

The last royal epoch: New Zealand Interior and Landscape Architecture in the 1900s

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"in the most elaborate manner conceivable"

King Edward VII (reign 1901-1910) was - as Douglas Lloyd Jenkins observes - "the last British monarch to give his name to a decorative epoch." As the British royals loosened their grip on aesthetic terminology, New Zealand also took the step of discarding colonialism for dominionship in 1907, after saying "no thanks" to becoming the seventh Australian state when the colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania, Western Australia, South Australia federated in January 1901. While we rejected Australia, we annexed the Cook Islands and Niue that same year. Smith writes that "Islander chiefs favoured annexation on the understanding that land rights would be preserved, though they too lost control." This first decade of the twentieth century thus built on Pākehā awareness in the 1890s of "a local, rather than solely a global past. The death of the first generation of pioneers, combined with the statistical knowledge that most New Zealanders were now born here, added up to the idea that a distinctive New Zealander might exist."

Consequently, 1901 also saw New Zealand becoming "the first country to establish a national tourism organisation," when the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts began, and gained direct management of assets such as Te Aroha Hot Springs Domain, Rotorua, which had "a long flower border (constructed in 1903), rockeries (1905), a bush house (1906) and a rustic rose garden (1908) with manuka arbours and fences." In Taupo, the gardens at the tourist "Spa" were "laid out in neat designs," along with buildings for tourists and invalids and hot water swimming baths. The dining room was "[a]n old Maori Kainga with large boards and frieze, carved in the most elaborate manner conceivable." It was

[f]urnished with tables [and] the interior is capacious enough to seat a hundred persons at meal. Around the inside are representations of the human figure, carved in the usual mode of Maori Art, each with its three-pronged hands affectionately clasping its stomach, and tongue protruding on to its chest, or curling marvellously round its wooden neck, as if in anticipation of the feast spread before it.

Smith additionally writes that "[p]ride in being a 'native-born' European manifested itself in native associations, motifs borrowed from Maoridom, and musings about New Zealand as 'Maoriland' [... and] national identity grew." Other assertions of nationality included the adoption of a national flag (1902), and the kiwi as an unofficial national symbol of New Zealand - first used in 1904, in a *New Zealand Free Lance* cartoon. The following year (1905) New Zealand's first nationally-representative rugby team, the "Originals," toured Britain, France and the US, and were given the name the "All Blacks" because of their black uniforms. But such nascent nationalism was also defined by creating hurdles for those considered to be outside the definition of New Zealander, for Chinese migrants who, In 1907, were required to pass a reading test of 100 English words, and denied New Zealand citizenship from 1908-52.

This burgeoning identity was not uncontested or universally felt, and the decade opened with the publication of Samuel Hurst Seager's well-known "Architectural Art in New Zealand" (*Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects* 1900) proclaiming that New Zealand had ""no style, no distinctive forms of art [...] all our methods are those of the Old World; our materials and our conditions of life are not sufficiently distinctive to lead to any special mode being adopted."" Another illustrative tension was that between retaining natural bush for tourism and supporting a growing timber industry. In 1905, the *Poverty Bay Herald* proposed that "the bush along the main tourist routes, which is a national asset of an important kind" be protected. It specifically referred to the railway line and coach road from Jackson's to Otira, noting that "it would be a pity if this [bush] was destroyed before it became actually necessary. The contrast between the fine bush-covered hills of Westland and the bare and bleak country on the Canterbury side helps one to form some idea of the loss which the destruction of the bush would be to landscape. [...] At present, perhaps, there is no danger of this, but the energetic settler is here and there seeking to make a home, and with his advent begins the work of destruction."

"the energetic settler"

This energetic settler wanted both industry and land. A flurry of industrial exhibitions permeated the decade and were held in Kumara (1902), Waikato West [Te Awamutu] (1902), Feilding (1903), Wairarapa (1903), Hawera (1904), Marlborough [Blenheim] (1904), Westport (1904), Taranaki [New Plymouth] (1905), Norsewood (1906), Auckland (1908), and Cambridge (1909). In 1900, Canterbury held a Jubilee Industrial Exhibition in recognition of its 50 years, and Coromandel held a Young People's Industrial Exhibition. Hastings' exhibition in 1909 was called the St Matthew's Industrial Exhibition and, of course, we can't forget the Christchurch International Exhibition held in Hagley Park in 1906. A photograph of its fernery was published in the *Otago Witness* in November 1906.

At the Canterbury Jubilee Industrial Exhibition, the display of the Christchurch Meat Company conjured an interior of wool bales and tinned meat. The *Press* reported that:

The stand is in the form of an arcade, and at intervals there are pillars intended to represent the interior of a freezing room. The whole effect, with the flags, banners, and streamers, which depend from the ceiling, and the interesting manner in which the various exhibits are grouped, is highly attractive. In the centre of the stand is an imposing representation of the tower of a castle, the sides of which are composed of the various sized and shaped tins in which the company's meat is packed, the variegated colours of the labels having a bright effect. [...] Just to the north of this are shown the cases in which the meat is exported, arranged in pyramidal form, with samples of the meats on top of the boxes. [...] an exhibit of twenty-eight bales of wool of varied classes, scoured and slipped, which will prove of great interest to sheep breeders and wool workers. The bales are arranged in pyramid form.

