



11 2011

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

BLOCK

Children of the Modern

What drives Mitchell Stout?



Last month a tuk-tuk swung up to a high-grilled gate in Ahmedabad and the great ramp of Le Corbusier's Mill Owners' Association Building reached out for us. Oh joy! The brise soleil was crammed with plants and the building stood in a high garden like a great cubist sculpture in a park. We were fresh from Chandigarh, where our Indian driver had been thunderstruck to hear that we got as much kick out of Corb's *béton brut* buildings as from the marble Taj Mahal. We are undeniably children of the Modern. Le Corbusier's "the correct and magnificent play of forms in light" still stokes our burner. Not for us the constant restating of eternal truths that traditional architecture (try Buddhist Nepal) has set as a goal. We were brought up on "the shock of the new".

Yet behaviour persists, and the human mutates so slowly that newness in architecture appears only to come from changes in technology. Sixty years ago Corb was building grass roofs, passive ventilation systems and sun screens that are paraded as banners of a new truth today. It was a great pleasure to visit the Sarabhai House. The slide catapulted into an empty pool, sadly, but the series of vaulted forms, open both ends, with their layering of screens and pivoting doors, was a free flowing stage for family life. Buildings must be seen and entered, not just looked at in pictures. We are door knockers.

The search for form is our prime task beyond pragmatism but it is not found ready-made. Jørn Utzon has sound advice on this. Son of a boat designer and builder, he asks us "to respond to the nature of things ... rather than battling for form and style." So we embrace fashion in others and try to resist it in ourselves. Ah, the deadly appeal of the perforated panorama, and the all-over brand new wrap! We think we avoid materials fetishes, but we fear we are too dull to invent something new. We still delight in construction made explicit, and things made of ordinary stuff.

What drives our work? The body in space. The choreography of movement. The embrace of the room. Making places that give richness and dignity to the rituals of daily life. A search for poetry in the pragmatic. The fall of light into dark space. Childhood memories of the darkness of Lippincott's house for the Vice Chancellor of Massey University. The tall double hung windows you could jump through and the sleeping balconies in summer.

What bothers us? The rising cost of building and the Herculean task of getting a building consent for anything one-off and special. It is making residential architecture more and more unavailable to anyone but the rich. The current recession invites a new pragmatism. We've always liked studs, ply, plastic and tin.

Continued on p.2...

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Children of the Modern *Continued from p.1...*

We've been wrestling with precast concrete for the last few years. Now we wonder by what alchemy we could reach a wider audience.

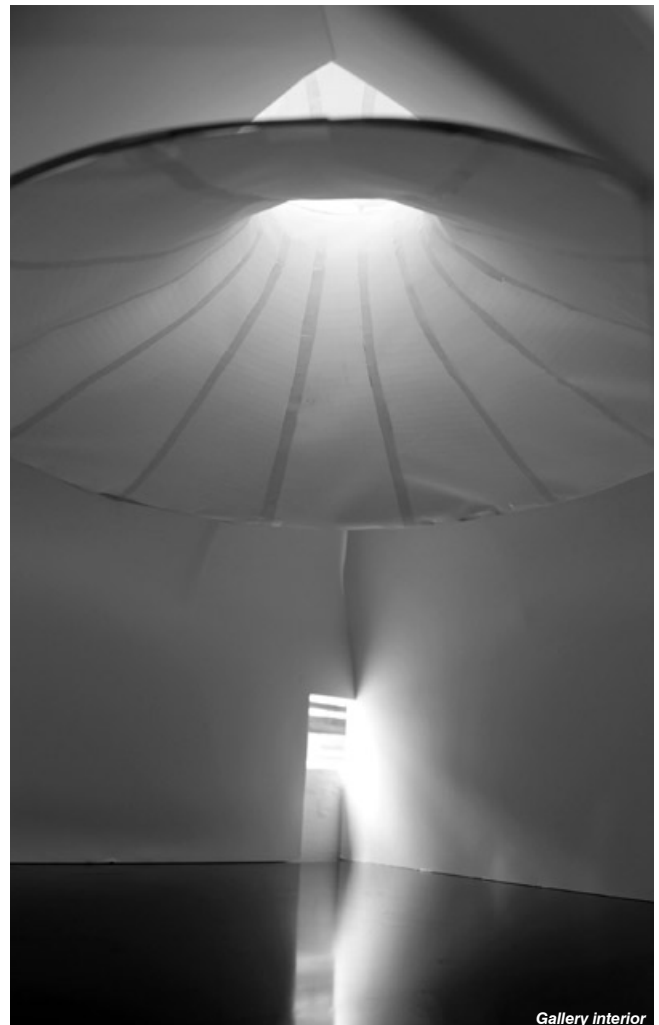
What are we working on? Working drawings of the redevelopment of Lopdell House out in Titirangi. The old hotel building is a Category 1 historic place. We're taking off the roof-top additions of the last 50 years, and restoring the roof garden. The building will be seismically upgraded and refurbished, and linked with bridges to an extended new art gallery to the side. Here, as architects, we have the luxury of calm, reflective occupants to stroke with light and spatial sequences while they visit. Yes, of course the art is what counts! But what should you look at it in? M&SA

