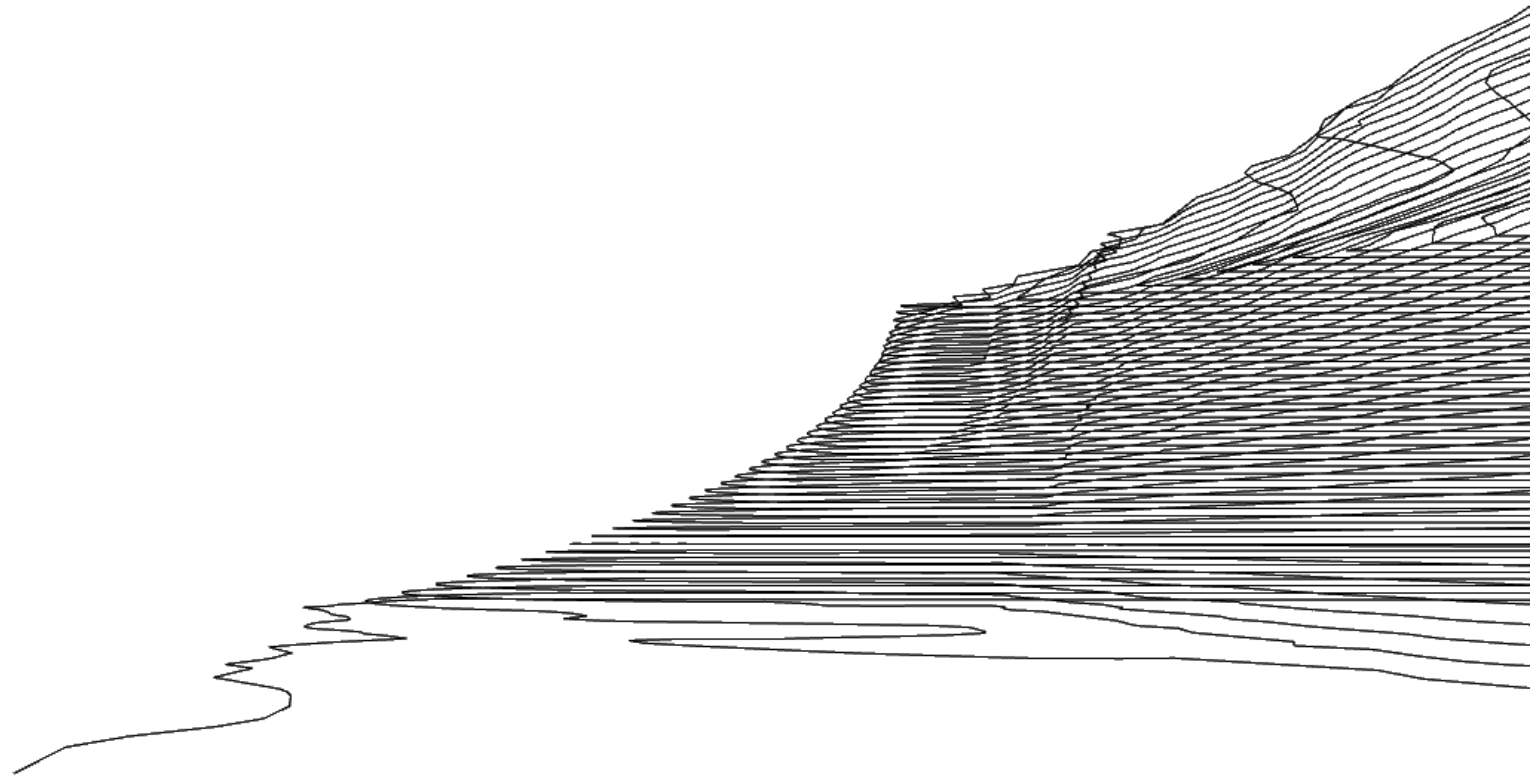


# CONCRETE ANAMNESIS

*Tracing Material Narratives Along Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland's Original Shoreline*



Leah Van Wyk. Co-Supervised by Dr Carl Douglas and Dr Rafik Patel.

## **School of Art & Design**

An exegesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Design.

### **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.

\_\_\_\_\_ 23.05.23

### **Declaration of Collaboration:**

Part of this thesis was carried out as a live tactical urbanism project commissioned by Auckland Council's Tāmaki Makaurau Design Ope unit. It was undertaken in collaboration with AUT Master of Design students Emma Choi and Jessica Juno, led by Claire Davis (Auckland Council), Dr Sue Gallagher (AUT) and Dr Carl Douglas (AUT). Details of this collaboration are given in Section Four.

## Acknowledgements.

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To Gary and Alison, my twin pillars, for their unwavering support. I am endlessly grateful.

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## Abstract.

Urban histories are textured histories—narrative threads, natural and human, woven together over space and time in a dense fabric. *Concrete Anamnesis* is a spatial design research inquiry into urban place-making which traces the thread of Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland’s original shoreline. Through a wandering/wondering methodology and a focus on the material imaginary of concrete, a series of public spaces which activate three vertical remnants of the lost coastline emerge.

Reacting to my experience of walking in the city, where the car dominates and sensations of place are fractured, this research centres on human-scaled environments and sensitising the urban pedestrian to the landscape. Engaging with coastal memories, this project proposes an alternative pedestrian route following the old shoreline. Along the way, a series of spaces conceived as urban interiors articulate the material histories of the sites. These settings are sensuous and invite the city-dweller to slow down and engage with their surroundings, forming a deeper connection to place.

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## **Section One.**

### Introduction

Urban histories are textured histories—narrative threads, natural and human, woven together over space and time in a dense fabric. One such thread of particular interest to me is that of Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland’s original shoreline (fig. 1). Once characterised by sleepy tidal inlets and broad headlands, the current landscape has been transformed beyond recognition, the ‘obsidian waters’ of the Waitematā Harbour, named for its glassy surface, progressively encroached upon by infill and wharves (fig. 2). Permeated by concrete infrastructure, wide roads, and car park buildings, the tranquil coastal character of the area is a distant memory. Speed and efficiency are the cornerstones of this modern city. Blaring car horns and rushing traffic substitute for the call of seagulls and the gentle brush of the tide upon the shore. Tracing the line of the old foreshore on foot requires navigating wide intersections and multi-lane roads. “Vehicular prosthetics”<sup>1</sup> and the horizontal space dominate the area, prioritising the car over the pedestrian and fracturing sensations of place, defined by geographer Yi-Fu Tuan as “centres of felt value.”<sup>2</sup> In response, this spatial design research inquiry asks, how can an emphasis on sensuous material narratives, particularly those associated with coastal memories, and a design methodology of walking and wondering restore our sensitivity to the landscape?

My research was conducted as part of the Material Imaginaries Research Collective (MIRC), founded and co-led by Dr Sue Gallagher and Dr Carl Douglas (Auckland University of Technology).<sup>3</sup> The MIRC explores material-led creative methodologies, with a focus on the way materials have imaginative, narrative, and affective agency. Investigating the material imaginary of concrete, I explore this enduring material’s relationship with memory through impression and casting techniques. The resulting objects and artefacts recall the lost coastline.

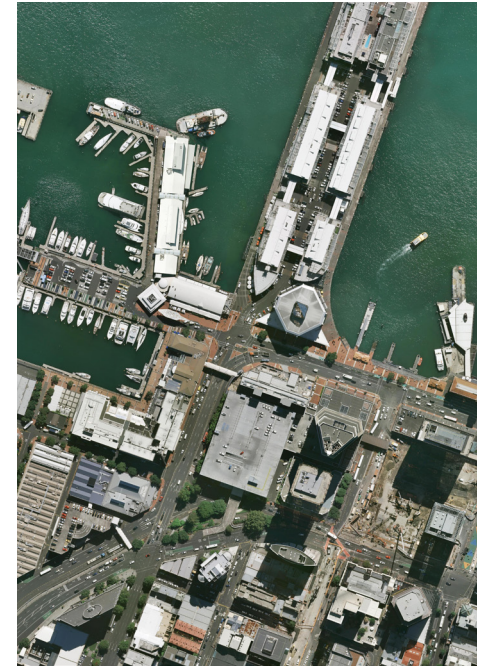
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<sup>1</sup> Rebecca Solnit, *Storming the Gates of Paradise: Landscapes for Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 335.

<sup>2</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 4.

<sup>3</sup> “Material Imaginaries Research Collective,” Centre for Design Research, Auckland University of Technology, accessed May 8, 2023, [https://cdr.aut.ac.nz/research\\_hub/material-imaginaries-research-collective/](https://cdr.aut.ac.nz/research_hub/material-imaginaries-research-collective/).





**Figure 2.** Auckland Council Geomaps. Auckland Waterfront, Aerial Photography, 2017.  
*Showing the extensive land reclamation of Downtown Auckland.*

Despite the extensive reclamation efforts undertaken throughout the city's history, dotted along the ghostly line of Auckland's original foreshore, there are still places where traces of the past, natural and human, can be found. This speculative urban place-making project seeks to give weight and presence to three remnants of the former shoreline: the concrete retaining wall along Sturdee Street (fig. 3); the basalt sea wall behind the BP garage on Fanshawe Street (fig. 4); and the exposed cliff edge inside the Victoria Park Market courtyard (fig. 5). Adjacent to these sites sit listed buildings that anchor the wandering line and offer a broader historical context for each locale. Opposite the Sturdee Street wall are the Tepid Baths (fig. 6), Auckland's oldest surviving public swimming baths (constructed 1912-1914). The once heated salt waters highlight the importance of bathing as a social and cultural activity in the colonial city. Further along, the Kauri Timber Building (constructed 1881-1882, see fig. 7) anchors the basalt wall on Fanshawe Street. This structure recalls the area's industry, where once kauri timber booms from Hokianga floated in the waters of the Waitematā Harbour, and stacks of fresh-sawn timber lined the waterfront. Toward the West stitch, the exposed earth of the former coastline slopes from Drake Street toward Victoria Street West and is enclosed by the brick walls of the former Auckland Municipal Destructor and Depot (constructed 1905-1918, see fig. 8). The polychromatic chimney signals the city's history of burning its rubbish and the importance of sanitation in the colonial town, billowing smoke once rising from its flue. If we continue, tracing the line along Auckland's pre-colonial waterfront, it's important to note that this area once belonged to a broader landscape associated with use by several iwi, including Ngāti Whātua Ōrakei, Ngāti Paoa, and Te Waiohū. Following the land transfer at Auckland to the Crown in 1840, these narrative threads of industry and sanitation emerged, weaving (and often competing) with indigenous Māori narratives to form a layered, textured story of place.

Reacting to my experience of walking in the city, where I realised that the landscape was not people-oriented but rather oriented around the car, this thesis proposes a new pedestrian route following the old shoreline, centring on human-scaled environments. Along the way, a series of spaces conceived as urban interiors articulate the material histories of the three locales through



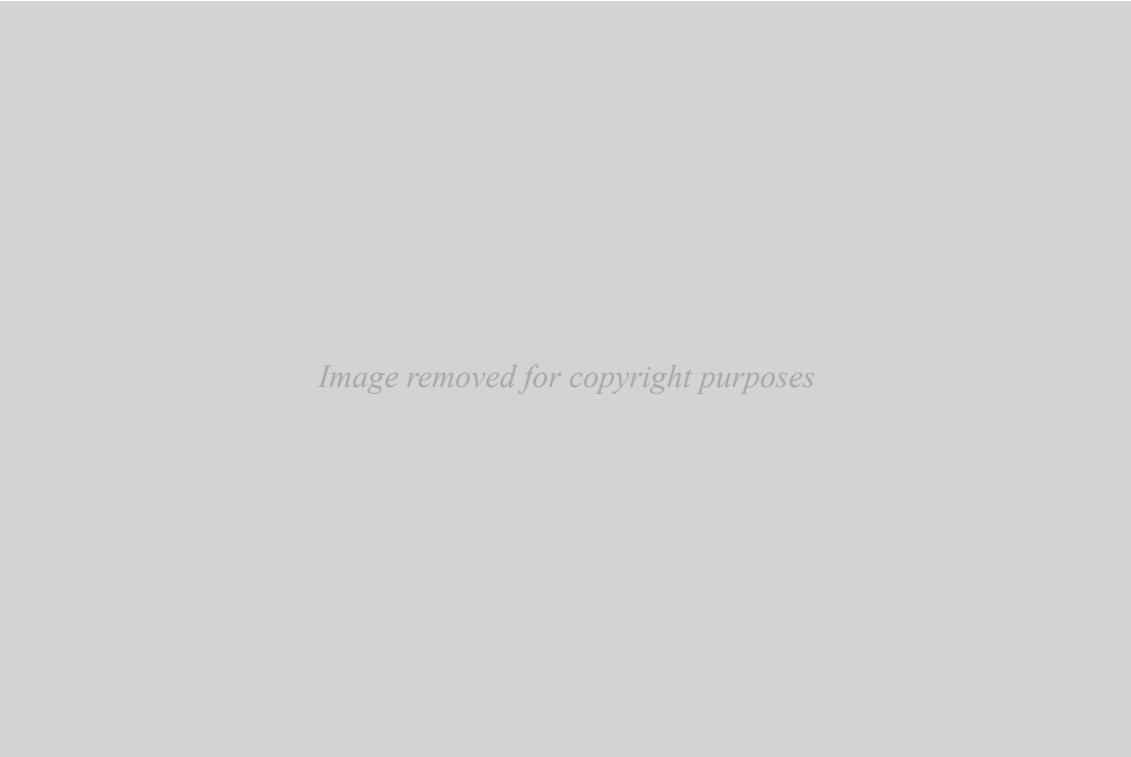
**Figure 3.** Van Wyk, L. Sturdee Street Wall, Photography, 2023.



**Figure 4.** Van Wyk, L. Fanshawe Street Wall, Photography, 2023.



**Figure 5.** Van Wyk, L. Drake Street Wall, Photography, 2022.



**Figure 6.** Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections. 786-A27-04, Photograph, circa 1965.

<https://kura.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz/digital/collection/photos/id/159470/rec/31>

*Showing the Tepid Baths at the corner of Customs Street West and Sturdee Street.*



**Figure 7.** Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections. 1-W0832, Photograph, 1927.  
<https://kura.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz/digital/collection/photos/id/97193/rec/11>  
*Showing the Kauri Timber Company (K.T.C) in the middle distance.*



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**Figure 8.** Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections. 1477-1866, Photograph, 2010.  
<https://kura.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz/digital/collection/photos/id/123184/rec/1>  
*Showing the Auckland Municipal Destructor and Depot (Former) viewed from Victoria Park.*

wharf-like structures, activating the vertical axis of these sites and elevating the pedestrian above street level. While conventional urban pedestrian practices prioritise momentum and efficiency (the quickest way to get from one point to another), this project resists these rhythms. Detouring through a series of gaps within the urban programme, as suggested by the elevated structures, the urban pedestrian is invited to move leisurely through these spaces, engaging their sensory environments and fostering a sense of place.

Three guiding principles, which I call *Space to Place*, *Tread Lightly*, and *Absence*, work together to form my understanding of place and what it might mean to ‘make place’ or evoke a ‘sense of place.’ *Space to Place* is the understanding that the ambiguity of space becomes the familiarity of place, through slowing down and engaging the sensuous aspects of our environment. To *Tread Lightly* is to proceed carefully. It implies a lightness of touch and an attitude of caring about the existing environment. *Absence* suggests a gap in the programme of the urban fabric, and an invitation to pause.

Section Two of this exegesis examines the research contexts, both theoretical and practice-based, which have informed the project. These contexts correspond with the principles outlined above. Concerning *Space to Place*, I am informed by the writing of human geographers Yi-Fu Tuan and Jennie Middleton, who speak to the pace of the urban pedestrian and how it is antithetical to a sense of place. In response, Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa introduces the notion of ‘slow’ architecture, which is then explored through the work of Swiss architect Peter Zumthor, who, starting from place, applies an inside-out approach to design. *Tread Lightly* picks up where Zumthor leaves off. Here I am informed by the writing of local historian Lucy Mackintosh, who highlights the importance of acknowledging place and its histories when working within a place-making context. Local landscape architecture group Isthmus and French architects Lacaton & Vassal address this through practice, demonstrating an approach that works with site: Isthmus by serving the health of the *maunga* (ancestral mountains), and Lacaton & Vassal by opting for an absence of intervention. *Absence* explores emptiness and loss

through the concave façade of Fearon Hay Architect's recent addition to the Kauri Timber Building, and through the casting practice of Rachel Whiteread, whose monumental objects underline the strange relationship between concrete and memory, as discussed by architecture historian Adrian Forty.

