Te Wananga o Wairaka, Unitec, Aotearoa
Department of Landscape Architecture
2022

Semester One: LAND5021- Studio 1

Plant / Community

COURSE OVERVIEW

Plant communities are mix of plant species associated with a particular geographic location or type of landscape. These communities are not static, and shift from one type to another in a subtle sequence as the landscape changes.

Understanding plant communities, or plant associations, is a critical principle that underpins ecological theory, and the interactions between plants, animals, and the environment (ecosystems). Humans are not distinct from ecology; we engage with, manipulate, and depend on the physical world around us.

With increasing pressure on the environment through climate change, pollution, population increase and urbanisation, loss of biodiversity and disruption to natural systems, the awareness of Nature Based Solutions to mitigate the effects is in high demand. Soon, legislation will enforce this.

Due to the prolonged lockdowns, plants and gardening are very desirable as people seek a connection to the vitality of life. Appreciation of access to public open space and the outdoors has come to the fore.

As landscape architects in practice, we have the skill and understanding of plants that no other professionals can bring to the table. If the client wants to know about what trees or plants are best for a situation, we must know our stuff. But increasingly, other professionals are jumping on the green bandwagon. How do we differentiate ourselves?

This studio explores the idea of using planting design in a space for people to use, that has overlays of other functions- whether that be climate change mitigation, ecological habitat restoration, or supporting pollinators. Taking the idea of plant associations beyond ecological principles, it could lead to companion planting, or the symbolic association of a particular plant to a place name or heritage.

Our skill as professionals is to combine plants in an aesthetically pleasing but functional way, to create compelling spaces with an underlying complexity that provides benefits beyond the moment in time that one person may be using that space. How can we create places that equally benefits people, animals, and the environment?

DESIGN BRIEF

The design brief is to design a public park with landscaped gardens: a public garden for the 21st Century. The design methodology will be undertaken in two assignments, with two parts in each assignment to guide you through the fundamentals of landscape architectural design practice: site analysis, design strategy, design concept and design development.

The first part is to undertake site analysis and develop a landscape concept plan and planting strategy for the northwest block by Building 1. The design should incorporate public access ways and a seating area, with significant planting that connects people with place and maximises the natural features of the site. Thinking outside of the boundary and creating connections to the wider context of the site will be critical to the success of your design.

The second part is to focus on a specific area of your design to produce a detail planting plan at a scale of 1:100, complete with planting annotation and a plant schedule.

PROCESS
We'll cover the basics of planting design for different types of situations and introduce you to the fundamental tools and resources used in site analysis and planting design. Key concepts will be developing planting strategies and selecting the right plant for the right place. We'll look at the commercial reality of the plant supply chain, and the change in the plant nursery industry over the last decade.

You will be introduced to the following tools and techniques through your visual communication class: drawing and mark making, modelling, scale, cross sections, plan, texture, draughting (measured drawings), and perspective. These tools will be reinforced, utilised and developed in studio.

To explore these ideas, we will have incremental check points over the 12-week semester. It will benefit your final presentations to fully engage with each step - as each step will build on your previous stages, you are expected to actively participate. Each checkpoint is a mandatory component of the course assessment, and they are designed as building blocks of skills and understanding.

Assessments for studio are worked on as activities during class time, and the accumulation of the exercises along the way will form part of your final submissions. It is important to attend and engage with each class along the way. If you miss any classes, please contact the course coordinator or lecturer so that we can assist you.

COURSE PURPOSE /AIM

- To introduce students to the principles of landscape architecture and plant design through investigation by design.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Investigate the principles, materials and operations of landscape architectural design and find creative solutions to known situations.
- Explore the codes and conventions of landscape representation.
- Investigate the role of site as a generative influence on landscape architectural design.
- Express design intentions formally and spatially through the use of diagrams, plans, sections and elevations.
- Evaluate and refine their own design proposals by means of observational, analytical creative and critical abilities developed through the process of self and peer critique.
- Demonstrate appreciation of the social, cultural and environmental forces that bear on landscape design.

