Refuge Heterotopia

An on-arrival reception centre for refugees resettling in New Zealand

Master Thesis Explanatory Document

Christian Burgos
1362659

Kerry Francis

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Abstract

Forced displacement drives refugees to unstable situations and environments. Architecture embodies the expression of hospitality towards refugees, and the way that they are treated by the host society that welcomes them in determines the success of social integration. Many of the 51 million forcefully displaced people around the world are not welcomed with hospitality, and this loss of citizenship leads to the loss of livelihood, wellbeing, and can reinstate the very dangers they originally escaped from.

*Refuge Heterotopia* is a research project exploring the possible ways of reinstating stability and citizenship for refugees as they begin their journey of resettlement at the New Lynn refugee reception centre where they go through a six week orientation programme upon arrival in New Zealand, in order to support their long-term integration into society.

The research adapts literature on architecture and migration, including Jacques Derrida’s ‘City of Refuge’ from *On Cosmopolitanism*, Paul Carter’s *Mythforms* and Michiel Dehaene and Lieven De Cauter’s *Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Post-Civil Society*, which were analysed alongside literature on refugee displacement. Drawings and models were used to interpret the texts to create an architecture of refuge within the reception centre.

The result is an architectural expression of refugee hospitality; a place of spatial liberation, restoring one’s sense of safety, security and autonomy. Just as each migrant has a different story, no refugee experience is the same. The architecture does not impose any preconceived ideas of refuge. Instead, it is an ambiguous labyrinth of possible refuge spaces, where the refugees can make sense of their new environment and seek their own form of refuge.
I would like to thank my supervisor Kerry Francis for his feedback and support throughout the year, my fellow studio friends for their inspiration, David Chaplin and all the crits who have helped me progress with their feedback throughout the year, Noor Parkar for kindly taking me around the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre and answering my questions, Qemal Murati and Li Zuo for answering my questions about the orientation programme, and last but not least my family and friends for supporting me throughout the years.
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Introduction

Overview

The migrant is a figure that moves in pursuit of a new place to settle, and should not be seen as the ‘other’ to the already settled citizen. But the arrival of the migrant can have unsettling effects towards the host society, resulting in segregation or the pressure to assimilate. Architecture is inherently involved in forming this relationship between the migrant and the settled citizen such as the architecture-for-migrants, marginalising and destabilising refugees within camps and detention centres which are designed to defend and control national borders, born out of fear.

For the first time since the Second World War, as of the end of 2013 the number of globally displaced people had surpassed 50 million, of which 33.3 million people are internally displaced and 16.7 million are refugees. Within this, 960,000 are in great need of resettlement to a third country to get away from the dangers within overcrowded refugee camps, difficult urban situations or detention centres in their countries of asylum. But with only 80,000 of the refugees being resettled through UNHCR’s Resettlement programme throughout the world per year, there is a need for countries to do more to alleviate the crisis.

The current orientation programme at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre (MRRC) in New Zealand addresses the on-arrival needs of refugees to prepare them for their new life in the country. But the design of the centre is inadequate and compromises the success of their future integration.

In response to the destabilisation felt by refugees in forced displacement, the following research project attempts to rebuild their sense of citizenship, supporting their integration into their new society through architecture. This project addresses the orientation phase of refugee resettlement in New Zealand where they are accommodated for six weeks at the New Lynn refugee reception centre. Here, they go through an orientation programme to receive introductory information about the country and receive health checks. The reception centre is a platform to re-stabilise from life in displacement, in preparation for integration into New Zealand society.

Research Questions

- How can architecture offer hospitality towards vulnerable refugees to assist in their journey of resettlement and integration into New Zealand society?

- How can the courtyard be utilised to create a sense of autonomy, safety, security and privacy?

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**Aims and Objectives**

The aim of this project is to utilise architecture as a tool to counter the effects of forced displacement. The architecture aims to become a platform for the refugees to re-establish stability during the reception phase of resettlement, in the hope of empowering them for their integration into society in the long-term. The objective is to create an architecture of hospitality, one that restores autonomy, safety, security and privacy without homogenising the vast differences of the refugees passing through it.

**Scope and Limitations**

The scale of the global refugee crisis exceeds the scope of this thesis, and its complexity cannot be addressed in its entirety. The project only covers the initial reception phase of third-country resettlement for refugees in vulnerable situations, in the context of the existing resettlement programme in New Zealand. What happens after the reception period is beyond the scope of this project. However, the project aims to reinforce the importance of architecture in migrant hospitality, and it is hoped that it will inspire more research to be done in this area of architecture and migrant studies in the future.

The project is limited to, and relies on, existing literature research about refugees. There were no refugees interviewed for any part of this research, so its success can only be tested against the existing literature. As a non-refugee, migrant in New Zealand myself, I am unable to measure the success of this research from a refugee’s perspective. The project is positioned as the one who attempts to welcome with hospitality, rather than the one who is being welcomed by it.

**Methodology**

The project began with readings about the refugee crisis, followed by an initial architectural response. The design was evaluated along with the readings and was followed by additional surveys of architectural precedents and theoretical literature to gain a better understanding of the topic, and the cycle was repeated. While much of the information about the refugee crisis involves policies, rights and data about current events, the research for design focused on the relevant literature about the hospitality of refugees that architecture could respond to. Literature on the theories of migration in general and relevant sections about forced displacement was referred to in Drifting: architecture and migrancy by Stephen Cairns, and within this text the particular sections referred to were: Drifting by Stephen Cairns, On Cosmopolitanism by Jacques Derrida, Mythforms by Paul Carter, and Why architecture is neither here nor there by Mark Rakatansky. Literature about forced displacement, Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Post-Civil Society by Michiel Dehaene and Lieven De Cauter provided a specific position for the project to be based on, and additional literature on more specific architectural strategies were several chapter from Pattern Language by Christopher Alexander, and A Concise Townscape by Gordon Cullen, in order to form the research into a tangible piece of architecture. Built and unbuilt architectural precedents were selected based on the literature survey, and were analysed through drawing to gain an understanding of their architectural strategies. The research was applied to the existing refugee reception programme in New Zealand providing an anchor for grounding the
research to a real-world context. Research by design involved a cycle of hand drawings and computer modelling based on the literature and site surveys, which resulted in a collage of different strategies to inform the design. Initial architectural strategies were explored through physical modelling, while pencil sketches were used to explore atmosphere and mood, and computer modelling to develop the design in a more complex manner.
Architecture and Migration

On Cosmopolitanism – Jacques Derrida

Hospitality towards the foreigner, the ‘city of refuge’, as argued by Jacques Derrida, can be found not through state sovereignty or what Hannah Arendt calls the international law between all the governments of the world, but through the inclusion of the foreigner into the very fabric of the city; the ‘residence, one’s home, the familiar place of dwelling’.

This concept of the ‘city of refuge’ draws reference to three historical traditions; Hebraic, Medieval, and Classical/Enlightenment. In the Hebrew bible, hospitality can be seen through what was called the ‘six cities of refuge’ as places that welcomed innocents seeking refuge from persecution. In the medieval tradition, the ‘Great Law of Hospitality’ was an unconditional law that the city is open to anyone who may come; and also the idea of refuge as sanctuary provided by churches to protect refugees from harm.

In the classical enlightenment period, Pauline Christianity advocated world-citizenship where people are no longer foreigners in a foreign land, but ‘fellow citizens with God’s people’. But for Emmanuel Kant, hospitality requires two limits. He argued that no one has the right to another man’s piece of land, as all humans have equal share of the limited surface of earth. This excludes hospitality as a right of residence, limiting the foreigner to the right of visitation, as we cannot infinitely scatter throughout the planet, and is also limited to state sovereignty which poses a contradiction to Arendt’s argument.

