

"a massive colonial experiment": New Zealand architecture in the 1840s:
a one day symposium held under the auspices of the
Centre for Building Performance Research, Victoria University

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ABSTRACTS

Paul Addison "What happened to Nelson's Town Belt?"

One of the common features of Wakefieldian settlements of the 1840s was the town belt. While the integrity of the town belt in those settlements may have been eroded in the last 170 years, Nelson is unique in that, by the end of the 1840s, any public awareness and concept of a town belt there had all but disappeared. This paper will explore the circumstances of the rapid disappearance of Nelson's town belt.

Stephen Cashmore "Dreamt I was at 'Holmcote' but woke and found myself in New Zealand"

How did first settlers furnish and decorate their interiors in the new country? An introduction to what we know of first settler interiors in New Zealand dwellings of the 1840s with specific references to the French farm house 1841, Akaroa Harbour and how Lieutenant Governor John Eyre coped with Government House in Wellington in the late 1840s.

Pamela Chester "Paremata Redoubt: colonial follies"

The construction of Paremata Redoubt, 1846-67, at the entrance to Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour, was commissioned by Lieutenant Governor George Grey. The redoubt was built to subdue Māori opposition to New Zealand Company immigrants settling in the wider Wellington area. In 1846 the entrance to Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour was a strategic military location being on the main Māori route from the west Wellington coast, *via* Pāuatahanui, to the Hutt Valley and Wellington.

The redoubt, was built on the site of Paremata Pā, which had been occupied from about the early 1830s to about the mid 1840s, just prior to the building of the redoubt, by members of Ngāti Toa Rangatira iwi, which included the tohunga and older half brother, Te Watarauhi Nohorua, and older sister, Te Waitohi, of Te Rauparaha.

When the first soldiers arrived on 16 April 1846, there was no accommodation provided, and the troops had to sleep in tents; the camp was on tabued ground. Barracks, to house Imperial troops, were completed in August 1847, but this was after the two fighting chiefs who were the main opponents of European settlement, Te Rauparaha and his nephew, Te Rangihaeata, had been subdued; Te Rauparaha had been captured at his kainga, Taupo, on Plimmerton beach and Te Rangihaeata had fled northwards from his pā, Mataitaua, at Pāuatahanui.

Clearance of the ruins of the barracks from late 1959 to early 1960 by the Wellington Regional Group of the New Zealand Archaeological Association revealed that they were rectangular with towers in opposing corners. The main building material was natural beach boulders, probably sourced locally, with brick quoins and window openings. The stonework had been knapped into line with a mortar made of sand, lime, and crushed sea shells. The outside walls were 0.7 m thick, and inner walls were 0.5 m thick. The foundations were particularly strong: 1.1 m wide, and the lower part of the walls were 0.75 m wide to a height of 0.75 m. The ground floor had been divided into four main rooms, with a corridor leading to an entrance to the west.

A small room, near the centre of the building, with walls as thick as those of the exterior, may have been an arsenal.

The two-storeyed barracks were the subject of many early European picturesque drawings and paintings. The towers had loopholes, probably to accommodate cannon, but the first shot fired so shook the fabric of the building that the gun was not used again. Further, the barracks were occupied only briefly. An earthquake in October 1848 damaged the barracks so severely that they could not be repaired and they were evacuated, and the troops were accommodated in huts. Another earthquake in January 1855 caused the upper storey to collapse.

Today the ruins of the barracks can be seen in Ngatitōa Domain.

William Cottrell "Neo-classicism and other Revivals in 1840 New Zealand: British Domestic Design in Indigenous Materials"

In the first decades of the nineteenth century there was an insatiable enthusiasm for the fashions of previous eras. New research has established that designs for domestic furnishings in America, Australia and New Zealand were concurrent with the latest London and Paris fashions. It may be hard to imagine, with the priorities of convict and missionary life in the Australasian colonies, that influence of some of the greatest English designers was of any importance.

Furniture designs by George Hepplewhite (1788), Thomas Sheraton (1794) and Thomas Hope (1807) can be found in New South Wales while George Smith (1826), Thomas King (1829-35) and John Loudon (1833) can be identified in New Zealand. Elements of current British style trends from thereon can be seen in colonial-made furniture as mainstream fashion. By the 1840s the rare surviving examples made of native timbers are typical of those that could be found in any English home. Evidence does survive and with interpretation reveals a consistent influx of modern styles into the new colonies.

