



WHAT IF? WHAT NEXT?

SPECULATIONS ON HISTORY'S FUTURES

SESSION 1B

MODES OF ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

Architectural History Through Technology and Material Culture

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UNLOCKING NEWCASTLE'S MODERNIST DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE

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As the architectural modernism of regional Australia gains greater scholarly attention, historians are in search of places where information about buildings can be found. Local studies libraries are one such source, so too are the locally published newspapers that took an interest in the opening of new buildings. A building type that presents considerable challenges for the historian is that of the private house, plans and drawings of which may no longer be held by regional councils and have not been placed in local studies collections or archival repositories.

This paper describes a fortunate part of Newcastle's post-war architectural history in the publication of a series of articles written by the journalist Alan Farrelly for the Newcastle Morning Herald on the contemporary domestic architecture of Newcastle and its surrounds. Published weekly between 1961 and 1964 (with an extended break during this period) and entitled "Modern Homes of Newcastle", each article in this series described a recently constructed house in detail, naming its owners, architect, builder and street location, and pointed out its design features, construction system and material qualities. In addition, each article typically included two photographic images, one exterior and one interior view.

After presenting some background context, this paper introduces the "Modern Homes of Newcastle" series. It then describes one of Farrelly's key architectural interests before ending with a set of reflections on the potential of the series to open up and support further research into the modern domestic architecture of Newcastle.

As the architectural modernism of regional Australia gains greater scholarly attention, the availability of historical information and archival material will shape the potential of this scholarship.¹ Local studies libraries, council repositories and the archives of different organisations are valuable places for locating material, as are local newspapers that covered plans for and the opening of new buildings of public interest. This paper tells of a fortunate part of the history of Newcastle's post-war architecture in the publication of a series of newspaper articles devoted to the city's most architecturally adventurous private houses of the early 1960s. Entitled "Modern Homes of Newcastle", this series was published in the *Newcastle Morning Herald* between July 1961 and March 1964.² Written by Alan Farrelly, each article described a recently constructed house within the western and south-western suburban growth areas of Newcastle as well as locations within the upper Lake Macquarie region. These articles are a gift to the historian as they not only provide a detailed description of the design features, construction system, materials and interior furnishing of each house, they also name their owners, street location, architect and builder.

The excitement of being able to discuss these articles within this paper has been frustrated somewhat by the fact that only a limited description and account of their content can be presented here. There were 50 articles in all, comprising documentation of 50 different houses, each worthy of attention for what it represents within the spectrum of contemporary design within a post-war regional context of architectural production. This is material for a larger project and the aim of this paper is to establish a context and useful outline as an introduction and way into greater analysis.³

Newcastle's First Modernist House?

Applications for new home construction in Newcastle waned up and down during the late 1940s due to continuing material shortages, the cost of building, and industrial action amongst coal workers. In 1950, after 719 applications had been approved, 189 houses were completed with 353 under construction.⁴ At this time, weatherboard construction dominated, followed by brick veneer and to a lesser extent the use of asbestos and concrete construction. Most new private home building occurred in the suburbs of Lambton, New Lambton, Waratah, Birmingham Gardens and Mayfield, although there were some notable large homes appearing in outer areas such as Lambton Heights and Highfields. It was these homes that caught the attention of the *Newcastle Morning Herald* in April 1950 which explained that because of the way new dwellings fitted into the landscape they were "making attractive suburbs of former bushlands."⁵ (Fig. 1)

Even though high-pitched roofs, prominent gable ends and a solid appearance were the order of the day, Novocastrians had their interests piqued in new ideas for home design and construction by a series of exhibitions that were held at NESCA House in the mid-1940s and early 1950s.⁶ The first exhibition, organised by the Federal Government's Department of Post-War Reconstruction, had travelled from Sydney and was opened in Newcastle in October 1944.⁷ It featured a model of what was heralded a "postwar house" with low-hipped roof and a large window along one wall which ran around its front corner.⁸ Held in November that year, the next exhibition was presented courtesy of the US Office of War Information and was devoted to the topic of American wartime housing and town planning.⁹ An exhibition in March 1945 displayed photographs, drawings and models showing how asbestos cement could be used within home construction. The drawings and models had been produced by architects and students from Australia and New Zealand for a widely-publicised competition on timber-frame house design organised by the NSW Branch of the Timber Development Association of Australia and the Asbestos-Cement Manufacturers of Australia.¹⁰ This was followed by an exhibition in May that year devoted to timber-framed houses.¹¹ A fifth exhibition, held in March and early April 1953, was organised by the Newcastle Division of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) (Fig. 2).¹² It featured photographs and drawings of the work of Institute members, the winning buildings of the past few years of the Sulman award (which included the Hanson and Rose Seidler houses) and a display of modern architecture from the Netherlands.

