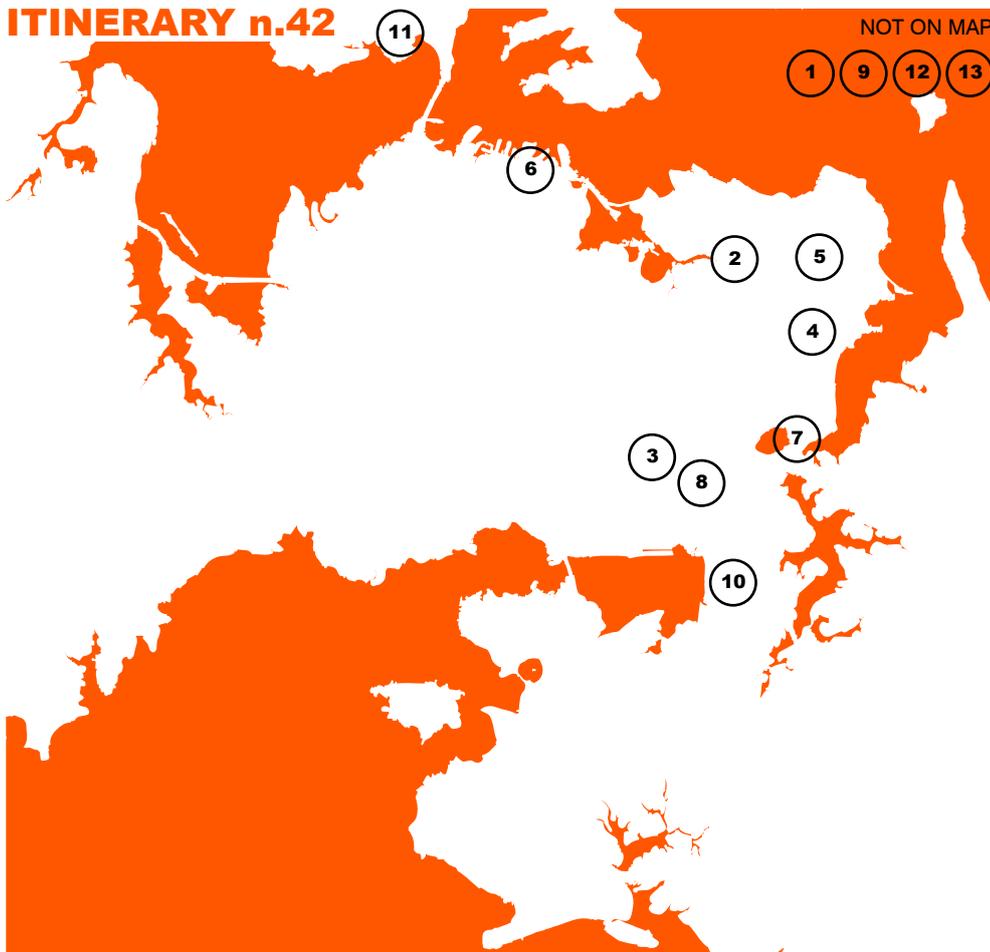


ITINERARY n.42



Rolly Adams



Brian Dodd

The work of Adams & Dodd's later incarnations, Price Adams Dodd and Adams Dodd Paterson, will be the subject of an upcoming itinerary.

Adams & Dodd 1: 1960-1970

In his best-selling book *Outliers*, journalist and “pop economist” Malcolm Gladwell described the factors that contribute to high levels of success. The most memorable idea in the book was what he called the “10,000-hour rule”, which suggests that what we call “talent” is really the skill that results from sustained practice in a particular field. Gladwell also made the case that success, particularly extraordinary success, often results from people with the right skills finding themselves in the right place at the right time. He argues that there are golden moments which create extraordinary opportunities for those ready to take them up.

A quick review of Kiwi architecture over the last 50 years bears this out – a number of the firms that have long dominated our architecture scene all emerged at around the same time. Warren & Mahoney formed in Christchurch in the late 1950s, and JASMaD (now Jasmax) just a few years later in the early 1960s. In addition to the good fortune of establishing themselves during a period of sustained high growth, what distinguished these firms was their desire to work across a wide range of building types. As well as their acclaimed residential and education projects, W&M's early work included elegantly resolved shopping malls and supermarkets (all now absent from their published portfolios). JASMaD likewise took on industrial work – their first high profile project was an NZIA Silver Medal-winning factory for Ford Motors at Wiri. Athfield Architects was established not long after JASMaD, although its progress from housing to other building types was more measured.

