Chapter Six: Case Study
Geraldine: the stop along the route

This chapter looks at the third type of tourist town on the travel circuit: the town of Geraldine as a stop along the route. The chapter follows the same pattern used in the previous two chapters by first describing Geraldine as space on the travel circuit. The chapter details Geraldine as a local place, as authentic experience, uses the lens of the performance perspective, with notions of script, stage and performance, to explore tourist activity. The chapter then looks more closely at three different tourist stages and what they contribute to tourist experiences.

The chapter unpacks the complexity of the performance perspective in more detail - specifically looking at existing scripts and stages, and current performances. This level of attention is needed to delve deeper than the outward appearance of the town and reveal the hidden and nuanced experiences associated with tourism and the everyday. For reasons of complexity it was necessary to separate the ‘staging’ and key informant responses to new tourism spaces in Geraldine into a separate chapter. Having two chapters for Geraldine helps to keep the data organized and maintains the progressive nature of the analysis, building on earlier observations and conclusions.

6.1 Global Spaces to Local Places

6.1.1 Locating Geraldine

Christchurch is the South Island’s largest city and primary air transport hub. Like any modern cosmopolitan city, Christchurch is linked to the global tourism network and establishes general expectations for tourism services. International standards shape the ‘global’ spaces which many visitors expect, as they provide a certain level of convenience, comfort, safety, and controlled experience which are familiar to the visitor. On the global stage tourists can visit new places without losing the familiarity and comforts of home. Christchurch however is not the main reason to visit the South Island. With Queenstown, Mt Cook and Fiordland as iconic tourist destinations on the South Island, most tourists, both domestic and international, travel along the state highway system that connects Christchurch to a variety of tourist destinations. The highway acts as a conduit focusing tourist movement. The places along the travel circuit (introduced in chapter 4) are therefore not just connected to the adjacent community, but are also connected and synchronised to much further reaching global processes, such as the timetables and facilities associated with transportation and hospitality. These processes move and deposit tourists, as well as information and materials into local everyday conditions. As a stop along the route Geraldine provides examples of how this globalisation process happens in a small town.
Geraldine (population 2244, 2006 census, Statistics New Zealand) is located about 140 km south of Christchurch. Situated in the highly modified agricultural land on the Canterbury Plains in south Canterbury, the town is nestled at the foot of the Geraldine Downs, a set of rolling hills spilling off the Southern Alps located to the west. The town is also bisected by the Waihi River and within a short walk to Talbot Forest, a remnant native lowland Podocarp forest.

Over the past 20 years Geraldine has developed as a tourist and domestic travel stop on a busy travel route between Christchurch and Queenstown. The overall attractiveness of the town is shaped by being nested in rolling topography, a small stream flowing through the town, and having large trees that were planted over a century ago. The focus of the tourist development has become a cluster of shops and facilities now known as Four Peaks Plaza, subtitled: Uniquely Geraldine. This plaza is located on a corner at the western end of the main street which makes up the central business district (CBD). The rest of the main street consists of well maintained buildings and what could be considered attractive yet traditional and functional small town New Zealand. Recently another tourist stop, Kiwi Country Tourist Complex, was developed on the east end of town. This is a tourist enclave, catering specifically for, but not limited to, scheduled coach tours. Using the terminology developed in this thesis, these areas – Four Peaks and Kiwi Country – can be considered as ‘stages’ for tourists and are the focus of the chapter.

Figure 6.1 1) The rolling downs behind Geraldine 2) CBD or main street with verandas, street parking and placards; Typical main street for small town New Zealand
Figure 6.2 Plan of Geraldine with emphasis on town centre: Town layout locates main street (Talbot Street) and the two tourist stages: Kiwi Country to the north and Four Peaks Plaza to the south (bottom of this image). This plan is for spatial orientation.

Figure 6.3 Sketch: Black arrow indicates primary tourist flow through Geraldine. The town’s main street is bookended by two tourism stops: Four Peaks Plaza on the left of this image (south) and Kiwi Country to the right (north).
6.1.2 Geraldine as a Stop on the Tourism Circuit

Geraldine is approximately a two hour drive from Christchurch and Christchurch International Airport, which provides enough distance to be removed from the city but close enough to take advantage of the city’s services and international airport. Geraldine’s proximity to Christchurch and connections to global networks provides a major source of tourists (and other global commodities/information) which flow into and out of the South Island.

It’s the first stop from the airport and it’s the last stop to Christchurch, so most people are here for morning tea, and in the afternoon, the buses stop, not huge numbers come for lunches, they all have to go to the loo (Group of 5 female volunteers 50s-70s).

The central location is also good for domestic tourists/visitors who live in other parts of the South Island and are travelling on to meet friends or family halfway:

This camping ground is just chocker during the summer and we have friends that come down every year and meet their friends from Invercargill. So geographically it is well positioned, so those coming from the north or the south. … People coming in (to the town) and meeting. You can be in different places quite quickly. Swimming, fishing, there are lots of things to do (AB 40s LA).

Geraldine is connected to this network along the state highway system and subject to the timing and demands as well as the fluctuations that occur in both the national and international tourism systems. However, although Geraldine is globally connected it still continues to function as a local place connected to the region’s agricultural and natural landscapes.

6.3 Geraldine as Local

6.3.1 Historical context: the Imagined Script

While Geraldine’s historical context is similar to many other towns on the South Island, originating as a rural service town, it was, according to one historical source, perceived ‘unique’ from the start.

No wonder the first settlers, when they came to the Geraldine district, said, ‘Well, this is good enough for me- we will make this our home’ and they planted trees. They planted pines and macrocarpas and blue gums but they not only planted those but they planted the trees of their homeland, the poplars and the willows, the oaks and the ashes and sycamores perhaps, worse luck, but they did that and they made their County lovely and beautiful. I think they realised, those early settlers that man does not live by bread alone. The Creator has been kind: the trees have grown and multiplied and the physical advantages make this, I think, the gem of all the counties in Canterbury (Davey 1952 p95).

“Born in 1857” (Button 2006) Geraldine was like any other town of that era formed to provide support services to people living in the broader region and eventually for some, it has come to be considered home. Towns are shaped both by the landscape (an array of related natural features) and taskscapes (an array of related human activities) (Ingold 1993). The inhabited and repetitive use of space formed Geraldine, as the township’s spine is an old bullock track that parallels the stream that runs through town.
The first roads were constructed along the tracks that had been formed as a result of the movement to and from points further afield. Later, roads were planned to meet the needs of industry (Davey 1952 p50).

The town grew from a simple track; track became street; then main street (Talbot Street), and eventually formed the nucleus for the CBD. Talbot and Cox Streets continue to house the CBD as well as comprising the main travel route connecting Christchurch with Queenstown. Most people travelling through the area only experience this route along the main streets where the tourist facilities, shopping and nearby domain are located.

The people of Geraldine think of their community as being a certain way and present this self image to outsiders through how they describe themselves. One ‘official’ version of this presentation of self is a posting found on a town information board. The town describes it’s identity as a country village and as simply unique. This way of describing itself appears credible and authentic as it is simple and unassuming in its portrayal.

The weathered sign and matter-of-factness of the wording suggests a long and honest representation of how the town sees itself. The town’s identity or its localness is derived from this sincere depiction of a town created through the surrounding landscape, its history and features that survive today.

Geraldine’s identity was analysed in this project by asking respondents how they perceived small New Zealand towns in general and Geraldine specifically, according to their knowledge and experience with the town. Residents have developed strong attachments to where they live and associate their identity to where they live and with the town’s identity.

I’m very proud to be a New Zealander. I’m very patriotic. We are the best country in the world ... When I was young I hated living here. Can’t go anywhere, everything is too far away. (It is) too expensive to go to Australia. Now that I’m my age, I love it. You change as you get older.
Christchurch is home, to my husband’s disgust. I’m still a city girl. Small towns have a different way of seeing things (PB 40s Tourism Business).

I’m a New Zealander first, then a provincial New Zealander, from rural New Zealand and I’m certainly a resident of Geraldine. It’s my home (BC, 50s Community Active Resident).

I’m a person who, or my family, we fit into this ... I’d call it almost a little, English town, and we love the people, we love the climate, we love everything about the town basically, yeah… the town is us (SH 50s Business Owner, emphasis added)

Local residents see their town as certain kind of place that reflects upon who they are as a people. (Small towns) They usually have a rural service role, why they were put there. That’s what I associated them with. They have a working side to them that is prominent (SR 30s LA).

Outsiders however, depending how well they know a place, may see Geraldine as any other small town in the area.

I don’t know if it has much of a sense of place, this could be anywhere. How do you make it Geraldine is a good question ... Topography, river,... yes that gives it a strong sense of place, but once you are here (the CBD), you are not really aware of that driving in from the north you see a lot of exotic trees, it’s nice with the camping ground, the footie field, the domain, and this side you get a more sense of arriving. ... (You said it was idyllic). Yeah it has a sense of charm, and it’s probably because of those things, of where it is in place as opposed to what is going on in the town (AB 40s LA, emphasis added).

People who are from the outside may see other aspects of the town’s identity. From a designer’s perspective, one designer perceives Geraldine as having a sense of place and fragile charm:

Geraldine more than many others because it is on the meeting point of two or three things. It’s a transport identity, a productive farming identity; it’s a retirement identity, the industries and business that use to be there. ... (Is it unique?) The pattern of the town, with the grid streets, is like any other town and the houses that got built there is typical south Canterbury. You can detect the differences between north and south Canterbury and Otago you can detect typically of how people did things. And the way … the materials they used. The further south you went they used more brick and stone, and further north was more timber. Stone was less common. It is a typical town in that sense in that it has recognisable patterns. But because it straddles a river and has a rural hinterland it does have a unique sense of place, and its microclimate which is not so common. (Does Geraldine have charm?) It’s a wee bit fragile, but yes it does. There are parts that are crass or don’t have a pattern but by and large yes it does have charm. The old town, it is not always a beautiful charm (RW 60s LA, emphasis added).

