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## Contingent Interpretations: Unreliable Memories in Stories of New Zealand Architecture

While the relocation of buildings is not unknown in other building cultures, this paper suggests that the practice in New Zealand of wholesale rearrangement is an over-casual approach to history, and that such rearrangements affect a city's narrative in time. Shifting buildings is a practice in the building culture that denies reliable record, toys with memory, and thus, one that requires our buildings to be treated as contingent interpretations. The presence of a building in a particular place is contingent, and dependent on externalities rather than on any commitment to notions of permanence.

As an example the relocation in 1982 of Benjamin Mountfort's first Anglican Cathedral in Auckland, can further be understood as a representation of a conflicted approach to permanence as a condition of urban architecture. For some, including the Historic Places Trust, St Mary's removal was a pragmatic resolution of a self-evidently unsatisfactory arrangement, justified in a property-focussed culture as a correction of its original location.<sup>1</sup> For others the removal was seen as an act of sacrilege that cut to the heart of traditions that inscribe buildings and Architecture with meaning by their association with place and time.<sup>2</sup>

This perception translates the general characteristics of New Zealand building - of a short history, often disputed; of a cultural resistance to the recognition of obsolescence; of light-weight constructions that are tenuously fixed to the ground; of a deeply conservative social order that commits the concept of 'property' to an extreme model of private ownership - which collectively suggest a profound attachment to temporary-ness. The practice creates a culture in which 'place' is uncertain, and in which the city as a representation of our built history lacks authenticity. This paper suggests that the tradition of treating buildings as a conditional property of history should be examined as a necessary part of a new discourse that develops more effective approaches to conservation.

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1 Jane Bellamy, "Quarter of a century since St Mary's move," *East and Bays Courier*, 7 March 2007, 8.

2 Nigel Wilson, "St Mary's and the Cathedral," *Auckland Metro*, no. 2 (1982): 88-91.

This paper examines the role of concepts of permanence in meanings of place, or *genius loci* in New Zealand architecture. The principle that some representation of history in the built environment is of value (that ancient and often obsolete structures have other values that are able to contribute to our identity) has been gradually accepted in public opinion and through this shift has been provided for in legislation since 1973. Strategies currently being developed in New Zealand to expand conservation theory tend to emerge as amalgamations of theories drawn from other conservation systems, but re-aligned with pragmatic definitions based on local interpretation.<sup>3</sup> But principles that conventionally apply in methodologies used overseas are obstructed in New Zealand by an assumption that a building and its site enjoy only a temporary relationship: at any time, it is both feasible and accepted in our culture that an old building can be removed, and if it has a prospective further use, it can be repositioned somewhere else. Theories for conservation practices relevant to New Zealand are now converging around the central issues: What should be preserved? Who should preserve it? And, by what criteria (in order to preserve which version of history) should it be preserved? In the expanding discourse issues that relate to 'place' seem to have been relegated: the 'what', and the 'which' designations appear not to be accompanied by references to 'where'. An occasional local dispute does not disguise the absence of protective legislation: in consequence, the present can be considered to represent a temporarily convenient distribution of our building stock, but need not (and should not) be relied on for historical veracity.

*Genius loci* – the perception described by Norberg-Schulz as “a meaningful relationship between the configuration of the site and the spatiality of human fellowship”<sup>4</sup> – is dependent on properties of authenticity, and of continuity, amongst others.<sup>5</sup> These properties may be extended to include concepts of permanence, each contributing to an understanding of a “meaningful relationship”. The habit of relocating buildings, on this premise, requires examination as part of a discourse to establish a definition of meaning(s) of place in New Zealand, weighed against perceptions of meaning in other conservation jurisdictions.

## Place and Occupation in New Zealand history

Impermanence as a pre-condition of place is tied by habit to a New Zealand tradition of building in which settlement was often expected to be temporary.<sup>6</sup> Social historians have suggested that a building culture derived from recent experiences of pioneering endorses the practice of moving buildings as a part of a residential vernacular.<sup>7</sup> The majority of 19<sup>th</sup> century settlers from Europe

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3 Robert McClean and Karen Greig, *Discussion Paper No. 1: Historic Heritage Principles and Issues* (Wellington: Historic Places Trust Pouhere Taonga, 2007).

4 Christian Norberg-Schulz, *The Concept of Dwelling: on the way to figurative architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1985), 41.

