

## TRANSLATION TRANSLATION

Proceedings of the  
**Society of Architectural Historians,  
Australia and New Zealand**  
Vol. 31

edited by Christoph Schnoor  
(Auckland, New Zealand SAHANZ and Unitec ePress;  
and Gold Coast, Queensland: SAHANZ, 2014).

The bibliographic citation for this paper is:

**Robert Freestone, "Auckland Calling at the Bottom of the Dial: The Journey of British Architect-Planner R.T. Kennedy," in *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand: 31, Translation*, edited by Christoph Schnoor (Auckland, New Zealand: SAHANZ and Unitec ePress; and Gold Coast, Queensland: SAHANZ, 2014), 681-690.**

*Published in*

*Auckland, New Zealand: SAHANZ and Unitec ePress [ISBN - 978-1-927214-12-1];  
and Gold Coast, Australia: SAHANZ [ISBN - 978-0-9876055-1-1]*

*All efforts have been undertaken to ensure that authors have secured appropriate permissions to reproduce the images illustrating individual contributions. Interested parties may contact the editor.*

*This work is licensed under a  
Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.*



Robert Freestone, *University of New South Wales*

## Auckland Calling at the Bottom of the Dial: The Journey of British Architect-Planner R. T. Kennedy

In 1957 Terry Kennedy was appointed foundation professor of town planning at the University of Auckland. He had never seen himself as an academic but the offer was welcome in a late career hiatus after spending over a decade in the Ministry responsible for administering the British town and country planning system. Kennedy's credentials were impressive. His illustrious associates in Whitehall included William Holford with whom he also collaborated in architectural practice both before and after the Second World War. Kennedy entered architectural practice in the 1920s working mostly in local government and contributed to numerous public buildings and housing schemes. He was always more architect than planner but his time in the civil service was one of unprecedented innovation with new planning legislation, reconstruction of bombed cities, new towns, and national parks. He brought this experience to Auckland, a wilful exporter of mainstream modernist British planning thought, but having to renegotiate its relevance within a new urban setting. Kennedy's expertise was forged in a 'blitz and blight' approach to redesigning the built environment but New Zealand presented a different set of environmental planning challenges. This biographical paper traces Kennedy's journey from the worlds of British town planning and public architecture to a new career in New Zealand through the evolution and adaptation of his planning and design philosophies.

The focus of this paper is on the evolving planning and design ideas of Terry Kennedy (1903-1997), foundation professor of town planning at the University of Auckland who came to New Zealand in the late 1950s after a long career as an architect and planning bureaucrat in England.<sup>1</sup> It draws from a reading of his personal papers lodged at the University and in the possession of his family, secondary documentation, and communications with former colleagues. There are several sections. The first set are contextual and background: outlining a theoretical setting within the framework of the diffusion of planning ideas, brief historical background to NZ planning in the mid-1950s, and recounting Kennedy's early architectural career and his movement into planning. The second set commences with a restatement of his ideas mid-century. Then comes the move to New Zealand and refinement and extension of his knowledge attuned to local conditions and concerns.

## History

The establishment of the planning chair at Auckland was most immediately made possible through the philanthropy of a local businessman, Norman Spencer. But the campaign to institute tertiary training in planning extended back at least to the late 1940s. The small professional ranks were filled primarily by architects, surveyors and engineers, some of whom had undertaken arduous independent study for the British Town Planning Institute examinations.<sup>2</sup> In 1949 Wellington's Architectural Centre constituted a School of Town Planning which helped prepared students.<sup>3</sup> The New Zealand which Kennedy migrated to was clearly anxious to institutionalize town planning education. There was a need for training to catch up with the expectations embedded in the 1953 Town and Country Planning Act. But the New Zealand urban environment differed significantly from 'the mother country' requiring a reworking of British ideas. Whilst acknowledging a common spatial ideology based around modernist precepts of order, specialisation, efficiency and the like, New Zealand planning diverged from British planning in being less preoccupied with the problems occasioned by big city 'blitz and blight' and more concerned with tidying up the functionality of modest sized low density cities, the dominant scatter of small rural towns, preparing for regional development, and addressing the uniqueness of the physical environment.