Geraldine appears to have both unique and common town features and dependent on what aspects are remembered and important to the respondent that an evaluation of the town is made. The concept of a local small town in New Zealand is thought to be different from larger populated areas such as cities like Auckland or Christchurch. Many residents expressed that it was the small town atmosphere or ‘way of life’ (script) and values where people knew each other and it was safe. Its location and relation to nature and outdoor activities also made Geraldine a small town and a great place to live and to visit.

Most towns central around a rugby club, the hotel, always a pub, a way of life, and rugby is a way of life. A factory freezing works where people work. ...Where everyone knows everyone. ... Good because there is a lot of caring people, caring for each other, know neighbours, not so much in the city. Sometimes they know too much (PB 40s Tourism Business).
No crime, it’s beautiful, quiet, friendly, a lovely place to live. For visitors, they enjoy it too. (They) love the stars, few street lights... blown away that you have walnuts, plums … the trees, and the quaintness to it too (RN 60s Tourism Business).

(O)ften the attractiveness is that they can have a pretty good house and section for not as much money as they would pay in a big town. But the down side is if you want your kids to go to ballet, or to violin lessons, it tends to be much harder, there is less range of things, and for that reason, a less range of people, by and large, you won’t get the professional people, and those who want something better for their kids, a lot will send their kids away to boarding school. There is a relaxed life style and the ability to go down to the river for a swim on a hot day (RW 60s LA).

There are some elements that are historical to New Zealand towns. Like the wide main street and things like a memorial, to World War 1 and World War 2, taking a centre point within a town, and things like a community centre. And the last two are often associated with each other. They respond to each other and are quite typical. Small New Zealand towns have a collection of shops, whatever, next to each other along a very wide street. Now you see those elements in many towns. Then in search of identity for small New Zealand towns they also become quite typical which I think is quite ironic in their search for making themselves different. Then they become quite the same (AB 40s LA).

You can get your pie and sit in the park and eat it. People are looking for peace… rest before embarking on the journey south (SR 30s LA).

Residents are attracted to the pace and lifestyle a small town has to offer even though they are quite aware that small towns have limitations such as fewer choices for shopping and cultural activities.

Small towns also operate on different, usually more limited hours than cities and what occurs in other countries.

(We) have to travel to do things. (We) can’t buy things locally. Need to travel to go to the show or concert. I like the convenience of the city (PB 40s Tourism Business).

Geraldine goes to sleep in the winter, and nothing much happens after five. Everything seems to shut down except the pub. The Village Inn is great (pub/restaurant) but they want to shut down at nine (PM). It was their first winter (under new management) so things close earlier and Europeans have a different time (wanting to dine later) (RN 60s tourism business owner).

6.3.2 What makes a Small Town Stage attractive for residents and tourists?

The specific attributes of a town’s identity are represented by what respondents considered important and/or attractive to them. Residents expressed that certain attributes make the town attractive, primarily natural features such as flora and fauna, the town’s green spaces and the area’s topography.

(Geraldine is) very close to nature, we’ve got a lot of Totara trees, Wood Pigeons all that ... (I live) very close to town, and the tourism aspect of the town, and a pretty good balance between the two; (What are the unique qualities that make Geraldine- Geraldine?) Ah, probably nature walks, green areas, its friendliness, that everyone knows everyone, which is indicative of a small town; it’s quite good to be acknowledged. ... Good small towns have its uniqueness, and Geraldine certainly has its uniqueness. (Are there any negative elements?) Um, (Pause) No, I don’t believe there is much negative-ness here to be honest (SH 50s Business owner).

There is a more limited range of retail type things, ... But the thing is in those smaller towns, they will still be laid out on that 19th century, on that one chain width, 20 metre width, 66 feet width, so a lot of the streets will have that spaciousness ... Which is one of the characteristics of it ... and there isn’t a lot of traffic necessarily, unless there is a state highway somewhere, going through it. Apart from that the streets are quite comfortable and the towns are comfortable to move around... pedestrians, and for your kid to bike off to school, if there is a school there. The smaller they get the more luxurious is the spaciousness, the feeling of spaciousness. And they will have often originated from an original survey; therefore they will have some sort of structure, like a grid, or another (structural) system... It was
common to have squares or land set aside like that in a visionary way, but they are quite different than European towns which tend to have evolved in a much, from a pre-traffic era, and secondly, evolved according to market fairs and spaces for defences and that type of thing. We don’t have that. They are more homogeneous because they come from a more survey (based) history (RW 60s LA, emphasis added).

Long term residents who have retired in the area see the town as safe with many outdoor activities available to them. A couple of elderly residents describe why they live in Geraldine and describe the town’s values:

Because we like it! … It’s a good place to retire, for retired people. ... (I like) the community and for Peel Forest. The trees, bush walks it has everything. It’s a safe and secure place that has traditional country values, we all grew up with. And we wanted to bring our kids up with… Farming values/townie; that’s what Geraldine is, it’s an outdoor country town … It’s close to ski fields, close to swimming, close to everything, … And we are also very close to the two major cities; we’re close to Christchurch and close to Dunedin. Close to the West Coast, close to the sea, close to the mountains. (Group of 5 volunteers 50s-70s).

Most importantly the attractiveness of Geraldine (as stage and script) is that it feels like a community. The physical attributes of the small town are important but the intangible aspects of the people and relationships really distinguish the nature of a small town. The majority of those interviewed see the town as real (authentic) because of how the performances and the stage meet their ideas (script) of what they believe a small town to be:

It’s an extended family. At this scale that is effectively what it is. There is a strong community feeling and strong community spirit, and strong community pride. People have different views and visions, and all that but it all revolves around the community rather than just themselves. It occurs in many communities, of a certain size, and that could be a community within a larger community too, a particular suburb in a city. (What are your impressions of Geraldine?) Well it has a real community feel to it. It has a size that can do it. It’s not overly large. It’s a typical New Zealand town, with a main street and domain, and residential bits and pieces, domains and parks, there is nothing that is extraordinary, except perhaps the bush. That a lot of other towns don’t have. It has a good feel about it, you know, people communicate and move around and the river is an attraction that certainly has not been used to its advantage (BC, 50s Community active resident).

It’s a real town. People (have) been here a long time, or (will) come back. There are some business open for tourists. But (there is) a good feeling here, and people notice it. …(I’m) worried that it may lose the village feel. Too many people who want to change it. (I have) already noticed the number of English people who moved here. They have a lifestyle they wouldn’t have in England. Therefore the prices have gone up (PB 40s Tourism Business).

I like it. I’ve always thought it was an attractive location. Quite an attractive sized town, and nice climate and things like that. One of the things that raises, … is for a town, to attract people who live there … what does it take for a town to attract people to live there… from a regionally economic development point of view it’s really important…that you have a base of residents (BC 50s Community active resident).

(This is a) lovely town. What do you judge a town on? … Top three of where we have been. Spend another (unplanned) night. We walked the main street, watched the Melbourne cup in the pub, and, been to a few shops. People are hospitable, (and) friendly. (They are) very nice country people. (We have also been to the) Peel Forest walks (and) was at the museum in the morning (AC 50s Australian tourists).

The town itself is well laid out, has good parks and reserves, good walks in the town itself, the infrastructure inside the town is basically there, particularly for the visitor, good toilets… commented on many times. The toilets in Geraldine are good. There are lots of cafes catering for the tourist,
Although Geraldine is like many other towns based on grid patterns it is also described as: quiet, close to nature, friendly, and unique, and is attractive because of physical attributes such as: the windy road, wide streets, walkability (ease of walking), location beside the downs and forests, variety of building types and large trees. These attributes are considered authentic because they are born out of people living in these spaces (taskscapes) and not built specifically for tourism.

It seems likely that it is exactly this sense of realness or authenticity that makes the local spaces in Geraldine attractive not only for those people living there but also for visitors looking for a ‘small town’ experience.

### 6.6 Travel Circuit

The most important feature of Geraldine’s location for tourism is its position on a main travel circuit route. This circuit is comprised of connections between entry points, transportation, and destinations. The place where a town is located on a travel circuit helps to identify its tourism role. Locals, both involved with tourism and not involved with tourism, describe Geraldine’s situation as a stop along the way:

> It’s too close to Christchurch for people who set off today… sorry, for those who stayed last night in Christchurch they are not going to stay in Geraldine. They may stop for a cup of tea and a pee, on their way through. They are going to at least head to Tekapo perhaps Mount Cook, …or perhaps further on ... The afternoon traffic out of Christchurch, afternoon flights, yeah, they reach Geraldine, four thirty to seven pm. We get them (arriving in our tourism facilities) (BW 60s Tourism business owner).

Where does Geraldine fit in? Probably for those who want to get off the beaten track and get back to a nature way of life, basically, and just explore a unique town without being told where you go, told what to do and break the cycle. And they do, we are the first stop, when they climb off the plane in Christchurch, get their car, we are the first town that they hit, and they hit, the tourist operators know we are here, with the facilities that we have, so we are getting hit, but, I agree with what you say, the first night stop may be Queenstown, Mt Cook or Dunedin, they are rushed with those itineraries, so much is crammed in that tourists don’t get enough time to experience New Zealand uniqueness (SH 50s Business owner).

The travel circuit is the route or connection between transportation systems (air terminals, roads, walkways) and major tourist destinations. In addition to arriving at a destination, moving from place to place is part of the desired experience, unlike travel experiences where tourists stay in one place for the duration of their holiday. Travelling the circuit may be within a tourism bubble (tourism providers control the experiences) where the unfolding experience is managed by a tourism provider such as found in a guided coach tour. In this kind of experience, schedules, planning and expected experiences are prearranged. On the other end of the same spectrum is a self directed tour (independent tourists) where individual choices are made to use or venture away from the ‘tourism
bubble’ and include local experiences. The self directed experience is subject to local schedules, self planning and unexpected experiences occurring during travel. Both of these forms of travel in the travel circuit are appreciated:

It (packaged tourism) works in some ways. I’ve experienced that. And I thought it was pretty good, as you feel secure, but you pay for it…. There is an expectation of what you pay for... you want that control (SR 30s LA).

Need to get people out of the system. Get into the local. Need to be independent... sad that people have a set itinerary and stick to it… They don’t plan ahead. People need to be flexible. … Buses service a purpose; people don’t have much time, the busses quickly taken them to Queenstown. (Name of local shop), big shops with over priced Chinese made stuff, and the same on the next stop, has the same stuff (RN 60s tourism business owner).

