In order to answer the questions set out in the Introduction to this thesis "what is the ideal form for the Third Places of Riccarton?" It is evident that places need to be analysed to establish if there are any distinct design trends, characteristics or precedents that lend towards designing successful Third Places in the landscape. We need to ascertain what are the great, good Third Places? What do they look like and how do they work?

Research into the theory surrounding the creation of successful Third Places has been undertaken in chapter 4 and 5, this developed a set of criteria for designing successful Third Places. These criteria were: Architectural relationship; permeability; legibility; linkages and sequencing; safety control; activities; hybridity and adaptability; comfort and personalisation; and the experiential landscape.

Chapter 5 further identified the need to look at the design of the mall environment and the need to establish how this environment works in relation to the Third Place.

Therefore the second key research approach followed in this thesis is the use of case studies to investigate these criteria against Third Places to measure their levels of success.
TYPE OF CASE STUDY - AND WHY WHERE THEY CHOSEN?

Five case studies were chosen, all are Shopping Malls in New Zealand. Their form, layout, landscape interaction and function varied across the scale, from large international malls to newer landscape focused ‘townscape’ malls. This variation provides diversity in the analysis, and also allows assessment to be made against the larger structure-planning elements of the design, as well as finer details at the human scale. A majority of the case study sites are situated in outer suburbs of major cities, similar to Riccarton.

All the case studies were conducted in June, during the Mid-term school holiday break. For each case study I spent approximately a day on site, this ensured different times of the day were observed and peak hours. The predominant form of research was observation through sketching, mapping, site analysis and observing what people did on site and their movement patterns. All the case studies were conducted on a winter’s day with warm weather.

6.2 BRIEF METHODOLOGY

Each case study is analysed according to the following points:

- Background of site. Providing a historical overview of the site and design intent of the mall and surrounding landscape.

- The Third Places of the mall in relation to described Criteria (From Chapter 4).

- Any additional activities occurring in the space/ experiential qualities/ key design aspects that aid the successful design of Third Places.

The analysis is both subjective and objective, in order to allow for a range of possible contributing factors for successful third spaces to emerge. One criticism of such analyses is that they can sometimes be too objective, and reducing observation to a more box-ticking or ranking exercise. Conversely, without a set of criteria for baseline comparisons, a completely subjective approach can fail to produce anything useful in terms of design guidelines.

Following these case studies the information will then be analysed in Chapter 7 and key positive design interventions will be drawn into a conclusion. This can then be used to re-assess my major design and develop successful alternative design scenarios for Riccarton – so bringing into focus and applying the art of the Third Place.

Case Studies chosen are:

1. Sylvia Park, Auckland. New Zealand
2. North City, Porirua. New Zealand
3. Fashion Island, Nelson. New Zealand
4. Bishopdale Mall, Christchurch. New Zealand
5. Botany Downs, Auckland. New Zealand
6.3 - Case Study (1) SYLVIA PARK
SYLVIA PARK - FACT SHEET

“Sylvia Park – This is the Place”

OWNER: Kiwi Income Property Trust

BUILT: Staged from 2006

SIZE: 6.5ha – over 200 shops

OPENING HOURS:

- Mon- Wed: 9.00am to 6.00pm
- Thurs – Fri: 9.00am to 9.00pm
- Sat – Sun: 9.00am to 6.00pm
- Public Holidays: Normal shopping hours
[BACKGROUND]

Sylvia Park Mall forms part of a large business park in Mount Wellington, a suburb in the South East of Auckland, New Zealand. Situated off the Southern Motorway, Sylvia Park is 12km from Auckland CBD, 20km from Auckland Airport and it is estimated that 700,000 residents live within a 20 minute drive (Cooper: 2006) (Fig 6.1). The main shopping mall is situated at the centre of the business park, and is the focus of this case study.

Sylvia Park Mall is a large interior shopping complex featuring a wide variety of major retailers (Fig 6-3). These include five large key anchor stores, national chains of The Warehouse Extra, Pak n Save, Whitcoulls, Dick Smith and entertainment facilities of Hoyts Cinema. There are also stores which are new to New Zealand retailing such as Roxy and Kookai, that provide a boutique shopping experience.

Owned and operated by Kiwi Income Property Trust (KIPT) Sylvia Park was built in several stages between 2006 and its completion in 2010 and now consists of 6.5 ha of indoor shopping space, with over 200 shops and has an estimated value of NZ$450 million. It is the second largest shopping centre in New Zealand by square metres and amongst the largest shopping centres in New Zealand in terms of number of shops. The wider Sylvia Park development appears likely to continue, with resource consent having been granted to start building office blocks (Dearnaley: 2007).

In a 2008 rating of New Zealand shopping centres by a retail expert group, Sylvia Park received four stars, the maximum rating, based on the criteria of amount of shopping area, economic performance, amenity and appeal as well as future growth prospects. Especially praised were the wide catchment of shoppers and the motorway accessibility (Gibson: 2008).

[DESIGN INTENT]

KIPT originally described the Sylvia Park development as a ‘world class town centre’ featuring a wide range of retail, commercial and community facilities. There has been significant investment in Urban Design, consisting of over 1300 trees, a large park and a 40m high structure that is the modern representation of an Auckland Volcanic cone. In total KIPT has ended up devoting 22% of the site area to landscaped spaces (Cooper: 2006). However, whether Sylvia Park functions as a town centre is far from clear, many argue that the mall itself is an insular development set amongst a largely industrial development that is largely car dependant (Ibid).
CHAPTER 6 ■ Case Studies

[Sylvia Park Mall - The Design] (Fig 6-6)

INTERIOR
With good accessibility deemed one of the major design elements of Sylvia Park there is no doubt that this is one of the main focuses of the design, with Bus and Rail amongst some of the most popular means of transport to the centre. The mall complex has an integrated railway station at the heart where the South Eastern Motorway flyover carves the design in two. Here trains stop at least once every 30 minutes, and more frequently at peak times. The Mall expands from this transport centre into two ‘wings’ and becomes two-storey in places. This transport also sculpts the design of the exterior of the mall. Enclosed amongst an expanse of car parks, Sylvia Park is accessed by four entrance ways off the motorway.

