



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

**BLOCK**

## Play Ball!

### Marshall Cooks up a Storm in the Depths of Victorian Ponsonby

In what might be a piece of big city chutzpah the latest New Yorker mag to flutter through the letterbox has a cover that rather perfectly fits an article in the previous week's issue. The magazine commissions art for it's cover and in this case it is an elegant painting by Bruce McCall entitled "Opening day" which depicts the new Yankee Stadium and Citifield ballparks that were the subject of a review by Paul Goldberger a week earlier. It may be that the magazine has made the best of a missed deadline and run with the picture anyway, or perhaps it was held back to be a little closer to spring, that it might conjure up the sound of the crowd barracking as the President, as tradition demands, throws the first ball of the new season.

Whatever, it is a serendipitous placement, for this week's issue has Goldberger on the current Royal Academy of Arts exhibition of the work of Andrea Palladio, an article in which he says of the show's subject: "His book shows that making good new buildings is a matter not just of copying old ones but of learning their lessons." Oh that the architects of the previous week's subject buildings had better heeded that sixteenth century advice, for in both ballparks we see a grab bag of classical bits, euphemistically described by Goldberger as "a magpie element", wrangled into, and onto, the enclosures of the two playing fields. Lest you think this is far from home and part of the bizarre world of US sports, think again; both stadia are the work of HOK to whom we owe most of our own Eden Park's confused North Stand.

It is a feature of our age that any project poking its head above the skyline will inevitably clash with property rights and the outcome will be negotiated either at an individual level or collectively through the machinations of consent hearings. Though one applauds and defends the rights of the individual it is hard to think of a building not blighted by having run the gauntlet of the RMA. It's early days yet to see if the Art Gallery or the new stands at Eden Park have survived with any life left in them, though given the client's proclivity for magpies and the presence of the world's largest Victorian villa on the north side of the paddock I don't have much hope for the latter.

Dashing to get a couple of tomatoes and a bottle of milk inside the Freemans Bay New World supermarket, a building refreshingly free of architectural aspirations be they ancient or modern, I bumped into Marshall Cook- himself a recent runner of the property rights gauntlet. As is his wont, Marshall makes manifest the social dynamics of his family by building a new home every five or so years, each one a superb examination of family life in the sub-tropical twenty-first century urban fringe. I was interested in his take on heritage, the constraints of Res One, and how on earth he managed to make an energetic piece of architecture deep in villa land.

In less time than it took to traverse Aisle One, Marshall summed it up. It was, he said, a conflict between sentimentality and rationalism and furthermore a lopsided conflict, the language of sentimentality allowing unchallengeable dead-end statements: "I like this/I don't like that". These are awful statements in which it seems the very basis of reason is set aside in favour of sentiments better suited to the enjoyment of flowers than the complexities of architecture. Any request for greater thought or a more profound analysis invariably evokes an aggressive assertion of one's right to "say what I like" and you can be sure that "its all a matter of opinion" is not far behind.

Were it only the stuff of dinner parties it would be of little consequence, yet it is just such sentiments that are gathered up in submissions and distilled through a hundred hearings and appeals into the provisions of the District Plan. We are a relatively young country and though a heritage consciousness has come a little too late to protect the habitations of our earliest arrivals, we are the better for the secure presence of the artifacts of earlier occupations and an understanding of our city as a continuum of occupation. If this were the only result it would be a fortunate outcome. The protection of old stuff has, however, an unfortunate correlation with conservatism, not in the sense of moral rectitude, but in the sense that the status quo should be maintained; that whatever is there is better than what will come and thus should be conserved. In this way heritage becomes a battlefield in which the specific values of a building are the first casualties and the rote application of rules prevails.



*A FRESH FACE  
Marshall Cook's new home is unscathed by the usually crippling constraints of Res One*

*Continued on inside front cover...*

## Play Ball!

*...continued from front cover*

The witless attempts to stem the tides of change are no better illustrated than in that delightful little sketch in the heritage guidelines of the District Plan which illustrates how one might satisfactorily combine the disparate styles of one's neighboring buildings were one lucky enough to have a conflagration level with the current abode and be faced with rebuilding. In that one sketch all the nonsense of King Canute is apparent as the draftsman attempts to reconcile villa with bungalow; the result being a sort of cockeyed inner suburban weatherboard blendo style.

