



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

BLOCK

Sacrifice

Alan Matson and the Heroic Struggle for the City

The Institute's annual report arrived in the mail the other day and I was pleased to see it still sported its gold cover, so confident and successful looking, though close reading of the accounts suggests that next year's issue might be clothed in a more modest colour - perhaps pewter? The text and figures follow a well worn format, the familiarity of which belies the enormous effort, both paid and voluntary, that keeps our Institute on an even keel.

Perhaps it was in seeking relief from the tortures of comprehending the hidden meanings within the balance sheet that my eye wandered to the page top where lay, like an omnipresent and censorious centipede, Ruskin's lamps: that imperious listing of beacons by which our work should be measured: *sacrifice, truth, power, beauty, life, memory an obedience.*

I am sorry to say the lamps are blurred and unreadably dim on the banner of this rag - worn off in the digital relay race by which we received the Institute's logo, each baton change shedding dots-per-inch until only the outer ring of text is still visible. It was then something of a shock to be reminded of the principles to which I have, by association, signed up and I began to wonder about my moral fitness for the job - how well my architectural endeavours stood up to the Ruskin measure.

I was fortunately diverted from such potentially depressing introspection by a discussion with Alan Matson; though Ruskin's lamps refer to the fruits of our labours, Alan is a figure to whom the lamps might apply equally as well as to architecture itself. Is there anyone reading this who does not know of Alan's Herculean efforts to save heritage buildings: Greenlane's Building 5, Wakefield Street's Fitzroy Hotel, the retail building on the corner of Queen and K, the Jean Batten Building and the Canvas City building on Hobson?

Each of these battles are complex, time consuming challenges that invariably pit this sole campaigner head-to-head against determined developers or institutions for whom a heritage building is an unwelcome encumbrance. These are projects with high stakes, the potential profits accruing from redevelopment powering up legal teams against Matson; a man for whom there is neither profit nor indeed cash flow as a result.

Our profession is thankfully well stocked with those of active concern for the common good, those who will slug away for weeks polishing an appeal to a District Plan hearing or a submission on the revisions to the Resource Management Act, yet most of these activities are in some way part of our daily grind. Though the possible reward at the end of process is far outweighed by the super-human endurance required to deflect the ship of state, there is at least a hint of making the path of planning

consent, documentation and so on easier for the next time we or our mates tread it.

Matson is a different kettle of fish altogether; though having a degree in architecture overlaid on an early career in investment banking and a childhood of exposure to European cities, Alan does not make buildings but has instead devoted every waking hour to the protection of a few critical ones. His initiation into the heritage battles was the Fitzroy Hotel. For those not familiar with the hotel, it is a four-square nugget of a building on the corner of Wakefield and Lyndock, much abused by time and tenancies, and slated for demolition in favour of a tower block. Though the basic proportions of the old pub are comfortable and the original rhythm of fenestration still discernible it was Matson's terrier-like researching that uncovered not only the building's history but also the process by which buildings in the city receive the various protections available through heritage listing.

Continued overleaf...

Albert Streets threatened Yates Building: Squarely in Matson's sights!



Sacrifice

Continued from front cover...

Were Matson only a protectionist zealot his commitment and *sacrifice* would be extraordinary, yet that is only a small part of his program. When asked why we should worry about a much-altered building whose context and use have long since moved on, the answer is a mix of pragmatism, stubbornness and good old fashioned muck raking. He sees in the building's squat form and large site an opportunity for the commercial imperatives of developers to be met and the urban condition to be enriched through the repair and reuse of the building, an occupation of the rooftop and the relocation of the proposed tower block to the rear of the site.

These opportunities have been developed into a working proposition by Andrew Patterson – a scheme in which both city and land owners' aims are met and the city's earliest pub is retained. This is city building at the pointed end, not the promotion of schemes at a land owner's behest nor the rote protection of all things old. It is instead the thoughtful eye of one who sees opportunity in the abandoned and who can coalesce seemingly contradictory imperatives into positive outcomes.

