



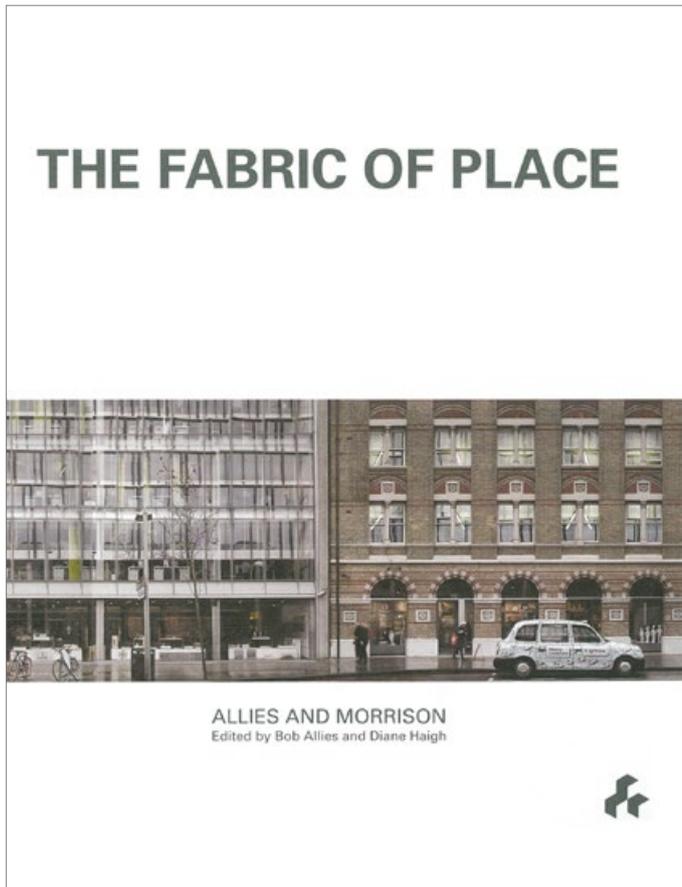
07 2015

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

**BLOCK**

## Nothing to See Here

Allies and Morrison's *The Fabric of Place*



Surprisingly, it is often humble things that are the most effective at making us. Citing examples like the clothes we wear and the implements we eat with, Miller highlights how the less aware we are of things, the more powerfully they can set the scene and influence our behaviour. Some of our most influential things – and the ways in which they are influential – are blindingly obvious.

The city is one scene set for life, a powerful influence on individuals and societies, and something that makes us just as much as we make it. And yet while Alberti described the city as being like a great house, is it possible it's also like many other things aside from a house? Can the city be like a bookcase full of books? Or like cushions on a couch? Does the city, in its all-pervasiveness, influence us in a blindingly obvious way? And are good cities, or good parts of cities, made good by humble means? To paraphrase Miller, are the things that make a city good so sufficiently evident that they can reach a point at which we are blinded to their presence, rather than reminded of their presence?

A recent book by award winning British architecture and urban planning practice Allies and Morrison offers a reminder of the humble qualities of good city centres and a cautionary tale of being blind to things which may be sufficiently evident.

*The Fabric of Place* presents 17 major urban projects the firm has carried out over a 15 year period. Amongst the case studies are a number of essays – many by founding partner Bob Allies – that speak plainly about the urban principles the firm holds dear and also the wrongs wrought by 20<sup>th</sup> century town planning. Some unsavoury things happened in the past – rapid uncontrolled growth; the bulldozing of ring roads round town to prioritise fast vehicle movement at the expense of pedestrians; the zoning and separation of activities; the evacuation of city life to peripheral business parks with the consequent destruction of the social and economic viability of traditional town centres; changing economic models that fostered the aggregation of city sites and then changing technologies and expectations of building that saw those sites occupied by buildings preoccupied with, and capable of, standing out rather than fitting in. Together, this heady mix led to the erosion of the continuity of the fabric of town centres.

