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ABSTRACT

This research document looks to highlight the central issue that has plagued the architectural industry to date: that is, the concept of the Starchitect. For too long the field of architecture has celebrated the glamourously shallow works that continue to fill the world’s magazines and internet blogs.

This project questions the architect’s role in creating built environments, identifying the common problem where designers chose to, or are instructed to construct buildings as statement pieces that portray their own idealized visions and the aspirations of their client, rather than constructing buildings that acknowledge and encourage the client’s vision while enabling future occupants to impart their identity.

Since architects are tasked with forming the environments in which people spend their lives, why then, in larger developments, does the industry show more interest in imposing designs that embody their own identity or style rather than guiding the people they are designing for in realising their own visions.

The design component of this project looks at the current state of the architectural industry in relation to post-earthquake Christchurch and its rebuild. This project is essentially a criticism of the contemporary approach to rebuilding, renewing and reconstructing new cities. The relevance of this project comes from the conflicting responses between the community and the officials in charge of rebuilding Christchurch’s CBD. The earthquakes have unearthed an appetite for citizenry inclusion alongside a growing culture of exploratory development, allowing a new city identity to form. The method of recovery proposed by those in charge of the rebuild does not encourage the development of this culture and is instead looks to impose an identity. This document will look closely at Christchurch’s development, from the city’s conception through to today and will make comments on how the proposed recovery plan is repeating the same mistakes made in the past. Discussions will relate to the role that the architect plays within the development of urban space. The stance this paper takes is that architecture should be seen as a tool for enabling people to continuously reconstruct their city’s identity, rather than a vehicle for portraying an identity to the world.

The design component for this project is to be an example of how we, as designers, can create the first stages of a piecemeal development that encourages people to explore different possibilities while providing the necessary restrictions that creativity requires. This design will be developed from an analysis of different forms of incremental developments in relation to the specific context of Christchurch. The project’s main conceptual basis rests on the idea that creativity needs a box to think out of. Without boundaries, creative thought is suffocated by possibilities.
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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Background of the project
The Christchurch earthquakes presented an opportunity for the city and its people to explore a new urban environment that drastically contrasts the city before the earthquake. During a time characterized by demolition and uncertainty, a culture that thrived within this transitional environment was born. What was once considered nothing but devastation became an exciting period of cultural engagement and exploration, where innovation and creativity began to fill the newly formed cracks. The impetus of this project comes from this cultural shift, attempting to understand why, in situations of devastation, creativity and artistic activation is at the forefront of urban renewal.

Research Question
In what ways should architects approach the redesign and reconstruction of a post-disaster city, and how can they continue to represent the culture of the city? can a holistic view of the arts allow architecture to enable a citizen led recovery?

Project Outline
The design component of this research project is to be an example of an architectural framework developed using principles of adaptive urbanism alongside building typologies and architectural elements which inspire creative thinking. This is to promote the facilitation of artistic and entrepreneurial ventures within the processes of urban renewal, city creation and rebuilding, with a specific focus on the events seen in Christchurch following the 2010 earthquakes.

Aims/Objectives of Project
The reason for this research project begins with the discussion around the future of Christchurch and the controversy surrounding the 2012 recovery plan proposed by the government. The scope of this discussion reaches further than Christchurch and centers on challenging the...
modernist mode of city planning, where idealised master plans are forced on communities, and replacing it with an approach to planning that aims to facilitates simultaneous cultural and economic expansion through incremental urban development. The goal for this project is to develop an architectural infrastructure that embodies the necessary levels of planned permanence, while allowing the freedom and flexibility that is required to enable proper cultural development and place-making to occur.

This project looks to raise awareness of the importance of creative activity within the process of rejuvenating under-utilized urban spaces, highlighting how artists and entrepreneur’s inhabit urban space in interesting and innovative ways, bringing with them economic growth while connecting the community with their city in ways they could not initially see.

The design component of this document seeks to propose a method of development that enables artistic activity through the creation of an architectural canvas that allows creative thought to drive an incremental process that redevelops the city’s infrastructure.

**Scope and Limitations**

The purpose of this project is to propose a method of architectural planning which is intended to facilitate organic urban development within a central part of the city. This project does not advocate city development without a plan. Rather it is promoting a change in attitude and direction when approaching city planning, replacing the idea that one professional or a small group of professionals has all the answers, with the concept that professionals should guide the community in their attempts to develop and rebuild their own urban spaces.

This specific project is directly examining how artistic and creative engagement connects the community with their urban environments, justifying the creation of an architectural canvas or framework which is characterised by spaces and typologies which inspire creative thought and attract artistic intervention.
Post-earthquake Christchurch is faced with a familiar scenario experienced by the first European settlers in New Zealand, having to build upon a precarious landscape. The Moa hunting tribes that first inhabited the area now known as Christchurch date back as early as 1000 AD. The first official Maori settlers to arrive in Christchurch were the Waitaha, followed by Ngati Mamoe from the North Island in the 1500s. Ngai Tahu later came from the North to assume authority over the Canterbury region, and the wider South Island around the 1700s. The first European settlers were welcomed into the Canterbury plains by Ngai Tahu within the first decades of the 1800s.¹ The Europeans eventually assumed economic authority over the land and began draining waterways to make way for development. The Europeans transformed the swampland into a model English community which would later define Christchurch as ‘England-of-the-South’. Doing so disguised the characteristics of the wetlands behind a facade of brick and mortar. The nature of a spring-fed land was hidden, the hazards of developing on such precarious ground were buried.²

² Sally Blundel, "Resisting Erasure," in Once in a Lifetime: City-building after Disaster in Christchurch, ed. Barnaby Bennet et al. (Christchurch: Freerange Press, 2014), 46
For 150 years preceding the English influence, the swampland was considered unsuitable for permanent settlement by Ngai Tahu. This hesitation to develop foreshadows the state in which Christchurch finds itself following the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes. Today’s Christchurch is presented with a scenario similar to the one faced by the European settlers; “We are back where we started... a swamp... this time of bricks and mortar”.3 The question now is how do we rebuild a city amongst this new swamp?

Mathew Galloway, a tutor at Otago Polytechnic School of Design, suggests we take heed of the past, suggests that we should acknowledge the landscape’s identity and work with it, rather than imposing another idealised vision of a city. Galloway discusses Christchurch’s identity through an analysis of the City Council’s logo, saying that it is a “formalised representation of the identity first imposed on the land in the 1850s”.4 The logo is made of four key elements: the blue sky represents the clear and open skies above the Canterbury plains, the green ground portrays the green space of the ‘Garden City’, then there is the pristine river, representing the Avon River, that leads towards the iconic Cathedral. This combination of elements accurately portrays the narrative of the Canterbury Association appointing this swampland as the site for a transplanted English community. But now Christchurch is in a transitional period of self re-branding. It can no longer rely on the imposed ‘English Garden’ facade that collapsed beneath the landscape it was attempting to cover. We must learn from our ancestor’s mistakes. As we develop on this new landscape we must not impose another foreign identity on the city. Instead we should build upon the city’s contextual foundations, acknowledging the past in order to allow the city to develop through citizenry engagement and transitional exploration.

4 Ibid.

Fig. 2. Elements of the current CCC logo (2007 - )
To better understand how a city should rebuild after an earthquake, we must look at how other cities have responded to similar disasters in the past. The importance of this is to see how a government’s response impacts the redevelopment of a city’s social and physical infrastructures.

If the governmental infrastructure is absent following the disaster, the first stages of recovery are reliant on the existence of an already formed social structure within a community. Having an existing social framework better enables communities to organise initial relief responses while the normal city government organises itself. In Kobe, Japan the contrasting initial responses seen by the neighboring communities, Mano and Mikura, highlight the important role an existing social infrastructure plays in the recovery process. Following the 1995 earthquake, the official response to the disaster was delayed, meaning communities had to fend for themselves for the first days following the earthquake. The community of Mano was actively engaged in the recovery, coordinating bucket brigades that worked to minimize the rapid spread of fire from the destruction. Inversly, the community of Mikura lacked the necessary social and organisational structures, resulting in the community watching the fire destroy their homes and businesses. The communities that showed more social connectivity and organisation were clearing rubble to make way for collaborative building projects and shared living, while the other communities where surrounded by rubble for months. As the government slowly began assisting these civil organisations, they attempted to save face by working quickly towards long term recovery. This often resulted in them overstepping their place within community organisations, causing frustration, and at times slowing down the process further.

Although the government was encouraging the newly formed infrastructures, their desire to take control and reorganise them negatively impacted their ability to rebuild the social structures that allowed them to get through the initial phases of recovery.

