



MOUNT ALBERT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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The Inspirational Basil Hooper

Who? I hear you ask. Who is Basil Hooper?

Although his name is little known in Auckland, Basil Hooper was the architect of six iconic Art and Craft dwellings in Mt Albert that are still in use as desirable family homes today, built between the years of 1924 -1938. He also remodelled St Luke's Church in Mt Albert in 1945.

But let us begin at the beginning. Basil was born in Lahore, India in 1876 and his parents who were Church of England missionaries in India, sent nine year old Basil and his brothers to seek a better life in Cambridge New Zealand in the care of his Aunt Bessie.

A year later Basil's mother died of malaria in Lucknow, so his father William and sister joined the rest of the family in Cambridge. In 1887 William took up an appointment at St Lukes Church in Mt Albert - a church that his son Basil had a hand in remodelling half a century later. Basil wanted to be an architect and boarded in Dunedin for four years under the guidance of Louis Salmond. Basil then decided to travel to England to study and gain experience in work. He arrived back in Dunedin in 1904 aged 28 with a RIBA¹ qualification and set up his own architectural office. In 1909 Hooper married Edith Jessie Seldon and they had three children together, Aston, Joan and Sylvia. From 1916 to 1921 Hooper taught at the Dunedin School of Art's Department of Architectural



Basil Bramston Hooper (1876-1960), architect March 1908
Morris, John Richard, 1854-1919.
Edwards, Joy: Photograph of Basil Bramston Hooper, 1876-1960.
Ref: 1/2-197527 -
E Alexander Turnbull Library,
Wellington, New Zealand.
<http://natlib.govt.nz/records/23024841>

History and Design, and held several offices in the New Zealand Institute of Architects.

He designed houses in Dunedin, Timaru and Otago before he shifted his family to Auckland in early 1923 to go into practice with J W Rough. Hooper's buildings achieve harmony and balance despite quite complex roof geometry and varied fenestration. The interiors are well lit and airy as he always made the most of available sun and view.³ Unlike some Arts and Crafts architects, Hooper felt 'a little ornament is a good thing...' as long as it was appropriately scaled and the outcome of this belief is clearly visible in many of his designs. Hooper used a number of decorative motifs throughout his career that – along with certain particulars of planning – are used to identify Hooper's work around New Zealand.

Hooper's houses stand out as a happy meld of Arts and Crafts principles and the realities of middleclass living in the early 20th century.

Hooper's status amongst his peers was demonstrated by the life membership of the NZIA² conferred at his retirement and the glowing obituary upon his death in 1960. The eulogy included a simple and memorable description of Hooper's architecture "There was always motif and beauty in his work."⁴

The Mt Albert Houses of Basil Hooper

1924, 40 Kitenui Avenue, Built for J. T. Wallett. Built in the same year, and across the road from the Oakfield Avenue House. Its entry porch 'articulation' is a very good example of how Hooper reduced the entry to human scale by using a low, stepped roof and the wooden brackets to reduce the apparent height of the supporting walls. The diamond shaped windows are one of Hooper's hallmarks in the North Island. I adored this house the first time I saw it and became a Hooper fan from then on.



1925, 7 Ferner Avenue, built for journalist Daniel Holland.

His children, John Holland the Empire Games 400m hurdler and his sister Joan, educationalist and future principal of St Cuthberts, grew up in this house. The wooden 1500sq feet L shaped bungalow has a relatively steeply pitched, corrugated iron roof. It is weatherboard with vertical board and batten and has the diagonal bay windows Hooper liked to use in his designs. Allan Ferguson purchased the house from the Hollands in 1974 and has lived there ever since making him only the second owner. The house has great ambience and Allan says it is a comfortable house that he has continued to improve upon through the years and was the most sensible investment he ever made.



