functional and structural ideas of the Metabolists were adopted almost instantly by city housing departments. In the 1980s, postmodern classicism was so attractive to political and corporate clients that it was rapidly adopted by established architects for skyscrapers and civic centers. It will be interesting to see how Herzog & de Meuron's "bird's nest" in Beijing, surely now the world's best known contemporary building, will affect the creation of civic architecture around the globe.

The possibilities now being opened up by digital technology were a central theme of the recent NZIA Conference. Slipped into the presentations on the new approaches and geometries made possible by digital design and fabrication technologies, Brett Steel – director of the Architectural Association school in London – referred to the school's exploration of "reactive architecture". Reactive architecture explores the potential for advanced technology (such as sensors, automation systems, and motor-driven components) to create architecture that responds to changing conditions – climate, weather, frequency of use, function or even topography. Allowing interaction between landscape, people, buildings, and digital information, the intentions of this approach are broad: reducing energy consumption; the fluid accommodation of changing function; the use of new materials; the creation of new types of space.

Reactive architecture is one of the most exciting new directions being explored in architecture globally. Some of these ideas have been around for a while – from Coop Himmelb(l)au's 1960s experiments with pneumatics to Toyo Ito's 1991 Egg of Winds, which scanned its environment for sound, light, air, and information. But even in the digital era, these ideas have largely been the domain of architecture schools and young designers creating sculptural installations; they have yet to be launched along the avant-garde-to-mainstream trajectory. However, with the rapid greening of corporate architecture, the money and energy required to develop these ideas into constructed buildings may well come from the corporate sector. That is, these ideas may pass straight from architecture school studios to the facades of corporate office towers.

Auckland's architecture community is about to get a chance for a first hand look at this type of work. An exhibition entitled *[ARC/SEC] Architecture per Second* has been put together by Uwe Reiger, the Associate Head of Design at the University of

Auckland School of Architecture and Planning. Presenting a series of installations designed by Uwe, his students, and his colleges at the UoA, the exhibition demonstrates the potential of reactive architecture – interactive and automated systems, light-sensitive facades, mobile landscapes, and hybrid machine-buildings. One particularly significant part of the exhibition will involve the presentation of a groundbreaking project for a prototypical zero-energy house designed to be adaptable to New Zealand's three climatic zones.

The exhibition will be held at the St. Paul Gallery (the gallery of the AUT School of Art & Design) in September and October. Wherever you place yourself along the avant-garde-mainstream spectrum, get along to the opening party or slip in sometime before October 7th to get a glimpse into the future of your architecture. AB



*Wideshut: A light-sensitive facade prototype to be shown at [ARC/SEC]*

### **[ARC/SEC] architecture per second**

*Opening Party 5.30pm September 11th*

St. Paul Street Gallery  
34 St. Paul St., Auckland Central  
10am - 5pm Tue-Fri, 12pm - 4pm Sat

[www.stpaulst.aut.ac.nz](http://www.stpaulst.aut.ac.nz)

# Spring at Last!

## Stephenson Spring Lecture Series

The Auckland Branch of the NZIA is pleased to announce the rebirth of the Stephenson Spring Lecture Series. This year's Series will be an amalgam of the traditional Urban Series and On the Boards. Three fantastic sessions with four speakers in each. Each presentation will run for exactly 15 minutes, with questions after they all finish... So block in your diary for three consecutive Tuesdays in September.

Time – 6.00pm; CPD Points: 10; Location - Life Outside by Stephenson Showroom – 2 Gillies Ave, Newmarket (cnr Gillies Ave and Eden Street)

Dates:

Tuesday 23 September – Green Architecture: Today & Tomorrow  
Zero Plus: New Zealand's First 0 Energy House – Uwe Rieger & Kerstin Rosemeier  
Johann Bernhardt – Sustainability: The Next Step  
Megan Rule – Off the Grid  
Graeme North – Permaculture - The Designers Response to Energy Descent and Climate Change

Tuesday 30 September – The Big Urban Issues  
Urban Heritage? – Adam Wild  
Urbanism North of the Bridge– Sills van Bohemen  
From The Honey Pot to Global War - Anthony Flannery  
The Britomart Hotel – Richard Goldie

Tuesday 7 October – In Foreign Lands  
Pete Bossley – Shanghai 4000 Apartments/Maui House, Hawaii  
Architectus – Courts – Brisbane and the Hague Courts  
Pip Cheshire – The Graveyard of Dreams  
Moller Architects – Majlis Oman Project

## JASMAX Film Festival

Thursday 11 September ~ Wednesday 17 September  
Featuring films on Oscar Niemeyer, Koolhaas, and H&deM, along with a string of delights including Tati's Mon Oncle

Browse through from [www.jasmax.co.nz](http://www.jasmax.co.nz)

## David Eisenberg Lecture

David Eisenberg is co-founder of the Development Center for Appropriate Technology (DCAT) in Tucson, Arizona.