The Taranaki exhibition (J.A. Maisey, 1904-5) was built on St. Michael's Square. Its plan perimetered a "spacious rectangular courtyard [120 x 180 ft]." The roof was "raised in the centre, with a lower tier on each side. At the sides of the centre piece and lower tiers glass is fitted, thus admitting plenty of light to the interior." In November 1904, the paths through the exhibition grounds had been laid out and "the work of tarring the walks" and "[t]he erection of the butter box arch" ("emblematic of Taranaki's staple industry") were imminent. The entrance included "a fern and flower grotto, and a cloak room." In the courtyard was a band rotunda and two "playing fountains," and a winter garden (designed by Mr. Green of the Morshead Nursery), as well as tents for afternoon tea, fortune telling and a smokers' retreat. The exhibition's electricity was generated by two dynamos with a 40 h.p. engine, supplying 10,000 candle-power. At night coloured lights graced the exhibition tower and courtyard. On the west side of the building (between Lemon and Liardet Sts), 3.5 acres were used to stage a Māori village and accommodate side shows and chopping contests. The village was "enclosed by a typical fence, and whares and [...] the area in front of the grandstand will also be utilised for haka and poi dances." Such representations of Māori in villages firmly located Māori as rural and Pākehā as urban dwellers, while drawing on images of "Maoriland" to solidify an image of New Zealand as distinctive and unique.

But "Maoriland" was an idyll distinct from the politically-fraught issues of Māori land.

The 1900s followed the 1895 Native Townships Act, which allowed European townships to be built on Māori land "opening up the land for settlement by undermining native title." Smith writes that "[p]otential tourist towns, and towns on the main trunk line in the central North Island (completed in 1908), was established by this method. [...] In 1891, 2.4 million acres (960,000 ha) of Maori land were leased to Europeans and another million acres (400,000 ha) by 1911. An estimated 10.8 million acres (4.32 million ha) in the North Island (including leased blocks) remained in Maori ownership in 1911." She states that "[t]he steep downward trend in Maori land holdings continued through the Liberal era, which witnessed the 'penultimate Maori land grab'."

Breaches of the Treaty had of course continually been raised long before this and the twentieth-century began with the passing of the Maori Lands Administration Act 1900 which was a response to Māori petitioning Parliament to reserve the then existing Māori land for Māori use and benefit, and a move to increase the productivity of Māori land for the interests "of the Maoris and Europeans of the colony" (preamble). The Act established "Maori-controlled land boards to develop Maori land and lease any surplus." Another emblem of Treaty breaches (Te Hapa o Niu Tirenī, Arowhenua, 1875) was destroyed by fire in 1903. Across the road from this first whare, a second (still existing) Te Hapa o Niu Tirenī (1905) was built. In July 1907, a hui on the injustices of the Kemp Purchase was held in Te Hapa o Niu Tirenī: The unfulfilled promises of New Zealand.

July 1907 was important for another reason. It was then that Apirana Turupa Ngata and Robert Stout published the ten recommendations of the Native Lands and Native-Land Tenure Commission. These recommended that the current system of purchasing Māori land be abandoned, that direct negotiation between land owners and private people be prohibited, that any further alienation require the Maori Land Board to be an agent for land owners, that land be set apart for Māori occupation and farming, and that limitations be placed on the land that the Board could administer. 1907 was also the year Rua Kenana's council house (Hīona) at Maungapōhatu was built, and when the Tohunga Suppression Act was passed.

the Brooklyn Bridge made of cotton reels

A second Fire Brigades Act was also enacted in 1907, following the 1903 State Fire Insurance Act, and the earlier (1906) The Fire Brigades Act. It was "to establish a State Fire Insurance Office, and to make other Provisions for the Insurance and Protection of Insurable Property in New Zealand against Loss or Damage by Fire" (Title). This consciousness about fire prevention is apparent in the interiors of the decade. A fire brigade office was included in the new Hamilton Town Hall (E. Mahoney and Son, 1905). The fire design in Wellington Town Hall's auditorium and dress circle ensured each had six fire exits. Palmerston North's opera house and municipal buildings included "[a]n asbestos drop curtain with a metal frame" to form a fire separation, and "three direct exhaust ventilators [...] in the roof." Branson's hotel (James Hislop, cnr King and St. Andrew Streets, Dunedin) had fire escapes from all of the rooms, and "fire hydrants [...] placed in convenient positions, any uneasy feeling on the score of fire being quite obviated." Alterations to Wain's Hotel (James Hislop, Manse St, Dunedin) also included "an up-to-date system of water supply in case of fire."

