



02 2013

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

**BLOCK**

## Making a Start in Christchurch

An Interview with Shigeru Ban, Yoshie Narimatsu, and Rev. Craig Dixon

Shigeru Ban's Cardboard Cathedral is now rising on its Christchurch site, due for completion in May. In October last year, Andrew Barrie interviewed architect Ban, project architect Yoshie Narimatsu, and Christchurch Cathedral staff member Rev. Craig Dixon about the project. What follows are excerpts from the conversation, in which the trio describe project's inception and early development.

AB: How did the project begin?

CD: In early May 2011, my wife gave me a copy of *Urbis* magazine. Reading through it I found a feature on several architects for whom sustainability was an important part of their work. One of those was Shigeru – it had a very small image, like a postage stamp, of the church in Kobe, and one paragraph of text. ... I emailed Shigeru asking if he'd heard about what had happened in Christchurch, noting that he'd responded in other areas, and asking if he'd be interested in helping out. He immediately came back saying "yes", and that he'd been planning to get in touch but the 'quake and tsunami in Japan had occupied his full attention.

Shigeru and Yoshie came over in June, and I thought we'd have a building by that Christmas.

SB: We initially tried to complete the building for the first anniversary in February 2012.

CD: I thought it would be quick...

AB: How did you go about figuring out what to do, or formulating a brief?

CD: We didn't give Shigeru a brief. We didn't have a site, and we didn't have a budget. The invitation was to come to see the situation and talk. We did eventually develop a brief among the Cathedral staff that was for a building to seat 700.

SB: They had initially asked for 500.

AB: Was that the capacity of the old cathedral?

CD: Yes, and also because the building has to pay its way. A lot of organizations would like to use it - for concerts, for example. We needed 700 seats to make it viable.

AB: So you developed the brief before the design, or they emerged together?

SB: The design was done the first day I visited Christchurch. We brought the model on our next visit a month later.

CD: We also engaged the local consultants quite early on. I think Shigeru met them on his second visit.

AB: In those first phases, the local folk all worked pro bono?

CD: Absolutely! The first to come on board were Warren & Mahoney, Beca and Holmes Consulting. They were the three that really got us moving.

AB: There was some seed funding for the project from the Prime Minister's Earthquake Fund?

CD: The Earthquake Fund gave us \$50,000 to put together a feasibility study on a temporary structure. That allowed us to bring Yoshie and Shigeru over to develop the scheme

and talk with our consultants.

AB: You had consultants in Japan too?

YN: Of course! We worked with our Japanese engineer, Minoru Tezuka, during that first month-long phase. Mr. Tezuka has been working with us for many years, especially on the paper tube projects, so he knows a lot about tubes [laughs].

SB: That was before we had contacted Sonoco. We designed the paper tubes as part of the structure, specifying the diameter and wall thickness dimensions. Afterwards we found out that the local Sonoco facilities could not produce such large tubes.

*Continued next page...*



*Rising from the rubble: Shigeru Ban's Christchurch Cathedral takes shape*

## Making a Start in Christchurch *Continued from previous page...*

AB: What creates the limitation? Don't have the same machinery as in other countries?

SB: The Christchurch factory is a fairly small paper tube manufacturer recently bought by Sonoco, so they don't have the equipment available at other Sonoco branches.

AB: The budget for the project has gone down and up and then back down, and the building is now regarded as permanent. Has this led to a change in the structural design?

SB: Originally we had timber trusses above the tubes to stop them deflecting. At this stage, the tubes were part of the structure, but they needed a certain wall thickness. Then we found out the local Sonoco couldn't produce such tubes.

AB: So that's why the trusses are gone and there are LVL beams inside the tubes. Have you used this kind of composite structure before?

SB: No, not at all. Always I try to use the paper tubes as the main structure, and also always have a local manufacturer produce the specific tubes we need. But then we found out the local Sonoco manufacturer couldn't produce them. For me, it is more important to use local materials than it is to insist that the paper tubes are structural.

AB: So apart from those enforced structural changes, the conception of the building is close to that original sketch?