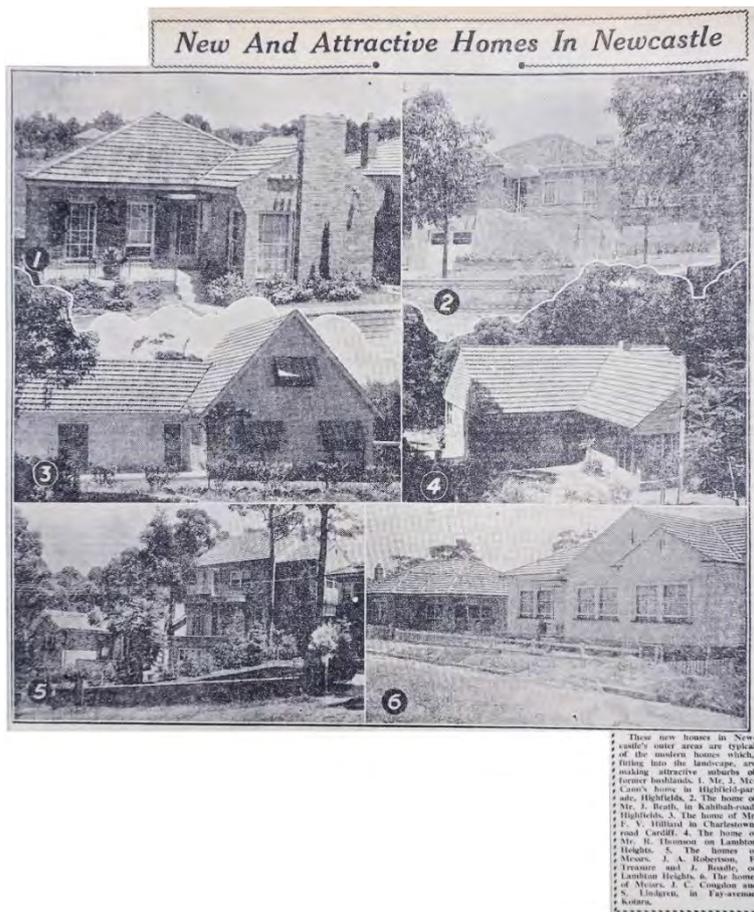


Figure 1. "New and Attractive Homes In Newcastle," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 11 April 1950, 4.



Figure 2. Newcastle architects Paul Thelander and D. McKenzie arranging a display for an exhibition organised by the Newcastle Division of the RAI, NESCA House, Newcastle, March 1953. Source: "Architectural Show," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 13 March 1953, 4.

It was not long after the 1953 exhibition that Newcastle saw what my research indicates was the first modernist house to be built in its suburbs – ‘Orana’ – in Adamstown Heights, completed in July that year (Fig. 3). Rather than its main orientation being toward the street, this house faced north in order to capture as much northern sunlight as possible. Its northern side contained a huge window, 486 square feet in size, composed of vertically and horizontally fitted glass panes. The floor of its main level was an 8-inch concrete slab that projected over a patio below. Rectangular in shape and with a floor area of about 33 squares, the main level had three bedrooms, a kitchen, bathroom, breakfast room, lounge and sun area. The lower level housed a laundry and double garage. The external walls were made of vertical pieces of stained red mahogany weatherboard and the slightly angled roof was of corrugated asbestos. Instead of stairs, a ramp led to the front door. The *Newcastle Morning Herald* called it a “Californian style house”, citing its architect, Sydney C. Morton, as saying, “the house was designed on lines of Californian homes because the Californian climate was similar to that in Australia.”¹³ This echoed Robin Boyd’s thoughts several years earlier.¹⁴



Figure 3. ‘Orana’, Adamstown Heights, Newcastle, NSW, designed by Sydney C. Morton. Source: State Library of New South Wales, Home and Away – 28233 (photo: 16/8/1955).