Section Three outlines my methodology of practice, positioned as a Wandering/Wondering Practice. The processes of my practice are all meditative, outworked as three core rhythms: walking, tracing, and making. Walking is an embodied practice which occurs as a process of discovering sites and concepts. It intertwines with the principle of *Space to Place*, which is an embodied knowing of one's environment or an atmospheric understanding of place. Tracing is a drawing practice understood as a process of archival research (drawing out, as in extraction) and drawing in the literal sense of putting pen to paper. This method aligns with the *Tread Lightly* principle, understanding site as the concept generator. Making interlaces with the principle of *Absence*, as my practice focuses on solid and void processes.

Section Four describes my practice which occurred in three stages: Material Imaginaries, the St Paul Street Activation Project, and the Design Proposal. Material Imaginaries comprises my early material experiments with concrete, the St Paul Street Activation Project serves as a case study in place-making, and the Design Proposal details the intended design outcomes for the three locales.

Section Five concludes this exegesis by pointing toward the research outcome, which was exhibited at St Paul Street Gallery in June 2023.

## **Section Two.**

Research Contexts:

A Place-Making Framework

## Space to Place

If we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place.<sup>4</sup>

My research begins by pondering this quote from Chinese-American geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, in his seminal work *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Tuan suggests that “what begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value.”<sup>5</sup> This suggests a process of familiarisation. Considering abstractions of space and place through the lens of the urban pedestrian, the implication is that the often-hurried practice of urban walking is antithetical to a sense of place. So long as we are hastening through the landscape, our environs remain indistinct and unfamiliar. Thus emerges the notion of slowing. When we slow down, the details of our surroundings come into focus, and we begin to form an intimate knowledge of our locale. The peripheral becomes the focus. Tuan believes that “[A] place achieves concrete reality when our experience of it is total, that is, through all the senses as well as with the active and reflective mind.”<sup>6</sup> This total experience is able to transpire through slowed, deliberate movements.

Human geographer Jennie Middleton explores the pace of the urban pedestrian, and argues that “many writings within urban and social theory often present highly abstract theorisations of walking in the city that [are] detached from most everyday urban pedestrian practices.”<sup>7</sup> In contrast, she analyses the experiences of those who “navigate, negotiate and traverse”<sup>8</sup> the city

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<sup>4</sup> Tuan, *Space and Place*, 6.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>7</sup> Jennie Middleton, “Sense and the City: Exploring the Embodied Geographies of Urban Walking,” *Social & Cultural Geography* 11, no. 6 (2010): 583, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2010.97913>.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 590.

streets in their day-to-day lives. Middleton's study relies upon interview and walking photo diary data from respondents in the inner London boroughs of Islington and Hackney. The accounts of two participants (Hackney resident George and Islington resident Paul) were especially pertinent to my experience walking in the city. Curiously, these two diary entries contradict each other. While George suggests that "walking allows one to really understand an area,"<sup>9</sup> Paul writes of walking on "autopilot,"<sup>10</sup> implying that he is unconscious of his surroundings. This indicates that the pedestrian experience is non-homogenous and often entirely subjective.

However, it's fair to suggest that within the context of the car-dominated city there is an apparent emphasis on speed and efficiency. Thus, walking becomes less about understanding the atmosphere of one's environment and more about getting from one place to the next with minimal interruption. My project doesn't seek to generalise the experience of walking in the city. Instead, inspired by the contradictory walking experiences of participants George and Paul, it provides alternative routes through the landscape which challenge the unrelenting pace of the modern city, and rather than "skim the surface of the world that has been previously mapped out and constructed for them to occupy,"<sup>11</sup> sensitise the urban pedestrian to their environment, cultivating a sense of place.

Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa writes of 'slow' and 'quiet' architecture. He believes architecture should "[slow] down and [focus] human experience instead of diffusing or speeding it up."<sup>12</sup> The work of Swiss architect Peter Zumthor demonstrates a slow architecture, both in terms of the designed experience and the process of design itself. His work details sensuous environments that emphasise interiority. Materials are given weight and substance. Glass and

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<sup>9</sup> Middleton, "Sense and the City," 582.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 583.

<sup>11</sup> Tim Ingold, "Culture on the Ground," *Journal of Material Culture* 9, no. 3 (2004): 329, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1359183504046896>.

<sup>12</sup> Juhani Pallasmaa, "Space, Place, Memory, and Imagination: The Temporal Dimension of Existential Space," in *Spatial Recall: Memory in Architecture and Landscape*, ed. Marc Treib (New York: Routledge, 2009), 35.

transparency are often reduced; instead, the focus is on the occupant in the interior. Many of his spaces are dark, the experience more than a visual preoccupation. Bruder Klaus Field Chapel and Kolumba Museum both highlight this interior focus.

Bruder Klaus Field Chapel (Germany, 2007) is arguably one of Zumthor's most well-known works. The process of construction was unusual. One hundred and twelve tree trunks (each around 50cm thick) were used to erect a wigwam. When the framework was completed, twenty-four layers of concrete were poured and rammed atop the timber structure. Once the concrete had set, the poles were then set on fire.<sup>13</sup> What remained was a hollowed, blackened cavity (fig. 9). From the exterior, the chapel appears monolithic (fig. 10). However, upon entering you are greeted by an incredibly sensuous interior, with charred concrete walls illuminated by the directional light streaming from the oculus above. Bruder Klaus engages the haptic and olfactory senses (via charred concrete) as well as the visual. Once inside, there is minimal interaction with the outside; the only visibility is provided by the ceiling aperture, which accentuates the building's vertical axis and draws your attention heavenward.

In contrast, his work on the Kolumba Museum in Cologne, Germany (2007) is more porous. There is a visibly direct relationship between the materiality of the interior and exterior membrane with perforated brickwork (fig. 11). These perforations allow for ample light within the space. However, there is still an emphasis on the interior experience, with Zumthor stating that "this project emerged from the inside out."<sup>14</sup> While light permeates the interior, you cannot see beyond the museum walls; your attention is turned inward. He uses a grey brick, articulated with perforations, to unite the destroyed fragments of the site. Once again, time is baked into the design process as he takes time crafting the material details, the bricks explicitly developed for this project. Fired with charcoal, they are imbued with a warm hue.

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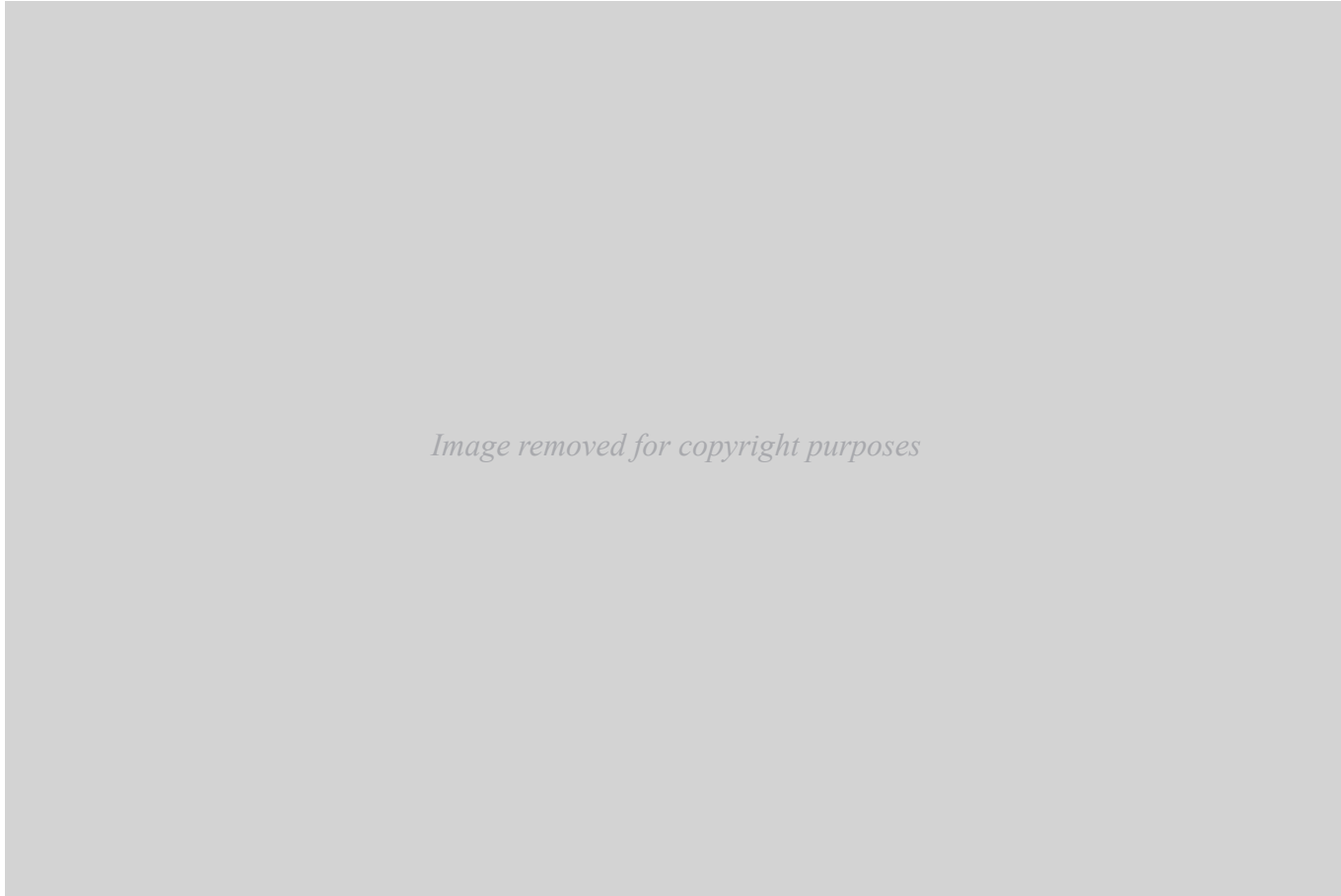
<sup>13</sup> Megan Sveiven, "Bruder Klaus Field Chapel / Peter Zumthor," ArchDaily, January 27, 2011, <https://www.archdaily.com/106352/bruder-klaus-field-chapel-peter-zumthor>.

<sup>14</sup> Karen Cilento, "Kolumba Museum/Peter Zumthor," ArchDaily, August 6, 2010, <https://www.archdaily.com/72192/kolumba-museum-peter-zumthor>.



*Image removed for copyright purposes*

**Figure 9.** Zumthor, Peter. Bruder Klaus Field Chapel, Architecture, 2007. Photograph by Aldo Amoretti.  
<https://www.archdaily.com/798340/peter-zumthors-bruder-klaus-field-chapel-through-the-lens-of-aldo-amoretti>



**Figure 10.** Zumthor, Peter. Bruder Klaus Field Chapel, Architecture, 2007. Photograph by Aldo Amoretti.  
<https://www.archdaily.com/798340/peter-zumthors-bruder-klaus-field-chapel-through-the-lens-of-aldo-amoretti>

*Image removed for copyright purposes*

**Figure 11.** Zumthor, Peter. Kolumba Museum, Architecture, 2007. Photograph by Rasmus Hjortshøj.  
<https://divisare.com/projects/349228-peter-zumthor-rasmus-hjortshoj-kolumba-museum>

Returning to Tuan's statement that "[A] place achieves concrete reality when our experience of it is total, that is, through all the senses as well as with the active and reflective mind,"<sup>15</sup> these examples by Zumthor indicate that by focussing on the materiality and interiority of space and creating sensuous environments that engage all the senses, we can achieve this 'total experience.'

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<sup>15</sup> Tuan, *Space and Place*, 18.

## Tread Lightly

Lucy Mackintosh (curator of history at Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum) unearths the lesser-known histories of three iconic landscapes within the Auckland region: Pukekawa/Auckland Domain, Maungakiekie/One Tree Hill, and the Ōtuataua Stonefields at Ihumātao. Mackintosh starts from the ground and works her way upward and outward in writing these histories. Throughout this text, the duality of place becomes apparent, beginning with naming locations. The forward slash in the place names above marks an ongoing tension, the identity of these sites remaining unsettled. Alison Jones (a professor from Te Puna Wānanga, the School of Māori and Indigenous Education at the University of Auckland) aptly describes this tension when discussing the hill beneath which she was born, in her recent memoir. She suggests, “a place is its stories ... The stories of Maungakiekie and One Tree Hill, the histories that call those places into being, are quite different.”<sup>16</sup>

Throughout this text, Mackintosh details how colonial efforts at place-making have consistently occurred to the detriment and desecration of Indigenous Māori narratives. Colonial narratives are so loud that they silence all others in the landscape. Take, for instance, Maungakiekie, where the obelisk commands the city’s attention from afar. Mackintosh suggests that “[focusing] on the visible monuments on Maungakiekie gives a narrow perspective on the history of the mountain and its inhabitants.”<sup>17</sup>

This disregard for the landscape and its embedded histories calls into question my motives and intention when intervening within the urban landscape of Tāmaki Makaurau. What might it look like to ‘make places’ in the present day, and in doing so, what narratives am I possibly favouring or obstructing through construction? The landscape has already been altered significantly by

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<sup>16</sup> Alison Jones, *This Pākehā Life: An Unsettled Memoir* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2020), 27.

<sup>17</sup> Lucy Mackintosh, *Shifting Grounds: Deep Histories of Tamaki Makaurau/Auckland* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2021), 218.

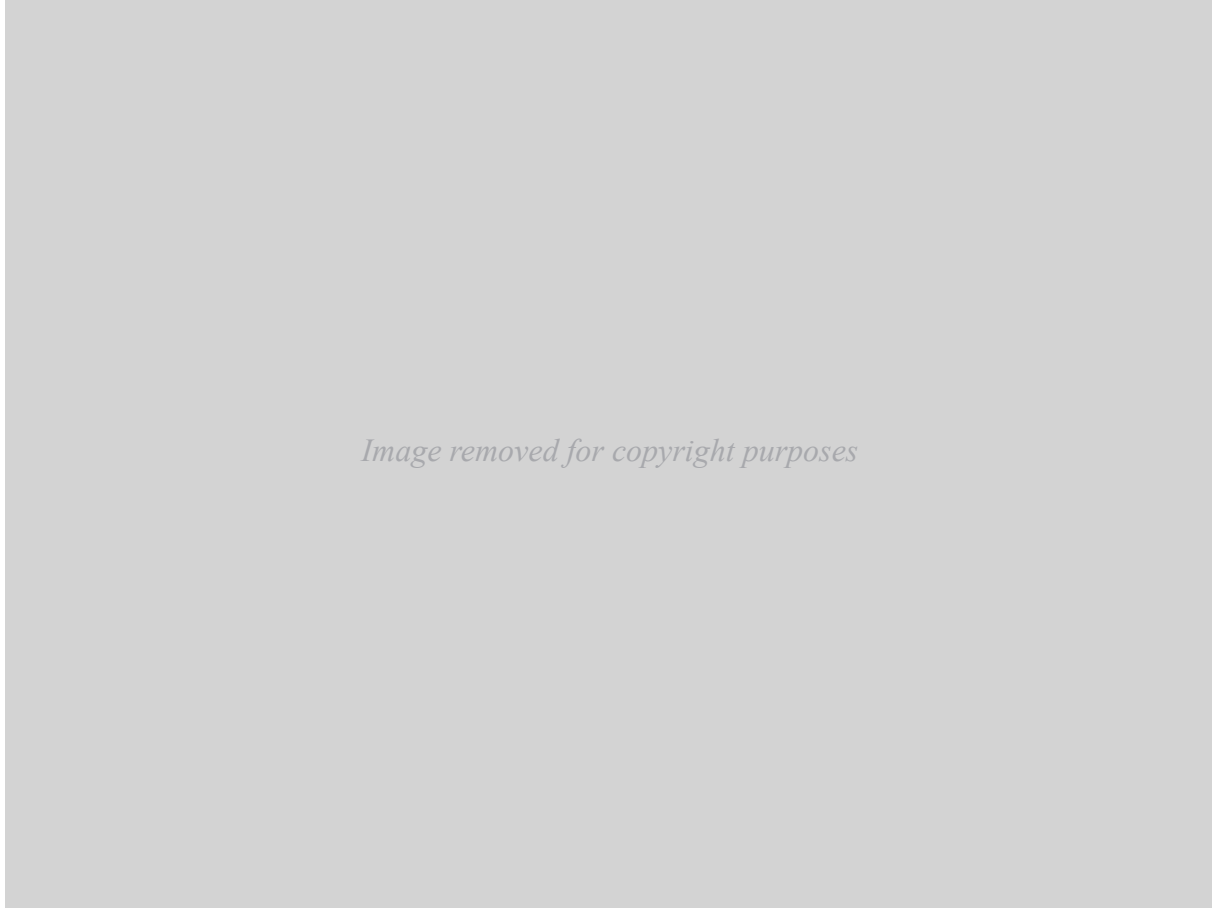
Pākehā settlement, as highlighted by historian Ben Schrader. He notes that “it was typical of the settlers’ mindset that rather than adapting the grid to the lie of the land, they preferred to modify the land so it conformed to the grid.”<sup>18</sup> However, I do not wish to follow this pattern of disregard. Instead, following the example of Mackintosh, how might a designer like myself approach the landscape as an archive, acknowledging the stories that have come before, even the messy, complicated ones—city slums, deforestation, and burning rubbish—as layers which provide the urban fabric with texture? This doesn’t mean celebrating the more sinister histories of the city but acknowledging them as part of the fabric.