Established in 1960, right between W&M and JASMaD, was a similarly multifaceted firm – Adams & Dodd. The practice formed after recent graduates Rolly Adams and Brian Dodd won the competition for the University of Otago library with a design they had put together in their bedrooms. It is testament to the availability of opportunities in the 1960s that the notion of a major institution running an open, purely design-oriented competition for such a substantial project is almost inconceivable in our present risk-averse era. In an intriguing validation of Gladwell's golden moments proposition, third place in the competition went to another youngster, Ivan Mercep, then of Montreal but soon to become the ‘M’ in JASMaD.

On the strength of the Otago project, Adams & Dodd soon built up a portfolio of stylish suburban houses, church projects, and industrial buildings. From our present vantage point houses and factories seem an odd combination, but at that time the owners of industrial buildings apparently felt they could benefit from sophisticated design. During the 1950s and 1960s industrial projects – milk treatment plants, sewerage treatment plants, vehicles testing stations, cool stores, depots, maintenance bases, and factories – were frequent winners of the NZIA's Gold and Silver Medals. All that now seems to remain of this sphere of design is wineries...

The work the firm produced was what Adams calls “simple” or “no bullshit” architecture, characterized by an elegant directness, although the work that appeared in the firm's second decade when Neville Price and George Patterson appeared on the masthead was more sculptural. What happened to Adams & Dodd? Though they began alongside W&M and JASMaD, they weren't able to so quickly attract the large institutional projects that allowed W&M and JASMaD to expand and become such award-magnets in the 1960s and 1970s. JASMaD/Jasmax and W&M have shown remarkable longevity, remaining intact past the retirement of their founders. Adams & Dodd absorbed new named partners, but eventually split into two firms in the 1980s. In their two and a half decades, however, they achieved a remarkable range of architectural successes. *Andrew Barrie*

Biography:

Rolland (Rolly) Edward Vincent Adams was born in Dunedin in 1932 and studied at Otago Boys High School, while Brian J. Dodd (born 1933) grew up in Wellington and studied at Wellington College. They both completed architecture studies at the University of Auckland in 1959. The Adams & Dodd Architects partnership formed in 1960 in the wake of the Otago University Library competition. They were both still very young (Adams was 27 years old, Dodd was 26) and had been working for other architects: Adams for Crookes & Galloway and Dodd for Mark-Brown & Fairhead (Dodd was responsible for MB&F's admired but now demolished Pan American Airlines Office). Neville Price joined the firm in 1970 to create Price Adams Dodd Architects. George Paterson joined the office in 1963, was made a principle in 1970, and in 1972 joined the masthead of Adams Dodd Paterson Architects after Price's departure (he later served as NZIA President). Adams was an NZIA Auckland Branch Chair and National Councillor, and in 1984 received the NZIA Award of Honour for his contribution to the profession. Adams retired in 1997, and Dodd in 2000.

1

1960-6

University of Otago Library
Cnr Cumberland and Albany Sts
Dunedin



The architects won this million-dollar project in a 1960 competition they entered "for the experience". They developed "a pragmatic solution" which they thought would appeal to the judge, Fergus Sheppard, who ran the Ministry of Works. The design presented a vivid contrast to the MoW's then underway UoO Dental School (completed 1961) – the Library was a large, low rectangular volume with a central courtyard and built in precast concrete, suggesting a massiveness which contrasted with vertical airiness of Dental School. The atrium was designed to allow for future expansion, but this was not implemented - extensive renovations mean nothing of the original Library is now visible. See *NZIA Journal* March 1960 and Ken Fah Tsen's Building Report in the UoA Architecture Library (1968).

2

1961

Feredos House
303a Kohimarama Road,
Kohimarama



Published as a "A House for Entertaining and Relaxation", this very stylish house included "suitable open spaces for entertaining and at other times for secluded relaxation." The plan is arranged around a open-ended courtyard well sheltered from the noise of the busy street and which separates living and sleeping areas. The site has been subdivided, but the house it still in very good shape. It was occupied until just a few years ago by people of discerning taste – at night a very large Colin McCahon canvas was visible through the front windows. See *Home & Building* Dec. 1964.

