Who has Written What on the University of Auckland’s Clock-tower Building (1920-26)?

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Abstract
The University of Auckland’s Old Arts Building (1920-26), known today as the Clock-tower Building, is a well-known local landmark, characterised by stylised or modern Gothic forms and details (verticality, pointed arches, pinnacles), in combination with the crests of overseas universities and native New Zealand flora and fauna. The University often uses images of it for marketing purposes, for example on its website and on the covers of calendars and prospectuses. The building was built to a competition-winning design by Roy Alstan Lippincott and Edward Billson. Lippincott, a brother-in-law of Walter Burley Griffin, had moved from Chicago to Australia with the Griffins after their success in the Canberra competition, and then moved a second time, to Auckland, following his own success, with Billson, in the Arts Building competition. Various elements of Lippincott & Billson’s design can be traced back to the work of the Griffins, particularly Newman College at the University of Melbourne, and thus also to Frank Lloyd Wright and the late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century desire for a distinctly American architecture. While both the building and the above, as a general sequence of events, are well known, the literature on the Arts Building is not. This paper explores the literature. It establishes that the building has attracted a surprising amount of scholarly attention, and has been considered within various contexts, including Lippincott’s oeuvre, American influences on New Zealand architecture and landmark towers of Auckland. The texts together demonstrate that a building once criticised for being overly decorated and out of kilter with the country’s national character is in fact one of depth and complexity, sustaining the interest of multiple authors over many years.
Introduction

From time to time, people approach the University of Auckland School of Architecture and Planning to ask what has been written on the University’s Clock-tower Building. This paper responds quite literally to these requests. The building, which resulted from a 1920-21 design competition and was completed in 1926, is characterised by stylised or modern Gothic forms and details (verticality, pointed arches, pinnacles), in combination with native New Zealand flora and fauna and the crests of overseas universities. It is an important component of the University’s image and branding, being both a well-known landmark within the city campus and also the subject of many photographs used by the University for marketing purposes, for example on its website and on the covers of calendars and prospectuses. The building’s central space, located directly underneath of the clock-tower, became better known nationally in 2016, when it beamed into homes up and down the country as the venue for that year’s series of the television programme *Mastermind New Zealand*. The name Clock-tower Building is comparatively new, bestowed on it at the turn of the millennium, and reflects the marketing and branding initiatives. It was originally called the Arts Building and was then known as Old Arts from the 1980s, when new facilities were built for the Faculty of Arts.

While the paper addresses the specific question of who has written what on the building, it has been produced as one component of a larger project on the history of the University’s School of Architecture and Planning, which celebrates its centenary in 2017. The School of Architecture, as it was for most of the last 100 years, was housed in the Arts Building from 1926 until shortly after World War II, by which time it had outgrown its Lippincott & Billson studio spaces and was in desperate need of a building of its own.¹

Anyone searching for information on the Arts Building will probably turn in the first instance to the internet. There they are likely to find the website of the national heritage agency, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga,² which establishes that the building was listed as a Category I historic place in 1983 and provides an outline of the history and significance of the place, including that it was built to a competition-winning design by Roy Alstan Lippincott and Edward Billson. Lippincott, a brother-in-law of Walter Burley Griffin, had moved from Chicago to Australia with the Griffins after their success in the Canberra competition, and then moved a second time, to Auckland, following his own success, with Billson, in the Arts Building competition. Various elements within the design can be traced back to the work of the Griffins, particularly to Newman College at the University of Melbourne (1916-18), and thus, in turn, to Frank Lloyd Wright, Louis Sullivan and the late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century desire for a distinctly American – or local – architecture. The Heritage New Zealand...
website lists three sources for further information: Thomson W. Leys’ *Auckland University College: Its Claim to a Central Site and Adequate Buildings* (1919), Keith Sinclair’s *A History of the University of Auckland, 1883-1983* (1983), and Peter Shaw’s *New Zealand Architecture from Polynesian Beginnings to 1990* (1991). The first of these sources pre-dates the competition, while the other two are both more than 25 years old. What else is there, and thus what else is known about the building?

The paper shows that in addition to having an established place within key historical surveys of New Zealand architecture, the building has also been considered within four theses – two completed in architecture and two in art history. The theses explore the building within various contexts, including Lippincott’s life and *oeuvre*, American influences on New Zealand architecture and landmark towers of Auckland. A collaborative exhibition and catalogue from 2004 then become the culmination of research and writing on the building to date. Taken together, the texts demonstrate that a building once criticised for being overly decorated and not English enough is in fact one of depth and complexity, sustaining the interest of multiple authors over many years. The controversy, depth and complexity all derive from the building’s American lineage and influences, introduced as they were to a dominion known for its enduring loyalty to the British Empire.