USEFUL ONLINE RESOURCES (more to be added during semester via Moodle)

1. https://www.level.org.nz/site-analysis/
2. https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/ecosystems/plant-communities/
3. https://www.aucklandbotanicgardens.co.nz/plants-for-auckland/
4. https://geomapspublic.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/viewer/index.html
5. https://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/
6. https://knowledgeauckland.org.nz/media/1399/indigenous-terrestrial-and-wetland-ecosystems-of-auckland-web-print-mar-2017.pdf

ASSIGNMENTS (see individual assignment briefs for further information)

Examples of previous assignments will be provided during class to guide you.

Assignment 1
Part 1 - Site analysis
Part 2 - Design Strategy
Assignment 2
Part 1 - Concept Plan and Plant Palette
Part 2 - Detail Planting Plan and plant schedule; plant files

STUDIO SCHEDULE

WEEK 1
Monday 7March 9am - 12pm
Lecture/ discussion - Introductory and creative exercises What is Landscape?
Wednesday 9 March 10am -12pm
Site visit – meet at class

WEEK 2
Monday 14 March 9am - 12pm
Lecture/ discussion: Design tools and drawing fundamentals, phases of design
Wednesday 16 March 10am -12pm
Design workshop – Site observation/exploration

WEEK 3
Monday 21 March 9am - 12pm
TBC Hikoi (Whaea Lynda Toki) Paa Harakeke (Tanya White)
Wednesday 23 March 10am -12pm
Site Analysis Presentation
Assessment 1 Part 1: Site Analysis 10%

WEEK 4
Monday 28 March 9am - 12pm
Lecture discussion - Mapping and research tools
Wednesday 31 March 10am -12pm
Design workshop – Opportunities and constraints

WEEK 5
Monday 4 April 9am - 12pm
Discussion/lecture - Ecological design thinking
Wednesday 6 April 10am -12pm
Design workshop – Concept design strategy

WEEK 6
Monday 11 April 9am - 12pm
Discussion/lecture - Plant design fundamentals
Wednesday 13 April 10am -12pm
Design check in – Concept design strategy

SEMESTER BREAK 18th April - 29th April

WEEK 7
Monday 02 May 9am - 12pm
Design workshop – Concept design strategy
Wednesday 04 May 10am -12pm
Design Strategy Presentation
Assessment 1 Part 2: Design Strategy (40%)

WEEK 8
Monday 09 May 9am - 12pm
Design iteration/model making & drawing
Wednesday 11 May 10am -12pm
Design iteration/model making & drawing

WEEK 9
Monday 16 May 9am - 12pm
Design check-in – Concept Design Development
Wednesday 18 May 10am -12pm
Design development

WEEK 10
Monday 23 May 9am - 12pm
Design refinement
Wednesday 25 May 10am -12pm
Design refinement

WEEK 11
Monday 30 May 9am - 12pm
Concept Design Presentations
Assessment 2 Part 1: Concept Design and Plant Palette (30%)
Wednesday 01 June 10am -12pm
Documentation/Implementation

WEEK 12
Monday 06 June NO CLASS (Queen's Birthday)
Wednesday 08 June 10am -12pm
Documentation/Implementation, Course Reflection

WEEK 13
Monday 13 June 9am - 12pm
Study leave

WEEK 14
Wednesday 15 June 10am (Hand in only)
Assessment 2 Part 2: Detail Planting Plan, plant schedule and plant files (20%)

ASSIGNMENT BRIEFS

ASSIGNMENT ONE	**ANALYSIS AND STRATEGY**	**50 %**
Assignment 1 Part 1:	Site analysis	10%
Assignment 1 Part 2:	Design Strategy	40%

Learning Objectives:

- Demonstrate appreciation of the social, cultural and environmental forces that bear on landscape design.
- Identify and respond to the complex layers and relationships that are inherent in the landscape.
- Engage with Te Ao Māori as an integral lens for reading the landscape.
- Explore the range of methods, codes and conventions of landscape representation.
- Investigate the role of site as a generative influence on landscape architectural design.
- Explore styles and applications of planting design
- Articulate design responses in an informed manner

ASSIGNMENT 1 PART 1: SITE ANALYSIS (10%)

Due: Wednesday 23rd March @10am present and submit at end of class
Submission requirements: A3 drawings, mapping, sketches and diagrams

INVESTIGATION, OBSERVATION, INTERPRETATION, EXPLORATION, NARRATIVE OF PLACE

Step 1:
Through engagement with the site observation and exploration through drawing, photography, mark making, and / or modeling, gain an understanding of the context of the site (the conditions that affect the site).

