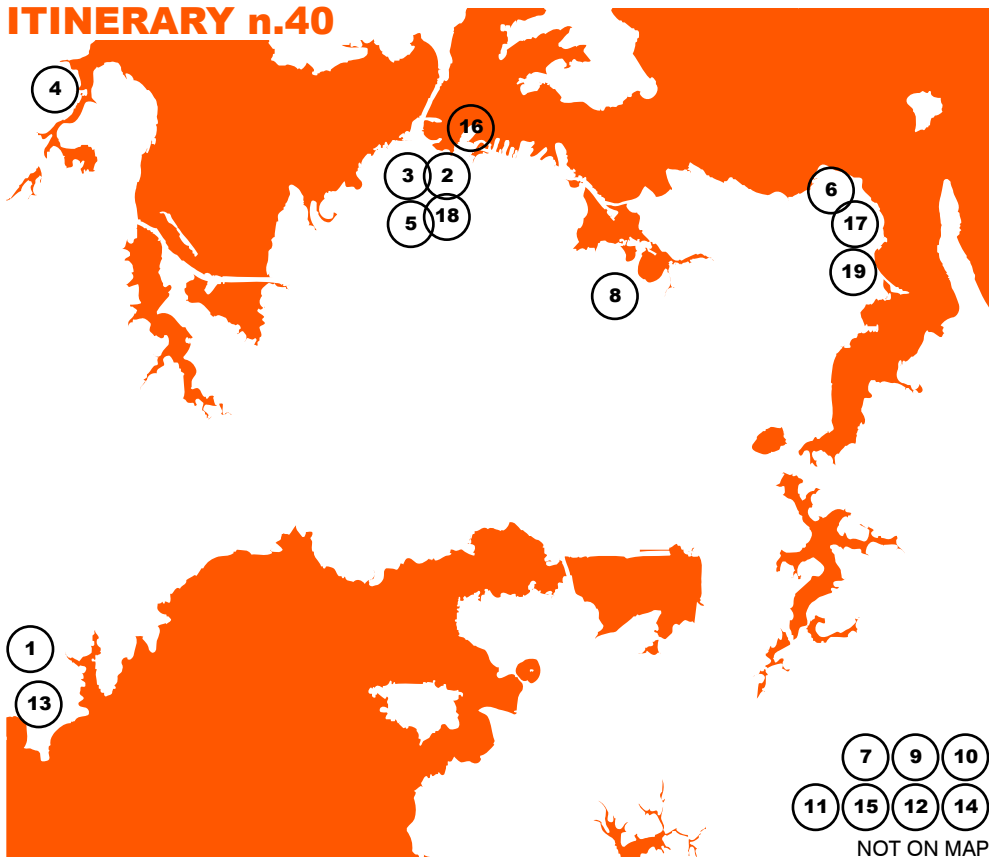


## ITINERARY n.40



## Pete Bossley

Pete Bossley's career seems to be an arcing trajectory of gathering speed, rather than a measured episodic progression. From the confusion of false starts and other lives so common in the late nineteen sixties and early seventies he seemingly stumbled upon draughting as a direction, fast-tracked through a diploma at ATI, signed up with the MoW for a couple of years then, realising where the real creative control lay in the drawing office, headed off to architecture school. From there, he achieved the best degree those woolly times could offer, was then reeled back in by the MoW, before escaping those shackles into private practice. His practice too, has traversed the times: the Artifice collective, the Bossley Cheshire Partnership, the formation of Jasmx and the re-establishment of Pete Bossley Architects. In each of these, he has bought a strong commitment to the architecture of ideas coupled with a healthy regard for the technology and human processes required to realise the often complex assemblies of materials that form his projects.

Though the organisations within which he has practiced have evolved, there seems a singular vector to the work, not in the appearance of the buildings, but in a certain restless energy with which forms are arrayed, structure manipulated, and materials deployed. Bossley, in his practice's monograph, and again in an interview with John Walsh in *Houses*, has spoken of the desire to draw out the poetics of a place; not that of regional style, but of the specific conditions of orientation, climate, topography, vegetation and outlook. This has given rise to a remarkable series of houses, from the early Roberts House (completed while still a student) folding back into its Langholm slope to form a sun trapped courtyard, to the more recent Heatley in Maui where his confident sliding of space, form, and structure are in full play.

