



School of Building Construction NZ Diploma in Architectural Technology

COURSE : DESIGN IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT - CIBC 6042

TOPIC : 1950's, 60's, 70's and 80's Lecture

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World War 2 hit in 1939 and lasting until 1945 , in turn reducing almost to zero the building programmes for residential or commercial buildings worldwide.

The 1950's to 1970's were the 'Adventurous and Optimistic years', in terms of exploring new ideas, taking up any one of many opportunities for work and the belief that "they could change the world".

The post war optimism of **the 50's** saw a significant rise in the number of babies being born and hence an increase in the demand for housing, (became known as baby boomers). However there was a scarcity of new materials, resulting in scavenging from the 'dumps' for second hand resources, for many of the houses built. In turn this led to the introduction of timber treatment plants in 1956 , as much of the framing in these 50's houses was untreated pine, heart rimu and timbers such as 150 x 25 on the skew acting as studs.

In the early 50's, several newly graduated architects in NZ wanted to test their design skills and create something 'in the NZ vernacular' rather than continuing to construct 'state houses', and import plans, kitsets and ideas from Australia and England.

They formed 'the Group' and created light timber framed 'sheds' that took account of their particular site conditions, incorporated the newly initiated clerestory window(s) and sarked skillion ceilings. Refer in particular to the "Elegant Shed " video and book by David Mitchell.

The 50's saw 'mod cons'(modern conveniences) explode on to the buying public's market, eg pop up toasters, fridges, washing machines, electric kettles, hairdryers etc. Cars were largely american with lots of chrome features, large wings over the wheel guard areas...

International and local airflight became more accessible to the general public , hence a large number of air terminals sprang up internationally.

It was the launching time of artists like Connie Francis, Elvis Presley, Cliff Richard, James Dean, Buddy Holly and Duke Ellington.

The 60's witnessed 'The Affluent Society'..where style was driven purely by the commercial desire for maximum profit, from minimum space , built for minimum cost.The International Style lived on for a few years into the 60's..eg van der Rohe's ' National Gallery in Berlin. The 60's saw the post war born baby boomers demanding housing which resulted in 'Housing Blocks in the sky' in all major international cities. These became 'living disasters' that no one wanted to live in, and many were in fact demolished in the 70's following ongoing vandalism.

The 60's was the time when 'plastic everything' became the new fad and norm for most domestic and subsequently commercial products too. TV's became the norm in many houses in the late 60's.

'Brutalism' became the 'new look' in design, using fairfaced concrete, exposed and therefore featured elements of the commonly adopted exposed aggregate precast panels on to concrete beam and column construction for commercial buildings.eg the University of Auckland 's Science buildings on Symonds St, and the Auckland Teachers College.

1960's Housing in NZ came under the newly introduced Building Guidelines known as NZS 1900 Chapters 1-9 with Chapter 6.1 being the Light Timber Framed code. These guidelines were not law but were adopted in part or completely by the various Building Councils as Bylaws, and were referred to when Building Permits were sought.

Similarly the Town and Country Planning Act came in to law in 1957 and this in turn identified the zoning of every section of land for purchase and subsequent building coverage and bulk restrictions. Motorways sprang up everywhere in all major cities. The 60's`saw conscription into the army to go to Vietnam. Artists such as the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan and the Bee Gees started their musical careers.

Following the deaths of the big four (Gropius, Corbu, FLW and van der Rohe) saw the full emergence of some new designers..eg Aalto(Helsinki), Utzon (Sydney Opera House), Stirling (eg University Buildings..Leicester), Erskine (Byker wall housing estate UK).

The 70's was the start of Post Modernism internationally, a return to historical references in the style and decoration (ornament) of buildings.

Houses in NZ were largely built by Group Home companies such as 'Universal', 'Beazley' or 'Keith Hay', as a result of these companies buying up large parcels of land, subdividing them and then building whole subdivisions that were then sold back as package deals of 'house plus land' to 'first buyers' in particular.

Internationally the demand for Universities to educate the baby boomers, continued. Venturi and Graves were designing post modern public /government buildings. Inflation began in 1971...Only the Housing Corporation and the ASB lent money for privately purchased house mortgages.

Organic architecture (and lifestyles) gathered momentum in the residential market and worldwide respectively, seeing Pole Housing emerge in NZ to take advantage of 'fringe / difficult' sections and the growing demand for housing.

High density , high rise inner city flats were built , particularly in Auckland in the Franklin Rd / Wellington St area. Sausage -flats developments, led to changes in the TP Act in 1977.

Designers of some residential buildings also explored the Buckminster Fuller concept of the Geodesic Dome, passive solar design and open plan / mezzanine floor approaches. Single wythe (skin) blockwork became a popular solution for fairfaced / brutal architectural form.

Some International Buildings of the, 50's – 70's were

Unite D'Habitation – Marseilles, France- 1946 –52 – Corbusier

Seagram Building – New York – 1954 Mies

Ronchamps Chapel – France- 1950 Corbu

Guggenheim Museum – New York – 1959 FLW

Sydney Opera House – Australia – 1956 –Utzon

Habitat – Montreal – 1967 Safdie

Postmodernism examples by Venturi, Meier, Aalto, etc in the 1970's onwards..

NZ Architectural Examples from 1950's –1970's

(all feature on the video / in the book 'Elegant Shed '

1950's

- **Auckland** – Vernon Brown's 'Hoffman House' Remuera 1949
 - 'The Group' Houses by Bill Wilson,
 - Bruce Rotheram,
 - Alan Wild
 - AMP Building - Thorpe ,Cutter...
- **Wellington** – Fortuna Chapel – John Scott
 - Massey House - Plischke and Firth
- **Southland / Hawke's Bay** -
 - St Paul's Cathedral extension - Dunedin – McCoy and Wixon
 - Hocken Library – Dunedin – McCoy and Wixon
- **Christchurch**
 - Dorset Street Flats- Miles Warren

1960's

- **Auckland** - Middleton House – Peter Middleton
 - Goldwater House – John Goldwater
 - Jewish Synagogue – John Goldwater
 - Auckland Teachers College – Jack Manning
 - Withers House – Russ Withers
 - Chapple House – Mike Austin
- **Wellington** - Athfield House part 1- Ian Athfield
- **Southland / Hawke's Bay**
 - Morgan House – Dunedin – Ballinger
 - Saunders House – Alexandra – John Blair
 - Spary House – Arrowtown – Peter Beaven
 - Pattison House – Waipawa – John Scott
- **Christchurch**
 - Lyttleton Tunnel Authority Building – Peter Beaven
 - Professional Offices – Miles Warren

1970's

- **Auckland** - West Plaza Building – Price Adams Dodd
 - Straddle Crane Workshop – KRTA
 - Auck University Science Block- Ministry of Works
 - Auck Uni Rec Centre – JASMAD(now JASMAX)
 - Osborne House – Marshall Cook
- **Wellington** – Cox House – Ian Athfield

- Wellington Club – Roger Walker
- Britten House – Roger Walker
- Habitat '75 – Beaven and Hunt
- **Southland / Hawke's Bay**
 - Mc Phail House – Havelock North – John Scott
 - Vintner's House – Havelock North – Ian Athfield
 - Apatu House – Napier / Taupo road – John Scott
- **Christchurch**
 - Christchurch Town Hall – Warren and Mahoney
 - QE 2 Park – Beaven and Hunt