

# MAK

# ING

# SPACE

EDITED BY  
ELIZABETH COX

A HISTORY OF  
NEW ZEALAND  
WOMEN IN  
ARCHITECTURE



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WOMEN IN  
ARCHITECTURE





For Stephanie Cornes (Cox) (1945–2006), a missing treasure,  
and Lucy Greenish (Symes) (1888–1976), who started this project

## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION / ELIZABETH COX 9

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## PART ONE: 1840–1945

1	'WE MADE THE PLAN OURSELVES': EARLY COLONIAL WOMEN DESIGNING BUILDINGS / CHERIE JACOBSON 18	7	LONDON CALLING: ALISON SHEPHERD / JULIA GATLEY 64
2	'THE TALENT SHE UNDOUBTEDLY POSSESSES': KATE BEATH / ELIZABETH COX 28	8	'SORRY WHEN THE END OF THE DAY CAME': DRAUGHTSWOMEN / ELIZABETH COX 70
3	VERY DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES: LUCY GREENISH / ELIZABETH COX 34	9	'MOVERS AND SHAKERS': CAMPAIGNING FOR BETTER ARCHITECTURE 1920s–1950s / ELIZABETH COX 78
4	A 'WORK-ROOM PURE AND SIMPLE': FLORENCE FIELD / ELIZABETH COX 38	10	TE KARANGA O TE WHAO: THE CALL OF THE CHISEL / TRYPHENA CRACKNELL 90
5	'GIRL AS ARCHITECT': TRAINING TO BE AN ARCHITECT 1920s–1945 / ELIZABETH COX 46	11	JOBBING ALONG: THE CURIOUS CASE OF ESTHER JAMES / GILL MATTHEWSON 96
6	'THEIR PRESENCE COULD WORK A REVOLUTION': WOMEN IN PRACTICE 1900s–1945 / ELIZABETH COX 56	12	IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE: WOMEN GOVERNMENT ARCHITECTS 1930s–1950s / AMANDA MULLIGAN 102

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## PART TWO: 1945–2000

13	'AWFUL TROUBLE': UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCES 1945–1970 / ELIZABETH COX 114	21	'SAILING IN A NEW DIRECTION': NANCY NORTHCROFT / ELIZABETH AITKEN ROSE 172
14	'SOLID REALITIES': ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE 1945–1970 / ELIZABETH COX 120	22	DOING 'THEIR THING': WOMEN ARCHITECTS AND THEIR OWN HOMES 1940s–1980s / CHERIE JACOBSON 178
15	CREATIVITY AND DISLOCATION: IRENE KOPPEL, ANNA PLISCHKE AND RENATE PRINCE / LUCY TREEP 128	23	'WE STOOD OUR GROUND': UNIVERSITY IN THE 1970s–1990s / ELIZABETH COX 188
16	'IN THE DEEP END': MARGARET MUNRO / MARY-JANE DUFFY 136	24	'THE FACES OF CHANGE': PRACTICE IN THE 1970s–1990s / ELIZABETH COX 196
17	'NOT AFRAID TO TRY ANYTHING': MONICA BARHAM / MEGAN RULE 144	25	OTHER WAYS: WOMEN ARCHITECTS AND ACTIVISM IN THE 1980s / GILL MATTHEWSON 212
18	'VIGOUR AND ZEST': LILLIAN CHRYSSTALL / LYNDA SIMMONS 154	26	'LAYING OUT PEOPLE'S LIVES': PUBLIC SERVICE ARCHITECTURE 1950s–1980s / ELIZABETH COX 218
19	'A GOOD LIFE': MURIEL LAMB / RICCI HARKER 162	27	PAVING THE WAY: MARY BUCKLAND / PAULA WILKINSON 228
20	'I NEVER REALLY HAD TO FIGHT': MARY DE LISLE / ROS EMPSON 168		

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## PART THREE: 2000–2020

28	'THE BURDEN OF TRANSLATION': WOMEN AT ARCHITECTURE SCHOOL 2000–2020 / <i>EKTA NATHU</i> 238	41	THE ARCHITECTURE OF COLLECTIVE LIVING / <i>ELIZABETH AITKEN ROSE</i> 354
29	NEW MODELS: THE LANDSCAPE OF PRACTICE 2000–2020 / <i>JULIE WILSON</i> 244	42	THE MAJESTIC DOMESTIC: RECENT RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE / <i>NICOLE STOCK</i> 362
30	COLLECTIVE ACTION: WOMEN ARCHITECTS AND ACTIVISM SINCE THE 1990s / <i>LYNDA SIMMONS</i> 264	43	ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS: HOME AS AN EVOLVING STORY / <i>MAGGIE HUBERT</i> 368
31	EVER TENACIOUS: WĀHINE MĀORI IN ARCHITECTURE / <i>DEIDRE BROWN</i> 272	44	'FRIENDS ON THE DOORSTEP': WOMEN ARCHITECTS AND COOPERATIVE HOUSING / <i>ABIGAIL HURST</i> 376
32	DESIGNING PAPAKĀINGA: WĀHINE MĀORI ARCHITECTS / <i>FLEUR PALMER</i> 280	45	AWAY FROM HOME: NEW ZEALAND WOMEN ARCHITECTS ABROAD / <i>ANN MCEWAN</i> 384
33	TO BE CONTINUED: PACIFIC WOMEN ARCHITECTS / <i>KARAMIA MÜLLER</i> 286	46	A HOME OF ONE'S OWN: ARCHITECTS' OWN HOMES 1990s–2020s / <i>NATASHA MARKHAM</i> 392
34	GOING PUBLIC: CIVIC AND SPECIAL PROJECTS / <i>CATHERINE HAMMOND</i> 292	47	BUILDING THE DOGBOX: A CASE STUDY / <i>SALLY OGLE</i> 398
35	'THE EXCELLENCE SOMEONE BEFORE YOU HAS CREATED': WOMEN ARCHITECTS IN HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION / <i>CHESSA STEVENS</i> 302	48	ENDLESSLY CREATIVE: ACADEMICS AND ARCHITECTURAL WRITERS / <i>ELIZABETH COX</i> 404
36	BUILDING BIG: CONTRIBUTIONS TO PROJECTS OF SCALE / <i>DIVYA PURUSHOTHAM</i> 308		
37	COLLABORATIVE EFFORT: WOMEN ARCHITECTS IN EDUCATION, HEALTH AND RESEARCH / <i>ELIZABETH COX</i> 318		EPILOGUE: MULTIPLE WORLDS COEXISTING / <i>ELIZABETH COX</i> 418
38	THE PATH TO GREEN: MAKING SUSTAINABILITY MATTER / <i>MIN HALL</i> 326		TE KĀHUI WHAIHANGA NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS HONOURS 423
39	FORMING THE FUTURE: WOMEN, ARCHITECTURE AND THE RECONSTRUCTION OF CHRISTCHURCH / <i>JESSICA HALLIDAY</i> 336		SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY 424
40	FORCES OF NATURE: WOMEN IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / <i>LUCY TREEP</i> 348		IMAGE CREDITS 426
			ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS 428
			ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 432
			INDEX 436



## INTRODUCTION

### Elizabeth Cox

The idea for this book took root several years ago when I read Geoff Mew and Adrian Humphris' book *Raupo to Deco: Wellington styles and architects 1840–1940* (2014), which gives biographies of all the architects who worked in Wellington over that century. Among the more than 300 people featured, there was only one woman, Lucy Greenish, the first woman to register as an architect in Aotearoa New Zealand, in 1914. I decided to find out more about her life. What I uncovered was a remarkable story.