Gideon Baker builds on Derrida’s concept of hospitality by concluding that although a purely unconditional form of hospitality remains theoretical; that despite unconditional hospitality calling for a welcome ‘without reserve and without calculation’, in practice, we must hold back the unlimited entry of the foreigner, in order for the act of ‘welcoming’ them to be truly effective. There is, therefore, no way for a purely unconditional form of hospitality to exist for hospitality can only exist through the threshold of ‘welcoming’ the foreigner into one’s home.

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8 Cairns, Drifting, 51.
9 Cairns, Drifting, 55.
10 Cairns, Drifting, 56.
11 Cairns, Drifting, 57-58.
12 Cairns, Drifting, 58-59.
Mythforms – Paul Carter

In his essay *Mythforms*, Paul Carter adapts Elias Canetti’s characterisation of migrants as “the ones who always come from elsewhere” unlike the white settler colonist who claims to have always been there, as if the land was nothing without them. He builds on the concept of hospitality in the context of design practice. Rejecting the traditional concept of ‘placism’, he argues instead for the ‘unspeakability’ of places due to the multiplicity of other people meeting there which takes the form of a labyrinth of multiple potential approaches, where the idea of place is made *after* the story is inscribed. Modernism’s well-ordered and linear Cartesian grid fails to account for a migrant’s history. Descartes’ architectonic line represents no pre-existing material. There is no memory to be found, and there is nowhere to ‘anchor’. To anchor is to find a place for a migrant to tell his or her story, where the past story is acknowledged while also allowing for future inscriptions. An architecture for migrants then, is the acknowledgement of this ‘trace’ of their migration. The trace has no origin because its materiality is different from whatever made it; free of nostalgia, yet imbued with the past. Migrants cannot point to any of their former histories in the new land, but carry with them a trace of their past. Accounting for the migrant’s past requires mythopoesis; a reinvention that echoes what has gone before. It is invention with memory.

Why Architecture is Neither Here Nor There – Mark Rakatansky

Mark Rakatansky argues in his paper *Why Architecture is Neither Here nor There*, that all architecture is neither purely here or purely there, but simultaneously here and there at the same time, and it is only a question of to what extent it achieves this. He refers to Martin Heidegger, who defines the idea of dwelling in his essay ‘Building, Dwelling, Thinking’ in which he celebrates the homey, canny aspects of dwelling while repressing the uncanny. In Heidegger’s earlier work *Being and Time* however, he defines human existence in terms of being ‘not at home’; that it is all about the uncanny. Freud on the other hand, argues that they both go hand in hand. Homi Bhaba reinforces this with the idea of a hybrid of ‘here’ and ‘there’ in relation to dwelling and migrancy, criticising the overemphasis on culture and national identity of the host country which excludes the migrant. He argues for a hybridity of identities that expose the rough edges of the constant negotiation of cultural contradictions between them. It takes what is unresolved and expresses the tension and struggle for translation. This hybrid requires mimicking aspects of local architecture, for in order to escape its assimilation, it needs to be expressed, and only then can a change be possible.

Concluding Statement

Hospitality for migrants is the conditional act of welcoming them in and
requires their inclusion into the city. An architecture for migrants is a labyrinth of possible anchor points where the idea of ‘place’ is only formed once the migrant has established a position. It acknowledges the trace of the migrants’ past while allowing for future stories to be inscribed without referring to any specific migrant histories or cultures, accommodating for the multiplicity of migrant stories possibly meeting there. It is a non-linear, non-monumental and labyrinthine form of architecture; a platform for establishing migrant stories. Lastly, dealing with the relationship between identities of the migrant and the host country requires not superficial form of multiculturalism, but a hybrid of local and global identities.
Fig. 2: Conflict in Myanmar

Fig. 3: Iraqi refugees fleeing to safety

Fig. 4: Refugees fleeing from Myanmar

Fig. 5: Conflict in Syria
Forced Displacement

Myanmar, Bhutan, and Iraq are just a few of the many countries throughout the world with crises resulting in the forceful uprooting of mass populations from their lands. In Myanmar (formerly known as Burma), the country was ruled by military junta which isolated the country from the rest of the world and enforced serious abuse of human rights on its civilians from 1962 to 2011. When Burma became independent in 1948, many small tribes rebelled to join the new state and the military eventually attacked the small villages, regardless of whether they were rebels or just peaceful villagers. Almost 700,000 of these people have fled persecution from the military that burned over 3000 of their villages. In Bhutan, the government denied Lhotshampa their citizenship rights in 1980. Retaliation from the Lhotshampa against the new policies caused the government to brand anyone involved as anti-nationals, resulting in the government imprisoning and torturing thousands of Lhotshampa. Repressive acts continued and citizenships were revoked, demolished houses and forced the Lhotshampa to flee, resulting in over 100,000 Lhotshampa refugees living in Nepal refugee camps since the early 90’s. In Iraq, before the war in 2003, estimates for Internally Displaced People (IDP) ranged from 800,000 to 2,000,000, and 1,250,000 refugees fled the country. When Iraq was invaded in 2003, Iraq’s refugee problem grew to become an unprecedented crisis, with one in twelve Iraqi families having fled their homes and not returned. The invasion was part of the war on terrorism under the Bush administration targeting Saddam Hussein.

Urban/Rural Origins

Many refugees originate from urban societies, but there are also many who have come from a rural agricultural background. In particular, the majority of Iraqi refugees come from Baghdad, an urban city. The majority of the

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Burmese refugees come from an agricultural rural background with little formal education, and the Lhotshampa from Bhutan are also predominantly from an agricultural background.

**Insufficient Hospitality**

It is recognised that the camp is not the best model for refugee protection and hospitality, but governments often favour camps as a way of separating the refugees from local residents to prevent conflict over scarce resources. This reflects society's attitude towards victims of war, labelling refugees as voiceless and helpless victims that are dependent on aid, revealing the camp as a place of oppression and control. On the other hand, unlike a refugee camp the city provides the opportunity to stay anonymous, earn money, and build a better future. Yet, it is still an inhospitable environment for refugees who are prone to exploitation, arrest and detention, cannot work legally. They compete with the poorest locals for the worst jobs, encounter issues with discrimination, limitations of access to local services, and their status as people of exception means they may not entirely be welcomed as part of the community.

**Insufficient Autonomy**

The design of the camp is based on the assumption that displacement is temporary, but due to the state of displacement dragging on for years, the camp becomes a permanent-temporary space of isolation. In many countries refugees in camps are deprived of participation in economic activities of the host nation despite international law requiring such opportunities, cannot engage in political activities, and when education and aid are provided, they are strictly controlled, turning camps into spaces of incomplete development, frozen in time. Not all camps are strictly controlled, however. In some cases camps establish and develop their own settlement, but despite this, they are still isolated from the local society. Spatial syntax analysis from a paper written by Regan Potangaroa shows that the typical row arrangement of tents have negative social consequences such as the lack of a defined social space, reducing the sense of safety and security, unlike the ‘U’ shaped layout which encloses a common space, increasing the sense of safety, security and intimacy gradient.