*Continued next page...*

Some anthropologists believe things make us as much as we make them. The stuff we have around – chairs, cushions, rugs, books, shelves – guide our behaviour within our cultural context. Daniel Miller, author of *Stuff*, suggests children learn to make their way in the world by rehearsing routines that involve regular interaction with things. This way of learning shapes individuals and societies and extends well beyond childhood. Things, Miller says, make us the people we are.

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## Nothing to See Here *Continued from prev page...*

Over the course of 30 years, Bob Allies, Graham Morrison and their approximately 170 staff have established a reputation for successfully rehabilitating damaged places. And while Morrison acknowledges their urban regeneration work is “not cutting edge,” they’re not shy of passing cutting commentary on colleagues whose designs veer close to repeating past errors. In a speech given some years ago at an *Architect’s Journal* awards ceremony, Morrison turned the blow-torch on the impulse for the iconic that has, in his eyes, led to an array of “second-rate structures, all shrilly demanding attention, without any relationship to each other.” His fear, of course, is for the effect such iconic desperation has on the city - “Too many iconic buildings and the fabric of the city is distorted, but too few and the city is dull. It is the quiet strength of ordinary streets and unexceptional buildings that allows the icon to be special.”

Some aggrieved by Morrison’s comments responded in kind. Piers Gough, director of London-based practice CZWG, turned the idea of ordinary streets and unexceptional buildings on its head, firing back that no one would “cross a street to look at an Allies and Morrison building.”

Gough makes a good point, though perhaps not the one he was hoping for. As *The Fabric of Place* shows, there’s no reason to cross the street and take a look because Allies and Morrison trade on the blindingly obvious, on architectural principles and urban qualities so frequently encountered and so sufficiently evident they’re often unseen. Like the Victorian and Edwardian architects Allies lauds for their ability to integrate new buildings into the city fabric, Allies and Morrison also seek to contribute to a continuum, to help build streets more so than individual buildings.

Citing Aldo Rossi, Allies contends the city is a ‘collective artefact.’ What city buildings have in common is therefore more important than what sets them apart. To help city centres cohere, Allies and Morrison try to maintain the continuity of urban fabric. A proposed building or space must conform to some of the historic urban and architectural conventions of a place. For this to happen, one must first have the experience to identify what those conventions are and how they play themselves out in a particular context. Then one must be willing to conform. In making this point, Allies draws an analogy with the handshake and the embrace as two conventional behaviours that inform all kinds of human relationships. He says it is because of such conventions that human relations can reach a level of intimacy. Likewise, it is because of architectural conventions that urban space can retain an intimate, enclosed, and intense character.

The case studies in *The Fabric of Place* include the redevelopment of London’s King’s Cross, the master planning of Sheffield’s city centre, the design of the BBC media village in White City, and the generation of the London Olympics 2012 legacy masterplan intended to fundamentally change East London’s urban prospects. Across this range of projects, one feels the firm’s repeated attempts to set to work the values of continuity and consistency. There is an ongoing search for inherited patterns that can be reinterpreted to help damaged areas cohere once more. And there is the recurrent desire for modern redevelopments to produce places with an intensity equivalent to those experienced in the best historic centres.

The consistent repetition of the same principles across various projects has an almost haunting effect and prompts a worrying acknowledgment of how vulnerable the city is to blind change. Allies and Morrison describe their designs in terms of things that seem so obvious. But each design is of course trying to repair a place where, in the past, the obvious went unseen. The blame for this is laid at the feet of 20<sup>th</sup>-century town planners, but Allies acknowledges how past decisions were made by intelligent people confronting the issues of their time; people armed with all manner of data pointing the way to the future. But despite this, much damage was done and so the lesson to be taken is how easily the obvious can become the blindingly obvious, particularly with something like a city – this omnipresent scene for life. In many respects, the interest in a book like *The Fabric of Place* lies not with any judgement of whether Allies and Morrison buildings are worth crossing the street for. The interest lies in the way in which this mix of case studies and essays reminds one of the city’s vulnerability. SF

## The Fine Print: July

### CHAIR’S REPORT: Lindley Naismith

*Ports Expansion:* Among the most exciting things to happen since our last meeting was the news on 19 June that the legal action taken by Urban Auckland had been won, and later that neither Ports nor Auckland Council intended to appeal. Congratulations and thanks again to all involved. Donations can still be made to the fighting fund at <https://givealittle.co.nz/org/stopstealingourharbour>.