SB: It's exactly the same. The only change is that we were asked for those 200 additional seats. We had an entrance covered by a canopy, so we just added some sliding doors to be able to make this area an indoor space.

AB: Tell me about the process of finding a site.

CD: It was very frustrating. Our first choice was the old site of Christchurch Girls High School at the southern end of Cranmer Square. That would have been perfect. Christ's College own that land, and they initially agreed. We negotiated to have the site for a period of three years with the option to extend it to five years, but they suddenly realized that once the building was up people would grow to love it and it would be very hard to remove. This was of course true. The College wanted in due course to develop that site for a school gymnasium or some such, so they eventually turned us down. There were obvious possibilities around the city, but no one stepped up to make an offer. ... I had a real estate agent looking at every site in the city that was being cleared and anything that was for sale, but the Diocese eventually decided they weren't willing to buy a site. There were numerous churches that had been pulled down, and there was one that would have made a suitable site but that congregation didn't want to be involved – they wanted to put up a temporary structure for their own use. We approached the City Council because we thought Shigeru's design would be great in Hagley Park, but...

SB: The city proposed that we put the building on the lake.

CD: Victoria Lake was an option.

SB: Yoshie created a drawing of a floating chapel.

AB: Wouldn't it be in danger of capsizing?

CD: Well... [laughs] Our first choice was the Christ's College site, but once they had withdrawn we began a search looking at private land, City Council land, church land, everything... But everywhere we went we just met blockages...

AB: The design had already been announced?

SB: Yes, the design was announced quite early.

CD: We had always known that the St John's site where the building now sits was a possibility. However, the Cathedral staff were nervous about that option. They wondered how, given our differing theological preferences, we might work together. I was keen to pursue that site – nothing is impossible. ... We approached them and they were willing to talk. We had a number of discussions and came to an agreement, but that took a long time...

AB: After a certain period of time sharing the Cardboard Cathedral with the St John's congregation, it will revert to being solely their parish church.

CD: We have an agreement for 10 years, to be reviewed at 8 years.

SB: When the Cardboard Cathedral becomes famous, I'm sure St Johns will want to take it as soon as they can [laughs].

AB: Have St John's become a kind of shadow client?

CD: No. Had we to up-spec some of the internal fit-out - sound or light, for example - then they would need to put some money towards it, but in the end they didn't have the funds. So they left the design it completely to us, which is kind of trusting...

AB: So the payoff for them is that they eventually get a free building to use as their church.

CD: Yes. On the remainder of their site they are building their hall and offices as well as commercial building.

AB: Funded by their insurance payout?

CD: Yes. The reason their land became available is that while they were well ahead of other churches with their rebuilding project, when they costed their design it was too expensive. They could afford to build their secondary buildings but not their church, so we asked about using that portion of their site. All Anglican church land and buildings are legally owned by Church Property Trustees, a single entity that oversees everything. CPT effectively owns it all – the question is who is given permission to use what.

AB: How supportive have CPT been of the project.

CD: Very supportive. They tend to be more business-oriented people, so they can see the sense in it.



On the way up: Shigeru Ban in the Cardboard Cathedral

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Left image: Tom Arban Photography  
Right image: Farrow Partnership Architects

## Beyond the Frame Pip Cheshire Sniffs Around Out West

Dear Sirs,

Your architectural critic has clearly been incredibly busy visiting all of the buildings that he commented on in his "Men in Black" article, Block - 11, 2012.

I am flattered that one of our projects even got a mention. Massey High School Auditorium, thank you, I didn't realise he'd visited.

Possibly on his visit he would have noted that we managed to achieve a 500 seat theatre and new school administration building for the princely sum of about \$2.5m.

He talked about the need to celebrate "site context, functionality, clarity of concept, structural integrity, honest materiality", but then criticised this project because it "appears to be assembled from a kitset of suppliers optional details". On his visit he'd have noticed the building capitalizes on its sloping site and is only made out of about three materials, a huge amount of concrete for the main building carcass lightened with aluminium and glass at the front. You couldn't get a more honest and raw building.