3

1963

Morrison-PIM Head Office
57 Walls Road
Penrose



This office building and warehouse building was designed for a company that sold printing machines and materials. The slope of the site was usefully exploited - the partially buried warehouse floor opened to the rear while the offices and showroom on the upper floor were accessible to the street. Light is brought into the basement via dramatically arched windows at ground level. Flexibility was paramount, so the structure allowed for the addition of an extra story or to be extended to the rear. The building is currently vacant. Adams & Dodd also designed the large warehouse building at the rear of the site. See *Home & Building* Nov. 1967.

4

1964

St Mary's Anglican Church
132 Taniwha Street
Glen Innes



Photo: Studio '57

Adams & Dodd completed three church projects – for congregations in Panmure, Pakuranga, and Glen Innes. These three areas were in fact all with the same parish until the early 1960s when population growth prompted their separation. The Glen Innes church was a simple concrete block structure with dramatic ceiling lined with NZ pine. Due to shifting demographics in the area, the building was demolished to make way for social housing. See *Building Progress* Nov. 1969.

5

1964

Adams House
21 Ashby Avenue
Kohimarama



Photo: Creative Photography

Tucked down a right-of-way, this modernist gem was Rolly Adams own home. Published as "A Small House in St Heliers Bay", the aims of the design were modest: "It is designed to provide economical accommodation for a young family while making the best possible use of a pleasant, introverted site, and enjoying a degree of privacy not always available on street frontages." The house was extended as Adams' family grew. See *Home & Building* March 1965, and Stephanie Bonny and Marilyn Reynolds' *Living with 50 Architects: A New Zealand Perspective* (Auckland: Cassell, 1980).

6

1964

Auckland Seafarers' Memorial Center
Cnr French & Quay Sts, City



Photo: Sparrow Pictures

Erected as a memorial to the Kiwi merchant seamen who died in the First and Second World Wars, this complex included a hall, restaurant, library, theatre, lounges, accommodation, and an interdenominational chapel featuring stained glass windows by Milan Mrkusich. The complex was demolished to make way for port expansion, its site now lying within the Port's red fence, and its functions taken over by the multistory Auckland International Seafarers Center on Quay Street. See *Building Progress* Nov. 1961 (project), *Home & Building* Jan. 1965, and Niel Chan's Building report in the UoA Architecture Library (1967).

7

1965

ACI Operations Head Office
752 Great South Road
Penrose



This two-storey office building was built for Australian Consolidated Industries, a major South Pacific manufacturer of glassware. In 1969 ACI Operations merged with Alex Harvey & Sons, forming Alex Harvey Industries, which would eventually become part of Cart Holt Harvey, for a time one of New Zealand's largest companies. The operation is now run by the multinational, Owens-Illinois, who've recently wrapped the entire upper floor in a billboard like mesh screen. See *Home & Building* October 1967.

8

1966

St. Matthias Church Hall
5 Thompson Street
Panmure



This still crisp composition of sharp-edged white timber boxes and strip windows has been neatly tucked onto the rear of a Selwyn-era wooden church. Standing in a colonial era graveyard, the hall has been arranged to make the most of its location, providing dramatic views over Panmure Basin. The main space, with its expressed I-beam frames and high glazing, has some of the spatial qualities of the hall in A&D's now demolished Seafarer's Center. Trivia point: around the same time, well-known architect G Rix-Trott developed the color scheme used to redecorate the interior of the church.

9

1965

Cairns House
27 Walpole Avenue
Manurewa



This substantial house was designed for the General Manager of ACI following Adams & Dodd's Head Office project for the firm. This L-shaped house stands on a large flat site adjacent to wooded reserve. See *Home & Building* Jan. 1966. This is an interesting neighborhood architecturally – a Parade of Homes was held around the corner in Frank Place in the late-1950s – the most striking design is a two-storey house by Vladimir Cacala at number 4. While you're in the neighborhood, you might also like to take in Adams & Dodd's Hillpark Home at 1 Lawrence Crescent. See *Home & Building* June 1967.