*Port Future Study:* The NZIA nominated Pip Cheshire and David Mitchell as our representatives at the Stakeholder Plenary Session last week that initiated this much anticipated project. The by all accounts chaotic proceedings that followed resulted in Julie Stout and Barry Copeland being elected onto the Consultative Working Group that will oversee the PFS.

*The Friends of St David’s ‘The Art of Remembrance’:* Sales of the individual quaterfoils making up the Max Gimblett art installation cloaking St David’s Church will provide funds for its restoration. Order the best value Max Gimblett you’re ever likely to come across by visiting [www.rememberthem.nz](http://www.rememberthem.nz) and please also show your support by ‘liking’ The Art of Remembrance’ Facebook page.

*Improving Collaboration Between Architects and Engineers:* Michael Thomson and I attended an IPENZ Auckland Branch meeting at their invitation to discuss how we might advance this initiative. Thank you to the members of committee who contributed some terrific material for the meeting at short notice. Mutual circulation of newsletters was talked about and we subsequently publicised through the Bulletin the IPENZ Auckland Waterfront Walking Tour. (Download the ‘IPENZ Engineering Tours’ app from either Apple or Google App Stores). Potential Tuesday IG presentations and something for AAW15 were mooted too.

*Talk by Brisbane Architect Paul Owen (formerly Owen & Vokes):* Piggy-backing on his trip to New Zealand for the Waikato BoP Branch Mid-winter Function and in the spirit of Branch collaboration, we have arranged for Paul to speak in Auckland on Wednesday 29 July at Zurich House.

*Feedback:* Feedback was provided from the Branch on both the Draft Code of Ethics (Courtney Kitchen) and this year’s Auckland Awards (Minutes of Branch Committee Meeting 9 June).

*Recruitment:* I’ve had heartening approaches these last few weeks from enthusiastic members (well, two) putting their hands up for involvement in the committee and in awards juries. It was great to see the Jasmx announcement of 4 new principals last week. Of the 4, 3 are current or past members of this committee; Sarah Hadyn, Jerome Buckwell and Neil Martin. We only take the best!

*Architecture+Women:* The AGM was held on 11 June at NZIA, Zurich House. Support A+W.NZ goals, events research and publications and become a Friend of A+W.NZ and/or join the A+W core group or a sub group <http://www.architecturewomen.org.nz/friends-aw.nz>. A speed-mentoring evening at ‘Little & Friday’ on 24 June was well attended and well received. Coming up on 26 September as part of AAW15 are; Learn a Wiata, Wiki Bomb - Rewrite History Occasion, Speed Mentoring Session and ongoing and later Auckland University Gender history ongoing research, and 2017 A+W.NZ Awards in Wellington <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Architecture-Women-NZ/248360245223057>

*Committee for Auckland:* Next event is a ‘Dialogue Session with Mayor Len Brown’ 12.15–2pm Tuesday 14 July. A work-in-progress is to seeking assistance from the Future Auckland Leaders Alumni via Marianne Riley in funding our ongoing membership of this programme.

*Continued on p.5...*



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## Blink, Blink

What's keeping Pip up at night?



Photo: Russell Street

Lights, camera, action?

Is this one of the latter stages of intolerance toward the new? Am I now entering that world in which so much of the new seems too much like a panel beaten past, and the rest like trivial nonsense? It's not an unhappy place provided that one is allowed to go unquietly into the night - to rain obscenities down upon the latest offence.

What now I am asked by a family too saturated in my extravagant bile?

