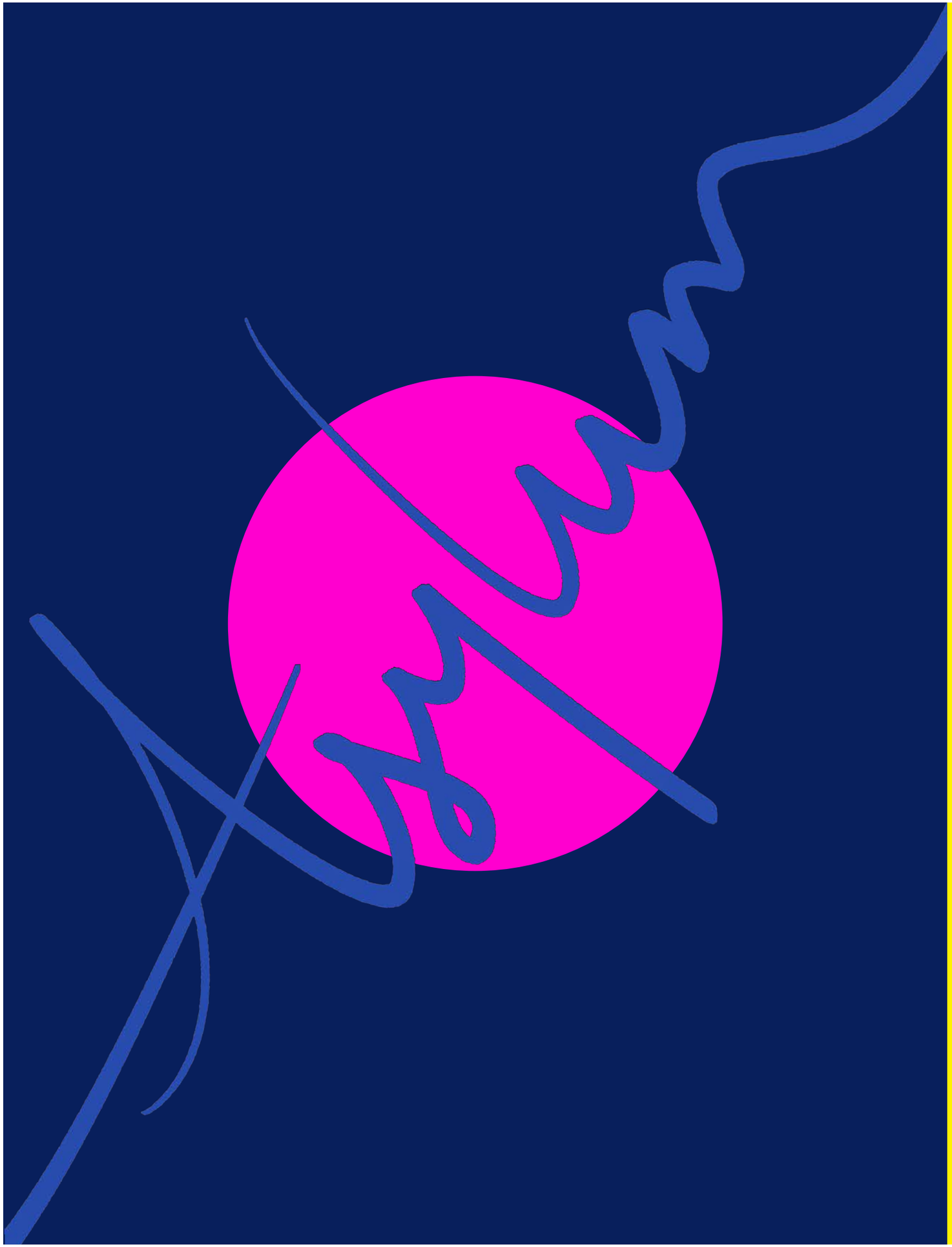


You are invited

Invited to come inside
Leave your doubts and uncertainties behind

Step into a space that is made for you
A place where big dreams and minds come through

Bring a friend or make one here
Join in on creating from far or near

Ask your questions, one or more
That is why you came through this door

Remember, change takes time and care
With many hearts to clap and cheer

If advice is offered, let it be kind
Constructively helpful for our future designs

Come to the top floor! Come see the view!
Let the horizon awaken you

Do not feel lost or out of place
Start your journey, begin and 'make'

Step by step, we all climb
Designing futures line by line

And as time moves forward our stories blend
Through the people we connect and the walls we mend

YOU are invited to DREAM and CREATE
To CHALLENGE, QUESTION and COLLABORATE

There's room for many, look around, enjoy yourself
A seat at the table, just like everyone else...

— *Olivia Nott*

ASYLUM 2025

Design Team
Taina Marie
Claudia McGough-Morunga
Olivia Nott
Rose Todd
Anna Bulkeley

Editors
Anna Bulkeley
Professor Peter McPherson

Asylum
Published 2025
School of Architecture and ePress
Unitec
Carrington Road
Mount Albert
Auckland 1025
New Zealand

Printed by CMYK
Hamilton
New Zealand
www.cmyk.co.nz

ISSN 1177-5572 (Print)
ISSN 2463-4190 (PDF)

Asylum

www.unitec.ac.nz/epress/index.php/category/publications/journals/asylums/

Sketches: Isabelle Cushman, Brooke Evaga, Melissa Knight, Taina Marie, Sinead McClay, Claudia McGough-Morunga, Kerensa Mihaere, Olivia Nott, Jess Smith, Gohanne Turtal

Dear younger me,

You are about to choose architecture as a pathway for your future, and it will be wonderful. No matter what direction your life will ultimately take in your work and personal life, there is no better grounding for your future. This BArch degree will open doors to a wide variety of careers. Irrespective of where life takes you, this way of seeing will stay with you. It will influence how you live, how you think and how you contribute. You'll discover that there is no better grounding for a meaningful life. And yes – you'll have so much fun along the way.

Take note of the people surrounding you – your fellow students will become your life-long friends and colleagues. You will form strong bonds based on your shared interests in architecture and the desire to impact this world to make it a better place for all. Nurture these friendships – and the new ones you will form in your working career. Remember, living fully and looking after your wellbeing is as important as your architectural work.

Have courage – follow your dreams, which sometimes is not easy. However, no problem is insurmountable; you just need to creatively approach solutions to what seem like obstacles at the time; they often turn into fantastic opportunities. You'll be made redundant from your first architectural practice, but this turns out to be one of the best things for your future architecture career.

Do not listen to anyone who tells you it cannot be done. You are resourceful and will design ways to manage a rewarding career alongside raising a family and living a balanced life. This may seem difficult at the time, but draw on that courage and follow your passion – even if leaving the safe path does not seem the sensible move. Trust me, you will find the strength to follow your heart and dreams. There is no normal. Design your working life to support and enhance your personal life. Both aspects of life are essential.

You'll raise children who are creative, kind and endlessly curious. They will be your joy. They will watch how you juggle work and life and they will learn from it. They'll see your drive and courage – and it will inspire them in ways you can't yet imagine. Seeing how you balanced work and personal commitments, and the joy I found in creating architecture has also influenced their path in life. The impact of working in architecture goes beyond just yourself; you will influence this and future generations, not just by the architecture you create but through your approach to life.

So, take the opportunities that will present themselves to you in your studies, work and personal life. Make plans but allow yourself to be open to possibilities. Say yes to things that scare you a little – they often lead to the most rewarding experiences. The road ahead will be exciting, unpredictable and deeply fulfilling.

Grab it with both hands! I am so proud of you, and you will be too!

Ainsley

Ainsley O'Connell
Lecturer

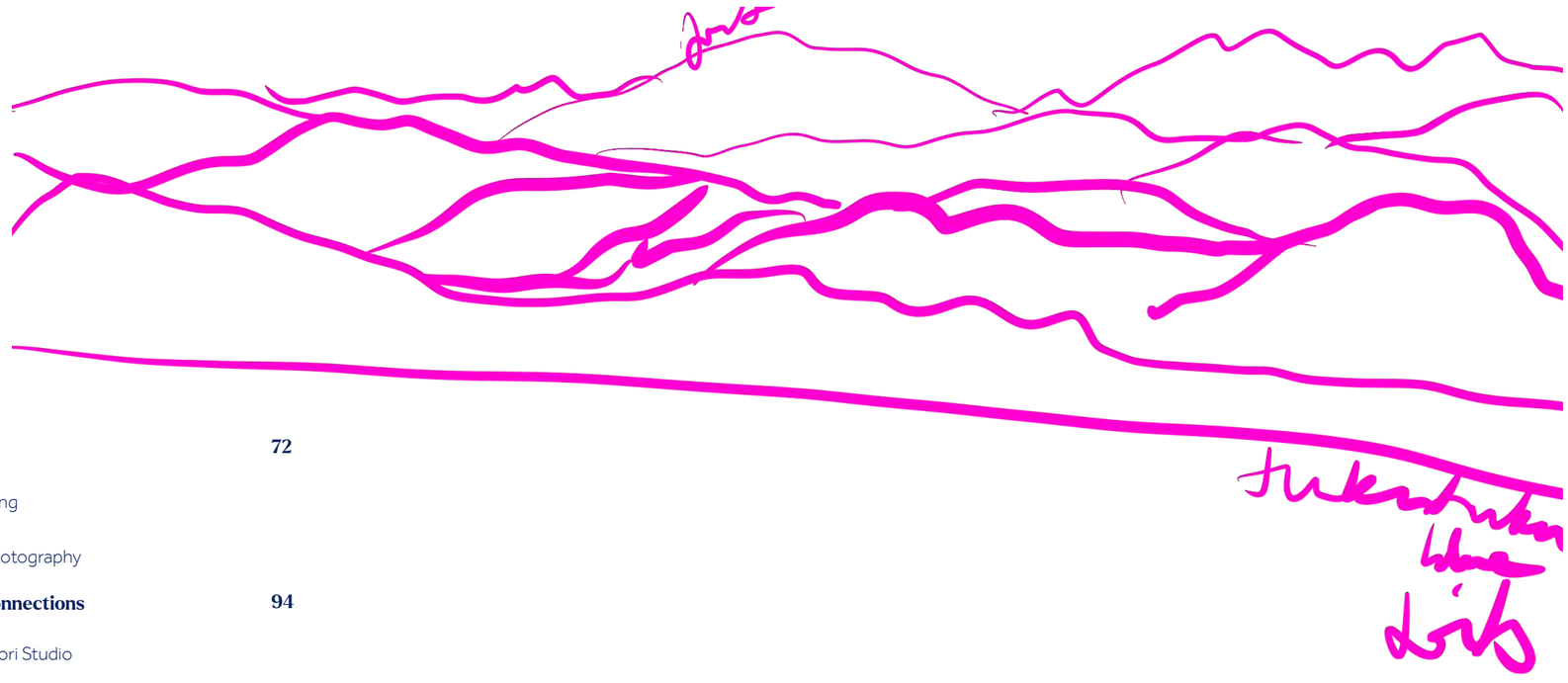


TABLE OF CONTENTS

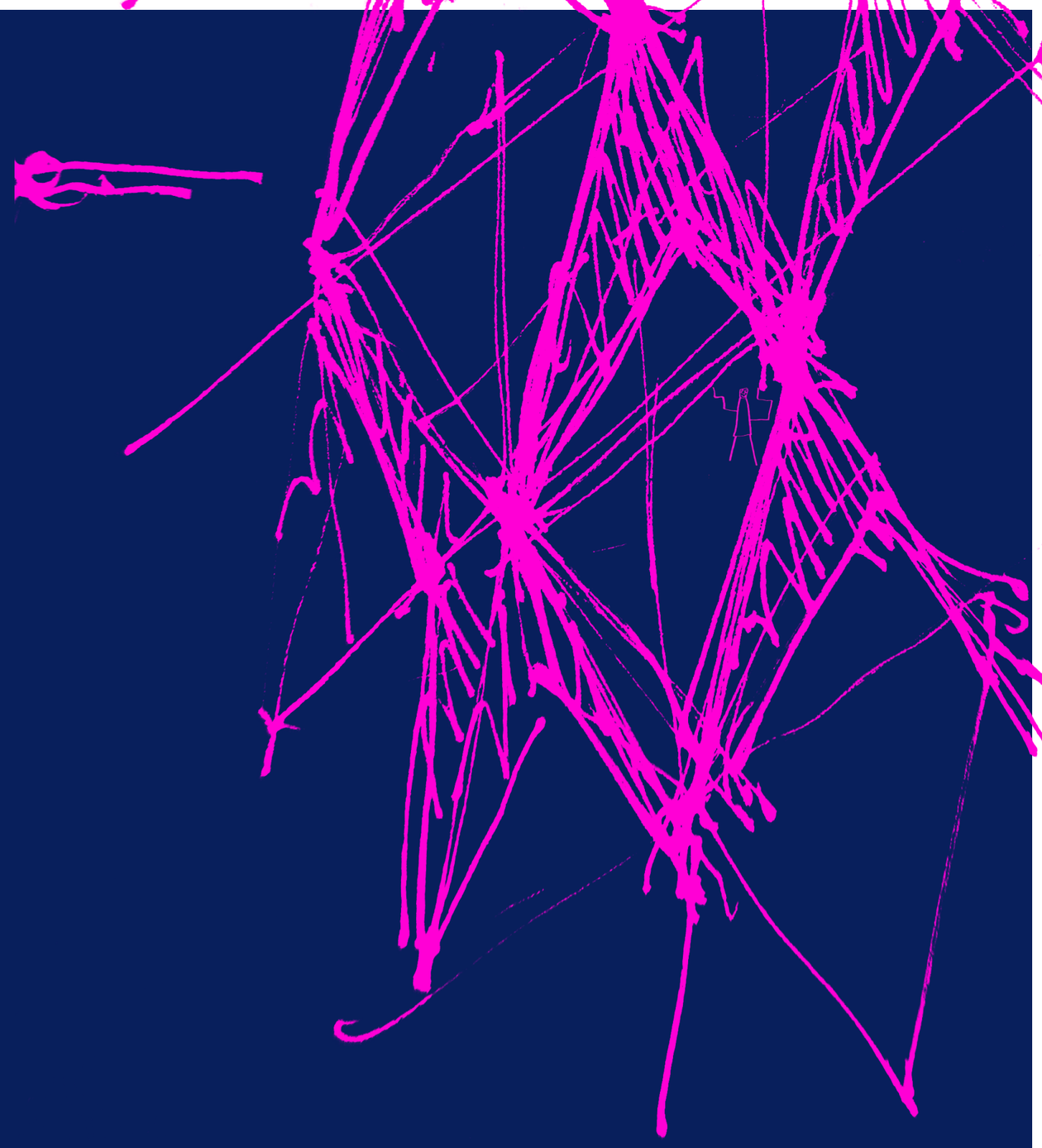
Sketch: Claudia McGough-Morunga

Dexell Aita
Jenny Allan
Sophie Bostwick
Associate Professor Matthew Bradbury
Jeanette Budgett
Anna Bulkeley
Madison Carkeek
David Chaplin
Scarlet Cibilich
Shelley Cooper
Dr Hamish Foote
Kerry Francis
Jessamine Fraser
Charlotte Grieve
Julia Gu
Min Hall
Joshua Hamilton
Hayley Hirschfeld
Gina Hochstein
Professor Rau Hoskins
Catherine Huckerby
Sue Hudson
Associate Professor Renata Jadresin Milic
Rebecca Jerram
Jaspreet Kaur
Maurits Kelderman
Iman Khan
Tamara Kiseleva
Cecelia Kuang
Duncan Long
Tricia Love
Keith Mann
Sinéad McClay
Graeme McConchie
Melanie McDaid
Professor Peter McPherson
Dr Lúcia Melchiors
Cameron Moore
Pip Newman
Ainsley O'Connell
Brett Orams
Associate Professor Yusef Patel
Nikolay Popov
Sēmisi Potauaine
Sandra Potier
Damian Powley
Associate Professor Annabel Pretty
Maia Ratana
Julian Rennie
Carl Salas
Professor Christoph Schnoor
Dr Sameh Shamout
Vaughan Shepherd
Trina Smith
Professor Bin Su
Glenna Taulilo-Makaea
Jessica Tregidga
Gohanne Turtal
Associate Professor Cesar Wagner
Sue Wake
Xinxin Wang

Left to right: Min Hall, Jeanette Budgett, Trina Smith, Pip Newman, Renata Jadresin Milic, Sophie Bostwick, Julia Gu, Ainsley O'Connell, Xinxin Wang, Anna Bulkeley, Iman Khan, Annabel Pretty, Glenna Taulilo-Makaea, Melanie McDaid, Gina Hochstein, Rebecca Jerram

STAFF 2025

Sketch: Anna Bulkeley



INTRODUCTION

I am pleased to introduce this year's issue of *Asylum*, which has, for the first time, an all-female student design team. It is somewhat of a surprise this has not occurred before – and whether it will happen again intrigues me. That it hasn't happened previously tells me much about the value with which we hold diversity, and how and where we really value it. No doubt the four young women that have toiled on design of the journal this year, and the production of the *Mana Wāhine* supplement, will have a good deal to tell of their experience in years to come.

The discipline of architecture has long been shaped by the relationship between identity, tradition and innovation. Our first-year programme prompts consideration of who we are, where we are, and how we engage with the materials that will shape our environment. This provides a solid foundation for the learning to come – particularly when it comes to understanding how we contribute to team outcomes early in the second year, and continue to learn from our peers during study, and later in our careers.

However, it is the female design team that has driven this edition of *Asylum* that shapes my introductory thoughts. Students have the opportunity in this journal to reflect upon and share their experiences, and learn through design. In the formulation of this edition the design team have drawn attention to and reinforced the importance of women's voices in shaping architecture's conversation.

Women have long played a pivotal yet often underappreciated role in the field of architecture. It pleases me greatly that in the past few years women are completing their degrees and going on to become registered architects at about the same rate as their male colleagues. This will fundamentally reshape the makeup of the profession in the short and medium term. As a colleague recently noted, over 51% of registered architects in Aotearoa New Zealand are over the age of 50, with 17% being 65 or older. Through their work and leadership, women will help to redefine architecture, not just in design but in practice, ethics and culture.

When schools and programmes actively highlight and recognise the significant work of women, they lay the foundation for learning environments that reflect diverse perspectives. Such environments are not accidental – they are the result of deliberate choices. Celebrating the achievements of women in architecture is not only a matter of acknowledgment and fairness, but a necessary step towards this shaping. By fostering environments that celebrate difference, encourage robust dialogue, and value every individual's contribution, the field of the built environment becomes a place where varied experiences are actively sought and supported, and where the intellectual and creative growth of every participant is prioritised.

In this edition of *Asylum*, the design team engaged with female staff and graduates of the school to contribute thoughtfully to discussion about our built environment. These academic and professional viewpoints meaningfully critique the discipline and provide insightful reflections to provoke and challenge assumptions. It is our intention that this will, in turn, give students the opportunity to reflect upon their own experiences and to begin to articulate a vision for their futures in the ever-evolving world of architecture.

Identity, therefore, stands as a central theme throughout this issue of the journal, and in presenting it, we seek to highlight and amplify the stories, achievements and insights of women in architecture that have shaped Unitec's School of Architecture. Through these pages, we invite readers to engage with the evolving narratives that define our community, reflect on the journeys of students and professionals alike, and contribute to the ongoing dialogue about identity, collaboration and innovation in the built environment.

Professor Peter McPherson
Head of School

EDITOR'S NOTE

Asylum 2025 emerges from the culture and community of Unitec's School of Architecture, where architectural thinking is shaped through collective learning, critical thinking and sustained engagement with community and practice. This year, *Asylum* responds to trepidation around equality, visibility and confidence within the architectural profession, as experienced by wāhine on educational and professional journeys, and documented in this year's unique and thought-provoking *Asylum* feature, *Mana Wāhine*.

The timing of this feature is significant, given the recent release of *The Bloomsbury Global Encyclopedia of Women in Architecture, 1960–2020*. It includes writing by Jeanette Budgett on Min Hall's work, and an article on female architects and educators in Serbia by Renata Jadresin Milic – all of whom feature in this year's *Asylum*. The encyclopedia is a seminal publication, reinforcing the understanding that architectural history is far richer and more diverse than established narratives might otherwise suggest.

Asylum 2025 contributes to this broader discourse by showcasing student projects alongside a curation of contributions from female staff and students through interviews, reflections and sketches. These testimonies reveal architecture to be a discipline shaped not only by an understanding of design combined with technical skill, but also empathy, resilience and inclusivity. From an editorial perspective, *Asylum* is intended as an act of clarification that both articulates and advocates for this position.

The journal functions as a platform through which students can articulate their perspectives and make an enduring contribution to the discipline and the broader community it serves. The intent is to document understanding and development, but also to build confidence, validate emerging voices and practice critical communication. In doing this, the journal contributes to the visibility of our future designers, while offering strength and encouragement to those who encounter it.

The student design team approached *Asylum* 2025 with the understanding that representation matters. Creating space for women's stories is an intervention in an industry where the power of leadership and voice have previously been unevenly distributed. The journal's narrative reinforces these intentions – a pink dot appears on the cover, and throughout the publication after the name of each female contributor, marking the presence and contributions of wāhine connected to Unitec's School of Architecture.

The colour pink extends into staff contributions, drawings and photographs, acknowledging the wāhine whose encouragement and leadership have helped shape the school. A blue gradient traces the learning journey from curiosity to confidence, reflecting the progression of architectural education. Imagery from project documentation and written submissions feature throughout, yet we recognise the sketch as the first architectural act – a point where ideas, instincts and intent begin to take form.

> *Mana Wāhine reaffirms that architecture is enriched by diverse voices and strengthened through collaboration and communication.*

Grounded in Unitec's School of Architecture, *Asylum* 2025 positions itself as both a record and a contribution – one that supports wāhine in our wider disciplines, and asserts a place for us in the future of architectural practice.

Anna Bulkeley.
Editor

Taina Marie.
Claudia McGough-Morunga.
Olivia Nott.
Rose Todd.

Student Design Team, *Asylum* 2025

Asylum 2025 was curated from an early conversation that was honest and vulnerable. As wāhine, we found ourselves asking, why were we worried about entering a working environment? Why did we feel pressured to prove ourselves? What was holding us back from reaching our full potential? To understand our trepidations, we sought answers and guidance. We turned to the women around us – tutors and mentors, wāhine who we find inspiring – and the result of these discussions is beautiful.

Through a series of conversations and interviews, we invited a select group of wāhine to speak freely about the pressures they faced, any setbacks that shaped their careers, and the changes they believe are needed for our generation to succeed. A common narrative emerged: despite the challenges – many arising from the societal norms of their time – these wāhine all achieved amazing goals, formed lasting friendships, and found deep fulfilment in their work.

Sitting with these wāhine helped us realise how normal our feelings are, how valid our questions of doubt are, and how our identities, cultures and values shape the way we design – the interviews offered an insight into how strong women are. Each one shows the power of resilience, clarity and purpose. The process of creating this special feature became as important to us when designing this year's *Asylum* journal. Each of the women featured in Mana Wāhine remind us that good design thrives on experimentation, mistakes and reflection.

As the first all-female *Asylum* student design team, we set out to create something feminine, inclusive, strong and poignant – words we all resonate with as aspirations. Starting with a poem of invitation and a letter to the past, we finish with a letter to the future – In the centre you'll find Mana Wāhine. Tracing decades of change, it tells a story of encouragement, persistence, courage and hope.

The pink dot on the cover marks our presence within the profession and appears throughout the journal after each woman's name serving as a symbol of visibility, legacy and the collective journey of wāhine in design. Staff contributions, drawings and photographs adopt this pink tone – an acknowledgement of the many women whose work and leadership have shaped Unitec's School of Architecture and the wider community.

The gradient of blue featured in our journal design traces our learning journey. From light to deep blue, it shows evolution and honours the challenges of progression, starting with curiosity, and maturing with clarity, confidence and resilience.This choice of blue is not a binary counterpoint to pink, it is a symbolic palette – a visual metaphor of our reflection and growth. Designing *Asylum* 2025 taught us that collaboration strengthens ideas – it became evident that working together broadens perspectives and creates richer outcomes. Design is not undertaken alone: it grows from shared support, feedback and collective storytelling. Throughout the journal, you'll find glimpses of how these collaborative practices take shape – across design studio, live projects and the conversations that connect us to the world beyond the campus.

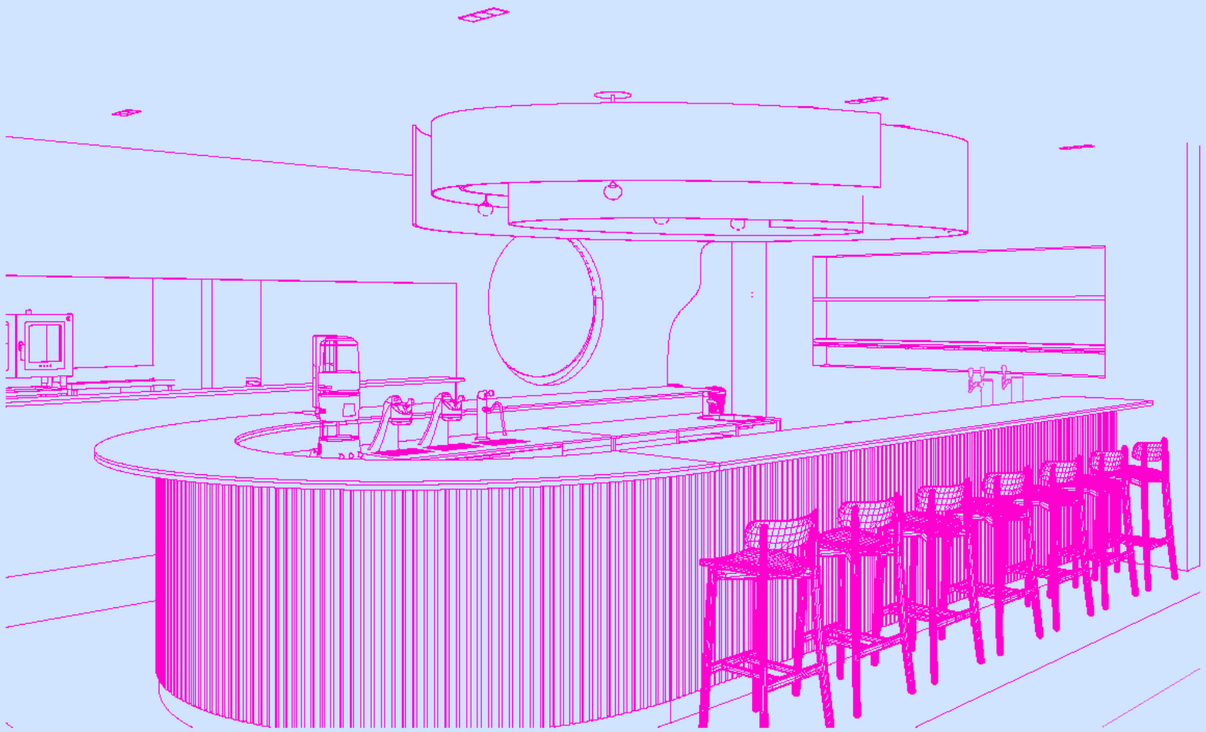
Hand drawings and written submissions from female staff and students feature boldly throughout, celebrating the personal and beautifully complex realities of design practice. Before a design evolves, there is always a sketch – a first mark of curiosity, instinct and intent. Each sketch signals the beginning of a journey, the moment where an idea becomes something physical to share and begins to find its direction. In recognising this, we also reflected on our own process and development. Our peers' work inspired us to shape each section and complement their efforts with an approach tailored to each contributor.

Asylum is our seat at the table, and a journal we place on yours.

Ultimately, *Asylum* 2025 aims to highlight our collective achievements and acknowledge how much women have progressed in the profession through storytelling, collaboration and shared strength. We acknowledge past issues and challenges, and that we are finding new ways to approach the future. This year we learned more than design, we learned to listen – to each other, our tutors, the whenua and the communities we aspire to serve. Mana Wāhine gathers these lessons, the uncomfortable moments and the sparks of clarity – all of which will guide us towards being stronger designers.

DESIGN STATEMENT

Sketch: Claudia McGough-Morunga



New Zealand Diploma in Interior Design
Residential and Commercial

Residential

Residential interior design is highly personal and specialised. As interior designers we are meeting people, being brought into their homes, their inner sanctums, and then assisting in bringing their dreams and desires for interior spaces to reality. It's a great privilege to be asked to do this and it can be an emotional journey, helping to craft personalised rooms and spaces for people. There are many factors at play, and much research is necessary in the early stages: the architecture and age of the home, the building's orientation and position on the site, the view shafts and outlook into the natural surrounds, the lifestyle of the occupants – who they are and how they live. From there we can design and make proposals for spatial planning, propose materiality selections, textiles, colour palettes, lighting, furnishings and artworks. The aim is always to design personalised and cohesive overall schemes for the home that align with the client's brief, meet functional requirements and to create lasting, memorable and beautiful spaces to live in.

Commercial

Commercial interior design is very broad and all-encompassing, but at its heart there is always some kind of business imperative as a key driver. As interior designers working with commercial clients on projects, we need to focus more on understanding the business objectives of each client and then creatively respond to their brief. The project might be a retail store fitout for a new client or involve a 'refresh' of an established brand. Three-dimensional spatial planning and design schemes need to work in concert with two-dimensional branding and communications design. Hospitality projects focus on meeting the functional requirements of a brief that often includes a commercial kitchen and bar combined with innovative, experiential interior spaces for guests that are full of mood and atmosphere. Theming is often key in both retail and hospitality projects to create stimulating 'other worlds' – environments unlike our own homes and the spaces of our day-to-day lifestyles.

Sue Hudson.

Sketch: Xiaohong Ou

ID

Liling Cui.

Residential Design

Kitchen Design: Heritage and modernity

This kitchen design celebrates the fusion of our client Kirra's Aboriginal heritage and her love of colour and pattern with Jason's preference for refined, yacht-inspired luxury. At its heart, the bold Rosso Levanto marble island benchtop is the most iconic feature – a statement of strength, artistry and cultural pride. Its rich red tones are balanced by the soft stone texture of the Dekton Trevi Pietra edition benchtop, introducing calm and balance, echoing the serenity of water and light.

The island's rounded waterfall edges express continuity and flow, softening the natural intensity of the marble. On its reverse, a wave-profile panel in warm peach-pink adds a tactile and feminine touch, creating gentle contrast and movement that resonates with Kirra's appreciation of organic, handcrafted forms.

Surrounding this centrepiece, the Dulux Khandallah-toned cabinetry offers a cool, grounded counterpoint to the richness of red, anchoring the space in understated sophistication. Its muted green-grey hue complements the glossy burgundy accents and brushed brass tapware, creating a layered palette that bridges Kirra's warmth and Jason's precision and nautical sensibility.

A coordinated splashback, mirroring the island's curves, reinforces the rhythm and depth of the composition. The result is a kitchen that intertwines heritage and modernity, softness and structure, earth and sea – a harmonious space that reflects the clients' identities with timeless elegance.

Joanna Jeong.

Residential Design

Kitchen Design: Robinson residence

Inspired by the tranquil beauty of Lake Pupuke on the North Shore, this kitchen is a perfect blend of organic form and rich materials. The Cipollino Verde stone benchtop beautifully captures the lake's cool tones and fluid shapes, while the rounded cabinetry and the feature arch are reminiscent of the views captured of the lake and its shoreline, a crater rim. A ceramic display niche allows for a personal touch while warm oak panels ground the space, balancing the stone's movement with a cosy, inviting warmth. This kitchen feels calm, connected and timeless, like the lake itself.

Victoria

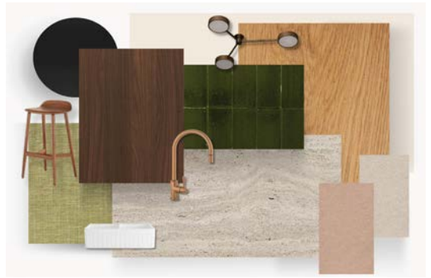
Butler-Pacholek.

Residential Design

Kitchen Design: Robinson residence

The design approach for the Robinson residence is guided by its natural surroundings and sense of heritage. Curved detailing and smooth surfaces show the influence of water and create a streamlined design.

Natural materials such as Venetian plaster, travertine, copper and walnut create a balance between texture and warmth while keeping the space grounded. The kitchen becomes a layered expression of natural form and refined detail, where every element reflects Jason and Kirra Robinson's shared story.



Fiona

King.

Residential Design

Kitchen Design: Robinson residence

The kitchen brings the whole family together, responding to Kirra and Jason Robinson's brief. It balances earthy, handcrafted elements with refined, fluid organisation. Warm and inviting, this design layers colour, texture and pattern balanced with the technical function, efficiency and durability of modern smart-home appliances, systems and materials. A stone floor grounds the room, drawing inspiration from the rockery in the neighbourhood. Custom cabinetry, walls, bench top and splashback echo earth, clay and autumn tones to form a cohesive colour palette. A mix of matte and gloss adds texture, and integrated lighting adds practicality, while feature lighting by a local designer introduces unique character and atmosphere. Overall, the kitchen design palette intertwines warmth and colour with technology and performance for a harmonious and functional space, tailored to the modern family.

Joanna

Jeong.

Residential Design

This is a space made for slowing down. A warm, rounded and tranquil place where you can unwind, breathe and simply take a moment for yourself.

Bathroom Design: Robinson residence

An escape from the noise of the world, where you can recentre, breathe deeply and return to yourself. This bathroom space is shaped by soft gestures and flowing forms, creating an atmosphere that feels cocooning and calm.

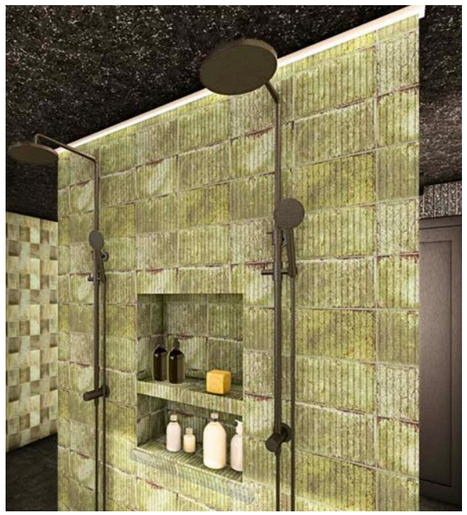
The material palette is layered in tone-on-tone calmness – muted, warm and harmonious, like a bed of smooth pebbles along a lakeshore. Each finish of brushed nickel fittings, textural tiles, soft stone surfaces harmonises with the whole to create a sense of calm.

The round bathtub, the curved wall between the shower and toilet, and the custom vanity with rounded fluted panels make a flowing, peaceful atmosphere. Light from the skylight washes across the surfaces, creating a gentle rhythm of highlights and shadows that shift throughout the day.

Mirah

Dumasia.

Residential Design



Bathroom Design: Contrast and cohesion

The bathroom is designed as distinct yet harmonious spaces, each offering a carefully curated blend of comfort, personality and atmosphere. Every element reflects the inspirations of both occupants, resulting in a space that is deeply personal yet effortlessly balanced.

The bathroom, in turn, offers a sanctuary of luxury and calm. Designed to provide areas for both private moments and shared experience, the space draws on biophilic inspiration, subtly evoking the serenity of nature. A charcoal-toned palette lends moody elegance and a grounding presence. The spaces exemplify a design philosophy that values contrast and cohesion, resulting in interiors that are visually striking, richly tactile and profoundly restorative.

Liling

Cui.

Residential Design

Bathroom Design: Wabi-sabi

This bathroom is envisioned as a tranquil sanctuary – a space that soothes the senses and restores calm after the day's hustle and bustle. Inspired by wabi-sabi, the design embraces natural textures, organic shapes and quiet imperfection to create beauty in simplicity.

Key features include a mounted water-feature wall, stone floor, rustic basin and a built-in spa bath for complete relaxation. Above, a skylight window allows sunlight to filter through the space, while the glass bricks catch and scatter the light – creating a gentle, shifting glow that feels both peaceful and alive.

A palette of black brick tiles and exposed concrete wall ground the design with depth and contrast, while the green tiles in the shower room add softness and a touch of nature. The result is a refined, nature-connected retreat that balances stillness, warmth and understated luxury.

Kelly-Brooke

Christie.

Commercial Design

Commercial Fitout: Studio Twenty-Two

The Studio Twenty-Two office fitout embraces a calm, contemporary aesthetic, balancing warmth and refinement for an interior design studio. Spanning two levels, the design celebrates natural materials, soft tonal layering, textures, stone, pale timber, woven materials and earthy wall finishes, creating a grounded yet elevated environment.

Organic forms, soft lighting and curved architectural gestures bring a sense of flow and openness, encouraging collaboration and creativity. The palette of warm neutrals, tactile surfaces and natural greenery fosters a tranquil, light-filled workspace that reflects the studio's ethos – here, material honesty, connection and comfort shape a cohesive inspiring workplace.

Hannah

Sapwell.

Commercial Design

Commercial Fitout: Sculpt & Create Pottery Studio

When you walk into Sculpt & Create Pottery Studio in Ponsonby, you breathe a sigh of relief as you take in the calming clay tones and beautiful artwork around the studio. You see a potter working away at the main sales desk and admire the way they move the clay with such ease. Visitors are enveloped in a sense of calm as the warm, natural textures of the studio complement one another. It feels like a home away from home where you can let your creativity run wild. As you move around the store, you notice natural textures in the layers of dark timbers, the curves of the pottery and the raw clay finishes. The sales desk incorporates a potter's wheel, which creates the space's centrepiece – take a seat across from the sales desk and watch a potter work. This is a place for customers to be fully immersed in the pottery process and choose a unique piece to take home with them.

Xiaohong

Ou.

Commercial Design

Commercial Fitout: Unitec Copy Centre

This space is designed to celebrate ideas – not just in what it delivers, but how it feels. Natural timber tones dominate the interior, grounding the environment in warmth and ease. In contrast, metal elements introduce a sense of precision and clarity, reflecting the technical accuracy expected of a copy centre. A soft green accent appearing in furniture and finishes adds quiet energy, while referencing Unitec's brand.

The layout is anchored by a custom timber partition, which subtly defines functional zones. This spatial intervention brings both visual clarity and operational efficiency, gently separating the staff production area from the customer-facing zones to create a calm, welcoming experience.

The print shop is a place where ideas come to life. This acoustic feature wall draws inspiration from the structure of neurons – the fundamental units of thought in the human brain. Rather than imagining ideas as isolated flashes, the design reflects how inspiration actually works: through networks of connections.

Circular acoustic modules represent idea nodes, while interlinking lines reference axons and dendrites, the pathways along which thoughts travel and grow. This wall is not just functional, it is a quiet tribute to the spark of creation, offering a tactile and visual expression of the centre's ethos: celebrating every idea that emerges here.

Jennifer Low.

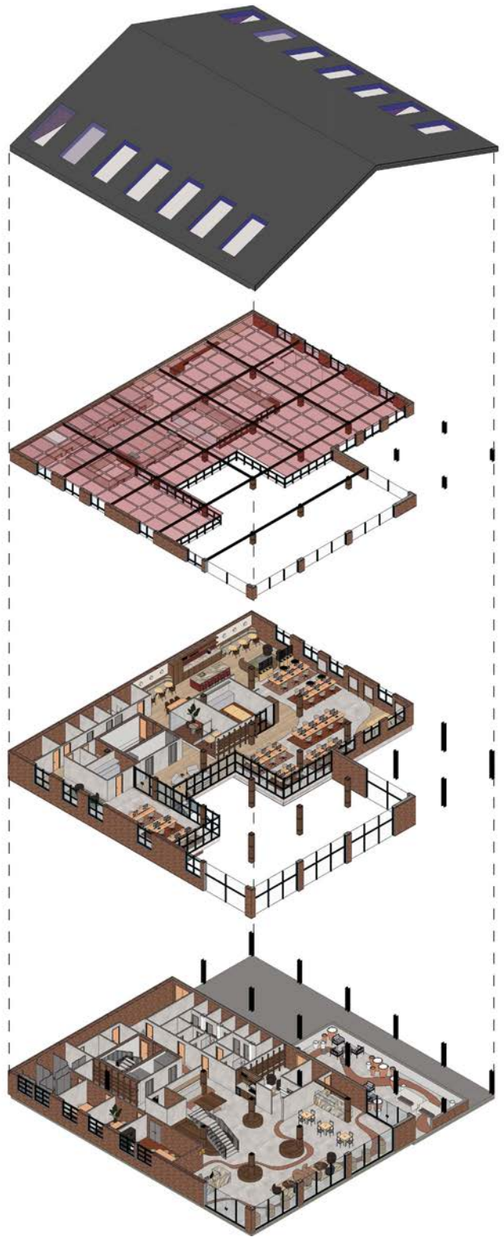
Commercial Design

Commercial Fitout: AG Studio office

This office design for AG Studio captures the spirit of a growing creative practice. The goal was to design a space that feels authentic, warm and inspiring; a place where collaboration and creativity come naturally, but where there is also room to pause and recharge.

The concept follows an industrial-chic mood, combining raw materials like concrete and metal with softer finishes and warm tones. Textured surfaces, walnut veneers and stainless-steel details create a balance between sophistication and comfort.

At the heart of the space is a library and materials space, a social hub where ideas are shared and projects take shape. Surrounding this, open work areas, quiet zones and breakout spaces give the team flexibility and flow throughout the day. Natural light, greenery and tactile materials tie everything together, making the office not just a place to work, but a space to feel inspired.



Emma Stewart.

Commercial Design

Commercial Fitout: Unitec Copy Centre

This redesign aims to create a modern, clean, functional space that enhances workflow and elevates the customer experience. The layout must be organised and efficient, with separate customer and staff areas, but still maintain a sense of openness. The client requested a neutral and sophisticated aesthetic to create a professional and welcoming environment.

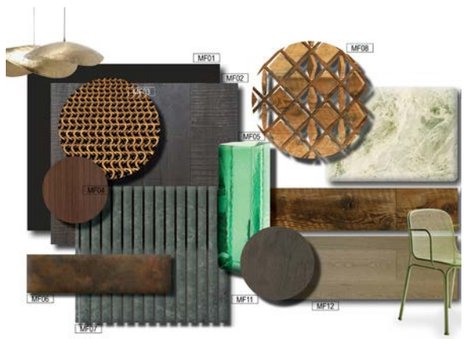
The print shop design is inspired by the heritage of the letterpress – reflecting on the materiality, geometry and methodical nature of letterpress printing techniques. Drawing from industrial roots, the space features a balanced palette of concrete, wood and metal, with strong rectangular forms that reflect precision and function.

While the materials speak to durability and craft, warm tones and clean, modern detailing create a welcoming and contemporary atmosphere. The result: a space where tradition meets modern creativity.

Vivien

Huang.

Commercial Design



Commercial Fitout: Rimu restaurant and bar

This project brief required the design of a high-end restaurant and bar located in Ponsonby. The brief further asked that the design embodies the cultural spirit of Aotearoa New Zealand, integrating core Māori values and Te Aranga Design Principles as outlined in Auckland Design Manual. The design needed to reflect the identity of the food and beverage on offer, while honouring the cultural narratives of the site.

Inspired by the traditions of Māori cuisine (kai), with its ties to Aotearoa New Zealand's natural landscape, the restaurant, Rimu, blends cultural heritage with contemporary luxury. The design emphasises organic textures and earthy tones. Patterns used for the fitout echo the artistry of traditional weaving, and interact with the effects of light and shadow mimicking the forest canopy. Each detail honours the connection between food, nature and culture, creating an immersive dining experience that is both grounded and sophisticated. Within the bar area guests will find an abstract representation of the rimu tree – a historical cultural landmark of Ponsonby.

Kelly-Brooke

Christie.

Commercial Design

Commercial Fitout: Matā restaurant and bar

Matā draws inspiration from the natural textures and colours of the volcanoes around the Waitematā Harbour, intertwining these elements with Māori principles to create a space that invites guests to immerse themselves in a welcoming high-end restaurant.

Carefully selected stone contrasts with dark timber finishes – paired with the delicate well-like bar, they add a sense of luxury. These textures work to create a tactile story of birth, growth and renewal, like the volcanic cycle.

The striking stone bench top and sculptural wall shelves evoke layered textures and the glow of cooling lava. The charcoal-black endless-pattern flooring wraps around the bar like a cooled lava bed, grounding the space with depth.

Manaakitanga, the Māori value of hospitality, is central to the design, fostering a sense of welcome, respect and care for each guest. The textures, materials and layout work together to bring forth a unique experience that celebrates nature's forces and enduring cultural heritages.

Xiaohong

Ou.

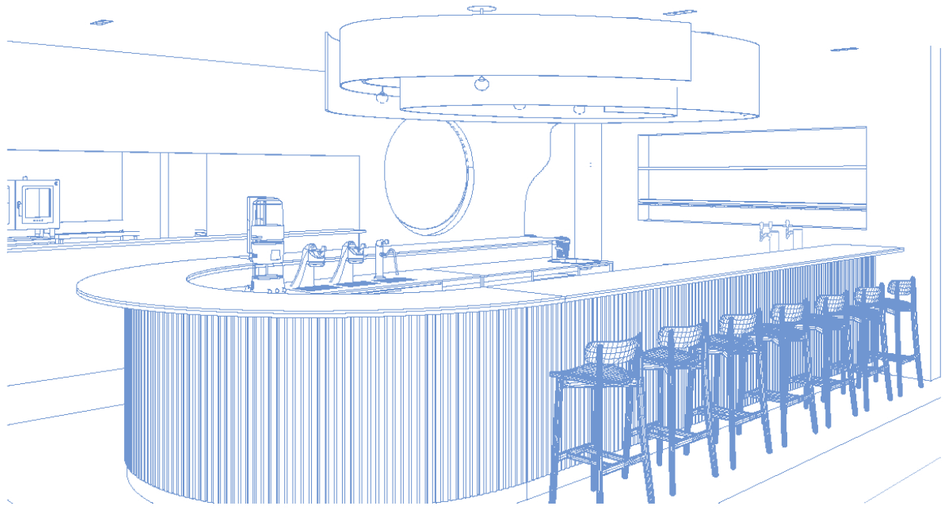
Commercial Design

Commercial Fitout: Ikaroa Restaurant

Ikaroa is a fine-dining restaurant located on Ponsonby Road, inspired by Māori mythology and ancestral voyaging traditions. In legend, Ikaroa is a celestial fish – long, luminous and powerful, believed to have birthed stars and the Milky Way itself. Eternally swimming across the night sky, this mythical creature is often envisioned in deep blues and purples, its flowing form and gentle glow evoking a sense of galactic wonder.

The design concept draws from this narrative, translating Ikaroa's celestial presence and the rhythm of oceanic motion into materiality and form. The space features curved geometries, rich tones and tactile surfaces that reflect both the sea and the stars. The result is an immersive atmosphere that celebrates myth, movement and memory.

The bar concept draws inspiration from the waka or Māori canoe. The vertical timber slats on the front panel mirror the interior framing of a waka, creating a rhythmic, structured flow. Beneath it, a brushed stainless-steel panel with a water-ripple texture captures and reflects ambient light, evoking the visual poetry of a canoe gliding across moonlit water.



New Zealand Diploma in Landscape (Design)

LD

I have been involved with Landscape Design programmes at Unitec for a very long time as both student and lecturer. I was attracted to it as a job full of interesting people and a family-friendly environment to bring up my daughter solo. I bought a small house nearby and started to make a garden that turned into a plant collection. I have always been passionate about plants and sharing this with others. Many students who have studied with us in Landscape Design over the last twenty-six years have visited my garden for plant identification, selection, design or management projects, making home and teaching somewhat seamless. The New Zealand Diploma in Landscape (Design) at Unitec's School of Architecture has produced some outstanding graduates who are significant in the industry today. Our 2025 cohort will doubtless add to that, because plants, gardens and design change lives, and they know this.

Sue Wake.

Sketch: Rachelle Bennett

Carla

To.

Shelterbelt Design

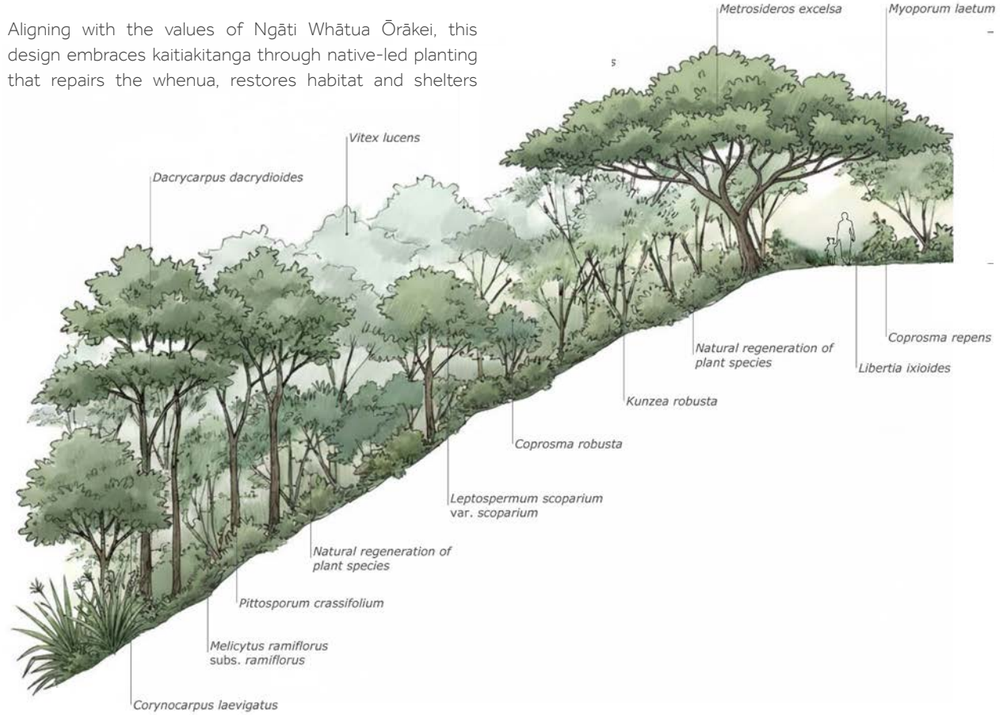
Pourewa Windbreak Planting Plan

This design aimed to implement a windbreak planting plan that protects, enhances and complements the newly established urban māra kai (food production garden) at Pourewa for Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei.

Led by the rhythm and energy of maramataka, this concept embodies mauri tau and fosters a deep spiritual connection. The atua (gods) guide the site – Tāwhirimātea (breath and presence), Tūmatauenga (standing together), Māui (strength and courage) and Hine-te-iwaiwa (weaving, care and new life). Planting, seating and quiet clearings create moments to pause, acknowledge and reconnect tamariki and whānau to the land, to the atua who guide them, and to mauri, the life essence.

Aligning with the values of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, this design embraces kaitiakitanga through native-led planting that repairs the whenua, restores habitat and shelters taonga species. Planting is selected to strengthen ecological resilience and enhance biodiversity with adjacent bush remnants and the māra kai. Pioneer species such as mānuka and kānuka are used to establish the site, with subsequent enrichment planting, all working towards the ultimate goal of creating a self-sustaining, regenerating pūriri – pōhutukawa broadleaf forest.

The design choreographs gentle pathways to the wai (water) and a clear link to the māra kai. Whakapapa is expressed through three treehouse-structured floating platforms, each representing significant maunga.



Anna

Wilcock.

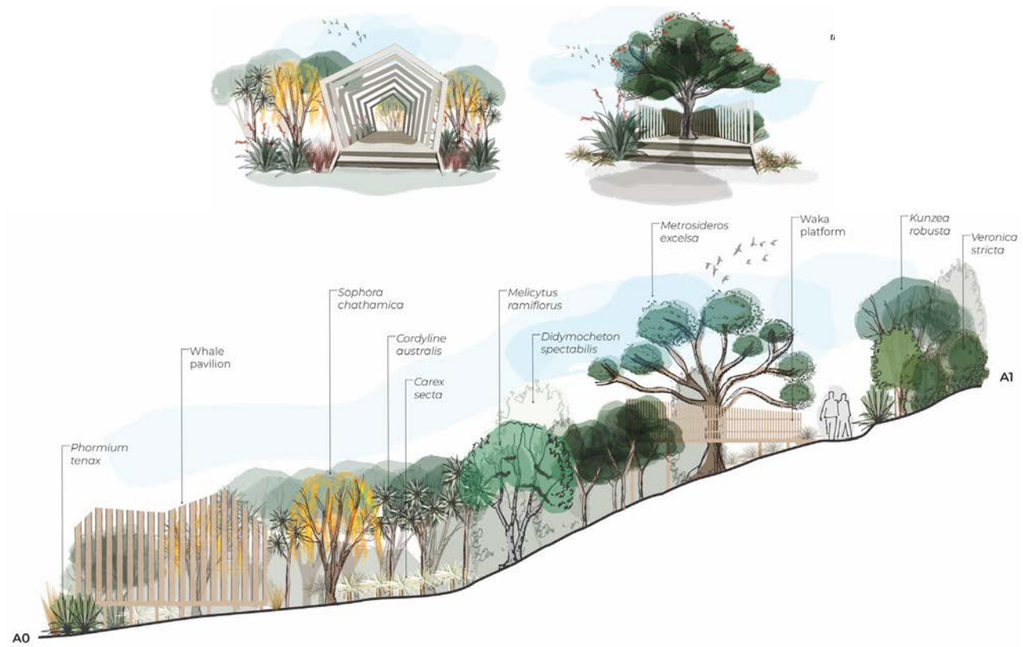
Shelterbelt Design

Tohorā and the Three Waka

Situated on the west ridge of Kepa Road is Pourewa Community Hub. It sits on a significant piece of land overlooking Pourewa Creek and back to Tāmaki Makarau Auckland's CBD. The land belongs to Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei and is home to a māra kai, a wonderful community produce garden. This year students had the unique opportunity to design a windbreak shelter for the māra kai – to enhance the area by adding to its biodiversity and creating educational touchpoints. It represents the core values of iwi: kaitiakitanga (guardianship of the environment), whakawhānaungatanga (relationships and connection) and manaakitanga (care for others).

The inspiration for my design goes back to the founding ancestors – the people that risked their lives to came to this new land. It is said that the ancestors who came on waka were guided by a whale (tohorā) – a spiritual companion. If tohorā were present, it was a sign that they should settle in that place. The whale is seen as tapu, not just for its significance as a guide, but because it is a powerful symbol of ancestry and connection (whakapapa).

In the future this may be the location for the national waka festival, so I wanted to build these elements into the design. The narrative is brought to life with three triangular platforms (in the shape of waka bows) that point in the direction of the three significant maunga – Maungawhau, Maungakiekie, Maungarei – and look down to a modern structure representing the skeleton of a whale. These structures will be used for wellness, events and educational purposes.



Phil McGowan

Landscape Design

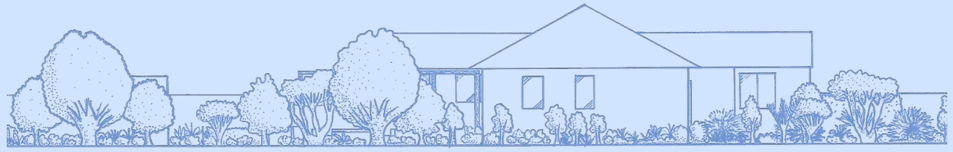
The Gravel Garden

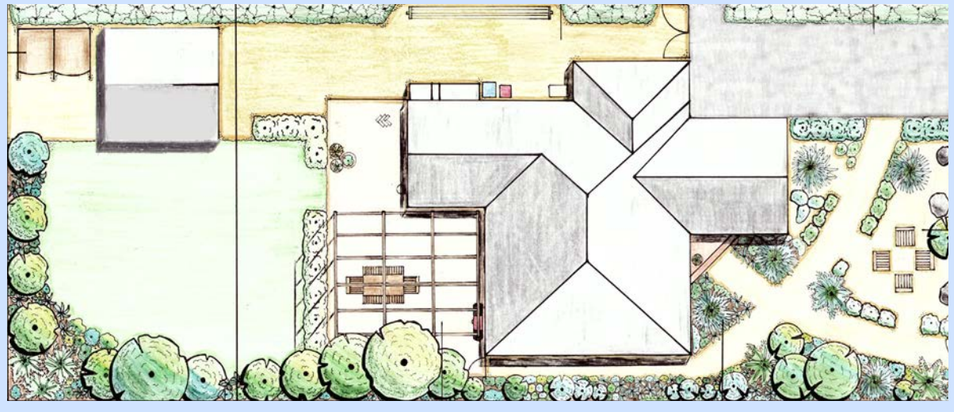
A west-facing suburban site in Mount Albert, backing directly onto Te Auaunga Oakley Creek Walkway, the site's northern aspect is dominated by large she-oaks in the reserve next door. This design responds to the client's desire for several outdoor spaces dedicated to different activities throughout the day. The design delivers spaces to dwell and entertain in the morning and afternoon and areas for children to play, improves privacy and retains the longer borrowed views to canopy and emergent trees in Te Auaunga Oakley Creek.

A low-maintenance and ecological approach to the design is supported through specifying predominantly native species that are fast-growing and nurture native wildlife.

The front garden's transformation to all-gravel substrate was inspired by Beth Chatto's Gravel Garden, increasing site permeability and reducing maintenance by avoiding lawn. The gravel garden also provides an opportunity to introduce curves to the site design and break from ubiquitous rectilinear layouts.

Hardscape choices are inspired by the local area's cultural and industrial heritage. A right-sized exposed-shell and aggregate concrete driveway nods to historical Māori middens in the area, and a recycled-brick patio with weathering steel pots connect to materials found at the ruins of Waterview's tannery complex.





Sarah Hargreaves.

Landscape Design

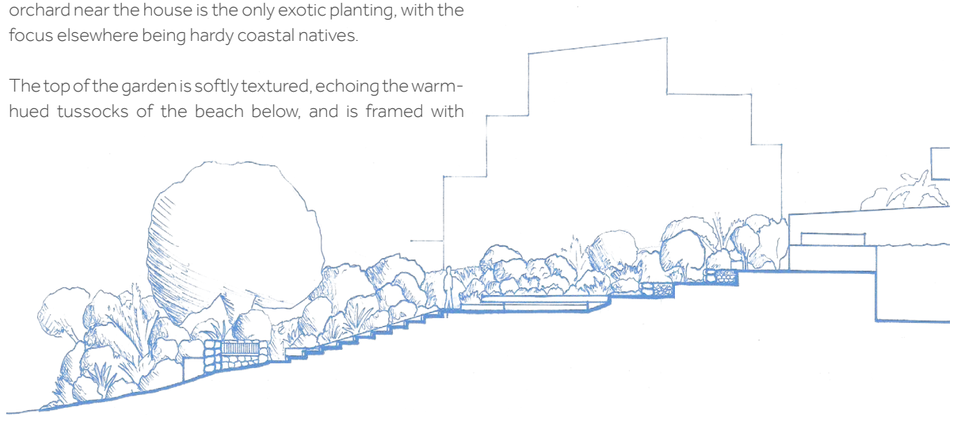
Light of the Sea

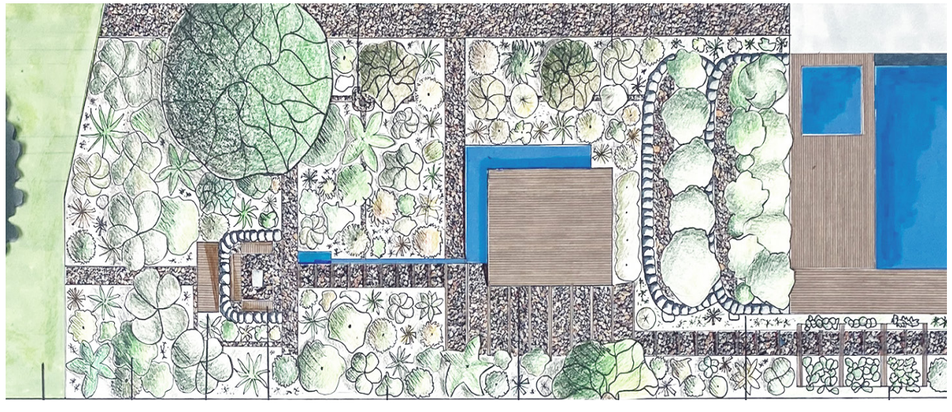
This property connects to an estuary that was the primary inspiration for this design. I wanted to capture the colours and quality of light, and bring the glow of warm beach days into the garden.

