

3rd year study urban acupuncture

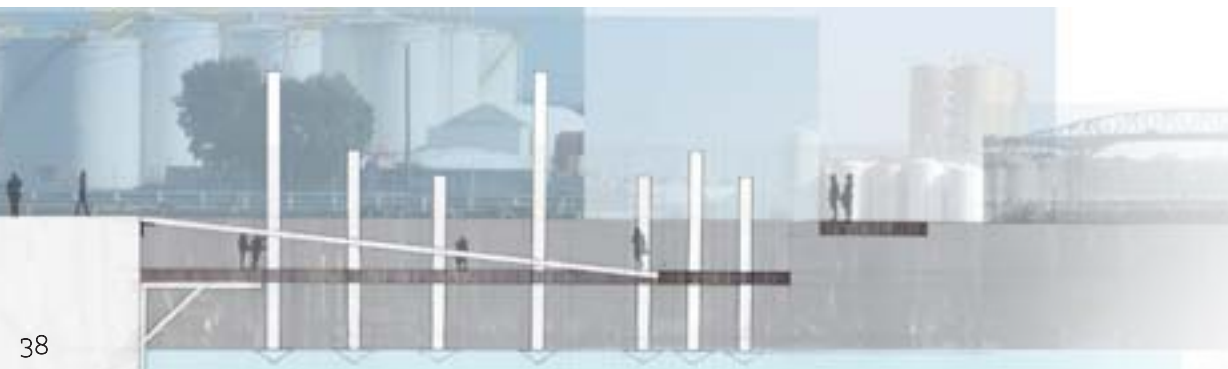


Urban design tends to focus on a transformation of space to engage or enrich some function of everyday living, and this is usually achieved through some form of designed urban intervention. The central question for this project was to discover what critical level of difference was required to achieve good urban design. Was it simply a matter of a different surface? Or is it a re-deployment of some existing model of urbanism. The task was to find the fulcrum of the site, and leverage the design intervention to create the best possible solution for enlivening the Victoria-Wynyard precinct.



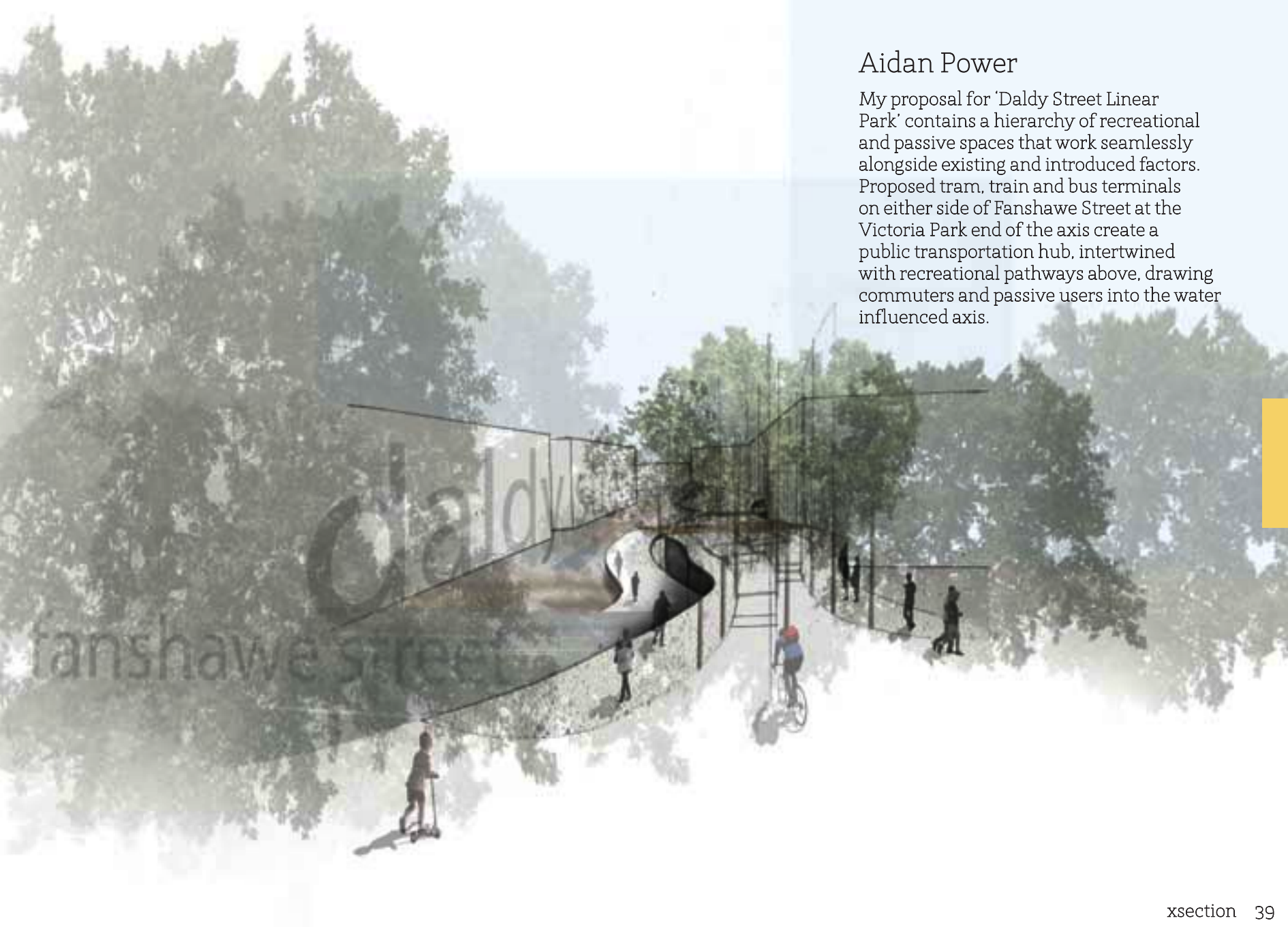
Dave Parker


The aim was to design a space that encourages users to engage with the existing factors of the site, creating an experience with the history and finer details that give the site its unique waterfront character. Fluctuation of tidal levels was used to create this experience with the waterfront, creating different experiences with the water at different tides. An inclusion of a water taxi terminal creates a site that would be passed through in a matter of minutes, therefore 3 separate spaces were designed to create a short, medium and long public engagement with the waterfront.