5 Kevin Lynch, *What Time is this Place?* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1972).

6 Jeremy Salmond, *Old New Zealand Houses* (Auckland: Reed, 1986).

7 Michael Fairburn, *The Ideal Society and its Enemies: The Foundations of Modern New Zealand Society 1850-1900* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1989).

came to New Zealand with no experience of land ownership.<sup>8</sup> Rural landowners in Britain preferred their tenants to be located in one place,<sup>9</sup> but the majority of new immigrants in New Zealand built and owned their houses and were free to decide their location.<sup>10</sup> Permanence of place associated with housing traditions in Europe was unnecessary, and not even desirable: the settlers found practical advantages in a loose relationship of building to site and encountered no cultural or economic disadvantage when buildings were moved. Light-weight construction in timber and roofing iron, framed floor plates, small room sizes and minimal sub-floor structures all contributed to a reasonably simple process for shifting houses from place to place, with oxen teams providing the motive power.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, a static model of society in the traditions of 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain and Europe was replaced by an unfamiliar mobility that applied to employment and location, as well as possession. In the colony a building and its site needed no fixed relationship for any practical purpose beyond immediate utility, and the building's relationship was wholly contingent on the perceived continuing value of that utility. An assumption that the home itself is a mobile possession continued to inform vernacular understandings during New Zealand's transition to an urban society between 1890 and 1920.<sup>12</sup>

In order to explore the relationship of mobile traditions to concepts of *genius loci*, selected examples of relocations (from the many available) are used to gain access to themes that become relevant to the conservation discourse.

The first exemplar is an early 20<sup>th</sup> century villa shifted in 2010 from Kingsland to a semi-rural site in Waitoki; the second is an 18<sup>th</sup> century Palladian house that was moved from its original site in Chippenham, England, to a site in Bath in 1929; these two examples are discussed alongside the relocated Cathedral Church of St Mary's, Parnell, moved to its present site in 1982. The Kingsland-Waitoki example is typical of current practice in New Zealand, but the relocated Chippenham house has been deleted from architectural histories.

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8 Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand* (Auckland: Penguin, 2003).

9 Graeme Dunstall, "The Social Pattern," in *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, ed. Geoffrey Rice (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

10 James Belich, *Making Peoples: A History of the New Zealanders* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 1996). Belich is one of many historians who have commented on the enterprise of immigrants who exchanged lives tied to small static rural communities in Britain, Ireland, and Europe for long sea voyages, largely un-explored and possibly dangerous destinations, and multi-cultural societies.

11 Erik Olssen, "A Paradise for Working Men 1870-1880," in *The People and the Land Te Tangata me Te Whenua: An Illustrated History of New Zealand 1820-1920*, ed. Judith Binney, Judith Bassett and Erik Olssen (Wellington: Allen and Unwin, 1990).

12 David Turner, "Planning for Higher Density: Concepts of Privacy in Auckland's culture of housing" (PhD diss., University of Auckland, 2010).

## 62 Walter's Road Auckland and Kingswood House, Bath

No 62 Walters Road, Kingsland is an example of a standard, ordinary relocation.



Fig. 1: 62 Walters Rd Kingsland in Waitoki.  
Photograph by David Turner

The Kingsland-Waitoki house (fig. 1) illustrates the advantages of a culture that maintains a non-permanent tradition in which hundreds of historic buildings are relocated each year. The villa is a typical example of a late Victorian single bay house that occupied the site in Auckland's suburb of Kingsland for about 100 years. Its relocation illustrates practical re-use and economic advantage, in which detachment from its origins reduces the building's potential to inform earlier suburban architectural morphologies in Auckland without entirely eliminating that potential. In 2010 it was found to be in the path of new public concourse space required for improvements to the adjacent Eden Park sports stadium in preparation for the Rugby World Cup in 2011, and was removed along with five of its neighbours. The building was auctioned, cut into two pieces, loaded and transported 45 kilometres by road north to Waitoki, where it now occupies a large site amongst a miscellany of older and newer houses. While its modest architectural qualities are intact its value as a minor element of the inner suburb's urban culture is lost.