Autonomy in a detention centre on the other hand can be severely diminished, at times with inhumane conditions like the Nauru detention centre where there are frequent floods, rodents and no privacy. In countries like Australia, asylum seekers arriving in the country are held in detention centres as a risk management tool in order to allow for health, identity and security checks to be carried out. They are detained for the duration of the

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35 Sanyal, “Refugees and the city,” 634.
37 Sanyal, “Refugees and the city,” 634.
38 Sanyal, “Refugees and the city,” 635.
Fig. 8: Beldangi Refugee Camp

Fig. 9: Strict grids at the Beldangi Camp

Fig. 10: A tent at Nauru Detention Centre

Fig. 11: Monotonous space provides no social hierarchy

Fig. 12: Apartment complex where refugees and migrants end up in Malaysia

Fig. 13: Cramped apartment - 30 people in a 3 bedroom home leaves no room for privacy
processing of their refugee status which keeps them in confinement that can last for several years, even when they pose no threat to the health and security of society. Detention can create serious mental health issues, imposing an uncertain future, lack of independence, and monotony of life, which can lead to self-harm or suicide.41

Vulnerability

Tent layouts are commonly reduced to fields of monotony. Lack of security leads to sexual abuse which is common within the camps.42 They may not be safe havens for women especially if they are separated from the security of their families which leave them vulnerable to abuse from guards and male refugees. But even for those who are with family, the strain of life as a refugee increase can the risk of domestic violence. Poorly planned camps may leave women and girls vulnerable to attacks as they travel through remote areas searching for food, water and firewood.43

A study on Burmese refugees living in Kuala Lumpur reveal that the refugees felt unsafe in their living and neighbourhood environments.44

Insufficient Privacy

Many of the refugees in Kuala Lumpur are pushed in compromised living conditions in order to minimise living expenses; the majority share apartment flats between families, friends and strangers, creating issues of privacy. Most of them stay in housing units that only had three bedrooms with ten people, but some have up to 30 people living in one housing unit, which can have a negative impact on their health and wellbeing.45

Asylum seekers at the Nauru Detention Centre stay in tents that offer no privacy with very little room between beds. This lack of privacy also makes it difficult to sleep when people cry at night.46

Trauma

Almost inevitable in forced displacement is the loss of livelihood. Additionally, many people have endured a long and dangerous escape with little or no access to food or water and faced threats to their personal safety along the way.47 Exposure to these experiences can compromise health conditions. Loss of access and control of the most basic needs of survival can create a sense of fear, helplessness and dependency, and a loss of meaning and purpose in one's day-to-day lives.48 Displacement can remove a person from their familiar

48 “Refugee Resettlement: An International Handbook to Guide Reception and
world and lose points of reference in their lives. This distress may be short-lived, or it can take years and even decades to recover from. Interviews of Iraqi refugees in Syria reveal that every single person that was interviewed had experienced a traumatic event. An estimate of up to 35% of the world’s refugees and asylum seekers have been victims of torture.

**Concluding Statement**

The inadequate hospitality of refugees in their first country of asylum compromises their wellbeing, resulting in their possible loss of autonomy, vulnerability, loss of privacy, and trauma. Just as every migrant has a different ‘trace’, every refugee situation is different.

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Architecture of Refuge

Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Post-civil Society – Michiel Dehaene and Lieven De Cauter

Michiel Dehaene and Lieven De Cauter in *Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Post-Civil Society* describe a refuge for the forcefully displaced as a form of heterotopia. A refuge for the refugee is a heterotopian sanctuary; a place of otherness that discontinues the 'normality' of the violence and danger in the environment that the refugees flee from. The opposite of the sanctuary is the concentration camp. The concentration camp is a place of 'bare life', but a refugee camp on the other hand, is (or at least should be), the opposite of the camp. The sanctuary is not a fortress, dungeon or gated community, since heterotopia as a space of mediation 'relates to other spheres', while the camp is a space of total rejection, with no relation to the outside.

Refugee camps, cities and detention centres are supposed to be heterotopian sanctuaries, but for the vulnerable refugees facing danger even in these environments, it is clear that they are currently not true places of refuge. A refuge for the refugee then, is the restoration of hospitality, autonomy and privacy, and a place away from vulnerability and trauma.

Degree of Publicness

In response to the differences between each refugee coming from urban and rural backgrounds, a gradient of public and private spaces within the environment will provide a choice to move to either a busy space or a more quiet space. Christopher Alexander makes a distinction between public and private by having dwellings on busy paths relatively exposed to passers-by, and winding paths that lead to secluded dwellings along quiet backs for more privacy.

Intimacy Gradient

Many of the refugee camps, urban apartments and detention centres that the refugees have departed from provide limited privacy. The distinction between these spaces addresses autonomy and heterotopia which relates to other spaces. To create personal autonomy, an intimacy gradient is needed in order to create different levels of privacy that stretch from public spaces such as communal social spaces, to the most intimate spaces such as the bedroom and bathroom. Similar to the degree of publicness, the intimacy gradient begins at the entrance into the public realm which then transitions into semi-public, semi-private and finally private spaces at the back. Rooms that have an undefined hierarchy of intimacy prevent the choice of moving to a desired space and prevents any social interaction in the building.

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53 Dehaene and De Cauter, *Heterotopia and the City*, 97-98.
Courtyard Enclosure

Countering the placelessness of the Cartesian grid and the forceful segregation of the fortress, the courtyard becomes an appropriate tool to create a mediating space; a heterotopian sanctuary that contains its own space while relating to other spaces. According to Christopher Alexander, a courtyard enclosure fails when there is no ambiguity between indoor and outdoor, not enough paths in and out of the space, or is too enclosed. The space becomes successful with an ambiguous in-between realm, has paths on at least two sides, and showing a glimpse into the space beyond. The space is open for people to pass through, but remains a private space that is not disrupted by the movement. The courtyard can also have different spaces within it, adding to the idea of an intimacy gradient to create a hierarchy of social spaces.56

Concluding Statement

A refuge for the refugee is a form of sanctuary, in which they are not forced or segregated into but can enter if they wish. A sanctuary therefore is not an isolated space but has relations to other spaces allowing for spatial autonomy. The need to restore a sense of safety and security through privacy for many refugees requires varying degrees of separation and isolation, in addition to community inclusion. Since the definition of ‘refuge’ will be different for each individual, a refuge of mythforms is required. This can be achieved through gradients of enclosure, privacy and level changes above and below the datum line, allowing for multiple interpretations of refuge from each individual. The courtyard is a necessary place of mediation that contains its own space while simultaneously relating to other spaces.

Here/There - Change in Levels

Gordon Cullen's theory of being 'here and there' relates to the concept of relating to other spaces, in addition to addressing autonomy. Level changes create a juxtaposition between two places, where being above the datum line creates a sense of empowerment and separation, while below the line creates an enclosure that is more social and intimate, and vulnerable. Similarly, a change of levels determine a person's relationship to the ground, where below level creates intimacy, inferiority and entering the known, while above level creates exhilaration, command and superiority and implies entering the unknown.57

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56 Alexander, A Pattern Language, 561-564.
Precedent Analysis

The Inclusive City - An Asylum Seekers Center in Maastricht

Robert Verrijt, 2003

This student thesis project was looked at to explore an architecture of hospitality through inclusiveness. The project integrates asylum seekers within the local city through a series of dispersed accommodation centres, seeking to normalise the living conditions of asylum seekers in the city of Maastricht. By countering the centralised asylum seekers centre model, the network of 13 sites bridges the gap between ‘the outsiders’ and society.58

Mythopoetic Design: ‘Solution’

Paul Carter, Victoria Harbour, Melbourne, Australia, 2002

The Mythopoetic study called ‘Solution’ was a public spaces strategy proposed by Paul Carter himself for Victoria Harbour in Melbourne, Australia. The intention was to create a ‘global’ public space. The ground pattern is a mythform; a stable trace of multiple histories. It is a series of public meeting places that do not correspond to any particular history, but accounts for multiple migrancies, always coming from somewhere else, and preserving the trace of possible meetings. The pattern is a local invention drawing reference to two movement forms, drawing reference to the palimpsest of unbuilt harbour plans, and the annual motion of locally symbolic stars. It is about reinventing migrant stories (and themselves) at that place. Mythopoetic design does not correspond to any particular migrant history but instead, meanders with multiple meeting points, a space that the migrants can build on with their past.