Aidan Power

My proposal for 'Daldy Street Linear Park' contains a hierarchy of recreational and passive spaces that work seamlessly alongside existing and introduced factors. Proposed tram, train and bus terminals on either side of Fanshawe Street at the Victoria Park end of the axis create a public transportation hub, intertwined with recreational pathways above, drawing commuters and passive users into the water influenced axis.





Thomas Keal

Landscape architecture is capitalizing on the value hidden within the landscape. Landscape architects manipulate landform to guide people's movement and views. In this project I made people aware of the value of our harbour by framing the view of the bridge and connecting people to the water. The barges are able to be moved to redefine public space. Connecting people to the water will also create awareness of the bigger issues which landscape architects face, such as cleaning the harbour water and environmental change.



John Allan

Within an overall masterplan that connects Auckland to its waterfront, this design intervention offers various opportunities to interact with water. The area provides multiple functions - a ferry and water taxi terminal, bar and cafe areas, public lookouts, finger piers and an interactive water feature to rival Princess Diana's memorial. The sunken courtyard, surrounded by waterfalls, produces a Paley Park like atmosphere, while a transparent sea wall allows the public to monitor the shifting tide.



diversity in the field

Stephen Quin

The purpose of local government is:

- (a) to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and
- (b) to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities, in the present and for the future. (Local Government Act 2002)

There are 24 landscape architects currently working across a range of divisions within Auckland Council, including its council controlled organisations (CCOs). These include Parks, Sports and Recreation Department, Waterfront Auckland, Community and Cultural Policy, the Built Environment Unit and the CBD Transformation Projects team.

Using a recent example of the Myers Park Development Plan, this paper suggests that the diverse multi-disciplinary approach of landscape architecture plays a crucial role in enabling the stated purpose of local government.

The Myers Park Development Plan is an initiative of the publicly elected Waitemata Local Board. The design team within the Parks, Sports and Recreation Department (a team of seven landscape architects) were asked to lead and deliver this plan each having influences across a wide range of

disciplines including visual arts, engineering, natural and cultural sciences. Landscape architects are an important resource when there are ideas to be formulated that are influenced by, and will influence, a range of perceptions, uses and qualities relating to natural and cultural landscapes.

Myers Park is located in the heart of Auckland's CBD, occupying a gully system formed by the Waihorotiu Stream - a valuable kaimoana source for Maori, before being piped and covered in the late nineteenth century. In reaction to developing slum-like conditions in the CBD, and under influence of the 'City Beautiful' movement of the time, former Mayor, Arthur Myers, donated the land to the people of Auckland in 1913 declaring: "The surroundings of our people should not only be healthy from every point of view, but as far as possible, the beautiful both in art and nature should enter into them. Nature should be brought as near to our citizens and their children as possible in a town".

The original Myers Park masterplan developed by then Superintendent of Parks, Thomas Pearson, served the city well, particularly as a park for children after the Myers Kindergarten was built there in 1917. However, after nearly a





century of development and changing uses in and surrounding the park, Myers Park has become isolated from its central city environment, severed by the Mayoral Drive overbridge and shadowed by surrounding tall buildings. It is a known trouble spot, suffering from anti-social behaviour at times. Despite this, the park remains highly valued by a broad range of people and organisations that hold various interests and associations with the park.

To create a plan to reinvigorate the park in time for its centenarian birthday, the design team undertook a process of participation to capture and understand the diverse and often competing interests in the park. Internal and external stakeholders were identified, and a specialist research firm was engaged to explore current park users and uses, as well as possible future uses. A series of workshops were held, where surrounding residents and business people mixed with users of the park. Participants were taken for a guided tour, where the history and current issues were explained, and this was followed by brainstorming sessions looking at short and long-term ideas. Key stakeholders were also interviewed by the research firm.

This process of public and stakeholder collaboration enabled Auckland council's landscape architects to develop a shared understanding of the park's issues, values, associations and aspirations. Perhaps more so than other professions, the breadth of influences and disciplines related to landscape architecture enables an

understanding of a range of views and stories. This ability to understand and listen, coupled with creativity and problem-solving skills, allows landscape architects to interpret this community feedback into designs that are responsive to the landscape context, including natural and cultural values and processes.

Preliminary ideas for Myers Park were tested at a public open day and through an interactive web page, encouraging feedback and critique. Concepts were refined and then reported to the Waitemata Local Board for their approval. The Myers Park Development Plan was approved in August 2012, guiding a programme of park improvement projects that will re-establish the original values of the park.

In conclusion, this paper suggests that the diverse multi-disciplinary training of landscape architecture plays an important and often crucial role in enabling and promoting the purpose of local government. Therefore, as a landscape architect within Auckland Council, the question – 'what is landscape architecture?' for me, is intrinsically linked with this purpose.

Stephen Quinn is a senior landscape architect who was trained at Unitec and has five years experience working at Auckland Council on a range of open space policies and capital delivery projects.

Image of Myers Park development plan supplied by the author.

a plea for permeability

Renee Davies

When asked about professional challenges at a recent landscape congress, landscape architect Kathryn Gustafson commented that “We need to be more permeable – how we work with others, creating teams and collaborating. Like diversity is good for the planet, diversity in our profession is good”. In relation to the topic of ‘what landscape architecture is’, the ambition of permeability seems appropriate and timely.

