Edi(ta)ble Urbanism: The Food, The Veil and The City.

Elizabeth Campbell

University of Auckland, School of Architecture and Planning.

Corresponding Author Email: elizabethkcampbell@gmail.com

Abstract:

Post war consumerism has left cities of the twenty-first century laden with the built residue of industrial systems. Societies that developed systems geared for production and efficiency throughout the previous century, are now faced with largely unprecedented issues of urban sprawl, population growth and limited resources to tackle these phenomena. Increasingly, worldwide, we are witnessing much of the built environment of the twentieth century going through a process of transformation. The need for space to be re-designed has created a drive toward the adaptation of previously non-domestic architectural types into places for living and leisure. A current trend for cities, and consequently those, who engage with the built environment (including architects), is a practice of re-purposing, re-fitting and re-programming existing structures which thereby destabilizes the form to programme relationship of architectural type. Spaces within cities that were once places of industrial economy and infrastructure are being converted in response to cultural, economic and political shifts. This conversion in part is a response to a demand for green space and access to sustainable resources in the urban environment.
This thesis maps the social epochs of the twentieth century, interrogating how the evolution of the market has transformed both the nature of food supply and its relationship to urban form.

Through a parallel written and design investigation, this thesis will critically analyse how urban form has developed in relation to food supply and will make a design proposal for New Zealand’s northern most city; Whangarei. This thesis views food supply and the model of the traditional market as a critical driver for the articulation of a threshold between architecture and urban form. Through the project vehicle of Whangarei Growers Market, this thesis aims to provide design solutions to facilitate the market’s growth socially and spatially. This case study seeks to offer an insight to how the re-emergence of local markets around New Zealand and worldwide should be supported within the urban environment and seen as local infrastructures. By acknowledging the potential of pre-existing networks in Whangarei, this thesis argues for the Whangarei Grower’s Market to be an initial catalyst for social, spatial and political agency in an aim to set up an urban framework which is conducive to the city’s anticipated future growth.
1. Introduction:

The relationships between food and architecture, agriculture and urban form have long been discussed within the discourse of architecture and urbanism. The production, consumption and disposal of food are an inevitable cycle of daily life in cities and there is an incredible amount of research, academic writing and design projects which focus on this process. Building upon this area of research this thesis focuses on how access to food supply and how the process of food production has a significant consequent effect the built environment. Building upon this analysis this thesis argues that through the growth of production in the food industry has significant consequent effects on the built environment. However, access to local food supply, through spaces such as markets, can be seen as models of programmatic, political and spatial agency for the articulation of the threshold between architecture and urban form.

The evolution of the market has been driven through numerous social epochs over centuries. In contemporary New Zealand, and the wider western society, majority of the population access food and other resources through the modern invention of the supermarket - an interface which is totally disconnected with the source of food. Whangarei is home to New Zealand’s largest local produce market. Established in 1996, by two local growers, occurring every Saturday morning, this weekly ritual has provided more than what it set out to do – it is now also a source of tourism, commerce and local economy for the city of Whangarei, bringing in approximately $4 million of revenue annually. This market is where the local community has
access to social connectivity, volumes of local produce and the growers who produce the edible resource – something sold largely through brands, packaging and images at the supermarket.

Signage, brands and logos have been in society for centuries. Theorists such as Ferdinand de Saussure, Jean Baudrillard, Gilles Delueze, Beatriz Cololina, Rem Koolhaas and Mario Carpo, among numerous others, have all engaged in such discourse analysing how communication through media has further affected the built environment after the rise of industry. Such inventions allow space to be mass produced with localized recognition of global systems though one simple image of the corporate logo. Coupling this with the resultant interface of food supply, the supermarket, this thesis will provide a foundation to the rise of the practice of urbanism in contemporary society.

The market as the central programmatic driver provides a traditional model that has evolved, mutated and as a consequence been resilient in contemporary society to stay as the primary source of food supply in Whangarei. The market model provides as spatial and social catalyst agent in society capable of generating event in mass, local economy and the return of food knowledge to the city. Thus, promoting the removal of disconnection created through the evolution of the market into the modern supermarket type and promoting urban projects that engage with re-purposing of existing infrastructures.

Projects such as the High Line in New York, Santa Caterina Market in Barcelona and Olympic Sculpture Park in Washington are all examples of design that repurposes space in a specific
context. This thesis uses projects such as these as case studies to address the way in which architects and urban designers are practicing design within cities that have lost a battle with the overproduction of space. Case studies such as these highlight the practice of re-purposing, re-programming and re-fitting to re-define existing infrastructures within the city.

Using Whangarei as a case study, this thesis argues not for the production of monumental architecture but for the re-design of existing infrastructures within the city. Proposals deeply set in context, aim to provide infrastructures that allow the city to grow in density, engage with daily and weekly cycles of the city and allow social engagement through space.
2. Methodology

The methodology of this study was carried out through interviews, literature reviews, diagramming and drawing. During the process of diagramming and drawing in this thesis was a journey in which news, politics and history has been transformed into visual media.
The Architecture of Markets: From Temple to Junkspace.

01.1: The Project Vehicle: Whangarei Growers Market

Agriculture has long been, and still is, a critical part of New Zealand’s identity. The farming industry is the largest contributor to New Zealand’s economy, making up two thirds of the country’s global exports. The Northland region plays a large role in this local and international business. With food as an essential resource to sustaining life, this precious commodity plays a vital role in not only New Zealand society but around the world.

The market has had a long history in civilization. Historically operating within the streets and public spaces in cities, markets were seen as places of not only commerce through exchange but also held significance as a platform for exchange of ideas. This social engagement and spatial integration within a society is what makes the market model of interest to this thesis.

The evolution of the market through the 19th and 20th Centuries in Western society has gone through expensive changes and these developments are seen to have had significant impacts on the way in which we have access to food and the quality of the built environment.

As current food systems grow things faster, fatter, bigger, cheaper, to accommodate the exponential and unprecedented growth of the population, the number of people actually growing and cultivating this precious resource has diminished. Majority of civilization now
relies on approximately 2% of the world’s population to produce the food we take for granted every day. Furthermore, it is also a very small minority that controls this process for “efficiency.”

In New Zealand the duopoly of Foodstuffs and Progressive Enterprise control the nation’s supermarkets; a large anonymous box interfacing the primary source for much of the country’s population. Through evoolution in much of the Western world the market has manifested into the “super”market. This large volume is dimensioned to carry brands visually identifiable nationally and internationally. Shifting the market from an entity highly integrated with the built environment into an entity which can be located in multiple places through branded recognition and controlled by a small percentage of the population. Minority controlling resources of or for the majority is not a new regulative principle. Since the first settlements of cities, temples, governments or positions of power have had control over resources. Food specifically contributed largely to how the first settlements were organized and operated. This operation of a city, town or settlement still exists in some parts of the world today; however, in the western world much of this resource translates currency from food into money. Money is now the resource which allows life to be sustained and it is for this very reason the two people behind the beginning of the Whangarei Growers Market problematized the current hierarchies in society.
The Whangarei Growers Market, established in 1996 by two local Northland Growers; Robert Bradley and Murray Burns, begun as a reaction to the systems in the contemporary food industry. In the last 50 years the global food industry had changed more than in the previous 10 thousand.\textsuperscript{iv} Part of the New Zealand food industry, in the past, worked around an auction based system called the Central Marketing System. Turners and Growers, which Burns once worked for, would bring together growers and buyers in the form of an auction. Growers would sell their produce to the buyer who, in turn, would be the interface or primary source of food for the wider public. Over a short number of years the Central Marketing System changed. Auctions work well when there are a lot of buyers and at the beginning of the system this is how the auction would run. Buyers included; supermarkets, greengrocers, restaurants and small local convenience stores. As the supermarkets became more dominant, buyer numbers dropped which in turn drove the grower price return down. This continued until the supermarkets wanted to pull out of the auction altogether. As a major buyer of the grown produce, they now controlled a majority of the operation and put procedures in place to avoid dealing with the grower altogether. By 1995 the supermarkets had pulled out of Whangarei and back to Auckland. Consequently, for the grower this meant they now had to transport the produce to Auckland also packing, distribution and transport to the supermarket, until finally it would reach the supermarket and they would put their mark up on it. The grower’s return went from being 30% down to 15% in less than a decade.
Since 1996, The Whangarei Grower’s Market has offered some autonomy for local growers. Operating from Water Street car-park on the fringe of the Central Business District, majority of the grower’s involved in the market make the bulk of their income from it. The market brings in $5.5 million dollars annually. Additional to providing local economy, the market offers a platform for the exchange of ideas, community and renewed societal interest in knowing where your food comes from.