One of the places I went to find more information about Greenish and her training was the New Zealand Institute of Architects' (NZIA) early record books, which date from the 1910s to the 1940s, and which listed those people who had signed up to be trained by senior architects or to sit the NZIA examinations. I went in with just Greenish's name, and came out with more than 20 other women's names that had been recorded in those books.<sup>1</sup> I also explored boxes of applications from those seeking registration with the NZIA, as one had to do from 1913 to use the title of 'architect'. Greenish's file includes a confident letter to the institute applying for student membership, and then another applying for full registration. There is no suggestion from her covering letter or her application that her submission was in any way unusual. It was signed by her employer, a senior member of the NZIA.

My search through the boxes yielded applications from numerous other women.<sup>2</sup> When I widened my scope I found more than 40 women training and working as architects, architectural assistants and draughtswomen in New Zealand in the period 1900–40 alone. This accords with Julie Willis and Bronwyn Hanna's 2001 study of around 140 women architects in Australia between 1900 and 1950. They found women to have been 'present in the Australian architectural profession in every capacity: from student and draftsperson, through to chief designer and partner; as teacher and writer; as well as working in the related fields of town planning, landscape architecture and interior design'.<sup>3</sup>

The standard architectural narrative in New Zealand, however, is that there were no female architects working in the first half of the twentieth century. The three editions of Peter Shaw's *History of New Zealand Architecture* (1991, 1997 and 2003) do acknowledge the presence of some women architects, but not until Barbara Parker and Marilyn Hart's involvement as students in the Architecture Group in 1946 – 'the first women to become prominent in what, no reader can have failed to realise, had been an entirely male profession'. Shaw also mentions Lillian Chrystall, Briar Green, Amanda Reynolds, Felicity Wallace and Julie Stout, but for their work much later.<sup>4</sup> As Julia Gatley's 2014 literature review has shown, it was not until 2000 that architectural histories in New Zealand could be relied upon to mention women architects at all.<sup>5</sup>

To plug this gap, women architects and architectural students, looking for role models and predecessors, have carried out their own research: most notably in 1993 as a way to mark the centenary of women's suffrage in New Zealand, in the research and exhibition work of the organisation Architecture+Women NZ since

Lucy Greenish,  
photographed at work  
at her drawing board in  
an architectural office in  
Wellington in the 1910s.  
Sitting with her is architect  
William Page.

it began in 2011, and in a limited number of gender and architecture courses at university.<sup>6</sup> Two other exceptions are an article on Alison Sleigh, and a thesis about Margaret Hamilton, both architects who began their careers in the 1930s.<sup>7</sup> And yet the depiction of architecture in New Zealand as something that has been almost entirely created by men, at least until very recent years, lingers.

As I did more research on women architects prior to the Second World War, it became clear to me that many of them contributed to our built environment in significant ways, working in architectural offices, government departments and elsewhere, without ever having their names recorded. Some worked in architecture for a short time, others for decades. I also found many politically active women writing and campaigning about architecture and better design, and working to improve urban environments and housing, often with a particular focus on improving the lives of women and children. The Waikato-Tainui leader Te Puea Hērangi and other Māori women, for example, worked towards the development of marae and better housing as a way to strengthen their communities. I also found a large number of newspaper articles extolling the potential benefits of women architects to the community.

However, even when I knew that a certain woman worked for a particular architectural practice, unless her signature or initials could be found on a drawing, there was often no way of knowing which buildings she worked on. This is, of course, often the case for any architect, male or female, who is not the named partner of a firm. To compensate, I had to cast a wide net. Family history records, oral histories, architectural files, university records, newspaper articles and many other documents gave me glimpses of these women.

Most architectural histories do not record those who worked in architecture but whose name was not 'on the door' of a firm, or those who completed their architectural training but never registered as architects. Such people are included here. Not all the women in this study became registered architects. (A registered architect is one who is suitably qualified, as assessed by their peers and in accordance with legislation. The term was introduced in New Zealand with the passage of the New Zealand Institute of Architects Act 1913. The institute ran the registration process for architects until 1963, when that task was given to the Architects Education and Registration Board, and then to the New Zealand Registered Architects Board in 2005. The legislation also makes it illegal for anyone who is not registered to use the term 'architect'.) Margaret Hamilton (later Munro), for example, worked from the 1930s until the 1990s as an architect in Christchurch and left a significant architectural legacy, but her registration by the NZIA did not occur until 1960, after her husband's death. When she did establish her sole practice she set up, to use her own words, as 'Mrs M. S. Munro, ANZIA, with the Mrs in very small print'.<sup>8</sup> The tremendous effort of these early women to make careers for themselves continues to resonate with me.

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From Lucy Greenish I worked both backwards and forwards in time – to the first woman known to have qualified as an architect in New Zealand, Christchurch woman Katherine (Kate) Beath, who completed her training a number of years before Lucy Greenish; and even further back to Marianne Reay and Mary Taylor, who, although not architects, designed a church and a shop, respectively, in the 1840s. And to the women having an impact our built environment after the Second World War, and then on to the many women working today.

The book has been organised roughly chronologically, across three main time periods. Initially, I had hoped to avoid strictly biographical essays, but some women were such pioneers and outliers in the early decades that they warranted their own chapter, ending with Lillian Chrystall, whose career began in the 1940s and who only retired in 2011, aged 85.

The first part focuses on those women who trained and worked before the Second World War, and takes in their training and their work, as architects and draughtswomen, in both private practices and government departments, both in

New Zealand and abroad. The first chapter is about early colonial women who designed buildings, although they were certainly not trained architects. The following three chapters recall three particular women working at the beginning of the twentieth century, but also tell the story of how women trained to be architects before the university training system was introduced. This part also discusses the work of Māori and Pākehā women trying to make a difference to their communities through their advocacy for better design, housing and urban spaces, and highlights the work of Māori women in the role of making marae and in carving.

The second part covers the period from 1945 to the 1990s. Two chapters discuss experiences at university during these years. Three discuss women in practice and in government departments and local authorities, showing how difficult it was, despite the pioneers of the earlier years, for women to make headway in the profession in these decades, for many different reasons, but also showing women standing their ground and making a space for themselves in the profession. A number of chapters highlight the careers of specific women at this time, and a chapter discusses women exploring the challenge of designing their own homes. A final chapter in this part investigates the way women explored activism and architecture and other ways of being an architect in the 1980s.

The third part, covering the first two decades of the twenty-first century, shows the tide turning, and women architects flourishing both in the profession and in adjacent fields. It's a long section because, quite simply, there is much to say. One chapter explores the experiences of women at university in these two decades. It includes a general chapter about women in practice in this era, and two chapters about wāhine Māori architects, including one specifically about those working on papakāinga developments, and another about Pacific women working in architecture in Aotearoa.