Sylvia Park fits the profile of what can be described as a typical large box mall layout, with an inwards-facing design and large street-like walkways lined with storefronts on both sides, punctuated by smaller food and retail kiosks.

EXTERIOR
The exterior of Sylvia Park is where the design does differ from many of the major Mall designs in New Zealand. A central open air courtyard is at the centre of the design. This acts as both an outdoor gathering space and significant entrance whilst moving from the car park. This exterior courtyard is a multifunctional place for gathering and entertainment. (At the time of research a bungee ride was in place).

This courtyard is surrounded by two storey buildings and balcony walkways which allow people views down into the public space. Seating punctuates the hard landscaped street and is a one off design for Sylvia Park, carefully positioned so as not to ‘belong’ to any particular shop or restaurant, and simply adds to the provision of positive outdoor space.

Walking under the flyover there is a unique design park entitled SEART Park. Designed by Isthmus Auckland, this design features “simple vertical steel poles, painted with vibrant colours to bring life energy and excitement into this potentially negative space” (Isthmus Group: 2012). This provides safety factors as well and interaction and activity to an otherwise dead space.
[DESIGN CRITERIA: A SUCCESSFUL THIRD PLACE?]

ARCHITECTURAL RELATIONSHIP (Fig 6-7).

Overall the mall only has a strong architectural relationship with a small percentage of the Sylvia Park site. There are key instances where the buildings appear at a comfortable human scale for the most part and interact with the street. An example of this is the main entrance way from the West and the Courtyard at the centre (Fig 6-10). However because of the architectural design of Sylvia Park, it is an inwards facing mall development that is one large built form. Exterior edges and in some cases whole street ways are large blank impermeable spaces (Fig 6-8). The architecture provides no relationship with these spaces and in turn makes a place dead. Despite the one street mentioned previously, there are no spaces that encourage a person to sit, linger and feel comfortable.

In contrast with the malls exterior its interior does have a positive architectural relationship with the space. Strong storefront rhythm is achieved through the scale, facade design and interactive edges; which gives it a human scale of architecture. Overall homogeneity and predictable visual rhythm is established on the interior (Fig 6-9).

PERMEABILITY FACTORS (Fig 6-11).

Sylvia Park has inadequate permeability on the exterior of the design. Once the user drives into the site from the motorway or arrive by train or bus the direction they tends to move in is largely determined by the landscape. The car park has instances where pedestrians are given priority at crossings, however this is very irregular in most cases pedestrians are forced to walk amongst the cars and dodge traffic. If arriving by train or bus the only direction for travel is into the Mall itself with limited interaction in the surrounding landscape.

The courtyard at the centre of the mall acts as a break in the building and opens up the site to increase visual perspectives and permeability, although this courtyard can only be accessed from the side facing the car park (Fig 6-10).

On the inside of the mall permeability is far stronger and increased with open store frontages enticing customers in and directing all foot traffic (Fig 6-9). However it is permeability through the building outer edges into the landscape that is poor. Exits are not well sign posted and do not provide strong visual connections to the surrounding landscape. There is limited porosity, with movement between the two environments controlled.
CHAPTER 6  ■  Case Studies

LEGIBILITY (Fig 6-12).

There are a few elements in the exterior landscape of Sylvia Park that make the landscape legible and stand out as a unique point of difference. The central outdoor courtyard and connecting street both act as a key node in the exterior landscape and adds an element of legibility to Sylvia Park as it provides an iconic entranceway.

Furthermore the SEART Park situated under the fly over provides good legibility. It is designed space that has won several awards and provides funky alternative spaces. People refer to the bright coloured poles when talking and use them as meeting points before entering the mall (Fig 6-13, Fig 6-14).

The interior of the mall has poor legibility. The layout, the familiar rhythm and placement of shops are in a generic fashion results in a layout that is no different to any others in New Zealand. There is nothing about the environment that makes the space legible and readable as a unique point of reference.

LINKAGES AND SEQUENCING (Fig 6-16)

The mall has been designed to attract people from the car park or principle mode of transport into the main body of the mall. This is through the use of unified paving and pedestrian right of way. There is no other direction or enticement offered to other parks of the development besides inside (See Fig 6-18: Pg 125). Once inside the mall the layout is all designed with the aim of managing pedestrian movement. Large retailers are placed at opposite ends of the mall to ensure that if moving between the two the user has to cross the paths of the smaller retailers. Visual cues are present in the flooring types (fig 6-15) and signage of the walls to draw customers into the mall or sequencing them through to different parts they may not have attended before. The focus of the mall is primarily inwards with the exits and way out being the hardest link to find.
CHAPTER 6       Case Studies

RICCARTON      The art of the Third Place

Excellent

Excellent

of security are also evident through the well maintained landscape where levels of vandalism are low, and if anything, appear non-existent.

Figure [6-18] Map of Sylvia Park. Identifies key movement around and entrances to Sylvia Park site.

SAFETY CONTROL (Fig 6-17).

There is a significant amount of security on site, although it is largely inconspicuous, and quite hard to notice. Occasionally security personnel walking through the site. High levels of security are also evident through the well maintained landscape where levels of vandalism are low, and if anything, appear non-existent.

Figure [6-19] Map of Sylvia Park. Identifies key movement around and entrances to Sylvia Park site.

ACTIVITIES.