Central to this harnessing of *power* and *memory* is robust and thorough research and a healthy disdain for hokum, be it a local authority's machinations in the calculation of a building's heritage rating or, for heavens sake, the legislation that only just, but almost didn't, reserve the title architect for those "...undertaking the drawing of plans....", etc, etc.

These activities gain friends about as fast as they do funds and there is a certain clandestine quality about his life that suggests the pursuit of *truth* exacts a price in bodily comforts that few would be willing to pay these days. We are lucky that Alan Matson is prepared however reluctantly to pay this price, and we are lucky for his certain belief in personal responsibility and the necessity for making a better city. PC

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If you have any tips please contact Nat Cheshire on 09 358 2770 or nat@cheshirearchitects.com.



Riken Yamamoto Lecture!

7pm, Friday 3rd July
Maidment Theatre, 6 Alfred St., Auckland City

Innovative Japanese architect Riken Yamamoto will visit New Zealand in July. Yamamoto is one of the most prominent members of the generation of architects to grow up in the ruins of post-war Japan – a group that includes Tadao Ando, Toyo Ito, and Shin Takamatsu.

Of his contemporaries, Yamamoto is the architect most concerned with re-conceiving architecture to respond to the changes taking place in contemporary society. His award-winning designs for houses respond to the changing nature of the family unit and changing role of the individual in society.

Yamamoto has also produced a number of radical educational projects – his Iwadeyama High School and Future University of Hakodate (an entire campus for a new university focussed on information science and technology) were specifically designed to make possible new curricula and bring fresh approaches to teaching to Japan's moribund education system. His work has been the subject of several monographs and exhibitions, has received numerous awards, and been published around the world. He now has projects in the Netherlands, China, Korea, and throughout Japan.

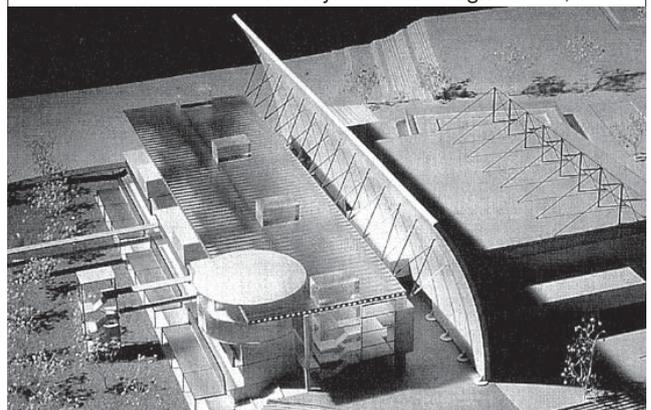
Yamamoto's Auckland lecture, to be held on July 3rd at the University of Auckland's Maidment Theatre, also serves as the keynote address of The Society of Architectural Historians, Australia & New Zealand annual conference. Generously supported by the University of Auckland, the Warren Trust, and GIB.

Bookings: www.maidment.auckland.ac.nz (09) 308 2383
\$25 (students \$20)



Hotakubo Housing, 1991

Iwadeyama Junior High School, 1994



The Fine Print

Combined Excerpts from the Reports to NZIA Auckland Branch meetings of April and May 2009.

CHAIR'S REPORT: Christina van Bohemen

Obituaries:

Garry Tonks, Rodney Davies

Meetings attended:

Orakei – Urban Design Review and Public Meeting (with Brian Aitken)

University of Auckland: Vice Chancellor's Breakfast Meeting with Richard Harris and others to consider issues of communication and engagement with Ludo Campbell Reid following *Metro* article.

Weather-tightness Issues:

Richard Harris has suggested that we engage with Auckland City on their approach to Proportionate Liability. TA liabilities will need to be addressed as part of the governance restructuring and it may be an opportune time to progress with proportionate liability.

