**The vernacular and the spectacular: media representations of second home architecture**

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In many countries, second homes (defined as those used primarily for leisure and recreation) are considered to have unique or distinctive architecture, frequently referred to as vernacular. For example, there is a recognisable style of second home architecture in Norway, Finland and in parts of the USA. In New Zealand, however, where traditional second homes are known colloquially as ‘baches’, many commentators note there is no single distinctive architectural style that distinguishes a bach. This fact notwithstanding, baches are still recognisable as such to those with the necessary cultural capital. Since the 1990s, new forms of second home have appeared in New Zealand that may still be referred to as baches – even though they are architect designed, larger and better equipped than their forebears. These luxury second homes are frequently maligned in the media for being the very antithesis of a bach.

This paper presents the findings of research into media representations of second home architecture in New Zealand and how these have changed over time, through a thematic analysis of second home articles in *Home New Zealand* magazine (New Zealand’s original architecture and lifestyle publication) from 1936-2016. The articles are written by architects or by journalists who have interviewed the architects, therefore providing a different perspective on second home architecture that has not been examined in previous studies.

The findings identify two significant representations of second home architecture in New Zealand; the vernacular and the spectacular. Furthermore, these representations have changed over time. In the 1930s the word ‘bach’ referenced the basic, self-built iterations, and were viewed by architects at the time as disgusting eyesores and blots on the landscape. Since the 1980s, however, they have been commonly represented as a site of nostalgia. Likewise the 1950s vernacular second homes have more recently been styled as cultural icons and repositories of a collective memory of summer holiday communitas. The newer architecturally designed ‘spectacular’ second homes, on the other hand, are frequently constructed in the pages of the magazine as having a bach-like aesthetic, or as providing a bach-like experience. The visual and written representations of the vernacular and spectacular second homes also differ significantly; the former are portrayed as rustic, whimsical and cluttered through a series of small images in a collage format, whereas the latter have double-page spreads of tidy minimalist designer interiors with expansive sea or mountain views.

The paper therefore suggests that, while second home architecture may exhibit constant, distinctive forms in some countries, in New Zealand it is a more fluid, dynamic construct that describes a way of living. Representations of second home architecture are thus subject to change, even when viewed through the eyes of architects themselves.

*Author biography*

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