## Contextualization

The diffusion of planning ideas is an established theme of planning and design history with numerous studies looking at agents, resistances, adaptations and outcomes often within the context

- 
- 1 Robert Freestone, "The Contributions of R.T. Kennedy to New Zealand Planning," in *UHPH\_14: Landscapes and Ecologies of Urban and Planning History: Proceedings of the 12th Australasian Urban History Planning History Conference*, ed. Morten Gjerde and Emina Petrovic (Wellington: Australasian Urban History / Planning History Group and Victoria University of Wellington), 147-61.
  - 2 Caroline Miller, *The Unsung Profession: A History of the New Zealand Planning Institute* (Wellington: Dunmore Publishing, 2007).
  - 3 John Wilson, ed., *Zeal and Crusade: The Modern Movement in Wellington* (Christchurch: Te Waihora Press, 1996). My thanks to Julia Gattley for information on this period.

of a transnational historic framework.<sup>4</sup> Sutcliffe deconstructs the international planning movement into a typology of cosmopolites, intermediaries, home-based planners willing to look abroad, and xenophobes.<sup>5</sup> Ward offers an expanded categorisation of processes on a spectrum from borrowing to imposition.<sup>6</sup> Healey and Upton push toward a more critical stance within the realm of policy transfer.<sup>7</sup> The approach in this paper draws more explicitly from the emphasis given by Nasr and Volait to “local mediations” and the negotiation of cultural, political, and environmental factors intervening in the reception of imported ideas.<sup>8</sup> This more nuanced positionality is enhanced through a biographical lens. The diminution of broader contextual foundation is compensated by insights into how individuals construct their own actions at the interface of personality and cultural environment.<sup>9</sup> A third patina is modernism and its international transfer and translation into diverse environments in the post-world war two period.<sup>10</sup>

## Career Moves

Kennedy was an architect before he became a planner. From 1923-25 he was articled to his father William Kennedy in Manchester. From 1925-35 he worked in the Manchester Corporation’s City Architect’s Department and studied part-time at the Manchester College of Technology and Municipal School of Art. He mainly prepared working drawings for diverse public structures also including libraries, police stations and bus garages. He applied for a succession of new positions through the early 1930s before securing a position as senior architectural assistant in the Chelmsford offices of Essex County Council. This brought new opportunities to work on schools, child welfare clinics, hostels and other public institutions. In 1937 he moved to Liverpool as senior architectural assistant to Lancelot Keay, the City Architect and Director of Housing. His “social conscience” prompted this move and he became involved in large scale slum clearance and redevelopment schemes in the form of multi-storey housing blocks unusual in England at that time.<sup>11</sup> At the beginning of the war Keay was approached by William Holford, then Lever Professor of Civic Design at the University of Liverpool, to release Kennedy to join him in supervising construction of a

---

4 Stephen V. Ward, Robert Freestone and Christopher Silver, “The ‘new’ planning history: reflections, issues and directions,” *Town Planning Review*, 82 (2011): 231-61.

5 Anthony Sutcliffe, *Towards the Planned City: Germany, Britain, the United States and France 1780-1914* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981).

6 Stephen V. Ward, *Planning the Twentieth-Century City: The advanced capitalist world* (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 2003).

7 Patsy Healey and Robert Upton, *Crossing Borders: International exchange and planning practices* (London: Routledge, 2010).

8 Joe Nasr and Mercedes Volait, eds. *Urbanism: Imported or Exported? Native Aspirations and Foreign Plans* (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2003).

9 Donald A. Krueckeberg, “Between Self and Culture or What Are Biographies of Planners About?,” *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 59 (1993): 217-20.

10 While architectural historiography in New Zealand is well served, the planning history literature is still developing. See Julia Gatley, *Long Live the Modern: New Zealand’s New Architecture, 1904-1984* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2008); Caroline L. Miller, “New Zealand’s planning history - quo vadis?,” *Planning Perspectives*, 13 (1998): 257-74.

