

Historic Heritage Evaluation

Sutch-Smith House
79a Todman Street, Brooklyn



August 2020

Historic Heritage Evaluation

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Contents

Contents	3
Executive Summary	4
Summary Statement of Significance	5
Purpose.....	5
Scope.....	5
Heritage Inventory Report	6
Site Detail.....	6
Historical Summary	7
Photographs and Images	11
Chronologies and Timelines.....	12
Timeline of events, including modifications	12
Occupation history	12
Biographies	12
Plans and Elevations.....	17
Physical Description.....	17
Comparative Analysis Summary	19
Evaluation Criteria	19
Recommendations	24
Extent of the Place	24
Sources and References.....	24
Appendices	27
Appendix 1 Comparative Analysis.....	28
Appendix 2 Wellington Thematic Heritage Study 2013	33



Executive Summary

The Sutch-Smith House at 79a Todman Street, Brooklyn, was evaluated because it was nominated for listing by the Brooklyn Local History Group and the Architectural Centre as part of their submission for District Plan Changes 53 and 58, and by Docomomo as part of their submission for DPC 53. It has not been listed on the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga New Zealand Heritage List.

The house, built in 1953-56, is considered to be architect Ernst Plischke's best and most original New Zealand house. The house is an expression of international Modern Movement principles in a New Zealand setting, including rectilinear forms, a flat roof, weatherboard exterior, open plan layout, large areas of glazing and sliding doors to facilitate a relationship between interior and exterior living spaces. As described by art historian Linda Tyler, the house 'eloquently encapsulates Plischke's whole intent to express lightness and transparency through structural daring'.

The house is also notable as the home of two of New Zealand's most prominent citizens of the second half of the twentieth century; Shirley Smith, human rights campaigner, heritage advocate and lawyer, and her husband William (Bill) Sutch, economist, public servant and intellectual. The house was sensitively restored in 2002 and is still occupied by members of the family at the time of writing (2020).

Plischke is recognised as having a significant influence on the development of architecture and design in New Zealand, particularly through his work on private residences. The Sutch-Smith house was nationally and internationally recognised as Plischke's finest New Zealand domestic design soon after it was built. The house was awarded an NZIA Enduring Architecture Award in 2004, and the restoration project was awarded a NZIA Heritage and Conservation Award in the same year.

The Sutch-Smith House is recommended for scheduling in the District Plan and requires a site visit to establish the extent of significant features, including any landscaping or interior fixtures or fittings.

Summary Statement of Significance

- The Sutch-Smith House has national significance as part of the work of Ernst Plischke, an Austrian architect active in New Zealand between 1939 and 1963. Plischke is recognised as having a significant influence on the development of architecture and design in New Zealand, particularly through his work on private residences.
- The Sutch-Smith House also has national significance for its association with its former owners, William Sutch and Shirley Smith. William Sutch was one of New Zealand's most significant economists, intellectuals and public servants, even though his later career was overshadowed by an espionage trial and acquittal. Shirley Smith was a significant human rights campaigner, heritage advocate and lawyer.
- The Sutch-Smith House is held in high public esteem and recognised nationally and internationally by architectural scholars as Plischke's finest and most influential house design in New Zealand. His interpretation and development of Modernism in the New Zealand context in an expert and consummate manner is exemplified in the Sutch-Smith House. His command of the style and his skills as an architect is evident in the planning, form, detailing and use of materials with which he has created a design that seamlessly integrates exterior and interior, while juxtaposing solid and void, substantial and delicate, diagonal and horizontal.
- Plischke's house designs are rare as an early use of the Modern Movement style, excellence of design and response to the site and landscape, paralleling similar developments in the style in the San Francisco Bay Area. The Sutch-Smith House is particularly rare given that it is considered the best-known and most significant example of his work.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to consider the Sutch-Smith House located at 79a Todman Street, Brooklyn, against Wellington City Council's criteria for evaluation of historic heritage for inclusion in the District Plan heritage schedules.

The document has been prepared by Ian Bowman on the specific instructions of our client, Wellington City Council. It is intended solely for the use by Wellington City Council in accordance with the agreed scope of work.

Scope

This report is a desktop study and the house has been visited from the street only.



Heritage Inventory Report

Site Detail	
Site address or address(es) and/or location	79a Todman Street
Property Name	Sutch-Smith House
Other names	Sutch House
Legal Description(s) and Record of Title identifier(s), Deeds register and/or Gate notice information	Lot 3 DP 7218, Part Lot 4 DP 3521 and Part Lot 5 DP 7128, subj to and int in Row DP 53157 and int in Row DP 85078 Record of Title: WN667/38
NZTM grid reference	Google grid reference (not converted) = 41°18'27.0"S 174°45'34.8"E -41.307497, 174.759666
District Plan Reference Number	None
Sites of significance to Māori	None
WCC Heritage Area	None
HNZPT listed	Not listed
HNZPT category	None
Archaeological site (Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014, Section 6)	Unknown
New Zealand Archaeological Association (NZAA) site record number(s)	None
Constructed	1953-1956
Significant alterations or additions	Restoration in 2002
Architect	Ernst Plischke
Builder	
Former uses	House
Current uses	House
Earthquake-prone Building Status at the date of assessment.	



