OPENING UP THE RIVER
OPENING UP THE RIVER - CONNECTION & ATTRACTION
Rediscovering the River in Hamilton
‘EXPLANATORY DOCUMENT’

A RESEARCH PROJECT PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE (PROFESSIONAL),
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“Opening up The River” is about strengthening the connection between river and city, and in turn offering a newfound attraction/entertainment point in Hamilton.

The Waikato River has become neglected as functionalistic development of buildings, which focus on framing the street and vehicle direction has increased. This is a common problem around the world. The aim is that through the process of strengthening the connection to the river, this can provide a central attraction to the city by offering a pleasant riverside district that is easily accessible and visible. With such a significant natural historical element, the question is, why does the city not fully embrace it?

By forming connections using permeable areas for the public and enhancing the visual scope of the river, amongst other urban planning techniques, the river will become an explicit part of the city. This can then offer a new component to the city and the occupants/visitors in the ability to take advantage of the riverside district. The area will contain a selection of uses to complement life and experience on the riverside, ensuring that the area is always activated.

Ultimately this project is providing the solution at the most central part of the city, in the hope of triggering the incremental development along the river. These processes will then also have a positive effect on the pedestrian life and decentralisation within the city.
I would like to express my utmost gratitude to my supervisor Cameron Moore, who has supported me immensely in this project. I am very grateful to have had an academic like you to guide me along the way.

To my friends and classmates who have always been by my side, thank you I could not have done it without you.

Most importantly, to my Father, Mother and Sister, you are the reason I want to succeed every day. I am forever grateful for you all.

Los Amo.
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With decades of architecture and construction having progressed some cities developed in this functionalistic manner,功能主义的这一概念, that the developments were based on the importance of vehicles and streets. With vehicle/roads being the top priority in design, the rivers that pertained to cities were slowly neglected. 河流曾经在运输和历史上扮演了重要的角色，但随着功能主义的发展，它们被看作是城市中的一个元素。

Connection and Attraction are fundamental elements in the success of a city. A body of water as significant as the Waikato River should be embraced as an attraction, an attraction point that is a part of the city fabric along with all other elements. 连接和吸引力是城市成功的基本要素。像瓦卡托河这样的重要水体应该被拥抱为一个吸引力点，成为城市织锦的一部分。

The primary approach is to design an integrated hotel project, which can address the issues of connection and attraction in Hamilton, ensuring that visitors and residents find a reason to spend more time in the city. 项目的首要方法是设计一个综合的酒店项目，以解决连接和吸引力的问题，在汉密尔顿，确保游客和居民能找到理由在城市中逗留更长时间。

Aims & Objectives

Hamilton has the ability to recreate its central city into an attraction point, therefore encouraging people, both domestic and visiting to spend significant time enjoying the city. The project aims to tackle the lack of connection between city and river, therefore creating a newfound attraction point to the city. The river serving as an attraction point and part of the identity of Hamilton are exemplified in cities such as Melbourne or San Antonio. 该项目有能力将城市中心地带重新设计为一个吸引力点，从而鼓励国内外游客在城市中停留较长的时间。项目的目的是解决城市与河流之间的缺乏联系问题，因此创造出一个新的吸引力点。河流作为吸引力点并成为汉密尔顿身份的一部分，如同墨尔本或圣安东尼奥等城市。

The showcasing of how specific architectural program and formal techniques can be implemented to strengthen connections and serve as a reason as to why people may want to visit a city is paramount. The project does not set out to propose an overall plan in regards to how the river connection should be designed, but instead a basis for the incremental development process along the river. With considerate design to achieve connection and attraction at the city centre, this can progress to different sites along the river, ultimately creating a city well in touch with its river. 具体地展示如何通过特定的建筑程序和形式技术来加强联系并作为人们之所以要访问一个城市的原因至关重要。项目不打算提出一个关于如何设计河流连接的整体计划，而是关于沿河流的逐步发展过程的基础。通过周到的设计来实现城市中心的连接和吸引力，这可以逐步扩展到河流的不同地点，最终创造出一个与河流紧密相连的城市。
What fundamental urban design and architectural techniques can be applied to best provide a link between the Waikato River and Victoria Street in Hamilton? And how can they be applied?

**Research Question**

The scope of this project is to successfully bring the Waikato River into the city. The process in which this project intends to do so is through the strengthening of connection between river and city. These connections will be strengthened through an initial iteration of a central site in Hamilton’s city centre.

Through the process of connection, an existing element of the city is highlighted and therefore becomes a newfound focal point from the heart of the city.

As this new focus point is formed, the activation of the city then relies on the ability to make the river area the main attraction and entertainment in the city.

The project is to serve as an example and basis for the remaining developments along the river, encouraging projects to respond to the strengthening of attraction for the city architecturally.

The approach does not seek to provide an overall masterplan design in regards to how the river connection should be designed. The scope is to show how one site can be designed successfully to achieve the connection and attraction through architectural and planning techniques.
State of Knowledge in the Field

Jan Gehl – Life Between Buildings
Kevin Lynch – The Image of the City
Charles Marohn – Strong Towns
Hamilton City Plans – River/City/Tourism
Melbourne Yarra River
Parramatta Riverwalk
San Antonio River Walk

The initial state of knowledge in regards to this project is based on the understanding of the Hamilton Council issued plans, such as the 10-year city plan, River plan and the tourism plan. These provide a framework for what is actually needed or preferred by the city itself and create the basis for architectural and planning approach to the project.

The project entails the architectural approach to connecting two points and interrelating them to produce an attraction point. This involves a strong degree of urban planning in the sense of how architectural form can act as the frame to these connecting techniques and spaces. Jan Gehl touches on the concepts of how spaces/buildings can invite or repel users, how the spaces between buildings are understood and how the spaces can, therefore, be activated through the assembly of specific elements.

Gehl introduces and understanding of how Victoria Street can offer enclosed transitional spaces which can connect city and river and how these spaces can be brought to life.

Kevin Lynch provides insight in regards to the understanding of the city. This is relevant to the project as it will offer an understanding on how the site can be analysed as a whole. Concepts such as visual scope, continuity and landmarking are touched on in this book and provide support for both the strengthening of connection and attraction. This will subsequently allow for the project to be understood as a whole.

Charles Marohn describes the idea of how the more suitable way to design cities is through incremental design, rather than overall masterplans. Strong Towns is an aid in understanding that the success of an individual site can influence other future developments. The main element in regards to this project is that the success of a central city connecting point to the river can inflect positive effects on future developments.

Hamilton is not yet considered a river city as the city does not hold sufficient connection to the Waikato River. In saying so, the city has the ability to transition into a successful river city. Therefore, an analysis of successful river cities will help construct an understanding of the guidelines stated in the literacy.

Yarra River is the Melbourne’s central point, with development on either side; it is the heart and soul of the city. Melbourne achieves to offer architecture on both sides of the river which in turn allows for it to naturally become the city centre.

