

THE STRIKING LINE: **How play can animate urban parks**

Dominic Tess

2025

Exegesis in support of practice-based Thesis
Master of Design
Auckland University of Technology

Abstract

This research inquiry proposes an urban park design for 16 Fencible Drive, Howick, that encourages community engagement through physical activity, aligning with the goals of the Howick Village Centre Plan, which aims to become a community hub for locals and visitors. The methods of drawing and three-dimensional modelling are used to investigate the techniques of an animated line and how they might fabricate a public space for playful interactions, involving physical movements. The documentation process consists of site analyses of urban parks across Tāmaki Makaurau, New Zealand, revealing any constraints and spatial qualities that might influence the design proposition. This practice-led spatial design reimagines urban parks as playful, physical activity environments that inform a sense of enjoyment when interacting with the space.

Contents

Abstract	2
Attestation of Authorship	4
Acknowledgements	5
List of Figures	6
Introduction	12
Chapter 1. <u>CONTEXT</u>	
What are urban parks?	14
Physical activity through play	18
Animated lines as a design tool	21
Chapter 2. <u>METHODS</u>	
Animated lines as a design tool	23
Visiting parks across Tāmaki Makaurau	32
Illustrating through three-dimensional modelling	42
Chapter 3. <u>THE HOWICK VILLAGE CENTRE</u>	
Howick Village	48
Site drawings	55
Design proposal	64
Conclusion	74
Installation	76
Bibliography	89

Attestation of Authorship:

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor any material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed: 

05/05/2025

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisors, Sue Hedges and Emily O'Hara, for their immense help and guidance throughout my research project. Your suggestions have truly been inspiring, and I would've been lost without you both.

I want to give special thanks to the AUT lab technicians and facilities for their assistance during my experimental process.

To my postgrad studio cohort, it has been a long, stressful ride, but we finally made it. Thank you for giving me advice for my project. I am very grateful to everyone who has supported me throughout this journey.

Lastly, thank you to all my friends and family for their endless love and encouragement. Words cannot describe how appreciative I am for being by my side.

List of Figures

- Figure 1. Catalina Williamson, photograph, in City of Play, n.d.
- Figure 2. Isamu Noguchi, Playscapes, 1976.
- Figure 3. Dominic Tess, Flex Fitness Gym, photograph, 2024.
- Figure 4. Dominic Tess, urban park analysis, drawing, 2025.
- Figure 5. Dominic Tess, abstract parkour illustration, drawing, 2024.
- Figure 6. Dominic Tess, abstract climb illustration, drawing, 2024.
- Figure 7. Dominic Tess, abstract jump illustration, drawing, 2024.
- Figure 8. Dominic Tess, abstract run illustration, drawing, 2024.
- Figure 9. Dominic Tess, physical activity conventions, drawing, 2024.
- Figure 10. Dominic Tess, athletic conventions, drawing, 2024.
- Figure 11. Dominic Tess, playground conventions, drawing, 2024.
- Figure 12. Dominic Tess, imaginative terrain, drawing, 2024.
- Figure 13. Dominic Tess, coloured mark-making, drawing, 2024.
- Figure 14. Dominic Tess, abstract cave, drawing, 2024.
- Figure 15. Dominic Tess, fantasy atmosphere, drawing, 2024.
- Figure 16. Dominic Tess, Mission Bay Park, photograph, 2024.

- Figure 17. Dominic Tess, scenic view, photograph, 2024.
- Figure 18. Dominic Tess, wall bar, photograph, 2024.
- Figure 19. Dominic Tess, monkey bars, photograph, 2024.
- Figure 20. Dominic Tess, ab crunch bench, photograph, 2024.
- Figure 21. Dominic Tess, seating, photograph, 2024.
- Figure 22. Dominic Tess, Farm Cove Park, photograph, 2024.
- Figure 23. Dominic Tess, Farm Cove observations, drawing, 2024.
- Figure 24. Dominic Tess, bench and swing, photograph, 2024.
- Figure 25. Dominic Tess, Farm Cove Reserve, photograph, 2025.
- Figure 26. Dominic Tess, Logan Carr Reserve, photograph, 2024.
- Figure 27. Dominic Tess, array of machines, photograph, 2024.
- Figure 28. Dominic Tess, Logan Carr observations, drawing, 2024.
- Figure 29. Dominic Tess, exercise machine, photograph, 2024.
- Figure 30. Dominic Tess, exercise bike, photograph, 2024.
- Figure 31. Dominic Tess, ab crunch machine, photograph, 2024.
- Figure 32. Dominic Tess, parkour course, digital model, 2024.
- Figure 33. Dominic Tess, parkour concept, digital model, 2024.

- Figure 34. Dominic Tess, hill run, digital model, 2024.
- Figure 35. Dominic Tess, calisthenic area, digital model, 2024.
- Figure 36. Dominic Tess, calisthenic movements, digital model, 2024.
- Figure 37. Dominic Tess, climbing movements, digital model, 2024.
- Figure 38. Dominic Tess, physical movements, digital model, 2024.
- Figure 39. Site map of Howick, Howick Village Centre Plan, Auckland Council, 2017.
- Figure 40. Dominic Tess, Picton Street, Howick, photograph, 2025.
- Figure 41. Dominic Tess, 16 Fencible Drive, photograph, 2024.
- Figure 42. Dominic Tess, view from car park, photograph, 2024.
- Figure 43. Dominic Tess, Central Terrace view, photograph, 2024.
- Figure 44. Dominic Tess, stairs' view, photograph, 2024.
- Figure 45. Dominic Tess, Howick site map, model, 2024.
- Figure 46. Dominic Tess, overlaying animated lines, drawing, 2024.
- Figure 47. Dominic Tess, Central Terrace and roundabout, drawing, 2024.
- Figure 48. Dominic Tess, Moore Street and Fencible Drive, drawing, 2024.
- Figure 49. Dominic Tess, first conceptual idea, drawing, 2024.
- Figure 50. Dominic Tess, second conceptual idea, drawing, 2024.

- Figure 51. Dominic Tess, playground concept, drawing, 2024.
- Figure 52. Dominic Tess, calisthenic concept, drawing, 2024.
- Figure 53. Dominic Tess, applications on site, drawing, 2024.
- Figure 54. Dominic Tess, movement in site, drawing, 2024.
- Figure 55. Dominic Tess, first conceptual idea of movement, drawing, 2024.
- Figure 56. Dominic Tess, second conceptual idea of movement, drawing, 2024.
- Figure 57. Dominic Tess, site annotations, drawing, 2025.
- Figure 58. Dominic Tess, first iteration of park, digital model, 2025.
- Figure 59. Dominic Tess, colourful conventions, digital model, 2025.
- Figure 60. Dominic Tess, second iteration, digital model, 2025.
- Figure 61. Dominic Tess, top view, digital model, 2025.
- Figure 62. Dominic Tess, east view, digital model, 2025.
- Figure 63. Dominic Tess, seating area, digital model, 2025.
- Figure 64. Dominic Tess, car park entrance, digital model, 2025.
- Figure 65. Dominic Tess, third iteration, digital model, 2025.
- Figure 66. Dominic Tess, third iteration plan, drawing, 2025.
- Figure 67. Dominic Tess, third iteration sight views, drawing, 2025.

- Figure 68. Dominic Tess, contour plan, drawing, 2025.
- Figure 69. Dominic Tess, fourth iteration plan, drawing, 2025.
- Figure 70. Dominic Tess, fourth iteration elevations, drawing, 2025.
- Figure 71. Dominic Tess, Central Terrace design, digital model, 2025.
- Figure 72. Dominic Tess, playful sculptures, digital model, 2025.
- Figure 73. Dominic Tess, fifth iteration, digital model, 2025.
- Figure 74. Dominic Tess, perspective one, digital model, 2025.
- Figure 75. Dominic Tess, perspective two, digital model, 2025.
- Figure 76. Dominic Tess, perspective three, digital model, 2025.
- Figure 77. Dominic Tess, perspective four, digital model, 2025.
- Figure 78. Dominic Tess, Masters Exhibition overview, photograph, 2025.
- Figure 79. Dominic Tess, table overview, photograph, 2025.
- Figure 80. Dominic Tess, entrance view, photograph, 2025.
- Figure 81. Dominic Tess, side view of table, photograph, 2025.
- Figure 82. Dominic Tess, Howick site map, photograph, 2025.
- Figure 83. Dominic Tess, top view of model, photograph, 2025.
- Figure 84. Dominic Tess, south view of park, photograph, 2025.

- Figure 85. Dominic Tess, animated line conventions, photograph, 2025.
- Figure 86. Dominic Tess, south entrance of park, photograph, 2025.
- Figure 87. Dominic Tess, wayfinding, photograph, 2025.
- Figure 88. Dominic Tess, seat convention, photograph, 2025.
- Figure 89. Dominic Tess, A1 posters, drawing, 2025.
- Figure 90. Dominic Tess, axonometric view, digital model, 2025.
- Figure 91. Dominic Tess, plan, drawing, 2025.
- Figure 92. Dominic Tess, site plan, drawing, 2025.
- Figure 93. Dominic Tess, contours, drawing, 2025.
- Figure 94. Dominic Tess, playful terrain, digital model, 2025.
- Figure 95. Dominic Tess, seating, digital model, 2025.
- Figure 96. Dominic Tess, slide convention, digital model, 2025.
- Figure 97. Dominic Tess, interactions, digital model, 2025.
- Figure 98. Dominic Tess, calisthenics, digital model, 2025.
- Figure 99. Dominic Tess, wayfinding convention, digital model, 2025.
- Figure 100. Dominic Tess, animate movement, digital model, 2025.

Introduction

This practice-based research proposes a playful design of an urban park that develops through a narrative of physical activity. The approach to this proposal stems from my interest in physical activity. Memories of meeting up with my friends to play a recreational sport have positively impacted my social life and well-being, where physical activity becomes an opportunity to hang out with my friends. I plan to foster these social interactions from my childhood by proposing an urban park that resonates with joyful experiences. Landscape architect Yijun Zeng states, “Urban parks can play a pivotal role in fostering a sense of place by creating a sense of ownership, responsibility, and community engagement.”¹ This framework inspires the direction for my urban park design, where I incorporate physical activity elements to engage with the community, providing a space for them to connect and socialise. My exegesis is structured into three chapters.

¹Yijun Zeng and Brian Deal, “What Role Do Urban Parks Play in Forming a Sense of Place? Lessons for Geodesign Using Social Media,” *Land* 12, no. 11 (2023): 1960, <https://doi.org/10.3390/land12111960>.

In Chapter 1, I contextualise urban parks through the works of Chilean architect Rodrigo Pérez de Arce and landscape architect Isamu Noguchi (1904-1988), reviewing their philosophies of play and how it is incorporated into their park designs. I discuss the comparison between the two because they offer different insights into community engagement and how their urban park design inspires a playful user experience.

Chapter 2 is a review of my methods of animated lines and documentation. My interest in animated lines has sparked my curiosity about their importance in visualising an urban park design. I have investigated a version of an animated line as a design tool using digital software to portray the essence of movement that emphasises physical activity through play. As part of my documentation, I took a series of photographs of existing parks across Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand, to identify their visual language and intended programme.

Chapter 3 is where I discuss my design proposal for 16 Fencible Drive, Howick, which includes a site analysis that examines the Auckland Council's community proposal and how my contribution positively impacts community engagement in Howick.² The illustrations of animated lines convey movement through the site, outline spatial properties that create an atmospheric narrative and offer playful opportunities for physical activity. This research concludes with my proposed urban park design, illustrated through a digital model.

²Auckland Council, Howick Village Centre Plan (Auckland Council, 2017), <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/place-based-plans/Documents/howick-village-centre-plan.pdf>.

Chapter 1: Context

What are urban parks?

The fundamental purpose of an urban space is to foster a sense of belonging in the community, which includes communal spaces, generally with open green spaces, that offer recreational and leisure activities. American sociologist Lyn H. Lofland suggests that urban parks are important because they provide opportunities for social interactions between people with different ethnic backgrounds, creating a communal hub for locals and visitors.³ My design inquiry explores physical activity opportunities that engage with playful interventions. Parkour best describes the physical activity narrative I envision in an urban space because of the different manoeuvres the user can do that stimulate a sense of play. The importance of the user's interaction with playful interventions has inspired me to review the works of Chilean architect Rodrigo Pérez de Arce and Japanese/American landscape architect Isamu Noguchi (1904-1988) and their approach to designing an urban space with their philosophies of play.

³Lyn H. Lofland, *The Public Realm: Exploring the City's Quintessential Social Territory* (Routledge, 2017).

Pérez de Arce writes in *City of Play: An Architectural and Urban History of Recreation and Leisure* that play isn't necessarily associated with childhood activities, but rather an aspect of life that resonates with us as we grow older. The user experience extends beyond childhood activities, suggesting urban spaces should stimulate enjoyment by hosting local events. Pérez de Arce notes, "More often than not, modern artists yearned to share the child's enchanted vision: play, we reckon, is by no means solely a childhood affair."⁴ He uses the term ludic, a characterisation of play, to explore urban environments that offer spontaneous, playful interactions. He observes children's interactions in the streets and how they improvise seating arrangements by gathering boxes to create a social space, or children using sidewalks and street corners to facilitate an imaginary game (Figure 1). These observations articulate environmental qualities that generate playful interactions, which inspire the direction for my urban park design. An important aspect of my design is to consider what interventions would correlate to the environment and how they define and integrate each age group, ensuring that they respond to various interests in play.

In Pérez de Arce's context of ludic inflections, his statement "The instinct of play attained ever so particular conjunctions through the agency of the field,"⁵ supports his philosophy that play can be developed through the site's environment. An active space introduces a form of amusement that encourages movement, interaction and engagement, promoting a sense of physical activity. A playground with structured interventions offers imaginary play, an open landscape and recreational possibilities for all ages. Creating an urban park with physical activity interventions is an alternative approach to convey a sense of play, and its effectiveness relies on the urban park's layout, responding to the site's environment.



Figure 1. Catalina Williamson, photograph, in *City of Play*, n.d.

⁴Rodrigo Pérez de Arce, *City of Play: An Architectural and Urban History of Recreation and Leisure* (Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2018), 2.

⁵Pérez de Arce, *City of Play*, 27.

Noguchi's work encourages playful interactions by incorporating sculptures to create environments that inform play.⁶ Noguchi envisions urban parks as imaginary and artistic, allowing a sense of movement to guide creative play. He suggests that the connection between the user and their surroundings shapes a playful narrative, fostering creative imagination. This is seen in his sculptural playground *Playscapes* (1976) (Figure 2). He envisions an urban park as a large-scale sculpture that transitions from the landscape to the park, describing the environment as a realm for play. For Noguchi, materiality is an essential aspect of how one can emphasise a playful experience, utilising durable and tactile materials that immerse the user in imaginative exploration, as he believes there are no constraints in children's play.

Noguchi describes playgrounds as a “primer of shapes and functions; simple, mysterious, and evocative; thus educational.”⁷ His philosophy is reminiscent of my relationship with drawing, where expressive lines are used playfully, sparking curiosity and creativity in the design. Through the use of an animated line, I emphasise that movement and physical activity will guide people through my urban park. As Noguchi suggests, this approach can educate the user, encouraging people to form connections with public spaces. Essentially, the success of a playful urban space is influenced by dynamic spatial qualities such as connectivity, openness, atmosphere and materiality, that inspire interaction and engagement.



Figure 2. Isamu Noguchi, *Playscapes*, 1976.

⁶Rebecca Rolfes, “Playscapes by Isamu Noguchi,” *Design For Arts in Education* 83, no. 3 (1982): 38–39, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07320973.1982.9940118>.

⁷Isamu Noguchi, *A Sculptor's World* (Harper & Row, 1968), 161.

While both Noguchi and Pérez de Arce integrate play as a key concept for their designs, they propose different urban space outcomes. Noguchi's exploration of materials allows him to create sculptural forms that invite interaction and express imaginative play, encouraging users to engage with his sculptural interventions playfully. In contrast, Pérez de Arce's approach responds to everyday urban elements, suggesting that features such as pathways and sidewalks can include playful interactions or be transformed into social spaces. Together, their perspectives inform my own approach to urban park design, to create a dynamic, inclusive space where play is integrated into the narrative of the urban environment.

Physical activity through play.

My interest in the proposal for an urban park that encourages physical activity stems from a belief that the enjoyment of active spaces positively contributes to well-being. This belief is supported by the work of epidemiologist Ariane Bedimo-Rung et al., who asserts, “By providing opportunities for physical activity, parks can facilitate physical and psychological health benefits.”⁸ As previously shared, from childhood, I always enjoyed meeting up with my friends to play a sport or recreational activity, as the social interactions with my peers fostered a sense of happiness and belonging. As I grew older and began exercising with other people in the same space, I would reminisce about times when physical activity initiated social bonds between me and my friends, which made me consider how I could design a space that embodied some of these experiences. This inspired me to reimagine an urban park as not only a space that supports physical activity, but also as a location in which play can re-emerge to enhance social interactions in the community.

⁸Ariane L. Bedimo-Rung et al., “The Significance of Parks to Physical Activity and Public Health: A Conceptual Model,” *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 28, no. 2 (2005): 160.

Early in my research, I had planned to design an indoor gymnasium that would provide structured exercises to achieve a high level of physical and mental self-improvement. On reflection, I realised that the essential component of play was missing, so I pivoted towards the design of an outdoor urban park that would allow me to think more imaginatively about a blended programme of activities such as physical movement, play and community space. A gymnasium design would only attract a specific audience who prioritises their health in a particular way, by working out and using weights (Figure 3). Additionally, there are many factors that may prevent people from attending a traditional gym, including financial issues, scheduling conflicts, and accessibility. Academics Judy Laverty and Jan Wright, known for their work on youth, health and physical activity, comments on the impact of gymnasiums for the youth, suggesting “If anything, the commercial gym appeared to reinforce absences and inequalities in physical activity experiences.”⁹ Although a traditional gymnasium is designed for physical activity, it doesn’t align with my idea of play as an essential component for movement. The repetitive motions of lifting weights contrast with my childhood memories of active play in open, accessible spaces. From a personal standpoint, playful experiences happen in environments that invite exploration and freedom, rather than a confined space filled with machines.



Figure 3. Dominic Tess, Flex Fitness Gym, photograph, 2024.

⁹Judy Laverty and Jan Wright, “Going to the Gym: The New Urban ‘It’ Space,” in *Young People, Physical Activity and the Everyday*, ed. Jan Wright and Doune Macdonald (Routledge, 2010), 96, <https://ro.uow.edu.au/edupapers/174>.

