Back to Front: Mixing it up in Ponsonby.

ABSTRACT

What is a sensitive development and urban design strategy for a vacant corner site and heritage building in Ponsonby; a character suburb of Auckland?

This research project focuses on issues of sensitive redevelopment of heritage buildings, in conjunction with their immediate vicinity. New Zealand has been slow to understand the importance of historic buildings and this was a particular point of interest. The study investigated utilisation of New Zealand’s Edwardian and Victorian shop buildings in the past, and their potential in the future, especially as both the buildings and land on which they are situated become more valuable.

The Ponsonby site includes a typical Edwardian building (GPK Building) and a neighbouring 1960’s building. An initial study determined the future of each of these buildings. The project aimed to improve both the site and its surrounding area. An urban design proposition was created and an interesting programme for the building was generated. The building includes subsidized housing for various creative professionals; with the mixed-use also helping to enhance the community.

The redevelopment strategy is to increase the rentable floor area while preserving the character and scale of the public front on Ponsonby Road. The current use of the GPK building has been adapted in the project while its aesthetic appeal and that of the neighbouring villas and cottages, have been respected; consequently becoming a strong driver of the buildings massing and elevational design. This reflects the scale, proportion and rhythm of old Ponsonby, while deploying modern materials and detail.
The project aims not only to successfully resolve the functional, formal and technological issues of this particular situation; but, to also propose a generic urban and architectural design strategy which can be applied to similar sites around Auckland.
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Overview

Architectural Question
What is a sensitive development and urban design strategy for a vacant corner site and heritage building in Ponsonby; a character suburb of Auckland?

Aim
To prove that a careful design strategy can positively reconcile the economic pressures in a project with the need to be respectful of both the historic character of the area, and associated sensitivities of the local community.

Objectives
- Compare options for the future of a site and its existing buildings in Ponsonby.
- Architecturally analyze Edwardian and Victorian 1900 era shops and propose a way of making them more functional in the future.
- Create a successful building that will be part of a third node of activity on Ponsonby Road.
- Propose a vibrant and useful public area with greater purpose than typical retail buildings today.
- Propose a design that aesthetically fits into the character area.
Outline of the Project

From the outset of the project, the first major question asked was – Would the chosen site and greater site area benefit more from developing the existing historic building on the site or from a completely new development?

In New Zealand and globally, the experiences of communities facing the dilemma of how to utilise buildings with historic importance led to my research and a comparison of three options:

A. To demolish the existing buildings and design and build a new structure to house the proposed use(s) – Redevelopment.

B. Retain both buildings on the site - retrofit the interiors, renovate the exteriors and extend the buildings – Reuse.

C. Remove the 1960’s building, preserve the historic 1908 building, retro-fitting the interior, renovating and/or restoring the existing exterior and extending the building; a form of revitalization and/or renovation, combined with conservation of aspects of the old building – Revitalization.

These options were analyzed and critiqued by a design panel; and each option evaluated in terms of its level of sustainability, economic viability and community impact. Option C was identified as satisfying key criteria with more potential to be the most successful architectural outcome. For Further information see appendix A.

Keeping the Auckland City Council, Category B graded, GPK building benefited the site and greater Ponsonby area. Well known New Zealand architect Peter Beavan states in a recent article in the Listener “We’ll have to conserve what we’ve got
and use it more intelligently”.¹ It became important to investigate urban characteristics of existing building fabric and focus on its strengths and weaknesses; while looking at how these existing buildings could be used to guide new architectural developments in Ponsonby, and, in particular, the development and extension to the GPK building. This meant using the historic building as a reference to help develop the façade, through elements such as proportion, order, scale and texture, while examining the way the buildings were used, determining how we might harness them further to benefit today’s lifestyle. A balance was necessary to ensure the project captured the concept without overstepping the mark.

Further analysis of the area highlighted the need to improve the site and its surroundings; suggesting that this area would become a new activity node on Ponsonby Road. This became a greater goal for the site; with the main focus being the ordinary 1908 building and the way in which it could be used in an extraordinary way. Historically, the rear of these buildings was used for private servicing and car parking; however, these areas have potential for development. The design of the historic building, aspires to transform the rear of the building into a valuable community area. It aims for the extended concept to be potentially adapted to other Edwardian and Victorian shops around New Zealand.

This is a new concept for the area; the only significant Auckland comparison being Parnell Village. However, the latter uses a different typology of building (residential villas); has a different focus (retail) and has arguably dated since its construction (ca. 1970).

The methodology includes interview, case studies and precedents, books and design exploration; used as the main sources of information and discovery. The project’s goal was the design of a successful building complex; with potential ideas for architects, city planners, urban designers, building owners and developers; the main focus is the design exploration and its process.

I have reviewed the current situation regarding international and New Zealand approaches to historic buildings. An important part of my study is the analysis of the Edwardian and Victorian building typology with the positives and negatives of these buildings being assessed. I also explore ideas about Auckland and its inhabitants. I will briefly describe the process I have followed, then finally collate the information, and combine it with personal ideas and proposals.

*For definitions of significant terms, please see appendix B.*
2 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

A qualitative/interpretative approach has been followed. Research involves “textual and/or image based data along with loosely structured... observations”\(^2\). The result is a series of hypotheses about what has been explored rather than a concrete and final conclusion.\(^3\)

Different methodological approaches have been used as different questions have been raised throughout the research and design development. Methods include review of international best practice, precedents and case studies, as well as interviews with architectural practitioners. The design process itself has been a major part of the methodological process.

For the initial problem: selecting the right solution for existing buildings on the chosen site; a qualitative approach was pursued to determine the positives and negatives of the three options in terms of three criteria: economic impact, sustainability and social impact. An architect makes these decisions on a regular basis; informed decisions are made based on information gathered, previous knowledge, and information from experienced specialists. Calculations are possible for the first two criteria but are specialized, complicated and beyond the remit of this research project.

It must also be noted that with subjective topics or questions it is possible to design systems to make decisions objective. Sometimes a systematic and accurate process needs to be followed to ensure results are fair and reliable. An example of this is


\(^3\) Ibid, 94-95.
the Council’s heritage score sheets. These score sheets result in a quantitative answer to a usually qualitative question. The international assessment systems are similar.

2.1 International Assessment Methods

International assessment methods and guidelines for heritage construction have been considered. See Review of Current Knowledge pg 10 for information on two of these theories. These systems were helpful in the initial comparative study of the research, when deciding whether to retain or remove existing buildings on the site. A limitation was that they do not factor in all elements which needed to be considered, such as surrounding environment, community and city situations, economics and sustainability.

The answers provided by these systems were not fully explored so they could not be taken as the sole solution to the question. They were used as an indicator and the question was investigated further through interviews and literature.
2.2 Precedents and Case Studies

Reviewing precedents and case studies was vital, forming the major methodological approach used for the research and design process.

When focusing on the design of a building, New Zealand and international case studies on architectural developments pointed to a clear understanding of some issues involved. They allowed a careful analysis of the positives and negatives of the design while allowing the case study sites and contextual situations to be compared to the Ponsonby Road site. They included international and local, public and private, and completely new buildings; and dealt with historic neighbours, as well as extensions to heritage buildings.

An important aspect of the project was the development and inclusion of a public courtyard at the rear of the building. Therefore it was important to look at developments Auckland-wide, which had successfully and unsuccessfully done this. Information collected from these case studies has helped determine the best architectural solution for the site, GPK building and creation of a pedestrian ‘street’.

*A selection of precedents evaluated can be found in appendix F.*
2.3 Interviews with Architectural Practitioners

As it was important to talk to architects who have designed buildings with similar aspects to the Ponsonby site, informal design critiques and interviews with different Auckland based architects have transpired. This further strengthened the design production.

A major shortcoming with this type of information collection is its lack of uniformity. The information was not fact-based but mainly subjective and formed from imperfect experience, with ideas often conflicting.

2.4 Design Exploration

Design Exploration is arguably the most important methodological approach for an architectural design project. Architectural design is an ‘in practice model’ of research…it is...less about gaining knowledge and more about solving problems and predicting effects...design fits that description pretty well”. Design exploration involves the constant process of trial and error. While the basic approach to architectural research is similar to other types of research; the major difference is the method of gathering the data which, in this instance, is through the exercise of design “Regardless of the discipline the researcher analyses the obtained data, interprets it, and reaches conclusions that the data seem to warrant.”

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4 Bryan Lawson, Designing as research, arq, vol. 6, no. 2., 2002, p.114, cited in Austin, n.d
5 Paul Leed, Jeanne Ormrod, Practical Research: Planning and Design. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2005), xxi.
Throughout the year and alongside further research, this approach has been utilized. Design exploration has resulted in many possible solutions to design problems including the design solution of the perimeter block, the need for the new construction to relate to the old, and the development of the back side of the building. Physical modelling, simple computer modelling, sketching and hard line drawing have been the major devices for activating this method. These ‘solutions’ are then tested through research, precedents, previous experience and with architectural practitioners.

Further research by design revealed complexities when designing a contemporary new building with the desire to acknowledge and communicate with the style of the GPK building. The issue is not just aesthetics and technology, per se, but how these relate to matters of taste, cultural identity and the socio-economic composition of Ponsonby and inner city Auckland.

2.5 Presentation

Presentation is a key element of the final project affecting the way the project is understood. Presentation will be hand-drawn I feel that it is a more sympathetic approach that references the past. These drawings will be adapted in “Adobe Photoshop” giving a collage affect and allowing a mix of new and old techniques. Plans, elevations, sections and perspectives will be shown along with two models which allow the three dimensional nature of the project and its spaces to be understood.
3 REVIEW OF CURRENT KNOWLEDGE

3.1 International Examples

Heritage buildings have been recognized as significant for hundreds of years in Europe; however, building conservation did not begin until the 1800’s. Theorists such as John Ruskin and William Morris highlighted the importance of architectural heritage and its conservation rather than preservation. Morris and Ruskin were part of the anti-restoration movement and criticized architects for the restoration of buildings. They believed buildings should not be rebuilt or preserved to what they were but protected, maintained and conserved to suit a future use.⁶ Ruskin’s ideas on the significance of heritage buildings became a basis for the conservation of architecture.⁷

Austria was early to recognize the importance of its heritage though legislation in 1852. Germany attempted to follow suit but it was not until 1893 that an Act was passed.⁸ Britain’s first law aimed to protect heritage monuments and was enforced in 1882.⁹

Following these initial legislative steps, many European countries have developed systems to define each building's status. Germany is one of the leaders in building conservation and, having lived and studied there, I gained some understanding of

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⁷ Ibid.
⁸ Ibid, 248.
their systems. I have investigated both Britain’s approach and the developed German system; choosing Britain as it colonized and primarily developed New Zealand.

**German Experience - Denkmalschutz Investigation**

Denkmalschutz is a German system and serves as laws written in 1974 and amended in 1986. The law translates as: ‘Act for the protection of cultural monuments’ and is used for the rating of both buildings and monuments, being: “…monuments protected under this act...[to include those] which lie in the public interest, for artistic, scientific, technical or historical reasons”.\(^{10}\)

A system has been created which requires buildings to be investigated in terms of their physical appearance and then ranked *(See Appendix C for further information).* After the completion of this procedure, the provisional outcome must obtain approval from Germany’s Monument Protection Authority if the building is to be demolished, relocated, remodeled, reconstructed and/or will involve the placement of advertising.\(^{11}\) This rigorous and typically thorough procedure protects German heritage and prevents the removal of significant buildings and attempts at thoughtless reconstruction.