Parramatta River Walk project aims to achieve a similar objective to that of this project. The Parramatta River in Sydney is neglected whilst all buildings show priority to the city streets. The objective of designers is to create an activated threshold to the riverside district. This project will serve as a means of studying activation techniques and the current processes in terms of responding to a functionalistic automobile-oriented environment.

The San Antonio Riverwalk project succeeded in achieving the goal of reinvigorating the river edge. Existing buildings are responsive of the street front but also the riverside in this project, which will help form design ideas in terms of how this project achieved to connect both city street and riverside.

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Research:
The initial step towards obtaining the relevant research for the topic is to acquire an understanding of the current opinions of the project. This will be through obtaining reports, plans articles of the city itself. A list of the main intentions or overall concepts will be created and analysed regarding what literature can be of use to the project. The literature will begin to provide guidelines and understanding for how projects of similar objectives have been designed previously. Books and websites can give technical requirements that can be applied to the project in terms of meeting the overall concepts. Aside from books and websites, articles, interviews and previous research projects can shed light on the project also. An analysis of the teachings will be undertaken through the process of diagrams or iterative models in the means of understanding the literature.

Precedent research and the study of how similar projects have become successful will be analysed in comparison with Hamilton. Compare and contrast techniques can help in regards to constructing conclusions and architectural design choices.

Design:
The starting point of the design is to form an overall summary of what applies to the project after having undertaken research. The overall summary can aid the construction of the design objectives and principles, in which the structure of the design will follow. Concept and development stages will consist of iterative processes, focusing on the option for different forms, materials and functions. The mode for these concept and development stages will consist of drawings, diagrams, and modelling. Computer-assisted design will ensure that the project can be fully shown, but understood with support from the written research document outlining the methods in which the design has been based on.

Precedent research

Methods:
The literature research and overall research on the topic has been the basis of the structure of the project. The research has provided the guidelines for design and performed as a set of criteria that can be referred to when analysing the design approach.

The overall research has succeeded in outlining elements of urban design and architecture, which have relevance in the connection of sites boundaries, and in turn understanding how the project will be understood as a whole with its environment. Similar concepts of continuity and legibility helped support the understanding of these perceptual wholes. The component of connection is well supported by the guidelines outlined in literature such as Responsive Environments, The image of the City, Strong Towns amongst others. The following concept of attraction is understood as the method of activating the space and bringing people into the building/space. Literature such as Life Between Buildings by Jan Gehl sheds light on the appropriate ratios in terms of enclosure. Enclosure is a concept meaning, how the architecture is performing as a frame for space/life between the buildings. Enclosure helps understand the space and its boundaries.

Ralf Weber talks on the aesthetics of the street and the understanding of perceptual wholes. This has a positive effect in understanding the concept of connection outside sites boundaries, and in turn understanding how the project will be understood as a whole with its environment. Similar concepts of continuity and legibility helped support the understanding of these perceptual wholes.

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how these spaces can be brought to life. The idea of use assembly and people assembly are highly important. These ideas have aided the thought process in regards to what uses are most relevant to the site and what uses can be incorporated to activate the site successfully.

Precedents of previously successful river connection projects have played a large part of the research project in regards to acquiring understanding of how these architectural design techniques have been appropriately applied. Projects such as the Yarra River in Melbourne and the San Antonio River Walk, serve as direct precedents to the project at hand. The New Plymouth Foreshore project, alternatively indicates that a connection to body of water project in New Zealand is possible and although not a river, connection to a natural element of the city serves as an attraction point in itself.

Figure 3  Aerial photograph of Hamilton/Waikato River
The city and the greater Waikato area have several attractions to offer. Hamilton City is home to the following international standard sports facilities and arenas:

- Waikato Stadium
- Seddon Park
- Claudelands Event Centre
- Waikato River
- Ruakura Chiefs training facility
- Avanti drome
- Lake Karapiro

Other main attractions include the Hamilton Zoo, Hamilton Gardens, Waitomo Caves, The Base mall, Hamilton Museum, Waterworld and SkyCity Hamilton.
The overall plan is to build a stronger economy and develop a more attractive city. The main themes to the Hamilton Plan are as follows:

1. Strongly connected to the river
2. Best garden in the world
3. An active, strong commercial centre city district
4. An urban garden
5. Access to affordable housing
6. Celebrate arts and culture

Where the focus on the river is arguably the most important as it has the ability to incrementally activate the intentions that follow it, this can happen through different urban design and architectural techniques which will be discussed further in literature reviews on the topic. An example is the study in regards to how cities can be additionally successful as a whole by Charles Marohn in ‘Strong Towns’. Marohn’s theories state that careful design produces the ‘most enduring changes, which are incremental and data responsive, and can only happen from the bottom up.’

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Under this overall Hamilton Plan, there are also several other running plans, such as the Tourism Plan, River Plan and the Garden Place Plan.

The river plan consists of the Waikato river that runs through Hamilton. The river has been the pride and defining feature of Hamilton, connection between river and the people goes back hundreds of years, the river is the tupuna of the Waikato Tainui, which is embodied in a unique and special relationship with the river. Most would agree that the river although being the pride of Hamilton and a central aspect is highly underutilized and undervalued. People of Hamilton and greater Waikato have been set on the connection to the river being developed and the stages have been categorized as projects that can start immediately and others...
that will take more time to refine the details. The main one that is currently underway is the Victoria on the river project, which creates a connection between the Collingwood and Victoria street junction down to the river. The secondary project that is making progress forward is the Ferrybank development that will ultimately allow a connection between street and river also offering retail outlets and cafes.

The main tourism vision for Hamilton is as follows; “The mighty Waikato River is the river that flows throughout the region that embraces visitors and recognised for its manaakitanga, and is alive with people enjoying authentic experiences, journeys and vibrant communities.” This again reinforces the importance and urgency to develop connection between the city streets and the river. This will provide a strong tourist attraction point and spaces and buildings produced in these developments, which will contribute to the tourism sector.

The main goals are, to be established as a competitive destination for visitors to want to spend multiple nights, spend money and recommend their experience to others, have a range of world-class events and experiences to attract domestic and international visitors added at least one new high-quality visitor attraction in the region to accompany to Hobbiton movie set and Waitomo Caves. Realize a connection with the river and offer range of ways to engage with it.

The process of opening up the river and connecting it into the city can provide a catalyst opportunity for the above goals. This is possible by the planning techniques, building form and elements all covered in following chapters.

Recent interest has surfaced on the redevelopment of the central square in Hamilton, Garden Place. There has been interest from private developers due to the council’s initial plan to produce more car parking in the area, which will focus on up to 200 extra spaces. Garden Place is the central point of the river and has a range of world-class events and experiences to attract domestic and international visitors as well as a riverfront that flows through the region.

Garden Place is the central point of the city region and creates a successful connection amid the main street (Victoria St) to the inner-city streets. The connection, both accessible and visual, with the river from this central civic space to the Waikato River is in no sense visible or established.

The Waikato River is the river that flows throughout the region that embraces visitors and recognised for its manaakitanga, and is alive with people enjoying authentic experiences, journeys and vibrant communities. This again reinforces the importance and urgency to develop connection between the city streets and the river. This will provide a strong tourist attraction point and spaces and buildings produced in these developments, which will contribute to the tourism sector.