Sydney Morton had received a diploma of architecture from the Technical College in Newcastle in 1949 and had worked in the Newcastle practice of Castleden and Sara. Not much is known of his career, but in undertaking research for this paper it has been revealed that he was responsible for designing some of the region’s most spectacular post-war dwellings.

‘Orana’ was built in Adamstown Heights which was one of Newcastle’s post-war growth suburbs to the south-west of the city. Like its neighbours of Kotara, Kotara Heights and Highfields, in the 1950s it attracted middle-class homebuyers and builders due to the availability of generous sites, clean air, plans for new churches and schools, and a location alongside the Pacific Highway which afforded easy motor access into the city centre. Consequently, along with more conventional suburban types, these suburbs and others became a locus for innovative house design and where, in certain situations, architects and builders were able to push the limits of house construction.

The appearance of innovative new houses within these growth areas must have inspired an editor, Alan Farrelly or someone else connected to the *Newcastle Morning Herald* to compose an article series on the city’s modern homes. This was a new proposition for the paper which did not

have a regular column devoted to architectural commentary. The *Sydney Morning Herald* had its weekly "Homes and Building" section, published on Tuesdays, which featured short articles and images of new buildings and other things but not a column specifically devoted to house design. Every Sunday the *Sun-Herald* included a house plan from the Small Homes Service Bureau run by the New South Wales Chapter of the R.I.A.A.

"Modern Homes of Newcastle"

BOOKINGS for the Victoria League parade, "Hills of the Present and Living Pictures of the Past," to be held on Monday, August 2, have been so heavy that the President (Mrs. D. H. Thomson) has decided to put it on a second date. The repeat performance will be on August 4. The League is lucky having amongst its members Mrs. J. A. Anscombe who, with a wealth of theatrical experience, will produce the show. Before her marriage, Mrs. Anscombe, under the stage name of Rita Starr, toured with the Fuller circuit in Australia and overseas as a musical comedy actress. After the parade there will be a supper party arranged by Mrs. L. E. Thompson.

WHEN the new Singleton Business and Professional Women's Club holds its affiliation dinner next Saturday night its members will be presented with a gavel bearing a small inscribed silver plate to commemorate the occasion. It will be the gift of members of Newcastle, Maitland and Cessnock Business and Professional Women's Clubs who were responsible for forming the new sister club.

— BARBARA



Mr. and Mrs. D. J. Ridley's home, "Carravilla," at Dudley.

IN BRIEF

MR. AND MRS. Robin Cornwall, of Hamilton, are receiving congratulations on the birth of a daughter at Royal Newcastle Hospital last Sunday.

THE engagement has been announced of Ellen Margaret Johnston, eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. E. Johnston, of Bourgal, to a daughter, John Gourley, son of Mr. and Mrs. D. Gourley, also of Bourgal.

MR. AND MRS. Peter Groombridge, of Tabbler, Burwood, and formerly of Newcastle, are receiving congratulations on the birth of a son, Stephen David, at Crown-street, Western Hospital, Sydney, on Sunday. Mrs. Groombridge was formerly Dr. Elaine Gilbert, a doctor at Royal Newcastle Hospital.

MRS. Patricia Mulvaney, of Coronation-street, Hamilton, will give a preceding party for her home this afternoon in honour of Miss Fay Brown, of North Lambton, who will be married to Mr. Gary Winne, of Adamstown, on September 16.

THE Progress Women's Minstrelsy Auxiliary will

Home Blends Into The Dudley Bush

A careful choice of materials and skilled landscaping blends this cool white brick and polished cypress pine home at Dudley into the surrounding bush.

Off Bombala-street, it was built for Mr. and Mrs. D. J. Ridley.

The house is set in more than five acres of almost untouched bush, running down to a 350yd stretch of rocky beach. Rocks directly below the home, originally an aboriginal fishing ground, are a favourite haunt for fishermen.

Eighty-two feet long, practically every room in the house faces the view. The home is built in a slight ripple of the hillside, has a north-east aspect and is protected from most winds.

Mainly Window It is high on brick foundations, with the end walls also in brick. The exterior brickwork is painted white.

The front, facing the view, is mainly window, with strips of polished cypress pine. The rear wall is constructed of roughly finished vertical pine panelling, with small windows.

On the eastern side of the house is a large, roof-flagged terrace with barbecue pit, leading to a track which winds to the beach.

The house is of about 16 squares, not counting the large balcony, terrace and swimming pool.

