

Te wā o ngā Tiramaroa:
New Zealand Interior and Landscape Architecture in the 1880s
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VUW School of Architecture

ABSTRACTS

Laura Dunham ""Here, There, and Everywhere": the Travelling Lantern-scapes of Edward William Seager"

The popular late-nineteenth century conception of visual screen-based technologies as providing trustworthy 'windows to the world' underwent a shift in 1880s Aotearoa New Zealand. Innovations in magic lantern equipment and photography now provided a stronger foundation for more people to take up either practice and refine their repertoires when performing for group audiences. We can observe this transition and its effects in the diverse and industrious lantern practices of Edward William Seager (1828–1922), gaoler of Lyttelton, director of Sunnyside Lunatic Asylum, theatrical director, and itinerant lanternist. Seager's enthusiasm for conjuring magical spectacles, acting, and producing works for early Christchurch theatricals also drove him to perform magic lantern shows for different types of audiences across Canterbury with his custom-made magic lantern apparatus that he carried to various indoor venues. This contraption and the collection of lantern slides depicting scenes he had curated became portable libraries of visual information that drew out particular themes and narratives according to the performer's intentions. This paper uses the idea of the assembled magic lantern, lanternist, and audience as a "travelling light-scape" to suggest that Seager's prolific lantern shows also contributed to a spatial landscape made up of light-generated images and audience imagination. Together, these worked to connect multiple other spaces of 'there and everywhere' to the 'here' of the lantern performance and 'transport' the outside-in for audiences' delectation.

Scott Flutey ""Sunder and more useful forms of modern æstheticism": the domestic interiors of Atkins and Clere (1883-88)"

Early on in the careers of Frederick de Jersey Clere (1856-1952) and Alfred Atkins (1850-1919), the duo worked in partnership and designed a number of innovative buildings, as well as some furniture. Their domestic designs from this period are mostly across Whanganui and Manawatū, are little-known, and warrant documentation and investigation – particularly their interiors, displaying avant-garde influences.

Adrian Humphris & Geoff Mew "From Seascape To Landscape: Wellington 1880 - 1889"

The creation of more flat land in central Wellington in the 1880s was achieved by continuing to extend the shoreline seawards through reclamation, a process that had begun much earlier. The main backer was the City Council which expected to increase revenue from the new land created. However the establishment of the Wellington Harbour Board in 1880 brought a new claimant into the field and depressed financial conditions led to complications with contractors. The main scheme at the time was the Te Aro Reclamation in several phases, all of which were controversial. Eventually new streets such as Wakefield Street were constructed and sections surveyed off, but there was little uptake until the early 1890s when both the Harbour Board and the City Council erected some substantial new buildings.

Nigel Isaacs "Local Manufacture in the 1880s – the opportunities for "Made in New Zealand""

From the 1880s to the end of the 1930s a national focus on increasing employment and industrial development led to the emergence of a range of manufacturing industries. The decade started with the Royal Commission into Local Industries (known as the Colonial Industries Commission) which was established on 12 March 1880 and reported on 29 July 1880. It received, and published, 207

written submissions. The Commission made a number of recommendations relating to construction including for forestry, iron, cement, improved technical education, uniform weights and measures.

One result was that by the end of the 1880s decade, industrialisation coupled with improved education led to over half of the materials, techniques and technologies used in a 1980s timber framed house were already in use. But not all technologies had such a long lives – some widely used in the 1880s within a few decades had become obsolete - including cut nails, roofing slates and shingles, balloon framing, pumice insulation, strutted roof construction, cast and wrought iron, double wall brick and braced framing.

The paper will explore the evolution (and decline) of architectural materials, techniques and technologies, both interior and exterior, during the 1880s decade and the impact on the evolution of the New Zealand house.

Laura Kellaway "Flax and Flour Mills, a grand estate and an architect or two: Industrial Change and the Waikato Landscape of 1880s"

Flour mills, granaries and riverside storehouses reflected confidence in farming, assisted by the awa and the new railway. Flax mills connected wetland places, local labour and export markets but more importantly a long history of harakeke as taonga. Along with the mills large land estates like Woodlands developed. But in the Waikato it was a time of bust and boom. The remnants of mills and the estates offer a way to understand part of nineteenth-century Waikato's new landscape, drawing attention to an industrial heritage, overshadowed by military, agricultural and settlement histories and the great losses of Waikato Tainui.