10

1967

Steelweb Upholstery Factory
20 Huia Road
Otahuhu



Photo: Studio 57

This stylish factory and office was built for a furniture manufacturer. The site has a narrow frontage, but Adams & Dodd's design elegantly separated the showroom and office entry from the factory loading area. After the building changed hands in 2009, it was extended towards the street, more-or-less obliterating the original composition. See *Home & Building* September 1967. Adams Dodd also completed a factory for Steelweb at 30 Coventry Street, Levin – it is now a kitset house and garage factory, but looks in close to original shape. See *Home & Building* September 1967.

11

1968?

Rentable Flatted Factory
29 Woodside Avenue
Northcote



When published, this crisply composed complex was explained as follows: "As blocks of flats are erected to enable people to live collectively on a single section, thus sharing costs and outgoings, so this building is designed to fulfill the need for economic rentable premises enabling small businesses to share expensive land and [a] desirable locality otherwise beyond their reach." Originally divided into four tenancies, the building is now arranged as seven. See *Home & Building* May 1968.

12

1969

Law Court Building
12 Huron Street
Takapuna



This was the first Magistrate's Court on the North Shore. The courtrooms took up much of the ground level, with Justice Department offices on the second floor and an assortment of governmental offices accommodated on the top floor. The building now houses a café called "The Verdict", tax accountants, and an English school. The structure was designed for the addition of a lift and an extra floor, but the rather alarming structure that has appeared probably isn't what was anticipated... See *Building Materials News* June 1970.

13

1970

NZ Navy Hydrographic Building
19 Burns Street
Takapuna



The Navy's hydrographic service was responsible for marine surveying and developing charts for New Zealand's huge Exclusive Economic Zone – approximately 4.8 million square kilometers in size. These services were restructured in the 1990s, with control passing to the Land Information NZ. This elegant, concrete-framed building now contains commercial offices and a showroom. See *NZIA Journal* Apr. 1977.

Other Addresses:

Three Flats (1965)
**273 Kohimarama Road,
Kohimarama**

Located just down the street from the Feredos House, this block of two-storey flats is similarly well preserved.

NZ Fibreglass Administration Building (1960s)

9-15 Holloway Place, Penrose
Originally a small, single-storey building, a cunning steel portal structure allowed the building's length to be tripled and an extra story added in the 1970s. Now occupied by Tasman Insulation, who make Pink Batts.

House (1960s)
**15 Montrose Terrace
Mairangi Bay**

Demonstrating a clear Japanese influence, this house was removed to make way for a public park and is now located at 252 Bawden Road, Dairy Flat.

Mortuary Chapel (1965)
287 Manukau Road, Epsom

This interior for C. Little & Sons was, according to Dodd, only "sort of built" for a "client wouldn't listen".

A Hillside House (circa 1966)
65 Ngapuhi Road, Remuera
Victim of an extreme makeover. See *Home & Building* July 1966.

Flexible Packaging Ltd
**721 Great South Road,
Penrose** (circa 1969)

This low-rise factory was shielded from traffic of its busy location by a walls and planted gardens. Now occupied by Nuplex, its been painted several alarming shades of blue and is looking rather shabby.

House (1969)
27 Killarney Street, Takapuna
Near original but in need of some TLC.

Levin Dyeworks (1970)
15 Tiro Tiro Road, Levin
Originally a synthetic yarn plant, this large factory is now home to Levin Sawmakers.



NZ Fibreglass

Photo: Unknown

Sources:

Except where noted, the photos are by Andrew Barrie. Many thanks to Rolly Adams and Brian Dodd for their generous help in preparing this guide.

Adams & Dodd's projects were well published in the journals of the times. For a fairly comprehensive survey of Adams & Dodd's work, check out "Adams Dodd Paterson Partnership of Auckland: their work of 17 years" in *NZIA Journal* Apr. 1977. Fans might also look up Brian Dodd's guest editorial in *Home & Building*, July/August 1981, and Rolly Adams article in *Quantity Survey* Nov. 1972. The story of St Matthias Hall is told in Peter J. Taylor's *150 Years of History, 1852-2002: St Matthias Anglican Church, Panmure* (Auckland: P J Taylor, 2002) and less correctly in C.R. Knights *The Sewyn Churches of Auckland* (Wellington: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1972).



Photo: Studio 57