Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre

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Abstract

In New Zealand there is no purpose built Refugee Resettlement Centre. Despite the complex requirements of a refugee centre, the current facility is a relatively unmodified former New Zealand army base in Mangere, South Auckland. I intend to investigate the architectural issues in the design of a refugee centre and how they can be addressed.

The humanitarian dimension of the refugee problem and the complex pragmatic and programmatic nature of their reception and care requires’ a contemporary architectural solution; a centre where quota refugees are comfortable and safe during their initial stages of arrival in New Zealand, with suitable buildings for orientation programmes, individual autonomy and social gathering.
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Chapter 1.0 Introduction
1.1 Research / Architectural Question or Problem

What are the architectural issues in the design of a refugee centre and how can they be addressed?

Resettlement centres are not currently a building type that is widely studied. Like the people who work and live in these centres; they should no longer be ignored. The centre will house the six week transition period between overseas refugee camps and resettlement into New Zealand society. The centre is a complex transition between institutional control and independent citizenship. It is a centre that needs to be functional, medical, administrative and in some way be representative of New Zealand.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the project is to develop a suitable architectural solution to house New Zealand’s refugee resettlement programme. The aim is to provide appropriate accommodation for newly arriving refugees for their six-week orientation period.

The project will be an attempt to create a design that:
- Restores a sense of entitlement and independence to people who have been dispossessed of these conditions.
- Is a fitting centre for traumatized and displaced people entering New Zealand.
- Combines care and control.
- Is experienced as both a refuge and a transition.
- Provides an architecture that is in essence placeless and isolated, but is also a point of transition.
- Integrates administration, medical facilities, education, accommodation, and food preparation and consumption.
- Accommodates people of widely differing cultural and spiritual backgrounds and practices.

1.3 Outline of the Project

This project will investigate the idea that architecture can have a positive affect on refugee resettlement by easing the rapid transition that refugees face between foreign countries and New Zealand. The project will investigate the situation of an interim space in the process: that of a refugee resettlement centre, functioning between two places: a refugee camp and an independent social life. The centre will function as a place of temporary occupancy before entering the wider community. It will promote the importance of recovery, rest, acceptance, education, orientation and the celebration of independence.
1.3.1 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PROJECT

In New Zealand there is no purpose-built Refugee Resettlement Centre. Despite the complex requirements of a refugee centre, the current facility is a relatively unmodified former New Zealand army base in Mangere, South Auckland. New Zealand’s 65-year history of accepting refugees is evidence of both the seriousness and the persistence of the problem of displaced people in the world. New Zealand will continue to accept refugees and is likely to face international pressure to accommodate greater numbers.

For many refugees, New Zealand is a country which they know very little about. They know even less about how to live in the country, so they will require appropriate guidance and education. As stated in “Migrant and Refugee Streams”, although “…refugees come from diverse cultures, often they arrive carrying a burden of loss (sometimes sudden) of home, friends, immediate family members, familiar environment, and a sense of safety. Some have suffered the additional trauma of torture. For refugees, the decision to leave their homeland is in direct contrast to the voluntary decision made by migrants. Refugees do not have a choice – they are forced to leave, and the involuntary nature of this experience pervades all subsequent aspects of their resettlement.”

The humanitarian dimension of the refugee problem and the complex pragmatic and programmatic nature of their reception and care requires a contemporary architectural solution – a centre where refugees can feel comfortable and safe during the initial stages of arrival in New Zealand, with suitable buildings for orientation programmes.

1.3.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF A NEW REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT CENTRE

The centre will improve the refugee’s ability to enter and participate in the wider community. The centre will aid in restoring a sense of entitlement and independence and help begin a process of familiarisation with New Zealand society, its processes and spaces. In addition, the centre’s reception and training functions will improve the refugee’s experience of this major transition. The centre will more efficiently implement and present programmes of reception, healthcare, accommodation and education. It will be a place for making contacts, which will help refugees function more efficiently.

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efficiently as citizens in the community. The centre will identify refugee needs and find solutions.
Chapter 2.0 Current state of knowledge of Refugee transition Centres

2.1 Definition of a Refugee

What is a refugee? According to Article 1 of the 1951 United Nations Convention and amended by the 1967 Protocol Relating to the status of refugees, a refugee is:

“A person who is outside his/her country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion; and is unable or unwilling to avail himself/herself of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution.”³

The reality of refugees arriving in New Zealand is that they carry the burden of stress, trauma and the pain of separation from family and friends. This results in a loss of independence, sense of belonging and entitlement.

2.2 Global Situation

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) publishes an annual refugee Global Trends report. Listed below are key statistics from the 2008 Global Trends report.

- There were some 42 million forcibly displaced people worldwide at the end of 2008. This includes 15.2 million refugees, 827,000 asylum-seekers (pending cases) and 26 million internally displaced persons (IDPs).

- Nearly 25 million people – 10.5 million refugees and 14.4 million IDPs – were receiving protection or assistance from UNHCR at the end of 2008. These numbers are similar to 2007.

- In 2008, UNHCR identified some 6.6 million stateless persons in 58 countries. The Office estimated that the overall number of stateless persons worldwide was far higher, about 12 million people.

• Some 604,000 refugees repatriated voluntarily during 2008. Repatriation figures have continued to decrease since 2004. The 2008 figure is the second lowest in 15 years.  

2.3 Refugees in New Zealand

Since 1944 New Zealand has had a long history of helping the international community, in terms of refugee acceptance and resettlement. Along with many other nations, New Zealand has given millions of refugees the chance of a safe and stable new life. New Zealand will continue to assist the international community by resettling refugees. Resettlement is not an easy task for refugees and immigrants. This is especially so for refugees who come from regions where war and civil conflicts have forced them to seek refuge in refugee camps, usually in neighbouring countries.

Types of Refugees
In New Zealand refugees are categorised into three groups: Quota Refugees, Asylum Seekers, or International/Family Reunification Migrants.

Quota Refugees
The UNHCR is responsible for the placement and organisation of quota refugees most in need of resettlement. The UNHRC will ask New Zealand, or one of the 17 countries of resettlement, to consider accepting certain refugees. However, it is the New Zealand Government that finally determines who will be accepted. The quota refugee programme is used as a last-resort solution if the UNHCR cannot find a long-term solution in that country of refuge.