These are followed by many themed chapters that show women working in different fields (including sustainability, heritage and academia), and women designing large commercial buildings, special and cultural buildings, residential architecture, alterations and additions, landscapes, urban design and cohousing. One chapter focuses specifically on those women working towards the recovery of Canterbury after the 2010–11 earthquakes, and another on New Zealand women working as architects abroad. Two chapters focus on women designing their own homes, including one written by an architect about her experiences working on her own project. These themed chapters help to traverse the work of numerous women practising today. Even so, because of the sheer numbers of women practising now, many have been left out, and for that I apologise – it is, in the end, a good problem to have, as it reflects the numbers of women now in the profession, but still it is one that has kept me up at night. This part also includes a chapter discussing women in activism in the profession from the 1990s until the present day.

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*Making Space* seemed an apt title for a book that chronicles women making physical spaces, buildings and landscapes, while also making space within the profession for themselves and for those who followed them. As the work progressed and other writers became involved, it became clear that the book itself was a space in which women could write about architecture, their own work or that of their peers and predecessors. Just as architecture pushes people into working collaboratively, so too has this project. The 29 other women who have written chapters are architects, architectural historians, academics, students and other practitioners, and all of them were courageous in their examination of the profession.

I have greatly enjoyed the many emails and phone calls with authors, reporting on the progress of their research. I provided Megan Rule with the basic background to the story of Monica Barham, who had preceded her as an Invercargill architect by many decades, had designed a number of buildings Megan knew well, and had worked for an earlier iteration of the firm for whom she herself had

worked. From there, Megan grabbed with both hands the opportunity to research her predecessor: she travelled by bike throughout the lower South Island to visit the buildings Barham had designed, and interviewed her family and the people who lived in her buildings. Likewise, architect Divya Purushotham, a designer of very large commercial buildings, took on the task of writing about other women involved in the same complex field and was able to examine their work through the lens of her own work; Min Hall examined those working in the world of sustainable architecture, having herself worked in this field for many years. Karamia Müller used the first weeks of lockdown in 2021 to hold talanoa with six Pacific architects. These are just four examples. Many contributors have spent hours interviewing other women and delving deep into difficult and complex topics.

One of the most outstanding experiences in writing this book has been the chance to talk to so many women architects from so many different professional situations and backgrounds. The time they made available was a great gift both to me and to the project.

Some women have said over the years that they object to the idea that they are considered ‘women architects’ – they are, rather, ‘architects’ they say. I understand that, but my respectful view is that women architects do bring something different to a building, urban environment or landscape, and the body of evidence in this book goes some way to explaining just what that is. I also believe that many of the struggles and issues they have faced over the years have been gendered, so a gendered study helps to examine those issues. Also, I would argue that telling the stories of women who are architects makes them no less architects.

I am also aware that every project discussed in the book is not simply the work of one woman, and that their genesis is the work of many people, both men and women, including those representing tangata whenua and the eventual users of the project, as well as other architects, technicians, tradespeople, craftspeople, project managers, artists and many others. The work of architecture is one of collaboration, and the fact that a woman has her name in this book alongside a project she led as a project architect, for example, is not to undermine the large number of other people who worked on it, too – and nor would any of the women discussed here want it to be read that way.

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I have been very aware that the architectural training system and profession, like the wider construction field, has been extremely difficult for some women, both in the past and today. I heard a few distressing accounts, and many more stories of disappointment and disenchantment. It is certainly easier to be a woman architect today than it was, but there remain struggles that I wouldn’t want to underplay. But I also heard many stories of bravery, stubbornness, creativity and tenacity – and of the joy women find in the creative, complex and exciting profession in which they work.

The women showcased in these chapters demonstrate that, despite the odds stacked against them, strength of character, professional skills and perseverance can overcome. ‘Nevertheless, she persisted’ could have been this book’s subtitle. These struggles are not over. Many women architects and others in related professions continue to make important inroads into changing both the profession and the environment in which it operates, particularly in the fields of papakāinga and safe and healthy housing; engaging rangatahi and communities with design, urban planning, cohousing and environmental sustainability; and pushing for technological and other changes to the way the profession operates. Women also continue to make the profession a better place for men, women and non-binary people to work and thrive.

As this project progressed, I realised it could become more than just a record of ‘she was here’, but rather something that would augment the narrative of the country’s architectural history, to encourage a wider understanding of how the profession worked (and works) in New Zealand. I carried out an oral history project for the book, and discovered, as all of my interviewees reminded me, that architecture

is a deeply collaborative industry: none of the achievements of the people whose names we all know could have been possible without the work of others. I hope that by looking past the name on the door (or website) of architectural firms to find the women toiling away inside we will have a more nuanced understanding of the genesis of New Zealand's built environment, both in the past and the present. I also hope that this book provides an insight into the work of non-Pākehā architects in New Zealand. With Deidre Brown's 2009 book *Māori Architecture: From fale to wharenu i and beyond* as an important exception, there are very few histories that highlight cultural diversity as an important element in New Zealand architecture, and all the authors of this book have made a concerted effort to do this wherever possible.

At various points over the decades, articles have been written by and about women architects that ask, 'Where are all the women?' Although there is still a long way to go until we see parity in the numbers of men to women in the profession, I hope this book will help to make the argument that they were there all along.

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- 1 Register of Students, NZIA00048 and NZIA00048, Register of Articles, NZIA00050 and other records, New Zealand Institute of Architects records, 1906–1967, held in the J. C. Beaglehole Room, Victoria University of Wellington Library.
- 2 'Architects registration files' [multiple boxes], New Zealand Institute of Architects, 1914–1986, Series Code 18486, Archives New Zealand, Wellington.
- 3 Julie Willis and Bronwyn Hanna, *Women Architects in Australia, 1900–1950* (Red Hill: Royal Australian Institute of Architects, 2001).
- 4 Peter Shaw, *New Zealand Architecture: From Polynesian beginnings to 1990* (Auckland: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991); Peter Shaw, *A History of New Zealand Architecture*, 2nd ed. (Auckland: Hodder Moa Beckett, 1997) and 3rd ed. (Auckland: Hodder Moa Beckett, 2003).
- 5 Julia Gatley, 'Women in New Zealand Architecture: A literature review', in *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand: 31, Translation*, ed. Christoph Schnoor (Auckland: SAHANZ, 2014), 249–62.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 These two pieces of work have been used as the basis of two chapters in this book.
- 8 Mary Kirk-Anderson, 'From Elves to Elevations', *Press*, 8 September 2003, C5.

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-1945

1840-



This section of *Making Space* focuses on the pioneers, beginning with two women who could be considered proto-architects, and who designed buildings as early as 1846 and 1849. It also highlights the careers of the handful of women architects who trained in the earliest forms of architectural education, and worked in both private practice and government departments before the end of the Second World War.

It discusses the work of Māori and Pākehā women determined to make a difference in their communities through advocacy for better design, housing and urban spaces, and it highlights the work of Māori women in the role of making marae and in carving.

# 1. 'WE MADE THE PLAN OURSELVES': EARLY COLONIAL WOMEN DESIGNING BUILDINGS

## Cherie Jacobson

The two earliest-known buildings designed by colonial women in Aotearoa New Zealand were built just three years apart, in the 1840s, in very different contexts. The first was a place of worship for a fledgling rural community south of Nelson, designed by a woman who came to New Zealand with her husband, an Anglican minister working for the Church Missionary Society. The second was a combined shop and house in the centre of fast-growing Wellington, designed by two cousins drawn to New Zealand by the opportunity to make an independent living on their own terms.