Paul Diamond "The Rutland Stockade – An Enduring Presence"

Redoubts, stockades and blockhouses were a feature of the Land Wars of the 1840s. As Walton (2003) has noted, at least thirty-two of these martial buildings were constructed between 1840–1848. Of these, the Rutland Stockade – built in Whanganui between 1846-1847, is remarkably well-represented in the historical record, and has an enduring presence in the city.

When the Coat of Arms of Wanganui City was presented in 1955, it included the Rutland Stockade, "a reminder that Wanganui was a garrison town from 1846 to 1870, the period during which the British Regiments were stationed in Wanganui."

Soon after the stockade was demolished in 1887, arguments about the loss of the town's heritage broke out. Salvaged parts of the buildings remain in the Whanganui Regional museum, and the stockade and blockhouses are represented in numerous photos, drawings, paintings, and manuscripts in many collections. The stockade name also lives on in the Rutland Arms Inn, named "named for the English county of Rutland in honour of the regiment which manned the stockade in 1847."

In this paper, Paul Diamond reviews the remnants and traces of the Rutland Stockade, considering what the ongoing presence of a long-lost building says about Whanganui's relationship with its martial past.

Nigel Isaacs "Foundations of Control: New Zealand Building Legislation in the 1840s"

The development of the "Raupo Houses Ordinance 1842" could be considered as the direct ancestor of today's "New Zealand Building Code." Limited in its scope and application, the ordinance provided a short term solution to what was hoped to be a short term problem - the use of highly flammable material for house construction. It was not intended for application to the countryside, only to urban areas.

To be effective, the ordinance had to be adopted by each provincial council as covering a specific area. This occurred from 1842 (Auckland) to 1852 (Lyttelton and Christchurch). It was finally repealed in 1878. Not every province was happy with the ordinance, with New Plymouth setting up its own "Thatch and Straw Building Ordinance."

This paper will examine the intent, content and context of the ordinance and its consequences on the development of future building controls.

Derek Kawiti "Topographical Landscapes"

This paper will examine, key changes in the understanding of topography and surface in relationship to the transition from pa tuwatawata, the pa maioro and its organisation to the development of the pa pakanga. It will track relationships through tribal kinship to pa pakanga across the mid to northern part of the North island. It will consist of a visual/ material study with supporting chronological figures/ diagrams.

Clare Kelly "The First Top House: A landmark in the Nelson pastoral landscape"

Vincent O'Malley has written that frontiers were "a localised phenomenon - the spaces between cultures or peoples - that ... Reflected the broader realities of colonial experience." The 1843 Wairau Affray was a defining event for Nelson settler society after which, incensed, indignant settlers perceived the ranges separating Blind Bay from the Nelson hinterland as a frontier of fear and mistrust. In 1847 the first settler homestead was built in the upper Wairau Valley. The first Tophouse later became an unofficial and then official accommodation house.

This paper reviews the struggle to construct this homestead, the unwillingness of women to endure its austerity and isolation and concedes that the history of the first Tophouse could be read as a testament to the inglorious struggles of pastoral establishment. Archival texts, maps and newspapers, however, offer an alternative reading. Nomenclature, cartographic conventions used to depict the first Tophouse and settler's choice of English romantic verse to describe it in popular press are considered. This paper concludes that, despite its inauspicious architecture, for Nelson settler society after the Wairau Affray, the first Tophouse was a symbol of "conquest." It was part of the broader story of colonial encounter in the South Island and became a crucial landmark in the pastoral landscape.

Adrian Humphris and Geoff Mews "ARCHITECT - or Painter, Politician, Forger, Farmer; multiple careers a necessity in 1840s New Zealand."

Emigrants arriving in New Zealand in the 1840s who had some architectural training were rarely able to find full-time employment in that profession. Some sought to make a living in related fields where their drafting skills could be used (as artists or surveyors); others changed completely to become farmers or real estate agents. A few sought civil service positions or moved into politics. The most persistent bided their time in other employment but moved back to architecture when conditions became more favourable.

