**Auckland City in the 2000s**

It’s hard to know how to contextualise a decade from which we’ve only recently exited. There’s a danger of producing an architectural version of the TV schedule fillers shown between Christmas and New Year that simply serve as a reminder of all that we were content to have forgotten. This was a decade, however, for which amnesia was not so desirable; the news was largely good.

Economically, the century’s first ten years were a mixed bag. Rebounding from the downturn of the late-nineties, the nation enjoyed an economic upswing. Real estate values ran wild and the associated building boom kept architects frantic though the middle years of the decade. This was followed by a global slump that threatened (and may yet cause) fundamental damage to international financial system, although NZ remained sheltered from the worst of it. Through boom and bust alike, the city saw significant action in a band along its waterfront zone – from Vector Arena and the Britomart in the east, through the PricewaterhouseCoopers Tower and Princes Wharf, to the redevelopment around the Viaduct Basin. As redevelopment continues west towards the tank farm area and completes the link to the Beaumont Quarter, the city’s centre of gravity has shifted dramatically in the direction of the harbour. Unlike previous construction booms that have left a legacy of which we might not be so proud – one thinks of the 1980s in particular – this boom bequeathed us substantial buildings by many of our best architects. Indeed, the naughties are notable in that while some key Auckland projects were claimed by Aussies, almost all of our local luminaries were able to boast major built achievements in the central city.

The decade saw the advent of BIM and the mainstreaming of software capable of producing dynamic forms and complex geometries. Many Auckland practices were early adopters of Revit and similar tools, but the potential of these systems seems rarely to have been fulfilled. There are a few notable exceptions – Noel Lane’s wobbly Museum dome or Oh No Sumo’s temporary Cupcake Pavilion – but the digital revolution has provided Auckland with remarkably little in the way of architectural blobs or swooshes. Something else to largely elude architects was the successful operation of competitions. The well-run 2007 competition for the City Mission produced a worthy scheme, but the two-tiered talent quests for Te Wero Bridge (2008) and Queens Wharf (2009) both came to controversial ends. One wonders why the City seems to set up open competitions for only its very highest profile projects; perhaps running competitions for smaller projects might establish the expertise and trust that would smooth the way when the high-stakes projects came around.

On a more positive note, the naughties were a time when Auckland seemed to discover urban design. The establishment of Urban Design Panels to review all development in the CBD raised the bar for designers and developers alike. The Council’s appointment of an Urban Design Manager was supplemented by all manner of champions, protocols, frameworks, and taskforces. Urban design hit the headlines when questions arose about where our rugby stadium should be located; it was a remarkable few weeks, when the design of our city became the focus for serious media attention and passionate public debate. But this was a splash in a general rising tide of public interest in our built environment. Combined with advent of Grand Designs-type TV and a marked step up in the volume and quality of local architectural publishing, the 2000s were a time in which the power and potential of architecture was increasingly recognised. It was a decade that left architects with plenty of reasons to be optimistic about the future. **Andrew Barrie**
When this building received an NZIA NZ Architecture Award in 2009, it was called "a brave and inspirational project." A warehouse refurb on an unsavoury backstreet, most of the action takes place inside. In the all-white top floor apartment, thin walls warp and twist, wrapping fluidly around each activity. The award citation described the space as "an otherworldly experience, one in which it has become possible to inhabit an idea." These sinuous curves also snake across the façade, slots excavated for banks of windows, each set to a different angle. See Architecture NZ May/June 2009.

With one flank pressed hard up against a motorway on-ramp, this building is a masterful piece of contextualism. On the motorway side, defensive concrete panels are cleaved by translucent strip windows formed into crosses. The other side, which forms one edge of a courtyard, has a cloister and bridge that links to adjacent buildings. Above, flip-up clerestories interlock to unite the composition. The project won an NZIA Supreme Award in 2002. See Architecture NZ Jan/Feb. 2000 and Nov/Dec. 2001. This area is now the best spot to see Architectus' work, with the Middle School Building (2003) across the St. Peter's campus, and several more just next door at AGS.

The initial stages of the refurbishment of the Grierson Armer & Drafen building (1922-29) won Lane an NZIA-Resene National Award in 2000. The "Grand Atrium Project" inserted a number of new galleries and support facilities into a light well at the rear of the Museum. The drama of the ground-level atrium space has been somewhat overshadowed by the fact that the new dome and its views over the city are not generally accessible to the public, used only as special function space. See Douglas Lloyd Jenkins rabid review in Architecture NZ March/April 2007, and Museum director Rodney Wilson's more reasoned refutation in the magazine's following issue.

This complex consists of two L-shaped blocks – built several years apart – arranged around a triangular landscaped court. The second block, the Viaduct Point, received an NZIA Supreme Award in 2004, the citation commending both architects and client "for a strong contemporary approach in developing an urban apartment typology." See Architecture NZ Jan/Feb. 2001 and May/June 2004. Step out onto Architectus-designed Watemata Plaza and adjacent open spaces (1998) or stroll around to the Lighter Quay to see Architects Patterson's Stratis Apartments (2005) and Studio of Pacific Architecture's North at Lighter Quay (2003).