Determined from the type of shops available and the observation of people using Sylvia Park the activities are perhaps 99% dominated by shopping and related activities from this such as eating and drinking. These activities have designated spaces for each, with individual establishments providing tables and seating that are reserved or have a barrier to control the space (Fig 6-20, Page 126). As spaces these individual areas work well, they are situated in places of high activity and pedestrian flow and are well integrated into the design to provide good aspect and opportunity for activities such as people watching. However these space are limited to those who purchase goods to consume on site, those without a purchase are not allowed to use the seating or space.

School holiday entertainment appeared to be the focus of the activity scheduled by Sylvia Park. This included big brand activity ‘stations’ such as Coco Pops Activity Spots and the central courtyard space included a bungee jumping company. All these programmes and activities needed to be paid for, there is no free entertainment (Fig 6-21, Page 126).
The technology age is present in Sylvia Park with free Wi-fi offered throughout. It can be concluded that this has a predominant aim to encourage people to stay in the environment. Mall Fit is also another activity that is undertaken in Sylvia Park. Similar to other large malls around the country, it is a community programme aimed to “encourage customers to use the centre as a fun way of getting fit and setting new goals in a controlled, warm and safe environment” (Sylvia Park: 2012). Each Tuesday and Thursday this is offered free of charge, and people can walk around the mall, socialise and congregate with other like-minded people.

Taken as a whole the majority of the activities that were taking place in and around Sylvia Park have to be paid for, with the only exception was the small seating area outside in the main courtyard. Here people were free to use the space as they please. As a result there was large numbers of people using the outdoor seating for all manners of activities relaxing, eating and general people watching. What does need to be considered is how multifunctional this seating area is and whether it would be the centre of activity on a cold rainy day. Furthermore the activities within Sylvia Park seemed very controlled. They were all activities that had to be paid for or what Sylvia Park managers provided for their client entertainment. There was no evidence of spontaneous personal activities, for example buskers, community groups and local markets.

The mall environment can be adapted to suit a variety of activities as described previously. The productive function of the spaces, however are extremely well defined with the aim of the design being to drive people to shop. The space has the physical ability to be moulded to suit an individual’s own desired activity. However the Mall is designed purposefully with reduced affordance and due to the fact that the space is owned by a private developer they have final say about what happens in a place, what activities there are and how they will be paid for. Therefore, it is not solely due to the individual design factors that Sylvia Park has limited adaptability and hybridity, but is due to the site being owned by a private company and the fact that they dictate the activities and uses of the spaces.
The levels and provision of comfort within the mall environment were above average. Physical comfort was well provided for in the numbers of seats and how the design and style varied throughout the site. In all cases occupation indicated a high level of comfort factor. The seating in the inner courtyard at the centre of the building was all used and proved hard to find free spaces (Fig 6-25), however in contrast to this the seating at the front of the mall in the landscaped area was relatively underused (Fig 6-26). It is interesting to note that all the seating had the same design and therefore the use was associated with other factors - the people using the seating in the internal courtyard were watching people take part of the ‘bungee’ ride, perhaps suggesting a direct correlation between the activities on site and the use of the seating.

The Mall environment also provides physical comfort by providing a micro-climate and protecting people from the natural elements such as the wind, rain, sun, cold and heat. Therefore these comfort factors can explain the high levels of use particularly on wet winter’s days.

However these where heavily monitored spaces where people needed a reason for being there and as a result the level of personalisation be that for the individual or group is extremely low. The environment is extremely controlled, there was no evidence of temporary spatial claims, buskers or people taking the exterior or interior spaces and using it for their own personal activity, besides the obvious consumption activities.

The overall experience in Sylvia Park was very similar to that of other malls in New Zealand. Due to the shops, climate, materials and layout of the space, designed around the facilitation of shopping there was no unique factor that distinguished it from one place to another. The user could have been anywhere in New Zealand or even Australasia and the Sylvia Park environment could be the same. Due to the lack of seasonal, weather and time influences in the design there therefore felt like a lack of interaction with the environment, almost to a point of entering a time warp or forgotten liminal space.

Overall the key experiential quality that dominated the design was an overarching sense of Sylvia Park as a monitored landscape. The landscape and the mall was all built as one block to function as a whole, and all owned by the same company. The company’s main focus was people’s shopping behaviour, keeping them indoors yet spending. There was no ability to do any activity that may distract people from this purpose.
[SUMMARY – SYLVA PARK] (Fig 6-27)

The exterior of the mall was not as successful at meeting the criteria. There were some very strong design elements present in the courtyard and the SEART park, however it fell short of the criteria if compared as a separate entity. It is evident there needs to be more connection between the two landscapes to successfully make the space, and therefore Third Places, work as a whole.

Overall the interior design of Sylvia Park possessed many of the design qualities of a successful Third Place based on the criterion. It demonstrated this through the number of people on site, the activities taking place and the opportunities that were provided for social interaction (meeting places, chance encounters and seating in sociable groups). The mall provided interest and stimulation to groups, provided all the necessary facilities, good sequencing and high levels of security and comfort.

Where the criteria was not met – or where Sylvia Park ‘failed’ as a successful Third Place - is in the element of personalisation. The level of security and fact that the landscape is owned by a private company has a significant impact on the way the landscape is used. Spontaneous activities and acts that take away from consumerism are actively discouraged. It therefore has to be argued that without allowing spontaneous resultant activities, and without allowing people the freedom to use spaces at their will it seems evident that we are not providing successful Third Places.
6.4 - Case Study (2) NORTH CITY
NORTH CITY - FACT SHEET

“Serving up food, fun and fashion”

OWNER: Kiwi Income Property Trust


SIZE: 4.9ha. 103 Stores.

OPENING HOURS
MALL
Monday - Wednesday 9.00am-5.30pm
Thursday 9.00am-9.00pm
Friday – Saturday 9.00am – 5.00pm
Sunday & Public Holidays 10.00am – 5.30pm

PEDESTRIAN MALL
No restricted access.

Figure [6-28] North City Porirua - Location maps.