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The Waikato ‘Rotoria’ was considered New Zealand’s first “tourist” and the river was of military importance during the invasion of the Waikato. In the year 1844, the city was established as the fourth Waikato militia landed. The city was given its name by Captain John Fane Charles Hamilton.

The river also holds great significance in that it is the longest river in New Zealand.

Although the Waikato holds such great meaning to the city it lacks the connection from city to the river both physical and visual.

The council has approved for the investigation into how the connection can be strengthened, beginning with the Victoria on the River project.

The Waikato River, as touched on before, is a huge asset to the city and unfortunately development that has progressed in the past 150 years, has taken a utilitarian approach in the basis and Victoria Street with disregard to the River and the potential it has in bringing the city’s main attraction, offering historical, scenic, sporting, environmental and leisurely attractions. The river in this case, the icon and attraction point of the city is not in any way showing connection to the adjacent Victoria Street, let alone the city’s inner areas. Hamilton City Council has recently proposed the Hamilton City River Plan.
This plan is a rough indication of the areas in which the city believes it is best to begin to activate the river with the adjacent main road. The only project that has progressed through to construction is the Victoria on the River project, which is located a short 50m from Garden Place, and comprises of a terraced public space linking the river walkway to the city in a much more inviting manner than what has been offered in the past.

Although the project offers public interaction and connecting space, the connection at the civic centre at Garden Place is not clear, especially visually.
The area in focus for this project is the main centre strip in Hamilton, Victoria Street, specifically from London St to the Hamilton Museum. This district features a two-lane road layout with a central planter strip, retail, commercial, public and hospitality locations. In terms of heritage on the site, there are a total of 26 built heritage buildings on the focused area, evenly split between rank A and B. On the river side of Victoria Street there are 6 Rank A and 5 Rank B heritage buildings.¹¹

Victoria Street contains bank buildings, retail outlets, cafes/restaurants, bars, public buildings and hotels. The buildings themselves range between 1 storey to 9 storeys high, averaging at about 2-3 storeys with only 2 buildings reaching higher than 6.

Garden Place, which is the central city’s main public space, is on the inner side of the strip and is enclosed by surrounding buildings creating a large public space.

Although the Waikato River is directly adjacent to Victoria Street there is no visual connection between this main Hamilton road and the river.

Buildings are designed in a manner that they are all side-by-side and facing street front, dominant towards the street for the purpose of bringing people in and shaping Victoria Street.

Hamilton Central finds itself vacating the retail and commercial property in the centre city far too often in the recent five years. Where the heart of the city was once the central point it has now become decentralised, and new hubs have been formed in response to the development that has occurred on these sites.

Hood Street has seen some revitalization to architecture and urban responsiveness, to the point where it is now a more occupied part of the city centre rather than where it has been in the past, Victoria Street and Garden Place. With the development of The Base mall in northern Hamilton, this has become a popular hub for residents of the city as development has incrementally sprouted with the success of the mall. The mall provides a destination for locals and visitors to enjoy shopping at a fifteen-minute drive away from the heart of the city.

The inhabitants of the city set the destination points for visitors, outlining where to go and what to do and with there being several different and scattered hubs in the city it is blurry as to where the City’s heart sits.
For a city to be successful in regards to the planning and design, the areas must be responsive to its inhabitants. Responsive Environments, a text by Ian Bentley, Alan Alcock, Paul Murrain, Sue McGlynn and Graham Smith, provides a manual of sorts for designers.

Permeability
Permeability is a large point of producing responsive places; it consists of "the number of alternative ways through and environment"—this indicates the quality of permeability. The area in which this project focuses is the strip on Victoria Street adjacent to the river. Specifically, the region ranging from London Street through to the Hamilton Museum, where the focus point for accessibility is the river.

Both visual and physical permeability must be clear and successful for the environment to be permeable. "Alternative routes must be visible, otherwise only people who already know them can take advantage of them." The site features several cases of hierarchal layouts that do not support the permeable success of the site. The book mentions that the inclusion of "hierarchal layouts within a cityscape reduces permeability and generate a world of cul-de-sacs and dead ends." London Street is a clear example in where a cul-de-sac is located directly in front of the river, and visually blocked off by foliage.

Legibility
The sites average building block height is at 2-3 storeys, where only 2 buildings stretch vertically above 6 storeys. These buildings play a role in the physical legibility, but the user legibility is also important. Responsive environments state that "to use a place to its full potential, awareness of its physical form and patterns of use must complement one another." The problem with the modern city is that most times, corporate office block buildings and public buildings all share the same form and aesthetical presence. In traditional cities, the larger buildings with open spaces were those in which welcomed the public. Victoria St offers users, cafes, restaurants, banks, retail and public space along one strip, most of which are located adjacent to each other all facing street. Currently, on Victoria Street legibility is present in the sense of direction and how building blocks are framing the street. The street is lacking that of the clear differentiation user patterns. By perpendicularly extending Victoria Street through the design of a public space/building, this can support the strengthening of this topic.

Edges are linear elements that help

13 Ibid. p.10
14 Ibid. p.12
15 Ibid. p.13
16 Ibid. p.42
in defining a path? at the current situation on Victoria St, the blocks on either side are defining the pedestrian and vehicular paths, while the rear of the buildings outlines the natural edge in that of the river. Through the proposed activation of the riverside, this is therefore almost offering a new ‘riverside’ district amongst the city, allowing for the user to more actively form understanding of the area.

Personalisation
In saying that variety and richness are important, spaces can also be formed and designed in such a way that they respond to the specific preferences of users, offering spaces or surfaces in which the user can personalize the building. The text communicates that “Participatory relationships between user and space are only developed in a space that the user likes.” This is enhanced by the careful design, in regards to this project the careful opening of space, creating visual and physical connections, whilst still offering enjoyable and comfortable spaces that users are able to interact with and inhabit in a unique way.

The element of personalisation in this project, allows for the tenancies within the space to connect with their client base uniquely. Appealing to a certain target market of the buildings and another site within the city centre. This linkage creates a connection between riverside district and the inner city streets. The threshold into tenancies allow a space for owners to decorate their respective space whether it be through furniture or greenery. This can provide the sense of inclusion amongst the community and new development.

Space and Enclosure
Aside from the programmatic uses and design of the building and space, the way in which we understand buildings, space and landmarks are related to the size and proportions in which the surroundings are designed.

No offering a new way of walking or travelling at speed, it is difficult to understand the buildings as individual where we are confined by the two walls of building defining the street.

Hazel Conway and Rowan Roenisch explain in their text, Understanding Architecture, that “scale and site are closely interrelated, in regards to the architecture and space not being understood in only our scale as user but also the scale of neighbouring buildings and spaces.”

An example being the urban design of large cathedrals, fronted by large plazas, in which passers-by fully acknowledge the frontal façade of the building as it is identified and differentiated from the regular thanks to the public space. Users are immediately attracted towards the focal point as it is at a break from the regular strip of building blocks located on the street.