Friday 5 September; RSVP to [j.balasoglou@xtra.co.nz](mailto:j.balasoglou@xtra.co.nz)  
D-72, Suite 1.5, 72 Dominion Road, Mt Eden  
10 CPD Points; \$10 koha at the door



Each Block is laid by a dedicated editorial team, all of whom happen to work at Cheshire Architects: Andrew Barrrie, Pip Cheshire, Nathaniel Cheshire & Sean Flanagan.  
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# The Fine Print

## Excerpts from the reports to NZIA Auckland Branch meeting held August 5th, 2008.

### CHAIR'S REPORT: Christina van Bohemen

*Awards Book:* Discussions early in the month with Lynette White about the Awards book. NZIA National office has decided not to publish the book this year. We have noted our concern about the process by which this decision was arrived. I will take it up with Richard Harris and Beverly McRae.

*Auckland wider region members:* No progress here. I will raise it with BM + RH. Keen to have some Branch event north and south – possibly west if feasible.

*Plan Change 163 – Residential 1 + 2 controls:* Council has invited feedback to proposal to designate areas within Res 2. I have been in consultation with a number of members about an appropriate response. We are also considering becoming a party to the appeal under s274. This will enable participation in the debate with Council – working towards a constructive outcome.

*Architecture Week:* PB noted that Committee for Auckland is interested in sponsoring an exhibition. I am keen to follow up on the ideas that PB developed last year for wider engagement in the community and across Auckland. Anthony Flannery (Chow Hill) presented a thoughtful lecture on city revitalization at Unitec last week and I have asked him to work on AW with us next year. Propose that we get a sub group on AW working this year.

### TECHNICAL ISSUES PORTFOLIO: Michael Middlebrook

*Ministerial Forum:* There was a ministerial building industry forum on 1 August 2008 in Auckland chaired by Peter Fehl. It brought together 60 leaders in the New Zealand Construction industry. Richard Harris, who attended, says that it was a great success with many new ideas raised for both the Minister and DBH to consider.

*Self Certification:* We are currently preparing a paper on Self Certification. Architects need to take the lead on this as it is the best way forward for complex projects. New York City has had it for several years but there it also includes planning sign-off, and this has been problematic. Councils would still have both a record keeping and auditing role.

### UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND REPORT: Prof. Jenny Dixon

The second semester is now well underway. We are continuing with our *Communique* series and will shortly announce our *Only Connect* evening lectures. During the break we have completed an external review of Teaching and Learning practices in Architecture and are looking forward to the panel's report and recommendations. Professor Jim Low from Birmingham in the UK was our external member on the panel. We are also finalizing our requirements for the MArch(Prof) design thesis which commences next year. The final year students are working towards the annual production of MODUS and are looking for sponsorship. It is always a highlight on the student calendar, of high quality and we would appreciate support towards the costs of printing from

the profession. Forty-one students are heading off on Friday to Palermo for a five-week studio, organized by Michael Milojevic in conjunction with the University of Palermo.

### UoA STUDENT REPORT: James Pearce

*SONANZ:* The Student Organised Network for Architecture in New Zealand is now in full swing. Students from the three NZ architecture schools recently met to establish the organization, which takes its lead from the Student Organised Network for Architecture (Australia). The organisation seeks to develop a culture of leadership and community for the advancement of NZ architecture through promotion of and advocacy for student interests. Its primary method for this is by connecting students within schools, between schools, and with the architectural profession. SONANZ is proud to be supported by the NZIA and hopes the two organisations can work closely together.

*Super Studio:* SONANZ's first initiative was "Super Studio", a 48-hour student design competition held 8-10th August. The competition has been run for years in Australia by SONA, but for the first time it will be held this year in NZ, Hong Kong and PNG. The projects of local finalists will be judged in Australia, where a winner will be chosen to attend the Venice Biennale. UoA gave its studios as a venue for the 110+ registered entrants, and all three schools have offered varying degrees of financial support.

*MODOS 08:* The final year student publication is once again in production, featuring final year students' work. We are now looking for support from the NZIA and its members - this will take the form of an advertisement on the MODOS website and in the publication, along with mention in all MODOS correspondence and at the official book launch: [www.modos.com](http://www.modos.com).

### HERITAGE PORTFOLIO: Adam Wild

*Auckland City Plan Change 163:* This issue has been around for a while. Hearings have been heard and a decision version can be found on the Auckland City website. The decision is however subject to appeal before the Environment Court. Council has been reconsidering the criteria in the residential 2 activity zone and this has brought about a new wave of concern and appeal.

*NZIA Heritage Policy:* At last month's committee meeting it was agreed that the 2005 draft heritage policy should be re-circulated around the committee for information and comment.

