

asylum

rethinking our future neighbourhoods

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The Urban Advisory (TUA) is an interdisciplinary firm working across Aotearoa New Zealand to create more sustainable and inclusive places. The team at TUA takes an outcomes-focused approach and works alongside iwi, developers, local authorities, government and community organisations to ensure our neighbourhoods, towns and cities are places where people can thrive. Bringing a fresh perspective to the property industry, the team at TUA are creative thinkers and passionate action-takers who love the complexity of unfamiliar problems, multiple stakeholders and nuanced governance.

Dr Natalie Allen is a leading thinker on urbanism in Aotearoa. As a director at The Urban Advisory she leads a team of transdisciplinary urban advisors who work across scales and across the country with the public, private, iwi and community sectors to make the seemingly complex simple when it comes to designing and delivering our built environment. Natalie specialises in designing integrated neighbourhoods that enhance wellbeing, and is passionate about supporting the delivery of quality, resilient and people-centric projects. She has a background in architecture, urban design and urban governance, and has extensive research experience across a range of critical urban topics: integrated urban planning and community visioning, urban growth and increasing density, and housing choices, preferences and demand. She maintains wide-ranging industry networks and mentors many up-and-coming urbanists.

Devon Sanson has a background in development studies, with experience in property consultancy and dispute resolution. His skills include working with people to solve complex problems and policy analysis, which he frequently applies in the course of his work across Aotearoa with The Urban Advisory. This includes distilling discrete information strands into reports and toolkits that can guide a project. Devon has particular interests in the interactions of people, policy and place, and how they shape our environments. Using knowledge from geography, political science, development theory and housing advocacy, he is passionate about systems that enable empowering urban spaces.



Introduction

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

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The *Asylum* publication began over 20 years ago in 2001, named by founding students of the Unitec School of Architecture to reflect the origins of the architecture programme at Unitec by acknowledging the prior use of the historical building that housed the school for twenty-five years. In this time the publication has served to document the work of students, their thinking, and the evolution of the school, and has since 2020 incorporated a section of peer-reviewed papers on architecture and design research.

This special issue of *Asylum*, guest edited by The Urban Advisory, is an opportunity to broaden the remit of the publication to be a curated collection of peer-reviewed and practitioner-led articles designed to challenge our collective thinking about a key urban topic. Specifically, the editors were challenged to bring together ideas commonly restricted to academic journals and share them more widely into the professional sphere.

The theme of this issue is Rethinking Our Future Neighbourhoods, a concept at the essence of what the team at The Urban Advisory strives to do. As a result, this issue is focused on evolving the discourse in Aotearoa about the design and delivery of our

future neighbourhoods. We have drawn together articles that explore ways to address our social, cultural and environmental challenges, opportunities for decolonisation, what embracing citizen-centric approaches to designing our neighbourhoods might look like, and how the built-environment professions might work together in new ways to deliver these wellbeing outcomes. The issue includes new, young voices, and some less-than-conventional ideas. The combination of peer-reviewed and practitioner articles asks the reader to imagine what a neighbourhood might be, and challenge their own preconceptions.

“We have drawn together articles that explore ways to address our social, cultural and environmental challenges...”

To guide the reader throughout the issue, we have organised the articles into three sections:

- What Is a Neighbourhood?
- Reimagining Our Approach to Place
- Regenerative Neighbourhoods: Teaching, Exciting and Nurturing.

In the sense-making and curation process, the editors identified a number of themes in the articles – migration, joy, reflection, belonging, and decomposition and rebirth – and worked to understand them across scales from small to large and tangible to intangible. It has been a labour of love to weave this content together and we hope it triggers for readers as many thoughts about the future potentiality of our neighbourhoods as it does for us!

As our consciousness grows about the impacts of our neighbourhoods on our wellbeing, including our sense of place, we hope this issue of *Asylum* is a timely questioning of what delivering wellbeing in our neighbourhoods really means in practice and how the way we think about our neighbourhoods and the way we live in them might evolve.

Enjoy.

Natalie Allen and Devon Sanson
The Urban Advisory



Section 1

WHAT IS A NEIGHBOURHOOD?

The first section of this issue challenges the reader to rethink exactly what a neighbourhood is, or 'should' be. Since colonisation, Aotearoa New Zealand's neighbourhoods have been highly stratified in form and use. Since World War II this has only been accentuated.

Chris Berthelsen invites us to imagine the contents of our neighbourhood as resources, and 'art centres' (whatever that means) as spaces to explore these resources and mould them into something new. That could be turning clay from a landslide into pottery, or a conversation between neighbours into a friendship.

Bhaveeka Madagammana introduces us to his pleasurable methodology. Disregarding the artificial boundaries and damaging structures we have drawn upon the land, this methodology integrates the natural processes of the whenua (decomposition) and human emotion into (rebirth) an urban landscape that sparks joy and seeks to generate equal, healthy neighbourhoods.

Ben van Bruggen and Eva Zombori promote the use of form-based codes. A more tangible topic, this allows us to understand how institutions can better facilitate neighbourhood autonomy through planning instruments. Instead of Euclidean zoning that dictates use, a form-based code designs a neighbourhood that feels good first, and lets the community decide what each space should be used for.

Elyjana Roach's article outlines in part the shortcomings of our current methods of designing neighbourhoods. Throughout her proposal for a contemporary Pacific village, she explains how traditional Pacific settlement patterns related to cultural experiences of time and community. Aotearoa's growing Pacific population is not well served by our housing institutions, and attempts to build a genuine Pacific community are stifled by restrictive regulatory frameworks. This article also segues into Section 2: Reimagining our Approach to Place.

Distributed Resource Centre: A Soft Infrastructure for Neighbourhood Creativity

Chris Berthelsen

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Abstract

This article presents the Distributed Resource Centre as a soft, low-cost, generative, and fun decentralised infrastructure for neighbourhood creativity. The article defines the concept (as flow vs stock), outlines some broad benefits (increased interfaces and resource availability, fostering of creative capability, and cost reductions), discusses the pilot and development projects which were involved in the development of the concept, and presents tentative findings for further exploration and discussion (making friends, porous, asynchronous and uncertain activity, neighbourhood = resource centre, berm = interface, multidimensional art centre). The submission ends with a coda and an invitation.

Keywords: Neighbourhood infrastructure, resource centre, art centre, loose parts, creative community

The city offers an incredible variety of learning labs.

– Colin Ward and Anthony Fyson¹

Having interests, curiosities, and good feelings are the main energy of creative community life.

– Kyohei Sakaguchi²

Introduction

A distributed resource centre is a way of viewing and engaging with the sub/urban environment that helps everyday residents perceive the potentials of all the stuff that we have around us, already. In this way it is a soft, low-cost, generative and fun decentralised infrastructure for neighbourhood creativity with the loose parts of our city. It challenges, asks questions of, and offers hopeful directions for urban planning, design and placemaking professionals, community activity providers, and other experts and authorities. What might happen if our future neighbourhoods devolved to fluid, everyday use of the stuff that is around us and developed through slow, creative accretions based on the desires of those who care for their everyday environments?

Loose parts (as discussed by Simon Nicholson³) are the variables in the environment that one can interact, experiment and play with. They are not confined to physical objects. They can be humans, relationships, various animals, objects and artefacts, physical phenomena, software, spaces and environments and processes, at least.

Attempts to “manage” the freely available loose parts of our neighbourhoods to make them more available for exploration, play and creative practice often try to wrangle them into resource centres (centralised to various degrees), databases, indexes, and asset maps that catalogue “everything” in the neighbourhood. This can make them resource intensive and emotionally draining. They become overwhelming (“too much stuff!”), soon out of date (“as stuff flows in and out, information constantly needs to be updated”) and expensive and difficult to manage (“not enough space and we need more people to manage it”). Moreover, it can turn the process of exploring, collecting, and using the stuff around us into a bureaucratic chore. Importantly, it can become “not very much fun anymore.”

In response, I initiated (with the support of Mairangi Arts Centre) a series of projects that explored community participation in the arts and creative activity in the sub/urban Tāmaki Makaurau neighbourhood of Mairangi Bay, with a focus on frugal augmentation of existing facilities, increasing community interfaces, and transforming and reimagining freely available materials.

¹ Colin Ward and Anthony Fyson, *Streetwork: The Exploding School* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 5.

² In a discussion with the author in 2016.

³ Simon Nicholson, “The Theory of Loose Parts: An Important Principle for Design Methodology,” *Studies in Design Education Craft and Technology* 4, no. 2 (1972): 5–14.

An ongoing outcome of this emergent programme of work is the idea of the neighbourhood as a distributed resource centre, a soft infrastructure where tacit and explicit awareness of “all kinds of stuff” that we can freely use develops over time, and various informal and formal activities and projects bubble up to make what is possible visible, nurture friendship and play, and crack open hard infrastructures for creative activity and conviviality (in Ivan Illich’s sense). This view of the resource centre departs from “business as usual” by understanding it as a flow (rather than a stock) that does not simply marshal and deploy capital and experts in order to create another opportunity for consumption, but folds in “all the stuff” that is already flowing around us. In this way, the distributed resource centre can be a serendipity engine for neighbourhoods, with new activity, relationships, friction and play bubbling up during the flow of the residents and their everyday lives.

This practitioner article is a bricolage of excerpts from the *Distributed Resource Centre* book (content, projects and photography by Chris Berthelsen, design and editing by Xin Cheng, produced by Mairangi Arts Centre), reflections originally submitted in funding accountability reports, and new writing. Images are spreads from the *Distributed Resource Centre* book, which is available to all interested parties (see the end of this article). The rest of this article presents our definition of a distributed resource centre, outlines some broad benefits, discusses the pilot and development projects that were involved in the development of the concept, and presents tentative findings for further exploration and discussion. The article ends with a coda and an invitation.

What is a Distributed Resource Centre?

A distributed resource centre is an ever-growing general understanding of freely available resources (commercial and household waste, fruit and vegetables and other food, skills, time, places/infrastructure) in the community, which is made in loose and soft collaboration with local businesses, groups and individuals.

A distributed resource centre is a flow of materials, not a

stock. It does not need to have a central storehouse where everything is kept. Once you develop an awareness of your general environment and make friends with people and other living things around you it will be possible to find the things you want and need, and come across much more ‘stuff’ that you never knew you loved (see Figure 1.) Schools, residential construction sites, the mountains, beaches, light industrial areas and more! Our possibilities are endless! What a bright future for our city!

Some Possible Benefits of Trying to Make a Distributed Resource Centre

1. Increasing local creative practitioner–community interfaces

Increased connections between and across members of the community and the groups (formal and informal) that they belong to might lead to new collaborations (formal and informal) and simply ‘doing stuff’ together. Social cohesion and resilience may increase.

2. Increasing availability of resources for creative activity in the community

Increasing the availability and possibilities of free resources in the community can open up new spaces for the participation of and collaboration with creative and skilled practitioners. Existing stakeholders might benefit from this resource, while new participants may be inspired to join.

3. Building creative capabilities

People might develop the ability to reimagine ‘waste’ in many ways. Working together, people can share and transform skills. They might learn to express themselves and find pleasure through working frugally and creatively with resources at hand.

4. Cost reduction

Resource costs decrease for art centres, schools and individuals. Waste-disposal costs decrease for all. Financial resources can be directed towards work that more directly benefits the community.

The Distributed Resource Centre Pilot and Development Projects

The Distributed Resource Centre project (DRC project) developed out of a series of eleven projects over six years (2015–20) at and around Mairangi Arts Centre (MAC). The projects were initiated, planned and carried out by Chris Berthelsen and companions, and supported by MAC (Angela Suh as General Manager 2016 to mid-2019; Clint Taniguchi as General Manager mid-2019 to present). They offer glimpses into what a distributed resource centre could be and what we could do in our neighbourhoods, together.

The DRC project was (1) the continuation of our experiments in discovering new ways to enjoy art and creative activities in our community, (2) an opportunity to ‘dig out’ possibilities for new types of collaboration with local groups and individuals, and (3) a way to build a rich understanding of materials and skills in the area. In this light, this project explored questions (modified from questions originally posed by the artist-researcher Xin Cheng) relating to community participation in the arts and creative activity in sub/urban Tāmaki Makaurau neighbourhoods:

- How can we augment our existing facilities by using and reimagining the ‘stuff’ around us?
- How can we increase our interface with our communities, as part of their everyday lives?
- How can we work with the community to transform everyday materials (where ‘materials’ also includes places/infrastructure, skills, stories and people)?

Participation does not simply mean making and showing things. It includes offering materials and advice, considering how others may value your waste and skill sets, as well as swapping, storing, failing and laughing – together. Merging art-based methods with streams of ‘waste’ uses familiar materials in new ways to ‘crack open’ art for increased participation.



Figure 1. Illustrative sketch of the Distributed Resource Centre around Mairangi Bay.

Some examples of activity that bubbled up include (but are definitely not limited to):

- An open-air and mobile pottery 'school' that used clay from local landslides and construction sites (with Jack Tilson) (Figure 2).
- Free feasts on berms and parks that used foraged local weeds and used weird pottery made of local clays, created during the above (with Shota Matsumura and Nina Yanagisawa) (Figure 3).
- Co-creating a public space with students from a local special school.
- Scent labs that used frugal methods to create essential oils from local plant matter (with Carrine and Tracey).
- Using a discarded trampoline as a massive piece of weaving equipment for creating a community-made hammock (Figure 4).
- Free waterslides using salvaged sheets and hundreds of metres of hoses clipped together from the gardens of various neighbours.
- Hair salons and massage parlours in forests and on wharves (with Katsu and Eri).
- Stimulus terrains of freely available local materials as presentations, invitations and snapshots of the flows of resources (Figure 5).
- This can go on forever!



Figure 2. Gathering clay from a local landslide.



Figure 3. Free feasts of local weeds and unwanted food, served on weird ceramics of local clay.

Plants + Clay = Feast

Realising that you can make dishes, bowls, plates, vessels, and so on with the clay that lies underneath your houses and gardens, along cliffs and landslides, and dumped at the side of construction sites makes playing with the delicious plants that grow freely in our neighbourhoods even more exciting and drool-inducing.

Shota Matsumura, Nina Yanagisawa, Tracey Sunderland and friends have been playing with us on bermside feasts, weeds catering, banquets using waste food parts, and 'piss-ups' of homebrew ... all experimentally and beautifully consumed off ceramics made from the clays around here.





Figure 4. Using a discarded trampoline frame from a rental house as a massive piece of weaving equipment.

A Story About a Trampoline Frame

The Matsumura family gave us their broken trampoline when they found out they had to move house. We didn't really know what to do with it, but since the gallery space was free over the school holidays we decided to put the frame in there and see what might happen.

We started by threading cotton over it just to pass the time. After a while we wondered if we might be able to make a new trampoline using only thread and string. So, we put up a sign and asked for donations of "string-like stuff." We got heaps! Some more, and some less, like string.

After a while, anyone who passed by added bits here and there, according to their own interests. Some were focused on creating a strong structure, some went into a trance, enchanted by the weaving and tying process, and some played with patterns that were not particularly structurally sound. We ended up with a massive net-like trampoline that was constructed with no overall planning or direction with regard to the structure of the thing.

We were sceptical at first, but it turned out it was possible to carry out a large, fun and satisfying project with people who happened to be around the art centre.





Figure 5. Stimulus terrain of freely available local materials (with Adam Ben-Dror leading a meditation in junk).

Tentative Findings

Reflection on the pilot Distributed Resource Centre and its development projects drew out six aspects for future experimentation, theoretical and practical development, and casual discussion. They form part of the foundations of our ongoing work.

Making friends

Generative, agile and pleasurable collaborations come from the (s)low-key process of making friends with people, all of whom have particular 'flavours' and special skills and abilities that will bubble up, be nurtured, and mixed together during the friendship (where friendship is a dynamic spectrum, not a particular state). They do not have to come from calls for proposals or provisions of service, but can emerge from the uncertainty of everyday life if we are open and maintain a stance of noticing and accompanying.

Porous, asynchronous, uncertain activities

The porous aspect refers to how the activity seeps through multiple layers (physical and non-physical) of our community. Asynchronous activity stretches itself through space and time. Start and end points are fluid and the location of activity is scattered throughout the community. Uncertainty gently turns the activity from a "transaction" or "pay for play" into a story, indirect negotiation, and an opening for participation or foothold for further development. An example of this is the Clay Invitation, which ran over the two months (and beyond) of the project and took place throughout the neighbourhood – cliffs, beach, berm, park, home, art centre. As the clay is an unprocessed natural resource it is still uncertain what the fired and glazed outcomes will be like.

A neighbourhood is a resource centre

All materials were sourced from our local environment at no cost (waste materials, renewable resources, etc.). The majority of them will be reused in future iterations of the project. In addition to the cost and waste-minimisation benefits, procuring materials in this way cracks open our neighbours and neighbourhoods for convivial interaction, development of casual relationships, and the collection and creation of stories about the people, things and places around us.

A berm can be an interface

Working on berms transforms a no-space of transition (jogging, going to the bus stop, walking to school, etc.) into a landmark, signpost and interface. These signs of life on our streets invite conversation and chance encounters, and open up everyday life for creative activity.

An art centre can (also) be a noticeboard, an open studio and a resource centre

An art centre can be a place where people can invite others to work together, by exhibiting works in various states of completion or by working in public in an open studio. It can provide an open repository for tools and resources that individuals or small groups cannot or do not want to own privately. People can bump up against ideas and activities to be continued elsewhere in our community.

An art centre can (also) be a living room for creative activities

Our neighbourhoods have a lack of non-commercial, non-sporting, warm and sheltered public spaces where people can be around others. We were inspired by the many people who visited the Free Shared Space for Activities during our project What Could an Art Centre Be? What Could Be an Art Centre? and stayed for three, four or more hours. This does not happen when exhibitions are held. An art centre can be a place where people can be, make, do and make do, together. As opposed to a library, they can engage in a variety of activities, sometimes messy, sometimes loud. They can cook and share meals while taking breaks. The space grows warm and changes

its flavour as the inhabitants come and go. As opposed to a general-use community centre, the umbrella concept of art brings together people with a shared interest in a very broad field.

Coda

We all know the pleasure of making things and making temporary things is an excellent, low impact way to pass the time. Imagine a world full of such things – it would have so much more creative possibility and beauty than the world we live in now.

– Niki Harré⁴

Practising the distributed resource centre in our future neighbourhoods can increase local creative practitioner–community interfaces and the availability of resources for creative activity in the community, build the creative capabilities of residents, enable cost reductions for local groups and individuals, and contribute substantially to zero-waste and low-carbon goals. More significantly, however, increasing the ability of normal people to engage with “all the stuff” in the everyday environment with more confidence, fluency and joy can result in unexpected and beneficial neighbourhood development that is rooted in the hopes and values of the residents themselves and drenched in their daily pleasures and frustrations. The future will thus emerge as a “common but negotiated human[e] experiment”⁵ – a life that is “engaged and felt rather than delegated and abstracted.”⁶

We (Activities and Research for Environments for Creativity) hope you would like to experiment with the idea of the distributed resource centre in your neighbourhoods and professional work. We welcome all discussion, invitations, play dates and opportunities to interact in ways that suit you. Let’s enable a greater number of people and other stuff in the community to enjoy creative activity, together.

Acknowledgements

Partial financial support for the projects partially described in this article was provided by the Creative Communities Scheme (CCS) and Hibiscus and Bays Local Board (HBLB), as documented in the *Distributed Resource Centre* book.

Note

The *Distributed Resource Centre* book, which is a more in-depth presentation of the pilot and development projects on the North Shore of Tāmaki Makaurau, is available free to readers. You can email Chris Berthelsen for a copy of the book (content, projects and photography by Chris Berthelsen, design and editing by Xin Cheng, produced by Mairangi Arts Centre). chrisberthelsen@gmail.com

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Author

Chris Berthelsen explores environments for creative activity, resident-led modification of the everyday environment, and alternative education(s). He is a co-founder and co-chair of the Activities and Research in Environments for Creativity Trust, a co-founder of Tanushimaru Institute for Art Research in Fukuoka, Japan, and was Deputy Chairperson of the Mairangi Arts Centre Trust (2017–21). From 2022 he is a Faculty of Creative Arts and Industries PhD Scholarship recipient at Waipapa Taumata Rau The University of Auckland.

⁴ Niki Harre, “The Value of Temporary Objects,” The Infinite Game, October 24, 2016. <http://www.infinite-game.net/blog/2016/10/24/the-pleasure-of-temporary-objects/>

⁵ Mohammed Bamyeh, *Anarchy as Order: The History and Future of Civic Humanity* (Washington, DC: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009), 12.

⁶ Ibid, 24.

A Pleasurable Methodology: Joyously Reimagining our Neighbourhoods

Bhaveeka Madagammana

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Abstract

The Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland neighbourhood of Ellerslie has undergone destructive erasures of ecology and indigeneity since colonisation. This is exemplified by the filling with concrete of the sacred subterranean caves, Waiatarua, during the construction of the Ellerslie Racecourse grandstand. This paper argues that this causal act of destruction through architectural procedures, and others geographically similar to it, can be understood as a result of a painful colonial legacy that continues to adversely inform architecture today. In response, a Pleasurable Methodology is proposed as an alternative architectural practice that emotively engages with the immanent whenua of Waiatarua. It speculatively aims to generate neighbourhoods where equality is formed between the vitality and wellbeing of the earth with the wellbeing of the communities that whakapapa and live there. This is crucial to facing the rising inequities of housing, food security and climate facing our cities.

As a result of the methodology, experimental drawings are created from an embodied pleasurable engagement between decomposing organic matter as whenua and conventional architectural materials such as wire, paper

and clay. This entangled dialogue provokes an emotive neighbourhood where whenua and pleasure fabricate and reimagine a regenerative way of living within our isthmus. This paper's main findings conclude that by challenging conceptions of land and architecture, we can potentially endeavour to feel and then draw future neighbourhoods where the vitality of whenua is intimately tied to loving communities.

Keywords: Whenua, Waiatarua, Pleasurable Methodology, methodology, decolonisation

Introduction

Aotearoa New Zealand's neighbourhoods are facing pressing issues that need to be addressed by our architectural discipline. As explained by a recent United Nations Report, "the housing crisis in New Zealand is, in fact, a human rights crisis"¹ in which other pressures such as unaffordability, food security and climate crisis are adversely impacting our most vulnerable communities, who are more likely to be Indigenous and minority. Furthermore, Aotearoa's colonial history has systematically dispossessed Māori from their land, in violation of the Treaty of Waitangi, creating a "dark shadow"² that hangs over our built environments.

To challenge our current architecture and then propose a solution, a Pleasurable Methodology as an architectural methodology from a tauīwi (non-Māori) perspective was developed that emotionally engages with te ao Māori (Māori worldview) elements and concepts.³ This approach aims to challenge the current built environment and seeks to reimagine our neighbourhoods by privileging concepts such as whenua and pleasure in the process of architectural generation. It takes Waiatarua, the general suburban area surrounding the

1 Leilana Farha, *A/HRC/47/43/Add.1: Visit to New Zealand Report of the Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing as a Component of the Right to an Adequate Standard of Living and on the Right to Nondiscrimination in This Context* (New York: United Nations, 2021), 9. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/ahrc4743add1-visit-new-zealand-report-special-rapporteur-adequate-housing>

2 Ibid, 5.

3 This research emerged out of my master's thesis, "A Pleasurable Methodology: Cultivating with Waiatarua."

Ellerslie Racecourse, as a case study of a neighbourhood that has materialised destructive histories and therefore needs to be reimagined to produce potentially equitable space. Given the government's proposed changes to the Resource Management Act, which seem to continue the same outcomes of misguided housing and urban legislation that have passed before,⁴ there has to be a critical engagement with current laws and regulations that have so far yet to construct an inclusive and affordable city.

Several methodologies critically examine harmful state procedures and histories, yet few have been proposed that incorporate these learnings into the overall generation of architectures, and consequently neighbourhoods. Firstly, Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Porou, Tūhourangi) decolonising methodologies are a foundational precedent for approaching research generally, particularly her Indigenous research projects that aim to reaffirm self-determination.⁵ Associate Professor of Critical Race and Indigenous Studies Eve Tuck's desire-based research framework and Professor of Gender Studies Katherine McKittrick's discussions around Black methodologies both incorporate communal emotion and dreams as fundamental aspects in their ways of producing alternative histories.⁶ Finally, academic and architect Eyal Weizman and his firm Forensic Architecture's counter-forensic methodology exemplifies how an evidentiary architectural focus to human-rights violations can reveal deeper patterns of abuse.⁷ While these

methodologies are powerful precedents for challenging conventional narratives and producing important analysis, there remains the potential to incorporate these methods into the production of architecture.⁸

In this paper, Waiatarua (modern-day Ellerslie) is explored as the physical manifestation of a colonial approach to architecture that erased whenua. In response, a Pleasurable Methodology is proposed as an alternative architectural practice that emphasises an emotional approach to whenua (ground, earth, placenta). Through key relationships and a series of three methods – Listening, Cultivating and Reprogramming – whenua emerges as a powerful architectural precedent and collaborator that creates unique spaces according to its wairua (spirit, spirituality). The methodology eventually proposes a drawing set that explores a Waiatarua where architecture aligns with whenua according to pleasure. In conclusion, a series of critical questions that surfaced during this research are posed to our discipline and our neighbourhoods, generating a *kōrero* (discussion) that might reveal new readings of the systemic issues faced by architectural designers.

Waiatarua's History and Colonialism's Legacy

In the 1950s, during the construction of the Ellerslie Racecourse grandstand, ancient subterranean caves named Waiatarua, or Two Songs, were filled in with concrete to make way for the foundations of the structure. The caves

were named Waiatarua for the songs that would emanate when wind blew between pools of collected rainwater.⁹ These were probably formed from the eruptions of Maungakiekie thousands of years ago, when lava flows emanated outwards from the blast before being hollowed out to form caves.¹⁰ The area became an abundant wetland; the volcanic ash meant its fertile soil was full of kai (food), birds and fish.¹¹ It was just one part of a seasonally entangled way of living that Māori took across the Isthmus for hundreds of years before colonisation, fishing and travelling between both the Manukau and Waitematā Harbours, settling amongst the many nearby maunga (hills, mountains) such as Ōhinerau (Mt Hobson), Maungarei (Mt Wellington) and Maungakiekie (One Tree Hill).¹²

The concrete sealing of the caves is clearly a singular act of destruction within a field of erasure that was enacted across Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. The grandstand and surrounding suburbs emerged from a colonial conception of land that conceived of it as a divisible commodifiable space that could generate and accumulate monetary wealth.¹³ This colonial construct ignores the intrinsic crucial value of whenua to Māori communities and was part of the systematic dispossession of their land over the centuries. For example, after the founding of Auckland in 1840, thousands of acres of land in Tāmaki Makaurau, including Waiatarua, were dispossessed in a matter of years to accommodate the speculators and settlers of the then-new capital city.¹⁴ Despite making up 17 percent of

4 Julie Stout, "The Diary of a Debacle: The Slum Enabling Act and Other Matters," *Architecture Now*, November 24, 2021, <https://architecturenow.co.nz/articles/the-diary-of-a-debacle-the-slum-enabling-act-and-other-matters/>

5 Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (New York and Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1999), 143–166.

6 Eve Tuck, "Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities," *Harvard Educational Review* 79, no. 3 (2009): 416–419, <https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.79.3.no01667566it3n15>; Katherine McKittrick, "Curiosities, Wonder and Black Methodologies," lecture for the University of Virginia School of Architecture, September 17, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=68gIZJPt7rY>

7 Eyal Weizman and Tina Di Carlo, "Dying to Speak: Forensic Spatiality," *Log* 20 (Fall 2010): 126, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41765381>

8 The best example of an explicitly decolonial architecture is the competition *Imagining Decolonised Cities*, run by Victoria University of Wellington's Rebeca Kiddle's (Ngāti Toa) research team: Rebeca Kiddle, Amanda Thomas, and Morten Gjerde, "Imagining Decolonised Cities or Indigenising the City," lecture presented for New Zealand Centre for Sustainable Cities seminar, University of Otago, November 15, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BVocwIXChzc&ab_channel=UniversityofOtago%2CWWellington

9 William N. Mackie, *A Noble Breed: The Auckland Racing Club, 1874–1974* (Auckland: Wilson and Horton for the Auckland Racing Club, 1974), 15. This is just one translation of Waiatarua. An Auckland Council Waiatarua Reserve report translates the name of the historical Lake Waiatarua as the "water of double reflections." Ōrākei Local Board, *Waiatarua Reserve Enhancement Plan* (Auckland Council, 2019), 36, <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/about-auckland-council/how-auckland-council-works/local-boards/all-local-boards/orakei-local-board/Documents/waiatarua-reserve-enhancement-plan-december-2019.pdf>

10 Bruce Hayward, Graeme Murdoch, and Gordon Maitland, *Volcanoes of Auckland: The Essential Guide* (Auckland University Press, 2011), 143.

11 Ōrākei Local Board, *Waiatarua Reserve Enhancement Plan*, 21.

12 D. R. Simmons, *Maori Auckland*, ed. George Graham (Auckland: Bush Press, 1987), 15–18.

13 Giselle Byrnes, *Boundary Markers: Land Surveying and the Colonisation of New Zealand* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2001), 41–47.

14 R. C. J. Stone, *From Tamaki-Makau-Rau to Auckland* (Auckland University Press, 2001), 300.

the population, contemporary Māori own just 4 percent than 1 percent in Te Waipounamu (the South Island).¹⁵ This means Māori, in terms of housing, are more likely to live in crowded and damp housing¹⁶ and own fewer homes than Pākehā (people of European descent).¹⁷

There are also the numerous physical constructions that took place in and around Waiaatarua that have completely transfigured its whenua. The clearing of the land that would become the Ellerslie Racecourse into arable farming land in the early nineteenth century and the draining of Lake Waiaatarua in 1929 erased the natural biodiversity.¹⁸ This was part of the overall destruction of 65 percent and 90 percent respectively of our native forests and wetlands, which have been lost since colonisation due to farming and urbanisation.¹⁹ The quarrying of Maungarei and the installation of water tanks on top of Ōhinerau are acts of destruction common to many of the maunga of Tāmaki Makaurau.²⁰ Lastly, there were the nearby developments of the Southern Motorway and Ellerslie–Panmure Highway in the mid-twentieth century, which not only potentially transfigured millions of tonnes of whenua but divided communities through the concrete ravines they formed.²¹ The Unitary Plan, which is Tāmaki Makaurau's future-planning document,²² continues previous patterns of erasure and destruction to construct our neighbourhoods.

A rigid colour-coded key effectively conceptualises the city as a series of zones defined by an arbitrary hierarchical division of land according to abstract plot lines that have originated since colonial dispossession. As the Unitary Plan presents in Figure 1, the zoning of Ellerslie Racecourse as a 'major recreational facility' sustains further destructive architecture such as the million-dollar developments currently being constructed along Peach Parade.²³ The Plan keeps the caves sealed and encourages further environmental damage, contributing to the spatial erosion of Māori tikanga (customary values and practices) in Waiaatarua.

Waiaatarua's neighbourhood must be understood as an amalgamation of historical and contemporary architectures that continue a painful colonial legacy. The suburb both through its built environment and the absence of its original native ecosystem is reflective of a destructive approach to city-making taken by generations of planners and architects. The motorway, the roads, the houses and the grandstand uphold an urban environment that occupies land as a commodifiable entity, not as a sacred Māori space.

A Pleasurable Methodology

In response to this colonial approach, a Pleasurable Methodology was developed as an alternative tauwi

approach to generating architecture. It holds mana tauritanga, the practice of equality and equity, as its guiding aim.²⁴ Within this context, this is understood as the arrival of an architectural proposal that equally shares resources and energy between the ecology and the communities that whakapapa (trace, descend, genealogy) to and live in Waiaatarua. Architecture within this framework is generated through the key conceptual relationship of pleasure with whenua, understood as the embodied joys and passions experienced and felt with the earth Papatūānuku and her whakapapa. By centring a positive regenerative pleasure at its core, the methodology endeavours to rejuvenate Waiaatarua's intrinsic wairua and waiata (songs), rather than define it by its past colonial erasures. A key aspect of utilising this approach is the embodiment of pleasure during the making process, as it ensures personal experiences begin to weave with Māori concepts such as wairua, mauri (life force), whakapapa and whenua.

Through an iterative series of three methods – Listening, Cultivating and Reprogramming – the methodology culminates in a set of experimental drawings in which pleasure with whenua is materialised through Waiaatarua's natural and built architecture. The first method, Listening, is the exchange between our bodies and the earth through

- 15 Māori Land Court, "Māori Land Online," accessed September 1, 2021, https://www.maorilandonline.govt.nz/gis/home.htm?moj_URL=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.justice.govt.nz&nzGovt_URL=http%3A%2F%2Fnewzealand.govt.nz&contactUs_URL=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.maorilandcourt.govt.nz%2Fcontact-us&feedback_URL=https%3A%2F%2Fconsultations.justice.govt.nz%2Foperations-service-delivery%2Fmlc-customer-survey&helpDoc_URL=https%3A%2F%2Fmaorilandcourt.govt.nz%2Fabout-mlc%2Fpublications%2F%23other-guides&mlc_URL=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.maorilandcourt.govt.nz; Ministry for Culture and Heritage, "Māori Land Loss, 1860–2000," accessed April 21, 2021, <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/media/interactive/maori-land-1860-2000>
- 16 Stats NZ, *Housing in Aotearoa: 2020* (Wellington: New Zealand Government, 2020), 97–98, <https://www.stats.govt.nz/reports/housing-in-aotearoa-2020>; ibid, 62.
- 17 Stats NZ, *Changes in Home-Ownership Patterns 1986–2013: Focus on Māori and Pacific People* (Wellington: New Zealand Government, 2016), 7, <https://www.stats.govt.nz/reports/changes-in-home-ownership-patterns-1986-2013-focus-on-maori-and-pacific-people>
- 18 Hayward, Murdoch, and Maitland, *Volcanoes of Auckland*, 157.
- 19 Stats NZ, *Environment Aotearoa 2019* (Wellington: New Zealand Government, 2019), 34, <https://environment.govt.nz/publications/environment-aotearoa-2019/>
- 20 Andy Loader, "For the Love of Rock," *Quarrying and Mining*, November 8, 2017, <https://quarryingandminingmag.co.nz/auckland-quarries/>
- 21 Stephanie Jean Chapman, Auckland (NZ) City Planning Group, Boffa Miskell, and Reed Salmond Architects, *Character & Heritage Study Ellerslie* (Auckland: Boffa Miskell, 2004), 37.
- 22 "The Unitary Plan guides the use of Auckland's natural and physical resources, including land development," Auckland Council, "He aha te Mahere Whakakotahi i Tāmaki Makaurau? What is the Auckland Unitary Plan?," <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/unitary-plan/Pages/what-is-the-auckland-unitary-plan.aspx>
- 23 Miriam Bell, "Ellerslie Racecourse Land Sale Clears Way for More Than 500 New Homes," *Stuff*, July 16, 2021, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/homed/real-estate/12576168/ellerslie-racecourse-land-sale-clears-way-for-more-than-500-new-homes>; "Racecourse Lots Good Bets for Developers," *NZ Herald*, November 8, 2021, <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/property/racecourse-lots-good-bets-for-developers/HG45URHLZU34RQYV5DAR2JFNQ4/>; Auckland Council, *H26. Special Purpose – Major Recreation Facility Zone* (Auckland Council, 2019), 1, <https://unitaryplan.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/Images/Auckland%20Unitary%20Plan%20Operative/Chapter%20H%20Zones/H26%20Special%20Purpose%20-%20Major%20Recreation%20Facility%20Zone.pdf>
- 24 Mana tauritanga was a term that I encountered working on the *Soil Boil* exhibition. It was a guiding principle of the collective and gifted to that kaupapa by art practitioner, co-designer and curator for the exhibition Grayson Goffie (Taranaki).

pleasure. This begins the speculative architectural process by gathering decomposing plant litter from the author's garden, which is situated next to the Ellerslie Racecourse, and was conceptualised by the overall framework as Waiatarua's vital whenua. It is a nutrient fertiliser for the growth of plants that live off the decomposition cycle and for the growth of a pleasurable architecture.