59 Cairns, Drifting, 93.
60 Cairns, Drifting, 94.
61 Cairns, Drifting, 95.
62 Cairns, Drifting, 94.
63 Cairns, Drifting, 95.
China Academy of Arts, Xiangshan Campus


Wang Shu was inspired by Tong Jun, referring to “Garden and the Literati” in his publication Glimpses of Gardens in Eastern China, stating the importance of gardens for literati to have a refuge away from everyday struggles. The campus was designed with Tong’s garden design principles of contrast, meandering and vistas. The role of walls in gardens, according to Tong, is to create isolation from the rest of the world. To create contrast, walls are used as the boundaries that determine the degree of courtyard enclosure, light versus dark, high versus low openings and large versus small volumes. Meandering spaces create a dynamic experience of travelling through the gardens create a dramatic montage of changing scenes in the overall composition.

Fig. 17: Xiangshan Campus

Fig. 18: Meandering path of the Xiangshan Campus

University of Auckland Music School

*Hill Manning Mitchell, Auckland, New Zealand, 1985*

This building contains a public central courtyard that is defined by a change in levels. The descending steps begin from the street entrance, leading down towards the courtyard space that continues to fall towards the centre. As Gordon Cullen’s theory suggests, sitting below the datum line creates a communal enclosure that creates a more vulnerable and intimate social space. The main interaction here is focused towards the centre of the space. Being a semi-public space, the courtyard here has a very open flow of entry.
The Auckland Hebrew Centre consists of the Kadimah School and a Jewish synagogue, a semi-private space for the Jewish community. This inward facing space isolates the community from public view but creates a social atmosphere within building, linking all the rooms with a strong spatial and visual connection towards the flat, hard-paved, social courtyard space.
The Unitec Health Centre (originally the Landscape and Plant Science faculty) contains a hidden but semi-public garden courtyard. Although there are some opportunities for social interaction, the transition spaces between the inside and the outside create multiple moments of refuge for individual occupation at the edges of the courtyard. It does this through the alternating pattern of seating in the circular voids of the facades and the balconies looking into the central garden as the prospect.

**Unitec Health Centre**

*Mitchell & Stout Architects, Auckland, New Zealand, 2005*

Fig. 25: Unitec Health Centre

Fig. 26: Central garden courtyard is a quiet place of rest

Fig. 27: Floor plans
The Education Center consists of multiple courtyards with porous enclosure boundaries that frame the spaces while maintaining visual links between each space. This porosity enables multiple spatial qualities to be weaved into a cohesive whole without becoming homogenous.

**Education Center Nyanza**

*Dominikus Stark Architekten, Nyanza, Rwanda, 2010*

The Education Center consists of multiple courtyards with porous enclosure boundaries that frame the spaces while maintaining visual links between each space. This porosity enables multiple spatial qualities to be weaved into a cohesive whole without becoming homogenous.
Meditation Pavilion

*Studio Tam Associati, Khartoum, Popular Republic of Sudan, 2007*

The Meditation Pavilion is a non-denominational religious meditation space in Sudan. It is open to all religions, and although it includes specific religious rituals, they are designed as hidden elements that appear to blend in as simply a feature in the building, so as to not favour any specific religion and also to not impose on any other religions.68 The meditation space is isolated, detaching the person from the surroundings by being elevated, surrounded by water and enclosed on all sides except for the entrances and the sky above. The non-denominational nature of this pavilion makes it an appropriate precedent relating to the non-specificity of migrant traces, making it a flexible space for different people.

Fig. 34: Refugees arriving at Belgium
Programme

New Zealand Refugee Quota

New Zealand serves 750 (plus or minus 10%) quota refugees who, in their country of asylum, are in the greatest need of resettlement, at six intakes per year of about 125 people in each intake.\(^6^9\) The country resettles refugees who are in a particular state of vulnerability and fall into one of these categories:

**Women at risk** – At least 75 women at risk are resettled each year, who are vulnerable to gender-related danger such as rape, abduction and exploitation, and are without the support of their traditional family protectors or community and are at risk in their country of refuge.

**Disabled/medical** – Up to 75 refugees with medical, physical or social disabilities who have a medical condition that cannot be treated in their country of refuge, and resettlement to New Zealand would be life-saving or significantly enhance their medical condition and well-being. This includes up to 20 refugees who have HIV/AIDS

**Priority Protection** – Up to 450 are resettled each year who require urgent legal or physical protection such as a life-threatening situation, refoulement, detention or imprisonment, and includes the dependent family members of the applicant. This includes 300 places for family reunification.

**Emergency Resettlement** – Under the priority protection category is emergency resettlement, where around 35 refugees needing emergency resettlement have top priority over all refugee cases.\(^7^0\)

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New Zealand Refugee quota intake from July 2013 to May 2014

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<th>Nationality</th>
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<td>Colombian</td>
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<td>Congolese</td>
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<td>Syrian</td>
<td>Jordan/Lebanon/Turkey(^7^1)</td>
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Hospitality Upon Arrival

The resettlement programmes have a common goal of supporting refugees to achieve independence, receive the same rights, responsibilities and quality of services as the other residents of the country. However, it is acknowledged that refugees may need intensive support in the initial period of arrival.\(^7^3\) In most countries, refugees are dispersed directly into the community immediately upon arrival, but some countries such as New Zealand offer on-arrival orientation services in a reception centre before dispersing into host communities.\(^7^5\)

Countries with Established Resettlement Programmes:

- Argentina
- Australia
- Belgium\(^*\)
- Bulgaria
- Brazil
- Canada
- Chile
- Czech Republic\(^*\)
- Denmark
- Finland
- Germany
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Ireland\(^*\)
- Netherlands

\(^*\) countries with established orientation reception centres

Pros and cons of orientation programmes at reception centres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
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<tr>
<td>Promotes welfare, basic opportunities, equality</td>
<td>Paternalistic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prevents serious social harm, such as inter-ethnic tensions and a divided society</td>
<td>Unduly furthering assimilation or exclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligation as part of reciprocal relationship of citizenship</td>
<td>In conflict with the rights of equal treatment and non-discrimination</td>
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<td>* reducing arc; * increasing</td>
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Fig. 35: Advantages and Disadvantages of Reception centres literature review p.33

Despite the advantages of an introductory reception programme, it can potentially foster dependency, and since reception centres are readily identifiable, it can stigmatise the refugees. Staying at reception centres for an extended period of time limits opportunities to connect with the wider community and to practice the language of the host country.\(^7^6\)

First Impressions: Re-establishing Safety & Security

On arrival, the refugees may be suffering the distressing effects of displacement such as trauma and loss. These first days and first weeks of the resettlement process form lasting impressions.\(^7^7\) This initial phase is an intense period of adjustment to an unfamiliar environment where refugees come to terms with changes such as different climate conditions, new food, shopping and currency. This signifies the on-arrival centre as the crucial opportunity to

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\(^7^3\) "Refugee Resettlement: A Literature Review," 28.
\(^7^6\) "Chapter 2.2 The First Weeks and Months," 70.
welcome the refugees, establishing a sense of safety and security.\textsuperscript{78}

\textsuperscript{78} “Chapter 2.2 The First Weeks and Months,” 71.
Programme Precedents

Belgium

Fedasil Pondrome

Refugee resettlement in Belgium begins upon arrival at either of the reception centres of Sint Truiden or Pondrome following the same procedure as asylum seekers. Both stay at the centre for a duration of 6 to 7 weeks. The centre accommodates 200 people providing services such as social, legal and medical support and various leisure activities. It includes ‘community homes’ which are living rooms with their own kitchenette, dining and TV rooms, and each ‘home’ houses 20 residents where each couple or family has their own room and single people share a room with 2 or 3 others. The centre organises open days and cultural events that strengthen the relationship between the refugees and asylum seekers, and the local community.