Well, not surprisingly its architecture, a building, one building in particular: The Cloud, that intestinal enclosure lying along Queens Wharf. Actually it's not the building that bothers me, in fact I rather like it, no its the fact that it seems to be having a party on its own thanks to the dubious glory of LED lighting that really makes me aware that I am fast becoming a grumpy old man, curmudgeonly some would say.

With the regularity of a lemming, or the erratic flowering or some exotic plant, I am attacking our poor villa yet again - ripping out the last vestiges of its Victorian genesis and the gib stopped contortions of a previous alteration's post modernity in a tragic affirmation of architectural agency, visiting half-finished ideas and impromptu drawings upon the gracious and philosophical builder Nigel Tizard and confusing the poor cat who sits marooned in the middle of the street surrounded by subcontractors' vans.

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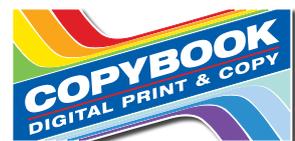
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## Blink, Blink *Continued from prev page...*

I have decamped, the fear of not replacing the gentle home of recent memory with anything better is too hard to face every day. The promise of the new seems not to compensate my partner for the inconvenience of no kitchen or roof or of foundation posts bursting through the once lovingly polished floors. By great good fortune we have fetched up in the Reynolds apartment in the Endeans Building, corner of Queen and Quay, graced with an outstanding view of Queens Wharf and an excellent architectural library. There are many delights to this outlook, and not a few surprises as one lifts the morning blinds to reveal a thousand Macs and Marthas from Minnesota on the foredeck of a berthing cruise ship gazing into our dishevelled boudoir.

The wharf, from my seat, is an opera set enlivened by the imagined stories of the thousands who traverse it daily; packaged bus tours at dawn from the foot of the gangplank, a sunburnt pair from a day at Waiheke, a surge of midweek commuters, the slow dance of day-glow vests ordering the traffic. But always late at night in mid stage, the scene is lit by the metronomic flow of red and purple, back and forth down the innards of that ill named structure. Though it may be cloud like by day, by night the outer form is diminished and it is all interior, a gullet, slow pulsing, awaiting a crowd. The relentless illuminations have a tragic quality, like a deejay's patter in an empty club; it demands an occupation, though one is unlikely to come at this bewitching hour.

It is the repetitive simplicity of the light's programming that is so disturbing, as if our attention span were so short that we might not remember the sequence of, well, twenty seconds ago. This is not the first time I have been bothered by the witlessly repetitive. Just as the Cloud occupies my centre stage now so the view from that poor battered villa is dominated by the wonderful Skytower. From our grandstand I eagerly watched the tower rise, hoping that it might go forever like Jack's concrete beanstalk. It was not to be and its completion was marked by the trivial blinking of a red light. I wrote to the Herald suggesting that perhaps the light might be hooked to the pokies, that a big payout might set the light pulsating in celebration before subsiding again into lugubrious torpor, a reflection of the morose actions of punters feeding the insatiable machines below. Gordon replied, via the Herald, that regulation so and so of Civil Aviation dictated a light of a certain wavelength flashing at a certain rate to warn low flying planes and helicopters. I still, after a couple of decades, don't understand why regularity is required, indeed it is the very irregularity of lighthouses that gives them meaning- why not the maps of aerial pathways notated with "Skytower- irregular flashing lights building erratically to a crescendo at any time"?

This is just part of the city's tableau, a kinetic background playing increasingly to its own tempo. A lifetime ago a Peter Sellars satirical travelogue mocked small town America with its ever changing lights switching from green to amber then red, and back to green again. It completely described all we needed to know about his mythical creation, Belham. But let him, were he to be still on this mortal coil, try that now. So completely have unseen controllers taken command of the night that we inefficient bundles of flabbyware are becoming increasingly redundant. If incontrovertible proof of this were required might I direct you to that pulsating gullet on Queens Wharf where the odd shambling silhouette of a passer by is all that breaks the certainty of the Cloud's progression through the digital rainbow.