Events:

Architecture Week planning is underway (Jerome to report). We are a bit behind on other events. I have spoken to Stephen Smith, Winner of DBH starter home competition – he is prepared to present at an "On the Boards" or something similar. Follow up needed with other winners and finalists in Auckland. John Balasoglou and I visited Auckland City Library to check suitability for seminars and talks. There is scope there – hireage is not expensive and it's a good venue for public talks. JB has mentioned there may be sponsorship interest in a Winter Series.

TECHNICAL ISSUES GROUP (TIG): Nicole Tarlton

CPD Portfolio altered to TIG:

This portfolio will seek to address the documentation context of CPD requirements. There is overlap with regulatory and environmental issues. There is potential to work with and/or support practice support and in-house office training groups.

Potential topics:

Some initial ideas are seminars on:

- lessons learnt in remedial work-
- membrane roofing; window detailing
- typical problem areas in weatherproofing
- specification writing
- starter home competition finalists.

Coordinators of PSGs have been canvassed for ideas on topics that could be worth sharing /expanding on in a larger forum or requests for speakers.

Nicole Tarlton, Jerome Buckwell and David Gatley have met and discussed some potential seminars. A seminar 'Current Thinking on Windows' will be held on Tuesday 26th May, arrival: 5.30pm for a 6pm start. The seminar will be presented by Robert Campion of APL and will cover a mix of the following issues:

- current thinking on window design
- international examples
- considerations when specifying and detailing windows
- different glass types; thermally broken aluminium and composite aluminium/timber windows
- the use of double glazing in windows
- different gases between double glazing
- different reflectivity pros and cons
- trickle vents and 'letting a room breathe'
- flashings and use with different cladding materials, weatherboards, masonry etc.

David Gatley has volunteered to present some seminars on

'lessons learnt' that he witnessed whilst working on the Arbitration Panel. This seminar(s) will be take place after June and details will be provided later in the year. Potential topic: Metals – corrosion issues, jointing with other materials, coatings. Possibly approach Les Bolton and HERA to present.

Readers of this report are invited to submit ideas for topics or speakers, please email Nicole: tarlton@xtra.co.nz.

HERITAGE PORTFOLIO: Adam Wild

2008 UNESCO Asia Pacific Heritage Award:

Rangitoto Island Historic Conservation Trust won an Honourable Mention for the restoration of Bach 38 on Rangitoto Island. It is the first NZ project to have won this award and was one of 17 awards given in response to 45 submissions from throughout the Asia Pacific region.

ICOMOS International Day of Monuments & Sites 18 April 2009 – Scientific Heritage:

I have been in contact with MOTAT, The University of Auckland and the Auckland Observatory. There is an emerging sense of the extent of scientific heritage in Auckland. The potential to celebrate more of this on the 18th of April and as part of AAW09 is clear. Not only buildings, but archival material describing some of the buildings and their collections can be made accessible.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES GROUP: Megan Rule

Green Star update presentation by Alec Couchman last Tuesday 28 April well attended:

Green Star is an ESD rating tool only, based on other International systems and does not replace the fundamentals of good urban design or good passive design. A 4 star rating generally equates to a standard building. There has been good industry interest and uptake in Green Star within NZ in the last 3-5 years of its presence here, although NZ lags behind other countries with eg 5-6 Green Star buildings compared to 100 Green Star buildings in Australia. Green Star is sector specific with the Commercial Building tool well established. Pilots have just been released for Education and Commercial Interiors. A residential tool may be released in the next 2 years if funding permits. The Green Star tool offers a potential opportunity for Architects to specialise in ESD.

Email broadcasts will advertise the content and time of future issues groups meetings.

UNITEC REPORT: Tony van Raat

The second quarter has commenced with various studio design projects in hand. Staffing remains unchanged although we welcome Jacopo Detti into our Italian studio which is currently developing proposals for a kindergarten competition in Toscana. There remains the normal variety, too large to mention, in the other projects on offer.

I'm canvassing people for content for an upcoming issue of *Architecture New Zealand* that John Walsh has kindly offered to me as a Guest Editor. The topic is eccentrics and individualists and there don't appear to be too many of them. Suggestions welcomed.