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Czech Republic

Centre for Integration of Foreigners

Czech Republic only resettles 40 refugees per year. It begins with a 6 month orientation at one of the several Integration Asylum Centres in the country. The refugees participate in learning the Czech language and socio-cultural adaptation courses to help them adapt to the new environment, focusing on day to day life such as health care, education, shopping and employment. The centre in Kubelikova is located near the heart of Prague city within easy reach of a local town centre, which helps the refugees adapt to the new environment for a lengthy programme such as this.

82 “Country Chapter – Czech Republic,” 6.

Fig. 39: The Centre for Integration of Foreigners is situated at the heart of the city.
Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre (MRRC)

Refugees resettling in New Zealand spend their first 6 weeks at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre (MRRC) where government agencies and non-government organisations work together to provide them with immediate on-arrival needs. The overarching goal of the programme “...aims to build basic social and coping skills required for quota refugees’ new lives in New Zealand, and provide information on work and expectations of employment.” They learn English, go through necessary mental and physical health check-ups, and are taken through their future settlement plans. The programme is globally recognised as an effective strategy for providing orientation.

There are 5 different organisations on site:

**Immigration New Zealand (INZ):**

The government agency that heads the MRRC programme.

**Red Cross Services:**

Provides social services such as arrange housing, furniture and banking to prepare the refugees once they leave the Mangere orientation.

**AUT University:**

There are 5 different organisations on site:

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Fig. 41: MRRC site context
AUT consists of Early Childhood Education, Primary, Secondary and Adult education. At the Early Childhood Education both parents and staff support the children to settle in, enabling the children, who may have never been away from their mothers, to feel safe in the unfamiliar environment. Primary level children are taught independent learning habits, coping skills and are introduced to the standard they will encounter when they begin school, including field trips to a library where they learn appropriate school trip behaviours and recognize the library as an important community resource. Secondary level students are introduced to New Zealand school system and classroom expectations, and discuss peer pressure, social issues and adapting to a new culture, and spend a day in a large multicultural co-ed school to deepen their experience. Adult education consists of English lessons and an orientation of New Zealand to help them integrate into the community.

Medical Health Screening:

The medical clinic provides medical screening which involves history, physical examinations and investigations such as stool, urine, blood tests. The doctors treat what conditions they can, and refer others to specialist clinics.

Refugees as Survivors (RASNZ):

The mental health agency that assess and treat refugees who have experienced trauma or torture. It consists of clinical psychologists, nurses, psychiatrists, physiotherapists, occupational and body therapists as well as 90 interpreters and cross-cultural workers. Research shows that the earlier that symptoms and stresses are addressed, the better they can cope with resettlement. Common coping skills are walking, reading, being alone, being with family/friends, prayer, singing and shopping/outings. Since many women face cultural issues with leisure activities in public unlike men, the RAS Women’s group provides them a ‘time out’ from family duties in a culturally safe environment to do physical exercises to relieve stress. Exercises include activities such as breathing, stretching, dancing, and Tai Chi.

MRRC Design

The facility was originally built as old army barracks which was then converted into the refugee reception centre in 1980. The design is efficiently follows a strict Cartesian grid, creating overpowering and oppressive spaces unsuitable as an expression of welcoming hospitality. The centre is currently undergoing reconstruction to replace the old army barracks with a purpose built facility, increasing capacity to 196 beds and providing higher quality.
Fig. 42: The facilities at MRRC, holding all the orientation activities throughout the 6 weeks

Fig. 43: The existing site is like a camp

Fig. 44: Refugees dining at the MRRC
and more efficient facilities. The upgrade is part of the Resettlement Strategy which better prepares the refugees for New Zealand life and their move into the community.\(^{94}\) The solution is similar to the Fedasil Pondrome centre where the accommodation blocks consist of bedrooms surrounding shared common lounges that fit the temporary nature of the stay\(^{95}\). But despite the upgrade being a functional improvement from the existing army barracks, since the site is still the same, isolation from any direct access to local community or town centre remains an issue. The orientation is an efficient and intensive programme that makes the most of the 6 weeks before the refugees disperse into the community. As permanent residents, like any other permanent resident of New Zealand, they are free to roam outside the centre, but since everything is done at the centre to maximise efficiency apart from the occasional weekend trips around city and x-ray tests at the hospital when needed,\(^{96}\) there is limited opportunity to leave the centre especially when there is very little to engage with around the immediate surroundings.

**Coping with Resettlement**

Health psychologist Li Zuo from the RASNZ clinic at the centre said that although the therapy clinics are specifically intended for physical and mental healing, everything in the programme from the English classes to the Powhiri and other group activities at the MRRC and anything that creates a sense that the refugees are in a safe place and out of danger, can essentially play a part in the overall healing process. The RAS clinic does not see every single refugee, but provides services for people who are particularly highly distressed. Having the centre close to peaceful scenery would be beneficial for the refugees as well as having some private areas for group meditation which would help with stress management.\(^{97}\) The New Zealand Medical Journal reports the health status of quota refugees between 1995 and 2000, with 14% having psychological symptoms, and 7% having post-traumatic stress disorder\(^{98}\). The vegetable garden is one of the features established in 2009 to help promote the wellbeing of refugees at the MRRC.\(^{99}\)

A study about Bhutanese Refugees describes their experience of arriving at New Zealand, in particular their experience at the MRRC. The first impression of New Zealand environment and scenery was positive, given they did not know what they expect to see upon arrival and the reception experience.\(^{100}\) They also noted however that it was difficult to adjust to the new environment, further intensified by the impact of leaving loved ones, creating unhappiness and guilt, added by the new culture and food of the country being unfamiliar.\(^{101}\) They felt that the inappropriate food at MRRC hindered their initial settlement into New Zealand\(^{102}\). They recommended improvements on the programme, suggesting being able to practice with

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95 Meeting with Noor Parkar, manager of the MRRC, March 29, 2014.
96 Noor Parkar, e-mail message to author, June 14, 2014.
97 Li Zuo, e-mail message to author, September 1, 2014.
Fig. 45: Proposed MRRC rebuild

Fig. 46: MRRC rebuild - strategy for proposed accommodation units (total proposed number of units had varied at different stages of the project)
banking and shopping.\textsuperscript{103}