Lest you think this is a rare event I should refer to a client who braved LA's I5 to return home, fortunately not to a house of my making, after an arduous day at the office only to find that while he may be responsible for the house's outgoings, that counted for nought when the house felt in need of letting its hair down. My client approached the front door with that wonderful elan that seems born of California, a mix of relaxed confidence and the certain knowledge that the one is in the promised land, only to be met with utter indifference. The house refused admittance, though clearly it was having a good time; lights and blinds running through their various phases and the gentle strains of Sinatra rising above the gurgling of the spa pool.

Were this to be a one off, the normal run of post contract shakedown woes it might be the stuff of bar talk but the same client recounted a situation where he inadvertently locked the keys for the Hummer inside the machine while out in the Sierra Madres. The options are few, a vehicle built to shrug off the villains of LA's mean streets was going to take something more serious than a coat hanger to breach its defences, and a call to the supplier was the only recourse. After the normal run of questions to establish identity and ownership the company obliged, the operator asking my client to wait a little while they positioned a satellite. It seemed a long shot, at best a great sales pitch, yet after about quarter of an hour the locks sprang open and the vehicle purred into life - without the keys in the ignition.

I am really not sure what to make of this stuff, but I think the fast approaching 'internet of things' will offer the best, and worst, of all possible things; help from on high for the stranded, the estrangement of occupant from the domestic hearth intense irritation for the sleepless on the waterfront, and perhaps the pokies might just hotwire themselves to the Skytower's witless beacon and put on a bit of a show for us all. PC



### Block Lecture 2015

The Block Foundation is delighted to announce the annual Block dinner on the night of Tuesday September 29<sup>th</sup> at the Northern Club. Metro editor and astute urban commentator Simon Wilson has kindly agreed to deliver the after dinner lecture that will address 'the state of the art'.

Tickets must be purchased in advance and are \$95 per person. The ticket price includes a three-course dinner and drinks. For further information and to purchase tickets, please email Sean Flanagan – [sean.flanagan@monkmackenzie.com](mailto:sean.flanagan@monkmackenzie.com)

## NZIA Calender: August

<b>Wed, 19th</b>	6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.	<b>Fast Forward Lecture – Performative Tectonics – Philip Yuan</b> Engineering Lecture Theatre 439, Building 401, 20 Symonds Street
<b>Thu, 20th</b>	12:30p.m. – 1:30 p.m.	<b>Unitec Scale Seminar – The Moorish Legacy – Sue Wake</b> Building 1, Room 2075, Unitec, Entry 1, Carrington Rd, Mt Albert
<b>Mon , 24th</b>	5:45 p.m.	<b>Auckland Branch – Urban Issues Group – ACDC 15 Rockin' the Unitary Plan – Patrick Fontein</b> NZIA Office, Level 5, Zurich House, 21 Queen Street
<b>Tue , 25th</b>	5:45 p.m.	<b>Auckland Branch – Environmental Issues Group Presentation – A roof over your head – Jon Davies</b> NZIA Office, Level 5, Zurich House, 21 Queen Street
<b>Wed, 26th</b>	6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.	<b>Fast Forward Lecture – The Ideal City – Colin Fournier</b> Engineering Lecture Theatre 439, Building 401, 20 Symonds Street
<b>Tue, 1st Sept</b>	5.45 p.m.	<b>Auckland Branch – Practice Issues Group – Enterprise Risk Management (ERM)</b> NZIA Office, Level 5, Zurich House, 21 Queen Street

## **The Fine Print** *Continued from p.2...*

### **UoA STUDENT REPORT:** Sam Aislabie

Exams and assignments concluded last month and all but the 5th year thesis students have been on holidays. Last week ArchEng took place in Wellington with architecture and structural engineering students from Vic, UoA, Unitec and CPIT pairing up to work on a 48 hour design charrette. Not only was this excellent for exposing both disciplines to the thinking and processes of the other but it was also a chance to meet and socialise between all the architecture schools in the country - something that happens all too rarely. This committee has spoken several times of the need to collaborate with engineers more closely and I think this workshop is an excellent initiative in this regard. I understand the NZIA already supports the event and I can only hope they continue to do so and the event grows to include more students in the future.