The lines are simple, bringing the focus to the planting, while a water feature leads the eye down to the water, capturing the sparkling light of the sea. The terraced orchard near the house is the only exotic planting, with the focus elsewhere being hardy coastal natives.

The top of the garden is softly textured, echoing the warm-hued tussocks of the beach below, and is framed with taller shrubs and trees for privacy. Moving down the slope, the garden shifts gently into taller, denser forest, adding to the privacy around the fire pit and re-establishing species from depleted coastal forest ecosystems.

Local and natural materials are used throughout, anchoring this garden, while aiming to further a sense of it belonging in the area and wider ecosystem.





Ainsley
Foster.
Landscape Design

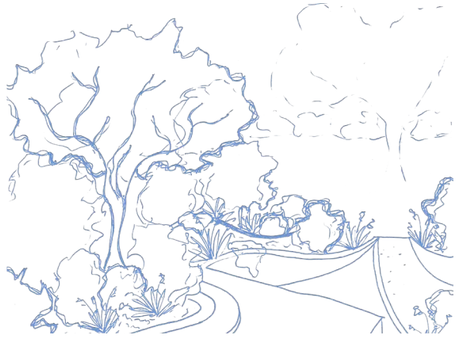
Ecotone

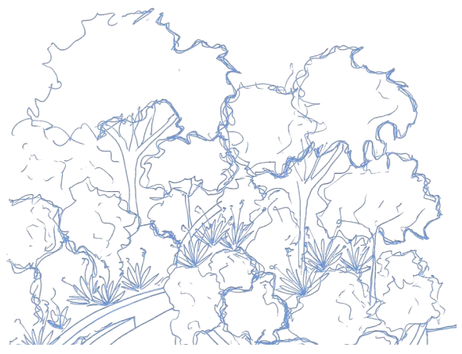
This design sits on a sloped coastal site bordering Oneoneroa (Shoal Bay), where views stretch out over the water and are framed by remnant pōhutukawa, an echo of what once grew here. The client's brief was to create a landscape that draws on the natural environment surrounding the property while maintaining a sense of cohesion with the local architecture.

My process focused on strengthening the connection between the built environment and land. I saw this correlation as an ecotone, a meeting point between two distinct ecosystems. Specifically, built and natural, drawing inspiration from estuaries, where fresh and saltwater merge to form dynamic, ever-changing landscapes.

These estuarine forms guided the design of the paths, which flow gently down the slope toward the beach. Between them sit planted 'islands' that undulate across the site, their interwoven beds spilling over with vegetation referencing historical coastal and forest ecosystems.

As the plantings move across the landscape, they shift in texture and form, reinforcing the impression of transition. Taller plantings along the property's edges frame and curate the view from the house's balcony, drawing the eye out toward the water and grounding the home in its coastal setting.





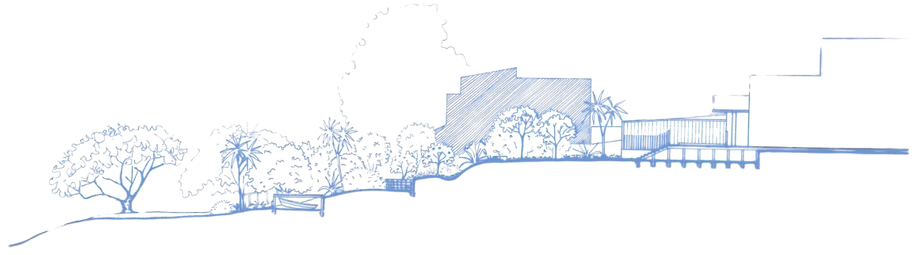
Rachelle
Bennett.
Landscape Design

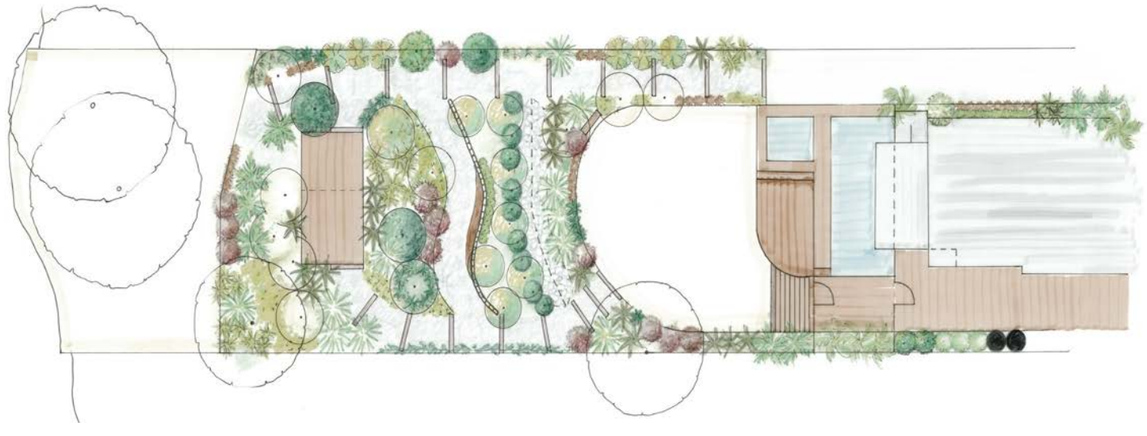
Oneoneroa Shoal Bay Views

Overlooking Oneoneroa Shoal Bay, this coastal design is inspired by the natural beauty, historical importance and ecological richness of the area. The intention was to maximise the potential of the section while blending it seamlessly with the client's neighbouring home and property, and with the shoreline. A sheltered lawn where grandchildren can play is bordered by a swathe of grasses and textural natives.

A yoga platform nestles quietly among plants traditionally used in rongoā Māori, including kūmarahou, kawakawa and harakeke. Salt-tolerant, stabilising native grasses and groundcovers border the reserve towards the estuary shoreline. Use of regenerative and eco-sourced native plants will help restore this garden to echo the coastal broadleaf forest of pre-colonial times. The design is also water-sensitive with permeable surfaces to reduce runoff and a generous swale that captures rainfall. Moisture and nutrients are slowly transferred into the lower garden and orchard area, providing sustenance in the drier seasons.

This garden evokes the textures, tones and movement of the coast – windswept foliage, silver-grey leaves and rhythmic planting patterns echo the shoreline. Paths lead visitors through sheltered nooks, open vistas and tactile plantings, inviting reflection and connection with the land. Every element, from plant choice to material selection, supports local biodiversity, soil health and long-term resilience.





Bachelor of Landscape Architecture
Master of Landscape Architecture

BLA & MLA

When we draw, our brains breathe... As contemporary designers, we are navigating the high seas of a brave new world. Ever-expanding waves of AI thunder and pound at the once rock-solid foundations of human intelligence and creativity. Software revelations appear and disappear over the horizon like cautionary waterspouts. Decisions are made, clients are happy, workflow increases...

Back in the dimming light of the Studios of Human Endeavour, an ink pen dances across paper with sleight of hand, joining lines, curves and shading, until landscapes emerge in wispy tendrils, swirling around dark wedges of vertical. Tap-tap stippling spreads across the page like tiny birds in flight, while brushes of watercolour melt lazily into the canvas like a sweltering Sunday afternoon.

Colour, shapes, patterns and vibrancy telling a hundred stories as one, narrating as fast as the pencil lead can bound, leap and trail. Our creativity is unlocked, our mood is piqued, we are free...

Incredible things happen in our brain when we draw. Neurotransmitters (dopamine, serotonin and endorphins) are released, and the limbic system and our cognitive state shift in alignment. Forty-five minutes of drawing drops our stress hormone (cortisol) significantly. We enter a state of relaxation, where visual perception, spatial navigation and fine motor skills come together. So when you are next tempted to relent to passive software design tools, think not of the time spared, but of the possible gradual silencing of the brain and its inherent magic.

Rebecca Jerram.

Finn O'Brien

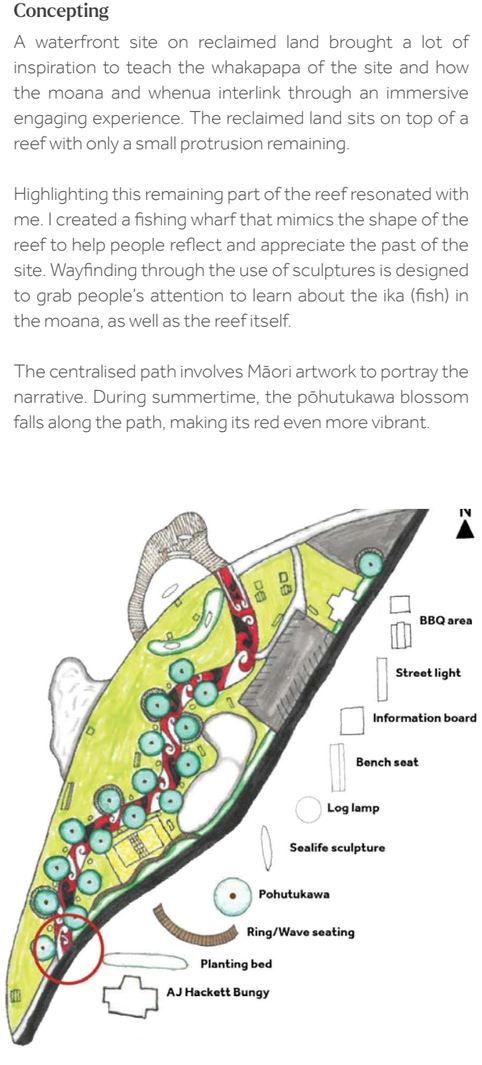
Studio One

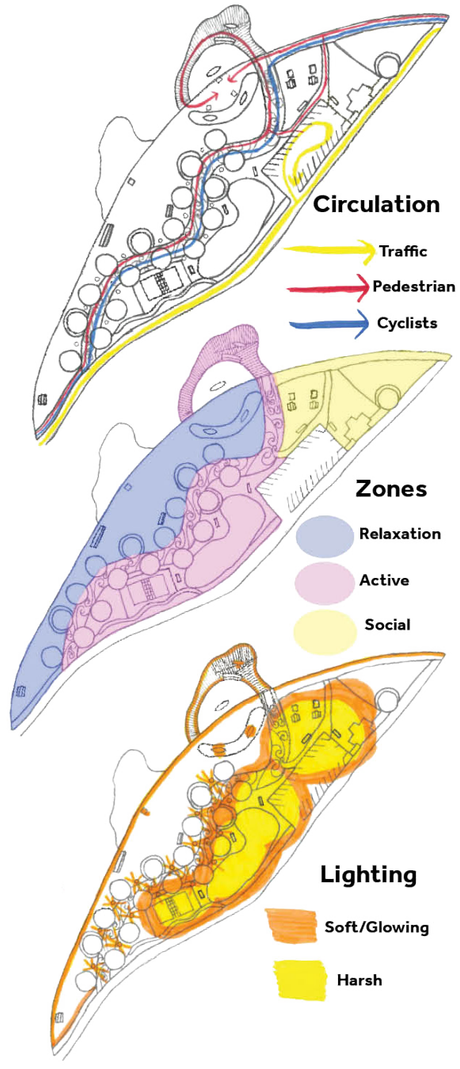
Concepting

A waterfront site on reclaimed land brought a lot of inspiration to teach the whakapapa of the site and how the moana and whenua interlink through an immersive engaging experience. The reclaimed land sits on top of a reef with only a small protrusion remaining.

Highlighting this remaining part of the reef resonated with me. I created a fishing wharf that mimics the shape of the reef to help people reflect and appreciate the past of the site. Wayfinding through the use of sculptures is designed to grab people's attention to learn about the ika (fish) in the moana, as well as the reef itself.

The centralised path involves Māori artwork to portray the narrative. During summertime, the pōhutukawa blossom falls along the path, making its red even more vibrant.





Kerensa Mihaere.

Studio One

Ureia Reef

For our studio class project, we were introduced to the process of designing a concept for a public space. The main goal was to learn how to use diagramming and spatial mapping to think critically about how spaces can support both ecological systems and community use. This involved exploring ways to bring people and nature together through purposeful design.

Ureia reef, the site we worked with has a rich history. Back in the nineteenth century, it was a busy industrial area, but by the 1930s had become a popular public space. The reef itself has long been important to Māori, especially Ngāti Pāoa, who used it for gathering food and flax. It still holds cultural and spiritual significance today.

When we analysed the current state of the site, we noticed that it feels quite run-down. It's mostly made up of hard, industrial materials and lacks a clear identity or sense of place. However, it also has strong connections to its surroundings and a lot of untapped potential. That's what inspired my design approach.

I used diagrams to explore different layers of activity – blending spaces for rest, movement, and ecology. By introducing a winding pathway which extended over the water, I aimed to create a destination that respects the site's cultural heritage.

My vision for the site was to create a welcoming, open space where people can relax, enjoy the scenery, and reconnect with both the environment and the culture.

This project helped me understand how design can shape public experience, and how important it is to listen to the land and its stories when imagining future possibilities.

Isabelle

Cushman.

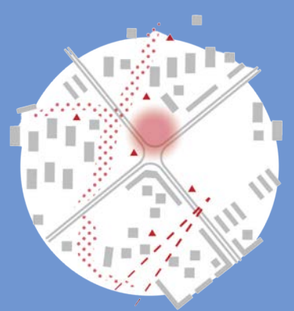
Studio Five

Waterwoven

The task in this studio was to boldly reimagine the urban form in flood-vulnerable areas of Te Rewarewa New Lynn. While today local residents mostly neglect or fear their waterways, my approach was inspired by the kōrero of mana whenua Te Kawerau ā Maki who state that waterways hold a natural life-giving capacity.

This design is centred around the idea that by restoring the mauri of the waterways, we can enhance the vitality of the whole neighbourhood.

In this vision of what it might look like to live well beside water, local streams become treasured places of community identity and connection, and the urban environment is enhanced rather than jeopardised by its waterways. This is a new centre for a catchment: Waterwoven.



1. Honour Te Kawearau ā Maki as mana whenua

2. Support a connected and vibrant community

3. Design for healthy and safe waterways

Issac

Denny

Studio Five

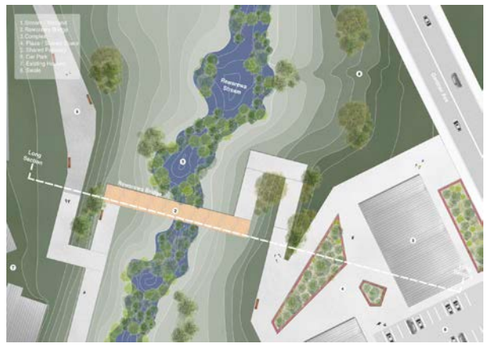
Flood Resilience: A community-based approach

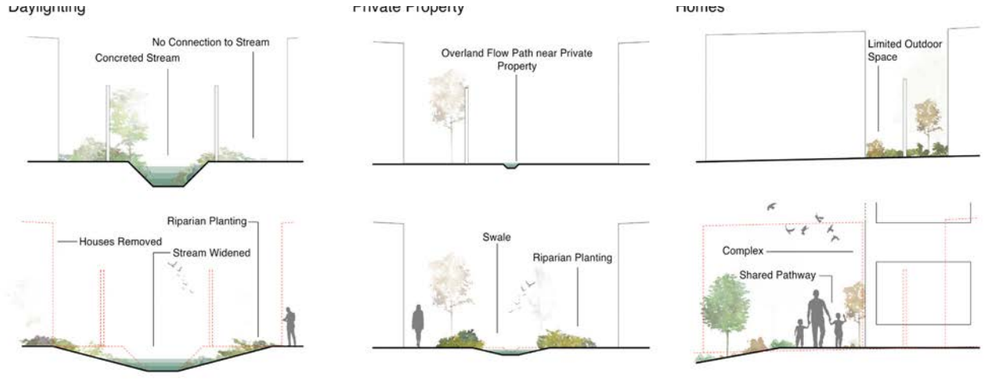
This project aimed to identify a range of typologies and explore the most effective ways to enhance an area's resilience to flooding. Community engagement and mātauranga Māori also played a key role, factors that were important to incorporate into the design process.

Three key objectives drove the outcome of this design: Flood, Taiao and Community. With these in mind, I reached an outcome that resolved flood issues, enhanced the environment and benefitted the people who use this enhanced space.

The design features an enhanced stream with surrounding wetlands, a new bridge, named Rewarewa after the stream, a plaza with shared car and pedestrian space, walkways and native planting.

The overarching goal of this project was to have people live with the stream, incorporating it rather than ignoring it - to create a strong sense of place so community care for their immediate environment.





Julianne

Buys.

Studio Six

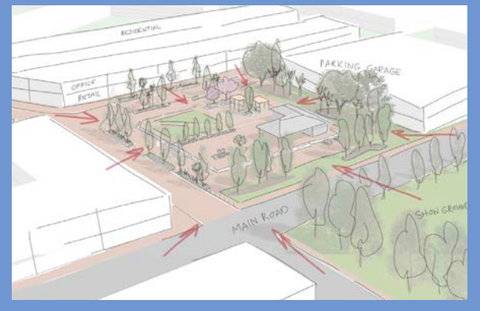
Town Centre for Kumeū

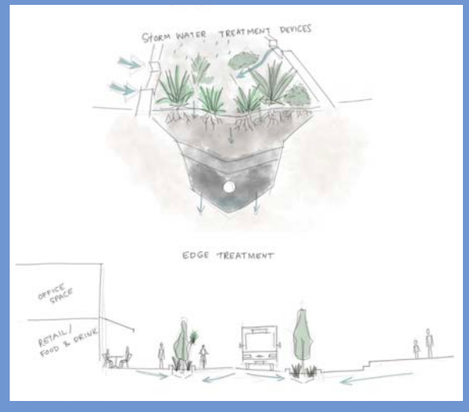
In this Landscape Architecture project, we explored strategies to rezone and design a new town centre for the semi-urban area of Kumeū–Huapai. Relocating the township offers an opportunity to address long-standing flooding issues while accommodating future growth. At a regional scale, the Auckland Future Development Strategy 2023–2053 identifies nearby Westgate as a major growth node, positioning Kumeū–Huapai as a commuter catchment and raising concerns about congestion along existing transport corridors.

Moving development away from the floodplain and establishing vegetated buffers helps slow and filter stormwater, allowing it to be absorbed into the soil and reducing pressure on the Kumeū River during flood events. Historically, the area was home to Māori settlements along the Ngongitepata Portage, and the surrounding landscape consisted largely of wetland ecosystems that naturally absorbed and slowed water before it entered the river. Mana whenua with interests in the area include Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara and Te Kawerau ā Maki, who have emphasised the need to restore local waterways, particularly the Kumeū River, and improve water quality.

The approach spans catchment scale zoning, the identification and rezoning of land for a new town centre, and the detailed design of a central town square within the relocated town centre. Alongside managing flood risk, improving water quality and enhancing transport connectivity, a key focus was retaining and strengthening Kumeū's rural character, which sets it apart from increasingly uniform suburban development across Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland.

Through an integrated planning framework, this concept proposes a sustainable and well-connected future for Kumeū, achieved by limiting sprawl, creating more greenspace, protecting and restoring native ecosystems, preserving elements of rural identity, improving walkability, cyclability and access to quality public transport. Together, these elements would support community wellbeing by encouraging social interaction, fostering stewardship of shared spaces and promoting local pride.





Ella Windner.

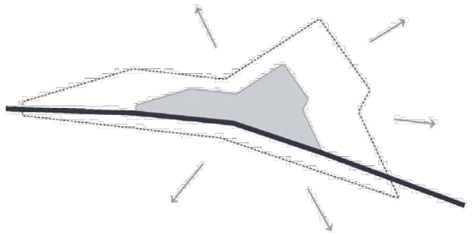
Negotiated Studies

Reconnecting Eden Terrace

This plan to develop Eden Terrace's ecological and social networks required a place-based, interdisciplinary approach that integrates landscape architecture, urban design and cultural heritage. Historically shaped by volcanic activity and freshwater systems, the area has undergone significant ecological fragmentation due to urbanisation and infrastructural expansion. Restoring these disrupted systems, such as daylighting buried streams and reintroducing native vegetation, can re-establish ecological connectivity and enhance urban resilience.

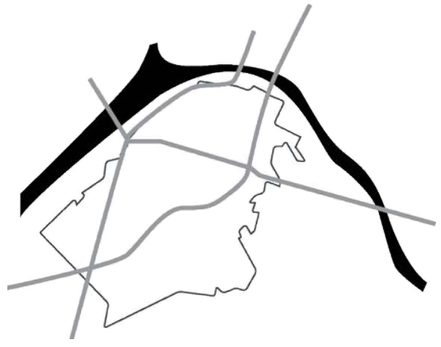
Equally critical is the reactivation of Eden Terrace's social and cultural fabric. The neighbourhood's layered histories, including Māori occupation and colonial development, offer rich narratives that can inform a locally grounded design language. Embedding these narratives into the built environment – through interpretive signage, culturally resonant materials, and spatial typologies – can foster a renewed sense of place and identity.

Participatory design processes involving mana whenua and local communities are essential to ensure that interventions are inclusive, contextually appropriate and socially sustainable. By weaving ecological restoration with cultural storytelling, Eden Terrace can evolve into a neighbourhood that reflects its unique heritage while addressing contemporary urban challenges. This integrated strategy not only strengthens community cohesion but also positions Eden Terrace as a model for regenerative urbanism in Aotearoa New Zealand.



Pressure on street infrastructure to support growth

Street retrofitting



Urban growth has impacted social and environmental development

Weave historical narratives into a neighbourhood indentity

Lack of cycleways

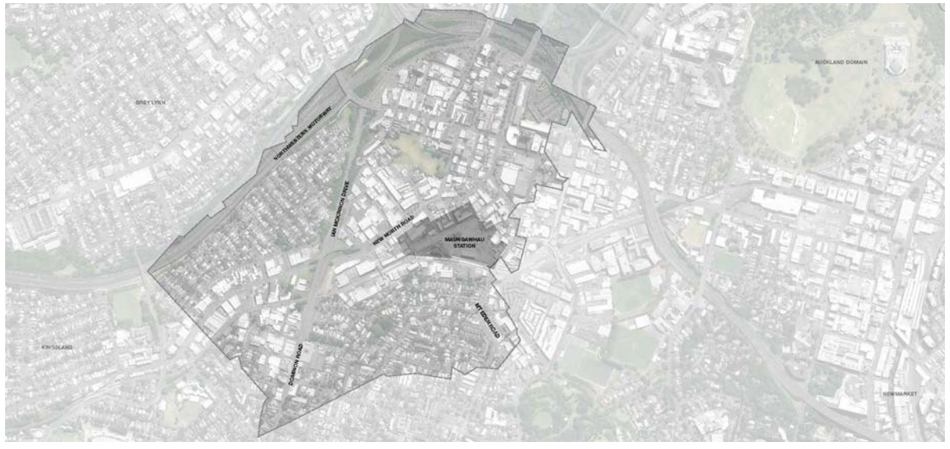
Paths – Streets priortise vehicles

Hard edge of the North-Western Motorway

Irregular district patterns

Major nodes of the train station and Basque Park

Maungawhau is in sightline



Yingxuan Lin.

Negotiated Studies

Balanced Green Space in High-Density Living

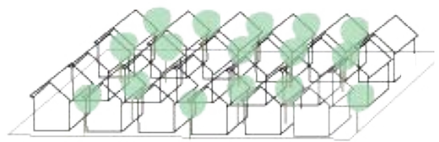
This research investigates how Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland can accommodate higher-density housing while significantly increasing green space at the neighbourhood scale. Although recent development follows the idea of a compact city, current suburban patterns, especially small-lot detached housing, produce large areas of pavement coverage, fragmented green space and limited opportunities for social interaction. Case studies such as Long Bay and Swanson Village show that while ecological planning is often considered at the catchment scale, the neighbourhood and residential scales remain poorly connected to green infrastructure.

Using a Research by Design framework, the study draws on literature, GIS mapping, spatial analysis and iterative design testing to develop an alternative neighbourhood model. Key theoretical foundations include Low Impact Urban Design and Development; multi-scale ecological planning; forest patch configuration for biodiversity connectivity; and Turner's critique of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland housing types, which argues that well-designed apartment buildings can consolidate land and create meaningful communal green spaces.

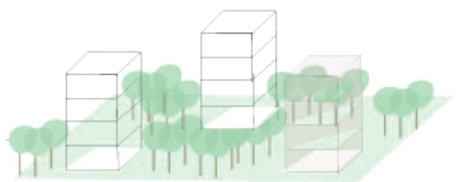
International and local case studies such as Helsinge Garden City, Tavor Park, Cohaus and Freemans Park show how building layout, shared courtyards and ecological corridors can create socially vibrant and ecologically functional neighbourhoods. These examples informed the design strategy for the selected site in Swanson, a recently developed but spatially inefficient subdivision. Through iterative testing using floor-area ratio analysis, the study shows that replacing compact detached houses with mid-rise apartments can double housing density while increasing green space from 21 to 40 percent.

The final design uses an L-shaped apartment arrangement around a central communal landscape, productive gardens, a wetland, bioswales, small clusters of native planting and a pedestrian-focused circulation system that supports transit-oriented living.

The project concludes by presenting a design framework where density, ecological integrity and human-scale spatial quality work together to support future sustainable neighbourhoods in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland.



Traditional parcel-lot or terrace houses.



Integration of housing design with the human scale while accommodating density.

Rosie
Rolls.
Negotiated Studies

Enhancing Ecological Activity in Te Atatū Penninsula

This project explores how ecological connectivity can be enhanced in Te Atatū Peninsula, a critical link in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland's North-West Wildlink. Drawing on theories of landscape ecology and urban ecology, alongside kaupapa Māori principles, this research identifies opportunities to reconnect fragmented urban habitats and native and endemic bird species.

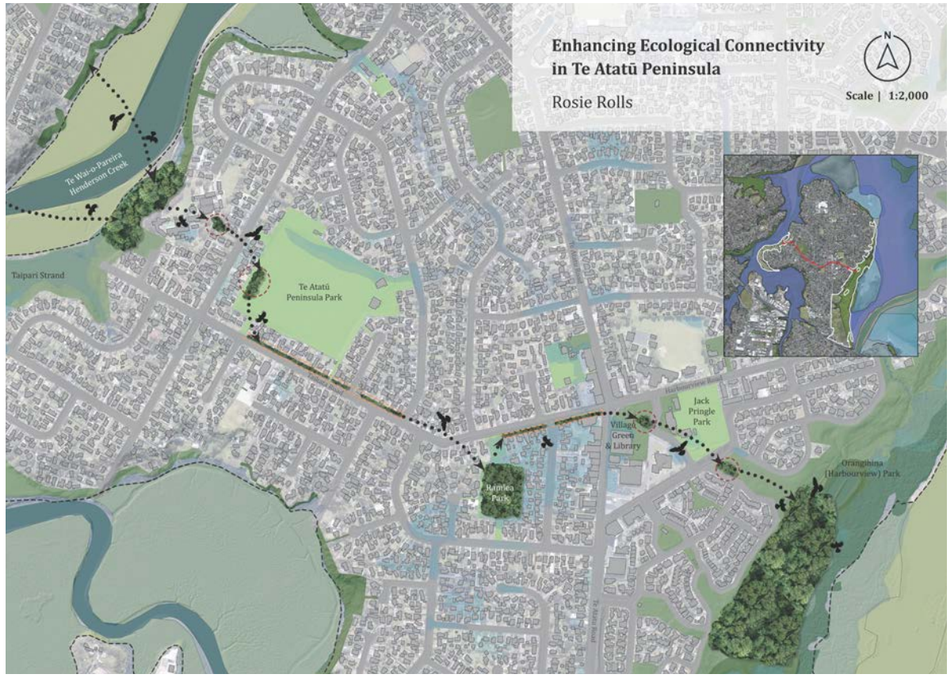
Using Meurk's Patch-Corridor-Matrix framework, the study proposes a sequence of design interventions – enrichment and source-planting of neighbourhood patches, establishment of noble-tree groves as stepping stones, and creation of green corridors through streetscapes. Informed by field surveys and community values, the design demonstrates how intentional ecological planning can restore biodiversity, improve ecosystem health, and strengthen connections between people and nature in an urban landscape.

Noble-Tree Grove in Open Spaces and Community Grounds.

Create and Enhance Source and Neighbourhood Patches

Create Stepping Stones

Create Green Corridors



Michael Head

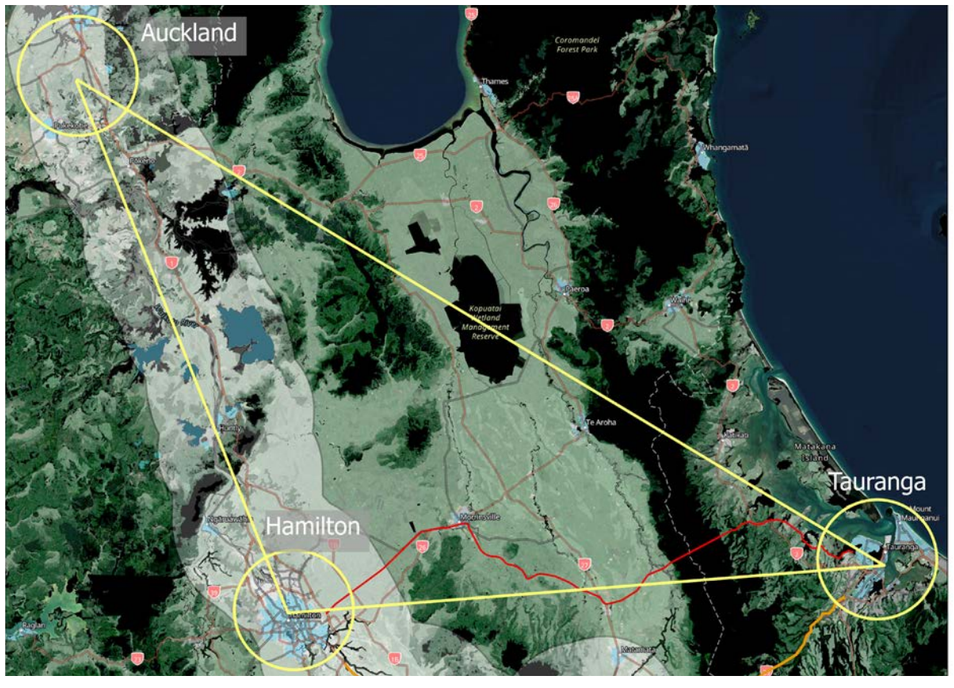
Negotiated Studies

Adaptive Strategies for the Hauraki Plains

At the centre of the Auckland–Hamilton–Tauranga growth corridor, the Hauraki Plains represent a critical yet under-recognised landscape in Aotearoa New Zealand. Subject to increasing environmental pressures, including coastal inundation, tectonic subsidence, pluvial flooding, and intensive dairy farming, the Plains are at a tipping point. However, they also offer a unique opportunity for large-scale ecological restoration and climate adaptation.

The region contains one of the last intact peat domes in the country, a globally rare carbon sink. It is traversed by two ancient river systems, remnants of the ancestral Waikato River, and bordered by the ecologically and historically significant Kaimai Ranges. The Plains are also a site of early Māori occupation, including swamp pā, reflecting deep Indigenous knowledge of wetland ecologies.

This proposal advocates for the establishment of the Hauraki Plains National Park as a model for integrated landscape transformation. Restoration of peatlands and reforestation would support biodiversity, carbon sequestration and climate resilience. A proposed freshwater lake could provide drinking water, stormwater retention and recreational opportunities. Anchored by green infrastructure and carbon markets, the park would catalyse regional regeneration while aligning with national climate goals and Indigenous-led environmental governance.



Xinyi Lu.

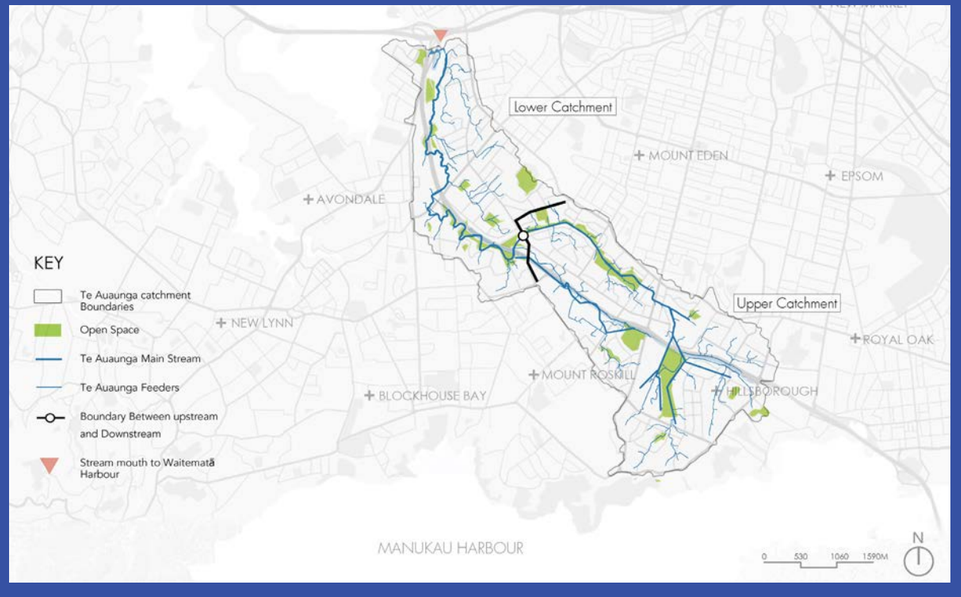
Research Project

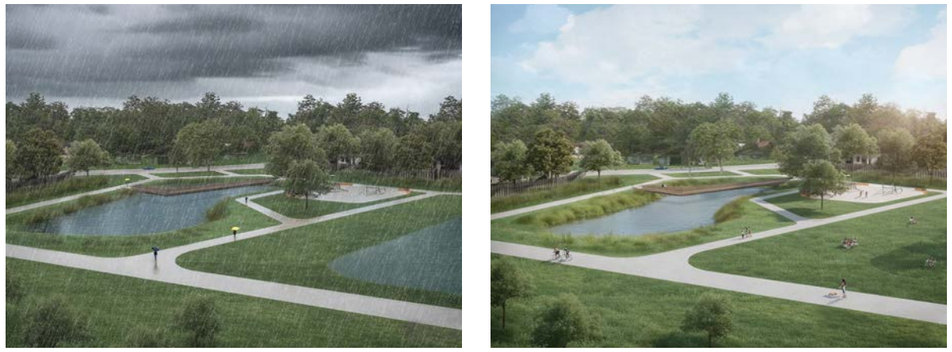
Sponge City Perspective: Exploring flood-resilience

Climate change has become a constant global challenge, making climate-adaptive design an essential part of landscape architecture. Based on this context, the project explores how the sponge city concept from China can be applied in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland to create a more flood-resilient and sustainable urban landscape. A sponge city uses contemporary stormwater management systems that resolve drainage problems, fully utilise land resources and promote sustainable development.

The design focuses on transforming a series of disconnected open spaces along Te Auaunga (Oakley Creek), the city's longest urban river, into a linear park system. This system functions as a flood corridor, ecological corridor, and recreational network simultaneously. Five main public spaces are connected along the creek, each using different sponge city strategies, including detention ponds, daylighted streams, reducing impervious surfaces and green streets. These interventions help the city store and manage rainwater, reduce surface runoff, and restore the natural water cycle disrupted by urban development. At the same time, they create meaningful green spaces for recreation.

The design also incorporates Māori design principles (Te Aranga), reflecting the cultural and spiritual connection between the local community and the land. By integrating natural processes into the urban fabric, the project establishes a new model of flood-resilient urban design, where water, nature and people coexist harmoniously. In this way, the city functions like a living sponge, able to absorb, store and regulate water, demonstrating how resilient and sustainable urban landscapes can be achieved.





Ziqi

Gao

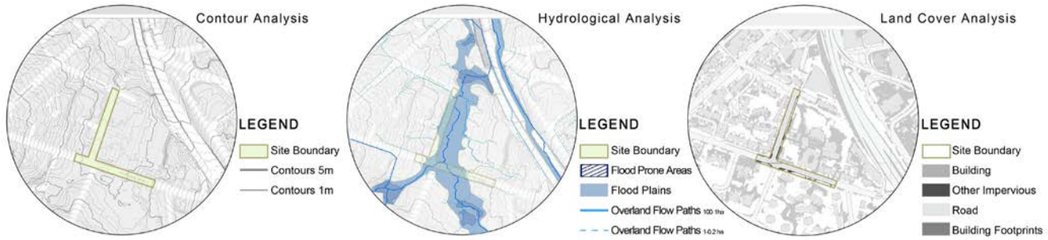
Research Project

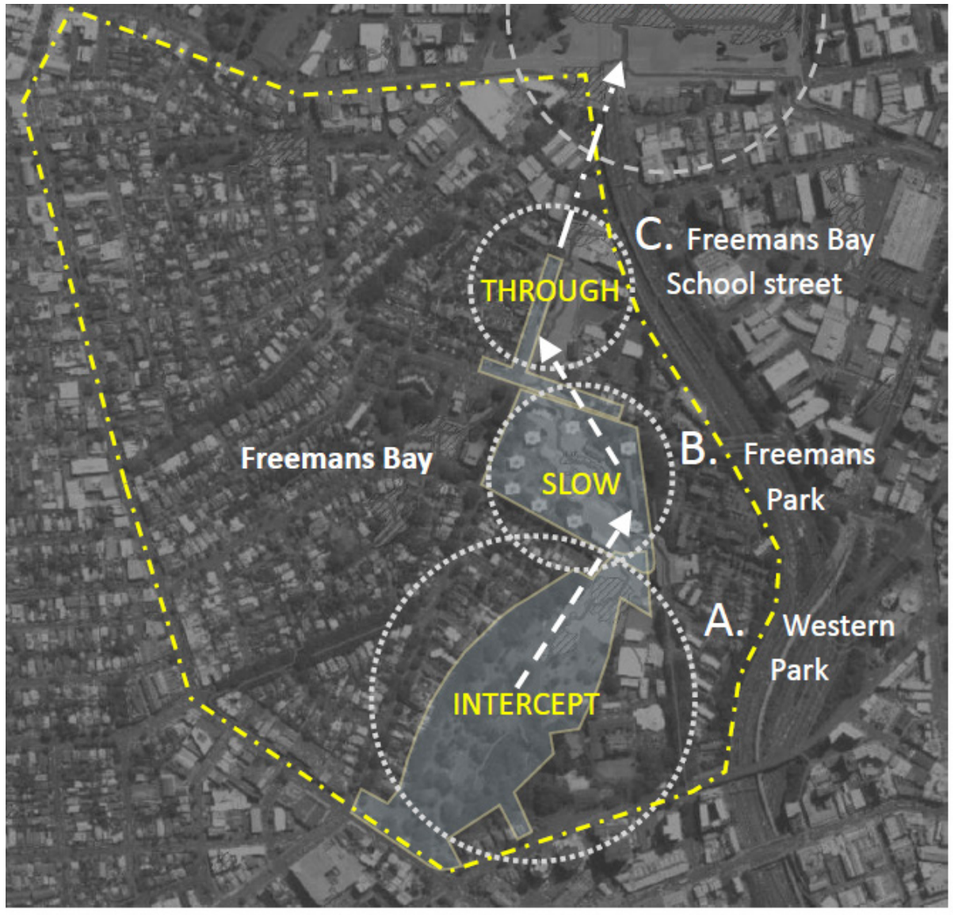
Floodable Public Space Strategies

This research investigates how floodable public spaces can strengthen flood resilience and reinforce cultural identity within the Freemans Bay community of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. Grounded in resilient landscape theory and Te Aranga Māori Design Principles, the project adopts the concept of 'living with water' to critically re-examine the relationship between urban environments and hydrological systems.

Western Park and the Freemans Park housing development serve as the primary study sites. The design framework proposes floodable public spaces incorporating wetlands, native vegetation and ecological corridors to restore the area's historical waterways. These elements are intended to collectively enable stormwater retention, delayed runoff and natural filtration during periodic extreme rainfall and flood events.

Beyond its hydrological function, the project integrates Māori worldviews – particularly Te Mana o te Wai (the intrinsic dignity of water) and Kaitiakitanga (guardianship) – to re-establish the spiritual and cultural connection between people, water and the land. Ultimately, the study envisions adaptive and meaningful public landscapes that not only mitigate floods but also narrate the stories of place, identity and belonging.





Bachelor of Architectural Studies
Design Studio Three
Bachelor of Landscape Architecture
Studio Seven

BAS & BLA

In our latest project, we have been working with the Avondale community to prepare alternative masterplans for the redevelopment of the Avondale Racecourse. Teams of architecture and landscape architecture students addressed a complex set of conditions, including major flooding and the potential for significant urban redevelopment, as well as the preservation of the fantastic Avondale Market. Students developed innovative responses that proposed a new public park for West Auckland, designed to mitigate flooding while allowing for part of the site to be urbanised.

Unitec's joint Architecture and Landscape Architecture Studio is now a venerable institution. The brainchild of Professor Dushko Bogunovich, who saw the potential for formal links between the two programmes within the School of Architecture, it has been running since 2017.

Over the years, students have collaborated on several joint projects that address the development of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland and the surrounding region. These projects range from waterfront developments with mana whenua in Whangārei, to urban design explorations in Wellsford, and working with local communities in Māngere to mitigate flooding. One notable waterfront project focused on the redevelopment of the Onehunga waterfront in response to rising sea levels.

Group 1, Hui Kōrero Masterplan: Matthew Calvert, Brooke Evaga, Natalie Lambourne, Myke Te Momo, Rose Todd and Rozielle Yanez. This masterplan offers a rare chance to reshape urban development by integrating ecological restoration, cultural memory and inclusive design to create a resilient future for West Auckland.

Group 2, Huihuinga Te Whau: Nicole Bamfield, Sun Kang, Sina Lutua, Rosie Rolls and Humaira Suhaimi. This masterplan is a socially, ***culturally*** and environmentally sustainable urban village design that welcomes all Aucklanders, integrating heritage, green infrastructure and community amenities around a central gathering space near the train station.

Group 3: Heta Anderson-Stafford, Elena Cui, Huiyi Cui, Jared Hemara, Yingxuan Lin, Shahil Naicker, Krisha Raju, Malachi Tepania and Shutian Zhang. This masterplan proposes a flood-resilient, multifunctional gathering hub in the east of the site that connects residential and commercial areas with recreational spaces through green infrastructure and pedestrian access, while honouring biodiversity, cultural identity and supporting community events.

Group 4: Matthew Brown, Kevin Feng, Jasmin Iosefo, Pamela Ocampo, Tasnim Taher and Ella Windner. This climate-adaptive masterplan balances built form and green space to restore local ecosystems, enhance flood resilience and foster community through integrated public, residential and commercial zones that honour heritage, biodiversity and sustainable living.

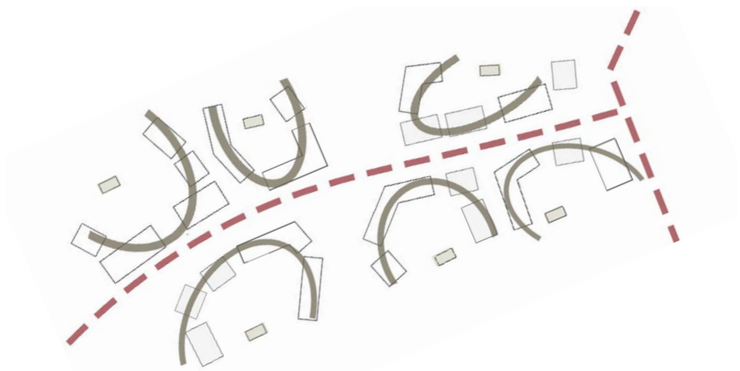
Group 5: Christian Angaaelangi, Nathan Philip Arriola, Bayley Cummings, Oliver Jones, Ausage Lauago Jr, Dawson Malota and Nehaal Naidu. This climate-conscious masterplan enhances open space for community wellbeing, honours Avondale's cultural and ecological heritage, and supports sustainable development through resilient design and inclusive planning.

Dr Matthew Bradbury

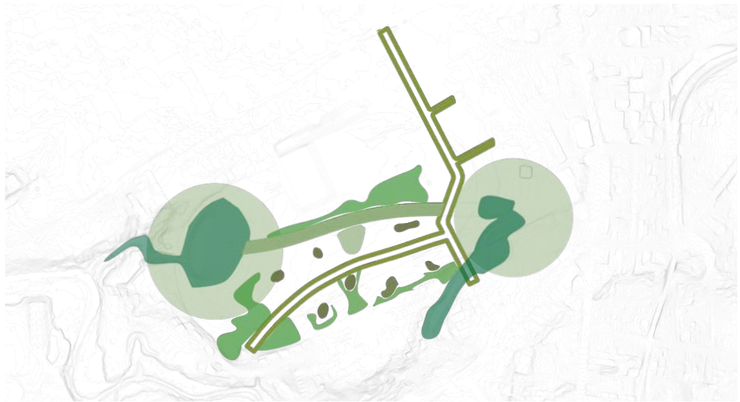
Group

One

Matthew Calvert, Brooke Evaga, Natalie Lambourne, Myke Te Momo, Rose Todd, Rozielle Yanez



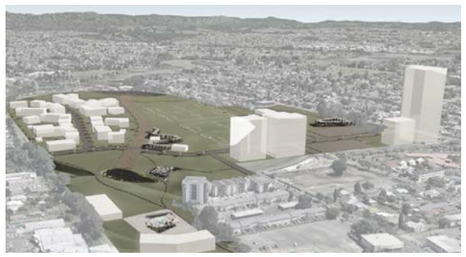
Urban village



Ecological zones and water treatment

1. Te Hono Community Centre
2. Watersquare
3. Waterpark playscape
4. Central pedestrian promenade
5. Community pavilion
6. Avondale Market
7. Rain gardens
8. Mid-rise housing
9. Te Whau connection
10. Retention ponds
11. Kuaka landing
12. Sports fields
13. Sports clubrooms
14. Outdoor pools
15. Basketball courts
16. Commercial mixed use
17. High-rise housing

Puriri wood model.



Perspective looking west.

Group Two

Nicole Bamfield, Sun Kang, Sina Lutua, Rosie Rolls, Humaira Suhaimi

1. A sports club overlooking a soccer field and two rugby fields, with parking directly off Ash Street.

2. An outdoor ampitheatre, with views over to the Waitākere Ranges .

3. An elevated central park, with winding paths up to the centre point with views to Ōwairaka and the Waitākere Ranges.

4. A large playground and spaces for cafés and other community facilities within the parkland.

5. Community recreation centre and swimming pool within repurposed historic buildings.

6. Elevated courtyard for apartment residents, also offering cover for carpark beneath.

7. Covered carpark that extends into a wide pedestrian pathway for the Markets, connecting Te Hono Community Centre and Town Square.

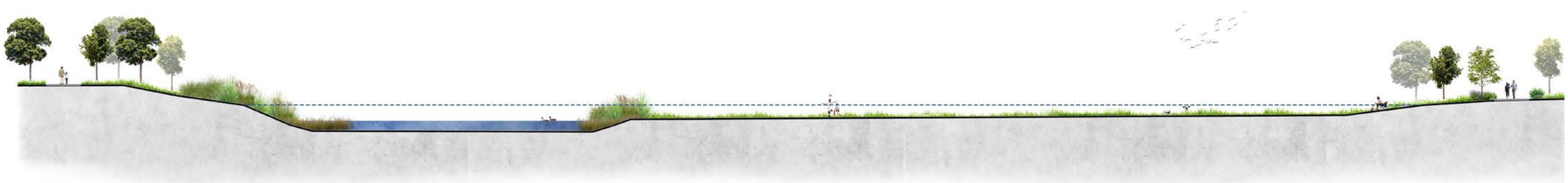
8. Wetlands and planted swales for flood resiliency.

Central park

Amphitheatre

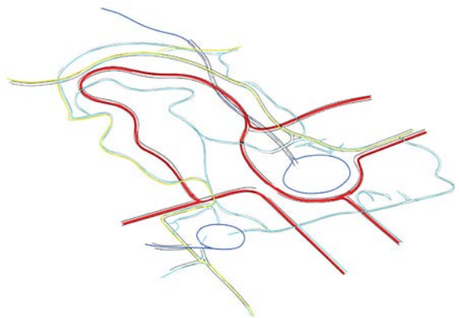
Walkable village

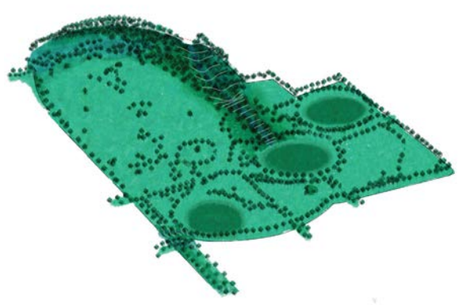
Market walkway

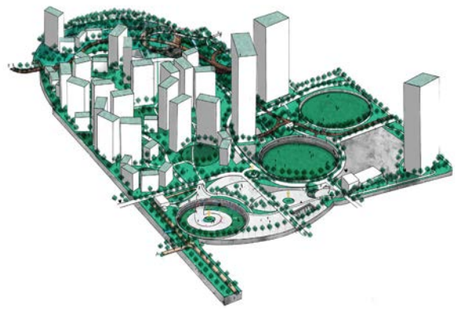


Group Three

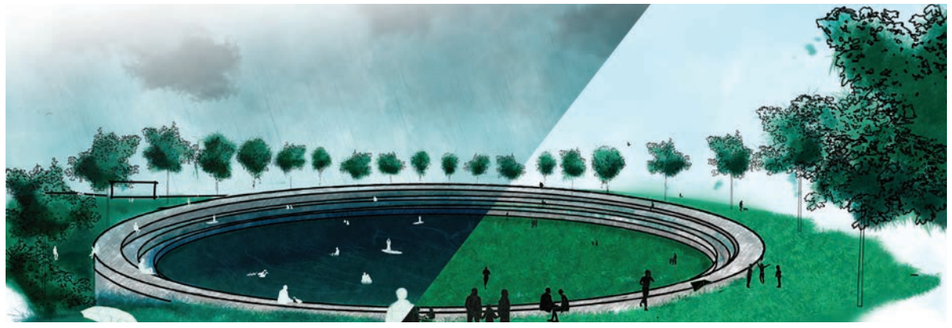
Heta Anderson-Stafford, Elena Cui, Huiyi Cui, Jared Hemara, Yingxuan Lin, Shahil Naicker, Krisha Raju, Malachi Te Pania, Shutian Zhang

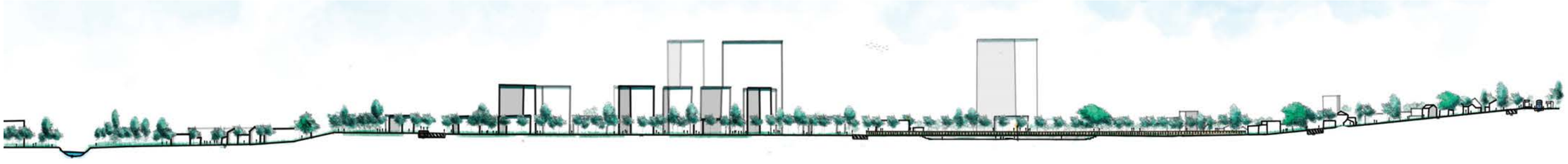


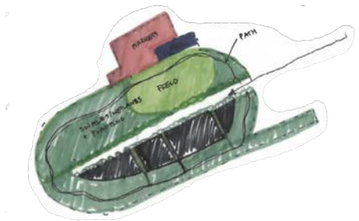


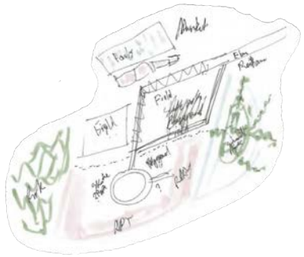


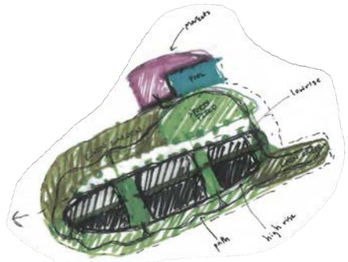
1. Playground
2. Court
3. Open area/market
4. Leisure centre (pools and gym)
5. Main carpark
6. Highrise building
7. North boardwalk
8. Sportsfields
9. Amphifield
10. Clubrooms
11. Stream
12. Whau River
13. Park
14. South boardwalk
15. Residential
16. Midrise building
17. Lowrise building
18. Racecourse statues
19. Community garden
20. Cultural and arts centre
21. Artway
22. Te Hono public library

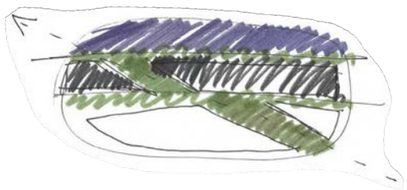


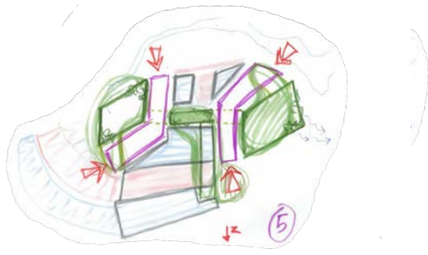


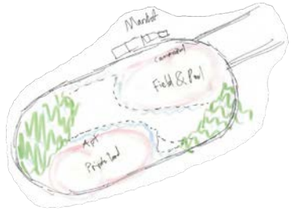


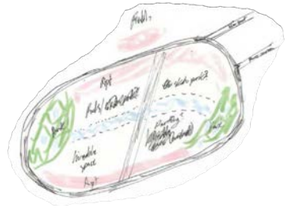


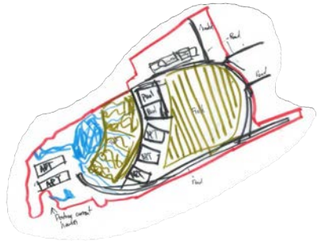








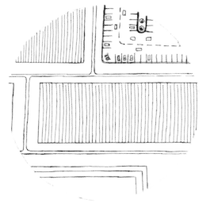


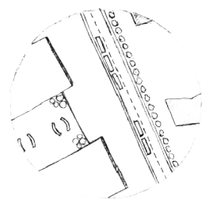


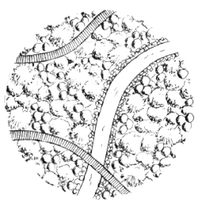
Group Four

Matt Brown, Kevin Feng, Jasmin Iosefo,
Pamela Ocampo, Tasnim Taher, Ella Windner

1. Paved market space
2. Community centre and swimming pool
3. High-rise residential
4. Rugby fields
5. Flood detention
6. Community gardens and food forest
7. Constructed wetlands
8. Raised timber boardwalk and lookout
9. Gravel pathway
10. Raised planted mounds
11. Public car park

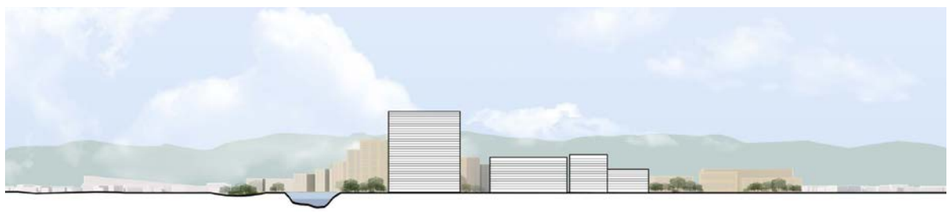


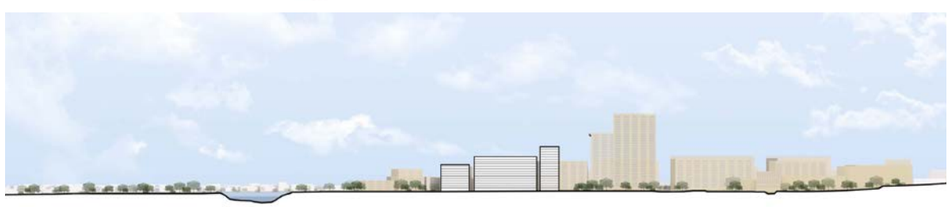




Group Five

Christian Angaaelangi, Nathan Philip Arriola,
Bayley Cummings, Oliver Jones, Ausage Lauago Jr,
Dawson Malota, Nehaal Naidu





Commercial space

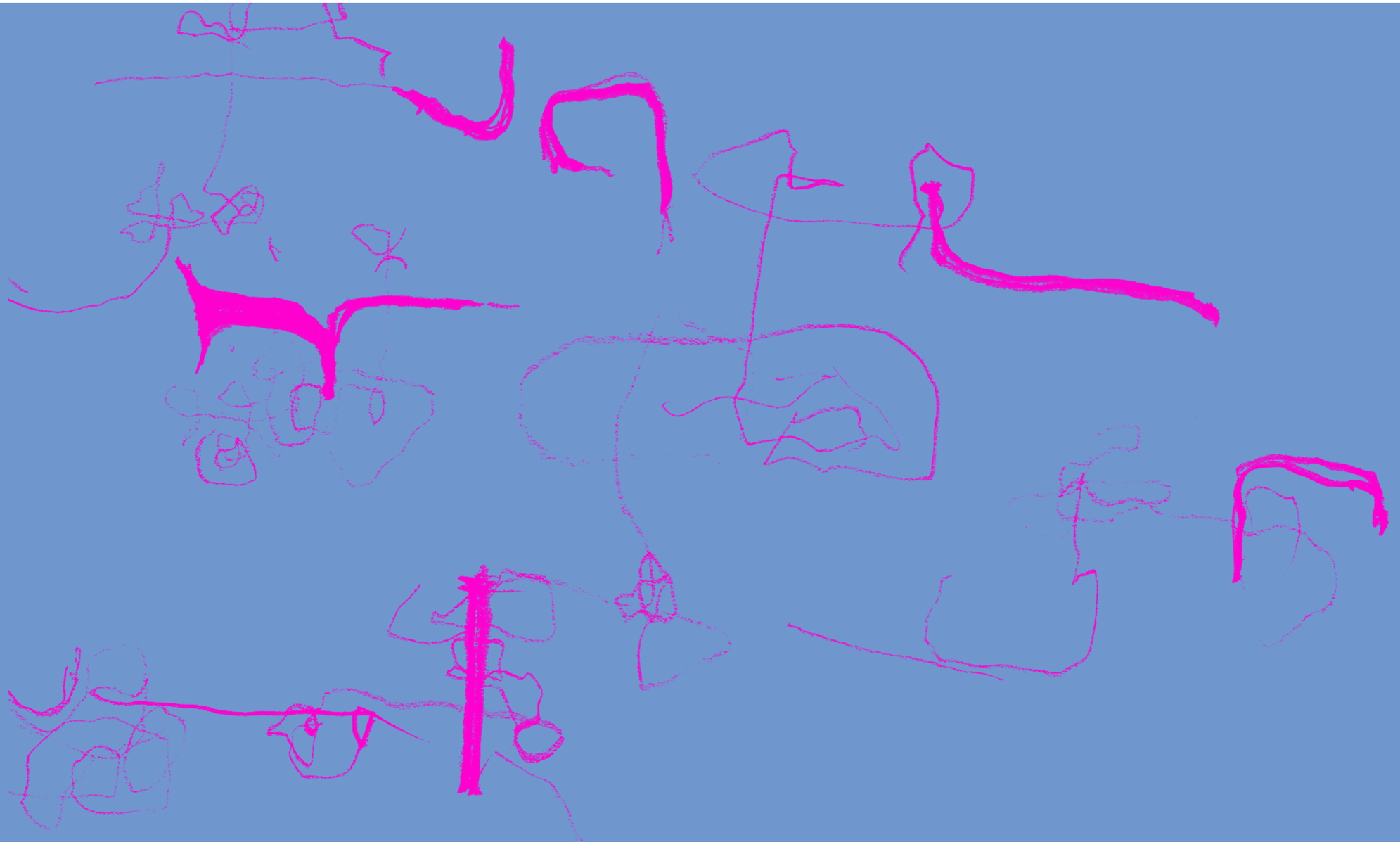
Stormwater

Green space

Recreational roof-tops

Isochron

Circulation

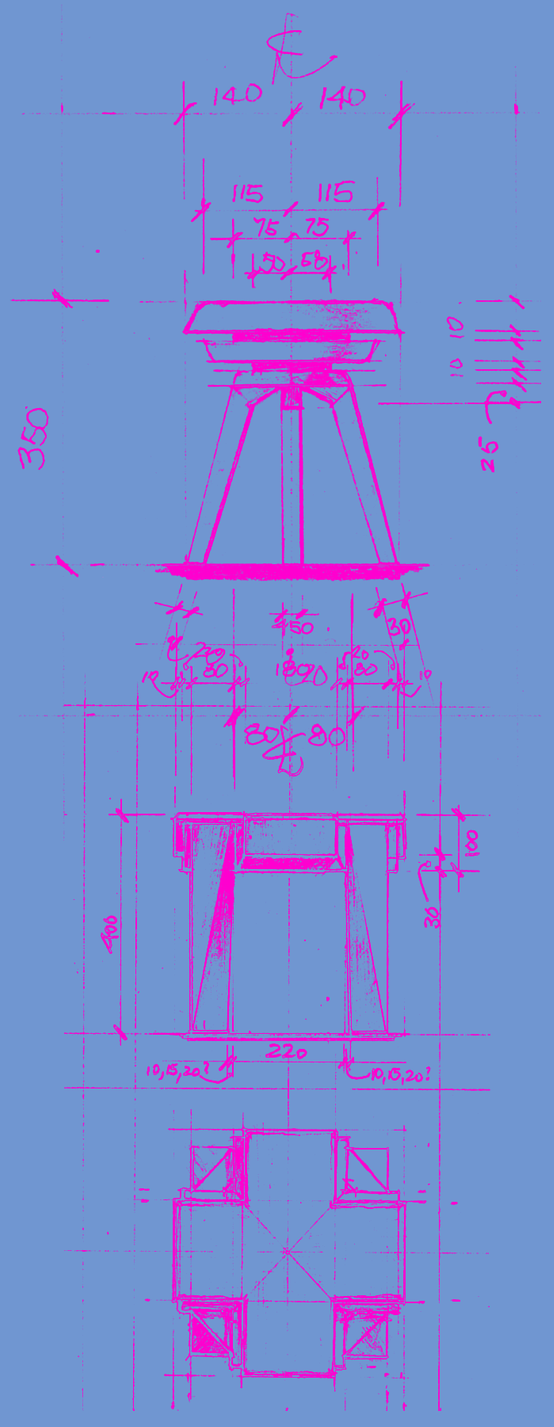


Design Process
Analytical Drawing
Life Drawing
Architectural Photography

Sketch: Kerry Francis

E

Design Process

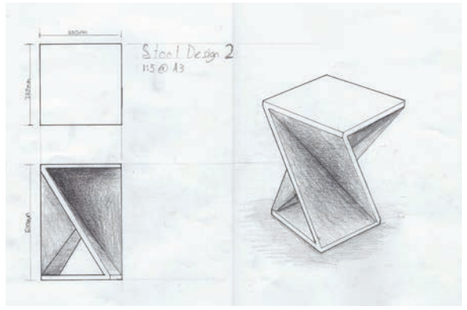


Humans are adaptable. They change stuff, mass and space into things that are useful. They do this because their bodies alone are not sufficient to ensure their survival, especially when they try to go into less hospitable contexts. The ancient way of doing this is called Heuristics – trial-and-error problem solving: try and fail, try again, fail again, going on until something works. This is painful. It is very important to a group when they find something that works. They protect their discovery viciously with a process called Tradition. They stop any group member changing Tradition, sometimes to the point of killing them if they try. The group will change only if something seriously interferes with their solution. If that happens, Tradition fails to cope, and the individuals who they might have previously killed become the only way out of Tradition's failure. The study, description and abstraction of the genetically influenced way that a human brain produces ideas about making things is called the Design Process. This elective takes students through the whole thing, from idea to final built outcome.