A study about Arab Muslim refugees resettling in New Zealand shows what some of the refugees thought of their experience at the MRRC. The most commonly mentioned experiences include: lack of privacy, unstable life, the food, emphasis on dependency and the departure at the end of the programme. Many felt suffocated and their freedom stripped from them due to the rigid lifestyle they endured at the centre. The MRRC did not provide them with a sense of security and stability, rather it actually caused considerable discomfort and distress.\textsuperscript{104} They felt that the lack of privacy was a big concern at the centre and is especially important for Muslim women in particular, and for those who wear a hijab. There was criticism over the sharing of bathroom facilities with others and also being unable to meet the needs of young children because their rooms are separated within the centre. Some have stated it was their worst experience of resettlement, being forced to mingle with other cultures, the place was not comfortable and the rooms were small. Sound would travel easily, providing no privacy as people would hear conversations from the end of the hallway. It has been described as mentally tiring due to lack of privacy, especially for those who had been through traumatic experiences. Allowing time for themselves without feeling watched was missed during the stay at the centre. The shared toilets and the cramped rooms provided no opportunities for solitude, and also no consideration for pregnant Muslim women who require privacy, ultimately defeating the purpose of the centre as a place to unwind.\textsuperscript{105} Life at the centre felt unstable, with feelings of isolation and imprisonment with the ‘military lifestyle’ of the programme, with the activities of sleeping, recreation, eating and orientation classes following a strict schedule. For these people, life at the centre was traumatic and distressing, leaving a negative impression of the country.\textsuperscript{106} Another issue is the emphasis on dependency and neediness, increasing their feeling of losing control of their lives.\textsuperscript{107} One of the criticisms of the centre was that it felt like a military camp, as it was originally designed for, further diminishing their pride and dignity.

Many refugees have stressed the role of Religious belief; that prayer was one of the key sources of dealing with emotional stress.\textsuperscript{108} An interview about Burmese refugees shows that some people had experienced loneliness and isolation upon arrival in New Zealand, in contrast to Malaysia where they sought asylum. Others have stated that they prefer quietness.\textsuperscript{109}

\section*{Concluding Statement}

The goal of the on-arrival reception programme is to provide a welcoming introduction which will ultimately prepare the refugees for their new life in New Zealand, while addressing the various distressing effects of life in displacement. The existing reception centre is an unfit expression of hospitality.

\textsuperscript{103} “The Bhutanese Refugee Resettlement Journey Part 3,” 22.
\textsuperscript{104} Rose Joudi Kadri, “Resettling the Unsettled: The Refugee Journey of Arab Muslims to New Zealand,” PHD Disc., Auckland University of Technology, 137.
\textsuperscript{105} Kadri, “Resettling the Unsettled,” 139.
\textsuperscript{106} Kadri, “Resettling the Unsettled,” 141.
\textsuperscript{107} Kadri, “Resettling the Unsettled,” 143.
Design Brief

The design requires an expression of hospitality towards quota refugees by addressing the past experience of forced displacement in order to assist with the introductory phase of resettlement in New Zealand. It adapts the existing functional programme at the MRRC. This period of transition provides initial orientation, rehabilitation, rest, safety and security in the six week reception programme to help them cope with long-term integration into New Zealand society.

The site requires qualities of an inclusive community, one with access to the public services and amenities that the rest of New Zealanders share. A semi-public communal area creates a transition between the New Lynn public and the semi-private spaces of the centre. Within this area are the orientation facilities and recreation courts, and a visitor’s lounge. The communal and residential grounds are semi-private spaces reserved for the refugees only, in order to create a protected and secure space away from the public realm. The orientation facilities in the semi-public area are separate from the residential spaces to preserve the domestic nature of the communal facilities and accommodation units. The communal facilities and the meditation/garden spaces are shared among all the residents, and the housing units are private rooms distributed among the family units. The AUT classrooms and RMS/Red Cross facilities are omitted from the design project as they are simply located within existing office buildings just outside of the project site.

Programme

Semi-public area:
- Visitors Lounge
- Recreation Courtyard
- Conference Hall
- NZIS office (New Zealand Immigration Service)
- Health Centre (medical clinic and RAS therapy clinic)
- Early Childhood Centre

Semi-private area:
- Quota Residents Office (Main Entrance/Reception)
- Main Lounge
- Recreation Lounge
- Main Dining Hall and Kitchen
- Separate Dining and Kitchen
- Laundry
- Prayer/Meditation Spaces

Private rooms:
- Housing units: 1 bed x42, 2 bed x48, 3 bed x10

MRRC programmes omitted from the design aspect of this project:
- AUT Classrooms and staff rooms
- RMS/Red Cross Services
Site

The chosen site for the project is at the town centre of Auckland’s suburb of New Lynn. An analysis of the site shows that it is a suitable expression of hospitality and inclusion into New Zealand society as it provides easy access to the local services that the refugees are entitled to as new permanent residents of the country. The town centre provides a variety of community services and attractions that support the local residents including parks and public transport, providing much of the day to day activities such as banking and shopping that the refugees need to become familiar with, and it is surrounded by suburban housing and natural features such as vegetation and creeks around the site which are all features that strongly represent New Zealand.
Fig. 48: New Lynn Town Centre

Fig. 49: Analysis of site conditions
Fig. 50: Site programmes
Fig. 51: Site vegetation
Fig. 52: Axonometric drawing showing New Lynn as a vibrant town centre
Fig. 53: Chosen site - existing open space - public carpark
WISE Collective - New Lynn Night Market

Every Thursday evening a Night Market is held at the New Lynn Community Centre, featuring a variety of ethnic food stalls including stalls run by former refugees, offering some of the very cultures that recent refugees have fled from. This provides them an opportunity for possible encounters with familiar cultural practices as well as recognising their presence as people welcomed into the community.
Immediate Site Context

The main street is a busy urban atmosphere, whereas the back street runs along a quiet nature reserve where Whau Creek runs through this area with a scenic walkway crossing over it. This contrast between the two sides of the site creates an opportunity for gradients of spatial qualities and hence experience within the building complex.
**New Lynn Master Plan**

The Master Plan proposes a large development planned for New Lynn which account for the growth of the multi-cultural population. The chosen site currently has future plans for a residential block, which typologically becomes an appropriate site for the reception centre, as it primarily consists of domestic buildings, albeit merely a place of temporary accommodation.
Site Strategies

The site strategies utilise the surrounding conditions to create gradients and spatial variation within the project. To break the Cartesian grid while simultaneously relating to the context, several grids were referenced from the site. The contrast between the creek and the main street allow for a gradient from public to private and from urban to nature, echoing the natural scenery of New Zealand.
Fig. 58: Site entry

Fig. 59: Site grids from surroundings

Fig. 60: Intimacy gradient

Fig. 61: Public/private gradient

Fig. 62: Urban/Nature gradient

Fig. 63: Public/private

Fig. 64: Programme arrangement

Fig. 58: Site entry

Fig. 59: Site grids from surroundings

Fig. 60: Intimacy gradient

Fig. 61: Public/private gradient

Fig. 62: Urban/Nature gradient

Fig. 63: Public/private

Fig. 64: Programme arrangement
Refuge Strategies

Refuge strategies are derived from the theories and precedent analysis to define the spatial qualities of the building complex. The main objective is to vary the levels of privacy and intimacy. This is done by varying the levels of enclosure, datum line, enclosure boundaries, urban to nature and community to solitude gradient, and the various number of thresholds between spaces.

Degree of Enclosure

The degree of enclosure determines the level of separation between spaces. An enclosure that is more open has a strong connection to the adjacent spaces, whereas a more enclosed space is more separated. This defines the extent to which the space is public or private.
**Datum Line Variation**

Shifting datum lines define the level of separation and connection by shifting the levels of the spaces vertically. Ascending above the datum line creates empowerment and safety, providing a vantage point across the site. Descending below the datum line is less empowering but provides a more intimate setting for socialisation.