There is room for several more rooms under the house when needed.

Simply designed — long and narrow — sleeping and living areas are at opposite ends of the house.

From the carpet a level paved in matt-finish terrazzo tiles leads into the lounge-dining room, 20ft, long and 16ft, wide.

Four-to-ceiling windows look across the site on the rocks 300ft below to Merewether, Bay and Stockton beaches. Two French doors

270 Guests At Petrol Firm's Ball

Members of Ampol Petroleum Ltd. entertained friends at their annual ball at the City Hill last night.

More than 270 guests attended.

Members of the official party were entertained by the Northern Manager of Ampol (Mr. Harry Thornton) and Mrs. Thornton.

To receive her guests, Mrs. Thornton wore a short brilliant evening frock of white nylon organza embellished with black velvet flowers.

The official guests were Mr. and Mrs. A. Humble, of Wollongong; Mr. and Mrs. B. W. Chidwick, representing Clarendon Bay; Mr. Ken Hooper (captain of the pilot steamer) and Mrs. Hooper; Mr. and Mrs. J. Richardson, representing the Sulphide Corporation; Mr. L. R. Harrison, of Sydney; Mr. S. Davy (Ampol Operations Manager) and Mrs. Davy.

Modern Homes Of Newcastle

Open on to the five wide wooden balcony.

The room is lined with polished yellowwood boards, covered with large white Indian wool rugs, and embroidered Indian nundah rugs.

One wall of the lounge room is panelled with polished Oregon, giving a warm tone to the room to offset the white-painted brick wall and is protected from the sunroom. Common bricks were used in this wall to get away from the uniformity of selected bricks.

An open fireplace built into the wall features a thick 6in long sandstone slab as a low mantel-piece, and a polished copper coal.

The other wall is covered with Japanese grass paper.

The sunroom features an Oregon-pannelled cocktail bar with a feature strip of aboriginal-motif wallpaper behind. It is a few inches lower than the rest of the house, and a slab of grey-veined white marble forms an unusual step.

A long hallway gives access to the rest of the house, with rooms opening off in the large bathroom a tiled in one green, with the colour carried into the furnishings of the guest bedroom.

Film Night At W.E.A.

A W.E.A. Film Club programme will be held at 7.45 p.m. on Sunday in the W.E.A. Rooms, King-street, Newcastle, at 7.45 p.m.

The first article within the *Newcastle Morning Herald's* "Modern Homes of Newcastle" series, 22 July 1961.

Figure 4. "Home Blends Into The Dudley Bush," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 22 July 1961, 7.

The first article in the "Modern Homes of Newcastle" series appeared in the *Newcastle Morning Herald* on Saturday 22 July 1961. It was placed on page 7 alongside the paper's social news columns and only a few pages from its property and real estate section. The initial subject was a house located in Dudley, a small township on the coast to the south of Newcastle (Fig. 4). Titled

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“Home Blends Into The Dudley Bush,” the article explained how the house sat on the “slight ripple” of a hillside that ran down to a rocky beach below.¹⁵ All rooms within the long and narrow house faced the ocean view through a front elevation consisting mostly of floor-to-ceiling windows. A photographic image captured the bushland setting and another showed the lounge-dining room area which had a floor of polished tallowwood boards covered by white Indian wool rugs. No author is mentioned, but the second instalment the following Saturday made it known that the author of this new series was Alan Farrelly. This second article described a large brick and tile house in Merewether which was placed on a high brick foundation to gain panoramic views over the city and coastline.¹⁶

So began the “Modern Homes of Newcastle” series without introduction to a broader aim or agenda. Published weekly in the Saturday edition of the *Newcastle Morning Herald*, each article featured a new building and typically included two photographic images, one of an exterior view and another of an interior. The first string of articles ran from 22 July 1961 to 3 March 1962, followed by a break of twenty months during which Farrelly travelled to the United States. The series resumed on 9 November 1963 and ran to 14 December that year, followed by a short break after which a third string ran from 4 January to 28 March 1964.

The articles followed a similar pattern beginning with a general statement of the key attributes of the house followed by the names of its owners and street location, its overall area and size, then a description of siting, key exterior features, entry, interior room arrangement, interior finishes and furnishings and external construction. They typically ended by naming who the architect and builders were. The photographic images were accompanied by lengthy captions. There was a generosity of space given to the articles which could run to about 680 words each. A direct description tended to characterise the articles although later in the series Farrelly sometimes opened with more general remarks on a topic, whether it was about the use of a certain material or construction method.