And in spite of that 'honest' materials palette, Michael Houston played there recently and told the audience that the acoustics were "perfect". The venue is booked out on a continuous basis and our clients are incredibly happy.

Not all projects are sexy, large budget, beautiful beach front houses.

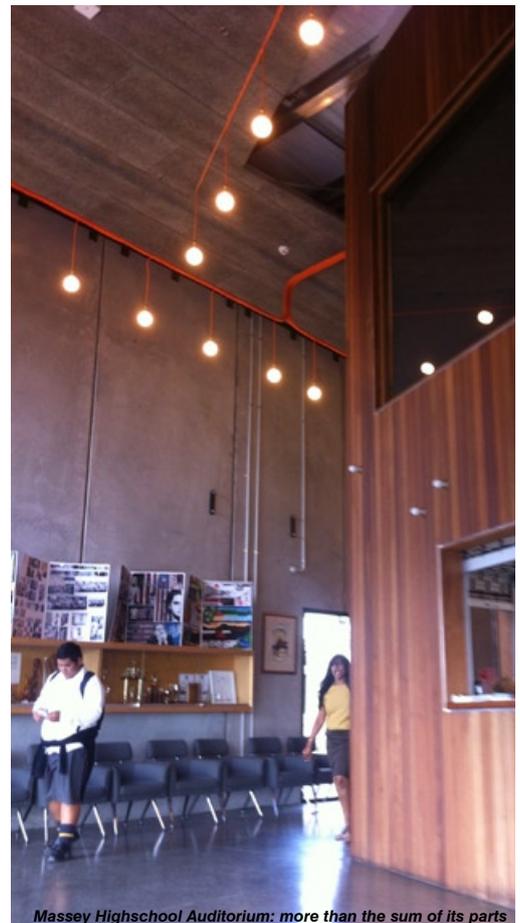
Could I suggest to your writer, if he is offering an architectural critique, he needs to do more than wander around the room with a drink in his hand looking at the pictures.

Kind regards

**Hamish Boyd** Registered Architect | Principal | Jasmax Ltd

Hamish Boyd's letter points to glib generalisations based on, as he describes it a recent correspondent's "...wander around the room with a drink in his hand looking at the pictures" at the last Auckland NZIA awards. It may be drawing too long a bow to call correspondent Marshall Cook's commentary critique as Boyd does, the feisty tone and inclusion of sartorial critique being as well suited to the popular press gossip column as to this august edition.

Continued next page...



Massey Highschool Auditorium: more than the sum of its parts

## Lost the plot? Bring them to us before you do.

If you still have valuable hard copy drawings and plans around that you don't want to lose we can scan and save them for you. Either bring them into the copycentre or give us a call and our friendly courier will pick them up from you. Our service is fast and efficient - or it was until we lost the plot . . .



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## Beyond the Frame *Continued from previous page...*

Cook's text does though highlight some interesting issues about the evolution of our experience of architecture in an age in which the whirling clouds of the internet daily deliver an inundation of projects. One need only click on the inbox to receive the daily mail and we are offered beautifully composed photographs, plans, sections, interviews and animations. Will we soon, perhaps, be delivered the code for our 3D printers to extrude a desktop marquette for our delectation?

Faced with such a tsunami of information the question arises - do we really need to visit the building any more? Need we rattle around the stratosphere, grapple with the fractured spanglish of LAX, or the arrogant rudeness of Heathrow, and prevail over the ambiguities of architectural maps only to be met with a closed gate, snarling rottweilers and a glimpse of a roof in the far distance? Better to stay home and let Archdaily or one of its many clones do the hard graft.

The increasing prevalence of awards based on photographic presentations, and the confidence of Cook bursting into print after perusing the competition panels alone, suggests that even freed from the tribulations of foreign travel as the local awards are, we might be increasingly confident in making pronouncements about the quality of a project on the basis of information edited by the project's architect alone. We understand, of course, the efficiency of this process but one wonders what is being assessed when our experience of a project privileges one sense at the expense of others.