11 Matthew Whitfield, “Multi-storey public housing in Liverpool during the inter-war years” (PhD diss., Manchester Metropolitan University, 2010).

new munitions factory in Kirkby. Successfully negotiating this logistical challenge, they joined forces again in association with Sir Alexander Gibb and Partners in the erection of hostels at Swynnerton to accommodate acute demands for war worker housing: “the most enjoyable, satisfying and rewarding job I ever had”, he later recalled.<sup>12</sup>

In February 1943 Kennedy’s career took a new direction when Holford facilitated his appointment to the “Planning Technique” division of the new Ministry for Town and Country Planning. The magnitude of the problems facing Britain were crystallised in a series of high level reports on national population distribution, rural development, and compensation and betterment. Devastation from German bombing exacerbated the challenges in the big cities. The Ministry has been portrayed as an idealistic space of hyperactivity during this period with ongoing plan, map and model making, research, meetings, and consultation.<sup>13</sup> Kennedy stayed on after the war to succeed Gordon Stephenson as Chief Planning Officer in 1949 and completed his service as Superintending Planner for New Towns in 1955 within a new Ministry of Housing and Local Government.

Planning Technique had no executive responsibilities but documented desired standards, techniques and practice in influential handbooks. Kennedy’s remit progressively expanded to advising on reconstruction of war-damaged cities, siting of and development plans for new towns, town centre design, and numerous county-level planning and housing proposals. He helped draft the first plan for Stevenage New Town. His later role saw him as head of technical staff in the central office in Whitehall and 11 regional divisions in England and Wales. Situated at the highest level of central government for over a decade, he worked alongside some of the best known names in mid-century British planning and design including not only Stephenson and Holford but also Thomas Sharp, Hugh Casson, Myles Wright, Colin Buchanan, Nathaniel Lichfield, Peter Shephard, Percy Johnson-Marshall and Ruth Glass.

By the mid-1950s Kennedy’s career was again at the crossroads. He said that he was “floundering, tied to being a town planner and a civil servant but uncertain as to whether I wanted to be either or both or neither”.<sup>14</sup> In the Ministry he became disillusioned by bureaucratic politics and had fallen out with senior colleagues. He could only see a bleak future “for men of constructive outlook” with diminished responsibilities for professional planners given the burden of “where so much of the job is financial, political or administrative”.<sup>15</sup> The strongest lure was teaming up again with Holford, by now Professor of Town Planning at University College, and still an active practitioner in architecture and civic design. Holford’s securing of a contract for a redevelopment strategy for the St Paul’s Cathedral precinct in April 1955 triggered departure from the civil service at the end of May 1955. The St Paul’s project proved a disappointment. Kennedy was critical of Holford’s design and the

---

12 R.T. Kennedy to Tony & Susan Cox, 4 December 1992. Kennedy Papers, courtesy Philip Kennedy, Christchurch.

13 R. Gordon Cummings, “Ministry of Beautiful Britain,” *Illustrated*, 26 May 1945, 14-17.

14 Kennedy to Jim Dart, 9 June 1980. Dart correspondence. Kennedy Papers (Christchurch).

15 Kennedy notes, after speaking with the Deputy Secretary, 28 April 1955. Kennedy Papers (Christchurch).

latter's imperviousness to advice. At a low ebb, the opportunity came to move to New Zealand. Holford wished him well with an influential reference, and while he had little experience with the academic world, an attendant right of private practice sweetened the deal.

## Planning Values in the Late-1940s and Mid-1950s

Kennedy left behind no major statements of the planning philosophy which guided him in Britain, but an understanding can be pieced together. He had been a journeyman public architect with no singular achievement to his name although the hostels work had dramatically revealed his organising and leadership abilities. His buildings were mostly utilitarian structures. There appear to be few engagements outside his day-to-day drafting and documentation, although taking on the secretaryship of the Manchester branch of the Design and Industries Association widened his contacts. The name which stands out above all others in his architect days is the leading modernist Maxwell Fry who wrote him a reference for the Liverpool job. Kennedy had commenced part-time studies for the Town Planning Institute (TPI) at Manchester (where he also worked on facilities for the "third garden city" of Wythenshawe) but had still not completed when he moved to Liverpool. His exposure came in other ways, including as joint honorary secretary to the Royal Institute of British Architect's Housing and Town and Country Planning Committees and subsequently its representative on the Council for the Preservation of Rural England. But essentially, his planning was most decisively shaped by his Ministry years. He wrote a substantive account of Ministry activities in 1949 but it says nothing of his personal involvements.<sup>16</sup>