Ask the question: what broader forces, relationships, patterns and processes are at play here; what role does this particular landscape play in those factors?

Step 2:
Describe how the landscape works within this context, the phrase ‘how the landscape works’ means how does the landscape operate in the present moment, what is the physicality and reality of the landscape at the present time. The object here is to understand the site as a living changing environment. Try to not focus on how the site looks now, but also how it works and who engages with it etc. Engage in a series of exploratory drawings etc in order to develop a thorough understanding of how you interpret the site and context, both physical and meta-physical.

If for example you are interested in how people or wildlife move around the site concentrate on: How fast they are moving and why? What are they connecting to? How does the greater context allow connection through the site? This will encompass its cultural and historical aspects- past, present and future being an integral part of the continuum. Attempt to draw/capture the invisible. Make marks and use media to describe such things as coastal influences, wind direction, key views, transport networks, desire lines, water flows, materiality, softness and hardness, the connectivity of the landscape, vegetation and ecological processes. Also consider different times of the day and night – how does the feeling of the site change and why?

ASSIGNMENT 1 PART 2: DESIGN STRATEGY 40%
Due: Wednesday 4th May @ 10am (Checkpoint: Wednesday, 13th April @ 10am)
Submission requirements: Final submission and presentation of A1 poster/s VENUE TBC

MAPPING, INVESTIGATION, ANALYSIS, RESEARCH, COMMUNICATION

Step 3:
Settle on the most engaging aspects of this landscape for you. What is it about this landscape that stands out or resonates with you? (This will be different for each of you). Try to avoid looking at the site simply in a closed way (the privileging of fixed objects) and rather focus on processes of formation, for example, water flow, erosion, or movement patterns. Bring what you have learned about the cultural and ecological history of the site into your processes.

Step 4:
Using the analysis and investigation of the physical site, document what you have discovered. Engage with formal landscape architectural drawing conventions: maps, plans, sections and details, and photography to capture the physical characteristics of the site. Use research to further understand what you find. Delve into what intrigues you and explore how other designers have engaged in that realm. Explore the specifics of the site both physically and in its use and relationships. Document your findings and begin to articulate your how you intend to respond to these findings through design.

Checkpoint: Wednesday 30th March: Peer Review and group discussion of work produced in mapping, analysing and investigating the physical site and context: maps, plans, sections, details, photographic images, analytical drawing, diagrams, model/s...

SYNTHESIS, RESPONSE, REPRESENTATION, NARRATIVE, DIRECTION

Step 5:
Collate and design the presentation of your findings and response to site. Consider both macro and micro, narrative and physical. This is the synthesis of your findings and interpretations and the representation of your reading of the site and context. Your posters should show your use of a range of representational techniques and materials, and describe a thorough and personal engagement with the physical and narrative characteristics. This work will provide the stepping off point for the next part of the studio where you will be responding to and acting on your findings. For this reason it is important that you are drawing on your emotive and intuitive responses to the site. What inspires you, captures your attention, frustrates you, intrigues you? How are you going to using planting to express your ideas, and what type of plants will you use?

Step 6:
Assemble and present your findings on two A1 sheets of paper: use drafted plans and cross sections, diagrams, photos of models and any loose mark making and drawing that you have done. Think about how you want to describe the site visually to someone who hasn't been there and will only get to see your work to understand it. What are the key things you want them to understand? What do you want them to feel? Visual communication is a powerful tool. Your presentation should be succinct, summarizing your journey of site discovery and clearly stating the direction you intend to take your design in the next stage.