Figure [6-29] North City Promotional Advertising
Porirua City is situated within 20km of Wellington City Centre in the North Island of New Zealand. A direct train route and state highway 1 (main motorway) are the main means of transport between the two, putting the average commute time at 15 minutes (Fig 6-28).

The suburb of Porirua has a large ‘shopping’ centre but lacks residential development. As a result the land use in this centre is taken up with shops and only operates during ‘opening’ hours. This internalisation has been deemed only 50% efficient due to its lack of night activation (Revitalisation Plan: 2007). The city has significant ethnic diversity with 20.9% of the population being Maori and 26% Pacific Island (NZ Census: 2006). There has been a series of revitalisation plans undertaken to address the urban design issues within Porirua.

The City centre has two interconnected malls. North City, a privately owned mall, and the Porirua pedestrian mall owned and operated by the council.

North City Mall is a two-level regional shopping centre that opened in 1990 and underwent several expansions and refurbishments up to 2004. It is owned by Kiwi Income Property Trust and it is clear they are expecting the mall to go further as they are land banking on an adjacent site to the east to allow for further expansion. The Mall development in Porirua is definitely a contested issue. Acting as a key magnet with large regional shops such as Kmart, The Warehouse and many key fashion stores it draws people to the area. However, at times it has been described as a ‘fort-like structure’ within the landscape due to its very dominant position and it failure to address pedestrian access and right of way (Gray: 2012 - Personal communication). The Porirua City Council has been in negotiations with the mall owners and developers to create a stronger connection between the mall and the pedestrian streetscape (ibid).
**THE PEDESTRIAN MALL** (Fig 6-31) (Fig 6-32).

At the heart of Porirua there is a pedestrian mall. These sections of streets are covered by distinctive canopies along Serlby Place, Cobham Court and Hartham Place (Fig 6-31). Whether the canopies should be retained is a contested issue. At present they appear to bridge the divide between the very corporate mono-function of North City and the street. The pedestrian mall can still be used on cold wet days. However whilst providing safety and shelter to pedestrians the area covered by the canopies in the core retail area are less prosperous than hoped. The canopies adversely affect the interface with upper storeys (including a reduction in surveillance opportunities) and prevent sunlight access in winter so becomes cold and dark at the ground floor (Urbanism Plus: 2007).

**DESIGN INTENT**

The North City Mall designed and developed by Kiwi Income Property Trust fits the typical design of many of the large scale urban malls in New Zealand. The design intent is aimed at attracting people to the mall to spend money and to keep them there for as long as possible. North City Mall features a large glass roof structure that allows a lot of natural daylight into the mall. The food court appears to be the main focus of the mall encircling the balcony that looks down onto a main entertainment area and open area. Here events and scheduled demonstrations are held. The lower level of the mall continues in one strip that branches off into three separate entrances.

The pedestrian mall features shops that are more local in character, than the other malls studies in this thesis and provides more small scale shopping experiences. Ninety percent of the pedestrian mall is under canopy to make it accessible all year round and in multiple weather conditions. The pedestrian mall features many sculptures, works of art and playground equipment for children.
and designed to feature almost home-like spaces, they are wallpapered and filled with comfortable seating.

The exterior of North City Mall however has a very different architectural relationship with the landscape. Described as a fortress at the front of Porirua (Gray: 2012) (Fig 6-34), the Mall is an extremely dominating building on the landscape. Architectural relationship with the landscape and urban environment is poor in the majority of places (Fig 6-35). There are large walls that are monotonous and uninteresting. As large blank impermeable spaces, they provide no relationship with the space and in turn create dead spaces.

Efforts have been made to incorporate the Council-owned pedestrian mall into the North City mall environment. Here the architectural relationship is strongest with entrances emphasised and scale reduced, creating liminal space where people appear to linger upon their exit from the mall to get their bearings and move on into the landscape in rapid succession (Fig 6-36).

The pedestrian mall conversely works well architecturally as a space, similar to the interior of North City Mall. Shops are small scale and face inwards onto the street. Facades are different yet contain some established rhythm to make a comfortable space for people. However the overhead canopy that has been built over the site does affect the second storey of the buildings limiting their impact on the space the second story is invisible when viewed at a human scale due to the canopy.
PERMEABILITY FACTORS (Fig 6-37).

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<th>Average</th>
<th>Above Adequate</th>
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Figure [6-37] Permeability Scale

North City Mall is around 90% impermeable spaces with large walls beyond human scale, and surrounded by a mass of car parks that allow no direct view shafts or movement through the space. Architecturally, the significant change in level the mall experiences are not addressed in the design. The main point of entry is the upper floor and users then have to go down a floor to access ‘street level’. However in instances this change in level is still high and steps and ramps have had to be introduced, reducing levels of permeability for the user.

Porirua City Council has undertaken several revitalisation plans to increase the levels of permeability between the areas of high use in the city, the pedestrian mall and North City Mall (for example the revitalisation and increased connections between the rail station and the central town).

However the pedestrian mall provides good permeability. Main walking access is achieved through small laneways and alleyways around the buildings, creating ease of movement and strong views into the market place (Fig6-38).
The covered pedestrian mall is an icon for Porirua City and is the key node in the landscape. Small notable works of art and shops owned by local people make the landscape legible and tie it to the local area (Fig 6-41, Fig 6-42). In contrast the North City Mall struggles with making a legible stamp on the landscape. Orientation around the mall is challenging, with multiple entrances and exists that don’t tie or link well with the surrounding pedestrian landscape. Once inside North City Mall the shops are so mainstream the user could be in any mall in the country.

At present the pedestrian mall and North City Mall have good sequencing. The user follows a distinct sequence through the positioning of shops and introduction of signage (Fig 6-43).

In some instances the linkages between the pedestrian mall and the North City Shopping centre are constructive. This sequencing is emphasised through the use of paving materials, signage and the overhead canopy providing a good transition between the two spaces.
ACTIVITIES

The main activity associated with North City Mall was shopping and the activities that occurred in relation to this, such as eating.