Enclosure serves as a communication system in regards to framing the space between buildings. For enclosure to be achieved, certain ratios must be met, the minimum suitable ratio for enclosure in a public space or area is 1:6. In regards to the project, it is important to achieve enclosure so that users can understand the threshold and space.

The buildings along Victoria Street, address the road and only the road with the only breaks coming in the form of perpendicular roads leading to the bridges crossing the river. Few small alleyways are dominated by the adjacent buildings and are overlooked by the pedestrians, as and differentiated from the regular thanks to the public space. Users are immediately attracted towards the focal point as it is at a break from the regular strip of building blocks located on the street.

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In regards to the project, it is important to achieve enclosure so that users can understand the threshold and space. The buildings along Victoria Street, address the road and only the road with the only breaks coming in the form of perpendicular roads leading to the bridges crossing the river. Few small alleyways are dominated by the adjacent buildings and are overlooked by the pedestrians, as and differentiated from the regular thanks to the public space. Users are immediately attracted towards the focal point as it is at a break from the regular strip of building blocks located on the street.
the buildings frontal facades are dominant. The relationship between buildings and street are clearly understood, it is the involvement of the community in with the river that is lacking. “Where buildings are positioned all adjacently in the same line and distance create a wall to the street.”

An observation by Hazel Conway + Rowan.

Conway, Roenisch, Understanding architecture: an introduction to architecture and architectural history, 215

Life Between Buildings, by Jan Gehl mentions, that an analysis between medieval cities and those that take after more modern movements, following the industrialization periods. The point is raised that “any European city that has been well preserved, still exist and remain successful.” Gehl refers here to the importance that early designers gave to the pedestrian influenced spaces and the efficient and effective spaces formed between the building blocks of a city. As modern design movements became dependent on automobiles and the functionalism of city spaces, cities began to drop the quality of life, which is represented in the comment “functionalistic and automobile-dominated cities are manifold.”

In Hamilton, in the area of focus, the street is dominated by the functionalism of cars travelling up and down Victoria Street, the strip consists of building blocks all adjacent and facing the street to accommodate for ease of access for the automobiles. Gehl comments on the quality of the outdoor activities and enjoyment being “killed” by such functionalistic environments.

These judgements are further based on a study of three parallel streets in San Francisco studied by Donald Appleyard’s Livable Streets publication. Appleyard here focuses on the registry of frequency of events and how the amount of automobile presence on a strip can hugely impact community connection and life.

It is clear that on the street where 16,000 vehicles per day that the pedestrian life is low to non-existent, in comparison to the street in which there are only 2000 vehicles per day, where the pedestrian and spaces are much more lively.

This, in turn, is related to this project as Victoria Street will remain a somewhat heavy street in terms of vehicular thoroughfare. Which provides the question as to what approach can be taken in providing that space for pedestrians to dwell between the buildings and furthermore offer the connection down towards the Waikato River.

Victoria Street and the site at hand is considered a strip, in which links can be made to the analysis of the Las Vegas Strip. The perpendicular order of the strip is worth analyzing. Robert Venturi published “Learning from Las Vegas”, a text that analyses the architectural order of the Las Vegas strip and the importance around the design based on the main road. Venturi mentions that “the zone of the highway is shared. The zone off the highway is private.” This implies that when travelling down the strip of the road through the city, the area is understood as civic, or as a whole, but where the user is off the road and permeating down the strip, architecture is seen as an individual private order. This trend can be counteracted in Hamilton through the perpendicular opening of civic space from the civic centre in Garden Place, down to the River through the new proposed building and space. An order that can be understood both from on the road or off the road.


Donald Appleyard’s Livable streets (University of California Press, 1981). p 4

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The senses play a large part in the prerequisites for planning the urban streetscape. The designer must take into consideration smelling, hearing and seeing, as well as the social distances that spaces offer. Factors such as walls, distances, speeds, levels & orientation have an influence on the degree of isolation or contact.

Here the idea is to design in regards to human needs and scale, especially scale. “The regard for human dimensions are crucial, how far? How much can be seen? And how accessible?” are questions designers must ask themselves. Lynch also touches on the regard for human understanding and dimension, as under his theory on form qualities, visual scope is a characteristic of importance. Visual scope being “qualities which increase the range and penetration of vision.” This is where a user’s vision is enhanced accordingly to their dimensions, meaning that vistas are created within space and further beyond the space. When looking specifically at the project at hand, the visual scope must be within the space between the buildings and also further beyond it, where the Waikato River is located.

Levels within a space should be designed according to the uses in which they offer. Life Between Spaces describes that “principally it is a bad idea to assemble activities by placing them on top of one another, expecting for people to use them equally.” Visual and permeable priority is given to the spaces and uses at ground level, anything above is given half the visual importance. Therefore all uses and activities assembled should be ideally located at ground level, although lookout points are an exception to this rule.

Any activity above the fourth level of a building drastically loses connection with ground.

Spaces and buildings have the ability to invite or repel the users, the concept of invitation is highly enhanced by the ability to see what is going on in a space. This means that of the many characteristics of urban streetscape design so far, it seems that the visual aspect is the prime one.

Gordon Cullen is an advocate of similar theories, which he describes in, “A Concise Townscape.” Cullen lists the 3 methods in which the environment produces a reaction on designer and user.

- optics
- place
- content

Cullen introduces “serial vision,” an amazing cinematic style set of sketch frames in representing what the user understands from the environment. The concept of serial vision covers the optical and place concepts, “Suppose, however, that we take over this linking as a branch of the art of relationship; then we are finding a tool with which human imagination can begin to mould the city into a coherent drama.”

Content refers to the city/areas fabric, such as colour, texture, scale, style, character, personality & uniqueness. Content closely related to the “variety” and “richness” aspects in Responsive Environments.

Visual scope being “qualities which increase the range and penetration of vision.” This is where a users vision is enhanced accordingly to their dimensions, meaning that vistas are created within space and further beyond the space.
Figure 25 First serial image - Victoria St w/ London St intersection.

Figure 26 Second serial image - Victoria St w/ Claudelands Rd intersection.

Figure 27 Third serial image - Victoria St (River behind left buildings.)

Figure 28 Fourth serial image - Victoria St with proposed site on left. No local pedestrian or visual permeability.
The image of the City indicates that "the clear transition from water to land at a seafront, all are powerful visual impressions. When two strongly contrasting regions are set in close juxtaposition...then visual attention is easily concentrated." Although this body of water in Hamilton is not the seafront but rather the riverfront, the same concept applies; the contrast between city and the natural asset is strong. The question remains in regards to how the edge can be connected and activated as a whole. For this Lynch has indicated that "One way of increasing the visibility of an edge is by increasing its accessibility or use, as when opening a waterfront to traffic or recreation. Another might be to construct high overhead, visible for long distances." With this basis, the design can take a move towards the offering of a riverside walk, reinvigorated to connect with buildings and river equally, and ultimately give life to the river's edge and strengthen it as the identity of the city.