6 Ibid., 89.
The recovery response seen in San Francisco following the 1905 earthquake is almost completely opposite to the response seen in Kobe. After the earthquake the nation responded so quickly to the needs of the city that communities did not have to form community response groups to get through. Instead, entire neighborhoods were moved into refugee camps, providing people with support systems that allowed them to psychologically recover from the disaster while the officials handled the initial clean up of the city. The amount of destruction from this earthquake left the city as a blank slate, presenting a unique opportunity to allocate large amounts of public space and buildings to city wide beautification projects. This proposal raised concern as it would allow civic power to take control and expand, potentially resulting in an incoherent urban environment. Though this development was stopped, people were still without homes and businesses were destroyed, resulting in a temporary strategy being introduced, allowing the city to achieve a sense of normality. The council allowed single story timber framed buildings to be constructed within the city without a permit. This was only to be a temporary fix, but these new regulations saw 19,000 wood framed buildings go up within the devastated city center, bringing with them the economic vitality and life that encouraged land owners to clear rubble and help bring back normality to the area. By looking for a solution that empowered the citizens in the short term, San Francisco was able to boost the city’s economy, allowing them to realistically move towards long term solutions.

The most significant difference between the recovery processes of Kobe and San Francisco can be put down to their government’s response times, accompanied by their efforts towards empowering people to influence the rebuild of their city. The people of Kobe developed their own organisational structures that were later obstructed by the government’s actions towards long term goals, as opposed to the people of San Francisco, who saw an official response right away, followed by the government implementing short term solutions that enabled the people to develop their own long term solutions. Understanding how the recovery of these two cities was influenced by

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8 Ibid., 19.
their representative governments allows us to look at the different community and governmental responses in Christchurch following the 2010 and 2011 earthquake.
The first major earthquake to hit Christchurch struck at 4:35am on the 4th of September 2010. The epicenter of this quake was centered roughly 40km west of Christchurch and was a 7.1 on the Richter scale. This earthquake rattled the city, primarily causing structural damage to many of the city’s buildings. Fortunately the earthquake occurred during the early hours of the morning, resulting in very few notable injuries. One person did pass away during this earthquake from a heart attack which was potentially induced by the shock. Roughly 9000 tremors were recorded within the year following the first earthquake. The most significant aftershock was a 6.2 magnitude earthquake on February the 22nd, 2011 at 12:51pm. This shock caused many of the city’s remaining buildings to fall or incur damage beyond repair. This earthquake struck in the middle of the day, claiming 185 lives and seriously injuring 164 people. This event caused city wide distress as the city’s entire infrastructure had been compromised, roads, bridges, power lines and waterpipes were all left severely damaged. The eastern suburbs were hit the hardest, losing access to basic utilities and suffering severe damage to residential properties. Large parts of the city experienced continual power outages and were left without clean drinking water. Citizens, no longer having access to basic necessities while dealing with wells of liquefaction spouting from the ground, were presented with the harsh reality of rebuilding on swampland.

Following any type of disaster the infrastructure on which people normally rely can be temporarily absent, forcing people into strange scenarios where their priorities are stripped back to the basic necessities of their physical wellbeing. This induces a temporary reliance on the existing social structures within a community, causing people to come together in such a way that can only happen after devastation. During these desperate times, localised forms of governance are created, where systems of design and democracy are broken down into specific actions that address immediate issues. These responses see human safety as the top priority, and problems like sewage in the river become momentarily acceptable. The physical and psychological im-
impact that disasters have on communities varies depending on the nature of the event. In the case of an earthquake, the severity of its effect is extremely complex as there is a constant threat of reoccurring aftershocks for months, or years, after the initial disaster. This continuously exposes people to moments of stress and insecurity with each new shock, often prolonging the recovery process, and in Christchurch’s case, causing it to go full circle. The long-term recovery response initiated after the 7.1 magnitude earthquake in September 2010, was not only stunted by the arrival of the 6.3 magnitude earthquake in February 2011, it was intensified by it. The damage from the first earthquake, both physically and mentally, still remained when the next event occurred. This intensified destruction, accompanied by the already unstable mental state of the citizens, amplified people’s insecurities, causing many people to leave the city.⁹

The Prime Minister’s Chief Science Advisor, Professor Sir Peter Gluckman released a briefing paper on May 10th, 2011 where he discussed the psychological response to the developing social environment created by the earthquakes. Gluckman outlines four typical phases which follow a disaster, acknowledging that separating them into distinct stages is somewhat unnatural as they are constantly fluctuating. These phases are:

1. **Heroic Phase**  
   Initial response: people help without counting the cost.

2. **Honeymoon Phase**  
   People see help arriving and are relieved to see the situation improving.

3. **Long-Term Recovery and Rehabilitation Phase**  
   People begin to realise how long the recovery process will take and start becoming angry and frustrated.

4. **New Equilibrium**  
   With the realisation that things will never be as they were before the disaster, people start to become accustomed to the ‘new normal.’

In Christchurch, during the first phase, citizens began small initiatives to help the city begin its journey towards the ‘new normal.’ Among these initiatives were the Student Volunteer Army (SVA), Gapfiller, Greening the Rubble, Life In Vacant Spaces, and more. The SVA, similar to the bucket brigades in Kobe, was created and organised by students over Facebook. It was a group that focused primarily on helping people in residential areas. The group had an incredible street presence, bringing food and water to those in need, while clearing over 65,000 tonnes of liquefaction after the September 2010 earthquake. While the SVA attended to peoples direct needs, initiatives such as Gapfiller, Greening the Rubble and Life In Vacant Spaces, worked towards reactivating spaces where buildings once stood. These programmes aimed to bring vibrancy and hope back into the lives of the surrounding communities, through transitional installations made by willing members of the community in agreement with the land owners. Over time these initiatives have grown, not only in numbers, but also in their desire to facilitate more experimentation and meaningful citizenry participation in the development of the city’s new normal. The importance of these initiatives and their role in the development of Christchurch’s new identity must not be underestimated. They not only provided a life raft for struggling communities.

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throughout the first recovery phases, they also presented the city with an exploratory strategy for development that educated citizens about the potential of their changing urban environment. These initiatives established the community’s ability to imprint its own identity onto the landscape, as opposed to the common method of forcing people to accept a contrived identity. These initiatives have attracted global attention as their work advocates for tactical urbanism to be used as a method of instigating permanent change. This has led to discussions around the redevelopment of Christchurch, suggesting that we should employ a strategy that encourages citizens to experiment and test, allowing for a low-risk environment to try otherwise high-risk ideas.

The most successful cities around the world are built on the accumulated remains of a thousand failed experiments, allowing the city to constantly learn from its mistakes. This type of situation then begs the question: how much of a say might citizens have in the development of their city?

The ‘Share an Idea’ campaign was launched in 2011, by the Christchurch City Council in conjunction with Gehl Architects, with the intention of making the rebuild as inclusive as possible. This campaign provided a platform where citizens were able to have their say on the future of Christchurch. Share an Idea was widely celebrated as the first step towards a citizen-led recovery, instilling hope that those in charge of the rebuild were willing to invest in a democratic development. Unfortunately this tone of inclusion was deafened by the launch of the Christchurch Central Development Units Recovery plan.


The Christchurch Central Development Units (CCDU) Recovery plan was hastily created within 100 days. The short time frame for the plan’s creation reveals a direct correlation to Gluckman’s third recovery phase, where people grow frustrated as they realise how long the recovery process will take. This plan has been used as a tool to subdue the public’s impatience with the speed of progress. Because of the self-imposed time constraints, there was no room for debate, “for a community still suffering, still shocked, and literally still shaking, there clearly needed to be a plan put in place as quickly as possible.”

It is evident that the recovery plan does not embody the inclusive narrative promoted by the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA). Though the designers of the recovery plan declare that they used the information received from the Share an Idea campaign, the plan was still conceived behind closed doors with no community consultation in regard to the major anchor projects, such as the proposed convention centre. Because there is much controversy over the recovery plan and the nature of its conception, there have been calls from the public asking for the plan and its larger anchor projects to be re-evaluated, asking for more collaboration when discussing the allocation of taxpayer’s money. This idea of opening up discussion with the community about major projects can be an intimidating notion as it slows down development and has the potential to produce incoherent outcomes. But this is not a proposal for unstructured development, it is a call for an inclusive process where people’s voices may be heard in order to holistically achieve a common goal; this is once again opposing the idea of prescribing developments, assuming their success and acceptance by the community.

To begin formulating a strategy for inclusive development we should be looking towards the small creative initiatives that have been exploring Christchurch’s new urban spaces, as they have set a foundation for urban development through community inclusion. Their work not only tests ideas for future development and advocates for progression through small beginnings, but it also encourages architects and designers to see the importance of accommodating movement and change within their architecture.

