

My father's edict was:

"clean simple lines, space and light, but above all functional", & "if in doubt paint it white".

The funny thing was, that the most rustic of all his designs was his most loved. It was originally, a quirky weekend cottage built in the Hunua Ranges. Constructed out of rough-sawn board and batten timber, it used rocks, hewn out of the hillside that it was built on, making pillars and a magnificent indoor fireplace. It was set in the bush at Opaheke with panoramic views in the distance of the Manukau Harbour. After many years it developed into his permanent place of residence when he added another bathroom and a large bedroom with doors opening towards this huge Puriri tree from which you could hear the sounds of the native birds singing. This place brought him more pleasure than any multi million dollar complex or design that he did.

In the early 50's, on his journey through Architectural School at Auckland University he met his future partner Mark Brown which was to become a defining moment in his life. Throughout his Practice he evolved into what I call his Don Draper period, with dark suits out of beautifully worsted cloth, white suits and expensive ties. He and his wife (Sonia, my mother) loved jazz, fine dining and socializing with people at all sorts of events. He was also fine piano player and mum loved to sing. I remember fondly many happy occasions around the piano with a group of friends having a big singalong.

Dad had come from a blue collar background, brought up by his widowed mother who sacrificed much for her only child and 3 bachelor brothers who lived with them. His father died in his mid 20's and Allan's achievements made his mother (my grandmother) Lil extremely proud.

Allan was a gadget man - I remember that we were one of the first families in the area to have a TV. He picked up a tin test model (not for sale) that he created a switch for that could turn the sound off when the ads came. He was also an avid amateur radio enthusiast, where he used to spend hours in one of the sheds at Opaheke or in his car communicating with people in staticky radio land, to all corners of the globe. A far cry from Skype but still miraculous in its day. His call sign was ZL10H (Zula, Lemar 1 Oscar Hotel).

His final Architectural Practice was *Fairhead, Sang and Carnachan* - a name still synonymous with fine architecture, of which I am very proud.

---

*Written By Peter Allan Fairhead.*

*Son of Allan Donald Fairhead.*

*Architect Firm: Mark Brown, Fairhead and Sang.*