As mentioned, the geographic focus of the series was the western and south-western suburbs of Newcastle. Houses in Merewether and Merewether Heights were given 22 articles in all, New Lambton (4), New Lambton Heights (3), Adamstown Heights (3), Kotara (2) and Kotara Heights (1). Farrelly explained that Merewether Heights was one of the most interesting suburbs from an architectural point of view: “Split levels, cantilevered balconies, butterfly roofs, glass, brick, stone, wood, metal follow in almost bewildering profusion.”¹⁷



Figure 5. Simplified map of Newcastle indicating suburban areas relevant for this study. Map: Paul Hogben, 2020.

Besides Newcastle's suburbs, Farrelly looked to townships in the upper Lake Macquarie region. These places had also undergone suburbanisation in the 1950s and early 1960s. Houses in Dudley were given four articles, Charlestown (3), Eleebana (2), Kahibah (1), Belmont (1), Belmont North (1), Toronto (1), Carey Bay (1) and Coal Point (1).

Born in Newcastle in July 1940, Farrelly began as a cadet with the *Newcastle Morning Herald* in 1957. His name first appeared in connection to a feature article on 2 August 1958 containing a story on the Bush Book Club of NSW, a service that delivered books to people in rural and outback places.¹⁸ This was followed by articles written in either a narrative or biographical style on different topics, all with a human interest angle.¹⁹ These articles were safe territory for a young writer finding his feet in general interest journalism but not an obvious stepping stone into the subject of modern domestic architecture.

Farrelly's skills in describing buildings were not bred from a training in architecture. He demonstrated little knowledge of the historical context of modern architecture. His articles did not reference any architects of national or international repute nor did they show an awareness of broader trends in architecture particularly as interest in the 'new brutalism' grew within Australia in the early 1960s. His descriptions were very building focussed, however toward the end of the series he occasionally hinted at an awareness of international developments such as when he remarked that asbestos cement was not subject to the same "class" discrimination overseas as it was in Australia.²⁰

Farrelly's descriptions demonstrate a first-hand knowledge of each house. Presumably this came from visiting the houses and meeting with their owners in order to gain an understanding of the types of materials and furnishings used. He had just turned 21 when he began writing the series and for someone of that age the task of researching and writing about a house each week ready for print every Saturday would have required a confident efficacy in how he managed himself and his interactions with others. The photographic images were likely taken by Ron Morrison, a Newcastle press photographer, who, with his wife Elizabeth, ran a press agency in the early 1960s.²¹ Farrelly and Morrison were to develop a close collaborative relationship, producing several books together in the late 1960s, beginning with a monograph on Newcastle itself.²²

During his trip to the United States in 1963 Farrelly wrote about his travel experiences and after the completion of the "Modern Homes of Newcastle" series he continued writing for the *Newcastle Morning Herald* and then the *Newcastle Sun*. He moved to Sydney in 1974 to become assistant editor of *The Sun* which began his career as an editor of major city dailies and Sunday papers including *The Australian*.²³

Key Interest

The "Modern Homes of Newcastle" series covered a range of house designs from the boldly experimental to those Farrelly described as possessing "conventional styling". Across this range he displayed an evenness in his treatment but there was a certain interest that came to the fore – that of daring responses to difficult sites requiring structurally innovative solutions. This was the case with houses located along Hickson Street in Merewether. Sites on the northern side of this elevated street offered expansive views over the city, port and coastline. Sites on its southern side had stunning views down the coastline but were less easy to build upon due to exposure to strong southerly gales and the steepness of the terrain which dropped sharply 300 feet down to the water's edge below. There were, however, people who were prepared to build on this side of the street, starting with Kevin Miller, a final year architecture student at Newcastle University College, whose house for himself and his wife employed a type of structural framework construction, "space column construction", which Farrelly believed was the first time such a system had been used in Newcastle.²⁴ This consisted of preassembled bay sections bolted together on site and into which timber beam supports for the ceiling and floor were fixed. The long walls of the house were almost entirely composed of plate glass. The side walls were constructed of aluminium to minimise the load on the foundations and which, left to corrode,

would turn a dull white and meld in tone with the seascape context.²⁵ The house's flat roof was covered with white marble chips laid in bitumen to reflect heat and also to blend with the surf below (Fig. 6).



