

Centre for Building Performance Research

DOMESTIC WALLPAPER IN NEW ZEALAND A Literature Survey

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1 INTRODUCTION

The history of wallpaper makes a fascinating social study, for it provides a remarkably clear and continuous picture of the way people have lived, of their pretensions, their taste and their manners.

Irving "Design for Walls" p. 90.

Little has been written regarding wallpaper in New Zealand. This introductory paper attempts to draw together material from existing published accounts. Contemporary accounts, as well as research on specific buildings, and guides to restoration, provide a relatively consistent, if not piecemeal, starting point for a history of New Zealand domestic wallpaper use, prevalent patterns, and style. This paper provides a chronological account under the following four headings:

- (i) Early nineteenth century to the c1860s
- (ii) the 1870s to the early twentieth century
- (iii) Early twentieth century to the 1960s
- and (iv) Design, manufacture and importing

The aim of the paper has been to focus on New Zealand, rather than international accounts of wallpaper.

2 EARLY NINETEENTH-CENTURY TO THE 1860s

While the earliest official importing records for wallpaper date from 1867,¹ Petersen notes that "Mass production of wallpaper began in Europe in the 1840s and the latest designs from England were available in the colony from the 1850s,"² co-inciding with Stacpoole's statement that: "Wallpaper in the colonial period was always imported, sometimes in patterns much handsomer than those houses where it was hung."³ It is also likely that Pakeha settlers bought some wallpapers with them from Britain, as Drummond notes:

Colonists with sufficient capital were frequently urged to carry their houses with them in a prefabricated state. One settler already in New Zealand went further than that; he advised bringing, in addition to the house, everything needed to furnish it.⁴

Often letters to England advised newcomers to bring as much as they could with them: "'not that such things are not to be had, but they are of such prices that when you are bringing anything it will be most economical to bring all.'"⁵ Such advice was not limited to terrestrial life in New Zealand, Hursthouse's *New Zealand* advised passengers to New Zealand travelling in a "dark *lower deck*-cabin [that such spaces] "may be made much *lighter* and more cosy-looking by just papering it with some light-coloured paper."⁶

Wallpaper appears to have been (initially at least) primarily an interest of Pakeha, rather than Maori. The interior of Maori whare often had no wallcovering (in a western sense), and while wharepuni may have had little apparent decoration, whare whakairo were rich with tukutuku weaving, kowhaiwhai rafter patterns, and the carved uprights of poupou. The prevalent use of smoke in these interiors, to deter insects,⁷ also meant that many were blackened with soot. In fact one of the earliest recorded interactions of Maori and wallpaper was of the Richmond's "white and gold arabesque wallpaper [being] ... torn off the drawing room walls"⁸ during a raid on their house.

¹ "Table Showing the quantity and value of imports at the several ports of New Zealand, during the year 1867" New Zealand Government *Statistics of New Zealand for 1867* Part II, No. 18. Prior to 1867 wallpaper would likely have been hidden in the importing records, grouped within "Unenumerated" or "Other Kinds" Categories.

² Petersen *New Zealanders at Home* p. 71.

³ Stacpoole *Colonial Architecture in New Zealand* p. 185.

⁴ Drummond and Drummond *At Home in New Zealand* p. 17.

⁵ Mary Hobhouse (1821-1866) cited, 2 July 1859, Drummond and Drummond *At Home in New Zealand* p. 149; also "These desirable rarities in the new colony had a saleable value a hundred per cent higher than their price in Britain." Drummond and Drummond *At Home in New Zealand* p. 17.

⁶ Hursthouse *New Zealand* p. 493, fn. 1.

⁷ McCarthy "From smoke-filled rooms to smoke-free environments" unpaginated.

⁸ Petersen *New Zealanders at Home* p. 52.

Early Pakeha houses were often where raupo built by Maori, or prefabricated buildings shipped from England. Those buildings outside townships, and those owned by lower classes were more likely to be unlined, with structural timbers (studs, noggs etc) exposed to the interior. Consequently Hammond describes the early houses of Pakeha bush settlers as having unlined walls and ceilings "though canvas or sacking could be arranged to give an extra layer of waterproofing."⁹ She also refers to the use of "flour, chaff and sugar bags"¹⁰ to line the walls of houses, and notes that from the c1860s "walls were lined with calico or newspapers."¹¹ Such descriptions appear at times to conflate terms such as wall linings and wall coverings, with Cochran's assertion that "[i]n early houses timber linings rarely received any treatment," being more precise.¹² It appears from Henry Williams' 1830 letters (one of the earliest references to wallpaper in New Zealand), that the use of wallpaper was rare in the 1820s and 1830s. His house was plastered "'inside and out,'" but he intended "'in [the] process of time to paper some of the rooms, which [he observed] will be a novel thing in this region of the earth."¹³

Some houses were lined but deliberately left without wall coverings. As Cochran notes, while paint and wallpaper soon became the conventional wall covering, walls might be left bare if "the lining was of exceptional quality."¹⁴ In 1845, Wakefield described Dicky Barrett's house as both a "'very superior edifice,'" and "'built of sawn timber, floored and lined inside,'"¹⁵ with no mention of the walls being papered. The following decade (in 1853) Jane Richmond wrote to her sister-in-law that: "'We shall have no need of our paper hangings in the beach house, as it will be lined with red pine wood ... and the woodwork is to be nicely finished."¹⁶