Tourists also perceive Geraldine’s important central location on the travel circuit and sense of appeal even if unintentional:

(We) wanted to go to Mt Cook, but arrived late, we saw the campground so we stopped. (We) made the day trip to Mt Cook and now back at the campground (GP 60s European tourists).

(We have) no expectations of the small towns. Read more about the treks, the glaciers, the main attractions. Did a big shop in Christchurch and stopped in Geraldine because it was getting late ... Geraldine is nice… nothing too special. Arrived at half seven last night. Stopped at the supermarket, saw it as we drove past… has the same name as the supermarket in Ireland. Got brochures at the i-SITE. We want to try a number of activities. (Geraldine) seems like a small town... not very touristy... just looks like a holiday park. (We) would like this kind of place for (the rest of) our trip (IC 20s European tourists; emphasis added).

The perception of these tourists is important for local tourism as they are the ones who are stopping and spending the night. They have other destinations in mind such as Mount Cook but they do stop and buy supplies and get information from small towns along the way. These tourists are not looking for a generic tourist, or touristified (mass tourist or global) stage, but support services that facilitate their imagined (scripts of how and where to travel) tourist performances. The stage that is not very touristy was identified and considered very appealing for this form of travel. Becoming ‘too touristy’ was on the minds of many of the people I talked to. Their biggest concerns were that small towns ‘didn’t become like Queenstown’, which they felt was overdeveloped, touristy and not the ‘real’ New Zealand. This sentiment was echoed by well over half of the people interviewed.

Since a stage is likely interpreted differently by a range of people holding different expectations (imagined scripts) the shift from local ‘authentic’ town or taskscape to tourist town or touristscape is highly individual. The basic concept of a ‘tourist stop’ in New Zealand is generally agreed upon by socially accepted scripts:

(It)’s about having a place that is friendly when you get out of your car, stretch your legs and certain things you need. You need some food, some coffee or something to drink, toilet stop, somewhere to do those things in, significant choice, I suppose, it doesn’t need to be huge. ... From a destination point of view... for a weekend ... (it) need(s) to have something that was of interest of me... an outdoor activity, so it would be the base for mountain biking or whatever it might be (LC 40s Tourism Consultant).

The basic ‘tourist stop’ stage is also generally accepted from the services it offers:
Most people go to the Four Peaks (Plaza), for reliable food, choice, lots of little souvenir shops, what people want to buy, its concentrated, convenient, on the corner, lots of car parking, near a couple of historic buildings with a little interpretation (SR 30s LA).

Although many people understand and accept a normative concept of a ‘tourist stop’ based on mass tourist attributes, still others have different ideas of imagined scripts, stages and performances they pursue while on holiday. A tension also occurs when locals have differing ideas of what tourism should be in their town and with other ‘non-traditional’ types of tourism. It appears a tension is created when in addition to the traditional tourists heading for established tourist destinations, New Zealand also attracts niche markets such as bicycle and driving for pleasure tourists. These tourists also use the travel circuit and contribute to tourism economies.

6.4.1 Not all tourists arrive by car: Bicycle tourists
Independent bicycle tourists were found using the town’s holiday park. They stop in Geraldine to ease into their physically strenuous tour where many of the cyclists (individuals and groups) spent another (unplanned) night before heading west towards the high country and the mountains. Many bicycle tourists in the holiday park (at least 10 separate groups) found Geraldine to be the right distance (the second day) from the start of their trip originating in Christchurch. They were just ‘getting their touring legs’ and the extra day/night in Geraldine gave them a needed rest day, time to recover from jet lag and prepare for the trip to come. One pair of cyclists were travelling in the opposite direction and heading toward Christchurch and nearing the end of their trip. The holiday park located in town provided a very attractive (clean, safe, quiet and green: good for camping) location to rest and easy walking (important for sore legs) access to food/drink, information, and the internet (Field notes, 2008, 2009). A less attractive setting (Methven was identified by the bicyclists) has influenced some bicyclists to continue on and look for a better multi-day rest location.

6.4.2 Driving is the Attraction
Independent tourists however are not all wanting a leisurely paced journey finding ‘hidden’ gems off the beaten track. On three separate occasions, tourists expressed that they were attracted to New Zealand to drive on the winding and relatively traffic free roads. For one European, it is through driving that he experiences nature.

His favourite place is Norway because of the nature. Second is New Zealand. He likes the little landscapes, where there is more change and variety and you move quickly from one to the other. He didn’t like Alaska because it was all the same. He loves to drive and is interested in connecting with nature, through driving (Field notes 2009: GP 60s European tourists).

The travel circuit nature of travelling New Zealand, as opposed to locations with all-inclusive holiday resorts where tourists stay in one location, is attractive for its sense of independence and adventure, effective way of seeing many landscapes and may be an alternative form of travel (driving tourism) that is relatively straightforward and easy in New Zealand. New Zealand’s landscape and road
networks are ideal for this type of travel especially as a land of ‘little landscapes’ (Hayward & O’Connor 1981), where considerable variation in relation to travelled distance is an appealing attribute for tourists.

New Zealand has been referred to as a land of ‘little landscapes’. That is, there is considerable variation in New Zealand’s landscape over relatively short distances and areas. These ‘little landscapes’ are distinct from one another and they more often than not occur in regional patterns. Within a region, communities identify with ‘their’ landscapes and often refer to them as having a particular combination of attributes and features that give them a distinctive ‘character’ (Boffa Miskell, 2010:10).

In summary, Geraldine is well situated on the South Island for travel access to all parts of the island and as a main stop on a classic travel circuit. Although New Zealand is considered a ‘land of little landscapes’ where landscape characteristics change quite quickly, rest stops and experiencing local places are still necessary and become the primary tourist experiences of driving and bicycle tourists. The stop along the route is experienced positively when basic needs including: toilet facilities and, food and drink are met. The stop is improved when more choice is given to accommodate the variation of personal scripts. Some people also believe the stop is improved even more if other, mass tourism related services such as communication (internet), entertainment or shopping are provided. What should be provided at the stop along the route depends upon the individual’s perception of authentic experiences. This will be considered next.

6.5 Authentic Experiences

This section is interested in how authenticity, a well contested concept in tourism studies (Wang 1999, MacCannell 1999; Knudsen and Waade 2010), plays a role in informing and enabling tourism and tourism design in small towns. MacCannell (1976, 1999) introduced the concept of authenticity as a modern way to understand issues of truth, reality, and front and back regions in tourism.

“Authenticity expressed the desire for insight in the intimate back-stage life of others, the past or the exotic cultural otherness” (Knudsen and Waade 2010:10).

There are many ways to experience a small town. As well as visitors creating authentic town experiences, local residents also create experiences with an understanding (possibly different from tourists) of what is authentic for them (see existential authenticity Wang 1999). For locals authentic experiences are associated with everyday practices and places (taskscapes) and individual understanding of appropriate changes to traditional ways of practicing life in small towns.

6.5.1 Authenticity

The terms authenticity and authentic were introduced and inferred during the interview process where key informants used these terms to express positive values of a place or experience as being ‘real’ and in some sense ‘truthful’ or ‘sincere’ in their representation. Places that are considered ‘authentic, real
or normal’ are the ‘back-stages’ as described by MacCannell and are what many tourists expect and desire of experiencing small town New Zealand.

(We) want to see normal small towns. (We) don’t really want to see the backpacker towns like Byron Bay ... (I) want to spend more time with my friends rather than the touristy places. (We) spent the last year in Australia. So want to stay away from the touristy places (IC 20s European tourists).

(Regarding tourist areas) I bypass them. It’s a gut feeling ... I don’t do crowds, too individualist for that (AK 20s European tourist).

For these travellers the authenticity of the towns they visit is important as they provide the physical setting or stage that contributes to their preferred tourist experience: in this case non-touristy and not crowded. While the above examples are preferred stages for these particular independent travellers, other tourists, especially mass tourists on coach tours, may expect another authentic version of the small town. Their search for authenticity is not related to the authenticity of toured objects (‘things’ they experience while travelling) but is an existential authenticity, where their motivation to travel is achieved by creating a state of Being activated by tourist activities (Wang 1999: 352).

For the coach tourist, getting off the bus and experiencing the town, even for five minutes is a very real and authentic tourist experience. Tourist mobility and the stops along the route are repeated performances by mass and independent tourists where existential authenticity is the goal. Using the performance metaphor I consider existential authenticity as the script used to guide the performance.

They don’t (go beyond the tourist system). They only have water, a piddle, a spit and back on the bus. And they’re gone; ... they are not really interested when they get off that bus. They (are) stuck in their itinerary. The bus driver has told them they only have a five minute stop and then they are off to somewhere else (SH 50s Business owner).

Performance authenticity, on the other hand, is not only the expected script, that makes the experience real, but the interaction and proximity to people and things, the phenomenological nature of being there that makes the experience real. Not all performances take place in standard forms but are more negotiated, creative, ironic and opposed activity (Knudsen and Waade 2010:14). Performance authenticity explains why some tourists enjoy performing traditional tourist stages in conventional ways while others contest convention by ‘acting out’ or by looking for different stages to perform their authentic tourist activities.

This section will look at Geraldine’s three tourist stages in terms of the types of authenticity in tourist experiences (Wang 1999, Knudsen and Waade 2010) and their relationship with design. The three stages are: main street which is considered an ‘everyday stage’, and two other stages, the Four Peaks Plaza and Kiwi Country which are predominantly tourist stages.
6.6  **Main Street Geraldine**

Talbot Street, the main street in Geraldine, is authentic in a number of ways. It has objective authenticity by retaining an original town layout and scale, and by preserving historical buildings and trees. Over time changes have occurred to buildings and outdoor spaces but generally speaking the overall appearance and function of the town has been relatively maintained which people understand to be the image associated with Geraldine.