David Chaplin

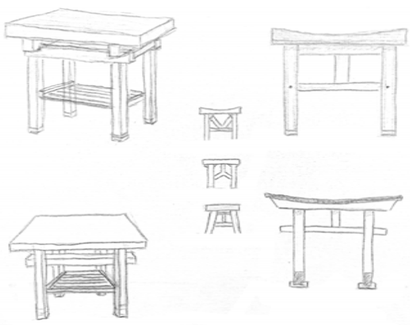
Sketch: Jacob Alexander and Tyler Maitland

Ashton
Morley
Design Process



Ruben Boyack

Design Process



Matt Railey

Design Process

Molly

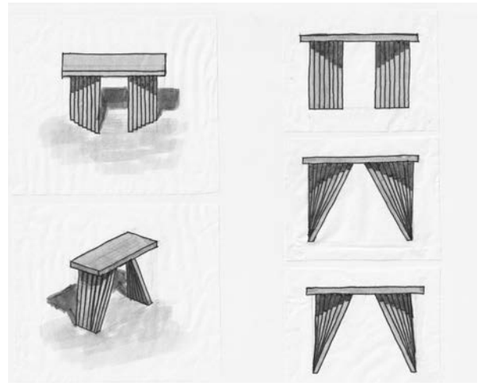
Lawrence-Graham.

Design Process

Jamie

Loveridge

Design Process



Analytical Drawing

Analytical Drawing: Drawing as Design Action is an elective that invites ākonga into a steady and calm rhythm of twelve compulsory workshop sessions where material, hand and eye communicate with each other. Over these weeks, students explore the ecology of drawing as a way of thinking and learn how hand-drawing can deepen the processes of design. The work that emerges from these workshops is experimental and reflects students' learning processes and research, and is recorded for final presentation in a digital portfolio.

Students are tasked with an assignment titled "Drawing from Your Own Culture", which asks them to look inward and investigate the tools, materials and cultural context of personal interest through the practice of drawing. The outcome is hand-drawn and hand-written, and held within a handmade book – a crafted object that draws on the cultural background of each student. The work that results is beautiful books where observation, culture and creativity meet.

Kerry Francis

Sketch: Siliuasi Lui

Siliuasi
Lui.
Analytical Drawing

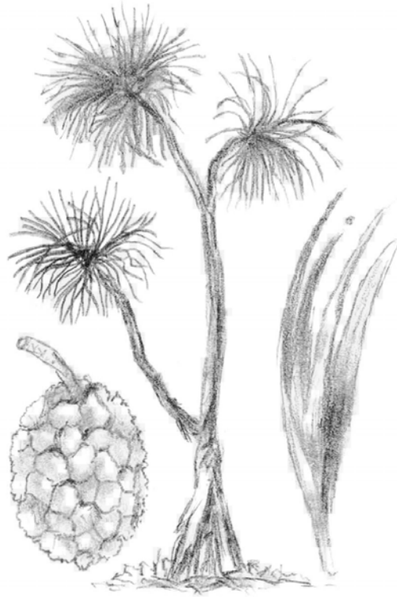
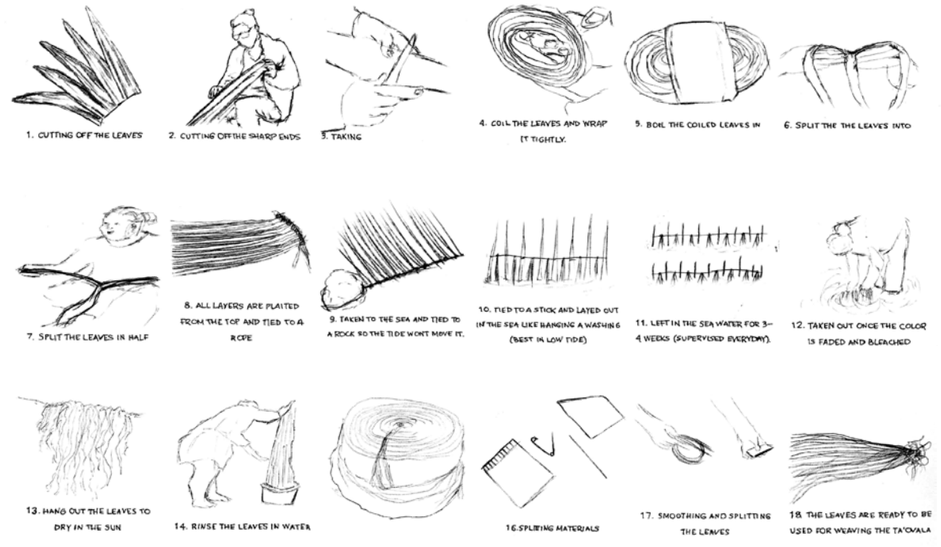


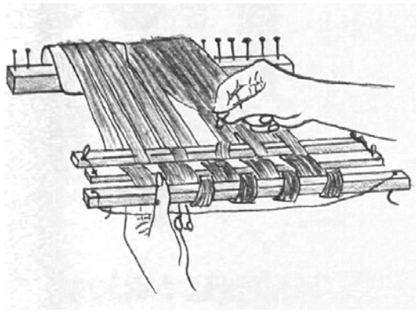
FIGURE : PANDANUS TREE

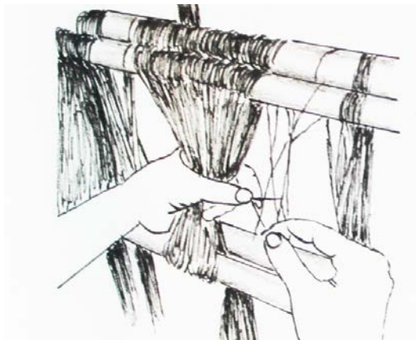


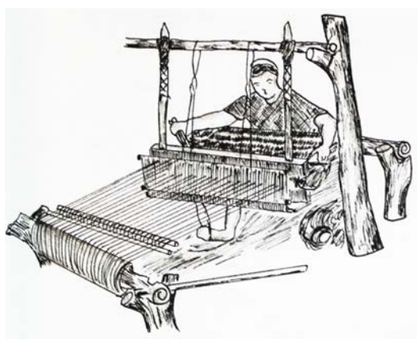
Jholan Nycole

Frias.

Analytical Drawing



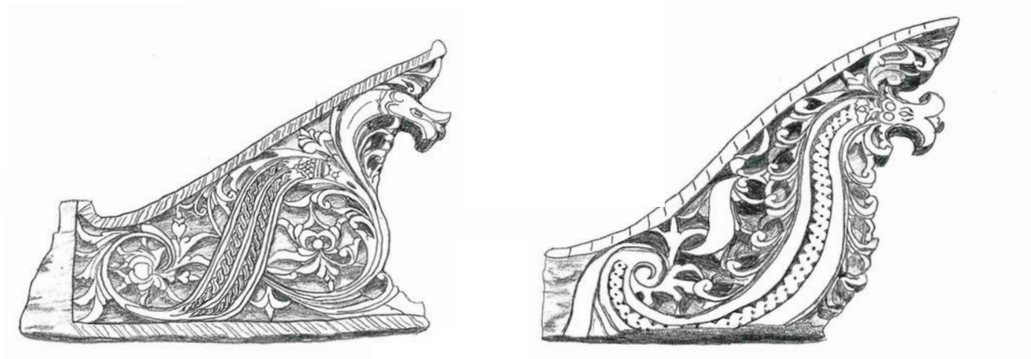


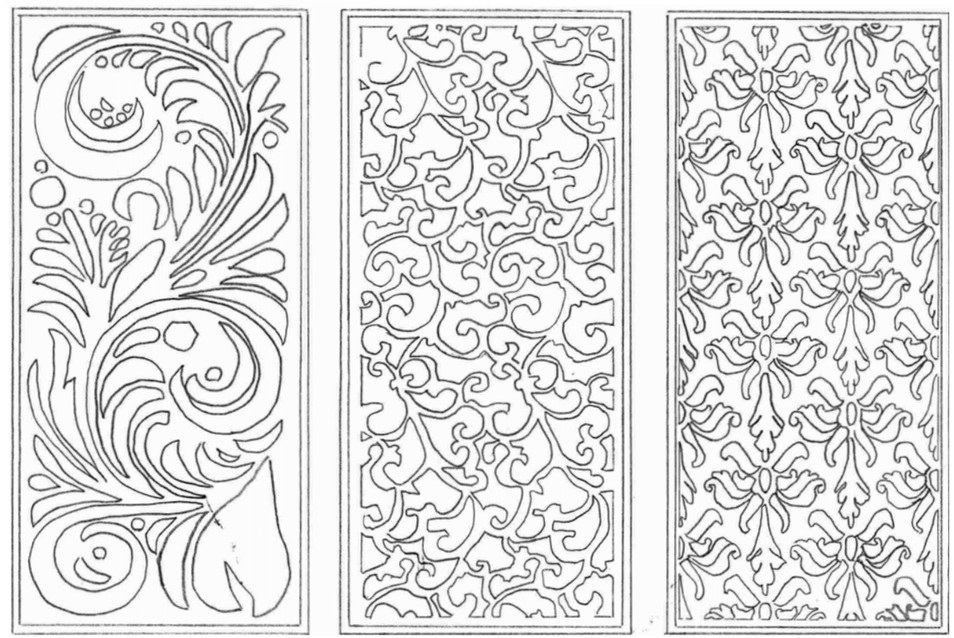


Jamby

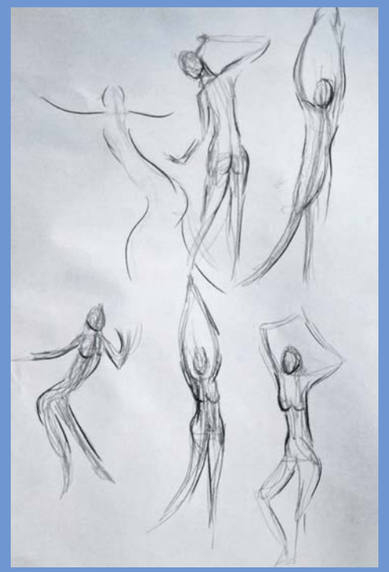
Dela Cruz.

Analytical Drawing





Life Drawing



Sketches. Morgan Ferguson

Morgan
Ferguson.

Life Drawing

Architectural Photography

The following student projects demonstrate how photography operates not as a secondary form of representation, but as an architectural act in itself: selecting, framing, interpreting and re-making. This elective shows that when students take the camera seriously, the result is not merely documentation but a body of architectural thought – playful, precise and persuasive.

This semester's photographic elective gathered a full cohort of students, and what follows is only a glimpse of the breadth and invention that emerged during the semester. Each participant selected a key theme from the weekly classes and pursued it with a mixture of rigour, curiosity and sheer visual flair. The results coalesced into a testament to what happens when architectural thought meets the camera's eye: an unfolding sequence of inquiries into space, scale, culture and context.

Take Bayley Cummings' series, where vegetation presses up against architecture in a low-socioeconomic setting. Here, biophilia becomes more than a passing aesthetic – it is social, spatial, even political. Through tight cropping and a disciplined consistency of focus, the images acquire a visual unity that allows multiple readings to coexist: ghetto, hood, home, character. The work is sensitive, complex and resolved.

Emma Zhu, by contrast, seizes upon context as her theme, and the result is an essay in formal control. Colour and form are harnessed with intent, while the shallow depth of field ties the series into a cohesive whole. The standout image pairs a miniaturised villa with its full-sized counterpart: a witty and visually compelling move that reframes architectural enquiry as both serious and playful.

Sina Lutua brings us into the cultural heart of Tonga with a series drenched in ochres and reds. Here, the lens oscillates between the kinetic – action caught mid-motion – and the contemplative: raffia and mats observed with intimacy and precision. Wide-angled energy and close-up detail are orchestrated into a counterpoint that brims with vitality. It is cultural representation rendered with both force and tenderness.

Finally, from colour to monochrome, Myke Te Momo's "Architecture at Scale" strips things back to black and white. Vertical framings establish rhythm, while sweeping curves – structural, spatial, sculptural – animate the frame. Occasionally, a lone figure appears, understated yet crucial, offering scale and presence against the weight of form. These are images of poise and persuasion, architecture and humanity entwined.

Dr Annabel Pretty.

Bayley Cummings

Architectural Photography

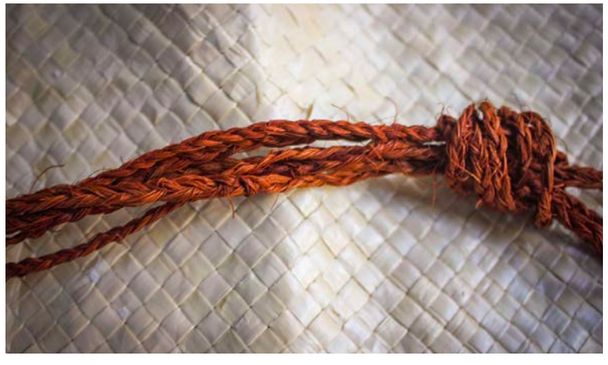
Emma
Zhu.

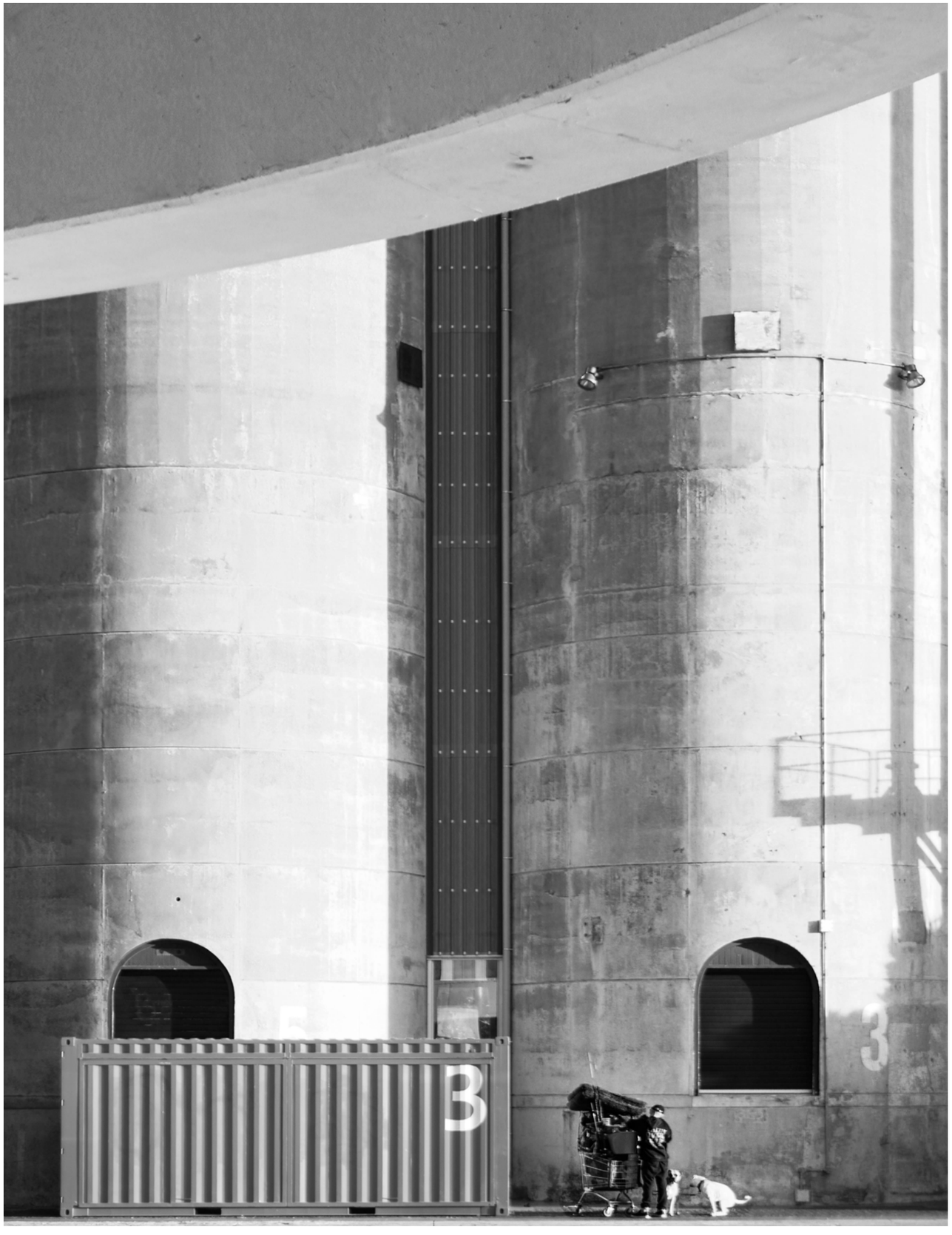
Architectural Photography

Sina

Lutua.

Architectural Photography

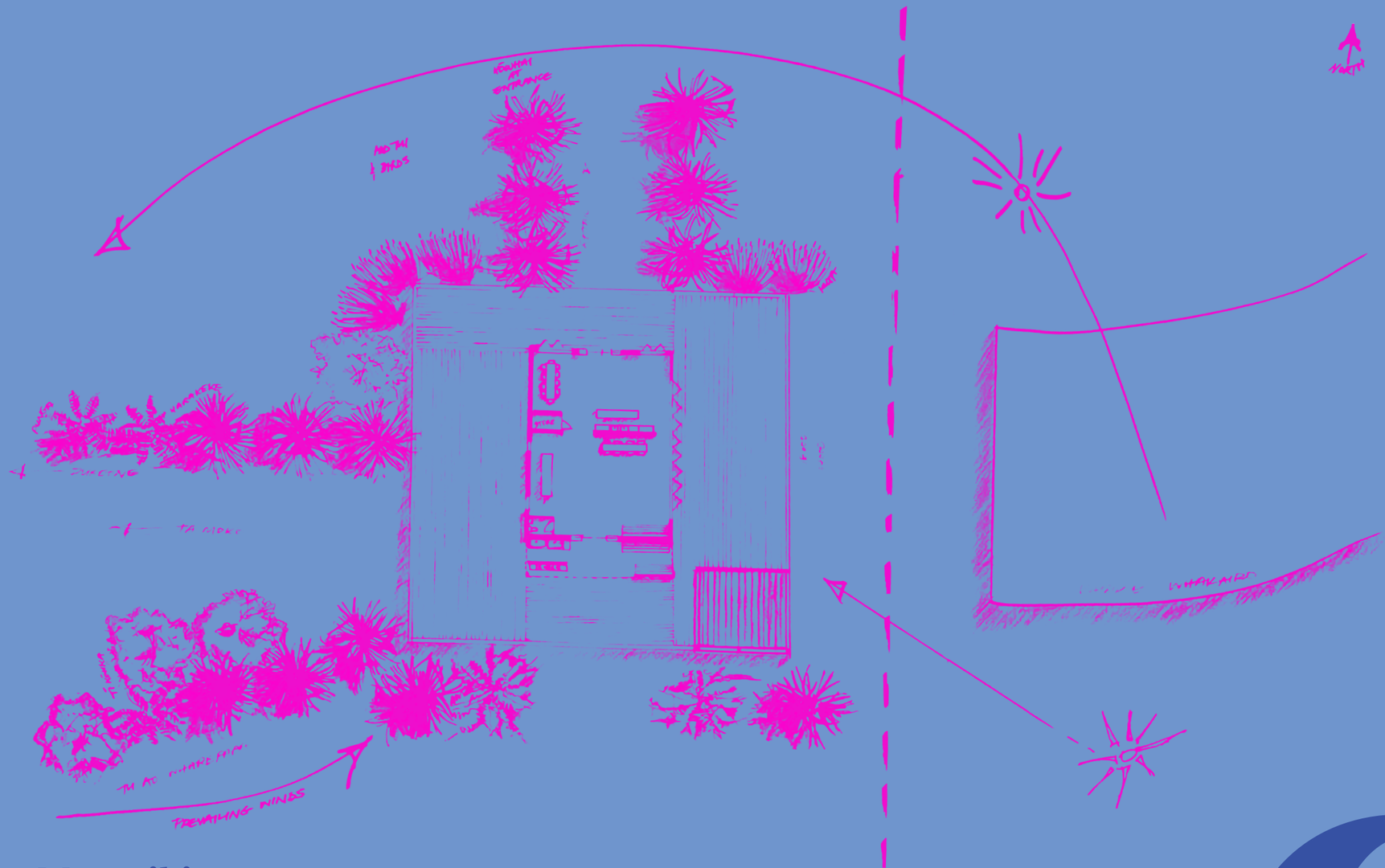




Myke

Te Momo

Architectural Photography

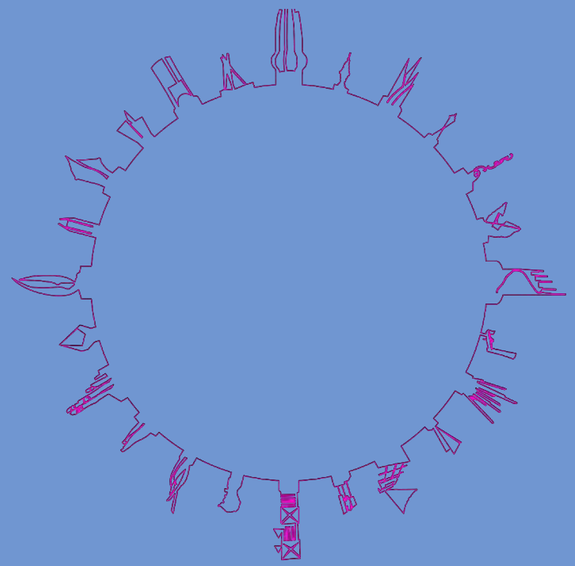


Matariki
Te Hononga Māori Studio
Office Studio
Communal Springs: Jinan, China
Teaching Technology
Woman as Maker

Sketch: Jess Smith

CC

Matariki



The Matariki Installation Project

The Matariki Installation Project invited students to explore cultural connections through design installations that would glow in the darkness of winter to illuminate Waiwhahariki Anzac Square in the heart of Takapuna. Through this exploration, students would discover what it truly means to design with, and for, community. However, the real invitation was to listen. To listen to mana whenua, community groups across Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, each other and to the site itself.

Students learned that meaningful design begins not with form or material, but with relationships. They gathered at Te Noho Kotahitanga marae, they engaged with cultural advisors, they heard stories of puna (springs) and ngāhere (forest), of ancestors and belonging. They discovered that Waiwhahariki Anzac Square, a space named after the flax that weaves people together, was teaching them how to design.

The Matariki Installation Project emerged as a profound journey of cultural connection and creative awakening. What moved us most was witnessing the transformation. Students who arrived thinking about structures, left understanding connection – to place, to culture, to each other and to the responsibility we carry as designers. They experienced first-hand how design can honour stories, create gathering spaces and serve as kaitiaki (guardians) of cultural knowledge and environmental care.

This project embodies everything we aspire to nurture in our students: technical excellence combined with cultural sensitivity, creativity rooted in respect, and the understanding that architecture, at its best, brings people together and honours the land we live on.

Keith Mann

Te Hononga

Māori Studio: Zone two masterplanning and pātaka kai

Natalie Lambourne.

This year's cohort of Te Hononga Māori Studio students travelled to Motueka on two separate visits to continue work with Te Āwhina Marae that began in 2024.

To kick off the first trip in August, we were warmly welcomed onto the marae with a pōwhiri at the wharenui, Turangāpeke. Over the following four days, we learned the history of Ngāti Rārua and Te Ātiawa, their migration to Te Tau Ihu, and their longstanding practices as gardeners and agriculturalists. A particular highlight was our guided walk through the ngāhere to Te Puna Wai o Riuwaka – a sacred place where the Riuwaka River emerges from underground.

For the remainder of the semester we worked to further develop the commercial zone of the overall masterplan created by the 2024 cohort. This trip concluded with the presentation of concept designs, including a hauora (health) centre, birthing unit, rehabilitation centre, iwi offices with climatorium, café, on-site culinary school and studios for tā moko, carving and weaving.

On our second trip to Motueka in October, we completed the building phase of our project – a 2.4 x 3.6-metre pātaka (food storehouse) at Te Āwhina Marae. While pātaka can be simple in form, those that are intricately carved and adorned historically signified an iwi's status and wealth. We look forward to seeing the carved elements the team at Te Ara Toki (the whare whakairo at Te Āwhina) plans to add to the pātaka in the future.

The 2025 Te Hononga Māori Studio rōpu consisted of lecturers Rau Hoskins, Min Hall and Kerry Francis, with students Harry Jeon, Melissa Knight, Mey Mey Nam, Daniel Chia, Gohanne Turtal, Myke Te Momo, Natalie Lambourne, Ruth Baker, Claudia McGough-Morunga, Jess Smith, Olivia Nott and Taina Marie.

1. Turangāpeke
2. Wharepuni
3. Wharekai
4. Te Ahurewa
5. Admin office
6. I-Site and bike shop
7. Café and culinary school
8. Māra kai
9. Multi-purpose space
10. Toi gallery
11. Retail
12. Iwi offices and climatorium
13. Future expansion of 12
14. Tā moko
15. Raranga
16. Whakairo
17. Weaving species for raranga
18. Trees for whakairo
19. Medical centre and rongoā
20. Māra rongoā
21. Rehab and wellbeing
22. Birthing centre
23. Playground
24. Te kōhanga reo
25. STEAMM+
26. Gym
27. Kura
28. Kōkiri
29. Amphitheatre
30. Truck access
31. Sports field
32. Hostel
33. Taphouse / restaurant
34. Papakainga
35. Te inoi
36. Kauta
37. Kāumatua flats
38. Hangi pit, māra and orchard
39. Commercial
40. Retirement
41. Kaumatua lodge

Claudia

McGough-Morunga.

Te Hononga Māori Studio

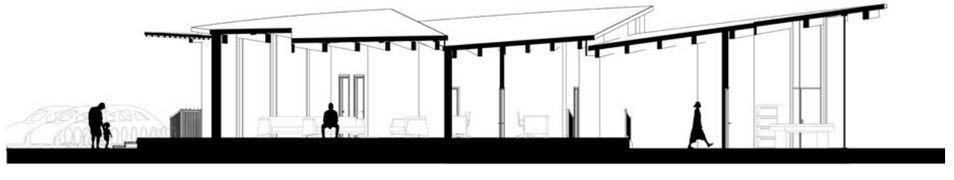
Tā Moko Studio

Gohanne

Turtal.

Te Hononga Māori Studio

Medical and Rongoā Centre

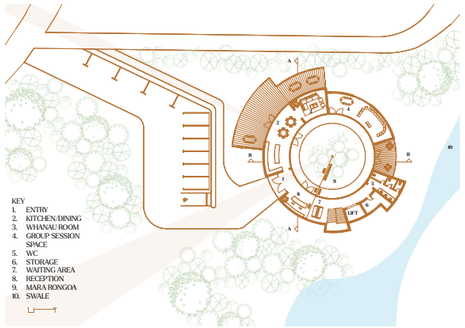


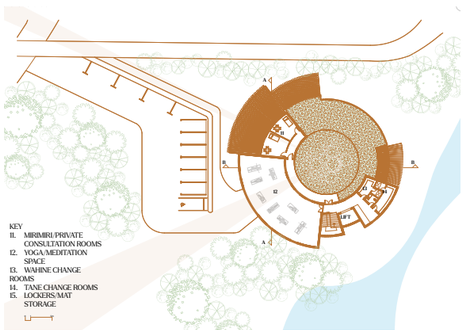
Taina
Marie.

Te Hononga Māori Studio

Hauora Rehabilitation and Wellbeing: Te Ara Purea

Haere ki ngā maunga kia purea ai
koe i ngā hau o Tawhirimātea

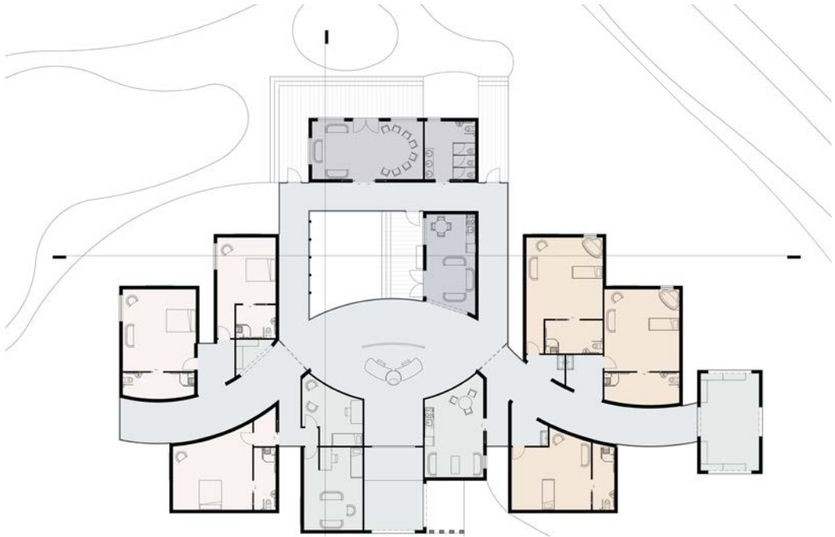




Olivia
Nott.

Te Hononga Māori Studio

Birthing Centre: A return to the whenua following the wai of Te Puna o Riuwaka

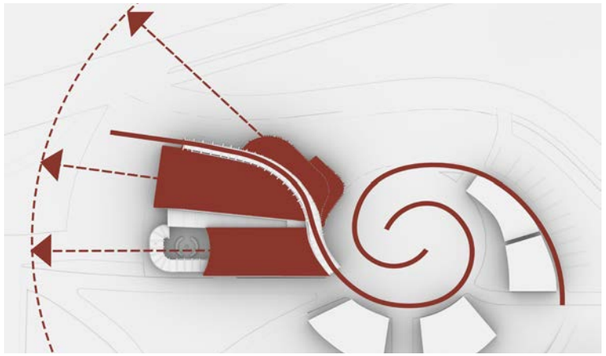


Myke

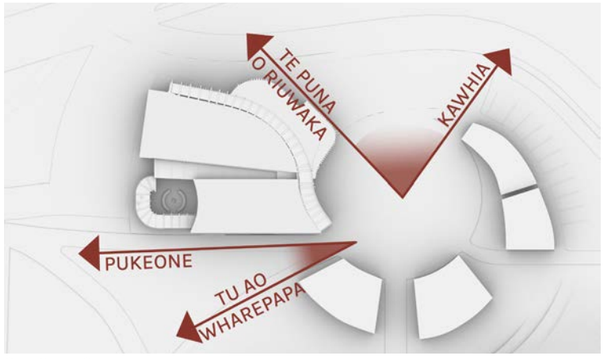
Te Momo

Te Hononga Māori Studio

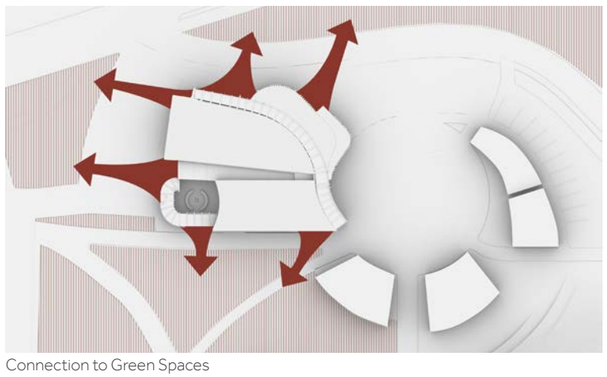
Marae Site: Café, culinary school, i-site and bike workshop



Te Āwhina Marae Site



Significant Site Lines



Connection to Green Spaces

Office Studio

Students in Practice

Nora Jean Lee.

As a female student who grew up overseas with a semi-strict background, I learned to be reserved in both social and creative life, as I was usually overshadowed by friends of the same gender with phenomenal talent in the art department. While I still love creating and designing as a hobby, I never felt that I was exceptional at it. Until my uncle told me to give architecture a try, I did not know what career to pursue.

At the start of my studies, I created designs that reflected my personality at the time – reserved and conforming. However, in Office Studio and with the guidance and patience of my lecturers and mentors, I was able to develop confidence in myself and my designs in a way that was uniquely me – specifically following nature, highlighting fluid lines instead of stringent right-angles. I am hugely proud of this journey – it showcases what I value in architecture studies.

Throughout the Master of Architecture (Professional) studio course, I found it uplifting and inspiring to have both female and male lecturers. This enabled me to gain a broad awareness and perspective, as all my teachers made unique and insightful contributions to my design project. Office Studio, however, was male-dominated – the mentors and lecturers who came to critique were all male. While they never treated me any differently from my peers, it demonstrated the reality of the industry. On a positive note, the female employees I encountered during my studies were very welcoming and friendly, readily providing advice and encouragement.

While it is uplifting to experience the industry and see female architects supporting each other, to my mind, it creates a question: am I taking gender equality for granted in this day and age? The comfort I feel was paved by prominent female architects before me who have worked tirelessly to ensure that my reality is even possible. This has granted me the opportunity to study and work within an industry I have a passion for as a young woman, hopefully without fear of discrimination.

Sketch: Anna Bulkeley

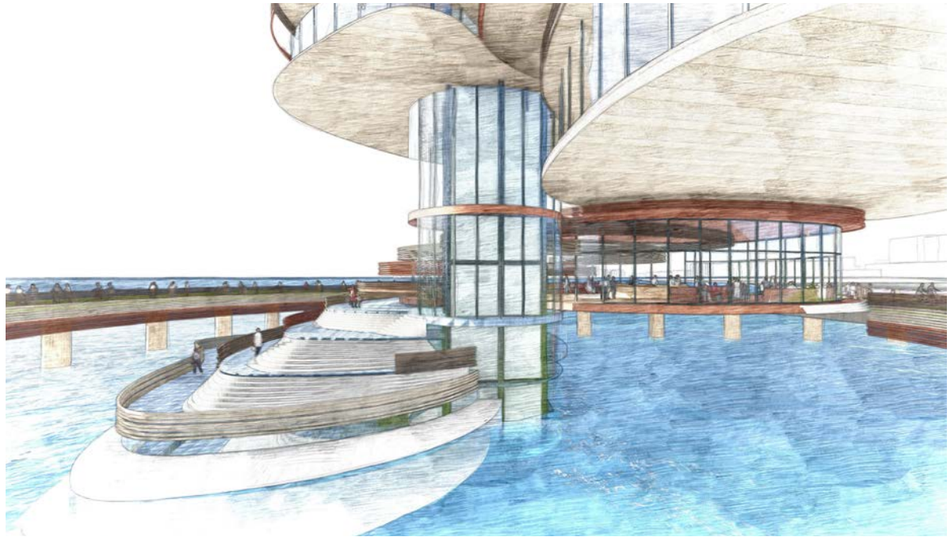
Nora Jean
Lee.
Jasmax

Serenity

The aim of this project was to create a connection between wharf, land and water. The design centres around the experience of walking on the beach as a child – picking up seashells on the beach, eventually finding that precious shell, then taking a swim in the ocean. This journey of nostalgia affords a sense of serenity that people in the city will enjoy, a place to slow down and be at peace.

The form was inspired by a nautilus shell and the way coral grows, and consists of a reverse aquarium below the wharf, with terraces on the roof where people can view the water level rising and falling throughout the day. On the ground floor is a retail area with a fish and chip shop to draw tourists and locals to enjoy seafood by the shore.

On the upper level is the community centre – its lower level is for morning yoga sessions and the upper level is for rest. Above that is a viewing deck that looks onto Rangitoto Island and the Harbour Bridge. In addition, patrons can walk along the external stairs that wrap around the building, giving them an additional opportunity to interact with the building.



Zane Chang

Jasmax

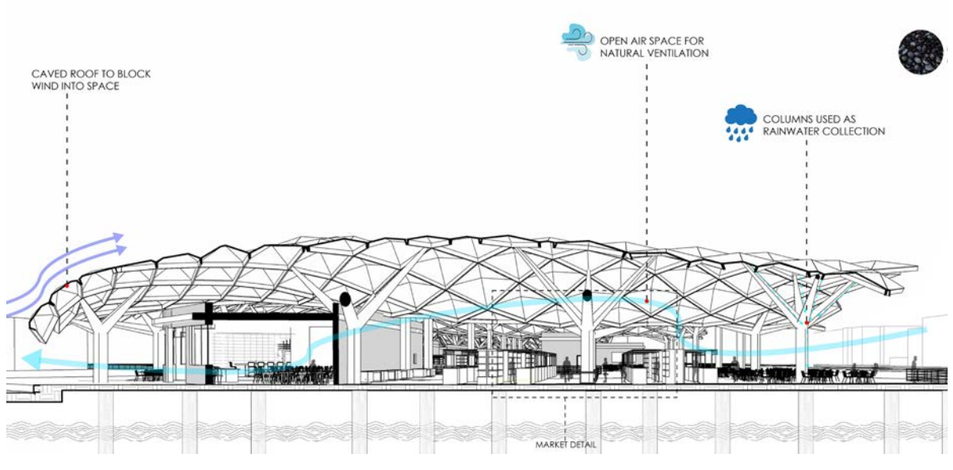
Te Rou Kai Urban Market

The Studio Jasmax brief asked students to design a land-based structure, pier structure and water-based structure along the Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland waterfront – made up of Queens, Captain Cook and Marsden wharves.

Te Rou Kai, meaning food gathering, is a pipi bank along the shoreline of Horotiu, where Māori harvested pipi as a food source. This design engages the history of Tāmaki Makaurau, including the story of Māori settlers arriving in Horotiu, and the activity along the original shoreline.

The meaning of Te Rou Kai led to the idea of an urban market that sells fresh produce from land and sea, sourced from across Aotearoa New Zealand. It will also include restaurants along the wharves, creating new social spaces. Implementing an urban market also created a new destination where the city can engage with its assets along the waterfront.

The roof of the market was formed to represent mussel beds lying on the shore, resembling the banks where Māori sourced kai. It is supported by tree-like columns sited along the coast of Horotiu. The wavy form of the roof allows for people to experience the space differently as they move through it. The roof is separated by four thresholds, with views across various iconic locations in Tāmaki Makaurau. Two orientate to the Auckland Harbour Bridge, one to Rangitoto Island, and one to the Cultural Centre.



Aqua Horizons

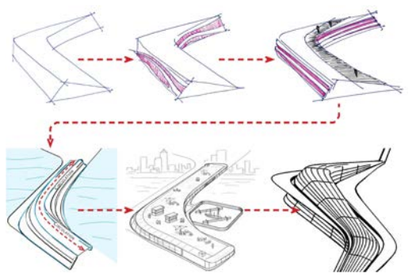
Aqua Horizons is a contemporary maritime museum that pursues an alternative meeting of water, architecture and human endeavour. The design dialogue stems from the rhythms and movements of ocean waves, circulated through a fluid architectural lexicon, and the idea of the continuity of the ocean and its eternal bond with mankind. Aqua Horizons aims to promote a dynamic conversation between architecture and the ocean, one that offers a fluid, evolving setting in celebration of maritime heritage with an emphasis on the future.

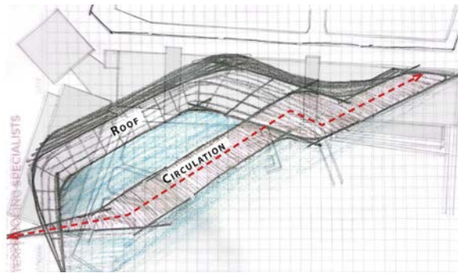
The design of the form and spatial character of the museum has three key precedents. The flowing exterior geometry and articulation of the façade are predicated on Zaha Hadid Architects' Jinghe New City Culture and Art Center. The sculptural roof profile and the design of a large skylight that brings diffused natural daylight deep into the interior is inspired by MAD Architects' Harbin Opera House. The exhibition layout, double-height gallery sequences, and the perforated framing housing key maritime artefacts draws inspiration from Guillermo Vázquez Consuegra's National Museum of Underwater Archaeology.

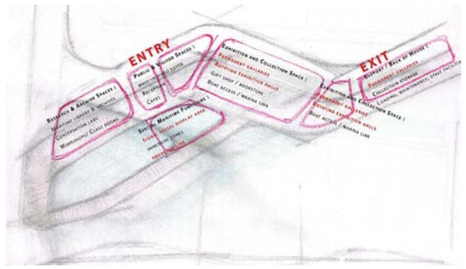
The museum is located on Hobson Wharf in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland and directly responds to the waterfront context. The circulation, public interfaces and topography were carefully studied in terms of the organisation of spaces so the building can be readily accessed, highly interactive and visually orientated towards the harbour. The programme was divided into two levels, with a public ramp leading to an upper-level library and balcony that overlooks the sea, where visitors can experience the site even without having entered the principal galleries.

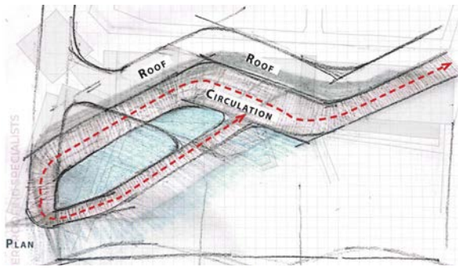
The interior of the museum features journeys ranging from ancient maritime stories to contemporary and futuristic developments in maritime affairs. Double-height areas, framed apertures and suspended boat models give a sense of immersion – all illuminated by changing natural light penetrating the internal volumes through the central skylight. Public amenities, including a café, learning spaces and connection to a promenade along the waterfront, further strengthen the position of the museum as an easily accessible cultural destination.

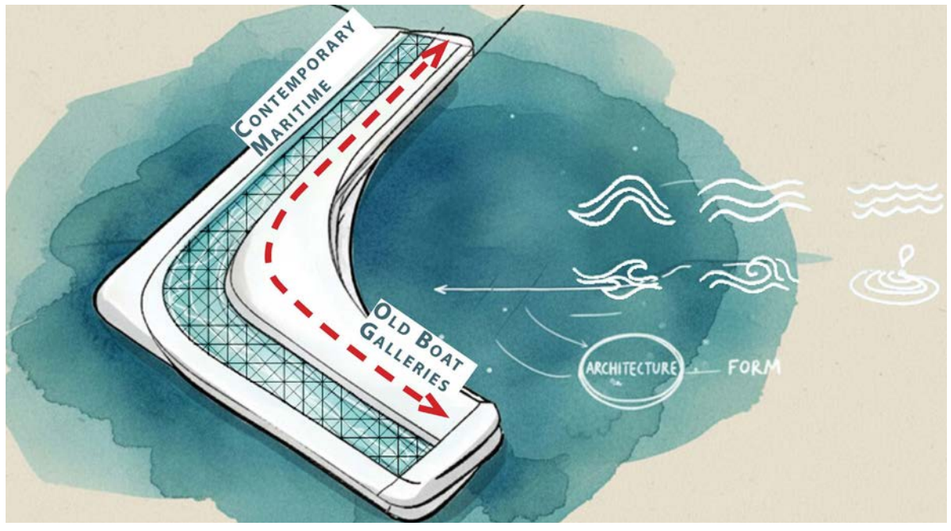
Mustafizahmed
Vhora
Peddlethorp

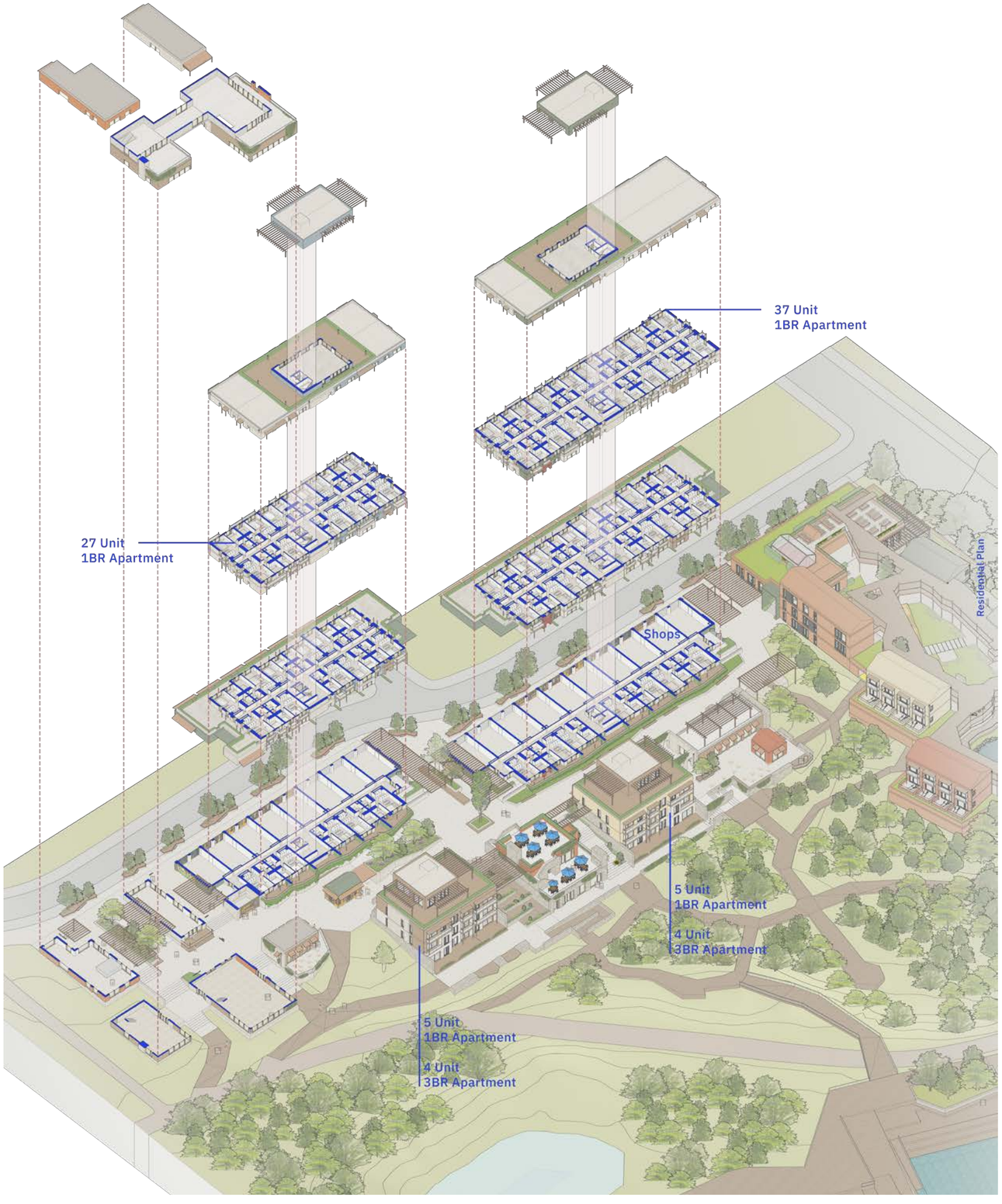












Eda

Dogan Kaya.

Chow Hill

In Journey: Celebrating life

We often think of dementia as a loss. But I begin with a simpler thought: People who live with dementia are still people, like all of us. They need freedom, connection and to belong. Architecture can isolate them, or it can bring them back into the rhythm of life.

The site sits between Bomb Point and Catalina Bay in Hobsonville. The bush was left untouched, remaining as a natural backdrop. Paths extend toward a sea bath, not a place of commerce, but of open platforms and walkways above the water. It acts as a bridge, linking the market with the dementia and retirement village, and creating a shared place for all generations at the edge of the sea.

The project creates a village of streets, passes and arcades. Not abstract spaces, but familiar ones with small shops, cafés and workshops that spark memory and invite people to interact. The streets are intimate, marked by small landmarks that make orientation easier, and they are places where families feel welcome.

Circulation is layered and clear. The sea-bath promenade forms the central spine, while smaller streets branch from it, calm and walkable. At night, subtle lighting provides a sense of safety and comfort. During the day, vegetation softens the edges, shapes the atmosphere and weaves the architecture into the bush landscape.

This project is not only about buildings but about atmosphere. It is about remembering that humans are social beings. When we are cut off from our social environment, we lose joy and our sense of the future begins to fade.

This design resists that disconnection. It creates a place where memory and daily life overlap, where people with dementia are supported yet free. Where families and communities can come together in a setting that feels familiar, safe and alive.

Mentors
Rajan Hira, Senior Principal
Stuart Mackie, Senior Principal
Anner Chong, Senior Principal

Communal Springs: Jinan, China

The Everyday Metabolism of Quancheng Square

To speak of Quancheng Square is to speak of a kind of urban respiration – the inhalation and exhalation of a city whose pulse still beats through its subterranean aquifers. Jinan, the City of Springs, performs its civic identity through this interplay of natural filtration and hard-edged urban form. Unitec's School of Architecture teaching team has been staying near the square for nearly two decades when in Jinan – long enough to see the city's financial heart migrate eastward, toward our partner university and joint undergraduate programme at Shandong Jianzhu University (SJU). Yet Quancheng remains, obstinately, the locus of civic metabolism – a space where bodies, water and granite continue their daily negotiation. When staying in a high-rise hotel devoid of greenery or communal thresholds, the outside becomes desperately important – an extension of breath, of release, of seeing and being seen.

Quancheng Square contains the charming park-enclosed Baotu Springs: natural pools that filter down from the mountainous caldera surrounding the city to the western edge of the park. To the north lies one of the many canals that separate the square from Parc66, that ode to modernism and blob architecture, whose gleaming surfaces mark a shift from civic ritual to consumer choreography. Walking northwards through Parc66, one enters the old town, a maze of narrow streets and slender waterways feeding into Daming Lake – a walk best taken before the heat of the day presses down.

At over 700 metres in length, the square is less a plaza than a topographic event – an expanse of polished granite that becomes, in summer, a radiant field of heat, and in winter, a crystalline rink of black ice. The gleaming blue sculpture at its western end – a modernist flourish abstracted from the calligraphic character for spring – anchors the space

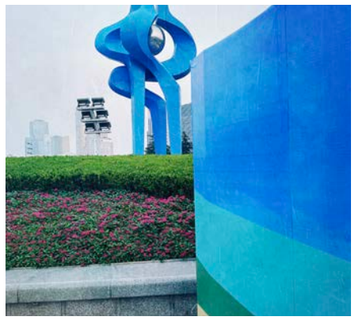
Dr Annabel Pretty.

in symbolic equilibrium, somewhere between myth and municipal branding. The square's granite plane may seem rigid and inert, yet its daily life tells another story.

Come dawn, the space belongs to the young and the old. Children carve intricate trajectories with in-line skates, while the aunties and grannies rehearse their synchronised choreographies of ribbon and rhythm – movements as fluid as the water. The air fills with the low murmur of repeated routines, a quiet defiance of the built order. By midday, heat drives everyone to the shade – what Edward Soja might have recognised as a temporary evacuation of thirdspace – but the square's dormancy is only apparent. The pigeons coo from their vast coops on the western edge, and the uncles and grandads fly kites with luminous reels and LED-tipped lines – they rehearse a different cosmology altogether: that of vertical extension, of claiming the air as the city's supplemental ground.

As evening descends, Quancheng Square is reborn. Its fountains erupt in choreographed jets, and the granite, having surrendered its stored heat, becomes once more hospitable. Families drift in from the surrounding high-rise buildings – there is laughter, dancing and kite-lights tracing ephemeral geometries overhead. It is here that Henri Lefebvre's notion of lived space – space as practice, performance, improvisation – finds full articulation. What was, in the harsh light of day, a forbidding surface of stone, becomes in twilight a living organism, a kind of open-air community of gestures.

Quancheng Square, in its contradictions, is neither a park nor a plaza, neither natural nor fully artificial. It is an urban spring – its life drawn not from water alone, but from the ceaseless flow of human occupation. In this city of a thousand springs, as it is known, this is perhaps the most vital one.



Teaching Technology in a Divided World

Sites of construction

Here we consider the historic and somewhat troubled division between the teaching of technology and humanist topics in architectural education, alongside further reflection on the emergence of digital technologies and what they might mean for architecture.

I learned how to build in my early twenties – after studying architecture I built myself a house in 1990. As a young architect I was disconcerted when a builder said to me, "Don't you worry about how to build that bulkhead framing, just tell us how big you want it and what colour you want it." Having trained as a carpenter/joiner I found it impossible not to worry over the hidden framing, and I hadn't worked out the colour. Everything in my training had warned me to be suspicious of interior decoration, yet finishes are the thing an architect obsesses over, right?

The builder's comment provoked doubt about what it was exactly that I was to do. I didn't think of myself as a scenographer as the builder seemed to suggest. Yet theatre and architecture have a lot in common, and never more so than during construction; the rich panoply of figures, machines and materials – the crane a veritable deus ex machina dropping things from the sky to resolve a detail, like the gods of ancient theatre dropping out of the sky to resolve irreconcilable plots. It is exciting to see the performance of architecture being enacted.

It took me a long time to unlearn the technical imperative in thinking about architecture. My final project in a Bachelor of Architecture (then a five-year degree) was about curtains – I was mad about them. Later I learned it is not just OK to start with colour – it's very helpful. If unlearning the technicist view sounds contrary, I think it may be a key to teaching technology.

Understanding the power of the representational and performative in technical acts of building shifts attention to the significance of architectonic elements and gesture. In later research I had the chance to consider performativity in the enactment of traditional Pacific architecture – the making of the foundational paepae/platform, for example, and the overarching roof. These collective efforts of building were consecrated at each stage with elaborate feasting. The modern 'roof shout' is a distant reminder of these sacrosanct moments.

An example from contemporary film serves to bring together the technical and ethical topics in architecture with rare insight. *Locke* (2013) is a film about a construction contractor driving through the night while orchestrating a series of cascading events by telephone. Morally compelled to support the woman who became pregnant after a brief encounter, he risks his marriage and job on a matter of principle. Driving across England at night to be with the woman as she gives birth, he abandons both family and the biggest concrete pour in England occurring on a Birmingham building site the next morning.

While the film is about a moral dilemma, it's the context that interests me – the tower. Often the scene of Capital's controlling forces, it is, in this case, a site for intensely ethical considerations. As his employers, contractors, wife and children, and not least the woman in labour, become increasingly alarmed, Locke exerts a tremendous will and moral imperative to manage things that are rapidly spiralling out of his control.

As he stresses the importance of consents for road closures, the crucial concrete slump tests and the correct tying of steel by telephone, to his worried, wavering and increasingly drunken foreman, he reaffirms the ethical dimensions of the project – to build well and to behave properly. Alongside a wealth of popular images of the building site as dangerous, exploitive, even violent, this is a redemptive view of construction – one that models a form of behaviour that is ethically informed.

A documentary about Frank Gehry's UTS building in Sydney shows bricklayers learning how to tie the immensely complex brickwork in the walls. The project displays many of the attributes of what I call 'technical feat-ism' and its title, Frank Gehry: The Architect says "Why Can't I?" (2015), highlights this wilfulness. Building ever taller skyscrapers might be an example of feat-ism – it's a feat because it's never been done before, but novelty is a dubious value.

'Let's do it because it's really hard to do' is a more complex motive. We confer value on things that are rare or difficult to realise, so Gehry's achievement becomes more than exuberant sculptural expression. Builders willingly exchange comfortable and secure working conditions for the autonomy of running their own business, to take calculated risks in all weather, to coordinate the myriad streams of material and labour necessary to realise a difficult project.

Especially moving in the documentary is the account of the bricklayer who felt his life had been so changed by the experience of building this difficult Sydney building he got a brick tattoo to record it. It is worth pointing out that the arrival of CNC-automated machinery allows the construction industry to engage less-skilled and lower-paid labour in factory settings, often without according the agency to builders that was felt by this bricklayer.

Architects welcome expertise in code writing and the promise, in theory at least, of 'file to factory' production. My point here is not to debate the remarkable opportunities digital construction technologies offer, but to remain alert to the implications of changing the methods of architectural production. Making technical and economic change politically complex for students humanises the thorny issues of consumption and architectonics. Kenneth Frampton and others have observed our tendency to see technology and the humanities as irreconcilable in the divided faculties of architecture schools.

