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RICCARTON - THE ART OF THE THIRD PLACE IN A FIRST SUBURB
Riccarton - The Art of the Third Place in a first suburb.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Landscape Architecture at Lincoln University by J. F. Moore

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Ray Oldenburg introduced the concept of the ‘Third Places’, describing them as havens of sociability that are essential to local democracy and community vitality. These places provide the potential for an area to be more socially inclusive and to achieve enhanced levels of social wellness (Oldenburg:2001).

An analysis of Oldenburg’s theory indicates it does not consider widely how landscape can add to this dimension of the Third Place. Therefore this thesis using a ‘research through design process’, challenges Oldenburg’s Third Place concept and looks at the landscape as Third Places. It addresses what is the ideal form of these Third Places? What do they look like and how do they work? And how as landscape architects can we judge their success?

Through the extraction of successful design elements from a variety of case-study sites around New Zealand the ‘art of the Third Place’ is developed. These findings are then contextualised as a design programme for Riccarton, an inner suburb of Christchurch, New Zealand, and the location of one of New Zealand’s largest shopping malls. Riccarton offers the potential to pursue a landscape expression of third spaces, as it can be investigated both externally and internally as the mall is a type of interior landscape. This thesis explores mall environment as a particular typology of the Third Place, analysing if these environments can act as successful Third Places and if not, why not? And how do we make these environments work best to fulfill community desires and create these ‘great good places’?

This design scenario, presented in chapter 7, envisions Riccarton becoming supported by vibrant Third Places, connected systems, permeable space, active frontages, bustling streets, all at a human scale. Riccarton is still a place to shop, but is also a place to live, work, play, dance, laugh, love, learn and belong… It is the ‘art’ of the Third Place.

Key Words
Third Place, Ray Oldenburg, Riccarton, Mall, Inner Suburb
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