This kind of resistance to industrial systems within a community can be seen all over New Zealand, Specifically the act of providing local people with not only local produce but also local connections to their local population and built environment. Within the Farmers market is a resilient model of this resistance. Farmers Markets are occurring all over New Zealand and around the world. Whangarei Growers Market provides a specific case study for this thesis because it is the largest market in New Zealand, which has actually begun to take on local supermarkets, founded on three very basic principles. The market rules state:
1. The (Grower’s) Market is to be a place where growers, producers and final consumers meet and deal directly with one another.

2. The (Grower’s) Market must be run in such a way that relations between grower’s (producers) and final consumers are open, honest and display integrity of purpose of the market.

3. The (Grower’s) Market is for growers who grow produce in the local Northland area. It is to be a market that allows local people to buy local produce.

The Grower’s Market has been running for fifteen years, and with a strong local support, continues to grow. Through these basic rules, allowing people direct access to locally grown food, event, mass and networking are created. It is these qualities that make the market, as a model, consistently and increasingly interesting throughout architectural and urban practices. Markets provide spaces of exchange, spatial agency and social engagement with the built environment on an architectural and urban level. Through these characteristics, traditional markets allow life in the public realm. This quality of the traditional market model is evident in the Whangarei Growers Market. Through access to food supply, The Whangarei Growers Market promotes life in the public realm making the Water Street car park, and surrounding businesses busy with life every Saturday. By using this market and the access to food supply
that it provides, this thesis argues for The Whangarei Grower’s market to be an initial critical driver for articulating a threshold between architecture and urbanism – promoting public life and aiming to provide a part in a robust urban framework for the city of Whangarei.
01.2: Pre-Industrial City: Agriculture and Urbanism

Approximately ten thousand years ago two very important inventions happened at the same place at the same time: agriculture and urbanism. It was the discovery of grain in the ancient world which provided a large enough food source to sustain permanent settlement for the first time (as opposed to hunter-gather nomadism). The formation of these settlements was compact, surrounded by productive farmland and dominated by large temple complexes. A settlement such as Ur (an extinct ancient city in modern day Iraq) is an example of this type of early settlement. Referred to as a spiritualized distribution centre, the temple complex would organize the harvest, collect the grain, offer it to the Gods then offer what was left back to the people of the village. The entire cycle of the city revolved around the grain and the harvest that sustained the civilization.

However, not all settlements at this time were this compact. Famously, the city of Rome had approximately one million citizens by the first century A.D. With access to the sea Rome was able to transport food via the water. In the ancient world sea travel was the most efficient means of transport for food over long distances. Roads, along with road transport, were not developed enough for food to travel long distances without perishing. Carolyn Steel, in her seminal book Hungry City, asserts further that if you look at any city settled prior to the rise of industry you can trace food moving into it. Cities then were constrained by geography because of access to sustaining resources such as food and water. Livestock from the surrounding
productive farmland would be walked into the streets and public spaces to be bought and sold on various days of the week.\textsuperscript{vi}

London’s history tracks back over two thousand years, however between 1840 and 1929 significant shifts in London’s urban form can be traced. Early maps of London prior to 1840 reveal the close relationship between food supply and urban form. Public exchange spaces were designed around the human scale of street and courtyard pattern. Street names, such as “Friday Street” give extensive clues to the content or programme of the space, this is where fish would be brought to be bought and sold on a Friday. To live in an early city such as London, it would be extremely hard to be disconnected from your food; citizens would know where their food comes from, who it was raised by how it was raised, transported and slaughtered. The identity of the author would be clear - verifiable through manual labour, a signature and a physical “face to face” relationship. This connection changed about a decade later, from 1840 with the rise of industry.

The rise of industry effectively emancipated the city from the constraint of geography. The emergence of the machine established a tendency for industrial cities to expand and for dormant built form to be set up around urban centers rather than integrated within the live/work patterns of society. The invention of the train allowed for the first time in history, the transportation of grain and livestock over large distances in a short time. This exponential growth in urban form resulted in people living in the city having no “real” connection with their food. Taylorism promoted streamlining and the rise of mass production through the machine of which the result in working conditions was the factory and production line geared for efficiency. Mass production via the machine and the production line meant objects, food, parts of a whole construction could be made in pieces and mass produced – items became copiable for the first time. “Exactly repeatable mechanical imprints generated standardized products and identification became based on visual identically”. As a result, citizens would not and possibly could not, walk in a city like this – this city was devoid of smell, mess and walking people. To access food, city dwellers would get in their automobile and drive to the periphery of the city to an anonymous box, now known as the supermarket. The “super” market, a large box or shed designed, (at least intended, if not purposely designed), to provide an “efficient” way of accessing what sustains us. However, designing this efficient mode of access effectively extinguished the relationship between producer and consumer and replaced
it with an image-veil between the producer and consumer. The supermarket is a type of “junkspace” , in Koolhaas’ terms – a module “dimensioned to carry brands” which are recognizable nationally and internationally and can be perceived through a moving automobile. ix “Pretending histories left and right, its contents a dynamic, yet stagnant, recycled or multiplied as in cloning..” x Supermarkets, through mass consumption and production, became buildings copied and moved into localized areas; suburbs, creating a nodal network to allow people access to their food. The post war city saw this model of the supermarket on the periphery being moved into the centers of suburbs trying to mimic the village model of pre-industrial time.
01.4: Post War City: The Rise of the Suburbia and “Super”Market. (Brands and Territories)

Through the rise of industry – machine made mass repeatable or copy-able items could be produced. Post war cities saw the rise of the suburbs. Suburbs effectively resulted in urban sprawl and became catered for by supermarkets at the nucleus. Having a food source back in the centre of a settlement is not something new. However, this type of interface food source is a mimicry of what was once the village type model of pre-industrial time. Supermarkets today have become brands occupying territories within a city through means of faceable dimension. Materialist theory, articulated by many theorists including Deleuze alludes to the face, which codifies the head which in turn codifies the body into a unified whole semantics in supermarkets, can be traced down to the very products they sell. “Significance is never with a white wall upon which it inscribes its signs and redundancies. Subjectification is never without a black hole in which it lodges its consciousness, passion and redundancies”. The façade of supermarkets, fast food businesses and the products in which they sell have now become perceived through brands, colour schemes and selling the illusion of what once we were so connected with – producer to consumer face to face engagement and communication.

Contemporary society now deals with interface. The modern supermarket sells (on average) a surplus of 47,000 “different” products. However, if you trace each item back down to its essential ingredient – this ingredient is a various number of rearrangements of the same simple food item; corn. Food production has expanded more in the last 50 years than it has since
the beginning of time.\textsuperscript{xiii} Likewise, through expanse of the urban environment “we have built more than all previous generations put together, but somehow we do not register on the same scale. We do not leave pyramids.”\textsuperscript{xiv} Instead the modern way of coping with the increase in population is fast, cheap and short lived design solutions which do not contribute in a highly positive way to the built environment or encourage public life in an urban context.

Through the consequent results of the previous century, designers are faced with the task of re-purposing, re-designing and re-thinking the built environment on an urban scale. The relationship between the development of food supply and urban form is evident throughout the pervious century and this thesis views food supply and the model of the traditional market as a critical driver for the articulation of a threshold between architecture and urban form.

Through the project vehicle of Whangarei Growers Market, this thesis aims to provide design solutions to facilitate the market’s growth socially and spatially. This case study seeks to offer an insight to how the re-emergence of local markets around New Zealand and the world should be supported and seen as local infrastructures. By acknowledging the potential in pre-existing networks in Whangarei, this thesis argues for the Whangarei Grower’s Market to be seen as a catalyst for social and spatial agency and poses the question:
How can food supply be used as a critical vehicle for articulating a threshold between architecture and urbanism while supporting existing social agency?
Whatever happened to urbanism? A question posed by many theorists, practicing architects, urban designers and city planners. Rem Koolhaas, in his texts such as “Junkspace”, “Whatever happened to Urbanism?” and “The Generic City” explores, describes and provides critique on the ways the human civilization has globally polluted the earth. By ignoring histories, existing networks and focusing on consumption the modern manifestation of the city has by and large destroyed the built environment for public life. The way in which Western society has developed through the 19th and 20th centuries has promoted large scale urban developments. This progression towards a “blanket urban” condition since the 1960’s celebrates the automobile rather than sympathizing with a human scale. This method of design, based around visual recognition through a moving motor vehicle, much like Robert Venturi and Denise Scott-Brown’s discourse in Learning from Las Vegas, has contributed to issues of urban sprawl, loss of community and lack of resources to continue this method of construction. This practice of connecting cities to surrounding suburbs, resultant of Taylor, Ford and Moses mentality, focuses on connectivity of places through the automobile. Through streamlining function, segregation of events and separation of functions into a concrete system the possibility of urban life is effectively extinguished. The places people now go to experience the
scale and history of what once was the city has manifested into the mall – an all-weather, multi-purpose space enclosed by expansive walls designed to carry brands and be perceived at a distance. First located in suburbs and now invading cities around the world, these inverted spaces are mere shades of what historically was the city. Globally recognized through brand, these inverted cities are privately owned and operated in a capitalist manner, generating income for a small minority of the population. Private ownership of land and property in the city is a big contributor to the methods of building the urban, suburban and even rural environment. Loss of public ownership affects public life. If a space in a city belongs to the city, therefore the people, it will begin to generate an unfolding of urban life, unplanned events and a matrix of different sequenced activities. “This century has been a losing battle with the issue of quantity.”