While wallpaper was rare in the Colony in the 1820s and 1830s, it was in more frequent use in the 1840s, and Stacpoole notes that both "Wallpaper and whitewash quickly became standard internal finishes."¹⁷ Northcote-Bade gives a detailed description of William Dorset's 1847 Wellington house, which was papered in the dining room and the double sitting rooms,¹⁸ as well as referring to Government House in Auckland having wallpaper in the 1840s.¹⁹

Paper was used for both its decorative and functional effect, reducing the impact of draughts through walls.²⁰ Painted brown paper and newspaper were also used to perform this role. Writing to his father in England, Henry Chapman described how in 1844, after lining his rooms with wood, his

"man George then got half a ream of brown paper which cost 13/- and covered the whole with it. He then made some whitewash and gave the ceiling three coats and some pale blue distemper and coloured the walls."²¹

Petersen, when discussing Malvern Hills Station, Canterbury, 1858, suggests that this functional aspect was still of prime importance in the late 1850s, observing that "[t]he papered walls would have added to the material comfort of the room, as it helped to shield the draught."²²

Mid-century city houses used wallpaper which was, in some cases, applied directly onto wall boards. This has been documented by Martin Hill in relation to the Nairn Street Cottage where he "found the first wallpaper had been pasted directly to the boards, with tapes over the joints, but despite these precautions, board movement had produced joint cracks."²³ Northcote-Bade

⁹ Hammond *Bush Carpenters: Pioneer Homes in New Zealand* p. 7.

¹⁰ Magee family "Papers 1868-1894" cited, Hammond *Bush Carpenters: Pioneer Homes in New Zealand* p. 66.

¹¹ Hammond *Bush Carpenters: Pioneer Homes in New Zealand* p. 8.

¹² Cochran *Restoring a New Zealand House* p. 64.

¹³ Rev. Henry Williams cited, Sept 1830, Drummond and Drummond *At Home in New Zealand* p. 99

¹⁴ Cochran *Restoring a New Zealand House* p. 64.

¹⁵ E.J. Wakefield cited, 1845, Drummond and Drummond *At Home in New Zealand* p. 36.

¹⁶ Jane Maria Richmond cited July 1853, Drummond and Drummond *At Home in New Zealand* p. 77.

¹⁷ Stacpoole *Colonial Architecture in New Zealand* p. 185.

¹⁸ Northcote-Bade *Colonial Furniture in New Zealand* p. 93.

¹⁹ Northcote-Bade *Colonial Furniture in New Zealand* p. 86.

²⁰ The issue of draughts was also one for flooring as Jane Bannerman noted: "The totata lining of its walls was close and sound enough, but the white pine floorboards had shrunk leaving draughty gaps." Jane Bannerman, cited 1848, Drummond and Drummond *At Home in New Zealand* p. 89.

²¹ Henry Samuel Chapman cited, 24 March 1844 Drummond and Drummond *At Home in New Zealand* p. 103.

²² Petersen *New Zealanders at Home* p. 52.

²³ Hill "Nairn Street Cottage" p. 7.

observes a similar occurrence in William Dorset's 1847 Wellington house, necessitating re-papering,²⁴ while Salmond notes it was from this tendency, for the movement in timber houses to rip wallpaper, that "the practice grew [in the first half of the nineteenth-century] of sticking the paper to thin calico stretched over the boards."²⁵

According to William Cottrell, the developments in mass production printing in the 1830s significantly reduced the price of wallpapers in New Zealand, such that: "What had formerly been a handmade luxury item became commonplace in even the poorest homes by the 1860s."²⁶ The use of newspapers though still continued as a wall covering during this time. Cochran, Day and Hill all refer to the use of newspaper to paper both walls and ceilings,²⁷ Day referring to the papering of an attic in the early 1860s,²⁸ and Cochran citing an instance of the 2nd March 1867 issue of the *London Illustrated News* as wallpaper.²⁹ Salmond notes that when people could wallpaper was used, but in other cases "newspaper or magazine illustrations were popular."³⁰ Arden and Bowman also note however that "paper was pasted onto a backing paper of newspaper or brown paper,"³¹ pointing to a possibly preparatory nature of some newspaper coverings, anticipating the hanging of wallpaper.

There are few descriptions of wallpaper imagery from this earlier part of the nineteenth-century.³² Northcote-Bade's discussion of William Dorset's 1847 Wellington house is one of the richest. Here the dining room paper had a "narrow blue striped enriched with a buff running design alternated with a broader, paler, blue stripe with flowers in colour,"³³ the sitting rooms initially had

a chintz-style pattern with thin intertwined pale blue twining stems from which sprang thin green flower stems terminating in grotesque[sic] flowers of cornflower blue, red, violet, and purple, the whole sparsely treated on the palest of blue backgrounds, a most pleasant paper,³⁴

which was soon replaced because of tearing due to the house moving. The second layer

also had a chintz-like pattern with bunches of naturalistic red and yellow full-blown roses, some everted so as to show the green calyx, among the green foliage. In this case the bunches were connected by trails of pale blue foliage on a cream background.³⁵

The bedroom walls upstairs in the Dorset house, which Northcote-Bade describes as "one of Wellington's better-class homes" were whitewashed rather than wallpapered at this time.³⁶ Their later wallpapering suggests a decorative prioritising of the more public spaces of the house, and possibly that the cost or availability of wallpaper was such that not all spaces could be papered all at once, assuming, of course, that wallpaper was the premier choice in wall-coverings in New Zealand at this time for these spaces.