¹ Royal Institute of British Architect

³ Motif and Beauty by Ralph Allen p16

² NZ Institute of Architects

⁴ Motif and Beauty by Ralph Allen p14



watercolour of 2 oakfield c 1972



2 oakfield today

1924, 2 Oakfield Avenue, built for C Lambourne. One of Basil Hooper's first buildings in Auckland. This watercolour of no 2 as it was originally designed, was commissioned by the then owners Mr & Mrs R Culpan after they purchased the property in 1972. It clearly shows the hallmarks of Basil Hooper buildings in the front entry, the semi-circular bow window and the diagonal bay windows. It is built of brick with heavy half-timbered gable ends. A top story with the matching gable was added by the Culpan family during their ownership. (see above)



42 Allendale Road

1926, 42 Allendale Road, built for A.D Lambourne (relative of C. Lambourne of 2 Oakfield Avenue) this house has a classic Hooper motif: a diagonal bay window seen as a pair of oriel windows abutting the ends of adjacent walls.⁵ This is an example of a standard mid to late 1920s bungalow with Hooper details superimposed. Hooper developed and refined rectangular bungalows with simple low pitched roofs and the majority of his known buildings in Auckland are single storeyed and despite their common Hooper motifs, their designs vary greatly in style.⁶

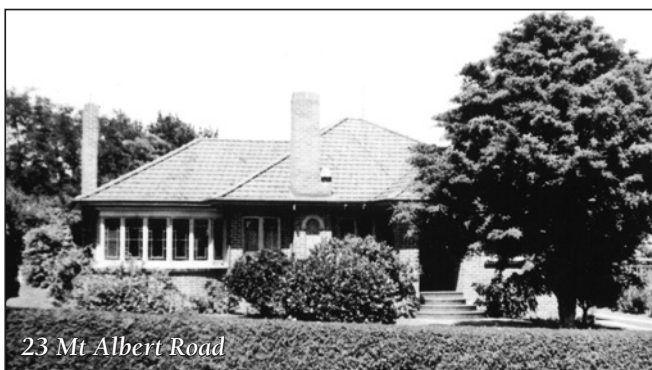
1929, 5 Summit Drive, built for S Takle. This is one of the few double storied houses Hooper designed in Auckland and is typical of the type of house he was well known for in Dunedin. This photo taken a few years after the house was built shows its original Hooper design details of human scale entry fenestration, bow windows and harmony of balance. More recently it has been extended on the right side.



5 Summit Drive 1930's



5 Summit Drive Today



23 Mt Albert Road

1938, 23 Mt Albert Road, built for S Takle. This is Hooper's second commission for his client Mr Takle whose wife's asthma necessitated the move to the flatter land of 23 Mt Albert Road, subdivided from the Brooks land at 25 Mt Albert Road. The chimneys on the outside walls are typical Arts and Crafts. The semi-circular entrance arch is supported on corbel-like mouldings as is the detail on the chimney. It is his last known house in Auckland and as such it is a rare glimpse of his reluctant response to the onslaught of modernism and an indication that he continued developing his ability to acknowledge a client's domestic environment and provide for their needs without abandoning the precepts that had guided his career.⁷

Apart from 13 other residential houses in Auckland, Basil Hooper also designed commercial, industrial and other buildings such as the Summit Building in Wellesley Street in 1924; Pembridge Flats/dance studio 38 Symonds Street in 1926, both of which are now apartments and in 1925 Alliance Assurance Co offices at 5 O'Connell Street. He also built the YWCA hostel in Queen Street in 1926 which has since been demolished.

To consider a walk to see the houses in Mt Albert as they are today, check out Local Walk no 9 as described by C Boswell in MAHS newsletter no 9, April 2009.

Go to MAHS website <http://www.mtalberthistoricalsociety.org.nz/Newsletters.php>

⁵ Motif and Beauty by Ralph Allen p18

⁶ Motif and Beauty by Ralph Allen p22

⁷ Motif and Beauty by Ralph Allen p97

M.A.H.S Dates To Remember

August 27, 2016 (Saturday) 2pm. Ferndale House 830 New North Road, Mt Albert.

Mt Albert Historical Society Annual General Meeting. Business to be followed by our speaker Mr Edward Bennett Architectural Designer and Historian, whose topic will be “The Architectural Heritage of Victorian Houses.”