Denkmalschutz Theory takes into account the existing building and its physical state. This could easily be transferred into economic value. However, it fails to look at the issue of sustainability and community impact. Retrofitting for sustainability, a similar system developed in Australia, looks into the environmental factors. However, it ignores other relevant issues.


\(^{11}\) Ibid.
Britain’s Experience

Britain is another country with developed building conservation legislation, and buildings erected prior to 1700 are automatically listed. Buildings in New Zealand from the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries could be compared to Britain’s buildings from the 18th century in terms of relative historical importance as both eras involved the development of the respective country’s early city buildings; however, New Zealand has not treated early era buildings as similarly important.

In Britain, buildings built after 1914, and around the same time as the GPK building being investigated, must be ‘selected’ in order to make the conservation list. However “many statutory lists contain buildings shown to be listed ‘mainly for group value’.” Buildings are kept if they contribute to the character of an area. If this were a rule in New Zealand, many Edwardian and Victorian Shops would be listed as they may confidently be argued to be vital to the overall character of certain areas.

British planners recognized that architectural importance should not be confined to singular buildings which are architecturally unique or to buildings which have hosted unique events. Areas or groups of buildings are as important, arguably more so. A group of buildings, squares, parks and items of historic importance often work together to form an area’s character and to create cohesion and this has been recognized by the creation of conservation areas “They are typically intended to prevent piecemeal erosion of the character of an area through the cumulative effects of numerous small changes.” All building demolition was to be controlled whether the buildings were listed or not, giving more weighting to ‘ordinary’ buildings. Buildings which, as a group, form an interesting area will therefore be protected. Demolition is still possible for non-listed buildings. However, a more stringent anterior process is required.

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13 Ibid
14 Ibid
Preventing change in areas could be viewed as negative where growth may be stunted; however growth is understood to be important but not necessarily to prevail at the cost of heritage. The Act means that only areas of heritage value are affected, as listed buildings may be influenced by the construction of an overpowering neighbouring building. Therefore without a large number of ‘ordinary’ buildings in one area their importance singularly would not be recognized.

In the United Kingdom all buildings are rated against criteria that determine whether they have architectural importance or not. This system produced by The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) aims to define the areas of a building that should be preserved or enhanced and deals with a large portion of the city comprising ordinary historic buildings.

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16 Martin Wollensak, interviewed on November 9, 2008.
3.2 New Zealand’s Approach

New Zealand is behind Europe in architectural conservation. At the time laws were devised for the preservation of buildings and monuments in Europe, settlers were beginning to arrive in New Zealand. To this day, an Act, aiming to protect ‘conservation areas’, has still not been passed. If it had been passed, many of our ‘ordinary’ Edwardian and Victorian Shops would have been safe and not susceptible to unsympathetic developments.

Figure 3.1 Ponsonby Road  
Figure 3.2 Mount Albert Shops  
Figure 3.3 Kingsland Shops
Demolition of buildings

Unlike Europe, our heritage regulations are not severe and this is noticeable when comparing Auckland’s city fabric with a similar sized European city that was not destroyed during the 1939-1945 war. Auckland was not developed until 1840, considerably later than European cities. Much of the inner city was constructed between 1860-1920; during Victorian and Edwardian times (including the GPK building), however, few of these early buildings remain. “Failure to protect heritage is one of the sorriest records of the Auckland City Council.”

Auckland’s heritage fabric especially suffered during the 1970’s and 1980’s when new construction was booming. A building victim, remembered as a national debacle, was the unwarranted removal of ‘His Majesty’s Theatre’ built in 1902 and demolished in 1988. All over the city, buildings were being removed without justified reason. Other examples were two blocks of 19th and 20th Century buildings which if present today, would receive at least a category B rating; one located between Hobson and Federal Streets and the other to the North of Victoria Street. These were destroyed to make room for the “flat earth” approach of Council car parking.

During the 1970’s and 1980’s, the Council appeared uninterested in the preservation of Auckland’s architectural history. Today, the Council, along with architectural professionals and the general public, is more aware of the importance of historic buildings and many buildings have been listed. However, the Council is not always thorough; buildings have been missed or not scored properly; with developers taking advantage of loopholes. Two buildings, inaccurately scored with applications for demolition include the Fitzroy Hotel and Canvas City.

20 Ibid
The Historic Places Act 1993 now requires the Historic Places Trust to keep a record of places, registered under the Act, as either Category A or B buildings. Listed buildings are then protected through the Resource Management Act. This is a successful system for listed buildings; however, many buildings without equivalent historical architectural value status (but still valuable to the history of the city) have little protection.

On Ponsonby Road, many buildings have been demolished and new; arguably poorer quality and less aesthetically-pleasing buildings, have been constructed. The majority of this reconstruction and development took place in the 1980’s when architects and city planners were focused on the modernization and renewal of Auckland city. Today, partially because of this process, we have more knowledge and understanding of the importance of historic buildings. Buildings that were removed include Osborne House in 1973 and Foundation Court. These were replaced “at the cost of older, more picturesque buildings” with new shopping or office complexes.

The removal of these ‘character-defining buildings’ has negatively affected the streetscape and resulted in the loss of buildings with great potential. They were replaced with seemingly fantastically modern buildings which are now tired (30-40 year old) and ready for replacement. This process has had a negative impact on the community, and is also unsustainable. Redeveloping a site within such a short timeframe is far from ideal, especially since the original buildings, with some revitalization, could have been retained and contributed more to the greater area than their replacements.

At the southern end of Ponsonby Road, Western Park was extended in place of a block of historic shops in 1980. This demolition has weakened the already fragile urban space. The idea of opening the park up to the street is romantic. However,

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23 Ibid.
we now know that the opening up of this park to Ponsonby has not encouraged sufficient use of the park to justify the removal of buildings that helped define the street and enhance the atmosphere.

Ponsonby Road could be considered one of Auckland’s more successful areas. However, the street needs enclosure as it is very wide, with many voids (e.g., in some cases parking is found at the front of the buildings) and many of the buildings are single-storied. The buildings must work hard to give this needed sense of closure. Removing buildings makes it even more difficult to achieve a successful urban space.

Auckland City Council

Auckland Council is now reversing its approach and aims to improve Auckland City and, in particular, its urban design and built environment; both features contributing to Auckland’s image or ‘brand’.

Auckland has six urban design goals; three of which are relevant to the design of a new complex: to become a more “compact city”, a more “sustainable city” and a more “beautiful city”.  

Auckland can become a more compact city through the “development of high-quality, compact, walkable, mixed-use neighbourhoods”. Sustainability is also important, with Auckland focusing on the overall sustainability of the city, rather than solely on creating energy efficient buildings. The last relevant goal is to make the city “more beautiful”. The Council is

26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
encouraging the development of “high-quality architecture”\textsuperscript{28} and is particularly interested in “the ‘ordinary’ environment”.\textsuperscript{29} These are the buildings and places/spaces people inhabit daily, and create the largest feature of Auckland; and therefore vital to the development and ‘beautification’ of the city.

These are three of the key factors which the Council wishes architects, urban designers, engineers and town planners to focus on for a large portion of the city. These aspects have been dealt with in the project; however, the third goal, to create a ‘more beautiful city’ is most relevant. The Council has recognized that the majority of Auckland consists of ‘ordinary’ areas with ‘ordinary’ buildings. The Council has recognized the potential of ordinariness. Where the gap lies is how to develop and deal with this ordinariness.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid, 8.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid
Karangahape Road (K’Road) Design Guidelines

The Council has developed a document showing guidelines for the development of properties on the K’Road strip. K’Road and Ponsonby Road are close in proximity and have similar period buildings. K’Road could be seen as a model for how Ponsonby could be, a street with well developed buildings on the street frontages and with few gaps.

The document highlights ideas; showing the best way to design new developments for K’Road sites. Buildings are broken down into elements such as: windows, corners and parapets. For each element, sketches give a range between sympathetic to unsympathetic designs with the former being considered ‘ideal’ buildings for the area. The document deals with new buildings and not extensions to buildings. The proposed designs are limited and uninteresting; they stay close to traditional designs and do not display contemporary architectural

Figure 3.4  Examples of Council design suggestions.\textsuperscript{30}

solutions. (See figure 3.4 for examples). The underlying approach is however, relevant.
What should be kept and what shouldn’t

The major determinant when deciding which parts of a building should be kept and which removed is the overall condition of the building; for example, does the roof need to be replaced?

Facadeism, which is “the practice of renovating old buildings, leaving the façade intact while demolishing and rebuilding its innards,”[^31] was a fashionable solution during the 1980s and 1990s. It was seen as a compromise between historic preservation and demolition. It was a way of making the historic activist and the Council, as well as the developer satisfied. Today, façadism is considered a weak and unsuccessful architectural option. The building is transformed into a stage set “and becomes a kind of Disneyland of false fronts”.[^32] Perhaps, it may be seen as the lesser of two evils if the building is set to be demolished? The contrast between the exterior and interior may also be intriguing.

Figure 3.5 illustrates an unsuccessful revitalization project using façadism. The new addition pays little attention to the historic building. The old building looks like it has been pasted on the front of a new building which rises up in an incongruous fashion. It may be seen as an unsympathetic outcome to the extension of an existing historic building.

Façadism has not been proposed for the GPK building on Ponsonby Road. The majority of the building is in good working order and easily extendable. The scheme suggests the bulk of the building be retained with the one storey lean-tos at the back removed. The roof would need to be replaced and additional structural walls constructed to support the additions. Further changes, (ensuring building compliance) include: installation of services such as air conditioning and solar hot water systems, insulation in the roof and wherever possible, as well as double glazing.

**Ideal Approach**

At the other end of the spectrum to facadism is the approach which sees historic buildings retained and extensions or new buildings designed to complement the existing and historic buildings. This is becoming fashionable in Auckland only recently “A significant change has been a move away from architectural history as one of the styles, and instead there has been a relating to the society that produced it and for which it was produced...Another change has been the greater tendency to place individual buildings within their physical environment, and to examine the lesser and more common buildings within that environment.”\(^{33}\) By adapting this approach the architecture becomes more about the community and older areas are “rehabilitated and infill is required to develop the sense of particularity around which communities can grow.”\(^{34}\)


\(^{34}\) Tony van Raat, “City Visionaries”, Architecture New Zealand, September/October, 2009. 80.
Historic Building Prototype

Historic Building Prototype
Victorian and Edwardian Shops and, more specifically, the GPK building located on the site.

The type of building on the site is a typical two-storied, brick building commonplace among the streets of older New Zealand suburbs.

Taking a ‘commonplace’ building involves research into an ‘ordinary’ building typology that comprises the majority of our historic urban landscape. An historic building usually refers to a specific and historically significant building. However, these two-storied unreinforced load-bearing cavity brickwork buildings are also important. Although they are not one-off community or architectural masterpieces such as a post office or town hall, they certainly play an important role in Auckland’s makeup and history. There are many of these buildings around Auckland especially in the surrounding inner-city suburbs, therefore, the need to keep them, while not vital, is extremely advantageous and important in sustaining the character of older areas such as Ponsonby. These buildings are gradually becoming endangered species. However, they are not verging on extinction and until this becomes an issue, the majority of these buildings will remain under a Category B listing.
**Further analysis of this building type**

When built, Ponsonby was a typical area; most buildings along the main strip in the early 1900s were ‘standard buildings’. To understand and portray the ordinariness of the buildings, plans and elevations of commercial Edwardian and Victorian buildings around Auckland and Ponsonby were examined.