Windows and skylights, as means to light an interior, were another aspect of design given particular attention, despite the increasing use of electricity. J. Paul and Co.'s new Whanganui premises (T.H. James, 1903) had eight large plate glass windows on its street front and used Wade's patent skylights to ensure light was "splendidly diffused throughout the whole building." A similar lighting strategy was used in the Wesley Buildings' shops in Hamilton (F.E. Smith, 1905). and the 1904 addition to Speight and Co's brewery. In contrast, in Nelson's Wakefield Buildings (Thos, Roberts C.E., 1903), the rooms were lit using incandescent gas burners.

Taller buildings posed challenges for natural light, though the *Lake Wakatip Mail* in 1902 reported that they had "resulted in a larger use of ribbed and prismatic glass for windows as well as in the production of improved varieties of such glass." It explained that "[t]he illumination of dingy rooms shut in by lofty walls is increased by the reflection, from the many facets of the glass, of light which would otherwise pass the windows, without penetrating the interior of the room. The employment of diffusing glass is regarded as introducing a "new era in interior lighting.""

Store front windows were important for light, but also for shop displays, and in 1903, window dresser, Mr. Frank L. Carr junior, was engaged by the Wellington D.I.C. He had 25 years' experience in window dressing, including work in South Africa, Australia, Britain and America. His first display in Wellington's D.I.C. filled the department store's central windows with "photographs and paintings of different styles of window dressing and interior designs, over 2000 of which Mr. Carr has in use." His mechanical interior displays included an Easter lily, the Rock of Ages, the Japanese handkerchief and a model of the Brooklyn Bridge made of cotton reels. W.G. Vining's piano and bicycle shop in Nelson also had a show window that merited reporting on. It had an "excellent display of bicycles and requisites, whilst the interior, or show room has a splendid exhibit of pianos of the best makes and of high-grade cycles having all the latest improvements."

Shop interiors typically demonstrated judicious colour schemes and timber joinery. Sargood, Son and Ewen's New Plymouth showroom (1901) was "spacious and lofty." The upper floor was reached by "a wide and handsome stairway, all in rimu and kauri, with polished hand rail and carved newels. This storey [...] being excellently lighted, each window [...] was] fitted with a dark green blind - a necessary protection for the delicate goods. [...] At the back of this large room is a spacious and well-lighted sample room running the whole length of the building." In Hamilton's Wesley Buildings (1905), the ceiling bays were "finished off in pulp plaster and heavy cornice moulding," and the "counters and fittings are all of polished kauri, handsomely turned." The interior of Kirkcaldie & Stains (1902) determined "the coziness

of a room. Rich carpets, handsome rugs, inviting draperies, make the home snug and restful," as it promoted "Emu" Carpet Squares and "Kangaroo" Tapestry Squares.

At J. Paul and Co.'s new Whanganui premises (T.H. James, 1903), the cameoid ceilings were green, the walls white, with kauri shelving and red pine counters. Cast-iron Corinthian columns supported the first floor, and the roof was supported by exposed ornamented trusses. The business's inclusion of an afternoon tea room in a drapery store was said to be a first in Whanganui. It had an oriel window and leadlights. Particular attention was paid to the building's ventilation with wall cavities, horizontal ventilators near the ceiling and "five large Boyle ventilators in the roof." Nelson's Wakefield Buildings also had a large Boyle ventilator, as well as a three sash window which the architect (Thos, Roberts C.E.) had designed to ensure "perfect ventilation." The Wakefield Buildings had been built for letting purposes and comprised offices, a warehouse room, and sample rooms. The interior had "a dado of V-jointed rimu, oiled" with "wall papers [...] variously tinted with "Indeliblo," a washable paint, the white ceilings being covered with the same material.

Both Eltham's Mr. L. Hill's Boot and shoemaker, and the N.Z. Clothing Factory in Dannevirke were altered early in the decade to improve their accommodation for women. At Hill's "a room exclusively for ladies" was provided, whereas the N.Z. Clothing Factory added a new ladies' boot department, "painted in two tints and the floor is covered with cork lino, which is soft and noiseless." Out houses were also sometimes provided, and at the Wesley Buildings, because there was no suitable drainage, "the pan system" had to be adopted for the latrines, and the shop buildings were "enclosed by a 6ft galvanised iron fence, with large entrance gates."

"for Beauty she was a long way behind"

One of the most detailed descriptions published of a commercial interior during the decade must be that of Wigglesworth and Binns' new photographic studio on Wills St (W.C. Chatfield, 1901), built to replace a building destroyed by fire. Named "palatial," the account of the lavish ground floor leads the reader to the first-floor studio's set of "ornamental chairs, settees and other articles which aid in giving finish to the posing and general arrangement of groups or of single subjects for photography." The ability for the interior to control and manipulate light is clear, as well as its ability to faint location through "an arrangement of trapdoors in the roof whereby backgrounds can be expeditiously let down from the studio for alterations," the studio providing "all the conditions for the production of successful negatives."