As a profession, we make our environments more permeable for people and wildlife, and our influence, whether recognised as landscape architecture or not, does in fact permeate through all aspects of our lives. What is missing from this all pervading influence is a voice to de-mystify that relationship – the communication of landscape. It is not a matter of doing more – we are doing – the challenge is building visibility, ownership of the outcomes and influence of that global activity. We often bemoan our lack of voice in the world, but there are ways we can and are raising the voice of landscape within the

global arena. The International Landscape Convention is one such move to strengthen the visibility and permeability of landscape. It has been driven by the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) alongside organisations such as UNESCO and aims to highlight the global threats to landscape that transcend political and physical boundaries. A point of difference is the Conventions recognition that the landscapes of the everyday are just as relevant as those of national or international significance, such as world heritage sites or in the New Zealand context, ‘outstanding natural landscapes’. As stated in the Convention it is these “everyday landscapes, the social, economic and physical context of our lives” that have the most value to us but are threatened with cumulative erosion of quality.

As highlighted by Sim van der Ryn and Stuart Cowan in *Ecological Design* “We live in two interpenetrating worlds. The first is the living world, which has been forged in an evolutionary crucible over a period of



Image by student Andrew Priestley from his Auckland Waterfront ‘moveable market’ concept.

four billion years. The second is the world of roads and cities, farms and artifacts, that people have been designing for themselves over the last few millennia. The condition that threatens both worlds – unsustainability – results from a lack of integration between them”.

The Convention helps us to articulate to a broad audience the potential of landscape as a tool for sustainable development that supports and empowers local communities. It also deals with the idea of landscape as a whole space (rural, urban, wilderness, man-made, treasured and degraded) in order to give it strength. Most importantly it highlights the relationship people have with landscape in a holistic and integrated view that sits above the compartmentalised nature of landscape that is so often presented. It ensures that we recognise landscape as who

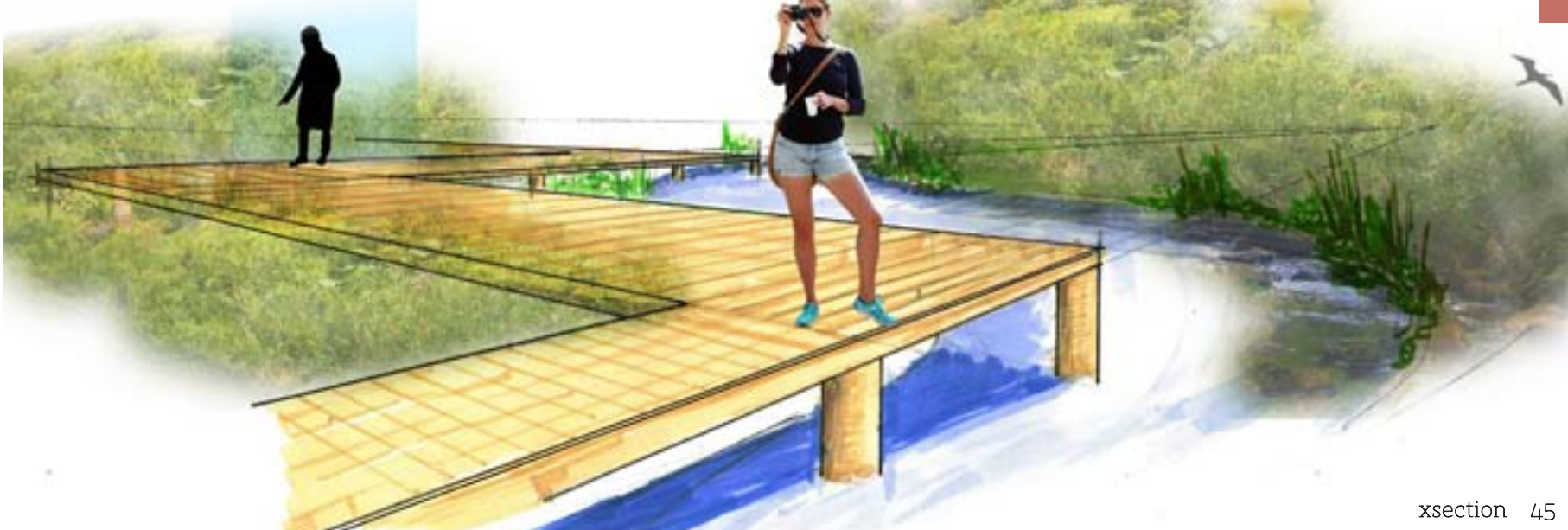
we are and not just where we live. It is this notion of landscape permeating all things that holds the most power for our future, both as communities living within and professionals working with.

Here is the opportunity to raise our voice in unison for landscape, to articulate a shared vision, to de-mystify landscape and facilitate local, national and global permeability.

Sign the change petition to support the International Landscape Convention at: <http://www.change.org/petitions/international-federation-of-landscape-architects-support-of-international-landscape-convention-ilc> and for more information see the following Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/International-Landscape-Convention/258725614140161>.

Renee is the Head of the Landscape Architecture Department at Unitec. She is also a Fellow Member of the NZILA.

Image by student Tamatoa Taruia from his Negotiated Study project, “Localised Sustainable Eco-Tourism”.





negotiated study

Negotiated Study ultimately aims to contribute realistic landscape architectural solutions through the process of an in-depth year long research project.

This process demonstrates the development of personal philosophy and landscape architectural strategies. Investigation commences with the identification of an issue of interest. These typically concern a pre-existing problem of the landscape discipline and importantly, to ensure motivation, one of critical interest to the student. Mark making, modelling and other explorative representational strategies are then applied in the investigation. The process also includes contextualisation in terms of the relevant theory and practise, which culminates in the presentation of the results to critics and peers.