Final submission:

Pin up A1 posters in time for presentations to begin @ 10am + Scanned copies of your posters to be submitted to Moodle (digitally)

ASSIGNMENT TWO: CONCEPT AND DESIGN DEVELOPMENT 50 %

Assignment 2 Part 1: Concept Design and Plant Palette 30%
Assignment 2 Part 2: Detail Planting Plan, Plant Schedule and Plant files 20%

Learning Objectives:

- Investigate the principles, materials and operations of landscape architectural design and find creative solutions to known situations.
- Explore the codes and conventions of landscape representation.
- Investigate the role of site as a generative influence on landscape architectural design.
- Express design intentions formally and spatially using diagrams, plans, sections and elevations.
- Evaluate and refine their own design proposals by means of observational, analytical creative and critical abilities developed through the process of self and peer critique.
- Demonstrate appreciation of the social, cultural and environmental forces that bear on landscape design.
- Start to compile your plant file information.

ASSIGNMENT 2 PART 1: DESIGN RESPONSE 30%

Submission requirements: 2x A1 posters and physical model
Due: Monday 30th May, presentation pin up to start @ 9am venue TBC (and digitally to Moodle)
(Check point: Monday 16th & 23rd May)

RESPONSE, IDEATION, ITERATION, DEVELOPMENT, COMMUNICATION

Step 1:
Iterative design: Develop diagrams/drawings/models that express design potential. This does not mean a finished design, but rather a series of drawings or models, or both, that illustrate how your chosen stance could impact/ change/ mitigate (lessen the impact) enhance the area. Asking yourself, for example, how can you support community use / connection to the site?

Step 2:
Utilise the drawing, modelling, photography or other representational or design communication skills you are developing to present these in a format that is accessible to an audience who may not be aware of your site and its complex conditions.

Check point: Monday 16th May: Peer Review and group discussion of your iterative design work: diagram/s photographic images, drawing, mixed media, model/s etc. Discuss site for design testing

Step 3:
Using the base plan as a starting point, experiment with drawing, collage (the practice of assembling found images), mark-making etc. to test your ideas on the site. Try not to settle on your first attempt. Iteration (repetition) is the key to a good solid and well worked through result. Think carefully about the scale of the moves that you are making...are they appropriate for the site? This process can be instinctual and experiential, comparing and contrasting options as your thinking progresses.

Step 4:
Selection of plants, terrestrial and aquatic vegetation, are critical to the your response to the design breif. Ensure that the design/process is built on your contextual understanding, engagement with community, analysis and initial ideas about the landscape. Utilise the main flows that are permeating your earlier work as directives for your design moves (this means that the drawings you have done

should inform your design/ process. Use these drawings as generators for the design, as starting points. One strong design idea is often the most successful. Ensure that your ideas for design key in well with the existing site conditions.

Step 5:
Move between section, plan and perspective to test your designs and the planting arrangement. The structure of the planting should be apparent in however you chose to represent your design. Produce a physical model as part of the design development process. You should also be thinking about your planting plan as an extension of your design presentation. How your design responds to and interacts with the physical site is important.

Step 6:
Begin to assemble and present your design on two A1 sheets of paper: Visual communication is important. Think about how you want us to understand your design and how you got to your final iteration, we want to be able to see your process and response to the site and context that informed your final outcome, so be selective about what you show us to best represent your design development.

ASSIGNMENT 2 PART 2: DOCUMENTATION 20%

Submission requirements:

- 3x A3 technical/measured drawings
  - 1:100 Plan
  - 1:100 Section/s
  - 1:100 Planting plan
- 4 x plant files

Due: Wednesday 15 June @ 10am (hardcopy and digitally to Moodle)
A3 pages individually named and in folder @ 10am + Digital copies of your submission to be uploaded to Moodle

ENGAGE, DEVELOP, REFINE, COMMUNICATE, DOCUMENT

Step 7:
Fine tune technical drawing and representation of your design and planting plan. Attention to detail is important. Be accurate, consider line weights, spatial depth, and the hierarchy of the information you are communicating.