The opening line of “Whatever happened to Urbanism” clearly states Koolhaas’ intentions for the text. “In spite of early promise... urbanism has been unable to invent and implement at the scale demanded by its apocalyptic demographics.” Koolhaas builds his argument through fact, “In 20 years, Lagos has grown from 2 to 7 to 12 to 15 million; Istanbul has doubled from 6 to 12. China prepares for even more staggering multiplications.” Likewise, New Zealand cities are expected to grow in the coming years. Whangarei’s current population of 74,382 is expected to double in the next 50 years, with

---

2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
projections of 130, 216 for 2061.¹ Currently over 50% of the world’s population live in urban environments and it is predicted by 2050 this figure will be 80%.² This rural to urban shift puts extreme pressure on the existing urban infrastructure and cities around the world are searching for solutions to deal with this pressing reality. In Post War Western Society, specifically The United States of America, Australia and New Zealand, population growth is a continually developing issue. However, the modern way of coping with this issue was and or is not through careful and strategic planning and design. Time, ever the enemy, causes reactive decisions and the result in the built environment is mass copiable architectural types; the sky scraper or vertical village, the supermarket, the fast food “restaurant” and the shopping mall. All of these types mimic what was once the city, the community and the neighborhood. These cheap, quick mass copiable providers of space promote private consumption rather than engaging with public urban life. The consequent effects of this kind of city construction have had numerous effects on the quality of human life and many of these effects are not positive. They do not consider the unfolding of urban life thorough architecture but rather stand as inverted cultures ignoring their wider context. Through the current city model, the resultant “Junkspace” that remains after modernization has run its course. The current social epoch can be rendered irrelevant and against the promotion of social agency through spatial condition.

Mass repeatable or copiable types in the built environment lack the potency they must possess due to organic nature of human behavior in society, such as the example of Whangarei Growers Market. The Whangarei Grower’s Market case study for this thesis is an example of re-emergent organic social and spatial growth in an urban environment. This case study provides a unique opportunity to facilitate this growth in a highly contextual manner. Therefore where, how and why designs are developed within the urban fabric needs to be studied with extreme care. Designs intended to engage with and create different forms urban life and events cannot be designed in isolation, deployed into any given context with the expectation of positive results. Likewise, a design that generates positive results in a specific context cannot be expected to provide the same success in another. It is worth noting here, that this notion of designing to allow mixed-use space is why city planners, urban designers and architects are analyzing informal African and Indian settlements or slums. Dharavi, the largest slum in Mumbai, is a typical example of such a settlement. This slum has over one million people living in only one square mile. As a result of this constrained living condition spaces must be mixed use, flexible and in a constant state of flux. Although Dharavi has poor water quality, sanitation and hygiene infrastructure the sense of community is extremely strong and the people living in the settlement have a type of happiness that can only be described as remarkable. ¹A close consideration of these qualities of community, mixed use and flexible

¹ Mohsen Mostafavi, Gareth Doherty, and Harvard University. Graduate School of Design., *Ecological urbanism*
space evident in these organic settlements make them extremely significant model for the articulation of a design that engages on both an architectural and urban level for this thesis. As Whangarei prepares for future growth, flexible uses, inherent conditions and community values should be facilitated and nurtured.

Part two studies the theories and practices of urban acupuncture, urban intervention and mat urbanism in close alignment with the everyday life cycles of people in the city. This part will compare the strengths and weaknesses though specific case studies related to each theory which are geared to provide examples of re-generation of urban life in the city. Through these case studies, part two will make a strong argument for the design of anti-monumental architecture and infrastructures but rather for carefully articulated design infrastructures that aim to act as catalyst spaces for urban form and life in the public realm. Monumental structures often have a single purpose, programme and create spectacle in a city and frequently do not engage with everyday life cycles in any given society. Rather, they promote the “blanket-urban” condition so familiar to Western society after the Taylor, Ford and Mosis way of planning which gave rise to or re-introduced the practice of urban theories such as acupuncture, intervention and Thick 2D Mat Urbanism. This part also seeks to provide a strong pallet for the articulating a design proposal for the urban setting of Whangarei. As

(Baden, Switzerland: Lars Müller Publishers, 2010).
Whangarei is a small city, the scale of design aimed at providing a strong urban framework should reflect the city’s specific context. Through theory and case studies, which are specific to a particular context, this part seeks to analyze and critique how designs can start to be articulated from existing networks. Through this close analysis this thesis aims to put to practice these design principles in the design proposal for Whangarei.
02.1: Urban Acupuncture & Urban Intervention

Urban acupuncture is an environmentalist theory based upon the combination of urban design and the practice of the traditional Chinese medicine of acupuncture. The city is seen in a similar way to the human body: a living organism. The city’s existing networks can be studied and neglected or under-utilized urban fabric can be addressed. This theory focuses on small-scale urban projects that are part of an inherent network in the wider context of the city. These small scale designs are often focused around community events and are usually actions of enhancing public space, public life and allowing for the unfolding of the urban environment. Such designs, which are deeply rooted in specific contexts, thus promote catalyst spaces for unpredicted and unplanned events to occur in the public realm. These designs take time and construction transpires over a series of phases through which the actions of study, design, prototype and permanent implementation can happen.

Urban Intervention was started as an artist based movement and takes advantage of run down and under used public spaces with temporary artworks and small scale events. While much of this practice is humorous, can be produced cheaply and provides an event quickly, the temporary nature of this practice can be seen to dilute the formal practices that urban acupuncture and furthermore mat urbanism promote.

---

While urban acupuncture is focused on highly analytical, detailed and localized designs enhancing innate networks in the built environment, urban intervention practices almost the opposite. While the two theories overlap in some stages of implementation, they offer vastly different design intentions. Due to the formal nature of urban acupuncture and mat urbanism, this does take time. Often urban intervention, which can be seen as the prototype of urban acupuncture, is viewed as a quick fix to an urban condition which needs more careful consideration that a top down injection of object in space. That said, some of the best public spaces in cities have significant artwork incorporated within them. The collaboration across practices is vital to creating space, not just between architect and artist but between architect, landscape architect, ecologist, engineer, planner, city councils. The practice of Urban Acupuncture is significant to this thesis for the design proposal in Whangarei. By understanding existing networks in the city, initially the Whangarei Grower’s Market, Urban Acupuncture provides a method to design an urban framework of considered individual parts to form a whole. The following selection of case studies putting this theory into practice provides insight to when, where and how this theory is deployed in the urban environment as well as providing a pallet of individual projects that offer solutions to problems in differing contexts.
Case Study

Jan Gehl and Gehl Architects.

Jan Gehl is a Danish architect and urban designer. Over the past four decades, Gehl has travelled the world closely documenting how people interact with the built environment and now has four major publications dedicated to this practice; Life Between Buildings, Public Spaces - Public Life, New City Spaces, New City Life. Beginning research in Sienna, Italy in 1965, Gehl studied how people used the existing public spaces and how these spaces within the urban fabric promoted public urban life. In a recent film titled “The Human Scale”, directed by Andreas M. Dalsgaard, this practice of urban regeneration around people is a central focus. This film sheds light on the effects modern planning methods have had on the cities around the world and also how designers can start to adapt the resultant spaces to human scale in the aim of promoting life in the public realm. The need to break traditional methods of city planning focused on traffic efficiency is a re-occurring theme worldwide. Since the influence of people such as Robert Moses and Le Corbusier planning in the 1950’s revolved around the automobile and has had consequent effects on the built environment for human life – much of which is not positive. Planning in a Moses or Corbusian manner is resultant of Taylorist ideal; streamlining, separating of function and programme and compartmentalization. By separating function and programme the possibility of urban life

---

1 Dalsgaard, "The Human Scale."
and unplanned events in the public realm is effectively extinguished. Cities are layered matrixes, complex in their networks and this is the very essence of what makes the city such an interesting set of spaces.