In depth analysis showed that planning and design techniques were consistent between buildings, reinforcing the idea that 1900s commercial shop buildings were typical building stock of the time.

The GPK building is from the Edwardian era (1900-1920). Commercial Edwardian buildings were designed with shops on the ground floor and residential occupancy in the upper floor. Buildings were sandwiched against each other and connecting walls had no openings. Therefore, a strip of buildings could extend as far as required.

The buildings were built from timber or non-reinforced brick. Decoration of facades was not as intricate as buildings designed in earlier styles, with more decorative features on the front façade. These included parapet detailing, window decoration and an awning; structural divisions were also emphasized.

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Auckland City Archives, 286 Ponsonby Road. Auckland: Auckland City Archive, 1908.
Side facades were less decorated while the backs had no decoration. Interestingly, design of the residential floor is symmetrical while the retail floor is asymmetric.

A practical feature, relevant to the New Zealand climate, is the veranda which projected from the building. This provided a visual break between the lower public area and the upper private area, whilst providing weather protection. Projecting an awning from a building is a typical New Zealand solution, turning public space into a more private area, especially when tables are placed beneath it.

Buildings also depicted a transition from public to private; from street front to the working area. The front of the building while grander than the rest of the building, still referenced the interior. For example, vertical details on the façade show where the major structural walls are located and the windows denote the interior activities; the upper windows are of a domestic scale while the bottom storey windows are of a commercial scale.

\[\text{Figure 3.7 Analysis of elevations of Jervois Road building.}^{36}\]

\[\text{36 ibid.}\]
In recent times, certain features of Edwardian buildings have been neglected. Shop entrances were “concaved” in this design, allowing the transition between public and private space. In modernizing alterations, the indented entrance is often removed and replaced with flat doors and windows foreign to the historic buildings. Often corners, both internally and externally, are angled, preventing important spaces from being obstructed. In some cases, corners are also accentuated with different detailing (see figures 3.5 and 3.6). This standard technique was used for all major corners despite their location or importance.

Another relevant feature is the stepping down of the buildings away from the main road. This drop in height helps the building relate to the neighbouring houses.

The backs of these buildings were stepped to create narrow light wells, allowing rooms to have natural light and ventilation. These have again been realized as important features as they are more sustainable than mechanical ventilation and lighting. The backs of the buildings were private areas used only by shop owners; useful for storage, rubbish and, today, car parking.

*For further analysis on Edwardian and Victorian shop buildings see appendix D.*
Modern Building Prototype

The 1967 building ("Nosh" Building) on the site is a single-storey, timber and concrete, post and beam construction, an open plan building designed as a liquor store and is now occupied by Nosh delicatessen. It symbolises low-cost modern architecture with its clean lines and simplicity. Approximately half the site (including one third of the street frontage) provides for vehicle access. Parking, and a dominant carport roof, has been constructed.

The modern building is in poor existing condition compared with the 1908 building. This is a feature of accelerated rate of replacement of modern buildings over traditional buildings. “Traditional materials and construction practices tend to have a slower rate of replacement...innovative materials and inefficient designs of modern buildings frequently necessitate repair and replacement much sooner”.  

37 Technitrades Limited, Perspective drawing of proposed wholesale liquor store at 254 Ponsonby Road. (Auckland :Auckland City Archives,1967), 2:
Influential modern buildings began to be preserved and realized as important in Europe as early as the 1950s (at about the same time the modern movement was beginning in New Zealand). The Nosh building is not important in terms of the modern movement in New Zealand.\(^{39}\) It is not character defining, and does not add value to Ponsonby Road. It is not a model for modern design and is not functioning outstandingly. It, therefore, may be justifiably removed.

As the quality of the building is poor, it is not a cost effective option to reuse this building; nor is it sustainable.\(^{40}\) A large amount of material would be needed to revitalize the building and the current shell of the building will limit design options. Major strengthening work would be required as the building lacks the strength needed to hold additional storeys.

\(^{39}\) Ibid, 7.

\(^{40}\) Enrico Santifaller, *Transform – the revitalization of buildings.* (Munich: Prestel Publishers, 2008), 22

“The solid structure, storey depths and heights of the [historic] building make...flexibility possible, which can’t be said of most new buildings...[buildings] are suitable for conversion as long as they have been soundly constructed”. 
**Historical Analysis of the Greater Ponsonby Area**

*Figure 3.9* shows the development of the area. The most obvious change is the increase in density. Many sites have been subdivided over the century and larger developments have also been constructed.

*Figure 3.9* Plans showing development of Ponsonby.
s. Many parts of the strip therefore do not relate comfortably to each other. When looking at the two sides of Ponsonby Road you start to realize the extreme differences that have always been apparent. One side of the road consists mainly of grand residential buildings while the other has developed slowly as shop front buildings. Interestingly, the layouts of the streets are also unrelated from one side of Ponsonby Road to the other. The western side of Ponsonby Road, intended as retail developments, has been broken up at small and fairly regular intervals while the eastern/residential side of the street has much larger blocks.

It would usually be assumed that side streets would connect across Ponsonby Road and there would be cross intersections. Looking at other areas it was determined that this was only true for the city centre. In most suburbs it is unusual for side streets on either side of a main road to connect. It is also not uncommon to find residential buildings amongst commercial buildings. Again Ponsonby is similar to other areas developed in the 1900s.
**Parnell: Case Study**

Parnell is an example of a suburb which has used its ordinariness to its advantage. In the 1970s Parnell was similar to other inner city suburbs until a developer saw its potential and transformed part of Parnell Rise. Parnell Village was developed, the areas behind the historic cottages were beautified and the backs of the buildings which contained restaurants were opened out onto the landscaped area. Small pathways and bridges were built to connect the separate areas.

It was a simple and clever idea. However, there were key problems which are now apparent forty years on. These include:

1. The level change. The restaurants which occupy the cottages sit at a different level to the ground. Although decks have been built, they are small and do not aid flow. The lower level is now used as car parking.

2. The narrow connections between the fronts and rears of the buildings. Without knowing the area exists or with the intent to visit a particular retailer, people are unlikely to venture off Parnell Rise.

*Figure 3.10  Rear area of buildings in Parnell. Now used as car parking*

*Figure 3.11  Back areas of restaurants.*

*Figure 3.12  Connections between front and rear.*

*Please see Appendix E for analysis of the recent Ponsonby Road developments.*
4  PROJECT CONTEXT

4.1 Auckland’s Current Situation and a Future Vision

Auckland, the gateway to New Zealand and its largest city, is attempting to become a world class city. Consequently, it is in competition with cities around the world, such as Melbourne and Vancouver, to “attract talented people and investment”. Internationally, cities are focused on branding themselves; making their city the one that people wish to live and work in, a time when “every city is beginning to look and feel the same”.

Auckland is a spectacular city. It sits between two harbours and is dotted with green volcanoes. It is a geographically stunning site which has not been utilized well. Two of the keys to a successful city are good urban design and recognition of architectural heritage and historically Auckland has made bad decisions in these areas; something the Council has only belatedly recognized.

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Ponsonby is considered one of Auckland’s more desirable suburbs since its transformation from slums to a chic, sought after area. It is an example which the Council wishes to replicate in other city fringe areas such as Victoria Park, Kingsland and Dominion Road.

Auckland also plans to follow the strategy of intensification where traditional suburbs such as Ponsonby need to intensify while retaining their character. This project is therefore relevant in this context.

In Ponsonby, the building fabric has not changed significantly; there are still a number of Victorian, Edwardian and “Interwar-Years” shops along the main street. However, the way these buildings are viewed has changed. The historic shop buildings are no longer glossed over, but loved, their importance to the character of the city recognized. The Council has created an action plan which includes the need to “identify key urban design characteristics and heritage features as a basis for future development”. These alone will not make an area successful; also recognized by the Council.

Figure 4.2 Images displaying some of Auckland’s Creative Industry.

other major impetus for Ponsonby’s success was the creativity and vibrancy created by its earlier occupants; qualities

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beginning to be lost. This idea of ‘creative industries’ is something that the Council wishes to grow and to harness to help Auckland, as “Encouraging [the creative] industries is one of the most powerful means of enhancing the city’s identity and distinctiveness”.46

One of the nine strategies (see appendix G) for achieving this is to develop creative places and in particular “to develop and promote the CBD fringe and vibrant local centres that support the creative industries”.47

Ponsonby fits this description, with additional urban design thinking and quality developments by creative people, the less inspiring parts of Ponsonby could also be successful areas.

Ponsonby currently consists of two major node points, one at each end of the street:

1. The major K’Road and Newton Gully intersection located at the southern end of Ponsonby Road: This section has developed significantly over the past five years. It has been transformed from a pejoratively-viewed red-light district to an arty urban area with galleries replacing euphemistically-named massage parlours and other similar retail outlets.

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This node continues until Franklin Road. This major section of the street is, arguably, more interesting and successful, with restaurants, boutique shops and local businesses straddling the majority of both sides of the street. The exceptions to these are Western Park and a couple of sites awaiting attention.

2. The other major node point of the Ponsonby Strip is the northern Three Lamps end. This connects with Jervois Road and College Hill; the latter leading to the CBD. This part of the street is also successful, albeit more commercial. The initial section of Ponsonby Road changes direction and North bound traffic is directed around a back street. The street is also one way, reducing vehicle numbers. The major downfall of this section is the dominance of the bank branches which have overwhelmed local shops; previously, the latter used to create more visual interest and street vitality.
This leaves the section of Ponsonby Road between Cowan Street and Franklin Road. This area is debatably the most prosaic section of the street and includes the chosen site.

Currently, there is a poor connection between the two sides of this section of Ponsonby Road; one side is retail and other is predominantly residential. However, this is gradually changing as more businesses establish themselves on the residential side. The majority of shops along this section are accessed by car rather than by foot, for example: Resene Paints, Nosh, Central Studios and KFC, all have large car parking areas. This encourages people to drive between shops, something that needs changing if this section of the street is to be revitalized. Between these larger, almost industrial, stores are smaller cafes, restaurants and shops which do provide a basis for the area. This struggling section is used predominantly as a link between the two nodes rather than as a destination in its own right. An aim of this project is to change this and transform this section of the street into a unique third node.

Figure 4.5  Map showing the two existing node points on Ponsonby Road. The cross marks the site’s location.
4.2 Site Analysis

Figure 4.6 Site of the proposed development. View from the opposite side of Ponsonby Road.

Site Location

The site is located at 254-262 Ponsonby Road.
Site Information

The O’Neill Street site (marked on figure 4.8) has much potential; the Council owns half of the site and it is intended as a civic square/open space. Many local people disagree with the proposed plan as the area is in need of “closure” and “vibrancy” rather than another “virtually deserted” park area.49

Providing an alternative option would assist the Council and the community to make an informed decision on the development of the site.

Figure 4.7 Location of Auckland.

Figure 4.8 Location of Ponsonby within Auckland.

Figure 4.9 Location of site in Ponsonby. Note: Red buildings show proposed building footprint.

Currently, on the site there is an historic two-storey building, housing two successful restaurants, GPK and Dizengoff. Neighbouring this is a one-storied 1960’s building accommodating Nosh, with adjacent car parking.

The large area owned by the Council means the redevelopment will encompass a greater number of activities and people, giving more potential for community interaction around the area.

The GPK building plays an important role in the current streetscape. Neighbouring the site (on the other side of Tole Street) is an almost identical building which was constructed before the GPK building. The neighbouring building is likely to have governed several of the builder’s decisions for the construction of the GPK building. Figure 4.9 shows the two similar Edwardian buildings framing Tole Street. It is likely that the architectural solution for the corner of the proposed design will also influence the design of the future development which will occur on the other side of O’Neill Street.

