

Paris Magdalinos Architects

Our desire for consistency wants creative work to directly reflect the personality of the people who make it. It is both satisfying and sensible to imagine that minimalist work must be created by serious folk, serene and scholarly, while expressionism emerges from colourful characters, all big beards and belly laughs. Commenting on whether a piece of imaginative writing, poetry in particular, is primarily a reflection of the author's personality, famed novelist and literary critic C.S. Lewis described such an approach as "The Personal Heresy". He argued that assuming a creative work - whether a painting or pop song - was autobiographical would likely lead to serious errors of interpretation. It is a critical stance, he argues, about as robust as assuming the resemblance of dogs and their owners.

In the realm of Kiwi architecture, one of the most tempting bodies of work to interpret in relation to its creator is that of Paris Magdalinos. He has been described as perhaps New Zealand's "most colourful and flamboyant practitioner", and seems always to have made a strong impression - John Blair describes him "replete with characteristic red bow tie, and large brilliant blue silk handkerchief drooping with such flourish from his jacket breast pocket." (*ArchNZ* July/Aug.'08) His architectural work was similarly colorful and extroverted. In his early years, Paris worked alongside a couple of the Hawkes Bay's most respected architects, Len Hoogerbrug and John Scott, but he was quick to shake off their influence and develop his own identity. Once practicing under his own name, he soon slipped the constraints of modernism, creating flamboyant buildings that established him as one of the nation's boldest postmodernists. It is easy to imagine the influence of Paris' extravagant Greek personality on his work, typified by structures with vividly coloured elements and soaring rooflines. There is no room for misinterpretation here, it seems - the colourful personality and extroverted architecture are indivisible.

Arriving in New Zealand in 1953 as escapees from Nazi-occupied Romania, Paris' family settled in Napier. It became his lifelong home. The son of an artist, grandson to an inventor, he latched onto the idea of becoming an architect - not just any architect, he said, but a "bloody hard-working" one. He was also a tireless servant of the profession, doing time on the NZIA Executive Committee, and being particularly involved in the reinvigoration of Institute's awards program. His contribution was recognised with a rare NZIA Award of Honour.

Paris Magdalinos Architects is still located in the heart of Napier's CBD, and remains deeply rooted in the Hawkes Bay. Unusually for a firm so closely associated with a particular personality, Paris' practice has survived his sudden passing in 2008. The business was taken over by Paris' youngest son, Nic. With a professional background in business rather than architecture, Nic has boldly developed and expanded the firm, bringing in projects both around the country and internationally - homes, commercial developments, schools and infrastructure. Many of the team who worked with Paris are still with the firm, ensuring his approach endures and evolves - PMA has already continued on for a time equivalent to a quarter of its life under Paris. Now the largest architectural practice in Hawke's Bay, PMA demonstrates consistency in all its forms - in longevity, of deeply held values, and in commitment to a place. *Andrew Barrie & Marianne Calvelo*

Biography

Paris Magdalinos was born in Constanta, Romania on 6 May 1942, squarely in the middle of World War II. Of Greek descent, his family arrived in NZ as refugees in 1953. After attending Napier Boys' High, he left at 14, served an apprenticeship as a joiner, and worked for the Ministry of Works for some years, qualifying as a draughtsman. In his mid-20s, he studied architecture at Auckland University, graduating with Honours in 1971. He rejoined the Ministry, but by the age of 30 had left to form a partnership with architect Len Hoogerbrug and engineer Bruce Williams. In 1989 he established his own architectural firm, Paris Magdalinos Architects, carrying out work ranging from top-end residential projects and commercial alterations to larger fitouts, sports facilities, and large-scale commercial developments. He received 58 NZIA awards for architecture and colour, including two National Awards, the Resene Lifetime Achievement Colour Award, and the NZIA Award of Honour for his exceptional contribution to the profession. He died in Hastings on 5 July 2008, at the age of 66. PMA, still based in Napier, continues as a large multi-disciplinary design office.

1

1980s-

Eastern Institute of Technology
501 Gloucester Street
Taradale



The EIT campus has a collection of PMA projects that range from substantial new buildings to refurbishments and color schemes. Paris' involvement spanned a period of more than 25 years, starting with his time as a young architect in the MoW's Napier office. PMA is responsible for more than half of the building on EIT's campuses. Among the more notable PMA projects on the campus are the NZIA Regional and Colour Award-winning Food Centre of Innovation (2004), the Trades & Technology Training Center (2010) – both designed by Ezra Kelly – and last year's award-winning Te Manga Maori Faculty Redevelopment.