New York, like many cities around the world, had focused solely on traffic efficiency in the development of creating connections to the suburban settlements around the city. By building a network of traffic infrastructure, bridges, highways and roads, this divided communities and contributed to urban sprawl. The Urban Realm and Bicycle Strategy in New York focused on the reclamation of some of that infrastructure to provide public space therefore promoting public life. Through highly strategic analysis of the existing context, a pedestrian network was implemented and a plan for a cycle way was presented. Located along the major roadways, including Broadway and Times Square, spaces were reclaimed in phases to allow for public life. Times Square beforehand was 89% traffic, 11% square – after implementation of the plan Times Square actually became an urban square. Providing this space for people generated a catalyst for pedestrian movement and New York City now provides some of the best public spaces in the world.
Melbourne, Australia, 1994 & 2004_ Client: City of Melbourne, Design and Culture.

Gehl Architect’s involvement in Melbourne was resultant of urban sprawl of the suburbs. The nature of the suburb allows people to own their individual detached house with their individual automobile in their own part of a neighborhood. While the city provides amenity at the front door, ownership of a house, car and lifestyle was more appealing to the people of Melbourne in the past. Analyzing existing networks in Melbourne’s CBD a system of small-scale laneways was re-discovered and acknowledged as having a scale beneficial and desirable for human habitation. By transforming the lane network from a “back of house” alley ways into vibrant street culture public life began to fill the city once more. By enhancing an innate and intricate network specific to the city of Melbourne Gehl Architects provided spaces which promoted urban life throughout the city’s existing networks and built environment. Resulting in ten times more inhabitants in the city, this project provided a catalyst for public urban life making Melbourne one of the top 10 cities to live in around the world and number one in 2011.
After the series of devastating earthquakes in Christchurch, the city now has a unique opportunity to re-build majority of the urban environment. Christchurch began to voice, gather and explore options for the future re-build in 2011. During the beginning of this process the city council involved the people of the city and gathered 106,000 ideas from the community contributing thoughts to how the rebuild should occur, what the people of the city want to happen and what the new face of Christchurch should look like. Gehl Architects was engaged in this process by the Christchurch City Council to provide a vision for the future rebuild. By listening to the people, a theme carried throughout the firms work to date, a vision was prepared and presented. As always, time and money play major roles in city planning and much of Gehl Architect’s advice has been put aside for now. The city plan provided by The Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Association (CERA) is now underway – putting immediate economic benefits ahead of long term urban quality.

The research, analysis and practice that Gehl Architects provides is comprehensive and invaluable. The statistical results of projects in cities prove how much architecture and urbanism are needed in cities today following the methods of modern planning and construction. The alignment with these practices and how designs are manifested to enhance the quality of urban life is somewhat basic, common sense and sometimes banal but provides
the basis for urban practice, which catalyzes spatial and social agency. Thus far, this practice of urban acupuncture and regeneration is successful in engaging with the everyday life cycles of people in the city. By understanding the innate networks within a specific context, design principles to allow for the enhancing of these networks help promote public life. Such principles are useful in the design approach for Whangarei and the facilitation to support the growth in relation to the Whangarei Grower’s Market.
Case Study

PF1 at PS1, New York, USA

Work AC

Since 1999, New York’s Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and its sister institution, PS1 Contemporary Art Center has hosted the Young Architect’s Programme (YAP) to design temporary installations in their courtyards in Queens, New York City. Providing installations for their summer “warm up” parties, these urban interventions have all expanded on the theme “The Urban Beach”. In 2008, Work AC, based in New York, put their own twist on the theme. Transforming the Urban Beach into an Urban Farm, Public Farm 1 (PF1) at PS1 provides a new symbol of “liberation, knowledge, power and fun into today’s cities.” Furthermore the farm is seen as a symbol for the current generation’s preoccupation and hopes for a better future. “As cities have finally proven their superiority over their suburban counterparts – in everything from quality of life to environmental impact” Work AC views the city as a much needed experimental laboratory. “Public Farm 1 or PF1 is an architectural and urban manifesto to engage, play and reinvent our cities, and our world, once again.”

Although temporary in nature and certainly an urban intervention, PF1 as an extension of a permanent node in the existing urban fabric, provides engagement and experimentation over the threshold between architecture and urbanism. Hindered by the fact that it is a temporary

---

1 Work AC, "PF1."
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
installation owned by PS1 and contained within its walls, it would be interesting to see how an installation like this might move to become an infrastructure for a community, furthermore to the public realm and the wider context of the city.

In relation to design PS1 presents innovation and food for thought regarding urban farming and the urban production of edible resource. Within the scheme are 51 varieties of herbs, fruit and vegetables all picked to thrive in the urban environment and bloom at different times over the summer. The power is completely off grid. A solar panel system consists of eighteen photovoltaic modules which power all of the power loads in the design: video screens, speakers, lights, cell phone chargers and all the irrigation pumps. As well as planted produce, livestock was incorporated. Chickens produced eggs all summer and added another dimension to the installation.

The location of Whangarei Grower’s Market, Water Street car park, provides a large urban surface in which events similar to PF1 could occur in the future. PF1 and the Whangarei Grower’s Market share a common theme of education around food. The temporary but recurrent nature of the Grower’s Market allows the market to become a weekly ritual and although PF1 is temporary it provides insight as to how people can grow their own produce.

The social shift from buying in bulk from a supermarket to shopping in small amounts locally or growing produce on your own is part of a slow food movement sweeping the globe. New Zealand citizens are well known for their “do it yourself” attitude and markets such as the
Whangarei Grower's Market and installations such as PF1 support this re-emergent shift. They provide examples of how these methods of access to edible resources can occur in urban environments. This thesis argues for architects, city planners and urban designers to move with this shift in society. Urban Acupuncture is one of many urban theories that tries to understand the complex nature of cities and in doing so, allows designers opportunity to engage with the built environment in a sustainable manner.
02.2: Mat Urbanism

Mat urbanism and mat building first appeared in architectural discourse through the writing of Alison Smithson in 1974. More recently, Stan Allen has re-introduced this theory into the architectural, urban and landscape architecture dialogue. Scaled down to individual buildings, mat designs are intended to express an unfolding of urban life through a dialogue with the surrounding context and individual parts. The theory has developed closely through the way in which design is being carried out in contemporary practice today, through collaboration between the disciplines of architecture, landscape architecture and urban design. Throughout history, much debate within these fields of design has revolved around the relationship, or non-relationship, between the architectural object and the landscape. With the development of digital technology there has been a significant interest in the architectural field dedicated to making form more biological. This development in technology can also be argued to give some ownership back to the author. Opposed to mass, machine made identical copies, the digital world allows for subtle changes in any area making a design unique – even if sampled from existing contexts to begin with. The desire to make form more fluid, adaptable and responsive to change has allowed architecture to literally integrate with its surrounding environment, providing not only new forms but also double-programming surfaces, creating opportunity to design mixed use space and multi-purposed designs. With the emergence of a new meaning to

---

the term “surface” in the architectural realm, the word now applies to both professions while retaining individual meaning to each. While this progression has allowed architecture to integrate with context more fluidly and provide more surface area for programme it has also allowed architecture to incorporate qualities related to performance. Through performance qualities in surfaces, possibly associated with the sustainability movements in contemporary design practices, solar systems can be arranged; water can be channeled and collected simultaneously to programme. Similar to the post-minimalist art movement in the 1960’s, “... the artist cannot exercise precise formal control over the material. Instead... establishes the conditions within which the material will be deployed.”¹ A surface is referred to as “connective tissue”, “a delineation of territory”, and “a living system with its own structure and cycles of production.”² Thus, providing an essential design tool when practicing mat building and urbanism theory and asking the question of “how to give space and active unfolding of urban life without abrogating the architect’s responsibility to provide some form of order.”³ Practicing this theory, Mat building instead of total control proposes a loose scaffolding based on the systematic organization of individual parts; the architect can design the system but not expect to control the individual components. Through this theory, and it’s case studies to follow, designs put into place in Whanagrei can aim to be directly tied to

² Megan Born et al., Dirt (PennDesign, 2012).
³ Allen, "Mat Urbanism: The Thick 2-D."
context. While having this quality, they can also allow for double programmes, mixed use and act as an invitation for unplanned events and life in the public realm. Due to the car park location and past organic growth of the Whangarei Grower’s Market, Mat Urbanism provides an insight to how a design may be able to facilitate and enhance this growth. Car parks in the urban environment have the potential for multiple functions and as an urban surface they can be seen as connective tissue, spaces for a matrix of programme and opportunities. Practicing principles of this design theory assist in the pallet of design tools for the case study of Whangarei and are seen to build upon the principles of urban acupuncture.
Case Study

The Highline, New York, USA, 2009 - Present  James Corner Field Operations & Diller Scofido + Ranfro.