An explanation of how this loyalty played out is necessary here. On 14 July 1921, the competition winners Lippincott & Billson were formally appointed as the architects for the building. The University College Council provided them with a list of modifications that it wished to be considered for the final design. This prompted a debate between the College Council, the architects, the Government Architect (John T. Mair) and the Minister of Education (C. J. Parr). The biggest criticism was from Mair, who believed that the treatment of the building’s tower was “continental” and “not in harmony with our national character”. He wanted a ‘more simple and English treatment of the mass’, and, in an attempt to lower the cost, he suggested that the tower and cloisters be omitted. Parr agreed that if the tower was left off, a satisfactory building would remain. Lippincott & Billson responded to the criticisms, defending their design largely in terms of inspiration from nature. In addition, Lippincott identified Christopher Wren’s Tom Tower, built over the Tom Gate at Christ Church, Oxford, in 1681-82, and also the Griffins’ Newman Hall at the University of Melbourne, as influences on their design. In particular, Lippincott said the “disposition of poise and openness [of the Tom Tower], along with the four tourelles, were consciously worked into his own design”. The College Council resisted the governmental pressure to alter the design and it was built to Lippincott & Billson’s original design with only minor changes. As construction progressed, criticisms continued of the design in general and of the tower in particular. The *New Zealand Herald* was very quick to publish negative comments (although not so the *Auckland Star*, which was edited by Thomson W. Leys). There was a scathing article in the Australian journal *Building*, which referred to it as “freak architecture”. Others ridiculed it as being “Maori Gothic” or said it resembled a wedding cake or a cruet. Poet A. R. D. (Rex) Fairburn even suggested that the design would scare old ladies in neighbouring Albert Park. In 1925, at the request of the Students’ Association, Lippincott was still being asked to comment on the design. He stated:

> There have been many criticisms of the tower; but people always criticize something they do not understand. The tower is something new, and criticism has been levelled against it because people could not place it. If they could have put a recognized design and period on it, they would have said nothing.

Though controversial at the time of design and construction, the tide soon turned on how people responded to the Arts Building: once it was opened and in use, the controversy subsided and people began to enjoy it – in part at least for its differences from the architectural milieu into which it had been introduced.
**Historical Surveys**

The Heritage New Zealand website directs interested parties to two important historical surveys: Keith Sinclair’s *A History of the University of Auckland, 1883-1983* (1983), and Peter Shaw’s *New Zealand Architecture from Polynesian Beginnings to 1990* (1991). They consider the building in quite different contexts.

Sinclair was a Professor of History at the University of Auckland and an important writer on New Zealand history. His centennial history of the University of Auckland is a well-known book. It includes generous coverage of the Arts Building, particularly the background that led to its realisation. He points out that it was the University College’s first purpose-built and permanent building, and would therefore represent the institution’s progress and permanence. But, he explains, the process of realising it was not easy. This included prolonged public argument over the site as well as the controversy surrounding the selected design. He mentions Mair’s and Parr’s criticisms and states that Council “remained steadfast and resisted this idiotic bureaucratic sniping”.

Sinclair makes his own architectural observations. He found the building to have been carefully sited, on one of the highest points in the central city, where the Maori *kainga* (village) Horotiu had once stood. He mentions Lippincott’s comment that he took inspiration from the Tom Tower in Oxford, but concludes that “the resemblance between the two towers is not close”. He recognises the Auckland building’s scale and style: “it was a large and substantial building, late campus gothic but with its own originality, not a mere imitation”. He also discussed the carved flora and fauna details, the mosaic flooring and the Lippincott & Billson-designed furniture. Finally, and he is alone in doing this, he notes the building’s effect on students: “how the building greatly stimulated student morale, how interest in the various student clubs increased and how the students came to regard the building with affection”.

Journalist, curator and architectural historian Peter Shaw’s 1991 book was the first comprehensive survey of New Zealand architecture. His discussion of the Arts Building focuses on Mair’s suggestion that it was “not in harmony with our national character”. He elaborates by exploring national character in the 1920s. He found the post-World War I period to be one in which new buildings were generally conservative, with most New Zealand architects looking back to historical precedent rather than investigating the new forms and ideas being developed at that time in Europe: “it was left to the American, Lippincott, or the eccentric Henry Eli White to break out of the mould”. Shaw outlines Lippincott’s background, describes the Arts Building and its ornamentation, and recounts the controversy it generated, concluding: “The acrimony which greeted the decision to award the prize to Lippincott & Billson has seldom been equalled in New Zealand’s architectural history”. To support this claim, Shaw quotes a reference to ‘new art Yankee notions’ from the Australian magazine *Building*, encapsulating, as it does, exasperation that an American could have won the competition at all.