### UNITEC REPORT: Tony van Raat

The new semester has started and we are pleased to have Professor Peggy Deamer with us again and to welcome Marsh Cook. The school is hosting a minor symposium on design studio teaching on August 15th with some participation of staff from Auckland and Victoria universities as well. The Contemporary New Zealand Architect's lecture series on housing continues on Wednesday evenings at 5.30. It's based on the Trenta Case exhibition which opens at its second venue in Rome on October 10 at the University of Rome La Sapienza. Current studio projects include the 'Kidscan' design-and-build project being run by Dave Strachan. This is now under construction - the students are

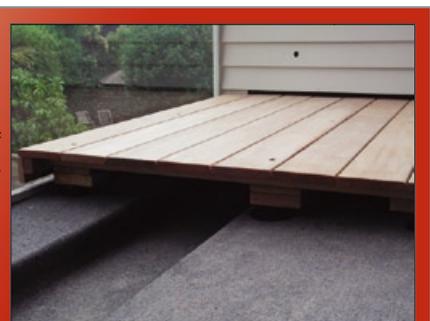


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# The District Plan

## Extracts from the Auckland Branch's feedback on ACC's proposed plan changes

Earlier this month, the Auckland Branch submitted feedback to the City Council on the proposed changes to the District Plan (Plan Change 163) regarding development in heritage areas. The submission was drafted by Christina van Bohemen, the Chair of the local branch, and generally offered support for the Plan's intentions of promoting respect for heritage areas. More importantly however, the submission reinforced the significance of recognising that the 'character' of an area was something determined by multiple factors and was something that therefore had to be identified through a fine grained analysis. This was an argument against the application of 'blanket controls' that seems to be Council's favoured approach, but which can prove too onerous in controlling development and often accords heritage protection in undeserving situations. The proposed holistic analysis of an area's character would become a ground for arguing the merits of a development and would form an important document for a pre-application meeting at which it would be decided whether or not a project requires a Resource Consent. This argument promoted the assessment of each case on its own merits. Extracts from the submission are given below.

### *Review by Heritage Experts*

We concur that a fine-grained analysis is required to ascertain the quality and value of a building and its surrounding landscape context. While we support the development of criteria to be used in a fine grained analysis of neighbourhoods, we have reservations about the current assessment criteria because they focus, somewhat superficially, upon the characteristics of "garden suburbs", which may, or may not be of particular relevance in the development of Auckland ... We believe that there needs to be an understanding of, and distinction between, architectural character, quality streetscape, urban design, landscape and cultural heritage, and what role each plays in creating good streets and neighbourhoods in both Residential 1 and 2.

... We do not support the current proposal for limited protection as described by the draft maps. It is a patchwork solution that will not result in coherent streetscapes and neighbourhoods.

... We do not support the application of blanket controls as required under the modification as passed by Council in 2006, nor as proposed in the draft maps. We believe that a review of the proposed controls and their method of application is required. Each application should be considered on its own merits and demonstrated in an appropriate form, rather than by use of blanket controls and maps.

... We support the development of appropriate criteria to be applied against houses of all periods in order to promote retention of built heritage. Our membership has skills in this area.

We are keen to contribute to the development of a solution to the current discussion on Residential 1 and 2, and propose an alternative way of reviewing applications below.

### *Additions and Alterations to Existing Houses in Residential 1 + 2*

... Where, following a pre-application process, it is decided that the particular context and existing house warrant the application of character controls, we support the intent of the plan. The "expectation that new building...will satisfy all of the assessment criteria" is too onerous.

### *Demolition of an Existing House*

... We believe that the requirement to meet all assessment criteria is counter productive in terms of the aims of the plan and it may prejudice the removal of structures with no heritage merit. It is our opinion that the clauses relating to physical condition and issues of cost relative to building new, should be removed.

... Criteria for the demolition of a house should include analysis of how the building contributes to the context-cultural and physical, as well as whether it has any architectural merit. It should be accompanied by a proposal for its replacement, demonstrating how a new house may contribute equally, if not more, to the character of the street.

### *Construction of New Buildings in Residential 1 and 2*

We support the requirement to provide a site and context analysis to demonstrate fit and appropriateness of any proposed new building in these zones. We do not believe that prescriptive controls on features such as roof forms, other architectural elements or fences will necessarily provide the best outcome.

### *Alternative Process*

... We do not oppose the requirement for Resource Consent for alterations or the demolition of houses in Residential 1 and 2. We do propose a review of the current process and reconsideration of the proposed blanket controls for determining an appropriate solution. We believe that the controls should be simplified.

... Where a property owner wishes to make changes or demolish an existing house, a holistic analysis should be undertaken on its architectural merit, the contribution of the site landscaping and the contribution of the context – both buildings and landscape.

... Such an analysis could form the basis of a pre-application meeting with council representatives – ideally a senior planner and architect. This would provide a degree of certainty before the applicant has spent money on a fully developed design. If it was agreed at this stage that the subject site and its surrounding context had none of the character typical of Residential 1 and 2, then the character controls should not apply and Resource Consent should not be required.

In the event of a lack of agreement between the parties at this stage, and following formal lodgement of an application, the applicant should have right of appeal to an independent review panel. This process would be similar to the urban design panel and should include planners, architects, urban designers, and heritage experts.

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