In their discussion of house removals, Stuart Arden and Ian Bowman recognize the possibility of cultural loss: "The problem is that the cultural significance of a house often stems from its relationship to its surroundings. This relationship can demonstrate important aspects of its history and this evidence is lost if the relationship is broken."<sup>13</sup> Arden and Bowman's "cultural significance" is a status in history attaching to the building regardless of its location, but their discussion of the effects of relocations suggests uncertainty about actual, or inevitable consequences. Breaking the relationship, I argue, corrodes the integrity of the building's identity: the real impacts on the original site, on the site of the relocation, and on the building itself, are all extensive. These impacts are also usually irreversible, and with effects greater than those implied by conditional phrases such as "can demonstrate" and modifiers such as "often".

In spite of its ad-hoc assembly Waitoki is an undistinguished village typical of settlements in the area. From local enquiries it appears that the arrival of the villa caused no surprise as several other

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13 Stuart Arden and Ian Bowman, *The New Zealand Period House: a restoration guide* (Auckland: Random House, 2004), 74.

houses of various vintages are also relocations, mostly from Auckland. There is no strong sense that Waitoki is a collection of old unwanted buildings, or that Number 62 is in any sense a 'fish out of water'. Late 19<sup>th</sup> century house builders in rural locations generally followed the style of fashionable villas being built speculatively in the city,<sup>14</sup> increasing the possibility that this relocation might be an early Waitoki homestead. Confusion arises from this possibility: while we know that it could be a Victorian house on its original site, we also know that it might not be.

Buildings that have been moved in this way are understood to be "authentic" in one sense but not in all: they retain integrity from their origin in time, but not in relation to place. The subsequent or continuing acceptance of the building as a historic artefact then becomes a variable property, dependent on documentation for proof of origin, status, and provenance. In New Zealand's history of architecture and place, their role is legitimized by the volume of relocations that occur, and - arguably - the social function of relocations is further legitimized by the way they represent habit as well as economic advantage. However the practice removes the possibility that the built environment as experienced at any particular moment can be relied on for an accurate representation of our building history. Authenticity is conditional, and historical accuracy is not to be expected.

Drawing on John Ruskin's writings and theoretical cornerstones developed in the early years of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in Britain, (SPAB) many European countries use constructs of historic integrity that require strict interpretation.<sup>15</sup> The second example (fig. 2) illustrates the approach to authenticity in conservation practices governed by English Heritage.



Fig. 2: John Wood the Elder's House in Bath: A stone rotunda added (left) by Mr Tate has since been demolished. Image source unknown.

This Palladian house was designed by John Wood The Elder in 1738 and erected in Chippenham High Street where it dominated the street by its size and quality for nearly two centuries. In 1929 the building, then in a neglected condition, was acquired by a Mr Tate, who had the building dismantled, transported 20 kilometres, and re-built on a site adjoining a Regency terrace in the Lansdown

<sup>14</sup> Salmond, *Old New Zealand Houses*.

<sup>15</sup> Neil Jackson, *Nineteenth Century Bath: Architects and Architecture* (Bath: Ashgrove Press, 1991).

suburb of Bath. Kingswood House is now owned by a public school, is used for senior-school teaching and commercial events, and has been restored and internally modernized. But because it is not on its original site the building has no formal heritage status and is not included in Bath's catalogue of Georgian architecture. In practice this means that public funds for maintenance and further restoration are not accessible, and it is not protected except by its inclusion in the general conservation area of Lansdown.

For historians of architecture, the fine stonework detailing and façade proportions of Wood's original design confirm its place in the architect's oeuvre, but its relocation removes its authenticity. Influential texts documenting 18<sup>th</sup> century architecture "note" the re-erection of Wood's building on the western gable of Sion Hill Place,<sup>16</sup> a late Georgian terrace designed by John Pinch; they observe that this "diminishes the Pinch building", and its arrival in 1929 is considered to have compounded the damage to its status that began with its demolition.<sup>17</sup> Walter Ison, the leading authority on Bath's Georgian architecture, declines to attribute the building to Wood, and regrets the effect of the addition to the terrace, even while acknowledging the minor status of Sion Hill Place as an item in Bath's collection of Georgian architecture.<sup>18</sup> Part of the case used by English Heritage against recognition of Kingswood House relates to details of the re-erection where twentieth century materials including concrete foundations were used. In the strict conservation approach applied only the materials used in the original, or replacements of exactly equal quality are accepted; for instance, new ashlar stone is permitted for facade repairs, but must be sourced from the original quarries (275 years earlier); plaster must be reconstituted to the same mix of lime, sand and adhesive liquids used in the early eighteenth century, and so on.

