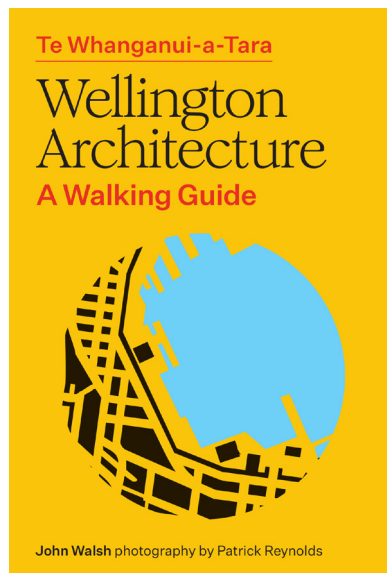


Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington Architecture

A walking guide

JOHN WALSH AND PATRICK REYNOLDS



\$37

CATEGORY: Non-fiction, Architecture

ISBN: 978-1-991309-17-4

THEMA: AM, WTH, 1MBN

BISAC: ARC000000, TRV004000

PUBLISHER: Massey University Press

IMPRINT: Massey University Press

PUBLISHED: November 2025

PAGE EXTENT: 312

FORMAT: Limpbound

SIZE: 178 x 119mm

RIGHTS: World

AUTHORS' RESIDENCES: Tāmaki

Makaurau Auckland, New Zealand

126 BUILDINGS AND FIVE ROUTES AROUND OUR CAPITAL CITY

The third in the series of popular and handy guides to our urban architecture by the well-known team of writer John Walsh and photographer Patrick Reynolds. Now fully revised, updated and enlarged, this handy pocket-sized book curates a series of city walks that take in Wellington's remarkably rich architectural heritage, guiding the reader from Oriental Bay through to Thorndon and many places in between.

It's the perfect guide for visitors to Wellington and also for locals who want to know more about their city, and a terrific introduction to a range of architectural styles and the careers of the architects who build this city.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

John Walsh is one of this country's best known writers about architecture. He is the author (with photographer Patrick Reynolds) of the major books *New Zealand Houses*, *Home Work*, *Big House Small House*, *City House Country House*, *Auckland Architecture: A Walking Guide* and *Christchurch Architecture: A Walking Guide*.

Patrick Reynolds is one of New Zealand's best architectural photographers.

SALES POINTS

- A lively pocket guide that brings a new dimension to a visit to Wellington
- Expertly written and beautifully photographed
- Accessible price makes this an easy-to-carry memento of the city
- A terrific introduction to a range of architectural styles
- Route maps makes navigation easy
- Fully revised, updated and expanded to encompass major new building projects and restorations since the first 2022 edition

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Takina

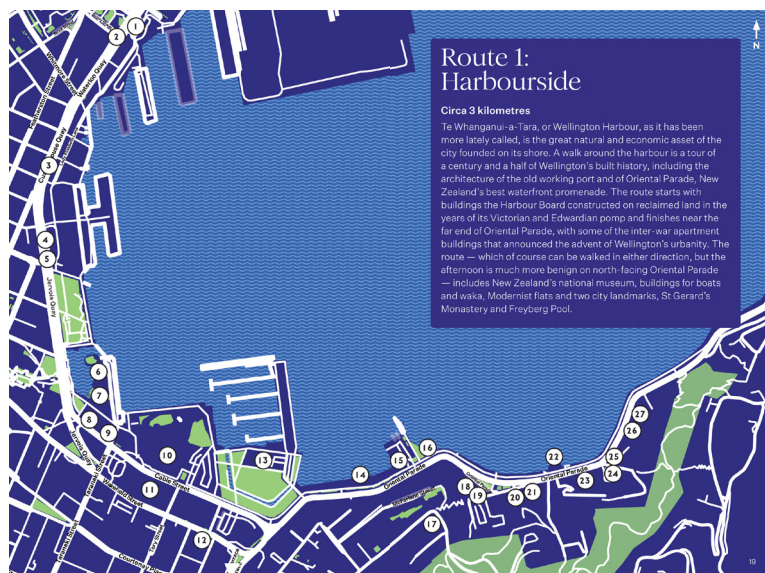
50 Cable Street and Wakefield Street
Studio Pacific Architecture, 2023

Like any city, Wellington is composed of built quadrilaterals. Economy and efficiency dictate a default to the rectangular box. It doesn't have to be this way, as evidenced by Basil Spence's circular Beehive (pages 256–57) and Jern Utzon's Sydney Opera House (1973), a 'spherical solution' that pushed design boundaries to their analog limits. Latterly, the practice founded by Iraqi-born British architect Zaha Hadid (1950–2016) has flamboyantly realised the geometric potential of digital technology, pushing, pulling and kneading buildings into sinuous, fluid forms. While 'parametric' architecture has flourished in countries where design ambition is complemented by autocratic vainglory, the wow-factor appeal of this style cuts across national borders and political divides.