If this years Bachelor of Landscape Architecture Negotiated Study is anything to go by then perhaps landscape architecture is a practice that aims to (among other things):

- enhance biodiversity
- protect fragile ecologies
- mitigate sea level rise
- integrate and optimize food production
- facilitate an effective response to emergency events
- harvest and clean water
- improve soil quality
- neutralise and reuse waste
- interconnect transport systems
- provide public amenity

Image kindly supplied by NZTA.

parametric landscapes

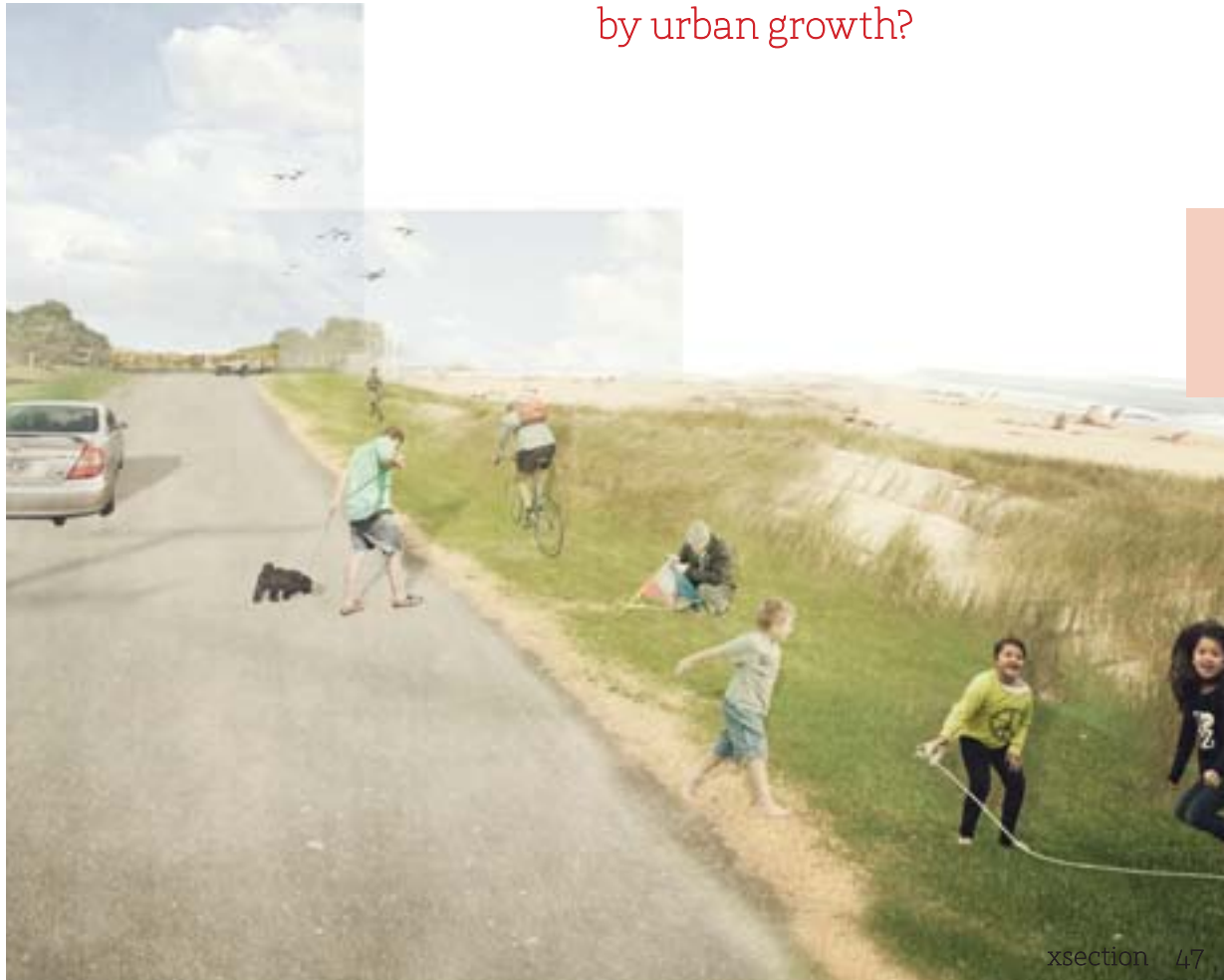
Kieran Dove

For this research project I looked at the potentials of parametric design as a landscape architectural tool.

Parametric design is the process of designing in an environment where design variations are effortless, thus replacing singularity with multiplicity in the design process. For my research I employed parametric design concepts in designing the greenfield coastal community of Patau North which has an expected population of 5,000 people over the next 50 years.

The real value of parametric design is not so much in generating geometry, but in offering instantaneous feedback of master plan design information and analysis during the design process. This combined with the effortless testing of the feasibility of designs can add to the quality of the urban environment.

How can parametric/
generative design processes
aid in designing coastal
communities that are affected
by urban growth?



in a new light

Alex Smith

How can a knowledge of light and its properties be used to inform the design of public space and encourage its utilisation throughout the day and at all times of the year?

Due to its importance to our sense of sight, light can play a defining role in our formation of a perception of a place, deciding whether we find it attractive to use. In the process of designing New Lynn's proposed Clay Pit Park, a consideration of the opportunities and constraints light and its properties could pose offered insights into how the aim of high public utilisation could be achieved.

The use of extensive sun studies, a detailed analysis of the interaction of light with materials and forms and the consideration of a detailed lighting strategy, informed the design of the park. This ensured it would provide the environmental qualities people find attractive in a public space throughout the day and over the course of a year.