The latter project reveals Bossley's assimilation of, and response to, widely varying site conditions to form houses that are (only just) identifiable in their authorship but unique in their organisation and the realisation of their architectural intentions. Such programs invariably include the perturbation of an underlying schema by a rogue element: a symbolic contour line restating the primacy of topography as in the Honore Morris house; an alignment to view as in the St Heliers Heatley/Manson House; or a conscious insertion as was worked through in his own Paget Street house alterations and the 1986 Tabula Rasa competition entry 'Romancing the Right Angle' (NZ Architect 1986 #5). While these disturbances move the eye to some distant point, or gently enlarge and enfold a sitting space, they often have a number of less obvious agenda in play as well; the organisation of scenographic movement through space, the display and delight in the often innovative structural elements, and the manipulation of environmental performance.

These same concerns appear in the larger projects, as at the Maritime Museum with the linking of the skewed glazing and the ramped ambulatory and at Te Papa where an axial alignment with the far-distant Taita Gorge forms an entry, primary circulation, and a cleft in the building – symbolically both splitting apart and joining together that institution's overloaded agenda.

Aside from his near relentless engagement in the making of architecture, Pete reads, draws, paints, and teaches and has made a major contribution to the visibility and standing of architecture in the wider community in New Zealand and Pacific rim countries through his writing, speaking, and many contributions to the profession. To each of these he brings a confident, open voice, an incisive intellect and a determination to make better architecture and celebrate that made by others. *Pip Cheshire*

## Biography:

Pete Bossley was born in Nelson, attended high school and started a law degree in Christchurch before moving to Auckland in 1969 and abandoning law in favour of the publishing industry. A chance encounter suggested a new direction and he headed off to Auckland Institute of Technology being fast tracked through draughting on the basis of subjects done at high school. A Ministry of Works scholarship in the middle 1970s allowed the by now father of two to attend the University of Auckland School of Architecture where he received an honours degree in 1978 and was then bonded into 5 years employment within the Ministry. Escaping the constraints of that organisation he set up Pete Bossley Architects (occasionally operating as Roy L. Doulton for a time to avoid the clutches of the Ministry!) before founding Artifice Studio with Mal Bartleet and Pip Cheshire. Pete travelled through Europe in 1981-2 before returning to establish Bossley Cheshire Architects which then collided with JASMaD and Gibbs Harris Architects to form Jasmx in 1988. In 1995 Pete left Jasmx to establish Pete Bossley Architects, a practice of some fifteen persons with a growing number of international residential commissions and of institutional and commercial projects nationally.

1 1982 Roberts House  
5 Janet Place, Laingholm

2 1984 Glock House  
Pompallier Tce., Ponsonby



The site responsive Roberts House was completed at architecture school with Bossley labouring on site in the holidays. The first projects after the MoW were alterations – the Glock and Mitchell projects, the former a full tilt transformation of a Ponsonby villa inconceivable under today's residential 1 strictures and the latter deconstructing and reordering the harbourside wall of a Herne Bay brick and tile.



3 1984 Mitchell House  
5 Marine Parade, Herne Bay

4 1986 Emerali House  
133 West Harbour Drive  
West Harbour



The Emerali House marks a turning point – a cleared site steaming, as Bossley has said, like a new skinned rabbit from his childhood. The response was a loose arrangement of rectangular forms occupying and shaping the site. It was too, the clearest example to date of the client getting more than they bargained for – in this case hoped for arts and craft begetting an energetic assemblage of form, material and colour.



5 1986  
Barnes House  
Wairangi Street  
Herne Bay



Bossley sees the Barnes house as something of a diversion in his oeuvre, the clear FLW references and the many gables and hips (now an anathema to Bossley), being at odds with the balance of his work. It was, though, an opportunity to address a tight harbour edge site, a big brief and a budget to match. The project has strong symmetries and a skewed entry axis realigning views to the Harbour Bridge and splitting public and private functions of the house. Project architect Rick Pearson with Bossley and contractor Ross Masters produced a superbly detailed and crafted building, though Bossley has suggested that contemporary building craft skills may make such detailed projects inappropriate. NZ Institute of Architects, Ten Best Buildings Award 1988, Carter Holt Harvey Environmental Design Award 1988.

6 1985/2004  
Heatley/Manson House  
The Rise  
St Heliers



The Heatley House, later reworked for Ted Manson, was undertaken concurrently with the Barnes House – a clear harbinger of the eclectic body of work to come. The house sits high on Achilles Point and uses the foci of harbour and gulf as organising schema. The northerly view forms a skewed axis bisecting the house. This in turn becomes something of a metaphor for the seismic dislocations of the land. The project was notable for Bossley's acceptance of the St. Heliers plastered wall and punched window aesthetic, adding a flying bridge, hovering vault and structural frame bursting from the walls. The later reworking calmed some of the mid nineteen eighties enthusiasms and added a greater density of occupation within house and garden. NZ Institute of Architects Branch Award 1986, NZIA Branch Award 1990.