![Image of Talbot Street](image1)

Figure 6.5 1) Geraldine’s main street is not too different from other rural towns and from the town’s historic past
2) What was once a ‘village green’ this open space has been privatised as part of the Village Inn bar and restaurant

![Image of Talbot Street](image2)

Figure 6.6 Sketch: Talbot Street has gradually changed but retains many aspects of ‘traditional’ New Zealand towns: building set backs; on street parking; and rural scale. Current additions include paving stones, street lights, trees and street bollards on corners

Geraldine has a connection to the past and has retained a sense of its origin through gradual changes that have respected vernacular forms and local design, scale and building methods. This has been accomplished by maintaining building setbacks, road width, and a relationship with its context, as well as reusing buildings and protecting historic trees. Geraldine is thus considered to be an authentic
New Zealand small town. Key informants saw the town as English, and as a romantic notion of its history and picturesque setting.

Geraldine, which reminds me of an English place. One, it doesn’t have a straight road going through the middle of it. The road is quite windy and the river. It’s a much more attractive place on its own. I like Geraldine. It’s one of the few places, as you drive through it ... it appears attractive... variety of building types... it has a nice openness to it ... the river, the wide street, the downs, it’s not that flat (SB 60s Tourism Consultant).

For a tourist in Geraldine the attraction, I think, is ... authenticity. Like the movie theatre. Yes, exactly like the movie theatre. The scenery, the walks, the river. The unique movies that are shown. (Should Geraldine be more authentic?)... What wearing old time costumes? I think you can easily tip into the... crass, touristy. We are what we are. Why should we pretend to be something that we are not to attract tourists? I think part of the attraction is to come and go around, is to mix and mingle with people just going about their daily. And that’s one of the reasons tourists come here. ... They arrive back from Queenstown saying why did we go there? (Group of 5 female volunteers 50s-70s).

The authenticity of original objects provides visual cues to places for authentic experiences. Geraldine has preserved original objects and marked them as significant. Examples of this include a Totara tree planted to commemorate the birth of Samuel Hewling’s daughter and a turning stone used to turn bullock carts on Talbot Street. However, while these artefacts may have historical significance for local residents, little attention was given to these objects by visiting tourists. This raises the issue that although authentic objects contribute to the authenticity of a place they do not necessarily make a place a tourist stage. Having objective authenticity may assist with tourists searching for authenticity, but in and of themselves the objects are not enough to attract tourists.

Figure 6.7 1) Original Totara tree planted in the 1850s 2) Eclectic buildings on Talbot Street 3) Turning stone on Talbot Street, Plaque reads: TURNING STONE TO GUIDE DRAYS INTO LANES (CIRCA 1880)

Geraldine’s main street also has constructive authenticity, where “imagery, expectations, preferences, beliefs, (and) powers” are projected onto objects (Wang 1999: 352). The earlier reference to Geraldine as being ‘English’ has been projected on to the town from people’s perceptions of traditional English towns. Locals also perceive themselves in this way:

It’s a good place, a good central attractive little town. The first impression is that it is gorgeous. It is English. The gardens, and green open places, the trees, it’s so English, not European, it’s English; the
visual impact... It’s (the) arrangement along the river, (and) the fact that it’s not just one long main street. You’ve got the hill behind. It’s got walk ways (Group of 5 female volunteers 50s-70s).

I like our attitude to life. I like our laid back-ness. The reason is that we are down here, out of the way a bit, and not influenced by other things that (influence) other countries, like Europe. It’s not a dog eat dog world here yet, we have a quieter way of life. Especially the English people they come here because they hate England now (they) don’t like what’s happening in England, they don’t like how crowded it is, they are all saying the same thing. This is what England was like 50 years ago, or whatever. This reminds them of what England was and they all yearn for again. And unfortunately that won’t happen. They want to bring up their kids in a safe environment and they see us as a safe place. ...Same life as in England; we believe in the same things (PB 40s Tourism Business).

These are examples of how residents imagine or script Geraldine with symbolic or constructed authenticity. However it is the stages that facilitate the script that are of importance to the design of small towns. Talbot Street is still a local stage providing services primarily for residents but also open to visitors travelling through. The street is wide with street parking on both sides and sidewalk to the building fronts. As Figure 6.8 below shows, the street is lined with trees and has had a recent streetscape upgrade adding pavers, bollards and benches. The side streets and residential areas have not been ‘up graded’ with pavers as used elsewhere in the CBD. Behind the main street are also lanes which provide service access and paths along the river that are used as access ways by locals.

Figure 6.8 1) Early morning main street 2) Dairies (convenience stores) in New Zealand are easily recognised with colourful and abundant signage.

Although a rosy picture of Geraldine as a small town stage has been painted here, changes to the main street and the town have occurred where key informants have noticed the encroachment of global influences. More people and the increase of tourism spaces have challenged the authenticity of this small town, shifting it from a local place to something more global (placeless or generic) and perhaps a tourist town.

Geraldine is funny! It has always struck me as almost an idyllic village, with its elevation, which is quite nice, where other places are just flat. It is just this wee idyllic town. With dealing with tourism to date, I don’t know if it is ... I don’t know if it’s that good actually. You have your wee bit of main street upgrade. And then you see these very big barn/cafe style things happening that when no one is in them they look terrible. ... when you are driving, in that one of the first things you see, in the township apart from the Subway, and then inevitably spend time around here (public toilets) because of the toilets. We beat a pretty quick track through here, last time we probably stopped at Subway (AB 40s LA).
(Is Geraldine touristy?) I think it is getting that way... 5 years ago I wouldn’t say so… I don’t consider it was touristy but there were a lot of tourists there. Probably because of the tour buses that drive here. There would be a difference if it were only individual tourists stopping in the town... the buses changed the nature of the town (SS 40s LA).

People are really concerned with commercialization and this is getting too touristy … We do not want to be another Queenstown. .... They use that term, quite a few people use that term... they meant that the town wasn’t for them anymore, it became for the visitors. So essentially the nature of the town … who it catered for or who is its primary audience (LC 40s Tourism Consultant; emphasis added).

(Defining the term) local… I defined it by what it is not, it is not global. So it doesn’t have a Subway, which Geraldine does now and I don’t like that. It doesn’t have cafes that all look alike… that big one as you drive in from Christchurch… yea that’s it ... Kiwi Country. It doesn’t have places like that. An authentic town has small, some old, some might be crappy looking as I was describing from Hokitika, I’m not saying they are necessarily beautiful, often they are not beautiful at all. But that is what a small Kiwi town is. And when it shifts across to become a tourist town it looked like any other town (LC 40s Tourism Consultant, emphasis added).

This small local town, ideally located on a travel circuit, has evolved from its ‘authentic’ rural roots and is now focused on capturing the tourism market. This has been accomplished by the creation of the two stages described next: the Four Peaks Plaza and the more recent Kiwi Country.

6.7 Four Peaks Plaza Stage- the Tourist Stop along the Route

People travelling the ‘classic route’ from/to Christchurch to/from Lake Tekapo -Aoraki/Mount Cook - Queenstown travel through Geraldine and make a turn at the intersection of Talbot Street and Cox Street. This corner has become a small tourist centre consisting of the Four Peaks Plaza, the town’s intercity bus stop, public toilets, bank machine, i-SITE (information centre), Geraldine museum, and a small green park area with picnic tables. These facilities are supported with a cafe/deli and clothing shop in an old post office building across the street and a holiday park beside the park and behind the plaza.

Instead of making this turn on the State Highway, and instead one continues along Talbot Street there are local town amenities such as a church, heritage cinema, and public library (with free internet access and district council facilities). In front of the public library is a small parking lot and lawn area which doubles as the town’s Anzac Day event space. This ‘back area’ is an extension of the main street rather than being a part of the Four Peaks Plaza. Small towns often do not have the luxury or resources to have specialized spaces, so like this lawn/parking area, most places are multifunctional and adaptable space.
The recognised tourist stage, Four Peaks Plaza consists of a set of ‘front shops’ and ‘back shops’ which provide a range of food, beverage, tourist souvenirs, local products, banking, tourist information, and toilet facilities. The ‘front’ shops were identified by locals who interpret these shops as for tourists: cafe, souvenir shop, I-site, ATM (bank machine) and recently added sushi shop, white-water rafting outfit and fruit juice bar. The ‘back shops’, situated behind the front shops, are businesses that are more likely to be also used by locals: bakery, Barker’s fruits, souvenir shop, Talbot Forest Cheese, a wood working shop and a cafe. Beside the Four Peaks Plaza is a small museum, well maintained public toilets and park/picnic area which hosts a local crafts market. The plaza (actually a small local shopping centre) is a hybrid space, both reasonably integrated with the local everyday, and a tourism enclave (self contained consumption space) where almost everything a passing traveller would want is available. However this balance is changing, with more spaces are being focused on the consuming tourist. In addition to domestic and international independent travellers, coach tours as well as domestic intercity buses stop here for a break.
Figure 6.11 Sketch: Four Peaks Plaza: Travel Flows. Tourists travel a specific route that makes a turn in front of the plaza. Buses stop on both sides of the street and tourists flow into the plaza. Fewer tourists (light coloured arrows) move beyond the plaza perimeter- there appears to be a perceived boundary keeping tourists within the plaza.

The plaza has a ‘touristy’ aesthetic using a local woodworker’s signs and sculptural elements (the pole people: first sighted outside of town and seen throughout the town and holiday park). Although the shops are located in two large buildings, the shops appear to be independent with separate frontages and signage. The space between the two buildings is accessible for cars and parking is provided. However, unlike most small local shopping centres, there is outdoor seating encroaching onto the parking area and people wander through and linger in this space as in a pedestrian shopping mall. This stage is comfortable with outdoor seating (tables and chairs, some with umbrellas) however it is best observed from the outside looking in. Once inside the space the attraction is to enter the shops, and like the tourism enclave encourage people to spend their money. This is a form of globalisation where local spaces are more focused on commercialisation and start to look like every other (homogenised) retail space. Nevertheless, the space is still also local, where building ‘embellishments’, sculptures and signs are locally produced on site by a locally owned business and the shops are locally or regionally owned and operated. This dialogue between global and local or glocalisation helps to mitigate the globalisation (commercialisation and homogenisation) and retain some sense of local Geraldine in this shopping centre space.
Figure 6.12 1) Corner of Talbot and Cox Streets: Café with large umbrellas and the i-SITE next door. Intercity buses as well as scheduled coach tours stop in front of the i-SITE and across the street, as pictured, between 10 and 4 everyday. 2) Entry into the Four Peaks Plaza: cheese shop, café, woodworker’s shop and parking are part of the ‘back area’. The fenced in cows in the foreground are accompanied by pole people crafted by the woodworker.