Quota refugees:
- are granted refugee status by UNHCR prior to arrival;
- are accepted by New Zealand at a rate of 750 each year and are granted permanent residence status on arrival;
- are resettled under three main categories:
  - Protection – 600 (including up to 300 declared spouses and dependent children of resettled refugees, and UNHCR referred cases with family links in New Zealand);
  - Medical/Disabled – 75
  - Women at Risk – 75

On arrival, all accepted quota refugees complete a six-week orientation programme at the Mangere Resettlement Centre. Like all New Zealand residents and citizens, they are entitled to the same rights to healthcare,


\[\text{\footnotesize \textsuperscript{5}}\text{Department of Labour, "Migrant and Refugee Streams, A guide to understanding how refugees enter New Zealand", http://www.immigration.govt.nz/ (accessed October 11, 2008)}\]
education, employment and social welfare, and receive monetary allowances. After five years they may apply for New Zealand citizenship.

**Post Mangere Resettlement Centre**

Upon completion of the orientation programme, refugees are carefully situated in towns and cities all over New Zealand, including Auckland, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Wellington, Hutt Valley, Porirua, Nelson and Christchurch. The new residents are located according on several criteria, the most important of which is being near family and friends. It is vital that they are able to use resources and services such as unemployment benefits, work opportunities, English classes, schools, health services and appropriate spiritual and ethnic community support.\(^6\)

There are other categories of refugees such as Asylum seekers or “convention” refugees and Family Reunification migrants but this project is focused on the transition facilities for Quota Refugees\(^7\)

\(^6\) Refugee Services Aotearoa New Zealand, “Refugees in New Zealand”
http://www.refugeeservices.org.nz/

\(^7\) Stephen Dunsten et al. "Refugee Voices: A Journey Towards Resettlement", Department of Labour, 2004
Diagram of refugee experience prior to and including resettlement in New Zealand.
2.4 Current Situation at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre

Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre: Context to Design Problem.
Upon arrival in New Zealand Quota refugees are placed at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre for a six-week orientation and residential/educational programme.

Annually, 750 quota refugees reside at the centre. Approximately 125 Quota refugees stay at the centre for a period of six-weeks, with a two-week interval in between groups.

The Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre is managed by the Refugee Quota Branch of the Department of Labour. It works with other government and non-government organizations (NGOs) to run regular orientation programmes at the centre. These include Refugee Services, Refugees As Survivors (RAS), the Auckland Regional Public Health Service, and the Auckland University of Technology Centre for Refugee Education.

Refugee Services provides a range of practical support services to assist refugees with the many challenges of adjusting to life in a new culture and society.

These services are:
- Pre-arrival planning
- On-arrival assessment
- Individual Case Plan development
- Community placement
- Advice, information and advocacy
- Crisis intervention and home-based family support programmes
- Community orientation
- Community linkages and referral services
- Volunteer training, deployment and support

The Resettlement Centre has helped more than 40,000 refugees.

Since 1978, Auckland University of Technology has developed and researched new methodologies in teaching refugees during the orientation period and outside of the Centre. AUT has recently implemented a more ecological approach to teaching, employing critical-thinking activities, music, art and drama while maintaining commitment to intellectual engagement. The education programme includes early childhood education, primary and secondary classes, and adult orientation classes taught in the refugee’s first language.  

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During the 1980s and ‘90s the Resettlement Centre saw only a few ethnic groups arriving at one time, depending on where the world’s conflicts were occurring. They were Nigerian, Khmer, Vietnamese, Lao, Polish, Czech, Hungarian, Assyrian Christians, Iranian Baha’i, and Central Americans. Today there can be up to 14 different ethnicities in one group, coming from countries such as Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Bosnia, Somalia, Myanmar, Iraq, Sudan and Nepal.

The site (formerly a military army barracks) has been used as a reception centre since the late 1970s. Initially it was a temporary solution for the increase of refugees coming to New Zealand, due to displaced people avoiding conflicts in Vietnam. The plan was to use the site for only one year and then end the resettling programme. Evidently programme has continued and developed until today.


9 Auckland University of Technology, “AUT Centre for Refugee Education: what we do”, http://www.aut.ac.nz (assessed May 20, 2009)

10 Ibid

11 Mangere Refugee Centre Map, photo taken by author, 15 October 2008
26 May

Current issues concerning operations at the Mangere Resettlement Centre.

A meeting with Aditya Vasa, assistant hostel manager of the refugee quota branch.

Research

- Refugee Services covers: – Banking
- Medical centre
- RAS
- AUT – Orientation and classes
- Red Cross – Tracing people back home

What Refugee Services do:

- Pre Planning with Red Cross
- Immigration department
- Administration of application process – Interview Refugees Overseas

Hostel Office: Is run by the Department of Labour’s Refugee Quota branch

- Central Hub
- Control Centre
- Allocate rooms
- Pre-planning by age, gender, nationality, family size
- Initial Briefing

- Health and safety

- The residents are not forced into participating in the orientation programme, but it is a condition that is agreed upon before arrival in New Zealand.

- Poor accommodation

- Agencies do the same thing which is a waste of time, so there need to be a plan to save time, in order to do more.

- Some people are afraid to go up to the road, but they encourage them to go outside.

- Some people do not have community links – so why not have a space in the centre for volunteer groups that come in on the weekend.
- The centre has no strong ties with its immediate surroundings but is looking at ways to strengthen its links to the community.

- There are links with De La Salle College and Kings College – students come talk to kids while parents are in meetings.

- Only some restrictions on where you can go.
- Everybody is the same for them, possibly treated like a number.

- It is suggested that all new residents should go through the programme.

- AUT buildings were positioned like that to fit the site.

- Think of it as a village.
2.5 Theory and Architectural Background

Most of the writing below concerns refugee camps that are different to the Resettlement Centre, but some of the topics discussed raise similar issues.