In a discussion of Government House in Auckland, Northcote-Bade describes wallpapers used in New Zealand in the 1840s as

somewhat varied and the colours subdued. Stripes were sometimes encountered, as also were trellised floral patterns, Chintz patterns were prevalent, at first sparse arabesques showing a fair amount of pale background, focal points being accentuated by bright blues, greens, reds and purples. Later chintz-like patterns had more flower in proportion to the

²⁴ "This paper cracked along the joins of the wooden sarking to which it was directly applied, and soon had to be replaced by another paper." Northcote-Bade *Colonial Furniture in New Zealand* p. 93.

²⁵ Salmond *Old New Zealand Houses 1800-1940* p. 71.

²⁶ Cottrell *Furniture of the New Zealand Colonial Era* p. 109 (caption Pl. 23).

²⁷ Hill *Restoring with Style* p. 77.

²⁸ J.W. Taylor cited, Day "Waiora Cottage" p. 14; c.f. Cottrell *Furniture of the New Zealand Colonial Era* p. 73, fig. 4.48. This 1883 photograph shows that attic spaces were used as bedroom spaces and wallpapered.

²⁹ Cochran *Restoring a New Zealand House* p. 80.

³⁰ Salmond *Old New Zealand Houses 1800-1940* p. 71.

³¹ Arden and Bowman *The New Zealand Period House* p. 178.

³² The Festival of Wellington *Industrial Design Exhibition Catalogue* of 1961 lists a number of wallpapers from this time with descriptions. Those described pre-1880 are all from the William Dorset house in Park St, Thorndon, Wellington. [Catalogue] *Festival of Wellington Industrial Design Exhibition 1961* unpaginated

³³ Northcote-Bade *Colonial Furniture in New Zealand* p. 93.

³⁴ Northcote-Bade *Colonial Furniture in New Zealand* p. 93.

³⁵ Northcote-Bade *Colonial Furniture in New Zealand* p. 93.

³⁶ Northcote-Bade *Colonial Furniture in New Zealand* pp. 20, 96.

background.³⁷

The *in-situ* papers in the rear ground floor bedroom of the Nairn Street Cottage date from c1858. Martin Hill recalls the discovery: "To us it was a great find to reveal the whole room as it must have looked in the 1860s, complete with purple and brown wallpaper and cream-painted ceiling."³⁸ His twentieth-century delight at the sight of the mid-nineteenth-century wallpapers is significantly more charitable than the opinions of Mary Hobhouse (1821-1866), whose letters provide contemporary insight. She describes her 1860 bedroom walls as ""neither white-washed brick nor rough boards, nor unbleached calico flapping to and fro in the gust - but battened, canvassed and papered (with a hideous paper) ... the paper in all its naked ugliness of huge unmeaning flowers of light drab and dark drab.""³⁹ Her drawing room had ""flock maroon paper diapered with silvery fleur de lis",⁴⁰ while the dining hall had ""lined walls and ceilings with unbleached calico".⁴¹

Northcote-Bade, when discussing the 1860s redecoration of the William Dorset house sitting rooms, describes a more "sombre" turn. He describes the replacement of "coloured flowers on a pale ground" with:

the application of a heavy flock paper with a dark background [which] ... had a much interlaced pattern of buff-coloured full-blown roses along with other flowers, all buff-coloured among leaves and stems of cinnamon brown. The background was maroon flock to match the Berlin woolwork of the fireside chairs and mantel drapes.⁴²

Cochran, referring to Alberton's dining room (1863; 1870s), notes the predominant use of red colour schemes in dining rooms, and green in libraries, and imitation marble papers in large stair halls,⁴³ making it clear that different rooms were subject to different decorative etiquette and fashions. Kate Buckland's 1903 description of her red wallpaper in her early twentieth-century Invercargill home also suggests that red might have also been a colour suitable for living rooms as well, and she expresses the transformative effects of such decor at night: ""The paper on the walls had a red background and when the hanging lamp ... was up it shone on a livingroom so attractive as to be unexpected amongst the tussock and rocks.""⁴⁴

Summarising mid-nineteenth-century wallpaper use, the Drummonds observe New Zealand desires to achieve middle-class Anglo-aspirations:

When considering the New Zealand parlour we get a composite picture of walls panelled in wood or gaily painted and papered, of fireplaces draped according to styles in the latest copy of the *Queen* - many months old - in a gallant attempt to suggest the rich comfort of a prosperous middle-class English home of the 1850s and 1860s.⁴⁵

Wallpapers during this time began to acquire specific architectural functions. Cochran notes that: "Decorative borders running under the cornices of rooms, quite often produced to match the main wallpapers, were used extensively throughout the last century."⁴⁶ Stewart also comments on the popularity of these borders or friezes, and mentions that they could be bought by the yard.⁴⁷ Such borders were not however restricted to the horizontal strip under the cornice. Photographic (1870s)⁴⁸ and later *in-situ* examples (1905)⁴⁹ show borders perimetering

³⁷ Northcote-Bade *Colonial Furniture in New Zealand* p. 86.

³⁸ Hill "Nairn Street Cottage" p. 7.

³⁹ Mary Hobhouse cited, 21 May-2 June 1860 Drummond and Drummond *At Home in New Zealand* pp. 152-153.

⁴⁰ Mary Hobhouse cited, 21 May-2 June 1860 Drummond and Drummond *At Home in New Zealand* p. 153.

⁴¹ Mary Hobhouse cited, 21 May-2 June 1860 Drummond and Drummond *At Home in New Zealand* p. 153; also "Flock papers were used quite extensively when there was the money and the scale of building was suitable for the expense." Cochran p. 75.