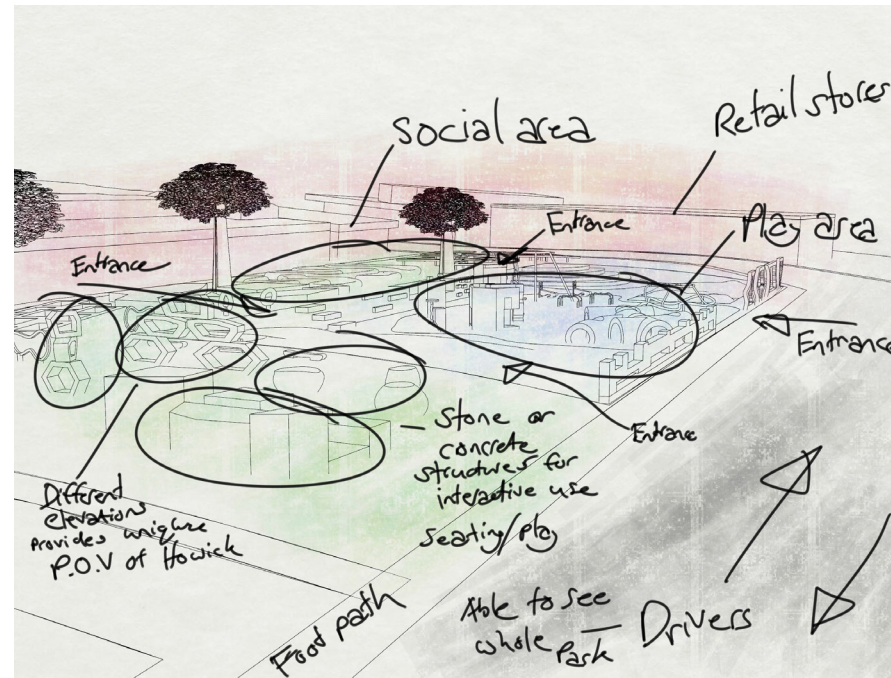


Figure 4. Dominic Tess, urban park analysis, drawing, 2025.

The aim of integrating play into an urban park is not only to bring joy and fun to the community but also to provide an opportunity for physical activity. Sports psychologist Mark Stephen Nesti agrees that “play is a serious concept in the sense that it is vital to human health and well-being, and it has the added attraction of also being highly enjoyable and fun.”¹⁰ Incorporating playful elements, such as a designated area for children (Figure 4), encourages imaginative interactions that create a joyful experience. It is equally critical to consider older individuals, as their preferences for engagement and enjoyment differ from those of younger users. The approach of my design is to create a dynamic space for meaningful participation that involves the whole community.

¹⁰ Mark Stephen Nesti, “Exercise for Health: Serious Fun for the Whole Person?” *Journal of Sport and Health Science* 5, no. 2 (2016): 138, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jshs.2016.03.003>.

Animated lines as a design tool.

My interest in animated lines stems from the characteristics of digital drawings that activate a sense of movement, creating an abstract portrayal of play. I prefer drawing digitally to analogue because of the accessibility and flexibility within the digital software. The variety of brush sets, colour palettes, and customisation features enabled me to explore conceptual visualisations for my design. Art historians Cornelia H. Butler and Catherine de Zegher characterise lines in drawings as follows:

“Broken or continuous, may comprise an extended sequence of single marks or an uninterrupted stripe. It is in the relation of one mark to another, in their shaping and shading, their tonal gradations, that a drawing acquires form, depth, volume.”¹¹

¹¹Cornelia H. Butler and M. Catherine De Zegher, *On Line: Drawing Through the Twentieth Century* (The Museum of Modern Art, 2010), 23.

The effectiveness of a drawing is not just reliant on individual marks or lines, but on how they align together to express imagination. For me, animated lines express a sense of movement and spatial occupation. I drew inspiration from manga illustrations, where visualised architectural atmospheres are composed of exaggerated and dynamic compositions. Architect Y. C. Qu states: “this novel way of visual communication of manga provides another realm for representing architectural drawings or photography, being real or virtual.”¹² Together, animated lines construct a story that illustrates spatial experiences, creative interventions and occupation. Animated lines not only guide movement but also act as both a visual and conceptual tool for my urban park design (Figure 5).

Further exploration of animated lines produced a series of mark-making and line weights that express movement and emotion. As Author Keith Micklewright notes in *Drawing: Mastering the Language of Visual Expression*, “Drawing can be better than words in communicating all kinds of information.”¹³ Through this research inquiry, I demonstrate how animated lines can effectively convey playful opportunities for physical activity. The drawings I present in Chapter 2 visually represent my interpretation of movement through play, illustrating how participants might actively engage in an urban park, fostering both social interaction and enjoyment.



Figure 5. Dominic Tess, abstract parkour illustration, drawing, 2024.

¹²Y. C. Qu, “Drawing Architecture Using Manga Techniques,” conference contribution, 2009, Open Access Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington, <https://doi.org/10.25455/wgtn.16418760.v1>.

¹³University of Wellington, <https://doi.org/10.25455/wgtn.16418760.v1>. Keith Micklewright, *Drawing: Mastering the Language of Visual Expression* (Laurence King Publishing, 2005), 8.

Chapter 2: Methods

Animated line drawings.

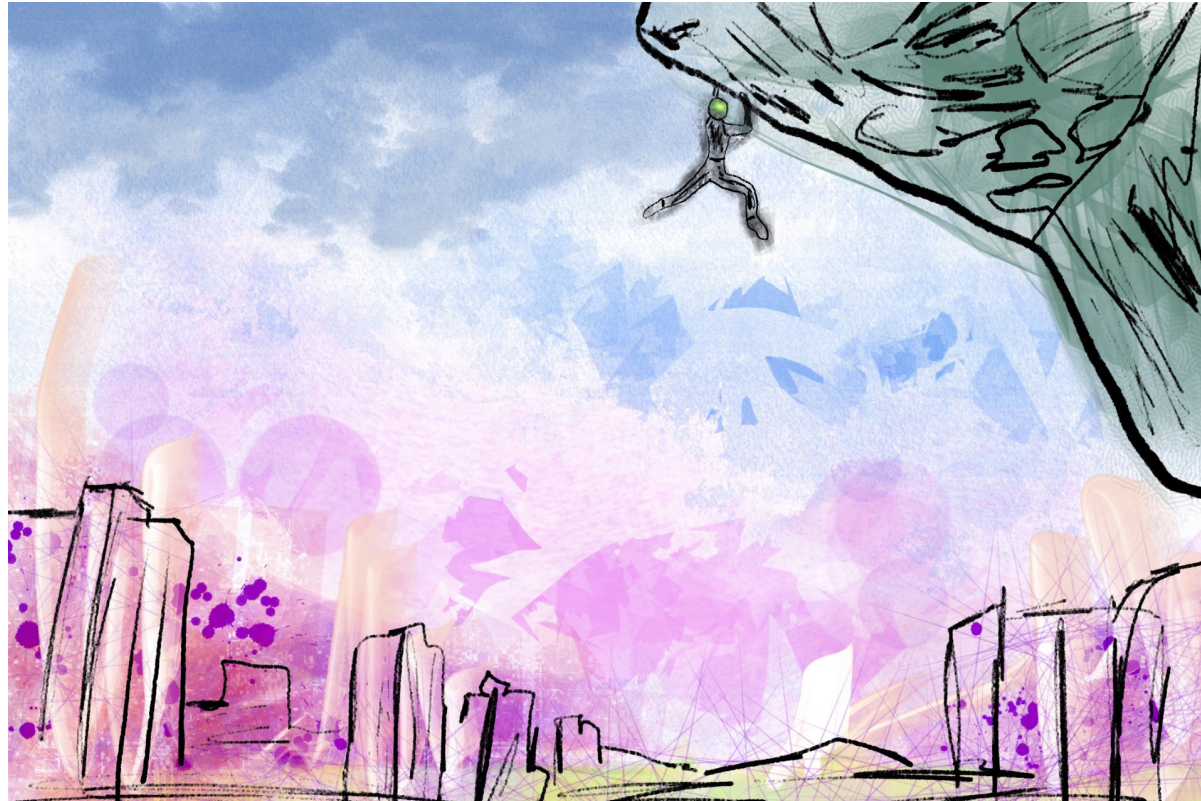


Figure 6. Dominic Tess, abstract climb illustration, drawing, 2024.

At the beginning of this research, I drew a series of animated lines to emphasise movement, pinpointing spatial arrangements associated with potential manoeuvres or exercises. Computer scientist Richard Wayne Boberg writes, “Once the general description of an idea or scene is given, one should be able to fill in missing details which are practical, and which conform to the restrictions created by the general abstract descriptions.”¹⁴ He suggests that every detail of a conceptual idea does not need to be specified, but rather acts as a guide for potential design aspects. These digital illustrations enabled me to explore animated lines in comic art style, visually offering a sense of movement. As I refine each detail of my animated line drawings, they begin to communicate a space designed for play, experimentation and movement.

The inspiration for my animated line drawings was initiated by an imaginary user immersed in a active atmosphere, making parkour movements (Figure 7). I resonate with parkour as being able to freely navigate and perform manoeuvres around a site, expressing a sense of adrenaline and excitement. The *Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries* defines parkour as “the sport of moving through a city by running, jumping and climbing under, around and through things.”¹⁵ Each of my drawings suggests a playful experience that emphasises a particular movement.

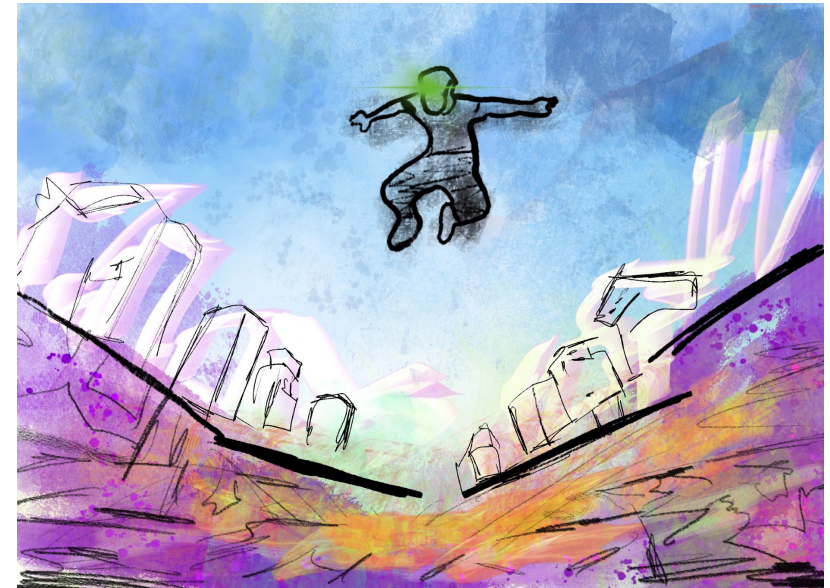


Figure 7. Dominic Tess, abstract jump illustration, drawing, 2024.

¹⁴Richard Wayne Boberg, “Generating Line Drawings from Abstract Scene Descriptions” (PhD diss., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1973), 6.

¹⁵“Parkour,” *Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries*, accessed 23 April 2025, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/parkour>.

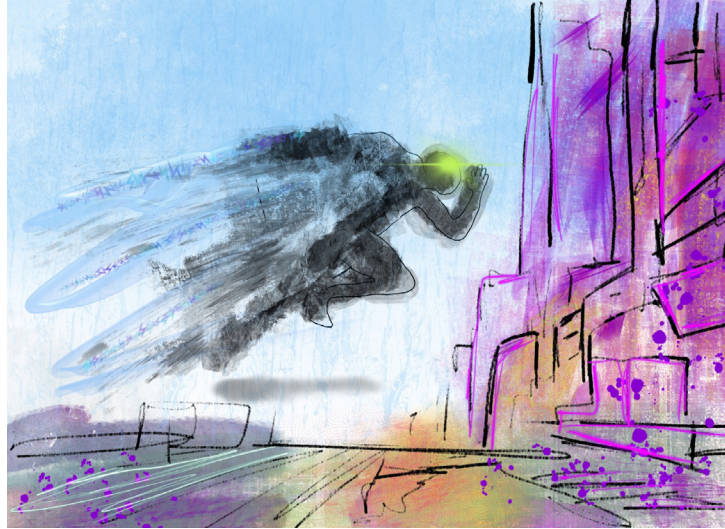


Figure 8. Dominic Tess, abstract run illustration, drawing, 2024

The palette of bold, vibrant colours further supports my playful approach toward design. What I envision as playful is illustrated as an atmospheric scenario where each colour resembles a different material quality (Figure 8). Specifically, purple and pink are used to illustrate environmental elements, emphasising tactile surfaces that invite interaction. The integration of orange and green adds an energetic aspect that highlights movement within the space. Variations of blue introduce a sense of openness and flow, associated with the atmosphere of an urban park.¹⁶

While these vibrant colours indicate a playful tone, they are carefully chosen to portray the user's interaction and movement, which are represented by a mysterious figure. Animated lines outline and communicate key spatial qualities that support wayfinding, enhancing the aesthetic and functional experience of the design. The outcome is an abstract environment that encourages interaction, creativity, and physical engagement through play.

¹⁶John Gage and Kelly Grovier, *Colour in Art* (Thames & Hudson, 2023).



Figure 9. Dominic Tess, physical activity conventions, drawing, 2024.

Initially, I thought beyond site or physical restrictions and illustrated abstract environments for play and activity. The central idea of illustrating animated lines was to explore conceptual ideas. In Figure 9, I started exploring types of physical activity by drawing ideas relating to children's play, competitive sports, and lifestyle hobbies. The purpose of iterative drawing is to generate multiple concepts that visualise the direction of my urban park and what it is intended for. By finding similarities between each drawing, I could test ideas that demonstrate movement and play, refining any constraints or implications regarding the design. Architect Francis D.K. Ching notes, "Whatever form a drawing takes, it is the principal means by which we organise and express our visual thoughts and perceptions."¹⁷

¹⁷Francis D. K. Ching, *Design Drawing* (John Wiley & Sons, 2019), 1.



Figure 10. Dominic Tess, athletic conventions, drawing, 2024.

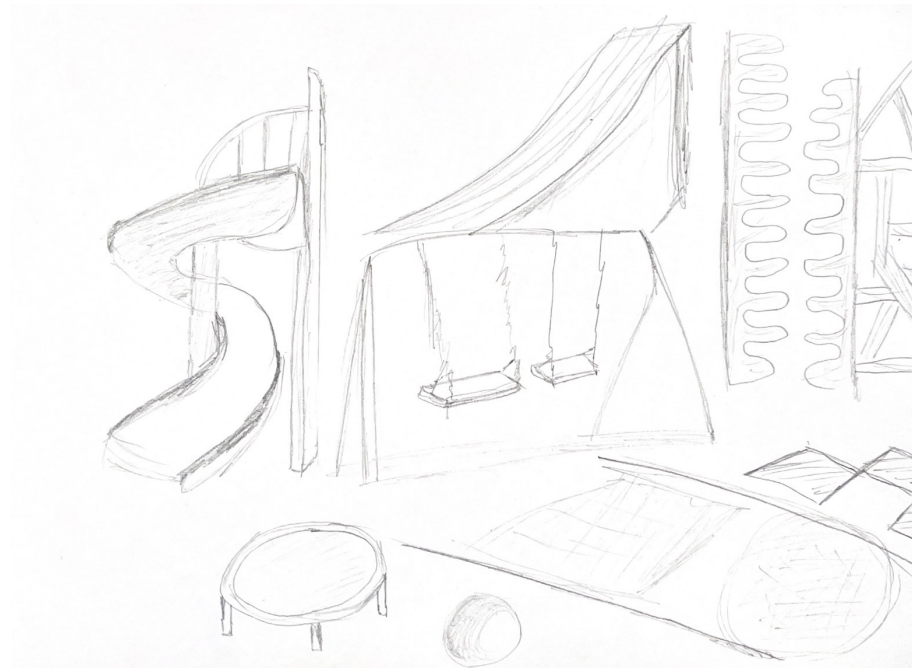


Figure 11. Dominic Tess, playground conventions, drawing, 2024.



Figure 12. Dominic Tess, imaginative terrain, drawing, 2024.

As I continued developing my conceptual idea of physical activity through play in an urban park context, I experimented with analogue and digital media to test different approaches to animated lines.¹⁸ The purpose of experimenting with different tools was to explore a potential art style that could best represent my concept of physical activity through play (Figure 12). By illustrating terrain and spatial features, I captured an abstract visualisation of an urban park designed to challenge participants to interact physically with their surroundings. Through exploring this imaginative environment, I discovered that some aspects of the user engagement were impractical when integrating into an actual urban park. However, the drawing revealed the potential of creative imagination as a tool for encouraging user interaction and promoting a playful experience.

¹⁸Brian Edwards, *Understanding Architecture Through Drawing* (Taylor & Francis, 2008).

Professor Mads Nygaard Folkman writes: “Imagination is a capacity that is always present, an integral part of consciousness that nobody can do without.”¹⁹ My use of coloured markers was effective when establishing the textured details of terrain surfaces. Each line stroke represented a different layer, bringing attention to environmental aspects that conveyed a sense of movement. My imagination pictured possibilities for various physical movements, interpreting situations where the user’s interaction informs a sense of play. The significance of animated lines inspired the layout format for my urban park, emphasising the user’s journey in the space. There is a similarity between animated lines and physical activity, where play is the central idea influencing my thinking and how I interpret my drawings. While I understand the drawing in Figure 13 illustrates an environment with no site context, the idea of imagination is fundamental to my perception of play, offering iterative movement concepts for my urban park design.



Figure 13. Dominic Tess, coloured mark-making, drawing, 2024.

¹⁹Mads Nygaard Folkmann, “Enabling Creativity: Imagination in Design Processes,” in *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Design Creativity*, ed. T. Taura and Y. Nagai (The Design Society, 2010), 1.

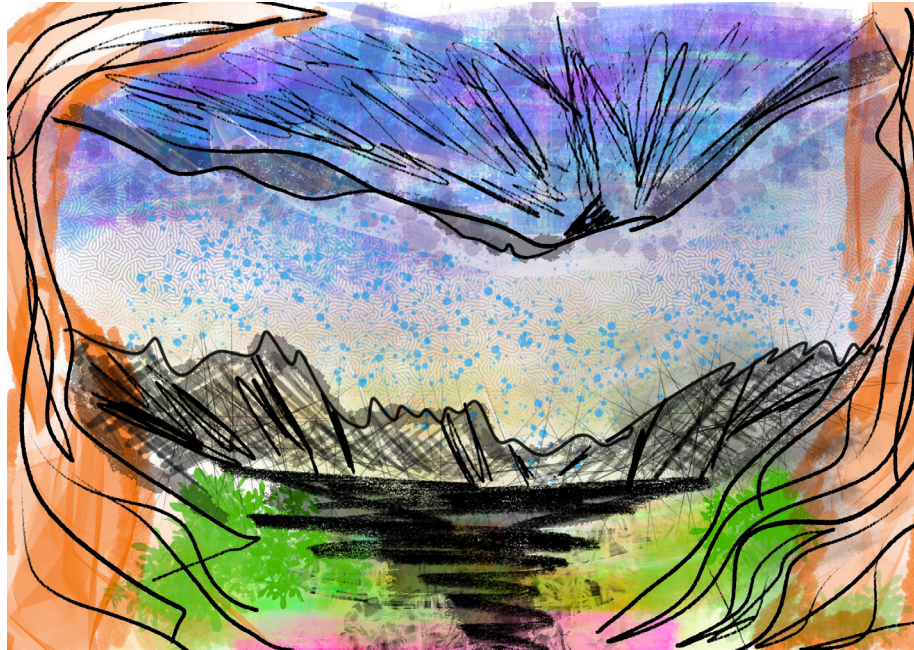


Figure 14. Dominic Tess, abstract cave, drawing, 2024.