This understanding must impact our ability to scrutinise portraits and photographs of interiors from this period, many of which were prominent in newspapers such as the *Auckland Weekly News* and the *New Zealand Graphic*, and included such tantalising vistas as those of the New Plymouth Dairy Produce Stores, the Featherston Cheese factory, the Buckle St Barracks, and the new Parliamentary Library, along with the more easily picturesque Wanganui Snow Scenes, Albert Park, Milford Sound and Waitokoaruru Falls. An awareness of the easy relationship between image and architecture is apparent in an article on beautiful homes which praised "a "Tyrolese" villa on a hill in the suburbs," which was "copied from a photograph."

Such suburban views impressed, or (alternatively) might catch "a conspicuous backyard, treeless and unashamed, completely destroying all view of the house" - if the surroundings of houses on hillsides were poorly designed. The *Otago Witness* was clear that houses on hilly sites needed particular attention, the home of one Wellington doctor being an exemplar, with the "house built far back from the street in something of the Swiss style, with a large pleasant loggia, while the rough slopes in front were covered with shrubs and conifers [... It] was quite a transformation scene." Lawns were an important aspect of a homestead, but "need not necessarily be flat or level. [...] They] may, on the contrary, be undulating, according to the natural formation of the ground." However, the advantages of a flat lawn become clear when it is understood that lawn tennis was "an exceedingly popular sport in New Zealand."

Home owners were to have pride in their homes, through, for example, "devoting a little time to the vegetable and flower garden" because "[f]resh vegetables all the year round and gay flowers to gaze on tend to create [the] pride all should have in their homes." *Otago Witness* columnist, James Gebbie (c1846-1933) made note of a particularly good example of such a garden in Balclutha which was:

in two parts, a grove of trees separating the residence and lawn, with its well-kept flower beds from the other part, where fruits, flowers, and vegetables abound. The flower beds on the lawn earlier in the season were a mass of hyacinths, narcissi, tulips, and other spring flowers, edged with primroses and polyanthus [...] Down one side of the lawn is a wide border of herbaceous and perennial plants, roses and bulbs, backed by a hedge of rhododendrons.

Gebbie's advice for hedges was to cut the hedge "in a pyramidal or inverted A form [so] every branch gets its fair share of light, air, and rain, and consequently all flourish alike." He noted that hawthorn, holly, berberis aristata, common laurel, escallonia, evergreen privet, laurustineas, matipo, olearia, and berberis darwinii were suitable plants for hedges. Mr. William Ensom's residence "Diplow" (Beverley Rd, Timaru), another example of a competent property was "half an acre of land well laid out in flower garden, croquet lawn, kitchen garden, and orchard in full bearing."

Gebbie contributed the *Otago Witness*' " Horticultural Notes" column for quarter of a century (October 1892- August 1917), and in 1901 (late of the Oamaru Botanic Gardens) announced his partnership with E. Gebbie to commence business as "nursery men and florists under the title of Gebbie and Son." In 1873 he had exhibited "a tastefully-arranged quadrangular pyramid [...] that included] fifteen varieties. There were white and red currants, strawberries, raspberries, brambles, apricots, plums, gooseberries, peaches, grapes, apples (several sorts), Siberian crabs, elderberries, &c." He also appears to have cleaned up in the prizes that year gaining prizes in the categories of Plants in flower (store or greenhouse plants, petunias, and zonal Pelargoniums), Foliage plants, Cut flowers (gladioli, hollyhocks, asters, other herbaceous plants, hand bouquet and best arranged vase of flowers), Fruit (grapes and peaches), and Special Prizes (best peaches and best decorated flower vase). Gebbie followed in the footsteps of his father (James Gebbie snr (c1816-1900)) as a nurseryman, and bought Mr Carter's nursery in Great King St, Dunedin in c1877. In 1892 he laid out the Public Gardens at Oamaru, where he was curator for 10 years.

The judges' report on Masterton Horticultural Society's 1910 Cottage Garden Competition provides another view of what was prized in domestic gardens. Points were awarded for beauty, neatness, good taste and artistic arrangement. Utility was determined by the inclusion and quality of fruit and vegetables. Mrs Hill's Bannister St garden "stood well for Utility, but for Beauty she was a long way behind. This garden is more a market garden than an ideal cottage garden." The winner Mr. R. Dixon's garden had "a nicely kept lawn with tastily arranged flowerbeds, and in his garden were well grown vegetables of all kinds suitable for providing a regular supply for a family table; there were also a good variety of both small and large fruits."

"lovely enough to tempt a guest"

The insides of houses were also subject to scrutiny. As Lloyd Jenkins writes:

[t]he Edwardian interior was concerned with illustrating one's position in society through maximum domestic display. In the colonies, supposedly a social *tabula rasa*, the idea that one could achieve a certain degree of social status through the acquisition and mass display of objects appealed immensely.