In the years following the release of the CCDUs recovery plan there was no evidence of re-evaluation until 2015, when the restructuring of CERA and the first stages of the Resilience Strategy had begun. In 2013, Christchurch was selected to take part in the 100 Resilient Cities Network organised by the Rockefeller Foundation. This organisation provides cities with the necessary resources to develop resilience to the physical, social and economic challenges in the 21st century. The initiative specifically focuses on establishing a resilient network of communications between governments, NGOs, the private sector, and individual citizens. The Mayor of Christchurch, Lianne Dalziel, sees this as an opportunity for the Council to approach the city’s recovery in a different fashion, establishing a framework of co-creation:

“The earthquakes have been a catalyst for change in Christchurch. This Resilience Strategy aims to take what we have learned about our community and the strength we create in coming together, and kick-start the kinds of projects and activities that will make our cities and towns better places to be.”

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16 Ibid., 55.
17 Sally Blandell, “Resisting Erasure,” in Once in a Lifetime: City-building after Disaster in Christchurch, ed. Barnaby Bennet et al. (Christchurch: Freerange Press, 2014), 49
18 100 Resilient Cities, date accessed September 25, 2015, http://www.100resilientcities.org/about-us#/-_/
Fig. 10: Christchurch Central Development Units Recovery Plan
2.1 MASTERPLANNING: THE RISE OF DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

To devise an architectural strategy where democratic participation informs the physical, social and economic city structures, we must re-evaluate the profession’s role in forming built environments. There is a recurring theme of powerlessness that is experienced within cities all around the world. This powerlessness derives from the government’s lack of willingness to engage with those who they are meant to be serving. Often, those in charge dictate our environments in a manner that seemingly exhibits competent and inclusive decision making, without actual communication with citizens.

This type of governance is often accepted by the majority of the population, especially younger generations, as people who are uneducated around topics of governmental discourse are more likely to believe false claims. Because of this, the reality is that people are no longer thought of as citizens, but as consumers, upon whom the leader’s ideologies are to be imposed in order to achieve a goal or mend conflicts, rather than mediating between the myriads of different values and perceptions within a community to achieve a truly common good.\(^{20}\) This reality within our cities directly relates to the discussion of architectural elitism. Citizens are left feeling as though their opinion of what a city should be is irrelevant, as they are not educated in the field of architecture. Even though the citizens are the primary users of the built environment that shapes a city, the idea that the architect knows better than the citizens, continues to perpetuate the concept of architectural elitism.

Throughout history masterplans have been top-down blueprints that have aimed to clearly define the physical and social relationships within our cities. Although they would often remain as superficial planning exercises, their effectiveness as a tool for defining the socio-spatial relationships with urban environments allows them to still be relevant within the industry.\(^{21}\) The central issue behind the masterplan is not the concept of devising a plan for development, but the idea of the masterplanner. It is this concept of having one person, or a group of people, in charge of defining a region’s identity that is dictatorial. The term ‘masterplan’ has worked its way into all parts of the architectural industry and can be considered one of the main causes

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of architectural elitism. This elitism emboldens designers to see their ideas as being the best option for a certain project or issue. Though they are the ‘professional’ in the scenario, everybody has an opinion on how something should work. Therefore the buildings they create are often used in ways the designer did not intend. With this in mind, something does have to be built and therefore someone’s vision must be achieved, which raises the question: How should designers accommodate the fact that once a building is made, it is likely to be used in unexpected ways? This question is even more relevant when discussing city planning, as it is almost impossible for designers to accommodate a wide variety of opinions when considering the redevelopment of city sectors or regions. The simple answer is to not attempt to satisfy everyone at once. An incremental approach must be adopted, where plans are changeable and people are given time to explore different possibilities. This exploration then informs the next stages of development and so on.

This idea of incremental development sees a shift in the architect’s role from a dictator of design, to a professional resource used to guide the public in shaping their own environments, adopting the democratic approach that is the very cornerstone of Christopher Alexander’s architectural philosophy. Alexander co-authored ‘A Pattern Language,’ which proposes an approach to architectural thinking through the formation of patterns over time. Alexander is one of the biggest contributors to the discussion around the importance of citizenry inclusion within the development of our buildings and towns. He believes that the user groups, or the general public, know what they need in a building better than an architect ever could. This statement is more relevant in commercial buildings, as they are more susceptible to competitive pressure and must adapt quickly to shifting user groups and their industries.

User groups will often redefine spaces or change them entirely, often discouraging designers as the buildings are used in ways that differ from their original vision. Alexander’s work is often overlooked by architects as it appears, on the surface, to be relieving architects of their job as designers. Though there is some truth in this view, it is more accurate to say that he is suggesting that the role of the architect must be re-evaluated. There must be a shift in the designer’s mindset: instead of constructing their own vision, they are meant to be guiding the construction of buildings that will accommodate their client’s vision, as well as making it adaptable for future user groups and their visions.

When relating this discussion to contemporary city planning, Christopher Alexander advocates for an incremental planning concept known as a piecemeal building process. Piecemeal development is characterised by unsystematic development driven by the users of an environment over a period of time. This type of development empowers the citizens, providing them the opportunity to form an identity that accurately represents them. The main concern with piecemeal development comes from the question of how much freedom can be given to communities in order to allow them to shape their environments without compromising coherency. This is where architects and designers need to guide development, ensuring the created environments function coherently. This often results in the creation of planning regulations that are continually recreated according to the changing needs of the community. Alexander acknowledges that “without a plan, the gradual accumulation of piecemeal acts will create a thousand mistakes of organization, twisted relationships and missed opportunities.”

Piecemeal developments gradually cultivate the layers that make up interesting urban landscapes. Each successful ingredient suggests the next, and each mistake is corrected:

“Perhaps one builds a pathway across the quadrant of land one is interested in and a bend in the pathway creates a natural space for a kiosk or snack stand. Once that snack stand is established other patterns might recommend themselves - perhaps one establishes a play area for children nearby, so that parents can talk together while still keeping an eye on their children. One layers in pattern after pattern in this way and thereby gradually intensifies the usefulness of the space.”

24 Ibid., 7-9.
26 Cristopher Alexander et al., The Oregon Experiment (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975)
A contrast to this type of process can be seen in the redevelopment of the World Trade Centre site in New York. Many of the proposed projects for this site suggest developing the entire site all at once. This type of proposal not only removes the possibility for widespread participation, but ignores the inherent technical problems in large-scale projects, where the ability to mend mistakes is nearly impossible. This is a considerable issue, as the contemporary architectural industry is often more concerned with creating works of art than creating art that works.

In his book, *How Buildings Learn*, Stewart Brand identifies the historical significance of the architectural profession being categorized alongside ‘art’. Brand believes this has been the largest contributing factor in the creation of dysfunctional buildings. Architects have taken the title of the artist in order to distinguish themselves from builders, but it is this fixation with creating ‘art’ that has distracted architects from their craft. Brand defines a craft as something useful that is created with close attention to detail, with artfulness. Therefore buildings must be thoughtfully pieced together, over time, in order to satisfy functional practically as well as achieving the desired aesthetic appearance.

The products of well-thought-out development can be seen in the historical cities and structures that we admire today, where the buildings most influential designer has been time. Developments such as the Palazzo Pubblico, in Sienna, are what Brands calls ‘buildings that learn’. The Palazzo has been continually enhanced for over 500 years. The earliest part of the building was the ground floor, which dates back to 1284. In the following 100 years the first floor was built, the spire completed and a mechanical clock was added. In 1680 a crenelated tower was constructed and in the 18th century a belfry was added. In Brand’s Television series *How Buildings Learn*, he says that although students of architecture are taught to admire the Palazzo Pubblico, they are not taught about how it became admirable. He goes on to say that properly understanding how historical developments came to be admirable could save the architectural profession, implying that evolutionary design is healthier than visionary design and that architects must “stop defying time, and put time to work”.  


Fig. 11: Bjarke Ingels proposal for World Trade Center tower.

Fig. 12: Palazzo Pubblico, the culmination of over 500 years of development.
Cities are infinitely complex and are continually morphing in response to the struggles of everyday life. These struggles are often articulated within the common spaces of a city, and are not represented in the state’s discussions of global aspirations. Instead of representing its inhabitants, a city’s design and architecture has become a tool for portraying global ideals; becoming a method of facade construction that glamorizes a culture, covering the gritty texture that defines it.