As a senior planner in the civil service his ideas would have undoubtedly aligned to the main foundations of the British town and country planning system. These values were captured in a Town and Country Planning exhibition which toured Australia and New Zealand in 1948-49. It covered the redevelopment of central areas, metropolitan planning, regional planning and the development of New Towns. Indeed, Kennedy was part of the small committee which helped advise on the contents.<sup>17</sup> Elsewhere he viewed with alarm the drive toward over-development of city centres and endorsed the policy of planned decentralization and orderly neighbourhood planning.<sup>18</sup> He regarded new towns as "a remarkable planning achievement".<sup>19</sup> He believed in social justice and saw strong central government as a vehicle for counteracting tendencies towards uneven spatial development. Diverse authors had helped shaped his views: Lewis Mumford, William Lethaby, Clough Williams Ellis, Thomas Sharp, Gordon Stephenson, Patrick Abercrombie, but not Raymond Unwin (he described

---

16 R.T. Kennedy, "A Ministry for All Town Planning in England and Wales," *Traffic Quarterly* 3 (1949): 138-48.

17 British Council, *Town and Country Planning in Great Britain. An Exhibition organized by the British Council (Sydney: British Council, 1948)*.

18 R.T. Kennedy, "London: Is the Plan Working?," *Town and Country Planning*, December (1955): 559-63.

19 R.T. Kennedy, Notes for a Talk to Otahuhu Rotary Club, 23 June 1959, typescript, 4. Box 5, Kennedy Papers, University of Auckland.

Town Planning in Practice as “a curious amalgam of ideas”<sup>20</sup> or Patrick Geddes (“took himself too seriously for my liking”<sup>21</sup>). He remained circumspect about impractical idealism: “After 13 years as a Whitehall civil servant I became very sceptical, too much so perhaps, of what can be expected from idealistic planning. A theoretical future is so often at odds with immediate and practical solutions.”<sup>22</sup>

Just as with his architecture his major contributions in government planning appear to have been collaborative and administrative. He was part of the “galaxy of talent” that led British planning into the post-war period<sup>23</sup> although was far too self-deprecating to see himself in such terms despite being awarded the CBE in recognition of services to town and country planning in 1951. Yet planning at times frustrated and perplexed him. Even before leaving England he was beginning to criticize the cumbersomeness built into planning systems. Indeed he could see that part of the problem was the quality of planners themselves and had harsh words for his colleagues in the Ministry charged with implementing statutory controls. He described modern statutory plans as “such unmoving things”.<sup>24</sup> His Whitehall years left him thinking that not only were many initiatives over-planned but that the dividends rarely repaid the investment. After leaving the Ministry he reviewed Ian Nairn’s classic exposé of subtopian streetscapes, *Outrage*, for the *Town Planning Institute Journal* and came to the depressing conclusion of “an indictment of the ineffectual control of our environment” despite all the resources accorded to the planning system. This review articulates other values which would be sustained in New Zealand: a caution against the seemingly preferred solution of high density development and a plea for better design rather than more regulation in suburb, town and country.<sup>25</sup>

## Moving to New Zealand

Terry Kennedy arrived with his family in Auckland on 9 April 1957. Asked by a reporter for his immediate impressions, he offered a non-committal comment on the architecture (“the new buildings here are straightforward and sensible”) and invoked a classic British spatial planning strategy for dealing with the spreading city: “the ideal thing, of course, is to have separate self-contained communities somewhat like those which have been built outside London.”<sup>26</sup>

Someone so steeped in British planning orthodoxy was not going to change radically overnight and the foundation of Kennedy’s planning ideas would remain the time he spent in government in London. One indicator of this is his teaching when the new postgraduate diploma programme

---

20 R.T. Kennedy, “What is Town Planning,” Proceedings of a seminar, “Town Planning and its effect on our environment,” University of Waikato, 29-30 March 1969, 4.

21 Kennedy to Dart, 5 July 1979. Dart correspondence. Kennedy Papers (Christchurch).

22 R.T. Kennedy, “A backward and forward view of town planning,” *Planning Quarterly* September (1969): 14.

23 Stephen V. Ward, “Gordon Stephenson and the ‘galaxy of talent’: planning for post-war reconstruction, in Britain 1942-1947,” *Town Planning Review* 83 (2012): 279-296.