“Ideal City” Refugee Camps
In his article “Refugee Camps or Ideal-Cities in Dust and Dirt”, Manuel Herz, writes about his research into a large and longstanding refugee settlement in Chad, Central Africa. Herz critiques the UNHCR’s planning and spatial structures for refugees, which is based on a European model of hygiene and enlightenment.12 He describes how this temporary camp developed into a permanent ghetto with high levels of violence. The dysfunction he identified as arising from what is essentially a modernist diagram of order and control provokes an awareness of the necessity to discover new ways of implementing humanitarian architecture.

Herz’s article explains how the UNHCR architects and planners utilise a planning strategy based on a detached neutral position stemming from the idea of identical human needs and global human rights. This is comparable to the thinking of the modern era, where cities are planned with rigid and ordered layouts separating function and uses.13

Herz comments on the widespread and uncritical application of this form of planning to refugee camps, “This modernist planning approach finds its application all over the world. The pretty order, thoroughly based on Western European ideals, seems like a naive fool’s planning in the dusty heat of the African desert or in direct proximity to violent combat.”14

It appears no matter where the refugee camp is in the world, the UNHCR adopts the same modernist strategy with no regard for cultures, climate or social groups.

Interestingly, the existing Mangere refugee centre reuses a former army base in which to implement its orientation programme for quota refugees in New Zealand. Both the regular grid and the army barrack plan are of course, metaphors of regulation. It is conceivable that initially, the site may have been chosen because of its association with control and perhaps its resemblance to the planning strategies of the UNHCR architects. The barely modified 1930s site may have not changed because the Government and

13 Ibid
14 Ibid
institutional agencies like the way the layout allows for a high level of institutional control over the individuals compelled to inhabit it.

Herz’s description of the camps is of ‘low density’ and undifferentiated planning covering large sites but lacking any characteristics of an urban arrangement, such as individual clusters or concentration towards a centre “...they are like suburbs without the corresponding city.”  

The Mangere centre demonstrates no central core that is open to the residents, only a functional plan that is content with efficiency and rule. The repetitive nature of the grid layout as Herz writes, “reduces the possibilities of social integration and eases the potential for observation and control by regional government and camp gendarmerie. There is no social or cultural life, no central density, just space for containing people.”

The aim of the refugee centre is essentially humanitarian but it is also conceived as a temporary solution. Its architecture therefore can be argued to be excused of its ruthless rationality. Herz writes, “Refugee camps are indispensable and essential, as they often represent the last life-saving sanctuary of protection. Often though, it is spatial strategies and decisions on the level of planning for a temporarily intended emergency support to become a permanent ‘solution.’ This reduces the urgency of dealing with a conflict and its causes on a political level, as the ‘human catastrophe’ has been dealt with and contained. A permanent settlement, a solution with architectural means, turns into a strategy of sidestepping political settlement.”

This is of interest to the Mangere Centre project because its operation is based around the temporary (six week) period of orientation and transition.

**Motuihe Island**

The issue of the controlling plan is also discussed by Treadwell in his paper “The Isolation Architecture of Motuihe Island” in SAHANZ, The Society of Architectural Historians of Australia and New Zealand, Treadwell describes past events that have occurred on Motuihe Island, situated in between Waiheke and Motutapu islands. The Island has been utilised for many functions since its most significant role as a quarantine station, as ‘a consequence of mainland fears of contamination.’ The mainlanders’ feared

15 Ibid
16 Ibid

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19 Ibid p.345
smallpox would enter the city of Auckland, so ships, which potentially carried such dangers, were diverted to the island. In terms of this project this writing is a reference for: the displacement of isolated architecture; the reuse of army barracks and the use of military architecture and its connection with medical facilities.

Treadwell commented that “with order, air, sunshine and food substituting as a cure for tuberculosis, the quarantine station barracks became in essence a sanatorium...” 20 Treadwell reiterated the ideas of Beatriz Colomina, who said, “The linear barrack plan at Paimio (Paimio Sanatorium, 1929 by Alvar Aalto) makes explicit the regulation of space, air and access to sunlight, the same issues regulated in the colonial barracks.” Beatriz Colomina makes these thematic connections explicit: “The bond between architecture medicine and war keeps running through architectural discourse into the second half of the century.”21 Analysis will be undertaken to investigate the Mangere Resettlement Centre for its appropriateness as a barrack model.

Compulsion within the Mangere centre

Even though this is a resettlement centre, the residents have to participate in medical checks, education and orientation programmes. So there is a degree of compulsion attached to the transitional procedure. The point is that while this is essentially still resettlement in a humanitarian process, at the moment the architecture of the present process is actually reflective of a compulsory and authority structure.

In her paper,”The Limit of the Refugee Camp and our Coming Community” Frichot states, “If architecture can be said to be that which responds to a given community and its needs, then what does the architecture of our refugee camps suggest for an Australian future...?” 22 Furthermore what is the future architecture for any country in the process of accepting refugees? Currently refugee transition centres, like the one in Mangere are politically and institutionally run with a primary agenda of function and processing. This is evident in the unchanged nature of the site; barely anything has been changed in terms of architectural provision over the history of the centres existence.

Frichot refers to an Australian situation in which she describes a, “hidden architecture of violence, exclusion and control” and”...in response to the rigid political limits inscribed by the sovereign demands of our nation-state. These limits serve to place in mandatory confinement the refugee, and the architecture in question is that of the refugee camp, the detention centre, or

20 Ibid p.350
21 Ibid p.350
the immigration reception and processing centre. The architecture of these mostly invisible or inaccessible camps...”

Frichot goes on to quote Giorgio Agamben who argues “the camp as a space of exception is placed outside the normal juridical order, but it is nevertheless not simply an external space.” The camp still depends on juridico-political structure of some kind. There is, in the Australian context, the appearance of the criminalisation of the refugee, in their being confined in mandatory detention in prison-like enclosures.”

The Mangere centre may not be situated outside of mainland New Zealand but it is tucked away from the view of the public. The “external space” of the Mangere Centre is on one hand a humanitarian space, but on the other hand it is a space that is framed within a process of administrative control. Architecturally the centre should not reflect such a building type, like a prison or a military institution. Frichot says “...we must open a crack in the walls of the circle we otherwise wish to inscribe ourselves. We must let someone in, call someone, or go out oneself, and launch oneself fort...”