By making Clay Pit Park a desirable place to visit regularly, it is hoped that the lives of the local residents of the surrounding high density development will be enriched.



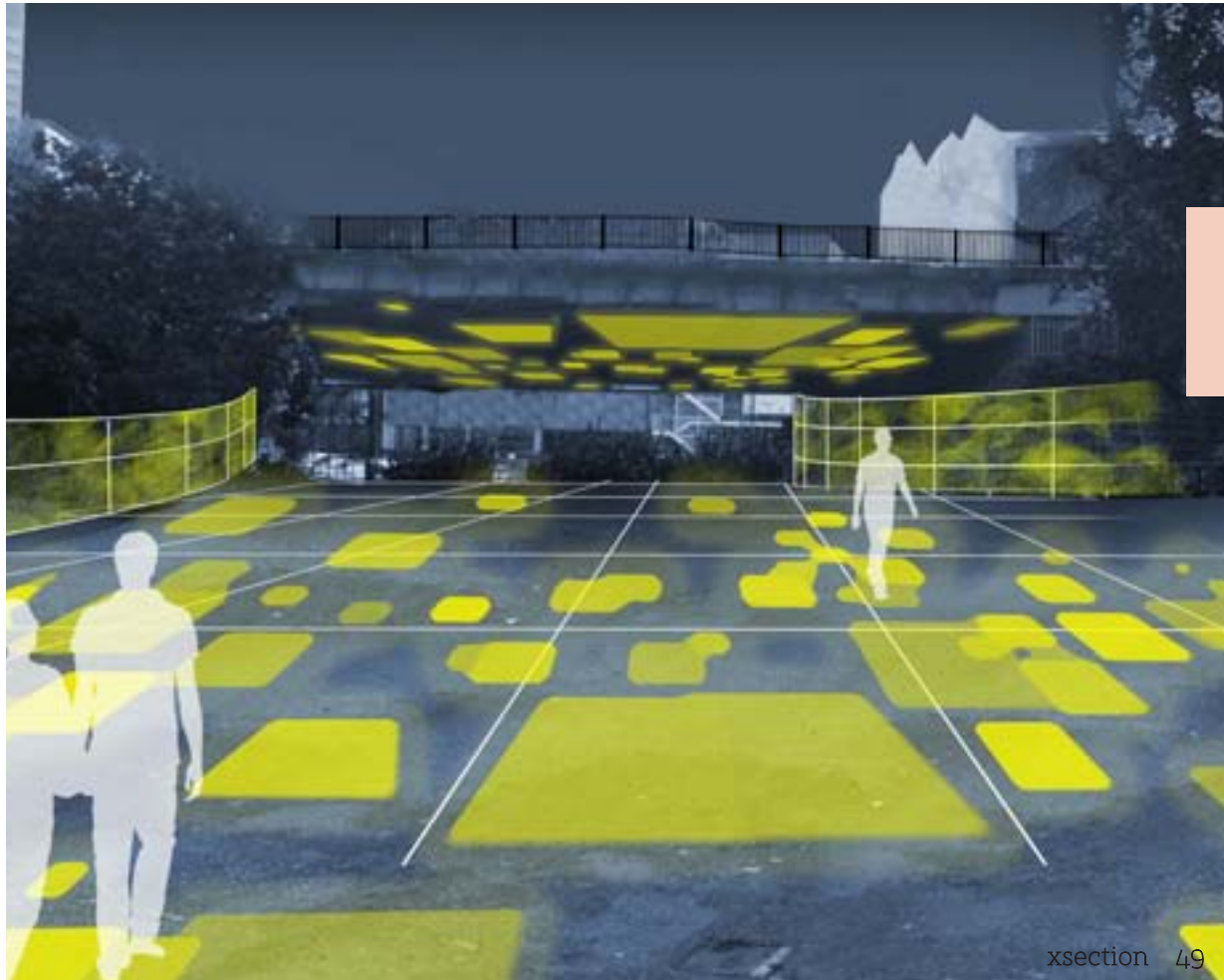
design for the subconscious mind

Helena Downey

What is the relevance of neuromarketing to the profession of landscape architecture?

Myers Park is an open space in Auckland where I tested the concept of implementing neuromarketing. Neuromarketing is a concept, which works with our 5 senses of vision, taste, smell, touch and hearing. The concept is based on a model where 95% of our decisions and emotions are made through our subconscious mind. The theory aims to manipulate brain activity and inspire the desired reaction of a person's perception.

I explored neuromarketing techniques and gathered an understanding of how they have an effect within the profession of landscape architecture. I addressed individual issues surrounding the overall perception of Myers Park and as a direct response. I designed individual spaces that the mind is subconsciously drawn to. I concluded that this process could form a positive shift in the way people perceive a landscape, whilst responding to Auckland's urban growth matters.