This division between the elites aspirations for a city and how a city actually functions, grants the distinction of two organisms that inhabit the same physical space. Raul Mehrotra describes these contrasting components as the Static City, and the Kinetic City. The Static is the physical form that portrays a city’s identity visually. Built of permanent materials, it is the two-dimensional entity recorded on maps and is monumental in presence. The Kinetic represents the reality of a city’s culture, continually in motion, and fluid by nature. The Kinetic City is an inconceivable construct of incremental development that inhabits and adapts spaces to support different functional requirements. It represents a city characterized by change, influenced by its people and their diverse opinions.30

Mehrotra emphasizes the fact that the Kinetic City is not the city of the poor, but a city condition where the physical fabric is continuously molded by the people who dwell within the city. Understanding the fluid nature of the Kinetic City has the potential to help understand the changing relationships between people and spaces in today’s urban societies. This can help designers anticipate the kinetic manifestations in their buildings, instead of ignoring them - which is often the tendency in contemporary development.31

The importance of acknowledging the Kinetic in our designs is increasingly important as the Static City, whose identity depends on its physical architecture, is losing its role as the defining feature that represents a city’s identity. Instead, emerging temporary events and festivals, created by the Kinetic City, have become a forum through which communities are able to articulate their fantasies and identity, creating a spectacle that accurately adheres to

31 Ibid., 110.
it's people and their experiences. These acts temporarily capture moments in time, where the only permanence is found within the residual memories, and are the pinnacle of the Kinetic City. This is because their ephemeral nature heightens and intensifies the reality of shifting ideas and human mortality. In contrast, the Static City seeks to permanently capture a moment in time and represent it through the creation of a permanent entity in order to achieve a sense of immortality.

The types of events discussed by Mehrotra are much like the transitional installations and events that were seen in Christchurch following the earthquakes. As both the physical and governmental infrastructures - the Static City - were left fractured, the Kinetic City was able to thrive. This is because original values are not precious within the Kinetic City. Spaces are consumed, reinterpreted and recycled in unintended ways. These works were the beginnings of incremental recovery, reviving the city while also exploring future possibilities. This was an opportunity for fluidity and time to become the designer of a city, but as the political infrastructure began to reform, the first response was to initiate a hasty redevelopment of a Static City. In the article written by Lebbeus Woods, titled *Inevitable Architecture*, he gives insight into why we are often drawn to creating Static Cities rather than allowing the Kinetic to pave the way. We all have an inbuilt desire for our lives to have some enduring value in order to deny our mortality. Woods states that this not only affects architects, but everybody, as without the thought that our work may endure past our lifetime, we may be left paralysed. Although acknowledging this, Woods implores us, as architects and designers, to accept our own mortality in order to produce architecture that is sensitive to the effects of time, or the Kinetic City. He challenges us to “include in design a degree of complexity, even of contradiction embodied in the simultaneous processes of growth and decay in our buildings, that heightens and intensifies our humanity.”

As discussed earlier, the Kinetic City recycles Static spaces, reinterpreting them in unintended ways to create a richer sensibility of spatial occupation that suits an alternate purpose. It can be argued that the Kinetic City is reliant on the existence of a static infrastructure to inhabit because of its temporal nature. The ease of adapting already formed space is more economic than developing a new construct. Because of this we as designers are challenged to create Static spaces that are easily used by the Kinetic.

The Kinetic City is a condition that is based around the concept of change and fluidity out of necessity. This is a broad term that ranges from changing occupancies of a building, to spatial occupation outside of the law, or squatting. To find the most interesting and fruitful precedent of this type of inhabitance we must look at an example of subversion. The Torre David in Caracas, Venezuela is a 45-story structure that was intended to house offices and administrative space. The building was never completed due to the death of its developer alongside the collapse of the Venezuelan economy in 1994. The building housed 750 families and was considered by many as a vertical slum. The building has been used as a case study in discussions around the conservation of informal settlements all around this world. This is because of how successfully the unfinished structure has accommodated...
the guerrilla systems of the people who lived inside.\textsuperscript{35} It can be said that its success as a structure that enabled organic inhabitance lies within its unfinished state. Although it has no guardrails on balconies, its staircases are unfinished and elevator shafts are left empty, it is this lack of ornamentation and detail that portrays a loosened structure that insights freedom of use. This kind of structure can be placed within the Low-Road category, defined by Stewart Brand as buildings that have been left in the wake of economic change and new development. In a discussion with John Sculley, the head of Apple Computer in 1990, Brand asked if Sculley preferred moving into old buildings or making new ones. Sculley’s response did away with hundreds of design assumptions, “Oh, old ones, they are much more freeing”. It is this concept of freedom that accompanies old buildings, warehouses and abandoned structures that defines the Low-Road building typology. These buildings are not delicate, but rough and spacious, free from authoritarian concerns. They are left-over places where the owners will say, “Do what you want. The place can’t get much worse anyway. It’s just too much trouble to tear down.”\textsuperscript{36}

This freedom found in derelict buildings is what architects should be aiming to imitate in new buildings. This essence of adaptability, where the static structure is merely a shell for creativity to thrive, can be found in Le Corbusier’s Dom-ino house, and Alejandro Aravena’s incremental housing project. Le Corbusier’s, Dom-ino was intended to be a standardised construction system that could be taken from an assembly line and joined end-to-end like dominos. Although the Dom-ino was never realised, the basic principle of providing the necessary structure for innovation to take place can be replicated, where the only thing restricting possible uses is the imagination.\textsuperscript{37} Alejandra Aravena's housing project was based around a similar idea, providing people with a suitable housing option at the cost of a small house, with the opportunity to further construct the second half in the future once the occupant can afford it. This project allowed people to affordably invest in their future now, as well as allowing them to customize their homes.\textsuperscript{38} These two projects show the designer constructing the bare necessities for inhabitance, and then relieving themselves of all authority to enable citizens to curate their own environments.

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Fig. 16: Exterior images of Torre David.

Fig. 17: Interior images of Torre David.
There is an ongoing debate within the realm of urban design regarding the creation of a ‘sense of place’. The argument can be simplified down to two opposing opinions on what defines a sense of place. The first view approaches it through an objective response, where the visual appearance of an environment defines its sense of place, through architectural styles and ornamentation. The other view suggests that a sense of place is attributed to a person’s subjective response, where they create mental connections with a space according to their psychological response. More often than not, when creating a city or environment it is the first view that is considered more than the second. This is because it is easier to control the visual definition of space through its physical attributes than it is to control the way a person develops a subjective response. Instead, we must accommodate both approaches, where we purposefully use physically created spaces to influence people’s psychological responses. Jane Jacobs introduces a view where activity is the key feature that allows the physical environment to influence people’s physiological responses. This view sees urban places being successful based on how the various activities flow between the built form and its spaces. This view is also acknowledged by architects and urban theorists such as Jan Gehl, Robert Cook, and also led to Peter Buchanan saying:

“Urban design is essentially about place-making, where places are not just a specific space, but all the activities and events which made it possible.”

Aligning this view to Rhaul Mehrotra’s concepts of the Static and Kinetic cities, we can say that a sense of place is created through the process of the Kinetic City consuming the Static. This means that as designers we should be creating static structures that are easily consumed by the Kinetic City, rather than viewing architecture as the creation of static monuments that capture an ideal and present it to the world. Our buildings must be thought of as

tools that enable the kinetic city to develop the sense of place that attracts global attention and genuine tourism.

Properly accommodating the kinetic city is extremely important as a sense of place is the fundamental characteristic that differentiates cultures, neighborhoods, towns and cities all across the world. Yet for some reason it is left out of architectural judgment. Architecture often gains appraisal from assumed success that is based on highly choreographed photography and conceptual facades put up by the designer to justify decisions. Although these things can certainly add value to a building, they should not be the only ingredients that constitute a judgment of success. In the article *Towards an Architecture of Place: Moving Beyond Iconic to Extraordinary*, Fred Kent uses the Cooper Union building in New York’s East Village as a perfect example of a building that was praised for its assumed civic value based on aesthetic judgments and conceptual ties.

“The curve of the corner, which lifts up to invite people inside the lobby, has an unexpected softness. Even the bulky exterior mirrors the proportions of the [Cooper Union] Foundation building [across the street] – a friendly nod to its older neighbor.”

Kent goes on to say that this statement shows a real lack of understanding when it comes to a building’s effect on creating a sense of place, “the massive, unfriendly façade of the building doesn’t invite anyone in, and there is nothing friendly about it. It creates a dead zone in the middle of what once was a vital, connected streetscape.”

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To begin developing static frameworks that encourage kinetic life to inhabit the context of a city environment, we must understand the characteristics of urban renewal and gentrification as they are the most common terms used to describe the effects of supply and demand within our urban environments. Therefore understanding them will provide a foundation that economically justifies the construction of basic building typologies, enabling people to reconstruct the physical, social and cultural infrastructures that the city’s economy relies on.

The basic theory of supply and demand can be explained through the Law of Demand and the Law of Supply. Demand refers to how much of a product is desired by consumers. The Law of Demand states that as the price of a product goes up the quantity buyers demand will lower as they are less likely to purchase a product that will hinder their ability to purchase a different product they value more. Supply refers to the amount of product that is sold at a certain price. The Law of Supply states that as the demand for a product increases the price of that item can be increased in relation to the demand. When considering the increase in price due to a rise in demand, the supplier must evaluate if the higher rate of demand is temporary or permanent. To clarify how this relates to urban renewal we can look at an example to show how supply and demand relates to rental prices.