Figure 6. House, Merewether, Newcastle, NSW, designed by Kevin Miller. Source: Alan Farrelly, "Unorthodox Home in Salt Spray," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 3 March 1962, 7.

Another house to appear on the southern side of Hickson Street was designed by Wally Kostyrko.²⁶ Projecting out over the steep incline, this house had a rectangular shape governed by the angles that maximised views. Windows ran along the full length of its main elevation and asbestos sheets were used to clad the walls (Fig. 7). Internally, a ceiling of exposed beams painted char grey supported suspended white plaster sheets hung in places to conceal the heating elements and lighting fixtures.

A third house in Merewether to be featured was designed by Sydney Morton and which also perched on its site with the effect of being thrust into space (Fig. 8).²⁷ Cantilevered over a brick base, the projecting side had a corner balcony protected to the east by a glass partition. A feature of the interior was a freestanding brick fireplace, with bench seats, which formed a wall to the entry foyer. The lounge room opened to the balcony adjacent to which was the kitchen which had the luxury of views through a corner window.



Above: View of the triangular house, taken from road and looking at the right-angle corner. Walls are of permanent coloured asbestos sheets with metal cover strips, flat roof of gravel-covered tar. Note the sea far below, underneath the house.

Below: View across lounge. Kitchen is to left of stairwell behind the lounge chair; dining room behind timber shadow strips. Main bedroom is through opening at far right. Note long windows at extreme right; heavy beams in ceiling, suspended white heater sheets, polished brushbox floors.

Figure 7. House, Merewether, Newcastle, NSW, designed by Wally Kostyrko. Source: Alan Farrelly, "Triangular Theme to get the View," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 21 March 1964, 6.



Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Woodard's home, Scenic Highway, Merewether. Note how top level cantilevers over brick base, almost blank wall to the west. Lounge room is at left, with balcony opening off. Note sunshade strips above windows in the kitchen, "den" and main bedroom. Glass partition to left of balcony shields from winds. Lower: Large brick fireplace in lounge room. Note angled position, polished copper flue pipe, built-in bench seats and wood-box. Note parquetry floor, folding door at right to hall and door chimes to left of door.

Figure 8. House, Merewether, Newcastle, NSW, designed by Sydney C. Morton. Source: Alan Farrelly, "Panorama of City, Beach and Sea," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 13 January 1962, 6.

Farrelly's interest in structurally innovative houses led him to the work of Gordon Appleby, an architect and lecturer at Newcastle University College. Appleby was engaged in research into low-cost housing exploring how mass produced, standardised building components could be used to create architecturally distinctive yet economic houses that possessed a high degree of flexibility in the way they could be adjusted to suit changing patterns of use. This was the motive behind Appleby's own house in Toronto on Lake Macquarie for which post-and-beam construction was used. Walls were non-load bearing and internal partitions could be moved at will.²⁸ Appleby also employed post-and-beam construction for a house he designed in Kotara which again enabled internal flexibility and, in this case, the introduction of a split level to gain greater views out to the bushland (Fig. 9).²⁹ The stained timber framework contained slots into which panels of white asbestos sheeting were slid, removing the need for bolts and nails.³⁰ The contrast of the white panels with the darkened timber created a "dramatic colour scheme throughout."³⁰ The economy of materials impressed Farrelly who wrote, "The house is generally of simple, aesthetic design, using only a few basic materials, but using these with great effect."³¹



Figure 9. House, Kotara, Newcastle, NSW, designed by Gordon Appleby. Source: Alan Farrelly, "Wall Panels Need no Bolts or Nails," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 8 February 1964, 6.

Openings

The "Modern Homes of Newcastle" series is a fantastic basis for research into the post-war domestic architecture of Newcastle. The articles demonstrate that the industrial city was a lively place for house design in the early 1960s and that there is a substantial amount of work deserving of further study. There are four areas where the articles are particularly helpful.

Firstly, they identify the architect (or architects) responsible for designing each of the houses. Several of these architects had been in practice for some time including Lees & Valentine, Rodd & Hay, Raymond Wilson and Sydney Morton. Others were recent graduates from the architecture

diploma course at Newcastle University College, namely Wally Kostyrko and David Hilliard, or, as was the case with Kevin Miller, still a student. Domestic commissions offered these architects an opportunity to test and develop their knowledge and to explore ideas. In some cases, this opportunity was amplified when it was their own house. The careers and body of work of these architects have yet to be charted and such an exercise will reveal any further domestic commissions each received and the interests that guided and distinguished their responses.