Figure 6.13 1) Four Peaks Plaza ‘back’ area: parking is shared with people wandering and seating areas. 2) Image shows a new extension of the ‘front’ area shops with parking. Regional tourists with bicycles are visible in the parking lot (right image in figure 6.8 above shows the site prior to the addition. The previous design had a blank wall, a few shrubs, and parking). Victorian Wood Works, a local company produces the pole people and signage in the plaza.

Figure 6.14 1) The i-SITE is front and centre of the Four Peaks Plaza, coaxing travellers to stop. Under the big ‘i’ a man is just visible using a bank machine. 2) Geraldine Historical Society Museum located in the old Town Board Office building beside the Four Peaks Plaza. People stopping at Four Peaks Plaza to use the toilets or to get something to eat/drink, and if they have time, will often have a quick look at the museum.
Figure 6.15 1) Public toilets are beside the museum, and next to the toilets is a linear park. Larger vehicles, especially those that are towing trailers often park along the linear park. 2) Looking back at the intersection, toilets and Four Peaks Plaza (i-SITE) are on the right. At the end of the road is the old post office building, which was being used to sell clothing. The flower beds in the foreground are intended to narrow the road and slow traffic.

Figure 6.16 1) Four different (local) musicians have been observed at this location, near the toilets or Four Peaks Plaza entry, playing for donations. The toilets are well maintained and well used. 2) The green space beside the toilets is used as a crafts market location and by travellers sitting at the picnic tables. The wear on the grass is likely from people using the crafts market. This patch of ‘green space’ is important for travellers who are avoiding the commercial side of travel and prefer free public space.

The authentic experience of the Four Peaks Plaza area (including the museum, public toilets and green space) is primarily constructive and existential. While the museum building and artefacts contained inside have objective authenticity, the Four Peaks corner experience is more about the experience of a rest stop along a journey.

The toilets are the focus. That is what most people need. Then building up from that is the shops, the cheese shop ... building on the dairying, from the hills behind, ... And beside the toilets is this nice treed parkland here, and you know you will get a park along here somewhere .... You notice, a large proportion of the people stopping are 4x4s towing a boat or a caravan, kayaks on top, probably Christchurch based, ... but it is very common to see 6 cars parked, maybe 2 or 3 are rentals....They know it’s a route ‘A’ to ‘B’, and along this route its time to pee. .... The old world has gone, but there is a passing trade with people’s body clocks. .... Omaru has something that causes people to come here, I don’t think Geraldine has in the moment, and it would be developed around bush, forest, rural produce, I would hazard to guess.... and outdoor experiences in the hinterland (RW 60s LA).
This rest stop originates as a logical stop on a travel route and continues to be developed to provide tourists services and spend their money in Geraldine.

(It is) on a route where tourists typically go from ‘A’ to ‘B’, when they are visiting say the South Island, secondly if it happens to be a place where often it is convenient after a day’s journey to stop over for a night, there is also that type of thing...[ examples? ] Quite a few of these towns, Geraldine is a case in point, that’s got a campground, campervan parks facilities, where people come... they arrive late in the day, they plug in, they do their thing, pay their money and go off in the morning. So some places are better set up for that than others (RW 60s LA).

Stop every time when we go there. Stop at Four Peaks and stop on the main street for a coffee. I usually stop at Four Peaks first, for parking, and if I’m tired. But if it looks very busy I would drive through and go to some place on the main street. Main street would be a second choice (SR 30s LA).

Scale of the town and the landscape context makes it one of the most attractive towns on the South Island. …We stop when we go through, quite often by the Four Peaks complex for food and toilet break, but we also go to Peel forest. (When we) come into town (while staying at Peel Forest), ignore that (Four Peaks) and just do something else, (like) the art gallery. Park where ever available. It's interesting when you pass through you focus on what you know, and the rest of the time you stop anywhere, and just wander (NM 40s LA, Emphasis added).

The Four Peaks Plaza has developed as a tourist stage from decades of catering to people having a ‘tea and pee’ stop. For the traveller, the space provides services that make their trip more enjoyable therefore essential in their tourist experience (existential authenticity). The plaza’s identity has changed from ‘happenstance’ space to a self-aware tourism stage. The stage was once only public toilets and the local Barker’s fruit store. It has now evolved into a complex that includes global foods like sushi and opportunities to book white water rafting trips. The ‘development’ of the tourist stage, making it more commercialized and what some called ‘touristy’ not only impacts tourist experiences but also local experiences. These changes were interpreted in a variety of ways by the key informants.

When I knew it (Geraldine) there was Morrison’s department store here, a country store you could buy anything, it closed down about 10 years ago. The old functions of the town have lessened. Just outside of this town was a flax mill believe it or not. … So all of these are gone, or contracted so adding on this thing of the tourist industry is important as it allows the town to continue, and therefore people to live here. Therefore new things develop, and Barker’s is a case in point. … Well its being going for 40-50 years, has become a commercial enterprise. So they have made a business of the produce of this area to the world (RW 60s LA).

The Barkers complex (Four Peaks) … has changed over the last 10 years … I went to the bakery and I thought as I walked through as a pedestrian how awful it was to walk through. It was absolutely appalling; it was just built for cars. I thought this was ridiculous and then bought my sandwich... ate outside and thought it awful and looked across and thought that is so touristy, and thought what am I doing here. I’ve been stopping here, at the bakery for years, and its not the world’s best bakery but it was convenient, fine, nothing wrong with it.. I won’t stop here again. It just didn’t do it for me at all. … I guess I was, in a very small scale, expressing that it’s wasn’t my zone anymore (LC 40s Tourism Consultant).

Geraldine wouldn’t become more than what it is. Four Peaks cluster of shops. Kiwi Country is something new... caters to bus market... (I) would not go there again. (I) would go to a coffee shop along the main street (VF 50s LA).

When you drive into Geraldine, you turn in, turn right off the main street, heading towards Mount Cook and Fairly, and suddenly on the corner there is quite a lot of obvious commercial activity. There are broad car parking lots you can drive in. There are people walking there. While the main street there is a kind of traditional veranda sort of strip development, which looks so traditional, for the most part
looks like it stayed that way for a long time. But a lot of tourists might think “ahh, that might be a bit daggy” (SR 30s LA).

Stopped there all my life, when travelling with parents… it was the right distance from Christchurch… but easy to bypass and stop in Fairlie. (What are the attractions?) Not a ‘bogan’ town. (Describes bogan as) Rough, no class, traditionally supported by agriculture…. Geraldine has always been busy, the pub… there is a buzz… food is always good in Geraldine… a bit less quality now, because it is busy…. Good local products like Barkers, the cheese factory is a good reason to stop. Use the public toilets…. Don’t take a walk, or stretch…. Like the café in the back… it was alright- not amazing, a bit too busy…. Like those little places that are fantastic but no one knows about it… (I) use them before they become popular (SS 40s LA).

Four Peaks Plaza still retains enough local authenticity for residents to support some shops and services.

Locals don’t tend to go there (Four Peaks Plaza). Well, they may go to a specific shop for a specific thing. They don’t go there as a destination, collectively, they keep away… they have no reason to go to the i-SITE. People don’t go to the one on the corner (Café in the front area) because a bus load of people will go there shortly (BC, 50s Community active resident).

I prefer the real. … I think you need to create things for the tourists to make money … Geraldine tries to be a real as possible (NP 20s administration).

There is a general understanding that tourist towns, places like Queenstown or Franz Joseph are somehow less authentic as the towns are created specifically for tourism and populated by non-local service personal.

Service people are the locals while they may not be, such as in Franz Joseph. Towns are being created… a bit of a Disneyland (SS 40s LA).

6.7.1 Strategy changes

Over the time of this study two changes have occurred that indicates the changing nature of tourism in Geraldine. The first occurred at the front of Four Peaks where a service/ employee parking area was removed to accommodate additional office and retail space. At the same time a new Sushi restaurant was added to the ‘front’ building. The second change is associated with the first change in that one of the new tenants is Rangitata Rafts, a local rafting company, who is attempting to increase its profile by opening a store front (Sleeman, Tourism consultant, personal communication, 2009). Prior to opening up this booking location, Rangitata Rafts operated by picking up clients at the bus stop at Four Peaks Plaza and in the back parking lot at Kiwi Country. This new location is a strategic move for better exposure and to compete with the more famous rafting outfitters associated with Queenstown. These changes indicate a desire to be more competitive and an increase in sophistication when providing tourism products. The implication of this strategy is subsequent tourism developments that are more commercialised and globalized (Sushi restaurant) and may lead to the creation of more enclavlic tourism stages. This type of development will be discussed further in the Kiwi Country Visitor Centre Stage.
Figure 6.17 1) Changes to the Four Peaks Plaza: the front area had a service bay (for the cafe) a private parking space, cabbage tree and two fenced cows and three pole people. 2) The new addition to this space has four new shop fronts at ground level and offices on the 1st floor. The cabbage tree is gone but the parking lot stays the same. There is now only one fenced cow and a sign for a cafe in the back area of the plaza.

Figure 6.18 1) Travellers on a youth coach tour prepare to go on a Rangitata Raft trip. Prior to 2009 tourists were transferred to different vehicles in the Kiwi Country Visitor Complex back parking lot to be shuttled to the river. 2) In 2009 Rangitata opened a store front in the Four Peaks Plaza. The store front includes monitors showing video of what to expect on the river trip. There is a distinct difference, between local adaptation and global formulae, and how people experience these spaces and what it means to the overall tourism experience.

In summary, the Four Peaks Plaza is a glocal tourist stage that has evolved to a configuration that provides tourist focused goods and services as found in global spaces but continues to retain features that are still attractive (tolerated) and authentic for local use. The authenticity of the tourist experience using the Four Peaks Plaza is subjective and likely related to existential and constructive authenticity as opposed to object authenticity.