The use of unique line strokes with different brushes and various drawing techniques helped express my idea for an atmospheric space, designed for physical activity purposes. By experimenting with a new set of mediums and colours, I was able to explore abstract concepts that reflected my playful design style. I have always been drawn to animated lines because of their sense of motion and expressive quality, as they allow me to interpret ideas based on movement and interaction visually. The techniques of doodling and sketching are methods I naturally lean towards during the design process because I can generate ideas quickly.

To better understand the impact of each animated line, Figure 15 showcases more terrain-focused sketches used to analyse certain aspects that could be translated into my urban park design. The colour palette consists of blue and purple, representing the openness of the space, while the use of green, orange and pink suggests environmental elements such as grassy areas or a rocky terrain. The combination of vibrant colours creates a playful response to a physical activity space, raising questions about movement and how users would navigate through their surroundings. The use of line thickness highlights material textures and the tactile feeling when interacting with them. As play is my central concept, I wanted to incorporate conventions that enable creative and amusing engagements. I began to experiment with different elevations and created pathways that emphasise energetic movements. The animated line plays a role in scoping out the user's journey, inspiring the playful interaction.

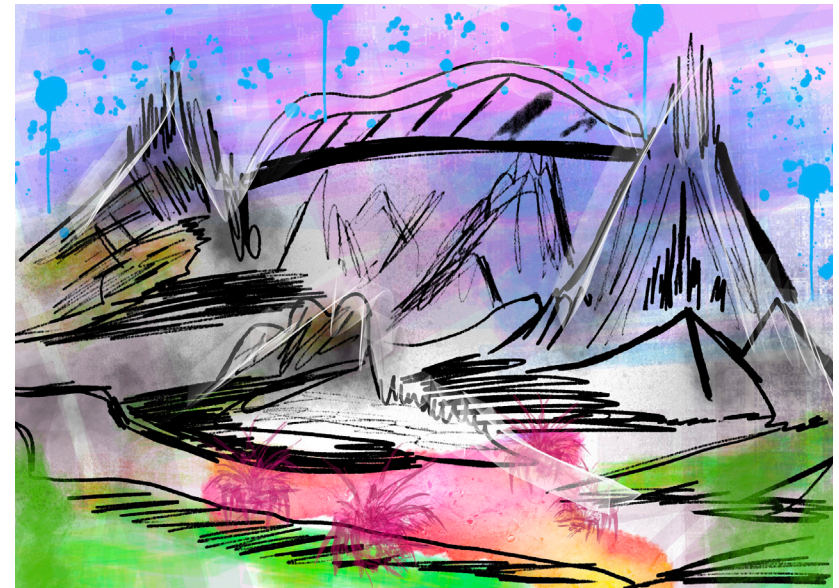


Figure 15. Dominic Tess, fantasy atmosphere, drawing, 2024.

Visiting parks across Tāmaki Makaurau.

Engaging with existing public spaces was an integral part of site analysis to understand the site's layout and spatial arrangements, contributing to the thinking of my own urban park. While photographs provide a visual snapshot of a perspective, they don't share enough context regarding where each urban park is situated and the purpose for which it was designed in this particular way. Physically understanding the site's characteristics by immersing myself in the space aided my understanding of the spatial narrative in play and inspired design opportunities for the Howick site. My focus when conducting these site analyses was to identify constraints regarding neighbouring buildings and environmental features that might impact the layout; it is ideal to note these aspects in order to resolve design boundaries and concerns. Among the methods of immersing in a public space, I also considered the user's sight line by viewing each park from a different perspective, ensuring I observed what I could see from afar, along with what persuaded me to explore that space. The user's point of view affects their curiosity, encouraging them to explore and distinguish the programme, which led me to consider the visual appearance of my design to attract nearby pedestrians.

I was interested in the Mission Bay Calisthenics Park, Farm Cove Reserve and Logan Carr Reserve,²⁰ because each location demonstrates a unique approach to exercise in an urban park. To begin my investigation, I took note of the layout and spatial relationship of each site, followed by a series of photographs that captured key focal points and any distinctive features. Through this process, I hoped to understand the visual narrative for each park by observing the entrances, interactive conventions, spatial orientation and materiality, as well as any queries regarding their design intentions.

²⁰“Find a Park or Beach,” Auckland Council, accessed 24 April 2025, <http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/parks-recreation/Pages/find-park-beach.aspx>.

Located in Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland, the Mission Bay Calisthenic Park is an outdoor fitness area designed to promote physical activity. The park features various exercise equipment intended for calisthenic training, such as pull-up bars, a parallel bar, monkey bars, wall bars and ab crunch benches.²² All of the equipment listed focuses on bodyweight strength training that involves physical movements. The park is suitable for all ages and fitness levels. Furthermore, it is open and freely accessible, encouraging both individual workouts and social interactions, making it a convenient destination for active users.

During a morning site visit, the park was quiet, with the sun just rising. Situated along the waterfront at Mission Bay, the park offers scenic beach views that can be enjoyed by pedestrians and park users. As I explored the space, I thought it would be ideal to interact with the equipment while enjoying the fresh outdoor breeze. The fitness structures are constructed using a combination of wooden pillars and metal bars, designed for various strength-based exercises (Figure 16). Upon further analysis, I found that I had questions about the layout of the space and how it conveyed movement when navigating the space. The park was clustered, with each exercise convention being connected to the other; the key interaction was moving around the space through manoeuvres rather than walking. While the park was small, there was an adjoining open green field for recreational activities and a social space.



Figure 16. Dominic Tess, Mission Bay Park, photograph, 2024.

²²“Auckland – Calisthenics Park – Mission Bay Beach,” Calisthenics-Parks, accessed 18 April 2025, <https://calisthenics-parks.com/spots/3417-en-auckland-calisthenics-park-mission-bay-beach>.



Figure 17. Dominic Tess, scenic view, photograph, 2024.



Figure 18. Dominic Tess, wall bar, photograph, 2024.



Figure 19. Dominic Tess, monkey bars, photograph, 2024.



Figure 20. Dominic Tess, ab crunch bench, photograph, 2024.



Figure 21. Dominic Tess, seating, photograph, 2024.

Farm Cove Park is a family-oriented park that supports recreational and outdoor activities. One of its most distinctive features is the life-sized Snakes and Ladders board, which is integrated into the natural terrain through the use of staircases and slides. The connection of the park's layout invites both locals and visitors to engage in playful experiences, whether by following the traditional rules of the game or using the space for imaginary play. Designed primarily for children's play, the park's features encourage families to spend time together. There are many opportunities for children to play and explore while adults can relax on nearby benches or stroll along the waterfront (Figure 22).



Figure 22. Dominic Tess, Farm Cove Park, photograph, 2024.

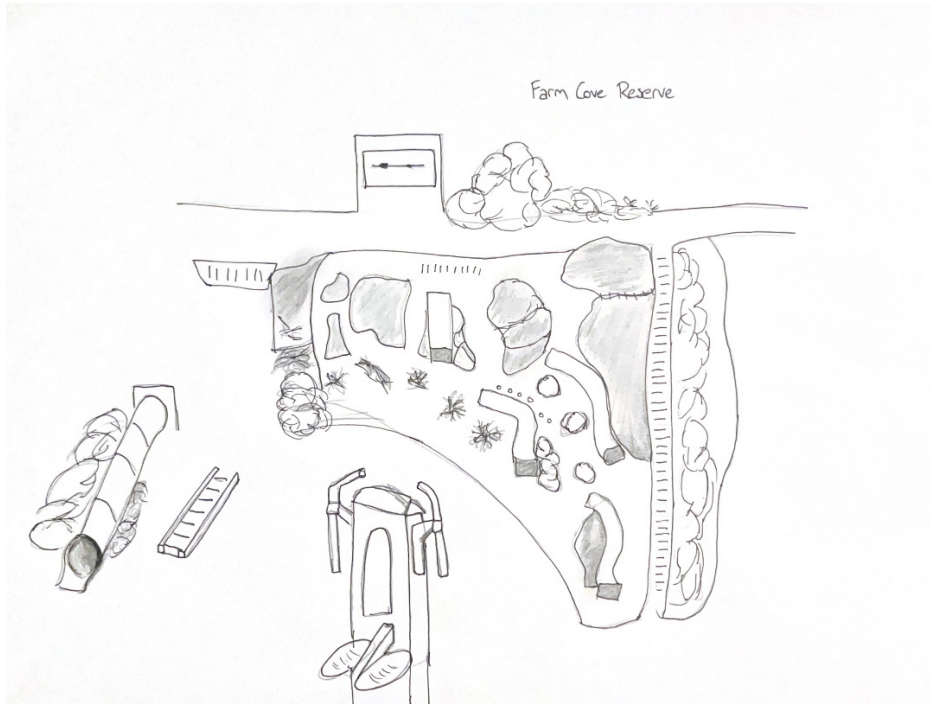


Figure 23. Dominic Tess, Farm Cove observations, drawing, 2024.



Figure 24. Dominic Tess, bench and swing, photograph, 2024.

Upon closer observation, I noticed that the park's layout appears to respond thoughtfully to the flow of pedestrian traffic from the surrounding residential area, offering plenty of space for recreational games, sporting events or socialising (Figure 25). Near the car park is a set of four exercise machines promoting outdoor fitness and the park's engagement. The orientation of public seating toward the waterfront provides scenic views and a sense of openness. Though the park currently offers only two main interactive zones, the surrounding open space holds potential for future projects that could encourage more families and friends to visit the park.²²



Figure 25. Dominic Tess, Farm Cove Reserve, photograph, 2025.

²²“Farm Cove Park,” Auckland Council, accessed 24 April 2025, <http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/parks-recreation/Pages/park-details.aspx?Location=720>.

The Logan Carr Reserve is a public neighbourhood park that is designed to support a wide range of recreational and physical activities. It features a large open field, a range of outdoor exercise machines, and a well-maintained playground located on the opposite side of the park. Surrounded by residential housing, the park remains accessible to pedestrians who are walking along the street or through the park, making it a local hub for families and individuals in the community. The park's layout naturally encourages movement and exploration, as there is a paved footpath that leads to a trail, ideal for walking or jogging. The exercise machines are spaced along the Kilkenny pathway, supporting a different range of physical activity movements (Figure 26).

Throughout my site analysis, I was interested in the behavioural decisions that influenced me to interact with each park. Norwegian Ecologist Rolf A. Ims states, “A movement pattern of an individual that emerges as the sum of movement events (often termed ‘steps’) over some time period may thus result from a series of both behavioural decisions and passive displacements.”²³ He suggests that movement is complex, but it is influenced by external factors and the user's motives. In an urban park context, playful conventions and pathways accommodate the user's movement, allowing them to explore or wander around the space. This idea has inspired the layout for my urban park, where I need to prioritise playful elements for engagement.



Figure 26. Dominic Tess, Logan Carr Reserve, photograph, 2024.

²³Rolf A. Ims, “Movement Patterns Related to Spatial Structures,” in *Mosaic Landscapes and Ecological Processes*, ed. Lennart Hansson, Lenore Fahrig, and Gray Merriam (Springer Netherlands, 1995), 86.



Figure 27. Dominic Tess, array of machines, photograph, 2024.

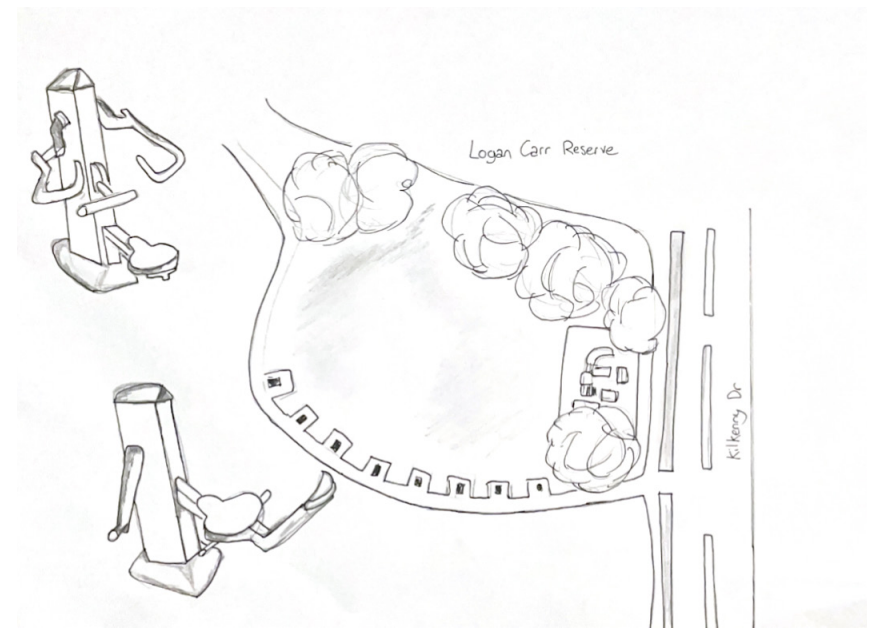


Figure 28. Dominic Tess, Logan Carr observations, drawing, 2024.



Figure 29. Dominic Tess, exercise machine, photograph, 2024.



Figure 30. Dominic Tess, exercise bike, photograph, 2024.



Figure 31. Dominic Tess, ab crunch machine, photograph, 2024.

Illustrating through three-dimensional modelling.

Three-dimensional modelling helped translate my conceptual drawings into three-dimensional forms, offering scaled perspectives and multiple viewpoints. Additionally, the modelling process allowed me to experiment with different lighting conditions and materials, providing insight into how they would respond in a three-dimensional environment. I explored how animated lines could be illustrated in a spatial or structural context through three-dimensional modelling, reinforcing a sense of movement throughout the design.

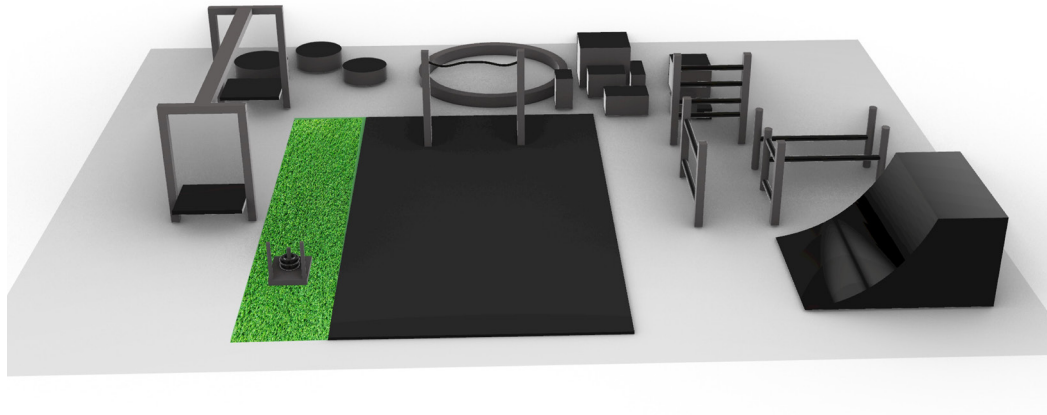


Figure 32. Dominic Tess, parkour course, digital model, 2024.



Figure 33. Dominic Tess, parkour concept, digital model, 2024.

In Figure 33, I portray a series of parkour movements by creating design conventions that enabled the user to jump, climb and swing as if they were on an obstacle course. This initial idea was how I imagined a playful, active space would look, where there is a programme that guides the user through the course. The making process consisted of extruding connected lines to form different geometric shapes that resembled playful conventions. As I began developing my concept, I considered the type of forms and conventions that would be appropriate in an urban park, responding to the constraints of the site.

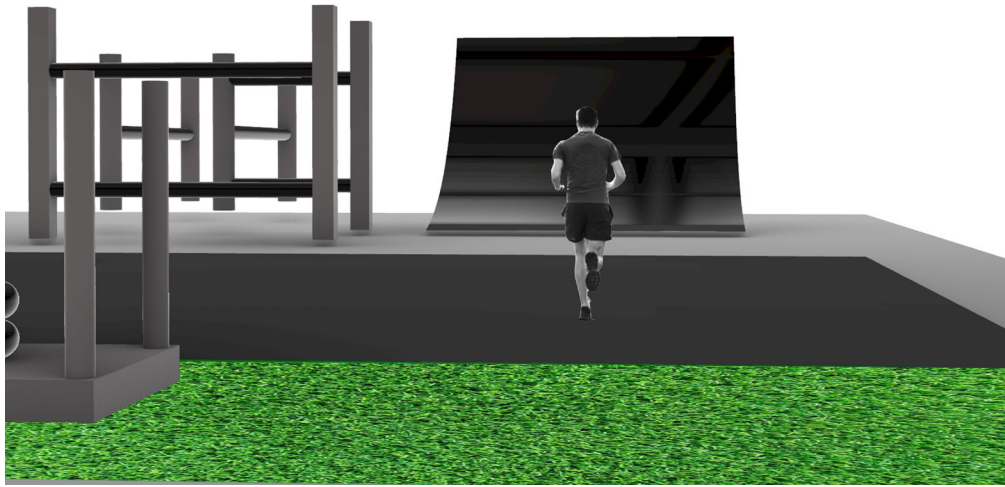


Figure 34. Dominic Tess, hill run, digital model, 2024.

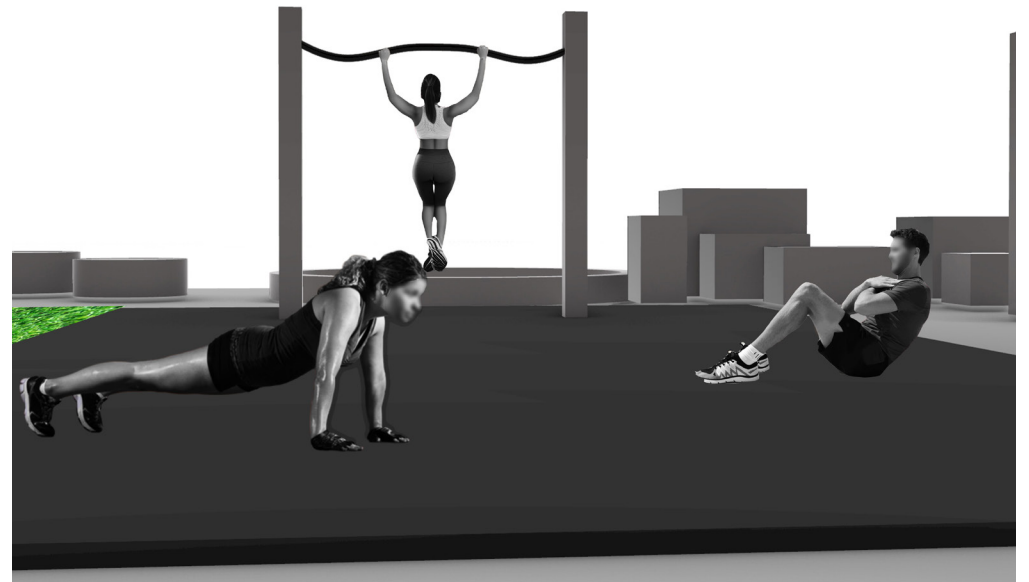


Figure 35. Dominic Tess, calisthenic area, digital model, 2024.