The other major contextual issue is the 1900’s residential housing, the villas and cottages which line the side-streets. Both neighbours on the west side of the property are one-storied cottages. The architectural style and solutions of the cottages has been expressed in a contemporary way and, in particular, a rhythm has been created from the number of closely positioned houses.
The site and area, as mentioned earlier, is in a lacklustre part of a promising street. Therefore, the area has even more ability to become a significant part of Auckland. Through the unique redevelopment of this site and the potential idea for the neighbouring blocks, there is the opportunity to add another dimension to Ponsonby.

*People movement in Ponsonby*

Ponsonby has changed significantly since the 1950’s when Ponsonby largely consisted of slums and was designated for demolition. Old wooden buildings were to be removed and replaced with row houses, flats and commercial buildings.

People were moved to new suburban areas with those remaining often unable to maintain their houses, making the area more run down.

During the 1960’s and 1970’s there was a large influx of Polynesians and Maori attracted by the cheap rents. This increase in the Polynesian population made an interesting and multicultural area. This, as well as the cheap rents, was recognized by Pakeha artists, musicians, writers, architects and students; people after an alternative lifestyle. “The seventies was a period when Ponsonby was a mecca for people who wanted to do different things”\(^5^0\) and the streets were “a rich blend of opposites; seedy and fashion-conscious, easy-going and hardworking, aspiring and barely surviving.”\(^5^1\)

It was at the end of the 1970’s that the area was discovered by the working middle class, the central location and cheap housing making it ideal for young families and couples. The increased rents, rates and high offers from speculators drove many


\(^{51}\) Ibid
of the Pacific Island and Maori families, students and artists out of the area – the people, ironically, who had made the area fashionable. This situation continued with people in Ponsonby becoming wealthier and house prices continuing to rise.

This increase of wealthy residents has seen Ponsonby’s political position move. People are no longer focused on the collective and community but rather on themselves and their own situation. The community aspect of the area has been lost. “Ponsonby was a nice place...neighbours were looked upon as family even if they weren’t blood related”.

Today, people are more private; high walls have been erected around many properties, separating people and reducing neighbourly contact.

Ponsonby has continued to be thought of as a bohemian, alternative area by its residents – however, the reality is that this character is being lost. Residents of Ponsonby consider themselves left wing, accepting people and although this may be true in some quarters, the majority of current residents are not affluent Che Guevaras, even if some sport a beret. It could be said that many people of Ponsonby are living behind a façade which mirrors their buildings; in a dual sense, equivocal and hiding their true colours.

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53 Ibid, 234.
Future Development in Ponsonby

As the two sides of Ponsonby Road are not architecturally coherent, the buildings being designed do not need to relate directly to buildings on the eastern side. It does, however, recognize the intention to develop the western side of the strip into a retail area and also to retain the promise found in community establishments such as the Samoan church directly opposite the site. This requires the new development to complement the Ponsonby Road street front. Attention is also paid to the corner.

In the next forty years, it is possible that villas on the east side of Ponsonby Road will be removed and larger retail complexes constructed due to densification and increasing land values. As part of the design proposal it has been suggested that a pedestrian back street should be developed (see urban design solution pg 47). If this proposition were to be pursued then the backs of many buildings would be opened up and a pedestrian-friendly street created.

Figure 4.12  Possible Ponsonby Road plan for the year 2050.
5 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Design Strategy

The GPK building is vital to the greater community. Therefore, the new complex, which will cover more area than the historic building, has been designed to appear less dominant when viewed from Ponsonby Road. The dominance of the new fabric in relation to the old is less important at the rear of the buildings as back space utilisation of commercial buildings is a relatively new idea. Traditionally, the backs and fronts of buildings of this era were never linked well.

The proposed design will relate to the historic building on the site and the building across Tole Street as well as to neighbouring villas and cottages along the side streets. The buildings will not imitate these buildings but will complement them. It is important to “Ensure appropriate new building is inserted into the existing urban fabric. It needs to be emphasized here that there is no intention to encourage the replication of traditional architectural styles but to encourage new architecture that ‘behaves as a good neighbour’ to the adjacent building and streetscape,”54 “additions should be seen as such so as not to confuse the new with the old”55

There are many architectural aspects relevant to the GPK building. These include: colour, texture, proportion, rhythm, bulk, setback, veranda height and scale. Many of these have been followed in the façade design of the new buildings; rhythm, scale, materiality, bulk, setback and proportion. The existing building will significantly guide the design.

Buffers between the new and old have been used. Before the buildings move from old to radically new there is a need for a transition zone which defines and slightly separates the new and old structure to prevent the historic buildings from being overpowered. Two major buffers-recessed timber louvers-one on Ponsonby Road and the other on O’Neill Street allow the old and new to be clearly seen as separate but linked. Timber is a sympathetic material which softens the largely brick front façade.

Not all 1900’s buildings constitute ideal architecture, new buildings should complement neighbouring buildings but do not need to follow all design techniques. It must also be noted that many of these buildings were constructed quickly by builders of the time and no architects were used.

The ideal living spaces of people have also changed. Flexibility for living and for environmentally flexible living conditions are desired. In the past everything on a building was fixed. Depending on the occupants and the outdoor climate a building may be adapted to provide further comfort for its users. Smart, kinetic buildings which adapt to changes result in spaces which are pleasant to occupy and, consequently, used more often.

Not only will the historic buildings influence the design of the new; our contemporary and modernized way of living is influencing the old. There is a co-dependency within the project; both the contemporary building and the GPK building must rely on each other for advice. This is so whether it is aesthetic, as is the case for the new building relying on the old building, or whether it is more functionally based, as is the case for the historic building relying on the new building.
Proposed Function

One of the major goals for Auckland City Council is to increase creative industry. The Ponsonby site is ideal for this kind of activity base; therefore my proposal includes an artist’s colony with a public outdoor courtyard, galleries, restaurants, offices and apartments.  

The site, consisting of retail, apartments and offices, incorporates a range of mixed-uses and will work well, with “the success of mixed-use deriving from the notion of creating a market of mutually complementary and supportive services and activities”\(^{57}\). The benefits of mixed-use buildings include a reduction in the need for motor vehicles, the development of a more vibrant city, reduced energy usage through district energy systems and increased security through extended human presence on the site”.  

The hypothetical client is a local commercial developer, wishing to engage with the Council. A reasonable profit is expected and favourable treatment from the Council will be gained in exchange for a project beneficial to the community.

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\(^{56}\) Intensification is an issue that has been dealt with internationally, yet its importance has failed to become apparent in Auckland. Vancouver City has done major analysis in community visioning; their city planning process achieving the capability of accommodating an additional 60,000 persons beyond current zoning capabilities.\(^{56}\) Densification is an important part of the future development of a sustainable Auckland city. Already, it is becoming common to design for increased density. Although the residents of Ponsonby have always occupied detached houses, the slow increase in Ponsonby’s density will result in improved vitality and better services for the area. \(^{57}\)


Building Programme

- The ground floor of Ponsonby Road will be devoted to retail. Ponsonby Road is renowned for its restaurant scene and its growing boutique clothing shops. The site is prime real-estate and “there is no shortage of retail tenants wanting to move into Ponsonby”. 59

- The lower floor of the GPK building will continue to be tenanted by GPK and Dizengoff. The new building will house a café, gallery and corner bar. An entrance to the courtyard and the upper levels also runs off Ponsonby Road.

- Above GPK and Dizengoff are mid-high end apartments. These occupy the second and third floors with a combination of duplexes and one level apartments. Access to these apartments is from Ponsonby Road and Tole Street.

- Above the gallery and bar located in the new building, are professional offices.

- There are two residential buildings on O’Neill Street. The first contains five live-work units for artists. These units are three-storeys high with the gallery/shop occupying the ground floor, living and working space on the first floor and a sleeping area on the top floor.

- The second is adjacent to a cottage, and situated on the section of the site deemed Residential One by the Council, contains five attached two-storied apartments aimed for mid-top end buyers. These apartments have access to private garages in the basement.

- The basement level with access from O’Neill Street consists of car parking, storage areas, circulation points, water tanks and heat pump equipment.

- The three buildings surround a large courtyard. The courtyard is visibly open to the public, areas are created and include alfresco dining, a water feature, planting, an area for outdoor music and the ability to transform the space into a Saturday craft market.

- Off the courtyard is also a workshop building. This is a feature of the courtyard and allows the public to see the artists at work.

See figures 6.1 to 6.4 for final plans.
5.2 Analysis of the Fronts and Rears of buildings

Difference between building faces

The idea of duality is visible in typical historic shop buildings. The façade of such buildings was designed to be more elaborate than the rear which was typically left plain and undecorated. The functions of the “front” and “rear” were completely different. The fronts of the shops were public areas, people displayed not only their shop but also their lifestyle. They displayed how people liked to be perceived to be living, rather than how they actually were. The front of these buildings was, in a sense, a stage. Meanwhile, the rear of the same buildings showed the genuine situation, lean-tos knocked on the back, functional areas; places not meant to be seen.

It is unusual for an historic building to have its back completely opened up as this blurs the line between a front and rear space and allows public space to penetrate the usually reserved, private space.

The proposed development aims to open up the rear of the GPK building in conjunction with the addition of the new building to provide a pedestrian street and courtyard space. The rear of the building will be an extension of the indoor spaces as well as spaces which have been created along the Ponsonby Road footpath. This architectural solution is an example for other Edwardian and Victorian buildings around New Zealand and, particularly, within inner city suburbs where land is becoming more valuable.
Fronts of the building Versus the Back

“The city is a dynamic living organism, which lives on for generations and grows and survives even when its original concept has been superseded”. This is the case for the GPK building. Since it was constructed, the Ponsonby lifestyle has changed significantly, however, the building has not. It continues to be a commercial building and will, hopefully, remain this way for another 100 years with the façade being left untouched.

What continually changes, is the occupation and the rear of the buildings. When constructed in 1908, the building had lean-tos built as cheaper extensions to the building. Over the past hundred years, many of these lean-tos have been removed and reconstructed with more modern materials, or added to and altered. A consistency between the lean-tos of yesterday and

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60 Elke Mittman, *The Other Cities*. (Berlin: Jovis Verlag, 2007), 54.
those of today is the cheapness in construction and the lack of attention to the aesthetics of the space and the lack of ability to use it as an additional living space.

Traditionally, the rear areas of these commercial Edwardian buildings were often the living spaces for the owners of the shops who slept on the upper floor. Understandably, these people required privacy from the public who entered the shops through the front door. The people who now own these buildings usually live off site. Occupants on the upper floors have separate entrances and do not usually interact with the retailers on the lower floor.

In a building where the front and rear walls are the only walls available for natural ventilation and light, it seems unrealistic that store rooms and kitchens occupy the rear wall of the building. The focus becomes the reorganization of space. These areas are moved so the interior spaces may be opened up, creating a space with additional natural lighting, cross ventilation and an additional, potentially useful outdoor space is created. Opening up the buildings creates further ability to have a visual connection with the courtyards and therefore more people are likely to use it. “By utilizing the back of the building the building is being seen on all sides, it can be walked around and enjoyed as a building”.  

**Urban Design Solution**

The proposed architectural development focuses on improving the immediate and wider community through the development of an artists’ colony and should help provide vitality to this section of Ponsonby Road. However, one development alone will not change the area and transform it into a place as successful as the existing nodes. Therefore, an urban design idea for the weak section of the street was created.

