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<b>Project Title:</b>	The everyday collective laboratory; Suburban interventions
<b>Project Code:</b>	RI11012
<b>Date of Report:</b>	

### **Executive Summary**

The highlights of the project were the discoveries made into inter-disciplinary research methodology and strategies for small-scale design interventions in advocating for community environmental projects. The approach was to continue to develop relationships with the community organizations that I had worked with in the previous research period in 2010. Previous findings made clear the necessity for small-scale inexpensive interventions to inform and advocate for initiatives identified by the collaboration between our researchers and the community. Two methods were considered to be the most effective; Firstly the use of QR Codes placed within the landscape that would direct visitors to both the research findings, and the community websites created to support the cultural activities existing within the neighborhood. Secondly the use of a 30 edition lithographic print that articulated both the history of the subject sites and the agreed concept to develop a heritage walkway, this edition was distributed amongst the community stakeholders and decision makers in local government. Auckland Council Parks and Heritage expressed an interest in trialing the use of QR Codes in a test area, and we are having on-going discussions on this. Both of these interventions proved to have great potential to inexpensively deliver the ability to both record and disseminate information discreetly, as well as to lobby for legal protection, restoration and present design solutions for a specific environmental issue.

### **Background**

This work was the result of a previous project that explored multi-disciplinary research within a community, assisting local heritage and environmental organizations and advocating for places of special character through research and design. The need for Unitec to connect with the wider community is a given, how to achieve this is not, and what makes this project important is that it explores a methodology to achieve aspects of this.

### **Aims and Objectives**

The aims and objectives remained consistent with those stated on the application.  
 To explore the dynamics of inter-disciplinary research for design.  
 To develop new examples of how subtle small scale design interventions can create connections between heritage landscapes, buildings and community amenity.  
 To facilitate enquiry into local history through design.

### **Methodology**

The methodology used was one that remained consistent with the previous years work and the one stated on the application form. It did take a step further however with my being invited to join the Kennedy Park WW2 Trust as a member, and establishing contacts within a higher level of Auckland Council governance than local representation, this was in the form of the central management for the Parks and Heritage Department. The methodology established in the previous project in 2010 dictated correctly, that a soft approach to dealing with Auckland Council was necessary to prevent the local community believing we were going over their heads to achieve an agenda of our own. This philosophy was continued in the project, and resulted in the gaining of trust and confidence in the local community.

## **Outcomes/findings**

The outcomes can be categorized into two groups; material outputs, and discoveries that relate to methodology. The first one consists of a paper presentation at both the Cumulus Paris Design Conference, and the Desis Forum, an international focus group on the environment and community also in held in Paris. A presentation to the Auckland Council Heritage and Environmental Forum was also made on behalf of the local community. The 30 Edition lithograph was produced, and won one of 3 merit awards in the NZ Painting and Printmaking Awards, and achieved the goal of establishing the Heritage Walkway in principle, subject to funding. We undertook gazetted walking tours of the walkway sites during Auckland's Heritage Week, and developed a method of making inexpensive permanent QR Codes for outdoor public space use that have great potential for further development. The discoveries made on research methodology within communities consisted of two identified problems; firstly, there is a requirement for research assistants due to the large amount of work that arises from this kind of project, but the process for employing them has a long time delay and needs to be documented to assist future researchers as I found it very difficult. The second is that once research is undertaken within a community and connections made, it is unethical to terminate these relationships after a short period of time, our estimates would put a minimum time of at least 3 to 5 years, as this would reflect the timeframes for a leadership or structural evolution within the community groups to occur.

I am satisfied the aims and objectives were achieved given the glacial speed that anything happens in local communities and government.

## **Conclusions**

Conclusions that were drawn from this project were:

External funding sources must be found to sustain a project that has ongoing benefits to the community and Unitec.

The recruitment of research assistants from recent graduates and current final year Bachelor students is both desirable and necessary to manage workload and achieve meaningful, ongoing or lasting results, this where true cross-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary collaboration can be facilitated. It is diversely disciplined student research assistant profiles that can prompt staff researchers to collaborate, as students are the primary focus of our work, they act as common ground for the lecturers to meet and discuss ideas on design and research.

The ability to present findings internationally has an important benefit, as there is an international movement within universities to be come more involved in designing community empowerment strategies for town planning and environmental issues that is growing in importance, and this presents opportunities for Unitec to have international PBRF outputs that deal with issues from within New Zealand.

One of the most lengthy and important periods of time to finish and produce work is after the Grad Show and before the start of the new year, unfortunately funding stops effectively at the end of November, it would be helpful if funds could be accessed over this time.

The methodology of this project could be expanded as a teaching model by using location and community as a basis to apply a range of subjects to, and the relationship of a student to their lecturer could be improved by them working alongside the tutor as *assistant-learners*.

## **Implications**

The benefits of this research are that the ground work for a methodology in institutional collaboration with community and industry has been done, and this can now be applied to a project with greater scope and longevity. It has been decided that the methodology pioneered by this project be moved from the North Shore to work with the Unitec initiative in Rosebank Road. This will bring a greater chance of obtaining external funding, offer wider opportunities for community collaboration, notably with an established industry organization as well as local residents groups, and have potential to be further developed and expanded over years rather than months. It has through this move, brought the possibility of establishing an international profile for Unitec in innovative institutional+industrial+community research. In summary, the research methodology will, by this move obtain a profile of location, community and industry partnerships it needs to

become fully integrated with Unitec's strategic goals. The everyday collective laboratory is now part of the Auckland Ecologies research cluster, and has obtained funding from the FCIB to continue to work into 2012.

### **Publications and dissemination**

Paper presentation, Cumulus 2012 Paris.

Digital presentation, Desis Forum Paris.

Oral and paper presentation, Auckland Council Parks, Heritage and Environment Forum Auckland.

Guided tours of the sites as participant of the Auckland Heritage Week.

Presentation, Unitec research symposium.

Exhibition, NKB Gallery Auckland.

Merit award for "Rahopara to Memorial ave" lithograph, NZ Painting and Printmaking Awards.

### **References**

[www.collectivelab.wordpress.com](http://www.collectivelab.wordpress.com)

[www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)