Counter-arguments in Tate's defence – that the re-erection is faultlessly executed, that it has improved a featureless, and possibly incomplete 5 storey gable wall, or that it was rescued by Tate (because in 1929 the building was not protected by SPAB classification) – fail to retrieve the historical integrity of Wood's magnificent Georgian house. As a street building in Chippenham the principal architectural element was the façade (which is intact), but, removed from its original site, the building is not considered to be authentic: for being reconstructed on the end of a terrace only developed 70 years after Wood's death the building is transformed into an architectural novelty.

No two examples of relocated buildings can be matched exactly, but perceptions of the degree to which they retain authenticity can be compared. With Arden and Bowman's useful term "cultural significance" in mind, there is a sense that the Kingsland-Waitoki house is compromised, but that its authenticity is retained: it is not a novelty or an outsider but a participant with a respectable lineage. It may also be understood to bestow a small element of continuity – a proof of permanent

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16 Steven Parissien, *The Georgian Group Book of the Georgian House* (London: Aurum Press, 1995).

17 Jackson, *Nineteenth Century Bath: Architects and Architecture*.

18 Walter Ison, *Georgian Buildings of Bath*. (Bath: Kingsmead Press, 1980; originally, 1948). Typically, Walter Ison, describes the relocation in these terms: "A splendid Palladian façade, originally from Chippenham, has been re-erected to form the west front of an extensive addition made to No.1 (Sion Hill Place) ... the original balance of the composition is irretrievably spoiled."

settlement. Claims of authenticity for Wood's house in Bath, however, are rejected after the barest of discussions.

Conflicting interpretations of authenticity are illustrated by these exemplars, but an element of clarification, and common ground, emerges: that authenticity is not dependent on designated status in either the British or New Zealand jurisdiction, but that status does relate to integrity of place. Accepting the principle of this interpretation, and acknowledging that conservation rules are varied by local circumstances, what judgement is supported in the example of St Mary's relocation to the Cathedral 'cloister' in Parnell, Auckland?

### The Cathedral Church of St Mary's

St Mary's presents a different narrative. Although its relocation appears to be a straightforward instance of a practice established by habit, St Mary's relocation provoked a bitter dispute. Thirty years later there is a widely shared perception that its presence is unsatisfactory, and its proximity uncomfortable (fig. 4).

The relocation continues to convey a sense of error, and with hindsight, an ill-judged design decision. Presence/absence of artefact, and proximal/distal spatial relationships are properties of architecture and place, which particularize authenticity. In St Mary's case I argue that these properties are absent because the building has been moved.

Until 1973 St Mary's was a consecrated Cathedral Church, designed as a timber structure in the gothic revival style by Benjamin Mountfort in 1886 and completed in 1897.<sup>19</sup> When Charles Towle undertook the design of a larger Cathedral in the 1930s on the east side of Parnell Road he did not anticipate a future for the old church in a Cathedral precinct group: his initial concepts followed the prevailing architectural theories of Modernist urban planning of a free-standing building surrounded by open space.



Fig. 3: St Mary's Cathedral Church, Auckland:  
Photograph by David Turner.

19 Ian Lochhead, *A Dream of Spires: Benjamin Mountfort and the Gothic revival* (Canterbury University Press, 1999).



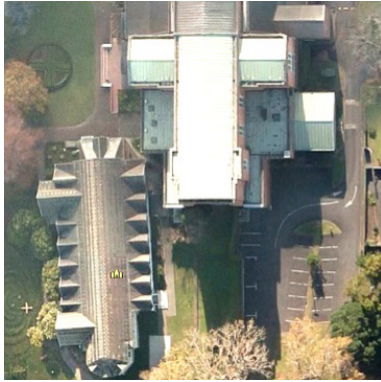


Fig. 4: St Mary's in its present location.  
Google Earth image retrieved 28 March 2014.

In the early 1960s, the Anglican authorities accepted a large bequest accompanied by a codicil stipulating that St Mary's, then in use for all the Anglican's cathedral purposes, must be maintained on its original site.<sup>20</sup> The condition reflected the St Mary's congregation's strong attachment to the old building, and their opposition to suggestions that it might be moved as part of plans for the new Holy Trinity building. Sentimentality would have played some part in that attachment, but another perception, one that acknowledges authenticity of site, building, and the particular 'spirit of place' is also evident from objections that were articulated during debates in the early 1980s.