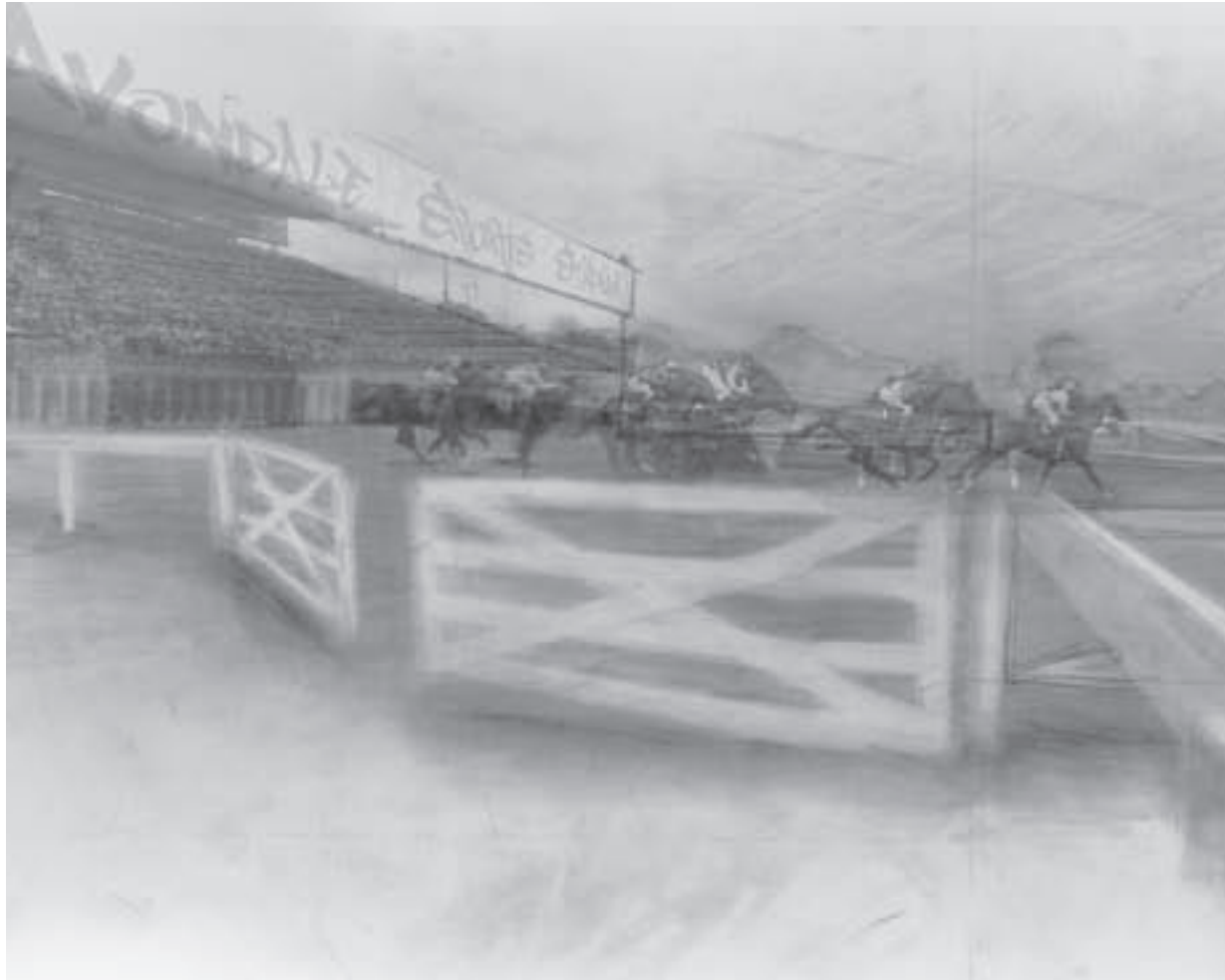
mashup urbanism

Heather Docherty

Can mashup urbanism establish specific, local spatially based public-private partnerships in order to develop a model of future Auckland urbanism that implements objectives of the Auckland plan?

By 2040, the Auckland Plan sets the goal of making Auckland the 'world's most liveable city' by developing a high-quality, compact urban environment. This study provides an alternative community renewal model that aims to support and intensify the unique links within local communities, in order to stimulate the exchange of local ideas, goods and services. A model was made to define the intersection between local community identity and the Auckland Council's public-private partnership strategy.

This research project employs the case study of Avondale, identified as a key urban renewal project area within Auckland. It describes how this new urban design model can work to retain the diversity of local Auckland communities and finds compelling incentives for public, private and community stakeholders to engage. The result is enriched, locally specific physical and social networks: landscape architectural expressions relevant to the local community that positively support Auckland's long-term strategic goal.



the hidden playground

Rhys Pemberton

How can degraded fabrics activate laneways as public space?

There is often a misconception between graffiti and 'street art'. Currently Auckland City has a zero tolerance on graffiti, while cities like Melbourne show how, in the right context, 'street art' can work in a positive manner, creating a sense of place and spaces people want to interact with. By tapping into Britomart's café and bar scene, this research showed how street art can transform laneway spaces.

The laneways mix public and private areas, with the potential to link Auckland's developing shared space network and other urban realms together.



the green mile

Di Huang

How can disused infrastructure be retrofitted to make new public space for local communities?

This project illustrates how design on unused infrastructure can contribute to the wider community. The chosen site runs along the old Auckland motorway Nelson Street off ramp that is currently unused. The proposed design addresses issues related to the potential surrounding users and improves the accessibility of non-motorized transport to the site which enables a distinctly different open public space from other elevated public spaces in Auckland.

The proposed site will act as a new “hub” for K Road quarter with the addition of higher pedestrian and cycling amenities while creating a safer public space that runs along the old unused off ramp.



landscape + humanity

Ryan Aldrich

How can public open space be designed to respond effectively to the phases of emergency events?

Civil emergencies are inevitable events. Landscape architects through planning and design can prepare cities for times of disaster. Approaching open space as emergency shelter is an established field in China and Japan. Analysis of these spaces can inform the planning and design of open public space in Christchurch.

Improving access and awareness of 'safe' open space with installation of independent infrastructure and supplies at key locations as well as ground improvement techniques facilitates effective response to emergency events. This improved function and efficiency during the phases of emergency events, ultimately results in the saving of human life and alleviation of suffering.



risk aversion and the diminishment of design

Dr Nathan Perkins

Henry Petrowski, an historian of engineering, has persuasively argued that fundamental advances in engineering, from bridges to tunnels, are often the result of failure. What he means is that as engineers have sought to get the most from the least. There have been occasions where trying to do too much with too little has resulted in failure, sometimes catastrophic failure. It is these failures that advance engineering design as a whole because if success was the only criterion, bridges might still be Roman arches. Petrowski's point is that risk, and occasionally failure is an essential element for historical advances in engineering.