24 Kennedy, “London: Is the Plan Working?,” 560.

25 R.T. Kennedy, “The Planner Provoked or The Iniquities of Subtopia,” *Town Planning Institute Journal*, November (1955): 287-288.

26 “Auckland Buildings Have Something Those in U.K. Lack”, *New Zealand Herald*, 10 April 1957.

commenced in 1958. His two subjects were “Town Planning Theory and Techniques” and “Architecture as related to Town Planning”. The former course, co-taught with Gerhard Rosenberg, provided an historical preamble, a general review of social, economic and aesthetic factors, an introduction to different types of planning contexts (residential, industrial, central areas), and an orientation to institutional structures. The primary examples were from the United Kingdom: Stevenage, Coventry, Port Sunlight, and so on.

Even into the mid-1960s he would draw substantially from the British scene but added caveats for his New Zealand students: “The English standards of housing space are clearly not applicable to NZ conditions and I do not suppose the School standards, Buildings and Playing Fields are the same here as in the UK”.<sup>27</sup> To convey the realities of planning process, he would often tell stories about the politics of planning in Britain and how the Ministry had worked.

Dick Smyth recalls that for his Architecture course the main textbook was *Town Design* (1st edition, 1953) by Frederick Gibberd, the designer of Harlow.<sup>28</sup> In the 1960s there were design exercises interpreting the parameters laid out by London County Council for its proposed new town of Hook.<sup>29</sup> Other former students recall a strong anglocentric treatment. Bill Robertson, who remembers Kennedy as “an approachable learned person with certain English reserve”, notes that: “He did convey a strong sense of the 1940s and 1950s planning approach. We were taught about the 1947 UK planning act, new towns and classic architecture in UK and Europe.”<sup>30</sup> Kennedy tacitly acknowledged criticism that he was parlaying “just old-fashioned ideas from another country [...] not really applicable to New Zealand”.<sup>31</sup> Robert Riddell remembers that over time he became “more of a Kiwi” and the quality and relevance of his lectures picked up enormously.<sup>32</sup> That evolution is charted below.

## Translations

Before coming to New Zealand, Kennedy, an accidental planner now turned accidental academic, began his research on planning programmes at various British Universities. After his arrival he spent nearly a year consulting widely before launching the Auckland diploma as an interdisciplinary post-professional qualification. That experience obviously attuned him to “local mediations”. His later consultancies for the Auckland Harbour Board on a downtown redevelopment project and Wellington City Council on a motorway, civic centre and sundry other matters further grounded him in the New

---

27 Department of Town Planning, “Town Planning Theory”, Lecture No 9, The Neighbourhood Unit. Box 5, Kennedy Papers, University of Auckland.

28 Dick Smyth, e-mail message to author, 14 November 2011.

29 London County Council, *The Planning of a New Town. Data and Design based on a study for a New Town at Hook, Hampshire* (London County Council, 1961).

30 Bill Robertson, e-mail message to author, 20 July 2011.

31 Michael Pritchard, interview with the author, Auckland, 8 August 2012.

32 Robert Riddell, e-mail message to author, 27 June 2011.

Zealand way of doing things.<sup>33</sup> His inaugural professorial address in March 1958 reveals an incipient appreciation of the local scene and the challenges posed by increasing car ownership, tourism, and uncoordinated development. He had already perceived a divide between the clarity of the original town grids and the “mere agglomerations of buildings” growing up within them. The bigger message was more generic and captures his own roots as a practical architect-planner with its emphasis on purposeful and strategic environmental design at every scale to ensure “creation of a physical environment conducive to better living”. Also there are themes he would return to time and again in endorsing planning that was holistic, co-operative, common-sensical, and not “compromised by legal complexities”.<sup>34</sup>