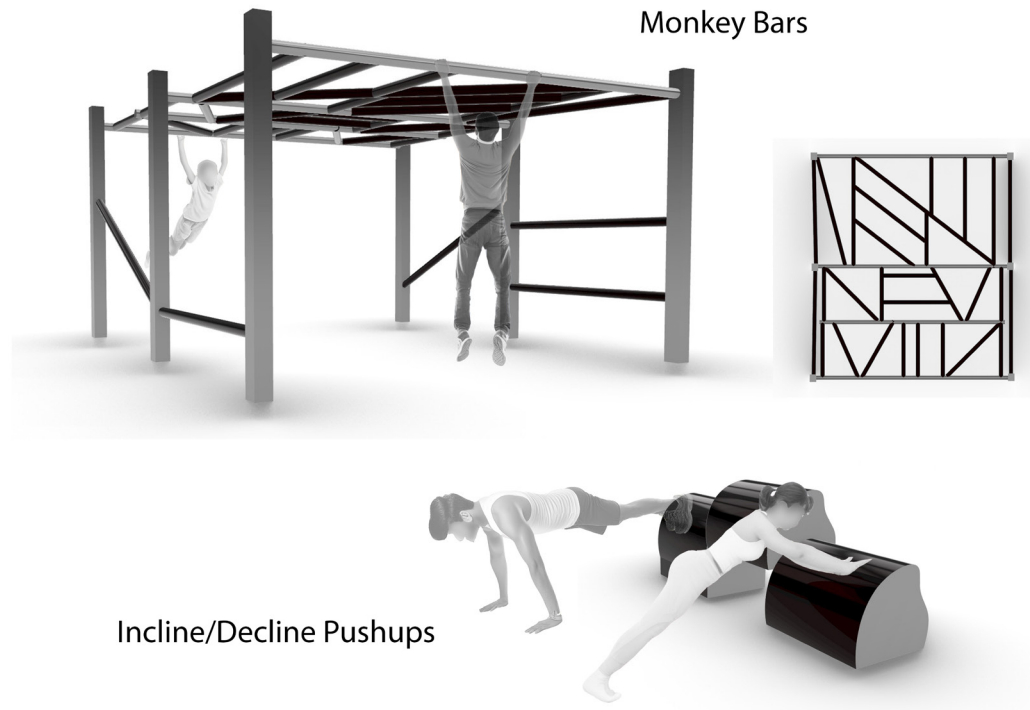


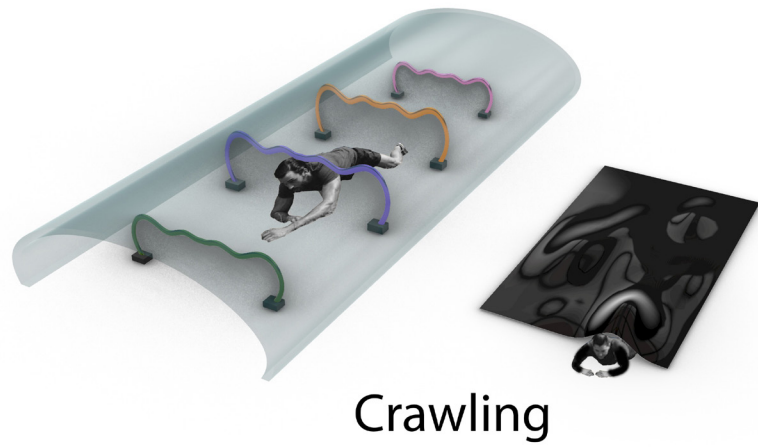
Figure 36. Dominic Tess, calisthenic movements, digital model, 2024.

Calisthenic movements were another interest in mind, where the physical activity is reliant on the user's body weight (Figure 36). This design was inspired by my observations of calisthenic gymnasiums, where there is a central fitness structure that is intended for pull-ups or swinging across to the other side. I attempted to use animated lines to create sculptural bars that users can grip onto; however, they did not correlate with my concept of play and were represented as traditional conventions. Since then, I continued exploring physical activity conventions that use animated lines as the focal concept.



Figure 37. Dominic Tess, climbing movements, digital model, 2024.

This design approach involves more physical movements, such as free-form climbing, balancing and swinging. These playful conventions are memories of my childhood, going to physical activity spaces that offered playful experiences. These shapes and forms are inspired by existing applications I've experienced before. However, my iteration portrays a simple geometric shape that emphasises a sense of randomness. The idea was to articulate multiple iterations of physical activity movements that enabled a sense of play. Once I had chosen a site for my urban park, I began designing conventions for users to engage with, that responded to the environment and the natural terrain.



Crawling



Rope swing

Balancing beam

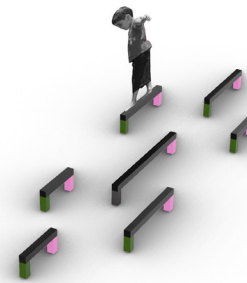


Figure 38. Dominic Tess, physical movements, digital model, 2024.

Chapter 3: The Howick Village Centre

Howick Village.

Howick was established in 1847 and is a part of the Fencible Settlement. Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki were the original iwi of this area before it served as accommodation for British soldiers who defended Auckland. By 1848 Howick had become the largest Fencible settlement, with 804 people.²⁴ Today, the Howick Historical Village Museum commemorates the area's history, including old buildings from the 1840s. Over the years, Howick has transformed from an agricultural settlement into a diverse suburb; in 1952, it was declared a borough and began its suburban growth.²⁵

²⁴“East Auckland,” New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage Te Manatu Taonga, accessed 25 April 2025, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/auckland-places/page-15>.

²⁵“Howick,” New Zealand History, accessed 31 July 2024, <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/keyword/howick>.

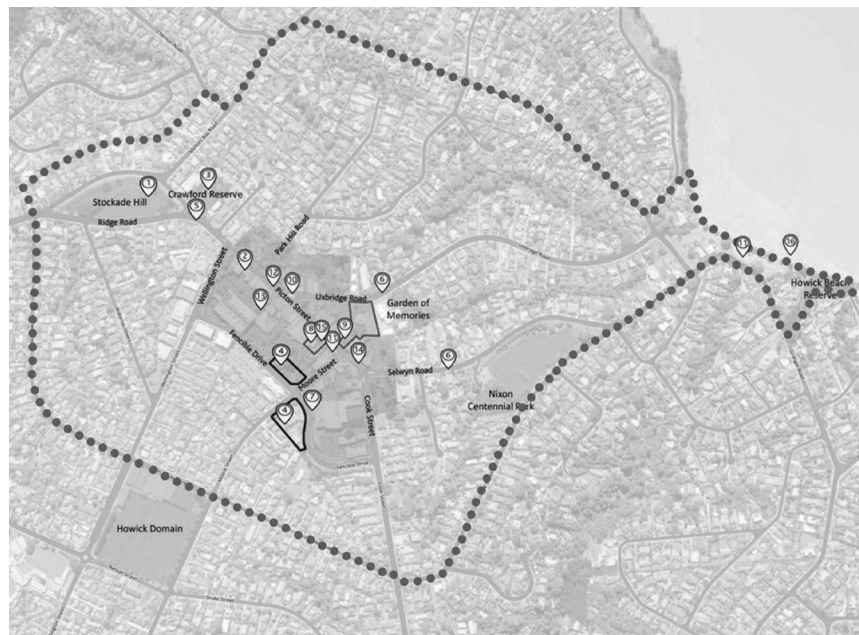


Figure 39. Site map of Howick, Howick Village Centre Plan, Auckland Council, 2017.

Currently, Howick has a village centre with a variety of local businesses for social gatherings and public engagement, serving as a community hub for locals and visitors.²⁶ Auckland Council has envisioned its future by proposing a Howick Village Centre Plan that strives to create an active, multi-use space that acknowledges the history of Howick (Figure 39). Part of this proposal is to develop the council-owned sites at 16 Fencible Drive and 34 Moore Street.²⁷ I saw the opportunity to design an urban park for 16 Fencible Drive, creating a playful space that engages with physical activity, enhancing Howick’s vision of becoming an accessible social environment for visitors and locals. I chose Howick as the location for this research inquiry because it is my local area. I travel to this location for work and often engage with the Howick community. The friendly community reminds me of the enjoyment I had hanging out with my friends in my childhood.

²⁶“Howick Village Business Directory,” Howick Village Association, accessed 14 June 2023, <https://howickvillage.co.nz/howick-village-business-directory/>.

²⁷ Auckland Council, *Howick Village Centre Plan*, 33.

In 2018, Howick Central²⁸ had a population of 3,405, with a nearly even gender split and an average age of 38.2 years. The largest age group was 30–64-year-olds, followed by children under 15, young adults aged 15–29, and seniors over 65. Since then, the population has tripled, mainly due to residential migration.²⁹ By 2023, the population had increased significantly, to 11,523, with a slightly higher median age of 38.4 years. The 30–64 age group remained the largest, making up 47.9 percent of the population. Asian residents now form the majority ethnic group at 52.5 percent, followed by Europeans (38.1 percent) and Māori and Pacific peoples (14.3 percent). The gender distribution in 2023 was 50.3 percent female, 49.5 percent male, and 0.2 percent identifying as another gender.³⁰



Figure 40. Dominic Tess, Picton Street, Howick, photograph, 2025.

²⁸“Place Summaries | Howick Central,” Stats NZ Tatauranga Aotearoa, accessed 22 October 2024, <https://www.stats.govt.nz/tools/2018-census-place-summaries/howick-central>.

²⁹“Regional Economic Profile | Howick Local Board | Population Growth,” Infometrics, accessed 28 October 2024, <https://rep.infometrics.co.nz/howick-local-board/population/growth>.

³⁰Auckland Council, *2023 Census Results. Howick Local Board* (Auckland Council, n.d.), <https://knowledgeauckland.org.nz/media/gzongivq/howick-2023-census-summary.pdf>.

When designing my urban park, it was vital to consider the Howick census data and the community profile. Howick's population is primarily made up of middle-aged adults, so creating a space solely for children would not be ideal. Instead, encouraging community participation relied on foot traffic and the site's visibility. From working a job in Howick, I noticed that Howick Village Centre regularly hosts community events, such as the Christmas and Anzac Day parades, a hot rod convention, and a cultural night. My proposed addition of an urban park would create a convenient gathering area for social activities. Through site analysis of the Howick Village Centre, I observed how nearby buildings influence pedestrian movement between Fencible Drive and Moore Street. Considering these surroundings in my design would shape the physical activity programme, suggesting how and where people could enter the space.³¹ The entrance to the site would play a key role in attracting people during the day. The reason I chose 16 Fencible Drive as the location for the design was that it is both accessible and convenient for an urban park that supports physical activity. The site responds to nearby shopping outlets and cafés, allowing visitors to head to them after interacting with the space. Since my design encourages social interactions, a seating area will further increase its use, especially if people want to sit down after buying food in the Howick Village Centre.



Figure 41. Dominic Tess, 16 Fencible Drive, photograph, 2024.

³¹ Marion Cutting, "The Use of Spatial Analysis to Study Prehistoric Settlement Architecture," *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 22, no. 1 (2003): 1–21, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0092.00001>.



Figure 42. Dominic Tess, view from car park, photograph, 2024.

In 2002, the building at 16 Fencible Drive was originally a Howick Public Library, serving as a public space and community hub before it was sold by the local council in 2008 under a mortgage sale. Throughout the 2000s, the site remained unsafe due to issues such as asbestos contamination, and despite multiple proposals from private developers, plans for the site have been rejected, leaving the space unused for years. Since then, there have been no plans for construction, leaving it fenced off (Figure 42).³² Due to the vacant nature of the site, coupled with its position in the central area of the village, I saw the opportunity to propose a space that brings the value of playful physical activity, encouraging community engagement among Howick residents. The design responds to the site's environment by considering access to nearby cafés and shopping outlets, making it a practical and appealing space for visitors and locals when they visit the Howick Village Centre.

³²“Howick: 16 Fencible Drive,” Bayleys, accessed 18 October 2024, <http://www.bayleys.co.nz/listings/commercial/auckland/manukau/16-fencible-drive-howick-1693132>.



Figure 43. Dominic Tess, Central Terrace view, photograph, 2024.



Figure 44. Dominic Tess, stairs' view, photograph, 2024.



Figure 45. Dominic Tess, Howick site map, model, 2024.

Mapping out the Howick Village Centre by outlining buildings and environmental elements assisted with my decision making around sight lines and design aspects that respond to the surroundings. As architect Corneel Cannaeerts explains, “A model – in the largest sense – makes complex realities comprehensible, operational and workable.” This design process enabled me to visualise my design through a physical format that supported my model-making further in my proposal, ensuring the conventions I created were scaled compared to the site.³³

³³Corneel Cannaeerts, “Models of/Models for Architecture,” *eCAADe* 27 (2009): 781.

Site drawings.

My exploration of animated lines further inspired my analysis of the Howick Centre, where I considered areas of potential movement relating to physical activity. Bringing animated line techniques, colour palette and visual qualities from my digital drawings into the site helped develop the playful element of my urban park, the elevation of each building, and the visibility of the site when seen from afar (Figure 46). I captured different viewpoints of the site to analyse its visibility from a pedestrian's point of view. This is important for the site's attractiveness, which creates curiosity for nearby pedestrians and locals wandering around Howick. In this case, the role of my animated line is to scope out a layout that minimises any concerns with the user experience by responding to the roads and nearby structures.³⁴ Parents and caregivers should be able to supervise their children from a distance and won't need to worry about them running away.

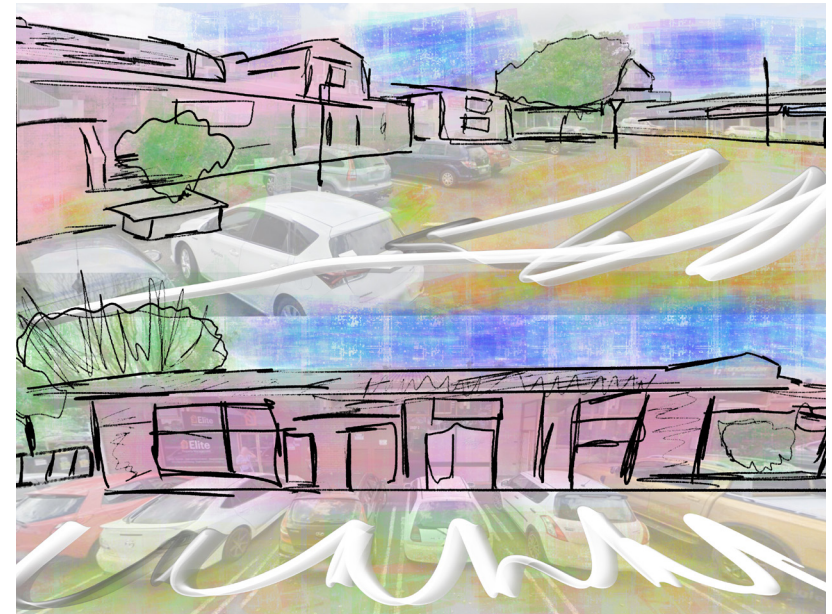


Figure 46. Dominic Tess, overlaying animated lines, drawing, 2024.

³⁴ Anthony Sully, *Interior Design: Conceptual Basis* (Springer International Publishing, 2015).

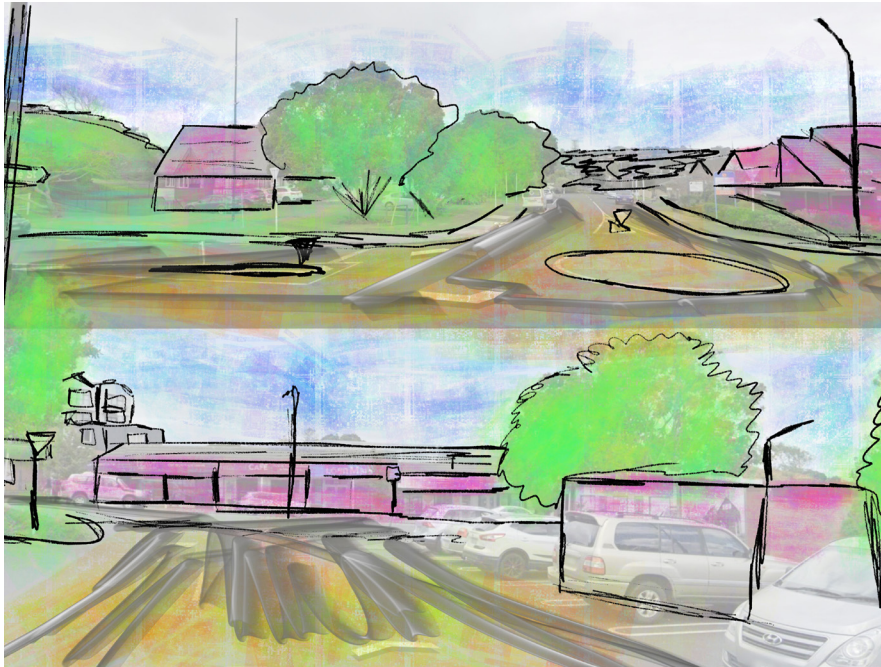


Figure 47. Dominic Tess, Central Terrace and roundabout, drawing, 2024.

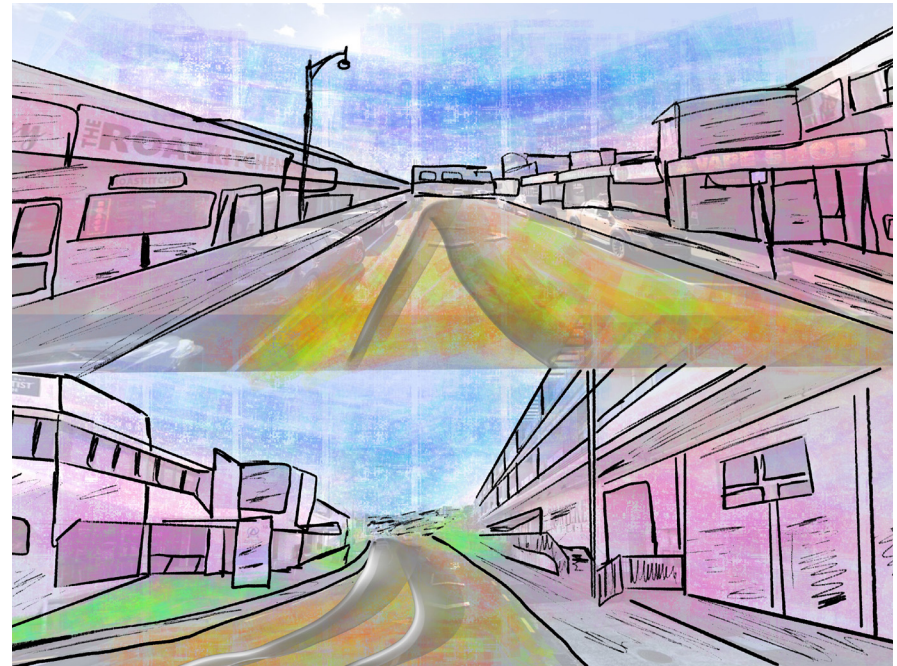


Figure 48. Dominic Tess, Moore Street and Fencible Drive, drawing, 2024.