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The idea of opening up the rears of buildings was explored further. The development was designed to include a pedestrian street. An anticipated problem faced was convincing people to use this street. This led an idea of having a pedestrian street run behind as many buildings as possible. This meant many buildings would be linked twice, through Ponsonby Road and through the pedestrian street. A connection of many cafes, offices and retail outlets would give people a reason to use this new street. The journey through the pedestrian street would also provide a different experience from the rest of Ponsonby Road. Another advantage this pedestrian street would offer over Ponsonby Road would be that there would be no cars. As stated in “A Pattern Language” by Alexander, to function properly there needs to be “no cars, but frequent crossings by streets with traffic”.  

A survey was done to determine how far this street could

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potentially extend and it was concluded it could continue south until Vermont Street and north until Redmond Street, providing developments predicted to be removed are actually removed. The street would provide an interesting space as its width and direction would be continually changing and would have a better degree of enclosure as the scale of the buildings and degree of enclosure create a more pedestrian-friendly feeling than that of Ponsonby Road.

A survey was carried out in Ponsonby a number of years ago. However, questions were framed to learn what it was residents liked about the area rather than what it needed: “Ponsonby residents made their reasons for preferring to live in the Ponsonby area plain. They liked its: inner city location; ‘village atmosphere’; heritage buildings; views from the ridges; beaches and access to the water; tree-lined streets and parks.” \(^{63}\) It can be assumed that current residents still like many of these features.

This information has helped develop the building design and the urban design idea. People wish their suburb to be successful. They want community spaces available; places where opportunities for social interaction arise. This is what the development aims to increase. “For neighbourhoods to...work, people need to be able to gather and interact with each other. They need places to meet for recreation”. \(^{64}\)

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5.3 Design Process

Design commenced April 2009.

Development of Preferred Option
(For initial design options see appendix A)

How was the development going to be massed? Where would the highest/lowest areas of the buildings be?

Ponsonby is an area of particular character and historical note. Analysis of the surrounding buildings was therefore important. Also, Council regulations give building restrictions of 12.5 metres and three storeys.
The complex is designed to be three storeys in Ponsonby Road and two storeys down the residential side streets. Continual questioning of the location of the three storey bulk occurred. **Should the new third-level extend forward to the Ponsonby Road frontage – or should it be set back?** There were two issues; the need for protection of the historic façade through sympathetic massing, and a three storey building would strengthen the current low degree of enclosure of Ponsonby Road.

A public courtyard was also considered important as the site needed to provide maximum benefit to the community, the main concern was the usage of the courtyard; it needed to be a populated space. A link from Ponsonby Road was created, and through-access from Tole Street and O’Neill Street a small alleyway connected to a larger street and provided an access from Tole Street to O’Neill.
Street. These accesses were designed to allow physical and visual links to and from the courtyard space.

*Figures 5.4 and 5.5* show early ground floor plans and elevations. Changes from the initial design included:
- An increase in density.
- Clarification of retailers. A bar was incorporated and located on the corner of the site, evoking the historic corner pub.
- Separation of buildings according to functions. The buildings transitioned from retail/offices to live/work apartments to living apartments as they moved away from Ponsonby Road. The two storey O’Neill Street apartments are also stepped back from the street to create a further link to the neighbouring residential houses.
- The new façades explored elements found in the GPK building and the villas/cottages.
Drawings presented for critique

Figure 5.7 Plans of the design presented at an interim critique. Colours highlight the different functions of the spaces. Also see page 57 and 58.
Figure 5.8 Elevations of the three streets. Colours are used to show materiality.
**Design issues addressed**

After the first design critique and further analysis of the Victorian/Edwardian commercial building typology a number of weaknesses in the initial design were identified. Questions were raised and solutions explored:

**Has the design dealt with light and ventilation successfully?**

Light and ventilation had been neglected in the section which was added to the rear of the GPK building. Historically, buildings frequently had light wells. This concept was adapted in the design so natural light and ventilation could be gained. Attractive usable outdoor spaces were also created, something not done historically.

**Is the design of the corner prominent? Should a corner on an intersection be more significant?**

Architecturally, the corner was not emphasized, resulting in a harsh solution, especially at street level. A corner of this magnitude requires highlighting, so further design was required. The solution saw the building turn the corner (*see corners pg 65 for further information*). It became important to find a way for the building to wrap the corner. Modelling was used to find a successful form which incorporated the idea of the folded form (*see page 66*).
A proportion of the project is owned by a developer, hence a need to maximize site occupancy, however, are spaces being compromised because of this?

South facing apartments were removed as it was found that back to back apartments do not function well and would not be ideal apartments to occupy. Apartments were merged as larger apartments are viable with Ponsonby being a top market area where buyers are looking to purchase well designed and successful apartments.

The middle block was also changed to three storey live/work accommodation for artists. This meant the lower level could be used as a shop or gallery. Circulation could also be worked into each apartment and space wasting communal circulation could be removed.

- **Will the courtyard access from Ponsonby Road attract attention and be a successful space?**

  The access to the courtyard from Ponsonby Road needed to be changed as it was narrow and could easily become a dingy, unused space.

  Initially the path was removed. However, its importance was realized and it was reopened. The path was redesigned to be six metres wide. This allows the bar patrons to spill into the space and provides a more welcoming access and further visual connections between the interior courtyard and main road. "Being able to see what is going on in public spaces can also be an element of invitation".  

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Encouraging people to visit/use the courtyard

The aim was to encourage the public use of a previously private space “Public spaces in the city and in residential areas can be inviting and easily accessible and thus encourage people and activities to move from the private to the public”. The courtyard, as stated earlier, encompasses a range of activities. With the development of an artists’ colony artists could take their craft into the courtyard, giving the space more life. However, this was not definite and depended upon individual occupants. Therefore a focal point within the courtyard was needed. Ideally, this would not be a “typical” activity, and led to the design of a workshop. Typically, a workshop is a hidden back area; but here, the workshop has been opened and transformed. Working artists are on display; with people able to view part of the creation process. The workshop becomes a focal point located at the end of the courtyard to be seen when entering from Ponsonby Road. The gallery also has the ability to close down; movable blades allow this transformation.

To aid the success of the space and to open the courtyard, whilst closing outer edges, the residents’ circulation point to the basement was moved as it prevented a visual link between Ponsonby Road and the individual galleries. It was moved beside the pub as an extension to the main building, helping reduce the width of the pedestrian street on the south side. The GPK wing on the north side was also extended.

- How will the land contour be dealt with? Will it create an interesting courtyard space?

The contours of the back area of the courtyard have been manipulated to create more interest for the space. Although there is not a major level change the contours have been angled to create a shallow amphitheatre which draws attention to the workshop.

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66 Ibid, 193.
The contours have also been used to stagger the height of the backyards of the block of apartments. There was a question over the ownership of the backyard area and it was decided that the area would work better as a communal space, which was broken visually, rather than as small fenced backyards. By contouring the land, boundaries are created and may be recognized by occupants. Each apartment has individual terraces with divisions between neighbours. The grassed area, with links to the public courtyard, is open to give more opportunity for its usage and less opportunity for it to become a neglected area.

- **How are the building materials being justified? Is there differentiation depending on the function of the spaces?**
  Three different materials for: retail/offices, residential and live/work would be used. It was considered that the live/work units could be a combination of the materials used for the other two categories as their functions are both residential and retail. It was then decided that, as the block is furthest from an historic building, it should utilize a modern material. *(See Materials page 67)*

- **Have awnings been considered?**
  The awnings were heavy, long and did not relate well to the building. It was decided that highlights or breaks in the awning were needed at important points of entry *(See folded form page 66).*

- **Why does the plan display four separate buildings while the O’Neill Street elevation shows one continuous building?**
  The blocks of building which have always been separate in plan were also separated in elevation. Each building block now has a separate function and aesthetic approach.
Currently the façade has been broken up into horizontal divisions to relate to the GPK building. However, there is no recognition of the vertical divisions. Why?

At street level, arguably the most important way the building will be viewed; the horizontal façade divisions which had been designed to break the façade would not be apparent. This created an uninteresting pedestrian façade.

A number of ideas were devised to deal with these problems. The most successful was a brick lattice designed to fold.

- **Is the underground car park necessary?**
  
  Underground car parks are not ideal spaces, however: “Underground parking systems have much to offer in terms of minimizing the impact of the car and improving site utilization and design flexibility”. An attempt was made to remove the basement carpark and allocate parking to each apartment. This seemed feasible; however, providing parking for the residents of the GPK building proved to be problematic, hence the decision to re-instate the underground parking. The Tole Street ramp was removed as it weakened the concept of causing a physical break between the front and rear of the GPK building.

- **Is there a visual connection between the front and rear of the buildings?**

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A large gallery has been placed on Ponsonby Road. This accentuates the artist colony and provides a large, visual connection to the courtyard and therefore between the front and rear of the buildings. The rear of the GPK building was also opened to reinforce this link. This results in a clear understanding of the courtyard and its public occupancy.

- **Is it plausible to have four separate cafés on one site?**
  With four cafés onsite, there was potential for there to be over-competition and a consequent paucity in the number of customers. It was decided that each café/restaurant needed to have a point of difference and one café was removed. The two existing businesses are popular and likely to continue successfully. The café by the workshop was removed and a self catering kitchen for workshop users was developed. The new café would need to be different from the existing establishments and this was to be done through its unique connection to the gallery.

- **Have the roofs been considered?**
  Roofs were designed to include areas for air conditioners, solar panels and photovoltaics. Many of the roofs were also designed to be green, not only for aesthetic reasons but also to act as thermal insulation and for the filtration of water.
Selection of drawings presented at a second interim critique

Figure 5.9  Ground floor plan. Yellow shows retail/public areas. Brown shows residential areas.
Figure 5.10  Elevations of the building. (From top to bottom) O’Neill Street Elevation, Ponsonby Road Elevation and Tole Street Elevation. Note: These elevations are similar to the final elevations.
Comments from final critique

*Figures 5.8 and 5.9* show some of the drawings that were presented at the final interim critique. Three minor changes were suggested. These were:

1. To open the bar/corner building up to Ponsonby Road, much like the other buildings.
2. Create greater flow between the two front courtyards by reducing the length of the middle wing of the main building.
3. Adapt the path leading to the residential apartments so it does not act like a funnel. Initially, it was decided that the path would be removed and the workshop and gallery extended. However, the path provided access to the courtyard for residents who should be encouraged to use the space. The path was integrated into the workshop to disguise it from the public.
4.3 Design Features

Courtyard

The courtyard’s success is largely dependent on the success of the proposed node. In order for this node to be successful it must be different from the other Ponsonby node points, but should attract similar types of people. “The facilities which are placed together round any one node must function in a cooperative manner, and must attract the same types of people”.68 The complex is being proposed as an arts and craft area with galleries, working artists, artists’ accommodation, restaurants and cafes and space for a weekend craft market. The only place nearby that is similar is Victoria Park Market which has marketed itself as a tourist complex. The proposed artists’ colony is aimed at creative, slightly bohemian local artists and people interested in the creative industries. “The urban environment should be an environment that encourages people to express themselves, to become involved”.69

Creating a point of difference for the development is likely to draw more interest. This will, in turn, create more vitality in courtyards and surrounding areas.

The courtyard is a large outdoor room and is a public space where people socialize. In the development there are three areas within the courtyard, each with a slightly different agenda.

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Corners

The site has two prominent corners. One will be occupied by the new structure and the other has been addressed by the GPK building.