Doubts, objections and community resistance delayed decisions for over a decade, but St Mary's future was sealed in 1981. At the second of two synods called in 1980 to determine the issue, the Cathedral's new architect, Professor Toy, presented the concept of a 'cluster' in which St Mary's would be tucked into the southwest corner of the site, close to the new Cathedral, and rewarded with the role of a Lady Chapel (fig. 4). A third synod ratified the decision to relocate St Mary's as Toy proposed. Although it conflicted with the original modernist concept, Toy's strategy provided a palatable answer to a majority within the laity's opposition.

The Dean, J. D. Rymer, commended the solution for the opportunity it created to open the view from the new Cathedral towards the Domain, the Museum, and the city.<sup>21</sup> The cathedral planners had received unanimous approval from the city's Planning Tribunal and were determined to face down other opposition to the relocation of St Mary's regardless of its weight of argument. The recently established Historic Places Trust (HPT) regarded the issue as a test case under the new Historic Places Act, but effectively endorsed the Planning Tribunal's decision by refusing to initiate an appeal against it. John Stacpoole, an architect member of the HTP panel, defended the decision, warning that leaving it on its site would "condemn St Mary's to an uncertain future".<sup>22</sup> Focussing on architectural merits that justified listing at the time in the highest protective category, the

20 Nigel Wilson, "St Mary's and the Cathedral," *Auckland Metro*, no. 2 (1982), 88-91.

21 Rymer, quoted in: *Dean Thrilled with Planning Decision*. New Zealand Herald, staff reporter; 20/8/81. (ASB: 44).

22 John Stacpoole, quoted in: "HPT sees St Mary's as a Test Case," *Auckland Star*, staff reporter; 4 November 1981 (ASB: 105).

panel avoided discussion of the significance of site as an element of its meaning: for the HPT the authenticity of the building as a protected artefact was not a function of place, but of material, provenance, and form alone. The church authorities and the HPT had considerable public support, but other voices were vigorously opposed. The Civic Trust in Auckland objected strongly, and a defence group collected 12,000 signatures from residents of Parnell in a petition for retention on the original site.<sup>23</sup>

These objectors attracted influential supporters during 1981. Sir Dove Myer-Robinson, the former City Mayor, described the proposal a “mutilation”, arguing that “(St Mary’s) ... belongs to the people of Auckland, and not the Church of England”.<sup>24</sup> When representing the Civic Trust to the HPT the University of Auckland’s Professor of History, Keith Sorrensen, criticized the Trust’s decision, and also the timing of the HPT’s meetings, which had ensured that it would be difficult for the opposition to organize its resources.<sup>25</sup> The HPT was internally divided on the issue: its Wellington-based assistant director, John Burns, disputed the Auckland panel’s decision and welcomed the Civic Trust’s action. Malcolm McKenzie, who had succeeded Charles Towle and was then displaced by Toy’s appointment published a sketch endorsed by the Civic Trust showing St Mary’s relocated but set at a right-angle to the new cathedral, and commanding a large public space (fig. 5).<sup>26</sup>

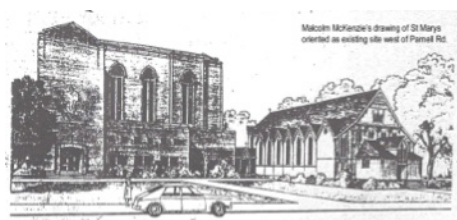


Fig. 5: McKenzie's alternative proposal for St Mary's.

Toy responded, describing the Civic Trust’s counter-proposals as “hare-brained”.<sup>27</sup> An architect-academic and colleague of Toy’s, Imric Porsolt, criticized all the alternatives in circulation, and, in support of the retention of St Mary’s on its site, advocated the complete (but also impractical) removal of the relevant section of Parnell Road.<sup>28</sup>

However, Nigel Wilson, a QC and High Court Judge, opposed to the relocation, argued that, for the Anglicans, “... (as long as) St Mary’s is a separate entity it represents a threat, a challenge, and a rival to the Cathedral.”<sup>29</sup> Wilson’s argument, which followed after Toy’s response to the McKenzie-Civic

23 Stacpoole, quoted in: “HPT sees St Mary’s as a Test Case.”

24 Dove Myer-Robinson, quoted in: “Relocation ‘an act of vandalism’,” *Auckland Star*, staff reporter; 5 May 1981 (ASB: 59).