**Enclosure Boundary**

The enclosure boundary defines the quality of the thresholds between spaces on a finer scale. Derived from the courtyard precedents, the porosity controls the strength of the connection between the enclosed outdoor space and the internal spaces surrounding it, as well as the quality of the threshold to the spaces beyond. This defines whether a space is more social or a quiet space for solitude.
Urban/Nature Community/Solitude

The design of the courtyard space defines the social activity taking place. A more urban setting uses hard surfaces which provides for activities such as recreation or socialising, whereas a more garden-oriented courtyard provides a quiet place of rest and privacy.

Thresholds

Privacy can be achieved through the use of multiple thresholds. Thresholds can achieve privacy without necessarily creating an isolated enclosure. Having less thresholds creates less separation and suggests a more public space that is quick and easy to reach.
Design Concept

A collage of the refuge strategies formulated earlier expresses the idea of a labyrinth of various spatial qualities and gradients. The models were arranged to form a dynamic collection of spaces that would inform the intention of the design. The axonometric sketch study expands on the ideas within the collage of models to explore possible sequences of spaces in a more defined manner. Initial models of gradients of level changes were also made to explore datum line level changes within the centre.
Fig. 71: Conceptual sketch showing shifting datum levels
Fig. 72: Conceptual sketch of sequence of various spaces developed from concept models
**Heterotopian Spaces**

**Main Entrance**

The main entry is the space where the buses and shuttles drop off and pick up the residents; the most significant moments take place in this space; the first arrival from the airport at the beginning of the six week programme, and the final departure at the end of it. The main entry leads straight into the main communal space to greet the refugees with a domestic atmosphere upon arrival. This is a conscious design strategy to break down the institutional nature of the programme. As the first and last point of contact within the orientation period, the space is not enclosed and restrictive, but open and porous. It introduces a designed pattern of transitions and gradients of enclosure as one progresses within the centre. The Residents Office sits by the side of the entrance not to act as a processing gate, but to meet the refugees as soon as they arrive.

Fig. 73: The porous nature of the arrival/departure space expressed by columns.
Fig. 74: Perspective of arrival/departure area
Central Communal Space

The communal lounge, dining, kitchen and recreation spaces revolve around a central courtyard, marking the core social space of the building. This semi-private space reserved for the refugees acts as the open space that links all the spaces within the centre and leads into the next space that is linked to the public realm of New Lynn. The communal space forms the boundary of the courtyard and is shaped in a slight circular enclosure which focuses the activity towards the centre of the space, and the courtyard descends below the datum line creating seats, steps and ramps that encourage social interaction along the edges of the courtyard, also directing the focus towards the centre of the space. The lounge spaces include lounge furniture, small library and reading areas, as well as a recreational space with several equipment including exercise machines and a pool table. The dining space adapts the dining procedure at MRRC where there is a communal dining space with a kitchen that serves the food for the refugees. There is also an additional kitchen space for independent cooking, for those who wish to prepare their own food, and a separate dining space for those wish to dine with more privacy.

Fig. 75: The courtyard drops in datum level in order to sculpt a more enclosed space that promotes social interaction towards the centre.
Fig. 76: Perspective of central communal courtyard
Accommodation Units

To address the varying numbers of the family sizes arriving at the centre, the accommodation adapts the flexible nature of the units in Belgium and the plans for the MRRC rebuild by providing a certain number of rooms which can be distributed between families as needed. The temporary nature of these accommodation units means they are not like permanent dwellings complete with a lounge, dining and kitchen. However, the issue of privacy needs to be addressed between each of the units to maintain a domestic atmosphere, despite its temporary nature. The units are divided into six different kinds of bedrooms which can be mixed and allocated as needed. The three main types of bedrooms contain a bathroom, which can then be shared with any other family member which would be placed in a room next to the main one. This is made possible by having each family unit having the keys of all the individual rooms that the family unit occupies. This addresses the need for privacy between each family unit while allowing for the flexibility of dividing the spaces. The material palette of this communal space is brick to maintain a warm atmosphere within a more urban and social environment.

Fig. 77: Conceptual sketch of MRRC’s planned accommodation units
Fig. 78: Floor plans of the six different types of housing units
Accommodation 1

The accommodation units in the first block enclose a semi-public social courtyard below and also overlooks the semi-public courtyard on the other side, raised above the ground floor to create a separation from the more public spaces while maintaining visual connection into the social space below. The emphasis of this housing cluster is security by surveillance through the use of social space, and its urban quality as it lies towards the urban side of the urban/rural gradient. The idea is not to expose the housing units but to place them where there is plenty of activity immediately around them. This large block expresses New Zealand urban apartment living and is ideal for those who prefer urban settings over quiet suburbs or rural villages. The block is large and contains large shared lounge spaces which is ideal for those who prefer to mingle and socialise with their fellow residents.
Accommodation 2

The second accommodation block has less traffic running through, making it a quieter setting than the first block. It sits above the separate dining and kitchen area enclosing the garden courtyard. The block is more fragmented and contains fewer housing units per common lounge, making it a more intimate and more private residential area. In addition to the central garden courtyard below, it contains smaller and quieter social courtyard spaces, providing more intimacy and privacy for families or small groups of people. The material palette of the units are timber and brick; with timber as an expression of New Zealand domesticity while the communal spaces are brick to create a contrast between the two.
Accommodation 3

Unlike the first two blocks situated around thoroughfares with more foot traffic, the third accommodation block is tucked away towards the quiet backs of the site, overlooking Whau Creek. Situated away from the busy routes of the centre, it is a quiet area that creates privacy not through isolated enclosure, but through multiple thresholds. It is even more fragmented than the second housing block, being a smaller block with less housing units sharing a common lounge. This is ideal for those who prefer to be more separated from the other residents within the centre, which offers more intimacy and privacy. The timber is an expression of New Zealand domesticity as well as a universal expression of rural architecture.
Accommodation 4

The fourth block is a single storey cluster that overlooks the communal vegetable garden and Whau Creek. It is a low density accommodation block that expresses New Zealand domesticity and is also suitable for those who prefer to dwell in a more rural-like setting. It is not as separated as the third block but emphasises the openness and strong connection to the communal garden and the natural scenery beyond.
Semi-public Space

The semi-public area descends from the public realm to create a gradual transition from public to private. It links the public to the centre so it does not become a fortress-like facility. The fall below the datum line emphasises the social nature of the large recreational courtyard space and provides an inviting and welcoming entry for visitors who wish to meet with the refugees.

Early Childhood Centre

The Early Childhood Centre is a separate social space for the children to play. The sense of protection and community creates a space for the children to feel safe in an unfamiliar environment. The courtyard provides a social space that allows for the children to play in an enclosed intimate space.
Fig. 89: Perspective of entry leading down to semi-public space
Health Clinics and Main Office

The health centre contains the medical clinic, therapy clinics, and the INZ office. Like the Unitec Health Centre, this building uses the courtyard as a mediating garden space with porous walls as seating to minimise the institutional feel of the building. The medical clinic and the INZ office occupy the ground floor while the therapy clinics sit on the upper levels to allow for spaces of privacy and peace.