The Arts Building features in other historical surveys, including Terence Hodgson’s *Looking at the Architecture of New Zealand* (1990) and David McGill’s *Landmarks: Notable Historic Buildings of New Zealand* (1997). Hodgson focuses on the stylistic eclecticism of post-World War I New Zealand architecture, describing the Arts Building as “unusual” even in an eclectic environment and as lacking the “sobriety” of its immediate predecessors. He concentrates on the criticisms of the design, and quotes *NZ Building Progress*’ 1921 comment that the “assertion that English Gothic had anything to do with the design … should make our great English architects turn in their graves”.

McGill, on the other hand, found the Arts Building to be a notable landmark. He suggested that it was “the city’s most photographed building” and that the competition jury deserved public gratitude for choosing this design from the 44 entries. McGill covered all the key criticisms of the design and Lippincott’s defense of it. His conclusion is that Lippincott was responsible for introducing, to New
Zealand, the use of local imagery in decorative elements, and that his impact and influence were fundamental:

Lippincott acquired the grandest New World architectural pedigree. He was the only one to pass that influence directly on to New Zealanders, and so successfully that New Zealand architecture swung away from the Old World to join the new.

McGill’s book also includes an extensive bibliography – including sources on Lippincott.

**Thesis Research and Writing**

Of the four theses that include consideration of the Arts Building, the first two were by fifth-year architecture students and the second two by postgraduate students in art history.

Peter Margetts’ 1978 Bachelor of Architecture (BArch) thesis, “Three Towers of Auckland”, pre-dates the historical surveys discussed above and is the first sustained piece of writing on the Arts Building. It considers it as one of Auckland’s three key landmark towers, along with the Auckland Town Hall and the Auckland Art Gallery (the former Auckland Public Library). Margetts’ concern was that the prominence of the three towers was in jeopardy, because of the construction of increasingly tall buildings in and around each of them.

Margetts commented that early British settlers built their settlements at sites which commanded views of the open sea in order to maintain a connection to Britain. He asserted that in the colonies, settlers initially built in the manner of their homeland. He claimed that this was true for Auckland’s three landmark towers, which were all built within Britain’s “Age of Revivals”. He acknowledged Lippincott’s comment about Wren’s Tom Tower. It is consistent with his own emphasis on New Zealand’s ties to Britain. But Margetts also discussed the influence of Newman College, seeing it in the Auckland building’s textured Mount Somers stone cladding and its stylised Gothic details.

The first, and still most detailed, single source on Lippincott is Alec Bruce’s 1985 BArch thesis, “Roy Alstan Lippincott: An American Connection”. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Vince Terrini, a lecturer in the University of Auckland’s School of Architecture, researched and collated information on Lippincott, from books, articles and official documents through to letters and notes made during conversations. In his BArch thesis, Bruce assembled the information gathered by Terrini, and complemented the material with his own additional research.

Bruce’s main aim was to explain Lippincott’s design philosophy through an analysis of his pedigree and works. He presented a narrative of the architect’s life and career, particularly his American background and New Zealand years. He emphasised the importance of the Chicago School and Lippincott’s lineage back through the Griffins to Wright and, in turn, Sullivan. Bruce considered ideas about organic architecture and ornamentation, and identifies similarities and differences between the work of Lippincott’s various forerunners. He was careful not to overstate the importance of the lineage, however, noting too that Walter Burley Griffin was determined not to be seen as an imitator of Wright and that this had consequences for Lippincott – it denied him “the chance to acknowledge and develop the ingenious means of organizing interior space that Wright employed in his domestic designs”.

Bruce considered the input of the two partners into the design of the Arts Building, commenting that Australian-born Billson had graduated from the University of Melbourne and then worked for the Griffins. He notes that Lippincott moved to Auckland in December 1921 to work on the building, joined by Billson in mid-1923, once construction was underway. Billson lived with Lippincott for about a year, but it was Lippincott who both claimed the design – “Ed Billson worked with me on the
Competition drawings but the basic plan of the Arts Building and the design are wholly mine— and also supervised its construction.