Working within the context of Tāmaki Makaurau and similarly addressing a place of Indigenous significance (Maungawhau/Mt Eden) are landscape architects Isthmus. Their project Maungawhau Tihi (2020) saw the addition of a boardwalk that floats above the volcanic cone (fig. 12). This structure treads lightly upon the sacred maunga, elevating and guiding pedestrians to the summit. The ancestral mountain has been severely scarred by footprints tracking back and forth across its ground. The project took its cues from the site, seeking to serve the needs of the maunga and helping to create a healthy relationship between the mountain and its visitors. Place-making, in this instance, wasn’t about constructing or imposing a new narrative within the landscape. Instead, it was about sensitivity to the landscape’s needs, stories, lives, and the people who inhabit and occupy it.

The work of Isthmus upon Maungawhau/Mt Eden, through their boardwalk structure, highlighted the importance of asking, what does a site require? Within the context of Tāmaki Makaurau’s pre-colonial waterfront, is it alternative pedestrian routes that activate the vertical remnants of the shoreline, elevating pedestrians above the bustling streets and extending an invitation to slow down? Within the context of the car-dominated city, I suggest that the landscape signals a need for more human-scaled environments.

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<sup>18</sup> Ben Schrader, *The Big Smoke: New Zealand Cities, 1840-1920* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2016), 92-93.



**Figure 12.** Isthmus. Maungawhau Tihi Boardwalk, Landscape Architecture, 2020. Photograph by Petra Leary.  
<https://nzila.co.nz/showcase/maungawhau-tihi-boardwalk>

Treading lightly would look different in the context of the urban landscape versus an ancestral mountain, as preservation isn't the matter at hand. However, a sensitive design approach is relevant. Working within the established city, in a landscape that results from change over time, it is interesting to consider all the elements of space as part of the situation. It is undoubtedly more interesting than starting from nothing.<sup>19</sup>

This is the mindset of French architects Lacaton & Vassal. Taking care of the existing, they understand a site's history as the addition of layers. These layers are to be preserved, not necessarily out of respect, but as a way of appreciating the site and its textured past as a resource to be maximised through design.<sup>20</sup> One of their early projects, Place Léon Aucoc (Bordeaux, 1996, fig. 13), highlights this approach rather unusually. They were approached by the Bordeaux city council in 1996 as part of a scheme to embellish the city's town squares. However, after conducting a site analysis and consulting with the locals, they ultimately decided that the square was "already beautiful"<sup>21</sup> and that nothing new, besides an improved maintenance programme, was required.

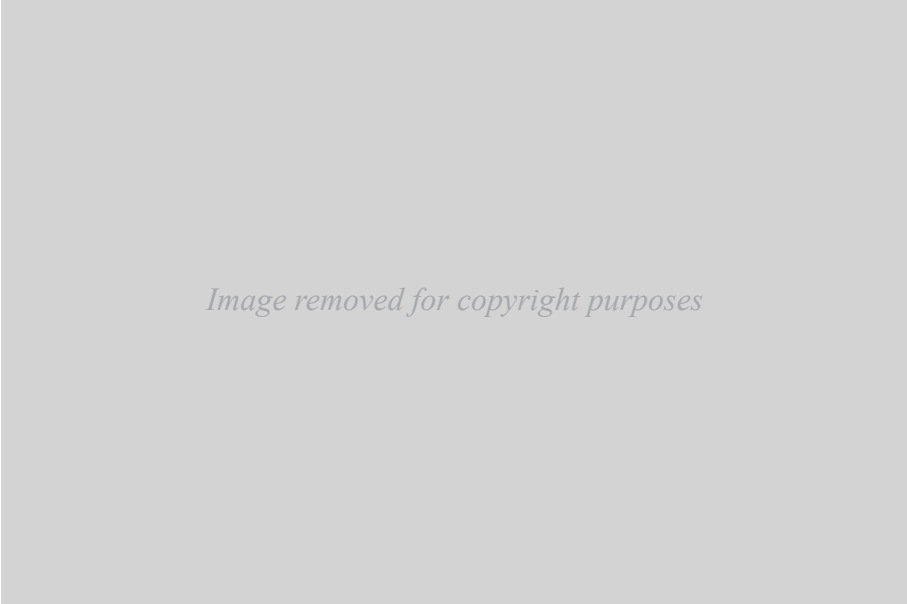
This lack of intervention highlights the necessity for an understanding of architecture beyond construction. The square was functional, and the community felt there was no need for change. The site already held significance and value within the community and for the people who used the space. As in the case of Maungawhau Tihi, the landscape and its occupants signalled their requirements, and the designers responded accordingly. This space, absent of intervention, reframes how I understand and approach the gaps in the urban fabric. Perhaps they might be better understood as gaps in the urban programme and an invitation to the urban pedestrian to slow down or pause; an invitation to wonder and imagine.

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<sup>19</sup> Louisiana Channel, "Anne Lacaton: Always Add," August 21, 2018, video, <https://channel.louisiana.dk/video/anne-lacatonalways-add>.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Lacaton & Vassal, "Place Léon Aucoc," accessed May 5, 2023, <https://www.lacatonvassal.com/index.php?idp=37#>.



**Figure 13.** Lacaton & Vassal. Place Léon Aucoc, Public Space, 1996.

<https://www.lacatonvassal.com/index.php?idp=37#>

## Absence

The Kauri Timber Building addition by Fearon Hay Architects fills the gap between the Auckland Transport car park building on Fanshawe Street and the heritage building itself (fig. 14). The concave surface of the facade recalls the timber booms which once floated in the waters of the Waitematā Harbour, and the industry which once occurred in the area. The form speaks to the absence—that which once was, but no longer is.

British sculptor Rachel Whiteread consistently addresses themes of absence throughout her practice. Perhaps her most famous work, *House* (East London, 1994, fig.15), was a cast of the interior of a Victorian-era townhouse. In her words, she attempted to “mummify the air”<sup>22</sup> in the room, resulting in a heavy, Brutalist mass. She gave weight and presence to absence by inverting it. The resulting object has monumental proportions.

Worked in concrete, Whiteread’s *House* recalls memorials such as the Edwin Lutyens Cenotaph (1920, fig. 16) through both the medium and the casting process itself. To cast an object or artefact is to preserve it by making it solid and enduring. As architecture historian Adrian Forty suggests, “Concrete has become the default material for memorials.”<sup>23</sup> Here occurs a curious contradiction, as he also points out that “concrete has, at the same time, been so generally associated with the erasure and obliteration of memory.”<sup>24</sup>

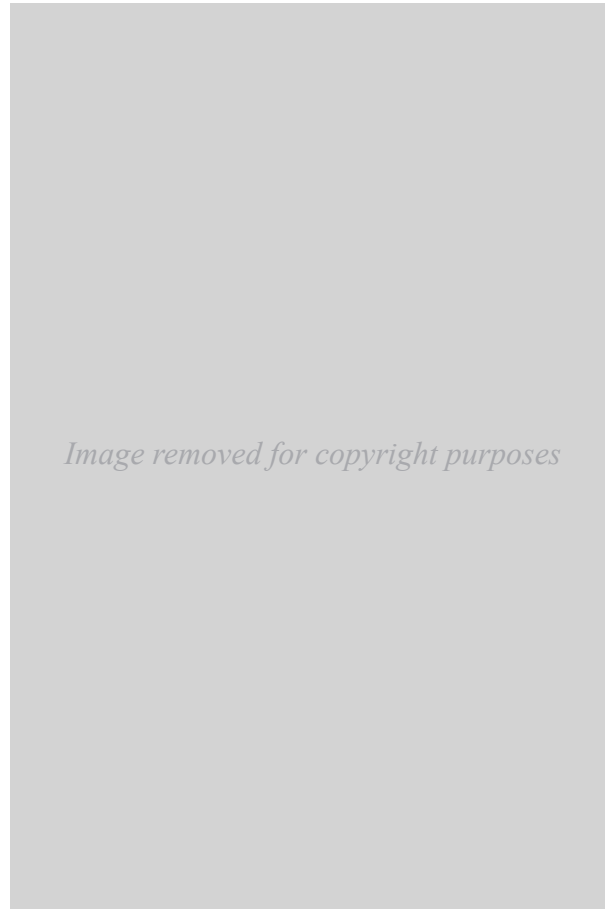
This is an interesting tension to work within. Considering ideas of erasure of absence, I would suggest that negative space, rather than a heavy solid mass, is more evocative of memory. The hollows invite us to fill them with our thought and reflections, projecting them into space. As

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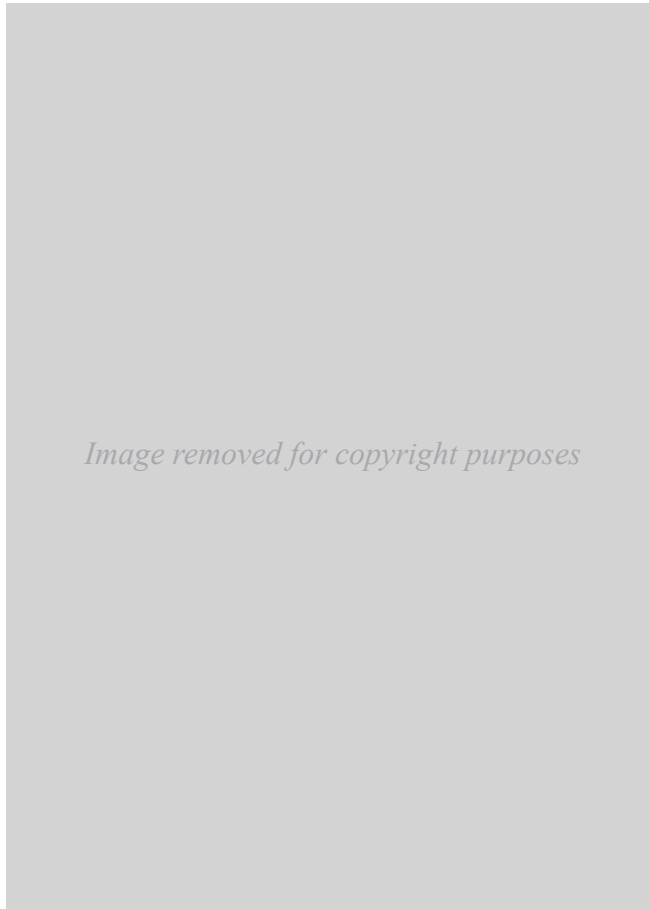
<sup>22</sup> National Gallery of Art, “Rachel Whiteread: Ghost,” May 30, 2014, video, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_Z1Vjwsv4gw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Z1Vjwsv4gw).

<sup>23</sup> Adrian Forty, “Concrete and Memory,” in *Urban Memory: History and Amnesia in the Modern City*, ed. Mark Crinson (London: Routledge, 2005), 75.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.



**Figure 14.** Fearon Hay Architects. Kauri Timber Building, Architecture, 2015. Photograph by Patrick Reynolds.  
<https://www.nzia.co.nz/awards/local/award-detail/6596>



**Figure 15.** Whiteread, Rachel. *House*, Sculpture, 1993. Photograph by Sue Omerod.  
<https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-rachel-whitereads-house-unlivable-controversial-unforgettable>



**Figure 16.** Luytens, Edwin. Cenotaph, Photographer Unknown. Circa. 1920.  
<https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/war-memorial/galleries/auckland-cenotaph>

Pallasmaa explains, “incompleteness and fragmentation possess a special evocative power,”<sup>25</sup> as they force us to reminisce and imagine.<sup>26</sup> This experience of projecting our thoughts fosters a more intimate relationship with our locales.

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<sup>25</sup> Pallasmaa, “Space, Place, Memory,” 21.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

## **Section Three.**

**Methodology of Practice:**

A Wandering/Wondering Practice

As we embark on our walk, our eyes are not upon a distant horizon. The first steps we take are tentative, even experimental, and time passes slowly as we attempt them. As yet unsure of our bearing or direction, each step feels like our first: a one-off that may lead to a second, a third, and so on, but that may just as well come to nothing.<sup>27</sup>

For me, walking is simultaneously a metaphor for creative practice, a specific strategy within my practice, and, in this case, the function of the designed outcome. The uncertain movements and tentative first steps taken upon setting out on a walk, as described by Ingold and Vergunst, resonate with my experience of beginning the design process. There is an initial aimlessness to the design motions as I explore sites, sketch, and conduct material experiments. This setting-out phase describes my rudimentary ideas and a feeling-forward process, as I search for a concept to frame the project.

We do not, in other words, start to walk as the athlete starts to run, at the shot of a pistol, springing into action at the instant. For it is only after quite a few steps, when the feet have found their rhythm and the body its momentum, that we discover—without having been aware of any moment of commencement—that we are already walking.<sup>28</sup>

Therefore, as I continue my walk, following the breadcrumbs or connecting the dots of these early explorations and experiments, I gain a sense of direction and momentum, and the project begins to unfold.

This section describes the three core rhythms of my creative practice (walking, tracing, and making), positioned as a Wandering/Wondering Practice. The notion of a wandering body

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<sup>27</sup> Tim Ingold and Jo Lee Vergunst, introduction to *Ways of Walking: Ethnography and Practice on Foot* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 3.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

resonates with the wondering mind. Rebecca Solnit eloquently describes this relationship, suggesting, “the rhythm of walking generates a kind of rhythm of thinking, and the passage through a landscape echoes or stimulates the passage through a series of thoughts.”<sup>29</sup> I would further argue that the rhythms of tracing and making are similarly meditative processes. In this sense, my practice comprises three lines of inquiry that explore motion and thought. The meandering and musing design process creates spaces that echo this course.

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<sup>29</sup> Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (London: Granta Books, 2014), 5-6.

## Walking

My walking practice is a process of discovery that began as a way to discover site. Undertaking a series of walks along the original shoreline, from Point Erin to the Parnell Baths (fig. 17), I started narrowing my area of interest along this stretch. I was captivated by the vertical remnants of the former landscape along Sturdee Street, Fanshawe Street, and Drake Street, and subsequent walks followed as a means of site analysis. During these walks, I would stop to write the occasional note and capture my observations in photographs (fig. 18). I was non-systematic in my approach. Feeling my way forward, I focussed instead on the atmospheric qualities of space. While I recorded minor data points on some of these earlier walks, this method quickly dissolved as the walking practice progressed. It felt strange and unnatural to cease movement within the urban landscape, even if only momentarily. Keenly aware of my stillness in this busy environment, I felt I was interrupting the flow of things around me. Unlike a coastal interlude, whose tranquil setting invites stillness, this so-called 'coastline' proposes the opposite. As an urban pedestrian moving through the urban space, my pace was a hasty, continual forward motion. That is, until it came time to wait at a traffic light, although I would suggest that my body didn't feel at rest, even then. Instead, there was a building sense of anticipation as I awaited the pulsating signal of the green man, indicating it was finally my turn to go. My body was synchronised to the pace of the vehicular traffic rushing past.

With each walk, I grew increasingly weary of the urban landscape. Tracing the labyrinth of lines, I marched on as the pavement marched on before me. My experience of walking in the city was one of endurance. I didn't feel particularly sensitised to my environment; instead, I felt detached. Skimming the surface, I made no impression on the landscape, and the landscape made no impression on me.

Throughout these encounters, I kept thinking back to my previous experiences of walking along

*Image removed for copyright purposes*

**Figure 17.** Auckland Council. Auckland's Original Shoreline Heritage Walk, Map, Date Unknown.

<https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/arts-culture-heritage/heritage-walks-places/Documents/auckland-city-heritage-walks-original-shoreline.pdf>



**Figure 18.** Van Wyk, L. Observation, Photography, 2022.  
*A tree root breaks through the pavement.*

beaches and rocky coastlines at Cockle Bay, Maraetai, and Duder Regional Park—local haunts of mine. These environments are incredibly sensory, and there is an apparent exchange between my body and the landscape; the weight of my body sinking into soft sand and mudflats, leaving an impression, a trace. They are inviting spaces that engage my senses rather than repel them. My mind would stray to these places, and my body soon followed. Following Solnit’s suggestion that “walking is a subject that is always straying,”<sup>30</sup> I took a detour from the urban to the coastal landscape, that I imagined as passing backwards through time to a lost urban coastline.