The second method is Cultivating, which is positioned as the physical and emotional nurturing of living drawings. Starting from the gathered organic matter, other conventional architectural materials such as

wire, clay, paint, and paper are entwined to create unique architectural drawings. Crucially this making is informed by pleasurable experiencing and imagining whenua, resulting in an embodied creative exercise that incorporates joyous emotions into matter.²⁵ These hybrid creations between organic and non-organic materials were kept outside in the garden, which allowed the environment to change each drawing through exposure to natural climatic conditions (rain, wind, sunshine, etc.). These creations as photographed in Figure 2, though physically small, were read as alternative spatial visions in which whenua overran Waiatarua.

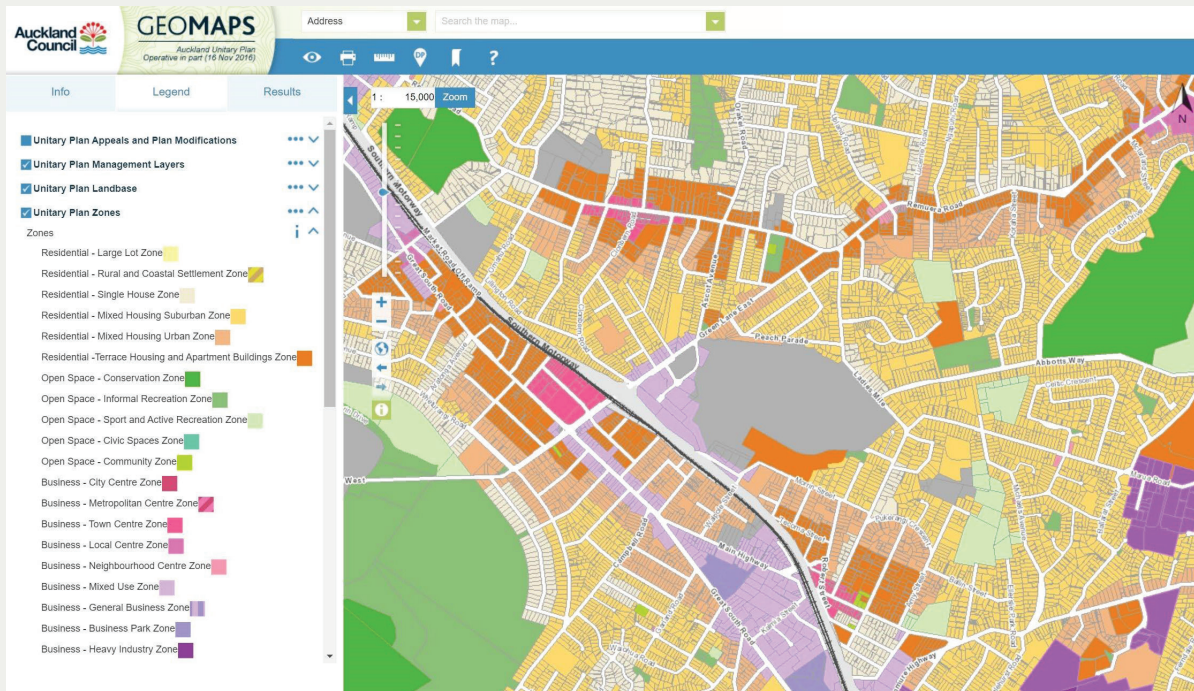


Figure 1. A screenshot from the Unitary Plan centred on the Ellerslie Racecourse coloured as grey. This drawing anticipates the Mixed Urban Housing and Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings Zones that will result in future developments. Copyright Auckland Council, reproduced with permission. <https://unitaryplanmaps.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/upviewer/>

²⁵ Embodiment here is inspired by Professor Tim Ingold, who discusses the relationship between the body and the world as an unfolding activity between "things" in *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 94.

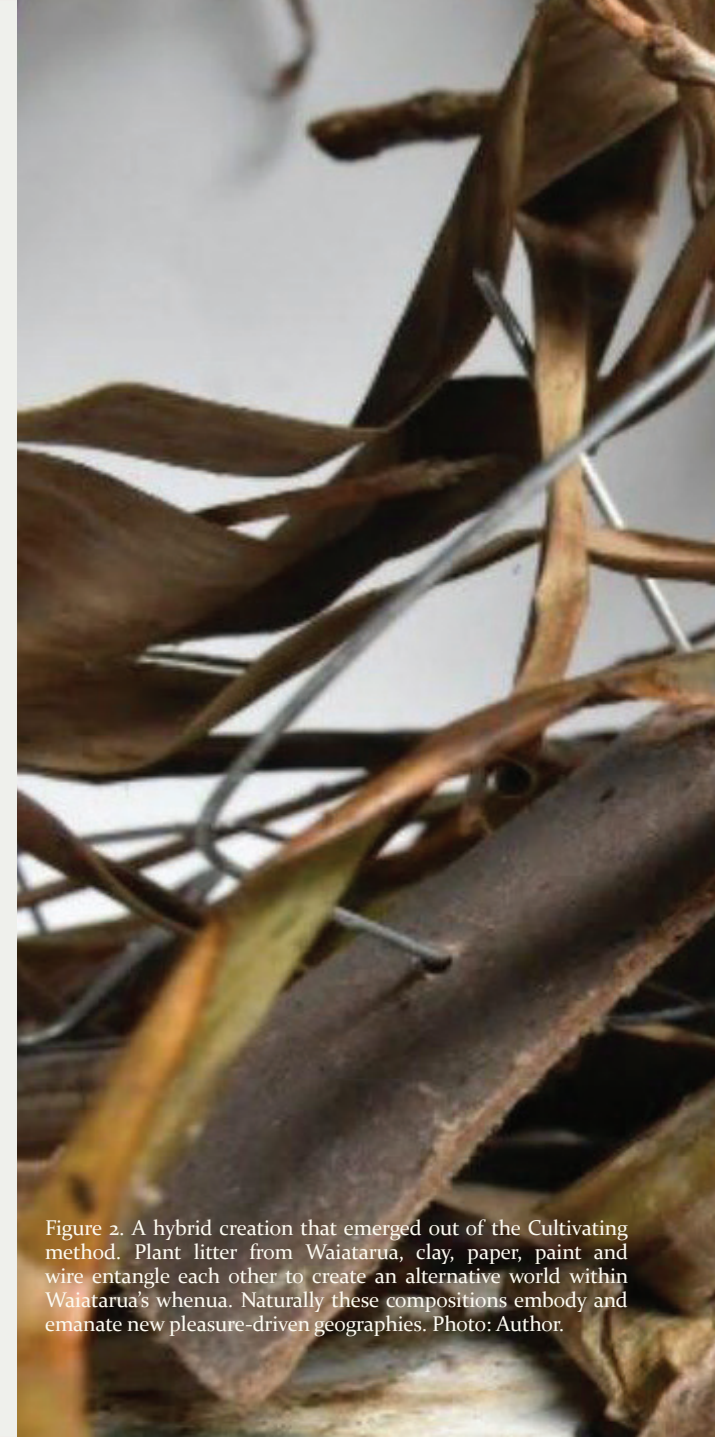


Figure 2. A hybrid creation that emerged out of the Cultivating method. Plant litter from Waiatarua, clay, paper, paint and wire entangle each other to create an alternative world within Waiatarua's whenua. Naturally these compositions embody and emanate new pleasure-driven geographies. Photo: Author.



The final method, Reprogramming, is the programming of pleasure with whenua into space. Within the Pleasurable Methodology, Reprogramming culminates in an alternative architecture across scales. These drawings were formed by photographing the creations that emerged from the Cultivating method, then painting over these by imagining a neighbourhood informed by pleasure with whenua. Two drawings, Figure 3 and Figure 4, are part of the collection of holistic drawings that envision the fabrication of a pleasurable Waiatarua. The plans explore a Waiatarua where zones, boundaries, fences and plot lines are eliminated by an emotive ecology that flows between buildings. Within these drawings, communities would be able to bind new relationships to their land and to each other, surrounded by an ecology that is allowed to determine the space between housing. Colours in the drawings don't represent particular planning rules or codes, rather they embody a personal joy with te ao Māori that creates the foundations for inclusivity and participation.

Activities like gardening, cultivating and outdoor gatherings within this speculative community are freely open and negotiated between the public. All living, in and out of Waiatarua, is enmeshed within the wider ecology, becoming cross-species. Joy, pleasure and happiness are proposed to arise from a way of living that is reciprocally inspired by a rejuvenated, overflowing whenua. This entangled relationship between the pleasure imbued into the vibrant ecology, and the potential joy for the communities living within it, is the main way the methodology cultivates a whakapapa that sustains generations to come. Reinforcing each other, the cultural and spiritual wellbeing of Waiatarua's communities is informed by the vitality of the earth below within this language of speculative drawing.

Figure 3. A plan centred on the former Ellerslie Racecourse and its surroundings, B1. Alongside each drawing is a title block that aids in the fabrication of the pleasure with whenua contained and described within each. The normally flat, manicured landscape of the racecourse is transformed into a dense native forest where numerous streams and ponds joyously occupy the land. The wildness and lushness of the ecology is reflective of its pleasure with whenua proliferating across the suburb.



Drawing Title:
Plan of the former Elitene Raccourse and its surroundings

Drawing Reference:
B1

Scale:
1:2000

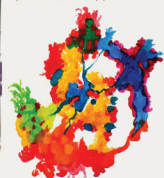
Living Drawing Photograph:



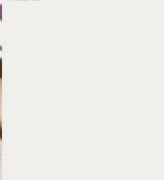
Pleasure Diagram:
A Pleasure Diagram acts as the guiding imaging of this drawing for further exploration. The diagram as an articulation of the core values of the drawing acts as a grounding element to the architect.



Pleasure Complex:
A Pleasure Complex locates this drawing within a wider pleasurable geography. It reconfigures positioning according to the passionate joys of an experience whenua and whakapapa.



Pleasure Passage:
Every building becomes an island in a swirling sea of colour. Colours accumulate along the roots and stems. Complex and enormous veins, arteries and bodies shift the tone, changing the subtle nature of life. These centrifugal forces project across space in time. They collapse any rigidity. Pools of water and birds collapse the ecology. The ecology is forever irreconcilable yet crucial to every breath taken at Waiatarua.



Drawn By:
Bhavina Matigammana and Waiatarua

Date of Drawing:
October 2021

Neighbourhoods

A Pleasurable Methodology, as a speculative architectural practice, reveals that by experimenting and collaborating with whenua through an architectural process, it can begin to instigate provocative architecture with neighbourhood implications. Key to this generation is the understanding of architectural material as whenua embodied in the decomposing matter. Whenua is architectural through not only its physicality but its deep, ineffable relationships to emotions and community. Mana tauritanga was continually sought throughout the methodology's process by allowing the natural environment to change the architectural creations and inform the drawing set. This creative interspecies partnership between the agent ecology and the imaginative body was another important aspect that invigorated the radical nature of the drawings. While it is yet to be seen whether equality and equity could be achieved within Waiatarua, the neighbourhood's fluidity between houses and ecology emphasises an inclusivity to cyclical and seasonal patterns of human and animal inhabitation.

The three methods and the resultant drawings explicitly outline a challenge to conventional modes of architectural creation and current neighbourhood planning that opens the possibility for our future neighbourhoods to thrive. The conventional style of drawing in our local-body documents is to describe buildings and land as ownable space, fragmented by a mosaic of lines that reify the commodification of Tāmaki's landscape. If the pleasurable drawing plans are taken as key fabrication documents for the future of Tāmaki, then the Pleasurable Methodology counters this depiction and the housing regulations it reflects by purposely imagining Waiatarua as an entangled landscape where life occurs across previously strict divisions.

The methodology taking place in and for Waiatarua is a transferrable framework and a speculative decolonisation of our urban environment. This research suggests

that the erosive histories of colonialism that echo in Waiatarua neither define its architecture nor lessen its formative potential. Instead, this paper makes the case in this instance that our embodied experiences with our homes can rejuvenate the intrinsic potential of the cave songs, whose symphony can still be heard in the mauri of the whenua. It is hoped that, as an architectural approach, the Pleasurable Methodology can be taken by communities and practitioners to their places and consequently generate alternative architecture according to the whakapapa and engagement with their whenua.

As pointed out by the Urban Design Forum, incoming housing legislation largely seems to leave the guardianship of our cities to private entities and citizens. It will likely ineffectively address climate change and will "marginalise communities and adversely impact our environment in a form that will have intergenerational consequences."²⁶ The research findings that emerged as a challenge to the current method of constructing and conceiving architecture reinforce the importance of centring whenua and te ao Māori. Coming from a non-Māori, this paper doesn't claim to fully know or understand mātauranga Māori; instead, it is proposed that an emotional dialogue with Tāmaki Makaurau's whenua might envision more inclusive and equal communities, envisioning and asserting a much-needed total transformation of our neighbourhood to align with pleasure and whenua to create equality.

Conclusion

A Pleasurable Methodology demonstrates an alternative approach to architecture that works by emotively engaging with whenua and whakapapa through collaboration and embodied making. It emerged in response to the current method of architectural making that continues to erase the whenua of Waiatarua. Through a set of speculative drawings, a more inclusive and environmentally engaged neighbourhood arose that, despite not yet being implemented, explores

²⁶ Urban Design Forum Aotearoa, *Submission on the Resource Management Enabling Housing Supply and Other Matters Amendment Bill* (Auckland: Urban Design Report, 2021), 4, <https://urbandesignforum.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Urban-Design-Forum-Aotearoa-Submission-on-the-Resource-Management-Enabling-Housing-Supply-and-Other-Matters-Amendment-Bill-2.pdf>

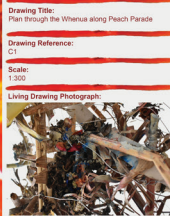
the possibilities of architectural design between organic matter and conventional drawing practices.

The research raises a series of critical questions for those involved in the design and planning of future neighbourhoods. How might we change the way we tackle housing and food crises if we approach them through pleasure with whenua? Can we change the way we draw and discuss our neighbourhoods with the fundamental understanding of the ecology as taonga, and does doing so alter our solutions? Can equality between our most vulnerable and our most privileged communities be achieved spatially with the whakapapa of Tāmaki Makaurau and, if so, what would that city look like?

This paper suggests that we can begin to answer these questions if we first critically examine historical colonial constructs and question current architectural practices in relation to those concepts. And secondly, if we then incorporate mātauranga Māori and our own experiences informed by these histories into ways of architectural making we might reveal and create new readings of our environment that could provide solutions to our pressing crises. By destabilising supposedly accepted conventions and instilling abstract yet highly charged relationships such as pleasure with whenua, architectural practitioners can begin to mediate and create new spatial conditions that speak to the evocative whakapapa that emanates from the whenua. Following and instilling te ao Māori values, concepts and principles into our drawing and building practices can completely transform our neighbourhoods towards a joyous future.

Figure 4. A plan of the whenua along Peach Parade alongside the Racecourse, C1. A typical suburban arrangement is envisioned as a place for native bush and birds to freely roam. By taking away the arbitrary boundary architecture that normally occupies the spaces between houses, Waiatarua is opened up as a vibrant, colourful ecology that wraps around and over houses.





Drawing Title:
Plan through the Whenua along Peach Parade

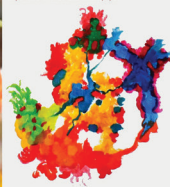
Drawing Reference:
C1

Scale:
1:300

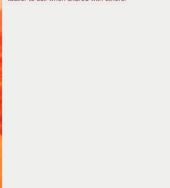
Living Drawing Photograph:



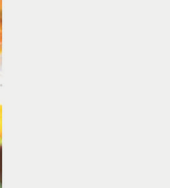
Pleasure Diagram:
A Pleasure Diagram acts as the guiding imagining of this drawing for further exploration. The diagram as an articulation of the core values of the drawing, acts as a grounding element to the architect



Pleasure Compass:
A Pleasure Compass locates this drawing within a wider pleasurable geography. It reorientates positioning according to the passionate joys of an expansive whenua and whakapapa



Pleasure Passage:
Routlines are the nests for weary wings. Water serpentine over rough ground and between houses and under alleys. There is constant happening occurring, each element and each living creature in a processional moving that feeds the turning of whenua. Fruit Trees between houses are always tastier to eat when shared with others.



Drawn By:
Brianna Madagammana and Waiatarua

Date of Drawing:
October 2021

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Can Form-Based Codes Be the Opportunity to Achieve a Quality Built Environment in Aotearoa New Zealand?

Eva Zombori and Ben van Bruggen

<https://doi.org/10.34074/aslm.2023104>

Abstract

This article suggests that our current land-use planning is routinely failing to make good places where people want to live. The inability of land-use zoning to generate mixed-use neighbourhoods is one reason. Instead of land-use and density calculations, the use of form-based codes might be an opportunity to take a holistic approach to streets, buildings and open spaces when thinking about our future neighbourhoods.

Keywords: Form-based codes, urban planning, building code, land use, built environment

Introduction

Why are the places that we want to live and work in not the places we typically plan and build?

We know what we want, and we know what looks good. We also know that the built environments we create today are not good enough. Too often they are car dependent, have few amenities beyond retail, are not resilient and much of the social infrastructure is missing. They lack quality open spaces and coherent built form. They are bland.

Most of us live in the suburbs of our cities. There is an urgent need to address the future of our suburban neighbourhoods. The onset of rapid climate-change-related hazards, inaccessibility to quality homes, increasing urbanisation, declining mental and physical wellbeing and growing inequality are just some of the most pressing challenges our cities are facing.

We need to find new ways of creating quality neighbourhoods, and resilient, equitable, compact, lively and walkable places. In order to do this, neighbourhoods must incorporate a greater mix of uses and include more of the things that we need on a daily basis, negating the need to travel by car. When we do need to travel we should make

this easier by encouraging bike use and providing frequent public-transport services.

We have plenty of evidence of what good urban environments look like. Unfortunately, what is clear is that our current zoning of land use is not creating properly conceived, well-functioning places (to use the latest government speak). The question is, how do we achieve better cities and their suburbs? How can urban planners be a force for tackling climate change, urbanisation and the creation of regenerative and attractive environments?

Form-Based Codes

One tool that should be applied more widely is the use of form-based codes. Simply put, these codes regulate the form of the buildings, not their use, as the current system of land-use zoning does. Land use and density controls, beloved of planners and NIMBYs (Not in My Back Yard), have become the weapon of choice for resisting change. So when, as now, we need big and rapid transformation, the system and its administrators are woefully inadequate. Form-based codes:

- De-emphasise the land use and density.
- Recognise that use must be flexible but buildings have a degree of permanence.
- Encourage mixing of uses, not only horizontally

across an area but vertically within a single building or block, achieving compatibility of uses through design.

- Understand the patterns of development and design concepts that create good environments for people.
- Give much greater attention to the relationship of the streets, the public realm and the buildings, with an emphasis on the lower levels of those buildings.
- Allow flexibility and certainty for developers and designers, making development more viable, so more likely.
- Require skilled designers to be employed because the process needs people to understand the built environment in three (or four if time is included) dimensions, which in turn is likely to lead to much-improved outcomes.
- Crucially, are based on design-focused public participation processes that increase the likelihood of more-equitable outcomes for people.

Form-based and design codes are nothing new. They are as old as cities themselves; there was some form of building code introduced in ancient towns and cities. As cities grew they responded to public-health concerns – for instance, dirty factories needed to be separated from where people lived – by segregating land uses. This became the dominant planning process and was reinforced by planning cities around people moving in cars. Zoning created a cycle of more and wider roads, more dispersal of land uses, and large land parcels in central locations utilised as car parks.

The Form-Based Codes Institute¹ in the US states:

A form-based code is a land development regulation that fosters predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code. A form-

based code is a regulation, not a mere guideline, adopted into city, town, or county law.

Codes can be highly detailed with technical specifications to control all aspects of the building design. Alternatively, they can be short, a single side of A4 paper, setting out the simple rules of height, bulk, setbacks and open space.

Look at any land-use plan in Aotearoa New Zealand. While the land parcels are all allocated a use and coloured accordingly, the roads and streets are blank, as if they are all the same or don't matter. Look at a transport plan, and the roads are allocated and coloured but there is no recognition of the place or the buildings adjacent.

They should be in service to each other. A significant advantage of form-based codes is that they can consider

the built environment holistically. Form-based coding examines and defines the spaces between the buildings depending on the type of road and the uses at the edges, while enhancing or creating the character of the area.

Resilience and adaptability over time have become key factors for the future of our neighbourhoods. Form-based codes provide a flexibility of use that is a basic element of urban resilience. A town centre building and street might accommodate retail, office and education as well as living, depending on the demand. While zoning might allow this to happen, it is not enough, and rarely delivers good neighbourhoods. Zone standards are rigid and prescriptive, most often resulting in decisions to lock single-use buildings that cannot quickly adapt to other uses, leading to their eventual demolition and waste.

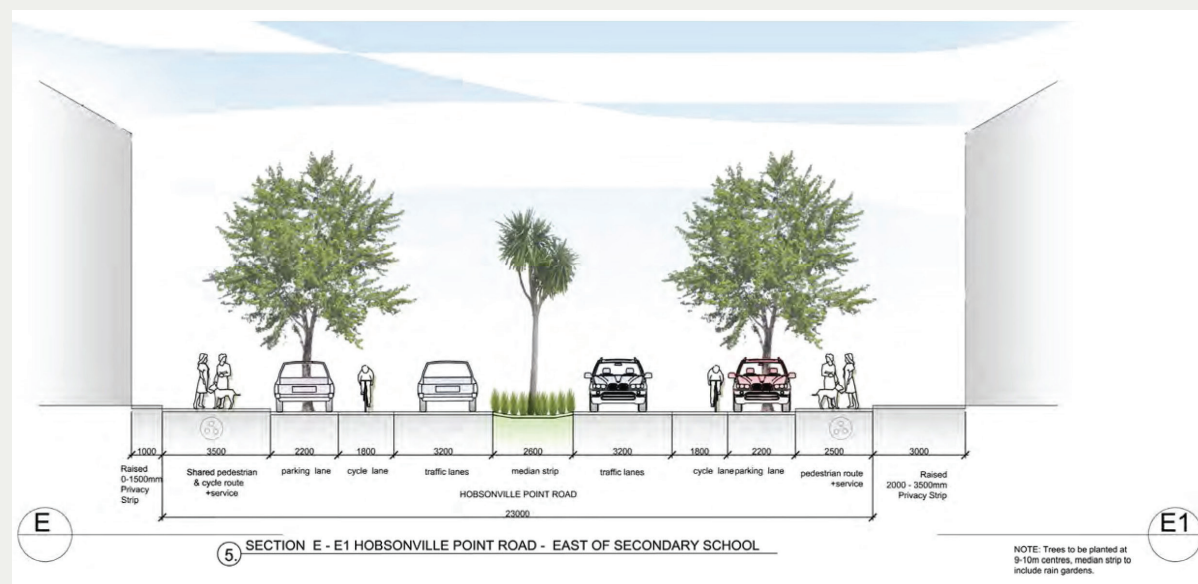


Figure 1. Example of the Hobsonville design codes, where the type of street defines the building type and their design elements, as well as the road/street design itself (how many lanes, planted median, type of street trees, etc.). Source: Buckley Hobsonville Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) 2009, Hobsonville Land Company.

¹ Form-Based Codes Institute, <https://formbasedcodes.org>

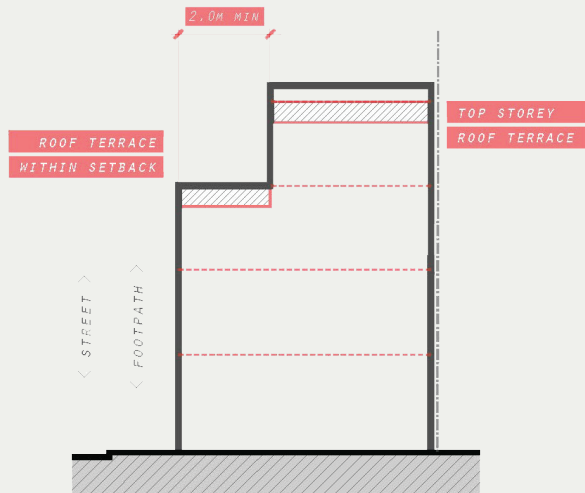


Fig 8. Roof terraces

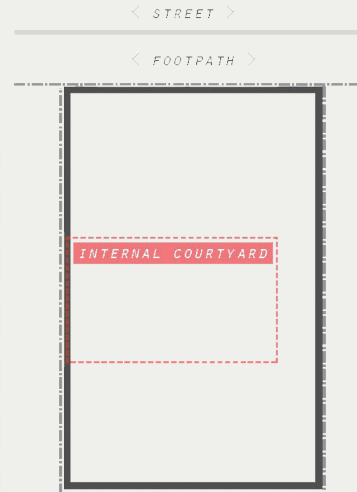


Fig 9. Internal courtyards

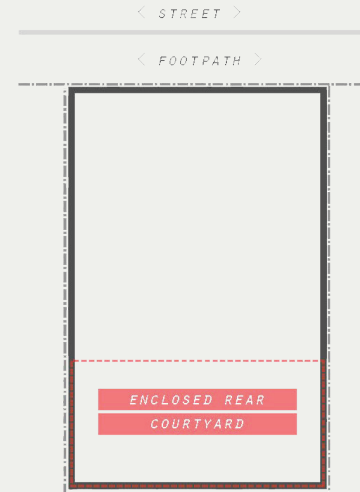


Fig 10. Enclosed rear courtyards

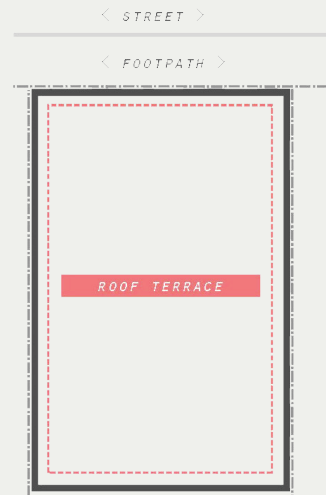


Fig 11. Roof terrace

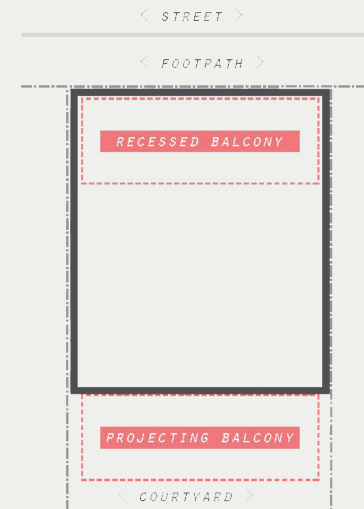


Fig 12. Balconies

Figure 2. Example of a design code that offers a range of permitted solutions for outdoor living spaces. Source: Isthmus Group, Vinegar Lane Precinct – Ponsonby, *Mixed Use Sites Design Manual*, 2013.

Encouraging compact and mixed-use areas is vital to tackling the adverse impacts of sprawl and delivering concepts such as the ‘15-minute city.’² Traditional zoning can define areas for mixed use, but it leads to each separate plot developing as a single-use building, with its own requirements for parking, etc. Form-based coding allows changes vertically within the buildings or plot, as well as horizontally across the block. The same building can contain many uses, sharing parking and refuse collection, for example, and being more compact.

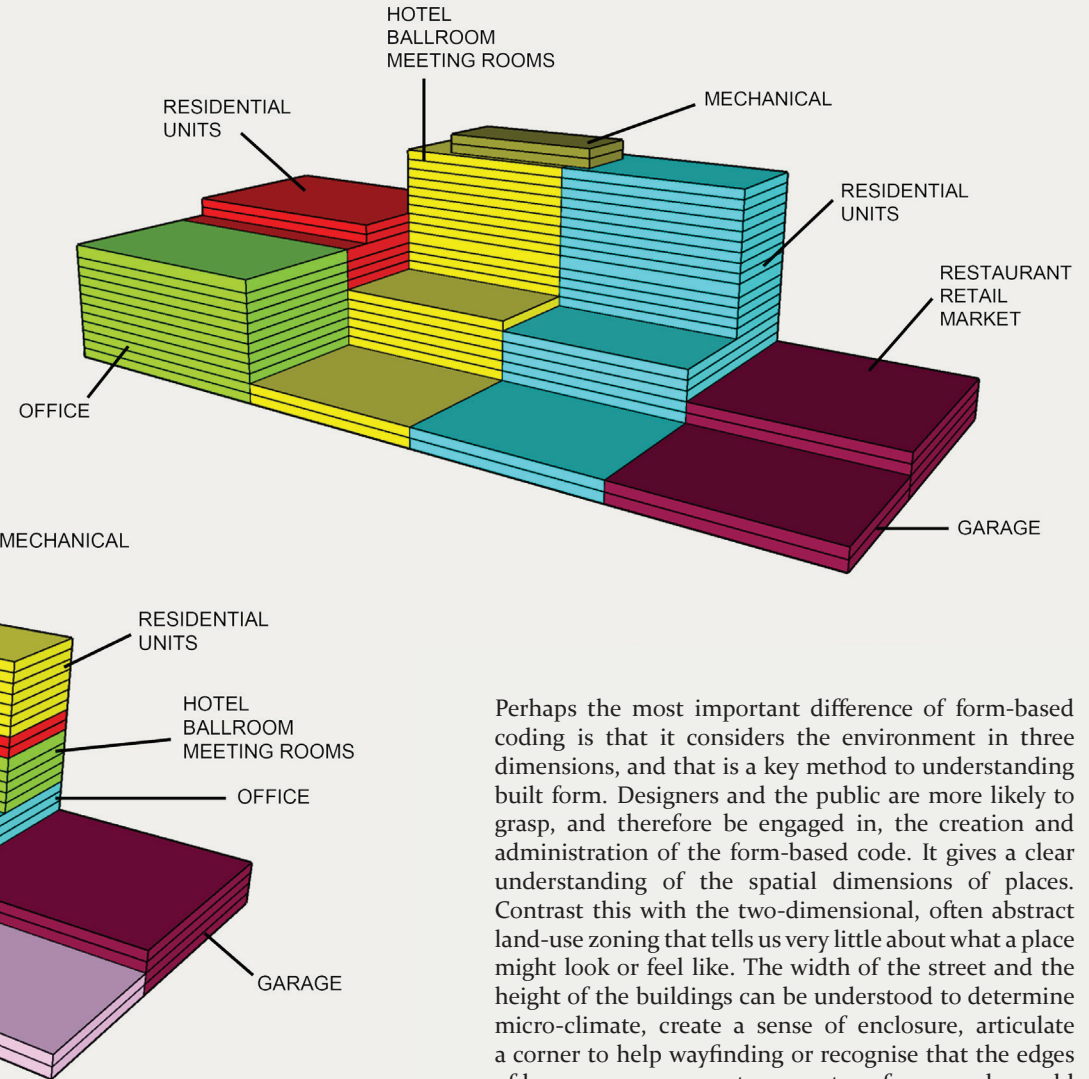


Figure 3. Vertical and horizontal mixed-use building diagram. Source: Mixed Use Transit Oriented Development, James Donovan, Architect, <https://www.pinterest.nz/pin/689895236639833714/>

Perhaps the most important difference of form-based coding is that it considers the environment in three dimensions, and that is a key method to understanding built form. Designers and the public are more likely to grasp, and therefore be engaged in, the creation and administration of the form-based code. It gives a clear understanding of the spatial dimensions of places. Contrast this with the two-dimensional, often abstract land-use zoning that tells us very little about what a place might look or feel like. The width of the street and the height of the buildings can be understood to determine micro-climate, create a sense of enclosure, articulate a corner to help wayfinding or recognise that the edges of large open spaces or town centres, for example, could accommodate taller structures. Zoning alone misses these important aspects of a place.

² The 15-minute city is a concept of an ideal city where a person's daily needs for work, healthcare, education, leisure and culture can be met within a walking journey time of 15 minutes from their doorstep.

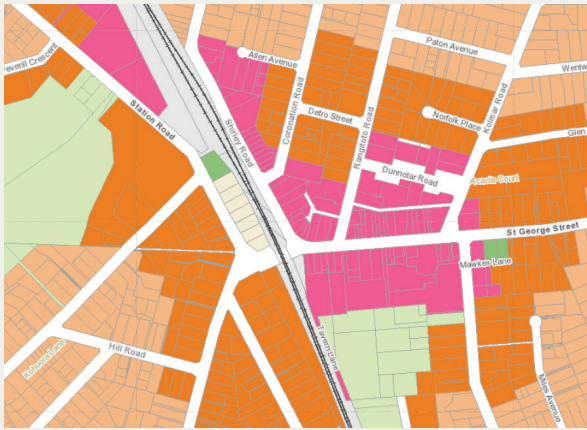


Figure 4. Typical land-use zoning map that shows the different land uses on a 2D map but not the built form. Source: Auckland Unitary Plan 2022.

An Opportunity in Aotearoa

Form-based design coding can be a participatory, inclusive and co-operative process between the public and designers. Because the codes require an understanding of the relationship of built forms, they also require the input of skilled designers, usually urban designers. In Aotearoa New Zealand, meaningful engagement with mana whenua at this stage of the design process would form the basis of coding. Reflecting local character, identity and distinction could be examined and expressed during the early part of the process. This could also be the basis for an expression of Aotearoa vernacular.

Form-based codes can also provide certainty for developers and builders, helping to speed up delivery. Developers and their architects know what is required as a minimum, and the code can be fully costed at the early stages of design, making delays or modifications at the end of the process less likely. Coding can specify style or design, but often leaves it to the individual.