The mall environment provided a central space that could be adapted to suit many of the key programmes it had planned. At the time of this study a stage had been constructed with a band and dance competition. This attracted a large number of people to watch (Fig 6-46), together with spin-off activities including a children’s entertainer (Bill the clown) and hair braiding stalls. This significantly activated the space.

The productive function of the space in North City Mall is very well defined in that the intent is to get people to feel comfortable to stay and to spend money. This is evident through the provision of comfortable seating and food and beverage outlets. There was limited freedom in the types of activities people could undertake. All activities had to be booked with the owners of the mall whose approval was required for them to be allowed. If people conducted activities that affected the running of the mall or the productive function they will be asked to leave the establishment, there appeared no ‘freedom’ for a range of activities.

The pedestrian mall provided more of an interesting environment, and more opportunities for adaptability. Sculptures were used both to look at, and for children to climb over. There was also a playground (Fig 6-48) and several different changes in level that were adapted by people for seating. There were opportunities for a Saturday market. Parking spaces could be used and taken away as necessary, depending on the event. Unlike the North City Mall, the level of control of the activities in this space was lower. There were no rules or discouragement of buskers, or street entertainers. However some rules were put in place that discouraged certain types of activity.
COMFORT AND PERSONALISATION (Fig 6-47)

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**PEDESTRIAN MALL**

**MALL**

Figure [6-47] Comfort and Personalisation.

**COMFORT**

Comfort factors due to climatic elements were higher in the North City Mall compared to the pedestrian mall. The environment was controlled against all weather and more comfortable seating was provided. However depending on a persons preference, the monitored nature of the mall can be contradictory to the comfort factors.

**PERSONALISATION**

The level of personalisation in the North City Mall is extremely low compared to the pedestrian covered mall. Local art and entertainment was evident in the pedestrian mall (Fig 6-48 to Fig 6-50). Whereas the North City Mall has only commercial advertisements and mainstream art. The shops themselves also reflected a level of personalisation, with many of the shops in the pedestrian shopping mall reflecting the ethnic diversity in Porirua. The shops in North City were typical mainstream and could have appeared in any of the malls around New Zealand.

**EXPERIENTIAL LANDSCAPE**

Like many of the other case studies in this thesis, North City had an overwhelming sense of a monitored environment. There was a distinct feeling of not being able to experience the landscape in a free way, or to utilise the landscape for your own needs not prescribed by another private corporation. The pedestrian shopping mall made the user feel more connected to place by providing a more local shopping experience, where you could relax in space without the overarching sense of being watched and with the pressing need to buy something.

Figure [6-48] Children's Playground in Pedestrian Mall - an adaptable environment

Figure [6-49] The seating in the Pedestrian Mall consisted of hard wooden benches. Soft couches were provided in North City

Figure [6-50] Local Art in the Pedestrian Mall
[SUMMARY – NORTH CITY]

Similar to the previous study of Sylvia Park Mall, the interior of North City Mall works well and meets the majority of the criteria for creating successful Third Places in the landscape. The high level of monitoring that occurs in these large chain malls results in the activities being very prescribed, with users unable to freely undertake whatever activity they felt like.

The pedestrian mall surrounding North City has elements that work well as a successful Third Place. Activities can be more spontaneous and the level of monitored landscape is lower. However, this also has adverse effects in that it creates a more unsafe environment through limiting visibility. The overhead canopies are a good way of protecting the user against any significant adverse weather conditions and provide a strong indoor and outdoor link between the two environments.
6.5 - Case Study (3) FASHION ISLAND
FASHION ISLAND (NELSON) - FACT SHEET

“Spoilt for choice”

OWNER: Oyster Property Group

BUILT: 2006

SIZE: 0.73ha - 25 shops

OPENING HOURS
MALL:
Open for access 24 / 7

Shops open:
Monday- Friday 9.00am – 5.30pm
Saturday 9.00am – 5.00pm
Sunday 10.00am – 4.00pm
[BACKGROUND]

[DESIGN] (Fig 6-54)

Fashion Island is a ‘typical’ open air mall development, nestled at the back of Hardy Street, one of Nelson’s main commercial streets. Fashion Island provides a variety of shops on site that match the main commercial focus of many of the major malls in New Zealand (Fig 6-54). Parking is provided (at a charge) around the interior of the complex, this mirrors in price and availability of parking on the main commercial street in Nelson. The design itself focuses all the shops around one Central Island with a Columbus Coffee shop at its centre. The place has been designed around the border to encourage pedestrian movement and seating is provided outside all of the major retailers.
[DESIGN CRITERIA - A SUCCESSFUL THIRD PLACE?]

ARCHITECTURAL RELATIONSHIP (Fig 6-55).

Fashion Island is nestled between the street systems of Nelson. The shops turn in on themselves creating what can be viewed as a private courtyard. The scale of the buildings is comfortable in that they do not dominate the pedestrian yet they still create a sense of enclosure in the laneways. Active facades of varying size and height create visual interest for the pedestrian. This enclosure is evident on the two sides of the shopping design and when walking through the laneways into the centre.

However there is still evidence of impermeable façades on the south and west of the development (Selwyn Place and Park St), and here the environment is cold and uninviting (Fig 6-61).

PERMEABILITY FACTORS (Fig 6-57).

The situation of the island mall lures people into the complex and provides strong connection between Hardy St and Selwyn Place (Fig 6-62). There are views through to the street beyond providing large amounts of pedestrian activity through the space as they are often used as a cut through and as a result a constant stream of people walk through the site. However there are barriers to movement around the edge of the site, present in vehicles parking and the landscape design elements such as hedges and fencing (Fig 6-63: Page 143). The vehicle still has the right of way over the pedestrian. Observations showed that people would drive straight up to their shop of choice get out their car, enter the shop and leave again. There was no evidence of interaction with the surrounding streetscape (Fig 6-56).
LEGIBILITY (Fig 6-58)

The pedestrian almost stumbles upon the mall. There is no evidence that it is a separate mall or building itself due to the open air sequence. The only thing that separates this from the nearby Hardy shopping street is the architecture is slightly different and more uniformed in design compared to the streetscape. The types of shops are large and commercial compared to the more niche shops available on Hardy Street.

