



# AN ARCHITECTURAL JOURNEY

The Canterbury earthquakes resulted in the region losing much of its best architecture, including a large number of private homes.

Like many Christchurch architects and architectural designers, Cymon Allfrey has experienced the loss of some of his work as a result of the earthquakes.



"It was really difficult seeing my work come down. When you put so much into a project, and then you see it disappear, it leaves you feeling quite sad. Of course, it's much worse for our clients, the owners - we can only imagine how they must have felt."

One of the projects Cymon lost was 'Shaw House' - a project he invested a lot of his own time into.

"The clients were amazing people to work with. With a relatively open brief, we were able to create a home with incredible panoramic views."



*Shaw House, like many other homes on the Port Hills, didn't survive the quakes.*

One of Cymon's projects that did survive the quakes is 'Wilton Close' - a multi-ownership complex made up of 40 apartments. This was the largest project he had ever worked on at the time, and he found it challenging both technically and creatively.

"It was difficult because we wanted to produce apartments that stood out from the crowd in terms of entry-level apartments in Central Christchurch." Cymon says the result was particularly

successful because of the way the team embraced the idea of communal living to create a sense of community within the site.

Cymon often reflects on his architectural journey so far. It's been a long one that started in his grandfather's workshop when he was just a boy. He was inspired by his grandfather who was a draughtsman for the Ministry of Works and the Christchurch City Council.

"He was a very precise man, and quite

technical in the way he thought. He provided me with an introduction to architecture and really sparked my interest. When he passed away when I was 12, I had already decided what I wanted to do. I ended up inheriting his pencils - and the rest is history."

Cymon initially studied at the University of Canterbury, with the intention of going on to study at the School of Architecture in Wellington. However, after some soul searching, he decided to study towards a Certificate of Architectural Draughting at Christchurch Polytechnic instead.

"I got my first job as a junior technician on the day of enrolment. After a couple of calls in the morning, I had a job trial that afternoon. I ended up working in that job for six years throughout my studies before heading off overseas," says Cymon.

After some time in London managing retail store re-fit and relocation projects, the opportunity arose to come home.

"I phoned my previous employer, and they said they'd love to have me back. But I had one condition - I wanted to buy into the business."

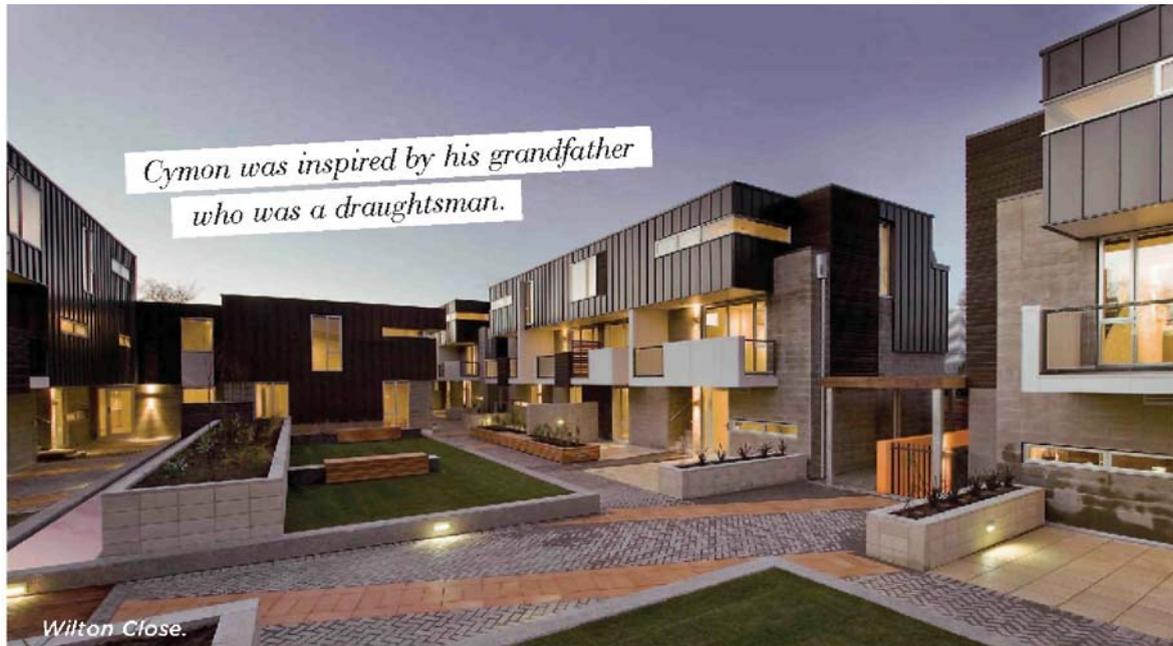
Upon his return to Christchurch, the business rebranded to Stanley-Joblin+Allfrey, and Cymon stayed there for ten years. During this time, he became a registered architect after completing his professional papers at Victoria University in 2009.

In 2010, Cymon decided to step away from Stanley-Joblin+Allfrey to focus on a new practice with a new direction. So Cymon bought out the line-share of the business assets and hired the existing staff, to establish Cymon Allfrey Architects.

"It's been an amazing ride - a fantastic journey of very detailed learning. I have learnt a lot not only in my field, but about people as well. I've built some really great relationships."



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