In Almere, in the Netherlands, each home is different, but the general area exhibits a great deal of cohesive

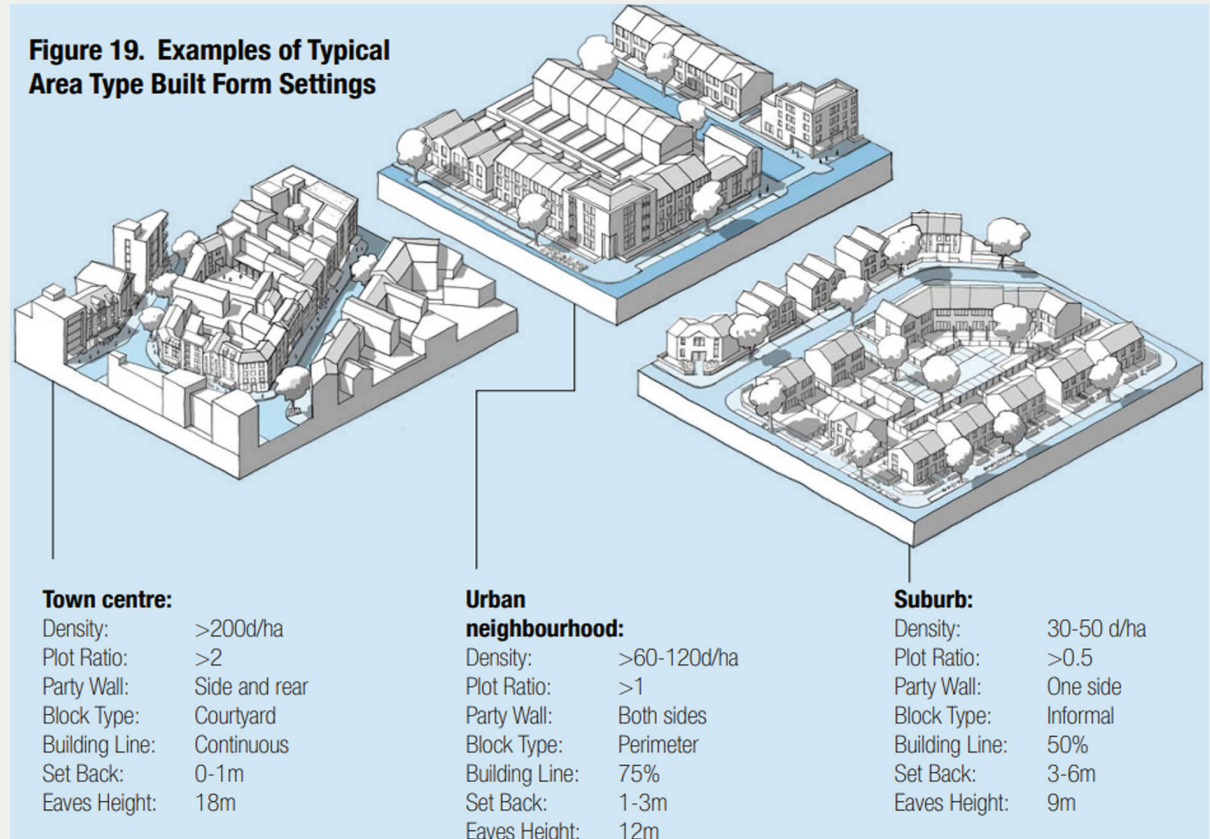


Figure 5. The proposed National Model Design Codes (UK) looks at the built environment in 3D. Source: National Model Design Codes Part 1 – The Coding Process, 2021, Ministry of Housing, Community and Local Government UK.

character as the height, setbacks and street frontage are specified. It also means that many hands can work on one site, delivering more units, faster, with variety a likely result. The master developer of the site, working to a masterplan, can issue 'plot passports.' This allows an individual, group, builder or other developer to know what they are allowed on each plot, and each plot can be varied. Sites are built out much faster with much greater diversity. Aotearoa housing development, with its monotonous grey-roofed homes, is time consuming and bland by comparison.

Form-based coding may not replace traditional zoning and may not be the only answer, but it fits well with the current system. However, the understanding of places and the level of design and planning skills required to implement such a change is limited at present in Aotearoa.

The changes could be led by local authorities to develop council-owned land, private developers seeking plan changes, or through the resource consent process. Larger



Figure 6. The Angle Mixed Use Development, Almere, the Netherlands. Photo: Studio Woodroffe Papa.

landowners such as Kāinga Ora or local authorities could become master developers, creating regulatory plans for areas and issuing plot passports to developers, builders, individuals and community groups to develop. This would speed up the completion of homes and raise standards of design and construction.

Government could promote the use of form-based codes to incrementally increase standards of construction, for example, allowing lengthy consent processes to be bypassed for energy-efficient homes. Form-based codes can be flexible and be updated as new legislation comes along without the delay usually associated with law changes. They are more likely to engage local communities, who will see the places they like reflected in the code, rather than the abstracted land-use and separate transport policy.

As the government starts to look at spatial planning, infrastructure provision and delivery of better places, form-based coding should be used to adapt our land-use plans and even replace them on specific sites. Bringing land-use planning, transport provision and built outcomes into closer alignment on a regional and local level is vital. The professions should play a prominent role in bringing the opportunities that form-based codes

offer, alongside the traditional zone-based planning, to shape our neighbourhoods. Doing so will enable our neighbourhoods to better cope with the social, cultural and environmental challenges we are facing.

Authors

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Figure 7. Vinegar Lane, Auckland. Photo: Author.

A Contemporary Pacific Village: A Proposal

Elyjana Roach

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On Creative Disobedience

This paper proposes a contemporary Pacific village as a response to the pressing housing issues of Pacific communities in Aotearoa New Zealand. More specifically, the proposal explores this at the scale of a neighbourhood. Three branches are considered in the process of designing such a village: Pacific concepts of tā-vā; Pacific churches as housing partners; and Indigenous partnerships with Māori. These are imagined through hyper-local processes. The proposal is not conceived to be applied directly to other contexts in the South Pacific region. However, the proposal could become a point of reference to where other localities across the South Pacific can begin to shift and change their own direct built environments.

For Aotearoa New Zealand, this kind of thinking requires deep-seated attitudes of resistance to the norm. It requires a challenge of the status quo, to carry out the act of decoloniality, or as I refer to, the act of creative disobedience. It is important to preface this proposal by outlining four postures of creative disobedience. I invite designers, planners, thinkers and doers to consider and adopt the following:

1. *Creative disobedience is to change the starting point*

This proposal attempts to centre other ways of knowing and creating in the built environment

of Aotearoa New Zealand. As the Pacific region has faced various stages of coloniality and external influences, the origin of design can be explored through vocabulary and its various meanings. Walter Mignolo, an Argentinian literary critic on concepts of global coloniality, recounts that the European Enlightenment was when other cosmologies worldwide, such as Africa, Latin America, South Asia and Oceania, began to disappear. He argues that although Europe has the right to be the centre of themselves, they do not have the right to be the centre of the world.¹ This proposal for a new Pacific village attempts to recentre for the Pacific what Europe de-centred through the modern city.

2. *Creative disobedience positions experience first and discipline second*

In this manner, creative disobedience begins at the intersection of two aspects of my identity: firstly, I am a daughter of the South Pacific; secondly, I am an architect and an urbanist. As designers, we should be repeatedly asking: Why do we do what we do? Why do we name what we do with the vocabulary and concepts we use? These are crucial questions to ask as designers of

the built environment. Especially when working within and from a culturally rich context, such as the South Pacific.

3. *Creative disobedience is context specific*

It is counter-boundary. Counter-colonial. It is to refuse the reductive and embrace complexity. It is to communicate multiplicity in a system that privileges singularity. It is mathematical but not rigid, where technology is in the imagination and is not an artefact. The past is not a place of residue but a wellspring of heritage. The decolonial is the reconstitution of the destitute.² The rejection of hybridity is to say that individual groups can innovate themselves.

4. *Creative disobedience is a call to dare to invent*

It is a generational mandate to create. It questions how a work came to be. As a creator, I must ask: How am I positioned in the being and doing of creating?

It is important to note that I will use 'Pasifika' and 'Pacific' interchangeably here. These terms are Western constructs. At times, I refer to the specific island ethnicities or nations that make up the generic Pacific category in Aotearoa New Zealand.

¹ Walter Mignolo, "Global South Epistemologies and Cosmologies Super Seminar Initiative," MIT Science and Technology class, October 14, 2021.

² Ibid.

Introduction: Common Spaces and Common Values

It takes a village to raise a child, hums the African proverb. We've heard it before. Many times, in fact. The African value of commonality is that, too, of Polynesia. One is not without another. The Sāmoan proverb "Ua o gatasi le futia ma le umele" translates to "We must be of one mind in the undertaking." This proverb reflects a village mindset. While the fisherman swings the rod, the others must assist him by paddling hard. The value of commonality and holism in Pacific communities is where social and environmental systems are integrated within each other. These systems are not disaggregated, as is commonly viewed through Western concepts.

Though the collective mind is alive in our communities, this attitude fails to render through our contemporary built environment. I do not refer to the civic buildings and town centres that reflect colonialism. Here I refer to the planning and design of our neighbourhoods' social and spatial arrangements. In Aotearoa New Zealand, these are based on the typical post-war detached suburban model. In the late 1950s and 60s, Polynesian people migrated to Aotearoa New Zealand for employment opportunities. Many Pacific peoples were housed in localities that were in the same areas, which allowed proximity within a community. However, these houses are no longer fit for purpose, given that the quality and design of these houses were poor. There are growing transportation pressures and a lack of access to vital social services. Pasifika people in Aotearoa now feel that their neighbourhoods "lack a sense of communal spaces for everyone to interact and that the suburbs feel disjointed."³

As Damon Salesa outlines in *Island Time: Aotearoa New Zealand's Pacific Futures*, Aotearoa New Zealand's future is in its youth. This youth is increasingly Pacific. Tāmaki

Makaurau Auckland demonstrates this most evidently, where one out of four babies born is of Pacific descent, one out of four is Asian, and one in five is Māori. The future of our neighbourhoods is being moulded differently than one might expect. Therefore, how might this be reflected in an urban context? Could a contemporary Pacific village become a model for building new neighbourhoods? What might a contemporary Pacific village be? What would this look like, feel like, operate as, and become over time? In the context of Aotearoa, what might this mean? And importantly, *why*? Why is the village a concept worth exploring as a model for building our neighbourhoods?

The *why* can be answered in two ways. The first reason is that social interactions within Pasifika communities inherently embody a village mindset. Pacific communities congregate around faith, family and intergenerational relationships that stem from a sense of interdependency. The second reason a contemporary village concept is essential to develop is that Pasifika statistics for housing are among the worst in Aotearoa. Some of these realities include the following: nearly 40 percent of Pacific people live in overcrowded homes;⁴ Pacific people are less likely to own a home than other ethnic groups in the country;⁵ about 40 percent of Kāinga Ora tenants in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland are Pacific; and the age for homelessness is increasingly becoming younger for Pacific people.⁶ In addition, issues linked to poor housing quality include rheumatic fever, child poverty, problem debt, asthma, and even post-natal depression amongst single Pacific mothers.⁷ Furthermore, loneliness and mental illness among Pacific elderly can be linked to high accommodation costs, unsuitable types of housing and living within overcrowded houses, or being too distant from family.⁸ These are some of the everyday realities for many Pacific households.

Three branches are proposed to consider in the process of designing a contemporary Pacific village. These are:

1. Pacific concepts and practices of tā-vā: Potential applications for topological form and block structure.
2. Faith and housing: The Matanikolo Housing Project in Māngere as a case study for how a Pacific church could become an 'iwi' for Pacific communities and a partner to provide housing.
3. Land tenure through Indigenous partnerships: Mana whenua and Pacific organisations.

The intent is not to go into depth about each aspect. Instead, the intent is to discuss these topics in a general manner, which may lead to further research and exploration. Overall, these aspects could be applied to different stages, autonomously or interdependently.

Pacific concepts and practices of tā-vā: applications for topological form and block structure

The concept of tā-vā is critical in understanding how Pacific people see and value space within a cultural context. Much has been written on the subject in relation to this as the 'inbetween.' The vā is a commonly referred to within Indigenous Moana Theory in Pacific diaspora and was first coined by Tongan scholar Hūfanga Dr 'Okusitino Māhina. Albert Wendt writes that it is "not space that separates but space that relates, that holds separate entities and things together in the Unity-that-is-All, the space that is context, giving meaning to things."⁹

In the text "Samoan Tā-Vā (Time-Space) Concepts and Practices in Language, Society, and Architecture," Fepulea'i Micah Van der Ryn discusses the relationship between tā-vā theory of reality and the point-field theory of space. He correlates this relationship to that of a

3 Savanah Hunt, "Lumana'i" (master's thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 2021), 84–85.

4 Ronji Tanielu, *The Housing Crisis Facing Pasifika People in Aotearoa* (Auckland: The Salvation Army New Zealand, 2019), 9, <https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/article/housing-crisis-pasifika-people>

5 Arthur Grimes and Chris Young, "Pacific Peoples' Homeownership in New Zealand," Pacific Housing Workshop, Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, May, 2009.

6 Tanielu, *The Housing Crisis*, 14–16.

7 Philippa Howden-Chapman, Caroline Fyfe, Kim Nathan, Michael Keall, Lynn Riggs, and Nevil Pierce, "The Effects of Housing on Health and Well-Being in Aotearoa New Zealand: Ngā Pānga o Ngā Whare Noho ki te Hauora me te Toiora i Aotearoa," *New Zealand Population Review* 47 (2021): 16–32, https://www.healthyhousing.org.nz/sites/default/files/2021-11/HowdenChapman_et_al_Housing_Health_Wellbeing.pdf

8 Taimalie Kiwi Tamasese, Tafaioimalo Loudeen Parsons, and Charles Waldegrave, *Pacific Perspectives on Ageing in New Zealand* (Wellington: The Family Centre, 2014), 65.

9 Albert Wendt, "Tatauing the Post-colonial Body," *Span: Journal of the South Pacific Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies* 42 (April–October 1996): 15–29.

Sāmoan village layout. The point-field theory of space is derived from Lehman and Herdrich's 2002 text, "On the Relevance of Point Field for Spatiality in Oceania."

Generative vocabulary: Tā-vā

A few chosen terms (Figure 1) are introduced; these are treated both as subjects and as analysis tools.¹⁰ They have generative power. These terms can translate underlying principles that help guide change processes, which become reflected in new architectural forms and spaces. Resilience and adaptability are intrinsic to this way of thinking. Van der Ryn highlights that architecture and the built environment are integral to spatial-temporal concepts that are culturally and linguistically conditioned and structured.

vā the space between	tā temporal marks	mata the eye, point of convergence or emanation	tua'oi boundary and neighbour
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Figure 1. Introduction to terms of vā, tā, mata and tua'oi.

Dr Māhina explains that within Polynesian societies, tā-vā is the "four-sided dimension" in which spatial-temporal relationships are structured. "Epistemologically tā and vā, time and space, are social products, involving their varying social arrangements across cultures."¹¹ Tā and vā are central to understanding conflict, order, harmony and beauty in various socio-cultural, artistic and spiritual realms.

Point-field theory of space

This theory asserts there are only two ways to cognitively perceive and construct: container and point field. Here we see how space is governed using language. For example, in English, you'll hear phrases such as "give me some space"

or "he needs some space." This metaphor highlights the concept of space as a container. Van der Ryn emphasises that this way of perceiving is parallel to a cultural worldview that emphasises the singular identities of entities. These include individual people, as autonomous and independent of the sets of relationships they are connected to. Container spaces are where boundaries predetermine space. We could think about this in design regarding the limitations of a property boundary, a building area, a block or a grid organisation.¹²

Point-field space offers a contrast to container space. Space begins with a point. These points can be determined by either people of the social landscape, or a significant cultural point. Each point generates its own field (space)

that interacts with other fields. Those fields then establish space (physical, social and spiritual) that interacts with the fields of other points. Boundaries emerge as negotiations between adjacent fields, only as an outcome of space. Space here is immediately relational and not quantifiable.

Lehman and Herdrich relate this with Sāmoan culture through linguistic and ethnographic evidence; in addition to mata and vā, other terms like moa (centre point), maga (the intersecting point) and ave (ray, tentacle, arm). I expand on these terms in Figure 4 to further illustrate this point-field theory. A short description of the four terms shown in Figure 1 illustrates how the use of vocabulary is crucial in the origin of design.

Vā – means intervals and binding relations between entities. It binds and separates beings together in various ways. There can be five types of vā: spatial; temporal; social, between people and other people; the vā between people and their environment; and the vā between people and their creator. The vā emphasises viewing the relations and contexts of things instead of focusing on objects, entities, or people in and of themselves (typically a more Western cultural pattern).

Tā – means 'to strike.' It is the material intersections marking 'points in time.' The Sāmoan word for ear is 'tāliga,' expressing the idea that our bodies listen to the beats that make up time through the ears. The word for time in Sāmoan is 'tāimi.' Europeans introduced this word with the clock and use of time. This refers to a Western container concept of time, parallel to the container model of space. Furthermore, common English expressions such as "do you have enough time?" and "thank you for giving me some of your time" are rarely heard in a Sāmoan cultural context. If translated directly they signify papalagi, foreign ideologies embedded in Western concepts of time. Time is viewed as a quantifiable and containable commodity. However, tā is seen as tempo, beat, pace, rhythm and frequency. Van der Ryn suggests the view that time = tā + vā. Time is composed of beats that mark 'time' plus the vā (of the intervals between each beat). The temporality can be illustrated with a few examples like tā tā le fatu (the continued beating of the heart), which is also a way of saying, "I'm still alive and life goes on." Or, in the asking of time, one does not ask "O le a le tāime?" ("What time is it?") but rather "Uā tā se fia?", literally translating to, "How much has been struck?"

Mata – can be the convergence point or eye, face, point or edge. Anything that can be constructed as a focal point can be mata, such as o le mata o le afa – the eye of the hurricane. It also finds itself in compound words, such as matavai (freshwater spring), and matagaluega (government section or department). Here, mata is a

10 Micah Van der Ryn, "Sāmoan Tā-Vā (Time-Space) Concepts and Practices in Language, Society, and Architecture," *Pacific Studies Special Issue* 40, no. 1/2 (2017): 212–244.

11 Ibid, 215–216.

12 Ibid, 216–217.

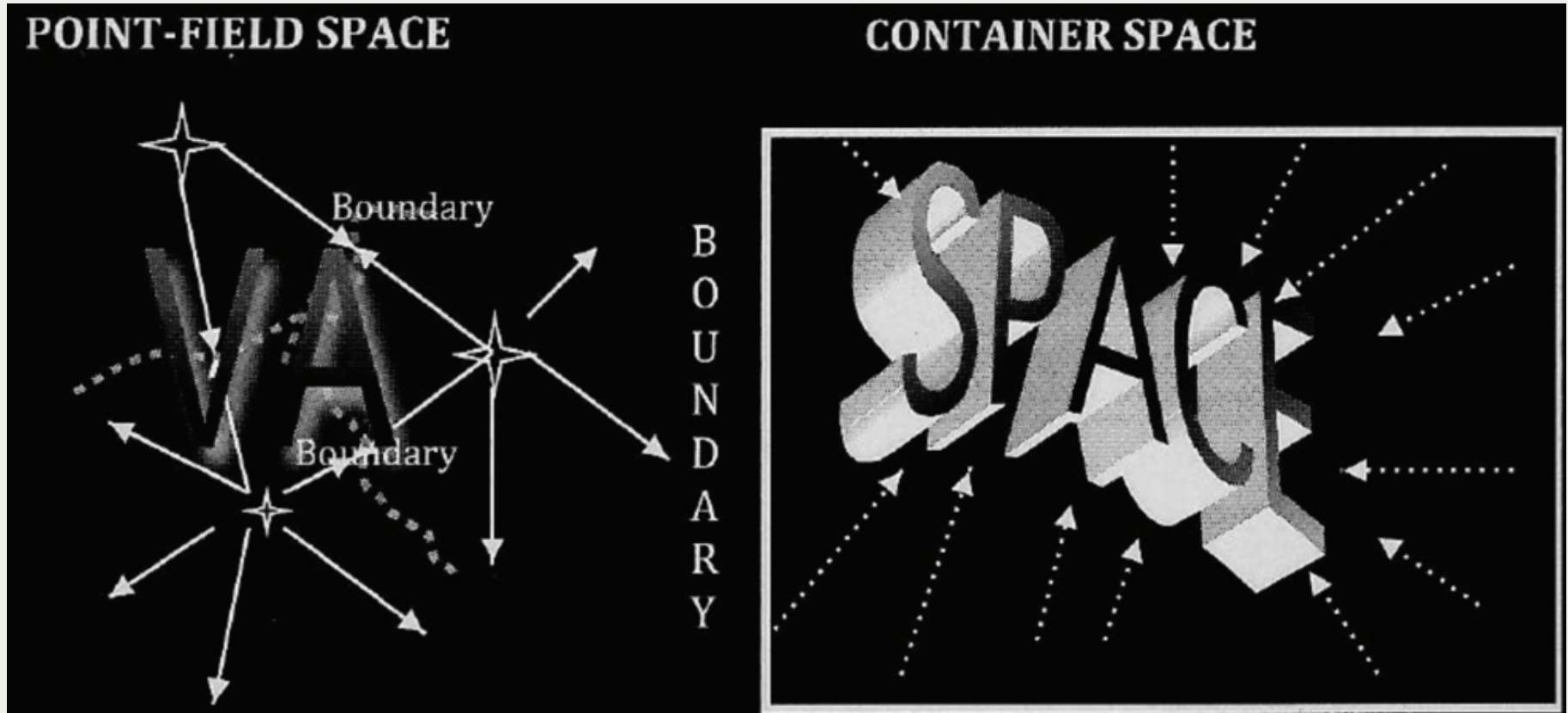


Figure 2 and Figure 3. Images illustrating point-field space vs container space. Source: Van der Ryn, "Samoan Tā-Vā (Time-Space) Concepts and Practices." Reproduced with permission.

point of intersection from which something emanates. It also encompasses the English concept of an edge. For example, the mata of a knife is its sharp edge, and matafaga (beach) means the edge of a bay – it signals the beach as a point at which trade and exchange would occur.

Tua'oi – means boundaries or a neighbour. Here, boundaries emerge as part of the vā. Boundaries are spaces that can be constantly negotiated and renegotiated between points of interest. The point-

field spatiality makes the concept of vā almost interchangeable with tua'oi, in that they imply each other. Neither vā nor tua'oi are the points of interest themselves, but rather the space between them is.¹³

Applications within a village malae

Van der Ryn explains how these terms can be seen within architectural buildings. Here, we will look at how these apply more generally to the spatial layout of a Sāmoan village or a village malae.

The malae, or marae, gives a spatial orientation of front and centre for the rest of the settlement and is arguably the most sacred space for the village. These original spatial relationships are now complicated by newer orientations to modern roads. Each malae has a centre eye (mata). The mata is the starting temporal point (tā) in the founding events of the village within the larger socio-political structure. Each malae has a name, which often hints to specific circumstances of the past, signifying the village's foundation. There are no fences, which

¹³ Ibid, 219-226.

vā

the space between

“between-ness”

spatial

temporal

social

people - environment

people - Creator

tā

temporal marks

tāliga - ear

tā - to strike

taimi - time

tā tā le fatu - the
continued beating
of the heart

ua tā se fia? -
how much has
been struck?

mata

the eye, point of
convergence or
emanation

o le mata o le afa -
the eye of the
hurricane

matavai -
freshwater spring

matagaluega -
government section

matafaga - beach

tua’oi

boundary and
neighbour

*Boundary is made
in the vā between
neighbours in the
landscape.*

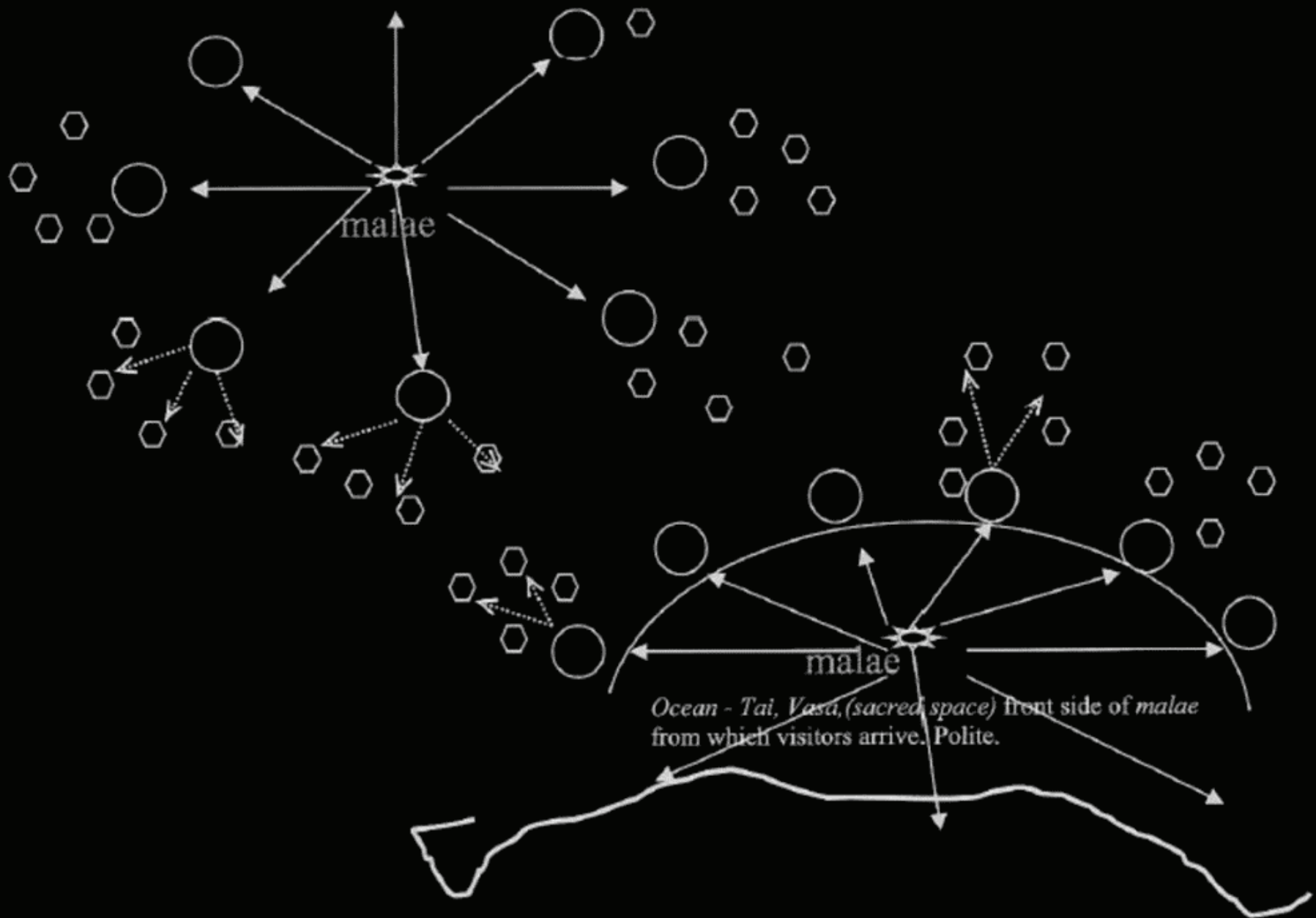


Figure 5. Diagram of village malae layout, illustrating point field. Source: Van der Ryn, "Samoan Tā-Vā (Time-Space) Concepts and Practices." Reproduced with permission.

is meant to communicate a fundamental need to respect and trust others. Strong boundaries indicate the absence of mutually trusting relationships between neighbours. Unmarked boundaries suggest common understanding, though these boundaries can be flexible and change over time, reflecting the changes in the relationships between people.

The boundary here is the most challenging concept to shift within the regulatory models of land ownership in Aotearoa New Zealand. Perhaps the contemporary Pacific village could consider the malae as the central way to deal with land boundaries in this context. For example, an open shared space could be designed, rather than having arbitrary boundaries, and utilised through negotiation between dwellers. A hierarchy of malae could be applied this way through variations of open space that are dedicated to different activities.

The typical malae villages are usually low density and mostly found in rural contexts. Yet to solve the housing crisis, the reality is that we need to increase density. For many Pacific peoples, this is confronting and thus the processes and solutions need to be creative. The challenge is how to achieve this density while still embodying culturally and environmentally sensitive practices. Within a contemporary neighbourhood, tua'oi becomes even more crucial.

These foundational concepts of time and space, boundaries and points of eminence in the Pacific, through vā, tā, mata and tua'oi, can be the terms of origin for constructing new congregations of housing. The point-field theory illustrates potential applications for designing topological form and block structure within a neighbourhood development. Further exploration needs to take place into how these terms, or other terms, relate to the construction of public-private space, communal vs individual areas that outplay within dwellings.¹⁴

Faith and Housing: The Matanikolo Housing Project in Māngere as a Case Study for how a Pacific Church Could Become an 'Iwi' for Pacific Communities

Churches are a nucleus of activity in Pacific communities. Churches as a point of spirituality can play an important role in the development of housing and Pacific communities in Aotearoa New Zealand. In the way that an iwi is the collective for Māori communities, spirituality is the collective for Pacific communities. Pacific churches could become a model, such as an iwi, to provide an overview of the general health and wellbeing of their whānau and hapu. More specifically, Pacific churches could consider partnering with housing providers or charitable trusts to offer solutions to housing their people in need. Could it be that, if the largest need for our Pacific communities is housing, the response in faith of our congregation is to meet that need?

Ronji Tanielu explores the relationship between theology and housing in *The Housing Crisis Facing Pasifika People in Aotearoa* by drawing upon a series of authors on the matter. One author, Wayne Kirkland, probes, "What is the housing crisis and why does God care? What is God's vision for housing in NZ? What is God asking of us?"¹⁵ Walter Brueggemann gives four themes from his 1997 book, *The Land*, which provides a framework for this avenue. These are: God deals with specifics, not abstractions and so place matters; 'home' is an important biblical image of redemption; communities are not commodities; and God is present in the poorest communities in a particular way. Tanielu reflects on his personal experiences of living in Samoa and South Auckland. Those ideas of this thinking can depend on numerous factors, such as how one views God Himself, the Bible, and complex ideas of land, home and place. Furthermore, Christian missionary Dr Shook adds a confronting call for believers:

It is hoped that the reader will have a new understanding of the God-given purpose of

land, and its just use so that all will have a place to live. It is hoped that the body of Christ will be mobilized to see and implement some practical ways that the church today can live out this part of the gospel to advance God's kingdom on earth.¹⁶

Case study: The Matanikolo Project

One example of innovation in which faith and housing come to fruition is in the Matanikolo Project in Māngere, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. In 2014, Matanikolo (Gateway of the Lord, in Tongan) provided twenty-two houses for 123 Pacific people facing housing hardship. In 2017, stage two got underway to complete eight two-bedroom pensioner flats for elderly Pacific people. The project was a collaboration between Airedale Property Trust; the Government's Social Housing Unit, Te Wāhanga Kāinga Pāpori; Lotofale'ia Māngere Tongan Methodist Parish; and the Methodist Church of New Zealand, Te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa. The land used for the development had been secured by the Tongan Methodist Church in 1993. The project leaders believed that Matanikolo was about building a community, not just about building houses. The inherent village mentality can be seen through Reverend Moi Kaufononga's description of the project: "We wanted it to be totally inclusive of all ages. The idea of the units for the older people was that they could come and help one another and share with other families – just like a village."¹⁷

Though the process of the Matanikolo Project provides an example of the involvement of the church, the design fails to rethink the configuration at the block scale. This development appears and performs operationally like every other development. It is indistinguishable from that of the typical suburban development. The project includes units for elderly, yet it is unclear as to how the single units provide improved social connections across generations. The orientations of the dwellings themselves do not encourage immediate exchange or a sense of community.

¹⁴ Ibid, 236–240.

¹⁵ Tanielu, *The Housing Crisis*, 4.

¹⁶ Ibid, 5.

¹⁷ "Pacific Social Housing," Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand, accessed December 10, 2021, <https://mentalhealth.org.nz/stories/story/pacific-social-housing>

Instead, they reaffirm the marker of boundaries, which, as discussed through tua'oi in a village malae, communicate a lack of trust. These boundaries in the Matanikolo Project are more likely a result of the planning legislation in Aotearoa New Zealand. Furthermore, the malae, or any evidence of shared common spaces, is unclear in the design. This is also the case for the recent dwellings completed in the Eastern Porirua Project. Though the houses were delivered through Kāinga Ora, the limitations of the design are restricted through the constraints of planning regulations.

Land Tenure Through Indigenous Partnerships: Mana Whenua and Pacific Organisations

A significant challenge for Pacific communities to achieve projects like this is the relative lack of capital asset base for Pasifika. Generally, they do not have access to land that Māori and other ethnicities have. Land on which Pacific churches are situated constitutes the most significant and accessible land owned collectively by Pacific communities. In saying this, owning land is not always the case for many Pacific churches. The question is, then, how can the right stakeholders, such as the government, private investors and mana whenua work together to build initiatives where Pacific people can grow and thrive? Notably, the kinds of land tenure that Pacific people are in urgent need of, and desire for the future, range from public housing, to rental properties, to private ownership. Shared land-ownership models like Community Land Trusts may also allow wealth to be built over time for Pacific families.

The partnership between Māori iwi and Pacific organisations is a necessary and poignant connection to achieve a contemporary Pacific village. The recent example between Porirua iwi Ngāti Toa Rangitira Inc. and the Regional Pacific organisation the Central Pacific Collective (CPC) demonstrates such a partnership. It is the first of its kind and demonstrates the benefits of collaborative relationships within iwi in determining what is possible to meet the needs of Pacific peoples.

January 2021 saw the official landmark signing of a formal relationship between the two groups. The historic Memorandum of Understanding allows Ngāti Toa and CPC “to work together to support the wellbeing of their communities across housing, health, education, social development, employment, and skills, economic and enterprise development, through innovation and strong community leadership;”¹⁸ the potential for this would not be possible without such an agreement. By taking ownership of our regional Polynesian identity and acknowledging that Māori are ahead in some of the areas Pasifika are attempting to address – most importantly, housing – there is an opportunity for different relationships between Māori iwi and Pacific organisations. Nevertheless, the types of housing models that are to be developed should attempt to be Pacific centred.

Conclusion

This paper is an early thought experiment about some aspects of what makes a contemporary Pacific village. Firstly, the linguistic origins of time and space through tā-vā in Indigenous Moana perspectives provide a fundamental starting point for planning a new neighbourhood. The boundaries between dwellings within the legal framework of construction in Aotearoa New Zealand will prove the most challenging aspect of such a design. Further exploration into other examples of legal structures for communal dwelling on shared land will need to be employed for any village concept to move forward. The closest contextual idea this may follow is that of papakāinga – Māori homes on Māori land. A range of low-medium and medium-high density arrangements should be explored with the concepts of a central malae, as a hierarchy of open green and shared spaces, to understand how Pacific-centred practices can be integrated, and the subsequent consequences for living.