Anyone confident in the power of the image alone to effectively communicate much about a building might seek a rerun of Patrick Reynolds' lecture on photography of a few years back, and in particular his two images of the Schroder house. In the first, a carefully composed close up, we see the house as a stand alone example of a strident and dynamic modernity, in the second a wider lens reveals the house to be a somewhat discordant addition to a row of dismal terrace houses. Our response to the house thus varies between images, the inclusion of the neighbouring structures placing the project in its social and temporal context, the narrower shot showing it simply as a construct of geometry, colour and texture.

When one visits a project, say the Villa Savoye, the importance of the project as a polemical statement is overshadowed by the wash of sensory experience, the play of light, the sound of footfall and the gradients of smell and temperature as one moves through the building. Even if one lucks upon a Citroen of similar age as the house amid the pilotis the potency of immediate experience prevails over historical contextualising. Again, we might marvel at the sculptural massing of Ronchamp on the printed page, but the shock of cold rising from the granite floor tipped as it is toward the altar provokes profound rumination on mortality, a response no photograph is likely to precipitate.

It is not the intention of the Performing Art Centre at Massey High School to engender thoughts of the afterlife, nor to rewrite the canons of twenty first century architecture; indeed both goals would be scotched by the omnipresent Ministry of Education and their legions of pedantic pragmatists. Cook's comments however argue for a somewhat lower bar to surmount in the attainment of an award - the need to avoid the "overpowering abstract geometrics of the digital age", a goal he suggests is attained through the contextualising of the subject. This is a worthy aim for all projects, but somewhat easier amid an existent built context. Working west of Te Atatu though, one searches amid the chaos for something to leverage off.

The school sits on rolling land between the upper Waitemata and the Waitakeres, a confusion of valleys and ridges overlaid with the last five decades' suburban sprawl. The campus is a tight agglomeration of buildings driven by the exigencies of reduced site infrastructure costs and minimised circulation distances. The buildings show the evolution of the school over the last decades - the buildings made at the time of the of its establishment being progressively augmented by Jasmx's labours, the Performing Arts Centre being its sixth work on campus.

The typology of closed concrete box opening through a curtain

wall toward the public street is an unusual choice for a facility in which much of the school's cultural activities find their outlet, and which consequently might be expected to be given some physical expression of that activity. This building, though, has many more agenda to satisfy and, like others of the genre - most visibly Andrew Scott Cotton's Raye Freedman Arts Centre on Gillies Avenue - it acts as the visible face of the school, the nexus between school and community, the wide open facade welcoming an audience beyond the school gates.

The building contains a 500 seat auditorium, staff administration and a café; all this in a near no frills precast box in which the careful coordination of bolts, conduits, cables, cleats, and sensors is used to create an aesthetic warmed by the insertion of a skewed timber-clad box housing toilets at ground floor and meeting rooms above.

Marshall Cook has described this project as an assemblage of "suppliers' optional details". This tells only half the story, for it is the strength of this building that it takes suppliers' 'optional' materials and components and makes a successful and enthusiastically received building with them. Boyd's letter refers to the hall's well tested natural acoustic achieved with a skinny budget, and a proud school principal speaks glowingly of both architect and outcome - no mean feat in this tough end of the industry.

If we might then consider the building with reference to Reynolds' two images, the composed close up reveals a robust building employing an adroit assembly of standard components to make a lively and successful project. If a wider view is taken we see a raw juxtaposition of discordant buildings, and Cook's critique has some resonance, though one should be mindful of the haphazardly planned ground within which the building is placed.

There is something of a paradox here; the examination of presentation boards and their carefully selected close up images has raised questions as to the appropriateness of an award, yet those who have visited the building and seen it amid its chaotic milieu have responded to qualities not apparent in the images and awarded it. This surely is an affirmation of the site visit and the critical importance of 'smelling the building', and of the Institute's commitment to a robust judging process involving site visits, long may it last. *PC*



A very successful A+W•NZ Mega Meeting was held at the new NZIA offices on Friday 22 February to enlist support for the September A+W•NZ exhibition in conjunction with Auckland Architecture Week. Contact: [architecturewomen@gmail.com](mailto:architecturewomen@gmail.com) for further information/queries/to get involved.