As Marohn specifies in 'Strong Towns', "Land is the base resource from which community prosperity is built and sustained. It must not be squandered." In which one can gather the meaning that, the river as natural asset must be embraced and considered with design. This can be done by, initially offering breakthrough connection spaces that can in the future serve as a basis to further develop the river as a whole so that it responds and connects to the city as a whole, an idea that is relative to the 'sense of the whole' the concept described by Kevin Lynch. Marohn elaborates further on this idea of incremental development as a medium for connection where he mentions, "the most enduring changes, which are incremental and data responsive, and can only happen from the bottom up." 37

36 Lynch, The image of the city, p 108
38 Lynch, The image of the city, p 108
The opening of the permeability within Victoria Street through to the river is an initial progression point towards activation and connectivity, but it is not necessarily valuable unless it offers “experiential choice.”

This allows for the project to take an architectural position in that the typologies must provide diverse options for the city. For example, the combination of “different uses and forms, in turn, attract different people and communicate different meanings.”

The site begs for smaller scale understanding of the variety and the proximity between the different uses and forms. The wider context must be taken into consideration and demonstrate how the site can respond to the overall variety of use and form within the city as a whole.

By changing the architectural typology and the initiating of the contemporary architectural movement in the city centre, it can ultimately change the vitality of the city. This can also reflect the ‘city of the future’ a theme that is ongoing amongst the people of Hamilton.

Richness is clear in the inclusion and protection of 11 heritage buildings amongst the strip, but should also be enhanced by the sense of motion, smell, hearing and touch. All features that can be designed in the intention for user to directly interact or alternatively, the architecture to respond to these senses automatically, for example designing with regard to sun and wind responsiveness for user comfort.

This concept in regards to the project begs for the importance of the social demand. Meaning incorporation of uses that take advantage of the river and views/space.

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40 Bentley, ‘Responsive environments: a manual for designers’, p.27
41 ibid.
43 Bentley, ‘Responsive environments: a manual for designers’, p.89
44 ibid. p.90

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[Figures 32 and 33] Responsive Environments. Link between uses, forms, people & meaning

[Figures 34 and 35] Responsive Environments. Variety on site

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With regards to the study of a responsive environment comes "placemaking". William H Whyte communicates the importance of comfort for the user in the public spaces within a city, framed by architecture and uses. The aim is to bring river into the street and through to the city. Whyte gives an example of where the street along Paley Park in New York is integrated so well to the extent that it is basically a part of the space.

For this project to successfully achieve the aim, the building/space must work well with its surroundings yet provide something different to attract users. This could be done through the connection process to the river. ‘Project for Public Spaces’ is an organization who base design theory from sources such as Whyte and have provided straightforward criteria to produce successful projects. Main attributes consist of the:

- sociability
- uses and activities
- access and linkages
- comfort and image

Sociability is described by the theorists as, “the potential for diverse and varied forms of uses and design”. The space from Victoria Street through to Riverside, allowing it to become more welcoming, encouraging more people to interact with the space, therefore, making the space and city as a whole more sociable.

Uses and activities can be related back to ‘variety’ in the study of Responsive Environments. An architectural form has its limits in regards to the amount of space and diversity of uses that it can contain. The careful design of a multi-use hotel project allows for architecture to frame space offering social and community-based public space, while simultaneously offering another selection of uses and activities to activate the connection.
Landmarking

"Landmarking" and visibility of the architecture can be an important feature of the design. In the case of this project, the main theme is the "connection and attraction". The connection being from the river through to the city and vice versa, and attraction being the reason in why people want to spend time in the area but also aims to achieve the visual dominance in locating the heart of the city.

Lynch explains that "If identifiable from near and far while moving rapidly or slowly, by night or day, it then becomes a stable anchor for the perception of the complex and shifting urban world." This concept is further developed in, "If the distinctive building is the scene of a historic event or similar then it becomes a landmark indeed." Here, the proposed building can signify the position of the river, and as the river holds a strong historical background for the establishment of Hamilton, this can act as a means of communicating the city’s history.

Lynch, The Image of the City, p. 130
Lynch, The Image of the City, p. 101
Lynch, The Image of the City, p. 101
Gehl explains that an urban environment analysis can be based on three concepts, “necessary, optional and social activities.” Necessary activities cover activities that people are required to participate in, such as, school, work, errands etc. Optional activities are activities that take place where there is a decision to do so, or if the adequate time presents itself for that activity. They are usually individual activities such as, sitting, walking, standing. The social activities are produced by other events and therefore trigger social interaction; these activities can consist of, greetings, conversation and communal activities. These activities can be arranged under low to high-intensity contact categories. The low-intensity contact consists of contact amongst people at its simplest, which can be in the form of smiling, seeing, hearing and just being in the same environment as others. The author explains that it is “essential to understanding that these low-intensity contacts work as a medium for the unpredictable, the spontaneous and the unplanned.” This refers to the careful design of urban environment and the activities that are offered. This provides reason for the users to visit the area. The design can contain a public common area which will catalyze the low-intensity contact. Restaurants and outlets will serve as further areas offering low-intensity contact. Andreas Sevtsuk, author of ‘How we shape our cities, and then they shape us’, elaborates further in saying that, “we must remember that there is no clear causality between form and space and behaviour.” The events that take place in the area are dependent on the quality of space. The quality of space for this project will be significantly improved through the connection to the river, and the smallest component, are determining factors to the quality of a public space.”

A concept raised by Gehl many times in the text is the importance of careful assembly. “That it is not the building which must first be assembled, but the people and events to ensure that human activity is adequately concentrated.” Currently, the buildings on Victoria Street are designed for the street front and the streetscape design does not reflect any assembly of spaces for events or people to spend time, with an exception in Garden Place. That space is slowly diminishing popularity in pedestrian use due to the decentralisation of the city out to different nodes. In chapter 4, Gehl touches on the importance of the stationary activities. Elements that encourage people to spend time, not only briefly stop in a space. The “design of individual spaces and of the details, down to the smallest component, are determining factors to the quality of a public space.”
When looking at the design, in terms of the architecture that will occupy the site, Weber shares insight on the perceptual understanding of the urban streetscape. There are two conditions for aesthetically successful form, “the best condition when an object permits the formation of perceptual wholes,” and the second condition being “an object to arouse a user’s perceptual interest.”

Meaning that for the architectural form to become aesthetically appropriate, users must first understand the environment and uniformity of the street, followed by the will to explore space itself when approaching it. This can be achieved by ensuring the building is visible in its context, and as one becomes closer, space acts as an extension of the street, ‘visual scope’ as mentioned by Lynch and others.

Proceeding further towards the design itself, basis can be drawn from Lynch’s remaining form characteristics. Singularity, being where the building is individualized in its environment, whether it be through “closure; contrast of surface; size; spatial location.” These are qualities that identify an element and make it remarkable or noticeable, which is somewhat the focus here in the means of creating an attraction point in the heart of the city.

Form Simplicity is a rather straightforward topic that Lynch covers, consisting of the architecture being of “a straightforward geometrical sense.” This is because forms of this nature are easily incorporated within the image of the city. Usually, even if the building is of complex elements, observers will distill them into simple forms for their own understanding.