September 6, 2016 (Tuesday) 3 – 5pm. Ferndale House 830 New North Road, Mt Albert.

Book Launch of “Mt Albert Then and Now” EXCLUSIVE to all members of the Mt Albert Historical Society, platinum donation members and VIP’s. Come and be part of this joyous occasion. PLEASE NOTE RSVP’S MUST BE IN BY AUGUST 15 to Judith 8176279 / judith.goldie@xtra.co.nz or Mary 8464509 / maryinomata@gmail.com Refreshments will be served.

October 2, 2016 (Sunday) 1.30pm – 4.30pm. Ferndale House 830 New North Road, Mt Albert.

Public launch of the book to the wider community.

October 8, 2016 (Saturday) 2pm. Ferndale House 830 New North Road, Mt Albert.

The Reverend Dr Richard Waugh QSM Speaks on “ Pioneer Airlines of NZ”. Richard’s father was one of the very first commercial pilots in New Zealand. All welcome. \$2 entry.

November 27, 2016 (Sunday) 2.30pm – 4.30pm. Ferndale House 830 New North Road, Mt Albert.

Christmas afternoon tea party open to members only. \$15 pp

Congratulations to Mt Albert resident Dr Tom Miller (MAHS Newsletter April 2016) on his recent Queens Birthday honour as a Companion of the NZ Order of Merit. Sixty years of medical research and publication of more than 140 works. Well done Tom!

Indomitable Women of Mt Albert

The Oxford and Cambridge dictionaries define an indomitable woman as “one who is strong and brave and impossible to subdue or defeat as their strength comes from within.”

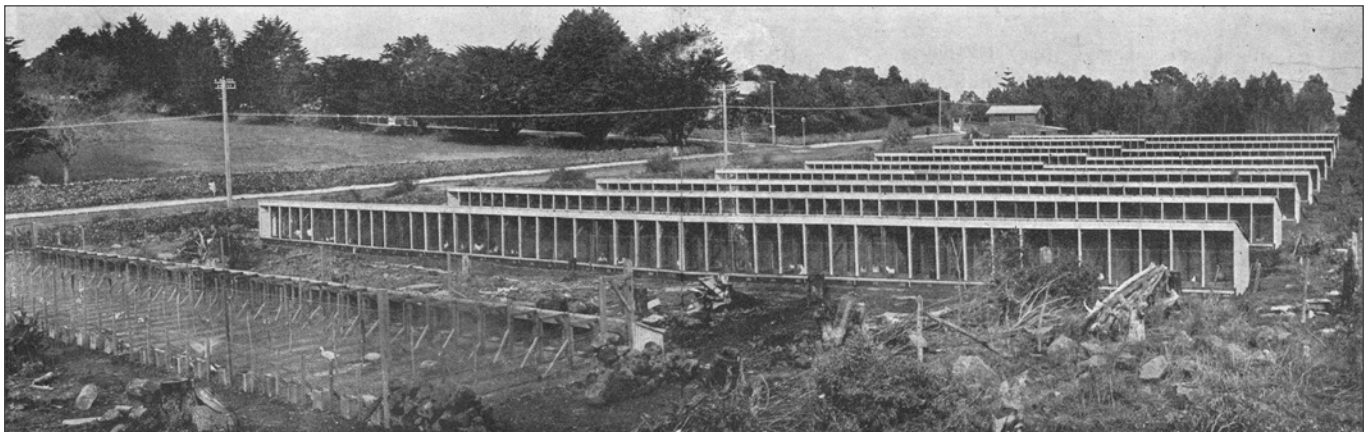
These are the qualities that our women of Mt Albert have needed through years of hard work and deprivation (especially if their husbands died earlier than expected), through multiple pregnancies, through wars, depressions and injustices.

Over the next few issues we will be writing of Mt Albert women who have made a difference over the years, both locally and nationally, in making Mt Albert and New Zealand a better place for us all.

The Auckland Weekly News Thursday May 8th, 1919

“Fostering the poultry industry in New Zealand: The elaborate competition pens of the Auckland Poultry Association which were recently constructed at Mt Albert at a cost of about £1000.”