Secondly, the articles provide valuable information about the building materials used for each house. In certain instances, the source locations of these materials are named, such as red textured bricks from Cessnock, sandstone from Gosford and imported cedar from Canada. This information can be used to build a picture of how regional industries supported the design and construction of modern houses in Newcastle and other places including townships around Lake Macquarie. Farrelly also described the way materials were treated such as exposed timbers as well as taking an interest in the treatment of brick walls where extruded mortar had been allowed to set creating a rough surface texture and colour contrasts.³² This attention to materials and their treatment allows for a study of the way Newcastle architects were responding to broader shifts in thinking about the expressive qualities of a house as an environment for living.

Thirdly, the articles are replete with description of the interior features and furnishings of each house. They detail the treatment of internal walls in the types of paint colours, panelling and wallpaper used. They describe the presence of fireplaces, cocktail bars and suspended cabinets that separated living rooms from kitchens. With an accommodating view of the furnishing and decorative choices on display, Farrelly pointed out some of the more individualistic features in some places such as the “gold room” of a large house in Charlestown where the living space was draped with gold satin curtains and wallpaper with gold motif patterns³³ and the “Scandinavian-style” sunken conversation pit within an Adamstown Heights house.³⁴ There was no mention of the involvement of any interior designers or decorators in his articles save for a brief reference to the bedroom furniture in one house being designed by the clients themselves.³⁵ Despite this, the strong focus on interiors enables an analysis of how modern, architect-designed houses of Newcastle were vehicles for a variety of approaches to interior furnishing and decoration.

Fourthly, the articles enable the houses to be understood in relation to their owners – a line of study that would reveal who these people were and what inspired them to commission a modern architect-designed home. What were their backgrounds and the communities in which they circulated, socialised and worked within?

As mentioned earlier, one of the missing elements to Farrelly’s descriptions was the broader context of architectural ideas and movements that informed the design of the houses. This is where further study can also be directed. One direction would be to look at the role played by local architectural discourse, particularly within education: who was teaching at the University College and what was taught within the diploma course.³⁶ Another direction would be to look further afield, especially to Sydney and the influences that were emanating from there and how these influences filtered into the building culture and practices of Newcastle. This broader study is ahead, but one that owes its possibilities to the “Modern Homes of Newcastle” series and the descriptive detail that it contains.

Endnotes

¹ See, for example, Lisa Marie Daunt, “Communities of Faith: Regional Queensland’s Innovative Modern Post-war Church Architecture,” in *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand 36, Distance Looks Back*, edited by Victoria Jackson Wyatt, Andrew Leach and Lee Stickells (Sydney: SAHANZ, 2019), 65-78.

² The full name of the paper was *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners’ Advocate* but here it will be cited and referenced as *Newcastle Morning Herald*.

³ The post-war architecture of Newcastle (NSW) has received little scholarly attention or study. Barry Maitland and David Stafford's architectural guide to the city contains eleven entries on buildings completed between 1945 and 1970 along with a six-page outline on post-war Newcastle. See Barry Maitland and David Stafford, *Architecture Newcastle: A Guide* (Newcastle, NSW: RAIA [Newcastle Division], 1997). The author is currently preparing a study of post-war churches within the Hunter region of New South Wales which includes several churches built in Newcastle and its suburbs in the 1950s and 1960s.

⁴ "£2M. Worth of Building," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 6 January 1951, 2.

⁵ "New and Attractive Homes In Newcastle," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 11 April 1950, 4.

⁶ Located adjacent to Newcastle's City Hall, NESCA House was opened in September 1939. Designed for the administrative staff of the Electric Supply Department of the City of Greater Newcastle, it contained display areas which were able to be used for civic purposes including art and architectural exhibitions.

⁷ "Housing Exhibition at Nesca House," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 7 October 1944, 6; "Housing Exhibition Opens at Nesca House Tomorrow," *Newcastle Sun*, 10 October 1944, 5. For an account of this exhibition see Robert Freestone, "Post-war Reconstruction, Planning Promotion and the Australian Government 1944-45," in *Exhibitions and the Development of Modern Planning Culture*, edited by Robert Freestone and Marco Amati (Surrey, England, and Burlington, USA: Ashgate Publishing, 2014), 209-224.