At Cockle Bay, I used the same documentation methods as in my earlier urban walks. This time, the process was generative, the sounds, sensations, and visuals captivating my imagination. My descriptions of the site were sensuous (fig. 19), and the images were vibrant with colour and texture (fig. 20). Within this location, my pace slowed right down. I was taking it in, delighted by my surroundings. I wondered what it might look and feel like to encounter a similar sensuous landscape within the built environment. While the coastal character of Auckland’s pre-colonial waterfront has been long erased by land reclamation, the area contains various material histories along the old shoreline, which could be explored through design to create similarly immersive and engaging environments.

Detouring became a way of approaching the site from a distance. My coastal musings at Cockle Bay were a way to stimulate ideas around the coastal landscape that would have once existed downtown; and to explore sensual environments that were stifled within the urban landscape. Thus, walking begins a mapping out process, describing the details of the designed experience.

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<sup>30</sup> Solnit, *Wanderlust*, 8.

Cockle Bay

August 2, 4:20 pm

mostly sunny

low tide

soft sand

salty breeze

stillness

silence

a piece of cliff crumbles away

a passing ferry drones in the distance

leaves rustle on high

seagulls squawking

bells chiming

cockle shells crunch underfoot

squelching mudflats

rocks cool to touch

coarse sandstone cliffs graze skin

velvet clay

wet earth

**Figure 19.** Van Wyk, L. Sensuous Notes, List, 2022.

*Recording my sensory exploration at Cockle Bay.*



**Figure 20.** Van Wyk, L. Cockle Bay Rocks, Photography, 2022.  
*The rocks at Cockle Bay were vibrant with colour and texture.*

## Tracing

Walking and tracing share a commonality in that they both proceed along lines. In this urban place-making project, both methods proceed along the line of the original foreshore. While walking is a ‘mapping out’ process detailing the experience of space, tracing is a ‘drawing out’ process. Walking is an embodied approach, engaging the senses and focusing on the experiential and atmospheric qualities of site. In contrast, working with digital archives and the aerial perspective, tracing the site occurs from a distance.

Tracing is a method of drawing within my practice and can be understood as both a process of extraction (to draw something out) as well as a mark-marking practice. ‘Drawing out’ suggests a pulling motion as I unearth the historical narratives of site. The discovery of site through walking provided a series of anchor points, or moorings, for the wandering practice, as well as the wandering line itself. The heritage buildings adjacent to each identified locale provide a point of entry into these impenetrable walls. Poring over digital archives of historical images and written accounts, a picture began to form in my mind about the former condition of the sites and their surrounding context. From the sea of images, I began to extract those of interest, particularly those that addressed the material histories of site and its atmospheric qualities (fig. 21). These historical narratives began to weave a thread, a guiding line between the three locations.

Tracing was then applied in a more literal sense within the practice. Following the narrative thread woven through the archival process, a series of marks were made on paper. I began by printing aerial photographs of the sites and laying tracing paper over the top, marking out the programme of space. The first marks made were three lines delineating the three walls. Bold in stroke, they outline the scope of the design (fig. 22). The weight of these lines echoes the weight of the walls themselves—heavy, grounding elements anchoring the wandering line. The second



KAURI TIMBER COMPANY'S BOOMS.

**Figure 21.** Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections. NZG-19060721-0028-03, Newspaper, 1906.

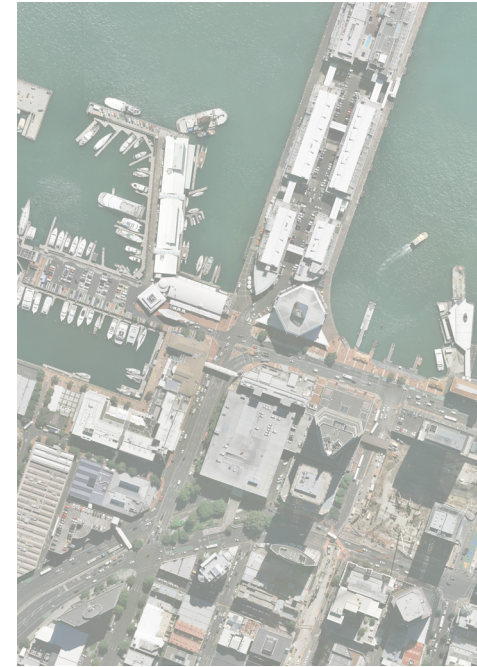
<https://kura.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz/digital/collection/photos/id/142732/rec/53>

*Photograph of the Kauri Timber Company's booms floating in the waters of the Waitematā Harbour showing what the activity and atmosphere of the area once was.*



**Figure 22.** Van Wyk, L. Bold Line, Digital, 2023.  
*The bold lines delineate the three walls.*

kind of line is the dashed line (fig. 23). These open, porous lines indicate the new proposed pedestrian routes and communicate the vast expanses of space between each grounding structure. These lines are less concrete; the walking experience along them is intended as a fluid, open route which can be followed and departed at any point. These lines recall the formerly aqueous nature of the landscape through their tendency to ebb and flow. The cross line indicates an omission (fig. 24). It calls for the removal of car park buildings and the opening of space as intentional gaps within the urban fabric, to create opportunities for more human-scaled design.



**Figure 23.** Van Wyk, L. Dashed Line, Digital, 2023.  
*The porous, dashed lines indicate the spaces between the three walls.*



**Figure 24.** Van Wyk, L. Crossed Line, Digital, 2023.

*The crossed lines call for the removal of car park buildings to create opportunities for human-scaled design.*

## Making

My making explores gaps, cracks, and crevices through a casting and 3D modelling practice. Like walking and tracing, making is a meditative process which involves repetition and rhythm. When designing along the invisible line of the original foreshore, there is an inherent narrative of absence within the landscape. I explored this by focusing on processes of solid and void. Two phases of making, material experiments and 3D modelling, explore these processes through casting techniques and perforated volumes.

The first phase involved working with materials, specifically concrete, to generate a range of cast objects and artefacts made in response to my walking encounters (fig. 25). These objects were tentative first steps, musings, and meditations. Ingold talks about thinking through making and suggests that making exists in the tension between two motions: a feeling forward through material making and a being pulled from in front through the imagination. He states, “materials have their own friction and drag; they hold us back.”<sup>31</sup> This tension is interesting to note when designing within the built environment whose pace is hasty and hurried, with no drag in sight—thinking through material processes, how might the design outcome mimic the practice of making by creating a similar ‘drag’ in the urban landscape?

When I visited Cockle Bay the landscape was sensuous and textured; my imagination stirred. However, the process involved a series of steps when it came time to make the desired objects. Having the idea to create a concrete cast of the sandstone texture (fig. 26), I began by pressing my knuckles into soft clay (fig. 27); poured a Pinkysil mould (fig. 28); mixed concrete; poured concrete over the mould; and finally set it (fig. 29). As Ingold informs us, “working with materials close up, there is a limit to how fast we can move.”<sup>32</sup> Though concrete is a malleable

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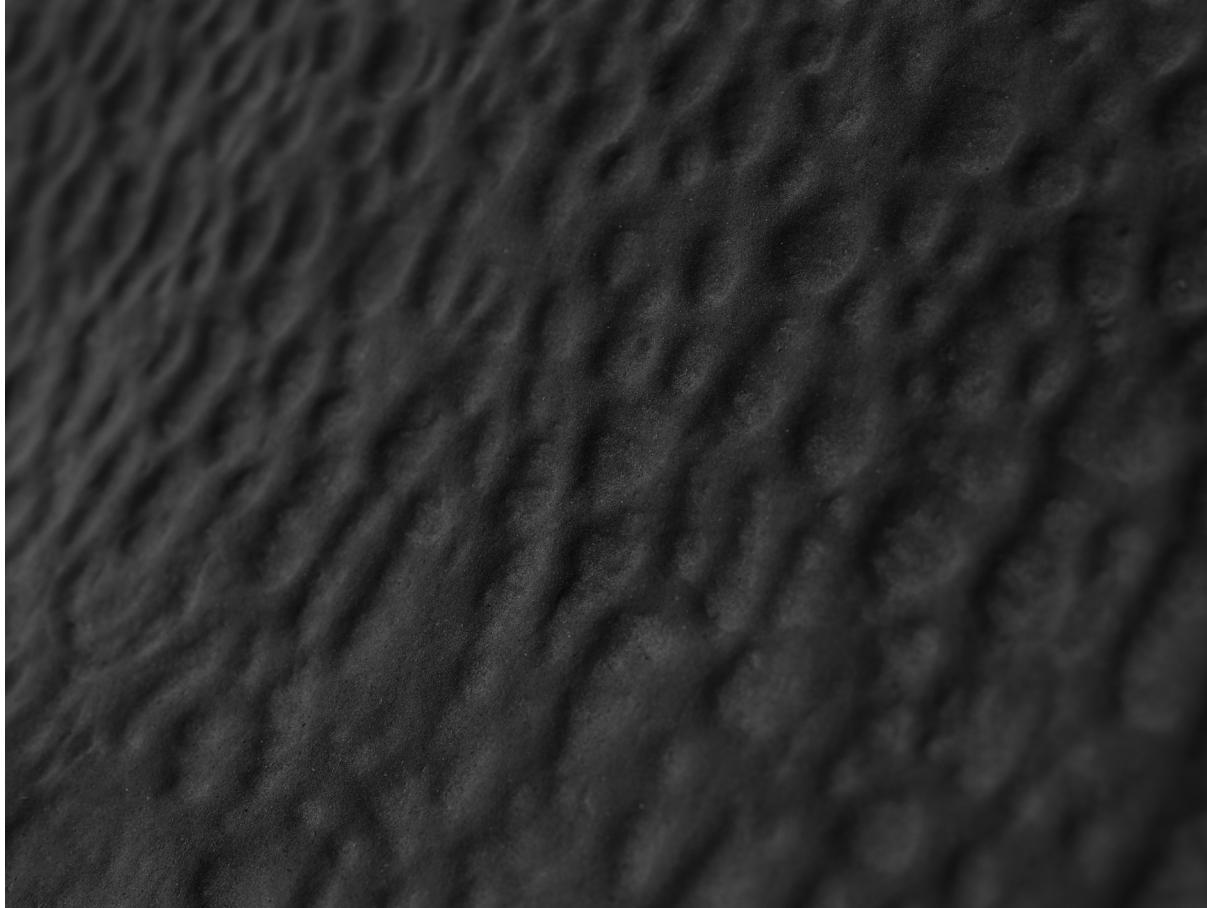
<sup>31</sup> Pohjoisen Kulttuuri-Instituutti—Institute for Northern Culture, “Ingold: Thinking through Making,” October 31, 2013, video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ygne72-4zyo>.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.



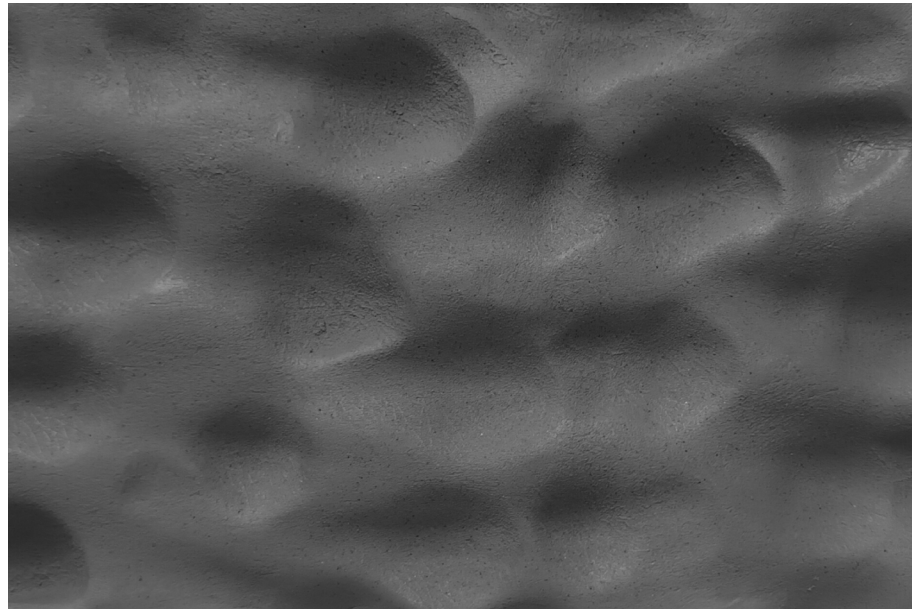
**Figure 25.** Van Wyk, L. Musings and Meditations, Concrete, 2022.

*Concrete casts of shells and rocks collected during my coastal interludes.*

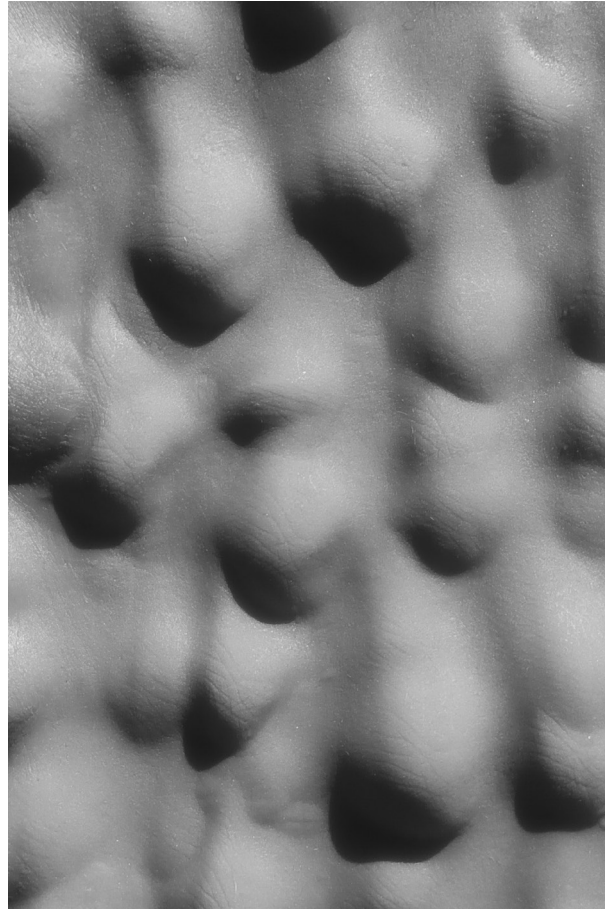


**Figure 26.** Van Wyk, L. Sandstone, Photography, 2022.

*The sandstone cliff at Cockle Bay exhibits a pressed quality, the depressions reminding me of fingerprints.*



**Figure 27.** Van Wyk, L. Clay Mould, Photography, 2022.  
*Impressions of my knuckles in wet clay.*



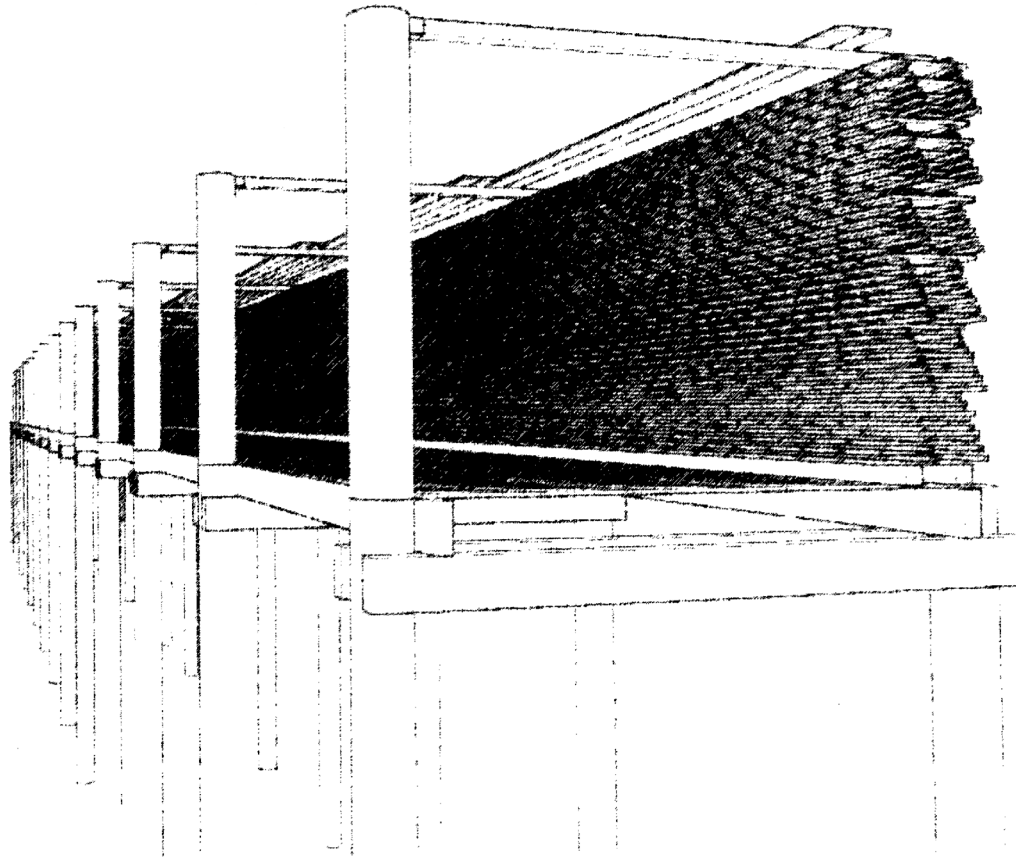
**Figure 28.** Van Wyk, L. Pinkysil Mould, Photography, 2022.  
*Pinkysil cast of my knuckles.*



**Figure 29.** Van Wyk, L. Dips and Hollows, Concrete, 2022.  
*Concrete paver preserving the weight and texture of my knuckles.*

material, it has its limitations — namely, that it requires ideas to be formed and moulds made before you can cast or shape it.