⁴² Northcote-Bade, S. *Colonial Furniture in New Zealand* p. 93.

⁴³ Cochran *Restoring a New Zealand House* pp. 63, 75; also "marbled papers were also popular, especially for halls and stairwells" Stewart *The New Zealand Villa* p. 56. Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins notes that "Drawing and dining rooms in middle-class homes most commonly featured dark-toned red or green wallpapers." Lloyd-Jenkins *At Home* p. 10.

⁴⁴ Kate Buckland cited, Petersen *New Zealanders at Home* 104.

⁴⁵ Drummond and Drummond *At Home in New Zealand* pp. 90-91.

⁴⁶ Cochran *Restoring a New Zealand House* p. 75; "By the 1860s dados and friezes often matched the chosen pattern" Stacpoole *Colonial Architecture in New Zealand* p. 185; also Stewart *The New Zealand Villa* p. 56.

⁴⁷ Stewart *The New Zealand Villa* p. 56.

⁴⁸ A.C. Barker house, Christchurch c1870s, Petersen *New Zealanders at Home* pp. 70-71.

⁴⁹ e.g. Dorothy Theomin Bedroom, Edward Thomin Bedroom, David Theomin Dressing Room, Main Bedroom, Olveston (1904-1906), 42 Royal Terrace, Dunedin.

all four edges of a wall, framing them in a way which articulates the walls as distinct surfaces, rather than emphasising the walls to wrap the space of a room

3 THE 1870s TO THE EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY

Wallpaper, according to Stewart:

reached the height of popularity during the late Victorian era. It was the cheapest universally applied wall decoration throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century and only began to lose popularity in favour of paint after the First World War.⁵⁰

Given this, it is not surprising that more discussion of late nineteenth-century use of wallpaper in New Zealand exists than in the twentieth-century interwar period and beyond. Such accounts, referring to the late nineteenth-century, frequently reference C.L. Eastlake's vertical division of the wall into dado, filling, and frieze, which was influential in New Zealand from the 1880s until the 1920s.⁵¹ Petersen, for example, uses photographic evidence to ascertain that the filling (or middle section of the wall) was, in the late 1880s and 1890s, typically a "flowing, all-over pattern."⁵² At this time there also emerges greater detail about the exchange between architectural detail and wallpaper developments. Salmond states that "In the 1890s wallpaper friezes above the picture rail were common,"⁵³ with Cochran contextualising this use of the picture rail in relation to changes in wallpaper shape. He writes that:

The earliest Victorian borders were simple strips, frequently taking the shape of festoons with curly shapes and a straight top to fit against the cornice, but later ones were straight-edged on both sides to fit between the cornice and a picture rail.⁵⁴

Cochran also records that:

a timber moulding was introduced at elbow height with a dark and sober dado below. This was often a plain embossed paper painted over rather than a patterned wallpaper. Examples of this embossed paper called anaglypta, are available today.⁵⁵

Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century ceilings too "were sometimes papered,"⁵⁶ but, Salmond notes that "after 1900 the most popular decorative ceilings were the Wunderlich Company's pressed "art metal" panels."⁵⁷

Wallpaper pattern descriptions vary. Stewart, in observing that "Thousands of wallpaper patterns existed ... [states that] these wallpapers were mostly floral designs."⁵⁸ Equally generic is Shaw's reference to "Textured and highly patterned wallpapers"⁵⁹ at this time. Cochran adds more specific detail stating that:

Wallpapers with gold were used, but they were very expensive ... Papers with embossed appearances were [also] used, but the embossing effect was usually produced by building up from the surface of the paper in much finer patterns than most of today's papers of this type.⁶⁰

⁵⁰ Stewart *The New Zealand Villa* p. 56.

⁵¹ Cochran *Restoring a New Zealand House* p. 75; Stewart *The New Zealand Villa* p. 56-57; Arden and Bowman *The New Zealand Period House* p. 209; Petersen *New Zealanders at Home* p. 83. Toomath notes that Eastlake's book *Hints on Household Taste* (1868) "was influential and popular in America, where it went through seven editions. ... By the 1880s this Stick-Eastlake style was taken up and widely applied in New Zealand, where its accessories continued to appear in catalogues well past the century's end." Toomath *Built in New Zealand* p. 136.

⁵² Petersen *New Zealanders at Home* p. 81.

⁵³ Salmond *Old New Zealand Houses 1800-1940* p. 153; also "They [of the 1905 Seddon State Houses] used to wallpaper the top and put a frieze around it." Fred Freeman cited, Fill *Seddon's State Houses* p. 37. Picture rails were most often found in parlours and dining rooms. Stewart *The New Zealand Villa* p. 56.

⁵⁴ Cochran *Restoring a New Zealand House* p. 75; also see the photograph of the drawing room, Coverdale, Shaw *A history of New Zealand Architecture* p. 52; and Lloyd- Jenkins *At Home* p. 10.

⁵⁵ Cochran *Restoring a New Zealand House* p. 75; also Stewart *The New Zealand Villa* p. 57.

⁵⁶ Salmond *Old New Zealand Houses 1800-1940* p. 153.

⁵⁷ Salmond *Old New Zealand Houses 1800-1940* p. 153.

⁵⁸ Stewart *The New Zealand Villa* p. 56; also "Drawing and dining rooms in middle-class homes ... [were] usually [papered] in a floral motif, although the intensity of pattern varied." Lloyd- Jenkins *At Home* p. 10.

⁵⁹ Shaw *A History of New Zealand Architecture* p. 46.