The last of the important characteristics that Lynch touches on is Continuity, in the sense of “repetition of rhythmic intervals, neatness of parts, similarity, harmony of surface. These are qualities that facilitate the perception of a complex physical reality.” Continuity is important within the architecture itself but also over the whole. This is communicated where Lynch talks about “The Sense of the Whole.” In discussing design by element types, there is a tendency to skim over the interrelation of the parts into a whole. The interrelation of the parts into the whole can be applied on this project through the means of incremental development. This central site can serve as an influence for the permeable developments along the river, therefore growing in both directions from this central site. This will ultimately result in the activation of the river as a whole.
The city has also indicated that it intends to attract domestic and international visitors to the city, and has made clear that the city is home to several world-class event locations but cannot offer sufficient world-class quality accommodation, in the council issued ‘Hamilton 10-year plan’. Ibis, Sudima and Novotel Tainui Hotels offer an economy accommodation solution in the city centre. With events such as Agricultural Fieldays, HSBC Hamilton Sevens, Rugby and Cricket international matches and others, how can Hamilton progress to accommodate the influx of the domestic and international visitors to the city in all aspects? History/Natural element and current streetscape is a suitable medium to create connection in this project. “Place and identity are inextricably bound to one another... Narratives we hold the memories of those spaces.”

In this sense, connection can act as catalyst for the strengthening of the cities identity. This project will consider the neglected natural asset of the city and bring it to its necessary fruition. This process of connection has an effect on many other incremental development opportunities both in regards to architectural and also communal development. “The bonds between city & identity can influence social formations, cultural practices & political actions.”

![Diagram highlighting existing hotels in the area.](image-url)
Melbourne Yarra River is a prime example of a city that has successfully reacted to their respective river. The Yarra River’s path travels through downtown Melbourne and features developments on both sides. What makes this river such a central point is the acknowledgement of the river itself. Although buildings are featured on both strips beyond the river edge, there are constant access points for the public to permeate through to the river’s edge from the central city.

For decades, the railway yards created a divide from the city to the river, but in previous years there has been a series of bold urban projects such as removing Batman Ave, extending Exhibition St and the addition of Federation Square, all which helped open up the visual corridors and enhancing permeability down towards the river.  

Aside from the permeability down to the river itself, the variety of building use and design facing the river is hugely successful. The variety on the riverside encourages the public to walk the river strip rather than the city streets. Along the River strip, one can find restaurants, bars, retail, convention centres, and public space all in which activate the space itself but also actively connecting the river to the city as a whole by becoming a central aspect.

As well as the ground level selection of uses and buildings along the river strip, high – mid-rise buildings are essential in adding to the variety and visual connection to the river.

Hilton and Crown Hotels are two among many hotels located in this central city district, which offer stunning views out to the river and over the city, this, in turn, acts as an attraction point for guests visiting the city.

The river holds an importance, which communicates a long and rich maritime history in the formation and development of Melbourne. Tracing back to the old boat sheds and docks used in the early days of the city’s development.

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San Antonio was the home of a similarly neglected river to the one in Hamilton. SWA Group, based in San Antonio, set out on the project to achieve the following intent: “to capitalise on an underused and ignored resource for the past 50 years.” The purpose of the project was to enhance the quality of life for residents, create compelling place for people to use, stimulate economic development adjacent to the river and near river corridor.

The designers of the project coordinated the revitalisation of the river along with other processes being undertaken in the city.

The improvements of the access way themselves beg for the city streets to tie into the development and integrate the river into the city.

Processes applied consisted of introducing pedestrian paths/bridges/spaces & multi-use buildings.

Over time, where development had sprung up, the businesses that had street front facing entrances looked at developing a riverfront entrance, which further enhanced the connection between river and the city.

“The river walk frontage made these buildings and their neighbouring ones more valuable for their riverside frontage rather than their street frontage.” An example of this being the D’Heye Saddlery Building.


The New Plymouth coastline was a deferred asset to the city before 1997. In 1984 the $18.2 million wastewater treatment plant was operational and sewage was no longer being sent out into the coast. This is when forward-thinking mayor, David Leans dream idea of a coastal walkway trailing New Plymouths raw and exhilarating beaches moved closer to reality.  

1997 the Isthmus Group began to design and construction of the walkway design. This design created a link to the coast beyond the rail line that had acted as a barrier for decades.  

The project became a social phenomenon and began to attract thousands to its coastline, successfully activating the area. As a product of the great design, small businesses emerged in the area of newfound life and opportunity.  

Over the years and after the positive impact and reactions the project extended by several kilometres.  

As time has passed and the project has been an example of how effective the accessibility out towards a great natural asset can be, it has racked up just over a dozen awards in recognition of its success in identity and connection.


Parramatta’s history is interwoven with the river, as it was the first large successful agricultural development in Australia through Experiments Farm. As decades pass, cities tend to lose connection with their respective rivers due to the planning in regards to industrialization and automobile-oriented areas. This process that had developed over time resulted in the river becoming highly disconnected from the cities surrounding urban structure, as is a very similar problem in Hamilton.

Due to this connection between river and city having diminished, a plan to re-activate the river has been brought to light. The project’s intentions consist of reconnecting the city to the river by, “positioning it at the front and centre of Parramatta, as redevelopment continues to occur.” The plan proposes to produce a ‘world-class public domain’ and a high standard selection of new buildings seamlessly knitted together by a dense network of accessible and active spaces.

The key unifying element in the Parramatta River project is provided in the form of River Square, which is directly linked to the city’s main civic space, Parramatta Square. This element of connectivity amidst the Parramatta project is very closely interrelated with the concept of connectivity in the project at hand in Hamilton.

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78 ibid.
79 ibid.
Activation, also being a driving element in the design project, is divided into 4 main categories. 

• Building Activation
  Where buildings must architecturally be responsive to river and also city.

• Event Activation
  Meaning that a selection of private, community and individual events must be offered.

• Water Activation
  This in regards to the reinvigoration of the river itself, in terms of considering water quality.

• Recreational Activation
  Passive and recreational activities are able to be performed.¹⁰

These categories link into the theory of Jan Gehl⁵ and the assembling of the activities and people, which will in turn affect the activation of the space. The project ensures an all year round lively city; it additionally provides the framework for


the establishment of a “strong connection amid lower level foreshore to upper-level city streets.”¹⁰

Figure 56 Parramatta River Plan along with personal analysis of connection paths & openings

Figure 57 Parramatta River Artistic Rendering

Hamilton, as well as many other cities globally, have neglected their respective main river over decades. This because, planning and construction progressed with a utilitarian approach to automobiles and street efficiency. This has the unfortunate effect of diminishing the connection amid city/occupant and river, therefore, cutting down the importance of the river itself and what it can offer the city.

Rivers, as well as all bodies of water that pertain to the city, have a very high ability to add cultural, historical, natural, sporting and leisurely attraction.

