



Adams & Dodd 2: Price & Paterson

Like many New Zealand firms, Adams & Dodd underwent a number of transformations. After operating as Adams & Dodd Partnership for a decade from 1960, the firm morphed briefly into Price Adams Dodd before becoming Adams Dodd Paterson and Dodd Paterson Newman Pearce Architects Collective, which then dissolved into Adams Langley and Dodd Paterson in the early 1980s.

In midst of these constant shifts, the firm was for a time one of the country's larger architecture offices and maintained a high profile, winning four NZIA Awards in 1974 alone. Only one of the firm's buildings, however, has earned a solid place in our architectural canon – the West Plaza Building in downtown Auckland, completed in 1974, the design usually ascribed specifically to Neville Price. Mitchell and Chaplin's *The Elegant Shed* includes a flattering paragraph on the building, as does Terrance Hodgson's 1990 history, while Peter Shaw's 1991 *New Zealand Architecture* forces West Plaza to share a paragraph with the National Library in Wellington. Two of the three texts compare it with Gio Ponti's 1955 Pirelli Building in Milan, but all emphasize the building's sculptural qualities.

The manipulation of architectural elements to sculptural or expressive effect was a key characteristic of Kiwi architecture in the early 1970s, a period we might now understand (in this country at least) as the slow shedding of modernist constraints. Of course, the work of PAD and ADP demonstrates an entirely different sculptural sensibility to that exhibited at that time by Ian Athfield and Roger Walker – famously slated as “willful”, “fancy dress” and “hors[ing] about” by Miles Warren (*NZ Arch.* 3, 1978). Where the “A & W” work mashed avant garde components with nostalgic colonial elements, the PAD and ADP version of “sculptural” was crisp and elegant; a common description of it at the time was “futuristic”. This was a quality much in the air at the time – the golden period between the 1968 moon landing and the 1973 oil ‘shocks’ are the years from which most of the work in this itinerary originates.

There is no doubt that the arrival in 1970 of the dapper, yacht-racing, Ferrari-driving Price gave the practice an added verve - his evolving but always stylish signature is recognizable on designs developed before, during, and after his partnership with Rolly Adams, Brian Dodd, and George Paterson. The flamboyance of the firm's work might normally be assumed to suggest extravagance and profligacy, but the way the firm presented itself emphasized soundly functional design, cost control, and the completeness of their suite of professional services. West Plaza, for example, was not an expensive building – its lasting grace was achieved well within the then-current developers' financial models.

However, the firm's substantial body of work has largely faded from the story of NZ architecture, and the “A & W” style that Warren derided as having “all the hallmarks of decadent extremism” has proved enduring. It's hard to speculate as to why. We might point to the long-standing antipathy among local architectural commentators and academics for buildings with insufficiently “local” references. Perhaps it was the constant shifts in firm's membership, or the lack of a high-profile later project - many buildings become more significant as time passes due to the impact of their designer's subsequent output. Most of the buildings remain standing, however, and many have been well looked after. The story of our architecture is constantly being rewritten, and some of these buildings may yet find a place within it. *Andrew Barrie*

Firmography:

Adams & Dodd Architects was formed in 1960 by Rolly Adams (b.1932) and Brian Dodd (b.1933) after the pair won the Otago University Library competition. Neville H. Price (b.1938, Wellington) joined the firm in 1970 to create Price Adams Dodd Partnership. The firm had offices in Fiji, New Caledonia and Sydney. George M. Paterson, born in Auckland in 1940 (Dip. Arch., Dip. Urb. Val.) had joined the office in 1963, was made a principle in 1970, and joined the masthead of Adams Dodd Paterson Architects after Price's departure in 1972. ADP split in 1981, dividing into Adams Langley and Architects Dodd Paterson, the latter in turn becoming Dodd Paterson Architects Ltd in 1986 and Dodd Paterson & Bukowski Rehm Limited in 1992. From 1979-1996 the firm had also operated as Dodd Paterson Newman Pearce Architects Collaborative Ltd. Adams retired in 1997, and Dodd in 2000. Price left New Zealand in 1980 to establish a successful practice in San Francisco, but returned in 2004 and is now based in Northland. George Paterson, who served as NZIA President in 1987-88 is now a director of Pacific Environments.

1

1967-1968

Devon Park Town House
45 Stanley Point Road
Devonport



This project was built by Neville H. Price & Associates before the formation of Price Adams Dodd, but when published in 1971 it was attributed to PAD. Standing on a two-acre cliff top site, this complex includes 61 apartments in a 12-storey tower and two low-rise wings. This complex was one a number of high-rise, high-end apartment buildings that sprang up around that time - another favorite is The Pines at 75 Owens Road, Mt Eden by Welton Becket & Associates (ca.1970). See *Home & Building* Nov. 1966 and Feb. 1971, and www.devonpark.co.nz.