LINKAGES AND SEQUENCING (Fig 6-59)

Sequencing works well with the streetscape and vice versa. The coffee shops on the periphery and in the centre of the design lure people in and act as a key activator for the mall. People can park and walk the street and vice versa. Although access is available at night, there are no night time functions or shops that are open and the space is unused.

The materiality of the landscape creates a good flow to Hardy Street and back into the mall this is achieved through building size and materials that match the outlying streetscape.

SAFETY CONTROL (Fig 6-60)

Fashion Island is a well maintained environment separate to that of the main streetscape. The mall is managed by an independent firm and therefore must employ separate maintenance and security. However no security presence was seen in the observation. Fashion Island appears to have the freedom of expression similar to that in a streetscape and public space.
ACTIVITIES

There is evidence of a large range of activities put on by the retailers including Fashion show, Kids Snow Zone (Fig 6-64) and Farmers Markets (Fig 6-65). The coffee shop and food houses are a major focus point for the main activity in the mall.

However there was no evidence of spontaneous activity taking place in the landscape. In comparison, on Hardy Street a 30 seconds walk away, there were people sitting in the late afternoon sunshine, talking on phones, greeting friends and passers-by and generally activating the edges of buildings and the streetscape (Fig 6-66). There was a lack of this activation in Fashion Island and what activity there was tended to be focused in or around the coffee shop.

HYBRIDITY AND ADAPTABILITY (Fig 6-67)

The space can be adapted to suit the purposes of the developer and owner, and for a permanent layout and design the space can be adapted to provide for a multitude of activities. Examples included the Winter Wonderland, and Farmers Market (Fig 6-64, Fig 6-65), where the road is sometimes closed at intermittent periods.
The mall provided high levels of “Seatability”, there were 12 benches around the periphery of the site (Fig 6-69), only one was in use by a man waiting for his partner outside a clothes shop. Fashion Island did not possess the same comfort factors as the street. On observation there were more people sitting and relaxing on Hardy Street (Fig 6-70).

Graffiti or art work was evident on the periphery, but appeared out of place as that this level of personalisation was ‘too much’ for Fashion Island (Fig 6-71). The level of personalisation allowed in Fashion Island was much lower than the streetscape due to the controlled nature of the environment (Fig 6-72).

EXPERIENTIAL LANDSCAPE

There was good progression through the site from the street to the mall and Fashion Island connected well with the surrounding landscape.
[SUMMARY - FASHION ISLAND]

When seated in the coffee shop you could overhear conversations from people who work in the surrounding shops. They were all talking to one another about their day, gossiping about the people walking through the landscape and observing the environment around them. This place in the centre of the landscape was evidently a third space for social engagement. The streetscape (Hardy Street) works the same. There were people sitting and talking catching up with one another, on their phones and smoking. What then is it about the Mall landscape that does not provide this?

All the transition zones between the two are flowing, you can walk from one to another quite happily, quickly and easily. Distance and access are not the issue.

What is it about Fashion Island that makes this space less conducive to Third Place activities? One observation is the types of activity in Fashion Island are less ‘desirable’ to watch. It is simply people shopping – there appears to be more diversity on the street. There are buskers, people eating, drinking and open front cafes. Therefore it appears evident that people feel more comfortable in space that is more active and diverse.

Figure [6-73] Summary Graphic for Fashion Island - Nelson
6.6 - Case Study (4) BISHOPDALE MALL
BISHOPDALE MALL - FACT SHEET

“Christchurch’s best kept shopping secret”

OWNER: The shopping centre is a collection of locally owned businesses. Run by the Voluntary Bishopdale Association Secretary.

BUILT: Approx 1960's

SIZE: 6.8 ha. 80 shops.

OPENING HOURS
MALL
Open for access 24/7

SHOPPING HOURS
Monday to Friday: 9.00am to 5.00pm
Saturday: 9.00am to 1.00pm

Figure [6-75] Bishopdale Mall - Promotional Advertising

Image removed for copyright purposes
Bishopdale Mall is a diverse collection of locally owned businesses and community services aimed at providing the shopper with a unique shopping experience. (Bishopdale Centre Association: 2012)(Fig 6-76). Situated approximately 10 minutes from the central City and 5 minutes from Christchurch airport, Bishopdale Mall is between the suburbs of Northcote, Redwood, Bryndwr, Harewood and Bishopdale (Fig 6-74).

Aimed at providing a different shopping experience in Christchurch, the Bishopdale Mall incorporates Bishopdale Shopping Centre, Bishopdale Court, Parkside Plaza and Harewood on the Park, all designed in an outdoor, village-style shopping context.

Offering over 80 stores and providing a range of cafes, restaurants and takeaways Bishopdale provides the unique selling point of “warm, local hospitality” (Bishopdale Centre Association: 2012).

As well as the variety of stores there are local facilities some of the other large malls fail to offer such as: the Bishopdale library, Bishopdale Community Centre, Citizens Advice Bureau and the YMCA, as well as on-site police, a medical centre, dentist, real estate, travel and legal services plus education and childcare facilities (Bishopdale Centre Association: 2012)(Fig 6-77).

In summer, market days, local events and musicians and street theatre are planned to provide plenty of entertainment for shoppers (Fig 6-78).
Bishopdale mall is designed in a village-style shopping context. It hosts over 600 free parking spaces around the periphery. From here the user can walk down various pedestrian-only laneways. The fronts of the shops face the laneways and have a village shop appearance. There is a lot of variety provided in their architectural design, products and storefront display.