Upon retirement in 1969 Kennedy reflected upon the major differences which struck him between Britain and New Zealand: a different, more exploitative attitude to the land; the scale of public works included in planning schemes; the small size and large number of local authorities; and the over-codification of planning ordinances.<sup>35</sup> The later issue became apparent within weeks of his arrival. While acknowledging its good intentions, he criticized the 1953 planning legislation on many grounds: overly prescriptive regulations; absence of triggers for public inquiry on controversial matters; no requirement for documentation and exhibition of advanced strategic planning; and inability to keep pace with emerging planning issues. This put him offside with the Ministry of Works but, as in all matters of principle, he stuck to his guns and became a vocal advocate of constructive not restrictive planning.<sup>36</sup>

As Kennedy gained a greater grasp of New Zealand problems he began to more confidently distance himself from the solutions of his past. He further criticised the 1953 Act as based too closely on the British experiences. The same extensive derelict industrial lands, scale of slum housing, and regional imbalance of economic opportunity were not replicated in New Zealand.<sup>37</sup> Notes for a lecture in his “Town Planning Theory” course provide a concise statement of the position he had reached by 1965:

It is, I think, a mistake to look for exact parallels in other countries to justify our town planning approach, legislation and practice. The economic and social conditions that have created almost insuperable problems in the building and rebuilding of cities and the development of agricultural and mineral resources in older countries have not been paralleled in this country to anything like the same extent. We have our own social, economic and aesthetic problems to solve and should find solutions to them in our own way, solutions that are politically acceptable and suited to the way of life we have decided to follow.<sup>38</sup>

---

33 On his Auckland waterfront project see: Dennis Smith, “A Short History of The Sixties Downtown,” *Architecture NZ*, March/April (2013): 25-37.

34 R.T. Kennedy, “Design in Environment,” *Journal of the NZ Institute of Architects (NZIA Journal)* April (1958): 59-68.

35 Kennedy, “A backward and forward view of town planning,” 12-16.

36 R.T. Kennedy, “Constructive and Restrictive Town Planning,” *NZIA Journal August* (1957): 171-76.

37 Department of Town Planning, “Town Planning Theory,” 2<sup>nd</sup> term, May 31, 1965. Box 5, Kennedy Papers, University of Auckland.

38 Department of Town Planning, “Town Planning Theory,” 4. Box 5, Kennedy Papers, University of Auckland.

The same point was reiterated even more strongly in a major public address three years later, in this instance referring specifically to urban renewal. Because New Zealand did not have the same nature or at least scale of problems as abroad, it was simply “absurd to look to US city housing and planning precedents”.<sup>39</sup> In the same lecture to the New Zealand Geographical Society he also conveys an explicit reversal of his previous support for high density living which would have gone back at least to his work at Liverpool in the late 1930s: “I have in the course of my life as a planner had to overcome many of my initial architectural prejudices in favour of closely built-up cities and to recognise that I cannot find anything inherently wrong in the ‘Cult of the Quarter Acre’.”<sup>40</sup> He saw higher density living as compromising living standards. By 1973 having retired from practice he was more emphatic in a letter to Steen Eiler Rasmussen: “I have never been an enthusiast for high density housing”.<sup>41</sup>

While shifting his views on density, he nevertheless became a prominent critic of suburban sprawl and joined in the public debate emerging by the late 1950s. The Architectural Centre’s travelling exhibition on “Homes without Sprawl” in 1957-59 captured this mood and Kennedy addressed an Auckland showing in May 1959.<sup>42</sup> In a series of radio talks for the NZ Broadcasting Service on “The Cult of the Quarter Acre” in 1962, he expanded on the problems of regimented and ruthless subdivision processes; destruction of trees; sterilisation of good agricultural land; futurist housing design; and the overall absence of any genuine integrated community planning. He concurred with the visiting architectural critic Nikolaus Pevsner that New Zealand towns and cities presented “an ingratiating chaos”.<sup>43</sup> He put it more bluntly: they were “in physical terms, a mess”.<sup>44</sup>

Traffic congestion was a related issue which he addressed in many public lectures and through his own design consultancies. He regarded the impact of the car on the built and social environments of New Zealand cities as far more of a problem than the urban renewal with which he was more familiar in England. Apart from encouraging better public transport - and in Auckland he saw that lying in a better bus network than the expensive rapid transit propounded by American transport engineers De Leuw Cather in the mid-1960s - his own solutions ran to articulating specialized spaces and circulation systems for different mobility needs with traffic-free pedestrian precincts a necessity. This was the progressive orthodoxy of the classic *Traffic in Towns* (1963) by Colin Buchanan, his former colleague from the Ministry days. They hooked up again in 1966 when Buchanan toured New Zealand. “Our towns will need to be adapted, transformed, perhaps even be turned inside out”, Kennedy wrote.<sup>45</sup>

---

39 R.T. Kennedy, *Planning and the Public Interest. J.T. Stewart Lecture in Planning No 2.* (Manawatu: New Zealand Geographical Society, 1968), 17.