Secondly, the Matanikolo Project is a precedent for how Pacific churches, as spiritual collectives, could provide partnerships for land and organisation to house Pacific peoples. However, the example fails to rethink the

configurations of a neighbourhood at the block scale. Instead of future Pacific-centred housing developments appearing and performing like a typical suburban development, the inclusion of a malae, at various scales, could be explored to address the blurring of boundaries within a zoned and regulated framework of land.

Lastly, since land tenure is a challenge for Pacific communities to attain, Pacific organisations could try to partner with mana whenua, and mana whenua could show manaakitanga towards their Polynesian cousins by providing the means of land to begin to solve some of the housing issues shared within their communities. Further suggestions are to explore the types of land-tenure models with Pacific communities so that Pacific people understand the short- and long-term effects of choosing specific tenure models.

These three aspects illustrate a multiplicity in the approach to addressing housing issues for Pacific communities. They each introduce a few key ways that a new contemporary Pacific village could be considered in the context of neighbourhoods in Aotearoa New Zealand. Combined, they highlight the opportunity to facilitate intercultural understandings as Aotearoa becomes more Pacific. Such a neighbourhood might allow second-generation Pacific peoples to embrace identities in new ways, while also giving housing regulators the understanding of these narratives and concepts to enable better housing outcomes across the country.

¹⁸ “Landmark Signing of Formal Relationship Between Porirua Iwi, Ngāti Toa Rangitira Inc. and the Central Pacific Collective (CPC),” Central Pacific Collective (CPC), News, January 20, 2021.

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Illustration by Emma McInnes

Section 2

REIMAGINING OUR APPROACH TO PLACE

What we learnt in Section 1 is that a neighbourhood functions as a response to a place. Within these places are smaller places, and potential for new places. So how do we approach place? How do places react and respond to us? And how do we react and respond in turn, again and again, and again and again, as generations of people pass through a neighbourhood and the place persists.

Charlotte Billing and Liz Allen share their approach to placemaking. Places have a narrative, as past, present and future. Placemaking approaches should understand the context of a given site, and consider what the future of the site may behold.

Niyati Soni builds on this concept by literally ‘reading’ a site through her architectural method. Touching upon the migrant desire to understand and be understood in a place, her approach fuses architectural design as a reflection of the individual into a public space, which acknowledges the pasts/futures and allows intercultural experiences to occur organically.

Liz Nicholls emphasises the importance of thinking of city centres as neighbourhoods, rather than simply nodes of economic activity. We must consider the needs of communities that reside in the city centre, and how

neighbourhood facilities can be integrated. Guided by the whakataukī “Ka mua, ka muri,” Nicholls embraces the need to look to past uses, needs and patterns to guide development of city centre neighbourhoods.

Grace Clark introduces the ideas of decolonisation and re-indigenisation in urban design. For our planning institutions, it is important to recognise how our urban history is steeped in colonisation, and the impacts this has had on Indigenous (Māori) communities. Re-indigenisation requires genuine partnership and space for Māori designers, not tokenistic design nods. Through this approach, our cities can become more reflective of tāngata whenua.

Lastly and importantly in this section, Ahlia-Mei Ta’ala’s article proposes the re-indigenisation of Pākaitore Pā in Whanganui. Today the site has been stripped of its mana and mauri, and is a reminder of the impact of colonisation. Ta’ala develops a place-specific approach to re-indigenising Pākaitore Pā through a series of wānanga throughout the Whanganui region. Through this approach, Pākaitore once again becomes Te Awa Tupua, a place to learn, share and grow Whanganuitanga, oriented towards the awa, restoring the mauri of the place.

Imagining a Narrative Form for Place

Charlotte Billing and Liz Allen

<https://doi.org/10.34074/aslm.2023106>

Abstract

Applying long-term thinking to placemaking is challenging when practitioners work within short timeframes to deliver a project – usually from the length of a funding window to that of an on-the-ground build. In order for placemaking activities to uphold the future vision for a place, new frameworks can be applied to widen our lens. Narrative structure is the framework of storytelling, in which the beginning, middle and end are distinct phases where the action of each propels the story and its characters forward, creating plot. The success of a story relies on sustaining the integrity of how the action of each phase links to what happens next. Telling the story of our future neighbourhoods by mapping out their history, their present, and their possibility will help to shape more people-centric places in vital areas of our towns and cities. This article demonstrates how to use narrative structure as a lens to deliver our future neighbourhoods in a way that shifts our time scale for meaningful placemaking. It articulates each phase of a place's lifespan: the place's past, present and future, in order to develop a context for placemaking activities. Within each phase, practical guidance is given on what to consider, and how to apply this thinking to places and placemaking.

Keywords: Urban design, narrative structure, future neighbourhoods, placemaking, tactical urbanism

Introduction

Neighbourhoods are places of ongoing change. Harnessing change as a strength can be challenging, as it relies on there being a strong vision for a place's future, while understanding the different phases of a place's lifespan. Framing a place as a narrative – by looking at these phases as its 'beginning, middle and end' – can be a way to understand the future vision, by articulating the steps needing to be taken in order to reach it.

Having a vision for a future that is multi-generational means greater resiliency in our places; our present moves with us, so our places should too. In placemaking,¹ we tend to think in terms of the length of time it takes to build something on the ground, such as a road or housing, or a funding window. In order to make resilient places that can adapt over time, we need to expand that timeframe, so that we can work in an ongoing context.

Using the narrative form or structure as a framework for thinking about place can be done by practitioners as a way to initiate place-based projects. The following approach is a non-exhaustive list to consider when getting started, which has been developed over the course of tactical urbanism and place-strategy projects delivered by Place Creative, a Place Strategy and Tactical Urbanism Agency.² In our experience, place projects have seen the most success when the community is involved from the very beginning of the planning stage.

There are three phases involved in applying narrative structure to place:

1. The beginning, which involves fact finding, researching and developing an understanding of the place's social and geographical background. It also involves planning – for how you will engage with the existing community – and collecting data that adds to your understanding and allows you to form insights. This phase is the foundation from which actions become meaningful.
2. The middle, where the status quo is challenged. The community is a vital source of ideas and feedback, and relationships can be strengthened by the process of placemaking. New approaches can be implemented, which may face resistance or failure. This phase is an essential learning curve.
3. The end, where resolution happens, and brings a place's story into a new light: what can you imagine for the place in twenty, fifty, or two hundred years' time? This phase is the moment to reflect.

Beginning: Understanding the Place

The first phase of a place's story requires asking good questions. Questions such as: What was this place before? Who used to live here? Who lives here now? What is planned to happen to this place in the future?

¹ "Placemaking," Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Placemaking>

² Place Creative, www.placecreative.co.nz

These questions create a picture of how this place came to be, and how you might gather insights about the context of the people living there today. This process will uncover the characters of your story.

When planning to engage a community:

- Give your data back to the community who gave it to you. The objective for gathering people's data should always be to respond directly to it, so share what they've told you and what steps you'll take – or ones you won't – to build trust in the process of change. Consultation can bring fatigue, but call and response can be generative.
- Collect data for the sake of bettering the solutions, not to justify spending. Don't expect people to contribute feedback for the sake of the future of their place, when to them that might be signalling gentrification. It's necessary to revisit your assumptions and your community, not in order to bother them, but to make sure they know that if they have something to say, someone will be there to listen.
- Make it an objective to improve relationships. Good relationships are the key indicator for whether any change, be it in policy, street upgrades, or even flat-cleaning rosters, will stick. If we start to see our relationships as essential to our success, the objectives for undertaking placemaking look very different from simply getting something built on the ground.

As with characters, people's motivations fit into a broader story of where and how they live, and the people you don't hear back from tell you as much as those who do respond. So take an iterative approach to engaging with them – it could be a survey that gets sent out online

as well as by post, some door-knocking, and then even some on-street events after work where people can tell you what they think, and co-design workshops where people collaborate on the solutions they want to see developed to address their needs. Once it becomes clear who the people are that make up a place, it's possible to illustrate their vision of its future.

Middle: Reinventing the Place

The opportunity to make changes to a place can be taken up through the process of tactical urbanism. Tactical urbanism uses design thinking to trial responses to needs in a place, and engages the community through trialling live, adaptable solutions to their user experience of a place.³ The trials should lead towards a larger upgrade planned in the future, so it's critical to spend time establishing the community's true needs, in phase one.

Doing things using the iterative process of tactical urbanism means people can instantaneously see the real-world implications of making more-permanent changes. By using a tactical urbanism approach, communities can collectively grow enthusiasm for bigger changes when they see how these may benefit them in the future. But it is critical the community is a partner in this process from the outset, so the solutions are responding to their needs, and the context of the place.

'Punctual urbanisms' is an umbrella term for the various approaches to tactical urbanism, which includes who undertakes it – grassroots communities, councils, or private entities – and how – immediately, over weeks, or over months, and incrementally or planned over a longer period.⁴

Who is delivering a trial, and what approach to take (the how), should be chosen with a good understanding of

the information collected in phase one. It's critical to let people develop the process, in order to protect the community's enthusiasm and energy within it.

Ending: Reimagining the Place

Changes, be they tactical or temporary, have lasting impact on people's experience of the place. It could be as simple as a chicane down a residential street decreasing rat-running, or a reconfigured rubbish collection that results in better pedestrian access to the footpath.

Once the immediate impact happens, and even when a permanent upgrade is put in place, it is still necessary to ask what the future might look like. To imagine it, reflect on how the questions asked back in the beginning set up context: What has this place been? And what do the people here need? It's the moment to ask: Have the tactics we've used so far started us on our way to reaching our future vision? And then asking more good questions: Who *could* be here, and what might make them stay?

Using more lenses, even in the last phase of our place, can daylight various pathways that could be taken. In order for places to continue to adapt for the future, consider three possible future scenarios that might result from asking good questions:

- Ruggedisation and climate adaptation: Climate communicator Alex Steffen uses the term 'ruggedisation'⁵ as a concept that describes preparing for climate change as a community. Ruggedisation includes aspects such as varied wealth levels and urbanisation, and makes the case against survival in a future of climate change as an individual's responsibility; instead, strong connection to community will make the most of each person's assets and skills.
- Intergenerational and collectivist living: In cultures where multiple generations

³ "Tactical Urbanism," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tactical_urbanism

⁴ Monica Landgrave-Serrano, Philip Stoker, and Jonathan Jae-an Crisman, "Punctual Urbanisms: Rapid Planning Responses to Urban Problems," *Journal of Planning Literature* 36, no. 4 (2021): 467.

⁵ Alex Steffen, "Ruggedize Your Life," *The Snap Forward*, November 30, 2021, <https://alexsteffen.substack.com/p/ruggedize-your-life>

Diagram on the Dimensions of Punctual Urbanisms

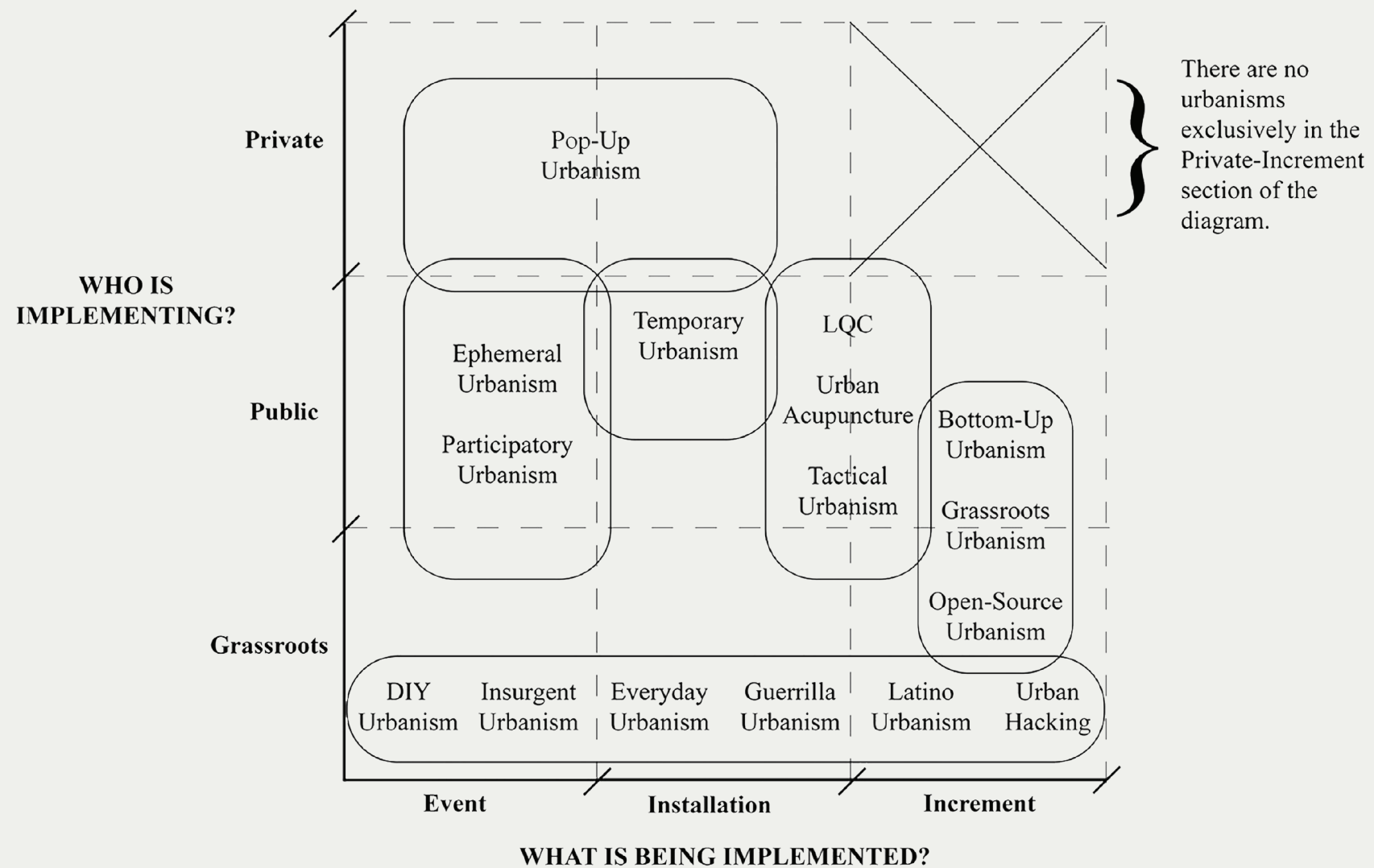


Figure 1. Source: Landgrave-Serrano, Stoker, and Crisman, "Punctual Urbanisms," 485.

live together, and collectivist goals drive decision-making, more planning is required to balance the complexity of resources and work, but the burden of work is lessened for each person. Traditionally, this means care of people at vulnerable ages, and easing the burden of household maintenance and costs. In Aotearoa New Zealand, Te Puni Kōkiri has formalised a Papakāinga model of housing development, which sees whānau able to create home-ownership opportunities, as well as reconfigure the process by which housing is designed and built, by putting relationships and consensus at the core.⁶

- Land back: A movement of Indigenous people worldwide that seeks the return of lands stolen through colonisation. Land back is a movement that could radically reorient the way we approach climate change and manage natural resources, by restoring kaitiakitanga to rebalance the needs of the ecosystem, and deprioritising the principle of individual land ownership.^{7,8}

Summary

Meaningful placemaking actions need to be rooted in context. To create an understanding of that context, be it on any scale, from down on the street to city-wide, requires asking questions about what came before, who is here now, who is missing from the place, and what kind of future could we imagine together.

Given the challenges of planning, where funding and budgets to make changes in our places can be set far in advance, placemakers have the opportunity to reimagine the future using a narrative framework. By uncovering the narrative beginning, middle and end of the place's lifespan, we can support communities to create a deep understanding of the context of belonging, and connect to the wider possibilities for their place.

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⁶ Te Puni Kōkiri, *A Guide to Papakāinga Housing* (Wellington: New Zealand Government, 2017).

⁷ Green Party Aotearoa, *Hoki Whenua Mai* (Wellington: Green Party Aotearoa, 2022), 2–3.

⁸ Te Kuru o te Marama Dewes, "Hoki Whenua Mai: The Greens' Land Back Push Explained," *The Spinoff*, February 10, 2022, <https://thespinoff.co.nz/atea/10-02-2022/hoki-whenua-mai-the-greens-land-back-push-explained>

Designing Neighbourhoods to Facilitate Intercultural Encounters: Negotiating Between Self, Society and Place

Niyati Soni

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Introduction

Globalisation, and the consequent migratory processes, have radically transformed many countries across the world. A greater number of people with diverse backgrounds have been travelling to more places for numerous reasons.¹ Consequently, immigrants have become an intrinsic part of most societies across the globe. When an individual travels from one place to another, they carry unique cultural information about specific areas. As such, immigrants inadvertently influence the spatial environment they interact with. Consequently, the built context of destination areas can be interpreted as the physical manifestation of accumulated information over time. Thus, immigrants effectively serve as catalysts for increasing levels of cultural flow between the place they have come from and the place they choose to resettle.

However, through this shift immigrants often face a personal and/or cultural identity crisis. They find themselves as ‘other’ – disconnected from their cultivated personality in their former environment and distinct from the ‘norm’ in their new context. As a result of their ‘difference,’ the immigrant can often feel or become

marginalised, discriminated against, or isolated within the neighbourhoods they settle in.² In such situations, these individuals face the challenge of adapting to new influences whilst also preserving cultural and geographical associations they may have inherited or cultivated in their place of origin. Thus, there exists a need for host countries to develop neighbourhoods to suit these needs – and subsequently reduce the adverse impacts of immigration. However, to respond to this, it is crucial to first understand how an immigrant’s cultural identity is defined, developed, and expressed as a consequence of the process of resettlement.³ To do so, the following research will analyse both subjective insights – of being an immigrant – and objective knowledge, gathered from literature regarding immigrant discourse.

Immigrant Identity and Experience

Various theories have been articulated to argue the constraints implied on, and the malleability of, an individual’s identity evolution. Through primordialism, one’s identity is premised on the perspective that it is predetermined through biological and familial factors that are assumed to be unreservedly passed down by kin or elders in one’s community of origin. Hence, an

individual will always be predisposed to relate with the same ethnic, national, or shared group they were born into.⁴ Alternatively, constructivism argues that an individual will have multiple identities that are socially constructed through interaction with other people and constantly influenced by the changing political, economic and/or social conditions one is exposed to. However, both these theories have been challenged by increased, and varied, levels of national, ethnic, religious, social, cultural and political exposures faced by immigrants. However, the essentialist nature of primordialism and its dependence on stagnancy does not recognise the impact of the influences and adaptations an immigrant’s identity may be subject to when trying to establish connections within a new context. And while constructivism enables immigrants to characterise themselves as affiliated with varied groups, this belief system may also encourage the rejection of those that believe in a more manifest truth.

The consideration of both perspectives together has inspired another view of identity evolution, termed constructed primordiality.⁵ This theory advocates for a

¹ Steven Vertovec, Daniel Heibert, Alan Gamlen, and Paul Spoonley, “Superdiversity: Today’s Migration Has Made Cities More Diverse than Ever – in Multiple Ways,” <https://superdiv.mmg.mpg.de/#vancouver-intro?bubble;filter:Total%20population?map;variables:o,o;mode:traditional?tree;year:2012;category:Humanitarian?sankey;year:1991?dashboard;filters:99,99,99,99,99>

² Ashleigh Ali-Aziz, ed., *Think Diversity: Different Journeys, One Destination*, 2nd ed. (Wellington: Eyeview Ethnic Trust, n.d.).

³ Niyati Soni, “Facilitating Intercultural Encounters: Through the Negotiation between Self, Society, and Place” (master’s thesis, University of Auckland, 2022), 21, <https://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/handle/2292/61038>

⁴ Sheila Croucher, *Globalization and Belonging: The Politics of Identity in a Changing World* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 42.

⁵ Ibid, 45.

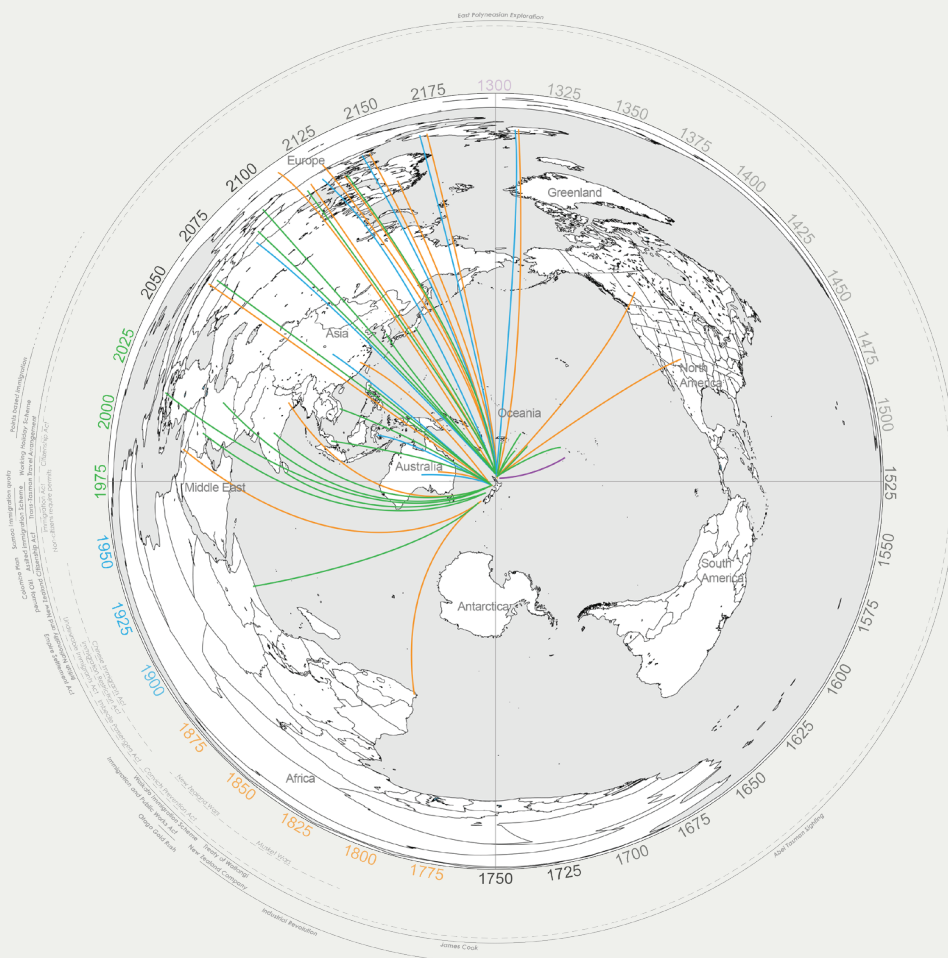


Figure 1. Diagram of mapping migratory movements to Aotearoa New Zealand over time. Image: Author.

critical and ongoing evaluation of the negotiation between the predetermined and self-determined attributes that may characterise identity. It involves reference to “salient and important past events, and the creation of links between those events and the present self”⁶ to delineate the crucial rituals, actions and activities that have been persistently practised or abided by throughout an individual’s life. For immigrants, these defining markers of one’s identity become the most apparent and challenging at the time of resettlement – when they are faced with the choice of heritage-based and/or host-based cultural acquisition.⁷ Consequently, immigrant identity can then be construed as a “unique synthesis of established cultural constructs and varied affiliations”⁸ which is “one of perpetual choice.”⁹ As this can result in innumerable permutations, the identity of an individual – especially an immigrant – should always be self-defined. However, the multiplicity inherent in this notion of identity implies that the performances and expressions of immigrants’ authentic selves will differ, if not be revealed, “depending on the opportunities afforded (and denied) by a given context.”¹⁰

To recognise the unique needs of immigrants, McLean and Syed have developed a master narrative framework.¹¹ Master narratives are culturally specific stories that provide insight into socially accepted values, practices and ideologies shared amongst the host society. While some immigrants may be able to adopt these factors completely to ‘fit in,’ other immigrants who cannot relate or do not feel accommodated by the master narrative will create alternative narratives – stories that describe an individual’s ‘difference’ from the expected ‘norms’ in a new context.¹² While this interrogative and comparative articulation of stories

- 6 Kate C. McLean and Moin Syed, “Personal, Master, and Alternative Narratives: An Integrative Framework for Understanding Identity Development in Context,” *Human Development* 58, no. 6 (2015): 321, <https://doi.org/10.1159/000445817>
- 7 Seth J. Schwartz, Jennifer B. Unger, Byron L. Zamboanga, and José Szapocznik, “Rethinking the Concept of Acculturation: Implications for Theory and Research,” *American Psychologist* 65, no. 4 (2010): 237.
- 8 Soni, “Facilitating Intercultural Encounters,” 22.
- 9 Themrise Khan, “Is It Possible to Define Immigrant Identity?” *Routed*, <https://www.routedmagazine.com/omc2020-1-immig-identity>
- 10 Shaun Wiley and Kay Deaux, “The Bicultural Identity Performance of Immigrants.” In *Identity and Participation in Culturally Diverse Societies: A Multidisciplinary Perspective*, ed. Assaad E. Azzi, Xenia Chrysoschoou, Bert Klandermans, and Bernd Simon (West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2010), 51, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444328158.ch3>
- 11 McLean and Syed, “Personal, Master, and Alternative Narratives,” 322.
- 12 Kate C. McLean, Jennifer P. Lilgendahl, Chelsea Fordham, Elizabeth Alpert, Emma Marsden, Kathryn Szymanowski, and Dan P. McAdams, “Identity Development in Cultural Context: The Role of Deviating from Master Narratives,” *Journal of Personality* 86, no. 4 (2018): 634, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12341>

enables immigrants to consolidate the understanding of their own identity, it also assists people who have input in moulding the surrounding social context to recognise the specific contextual constructs that can adversely impact immigrants and their identity development. Therefore, this article advocates for, and tests, the extrapolation of this framework into a design guideline that can be utilised to create places that can facilitate 'difference' in a positive manner, celebrate diversity and enable the self-representation and integration of immigrants within globalised societies.

Concepts of Self: Soul, Body, Mind

Personally, I choose to self-categorise as an Indian New Zealander. At the age of four years, I immigrated with my family to Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand, from Mumbai, India. Since then, consciously and subconsciously, I have constantly altered my dialogue, behaviours and expressed preferences in attempts to conform to the norms of particular cultural communities, spaces or situations.

This experience, combined with my academic progression toward becoming an architect, directs the incentive for this research. In agreement with the theory of constructed primordiality, I believe that my identity is comprised of many facets – each moulded by the interactions, observations and experiences I have encountered in numerous social situations and diverse cultural contexts throughout my life. As such, each facet of my 'self' requires a unique place, space, or situation in which I can express, develop or advocate my authenticity. This is the design incentive for my research. To do so, then, each and/or any facet deemed to be most impacted by resettlement will be interrogated – through the scribing of narratives that articulate the intersectionality between my cultural connections with India and my experiences with diversity

in Aotearoa New Zealand. While my master's thesis¹³ explored the multiple facets of my identity, for the scope of this article, I will only focus on one – which I have named 'soul.'

The narrative of 'soul' relates to my affiliation to religion as a Hindu Punjabi, and how my interpretation of Hinduism may differ from established, or perceived, norms and expectations within the community. As such, my unique religious performances/practices revealed in the following narrative will be the driver of the design process.

Digressing from Hindu conventions, I do not believe in any deity; as a manifestation of a supreme being or God. Instead, I guide decisions based on two core ideologies inherent in Hinduism: ātman and karma, both referencing energy as the source of all existence ... This energy – the spirit or true essence of one's being encapsulated within a human form – is called the soul or ātman. Fundamentally, the Hindu purpose of existence is "to transcend individually, [and] realize one's own true nature" by positively nurturing the ātman through every lifetime. To fulfil this, Hindus abide by karma, whereby the actions throughout past life/times have corresponding consequences impacting the present and determining the future.

[And] while my spiritual connections are aligned with selected Hindu values, my expressions of the soul are influenced by [inter-]cultural exposure and [diverse] religious practices. The religious practices I perform are meditation and introspection. I meditate by simultaneously chanting and performing yoga in respect and

gratitude for my body and all it has endured to support me through life. This allows me to acknowledge my ātman and reconsolidate my spiritual purpose. I introspect by interrogating my karma through spiritual journaling in places away from my usual environment. In doing so, I analyse my actions whilst identifying specific activities, gestures, and linguistic tools which I have observed/experienced from other cultures and would like to inculcate in my daily life.¹⁴

Existing Urban Context

Migration in the age of globalisation

As the destination for my resettlement, and a city that has been identified as the fourth most ethnically diverse city globally, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand, is the urban setting of focus for my research.¹⁵ Whilst this young country has attracted and absorbed numerous waves of immigrants from various areas across the world over time,¹⁶ the existing built environment is not reflective of the cultural variances and anomalies that characterise this ever-diversifying composition. The key approaches that direct actions towards and for, and management of, diversity within this country are categorised into three socio-cultural models: biculturalism, multiculturalism and interculturalism.

Theoretically, Aotearoa New Zealand is founded by a bicultural political structure that acknowledges the authority of the Crown and upholds the recognition of Māori as tāngata whenua. However, the debates on implemented equity between these groups are ongoing.¹⁷

In response to these debates and in reflection of immigration flows, initiatives and management strategies intending to acknowledge and accommodate all existing cultures have been formed – most of which stem from the

¹³ Soni, "Facilitating Intercultural Encounters," 27.

¹⁴ Ibid, 28.

¹⁵ International Organization for Migration, *World Migration Report 2015 – Migrants and Cities: New Partnerships to Manage Mobility* vol. 8, 2015, 39, <https://publications.iom.int/books/world-migration-report-2015-migrants-and-cities-new-partnerships-manage-mobility>

¹⁶ Hiromi Ishizawa and Dharma Arunachalam, "Ethnic Neighbourhoods in Auckland, New Zealand," *Urban Policy and Research* 32, no. 4 (October 2, 2014): 419–420, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0811146.2013.877391>

¹⁷ Francis Leo Collins and Wardlow Friesen, "Making the Most of Diversity? The Intercultural City Project and a Rescaled Version of Diversity in Auckland, New Zealand," *Urban Studies* (Edinburgh, Scotland) 48, no. 14 (2011): 3068, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098010394686>

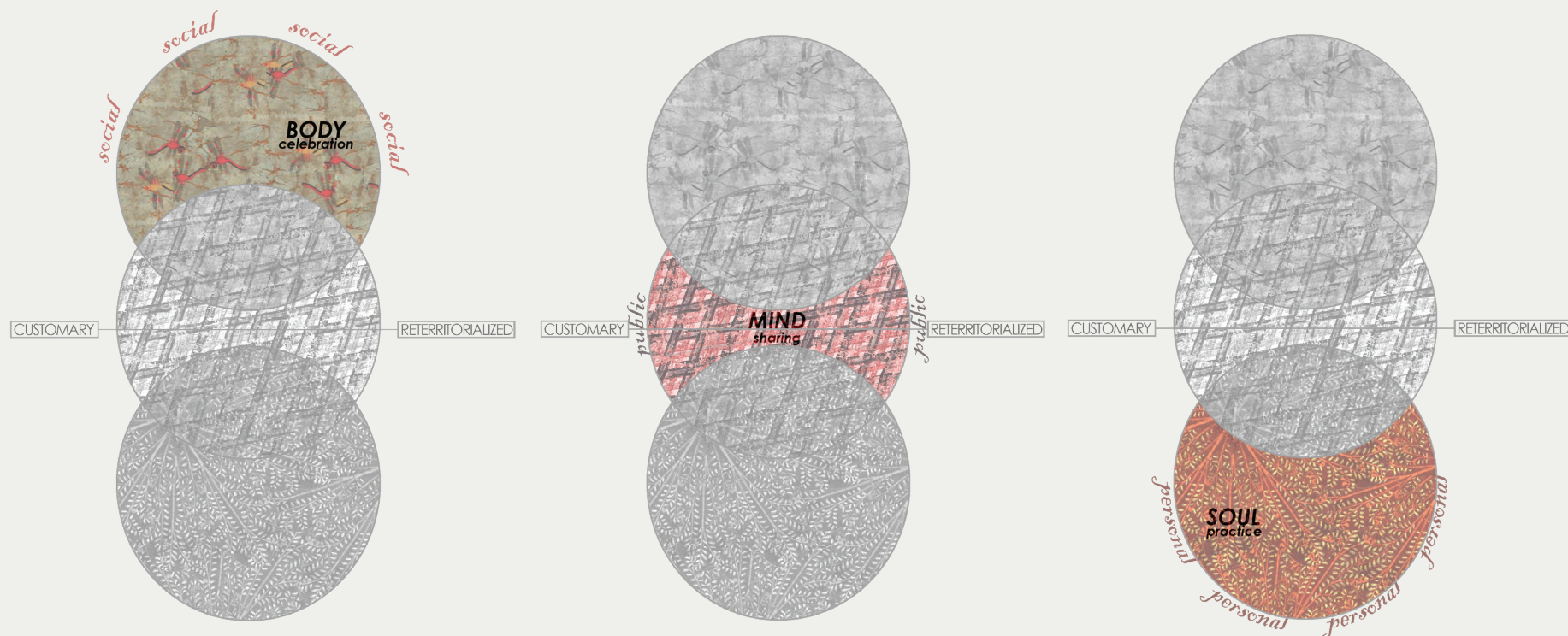


Figure 2. Diagrams of my identity facets. Image: Author.

ideologies of multiculturalism. In Aotearoa New Zealand, its implementation has been manifested in two forms. On one hand, symbolic differences such as food and ethnic ceremonies have been enabled and encouraged through permissions granted for community-based events. On the other, formal policies to aid marginalised groups have been established. However, while both these forms have actively accommodated specific preferences and requirements for varied groups, these approaches have been considered to “overemphasise diversity, without building on the bonds that unite people.”¹⁸

The search for alternative approaches to managing diversity reveals the importance of cultural exchange as a prerequisite for the development of societal constructs that “cannot be derived from one culture alone but through an open and equal dialogue between them.”¹⁹ This can occur in two scenarios: through interpersonal cultural encounters, wherein one can express inner values, beliefs and practices within a trusted group or comfortable environment, and through social encounters, wherein one is exposed to, learns from and increases tolerance towards other cultures. In reflection of this, this article advocates for “the facilitation of

intercultural encounters – wherein different cultural groups/individuals are instigated and/or enabled to ‘correct and complement each other, [and to] expand each other’s horizon[s] of thought’.”²⁰

Urban context

Today, Aotearoa New Zealand is home to over 200 ethnic groups,²¹ with immigrants residing predominantly in the Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland region. While some suburbs have been spatially appropriated entirely by the rapid influx of immigrants, other areas have witnessed more subtle and partial adaptations of the existing built

¹⁸ “What Interculturalism Is About?” Council of Europe OP Services, Vimeo, 2019, <https://vimeo.com/340202838>

¹⁹ Bhikhu C. Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke, UK; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 13.