He identifies Lady Constance Ranfurly as a key trend setter "in a world still attuned to looking up for guidance in home design." The "Ladies' Column" of the *Evening Post* operated to also fulfil this role. In June 1905, it described the dining room of one new Wellington house as being:

papered with brown paper, which met a very deep frieze of sunset sky, brown hills, and flame-tinted trees, an exquisite design. The soft blue carpet, quaint white enamel mantelpiece and fittings enclosing a mirror with a handsome hammered silver frame, the bits of old china, and beautiful Sheraton furniture, made up an ideal interior. A quaint idea was a little room opening by means of an arch from the hall, all butcher-blue and dull greens, dedicated to that most social of entertainments, morning tea. But the spare bedroom, with wreaths of rosebuds on frieze and chintz, and everything else pure white, was lovely enough to tempt a guest to spend a month instead of a week, and then go away regretfully from such fresh daintiness.

Smith notes that "Australia and New Zealand had two of the highest home ownership rates in the world by 1911, of 50 per cent or more. Home ownership was the dominant form of tenure in settler New Zealand," and that the Liberal governments (1891-1912) "set out to create New Zealand as a democratic social laboratory." This included advancing housing for workers, which led to the Workers' Dwelling Act 1905 - with the building of the first 25 state houses in Petone at the Heretaunga Settlement - and the Government Advances to Workers' Act 1906, that enabled the government to loan money to workers to

build houses. But the government was not the only one thinking about housing. Samuel Hurst Seager is one of the most well-known architects of this period for innovating New Zealand domesticity. In 1902, He built a small suburb of eight houses in Sumner that would become the Spur. Inside the houses, Seager:

lined the walls and ceilings with timber planking that reminded viewers a little of earlier pioneer cottages, but where they had been draughty and cold, these houses were snug and warm. At the same time, the timber lining gave the occupant no opportunity to introduce the popular patterned wallpapers that in other houses hung against a backing of scrim that harboured dust and damaged easily. This, along with the introduction of built-in cupboards, clean-lined fireplaces, and showers rather than baths, meant the interiors were more efficient, compensating for a smaller than expected floor area. These houses were terrifically modern. In the language of their day, they were 'artistic' houses. They were also beginning to be referred to as bungalows, at the time a new word. [...] 'bungalow' meant an innovative small house, built cheaply, soundly and without pretension.

Seager's construction of the Spur was not simply about building houses. It was also about building a garden suburb, but it was reliant on the Spur's close proximity to the tram stop on old Christchurch Road. This was a time when transport was influx and transition. Pedestrians, bicycles, horses, carriages, cars, trams, boats and trains made up the mix. Schrader stated that "by the early 1900s motorcars were a familiar sight on city streets [...] and] in 1904 Thomas Stone was charged with furiously riding a motorcycle down Dunedin's George Street." The intersection of High, Hereford and Colombo Streets in Christchurch were graced with New Zealand's first dedicated traffic constable in 1907. In 1905, the *New Zealand Graphic* documented "the spread of settlement caused by the extension of the tramway system." In Dunedin, tram lines were also planned, with the line to Caversham completed by 1905, while others to South Dunedin and St Kilda were held up by "the Public Works Department, which should have strangled itself with its own red tape twenty times over." At this time, Dunedin's town belt was "a wild tangle of broom; elderberry, fuschia, cocksfoot, and flax," though its potential "from a landscape point of view," was considered to be limitless. Reclaiming Otago harbour had also progressed, and in January 1905, the Harbor Board had "nearly completed the reclamation of an area of 32 acres at the foot of Albany street." Fritz writing in the *Bruce Herald* speculated that in years to come this "real estate, unless confiscated by a needy Government, will be worth millions."

In 1908, the main trunk railway line linked Wellington and Auckland - just in time for MPs to travel to Auckland to meet the American Great White Fleet, which Prime Minister Joseph Ward had invited to New Zealand. A Royal Train conveyed the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall from Christchurch to Dunedin on their tour of 1901. It followed the opening of the Commonwealth Parliament of Australia, but also paid tribute to the Empire's response to the Boer War, which ended in 1902.

This was New Zealand's first foreign war and is also the event represented by the oldest film held by Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision ("The Departure of the Second Contingent for the Boer War"). New Zealand's contingents were supported by a Māori carnival held at Wellington's Basin Reserve in March 1900. By September 1900, Trooper Mitchell, a Balclutha member of the First Contingent to the war had been invalided home to a warm reception: "The shops were closed, the flag poles, buildings, and all manner of other conspicuous places were gaily decorated with bunting and all the Clutha world and his wife were on the streets." The route of the welcoming procession was "gaily decorated, many of the buildings being literally covered with flags [...] and] a welcome arch had been erected over the gate." To welcome Mitchell home "a sumptuous lunch was set out. The interior of the room was a triumph of the decorator's art, flowers, greenery, flags, and pictures of most of the war heroes being noticeable everywhere."