Plischke was originally employed by the Department of Housing Construction where he worked with other European immigrants, particularly on multiple-unit state housing, and later on towns and community centres. In 1947 Plischke resigned from the Department and went into work with Cedric Firth, finding success and acclaim designing private residences and churches.

In the early 1950s, Plischke was commissioned to design a house by William (Bill) Sutch, economist, public servant and intellectual, and his wife Shirley Smith, human rights campaigner and lawyer. It was a difficult hillside site, a challenge Plischke embraced, and construction lasted from 1953-1956. Linda Tyler wrote that with Sutch and Smith he 'finally found a client as interested in design as he was'. Sutch paid Plischke a salary for a year while he worked on the design, rather than the standard arrangement of paying the architect a percentage of the overall cost. The resulting house is considered his best and most innovative house in New Zealand.²

Shirley Smith discussed the house and its genesis with art historian Linda Tyler. She recalled 'We all three (Plischke, Smith and Sutch) worked on the architectural conception and the detailed plans: and we accepted it with enthusiasm. It was a very harmonious cooperation'. She insisted on an open fireplace when learning that there was not one planned – this bluestone fireplace was to become an important feature of the house, its materials matching that of the outdoor terrace. Despite her memories of harmony in the design process, she also stated that she felt excluded from much of the later decision-making about the house, and resented Plischke and Sutch's desire to build a masterpiece.³

Sutch and Smith had one child, a daughter Helen, who grew up in the house from around the age of 11. For many years the house was known as the 'Sutch House', which Shirley Smith disagreed with as she herself had not changed her name on marriage (a decision for which she was well-known at the time), and because her money had been used to fund the construction.⁴ Smith also recalled that Sutch, wanting more storage space, dug out some of the hillside underneath the house, much to Plischke's horror. Smith recalled that council tramway tracks were used to shore up the house.⁵

² Linda Tyler, 'Ernst Plischke: Architect', City Gallery Wellington, 2004, <https://citygallery.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/EEP2.pdf>; Linda Tyler, 'Sutch House (also known as the Sutch-Smith House)', in *Long Live the Modern: New Zealand's New Architecture 1904-1984*, ed. Julia Gatley (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2008), pp.74-75.

³ Shirley Smith to Linda Tyler, School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury, 29 May 1984, quoted in Sarah Gaitanos, *Shirley Smith: An Examined Life* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2019), pp.224-5, 238-9.

⁴ Sarah Gaitanos, *Shirley Smith: An Examined Life*, p.239.

⁵ *Ibid*, p.225.

A garden plan for the site was designed by notable New Zealand landscape architect Mary Lysaght, one of New Zealand's first landscape architects to train overseas, although how much of this scheme was implemented in reality is currently unclear.⁶ As Sutch was so involved in the construction and planting of the garden, it seems likely that he altered the plans to suit his section. The writer Keith Ovenden, who later married Helen and lived in the house, wrote of the garden construction:

It sometimes seems as if a whole generation of male students and youthful public servants have recalled to me, over the years, their pleasure at being invited to labour on the site of the Ernst Plischke-designed house...Hugh Price, later a distinguished publisher, remembered unloading and hauling gravel; Rod Alley, later a university lecturer, wielded a pick and shovel; Fergus McLean, later a New Zealand trade commissioner, along with other young recruits from the Department of Industries and Commerce, helped to mix concrete and haul building materials; while Shirley grubbed gorse and laid on the lunchtime sandwiches...

Some probably found the tasks a burdensome intrusion on their weekends, but all those I have spoken to have grateful memories of working beside this knowledgeable, greatly experienced man who was eager to impart what he had learned, and knew how to nurture and sustain their interest.⁷

Bill Sutch died in 1975, and Shirley remained on in the house for almost another three decades. In 1984 she replaced the upper level roof, which leaked. In the same year, however, while she was overseas, the roof failed, causing major damage to the house and many of the important items inside, including the huge collection of Smith and Sutch papers held in the house. Shirley lived in the house until 2002, at which time she moved into a smaller home, and the house was sensitively restored by architect Alistair Luke, and the garden re-landscaped. Her daughter and son in law continue to live in the home at the time of writing (2020).⁸

The Sutch-Smith House is one of over 40 houses designed by Plischke during his time in New Zealand. A number of themes explored in Plischke's houses can be seen in the Sutch/Smith House. These include extensive glazing particularly emphasising views, flowing spaces, horizontality, the use of contrasting materials such as stone, weatherboards and steel, stairways creating open volumes, interplay of exterior and interior, a strong relationship with the site, and the creation of courtyard spaces. A number of these themes were universal to the Modern Movement, particularly as expressed by Adolf Loos who was highly respected by

⁶ 'Gardening – Mary Lysaght Plans', ref: 96-145-2/09, Alexander Turnbull Library.

⁷ Keith Ovenden, *Bill and Shirley: A Memoir* (Massey University Press, 2020 [forthcoming]), p.22.