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## Board Response

### The NZRAB respond to last month's article "Just Registration? Fortunate Actors in Architecture's Black Comedy"

SF's article in *Block 01 2013* under the heading *Just Registration?* is an important contribution to discussion about a fundamental issue for the architectural profession. The way decisions are made about who becomes a Registered Architect is very important and SF's article raises ideas that warrant careful consideration.

In essence, SF is saying that registration in New Zealand is affected by "arbitrary factors", so that it goes to the "fortunate", rather than being "earned by the deserving". SF makes this case primarily in terms of the way some architectural graduates struggle to build up the required breadth of work experience.

This concern may reflect a misunderstanding of what registration entails and means.

Registration decisions in New Zealand are made against a standard that applicants have to meet. That standard is outlined in the Registered Architects Rules 2006, rules six and seven. The applicant has to demonstrate that "he or she is able to practice competently to the standard of a Registered Architect." The Rules then describe detailed competencies as to what that standard must cover.

To form a judgement that a person is fit to practice, the NZRAB has to be confident that the applicant is competent to practice stand-alone carrying out all stages of the architectural process unsupervised and un-supported. This is necessary because registration does not restrict architects to areas of specialisation or types of practices. By law here, and in almost all other jurisdictions, an architect is an architect is an architect. This is despite that fact that for many architects practice specialisation is the reality.

SF is correct that for registration the NZRAB "values a demonstration of experience and values knowledge gained through action". Indeed, the best predictor of future behaviour is what people have done already, rather than what they know. A person who has only studied contract administration at university does not necessarily know how to effectively and efficiently administer a contract – that also needs experience, gained under supervision.

The NZRAB accepts that nowadays some architectural graduates struggle with registration because their day-to-day work lacks sufficient breadth. This reflects the way some practices are evolving with increasing specialisation, and the traditional roles of architects during construction often being done by others. It is also harder for graduates to find other employment during economic downturns. The NZRAB encourages practice managers to give their graduate staff a diverse work experience, and to be active in preparing them for registration.

However, the NZRAB cannot arbitrarily reduce the requirements of registration in response to this difficulty. It would be wrong to register a person to do the work of an architect if there were significant parts of the architectural process about which he or she had no experience. That could put the public, and, by that, our profession, at risk. SF is correct that the NZRAB is concerned about some applicants' submitting excessively complex and lengthy case studies and delayed their applications. The NZRAB believes that some applicants are doing too much preparatory work or are hanging back unnecessarily because they think registration is harder than it really is. The NZRAB is working to correct that misperception.

The additional panel assessment that SF refers to is only required for applicants who do **not** have the required academic qualifications or work experience. That said, graduates' applications are reviewed for gaps prior to assessment and if there are significant gaps applicants are encouraged to put this right.

In addition, one-to-one advice is available to graduates prior to making their application, including about whether their work experience is sufficient. This advice is provided by the NZRAB's three regional conveners, the Auckland convenor being Tony Orgias at 09 481 0630.

Graduates considering registration are encouraged to take advantage of this. *Warwick Bell, Chair NZRAB*

## The Fine Print: February

### CHAIRS REPORT: Richard Goldie

#### AGM and Elections

The Branch AGM is scheduled for Thursday the 14th of March. It was my intention that the Committee members remain on the committee for a two years (min?), with a member 'elect' anointed at the AGM. The intent of this was to achieve some continuity between committees from year to year, and theoretically thinking, involvement in projects etc. So two things to think about. First, are you happy to have the current committee continue through the 2013 year? (if they want to), secondly, do you want a go, or do you know someone who could do a great job. Certainly being on the committee is at times demanding but it's a great way to learn what's happening and have a crack at some big issues. Give it some thought.

#### AGM and Elections

The announcement of those elected as Fellows to the Institute is normally celebrated held at the AGM. You know who they are! If you know of any good and worthy persons who you believe are deserving, please send me a short email with an explanation as to why. [richard@peddlethorp.co.nz](mailto:richard@peddlethorp.co.nz). Elections of Councillors is to take place after the Auckland AGM. National office will be advising us of the candidates, date and process in due course.