2

1970

Whitaker Lodge
21 Whitaker Place
City



Photo: Unknown

Another Price-designed project, this striking building sat just a few steps from PAD's offices on a site immediately adjacent to JASMaD's then recently completed International House. The motel's 25 self-contained rooms were arranged in a serrated four-story block. The accommodation was elevated on piloti to allow car parking beneath, and projecting windows and pop up roofs made for a punchy composition. The building was demolished and replaced by the towers of the Empire Apartments. See Ray Courtney's 1971 building report held in the Architecture Library.

3

1970

Professional Office Building
82 Symonds Street
City



Neville Price was designer and initiated the development of this project, described as the country's first circular office building (the plan is actually a twelve-sided polygon). At the time, Symonds Street was still predominantly residential, and this building was at the vanguard of the area's commercial development. The building briefly housed the offices of Price Adams Dodd before the office split - Price then took two floors and Adams Dodd Paterson others. See *Designscape* 38 (July 1972), *Home & Blg.* June 1972 and *Blg. Progress* Sept. 1974.

4

1971

State Rental Apartments
33 Asquith Avenue
Mt. Albert



This Rolly Adams-designed collection of one- and two-bedroom units was designed to re-house pensioners displaced by motorway construction. Built on a very large corner site, three two-storey blocks run along the site's non-street boundaries, creating a park-like setting. The units feature structural block walls and a rather aggressively geometric plan, but the current color scheme, the addition of roofing over the pergolas, and a generally ramshackle air gives the complex a casual, Mediterranean villa vibe. Winner of a 1974 NZIA Branch Award. See AAA Bulletin Sept. 1972, *NZIA Journal* Feb. 1974, *Home & Building* Jan./Feb. 1975, and *Building Progress* May 1975 (incl. cover).

5

1971

Johnson Wax Offices & Factory
29 Mahunga Drive
Mangere Bridge



This household cleaning products' company is a well-known architectural patron - its headquarters is the famous Frank Lloyd Wright-designed complex in Racine, Wisconsin. Here in Auckland, their factory and administration complex was divided into three blocks, the most interesting predictably being the administration block that faces the street. Showing the influence of post-war Japanese architecture, this Dodd design has an expressed and boldly cantilevered concrete frame that provides for expansion. See *Home & Building* March 1973 and Jan./Feb. 1975, and *Building Progress* Nov. 1971.

6

1972

MOTAT Transport Pavilion
805 Great North Road
Western Springs



Designed to display all forms of road and rail transport, this Dodd-designed pavilion was the first permanent building on the MOTAT site. The 30m by 20m open plan pavilion was configured for static displays around the perimeter and with tram tracks in the center. An adjacent maintenance workshop was also linked to the museum's network of tram tracks. Circular brick towers at the corners housed toilets, storage and access stairs to the mezzanine. The building has since been fully enclosed and built in on two sides, but the original form is still clear. It now houses intriguing displays on post-WWII Auckland. See www.motat.org.nz.

7

1972

Raines House
239 Beach Road
Campbells Bay



Photo: Unknown

Perched on a dramatic cliff-top site, this Dodd-designed house is composed as a set of glazed pavilions - one for living, another for the main bedroom, and others for extra bedrooms and garaging. These volumes are linked together to define extensively landscaped courtyard spaces, which the internal space look into and across to the view. The house, which was highly commended in the 1974 NZIA Awards, has been extended, but the good bits are still there. See *Home & Building* Jan./Feb. 1975.

8

1973

UDC House
38 Wyndham Street
City



Now called Wyndham Towers, this petite inner city office tower for United Dominions Corporation Finance Limited is a sleek composition. Strip windows on each floor project from the line of the structure out to the property boundary, created a highly sculpted facade, and the rooftop lift room reads as a capsule-like projecting tube. Interior highlights: brown and green carpets, blue ceramic tiles, custom-made globe lights, and gold drapes. The 11-storey building was published on completion by Neville H. Price & Associates. See *Home & Building* May 1974.

9

1973

Mitchell House
13 View Road
Campbells Bay



Photo: Unknown

This Paterson-designed house won an NZIA Bronze Medal in 1974, the citation reading: "The architects have made interesting use of a superb tree, cliffside site on which the house has been skillfully integrated with the natural features. It is conceived as a pavilion for living and entertaining as combines striking form with a rich interrelationship of spaces, careful choice of materials and impeccable detailing. The landscape has been sensitively designed and executed to enhance and complement the overall design." It is still occupied by the original owner. See *Home & Building* Jan./Feb. 1975 and *Building Progress* March 1975.