⁸ The story of the flood is told in Sarah Gaitanos, *Shirley Smith: An Examined Life*, pp.381-6, 434-35.

Plischke, but were particularly emphasised in the San Francisco Bay Area style of architects, such as Rudolph Schindler and Richard Neutra.

While there are similarities with Plischke's other Wellington houses, his command of the style and his skills as an architect are particularly evident in the planning, form, detailing and use of materials in the Sutch-Smith House. His design seamlessly integrates exterior and interior, while juxtaposing solid and void, substantial and delicate, diagonal and horizontal. Plischke's exploration of the Modern Movement in the New World was remarkably aligned with architects practising in the San Francisco Bay Area, such as Rudolph Schindler and Richard Neutra, who also had a concern for integrating site, landscape, building, view and sun, all of which are epitomised in the Sutch-Smith House.

Although visibility of the house from the street is limited, Plischke's design has significant townscape values as it enhances the natural landscape qualities by both reinforcing and contrasting the built and natural forms around it. The landscape qualities of the house were recognised by painter and author Peter McIntyre, who compared it with an Italian mountain house that seems to grow naturally out of the hill.⁹

The Sutch-Smith House was featured in a special edition of the *Architectural Review* (London) in October 1959 on Commonwealth countries, edited by Niklaus Pevsner, and in the December 1960 edition of the *Australian House and Garden* magazine. The house was awarded an NZIA Enduring Architecture Award in 2004, and the restoration work was awarded a NZIA Heritage and Conservation Award in the same year.

In 2013, a thematic heritage study of Wellington city was undertaken by the Wellington City Council's Heritage team. Themes in the history of the city that have shaped it physically, culturally, socially and politically were identified. Plischke houses were identified by the thematic study as an example of places that represent "World War II and post-war refugees and migrants (e.g. Polish & British children, Greeks, other Europeans)."¹⁰ Using this study, a thematic heritage analysis of Council's scheduled heritage listings was undertaken in order to identify under-represented themes.

This analysis was continued in 2020 and heritage sites that had been proposed for

⁹ August Sarntiz and Eva B Ottlinger, *Ernst Plischke Modern Architecture for the New World: The Complete Works* (Prestel, 2004), p180.

¹⁰ *Thematic Heritage Study of Wellington* (Wellington: Wellington City Council, 2013), 11.

listing in the District Plan were thematically coded. Sutch-Smith House was shortlisted for consideration for scheduling because it was nominated by the Brooklyn Local History Group and The Architectural Centre as part of their DPC 53 and 58 submissions, and Docomomo as part their DPC 53 submission. It is also associated with the theme of “WWII and post-war refugees and migrants (e.g. Polish, British children, Greeks, other Europeans)” and the under-represented theme of “Gardening (European).” The building was assessed against Wellington City Council’s criteria for evaluation of historic heritage for inclusion in the District Plan heritage schedules.

The current GWRC/WCC threshold for inclusion in a District Plan is that a building must contribute to an understanding and appreciation of history and culture under one or more of the assessment criteria. These include historic, physical (archaeological, architectural, scientific, technological, integrity, age, group, townscape or surroundings), social, tangata whenua, rarity and representativeness.

Photographs and Images



House designed by Ernst Plischke for W B Sutch, Todman Street, Brooklyn, Wellington. Ashton, John Hammond, 1917-2010: Negatives. Ref: 1/2-199947-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. /records/22335792

Chronologies and Timelines

Timeline of events, including modifications

1953	House designed
1956	Completion of construction
1984	Roof damaged and house flooded
2002	Restored

Occupation history

1957	W B Sutch and S Smith move into new home
2002	Sutch and Smith's daughter and son-in-law move into house

Biographies

Ernst Plischke

Ernst Plischke was born 26 June 1903 in Klosterneuberg, a suburb of Vienna, the only son of Anton Plischke, an architect, and his wife, Emma Pflanzner. Plischke's education included four years at the Kunstgewerbeschule (College for Arts and Crafts) and three years at the Akademie der bildenden Künste (Academy of Fine Arts), both in Vienna, graduating in 1926. After a stint in New York, Plischke returned to Vienna, working as an architect and qualifying as an engineer in 1932. Plischke was a member of the Austrian Werkbund, a 'movement for the promotion of high-quality design and craftsmanship'.

In 1935 Plischke married Anna Lang (nee Schwitzer). Vienna in the 1930s became inhospitable to the Plischkes, due to Ernst's membership of the socialist wing of Werkbund and Anne's Jewish faith. In increasingly hostile circumstances, the Plischkes immigrated to Wellington on 9 May 1939.

Plischke was employed by the Department of Housing Construction, where he worked with other European immigrants such as Fritz Feuer (Frederick Farrar) and Friedrich Neumann (Fred Newman). Working under the Chief Architect Gordon Wilson, they designed multiple-unit state housing located in Auckland and Wellington. A clash with Wilson saw Plischke become a community planner, designing the towns of Mangakino and Kaingaroa and community centres in the



Hutt Valley and Auckland. In 1947, Plischke resigned from the Department and went into work with Cedric Firth, finding success and acclaim designing private residences and churches.