### **SANNZ REPORT:** Sam Aislabie

*Congress:* Last week almost 30 students from across UoA, Vic and Unitec attended the 2015 Australasian Architecture Students Congress in Melbourne. It was a full on, well executed conference that matched the scale and quality of the NZIA in:situ conference earlier this year. It included a fantastic lineup of international speakers such as Takaharu Tezuka, Steve Larkin, Laurent Guitierrez (of MAP) and our own Julie Stout along with some big local names, namely Sean Godsell, Troppo and Jeremy McLeod. While our own national conference this year was fantastic, I think there is a lot to be learned from these more informal student ones. For one, the theme was more specific, starting with the proposition - "architecture is not about form but formations of people" which dictated the curation of the speakers and clearly their briefing as they all stuck to it fairly rigorously. The format was also more conducive to discussion with speakers being paired into a sub-theme followed by a half hour panel with both of them in which the conference theme could be more thoroughly interrogated. The inclusion of a 3 hour workshop was also notable, in which 16 Melbourne architects ran short design charrettes and exercises with small groups of students.

On the last day of congress, students pitched to host the following congress in their home city. Auckland and Wellington put in a small joint pitch but were unsuccessful. It would be interesting to know if we have the NZIA's backing were the pitch to be successful? Despite the student creative directors, it was no doubt the administration and funding sourced by the AIA that made the congress such a success.

We also met up with many members of the SONA Executive including the current and future presidents. We discussed the possibility of running a 24-hour design competition (Superstudio) across NZ and Australia concurrently next year.

The next congress is to be held in 2017 in Sydney to the theme 'Agency', looking at the soaring house prices in Sydney and the ramifications for a new generation who may not be able to buy their own home (sound familiar?). I cannot recommend attending congress enough! It was a fantastic time!

### **UNITEC STUDENT REPORT:** Jonnel Mamauag

Not much to report as the majority of June is filled with end of semester hand-ins, exams and reviews for the thesis proposals at UNITEC.

One main event though is the meeting that the dean of the "Creative Industries & Business", Dean Leon Fourie, had with the current student body of the Architecture School for UNITEC, discussing the rumoured changes in campus. Certain issues were of high concern to the students, and some were already common knowledge. One of which is the move of the department to the southern end of the campus, due to the plan of making the campus more compact and cost-effective. As managing a larger campus is easier than a larger one, which was a no-brainer really. Another issue of concern to the student body in attendance

was the fees and the "fear" of UNITEC dropping the Master of Architecture programme altogether. Dean Fourie, pointed out that fees and how to best manage it so students can make the most of it is in review, and thus the big moves in the next 20 years for the polytechnic has been considered and proposed to address those issues. The master of architecture degree will stay, with him pointing out that it is a "jewel" in UNITEC's academic crown and the degree is now a norm for the Architecture profession. It would be a "silly" move for UNITEC to drop it, in regards to the ethos of real-world learning, when the degree is in line with what is happening in the industry right now.

A bit of comfort came out of that presentation and meeting. Though there is a lot that could happen in that 20 year plan. Current and graduating students will surely be following the progress of these said "improvements".

On other news, I (*along with Sam Aislabie*) and other selected students throughout New Zealand, studying Architecture & Engineering participated in the ArchEng2015 workshop. A three-day workshop, held this year in Wellington, with the aim of which is to engage students in project collaboration. This was a great initiative I think, not to mention the free flights & accommodation. This event has only been going for no more than 5 years, and I feel that a series of events of this magnitude would be beneficial for everyone in the built environment & construction industry.

### **GRADUATE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION:** Bobby Shen

There was a good turnout at the Demystifying Risk seminar on the 24<sup>th</sup> June. Graduates had the opportunity hear about professional risk, liability, legal issues and insurance from Graham Strez, who has great experience in this field. Although a heavy topic for an after-work seminar, the graduates, many who are very close to becoming a registered architect and potentially assume greater responsibilities, were able to fully take in the significance of such a talk.