7 1988  
Rainbows End  
2 Clint Crescent  
Manukau



Rainbows End and the Commonwealth Games village were opportunities for the exploration of large scale space planning, the deployment of innovative materials and technologies and the generation of temporary and new building typologies. These included the large scale use of scaffolding for the games village kiosks and athletes' bridge, the use of sprayed concrete and extreme tanapole construction in the making of a faux mountain and toilet block and the theming of rides. The roller coaster building uses tanapole and scaff pipe construction in making a robust, functional building in which a bursting roof frame suggests some of the movement of the ride.

8 1993  
Kelland House  
40B Orakei Road  
Remuera



As with the earlier Heatley House, the rectilinear planning is disrupted, enlivened and organised by a geometry that is largely independent of the house's domestic program. Curved concrete walls set up a dramatic entry, form stacked building platforms overlooking a reserve to the west and, almost incidentally, organise vertical and horizontal planning of the site and the arrangement of spaces in and around the building. The project is notable for its creation of external room like spaces by returns and re entrant external walls and by the introduction of fixed, free standing external tension structures located to manipulate light levels into the skylit living space. The project won NZIA National Award 1993, NZIA Auckland Branch 10 Best Award 1993.

9 1999  
Island Complex  
Moturua Island  
Bay of Islands



Patrick Reynold's photograph of the Moturua Island house for Craig Heatley perfectly encapsulates the building's central concerns; a roof held up on sticks mimicking the slope of the land and mediating the transition from the Pacific water's edge to the cabbage trees of the island hinterland. The roof shelters a stepped series of platforms, a partially enclosed room per level and each opening seaward and inland and linked by a grand stair on the inland side. NZIA Regional Award 2000, Tasman Small Practice Award 1999, NZIA Northern Regional Award for Architecture 1999, NZ Home and Building/Citroen 'Home of the Year', NZIA Branch Award for Architecture 1998, NZIA 10 Best Buildings Award 1997.

10 2000  
James House  
60 Jones Road  
Clevedon



The house is one of the first with a parti of discrete blocks assembled to organise internal and external space and to respond to the site's specific topographic and climatic conditions. A venturi shaped space is formed by the living area curving away from the sleeping volumes to align to afternoon sun and view. The framed external tensile shade structure of the Kelland House reappears, we see the pulling apart of bedroom spaces into nearly independent pavilions and the use of sculptured structure. See *Theme and Variations, Architecture NZ 2000, Casabella 683, Italy, Nov. 2000.*

11

2003

Beach Retreat  
Paroa Bay  
Bay of Islands



A number of Bossley's interests are combined: the rectangular plan disturbed by a rogue geometry having its genesis in the site condition, bedroom spaces pulled out to form separate pavilions, and the expressive hyperbolic paraboloid roof. This is probably the heaviest construction employed to date with cast in-situ concrete structure and enclosure. NZIA Supreme Award for Architecture 2006, NZIA New Zealand Award for Architecture 2006, NZIA Local Award for Architecture 2005, Home and Entertaining Home of the Year Award Winner 2004. See *Setting Sail, New Zealand Home & Entertaining, Dec/Jan 2006, Masters of Light, 2007 Images Publishing Group Pty Ltd.*

12

2003

Seresin House  
Waterfall Bay  
Marlborough Sounds



Familiar concerns resurface – the breaking of the program into discrete but connected elements and the playful manipulation of structural elements – in this case the angled foundation posts suggesting the restless energy of the client. The house responds to the sombre ambiance of the Marlborough Sounds with more enclosing elements than the light filled northern pavilions. NZIA Resene New Zealand Award for Architecture 2005, NZIA Local Award for Architecture 2004. See *100 Country Houses: New Rural Architecture, The Phaidon Atlas of 21st Century Houses, Masters of Light, Images Publishing Group Pty Ltd, Long White Book, Laurence Varga + Roderick Fry, 100 Top House from Down Under, Images Publishing Group Australia.*

