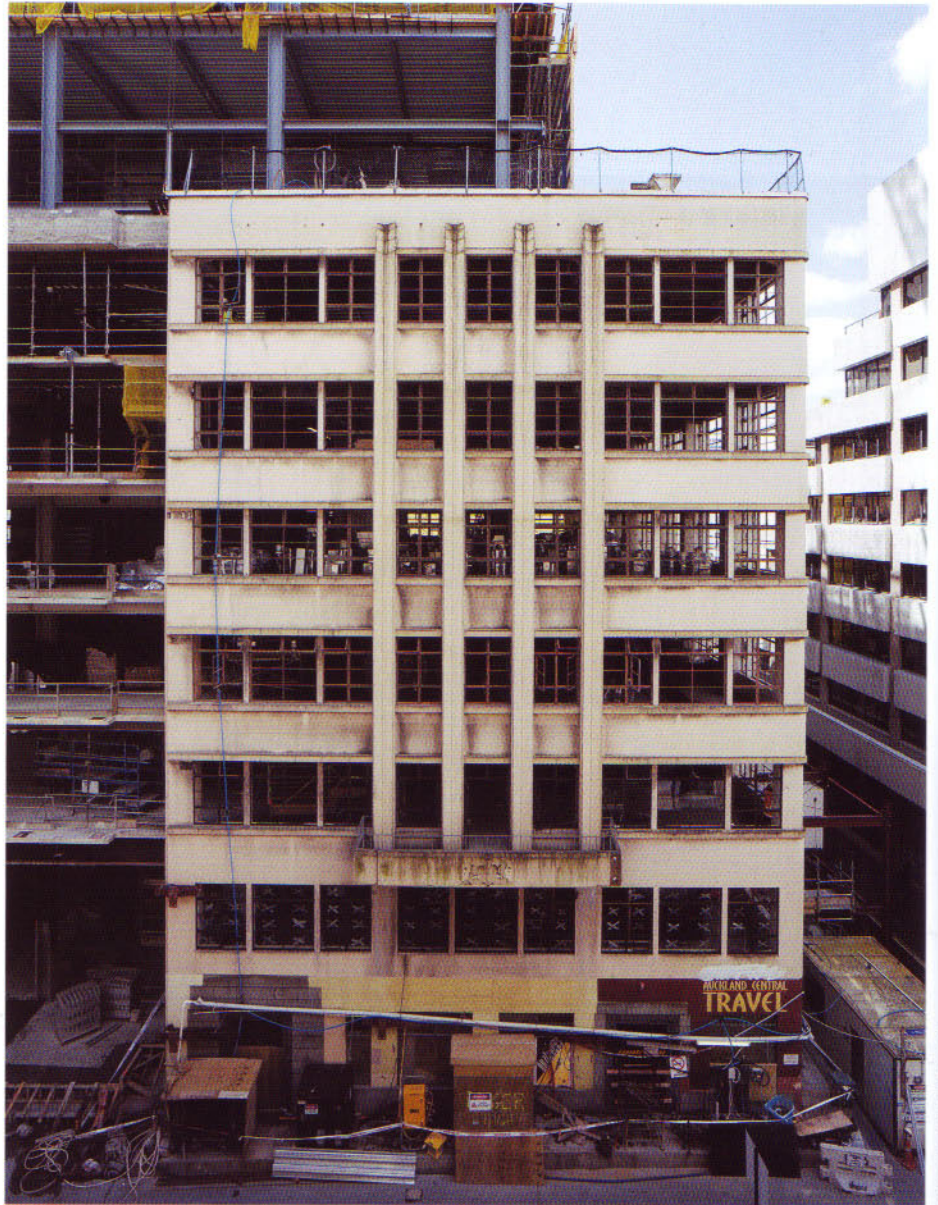Photographer Patrick Reynolds

SOHO SQUARE, GREY LYNN

Currently a big, expensive pit, "Soho Square" is slated to become an eclectic enclave on the site of the old yeast factory at the southern end of Ponsonby Road. The mixed-use monster, designed by Ignite Architecture, is deeply unpopular with locals, who at least have the consolation of schadenfreude as the credit collapse seems to have halted the out-of-scale project (although the developers have been insisting that work will recommence, any day now).

Much is made of the 25% of the scheme allocated to public spaces. The project adopts the credible strategy of establishing a pedestrian network through the site, but this network turns out to be a set of fairly modest shopping alleys leading to a central court. Essentially, the public space is one of the new generation of malls you have when you're not having a mall. Renderings and marketing images suggest that "Soho Square" makes some fairly cursory gestures towards the local architectural stock, but this seems to be aimed mostly at breaking down the visual bulk of a hefty development. Say what you like about Christopher Alexander and Leon Krier, at least they bring a rigour to their nostalgic urbanism. **Carl Douglas**

Photographer: Patrick Reynolds

DELOITTE CENTRE, AUCKLAND CITY

The Deloitte Centre on Queen Street, a new administrative centre for the BNZ, is an obviously appropriate type of development for its central city site. But it does not behave well towards the 1937 Jean Batten Building (designer: J.T. Mair, Government Architect), which occupies the rear half of the block. Warren and Mahoney (architects, with Woods Bagot, of the new building) claim heritage integration, but the violence of the architectural gesture belies this: the new has eviscerated the old and deploys its tanned hide as a decorative historical dressing, a concession to propriety. The Deloitte Centre makes totemic use of another's skin to ward off any actual historical engagement.

The project highlights the problems of a zero-sum approach to our architectural history. A pragmatic present and a monolithic past trade concessions in a bare-fisted cage-match, as if all gains for one were necessarily at the expense of the other. Architecture exists and operates across a whole series of time frames: fleeting events; sudden shifts; rhythmic patterns; slowly unfolding changes. Without a nuanced and thoughtful approach to architecture's temporal dimensions we will continue to face these unsatisfactory compromises. **Carl Douglas**