#### Money

We are preparing the budget for the year ahead. We have been advised that the Institutes finances are tight, which to my mind is entirely unexpected in these times. Having said that we intend an active year and with that comes expenditure. The building economy (Mainzeal excepted) is spluttering towards growth it seems, and there may be new or existing businesses out there who want to make an impact in the market- can we help them! You bet. So, please, if you know of any potential sponsors please get in touch.

On this subject its worth pausing a moment to consider the impact on so many, Architects no doubt included, due to the demise of Mainzeal. It seems to me we've a long way to go to achieving real stability.

We've made our annual donation to the Futuna Chapel fund and have suggested that this might be a National Office matter rather than a Branch one. We're on the lookout for a worthy project so bring them on. I'm pretty sure we aren't so flush as to purchase a late model Group house in a central suburb however (dammit). Any ideas?

Please note that, like all Branches, we also have the benefit of the NZIAs 'squirrel fund' which can distribute small sums to worthy causes. Please bring forward any ideas that might be worthy.

#### Auckland Council Liaison and Legislative Input

Auckland Council Procurement: The new year is well and truly underway, and so it's time to reignite the flame of discontent with Councils process. We still await ideas from those who have expressed concern and will take these back to Council when received. If you have some more please share. We will convene a meeting of those interested soon and hope to push this along.

Building Consenting: We have heard from members concern at the growing complexity with the process of Building Consent applications with more and more information being required. John Albert and I have met with Bob de Leur, head of building policy, and Rose McLaughlin, head of communications, both of AC to discuss this. It appears that much of the problem has arisen within the BC team through change and misunderstanding. AC have instituted a vigorous training programme to hopefully help alleviate this. They are in the final stages of developing a web based communication to which Architects will be able to subscribe. This will follow their already established process of publishing Practice Notes etc, but will communicate the subtleties of policy which seem to shift with the wind. Be sure to subscribe when it is released. You may already have seen snippets of this come out in the NZIA Bulletin.

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## The Fine Print Continued from previous page...

Unitary Plan: Vigorous lobbying by Barry Copeland on behalf of the UIG has seen Penny Pirrit's Planning team share the predraft Unitary Plan documents with an in house Branch working group. The group has prepared commentary on the draft residential rules and maps and this was shared with Penny just prior to Christmas-well done all. Barry will in time report in more detail.

Leaky Buildings, Restricted Building Work etc: (A pet subject of mine) - with the RBW/LBP regime the promoter or developer of a project, who is often at least a contributor to the cause of the problems, remains unidentified. The RBW regime means the industry is effectively indemnifying the developer against any liability for their involvement.

This is highly relevant in my view as it seems apparent that government will expand the regime to at least larger multi unit residential developments in due course. With the burgeoning demand for housing, and the Auckland Unity Plan (for example) anticipating more of this housing type being required, the market will turn to developers to deliver them. The developers will still be 'protected' by not being part of the RBW regime.

I strongly believe that the developer or promoter of a development should be recorded otherwise the industry will continue indemnifying developers.

Post GFC we are seeing directors of finance companies being prosecuted for misstatements in investment prospectuses. It seems extraordinary when these people can be dragged before the courts, but not a developer in the case of a leaky. Particularly when you consider that the man in the street's most significant asset is their house, not their cash investments.

I do think the Insurers, builders and NZIA should actively make this point to government.