The corner design of the GPK building is a standard solution of the time and building typology. These historic buildings were designed to sit one after the other. However, these strips of buildings often meet corners. “Corners are important strategic places, defining activity nodes at intersections”. The corner must be assessed and buildings designed in accordance with it. Tole Street is a small dead end side street and so not much is made of the corner. In the two buildings framing Tole Street in figure 4.9, the building on the site acknowledges the corner by cutting it off. However, no additional decoration is added. This is appropriate as the corner is not a major activity node.

In the case of large and significant corners, more attention must be paid to the design of the corner. It is here “the buildings are [often] seen in three dimension compared to the usually perceived flat frontages”. There are many examples of successful corner designs for older buildings around the city; they usually differentiate the corner, allowing it to stand out without overpowering the building.

The corner of O’Neill Street and Ponsonby Road is very prominent from the road and the corner solution is therefore important. It involves wrapping the building around the corner, helping to unite the side street with Ponsonby Road. The façade tile system being used to clad the corner opens to create a clearly visible pattern that extends across the façade to the corner where it is strongest.

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70 Auckland City Council, District Plan, Annexure 3 – Karangahape road design guidelines, 2004, 32.
71 Ibid.
Folded Form
The original façade did not display verticality. The three dimensionality displayed in the GPK façade and other traditional shop entrances had not been achieved.

After researching an architectural model, ‘casa la roca’ by Office dA architects was found, see figure 5.10. Office dA had done many projects in brick and this particular one had a fascinating folding screen. Which had the potential to be adapted and reworked.

The vertical breaks were to be shown though a change in the direction of the plane rather than through physical elements. This would also create the required depth with indents becoming the shop entrances. The material was initially brick but was later changed to a clay tile façade system as issues with the weather tightness of the structure and its ability to have small brick sized windows had arisen. The clay tile façade system is a functional and modern, yet still sympathetic, alternative.

Figure 5.11  Model of the Casa La Roca house designed by Office dA.72

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Repetition of this form would help link it into the project further; therefore, it was also used in the awning to highlight the major entrances being: the entrance to the courtyard, the entrance to the offices and apartments. It was also used to highlight the end of the awning and as a highlight in the workshop façade.

**Materiality**

Materiality is an important aspect of the design and has been used to create a transition between the proposed development and its historic neighbours. The majority of Ponsonby’s character buildings are timber villas and cottages or brick/timber shop buildings. This is true for the sites’ neighbouring buildings.

The new buildings needed to relate aesthetically to these traditional buildings. It was decided that as we are 100 years on from when the historic buildings were constructed, have access to many more materials and greater technology, the buildings should illustrate this. Materials that reference the historic buildings, but are modern, were therefore used.

Concrete is being used for walls between apartments as it works well as a fire and noise separator, as well as being a thermal insulator. The residential buildings will be clad in Cypress timber. Unlike the villas and cottages, the timber is not a native New Zealand species such as rimu or kauri. It is, however, a sustainable timber as it is grown in plantations around New Zealand. “The timber has a natural lustre that makes it a good substitute for kauri”.73 These buildings aim to create a buffer between new and old and this is reinforced by using a similar timber to Kauri.

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The live/work apartments do not neighbour historic buildings, so it was decided that the building would ideally use a contemporary material. The apartments also have an issue with light as they are tall and narrow. So, fibre optic concrete was chosen as the main cladding material. Another influence was the artists who will occupy the buildings. Fibre optic concrete allows shadows of objects to be displayed, creating another aspect of interest for the public as well as inspiration for the artists.

The last major material used relates to the GPK building. The idea was that the material would be similar to existing brick however as it was being used in a modern and non-monolithic way, it should be a modern material. Clay façade tiles were settled upon.

**Services**

The design of green buildings should no longer be optional but common practice. Therefore, the buildings will employ ESD principles, wherever possible. As servicing equipment was traditionally placed out the back of commercial buildings, it has to be relocated to ensure that the spaces will be attractive and functional. Instead, these devices will be placed on the roof behind screening and some equipment will be located in the basement.

- The buildings will use louvres and other sun shading devices.
- Water will be collected from the roof and filtered through an earth roof before it is drained to two 50,000L water tanks which are stored in the basement.
- There will be a water feature in the courtyard. This acts as a water settlement system and a firefighting reservoir.
- Heat pumps will be used for each apartment and office.
- Apartments will have solar hot water systems. Hot water will also be used for under floor heating systems.
- As there is an underground car park, extract systems will be needed. There will be one per apartment garage and three for the main circulation space. Extracts, depending on their position, will be chimneys or planting features.
Structure

Structural investigation is particularly important as the design proposes to build above an historic building. The current structure of the GPK building is unreinforced brick. The building has already been strengthened as some of the interior walls have been opened up previously. However, the structure is currently not strong enough to hold an additional storey or to meet fire safety standards. Structural changes and systems include:

- The insertion of anchor ties in the building’s foundations. There will need to be 3 ties, approximately 9 metres long and at 6 metre intervals.
- Fire proofing of apartment walls and floors needs to occur. This is likely to be done through 60mm thick GIB timber frame walls and concrete floors.
- Additional braces parallel with Ponsonby Road are needed in the structure of the GPK building. There will be three 2.5 metre bays with 60mm diameter bracing inserted into the building.
- Shear wall construction will be used as the main structural system for the other buildings on the site.
6 CONCLUSION

6.1 Critical Appraisal of the Finished Work and its Theoretical Framework

The theoretical direction of this project changed significantly over the year. Initially, as stated previously, the project aimed to discover which would be the best of three options for a listed Ponsonby building. Early in the research and design process this question was answered. Option C stood out. Not only was it the most viable option of the three, mainly due to its community value, but it had great potential for a successful design and interesting design process. Working with an existing building opened up further design challenges which had not personally been experienced in other studio projects.

After settling on the final option, it was evident that further research and analysis was needed to find an extraordinary idea and an added layer of depth. Analysis of historic buildings, and the re-working of an earlier idea relating to the ordinariness of these buildings led to a new proposal; to utilize the rear of the GPK building and create a social and community space where locals and visitors could interact; something not previously experienced in Ponsonby.

Each of the two research stages informs and adds value to the other. The first area of research highlighted the importance of the GPK building. Without understanding the effect it has on the wider community and local history, in conjunction with the sustainable and economic implications of removing this building; finding a way to adapt the traditional idea of the building would have been difficult.
Architectural Design Solution

The question:

What is a sensitive development and urban design strategy for a vacant corner site and heritage building in Ponsonby; a character suburb of Auckland?

A major driver of the architecture was the historical context. The buildings had to carefully fit into its surroundings and appear modern without being overly dominant or unsympathetic. Although this sounds like a simple and straightforward task, in reality it was difficult. Looking at local and international precedents and solutions on neighbouring sites further revealed this difficulty. Many of the designs, especially the recent buildings on Ponsonby Road, struggled to complement the adjacent buildings and contribute to the overall character of the street. Many sought to include aspects of the existing historic building.

Overall, the design sits well amongst its neighbours. Careful attention has been paid to the design of the elevations and their relationship to the neighbouring buildings. As stated earlier, the two building types which were important to follow were the GPK building and the cottages neighbouring the site along the side streets. Elements pursued included set back, materiality, proportion, bulk, scale, verticality and horizontality displayed in the GPK façade and rhythm – the latter is displayed particularly well though the repetition of the apartment/live-work blocks as they make reference to the rows of villas and cottages along the side streets.

There are numerous elevation solutions and many were explored. It was found that there were few alternatives for the bulk of the building due to the current heights of neighbouring buildings and Council restrictions. There were numerous configurations for façade elements such as bricks, louvres and windows. Many alternative arrangements were considered and
assessed on the basis of their function and relationship to the context. This took many elevational sketches and has resulted in a simple, yet hopefully sophisticated, architectural design.

As stated previously, theory and personal investigation found that ‘ordinary buildings’, such as commercial shops, are using half of their allocated site as a service area. In the design project, the rear of the buildings was opened into a public courtyard. The design aimed to link the interior courtyard space and the street façade; a relatively sympathetic solution. In hindsight, it would have been interesting to push the idea of change further and to create something new through a more bold design in the interior courtyards.

One issue unable to be fully resolved, is the lack of privacy for the neighbouring cottage on Tole Street. With intensification of the project site, the house will lose some privacy as apartments will now look down on it. The house is facing north, therefore its sunlight will not be reduced. A design solution which attempted angling the walls of the apartments to focus on different viewpoints was attempted but it did not work as expected. Covering the wall and reducing the window coverage was not an answer as the north sunlight is needed for apartments, especially as they only have two facets available for window space, hence the need for the glazed face. This left few options, with louvres being used to angle occupants' views slightly, the large existing fence is being retained and additional trees planted.
Figure 6.1 Perspective of complex from Ponsonby Road.
Figure 6.2  Ground floor plan (NTS). Majority of the ground floor is retail/public.
Figure 6.3 First Floor Plan. Majority of second floor is residential with some offices.
Figure 6.4 Second Floor Plan (NTS). This floor comprises of a mix of office spaces and apartments.
Figure 6.5 Elevations (NTS). From top to bottom North Elevation (Tole Street), East Elevation (Ponsonby Road) and South Elevation (O’Neill Street).
Figure 6.6 Long Section through apartments and corner bar (NTS).
Figure 6.7 Two sections through an artist’s live/work apartment (above) and an apartment (below).
Figure 6.8  Perspective showing entrance from Ponsonby Road into the courtyard.
6.2 Suggestion for Further Research

This research project has offered a potential solution to a major problem; showing that wasted spaces at the rears of buildings can be transformed into usable spaces and building connectors. This is an invaluable evaluation and has been relevant throughout my design project.

However, how realistic is the proposal? What problems will arise from this solution? As research has shown, it is physically possible. Parnell has followed a similar design idea – how did this work? A major issue is the ownership of the land. In Parnell the land used was owned by a single developer made the process straightforward. This is an unlikely scenario for most locations, including Ponsonby, where there are multiple property owners.

Equally, many people may be opposed to paying rates for areas considered to be ‘public;’ therefore the payment of rates could be a contentious issue.

These are important practical, but controversial points that have not yet been investigated.

Further research could include the overall project being adapted to suit different buildings and building types. The back spaces of these buildings could be modified to suit the particular setting. An example could be Auckland’s commercial 1950’s buildings which are dotted around the city. There has been minimal research relating to these buildings and their potential development. Many have back areas that could be evolved and converted. Large 1970’s industrial warehouses are another typology of building where my research could be pursued and adapted. These particular ideas have the potential to be an interesting study.
6.3 Summary

My initial investigation resulted in the selection of the Ponsonby Road site, featuring an ordinary Edwardian shop building with potential for redevelopment; a neighbouring modern building and open space. The site is located in a non-descript area of Ponsonby Road providing further reason to develop it and enhance the area.

I decided to retain the GPK building and remove the modern (Nosh) building. The 1908 building was important to the community and regarded as a character defining building for Ponsonby. Conversely, the Nosh building was in a poor condition, did not lend itself easily to redevelopment, and weakened the important Ponsonby Road façade.

An urban design solution was then devised, as more than one site needed to be developed to improve the area and create the third node on Ponsonby Road. Analysis of the Edwardian and Victorian building types found that the backs of the buildings were, and continue to be, spaces for activities such as servicing and car parking. With intensification occurring, land is becoming more valuable; therefore these areas were ideal for development as additional living spaces with an added ability to be used for servicing. This idea was expanded to include other neighbouring properties and to create a pedestrian street behind Ponsonby Road.