The site of the pens was on the corner of New North and Woodward Roads approximately where the BP petrol station now stands. The road running from left to right in the photo is New North Road. The road running across the back of the photo behind the trees is Richardson Road to the left and Woodwood Road to the right.



MT ALBERT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

Indomitable Women of Mt Albert

ALICE WYLIE QSM JP



Alice Wylie at home June 2016

Alice Wylie is the embodiment of the word “indomitable”. Despite being widowed at an early age with daughters still to raise and being far from her family network of Nelson, she nevertheless pitched in to make her adopted hometown

of Mt Albert a place where people mattered.

So where did this altruism start?

Emily Alice Brent, the youngest of four girls, was born in Nelson to a family rich with the tradition of service to the community. Her great-grand father on the Browning side, Jonathon Samuel Browning was Mayor of Oxford (1841 -1842). It was clearly a tasking position as when nominated again in 1848 he declined to serve “as the role took too much time” and was fined £60 for declining. Alice’s other great-grand father, James Ransom was an Alderman (a high-ranking member of a borough in England chosen by and from the elected members) for Ipswich.

Alice attended Nelson Girls College and met and married Geoffrey Wylie. He was a professional soldier but an army mishap during his service, resulted in his being invalided out of the army to seek a new career with the Post and Telegraph Department after the war. Later Geoffrey was offered a promotion in Auckland and was joined by Alice and their two daughters, leaving all family support behind. Alice was welcomed to Mt Albert by the then Mayoress Clarice Anderson, and invited to join the various community groups and committees that Clarice had put in place. This helped Alice assuage the loneliness of being in an unknown town and gave her support when Geoffrey died unexpectedly.

The incident that made Alice stand for Mt Albert Borough Council in the early 60’s, was the instability of the water tower at the top of Mt Albert near La Veta Avenue. In Alice’s words: “I said something should be done, so they said why don’t you go on council and make them. So I did.”

Alice won the day and huge rocks were put there to shore up the land. Sometime later Alice was called by one of residents to say there was a bulldozer there taking away the rocks. The resident told the workers “I’ll tell Mrs Wylie and she’ll fix you!”

Which she did! Alice stood in front of the bulldozer and told them “you’ve got to stop” and they did. (*In an aside, from then on the same man whenever he was concerned about local injustices would say to the offender “I’ll tell Mrs Wylie and she’ll fix you”.*)

I wish we could have that confidence in our local body reps today don’t you?

Alice had many appointments over the years including: a Judicial JP on Preliminary Hearings at Auckland District Court (and was the first woman on the Court Panel), Chair of the State Housing Committee, the Real Estate Licensing Board, 25 years and a life member of the Auckland Institute and Museum Council, the ASB Trust Board and of course Mt Albert Borough/City Councillor for 27 years, Chairman of the Mt Albert Library Committee and Deputy Mayor of Mt Albert City.

The rezoning of land to stop lovely old properties being replaced by sausage flats as the old people died off was the accomplishment for the people of Mt Albert, that Alice was most proud of. She had noted after seeing this happening, that under current bylaws all of Mt Albert could be broken up in this way. Alice introduced this into council and with support from Councillor Brian Corban and not without some disagreement as to desirability, the Mt Albert Borough Council altered the zoning to protect this area from subdivision into smaller sections.¹

Alice has been a great role model for all women over the years. She is gracious and warm and has never lost interest in local body issues and the welfare of the people of Mt Albert. Truly an indomitable woman whose strength comes from within!

Mary Inomata July 2016



MT. ALBERT BOROUGH COUNCIL
1962 - 1965

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Town Clerk M. C. Ensor	Councillor Mrs. E. A. Wylie	Councillor G. N. Kenny, J.P.	His Worship the Mayor F. G. Turner	Deputy Mayor D. G. Croot	Councillor Mrs. N. J. Canning, J.P.	Borough Supervisor G. K. Jackson

¹ from an interview with Alice Wylie June 2016