The conclusion of the Boer War in 1902 did not mean it was forgotten. At least initially annual reunions were held. In April 1903, the first Auckland reunion of the Fourth and Fifth Contingents "was held in His Majesty's Cafe, Arcade Buildings [...] The interior of the room was tastefully decorated with bunting." Similar festivities greeted the Duke and Duchess across the country. In Wellington they processed through street arches, including a Māori arch on Molesworth Street. When the royals arrived in Dunedin in 1901, and a reception was held for them in the Agricultural Hall, where

[t]he whole of the interior of the vast building was one harmonious scheme of colour. From ceiling to floor, in delicate gradations, the eye was led on from one brilliant band to another, flags, streamers, bannerets, shields, garlands, floral designs, all composing a tout ensemble of quite overwhelming beauty.

The designer of the reception decoration was John Frances Kirby (c1861-1935), who was also responsible for the theatre design of the Brough matinee performance in the Princess Theatre in February 1900 (funded by the United Steam Ship Company where Kirby was employed), and a *Conversazione* at the University in 1904, where dingy corridors walls were transformed "with a brave array of bunting [...] while the main porch was relieved with evergreens in the shape of tree ferns etc." On his death Kirby in 1935 was described as having had an "association with the theatrical world" for over half a century.

a room "devoted to Chrismancy"

Ephemeral decoration of spaces with flags, flowers, ferns and bunting that transformed a space was an important way to celebrate or acknowledge the importance or specialness of occasions. In 1904, the interior of the Waipawa hall became (for a bazaar to aid St. Peter's Church) "a tastefully designed room bright with color," with rows of stalls on each side of the hall with displays of flowers, fancy goods, plain goods, dolls, lollies and cakes, produce, and refreshments and side shows. The forming of the Marist Brothers' Old Boys' Association and Catholic Men's Club in Auckland was celebrated with a smoke concert in the Marist School's gymnasium in Pitt St which was "brightly and artistically decorated for the occasion," while the St Hilda's Collegiate School's prize-giving was held in the Upper Choral Hall, "nicely decorated with flags and banners, and the stage [...] was] prettily arranged with greenery and flowers." In 1901, Hampstead School in Ashburton held a week-long "hoko," transforming the "ordinary aspect of the interior of the [school] building." The interiors contained a gigantic Christmas tree, a fancy work stall, garden produce and live stock, a post office, refreshments stand, a miniature theatre, art and curios gallery, and a room "devoted to Chrismancy." The building was "lighted brilliantly with acetylene gas, kindly installed by Messrs Hardley Bros."

At the more elaborate Northern Club Ball, in Auckland in 1902:

The entrance doors were draped with bunting, while the interior of the room was very strikingly decorated with flags, foliage and flowers, a prominent feature being the British and Boer flags, which were draped over the northern entrance. [...] The entrance hall in Princes-street was lined with greenery, through which numbers of flags could be seen, and the vestibule leading to the ballroom door had its walls covered with varied foliage. From the end of this vestibule a covered balcony, specially built for the occasion, led to the rear verandah of the Grand Hotel. This passage was also decorated with greenery of all descriptions, and was supplied with chairs and lounges for those sitting out the dances, a delightful resting place being thus provided. A soft light was diffused through the foliage from numbers of twinkling fairy lamps, and a gas jet at the northern end provided sufficient light for those passing through the passage. The main object of this covered way was to provide access to the Grand Hotel, where the supper was laid out [...] the tables being profusely decorated with flowers, yellow and violet blossoms, relieved with green, being the colour scheme adopted.

Winks and Hall decorated the interior, with the exception of the floral work, which florist Gilbert J. Macky was responsible for.

It is easy to imagine with such descriptions that festive events merged interior and exterior spaces, and descriptions of garden parties suggest the potential for this. In December 1909, the garden party at Mr. Bowker's grounds (The Pines, College Rd, Timaru) was to include "several novel attractions," due to the hard work of the ladies of the Guild, while the Main School Garden in Timaru in 1909 was promising to be "quite as interesting and entertaining as the garden party of 1908." The garden party organised by the Girls' Realm Guild at Awarua House (a.k.a. Premier House, Thorndon, Wellington) included decorated stalls: "the sweet stall, was simply a bower of wistaria, and would have delighted the heart of an exile from Japan. [...] The flower stall had arches of green built over it, and tied with the guild colours, while the attendants wore large heliotrope paper hats that harmonised charmingly with the very lovely flowers with which the stall had been supplied." The garden party also included "[a] number of side shows had been arranged, fortune-telling, nail-driving competitions, quoits, and a distinct novelty, an electric battery, supplied thrills to an unlimited extent."

Botanic gardens, domains and even racecourses were likewise carefully designed outdoor spaces. Improvements to the Wellington Botanic Gardens saw that:

The various banks and terraces are requisitioned and brought into the general plan of landscape gardening. Seats are provided in pleasant nooks and on prominent points which afford magnificent views of the city, harbour, and surrounding country. For those who love Nature in its wilder forms there are paths winding among the pine trees and manuka.

"an inviting and cosy appearance."