6.8 Kiwi Country Visitor Complex Stage

In contrast to the main street and Four Peaks Plaza stages, Kiwi Country Visitor Complex is a discrete tourism enclave. It is physically enclosed in a single building and is separated from the rest of the CBD in its location and physically separated with fencing. It appears as a ‘shopping mall’ with architectural referencing to the site’s agricultural past with corrugated iron facade and silo form. Parking is focused on coaches which are placed behind the building somewhat hidden from the main
street. Similar to many shopping malls, the outdoor space is uninspiring (although there are flower beds) and people are drawn into the building to purchase their goods and experiences. The complex provides souvenirs, food and drink, internet, a money exchange and toilet facilities. A first impression of Kiwi Country is that it appears to be very similar to what you expect to see and experience in an airport.

Figure 6.19 Kiwi Country Tourist Complex located on what was the sales yards and livery stables site. Geraldine’s only remaining petrol station (Shell) is located next door. Mundell’s Cafe and Restaurant is located in the complex. Note: Coaches park at the rear of the building and short term visitor parking occurs on the street. The traditional building frontage found in the rest of the CBD is maintained.

Figure 6.20 1) Kiwi Country Visitor Complex: across the streets from a petrol station and 2) Subway. Does Geraldine need two visitor centres on either side of the town?

Figure 6.21 1) Buses park at the side entrance for loading and unloading. Passengers are directed right into the building. There are few things to see or do surrounding this visitor complex. 2) Buses park behind the building.
Figure 6.22 Sketch: Kiwi Country Visitor Complex: Tourist flows. Primarily coach tours stop in this tourist enclave. The space is designed for people to enter the building and spend money. There are few connections with the surrounding town.

The Kiwi Country Visitor Complex provides a node along the global mass tourist network. For the time attentive traveller within the tourism network system, this stop provides convenience and consumer activities.

Of the three tourist stages in Geraldine the Kiwi Country Visitor Complex was of most concern of key informants. The concern was most directed at the complex’s strong connection with mass tourism and the coach tours which the complex targets.

Kiwi Country is something new... caters to bus market... (I) would not go there again (VF 50s LA).

(We) didn’t go in, but saw it. Don’t remember it (Kiwi Country) as we came in. If a Japanese tourist bus comes in (to town) there is a place for it. (However) we don’t want it (AC 50s Australian tourists).

The coach market is a part of that system where you don’t make the decisions. But you will always have that (not allowing for individual choices) because there are a huge proportion of tourists, of people in life who need guidance... Asians buy into that system. A lot of people even domestic (tourists) who will go on the coach because it is organized. They don’t have to worry with other people going, safety factor; there is also a confidence factor with the driver, etc... They get value for the money. In Geraldine we will never be a part of that. I don’t believe we will ever be a (overnight) stopover or that type of thing... unless things changes. I don’t see that sort of money being attracted to the town to develop that type of accommodation (BW 60s Tourism Business).
The primary concern with Kiwi Country is with the complex’s lack of authenticity as a local experience. Kiwi Country is not viewed as ‘tea and pee’ stop, but as an extension of the global tourism network where the facility provides a standardized space that is homogenized and placeless. Standardization provides a tourist experience for mass tourists on coach tours but it removes the features that are important for independent travellers.

If we provide that then everyone would have access to it... then the independent traveller wouldn’t have anything to discover... I would rather have busses move to point ‘a’ and I would go, (independent travellers) would go to point b (SS 40s LA).

That (Kiwi Country) has never struck me as a place you want to stop at, unless you are on a tour bus, I have nothing against it it’s just that we have always stopped here (Four Peaks)... tradition and you have a few more options, and plus the toilets (AB 40s LA).

Need to stop the global look, building design, architecture, would help a lot. Perhaps, strengthen the sorts of everyday things like…. Offer more things like mountain biking routes that were visible when going through... people with bikes on the campervan… it’s not only good for the locals, but it’s a real thing but it’s also good for the visitors... so it’s the aesthetic, nice space type things... might draw you in for visitors and local… it doesn’t have to be staged, and not just for the locals. (Does real or staged matter to you? Matter to your professional perception?) Yes it bothers you. I will not go to places that are too staged and I have a choice. I just avoid them... I encourage the more real in my professional practice (LC 40s Tourism Consultant).

Since locals perceive a problem with Kiwi Country’s local authenticity they are less likely to use these facilities. Places that are not use by residents appear to be less ‘local’ and therefore less authentic as a rural town.

Create a destination, a place to go (where) the locals have got to go. In Italy and Paris it’s the locals in the parks and squares... we need to mix them. It has a sense of place (SB 60s Tourism Consultant).

I like Geraldine … I think it is on the cusp of going from a local town to a tourist town... some of the things that I have seen developing there, in the past 5 years, possibly the last 3 years… I don’t like. And I think it’s because I think it is losing its authenticity as a local town (LC 40s Tourism Consultant).

This section has looked at three stages which provide for tourism in Geraldine. The stages provide a range of experiences from authentic local experiences to authentic global experiences that are provided primarily for mass tourists on organized coach tours. I have used Wang’s three types of authenticity in tourism experiences to explain how the stages work as a means for authentic tourism experiences. As a designer however, Wang’s authenticity theory is problematic when trying to apply it to the design process. Authentic objects are important, but in and of themselves do not create authentic tourist experiences. Constructive and existential authenticities are subjective and socially negotiated and therefore quite difficult to apply when designing space. This is difficult as designers need to understand and measure what people ‘project on to’ objects and space as well as their state of Being. This is made even more difficult as authentic projections change as societies and individuals change as well the ephemeral nature of a person’s state of Being. To overcome these challenges the performance metaphor as well as the concept of performance authenticity has been used to make sense of three tourist stages in Geraldine.
6.9 Performing Geraldine

In tourist studies the visual culture of tourism, informed by Urry’s (1990) tourist gaze, has been challenged by a more anthropological-phenomenological-inspired viewpoint- “tourists do not only gaze but are also bodies performing at specific sights” (Knudsen and Waade 2010: 12). This thesis is exploring the proposition that design disciplines need to also take a more phenomenological stance. To do this the performance metaphor was chosen, as well as the concept of performative authenticity (Knudsen and Waade 2010) to render a more complete understanding of the three tourist stages in Geraldine. The new perspective gained from understanding practices and places as cultural and social performance will then be used to organize my understanding of the tourism stage and the staging of tourist places in the following sections in this chapter.

6.9.1 Performing Main Street Geraldine

Talbot Street, Geraldine’s main street provides both access through the town and access to the shops lining the street. The wide street, as mentioned by key informants, is typical and signifies rural New Zealand towns. The everyday performances of a small town are comprised of scheduled and informal meetings between residents going about their daily lives. During the movement of daily life, people’s movements intersect and become opportunities to socialize. The copresence (physically being with others) exchange occurs in all sorts of public and private places, such as standing beside their vehicles on a street, outside of shop entrances, and while sitting in idling cars parked driver window to driver window, sometimes in the middle of the street or parking lot. The wide street makes this social behaviour possible. Locals perform this stage as a familiar taskscape where repetition rather than reflection of practices guide their performances.

Figure 6.23 Locals and travelling groups often use the street, space by their vehicles and sidewalks to socialize, and organize their lives. 1) Locals organizing their car while two groups of motorcycle travellers plan their trip. 2) Two local men talking (they talked for approximately five minutes) beside a truck on the traffic side of the street
Outdoor performances include moving between shops and services by car, bicycle and as pedestrian, parking as close to the shop destination as possible, youth ‘hanging out’ outside the dairy, strolling with children/dogs while running errands and meeting up with acquaintances. Some unique performances also occur such as locals leaving farm trucks/Ute’s parked on the street with animated dogs and sometimes sheep in the back. For people unfamiliar with ‘rural life’ this scene is a new experience and is of interest.

One possible exception to the otherwise small town everyday in Geraldine is a knitwear shop, which viewed from the outside appears to be an ordinary shop on a side street but is home to the Guinness approved, world’s largest jersey and mosaic replica of the Bayeux Tapestry. While this initially could be considered a ‘tourist trap’, spending time with the creator, Michael Linton, quickly reveals this is not a trap at all but one man’s passion to exhibit his interests in history and puzzles. Although it has become a small tourist attraction, it is experienced more as an honest expression of an everyday man and his interests.

Another very unusual type of art is seen at the Giant Jersey Shop, where Michael Linton has a mosaic replica of the Bayeux Tapestry on exhibition. The initial reaction to hearing about it is a bit “ho-hum, just a copy of something old.” The reaction on actually seeing it is one of astonishment at the sheer scale, and disbelief at the incredible patience needed to complete such a monumental 25-year task. The work is a mosaic of more than 2,500,000 chips of spring steel from knitting machine programming discs, hand-painted, on canvas. It is 42 metres long and weighs 275 kilograms (Button 2006: 404-405).

I met a number of tourists who support this sentiment and expressed their astonishment after meeting and experiencing Mr. Linton and his work. The reason to visit this shop/exhibition is not necessarily the subject matter or as spectacle, but to meet a local man and the expression of his passion. This example is important to this discussion as it identifies what experiences tourists find important and they do not have to be those most associated with mass tourism.

Tourists use the everyday stage on Talbot Street because it provides the right stage for their performance (they deliberately avoid tourist stages because they are ‘not authentic’ or are too ‘touristy’) or they are using what is in front of them, unaware of other options available to them. Tourists perform Talbot Street by engaging with a number of activities that include: strolling obvious routes up and down the street, window shopping, gazing (and sometimes photographing) localness (including: architecture; real estate displays and community announcements; and vegetation), socializing with members of their travel group and with locals, and based out of their vehicle they organize their travel lives. Tourists were observed (re)packing their camper vans and relaxing (eating and reading) in their vehicles. Main street performances mix tourists and locals where everyday life is the predominant script.
6.9.2 Performing the Four Peaks Plaza Stage- the Tourist Stop along the Route

Four Peaks Plaza is performed quite differently from the main street stage. This stage is intended for tourists taking a break from travel and consuming products targeted to them. Time is important in this stage, where schedules need to be met with coach tours moving through the travel circuit. International and domestic (independent) tourists also use this stage as it conveniently provides the necessary services as a comfort stop.