Bruce provides a comprehensive analysis of the Arts Building, including the competition, the design, the two key precedents, the criticisms and Lippincott’s rebuttals. He described the building as being ‘simultaneously primitive and sophisticated’— primitive because it is directly expressive (organic), and sophisticated because it knowingly reinterprets and distorts an existing architectural style (late Gothic). He made the point that Lippincott, like Griffin, was well aware of the Collegiate Gothic tradition and that Americans had reinterpreted Gothic construction far less literally than Newman College, before Newman College was even commissioned.

After discussing Lippincott’s later buildings, Bruce concluded that the Arts Building and the Smith & Caughey Building in Auckland’s Queen Street are the architect’s best works. He found his subsequent work to be more conventional, and is left to ponder why Lippincott might have become less experimental in the later part of his career.

The American connection is further explored by Ann McEwan in her 1993 paper, ‘R. A. Lippincott: A Modernist American Architect in New Zealand,’ published during her PhD enrolment and thus also informing her 2001 thesis, “An ‘American Dream’ in the ‘England of the Pacific:’ American Influences on New Zealand Architecture, 1840-1940”. In the paper, she discussed Lippincott’s contribution to New Zealand architecture, his reception by local architects and his importance within the development of modernism in New Zealand during the inter-war period. She does discuss the Arts Building, but in less detail than the other sources in this review.

Expanding on Bruce’s detailed work on Lippincott, Sandra Anne Falconer further explores Lippincott’s life and works in her 1993 Master of Arts (MA) thesis, “The Maori Gothic Wedding Cake”. This thesis outlined his years with the Griffins and in New Zealand, before focusing on the Arts Building and its sources. It provides more detail on the design competition, including the other designs that were submitted, than the other sources. Falconer’s discussion of the Arts Building is then explicitly concerned with ornament.

In addition to Sullivan and Wright, Falconer considered the influence of Henry Hobson Richardson and Marion Mahony Griffin on Lippincott. She notes that Mahony Griffin had been responsible for some of Wright’s early decorative work, and that Lippincott was influenced by her ideas about decoration. In her own designs, however, Mahony Griffin tended to use abstract, geometric patterns and although the Griffins both had a keen botanical knowledge, this did not necessarily appear in their ornamentation, because they preferred geometric forms, prisms and crystals. Falconer argued that the Griffins influenced Lippincott the most – both the geometric planning of Walter Burley Griffin and the detailing of Marion Mahony Griffin. Falconer even claims that it was Burley Griffin who suggested that Lippincott look to Wren’s Tom Tower as a source of massing for the Arts Building.

While Falconer titled her thesis ‘The Maori Gothic Wedding Cake’, she disputed the use of the term “Maori Gothic” to describe the Arts Building, explaining that although Lippincott later incorporated Maori motifs into his buildings, he did not use any such elements in this one; the flora and fauna are native but they are nothing like the geometric forms used in Maori art. Falconer wrote: ‘it seems that at that time, the mere inclusion of elements native to New Zealand was enough to be “Maori”.’ Falconer recognised the important role of the sculptor Richard Gross, who produced the ornament in all of Lippincott’s public buildings, including the Arts Building. She also acknowledged Lippincott’s support for Arts and Crafts principles in general and Gesamtkunstwerk in particular:
The architect's concern for total control of the building's details, the respect for the materials used, the simplicity of the furniture designs, and the exposed timber beams, all look back to philosophy of the Arts and Crafts.  

Falconer concluded that it was Lippincott's ornament that made his buildings unique — more specifically, the native sources that he used in his ornament, as these clearly identified the buildings as belonging to New Zealand. His buildings did not ignore historical precedent, she says, but they developed it and were different from their historical sources. He experimented with material, forms, textures and colours and in doing so, developed his own style of ornament.

More Recent Scholarship
In 2004, the Auckland War Memorial Museum hosted an exhibition on the Arts Building. To support this initiative, Architecture New Zealand published a collection of short essays on the architect and the building, by art historian Don Bassett, design historian Douglas Lloyd Jenkins, Auckland Museum curator of applied arts Louis Le Vaillant, Perth-based Griffin scholar Christopher Vernon and University of Auckland librarian Jane Wild. The essays together effectively served as an exhibition catalogue. In addition to a biographical overview, this catalogue considered the totality of Lippincott's repertoire, including buildings as well as interiors, furniture and gardens. It also explores the progression of Lippincott's ornamentation after the Arts Building.