The institutional nature of such a site should be supportive and not dominative.

The challenge of positioning the Refugee.

An essential problem facing the Mangere Centre is the question of how to design a centre which aims at settlement, adjustment and being in a new place. Inherently it is paradoxical because it is actually about transition. Architecturally, this poses a contradiction. This predicament arises within the concept of heterotopias.

In *Rethinking Architecture*, Michel Foucault’s article, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias” states the importance of a function that takes place between two points, what he calls ‘heterotopias’. His first principle is that there is probably not a single culture in the world that fails to constitute heterotopias. These heterotopias may have the characteristics of a “temporary halt.” The refugee resettlement centre is a classic case of heterotopias as discussed by Foucault, who also addresses the issue of reusing past heterotopias for a different purpose yet still contributing to a society. As a gateway to New Zealand the centre has in some way affected thousands of people lives.

26 Ibid p. 352
27 Ibid p. 352
The resettlement centre may also be categorized under ‘heterotopias of crises’\textsuperscript{28} because of the nature of such a place. Most refugees are forced to flee their home land and so are required to enter certain heterotopias.

Heterotopias are constructed by the idea of ‘the other’. Inherent in this construction is the question of space as distance between. The refugee is migratory and mobile between spaces.

Andrew Benjamin in “Positioning the Refugee”, talks about exploration and the act of transition from one place to another, to explore and settle\textsuperscript{29}. For the refugee it is about losing everything and to search for a new beginning.

In the act of resettlement, refugees should not all be assumed ‘weak’. Instead, they should be assumed as people in transition, people who are now defined by movement who are ‘strong’ and ‘well armed.’ Hence a sovereign and indigenous people should accept their arrival and have then the challenge of welcoming and receiving the new residents\textsuperscript{30}. What is important is how refugees are received on their arrival. Refugees, like an explorer, are seeking some sort of refuge. So like the explorer who defines a place of discovery, the refugee can define a place of arrival depending on the level of ‘hospitality’ demonstrated by the receiving state.\textsuperscript{31}

Essentially this project is about arrival and the acting out of settlement. But settlement, like the impermanent but permanent refugee camps, is another fiction. The refugees will move on.

This project is positioned around a paradox of settlement and mobility. So architecturally, how will this be done?

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid p. 352

\textsuperscript{29} Benjamin, Andrew. “Refugees, Cosmopolitanism, and the Place of Citizenship”. 

\textsuperscript{30} Benjamin, Andrew. “Refugees, Cosmopolitanism, and the Place of Citizenship”. 

\textsuperscript{31} Benjamin, Andrew. “Refugees, Cosmopolitanism, and the Place of Citizenship”. 
Chapter 3.0 Project Development

This section describes the process taken to the final outcome. The topics discussed will be the chosen site, site analysis, the existing resettlement centre, relationship studies and processes driven by a sense of Entitlement.

3.1 Site

**Why this site?**

The site has been used as a refugee resettlement centre since the late 1970s showing that there is a commitment to aiding displaced foreigners and to the orientation programme. By continuing dedication to the site, the project will be an attempt to design a new alternative for housing a refugee reception centre. The surrounding context and existing content creates the task critiquing and responding to an outdated complex. There is an opportunity to design a specific centre to cater for people in transition, and to improve the existing conditions.

The site is adequate in size to house the buildings and orientation programme. If necessary, it is possible to expand the site out to the north and west, as there are parks and fields that may be utilised. Existing agencies are set up on site and there are links with some community groups in the area such as schools and Middlemore Hospital.

As stated above this complex is an example of Foucault’s “heterotopias” as its position is sunken into a varied context. However there is the possibility of being part of the surrounding context. The newly arrived residents may find this beneficial, as the site is set back from the wider community. However, they can venture out into the community once they are comfortable with their surroundings.

In Mangere, new arrivals will experience a multicultural community; this is what they might expect once they leave the programme.

Mangere is situated to the northwest of the centre of Manukau city and 15 kilometres south of Auckland city centre. In ways Mangere is the gateway to and from New Zealand. In the case of the quota refugee this is very true. Mangere is Manukau City’s second most populous community, with 55,266 residents of which 62% of residents belong to the Pacific Peoples ethnic group, followed by 20% European, 18% Maori and 11% Asian. Mangere has a very youthful population, with 39% under 20 years while the median age of residents is 26 years.

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The existing Resettlement Centre is located in Mangere East, South Auckland, and nine kilometres northeast of the Auckland International Airport. Mangere is situated between Manukau City to the south west, Papatoetoe and Onehunga to the northwest, and Otahuhu and Mt Wellington to the northeast. The Manukau Harbour is north of the site, beyond the industrial area for which Otahuhu, Onehunga and some parts of Mangere are known for. The surrounding suburban neighbourhood is predominantly made up of state houses and old bungalows.

Surrounding context:
- Mangere East library,
- Parks and Sports fields
- Community shops
- Churches
- Schools: De La Salle College, Kings College, Otahuhu College, and Mangere College
- Middlemore Hospital
- Industrial factories
- Auckland Golf Course

**Immediate site context**

The site is embedded about 500m from a main street in Mangere, Massey Road. Its most noticeable neighbour is the shipping yard, which dominates ones view when entering the site. Hence more trees will be required along the fence line to ease the boundary view.

The private road leading to the site is adjacent to a block of shops that consists of takeaways, fast-food outlets, minimarts, a petrol station, a family medical centre, and a video store. It is also surrounded by single-story state housing to the south and east. To the north is a plantation field for seasonal kumara (sweet potato) and corn, which is occupied by private owners. To the west is a communal park and sports field used informally by locals but not by organised club teams.

The site is about 3.5 hectares in size and is bordered by a chain-link fence topped with barbed wire. The site naturally has a slight rise 2.5m over a distance of 230m. However most of the site has been paved and flattened.
3.2 Analysis of Existing Resettlement Centre

Arguably, reuse of the old army barracks is not appropriate for the types of programmes and accommodation required for such a centre. From an institutional point of view, the types of buildings and layout may be ideal, in terms of processing the refugees, for sleeping arrangements and for observation of the residents. The grid layout reflects the importance of efficiency in procedures such as medical checks, education and food consumption. By putting people in a grid layout it is easy to keep track of them, but the lack of thought regarding spaces eliminates any chance of independence or autonomy.

