

# CULTURAL ASPECTS OF MAKING SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS

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One aspect of minimising the use of resources in the built environment is to make buildings that have a long and useful life. This has led to investigations into the useful life of materials, their environmental impacts, and designing for maintenance, all aspects which can be combined as part of the life-cycle approach to design of buildings. However, there is also a design dimension that needs to be considered. Buildings have to be produced that are not just economically viable but that are also culturally viable and acceptable over many years, in order to ensure building longevity. Using an example from the UK (the 1911 and 1934 exhibitions of model houses at Gidea Park) and one from NZ (the Wanganui Memorial Hall), the paper will demonstrate that buildings that satisfy cultural expectations become the buildings that people love, and hence maintain, to ensure a long and useful life. This suggests that rational analysis of what makes a sustainable building must also be linked to ideas and issues about buildings that fit within a given cultural context.