Although these women weren't architects, their accounts show that Pākehā women have been making contributions to New Zealand's built environment since the earliest years of colonisation. Recognition of this fact has not always been forthcoming, making it especially important that these women and their achievements are celebrated today.

On a gentle rise overlooking Wakefield, a small town near Nelson, sits St John's, an unassuming little white church that is now the oldest church in the South Island and one of the oldest in New Zealand. Built in 1846, St John's is the first known piece of New Zealand architecture designed by a Pākehā woman. The first service at St John's, on 11 October 1846, was led by Reverend Charles Lucas Reay, whose wife, Marianne Reay, had designed the simple, but picturesque church.<sup>1</sup>

Local sawmiller Edward Baigent, one of the first European settlers in the district, donated the timber and oversaw the church's construction. Baigent's invoice for his work noted that the church was 'designed by Mrs Reay', and a short memoir written by Baigent in 1891 also records that 'Mrs Reay drew a design for the church which was approved and the settlers were asked for their assistance'.<sup>2</sup>

Despite this acknowledgement of Marianne Reay at the time, when St John's was first registered by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust (now Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga) as a Category One Historic Place in 1983, her involvement was not noted in the citation. Indeed, the historian who researched St John's for this registration doubted the veracity of the claims that a nineteenth-century clergyman's wife had designed it.

A brief article in the *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronical* published following the first service at St John's noted that:

when finished [the church] promises to be one of the most ornamental constructions in the settlement: at the same time it is substantially put together, and strengthened by heavy, solid totara buttresses. The church stands in a very commanding position and is well situated for the accommodation of the population who are scattered about in the neighbourhood.<sup>3</sup>

The Gothic timber church, with gabled nave, lancet windows, chancel and bell tower, was clad in rusticated tōtara weatherboard with a wooden-shingle roof,

OPPOSITE: St John's Anglican Church in Wakefield, designed by Marianne Reay in 1846.

OVERLEAF: The interior of St John's.



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The second part of *Making Space* covers the period from 1945 to 2000, and discusses experiences at university, women in practice and in government departments and local authorities, and how difficult it was for women to make headway in the profession in these decades.

It also shows women standing their ground and making a space for themselves in the profession. It canvasses the careers of specific women, and the ways in which women architects explored the challenge of designing their own homes, activism, and other ways of being an architect.

## 17. 'NOT AFRAID TO TRY ANYTHING': MONICA BARHAM Megan Rule



Monica Barham,  
photographed in 1948.

Monica Ford (1920–1983) was the second-eldest of five daughters of Invercargill architect Allan Charles (A. C.) Ford and his English wife, Hildegarde. She attended Southland Girls' High School in Invercargill and later boarded at Columba College in Dunedin.<sup>1</sup>

Allan Ford, the son of a builder, trained under Dunedin architect Harry Mandeno (noted elsewhere in this book for being an employer of early women architects).<sup>2</sup> After service overseas in the First World War, Allan established what would become a successful practice in Invercargill, A. C. Ford Architect, and, later, Ford, Derby and Gray Architects. Ford is best known for his art deco work in the city, such as the Cambridge Arcade, and his Arts and Crafts residences.<sup>3</sup>

The family was musically talented and Monica was an accomplished violinist. Her sister Patricia trained in medicine at the University of Otago and later became a leading anaesthetist in Auckland who invented more effective anaesthetic equipment. Patricia's relocation to Auckland coincided with Monica's time studying architecture in Auckland in the 1940s.<sup>4</sup>

Until recently, through this book project, I had not known that a woman architect had worked in my home town and made a significant contribution to the built fabric of the city and region. My own formative architectural experiences in the early 1980s began, like hers, draughting in a local Invercargill practice before going to university. In an uncanny coincidence, I was fortunate to visit and develop a colour scheme to refresh her father's Cambridge Arcade, and to measure and draw as-built drawings for the former Dee Street Hospital, another of his projects. I also archived the historic linen architectural plans of the firm, which had grown out of her father's practice, where Monica had started out.

In 1937, aged 17, Monica Ford began working in her father's practice while studying architecture extramurally through Auckland University College. After her father suggested she complete her architecture training in Auckland, she went there in 1942, returning for further work experience with her father during the university holidays.<sup>5</sup>

Institutional projects under way during her time in Ford's office included the Roxburgh Children's Health Camp, regarded as a state-of-the-art facility when it opened in 1941.<sup>6</sup> Monica also developed her interest in art, and, with the local sculptor-artist Molly Macalister, she created sandblasted glass partitions depicting nursery rhymes for Gore Hospital's children's ward in 1942.<sup>7</sup>

When she arrived at university, her years of architectural and draughting experience in a successful provincial practice made her a lot more experienced than many of her cohort. That year, she produced an accomplished working drawing of a suburban bungalow residence which featured in the School of Architecture's 1943 prospectus.<sup>8</sup> She also received a high mark for a terraced flat project on a steep Auckland site in which the roofs of each of the flats served as outdoor living for the unit above as they moved up the site.<sup>9</sup>

ABOVE: Monica Barham and her son Don at the family home 'Telesis', designed by Monica and her husband Cecil Barham at Otatara, near Invercargill, while it was under construction in the early 1950s.

BELLOW: Monica and Cecil at their drawing board, mid-1960s, with their projects pinned on the wall behind them.



Monica Ford proved a talented student. She completed her diploma of architecture in November 1944 and applied to be registered as an architect by the NZIA just a few months later, aged 25, citing her extensive experience in her father's office as well as time working in the office of Auckland architect George Tole while at university. In doing so, she became the first registered woman architect in the Southland & Otago branch of the New Zealand Institute of Architects (NZIA). She also sat the examinations for qualification as an Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), passing with a grade of 93 per cent. The news of her 'two-fold distinction' was published in several newspapers in March 1945, along with the speculation that she may have been the first woman in New Zealand to achieve this honour.<sup>10</sup>

Monica Ford met Cecil Barham, who was eight years her senior, in 1945, according to family information. He had also grown up in Invercargill and had studied architecture at Auckland from 1933 to 1938, then worked for Invercargill architect Edward H. Smith before serving overseas in the war. He passed his diploma of architecture in 1944 and applied for registration as an architect in the same year.<sup>11</sup>

Nineteen forty-six was a momentous year for the couple. Following a whirlwind courtship, they married, had their first child and started a practice together, under the name Barham and Barham Architects. They ran their business from the Bank of NSW Chambers at 1 Dee Street, as well as a home studio (with a front entrance cleverly designed to provide access separate from the rest of the house). Monica Barham is therefore arguably the first registered woman architect to practise as an owner and partner of a successful architectural business in New Zealand.<sup>12</sup> In 1947, she was the only woman listed with the NZIA as 'Registered in Practice'. All other women listed as registered architects in that year were either working in the public service or as 'Associates not in Practice' (or were overseas, as in the case of Nancy Northcroft).<sup>13</sup>

While working in the practice, Monica had six children in quick succession between 1946 and 1953, and maintained the Barhams' rural property at Ōtatara, a beach suburb near Invercargill. A drawing board set up in the corner of the living room made it possible for her to juggle work with the needs of her growing family, farm chores and animals. She kept meticulous handwritten records of farm management and production in a log book. Family, household and childcare support was limited to home support for the children on a couple of occasions when she was ill in hospital.<sup>14</sup>

She somehow also found time to be involved in community organisations, including Girl Guides, the Business and Professional Women's Club, and the Southland Altrusa Club. Cecil Barham was elected to the Invercargill City Council in 1956 for three terms until 1965.<sup>15</sup>

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In her own words, Barham was 'not afraid to try anything', and she actively promoted herself, her work and achievements, and the work of her architecture practice in order to secure projects.<sup>16</sup> In 1949, she spoke on a local Dunedin radio station on the topic of 'So You're Building a House: You and the architect'.<sup>17</sup> Her article 'Practical Suggestion for a Farm or Country House' was published in *Home and Building* in 1950. It provided a farmhouse plan which oriented the generous main service entry verandah for sun and ease of access to the kitchen, and a 'sitting out area' for workers with heavy boots 'when the housewife wishes freedom within the house to continue her chores'. A similarly generous front hall entry could double as a sunroom or be converted to an extra bedroom.<sup>18</sup> These planning considerations would influence many country homes.