List of analysis:

- The existing centre demonstrates clearly that no one has thought about hierarchy in the space. There are no open spaces for gathering.
- Army barracks – previous soldiers were asked to protect and fight for their country but the Government put them in substandard buildings. Government organisations do not understand how to arrange human buildings.
- There has been little modification to the buildings since they were first completed.
- Grid. Uniform. Repetition.
- No room for social gathering or individual space.
- Spaces in between buildings are poorly designed.
- The institutional buildings are spread out and dominate the site.
- Low density
- Undifferentiated
- No communal spaces
- No architecture
- Residents pushed to the back
- There is no direction to a reception area.
- The school is cramped into a corner

Summary
The problems of adopting architecture from a previous use, without significant changes to suit a new programme, can lead to a place that restricts the inhabitants’ ability to act freely. It also restricts the ability of a meaningful programme to operate to its full potential.

The existing arrangement maintains the power relationships from the army model – those of removing individuality and imposing control.

There is a need to design a new centre that reflects the aim of assisting refugees’ transition into life in New Zealand – one that conveys a sense of entitlement and independence.
3.3 Mapping – Colour Coded Types of Buildings (m2)

**Key**

- **Blue Shade**: Residents’ buildings
- **Red Shade**: Institutional buildings

**Analysis**

The image demonstrates how institutional buildings dominate the site, overpowering the residents. This is emphasised by the disjointed nature of the institution, penetrating and surrounding the sleeping blocks.
Residents and visitors are met by central institutional buildings on arrival.

There is a lack of direction regarding where one is supposed to access the reception area.
On the left institutional buildings occupy the only space with greenery.

Image of some of the classrooms cramped into the edge of the site.

Left over space in between sleeping blocks, have not been thought out, they only serve a functional purpose, that of hanging clothes. These areas become obsolete and a waste of space.
Image of a main pathway cutting across the site, that displays repetition, functionality. Apart from some picnic tables there are no spaces for individual withdraw or communal interaction.

The Dining hall: One of the most important buildings on the site. The hub that collects and allows people to interact.
3.4 Typical plan of existing sleeping block

The plan demonstrates a lack of individual provision. Room sizes are approximately 3m x 2.7m, but are probably smaller. Each room is set up the same with either single or bunk beds to either side of the room, with storage space at the lower end for whatever items the residents might have. The buildings have been barely modified since their original use as army barracks. The long uninterrupted corridor evokes a notion of control, which constantly hangs over the residents. The doors have been poorly positioned to open directly across to the opposite room, proof of the complete lack of privacy. The bathroom doors even open up to the bedrooms. Overall the reuse of the former army barracks is evidence of the need for a purpose-built resettlement centre and appropriate accommodation. It needs rooms of a standard acceptable to all New Zealanders or of even higher quality due to the trauma and stress that the new arrivals have endured.

Sleeping Quarters:
- Tiny rooms
- No common room
- Poor construction
- No privacy
- Less than minimum standards
- Repeated with margin for change.
These images demonstrate that sleeping is the only possible activity in such a space.

- Interior of room, very bare.
- Unacceptable living standards with no privacy.
3.5 Mapping – Daily Routines Analysis

The movement between personal spaces and institutional spaces are small and abstract, and the institutional obligations are too close to the residents’ realm. There should be some sort of distance and variety in both landscape and building to allow for personal freedom.

There is a central and functionally orientated movement pattern around the dining room, a space that is vital part to the complex. However, the dining hall is surrounded by programmatic administrative buildings that take away the importance of eating.

- A lot of moving back and forth from dining to classroom.
- Hardly any movement within the residential area
- Shows that functional and institutional acts dominate daily routines.
- A lack of autonomous space results in minimal independent action.
This diagram shows a typical day for the residents. It is a functional programme. In response to this is, there should be interventions with architecture that create spaces to relax and step out of the system.
3.6 Design strategy: Development Process

Summary of design procedure and critique:

Privilege the individual: models

By using existing sizes and manipulating the buildings, by the process of disassembling the existing, to form a centre that privileges the individual.

These early images lack an overall language; they were driven by the idea of privileging the residents but overall are not conveying this well.
25 May
Initial Proposition: Density
At this point of the development process, analysis shows that two conditions operate at the Resettlement Centre:
1) Institutional obligations:
- Medical, educational and administrative processes.
- The institution obliges individuals to fit with spatial, temporal procedures.
2) Individual autonomy: What opportunity is there for?
   a. The physical body or individual to act autonomously?
   b. Social and collective activities?
Can density be used to optimise individual autonomy both physically and socially? As a way to answer this question, institutional buildings will be aggregated together to form an institutional sector or building. The result of greater site area, may allow for the individual and social design strategies to occur.

28 May
Overarching Postion(at this time)
- mapping the process
- somehow intervening in that process
- Referring to Manuel Herz – undifferentiated low density space.
- Must design differentiated density

A plan driven by: Density

This plan demonstrates:
- Residents near the front
- Knuckle and finger: The spaces revealing themselves through transition
- Pushing the institution to the rear
- Density by combining most of the institution to one place (on the top left)
- Differentiated spaces
- Starting looking at New Zealand motel for sizes

This idea can be pushed further by incorporating the communal buildings into the residential.
4 June

Proposition: Changing density may vastly improve layout opportunities for individuals. The lack of density in which residents currently live in restricts any ability to act autonomously.

The Big Problem:
a) Refugees are placeless
b) Refugees are powerless
Therefore, the refugee centre can correct this in some way by giving them a sense of place and their own space. By increasing the degree of autonomy Analysis shows the existing complex does not provide this architecturally, in any way. The existing complex lacks any degree gradient of density. Therefore, there is no space for individual operations

So the idea is:
By careful design and use of density, it may be possible to achieve differentiated spaces.

23 July

The Motel
The institution takes away a lot of domestic programmes, including recreation, autonomous cooking and social opportunities,
The motel includes all of these things.

The current average square meter for motel units is 24 to 36m².
These sizes will be use as a benchmark for what is a standard.

An analysis of the existing complex shows that it is dispersed and wasting space. So a programme must be devised to combine the institution. There must be critical analyse how much space is allocated to the individual, in terms of recreation, social and spiritual/religious needs.
What is left over is two thirds of the site free for individual provision.
For this to work the centre will be a new alternative, a different model to the existing. A way of intervening in the existing institutional programme, would be to take the structure of the institutional programme but make provision for autonomous operations.

Establishing the project programme from the motel and New Zealand norms:
Refugees who transition to New Zealand should expect at least the motel minimum – a minimum of domestic provision, e.g. a jug, microwave etc.
What will this positioned against exactly? How to evaluate it?
Again, a low-cost motel is the New Zealand minimum standard that refugees should be expected to experience. The act of transitioning to somewhere; therefore the motel is a temporary condition – the norm. It can be argued that the residents deserve a better than the minimum because of the distress and trauma that they have experienced.

The existing army barracks are unacceptable, except on the basis of time, one may argue that six weeks in the existing condition may be acceptable. However the army plan is not suitable for the types of programmes provided at the centre.

What is the role of administration and how can it be supportive rather than dominating? At the moment you cannot escape it.

6 August

Problems facing the refugee:
- a loss in the process of ‘being’:
- loss of one’s place in the world
- loss of family
- disconnection from their land and traditions
- time in a refugee camp, inability to determines one’s own fate or direction

Coming to New Zealand

The opportunity to come to New Zealand gives the refugees the chance to begin a process of determining their own fate or direction, probably for the first time in years. Accepting that there is a necessity for a relationship between the refugees and the institutional program, the architecture will be specially designed to develop a sense of:
- Rights to one’s own place.
- Independence of being.
- A relationship with the institution that is supportive of the refugees.

Image: Embedding the collective, larger buildings (dining hall, library, recreation spaces and common rooms) within the resident’s dwellings and pushing the residents to the front of the site. This image illustrates a turning point in the design project by leading to a proposed position.
Proposition

My proposition is that the architecture must create ‘a sense of entitlement’.
The architectural issue now becomes important, as the architecture either
subjugates them or emphasises the importance of independence and self
determination.
This is a clear position that gives a sense of judgement to design from. It will
provide a clear direction to the way I think about the relationship of:
- Dwellings to each other
- Relationship to the institution (the institution is benevolent but runs
  a system that objectifies the refugees and may take away certain
  rights.

What are the things that will entail a sense of entitlement and how to
construct those things?
- Public versus private spaces
- Autonomy
- Cooking own food
- A combination of facets.
Entitlement links to earlier ideas of private and public areas and the
transition between the two, but it starts with strong ideas for example in
plan: residents are position at the front of the site, dining in the middle and a
supportive institutional sector.

Entitlement
- Quota Refugees arrive as permanent residents
- Quota refugees have the right to minimum New Zealand living
  standards
- Like all New Zealand residents and citizens, they are entitled to the
  same rights to healthcare, education, employment, social welfare,
  and receiving monetary allowances. After five years they may apply
  for New Zealand citizenship.

Entitlement architecture
- Privacy, access to services and being part of a community,
3.7 New Programme

The new programme will be one that combines institutional buildings and carefully worked out leftover space.

The required building will be:
- NZIS, New Zealand Immigration Services building
- Refugee Services building
- Quota residents office
- Interview offices
- Dining room
- Conference room
- Medical facilities
- RAS building
- Recreation room
- AUT offices
- AUT staff workroom
- Visitor laundry and toilets
- AUT classrooms
- Prayer room
- Car parks

Additional buildings:
- Front atrium
- Library
3.8 New Zealand norms

Motel – domesticity in transition

Motels sizes will be used to decide what the appropriate level of provision is. The Motel is the generic measure of New Zealand domesticity. The typical motel sizes are a minimum required that should be changed to suite and privilege the residents.
3.9 Circulation diagrams / studies

Loop or ringy syntax gives alternatives for every move

Circulation types:
- Directed
- Non directed
- Optional
- Combination

3.10 Relationship diagrams

The image below demonstrates some of the types of relationships that are possible between institutional groups (black) and residential facilities (white)

Solid groups
1. All-seeing eye of the central institutional block
2. Neutral zone in between. Close proximity to one another.
3. Create distance with fence line. Taking an extreme approach
4. Distance and facing back to back with the removal of the fence
5. Trying to privilege the residential block by turning it away.
6. Thin line here between supportive and overpowering
7. Forming own internal area
8. Allowing the residential to be private with a nearby support group

The image below illustrate extended clusters and pathways
3.11 Bubble Diagrams

This is an initial bubble diagrams showing how the institution was compressed into one area. However, this still does not put enough focus on the residents.

Here is an image addressing the types of groups and trying to decide what activities work with what. These groups were: administration/institution, communal, and residential.

Initial ideas methods of applying the bubble into the site was not really working
After the analysis of some of the previous work, there needed to be a step back to finding better ways of benefiting the individual. Again the three types of activities (institutional, communal and residential) were identified and experimented with.

1. Identifying the groups but this is the existing way the buildings are laid out

2. This moved was to push the residential buildings with the communal.

3. A basic but radical idea to enter the centre through the residents and communal buildings. Allowing the institutional to step back into a more supportive role.

4. This is a clearer diagram of mixing the communal and residential buildings together. Also separating the institutional but within a close distance.
21 August

Design Strategies for the Master plan.
The current master plan is based on ideas of entitlement and independence.

The relationship between institutional and residents is one of fostering. Residential buildings foster the main buildings and vice versa.

The institutional buildings are not the first thing that one encounters’, on arrival one will encounter residential and communal buildings, which is major change to existing.

Conference Hall
The Conference hall creates a buffer between the residential and institutional sectors, a move that establishes a neutral zone in which to meet as a group.

Front field
Retaining the front field establishes distance between the entrance and the centre. It addresses formal separation between arrival and being in the inhabiting. The neutral park does not show one thing, one can see a variety of buildings as opposed to going through a gateway to a group of institutional buildings.