The second phase of my making practice is 3D modelling. This process involves tracing the lines of rippling water, cut timber, and rising curls of smoke from the atmospheric images identified in the drawing-out process (fig. 30). Working in the digital realm, a similar friction to working with materials is encountered. Making requires numerical inputs in order to give space definition, which creates drag as you have to stop to research and consider the dimensions of timber beams, paving details, etc. Through this slow process, a series of spaces began to take shape, allowing me to imagine how passing through them might be experienced through friction and drag.



**Figure 30.** Van Wyk, L. Rhino 3D Model, Digital, 2022.  
*Tracing the lines of timber stacks in 3D modelling software.*

## **Section Four.**

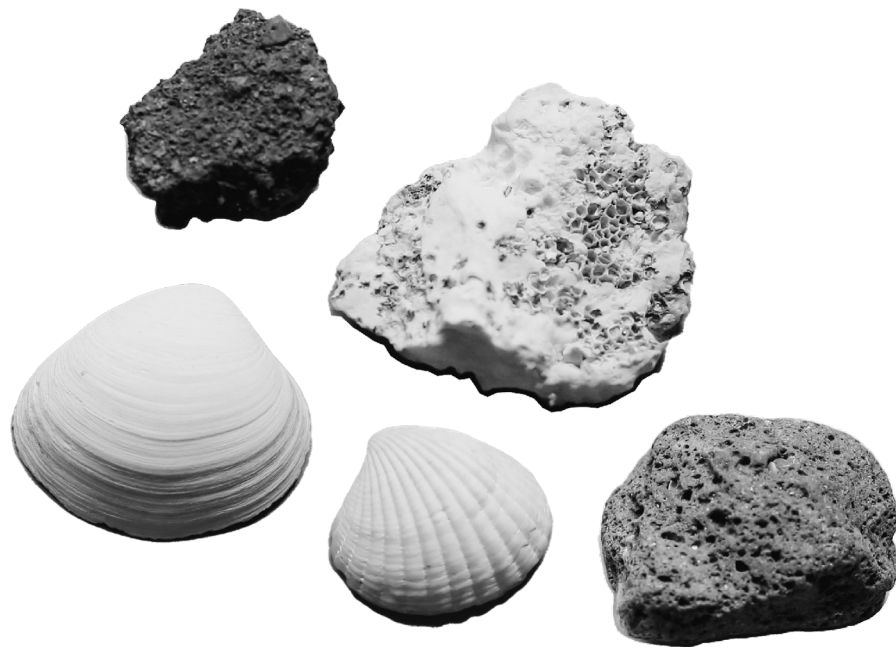
### Description of Practice

## Material Imaginaries: Concrete, Sediments, and Impressions

Surrounded by the city's bland concrete surfaces, but fascinated by the richness of concrete as used by designers like Peter Zumthor (discussed in section 2.1), I chose in my early work to investigate the material imaginary of concrete. I gravitated toward a casting practice. However, the question arose, what to cast? Here the wandering began. Aimless, I turned to walking to collect objects which I could then cast. On walks along shorelines past and present, during brisk urban encounters and tranquil coastal interludes, I would occasionally stop to collect objects of interest. These momentary stops prompted my interest in Tuan's notion of space as movement and place as pause (discussed in section 2.1). This was a tentative process of feeling forward and feeling out my rudimentary ideas around place. Through these walks, I discovered that my coastal interludes were far more productive than my urban encounters, in terms of collecting objects and generating these slowing moments of pause, reflection, and engagement with my environment. The resulting object collections reflect this, consisting of an abundance of shells and rocks (fig. 31) of various kinds. I would press each object into clay to create a series of moulds before pouring the concrete. When I broke the moulds, traces of concrete would linger upon the dry clay (fig. 32). Through this process, I discovered the way concrete implies an absence (of the cast object) and long timescales (since things become more durable as casts).

Reflecting on my coastal walks and the layers of rock and sediment observed in the exposed earth of cliff faces (fig. 33), I began thinking through layers. Taking images from my site visits, I began layering them (fig. 34). The contour-like rocks in these images prompted me to cast the contours of the Fanshawe Street site. This process involved cutting (fig. 35) and stacking (fig. 36) the contour layers, before casting a series of concrete pavers from the moulds (fig. 37). The resulting artefacts have a coastal character with rough edges and sand textures (fig. 38).

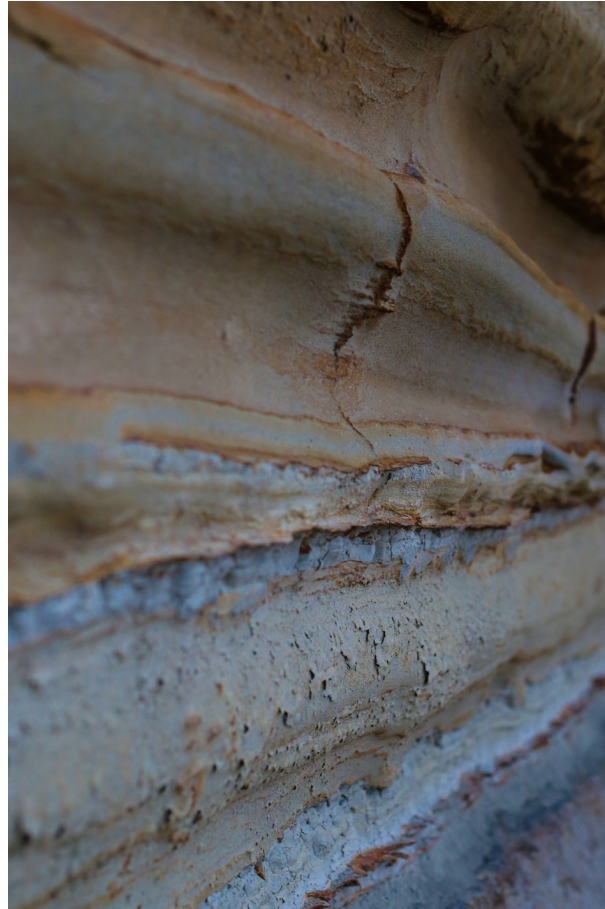
This stage of the project culminated in the *Material Imaginaries Exhibition* (fig. 39) in June of



**Figure 31.** Van Wyk, L. Shells and Rocks, Photography, 2022.  
*A collection of objects gathered during my walks.*

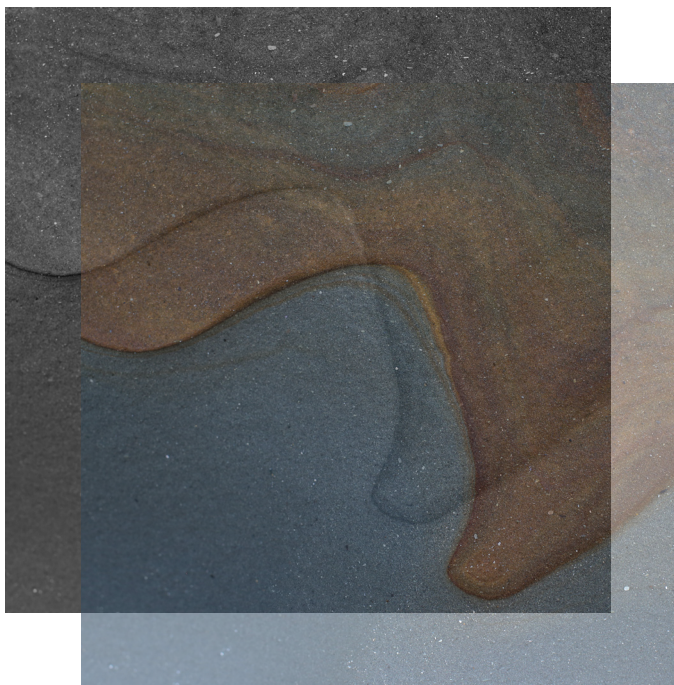


**Figure 32.** Van Wyk, L. Residue, Photography, 2022.  
*Traces of concrete linger upon a broken clay mould.*

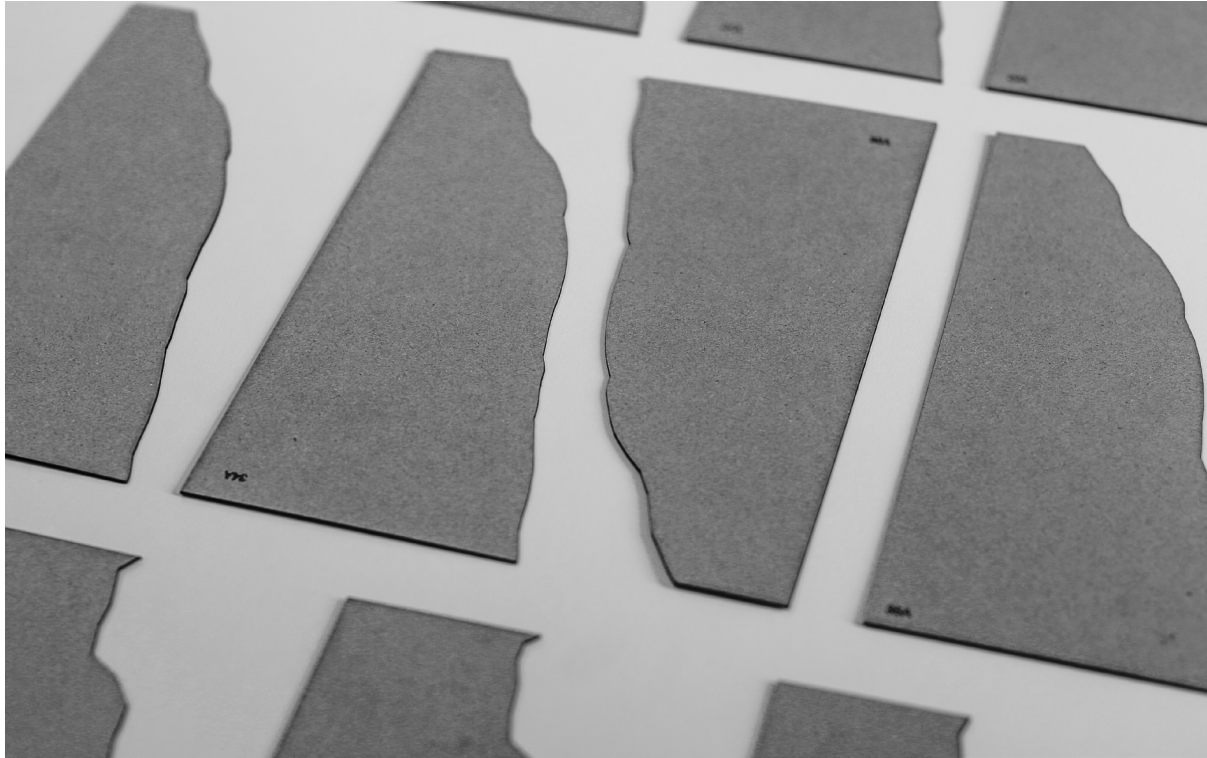


**Figure 33.** Van Wyk, L. Layered Earth, Photography, 2022.

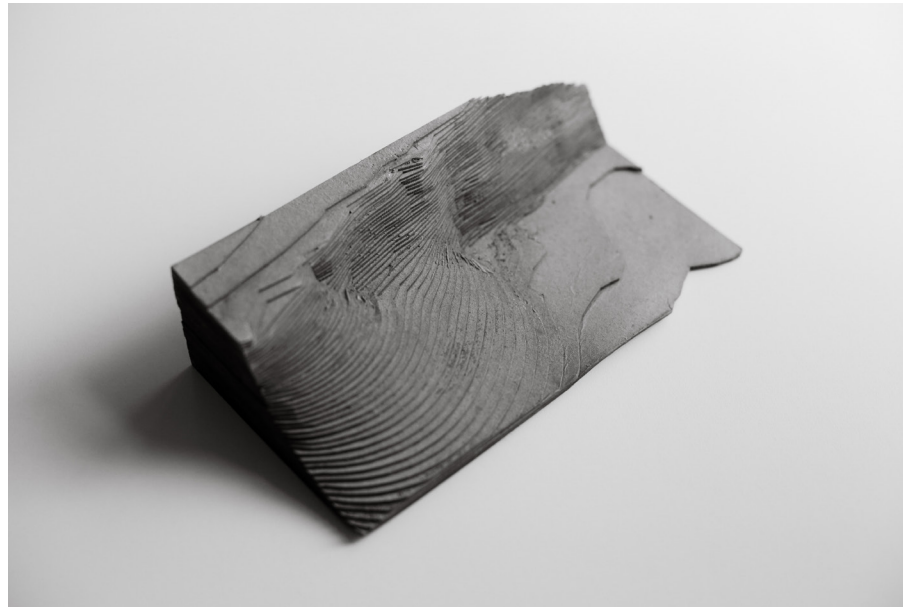
*Layers of rock and sediment exposed in the cliff face at Cockle Bay.*



**Figure 34.** Van Wyk, L. Layering, Photography, 2022.  
*Layering images of the contoured rocks at Cockle Bay.*



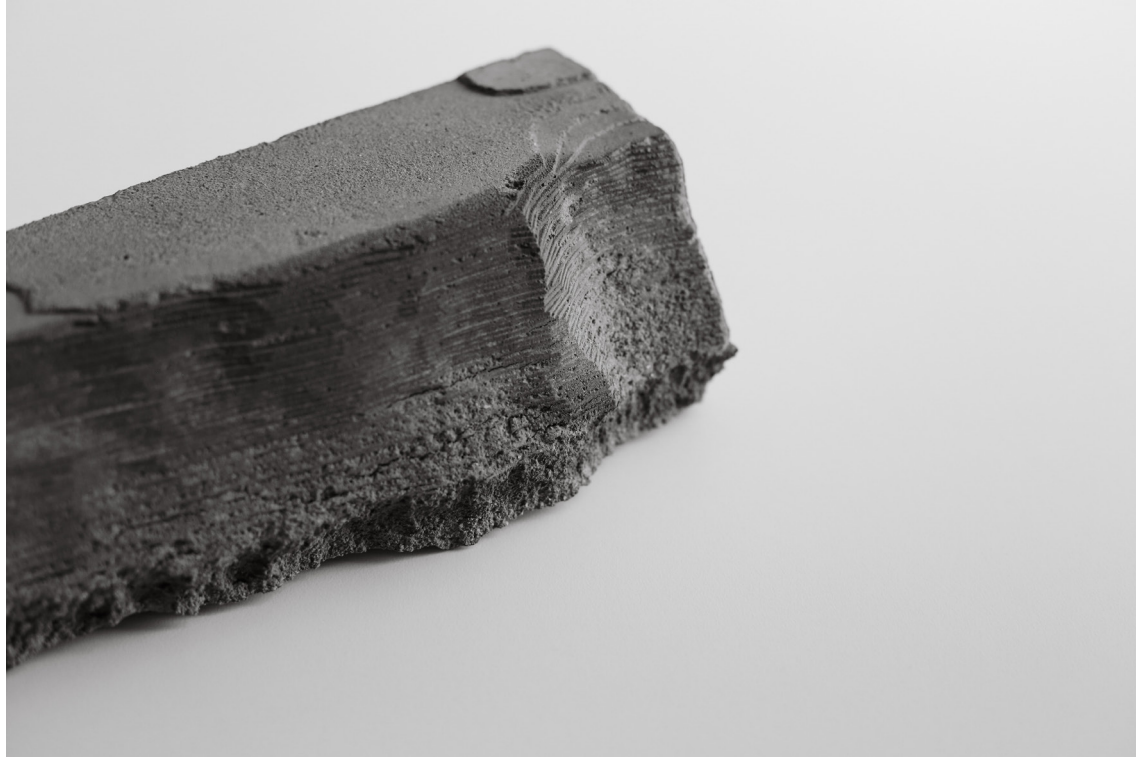
**Figure 35.** Van Wyk, L. Cutting, Photography, 2022.  
*Laser cut layers of the Fanshawe Street site contours.*



**Figure 36.** Van Wyk, L. Stacking, Photography, 2022.  
*Partial model of the Fanshawe Street site contours.*



**Figure 37.** Van Wyk, L. Contour Paver One, Concrete, 2022.  
*One of three concrete pavers cast from the Fanshawe Street site contours.*



**Figure 38.** Van Wyk, L. Contour Paver Two, Concrete, 2022.

*The rough edges and sand textures of the concrete cast contour pavers possess a coast-like quality.*



**Figure 39.** Van Wyk, L. Material Imaginaries Exhibition, Concrete, 2022.

*A collection of concrete cast objects, collected during my walks, exhibited at the Material Imaginaries Exhibition in June of 2022.*

2022, showcased at St Paul Street Gallery Three, in Auckland, New Zealand.