The major architectural strategy was to work with the surrounding context. It is important to “recognize which of the existing features of the area are important and have [them] woven in to what is still unquestionably work of the new century”\textsuperscript{74}. Surrounding context drove much of the new design, and was considered when designing the buildings’ bulk and location, detailed elevations and for major planning decisions. As part of the design the density of the site was also increased with the

\textsuperscript{74} Tony van Raat, “City Visionaries”, Architecture New Zealand, September/October, 2009. 80.
number of bed spaces rising from zero to twenty-four. The internal courtyard was also an important space, firstly as a connection to the pedestrian street and secondly as it aims to contain the life of the artists’ colony.

Overall, the project is a success. It has proven that a careful design strategy can lead to a successful development which respects the historic character of an area and associated sensitivities of the local community. The project has been an individual success. It will make a difference to the dynamics of this section of Ponsonby Road and more specifically, provides a better architectural solution that the 1967 building or the Council proposed park. It works with the neighbouring historic buildings, creates a better front to Ponsonby Road and utilizes the site; including the back spaces.

The project has also been effective as it provides a generic solution which could be a model for similar developments in the future. The project aligns with RTA Studio’s, (a widely acknowledged New Zealand practice) Richmond Road buildings (see appendix F) these “projects set a standard for the future and possibly wider interventions”.75

75 Ibid.
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APPENDIX A

Comparative Study Evaluation

When making a decision about comparative costs, qualitative evaluation was applied, using three key criteria:

1. Economic cost: The consideration was financial viability; whether to reuse the site buildings or to clear the site and start from scratch.

It is believed that the costs of reusing a building are extreme; common costs being cited as fireproofing, new service work, disabled access, structural strengthening and earthquake proofing as well as large contingency fees.

Some developers often see beyond these costs and acknowledge that the reuse of a building, after analyzing relevant factors, may increase demand for the property as two developers, Ken and Ross Healy, learned. They believe that “if you can provide a building that has an interesting feel and everything you have in a modern building people enjoy coming to work in that building.” 76

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76 Geoff Cumming, “Putting heart and soul into the city,” Weekend Herald, June 14, 2002.
An example of an early and successful adaptive reuse project is ‘The Cannery’ in San Francisco, a 1907 fruit market destined for demolition, but renovated in 1966 and reopened as a shopping centre. This helped promote the movement to recycle older buildings. Reuse of buildings in New Zealand only became fashionable in New Zealand in the last twenty years.

Historic revitalization could also be an alternative to new construction. Developers often construct cost-effective new buildings, where the quality does not match that of the historic buildings. Historic buildings “Preserve so much good fabric that there’s still a profit to be made in revitalizing them rather than demolishing them and replacing them with banal new buildings.”\(^77\) To produce buildings of a similar quality to those built in the early 20\(^{th}\) century is difficult and expensive. In many locations, revitalizing a high-quality building will not yield the returns required by the developer and it is therefore cheaper to demolish the building and start again. However, in Ponsonby, tenants are willing to pay for quality buildings.

A role play situation was completed with Richard Naish, an architect who deals with developers daily. As a developer for a Ponsonby Road site he would definitely keep the historic building and remove the modern building. The latter adds nothing to the site, whereas the historic building adds value and provides an interesting basis for the design of a new building.

In order to remove the building a strong case is needed. This would be time-consuming and expensive, requiring specialists and consultants specialising in resource consents to assist. Developers also expect construction to be finished quickly as untenanted buildings cost money.

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\(^77\) Enrico Santifaller, Transform – the revitalization of buildings. (Munich: Prestel Publishers, 2008), 141.
2. **Environmental Cost:** Sustainability of the building will primarily depend on the amount of embodied energy used and the amount of energy potentially wasted during demolition.

This leaves the question: is it more sustainable to reuse a building or remove a non-energy efficient building and replace it with a well designed and very sustainable building?

The 1960’s building was largely constructed of concrete block and fibrous cement sheet.\(^{78}\)

The fibrous cement sheet often ends up in landfill. These have been fixed with reversible connectors so they may be removed and reused. As the Nosh building will be demolished all concrete blocks will crushed and reused for new concrete blocks.\(^{80}\)

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Concrete and fibrous cement sheet both have relatively low embodied energies: 0.9MJ/kg and 9.5MJ/kg respectively.


Sustainability ratings of the two buildings have been calculated using the chart in *figure 7.1*. Findings are in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Level Clarification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GPK building</td>
<td>Three</td>
<td>Major refurbishment – replace major plant services, floor finishes and internal walls, and install external solar control. Additionally structural actions will need to occur to ensure the building meets current standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nosh building</td>
<td>Five</td>
<td>“Demolish and rebuild”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This rating system provided a straightforward and systematic way of determining each building’s ability to be reused. However, like Denkmalschutz, it fails to look at the building’s significance in terms of community impact.

**3. Community Impact:** Community impact is concerned with the effect the project will have on the Ponsonby area and its residents. This criterion was more subjective than the other criteria, making it harder to measure. The success of the building in the area is based on its architectural or aesthetic value, social value (sense of community/identity) and heritage (cultural/social) value.

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82 Ibid
Examples of similar projects have been considered around Auckland and internationally; concluding that the best approach is one in which the 1900’s building is retained. It has been well maintained, is visually appealing, and is a ‘character defining’ building for Ponsonby Road and therefore there is no compelling reason to remove it.

Allan Matson, a heritage campaigner for Auckland, believes that option C would be the most beneficial option for the site. He prefers extensions of heritage buildings as long as the original building is favoured – “a good extension can bring a heritage building to life”.

When the above criteria were weighed up against each other, the information clearly led to the selection of the third option. Providing the additions were sympathetic to the GPK building and were architecturally successful, the option of reusing the existing building and removing the Nosh building would plainly outweigh the other options.

Along site this research the design solutions of the three design options were investigated:
The design process illustrated the practicalities and understanding of the issues faced when retaining or removing buildings. This test aimed to be unbiased: equal amounts of time, the same programme and materials were used for each scheme.

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Allan Matson, interviewed by author, May 1, 2009.
Figure 7.2 shows the concepts drawn up:

In theory, producing different designs seemed to be a straightforward way of developing alternative solutions. However, it became apparent, early on, that creating three equally well thought out designs would be difficult owing to limited time and an increasing preference towards one scheme developed from literature review and initial interviews.

When using existing buildings, the options available in terms of the programme and materiality are more limited than for a vacant site. As all the options were to have the same programme and materials, the three options looked relatively similar.

Why remove a building if the new development is going to be similar to the building being removed?

Figure 7.2  Concept plans of the three options.
Option A and Option C in figure 7.2 look almost identical in plan and elevation. Re-creating the building being removed makes little sense and helped lead to the decision to follow Option C, the most successful option. This was appreciated, despite the design being at an early stage.
APPENDIX B

Definitions of significant terms

**Conservation** (from the Dictionary of Architecture) - the “Retention of existing buildings or groups of buildings...taking care not to alter or destroy character or detail...conservation does not necessarily mean preservation: it can involve considerable intervention, even much new building”.\(^{84}\) The existing character must be respected; this holds the potential of enhancing the historic building’s character.\(^{85}\)

**Historic** - something “dating from or preserved from a past time or culture”.\(^{86}\)

An **historic building** - a building with character and style from an earlier era, usually with distinct architectural style.

**Listed Building** – A building that has been recognized by the authorities as significant. In New Zealand listed buildings will either be category A or category B. A building will be listed not only because of its architectural importance but also if it has

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\(^{85}\) Ibid.

had “association with historic events or persons; embodiment of a distinctive type, period, method of construction; and the inclusion of components that may lack individual distinction”\(^{87}\).

A Category B historic Building – Is a building that “should not be willfully removed, damaged or altered in a significant way unless there is a compelling reason”.\(^{88}\)

A new building, refers to one “never before existing”.\(^{89}\) The new building will be designed and built from scratch.

Revitalisation – “the refurbishing and conversion of existing buildings and upgrading them to current technical standards for the purpose of some contemporary use”.\(^{90}\)

A Sustainable building should have “minimal long-term [negative] effect on the environment”\(^{91}\) and the environmental impact is controlled “by enhancing efficiency and moderation in the use of materials, energy and development space”.\(^{92}\)

Sustainability may be broken down into three categories – environmental sustainability (perhaps the sector most of us are familiar with), economic sustainability and social/cultural sustainability.\(^{93}\)


\(^{89}\) Lorna Gilmour, *Collins Concise Dictionary and Thesaurus*, 3\(^{rd}\) ed. (Glasgow: HarperCollins Publishers, 2003), s.v. “new”.


Environmental sustainability involves six simple concepts or goals that should be carefully considered whilst a building is being designed. These include “replacing non-renewable with renewable resources and minimizing infrastructural and transport needs”. With the inclusion of these in our building designs we can expect to see a much healthier environment through reduced “green house gas emissions, clean air, good water and land qualities, the preservation of non-renewable resources and a healthier population”.

Economic sustainability is the second branch of sustainability that must be considered. Instead of looking solely at the building’s current costs or construction costs the future or life cycle costs (operation costs) of the building should also be taken into account.

The social and cultural aspects must also be considered. These include human health, comfort and social/cultural vibrancy within a community and memory.

Modern Architecture is “architecture of the recent past”. Modern architecture is essentially the simplification of form and elimination of ornament. In New Zealand modern architecture did not gain popularity until the 1950s, and by the 1960s it was widespread.

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94 ibid
95 ibid.
96 ibid
98 Theodore Prudon, Preservation of Modern Architecture. (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), XI.
APPENDIX C

Denkmalschutz Investigation

The system results force the physical state of buildings to be looked at; this is called the “bauzustands stufen”\(^9\). Within this system there are five different categories denoting the stage of repair for the building:

1. New (Building does not require much work, perhaps a coat of paint).
2. Problems with the finishes (for example, the floor).
3. Problems with some parts of the building (e.g. windows/doors or lighting) but the main structural system is still working.
4. Problems with the structure. The building is unable to be used until repaired.
5. Building needs to be removed.

In order to realize which stage the building is at a “Raumbuch”, (space book) is used. Each room within the building is given a rating for the following categories: water, acoustics, lighting and electric. Then an overall grade is taken from the averages.\(^1\)

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\(^9\) Martin Wollensak, interviewed on November 9, 2008.
\(^1\) Ibid
APPENDIX D

Further Analysis of the Shop buildings

Stairs access was also looked at. Buildings were designed to be occupied by one family. Bedrooms (and sometimes a bathroom) were located on the upper floor while living areas were in the back section of the lower floor, with a shop run by the same family, occupying the front. Stairs were entered from the back of the building where the living area was, and then turn on a right angle. Intriguingly these stairs are always on the same side as the light well.

Often one window is provided per room. This window is always in the centre of the wall, so rooms seem round as the corners are dark. Even when it is possible to have an additional window, for example on a spare wall, no windows are built. This is most probably for economic reasons.

Figure 7.3  Analysis of plans of a Ponsonby Road building.

101 Auckland City Archives, 102 Ponsonby Road. Auckland: Auckland City Archive, 1910.
The treatment of the stairs is different; the stairs do not take a right angle turn but a complete 180 degrees. They are also entered from a different direction to the more typical buildings.

In many buildings of the time, it was also found that the floor stayed at one level even if there were a contour. Today, many buildings step down gradually following the lands contour.