Group Therapy

The group therapy space is where the women in particular are given their own outdoor space for exercise and meditation as part of the group therapy exercises provided by the RASNZ clinic. Activities include exercises such as tai chi and other group exercise activities. A separate space for them requires a raised courtyard to create a sense of protection and empowerment that is also sunken towards the centre to create an intimate social atmosphere. The walls are porous brick enclosures that maintain a connection to the spaces beyond by allowing them to look to the spaces below, while maintaining privacy by not being seen from those below.
Fig. 91: Perspective of medical clinic courtyard

Fig. 92: Perspective of group therapy courtyard
Lookout

The lookout is the smallest of all the personal spaces of rest that creates a sense of empowerment. The space is separated from its surroundings by sitting high above the datum line while creating a vantage point to the town and the spaces below. This solitude space requires one to take a journey through multiple thresholds and finally ends with spatial openness.
Lower Meditation Pavilion

The lower meditation pavilion is isolated by a long path surrounded by water and enclosed by large walls which creates a sense of separation. At the end of the path, the pavilion itself sits in an area that opens upwards. The sense of separation is emphasised within the pavilion itself with the skylight, reinforcing the sense of openness moving upwards.
Upper Meditation Pavilion

The upper meditation pavilion features multiple thresholds to create privacy and separation. It not only uses water as an element of separation, but it also rises above the datum line and is separated by the bridge, further isolating the space for a very private and empowering meditation experience. Once at the pavilion, the multiple thresholds lead to a view of Whau Creek, completing the journey to the meditative space.
Meditation Garden

The garden is also a place of meditation, raised slightly above the ground to create a subtle sense of separation and empowerment above the datum of the natural ground line. This inward facing courtyard focuses the view towards the garden in the middle, as well opening out towards Whau Creek, continuing the flow of the quiet green scenery.
Communal Garden

The communal garden is part of the therapy programme for psychological healing, and it also allows the refugees with an agricultural background to learn about growing food in New Zealand’s climate. The communal garden is not enclosed but is raised above the ground level to create a sense of empowerment, yet stepped towards Whau Creek to articulate it as a space for social interaction while sitting in a more natural setting. The communal garden opens out to the path leading to Whau Creek and strengthens the centres connection to it and the scenic path crossing through the creek nearby.
Fig. 102: Perspective of communal vegetable garden
Material Palette

The material palette consists of concrete, brick and timber. These materials set a warm tone to the atmosphere of the centre, with concrete used to either create spatial separation or to blend the centre’s gradient towards the urban fabric of New Lynn town centre, brick being featured on the more communal and social spaces, and the timber on the softer residential areas. The combination of the three materials create a tension between hard and soft, urban and rural, relating back to Mark’s idea that architecture is simultaneously here and there, referring to both global cultures and local ones, as well as reinforcing the distinction between the spaces, as required by the theories of the Heterotopian Sanctuary and Mythform place-making. These materials are familiar within New Zealand’s urban and domestic architecture, and as an additional link, the bricks can also be seen as a reference to the history of New Lynn’s brick industry.
Fig. 103: Material palette

Fig. 104: Material palette of accommodation and common spaces
Conceptual Collages

A collage of early iterations of each of the spaces informed the design of the building complex. It was from this exercise that questions about the possible relationships between each of the spaces began to arise, and the specific programmes were integrated into the sequence of the spaces. The collages were then worked into floor plans to develop the design further.

Fig. 105: Collage floor plan
Fig. 106: This long section collage shows the shifting datum lines of the spaces particularly towards the private meditation area.
Design Outcome

Fig. 107: Aerial view from north
Programme Arrangement

The massing of the complex follows the site context, where the urban area contains large scale buildings, and gradually becomes fragmented and smaller in scale towards Whau Creek. The centre contains the housing units, communal spaces, meditation spaces as well as the health centre and Early Childhood Centre. It links to the public realm through the semi-public space containing the Health Centre, Early Childhood Centre, visitors lounge and staff offices, providing a gradual transition into the semi-private and private spaces of the centre. The semi-private spaces of the accommodation, communal and meditation areas are located deeper into the complex.
Fig. 109: Ground floor plan and first floor plan programmes

- Early Childhood Centre
- Health Centre
- Common Lounges
- Accommodation Units
- Garden/Meditation Spaces
- Staff
Circulation

The circulation throughout the site takes the form of a meandering pattern like in the Xiangshan campus, which hides the quiet and more private areas of the site, while the flow of space opens up more towards the public side, creating a dynamic series of changing scenes. The town centre is connected to the semi-public space of the reception centre through a wide footpath, and the communal garden opens out to Whau Creek with an entrance for ease of access, to strengthen the centre's connection to its physical locale.
Fig. 112: Site circulation
Fig. 113: View from main entry looking down at semi-public space

Fig. 114: View into central communal space
Fig. 115: An intimate courtyard at an accommodation block

Fig. 116: Aerial view of vegetable garden, meditative spaces and accommodation blocks
Fig. 117: View towards departure area at the end of the orientation programme
The aim of this research project was to explore how architecture can be used as a means of expressing hospitality towards refugees to enable them to re-establish stability and citizenship for their future integration into a new society. It was addressed in the arrival phase of refugee resettlement in New Zealand where the refugees are accommodated for six weeks at a reception centre to build social and coping skills required for long-term integration. Architectural theories on migration and refugee displacement suggested that this would require an expression of hospitality that addressed the unstable and inhospitable situations that the refugees have experienced which would restore autonomy, safety, security and privacy. Analysis of various architectural precedents, including an analysis of the existing Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre revealed that the existing facilities and its site context were not suitable for expressing hospitality. The gesture of including them ‘in the city’ to restore citizenship required the site to be relocated to New Lynn, where the services and amenities in the town centre offer a better sense of community inclusion.

The project demonstrates architecture’s ability to provide refuge for refugees within a reception centre through variations within the spaces, allowing them to decide for themselves how they might be used to their benefit. The labyrinth of enclosures vary the levels of privacy through degrees of enclosure, shifting datum levels, enclosure boundaries, urban to nature and community to solitude, and thresholds from the wider community to the most private spaces within the centre. The spaces throughout the building complex all work as distinct places of their own without being segregated, as a heterotopian refuge is a space that relates to other spaces without losing the distinction between public and private. A hybrid between New Zealand culture and foreign cultures was generated through the use of a universal material palette consisting of concrete, brick and timber.

The research methodology was a cycle through literature readings and design responses. It began with readings of existing survey on the topic of migration and the refugee crisis, most of which were resources from UNHCR and information about the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre, followed by theoretical readings dealing with architecture and migration, which then informed the design responses.

The research was limited to existing literature and excluded formal interviews. In addition to this, the refugee crisis is vastly complex with each refugee being different and situations constantly changing, which meant that it was not possible to design for any particular individual or group. The most appropriate architectural solution was to acknowledge their differences by creating an architecture of ambiguity with a particular focus on the hierarchy of privacy and intimacy, but due to the physical scale of the project there was little room to explore the ideas of cultural hybridity. It is unknown exactly how each of these spaces would be occupied in detail, but in any case, the project succeeds in restoring spatial autonomy to help ease the orientation experience.

With the increasing need to relieve the pressures of forced displacement, there is a growing need for architecture to express hospitality to assist social cohesion and integration of refugees into their host societies. The project shows the importance of architecture as a mediating tool in refugee hospitality upon arrival in their country of resettlement. It is hoped that this project will promote the reception centre as a method of welcoming refugees that can positively assist in their integration into society.
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Appendix B

Refuge Heterotopia

SITE - NEW LYNN TOWN CENTRE
Arrival/Departure

Central Communal Courtyard
Medical Centre
A garden courtyard as a resting and waiting area

Group Therapy
A private courtyard raised above the datum line overlooking the semi-public spaces below
Residential Courtyard
Low density housing block towards Whau Creek

Residential Courtyard
Intimate family space among the housing units
Lower Meditation Pavilion
Meditation space raised slightly above the datum line and separated by water

Upper Meditation Pavilion
Multiple thresholds above the datum line creates separation and privacy
Meditation Garden
A private garden towards Whau Creek providing quiet solitude space

Lookout
Solitude space high above the datum line and overlooking the site offers a high vantage point and a sense of safety