The approach is to:

• Allocate an adequate site on Victoria Street in where a redesign can be undertaken to achieve a stronger connection with the Waikato River.
• Consider how a building form can be manipulated to offer the strongest connection according to research on the topic.
• Establishing a means of activation for the site once the connecting design has been accomplished.
• Assemble uses and diversity amongst the area.
• Provide the basis for an overall connection process beyond that of River and City Street.
• Propose successful design which will influence future incremental developments, rather than proposing full city river plan. Therefore, in what way, through the connection of the Waikato River back into Hamilton can the cities attraction aspect be enhanced.

To ensure that the design objectives are met, the following design principles can provide the basis for design.

Permeability
A clearer sense of pedestrian permeability towards river edge will begin to strengthen the connection amidst the city and river, creating an added access route between the two points.

Optics
As described by Lynch, means the ability to create visual connection into an area. Therefore creating a design that both offers optimal visual scope from one space to another is important in establishing the sense of connection.

Space and Enclosure
The sense of enclosure is important to define the space, the guide for a wide street or public square is a 1:6 ratio in terms of enclosure.\(^\text{1}\) It is essential to create an enclosure that is also a threshold with the ability to permeate straight through to create the connection. The enclosure quality is influenced by the buildings height, especially at the ground and lower levels, where it ends vertically or is recessed.\(^\text{2}\)

Content/Variety
The attraction to an area is based on the range of uses that are offered and the aesthetics of the site. Lynch describes the concept of 'content', referring to the contents of a site. For this project to activate the connection between river and city and simultaneously create an attraction point, uses and activities must be assembled.

The design process

The location of focus is the central city district in Hamilton, more specifically, the region of Victoria Street near Garden Place.

This area has previously been the central hub in Hamilton, but unfortunately, as years have passed, due to other developments, some alternate hubs have been created, away from the heart of the city.

The location of this site 370 Victoria Street is at a diagonal from the city's central civic space and is also located adjacent to a Rank A heritage building in that occupied by the SkyCity Hamilton. The site is directly adjacent to the Waikato River, which provides ability for clear to construct clear visual connection. Its central location in the city holds opportunity for the project to act as a catalyst for incremental future developments along the river, which will further activate the connection.


\(^{2}\) Ibid.
370 Victoria Street is located in proximity to the initial project under the River Plan, Victoria On the River. This project can serve as a supporting system in conjunction with Victoria on the River, to activate the river edge side, similar to that of the studied precedents.

After establishing the appropriate site in terms of central city location, proximity to main civic space and other developments, adjacency to the river and the ease of accessibility, the following step is to acknowledge what is currently there.

The SkyCity Hamilton building, with an art deco style frontal façade, now acting as the anchor point to Garden Place. The building is a Rank A heritage building and gives the site a degree of diversity and historical character. To both sides are rectangular block, commercial style buildings, occupied by BNZ and Novotel. The Victoria on the River public space is located on SkyCity’s opposite side.

In regards to the facilitation of a more successful connection between central civic space down towards the river, the most appropriate site is the BNZ building. The BNZ building is 24 meters in width, which is not sufficient to accommodate a building that encloses a public space of the quality intended to achieve the necessary connection and attraction concepts. The Novotel Hotel site will complete the appropriate size for the development of the site, offering sufficient space for a hotel building offering multiple uses for the occupants and visitors, whilst also contributing a public space for the community. The reasoning behind the choice of this building to demolish apart from size is its responsiveness to connection. Currently, the building is rectangular, with a flat Victoria Street façade, the building fails to create sufficient invitation of users to permeate to the rear. While it achieves the continuity of street uniformity, it fails to provide the welcoming ability to penetrate through to Riverside or understand its respective area.

The demolition of these two buildings proposes a site that is 74x70 meters, proposing a new mixed-use hotel development.
A variety of architectural program types are possible on this site, but a specific analysis of the site and the project's intentions confirms the appropriateness of the project.

Activation, in a connection project, is perhaps most important. Gehl described that it is the assembly of the people and activities that are most important.

To achieve the content and variety design principle, the design must have the ability to propose several different uses and activities for users.

Contemporary hotels have made a natural move towards the mixed-use typology in recent times, offering the obvious hotel rooms, but also the additional functions in the incorporation of conference halls, event rooms, restaurants, bars, casinos, retail and commercial.

To progress from the assembly of uses; the people must then be assembled. The people will be those who activate these spaces. For this to occur, a building program that can accommodate large groups of people is the most suitable. A mixed-use hotel is, therefore, an adequate option as it takes into consideration what was previously on site whilst offering the appropriate characteristics in the building the program to respond well with the intentions of this project.

The space at lower levels will need to be carefully designed for the project to be successful. This is derived from the understanding that, “low-intensity contact acts as a medium for the unpredictable, the spontaneous and the unplanned”, as described by Gehl.

In addition to the large amounts of people who will accommodate the building, the city is home to several world-class international events that bring in a significant influx of visitors. The addition of a world-class hotel project will also show connection to the world-class event venues as explained in the council’s tourism plan.

The proposed uses for this building will be:

- Hotel
- Conference/Exhibition Hall
- Viewing Deck
- Retail/Hospitality
- Expansion of existing SkyCity casino

All the above features accommodate for activities to be accessible at all times of the day. This also encourages a diverse group of people to interact with the building and its spaces.

Figure 62 Site location plan
Building form

Building as anchor.
Continuity and public space is unstructured.

Form addresses street uniform.
Permeability is not fluid.

Form introduces building to street uniformity.
Form lacks connection within itself.

No fluid connection with garden place.
Creates street side plaza, rather than riverside.

Good form introduction to street.
Adequate fluidity in connection.

Good connection within form itself.

Figure 63 Six formal physical modelling iterations.
The buildings’ formal qualities will ensure to address the connection between river and street and the subsequent connections. At ground level, the aim is to create a perpendicular extension of Victoria Street out towards the river to highlight this city and river link. For this to occur the buildings’ axis must be rotated 90 degrees from Victoria Street.

This ensures that the streets’ uniformity is continued through the position and shape at ground level, whilst the break between the two wings of the building attempts to bring users in within the building’s space. The design achieves the continuity of the street to an extent but is an elaborate repetition of the previous buildings on the street strip, which act as individual and are responsive to the space directly at their frontal façade.

To resolve this problem, the buildings’ ground level form must be considerate of the adjacent buildings, whilst also responding to the street as a whole, therefore, becoming a more viable solution to offer connection. By rotating the building form, 45 degrees in relation to Victoria Street, this allows for the central space to become oriented to the North, allowing for maximal natural sun to provide light to the space, whilst conveniently becoming positioned towards Garden Place.

This then acts as a more inviting space rather than one which will repel the interaction of users, a concept which is addressed by Gehl in ‘Life Between Buildings.’

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b u i l d i n g  f o r m

Figure 64: Rotating form axis 90 degrees. Diagram showing space framed and activated and visual/permeable connections.

Figure 65: Rotating form axis 45 degrees. Diagram showing space framed and activated and visual/permeable connections.

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*Gehl, Life between buildings: using public space, p. 113*
The attraction of the project is understood by the ability to want to occupy the building. To achieve this the building design will feature views, restaurants, bars, casino, accommodation. Moving a step further from the allocation of uses, the concept of ‘Placemaking’ discussed by Whyte and Lynch is important. This begs for the design of the building as a whole. What formal characteristics? What inspires the form? Materiality? Heights in relation to city and site?