Plischke became one of the foremost exponents of Modernist architecture in New Zealand. In 1963, Plischke returned to Vienna to take up the position of Professor of Architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts. He returned once to New Zealand in 1969 to receive an honorary fellowship of the New Zealand Institute of Architects. Plischke died in Vienna in 1992.

WCC Architects Biography

William Ball Sutch¹¹

William Ball Sutch (Bill) was born in Southport, Lancashire, England, on 27 June 1907. He arrived in New Zealand at the age of eight months, when his family migrated to Wellington. After attending Wellington College, Sutch went to Teachers' Training College (1926–27) and Victoria University College, Wellington.

A fellowship at Columbia University, New York, led to a PhD with a thesis on 'Price fixing in New Zealand' in 1932. He arrived back in New Zealand in late 1932, during the deepest part of the inter-war depression. The experiences of his friends and relatives during the depression years shaped Sutch's thinking about New Zealand and the world economy.

In August 1933, because of his advanced qualifications in economics, Sutch joined the staff of the then Minister of Finance, Gordon Coates. He became Private Secretary to Coates, and after the 1935 election to Walter Nash, accompanying him on overseas trips. Thus, he was closely involved in most of the main economic debates of the period.

In 1934 he married Morva Milburn Williams, a schoolteacher. An active member of the Wellington cultural and intellectual community, Sutch helped found the Fabian society that year and was active in the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, the Left Book Club, Progressive Publishing Society, and the Wellington Co-operative Book Society (Modern Books). He began publishing regularly on a wide variety of contemporary economic and political issues. In 1941, Sutch's *Poverty and*

¹¹ Summarised from Brian Easton, 'Sutch, William Ball', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, Te Ara - the Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, first published in 2000, accessed 17 June 2020, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/5s54/sutch-william-ball>

progress in New Zealand, a history with the theme of social difficulties driving national development, was published as a Penguin special. In 1942, *The quest for security in New Zealand* was published, selling over 100,000 copies.

These public activities by an official closely involved in political advice led to conflict with his political masters, especially the prime minister, Peter Fraser, and late in 1941 he moved to the Ministry of Supply (later incorporated into the Department of Industries and Commerce). Sutch entered the army in 1942. He did not serve overseas and was discharged in November 1943.

His marriage to Morva was dissolved in 1944, and he married Shirley Hilda Stanley Smith, a lecturer (later a lawyer), in Auckland later that year. They were to have one daughter.

In 1945 and 1946 Sutch was based in Sydney and London, working for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. From 1947 to 1951, he was Secretary General of the New Zealand delegation to the United Nations in New York. He contributed to the creation of an independent international public service, and actively discouraged racial discrimination.

Returning to New Zealand in 1951, Sutch became, in turn, an economist, Assistant Secretary and, in 1958, permanent Secretary for the Department of Industries and Commerce. In March 1965 he retired after 40 years of public service employment.

Sutch had re-joined the Wellington cultural and intellectual community, including being involved with the Architectural Centre and chairing the Festival of Wellington Arts Committee. His modernist house, high in Brooklyn where he had grown up, was designed by Ernst Plischke. In 1973 he was appointed chair of the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand.

At 57 he began a new career as a consultant, especially to the textile industry. He also published a series of books, which provide one of the most comprehensive accounts of, and visions for, New Zealand.

In September 1974, after some meetings with a Russian diplomat, Sutch was charged under the Official Secrets Act 1951 with the offence of obtaining information that would be helpful to an enemy. No evidence was brought that he had obtained information of any kind, and there was no significant evidence on his security file. He was acquitted in 1975.

The events surrounding the trial overshadowed the significance of what went

before, and have muted subsequent recognition of his intellectual contributions. Sutch's health began failing after his arrest. He died on 28 September 1975 in Wellington. He was survived by Shirley Smith and his daughter, Helen Sutch, an economist.

Shirley Smith¹²

Shirley Smith (1916-2007) was a human-rights campaigner and trail-blazing lawyer. As a community activist from the early 1950s she fought for social and political reform, while as a lawyer she spoke for those who had no voice and pursued equal rights for all. Passionate about human rights and equality and appalled by the government's draconian legislation following the 1951 waterfront dispute, she founded the Human Rights Organisation and co-founded the New Zealand Council for Civil Liberties. In 1976 she was made the Council's first life member. She was the first woman appointed to a law faculty in New Zealand. She campaigned to abolish the death penalty, stop whites-only New Zealand rugby tours to South Africa, improve mental health services, and to bring about jury reform, equal pay for women, homosexual law reform and abortion law reform. In the 1960s she was national secretary for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (New Zealand), and she opposed the Vietnam War. She served as long-term honorary solicitor for the Society for Research on Women, the Cook Islands Society, and the Thorndon Trust, which she established with architect Martin Hill and journalist Gillian MacGregor.