2

1984

Mclean Park Grandstand
Latham Street
Napier



This grandstand was the product of a multi-disciplinary collaboration between Hoogerbrug, Williams and various consultants under Paris' leadership. Replacing an old timber structure destroyed by fire at the beginning of 1984, Paris' team was appointed in August of that year and charged with delivering the first stage of the grandstand in time for the 1986 rugby season. The first piles were driven within a couple of months, initiating a fast-track construction project that employed steel and fair-faced precast concrete elements to allow the swift completion of the 4,000-seat stand. This high-profile project received numerous architectural awards, including an NZIA Branch Award in 1986. See *Arch NZ* Jan./Feb. 1989.

3

1987

Road's End
512 Shakespeare Terrace
Bluff Hill



This project was an extension to a 130-year old cottage once owned by members of the Holt family, Hawke's Bay timber merchants whose company is now part of Carter Holt Harvey. The project involved a reorganization of spaces and planning within the existing single storey house and the new construction of an upper floor for extra bedrooms. Numerous elements were left in original condition and the modifications followed a similar design language right down to the details, but Paris described himself as a conservationist rather than a preservationist and bold changes were made where required by the client's brief. See *NZ Home & Building* Aug./Sept. 1987.

4

1986

UFS Dispensary
265 Emerson Street
Napier



Contentious in its time, this project required the demolition of building with a Spanish mission style façade, and was the subject of a preservation campaign by Napier Art Deco enthusiasts. The bold, Art Deco-inspired façade of the new Dispensary, completed by HMW, has since become a landmark in Napier's retail centre of Napier. Architectural critic Douglas Lloyd Jenkins has defined it as a 'superbly sophisticated example of a small scale post-modern building' and it has been recognised with an NZIA National Award in 1987 – Paris' first National award. See *Home & Building* Dec. /Jan. 1987/1988.

5

1993

Eskdale School Hall
324 Hill Road
Eskdale



Photo courtesy PMA

This project won an NZIA National Award in 1994, the citation reading: "Alongside existing school buildings, a delightful corrugated steel 'barn' has been designed to nestle snugly into a picturesque setting beneath an oak tree. A small multi-functional school hall, the building is derived from mixed rural origins. The stepping roof and the playful exterior colour scheme memorably enliven the simple form, while straightforward interior treatments lend a charm reminiscent of colonial school buildings. The children love it!" See *Architecture New Zealand* May/June 1994.

6

1995

Sacred Heart Church
425 East Heretaunga St,
Hastings



In keeping with the Spanish Mission heritage that characterises central Hastings, this building infuses this architectural style with a modern approach. Winners of a national competition held by the Church community, PMA replaced the church that had been destroyed by fire with one wrapped in smooth, cream-coloured plastered Spanish Mission façades and tiled parapets. Significant elements are the floating roof that links the entrance to the church, and the free-standing triangular wall on the street front. The roof is further extended to shelter an elevated statue of Mary - a religious icon positioned to recall 'old world' cathedrals.

7

1998-

Napier Girls High School
Clyde Road
Bluff Hill



PMA completed a number of large buildings on the NGHS campus, including the Spencer Building refurbishment (1998), the Walker Building (2001), the Hague Block (2008), and the New Hall Entrance (2009). Each has its own character, though they are united by a common industrial vocabulary of oversailing steel columns and beams, steel siding, and perforated metal. The Hague Block, a two-storey teaching block was the winner of NZIA Local and Colour Awards in 2006 - it was cited as delivering "clever space manipulation, strong and careful detailing, bold colour, and enhancement of the superb location with subtle view emphasis and indoor/outdoor opportunities at both floor levels."

8

2004

Austen-Smith House
Address Withheld
Havelock North



This house is a lasting jewel, originally designed over 30 years ago by architect Ted Wood, a former lecturer at Victoria University's School of Architecture. The construction of one stage of Wood's design was overseen by PMA, who later added a pool and reworked the house in 2004. Angular forms in white plaster give the exterior a crisp, Mediterranean quality. One of the former occupants is interior designer Noela Austen-Smith, and the house is characterised by a restrained palette of colour and materials. Winner of an NZIA Local Awards in 2004 and 2007. See *NZ Home & Building* June/July 1989, and *NZ House & Garden* Oct. 2004.