## A Place-Making Case Study: St Paul Street Activation Project

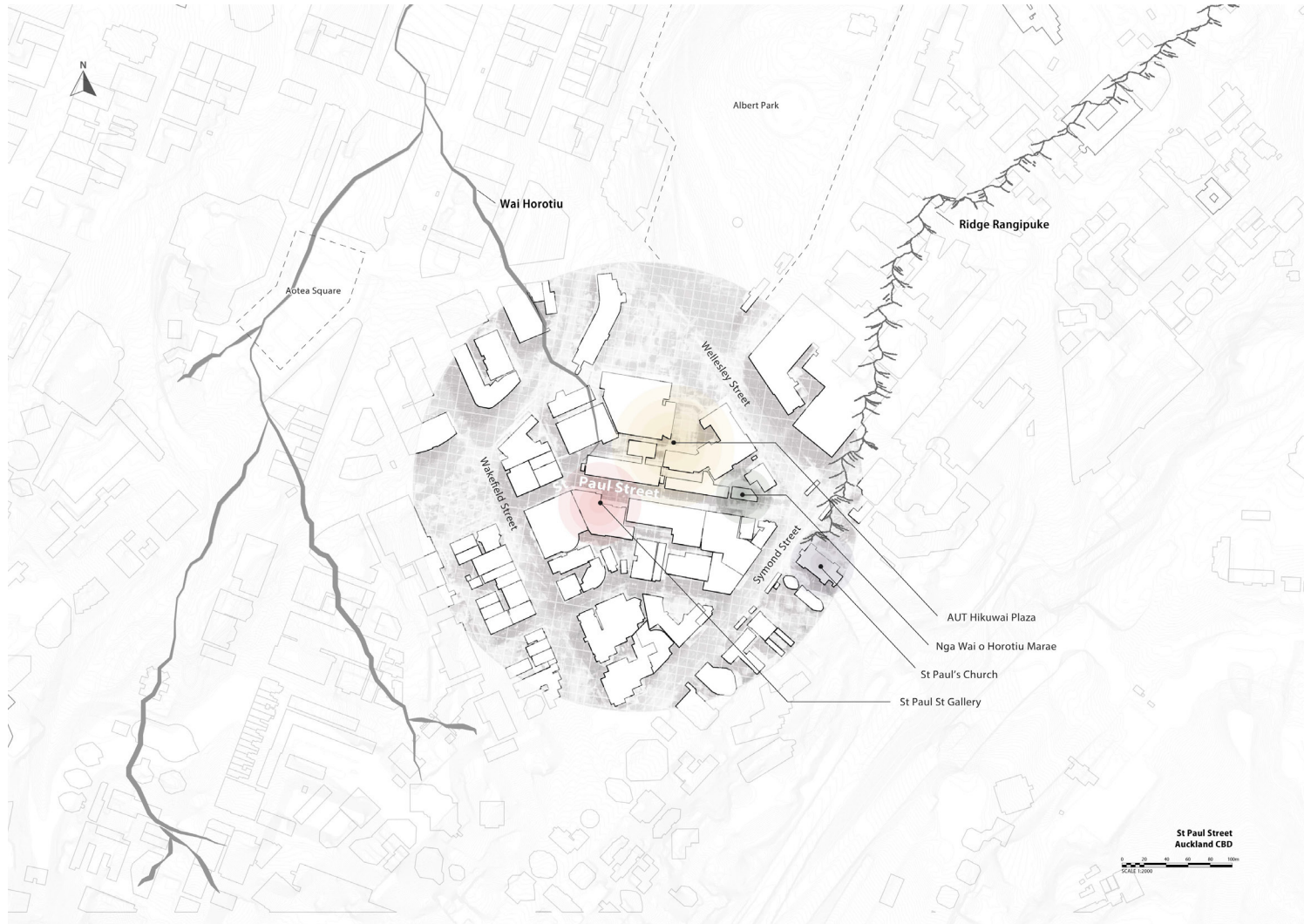
The second stage of the project was an external project for the streetscape of Auckland's St Paul Street. This project allowed me to form an approach to place-making within Tāmaki Makaurau which I can apply to my sites along the original shoreline. The St Paul Street Activation Project was commissioned by Auckland Council's Tāmaki Makaurau Design Open unit (led by Auckland Council's Claire Davis and Sue Gallagher and Carl Douglas from Auckland University of Technology (AUT), and carried out in collaboration with fellow AUT Master of Design students Emma Choi and Jessica Juno). A temporary street upgrade was installed in 2018 as part of the council's Tactical Urbanism Initiative (TUI) and has reached the end of its lifespan (fig. 40). The painted polka dot ground graphics, astroturf, red and green plastic tub seating arrangements, and planters on the street were worn and had been only partly successful in activating public use of the footpath. There is a need to upgrade the existing installation to a longer-lasting, higher-quality solution. We were briefed to develop a concept design within the boundaries of the current TUI project that would provide a quality place-making solution for the street and the St Paul Street Gallery spaces.

Drawing on our research approaches, including my wandering/wondering method and focus on the material imaginary of concrete, we explored the site's historical narratives and geographic characters (fig. 41). Early site analysis unearthed the former name of the street: Abercrombie Street, a name with an etymology related to the idea of confluence. This introduced an aqueous narrative reinforced by the historic Waihorotiu waterways concealed below the surface. Looking then at the broader historical context of the site, we identified Rangipuke, the ridgeline that runs along Symonds Street. Our design proposed to draw these two wandering lines within the street.

The St Paul Street site is perched atop the ridge and could be considered a place of pooling or



Figure 40. Van Wyk, L. Auckland Council TUI Project 2018, Photography, 2023.



**Figure 41.** Choi, Emma. St Paul Street Site Map, Digital, 2023.

*Showing the broader context of St Paul Street and the wandering lines of the Waihorotiu waterways and the Rangipuke ridgeline.*

gathering within the landscape. Here, water from the various tributaries trickles together before rushing down the slope of Governor Fitzroy Place toward the Queen Street Valley/Waihorotiu. The notion of pooling began to paint a watery image of the site. People's social activity and movements within the street was perceived as mimicking the flow of the waterways once present within the area.

The design scheme takes its cues from the landscape and centres around two lines (the grounded line and the pipeline) and fluid movements (flow, pooling, and porosity, as seen in fig. 42). The grounded line became expressed as a series of 3D-printed concrete seating arrangements. The benches' texture recalls the site's contours and geographic character. They gently slope up from the pavement and recede at various points, the unseen becoming seen for a moment before disappearing into the ground. The pipeline is tubular steel which loops and weaves throughout the street, serving a range of functions: bike racks, tables, and barriers. Like the concrete line, the fluid line was articulated as a curved pipeline that emerges and disappears; each time it appears, it serves a different purpose (fig. 43). This fluid line was also imagined as a playful drawn line, referencing the School of Art & Design at AUT, which is housed on St Paul Street.

The flow of people within the site determines the program of the space. They recall the watery narrative of place. The concrete benches bend and curve, pooling and gathering people together (fig. 44). At the centre, where people exit one building and cross the street to another, a series of sloping concrete planters provide a porous moment, allowing people to pass through easily (fig. 45).

This St Paul Street project was relevant to my shoreline project in that it helped me to develop the idea of a discontinuous line or an implied continuity, as expressed by the heavy, grounded line and fluid pipeline. It enabled me to experiment with and understand some possibilities for concrete elements. And it helped me better understand how to activate people's use of the street (as well as some of the practical issues involved).



**Figure 42.** Choi, Emma. St Paul Street Perspective One, Digital, 2023.

*Showing the two wandering lines of the design scheme: the concrete grounded line and the tubular steel pipeline.*



**Figure 43.** Choi, Emma. St Paul Street Perspective Two, Digital, 2023.  
*Showing the pipeline appear as a series of tables.*



**Figure 44.** Choi, Emma. St Paul Street Perspective Three, Digital, 2023.  
*Showing the concrete seating arrangements pooling and gathering the public for a screening event.*



**Figure 45.** Choi, Emma. St Paul Street Perspective Four, Digital, 2023.  
*Showing the porous concrete planters which allow for pedestrians to cross the street.*

## Design Proposal: The Three Locales

I returned to the Fanshawe Street site with a new understanding of how I could make the shoreline present through a series of discontinuous moments. The three key locations would each have their own character and provide a sense of landscape continuity. Working these three sites alongside each other, a visual language develops, characterised by perforations, porosity, and variation. These spaces aren't slick or polished. There is an intentional irregularity to them (shown in offset brick perforations and varying timber lengths, for example), which counters the order and regularity of the urban landscape.

The Fanshawe Street site was the first to be developed. Tracing the lines of timber stacks that once lined the waterfront (fig. 46), a new timber structure, conceived as being wharf-like in form, follows the old shoreline, sitting flush with the cold, heavy stone mass of the basalt wall. In contrast to this grounding element, a light timber frame floats upon concrete pillars, which elevates the urban pedestrian six meters above the street and its car-related activities and industries. The spaces below, currently occupied by a BP petrol station and an auto shop, are imagined as designated for redevelopment—part of a move to reinforce the prioritisation of human-scaled environments. The timber wall runs the length of the basalt wall, which is approximately 80 metres. To interrupt the monotony of the timber stacks, I broke the wall into sections. Between these sections are a series of enclaves which provide intimate moments of pause, with seating arrangements suited to the individual. These are not spaces of community building but rather facilitate relationships between the individual and their environment. The timber stacks have partial ceilings of planks laid atop beams overhead. This urban interior space is primarily timber with steel accents.

Concrete is used as a grounding element, as it was in the St Paul Street project. Concrete elements follow along the basalt wall, anchoring the light, floating timber structure. At the far end, the



**Figure 46.** Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections. 1572-1418, Photograph, Date Unknown.  
<https://kura.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz/digital/collection/photos/id/55573>  
*Showing stacks of sawn timber that once lined the waterfront.*

narrow corridor opens out. Extending back along Graham Street, it joins with the pocket park at the top. This space is the halfway point along the wandering line. Here is the only spot along the line where the pedestrian's attention is turned outward. Looking through a gap in the buildings, there is a direct throughline to the harbour (fig. 47). This moment juts out, recalling the headlands. The balustrade of this headland moment is a concave concrete wall. This echoes Fearon Hay Architect's façade on the Kauri Timber Building at the far end of the basalt wall and similarly suggests the timber booms that once floated in the waters of the Waitematā harbour.

Further along the old coastline, at the Sturdee Street site, I recall the scaffold structure used to construct the wall (fig. 48). The proposed structure extends the length of half the wall and covers half the sidewalk. Further reinforcing the prioritisation of the pedestrian over the vehicle, a traffic lane has been reclaimed along the street, widening the sidewalk. This space has an above-and-below configuration. Above, a boardwalk runs parallel to Fanshawe Street. Sections of the balustrade atop the wall (fig. 49) have been removed to create a porous barrier and allow for fluid movement between the streets. Below, an urban interior recalls a watery past, tracing lines of rippling salt waters and recalling the motions of the tide upon the shore through a series of paving details articulated with dips and hollows.

This stepped structure follows the slope of Sturdee Street, creating a receding façade. A timber framework elevates a series of perforated concrete walls, creating an interesting tension between the light and heavy elements of the design. The timber frame has irregular lengths, which mimic the rickety structure of the scaffolding. These are accented with weathering steel to recall the maritime history of the area. The concrete façade is broken into a series of receding sections that follow the contour of the street. A series of individual seating arrangements correspond above and below.

The Drake Street site, close to Victoria Park, recalls the city's history of burning its rubbish (fig. 50). This has been articulated through charred timber details. Smaller in scale than the previous



**Figure 47.** Van Wyk, L. Harbour View, Photography, 2022.  
*Looking across Fanshawe Street to the Viaduct Basin.*



**Figure 48.** Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections. 1-W1523, Photograph, 1912.  
<https://kura.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz/digital/collection/photos/id/98653>  
*Showing work on the retaining wall above Sturdee Street under way.*



**Figure 49.** Van Wyk, L. Sturdee Street Balustrade, Photography, 2023.  
*Showing the balustrade the runs between Sturdee Street (below) and Fanshawe Street (above).*



**Figure 50.** Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections. NZG-19000505-0838-02, Newspaper, 1900.  
<https://kura.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz/digital/collection/photos/id/130691>  
*Showing the burning of the city's rubbish at the destructor.*

and situated along the back streets, it's much more secluded and quiet. The space inside the Victoria Park Market courtyard already works well. Enclosed by retail stores and restaurants, and having undergone recent development, the space serves the needs of the community sufficiently. However, from Drake Street the site appears rather closed off. A timber fence lines the top of the cliff face (fig. 51), reducing visibility into the market square. Toward the far end, a concrete staircase provides access to the courtyard. My design opens the space above and extends the sidewalk through a boardwalk structure, which takes advantage of the beautiful canopy provided by the pōhutukawa trees hanging from the cliff. Activating the exposed cliff face, a series of steps guide the pedestrian down to a platform which sits flush with the cool earth. A charred timber balustrade detail with irregular lengths mimics the irregularity of the Sturdee Street structure. Concrete details also recall the sensuous coastal landscape through dips and hollows that fill with water when it rains.



**Figure 51.** Van Wyk, L. Drake Street Fence, Photography, 2023.  
*Showing the fence along Drake Street that reduces visibility into the Victoria Park Market courtyard.*

**Section Five.**

Conclusion

My spatial design research inquiry examined how an emphasis on sensuous material narratives, particularly those associated with coastal memories, and a design methodology of wandering and wondering, can restore our sensitivity to the landscape.

Prioritising walking and the urban pedestrian experience felt appropriate when working in the context of the city centre, where town planners aim to make the area more pedestrian-friendly, according to the Masterplan.<sup>33</sup> This project complements this aim through speculative urban place-making, which proposes an alternative pedestrian route following the old shoreline, centring on human-scaled environments. Recalling some of the material histories once present along this line, and weaving sensuous, textured environments from these narrative threads, the resulting spaces aim to slow the urban pedestrian and bring them in contact with the histories of hygiene, industry, and waste management associated with each locale and the adjacent architecture.

Once characterised by sleepy tidal inlets and broad headlands, the landscape of the old foreshore is a distant memory. The heritage walk along Tāmaki Makaurau’s original shoreline could hardly be described as coastal. However, various sensuous material histories along this line exist in the form of fresh-sawn timber stacks, saltwater baths, and billowing smoke from the city’s burning rubbish. This project recalls the particular memories of each site to create a sensuous landscape that, while not especially coastal, facilitates a similar spatial encounter. The gaps between the designed openings in the urban fabric contain a series of paving details that continues the line. These surfaces refer to the former coastal character of the landscape through dips and hollows that recall soft sand, mudflats, and crunching shells.