In the 1970s she rallied the public to preserve Thorndon's historic buildings and character from destruction by urban and motorway development. The Thorndon Trust assisted the establishment of the Thorndon Society; both organisations helped establish Thorndon in the Wellington consciousness as a heritage place worth preserving. The Trust's most important and on-going achievement was the adoption by Wellington City Council of a new zone, later known as Residential E, which resulted in the heritage protection of a large area of Thorndon (bounded by Bowen Street, Tinakori Road, Hill Street and the motorway, and including Ascot Street).¹³ At the time this was a new approach to the protection of heritage in New

¹² Summary of essay by Sarah Gaitanos, 'Smith, Shirley Hilda Stanley', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, Te Ara - the Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, first published in 2019, accessed 17 June 2020, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/6s6/smith-shirley-hilda-stanley>

¹³ Ben Schrader, 'Residential E and the Saving of Thorndon', in "All the Appearances of being Innovative": New Zealand Architecture in the 1970s: a One Day Symposium', ed. Christine McCarthy (Wellington: Centre for Building Performance Research, Faculty of Architecture and Design, Victoria University of Wellington, 2016), p.79; Michael Kelly and Kerry Pollack, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga – List Entry Report for a Historic Place, List No. 9764, May 2020, pp.11-14.



Zealand, and as noted by Heritage New Zealand, not a single house or cottage has been demolished since 1975 to the time of writing in 2020.¹⁴

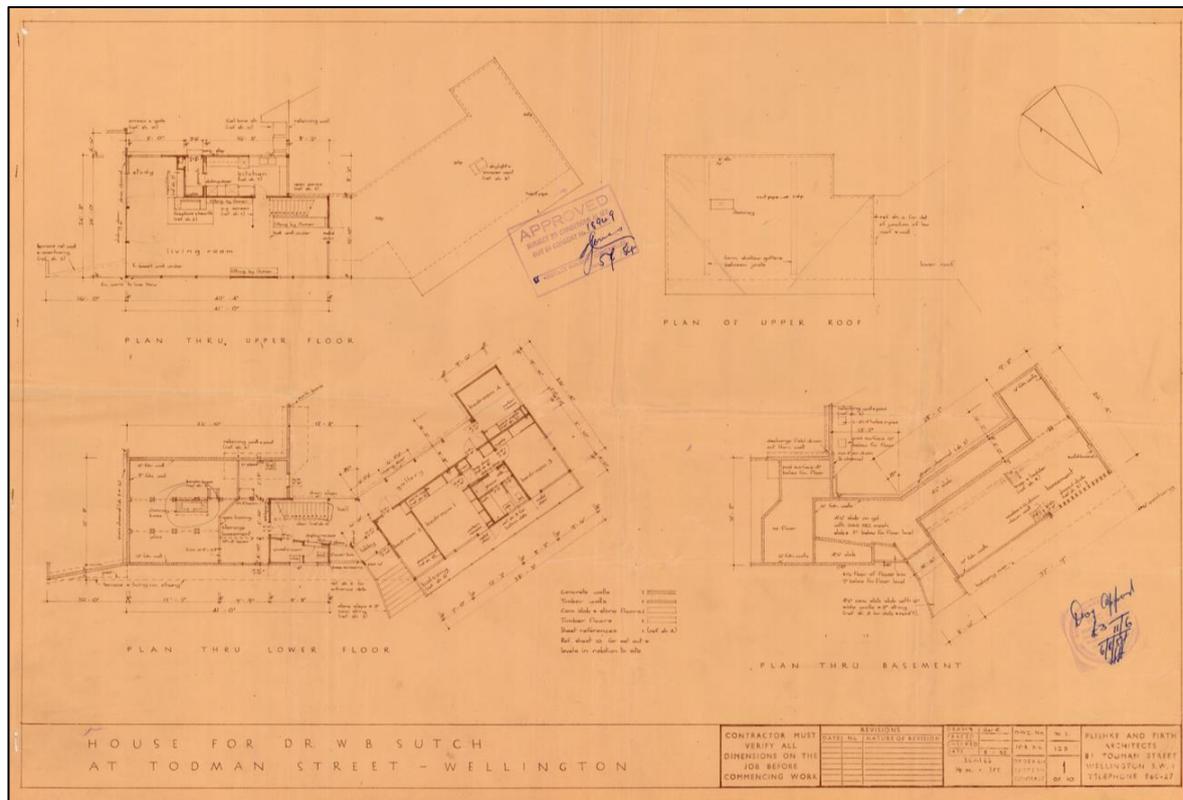
All this time, Shirley was running her own legal practice. She said that she never refused a case, believing everyone had the right to justice. In the late 1970s, Shirley focused on the work she enjoyed most – criminal law, defending young Māori and Polynesian men. Having previously represented Black Power, in the 1980s she was solicitor for the Mongrel Mob.

She married Bill Sutch in 1944, and in the 1950s they moved to the new award-winning house they had built on Brooklyn hill, which would be her home for nearly five decades. In 1974 Sutch was charged with espionage. He was acquitted but the matter was not settled in public opinion. Shirley stood staunchly by him until his death later that year, and continued to defend his reputation publicly throughout her long widowhood. She died in 2007.