Monica Barham was involved in all aspects of architecture in the practice: attracting new clients, structural design, working drawings and site administration, both working alongside her husband and developing her own projects independently. The practice benefited from overflow projects passed on by Allan Ford, and the pair engaged support staff from time to time when needed.<sup>19</sup> Monica showed a southern



ABOVE: Medical centre, Don Street, Invercargill (1956).

CENTRE: Newfield Methodist Church, Invercargill (1958, demolished 1986), featured in *Home and Building* in December 1958.

BELOW: Bluff Methodist Church (1958).

tenacity and work ethic, pitching in during high seasons regardless of gender, and running a family business exposed to the ebb and flow of work and requiring durability and resilience to survive.

According to a history of Otago and Southland architects, the Barhams, whose work was said to be influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright, were regarded as 'somewhat eccentric' and 'often structurally ambitious' by their local colleagues.<sup>20</sup> Lloyd Wright's practice and learning studio in Arizona was known from c.1937 as Taliesin West, and the Barhams' choice of Telesis for the name of their residential studio at Ōtatara was a nod to the international architectural movement of the 1930s that described 'planned progress', or social directed advancement via scientific method.<sup>21</sup> Cecil Barham was 'interested in cultural buildings and the development of modern trends and materials'.<sup>22</sup>

The Barhams' Invercargill home, which still exists largely unaltered, was compact and adapted over time to suit their expanding family. The house looks north towards the city. From the road entry a single storey is visible with pop-up clerestory that daylights the living spaces. A generous entry weather lobby anchors a house corner with a split-level living/work spillover. A winding stair leads down to bedrooms and family bathroom on the lower level, fully retained with a hall as a thermal bridge. Over two storeys all the living and bedrooms face the north sun and views. A utility mudroom flanks the entry lobby, helping to insulate the living spaces. Upper living windows slope inward like a ship's bridge, expanding their space and reducing glare. A later addition has been a bedroom, play and study across two levels for more family space. An enclosed carport shelters a morning service courtyard flanked by workrooms.

An architect's own home allows opportunities to challenge constraints and test manifestos, with importance placed here on the practical, functional requirements of rural conditions and a more modern response to the needs of the family. Scandinavian and American design influences are evident in optimal site orientation, materials, and the use of the sun to heat the house. The current owners of the house appreciate the significance of their home, a house that is modest but unusually experimental in its subtle details.

In the early years of the practice, as well as designing their own home the Barhams also remodelled the famous Brown Owl Milk Bar, probably commissioned following the end of the long-standing Invercargill alcohol ban in 1944. The project was featured in *Home and Building* in 1948–49. The Brown Owl showcased Monica's interest in art and interiors, with a curved bar and her own sandblasted decorative designs produced on glass panels by Wanganui Glass. She used pale green, primrose and maroon, while suntrap 'egg crates' controlled daylight over windows.<sup>23</sup>

It is thought almost 500 projects passed through the Barhams' office, though the number actually built is unknown.<sup>24</sup> Most of their community, churches and residential projects are located throughout the southern region between Queenstown and Rakiura Stewart Island. Their architectural drawings typically consisted of two or three A1-size sheets with resolved detail design, many with hand-coloured coding on printed copies to define material features.

The Winton RSA Clubrooms, an elegant art deco, single-storey building built in 1950, exemplifies the Barhams' early practice. Largely unaltered, and renovated in 2016, it is described as a 'seriously impressive building, warm, lively and inviting'.<sup>25</sup> The firm also designed other community buildings, such as the library building at Mataura (1969) and the Gore Women's Club (1970).

A modern medical centre built for Dr F. Russell Miller in Don Street in central Invercargill in 1956 featured a distinctive motif of circular concrete wall voids that mark the entry and anchors the building together with a steel screened stair. The circular motifs resemble those of Southland Centennial Agricultural Hall (1956) and reappear in the Barhams' work over this period.

In St Peter's Methodist Church (1957), later the Elles Road Bible Chapel, the windows feature themes of sandblasted art motifs, and a smooth wall envelopes the entry like a rippling piece of fabric with details that link to the original church. The Bluff Methodist Church (1958) tucks into a hillside, its flowing steps

3

2020

2000-



The third part of *Making Space*, covering roughly the first two decades of the twenty-first century, shows the tide turning, and women architects flourishing both in the profession and in adjacent fields. It explores the experiences of women at university, women in practice and in activism, and wāhine Māori and Pacific architects.

It showcases women working in sustainability, heritage and academia, designing large commercial, health, educational, cultural and residential buildings, and working in landscapes, urban design, papakāinga and cohousing, and the post-earthquake recovery of Canterbury.

## 29. NEW MODELS: THE LANDSCAPE OF PRACTICE

2000–2020

Julie Wilson

In 2005, as part of its centenary celebrations, Te Kāhui Whaihangā the New Zealand Institute of Architects (NZIA) published the book *Exquisite Apart: 100 years of architecture in New Zealand*. Among its pages was an essay by Gill Matthewson, 'Sketching in the Margins', which discussed the ways in which women inhabited the margins of architecture – and how they made a virtue of their work there. Women, Matthewson argued, were bored with the battles for power, the long hours and the undervaluation of collaboration. The margins were a place for potential: 'If we accept women as "other" to men and architecture (and it seems at times that there is no choice) then temporarily embracing that may be a tactic,' she wrote.<sup>1</sup>

Since then, in parallel with significant social, economic and cultural changes elsewhere in society, for most women entering the architectural profession the established 'structural resistance'<sup>2</sup> has begun to yield. The number of women not only enrolling in but also graduating from architecture courses in the country now equals that of their male counterparts: in the decade 2009–18, 49 per cent of all graduates from the architectural programmes have been women. This has led to a gradual offsetting of the gender imbalance within the profession and has altered the character of almost all architectural practices.

In the period 2000–20, the number of women registered architects has increased but, given the historical lower base, it is still low: in 2020 only 34 per cent of all registered architects in New Zealand were women (514 women out of a total of 2016 registered architects, not including those on voluntary suspension). This is a striking increase on the past, but still shows that there is a long way to go until parity is achieved.<sup>3</sup> And despite an increase in the number of women registering as architects after graduation, there is still a significant disparity: of all those women who graduated from New Zealand universities between 1987 and 2018, only 27 per cent went on to register.<sup>4</sup> The rate of attrition between graduation and involvement in the profession is not as stark as those statistics would suggest, of course – after all, it is possible to work in architecture and not be registered – but people following this path are more difficult to count.