Marshall's house occupies different territory altogether and in doing so offers hope that there is the possibility of rational discussion within the Res One consenting process, though the vestigial picket fence points to an incomplete victory over the relentless application of generalized rules. After negotiating the site clearance, itself no easy matter, Cook gained agreement from City planners that the change from foot traffic to vehicular requires a change in understanding of the character of streetscape, and

that the underlying values of scale, massing and detail were more important to get right than sticking on a verandah and having a corrugated iron roof. In lieu of these familiar icons Marshall has made a bit of streetscape that offers all the interest of its neighbours, (perhaps even more if someone is showering behind the marble 'window' facing the street,) yet without the mawkish sentimentality of reconstructed Victoriana.

This would be a happy conclusion, proof positive of the power of rational discussion and debate over the strictures of codified heritage constraints were it not for the process involved; a barrister, power point presentations, submissions and too many hearings. Marshall is a whizz at these things, articulate, intelligent and with just the right length of fuse to a good range of swear words. Yet what a tragedy that it should come to such an arduous and expensive process. There would be few of our customers who would hang in there for architecture in the face of such entrenched conservatism, and, I suspect, few of us with the moxy to carry it off. *PC*



*To the glory of architecture: an example from Appendix 13 of the District Plan illustrating how a new house could draw on traditional architecture to comply with Res One...*



*The various living areas that wrap a private courtyard reflect the social dynamic of the Cook family to date*

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

[nat@cheshirearchitects.com](mailto:nat@cheshirearchitects.com) for a colour pdf or back issues

### Secret Treasure Unearthed

Someone has discovered buried in the sand under two palm trees in the shape of a mysterious 'X' a box of original copies of Interstices 02 - long considered out of print.

To get your hands on a copy email [julia.gatley@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:julia.gatley@auckland.ac.nz)

# The Fine Print

## Excerpts from the reports to NZIA Auckland Branch meeting held March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009.

CHAIR'S REPORT: Christina van Bohemen

### *Correspondance:*

Auckland City: requested nomination of 3 members of the current Urban Design Panel to retire, and the inclusion of 1-2 heritage architects on our list. ACC has yet to make a selection from the nominations for new members submitted in November 2008.

Letter to Stevensons: In appreciation of support of the Winter/Spring series and to the profession in general.

Email to Firth: Requesting consideration for continuation of Stevensons Architectural Masonry and Veneto Pavers. (Phone response: No decision yet on architectural masonry, but they are considering it, as well as looking at the paver business).

Committee Resignation: Daryl McGuire.

### *Activities:*

Orakei Mayoral Forum/Working Group – ongoing.

Plan Change 163: Communication to the Environment Court containing agreed revised text (criteria). Next steps: results of survey by Salmond Reed to determine those buildings in Res 2 that are excluded from the demolition criteria.

These maps will be notified under S 263 of the RMA.

### *Urban Design Panel Review:*

David Kaunitz from Emergency Architects Australia (EEA) gave a talk at D72 on Thursday 19 February about their work. He is keen to for a chapter to be established in NZ. More information available (brochures) and see [www.emergencyarchitects.org.au](http://www.emergencyarchitects.org.au).

PRACTICE ISSUES GROUP: Richard Goldie

The Practice Issues Group intended having one final meeting to conclude the 2008 year on the subject of ethics and copyright. Unfortunately due to the energetic level of cocktail engagements and domestic dramas unfolding this was unable to take place. We have entered the New Year with a very real sense and for many of us very real experience of the changing face of Architectural practice. We commend the Branch for convening a special meeting regarding ideas; we beat the Government to the post on that one!

The first PIG meeting for 2009 is tomorrow evening and we will focus on scoping the following month's presentation. The emphasis this year, until firm signs of recovery are identified (ie Architects reporting an upturn in business, first in first out sort of thing!), will be on maintaining business, managing the emerging risks and challenges ahead.

Next meeting (presentation 6pm 7/4/9)

RG and CS 2/3/9

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP: Carolyn Savage

I am pleased to announce that Megan Rule has agreed to stand as Chairperson for the Auckland Environmental Issues Group for 2009. This was formally acknowledged at the first meeting of 2009, 10 February, at D72. The proposals that Megan presented should see some positive directions and challenges for the EIG over the next 12 months with various members having the opportunity to work on different folios/projects.