Most designers, I suspect, think of themselves and their work in substantially different terms than engineers, and yet, most designers would agree that risk is central to the design endeavour.

Design after all, in the words of Erv Zube, is a "hypothesis waiting to be tested". Experimentation and creating novel, unique work is what drives many designers and unique, untested design is inherently more of a risk than mimicking what has been done before.

Unfortunately risk, and risk taking among designers and their work seems to be declining and the result is a pervasive globalization of design, a loss of the spectacular vernacular and a standardization of the everyday places that we inhabit. Housing estates, urban waterfronts and franchise freeways now exhibit the same qualities from Toronto to Auckland.

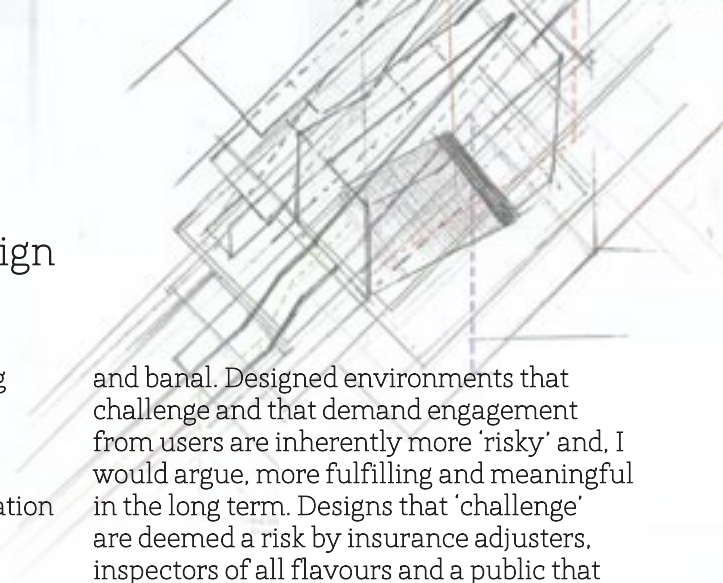
The causes for this are education cultures that reward success (read lack of failure) and professional cultures that must respond to risk averse institutions from insurance companies to municipal councils. For the latter, the threat of possible litigation pushes design to the lowest potential risk. For the former educators and students shy away from risk and potential failure because the system is predicated on getting it right and not stretching the possible. Ken Robinson has spoken eloquently on the necessity of embracing risk and accepting failure as a normal and frequent educational companion to success.

The longer-term result of a risk-averse design community responding to a risk-averse constituency is design that is safe, predictable

and banal. Designed environments that challenge and that demand engagement from users are inherently more 'risky' and, I would argue, more fulfilling and meaningful in the long term. Designs that 'challenge' are deemed a risk by insurance adjusters, inspectors of all flavours and a public that wants to be immune to accidents and other unforeseen and unexpected surprises. It is, however, those safe and certain environments that are so often found to be lifeless, soulless and uninspiring to the people who demanded them in the first place.

To create environments that most people want (but they just don't know it!) requires that risk and the potential for failure be accepted firstly in schools of design, secondly by the professional community and lastly, by clients, including the public and government.

Schools of design, such as Unitec, have the opportunity to teach future practitioners that embracing risk and risking failure are essential elements of design education. Challenging students to risk, to experiment and to be creative while ensuring a soft landing for failure ensures that soon to be professionals have an expanded palette of



imagination and creativity and are willing to take creative chances (AKA risks). It is relatively easy to simply teach standards, hard guidelines and fixed protocols and indeed these are the basis for competent and enduring design. Yet it is the novel and the serendipitous, the outrageous and the sublime that should not be lost along the way.

Nathan Perkins, PhD and FASLA is a professor and the Bachelor of Landscape Architecture coordinator at the University of Guelph in Canada

Images by student Denice Dominguez from her 'Quay Street re-design' project.

Petrowski, H. (2012) To forgive design: Understanding failure. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.

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synopsis

What is landscape architecture?

As Matthew Bradbury states in the opening article Auckland Ecologies 'The aim is to look at Auckland City as a test bed for multidisciplinary researchers to recast the history of Auckland...' xsection magazine plays an important role in this endeavour as an instrument of communication and as a tool for the dissemination of landscape architectural discourse.

Emerging from the articles in this edition are a number of responses to the question: what is landscape architecture? They include:

+ landscape architecture is concerned with communication, not only of landscape documentation, but perhaps more importantly how we as landscape architects communicate within our practices and with the public

+ landscape architecture can act as mechanism for a sustainable culture

+ the virtual landscape world is the real landscape world

+ landscape architecture as a means for clarity of distinction

+ landscape architecture is context

+ landscape architecture is a discipline where conflicting agents can be united

+ landscape architecture is not only concerned with physicality, but also with future planning