Hastings Civic Square Competition

The Hastings District Council has announced a design competition seeking proposals to redevelop their Civic Square with an interest in exploring the idea of architecture as a vessel for cultural connectedness and evolution; an enabler and catalyst for social, cultural and economic growth.

The competition calls for "visionary pragmatism": a balance between visionary and practical. The proposals will be used to allow the wider community to appreciate the concept of developing the square and to be presented to Council who will make a decision on whether to commit to the project in their 2012/22 Long Term Plan.

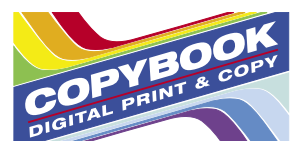
Prizes are: 1st - \$8,000; 2nd - \$3,000; 3rd - \$2,000; Student - \$1,500. Registration closes on 14th January and submissions are due on the 27th January. Full details are available online at hastingscivicsquare.co.nz



Gallery interior

Avoid getting red-carded this Christmas. Point the finger at us instead.

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Letters to the Editor

John Sinclair writes in on the future of the roles of the Architect and the NZIA.

The Inaugural Block Lecture caused me to think about the concerns I have for the future of architecture, architects and NZIA. I reckon NZIA Council and office has done a great job establishing the status and role of architects in New Zealand but the world is changing. As I see it, while the future of architecture as a job will be secure, the means by which architecture is delivered will change. It is the NZIA's future I am concerned for and although I can articulate the problems, I don't have answers.

I suspect the NZIA's success at consolidating its position in New Zealand over the past decade or so may also become a significant part of the problem.

If there was an underlying thread to John Walsh's Block Lecture it was that he identified the growing disconnection between the 'official' position of 'architecture', as validated and reinforced by the successes of the NZIA, and the delivery mechanisms, and assessments of architecture in the wider society. It is this growing disconnection that I believe practicing architects will adapt to, while the NZIA may struggle to do so.

This must all be considered against the background of one of the most positive changes in societal attitudes – *the acceptance that good design is an essential component of a successful community*. To young architects this may seem a statement of the obvious, but others will remember the middle of the 20th century when architecture was generally marginalized. It was a time when engineers and cost accountants held sway and urban design was dominated by traffic planners. The section headed "*Priority 3 Demand Good Design in all Development*" in The Draft Auckland Plan would have been inconceivable in the 1950s – the shared space of Fort and Darby Street would have been rejected out of hand as would much of current urban design. I still recall Auckland's Senior Traffic Police opposing the first tree to be installed in the Central Area - in Britomart Place - it would be a traffic hazard, they said.

So the climate for architecture and urban design is much better, but with that comes different expectations of performance and methods of delivery and architectural involvement. Commercial processes now accept the necessity of good design, and this has resulted in terms of engagement and roles that respond to different imperatives. It's already happening – novation, limited service and roles subjugated to Project Managers are simple examples, the conditions of engagement offered to architects in Christchurch being an example of such change. Yet while these may reduce the status of the architect, they do not diminish the importance of the role.

I support Practice Notes, Fee Guidelines, Ethical standards, Conditions of Contract etc but wonder the extent to which they will remain relevant as implied conditions of NZIA membership given the changing conditions in which tomorrow's architects will work.

We might ask if there will still be a need for the NZIA? One observes that the DBH, RAB and the media do not always treat the NZIA with the respect that we believe appropriate and I suspect most of us have been harangued on the irrelevance of NZIA awards: the practicality or the lip service paid to environmental issues by award winning houses, or their appearance so often on the market soon after being built and gaining an award. Don't get me wrong – I applaud the awards system but is it going to reinforce the value to consumers of NZIA membership in its present form?