![Fig. 19: Laws of Demand and Supply](image-url)
Imagine an unoccupied building in a dilapidated part of town. As the area is undesirable the demand for usable space is low. This in turn means rental prices must be low to entice a wide variety of potential occupants. Now imagine if a restaurant or bar moved into one of the cheap spaces, attracting people back to this unused part of town. As the area begins to generate interest, the demand for usable space increases, therefore allowing property owners to increase rental prices at a realistic rate. If the rental prices for the unused buildings were unrealistically high before there was a demand it is unlikely that anyone would be interested in investing their money in a rundown area as opposed to an area they value more.

When discussing the causes of urban renewal, the catalysts can be separated into two different categories: organic progression and strategic instigation. This first type of urban renewal demonstrates a natural progression, where the urban environment resembles a living entity consisting of unplanned improvement within dilapidated areas. This is often a direct response to the opportunities provided by cheap property prices, resulting in creative activation. The second iteration applies a more direct approach to increasing real estate interests. Developers make adjustments to existing areas with the sole intention of increasing property prices.

It is important to differentiate the characteristics between these two forms of regeneration to understand the physical and social implications of each. The stream of rehabilitation described as an organic process, which links closely to the concept of the Kinetic City, often stems from artists, and other creative initiatives filling the unused gaps - Low-Road spaces - within dilapidated areas. This leads to gradual social, cultural and economic expansion within the area. The second, more corporate form of rehabilitation likens itself to the creation of new static buildings which represent a developer’s values, rather than the existing culture. This method is orchestrated by those in power, imposing governing rules, structures and plans to replace an area’s identity as they see fit.

Both of these methods often result in the displacement of existing user groups as the property prices increase. This process of displacement is the defining characteristic of the term gentrification. This term is often used as a derogatory way of describing the effects of middle-class or affluent people moving into deteriorating areas as a result of urban renewal or rebuilding. Although all types of urban renewal have different forms of impetus with varying degrees of disruption, they all displace an existing structure in some way or another. It is this point where the term gentrification derives its derogatory status and is the defining element that differentiates the term from other ways of describing urban interventions. Terms such as urban renewal and urban rejuvenation only portray positive ideas, but we must realise that any form of environmental change will bring about varying degrees of displacement as economic expansion forces out occupants who can not meet the rising demands.

The purpose of grasping the concept gentrification is to gain an understanding of how it can be used as a strategy for reinstating economic worth within a city. The more incremental bottom-up approach begins to stimulate an economic shift through cultural activation and place making. Piece by piece, the economic value of the area begins to rise at the same rate of cultural expansion. This approach is sustainable as it lifts the property market at a realistic rate as opposed to the top-down approach, which, in a single move, constructs new buildings with high rental costs, relying on the buildings themselves to bring in potential occupants. The incremental approach is often more viable as it does not require large investment to initiate, but when discussing Christchurch and its current state, the central business district is...
starved of the Low-Road structures necessary for the initial stages of organic renewal. Because of this, it is not possible to encourage this type of renewal in the normal sense. In order to properly regenerate the city’s culture and economic worth, the rebuild must allow for flexibility in property prices, as well as in occupational possibilities. This would allow people to enter rebuilt parts of the city at a lower cost, allowing them to begin raising the demand for property, thus allowing property values to increase. This is advocating for the city to adopt Stewart Brands vision on freedom, where “nobody cares what we do there,” in order to later achieve the property standards that developers want to achieve right away. The answer to this may be the construction of cheaper buildings, allowing a wider variety of occupancies to inhabit central city spaces without concern for rental costs and property upkeep, or the allocation of space within already constructed high end buildings for cheaper rental space.

Fig. 21: Starting cheap and small to build over time.

Fig. 22: Waiting to go big later.

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Fig. 23: "nobody cares what we do there."

Fig. 24: "everybody cares what we do here."
3.1 ARTS IN URBAN RENEWAL

Arts ability to bring vibrancy into our urban environment is not a foreign concept. There are examples all around the world where artists have injected life into streetscapes with sculptural installations, murals and performances literally on urban infrastructure. These works bring vibrancy and colour into people’s daily lives, engaging citizens while drawing attention to issues within a community to catalyze change. Governing officials often encourage the former type of artistic activation as it has positive effects on communities, bringing joy to people while evoking a new sense of pride. It is proven that this type of activation is fruitful and should continue to be incorporated within our cities, but those in power should also understand how the arts can be used as a mechanism for exploring the political, social and physical divides that make up today’s cities, rather than a quick fix for concealing the cracks.

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*Fig. 25: The Women’s Building in San Francisco.*

*Fig. 26: Festival of Transitional Architecture in Christchurch.*

*Fig. 27: Interactive mirrored street facade art.*


There are many examples of cities and towns all around the world that have successfully used art to reinvent their urban environments, bringing communities back together by re-establishing pride and economic vitality back into their neighborhoods. Places such as in Italy, Mexico, Copenhagen, San Francisco and Brazil have all used the arts as a vehicle for introducing a new spirit in their communities and cultures. In Albania, the now president Edi Rama, simply began contracting artists and members of the community to paint buildings all around the city during his time as the Mayor of Tirana, all while under the Communist rule. Rama began revitalizing the city and its culture through the simple method of painting buildings all across the city with vibrant colours and patterns. The purpose of this project was to inspire hope for a better future, acknowledging the problems instead of trying to hide them. As the project spread, the spirit of the people changed; they became proud of their environment, started paying their taxes and stopped littering the streets. People began to love their city as crime rates dropped and people began to feel safer as a response to life filling the streets. It is this type of work that advocates for artistic inclusion within the redevelopment of our urban spaces, where art is purposefully used as a tool that actively directs social, political and physical change. Unless the arts and their processes are holistically understood and accommodated within the development of our cities, their potential is wasted.

Fig. 28: Painted apartment building in Tirana, Albania

50 “Painting the Town: Part 1 - Enhancing the Public Realm.”
51 Parker, *Once in a Lifetime*, 338.
3.2
TERRAIN VAGUE & THE CREATIVE RESPONSE

Ignasi de Sola-Morales, in his text presents a discussion on the types of urban environments that attract creative thought. Sola-Morales uses the French term *terrain vague*, to describe the characteristics of abandoned urban spaces that inspire creative thought through a sense of freedom. To properly grasp the significance of these environments and their association with creative responses we must properly understand the words and their meanings. The *terrain vague* used by Sola-Morales is impossible to explain through a single word or phrase from the English language. Therefore we must look at the French meanings and their origins. The first word, *terrain*, in French language holds specific urban connotations that refer to loosely defined parcels of land within a city. This type of definition cannot be accurately understood through the English definition, as the English word *terrain* pertains to a broader geographical concept of land. The second part of *terrain vague*, the French word *vague*, can only be properly understood by examining its three different origins. The first definition derives itself from the Germanic word *vagrwogue*, which refers to the waves on the ocean, relating to movement, instability and fluctuation. The second is the Latin word *vacuss*, from which the French derive the word *vacant* and the English derive the word *vacuum*. These words both relate to an absence of occupation and emptiness, implying the sense of freedom and availability, similar to the characteristics found in Stewart Brands ’Low-Road’ Structures. The third is another Latin word, *vagus*, from which the English language derives its own definition of vague, referring to ambiguity and uncertainty; although its connotations are often negative, it perpetuates a sense of limitless and freedom.

Sola-Morales uses *terrain vague* as a way of describing how unused pockets of land are simultaneously within the organisation of a city, while at the same time being external entities that are not part of the expected city structure. Industrial areas, railway stations, and unsafe neighborhoods are just some of these areas that have been forgotten by the city and are no longer part of its productive structure. The creative eye is drawn to these *terrains vagues* as they have become moments of relief from the rigid structure of the city. They allow the viewer to escape the static environments around them and experience the fluid effects of time. These places allow for people to simul-

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taneously perceive the past while imagining the future. This juxtaposition is made possible solely because the spaces are not occupied. The absence of occupation frees the imagination as it removes the constraints attributed with an existing thing; we are able to consider all possibilities because we have no functional references on which to base our thought. Sola-Morales insists that the value of these places depends on their state of ruin and lack of productivity, if they are reinstated within the productive system of the city, they lose their value as manifestations of freedom. If they are reinstated within the productive system of the city, they lose their value as manifestations of freedom.53 How then, can we utilize these empty spaces for artistic creation, reinstating a form of productivity, without permanently diminishing the qualities that inspire creativity?