![Figure 6.24](image1.jpg)

Figure 6.24 1) Many people in the Four Peaks Plaza are waiting for their coach tour to continue. For the mass coach tourist, Geraldine is a stop along the route. After using the toilet facilities and getting something to eat or drink, people spend quite a bit of time standing near their bus or pick up point. 2) The buses and building facades enclose the sidewalk space in front of the i-SITE. This sense of enclosure keeps the focus on the shopping centre space

![Figure 6.25](image2.jpg)

Figure 6.25 1) Directly across from Four Peaks Plaza is a privately owned house. The over grown and brightly coloured garden attracts many people to take photos, touch and smell the flowers. 2) When buses park on this side of the street, the buses create a visual barrier directing attention to the house and garden. The ‘localness’ of the house and garden appears to soften the commercial/’touristy’ aspects of the Four Peaks Plaza

The physical presence of buses in the Four Peaks area dominate the stage and indicates the difference between this tourist stage and the more local main street. Performances here become more like an ‘event’ with the arrival of buses which physically transform the space by adding temporary ‘walls’ and framing views. More importantly the buses bring people who pour out onto the sidewalks and bring life to space. On one occasion, an older local gentleman sitting on a bench near the museum who during a conversation revealed he enjoyed sitting here so he could watch the people getting off the bus.
buses and have conversations with them. The buskers who play at the Four Peaks Plaza entrance rely on the flow of tourists moving through, and they also add to the overall tourist performance of this space.

The presence of buses however is not always taken positively and is considered a nuisance by some by blocking views, taking prominent parking spaces and fouling the air with noise and pollution. The higher concentration of buses does reshape this space and has been interpreted as more ‘urban’.

The performances of the coach tourists were largely found to be predictable and likely to be scripted and led in part by the tour companies. After leaving the bus, the first scene is usually a direct line to the public toilets. The coach tourists then regroup for the second scene, in the Four Peaks Plaza (some use the toilets in the Plaza) where they get something to eat or wander into the shops. As time goes on, there is movement between the shops as the Plaza is explored, but few coach tourists venture out of the Plaza and down the main street. Independent tourists (both international and domestic) are less regulated by the clock and are more inclined to move outside of the Four Peaks and explore the main street. Once the biological needs are attended to, the Plaza stage becomes a waiting room, where people mill about, gather with others on their trip and have conversations, stand waiting near their tour coach, and checking their phones for messages. There are few places to sit near the street so most people are required to stand. The café’s seating was once popular for coach tours that were waiting. However the owners of the café were not gaining from tourists using their seating but not buying from them. This outdoor sitting area has since been re-claimed by the café with the use of a fence and more structured seating.

Figure 6.26 CHANGES: 1) Asian tourists wait in front of the café often not buying from the café who are providing the seating area. This space was open to people on the street and was attractive for mass tourists waiting for their tour to continue. 2) A new fence and larger umbrellas have been constructed on the same site to claim the café’s private commercial space. The sidewalk and road are the only public spaces in the Four Peaks Plaza.

The script and stage do not always provide the cues or the experiences that are sought out by people performing these spaces. It was very common to see tourists using whatever they could to ‘sit and
wait’ and one tourist was observed looking for a physical challenge by *buildering* (like bouldering but climbing on buildings). Many people were observed stretching their limbs after exiting their vehicles.

The mass coach tourists were not the only groups arriving in large numbers. Large touring groups on motorcycles and bicycles also found Geraldine a convenient and important stop along the route. While the Four Peaks Plaza was the most common place to stop, other spaces were used such as a church lawn across the road from Four Peaks and the private *village green* at the Village Inn. These spaces allowed large groups and their equipment to congregate and create the ephemeral stage for their touring performance. Touring motorcyclists and to a greater extent bicyclists are less intrusive to town stages, when compared to coach tours or even campervans. This appears to be a reflection of the scale of the intrusion and the compatibility of their presence has on other tourist and local performances.

The travel performance requires certain, and sometimes special equipment, we can call ‘*props*’, as well as specific clothing or *costumes* and other people or *actors* to enact a desired performance. Tourist vehicles and the tourists themselves found in the Four Peaks area became the cues to tourist performance. One motorcyclist was observed spending about 15 minutes with two Asian tourists,
answering their (broken-English) questions and taking photos of various poses with the bike and with them. Parking spaces are also used in different ways as places to rest, read, organize, and eat, to name a few. Seeing other people occupy space draws more people to use that space (Whyte 1980). Cullen’s (1961) concept of occupied territory suggests some permanent indication, such as furniture, helps to provide the town humanity and intricacy and for the purposes of this research a cue for a spatial script. However there were few permanent ‘props’ found in the Four Peaks Plaza, other than those that were part of a commercialised setting.

Figure 6.29 1) People and their vehicles become new and interactive props on the tourist stage. Motorcycles and antique cars were commonly observed temporary props that add to the holiday stage. 2) People inside their vehicles also become a part of the street scene as is the case of this sleeping child; suggesting a safe relaxed place.

6.9.3 Performing Other Tourist Stages in Geraldine

Tourist performances do not solely occur on the commodified tourist stages such as the Four Peaks Plaza. Tourists on holiday also share services and facilities used by locals and other types of tourists such as those who are working or visiting friends and family. Verdé Café deli is a good example of a tourist stage that is removed from the more popular stages. Verdé is tucked behind the old Post Office building across the street from the Four Peaks Plaza. This café is situated in an old house and takes advantage of its somewhat secluded location and garden surroundings. There are signs indicating the café’s location. It is mostly locals and domestic tourists (who were told about the place or ‘happened upon it”) that are aware of its location and the quality food and coffee it offers. The café’s quiet and (relatively) removed location requires some ‘prior knowledge’ of its location and quality which adds a layer of ‘insideness’ or ‘localness’ to the place. Customers are predominantly made up of locals and domestic tourists familiar with the area, but more ‘outsiders’ are discovering it. Although Verdé is not any ‘more local’ than the bakery in the Four Peaks Plaza or Mundell’s restaurant in Kiwi Country, it appears to be ‘more local’ because of its removed relationship to other tourist facilities and has a domestic scale and aesthetic (garden and veranda in an old house). Verdé is also no different from other cafés in that it is a business trying to sell its services to its customers, but it is different in that it has created a stage and script (physically and symbolically) which suggests a connection to the
concept of ‘small town’ and not an extension of global efficiency and mass tourism. Verdé is not set up to accommodate the coach tours.

Another tourist stage that appears ‘local’ but not is intended for locals is the Geraldine Holiday Park. This holiday park is located in town behind the Four Peaks Plaza and adjacent to the public toilets and green space. The park is also associated with the town’s domain which has a cricket pitch, outdoor swimming pool and large children’s play area. Both the holiday park and the domain are well planted with mature exotic tree species that were planted well over a hundred years ago. One tourist with horticultural experience described the park as a wonderful ‘botanical garden’. The owners of the park have created a well considered strategy (script) for their stage and believe their customers will return and recommend their park if it is well run and maintained, relatively quiet (a family place), and, quite importantly, kept very clean (personal communication, 2008, 2009). This high standard of service and relaxed green space makes this an attractive holiday stop. This attracts not only people on the move, but this park is also a regional destination for domestic tourists who book sites often for weeks.

What makes this park appealing for some travellers is its location next to the tourist facilities and CBD. The holiday park stage is very dynamic and changes with the various types and arrangements of caravans, tents and campervans. People also change but the seasoned holiday camper knows the script and how to use this stage. The holiday camp performance is a research topic in and of itself, but it is worth noting that the performance is routine yet relaxed, friendly, slower paced (compared to urban settings) and influenced by living in temporary structures in a more simplified way. This simplicity is however changing with the appearance of satellite dishes and larger more sophisticated motor homes. The holiday park can be considered an extension of the small town lifestyle (performance) where a stage is provided for visitors to perform in a less complicated, quieter and more basic way in a ‘natural’ park-like setting. What is unique in the Geraldine stage is that if the ‘camping’ lifestyle is not to your liking, there is the option of the tourist facilities and CBD only steps away. The holiday park is also desirable for international tourists who want to meet and mix with New Zealanders.

Figure 6.30 1) Verdé restaurant is tucked behind the Old Post Office, opposite the Four Peaks Plaza. This restaurant is open 9 am to 4 pm and used by locals and people who know of its location. 2) Geraldine Holiday Park.
Park, behind the Four Peaks Plaza is a mix of domestic and international visitors. Holiday park performances by domestic tourists include the very common morning walk to the service block in a house coat. The holiday park provides a temporary yet local-like stage, for non-residents.

6.9.4 Performing the Kiwi Country Visitor Complex Stage
The tourist performances at Kiwi Country are different to the Four Peaks Plaza. It is an indoor enclave - outdoor space is limited to parking. Similar to an urban shopping mall or airport, tourist enclaves provide little for outdoor performances. Outdoor seating, shade, access to other amenities or any form of outdoor entertainment is not provided. This stage works by attracting people inside and keeping them contained (and spending) within the enclave. For the mass tourist and for some independent tourists and locals, the performance is desired for its convenience and familiarity. In some ways it was considered more authentic than glocalised spaces, such as Four Peaks, as it is quite clear that this place is intended for a specific kind (globally connected, mass) tourist experience. This type of complex is relatively new for New Zealand and new enclavic complexes, such as Farmers Corner outside of Ashburton, are appearing on the travel circuits. Farmers Corner has been designed to be viewed from the highway and uses lawns and gardens to soften the isolated and enclavic nature of the building. Outdoor spaces on this stage are passed through and experienced from inside the vehicle.

Figure 6.31 Farmers Corner outside of Ashburton. The outdoor space is landscaped to be experienced from the vehicle and provides the primary function for efficient traffic flow and parking.