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At the turn of the millennium, the representation of women in publications and the professional community beyond was still minimal. In 2012, research by Sarah Treadwell and Nicole Allan revealed that between 2002 and 2011 only 19 per cent of the contributors to *Architecture New Zealand* had been women, and from 2007 to 2011 only 21 per cent of the names listed under project credits belonged to women.<sup>5</sup> Julia Gatley's study of New Zealand architectural books and magazine articles found that around 50 contemporary women had been mentioned in these texts up until 2014.<sup>6</sup> *Exquisite Apart* was the first architecture survey publication to include a



ABOVE: Megan Rule of South Pacific Architecture.

CENTRE: Sharon Jansen of Sharon Jansen Architect.

BELOW: Lindy Leuschke of Leuschke Group Architects.

chapter on women, but there were only three mentioned – Julie Stout (for the NEW Gallery, 2001, with David Mitchell), Megan Rule (for her Northland Chapel) and Dorita Hannah (for her design, with the Massey School of Design, for Prague Quadrennial 2003) – and only one in the lists of NZIA awards: Stout for the NEW Gallery.

In the first two decades of the century, at least 40 women-led projects or with the significant involvement of women architects have been awarded NZIA National Awards (it is likely to be more; as Megan Rule and Lynda Simmons have pointed out, attribution and acknowledgement remained a problem in identifying who has worked on projects, especially in large firms).<sup>7</sup>

Included in this list is a wide variety of cultural, public and educational projects including Andrea Bell (Pete Bossley Architects) for the Colin McCahon Artist Residence, Sharon Jansen (Tennent Brown) for Te Kura Kaupapa Māori in Palmerston North, Jane Rooney (Architectus) for the St Andrew's Centennial Chapel in Christchurch, Anne Salmond (Architecture+) for Expressions Art Centre in Upper Hutt, Julie Stout for Te Uru Waitākere Contemporary Gallery, Julie Stout and Ginny Pedlow for the Tauranga Art Gallery and the Landscape & Plant Sciences Building at Unitec (Mitchell & Stout), and Louise Wright (Assembly Architects) for a pavilion at Wellington Zoo.

Projects in the planning and urban design category include: Christina van Bohemen's (Sills van Bohemen) project at Hurstmere Green, Takapuna; Mary Jowett's Frankton Bus Shelter; and the Re:Start project in Christchurch, designed as part of the immediate recovery after the 2010–11 earthquakes, by Raylene McEwan (Buchan). Jo Aitken's firm, Atelier Aitken, working with Patterson Architects, won an award for the pavilion at the Frankfurt Book Fair, and Louise Wright (Assembly Architects) for a showroom in Cardrona. Heritage projects include Lianne Cox (Studio Pacific Architecture) for the National War Memorial in Wellington, and the alterations by Sharon Jansen of an Ernst Plischke house in Nelson.

National NZIA awards for houses or alterations to houses have been given for the work of Anna-Marie Chin, Rachel Dodd, Belinda George, Nicola Herbst, Sharon Jansen, Bronwen Kerr, Lindley Naismith, Ana O'Connell, Sally Ogle, Rachael Rush, Lynda Simmons, Julie Stout, Lisa Webb and Louise Wright (or their respective firms), plus the team at First Light for their First Light House.

Notably, two NZIA Enduring Awards have been given to the work of Julie Stout (Mitchell & Stout), one for the Gibbs House and one for the Heke Street House. Yvette Overdyck and Dorita Hannah were part of the Stevens Lawson project team who were recipients of the coveted New Zealand Architecture Medal for the Blyth Performing Arts Centre in 2015. Since 2015 the NZIA has also conferred 'named awards' in the categories of public, commercial, education and housing, representing Aotearoa's highest tier of architectural achievement. Lisa Webb and Nicola Herbst (Herbst Architecture) have both won the Ian Athfield Award for Housing, and numerous women have also been involved in the large commercial projects which have also received these named awards, including the Nelson Airport Terminal (Studio Pacific), Western Springs College Ngā Puna o Waiōrea (Jasmax) and Wynyard Central (Architectus).

In 2022, as work on this book was in its final stages, Julie Stout became the first woman recipient of the NZIA Gold Medal: the highest individual honour an architect can achieve in New Zealand. She said at the time, 'Architecture has influenced my life, my loves, my work and my hopes for future generations in so many ways . . . I am sure that in the very near future, we will look back and say, "Why did that take so long?" and that being a woman architect winning the Gold Medal is not unusual.'<sup>8</sup>

In 2014, Lindy Leuschke, a director of Leuschke Group Architects, argued that practices urged the profession to recognise all contributors to award-winning projects beyond those on whom the spotlight usually fell: 'There is a cult in architecture relating to the individual as the designer or as the superstar architect . . . no individual architect is as effective as a group of architects working collaboratively'.<sup>9</sup> The Architecture+Women NZ Awards and the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) Awards have made a conscious effort to publicise the work of women practising in the profession and to widen the net of those receiving awards. The triennial awards programme of A+W NZ

The architects, landscape architects, project leaders and project managers who led the reconstruction of Freyberg Place and the Ellen Melville Centre in downtown Auckland (2017). From left: Elspeth Gray, architectural graduate at Stevens Lawson Architects; Karina Mascarenhas, senior project manager, MPM Projects; Yvette Overdyck, senior associate at Stevens Lawson Architects and project architect for the Ellen Melville Centre project; Karen Ehlers, associate, Isthmus Group; Cherie Armer, stakeholder liaison manager, JFC; Lisa Spasić, senior project leader, Auckland Council.



reveals this diversity in the profession, and publishing the judges, finalists and winners of these awards celebrates the rich diversity of where, how and what women are practising. The careers of no fewer than 45 women have been celebrated in the A+W NZ Awards, building the architectural canon over time.

Publishing the names of full project teams in NZIA awards and magazines, rather than just the name of the director of the firm or the principal in charge, has been an important step. Doing so reveals the collaborative nature of architecture, and the rich diversity of talent involved in projects is recorded. Publishing the full list of team members encourages active visibility, challenges unconscious bias, and records women practitioners whose work may not otherwise be visible. Small incremental steps can have a wider impact.

When Felicity Wallace won the prestigious Home of the Year title in 1997 for her twin townhouses in the Auckland suburb of Westmere, it lifted the profile of her practice and positioned her as an emerging talent. Since then, Wallace has completed numerous award-winning projects. Now based in Marton, she situates her practice as independent of the need to publish: 'At this stage of my career, I don't look for work, so I don't need to publish to achieve visibility . . . I deliberately went underground . . . I wanted to start again, and work with clients in a completely new area, and I wanted to develop my thinking,' she said in 2021.<sup>10</sup>

Wallace identifies first and foremost as an architect, regardless of gender, and is grateful to the many people she has worked with, noting the trusted associates, advisors, clients and builders who have supported her career and complemented her life with a family, in the process extending her practice into a wider understanding of architecture: 'My life is much broader and richer for having spent time investing in my family; buildings are about people.'<sup>11</sup>

As Wallace found, the highly coveted overall Home of the Year Award assures a significant public profile. Julie Stout (Mitchell & Stout Architects; 2005 and 2009) and Nicola Herbst (Herbst Architects; 2012, 2016, 2018) have each won the award a number of times. In 2021, Barcelona-based architect Bergendy Cooke was the fourth woman recipient of the overall title for her Black Quail House, and Anna-Marie Chin the fifth for Terrace Edge House, Lake Hayes, in 2022. Other finalists and category winners have included Wendy Shacklock (in association with Paul Clarke) in 2014; Andrea Bell (with Andrew Kissell) for their own home in an industrial building in Grey Lynn, which won the City Home category, and Anna-Marie Chin, winner of the Small House category, both in 2016; and Belinda George in 2020.