One of the first initiatives Megan will implement is a new email list of members who attend regular meetings and a copy of the minutes will be issued each month. Geoffrey Richards has agreed to be the minutes secretary.

It was agreed that a similar structure/format implemented by PIG in 2008 will be setup for the EIG. Committee meetings and speakers/events will alternate on a monthly basis, the final programme to be confirmed.

It has been a pleasure to have been involved with the EIG over a number of years as Chairperson and to have seen the Group's dynamics and role change over this time.

TRIG: Michael Middlebrook

I have too many commitments this year to give the technical portfolio the time it requires. I would prefer it if someone else is able to pick this up.

### *Regulatory Issues*

Maurice Williams has been notably quiet since December. The DBH have confirmed that there will be no rewrite of the Building Code and that changes will be clause by clause with public consultation

### *Peter Beaven Film*

Alex van Klink has met with John Harris of Greenstone Pictures and they are interested in producing a film on Peter Beaven and his work. Greenstone are looking at the viability of NZ On Air funding and an Artsville slot. Peter is very keen. One idea from Greenstone is a documentary comparing the work of Miles and Peter, both Christ's College old boys. NZIA National Office have said that they are not interested in supporting the film.

### *NZS 3604 Revision*

The NZS 3604 review is underway. Main reason for the review is the change in structural standards to AS/NZS 1170. Also looking at various initiatives including more extensive guidance notes, removal of all cladding related sections, separation of design and construction sections (may help convince Councils that we should not be replicating general construction details from NZS3604). I have asked that if cladding is removed from NZS3604 that there be an industry written NZS for cladding as an alternative to E2/AS1, which used a DBH selected cladding group but only covers minimal standards. Next meeting 19th March.

UNITEC REPORT: Tony van Raat

### *Enrolments*

Enrolments this year have been heavy with, for example and for some unanticipated reason, 25 more students in second year than we've ever had before. Enrolments in the first year of the professional masters are also strong with a larger than anticipated number of applications from outside the School. Final numbers will settle down over the next week. As a result of all this we find ourselves short of studio space.

### *Staffing*

We are pleased to announce that Adjunct Professors this year will be Dave Strachan, Marsh Cook and Richard Naish. We continue to be supported by a significant number of other members of the practice community (Hi Charissa!). There are at the moment no changes in the permanent staff.

### *Projects*

First semester studio projects include work addressing The Pt Chevalier shopping centre, pollution in the Manukau Harbour, a kindergarten in Tuscany, investigation of the spaces in and around our own (tatty) heritage building as well as another design/document/build project this year related to low-cost prefabricated housing. A further bunch of projects will be introduced in the second quarter.

### *Overseas*

7 Unitec students attended the Architecture Association Australia Summer School organized by Lindsay Johnston, to their great content and benefit by all accounts. We were pleased to have the largest contingent of all the participating parties.

UOA STUDENT REPORT: Angus Muir, Jordan Saunders

### 1st Week

Not much to report at this early stage given that we all started back yesterday. Students are excited to be back and looking forward to a great semester. All year levels are undertaking a whole school design session this week and producing umbrellas. They will be presented on Friday at a school barbecue.

### SANNZ

SANNZ is undertaking a membership drive this week in the various schools. We had a very successful meeting in Taupo recently and everything is set for an exciting year.

### COMMITTEE FOR AUCKLAND: Pete Bossley

I had a session with Karen Goodall, to catch up with C4A activities and to discuss areas which may be mutually beneficial.

C4A has just produced 'Growing Auckland Growing New Zealand' book, a 40 page document which outlines many aspect of Auckland and emphasises the significance of the city in the growth of the country as a whole. You should have received a copy (?).

C4A has 5 main Strategic Goals:

- 1.0 Leadership and Momentum
  - Future Auckland Leaders
- 2.0 Dynamic Business Region
  - Royal Commission: submissions, case studies, research
- 3.0 Accelerating Liveability
  - Task Force on Urban Development
  - Whole of Waterfront approach
  - CBD Investments
  - Convention Centre
  - Passenger Terminal
- 4.0 Generating Talent and Knowledge
  - OMEGA
  - disparity issues-social sector CEOs
- 5.0 Global Relevance
  - exchanges and visits

Very significant for the NZIA are the Future Leaders programme, (which has been well tested and supported, with enthusiastic feedback, by committee members currently and in the past) and the Commission on Governance.