Frampton reminds us that we tend to privilege technology as an essential but totally a-cultural discourse. However, in this part of the world we hear Pacific peoples say 'it's relational' – meaning that human relations and ethics underwrite most forms of cultural and economic exchange. I think this is a good model for teaching architects – for teaching anybody. By emphasising humanity, I think we have the best chance to teach technology well; to empower women to see the building site not always as a battleground of gender tensions, but as a rich and surprising site for enacting architecture.

Jeanette Budgett.

Wall concept design: Digitial Fabrication Class 2025

Woman as Maker

Showcasing Ten Years of Women as Makers at Unitec's School of Architecture

In September this year, Unitec's School of Architecture showcased *Woman as Maker* as part of the NZIA (New Zealand Institute of Architects) Festival of Architecture, curated by Gina Hochstein with support from Yusef Patel, Vaughan Shepherd and Carl Salas. The exhibition celebrated a decade of women designing, crafting and contributing to the shaping of our built environment. It marked an important moment of reflection and recognition, emphasising the creative agency of women in architecture and design, as well as how making functions as both a pedagogical tool and a form of cultural expression.

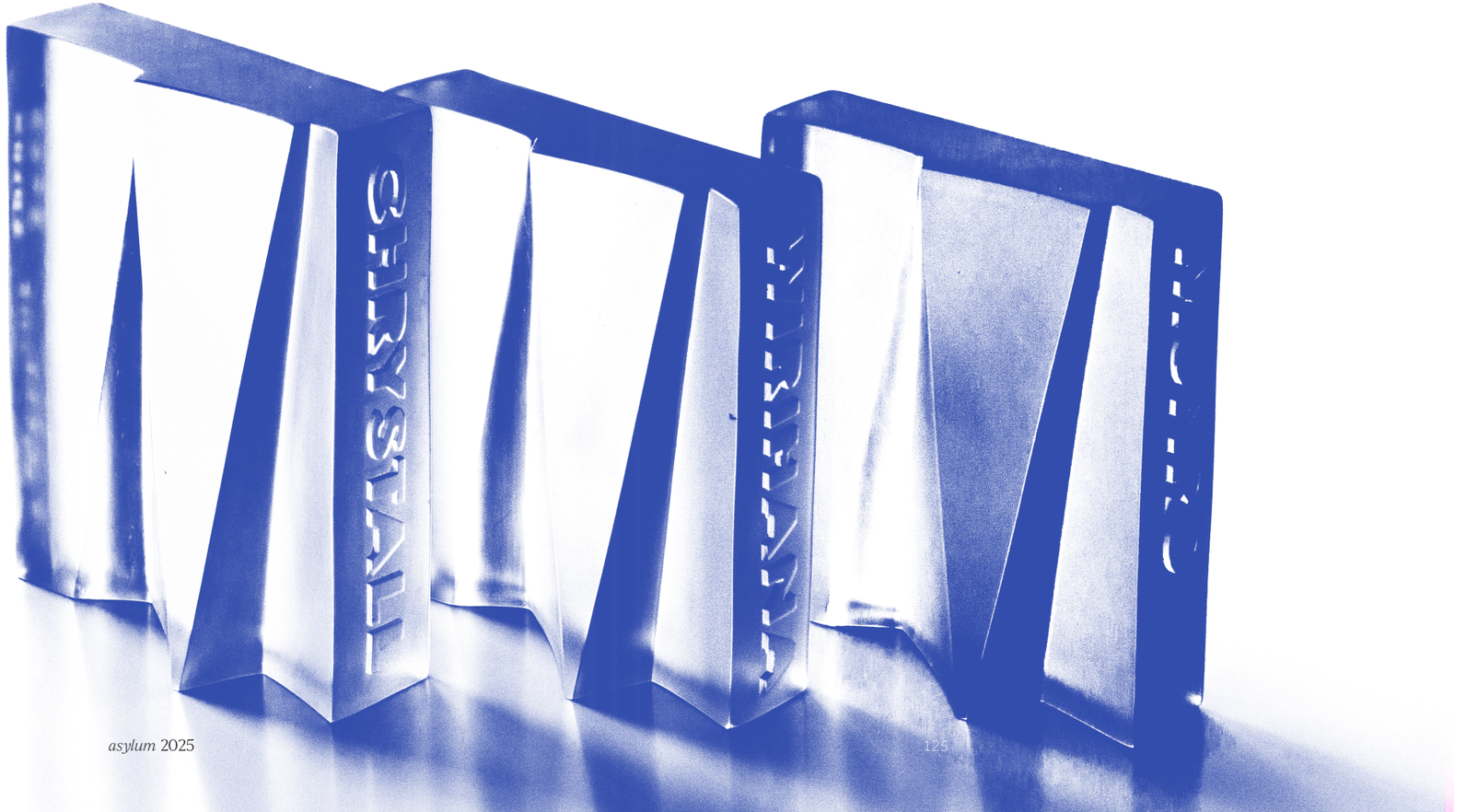
Displayed in the foyer of ASC Architects in Grey Lynn and supported by Architecture + Women New Zealand, the exhibition highlighted ways in which women have celebrated working in the workshop, modelling and creating 1:1 scale works. A range of student projects from the past decade showcased the drive, creativity and technical skill of Unitec's female ākonga and kaimahi in shaping contemporary architectural practice.

The *Motueka Workshop 2024* video created by ākonga Tai Leasua accompanied the exhibition, showcasing outstanding work from Unitec's academic kaimahi: Min Hall, Ainsley O'Connell, Gina Hochstein and Jeanette Budgett. Alongside these were inspiring projects from our ākonga – Alyssa Haley, Alice Couchman, Gemma Campbell and Kyah Suckling – whose work demonstrates how innovation and craftsmanship intersect across scales, materials and disciplines.

The collection ranged from bespoke bookshelf designs created for Ngākōroa School to digitally crafted installations such as the Auranga Performance Container, which examine new connections between materiality, technology and community involvement. Contributions such as the Mehrab for Al Hikmah Trust reflected the inclusive and responsive nature of our design teaching, where architecture acts as a dialogue between people, place and practice.

In the area of sustainability, the exhibition also featured a review of upcycled Abodo offcuts, underscoring a commitment to environmentally conscious and circular design practices. Lecturer-led projects from courses such as Glow at Artweek, Resource Matters, Digital Fabrication and the Gender Elective were also showcased, representing the breadth and depth of Unitec's curriculum. Together, *Woman as Maker* marked ten years of learning, experimentation and leadership, recognising the women whose creative and intellectual contributions continue to shape the ethos of Unitec's School of Architecture and the future of design in Aotearoa.

Gina Hochstein.



Glass Sculptures: Ainsley O'Connell


M
WA


AN
HIN

Māna Wāhine puts the women of Unitec centre-stage in *Asylum*

Māna Wāhine is where our questions as emerging designers meet the wisdom of those who have shaped the profession before us, by taking risks and having courage to challenge the norm – wāhine whose journeys have, in different ways, been shaped by their connections to Unitec's School of Architecture, and the kaupapa that has supported their growth. This special feature documents strength grounded in care, leadership built through service and the determined courage to carve space where none existed before.

The wāhine we spoke with embody this in different ways: through making, resilience, teaching, advocacy, cultural knowledge, global leadership and uplifting others. Speaking with them revealed patterns that echoed our own experiences: the pressure to prove ourselves, the uncertainty of entering the profession, and the resilience required to keep going.

This feature honours those journeys in the following pages and recognises the legacy they are building – through mentorship and innovation – and the countless ways they uplift the next generation of designers. For us, *Mana Wāhine* became a blueprint for courage and possibility, reminding us that our identities, cultures and perspectives are strengths to be carried forward.

—The student design team: Taina Marie, Claudia McGough-Morunga, Olivia Nott and Rose Todd

Min HALL

Min Hall is a designer and teacher shaped by making – learning through building, renovating and working alongside others. As one of the few women working in architecture at the time she began to practice, she found confidence through exercising curiosity and developing practical skills. Her years at Unitec have been spent creating an environment where students feel supported to give things a go, can trust their capabilities, and are encouraged to collaborate.

Ainsley O'CONNELL

Ainsley O'Connell is an architect, maker, and teacher whose path has been defined by resilience, curiosity, and a love for real practice. Her long connection to Unitec began with a desire to support the next generation, bringing stories from practice, clarity around professional pathways, and a belief that architecture should be both challenging and joyful. Ainsley is a long-serving NZRAB assessor and NZIA Fellow, roles that keep her learning and connected to the profession she cares so deeply about.

Jeanette BUDGETT

Jeanette Budgett is the founder of the Digital Fabrication stream and a cornerstone at Unitec School of Architecture, shaping generations of students through teaching, leadership and research. After twenty-five years, 2025 is Jeanette's final year of teaching at the school.

Ministry of ARCHITECTURE + INTERIORS

Three Unitec alumnae – Lindy Ewart, Jessica Thornton-Grimes and Michelle Pirret – now shape the culture of The Ministry of Architecture + Interiors, in interiors and senior leadership roles, and at the directors' table. Their kōrero traces their beginnings, the moments that shaped them, and what they have navigated in the profession. What emerges is a shared ethos grounded in capability, collaboration and an unwavering commitment to people-centred design. Their journeys, much like the spaces they create, reveal the strength that comes designing a future in which women in architecture are seen, heard and thrive.

Xinxin WANG

Xinxin Wang is a landscape architect and senior lecturer whose passion for the work began in the traditional Chinese gardens she imagined as a child – places of fragrance, storytelling and calm. Her design approach has evolved through living and working across cultures, learning to embrace change, and to see the intricacies of everyday space. At Unitec, Xinxin teaches with patience and genuine respect for each student's perspective, believing that their achievements are shared by everyone involved.

Dr Diane MENZIES

Dr Diane Menzies (Ngāti Kahungunu) is a landscape architect, advocate and mentor whose career has been guided by a deep commitment to learning. Moving from horticulture into landscape architecture, she carved her path by asking questions and embracing challenges. Diane is a former lecturer at Unitec and a past President of NZILA and IFLA, where she is now leading the newly formed Advisory Circle. Her work in design, policy, education and global leadership reflects her belief in collective practice.

Iman KHAN

Iman Khan is a lecturer and researcher whose work blends culture and digital heritage. With roots in Pakistan and the Philippines, she sees architecture as a journey shaped by people, place and care. Her teaching is grounded in curiosity, and she believes discomfort can be a powerful teacher. For Iman, the heart of architecture is people – and the moments, spaces and environments that bring us together.

"My philosophy of teaching is that the students' achievements are everyone's achievements."

— Xinxin Wang

At the time you graduated, architecture was a bloke-dominated world. What did it mean to be a young woman stepping into this environment, and how did you find your voice?

It felt very daunting. I was the youngest in my cohort and the only woman who finished in my year. Others had withdrawn for different reasons, so by the time I graduated, I was used to being surrounded entirely by men. Still, I felt like a fraud. I worried that I would have real problems working with builders, partly because of how I looked. One of my friends told me years later that he thought I was one of the lecturers' children because I looked so young.

I realised that to gain confidence and respect, I needed to learn how things were made. At that time, we hadn't been taught much about timber construction at university – it was the 1970s, and the assumption was that we would design large, technical buildings. So, I taught myself. I bought books like Carpentry in New Zealand and Plumbing in New Zealand, and I was fortunate to be around builders who were willing to show me how things worked. I learned by making, by demolishing old buildings, and by studying how materials went together.

At university, I had learned to work alongside men, which was new for me, as I'd come from all-girls schools. I ended up enjoying that dynamic and later worked part-time on building sites, helping carpenter friends in Murchison. That hands-on experience gave me confidence as a designer.

My first project was the Murchison abattoir. A local farmer heard that a young architect had moved into the valley and asked me to design a new facility. I visited another abattoir to understand how it worked, then drew up my design. When construction started, it didn't look like what I'd drawn. Back then, once you had a building consent, no one checked the build, so the builders just changed things as they went. I still drive past that little building sometimes and think, "That's vaguely familiar – but it's not what I designed."

You chose to go to the backblocks of Murchison to learn how to make things. What did this period teach you about confidence and earning respect as a woman in practice in rural settings?

That period was all about learning practicality and self-reliance. I learned things like not drawing a roof that overlaps in a way you can't get your hand in to hammer or screw it. Those lessons came from doing the work myself – holding a hammer, building things and renovating our old house.

We stripped out the inside, built a mezzanine floor, reused old windows and made things work with whatever was available. I began designing small projects for people who had chosen alternative lifestyles – artists, craftspeople, people working with their hands. We used local materials: river stones, native timbers from the local sawmill and sometimes trees we milled ourselves.

That time taught me how empowering making can be. I originally wanted to be self-sufficient, to learn to build so I could look after myself. Many of us then thought the world might not last forever and that we'd need to survive on our own skills. Over time, that thinking evolved – from personal survival to understanding the importance of planetary survival.

What first drew you to the idea of making as a vital part of learning and architecture?

It began when my father brought home the New Zealand Whole Earth Catalogue in the early 1970s. That book covered everything – home birth, building out of earth, domes and self-sufficiency. It opened my eyes to alternative ways of living and creating. From then on, I collected books about making and building. Those books became my education in how architecture connects to life and the land.

"For me, teaching is about relationships – between teachers, students and ideas. The most satisfying projects in my career have come from great relationships."

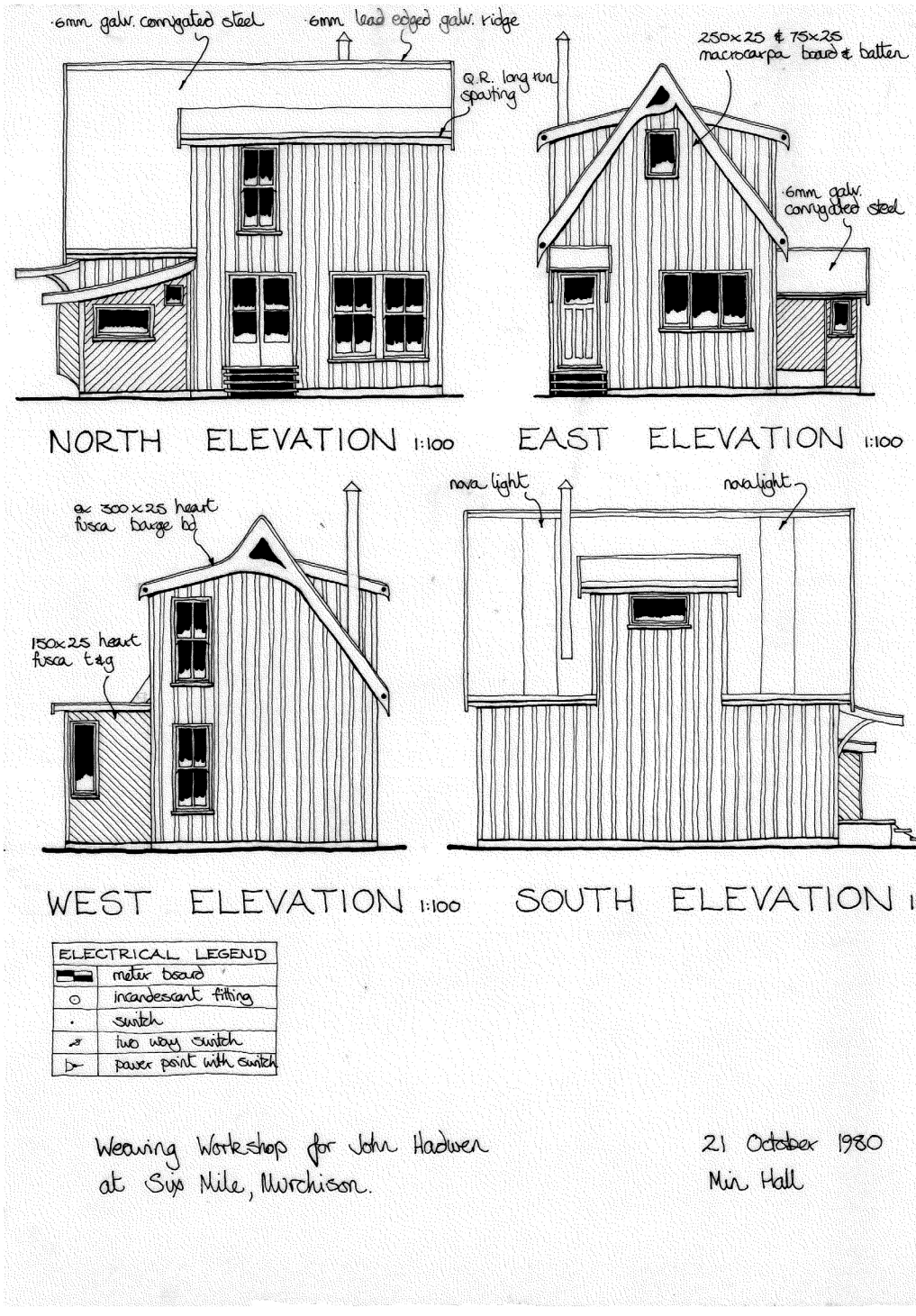
What has it meant to you personally to see young women thrive in workshop and do the mahi on-site?

I feel incredibly proud of them. Watching women jump in with enthusiasm and confidence is one of the most rewarding parts of teaching. On the marae, I've seen students take charge of tools, build ovens and lead aspects of construction with energy and curiosity. Their excitement and pride in what they achieve give me a real sense of satisfaction. I just want to make sure women continue to have those opportunities.

How have collaborations like Te Hononga Māori Studio and working with Rau Hoskins shifted the culture of architectural education at Unitec as a whole?

Te Hononga is an extraordinary programme. It's been running for a long time and has involved so many people, communities and iwi. I think it's something really special to Unitec. These collaborative, real-world projects have shaped the culture of the school by grounding design education in practice, culture and connection.

Min
HALL.
Lecturer
Architecture



Sketch: Min Hall

I remember when we had Studio 19, a design-and-build programme led by Dave Strachan Architects. That was another powerful experience for students, especially women, though it became harder to run after changes to the Health and Safety Act. Still, programmes like these are essential. They embody Unitec's philosophy of "real world learning" and prepare students with skills that employers recognise.

Do you feel like culture in architecture schools is changing to better support women, or is there still a long way to go?

I think things have improved significantly. Organisations like Architecture + Women NZ have made a huge difference, and books like Making Space have helped give visibility to women architects.

At Unitec, women now make up more than half the student body, and that's been true for some time. I see strong, capable women coming out of all the architecture schools. There's also been a cultural shift toward sustainability. When I first started teaching, maybe one student per year was genuinely interested in sustainable design. By 2023, that had completely changed – it became a central part of how students thought.

What would you like your students, especially younger women, to carry forward from your teaching into their practice and their careers?

I want my students to carry a sense of spirited inquiry – to be brave enough to ask difficult questions of their employers, clients and the industry. I hope they'll be conscious about sustainability and understand the impact of their design choices.

I want women to know they don't have to sacrifice everything else in life to be great architects. Balance is important. Many of the men who rise to the top of the field do so at great personal cost, and I think women bring something different – an understanding of community, partnership and balance – that makes the profession stronger.

If you imagine architecture education 20 years from now, what role would you want making and hands-on learning to be playing within it?

I'd like to return to the idea that students should spend time learning a trade before studying architecture – six months of carpentry, metalwork or another hands-on skill. I think architects learn best through real experience, on-site, and through consistent engagement with the process of building.

Ideally, architecture education would combine on-the-job experience with block courses throughout a career. It would allow architects to grow through practice, not just theory. Too many students start at 17 or 18, moving straight from one classroom to another without much life experience. I think real, practical exposure early on would make a huge difference.

Min

HALL.

What does 'mana wāhine' mean to you in your work and your life, and how would you like to see it embedded in architectural education and the industry moving forward?

For me, mana wāhine is about recognising and celebrating the strength and capability of women. I want young women to realise how amazing they are and how much they can achieve. I make a point of showing examples of women in my teaching – female architects, builders, apprentices – so that representation becomes normal, not exceptional.

Inclusivity should be embedded in how we teach and who we hire. We don't want only men speaking about women's work. I'd like to see more women in teaching and leadership positions.

"Women are pillars of strength, and the industry benefits from their perspectives, empathy and creativity."

Do you have any final thoughts or prompts for students?

I often feel like a fraud, especially in academia, because I'm not particularly digital or theoretical. But that's also been a gift – it's made me a better collaborator. Knowing what I can't do means I reach out to others who can, and that's where great ideas emerge.

I love working alongside others to shape and test designs. Collaboration brings out the best in everyone.

"Builders, fabricators, students – each has something vital to contribute. That's where I find joy in architecture. Collaboration, more than anything else, is what keeps the work alive."

— Min Hall

Lecturer
Architecture

What first drew you to architecture – was there a spark or did it emerge gradually?

It was more gradual. I was lucky – at school we had a career guidance counsellor. They asked, "What are your hobbies? What do you do?" And as a throwaway line I said, "As a kid my parents renovated houses and there were all these rolls of wallpaper. I used to roll them out and design cities. I'd get books out of the bookcase and make buildings and towns." I supposed it drove my parents nuts, because I was always stuck all over the floor playing – she said – "architecture."

We lived across the road from Jim Hackshaw, who was a part of the Group Architects. He had a house I thought was great – really unusual. My mother would say, "Oh, poor [bloke], he hasn't got a proper house," but I thought it was so cool. I spoke to him about becoming an architect, and he said, "Absolutely not. Architecture isn't for women. No, you wouldn't have the skills. You'd have to climb up on roofs. No, you can't do this. No, absolutely not." So of course I thought, "This sounds good," and went off and did intermediate. Back then it was just marks to get into architecture – no portfolios – which was lucky because I'd never done art. The attitude at my school was you only did art if you weren't good at maths or writing.

So, is this age 17?

Yes, 17. I did my intermediate, got into architecture and thought, "I'll give it a whirl." I felt at home straight away. I still thank the career guidance woman, because I don't know that I would have come to architecture.

On my first day at architecture school, I wore my favourite red-checkered dress and when I walked in, it was all guys. Women in those days could not get away with bright skirts. I went home at lunchtime and changed into jeans and a T-shirt to blend in and not be noticed – the women in my year, we weren't visibly women. There were eight in the cohort – the year before, there were three – and we were going to make it even if it wasn't expected.

From your early years in London and New York, and then in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, what were some defining moments for you?

When I graduated, there was no work. Eventually I got a job at Murray North, which was mainly engineers. I bought a house and was made redundant two days later. So, I cried. But there was a man who used to take the bus with me to work and one day he said, "What are you looking so miserable about?" I told him I'd just lost my job, and he said, "I think I can help, our office is looking for somebody. I'll have a word." That's how I got the job at a larger multidisciplinary company. That really changed things for me.

Being taken seriously there felt like a step up. I was the only woman in the architecture department, apart from one woman in interiors. It was multidisciplinary practice, which I liked, with graphics, engineers, interiors, and that opened my eyes. The fact that they trusted me to do things was huge. I'd be thinking, "What do I do?" but luckily I had great mentors.

Then I went travelling. I spent about three months in New York working on brownstone buildings, then went to London and joined Building Design Partnership. There, I felt like I was in my niche. I left BDP to travel, and while I was away, they wrote a letter to me asking me to come back and run a project I'd been working on because the project architect had left. That was a defining moment.

I was 28 when I became project architect for the UK headquarters for Digital Equipment Company. At one point, a client refused to have me as the architect because I was a woman. The firm stood behind me and said, "She's got the knowledge for the job, so she's who you're getting." The client rep said to me, "I will never acknowledge you. I will never talk to you in public. Don't expect to be introduced to people from the US. I don't want you, but I'm stuck with you, so you'd better do a good job."

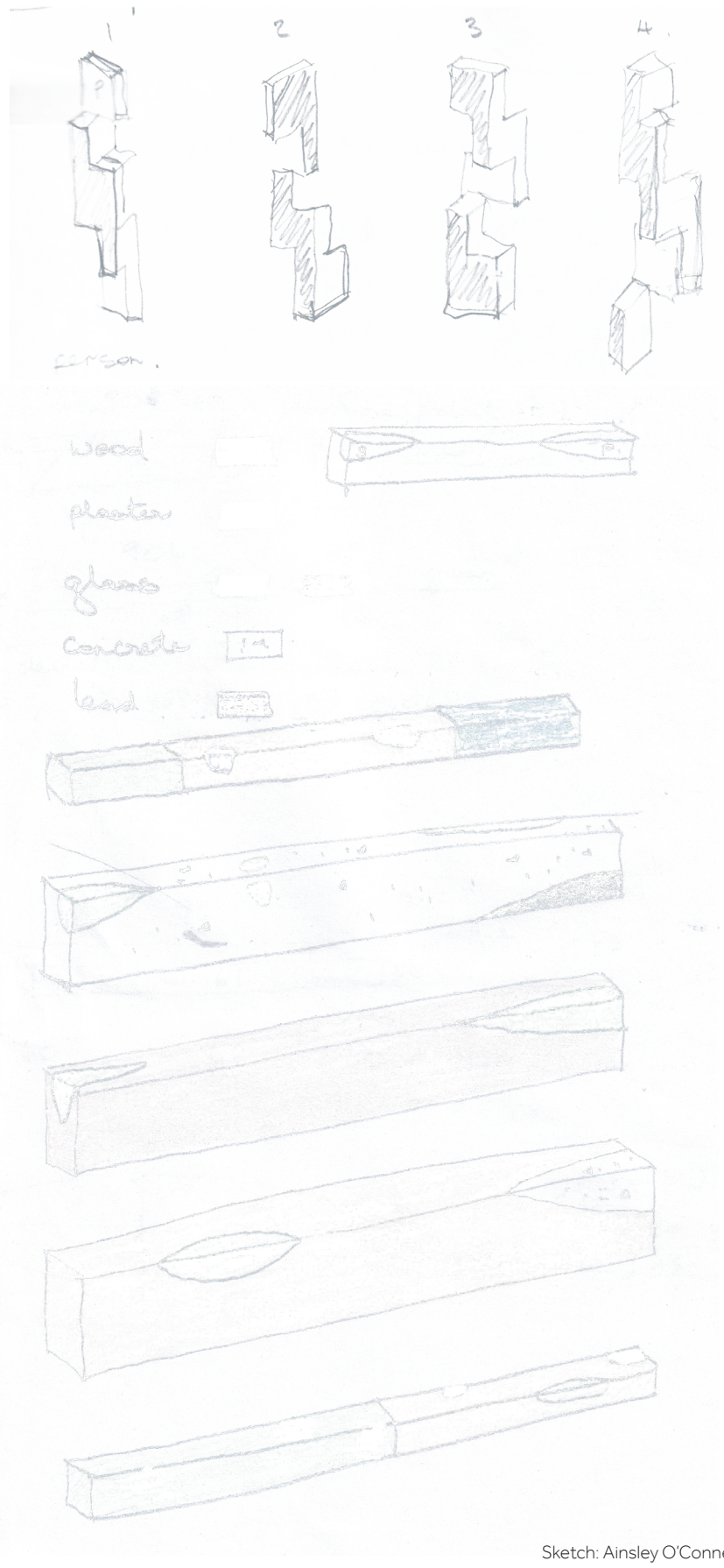
What did you say to that?

I didn't really say anything. That's something I admire about women now – you're much more ready to push back. But at the end of the job, he apologised and said he'd been wrong and that I'd done a great job. We actually got on quite well afterwards.

I have managed to have a lot of fun in these scenarios. I had an older male colleague who worked for me – we went into this meeting with about 30 people and everybody bowed to my assistant and looked after him. Then someone said to me, "Could you get the coffee, please?" I went, "Sure!" I went and made coffees for everybody, put them out, then we all sat

Ainsley
O'CONNELL.

Lecturer
Architecture



Sketch: Ainsley O'Connell

down, and they turned to my coworker to start the meeting. He just sat there and everyone's thinking, "What's going on?" Then I said, "Well, gentlemen, if we're ready, let's start." You should have seen them blush! Sometimes you've got to have a bit of fun, otherwise it would drive you nuts.

What brought you to Unitec and why did teaching become a part of your journey?

John Sutherland brought me to Unitec. He'd been a director at the Auckland practice I worked at and had left to head up the new degree at Unitec. I had been the project architect for the Auckland Town Hall adaptive reuse project and then undertook a client liaison role in the Civic Theatre project. After my third child I reinvented a new role for myself because I couldn't easily do big project work. I had run a teaching session at lunchtimes for people who wanted to get registered. I had already been registered in NZ and UK for a number of years so I decided to focus on setting up universal systems such as better drawing checking systems.

The benefit of that role was that I could bring my son and put him under the table in his carrycot. I wanted to work from home, but they wouldn't give me a laptop. Interestingly, they gave laptops to two colleagues – both men. It felt a bit sexist. Then John rang from Unitec and said, "We're looking for someone to teach professional practice. I'm not doing it anymore. We're looking for someone to replace me. Are you interested?"

Where I had been working, there were the directors, then two practice directors, one in interiors, and me, in architecture – both women. We were the only women and had shares in the company. They announced three new directors who would leapfrog above me – all men I had trained. I was incensed. They told me, "You're the wrong age."

On a bad day I'd think I was just useless. It really hit my confidence. I thought, I can't stay here when they've just told me that they don't value me. All of that coincided with the Unitec offer and beginning to practice art. My husband, who is an architect, said, "You're so stressed. You should get out of that den of males." So I did. I was head-hunted and paid more. At the company where I had been working - there, I'd been paid less than the people who reported to me – they were all men. When I resigned, they all went, "Why are you going?" I'd had good times and good friends, but in retrospect, no wonder I was stressed. Coming to Unitec was being thrown in the deep end, again – but I think I may thrive on that.

Did you build your own practice in London?

When I first went to London, I worked for two architects – a husband and wife – from their home. After a few months, I'd realised I'd never meet anyone working in their basement, so I went to BDP – initially in landscape – and then transferred into architecture and got registered in the UK. Eventually I left BDP, where I met my husband. After he left, people were very annoyed that he had – and they took it out on me. When I handed in my notice, the director said, "Well, it's only natural for a woman to want to work with her husband." And I said, "Actually, that's not what I'm doing."

I went to see a friend, a landscape architect at another practice. She was having a baby, and she asked me if I could run her practice for her. That was fun – I worked on Ardross Castle up in Scotland, restoring the landscape, and enjoyed it. This made me think, "I'll work from home and we could have a family."

Is that how you merged motherhood and architecture?

My husband and I used to argue about how we'd manage having children. He'd say, "Well, I can't stay home," and I'd respond, "Well, I can't stay home either."

Yes, for a time. When the kids were two and four, my husband – who's British – always wanted to come to New Zealand. I joke that it's the reason we're together. We came here and agreed whoever got the first job would go full time, the other person would go part-time.

I studied full-time for three months learning the NZBC and processes here to get registration. I got registered and one of the assessors, a Director at my former practice, offered me a job. I started there three days a week. The work was below my skill level but when the project architect working on a hotel job left, I immediately said, "I'll do it. I'll be the project architect," and they went "Oh, I don't know." But I pushed. It worked.

Ainsley
O'CONNELL.

Lecturer
Architecture

When I moved on to the Town Hall project, I started three days a week, which quickly became six – three days a week wasn't possible. It was on site for two years and I spent a lot of the last year on site – which I loved. Health and Safety was different then. I had a hard hat and they had communal boots for men, and of course none of them fitted me – I bought my own. I used to take the kids there on a Saturday and wander around. That would never be allowed now, but they're fond memories – it's affectionately known in our household as 'Mummy Hall'.

Would you change anything about your job, looking back?

I do sometimes regret always working in commercial architecture – it was a fantastic and an incredible buzz – but projects are long, so you don't do many. I always wanted to work in housing and now I am. Once these houses are all built, hopefully the investment is worth it – if not, we are just having fun, very expensive fun. If I'd had a plan, maybe I would have worked with a housing company, but in a lot of those you wouldn't get design control, so I am happy with the path I took.

You've worked alongside some successful architects, your husband included, yet you've clearly stood in your own light. How have you maintained your independence and authorship within the profession?

I'm not sure I have stood in my own light, apart from now. I like having my own business, but I've also mellowed. Leaving the company, I was angry, but I realised being angry doesn't do anything. When I was told, "You'll never be a director, Ainsley, you're just not the right profile or age," I took it as something to move away from.

You can't let anyone overshadow you! My husband and I worked together in London for a while, and we work together now. If you work together, and live together, as well as design together, you might argue a lot. Everything we design together is a compromise. It's not what I would do by myself, and it's not what he would do by himself. It's better that every decision has to be a consensus – it just takes forever, but together we get there.

Have you managed to keep doing everything that you like to do?

Sometimes, I get overwhelmed – there are so many things to do that I don't know where to start. I feel like my art practice gets pushed aside a bit unless I have a deadline, then everything else goes out the window. I'm a great initiator and a terrible finisher – my mind has all these projects. I do finish them, but not with the same speed that I started!

If you look at the higher echelons – which I do often – there still aren't many women. Years ago, I asked someone at another large firm why they didn't have women in senior leadership. Their answer was, "There aren't any decent women applying." I thought, "You've got to be kidding." There is all this terminology in practices – partner, director – but the real truth is at the Companies Office where you see who owns the shares – they're the people with the power, the shareholders.

"I think it's great that women are much more comfortable with themselves, and that we don't necessarily have to be shunted. Hopefully, as time goes on, it'll get better and better."

If you talk to women of my generation, a lot of them set up their own practices because they could see they were stuck under that glass ceiling. They were never going to progress, so they did their own thing. Now there are more women in control of their time and destiny, and mixing practice with children.

Given that you're taking a step back from teaching next year, can you sum up your journey at Unitec?

Teaching has enabled me to consolidate my views on architecture. I think teaching professional practice was really very rewarding. Working in studio was great – I like that we did the build project, actually making ideas three-dimensional. I think that doing an architecture degree is amazing. I wish everybody could do it. Even if you never work in architecture, people do all sorts of other things from having studied architecture – you just see the world differently.

"I think you have to be true to yourself and follow your intuition."

— Ainsley O'Connell

Ainsley O'CONNELL.

Lecturer
Architecture

What does mana wāhine mean to you within the architectural profession?

Identifying what's important, staying in focus and being persistent!

What first brought you here to Unitec, and what inspired you to start teaching here?

After I graduated from Auckland University in 1987, I was invited back as a critic and guest tutor for studio projects. I did some lecturing in Sarah Treadwell's Women and Architecture course.

While still practising, I became a design fellow at Auckland University before coming to Unitec in 2001. The opportunity to teach full-time gave me the chance to begin a research career, and in 2007 I completed my Master of Architecture degree.

Looking back on all of that, what kept you here for twenty-five years?

Unitec was very collegial, particularly in the Building One days (the old Carrington Hospital building). We had a lot more freedom and space for constucting projects in and around the building. Students were hands-on and more present. There were dedicated studio spaces, no hot desks, so students more or less lived in the studio.

"Studio culture was alive, and the parties were great."

We had after-work drinks in the head's office, lots of exhibitions, and the end of year Gradfest parties were legendary. Teaching has a terrific rhythm; it's not the monotony of 9–5 job, 52 weeks a year. There are natural breaks and endings. I feel very lucky to have had the privilege to teach for so long.

You introduced Digital Fabrication to Unitec in 2003. How has teaching and practising with these tools evolved since then, and where do you see it going?

I went to Victoria University and they had a fantastic workshop with CNC tools. I decided that our students needed to play with them. I've always been interested in materials and making. Unitec's joinery department had a big old CNC router, but they weren't going to let us play with it, so we had to go to Rosebank Road. The course revolved around a series of site visits to small industries using CNC laser-cutters and routers.

Students were asked to form semi-professional relationships with fabricators from the industry. Their projects engaged strongly with the tectonics of materials and jointing – not the 'tube of toothpaste' 3D printers that came later. In design terms, digital tools can produce highly ornamental work, but I became less interested in extravagant form for its own sake. That particular 'digital moment' had its time.

While the promise of digital tools for productivity, the so-called 'file-to-factory' production, is still with us, I became more interested in the culture of building. We tend to see technology in a very acultural way, divorced from particular contexts and times, and I began to wonder where the ethical and cultural dimensions come into play.

You've collaborated with artists like Allan McDonald to create architecturally driven projects. What does working across multiple disciplines open that traditional practice doesn't?

Allan's artistic and photographic interest was in the old buildings of the city, which included many Edwardian shop buildings. The Christchurch earthquakes suddenly posed a great risk to the future of these buildings. New seismic rules threatened their economic feasibility, which often meant potential demolition and especially so in Ōtautahi Christchurch, where they bowled whole streets of the old city.

Increasingly, I became interested in memory, loss and urban character – the built backdrop to our lives that often goes unnoticed. Teaching technology was a great way to straddle the profession and teaching; however, this new research obliged me to look beyond the technical and tectonic.

"So many people have a stake in architecture who are not architects or clients. They've been called 'the missing others' – the people who participate in and occupy our built environment, but seldom get consulted."

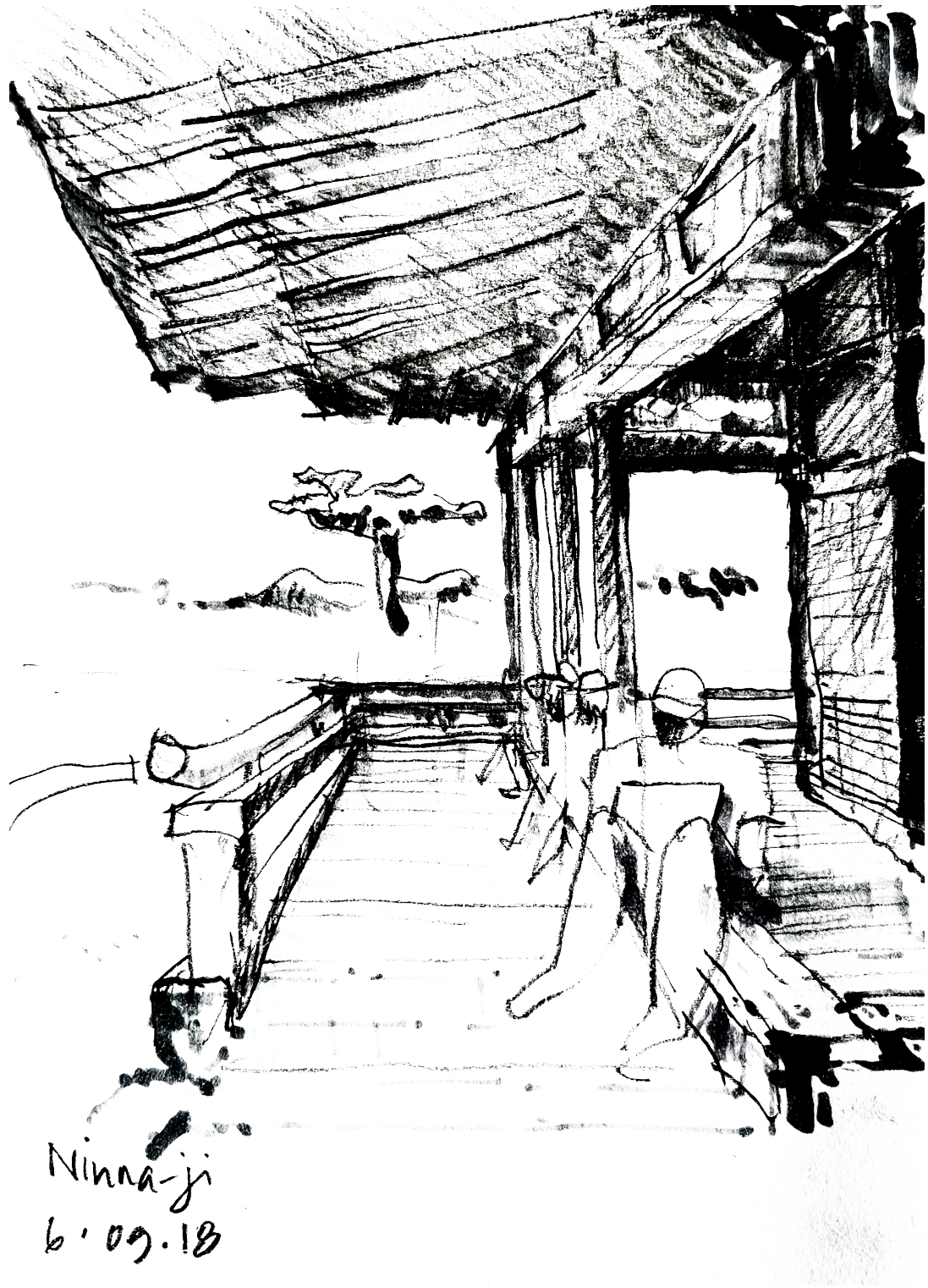
Architects need to be alert to the larger public urban realm they serve. Working with Allan was just terrific – he made images and I wrote on a parallel topic so the two pieces of work sat alongside each other.

I explored the history of the shophouse in Aotearoa New Zealand and went on to compare it to the Asian shophouse. This vernacular form – shops underneath with apartments above – has become a really popular mixed-use model to rejuvenate the urban realm. It was a perfect typology in a pre-car, largely pedestrian world. That's what makes it so attractive again today, when we are trying to make compact, sustainable and walkable cities.

Jane Jacobs said that cities need old buildings for artists and people with high-risk ideas who can't pay high rents. Banks and insurance companies fund new buildings – they're low risk – whereas

Jeanette
BUDGETT.

Lecturer
Architecture



Sketch: Jeanette Budgett

What role do you see technology playing in the adaptive reuse of architecture? Is there room to balance this innovation and heritage?

old buildings support diversity. Many small towns will never see those old buildings rebuilt if they're lost, and they're incredibly valuable in those contexts. Who would construct a new building to house a charity shop? So the collaboration with Allan was very productive.

There are increasingly subtle ways to strengthen old buildings – fibreglass corseting, for example. The visible K-frames you see on the exteriors of façades are more overt signs of strengthening. Adaptive reuse is about entering into dialogue with the existing building and finding a tectonic response that speaks to it.

A surprising number of new uses will fit into buildings not originally designed for those purposes. Adaptive reuse is a really powerful strategy – you're obliged to think about what is already there, what it stands for, and what your changes will mean.

"Alteration work can afford to let go of a single overriding concept and embrace incremental change and detail over time. There's plenty of room for innovation, and it's not all about technical belts and braces."

Over your career, have you had to carve out space for yourself as a woman in architecture and academia? Are there any key moments you remember?

I was probably outspoken at times. When I started here, there were only one or two other female staff in the school, out of twenty. We weren't a part of the landscape or interior departments. I've enjoyed the addition of those disciplines, historically more associated with women. They're crucial to a broader understanding of the world architects design within.

"The building site is riddled with gender tensions. It's still a very male world."

Putting on your boots and entering that space is important. I always felt good about taking students on site – we'd visit four or five building sites a semester. It's important for students to learn the language of building and how to talk to builders.

What about when you were a student yourself – did you feel like your world was less than your male counterparts' or did it feel equal?

I think many women end up facing the dual demands of family and career, though I didn't face that particular challenge. There was historically a high attrition rate, of women leaving the profession, for that reason. The greater acceptability of part-time work today may be changing that.

Sarah Treadwell was my undergrad supervisor and later my master's supervisor. She was an important influence and incredibly committed to women's voices in architecture. Under her supervision I pursued a research interest in curtains (previously unheard of); however, I also wore overalls to school a lot!

'Mana wāhine' is about strength, resilience and leadership carried across generations. How do you see your own journey reflecting these values?

Women are crucial to architecture and it's really important that we don't see ourselves as having to do it on our own. Modernism is so often the story of heroic architecture and heroic male architects. The star architect of the 1980s and 90s, the solo genius, is really an outdated concept.

"We've learned from Māori and Pacific cultures about collectivity. My generation focused on individual genius, yet increasingly we see the need for collective intelligence in the way we make architecture."

Are there key moments that really changed the course of where you are now?

Going to the Cook Islands in 2003 initiated my master's research into colonial missionary architecture in the Pacific. Understanding Pacific tectonics and notions of space is so important to how we think about architecture in this part of the world, and I hope that's really starting to be seen.

How do you think we can develop this past narrative for the now, and build history without erasing it – the redevelopment of what maybe already exists?

The teaching of architectural history remains really important! I've probably attended more architectural history conferences than architectural technology conferences. I don't think architects ever make anything completely new. We need to remember history, respond to it and work with it.

"That's why I think the commonplace alteration is so important. It's often regarded as a minor activity by architects, but it's actually a significant act of architectural interpretation."

In the present moment in Aotearoa's architectural landscape, what do you see as the biggest issues, and what are your hopes for the profession's future?

The urban realm is really important in Aotearoa. Architects need to move beyond the single architectural object and ask what kind of cities we want. Sprawling suburbs of quiet, sleeping houses, or more vibrant, dense and diverse cities?

Jeanette
BUDGETT.
Lecturer
Architecture

We must build ethically with respect to the environment. We have to think about adaptive reuse, material reuse, building with timber and, probably most importantly, building and consuming less. French architects Lacaton and Vassal have a lot to teach us in that regard. Design decisions might not necessarily be architectural ones in the traditional sense, but can focus on performative function. Routine maintenance, renovation and clever digital tech can transform the use of existing space without the need to build more.

"Architects need to think through the distorting imperatives of capitalism. We really have to think a lot harder about that, and to look after our water and public spaces. Who defends public space, and how do we make it better?"

What do you hope your students have carried forward from you into their professional careers or further study?

I hope they take drawing seriously. Drawing is how we communicate ideas. Technical drawing, this necessary tool of the discipline, upholds a certain authority, while design drawing is a way to look, to attend to form and context. Hand drawing is cool and matters a lot.

If you could give a first-year student one piece of advice, what would it be?

Collaborate more.

Collectives and collaborations – some people instinctively understand them and some don't. I don't think I did. I grew up in a fairly individualistic environment and we are still mostly tested as individuals. Working with somebody else changes everything.

"Collaboration is powerful – and fun. A problem shared is a problem halved."

— Jeanette Budgett

Jeanette
BUDGETT.

Lecturer
Architecture

What originally drew each of you to architecture and design?

Jessica: I've always been creative, enjoyed organising, problem solving, and interior design captured all of that. It was always what I wanted to do, and really is my dream job. It captured all my interests, passions, strengths, and it felt like the one thing that I could do and could see myself doing it for life and it not feeling like just a job. I always want to go to work.

Michelle: Design is a second career of mine, but my whole childhood was surrounded by it. My parents always bought a house and renovated it, gutted them, and we lived in the houses while they did it. It would be a whole process – a few years and then we'd move on to another house. As I got older, I noticed the finishes and the materiality, and I started helping with the renovations too. When I was in my 20s, my dad started asking for my input – what paint colour should we use, what should we do the kitchen in. He really trusted me – it became my thing, that I would make the house a home. My mum died when I was younger, and I was the only female and person to infuse love into the house.

Lindy: Similar to what Michelle said – it was always around me. My father had a construction company that did design–build, so it was about seeing things get thought about, and then get documented, and then get built. From a really young age I would make models and things, so creating spaces and construction was always a part of my life. At college I was choosing between architecture and the sciences, but in the end, it was always going to be architecture – creating spaces and constructions and getting them built.

"Working together towards a common goal – tapping into each other's strengths, supporting people..." – *Michelle Pirret*

What makes The Ministry of Architecture + Interiors' team culture unique?

Michelle: I think it is the fact that Malcolm and Lindy [Ewart] are a married couple. They treat the ministry like an extension of their family. To me, that's quite unique, and seeing a couple at work as well, who seem to always get along and agree on things – that's inspiring. There are open honest conversations in our team, from my perspective, we seem to be included in a lot of aspects of the business growth and development. Then being able to have a bit of fun as well, on the side – like we're a little bit of family.

You are part of a firm that clearly supports and celebrates women. What does that support look like in action, day to day?

Jessica: Whether it's in the office or outside of the office, the support is shown in how we're treated. For example, although it's slowly changing the construction industry still tends to be more male dominated. This is something that becomes very apparent when on a building site, and it can feel intimidating at times if you're one of the few, if not the only woman on site - which I have experienced before. Support is shown in how I'm not treated any differently despite this.

This year, in particular, we've launched a women's group within Ministry. A bi-monthly meeting is held; it's a very informal, open discussion time for us all to have a catch-up and discuss various aspects based on a couple of points that we've kind of prepped beforehand, just to share. I think that's important – a lot of us think everyone else has it perfectly figured out, or hasn't had the same experience, so I think that is really, really valuable.

Do you think that group environment, where you feel like you can speak freely, helps with growth as individuals and as a group?

I think so, because there's no point having a conversation where everyone feels guarded. These conversations are very unfiltered and, at times, very vulnerable for some people. It's really good, because someone will ask how to handle something, and someone will have experienced it. It's not until you do talk about these things, that it becomes apparent that multiple women have had the same experiences.

What prompted that?

Lindy: I went to a women in leadership seminar, and was actually, quite frankly, appalled by what women see. I am in business with my husband – I don't get judged for being a female within the office and I don't judge. People talk about gender bias, but it didn't register with me, because I'm not in a business where I am subjected to it. I'd been cruising, thinking it didn't affect our team.

But then I go to something like that and I hear the disgusting behaviour directed towards women. Hearing the stories and the speakers made me realise I need to be more supportive and recognise that it does

Lindy **Ewart** Director
Michelle **Pirret** Senior Interior Designer
Jessica **Thornton-Grimes** Interior Designer

MINISTRY

happen. I have been subject to gender bias by clients and contractors, and I have pushed through that, but within businesses, it is worse than I thought.

So, I can do something towards that – make sure that it never surfaces in our business, but also prepare our team for the kind of negative gender-driven situations out there that I wasn't as aware of. That's why we have some relatively tough preparatory discussions. And knowing that it has happened to other people, and they've gotten through it and can move on with their careers and lives, not be defined by the fact they're a woman, helps everyone.

How do you interpret designing for people?

Jessica: For me it means a human-centred approach. It's great to capture the brief and fulfil the checklist of all the rooms and spaces required – that's 2D. But also think in 3D, visualise walking through it, how does that work? It's not just about pure functionality or making everything look aesthetic. After COVID, in particular, how do we draw people back into an office? What does the office have to offer that your house doesn't? Think of it that wayand that's leading with a human-centred design.

Michelle: When we do a brief with the client for an office, there's always the company's mission statement or how they want to be perceived online or by their clients, but actually, what I like to look into is their culture and what do they do as a team behind the scenes. Yes, you've got your front of house and that's what your clients are going to see. It's the back of house that's going to make everyone happy. So, it's important to get two sides of the story.

Lindy: Adding a different layer to that is making sure all of these things stay relevant, when a lot of the design work I do is actually business-to-business, helping our client bodies figure out if big projects are actually feasible. It's all about dollars and GFA and scale and all those kinds of things. But, in reality, if something big and this dense is going to work, it's my job – in that scale of the QSs, figuring out dollars – to make sure that we are not promising something of a scale that stacks up but humans don't want to use.

All the stuff that these guys have said has to be at the heart of those bigger decisions. There are one million decisions – if they're made without this human side in mind, it's quite disastrous.

How do you think your time at Unitec has influenced your approach to practice today?

Jessica: From uni days, there was a big emphasis on the practical aspect over theory, especially in interiors. That was the overarching thing for me. When I came here, that translated... It's not just reading, writing and the brief. It's materiality – it's the visual aspect. This is a visual job, so the practical aspect has really helped.

Lindy: I agree. Even 20-something years ago, the practical aspect of the Unitec degree was recognised in the industry. We often hire students, who then graduate and join our team. When we sit in on critiques, I always think, "well done to Unitec" for keeping that focus. Their students produce thesis projects that are not just theoretical – they're buildings with innovative ideas.

That's the main goal: to understand why you're designing something, what you're designing, how it comes together, and why it fits the environment. You also need to understand how people will actually build it, and who you need to consult along the way. Ultimately, it's about knowing your role within a wider environment and how everything connects – and being able to talk about it.

Is there a moment where you've felt really proud to have this company, or proud of your team?

Lindy: I feel really proud every day. It's not moment-to-moment. Projects are probably the high points – we won that tender, we won that competition – that locks in future work for the business. But as far as being proud of the business – every day. It's a continual thing – doesn't mean it's always happy and successful. There are always bad days. There are lots of people doing lots of different things and there's some awesome stuff that gets done. Every time I come across something that our team has done, I'm like, my gosh, that's cool. That's a proud moment. If it's not the team, it's that person or that person.

"When we design spaces collaboratively, it encourages better work and leads to happier spaces." – *Jessica Thornton-Grimes*

Lindy **Ewart** **Director**
Michelle **Pirret** **Senior Interior Designer**
Jessica **Thornton-Grimes** **Interior Designer**

MINISTRY
MINISTRY OF ARCHITECTURE + INTERIORS

When you talk about designing for the future, what kind of future do you each hope to help build?

Michelle: A future where healthy work environments lead the design. Over the years, especially during economic downturns, we've seen a lot of offices where they just jam as many people as they can into it and don't consider lunchrooms and breakout rooms. I'd like to see the end of that, because I don't think those are nice places to work in.

Jessica: I think what we leave behind when we move into the future – office designs that create a feeling of less isolation. You go into more traditional layouts, and think I could not imagine sitting in a cubicle all day. It's not that everything has to be open-plan, but how people work together has changed, and the office needs to change with that.

Lindy: I'd like to see more permanent buildings. If you go to London, or many European cities, you see big stone buildings that have been there for decades. Acknowledging that can't happen everywhere, but in our cities, I want to see more. You only get history if you build things that are worth keeping – designed to be there for hundreds of years, not just ticking a 50-year code box.

How have you seen the profession shift for women since you first entered it?

Michelle: The roles have changed too. Some men are now the main caregiver, and the woman goes and does a full day's work. That's a shift I've noticed.

Lindy: I can remember sending emails out to a project team at midnight because that was the time I had to work, and it wasn't that kind of normal back then. Now I think it is – people realise you can have several lives happening at once and you just make it all work. Business doesn't only happen in business hours. Fathers can take a day off to look after kids, and if they've got work to do, they'll probably do it in the evening.

It's a general overall shift – more flexibility and more overlap between life and work is becoming more normalised and acceptable. Therefore, it makes it easier for women to be in the workplace and do what they need to do.

What legacy do you hope to leave as designers and as women in this industry – or in life?

Jessica: It's not just the physical projects and office designs we leave behind, but how your influence on others has shaped them as people. I'm a big believer and you might not always remember exactly what someone said, but you always remember how they made you feel. It's definitely had an effect on me – people who have supported me versus people who haven't. That's what has encouraged me and made me aware of how, going forward, I treat others.

Michelle: For me it would be, to be remembered as someone who was kind but fair, and honest. Kind and honest – which sometimes clash. Sometimes you have to choose between the two, depending on who you're talking to.

What does 'mana wāhine' mean to you?

Lindy: For me, a strong woman is a capable one. One of the key things I try to impart to my kids, and in people who work in the business, is to be capable. That doesn't mean you can do everything – it just means being able to take on challenges and figure out how to do it. A strong woman is someone who can deal with all sorts of stuff without knowing how, AND just get stuff thrown at them and go, I can figure this out. That doesn't mean doing it alone. It means getting whatever help you need.

Determination and that ability to figure out how to deal with difficult things – in life, in business, in design, in everything. There's always difficult stuff. Not crying in the corner about it, because it's not going to go away – you've got to figure it out.

You describe yourselves as innovative and exacting, building upon legacy and designing for the future. What does that philosophy look like in day-to-day practice?

Lindy: Innovative and exacting means getting the right solution. Exacting means it is the right thing. It works. You get all the practicality stuff, but in a way that has meaning. It's fresh thinking and excellence. It's not loose and undetermined. It's the right thing, an awesome outcome, the best outcome we can do at that particular time. That's how we like to approach things and see an outcome – exactly right for that client.

Lindy **Ewart** Director
Michelle **Pirret** Senior Interior Designer
Jessica **Thornton-Grimes** Interior Designer

MINISTRY
MINISTRY OF ARCHITECTURE + INTERIORS

Xinxin

WANG.

Can you tell me about the moment you first felt drawn to architecture and outdoor space?

I always had a passion for Chinese gardens – that might be the seed of my passion for landscape architecture. When I was little, I read the classic Chinese novel The Dream of the Red Chamber by Cao Xueqin, and the stories happened in a beautiful traditional garden. Chinese gardens are surrounded by architecture and plants, and it showed me what architecture could be. When I was young, I imagined sitting in a beautiful Chinese garden, enjoying the smell of the flowers and the sound of the birds. Like a fairytale!

What does being a woman in design mean to you now compared to when you began studying?

When I went to university, there were many depictions of beautiful traditional Chinese architecture, which is still a big inspiration for me. When I began, most of my classmates were men. In my class, there were 28 students, 20 men and 8 women, but for the time that was a very high ratio of women. The number of women in the course was a surprise to everybody. When I started working as an urban planner, there were clients who were shocked that women were able to even work in the profession. They assumed that women couldn't do it, but it is different now.

Are there moments that changed your design approach?

My views have totally changed. It was hard, to be honest. I had to challenge many of my beliefs to grow as a designer. Transitioning from being an urban designer in China to a lecturer in New Zealand, I had to learn the language in a particular way to describe our field. Likewise, the profession is changing all the time: change is the only constant! There are lots of unexpected changes along the way. In China, the design profession was much faster and on a larger scale, and in New Zealand it seems slower; but actually, there are just many more details to pay attention to that make the process more intricate. All of these things have changed how I approach design today.

"Women definitely bring different strengths: for example, we are often more empathetic and perhaps considerate of how others can access space."

What strengths of perspectives do you feel women bring to the profession?

For example, when I was pregnant, I always noticed design details in the built environment that made it easier or harder for women to access things. When my son was very young, I noticed lots of physical barriers in roads, entrances to buildings and even in parks. It was difficult to push the stroller or walk around. This helped me notice things that some designers might not notice if they hadn't had that experience. Women may also be more resilient during change: we experience constant change from natural cycles to the broader transitions from being a daughter, a woman, a mother. We have to adapt to constant change and the broader changes of our lives. I like that we can celebrate those strengths in architecture.

How has your experience of being a woman in the field translated to teaching?

In a way, teaching your children has similar qualities to teaching students. It is all about respecting another person's independent personality. When I was young, I wasn't fully aware of or had full empathy for other people's challenges. It was easier to be self-focused when I was young. However, while I was raising my son, I was able to see how people learn. He always asked questions about things that I never questioned or assumed were apparent, and it taught me to approach others' ideas with respect because not everything is black and white. So now, when a student asks me a question, I always consider it deeply, with respect, and try to rethink my own views as well as help them describe theirs.

What is your proudest moment in your time at Unitec?

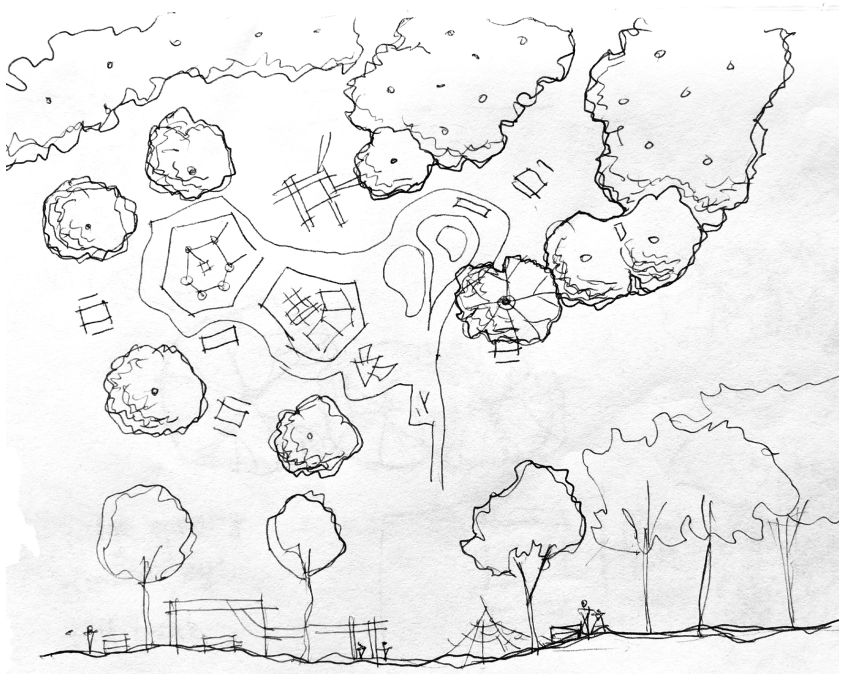
Every year, when students have finished their studio projects, on the day of the final presentation, I always feel so proud of the students. Because it is so clear how everyone has grown from understanding very little about a subject to understanding it; so much so that they are able to present their ideas in a passionate way. I always feel like I could cry during those moments.