I have proposed a design that links three locales (Sturdee Street, Fanshawe Street, and Drake Street), activating vertical remnants of the original shoreline (concrete and basalt retaining walls and an exposed cliff face) through wharf-like structures. These interludes elevate the urban

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<sup>33</sup> Auckland Council, “City Centre Masterplan 2020,” Auckland City Centre Masterplan, accessed May 5, 2023, <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/>.

pedestrian above the car-dominated streets, providing moments of reprieve from the bustling environments below, and prioritising an interior experience. They are conceived as a series of detours throughout the city. These spaces allow for the urban pedestrian to experience more than endurance. The passage through these locations is not simply about getting from one point to another but invites the occupant to slow down and engage in their sensory environments.

My meandering exploration along a lost coastline is an act of remembrance. This city has many layers of history that have been lost to progress. While the current heritage walk mapped by Auckland Council provides insight into the history of the area, it follows the streets adjacent to the old shoreline.<sup>34</sup> When the city-dweller is immersed in the bustling activity of the surrounding urban environment, it is difficult to reminisce and imagine in this setting. The proposed structures elevate the pedestrian above the commotion, enclosing them in sensuous interior environments that allow them to focus and engage the material dimensions of the past, forming a deeper connection to place.

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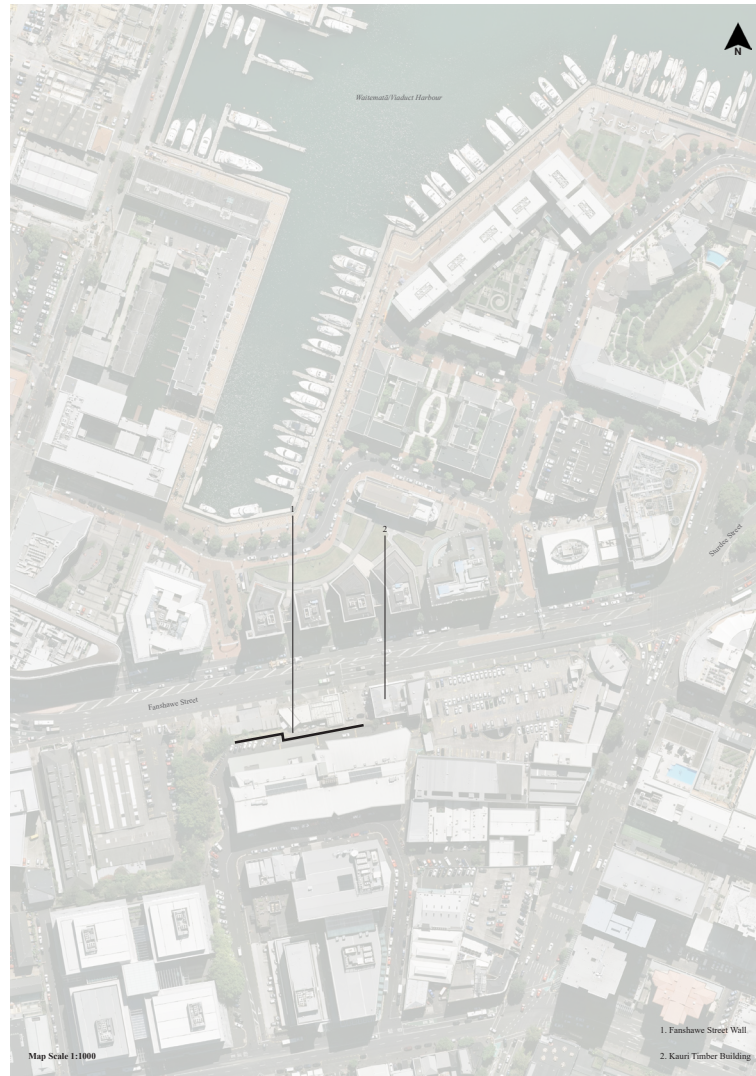
<sup>34</sup> Auckland Council, “Auckland’s Original Shoreline Heritage Walk,” accessed May 5, 2023, <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/arts-culture-heritage/heritage-walks-places/Pages/auckland-city-heritage-walks-original-shoreline.aspx>.



**Figure 52.** Chapman, P. *Exhibition Overview*, Digital Photograph, 2023.  
*Showing maps, drawings, perspectives, models, and material samples exhibited at St Paul Street Gallery in June 2023.*



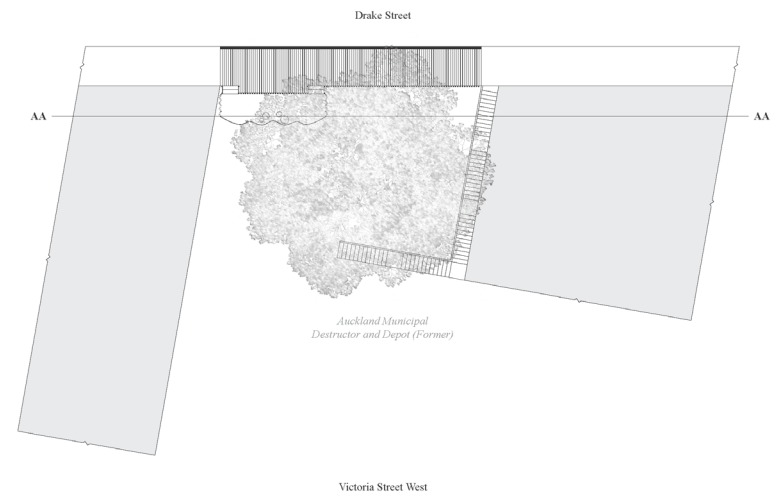
**Figure 53.** Van Wyk, L. *Drake Street Site Map*, Digital, 2023.  
*Showing the Drake Street site and the surrounding urban and historical context.*



**Figure 54.** Van Wyk, L. *Fanshawe Street Site Map*, Digital, 2023.  
*Showing the Fanshawe Street site and the surrounding urban and historical context.*

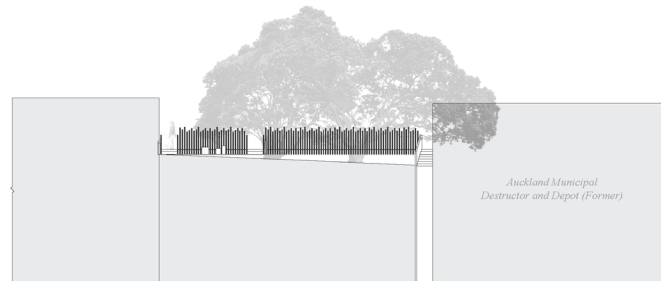


**Figure 55.** Van Wyk, L. *Sturdee Street Site Map*, Digital, 2023.  
*Showing the Sturdee Street site and the surrounding urban and historical context.*



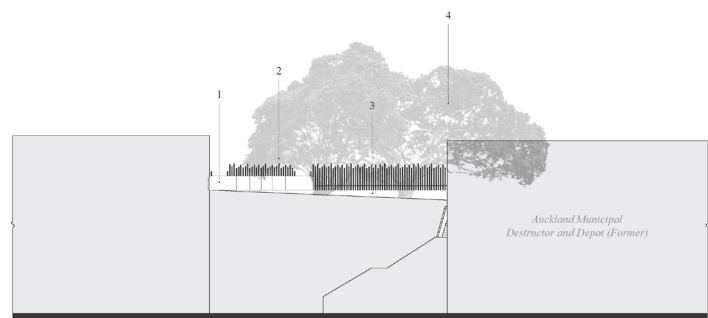
Drake Street Plan  
Scale 1:200

Figure 56. Van Wyk, L. *Drake Street Plan*, Digital Drawing, 2023.



Drake Street Section AA  
Scale 1:200

**Figure 57.** Van Wyk, L. *Drake Street Section AA*, Digital Drawing, 2023.



Drake Street Elevation  
Scale 1:200





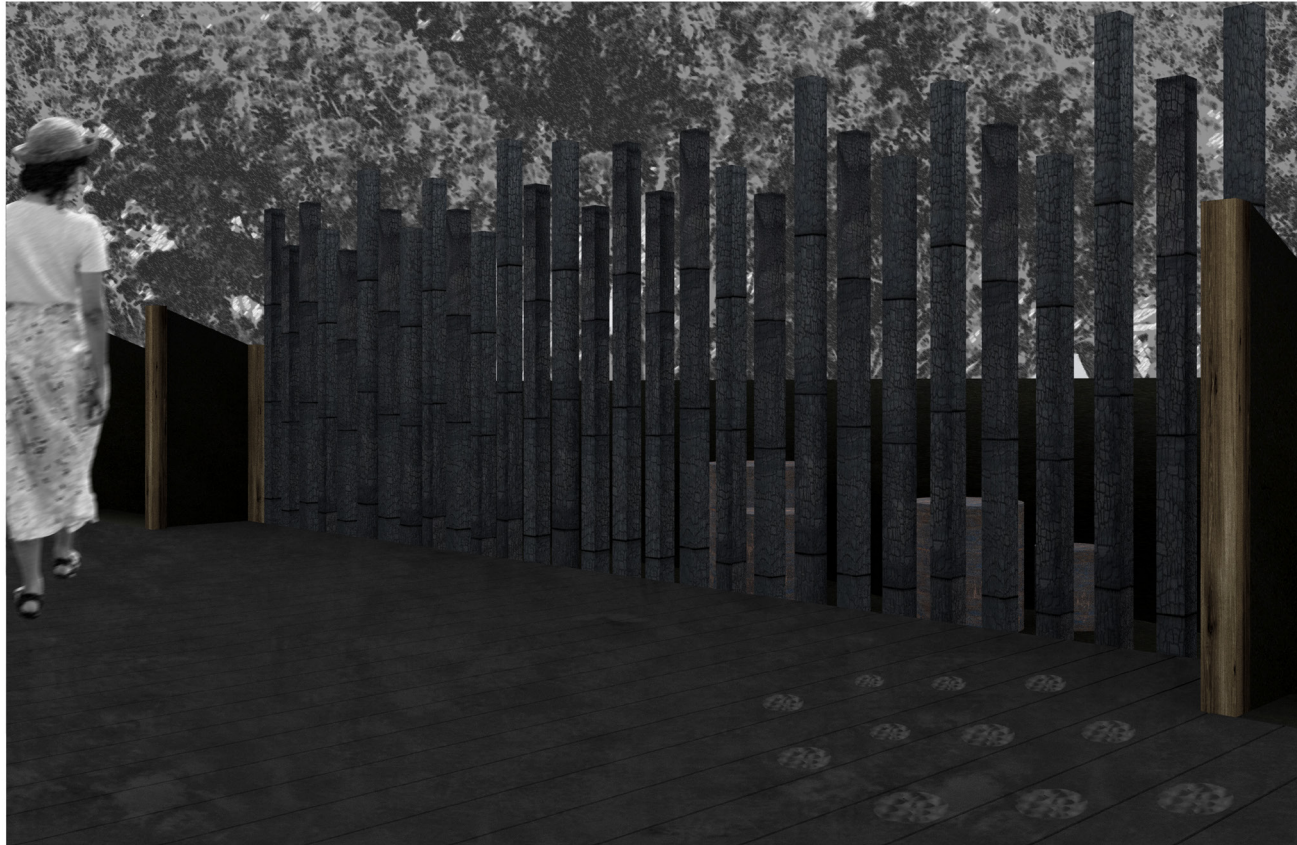
- 1. Matte black steel timber balustrade 
- 2. Charred timber balustrade 
- 3. Concrete retaining wall 
- 4. Pōhutukawa 

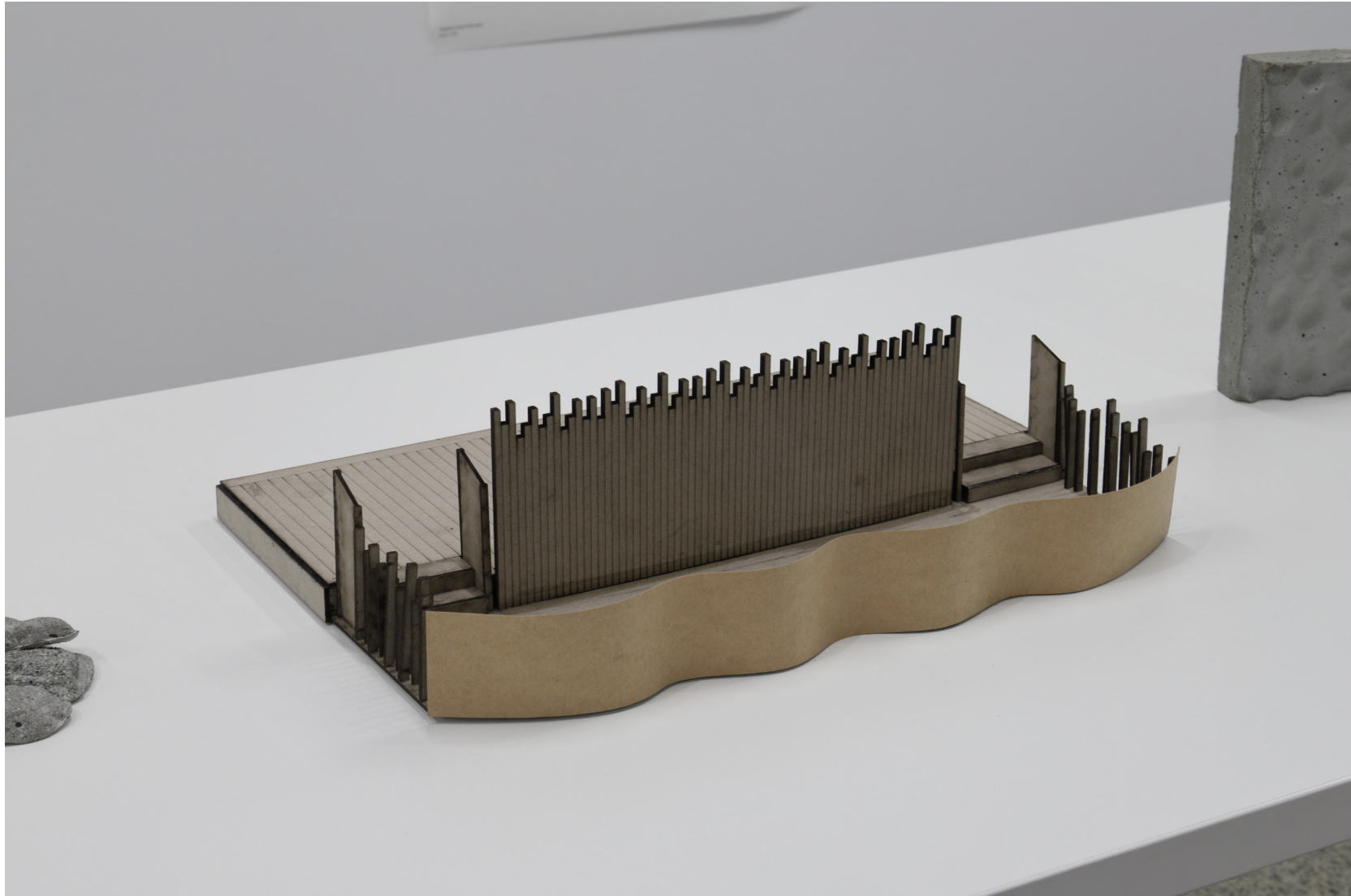
Figure 58. Van Wyk, L. *Drake Street Elevation*, Digital Drawing, 2023.