⁶⁰ Cochran *Restoring a New Zealand House* p. 75.

Some descriptions of specific rooms have been published. Northcote-Bade and Cottrell refer to specific bedrooms in order to derive wider description of decorative practices in the 1870s and 1900s respectively. Northcote-Bade again refers to the Dorset house. When the upstairs bedrooms were papered c1870s:

they had a variety of moss rose pattern. There were several varieties of this popular bedroom paper used from the seventies. Mostly they were reminiscent of the Chantilly sprigs found on china, and generally they had sparsely applied minute sprigs of a single unopened red bud among fern leaves on a pale blue background. Others occupied the centres of an unobtrusive trellised pattern.⁶¹

Cottrell draws from an early twentieth-century photograph of George G. Stead's residence, Strowan in Christchurch to observe that:

The perennially popular striped wallpaper of this bedroom was still in vogue by 1901. Variations of this linear floral motif, generally in soft pastel colours, particularly greens, blues and pinks, were fashionable throughout the period of colonial settlement.⁶²

Petersen, likewise refers to photographic evidence to identify the influence of "the new eclectic approach to design [giving the example of a Pompeian dado pattern] following the arrival of the Aesthetic Movement."⁶³ She notes that "Aesthetic decors favoured soft "natural" tertiary colours which could be produced by vegetable dyes rather than aniline mauves and magentas."⁶⁴ Wall patterning of a repetitive nature though was not only restricted to wallpaper, with Salmond referring to a popular effect achieved "by painting through a home-made stencil, to get a repeating pattern along the top of the wall."⁶⁵

It was in this later part of the century that a hessian scrim, rather than calico, was used in preparation for wall papering, with rough boarding rather than match lining as an interior cladding.⁶⁶ Scrim was "tacked to the rough lining boards with thin white tape to prevent sagging, and this prevented the paper being torn by movement in the boards."⁶⁷ Service areas tended not to be wallpapered, their walls being lined with "dressed and painted [tongue and groove] boarding, or match lining."⁶⁸ Renovation in the early twentieth-century could also mean "upgrading" wall coverings to include scrim. Shaw notes that "In the early 1900s the original "lath-and-plaster interior linings [of the 1833 Waitangi Treaty House] were replaced with timber, scrim and paper."⁶⁹

4 EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY TO THE 1960s.

With the emergence of the Californian bungalow the use of scrim grew less popular, with Salmond attributing this to wallpaper on scrim being "regarded as unhealthy,"⁷⁰ and consequently wallpaper began to be "applied directly to [Gilbraltar Board]."⁷¹ Ashford notes that at this time "[t]he most popular wallpaper patterns were geometric, floral or fruit designs, but there were also plain colours, textures and even some tartan."⁷² He refers to William Morris' Arts and Crafts papers as being the "finest."⁷³ Calhoun also refers to Morris via a wallpaper advertisement from the 1904 Christchurch exhibition. In it W. Sey, Painter and Decorator, uses terms and phrases such as "Artistic," "Aesthetic," and "people of taste," as well as referring to Ruskin and Morris, to sell wallpapers. Not only does the advertisement grant wallpaper the

⁶¹ Northcote-Bade *Colonial Furniture in New Zealand* p. 96.

⁶² Cottrell *Furniture of the New Zealand Colonial Era* p. 154 (caption fig. 9.17).

⁶³ Petersen *New Zealanders at Home* p. 81.

⁶⁴ Petersen *New Zealanders at Home* p. 83.

⁶⁵ Salmond *Old New Zealand Houses 1800-1940* p. 153.

⁶⁶ Salmond *Old New Zealand Houses 1800-1940* p. 153; Cochran *Restoring a New Zealand House* p. 64; Shaw *A History of New Zealand Architecture* p. 49; Fred Freeman cited, Fill *Seddon's State Houses* p. 37.

⁶⁷ Salmond *Old New Zealand Houses 1800-1940* p. 153.

⁶⁸ Cochran *Restoring a New Zealand House* p. 64.

⁶⁹ Shaw *A History of New Zealand Architecture* p. 19.

⁷⁰ Salmond *Old New Zealand Houses 1800-1940* p. 209; also Lloyd-Jenkins *At Home* p. 7.

⁷¹ Ashford *The Bungalow in New Zealand* p. 72.

⁷² Ashford *The Bungalow in New Zealand* p. 72.

⁷³ Ashford *The Bungalow in New Zealand* p. 72.

ability to make "homes happy and beautiful," but it also claims their ability to provide an "artistic education."⁷⁴

Two-dimensional wallpaper continued to be designed in response to, or in sync with, the three-dimensional elaborations of the domestic wall. In Californian bungalows (c1910-c1940), Salmond notes that, in hall, living and breakfast rooms:

The wall above [the "plate shelf"] was ... commonly covered by an extravagant wallpaper frieze on which Art Nouveau motifs flourished. Alternatively, timber battens divided the upper wall into panels trimmed with a narrow paper frieze ... In bedrooms ceilings were battened or just wall-papered, and walls were papered from floor to ceiling with a picture rail instead of a plate shelf to divide the frieze along the top.⁷⁵

Wallpapers became known "'Art papers."⁷⁶

Lloyd-Jenkins suggests that this period in New Zealand's architectural history was a time when wallpaper began to be intentionally designed out of houses. He refers to Samuel Hurst Seager's 1902 design of the Spur in Sumner, stating that:

Inside, Seager took control. He lined the walls and ceilings with timber planking that reminded viewers a little of earlier pioneer cottages 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.⁷⁷

James Chapman-Taylor also "abandoned" wallpaper, in his case "rendered, and sometimes painted, brick interiors"⁷⁸ were favoured. As a general note, Lloyd-Jenkins observes that: "Wallpaper faced much competition from panelling in the 1920s,"⁷⁹ and it certainly seems that the fashion for panelling concentrated the use of wallpaper in the frieze, and possibly also in the less public areas of the house. Published photographs from this time, such as those of a c1910 house in Springfield Rd, Christchurch, which depicts an art nouveau frieze "designed by C.O. Masters and made by John Line & Sons Ltd, England,"⁸⁰ suggest such a confinement of wallpaper to the frieze.