10

1974

Dale Motorcycle Showroom
550 Karangahape Road
City



This showroom and service facilities complex was designed to slot around two large trees that then stood on the corner of K Road and Gundry Street; motorcycle showcases were slotted in around the trunks. The building – originally finished in rich orange, yellow and brown – is now home to R&R Sport; the trees, the showcases, and almost all of the interior has been rather brutally stripped out, but the building's bones are still visible. See *Building Progress* March 1974.

While you are there, take a look at RTA Studio's nearby 582 Karangahape Road (2008) and 4 Gundry Street (2004).

11

1974

West Plaza Building
3 Albert Street
City



Another of Price's projects, this building received an NZIA Enduring Architecture Award in 2005. The citation read: "This finely scaled building stands tall on its narrow site, as noble now as when first built [...] The elegant arrangement of fins describes an ever-changing pattern for passing observers, and displays a richly layered texture on the cityscape. [...] in its contribution to the cityscape West Plaza remains a jewel to be treasured and an exemplar for future generations." See *Home & Building* April 1974, *Building Progress* May 1973 and June 1974.

12

ca. 1980

Dunholme Apartments
186 Remuera Road
Remuera



As this Adams-design complex steps down a fairly steep hillside, its seven apartments interlock to provide views over the city and the harbor beyond. A planted courtyard and garaging for the lower apartments have been cunningly tucked into the center of the almost symmetrical plan, providing further amenity. The project's then-fashionable concrete block and diagonal timber siding were originally much more visible - the high fence to Remuera Road is a later addition. See *Home & Building*, no. 5, 1980.

13

1982

East Coast Bays Public Library
8 Bute Road
Browns Bay



This Paterson design dates from after the Adams Dodd Paterson split, being completed by Dodd Paterson Architects, but has been included as something of an under-the-radar gem. Standing on the edge of the Browns Bay village green, the building exterior is almost domestically scaled. Within are a lovely series of spaces designed around a solar energy system centered on a trombe wall. The project won an AHI Environmental Award and an NZIA Local Award 1983, as well as an NZIA National Award and an RAIA Library Design Award in 1984. Open seven days. See *Home & Bldg* no. 1, 1983. Dodd Paterson was also responsible for the adjacent Senior Citizens Association Clubrooms (1979).

Other Addresses:

St Peter's Anglican Church Hall (1971)
71 Udys Road, Pakuranga
Dodd also did the adjacent Vicar's manse.

Taiāotea Kindergarten (1972)
4 Woodland Crescent
Browns Bay
Recently altered. The firm also did kindergartens at 37 Danbury Drive, Torbay (1974) and Motutapu Ave, Little Manly, Whangaparaoa (1975)

Sinclair House (ca. 1972)
19 Stillwell Road, Mt Albert
By Dodd. Now modernized.

Franklin Electric Power Board Administration Bldg (1973)
12-18 Seddon St, Pukekohe
Now home to various professional offices, this is another Adams Dodd building to have had a rather alarming extra floor added.

Were House (1972)
35 Manurere Ave, Takapuna
This house, which overlooks Lake Pupuke, was built for interior designers and sounds a treat - dark brown and textured off-white walls, exposed beams, and chocolate brown

shag-pile carpets. See *Home & Building* May 1974.

Boyd House (ca. 1974)
13 Bournemouth Terrace,
Murrays Bay

A family home built using the Lockwood construction system. See *Home & Building* April 1974 and Jan./Feb. 1975.

Manukau City Council Chambers (1977)
31-33 Wiri Station Road,
Manukau City

The first schemes were produced under the auspices of PAD, but the completed building is attributed to Neville H. Price & Associates. See *Home & Building* no. 6 1977.

James Hardie Administration Offices (ca. 1982)
50 O'Rorke Road, Penrose
By Dodd Paterson Architects. See *Home & Bldg* no. 4, 1982.



James Hardie

Sources:

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

The projects included here were well published in the journals of the times. For a fairly comprehensive survey of ADPs work check "Adams Dodd Paterson Partnership of Auckland: their work of 17 years" in *NZIA Journal* Apr. 1977. Other interesting general articles include "Architecture and Modern Management" in *Management* (NZ Institute of Management) March 1972, Winifred Willson's "Dynamic partnership operates over two hemispheres" in *Building Progress* August 1970, and Winifred Willson's "New Buildings Enhance Auckland Skyline" in *Building Progress* February 1972. Fans might like to check out writings by the firm's directors: Rolly Adams published an article in *Quantity Survey* Nov. 1972; Brian Dodd wrote a guest editorial on the role of the architect in society for *Home & Building* no. 4 1981; and George Paterson reviewed the 1987 NZIA Conference in *Architecture New Zealand* Nov./Dec. 1987.