Occupying the former Enerco gas works site, this project was masterplanned by Studio of Pacific Architecture, with buildings and landscapes by SoPa, S333 (Amsterdam), Engelen Moore (Sydney) and expatriate landscape architect Steven Tupu (New York). Developed by Nigel McKenna (now bankrupt), the project has not been without controversy. Many apartments were sold through failed property company Blue Chip, and a legal stoush erupted in 2008 when ground leases - the project is one of the country's largest leasehold residential developments - increased by 400%. The project won an NZIA NZ Architecture Award for Urban Design in 2010. See Arca Dec. 2006.

Built alongside W&M's 1960s Students' Union building, this complex includes a bookshop, café, shops, health and counseling services, large information commons, and study facilities. The project won an NZIA-Resene Local Award in 2003, an NZIA-Resene New Zealand Award in 2005, and a Property Council Merit Award in 2004. See Architecture NZ July/Aug. 2003 and Nov/Dec. 2007. Slip across to the road to see Jasmax's fabulous University Fale (2004) or Ashton Mitchell Architects School of Engineering Atrium/Theatres Project, winner of an NZIA-Resene New Zealand Award in 2006.

When this building won an NZIA Supreme Award in 2006, the citation read: "A business school by its very nature attempts to have its feet in two camps – those of the city and academia. At AUT that desire is made manifest on a number of levels to the benefit of both. From the street level the entry forms both a threshold and a gateway to the campus ... At the scale of the city the building form is responsive to context and climate, and expressive of its role as a great place to work and study." Check out Jasmax's adjacent AUT Te Amorangi library and admin complex (2001) and AUT Art & Design Building (2004).

The Point & Viaduct Point Apts 121-15 Customs St West Craig Craig Moller

 occupying the former Enerco gas works site, this project was masterplanned by Studio of Pacific Architecture, with buildings and landscapes by SoPa, S333 (Amsterdam), Engelen Moore (Sydney) and expatriate landscape architect Steven Tupu (New York). Developed by Nigel McKenna (now bankrupt), the project has not been without controversy. Many apartments were sold through failed property company Blue Chip, and a legal stoush erupted in 2008 when ground leases - the project is one of the country's largest leasehold residential developments - increased by 400%. The project won an NZIA NZ Architecture Award for Urban Design in 2010. See Arca Dec. 2006.

Built alongside W&M's 1960s Students' Union building, this complex includes a bookshop, café, shops, health and counseling services, large information commons, and study facilities. The project won an NZIA-Resene Local Award in 2003, an NZIA-Resene New Zealand Award in 2005, and a Property Council Merit Award in 2004. See Architecture NZ July/Aug. 2003 and Nov/Dec. 2007. Slip across to the road to see Jasmax's fabulous University Fale (2004) or Ashton Mitchell Architects School of Engineering Atrium/Theatres Project, winner of an NZIA-Resene New Zealand Award in 2006.

When this building won an NZIA Supreme Award in 2006, the citation read: "A business school by its very nature attempts to have its feet in two camps – those of the city and academia. At AUT that desire is made manifest on a number of levels to the benefit of both. From the street level the entry forms both a threshold and a gateway to the campus ... At the scale of the city the building form is responsive to context and climate, and expressive of its role as a great place to work and study." Check out Jasmax's adjacent AUT Te Amorangi library and admin complex (2001) and AUT Art & Design Building (2004).
Consent stage. has now progressed to Resource neo-gothic language. The project reflect and defer to St Matthew’s cityscape primarily of vertical forms. All this is housed in a miniature health and recreational facilities. a library, workshops, as well as Centre, targeted housing, offices, the Mission includes a Homeless Matthew’s church. Facilities for neighboring St facilities for neighboring St. This retail and office development must surely be our nation’s most awarded building ever, having received the NZIA-Resene Architecture Medal, a Gold Award in the Best Awards, Metro magazine’s nod for best new commercial building, a Highly Commended citation at the World Architecture Festival, and even a special urban design commendation from our former Mayor. Check out the Cross Street façade, and then take a look at RTA’s 2008 refurbishment for the same client along the street at 582 K’ Road. See Metro Dec. 2009, Architecture NZ Sept/Oct. 2009, Nov. Dec. 2009, and May/June. 2010.

Other Addresses:

Beyond the Inner City:
Manukau District Court 30 Wiri Station Road Manukau City (1996) Architects New Zealand & Noel Lane Architects Not strictly a 2000s building, but well worth a look. Winner of an NZIA Award in 2002.


Gladstone Road Offices 76 Gladstone Road, Parnell Fearon Hay (2001) Winner of an NZIA-Resene NZ Award in 2002.

Cumulus (2003) 8a Cleveland Road, Parnell Architects Patterson Winner of an NZIA Supreme Award in 2003.


Waitakere Civic Centre (2006) 6 Henderson Valley Rd, Henderson Architect with Athfield

Architects Winner of an NZIA-Resene New Zealand Award for Architecture 2008.


Sources: