CREATIVE SPACES
The application of arts and crafts in contemporary architecture

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ABSTRACT

This research project is concerned with the design of Creative Spaces, an arts centre for urban dwellers.

Urban life can be complex, disjunctive and isolating, and as a result our generation relies on ‘quick fixes’ for instant gratification, ‘retail therapy’ or spa treatments are just two examples of this phenomenon. The knowledge and skill of making on the other hand has been lost and with it the rewarding feeling of achievement, that is gained due to activity and company.

Furthermore, shop and art gallery designs aim at accommodation of the art object and focus on the sales process. The incorporation of the customers curiosity on how the object has been crafted is not provided neither is the possibility of his/her participation. As a consequence the artist studio is mostly hidden from view.

This project will analyse and discuss how the nineteenth century Arts & Crafts Movement theories and contemplate whether or not an application of those theories can positively influence contemporary architecture in the design of Creative Spaces. This idea will work hand in hand with the function of the projected building which aims at infusing arts and crafts into an urban context, thereby providing dynamic activities for the long term benefits of the community. To finally dissolve the boundary between private and public space will be a fundamental part of both, this thesis and the projected architectural plan.

What makes the architectural solution of Creative Spaces so successful is that it can encourage the local community to integrate the arts and crafts programmes into their busy daily lives.
1.0 INTRODUCTION
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This Project, Creative Spaces, explores the integration of art in everyday life. In particular, it considers whether the Arts & Crafts Movement theories of the nineteenth century are applicable to contemporary architecture and, if so, whether they can help create environments that have a positive effect on people’s health and well-being.

A key issue in relation to this question concerns the idea that exposure of artists’ studios could once again engage people in creative pursuits as a means of escape from the chaotic and disjunctive twenty-first century lifestyle. Artists’ studios are typically hidden from public view in order to avoid demystifying the creative process of objects by revealing how they have been crafted.

1.1 Research question and problem

The research question that informed the research project was therefore:

*How can the thinking and practice of the Arts & Crafts Movement be applied to contemporary architecture?*

Urban lifestyles are solitary, alienating, complex, and pressurise individuals in many ways. As a result of this, today’s generation often rely on instant gratification acquired through temporary or “quick fixes”, such as day spas, unhealthy take-away food or “retail therapy”. As people have become increasingly reliant on such solutions, they have forgotten the benefits and value to be gained from making things. Swiss architect, Peter Zumthor, asserts that he is not only “impressed by the knowledge of how to make things”¹, but that this ability actually “lies at the bottom of

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human skill.” Unfortunately people do not seem to even be aware of their potential to utilise this capability.

Creative Spaces, the title used for both project and building, offers an escape from the demanding complexities of the twenty-first century lifestyle, air conditioned offices and repetitive daily routines. Its design aims to integrate community, creativity, well-being and architecture, and to promote personal health and well-being programmes in the area of arts and crafts. The occupants’ sense of well-being is dependent on their engagement with the arts and crafts programmes.

Figure 1.1.1 Bill Moore, *untitled*, unknown media, California, USA.

Pablo Picasso once said that “art washes from the soul, the dust of everyday life.” As such, if people are encouraged to express themselves creatively and engage in art regularly, they will enjoy long-term benefits such as feelings of fulfilment, satisfaction in life and revitalisation. Creative Spaces aims to break-up the grind of everyday working or urban life by removing individuals from this through inspiring and stimulating arts and crafts for the “joy of the maker”.

The architectural solution of Creative Spaces will only be successful if it can encourage the local community to integrate the arts and crafts programmes into their daily lives. In order to do this, the design is influenced by its immediate and surrounding context, existing building fabric, amenities, characteristics of the site, topography, flows in and around the site and outlook.

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1.2 Research objectives

The primary objective of this research is to understand how to integrate arts and crafts into people’s everyday lives so that the Creative Spaces building can be used as a means of escape from the complexities of the twenty-first century lifestyle.

In order to do this the design of Creative Spaces is informed by the key Arts & Crafts Movement theories. Specifically, this project examines in particular whether the principle ideas of truth and honesty to materials, function, structure and site can successfully be applied to contemporary architecture.

To reinforce the theory behind the Creative Spaces design, the building’s function must be amenable to promoting the pursuits of arts and crafts in accordance with the analysed precedents. This will ensure the building and its function will benefit the community.

Finally, the overarching research goal is to discover ways of combining traditional craftsmanship, with contemporary design methods, typically including laser cutting and CNC machines. Frank Lloyd Wright’s textile block is particularly instructive in this regard. The design process for Creative Spaces combines the two methodologies using the strategy design through making. This means that Creative Spaces is designed through the use of model studies in conjunction with drawings and contemporary design methods.
1.3 Project scope and limitations

This project does not espouse a revival of the Arts & Crafts Movement as it existed in the nineteenth century. Rather, it seeks to apply the Arts & Crafts Movement theories to contemporary architecture. The proposed Creative Spaces design will therefore not reflect the architectural style of the Arts & Crafts Movement, but use the relevant theories to inform a modern interpretation suited to today’s lifestyle.

The principal focus of this Project is to establish how the arts and crafts programmes should integrate with one another, the Parnell urban fabric and its contemporary occupants. Secondary to the arts and crafts programmes, Creative Spaces will also provide a cafe and art shop.

The design of Creative Spaces will be unlike existing art centres and schools that tend to contain private and institutional studios and classes. Instead, Creative Spaces adopts an informal approach similar to that of open markets and street artists. This approach will best involve the Parnell community on a daily basis because the arts and crafts activities will be reflected through the fabric of the building.
2.0 METHODOLOGY
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2.1 Research

This Project explores the application of Arts & Crafts Movement theories to contemporary architecture and the area of arts and crafts. As part of this, appropriate precedents and their elements are analysed. This research is pertinent to the design of Creative Spaces because it provides an understanding of how the successful elements of current architectural precedents affect design and influence occupants.

2.2 Design

The design development of Creative Spaces is influenced by the arts and crafts programmes central to the building. The form of Creative Spaces therefore reflects the integration of art and craft pursuits into the busy twenty-first century lifestyle.

The Creative Spaces project takes a step-by-step design approach, involving the investigation of a suitable urban site and its surrounding environment. This involves taking photographs, drawing maps and sketches of the immediate and surrounding area (including vehicle and pedestrian routes, topography, local climate, views and noise), and noting the correct scale and proportions of existing buildings and their functions. It is also necessary to research the lifestyle of the chosen community. All of this culminates in a mixture of hand drawings and digital presentation techniques for the final presentation.

2.3 Programme

In order to infuse arts and crafts in the everyday lives of the urban dwellers, the selection of available arts and crafts programmes needed to take place at the same time as the design of Creative Spaces. To select the arts and crafts programmes it was first necessary to study architectural precedents and then to identify existing art facilities in the vicinity of the chosen site. These facilities include art centres, community centres, art institutions and galleries.
The facilities in the area of the chosen site indicate what arts and crafts services are already provided and if they are adequate.

The connection of the arts and crafts programmes to one another, to the outdoors, and to the urban surroundings, is important in developing fluid and comfortable spaces for both the artists and visitors. This connection is achieved through adjustable and flexible studio arrangements and will provide a dynamic building façade. Creative Spaces offers a mix of private studios for quiet, personal use, and semi-public studios to allow for visitor interaction with the artists. There are also public spaces outside the walls of the building to promote an open and welcoming aura.
3.0 THE NINETEENTH CENTURY ARTS & CRAFTS MOVEMENT
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European and North American cities grew immensely in the nineteenth century with industrialisation. German sociologists Ferndin and Tönnies\(^4\) described as early as 1887, the contrast between rural and city life at the time. The countryside was perceived as a place where a close community of likeminded people lived, whereas the city seemed to accommodate a host of strangers. Ferndin and Tönnies viewed urban life as unnatural and marked by dislocation of the dwellers from their surrounds. In this regard, they comment on the sense of alienation and disjunction felt by those experiencing a busy city lifestyle. More and more people seem to now face the rushed, ruthless and alienating feel of urban life. To escape this and to re-gain a sense of fulfilment, people often seek “quick fixes” or temporary solutions, most commonly in the form of consumption of material items, fast foods, drugs or tabloid television.

In 1887 the Arts & Crafts Society was formed by a group of designers in London. The designers formed this group to react against the industrial conditions and objects of mass production that had led to architecture separating from craft.\(^5\) Charles Mackintosh, distinguished Arts & Crafts architect, described architecture generated in Glasgow in the late 1800’s as “cold and lifeless”.\(^6\) This resulted from the industrial revolution whereby architecture became secondary to machines and mass production:

“For most of this century, the operative assumption has been that architecture must follow the means of production rather than lead it.”\(^7\)

James Garrett, author of *Home Building 1814-1954 the New Zealand Tradition*, adds that: “By the turn of the century many people had become dissatisfied with cheap, machine-

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William Morris, the founder of the Arts & Crafts Movement, was concerned with the living and working conditions the industrial revolution was generating in that:

“...Art is man’s pleasure in his daily necessary work, which expresses itself and is embodied in that work itself; nothing else can make the common surroundings of life beautiful, and whenever they are beautiful it is a sign that men’s work has pleasure in it. It is the lack of this pleasure in daily work which has made our own towns and habitations sordid and hideous.”

Morris believed in the “joy of the maker”, that the hand of the craftsman gave life to an object and that neglecting art would surely endanger social existence. He believed that art should be a part of everyone’s lives and was not just a privilege of the wealthy. Similarly, renowned arts and crafts architect, John Ruskin, has said that an object is worthless when human labour is absent. Because Morris realized that man was more important than the machine he, along with others, founded the Arts & Crafts Movement to raise standards of craftsmanship.

Many theories of the Arts & Crafts Movement influence Creative Spaces. The “joy of the maker” and the engagement of individuals in craftsmanship prominently informs the Creative Spaces project, together with the theories of “truth to materials”, “honesty to construction” and “fidelity to place” (which promotes a better sense of national identity). Jonathan Glancey, who wrote The Story of Architecture, described the architecture of Arts & Crafts Movement architect, Charles Voysey, as consisting of “free-flowing plan, gloriously light interiors and a sense of harmony and well-being expressed” through outstanding hand-crafted details.

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9 Davis, Howard, The Culture of Building, Oxford University Press, New York, 1999, p. 18
10 Architecture History 2A, Lecture 3, Gothic Revival and Arts & Crafts Movement
A built example of the Arts & Crafts Movement style is the “Red House” in Kent England [3.0.1] designed by Philip Webb for William Morris in 1860. It was the first example to embody the Arts & Crafts Movement values by producing a practical and inventive retreat in “a small place for art”.  

Figure 3.0.1 Philip Webb, Red House, 1860, timber and brick, Kent, England

Another building of the Arts & Crafts Movement is Ernest Gimson’s cottage called “Stoneywell”, which has been described as “a symbol of the simple life, a sanctuary of innocence, a safe refuge from the ills of modern civilisation.”

The Arts & Crafts Movement theories closely consider the context of a site and seek to harmonise this context with its surroundings and contemporary design. Co-founder of the Arts & Crafts Movement, John Ruskin, has described the theories in this way. Baillie Scott and Edward Burne-Jones also held context to be an important part of design whereby the exterior should be as important as the interior. Burne-Jones has said to this effect that:

“The vernacular house was essential in the Arts & Crafts ideals. Houses should be regional in appearance, reflect the climate, the indigenous materials and the local building tradition...the spirit of the movement required freedom, flexibility, personal ownership and individual interpretation.”

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16 Ibid., p.73.
One hundred years after the Arts & Crafts Movement had its heyday, Elizabeth Cumming, who wrote *Architecture 1900*, suggested that:

“*Arts together could contribute once more to the quality of building design and they could bring visual and even spiritual harmony to the lives of British citizens.*”

Henry Van de Velde, a Belgian proponent of Arts & Crafts ideas, claimed that “*good design alone had the power to transform society.*” The Arts & Crafts Movement aimed to develop this idea through the proliferation of “*honest construction*” and the exposure of structure and materials (for example, timber rafters were revealed in the eaves of buildings). People were “*sick and tired*” of cheap mass produced products so the Arts & Crafts Movement was “*an act of rebellion ... against the appalling consequences of industrialisation*” in an effort to re-consider the valuable social benefits that architecture can provide. The “Hvittrask House” designed by Herman Gesellius, Armas Lindgren and Eliel Saarinen in 1902 reflected the Arts & Crafts Movement theories’ “*desire to escape from urban life*” through design that was sensitive to its site, had high standards of craftsmanship and utilised a variety of materials.

Frank Lloyd Wright founded the Chicago Arts and Crafts Society in 1897 that promoted the social and philosophical principles of the Arts & Crafts Movement. Wright felt a sense of freedom through creative expression and he believed that art and life permeate one another with the result that a sense of freedom and escape can be reached. Furthermore, Wright perpetuated the idea that art should reconcile with urban life.

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20 Ibid., p. 43.
22 Ibid., p. 57.
Wright proposed that form and function should reflect one another, and that there should be truth to materials in the sense that materials should demonstrate their natural qualities and relationship to nature, similar theories to the principles of the Arts & Crafts Movement.  

The closeness of Wright’s theories to those of the British Arts & Crafts Movement is particularly evident in Wright’s respect for the past, his careful rendering of the natural landscape and his concept of honest craftsmanship. Wright’s fundamental source of inspiration came from nature and he believed that it was essential for structure and site to relate to one another. For example his famous textile block construction [3.0.3] was inspired by the textures of the trees surrounding one of his projects.

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27 Ibid., p. 89.
the inside and outside, sympathetic to the ground and complementary to the natural environment. 28

Wright minimised enclosed space with dividing screens that replaced conventional walls developing flow from one room to another, interior to exterior space such as in his project “Falling Water” that has open plan spatial arrangement of living spaces.

Later on in his career Wright realised that craftsmanship was becoming more and more costly so he proposed a collaborated between art and industry in saying: the “machine should be a tool in the hand of the artist.” 29

Conversely, John Ruskin refused to accept the machine. He was quoted in The Arts & Crafts House as once saying that:

“The industrial revolution has dehumanised the artisan, turning him into a machine, robbing him of his creativity, and leading to buildings, artefacts and decorative objects that were ugly because they had no soul.” 30

This project proposes to combine the theories of the Arts & Crafts Movement with technology, because technology is an intrinsic part of our lives and to go back to pre-industrial age is a “utopia” no one wants to pursue. Technological advancement has enabled the machine to produce unique architectural design, not just mass production of poor quality products. 31

The dilemma of the Arts & Crafts Movement was whether or not to allow the machine a place in the creative process. Handcrafted products were exceptionally expensive so the machine assembly line provided economical and efficient production however as a consequence this result in “poor design and the dehumanization of the craftsman” 32

However, later in Morris’s career he agreed that it was

unrealistic for everything to be handmade so there should be both: handmade and machine made objects. The high level of labour involved in producing handcrafted products and architecture that only the wealthy could afford, was one reason for the end of the Arts & Crafts Movement.

The German architect and co-founder of the Deutsche Werkbund in 1907 Hermann Muthesius tried to circumnavigate this dilemma by saying that the only economically and viable way to create a national style was through the conjunction of art and industry.

Many of the Arts & Crafts ideas were obscured and lost by the subsequent architectural modern movement of the early to mid-twentieth century International Style. The Style was in support of utopian architecture and productivity however, craftsmanship, well being and spirituality were not part of this like the Arts & Crafts were concerned with.

This project differs from the Arts & Crafts Movement in the way that modern technological methods and twenty-first century society have been considered in the design process. This project nevertheless uses the lost theories of the Movement in order to address the current social problems. I feel that some very important theories of the Arts & Crafts have been lost in architecture today including quality craftsmanship, consideration to site, honesty and truth to materials and function of the building. This study of the theories will hopefully bring light to them once again in conjunction with craftsmanship combined with modern technology to ensure its continued existence in architecture.

Furthermore, the built examples of the Arts & Crafts Movement in England did not have any strong relation to the outdoors. The most renowned building of the Arts & Crafts, “Red House” [3.0.1] boasted very small openings, overall fairly enclosed and separated from its outdoor surroundings which I feel is not fitting for the 21st century and especially the New Zealand lifestyle.

33 Ibid., p. 134.
34 Ibid., p. 9.
The Seattle architect practice, Olson Kundig is an example of 21st century architects applying similar ideas of the Arts & Crafts Movement in their designs and philosophies. Jim Olson believes that:

“Buildings can serve as a bridge between nature, culture, people and that inspiring surroundings have a positive effect on people’s lives ... In natural settings, his buildings often weave into their surroundings as if they had always been there; they are as integrated with nature as they are with art.”36

Olson also strongly recognises the important relationship between art and architecture. Olson’s explanations are akin to the Arts & Crafts Movement, a rare example since the theories were lost in the 19th century.

Nili Portugali considers the effect of modern society to have been “alienation between man and the environment ... feelings of detachment and alienation.”37 Portugali goes on to say that “contemporary architecture sought to dislocate itself from the world of emotions” - the essence of beauty and comfort.38 The Culture of Building written by Howard Davis, is an important source for this project as he discusses the current situation of architecture, the lost tradition of craftsmanship and how it may be restored and applied in the 21st century with modern design methods. Davis wrote that the

“Modern built environment is to a large extent brutal and alienating and that traditional environments contained at least elements of human feeling and aesthetic sensibility.”39

Davis goes on to explain that the problem with modernism is that local place and culture is no longer considered, for its replacement with a universal design.40 However, Davis believes that architecture should have a “strong connection

38 Ibid., p. 1.
to place [...] local history, local building techniques,”

similar theories of the Arts & Crafts Movement.


“For the pleasure of the eye rather than for the well
being of the inhabitants [...] pushing us into
isolation, detachment and exteriority.”

disregarding the senses. Pallasmaa goes on to say that
modern designs failed to raise the human spirit – even
though this was one of the goals the modern movement
pursued.43

3.0.1 Arts & Crafts Movement in New Zealand

The Arts & Crafts Movement became universal, spreading
world-wide. James Chapman-Taylor (1878-1958), a
significant Arts & Crafts Architect, brought the Movement
to New Zealand. Chapman-Taylor believed in timeless
principles of beauty and humanity in architecture, reflecting
the Arts & Crafts ideals; “*quiet beauty, simplicity and
honesty ... to lead the world in artistic and social
change.*”44 He thought that architecture should work in
conjunction with crafts and design because the architecture
of a country reflects society and its moral values.45

It was claimed by the 1940’s Group Architects, that New
Zealand needed its own architecture as the replication of
overseas styles were not appropriate or fitting for New
Zealand’s climate and lifestyle. The Group described how
architecture plays an important role in our everyday lives as
it is the background to our environments. They said that
freedom from the daily routine could be achieved through
designing for a building's function and its occupants in order
to “*gain for himself the joys and satisfactions of a more
leisured and cultured existence.*”46

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41 Ibid., p. 284.
43 Ibid., p. 21.
44 Siers, Judy, *The Life and times of James Walter Chapman-Taylor*, Millwood Heritage Productions 2007, p. 4.3
45 Ibid., p. 44.
Figure 3.0.1.1 Group Architects, *Takapuna house*, Auckland, 1949-1950
ART AND CRAFT TODAY
4.0 ART AND CRAFT TODAY

There is the idea that creativity is concealed in a back room, a messy activity to be hidden from view in order to maintain the mystique of art. Artists studios also tend not to reflect their creative functions within. This may be because the studios are associated with ‘dirty’ settings. The usual idea of concealing activities within buildings is changing; an example is the restaurant kitchen – kitchens are becoming more visible to customers in the dining areas to show off the skills of the chefs, with no reason to conceal the preparations of meals, and creating a relaxed atmosphere.

The same can be said for art centres that are typically found in community centres or buildings that do not promote their function. It is unfortunate that such facilities are not exposed because the buildings conceal the beautiful skills and processes involved in creating an object that the public cannot appreciate. The form of Creative Spaces will intend to expose its function.

An example of an artist’s studio in the public eye is carver Toi Te Rangiuaia who works outside of his studio on the main street of Oneroa village on Waiheke Island.

Traditionally many creative activities, and businesses such as blacksmiths, were outside on the main streets to advertise their services, not dissimilar to the street artists in Florence where pedestrian observation of the artists at work on the pavement welcoming social interaction. Creative Spaces takes on this idea to provide art studios with informal and casual environments.

The role of technology will become an important part of both the programme and in the design of the building itself. The programme will provide not only artists’ studios but contemporary technology and machines to assist with the production including laser cutting machines, CNC machines, stereo-lithography and computers with 3D modelling computer software. This will enable the combination of traditional and contemporary art and craft. For example Mike Carlton, a New Zealand artist, applies contemporary technology in his traditional Maori designs,
using a laser cutting machine [4.0.3]. Carlton respects traditional Maori culture while using a modern approach to making the art.

![Figure 4.0.3 Mike Carlton, untitled, timber](image1)

![Figure 4.0.4 Personal laser cut card and necklace](image2)

4.1 Benefits of arts and crafts

The benefits of arts and crafts are found globally and in many cultures. In Wellington, New Zealand artist Ingrid Jenner attends an art studio called Pablo. Jenner said that the facility is a supportive environment where she can pursue and develop her art, “It’s given me structure, an occupation, a daily routine and a sense of community.”

In extreme cases art has been used as therapy in prisons for emotional release and a sense of redemption through art. Art and craft programmes are found in some prisons around New Zealand beneficial to the rehabilitation and healing process of the prisoners, through gaining new skills, discovery and restoring their social well being.

4.2 New Zealand art, craft and culture

Art is a very important part of New Zealand culture. The Ministry of Culture and Heritage defines cultural-well being as the

> “vitality that communities and individuals enjoy through participation in recreation, creative and cultural activities and the freedom to retain, interpret and express their arts, history, heritage and traditions.”

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48 www.arttherapyinprison.com/Research.html
49 www.mch.govt.nz
Furthermore, our indigenous Maori art culture is described as being inseparable from culture,

“It is like a living organism that exists in the spirit of our people and drives them toward wider horizons and greater achievement.”

The Maori philosophy of Hauora (well-being), moreover, encompasses the physical, mental/emotional, social and spiritual dimensions of health that are necessary for strength, harmony and enhancement of a quality life. The inclusion of traditional and contemporary Maori art and craft programmes in this project will be important including carving and weaving. New Zealand’s indigenous Maori culture may also inform the building’s design.

4.3 Contemporary architecture and craftsmanship

The Culture of Building (1999), by Howard Davis, is an important text for this project, discussing the current dilemmas in architecture and how in the reinstatement of traditional craftsmanship, in conjunction with contemporary design methods may assist with the problems.

The word ‘craftsmanship’ as explained by Davis has the tendency of being associated with old fashioned and out of date references, although he believes that craftsmanship is about the relationship between a person and the product where there are direct and conscious decisions made about the evolution and therefore outcome of the artefact through the tools. Craftsmanship is appreciated a great deal more in an age where hand crafted objects are scarce and mass produced products are abundant.

A strong relationship between client, architect and builder is necessary for decision making to establish a strong resolution in design and higher quality of craftsmanship as everyone is actively involved in each stages of a projects progression:

“These ideas are not archaic but twentieth-century processes of production have eliminated them from the production of most artefacts. This is not to say
that craftsmanship is not present somewhere in the process – in industrial design [...] but most contemporary buildings in the world, and modern cities as a whole, are not themselves the product of craftsmanship”.

Craftsmanship inevitably leads to precision of a design through traditional carpentry or advanced computer technology for the precise fit of a building to its context. Davis considers traditional and modern design techniques should evolve together.

He talks about how buildings have the ability to elevate people’s spirits but are no longer delivered because we live:

“...in a world that depends on the satisfaction of explicit standards and functional demands (regulations, building codes, economic and cost analysis) [...] the need to be explicit in a society that is driven by money, paper, and litigation had caused the more unquantifiable qualities of beauty, cultural meaning, and deep affective feelings to be put aside as things that are unimportant and ‘subjective’”.

Architecture and construction were considered in the late nineteenth century to be restricted to industrial and economic requirements and as a consequence jeopardising human needs.

This idea has altered in the twenty-first century due to technological and production advancements for working conditions that are not necessarily unhealthy, as previously might have been the case. Today high-tech processes such as computers are efficient in relation to production time, changes to drawings, and coordination of projects therefore making jobs much more cost effective. They can also assist in the development of unique and complex designs. Davis explains that the ability to visualise abstract structures has become much easier and possible with 3D computer modelling becoming a tool which has

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52 Ibid., p. 254.
53 Ibid., p. 299.
“a direct relationship between visualisation and actuality – a relationship that might become more fluid than conventional process of design.”

These new tools; computers and machines have the ability to regenerate “a new vernacular in a socially dislocating world.”

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57 Davis, Howard, *Communiqué 1010* Lecture Series, Auckland University, personal notes
5.0 ARCHITECTURAL PRECEDENTS
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The theoretical underpinnings of this Project have been discussed. Relevant case-studies are now presented, to highlight worthy attributes of programme and design that informed the project development.

5.1 Cuban Art Schools

Significant precedents for this project are the Cuban Art Schools located in Havana, Cuba that were designed by Ricardo Porro in 1960. The schools were designed with the intention ‘to reinvent architecture’ as stated by Fidel Castro in 1960, political leader of the 1959 Revolution in Cuba.\(^{58}\) The schools are made up of five creative programmes including ballet, plastic arts, music, drama and modern dance.

Ricardo Porro was heavily influenced by the revolution of the time suggesting that architecture should be compatible with the purpose of the building and reflect the past and current state of society. The revolution was to make Cuba a communist country. The general political aims were to bring everyone, regardless of race, together through equal standards, opportunities and education - especially in the areas of art and science. The convex roofs of the School of Dance [5.1.2] were designed to ‘collect’ the movements of the dancers. The school was shaped to be dynamic in order to respond to the dynamism of dance, vision of freedom of the future - informed by the political communist ideology.\(^{59}\)

The political climate of Cuba informed the architectural design; a method which could be applied to this project in terms of the design being influenced by part of the inherited culture of New Zealand’s art.


Ricardo Porro stated; “Architecture must have meaning and add a poetic dimension to everyday life.” The schools were therefore designed to activate creativity through the building itself, and become so an architecture of fantasy. Sanchez, one of the associate architects in Porro’s practice believed that

“New architecture, for the mere fact of being in the service of the people, must not be purely utilitarian art, without aesthetic or emotional purpose.”

He believed that architecture is worthless if its purpose is purely a mechanical construction. Porro described his overall aim embedded in the schools as having sought “an expression of an architecture for the people and to delve into the eternal problems of the human condition.”

The forms of the schools were inspired by spatial symbolic representation and by the identity of the multicultural heritage, lifestyle, culture and landscape of Cuba:

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60 Ibid., p. 72
61 Ibid., p 43
62 Ibid., p. 146
63 Ibid., p. 146
“New spaces and forms deriving from a wide range of factual and metaphorical input that was reprocessed in various ways – changes of scale, exaggerated or broken rhythms, slopes and overhangs, complex or intersecting force and direction lines, fragmentation of volumes.”

The various creative programmes are housed within their own buildings with corridors to link each activity together.

Three principles guided the designs that all responded to the landscape, materials and structure of the site.

The first principle was to respect and respond to the landscape. This was achieved by the muscular reinforced concrete frame of the domes that incorporate planters, a gesture by which the landscape was integrated into the fabric of the building. The architecture was designed to be a part of the landscape and the character of the terrain informed the design developing sinuous and diverse spatial experiences through the architectonic elements. Layered vaults undulate with the landscape

“presenting an ever changing contrast of light and shadow of dark subterranean and brilliant tropical environments.”

The second principle determined the use of local materials which would provide an organic harmony between the forms of the architecture and the materials.

The third principle was for the structure of each school to be designed with vaulted ceilings.

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65 Ibid., p. 172
66 Ibid., p. 57.
67 Ibid., p. 57.
68 Ibid., p. 57.
69 Ibid., p. 24-26.
Rudolph Schindler, one of Porro’s associate architects, illustrated the Art Schools to be shifting volumes and planes\(^70\) with filtered light through a thin shell construction \[5.1.3\]. Garatti, one of the architects of the schools, said the vaults “*peel away allowing slices of the brilliant tropical light to penetrate the dark subterranean corridor.*”\(^71\) There are also dramatic contrasts in the dark pathways with the brightly lit volumes of the dance pavilions.\(^72\)

A former student commented on the school:

> “The functional can be organic and aesthetic [...] culturally the schools were very functional, very good for the spirit, providing a place of meditation for the students. I loved studying there in the wonderful spaces with the wonderful light. You had the sense of being alone when walking along the curved footpaths. There was the magic of being there”.\(^73\)

The function of the building appeared to be another strong point of design. It was organised by the internal and external forces of the programmes with easy movement from individual to group practice. In parts the schools turns its back to the landscape and these spaces are introverted.\(^74\)

Each of the school’s designs was centred around the main program i.e. the rehearsal dance studios and theoretical classes gathered around the exterior of the main dance auditorium, which had accentuated roofs inflecting inward to draw attention to it.


\(^{71}\) Ibid., p. 57.

\(^{72}\) Ibid., p. 98.

\(^{73}\) Ibid., p. 175.

\(^{74}\) Ibid., p. 86.
The paths linked the various programmes together while providing informal meeting places and sitting areas. The interior and exterior spaces completely contrast one another to emphasise and acknowledge the different environments.

5.2 Art Schools in New Zealand and Australia

Corban Estate Arts Centre is located in the historic winery buildings of Corban Estate in Henderson, Auckland. It is now home to artists’ studios, exhibition and gallery spaces.

The conversion of Corban Estate was developed by the Waitakere Arts and Cultural Development Trust in 2002, to promote and develop the arts and culture of Waitakere City. On a visit to the art centre there was a feeling of remoteness and hostility caused by the sprawling nature of the concrete buildings and remaining foundations of demolished buildings. Although there are a variety of spacious industrial buildings, converted into artist’s studios, the thick set walls with small openings obstruct visitor’s interaction with the studios. Private spaces are more common than semi public or semi private spaces which will be avoided in the design of Creative Spaces as the encouragement of the community involved will be key. The buildings also do not respond to one another as did the Cuban Art Schools nor do they reflect the function of the buildings in a way that inspires the artists as the initial design of the buildings were not intended for art studios. The interior of the buildings have no relation to the exterior reducing passive light and ventilation while limiting social interaction.
The Maori Arts and Crafts school in Rotorua was established in 1967 by Sir Apirana Ngata. The school was intended “to preserve what was left of the remarkable attainments of Māori, and to promote all aspects of the culture.”75

![Sunken studio of the School of Maori arts and crafts](image)

Figure 5.2.2 Sunken studio of the School of Maori arts and crafts

The art and craft programmes are primarily carving and weaving not only to conserve Maori traditions but also to benefit the students in feeling a sense of achievement through learning new skills and making discoveries. The central studio is intentionally placed 500mm lower than the public space [5.2.2]. This works such that visitors are able to get as close as possible to the working artists without encroaching on their personal space and getting in the way.

Box Hill Community Arts Centre was developed alongside the local artists intending to use the centre. Through the collaboration of the occupants of the building a real sense of community was established. 76 This art centre serves the suburb of Box Hill as the dynamic centre providing a variety of craft programmes. The spatial experience of the building is explained by the architect Gregory Burgess “Feeling of vitality and light, and the building exudes a sense of welcoming and ease.”77 The exposure of the creative function of the building increased the volume of visitors, 78 a notable design element for the consideration in the project development of Creative Spaces.

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75 School of Maori arts and crafts, Rotorua, www.tepuia.com

77 Ibid., p. 289.
6.0 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT
6.0 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Introduction

The programme of this project has been assembled over the course of a year and a half. The journey began in the Research Methods class 2009 where the formulation of a proposal and topic of architecture was pursued. Initially this proposal was interested in a facility intended for mind, body and spirit programmes however this focus shifted to focus solely on the art and craft programmes.

6.2 Site selection

The site I chose is located in Parnell, an inner suburb of Auckland [6.2.1]. The reason for choosing the site was because I have been working in Parnell for the past two years and feel there are inadequate public spaces that tempt me to escape the air conditioned office in my breaks to eat my lunch, relax or get motivated. Parnell is also known as Auckland’s “creative quarter” an established and thriving village 5 minutes drive from Auckland’s CBD and waterfront with a residential population of 6,519⁷⁹.

⁷⁹ www.teara.govt.nz/en/auckland-places/12
Creative Spaces caters for both the living and working community, to offer people relief from their busy lifestyles by stimulating them with a creative environment. Not a typical day spa where relaxation is given through massage and treatments or retail therapy, but a place where individuals will gain a sense of long term well-being and satisfaction through the engagement of creative programmes. It will be an area in Parnell where one can retreat to at any time whether or not they are participating in arts or crafts. It will be a dynamic and stimulating place to be exposed to, or wander through. The facility should be open for long hours during the daytime and evening, conveniently available for daily, weekly or monthly use. The classes could be an expansion of the current activities held in the Jubilee building and could be funded by the Parnell Trust, Creative NZ, Auckland City Council, surrounding art galleries and commission from artworks sold at the urban Creative Spaces.

Parnell’s topography slopes off either side of the Parnell Road giving the feeling that the buildings along the road are rolling away. This does not develop a sense of containment or shelter, however, the buildings are two storied and close to the roadside which creates a feeling of stability and direction down Parnell Road typically including restaurants, bars, cafes and retail shops on the ground level and offices and apartments on the first levels. Venturing off the main road of Parnell the backs of these buildings are deteriorating with many leftover and unresolved spaces. It appears that everything (except the residential dwellings) beyond the main road is inferior.

The immediate surroundings of Parnell Road are mostly low density detached residential dwellings. There is small commercial area to the north-west of Parnell situated adjacent to the railway. To the west of Parnell, at the top of the ridge, there are commercial and retail buildings.

6.2.1 Topography of Parnell
6.2.2 History

The ideals of the Arts & Crafts Movement highlight the importance of truth to tradition with the intention that a building will fit into its context. Howard Davis also suggests that a new design should have familiar elements to the traditional architecture of a place so that people can connect and understand new buildings, but that should not limit contemporary architecture in form or construction. It is important in combining the historical buildings and history of Parnell at the same time as bringing a new edge into the building fabric.

It is therefore necessary for this project to examine the site context of Parnell village, Auckland’s oldest suburb. It was originally developed in the pioneering period of the 1840’s and has retained its fabric, full of beautiful well maintained two storied colonial style commercial buildings. The buildings are clad mostly in white timber weatherboards or built of concrete and various bricks including Portsmouth, Oamaru stone and Parnell orange brick [6.2.2.2]. Well established trees frame either side of the bustling main street. The buildings heights and openings are of human proportions resulting in the village character and boutique nature of Parnell.

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Opposite the proposed site is Parnell village, built in the 1970’s by developer Les Harvey, the owner of many preserved buildings’ in Auckland. Harvey’s theories were similar to that of the Arts & Crafts as he was a craftsman and believed that there should be more pride in developments through the application of craftsmanship and arts.  

Parnell village designed for shops and cafés, is situated in the centre of Parnell contained behind the main set of shops and would probably not be discovered unless one stumbled across it.

The ideas behind the village link well with Creative Spaces allowing it to sit nicely opposite the village, although it is unlike Parnell village in terms of the design. This is because the function will play a large role in the design to promote and actively involve the community in participation or observation of art and crafts. The design will attempt to take

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Harvey stated

“In our industrial society, things are made for money, not for love [...] to give people delight and joy and to make the city a beautiful place where people can come to enjoy their leisure and living a full life which is now enjoyed only by extremely wealthy people”.  

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82 Ibid.
Harvey was dedicated to preserving the heritage site of Parnell in the 1970s. A modern building today will naturally have to consider the traditional fabric of the site but Creative Spaces aims furthermore at supporting the advent of a community spirit and does not just further the preservation of buildings.

6.2.3 Altering Parnell’s urban fabric

Creative Spaces is located in a central node of Parnell which will expose creative activities to the immediate working and living community.

Figure 6.2.3.1 Buildings surrounding proposed site

Parnell is considered to be a ‘privileged’ area consisting of many boutique shops and restaurants. The extent of Auckland’s ‘creative quarter’ in the immediate context of Parnell consists of a significant number of retail shops including 45 home and design shops, 12 art galleries, 10 jewellers and 21 boutique fashion stores displaying objects that can only be appreciated as finished products. A study of the building types in Parnell is shown in Figure 6.3.2.2.
Figure 6.3.2.2 Context of Parnell
While Parnell boasts a significant number of shops and galleries in the creative field, there is nowhere in the direct vicinity of Parnell that provides arts and crafts programmes. For Parnell to live up to its name ‘Auckland’s creative quarter’ I believe a facility of such description is needed.

Venues providing creative programmes in Parnell include the Jubilee building (Parnell’s community centre) Whitecliffe and Elam Schools of Art, each one located on the outskirts of Parnell at least 10-15min walk away. The Jubilee building is the only facility in Parnell which is accessible for the public; however it is not in Parnell village itself, making it inconvenient for daily use. In addition to this the building design does not support the specific function of art and craft programmes. Whitecliffe and Elam Schools of Art are institutional or private facilities; the idea to provide classes for everyone is not inherent.

Creative Spaces would ideally be situated in the immediate context of Parnell in order for it to be convenient for the working and living residence providing Parnell with a central creative hub.

Exposing Creative Spaces may bring together and make the common interest of creativity stronger in Parnell. Creative Spaces is intended to elevate the spirit of Parnell, giving change to the existing urban fabric of Parnell concentrating the interests of the arts into one area.

Buses and cars are the main source of transportation in Parnell. A train station by Stevens Lawson Architects is proposed in the old carriage works building off Cheshire Street, a two minute walk west of the site and is on a strong axis from the site as shown in figure 6.3.2.3.
Because Creative Spaces has public transport options available and being located in the centre of Parnell, artists and visitors should not need to drive to the venue.

The train station will become a main public transport alternative in Parnell linking surrounding suburbs and Auckland’s CBD to Parnell and the Creative Spaces.
7.0 SITE ANALYSIS
7.0 SITE ANALYSIS

The site, 218-236 Parnell Road is situated in a central node of the village, as shown in figure 7.0.1 highlighted in orange.

![Figure 7.0.1 Parnell site plan](image)

The site is sloping which reveals views out to Mechanics Bay, the Waitemata Harbour and is adjacent to Scarborough Reserve and not far from the proposed Parnell train station. It is a discredit that such a prime site has been left as a sprawling car park. The topography of Parnell naturally slopes away from the main road, generating a natural flow down into the site; attracting pedestrian foot traffic into the presently undervalued land.

![Figure 7.0.2 View of site from south](image)

The site is relatively flat near Parnell Road, sloping down to the east to Scarborough Terrace. The site slopes approximately 9m from the west edge of the boundary to the edge of the east boundary.

The land is privately owned by St John’s Church serving as a large 5700m2 car park [7.0.2].
Two seven storied residential blocks are located south of the site. St John’s Church and two story villas’ are found to the western side of the site on Parnell Road. They have unresolved spaces in between one another and at the rear of the sites.

![Figure 7.0.3 Negative & positive composition of the immediate context around the proposed site](image)

The section [7.0.4] clearly indicates the distinct contrast between building scales around the site (marked in orange). This is seen in the larger commercial buildings on Parnell Road and smaller residential houses on the opposing side of the site, Scarborough Terrace.

![Figure 7.0.4 Section through Parnell and site](image)

Consideration of the immediate surroundings of the site is essential. The many two story commercial and retail developments along both sides of the Parnell Road ridge contrast with low density, detached residential buildings to the east, which sit in the valley, dwarfed by the car park. These dwellings have an unappealing outlook from the frontal aspect of the properties. The scale and position of Creative Spaces is important to ensure that these dwellings are not affected by shadowing as they are sited low in a valley already with limited sun exposure in the late afternoon due to the commercial and retail buildings on Parnell Road.
7.1 Site characteristics

*Creative Spaces* is situated on the northern area of the site blocked out in figure 7.1.1, maximising sun exposure and harbour views. The site has no major shadowing from surrounding buildings and is devoid of prevailing south westerly winds.

This particular location also establishes a journey where visitors are drawn into a new environment off the busy main road of Parnell.

The site is typical of the forgotten spaces behind Parnell Road; disorderly, untidy, damaged, fragmented land that has lost its natural topography to flattened hard surfaces of concrete car parks. Reference to the original contours may break down the severity of the processed land. Figure 7.1.2 reveals various aspects of the site, retaining walls of an
assortment of materials; timber, concrete, metal and large scoria rocks. Metal fences define the boundaries and levels of the site.

Figure 7.1.2 Various retaining walls and materials on the site

From the residential houses, views of the site reveal layers of metal fences and retaining walls bearing down upon them, leaving a hostile impression similar to that of an institutionalised setting. The images of the proposed site and Parnell’s character are polarising because of the differentiating environments. The pressure developed by the dominant retaining walls needs to be addressed through the placement of the proposed building. This will be achieved by removing the retaining walls and setting the building back from the boundary line to reconnect the residential houses to the site.

A study of the existing vehicle and pedestrian flow in and around the site are shown in figures 7.1.3 which later informed the design development.

Figure 7.1.3 Pedestrian circulation and existing vehicle paths on and surrounding the site

7.2 District scheme
The site has a 12.5m height restriction to maintain views of the harbour from Auckland Museum and the zoning is 7b; residential activity however, the Council assured me that a discretionary application for resource consent for the proposed Creative Spaces would more than likely be accepted.
8.0 DESIGN PROCESS
8.0 DESIGN PROCESS

The study of the site’s surrounding and immediate context has informed the design process, in conjunction with the research.

8.1 Arts, crafts and site

*Creative Spaces* aims to relieve individuals from their daily routine through providing change to their surroundings as well as igniting their senses. The design will develop a relationship between creativity, architecture and well-being so that individuals may be invigorated and rejuvenated. The building itself becomes a working piece of art; using the process of connection, removal and addition of layers and materials.

8.2 Repairing a damaged site

The site is scarred from the prominent levels of the concrete car park and assortment of industrial materials. These characteristics have become increasingly influential and intertwined into the design process.

Initially I found it difficult to find any attractive characteristics on the damaged site. Peter Zumthor’s quote helped me to deal with this dilemma, “In my buildings I try to enhance what seems to be valuable, to correct what is disturbing, and to create anew what we feel is missing.”

So I began with studying the site’s various characteristics individually and in more detail.

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design process also reflects the process of making art; the removal, addition and layering of materials [8.3.1].

The model studies began with the re-interpretation of the site’s characteristics of materials, contours and the distinct levels of the site. The materials were rearranged and combined with the original contours of the site. Though the concrete was not cast accurately in terms of the contour heights, it develops an abstract composition reflecting the various characteristics of the site [8.3.2].

The design process through making will be followed through the rest of this Design Process chapter.

8.3 Design through making

The design process of *Creative Spaces* is through model making, reflecting the importance of craftsmanship in the theories of the Arts & Crafts Movement. This conceptual

Figure 8.2.2 Existing site materials; scoria, concrete, timber & metal

This Project will now continue to explain how this process was carried out.
8.4 Cultural and contextual influence

To acknowledge the Arts & Crafts theory of ‘truth’ to tradition, it is imperative to consider New Zealand’s culture and the immediate surroundings of the site: Parnell. This will ensure the firm connection of Creative Spaces to its context.

As discussed in Site Analysis [7.0] Parnell village has a great deal of character and charm. However, as the majority of buildings depict a colonial style, our New Zealand lifestyle and identity have been disregarded. New Zealand’s lifestyle has a strong connection to the outdoors. The colonial buildings of Parnell however, do not reflect this as they are mostly enclosed with confined internal spaces and living arrangements that are not easily altered. This needs to be considered throughout the design process in order for the building to connect into its context and lives of the community.

To add to this, for the building to fit into its context, it must be anchored to its site. Herzog and De Meuron,
contemporary Swiss architects, believe that beauty in a building can be created through the fusion of a building’s function and the site.\textsuperscript{84} This is achieved through the building’s design taking into consideration the topography and its surrounding fabric (colours, materials, scale and proportion.) as studied in Site Analysis [7.0].

This is informed by New Zealand’s unique indigenous Maori culture, recognised in the design process. The sketch and model studies below are inspired by a traditional Maori artefact. This artefact was then abstracted in the sketches [8.4.1] displaying the controlled process of removal, addition and connection of materials. This study then evolves into a 3D interpretation [8.4.2] with incised timber and string overlay.

\textsuperscript{84} Herzog and De Meuron, www.pritzkerprize.com
Another architect who believed in the strong connection between building and its context was Frank Lloyd Wright. His composition for the 1916 Imperial Hotel, Tokyo [8.4.3] was inspirational to this Project. Similar to the study of Maori artefacts, Wright’s illustration clearly demonstrate the layering and materiality through the geometrical lines and use of colour.

Wright’s composition was applied to the design process of Creative Spaces in reference to site influences. This was a combination of historical and contextual influences including the original contours, existing excavation of the car park layers and pedestrian circulation through the site [8.4.4].
These layers were then developed into a plan [8.4.5]. Added influences of the site were included; shadows cast from the surrounding buildings and the footprint of two buildings which were once on the site - a Catholic school and post office. The plan shows overlapping elements representing the merging and adjustable spaces between studios and in conjunction with external spaces.

*Figure 8.4.4* Original topography, existing car park, pedestrian circulation
Figure 8.4.5 Plan inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright’s Imperial Hotel illustration

The models below [8.4.6] are a three dimensional development of Figure 8.4.5 showing the combination of contours and circulation through the site with foam and string. Exploration of the building form with curves proved ineffective.

Figure 8.4.6 Foam and string study of sites contours and circulation
Subsequently I developed the curvilinear drawing into an abstract geometric plan, [8.4.7], on the drafting board.

A model was then developed [8.4.8] identifying how the masses of the Geometric abstraction lay three dimensionally. The materials of the model represent the type of spaces within the building rather than the materiality of the facade. The perspex represents the external space; Hebel, semi internal space; and timber, internal space. However as the model does not sit in its context, the effect of the form on its environment cannot be fully understood or analysed.

This model fails to effectively identify the relation between the ground plane and building form in elevation. This design process was then modified with laser cut models [8.4.9]. The models were inspired by the interior spaces of the Cuban Art Schools which have shifting and overlapping
elements filtering light and views of the external spaces. The model study represents wall, roof and floor planes and takes it a step further by including sliding and pivoting walls to enable artists’ to adjust their studio spaces. Existing shops in Parnell in some ways restrict the pedestrian with their small openings; Creative Spaces will hide then reveal the activities as pedestrians walk past the building through pivoting and sliding panels. Like street art visitors are able to watch the artists at work or take part in the activities.

The models were inspired by Maori artefacts [8.3.1], designed on project, drawn up in Auto CAD and produced with a laser cutting machine. This order of design ensured the product was thoroughly thought out before the inclusion of any machine which may hinder the full realisation of the desired product. The models were a study of various ways in which layers connect, filter light and develop negative and positive space. Building above ground level is the typical way of designing however this study consciously works with the ground plane.

Figure 8.4.9 Laser cut layered and shifting planes
8.5 Programme

The various activities will lend themselves better to certain areas on the site in consideration to the immediate context, noise, sun, wind and outlook.

*Creative Spaces* will provide both traditional and contemporary art and craft programmes. Traditional classes include but are not limited to: art painting and sketching, photography, Maori carving and weaving, metal work and jewellery design, furniture fabrication and sculpture classes. These traditional classes can be advanced with contemporary design methods including modelling of art and craft in three dimensional computer programmes and then produced with a stereo-lithograph, CNC or laser cutting machine. Secondary to this is the programming of private studios for tutors, outdoor relaxation and reflection spaces, café, exhibition space and specialty art shop.

The schedule of programming is part of the deliberate and planned development of each programme. It assesses and compiles a schedule of areas used as a guide for designing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHEDULE OF PROGRAMMING</th>
<th>Approx area allocation</th>
<th>Inside (I)</th>
<th>Outside (O)</th>
<th>Type of space</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Car parking</td>
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<td>O</td>
<td></td>
<td>loud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrance/foyer/reception</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>+ Offices</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Loud</td>
</tr>
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<td>+ Meeting room</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td>Quiet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Office</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td>Quiet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Painting/sketching/mural design</td>
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<td>I + O</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>+ Weaving</td>
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<td>I + O</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>I</td>
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<tr>
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<td>I + O</td>
<td>Quiet</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>+ Computer room</td>
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<td>Quiet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ CNC &amp; laser cutting machine</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Quiet</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>room</td>
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<tr>
<td>+ Glass blowing/stain glass</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Loud</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>+ Screen printing/textile design/wall project design</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Quiet</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>+ Metal work &amp; jewellery</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>I + O</td>
<td>Quiet</td>
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<tr>
<td>+ Private studios</td>
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<tr>
<td>Café</td>
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<tr>
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<td>855m²</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Placement of the various programmes on the site have been considered in relation to noise, sun, wind, outlook and the effect they have on their immediate context.

The immediate context of the site, as discussed in Project Development, posed the issue of identifying and addressing the various building zones in relation to the design of Creative Spaces. To the north and west region of the site, where commercial buildings are more predominant are the location of: studios, cafe and art shop. They are positioned to expose their activity to draw people within the building. To the south of the site are the louder activities including the laser cutting, CNC machines, computers and service room. These rooms require a smaller amount of passive lighting and heating, as they consume and therefore, produce larger amounts of energy and heat. This heat can be transferred into other areas of the building in the cold winter months via ducting. To the east of the site are the quieter activities including private studios and library in keeping with the residential dwellings, adjacent to Creative Spaces.

An early layout of programmes is demonstrated in the plan [8.5.4]. Although the plan of the proposed Creative Spaces is unlike the rectangular plan of neighbouring buildings, it is harmoniously integrated into the site and context of Parnell. To confirm this, a card board model of this plan was made situating the building, Creative Spaces, within the topography and surrounding buildings. It shows the relationship between the large scale buildings on Parnell Road and the small scale villas on Scarborough Terrace.
**Figure 8.5.4** Programme and form

**Figure 8.5.5** Model of form
Figure 8.5.6 Programming option
8.6.1 Fusion of public and private space

In order to draw the community of Parnell into *Creative Spaces* to immerse themselves in the art and craft programmes, a journey is developed through a careful sequencing of events and architectural elements. The design and environment of *Creative Spaces* aims to contrast with the building fabric of Parnell especially the formality of the colonial style. This is developed through a new and dynamic facade of sliding and pivoting walls revealing the artists’ studios and harbour views. This active environment will leave visitors and artists feeling motivated, inspired and refreshed from the artists.

8.6.2 An extension of Parnell Rd footpath

The main artery of the building (highlighted in orange) [8.5.6] is designed to be an extension of the footpath of Parnell Road. The main circulation pathway through the building encapsulates views of the studios and harbour.

The artists’ studios will be visible from the main road of Parnell to ensure that the function of the building is clear. Instead of exhibiting finished artworks like galleries, *Creative Spaces* is more similar to street artists in Florence where pedestrians interact with the artist. To help gain the curiosity of the pedestrian, views of the studios and harbour will be hidden and revealed through a series of panels.

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**Figure 8.6.1.1** Contrasting environments
The entrance of the building is identified with the slight level change in foot path. The roof overhang also breaks the boundary between public and private space welcoming people in. The building wraps around the church and villa sitting while sitting comfortably within the topography as follows the natural lay in the land.

The entrance is narrow and tall creating tension and to reflect the pressure of the urban lifestyle. This is the start of the transition from air-conditioned offices, structured orderly streets and into a hive of artists studios. As visiting pedestrians move further into the building this pressure is slowly released revealing the large main studio space and a full view of the harbour.

Below the main circulation artery is a large sunken studio space [8.6.2.3] inspired by the Maori arts and crafts school. The space is open to pedestrian observation at the same time ensuring that the visitors do not encroach too much on the artists work space. As the visitors move through the building they can experience a variety of arts and crafts. Courtyards are situated in and around the studios so that the sliding walls can open out to gardens. Both artists and visitors can enjoy their lunch and coffee breaks in these spaces. Internal and external areas are fluid through intersecting roof, ground and wall planes.

8.6.3 Flexible studio spaces

The adjustable walls aim to create a similar environment to the street artists in Italy [8.6.3.1], an informal space where people can feel welcome and comfortable to mix and mingle with the artists. Mies van der Rohe once explained how he provided flexible spaces:
“Screens can be slid aside, transforming the interiors. They do not enclose rooms but form light frames around the inhabitants and their few possessions, flattering openings out towards nature.”

Spaces can be easily transformed into various arrangements for particular programmes which is particularly important for an arts centre. For example larger spaces for carving and sculpture while smaller intimate spaces for painting and jewellery making.

During the day Creative Spaces will unfold, exposing the artists at work and at night close up to secure the building. It will respond to the spatial requirements of individual artists instead of the artist fitting into prearranged spaces. Alterations to the facade will reflect the evolving artwork within and providing a new dimension to the existing fabric. The adjustable walls will also enable spaces to be altered into public, semi-public, semi-private and private studios by giving artists freedom and flexibility to generate their own spaces in consideration to the size of studio desired. They will also regulate environmental elements such as filtering of passive light and ventilation necessary with Auckland’s irregular weather patterns.

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8.6.4 Materiality

The material selection for Creative Spaces were determined by the principles from the Arts & Craft Movement ‘truth to tradition’ and ‘honesty to materials’ in order for the building to fit comfortably into its context. Consideration to Parnell’s traditional use of materials was a key factor, the reason for its study in Project Development 6.0. This outlined the common use of white linear weather board, concrete and scoria stone. However, in consideration of ‘honesty to materials’, the timber will be stained to expose its natural texture, grain and colour. Timber in a sense reconnects us with the natural materials of the land and evolves over time, “it darkens and the grain grows more subtle with the years, acquires an inexplicable power to calm and soothe.”

As timber is the most common construction material in New Zealand, it will be used for most of Creative Spaces.

The northerly aspect of the building will be mainly clad in high performance glazing to make the most of the midday sun and harbour views. The south wall is clad in scoria rock and concrete. It has minimal openings.

8.6.5 Sustainable aspects

The orientation of Creative Spaces is north-east to maximise sun exposure over most of the day. The elongated shape of the building is in the direction of east west. This works well in the temperate climate of New Zealand for flexible and comfortable spaces throughout the course of the day.

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The sliding and pivoting walls enable natural ventilation and manage daylight throughout different times of the day and seasons. The intersecting roof planes and courtyards also allow for the natural reticulation of air flow through the building.

The material palette, as discussed in Materiality [8.4.5], includes local materials and production to lower costs and minimise environmental impact.\(^{87}\)

Because the scoria rock is located to the west of the building and is a solid mass material it will provide protection from the south westerly winds and act as a thermal insulator in winter and cools in the summer months.

*Creative Spaces* will be a great water harvester because of the large area of roof space. The roof collects the rain and is diverted to the underground water tank to be stored until it is used for irrigation of the gardens and used for the toilet flushing system.


![Figure 8.4.6.1 Section of building showing passive ventilation](image-url)

8.4.6 Structural and service systems

The ‘honest construction’ of *Creative Spaces* has been influenced by ‘Tree House’ (left) a residential home designed by Mount Fuji architects in Japan. The timber rafters and columns are exposed, giving a clear indication of how the structure works. This structure has been applied to the design of my project as shown in figure 8.4.7.2. The configuration of the building can be easily altered because of the relatively short spans of the structure.
Creative Spaces service systems include heat exchange from the rooms producing a lot of heat into cooler rooms. In the height of the summer an air conditioning unit will be used to cool 20 percent of the time while the remaining 80 percent will be naturally ventilated. In the winter under-floor heating will be used to warm the interior spaces.
CREATIVE SPACES

This research project is concerned with the design of Creative Spaces, an arts centre for urban dwellers.

Urban life can be complex, disjointed and isolating, and as a result our generation relies on ‘quick fixes’. The knowledge and skill of making on the other hand has been lost and with it the rewarding feeling of achievement, that is gained through the activity. Furthermore, shop and art gallery designs aim at accommodation of the art object and focus on the sales process. The incorporation of the customer's curiosity on how the object has been crafted is not provided neither is the possibility of his/her participation. As a consequence the artist studio is mostly hidden from view.

This project will analyse and discuss how the nineteenth century Arts & Crafts Movement theories and contemplate whether or not an application of those theories can positively influence contemporary architecture in the design of Creative Spaces. This idea will work hand in hand with the function of the projected building which aims at infusing arts and crafts into an urban context, thereby providing dynamic activities for the long term benefits of the community. To dissolve the boundary between private and public space will be a fundamental part of both, the thesis and the projected architectural design.

What makes the architectural solution of Creative Spaces so successful is that it can encourage the local community to integrate the arts and crafts programmes into their busy daily lives.
9.0 CONCLUSION
9.0 CONCLUSION

9.1 Critical appraisal

This research project shifted focus in that originally the goal was to design a facility to broadly cater to the mind, body and soul. However, as the well-being programmes needed for this facility appeared to grow to a size too large for the site, it was decided to focus on a particular area of well-being programmes of the arts and crafts. This shift in focus enabled stronger and more precise direction.

*Creative Spaces* proposes an escape from the demanding complexities of the twenty-first century lifestyle, air conditioned offices and repetitive daily routines. The proposed building aims to enhance the often draining routine of working life by freeing individuals through the variety of inspiring and stimulating arts and crafts for the “joy of the maker”.

*Creative Spaces* seeks to encourage active involvement in arts and crafts programmes in the midst of modern urban life so that people can feel a new sense of freedom and spark their imaginations. The “joy of the maker” was also applied to the conceptual design of *Creative Spaces* where a series of model studies informed the design outcome.

Movement theories could be applied to contemporary architecture, in order for the duality between art and urban life. The style of the British Arts & Crafts Movement is not suited to *Creative Spaces* because the designs are not compatible with New Zealand’s contemporary culture and climate. While the Arts & Crafts Movement architectural style cannot be readily applied to the New Zealand context, many of the key theories of the Arts & Crafts Movement are highly useful for the *Creative Spaces* building. For example, the “joy of the maker” theory is the most important in that it shows that satisfaction can be acquired through making something by hand, therefore contributing to the health and wellbeing of an individual. *Creative Spaces* seeks to encourage active involvement in arts and crafts programmes in the midst of modern urban life so that people can feel a new sense of freedom and spark their imaginations. The “joy of the maker” was also applied to the conceptual design of *Creative Spaces* where a series of model studies informed the design outcome.
9.2 Design outcome evaluation

As mentioned above the design of *Creative Spaces* was informed by the theories of the Arts & Crafts Movement and to reinforce this, the function of the building provides artists’ studios and arts and crafts programmes. Arts & Crafts Movement theories can be applied universally because the theories take into consideration the culture and context of a particular project, such as the ‘honesty to function’ theory. The design of *Creative Spaces* was informed by the arts and crafts programmes and studios. This was also similar to the theories of the Cuban Art Schools where every part of the schools could be used as a theatre; in relation to the design of *Creative Spaces*, all parts of the building can be adjusted for a particular creative space. The adjustment of spaces is possible with the pivoting and sliding walls developing a new dimension to Parnell’s fabric and integrating the artist’s studio into the community. The flexibility of space provides a more informal and welcoming environment reminiscent of markets, breaking the barrier between public and private boundaries. The design of *Creative Spaces* also encompassed a third important Arts & Crafts Movement theory ‘truth to tradition’, considered the architectural elements of the colonial style of Parnell and New Zealand’s culture to ensure that the design meshed well with its context. The theories of the Arts & Crafts Movement were strongly against the use of any machine, however, because of the advancement of contemporary design methods (such as the laser cutting machine,) machines are no longer necessarily producing poor quality products. The final test of *Creative Spaces* will be realised when the tangible building is tested by its occupants and visitors. This research project will ensure that the ultimate product meets the desired objectives in the best possible way.

9.3 Further research

As a means of following up on the effectiveness of the *Creative Spaces* building, it would be useful to conduct future research in the area of psychology. In particular, research could focus on psychologists’ studies about whether human engagement in making objects or art can be a successful form of therapy.
It would have been interesting for the design of the *Creative Spaces* building to have included a broader range of contemporary technologies in the design process including the CNC machine, stereo-lithograph and 3D models produced by computer programmes such as Revit and Rino. This is another area whereby future research could even better enhance the architectural qualities of *Creative Spaces*. 
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