Christopher Vernon, like Falconer, emphasised the importance of Marion Mahony Griffin as Lippincott's first professional mentor. He traced Lippincott's embrace of the Griffins' way of employing native vegetation in design, "as a means to conserve and accentuate the significance of place". He noted that Griffin had acknowledged that New Zealand's flora had captured his eye: "He explained that he "liked Australian trees, but not in New Zealand, which had the most wonderful flora of its own, and that was what one wanted to see when one went there". Vernon concluded that of all the Griffins' buildings, Newman College most informed Lippincott's career direction, because it conceived architecture and landscape together, and that while sharing many of the design ideals of the Griffins, Lippincott was innovative in his own right:

Most notably, he enlarged and transformed the Griffins' appreciation of indigenous landscape as a design source. For Lippincott, indigenous sources informed not only landscape design, but also architecture.

Jane Wild focuses on the competition, the associated controversy and Lippincott's defence of the original design. Douglas Lloyd Jenkins discussed the similarities between the Arts Building and Lippincott's later Biology Building, also for the University of Auckland. Lloyd Jenkins then suggested that although Lippincott told Aucklanders that he modelled his clock-tower on Oxford's Tom Tower, this was "an architectural red herring". Pursuing Sinclair's and Hodgson's questioning of Lippincott's assertion, he wrote:

That the Tom Tower reference was a deflection must have been obvious to anyone standing inside the Arts Building. On the floor of the double height space, surrounded by individually designed decorative motifs that only notionally nodded to the Gothic and distinctive purpose-built furniture of every description, it must have been apparent that the building had little to do with Oxbridge traditions. No other Auckland room of the mid-1920s can have seemed as strangely, perversely and originally modern as this one.

Louis Le Vaillant then details the Arts Building furniture. He stated that Lippincott was a "do-it-all designer," and that "the totality of his treatment for the interior of the building remains unparalleled in New Zealand architectural history". In a second article, Jane Wild sketched Lippincott's other educational buildings, commercial and residential work in Auckland, and his return to the United
The final article, by Don Bassett, focuses on ornamentation – the geometric ornamentation of the Smith & Caughey Building, the naturalistic ornamentation of the Arts Building and the more crystalline ornamentation of Lippincott’s Berlei Factory.

Conclusion

The literature on the Arts Building is comparatively full and thorough. The building has long been recognised for its heritage value; it has an established place within historical surveys of New Zealand architecture; and it and its architects have been the subject of sustained examination by two fifth year architecture students and two postgraduate students in art history. Most of the literature focuses on the importance of Lippincott’s pedigree and the associated American influences, culminating in 2004 in the exhibition and associated essays by the multi-disciplinary team of Don Bassett, Douglas Lloyd Jenkins, Louis Le Vaillant, Christopher Vernon and Jane Wild. The collection of essays is the most succinct and comprehensive account of the building and its various points of interest; it is the only text that pursues the totality of Lippincott’s approach to design.

For those wanting to go beyond the secondary sources, original drawings of the building, correspondence and newspaper clippings are held in the Architecture Archive at the University of Auckland. The various entries in the 1920-21 design competition were published in NZ Building Progress in November 1921, and photographs of the building as built can be found in various collections, including the University of Auckland Library, the Auckland Central Library and the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington.

The authors who have written on the Arts Building bring differing degrees of knowledge and understanding of the work of the Griffins, Wright and Sullivan to their interpretation of the Auckland building, but it is really in the extent to which Lippincott did or did not take inspiration from Wren’s Tom Tower that the authors disagree with each other. Some have accepted the comment at face value, whereas Keith Sinclair, Terence Hodgson and Douglas Lloyd Jenkins have all questioned it, with Lloyd Jenkins in particular implying that the reference was an example of post-rationalisation; an attempt to placate the critics who wanted an English rather than American building.

The Arts Building is unusual in having been considered both historicist and overly decorated as well as new, unusual, freakish and “perversely and originally modern”. There is in fact comparatively little direct quotation within the design. Lippincott used a range of sources and manipulated them to effect, showing him to have been an original and creative designer. Perhaps it was as a result of the initial public reaction and controversy that he opted to pursue more conventional work in the years that followed its completion: not everyone is comfortable having to defend themselves in the public arena. The building remains atypical and thus distinctive within the New Zealand context. This contributes to its landmark status and its ready identification with the University of Auckland – valuable attributes for marketing and branding purposes.