With a sense of how I approached the site – using animated lines – I could begin producing iterative designs that supported physical activity through play as a central concept. My aim with the first iteration of my drawings was to create physical activity conventions that correspond to the site's terrain. I wanted to articulate different manoeuvres and playful elements, inspired by parkour and apply a sense of logic that suggests movement in the space. My drawing in Figure 49 attempts to illustrate an environment where design interventions enable the participant to perform parkour movements. I have replaced the stairs with a slide and added parkour amenities for playful interaction. While my concept was still developing, the direction for my urban park was to include physical activity elements and a social area for seating.



Figure 49. Dominic Tess, first conceptual idea, drawing, 2024.



Figure 50. Dominic Tess, second conceptual idea, drawing, 2024.



Figure 51. Dominic Tess, playground concept, drawing, 2024.

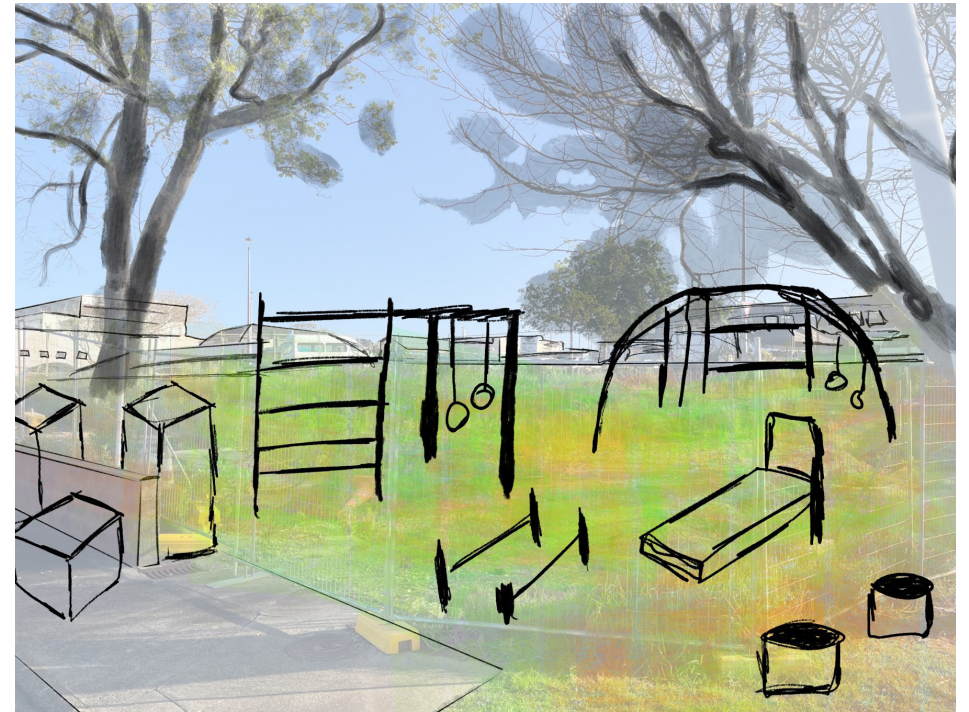


Figure 52. Dominic Tess, calisthenic concept, drawing, 2024.

After capturing different viewpoints of my site, I illustrated a combination of applications that portray a sense of movement and play. My concern with the direction of my exploration was establishing my central concept and what type of space I was designing. There have been multiple occasions where there have been inconsistencies with my design proposition, gathering multiple aspects from existing spaces and applying them together. While there are some resemblances to animated lines in Figure 53, they are not represented as the central concept of conveying physical activity but rather as a design tool to trace existing conventions that I explored. Once I resolved this confusion, my focus was straightforward - to incorporate animation lines as a way to illustrate movement on the site.

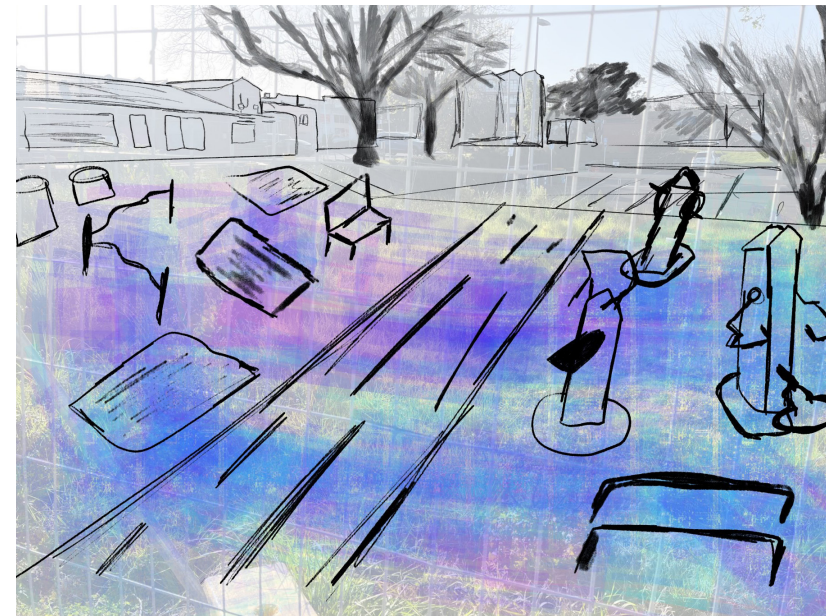


Figure 53. Dominic Tess, applications on site, drawing, 2024.

To further investigate the context of the Howick Centre site, I highlighted movement patterns and foot traffic (Figure 54). This gives the context of how people might enter the site and what they will see upon arriving at my urban park. Different colours are used to differentiate residential buildings and local businesses. The way we navigate through the Howick Centre depends on our destination. I used animated lines to portray an example of a person's movement in response to the surrounding buildings and pathways, which are highlighted in various colours. This analysis inspired my design thinking regarding the users' perceptions and how I could design according to the movement patterns on the site. This led to experimenting with different elevations and obstacles that disrupt the user's pathway, enabling them to manoeuvre across to get to their destination, fulfilling my playful concept.

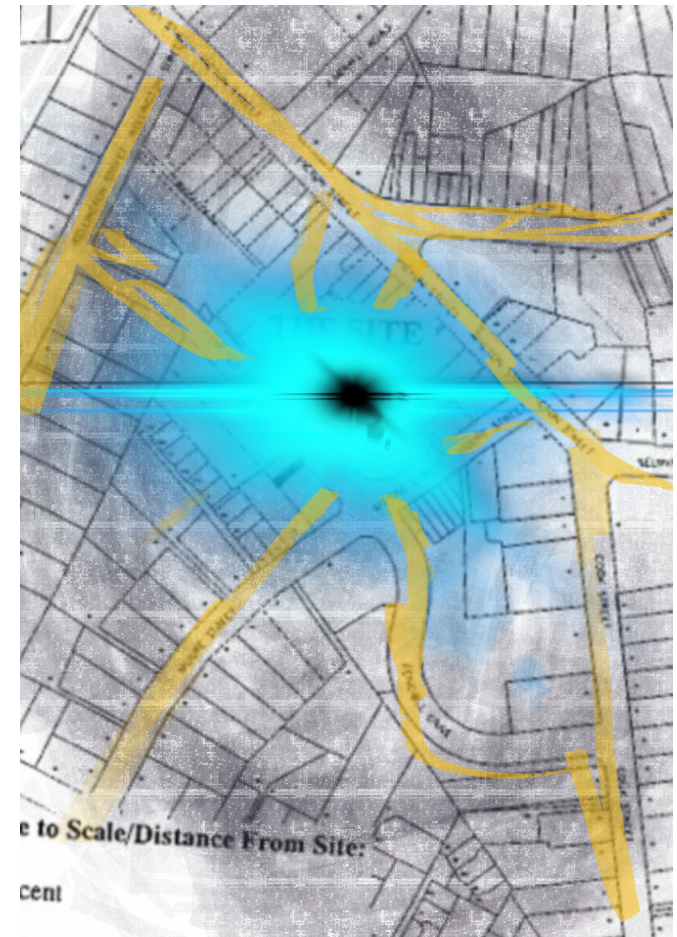


Figure 54. Dominic Tess, movement in site, drawing, 2024.



Figure 55. Dominic Tess, first conceptual idea of movement, drawing, 2024.



Figure 56. Dominic Tess, second conceptual idea of movement, drawing, 2024.

After creating different iterations of my urban park, it was necessary to highlight how animated lines shaped and influenced the design's layout. These lines responded to the site's contours, inspiring the arrangement of conventions and pathways of the park. By incorporating seating areas, playful structures and exercise conventions, there is a sense of adventure that directs the user around the space. Figure 57 showcases my layout in response to the Howick site. As there are nearby shopping outlets, restaurants, and cafés, I considered that they are visible, and people could navigate through the park to reach their destination. Knowing what buildings and roads are nearby determines the placement for physical activity and social areas, ensuring a convenient and safe experience.

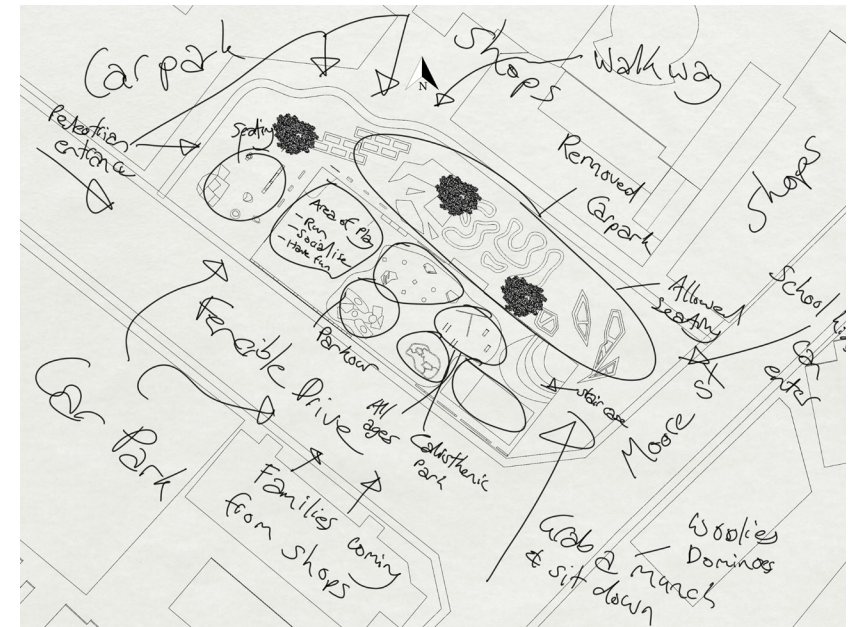


Figure 57. Dominic Tess, site annotations, drawing, 2025.

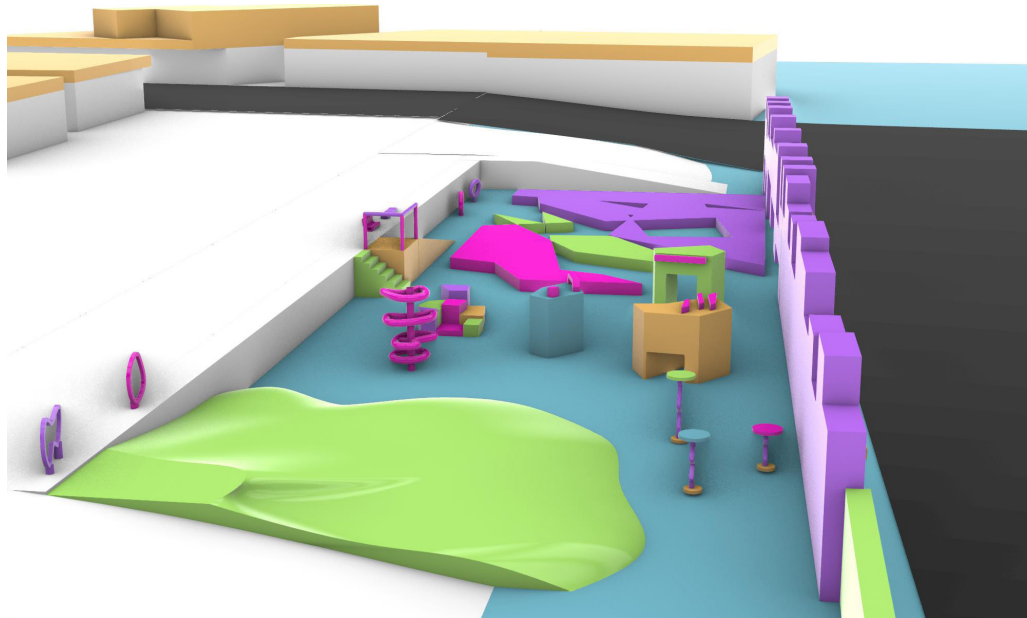


Figure 58. Dominic Tess, first iteration of park, digital model, 2025.

Design proposal.

My three-dimensional models began to conceptualise the playfulness of physical activity using sculptural forms inspired by animated lines. These shapes and forms act as playful conventions for parkour activities, calisthenic movements, and seating areas. The colour palette consists of four colours that were selected from my drawings to emphasise the realm of play. While the bold colours don't contextualise the material of the conventions, they evoke a whimsical approach that correlates with my imagination of a playful atmosphere, which will later be refined.

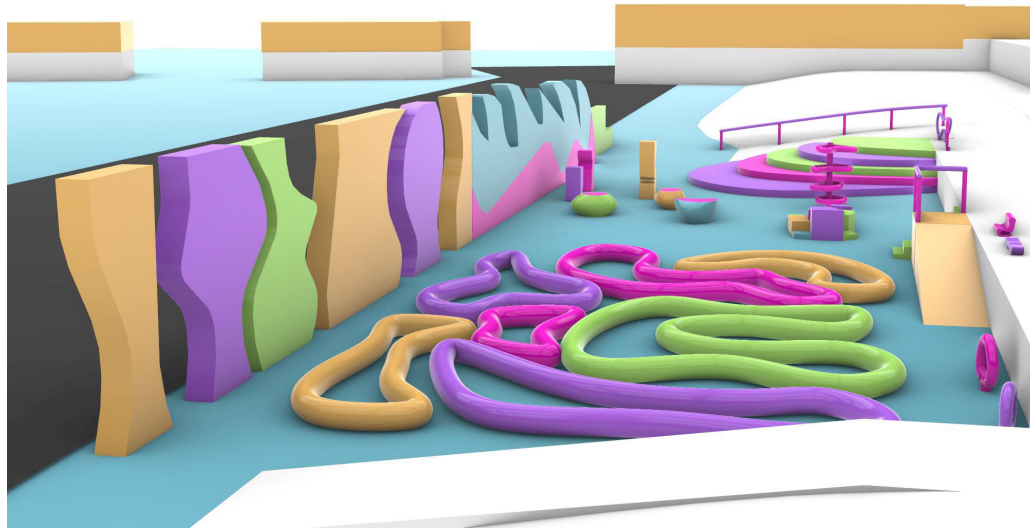


Figure 59. Dominic Tess, colourful conventions, digital model, 2025.

In Figure 59, various forms and colour components imagine a playful space, influenced by the design techniques that were used to produce my animated line drawings. By experimenting with different forms and colours, I could eliminate certain concepts that seemed impractical or did not align with my central concept. Throughout this journey, I continued refining my model in response to functionality, ensuring that the fabrication of my urban park was practical and considered the existing site constraints. My urban park expanded beyond the area of 16 Fencible Drive, to incorporate social zones and provide more seating for people to gather. There is a lot of parking space adjacent to the site, which could serve another purpose for community engagement; this expansion was considered because of the opportunities I could explore to enhance my urban park.

In developing my design proposal, I considered the spatial programme and how the layout aligned with my overall concept. At this stage, my focus was to explore the playfulness of the design by integrating a vibrant colour palette drawn from my animated line drawings. While the colours conveyed a sense of play, the materiality and contextual responses needed further refining. As shown in Figure 60, the colour blocks do not reflect an existing site but instead suggest a redesign proposal for the Howick Village Centre. After analysing this iteration of my urban park, I evaluated a critical aspect of the site's context, which is its surrounding architecture and environmental terrain, both of which influenced my design. My design decision needed to follow a clear logic and purpose that responded to what existed on the site. Subsequent iterations of my urban park considered the context of the Howick site, where the environment and surroundings influence the layout for physical activity in relation to the Auckland Council plans and the broader community.

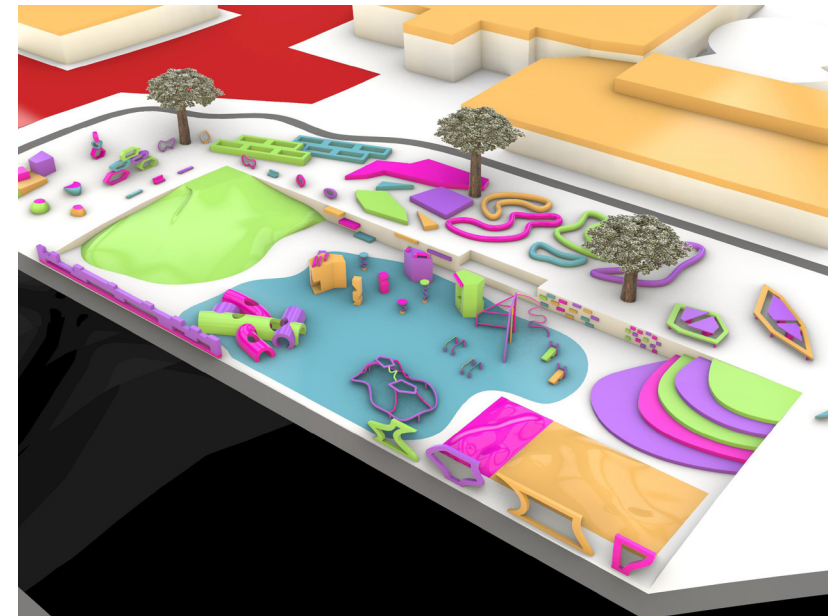


Figure 60. Dominic Tess, second iteration, digital model, 2025.

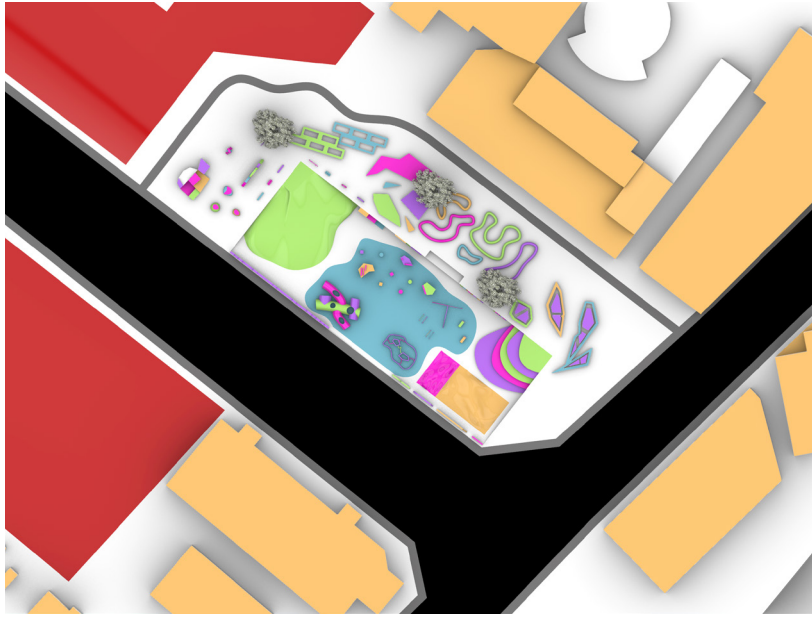


Figure 61. Dominic Tess, top view, digital model, 2025.