As I said, I don't have the answers. I believe the NZIA has an essential role to play in New Zealand's future – but suspect it may be different to the current model - therein lies the challenge that I suggest the NZIA President and Council have a responsibility to address – now. JS

Drake and Wrigley

Drake and Wrigley have been with BLOCK since its inception. Sitting quietly in the wings, they have helped us send you this broadsheet for more than half a decade.

Drake and Wrigley are one of the few great 'old' companies still operating in the construction industry. Their heritage reveals itself in a couple of ways. Firstly, that their processes – forging, casting and machining – are centuries old and still carried out by human beings. Secondly, that it's a small, family-owned business drawing on 70 years' of accumulated experience. Together, these two traits mean good things for architects: we can modify Drake and Wrigley's stock designs, approach them with our own wild doodles, seek help in developing those doodles into credible bits of hardware, request small runs, and generally be difficult. By and large, they'll love us for it: Drake and Wrigley promise to support bespoke projects with a design-conscious service, immediate and informed advice, superior craft, and swift distribution both within New Zealand and overseas.

Of late, a handful of BLOCK readers have been experimenting with direct CNC milling of handles from all sorts of materials. It's enticing to consider instead undergoing the old-world equivalent of this process. It's a sort of perfect inversion: CNC takes a solid block of material and whittles away at it until only until the desired form is left, casting instead takes a void, and fills it with matter. We enjoy the magic of both, but there's something comforting about the age-old history of casting that makes it seem just that much more special.

Architects seem always to have enjoyed Drake and Wrigley's professional service, and delighted in their repository of beautiful old brass fittings. Drake and Wrigley are now seeking to improve their service to architects by focusing on and expanding the bespoke part of their service, without faltering on their delivery of those old classics. We can't wait to try it out. You could visit the website at www.drakewrigley.com, but why not make like it's 1960, and pick up the phone: (09) 636 0926 to talk to someone who cares about what they're making.



The Fine Print: November

CHAIR'S REPORT – Harry Street

NZIA Council: Council has recognised that a greater representation of the Auckland Branch is necessary to help spread the workload and ensure a broader capturing of issues affecting the Auckland Branch. Accordingly, Christina van Bohemen has agreed to be co-opted on to Council as a second Auckland representative, sharing the load with Tim Melville.

Draft Auckland Plan: The Branch submission was lodged and receipt confirmed by Council. I have subsequently confirmed that Branch representatives wish to speak in support of the submission and we need to give some thought to who is best to do this. Thank you to all who contributed to the submission.

Civil Defense Panel: David Gatley has agreed to coordinate the Auckland Branch panel. Additional members are John Cornthwaite and Chris Murphy.

Auckland Council Heritage Advisory Panel: Adam wasn't able to secure a position on the panel. Seems a curious decision given Adam's obvious qualifications for the position.

Future Auckland Leaders: Seven applications were received. A nomination has been forwarded to the Committee for Auckland and been accepted. The unsuccessful applicants have been notified.

Gibbs Farm Sculpture Walk: The walk raised approximately \$30,000.00 for the Christchurch Members Benevolent Fund.

Urban Design Panel: Auckland Council is undertaking a review of the Urban Design Panel. Council has confirmed the UDP will remain, it's use will be extended, Council will continue to fund it (in part) and there is wide support for the UDP. The purpose of the review is to ensure the panel is highly effective, is respected and ensures good urban design outcomes. The scope of the review includes membership appointments, relationship to other council advisory panels and clarification of the panel's note in consenting processes.

Built Environment Unit: A social event with Council staff from the BEU (plus some others) was very successful, with general agreement we should continue meeting in this informal way. Lively discussions were in evidence all around the room. Some initiatives we should follow up on are: continued informal discussion with the BEU on the Auckland Plan; offer by the Plan Development Team Leader to present the developing Unitary Plan; offer to discuss Council procurement processes; suggestion that a group, similar to the Urban Development Industry Forum in Australia, would provide a much stronger lobby group than the current fragmented collection of institutes, councils and forums. This combined group would combine the interests and resources of all involved in the development and property owners. Thanks to Christina, Shannon and Patrick for helping to pull the evening together.

