

F. Gordon Wilson Fellowship for Affordable Housing 2025

Expression of Interest

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Call for Entries

Entries are open for the F. Gordon Wilson Fellowship for Affordable Housing.

Submissions must be received by 16 June 2025.

Fellowship Brief

The F. Gordon Wilson Fellowship for Affordable Housing invites architects and design professionals from Aotearoa New Zealand to explore how architecture can address one of today's most pressing needs: housing.

This Fellowship seeks to promote new ideas and approaches to significant unmet housing needs across Aotearoa New Zealand through a self-directed design and research project. Topics can address a variety of issues, including culture, climate change, housing density, and models of delivery. The findings from, and application of, the Fellowship design explorations and supporting research should be relevant and useful in supporting housing design, the development of new housing materials or technologies, and/or the development of housing policy. Project applications that utilise a unique perspective or innovative solution/methodology are encouraged.

Recipients are encouraged to connect and engage with the resources and insights provided by government agencies, private research organisations, private industry and educational institutions both domestically and worldwide. Limited travel is also acceptable if necessary.

The Fellowship recipient(s) must be willing and able to present the F. Gordon Wilson Fellowship results to a variety of audiences – professional, public and the media – and to represent the F. Gordon Wilson Fellowship at Institute events.

This Fellowship offers engaged professionals an opportunity to explore their own ideas and passions in the housing space. It is hoped that new ways of looking at the complex relationship of design and affordable housing will ultimately influence design outcomes as well as the overall wellbeing of people and communities.

Click to see the [2024 winner](#) and [shortlisted submissions](#).

Selection

Eligibility

Applications for the Fellowship:

- must be a graduate of a programme in architecture or related field, such as landscape architecture, urban design, planning, public policy, engineering or similar
- can be submitted by an individual or a team (collaboration)
- must be Aotearoa New Zealand citizens or permanent residents
- must be able to be completed over no more than 12 months and must begin within six months of receipt of the award letter

The Fellowship cannot be used for the: promotion of a particular political, religious, or ideological point of view; advocacy of a particular programme of social, environmental, cultural or political action; support of specific public policies or legislation; academic/educator funded research, Masters or PhD candidates research and/or preparation or revision of textbooks.

Selection criteria

The F. Gordon Wilson Fellowship jury will review proposals for:

- clarity of purpose and research idea
- originality
- feasibility (time, budget, research idea)
- consistency with [the Fellowship purpose, as outlined in the Fellowship Brief](#)

Selection process

The selection process occurs in two stages. The jury first selects a shortlist from the submitted proposals. The shortlisted entrants will then be asked to answer further clarifying questions and sit for an interview with the jury.

Stage 1 submitted applications must include:

- stated purpose of enquiry
- proposed outputs, including:
 - * Research methodology and outcomes
 - * Design component
 - * Final written and graphic report concept
 - * Final presentation concept
- project schedule/programme
- budget
- portfolio of previous works, if applicable
- applicant(s) CV
- letter of support from employer for Fellowship application, if applicable

In **Stage 2**, the shortlisted applicants will be required to respond to jury feedback and/or questions, and supply supplementary information. Shortlisted applicants for the F. Gordon Wilson Fellowship will present their proposals to the jury in Stage 2, online, at a pre-arranged presentation time.

The F. Gordon Wilson Fellowship is \$20,000 and this amount must not be exceeded. Within this amount the F. Gordon Wilson Fellowship recipient must:

- deliver appropriate original research, with evidence that can be published and used in communications
- procure necessary materials and inputs for the research
- allow for any travel and accommodation
- ensure any copyright, permissions and referencing are organised

Jury

Purpose

The jury panel consists of five members who bring diverse viewpoints and varied experiences to the process. They play a key role in reviewing the applications and selecting the Fellowship recipient. Jury members also provide feedback and additional support and connections to the Fellowship recipients while they undertake their research.

Members of jury

Dr Kay Saville-Smith

Chief Science Advisor for the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and Research Director, Centre for Research, Evaluation and Social Assessment

Peter McPherson

Head of School, School of Architecture, Te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka Unitec

Julia Mandell

AIA; Design Director, Wilson Associates; representative of F. Gordon Wilson's family

Marko den Breems

Chief Executive Officer, Isthmus

Brian Donnelly, ONZM

Director; affordable housing specialist

Key Dates 2025

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| 28 February | Expressions of Interest open |
| 16 June | Deadline for submissions |
| 4 July | Shortlist announced |
| 25 July | Shortlist applicants submit responses to further information |
| 14 August | Shortlist applicants present to Jury |
| 24 September | Recipient(s) announced at Wellington event |

Submission

Submission format

Submissions must be presented in PDF format, maximum of five A4 pages, including CV. The PDF document must not exceed 4 MB file size. Applications must be submitted with the Expression of Interest Cover Form document, which is additional to the five page submission and can be [downloaded here](#).