Opening to and owned by the public in 2009 The Highline in New York is a raised urban park. Taking advantage of what historically was the raised industrial rail infrastructure in the city, the park provides some much needed green space in the concrete urban fabric. Consisting of grasslands, sundecks, water features, public spaces, art installations and performance spaces, The Highline has become one of the cultural focal points of Manhattan.¹ Landscape architecture, architecture, engineering and ecology all come together in this design. The raised park is a programmatic surface, and while this surface provides a space for public life very well, it also has performance qualities which allow it to be a sustainable addition to the built environment. While the highline has these qualities, its limitations arise from the park’s inability to connect to the surrounding buildings and the lower ground plane. This is resultant of the modern way of construction; separating function. This highlights the importance of designing to allow access to spaces in a manner which relates to the surrounding context.

Case Study_

Santa Caterina Market, Barcelona, Spain, 2005_ EMBT

The reconstruction of Santa Caterina Market was highly related to a reaction to the “present city planning methods” by the architects Enric Miralles and Benedetta Tagliabue of EMBT who viewed them as “incapable of addressing the complexity of a historic city.”¹ Instead, like many cities around the world, modern planning methods in Barcelona were geared for immediate results, followed by rebuilding very different typologies which had nothing to do with the architecture of the historic city core. The market was reconstructed over, not erasing, an historic convent in the heart of the city. Signifying the societal shift in the evolution of cities from religious or political centers to centers of exchange and commerce, the architects sought to superimpose new traces over the existing ones as a way to incorporate the new with the old and aimed to root the new design into its surrounding urban context. As a wider part of the scheme, the market was constructed with the notion of urban renewal of the streets surrounding the design. Responding to the constant flux of demolition and construction in city centers the architects retained three of the white-masonry walls from the 1845 structure with many arched openings making the design permeable to the surrounding streets. Through this process, Miralles and Tagliabue respect the raucous mix of activities inherent typical to the city core. The lightweight multi-colored canopy structure serves as a component to unify these

¹ David Cohn, "Rehabilitation of Santa Caterina Market," _Architectural Record_ 2(2006).
patterns of activity and allow them to continue in the urban scene. The project does not
remove any characteristics of the site, but rather challenges and reconfigures the urban
context as an organizational strategy with architectural effect.

Architecture has a direct impact on the context in which it is set and simultaneously, the
surrounding environment has a direct effect on architecture. The past theories and case studies
provide examples of practiced urban and architectural design theory and method which aim to
set up a substantial pallet for design methodology for Whanagrei. Urban acupuncture and Mat
Urbanism are seen as significant design theories for the practice of re-purposing, re-
programming and re-designing the residual built environment from modern construction. Both
theories are founded on understanding existing qualities in specific contexts. The design of the
Highline, for example is specific to New York City, if copied or replicated and deployed in
another city, the design would not garner the same results or be as ingrained in the city as it is
in New York. The repurposing of redundant entities that are specific to a city creates context
with specific content and a concept unique to a place. In order to design for a given site or
context it is the argument of this thesis that a designer must understand the environment in
which a design is articulated for. A design for articulating the threshold between architecture
and urbanism to allow for public life needs to facilitate and act as a catalyst for social and
Edi(ta)ble Urbanism: The Food, The Veil and The City.

spatial agency through understanding what exists. This is the aim for the articulation of a threshold between architecture and urban form in Whangarei.
Context is an inescapable part of architecture. Architecture has a direct relationship with context and vice versa, context has a direct impact on architecture. Bernard Tschumi’s discussion and argument around context, in his most recent monograph “RED IS NOT A COLOUR” is significant in relation to this thesis. This thesis argues for anti-monumental architecture that engages spatially and socially with an aim to set up an urban framework to promote public urban life. Throughout the text Tschumi discusses and argues the notion of context and how a designer may approach this condition. Through the text he discusses the notion of context in relation to concept (the idea behind the architectural design) and content (the programme or purpose the architecture is designed for). Tschumi states in his beginning lines regarding of the chapter related to context, “…, you do not mean context as it was referred to in the 1980’s … new buildings must be “contextual”, meaning they should look like buildings next door to them.”¹ Further, he states, “...intended to appear sympathetic to cultures of local communities’ contextualist concerns often manifested themselves as formal expressions mimicking the past”.² Through theory and practice Tschumi states that architecture must have an idea (concept) behind design which is often related to site conditions (context) or content (programme). He argues that without this, there is no architecture.

² Ibid.
Further, he believes that concept is what separates architecture from mere building. As an example of this, Tschumi refers to the work of artists Marcel Duchap and Andy Warhol. Turning everyday items into artwork, Duchamp’s bicycle wheel and toilet seat and Warhol’s Campbell’s Soup Can, were transformed by the context of a gallery: a setting promoting contemplation. Context here surrounds the object and redefines it in a space. Similarly, architecture has the capacity to redefine spaces in a city. “Architecture’s importance is in its ability to be a city generator - strategically engages, challenges, activates and redefines its urban context.” Therefore to engage in urban context, the surrounding environment must be understood. Architect’s which engage in design internationally face similar and unique idiosyncrasies of different and specific cultures. Western cities, in particular have many similarities. As discussed in Part One of this thesis, the evolution of the market to the supermarket has been a common trend in Western culture. Arguably, this manifestation of branded box is designed to be context-less. Therefore, through branding, access to food supply in many western cultures has become globally contextual – selling nationally and globally recognized images rather than being locally specific. Building on the argument generated through Parts One and Two, these “mass copy-able” types such as the supermarket or junkspaces, lack the social and spatial potency to engage in everyday life. Further, they do not desire to engage with this agency at all. They are designed for consumer-culture and efficiency, through which they are invented. They are defined by walls and limits rather than...
promoting public spaces and open plazas allowing for the unfolding of urban life. In addition
to this the post war rise of the suburbs provided a “need” for these nationally recognized food
interfaces to be located central to each settlement. In doing so, the further promotion of an
automobile lifestyle is now embedded in western culture, globally and all over New Zealand.

Through Part Two, the discussion around urban theories and practices revealed the shift from
industrial paradigm to local qualities with international tourism. This paradigm shift from
industry revenue to tourist revenue has seen the re-programming, re-design and re-purposing
of much of the industrial fabric in cities worldwide. While the paradigm shift is a globally
recognised one, the case studies discussed in part two are each specific to their own context.
This locally specific nature of design allows existing networks to flourish by simply facilitating
for catalyst events and allowing spaces that are not totally controlled. Through this practice;
context, content and concept allow for the exploration of threshold between architecture and
urban form.

Part three seeks to explore the notions of global context through the writings of Bernard
Tschumi, Rem Koolhass, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Grattari further building an argument as to
why design must respond to local context. In doing so, it is important to note that certain
aspects of culture, particularly in cities are common throughout the world. European cities
have similar features, from a general planning perspective. Likewise Western cities also have
similar features resultant of general planning principles. Through this notion buildings and spaces can seem generic rather than locally specific. However, context and content can create specific differences in relation to how these buildings and spaces operate. Therefore it is the designer who must observe these specific phenomena when creating a new architectural or urban articulation. Rem Koolhaas’s text, “Whatever Happened to Urbanism”, leading into “The Generic City” delivers a harsh image of reality and the future of cities continue to be built in a globalized, generic manner. The beginning of the text sets the tone for the following Generic City. ““The City” no longer exists. As the concept of the city is distorted and stretched beyond precedent, each instance of its primordial condition – in terms of images rules, fabrication – irrevocably leads via nostalgia to irrelevance”.

Asserting that post-modern times has become not about designing architecture that is localized, but rather in an attempt to keep up with expanding populations, “The Generic City” replaces the addition of layers to existing networks, urban fabric and the built environment. “The architecture of The Generic City is by definition beautiful. Built at incredible speed, and conceived at even more incredible pace, there is an average of 27 aborted versions for every realized ...” “The Generic City is like a sketch which is never elaborated, is not improved but is abandoned. The idea of layering, intensification and completion are alien to it. It has no layers. Its next layer takes place somewhere else, either next door – that can be the size of a country or even

---

elsewhere altogether.” It has taken designers, city planners and councils decades (if not more) to realize the catastrophic effects on the quality of life through the modern and post-modern means of designing cities. Giles Delueze and Felix Grattari’s text “Repetition and Difference” elaborates on the fact that human beings need or respond to subtle change. Thus providing an insight to how the built environment should differ from place to place or location to location creating different situations and enhancing existing conditions of specific place. This therefore further arguing that mass copible architectural and urban conditions irrelevant in the current social epoch. Supermarkets do not promote public urban life however; the traditional market does this very well and through basic principles.