In the same year, the winner of the City Home of the Year house, on Takapuna Beach, was designed by Anna Tong of CAAHT Studio, and Christina van Bohemen's practice, Sills van Bohemen, won Multi-unit Home of the Year for her multi-generational house in Auckland. Queenstown architect Stacey Farrell's design for her own holiday home, in an extreme environment in a small community between Invercargill and Bluff, was awarded Highly Commended in the Green Home category in the same year.

Publications of architectural books and magazines now include many more women and firms with women partners within their pages. In the early years of the new century it was most frequently Herbst Architects, Mitchell & Stout Architects, Felicity Wallace Architects and Belinda George Architects. More recently the firms discussed have flourished, including (among others) Bronwen Kerr and Peter Ritchie's home in Wānaka, and Ginny Pedlow and Gary Hunt's home in *Home Work* (2010); Stacey Farrell's own home in *Big House Small House* (2012); and Ana O'Connell's Wānaka house in *City House, Country House* (2016), all books by John Walsh and Patrick Reynolds. Books often also take more care to list the team members who contributed to projects.



A marker of change has been the way in which women have been able to combine practice with holding top positions in organisations such as the NZIA. In 2016 Christina van Bohemen became the second female president of the NZIA, after Helen Tippett in 1989. Van Bohemen viewed the role as a significant challenge, but one that also provided opportunities for recognition of the growing counterbalance to the male dominance in the profession. She agreed to be nominated because at the time there was discussion that the 'shoulder-tapping' tradition of finding the next president was tending to exclude women. Judi Keith-Brown was the next woman president of the NZIA (2020–22). She has been working in sole practice in Wellington for many years, and her aim in particular was to promote the work of those in small and sole practices.

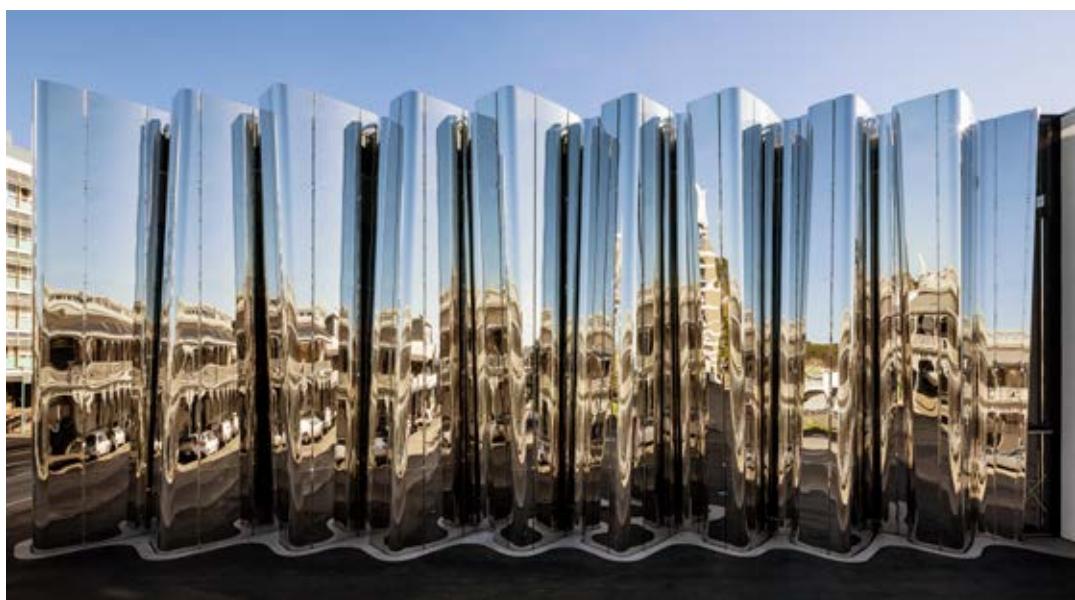
Judith Taylor succeeded Keith-Brown in 2022. Taylor is an associate at Auckland architectural firm Context Architects, and has almost 40 years of experience in the architectural field, including multi-storey construction projects, seismic upgrades and refurbishment of heritage buildings. Women have also been involved in the national board of the NZIA and in branch committee work, increasingly so in recent years. At the time of writing, national board members include Belinda Tuohy, Felicity Wallace, Rachel Venables and Andrea Bell, and Renee Williamson as the representative of graduate architects. Women have found this a good way to get out of their practices and into the wider profession. Women on judging panels for NZIA Awards, both national and regional, are now standard.

Women have also had a significant and growing role in the New Zealand Registered Architects Board (NZRAB), which registers architects, and its predecessor the Architects Education and Registration Board. Many established women architects now play an important part in the assessment of prospective architects for registration on behalf of NZRAB. For example, Ainsley O'Connor has been an NZRAB assessor for more than 27 years, and Anne Salmond for 15 years. The first chair of the board of NZRAB was Jane Aimer, and since 2018 the chair has been Gina Jones, an architect who has run her own practices in Wellington and the Wairarapa since the 1980s and now is the architectural team lead for Catalyst Group. Jones has extensive governance experience in the construction and architectural world, having been also the inaugural president of the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) in New Zealand and previous president of the New Zealand Institute of Building (NZIOB), a pan-industry business group for the construction industry. Deborah Cranko is another whose practice has flexed to include governance of architectural, engineering and building industry bodies. These have included the New Zealand Architects Co-operative Society,

ABOVE: Judith Taylor, president of the NZIA from 2022.

CENTRE: Judi Keith-Brown, president of the NZIA 2020–22.

BELOW: Wendy Shacklock of Wendy Shacklock Architects.





OPPOSITE ABOVE:  
Katherine Skipper  
was project lead for  
Warren and Mahoney's  
restoration and extension  
of the Martinborough  
Town Hall (2018).

OPPOSITE BELOW:  
Jo Aitken was the project  
architect for Patterson  
Associates' Len Lye  
Centre Art Gallery in  
New Plymouth (2015).

ABOVE: Stacey Farrell's  
Black House Part One,  
designed for her family in  
Queenstown. The Black  
House Part One and Two  
were awarded *HOME*  
magazine's 2022 Green  
Home of the Year.





## 32. DESIGNING PAPAKĀINGA: WĀHINE MĀORI ARCHITECTS

### Fleur Palmer (Te Rarawa, Te Aupōuri, Ngāti Awa)

Our first home and house of being is the whare tangata, our mother's womb, a place that nurtures and keeps us safe until eventually we are ready to exit Te Pō (the world of darkness). As we squeeze down the birth canal, it is to the primal roar of our mother's karanga (call) as she welcomes us into Te Ao Mārama (the world of light). 'Tihei mauri ora!' we gasp as we take our first breath of life.