Access to the site:
A crucial move has been taken to allow separate access to the group of institutional buildings on the south western end of the site, by opening a separate entry on Cleek Street. The two entries break down the idea of the camp and its control, reflected by a singular path in and out. These images initial plans that demonstrate privileges for individuals. Flexible adaptive and adaptable
Culture
In New Zealand many crammed suburbs do not suit the people who live in. Typical states housing or brick and tile houses are not reflective of the many culturally diverse types living, for example covered outdoor cooking areas. Therefore the new resettlement centre may provide a possible architectural response that provides and is responsible.

Food
Food is one of the most ritualized activities. From analysis it has been established that the dining hall is the most used buildings, in terms of communal gathering outside of institutional obligations. Emphasis has been put on the eating and cooking areas to tie the whole complex into one.

8 September
The types of resident’s rooms cannot be generalised for every culture. So instead the types of clusters are strategies from an architectural view. That establishes a condition of separation and gathering. The cluster types utilised are ones with:

- Level changes: the dwellings are separated from communal areas and terrain by using a form of hierarchy that differentiate these areas.
- Private compounds: These dwellings use hedged components that create greater privacy for the occupant yet the rooms are still past of a public cluster.
- Courtyard: This cluster is based around the idea of sharing a common outdoor space. Promoting spaces for interaction.
17 September

Hierarchy of terrain

The circulation has been dealt with a hierarchy strategy of materials and transitions. By walking across the terrain the point was to demonstrate a feeling of independence and clear change in external space. The types of landscape in the collective areas are aimed to be differentiated public space.

Roofs and Spaces below

The extended roofs of the communal buildings cover the exterior surfaces below, where a more flexible and loose arrangement can be occupied. The transition between inside and outside is slightly blurred making the outside an extension of the inside by encouraging collectiveness within and around communal buildings.

Note: If the residents have travelled from environments such as the refugee camp, that are structured like army barracks that rules and controls. Why not, like the residents’ houses which are arranged more freely, stepped and varied, design external communal spaces to be free and flexible. By providing open differentiated spaces, rather than, using formal elements to dictate a space.
Current Master Plan (not to scale)
3.12 The Master Plan

This master plan was driven by the idea of Entitlement. It is a plan that demonstrates a degree of provision for its residents by creating spaces for independent operations and to act autonomously. This is reiterated by these key design moves:

- Identifying the need to combine the institutional agencies into one whole section and moving section to the rear (south west end) of the site. It is an attempt to give the institution a supportive position rather than a dominant one. This leaves over two thirds of the site free.

- To blur the division between the institutional and residential sectors the conference hall has been position tactically to act as a buffer between the two.

- The residents’ are positioned strategically in the front of the site, creating their own community which can be opened and is closer to the outside community.

- The aim of positioning the residents’ buildings near the entrance was to initialize an experience of belonging. By not disrupting the residents quarters with institutional control.

- To continue with the theme community, there was a lack of communal buildings within with the existing site. Here there is an introduction of more communal buildings and outdoor spaces. Ranging from gathering, eating, withdraw, relaxation and private areas.

- The strategy to embed the communal spaces amongst the residents’ buildings. To foster each other, as this may give the residents a sense of ownership or belonging. Also the communal buildings will sink into a group of dwellings.

- The variety of building and communal spaces start to generate and assortment of place makers that the residents will be able to identify with.

- Visitors who access the site through the front will encounter how the residents will be living, possibly creating opportunities of interaction.
Community Hall

- On entry to the centre one is directed to the outdoor atrium before leading into the community hall. The hall is a building that will be used to house meetings and social events when outside community volunteer groups meet with the residents.

- There will also be an opportunity to hold market days on the site for locals to taste ethnic foods that the residents could cook as part of their orientation programme.

Dining hall

The dining hall is situated in the heart of the site. It occupies a focal area but also formulates its own outdoor space. The immediate buildings that surround the dining hall do not open directly onto it but instead are positioned to form transitional areas before moving into a wider space.

Residents’ Dwellings: Hierarchy of levels

To formulate a strategy to create the residents’ dwellings a series of studies were carried out in the matter of hierarchical status. In a typical levelled cluster, level changes were established to differentiate the movement between the dwellings and public vicinities.

The transitional series of objects to distinguish the hierarchy are: paving, loose pebbles or grass, steps, patio, seat, step up to the dwelling, and a step up to private a private room. These objects were used as a series of planes and surfaces.

Also there was a move to identify how much space and the types of spaces the residents would require, in relation to private, social and outdoor spaces. Roofs and floor slabs were considered first to cover and define the spaces. Walls were then used to create boundaries and openings.
To figure out roof forms, sun orientation, exterior spaces and the interior programme were considered in order to cover the dwellings. Openings and roofs were orientated towards north to let light into the more public areas in the dwellings. To allow light to access private bedrooms the roofs were split accordingly to allow light penetration. The split and raised roof also demonstrate a shift in the interior space. The higher sections of the dwellings indicate the more private spaces, giving importance to the individual spaces.

As mentioned in the design process there are also two other types of clusters that exhibit similar design ideas, like roof angles and differentiation of surfaces. The private compounds and the courtyard cluster.

**Space in between**

A similar theme is continued throughout the site by breaking up external surfaces to indicate certain areas. As one travel across the terrain one may experience a typology that is based on a provision for the individual. Examples of these are:

- Outdoor rooms which are extensions of the dwellings, where the residents can meet and have the opportunity cook.
- Withdraw spaces where the importance of recovery and rest is signified.
Chapter 4.0 Critical Appraisal of the finished work and its theoretical framework

The purpose of this project was to develop a new refugee resettlement centre for newly arriving quota refugee in New Zealand. This is justified by the fact that there is no purpose built refugee resettlement centre, this is unacceptable. The complex requirements for a six week orientation programme needs particular attention.

4.1 Analysis of the design process

The site was a suitable option because the existing unmodified army barracks generated a means of critiquing and responding to current conditions. This analysis was a useful way of formulating architectural concepts and theories.

Initial analysis of the site indicated a condition which lacked any sense of space that provisioned one to act autonomously. As Herz stated earlier the grid layout provides “...no social or cultural life, no central density, just space for containing people.” 35 His research provides evidence that the grid must be broken up to allow for individual operations and social interaction.