HERITAGE PORTFOLIO: Adam Wild

Auckland Council proposed heritage advisory panel: The panel includes: Allan Matson, Ann McEwan, Bill Rayner, Dave Beamish, David Vert, Elizabeth Aitken Rose, Graeme Burgess, Graeme Murdoch, Jane Matthews, John L Roche, Lorraine Wilson, Michael Geale, Michelle Ann Smith, Rachel de Lambert, Rob Enright, and Sherry Reynolds.

Auckland Council – Auckland plan: Our heritage interest remains connected to those other disciplines and skills promoted through the Branch liaison with the Mayor's office. Contributions to the NZIA position have been prepared in accordance with the Branch's special committee.

John Scott's Te Urewera National Park Visitor Centre and Headquarters at Aniwhaniwa: No updates on this issue.

UNESCO: UNESCO's General Conference voted on the 31st of October this year to admit Palestine as a Member State of the Organization. Palestine's entry will bring the number of UNESCO's Member States to 195. ICOMOS New Zealand notes that given that the people of Palestine occupy/live in part of at least two World Heritage sites (Jerusalem and Akko) it seems constructive to have them in. The vote was carried by 107 votes in favour of admission and 14 votes against, with 52 abstentions. New Zealand was one of the nations choosing to abstain.

EVENTS PORTFOLIO: Andrea Bell

Auckland Architecture Week 2011: Our original budget for Auckland Architecture Week this year was \$20,859.50, and our total spend ended up being \$20,352.05 (some figures are still to be confirmed). Income from the Sean Godsell Lecture was \$4219.00, so the total cost to the branch was \$16,132.27 the Week. The Gibbs Farm Sculpture Walk raised a donation of \$29,543.40 for the Christchurch Benevolent Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES GROUP: Megan Rule & Eva Nash

November 8th: Making environmental work central to what our Institute and Practices do as a whole. Several leading practices discuss their own strategies to make their environmental work central to what their Practice as a whole does: Rau Hoskins (Design Tribe); Lance & Nicky Herbst (Herbst Architects); Jerome Partington (Jasmax); and Dave Strachan (Strachan Group Architects). NZIA President Patrick Clifford will introduce the above session with feedback from the Tokyo event - UIA Tokyo 2011 24th World Congress - Design 2050: Beyond disasters, through Solidarity, towards Sustainability.

Future Events - November 17/18: "The Living Building Challenge" – socially just, culturally rich & ecologically restorative. A seminar & workshop with Jason McLennan from Seattle at Auckland University and Skycity (see www.resene.co.nz/booking.htm).

April 10: Abstracts due for September 2012 Sustainable by Design Breaking the Silos (see www.thesustainabilitysociety.org.nz).

Next year: Opportunities for discussions with Auckland Council Built Environment Unit; sustainability representation & RMA processing representation; continuing discussions with colleagues from AIA National Sustainability Committee.

GRADUATE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION: Sarah MacKenzie & Sandy Hayward

Costs Associated with Architectural Practice 2: Our second event in this series focuses on the costs associated with running a project. This session is intended to correspond with Experience Areas B through E. Lindley Naismith (Scarlet Architects) and Tim Melville (RTA Studio) will be leading the discussion, with a third speaker to be confirmed.

Venue: NZIA, D72, Suite 1.5, 72 Dominion Road, Mt Eden.

Date: Wednesday 7th December, 5:45pm for 6:00pm start.

Graduate Professional Education Coordinator: Sarah is looking to retire from the committee at the end of this year after five years of involvement. As such, the GPE is looking for a volunteer to work alongside Sandy next year.

UNITEC REPORT: Tony van Raat

Final reviews for the BAS and First Year MARCH happened last week. Final examinations of the Masters are happening this week.

A group of six Unitec students (and one from UoA?) are leaving to Haiti next week to spend four weeks working there with Architecture for Humanity. The objective of this exercise is to provide New Zealand grads with direct experience of working on disaster relief so that they can intervene locally and internationally as need arises. Fund raising for this has been difficult and we acknowledge with gratitude the generous support received from Pete Bossley Architects, Jasmax and Architectus. It's still not too late...

Discussions are proceeding with the NZIA, HPT, DoC, and local iwi, to see if our students might assist in the preservation of Aniwhaniwa, John Scott's visitor centre at Waikaremoana.