13

2007

McCahon House  
French Bay  
Auckland



A house for artists in residence allowed Bossley to explore the inter twinning of his passions for architecture and the visual arts. The project weaves an angular tree house through the site's kauri. The house mediates a difficult brief being in close proximity to the conserved McCahon house yet offering a temporary home to contemporary artists. NZIA New Zealand Award 2008, NZIA, Local Colour Award 2007, NZ Institute of Architects Local Award 2007. See *The Phaidon Atlas of 21st Century Houses, Architecture NZ Magazine, 100 Dream Houses Down Under, Trenta Case, Thirty New Zealand Houses, Art House, NZ Home & Entertaining April/May 2007, New New Zealand Houses, Random House NZ.*

14

2008

Nanea  
Makena  
Maui, Hawaii



This is the last in a line of innovative projects for Bossley's patron Craig Heatley. The house reveals Bossley's easy manipulation of building elements to meet a number of agenda – sculptural, programmatic, contextual and, notably in this case, environmental. Domestic and landscape components are organised to create a continuum of internal and external space while dramatically decreasing the energy demands of habitation. The incorporation of sustainable and low energy concerns is implicit in much of Bossley's work yet, as with this project, these are not applied infrastructure, fetishised or used polemically. The house, realised with architect James Downey, has had a low profile in New Zealand but is the first of a number of offshore houses currently under way. See: *The Phaidon Atlas of 21st Century Houses, Phaidon.*

15

2008

Thorne Bay House  
22A Minnehaha Avenue  
Takapuna



The project shows Bossley's ability to assimilate site conditions, in this case particularly onerous planning and silvicultural requirements, and to prevail over them with innovative technical solutions and make an architecture that gives no hint of the tortuous constraints. The house is also notable for its top storey obeying a separate geometry from the lower, a move being developed in more recent projects. Master Builders Auckland Region Gold Award 2009. See *Branching Out, Home NZ Magazine, Dec/Jan 2010.*

16

2009

Voyager NZ Maritime Museum  
Cnr. Quay and Hobson Street  
Viaduct Harbour



The Voyager houses America's Cup winner Black Magic in a central hall surrounded by a ramped ambulatory offering view over and under the boat. The hall is an extension to the existing Maritime Museum and seeks to set itself apart from the gable ended sheds. The coloured polycarbonate, east wall's glazing bars mimic the ramp slope within and gives the building a hint of the ocean swell. Circumnavigating the boat offers an interesting spatial progression and is much enlivened by the wall of light to the east. Property Council NZ, Excellence Award, NZIA Auckland Architecture Award. See *Voyager NZ Maritime Museum Extension in Auckland, Papyrus, Vol 12, No. 1, Shifting Light, Indesign Magazine, Issue 43, Magic Box, Architecture NZ, March 2010.*

17

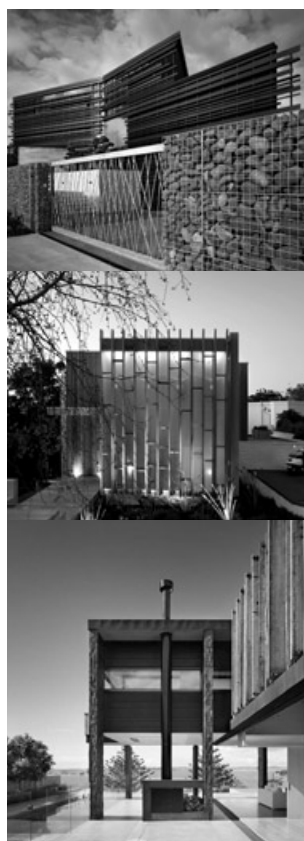
2008 Glendowie House, 661 Riddell Road, Glendowie

18

2010 Brown Vucich House, 25 Emmett Street, Herne Bay

19

2008 Foreman House, 593 Riddell Road, Glendowie



Three city houses each reveal Bossley's unflagging inventiveness in the creation of private space. The Glendowie and Brown Vucich using screens to achieve privacy and all three having a distinct set of materials. While each has the studio's characteristic skews and inflections of planning, the projects are also the result of increasing collaboration with associate Andrea Bell and have a slightly more reserved sense of composition than their more flamboyant predecessors. NZIA, Auckland Architecture Award. See *Screen Dreams, Home NZ, Aug/Sept 2011, Mind the Gaps, Home NZ, April/May 2011, Street Appeal, Home NZ, Oct/Nov 2010.*

#### Sources:

We are indebted to Pete and the staff of Pete Bossley Architects for photographs and design and construction dates. Houses NZ #09/Spring 2008 has a good interview with Bossley and you are also directed to the 2005 Pete Bossley Monograph, published by the New Zealand Publishing Trust.