When the Governor and Lady Plunket took a tour of Cambridge Domain in 1905, they were "charmed with the loveliness of the laying out of the grounds, flowers and general aspect of the surroundings [... and] appeared deeply interested in the old Maori pah." At the Riverlands Racecourse in April 1905, with the completion of the new grandstand, the grounds included the "bird cage," saddling paddock, and 14 stalls and six loose boxes as well as a new totalizer house. In addition to fencing and cultivation for the course, provision had been made for much needed planting. Horses were of course commonplace, and spaces were designed to accommodate them. At the rear of the Commercial Hotel in Hamilton, a large, two-storey horse bazaar (W.R. Aislabie, 1905) was built with stall capacity for 36 horses. Likewise at the back of the Emmanuel Congregational Church (Broad St (now Broadway Avenue), Palmerston North), a 60-foot long shed, was built in 1901, so "country members of the congregation will be enabled to place their horses and traps during stormy weather."

Civic infrastructure such as public halls were agglomerations of libraries, reading rooms, recreation rooms, kitchens, club rooms, billiard rooms, writing and committee rooms, stranger's rooms, card rooms, smoking rooms, ticket offices, and ladies' rooms. The reading rooms at the Masterton Club Rooms (J.S. Swan, 1904) had a "large bay window of which measures twelve feet across." The Lyttleton Fire Brigade Station (Collins and Harman, cnr Oxford and London Streets) was designed to include a lower floor to be used "either for the purposes of a technical school or as a public library." Above this, the fire brigade included: "a reading-room [...], a billiard-room [...], and four small rooms, three of which will probably be used as bedrooms." The rooms were to be "plastered, well-ventilated and warmed by means of hot-water pipes."

Town halls could be quite glorious places. The entrance to the 3,000 seat auditorium of Wellington's town hall (Joshua Charlesworth, 1904) is through "a splendid double staircase." In the auditorium "[d]ecorative Wunderlich zinc work has been used for the ceiling and the front of the dress-circle. It is of special designs, variously panelled and enriched. The ground is creme, relieved with many colours, blue and pink tints being predominant." In Hamilton the town hall (E. Mahoney and Son, 1905) was

extremely well lighted by 12 windows on each side. The ceiling takes a circular sweep. Running along the side are handsome colonnades [...] the cornices and colonnades being picked out in pink and pale blue [... while a] dado of polished rimu runs round the interior.

At Roxburgh, the hall (1905), the decorating and scene painting were completed by Mr. J.W. Rooney who had also been responsible for that of Dunedin's His Majesty's Theatre.

These are all spaces for people who are alive, but newspapers reports during the decade also included at least one civic interior primarily designed for the dead. The Napier city morgue (C.A. Wundrum, Port Ahuriri, 1904) was, apart from the concrete inquest room, a timber building. The interior walls of the inquest room was "finished in such a thorough manner that they are as smooth as marble." Windows and skylights ensured good lighting, and all the doors "are on the sliding system, and cased with iron." In contrast to the inquest room, in the jury room the ceiling was "painted white and the walls terra cotta, the whole being set-off with a dado of varnished wood three feet high." The newspaper description also noted that the mortuary section had been "planted with Karamu trees, so that in a comparatively short time there should be a substantial hedge all round the building."

In hotel interiors, greater emphasis was placed on timber. The bar at Wain's Hotel (James Hislop, Manse St, Dunedin, 1902) was "richly decorated and panelled figured red pine." In Dunedin's City Hotel (1902) the bar and billiard room were divided by "a screen finished in figured red pine and walnut moulded and carved. The bar fittings are finished in a similar style, and the whole room has a fine appearance." In Charles Branson's Hotel (James Hislop, cnr King and St Andrew Streets), the hall, stairway, bar and bar parlours were all finished in polished figured red pine. The bar fittings were "backed by lead lights, which throw a beautiful rich hue around when the lights are lit and give the parlour an inviting and cosy appearance."

Planning and layout reflected innovations. Alterations to Woodville's Commercial Hotel included the adoption of "the cafe system [...] in the arrangement of the tables." The Silver Grid, in Cuba Street, Wellington, located the kitchen on the top floor "[s]o that the smell of cooking shall not reach the diners."

The Silver Grid in Stratford was illuminated by electric light. Another Silver Grid (Victoria Ave, Whanganui) had its shop windows decorated by "that well-known artist Mr Tingey, of the firm of Tingey and Co." Among its several eating spaces, there was a "commercial room for gentlemen, which [...] has been liberally supplied with all the best newspapers and periodicals of the day."

""This is certainly worth coming for.""

Buildings designed for animals were a moment where the inside and (usually pastoral) outside met. One example was Mr Kerr's canary aviary in Mornington, Dunedin. The interior of the aviary was painted "enamel-white, prettily pointed with blue lines," with a range of five tiers of cages:

The upper half of the opposite side of the room — the south-east — is one long window of sliding sashes, beneath being three large drop cages [...] These cages, [...] are so constructed — end to end — that if required they may form one long aviary, 22ft in length, and by an ingenious contrivance of hinges they can, by the withdrawal of a few pins, be made to collapse flat against the wall, quite out of the way [...] In addition to the sliding sash windows on the side wall I should mention that one end of the room is also glazed, and, with a view to perfect ventilation, a series of ventilators are arranged along the whole length of the roof of the building.