There will likely be another talk about risk as demand was high, focussing more on registration and how to address risk in the case study and professional conversation. The event was filmed and will likely be put up as a graduate online seminar.

The Pathways event for final year students and recent graduates is on the books again – an event that allows them to have an informal group chat with different practitioners and the options put before them when joining the architectural profession.

### **DESIGN ADVOCACY:** Jo Aitken

*Social Media and Online:* DATC continues to promote Urban Design initiatives and Architecture. Note that the Harbour Bridge cycle way, 'Skypath', was awarded Resource Consent, which takes us a step closer to living in a city where cycling is a viable transport option for a significant % of the population.

*Advocating Design through the Procurement Process:* Comparative to other countries, the New Zealand Architecture Scene is lacking competitions and competitive design processes. Changing the procurement process is one way to tackle this: Requiring the need for a Design based assessment (DBA), in addition to or in lieu of the Qualification based assessment (QBA). Competitions are also helpful in terms of giving the profession more publicity through exhibitions and media.

*Auckland Architecture Week and Events:* We are working with Jessica and Sam on developing this event over the next few months – with a base programme already established.

We have met with Waterfront Auckland who would like to be involved, as a key development organisation for Auckland with a lot of interesting projects under development. They have offered their spaces in Wynyard Quarter for any events that week. We have discussed the possibility of making the 24hr student competition, to be held during Architecture Week, a public event in a public location. We have also discussed the possibility of showcasing higher density (apartment) living as a relevant topic of interest.

*Continued next page...*

Waterfront Auckland are looking into hosting an 'Open House' event in October 2015. This is an annual event that is already running in several cities worldwide such as London, New York, Rome, Chicago, Dublin, Barcelona, Lisbon, Vienna and so on. It is a simple but powerful concept: showcasing outstanding architecture for all to experience, for free. It is an event that invites everyone to explore and understand the value of a well--designed environment.

#### **URBAN ISSUES GROUP:** David Gibbs

*Meetings:* At a very well attended meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> June Julie Stout gave a briefing on Urban Auckland's successful High Court action against PoAL and Auckland Council opposing the Bledisloe wharf extensions. David Gibbs, Graeme Scott, Christina van Bohemen and John Mackay spoke of their recent attendances at Unitary Plan hearings, mediations and workshops. Bruce Howe, will speak at the next meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> July. After a successful career in software development in the US, Bruce has returned to Auckland, where his pre-occupation is now researching the translocation of container ports from the downtown business districts of major capital cities around the world to nearby sites better suited to handling the increasingly larger container ships now in use in international trade. The timing of this talk is excellent, with the Ports Future Study having just commenced

*Ports Future Study:* Pip Cheshire gave an amusing account in the NZIA Bulletin on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July of the meeting to kick off the PFS on the preceding day attended by him, Julie Stout, David Mitchell, Barry Copeland and David Gibbs amongst some 70 others. Despite the bizarre nature of the meeting, the irregular election process to the Consultative Working Group who will oversee the project produced a good result. Julie Stout and (with some luck) Barry Copeland have been elected to that influential group.

*Auckland Unitary Plan:* NZIA's participation in the PAUP process continues its unrelenting and exhausting path. Graeme Scott has been particularly enmeshed this last month in hearings and workshops on residential development controls. David Gibbs has been participating in a expert group attempting to define the supply of housing likely to be created by the Unitary Plan. The same group is also looking at population growth projections. This work is a vital input to the Unitary Plan and will inform how much pressure is needed on upzoning to meet the demand for residential land. They will report back to the AUPHP late July.

*Housing We'd Choose Report:* On Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July Auckland Council released a major new report called *Housing We'd Choose*. It surveys a statistically significant sample of Aucklanders about their preferences for housing typologies and locations within the context of what the participants say they can afford to buy or rent. It produces some surprising results about the appetite for denser forms of housing. The timing of this report is very useful as the AUPHP heads towards consideration of submissions on residential zoning. The report can be downloaded from Auckland Council's website via this link: <http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/EN/planspoliciesprojects/reports/technicalpublications/Pages/technicalreports2015.aspx>  
You'll need to scroll down till you get to TR2015/016.