‘Village squares’ appear where these laneways intersect. Here the designer has made good use in making these key activity points. Bishopdale for example has included planting, seating and a children’s playground.

The community driven focus is evident in the facilities provided on site. These anchor to local recreation facilities on the site and make use of the adjacent Bishopdale Park, which has a skate park and playground facilities.

The site was visited on numerous occasions and the number of people differed due to time of day. Early in the morning the site is used for people to get their essentials who predominantly moved in and out of the place quickly. Earlier in the afternoon and around lunch the mall was used for people to have lunch breaks. In late afternoon predominantly in nice weather the spaces around the shopping mall were used by young children and teenagers gathering with friends.
ARCHITECTURAL RELATIONSHIP (Fig 6-80)

Bishopdale Mall provides good architectural relationship to space. Indoor / outdoor relationships are emphasised through the use of laneways. Small shops provide a variety of interest and active edges. Architecture style differs with large big box retail (such as New World) mixing with smaller boutique shops (The Fudge Cottage).

PERMEABILITY FACTORS (6-81)

The ‘village-style’ layout of Bishopdale mall creates positive permeability factors (Fig 6-82). The user can walk from the car park or bus stop through the pedestrian orientated streetscape. For those arriving from the surrounding suburbs there are various walkways and access points available. Even during times when the mall is closed the outdoor space is accessible.

The car parks themselves have limited crossings for pedestrians and sometimes prove difficult to manoeuvre at peak hours.
When first arriving on site there is no distinct reference point to allow the user to know that they are entering Bishopdale Mall. The main entrance is heavily dominated by the New World supermarket. However community facilities such as the YMCA and Community Centre are key focal points for the community (Fig 6-84). Observations indicate that the playground in the centre of the shopping district with its seating arrangement provided a popular meeting point for many people, as well as a popular destination point for many children. Legibility in the space was not as clear for moving to the western area of the site. The second half of the mall was hidden from direct view and there were no signs or design elements to indicate its existence.

The linkages and sequencing in the Bishopdale mall generally worked well. Strong signposting and connections were made between the carparks and the shopping centre. The mall spread onto the main road of Farrington Avenue – so any foot traffic was drawn down into the centre of the mall. There was evidence of distinct arrival in the mall with signposting.

Bishopdale Mall is home to the on-site police. However there was no specific safety control on the site. There was no evidence of security personnel walking around the site and sign posting to the on-site police was not evident. However there was limited vandalism and damage to the facilities in the area and there appeared to be a high level of maintenance. The Mall was well cared for and maintained regularly. Even the local Skate Park in Bishopdale Park appeared to have limited vandalism and graffiti.

Bishopdale Mall provides a range of activities for users. These vary from providing the necessary activities such as groceries and banking to more resultant activities shopping experiences, such as clothes stores and electronics. However the environment around the streets of the mall is designed in certain ways to benefit other types of activities. The children’s playground in the centre of the site provides opportunities for play. There is space for open air markets, and activities on site included children’s entertainment at boutique stores such as the ‘Fudge Cottage’, buskers (Fig 6-87) and entertainers.
EXPERIENTIAL LANDSCAPE

The main experiential aspects mirror the streetscape of a local town and city. It is evident through the local shops and notices on the community board that it is a local place owned by local people that provides a strong neighbourhood-orientated shopping environment. Sun and warmth was captured in pockets. Bishopdale Mall is a place for lingering in and didn’t feel as destination-driven as some of the other case study malls (Fig 6-92).

HYBRIDITY AND ADAPTABILITY (Fig 6-88)

The adaptability of the spaces within the centre of the mall are good. There is space available in car-free environment to create temporary markets. There are several areas available where the buildings have large overhanging awnings to protect from the elements (Fig 6-90). Weather has a significant impact on the use of the Third Places around the mall. Although it is designed in a way to best mitigate these elements (orientation and scale), cold, wet weather does deter people from actively using the space.

COMFORT AND PERSONALISATION (Fig 6-89)

Small boutique shops owned by local people added an element of personalisation to Bishopdale Mall (Fig 6-91). It provides a very unique to place setting. Community centres and child care facilities enhance the personalisation of the site compared to some of the larger commercial shopping malls. The appearance of buskers reiterated an aspect of user control over the space.
[SUMMARY BISHOPDALE MALL] (Fig 6-93).

Bishopdale Mall met many of the criteria for design of successful Third Places. There was evidence of activity that encourages interaction and the positive use of space.

However in comparison to the other case studies there was a decided lack of people using the landscape and they gathered in one small pocket around the playground at the centre of the landscape. This was perhaps due to the design of space and the fact that all paths lead to this area, and that it was the area most protected from the elements. The type of shop would also have an impact on the use of this area. There were limited shops that encourage a person to stop and linger. There was no evidence of cafes or restaurants with outdoors seating at the centre. The introduction of this may have increased the number of resultant activities and therefore the number of people using the spaces.
6.7 Case Study (5) BOTANY DOWNS
**BOTANY DOWNS - FACT SHEET**

"Your Home for Shopping"

**OWNER:**

**BUILT:** 1998 - 2004

**SIZE:** 160 stores. 17.6 ha with 56,500 square metres of retail space.

**OPENING HOURS**

**MALL:**

Open for access 24/7

Thursday – Friday  9.00am – 9.00pm
Monday – Sunday  9.00am – 5.30pm
Open Public Holidays  10.00am – 5.30pm

Figure [6-95] Botany Downs - promotional advertising
[BACKGROUND AND DESIGN INTENT]

Botany Downs Town Centre is situated in the newly established Botany town, South East Auckland. Constructed in a period over 1998 – 2004, Botany Downs sells itself as being the ‘town centre’ for Botany district.