Rau Hoskins and Carin Wilson have offered their services, and those of a student group, in the possible refurbishment of John Scott's Visitor Centre at Lake Waikaremoana. The building is in poor repair and danger of demolition and we hope to save it.

I'm also putting together an exhibition to open in Rome alongside of Trenta Case which is having a second Rome show sponsored by the NZ Embassy. The new exhibition is called Infusion and represents work done by professional artists in the School and also by students. Opens on 15 June if you can make it...

GRADUATE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION PORTFOLIO: Sarah MacKenzie & James Pearce

Auckland Branch GD Study Group Workshop:

This year's study group workshop was held Monday 20 April. From this event a database of potential and existing study groups has been created with the aim of linking graduates to others looking to apply for registration at the same time.

Upcoming APL Graduate Development Seminars:

A weekend seminar will be held from 31st July – 1st August covering experience areas and case study preparation.

Graduate Website Development:

It would appear that the Graduate equivalent of the SANNZ website has yet to be set up. Our next goal is to get this vital resource up and running, allowing a base point for information and a structure for future networking. This would supply registration information, NZIA news including upcoming events and provide a platform for graduates to form discussions.

AUCKLAND ARCHITECTURE WEEK REPORT: Jerome Buckwell

Committee met and discussed AAW, 23rd April:

Main AAW events to be focused around weekend 16/17/18 October. Possible theme for AAW based around Royal Commission findings or Super City. Major infrastructure projects rather than residential architecture. Locations for main exhibition / main focus still to be agreed, however, a single focus venue to be progressed. The committee is currently reviewing possible exhibitions and activities.

PRACTICE ISSUES GROUP: Richard Goldie

The first PIG presentation for 2009 was on 7th April and featured three practitioners from the S,M and L brigades being Megan Rule, Maurice Langdon of Eclipse Architecture and Brian Aitken of Peddle Thorp Architects. The event was well attended. Lively discussion was had between presenters and at the evenings close.

The lectures were valuable for the insights offered, which were both strong in similarities and differences. Megan shared her experience as a sole Practitioner undertaking her work as she determined to, to Clients who searched out her particular 'take'. Working in shared space offered the chance to collaborate on larger projects or when demands dictated. Bottom line in difficult times - don't/cant pay yourself! Maurice's presentation took the form of an excellent lecture of what was basically Practice Financial Management 301, and was a concise analysis of costs and multipliers and how this works between medium and large scales of practice.

Brian shared anecdotes of the late 80s recession and the steps that were taken both to contain cost, in the form of redundancies and salary cuts by senior staff, and the slow recovery worked through in significant projects. The investment in staff and systems set the practice up for the strong period of growth that has now, regrettably, come to an end.

There has been a ground swell of anxiety regarding PI Insurance with new players entering the market. The May 2009 issue of *Communique* has thoroughly addressed many of the issues raised. This evening's informal discussion will address this further, and determine if the time is right for further exploration of this.



'Extremely unpromising'

Continued from back cover...

stock runs, the emptying of traditional Maori harvesting grounds to make scenic tourist traps) have been discussed by others. Michael King, for example, identified how the processes that facilitated the occupation and shaping of our country into a productive resource were played out here in a more intense manner and at a more accelerated pace than almost anywhere else on earth. It is the intensity and pace of the encounter between the colonial and the indigenous that distinguishes our history from that of other human societies. *Theatre Country* therefore contributes to an established field of research, but is a telling contribution because Park is both very particular and very persistent, the concise essay structure compelling us to dwell on a particular occurrence of landscaping. These essays were written for conferences or as a keynote lectures, and as a regular presenter Park obviously learnt that a good strategy for engaging your audience is to lead them to an understanding of general concepts by discussing a very particular situation. In this way people entertain an idea in and through concrete details. The fact that each essay deals with a particular place, person or event about which Park can elucidate historic details means that the essays carry mana.