I think we could utilise the C4A more effectively as a vehicle to promote our ideas about the incorporation of vision into the development and urban design of the new city, whatever form it takes. C4A is very supportive of that approach.

### Recommendations:

I recommend we stay as members and work to make a greater contribution to the Committees activities. This could take the form of a task group to prepare for submissions to the ongoing transition process towards the new city. It is anticipated more submissions and/or study groups will be called for, and C4A is keen to hit the ground running by setting up groups in advance and have submissions ready by May 09. A couple of us could set up and be part of a group which considers how urban design can be incorporated at the upper levels of governance.

### Riken Yamamoto is coming....

Rumours abound that the extraordinary Japanese architect Riken Yamamoto may be heading this way soon - keep your eyes peeled!

## Downturn's Inherent Yearning

*Continued from back cover...*

The opportunities pulling people towards the colonies included the prospects of social and financial advancement in a country that was oceans away from repressive class systems. Independence for oneself and one's family in an egalitarian society was many a colonist's dream and is a central concept to DIY. The liberation of clipping on the tool belt helps to explain why, when Shane Jones announced his building reforms, newspapers exclaimed that Kiwis were again 'free' to take up their tools. This freedom is also closely intertwined with our light-weight timber tradition because timber can be handled alone or with little assistance and timber buildings are receptive to additions and alterations – the main province of the home handyman.



*With a little help from our friends: tops off to a great Kiwi tradition*

My own shot at freedom came recently with a renovation where I had to apply the final lick of paint. Traipsing the aisles of the mega-store I went in search of the tools of the trade and as I collected my brushes, turps and tape I discovered I was being shadowed by others also dabbling in decoration. At the checkouts it became clear that someone was making a hefty profit from our independence and its unsustainable consumerism. It was disturbing to think of all the hardened brushes and half-bottles of turps that would soon be laid to rest in our basements. If only we could learn to share. Recounting my mega-store malaise to a friend, he pointed out that one of the major criticisms levelled against our DIY culture is that its independent attitude can cripple our sense of community. This downside is something that Christopher Alexander alludes to in his discussion of the 'work community'. He proposes that the respect for others that encourages community spirit is impeded when we are "segregated from people who do different kinds of work from us." Alexander points to the peril of independence transmuting into segregation, for in the determination to DIY lies a danger of overlooking the dignity associated with another person's work. In my case, it was overlooking the craft of painting, blinded as I was by the illusion that I could do it myself. My poor results however taught me the value intrinsic to the job because to set things right I hired a friend who was a professional. Though it was only a small job, he exhibited knowledge and skills that made my efforts look absurd. The finished room is first rate and I gladly admit more pride in knowing a very good painter than in knowing how to DIY. SF



# Downturn's Inherent Yearning

## Redressing the wounds of another season of the beloved Kiwi DIY tradition

It takes a tyrant to make architecture; someone with that distinct blend of wealth, power, materialistic drive and the ability to put building inspectors to the sword. When considering the roots of western architecture, one can see that the great temples and civic buildings of ancient Greece were closely linked to the rise of tyranny; a political system where an individual from a Greek city-state was installed as a central power figure, thereby usurping the rule of the aristocratic magistrates and councils. Under the rule of Greek tyrants, money, power and ambition were concentrated in an individual rather than dispersed amongst several noble families. Tyrants controlled greater revenues than their noble rivals - revenues enough for architecture. It was against this background of change from aristocratic rule to tyranny that buildings like the Temple of Apollo at Corinth (c. 540BC) emerged as supreme symbols of financial and militaristic power.

During aristocratic rule Greek nobles found luxury in smaller things - exotic scents, fabrics, oils, jewels and metals, cosmetics, carpets, cushions, figs, fish, slaves and horses. Often the spoils of war, these were brought home from abroad and paraded in the intensely competitive social scenes of aristocratic life. Such small things inspired envy and fuelled intense competition between leading families. In addition to these commodities, aristocrats also commissioned sculptures of dead heroes, athletics victors and local beauties to show the noble status of both those who commissioned the works and those who served as their subject. Sculpture was an aristocratic luxury. Architecture, as luxury *par excellence*, was the plaything of tyrants.