This is very different from practice, where your achievements are measured by the client feedback, how much profit you bring, how much respect you get from colleagues, or how fast you get promoted to a higher level. In the educational environment, it is less individualistic, and young people are so enthusiastic to learn that I feel inspired to see them achieve their goals. As the teacher, I try to see what they already know and where they need help. I try to identify what the essential things are for them to succeed, because teaching is inherently very selfless.

If you could write a short note to women entering the field today, what would it say?

It is a very exciting and complex field to work in; it is so relevant to everyday life. We are working on everyday space; we live and work and play in and around this space. We have the ability to shape the future, so be bold! Be creative! Believe in yourself and others. Confidence can be shared when you mirror it to others. I have confidence in all my peers and students, and I feel confident in myself when I see them succeed. Once you finish your study, you will have achieved so much – feel proud! You will know in your heart that you have accomplished so much. Keep following your passion, and you will achieve more than you ever imagined.

Senior Lecturer
Landscape Architecture



Sketch: Xinxin Wang

Was it difficult transitioning from horticulture to studying landscape architecture? Did you have any idea of where it would take you?

Well, to take a step back, I did horticulture to do landscape architecture, not to do horticulture. I had friends who were architects, and one was a landscape contractor, and I realised that for a woman – particularly in those days – just buying a truck and being in business wouldn't have worked. So, I thought the academic weight gives you more credibility. That's why I did horticulture and then landscape architecture. I was in the same year as Peter Ruff – we both did the same thing.

We started off in horticulture, then found that it wasn't what it was described as. They just explained it badly, and it was actually something slightly different, with a lot more technical training – a five-year course called National Primary Horticulture. The 'primary horticulture' wasn't that clear, but it wasn't obvious at the time.

At that stage, I was really just interested in working outside, not at a desk. But, in fact, I found I was in the office. I was also initially interested in small-scale work, but as the course went on, I realised it was at a bigger, regional scale than I had anticipated. When I did it, it was somewhat under Wellington City's control because they gave me an internship – a studentship. They paid me to study landscape architecture.

What do you hope students now are bringing into their practices from the time you were studying?

An inquiring mind. If you don't have that, you get stuck a bit. And humility, because some students think that with all the work they've put into study, they are now ready to be experts. Every new place you go is like starting all over again, and that is frustrating. Students arrive and can't do what they need to do. So, I guess the curiosity to keep on learning – always keep on learning.

It's not for nothing. Like in many fields, such as medicine, we have Continuing Professional Development points – CPD. That was brought into landscape architecture with a lot of resistance. It seems extraordinary to me that people would not want to do that. They think, "I'm ready to go." For those people, they may see it as a craft rather than an evolving practice where change is necessary.

For instance, I went to a debate one night about "What is AI going to be?" Interestingly, the students supported the integration of AI into design to bridge the gap of technical skills – definitely a debate that I think a lot of students are dealing with as they approach their design work now, because it is accessible. But still, they need to remain curious and humble approaching the design regardless of the tools they use.

What keeps you keen to contribute to the profession after such a long and impactful career?

I give support because I think students are the future of any practice or service. If you don't support students or maintain relationships through the profession, it shows a lack of hearing and a lack of vision for where the profession might go.

I do it because I always have, but sometimes 50% of my time goes into pro bono work. It's not just a one-way street to engage with those at university – I'm learning too. I keep in touch with their inspirations and aspirations for the future. That's to see the future of the profession. I've concentrated on students for the past eight years. They need mentors and support too – it's a privilege to push them forward.

An assumption is often that Pasifika students don't measure up. But given the opportunity, you often find people who struggled at the start blossom later. They become the leaders in the profession, and their hard work gets recognised.

Do you feel that the profession is less judgmental regarding women moving into heavily male-dominated roles?

I think that could possibly be the case, particularly in architecture; in landscape architecture, perhaps it is different – or I just ignored it. Yet, I know I was used for various mitigating purposes. For example, if there was a meeting with the director investigating an employee, I might have been positioned in the room so, instead of yelling, the person was tongue-tied because they felt they couldn't swear in front of me. It's a plus and a minus – to know I was used when there were issues people didn't know how to deal with.

In my first job, it was more obvious. Going into it, you don't know any of this extra work. When I went out to inspect parks in Wellington, I would always check the toilets first – mostly to see how they were maintained, but also maybe for safety. Thankfully, I just noticed that women's bathrooms tended to be far less derelict.

"I have this unproven belief: people are influenced by their parents' professions. Skills and interests pass down."

Dr Diane
MENZIES.

Guest Lecturer
Landscape Architecture

During your time with the Ministry for the Environment, you were focused on policy review and development. How do you see the relationship between policy and design — are they still too separate?

A lot of work is a training ground. There's a lot of policy that directly impacts or changes our work. Things really changed when the Resource Management Act came around. Now people talk about rejigging it. I think what we're moving toward – and what legislation is helping with – is codesign. In other words, working with the people of the land as environmental experts rather than relying solely on policy-driven design. We've also broadened the cultural landscape approach, taking it from a top-down approach to a more practical one.

At one time people may have regarded good public engagement as the seven C's: Completeness, Conciseness, Consideration, Concreteness, Courtesy, Clearness, Correctness. Now we add Community. As designers, we must be good communicators.

We've worked with Te Aranga principles, but they were never meant to replace community or be a tick-box exercise. It was always intended as a starter to help understand values in a space. Apply it to your own toolbox, but don't force it on everyone, otherwise you might hear, "Oh, they're trying to tell me what my values are!" Te Aranga adds values to conversations where English may lack equivalent words. It's something you do collectively from the beginning. If you are connected to the project, you'll find time to properly connect with the people it affects.

For some, and certainly for me, it's a challenge. When faced with a challenge, something in me says, "Why not try?" Leadership is a challenge. Some people aren't drawn to it, so if you can be calm and do a certain amount, that's good – but it's also good to pursue it. Some people are comfortable, and some enjoy a little discomfort or pressure. Maybe you enjoy creating problems for yourself – in that case, leadership is a great challenge to work through.

Do you have any advice for young women finding their confidence to enter leadership positions?

I haven't worked it all out, but my advice is don't dwell on failures, learn from them, listen to a mentor, and have your own ideas and backup plans. Everyone has one set of ideas, so you're always on the move, giving different ideas space. Some see themselves as separate rather than part of a collective, but there is always a collective, and there is always a peer group giving essential advice, which is crucial for leadership.

Women can be described more personally than men in the media. And once you have a persona, it sticks. Likewise, if you put yourself out there, you must be at peace with a photo of yourself you don't particularly like.

But leadership – why did I do it? It's a challenge, and because I could. I also didn't like being told what to do. If you're entering a field focussed on climbing the corporate ladder... but you can lead with a sense of community. It's less about yourself – you're representing the collective.

At the time, someone said, "Well, we've just had a female President of IFLA. Surely there won't be another female president!" And then there was me. That was a challenge.

You have travelled so much as part of IFLA. Are there any locations near and dear to your heart that you believe new landscape architects should see?

Lead with a culture that interests you and dive deep into the unseen layers of any location. There are so many. That curiosity – wanting to see layers of history and biology – may seem tedious to some, but reading a landscape is rewarding. It isn't something you will find somewhere else in the world, it is everywhere once you have the eyes to see it, even in Aotearoa. The relationships people have with land here reflect patterns you'll see globally.

Dr Diane
MENZIES.

Guest Lecturer
Landscape Architecture

Iman

KHAN.

When did you first realise architecture was more than just buildings?

Coming out of high school, I thought architecture simply meant designing buildings, with the architect in control of space. At university I realised it could also be social, theoretical and sometimes purely conversational.

"Architecture doesn't have to be tied to the built object, it can begin as a drawing or even as dialogue – like the one we're having now. That idea was freeing."

Was there a space that changed how you see design?

Travelling shaped me. Walking the streets where my grandmothers lived in Pakistan and the Philippines showed me how local communities constantly produce space – through smells, sounds and everyday life. Another formative moment was visiting the Kaaba in Mecca at twelve: moving with thousands, chanting together, guided by sound and sky. It revealed how architecture is also spiritual and sensory – not just walls and structure.

Has your faith or cultural background given you a different lens on design?

My background is mixed – Pakistani and Filipino – and I moved across countries while growing up. Home became less about a fixed place and more about people and faith. In Islamic practice, a journey into prayer is choreographed through senses: calls to prayer, changes in ground texture, screens and ablutions. That sequence taught me to design with the journey in mind – how people move, what they hear and feel, and how a space prepares you for contemplation.

Have you had to carve out a space as a woman in architecture?

It's ongoing. I graduated into a tough market and had to push myself into rooms – often male-dominated and culturally different to me. It was uncomfortable, but it connected me to people who respected what I bring. Where there isn't respect, I move on.

"I think women bring care – as an ethic, not a weakness. It shows in how we engage with one another, and in always wanting the best outcome for each other."

You've researched heritage that's falling through the gaps. How do you stay optimistic amid loss?

Research starts with reality. The more clearly we see the problem, the more precisely we can act. At the Digital Heritage Research Centre, we scan and record vulnerable sites, support communities with evidence and advocate for reuse. Sometimes we can help save a place; other times, at least its memory is preserved.

How do you think digital tools and adaptive reuse can shape Aotearoa's future?

They help us value what we already have – materially and culturally. With climate pressure and cost, we can't keep wiping sites clean. Digital recording, community advocacy and thoughtful reuse keep stories alive while meeting present needs.

Is there a project that captures this approach?

Scanning vulnerable heritage – like churches or towers – has allowed communities to argue for preservation and understand how things were made. In other contexts, researchers have used scans to inform reconstruction with cultural care. It's a way to carry methods, memory and craft forward without erasing place.

Tell us about Sidewalk.
side___walk

Sidewalk is a small collective of friends from uni. We host monthly walks where the route is shaped by participants' curiosities – observing care at the scale of streets, objects and encounters. It keeps our creative practice alive beyond the institution, and it's open to anyone who wants to join.

Has a student taught you something recently?

Every day. Transitioning from graduate to lecturer was daunting, but students constantly expand my understanding – whether that's construction details or new ways of thinking conceptually. Many of my students are older than me. … I'm very open to being taught in the room.

What is your proudest moment so far?

Last year, my first time teaching first-year studio. Every lecture delivered felt like a win because it demanded courage and growth. I celebrated small victories often.

"There is something about discomfort. Discomfort shows up often for me – and it's been a teacher."

Do you have a design ritual?

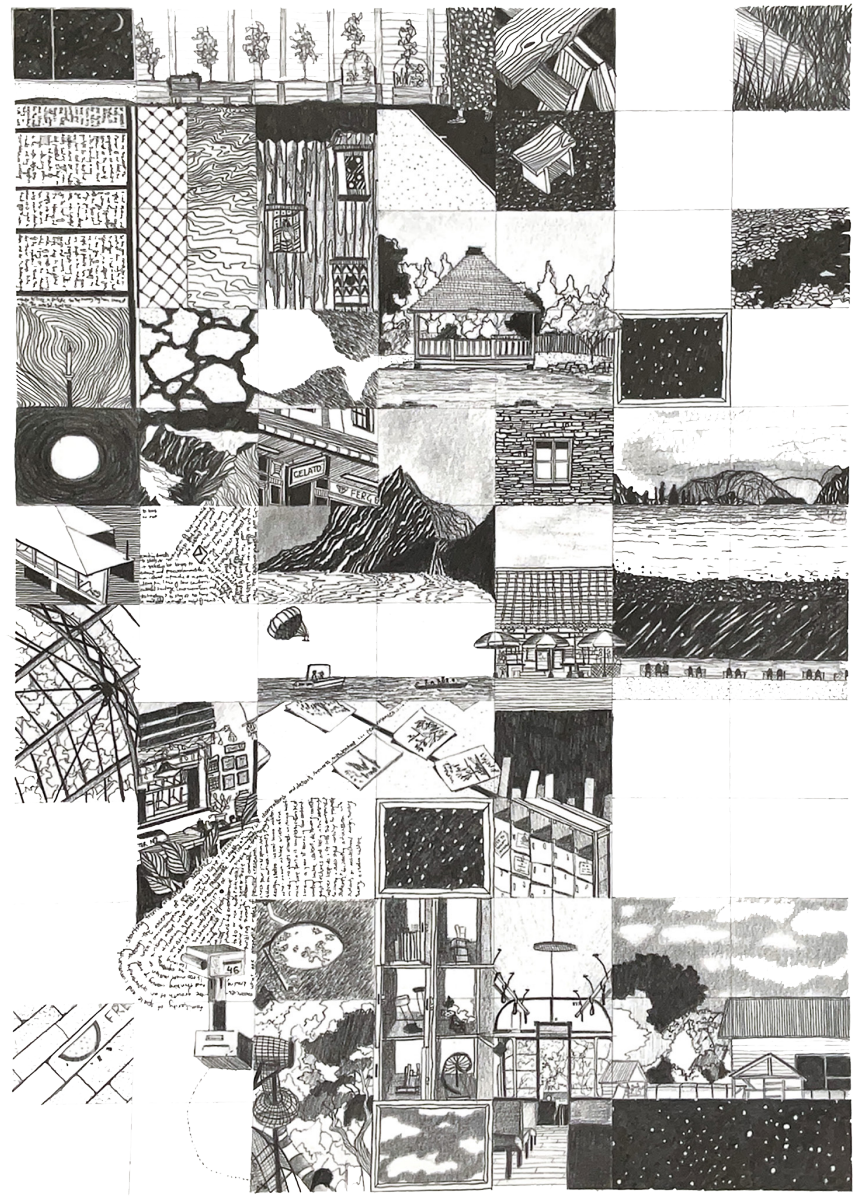
I like to keep sketchbooks that blend notes, drawings and everyday observations. Some pages are meditations: dense lines made over months when I needed to quiet my mind. Others are calendars of reflections – small marks that help me remember a year.

What feels unfinished – personally or in the profession?

Everything is in progress. Drawings evolve; projects teach us through use; practices adapt to climate realities. 'Unfinished' is not failure – it's an invitation to continue.

"Be stubborn for the right things. If a space doesn't respect who you are, it's okay to leave and find collaborators who do. You can still do the work – just not with people who diminish you."

Lecturer
Architecture



Sketch: Iman Khan


WA


ANA
HINE

Bachelor of Architectural Studies

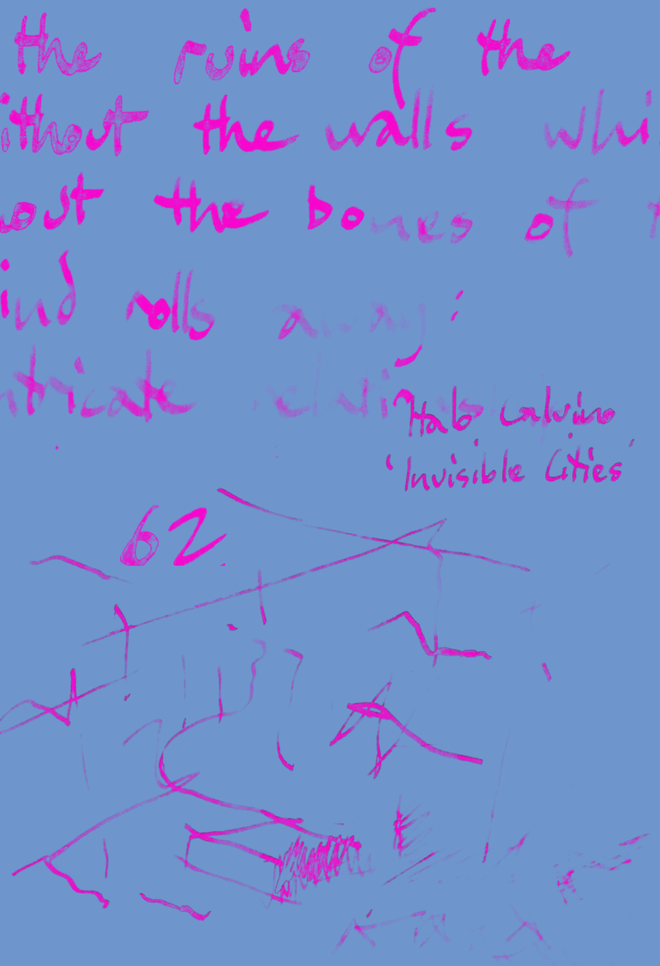
BAS

The BAS is where things get real and exciting. It is where students begin to think spatially, draw with intention and design with care. Every year, we look forward to seeing that moment when our students begin to connect ideas with the first forms and spaces they create, and how their confidence grows as they realise architecture is not just about buildings. It is a joy to witness.

The programme is rigorous, wide-ranging and demanding. Students learn to read sites and cultural landscapes, develop sustainable design strategies, and navigate the realities of construction, law and contract management. They get to engage with te ao Māori concepts and mātauranga Māori, which deepens their understanding of architecture in Aotearoa New Zealand – and invites them to think beyond conventional professional frameworks.

While studying in the BAS our students conduct applied, real-world research in collaboration with industry, community, iwi and other external partners. They learn to think critically and act ethically; to ask difficult questions; to question assumptions and be courageous in their thinking, generous in their collaboration, and to design with integrity.

Dr Renata Jadresin Milic.



The first year of Design Studio study asks questions suggesting pathways and practices to discover answers. A new language is being developed using the vocabulary of design thinking and its protocols of communication. How does an architectural practitioner communicate ideas and possibilities through modelling, drawing, writing and performing?

Through listening and researching, observing, engaging in creative thinking and making, exploring material and conceptual possibilities, the first-year student is developing design muscles and skills to respond to challenging quandaries. Who are you? What does the world look like and what form does it have? How can the designer respond to a brief with an intentional and thoughtful proposal, generating space, matter and a response to the multiple layers of performance required? How can one create meaningful experiences of value, amenity and community?

The journey of learning seeks to fuel curiosity about the self and the world about us, while learning mental dexterity and critical thinking.

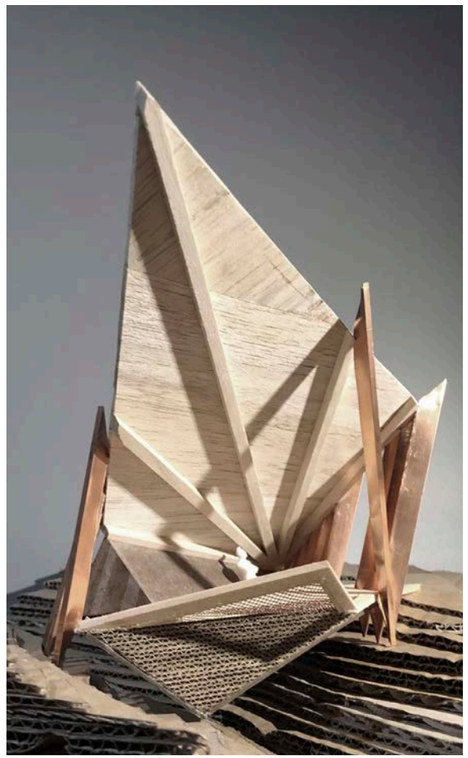
Pip Newman.

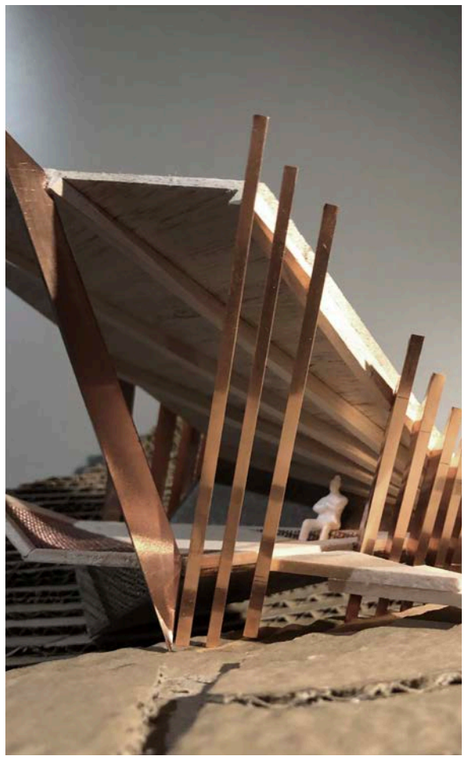
Bachelor of Architectural Studies
Year One

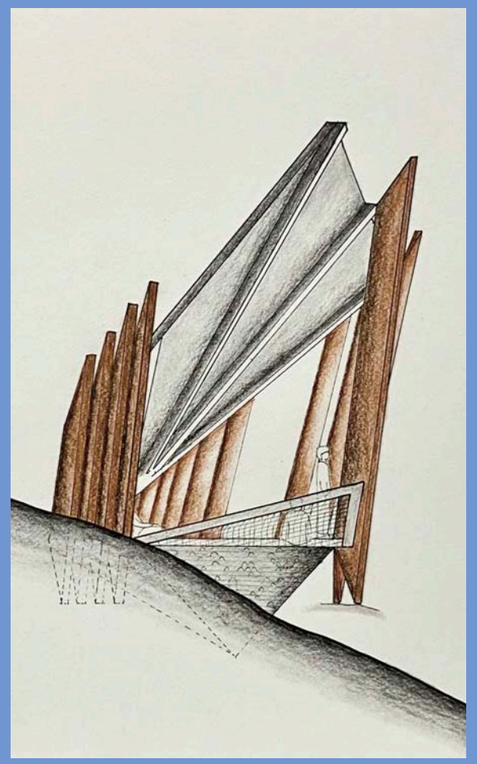
BAS

Mitchell Carey

Design Studio One







This design is called Tīmatanga, which translates to beginnings. Sitting lightly over a stream surrounded by dense native bush, Tīmatanga reaches east to welcome the morning sun.

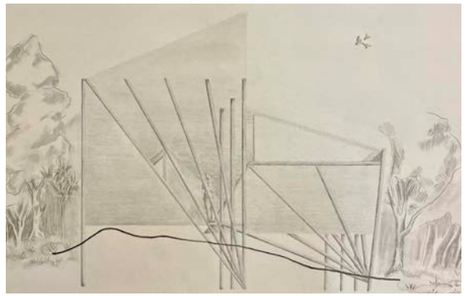
Fourteen copper panels hold Tīmatanga, giving it a feeling of weightlessness. Another point touches the whenua – the bottom of the triangular base. It sits delicately on these points, tripod-like.

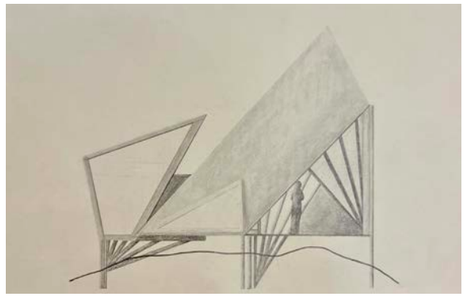
Tīmatanga is never silent; its open design and use of porous materials bring the sounds of the whenua within, allowing occupants to feel they are part of the nature that's all around them.

The stream's sound travels up through the building, creating a sense of calm and generating life within. The copper panels that line the eastern and western sides are designed to vibrate and hum softly during stronger northerly gusts. This gives the wind a voice, adding to the whenua's music.

The mass protruding down from Tīmatanga plays with and mimics the form created by the stream as it carves its way through the earth. The angled roof extends from the slopes of the surrounding site, integrating Tīmatanga into the whenua.

Bryher
Bailie.
Design Studio One





Sense of Place

The objective for this Design Studio project was to create a structure that presents taonga to visitors, recognising that architecture needs to be designed in conjunction with its surroundings. This structure is based in Tōtaranui Queen Charlotte Sound, and as such, the relationship between architecture and native vegetation is a key narrative. The sense of place or tūrangawaewae of the land has influenced the architecture. Through the sequential drawings, the process of walking through the native plantation, including ponga, harakeke, tōtara, mānuka, hauhere, tīkouka, invites manuhiri to respect and honour the whakapapa of the land.

Upon arrival to site, the first sequential drawing shows the requirement to anchor and travel ashore without a jetty, and in doing so embodying a sense of place and walking the same path as the tipuna of Ngāti Kuia, Rangitāne o Wairau, and Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō, all who tūrangawaewae to Tōtaranui. A further illustrated sequence shows movement upwards and finally a clearing, where vegetation is limited. This structure does not stand alone, but rather coexists with the land.

Marshall
Rongo
Design Studio One

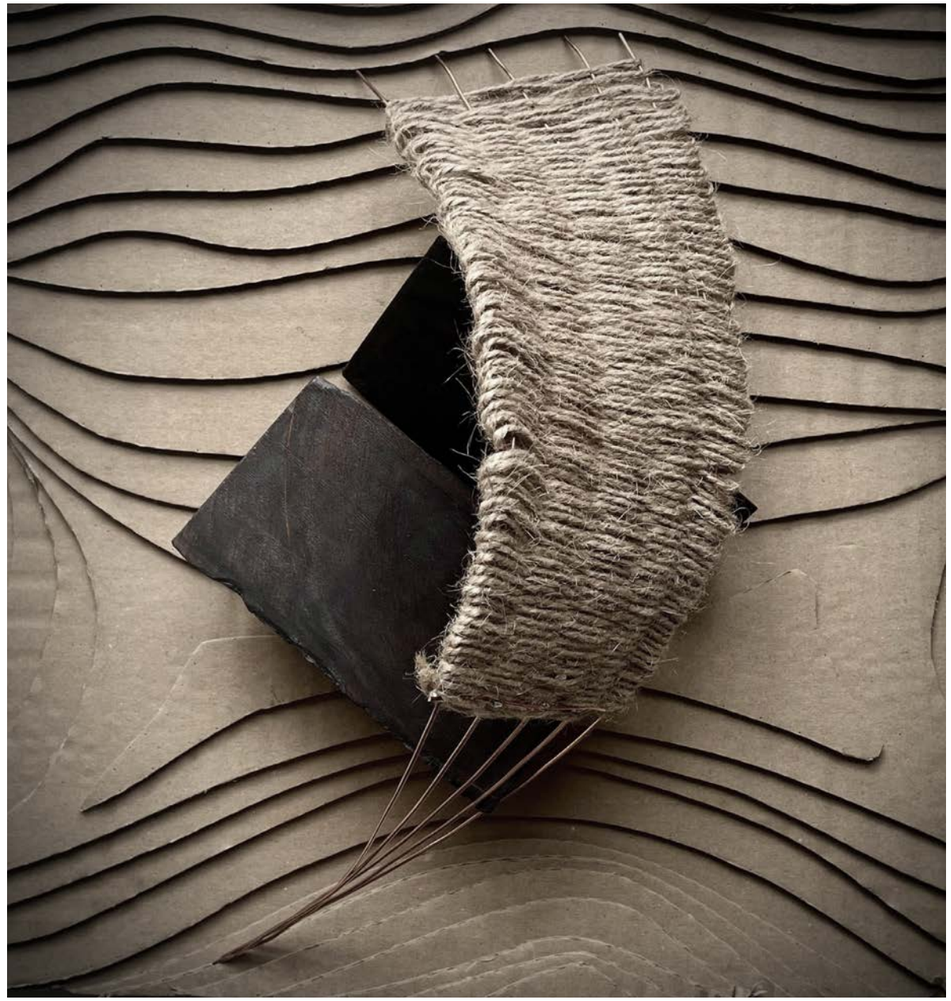
Rising Tides

Inspired by design methods in the Pacific Islands (specifically Aitutaki in the Cook Islands, where my grandfather was born), the structural model includes hatching and weaving – a repeating element throughout the skeletal frame. The Pacific Islands are also a sense of inspiration in a general contextual sense – both concepts helped inform the final design of my project. These can be recognised as a series of alternating panels representing traditional patterns, linear elements rising out from the edge of the hill face, and weave-like wave elements providing shade whilst still being outside among nature. This gave birth to the name Rising Tides – the weaving patterns are reminiscent of waves rising as the structure protrudes up and out from hill face. I decided to use collage in perspective and plan view drawings to place emphasis on the deep-blue tropical water of the islands. However, the rich colours of rocks and trees isolate the island's scenery and vegetation from the typical tropical colours seen throughout the Pacific and thus create a unique idea with elements inspired by my culture.

Jessica

Pengelly.

Design Studio One



The Shade Sanctuary

The guiding concept for this project was only fully developed in the final few weeks of the project. The design evolved continuously throughout the semester, with several key turning points along the way. The early stages played a major role in shaping aspects that remain evident through the final design.

Context was the consistent force. Each stage is built upon the last, deepening the design while staying rooted in its site location. This continuity between stages was a key strength of the overall project.

In the early explorations of Island and Mass in Design Studio One, the model followed an orthogonal shape that opened outward. By the end of the Space + Structure stage, the design took a significant turn, becoming more grounded and tied to the land.

This evolution continued through the 1D, 2D and 3D stages, ultimately leading to the final model. The completed design offered places to sit, stand and lie, all shaded by the signature element. This became the inspiration for the name The Shade Sanctuary.

Ian

Ratusau

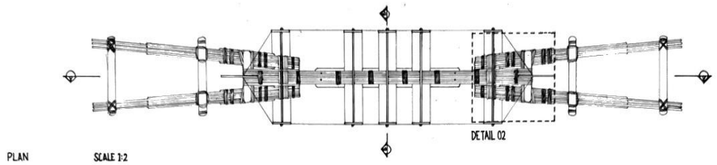
Design Studio One

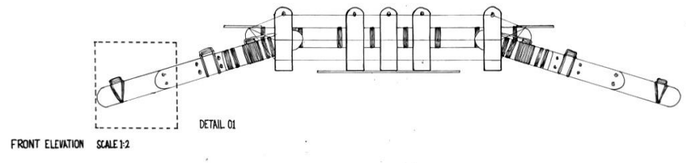
Structure: Waka Bridge

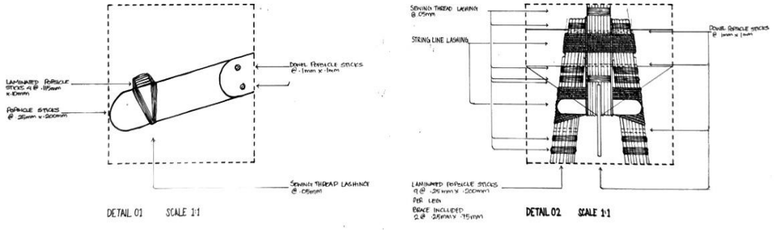
Waka Bridge was conceived as both a structural system and a cultural metaphor, reimagining the bridge not simply as a crossing but as a vessel of movement and meaning. In the Pacific, a waka is more than a boat, it is a carrier of people, knowledge and collective intent. In the same way, this bridge functions as a grounded waka, carrying the load of those who travel across it. Its structure works much like a hull, distributing forces, maintaining balance and guiding movement from one piece of land to another.

A bridge can essentially be understood as a horizontal waka – both serve the same purpose: transporting us safely across a threshold. The Waka Bridge design embraces this idea by involving elements reminiscent of traditional waka construction, such as lashings, ribs and a central spine, that reveal how tension and compression work together.

The development of this design was greatly influenced by the teachings of lecturer Sēmisi Potauaine, whose discussions of cultural narratives, Pacific structural logic, and the deeper meanings of forms guided my approach to this project. His ideas encouraged me to see structural design as engineering and storytelling, influencing the Waka Bridge to embody both purpose and cultural identity.







Sakina

Gadia.

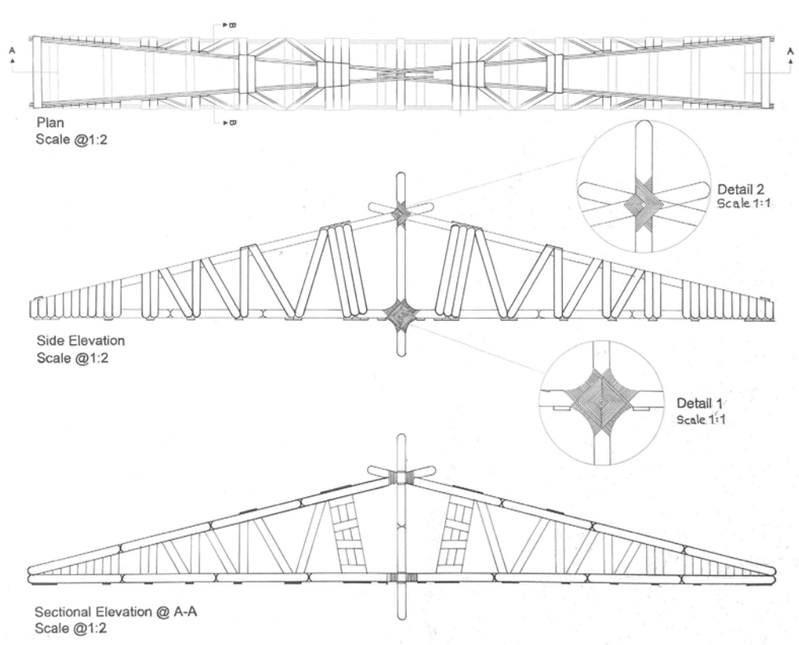
Design Studio One

Structure

The aim of the project was to develop, test and refine a structural model to understand basic structural principles and improve its efficiency and aesthetics. This bridge design explores how triangular geometry and lalava joinery can create a light yet strong truss across a fixed span.

The structure is organised as a symmetrical, tapered truss that deepens towards the centre, aligning material depth with the highest bending moments, and allowing forces to flow efficiently from mid-span back to the supports. The continuous triangular web and central spine resist both tension and compression, while diagonal bracing reduces shear and torsion along the full length of the bridge. Lalava weaving is used strategically at key joints instead of glue, reducing weight while visually expressing how elements are tied together in tension.

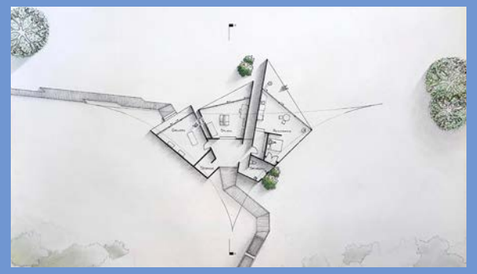
Tested to failure, Bridge 1 achieved a strength-to-weight ratio of 29.5, while redesigned Bridge 2 reached 98.5, confirming the benefits of consistent truss design and improved load distribution. Overall, the design aims to balance structural efficiency, material economy and crafted detail through an expressive lightweight timber truss.

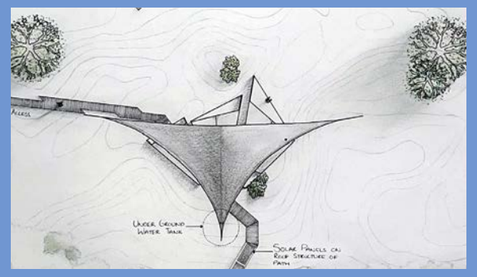


Jessica

Pengelly.

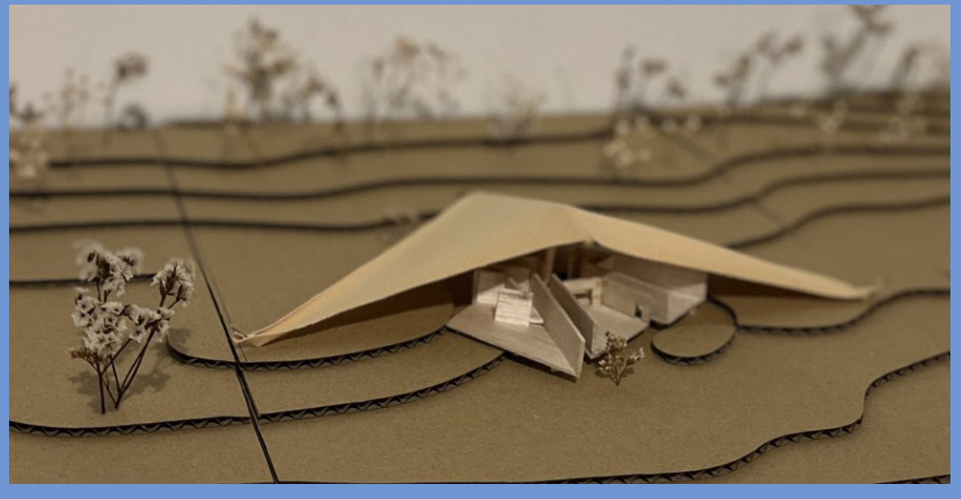
Design Studio One





Te Ara o te Whai: The path of the stingray

This project has explored the use of cultural mapping to develop forms which were then developed into architecture with meaning and belonging. The design concept is protection from the canvas structure floating above the sand, inspired by a stingray gliding in the bay in front. This floating concept enables the design to accommodate little ground disturbances and keeps the site as unaffected as possible. Understanding the occupants' and visitors' experience with the site at the heart of the design has kept the architecture simple, open and connected to the surrounding environment.



George

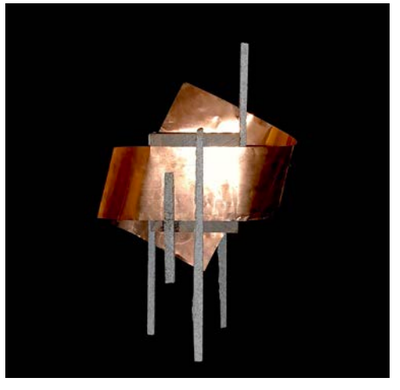
Gustafsson

Design Studio One

Materiality

These models explore different incarnations of three chosen materials in unique combinations, shaped by the different ways that the materials can come together, and the different dimensional forms they can take. Each element of stone, wood and metal has been cut to express itself in linear, planar and three-dimensional forms across each of the models. Each model combines the three different materials in their unique forms and employs a specific connection strategy to join the materials.

In each model, part of the structure is balancing, and part is supporting, and the potential density and lightness of each material is explored. The intrinsic nature of each material that dictates how it can be used is also explored and sometimes challenged. Timber and metal are joined mechanically to support a weighty stone; stone and wood are joined geometrically to suspend a floaty metal mass; and thin stone legs balance a block of wood and metal that are chemically bound together.



Critical Studies One

Biography of a Building

Drawing is a method of communicating factual and fictional ideas by simply marking a two-dimensional surface, such as paper, with an instrument, such as a pen, pencil, charcoal, crayon or paint. As humans, we draw for pleasure; we draw to express creative energy and emotions, or even as a means to escape reality. In the field of architecture, drawings take on a professional role as a tool for developing and communicating ideas. It is how we think, how we express ourselves, and how we solve problems on site.

Drawing becomes a method of inquiry – a way to uncover architects' design processes, how buildings were conceived and constructed, and how they have been experienced over time.

'Biography of a Building' is an assignment from lecturer Renata Jadresin Milic's Critical Studies One, which aims to teach students how to research and produce drawings of historical buildings accurately and successfully. Each student explores one building throughout the semester and presents its biography in the format of a timeline, essay and, most importantly, as architectural drawings. The outcome is the production of a poster for an exhibition, accompanied by a verbal presentation and critical reflection.

This assignment encourages the development of a professional skill-set. Firstly, it provides an opportunity for students to gain hands-on documentation experience working with orthographic scale drawings – a site plan, plan, elevations, sections and architectural details. Secondly, it provides an opportunity to develop crucial presentation skills. In professional practice, architects must present their work to clients, who are not always trained to read architectural drawings or understand industry jargon. We must take the time and opportunity to explain our design intent to clients clearly and successfully. Lastly, it is good practice to critically reflect on our work and identify what was successful and what was not.

This assignment also deepens students' understanding of architectural history. To produce accurate plans, sections and elevations of historic buildings, students must understand their spatial and architectural qualities. This process develops an appreciation of design principles, construction techniques and cultural contexts that are essential parts of the built environment.

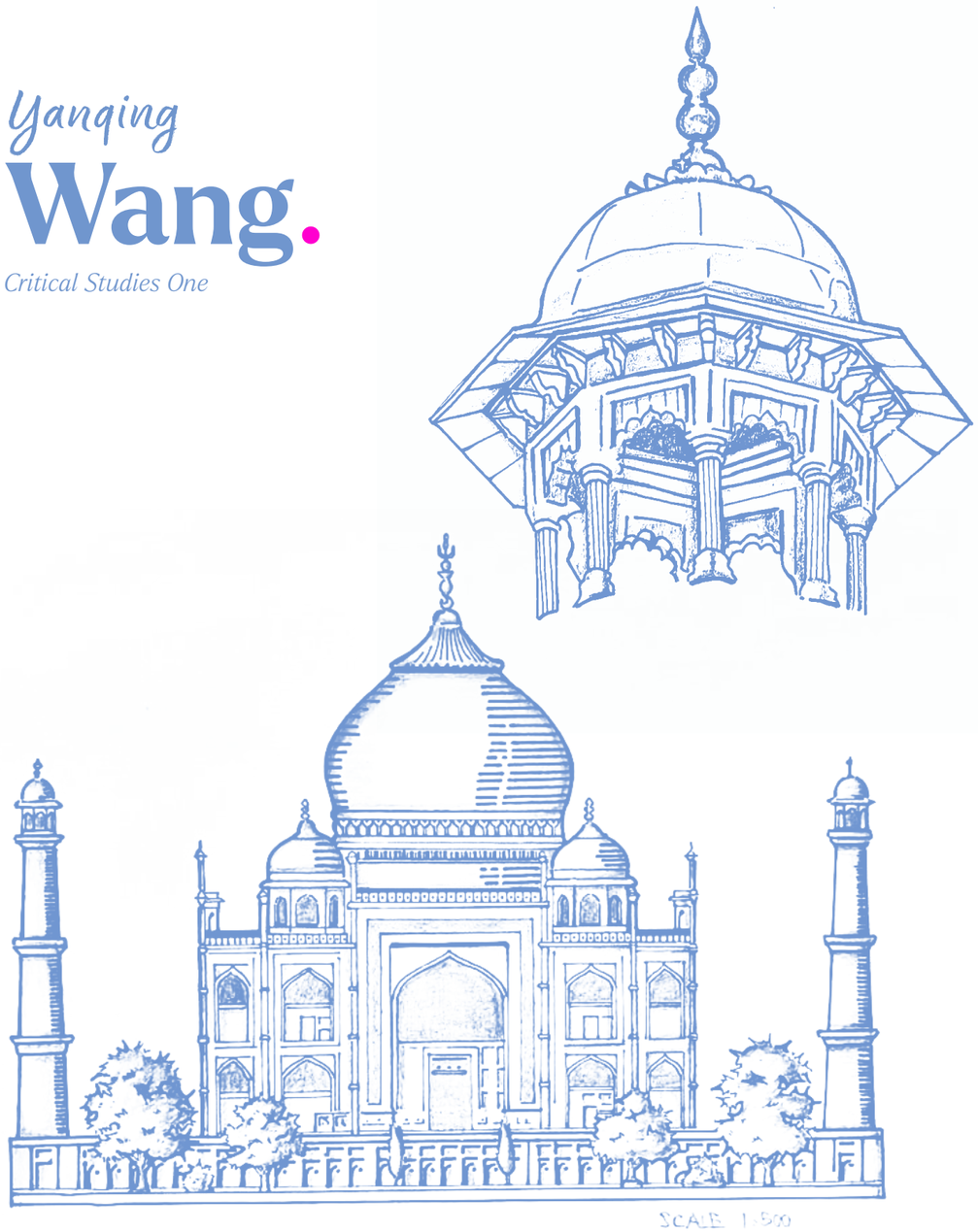
Jaspreet Kaur.
Dr Renata Jadresin Milic.

Sketch: Jaspreet Kaur

Yanqing

Wang.

Critical Studies One

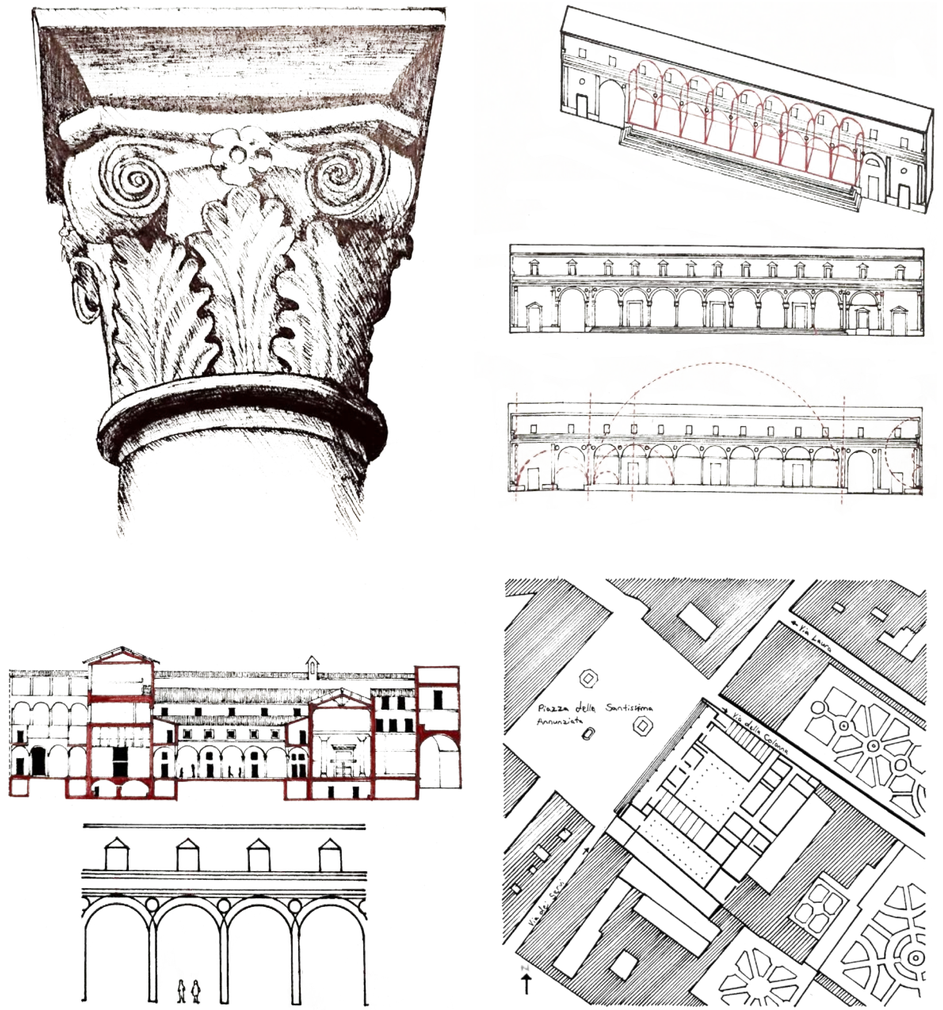


Working on this poster assignment provided me with insight into how to combine drawing and research into a story about a building. Additionally, I learned more about the Taj Mahal, and improved in both drawing and laying out a poster.

Dixit

Rabadia

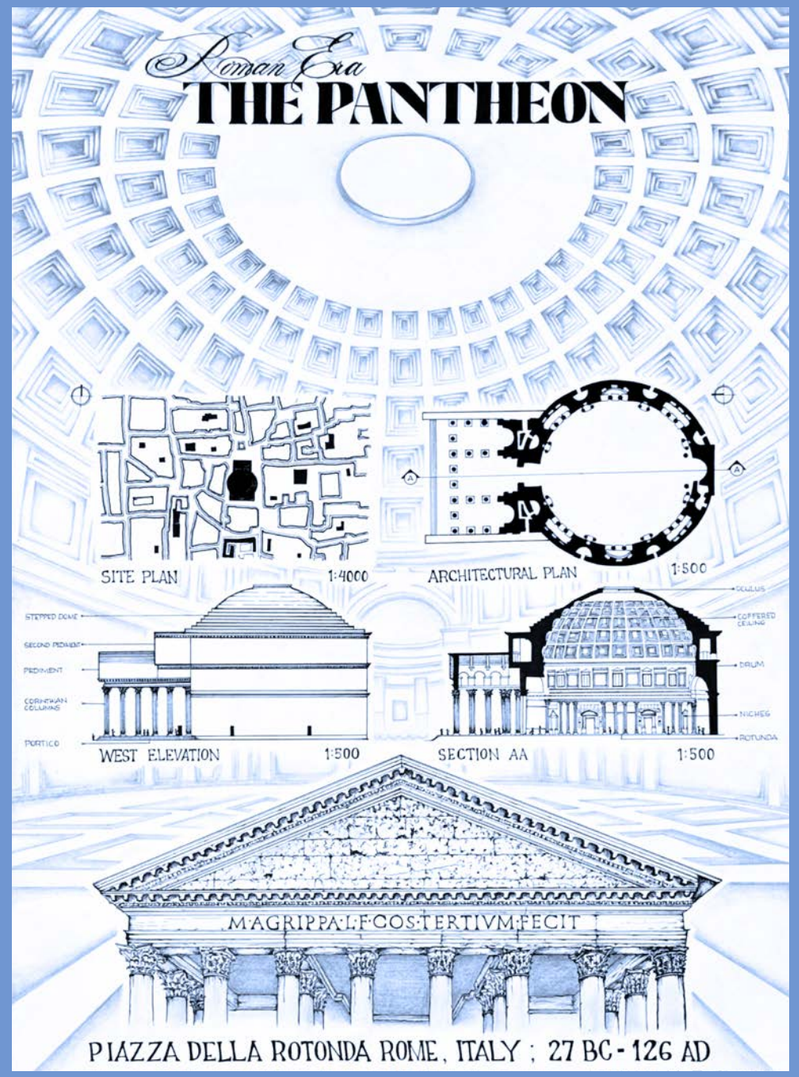
Crictical Studies One



Jonalyn

Estrella.

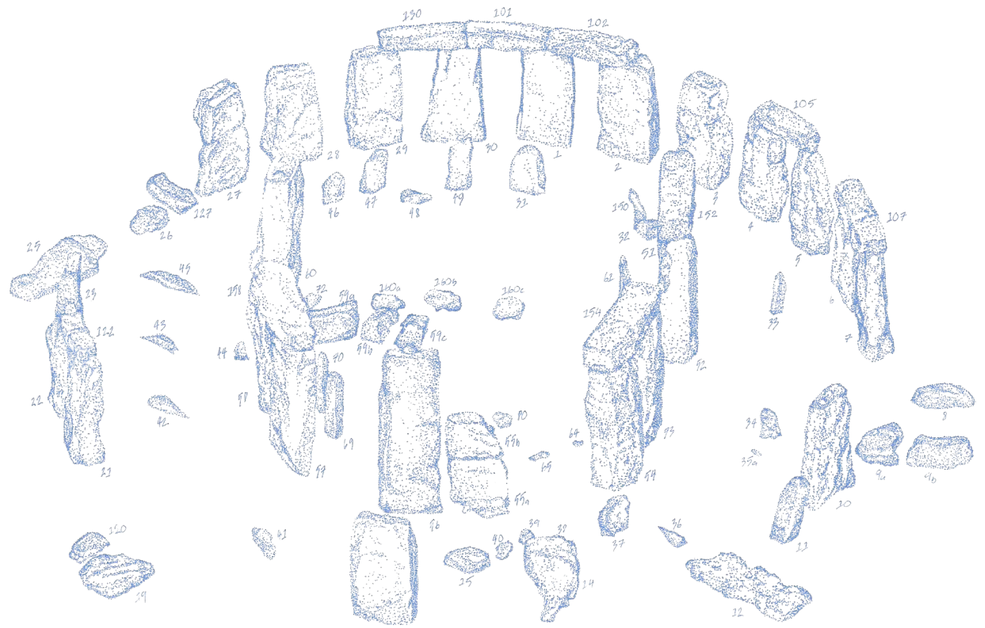
Critical Studies One



Bryher

Bailie.

Critical Studies One



Presenting the shadows that evoke stature within the form; those that inspire the many myths and ideas curated upon the building throughout its lifetime, for the purpose of the proposed construction.

Sketch: Thomas and Max McPherson

As a lecturer, I have returned to the place where my architectural journey began. Since graduating from Unitec's School of Architecture, I have often reflected on the many highlights of my studies, as well as the constant academic and architectural challenges. In the now, those highlights and challenges repeat in front of me and serve as a reminder of how these early years of design exploration and learning impact those seeking to enter the profession – especially in year two of the Bachelor of Architectural Studies (BAS) programme.

This second year of study provides a keen balance of autonomy and instruction, where today students, male and female, are treated as equals. Risk-taking is encouraged – the pushing of boundaries, extension of knowledge, growth of confidence and exploration of possibilities all expected. The guidance in second year is considerable, and although expectations grow, this year is mostly devoid of the intense pressure that often defines the third and final year of the degree programme.

Second year is shaped around typological and thematic design problems of moderate complexity. These projects address fundamental architectural issues such as light, scale, space, site, boundary and context. Within this framework, our objectives resolve to help students build capability in architectural design with a focus on small- to medium-scale buildings in urban settings. Plans, sections, elevations and maquettes are keenly explored through computer applications, hand drawing and 3D-modelling.To support these explorations, students engage critically with structure, programme, environment and social conditions.

As a female lecturer, I'm aware of the value of agency, representation and balance, and of creating a culture where all students are supported in the development and thoughtful resolution of their design projects. Second year BAS remains, for me, a formative space where architectural thinking becomes more confident, better focused, and where individual voices start to emerge – and where wāhine are supported and celebrated equally.

Anna Bulkeley.

Bachelor of Architectural Studies
Year Two

BAS

Hayley Jonkers.

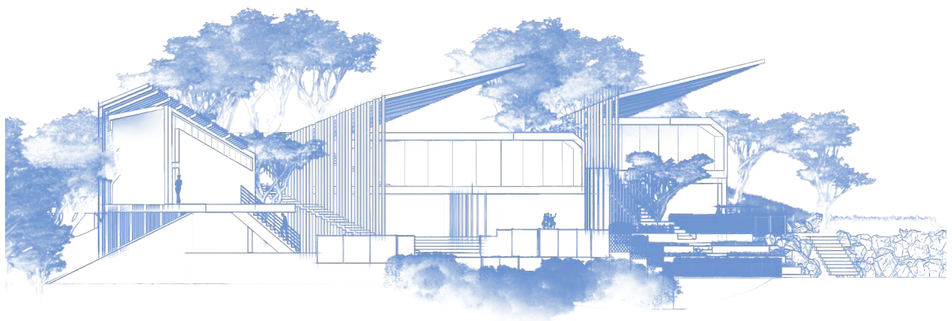
Design Studio Two

Multi-Generational Project

This is a place where life's many chapters can unfold side by side. The layout is carefully crafted to encourage moments of togetherness, creating spaces where families can gather, share experiences and build lasting memories. These communal areas will be balanced by thoughtfully integrated private zones that honour individuality and provide opportunities for personal reflection, learning and self-discovery. This balance ensures that while connection is nurtured, personal boundaries and independence are never compromised.

The design aspires to embody the theme of growth and transformation, reflecting the natural evolution of individuals, relationships and family across all stages of life.

Every detail, whether in the spatial arrangement, choice of materials, or the way light moves through the interiors, is considered to support both intimacy and openness: adaptable spaces that can evolve with changing needs, natural materials that age gracefully, and landscapes that mature alongside the people who inhabit them. Ultimately, the goal is to create a harmonious environment where every generation feels a sense of belonging and possibility.

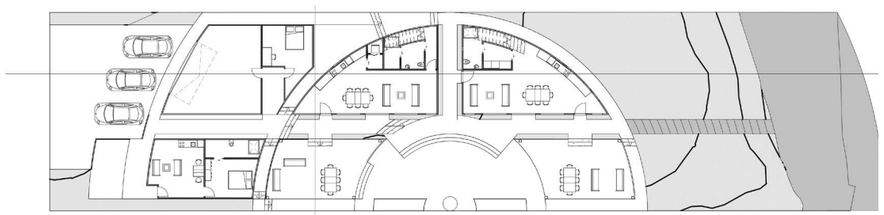


Olivia Nott.

Design Studio Two

A Radiating Family

This multi-generational house design emerged from site exploration and a walk across the nearby footbridge, inspiring the design's integration with the neighbouring reserve. The home is positioned to face the existing tree canopy and stream, extending the backyard into the reserve. Guided by the concept of three: three generations, three terraces and three paths of engagement with a layout that encourages connection to land and family. A linear path parallels the stream, a central axis aligns with the bridge's directional pathway, and a radial path leads to the communal heart of the home. Two levels follow the inner radius, while the outer ring hosts the grandparents' studio and workshop on either side of the main entrance. Rooftop gardens and outdoor areas deepen engagement with nature and sea views. The floating roof and clerestory windows elevate the structure into light. At the same time, a central fire pit in the communal garden invites warmth and family gathering at the core of the design. Everyone has a view, a place, a connection.



Shanshan Cao.

Design Studio Two

The Gathering Shores

Tucked into a quiet stretch of coastline, The Gathering Shores was more than just three homes – it was a living story, told through laughter, coffee, tools and tiny muddy footprints. The family had grown, spread and changed, yet stayed anchored to the place that brought them together.

In the first house lived Emma and David. Emma's studio overlooked the sea, and she shaped silver and sea glass into delicate jewellery. David, an early riser, was known for his quiet morning ritual – coffee on the porch, watching the waves roll in before heading to his downtown office. Their son, Leo, lived with them while studying architecture, often sketching designs inspired by the sea and sunlight.

Next door, their daughter Grace lived with her partner Tom, a builder with rough hands and a soft heart. Grace loved feeding everyone – big weekend breakfasts, big dinners and snacks. Their five-year-old, Mia, could usually be found in the roof-top garden with a picture book, while her brother Ollie darted barefoot through the garden, chasing birds or pretending to build like Dad.

The third house was quieter but full of memories. It belonged to their middle son, Alex, and the grandparents. They visit, often unannounced, bringing excitement and late-night stories from far-off places.

Though lives bustled in different rhythms, the homes remained close – connected by paths, shared meals, and a love that spanned generations. At The Gathering Shores, the tide always brought them back together.

Harrison

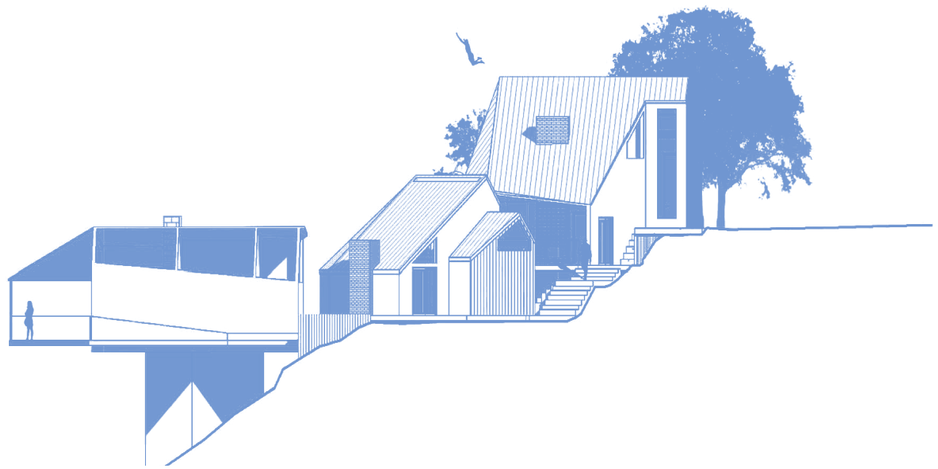
Chambers

Design Studio Two

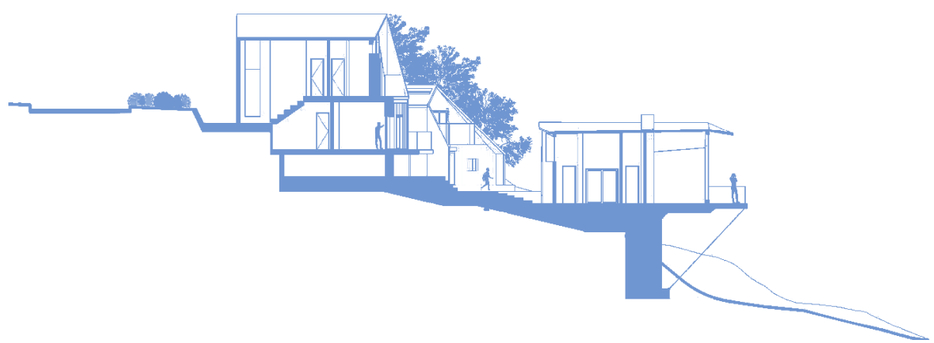
White Lines

White Lines is a project that required the development of a site in the central suburbs of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland that would host three units to accommodate four generations. The aesthetics were shaped by using dramatic vertical and horizontal white lines to produce the buildings' form. The form of each unit is seen as asymmetrical but is complementary to the surrounding units. This creates a consistent and recognisable language across all three units.