Another instance is a 1903 report of "a very useful poultry house" with three fowl pens designed so the internal wire netting divisions allowed the sunshine that entered "at one side of the house to fall into all the pens." Skylights were important sources of light, and the principle room of Timaru's municipal abattoir was well lighted by half a dozen skylights, and the louvres of the walls also admitted a good deal of light as well as air. The Invercargill Dairy Supply Company was "particularly well lit by day, and for night work the incandescent burner has been efficiently introduced." In the Canterbury Farmers' Co-operative Association's new buildings on Beswick St, the rooms that were partly underground were lit by "new patent pavement lights. These will consist of a number of strong glass prisms which will catch the light vertically and throw it horizontally through the building." Separate circulation routes were designed in the new building to prevent employees having to go through the customers' or public entrance, and "a "bicycle room" is close handy for the storage of the employees' wheels."

Agricultural spaces for animals, particularly dairy factories and abattoirs, had carefully designed floors and ceilings. The floors of the churning room and separating room of the Masterton Co-operative Dairy Company (J.E. Roc, 1901), had "a fall of 6in, the full width to a 10in. semicircular glazed earthenware drain, which will carry off all waste water and refuse from workings and will enable floors to be kept dry and clean." Throughout the Waitara Freezing Works a network of drains carried away the blood. The floor of the operating room at the Invercargill Dairy Supply Company was "concrete, with a gentle slope from the side walls to a shallow rounded gutter near the centre, by which all liquid—chiefly water—is run out to a drain connecting with the town sewage system."

S.G. Inder's Gore butchery on Main street was heralded as a model establishment:

The floors throughout are of concrete, and the walls, of the same material, are covered with a patent oil-cloth bearing a neat pattern in imitation of blue and white tiles. The display benches fronting the windows are also of concrete with mirror tops. The whole shop can thus be thoroughly hosed out at frequent intervals, and the almost exclusive employment of concrete ensures perfect coolness in all weathers. Ample ventilation is also provided. A commodious workroom at the rear of the shop also has cement floors and walls, while the office at the side is conveniently fitted up with desks, strong room, etc. The interior fittings of the shop are of the newest pattern, double doors are provided at either side, and nothing is wanting.

The cement plaster in the principle room at Timaru's municipal abattoir had a "remarkably smooth surface that the workmen by an unstinted application of "elbow grease" have given to [...] its] final coat," while its roof space of was "an intricate network of iron rods and bars, in principal-stays, meat-rails, and bars on which the latter are suspended." Likewise at the Waitara Freezing Works, hooks on overhead rails transported the carcasses from the slaughtering room to the cooling and chilling rooms and the freezing chambers. According to the *Taranaki Herald*, the slaughtering room interior at the Waitara Freezing Works had "the appearance, and is in reality, an arena of terrible carnage." The killing pens were "stoutly built, [...] the sides are sheeted with iron," skillful pithing meaning death was very sudden. The cooling room was "provided on all exposed sides with a multitude of louvres which can be opened fully or partially, or closed as necessity arises," while the chilling room and freezing chambers used ammonia to control the temperature, and the freezing chambers were kept air tight "by packing the doors with canvas and wool."

Agriculture was increasingly important for New Zealand. The 1890s had witnessed the passing of three Dairy Industry Acts (in 1892, 1894 and 1898), and in November 1903 it was announced that the new laboratory at Wallaceville for the Department of Agriculture would soon be completed. A. and P. Associations appear prolific but also politically involved; the 1901 annual report of the Manawatu and West Coast A. and P. Association noting that recommendations of the New Zealand Agricultural Conference held in Wellington (26 June 1900) "were given practical effect to in the Noxious Weeds' Act passed last session." Lord Plunket, who became the Governor of New Zealand in 1904, also had agricultural interests, having promoted co-operative dairying in Ireland, and, on a tour of the Waikato in 1905, he "repeatedly drew attention to the refreshing appearance of the many farms nestling cosily here and there, as well as to the pleasant country to drive through." At the "Crow's Nest" (an old redoubt) on Pukekura Hill, Lord Plunket reportedly exclaimed of the view across the Waikato (which reached as far as Waotu): ""This is certainly worth coming for.""

Such a sentiment by a royal representative seems a good place to conclude a call for conference papers (15-20 min) which present new research on any aspect of this period of New Zealand interior or landscape architectural history. All academics, practitioners, heritage consultants, and postgraduate students are welcome. The symposium is one of a series of annual meetings examining specific periods of New Zealand interior and landscape architectural history.

Symposium fee: The cost of the symposium (including proceedings) will be \$70. This will be able to be paid either via the symposium website closer to the date of the symposium, or collected on the day.

Timetable:

Abstracts due: Wednesday 10th September 5pm 2025
 Programme announced: Wednesday 10th September 2025
 Full Papers due: Monday 17th November 2025
 Registration due: Friday 28th November 2025
 Conference: Friday 5th December 2025

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