²⁰ Ibid, 167.

²¹ Vaimoana Tapaleao, “Auckland ‘More Diverse’ Than London,” *New Zealand Herald*, March 4, 2014, <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/auckland-now-more-diverse-than-london/GAKIORANZOOGNA3I4BUVHRWLMU/>

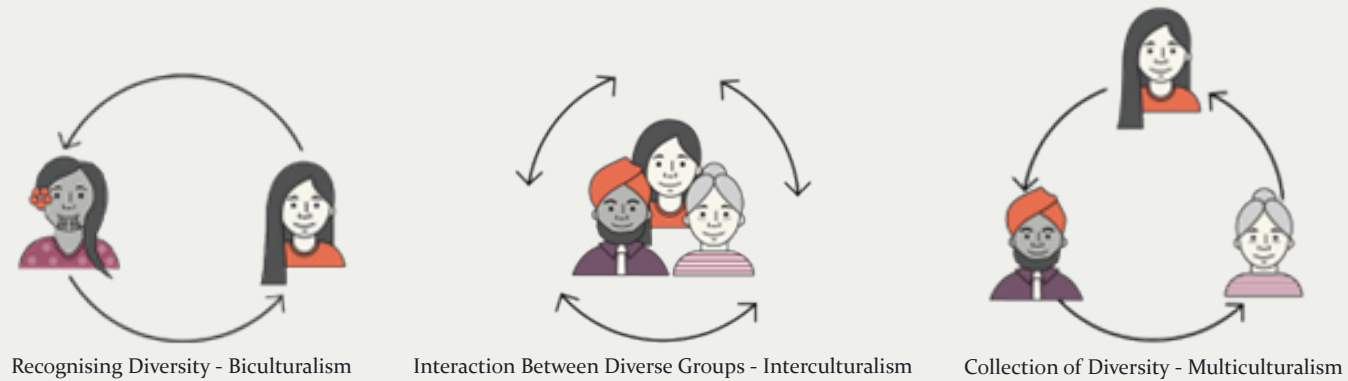


Figure 3. Visual representations of biculturalism, multiculturalism and interculturalism. Image: Author.



Figure 4. Diagram of the diversity encapsulated within Auckland Central. Image: Author.

environs. However, the intersection of immigrants, tourists and working people from various backgrounds is greatest in Auckland central. This is due to its commercial profile, and its critical positioning at the geographical centre of the entire region and the region's public transportation network. As such, the area hosts the greatest prevalence of intentional or happenstance interaction between diverse groups.

While many sites within this area can be developed to facilitate intercultural encounters, the public realm of the city is of most interest for this research due to three reasons:

1. Public spaces serve as platforms of expression where a range of activities, forms and people are most likely to be accepted and celebrated, or at least acknowledged.
2. Public spaces in the city serve as thoroughfares, rest places and/or exotic destinations. As they are constantly accessed by many, the chance of encountering cultural diversity is almost inevitable.
3. Compared with the rest of the region, Auckland central has the most publicly used typologies that can be, or are already planned to be, developed for the purpose of cultural advocacy.

Research question

Thus, the research question that frames the rest of this exploration is: How can the representation of 'self' transform a public space in order to facilitate intercultural encounters?

Methodology Space into place

The term 'space' is understood as a "continuous area or expanse which is free, available or unoccupied" and is

physically defined by "dimensions of height, depth, and width within which all things exist and move."²² Whereas 'place' exists through the amalgamation of three components: "the physical setting, human activities, and the human psychological processes relating to it."²³ While spaces can physically exist in their material form, without the latter two components they do not embody any meaning or have any value to any person.

In the specific context of immigration, architectural lecturer Stephan Cairns suggests the built environment can be transformed in four ways: it can either be created for, adapted by or designed by immigrants, or it can be subject to architectural migrancy – wherein built forms from an immigrant's origin country are reconstructed at the new destination.²⁴ When meaning is ascribed to a space through these methods, immigrants may be enabled to inculcate known conditions into their new environment through culturally directed adaptations, active engagements or decorative measures, while exhibiting cultural knowledge and skills to society. This establishes their sense of belonging to that place. Thus, not only do these constructions enable one's cultural empowerment, but they also highlight the value of the immigrant within their new context and inspire other diverse hybrid tectonics and aesthetics.

Precedent study

By cross-referencing Cairns's categories with the functions outlined in the narrative about my soul, I have been able to identify built precedents that may have design features that can possibly facilitate the maintenance, development or expression of my religious practices; namely meditation and/or introspection. The analysis revealed such typologies are either designed to represent people of a particular religion, or are devoid of any symbolic features in order to cater to as many people as possible.

²² "Space," Lexico, <https://www.lexico.com/definition/space>

²³ Andrea M. Brandenburg and Matthew S. Carroll, "Your Place or Mine?: The Effect of Place Creation on Environmental Values and Landscape Meanings," *Society & Natural Resources* 8, no. 5 (September 1995): 384, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08941929509380931>

²⁴ Stephen Cairns, "Drifting: Architecture/Migrancy," in *Drifting: Architecture and Migrancy*, ed. Stephen Cairns (London & New York: Routledge, 2004), 17–47.





Figure 5. Rani ki Vav, a stepwell in Patan, Gujarat, India. Photo: Bernard Gagnon. Source: Wikimedia Commons. CC BY SA- 3.0. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rani_ki_vav_02.jpg

Multi-faith spaces

An example of the latter is multi-faith spaces. Spatially, the most prevalent form of this typology is the “empty white room.”²⁵ To avoid association with any singular religious group, these are created by the absence of any elements – material, structural, iconic or otherwise. With only storage provisions as physical elements, and sometimes supported by external supplementary facilities such as ablution areas, these banal spaces can be constantly repurposed to suit specific needs. Consequently, the inexhaustive adaptability and multifunctionality of this typology has necessitated its inclusion within utilitarian public areas that are subject to the greatest density of diversity – such as airports, universities and hospitals.

Stepwell

Another typology of interest is a stepwell. Although essentially created for irrigation purposes, the spatial experience provided by the space has enabled it to be appropriated – in function – as a place of worship. Architecturally, a stepwell is formed by the strategic composition of three key elements: kūtas – tower-like pavilions created from platforms and columns – which are placed at regular intervals through a stepped corridor descending towards the kūpa – a vertical well shaft.²⁶ As water is recognised by many religions to be associated with purification and spiritual cleansing, the descent enabled by a stepwell is akin to a pilgrimage. While the subterranean subspaces framed by the kūtas serve as places for social gatherings, the kūpa located at the end of the journey allows for various religious activities, such as baptisms, rites of blessing or spiritual bathing, to take place. Consequently, then, the various expanses and enclosures encountered within the stepwell are conducive of experiences that can encourage both interactivity and introspection.

²⁵ Andrew Crompton, “The Architecture of Multifaith Spaces: God Leaves the Building,” *The Journal of Architecture* 18, no. 4 (2013): 487, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602365.2013.821149>

²⁶ Jutta Jain-Neubauer, *The Stepwells of Gujarat: In Art-Historical Perspective*, 1st ed. (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1981), 2.



Figure 6. Archimedes Palimpsest. Photo: Matthew Kon, courtesy of the Walters Museum. Source: Wikimedia Commons. Public Domain. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Archimedes_Palimpsest.jpg

Place-Making Techniques

Palimpsests

In the current urban context, all appropriations of the built environment presuppose a negotiation between existing and desired built conditions. Architect Paul Lukez argues that all physical sites exist as *palimpsests* – built products conceived from the iterative superimposition of “successive operations of transformation on a site over time.”²⁷ Therefore, in order to transform any existing space into a place of belonging, the first step of the design process is to decipher what elements from the existing context are of value. Only then can demolition or construction be accordingly and appropriately implemented on the site. Every instance of this process, which causes a transformation of the site, is considered an ‘episode’ of the site’s existence.²⁸ The identification and examination of these episodes collectively reveal the hierarchical influences that mould a site and inspire, guide, or limit the possibilities for its further development. Not only does this analysis reveal

Figure 7. Collage based on the graphic understanding of traditional Indian scroll paintings. Image: Author.

27 Paul Lukez, *Suburban Transformations* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2007), 26.

28 Geoffrey Bailey, “Time Perspectives, Palimpsests and the Archaeology of Time,” *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 26 (2007): 207, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaa.2006.08.002>



material or temporal changes of the context, it also highlights the multiplicity of meanings, associations and functions ascribed to a site by its various users. This in turn directs any future transformations to be directed toward “emphasizing the coexistence of multiple visions and impacts of different cultures on the landscape.”²⁹

Scroll paintings

Once a site is selected and assessed as above, the potential of it becoming an intended place is conceived through design proposals – mostly presented via two-dimensional drawings. While architects traditionally utilise sections, elevations and plans to describe the potential appropriation of space through tectonics, this article advocates for the recognition of scroll paintings as an alternative visualisation tool. Serving as visual manifestations of cultural information, scroll paintings have been used to record illustrative narratives of mythology, folklore, traditions and ideologies of various regions.³⁰ Historically belonging to itinerant painter minstrels, these scrolls would be carried to various towns and presented through an oral explanation to support the visuals as the painting was unrolled. As these drawings are based on scenarios rather than a subject, this performance enables viewers to become travellers in the paintings – connecting intimately to the places, cultural activities and time periods being represented.

Collage

A drawing technique that can be extrapolated from both these concepts is collaging. By layering, overlapping and juxtaposing various two-dimensional mediums, unique understandings and perceptions about the base components are revealed. When analysed as a whole, the resultant composition can even present new potentialities of three-dimensional space. Therefore, in architectural discourse, the holistic approach of this technique can appropriately consider the importance of existing elements within a site and seamlessly incorporate the proposed. As a result, the usage of the site in its existing neighbourhood is acknowledged and either encouraged,

challenged or incorporated in response to absorbing and welcoming the cultural nuances immigrants bring to the neighbourhood. Furthermore, the versatility of collage enables its implementation at numerous levels of the design process for various purposes; i.e., for the investigation and isolation of critical elements during initial design phases or for the means of visualisation and presentation towards the end of the design process.

Architectural Strategy

In response to the research question, the various concepts, theories and processes discussed above have been amalgamated into a four-phase guide that outlines steps for manifesting the ‘self’ into a representational built form.

Phase One: Brief development

The brief articulates the requirements of representing one’s ‘self.’ It consists of three parts:

1. Functional intent – outlines the key functions

to be facilitated: the core practices, activities and actions extrapolated from one’s identity narrative/s.

2. Design intent – identifies core design elements from the precedent study which can be utilised to cater for the above-chosen functions.
3. Site selection – provides insight into how the existing spatial conditions of a selected site may support the design and functional intent.

Phase Two: Visual ideation

Utilising palimpsest as a tool to spatially interrogate the selected site, this phase combines site analysis and design conception to create a three-dimensional physical collage that explores the site’s spatial evolution over time.

Firstly, information about the site is collected, segregated and categorised into groups, forming the layers of the collage. Each layer relates to an episode of the site’s existence; it conveys

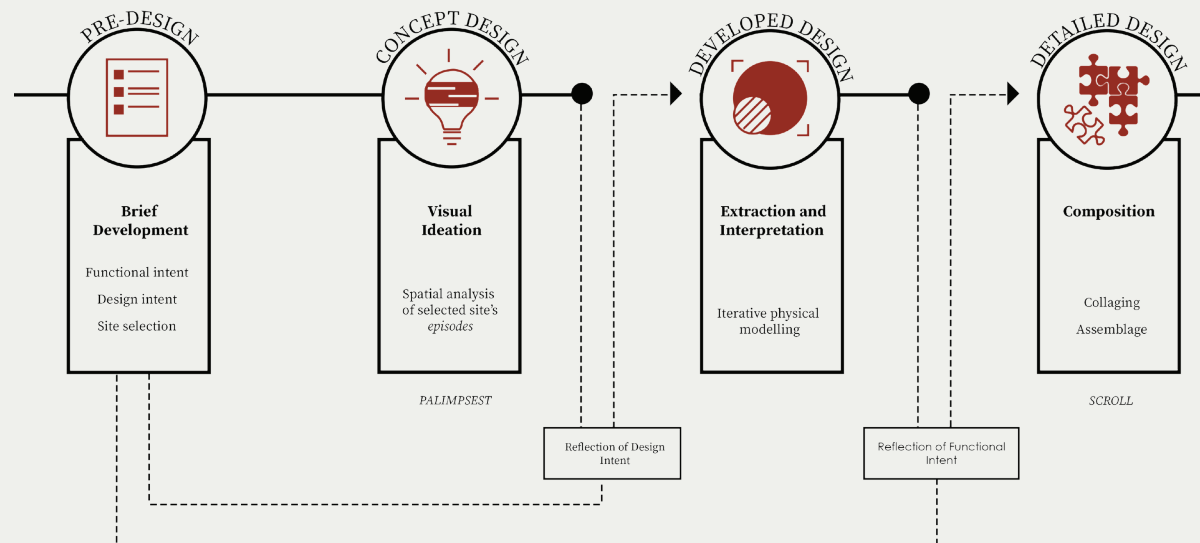


Figure 8. Diagram of the proposed four-phase guide to manifesting the ‘self’ into a representational built form. Image: Author.

29 Ivan Mitin, “Palimpsest,” in *Encyclopedia of Geography*, ed. Barney Warf (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2010), 2111, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412939591>

30 Tasneem Sariya, “Scroll Paintings of India – A Fine Mix of Story-Telling and Art,” *Caleidoscope* (blog), September 23, 2019, <https://www.caleidoscope.in/art-culture/scroll-paintings-of-india>

a visual depiction of the site and its features and functions at a specific period – the past, present or future.³¹

These layers are then superimposed chronologically by two fundamental operations: reading (the critical analysis of the existing composition); and writing (adding further layers) or erasing (removing/covering aspects of the existing composition). Following the assemblage of the initial layer – representing the site's conception – the traces that prevail through the subsequent superimpositions reveal the resilience of specific materiality, form, spatial arrangements and/or planning constraints that should be appropriately acknowledged by the future layer.

Phase Three: Extraction and interpretation

This phase consists of the interpretation and extraction of key spatial elements from the palimpsest through model making. While the overall form and function of these models will be derived from the precedents, the materiality, spatial composition and details will reference the layers present in the palimpsest. Consequently, these models are considerate of both the existing site and the cultural nuances inherent in the precedents of interest. These models are then photographed and digitally manipulated into spatial moments that can exist on their own or in conjunction with other models as complete spaces. They serve as experimental iterations to test ideas regarding the planning, aesthetics and form of the final intervention.

Phase Four: Composition

This phase amalgamates visualisation techniques from scroll paintings and architectural drawings to present the final design intervention as a 'place' of belonging. This is done through two steps: interpretation of spatial moments into a final design form; and narration of function. Firstly, the spatial moments that best support the functional intent are amalgamated into specific arrangements that visualise various aspects of the proposed intervention. The drawings generated are plans, perspectives and architectural scrolls. Secondly, the perspectives and architectural scrolls are embellished with artistically varied characters

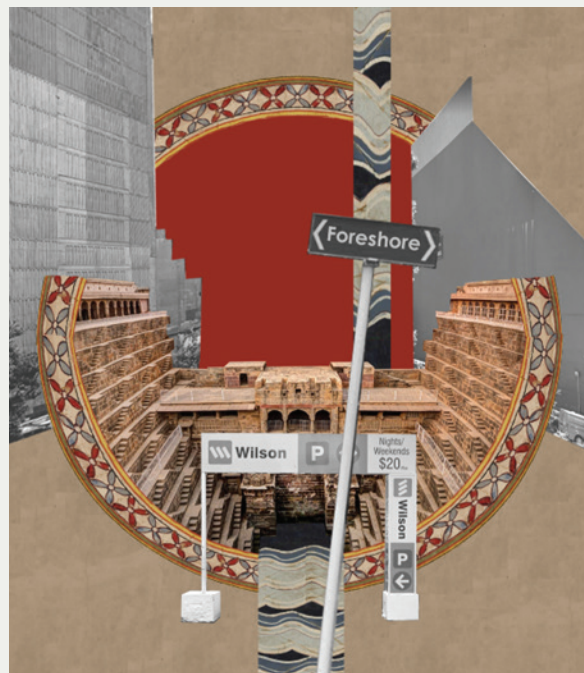


Figure 9. Collage conceptualising a place of soul. Image: Author.

representing how the proposed intervention can be used differently to stay relevant through time and for different cultural groups. Consequently, this presentation method prioritises communicating the ambience, experiences and cultural meanings evoked by, and through, the intervention – rather than just describing its physical structure, as may be the case via more traditional formats of architectural visualisation.

Proposed Intervention: Rūh-sthaan – Place of Soul **Brief development**

Responding to the unorthodox practices I choose to perform when expressing my religion, the functional intent of this intervention is to create a place for introspection and meditation that enables me to collect, concentrate and reflect on actions to reaffirm my faith. To do so, the design intent for this proposal is to amalgamate arrangements

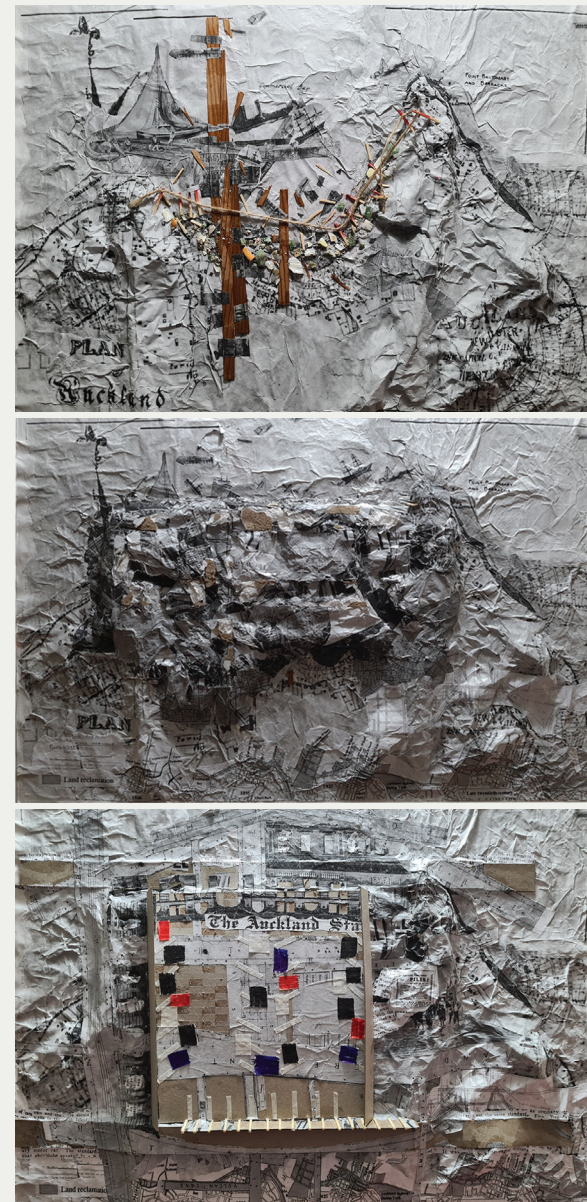
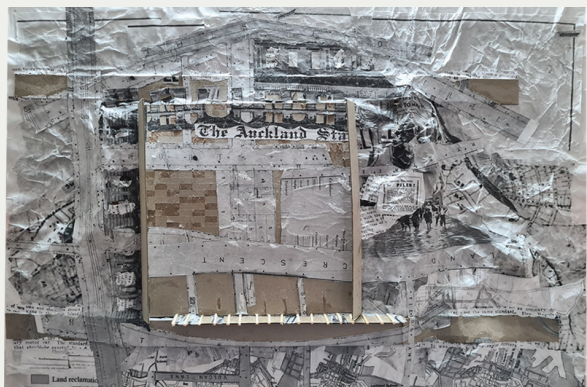
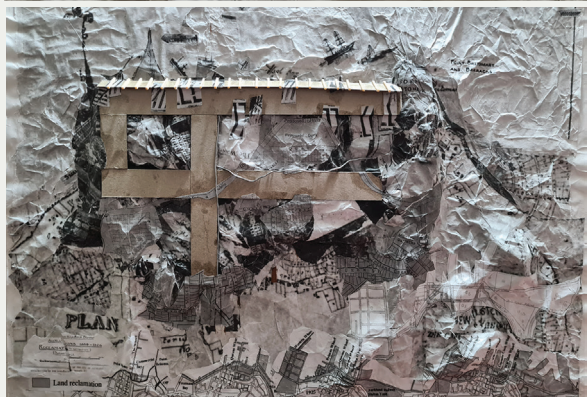


Figure 10. Photographs of physical collaged 'episodes' of 27 Fort Street. Image: Author.

³¹ For more detail, see Soni, "Facilitating Intercultural Encounters," 102.



that enforce the universality of multi-faith spaces with features that enable the introspective atmosphere of a stepwell.

Thus, derived from the precedent analysis, the core design elements implemented in this design are a body of water, entrances, passages, and platforms.

Visual ideation

The site selected for the development of this intervention is 27 Fort Street – an underutilised car park and transitory circulation space located within Auckland central's laneway network. Historically, this site existed as the entrance to the city and its location marks the original shoreline. Following colonisation, it was one of the first sites to be reclaimed, and triggered the cartesian grid arrangement that characterises the present-day city layout. Serving as a crucial circulatory pathway intersecting numerous streets, the car park is spatially introspective as it is surrounded by tall buildings, and maintains an uninterrupted view of the waterfront.

Therefore, it is envisioned that this site will be excavated in a manner that carves out an encircling terraced form of a stepwell. Numerous layers of ground will be unearthed by stepped multi-faith pavilions spread through a passageway focused around, and leading towards, a body of water that commemorates the site's historical use and enables spiritual connection. While some pavilions will emphatically be designed to facilitate private meditation practices, others will exist as open ambiguous zones for people to collect, concentrate and practise introspection and reflection.

Extraction and interpretation

Based on the site's significant change in materiality through reclamation processes, the models extracted from the palimpsest are formed from the manipulation of or juxtaposition between historically reflective materials – clay, timber, shells – and a material utilised for reclamation – concrete.

Driven by the need to facilitate different environments for varying spiritual practices, the 'spatial moments' conceived from the models are arranged to support fundamental interactions one may have with the proposed built form: confrontation, transition and inhabitation.

The collaged moments of confrontation explore the impression an individual may obtain before engaging with the intervention or a particular space within it. The intervention will be created by prying open the ground vertically through multiple platforms, which will either serve as floors or roofs. Each platform lifted above the existing ground level serves as the roof for the subspace associated with it; the lower the roof is to the existing ground level, the deeper the subspace within the intervention. Thus, the observer will understand the intervention is curated as an assemblage of subspaces and alludes to the subterranean atmosphere that is to be experienced.

The moments of transition explore the experiences an individual may have when circulating through the intervention. The descending stepped form proposed will be designed to facilitate a journey of choice. While all pathways within will lead towards the spiritual body of water, the various options of changes in levels provide inhabitants agency to direct their experience. As an individual descends into the intervention, each level will be predominantly formed through concrete, wood and clay – in that order. Not only does this strategic material change allude to the historical structural transformation of the site, but the affiliated changes in temperature and illumination also guide the sensorial experience of an inhabitant journeying through the place. It enables a seamless and comfortable transition from the bustling environment of the city towards an intimate oasis within.

The moments of inhabitation explore the tectonic formation of the areas for activity within the intervention. Symbolically, the intervention forefronts the 'natural'





Figure 12. Exploring how the ground can be lifted and sunken to generate spaces. Image: Author.



Figure 14. Exploring how the journey through the intervention can be arranged. Image: Author.



Figure 17. Exploring the spatial possibilities of retaining structures. Image: Author.

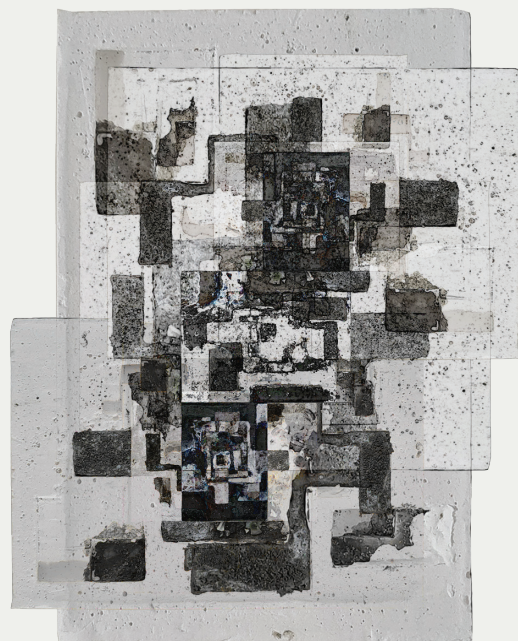


Figure 13. Exploring how the ground can be levelled to direct flow. Image: Author.



Figure 15. Exploring the juxtaposition/transition between the textures inherent within ground. Image: Author.



Figure 16. Exploring materiality as markers of place and time. Image: Author.



Figure 18. Exploring how all the materials within the intervention concentrate at, encase and extend through water bodies. Image: Author.



Figure 19. Architectural scroll depicting the journeys through rūh-sthaan. Image: Author.

against the ‘man made’ and advocates for the resurgence of softer, warmer and more impressionable materials that can complement the introspective and meditative activities to be facilitated by this place. Thus, concrete is utilised to establish space and encase a place curated from the intricacies and depths compressed within the ground. And while each subspace demonstrates the potential of specific materials, they are all superimposed to form the walls of the well shaft which culminates one’s journey through the intervention. This final exhibition epitomises the significance of materials that have endured through, or contributed to, the development of this site.

Composing a place of ‘soul’ – rūh-sthaan

Consolidating the learnings from the former phases, the design of this intervention will be focused on subterranean tectonics, temporal narration through materiality and the spatial management of privacy.

As such, the arrangement of this place is curated from the collation zones. Zone A is a point of collection – designed to draw in pedestrians and direct, transition and condition them for the subterranean experience they embark upon. Zone B is a point of concentration – existing as an interstice of choice, it provides the inhabitant access to all pathways and encourages them to contemplate and direct their journey in alignment with their purpose of engaging with this space. Zone C includes individual and communal meditation rooms. Zone D provides access to water for numerous purposes of introspection – cleansing, purification and/or reflection.

The architectural scroll of rūh-sthaan extrapolates the entire structure of the intervention. With the existing ground level positioned at the top of the drawing, the depths of the intervention are revealed as an observer follows the page downwards. The greyscale photographic characters depict how the site would have been reclaimed, the coloured photographic characters suggest how the place could

be used by people that regularly use the site today, and the coloured illustrative characters represent how I would utilise the space to perform my religious practices. While these character embellishments reveal some possible journeys and pilgrimages that may be experienced within the intervention, I invite the reader to navigate through this drawing by imagining alternative and personal understandings about how they would circulate through the place and use it.

Discussion and Conclusion

Architecture as reflection of the designer(s)

While this research did inspire the design of architectural interventions, the critical response to the research question is addressed by the architectural strategy proposed. Acknowledging the importance of all diverse groups, the methodology proposed is explicitly outlined in a manner that is broad enough to be adopted by anyone who may require alternative places in order to freely express, understand and develop facets of their identity. However, each step of the process is specifically created to encourage the personal perspectives, creative tendencies and spatial aspirations of the person conducting the design process. As such, the results produced will not be based on objective conjecture about diversity but instead guided by the subjective experience and knowledge of evolving diverse lifestyles.

As such, the design interventions presented in this article and my thesis³² are simply examples of the spatial diversity and cultural knowledge that can be conceived from a narrative-driven design process. Not only do these places facilitate my specific cultural needs, but they also exist as exhibits for others to understand my unique cultural identity through their own subjective experiences. Either way, the intended consequence of such a place is the added richness and seamless inclusion of a unique cultural existence within the established palimpsest of a multicultural context.

Practical application: Design reactively

When designs for immigrants are created or implemented prior to their arrival and settlement, these solutions may not be successful. This is because they will mostly be based on perceptions or biases about immigrants’ needs and preferences, which may or may not be accurate. More often than not, the cultural living styles, perspectives and requirements will be determined and influenced by the environments, people, languages and trends of their destination once they attempt to resettle. Furthermore, the current urban context of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland already consists of valuable layers of cultural heritage, forms and usages that must be acknowledged, if not accepted, by immigrants as they establish themselves in, and understand, their new home. Recognising these complexities, it is thus essential to design reactively – by considering and developing solutions through intensive and ongoing collaboration with the impacted immigrant/person/cultural group and the existing context.

Thus, to ensure the public realm maintains relevancy and appropriately facilitates ever-increasing diversity, it must be designed to be constantly evolving and changing. As such, any intervention proposed and/or constructed through this methodology does not determine the final form or function of the site. Existing as an episode of the site’s ongoing evolution, it ensures the cultural nuances it facilitates are acknowledged, but also encourages and welcomes further adaptations as required.

Through these ideologies and implementations, these interventions will serve as places of intimate understanding – a reflection of the dynamism of a particular area, an opportunity to comprehend the cultural nuances of the community living within the neighbourhood and a platform to negotiate one’s connection to, and acceptance of, diversity throughout

32 Soni, “Facilitating Intercultural Encounters,” 112–205.

various neighbourhoods. Thus, public spaces exist as critical opportunities for development that can catalyse future neighbourhoods of multicultural societies to utilise, respond to and facilitate the congruency of diversity in all its shapes, forms and functions.

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Author

Niyati Soni immigrated to Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland from India as a child. As an immigrant, she acknowledges her unique position within society and has a great sense of purpose to interact with, serve and help people to the best of her ability. Niyati studied architecture at the University of Auckland to develop and utilise her creative skills to give back to the community. She advocates for architecture to be a revolutionary tool by which the identity of a space can be redefined to empower, nourish and represent its inhabitants' sense of belonging. She endeavours to design solutions that are fit for purpose, and that criticise and challenge the 'typical' or 'generic' way of living. Following her passion for urban design, master planning, multi-use regeneration and intervention architecture, she is contributing to the industry in a meaningful way by working for Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities in the Urban Planning and Design team.

Walking Backwards into the Future in Te Pokapū Tāone, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland's City Centre

Liz Nicholls

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Abstract

Te pokapū tāone o Tāmaki, Auckland's city centre, is the belly of Tāmaki Makaurau, Aotearoa New Zealand's fastest-growing residential neighbourhood and a significant contributor to the region and to the country. Globally, cities have been significantly impacted by Covid-19 and this has led to questions of the viability of city centres and central business districts and their future role. If we look to the patterns of this wāhi, or place, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland's city centre has been founded on, and will continue to be, a neighbourhood, drawing together diverse functions such as being a place for people to live, for trade, for education and for entertainment. However, we know that the city-centre experience will change, and we need to look far into the future to help the city centre become a resilient place that supports human and environmental wellbeing. This paper outlines the importance of future thinking in planning, development and programming, and behaviour change to support the city centre to be a healthy neighbourhood and to become a resilient place for people.

Keywords: Future thinking, city environments, urban planning, urban wellbeing, resilient neighbourhoods, future neighbourhoods

Introduction: Te Pokapū Tāone o Tāmaki, Auckland's City Centre

Te pokapū tāone o Tāmaki, Auckland's city centre, is the cultural and educational centre of Auckland and a significant contributor to the regional and national economy. Auckland is known as Tāmaki Makaurau, 'a place desired by many.' Its unique offering is as a place for people to live, to source food and eat, to rest and play, and for trade and commerce, and is defined by its proximity to the Waitematā Harbour. As the economic core, the city centre is susceptible to shocks, particularly global trends. It is also Aotearoa's fastest growing neighbourhood, with over 40,000 residents who live, work, raise children, and play within its streets, plazas, parks and buildings. As such, it is an excellent focal place to consider the needs and composition of our future neighbourhoods.

The impacts of Covid-19 have been felt globally and Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland's city centre experienced significant impacts from the pandemic. Covid-19 accelerated trends already present in the city centre. This paper discusses how this experience of Covid-19 and accelerated change in cities can trigger behaviour and process change for the future of Auckland's city centre.

Cities and the Experience of Covid-19

Cities have been at the centre of Covid-19 infections and spread due to population density and the concentration of economic and cultural activities within these settings. Early responses to the pandemic in cities included social distancing measures, digital interventions to curb the spread of disease, and restrictions on mobility.¹ Many cities introduced lockdowns, limited gatherings and introduced curfews that impacted the role and function of cities.² Cities experienced a dramatic drop in hospitality and retail revenue, and many inner-city workers relocated to home offices.³ Closing borders and lockdown measures also created challenges for cities that rely on tourism.

Despite these experiences, it is predicted that the unique mix of commercial, cultural, educational and residential activity in cities will ensure they remain important parts of our system. It is likely that trends visible before the pandemic – such as modal shift, flexible working, 15-minute neighbourhoods – will accelerate, so that the offering and nature of services, and functions of cities will change. Active consideration should be given to future needs, including mitigating future pandemic impacts.

1 Haji K. Suleiman, "An Outlook of Post Covid-19 Urban Planning & Design," *The World After the Pandemic. Science and Technology* (2020): 143–156.

2 Rachael Butler and Auckland Council, *Reshaping City Centres: A Literature Review of Post Covid-19 Planning and Design Thinking and its Impact for Auckland's City Centre* (Auckland Council, 2022).

3 Philip Cooke, "After the Contagion. Ghost City Centres: Closed 'Smart' or Open Greener?" *Sustainability* 13, no. 6 (2021): 3071, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13063071>; Richard Florida, Andrés Rodríguez-Pose, and Michael Storper, "Cities in a Post-Covid World," *Urban Studies* (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1177/00420980211018072>; Ayyoob Sharifi and Amir Reza Khavarian-Garmsir, "The Covid-19 Pandemic: Impacts on Cities and Major Lessons for Urban Planning, Design, and Management," *Science of the Total Environment* (2021): 142391.



Figure 1. Aotea Centre, Auckland City, 2022. Photo: Author.

Provocations for Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland's city centre

Global lessons can help shape the way we think about our future and the future of neighbourhoods in Tāmaki Makaurau.⁴ Covid-19 arrived in Aotearoa at a time of acknowledgement of the wider national challenges: a housing crisis, a climate crisis, inequality and poverty, and underinvestment in infrastructure. The city centre will be impacted by these challenges in a disproportionate and concentrated form, and a futurist lens will help mitigate future crises.

The following immediate provocations emerge for Auckland's city centre:

- Our city centre is vulnerable to shocks – it needs to be resilient and sustainable.
- Our city centre cannot survive solely as an economic hub – it should become a 'central experience district' for visitors and a neighbourhood for residents.
- Aotearoa is reliant on Auckland's city centre as part of a wider economic system. A healthy city centre is good for the region and for the country.
- Change should be expected, enabled and planned for in the retail and commercial sectors.
- Increased investment in wider footpaths, safe cycleways, public and green spaces will contribute to emissions reduction.
- Doing things 'the same way' will not achieve a sustainable and equitable city centre.