40 Kennedy, *Planning and the Public Interest*, 18-19.

41 Kennedy to Steen Eiler Rasmussen, 30 April 1973. Typescript letter, 4. Kennedy Papers (Christchurch).

42 Lesleigh Salinger, “A Breath of Fresh Air: The Architectural Centre Inc.,” in *Zeal and Crusade*, ed. Wilson, 76-77; Kennedy, Notes for a Talk, Opening of Exhibition, ‘Homes without Sprawl.’ Auckland, 21 May 1959. Box 15, Kennedy Papers, University of Auckland.

43 Kennedy, “The Cult of The Quarter Acre”, Typescript notes, three talks, June 1962. Kennedy Papers, Christchurch, accessed June 2012.

44 Kennedy, *Planning and the Public Interest*, 3.

45 R.T. Kennedy, “Buchanan in New Zealand,” *New Zealand Local Government*, March (1966): 4.

## Conclusion

This paper has explored the translation of modern town planning ideas from Britain to New Zealand in the post-war years through a study of the career of Terry Kennedy. Enlisted because of his knowledge of the British planning system, the next 10 years were spent in adapting this expertise to new circumstances - "local mediations" of different kinds - cultural, institutional, environmental and economic. The biographical lens records shifts in his thoughts and preoccupations - the "toil between freedom and fate"<sup>46</sup> - to shed light on continuities and discontinuities in his planning and design ideas.

Kennedy never regretted the many physical moves he made in his career, even the massive move to New Zealand comparatively late in life. He never quite reconciled to the local landscape. In contrast to the places he knew well - Derbyshire, Wales, The Lakes District, rural Essex - he could never "suppress an inner feeling of the rawness in NZ towns and countryside".<sup>47</sup> He frequently pondered his relationship with Holford because it changed his life completely at critical junctures. Becoming an academic was not in the original career script but he seized the opportunity to continue his career in the antipodes, widening his "own understanding of the world around", and relishing the free-ranging commentary which academia afforded.<sup>48</sup> He was ambivalent about leaving architecture: "the smell of new buildings, timber, concrete and paint has never ceased to excite me and the smell of ink and tracing paper is still heaven".<sup>49</sup> And in later life he became disillusioned with planning, especially as it transitioned from an instrument of the welfare state to a tool of neo-liberal rationalism. The Resource Management Act in 1991 struck him as overly complex, but by then he was no longer closely connected to the professional ranks. He is nonetheless remembered, by those who knew him, as a decent, ethical and fearless advocate for positive, flexible, strategic and design-driven planning. Michael Pritchard remembers him as an inspiring "battler" rather than an establishment figure; someone who was not afraid to critique orthodoxy and fight for what he felt was right in professional and personal terms.<sup>50</sup> His "translation" was a challenging and worthwhile one: "though he learnt his planning in England he [had] a sensitivity and generosity that enabled him to respond quickly and willingly to NZ and to the demands we made of him."<sup>51</sup>

## Acknowledgements

My particular thanks to Philip Kennedy, Mike Pritchard, Robert Riddell, Dick Smyth, and the referees in the drafting of this paper.

---

46 Krueckeberg, "Between Self and Culture", 219.

47 Kennedy to Gordon Stephenson, "Disillusion in Town Planning and Architecture." Box 1, Kennedy Papers, University of Auckland.

48 Kennedy, "A backward and forward view of town planning," 16.

49 R.T. Kennedy, "A Scolding for Architects," *NZIA Journal*, May (1964), 112.

50 Pritchard, interview, 8 August 2012.

51 Nancy Northcroft, "Professor Kennedy retires," *Town Planning Quarterly*, September (1969): 11.