The whakataukī 'Mā te wāhine, mā te whenua, ka ngaro ai te tangata' ('By women and land, men are lost') refers to the critical relationship that exists between women and Papatūānuku (Earth mother) and the whenua (land). To survive, our mother feeds us. When we wake in the night, we ūkaipō (suck milk from her breast). To give her sustenance and maintain her strength to feed us, her family brings food grown in the whenua, gathered from local māra kai (cultivated food gardens) and collected from the ngāhere (forests) and rohe moana (fishing grounds).

Everything we drink and eat comes from Papatūānuku. Her food reserves are our whenua ūkaipō (sources of sustenance). The whare tangata, and our mother's relationship to Papatūānuku, and the whenua ūkaipō that feeds and houses her, are critical to our survival. Through this relationship we are deeply and intimately connected. This relationship sustains the health and well-being of our communities.

But what if the world our mother welcomes us into cannot provide us with a healthy long-term place to stay? What if there is nowhere to plant our whenua in accordance with the tikanga practised by our tūpuna (ancestors)? 'Ko au te whenua, ko te whenua ko au' ('I am the land, the land is me'). What happens if our mother is dislocated from the land, living in a rental? Isolated, and with no extended family to help or protect her. No money to buy food from the supermarket. How will she care for her children? How will she pay to see the doctor? Who will help and protect her?

Traditional Māori settlements on ancestral land are known as papakāinga. The 'pā' in papakāinga relates to an elevated site, which enabled the community to create a stronghold, to protect both the inhabitants and primary food sources. The 'papa' in papakāinga is also associated with Papatūānuku and her role in providing a whenua, a place where people can both live and be sustained by food grown and gathered from local reserves. The word 'kai' in papakāinga refers to the importance of food in maintaining the community. Papakāinga were always built close to productive food-growing areas with fertile gardens or rivers, lakes or coastal areas that had abundant supplies of eel or kai moana. Sometimes papakāinga were seasonal, depending on what food was available at different times of the year.

The organisation of a papakāinga relied on principles that drew the community together to form a communal stronghold. This arrangement supported the raising of families, collective sharing of local resources, protection of the community, and kaitiakitanga (guardianship) over the rauemi kai (local food reserves) to support future generations. As a collective, everyone living in a papakāinga was involved in building the whare (houses), collecting structural materials, gathering cladding elements, making bindings to tie different components together, preparing food for the workers, and looking after the children. Both female and male leaders directed the hapori (community), mahi kōtahi (working together) and drawing on the

Former state houses were relocated from Glen Innes in Auckland to a new papakāinga in Kaitāia. The first stage of the project was developed by Fleur Palmer in partnership with He Korowai Trust, which has been working with local whānau for 20 years. Shown here is Rosalina Puhi with her sons.



## 34. GOING PUBLIC: CIVIC AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

### Catherine Hammond

When you respect a community by giving people something of quality, they really respond. It's always a great privilege working on public buildings for that reason.<sup>1</sup>

– Julie Stout

Something interesting happens in the architectural record of Aotearoa in the first decades of the new millennium. We see growing evidence of the involvement of women architects on special projects, civic buildings, and the range of dedicated public structures where people and communities gather. Earlier examples of this kind exist, of course: Julie Stout, Felicity Wallace and Anne Salmond, for instance, all designed public buildings in the 1990s, but at a time when residential projects were still substantively the norm for women in practice. After 2010, the contribution of women architects in leading roles starts to accumulate more rapidly in the public sphere; in part this is made possible by the increasing number of graduates and women in senior positions, but it is also fuelled by client demand, and sustained by the demonstrable benefits that a diversity of ideas, perceptions and relationships brings to public projects.

Julie Stout's first civic commission was the NEW Gallery (1995), a contemporary art exhibition space for Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, a metropolitan art museum established in the late nineteenth century. With her partner David Mitchell, and with their signature whimsy, they converted a former telephone exchange building in central Auckland into a light-filled, flexible showcase for the gallery's growing contemporary collections and special exhibitions. The NEW Gallery was decommissioned after a major extension to Auckland Art Gallery's main building in 2011, but it remains an influential exemplar of both sensitive retrofitting and a subtle rethinking of the established white cube aesthetic for exhibiting contemporary art.

Mitchell & Stout would design two more public art galleries in the decades that followed: the newly established Tauranga Art Gallery (2009) in the Bay of Plenty and Te Uru Waitākere Contemporary Gallery (2015) in Titirangi, west Auckland. Tauranga was another civic project that repurposed an existing structure, in this case a former bank building, but Te Uru was a substantial new build on a challenging narrow site which abutted an allied heritage building, Lopdell House.

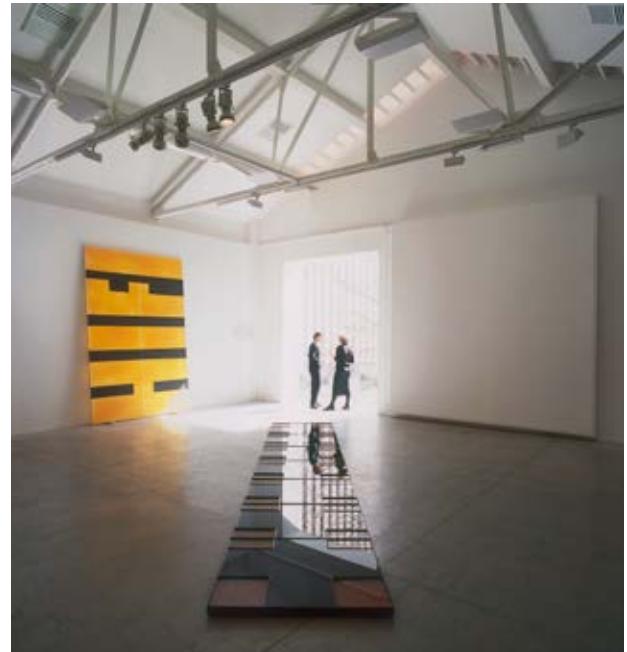
For Stout, who received the NZIA Gold Medal in 2021, the health of a building is rooted in and sustained by its communities.<sup>2</sup> She led the extensive community consultation necessitated by the project, and an award-winning public building emerged in the process.<sup>3</sup> Clad in painted aluminium, Te Uru is a striking aspect of the Titirangi streetscape; its vibrant green hue a sympathetic allusion to the nearby rainforests of the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park.

A significant feature of all three Mitchell & Stout galleries is the presence of natural light that somehow conforms to the strictures of displaying art. Vertical light shafts are used in Te Uru exhibition spaces to harness and control daylight.



ABOVE: Te Uru Waitākere Contemporary Gallery, Titirangi, Auckland, by Mitchell and Stout (2015).

RIGHT: NEW Gallery in central Auckland by Mitchell and Stout (1995).





ABOVE: Wellington Zoo Hub by Assembly Architects (2011).

OPPOSITE ABOVE: Northland Chapel, by Megan Rule of South Pacific Architecture (2003).

OPPOSITE BELOW: *Chapel Pacific*, by Jade Kake, Ambrosia Crum, Sonny Ganaden and Jason Lowe, at the Honolulu Contemporary Museum of Art (2015).