+ landscape architecture is how a place feels rather than what it looks like

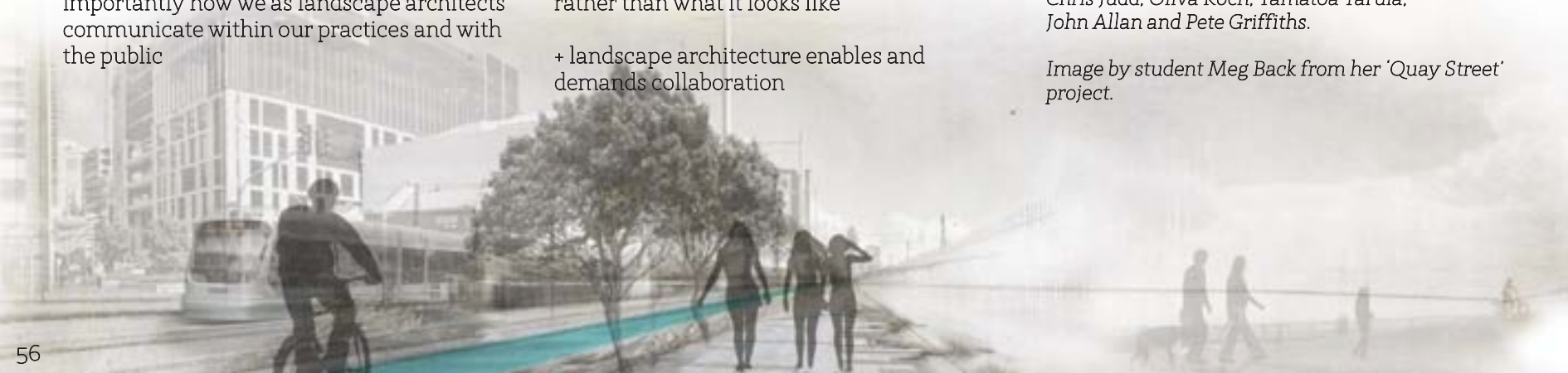
+ landscape architecture enables and demands collaboration

+ more than any other design discipline landscape architecture is concerned with people.

Landscape architecture is summed up by Dr. Nathan Perkins as a discipline where 'to create environments that most people want... requires that risk and the potential for failure to be accepted...' Perhaps this publication demonstrates that landscape architecture in Auckland, both in an academic sense and a professional sense, displays that element of risk, which enables dexterous, interesting, moving, and inspiring design. Auckland's landscape architecture is growing in strength and variety must be encouraged and promoted.

*xsection team 2012,
Chris Judd, Oliva Koch, Tamatoa Taruia,
John Allan and Pete Griffiths.*

Image by student Meg Back from her 'Quay Street' project.





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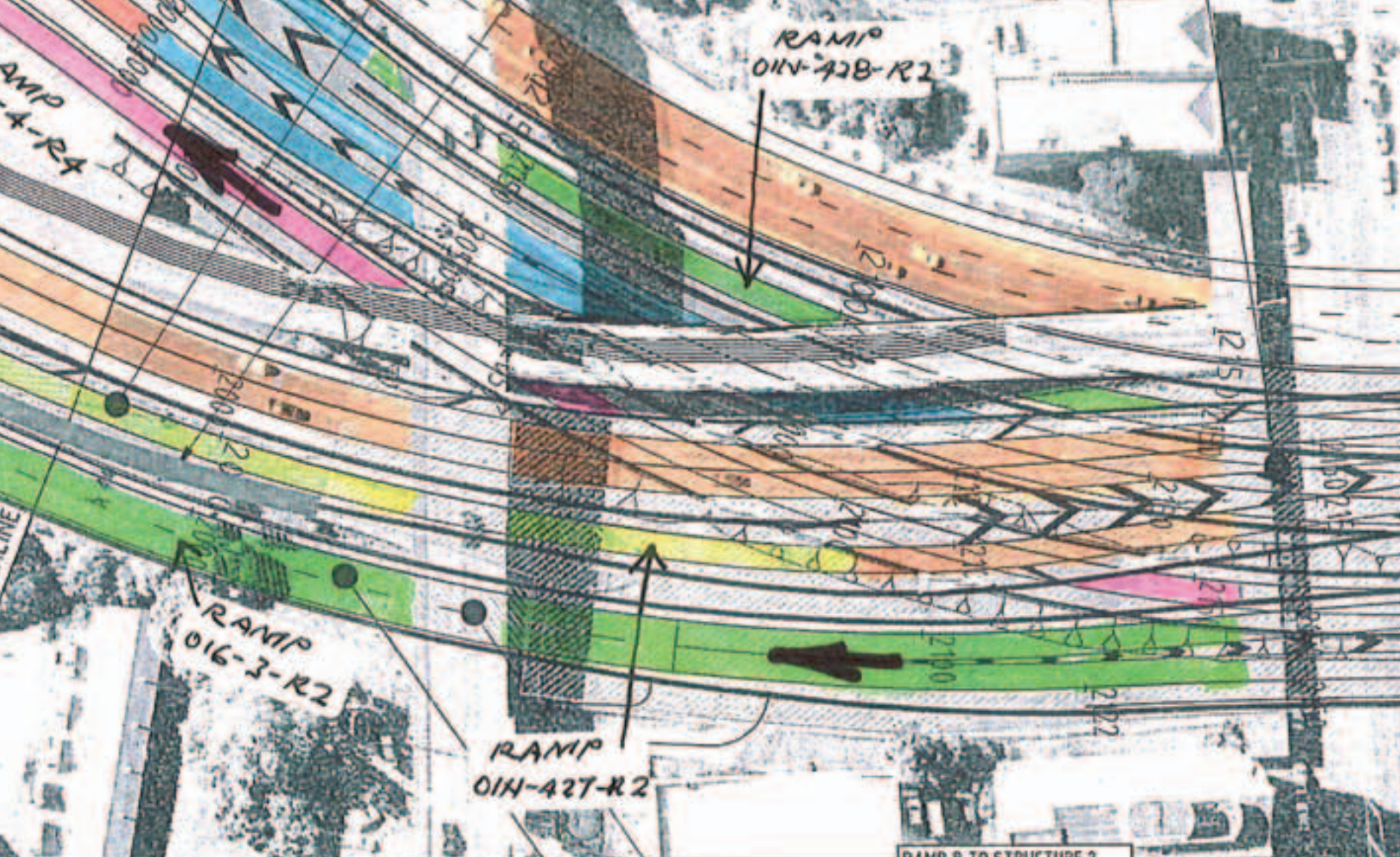
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