The answer is to inhabit these spaces in ways that do not attribute a sense of physical permanence, preserving the spatial quality that enhances our perception of time. With the intention of temporary occupation we are able to reinterpret Sola-Morales view, where a function hinders our ability to think of future possibilities, as a method for educating people about potential uses of urban space. Creatively inclined people, such as artists, are more likely to see the potential of these spaces. As they begin to build installations or strange functional occupancies, they educate people about the potential of urban space. This is because they are enabling people to perceive possibilities that they were previously unable to, thereby permanently expanding their understanding of spatial occupation. This idea where ephemeral experiences have permanent influences, has direct relations with the Kinetic City. Understanding the potential of terrain vague spaces as places for temporary urban exploration and spatial education intensifies the importance of their existence within a city's structure. The development of a city's own sense of place and culture is dependent on the terrain vague as it allows room for the Kinetic City to exist through events, installations and festivals that intensify our experiences and broaden our understandings of urban space.

This concept of temporal activation is not often encouraged by governing officials, therefore the productivity of these spaces must be economically justified, deterring the permanent development that causes terrains vagues to fall within the organised city infrastructure. The contemporary arts have formed an ecology that fights for the preservation of these obscure places. This arts ecology takes refuge within the city's margins, inside the terrain vague, away from the structure of the city that restricts their freedom. These acts of refuge are often subversive acts, as seen in the example of Torre David, a tower occupied by squatters for years. It is often argued that artists take this form of occupancy due to economic reasons, but it is also accurate to link their habitation of dilapidated spaces to the opportunities that come with the terrain vague. Art squats are often formed within unused buildings, largely because they allow for freedom, but also as a means of preserving the building and its characteristics within the city. These types of art squats have been formed all around the world, most significantly in Berlin after the wall came down, and in France. One of the most significant examples in Berlin was Tacheles. Originally built in 1907 as a department store, the building was severely damaged during World War II. In the months following the wall coming down, artists began filling the building exploring the opportunities found within this place of freedom. Amongst the high end bars and boutique shops that began to appear around the city, it was the gritty and expressive Tacheles building that drew global interest. This form of inhabitation saw the rise of artistic expression that defined the anarchic spirit of 1990s Berlin. Unfortu-
nately in 2012 the artists were forced to leave the building to make way for future developments. In Paris the government has chosen to protect these forms of creative inhabitation by legitimizing this type of occupancy within the city. Artists began taking over abandoned buildings, such as 59, Rue de Rivoli, using them for exhibitions, performances and places of work. After a ministry of culture study discovered that the art squats were bringing in roughly 40,000 people each year, they decided to purchase the buildings and give them over to the artists occupying them. The government’s scheme provides artists with cheap studios and gallery spaces, allowing them to make and sell their work as long as they do not live in the building. As these types of occupancies become legitimized, the general concept of a city begins to shift from a strictly organised economic structure that fails to support creative enterprises, to a structure that is organised in a way that accepts the terrain vague, allowing room for creativity to grow.

Fig. 33: Tacheles street frontage.

Fig. 34: Tacheles interior.

Fig. 35: View from inside Tacheles.
3.3
PURPOSEFULLY CREATING THE ARCHITECTURE OF OPPORTUNITY

Creativity is often thought of as the ability to conceive an idea or solution out of thin air, as if it were a specific event that manifests itself within the presence of complete cognitive freedom. Ken Robinson presents a view on creativity that disrupts this idea. He argues that creativity often depends on an evaluative framework or set of constraints to freely work within in order to generate unique responses and original ideas. This view sees creativity as a development process that is defined by the generation of ideas in response to certain restrictions. These ideas are then evaluated against those same restrictions or requirements and adjusted accordingly. In reality, the most common problem seen amongst creative professions is the blank canvas or the empty page. When people are faced with innumerable opportunities they are often left paralyzed. Restrictions remove certain possibilities, allowing the creative mind to gain a footing within this paralyzing freedom. This concept can give insight into how the freedom of the terrain vague avoids paralyzing creative thought, as well as helping to understand the importance of creating a varying degrees of flexibility and rigidity in built space.

As stated earlier, terrain vague pertains only to space within the structure of the city, therefore it must have a static reference point against which to oppose its sense of freedom. The existence of the formal city structure provides the necessary restrictions for these spaces to induce creative urban thought: without the formal city, the terrain vague would not exist. Linking this concept to spatial occupancies in constructed buildings, the static structure is the reference point that different spatial possibilities are based on or oppose. The buildings structure, or lack thereof, is the point of reference that starts to define how people perceive ways of occupying the building’s spaces. Without a structure to fill, people are presented with limitless ideas of what could be put there. As the structure of a building goes up, different spatial possibilities can be perceived, thereby creating the box for people to then think out of. This is why there are so many successful adaptive reuse projects: somebody sees a building designed for a certain purpose and has an alternate vision of how it could be used. For example, a building may be designed for a specific purpose, but its architectural qualities inspire the divergent thinking that leads to its new occupation of a restaurant.

56 Ken Robinson, Out of Our Minds: Learning to be Creative, (Capestone, February 21, 2011), 151,152
Therefore certain building typologies and material characteristics accommodate certain types of occupancy more-so than others. This does not mean that an artist cannot occupy a large, cleanly finished high-end building, or that a corporate business cannot inhabit a small part of an old industrial building. It is only making the point that different building typologies imply different forms of spatial occupation more so than others. The only thing that restricts the occupational possibilities of a space is the occupier’s imagination. Therefore architects must acknowledge that the spatial qualities they are attributing to a function may also provoke alternate spatial uses, suggesting that certain building typologies should allow for varying degrees of flexibility and rigidity to allow for a wider range of spatial possibilities.

Acknowledging different spatial possibilities within architecture requires a shift in the architects mindset, where they are designing for the different kinds of spatial occupation attributed to a typology as opposed to designing for one purpose. This would also alter the way we evaluate architectural success. Instead of architecture being seen as a finished product that is designed for purely aesthetic purposes, or to perfectly accommodate its client, successful architecture would be measured by its ability to enable occupants to impart their creativity on its spaces, allowing creative thought to develop the buildings finer details over time. This concept begins to align itself with the current trend of mixed-use developments without deciding what those user groups are. To encourage this approach regulatory standards of occupation and zoning must be loosened to make it easier for different functions to move into different types of spaces.

As components are constructed the scope of spatial possibilities begins to narrow. Varying degrees of structural permanence and architectural detail should be used, depending on the building typology, to allow creative thought. For example, commercial buildings are more likely to change occupancy than a hospital, providing less architectural detail then broadens it’s scope of possibilities.
The purpose of this research document is to highlight a central issue within the architectural industry, as well as the way we approach the development of our cities. This issue is the idea that the architect or designer holds all authority as it is their 'profession.' The architectural industry at its core is a service, where the architect is a master craftsman whose main priority is to thoughtfully piece together a project in order to satisfy the desires of their client. Though parts of the industry operate in this manner, the way in which successful architecture is judged does not align with this view. Instead of architecture gaining praise for its ability to house its occupants while accommodating shifting contextual influences, awards are given to architects based purely on conceptual justifications and aesthetic parameters that frame the architect's vision. More often than not, these 'critically acclaimed' pieces of architecture do not live up to their perceived value. Alterations are made, and occupants use spaces in ways that may discourage the building designer.

It is this fixation on constructing quick visual statements to gain praise that distracts architects and governing officials from letting admirable architecture develop over time. It is imperative to approach the design component of this document as a facilitation of development rather than an act of dictation, creating an form of architecture that enables its occupants to properly develop the sense of place and economic vitality boasted by statement architecture. This means providing citizens with enough built infrastructure to direct them through an incremental development process without restricting their ability to control outcomes. In this way the community is able to mold its built environment according to their desires while simultaneously creating economic stability.
Fig. 36: Comparison between dictation and facilitation methods.
4.2 IDENTIFYING THE ISSUE & A SITE

Before the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes, the built form of Christchurch was defined by the model English settlement that collapsed under the land’s contextual identity. We must not impose yet another idealised identity on Christchurch. Instead we must enable the citizens to develop an identity that accurately represents them and the contextual landscape of Christchurch.

To do so we must utilize the communities desire for citizenry inclusion that has been fueled by the work of creative initiatives following the earthquake, as they allowed people to explore the possibilities of their new environment. These initiatives present a method of exploration that informs permanent solutions; they align themselves with the holistic method of place making, where the Kinetic City inhabits the Static City, temporarily activating spaces in ways that have enduring effects on those who witness them.

Unfortunately, the recovery plan that was proposed by the Christchurch Central Development Unit (CCDU) appears to be repeating the mistakes of the past, presenting people with yet another model city that is a façade of economic and cultural vitality for the world to see and be drawn in by.