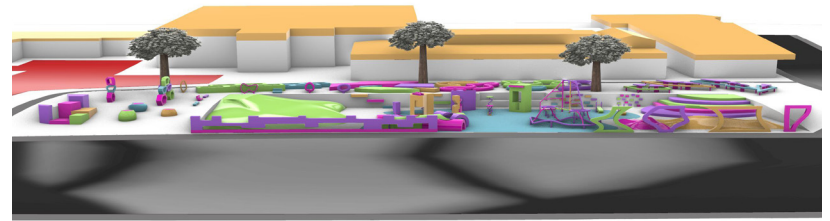


Figure 62. Dominic Tess, east view, digital model, 2025.

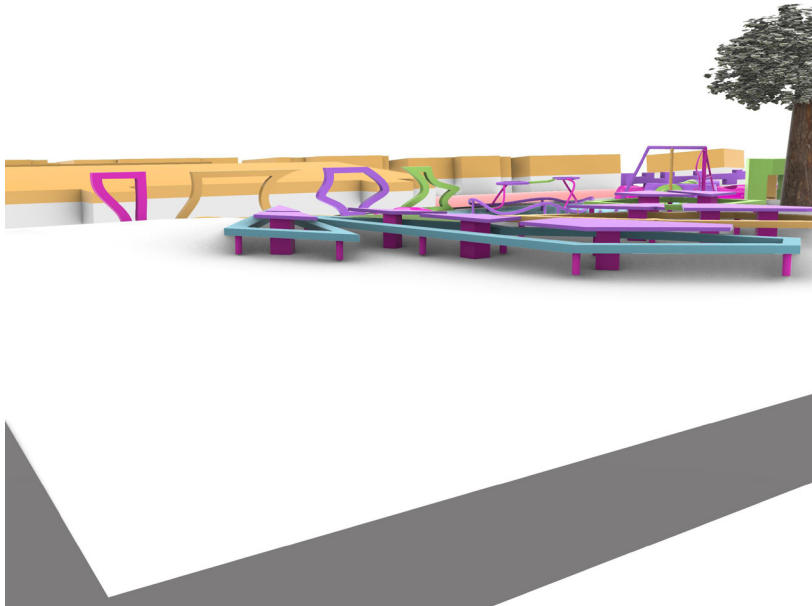


Figure 63. Dominic Tess, seating area, digital model, 2025.

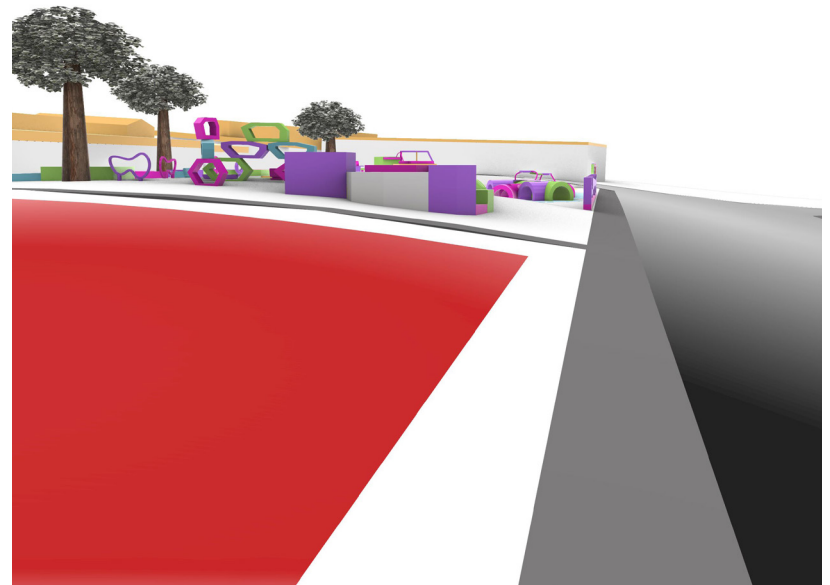
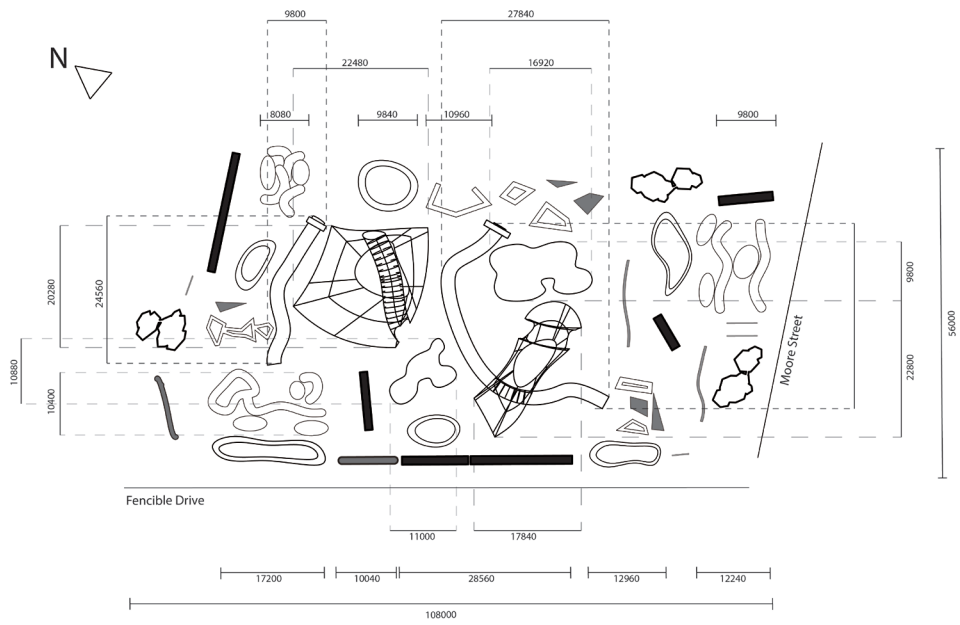


Figure 64. Dominic Tess, car park entrance, digital model, 2025.

Once I understood what design aspects best illustrated my concept, I progressively refined the sculptures and structures by integrating animation lines that connected to a pathway. This design phase, shown in Figure 65, was a significant leap compared to my other iterations; animation lines were embedded in sculptural forms, seating arrangements and pathways. Every form and creation conveyed a continuous animated line that suggested a playful encounter, a spatial element that involved physical interactions. While my programme emphasised a series of movements that included playful interactions, the placement of applications was overwhelming due to everything being clustered together. The subsequent advancement focused on simplifying the design by maintaining design aspects that portrayed animated lines alongside appropriate materials, as my proposal indicated an amusement park rather than an urban space.

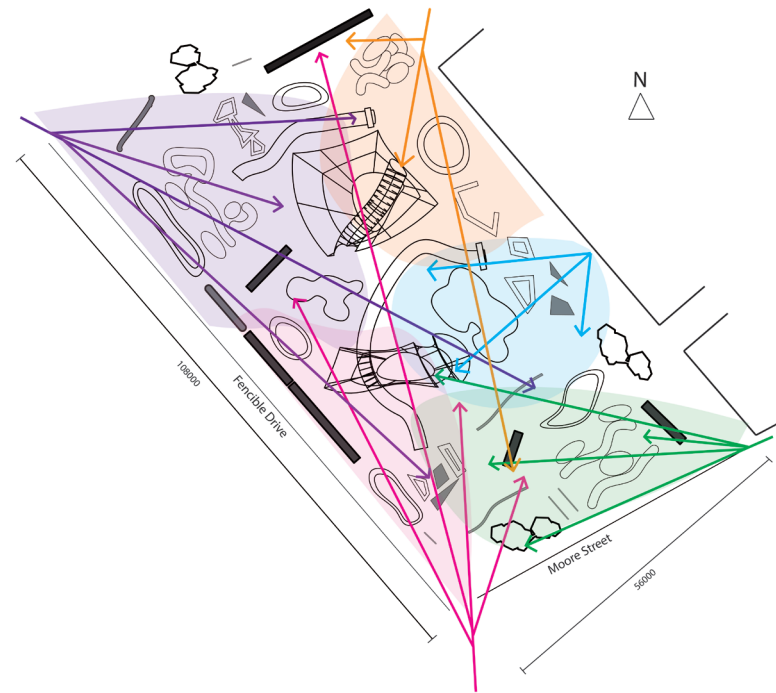


Figure 65. Dominic Tess, third iteration, digital model, 2025.



Scale 1:400 mm

Figure 66. Dominic Tess, third iteration plan, drawing, 2025.



Scale 1:400 mm

Figure 67. Dominic Tess, third iteration sight views, drawing, 2025.

As shown in Figure 68, I reconsidered the layout of my design, which responds to the contours of the site and pathways leading to the shopping outlets, enhancing the journey within the urban park. Playful conventions inspired by animated lines surround the user experience, guiding participants towards designated spaces for social interactions and physical activity. This design integrates nature through grassy areas and trees to reflect the existing landscape of 16 Fencible Drive, which is used to encourage social interaction and create a dynamic atmosphere for locals and visitors. As British anthropologist Tim Ingold has noted, “To be sure, the rules and methods of engagement employed respectively by the native dweller and the archaeologist will differ, as will the stories they tell, nevertheless – in so far as both seek the past in the landscape – they are engaged in projects of fundamentally the same kind.”³⁵ My story illustrates a sense of animated lines being the central idea for the layout of an urban park, along with physical activity conventions. I was satisfied with the improvements in my redefined urban park, where materiality and colour establish the narrative of physical activity through play, and each aspect of the design highlights different interactions for community engagement.

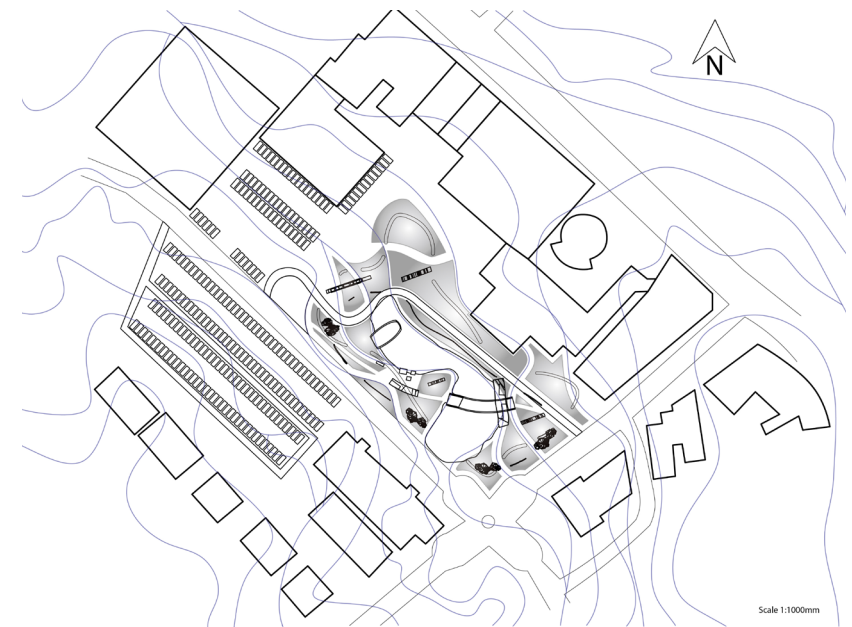


Figure 68. Dominic Tess, contour plan, drawing, 2025.

³⁵Tim Ingold, “The Temporality of the Landscape,” *World Archaeology* 25, no. 2 (1993): 153, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/124811>.

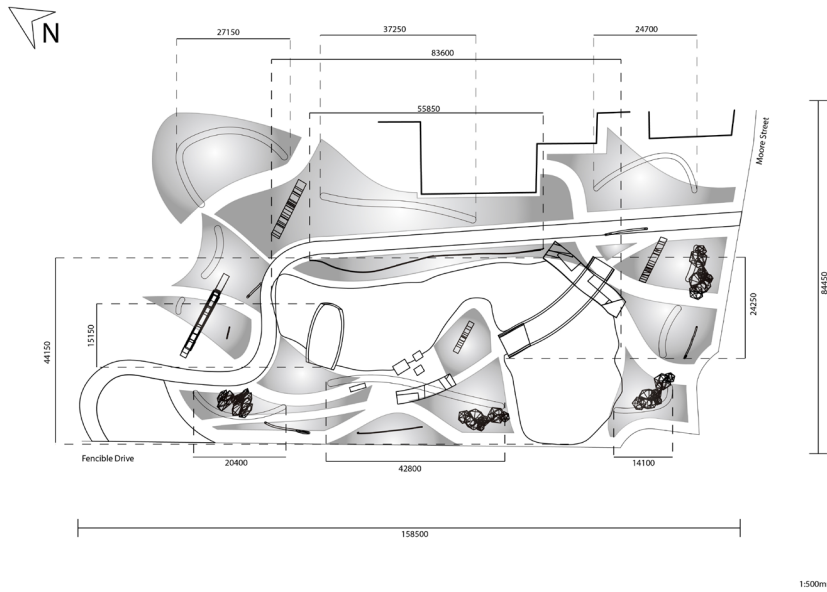


Figure 69. Dominic Tess, fourth iteration plan, drawing, 2025.

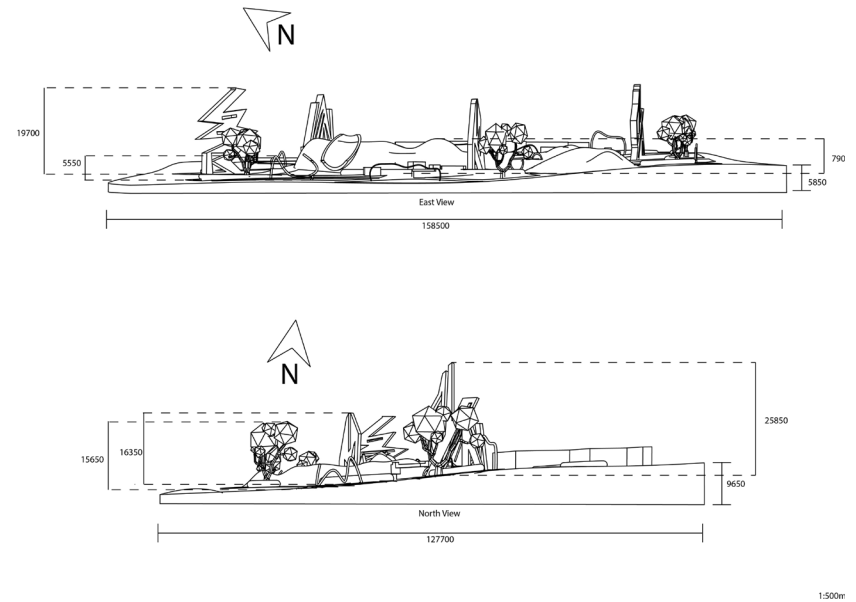


Figure 70. Dominic Tess, fourth iteration elevations, drawing, 2025.



Figure 71. Dominic Tess, Central Terrace design, digital model, 2025.

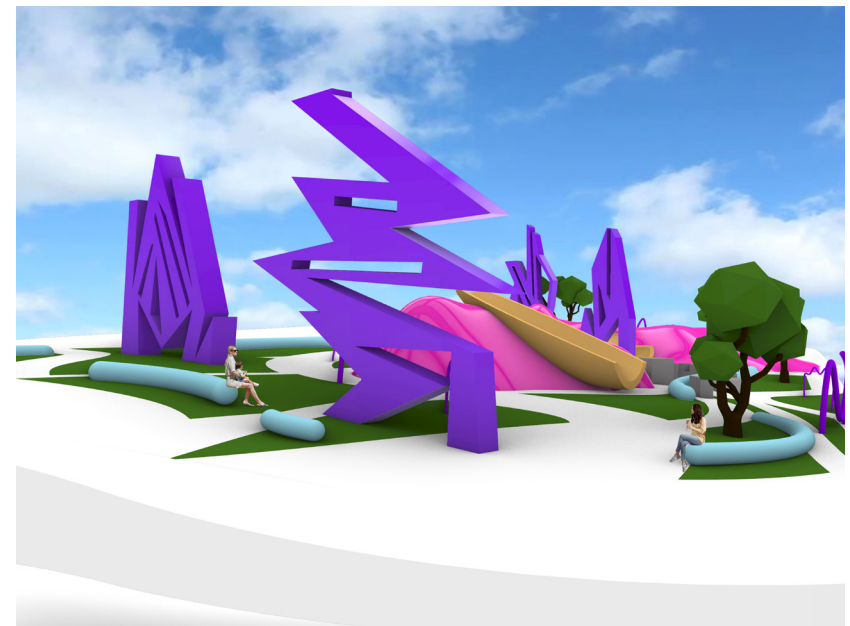


Figure 72. Dominic Tess, playful sculptures, digital model, 2025.

While my design concept has been established, Figure 73 shows an improvement from my previous iteration, responding to the practical guidelines of the Auckland Design Manual.³⁶ I have to respect specific height elevations, as my earlier design iteration exceeded the safety height for physical activity conventions. My previous renders were missing the context of materiality and scale, which confused the type of space I was designing. My new iteration showcases specific materiality, including concrete flooring and wooden benches, while keeping the vibrant colours from my drawings, which are used for rubber and plastic surfaces. The people in the model are used as a visual tool to identify the scale of the park and what they look like in relation to each design intervention.

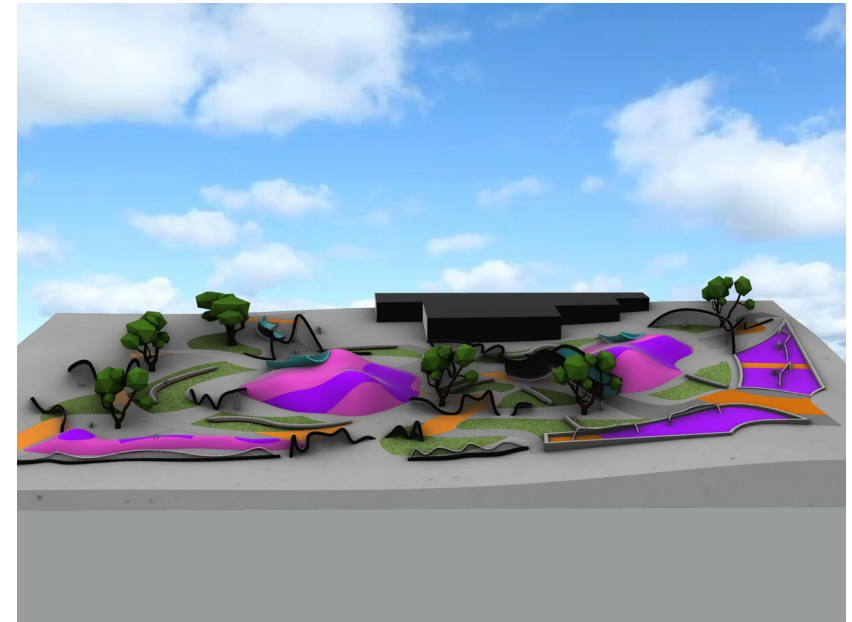


Figure 73. Dominic Tess, fifth iteration, digital model, 2025.