Art Deco interiors appear to have been dominated by wallpapers with large horizontal strips, and bold geometry. Lloyd-Jenkins refers to such a horizontal banding in the Thorpe House in Auckland, and the Tingey House in Miramar, Wellington.⁸¹ He describes the Thorpe wallpaper in the living and dining room as "shar[ing] ... a dual colour scheme, achieved with horizontal bands of wallpaper in tones of creamy brown, separated by narrow black horizontal stripes."⁸² He notes that such wallpaper was thought to provide spaciousness,⁸³ and to represent "both speed and restful repose."⁸⁴ Salmond, who describes the architecture of the mass-market moderne as "simply a matter of a new kind of elevation to an old plan,"⁸⁵ locates the interior distinctiveness of Art Deco primarily in decorative effects: "Art deco was a style of lines and layers with geometric designs being particularly common ... Everywhere the zigzag outline of the Art Deco skyscraper was repeated as a decorative motif - in fabrics, on wallpaper and linoleums ..."⁸⁶

Chaney, Cogswell and Rutledge, in their study of wallpaper in the 1940s, conclude that "there is

⁷⁴ The full text, as quoted by Calhoun is as follows: "'Wall Papers from an Artistic point of view ... an Aesthetic point of view ... a Ruskin point of view ... a "Morris" point of view ... from the most eminent designers ... from people of taste ... that will make homes happy and beautiful ... and artistic education in themselves ...'" Calhoun *The Arts and Crafts Movement in New Zealand* p. 109.

⁷⁵ Salmond *Old New Zealand Houses 1800-1940* p. 209.

⁷⁶ Salmond *Old New Zealand Houses 1800-1940* p. 210.

⁷⁷ Lloyd-Jenkins *At Home* p. 7.

⁷⁸ Lloyd-Jenkins *At Home* p. 32.

⁷⁹ Lloyd-Jenkins *At Home* p. 54 (caption to fig. 3).

⁸⁰ Cottrell *Furniture of the New Zealand Colonial Era* p. 195 (caption fig. 11.34).

⁸¹ Lloyd-Jenkins *At Home* pp. 66 (caption to fig. 3), 68.

⁸² Lloyd-Jenkins *At Home* p. 68.

⁸³ Lloyd-Jenkins *At Home* p. 66 (caption to fig. 3).

⁸⁴ Lloyd-Jenkins *At Home* p. 68; also p. 66 (caption to fig. 3).

⁸⁵ Salmond *Old New Zealand Houses 1800-1940* p. 220; c.f. "Layouts differed little from those of conventional bungalows and two-storey houses, apart from the thrill of rounded corners and dramatic staircases" Toomath *Built in New Zealand* p. 169.

⁸⁶ Salmond *Old New Zealand Houses 1800-1940* p. 226.

very limited evidence of the use, manufacture or advertising of New Zealand wallpaper during this time period." They find a similar situation in the 1940s to the one that Lloyd-Jenkins identifies as a late nineteenth-century "irony" regarding the New Zealand design of wallpaper, but with the requisite component industries of "paper manufacturing and printing"⁸⁷ well established. Lloyd-Jenkins observes that: "When exhibited such designs proved popular and won prizes, but they had little chance of being manufactured in a country without a wallpaper industry or without the wealthy clientele needed to support the production of hand-blocked wallpapers."⁸⁸ Chaney *et al* isolate the craft activity of women, exhibited in the Women's Section of the 1939-1940 Centennial Exhibition in Rongotai as one of the few instances of New Zealand wallpaper design. They identify the association of New Zealand wallpaper design with craft in contrast to the industrialised imaging of paint and observe that: "Wallpaper was actively and directly seen as inferior product to paint ... [which] allowed a commonality between the exterior and interior surfaces of a dwelling, increasingly integrating a interior painted surface to the dwelling as a whole,"⁸⁹ and thus supported an ideology consistent with Modernist agendas, rather than those of the applied and exclusively interior characteristic of wallpaper.

But even then the relationship between Modernism and wallpaper in New Zealand was not a uniform or straightforward one. For example, Irving, writing for the Modernist *Design Review* in 1951, described wallpaper as "the must[sic] universal, ... [and] the most democratic, of the applied arts,"⁹⁰ and asserted that "Today papers are comparatively cheap to buy, and they are, without doubt, the best of all wall coverings."⁹¹ Chaney *et al* also observe that in the 1940s: "wallpaper designs did shift towards a modern aesthetic in an attempt to realign the value of wallpaper"⁹² with the value system of Modernism:

the approach to the design of patterning, style and colour in wallpaper shifted to become increasingly subdued. In the preceding decades integrated floral designs were popular with a heavy pattern that disguised the structural geometry inherent in a repeated pattern. However, in the 1940s these were replaced by geometric block patterns, namely stripes and trellis designs, or a subtly toned textured paper without pattern. Therefore, an attempt was made to align wallpaper with a wider contextual notion of the aesthetic qualities of the modern, and thus validate it.⁹³