Although officials argue that the recovery plan embodies the aspirations of its people as identified in the Share an Idea campaign, the plan was devised behind closed doors with little citizenry inclusion. To properly understand the recovery plan’s approach to revitalizing the city through this façade of economic and cultural vitality, we need only to look as its center piece, the Christchurch Convention Centre.
a myriad of moral issues, planning problems and economic contradictions. Convention centres are notoriously known to be cash cows for cities, aiming to bring in corporate money and nothing else. Though convention centres do boost the economy, they do nothing in the way of increasing cultural capital or creating the sense of place that draws in a wide variety of tourism. Knowing this, we look at the proposed site for the convention centre. It is located within the heart of the city, directly attached to Cathedral Square, and is to occupy arguably the most important land in the northern sector of the CBD. Having this type of project on such a significant piece of real estate says to the world, ‘the best of what [Christchurch has to offer] is a nice place for business people to meet and talk about other places.’ The main argument for the convention centres location within the city is its proximity to activity. The reality of having a convention centre in the middle of the city diminishes the type of activity that draw people into the city, hence why in most cities, convention centres are placed on the outskirts of central areas; allowing people to walk to restaurants and other commodities, without dominating the city’s atmosphere.

The nature of this project is not one of participation but of exclusion, where the power of the CERA legislation has allowed the project to go forward hidden from the public eye. As they are not obligated to consult the community or the council for approval, the citizens have not been given details about a project they are paying for but will not use. The fact that such a large statement project, which has the potential to define the city’s identity, has gone ahead behind a veil of secrecy undermines any of the positive aspects of the recovery plan. Because of this I have selected the proposed site of the convention centre for the design component of this research document.

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Fig. 42: Christchurch Central Development Units Recovery Plan
DEFINING PROJECT CRITERIA

To begin developing the ‘first step’ towards the next stage in a piecemeal development we must realise that it is not actually the first step. The concept of incremental development implies continually building layer upon layer over time. This means that the contextual influences that precede this project define this stage of design, which in turn influences the stage after it and so on. For simplicity’s sake, any influences preceding this project will be labeled Phase 0, making this project Phase 1 and the future stage that is influenced by this stage will be Phase 2 and so forth.

To begin designing Phase 1 of this incremental development we must identify the key ideas and influences from Phase 0 that we can build upon.

Christchurch’s Terrain Vague

The basic foundation of terrain vague is that it is an abstract occurrence within our normal idea of a city. It is a contradiction by nature as it simultaneously opposes the formalised city structure while its own existence relies on that same structure’s presence; it is only found within the city, but it is not of the city. In Christchurch, the destruction of the earthquakes saw the creation of terrain vague spaces where one expected the built presence of a city. This saw a direct reversal in roles, where terrain vague became the normal image of the city, and the remaining city infrastructure and new constructions became unusual. The city was now exposed to this spatial typology that simultaneously mourned the past while inspiring thoughts of the future, instigating the transitional work that occupied spaces around the city. Christchurch is now faced with the reality of occupying a city whose identity is defined by terrain vague. We must consider if it is possible to construct buildings within terrain vague spaces without destroying the character that has made post-quake Christchurch so interesting. The only possible solution can be found in relinquishing the idea of completion from the city and its architecture, where the moment of occupancy no longer signifies the final stage in the building process. This reality relies on architects, developers and government officials, acknowledging the fact that cities and buildings continuously transform and grow after they are constructed.

The CCDU believes that “fostering the arts and creative industries is crucial to building a 21st century international city”, aligning itself with many of the discussions introduced earlier in this document, where creative activation increases a community’s cultural well being while increasing tourism and hospitality opportunities. Following the earthquakes, an arts advocacy group called Arts Voice Christchurch emerged with the intention of giving the arts community a voice within the highly politicised post-quake environment. Members of the group attended community meetings and hosted many of their own, canvassing the views of the arts community and the opinions of the general public. The response they saw aligned itself with the CCDUs statement; rather than the arts being a ‘nice’ luxury which was considered after the city was rebuilt, it needed to be fully integrated within the construction of a contemporary city. The community’s no longer sees the arts as a commodity that is isolated within a part of the city, only to be appreciated by the middle class, middle-aged ‘arty’ crowd, but as a more collaborative catalyst in city making. This change in view is a direct response to the way the arts community became an organiser of collaboration between different sectors of the city.59 Although the community’s view on the arts seems to align with the CCDU, the proposed plan shows a lack of understanding from the governing officials as they have confined the arts within the Performing Arts Precinct, providing space only for high end artistic expression that is to be appreciated by a select crowd. “This official view sees art as an agent for covering up the cracks rather than as a means for exploring the divides and gaps that make up our contemporary political, social and physical reality.”60

59 George Parker, “A New City Through the Arts?,” in Once in a Lifetime: City-building after Disaster in Christchurch, ed. Barnaby Bennet et al. (Christchurch: Freerange Press, 2014), 339
60 Ibid., 339, 341
The idea that the governing officials do not have a holistic understanding of the arts continues to be reinforced as they purchase sculptures from international artists with the hope that their work will help revitalize the city. George Parker predicted that the CCDU, and those in charge of the rebuild, did not understand the claims they were making when they vouched for the arts in the creation of a successful contemporary city. As one of the original members of Arts Voice Christchurch, Parker wrote an essay titled “A new City Through the Arts?” where he discussed how the CCDU adopted their proposal for the River of Arts and adjusted it to be the Art Trail project. Originally meant to be an opportunity for the arts to have an inclusive voice in the city, Parker hoped that once they took control it would not become “an exercise in expensive place-faking, where a series of sculptures are lined up along the river’s edge in a static, business-park style arrangement.” Unfortunately Parker’s concerns were proven to be accurate as the council began investing large amounts of money on art works from foreign artists; most recently an estimated $500,000 was used to purchase two identical sculptures that are to be placed within the city as catalysts for rejuvenation.

The reality is that the government has the right intentions: they know the arts have potential, they just do not know how to properly utilize them. Instead of investing large amounts of money in ‘place-faking’, they should be investing that money into allowing artists and creative initiatives to operate within the city. This would make it easier for them to begin the process of genuine place-making, simultaneously increasing cultural vitality while restoring economic stability.

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Ibid., 341.


Fig. 49: Conceptual image of one of the sculptures.
Enabling artists and creative initiatives is economically sensible when seeking to redevelop an area. This is because the spaces they seek to inhabit are often places that are cheap to construct, with minimal finishes, presenting more opportunities and freedom. Applying this reality to the construction industry and urban renewal we are able economically justify accommodating the arts within the first stages of urban renewal:

The creation of architecture is a response to economic necessities: developers construct a building in order to satisfy a demand. In most cases the demand for new developments increase as economies and populations grow. Therefore it only makes sense to invest in construction when there is a demand to satisfy. In the case of Christchurch’s Central Business District, developers are left going round in circles as they are hesitant to invest in an area that no longer has an established economy creating demands to satisfy. To increase the demand for developments within the CBD people must return, therefore new developments must be built. As people return to the city the demand for more buildings increases, reducing the risk in new developments. Too often the recovery process is prolonged by the unrealistic expectation that each new development must visually represent economic and cultural vitality. These developments are too large an investment within the early stages of urban renewal as they only accommodate high-end user groups. This narrows down the type of user that can occupy the space, making the investment even more risky. Because of this reality standards and expectations of first stage developments must be lowered in order to decrease the risk in developing within an unstable economic landscape. Doing so would make it cheaper and faster to build while providing more opportunities to a wider variety of user groups, therefore creating a higher demand for more developments, gradually rebuilding economic stability and vitality.

Economically justifying the creation of low impact structures that accommodate cultural activation allows us to begin looking at the physical, cultural and artistic relationships that were established in Phase 0 to then inform the design decisions for Phase 1. Within the design process of Phase 1, I will be applying different strategies that influence the future development of Phase 2 without restricting its own evolution.

Fig. 50: Investing small to increase demand for development.
4.4
ESTABLISHING BASIC OUTLINES FOR DEVELOPMENT

The site of the proposed convention centre is a significant piece of land located directly between Cathedral Square and Victoria Square. Victoria Square used to be known as Market Square as it was early Christchurch’s commercial hub where the Maori and Europeans would trade and sell produce. Between the 1860s and 1880s, Cathedral Square began to transform into the city’s new commercial hub: markets and entertainment filled the Square as it became the focal point of the city. Up until the 2011 earthquake the square was used for markets, cultural festivals, artist performances, New Year’s celebrations and the annual World Busker’s Festival. More recently, Cathedral Square and many of the neighboring sites, have been used for creative installations and events such as the Festival of Transitional Architecture.

As these two squares have held similar cultural functions throughout Christchurch’s history, establishing a connection between the two encourages future festivals, markets and city celebrations to occupy both Squares as well as offering the opportunity to create events through the site as it changes over time.

Ensuring this connection remains through future stages of development, I have proposed the construction of thoroughfares; creating permanent passageways to protect the land in front of them from being covered in the future.