³⁶“Your Guide to Designing and Building a Better Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland,” Auckland Design Manual, accessed 24 April 2025, <https://www.aucklanddesignmanual.co.nz/>.

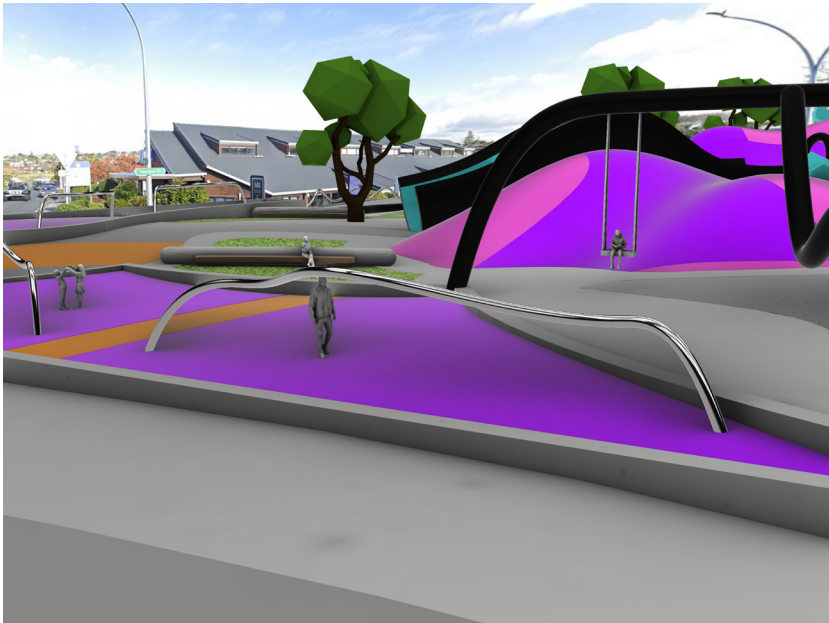


Figure 74. Dominic Tess, perspective one, digital model, 2025.

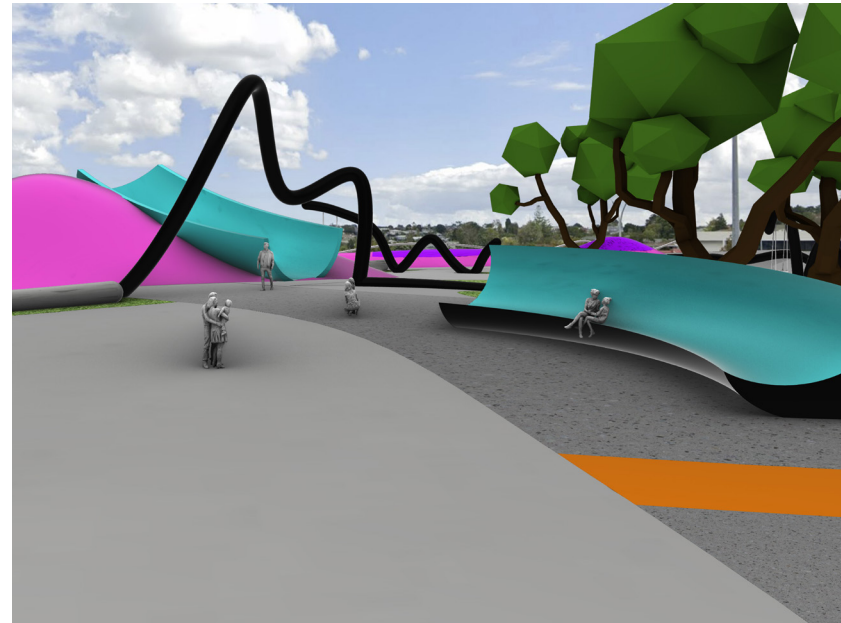


Figure 75. Dominic Tess, perspective two, digital model, 2025.

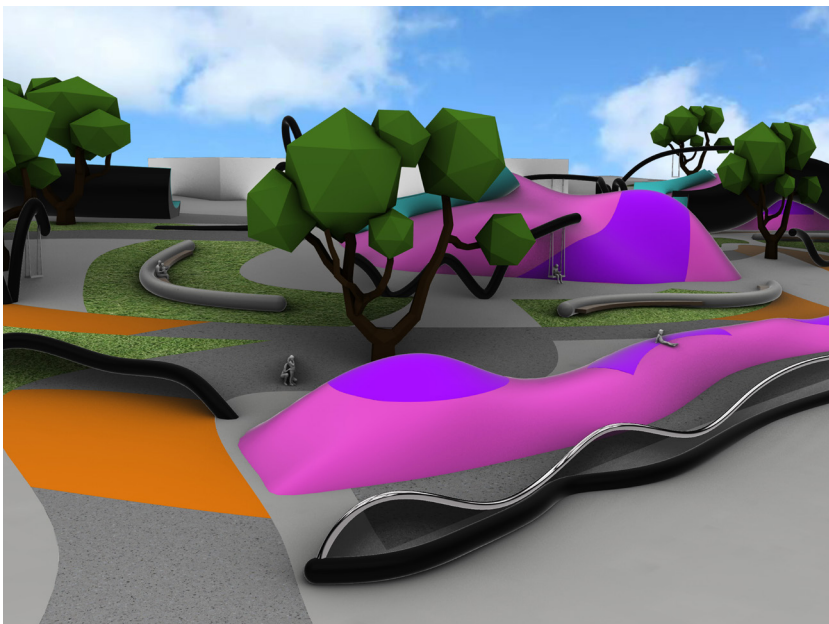


Figure 76. Dominic Tess, perspective three, digital model, 2025.

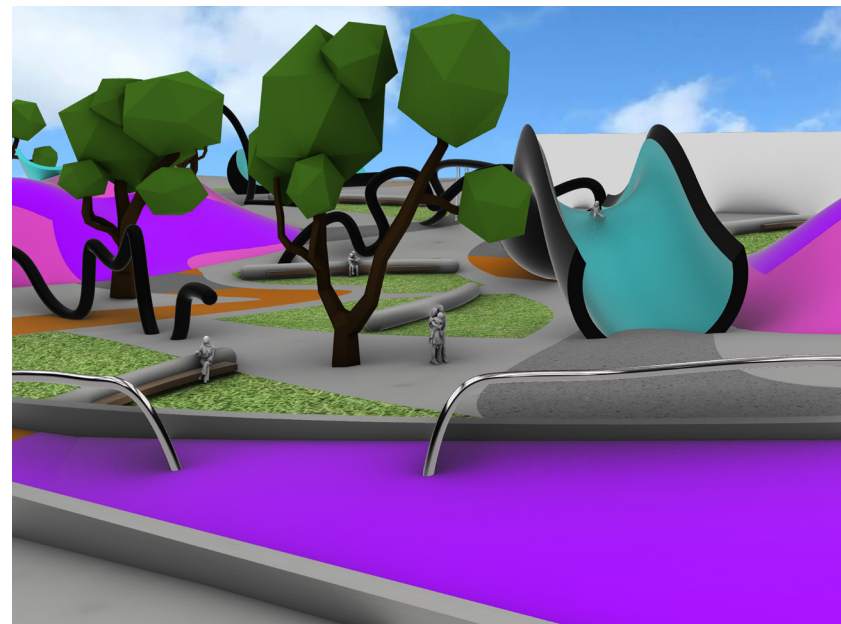


Figure 77. Dominic Tess, perspective four, digital model, 2025.

Conclusion

This thesis presents an exploration of how animated lines and play can inform an urban park design that fosters physical activity and community engagement. Inspired by memories of my childhood experiences in playful public spaces, I investigated how the element of play can influence a spatial layout, using physical activity as a conceptual foundation for this proposal. Through this design, I aim to strengthen community engagement in Howick, supporting the goal of developing an inclusive local hub. I see urban spaces as opportunities for active engagement. This proposal envisions a park where social gathering, movement, and playful interactions build a more connected community, aligning with the goals of the Howick Village Centre Plan.

Throughout this research, I have developed a design approach that integrates physical activity into an urban park through playful interactions. I have explored this concept through site analysis, iterative drawings, and digital modelling, using each method to experiment with animated lines and how they could generate concepts for an urban park design. Furthermore, I have used these lines as a primary design tool to visualise my ideas of play and environmental qualities, discovering a spatial language that makes physical activity inviting, encouraging interactive user experiences. This method has introduced mark-making and line work as generative processes to create a dynamic relationship between space and movement.

The evaluation of this research demonstrates how animated lines and play can transform urban parks into communal spaces of physical activity and enjoyment. The next steps for future work involve translating these conceptual ideas into full-scale material explorations, further analysing how animated lines can offer possibilities for spontaneous movement and social interactions. This proposal reimagines the urban park as an animated drawing that shapes playful spaces for communities to thrive and engage in physical activity.

Installation

The exhibition consisted of two A1 posters featuring my animated line drawings, which convey physical activity, and my design proposal for 16 Fencible Drive, accompanied by a physical model of my urban park. The posters are represented as comic panels that resemble the characteristics of my design iterations, reiterating my interest in digital drawings that led to investigating the animated line. Adjacent to the posters is my site map, which provides the context of neighbouring buildings alongside my physical model. The arrangement of my exhibition ensures the viewer follows my journey of creating a series of drawings that illustrate physical activity through play, which transforms into an urban park where animated lines activate a sense of movement.



Figure 78. Dominic Tess, Masters Exhibition overview, photograph, 2025.



Figure 79. Dominic Tess, table overview, photograph, 2025.



Figure 80. Dominic Tess, entrance view, photograph, 2025.



Figure 81. Dominic Tess, side view of table, photograph, 2025.



Figure 82. Dominic Tess, Howick site map, photograph, 2025.



Figure 83. Dominic Tess, top view of model, photograph, 2025.



Figure 84. Dominic Tess, south view of park, photograph, 2025.



Figure 85. Dominic Tess, animated line conventions, photograph, 2025.



Figure 86. Dominic Tess, south entrance of park, photograph, 2025.



Figure 87. Dominic Tess, wayfinding, photograph, 2025.



Figure 88. Dominic Tess, seat convention, photograph, 2025.

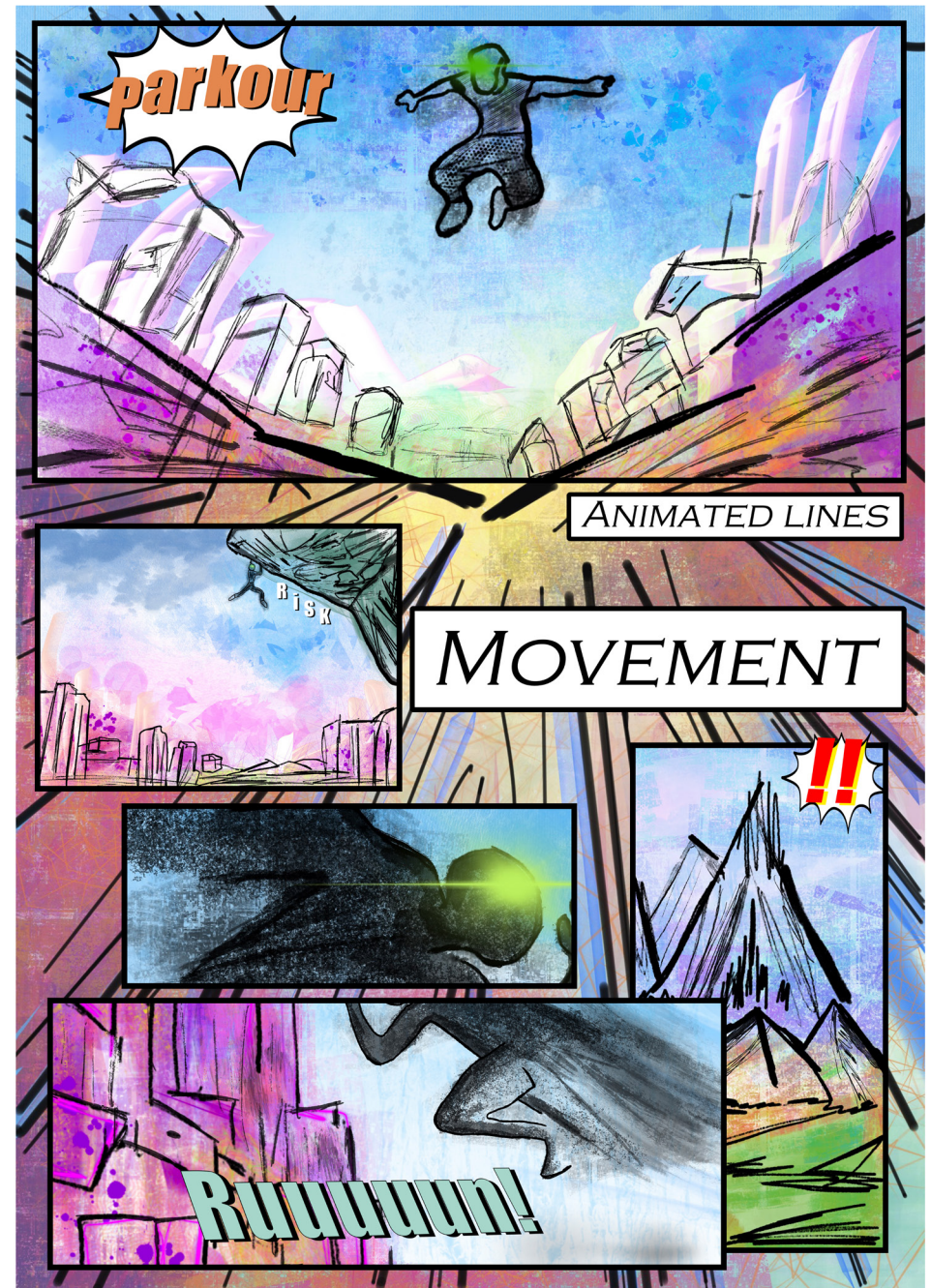


Figure 89. Dominic Tess, A1 posters, drawing, 2025.

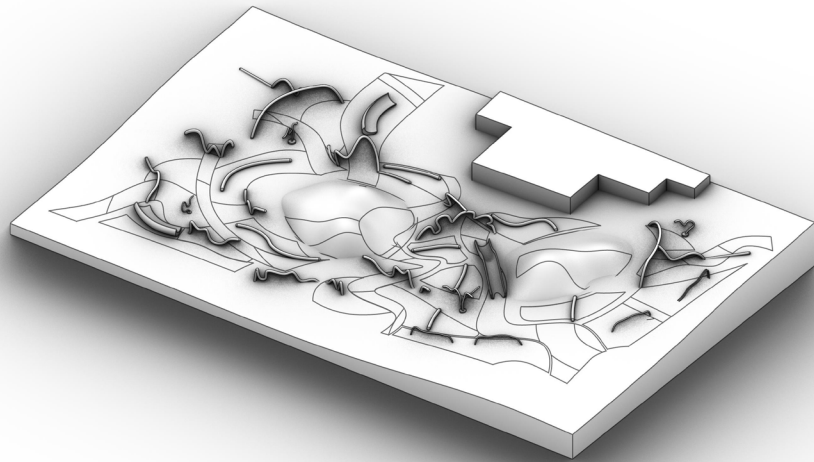


Figure 90. Dominic Tess, axonometric view, digital model, 2025.

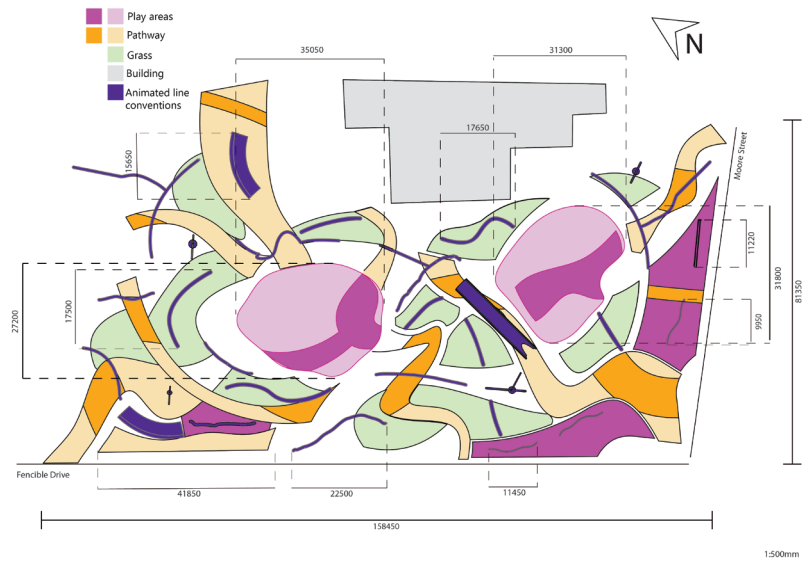


Figure 91. Dominic Tess, plan, drawing, 2025.

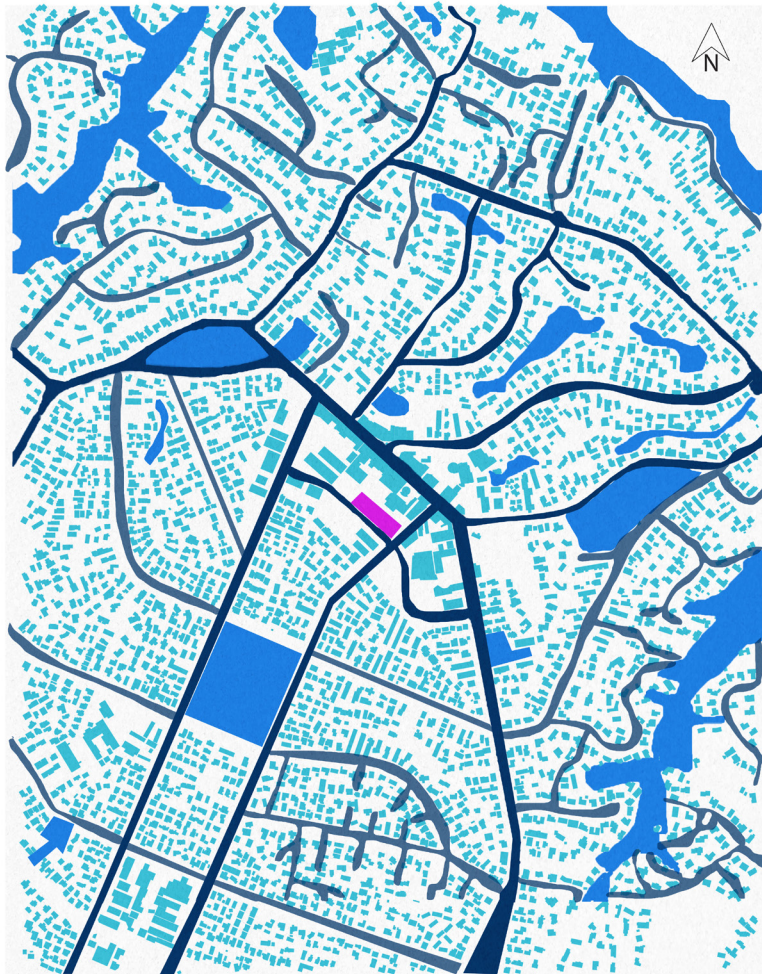


Figure 92. Dominic Tess, site plan, drawing, 2025.