¹⁴ Kelly and Pollock, p.13, fn.59; Schrader, p.79.



Plans and Elevations



77a Todman Street [79a Todman Street], dwelling – 6 Aug 1954,
Ref: 00056-B36577, Wellington City Archives.

Physical Description

Setting

The house is built on the brow of the eastern side of Brooklyn Hill overlooking Todman Street, with views to the north and east. Although the house has expansive views, it is difficult to see from the road due to the steep terrain and because it is largely obscured by mature bush. The main view of the house is from the corner of Todman and Mitchell Street.

A long path with steep steps from Todman Street give pedestrian access to the house, while a long drive gives vehicular access off Mitchell Street. This connects to a wide path giving access to the front entry door along the front of the house. Plischke's own house at 81 Todman Street is in close proximity to the Sutch-Smith house and has the same pedestrian access.

The site has large, heavily planted areas to the east, north and west, with a landscaped terrace accessible from the living room to the east of the house.

Buildings or structures

The house has two main wings in a shallow 'V' plan aligned east-west with the fulcrum at the main entry. Although each wing is principally single storey, with the east wing a floor above the west wing, both wings have a floor under the west end. The main entry leads to the stairs, giving access to the kitchen, living and dining rooms on the upper level to the east, while to the west is a fully glazed corridor leading to the bedroom wing and a landscaped courtyard at the same level. The courtyard is enclosed by the house to the east, retaining walls to the south and a pergola structure at the west. Paving to both the entry and the courtyard is Sydney sandstone, suggesting a seamless transition between inside and outside.

The stairs rise up through the living area creating a staggered 'L' shaped space, wrapping around the kitchen with the dining area to the east. A bluestone fireplace at the north east corner of the kitchen wall marks the transition between the dining and living room. The same stone is used for the paving, low balustrading and base of a curved timber wall to the north of the eastern courtyard.

The base of the house and the path to the entry reflects the gradual slope of the site. The base of the western wing is stone, while the base of the eastern wing is concrete block.

The shallow diagonal line of the base of the house contrasts with the overwhelming horizontality of the majority of the house. The flat roof slab of the lower wing, extending beyond the wall of the house to create a sun shade, becomes the soffit of the cantilevered living room in an unbroken line the full length of the house. The line unifies the two wings.

The roof of the living room wing is also flat and extends beyond the house as a sun shade. The lower bedroom wing has a continuous, solid balcony, which is matched by the continuous spandrel of the upper wing.

The north elevations of the two wings have large extensive glazing between panels of flush weatherboard, while the east elevation is fully glazed, matching that of the lower courtyard elevation. The large windows throughout the house and the sliding doors to access the upper and lower courtyards are steel.

Materials

- Stone courtyard paving, base of the house and chimney
- Concrete slab roof
- Timber weatherboards

- Steel windows
- Timber interior joinery
- Asphaltic roofing

Archaeological sites

Unknown.

Comparative Analysis Summary

The Sutch-Smith house is one of over 40 houses designed by Ernst Plischke during his time in New Zealand. When considered alongside the Kahn House (1942), the Lang House (1952) and the Hirschfield House (1962), three other Plischke houses in Wellington, it shares many similarities. All four houses are an expression of international Modern Movement principles in a New Zealand setting, adapted to the landscape of the site and budget of the clients. Similarities include rectilinear forms, a flat roof, weatherboard exterior, open plan layout, large areas of glazing and sliding doors to facilitate a relationship between interior and exterior living spaces.

Evaluation Criteria

A. Historic values: these relate to the history of a place and how it demonstrates important historical themes, events, people or experiences.

(i) Themes: the place is associated with important themes in history or patterns of development.

The Sutch-Smith House has significant national historic value for its association with European émigrés who came to New Zealand to escape Nazism. Many of these refugees had a significant impact on New Zealand art, design and architecture, and in particular, the spread and promotion of Modernist principles. Plischke is one of the most well-known of this group for his contribution to the development of Modernist architectural ideas in New Zealand.

(ii) Events: the place has an association with an important

event or events in local, regional or national history.

Not assessed.

(iii) People: the place is associated with the life or works of an individual, group or organisation that has made a significant contribution to the district, region or nation

The Sutch-Smith House has significant national historic value as part of the work of Ernst Plischke, an Austrian architect active in New Zealand between 1939 and 1963. Plischke is recognised as having a significant influence on the development of architecture and design in New Zealand, particularly through his work on private residences. The Sutch-Smith House is recognised nationally and internationally by architectural scholars as Plischke's finest and most influential house design in New Zealand.

The Sutch-Smith House also has significant national historic value for its association with its former owners, William Sutch and Shirley Smith. William Sutch was one of New Zealand's most significant economists, intellectuals and public servants, even though his later career was overshadowed by the espionage trial and acquittal. Shirley Smith was a significant human rights campaigner, heritage advocate and lawyer.

(iv) Social: the place is associated with everyday experiences from the past and contributes to our understanding of the culture and life of the district, region or nation.

Not assessed.