Here we describe a number of examples of these categories. E. Ashworth arrived in Auckland in 1842. Unable to find architectural work, he taught drawing to the

Governor's children and also produced several paintings of early Auckland. Henry St Hill arrived in Wellington as the New Zealand Company's Architect - but followed a career as magistrate and sheriff. W. Robertson practised as an architect in Auckland from 1847 - but also advertised as a real estate agent. S. Kempthorne arrived in 1842 as a church architect but did not adapt well to New Zealand conditions and fell out of favour with Bishop Selwyn. By 1864 he was Secretary of a Public Buildings Commission. Reader Gillson Wood, famous or infamous for New Zealand's first parliament building, the "Shedifice" in Auckland, became a well-known politician - but returned to practising as an architect several times during a long career. William Mason thought he was coming to New Zealand as Colonial Architect in 1840. Downgraded to Superintendent of Public Works, he resigned after two years. Mason then moved into auctioneering and farming for the next 10 years before returning to architecture and, later, a highly successful career in Dunedin. T. O'Meara of Wellington claimed to be an architect but was probably a builder. Either way his drafting ability was found to be wanting when he forged a series of government debentures and tried to pass them for payment. (This resulted in a ten-year jail sentence, with transportation to Tasmania).

We also explore some of the social reasons for the apparent lack of work for early skilled architects, including the slow-growing economy, immediate needs for basic shelter/food production and major differences in building material resources compared with settlers' countries of origin.

Christine McCarthy "Colonial Homelessnesses"

Published references to homelessness in newspapers of the decade include instances of both foreign and local homelessness. International homelessness is frequently stated to be a result of social conditions: poverty and unemployment. Natural disasters figure small. New Zealand accounts vary more widely, but are dominated by Pākehā homelessness resulting from sub-leasing regulations, "native insurgents" - usually in reference to the attack on Kororāreka, and Wellington's 1848 earthquake, whose homeless sheltered with friends who lived in "wooden buildings."

Yet, simultaneously, New Zealand is also proposed as a potential home for England's unemployed homeless, and Auckland - "the neglected offspring of avaricious parents ... exhibiting the tokens of permanent prosperity" due to its merchantile, rather than colonial, British settlement - is stated to have accommodated refugee settlers "driven from their homes by acts of violence and destruction which the native insurgents, intoxicated with success, so wantonly committed." Unlike the 1880s, in 1840s newspapers there are no references to homelessness in serialised literature, and few abstract uses of the term.

Māori do not figure large in the references to homelessness as being homeless. There is reference though in the late 1840s to Tommy, who is praised because when he "found himself homeless ... [he] did not return to the savage horde from whence he came, but sought and found other employment amongst the Pakeha's [sic]," and there is a heartfelt plea from a father of half-caste children to other fathers: "let not your children fall back to the state of degradation, from whence their mothers sprung." Potential homeless here is tied to prostitution and disease.

This paper will examine the reporting of homelessness throughout the 1840s, and will attempt to isolate specifically architecture issues of the decade which emerge from this.

Vivienne Morrell "Settlers' clearings: making a new home on Wellington's country acres in the 1840s"

The Maories [sic] have split into fencing poles the very trees I had cut down by my men to fence off what they call their ground and they are now taking possession of my own clearings.

Charles von Alzdorf, letter to George White, Magistrate, Petone (22 August 1842)

This illustrated talk focuses on the clearings new settlers made in the mostly forested country acres around Wellington – particularly in Karori and the Hutt Valley. I will consider what the settlers put in "their" clearings so soon after making them, using information from diaries, letters and newspapers as well as secondary sources and the illustrations. This included houses, outbuildings, gardens, glasshouses, a flour mill and even a labyrinth, for example. As land was one of the main concerns for both Pākehā settlers and Māori in this decade I want to see how this played out in particular areas and how it changed over the decade.

Rosie Geary Nichol, Katharine Watson & William Cottrell "French Farm house: history and archaeology"

French Farm house was built in c1843 by the French navy, as part of the French settlement in Akaroa. The house was occupied throughout the nineteenth-century but abandoned in the early twentieth-century, after which it was used for storage. The house, a Category 1 building listed with Heritage New Zealand, is now in a poor state of repair, and the Akaroa Civic Trust are embarking on a project to stabilise and preserve the building. As part of this project, Underground Overground Archaeology held an archaeological working bee at the site in July, recording the house and excavating in two rooms. This paper presents the preliminary results of that work.