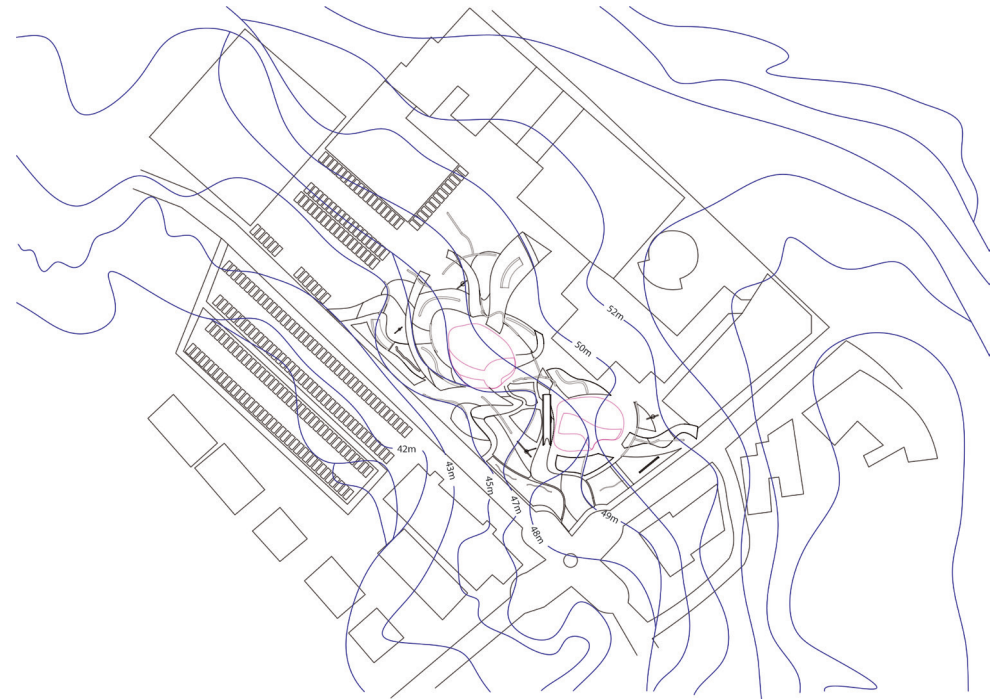


Figure 93. Dominic Tess, contours, drawing, 2025.



Figure 94. Dominic Tess, playful terrain, digital model, 2025.

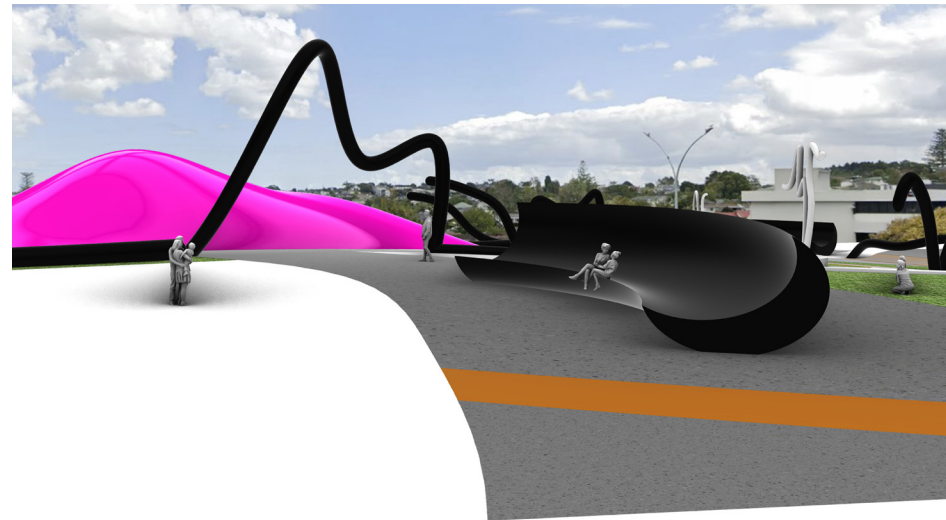


Figure 95. Dominic Tess, seating, digital model, 2025.

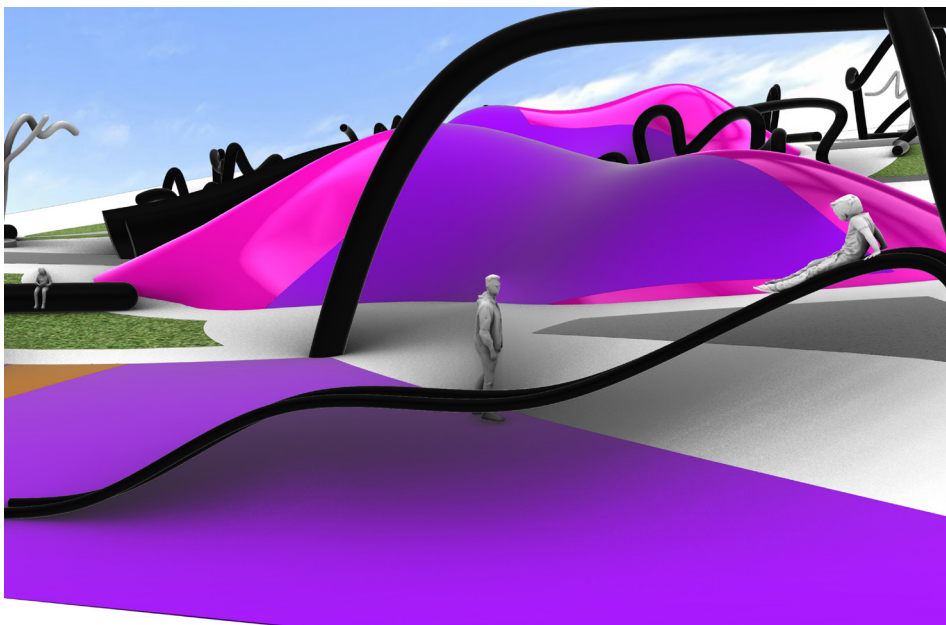


Figure 96. Dominic Tess, slide convention, digital model, 2025.

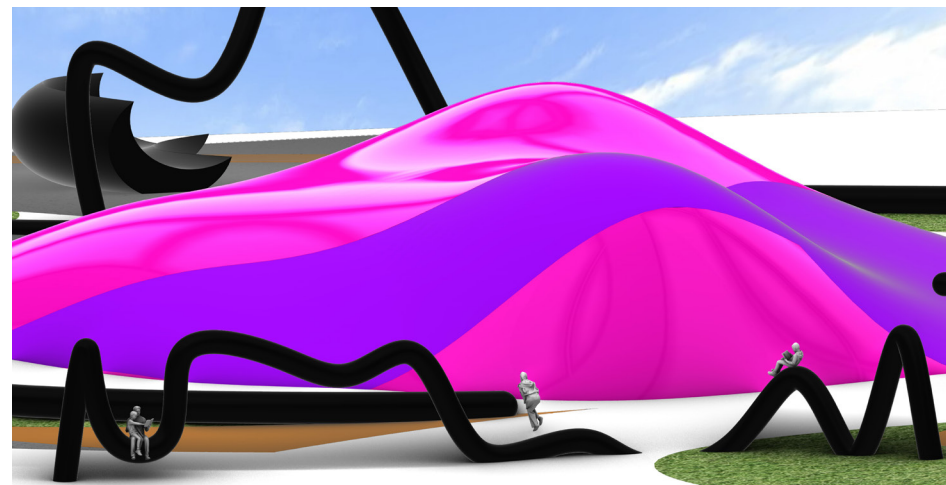


Figure 97. Dominic Tess, interactions, digital model, 2025.

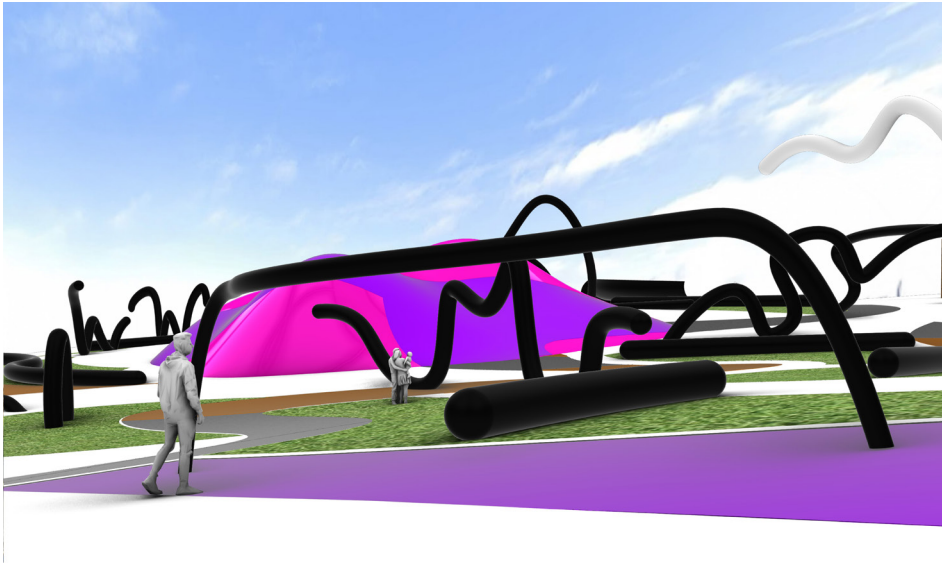


Figure 98. Dominic Tess, calisthenics, digital model, 2025.

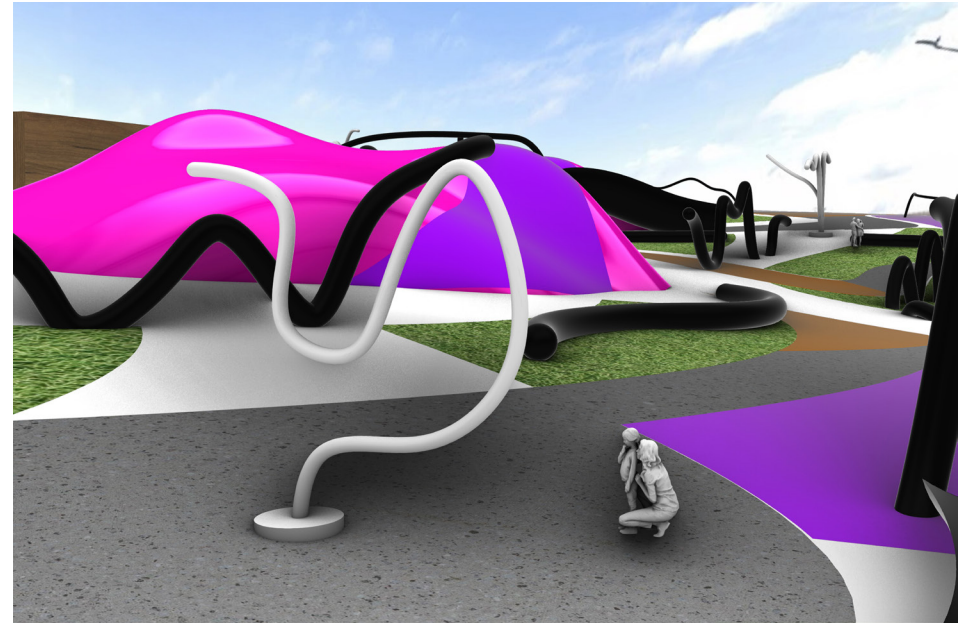


Figure 99. Dominic Tess, wayfinding convention, digital model, 2025.

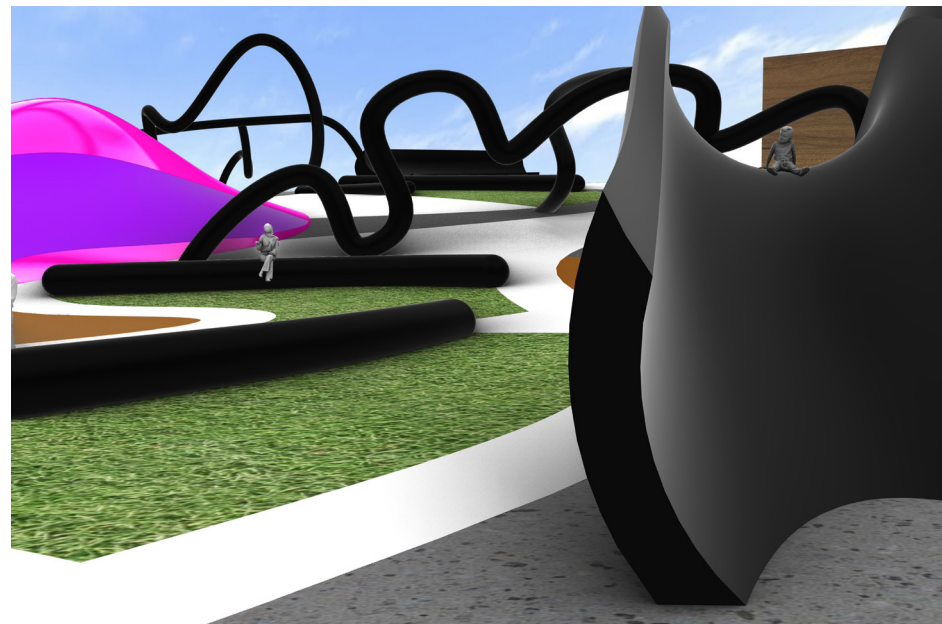


Figure 100. Dominic Tess, animate movement, digital model, 2025.

Bibliography

Auckland Council. *2023 Census Results. Howick Local Board*. Auckland Council, n.d. <https://knowledgeauckland.org.nz/media/gzongivq/howick-2023-census-summary.pdf>.

Auckland Council. *Howick Village Centre Plan*. Auckland Council, 2017. <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/place-based-plans/Documents/howick-village-centre-plan.pdf>.

Auckland Council. “Farm Cove Park.” Accessed 24 April 2025. <http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/parks-recreation/Pages/park-details.aspx?Location=720>.

Auckland Council. “Find a Park or Beach.” Accessed 24 April 2025. <http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/parks-recreation/Pages/find-park-beach.aspx>.

Auckland Council. “Howick Village Centre Plan.” Accessed 6 February 2025. <http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/place-based-plans/area-plans/Pages/howick-village-centre-plan.aspx>.

Auckland Design Manual. “Your Guide to Designing and Building a Better Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland.” Accessed 24 April 2025. <https://www.aucklanddesignmanual.co.nz/>.

Bayleys. “Howick: 16 Fencible Drive.” Accessed 18 October 2024. <http://www.bayleys.co.nz/listings/commercial/auckland/manukau/16-fencible-drive-howick-1693132>.

Bedimo-Rung, Ariane L., Andrew J. Mowen, and Deborah A. Cohen. “The Significance of Parks to Physical Activity and Public Health: A Conceptual Model.” *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 28, no. 2 (2005): 159–168. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2004.10.024>

Boberg, Richard Wayne. “Generating Line Drawings from Abstract Scene Descriptions.” PhD diss., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1973.

Butler, Cornelia H., and M. Catherine De Zegher. *On Line: Drawing Through the Twentieth Century*. The Museum of Modern Art, 2010.

Calisthenics-Parks. “Auckland – Calisthenics Park – Mission Bay Beach.” Accessed 18 April 2025. <https://calisthenics-parks.com/spots/3417-en-auckland-calisthenics-park-mission-bay-beach>.

Cannaerts, Corneel. “Models of/Models for Architecture.” *eCAADe* 27 (2009): 781–786.

Ching, Francis D. K. *Design Drawing*. John Wiley & Sons, 2019.

Cutting, Marion. “The Use of Spatial Analysis to Study Prehistoric Settlement Architecture.” *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 22, no. 1 (2003): 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0092.00001>.

Edwards, Brian. *Understanding Architecture Through Drawing*. Taylor & Francis, 2008.

Folkmann, Mads Nygaard. “Enabling Creativity: Imagination in Design Processes.” In *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Design Creativity*, edited by T. Taura and Y Nagai. The Design Society, 2010.

Gage, John, and Kelly Grovier. *Colour in Art*. Thames & Hudson, 2023.

Howick Village Association. "Howick Village Business Directory." Accessed 14 June 2023. <https://howickvillage.co.nz/howick-village-business-directory/>.

Ims, Rolf A. "Movement Patterns Related to Spatial Structures." In *Mosaic Landscapes and Ecological Processes*, edited by Lennart Hansson, Lenore Fahrig, and Gray Merriam. Springer Netherlands, 1995.

Infometrics. "Regional Economic Profile | Howick Local Board | Population Growth." Accessed 28 October 2024. <https://rep.infometrics.co.nz/howick-local-board/population/growth>.

Ingold, Tim. "The Temporality of the Landscape." *World Archaeology* 25, no. 2 (1993): 152–174. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/124811>.

Laverty, Judy, and Jan Wright. "Going to the Gym: The New Urban 'It' Space." In *Young People, Physical Activity and the Everyday*, edited by Jan Wright and Doune Macdonald. Routledge, 2010. <https://ro.uow.edu.au/edupapers/174>.

Lofland, Lyn H. *The Public Realm: Exploring the City's Quintessential Social Territory*. Routledge, 2017.

Micklewright, Keith. *Drawing: Mastering the Language of Visual Expression*. Laurence King Publishing, 2005.

New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage Te Manatu Taonga. "East Auckland." Accessed 25 April 2025. <https://teara.govt.nz/en/auckland-places/page-15>.

New Zealand History. "Howick." Accessed 31 July 2024. <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/keyword/howick>.

Nesti, Mark Stephen. "Exercise for Health: Serious Fun for the Whole Person?" *Journal of Sport and Health Science* 5, no. 2 (2016): 135–138. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jshs.2016.03.003>.

Noguchi, Isamu. *A Sculptor's World*. Harper & Row, 1968.

Oxford Learner's Dictionaries. "Parkour." Accessed 23 April 2025. <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/parkour>

Pérez de Arce, Rodrigo. *City of Play : An Architectural and Urban History of Recreation and Leisure*. Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2018.

Qu, Y. C. "Drawing Architecture Using Manga Techniques." Conference contribution. 2009. Open Access Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington. <https://doi.org/10.25455/wgtn.16418760.v1>.

Rolfes, Rebecca. "Playscapes by Isamu Noguchi." *Design For Arts in Education* 83, no. 3 (1982): 38–39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07320973.1982.9940118>.

Stats NZ Tauranga Aotearoa. "Place Summaries | Howick Central." Accessed 22 October 2024. <https://www.stats.govt.nz/tools/2018-census-place-summaries/howick-central>.

Sully, Anthony. *Interior Design: Conceptual Basis*. Springer International Publishing, 2015.

Zeng, Yijun, and Brian Deal. "What Role Do Urban Parks Play in Forming a Sense of Place? Lessons for Geodesign Using Social Media." *Land* 12, no. 11 (2023): 1960, <https://doi.org/10.3390/land12111960>.