The Institute requires that all submissions be received electronically. The Institute accepts no responsibility for not being able to decipher material submitted in an unusual format, or one that is not specified as above.

Late submissions will not be accepted.

Submissions must be received at kmatthew@nzia.co.nz by 3pm 16 June 2025.

All proposals received will be acknowledged by close of business on 23 June 2025. Submitters of shortlisted proposals will be notified by 4 July 2025.

Shortlisted proposals will be provided with details of Stage 2 submission and those submissions will be required by 25 July 2025, at which time in- person presentations and interviews will be scheduled and conducted.

The successful proposal will be announced on 24 September.

Confidentiality, copyright and attribution

The decisions reached by Te Kāhui Whaihanga New Zealand Institute of Architects F. Gordon Wilson Fellowship jury are final and binding for all participants.

On receipt, submissions become the property of the Institute. Although retained by the Institute, there is no intention to use the ideas contained in any submission for any other purposes.

Contact

Any enquiries regarding submissions should be addressed to:

Kirsten Matthew
Te Kāhui Whaihanga New Zealand Institute of Architects
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kmatthew@nzia.co.nz
022 479 0504

Appendix

Recognising a Remarkable Contribution and Legacy

F. Gordon Wilson

- Chief Architect of the Department of Housing Construction (1936–1943)
- Chief Architect of the Housing Division of the Public Works Department (1943–1952)
- Assistant Government Architect (1948–1952)
- Government Architect (1952–1959)

Francis Gordon Wilson was born in Perth, Australia, and moved to Aotearoa New Zealand with his parents and younger brother in 1903. Known as F. Gordon Wilson, he followed in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, both named Francis John and both active architect-builders who frequently travelled between Australia and Aotearoa with their profession.

F. Gordon Wilson's grandfather Francis John Wilson was born in South Africa in 1836 and arrived in Timaru in the 1850s. His career spanned approximately 30 years, during which he designed public and private buildings in Timaru and Wellington. The architect has been credited with designing a large number of prominent buildings, including the Oriental Hotel and Kirkcaldie & Stains warehouse. In Palmerston North, he was the principal architect for the Opera House, which was his last building. Francis John Wilson died in Gisborne in 1911.

F. Gordon Wilson's father Francis John was born in Timaru in 1865 and spent the majority of his professional life in Australia. When he returned to New Zealand in 1903 with his young family, they settled in Wellington. In 1916, F. Gordon Wilson was a teenager when he was articled to architect William M Paige in Wellington. In 1920, he relocated to Auckland where he studied at the University College School of Architecture and began working for Hoggard, Prouse and Gummer. In 1923, when William Gummer partnered with Reginald Ford, Gummer and Ford employed F. Gordon Wilson as a draughtsman. After completing his professional examination in 1928 and being admitted to the New Zealand Institute of Architects (NZIA), F. Gordon Wilson became an associate partner at the practice. During his time there, he is known to have been involved in the design of the Remuera Public Library, Auckland Railway Station, Wellington Public Library (now the City Gallery), the National War Memorial and Carillon, the National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum building in Wellington.

F. Gordon Wilson began his public service career in 1936 as Chief Architect for the Department of Housing Construction. He was tasked by Prime Minister Michael Joseph Savage and his Labour Government to help tackle the nationwide housing crisis. The architect led the design of an innovative state housing programme, which included thousands of new single duplex and multi-unit houses, as well as internationally recognised modernist apartment buildings.

Several influential modernist social housing developments include the Berhampore Flats (built in 1939-1940), the Dixon Street State Flats (1941-1944), the McLean State Flats (1943-1944), the Hanson Street Flats (1943-1944), and Auckland's Grey's Avenue Flats (1945-1947) and Symonds Street Flats (1945-1947). The Dixon Street flats were awarded a gold medal by the NZIA in 1947.

In 1948, F. Gordon Wilson was appointed Assistant Government Architect, then became Government Architect in 1952. Continuing his tenure until 1959, he attracted many talented young architects to work in his department, including Ernst Plischke, Friedrich Neumann (Frederick Newman), Helmut Einhorn, Ian Reynolds and Douglas Beere. He also encouraged the establishment of the Wellington Architectural Centre and played a prominent role in the NZIA at branch and national levels.

Today, with F. Gordon Wilson's sons and granddaughter Julia Mandell taking up the profession, architecture reaches across five generations of the family.

The focus of this fellowship recognises F. Gordon Wilson's historic role as design champion for State Housing in Aotearoa New Zealand.

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