#### **DESIGN – ENVIRONMENT:** Hannah Andrew

We are working to arrange EIG presentations for the remainder of the year; Richard Cullingworth and Simon Harrison are pencilled in to talk about the Auckland Design Manual and Universal Design (see below) on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September, and hopefully Thomas van Raamsdonk and Jon Davies from ProClima will do another engaging presentation or workshop later this year.

#### **Universal Design (by Richard Cullingworth)**

At the beginning of 2014, an in-depth review of the accessibility of our building stock was instigated by the MBIE. The resulting consultation report "Access to buildings for people with disabilities - June 2014" can be found at [www.building.govt.nz/access-to-buildings-for-people-with-disabilities](http://www.building.govt.nz/access-to-buildings-for-people-with-disabilities)

Whilst this review identified a number of issues, an extract from the report states:

*Almost all of the organisations representing people with disabilities who were interviewed felt that 'access for people with disabilities' should be amended to 'universal design and access'. A few were concerned that changing the terminology to universal design would result in a loss of focus and disadvantage people with disabilities. A change to the use of 'universal' design was also supported by many of the TA representatives.*

Prior to the consultation report being published, Auckland Council had held the first Universal Design Conference in New Zealand and the NZIA Auckland Branch had received a presentation on Accessibility and Universal Design by Richard Cullingworth, one of the speakers at the Conference.

MBIE is now progressing investigations into changing the Building Code to a Universal Design approach and Richard Cullingworth is working with Auckland Council to develop a Universal Design hub for the Auckland Design Manual (ADM). It would appear that change is in the wind and it is important that members are aware of these developments and are able to contribute towards them.

It is easy to assume that universal design describes an end product that is accessible, understandable and usable by everyone; this is not the case. Universal design is an approach to design and not an end in itself; it is similar to the Human Centred Design approach used in product development or the Co-Design approach that is currently being used for the new Middlemore Mental Health Unit.

In the built environment, universal design has 4 aims: firstly, that *everyone* is considered; secondly, that everyone is able to gain easy access *everywhere*; thirdly, that *everything*, everywhere is accessible, understandable and usable by everyone, and; fourthly, that everything that everyone everywhere does is achievable *every time*. Some will say that universal design is impossible because you can't design a single thing that is suitable for everyone, but this is why these are aims and not minimums to be achieved.

The Access Review clearly shows that meeting the minimum accessibility requirements of the current Building Code does not produce buildings that are fit for purpose. Maintaining a disability-focussed approach to a re-write of the legislation would indeed improve matters but would still exclude groups such as children, expectant mothers and older people.

Megan Rule and Michael Middlebrook are providing input to the Universal Design hub of the ADM and Hannah Andrew is representing the NZIA on the Auckland Council Forum for the hub. If you are interested in learning more, a presentation to the NZIA Auckland Branch on the ADM and universal design is pencilled in for the EIG slot in September.

#### **FACEBOOK & EVENTS:** Jessica Barter

Auckland Architecture Week 2015 is set for September 21-27<sup>th</sup>. We are continuing to work on refining programme and events for AAW 2015 with help from Sam and Jo (thank you). The NZIA Branch budget is to be confirmed with the Treasurer.

#### **SPECIAL EVENTS REPORT:** John Balasoglou

We have been in the midst of the Winter Lecture, which has been even better attended than in previous years. We estimated 200 for the 2 July and 150 for 9 July. It is the big one this Thursday with Andrew Barclay and Rachel de Lambert speaking on the New Zealand International Convention Centre. We expect a very good turnout for this. Jacob van Rijs of MVRDV is arriving on Sunday night. He is speaking at Auckland University Business School Fisher & Paykel Theatre on Thursday. Registrations have been terrific.