B. Physical values: these values relate to the physical evidence present.

(i) Archaeological: there is potential for archaeological investigation to contribute new or important information about the human history of the district, region or nation.

Not assessed.



(ii) Architectural: the place is notable for its style, design, form, scale, materials, ornamentation, period, craftsmanship or other architectural values

The Sutch-Smith House has significant architectural value as Plischke's finest and most influential house design in New Zealand, as recognised by national and international architectural scholars. His interpretation and development of Modernism in the New Zealand context in an expert and consummate manner is exemplified in the Sutch-Smith House. His command of the style and his skills as an architect is evident in the planning, form, detailing and use of materials with which he has created a design that seamlessly integrates exterior and interior, while juxtaposing solid and void, substantial and delicate, diagonal and horizontal.

(iii) Townscape: the place is strongly associated with other natural or cultural features in the landscape or townscape, and/or contributes to the heritage values of a wider townscape or landscape setting, and/or it is a landmark.

Although visibility of the house is limited, the Sutch-Smith design has significant townscape values, as it enhances the natural landscape qualities by both reinforcing and contrasting the built and natural forms.

(iv) Groups: The place is part of a group of buildings, structures, or sites that taken together have coherence because of their age, history, style, scale, materials, or use.

The Sutch-Smith House is one of over 40 highly individual Modern Movement homes designed by Ernst Plischke throughout New Zealand, a number of which are statutorily recognised. They have significant group value nationally for their architectural design and their association with Ernst Plischke, an internationally recognised Modernist architect. The Sutch-Smith House is one of a number Plischke designs in the Wellington region, including the Hardwicke-Smith, Lang, Kahn, Vance and Winn Houses.

(v) Surroundings: the setting or context of the place contributes to an appreciation and understanding of its character, history and/or development.

The immediate setting of the house includes the extensive grounds; courtyards and planting that provide privacy while also allowing expansive views of Wellington city, harbour and hills beyond. The wider built setting is also significant in the contrast between the narrow and densely built sites in front of the house on Todman and Mitchell Streets, which are of a much earlier period.

(vi) Scientific: The area or place has the potential to provide scientific information about the history of the district or region

Not assessed.

(vii) Technological: the place provides evidence of the history of technological development; and/or demonstrates innovation or important methods of construction or design; and/or contains unusual construction materials.

The Sutch-Smith House has some technological value in its engineering design that allows for visually seamless volumes and surfaces.

(viii) Integrity: the significant physical values of the place have been largely unmodified. This includes the retention of important modifications and/or additions from later periods.

The Sutch-Smith House was significantly refurbished in 2002 but maintains a high level of integrity to the original design, and its relationship with the garden and wider landscape remains intact.

(ix) Age: the place is particularly old in the context of human occupation of the Wellington region.

The Sutch-Smith House is not considered to be particularly old in the context of human occupation of the Wellington region.

C. Social values: these values relate to the meanings that a



place has for a particular community or communities.

(i) Sentiment: the place has strong or special associations with a particular cultural group or community for spiritual, political, social, religious, ethnic, national, symbolic or commemorative reasons.

Not assessed.

(ii) Recognition: the place is held in high public esteem for its historic heritage values, or its contribution to the sense of identity of a community, to the extent that if it was damaged or destroyed it would cause a sense of loss.

The Sutch-Smith House is held in high public esteem by the national and international architectural community as the most significant of Ernst Plischke's architectural legacy in New Zealand.

(iii) Sense of place/ continuity: the place provides evidence of cultural or historical continuity, or contributes to a sense of place for a community

Not assessed.

D. Tangata whenua values: the place is sacred or important to Māori for spiritual, cultural or historical reasons.

Not assessed.

E. Rarity: the place is unique or rare within the district or region.

Plischke's house designs are rare as an early use of the Modern Movement style, excellence of design and response to the site and landscape, paralleling similar developments in the style in the San Francisco Bay Area. The Sutch-Smith House is particularly rare given that it is considered the best-known and most significant

example of his work.

F. Representativeness: the place is a good example of its type, era or class it represents.

The Sutch-Smith House's design is nationally and internationally significant as a representative example of the work of internationally acclaimed architect Ernst Plischke, and his exploration and development of the Modern Movement style within the New Zealand context. When considered alongside other Plischke houses, it is regarded as his best-known and most significant.

Recommendations

Sutch-Smith House has significant heritage value for its architectural and historical values, representativeness, rarity and integrity. It meets the threshold for eligibility as a Historic Heritage Building and is recommended listing on the District Plan.

Extent of the Place

The extent of place includes the land described as Lot 3 DP 7218, Part Lot 4 DP 3521 and Part Lot 5 DP 7128 (RT WN667/38), Wellington Land District, and the building known as Sutch/Smith House thereon. It should encompass the building's exterior form, scale and materials.