As a postscript, the recent research on the history of the University’s School of Architecture and Planning has revealed Lippincott’s role as an early supporter of the School – if not as a studio teacher, then at least as a critic, including in the absence of the Dean, Cyril Knight, when he travelled overseas. Knight was an Australian who had trained at the University of Liverpool and then lived in New York while completing an MA on that city’s housing. He, his colleagues in the School and the students must surely have appreciated Lippincott’s American pedigree and experience: he was as close as Auckland got to having a Chicago School architect.

The research and writing of this paper was supported by a University of Auckland Summer Research Scholarship, awarded to Bree Meyers by the Faculty of Creative Arts and Industries in 2016.
Endnotes


4 “New Arts Building: The Work to Proceed; Question of the Tower; Minister and Council; Reply by Architects,” New Zealand Herald, August 9, (1921); 8. Architecture Archive, University of Auckland Library, LP2 Box A5, File 3.

5 “New Arts Building,” 8.


7 M. Alec Bruce, “Roy Alston Lippincott: An American Connection,” BArch thesis, University of Auckland, March 1985, 55. Bruce refers to an Auckland University College Students’ Association meeting on July 20, 1925, during which Lippincott defended the design.

8 See, for example, Auckland Star, June 2, 1921; New Zealand Herald, June 2, 1921; New Zealand Herald, June 8, 1921; New Zealand Herald, June 11, 1921; New Zealand Herald, June 21, 1921; Auckland Star, July 26, 1921; New Zealand Herald, July 27, 1921; New Zealand Herald, August 9, 1921; New Zealand Herald, September 10, 1921.


10 Sinclair, A History of the University of Auckland, 128. Sinclair does not provide his source.

11 Sinclair, A History of the University of Auckland, 128. Sinclair does not provide his source.


13 Sinclair, A History of the University of Auckland, 124-29.

14 Sinclair, A History of the University of Auckland, 127.

15 Sinclair, A History of the University of Auckland, 128.

16 Sinclair, A History of the University of Auckland, 128.

17 Sinclair, A History of the University of Auckland, 128.

18 Sinclair, A History of the University of Auckland, 128.

19 Sinclair, A History of the University of Auckland, 128.

20 Shaw, New Zealand Architecture, 116.

21 Shaw, New Zealand Architecture, 110.

22 Shaw, New Zealand Architecture, 111.


24 New Zealand Building Progress (November 1921) quoted in Hodgson, Looking at the Architecture of New Zealand, 53.


31 Bruce, “Roy Alston Lippincott”.


33 Bruce, “Roy Alston Lippincott,” 2-42.

34 Bruce, “Roy Alston Lippincott,” 179.

35 Bruce, “Roy Alston Lippincott,” 38.


37 Bruce, “Roy Alston Lippincott,” 52-56.

38 Bruce, “Roy Alston Lippincott,” 55.


41 Falconer, “The Maori Gothic Wedding Cake”.
44 Falconer, “The Maori Gothic Wedding Cake,” 56.
46 Falconer, “The Maori Gothic Wedding Cake,” 43.
64 Lucy Treep, “‘A School of Architecture for the Dominion’: The First Years,’ in Gatley and Treep (eds), The Auckland School, 35.
Helen Maxwell (ヘレン・マクスウェル Heren Makusuweru) is one of five playable characters in Clock Tower. She is nicknamed Teach by her co-worker Stan Gotts. As a part of the criminal research group, Helen becomes involved in the Clock Tower case. She develops a close relationship with survivor Jennifer Simpson, eventually becoming Jennifer's legal guardian. Their relationship is more sisterly in nature instead of a maternal one.

Tower of London, royal fortress and London landmark. Its buildings and grounds served historically as a royal palace, a political prison, a place of execution, an arsenal, a royal mint, a menagerie, and a public records office. It is located on the north bank of the River Thames. It is located on the north bank of the River Thames, in the extreme western portion of the borough of Tower Hamlets, on the border with the central City of London. The Tower of London and the River Thames. The earliest part of the fortification, the White Tower (centre right), was built in the 11th century and was later topped by four cupolas; the Traitors' Gate (centre left) dates from the 13th century. Dennis Marsico/Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. Britannica Quiz. The Tower comprises several towers and the Jewel House where the Crown Jewels are kept and available on public display. The Bloody Tower is believed to be the scene of the murder of Edward V and his brother, the Duke of York. Some terrible deeds took place in the grim tower. The White Tower, a massive building inside the walls, was the place where Kings of England held their Court. It was built by William the Conqueror to protect and control the City of London. It is the oldest and the most important building, surrounded by other towers, which all have different names. Tower Bridge is close by.