The exterior of the buildings emphasises their horizontal forms, with elongated decks and courtyards, while the interior of each building showcases verticality, displaying high studs in all three units reaching beyond a height of five metres. Multiple split levels in one unit provoke intrigue, along with a mezzanine seen in another. This ensures the units, from both an internal and external perspective, are positioned to view the uninterrupted white lines of sun striking the water of the harbour.



The design direction was informed by the requirements of the brief, including the integration of privacy, communal interaction and accessibility.



Ruben

Boyack

Design Studio Two

Intergenerational Home

This project aims to create an intergenerational home for two families across three generations living on the same property. Focused on an solid hexagonal shape, the design conveys a sense of stability and harmony, echoing the overall geometry of a beehive. Multiple courtyard spaces are integrated throughout, created by the architecture around them. These central spaces provide places for the respective families to connect with each other or host visitors, while also using the spaces between the individual buildings to create a sense of privacy. A gently sloping site allows for a clear hierarchy of buildings to be established: unit 1 (at the north) is 'Dad', middle is 'Mum' and the smallest is 'Baby'.

Timber, tile and smooth stone as materials reinforce the feeling of strength, solidarity and being grounded, making the buildings feel like spaces that people want to be in, both inside and out. Large sliding and fold-out doors, along with decks and large roof overhangs, allow for an easy transition from outdoors to indoors. In the larger two 'Dad' and 'Mum' structures, the upstairs areas are more private and further from the front door than the public and semi-private areas. Two separate access paths leading down the sides of the site also add an extra degree of privacy to the internal spaces.

Mikayla

Funnell.

Design Studio Two

The Journey to the Tea House: A multi-generational home in Waterview

This project proposes a multi-generational home in Waterview, near Mount Albert in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, addressing the city's growing need for urban intensification, while remaining grounded in the natural landscape and cultural identity of its inhabitants. Designed for a first-generation Japanese family, the project asks, how can Japanese architectural traditions be integrated into a contemporary multi-generational home to foster cultural identity, adaptability and harmony with nature? The aim is to create a home that not only responds to the challenges of urban intensification but also sustains intergenerational living and cultural belonging.

Objectives include integrating adaptability, spatial fluidity and environmental harmony; using the roji (dewy path) as a guiding framework for spatial sequencing; designing layered thresholds and courtyards that heighten awareness, contemplation and connection with the surrounding landscape; and supporting flexible living arrangements suited to multiple generations. The methodology combined site analysis of bushland and a stream with cultural research into Japanese traditions such as the tea house pathway and courtyard living, alongside iterative design testing of thresholds, compression and release, and garden integration.

The resulting design choreographs a journey inspired by the roji, leading from an outer gate through a sequence of layered thresholds, gardens and courtyards that blur the boundary between inside and outside. Carefully orchestrated transitions frame key views and create moments for gathering, reflection and connection, while gaps within the architecture extend interiors into the landscape. This generates a home that nurtures cultural continuity and strengthens family relationships while accommodating the demands of modern urban life. The project demonstrates how Japanese traditions of harmony, adaptability and experiential awareness can meaningfully inform Tāmaki Makaurau's contemporary housing. This multi-generational home is both a practical response to intensification and a celebration of identity, heritage and nature.

Claudia McGough-Morunga.

Design Studio Two

The Grove

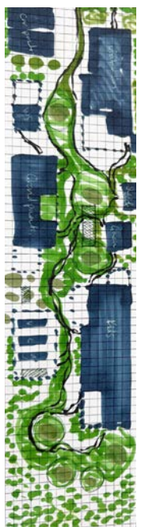
The Grove is a multi-generational home that grows from the land, Like the mangroves it draws its name from, the site is grounded, resilient and connected with its local surroundings. The grandparents' house sits at the centre of the site, across the main courtyard, and is the connection between all three spaces. The architecture radiates outward from this social space, like roots in water, connecting three generations through shared space and meaningful distance.

One of the design drivers for this site is the integration of native planting, directly referencing the adjacent Waterview Reserve. Plants like rengarenga, taupata, fern, kōwhai, harakeke, pūriri and nīkau are woven through the site, creating biodiversity, shade and sensory connection to place. The vegetation serves as a cultural memory and ecological repair, blurring the boundaries between reserve and residence.

68 Fir Street is a long and narrow site, and the wavy paths leading through the site reference the Waterview Stream, the nearby harbour, and the River Thames in London, where the owners' families hail from. These paths gently divide and later merge, forming organic walkways that lead to circular clearings – places to gather, reflect and plant memory.

At its heart, The Grove is an ecological, emotional and generational space. Having the grandparents' home as the hub, surrounded by the homes of their children and grandchildren, means each home can enjoy privacy yet be visually and physically connected, emphasising kinship without hierarchy.

Like mangroves forming natural communities in estuarine zones, The Grove connects family, landscape and neighbourhood. This is not just a place to live – it is a living system, where design reflects the flow of water, the strength of roots, and the quiet resilience of family.



Taina Marie.

Design Studio Two

Residency: Te Rauwhare

This home is envisioned as a living organism, where architecture serves as a vessel for connection across generations. Inspired by the branching structure of a leaf, gabled modules extend outward from a central courtyard like veins from a stem, each path leading to a unique yet interconnected space. These veins symbolise the lifelines between three generations, offering a balance between privacy, proximity, independence and unity.

The 64m² modules are strategically arranged to align their roof ridges, creating a cohesive structural rhythm. These ridges subtly echo the silhouette of the Waitākere Ranges, grounding the home in its broader landscape. The roof eaves rise and fall in gentle waves, mirroring the contours of the terrain and the dynamic, evolving nature of family life.

These undulations create generous interior volumes and ever-shifting sightlines, inviting moments of openness, shelter and reflection.

At the heart of the home lies a triangular courtyard, acting as a communal anchor – a space where generations converge, stories are shared, and daily life flows naturally. This central void serves as a gathering place and a spatial device that embraces the surrounding environment. The tessellated arrangement of the modules around the courtyard gives each space a unique view – framing lush vegetation, shifting daylight and glimpses of the Waitākere Ranges – and extends the design's metaphor of growth and continuity.

Dylan
Quayle
Design Studio Two

Kingsland Apartments, Library and Gallery

Located at 476 New North Road, this Design Studio Two brief focused on urban living, combining six apartments with a public library, art gallery, café and accessway to Kingsland Train Station.

Volcanoes, swampland and an abundance of cabbage trees formed the surrounding area before settlers developed it. Designed around this, the circular core of the building represents the volcanic nature of the land around it. Stone and swamp timber have been used to decorate the façade and ceilings.

The art gallery is located on the basement floor, away from direct sunlight, and includes a double-height room for larger-format art. The ground floor houses a coffee shop opening onto the main road and public accessway. The library occupies the second floor, with the third and fourth floors containing the apartments.

There is a specific focus on the community nature of the apartments, with a courtyard for gathering, and all the apartments opening onto it. The courtyard provides a central meeting space with seating for people to rest and meet after catching the train. A bridge from the apartments crosses over the railway, providing easy access to public transport.

Harrison

Chambers

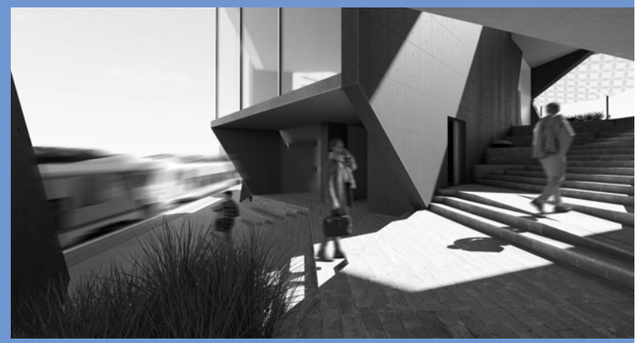
Design Studio Two

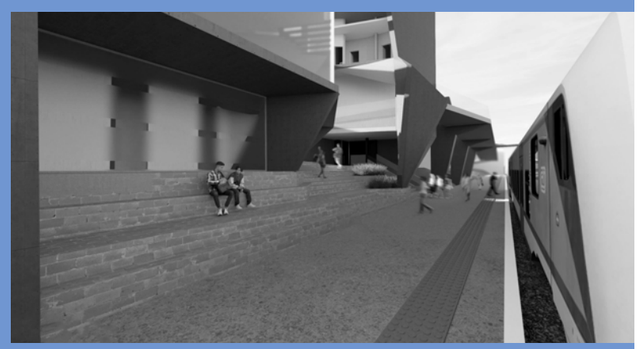
The Mountain

Rising from the urban fabric like origami, The Mountain redefines the link between city and transit. Its angular planes fold and twist as if sculpted from sheets of paper – each crease reflects light in a dynamic play that changes throughout the day.

At noon, the sun pierces the central gap of the structure, warming the interior with a golden heat ray that animates the space and connects the ground to the sky. The opening is not just a void, but a moment of breath – and invitation for light, air and people to flow through.

The Mountain stands as a sculptural bridge between New North Road and Kingsland Train Station, guiding movement between the two, while grounding itself as a landmark of motion and stillness. Its form feels both deliberate and spontaneous, a folded structure born of the rhythm of Kingsland itself.

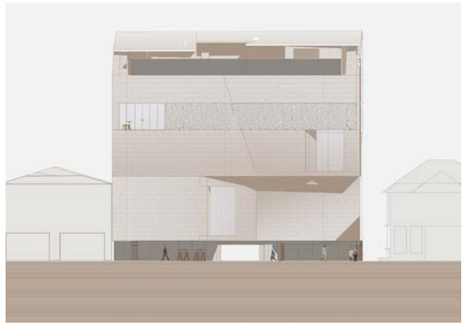




Mikayla

Funnell.

Design Studio Two



Kingsland Urbanity

Between the heritage façades of Kingsland, this timeless sandstone building captures the layers of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland's evolution – memory, movement and connection. Guided by Philip Johnson's notion that "Architecture is the art of how to waste space," it invites people to dwell within, rather than simply pass through.

The lower levels, dark and moody, reflect the city's volcanic memory while also housing an art gallery. The atrium and ground floor form a public passage, connecting the street to Kingsland Train Station below. Above, warm timber, stone and concrete interiors offer a contemporary library space that anticipates Kingsland's future.

Private apartments nestled at the top of the development have an intimacy that contrasts with the expansive views across central Tāmaki Makaurau. Acting as a porous urban sponge, the building breathes with its surroundings – adaptive, responsive and enduring both in form and spirit.

Critical Studies Two

The Bachelor of Architectural Studies programmes Critical Studies One (year one, semester two) and Critical Studies Two (year two, semester one) together establish a chronological survey of architectural from its origins to the present day – predominantly the western world's architectural development. The interface between the two courses is the mid-nineteenth century industrial revolution, which introduced new building materials and constructional methods.

Critical Studies One (CS1) is an express journey, traversing some 6,000 years of cultural and architectural development and styles – from ancient Africa and Egypt through to the European baroque period. In the following semester, Critical Studies Two (CS2) takes complex multiple journeys across the globe from 300 years ago to the present day. Architecture in Aotearoa New Zealand is given emphatic attention.

CS2 course assessments are based on a major assignment, I.D. test and semester examination. The I.D. test is based on images of selected buildings projected on-screen. For each, students are required to provide building name, location, architect and approximate date. The examination is an overall-course assessment consisting of multi-choice and short-answer questions, paragraphed summaries of selected course topics, and design analysis of a selection of illustrated buildings.

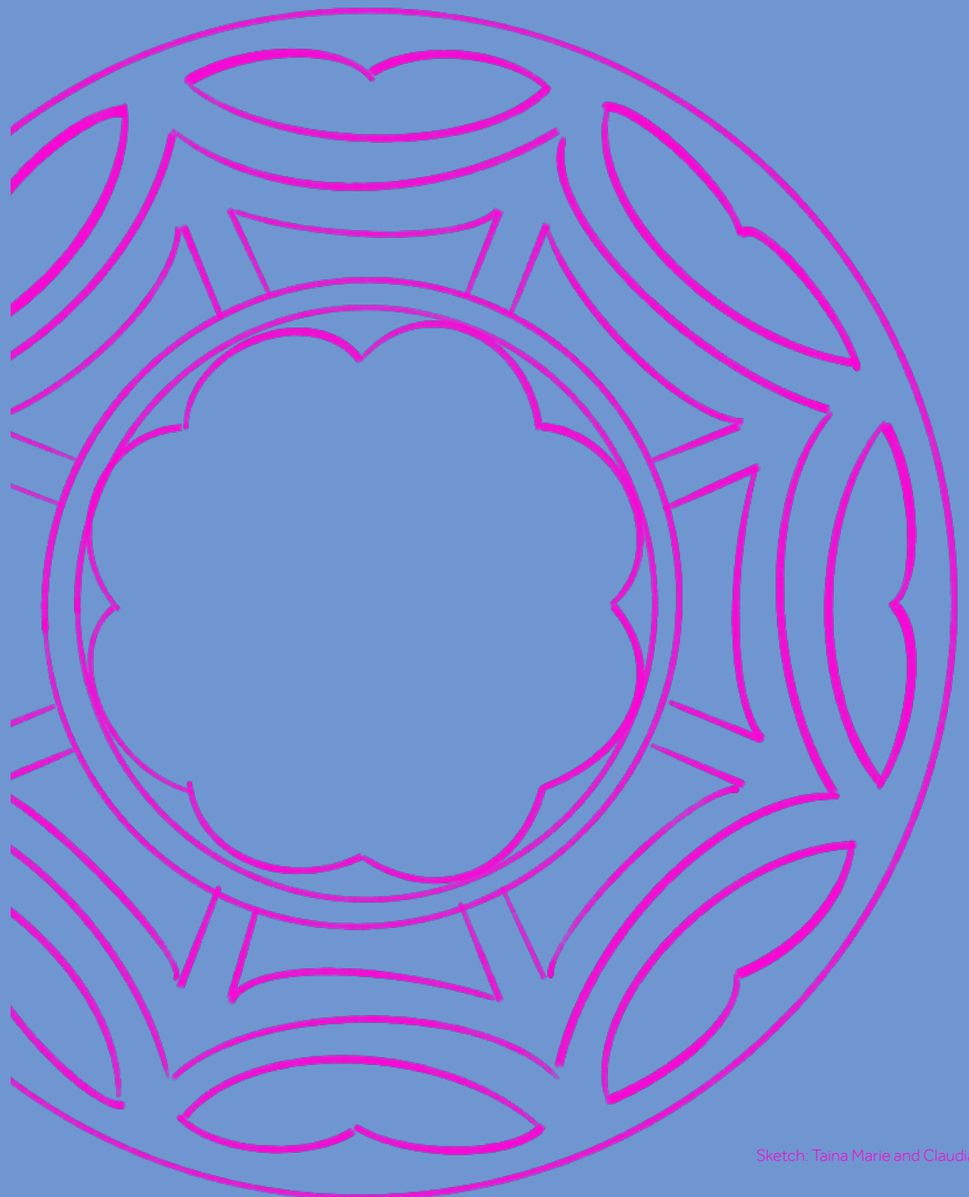
The major assignment involves individual student studies of a selected building from the twentieth or twenty-first centuries – international or local. It is in three parts: timeline, essay and 3D physical models. The timeline is required to locate the chosen building in an illustrated graphic chronology that includes other key projects by its architect, before and after, and relevant contextual events related to the building and its architect.

The essay is expected to critically research and assess the building's form and function, and its architectural qualities; the ideas and other buildings which may have influenced its design; and consideration of how the building itself may have inspired other projects by the architect and other architects. It is required to also take account of these questions: Is the building an exemplar of a particular architectural style? Does it mark the beginning of a new direction in architecture, or in the career of its designer? How has it been evaluated by historians and critics?

The physical modelling of the building is expected to be presented in two models: model one represents the building in its overall form, with associated site context; and model two is a creative interpretation of a significant spatial, formal or material attribute of the building. Students also submit photo portfolios of their models and the model-making process.

Illustrated here are five superb assignment models from CS2 2025. The Paris Eiffel Tower is a spectacular example of the industrial-revolution era use of cast iron as an engineering material for building structures. Mies van der Rohe's German Pavilion in Barcelona was a significant early manifestation of architectural modernism. Brazil's government building, Palácio do Planalto in Brasilia, was designed by Oscar Niemeyer. Villa Busk, by Norwegian Sverre Fehn, is a late-modernist example of Norway's rural vernacular architecture. And Zaha Hadid's Vitra Fire Station seeks to define space rather than occupy it – postmodern deconstructivism at its finest.

Graeme McConchie



Sketch: Taina Marie and Claudia McGough-Morunga

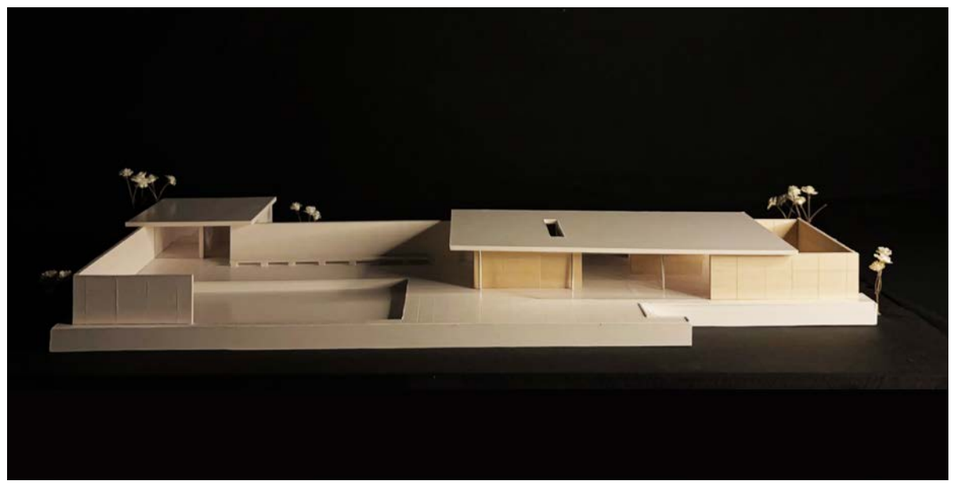
Olivia Nott. & Dylan Quayle

Critical Studies Two

Sverre Fehn's Villa Busk, Norway (1990)

Mehar
Kaur.

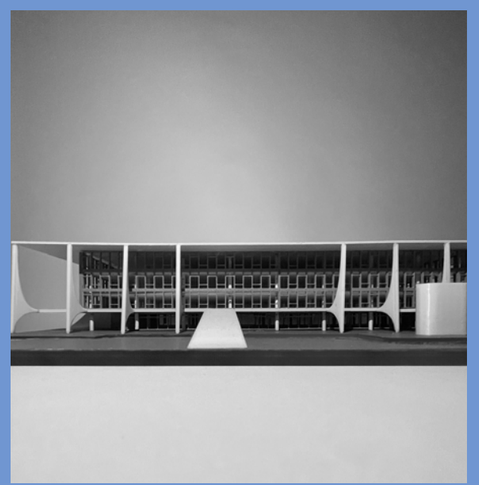
Critical Studies Two



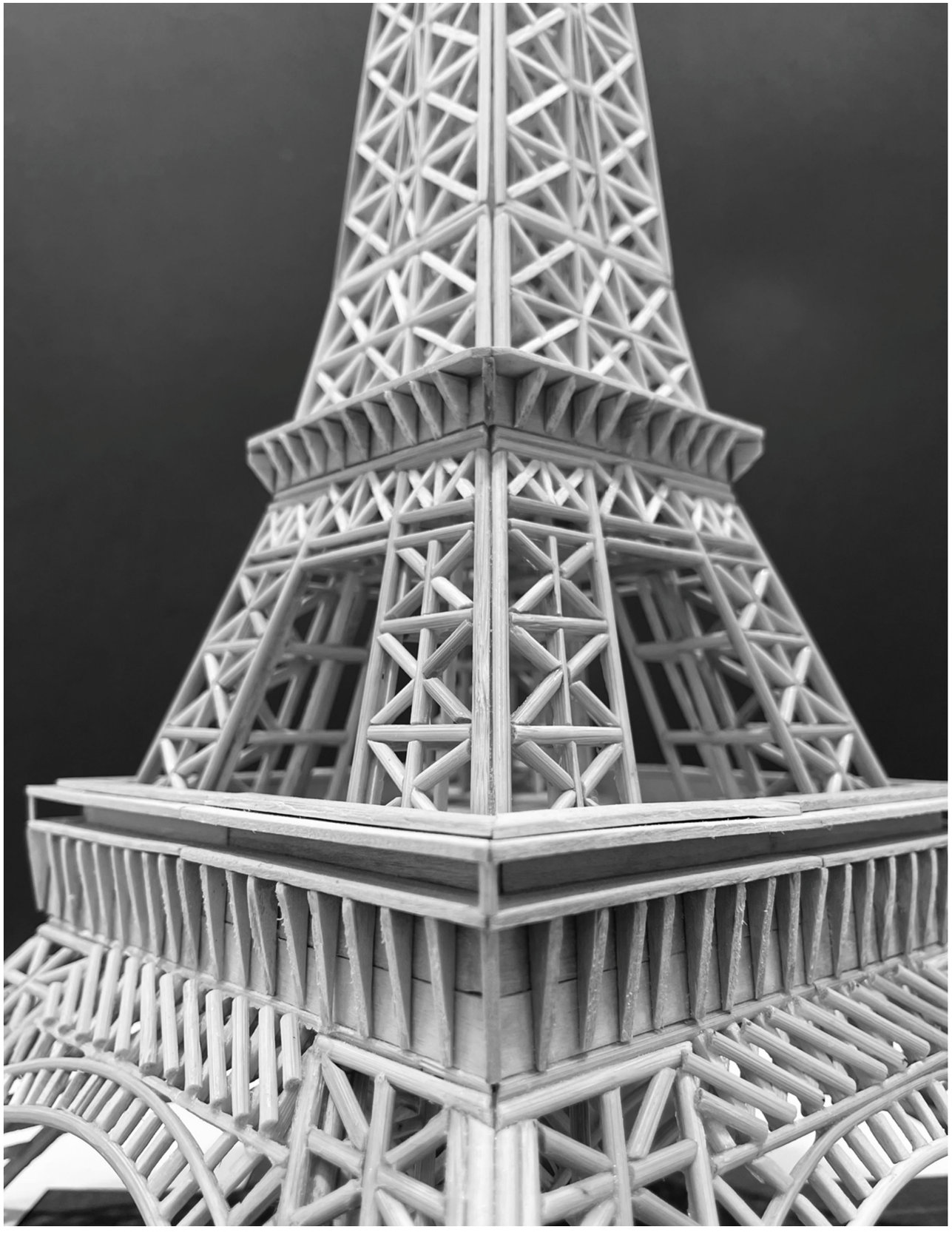
German Pavilion by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1929)

Sifoni
Fetuani

Critical Studies Two



Palácio do Planalto by Oscar Niemeyer (1960)



Harrison

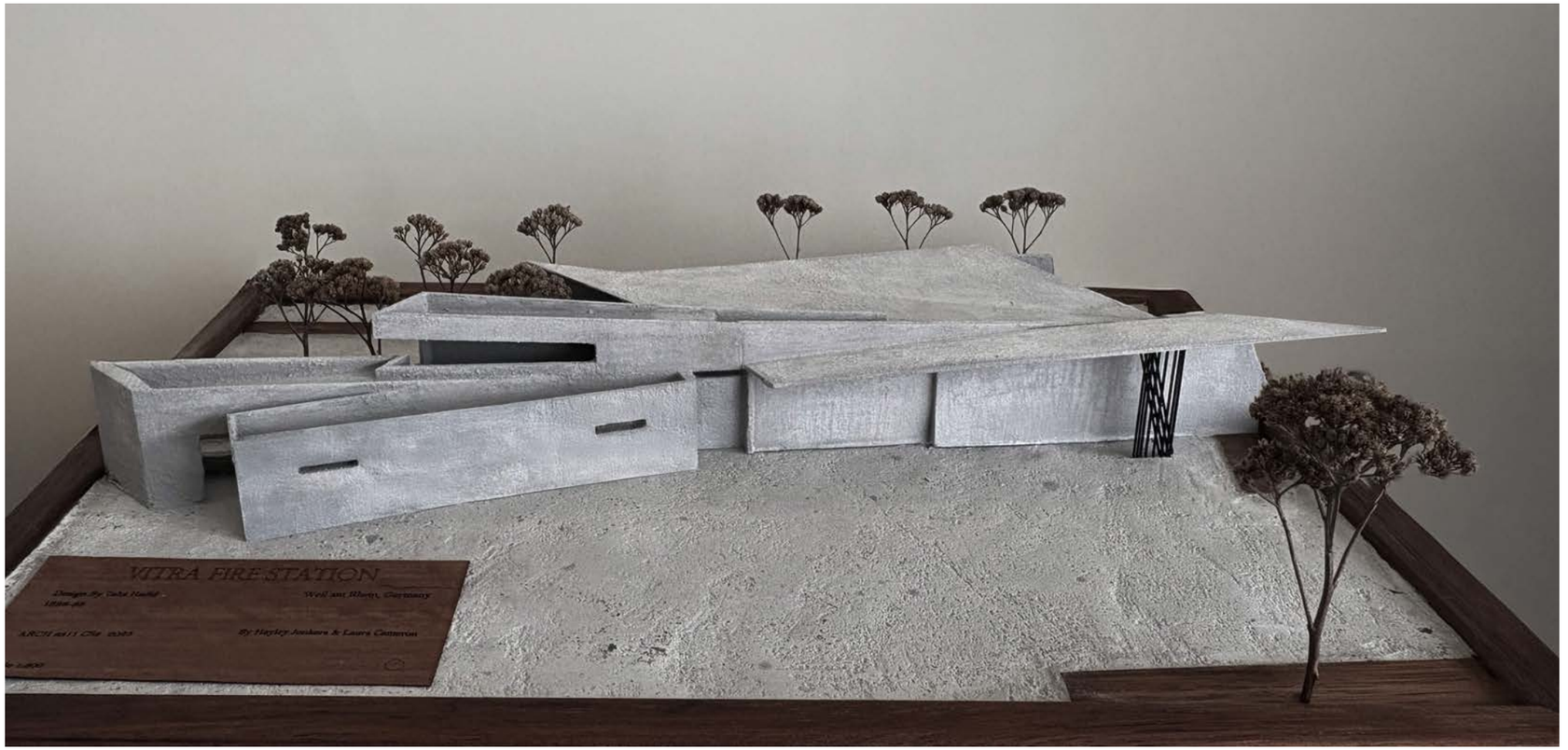
Chambers

Critical Studies Two

Eiffel Tower by Gustave Eiffel (1889)

Hayley
Jonkers.
&
Laura
Cameron.

Critical Studies Two



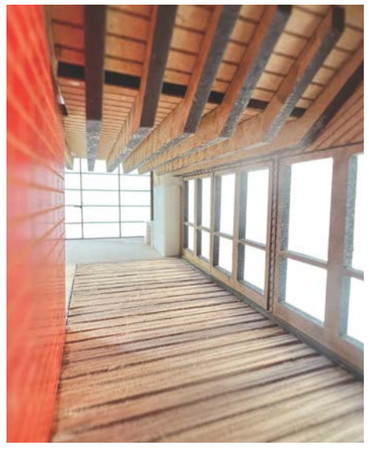
Vitra Fire Station by Zaha Hadid

Lucas

Braga

Architectural Representation Two

Rotherham House

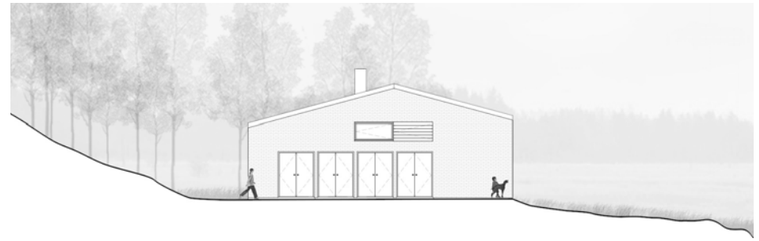


Mikayla

Funnell.

Architectural Representation Two

Rotherham House



Jamie

Loveridge

Architectural Representation Two

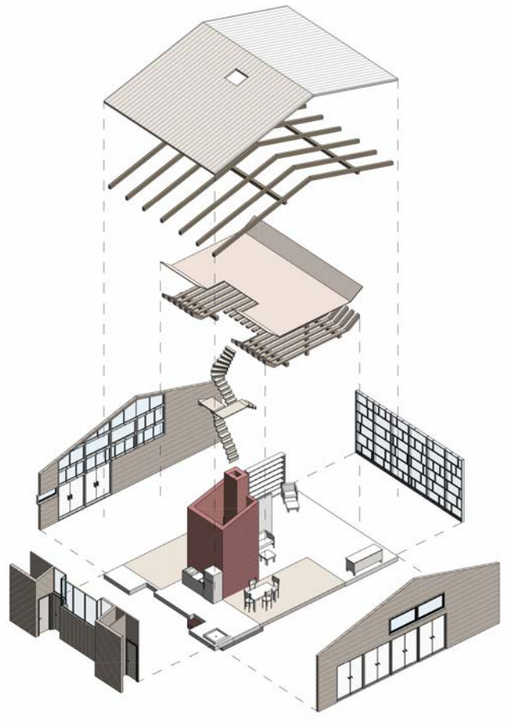
Rotherham House

Mehar

Kaur.

Architectural Representation Two

Rotherham House



Bachelor of Architectural Studies
Year Three

BAS

Emily **Young.**

Moving into the third and final year of the Bachelor of Architectural Studies comes with mixed emotions; it is the time when many key learnings from previous years come together to bridge the threshold between the extreme conceptual designs of the first year and the drive for practicality in the second year.

Third year is not about learning the basics anymore, but rather merging concepts, materiality, sustainability, purpose and human response to forge innovative design initiatives. In studio, design briefs are composed to challenge students to think outside the box, prompting them to rethink spatial design and how architecture can truly reshape a community or bring one together.

Architecture is not as shallow as to consider only form and aesthetic; the key is to find inspiration for both the built and natural environments – to find beauty in the life of a building, the way it appears to breathe, move and merge with its surroundings. The way it interacts with the land, people and climate. How it balances conceptual harmony with the demands of function and practicality.

The third year pushes students to step into the shoes of a future architect. The realities of collaboration, ethics and professional relations become key considerations. It's soon realised that every model, every drawing and every small decision has significant implications, not just for the final grade but for the real world and the people that would inhabit that space.

This year, like any other, comes with its challenges, shaping students and affirming why they chose architecture to begin with. However, finishing the third year provides key learning on what it means to be intentional and critical with decision making, while building grit and determination in every student.

Sketch: Gohanne Turtal

Matthew
Calvert

Design Studio Three

A Layered Community

This project proposes a midrise, high-density urban village be developed at the Avondale Racecourse site. It uses four different apartment plans designed around a 3m construction grid to geometrically fit around the central core of each building in various configurations. This planning method ensures that each building is different, and gives each apartment a unique identity and neighbour relationships.

A Layered Community's design explores the idea of having an identity within a wider community, and how a community comprises many different individuals.

The roofs follow Christopher Alexander's 'cascade of roofs' pattern 116 in *A Pattern Language* by varying the roofing typology and using a hierarchy of roofs towards the centre of the design to draw users towards the large central social spaces. Aesthetically, the design draws inspiration from many typologies, including Japanese timber joinery, Hassan Fathy's earthen domes and European street design.

The interiors are designed without hallways, providing an open plan – a space-to-space arrangement that offers locations for interaction and shared activity rather than only movement. To maintain privacy in the public village, the elevated domes on the second level provide outdoor, semi-private spaces that only residents can access. A skybridge network connects all of these to the central building, where all residents can access the main central dome and underground carpark. Together, these strategies create an inclusive, socially connected village that celebrates having an identity within a community.

Matt Brown

Design Studio Three

Kete Aronui

The project reframes sustainability through a Māori and Pacific worldview, challenging development models that privilege short-term gain and profit over people. It offers a framework for cultural healing, environmental stewardship (kaitiakitanga) and social cohesion (kotahitanga) – a framework that heals, nurtures and endures for generations to come.

In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, safety precedes belonging and growth. For our communities, true safety means resilience, access to kai (food) and wai (water), and preparedness for fire, flood and wind events. The design integrates these principles structurally and socially.

Structural innovation and modular design ensure efficiency while creating a timeless architectural intervention. The circular plan and forms optimise bracing, minimise wind loading and symbolise unity and continuity. Modular construction enables bespoke, affordable architecture, providing a practical pathway to equitable housing.

Guided by Kepa Morgan's Mauri Model, where ecological health equals spiritual health, the design integrates ecology, culture and technology. Regenerative water systems cleanse and nourish the site, food gardens filter wastewater, and water features cool and animate the shared spaces and atrium with reflected light and movement.

Indigenous cultures remind us that our actions ripple across multiple generations. This project honours that belief: seven generations forward, seven back – designing for legacy and restoration. The ultimate vision is to empower Aotearoa New Zealand's youth to value creativity and authentic expression as our next great export. Big ideas need big hearts to build hope for generations to come.

Nathan Philip Arriola

Design Studio Three

Avondale Urban Village

The proposed Avondale Urban Village development presents a mixed-use development with commercial spaces on ground level and residential apartments above. Designed to promote social interactions and a walkable environment, the development features interconnected green courtyards and shared terraces that soften the transition between built form and landscape.

The building's architecture is defined by balconies with timber elements and generous glazing, balancing privacy, shading and openness. Elevated walkways and rooftop gardens enhance vertical connectivity and promote environmental sustainability. The commercial space at the street level activates the public realm surrounding the building, fostering a vibrant urban environment.

Jacob **Alex**
Oscar **Lear**
Campbell **Ree**

Design Studio Three

C40's Reinventing Cities 2025: Student housing in the city of Milan–Segrate: Red Brick Road

Red Brick Road, set in Milan–Segrate, is based on five design principles: Pedestrian Streets, A Place for Everyone, Clean Construction, Retrofitting and Urban Nature.

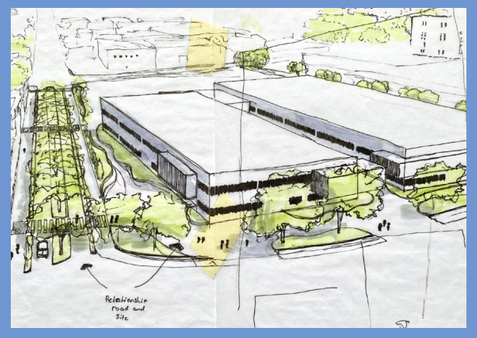
Inspired by Brazilian architecture, it maximises pedestrian usability by involving buildings that begin above ground level. This assists in sheltering and shading public spaces, and promotes circulation through intersecting site axes emphasised by red brick paving. Widened footpaths and additional rain gardens further improve stormwater management and pedestrian safety.

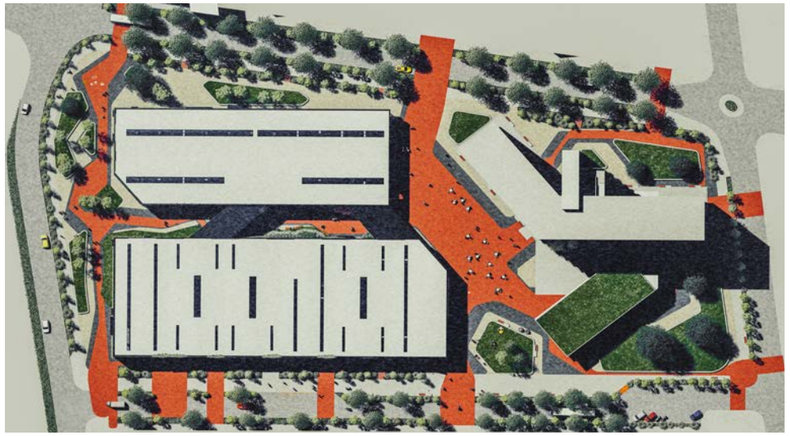
As a student housing project, Red Brick Road fosters social interaction with communal spaces that encourage engagement. Essential amenities, such as shops, a café and a gym, support both residents and the local economy – and links to an existing community house in neighbouring warehouse space.

Aligning with the Green Kilometer's key sustainability metrics and resource optimisation, the project prioritises clean construction by retrofitting warehouses, utilising sustainable timber, limiting new concrete to essential structural elements and repurposing recycled materials where possible. These guidelines ensure reduced emissions, minimal waste and alignment with Milan's climate goals.

Cohesion between Red Brick Road, the site and its context is crucial for the urban character of the landscape. Reinstating biodiversity in the industrial area is achieved through grass berms, rain gardens and native plantings, which contribute to carbon sequestration, reduce energy demand and create meaningful public spaces.

Adding to the urban quality of the site, the use of modern construction technologies, such as green-roofing above the library, increases permeability and mitigates heat-island effects. The site provides a space for all to enjoy, offering a range of areas that cater broadly to wellbeing and connected lifestyle.



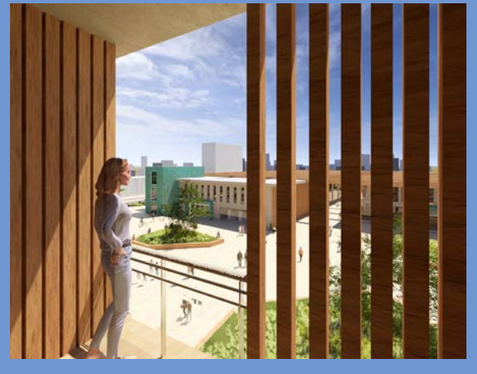


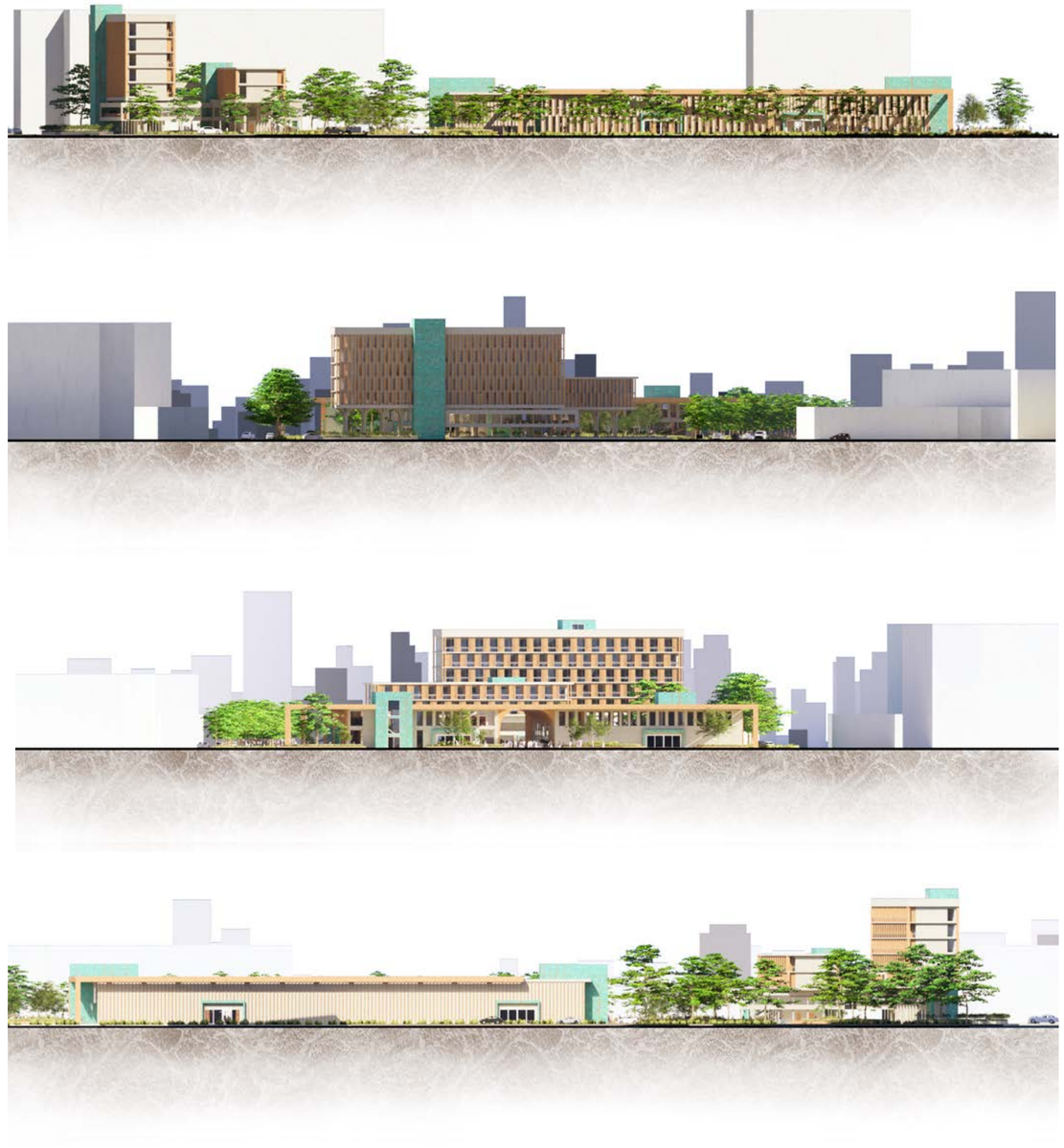
Emily **Young.**
Sophia **Connell.**
Zoe **Gurschl.**

Design Studio Three

C40's Reinventing Cities 2025: Student housing in the city of Milan–Segrate

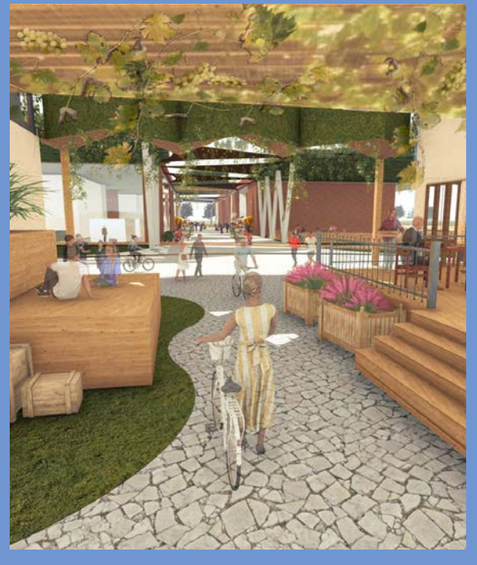
Located in MIlan-Segrate, this project sits within a transforming industrial landscape, an area soon to be revitalised by the ambitious Green Kilometer project initiative. Designed to house university students, this development also opens its doors to the broader public by integrating amenities such as gym facilities, cafés and a public library. With a strong focus on accessibility and sustainability, the design adds cycle paths and pedestrian-friendly routes. This encourages a vibrant and connected community.





Erica
Lim.
&
Laura
Zhou.

Design Studio Three



C40's Reinventing Cities 2025: Student housing in the city of Milan–Segrate

The Green Machine, located within the heart of Segrate, the eastern gateway to Milan in Italy, creates an immersion of green off the back of the Green Kilometer, whilst respecting its industrial context. It is designed not only to house students, but to connect, nourish and inspire the whole community.

The folded green-wall façade strikes those looking from afar and intrigues those within its confines to approach closer, whilst its interior provides an earthy, homely escape. The warehouses, now transformed to serve and feed the community, act as a complete neighbourhood, with supermarkets, natural produce outlets, retail, eateries, gym, bike repair, a creative hub, library and community centre right within the compound.

With its distinctive design that sparks curiosity, self-expression and wonder, The Green Machine invites occupants to explore through and around it. The building stands out as a landmark in its industrial surroundings, serving as a visual anchor, enabling visitors to navigate the surrounding area.

Sara
Peterson.
&
Shaifali
Lad.

Design Studio Three

C40's Reinventing Cities 2025: Student housing in the city of Milan–Segrate

The area surrounding this Milan student housing design is a mix of light industrial and residential. There is a large, grassed park nearby that is seemingly unused. Adding sustainable student housing, along with a new community centre to share the space, would merge the two areas and activate the neighbourhood.

This development would bring a variety of positive benefits: an extension of the Green Kilometer project, a boost for the local economy, eco-friendly accommodation and an increase of passive surveillance for the community. Further developing the large green space of Golfo Agricolo would also be of benefit, ensuring connection of the area to nearby schools as well as adding interest to the area.

The addition of student accommodation and landscaping would positively influence the wellbeing of the community by providing a sense of place, and encouraging exploration of this regenerated part-industrial area as it becomes more liveable and pedestrian friendly.

Critical Studies Four

The Pedagogical Value of Morphological and Sensorial Analysis Through Hand-Drawing and Writing

For architecture students, the ability to critically interpret and represent urban spaces is foundational to developing design literacy and spatial sensitivity. Analysing a variety of open public spaces – such as squares, plazas, parks, streets, promenades and pedestrian zones – through morphological and sensorial lenses, using hand-drawn sketches and reflective writing, offers a multidimensional learning experience that integrates observation, cognition and creativity. This approach is strongly supported by literature on architectural pedagogy and urban design theory.

As a fundamental discipline for introducing and studying the principles and theories of urban design and planning, ARCH7311 Critical Studies Four offers the ideal basis for exposing our third-year students to this multidimensional learning experience, where the processes of drawing and writing foster a critical engagement with our built environment; an urban environment that they pass through every day, but which is rarely perceived through a critical lens.

Morphological analysis enables students to understand the formal structure and spatial organisation of urban environments. Scholars such as Vicente del Rio, Gordon Cullen and Kevin Lynch argue that urban morphology reveals patterns of plot division, building typologies and street networks, which are essential for comprehending the historical and functional logic of cities. Hand-drawing these elements compels students to engage with scale, proportion and geometry in a way that digital tools often obscure. As Juhani Pallasmaa notes, the tactile act of drawing fosters a haptic connection to space, sharpening perceptual skills and encouraging interpretative judgment.

Sensorial analysis complements this morphological focus by addressing the experiential qualities of urban spaces – light, sound, texture and movement. Jane Jacobs and Jan Gehl emphasise that successful public spaces are defined not only by their physical form, but by their capacity to support human interaction and sensory engagement. Observing and recording these phenomena in situ, then articulating them through sketches and written reflection, cultivates an awareness of the atmospheric and social dimensions of our built urban environment. This dual modality – visual and textual – reinforces critical thinking, as students must synthesise empirical observation with conceptual interpretation.

Moreover, while sketches capture spatial relationships and material qualities, essays allow students to interrogate meanings, contextualise observations and articulate design implications. This iterative process nurtures analytical rigour and communicative competence, both of which are indispensable for professional practice.

Morphological and sensorial analysis through hand-drawing and writing transforms urban spaces from abstract constructs into lived realities. It equips architecture students with perceptual acuity, critical reasoning and expressive skills, fostering a holistic understanding of the built environment that underpins responsible and innovative urban design.

In the following pages, we invite readers to delve into the work produced by our students. A selection of essays and sketches explores the diverse urban spaces of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, revealing how morphology and sensory design shape our daily public experience:

Dr Cesar Wagner

Hurstmere Green's seating arrangements dissolve spatial limitations and encourage lingering, while sensory-friendly design enhances comfort and safety.

St Patrick's Square contrasts vertical towers with a human-scale oasis, combining cultural and religious significance with spatial elements that promote interaction and safety.

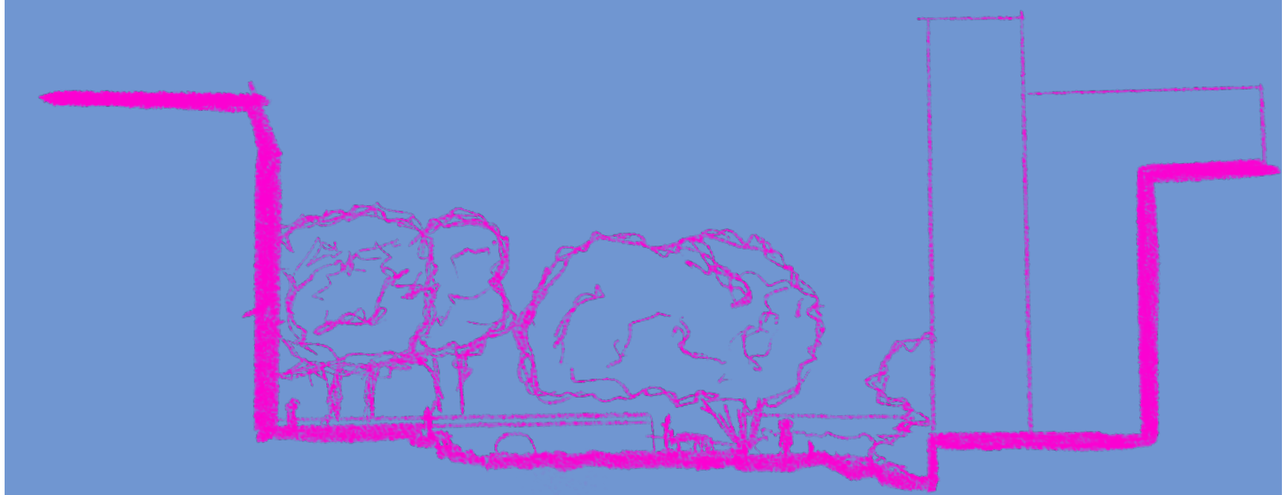
The High Street District thrives on intrigue and intimacy, utilising laneways and heritage façades to create immersive 'outdoor rooms' that strike a balance between protection and vibrancy.

Moving to the Daldy Street Linear Park, its elongated axis and layered textures transform a former industrial corridor into a dynamic promenade, where greenery and tactile surfaces encourage slow, sensory-rich movement.

In Ponsonby Central, morphology takes the form of a 'mini city', where interconnected layouts and quiet pockets foster social interaction amid bustling retail, complemented by sensory cues of light, sound and material warmth.

Finally, Silo Park exemplifies serial vision, combining cinematic events with open waterfront vistas to evoke a sense of scale, liveliness and safety.

Across these spaces, common threads emerge: porous boundaries, layered textures and sensory invitations that transform urban morphology into inclusive, engaging environments.



Sketch: Claudia McGough-Morunga

Claudia

McGough-Morunga.

Critical Studies Four

Blurred Boundaries and Informal Invitations: An analysis of Hurstmere Green

Introduction

Tucked away on the edge of Takapuna, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, and a short walk from Potters Park, is Hurstmere Green (also known as the Green), a public square that invites occupancy with its blurred borders and inviting boundaries. In recent years, Takapuna has undergone an urban revamp, with the Hurstmere Green space already existing, but lacking comfort and style. Now showcasing a modern application of landscape architecture and urban design, and both

Figure 1. Site plan.

informal and formal seating, a more adaptable and user-friendly space has been created (Figure 1). This essay will analyse the urban design and spatial layout of Hurstmere Green. By focusing on the dual functionality of the sculptural borders, retaining walls and garden edges – all made of concrete, which also serve as seating, encouraging active and engaging occupancy – I hope to critically assess the outcome of this design application.

The Evolution of Public Use

There has been a significant shift in the approach to urban design in Tāmaki Makaurau, where public transport and pedestrian-friendly environments are being prioritised over car-centric infrastructure. Previously, Hurstmere Green was simply decorated with asphalt paving and car parks, and public seating received little attention. Efficiency was favoured over community needs until North Shore City Council selected Sills van Bohemen Architecture's as the preferred design concept for the redevelopment of Takapuna's Hurstmere Green.[1] Their design focus was the public: they pedestrianised the surrounding areas and renovated the Green with the intention of softening commercial infrastructure, introducing permeable surfaces, and creating multifunctional spaces. In redesigning this space, they acknowledged the necessity for urban landscapes to adapt. By prioritising people, they have reduced traffic, established designated areas for public transport, and enhanced pedestrian movement (Figure 2). The commercial spaces surrounding Hurstmere Green are user-friendly, and the square is easily accessible from Potters Park. The entire area possesses qualities that resonate with ideas in Jan Gehl's book, *Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space*.[2] The effectiveness of their efforts to create an inclusive space that offers vibrancy and multi-use to the public has been notable.

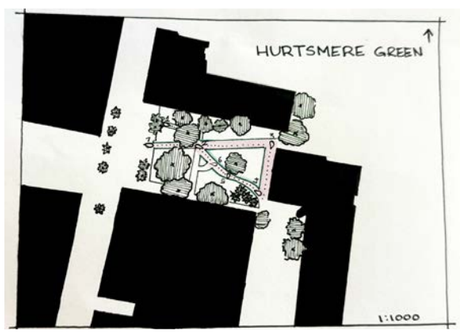


Figure 2. Figure-ground drawing.

1 "Hurstmere Green Design Concept Chosen," Sills van Bohemen, accessed May 20, 2025, https://svb.co.nz/hurstmere-green-design-concept-chosen/.
2 Jan Gehl, *Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space* (Island Press, 2011), 11.

Mana Whenua

An understanding of the area's cultural history is relevant to its transformation into a contemporary urban space. Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei and Te Kawerau ā Maki historically inhabited the coastal landscape that Takapuna sits within.[3] Tangata whenua used Takapuna as a place of trade; it was part of a larger network that included settlements and food sources and held ties that linked the people to the land and Hauraki Gulf. However, colonisation and the development of the land largely erased the visual presence of these communities, replacing them with Western patterns of commerce, paved surfaces and privately owned housing.[4] While the design of Hurstmere Green does not specifically centre around Māori design principles, it incorporates native planting to complement the natural landscape and aims to reduce barriers between people and the space. These actions serve as small steps in reconnecting the current occupants to the land and recognising the ancestral culture and landscape. Vicente del Rio asserts that to achieve a deeper understanding and meaningful engagement with a space, it is essential to acknowledge its historical context.[5]

Seating: The boundaries dissolve

In *Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space*, Jan Gehl writes that the quality of public spaces can support social activity and has the potential to create a range of choices for the visitor.[6] This is something I noticed visually within the Green. Throughout the square, the seating is not quite as traditional as the standard bench. Whilst a few benches are available, in and around the space, they sit flush with concrete edges and retaining walls. These features have all been designed to be chair height, offering an informal and flexible invitation, blurring the line between traditional and contemporary, and allowing the public to create their own relationship with the space. I noticed that people had chosen to sit on the concrete edges next to the empty benches.

Del Rio argues that a sense of urbanity emerges from the "existential dimension of place," where city life is determined by the everyday actions of the occupants.[7] When a person sits in this space, be it a bench or garden edge, they become a part of what frames the space – seeing people occupy these unconventional spaces is part of the visual theatre for passersby. The variety of seating options is clever; it challenges the idea of fixed public seating and instead showcases what Jane Jacobs described as "self-generated diversity" – the spontaneity of human interactions.[8]

This notion of flexibility gives individuals freedom in choosing not only where to sit but also how to do so. People can choose to sit facing inwards, watching others in the sun, or outwards, observing the street in the shade (Figure 3). There are options to gaze toward Rangitoto and the beach or to seek shelter beneath the trees, away from direct view. This design aligns with Gehl's theory of "staying ideas," which encourages unplanned social interactions, gatherings and moments of solitude in a bustling commercial environment.[9]

Figure 3. Entrance to Hurstmere Green.

The Invitation to Stay

The success of Hurstmere Green can be summed up by Kevin Lynch's concept of 'Imageability', which suggests that the effectiveness of a space depends on how easily it can be understood and navigated.[10] The Green is a calming environment that offers various options while maintaining a sense of continuity. The spatial layout features a network of paths that lead to areas for rest, each distinct from the others. These spaces promote openness, allowing each visitor to interpret and engage with them freely.

Typically, low concrete borders might be perceived as barriers or something that children would want to run along. However, in Hurstmere Green, these design elements serve to frame the movement within the space, which Cullen describes as "lines of force".[11]

3 "Te Ara Tukutuku: Concept Design Summary," Auckland Council, accessed June 1, 2025, https://www.ekepanuku.co.nz/media/ucbbbd3b/te-ara-tukutuku-concept-design-summary-version_.pdf.
4 Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Vintage Books, 1992), 42.
5 Vicente del Rio. "Urbanity, the Flâneur, and the Visual Qualities of Urban Design: A Walk in Lisbon, Portugal," *Focus*, 12 no. 1 (2016): 67.
6 Gehl, *Life Between Buildings*, 11.
7 Del Rio, "Urbanity, the Flâneur, and the Visual Qualities of Urban Design," 67.
8 Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 150.
9 Gehl, *Life Between Buildings*, 22.
10 Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (MIT Press, 1960), 3.
11 Gordon Cullen, *The Concise Townscape* (Architectural Press, 1996), 111.

The difference between an actual border and those throughout Hurstmere Green is in the details; their materiality is smooth and comfortable, and the size is perfect for sitting and placing your bags down. The openness of the green space provides people with freedom rather than strict directions, enabling them to use the area in a way that suits their preferences (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Visible network of paths.

Friendly Design for the Senses

Del Rio highlights that those who observe and wander are essential participants in urban life, adding vibrancy to the city.[12] While Hurstmere Green is small and compact, the engaging and subtle changes in its elevation encourage exploration. As I walked through the area, I found the unconventional pathways and junctions intriguing (Figure 5).

The colour palette of stone, grass, concrete and timber is visually appealing and rhythmic. These materials create visual pauses that invite moments of rest, which Cullen refers to as "serial vision".[13] When we seek a pause, we tend to investigate our surroundings and look for spaces to approach and sit. Our desire for solitude or a place to observe can greatly influence our choices. An edge has the potential to become an invitation to observe. These sensory experiences encourage people not just to pass through but to take a moment and stay in the green spaces. Gehl states that the success of a public space is determined by how many people linger, rather than simply moving through it.[14]

Safety, Comfort and Spatial Ownership

People need to feel safe when using urban spaces, and this is highlighted by the importance of visibility and mutual awareness – Jacobs emphasises this in her book

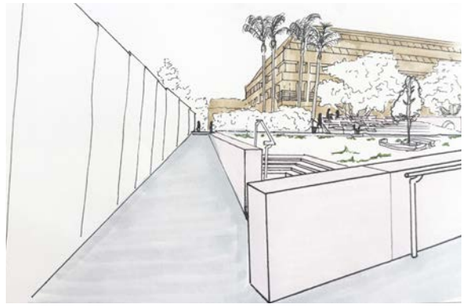


Figure 5. Sloping paths and stairs to elevational changes.

The Death and Life of Great American Cities.[15] Hurstmere Green's layout has been designed in an 'open plan' style. The user has a clear sightline to other people, all paths, as well as the adjacent road and shops. The seating arrangement supports this by allowing people to sit in multiple directions, providing a variety of views. When people feel they are in control of a space, they're more likely to use it and make it their own.

The different layouts of seating in the park make it easy for regular social use. This little space is a break from the commercial spaces it's surrounded by and caters to all. Many people sit here during their lunch breaks; it can host a large group of teens, a casual meeting or a quiet space to read. The focus on our needs and experiences in urban spaces is what Gehl advocates for in *Life Between Buildings*.[16]

Figure 6. Elevated main seating area.