The School is developing two courses to be run in Italy next year in June/July.

UNITEC STUDENT REPORT: Matthew Roberts & Stu Penno

This week sees the ultimate conclusion of the studies for the Second Year Masters students. After submitting their explanatory design documents four weeks ago, they are undertaking their final public examinations from Monday the 7th to Friday the 11th of November in the library exhibition space and Room 2030 at Unitec.

December 1st sees the opening of the Annual Grad Show. Coinciding with the opening of the Grad Show the annual publication *Asylum* will be available for sale. The launch party for the publication will be held on the 24th of November with this year looking to be a very good year. *Asylum* will also be available online at Amazon and Fishpond.

TECHNICAL ISSUES GROUP: Nicole Tarlton & Mark Mismash

TIG's last seminar of the year will be on 29th November which is the fifth Tuesday rather than the usual fourth Tuesday. It will be on composite structures and will be presented by Dr. Stephen Hicks, manager of structural systems at HERA.

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND REPORT: Uwe Rieger

Semester two has finished with final crit week running from Oct. 17th-20th. The final thesis projects were presented on Friday October 28th at the *old* New Art Gallery, followed by a public function and a public exhibition over the weekend. NICA's participation at the Rugby World Cup fan trail led to 11 successful event nights. A total of 76,000 visitors came through Myers Park interacting with installations and performances by architecture, art, music and dance students.

UOA STUDENT REPORT: Mikhail Rodricks & Jordon Saunders

The 2011 academic year has more or less come to a conclusion with Public Studio Reviews design grading moderation reviews all having been completed. The final year students are now finishing off the last few thousand words of their theses, with four students having been selected to represent the school at the NZIA Student Design awards: Jessica Mentis, Raukura Turei, Min Tian, and Yunwei Xu. The Intensive Design Studio with Camia Young and Derek Kawiti received positive feedback for both the Third- and Fourth-Year students from guest critics including Bernd Gundermann from Stephenson & Turner, who remarked, "The engaging presentations showcased groundbreaking new thinking on the macro-level of urban design." On November 3rd the school had the pleasure of hosting world famous paper tube architect and designer of Christchurch's Cardboard Cathedral, Shigeru Ban, for a thoroughly interesting and insightful lecture.

PRACTICE ISSUES GROUP: John Anderson & Richard Goldie

Typical of the PIG to make a last charge for the year! Two events have been hosted by the PIG. The mid-October PIG talk focused on BIM from three perspectives: 1) the designer, 2) the builder, and 3) the operator/manager. BIM has been touted as the answer to all, a universal system shared by all, rich with information, accessible, versatile. Our three speakers were Greg Boyden (ex-MD of Jasmax, known Revit buff and gadget fiend), Shane Brealey (MD of constructor NZ Strong, self-confessed Revit power-user) and Anthony Van Kan (a roving BIM champion and enthusiast). Their experiences and wondering varied widely. In general thought some themes prevailed:

- 1) The application and human resource available to see projects through in Revit/BIM varies. Many start with the best of intentions, but experience has shown that this can diminish rapidly with commercial (fee) pressure forcing a return to the tried and true in some cases. This can leave a project in a frustrating 'neither fish nor fowl' mode.
 - 2) It must be very clear at the outset of a project what the model will be used for. International experience suggests one of three things:
 - i. As a tool, useful for imaging and coordination, no status in contract.
 - ii. As both a tool for imaging and coordination, with strictly defined parameters for its use, in part, for contract purposes
 - iii. As both a tool for imaging and coordination, and a contract document.
 - 3) Clients expectations must be carefully managed as regarding the output expectations - BIM? Just what 'information do you want?
 - 4) Don't think its going to be cheaper! In fact it could be quite scary, don't expect to see anything meaningful for some time, you may have to advance the fee to cover the intensive early BIM model build cost
 - 5) There is a real need to get good quality information down, this implies the gap in the production - where do you find a young Revit enthusiast, who has enough construction nous to be able to 'build' the building element by element.
 - 6) The construction industry has barely started down this path. NZ Strong's experience however is that it provides a great opportunity to 'prototype' the building in the office before getting to site. Methodologies can be tested, and prefabricated items clearly defined, understood and priced, and coordination and clashes detected before the concrete saws have to come out.
 - 7) Cost savings of up to 20% below QS estimates are achievable!
 - 8) More and ongoing discussion required as this space evolves.
- Note: it may be worthwhile clarifying Client expectations for BIM in the next iteration of AAS

On Tuesday the 1st of November the PIG welcomed Bob deLeur, Auckland Council's head of Policy (Building) who presented Council's latest thinking regarding both Restricted Building Work and the increasingly vexing issue of Producer Statements.