Below is another building on Ponsonby Road that was built differently from the other buildings examined:

This building differs in a number of ways, including the amount of façade decoration. The front façade decoration is continued around to the side façade which naturally suggests that perhaps the building is more important? The corner has also been treated differently; it is only recognised at the lower level. However, there are a number of buildings that also do this. When the corner is not well emphasised, the central point of the façade is acknowledged. The treatment of the stairs is unique and the massing of the building is also dissimilar. The building does not make a good effort to relate to the neighbouring buildings. Rather than a gradual step down, there is a major drop from a two-storied level to a small, single level.
This building shows that there can be changes to the standard pattern of this type of building. What must be asked is, can this building be used in the same way and re-developed similarly? The answer to this question is a resounding yes, the building may certainly be used, extended and the back can be opened up.

The style of building which followed the Victorian and Edwardian styles was the Interwar Years (during the 1920s and 1930s). This was looked at and compared as it takes the typical building pattern a step further; simplifying it.

Although the buildings were relatively similar there were apparent differences. The newer buildings were a lot simpler; with less façade detail and ornamentation. The buildings are also more symmetrical. This was probably to save money and construction time. As you can see from the red line above, both the plan and façade are symmetrical. A major difference is the sizes of the shops. In Victorian and Edwardian buildings the shops varied in size but the Interwar years buildings have shops all the same width, including the corner site.
Awnings were beginning to be held up with tension cables. Stairs were not always on the same side as the light well and light wells were not always sheltered from the street with building.

As you can see from the side street façade, the builders have again not taken the opportunity to build additional windows.
APPENDIX E

Analysis of New Constructions along Ponsonby Road

The Westpac building (figure 7.6) has obviously followed the brutalist architectural style. It does make reference to the historic buildings through the vertical divisions or bays. The horizontal divisions are also recognized and are shown through three major strips – the roof, upper floor and lower floor.

So if the building pays attention to the historic building, why is it not successful? A major problem is the way the building has dealt with the windows. The historic building typology has windows which puncture the walls. While this building has large spans of glass that appear very flat.

The accident and emergency clinic (figure 7.7) has also taken some leads from the historic building. However, in my view; not enough. It has dealt with the height by
recognising the existing height of the neighbouring building before stepping up to a higher level. The proportions of the building have also been addressed but done in a very simplistic way. One of the major problems is the lack of texture in the façade, although the architect has dealt with depth. The treatment of the street front is also underwhelming, large entrances are created that lead up to a higher or lower level, there are no shops on the street level and this takes away from street vitality.

Both of these examples of modern developments from the 1970-1980 period are unsuccessful by today’s standards. The buildings, which were extremely modern for their time, are now very dated.

These next two buildings are more recent examples of Ponsonby Road buildings. Neither are perfect solutions, however, both, and especially the building opposite Franklin Road, make a good attempt at relating to the historic buildings. The latter building’s success is mainly due to its materiality, vertical divisions and window treatment.

The building on the corner of Collingwood Street (figure 7.8) and Ponsonby Road has made an obvious attempt to fit into the existing Ponsonby fabric. The building creates a vertical rhythm through its differing roof lines. However, the roof is definitely not characteristic of an historic Ponsonby shop front.

The building, has also had to deal with a corner. The architect has made an attempt with the corner but it is fairly unsuccessful, especially at the lower level. The building closes the corner off and does not create a good flow between Ponsonby Road and Collingwood Street. This is the complete opposite to all older buildings which cut off the corner.
The depth of the façade has also been dealt with, not through the use of thick and heavy walls, but rather through verandas/outdoor spaces.

The building **opposite Franklin road** *(figure 7.9)* does a very good job of being modern while still respecting the existing buildings. The building uses brick, the material used by many Ponsonby buildings. It also cleverly uses the materials to link older neighbouring buildings together, however in the middle a completely modern approach is taken. One downfall, perhaps, is the way the shop fronts have been dealt with, the brick sides of the building are closed, not open enough, and the middle section is probably too exposed.

The **World Building** *(figure 7.10)* is a very simple building that has not dated like many of the other buildings on Ponsonby Road. It has clearly defined the three horizontal levels; there is a sense of depth created through the recessed windows and doors. The building also has a textured surface and the middle of the building has been defined by a step in the parapet. Traditionally, buildings usually accentuated the middle of the parapet or the corner.

The other building is the **French Art Shop** *(figure 7.11)*. This is a new building that has also dealt with the neighbouring buildings well. The use of bricks, the parapet and central peak and the way it has brought the shop entrance away from the footpath have all worked well, while the patterning of the bricks and the triangular window give the building a modern image.
The World Building and the French Art Shop are both successful attempts at the development of modern buildings amongst historic buildings. Although neither has had to deal with a major corner they have had to incorporate three levels.

These next two developments have similar sites, both large and located on prominent corners. The two developments are from different eras and the architects have taken different approaches to design.

The top apartment building *(figure 7.12)* designed by Richard Priest is the more modern building. The architect has obviously had to get a lot of floor area into the building as the complex is four storeys high and because of this massive volume, the building has been broken up into vertical slots. A major weakness in the building is the overhangs on the roof, (these are not typical of any Ponsonby Road shop) and the way the windows have been dealt with.

The bottom photograph shows the international food court building *(figure 7.13)* from the 1980s. This building has quite clearly chosen to relate to the villa/residential architecture from the early 1900s and looks to be a mismatch or chaos of this typology of building. It’s perhaps a representation of what Ponsonby started off as rather than where Ponsonby is going. The large veranda at the front adds another element of domesticity.

This analysis shows that there are many aesthetic approaches to the design of the facades of buildings that attempt to relate to historic Edwardian and Victorian shops. The functions of the developments are not uniform. They include an accident and emergency clinic, a bank, a gym, apartments, shops and restaurants. Despite this, none of the developments has made use of the reasonable space behind the buildings other than for servicing and car parking.
APPENDIX F

A Selection of Case Studies

1. Maroubra Bay Hotel, Sydney *(figure 7.14)* (Designed by Bates Smart) – Although the function of the building is different this project is an important example of a redevelopment project, similar to option C. The architects have made significant additions to a historic brick building, a completely new and modern wing has been added to the building.\(^{103}\)

2. Heards Sweet Factory in Parnell, Auckland *(figure 7.15)* (Designed by Aston Mitchell Architects) - This project is another good example of a redevelopment project. The project is an ex-sweet factory that has been converted to a mixed used complex with apartments, offices and retail tenants.\(^ {104}\)

3. Brownrigg Agriculture Offices, Hawke’s Bay (Designed by Warren and Mahoney) - This is a very interesting project that is useful for


\(^{105}\) Ibid
option B, redevelopment of the 1960’s building. The Hawke’s Bay Project unifies three depressed commercial buildings and transforms them into a modern and clean cut building which makes a statement in the small town of Hastings.  

4. Tivoli Housing, Chur, Switzerland (Designed by Dieter Jüngling) – This is an international example of a refurbishment project, two buildings constructed in the 1940’s are connected with a modern section and the buildings were refurbished internally.  

5. The Mint, Sydney (figure 7.16) (Designed by Francis-Jones Morehen Thorp Architects) – This is a good example for the extension of an historic building. The architects do not try to replicate the historic building in anyway but rather provide a completely contrasting design that still manages to complement the building. A modern glass block with timber louver blinds is the addition to an old brick building. Although the use is different (this was converted to a theatre) the example is still relevant in terms of working with an old existing building.  

6. Rue de Suisse Apartments, Paris (figure 7.17) (Herzog and De Meuron) – A complex of modern apartments built in amongst neighbouring historic buildings. The interesting parts of this

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development that relate to this project is the treatment of the modern façade which still relates to the neighbouring historic building and the interior courtyard.

7. Site 3, Newton. *(figure 7.18)* (Patterson Architects) – This building was looked at particularly for its courtyard space. As the project design incorporates a similar space it was important to look at both successful and unsuccessful examples. This was a successful design and it was useful to look at the proportions of the space.

8. Iron Bank, Auckland *(figure 7.19)* (RTA Studio) – This is a new complex which has recently been completed on K’Road. Although the project is of a larger scale it has had to deal with some similar aspects. Although this building is completely new a façade has been designed which relates to the historic neighbouring buildings; the top section of the building is extremely modern especially when you move around the back of the project. Having the building change from front to back is an interesting concept. The building also incorporates a pedestrian street into its design.

9. Richmond Road Buildings *(figures 7.20 and 7.21)* (RTA Studio) – These buildings have been a major source of inspiration and comparison for this project. The buildings deal with similar aspects to the Ponsonby Road site especially since they deal with historic Edwardian and Victorian buildings. The buildings are simple yet sophisticated and encompass many of the architectural elements found in the historic buildings.
Figure 7.18  The courtyard of Site 3, Newton.

Figure 7.19  Render of Iron Bank on K’Road.\textsuperscript{110}

Figure 2.21  Richmond Road building by RTA Studios.

Figure 7.20  Corner building on Richmond Road by RTA Studios

APPENDIX G

Nine strategies for Auckland City

Key Strategy One:
Promote Auckland’s Creative sector within New Zealand and internationally
- Showcase the diversity of the creative industries, including people, businesses and places.
- Market the arts as a key component of the creative industries.

Key Strategy Two:
Promote Auckland’s creative sector as a key economic driver
- Contribute to developing and implementing city, regional and national strategies that grow the creative industries.
- Make the creative industries a key part of Auckland’s investment and tourism attraction programmes.
- Promote the creative industries through Auckland City Council’s international relationships.

Key Strategy Three:
Enhance Auckland’s creative enterprise through significant events
- Develop and grow signature, major and community events that support creative enterprise.
- Sponsor business events that support the growth of the creative industries.
- Develop and grow creative events that enliven the CBD.
- Promote opportunities for the creative sector to contribute to the successful hosting of international events, including the Rugby World Cup 2011.

Key Strategy Four:
Foster the growth of business opportunities for Auckland’s creative sector
- Work with national agencies to address barriers to growth, build capability in the sector and encourage links between New Zealand’s creative industry and international markets.
- Support incubation, acceleration and enterprise development initiatives.
- Support the growth of key and high-growth sub-sectors such as screen production, design, digital media and music.
- Foster connection between Auckland’s diverse cultures and creative sector business opportunities.

Key Strategy Five:
Develop career pathways for creative talent
- Connect the aspirations of talented young people with the creative industries.
- Contribute to the career development of emerging and established creative practitioners.

Key Strategy Six:
Deepen our understanding of the creative sector and its aspirations
- Enhance relationships with the sector, organizations and tertiary institutions that develop the economic potential of the creative industries.
- Conduct research on the growth of the creative industries and its diverse sub-sectors.

Key Strategy Seven:
Enhance Auckland city’s urban environment
- Implement the council’s urban design framework.
- Advocate for others to sign up to the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol.
- Implement a design-led approach to relevant capital works project.
- Promote good urban design in Auckland.
- Implement the CBD public art work development plan.

Key Strategy Eight:
Be creative industries friendly
- Incorporate the requirements of the creative industries into the council’s approach to its regulatory environment, transport policies and priorities, and information technologies.
- Highlight opportunities for the creative sector to input to Auckland City Council projects and initiatives.
- Assess the opportunity for the council to assist with providing affordable workspace for the creative sector.
Key Strategy Nine:

- Develop creative places
  - Develop creative quarters within the CBD. In particular, Aotea Quarter, Learning Quarter, Victoria Quarter, and the Britomart Precinct.
  - Develop and promote the CBD fringe and vibrant local centres that support creative industries.
  - Develop the Town Hall Arts Precinct.
  - Contribute to the development of the Q Theatre.
  - Make the Auckland Art Gallery an iconic cultural facility.