Challenges in Design and Use

The informality of Hurstmere Green does work well in many ways, but it also comes with issues. While I enjoyed

12 Del Rio, "Urbanity, the Flâneur, and the Visual Qualities of Urban Design," 66.
13 Cullen, *The Concise Townscape*, 108.
14 Gehl, *Life Between Buildings*, 97.
15 Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 35.
16 Gehl, *Life Between Buildings*, 97.

the seating, it doesn't appear user-friendly for those with physical disabilities. It can be uncomfortable for many, such as elderly people, to rest on hard surfaces. 80 percent of the wooden benches are located on the bleachers (Figure 6), and none of the seating offers any form of arm supports for those who need assistance to stand up.[17]

A major con of having such an open plan, as seen in the Green, is the lack of specific areas designated for gatherings. Open urban environments without clear meeting points can feel empty, regardless of their size.[18] In the centre of the square is a large grass lawn, which looks nice, but feels like an under-utilised space (Figure 7). There is minimal seating and no shade – this was a missed opportunity for a focal gathering spot or a space for children to play.

Finally, using mostly concrete for seating does come with some risks: in the winter, the surfaces are very cold and dull, becoming less inviting. It is durable and fits the aesthetic, but the seating scheme could have benefited from shelter and more of the warmer wooden benches.

Figure 7. Large lawn centred in the site.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Hurstmere Green has been through a transformation that has created a more adaptable and inclusive space. Prioritising people and a sense of community has improved the usability and functionality of the space. By acknowledging its historical context in this process, the design has also created an opportunity for a deeper connection between the land and the people.

Urban design is about well-designed spaces for people and landscapes. Hurstmere Green's integration of seating that blurs boundaries between formal and informal has created an invitation for visitors to observe and explore their surroundings, creating a vibrant atmosphere.

As Takapuna continues to develop and transition into a people-friendly space, Hurstmere Green and places like it will play a pivotal role in shaping our urban landscape, reflecting heritage, people, land and connections. Having these spaces available for use helps pave the way for a more engaging and sustainable environment, encouraging us to be outside and shape public life.

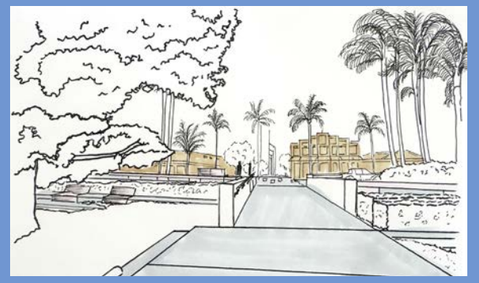


Figure 8. Exit onto Hurstmere Road.

17 Gehl, 96–98.
18 Gehl, 97.

Bibliography

Auckland Council. "Te Ara Tukutuku: Concept Design Summary." Accessed June 1, 2025. https://www.ekepanuku.co.nz/media/ucbbbd3b/te-ara-tukutuku-concept-design-summary-version_.pdf

Cullen, Gordon. *The Concise Townscape*. Architectural Press, 1996.

Del Rio, Vicente. "Urbanity, the Flâneur, and the Visual Qualities of Urban Design: A Walk in Lisbon, Portugal". *Focus* 12, no. 1 (2016): 66–72.

Gehl, Jan. *Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space*. Island Press, 2011.

Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Vintage Books, 1992.

Kalmar Projects. "Hurstmere Green." Accessed May 15, 2025. https://kalmar.co.nz/project/hurstmere-green/

Landscape Architecture Aotearoa. "Rejuvenating Hurstmere Green." February 27, 2022. https://www.landscapearchitecture.nz/landscape-architecture-aotearoa/2022/2/27/43d9qo0o3ns8f9qwbvosctgq2l6jv0?rq=hurstmere%20green

Lynch, Kevin. *The Image of the City*. MIT Press, 1960.

Sills van Bohemen. "Hurstmere Green Design Concept Chosen." Accessed May 20, 2025. https://svb.co.nz/hurstmere-green-design-concept-chosen/

Myke

Te Momo

Critical Studies Four

St Patrick's Square: An oasis beneath towers

Figure 1. Plan view showing the perimeter of the cathedral.

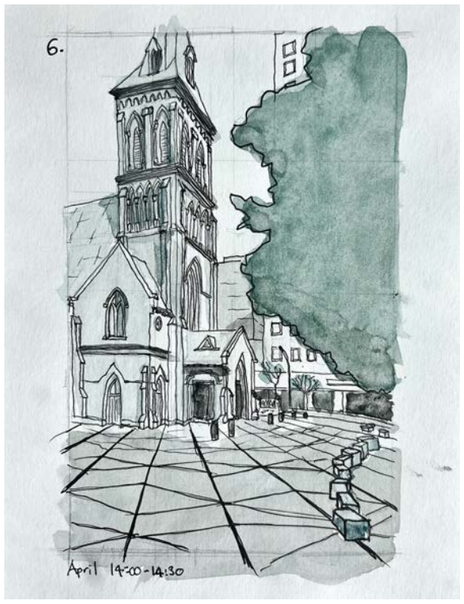


Figure 2. Geometrical patterns within the paving.

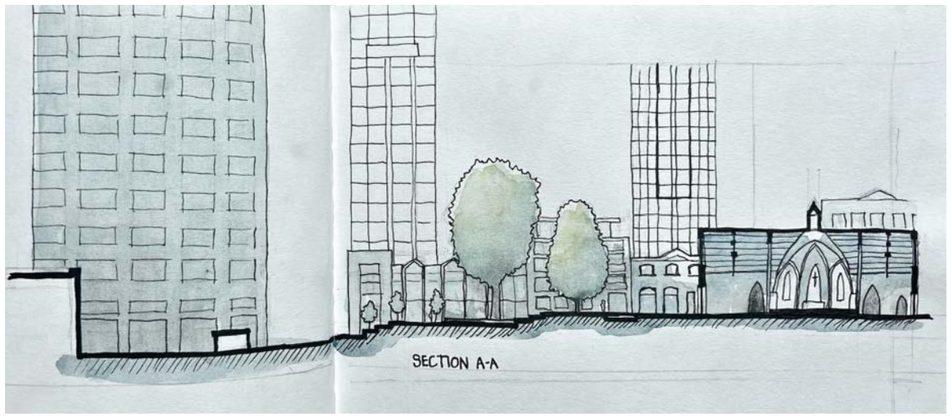


Figure 3. Section through the site showing the change in levels.

Figure 4. View toward St Patrick's Square from Albert Street, showing compression and release.

Figure 5. Skyscraper with mid-rise façade to engage in the human dimension.

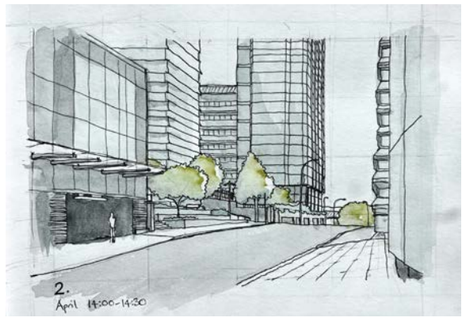


Figure 6. 'Here' and 'there' are defined by Swanson Street.

Figure 7. The centre of St Patrick's Square offers a place to engage with terraced seating and ecology.

Figure 8. Children engage with the water feature.

Figure 9. Pedestrian links through the square become less desirable at night.

Erica
Lim.
Critical Studies Four

The Mastery of Intrigue, Intimacy and Immersion: A case study of the High Street district

Introduction

Intrigue, intimacy and immersion are all draws that the human dimension desires. "Carefully working with the human dimension," is what Jan Gehl says is the key to placemaking and creating successful public spaces.[1] Since the 1910s, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland's High Street district has been destined for greatness – its placemaking potential has been highly anticipated.

High Street has seen days of tribulation, with hope in the cause almost lost due to the narrowness of its streets; however, now included are such elements that contribute to successful public engagement.

The human dimension is critical in understanding and engaging with the places that we inhabit, as it determines our ability to be curious and follow the instinct for exploration. Furthermore, our sense of safety and belonging heavily influence our decision to linger in a place or to leave.

1 Jan Gehl, *Cities for People* (Island Press, 2010), 77.

Intrigue: Where heritage meets uptown

Moments of intrigue draw an individual to a place – a lure that the soul seems to yearn for. Figure 1 shows that on entering High Street, an immediate sense of intrigue pulls people off Queen Street, Shortland Street and Victoria Street into its eclectic, charming and vibrant funnel. Lining the streetscape are mixed-use, original heritage buildings which immediately catch one's gaze, giving the street a sense of character and nostalgia and instilling a sense of belonging.

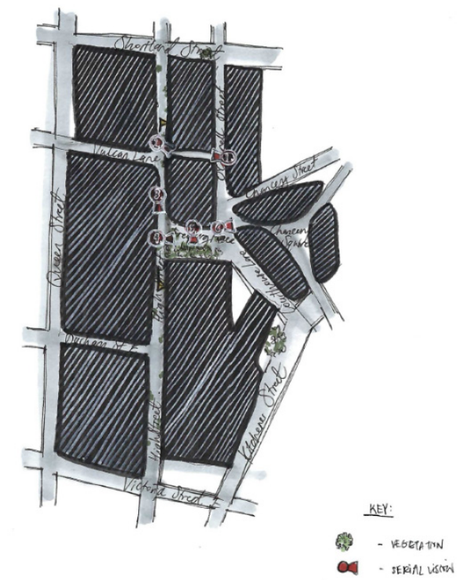


Figure 1. Figure–ground diagram of the High Street district.

Allan Jacobs and Donald Appleyard's "Toward an Urban Design Manifesto" states that "Local identity is encouraged with a response to publicness and diversity when there is an integration of activity, from living, shopping, and public."[2] High Street does exactly that, with a mix of upmarket and hip retail, along with bistros, eateries and superettes lining the ground floors. There is a harmonious meld of heritage buildings, which are a big part of the local attraction, housing residents and office spaces in the levels above; they also provide a sense of comfort and fascination with their old-town charm, High Street long serving as a go-to street well before WWII.[3]

The mixed-use capacity of the street initiates a reason for it to be populated at all hours of the day – Gordon Cullen describes this effect as viscosity and possession of place.[4] This is seen in the gathering of early morning office commuters for a coffee stop, the tourists and students window shopping and exploring the boutiques during the day, the residents grabbing dinner on the way home, or visitors enjoying the iconic Unity Books.

An application where this has not been so successful is the entrance from Victoria Street into High Street, where, although this is often an occupied space, there is a noticeable sense of urgency to move away and go further down the street. Apart from this space being the exit to a major car parking garage, Victoria Street Carpark has tried to create an 'ode to history', with an eyesore of industrial, metal arches that make up its façade (see Figure 2). This façade is not admired: as visitors pass by, there is a stark quality of coldness to the space, compared to 30 metres down the street with its genuine historical architecture. However, there is still generally a lure through intrigue for High Street to be populated. Allowing frequenters of the space to tap into comforting sensations and pinpoint locations of belonging is what brings forth its success as a 'happening' space.

Figure 2. Victoria Street Carpark façade

Intrigue: The art of laneways

Vicente del Rio gives a compelling description of the effects of carefully curated laneways embedded throughout High Street: "Complexity and surprise in urban design keep the mind curious and make the walk more rewarding."[5] Vulcan Lane, connecting O'Connell Street to High Street, has a history of debauchery and deprivation, earning the nick-name Vulture's Lane, until the mid-nineteenth century.[6] From 2020, Auckland Council set their mission to create a people-centred High Street,

2 Alan Jacobs and Donald Appleyard, "Toward an Urban Design Manifesto," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 53, no. 1 (1987): 118.
3 Chris Singh, "A Brief History of Auckland's Stylish High Street (New Zealand)," *The AU Review*, updated March 8, 2016, https://www.theaureview.com/travel/a-brief-history-of-aucklands-stylish-high-street-new-zealand/.
4 Gordon Cullen, *The Concise Townscape* (Architectural Press, 1971), 24.
5 Vicente del Rio. "Urbanity, the Flâneur, and the Visual Qualities of Urban Design: A Walk in Lisbon, Portugal," *Focus* 12, no. 1 (2016): 68.
6 Singh, "A Brief History of Auckland's Stylish High Street (New Zealand)."

placing the community at its centre. These changes have impacted the identity of the area, and specifically Vulcan Lane, from a hotspot of danger to a magical and visually engaging car-free sanctuary that summons you off O'Connell Street into its intimate and charming embrace.

Gehl speaks highly of narrow and small spaces: "In narrow streets, everything is perceived at a closer range and with considerably more intensity, where the details as well as the whole can be enjoyed. These spaces are perceived as intimate, warm, and personal."[7] From Figure 3, it can be seen that this speaks perfectly to Vulcan Lane, where, as you cross the fairy-light-filled threshold, you are immediately transitioned into a space of belonging. It makes you look admiringly up and around, to notice the lights, the auburn cobbled tiles, and the presence of those moving through the alley alongside you. Chic bistros tucked into the walls pour their seating into the laneway, tapping into the sensation of homeliness through the indoor–outdoor flow.

Figure 3. Entrance to Vulcan Lane via O'Connell Street.

Approaching from High Street, the curvature of the building, as seen in Figures 4 and 5, pulls you into the lane in anticipation; as del Rio describes: "Defining edges create to feelings of accessibility and continuity."[8] This creates an evident moment of intrigue along High Street, which promotes exploration and walkability, especially when the architecture itself is so welcoming. This space has been transformed to be viewed from a human scale, which, without the enhancement of lights that create a shelter, or popular eateries that bring life to the lane, would otherwise be a brooding and cold alleyway. The large-scale shadow cast on either side would make the visitor feel small, endangered and obsolete. This compressive corridor, however, is an effective thoroughfare that funnels you through to your destination whilst providing a momentary escape from reality, accompanied by a sense of mystery about what lies within and beyond.

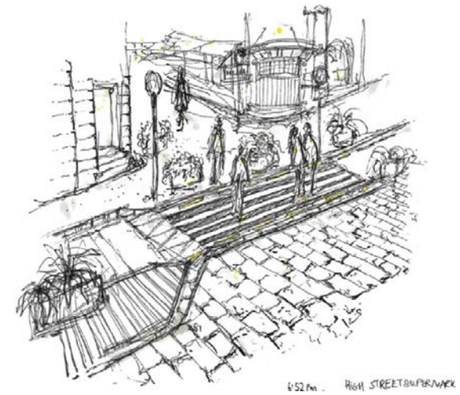


Figure 4. Entrance to Vulcan Lane from High Street.

Intimacy: Safety and protection

With its near demise in 2012 due to the street's narrowness, the regeneration of High Street has utilised its unique features as a draw for the creation of intimacy and security. Intimacy, at its core, is closeness, safety and protection – it is a part of the human dimension that is essential for making us feel as if we belong. Gehl wrote that, "The pleasantness of a place is contingent upon protection from danger and physical harm, which is an insecurity from criminality and vehicular traffic."[9] Through this understanding, we can unpack that it is within our nature to always be conscious of these external threats, and therefore, a successful streetscape should implement strategies that move towards people-centric spaces that provide safety and offer peace of mind.

Firstly, this has been implemented through the widening of its sidewalks, using a change in materiality to delineate the

7 Jan Gehl, *Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space* (Island Press, 2011), 69.
8 Del Rio, "Urbanity, the Flâneur, and the Visual Qualities of Urban Design," 69.
9 Gehl, *Life Between Buildings*, 171.

Figure 5. Curvature of architecture on the entrance to Vulcan Lane.

Figure 6 - Looking up High Street and large protective planters.

old from the new and offer peace of mind. The addition of the wooden slats to the concrete tiling instils an earthy, human, and familiar feel within the cityscape, encouraging the idea of walkability, that this path is solely for human use. The widening of the path imparts possession of the sidewalk for varying activities and allows for viscosity, which promotes social interactions, as opposed to a simple bypass. Large planters of lush native flora at mid height, as seen in Figures 6 and 7, add a sense of security, providing both a visual and physical barrier of protection from the one-way street.

With High Street's axis being north-facing, it is in a prime location for streams of afternoon light, contributing to a bright and well-lit walk, playing heavily into the factor of safety and visibility. The pleasantness of a place is also determined, according to Gehl, as "protection from unpleasant weather as well."[10] Whilst the street is blocked from the southwesterly wind, making it a comfortable and pleasant stroll, glass eaves protrude from the building creating further protection from the elements while also bringing the street back to human scale through a feeling of enclosure. The streetscape has been so effectively curated that, although narrow, it enables all its functions to flow cohesively, whilst providing a safe, secure and pleasant urban experience.

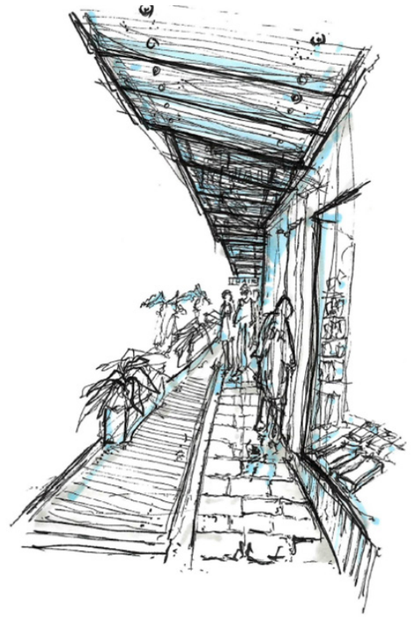


Figure 7. Looking up High Street outside Unity Book Store.

10 Gehl, 173.

Immersion: The outdoor room and the anchor

Freyberg Place, the outdoor room, and Chancery Square, the anchor, are the main public spaces and landmarks at the heart of the High Street district, making their mark by providing a place for all to be immersed. Jacobs and Appleyard wrote that, "A good urban environment must be designed for the poor and the rich, where the people should have the opportunity to imagine and find joy, have a break from the traditional moulds, extend their experience, learn new viewpoints, meet new people and have fun."[11] So often, cityscapes are designed purely to house the rich as their targeted clientele; however, Freyberg Place has a light and airy atmosphere, and is fully pedestrianised expanse with playful terraced architectural seating, welcoming all (see Figure 8). This type of urban architecture facilitates individual autonomy, enabling self-expression and freedom. The concrete forms encourage both rest and play, inviting even those transitioning through the space to find a reason to sit and experience the square.

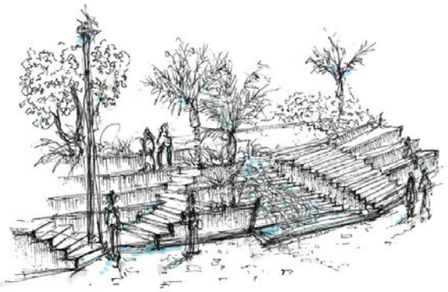


Figure 8. Freyberg Place terraced stairs and cascading water feature.

A feeling of belonging is instilled in Freyberg Place by the multiple ways the space can be used – the changing of levels and direction stir excitement and intrigue for people, and spark exploration and enjoyment. High levels of immersion and foot traffic in this space make it "A space equipped to handle strangers."[12] Jacobs' words prove the importance of creating shared reason for strangers to coexist in and inhabit the same space without being 'automatically menaced' by each other.[13] The square does this in the way it uses open space – it "disassociates the stream of people into groups," as Cullen describes it.[14] This arrangement enables immersion so all walks of life become one; from markets and performances to laundry services for the homeless, a place for children to play in the cascading stream, and an extension of the Ellen Melville Centre that spills out onto the square, creating a "flexible urban living room."[15]

The multiple access points to Freyberg Place lead to further exploration of space, brought about by curiosity and intrigue. One of these explorations leads to the anchor, which is Chancery Square. A sense of hereness and thereness is always looming, as the presence of its towers stands out as an icon of placemaking in the area, often seen from a distance (see Figure 9). The towers' curved threshold follows the same welcoming language as that from High Street into Vulcan Lane, which pulls travellers into its orbit for further exploration. Colourful illumination, spouting soft glows of light onto the surrounding pavement, creates a magical and semi-enclosed feeling, whilst clear signage creates an immediate sense of place and wayfinding. Both core public spaces create a place for all to be immersed, which facilitates connections that would otherwise not exist. The human dimension is carefully treated to enhance these feelings of imagination and joy, which can easily be lost in the mundane actions of commuting through the city, and proves why it is an essential matter in the planning of streets.

Figure 9. Chancery Square entrance.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the effectiveness of the High Street district as a successful public space was strategically planned, and the workings of scholars show us how to effectively deal with the human dimension with tailored-made, human-centric experiences. High Street, Vulcan Lane, Freyberg Place and Chancery Square could have very easily been deemed obsolete and uninviting spaces in the city, without the key work of creating pockets of intrigue, intimacy and immersion. These draw on the heritage and history, whilst incorporating mixed-use functions and the magic of artfully curated laneways – alongside ensuring safety and protection, and facilitating chance interactions of self-expression through outdoor rooms and anchor points.

11 Jacobs and Appleyard, "Toward an Urban Design Manifesto," 116.
12 Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (The Bodley Head, 2020), 40.
13 Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 44.
14 Cullen, *The Concise Townscape*, 104.
15 "Freyberg Place and Ellen Melville Centre: The Heart of the High Street Community," Heart of the City, accessed June 10, 2025, https://heartofthecity.co.nz/all-you-need/freyberg-place-ellen-melville-centre.

Bibliography

Auckland Council. "Project AKL: High Street Improvements Project. Auckland's Future in Progress." Accessed June 8, 2025. https://progressakl.co.nz/projects/auckland-council/high-street-improvements-project/

Cullen, Gordon. *The Concise Townscape*. Architectural Press, 1971.

Del Rio, Vicente. "Urbanity, the Flâneur, and the Visual Qualities of Urban Design: A Walk in Lisbon, Portugal." *Focus* 12, no. 1 (2016): 66–72.

Heart of the City. "Freyberg Place and Ellen Melville Centre: The Heart of the High Street Community." Accessed June 10, 2025. https://heartofthecity.co.nz/all-you-need/freyberg-place-ellen-melville-centre

Gehl, Jan. *Cities for People*. Island Press, 2010.

Gehl, Jan. Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space. Island Press, 2011.

L., Matt. "Is High St a Lost Cause?" GreaterAuckland. Accessed February 26, 2014. https://www.greaterauckland.org.nz/2014/02/27/is-high-st-a-lost-cause/

Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. The Bodley Head, 2020.

Jacobs, Allan, and Donald Appleyard. "Toward an Urban Design Manifesto." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 53, no. 1 (1987): 112–120.

Singh, Chris. "A Brief History of Auckland's Stylish High Street (New Zealand)." *The AU Review*. Accessed March 8, 2016. https://www.theaureview.com/travel/a-brief-history-of-aucklands-stylish-high-street-new-zealand/

Jacob

Alexander

Critical Studies Four

Interpreting Daldy Street Linear Park

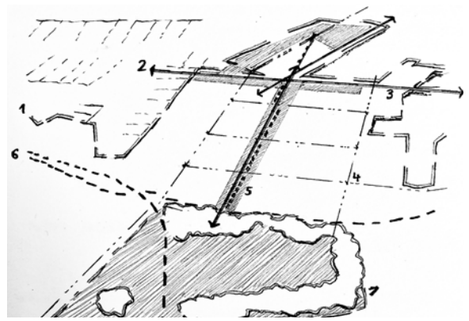


Figure 1. An aerial drawing highlighting Daldy Street Linear Park's connectivity.

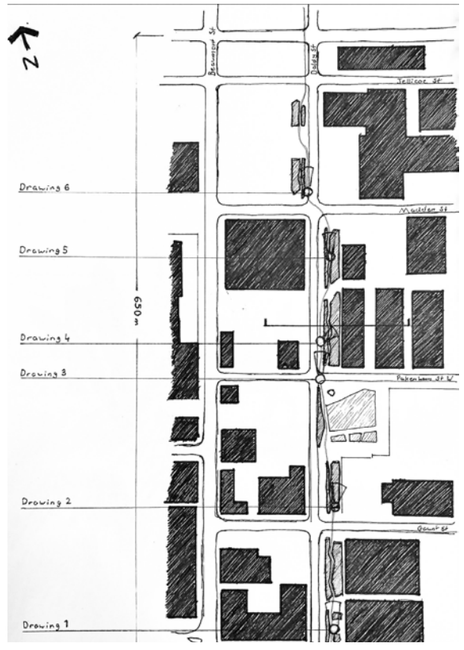


Figure 2. A figure-ground diagram shows the general massing of Wynyard Quarter.

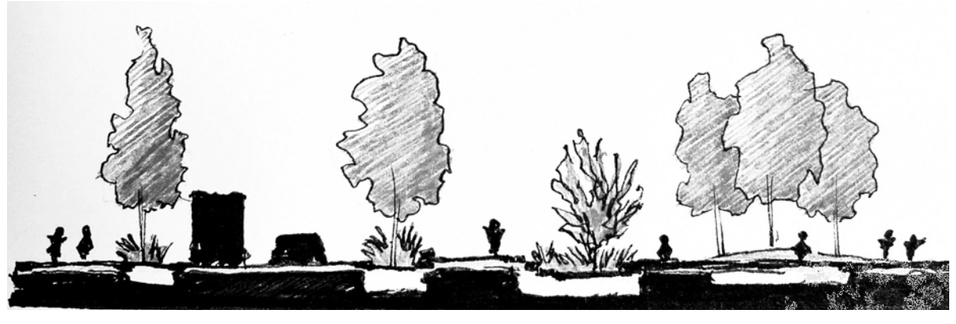


Figure 3. A section cut showing the various levels of the park, creating the sensorial datum effect.

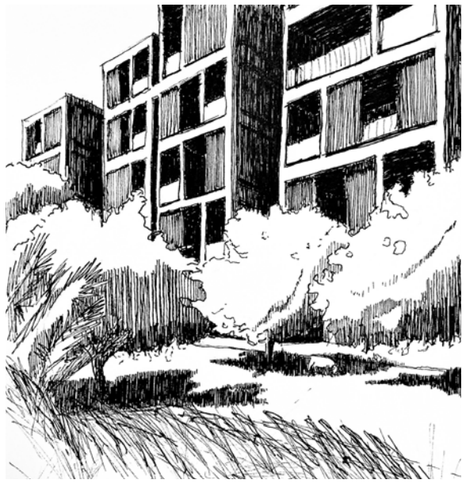


Figure 4. Acting as a flood prevention area, this 'Zen garden' sits lower than the footpath.

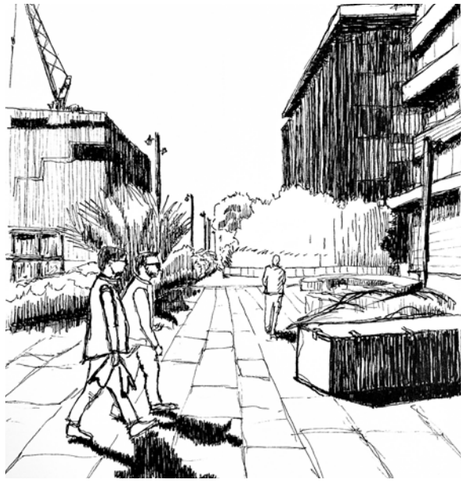


Figure 5. Various spatial densities, via compression and release tactics, create intimacy.

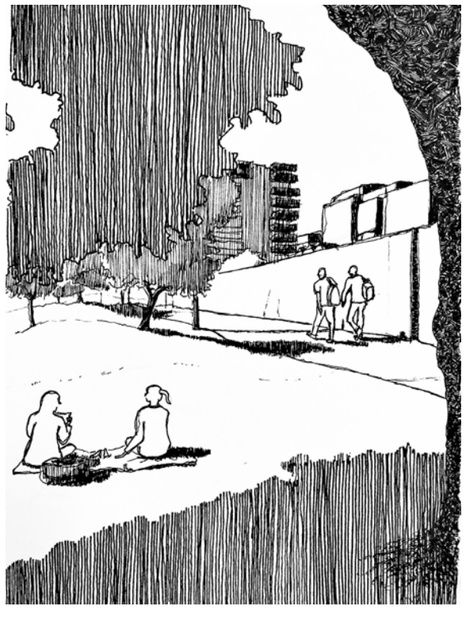


Figure 6. Drawing techniques such as vertical hatching change the quality of the space.

Figure 7. Site functionality is restricted by the narrow context.

Nicholas Jones

Critical Studies Four

A Place to Meet, Eat, Drink, Shop and Be Social: Ponsonby Central

Introduction

Ponsonby Central is situated in the heart of Ponsonby Road, one of the busiest streets in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. It is a multifunctional hub that operates almost like a mini-city. It caters to diverse needs, from fine dining to fast-food bars, cinemas for family and rentable rooms to hold functions, retail, office spaces and a quiet, hidden park. Its design reflects the principles of Allen Jacobs' and Donald Appleyard's *Toward an Urban Design Manifesto*. The people in a city need to feel safe and like they belong, whether they are working behind a bar, in an office or as an artist; there needs to be a way for everyone to connect with the space and interact as one to form a healthy community.[1]

This essay critically examines how Ponsonby Central's spaces shape our encounters, emotions, and perceptions, arguing that architecture's true essence lies not in its external façade but in the complex interplay of spaces and human experience that unfolds between the buildings. The successful use of light, greenery, circulation design, and functionality helps to create engaging and usable spaces that enhance the users' experience beyond just the function of the architecture.

Layout

Ponsonby Central is made up of four main buildings connected by walkways and open spaces. The site underwent extensive renovation in 2012, transforming it into the vibrant hub known today as Ponsonby Central.[2] As seen in Figure 1, the Ponsonby Central plan features a main central axis with a network of walkways and passages that branch off and connect to the many shops and spaces that lie within its walls in a grid-like pattern. These walkways not only connect within the main building but also allow people to move freely through the space to the outer pedestrian walkways and other parts of the site. This design allows people to navigate the space safely while still creating a sense of exploration with many pathway options and intersections. The layout also encourages casual walkers to cut through, potentially discovering the small businesses and retail within, creating new customers and community for the local stores.

A notable feature is the incorporation of greenery within the architectural layout itself. Both new plants and existing trees are growing throughout Ponsonby Central, so much so that, from above, this area looks like a park. The use of greenery softens the hard surfaces and creates a sense of privacy, making it an inviting, safe space for all. As Jan Gehl notes, "Instead of the reverse order in the planning process that prioritises buildings, then space and (perhaps) a little life, working with the human dimension requires life and space to be treated before buildings."[3] It is evident that the layout of Ponsonby Central was designed with the intention of creating space for life.

The Main Entrance

A strong invitation into a public space is essential, and despite its strengths, Ponsonby Central's main entrance on Ponsonby Road lacks a strong entryway to passersby. Problematic conditions for the architect would have been the elevation and the location of the site. The complex is situated on a busy four-lane road, with a large bus stop right on its main doorstep, so the footpath outside is busy, loud, narrow, uncomfortable and dangerous during peak times. The entrance is elevated, so that you cannot see into the complex easily from the footpath; you must go up the stairs or the ramp. As well as this, the doors are swing doors, which, although they can block sound and create a calm space within, can be seen as less welcoming than automatic or open doors, as they appear closed and require interaction.

1 Alan Jacobs and Donald Appleyard, "Toward an Urban Design Manifesto," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 53, no. 1 (1987): 117.
2 "Who Are We?" Ponsonby Central, accessed May 31, 2025, https://www.ponsonbycentral.co.nz/who-are-we.
3 Jan Gehl, *Cities for People*, (Island Press, 2010), 198.

Figure 1. Ponsonby central plan. Axis and grid-like patterns are in red. The area is full of green life.

Figure 2. Ponsonby Central entrance. Here we notice its underwhelming entrance, and a bus stop which blocks the walkway.

The front façade is not a grand, massive entry point; it fits in with its peers on the main street, looking like a normal shop front, so it could be missed if you didn't know it was a place to explore. As I sit on the opposite side of the road and draw the front façade, I watch how people respond: as seen in Figure 2, the people generally walk past this space without looking twice. There is no real call to enter the space from this side.

In contrast, when observing the smaller open entrance points from either the south or north side of the building, the pedestrian's attention is grabbed by the colour and life of what lies within. It's full of people shopping, eating, drinking and socialising. This vibrancy helps to create a welcoming space with a sense of community.

The Mini City

This isn't just a haven for locals from Ponsonby, but a melting pot for everyone and all cultures. It's a vibrant mini city that thrives in the heart of Tāmaki Makaurau. The design fosters a lively, safe, sustainable and healthy environment, essential for quality of life in cities. Jacobs and Appleyard write in their manifesto, "Most people want a kind of sanctuary for their living environment, a place where they can bring up children, have privacy, sleep, eat, relax and restore themselves".[4] Ponsonby Central has become a sanctuary for many.

Once you step through the first threshold of the main Ponsonby Road entrance, there is a main central axis, and it's here that people can view the full scale of this hidden space, which is lined with diverse retail and food stores. As seen in Figure 3, you notice there is more happening deeper inside, which encourages exploration. This space unfolds with the warmth from natural light flooding through the many skylights. The atmosphere is light and vibrant, with people moving back and forth through the walkways. The smell of food wafts through the air, mingling with the hum of conversations, engaging the senses of the flâneur, who instantly feels part of the space.

Figure 3. The main entrance, where we can see the main axis, and light pouring into the space. The sight of human figures at the end makes for exploration.

4 Jacobs and Appleyard, "Toward an Urban Design Manifesto," 117.

As we continue our journey through this main axis, we notice a series of alleyways and walkways that connect back to the main roads surrounding Ponsonby Central. As can be seen in Figures 4 and 5, these walkways are not only indoors but also outdoor alleyways that are full of life and even busier than the inside. During the day, the paths are illuminated by natural light that refracts off the architecture. Looking down the pathways, we can see that many different materials are used cohesively throughout the main building, making it feel like a busy, diverse, city space. The use of greenery highlights the colour and warmth of the brickwork while enhancing the indoor–outdoor flow.

At night, the spaces are full of different-coloured lights, the sounds of music and conversation and the smell of food, which creates an exciting, festive atmosphere. People choose to come here to eat and drink for many occasions. Fine dining, a quick burger, catching up with friends, or taking the family out for dinner – there are spaces for all. I have observed that people feel comfortable and relaxed in these spaces; they are able to enjoy the food, socialise together; there is visual stimulation, and there is comfort in being around others, but also in being able to see the exits and leave the space with ease.

The open layout in the architecture of Ponsonby Central's kitchens and stores breaks down the barriers between visitors and workers, creating a sense of connection and community in this mini city. This allows the visitors to see into the kitchens and interact with the staff, even if it's just visually; the architecture creates a sense of belonging not only for the visitors, but also to the people who work here. Opportunities that come from simply meeting, seeing, and hearing others bring the potential for low-level interactions, deeper connections, the means to sustain existing relationships, ways to gather insights about the broader social world, sparks of inspiration and access to stimulating experiences.[5]

For this journey, I walked out the north-facing side, and the exit leads to a large car park. A car park integrated into the architecture, some would say, represents unsustainable design as it encourages people to drive a vehicle; however, I disagree with this. It would be impractical to have a space like Ponsonby Central that people cannot easily get to. In Aotearoa, the dominance of the private motor vehicle still holds hierarchy over public transport. Until there is a better solution or change in culture, a car park in this space is necessary for retail to survive.

Figure 4. The network of walkways through Ponsonby Central. Nature and architecture blend as one.

Figure 5. The network of walkways through Ponsonby Central. People are engaging in the spaces between buildings.

A Quiet Oasis

Life between buildings can be supported further if opportunities for staying outdoors are offered, writes Jan Gehl in *Life Between Buildings*.[6] Tucked away on the west side of Ponsonby Central is a small, lush park that provides a serene escape from the crowds (Figure 6). This green space is a haven – private, safe and peaceful, with native plants, sitting benches and a small swing for children. The park's natural beauty and striking contrast to the surrounding architecture create a calm and relaxing atmosphere, allowing users to connect with nature in the heart of a city. As I observe people, they use this park as a shortcut from one side of the site to another, a peaceful journey they get to take, away from the loud vehicles and rush of people moving; it's able to calm the user as they journey through.

Figure 6. Brown Reserve, a peaceful space within the city. A couple seeks a quiet space.

Figure 7. Ponsonby Central from Richmond Road.

Opportunities for the Community

A city should be a place where everyone lives in relative comfort, a place where they can raise families, and enjoy privacy, relaxation and restoration all within a comfortable walking distance.[7] Ponsonby Central successfully creates spaces both indoors and out for restoration, relaxation and socialisation. From bustling food areas to cosy entertainment spaces, inviting retail spaces to outdoor green spaces, this architecture is full of places to sit and enjoy the space both in a social setting and as an individual. Being amidst buildings and people offers a chance to be with others without any pressure. One might take a stroll, make a detour on the way home, or even just sit on a bench and be among people for a bit. Even everyday activities like daily shopping can become opportunities for casual social interaction. Being around others, seeing and hearing them, and absorbing the atmosphere can be a quietly satisfying experience – not necessarily about meeting someone specific, but about feeling part of a larger community.[8] Ponsonby Central, and its many ways to engage with the space, successfully create diverse opportunities for social engagement and community.

Conclusion

Quality of life in cities is dependent on accomplishing a lively, safe, sustainable and healthy city. Like a mini city within the heart of Tāmaki Makaurau, Ponsonby Central is a great example of urban design that prioritises these key factors and caters to the diverse needs of its community. Although the main entrance is affected by some problematic conditions, through its thoughtful layout, use of greenery and blend of public and private spaces, Ponsonby Central has become a sanctuary for people from all walks of life. The ability to provide a variety of experiences and atmospheres allows it to engage a diverse range of people and fosters a sense of belonging, social connection and wellbeing.

Bibliography

Gehl, Jan. *Cities for People*. Island Press, 2010.

Gehi, Jan. *Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space*. Island Press, 2011.

Jacobs, Allan, and Donald Appleyard. "Toward an Urban Design Manifesto." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 53, no. 1 (1987): 112–120.

Ponsonby Central. "Who Are We?" Accessed May 31, 2025. https://www.ponsonbycentral.co.nz/who-are-we

5 Jan Gehl, *Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space* (Little Island, 2011), 15.
6 Gehl, *Life Between Buildings*, 189.
7 Jacobs and Appleyard, "Toward an Urban Design Manifesto," 115.
8 Gehl, 17.

Yona

Zhou.

Critical Studies Four

The Silo Park Movies: A serial vision experience

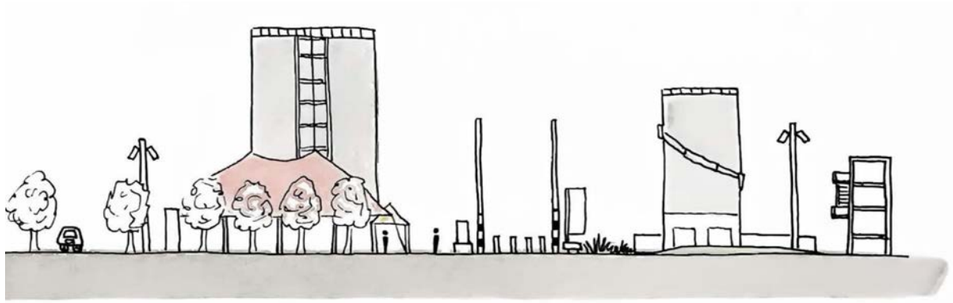


Figure 1. Section A–A of Silo Park (perpendicular to the pedestrian walkway).

Figure 2. Section B–B of Silo Park (through the pedestrian walkway).

Figure 3. Sketch at location 3: facing the playground towards the gantry.

Figure 4. Sketch at location 2: facing the basketball court and down the main pedestrian street.

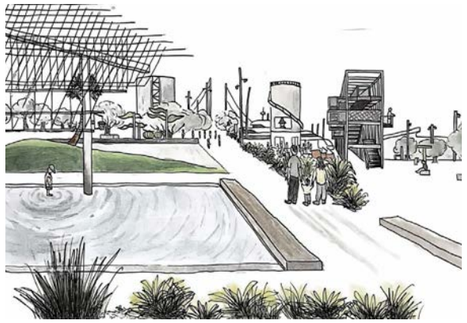


Figure 5. Sketch at location 1: facing Wind Tree *and down the main pedestrian street.*

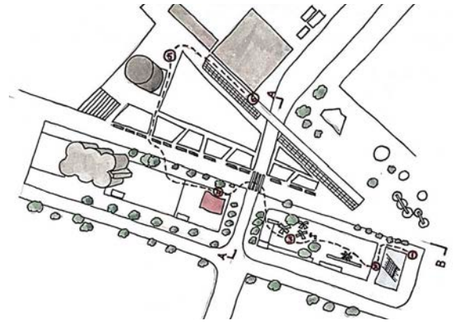


Figure 6. Silo Park location plan.

Figure 7. Sketch at location 4: facing the markets and food stalls.

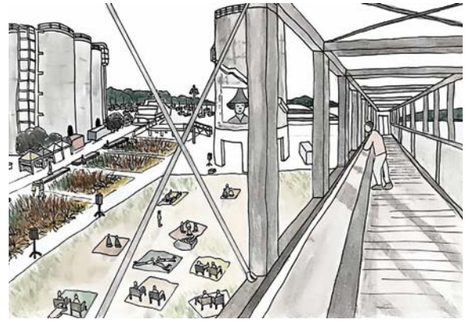
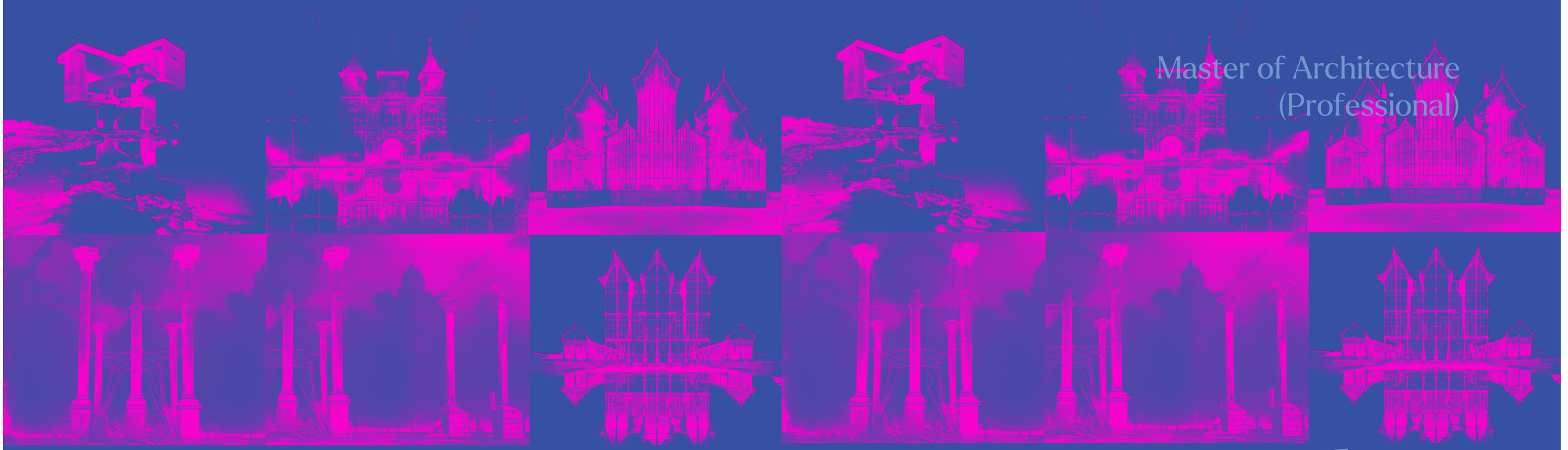


Figure 8. Sketch at location 6: up on the gantry looking down at the moviegoers and markets.

Figure 9. Sketch at location 5: Facing the gantry towards the audience.



Master of Architecture
(Professional)

MArch (Prof)

Since its founding in 2007 and the first graduates in 2009, the Master of Architecture (Professional) has become a robust machine for producing designers as adept at wrangling a footnote in InDesign as they are testing the tensile grace of a 3D model. Over nine years as Discipline Leader, I've watched it evolve, and the results have been nothing short of exhilarating – especially the surge of women shaping the programme through projects that range from the rigorously pragmatic to the audaciously visionary. Equally significant has been the role of women lecturers, past and present, who have guided and expanded the field – Jeanette Budgett among them.

Thesis year (year two) remains the crucible: a long march through Zotero headaches, Revit software glitches, and that most elusive trial – how to stage one's ideas so examiners can grasp their spatial poetics. What excites me most is the expanded field of drawing – collage, Photoshop, photography, renders with hand-line sketching – where architecture breaks free of the drafting board and embraces the messy, generous richness of media. In those final outputs, one glimpses architecture not only as building, but as image, speculation and possibility.

Dr Annabel Pretty.

Jinpeng

Yang

Studio

Tree House for the Homeless

Tree House for the Homeless explores how architecture can provide shelter, but also dignity, relationships and a renewed sense of belonging. The project reimagines a homeless shelter as a living structure – a tree that grows from the city, offering protection, light and social connection. Instead of isolating vulnerable people at the margins, this building positions them at the centre of community life.

The project is located above an existing railway station, a site defined by constant movement, mature trees and irregular terrain. Rather than masking these conditions, the design absorbs them into its structure. Two towers rise like trunks from the ground, while a flowing courtyard preserves the existing trees and channels daylight and fresh air down to the platforms below.

This space operates as both a public room and a vertical lung. Programmatically, the lower levels are dedicated to shared kitchens, workshops and lounges that encourage interaction and mutual support. The upper levels contain modular living units for individuals, couples and families, giving residents privacy alongside collective belonging.

Vertical planting extends across terraces and balconies, bringing nature into daily routines and symbolising personal growth. A rooftop observation deck reconnects residents with the wider city, offering a space of reflection rather than exclusion. By integrating nature, community and structure, this project proposes a new model of urban shelter – a tree house for the city, and for the people who need a safe place to grow.

Ron
Kumar
Studio

Fijian Consulate

This architectural concept for the Fijian Consulate draws its foundational inspiration from the tanoa – the traditional Fijian kava bowl that symbolises community, ritual and connection. The design reinterprets this cultural emblem into a contemporary architectural language that celebrates Fijian identity while honouring shared Pacific values. The consulate becomes more than a place of diplomacy; it becomes a vessel of culture, hospitality and collective belonging.

At the heart of the Newmarket site stands a large-span cultural building that serves as the communal centre, surrounded by smaller interconnected structures reminiscent of a traditional village layout. These peripheral buildings accommodate the consulate offices and residential quarters for staff and dignitaries, fostering a sense of closeness and shared purpose. The site planning draws on the spiral geometry of the nautilus shell, the spiral being a motif present in both Fijian and Māori symbolism representing growth, continuity and the cyclical unfolding of knowledge. This organic form guides the spatial rhythm, circulation and sequencing of experiences across the site.

The landscape design embraces kaitiakitanga – the principle of guardianship and care for the natural world – through lush plantings of native species and integrated water features. At the core, a tropical garden atrium connects interior and exterior spaces, while a café, exhibition areas and communal zones activate the cultural heart of the consulate. Together, these elements create a living cultural village that embodies the warmth, depth and interconnectedness of Fijian and Māori traditions, bringing together diplomacy, community and the environment into a cohesive expression of Pacific identity.

Hangyul Jeon

Studio

Korean Consulate: Hanji and persimmons

This consulate is designed as a space to learn, connect, and share Korean culture. Māori values are woven through the design, encompassing Te Aranga Māori Design Principles. It celebrates cultural respect and mana, highlighting connections between Aotearoa New Zealand and Korea.

The site has a long history, including earlier damaged buildings that were rebuilt and destroyed again, now buried under concrete. This project gives the site a chance to breathe again. The design listens to the land, placing the timber structure lightly so it can remain largely undisturbed. A courtyard offers a quiet space for rest, reflection and connection.

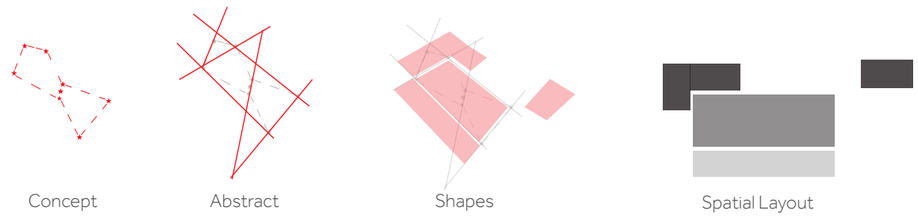
Two welcoming entrances guide visitors through the site to the library, consulate and café. The north side opens to a public area where people can gather and relax. The ground floor hosts lively activity, while the upper levels ensure quiet, calm spaces, supporting focus and privacy.

Inspired by hanji, traditional Korean paper, the building's light timber structure expresses honesty and care for the land. Persimmons act as a storytelling motif within the design; the symbols of warmth, gathering and the Korean spirit. In Korea, people often gather and sit at one table, eating persimmons together.

Lopeti Uhi

Studio

Tongan Consulate and Events Centre



This design was inspired by the Orion constellation, specifically, Orion's Belt. This is one of many constellations used by Tongan ancestors to navigate the vast Pacific Ocean and ensure safe passage home.

Josh
Hamilton

Studio

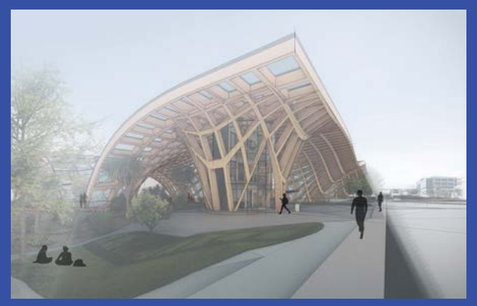
Dreamtime Pavilion: Australian cultural centre and consulate

A place for gathering and sharing of experiences, knowledge and craft: the Dreamtime Pavilion form draws from vernacular architectural techniques of the first nations people of Australia and their respect for the land and all things nature-given.

The pavilion respects the land through sustainable material and technical system solutions, minimal ground coverage, and restoration of green spaces throughout the site. Spatial composition is driven by the dot motif commonly seen in the storytelling of the first nations people and their telling of Dreamtime stories. This circular motif is representative of significant gathering spaces for sharing of stories, beliefs and celebration.

Functions of the cultural centre include a consulate, retail shop, public toilet, residency, gallery/museum and café, which all occupy spaces within the structure to reduce visual impact. The first nations people of Australia lived off the land for almost 50,000 years while barely leaving a trace architecturally, thus it was important in the design to minimise apparency of the services provided. However, the functions are crucial to activating the pedestrian frontage of Khyber Pass Road and appealing to the demands of unitary planning for the site zoning.

The Glulam timber grid shell structure of the pavilion appears as a repetition of a vault system used traditionally in Australia. It also adopts a cave-like form, referencing the inhabitation of naturally occurring landforms, invoking curiosity in pedestrians and drawing them into the topographically varying spaces. The tinted acrylic sheeting used in the roof composition allows dappled light through the grid of Glulam beams, creating an interesting light pattern, adding to the emotional experience of traversing the plaza.



Mey Mey
Nam.

Studio

Consulate of France: Impressionist garden

Located at 314 Khyber Pass Road in Newmarket is the Consulate of France. France has a long history of arts, paintings and entertainment, and an enduring affection for formal gardens. This project incorporated modern French architecture and impressionism. In particular, Claude Monet's paintings with their dappled light, visible brush strokes and luminous white grounds. This inspiration has been echoed in the lightness and texture of the building's materials.

Community is at the forefront of the consulate's design, and the main stairs reflect this, leading to ample decking which acts as a public space for people gather and rest. Further, the underground garden, heavily inspired by Monet's art, has been placed as the centrepiece of the long-span structure, intertwined with the art gallery. There are glass bricks separating the two areas while maintaining a visual connection. The consulate is located further back on site, giving a sense of privacy to workspaces while adding a layer of security to the consulate.

The Consulate of France becomes a place that reflects French culture by taking the principles of impressionist art and applying them to a regenerative, living building. The design aims to make the experience of occupying these spaces akin to being in an impressionist's garden.

Mustafizahmed
Vhora
Studio

Indian Consulate and Cultural Centre

This project proposes a performing arts and cultural centre that also functions as the Indian Consulate, designed to reflect Indian heritage while embracing Aotearoa New Zealand's bicultural identity. The site on Khyber Pass Road, Newmarket, has great potential for addressing a vibrant yet challenging urban context: busy roads, noise and high foot traffic characterise the site. The site, notwithstanding these constraints, provides strong public transport links, accessibility to schools and green space. This makes the site ideal for a civic facility with great cultural engagement potential.

The major demographics for this project include Indians, immigrants, artists and locals who have an interest in Indian traditions. The programme comprises a performance hall, dance studios, public plaza, café, consular services and residences.

The core design idea was to form a parametric, organic architectural body that visually merges with surroundings, yet stands out as a cultural landmark. It takes inspiration from traditional Indian motifs, has a strong visual identity and creates a wow-factor, engaging the streetscape and encouraging visitors. The ribbon-like roof, flowing masses and walkable green surfaces create a soft, sculptural experience that invites pedestrians to engage, not just enter.

With the application of Te Aranga Māori Design Principles, such as manaakitanga (hospitality) or whanaungatanga (relationships), this design places importance on building an inclusive and community-focused environment through which international diplomacy may take place. The building functions as a diplomatic space, but it is also alive, engaging and opening the minds of people through cultural expression, blurring lines between audience and performer, visitor and community.

Zane
Chang
Studio

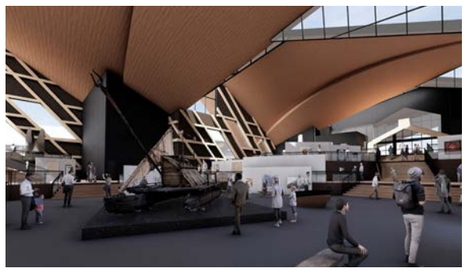
Volau e Nomu: Voyage

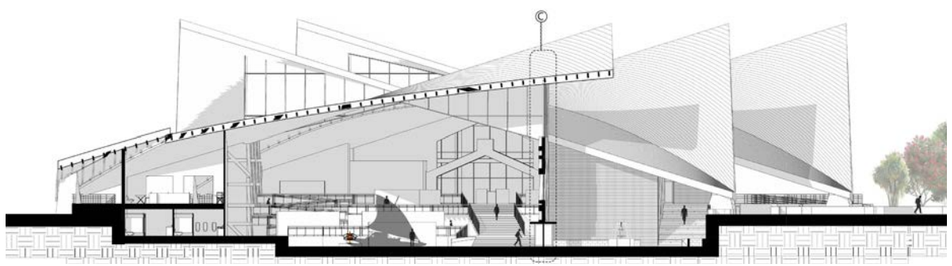
The form of this art gallery design is inspired by the Fijian boat, the drua – a sacred warship that sailed throughout Polynesia and Micronesia. The form of the drua's sails was a design driver, inspiring the overall form, aesthetics and structure of the building, representing the drua's sails moving in the wind.

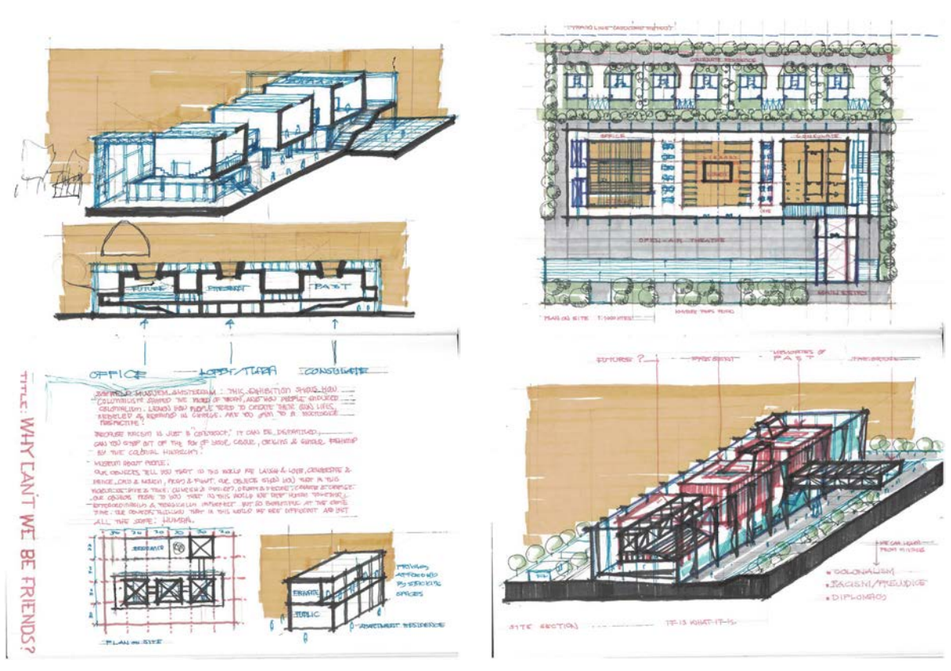
Not only does the concept of the drua inform the design of the building, it also influences the circulation within the art gallery. The red arrows visible within the spaces showcase the journey of Polynesian inhabitation and exploration by ancestors. Each exit from the gallery represents locations explored in this journey.

The design hierarchy within the gallery signifies a metaphorical wave within the space, further emphasising the idea of a journey to a place. The interior walls of the gallery showcase the traditional weaving and wooden joinery seen in a bure, a traditional Fijian house, ensuring inhabitants feel at home.

The consulate accommodation further explores Fijian culture, emphasising family and community. Spaces such as the living room are considered places to commune and connect and this concept was an essential driver to accommodate Fijian citizens in the consulate. Communal activities are celebrated in the outdoor amphitheatre, which provides open space for social connection as well as small market stalls to enhance community.







Rogelio Uy Studio

Pavilion of Time: Exhibition gallery for the history of Filipinos and consular office

The Pavilion of Time is a cultural journey that celebrates the Filipino diaspora and shares Filipino culture across Aotearoa New Zealand. Located beside the University of Auckland's Newmarket campus, along Khyber Pass Road and Suiter Street, it unfolds through three galleries – Past, Present and Future – that float on water, reflecting the archipelagic geography of the Philippines.

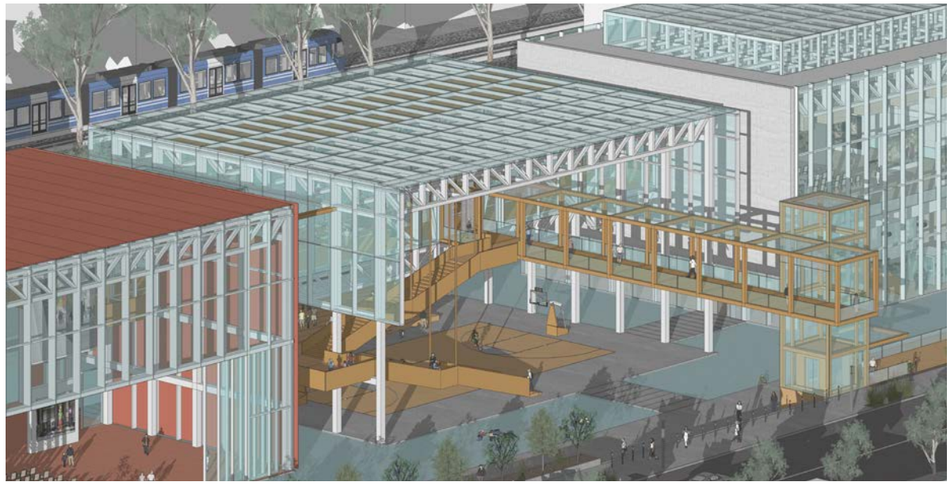
The galleries are connected by a metaphorical yellow bridge, inviting visitors to explore the shifting textures and meanings of time. Infused with hope, warmth and dynamic energy, the bridge gently guides guests through the pavilion, weaving together stories and experiences across the site.