This social paradigm shift of the re-emergence of markets, temporal events and spaces of leisure has given rise to the practice of urbanism once again in the architectural, landscape architecture and city planning disciplines. Projects worldwide today often fall between the traditional practices of these individual specializations promoting collaboration across disciplines. The “Master Plan” and practice of the solo architect is no longer relevant, collaborative practice is occurring more and more in contemporary society and should be utilized to full potential. The residual theories of Taylor, Ford and Moses which streamline, separate functions and eliminate the possibility of public urban life to happen is shifting and architects need to embrace this shift rather than see it as a negative.
This change in societal thinking and practice does not demand not more building through modern building methods, rather, a re-thinking of existing infrastructure, urban fabric and networks. Providing a robust framework for city planning can provide invitations for public life in any given context. However, this framework needs to allow for the unfolding of urban life by embracing local conditions.

Building upon Tschumi’s discussion relative to context and Koolhaas’ discussion in relation to urbanism, this thesis argues for design which is specific or relevant to the context it is designed for; not only in a spatial manner but also in a manner that engages socially. The Whangarei Growers Market has an innate social network that keeps developing over time and through the design for Whangarei, this aspect should be acknowledged and nurtured.
3.2 From Global to Local: Context in Whangarei

Whangarei is New Zealand’s northern most city. Historically, Whangarei was a provincial settlement relying heavily on ship transportation. Established as a colonial township in the 1860’s, Whangarei’s earliest railway line was constructed in 1879-80 to allow export of coal from the mines in Kamo via the Whangarei Wharf. By 1925 its connection to Auckland was complete. The introduction of rail to Whangarei provided major industrial economy in the area; however, rail declined in the late 1900’s due to new road routes. Whangarei is Northland’s economic centre and now exports much of New Zealand’s timber, food produce and has a large oil refinery at Marsden Point. Located in the centre of the Northland region it is home to 74,382 of New Zealand’s wider population of 4.4 million. With this population projected to double in the coming 50 years Whangarei City needs to provide enough infrastructures to allow this growth to occur sustainably.

The term infrastructure is thrown around loosely in contemporary architectural and urban discourse – “it is applied to phenomena ranging from sewers and highways to the underpinnings economies and social networks.”¹ Believed to be a telling term which is significant to describe “a new world order”, the term is not only viewed in outlining

¹ Katrina Stoll, Scott Lloyd, and Stan Allen, Infrastructure as architecture : designing composite networks (Berlin: Jovis, 2010).
geographically distinct systems but also politically and operationally autonomous ones.\(^1\) In contemporary society and architectural discourse, infrastructure, is used to define the necessary frameworks for public benefit, thus being the term paramount in describing the articulation of the threshold between architecture and urban form. In relation to this thesis, infrastructure refers to an architectural insertion in an urban environment which supports future growth and enhances inherent conditions. Whangarei district council limits this term to pumping substructure below the ground, schools, hospitals and public toilets. This thesis argues that the term be expanded to structures that provide more than just public service. Infrastructure is argued to provide more than amenity to the city by enhancing the experience of the urban environment and giving something back to the people of city.

Whangarei’s Central Business District, like many western cities, suffers from a number of typical urban issues, traffic congestion, lack of safety after 5.00pm and lack of pedestrian orientated spaces. This is resultant on the in-balance of infrastructures and dependence of the automobile in so many western societies, not only specific to Whangarei. Locally to Whangarei the CBD is severed from the rest of the city by 3 thick arterial roads, Dent, Walton and Bank streets. These roads are up to 6 lanes wide and prove to provide a clear segregation from the CBD, residential zone and industrial zone.

\(^1\) Ibid.
The roading network in Whanganei promotes an automobile and suburb lifestyle. With no activity in the City centre, suburb dwellers will continue and the cities urban sprawl pattern will continue.

There have been a number of documents published by the Whangarei District Council setting aims giving the city’s issues and providing contextual analysis. While these documents give good general overviews they fail to provide specific solutions to the city, offering general and generic options to improve the quality of the built environment and therefore lift the quality of urban life.

The recent development of The Town Basin is a perfect example of this – while the upgrade provides a complex of cafes, restaurants and museums with direct access to the waterfront it is under-utilized because of poor connection with the Central Business district and the wider Whangarei. Separated from the CBD by six lanes of traffic this “cultural hub” is not supported with pedestrian friendly access, thus limiting its use in terms of people and time. In order to generate a pedestrian friendly city, vibrant with life and diversity an understanding of existing networks must be gained. Top down planning, like Mosis, Taylor & Ford, promotes segregation while bottom up design promotes emergence of new behaviours, acts as an agency for change and provides catalyst events through loose planning and no planning at all.
Architects are agents for adding more built fabric to the world. Although this is sometimes necessary, this thesis argues not for more, but for enhancing, facilitation and promoting what is existing. Whangarei Growers Market is viewed as a unique and extremely valuable asset to the city and this thesis argues that not only should the market be seen as such, but also could act as the single catalyst for social, spatial and political agent to change the face of Whangarei. While doing this, the market provides a case study for the shift in the current paradigm of architecture. Moving from a bound object focused internally to wider manipulation of urban landscapes. The market allows for a dialogue around architecture as public works, thus architecture as infrastructure. The market also allows for the study of community. As discussed in Part Two, many architects, planners and urban designers in recent years have been studying African and Indian settlements to unlock traits of community.\(^1\) Settlements like Dharavi, India are seen as bottom up settlements, filled with complex and intricate networks with a strong sense of community. While settlements such as this lack good hygiene, sanitization and infrastructures, the sense of community, hybrid space use and social engagement is seen as a phenomenon. Filled with highly specific contextual frameworks, these settlements are highly adaptive, responsive and fluid. Western cities, in the face of their current context, are seeking better communities. Whangarei has already established a community every Saturday morning through The Grower’s Market – this should be treasured.

\(^1\) John Hartley, "Connected Communities and Creative Economy; Clash, cluster, complexity, creativity," (2010).
Part 04: Edi(ta)ble Types: Urban Design Proposals for Whangarei

Edi(ta)ble Types refers to the design approach of this thesis. As argued throughout Parts 01, 02 and 03, this thesis does not promote a monumental architecture but rather considered articulations with relationships to one another in the urban environment. This design method incorporates notions of urban theory and practice, notably, those of Urban Acupuncture and Mat Urbanism. Such theories provide a method to approach the incorporation of public leisure spaces in residual modern urban environment. The terms edible and editable refer to the consumption of both food and the built environment. Food is an edible resource and this thesis argues for the re-purpose, re-use and re-programming of existing structures in the built environment, thus rendering these built forms as editable.

The following design proposals are vehicles of investigating how architecture can re-define and challenge and urban context socially, spatially and politically. Through a series of strategies at differing scales, small, medium and large, the following designs aim to set up a robust urban framework for the city of Whangarei. The individual parts of this framework aim to be mutually beneficial. Providing a cycle between them and unfolding into the wider urban environment, the designs seek to act as catalysts for change. This approach seeks to question the “master plan”. By considering the unique nature of existing networks in Whangarei, each
Edi(ta)ble Urbanism: The Food, The Veil and The City.

design has been carefully articulated to enhance the existing environment while offering further amenity to the city. Through the journey of an apple and a person, each design has a projected way of how one will link to the other; thus providing Edi(ta)ble Urbanism.
4.1 The Growers Market: Re-centring Whangarei’s Centre

Located in a humble car park on Water Street, Whangarei’s Growers Market has been operational for over fifteen years. This market has not only become the main place to buy and sell local produce, but also a centre for national tourism and local economy for the city. Operating in a temporal manner between the hours of 6.30am and 10.30am weekly on Saturdays the market provides a regular community event promoting social mass, local food knowledge and exchange of ideas. During these short hours each Saturday, the market brings in ten thousand local people and travellers on average and sets the scene for a local identity. Recently a “guerrilla crossing group” in the city painted a pedestrian crossing across Water Street to facilitate pedestrian access. This action has sparked debate about whether a more permanent feature is needed.

Since the market was founded in 1998 by Robert Bradley and Murray Burns, it has been forced to change location three times. (Beginning in a supermarket car park – shifting to another car park in 1999 until finally being able to settle for a decent amount of time in Water Street car park with some help (although minimal) from the local Council. Being forced to relocate has usually been due to nearly, immediately or locally adjacent businesses wanting the use of car parks the Market occupies for the short hours on Saturday morning. The temporal structure of
the market allows it to do this; however, discussion regarding a more permanent structure or identifiable location for the Market has become an increasingly hot topic. While the founders of the market are happy with this location (also the locals) they are under constant pressure from the Council to relocate either into the Central Business District (CBD) in the hope that the generated foot traffic will stay to help local business or relocate to the Town Basin, a recent development on the water’s edge not far from the CBD or relocate elsewhere altogether to allow for use of the Water Street car park for parking patrons for the CBD.