Likewise William Mason's early 1960s later handprinted wallpapers enabled a Modernist engagement with New Zealand domestic interiors via his wallpapers which cut-across a simplistic assumption that wallpaper was an anathema to the Modern. Lloyd-Jenkins states it thus: "Mason, as ever at the forefront locally, explored this Pan-Pacific Modernism with a range of dynamic textile and wallpaper patterns,"⁹⁴ transforming the domestic wall into avant garde conceptual art, exploring the spatial potential of surface pattern. He continues: "... Mason's wallpapers were in effect more than simply wall-sized paintings. This was decor as installation ... encountered on a daily basis by those who dwelt within the spaces Mason initiated. This was conceptual art at its most immediate."⁹⁵

Shaw's account of the emergence of Group Building brings published discussion back to the mainstream, and suggests that, in the background, wallpaper had been an enduring part of the popular house. He notes a change in the 1960s stating that: "new home buyers gradually came to like the Lockwood show houses, realising that timber was an excellent building material and that there was no need to wallpaper their attractive all-wood walls."⁹⁶

5 DESIGN, MANUFACTURE AND IMPORTING

It is generally considered that the wallpaper used in New Zealand in the nineteenth-century was

⁸⁷ Chaney *et al* "The [in]significance of New Zealand Wallpaper in the 1940s" p. 22.

⁸⁸ Lloyd-Jenkins *At Home* p. 17.

⁸⁹ Chaney *et al* "The [in]significance of New Zealand Wallpaper in the 1940s" pp. 25-26.

⁹⁰ Irving "Design for Walls" p. 87.

⁹¹ Irving "Design for Walls" p. 90.

⁹² Chaney *et al* "The [in]significance of New Zealand Wallpaper in the 1940s" p. 25.

⁹³ Chaney *et al* "The [in]significance of New Zealand Wallpaper in the 1940s" p. 25.

⁹⁴ Lloyd-Jenkins "The Modern Eclectic" p. 32.

⁹⁵ Lloyd-Jenkins "The Modern Eclectic" p. 33.

⁹⁶ Shaw *A History of New Zealand Architecture* p. 162.

foreign-made and imported, "largely from England."⁹⁷ Toomath, suggestively confirms this with his observation that: "our houses remained traditional enough, in a British sense, internally as far as their basic room layout and finishings were concerned; but they were clothed externally in what amounted to American Victorian styles."⁹⁸ Lloyd-Jenkins, in particular, teases out this "internal" relationship as an economic one, stating that New Zealand was:

the ideal recipient, of British exports, and in many respects had been settled so that it might eventually provide a ready-made market for the products of English manufacturers. Dependent on British taste for direction, New Zealanders proved receptive to the latest fashions but even more receptive to last year's models - those that no longer sold well in Britain but were just beginning to be seen in New Zealand as the previous year's journals and trade papers arrived in the far-flung places of Empire.⁹⁹

It is hence assumed the wallpaper was dependent on importing. Apart from generic comments, there are few published statements referring to this aspect of New Zealand's consumption of wallpaper. Petersen makes one of these, suggesting that one late nineteenth-century sunflower wallpaper "may well have been supplied by Robert Martin Limited of Wellington, a large importer of art wallpapers."¹⁰⁰

Similarly New Zealand wallpaper is generally thought to have begun to be manufactured in the 1960s.¹⁰¹ Arden and Bowman imply otherwise in their references to the production of "Endless" paper rolls made on patterns cylinders by 1900 in New Zealand,¹⁰² and the use of cheap wood pulp to make paper by the 1890s in New Zealand embedded with an "acidity caused by the presence of lignin [meaning that] ... many of the later 19th-century papers are typically now brown or "yellowed," so brittle that they tend to fall apart."¹⁰³ Wallpaper was definitely designed in New Zealand prior to the 1960s, regardless of whether it was manufactured. Late nineteenth-century art schools in New Zealand had adopted the South Kensington system of art education, influenced by the Arts and Crafts. Lloyd-Jenkins describes "A popular art-school exercise that required the design of wallpaper patterns on native plant themes."¹⁰⁴ Wallpaper competitions were also in vogue. Ann Calhoun references the competitions published in *The Studio*, a journal which she describes as "a primary force in the promotion of new and revived Arts and Crafts into the new century in both New Zealand and Australia."¹⁰⁵ These, she writes, "created design blueprints for countless students internationally and women were frequent winners."¹⁰⁶ Isabel Hodgkins (1867-1950) is one nineteenth-century New Zealand wallpaper designer whose work has been published.¹⁰⁷ Calhoun lists her success in winning an Honorable mention at the 1885 New Zealand Industrial Exhibition, Wellington, with her wallpaper design "New Zealand foliage."¹⁰⁸

Wallpaper design competitions, such as those run by *The Studio* encouraged students to anticipate mass-production. Calhoun refers to the requirements "to design a wallpaper that was aesthetic, attractive to buyers, reproducible within given cost parameters and designed with its future use in mind."¹⁰⁹ There is published reference to other wallpaper competitions, the 1961 Festival of Wellington competition won by William Mason, for example, as well as craft exhibitions, such as that at the 1939-1940 Centennial Exhibition. Mason won both first and second prizes in the Festival of Wellington competition,¹¹⁰ with designs which Lloyd-Jenkins

⁹⁷ Stewart *The New Zealand Villa* p. 56; also Lloyd-Jenkins *At Home* pp. 10, 17.