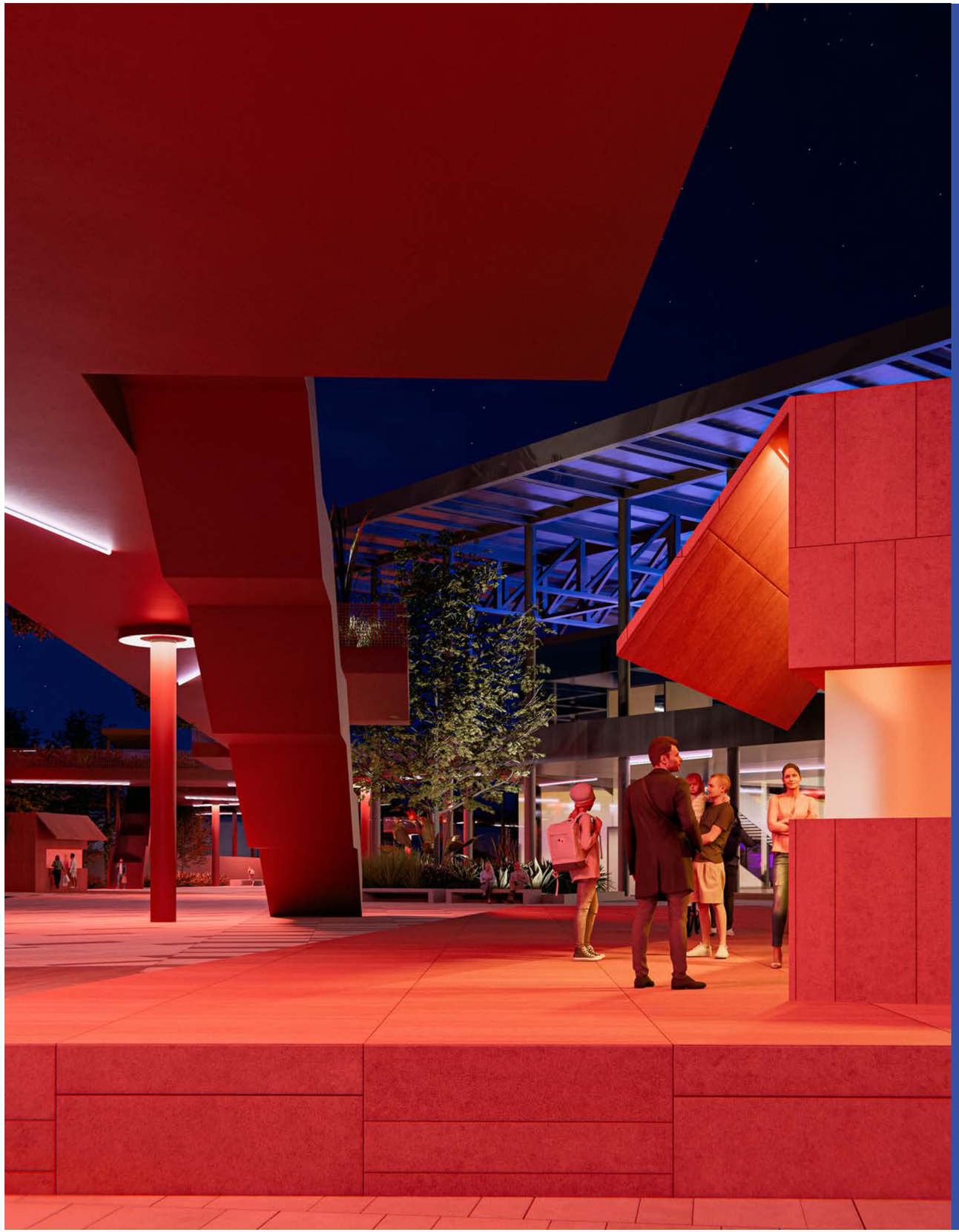
The Present Gallery serves as the welcoming entrance, embodying the warmth and energy of the Filipino community today. Symbolised by basketball, a beloved pastime and cultural touchpoint, this space represents familiarity, inclusivity and play. It invites visitors to step into the everyday rhythms of Filipino life.

The Past Gallery is an immersive and flexible exhibition space that delves into Philippine history to explore themes of identity, memory and community. It creates a contemplative environment that invites visitors to reconnect with their cultural roots and collective heritage. It is designed to accommodate a variety of events – from art exhibitions and literature readings to theatre and public lectures.

The Future Gallery concludes the journey in an open, adaptable space inviting imagination and contribution. Interactive installations encourage creativity and shared vision, making the space a platform for evolving cultural expression.

The Pavilion of Time stands as both a cultural landmark and meeting place – celebrating the Filipino spirit across time and fostering connection through shared stories and experience throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.





Eda

Dogan Kaya.

Studio

The Platform: Turkish consulate and music hall

The project aims to establish new bridges between Turkey and Aotearoa New Zealand. The primary goal is to engage with the community and provide a vibrant public space. The project focuses on designing buildings and also facilitates social interaction in Newmarket. The site is located between two main arterial routes: Khyber Pass Road and Carlton Gore Road. Because there is no direct pedestrian connection between them, the platform was developed to maximise accessibility, and extends from Grafton Station to the Davis Crescent railway bridge and to Broadway. Day-and-night functions and movement were meticulously planned to create a safe environment for users.

This project was inspired by Turkish kilim motifs, which hold traditional and diplomatic significance within the culture of Anatolia. Each motif symbolises personal good intentions that interweave throughout the design. The consulate's design objective was to ensure it became an integral part of the city and community, characterised by a welcoming and warm atmosphere, elevating the immediate environment.

Music is an essential element of Turkish culture that has existed since the dawn of humanity. People can express themselves to others, whether nationally or internationally – this is the beauty of music, which is universal. Music is an intrinsic part of Turkish culture, and the hall is designed as a building within a building. The large roof covering it symbolises its purpose to embrace all cultures, with doors that remain open for everyone.

Dirk

Encela

Studio

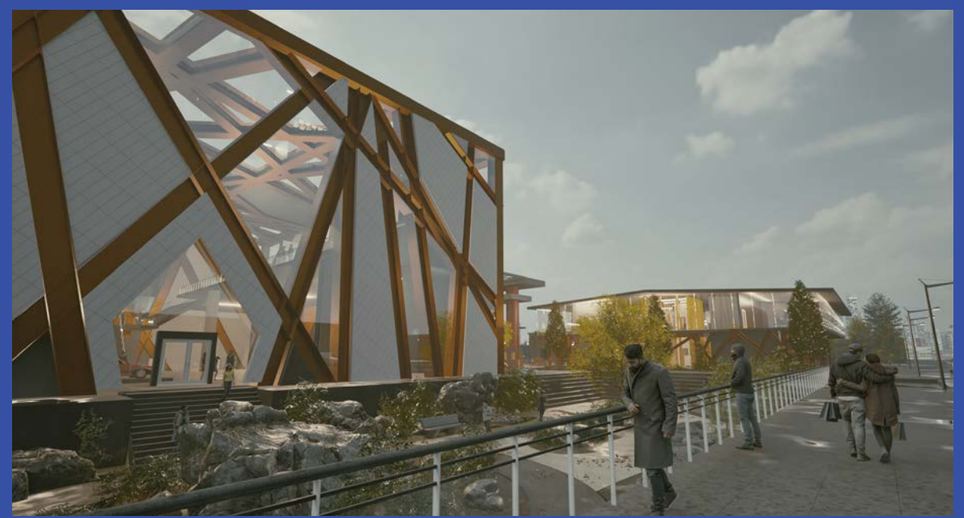
Project Resilience

Japan continues to move forward, demonstrating perseverance, despite historical challenges. As its society continues to evolve, Japan has shown strength through pioneering technological advances. This serves as inspiration for Project Resilience, located at 342 Khyber Pass Road in Newmarket, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland.

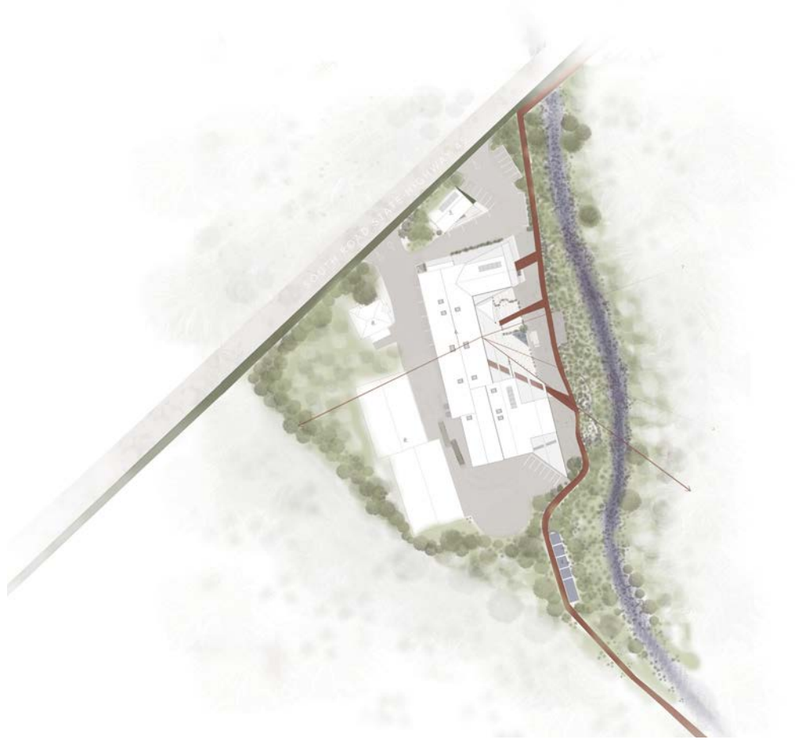
This project showcases innovation and perseverance as recognised through Japanese culture and history, pushing through adversity. This perseverance is often described through Japanese concepts such as gaman. Albeit difficult to translate from Japanese to English directly, gaman generally means endurance, perseverance, patience. Deeply embedded in Japanese society, it is a notion that highlights the value of perseverance in the face of disadvantage.

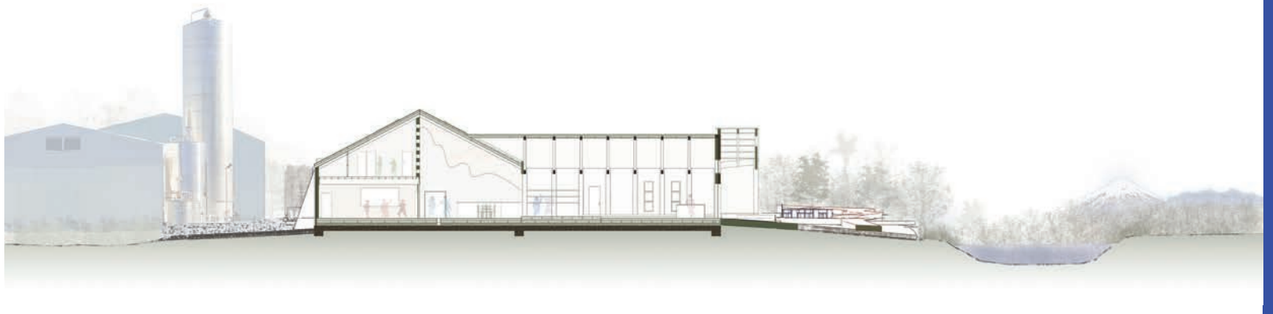
This long-span project combines existing natural site resources with residential, commercial, diplomatic, exhibition and recreational areas. The objective is to enhance the resilience and vibrancy of the precinct, while ensuring it becomes a multifunctional urban destination thoughtfully blending cultural heritage with modern city life.

This includes a carefully integrated Japanese exhibition centre and consulate, designed to traverse order and chaos, tradition and modernity with a symbolic approach. Key zones anchor the site including the Zen Garden, Japanese Consulate, dynamic exhibition space, and thoroughfare that acts as a connective spine between contrasting experiences. Combined, these create a balanced urban oasis within the busy Khyber Pass precinct.



"Spaces are ultimately created to be lived in and used, and if they don't do that well, they are not considered successful."
– Dr Teruaki Matsukazi





Sinéad
McClay.

Te Kāhui Whaihanga New Zealand Institute of Architects
Resene Student Design Awards 2025
Finalist

Research Project

The Ōkato Co-op

Disused dairy factories, scattered all over Taranaki, are stark reminders of the impacts of colonisation, land loss for Māori, and the destruction of once-thriving forest ecosystems. The former Ōkato Co-op Dairy Factory provides an opportunity to address some of these issues by reimagining it as a community-led hub for production, education and recreation.

Hempcrete production is proposed to be the commercial function of the facility – it is a sustainable material that allows active community participation in adaptive reuse projects in new and refurbished spaces. The design process has been guided by Te Takarangi, the Māori circular economy model, which guides adaptive reuse to achieve resilience and wellbeing.

Interviews with members of the community and mana whenua revealed local needs, aspirations and stories. The existing buildings are opened up to the Kaihihi Stream and Taranaki maunga, emphasising the interconnected and reciprocal relationship between the community and environment.

Community workshops, co-working offices, skateboard ramps and outdoor areas for gatherings are provided. Walking and cycle tracks that connect to the township weave along the revegetated Kaihihi awa. The highly visible and accessible location means it has the potential to have widespread impact, providing hope for future connection and healing.

Leo Hongyu
Wang

Te Kāhui Whaihanga New Zealand Institute of Architects
Resene Student Design Awards 2025
Finalist

Research Project

Place in Time

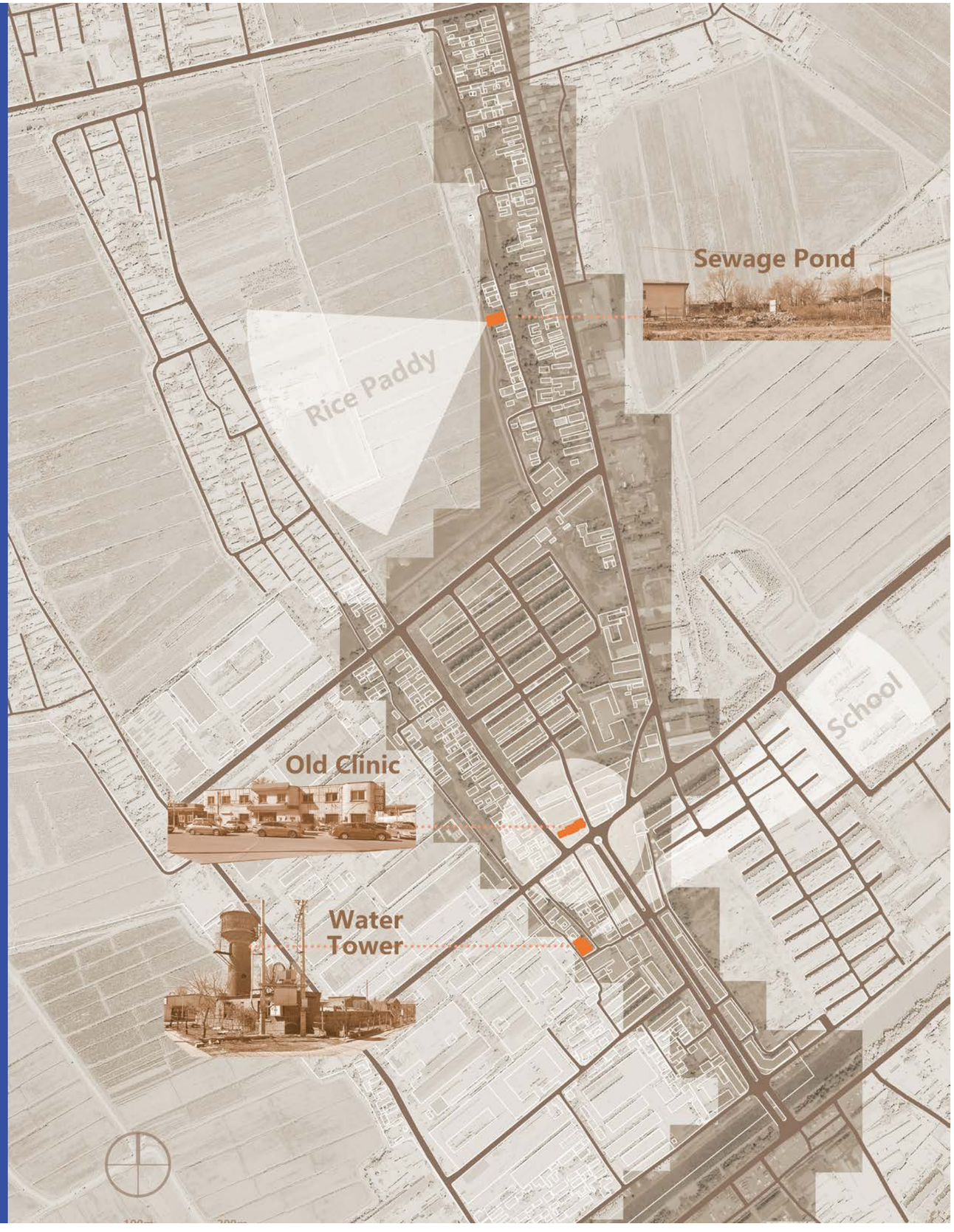
This project responds to the fragmented culture and memory in existing rural villages amid China's rapid urbanisation. The thesis explores how design, from a bottom-up perspective, can support the memory, social resilience and dignity of villages that still exist but are under cultural and spatial pressure.

Architecture, in this context, is no longer a distant vision of modernity, but a living dialogue with land, people and time, bringing architecture back to the real grassroots community it was always meant to serve.

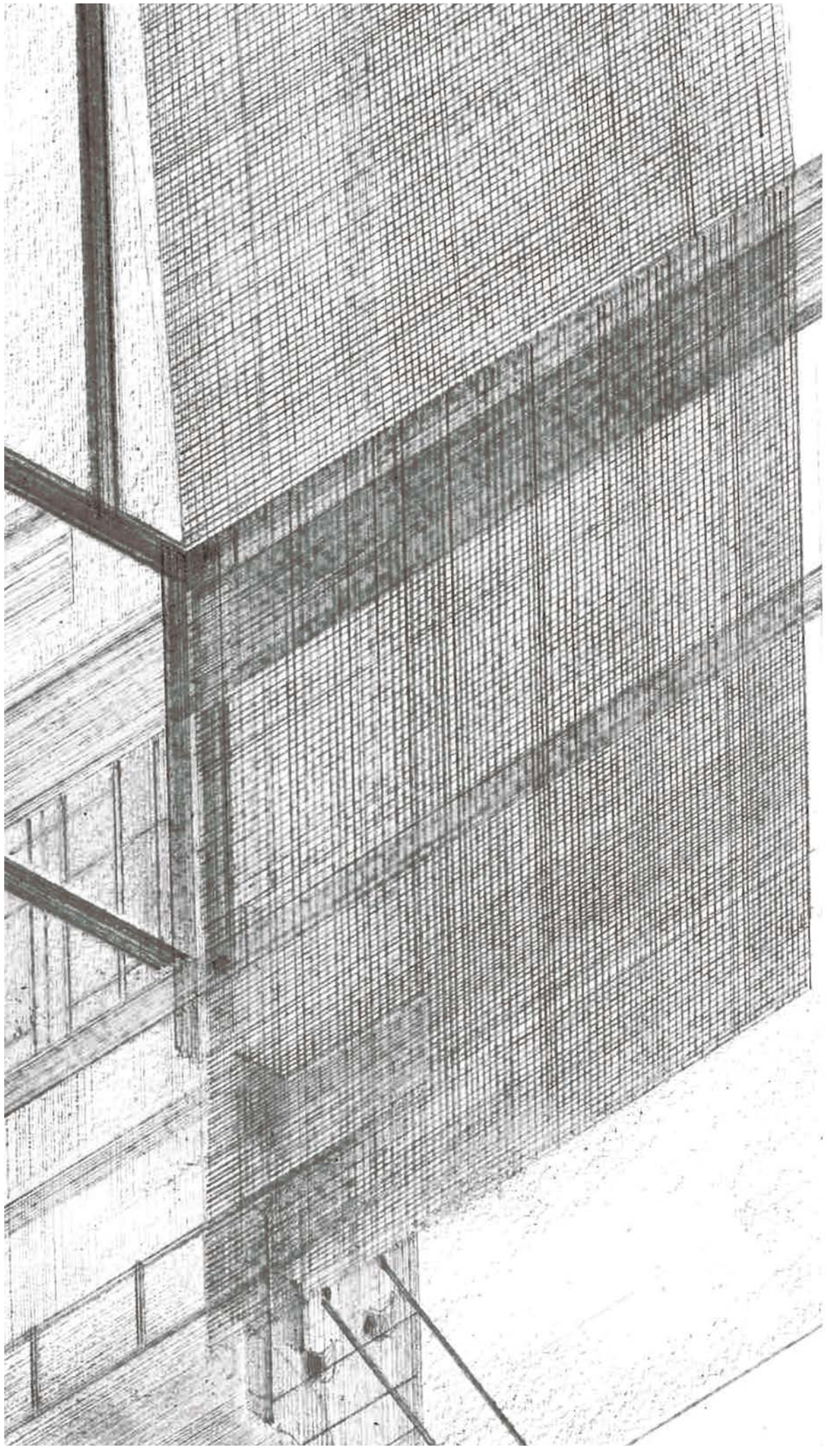
Inspired by Heidegger's *Being and Time*, I developed the concept of Dynamic Being – a framework that approaches architecture through the temporal dimensions of past, present, future and death. It recognises that life is not static, but constantly shaped by memories, habits and aspirations across generations.

This project combines physical design with cultural narrative, weaving together traditional memory, daily practice and future possibility. By grounding design in spatial justice, it rebalances the power between planners and users, giving agency back to the community.

Ultimately, this project aims to create functional spaces and re-anchor meaning in everyday places, transforming them into spaces of care, remembrance and shared imagination. Architecture, in this context, is no longer a distant vision of modernity, but a living dialogue with the land, people and time, bringing architecture back to the real grassroots community it was always meant to serve.




PaddyVerse



Scarlett Cibilich.

Te Kāhui Whaihanga New Zealand Institute of Architects
Resene Student Design Awards 2025
Finalist

Research Project

Gleaning from the Surfaces of Drawing[s] and Building[s]

Drawings present in the project as artefacts that record a continuing dialogue with mark-making, and material sampling as architectural informants for a speculative dialogue with a city: positioning the activity of drawing as notional, digressive and situated.

To glean is to pick over in search of relevant material. It is an act of habitual and opportune correspondence between maker and material artefact. Using their tools and hands, the urban gleaner does not yet know what they will make. They are driven by necessity to pick out, to collect, to scrape out and to make from what is left on the surfaces of the urban hardscape.

This body of work [work of the body] moves across the surface of the city [paper] in a quotidian drama of gleaning. Beginning with in situ field drawings, the project proceeds through creative entanglements of text and drawing practices, gleaning new possibilities for design action that flow forth and begin again.

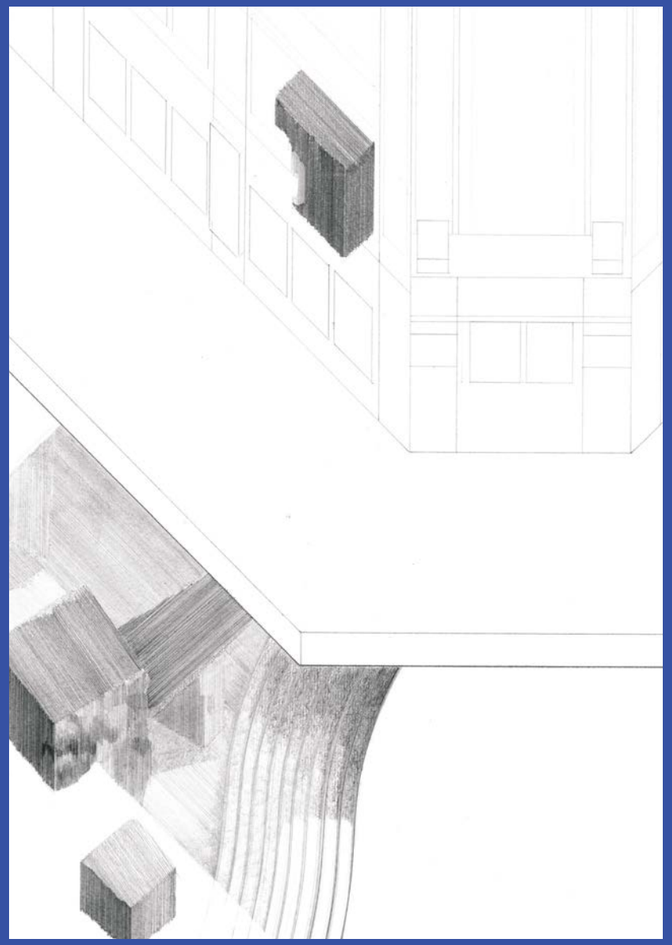
Eyes are looking to the ground, hunched over, inspecting, picking out.

Through my creative practice, I explore a design methodology that is built on personal responsiveness. It is entangled with expansive provocations of surfaces connecting drawing, my body and building. In doing so, I look to the generation of architectural possibilities – when practice is situated in several material registers and architectural drawing is responsive.

Reworking this drawing, moving about the walls and the floors.

What have you found?

I am re-reading a city.



Pankaj

Chauhan

Research Project

River in Need: Redeveloping the Ganga ghat

This thesis explores how architecture can respond to the layered complexities of Har Ki Pauri ghat, a sacred stretch of the river Ganga in Haridwar, India – where spirituality, mass tourism and environmental degradation collide daily. The project reflects on how design can create balance in a space that carries deep cultural, religious and emotional meaning, while facing issues like overcrowding, pollution and deteriorating infrastructure.

Guided by ideas from John Urry's *The Tourist Gaze* and Gay Hawkins' *The Ethics of Waste*, the proposal introduces a holistic design approach rooted in sustainability, spirituality and community engagement. Key interventions include a landscape-integrated pedestrian bridge that helps manage crowd flow, while also offering shaded rest areas, viewing decks, water purification systems and solar panels – designed to coexist with the rhythm of the river and rituals.

A significant part of the project also proposes a crematorium redesigned for more sustainable practices, addressing the urgent need for cleaner and more respectful funeral rites. Additionally, a waste recycling and education centre is introduced along the ghat, not only to reduce pollution, but to serve as a space where visitors and locals alike can learn about responsible waste handling and the sacred relationship between humans and nature.

The design reimagines the ghat not as a passive site for rituals but as a living, breathing ecosystem – one that nurtures both the river and its people. This thesis advocates for an architecture that heals: a model where cultural heritage, environmental care and human experience are interwoven through thoughtful, grounded design. It is a vision of offering back to the river that has long given so much.

Jack
Culloty
Research Project

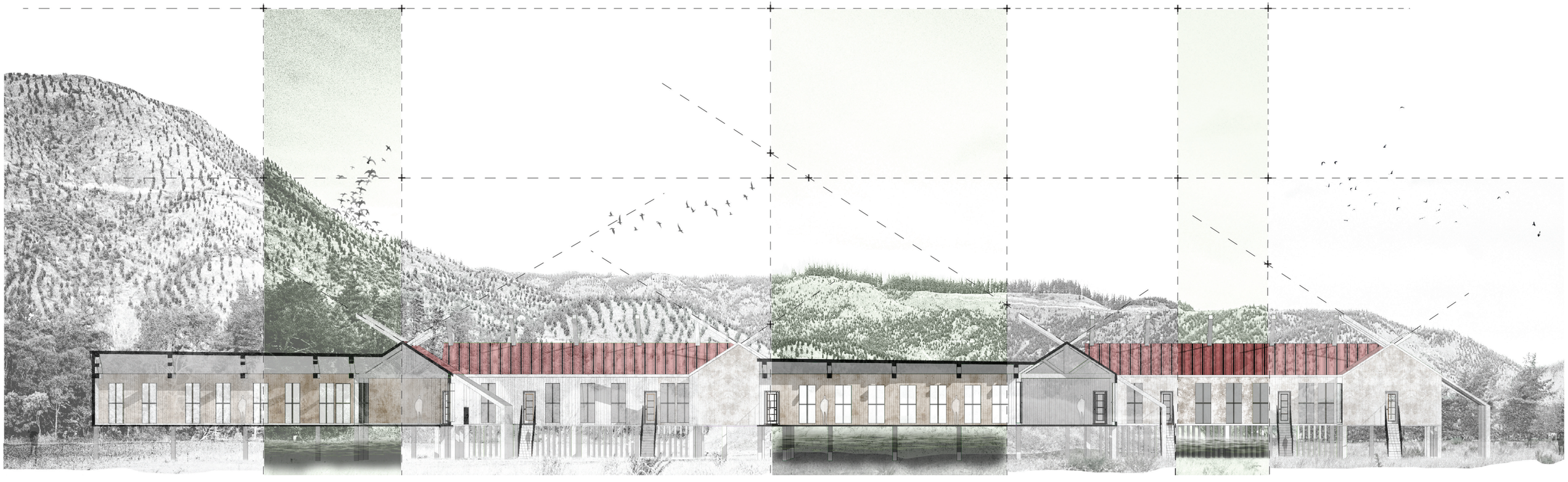
Esk Valley Relief Centre

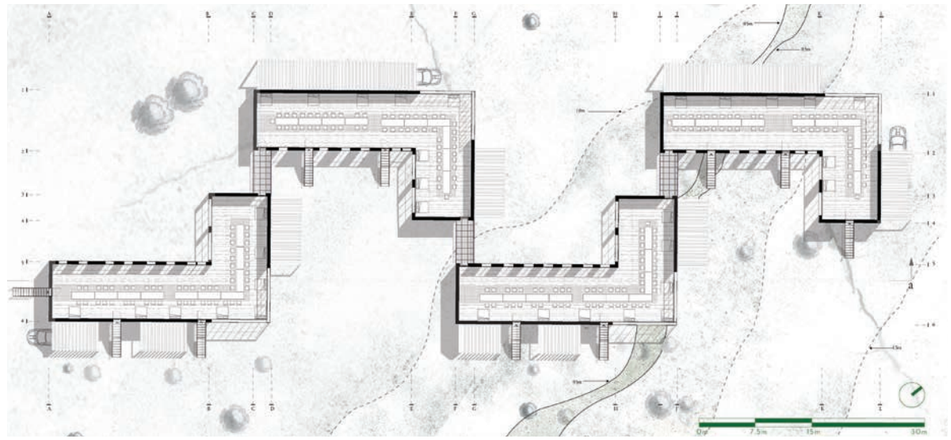
Severe weather events such as flooding significantly impact people's lives in rural areas. For example, the Esk Valley community in Te Matau-a-Māui Hawke's Bay, Aotearoa New Zealand, have suffered repeatedly from destructive flood events. This research investigation is focused on identifying and applying strategies from the disciplines of architecture and landscape architecture to mitigate the impact of these events.

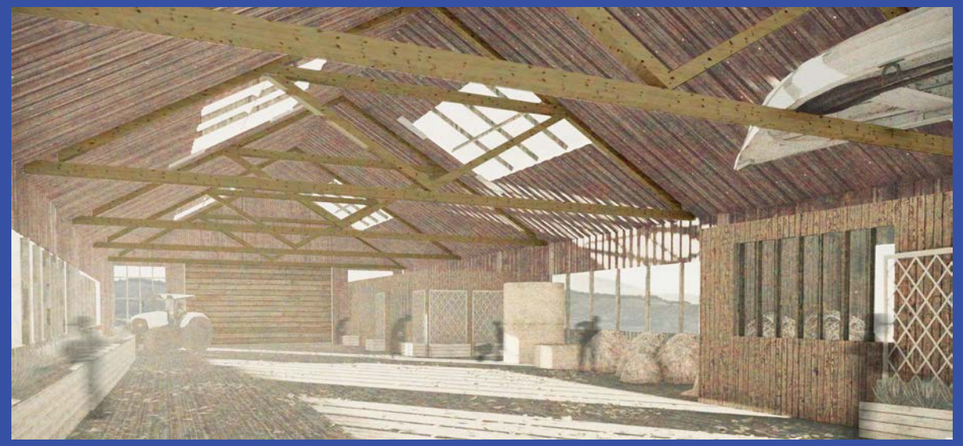
A residential neighbourhood in the Valley has been selected as a case study, where assorted approaches have been explored. The final proposition, which includes a relief centre, comprises various relief options that respond to the immediate context. This approach is scalable and can be applied across the entire catchment for optimal results. Architecture has been used as a tool to mitigate flooding, but more research needs to be undertaken to better accommodate rural communities.

This project used research by design as the overarching methodology. The focus on flood mitigation, topography methods, and method of inserting green and grey flood-mitigation strategies into site-specific conditions, provides creative possibilities – here, the power of topography and flood-preventative strategies can be considered portable.

Topography can call for positive change in architecture as each site that is explored is different, which means different needs are to be called for and addressed in architecture. Applying strategies to safeguard and deter floodwater from typologies also provides positive possibilities, as each strategy offers a hybrid approach to the design process to discover what is successful and what is not.







Nidhi Patel.

Research Project

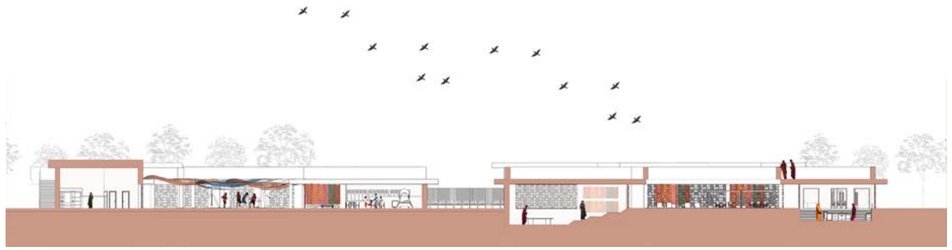
Prerna Aangan: The feminine de-mystique

Women in rural India continue to face systemic gender inequality influencing nearly every aspect of their lives. Restricted opportunities for education, healthcare and essential resources, together with deeply entrenched patriarchal norms, continue to limit women's autonomy and hinder their social advancement. As India's population surpasses 1.4 billion, the strain on natural resources and infrastructure has intensified, deepening the existing divide between privilege and deprivation. Addressing these interlinked issues requires not only policy reform but also social transformation. Empowering women through education and awareness of family planning represents a foundational step toward achieving sustainable development and community resilience.

This project responds to these challenges through architecture that functions as both a social and spatial intervention. Conceived as a women's empowerment and education centre in rural Gujarat, the project aims to provide a safe and inclusive environment for learning, dialogue and self-development. Drawing inspiration from vernacular Indian architecture, the design unfolds through three interrelated spatial scales: the Chaupal, a community gathering space situated at the heart of the village; the Aangan, a domestic courtyard that mediates between private and public life; and the empowerment centre itself, which serves as a locus for collective learning and engagement. Collectively, these scales explore how architecture can foster belonging, participation and confidence among women.

The project celebrates locality by using climate-responsive materials and traditional craftsmanship, establishing critical regionalism as a key principle. Elements such as jaali screens, bandhani textiles and stepwell-inspired forms reflect a dialogue between heritage and contemporary need. The resulting architecture is contextually rooted yet progressive, expressing both cultural continuity and social reform.

Ultimately, this project positions architecture as an instrument of empowerment. It envisions the built environment as a catalyst for change, one that redefines women not as passive recipients of space, but as active participants in shaping their own futures.



Tamara
Kiselva.

Research Project

The Berufsschule Future Skills Today: A vocational high school

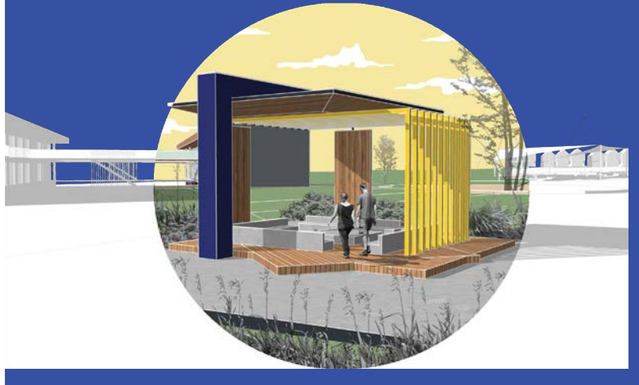
The project proposes a new model of secondary vocational education in Aotearoa New Zealand, inspired by Germany's long-established Berufsschule system and the post-war vocational institutions of Soviet Russia. The vocational school is proposed to be on-site with a high school to facilitate and ease vocational pathways for youth. Both historical precedents succeeded in that and responded to major societal shifts. They demonstrated how structured training, apprenticeships and specialised learning environments can elevate the status of trade pathways.

In Aotearoa, where government priorities increasingly emphasise work-based learning, this project explores how architecture can strengthen that shift by making vocational routes more visible, valued and culturally grounded for 16–18-year-old students. Through literature, precedent and site research, the project progressively expanded from a study of school typologies to a wider examination of learning approaches, inclusiveness and cultural landscape.

The chosen site in Ōtāhuhu introduced strong contextual conditions: proximity to Te Tō Waka and Maunga Ōtāhuhu added cultural depth, while the surrounding industrial area prompted a complete reimagining of the land as a green and publicly accessible urban park. Early design thinking drew from OMA's Mission Grand Axe, but this approach proved unsuitable for a context where cultural narratives are essential. Instead, Daniel Libeskind's Between the Lines methodology and Tohu cultural mapping guided the urban-scale spatial organisation.

Physical model testing led to a courtyard-based urban layout that strengthened thresholds, created boulevards and plazas for job fairs, and provided pavilion spaces for showcasing students' work. The addition of public elements, such as the basketball court, playground and wetland boardwalk, aimed to reinforce community engagement with trade education.

At the building scale, functional testing generated three options, with the Anchor Points layout emerging as the most effective. Its L-shaped circulation connected workshops, studios and administration around a central courtyard, balancing visibility, accessibility and acoustic control. The final scheme supports the project's core aim, which is to elevate vocational education through spatial openness, cultural responsiveness, and strong connections between making, learning and community.



Jessica

Tregidga.

Research Project

Rural Revitalisation: The study of place and identity in small-town living

While focus in Aotearoa New Zealand is often put onto urban centres, it is essential to remember the population that lives outside of cities. Rural town populations are stagnating or declining, with people migrating to urban areas for economic or amenity-related opportunities.

An example of this trend is Dargaville, a town on the upper west coast of the North Island. With a population of 5,016, it is a gateway town to smaller settlements such as Kaihū, Ruawai and Te Kōpuru. In the past, Dargaville was prosperous because of timber milling, kauri gum digging, dairy farming and boat building. Over time, demand waned, companies closed, and people left to find work elsewhere.

With this loss of people and industry came a significant loss of identity and economic opportunity. The town became a quick stop on the way to somewhere else. However, for the people who remained or grew up there, and return home over the Wairoa River, there is the possibility of building upon existing local plans to create opportunity and forge new identity.

Currently, the northern Wairoa River faces environmental threats from industrial and horticultural activities along its banks. Community efforts have been made to reduce these impacts, such as initiatives teaching the importance of acting as kaitiaki of the awa and the Kaipara Harbour. This has resulted in schools sourcing and growing native species and planting them along the awa and around the dune lakes and wetlands that flow into the harbour. These rangatahi actions suggest that care of the awa provides rich potential for developing new beginnings in Dargaville.

This project was born from my experience of moving from a rural community to the metropolis of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. As someone raised in a rural community, I found it hard to turn my back on this part of the country. The outsiders' impression of Dargaville seemed so far from my experience, making me aware of the negative image of my community, and how it is perceived to offer little opportunity.

This project works to strengthen the relationships between the awa (the river), the whenua (the land) and the community to tie them all together. To achieve these aims, three simultaneous enquiries – literature and precedent analysis, interviews with local community representatives and design – ensured that the architectural design process was informed from multiple viewpoints.

The continuous loop of design production and analysis ensured that each iteration was underpinned by thoughtful and informed critique. These iterative loops have produced a design for a community facility with an appropriate programme that will aid in improving water quality and the sense of local identity in the area around the northern Wairoa River.

Asieh

Dadashi.

Research Project

Mimicking the Age-Friendly City in Tehran: Reconnecting community through healthy ageing and sense of place

In today's Tehran many elders are quietly being left behind. Some spend most of their time alone in small apartments not designed for their needs, while others are left in care homes that feel cold and impersonal. Many are even left in the street, unsupported, watching life pass by without being part of it, and this neglect affects not only their physical, mental and spiritual health.

When people lose their connection to place and community, they lose part of themselves. This project, Echoes of a Forgotten Dream: Metamorphosis of Living – Ageing, Culture and Lifestyle Among Persian Seniors زاغآ لوحت کی, was born from this concern. It asks how might architectural design play a role in devising atmospheric dwellings that foster Persian seniors' mental health and spiritual wellbeing?

The project is located in central Tehran, Iran, and imagines a smaller city within the city, where seniors can live independently yet feel surrounded by life. It brings the community together, with shops lining the streets, healing and educational centres, cultural spaces and walkable courtyards, all designed for social contact and accessibility.

The whole site is inspired by the Persian carpet – each cluster, courtyard and pathway is like a motif in a woven pattern, together forming a continuous fabric of community life. Just as a carpet communicates stories through colour and geometry, this project connects people through movement, memory and everyday rituals.

Through this approach, healthy ageing becomes part of daily living: public courtyards and shaded walking paths encourage movement and independence, and semi-public courtyards invite neighbours to meet and share time. Young university students live on upper levels, helping and learning from the seniors – creating friendship between generations.

Architecturally, the project revives the Iranian sense of place – with courtyards united by windcatchers, earthy textures, colourful tiles and stained-glass windows bringing seniors together. These familiar elements comfort the residents, reminding them that they still belong – not to an institution, but to Tehran itself.

In the end, Echoes of a Forgotten Dream is more than housing. It is a woven city of care – a place that restores mental peace, spiritual balance and dignity through architecture. It shows that when we design with care, we do not simply build buildings – we rebuild dreams.

Anand Dhillon

Research Project

पंडित दीप चन्द रंगमंच एवं हरियाणा संस्कृति स्थल

Honouring the Shakespeare of Haryana: A performing arts centre and cultural precinct

This investigation attempted to highlight the ongoing and rapid loss of Haryanvi traditions, with the aim of preserving them for future generations. It is the responsibility of the recipients of this cultural treasure passed down by elders – shaping the community's understanding, identity and awareness of origin – to preserve and pass it on to future generations.

I was born and raised in Haryana, a state in North India known for its cultural diversity. My research is motivated by the desire to preserve a tradition integral to the region's cultural identity: Saang – a unique, centuries-old traditional folk-theatre art that serves not only as a source of entertainment, but also as a means to raise funds for public amenities and welfare.

Saang is now, however, on the verge of extinction, struggling with changing audience preferences, the impact of modernisation on traditions, financial constraints and a shortage of suitable performance spaces. This study explores how architecture could help preserve and revitalise Saang before it disappears.

The study of cultural precincts, along with an analysis of architectural elements from heritage structures in Haryana's villages, laid the foundation for the design. The aim was not to replicate Haryanvi architectural styles, but to evoke the same design language to create a sense of cultural resonance; to encourage locals to engage with their roots, while offering outsiders a glimpse into the region's traditions and culture.

The result is a thoughtfully designed precinct featuring a cluster of programmes, with landscape and water elements, that shape the site into a vibrant entertainment and cultural hub. The primary spaces include a theatre building with a 1,700-patron capacity arena, and an administration and training building.

Furthermore, the inclusion of an amphitheatre, an ethnic restaurant, a central plaza and a pond contribute to the impression of a traditional Haryanvi village setting. This investigation aimed not only to revive both tangible and intangible aspects of cultural heritage, but also to promote local Haryanvi culture. It is grounded in the belief that traditional art forms serve as the foundational essence of all modern artistic expression.

Pablo Vanegas

Master of Architecture by Project

The House of the Sun and the Moon

The Muisca are the Indigenous people of the high Andean plateau around Bogotá known as the Altiplano Cundiboyacense. They developed strong farming systems, gold metalwork and a rich spiritual world centred on Chiminigagua. Spanish colonisation in the sixteenth century and the long process of settler urbanisation disrupted Muisca towns, ceremonies and land systems. Today Muisca communities such as those in Bosa and El Porvenir are rebuilding language, ritual practice and claims to land while facing insecure tenure, pressure from urban growth and limited political recognition.

A guiding symbol for the project is the El Dorado legend, the story that a leader covered in gold offered treasures at sacred lakes. That legend captures how Muisca gold pieces carried meaning and ritual value. Key sources for the design's form are three linked ideas from Muisca material and landscape culture: circular Muisca gold artifacts, Tayrona-style terracing and the stepped landscape, and suna (ceremonial paths) and their orientation. The House of the Sun and the Moon places the suna at the heart of circulation and orientation.

Material choices reference the qusmuy, the ancestral Muisca huts. The proposed design uses timber with structural rhythms that recall post-and-beam systems, and conical roof forms that suggest thatch profiles reinterpreted with durable local cladding. Earth-based finishes such as rammed earth or compressed stabilised earth blocks in base walls, together with woven fibre screens, echo traditional textures and support local craft.

Planting beds and terraces connect the building and create microclimate habitats for the sacred plants of Siembro practice. The aim is a building that speaks of hut-making while meeting modern durability and code requirements. The building was shaped by community conversations, tested in sketches and models, and refined with Muisca feedback. It is meant to be a living centre for ceremony, education, governance and cultivation practices.

Students 2025

Certificate of Practice

James Ka Shing Chong
Richard Frazer
Antony Jackson
Sian Larkin
Regan Little
Thea Martin
Caroline Mukane
William Stansfield
Petra Trousilova
Cuicui Wang

Interior Design Residential

Aini Aaltonen
Dana Abdel Salam Ibrahim
Anmolkaur Sukhvinder Singh
Azra Banu
Katrina Barham
Victoria Butler-Pacholek
Liling Cui
Jessica Cook
Bruna Dalsenter Elias
Marites Devonshire
Chanelle Douglas
Mirah Dumasia
Maddison Fenton-Heald
Sophie Fletcher
Sean Harding
Kurtis Hepi
Alisha Heppleston
Melissa Jackson
Joanna Jeong
Fiona King
Chantez Knight
Rose Lendich
Brooke Lucas
Isaac McGregor
Aimee Mexted
Krishtika Nadan
Vivan Naidu
Leticia Nixon
Merceious Ofe
Sonya Pemberton
Saadiya Peragar
Panthiya Phruksa
Yiling Qiu
Caitlin Ritchie
Tess Southwell
Tidarat Srilasak
Phoebe Tate
Coralee Thomasen
Antonia Van Den Berg
Shanay Yu

Interior Design Commercial

Abigail Bobbitt
Kelly-Brooke Christie
Rebecca Diana
Vivien Huang
Paige Irvine
Imogen Kendall
Jennifer Low
Xiaohong Ou
Camille Reboul
Hannah Sapwell
Emma Stewart

Landscape Design Horticulture Services

Edward Ashton
Katherine Bang
Paula Barakat-Stanage
Lucy Beveridge
Patrick Brebner
Junxiao Chen
Anthony Drent
Dion Gallagher
Sophie Henare
Morgan Huggins
Yoshua Mackerracher
Ida Moberg
Nathan Orlandini
Oscar Pivac
Luke Rewha-Lobo
Seth Trigg
Kai Zheng

Landscape Design Diploma

Daniel Ahwa
Timothy Arcus
Oliver Ball
Rachelle Bennett
Jemma Bunker
Harrison Caird
Sharon Fisk
Ainsley Foster
Sarah Hargreaves
Haiguang He
Sean Jacobson
Claudia Knarston
Lila Kuka
Stephanie McCallum
Phil McGowan
Blake McIntyre
Rebecca Moldenhauer
Osi Monu
Elliott Morgan
Julia Moss
Carl Reynolds
Serin Sebastian
Carla To
Anna Wilcock

Landscape Architecture BLA

Falemaka Afeaki
Shaymaa Al Magasees
Isla Baillie
Hannah Busby
Julianne Buys
Isabelle Cushman
Isaac Denny
Rury Fitzsimons
Michael Head
Oliver Jones
Russell Kereru
Summer Kivits
Amelia Lawson
Ximin Li
Yingxuan Lin
Kerensa Mihaere
Joseph Mohi
Ben Nicklin
Jack Norris
Finn O'Brien
Sylvia Pedersen
Lennox Penrose
Rosie Rolls
Brynn Salmon
Samuel Sinclair
Leighton Smith
Rose Todd
Ngoc Phuong Thao Vo
Martin Walsh
Hannah Wells
Ella Windner

Landscape Architecture MLA

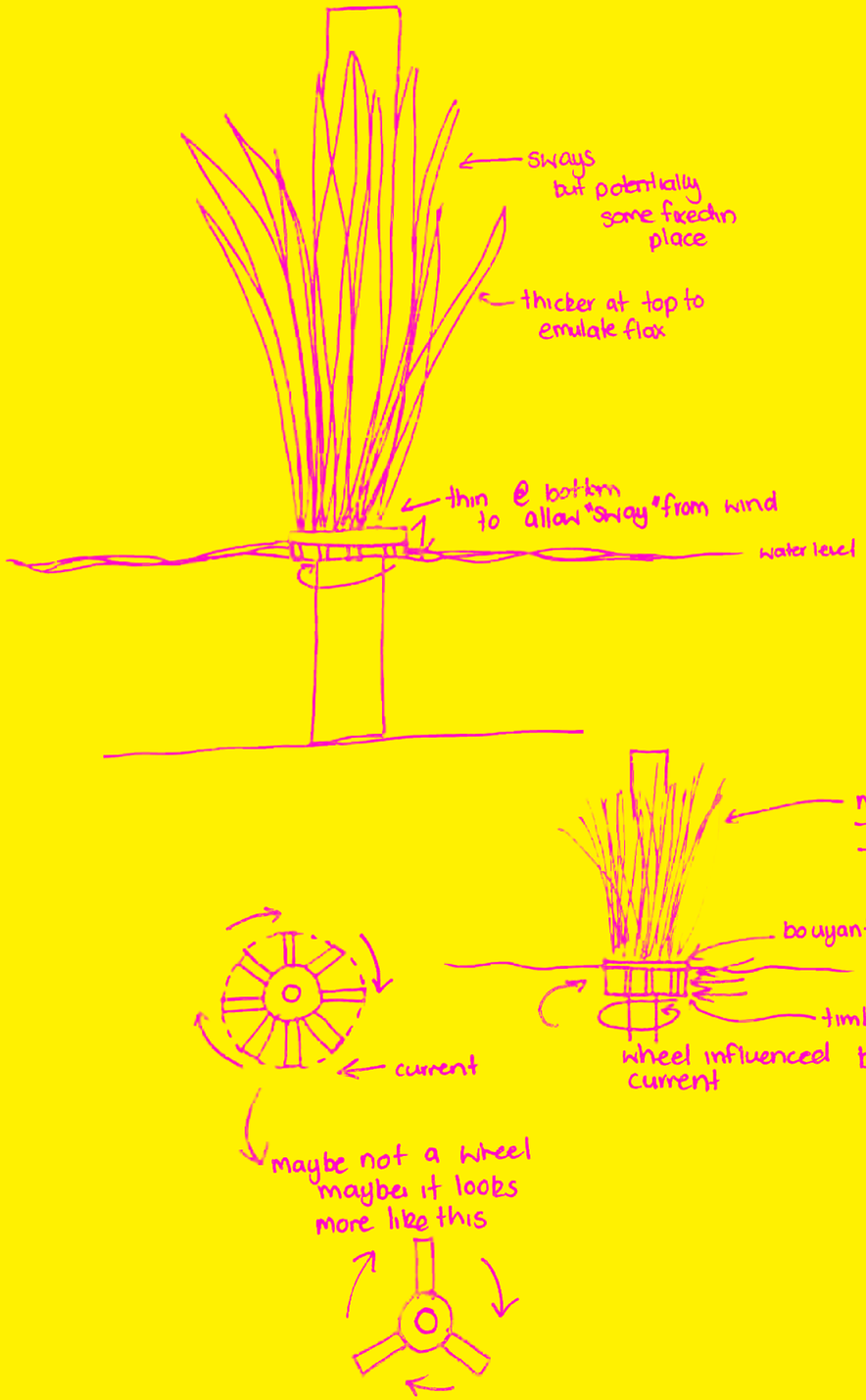
Ziqi Gao
Hunter Henson
Kuramahaurangi Kotlowski
Xinyi Lu
Jacqueline Naismith

Architecture BAS

Jacob Alexander
Abdul Aariz Ali
Heta Anderson-Stafford
Christian Angaaelangi
Nathan Philip Arriola
Rasantha Athapatthu Mudiyanselage
Bryher Bailie
Ruth Baker
Nicole Bamfield
Fernanda Barbosa Marangoni
Fabiana Edite Barboza
Fernando Basson
Litania Borrell
Regina Borrell
Ruben Boyack
Matt Brown
Maxine Burger
Alayna Burgess
Matthew Calvert
Laura Cameron
Shanshan Cao
Mitchell Carey
Harrison Chambers
Nikheel Chand
Hua Chen
Daniel Chia
Dante Choi
Vivian Clarke
Dawson Collyer
Rio Mae Comia
Sophia Connell
Zane Cooper
Jaidah Cooper-Smith
Stratton Craig
Cole Cranswick
Tricia Croker
Aida Crombach
Curt Cruz
Elena Cui
Huiyi Cui
Bayley Cummings
Rosie Dai
Lucas Braga
Jamby Nicole Dela Cruz
Nicole Delara
Jack Denny
Ashley Dry
Jonalyn Estrella
Brooke Evaga
Luteru Faavale
Evander Faofua
Kevin Feng
Morgan Ferguson
Sifoni Fetuani
John Paul Fifita
Alicia Finn-House
Liam Foote
Jholan Nycole Frias
Mikayla Funnell
Sakina Gadia
Abuzar Ghafari
Ashlee Gilbert
Darred Godinez
Jensen Gooduuyn
Zoe Gurschl
George Gustafsson
Ainsley Hall
Teiria Hemana
Jared Hemara
Victor Hong
Indiana Hunt-Smith
Jasmin Iosefo
Melody Iosua
Maria Iskander
Liberty Johns Kerr
Rejo Johnson
Nicholas Jones
Hayley Jonkers
Sakina Kachwala
Sun Kang
Mehar Kaur
Priyal Kerai
Akansha Kumar
Shaifali Lad
Natalie Lambourne
Aasif Laskar
Areeba Latif
Ausage Lauago Jr
Molly Lawrence-Graham
Oscar Lear
Tuivanuakula Lecavanavanua
Lehan Li
Lulu Li
Yan Li
Erica Lim
Gavin Liu
Jamie Loveridge
Jiawen Lu
Siosifa Lua
Siliuasi Lui
Sina Lutua
Shreeya Malhotra
Dawson Malota
Safi Malik
Brielle Manson
Tevita Manuika
Taina Marie
Devon Matten
Aukuso Mauga Esekia
Amber Mcallister-Old
Ethan Mcginty
Claudia McGough-Morunga
Jeune Milford
Dixakumari Mistry
Sorav Mittal
Tasi Molioo
Ashton Morley
Christian Mulipola
Shahil Naicker
Nehaal Naidu
Aryan Nand Mishra
Christopher Nansen
Tiana Naqih
Min Ni
Olivia Nott
Pamela Ocampo
Jee Hyun Oh
Payam Parneian
Rutik Patel
Jessica Paton
Jessica Pengelly
Sara Peterson
Elizabeth Pipi
Pamela Poisl
Ritikesh Prakash
Kylin Prasad
Xiaoxi Qiu
Dylan Quayle
Dixit Rabadia
Matt Railey
Krisha Raju
Rheniel Ramirez
Ian Ratusau
Campbell Reelick
Marshall Rongo
Narjes Rooshenas
Alexandra Samuels-Hutchinson
Losaline Selupe
Christian Seve
Anjali Shah
Shakiba Shamaei
Mehwish Sharif
Esha Sharma
Jaireet Sidhu
Braydn Siegenthaler
Anya Silwood
Jess Smith
Andrew-John Spicer
Mary Suante
Humaira Suhaimi
Xu Sun
Cameron Szeto
Tasnim Taher
Phoenix Tahuri
Amelyiah Tanevesi
Amelia Taufatofua
Emma Taylor
Myke Te Momo
Malachi Te Pania
Windsor Tevita-Tanielu
Junior Tipelu
Carmelite Tipi
Gabrielle Titter
Letizia Tofilau
Dominhgo Toung
Samuela Tupou
Gohanne Turtal
Roselyn Valmadrid
Francesca Waiariki
Siyou Wang
Yanqing Wang
Yue Wang
Nicala Wheaton
Meeka Wise
Hayley Wright
Yuxiang Xiong
Rozielle Yanez
Ge Yang
Emily Young
Jana Youssri
Hang Yue
Hangwei Zhang
Shutian Zhang
Jiantong Zheng
Yichen Zhou
Yona Zhou
Emma Zhu

Architecture MArch(Prof)

Pawan Ale
Pablo Vanegas
Xin Zhao
Astrid Aarons
Farheen Ahmed
Popua Aleamotu'A
Nitu Basnet
Rupesh Bhandari
Anuradha Bhattacherjee
Tane Brooks
Jasmine Burring
Craig Butland
Jimena Canelo Sanchez
Madison Carkeek
Rahul Chand
Romit Chand
Shikha Chandratre
Zane Chang
Pankaj Chauhan
Xintao Cheng
Dipika Chhabhadiya
Astha Chitrakar
Scarlett Cibilich
Carolina Cocever Silva
Jack Culloty
Asieh Dadashi
Chunlan Dai
Phu Quy Dang
Isha Devia
Anand Dhillon
Rudy Dzulnaidi
Luke Dobbs
Eda Dogan Kaya
Elana Eivers-Wong
Cameron Ellis
Dirk Encela
Pieter Erasmus
Kyle Evans
Mosese Fakatava
Emara Feasey-Weiss
Luis Fernandez Almendra
Yali Gao
Harrison Gobbie
Aden Goel
Tayyibah Hajee
Josh Hamilton
Frazer Hawke
Joel Hewlett
Dusabe Ibambasi
Hangyul Jeon
Rupinderjit Kaur
Sachleen Kaur
Tamara Kiseleva
Melissa Knight
Erik Koefoed
Cecilia Kuang
Sadanand Kudav
Ron Kumar
Arnica Laiman
Irene Lee
Nora Jean Lee
Xiaoya Lin
Qin Liu
Kalpani Rukshani Liyanage
Tyler Maitland
Amal Makan
Vishal Malpotra
Melwin Mathew
Sinéad McClay
Harshit Mehta
Daniel Metcalf
Mey Mey Nam
Colin Ng
Henrietta Olivier
Tevita Paea
Durva Patel
Esha Patel
Nidhi Patel
Shachi Patel
Sakina Piplodwala
Rhea Mae Plania
Joshua Porter
Youlin Qi
Shrestha Raithwal
Isaac Rakich
Aldrich Rebello
Rimo Ribechini
Sara Rongo
Zeina Samak
Ranudi Rithnimi Samaratunge
Zhan Shen
Aman Singh
Damanveer Singh
Xingru Song
Henri Stroh
Sushil Suwal
Rong Tian
Fereti Toleafoa
Jessica Tregidga
Lopeti Uhi
Rogelio Uy
Ethan Valentine
Jennifer-Clair van der Merwe
Renee Veltman
Mustafizahmed Vhora
Leo Hongyu Wang
Jack Williams
Tyler Williams
Wenxiu Wu
Jinpeng Yang



Dear younger me,

You, at the unsure age of eighteen, made the choice of architecture as your pathway, and now, as your journey into the workplace begins, I hope that it has been fulfilling – and that it has brought you opportunities and joy, and that what you have learned over the last seven years from your peers and teachers has shaped you further, both professionally and personally.

I hope that the work you are about to launch yourself into is the beginning of a meaningful journey through architectural practice, and that you are able to further express yourself creatively. I also hope you have been able to give back to the web of knowledge you have gained; becoming an educator is always the capstone I envisioned.

My hope is that all the people you have met – both in your cohort and in other years – have continued to be your friends and possibly even colleagues! (You never know.) That they do not just become talking points as you reflect on your time at university. Meeting people who are like-minded and interested in architectural discussion, which lead to genuine friendships, is one of life's greatest gifts, and I hope it never stops. I hope you have continued to nurture those relationships.

As part of your growth, I hope you have gained the courage to forge your own path and not be held back by the idea of what is possible or what is expected; that you are surrounded by a support system, whatever shape it takes, and that a balance is present – the balance I crave now.

I hope you are living and working in a world that has become kinder – that has more equality, diversity, and is more open. I hope our profession has continued to grow into a place where voices are welcomed and that you have played a part in creating that environment. One where we are all seen, valued and included.

I hope that you have faced challenges with determination and taken the chances life has presented to you, and you look back at them, proud of what you have achieved. I am about to graduate, and know the best is yet to come.

With love,

Jessica

Jessica Tregidga
MArch(Prof) graduate

Architecture
Design
Research