However, these options for the market provide less than desirable and arguably can be viewed as illogical economically, socially and spatially. Based on statistics from 2012, the market brings $5.5 million into the local economy, operating only 6 hours per week. The total car parks in Whangarei bring only $1.2 million (2011 car parking strategy – September 90-100 thousand – averaged over a year – 1.2 million approximately). Socially, the market operates as it is where it is as a social hub every Saturday morning, generates business for nearby cafes and sets a platform for social engagement. Spatially, the car park allows an open air space for a plaza or agro as traditional markets in the early settlements of civilization – the market is ever expanding so could make good use of the opposite car park on Water Street also.
Through facilitation of the market in its current location, this thesis argues for an infrastructural design that allows for both of the existing programmes, car park and market, to continue to share the space. Rather than the design of a typical canopy structure, which ultimately runs the risk of becoming a glorified supermarket targeted at “food fashion”, the design of an infrastructure in the form of a surface to facilitate operation of the market allow for further organic growth and provide identity has been articulated. As discussed in Part Two of this thesis, urban practices such as Urban Acupuncture and Mat Urbanism act to enhance existing networks in urban environments.

Initially convinced by local opinion that the CBD needed immediate attention the design for the market infrastructure was to unfold the traditional market type, the agora, into a linear arrangement of infrastructures along James Street. This design aimed to bring the foot traffic of the market into the CBD and help local business. Unconvinced that this solution would provide a better relationship between architecture and urban form for mutual benefit, catalyse this social and spatial agency or help the dying CBD the design was re-focused on the development of the current platform of the car park site.

Through articulation of a new surface, typographically typologically and spatially the design facilitates the market programme as well as providing car parking. The articulation of
surfaces has become more and more prevalent in architectural, landscape architecture and urban practices over the past decade. This paradigm shift in practice reflects development in technology, performance and a shift from emphasis of designing closed objects to the design and manipulation of larger urban surfaces. Given the nature of organic growth the market has already sustained an urban “type” of structure pulled up from existing societal notions seemed most appropriate. The surface of the car park is viewed as a “connective tissue”, a delineation of territory” and a living system with its own structure and cycles of production”.¹ This shift also signifies a renewed interest in the instrumentality of design – it’s enabling function – as opposed to representation and stylization.

Therefore a surface has been generated in response to context and content to provide a concept. The ground plane facilitates the market’s primary function, assists in the resultant social engagement and elevates the market’s identity. Rather than designing a monumental structure, the surface is composed of a series of raised areas, edible vegetation, and concrete paving and activity areas. The raised berms on side were initially generated to provide protection from the prevailing South west wind. “We get a bit of protection from the north with the rail embankment but when the southerly wind comes through man, it is miserable”.

Jeff Griggs (TT & Avo).

¹ Megan Born et al., Dirt (PennDesign, 2012).
Initially generated as topography to study deflecting the wind on site, the berms rise no higher than 2.5 metres to provide protected pockets for programme activity on site. By introducing these forms, site drainage was addressed to allow for sufficient drainage, plant feed and dry areas. Studies of flooding were carried out with a number of variations to the berm geometry to increase the performance of the surface.

The vegetation on site, consists of local edible plants native or conducive to growth in the region and will change with the seasons, providing some grassed areas on the raised berms allows for people to spend more time in the space on Saturdays without congesting the market activity. A new paving treatment visually differentiates the site from any other car park in Whangarei CBD, providing an identity for the market and delineating a threshold or territory. This subtle shift sets a territory without imposing a physical boundary, allowing two programmes, the car park and the market to negotiate spatially.

Providing a “loose scaffolding” design for the market’s activity, allows for change and for further activities into Whangarei’s public realm. The design of the market space in this manner sparked further interrogation into the built fabric of Whangarei. The cookie cutter
lifestyle of Whangarei’s suburbs sits in opposition to a density of activity within the urban realm draining life from the city.
Figure 54:
Site Plan | Location Axonometric Drawing of Whangarei Grower’s Market and Proposed Surface Design. Landscape Infrastructure.
Figure 55:
Generation of beam geometry.

Prevailing Wind Direction
Water Drainage and Retention
Activity Areas: Market and Car Parking
Vegetation
Figure 5.5:
Wind studies on site.
Figure 57:
Vegetation on site. All local and like hardy environments. Sun exposure, rainfall and wind.

a. Lemon
b. Monty’s Surprise Apple
c. Tahitian Lime
d. Gemini Feijoa
e. Garnet Strawberry
f. Goji Gooseberry
g. Raspberry
Figure 5.6:
Slope geometries on a ski:

a. Standing slope
b. Walking Slope
c. Drop-In
d. Quarter Pipe
e. BMX Sterile Slope
Detail 01:
1. Concrete Paving
2. 50mm bedding: 90% sand, 20% organic material
3. Non-woven filter fabric over gravel
4. Compacted base depth (geo-tech derived)
5. Compacted sub-grade soil base depth (geo-tech derived)
4.2 The Overall Problem(s) & Mixed solutions: Re-Typing the Car Park.

According to numerous reports published by the Whangarei District Council the city’s main issues are a lack of public amenity and space in the CBD, an aging population and increasing traffic congestion. These three main issues reveal the results of Whangarei being a predominantly unplanned city.

The CBD has a significant lack of any night life or for that matter any lifestyle at all. While the CBD is open between business hours of 9.00am – 5.00pm the suburbs provide homes to retreat to outside these hours. The suburbs in Whangarei are where all the leisure networks are provided; open green space, parks and recreational activities. In order to promote a city with a vibrant 24 hour life cycle mixed use areas need to be implemented and with the projected population growth, Whanganei CBD needs to design for this growth. Apartment living is something “… somewhat foreign to many people in Whangarei in its current state”.

For Whangarei, to move into this new way of living the design of community housing seemed a logical model to test. The co-housing designed for the CBD is located above commercial retail and car parking space on the corner of James and Robert Streets. With pedestrian access from James Street as an extension of Cameron Street pedestrian Mall residents can access the housing development by lift or stair. The other side, on Walton
Street, provides vehicle access through an existing car parking infrastructure. By using existing infrastructure within the CBD the design maintains the grain of the built environment while adding another layer of program and further amenity to the city. Promoting mixed use in the city invites people to stay longer, promotes a 24 hour network and with increased use, provides increased local economy. By designing housing for the public to live in, this development is one of the initial steps taken to provide a liveable central city. This housing development seeks to act as part of the overall urban framework by adding to the weekly cycles of The Whangarei Grower’s Market. Located locally adjacent to the Market replaces the need to drive into the CBD and instead promotes walking.

The housing typology is composed of three modular sizes expressed formally in a continuous strip to create a central courtyard to be shared communally. The shared courtyard incorporates a community gardening area, kitchen and dining room. The smallest module provides studios – (6m x 8m) designed for single residents or couples. Single bedroom apartment – (6m x 8 + 3 x 4m) aimed at couples or new families and two bedroom – (6m x 8m + 6m x 8m) aimed at couples and families. Although designed with the anticipated maturing population in mind, the variety of typologies are applicable to many configurations. This and the communal spaces seek to facilitate a pocket community and which promote relationships between residents. While formally simple the desire is not to
create complex architecture but rather to set the foundations for complex and comprehensively close human relationships.

Spatially this design seeks a strong connection to the ground. Through a series of planted facades this design provides a new type of green space in the city and a new type of management of car park facades. The visual and spatial connection to ground level by these green facades promotes the extended pedestrian mall and enhances the public realm on James and Cameron Streets.

The co-housing development, like the market surface, inherits performative elements to allow densification while being sustainable. A green roof retains water for plants while directing the excess into water collection tanks for the residing community. This communal water in turn feeds the planted facades can be used in the garden or drunk. This design is an extension of the kind of lifestyle observed in and around the vibrant Grower’s Market. By extending the principles of The Grower’s Market into a co-housing scheme it provides much needed amenity of the CBD in relation to time, use and extension of the existing built environment.
Figura 61:
Living Units: Studio, One Bedroom and Two Bedroom.
Development of overall form:
a. Single Story Courtyard
b. Double Story Courtyard
c. Drop Inner Side
d. Drop ends of geometry for water collection
e. Raise South corner for views to the North East from South West
Figure 62:
Urban Living
Street Access Joeo
Detail 04:
1. Pre-tensioned column cap (concrete)
2. Insitu Concrete Infill
3. Geotextile
4. Flat Slab
5. Fibreglass Steel Plate
6. Tension Cable Ø 18mm

Detail 04a:
1. PVC/Steel Pipe
2. Concrete
3. Tension Cable

Detail 04: Additional Roof Structure
Edi(ta)ble Urbanism: The Food, The Veil and The City.
Detail 05
1. Selected Plants
2. Growing medium
3. Bird-in-Glo textile
4. Placemat
5. Heavy Duty Polythene
6. Nursely 3 PG Membrane
7. Nursely 3PV Membrane
8. Substrate: Concrete
9. 60mm Concrete with openings for planting; felt layer; soiling layer; 2mm brickwork with 6mm cavity; plaster
10. Steel single bracket
11. Ø 30mm Watering Pipe

An Introduction to Urban Living

A further extension to the Growers Market and co-housing scheme is the third urban articulation; an urban composting station. Statistics on the amount humans generate reveals enormous numbers. In New Zealand alone 258,886 tonnes of food waste goes into landfill each year. That works out to be 64 kilos per person (approximately). The population of Whangarei is 74,382. Translated into food waste, this is 4760.448 tonnes annually. As a growing region (in relation to agriculture and population) there was an opportunity to implement an infrastructure to not only address this situation but also provide local economy.