⁹⁸ Toomath *Built in New Zealand* p. 119.

⁹⁹ Lloyd-Jenkins *At Home* p. 10.

¹⁰⁰ Petersen *New Zealanders at Home* p. 83.

¹⁰¹ "Wallpaper is now manufactured in New Zealand. Our aim should be the linking of this industry with our designers and artists to develop a wholly New Zealand product." [Northcote-Bade, S.] "Wallpaper" p. 20. The Wallpaper Manufacturers' Association of New Zealand dates from 1967, and comprised of the existing firms: Ashley Wallpapers Limited and New Zealand Wallpaper Manufacturers Limited. 12 June 1967, "Wallpaper Manufacturers' Association of New Zealand - Minutes."

¹⁰² Arden and Bowman *The New Zealand Period House* p. 208.

¹⁰³ Arden and Bowman *The New Zealand Period House* p. 209.

¹⁰⁴ Lloyd-Jenkins *At Home* p. 17.

¹⁰⁵ Calhoun *The Arts and Crafts Movement in New Zealand* p. 68.

¹⁰⁶ Calhoun *The Arts and Crafts Movement in New Zealand* p. 68.

¹⁰⁷ Calhoun *The Arts and Crafts Movement in New Zealand* p. 45; also Alexander Turnbull Library "Timeframes" Reference number: C-018-019 unpaginated.

¹⁰⁸ Calhoun *The Arts and Crafts Movement in New Zealand* p. 45. The Alexander Turnbull Library information states she won first prize. Alexander Turnbull Library "Timeframes" Reference number: C-018-019 unpaginated.

¹⁰⁹ Calhoun *The Arts and Crafts Movement in New Zealand* p. 68.

¹¹⁰ Lloyd-Jenkins *At Home* p. 209.

describes as:

sit[ting] just outside commercial wallpaper designs of the early 1960s ... Neither the use of delicate calligraphy to effect a chinoiserie pattern backgrounded by pretty dots in the second-placed design, nor the fish theme of Mason's winning paper [were] ... at all typical of the textile designs Mason would begin producing within a year of his competition win.¹¹¹

In discussing this later work, Lloyd-Jenkins points to Mason designs: *Mintal*, *Wind Flower*, *Polka*, *Samba* and *Minorca* to illustrate the boldness of his wallpaper design,¹¹² and contrasts these with "mid-1970s local manufacturers such as Ashley's [who] were using similar source materials to produce papers in tune to a suburban market. [These, Lloyd-Jenkins argues, were] comparatively timid in scale, colour and conception"¹¹³ when compared with the strength of Mason's work.

Another local manufacturer, Vision Wallpapers began manufacturing vinyl-coated wallpaper in 1976 in South Auckland, and by the 1980s produced solid vinyl papers.¹¹⁴ In 1989 it began blown vinyl production and by the 1990s it was exporting to Algiers, Australia, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, North America, and Taiwan.¹¹⁵ Ray Gray, Vision's marketing director at the time noted that ""New Zealanders are regarded as one of the biggest consumers of wallpaper per capita in the world, it must have something to do with our English heritage.""¹¹⁶ Wallpaper continues to be manufactured in New Zealand, with Pacific Wallcoverings Ltd, New Zealand, based in Porirua, being one of the largest wallpaper manufacturers in the southern hemisphere.

6 CONCLUSION

These excerpts from contemporary accounts, histories and guides to conservation, demonstrate the significant roles of importing and international influence on New Zealand's use of wallpapers. They also demonstrate that the published material on New Zealand wallpapers and their use do not provide an even and comprehensive history.

More research, for example, has emerged in the decorative practices of the nineteenth-century, possibly because this is where greatest investment in heritage and conservation to date has lain, and possibly also because of an academic interest in recording innovation, newness and change, over conservative décor and the domestic mainstream. In the twentieth-century, newness and innovation has most often been associated with a Modernist narrative opposed to the continuity of patterned and applied surfaces - the alternatives to the *avant garde* which the majority of New Zealanders likely lived with.

Such interior decorative practices were not necessarily uniform throughout New Zealand though. House location, occupant class, culture, race, and building date would no doubt have determined different strategies for the treatment of interior walls. More specific research addressing these issues and considering potentially different uses in wallpaper in different building types (e.g. houses c.f. hotels and businesses etc.) is yet to occur.

The field of New Zealand wallpaper design and use is hence an under-researched area to date, yet to receive a rigorous discussion in New Zealand's research and academic circles. This paper is intended as a beginning point for such research.

¹¹¹ Lloyd-Jenkins "The Modern Eclectic" pp. 29-32.

¹¹² Lloyd-Jenkins "The Modern Eclectic" pp. 42-44.

¹¹³ Lloyd-Jenkins "The Modern Eclectic" pp. 42-44.

¹¹⁴ Rotherham "Vision makes floor to ceiling money" p. 29.

¹¹⁵ Rotherham "Vision makes floor to ceiling money" p. 29.

¹¹⁶ Rotherham "Vision makes floor to ceiling money" p. 29.

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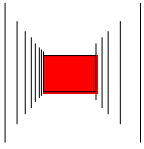
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<p>ABSTRACT</p> <p>This report surveys existing literature in order to provide an outline of previous research in the area of New Zealand wallpaper design and use. The report summarises material from the early nineteenth-century through to the 1960s, the time period previous research documents. The report identifies the lack of comprehensive research in this area of New Zealand architectural history.</p>		
SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES		

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