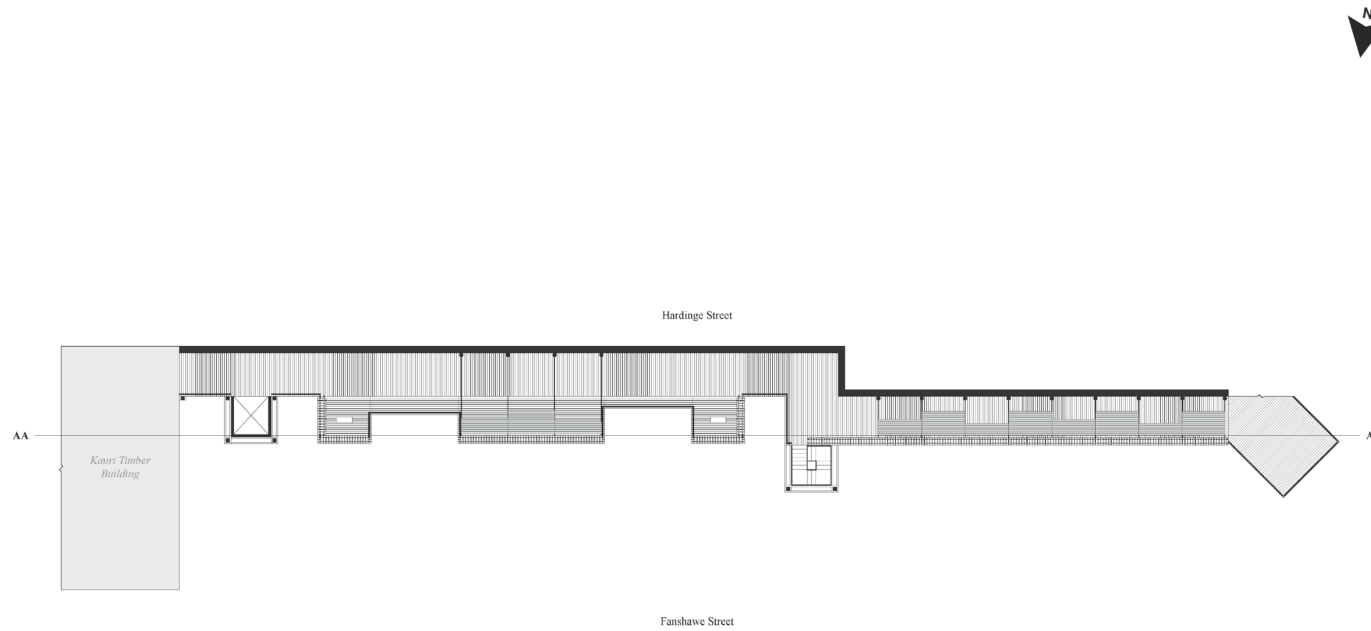
**Figure 59.** Van Wyk, L. *Drake Street Perspective One*, Digital, 2023.



**Figure 60.** Van Wyk, L. *Drake Street Perspective Two*, Digital, 2023.

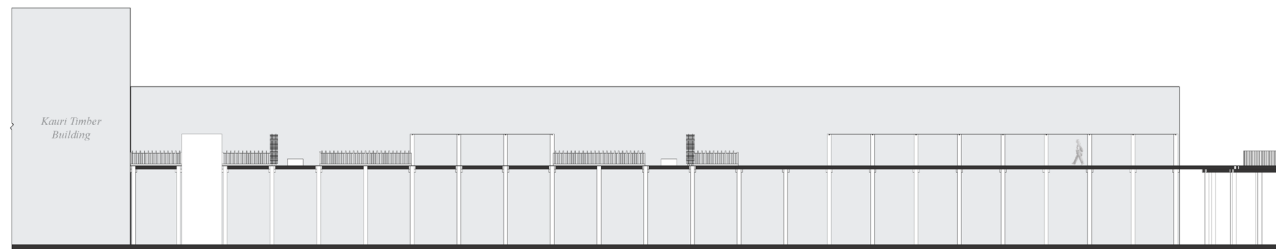


**Figure 61.** Chapman, P. *Drake Street Partial Model*, Digital Photograph, 2023.



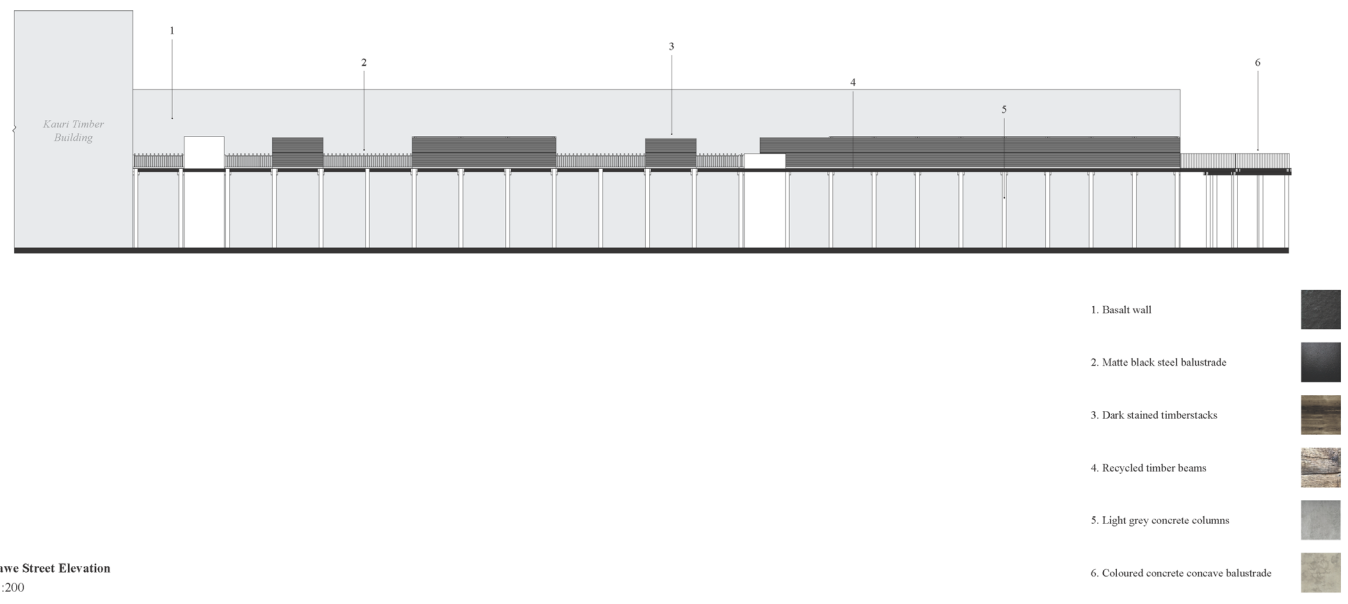
Fanshawe Street Plan  
Scale 1:200

Figure 62. Van Wyk, L. *Fanshawe Street Plan*, Digital Drawing, 2023.



Fanshawe Street Section AA  
Scale 1:200

**Figure 63.** Van Wyk, L. *Fanshawe Street Section AA*, Digital Drawing, 2023.

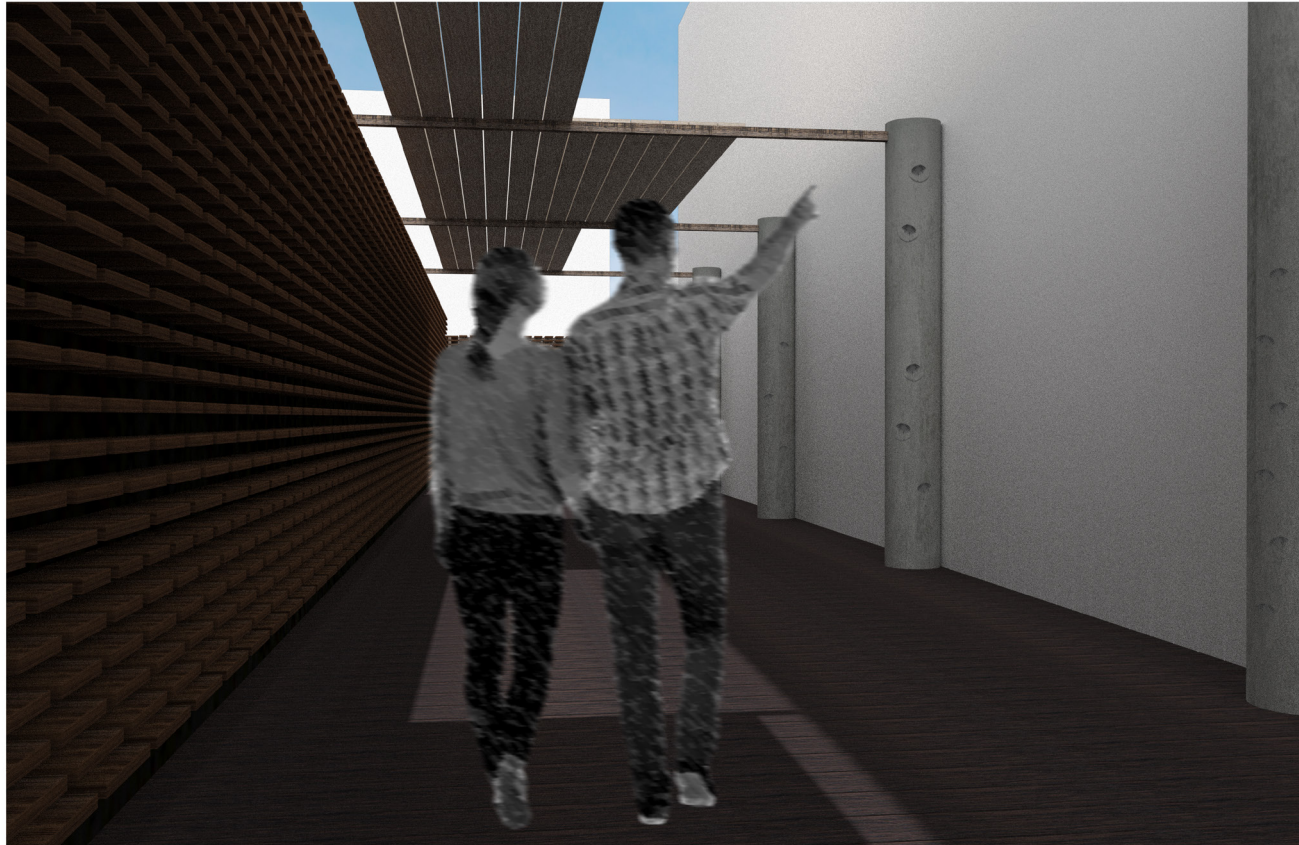


Fanshawe Street Elevation  
Scale 1:200

Figure 64. Van Wyk, L. *Fanshawe Street Elevation*, Digital Drawing, 2023.



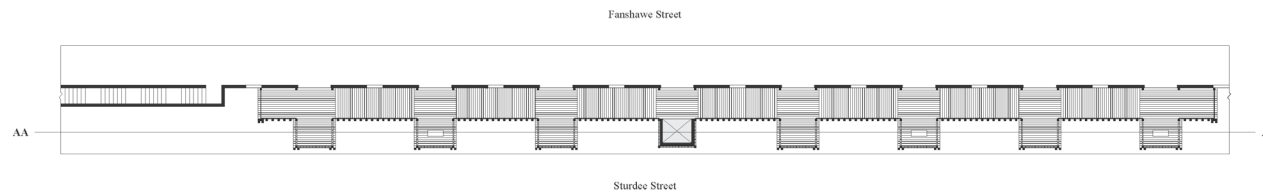
**Figure 65.** Van Wyk, L. *Fanshawe Street Perspective One*, Digital, 2023.



**Figure 66.** Van Wyk, L. *Fanshawe Street Perspective Two*, Digital, 2023.

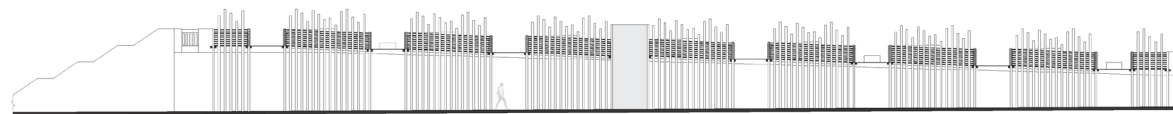


**Figure 67.** Van Wyk, L. *Fanshawe Street Partial Model*, Digital Photograph, 2023.



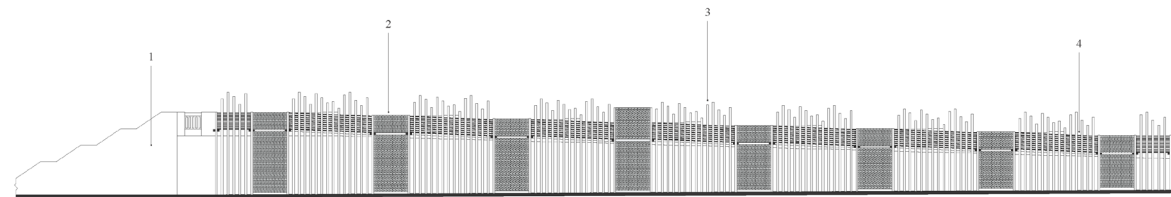
Sturdee Street Plan  
Scale 1:200

Figure 68. Van Wyk, L. *Sturdee Street Plan*, Digital Drawing, 2023.







Sturdee Street Section AA  
Scale 1:200

**Figure 69.** Van Wyk, L. *Sturdee Street Section AA*, Digital Drawing, 2023.



Sturdee Street Elevation  
Scale 1:200

- 1. Concrete retaining wall 
- 2. Coloured concrete blocks 
- 3. Recycled timber columns 
- 4. Matte black steel rail 

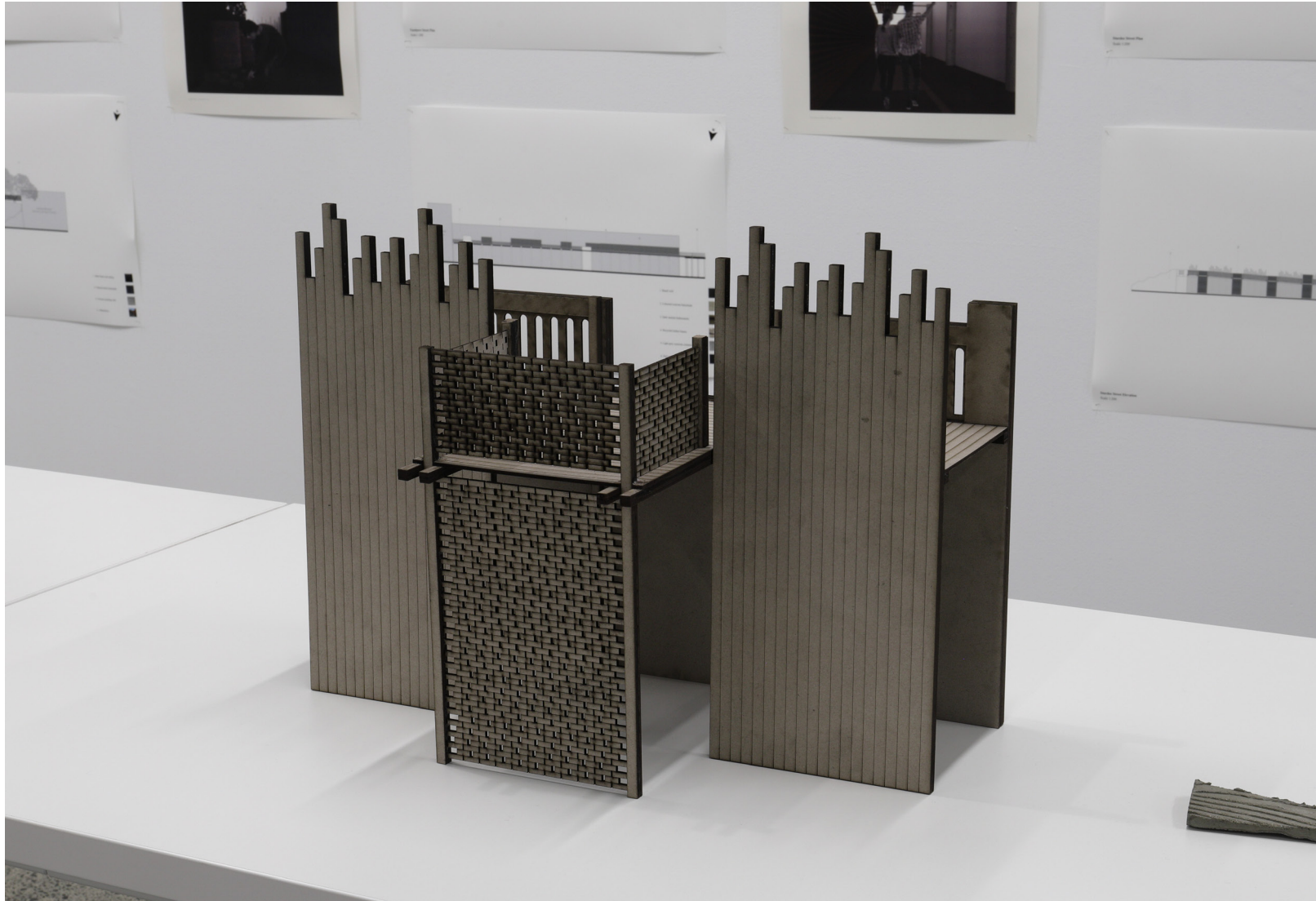
**Figure 70.** Van Wyk, L. *Sturdee Street Elevation*, Digital Drawing, 2023.



**Figure 71.** Van Wyk, L. *Sturdee Street Perspective One*, Digital, 2023.



**Figure 72.** Van Wyk, L. *Sturdee Street Perspective Two*, Digital, 2023.



**Figure 73.** Chapman, P. *Sturdee Street Partial Model*, Digital Photograph, 2023.



**Figure 74.** Chapman, P. *Exhibition Detail*, Digital Photograph, 2023.

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