With architecture sitting atop history's list of luxury items, it is not surprising that architects have been amongst the first to feel the effects of the global economic downturn. Our modern tyrants are suffering what Alan Bollard described as "an unprecedented destruction of wealth". But the destruction of wealth should not imply the destruction of wealthy ambitions. One should not expect the competitiveness or material drive first recognised in Greek aristocrats to subside, for while the means may wane, the desire to keep up with the Joneses remains. And while our tyrants may turn their attentions to other luxuries - carpets, cushions and associated interior specialties - one can surmise that recession or not, people still want special buildings and at the domestic scale there is ongoing social competitiveness. We want to keep a good house. With the economy weak but the will strong, it seems time for a little DIY.

In recent months, reports on the collapsing financial markets have been shadowed by stories about the resurgence of Kiwi DIY. In late October 2008, Shane Jones - then the Minister for Building and Construction - announced changes to building standards that would allow more small projects to proceed without building owners needing consent. Jones said his job was to cut red tape and so he did - "The pleasing thing for me is that Kiwis up and down the country can take up their tools once more and go about doing what has always been a tradition in New Zealand."



THE PUNTER'S PARADISE - the glorious familiarity of the techni-coloured hardware store

Like the sound of a Saturday-morning skill-saw, this announcement was music to the ears of DIYers, but some voiced warnings. Speaking from a building site where he was repairing a DIY disaster, carpenter Scott Green warned Christchurch's *The Press* that many DIYers "don't know what they're doing".

The National Party enter the fray with a larger vision for DIY. Announcing a review of the RMA, they talk of removing red tape and eliminating obstructions to development. Read between the lines and the suggestions are that changes will reduce the need for consultant input in the consenting process, which points to more developer DIY. There are warning signs to be noted here too, for in another recent news item an expert on trade-relations criticised New Zealand business's lacklustre overseas efforts by describing a 'great tradition' of kiwi business - our tendency to be "a buck short and a day late." Harsh comments indeed, but certainly something to keep in mind if National wants to let the business sector revel in DIY.

Where in our past can we find the roots to DIY's popularity? Historian Michael King proposes that our "highly practical do-it-yourself tradition of home maintenance that sets men to work on houses" is linked to the attitudes and values formed in the years of our nation's gestation. Perhaps indeed as the TV ad suggests, "DIY, it's in our DNA."

King explains that a fundamental aspect of New Zealand's history is the fact that our ancestors were uprooted and displaced from other parts of the globe. In both Polynesian and European stories of displacement and resettlement lie the clues to the importance of DIY to our cultural identity. The Polynesians who stepped ashore in Aotearoa discovered a climate very different to the temperate isles from whence they came. Survival required inventive use of new materials and tools to adapt to the challenges of the unfamiliar climate. This inventiveness in isolation is one of the underlying attitudes of our DIY culture and was something that European colonials also had to master, but in their stories of displacement we find another fundamental value of DIY - independence.

Continued on inside back cover...



I Want You poster. James Montgomery Flagg, 1917.

## PRINT DESIGN CLASSICS #10

Originally published as the cover of the July 6, 1916, issue of *Leslie's Weekly* - an illustrated literary and news magazine with a strong patriotic stance - with the title "What Are You Doing For Preparedness?", this portrait of Uncle Sam went on to become (according to its creator) "the most famous poster in the world."

Over 4 million copies were printed between 1917 and 1918 as the U.S. entered WW1, and because of its overwhelming popularity the image was later adapted for use in WW2.

The Uncle Sam character - a popular personification of the U.S. - is named after Samuel Wilson, a

highly upstanding businessman in the slaughtering and meat packing trade who supplied the army with meat during the war of 1812.

Flagg had the artistic ability to create rapidly in a variety of mediums, and created 46 works to support the U.S. WW1 effort.

The inspiration for the work appears to be a similar pointing figure - Britain's Secretary of State for War, Lord Kitchener - painted by Alfred Leete in 1914 accompanied by the text "Wants You - Join Your Country's Army!", a call to action style adapted by many nations and movements in subsequent years.



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