The city centre as a neighbourhood and the role of residents

Auckland's city centre is Aotearoa's fastest-growing neighbourhood and already has an estimated residential population of approximately 40,000.⁵ There has been a gradual shift away from referring to a central business district (CBD) to the term 'city centre,' to ensure that strategies are inclusive of all functions of this place, including supporting growing residential neighbourhoods.

Auckland's City Centre Masterplan

Auckland's City Centre Masterplan includes a vision for its residential city centre neighbourhood.⁶ It envisages:

- An increase in quality and variety of new public space supporting the city centre's residential buildings and neighbourhoods.
- An increase in quality and range of housing typologies available.
- A reduction in actual crime levels and fear of crime.
- An expansion of community and social infrastructure that reflects residents' needs, including the potential addition of a new urban school.
- Homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring.

There are existing programmes to realise these neighbourhood outcomes.⁷ Additionally, the experience of Covid-19 demonstrates that residents have a role in creating resilience and that access to services, technology, open and green spaces, and good walking and cycling infrastructure is needed. City centre residents are not the region's most vulnerable to pandemics or other shocks; however, they are often socially disconnected, are less

financially resilient and less able to adapt or respond to the situation.⁸ To encourage residential growth there needs to be recognition that building safe and equitable neighbourhoods requires more than good inclusive design and investment in infrastructure.

Our Way Forward: Ka Mua, Ka Muri – Walking Backwards into the Future⁹

This section focuses on three practice areas for change that will design a city centre as a neighbourhood for the future of Tāmaki Makaurau:

1. Discovering the potential of Auckland's city centre
2. Kete Wāhi: Developing our place and knowledge basket
3. Acupuncture projects

Discovering the potential of Auckland's city centre as a neighbourhood

Planning, development and programming are often based on addressing existing needs and forecast growth, rather than future opportunities. Encouraging practitioners across disciplines to take a futurist lens responds to the challenges of tomorrow, such as climate-change impacts.¹⁰ Discussing the potential of our city centre allows Aucklanders to unite behind an agreed future vision or future 'end' state. In a recent publication, the potential Auckland is defined as "a place where people thrive and want to live, with an identity they are proud of."¹¹

Regeneration Conversations is the first part of an Auckland Council project to align communities behind 'potential.' Five groups of academics and industry representatives were invited to join think tanks

4 Toamasz Napierala, Katarzyna Leśniewska-Napierala, and Rafal Burski, "Impact of Geographic Distribution of Covid-19 Cases on Hotels' Performances: Case of Polish Cities," *Sustainability* 12, no. 11 (2021): 4697.; Sharifi and Khavarian-Garmsir, "The Covid-19 Pandemic: Impacts on Cities and Major Lessons for Urban Planning," 142391.

5 Infometrics, "Regional Economic Profile: Auckland City Centre," <https://ecoprofile.infometrics.co.nz/Auckland%20City%20Centre>

6 Auckland Council, *City Centre Masterplan 2020*. <https://aucklandccmp.co.nz/about-the-city-centre-masterplan-ccmp/>

7 Auckland Council, "Auckland's Future in Progress," accessed April 5, 2022, <https://progress.acl.co.nz>

8 Mario Andres Fernandez and Nancy E. Golubiewski, *An Assessment of Vulnerability to Climate Change in Auckland*, Auckland Council technical report 209/011 (Auckland Council, 2019).

9 This is a whakatauki, or Māori proverb, reflecting the concept that we should always look to and recognise the past to inform the future.

10 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, "Futures Thinking," accessed March 28, 2022, <https://www.dPMC.govt.nz/our-programmes/policy-project/policy-methods-toolbox/futures-thinking>

11 Peter Gluckman, Dawnelle Clyne, and Anne Bardsley, *Reimagining Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland: Harnessing the Region's Potential*. Auckland Unlimited, 2022.

(Environment, Place, Identity and Culture, Economic Development, Mobility and Transport) to share views of the city centre's potential. Consistent themes emerged of the city centre being an equitable place, encouraging a sense of *tūrangawaewae*, belonging/home, for all people, that delivers hauora, wellbeing, where mana whenua and Māori identity is visible, and partnership practised. This process will be repeated over the next three years with diverse groups to hear different voices and engage with communities in a way that encourages a vested interest and attachment to the city, and sense of *kaitiakitanga*. Outputs from this work will inform long-term strategies and thinking about the development of the city centre as a neighbourhood.

Kete Wāhi: Developing our place and knowledge basket

There is an opportunity to revisit practice and thinking about neighbourhood development through the lens of *wāhi* or place (rather than plan), its role and contribution to the city centre, to the region and to Aotearoa New Zealand. Doing this well requires a multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder approach and authentic partnership with mana whenua, where project managers work with designers, artists, community organisations, technical experts and *rangatahi* to determine need through a futurist lens.

Auckland Council is exploring this opportunity as part of the implementation of the City Centre Masterplan. To break down silos, this mahi explores processes and language that are not discipline specific, replacing (at least as a working title) 'precinct plan,' 'masterplan,' and 'business case' with *Kete Wāhi*, a place and knowledge basket. Neutral terminology helps communities and practitioners work closely together to realise neighbourhoods that have a strong identity and role, attracting residents, business, students and visitors, and help develop a sense of belonging and connection to the city.

Acupuncture projects

Acupuncture projects provide opportunities for first steps towards realising potential. Acupuncture for humans relieves stress in the body by focusing on one or several points. An acupuncture project does the same for our urban environment – choosing small-scale interventions and working closely with the local community will transform the larger context of our city centre.¹² They are an opportunity to demonstrate change in the physical part of our urban environment through use, layout and design, but also to demonstrate behaviour change through our values, engagement and focus on improving human, economic and environmental wellbeing.

There are opportunities for acupuncture projects in our city centre that can be led by local government, the private sector or communities. These projects provide an opportunity to move towards a shared vision while gathering data, evidence, sentiment, historical trends, comparative analysis and lessons learned to improve our outcomes, outputs and processes.

Conclusion

The fast-growing neighbourhood of *te pokapū tāone o Tāmaki*, Auckland's city centre, provides an important case study for how we can understand and plan for the future needs of neighbourhoods across Aotearoa. There is a need to work and engage in different ways with our communities to allow the city centre to reach its potential as a neighbourhood for future generations. To achieve a healthy and stable city centre, we need a conscious path of working together across agencies, disciplines and communities, and towards a shared future experience of what we want this neighbourhood to be. A futurist lens focused on potential, values and principles will help effective neighbourhood development. This requires:

- Partnership, participation and support from all our communities, including a greater voice from our residents.

- Incremental change, demonstrating steps towards our potential.
- Changing behaviours – individual transformations in how we think.

This practice paper has outlined some of the challenges that Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland's city centre faces and some of the ways to start working backwards from the future as we move towards supporting the city centre to reach its potential as a neighbourhood.

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12 Andreea Cutieru, "Urban Acupuncture: Regenerating Public Space Through Hyper-Local Interventions," *ArchDaily*, September 25, 2020, <https://www.archdaily.com/948304/urban-acupuncture-regenerating-public-space-through-hyper-local-interventions>



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Figure 2. Kupenga (nets) at Te Wānanga, a new public space in Downtown Auckland, 2022. Photo: Author.

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Decolonising and Re-Indigenising Neighbourhood Design

Grace Clark

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Introduction

How do we create a fairer, more equitable future? How do we create neighbourhoods that serve and nurture us; spaces that reflect us, that bring beauty, that inform our identities? Urbanists are generally reluctant to address the past in order to summon that more equitable future. However, I believe that it cannot be achieved without decolonisation.

Before we get into it, we'll need to set some parameters. I cannot dictate exactly how Māori should be represented or what *mātauranga* Māori should mean. That's not what this piece is. Its purpose is instead to provide an overview of this topic and what Aotearoa can do to decolonise architecture and urban design on a larger scale. Hopefully, it will also introduce you to some incredible people and research that I highly recommend you dig into after this.

Next, decolonisation, even just for design, is a large topic. It's a complex and nuanced one, too. Furthermore, fully unpacking colonialism and its devastating, widespread and pervasive effects deserves a lot more time than we have today. So, let's focus up. We're here to talk about neighbourhoods, so, as much as it hurts, we are going to have to leave every other institution aside, just for today.

Decolonised neighbourhoods will better reflect Aotearoa's people. Through art and language, structures and environments, we can confront this country's very real and ongoing colonial history and consciously make space for future Māori representation. This decolonisation will mean deconstructing what is in our neighbourhoods, who they're for, and the institutions behind their creation. From there, it will mean purposeful and meaningful Māori and iwi involvement to consider what these spaces could become.

For our purposes, decolonisation means the examination and disruption of coloniser culture, institutions and hierarchy in a colonised country. It will include an acknowledgement and sincere confrontation of the effects of colonisation, both historical and ongoing.

The thing is, colonisation has a way of affecting every little crevice of society and culture. Its presence permeates across our institutions, communities, government, assumptions, norms, housing, and all sorts of places you may not think about. When a nation is colonised, the coloniser culture tends to build spaces based on its own aesthetics, values, identities, institutions and narratives.

This often comes with the removal, replacement or suppression of land, spaces, symbols and practices that reflect the Indigenous culture(s). That which reflects the coloniser's culture is assumed to be more correct, developed and acceptable than that which reflects the other culture(s).

The Colonial Neighbourhood

Let's look at this in the context of neighbourhoods. What do you think of when you consider a quintessential New Zealand neighbourhood? Maybe rows of houses? Suburbs? Cul-de-sacs? What groups of people live there? Are there local shops, a bank, a cinema, a marae, a school? What about aesthetics? There's precedence for colonisers to import and favour their own architecture, flora and fauna; for instance, creating parks and gardens full of non-native plants¹ which may be ill-suited to the new environment and disrupt native species.

Most of our neighbourhoods are made with single families and individual ownership in mind. Here, even what we assume a family looks like – probably a couple and their kids – is informed by European standards. The sheer ubiquity of these structures implies a norm.

¹ Michelle Cocks and Charlie Shackleton, "Colonial Legacies Shape Urban Nature: Why This Should Change," *The Conversation*, March 25, 2021, <https://theconversation.com/colonial-legacies-shape-urban-nature-why-this-should-change-156334>

Moreover, it makes any deviation from said norm difficult. What happens if you work in a city but have a larger, intergenerational family? Historically, policies like the Town and Country Planning Act zoned papakāinga as rural. This limited the number of dwellings that could be built, forcing Māori into what was available: colonial-style homes.²

Recently, medium-density residential standards have made it easier for three three-storey houses to be built on a residential site. However, the houses that tend to be built to these standards continue to favour smaller, single families over other dynamics. In a recent article by Adam Jacobson for *Stuff* (2022), Rau Hoskins, director of the architecture firm DesignTRIBE, commented on these high-density developments. He suggested that the one-size-fits-all approach encouraged by this kind of development forgets Māori and Pacific families. For instance, bedrooms are often located upstairs on the second or third storey, making them poorly suited for many elderly residents. Here, it is important that new, even well-intentioned, designs do not further perpetuate colonial assumptions and restrictions.

Decolonisation by Design

So, what does decolonisation look like? Jade Kake³ argues that at a minimum, practical decolonisation requires the returning of Māori land, resources and power. Further, she suggests that this should be underpinned by Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Additionally, there needs to be an active push to integrate Māori voices, local iwi and mātauranga Māori into urban design.

A study by Kimiora Raerino, Alex Macmillan, Adrian Field and Rau Hoskins⁴ discusses kaupapa Māori,

and mana whenua autonomy and engagement in streetscape design. The research utilises interviews and a case study of Te Ara Mura, Māngere, before and after redevelopment. Participants stated that for these kinds of projects, Māori involvement needs to feel integrated, welcome and respected throughout. Real effort must be made to ensure this involvement doesn't feel like an insincere box-tick. This kind of superficial inclusion can feel disrespectful and tokenistic. One participant recounted a project wherein she was offered three pre-made design options for approval. There was no Māori agency over the designs or chance to make meaningful changes. She said the experience felt like the project wanted a rubber stamp of Māori endorsement without Māori input.

This is far from an isolated incident. Dr Rebecca Kiddle⁵ explores how Māori designs and input are often left uncredited. Once again, we see Māori involvement being treated as superficial. Kiddle provides examples such as Christchurch's Tūrangā library and Auckland's Tirohanga Whānui walking and cycling bridge. Both structures have been highly praised for their designs and both relied on Māori designers and motifs. Yet, Christchurch City Libraries severely underplayed the work and input from Matapopore Trust, the group that speaks for local hapū and iwi Ngāi Tūāhuriri, Ngāi Tahu, on rebuilding projects. Meanwhile, the artist behind Tirohanga Whānui's iconic design, Graham Tipene, wasn't even invited to a ceremony where it won a prestigious architecture award.

Let's bring this all together. We need to provide active support for Māori communities, designers, artists and architects. Moreover, that needs to be standardised throughout planning, design and development. We

can't be settling for one-off features and projects. This involvement cannot feel like tokenistic box-ticking. That means listening to, being respectful of and implementing ideas, criticisms, narratives and designs that are brought forward by mana whenua. With that, all work, symbols and input must be appropriately celebrated and credited. Otherwise, you start to lean towards appropriation, which can range from humorously ignorant to genuinely offensive.⁶ The resulting designs ought to serve their communities, whatever that looks like for the specific place and its history.

The Bigger Picture

Now that we're talking about standardising these practices, you may be sensing our scale getting a little bigger. At a certain point, this conversation stops being about individual projects. For long-term change, we have to decolonise the institutions behind our structures.

New Zealand has a history of racist policies that aimed to keep Māori out of Western systems and institutions. These policies made it more difficult for Māori to obtain financial resources for development. Moreover, they discouraged communal ownership and, in the case of the Raupo Houses Ordinance, Māori construction practices.⁷

Even in modern architectural education, there is little time given to non-Western theories or practices. Indigenous knowledge is often left untouched, or is discussed in a shallow manner. Here, we are taught to think about architecture through a highly selective lens. It's harder to integrate new knowledge and conceive of something brand new when you're only taught one set of philosophies. This approach also leaves many graduates ill-equipped to facilitate conversations and collaborations

2 Rebecca Kiddle, "Indigenous Ecological Design," in *Ecologies Design: Transforming Architecture, Landscape and Urbanism*, ed. Maibritt Pedersen Zari, Peter Connolly, and Mark Southcombe, 204–211 (Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2020).

3 Jade Kake, "Spatial Justice: Decolonising Our Cities and Settlements," *Counterfutures: Left Thought and Practice Aotearoa* 9 (2021): 122–135, <https://doi.org/10.26686/cf.v9.6777>

4 Kimiora Raerino, Alex Macmillan, Adrian Field, and Rau Hoskins, "Local-Indigenous Autonomy and Community Streetscape Enhancement: Learnings from Māori and Te Ara Mura – Future Streets Project," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18, no. 3 (2021): 865, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18030865>

5 Rebecca Kiddle, "The Buildings Are 'Uniquely Aotearoa'. Their Māori Designers Are Ignored," *The Spinoff*, June 24, 2019, <https://thespinoff.co.nz/atea/24-06-2019/the-buildings-are-uniquely-aotearoa-their-maori-designers-are-ignored>

6 AJ Park, "It's Not Trendy if it's Appropriating," September 16, 2020, <https://www.ajpark.com/insights/its-not-trendy-if-its-appropriating/>

7 Kake, "Spatial Justice: Decolonising Our Cities and Settlements."

with iwi and mana whenua even if they have good intentions.⁸ We also know that the pervasive dominance of whiteness and Western ideals in higher education lowers the education outcomes of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, people of colour) students. Furthermore, BIPOC staff at universities are less likely to get promoted⁹ or obtain tenure, making it even harder for their knowledge and experiences to be made accessible or respected.

When you're not represented or when the stories about you are all the same, it becomes difficult to imagine yourself in new ways. You learn that's the only story worth telling, the only one people want to hear. When you're nowhere to be seen, it becomes difficult to feel important or for those experiences to feel worthy.¹⁰

Decolonising educational institutions will require the active inclusion of Indigenous and international knowledge, history, contributions and practices. Importantly, it will require dismantling the assumed superiority of Western practices over Indigenous ones. This should also include dedicated education on a place's history of colonisation, institutional harm and suppression of Indigenous knowledge. In a panel hosted by the University and College Union, Juliana Ojinnaka reinforced that it is up to all of us to decolonise these institutions. The burden cannot fall purely on BIPOC students and staff; Pākehā and tauiwi have to be a part of this mission.

In the same panel, Jason Arday discussed how this movement cannot stop at the university level. Universities inherently gatekeep knowledge. If these are the only

places where this information is available, a large group of people will inevitably be alienated from these discussions. Furthermore, if decolonisation is limited only to assessments and lectures, students will forget or lose that praxis when they leave university. Decolonising has to go beyond the classroom, beyond graduation.¹¹ Maybe that means, once again, standardising and formalising practices like consulting iwi and hapū groups, or regularly integrating karakia and actions that make Māori culture feel welcome and understood.¹² Maybe it means continuing education for alumni. Or universities, their alumni, staff and students could invest in community projects¹³ and education for the wider public.

Re-Indigenising Our Spaces

Now that we're well into it, let's flip this conversation on its head a bit. There's a problem with the way we've been thinking about decolonisation: it focuses on the coloniser and their assumptions, knowledge and hierarchy. Re-indigenisation – sometimes called indigenisation or (re) Māorification – however, centres Indigenous peoples' agency and desires rather than those of the coloniser. It's a strength-based approach that, in Aotearoa, would consciously prioritise kaupapa Māori.¹⁴

Here are some basic methods of re-indigenising our spaces. We can encourage more te reo Māori and Māori art in our public spaces and communities. Art is a key way for people to represent themselves, make statements about our world, and confront our pasts. The same goes for actively caring and making space for native plants and animals in our neighbourhoods. These are all

opportunities for education, storytelling, and informing cultural and national identity. As a bonus, more art and nature in our daily lives does wonders for wellbeing.¹⁵

Re-indigenisation would also mean fostering structures in our neighbourhoods and towns that reflect Māori desires and kaupapa. For example, we can ensure our neighbourhoods allow for and foster communal and intergenerational living.

When it comes to institutions, education should celebrate mātauranga Māori. Dr Rebecca Kiddle¹⁶ provides principles to decolonise and indigenise architecture and the institutions behind it. These include an emphasis on maintaining a temporal approach – carefully considering all temporal directions, histories, and how structures will serve us over time – and care for Papatūānuku. She also highlights the urgency for Māori leadership and collective action. Practically, this encourages collaboration between a project and a range of stakeholders, including mana whenua.

Conclusion

Neighbourhoods informed by these principles would be more equitable both in their creation and results. They would authentically elevate and directly reflect kaupapa Māori. Again, these approaches coupled with the re-indigenisation of our institutions would create systems for meaningful mana whenua and iwi involvement that doesn't feel tokenistic or shallow. They would create a sense that this involvement is an essential part of development. They would create a future where neighbourhoods

8 Kiddle, "Indigenous Ecological Design."

9 University and College Union, "Decolonising Our Institutions," July 23, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TpiO_on9fgQ

10 Michelle Caswell, Alda Allina Migoni, Noah Geraci, and Marika Cifor, "To Be Able to Imagine Otherwise: Community Archives and the Importance of Representation," *The Journals of the Archives and Records Association* 38, no. 1 (2017): 5–26, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23257962.2016.1260445>

11 University and College Union, "Decolonising Our Institutions."

12 Raerino, Macmillan, Field, and Hoskins, "Local-Indigenous Autonomy and Community Streetscape Enhancement," 865.

13 Melbourne School of Design, "Decolonising Architectural Education," April 7, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yly63-dwCsQ>

14 Puawai Cairns, "Decolonise or Indigenise: Moving Towards Sovereign Spaces and the Māorification of New Zealand Museology," Te Papa Blog, February 10, 2020, <https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2020/02/10/decolonise-or-indigenise-moving-towards-sovereign-spaces-and-the-maorification-of-new-zealand-museology/?cn-reloaded=1&cn-reloaded=1>; Melbourne School of Design, "Decolonising Architectural Education."

15 Raerino, Macmillan, Field, and Hoskins, "Local-Indigenous Autonomy and Community Streetscape Enhancement," 865; University of Toronto Daniels, "Design through an Indigenous Lens: Decolonizing our Approach to Architecture." Matthew Hickey, February 24, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMCaArTrPoo>

16 Kiddle, "Indigenous Ecological Design."

become key spaces for Māori self-determination and self-expression. Furthermore, these neighbourhoods would serve not only their people, but their environments and creatures. They would encourage an ethos of protection and care for natural spaces. This would be reflected by more accessible, biodiverse green spaces integrated throughout these neighbourhoods. Finally, the ideas we've discussed in this piece will encourage the development of housing and communities that benefit us for years to come. Too much urban planning revolves around short-term rewards and goals. Re-indigenisation invites us to consider a space in its unique historical and future contexts. With that, we are invited to ask how its use, perception or efficiency will change over time. This kind of thinking is crucial for creating neighbourhoods that matter and last in the face of our rapidly changing climate.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. There's much more we can do at both the community and institutional levels. This work will require active and meaningful change throughout our systems. This work is critical for building those neighbourhoods we desire. But it's work that is easily overlooked or put aside for short-term issues. Decolonisation begins with education, but it must lead to action.¹⁷

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¹⁷ Ingrid Huygens, "Developing a Decolonisation Practice for Settler Colonisers: A Case Study from Aotearoa New Zealand," *Settler Colonial Studies* 1, no. 2 (2011): 53–81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2011.10648812>

The Fires of Ambition: Te Awa Tupua 2040

Ahlia-Mei Ta'ala

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Introduction

Identity in Aotearoa

Upon introduction, Māori will often, ask “Ko wai koe?”, or at the beginning of a pepeha, Māori might say, “Ko wai au?” The concept of ‘ko wai au’ is both a question and a statement in one. In one sense ‘ko wai au’ is asking “Who am I?”, in another, it is also stating who I am by saying “I am water.” Ko wai au – wai is me. So the question really asks, which waters are you from? Which are the waters that feed you, that nourish you, that have sustained you and given you life? Ancestrally, tūrangawaewae (a place to stand and belong) was founded within the centralised societal frameworks of pre-colonial Aotearoa, based on whānau/hapū (family/sub-tribe), and it was formed in relation to the geographical features of a place: to the mountains, the rivers and the lakes that define a place. For Māori, water is central to who we are, and our waters have become inaccessible to us. For many of us, growing up Māori in New Zealand can be an extremely confusing time, particularly when living in urban centres, which applies to 84 percent of Māori, according to *Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*.¹ Contemporary urban neighbourhoods in Aotearoa do not reflect our whakapapa, histories and connections to whenua, disconnecting us from tūrangawaewae, providing an

unstable environment to build our identity and culture on. We know we're from here, but we don't really know how, and what that means anymore. Not in the sense that our ancestors knew in detail how they were connected to every little part of the ecosystem that they were in. So if we don't really know who we are, and where we come from, how do we then know where to go? How do we build an abundant pathway forward, without a clear understanding of the cultural, historical, ancestral, geographical and spiritual foundations that we live on? How do we connect to place? How do we build a strong sense of identity, when the awa (rivers) continue to be siphoned for money and power, the maunga (mountains) are quarried or built over, and the moana (ocean) is dominated by our built environment and polluted with our waste? And how do we connect to place, especially when we feel disconnected from our hau kāinga (true home)?

Contemporary Māori identities are constructed on shifting grounds, making it difficult to build solid foundations for tūrangawaewae, and therefore of belonging, connection and purpose.² Separation from our ancestral landscapes – our pillars of identity – disconnects us from our wairua

(spiritual wellbeing),³ and if we are disconnected from our wairua, we lose hope, and if we have lost hope, how do we then find the ability to dream? To imagine a reality beyond the restrictions of our present? Beyond this period of struggle and resistance? Our cities have an unclear sense of built identity – and as a nation, New Zealand lacks the understanding and sense of belief in itself to tell its own story and unique histories, leaving our cities a reflection of colonisation. This is evident in the city of Whanganui, one of the six New Zealand Company towns established in the 1840s.⁴ From a design perspective, how do we design a clear built identity and pathways forward that acknowledge the contentious history that brought us to the present context? From a Whanganui iwi perspective, how do we realise an ambitious future for Whanganui uri (descendants of the River) when our cultural landscapes continue to restrict us by reflecting the colonisation of our land and people? What steps need to be taken now, to shift us towards an ambitious future for our people?

Te Awa Tupua – Background

I began my Master of Landscape Architecture research in 2020 with the journey of the Tira Hoe Waka, which is the annual wānanga for Whanganui uri, in which we

1 Paul Meredith, “Urban Māori – Urbanisation,” *Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, updated February 17, 2015, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/urban-maori/page-1>

2 Pania Te Whaiti, Marie McCarthy, and Aroha Durie, *Mai i Rangiaatea* (Auckland University Press, 1997), 142.

3 Mike Joy, *Mountains to Sea: Solving New Zealand's Freshwater Crisis* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2018), 74.

4 David Thorns and Ben Schrader, “City History and People – The First Towns,” *Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, March 11, 2010, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/city-history-and-people/page-1>



Figure 1. Tira Hoe Waka, 2020, the annual pilgrimage from the mountain to the sea. Photo: Author.

paddle from pā to pā along the Whanganui River from the mountain to the sea. For two weeks once a year, we shift into the rhythm of our ancestors, with the River as our highway and our source of spiritual and physical sustenance. We fill our wairua up with the kōrero (narratives) of our tūpuna (ancestors), in the places of our tūpuna, and we carry our kōrero along the awa. We continue to do this, to carry on this way of life for our past and future generations. The tira is the ahi kā (fires of occupation) of our kōrero tuku iho (ancestral knowledge), of our ancestral way of life; it holds the stories and practices of our tūpuna, and is an expression of our Whanganuitanga. It provides intergenerational knowledge transfer, strengthens connections and contextualises who we are as a people. It builds up our rangatahi (youth) to be rangatira (leaders) and tohunga (experts) of the River.

Since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, the Whanganui River has actively been destroyed by legislative acts of the Crown. The Highways and Watercourses Diversions Act 1858, the Wanganui River Trust Act 1891, and the Coal Mines Act amendment in 1891 have all undermined Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the ability for Whanganui uri to care for, protect, manage and use the River. Over the past 180 years the outcomes of these laws have diminished the mauri (life force) of the River and severed the interconnected relationship Whanganui uri have with the River, resulting in a significant loss of ancestral knowledge and practices.

In 2017, Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act was passed, which brought to rest the longest-running legal battle in New Zealand's history (over 175 years), with many of those who championed the battle not living to bear witness to their efforts. The legislation recognises Te Awa Tupua as “an indivisible and living whole, comprising the Whanganui River from the mountains to the sea, incorporating all its physical and metaphysical elements.”⁵

This represents a significant turning point. A point where Whanganui uri can acknowledge their people who championed the longest-running legal battle in New Zealand's history, by imagining the future of Te Awa Tupua through their eyes. Now that the River is established as a legal person through Westminster law, Whanganui uri can shift efforts towards restoring the mauri of the awa and rebuilding their relationship with it.

In March 2020, Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui (the post-settlement governance entity for Whanganui iwi for the purpose of the Whanganui River Settlement) gathered Whanganui iwi to set the pathway forward to collectively define our aspirations for 2040 through a two-day wānanga, He Waka Pakoko – Pathway to 2040.⁶ Workshops engaged iwi members to imagine what their ideal state for Te Awa Tupua and Whanganui iwi would be in 2040. The He Waka Pakoko symposium provided me with an opportunity to capture and explore the aspirations of Whanganui iwi for the future of Te Awa Tupua through a design case study.

Design Research Process

Te Awa Tupua design framework

Following the He Waka Pakoko symposium, an appropriate scope of aspirations was deduced around which to build a design case-study. To ensure that the design developed from this study encapsulated the aspirations of Whanganui iwi and encompassed the nature of Te Awa Tupua, the following process was applied:

1. Te Awa Tupua legal framework, Te Pā Auroa nā Te Awa Tupua, was studied and appropriately translated into design principles to guide the development.
2. A framework was then created to develop the aspirations into design cues through Te Awa Tupua design principles.
3. From the framework, a project vision was then developed for the design that encapsulates the aspirations of Whanganui iwi and the nature of Te Awa Tupua.

- **Te Awa Tupua legal status – Taiao:** recognition and manifestation of the natural law and value system of Te Awa Tupua.
- **Tupua te Kawa – Whanganuitanga:** (Whanganui tikanga and kawa) valuing the customs and principles of Whanganui iwi and the way in which Whanganui iwi operates.
- **Te Pou Tupua/Te Karewao – Rangaitiranga:** leading by example by upholding and manifesting Tupua te Kawa and Te Awa Tupua.
- **Te Kōpuka – Kotahitanga:** collaboration, inclusion, involvement and participation of all relevant/interested groups.
- **Te Heke Ngāhuru – Kaitiakitanga:** act to advance the health and wellbeing of Te Awa Tupua.
- **Kia Māhara Rawā – Wairuatanga:** upholding te mana me te mauri o Te Awa Tupua (the spiritual power and life force of Te Awa Tupua).
- **Te Korotele – Oranga Ionutanga:** Generate a thriving economy that centres and sustains the health and wellbeing of Te Awa Tupua.

Figure 2. Translation of Te Pā Auroa nā Te Awa Tupua (in brown) into outcome-oriented design principles (in green).

Te Awa Tupua legal framework draws on the expertise of Whanganui leaders and follows our own Indigenous conceptualities and frameworks through pūrākau (ancestral stories). Utilising Te Awa Tupua legal framework to develop a design framework for this research therefore ensures that the design is governed by our own Indigenous law system – tikanga – through Tupua te Kawa.⁷ Essentially, this research attempts to re-intertwine whakapapa with tikanga to guide us forward in designing within the context of Te Awa Tupua.

This process produced the project vision: To generate a thriving Te Awa Tupua through the development of a Te Awa Tupua hub that:

- Facilitates wānanga for intergenerational knowledge transfer of Whanganuitanga.
- Invests in the health of Te Awa Tupua through resources, practices, and wānanga.
- Restores the whakapapa of wāhi tūpuna (ancestral sites).
- Re-orientates people towards te awa me te taiao (the river and the natural environment).

5 Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017, S12, <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2017/0007/latest/whole.html>

6 Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui, “He Waka Pakoko,” <https://www.ngatangatatiaki.co.nz/for-your-information/news-and-events/hewakapakoko/>

7 Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui, “Tupua te Kawa,” <https://www.ngatangatatiaki.co.nz/our-story/tupua-te-kawa/>

Pākaitore site context

The development and outcomes of this framework, alongside site investigation into the cultural landscape of Te Awa Tupua, led to an alignment with the site of Pākaitore.

Located in the centre of Whanganui City along the edge of the awa, Pākaitore is of great significance to Whanganui uri and is a central site of Whanganuitanga.

A fishing kāinga (village), Pākaitore was a sanctuary, a trading hub and gathering place that united hapū from all along the Whanganui awa. Hapū would travel from as far as the upper reaches and from neighbouring tribes in the summer months to trade here and to gather kai stock to return home with for winter.⁸ Pākaitore speaks to the whakapapa – the relationships and connections – of these Whanganui hapū and to their relationship with the awa. Pākaitore was a site that brought all uri of the

Whanganui awa together prior to European arrival, and in resisting colonisation during early settler-colonial history; as well as in 1995, when it became the principal site of reasserting Whanganuitanga through the 79-day occupation.

Currently named Moutoa Gardens, the site immortalises the colonisation of Whanganui through colonial monuments, the Whanganui District Court, built heritage, dominant exotic trees and place names throughout. Pākaitore as it stands today is an exhibition of the colonial tools and methods utilised throughout Whanganui's colonisation. A site of such great significance to Whanganui uri, stripped of its mana and mauri to display colonial victory through the current spatial organisation and use of the site.



Figure 3. Pākaitore Pā, now known as Moutoa Gardens, in the heart of Whanganui City. Image: Author.



Figure 4. Pākaitore today, showing the river on the left, the courthouse on the right, and monuments throughout. Photo: Author.

Herein lies the importance for decolonising Moutoa Gardens in re-indigenising Pākaitore to strengthen Whanganuitanga and ahikātanga (mana whenua presence and the practices that occur when occupying whenua) within Whanganui City, for the future of

8 Pākaitore Historic Reserve Board, *Pākaitore: A History* (Whanganui: Pākaitore Historic Reserve Board, 2020).

Te Awa Tupua. The significance that Pākaitore has to Whanganui uri, from the mountains to the sea, makes it the appropriate site for a Te Awa Tupua hub within the heart of the city, a central place for Whanganui iwi to gather, to wānanga, to practice ahikā.

The Design Outcome

With this in mind, what does the reclamation of Pākaitore look like through the aspirations of Whanganui uri, and the whakapapa of Te Awa Tupua?

Te Awa Tupua Hub design development

The design cues that were produced by the framework were developed into design moves that translate across the site to produce four key focus areas. These are the awa, tomokanga (portal or transitional space), whenua (the grounds/land), and oranga (food health and wellbeing area). This results in eight interventions across the site that activate the riverfront and provide interaction with the awa, with each area activated by tāngata – the people.

Te Awa Tupua Hub overview

The masterplan draws from the whakatauaikī “E rere kau mai te awa nui mai i te kāhui maunga ki Tangaroa. Ko au te awa, ko te awa ko au,” “The great river flows from the mountains to the sea, I am the river and the river is me,” and the whakataukī “He muka nō te taura whiri a Hinengākau,” “A thread from the woven rope of Hinengākau.” These pūrākau speak to the connections along the awa from the mountains to the sea – the unity of our different threads that stem from Te Awa Tupua, invoking our Whanganuitanga.

The pūrākau guide circulation through the site, which, when viewed from the awa, represents the journey of the awa from the mountains to the sea. Circulation flows from the maunga Pukemumu and the whakaruruhau (shelter) that symbolises Te Kāhui Maunga (the mountains within Tongariro National Park), down through the site with the central open areas, that then splits to the entry points of the awa, referencing the flow of the awa from the mountains to the sea. Everything in between speaks to the life and practices that once occurred along the awa, and the relationship that Whanganui uri had with it.



Figure 5. Key focus areas further guide design development towards the project's vision. Image: Author.

The awa focus area provides waka storage and facilities and a multifunctional hall space through the waka hub, alongside steps leading into the awa and ramp access. The waka hub facilitates waka rebuilding and the teaching of customary waka practices and the steps leading into the awa carry names of the 239 rapids of the river – many of which were destroyed for the steamboats to operate along the awa. This brings life back to the rapids in allowing the river to touch the names as it rises and falls. The tomokanga (entrance) focus area acts as a transition space that reconnects the awa and the whenua, and provides native planting



Figure 6. Te Awa Tupua Hub Masterplan – the reclamation of Pākaitore. Image: Author.

through the māra ako and māra ua. Native planting throughout the design improves corridor connections, increases bird habitation, filters stormwater runoff and acts as a riparian buffer to the awa. The whenua focus area activates Pākaitore through the ātea, the whakaruruhau and the open green space that provides fluidity for cultural practices, wānanga, a marketplace and varying public use. The oranga focus area provides a māra kai area for the community.