⁸ "Interest in Model for Postwar House," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 12 October 1944, 6.

⁹ See "American Wartime Housing" and "Pictures Show U.S. Housing Trends," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 28 November 1944, 3. This exhibition, which had originally been created by the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, had previously been shown in Sydney and Melbourne.

¹⁰ See, for instance, "Timber Homes Competition," *Sunday Mail* (Brisbane), 22 August 1944, 5. First exhibited in Sydney in December 1944, entries to the asbestos cement section of the competition were shown in Newcastle before moving onto Brisbane, Adelaide and Melbourne. For coverage of the Newcastle opening see "Asbestos-Cement Home," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 6 March 1945, 3; "Model Home for Asbestos-Cement Exhibition," *Newcastle Sun*, 6 March 1945, 2.

¹¹ See "Timber Industry Shows Model Homes," *Newcastle Sun*, 30 April 1945, 3.

¹² "Architectural Show," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 13 March 1953, 4; "Exhibits Prepared," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 24 March 1953, 3; "Architectural Exhibition," *Newcastle Sun*, 24 March 1953, 11.

¹³ "Big Windows Feature in New Home," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 10 July 1953, 4.

¹⁴ See Robin Boyd, "California & Victoria, Architectural Twins," *The Age*, 9 October 1948, 2.

¹⁵ "Home Blends Into The Dudley Bush," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 22 July 1961, 7.

¹⁶ Alan Farrelly, "Panoramic Views and Four Levels," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 29 July 1961, 7.

¹⁷ Alan Farrelly, "Compact but there is no Crowding," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 4 November 1961, 7.

¹⁸ Alan Farrelly, "Library of the Bush," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 2 August 1958, 5.

¹⁹ Alan Farrelly, "Shooting up the Bush," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 30 August 1958, 5; Alan Farrelly, "Siberia can't be all that Bad," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 16 May 1959, 5; Alan Farrelly, "Plane link with Great Pioneer," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 11 July 1959, 5; Alan Farrelly, "Volga Man who Shot Wolves at 14," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 14 November 1959, 5.

²⁰ Alan Farrelly, "Higher Status for Asbestos Cement," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 25 January 1964, 6. Farrelly stated, "In Scandinavian countries especially it is used widely in the most expensive homes."

²¹ See Greg Ray, "Shot Clock," *Newcastle Herald*, 16 July 2005, Weekender Section, 10.

²² See Alan Farrelly and Ron Morrison, *Newcastle, NSW* (Adelaide: Rigby, 1968). In the late 1960s Farrelly and Morrison also produced four children's books together before they embarked on a trip around Australia to compile material for their *New Frontiers* (Adelaide: Rigby, 1970).

²³ Farrelly spent time in Hong Kong as editor of the *South China Morning Post* in 1986 and 1987. Retiring to Jindabyne in New South Wales, he died of a heart attack on 27 September 2009. See Graeme Leech, "Accomplished Editor Alan Farrelly Dies at 69," *The Australian*, 29 September 2009, 4.

²⁴ Alan Farrelly "Unorthodox Home in Salt Spray," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 3 March 1962, 7.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Alan Farrelly, "Triangular Theme to get the View," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 21 March 1964, 6.

²⁷ Alan Farrelly, "Panorama of City, Beach and Sea," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 13 January 1962, 6.

²⁸ Alan Farrelly, "Lowering Costs of Building," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 7 December 1963, 10.

²⁹ Alan Farrelly, "Wall Panels Need no Bolts or Nails," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 8 February 1964, 6.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Alan Farrelly, "Extruding Mortar in Brick Walls," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 3 February 1962, 7; Alan Farrelly, "Dwelling with Many Angles," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 4 January 1964, 6.

³³ Alan Farrelly, "Harmony in Style and Furnishings," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 16 September 1961, 7.

³⁴ Alan Farrelly, "Unusual Home of Architect," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 16 November 1963, 8.

³⁵ Alan Farrelly, "Modernity but Touch of Colonial," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 2 September 1961, 7.

³⁶ An excellent source for this is Bob Donaldson and Don Morris, *Architecture Newcastle, Preserving its Educational History: A History of Architectural Education at Newcastle* (Callaghan, Newcastle: University of Newcastle, 2001).