To create the first half of the connection between Cathedral Square and Victoria Square we are able to reference the old Chancery Lane that existed before the earthquake. For the second half we are unable to reference a historic passageway, therefore we must define a new thoroughfare according to the new buildings that will be constructed as a part of Phase 1.

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Fig. 51: Connecting Cathedral Square & Victoria Square.

Fig. 52: Referencing Chancery Lane.

Fig. 53: Victoria Square.

Fig. 54: Cathedral Square.

Fig. 55: Chancery Lane.
To decide where to build new structures on this site I have referenced three buildings from before the earthquake that had similar characteristics to what I am intending to provide. These characteristics are community engagement, commercial opportunity and adaptive reuse through creative engagement.

The first building that has been chosen as a reference is the Old Christchurch Central Library. This is because it is a relatively large structure that has ties to community engagement. The second building is the Farmers building as it connects directly to the commercial industry and its interest. The final, and most significant, building is the Government Life building that replaced the original Grand Theatre in the 1960s. In its later years this building was largely unoccupied and was criticised for looking out of place in Cathedral Square. Because of these factors the owner, Philip Carter, allowed artists to move into sections of the building to use as studio spaces. It is this type of occupancy that the design of Phase 1 looks to accommodate in order to easily bring interest to the site. Carter spoke of the scenario, “I enjoy supporting the arts and it was a way of doing that. It was an easy way to help some artists. The building was just sitting there.”

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Fig. 56: Identifying buildings to reference
Fig. 57: Christchurch Central Library post-quake.

Fig. 58: Farmers building post-quake

Fig. 59: Government Life building post-quake

Fig. 60: 1850, Plot of Christchurch

Fig. 61: Artists forced to leave the Government Life building post-quake
The location of these buildings was then translated onto the original Christchurch site plots done in 1850 by Edward Jollie. From this, basic forms were created to accommodate the second portion of the thoroughfare through the site.

This then provides the basic format for the first stage of development, two thoroughfares that permanently defines circulation through the site accompanied by three basic structures that are to be used by a variety of creative occupants that engage the community as well as satisfying commercial interests.
1. Connecting Squares
2. Referencing the old & the new
3. Joining thoroughfares
4. Constructing passage ways to protect space
5. Basic format for development

Fig. 65: Full site development process
4.5 ARCHITECTURAL LANGUAGE

With the basic infrastructure in place we are now able to begin defining an architectural language that can be applied to these buildings. As stated in the previous section, these first stage developments must be economically feasible in order to allow a wide variety of user groups. Therefore the architectural finesse that characterises much of the buildings we see published in architectural magazines should not be present. Coincidentally, it is this lack of ornamentation and finesse that is more likely to evoke creative responses. This is because a basic skeletal structure provides the necessary levels of restriction and freedom needed for creativity to thrive. If a building is constructed with too much precision there may not be enough freedom for creative thought to freely occur. Inversely if there is not enough structure present, creative thought is suffocated by the innumerable possibilities.

As the structures must be created with minimal finishes to accommodate creative thought and economic interests, an inherent lack of complexity is implied. In his discussion on creating architecture that learns, Stewart Brand advocates for simple forms and configurations of space that grows well and subdivides well, “as for shape: be square;” a simple boxy shape allows complications to develop over time as a response to use, rather than as a response to bad designs. Brand labels these structures as buildings that learn, I have chosen to define the typology as the architecture of opportunity.

To establish this architecture of opportunity we must look at the conceptual basis of Le Corbusiers Dom-ino and Alejandro Aravenas incremental housing, using structural frameworks to define space while encouraging future expansion. To understand the types of materiality and finishes required for the project we can look at Torre David as well as other art squats. These combinations of structural typologies and materiality can then be used to formulate a static structure that can be easily put to use by the Kinetic City.

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Stewart Brand, How Buildings Learn: What Happens After They're Built (USA: Viking, 1994), 190-192
**MONEY**

80m²

80m²

**NO MONEY**

40m²

40m² + 40m²

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*Fig. 66: Alejandro Aravena's incremental housing concept*

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*Fig. 67: Le Corbusier's Dom-ino concept*
Fig. 68: Torre David

Fig. 69: Les Frigos: Art Squat in Paris
Fig. 70: Skeletal structures exploring a variety of permanence and flexibility
As Phase 1 begins developing it instantly starts influencing the next stage, Phase 2. As walls go up, the environment is altered, values change and the way people perceive spaces changes. Because of this reality, the buildings implemented must be designed in a way that acknowledges the possibilities of Phase 2 without specifically defining what they will be. This is to allow the empty sites to still function as terrain vague spaces within the city, encouraging the occupants of the Phase 1 structures to explore the surrounding spaces; encouraging the form of transition exploration, that emerged from the earthquakes, to influence the next stages in development.

This led to a facade analysis, identifying how the faces of a building affect their adjoining spaces. The result of this analysis shows that the architectural detail directly influences the spatial opportunities of the adjoining sites. With this in mind we are then able to begin implying how future developments might function within the design of this stage.

As the purpose of this project has been to create only first stage in a continuously developing process, it is imperative to understand that each stage will change alongside the shifting cultural, social and economic influences.
Fig. 70: Facade Analysis

- Architectural detail on a facade protects the adjacent space from development.

- A lack of architectural detail allows room for potential development to occur.

- Sections of empty facade in conjunction with architectural detail can be used to influence future decisions.
CONCLUSION

The goal for this project has been to propose an architectural solution that allows the citizens of Christchurch to develop the city’s identity amongst the swamp of brick and mortar left by the earthquake. To do so we must learn to not hastily reconstruct the Static City in an attempt to subdue concern. This means designers must relieve themselves of authority, allowing the opportunity for the citizens to coordinate the Kinetic City in a way that facilitates the creation of a true sense of place.

This advocacy for citizenry participation comes from a response to the issues rooted in the idea of a masterplan, or more specifically, the masterplanner. Architects have developed a sense of elitism that has resulted in a dictatorial approach to design, where any deviation from their vision can result in them disowning the building. Instead, we must consider our buildings to be a living organism whose life begins once it is constructed.

The design component of this document seeks to oppose this dictatorial approach by organising a single stage within an incremental development process. This design requires the necessary levels of planned permanence and flexibility to allow for a variety of creative responses. Incremental developments require the architect to re-evaluate their role in design as it removes the concept of completion. The architectural industry often fixates on producing cleanly finished products to gain critical acclaim, therefore the design component of this research document was approached with the intention of enabling future development to organically occur rather than defining what that development will be. The purpose of this constructed phase was to accommodate the influences from previous events in order to guide future developments in a similar direction as they respond to this project. Approaching design as a facilitator of development implies a continuous relationship with a project, allowing architects to guide the project
through further developments as the buildings requirements change according to the continually shifting social, cultural and economic context.

This project is a direct response to the cultural shifts seen in Christchurch following the earthquakes. The community now acknowledges the importance of artistic activity within the redevelopment of their city as the creative initiatives has set a precedent for inclusive urban exploration. The recovery plan proposed by the CCDU has not utilised the community’s desire for creative activity and inclusion, instead proposing an image that boasts a fake cultural and economic vitality. This project looks to suggest that authorities should not attempt to present the world with purely aesthetic identities; instead, architects and governing officials should encourage social, cultural and economic redevelopment at a citizenry level. The design component for this project aims to be a example of how to purposefully construct a piece of architecture that encourages citizens to define it and its neighboring developments.

As the earthquakes spread the urban condition of terrain vague across the city people had no choice but to embrace it, and from this acceptance a new culture of transitional celebration was created. This further perpetuates the importance of acknowledging creative movement in our more permanent architecture as it is the next step in progressing towards a new normal. The important thing that must be realised is that Christchurch’s new normal does not have to be what the rest of the world considers normal.
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Appendix: Final Presentation

ACTIVE FACADES

INACTIVE FACADES
TYPE 1
Single Entry + Single Vertical Circulation

TYPE 2
Multiple Entries + No Defined Vertical Circulation

TYPE 3
Multiple Entries + Separated Vertical Circulation
TYPE 1
Single Entry
+ Single Vertical Circulation

TYPE 2
Multiple Entries
+ No Defined Vertical Circulation

TYPE 3
Multiple Entries
+ Multiple Vertical Circulation
TYPE 1
TYPE 2
TYPE 3
FUTURE SCENARIO 2
Full name of author: Oliver Ayrey

ORCID number (Optional): ............................................

Full title of thesis/dissertation/research project ('the work'):
The Architecture of Opportunity:
Creating the Box for People to think out of

Practice Pathway: Architecture
Degree: Master of Architecture (Professional)
Year of presentation: 2015

Principal Supervisor: Jeanette Budgett
Associate Supervisor: Krystina Kaza

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