Featuring over 160 speciality stores, plus chain and anchor stores, the whole place is designed to work as a mall, shopping precinct and town centre in one. The key element to Botany is its distinctive layout of cobbled laneways lined with shops and eating establishments all meeting at a central town square.

Botany Downs works as a hub for the services in the community providing a community constable, medical and health providers and the ‘Botany Library’ all with the added benefit and focus on open public space and streetscape.

Botany Downs covers a total area of 17.6 ha with 56,500m squared of retail space. Large box retail establishments are on the fringes of the town centre with a significant amount of parking around the periphery. (Botany Town Centre:2012) (Fig 6-96).
Botany Downs was architecturally designed and planned by an American company Altoon & Porter. The architecture design is very different to that of other case studies examined in this chapter. It featured long streets with active facades, areas that are covered, differing scales, different materials and styles (Fig 6-98) which helps to create a style that is different to many of the typical mall developments in New Zealand.

The layout follows the distinctive pattern of a local town centre, be this in the UK or the USA, with awnings, paving and streetscape.

**PERMEABILITY FACTORS (Fig 6-99)**

There is strong permeability within the site as connected streetscapes and laneways lead into and around the built components on site. As an open space environment there are sections that completely open up to new lanes and street ways.

**LEGIBILITY (Fig 6-100)**

Signage is the key for legibility and for people to orientate themselves throughout Botany. However the streetscapes are distinguishable due to the landscape factors that define them. There are pockets and nodes created throughout and distinctive design factors that make the site legible (Fig 6-101, 6-102), for example the Garden Lane (Fig 6-103) has a number of different interactive gardens on it and there are covered mall character areas. The whole ‘town’ appears to be divided into precincts and each precinct connects with a large car park on the periphery.
CHAPTER 6       Case Studies
RICCARTON      The art of the Third Place

LINKAGES AND SEQUENCING (Fig 6-104)

All of the laneways are linked to one another, are signposted and there is an easy sequence when walking throughout the site (Fig 6-107). The user can slip into the mall and out the exit down the cobbled streets and into different covered and uncovered plazas.

SAFETY CONTROL (Fig 6-105)

Botany Downs has a Community Constable advertised on several signs throughout the site. This is a good safety factor for the site and also provides security at a more personal level. Associations are made between this and the ‘local’ community constables in older towns and villages. Security guards drive around on golf carts policing people’s activity.

ACTIVITIES

Shopping again is the key activity, but there is a good mix of alternative activity in the space (see Fig 6-115 to fig 6-117, Page 163). Seating is integrated into the landscape components and isn’t segregated for each shop. There are organised activities taking place such as Coco Pops Kids activity and bungee. In addition, there is evidence of other more personal activities that aren’t organised by the owners of the town. Buskers play along down the streets and a children’s play area is at the centre of the design with a miniature Hobbiton and Giant snakes and ladders (Fig 6-108 and fig 6-109) all stitched into the design of the streetscape.

HYBRIDITY AND ADAPTABILITY (Fig 6-106)

The place can be adapted to many purposes. There is more space ownership provided in the hierarchy of open spaces. Botany Town centre features a variety of spaces for more intimate encounters and changes for people to be on their own comfortably and also larger open plan areas for large events and gatherings.
CHAPTER 6       Case Studies

COMFORT AND PERSONALISATION (Fig 6-110)

Extremely Poor  | Below Adequate | Adequate | Above Adequate | Excellent |

|                  |               |         |               |          |

Figure [6-110] Comfort and personalisation figure

There are high levels of comfort in Botany Downs with the distinctive different use of spaces (Fig 6-111 & fig 6-112). There is a strong indoor outdoor relationship with many of the buildings and businesses. If the weather is bad then large awnings are in place on the buildings that protect people from the elements. People can relax where they feel like, without feeling the need to buy goods.

However there is still the underlying element of ownership. It is owned by an independent company and this will limit the opportunities for the personalisation of space.

THE EXPERIENTIAL LANDSCAPE

The whole experience is reflective and positive in the mall environment, but there are instances where it is hard to apply a sense of place to the design. Besides the evident Cabbage Trees and native planting, the whole design of the mall has a very American feel to it. The design doesn’t appear to knit with the surrounding landscape further afield and tie in with what is viewed and typically New Zealand. Prior knowledge that Botany Town Centre was designed in America may have influenced my perceptions of the site.
Botany Downs meets the majority of the criteria for providing successful Third Places. It provides a series of interlinked areas with strong architectural relationships, good permeability, linkages, sequencing and legibility. In contrast to many of the other malls in this chapter the activities allowed on site were not as controlled by the managers of the mall. This gave the place a distinct level of personalisation and increased levels of comfort. Whilst still allowing for different activities the mall environment provided the important element of security on site, through the provision of a community constable. This level of security also ensured safety was provided at a more personal level.

However the element of Botany Downs that resulted in a less successful Third Place was the experiential aspect of the site. As the site was designed in the US it did not link well with the local area, the design didn’t enhance a sense of place, provide a level of connection to New Zealand landscape or provide a feeling of ‘homeliness’. Although this experiential concept is a very subjective measure, it is therefore hard to suggest that for one person the site may have felt alien but to another it may have been an exact measure of ‘home’. This suggests the need to take into account the people of the local area, if designing for them there is the need to take into account their desires and how connections to place can be established.
6.8 [SUMMARY – OF CASE STUDIES]

The case studies have yielded a wealth of information on the design of “successful Third Places”. Some of these design elements can be applied to Riccarton, whilst others that may work well in theory, will be redundant due the external factors such as existing built form and the demographic of Riccarton.

Therefore Chapter 7 the Result and Redesign will conclude this case study section. It will focus on the mall environment, combine information derived from the case study analysis and attempt several redesign scenarios for the Third Place of Riccarton thus answering the question what is the ideal form for the Third Places of Riccarton?

Figure [6-119] Summary of Case Studies Graphics. Showing comparison.