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## KRTA's Conference Centre Building, 22 Symonds Street, Auckland



Fig. 1 The complex roof forms, with the Architecture and Planning Library in the foreground. It sits back-to-back with the Design Theatre (under the turret), with the Dean's Office to its left (south), and the Conference Centre Lecture Theatre and so-called Flat Floor Space to the right (north). Construction of a new building for the Faculty of Engineering is underway.

In 2018, the University of Auckland's School of Architecture and Planning commissioned Patrick Reynolds to photograph the University's Conference Centre Building, ahead of its likely demolition in 2019 or 2020. The University also announced, in mid-2018, that it would be closing the three branch libraries of the Faculty of Creative Arts and Industries and consolidating their collections into the General Library Building on Alfred Street. The three are Architecture and Planning; Music and Dance; and Fine Arts. As the Conference Centre Building is home to the Architecture and Planning Library, this photographic essay records the library ahead of the relocation of its collections, as well as the building ahead of its demolition. Bill McKay has discussed the design and construction of the building in the School's centennial history publication (2017: 79–81, 93–97). Here it suffices to say that both the high-rise Architecture and Planning Building at 26 Symonds Street, and its low-rise wing, the Conference Centre Building at 22 Symonds Street, were designed by Kingston Reynolds Thom & Allardice

(KRTA) from the early 1970s (Patrick Reynolds' father Ian Reynolds was a partner in KRTA and contributed to the project from the outset). The Architecture and Planning Building was built as Stage I from 1975 to 1978, with Blair White serving as project architect. The Conference Centre Building followed as Stage II, with Derek King as project architect, and was opened in 1982. Building users have long appreciated the complexity of the Conference Centre Building's roof forms, the generosity of its foyers and stairs, the material palette of off-form concrete and exposed timbers, the informality of the Design Theatre, and the volume and luminosity of the library.



Fig. 2 The building's courtyard façade, originally designed around oak trees. The trees were felled 2013, following a particularly hot, dry summer and the partial collapse of one of the trees in a storm.

Fig. 3 The entry identifies the building by its current name. To its right is the exterior wall that originally displayed Pat Hanly and Claudia Pond Eyley's large mural, now moved inside to help ensure its longevity.





Fig. 4 The Flat Floor Space benefits from a high ceiling with exposed timber trusses and rafters, and timber sarking.



Fig. 5 The Design Theatre, notable for its comparatively small scale, high ceiling, top lighting and Harold Marshall-designed acoustic panels. The chairs and writing tablets were a later addition.

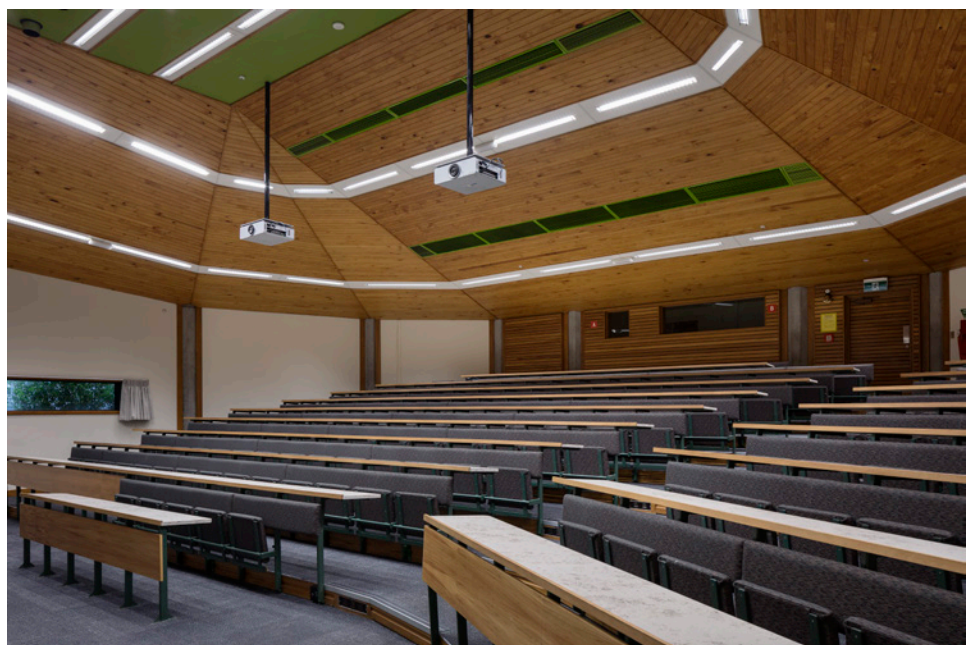


Fig. 6 The Conference Centre Lecture Theatre, now with replacement seats and writing ledges. The timber ceiling and detailing add interest.

Fig. 7 The off-form concrete wall of the Design Theatre, now adorned with Pat Hanly and Claudia Pond Eyley's mural, signed too by Professor Allan Wild, Dean of the Faculty from 1969 to 1993.

Fig. 8 The generous stair from the entry level down to the Architecture and Planning Library. The concrete block wall shows the ghostly traces of Architecture + Women New Zealand's timeline, posted for the School centenary in September 2017 and removed in August 2018 after an 11 month showing.

Fig. 9 Entrance to the Architecture and Planning Library, where the walls have presented an ever-changing array of exhibitions of books, journals, posters, and drawings.





Fig. 10 Allan Wild described the building as “an Arabian tent beside a city wall” (in Robertson 1982: 29). The sense of the tent is apparent upon entry to the Architecture and Planning Library, where the high ceiling and top lighting combine to produce a sense of volume and luminosity.

Fig. 11 In addition to the collections of books and journals, the Architecture and Planning Library has long displayed student drawings and models, all of which contribute to its character and atmosphere.

Fig. 12 The Architecture Archive, combining drawing cabinet upon drawing cabinet of large format work, box upon box of files, and a compactus of old books and journals.



## REFERENCES

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