Within the Mangere resettlement centre the humanitarian process of resettlement can be argued to be obstructed by a model of compulsion, which derives from the act of administrated procedures. The controlled procedures of medical screening and observation for example are reflected in the repetitive and institutionally focused master plan. This was a critical finding that illustrated the importance of positioning institutional buildings in such way that suggests a secondary role to let residential buildings breathe on their own.

The above critiques illustrated several existing problems that spawned the beginning of an architectural intervention, through a sense of entitlement. Throughout the design process numerous methods of crafting a centre that promotes individual autonomy and a sense of belonging, resulted in a scheme that sets up possible opportunities for a new refugee centre.

4.2 Analysis of master plan

The overall master plan was utilised to demonstrate the key moves in creating place that was targeted at giving the residents a sense of entitlement. A radical shift from the existing centre was the densification of the institutional buildings and positioning them 'behind' the residential and

communal spaces. Hence creating an adequately sized centre with differentiated spaces.

4.3 Analysis of architectural design solutions

Architecturally the sense of entitlement lies in such elements like, hierarchy of transition across the site, from to private residential buildings to communal spaces and withdrawn outdoor areas. The clusters across the site form spaces that are engaging and interesting compared to the existing army barracks. The clusters themselves are exciting in that they create smaller environments before entering larger areas. Many of the clusters join areas that act as exterior rooms connected to the private dwellings. These exterior rooms are good as they provide spaces for cooking and socializing, activities that provide for self determination. The dwellings demonstrate a degree of thought in the case of individuality. The forms are simple yet fit for the types of occupancy required for a six week period. The dwellings are adequately sized and private enough for rest and recovery.
5.0 Conclusion

The purpose of this project was to develop a suitable architectural solution to house New Zealand’s Refugee Resettlement programme. Despite the complex requirements of such a programme, there is no purpose-built Refugee Resettlement Centre. The current facility is a relatively unmodified former New Zealand army base.

So what were the architectural issues in the design of a Refugee Resettlement centre and how were they addressed?

The architectural issues in designing a refugee centre were identified as; even though the resettlement centres’ aims are essentially humanitarian, it can also be conceived as temporary solution therefore can be argued to be excused of its ruthless rationality. A rationale modelled by compulsion and control, which is derived from the act of administrated procedures.

These issues were addressed by critically analysing the existing refugee centre, in order to generate a means of formulating architectural concepts and strategies. Hence a proposition was created, in that the architecture must create ‘a sense of entitlement’. As the architecture either subjugates them or emphasises the importance of independence and self determination.

The result is a scheme that attempts to promote individual autonomy and a sense of belonging, resulting in a master plan and architectural solutions that sets up possible opportunities for a new refugee centre.
Appendix
### Summary of the residents’ weekly timetable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>On Arrival Briefing</td>
<td>*Morning meeting</td>
<td>*Morning meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Day 2</strong></td>
<td>*AUT Classes</td>
<td>*AUT Classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Introduction Meeting</td>
<td>*Medical: Cervical Screening Education session</td>
<td>*RAS Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Full Briefing in TV Room - Orientation of Dining Room (Introduction to Kitchen staff)</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Intro Talk followed by case interviews</td>
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<td>- Orientation of bathroom/laundry (intro to residential assistants)</td>
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<td><strong>Day 2</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>*Medical Testing</td>
<td><strong>Day 2</strong></td>
<td>*AUT Classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Under 16yr</td>
<td><strong>Day 3</strong></td>
<td>*Medical X-ray</td>
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<tr>
<td>*RMS: Intro Talk followed by case interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>RAS</strong></td>
<td><strong>Day 3</strong></td>
<td>*RMS Confirm Resettlement allocations</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Stress assessments groups</td>
<td></td>
<td>*Dentist All Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>- RAS Health</td>
<td><strong>Day 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Day 4</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Intro/Road Safety Training</td>
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<td>*AUT Classes</td>
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<td><strong>Day 3</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>*Blood Tests All Day</td>
<td><strong>Day 3</strong></td>
<td>*RAS Children and Adolescents’ Group</td>
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<td>*RMS Continue Case interviews if necessary</td>
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<td><strong>Day 5</strong></td>
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<td><strong>RAS Continue Stress Assessment Groups continue...</strong></td>
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<td><em>AUT</em></td>
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<td>*AUT Testing</td>
<td><strong>Day 4</strong></td>
<td>*Allowances</td>
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<td>*Dentist All Day</td>
<td><strong>Day 4</strong></td>
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<td>*HNZC Orientation Presentation and Needs Assessments</td>
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<td><em>RMS Auckland Social Workers meeting - cases meet with volunteers</em></td>
<td><em>RMS Auckland Social Workers meeting - cases meet with families</em></td>
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<td><em>HNZ Tenancy Sign-ups &amp; HNZ/RMS Life Skills House Presentation</em></td>
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Asylum seekers make their way to New Zealand independently. They seek international protection, and claim refugee status on arrival or after having been in the country for a period of time.

Asylum seekers:
- may be detained if they pose a risk to national security or if there are doubts as to their identities or risks of them absconding. Detention may be either at an open detention centre or sometimes in prison, while applications for asylum are processed. They may also be released on conditions to the community;
- are entitled to receive protection in New Zealand during the legal process of proving the validity of their case;
- may be granted a six-monthly renewable work permit and can receive an emergency unemployment benefit but are unable to access a number of social services;
- do not have guaranteed access to adult education;
- are entitled to state-funded healthcare;
- are removed if applications or subsequent appeals for refugee status are unsuccessful.1

A research paper delivered by the Department of Labour called Refugee Voices: A Journey Towards Resettlement illustrated how service providers and refugees felt about the support at the Mangere centre. The findings can be summarised as followed:
Overall good support and a useful program.
Having people at one place made it easier to deliver essential services.
The six week programme may not be long enough for some people, about 13% of Quota refugees felt unprepared
About 87% of 97 interviewed refugees had positive feedback about the Mangere Centre.
Hard for refugees to list least important aspects of the centre as it was the only place they had known about New Zealand.
The food was difficult to get use to.
Sleeping and other facilities could be improved.2

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