Non-heritage fabric / exclusions

None.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Comparative Analysis

Appendix 2 Wellington Thematic Heritage Study 2013

Appendix 1 Comparative Analysis

Houses designed by Ernst Plischke in Wellington				
Place name	Address/ location/ NZTM	Heritage Listing or recognition of significance	Photographs	Analysis

<p>Hirschfeld House</p>	<p>49 Waiapu Road, Kelburn, Wellington</p>	<p>HNZPT Category I Historic Place</p>	 <p>Lower entrance to Hirschfeld House photographed by Michael Kelly, 2011. Wellington City Council.</p>	<p>The Hirschfeld House was designed by Ernst Plischke and constructed between 1959-60 for fellow Austrian émigrés, Sigmund and Gisella Hirschfeld.</p> <p>The Sutch-Smith House has a number of aspects that are similar to the Hirschfeld House. Both were designed by Plischke and constructed in the mid to latter half of the 1950s, near the end of Plischke's time in New Zealand. Both houses reflect Plischke's interpretation of Modern Movement house design principles - orientation to the sun, responsiveness to the site, rectilinear forms, flat roofs and open planning in the living and dining areas. Both houses have two storeyed sections and are well integrated into their surroundings, with their gardens being designed by landscape architects; the Sutch-Smith's commissioned Mary Lysaght, while the Hirschfeld's commissioned Plischke's wife, Anna. Both houses also remain largely unaltered. The two sites are significantly different, however. The Hirschfeld House is located in a narrow valley with little outlook, while the Sutch-Smith house is located on a ridge with panoramic views across the city and beyond.</p>
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<p>Lang House</p>	<p>81 Hatton Street, Karori, Wellington</p>	<p>HNZPT Category I Historic Place; WCC DP Heritage Building</p>	 <p>Photographed by John Ashton, 1962. ATL: 1/2-199941-F.</p>  <p>Photographed by Ken Downie, date unknown. Ministry for Culture & Heritage.</p>	<p>The Lang House was built in 1952 and is one of Ernst Plischke’s best-known Wellington works. Designed for Henry, Plischke’s stepson who became a prominent public servant, and Octavia (Tup) Lang, it shares a number of similarities with the Sutch-Smith House.</p> <p>Both houses reflect Plischke’s interpretation of Modern Movement house design principles - orientation to the sun, responsiveness to the site, rectilinear forms, flat roofs, extensive glazing and open planning in the living and dining areas.</p> <p>Where the houses differ is in their setting and forms of construction. The Sutch-Smith House has expansive views on a largely open site, whereas the Lang House has a much more limited vista and is set with bush. The Lang House is constructed of and clad with timber, whereas the Sutch-Smith House is constructed of stone, concrete and timber.</p> <p>Although both houses use timber framing and cladding, Plischke has demonstrated on both that he was not interested in developing a ‘New Zealand style’ of Modernism. In all his houses he used international Modern</p>
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		 <p>Photographed by Charles Collins, 2015. Wellington City Council.</p>	<p>Movement principles while responding uniquely to each site.</p> <p>While the Sutch-Smith House is largely original, sensitive extensions were made to the Lang House in the 1970s and further alterations more recently.</p>
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<p>Khan House</p>	<p>53 Trelissick Crescent, Ngaio, Wellington</p>	<p>HNZPT Category I Historic Place; Identified by DOCOMOMO as one of 19 places that best represent the Modern Movement in New Zealand</p>	 <p>Exterior photographed by Irene Koppel, c.1941. ATL: 35mm-35610-20-F.</p>  <p>Interior photographed by Irene Koppel, c.1941. ATL: 35mm-35602-14-F.</p>  <p>Date unknown. Wellington City Council.</p>	<p>Plischke designed the Kahn House for fellow European émigrés Joachim and Gertrude Kahn. Completed in 1942, it was Plischke's second New Zealand house and first Wellington house. It is considered the first Modern Movement house in Wellington, and as such, was highly unusual at the time with its flat roof, open plan, raised multi-functional dining and living area, and large glazed areas. It also featured an innovative sliding glass door system designed by Plischke, and skeleton timber framing as opposed to the stud framing more common in New Zealand at the time.</p> <p>It shares similarities with the Sutch-Smith House in its orientation to the sun, open plan design, a strong relationship between indoor and outdoor spaces, a flat roof, extensive glazing and expansive views. Both clients' families still own and live in the houses. However, the houses differ in scale, form of construction, internal planning and age. A professional landscape architect designed the Sutch-Smith garden, whereas the Kahn's designed their own. The blue exterior colour of the Kahn's house is unusual amongst Plischke's house designs, although he used a similar blue in Massey House.</p>
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Appendix 2 Wellington Thematic Heritage Study 2013

Refer to the Wellington Thematic Heritage Study 2013

https://wellington.govt.nz/~/_media/services/community-and-culture/heritage/files/thematic-heritage-study.pdf

	Select the themes & subthemes which apply to the place	Yes / some (add explanation)
A1.7	WWII and post-war refugees and migrants (e.g. Polish, British children, Greeks, other Europeans)	
A1.7A	Austrian Architecturally designed buildings	Yes
B1	Gardening	
B1.2	Domestic (European)	Yes

Note that additional themes could be added to the thematic heritage study:

- Houses of significant architects
- Architectural styles, periods and movements
 - Modernism