Recently, two Wellington buildings have graduated from sexy parametric rendering to actual steel-and-glass structure. No. 1 Whitmore Street (pages 216–17), and Takina, the Wellington Convention and Exhibition Centre. (In te reo Māori, tākina can mean to connect or invoke.) Takina stretches languorously between apartment buildings on busy Cable Street, opposite altogether less singular Te Papa. (It also faces a dispiriting stretch of Wakefield Street.) The sheen of Takina's bronze glazing, especially on its north-facing Cable Street side, is reminiscent of the façade of the InterContinental Hotel (pages 204–05), although relating the two buildings is like comparing the CGI of the *Avatar* movies to the marionette puppetry of the 1960s TV series *Thunderbirds Are Go*. Inside, 6-level Takina is a series of functional conference and exhibition spaces. The building was intended to include a film museum featuring movie-maker Peter Jackson's collection of cinema memorabilia. When Jackson withdrew from the project, the trajectory of city council-owned Takina was tweaked towards the nebulous realm of venue architecture — a journey always undertaken as much in hope as expectation: build it and, fingers crossed, they will come.

Route 1–11

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Route 1: Harbourside

Circa 3 kilometres

Te Whanganui-a-Tara, or Wellington Harbour, as it has been more lately called, is the great natural and economic asset of the city founded on its shore. A walk around the harbour is at once a century and a half of Wellington's built history, including the architecture of the old working port and of Oriental Parade, New Zealand's best waterfront promenade. The route starts with buildings the Harbour Board constructed on reclaimed land in the years of its Victorian and Edwardian pomp and finishes near the far end of Oriental Parade, with some of the inter-war apartment buildings that announced the advent of Wellington's urbanity. The route — which of course can be walked in either direction, but the afternoon is much more benign on north-facing Oriental Parade — includes New Zealand's national museum, buildings for boats and waka, Modernist flats and two city landmarks, St Gerard's Monastery and Freyberg Pool.

↑ N

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Te Tumu Herenga Waka

Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington
42–50 Kelburn Parade
Tākīrangi Smith (master carver), 1986

The whare whakairo (carved meeting house) is a one-room structure, sheltered by a pitched roof extending over an open front porch, and richly endowed with figurative imagery. It is the most distinctive architecture of Aotearoa New Zealand, a building not found anywhere else. Its incidence dates from the mid-nineteenth century. According to architectural historian Deidre Brown, the whare whakairo is both an evolution of precedents such as the wharepuni (sleeping house) and pākaia (storehouse), and a response to the dislocations caused by European settlement. (The ecclesiastical architecture of the colonisers was a formal influence.) The whare whakairo became a focus of the Māori carving renaissance of the 1930s and 1960s.

In the later twentieth century, the whare whakairo became associated with the emergence of Māori political self-determinism. The first whare whakairo at Victoria University was constructed in the early 1980s, in a converted villa on Kelburn Parade. That, and an equally short-lived successor, preceded the purpose-built Te Tumu Herenga Waka, which opened in 1986. The master carver of the new whare whakairo, and of the marae's waharoa (gatepost) and pou haki (flagpole), was Tākīrangi Smith (Te Aitanga-a-Hauti, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa, Ngāti Apa). All the timber surfaces of Te Tumu Herenga Waka — the name, pānuiably appropriate, translates as the hitching post of canoes — are adorned, with scores of carvings of tūpuna (ancestors) on the māhi (bargeboards), poupou (pillars) and epa (posts); kōwhiriwai patterns on heke (rafters); and tukutuku panels on the walls. (The whare whakairo's weavers were led by Con Te Rata Jones, Te Whānau a Apanui, Rongowhakaata and Ngāti Tahu.) Te Tumu Herenga Waka can be viewed from the street through the ground floor dining hall of Ngā Mokopuna. You may even be able to see the tekoteko (gable figure) of Kupe, legendary discoverer of Aotearoa, kept company by his cavorting pet dog.

Route 5–102

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