Rather than abstract discussions, we have a palpable history of various parts of our country; parts that over the course of the book come together in the reader's mind to create an affecting experience of the scale of change to the country as a whole. More than just creating an experience of change, Park passes judgement on it and allows himself to lament what he sees as the opportunities lost in making Aotearoa a Better Britain. This is clearly felt, for example, when he recalls the view of New Zealand held by one Thomas Shepherd, a British landscape designer in the mould of Capability Brown and who wrote of the potential for living in this beautifully forested country of which there was no comparison in the world. This is contrasted with the view of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, one of the minds behind the New Zealand Company's programme for systematic colonisation and who, on seeing the Wellington coast line, described it as 'extremely unpromising'. Here there is a great sigh of "what if?". In Shepherd, Park sees the opportunity for a rich relationship with country because he appreciated a more sinuous connection between humanity and nature. Shepherd traded linearity for more natural curves while Wakefield remained an avid proponent of the imperial grid laid over the country independent of topography. As one of Wakefield's surveyors commented, settlement via the grid meant that "a great many streets would run through swamps and marshes, in some places sized to ten feet deep." Nonetheless, the land could be cleared, drained and reclaimed. But for Edward Gibbon Wakefield, Park laments, might our ordinary landscapes have been different?

Park's lament is a cutting aside to one of the most precious things of New Zealand architecture – the view. Take him to one of this year's award-winning buildings and chances are he wouldn't like what he saw – a land of missed opportunities. Nor would he like our obsession with how we look – the way we frame the country, aestheticise it and consequently fall into age old colonial strategies that force apart nature and culture. Awards judges regularly commend our lot for their careful composition of the view, but Park would, I imagine, be suspicious of our habit of making architecture a looking device, as something akin to the Claude Glass he describes in one of his essays - that darkly tinted, convex pocket mirror through which the 19th century tourist could, albeit with their back turned to the scene, "see the prospect condensed and framed, and suffused with the mellow glow of Claude's vision of Elysium." It is troubling how close this description is to many a jury citation.

The Claude Glass organised the world onto a flat plane, for a moment framing and taming nature and capturing it as a private possession. In *Theatre Country* it becomes an emblem of the forcing apart of people and place and it foregrounds our touristic tendencies. When architecture is like a Claude Glass it can make us tourists in our own country and, given our history, we should be wary of this. *SF*

An 'Extremely Unpromising' View

Taming the primeval and building a Better Britain

Sifting through the weekend papers I always keep an eye-out for the 'book corner' where each week someone describes the books on their bedside table and recalls those they found inspiring. "How long does it take you to finish a book?" is something regularly asked of the interviewees and responses range from the cliché that they can devour a great book in just a few days through to admissions that it took three years to see off *The Da Vinci Code* by which time the movie spoilt everything.

Personally, I have never found a book to be so good that I just can't put it down, and having recently completed Geoff Park's *Theatre Country: Essays on landscape and whenua* (Victoria University Press, 2006) I have become convinced that the more thought provoking a book is, the longer it might actually take to read. Started at Christmas and finished at Easter, the long spell reading *Theatre Country* was punctuated by a break that I now recognise as a period of mourning for the myth of Kiwi culture's close integration with nature.

Theatre Country problematises the cosy idea that in Aotearoa we live close to nature and, though architecture is not a particular focus, the book complicates the dominant rhetoric about local architecture being of the land or stemming from a close fit with the country. It problematises a precious image of New Zealand architecture – think of the long gaze out through stretches of grass across rolling farmland or the view back in which the building is barely visible against a mountainous backdrop. It does this by recounting some of the changes wrought upon the land during colonisation and thereby suggesting we need to think twice when discussing relationships between building and nature. This is particularly so when we lean towards viewing nature as an emblem of purity, as in the untainted country portrayed in the 100% Pure campaigns of tourism marketers. Through sixteen essays, Park presents the predisposition of colonials to force human life apart from the indigenous flora and fauna. Whilst as a nation it's nice to portray ourselves as people of the land, Park instead argues that through our actions of the past 150 years we have become more like tourists in our own country.