25 E. H. Reynolds, “St Marys can never be overlooked now,” *New Zealand Herald*, 8 March 1982, 9.

26 *New Zealand Herald* (staff reporter), “Civic Trust produces St Marys Plan,” *New Zealand Herald*, 10 March 1982 (ASB: 13).

27 Toy, quoted in: “Stop-now idea called hare-brained,” *New Zealand Herald* (staff reporter), 10 March 1982.

28 Imric Porsolt, “Monumental alteration of sacred space,” *Auckland Star*, 10 February 1982 (ASB: 105).

29 Wilson, “St Mary’s and the Cathedral.”

Trust proposal, introduces more complex issues of place theory, relating to status and history, and also to authenticity. His argument recognizes meanings associated with place in relation to a consecrated building: that is, that in the traditions of the Church, there is a profound relationship between site and artefact. Wilson's perception of place also recognizes concepts that cannot be discontinued in any context, secular or religious, without a sense of significant loss: a loss that registers in the common experience as an irreversible severing of integrity, value, trust, ownership and identity. Meaning attaches to place: in St Mary's case, place formalized by the Anglican institutions of consecration, liturgy, and collective memory over eight decades, established and entrenched by the secular conventions of social habit and culture.

The synod's dispute was resolved by Professor Toy's pivotal intervention in its deliberations with his use of the word "cluster", providing the cathedral planners with sufficient momentum to end the dispute: St Mary's, or at least its physical and temporal future role, was legitimized by an invented function ('Lady Chapel'), by location ('cluster'), and - less precisely - by its (inferior) spatial association within the new precinct.

Toy's proposition of a 'cluster' to resolve the relationship addressed the material issues and satisfied the synod, but it failed to recognize the significance of place. Wilson's suggestion (that St Mary's continued occupation of its site would "threat(en)", or "rival" the new cathedral) is a perception that St Mary's would be a permanent reminder of the new building's legitimate and authentic predecessor - more authentic by virtue of age and precedence, and, perhaps, beauty. The objectors understood that the new role for St Mary's emasculated its meaning, subordinating and imposing on it the character of a slightly irritable neighbour. For the new cathedral's planners, however, the "threat" was contained.

Toy would have been aware of Gordon Cullen's argument for compression and immediacy in perceptions of urban space when advancing his concept of a cluster to the second synod in August 1981. Cullen's seminal book, *Townscape*, published in 1961 argues that the Modern Movement's preference for spatial isolation of a city's principal public buildings (including churches and Cathedrals) is an error. Such buildings need to be provided with "enough free space to ... allow one to enjoy its presence";<sup>30</sup> but otherwise are best served by spatial compression that permits experience of the building at different levels of intensity. Cullen gives Brunelleschi's Duomo in Florence, and Wren's London churches as examples of public buildings that function as places in cities, enhanced by compressed settings and spatial immediacy.

A second contemporary influence that addressed human perceptions of meaning and authenticity of place, also certain to have been known to Toy, was Kevin Lynch's book *Image of the City* (1960), in which Lynch's mapping studies of Boston were detailed. In a later study, *What Time is This Place*, Lynch recorded the determination with which communities in Polish cities rebuilt exact copies, in exactly the same place, the buildings, streets, public spaces, and particularly major public buildings

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30 Gordon Cullen, *Townscape* (London: Architectural Press, 1961), 294.

lost in wartime between 1940 and -45. There was an understanding that the history of these cities would be restored, and cultural memory regained; the authenticity of the rebuilt city was not in doubt, and no other course of action could achieve this spatio-cultural recovery.<sup>31</sup> This reading is confirmed by a contemporary account: the principle of large-scale physical and cultural restoration guided a programme of works that required the "... monuments of architecture (to) be restored for posterity as an illustration of the written history of culture".<sup>32</sup> Lynch's study suggests that the extraordinary speed with which the restoration programme had been undertaken reflected a need greater than that dictated by the recovery of the functions of the cities. The urgency of this recovery represents, according to Ciborowski, the significance of restoration of the written record, the physical proof of Polish identity, and the cultural memory that is transmitted generation by generation.