### *New NZIA Premises*

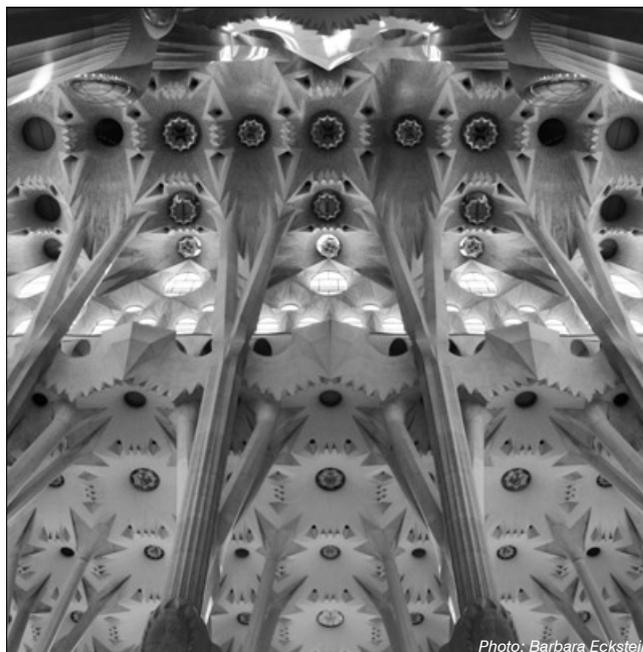
With the intent of making some noise about the NZIAs commitment to the city we have contacted the Mayor to invite him to formally open the new offices. This is scheduled for late March or April. We are also anticipating hosting other social events that we hope will further associate us with the city. Potential invitees are our sponsors, allied professionals, who knows- maybe even Branch members!

### *Local Awards*

Megan Rule has kindly agreed to convene- thanks Megan. Looking at hosting these in the lobby of the new building.

### *Architecture Week*

As 2013 is the 120th anniversary of women's suffrage A+W have kindly offered to coordinate this event this year.



*Photo: Barbara Eckstein*

## DULUX FUTUNA LECTURE

### MARK BURRY

Professor Mark Burry is a New Zealand-born architect and was a lecturer at Victoria University before moving to Australia where he is now Professor of Innovation and Director of the Spatial Information Architecture Laboratory at RMIT University, Melbourne. Mark will speak about his ongoing work with the construction of Antonio Gaudi's Sagrada Familia in Barcelona as well as his continuing spatial design research at the Design Research Institute in Melbourne.

Wednesday 13 March, 6.30pm  
Engineering Lecture Theatre 439, 20 Symonds Street,  
Auckland  
15 CPD Points

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Fees apply

## NZIA Calender: February

<b>Wed, 6th</b>	12:30 – 1:30 p.m.	<b>Passive House Facts and Fiction</b> Unitec, ScALA, Building 1, Lecture Theatre 1, Room 2075
<b>Thu, 7th</b>	6:00 – 7:00 p.m.	<b>The Swarm Landscape – Designing for a Climate Proof Future</b> Unitec, ScALA, Building 1, Lecture Theatre 1, Room 2075
<b>Mon, 11th</b>	6:00 – 7:00 p.m.	<b>Tye Farrow – Designing for Sustainability, Well-being and Resilience</b> Design Theatre, Uni of Auckland, 22 Symonds Street
<b>Wed, 13th</b>	12:35 – 1:35 p.m.	<b>Auckland's Remarkable Urban Forest</b> Unitec, ScALA, Building 1, Lecture Theatre 1, Room 2075
	6:30 – 8:00 p.m.	<b>Futuna Lecture 2013 – Mark Burry</b> Engineering Lecture Theatre 439, 20 Symonds Street
<b>Wed, 20th</b>	8:00 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.	<b>Green Property Summit 2013</b> Pullman Auckland Hotel, Cnr Waterloo Quadrant & Princes Street
<b>Mon, 25th</b>	8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	<b>Introduction to BIM</b> Graphisoft Akl, 41 Taharoto Road
	5:30 p.m.	<b>Four Futures: Auckland, Christchurch and Beyond</b> George Fraser Gallery, 25a Princes Street
<b>Wed, 27th</b>	12:35 - 1:35 p.m.	<b>The Zero Energy House Project</b> Unitec, ScALA, Building 1, Lecture Theatre 1, Room 2075
	1:30 - 3:30 p.m.	<b>elegance : resilience – Elrond Burrel</b> Unitec, ScALA, Building 1, Lecture Theatre 1, Room 2075
<b>Thu, 28th</b>	12:30 - 2:00 p.m.	<b>Evolution and Departure - James Mary O'Connor</b> Unitec, ScALA, Building 1, Lecture Theatre 2, Room 2076