Vertical composting units are designed and built in New Zealand. They are capable of breaking down any kind of organic waste while overcoming odour, leachate, vermin and transportation problems usually associated with this kind of waste. Having a small footprint, being anaerobic with an end product suitable for domestic and commercial application, VCU technology is suitable for urban locations. Within Whangarei they can provide a link between the commercial growers at the market and the communal garden incorporated in the co-housing design. Furthermore, setting up such an infrastructure, this
station effectively converses with every building in the urban and suburb and fabric of Whangarei and the wider Northland region which produces organic waste.

Located immediately adjacent to the market and locally adjacent to the co-housing development in the CBD the station provides a drop off point for all organic waste by vehicle or by food. By combining a waste drop off zone, VCU, clean compost area and an office this design is an efficient use of central real estate and provides an “in sight, in mind” conscientious approach to combating waste and educating local communities. The station engages literally with context half submerged in the north east side of the railway embankment. As an extension and contrast of the embankment surface the VCU is not while the office is clad in mud brick with a green roof to promote growth – acting as a cyclical station of visual process.
Figure 65:
Site Plan / Location Axonometric Drawing of Waste Not, Want Not. The Urban Composting Station.
Edi(ta)ble Urbanism: The Food, The Veil and The City.
Figure 67: Urban Composting Station and VCO Process.

- **Upper Fleece - Very Hot**: Pathogens and seeds destroyed.
- **Mid Fleece - Hot**: Recovers breakdown fats and proteins, material reduces in size.
- **Lower Fleece - Cool**: Fungi further reduces and stabilizes material matrices.
- **Harvest**: The result is fresh, clean, compost full of micro-organisms that benefit the soil.

Feed System - Organic matter is mixed then fed into the VCO.
Figure 66:
Types of Organic material that can be composted:
   a. Commingled Food and Green Waste
   b. Hatchery Waste
   c. Feathers
   d. Commercial Food Waste
   e. Pizza Waste
   f. Fish Waste
   g. Poultry Waste
   h. Pet Food Waste
   i. Grill and Screening Waste
Detail 02:
1. SolarLeaf external louvre
2. Brackets with thermal breaks for transfer loads of primary structure
3. Finwork for medium to enter and leave
4. Sub-frame rolled steel U-section
5. Pivot fixing allowing rotation
6. Metal Cladding - also covers supply of pressured air, controlled by magnetic valves

Detail 03:
1. Planted roof - Refer to Detail 05 for build up. (P137)
2. Superfluous barge board to conceal cable joint
3. PVC sheet cable for planting to grow down
4. RHS 35mm with 5mm wall - eave overhang 500mm to shelter panel cladding from erosion
5. Mud-brick panel cladding on cross-braced steel frame and structure
Results

If the design outcome of this thesis was implemented it is hoped that the framework would act as a catalyst for future sustainable growth of Whangarei.

Conclusions

The initial intention of this thesis was to understand why branding and symbols have become such a large part of the urban environment. Being so broad, this intention soon developed into the more specific issues of the modern supermarket versus the traditional market model. Through branding, the modern supermarket can be located and still recognised in a multitude of places. Further, from behind this “image-veil” the supermarket acts as merely a large-box interface for food supply to majority of the population. The traditional market provides a different experience. While providing a local connection with food, assisting with food knowledge, the traditional market re-introduces a social and spatial platform in the urban environment in the twenty-first century.

Throughout the research, analysis and discourse of this thesis more questions have been raised than answered. This is not a negative thing but on the contrary, it is a positive culmination of this process. Through the pursuit of the critical question of this thesis; “How can food supply be used as an initial critical vehicle for articulating a threshold between architecture and urbanism?” this thesis has acted as a vehicle to enlighten personal interest, practices and reflections on the way in which personal learning has been experienced throughout life.

The research in Part One of this thesis revealed many of the issues in the world today. Through tracking the evolution of the traditional market model into the modern supermarket model food
processes have shed light on how the daily processes of cities and countries have direct effects on the urban environment. A number of these contemporary phenomena are resultant of previous occurrences in society. Like many things in life, the actions of those before us leave consequent current conditions. However, the issues residual in the built environment today from the shifts in cultural, political and economic sectors provide new challenges for designers. The case studies in this thesis provided insight to a number of different ways in which designers are thinking and practicing in the contemporary urban environment. The variety of case studies aims to relate to food but also essential resources and the societal shift from industrial economy to tourism economy. The demand for re-purposing industrial infrastructures in the urban environment is providing new challenges for architects and encouraging collaborative practice around the world. Through the theories of Urban Acupuncture and Mat Urbanism, methods of design for these transformations are gained. Each case study in Part Two shares a common thread of engaging with more than one user group and promoting life in the public sphere. These designs all contribute to creating communities and trigger a shift in how architectural practice is engaging with facilitating this action.

Part Three of this thesis focuses on the discourse of context. Context is an inevitable part of an architect’s life. Part three sought to build the argument that an architect should respond to a context, not merely by aesthetic values, but also focusing on facilitation in relation to existing networks, societal shifts and enhancement of inherent conditions. This Part is an attempt to challenge such a wide subject which is highly subjective. The design outcome aims to builds directly upon the discourse of Part Three and is a highly contextual response to the city of
Whangarei. While this is so, it is imagined that the design for Whangarei could be a case study for practice in a similar manner elsewhere.

The design outcome of this thesis is only a small case study and attempt of a personal area of interest. Through problematizing the modern supermarket, therefore modern food systems, The Whangarei Grower’s Market provided a significant case study for this thesis. The common thinking of Murray Burns, Robert Bradley and all of those who engage with the market on a weekly basis provided a common thread with personal thinking.

The importance of choosing a location such as Whangarei is reflected through how a unique entity such as the Whangarei Grower’s Market can start to challenge the common issues New Zealand and Western cities worldwide. Through the project vehicle of Whangarei Growers Market, this thesis aims to provide design solutions to facilitate the market’s growth socially and spatially. This case study seeks to offer an insight to how the re-emergence of local markets around New Zealand and worldwide should be supported within the urban environment and seen as local infrastructures. By acknowledging the potential of pre-existing networks in Whangarei, this thesis argues for the Whangarei Grower’s Market to be an initial catalyst for social, spatial and political agency in an aim to set up an urban framework which is conducive to the city’s anticipated future growth.

Together the three designs aim to work in a cyclical manner engaged with everyday life cycles of people and the city. Food is an inescapable part of everyday life in western culture and the cultivation of this resource occupies both space and time. These three articulations between architecture and urban form seek to assist with facilitating catalyst social events, connections and relationships in relation to time and space. Through the cycle between the three designs it would be hoped that they become mutually beneficial through structural coupling of
programme, space and time while setting a strong basis for further design of architecture that engages with everyday life cycles of the city.

The strengths of this design outcome provide this foundation for future growth. The designs aim to be a beginning to the way in which trained architects approach urban situations. Moving from an object focused method of practice to how the object effects the wider environment poses the question – what kind of architecture is this thesis proposing? In response to this question, this thesis proposes an architecture or series of architectural articulations of strategy. While having a slight political agenda, the designs aim to anticipate future growth. By considering the existing networks in Whangarei’s context, the designs seek to enhance and promote urban life.

The weaknesses of this scheme could be tied to the organic nature of growth The Whangarei Grower’s Market has already sustained. As this organic growth is unpredictable, the architectural infrastructure provided may be used for another programme, losing yet another opportunity to provide an identity for the market. Further, the apartment living may not be a lifestyle Whangarei residents seek. New Zealand citizens are accustom to owning their own piece of land, with their own car and own family. The anticipated growth in Whangarei is retiring citizens from Auckland. These citizens may wish to stay living in a condition they are familiar with. The overall scheme aims to grow over time and space. These notions have not been fully realized in the project. While the three designs are resolved to a certain level of detail there is always more that could be designed, thought about and produced. The personal learning gained from the completion of this thesis has been significant. This project has allowed an individual method of thinking to be carried out and a clear path of preferred practice to be gained.
References


Boston: Museum of Modern Art;


Ibid.

Ibid.


Ibid.


Kenner et al., "Food, Inc."

Ibid.

Koolhaas, "Junkspace."