Restricted Building Work:

- 1) The Building Bill No.3 will become active on March 1st 2012.
- 2) The Bill defines Restricted Building Work (RBW) as residential design and construction up to two storeys high or a maximum of up to 10 meters from the top of the roof.
- 3) The Bill seeks to ensure that RBW design and building is carried out or supervised by competent persons, and ensure that those persons can be held to account if this RBW ends up being not up to standard.

- 4) The Bill will require any Restricted Building Work (RBW) to be undertaken by a Licensed Building Professional (LBP).
- 5) The Bill will require all design and construction of RBW to be undertaken by a LBP.
- 6) LBPs (and Architects are deemed to be LBPs) will need to provide a Certificate of Work (COW) relating to their portion of the design work. An Architect would have to provide a COW relating to their observation of the work (only if engaged to do so).
- 7) A main contractor or subcontractor would have to be a LBP and provide a 'Record of Work' (ROW) relating to the work specifically undertaken. A main contractor would have to provide a ROW for the supervision of the work.
- 8) A list of LBPs involved in design or construction must be provided with the BC submission (provisional for trades not yet appointed).
- 9) The TA then issue a BC provided they are reasonably satisfied that:
 - a) the RBW design will comply with the building code with usual consideration of waivers/alt solutions etc;
 - b) the provisions of the building code would be met if the RBW are properly competed in accordance with the design; and
 - c) the work will be carried out by LBPs.
- 10) Arguably there is no additional liability for Architects- the Consumer Guarantees Act already defines liabilities and these cannot be contracted out of. Perhaps all parties including Architects are better protected because the scope of their involvement is defined, suggesting a more 'proportional' approach to liability.
- 11) Long term the regime may be rolled out further to include more complex residential work.

Producer Statements:

- 1) Producer statements were first provided for under the 1991 Building Act and primarily were used by Engineers. Engineers generally only undertake specific design, the best person therefore to assess this design is another Engineer. Hence the emergence of the Producer Statement that basically states that, in the opinion of the Author (and Peer Reviewer) the design work will reasonably comply with the Building Code.
- 2) Their use has expanded over time to include work related to trades and products.
- 3) They have grown to be broadly accepted for many disciplines- Council cannot be reasonably expected to harbor the in house expertise required in the modern commercial environment.
- 4) The PS is a voluntary system, TAs cannot insist upon their use.
- 5) Auckland has had a formal policy on the acceptance of Producer Statement 'Authors', ie persons deemed acceptable by Council to provide Producer Statements, since 1993. Some TA's do not have registers.
- 6) Auckland Council are developing a policy for their use which will broadly it will require: a) the PS 'author' to be accepted by Council; b) the PS attracts varying amounts of liability to the TA - the amount depends on the project value. Evidence of this cover is required. AON have advised that this undertaking does not compromise the Insured's (Architect's) position; and c) the use of PS must be agreed up front with the TA. Their provision on a project by Authors and Peer Reviewers (provided Council accepts them and don't then require to check the work a 3rd time!) should save Clients the often significant time involved in Consent processing.
- 7) The NZIA are working with Auckland Council to develop the Producer Statement Policy which may include an Architect specific PS endorsed by Council, NZIA and Insurers.

Observations:

- 1) The goings on with regard to Producer Statements are starting to get some real traction with the Institute, and we should be able to knock a policy into shape soon. Hopefully before Council have made their mind up for us!
- 2) Some may be concerned that making undertakings to third parties (Council) may void our PI unfounded and the NZIA have received confirmation from AON regarding this. Check with your insurance broker in case of doubt.
- 3) The use of COWs and PSs may be seen as onerous by some, but there are arguments that they may serve to clarify and record the scope of design responsibility undertaken. Does this hint at proportional liability? Remember both the COW and the PS will define the sections of the Building Code to which each relate.
- 4) The argument that the best person to assess an Architect's work may be another Architect could engender a more intelligent, more peaceable and speedier Building Consent process.