Christine McCarthy "The empty room: photographic scenic backgrounds in the 1880s"

This paper examines a series of late nineteenth-century portraits taken by photographer William James Harding (1826-89) of Whanganui, New Zealand, in which use of painted cloth backgrounds of fictional architectural interiors construct the social status of the depicted subject. Scenic backgrounds (or backdrops) are a feature of photographic portraiture internationally from c1860 to 1920. They occupy an intersection between painted portraiture, theatrical stage design and interior fashions, yet it was the physical constraints related to time and space - the needs for a still background with slow shutter speeds and to hide the physical space of photography - that made these canvas backdrops particularly vital. This paper will examine the two and three dimensional aspects of interiority represented in both these scenic backgrounds and the Hardings photographic portraits that represent them.

Tyson Schmidt ""I have a right to the whole of the Block" – describing the Waipiro Block landscape through 1880s Native Land Court evidence"

Mentions of Waipiro Bay in Native Land Court Minute Books accelerated significantly after the 1880s, recording 584 references between 1890 to 1900 following only 7 before 1890. The shift was due to Title Investigation cases in the 1880s – cases that determined which Māori owned the land in the eyes of the Court, from which subsequent succession and partition cases flowed.

This paper explores how landscape was described in the Title Investigation cases of the Waipiro Block in the 1880s. The oral evidence presented at the Court by competing claimants provides rich descriptions of rights to land (by conquest, by whakapapa, by gifting, and by occupation) overlaid on descriptions of the land itself. In contrast to official surveys and maps of the time, the evidence presents a layered landscape across time and multiple interests.

Lyn Williams "Built to last? Hamilton's development during the 1880s."

Despite a national economic depression, Hamilton experienced a dramatic transformation in its built environment during the 1880s, driven by shifts in developments and commercial architecture. Spurred by late-1870s events such as the 1877 arrival of the railway, the consolidation of Hamilton Borough, and the completion of landmark structures like the Bank of New Zealand, the town changed rapidly. Central to this change was the subdivision of the 1864 one-acre military allotments along Victoria Street into smaller commercial parcels. Local builders and early architects reshaped the landscape, replacing isolated homesteads with a new 'golden mile'. The vernacular architecture and structures laid the physical foundations for Hamilton's future regional prominence.

Peter Wood "The Stone Pātaka of Te Wairoa, c.1886"

In the early morning of June 10th, 1886, the residents of the village of Te Wairoa, near Rotorua, woke to the violence of Mt Tarawera erupting only 13 km away. Over six hours the volcanic activity increased in a storm of ash, lightning, earthquakes and explosions. The sound was heard as far away as Christchurch, and the smoke plume was visible from Auckland and Gisborne. The Pink and White Terraces, the celebrated tourist attraction of silica sinter, were destroyed, and the close-by village was crushed under a blanket of wet mud and tephra. An estimated 120 died in the region, and in the aftermath the wrecked Te Wairoa was abandoned as unliveable.

Tarawera remains the deadliest volcanic eruption in New Zealand's recorded history. While Te Wairoa's destruction was catastrophic it has left us an architectural narrative rich in associations to landscape and interior. Volcanic activity is landscape in revolt and it challenges our expectations of stability and continuance of the land. In such a ferocious uprising buildings are frail artifice to be cast aside in search of a more primal interior language of shelter, bunker and cave, and rescuers arriving in the dawn found a transformed landscape into which bewildered survivors climbed from their overnight crypts. The famed architectural story of Te Wairoa features Hinemihi o te Ao Tawhito, the ancestral meeting house of Ngāti Hinemihi and Te Arawa that sheltered 45 people through the eruption only to be later sold and transported to England by William Hillier, 4th Earl of Onslow, to reside in the manicured landscape of Clandon Manor, Surrey, for over 125 years.

Hinemihi is on their way home, but what of that which was left to the fields of mud and ash? A visitor to Te Wairoa today will find that this once thriving community is now a private tourist venture operating under the moniker "The Buried Village." The entrance fee buys a stroll through a rather bucolic garden landscape populated by a scattering of eruption reminders shaped by amateur archaeological action. Featured amongst the excavated sites is the "Stone Pātaka," categorised by the Buried Village's Pākehā owners as a rare example of Māori stone carving. In actual fact this modest stone enclosure has no architectural compare. Half-buried into a bank it is an interior volume whose indigenous dedication is found in the two panels carved in stone that flank the entrance much in the manner of amo on a whareniui. There is no question that this work is Māori, but beyond that acknowledgement the Stone Pātaka is an anomalous architectural artefact whose authenticity has been made synonymous with the eruption of Tarawera, and to the identity of Te Wairoa as the village that serviced the Pink and White Terraces. But how sure can we really be of this account, particularly as it serves the interests of tourist expectations rather than New Zealand's architectural history?