6.10 Changing Stages

6.10.1 Daily Rhythms
The stages and subsequent performances that have been described in this section are not static but evolve with daily rhythms and have changed, at larger scales, during the three years of this study. The daily rhythms of a stop along the route are obvious, and are the product of scheduled coach tours and the time/distance from other starting and stop points along the route. Prior to coaches arriving for morning tea the tourist stages are being prepared for ‘the rush’. Deliveries and staff move in and out of the tourist space, cleaning, maintaining and preparing. Occasionally locals have adapted to the
tourist rhythms and use the space for their needs. A local tradesman was observed, using the tables in the back area of the Four Peaks as his office and place to have his morning coffee. He was gone by the time the buses arrived. It was also noted that coach tours and most independent travellers have moved on or have settled into local accommodation by late afternoon. The purely tourist shops (souvenir and retail shops) close with the departure of the last mass tour bus. While the tourist space looks empty without people moving or vehicles on the street or parking lot, it has a flexible scale, where the scale of the built form is appropriate with a range of use (light to heavy use) and when it is empty. The stage is actually not empty at all, as locals and tourists spending the night use the café that stays open into the evening, use the bank machine, and use the space between the buildings as a short cut, although the number of evening performances is quite a bit fewer than the day time ones. The public toilets are also used during all hours of the night.

Another daily rhythm that changes the stages is the New Zealand use of sidewalk signage. Put out in the morning and taken in at the end of the business day, placard or sandwich board signs are used on public space, usually sidewalks. Often associated with dairies (small convenience stores) these signs fill up space on sidewalks creating a sense of ‘something happening’ in a space and often, for some people, become a nuisance as an obstacle course on the sidewalk. The hand-made aesthetic and non-permanent nature of the signs equates to the nature of small towns. There are also more sophisticated and permanent signs being created which demonstrates the changing of the times. Geraldine, like many small towns have until quite recently had only had locally produced and nationally branded signage. There are now however quite sophisticated signs displayed, most notable the Kiwi Country and Subway restaurant signs at the north end of town.

Figure 6.32 1) Sidewalk signage is popular throughout New Zealand and seems to increase as time goes on. 2) The local handicraft sign is handmade and simple, while 3) the Farmer’s market (no affiliation with the other markets) is more upscale. 4) The pole people (local symbols) stand guard near the more sophisticated and brand conscious signs of Kiwi Country and the internationally recognised Subway restaurants. The obstacles increase co-presence between people moving around the smaller spaces on the sidewalk. This does create a ‘buzz’ of people in this space and for some is a nuisance.
Figure 6.33 1) Tourists wander around the parking lot of the Four Peaks Plaza. When the tourists leave the tourist space is still at an appropriate scale for local use. 2) What appears to be Geraldine’s village green is actually a private space for patrons of Village Inn restaurant and bar. A children’s playgroup structure is located in the centre of this image and provides a domestic as opposed to a commodified sense of place. The scale of the empty stage is important to ‘work’ for the community when not being performed by tourists.

Figure 6.34 1) The public toilet area is the hub for the quick stop in Geraldine. Like a village green, many performances are occurring from stretching the legs, resting in the shade, boy playing a violin and cars being aired out. 2) A coach tour, for young adults, is left waiting at the Four Peaks Plaza corner. These tourists grew tired of the shops and preferred to entertain themselves by socializing, reading, and throwing a rugby ball around. The presence of this large group of people transferred this corner space from the usual small market passive performance into a more park-like and active performance space. The ball routinely went into the street and caused traffic to stop which gave entertainment to the waiting travellers.

The nature of small towns is to be resourceful and make use of spaces in multifunctional ways. Parking lots are never just for parking your car, but are also event space. This is illustrated at the Harcourt parking space becoming a small market space. Private spaces can also be multifunctional and adaptable, as in the case of the Village Inn’s ‘village green’ used to display heritage motorcycles on a day ride. The performances by the motorcyclists provide potential performances for visitors and residents alike to interact with the vehicles and their owners. Everyday spaces change to accommodate and transform into tourism space. Parking lots turn into market spaces and the ‘village green, a privately owned restaurant space is changed into an antique motorcycle exhibition space.
6.10.2 Taking photographs

One performance that is quite noticeable in the Four Peaks Plaza area and to a lesser extent along Geraldine’s main street is the tourist practice of taking photographs. Taking snapshots while on vacation is standard practice: recording what you do, experiencing place through the camera and creating experiences from the social performance of taking the photograph. Observations were made in the Four Peaks Plaza of people, primarily Asian tourists, taking photographs of each other and the ‘local sights’ surrounding the Plaza. The subject matter of the photographs was focused on fellow travellers positioned in front of a number of key scenes. The old Post Office, the small house and garden, churches and the museum were the most common scenes selected by the photographers. The coach tourists appear familiar with this performance and skilfully set up photographs they desire. These performances often included having both the photographer and subject of the photograph, the friend or relative, on the street to get the best framing for the shot as possible. The photographic team moves quickly and are entertained with their antics to get that perfect photo. In addition to Asian tourists at the Four Peaks Plaza, other photographers were observed taking photographs in a less animated way of other parts of town such as the old Crown Hotel on the main street.

The photography performance also included the ‘staged’ shot of someone in the group posing in a humorous way. On three different occasions, Asian tourists were observed climbing on the cow statue for a picture of them riding the cow. This performance included a number of fellow passengers encouraging the performance along and enjoying every moment of it. These tourists may be improvising (acting in the spur of the moment) the stage, or may also be following another script provided by the tour company. Other tourists and locals may have mixed feelings of this performance.
by the mass tourists and it may interfere with their own performances. Regardless, the stage is reactivated and a burst of life energizes the space. The stop in Geraldine may be only a stop along the route for most tourists but it may also be quite enjoyable and memorable.

Figure 6.36 1) German tourists wander along and take photos of Talbot Street near the old hotel. 2) Korean tourists do not venture too far from the coach and take photos with the fibreglass cow. Some people climb on the cow for pictures which results in an entertaining performance for the performers and the audience. 3) Photos are important enough to risk injury and pose in the middle of a busy street

6.11 Summary and Contributions

The use of the performance metaphor, perceiving the town as stages and people as performers practicing scripts puts a new dimension on understanding a town’s spatial structure and how it functions. As a stop along the route, Geraldine provides two key tourist stages that provide for mass tourism as well as independent and domestic tourists/travellers. The town’s main street is the third stage where performing the local everyday is sought for an authentic (performative authenticity) small town experience. Four Peaks Plaza is a hybrid local/tourist stage where tourists perform the ‘rest stop’ and as consumers. Locals also share this stage, for more ‘everyday’ performances and are likely to avoid the peak tourist times. Kiwi Country Visitor Complex provides the most global experience where mass tourists follow a consumption script in a highly controlled and aesthetically placeless stage. This chapter also highlights the importance of people’s perceptions of authenticity, as it relates to the contrasting scripts of mass and independent tourists, as well as taskscapes and touristscapes. The next chapter will add to this by examining the staging and responses to different tourist stages proposed for Geraldine.

Up to this point, the Geraldine case study contributes to this research by revealing four main issues associated with perception’s of the town’s script and current stage. First, is the issue and nature of perceived authenticity. It was found that locals perceive the town, the current script and stage, as - ‘feels like a community’. The town feels authentic because the performances and stage meets their ideas or script of what they believe a small town to be. Residents perform local stages as familiar
taskscape from repetition rather than reflection. Locals accept change but are wary of the town becoming ‘touristy’ like Queenstown. Authentic objects were considered important, but in and of themselves do not create authentic tourist experiences. Theoretically this is important in the authenticity discussion and suggests the authenticity at play is not only based on the gaze, the place and the imagined script but also includes the body performing places by actions and behaviours. These performances, everyday performances are often uneventful and forgotten but without them the travel experience is unobtainable.

Secondly, this section has highlighted the importance of the notions of taskscape and touristscape. Associated with the concepts of local and global, these concepts are ideal types and some level of hybrid of glocalisation occurs in reality. Glocalisation occurred in Four Peaks Plaza where local mitigation was applied to the global nature of the tourism stop. Locally produced props, signs and regional icons ‘soften’ the global/commercial aspects of the space. Although this initially helps to mitigate globalisation, there are limits to how these changes are perceived and tourisctapes move toward becoming more commercialised and globalised. At some point they become enclavic tourist space and no longer ‘feel like a part of the community’. It was also found that taskscapes need appropriate cues (scriptstage props) or signs to ‘invite’ tourists. With out these cues the stages go unnoticed or are interpreted as extensions of touristisctapes. How this is accomplished is ‘tricky’ as conventional cues, such as direct sight access or reconfiguring the street to slow traffic, change the character of the town. When this occurs in a majority of towns these spaces become homogenised and therefore lack the uniqueness essential for tourism. There is also a risk when taskscapes such as a tourist stop attempt to become a touristscape or a destination. Changes to become a touristscape, although appealing for mass tourists appear to have negative consequences for locals and independent travellers.

This chapter also contributes a clearer distinction between mass and independent tourists. Mass tourists generally follow a script, stage and performance as created by the tourism industry. While independent tourists (and independent minded mass tourists) may choose to follow the conventional script, stage and perform as ‘expected’ as a tourist, they may also choose to challenge the script by spending more time in the local everyday (taskscapes), avoiding the tourist stages, or perform stages in ways contrary to how they were intentionally staged and scripted. Independent tourists are particularly important for stops along the route and taskscapes as they are more likely to remove themselves from the established stages and scripts and perform in a town’s taskscape. Unlike mass tourists, who have chosen to allow the tourism industry to schedule and produce their travel experiences. Unscripted and everyday experiences are excluded from the mass tourist itinerary due to limited time and the goal of commercial gain for the tourism industry. This suggests that there is a need for spaces that are attractive to ‘outsiders’ wanting a local staging where visitors can meet locals,
such as the Holiday Park and Verdé café where the scripting and stage (taskscapes) provide a ‘local experience’. Finally, related to the notions of mass/independent tourists, is the tourist performance of taking photographs. For mass tourists on coach tours the Four Peaks’ stage provides the necessary props for this to occur. The plastic cow provides for improvised photographic performances while the historic post office and ‘authentic everyday’ cottage provides the more conventional props for a photography performance. Churches and the historic hotel provide alternative scenes for independent minded tourists wishing to venture away from the tourist stage.

The final insight concerns the performance metaphor. It was found that people ‘project onto’ objects and spaces. They projected their state of being (how they feel) onto objects and spaces as well. This means that some objects and spaces have added value according to what individuals perceive at the time of experiencing. Experiences where the performer is given more freedom, more choice, and is a part of creating the experience are deemed important. How this ‘works’ with staging a tourist experience will be examined in the next chapter.