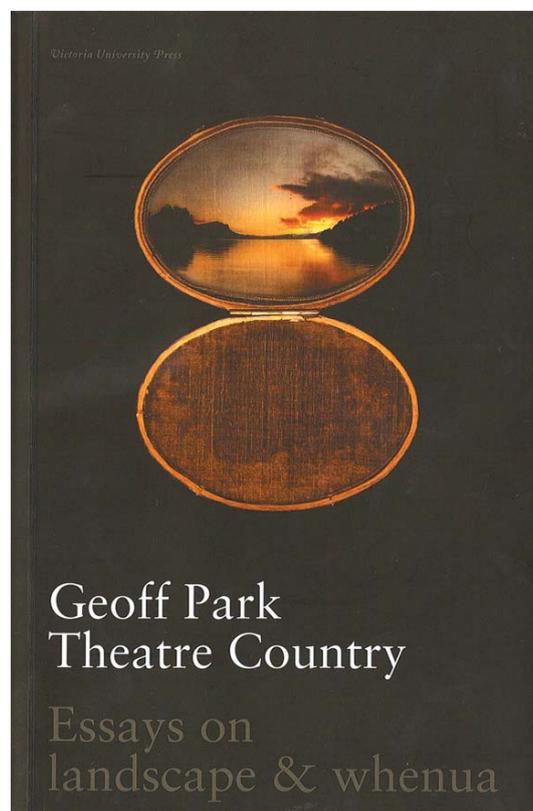
Geoff Park has been described as an influential ecologist who could "take a stretch of suburbia or open farm land, analyse landforms, ferret through innocuous scrub, consult historical accounts and then, in his minds eye, visualise what had been growing there, say, 150 years ago." Many of the essays in *Theatre Country* turn around this kind of reconstruction. On some occasions the essays seat us behind Park as he kayaks round one of his favourite locations, describing the surroundings in a way that is meant to encourage us to see the shoreline as it was seen by those pulling ashore from a New Zealand Company ship. By encouraging us to appreciate the land as it was, he leads us to see how different it is now.

For many who ventured here from Blighty's rolling countryside, the first sight was terrifying; a stretch of sandy beach swallowed by

dense and inhospitable forest just a few steps beyond. This great forest-covered land, dark and damp, was not at all what many expected (the half-truths of advertising and real estate agents are not a recent phenomenon). Having built a picture of how the country was, Park's essays then historicise the changes that shaped it into what it is today. He presents the political decisions, the technological advances, the aesthetic impulses and the colonial attitudes that facilitated the staggering changes wrought upon our country as it was reshaped in the image of Britain and tamed from a primeval (and supposedly unproductive) wilderness into fertile plains. As one can gather by now, these changes are not well received by Park and their unveiling, one essay at a time, can prompt in the reader a growing sense of iniquity. Did my ancestors do that? As Park explains, the history of colonisation and its effect on the land is a history that we need to know, even though it's not nice to know.

The speed and scale of the changes described (the draining of wet-lands to create alluvial pastures, the raising of forest to make

Continued on inside back cover...



Jane Avril 1899 poster. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec.

PRINT DESIGN CLASSICS #11

Henri Marie Raymond de Toulouse-Lautrec-Monfa was a French painter, printmaker, draftsman and illustrator who recorded in his works many details of the late-19th-century bohemian lifestyle of the Montmartre area of Paris – a popular haunt of artists, writers and philosophers.

He became a regular at the Moulin Rouge cabaret and was commissioned to produce a series of posters, where he also met the dancer, performer and artist Jane Avril. Having become a close friend she appears many times in his art, often as a beautiful melancholic, withdrawn into her own emotions or the expression of dance.

This lithograph displays the influence of Art Nouveau. Gone are the voluminous frilly petticoats and aprons of her earlier costume, replaced by a fitting black dress – a snake, at which she feigns horror, winds up her body accentuating the curves of her twisting form.

Though he died at only 36, Toulouse-Lautrec created over 6460 known works in various media. He excelled at capturing people in their working environment, with the colour and the movement of the gaudy night-life present but the glamour stripped away, and crowd scenes in which the figures are highly individualised.



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