

## Outline of Biography

Ian Athfield was born in Christchurch and graduated from Auckland School of Architecture in 1963. He worked in Auckland and was a partner in Structon in 1965 and then became principle partner in Athfield Architects in Wellington in 1968. For a long time he focussed on domestic architecture but by the 1980s he had become known for large projects and he is now one of New Zealand's top architects. He liked doing big buildings because he is interested in having a positive impact on cities and in the twenty first century he had been involved in some big urban projects, including the Bangkok Railway.

### Three Stages

Athfield's early work has close links to his New Zealand upbringing, especially growing up in Christchurch and his work shows strong influence from Warren Mahoney and their Brutalism. 1

As Athfield became a mature architect he used more international influences in his work which he gained from his oversea travel in big cities America and Asia. In the last decade Athfield has been involved in many civic projects which he used to show his belief that architects can have a positive impact on urban environments.

### 1970s Moves away from focussing on domestic work and begins designing high-rise buildings.



**The Arlington Flats (1970)** was one of Athfield's first high rise commissions. It is a tall reinforced white concrete building with a facade which is given interest by its square windows and receding balconies. At one end there are glass lounges which are cantilevered out from the building and the other end of the building the service tower has a decorative top. The irregular shapes are a bit like the shapes in Athfield's houses of the time like his own house in Wellington but not as curved. The blocky shape of the building is a bit like some of Warren and Mahoney's brutalism flat buildings and shows the influence that these top Christchurch architects were still having in his work. You can also see he has looked at Le Corbusier's *Unite d'Habitation*. This all shows that he is learning to build big buildings and using other people's ideas. 2 3

**1990s -2000 Period Dominated by Commercial work. Athfield was busy in the expansion of Wellington and other New Zealand cities.**



This is the Telecom Building in 1988 and it is very different from the first building. By this stage Athfield was recognised as a major New Zealand architect so he is making a big statement. This building was built in a boom period when New Zealanders had big ideas and wanted their cities to look like international ones and there were lots of glass walled skyscrapers like this being built in Wellington at this time. The building has a strong simple shape with smooth sides with lots of glass like an international style building. It is more restrained and shows that Athfield wants the building to fit into the urban landscape and you can see how well it matches the glass curtain wall in the back ground. This world-class designer who can design buildings in contemporary corporate style like this building which look like it has three towers and covers a whole block. It has a shopping plaza down below and Athfield has been influenced by the big high-rise shopping plaza building he has seen in America and Asia.