Main elements that affect the design process are the uses themselves. To accommodate for a viewing deck within the building the height must be considered in terms of its surroundings. When talking on the topic of views, organic forms have shown to perform better in terms of offering panoramic views than that of a rectilinear form.

Inspiration of organic form is taken from the river path. Connection can be displayed in the formal language where the building can reflect the organic nature of river. Conceptual iterations of how organic inspiration may be applied in both plan and elevation are shown below.

Taking an organic formal direction will also support the maximisation of vision from different areas on site. This will show to be important in the enhancing of visual connection with the river.
The connection aspect of the project covers a range of elements in which consideration must be shown. The main connection at focus is the visual and accessible connection with the Waikato River and Victoria Street. A connection in which understanding and integration of permeability and optics are paramount. 'Optics', one of Cullens three main characteristics in how an environment can produce reactions from designer and user, focuses on the visual accessibility to space.

Space:
The buildings form will highlight and frame the threshold from River through to City Street. With a wide spatial composition and clear building block frame the space directs users on a procession down towards the river or vice versa. It is essential to design the permeable axis based on that from Garden Place. This creates a link from central civic space to the new riverside civic space.

The connection from Garden Place and Victoria Street towards the river are more suited to take a diagonal direction as the SkyCity building impedes any straight access. This decision in regards to formal characteristics and responsiveness is developed through form iterations on a site model.
Subsequently, the importance of perceptual wholes as described by Ralf Weber must be considered in regards to the aesthetic understanding of the street as one. For the hotel to be understood in relation to its adjacent buildings the design brings one of the buildings facades out to the boundary line, in order with all the other buildings on Victoria Street. This introduces the building to the strip and brings the pedestrians in through the space and in through the building itself. Directly adjacent to the site is the SkyCity Hamilton building. The involvement of the casino, with this building, provides opportunity for an addition of another use for the building to expand the activities in which it holds. The linkage between existing into the new building can offer a size expansion for the casino and be accessible through existing casino entry or the hotel ground floor entry.
The accessibility to the newfound public area must be clear. As can be appreciated in the design of the New Plymouth Foreshore, the accessibility to the foreshore was highlighted and became a sensation. Therefore the methods of activating the riverside through integration of community will occur through the formation of the riverside path, access from Victoria Street through the central threshold of the building and the uses that are assembled through the design.

The central public threshold space features terraced steps down towards the riverside walk. These terraces can be used to sit, walk or access the lower level of the space. Ramps are also featured to provide accessibility for people on bikes or wheelchairs.

To further enhance the community/river connection, a selection of ground and second floor, river facing hospitality outlets will be included for the public to enjoy. Furthermore, the central public space, as well as acting as a threshold from city to Riverside, acts as a community meeting space, where users can sit, have lunch, play and spectate events on provided exterior screens.
The transition from street to the riverside area is framed by the two wings of the building at ground level, directing users in and through the space.

Once the user is Riverside, the design allows for transition from the site towards the Victoria on the River development. This progression between sites is important as it allows for the riverside region to become activated, generating life on Victoria Street, as well as the Riverside. This allows for businesses to sprout riverside or alternatively allow for the businesses, which have been street facing for many years to add a river-facing entrance. This process is similar to that of the San Antonio Riverwalk and Parramatta River Project, which both reinvigorated the riverside facades of the existing buildings.

It is important to work well with surrounding developments to ensure the success of the project. Extending from the connection concept on site is the connection of the site to its wider context and how the project aims to support other developments.
CHAPTER 7
BUILDING PRECEDENTS

regal emporia
greater noida

• Designed by architect Mauro Resnitzky
• Depicts the concept of connection between two points
• Consists of varied use programme
• Fluid forms to invite rather than repel users.

aqua tower
chicago

• Designed by Studio Gang
• Shows understanding of fluid organic form
• Inspired by water concept

Figure 76: Photograph of the Aqua Tower, Chicago.

Figure 76: Connection & Uses map

Figure 77: Artistic rendering of Regal Emporia.
This project had set out to ultimately strengthen the connection to the river, therefore bringing the river into the city. This would result in the creation of a more pleasant connection to the city’s largest natural asset. By creating this connection, it would allow for the river to be understood as an attraction.

The attraction was to be based around the river and the integration of uses and activities that will work well with the riverside site.

Following the strengthening of connection and formation of an attraction point, the aim was to influence incremental architectural projects to develop along the river, resulting in the riverside to become well activated.

Literature has provided insight to how the site can be designed in order to reflect the concept of connection and attraction. The research touched on subjects such as form and spaces between the architectural forms, permeability, legibility and variety, continuity, placemaking, ratios and enclosure.

These subjects served as a basis to achieve the correct design in regards to reflecting connection on the site and to the city as a whole.

The project’s design expresses an acknowledgement for the existing street uniformity where the building is introduced at the Victoria Street boundary. Although the design addresses the street uniformity, it also invites as the form creates an opening through the two building wings, inviting users to permeate through from Victoria Street to the river. Within this space between the buildings, the design acknowledges the need to have an assembled set of activities and uses, where the understanding of low-intensity contact is served as a medium for the unpredictable contact that is to follow.

The connection has been well addressed throughout the project, where importance has been given to all aspects beginning at the river through to the site and street through to the city’s identity and ultimately how the city is seen in the context of the country as a whole.
The connection and attraction project was initially set out to address the neglected river and bring it to focus within the city, strengthening the identity and setting opportunity for attraction and entertainment. This, in turn, results in the attraction of the city and offers visitors an enjoyable riverside experience in the city centre whilst having a selection of activities to occupy their time.

Ultimately the project has achieved the objective of connectivity, linking the site to the city. In regards to the attraction of the city, this is yet to be developed, but it will be developed over the years, as Hamilton is growing ever so rapidly.

Figure 79: Arbory Bar, Melbourne. Riverside activities.

Figure 79: Arbory Bar, Melbourne. Riverside activities.


Figure 1 – Map of New Zealand. http://d-maps.com/m/oceania/newzealand/newzealand17.gif
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Figure 4 – Main Points, analytical map. By Giordano Santana
Figure 5 – Hamilton 10 Year Plan. http://www.hamilton.govt.nz/PublishingImages/10yp-spoot.jpg
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l i s t o f  f i g u r e s
Declaration

Name of candidate: GIORDANO SANTANA

This Thesis/Dissertation/Research Project entitled: OPENING UP

is submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirements for the Unitec degree of

Masters of Architecture Professional

Principal Supervisor: CAMERON MOORE

Associate Supervisor/s:

CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I confirm that:

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Research Ethics Committee Approval Number: N/A

Candidate Signature: __________________________ Date: 10/10/17

Student number: 14/7030
Full name of author: GIORDANO SANTANA DRAGO

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

Full title of thesis/dissertation/research project ('the work'):

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Practice Pathway: ARCHITECTURE

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Year of presentation: 2017

Principal Supervisor: CAMERON MOORE

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