Tyson Schmidt ""He thought the Māori did not use their land...": the Wastelands in 1840s landscape painting[propaganda]"

The waste lands concept was an important part of the colonial project, gaining particular traction in the 1850s. Its initial implementation in New Zealand was begun in the 1840s, underpinning a strongly economic approach to settlement favoured by the owners and proprietors of the New Zealand Company. In the 2012 version of this symposium I presented a paper that explored how images of New Zealand's landscape in the 1850s could be analysed in light of the concept, with a particular focus on Crown/Māori relationships. Here I extend this analysis into the 1840s – before the heady heights of waste land policy implementation – and test what landscape images from the likes of William Fox, Charles Heaphy, and publications such as Edward Jerningham Wakefield's *Adventures in New Zealand* can reveal when read through the lens of the waste lands concept.

Ben Schrader "A Bi-cultural Townscape: Wellington in the 1840s"

Included in the baggage the first settlers brought to Wellington were prefabricated cottages built in London. According to their designer and maker – Manning of Holborn – these "flat-pack" homes could be erected in only a few hours. All that was needed was a wrench to put them together. For settlers, the advantage of the prefabricated dwellings was the chance to create an "instant home." Constructed together they would create an immediate and modern British-like townscape in an exotic land. Why then did so many settlers quickly abandon their prefabricated dwellings for raupo structures built by Māori? How come raupo dwellings proliferated in Wellington and not in Auckland? And why were measures were put in place to restrict their construction from 1844? This talk focuses on the early settlement of Wellington when the town had a hybrid-built environment – comprising both European and Māori-designed structures – and Māori and Pākehā lived side by side. These attributes set Wellington apart from other towns in New Zealand and similar

settler societies. So why was this unique bicultural townscape subsumed by an overtly European one by 1850?

Peter Wood "Swiss Architectural Origins, Le Corbusier, and The Pātaka of Lake Horowhenua"

In April, 1845, the Rev. Richard Taylor passed through the area of the North Island now marked by the town of Levin. At this time he described Lake Horowhenua as being of singular appearance for the small storehouses built over the water on poles. As was his predilection, Taylor made a drawing of the lake huts, a version of which was belatedly included in the second edition of his most important literary contribution, *Te Ika-a-Māui* (1870). This image would have remained as little more than a questionable curiosity were it not for Messrs, Black Bros. who, in the course of exploring the lake bed for Māori artefacts in 1932, legitimised Taylor's observation with their discovery of the submerged architectural remains of an aquatic hut. Nonetheless, almost a century after Taylor's original diary entry, G. L. Adkin, writing for *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, lamented the neglect shown toward these remarkable structures, and which he cited as just one example of the "tantalising gaps" in the recorded history of Māori custom and culture. Sadly, it is well beyond the scope of this research to properly redress the historical neglect shown toward lake Pātaka. What I do wish to do is to link these structures to an event on the shores of the Lake of Zurich, Switzerland, when Dr. Ferdinand Keller noticed some half-submerged piles in 1854. Upon these remains Keller made a great, if erroneous, case for primitive "pile-work habitations" in the Swiss lakes. The impact of this argument cannot be understated. It became the privileged model for architectural origins in the German and French parts of Switzerland, and by the 1890s it was a part of standard teaching texts in Swiss schools, where it was firmly inculcated into the curriculum at the time that Charles Edouard Jeanneret was a child. This in turn has led Vogt to suggest that in Keller's "dwellings on the water" Le Corbusier found a Primitive Hut typology that underpinned all his architectural thinking, and which is made most explicit in his principled use of piloti. What makes this all the more involved is that Keller, in searching for examples to visualise the construction of the Swiss lake dwellings, turned to the Pacific (which he categorised as at a developmental stage of architectural evolution akin to early Europe). In this paper I identify the exact etching by Louis Auguste de Sainson that Keller took for direct influence. The problem, however, is that Sainson depicted a conventional whare built on land, and Keller transposed it to the water. So we have on the one side of this paper an authentic lake whare that is all but forgotten, and a famed European lake-hut that is all but Māori, and between the two is the figure of Le Corbusier who may or may not have unknowingly based one of his major innovations on influences found in the Pātaka of Lake Horowhenua.