This design enhances the mauri of Pākaitore by orienting the site towards the awa and the natural environment and by increasing the connections with Pukemumu and



Figure 7. Te Awa Tupua Hub viewed from across the awa at Taumata-Aute. Image: Author.

iho. Continuing the whakapapa of the whenua as a food kāinga and as a marketplace – a gathering and trading hub.

Te Awa Tupua Hub experience

Immediately upon arrival at Pākaitore by way of waka, people read the names of the rapids on the steps, providing an opportunity to reflect on the significance of the rapids that are windows into the spiritual world of Whanganui iwi. As the Tira arrives at Pākaitore, the flotilla of twenty waka floats in line below Taumata-Aute, awaiting the karanga (formal call) of the kuia as she stands at the point of the deck over the awa, while welcoming whānau stand along the riverbank to meet us at the final stop of this year's Tira Hoe Waka. "Haere mai!" she calls over the awa and across to us. Our steerers begin guiding us across the awa as one, our paddles upright, banging the base of the waka in beat together. "Ripi ripia, hoe hoea!" we call in response. We pull our waka up – half going up the ramp into the waka storage facilities, and the other half are pulled up on the bank to be returned to their respective whānau businesses.

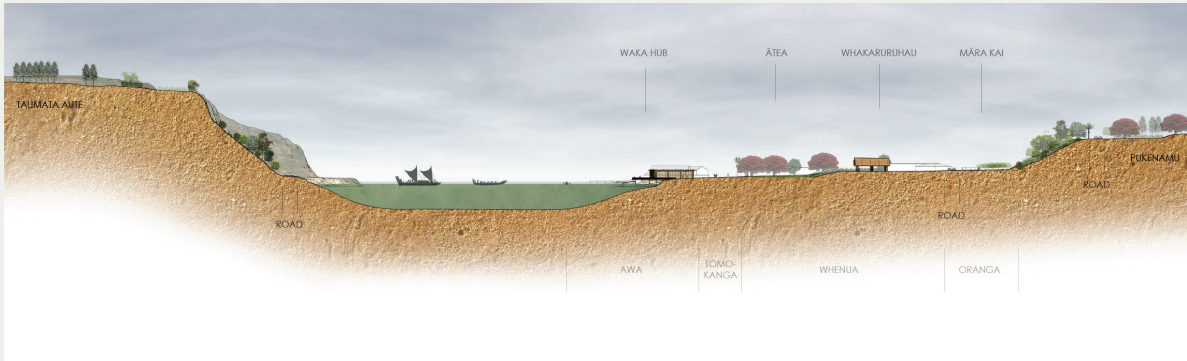


Figure 8. Te Awa Tupua Hub site section across Pākaitore to Taumata-Aute. Image: Author.

Taumata-Aute, the two significant sites that overlook Pākaitore. The design provides space and resources for making, sharing and trading craft, rongoā and kai, as well as space for sharing kōrero tuku iho and taonga tuku

Once the waka have been stored away, and whānau are reunited, we jump back into the awa for a swim, using the swimming steps for safer access. We wait for our pōhiri (formal welcome), drying in the sun on the riverbank.

- Waka Hub**
 - waka storage
 - multi-functional hall space
- Mara Awa**
 - native riparian buffer
 - steps leading into awa



"Kauaka e kōrero mō te awa, kōrero kī te awa."
"Don't talk for the awa, talk to the awa."

Figure 9. The arrival of the Tira Hoe Waka at Te Awa Tupua Hub at Pākaitore. Image: Author.

With our pāreu on, the kuia karanga to us over the tomokanga area and into the ātea, signifying a transition into another realm. During whaikōrero (formal speech) the whakapapa of Pākaitore is shared, the kaikōrero (speaker) using the reference points of the pūrākau throughout the stairs, the paving and the built design to aid in connecting people to Pākaitore through kōrero tuku iho. Once the whaikōrero have ended, and hongī and hariru are over, our packed lunches are handed out, complemented with fruit from the māra kai. We unpack and set up our tents on the whenua, while the kaumātua (elders) have priority in sleeping inside the iwi facilities, or under the whakaruruhau.

Our waka groups split across the site to practise our skits for te pō whakangāhau – the final night's celebrations –

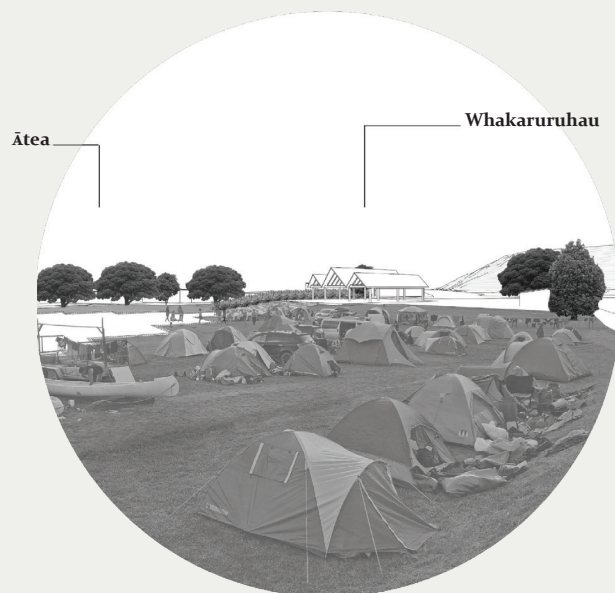


Figure 10. The Tira Hoe Waka setting up camp at Te Awa Tupua Hub at Pākaitore. Image: Author.

one group in the māra ako, one under the whakaruruhau, one in the wharekai/hall, and one on the step area. The rest of the whānau gather food from the māra kai before heading to the wharekai to prepare dinner and set up the dining hall. Before dinner, we have our ceremony under the whakaruruhau for those who have completed the Tira for the first time, followed by a big hākari (feast) in the hall with kapa haka by the rangatahi as we plate up. We are surrounded by views of the maunga and awa.

After our big feast we sit and watch the group performances under the whakaruruhau, with Pukenuamu as the backdrop, while the hall is packed down and mattresses are laid out. There is much laughter, and ngā waiata o Whanganui (the songs of Whanganui) can be heard across Pākaitore, reaching the maunga and the awa. Afterwards, we hear from our elders for kūmete kōrero, sharing our kōrero tuku iho to build up our kete (baskets)

of knowledge, surrounded by the whenua of Pākaitore, with the curve of the awa around us as the sun sets. This finishes with a karakia before we head to bed, with the sound of light chatter and the quiet hush of the awa. We are awoken at four am for our closing ruruku to end the wānanga of this year's Tira Hoe Waka. We shuffle our way over to the awa, the streetlights over the tomokanga area guiding our path, with the ramp and steps lit up at their sides to guide us safely to the awa. This marks the end of another year's Tira Hoe Waka, the first year that Pākaitore has been included as an overnight stop.

On another day, kapa haka practice can be seen on the deck from the awa, waiata echoing across to Taumata Aute, and school classes visit to learn about the māra kai and the kōrero of our native resources in the māra ako. Our tohunga of the awa – the steerers – operate daily kayak/canoe services and water activities from Te Awa Tupua Hub during summer, providing job experience and opportunities to Whanganui uri, sharing our Whanganuitanga. On the weekends the market spans along the tomokanga and through the ātea to the whakaruruhau, where the wider Whanganui community gather and trade goods alongside produce from the māra kai, with māra kai wānanga running throughout the day.

Reflections

The river is the aho – the cross-thread – a connector both physically and metaphysically. The infrastructure of today has seen it become a barrier across and along its course.

The river is our way back home, the thread that has kept us united throughout colonisation, and has constantly provided us with the strength and resilience in resisting colonisation, in upholding our tino rangatiratanga and in remembering who we are. The waka stands out as a vessel that holds our kōrero tuku iho. Returning to the awa through waka is a return to the tikanga of our tūpuna, to the relationship they had with te taiao, and it is a return to the way of life of our tūpuna. This strengthens who we are – our individual and collective identity and place within the city. Te Awa Tupua Hub brings the kaupapa of the tira hoe waka forward through the whakapapa and pūrākau of Whanganui iwi and Te Awa Tupua, breathing life back into our ancestral practices.

Currently, Moutoa Gardens still represents our trauma – the monuments, design and function of the site are holding us back from moving forward. The design transforms Moutoa Gardens from a quiet, oppressive colonial garden into Te Awa Tupua Hub in the centre of Whanganui City, reclaiming the whenua as Pākaitore. Through the removal of the monuments, the design signifies a shift in the conversations of who we are, how we are and why we are. The benefits of removing the monuments in Moutoa Gardens allow the site to tell our stories, to share our stories, and to live our stories.

Te Awa Tupua Hub provides the space for Whanganui iwi to wānanga – to gather, learn, share and grow in our Whanganuitanga through our kōrero tuku iho, our ancestral

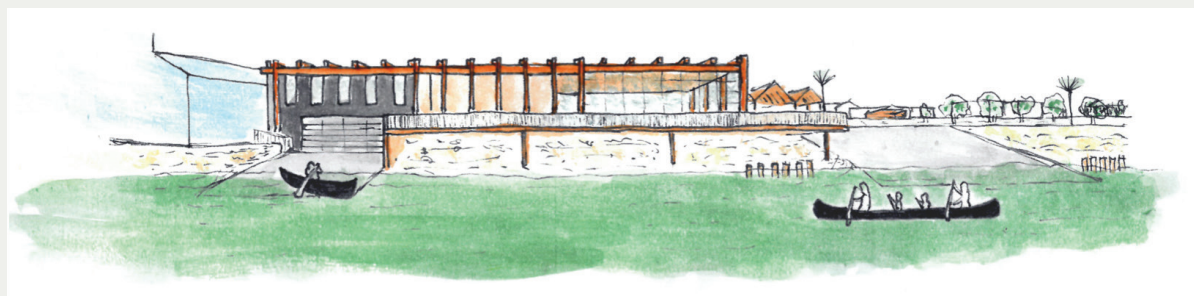


Figure 11. Water activities operating from Te Awa Tupua Hub at Pākaitore. Image: Author.



Figure 12. Te Awa Tupua, the Whanganui River. Photo: Author.

practices and whakapapa – allowing the depth of the whenua to come to the fore. Te Awa Tupua Hub provides space for Whanganui uri to address and unpack our intergenerational trauma to shift us out of grievance mode, out of the framework of struggle and resistance in removing ourselves from the shackles of colonisation collectively, providing the platform for our renewal and realignment, by operating from a place of strength, from within our Whanganuitanga, reaffirming our place within Whanganui

City. Te Awa Tupua Hub is a protection of our interests, our aspirations and self-determination. It is a place for us to thrive.

This design brings Whanganuitanga to the forefront of Whanganui City, reconnecting tūpuna use of the site with future use of the site, enabling Māori to be part of the wider Whanganui community, demanding the conversations to be had – the acknowledgement of the wrongdoings to Whanganui iwi, and the recognition of the mana of Whanganui iwi, and their whenua. The hub provides a meeting place and a portal that allows people to move fluidly between Te Ao Māori and Te Ao Pākehā in building understanding, respect and connectedness between peoples, spaces and realms. More spaces like these can enhance the wellbeing and increase connectedness across urban neighbourhoods, strengthening sense of place, identity and belonging in relation to the whakapapa and histories of our places and spaces.

Conclusion

This design operates from a Whanganui tikanga, whakapapa and pūrākau base, in decolonising Moutoa Gardens through the aspirations of Whanganui iwi to re-establish mana whenua ahikātanga within Whanganui City through Te Awa Tupua Hub at Pākaitore. These are Indigenous conceptualities and frameworks specific to Whanganui iwi, and therefore serve to re-indigenise the site in the process of decolonisation. Te Awa Tupua design framework facilitates the re-establishing of Whanganui iwi ahikātanga within their ancestral landscapes by aligning Whanganui iwi aspirations with the values that underpin their relationship with Te Awa Tupua to produce design cues for development. This framework is an approach that can be applied across governance and the public and private sector of Whanganui in working towards decolonising Whanganui, or, rather, re-indigenising the cultural landscape of Te Awa Tupua.

Te Awa Tupua design framework and its design outcome provide an example of how New Zealand cities can be decolonised to re-establish mana whenua ahikātanga, place by place – valuing the specific relationship of mana

whenua with their specific places and their aspirations for their places, through their values, tikanga, pūrākau and whakapapa. The process must be led by the appropriate mana whenua group for the context of the project and place – recognising their unique status as mana whenua, and their deep connections to place – from project conception to project completion, placing their aspirations and values at the centre.

Design of the built environment of New Zealand needs to shift conversations forward in acknowledging the past 250 years of destruction and displacement that colonisation has had on Māori. Frameworks, methods and processes like the ones utilised in this research provide the starting points for this. In thinking about our public spaces, we need to be asking the questions: How did this area come to be a public space? Was it once a pā? Was it acquired through land confiscations?

This research project provides a precedent, but also an opportunity for critical conversations into the history and role of public spaces in our neighbourhoods – our parks, gardens, reserves and civic centres. Could these become the spaces in which New Zealand is able to have those critical moments of self-reflection; of acknowledgement of the great injustices of the colonial-settler history of New Zealand; the place where true apologies are given and where we forge new pathways, based on true partnerships of understanding and respect? Could these be the spaces that allow us to dream, that empower us to be ambitious, and that truly reflect ourselves – our worldview, our values, and our ancestral knowledges? Spaces that connect us to our tūpuna and tupua, to our kōrero tuku iho and our taonga tuku iho? Lastly, could these be the spaces that transition us from the fires of occupation into the fires of ambition?

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Author

Ahlia-Mei Ta'ala is a descendent of the Whanganui River (Ngāti Hineoneone, Ngā Poutama), as well as having Sāmoan heritage. In 2019 she received the He Maunga, He Tangata Māori Design Internship after completing a Bachelor of Architectural Studies majoring in Interior Architecture at Victoria University of Wellington. A two-year programme, the Internship provided her with master's study at Unitec alongside paid intern work at Isthmus and Auckland Council. This programme aided towards the completion of her Master of Landscape Architecture at Unitec in 2021. Following her studies, Ahlia-Mei worked at Matakohe Architecture + Urbanism before joining Tāmaki Paenga Hira in 2023.



Illustration by Emma McInnes



Section 3

REGENERATIVE NEIGHBOURHOODS: TEACHING, EXCITING AND NURTURING

Throughout Section 2 we learnt how place persists through time, and the importance of reflecting the communities who call a neighbourhood home. To build a healthy neighbourhood, we need places to share, experience and understand our individual and collective histories. The authors in Section 3 propose re-use and recycling materials to build places of resilience, understanding and joy.

The Resilient Hub proposed by Ben Hickling promotes the idea of neighbourhood self-sufficiency and collaborative development. These hubs can be places of gathering, to foster neighbourhood cohesion and reduce our impact on the planet.

Unitec's project of developing urban furniture, described by Sameh Shamout, Yusef Patel and Alessandro Premier, highlights the importance of shared urban spaces in

neighbourhoods, particularly in times of crisis. Students designed multifunctional spaces in a suburban Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland neighbourhood, using recycled construction materials. These created attractive urban spaces with the intention of responding to neighbourhood needs. The reader can understand how this approach could be used for many of the interventions proposed by other authors in the journal.

Finally, Chris Berthelsen, Rumen Rachev and Alexandra Bonham share the wild world of Katamari Kart, a game in which a “whole lot of crap” is stuck together to create joyful, sometimes useful, pieces of public art. This approach encourages people to take back control of public and semi-public spaces, relearning how to play, and diverts waste from landfill or pollution by reimagining this “crap” as part of a “distributed resource centre” which Berthelsen earlier introduced us to.

Resilient Hub

Ben Hickling

<https://doi.org/10.34074/aslm.2023111>

Abstract

The proposal describes a community hub; a site located within the suburban and urban built environment, made up of an arrangement of community-run buildings and facilities. Modern sustainable technologies and building typologies will be promoted and community interaction encouraged. Multiple functions will work in unison, with all members of the surrounding community interfacing with it. Through participation, collaboration and creative contribution, the Resilient Hub will demonstrate in a tangible, real-time way the connection between energy, water, food production, food preparation, food consumption, compost and energy use. The knowledge and practices gained will proliferate in community members' daily practices and help to accelerate the uptake of sustainable technology, building construction and use. Involving the community at the design stage will further integrate the relevance of these sustainable methods. All these aspects combine to challenge us to think in a more integrated way about our future neighbourhoods and how all aspects of them are part of an interconnected system.

Keywords: Resilient hub, community hub, sustainable technologies, self-resilience

What is a Resilient Hub?

Increasingly, our global society and the modes in which we live and work are being tested by climate change and market and state fluctuations, now made viscerally clear with the advent of the recent pandemic. Government legislation and private sector innovation alone is not enough to ensure people gain an understanding of sustainable practices and self-resilience. Fundamentally, people need to *want* to include these aspects in their lives and see tangible results that can benefit them and their families. We need to empower our communities, giving them core skills as assets and allowing for a democracy of choice informed by resilient and environmentally conscious practices. For example, enabling people:

- To be aware of and respond to possible future food security issues and understand the process of growing food.
- To understand the usage of water in a home and what practices can conserve and optimise water use.
- To understand the usage of power in a home and be conscious of energy use in our daily lives.
- To, in an overall sense, gain an understanding of our opportunities to be personally responsible and aware of our ability to be resilient and self-sustaining at a personal and community level.

This proposal outlines the concept of a modular, sustainability-focused hub in every community – a Resilient Hub. It is envisioned as a publicly owned and operated facility powered by local, sustainable, carbon neutral means that provides an interface between private, public and community. It would engage, resource and inform people to act independently, while empowering them to unite and to act as a collective for collaboration and co-operation – a place to provide knowledge and to seed new ideas.

The Resilient Hub is proposed to be located within the suburban and urban built environment; at the heart of our neighbourhoods. Multiple functions will work in unison, with members of the surrounding community interfacing with it. Through participation, collaboration and creative contribution, the Resilient Hub will demonstrate the connection between energy, water, food production, food preparation, food consumption, compost and energy use.

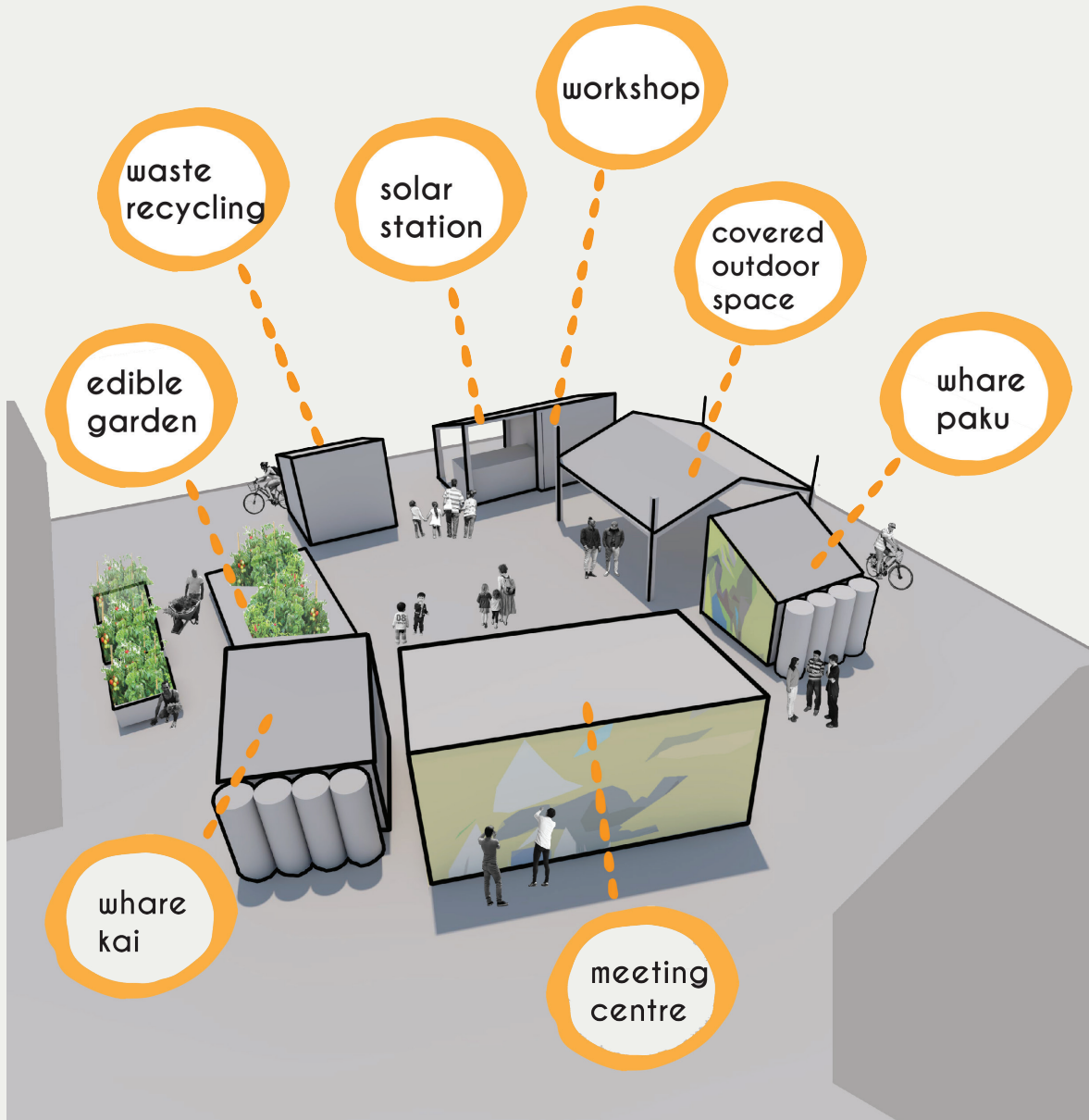


Figure 1. Visualisation of a Resilient Hub. Architecture and general layout are conceptual only.

General Typology

The Resilient Hub will highlight new sustainable technologies and building typologies and allow for community interaction. This will organically proliferate these technologies in people's lives and help to accelerate the uptake of sustainable technology, building construction and use. Involving the community at the design stage will further integrate the relevance of these sustainable methods.

The key components of the Resilient Hub:



Figure 2. Resilient Hub.

Solar station

- Off-grid renewable power supply – solar, wind
- Visible components
- Information panels
- Digital displays

Workshop

- Powered by off-grid power
- Set up for cyclists
- Provides charging points for bikes and scooters
- Information panels
- Digital displays

Waste recycling

- Powered by off-grid power
- Sorting areas for different recyclables
- Onsite composting
- Information panels
- Digital displays

Outdoor areas

- Breakout space
- Meeting area
- Could hold markets
- Covered section

Whare paku/Ablutions

- Toilet block
- Water collection
- Compostable toilets
- Removable exterior art panels

Meeting centre

- Open plan
- Space for temporary display
- Information panels
- Digital displays of energy and water consumption of Resilient Hub in real time
- Removeable exterior art panels

Whare kai/Food

- Kitchen
- Water collection
- Food storage

Edible garden

- Raised planters with edible crops
- Fed by onsite water collection

All structural forms are to be collaboratively designed with architectural studios engaging the local community. The Resilient Hub promotes democracy of choice through having a communal hub that is publicly available, allowing for members of the community to engage with the facilities on their own terms, and for the organic proliferation of whakaaro (ideas) and resilient habits. The sustainable climate-friendly systems and buildings have the broader benefit of being demonstrated as functional as the community goes about their activities within them.

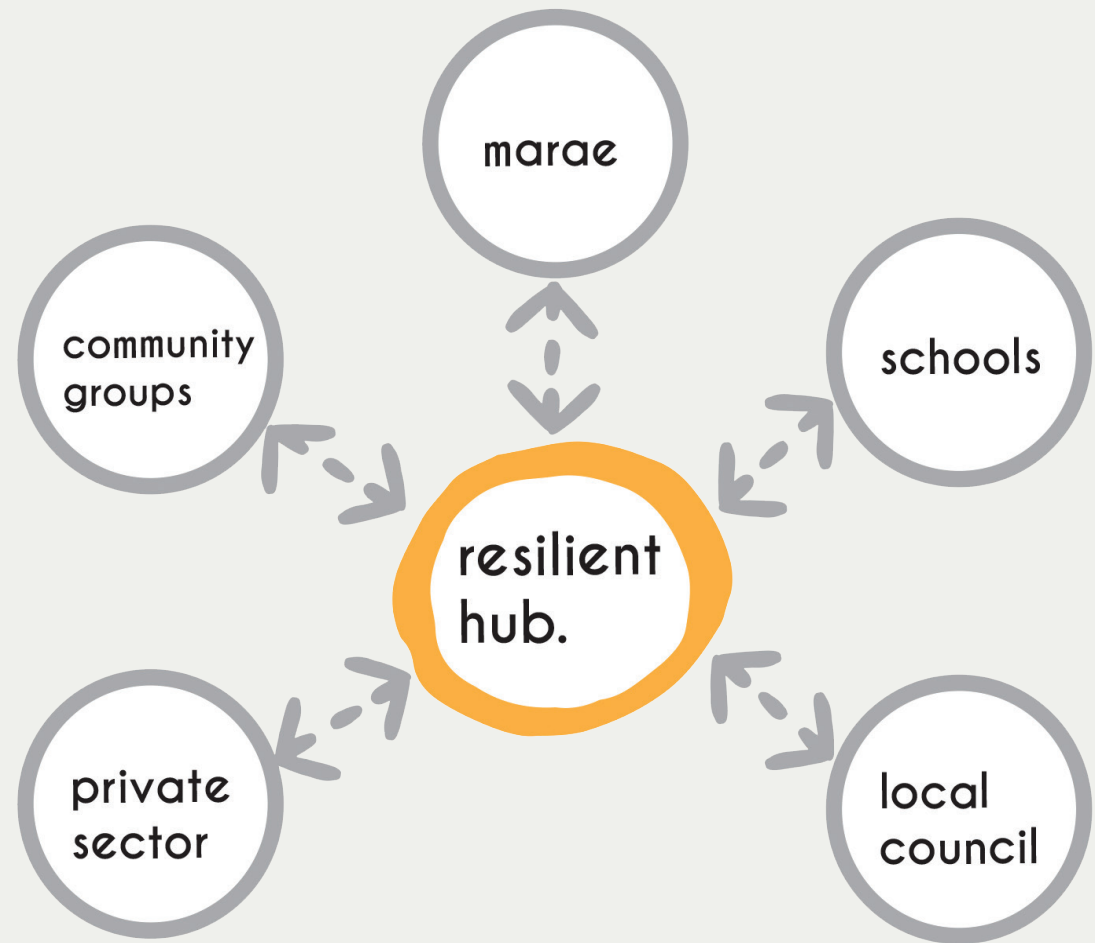


Figure 3. Resilient Hub relationship.

Relationship to community

The layout, function, and use of the Resilient Hub aims to foster leadership at all levels, and allow for integration of private innovation sectors and community initiatives. All skill levels and interests are accessible in the Resilient Hub. The participant is respected and gains self-respect as an individual through the knowledge gained and the self-empowerment of sustainable practices, and becomes a valued contributor to the shared Resilient Hub, and a valued part of the extended community at large. The knowledge and technology can be passed on and applied in a grass-roots fashion. This will seed further innovation in the community. The varied yet interconnected nature of the activities and facilities at the Resilient Hub allows for organic leadership initiatives to grow and be fostered. Collaboration with mana whenua can empower our rangatahi to adopt sustainable and resilient practices and be kaitiaki of knowledge for future generations.

Relationship to public and private sector

With the challenges of global supply-chain interruptions and increasing costs, we need to develop ways to leverage public- and private-sector supply and innovation to deliver on climate and sustainability outcomes. The Resilient Hub is proposed to act partly as an insertion into the supplier-consumer chain. By actively demonstrating the viability of sustainable and resilient practices, products and methods within the community, we can push climate-relevant outcomes to be commercially viable for suppliers and producers. Giving the community democracy of choice within a sustainable framework will organically proliferate the uptake and future demand for these services. Once it is recognised as a profitable enterprise to incorporate these components into future residential developments and services, it will in turn stimulate further research and development in the sector.

An article published on the Sustainable Energy Association New Zealand website in April 2022 outlines the issues with the current government-owned monopoly on energy supply, and some of the changes expected to come with future developments in the renewable energy sector.

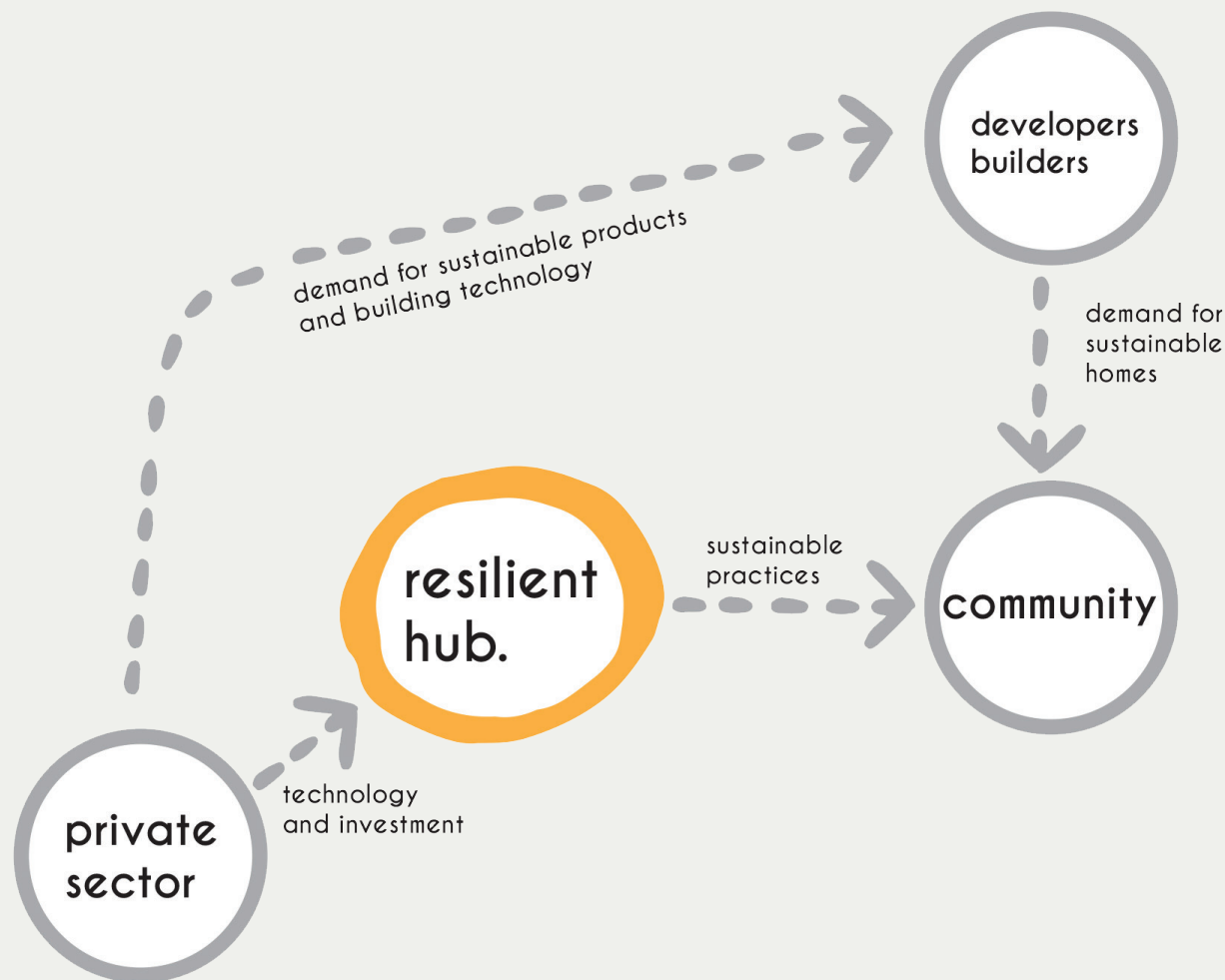


Figure 4. Relationship and influence of Resilient Hub to private sector.

It describes the benefits of locally produced energy from grid-connected installations, which reduces energy costs and provides local producers the chance to build resilience:

Grid-connected residential installations continue to grow (36 percent YoY) with the biggest gains being seen in commercial installations with

businesses large and small realising the economic and sustainability benefits of installing solar. It's not only allowing them to reduce energy costs, it's also allowing them to play more active roles in building resilience and could soon be viewed as another revenue stream. With installations

happening now around the country consumers are providing excess energy back into the grid for other consumers, during times of high demand.¹

The Sustainable Energy Association New Zealand represents private sustainable-energy providers, installers, manufacturers and retailers, as well as representing the end user. The Resilient Hub would act as an intermediary between this private sector and the community, allowing for practical demonstration and understanding at a community level.

Private sector input is generated through the use of resilient green technology companies and suppliers being able to install and advertise their products. The renewable energy technology used is on display and is interactive so that the community can understand and be involved in the process.

Screens, apps and other monitoring devices can be incorporated into the equipment to help communicate the status of, for example, the solar or water collection. Manufacturers of compostable toilets, rainwater filtration companies, and solar off-grid technology companies are all encouraged to sponsor and fit out the Resilient Hub. The structures themselves are proposed to be constructed using modular prefabricated low-carbon materials.

Companies that can facilitate this would be actively used and promoted. This then could lead to a perspective shift and allow for an organic adoption of cutting-edge building practices and technologies in the wider community. Public familiarity with these technologies and building methods will provide a demand in the housing market, which will in turn prompt developers, investors and owners to utilise and invest in these types of infrastructure. A circular economy could be formed in which the democracy of choice fosters knowledge; the informed community seeks out sustainable methods



Figure 5. Individual and community input driving private sector development in green technology.

and tools, which in turn stimulates the private and public sector to provide this in its general housing developments.

Relationship to food security and food sustainability

The pressure on supply chains and access to good-quality, healthy food means we need to work together to strengthen the resilience of our communities and ensure we have access to healthy food and clean water for everyone. A key function of the Resilient Hub would be dedicated to vegetable growing, using onsite rainwater collection to feed the garden. Local schools and community groups would be kaitiaki for the garden.

An article published by Radio New Zealand in July 2021 states that “About 33 percent of New Zealand households say they face moderate food insecurity, experiencing uncertainty about whether they’ll have enough food, or choosing cheaper, often nutritionally poor items,” and in response “what was needed was an understanding of food’s role in our country and any strategy needed to look at not just issues like food security, but economics, the environment and culture.”²

The Resilient Hub would provide a bottom-up interface to allow government-led programmes and future

1 Brendan Winitana, “Unlocking Distributed Generation,” Sustainable Energy Association New Zealand, May 12, 2022, https://www.seanz.org.nz/unlocking_distributed_generation

2 Farrah Hancock, “Calls to ‘Feed the 5 Million First’ Before Exporting NZ Food,” *Radio New Zealand*, July 21, 2021, <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/whoseatingnewzealand/447324/calls-to-feed-the-5-million-first-before-exporting-nz-food#:~:text=About%2033%20percent%20of%20New,sometimes%20run%20out%20of%20food>

changes in food production and supply to be understood at community level, and allow for resilience and interdependence, rather than co-dependency, to develop.