9

2009

Whare Ra
2 Tauroa Road
Havelock North



Now a Category 1 listed historic place, this building once housed, in addition to the Felkin family, the New Zealand branch of the magical Order of Stella Matutina. It was designed by Arts & Crafts hero James Walter Chapman-Taylor (who was a senior member of the Order), and completed in 1915. The order ceased to operate in 1978, and the building is now a private home. PMA added a garage and forecourt externally, and internally carved a series of service areas from sub-floor space. This project was overseen by Chris Ainsworth, and received an NZIA Local Award in 2010.

10

2009

Hastings Courthouse
102 Eastbourne Street West
Hastings



Located close to the city's historic center and adjacent to the Police Station, this slickly executed design reflects the scale and materiality of its low-rise context. A bright yellow blade wall rises above the facade to mark the entry, and a sense of openness to the street created by extensive glazing and perforated metal screens. Internally, the design effortlessly resolved complex planning problems created by the need for separate circulation routes for judges, public, and prisoners.

11

2009

Christchurch Airport
Control Tower
Drury Road, Christchurch

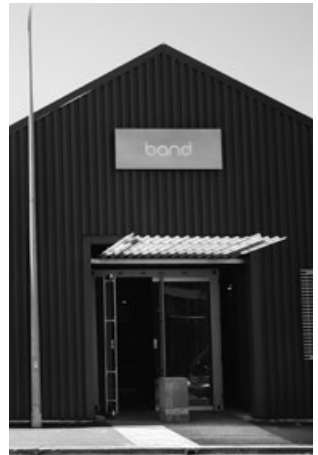


One of Paris' final projects, this 45m-high precast concrete tower is the most cheerful element in the vicinity of Warren & Mahoney's surprisingly somber entry to the airport terminal. It gets bigger as it goes up, is capped with polygonal concrete, and wrapped with a spiraling swoosh of perforated metal. The building has received numerous awards, most in 2010 - from the Concrete Industry, the NZIA, Master Builders, the New Zealand Institute of Building, and the Property Council. See *Architecture NZ* Jan//Feb. 2010. PMA also designed the Napier Airport Control Tower, winner of an NZIA Local Award in 2003.

12

2010

Band
50 Ossian Street
Ahuriri



On winning an NZIA Local Award in 2010, the citation for this building read, "The dynamic entry bursts out into a stripped back, light-filled, industrial cavern. Simple spaces and authentic detailing have created a flexible and contemporary piece of architecture. Clever use of a client-relevant CMYK colour palette is a strong and successful gesture. This is a classic case of 'less is more'." The project was designed by Ian Seddon.



Other Addresses:

Taylor Residence

52 Hardinge Road, Hastings

A 1990's conversion of two houses into one. See *NZ Home & Building* Aug./Sept. 1993.

F & G Smith Building

9A Ossian St., Ahuriri

HortResearch Campus

Cnr Crosses & St George's Rds, Havelock North

Winner of an NZIA Resene Award in 2002.

Ohiti Residence, Stables, and Guest Accommodation

667 Ohiti Road, Fernhill (2006)
Recipient of an NZIA Local Award in 2007.



Sources:

Except where noted, the photographs are by Marianne Calvelo or Andrew Barrie; the drawings are courtesy Paris Magdalinos Architecture. Many thanks to Nic Magdalinos for his help in preparing this guide.

The work of Hoogerbrug Magdalinos Williams and Paris Magdalinos Architects has been well published in local architecture journals. John Walsh's extensive interview with Paris was published in *Architecture New Zealand* Jan./Feb. 2007. Tributes to Paris' life and work can be found in obituaries penned by Brian Elliot, John Blair, Marsh Cook, Neil Cotton, John Balasoglou, and Mary Shanahan published in *Architecture New Zealand* July/Aug. 2008. Adrienne Rewi and Euan Sarginson's *Architects at Home: Thirty New Zealand Architects & Their Houses* (Christchurch, Shoal Bay Press, 1995) includes a chapter on Paris.

See also Paris Magdalinos Architects website:
www.pmachitects.co.nz