

President's Report of 2004/5

This last year, as in others, the Architectural Centre has continued to advocate for architecture in Wellington. This has been achieved through organising architectural events, promoting principles of good design in submissions to the Wellington City Council, and providing forums for the discussion of architecture, and in co-ordinating with like-minded organisations (including the N.Z.I.A., the N.Z.H.P.T., N.A.W.I.C., DOCOMOMO(NZ), the Wellington Civic Trust, the School of Architecture, Victoria University, and the Interior Design Programmes at Weltec, and Massey University).

Over the last year a key focus for the Architectural Centre was the organisation of Wellington Architectural Week. This was a successful collaboration with the Wellington Branch of the NZIA, and the NZHPT. In addition we have organised a work-in-progress evening, been involved with a visit to Wellington by architectural students from the University of Tasmania, and put together five submissions on various aspects of Wellington's architecture and urban design to the city council. The bi-monthly newsletter continues to go from strength to strength, and this year more use has been made of the website and the email list. These are commented on in more detail below.

Futuna

One issue that has remained as a persistent topic in committee meetings has been the plight of Futuna Chapel. There is no dispute that Futuna is a significant example of modern architecture, and that the current state of Futuna chapel is both frustrating and must be an ongoing concern for the Architectural Centre. The landscape context has been seriously compromised and the interior fittings do not appear to have been well looked after. The chapel is currently being used to store timber. This is a complex situation and we need to continue to support attempts for a satisfactory long-term way of ensuring Futuna is looked after and made accessible to the public.

To date the Architectural Centre has taken a background role in relation to Futuna. There has been Architectural Centre representation at several meetings throughout the recent years (with, for example, the NZHPT, DOCOMOMO(NZ), and the Futuna Trust), and there is currently a proposal by Futuna Trust to buy Futuna. The AC committee will continue to monitor the situation, and will support any fundraising efforts to buy the chapel if attempts to buy the chapel will achieve a sustainable solution which will ensure Futuna is recognised and publicly accessible for the long-term.

Wellington Architecture Week 2004

In terms of events Wellington Architecture Week was a large focus. This was a collaboration between the Architectural Centre, the N.Z.I.A. and N.Z.H.P.T.. The committee consisted of Nick Mouat, Xanthe Howes, Morten Gjerde, Guy Marriage and Christine McCarthy. Architecture Week was a productive event, perhaps most renowned now for its little green booklet. The week included a lunchtime lecture series, exhibitions, open buildings (including the World Architecture Day open projects, and N.Z.H.P.T. open historic buildings, and the inner city churches tour), films at the Film Archive, and the Great Architectural Debate at Old St Paul's. Thanks are due to all of the WAW committee and also to the others on the Architectural Centre committee, esp Michelle, James and Simon for "baby-sitting" churches on the Saturday, and Mike and Amelia for making the debate a great success. WAW of course made a financial loss over the week which we halved with the Wellington branch of the N.Z.I.A..

Work-in-Progress Evenings

Many of our attempts to organise site visits were stifled for various reasons, so we tried another tactic by organising Work-in-Progress Evenings. The first of these was in November with Mike Evans, Michelle Cooper and Lou Ryan presenting one project each. The next one of these will be on 7th June with Angela Foster and Mark Southcombe presenting work. We will also be co-sponsoring a lecture with Weltec by Sarah Whiting and Ron Witte who will be presenting their current work in late June.

Tasmanian Students visit

Students from the University of Tasmania visited Wellington last year (28 Aug- 5th Sept) for a study tour of New Zealand architecture. This was organised by Julia Gatley. Thanks to Nick Mouat for organising their visit to Athfield's house. The students also took part in a design studio with students from VUW and Architectural Centre committee members assisted in the development of the brief for this.

Housing New Zealand competition

We are currently working with Housing New Zealand on a national housing competition which is to be announced during the N.Z.I.A. conference in May. We hope that this initiative will also enable future possibilities with local sites for collaborative work on housing initiatives.

BAM space gallery

Late last year we announced in the newsletter that we were looking into possibilities of an architectural and design gallery using the former BAM space. Unfortunately this space would only have been available for the short term and there were security issues which we didn't really have the volunteer power to address. While this didn't eventuate we are keen on following up possibilities for a more permanent space.

WCC Submissions

In the last year the committee put together five WCC submissions on: the NZ Music School (August 2004), the Waterfront Plan for Kumutoto (November 2004), the Glover Park Draft Management Plan (December 2004), the Built Heritage Strategy (January 2005), the V8 Street-race (April 2005). These can be found on the Architectural Centre web site, and we will be attempting to make more use of the web-forum to get more membership input into our submissions.

Architectural Centre book

The long awaited history of the Architectural Centre by Paul Walker and Julia Gatley, to be published by Victoria University Press, is nearing completion with Paul Walker's final draft of the book to be finished by the end of April 2005.

The Newsletter, email list and Web-site

We have continued to produce a newsletter every two months thanks to the hard work of Guy Marriage and Mike Evans. Any volunteers for contributions, and any ideas etc. are always welcomed. The email list has complemented the newsletter and meant that details of events from other organisations around Wellington can also be made available to members at shorter notice.

This year has seen more use of the web-site, particularly with the web-forum,. We are hoping to add an events calendar soon and we are also considering experimenting with web-based architectural competitions. Thanks in particular are due to James Shaw for all his work on the website which he willingly does for nothing.

Membership

We have recently implemented a new system whereby address labels for the newsletter will remind you when your subscriptions are due. This means that rather than all subs being due at the same time of the year, the subscription year will fall relative to the date new members joined rather than annually at the end of March.

Forthcoming Events

Film Archive 1970s architecture (May 2005)

Work-in-Progress: Angela Foster and Mark Southcombe (7 June 2005)

Architectural Centre/Weltec Lecture: Sarah Whiting and Ron Witte (late June 2005)

20U40 (to coincide with the Urbanism Downunder conference) (August 2005)

WAW 2005 (in collaboration with NZIA, NZHPT and DOCOMOMO(NZ)) (October 2005)

Lastly the Architectural Centre wouldn't function without the behind the scenes work from all of the committee. Thanks are due to you all for all of your work throughout the year, and a special thanks goes to Michelle Cooper who is unable to continue on the committee but has volunteered James as a replacement.