Through the process of growing food, communities can move closer to healthy food production, especially in communities where food production is not normally accessible or practised, such as urban areas. The focus would be on learning gardening methods in terms of sustainable practices rather than producing large quantities of food.

The food harvested onsite could be cooked and eaten as part of community events held within the Resilient Hub. The knowledge gathered would then ideally proliferate into the community and people would become more self-sufficient and considerate of their own food consumption.

What Works? An Example

The CERES Community Environment Park is located in Melbourne, Australia. CERES, which stands for Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies, “is an environmental education centre, community garden, urban farm and social enterprise hub,” whose vision “is for people to fall in love with the Earth again and to that end our work spans environmental, social, economic, spiritual and cultural dimensions.”³ Started in 1982 as a community garden, it has expanded to exploration into green technology, recycling and organic farming. “[CERES] receive around half a million visits per year to our original park in Brunswick East, and reach nearly another million through our other locations, school outreach programs and online services.”⁴

The Resilient Hub takes inspiration from successful projects such as CERES, and in addition aims to embrace technology and innovation from the private sector to help integrate the different aspects of our community with global innovation and cutting-edge technologies.

What Next? Development Through Collaboration

The ideas and schemes outlined in this article are intended to be discussed and further defined in the spirit of collective action. We can effectively move forward by allowing individuals and existing groups to utilise their inherent skills and provide input and further develop the scheme. The input from the community in which the future Resilient Hub is located would enable a high level of integration and relevancy.

Initial groups that could be consulted are architecture studios, marae, youth groups, health centres, off-grid energy providers, water system providers, modular construction companies and local community groups. This specific input can be incorporated before approaching the local council or property developers. For example, new greenfield sites (new areas of development, usually former agricultural land) in the growing Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland region could allocate high-visibility sites within residential areas for a Resilient Hub, and brownfield sites (areas of existing development being repurposed, such as those being redeveloped by Kāinga Ora) could work with existing community groups to co-ordinate locations for a Resilient Hub with the neighbourhood. With the input of the community, the design can be further developed and a logistical framework can be made, addressing funding, construction and facilitation. Through kotahitanga, unity, we can move into the future with confidence in ourselves and the environment around us in all aspects.

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³ CERES, “About CERES,” <https://ceres.org.au/about/>

⁴ Ibid.

Developing Urban Furniture by Unitec Students for an Emerging Urban Fabric in Auranga, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland: The Socio-Ecological Dynamics of Creative Sustainable Prototyping Production During the Covid-19 Crisis

Sameh Shamout, Dr Yusef Patel and Dr Alessandro Premier

<https://doi.org/10.34074/aslm.2023112>

Abstract

As the number of suburban communities in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland grows, it's essential to consider the social component when planning and developing these communities in order to improve social resilience and reduce social and economic disparities between residents in these areas and those in the city centre. Since the Covid-19 crisis forced people to stay in their neighbourhoods during lockdowns, social urban spaces have become one of the most important urban necessities for achieving urban resilience and sustainable development goals. Given the role that urban furniture plays in making urban social spaces more attractive and liveable, this paper discusses two student-built urban furniture projects, a multi-functional bike pod and a pop-up performance container. Students from Unitec School of Architecture designed and built the two projects for MADE Group's Auranga housing development in Karaka, South Auckland, as an example of enhancing social resilience in a suburban community in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland.

Keywords: Suburban communities, urban furniture, social resilience, architecture, student-built projects, prefabrication

Background

Today nearly 55 percent of the world's population lives in cities, with that percentage anticipated to rise to 68 percent by 2050.¹ Urbanisation, or the gradual shift in human population from rural to urban regions, combined with global population increase, is projected to add another 2.5 billion people to urban areas by 2050, according to the United Nations.² In 2020, metropolitan regions and cities accounted for 86.7 percent of Aotearoa New Zealand's total population. Between 2018 and 2048, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland is expected to have around half of the population growth, with the city's population reaching 2 million in the early 2030s.³ The inability of existing urban fabrics to meet population demand emphasises the need for new suburban areas to be

constructed, and shifting to more sustainable and resilient urban communities is more than a priority today,⁴ given the increasing socio-ecological challenges that the globe faces.⁵ Climate change, ageing infrastructure, population expansion and global migration, as well as social and economic inequalities, are all burdens that cities today bear disproportionately.⁶ Urban areas include the inner city, whereas suburban areas are those that are located adjacent to, or surrounding, the inner city. Emerging suburban communities that distribute the population around the Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland region offer several benefits, including promoting decentralisation and decreasing traffic congestion in the areas closer to the city centre. Because the number of emerging suburban communities in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland is increasing, it is critical to consider the social component when designing and developing these communities in order to promote social resilience and reduce social and economic inequalities between people who live in these areas and those who live

- 1 United Nations, "68% of the World Population Projected to Live in Urban Areas by 2050, Says UN," Department of Economic and Social Affairs, May 16, 2018, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/news/population/2018-revision-of-world-urbanization-prospects.html>
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Stats NZ, "Subnational Population Projections: 2018(Base)–2048," March 31, 2021, <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/subnational-population-projections-2018base2048>
- 4 Sameh Shamout and Paola Boarin, "An Overview of 100 Resilient Cities Network: The Case of Amman," in *Advanced Studies in Efficient Environmental Design and City Planning*, ed. Ferdinando Trapani, Nabil Mohareb, Federica Rosso, Denia Kolokotsa, Sreetheran Maruthaveeran, and Mahmoud Ghoneem, 267–277 (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-65181-7_22
- 5 Marcus J. Collier, Zorica Nedović-Budić, Jeroen Aerts, Stuart Connop, Dermot Foley, Karen Foley, Darryl Newport, Siobhán McQuaid, Aleksander Slaev, and Peter Verborg, "Transitioning to Resilience and Sustainability in Urban Communities," *Cities* 32 (2013): S21–S28, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2013.03.010>
- 6 Resilient Cities Network, "Cities Taking Action: How the 100RC Network Is Building Urban Resilience," 2017, <https://resilientcitiesnetwork.org/cities-taking-action/>; Sameh Shamout, Paola Boarin, and Sandeeka Mannakkara, "Understanding Resilience in the Built Environment: Going beyond Disaster Mitigation," in *Proceedings of the International Conference of Architectural Science Association*, 1263–1272, 2020.

in the city centre. Social urban spaces are one of the urban needs that play an important role in achieving sustainable development goals.⁷ This paper discusses the engagement of students from Unitec School of Architecture in the design and implementation of urban furniture using recycled construction wastes in Auranga, an emerging suburban community in South Auckland. The purpose of this project during the Covid-19 crisis in Aotearoa New Zealand was to create social urban furniture out of recycled materials that would bring people together at a time the community needed it. Reusing construction waste means embracing life-cycle thinking and helps to achieve circularity goals. Understanding how the design of social spaces may contain urban furniture components that can be utilised for a range of social needs, build social resilience, and create a sense of place in a growing urban environment during a time of Covid-related constraints can be tough. When urban furniture is well integrated into public-space design, it may help to provide a sense of place and identity.

Design Brief

Unitec School of Architecture students developed and built a multi-functional bike pod and a pop-up performance container for MADE Group's Auranga housing complex in Karaka, South Auckland. As part of Unitec's digital fabrication courses, students worked with MADE Group on the preparation of the design brief with the goal of creating a new social centre for Auranga's growing community. In 2021, students from two fabrication programmes – the undergraduate Bachelor of Architecture degree and the postgraduate Master of Architecture (Professional) programme – were nominated to develop two separate projects at Auranga. Despite the fact that Covid-19 lockdowns hindered the practical making components of the course, the school made every attempt to find means for this project to continue and serve the community.

Previous community-based research projects were used as inspiration for the design brief. The first project was

the Futurebuild LVL feature stand for NZIA's in:situ conference.⁸ Futurebuild LVL partnered with the Unitec School of Architecture to design and build a display using offcuts from their LVL factory to investigate the reduction of construction waste. The project was organised as a Women in Fabrication initiative, with female architects leading the project with Unitec students. The layers of veneer that make up Futurebuild LVL beams were turned to show off the product's layers. These panels were run through a CNC machine to make a variety of wood configurations, and boxes were built. The result was a show that sparked a lot of discussion about the beauty and sustainability of wood-based building materials.

The second project was the EDAFB 4.0 research house project, which looked at how prefabrication may help contribute to the reduction of construction waste.⁹ Kitchens, interior door leaves, knobs and mouldings were made from the wood and plywood construction waste. With the exception of sawdust, there was no waste generated throughout the prefabrication process at Unitec; this excludes prefab waste generated by other prefabricators such as window fabricators.

Urban Furniture Designs

Students were asked to create urban furniture for Auranga's village square using recycled timber offcuts from the Auranga housing construction and laminate them into sheet materials that could be CNC machined into flat-pack components, as part of their undergraduate degree programme. Undergraduate students looked at how to include circular economies into their digital fabrication projects, while postgraduate students studied digital fabrication workflows. The students created twenty concepts and MADE chose a 'seating pod' concept design by Nadia Elkhour to be further refined and fabricated by the entire class. The concept evolved into a 'bike pod,' with the dual aim of providing a place to relax as well as a place to store bikes.



Figure 1. Pop-up container interior fit-out being assembled by Keith Mann. Photo: Author.



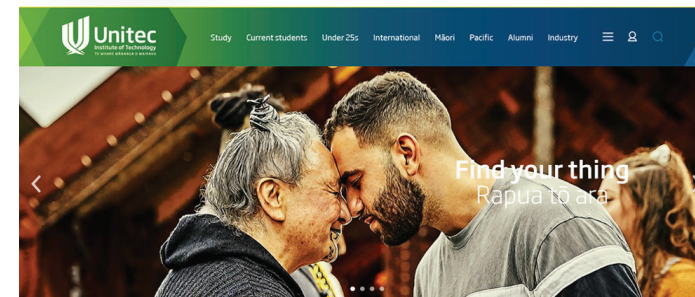
Figure 2. Pop-up container interior fit-out being used as a performance stage at a Christmas event. Photo: Author.

Figure 3. Poster designed by student Alyssa Haley.

7 United Nations, *The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (New York: United Nations, 2015), <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf>

8 Priscila Besen, Yusef Patel, Alice Couchman, and Peter McPherson, "Architecture as a Tool for Inclusion and Community Building," *Asylum* 1 (2020): 174–181, <https://www.unitec.ac.nz/epress/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Architecture-as-a-Tool.pdf>

9 Neill McCulloch, Yusef Patel, and Sēmisi Potauaine, "Design and Building of a Plywood Research House," *Asylum* 1 (2020): 180–187, <https://www.unitec.ac.nz/epress/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/EDFAB.pdf>



Thats me!





Lockdown Challenges

Due to Covid-19 lockdown restrictions, students and staff were unable to enter the CNC and digital fabrication workshops, and accessing Auranga to collect waste timber material was also challenging. To overcome these hurdles, workshop equipment was moved to a makeshift home workshop, Abodo Wood donated Vulcan Cladding offcuts, and digital fabrication workshop assistant and postgraduate student Alyssa Haley assisted lecturers in cutting and laminating Vulcan timber offcuts into panels and glulam beams.

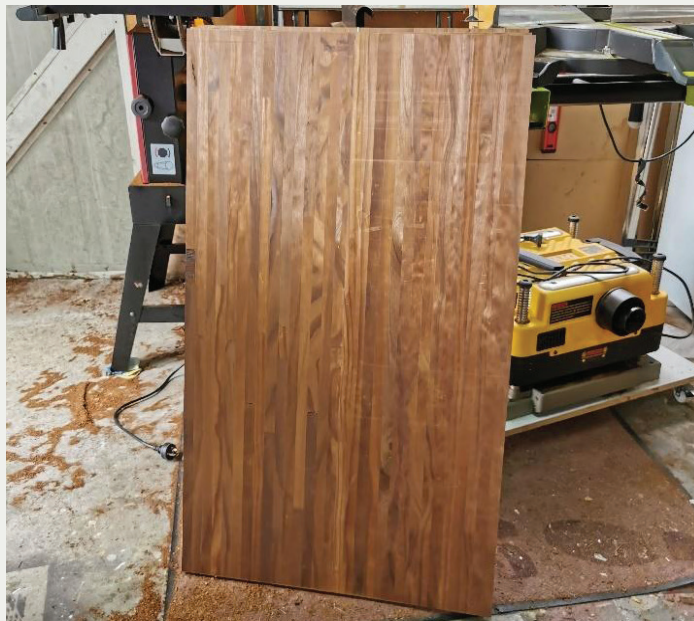
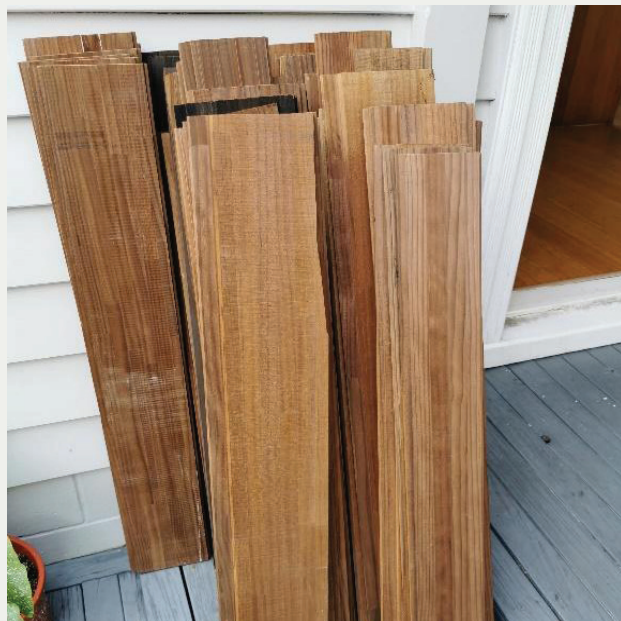
As part of his postgraduate thesis work, Kieran Copper was tasked with redesigning concepts for the current 'pop-up' performance container in Auranga's village square. Alyssa Haley was chosen to refine and detail Copper's design on the digital fabrication course, collaborating with course teachers and MADE through Zoom sessions for the majority of the project. The project's development was hindered by the lack of access to the site, as the placement of equipment such as motors and power boxes was not indicated in any plans provided to the design team. Flat-pack plywood components made on the CNC machine were used to create the final design (Figure 5).

The course lecturer had to rely on prior experience to mark up, digitally simulate and recommend design revisions, without access to CNC machines and laser cutters to quickly evaluate the design features. Finally, the lecturer and student fine-tuned the design conclusion, resulting in a highly polished design outcome that served the community at the right time.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, Ultimate Building Supplies (UBS) performed CNC milling fabrication, with components cut only in time for onsite installation of the bike pod and container fit-out before the Auranga Christmas party.

Figure 4. The final multi-purpose bike pod, serving community gatherings and cyclists. Photos: Author.

Figure 5. The process of collecting offcuts from Abodo Wood, sorting materials, testing the lamination mechanism, and production of a finished laminated panel. Photos: Author.



Future Development and Opportunities

Future built projects within Unitec prefabrication courses may aim to develop urban furniture with the integration of renewable technologies to become 'smart.' In particular, the addition of IT options to urban furniture may help gather more information on the users' habits and preferences, and to provide new functions such as electric bike charging outlets, phone and laptop chargers, wi-fi, and others. This topic is currently being investigated in a project at the University of Auckland's School of Architecture and Planning,¹⁰ and is also an opportunity to be further explored in future courses and potential collaborations. Although solar urban furniture is common in many cities around the world, such as Singapore, Dubai and Hong Kong, it is still uncommon in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland social spaces. Incorporating this technology into future projects built by students will expand the skills of students who will help shape Aotearoa New Zealand's built environment.

Future prefabrication projects will need to examine the lamination process in order to accommodate a range of offcuts other than one-metre lengths. Because the glue employed was insufficiently strong, and unfriendly to the environment, alternative laminating mechanisms should be investigated. It will also be beneficial to test the panels for strength, to determine whether there are any additional applications that may be employed in architecture.

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¹⁰ Alessandro Premier, Ali Ghaffarian Hoseini, and Amirhosein Ghaffarian Hoseini, "Solar-Powered Smart Urban Furniture: Preliminary Investigation on Limits and Potentials of Current Designs," *Smart and Sustainable Built Environment* (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1108/sasbe-09-2021-0152>

Katamari Kart: A Serious and Hilarious Sub/Urban Game for More Serendipitous, Playful and Friendly Public Art

Chris Berthelsen, Rumen Rachev and Dr Alex Bonham

<https://doi.org/10.34074/aslm.2023113>

Abstract

The article presents the sub/urban game-method Katamari Kart, where people roam industrial and suburban areas collecting waste materials and progressively building a large and mobile public sculpture. This game-method departs from established concepts and practice in neighbourhood improvement as it tries to evade capital expenditure and embraces uncertainty and friction in bringing together various stakeholders, does not aim to look stylish or even be useful, decelerates daily life, promotes self-sufficiency in cultural life, and creates long-term wellbeing through play. That is, it is a degrowth approach to neighbourhood improvement. Rumen Rachev positions the Katamari Kart game-method as an expression of the 'Kiwi way' and discusses the role it can play in making our future neighbourhoods more serendipitous, playful and friendly, and a reflection of the diverse people and things that reside there – all without capital expenditure or the support of the authorities. Finally, Alex Bonham, author of the book *Play and the City: How to Create Places and Spaces to Help Us Thrive*, discusses the Katamari Kart game-method in the context of adult play, our

settler history, keeping up appearances, the Be a Tidy Kiwi campaign, play and wellbeing, and conflicting responses to frugality.

Keywords: Sub/urban play, improvisation, collaboration, public art, serious games

Introduction

When people make 'stuff' outside of their houses, in the public and liminal spaces of their cities, it's as if they have taken up Paul Auster's advice to "pick one spot in the city and begin to think of it as yours. It doesn't matter where and it doesn't matter what."¹ Urban planner Kevin Lynch notes that "people play with things and find new uses for them,"² which can be understood as individually created, everyday expressions of the creativity of everyday people in all of its facets.³

Unauthorised residents' use and modification of their everyday environments leaves traces and fragments; remnants that layer up and decay over time. These traces are fine-grained evidence of life, human(e)-scale attachment, action and care, affection, love, pride and ordinary magic. They are the key to everyday environments where people can be well beings. They are scattered oases; tacitly accepted, actively protected, ignored, or begrudgingly left alone.

We thus view them as 'small spaces of anarchy,' an idea we modified from Mohammad Bamyeh's book *Anarchy as Order* (2009). These spaces are zones of human-

¹ Paul Auster, *Collected Prose* (London: Faber and Faber, 2003), 285.

² Kevin Lynch, *Good City Form* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1984), 157.

³ Marieluise Jonas, "Private Use of Public Open Space in Tokyo. A Study of the Hybrid Landscape of Tokyo's Informal Gardens," *Journal of Landscape Architecture* 2, no. 2 (2007): 18–29, <https://doi.org/10.1080/18626033.2007.9723385>

scale action, attachment and care that have three key characteristics:

- They can replace state control with regards to an aspect of city life.
- They can take away that aspect from the need for majority rule.
- They promote unimposed order as a style of working.⁴

From the perspective of small spaces of anarchy, it is possible for people to generate their own environments, all rubbing up against each other and transforming each other's knowledge, and scattered all over the cities they live in. We learn about ourselves and each other through our making, doing and making-do, in the (s)low-key process of making stuff in our cities, and while it may not be efficient, easy, or always fun, the friction is what brings life, interest and pleasure to the everyday environment.

Perhaps the most interesting and useful way to improve sub/urban environments, then, is to devolve control to the residents; those that have the various stakes, knowledge and abilities to do so.

Negative Emissions and Waste Studies (NEWS) Programme

Under this understanding, Chris Berthelsen, Adam Ben-Dror and Rumen Rachev created the Negative Emissions and Waste Studies (NEWS) Programme in 2020 for investigating and promoting this view. The NEWS Programme is a free self-learning environment that runs on streets, parks, private homes, community centres, public art galleries, department stores, public schools, in the sea, and anywhere else. It uses only things that have been thrown away or can be found for free. We then play and experiment with them to make fun, pleasurable and (sometimes) useful objects, services, activities, etc., in domains including but not limited to electronics, sewing, ceramics, sound/music, micromobility, gaming, landscaping, food/drink, poetry and love.

A core game-method of the NEWS Programme is the Katamari Kart, a real-time prototyping exercise where people roam industrial and suburban areas collecting waste materials and progressively building a large and mobile public sculpture (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Iteratively building a mobile public sculpture of junk.

This game-method departs from established concepts and practice in neighbourhood improvement, as it tries to evade capital expenditure, embraces uncertainty and friction in bringing together various stakeholders, does not aim to look stylish or even be useful, decelerates daily life (embraces slowness), promotes self-sufficiency in cultural life (rather than participation in cultural consumption), and creates long-term wellbeing through play even though it (i) does not aim to and (ii) may often result in negative feelings or shock in the short-term. This can be viewed as a method within a wider agenda of

a de-growth⁵ approach to neighbourhood improvement. The aim of this game-method is not simply to oppose the dominant hierarchical structure for the sake of it (and getting pleasure out of the refusal). Rather, we believe in and try to introduce different modalities of active and not-so-active participation in the urban sphere, without the co-option of commercial flows of finance and bureaucracy. We try to do what we can without having or needing official permission to play in the Super City and without having or needing any 'proper' resources ready at hand.

Katamari Kart

Katamari (塊) is a Japanese word that means agglomeration or aggregation – a whole lot of stuff stuck together – and the Katamari Kart method resembles (but was not initially influenced by) the Playstation 2 game *Katamari Damacy* (literally 'Clump Spirit') by Namco, which involves (as Wikipedia tells us) “rolling a magical, highly adhesive ball called a katamari around various locations, collecting increasingly larger objects, ranging from thumbtacks to human beings to mountains, until the ball has grown large enough to become a star.”⁶

The unwanted stuff of the city, in dumpsters, left on the side of the road, floating down the street, is perceived as a distributed resource centre and serendipity engine, where resources are not a stock that is administered by specific authorities or caretakers, but a flow that can be encountered and commandeered by anyone, according to their desires and abilities. What emerges in this game-method is not a permitted public sculpture that has been filtered by the authorities and been submitted to multiple health, safety, ethics and aesthetics checks.

The temporary sculpture is simply a whole lot of crap, brought together in a particular way, at a particular time, in a particular place, by particular (and often peculiar) people (Figure 2). We leave it, with a note of explanation and a contact number and intend to retrieve it “when

4 Mohammed A. Bamyeh, *Anarchy as Order: The History and Future of Civic Humanity* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2009).

5 Giacomo D'Alisa, Federico Demaria, and Giorgos Kallis, eds., *Degrowth: A Vocabulary for a New Era* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015).

6 “Katamari Damacy,” Wikipedia, accessed November 4, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Katamari_Damacy



Figure 2. Simply a whole lot of crap, brought together in a particular way, at a particular time, in a particular place, by particular (and often peculiar) people.

we feel like it” (which includes when someone rings us and asks us to move it) and repurpose it for future pleasure. What would be the point of throwing it out?

Like Claude Levi-Strauss’ bricoleur, in playing this game people can learn how to make do with whatever is at hand to create a poetry that is not (only) about accomplishment and execution but is an expression of their lives and personalities through the choices they make with the resources that they happen to bump into. “The ‘bricoleur’ may not ever complete [her] purpose but she always puts something of [her] self into it.”⁷

In the next section, co-maker of the Katamari Kart Rumen Rachev will interrogate the Katamari Kart game-method and discuss the role it can play in making our future neighbourhoods more serendipitous, playful and friendly, and a reflection of the diverse people and things that reside there – all without capital expenditure or the support of the authorities.

Katamari Kart as a Form of Hopeful Ludology and Ludic Hope-ology – Rumen Rachev

As an EU-raised urbanartiste living and researching future environments in Aotearoa I experience the Katamari Kart as a form of Hopeful Ludology and Ludic Hope-ology, a virtuous spiral where the more you play, the more hopeful you get, and the more hopeful you are, the more you play.

The Katamari Kart game-method is an expression of the ‘Kiwi way,’ the key aspect of which is the attitude of ‘just go for it and do it!’. No budget, no expectations, just on the go as it goes. That is to say: enjoy the flow. After five years of research and practice in Aotearoa, I find that the proper ‘Kiwi way’ is to go with the flow and learn how to enjoy whatever happens. While this mantra has long been co-opted by the neoliberal market and start-up culture, with its focus on risk-taking (you gotta risk it for the biscuit!), the Katamari Kart and the Kiwi way show us how to participate in the cultural life of our neighbourhoods without contributing to the neoliberal

market or producing anything of financial significance. Engaging hands-on with the Katamari Kart game-method is a chance to dive deep into the urban fabric without the fear that one has to be able to afford to consume and spend hard-earned dollars, in order to play in the Super City of Tāmaki Makaurau (the city previously known as Auckland) (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Dive deep into the sub/urban fabric without financial resources.

The tactile engagement with the neighbourhood through the Katamari Kart provides an opportunity to become hopeful about our neighbourhoods through interacting with the material world and exploring the suburbs as a giant toolbox, full of surprises and encounters with the public body. Moreover, the Katamari Kart engages with the roots of the person building on the go, enabling residents to bring their own aesthetics and values to the neighbourhood, in my case by introducing critical Euro-aesthetics and providing some Euro-visuals (as the EU flag for example) (Figure 4).

Through collecting and reassembling discarded and unwanted materials, stripped of productive labour and cut from the circulation economy, the Katamari Kart game-method opens up a space to play and explore, and to dive into ludic hope-ology. It is not junk, but a hopeful message for activating differently perceived sub/urban aesthetics and relationships.

Through the Katamari Kart game-method it becomes apparent how the power structures of the mega city strictly divide the suburban regions into official zones of registered and formally recognised play activities at the appropriate play zones. It seems that unofficial or somewhat illegible play with physical elements cannot be tolerated in the plans of the Super City, and any differently looking play activities in the public sphere are likely to be immediately condemned and labelled as unwanted and undesirable junk, without the chance for friendly discussion and negotiation. Xin Cheng and Chris Berthelsen’s experience during Auckland Artweek 2016, where “Auckland Council approve[d] art, then remove[d] it anyway” illustrates that even when one arm of the authorities tries to support such experiments, another arm is all too quick to tear it down.⁸

Take your junk home and do not disturb the neighbours. That is the proper way, but not the ‘Kiwi way,’ which gives me hope for the future of Kiwi neighbourhoods. Who wants to be a ‘tidy Kiwi’ when you can be a ‘junk Kiwi’?

Finally, Alex Bonham, author of the book *Play and the City: How to Create Places and Spaces to Help Us Thrive* (2021), will discuss the Katamari Kart method in the context of play and wellbeing and draw out future directions for research and discussion.

Commentary – Alex Bonham

I observe the progress of the Katamari Kart through the suburbs of the North Shore, led by two normal-looking white blokes albeit with foreign-sounding names, and I find the work they do very open to the possibility of serendipitous discoveries and encounters, surprises and

7 Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 21.

8 Morgan Tait, “Auckland Council Approves Art, then Removes it Anyway,” *Stuff*, October 12, 2016, <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/auckland-council-approves-art-then-removes-it-anyway/X7VV2GGXLUE34JDS455IPPPKJQ/>



Figure 4. Enabling residents to bring their own aesthetics and values to the neighbourhood.

laughter, so I wonder at the response they get as they play the city. If it were children pulling trolleys with junk, making things with what they have found, children with a bit of initiative and imagination, they would be commended for their creative efforts. Children are allowed to play with junk on the street, but adults? Chris and Rumen have noted that the response to them in the street has been mixed. Some have enjoyed their behaviour, which models the truth that we have permission to play, to be unexpected. Kiwis are generally friendly and tolerant, so why have Chris and Rumen triggered negative reactions as well as positive ones? Roger Callois observes that you can understand a culture by the way it plays.⁹ I wonder whether the responses tell us about another side of the Kiwi way, another aspect to 'having a go' or 'going with the flow'. I am talking about conformism, and a certain kind of cultural aesthetics that I will consider through the lens of play.

It has been put to me that New Zealand's settler society was predominantly skilled working-class or lower-middle-class people with aspirations to create a better version of society back home (mainly Britain). That was a unionised, organised society in which there was a good deal of ability, resourcefulness and quiet pride, despite the fact that (or because) there may not have been much spare cash. This has been a society in which reciprocity is valued and necessary for society to cohere. Yes, you should have a go, and then you should keep practising until you get good at it, whatever it is. Preferably in private, so as to be skilled in public. Keeping up appearances – the front garden, the ready smile – is key, whatever is going on behind closed doors, perhaps in the shed. Augusto Boal says that in South America there are cops in the street, in the West there are cops in the head.¹⁰ In New Zealand there are arguably cops in the head, but only when you are in the street.

Is the pushback to an abandoned cart a legacy of the Tidy Kiwi campaign, that has lasted nigh on fifty years? Another form of keeping up appearances but also a culture of reciprocity and care. And perhaps council contracts with

park maintenance companies demand that the streets and sports fields are left tidy. The parks maintenance worker, perhaps on a zero-hours contract, without fluent English, is charged with removing stuff. Of course, they don't call the number that Chris and Rumen left on the cart: it's best to avoid conflict. Besides, what would happen if everyone left their stuff on the side of a park?

If the tidy, keeping-up-appearances stereotype is true, then perhaps there is a reaction against the outlier, the eccentric adult artist or intellectual. To fit in culturally as a Kiwi, I posit, it is best to be offering something that people understand and enjoy. Like music, sport, or fish and chips. Why would an adult create something with junk that has no purpose at all? It is absurd, hard to understand – Katamari Kart may have been beloved in Japan and by devoted gamers a decade ago, but it is not widely understood in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. By not being able to understand the cultural references as a game, perhaps the behaviour is oddly threatening, upsetting, like other kids speaking a made-up (or, God forbid, foreign! or Indigenous!) language during team sports. Maybe it is a status thing.

Perhaps those who are supportive will read Chris and Rumen's card and understand their intentions. For others, the self-declared work might be considered subversive. Johan Huizinga, in his seminal work on play, observes that spoilsports are held in the lowest esteem, lower than the cheat.¹¹ When Chris and Rumen challenge dominant culture in this gentle way, are they spoilsports? I would ask them if they would enjoy it as much without the subversive element. What response would Chris and Rumen get, I wonder, if the gathering and making was done more discreetly and the final piece of art more impressive? Deer heads of found metals go for a lot in the gallery at Helena Bay. On the other hand, there is something Kiwi about being rubbish at something and doing it anyway. It's funny. Laughing at one's self also goes a long way here. It would be less funny if there was

no cultural tension. Which makes me wonder how much the stereotype of resourcefulness is perhaps an ideal rather than the norm.

Look at Chris and Rumen's practice through another lens, and it is an enjoyable sustainable, quirky, kind effort of collection and creativity. A conscientious objection to throw-away society and a modelling of a thrifty, creative ontology. That they should be considered threatening is silly. And, yet, perhaps thriftiness is troubling in its own way if it foreshadows a future of scrabbling for bits and pieces that, these days, we take for granted (though perhaps not so much at the moment, with supply-chain issues). Will we gather rubber bands and nails in old shoe boxes like they did in communist Eastern Europe? Is it a hint that our status is falling, that our future in the world is uncertain, that as private space gets smaller and more expensive, we rely on the public realm and crave order in it? There is a lot to admire in the past, as well as critique, even as it slips away. Of course, perhaps the memory is false. We identify as competent but actually we have always struggled. We have been forced to make clothes because there were no imports. Not unlike Eastern Europe at all.

It is a paradox – as the world changes we may need to play our way through it, to adapt, to lean into moments of serendipity to create new opportunities and friendships (Figure 5) – yet there is an understandable desire for order and to cling to what we have, or thought we had, and not be left behind. Who would have thought contemplating Katamari Kart might need a trigger warning?

⁹ Roger Callois, *Man, Play and Games* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2001).

¹⁰ Augusto Boal, *The Aesthetics of the Oppressed* (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2006).

¹¹ Johan Huizinga, *Homo ludens: A study of the play-element in culture* (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2014).



Figure 5. As the world changes we may need to play our way through it.

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Chris Berthelsen explores environments for creative activity, resident-led modification of the everyday environment, and alternative education(s). He is a co-founder and co-chair of Activities and Research in Environments for Creativity Trust, a co-founder of Tanushimaru Institute for Art Research (Fukuoka, Japan), and was Deputy Chairperson of the Mairangi Arts Centre Trust (2017–2021). From 2022 he is a Faculty of Creative Arts and Industries PhD Scholarship recipient at Waipapa Taumata Rau The University of Auckland.

Rumen Rachev holds an RMA in Media and Performance Studies from Utrecht University, the Netherlands, and is actively engaged in practice-led research in art and design (AUT), since 2017. As well, he is co-founder of the NEWS Programme (Negative Emissions and Waste Studies Programme) and is Creative Guest, Wairua Awhina (Helping Spirit) and Director of 希望学 (Hope-ology) at Activities and Research in Environments for Creativity Charitable Trust. Currently he holds the position of research assistant at the University of Auckland.

Dr Alex Bonham is an elected member of the Waitematā Local Board. Her position is that the council can deliver action on climate change and pollution by the choices it makes, and she stands for better transport choices and forward-thinking urban planning that leaves space for local business, parks and nature, libraries and community facilities where everyone is welcome. Alex supports enhancing our shared spaces and offering many opportunities to participate in exciting and diverse ways. Alex graduated from Cambridge with a degree in law then went into publishing. She left publishing in July 2010 to have two children and is currently working on a doctorate on the role of play, including sports, recreation and the arts in maintaining quality of life in Auckland.

Conclusion

A FUTURE NEIGHBOURHOOD TELLS US WHERE WE HAVE BEEN AND LETS US DECIDE WHERE WE WILL GO

Throughout this journey we have reimagined what a neighbourhood may be, and what it may look like. This has been through reconceptualising how we approach places, and viewing direct interventions in line with these.

“The history of a place and the history of people is important to building a neighbourhood.”

From various perspectives, we’ve seen how understanding the history of a place and the history of

people is important to building a neighbourhood. We’ve seen how neighbourhoods can spark joy, community, friendship and understanding.

A thread ties people and places together. Our future neighbourhoods should strengthen these threads. Good design, at its core, is about allowing people to be people, allowing people to be part of a place. For too long we have tried to dictate what people or places should or shouldn’t be. Instead, we should simply allow people and places to be, and provide spaces to share, to live in conveniently and healthily, so we can create the neighbourhoods that reflect us.