Ciborowski notes that the newness of these buildings is regrettable, but their newness does not diminish their cultural importance, or their authenticity. In a short time their meaning is re-established through use and re-instatement of place in the collective memory.<sup>33</sup> Thus, place and memory are cultural properties of urban life. Developing the argument, Lynch proposes that "(m)emory is the basis of culture",<sup>34</sup> referring to the Polish restoration programme to observe that a stable urban landscape conditions memory through time and function, and through the shared common experiences that provide individuals and communities with uniqueness and identity.

In an effort to achieve authenticity, place, and memory it seems that Toy's cluster rearrangement relied on recent architectural theory that, following Cullen's counter-modernist recommendations, enabled him to re-plan the Holy Trinity site with the relocated St Mary's nudging into the south-west corner of Towle's incomplete chancel. However, he brushed off criticism of his site planning without acknowledging the validity of arguments put forward by Wilson, McKenzie, and others in their objections to the old building's removal: objections that, as argued in this paper, recognized the properties of authenticity in architecture. Thus a perception that part of a building's meaning relates to the presence in its original location was (and is) suppressed; and the concept that St Mary's place in the city is a critical dimension of its authenticity appears not to have entered the debate in Toy's thinking or during the synod's deliberations.

## Conclusion

This paper has been expanded on the narrative of St Mary's - relative to the first two exemplars - in order to present comparative perspectives on interpretations of the practice of relocation. In summary, the authenticity of the villa shifted to Waitoki is diminished but not wholly removed, but St

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31 Lynch, *What Time is this Place?*, 196-98.

32 Adolf Ciborowski, *Town Planning in Poland* (Warsaw: Polonia Publishing, 1956), 38.

33 Ciborowski *Town Planning in Poland*, 78.

34 Lynch, *What Time is this Place?*, 124.

Mary's authenticity is substantially reduced. St Mary's current status is not dissimilar to that of the John Wood building in Bath, which is positioned as a regrettable novelty, and a casualty of history. Unlike the disputes surrounding St Mary's, resistance to the relocation of No. 62 was minimal, the house received in Kingsland and Waitoki as simply a practical alternative use for an inconvenient building.

Concluding the narrative of St Mary's is complicated by plans announced in 2010 and amplified recently to develop the interstitial spaces of the Holy Trinity group.<sup>35</sup> For the present, the description used to present the public image of the Holy Trinity Cathedral makes no mention of a 'cluster' relationship. The old church is now known on the Cathedral's website as "St Mary's in Holy Trinity" where "it ... forms part of the Cathedral cloister";<sup>36</sup> its identity is wholly subsumed. The word "cloister" may be recognised as a para-rhyme, which, besides legitimizing the 1982 relocation (or, at least, the website's explanation for it), now substitutes for Toy's 'cluster' and simultaneously adjusts the vocabulary to a word with comforting religious associations. The function of a Lady Chapel has been more or less abandoned in Anglican liturgy, and although the old church is occasionally used for lesser funerals and weddings, these services would have been better provided to parishioners without the building's relocation.

The acceptance of qualified donations by the church authorities could have been expected to provoke a different dialogue, but the debates that determined the relocation missed the opportunity to explore concepts of permanency and meaning of place. That dialogue, in which bound-in legal obligations would bring into focus the relationship of St Mary's to the new Cathedral did not develop except through arguments put forward by the group opposed to the plan. Perceptions of meaning, which have been connected in this paper to urban conservation theory with origins in Europe, and in particular those articulated by Wilson in 1982 failed to inform, or to deflect a flawed design strategy that, instead, has drawn credibility from a tradition of relocations.

From this analysis the New Zealand approach to moving buildings is a habit that compromises authenticity, and that results in a contingent interpretation for meanings of place. The application of more rigorous definitions would achieve an integrity that avoids the deceit sensed in the unsatisfactory spatial relationship, and in the confusing language used in contemporary descriptions of St Mary's.

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<sup>35</sup> "City's grant to cathedral too generous," *New Zealand Herald*, Editorial, 8 June 2014, 20.

<sup>36</sup> Anglican Church Commissioners. [www.holy-trinity.org.nz/our-cathedral](http://www.holy-trinity.org.nz/our-cathedral) [cited 16 February 2014].