Step 8:
Produce a fully drafted and textured/ rendered set of design drawings: plans, sections and planting plan. Pay attention to the conventions of landscape architectural technical drawing standards.

MARKING GUIDE

Assignment One **(50 % of course grade)**

Marking schedule

Part 1: Site Analysis **10%**

- Experimentation with drawing techniques for representing site
- Quantity and analytical quality
- Annotations to support visual work
- Depth of exploration of site and narratives

Part 2: Design Strategy **40%**

- Depth and breadth of contextual research
- Originality and creativity
- Chosen area explored comprehensively
- The range of representational modes is present
- Quality of graphic communication
- Clarity of design strategy

Assignment Two **(50 % of course grade)**

Part 3: Concept Design and Plant Palette **30%**

- Depth of exploration and iteration
- Design strength and successful transfer of analysis and strategy into design or intervention
- Representation reinforces underpinning concept
- Quality of graphic communication
- Drawing conventions followed
- Selection of plants appropriate to strategy
- Quality of verbal communication

Part 4: Detail Planting Plan, plant schedule and plant files **20%**

- Accuracy and attention to detail
- Scale of plants represented accurately to species
- Drawing conventions followed
- Quality of drawings
- Cohesive set of drawings

You are expected to attend all scheduled classes and participate in all in-class activities and site visits. All assignments must be submitted on time. The fortnightly checkpoints, assignment presentations and submissions are mandatory.

GRADE PROFILE

A

- Context and elements and issues identified clearly
- Landscape investigation based on research and analysis provides clear physical landscape information
- Site data and context, sensitivities and values identified
- Innovative landscape concept/ intervention based on previous work and insightful analysis
- High quality graphic presentation
- Completed all checkpoints and plant files

B

- Relevant information indicated
- Context, elements and issues identified
- Landscape information based on research and analysis
- Some site sensitivities and values identified
- Insightful and resilient landscape concept/ intervention submitted
- Completed all checkpoints and plant files

C

- Relevant information collected
- Most context, elements, and issues identified
- Landscape analysis indicated
- Site issues identified
- Landscape concept/ intervention submitted
- Completed all/most checkpoints and plant files

D

- Relevant research and information absent
- Some drawings missing
- Issues not clearly identified
- Comprehension not indicated

E

- Drawings do not adequately address brief.
- Limited or no final hand in.

KEY COURSE CONTACT PEOPLE

Heather Wilkins - Lecturer hwilkins@unitec.ac.nz

Matthew Bradbury - Course Coordinator mbradbury@unitec.ac.nz

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Have a query? Want to improve your grades next time? You could:
Talk it over with your lecturer, Course Coordinator or Discipline/Academic Programme Leader

Visit Te Puna Ako Learning Centre or Student Learning and Achievement team
https://www.unitec.ac.nz/current-students/study-support/student-learning-and-achievement

Maia Maori learning advice and support https://www.unitec.ac.nz/maori/support/study-support

Centre for Pacific Development and Support https://www.unitec.ac.nz/pacific/support/study-support

International student support
https://www.unitec.ac.nz/international/student-support/student-advisors

Student support services
https://www.unitec.ac.nz/current-students/student-life/student-support-advisors

Contact the Unitec Student Advocate for independent advice For contact details and more information, go to
http://www.unitec.ac.nz/current-students/student-life/student-advocates or email them directly:
studentadvocate@unitec.ac.nz

STUDIO – WHAT TO EXPECT

Landscape Architecture is about stewarding relationships: the role of the Landscape Architect is to develop an understanding of the various elements through their practice to best reflect the site and support the associated communities. Communities encompass the biological, social, cultural, physiological, environmental and spiritual aspects of place.

Exploring creative ways to bring these threads together, both esoteric and scientific, will help to develop your design processes. As a class we will progress from engaging with the landscape through observation, discussion, drawing, photography, mark making and modeling, investigating through these techniques to broaden understanding the site and its broader landscape connections. Then responding to this engagement with the landscape through a design process and developing ideas through discussion, experimentation, exploration and testing, we will explore various design outcomes.

The design studio is a platform for exploration, for instance, to use applied, land-based research and creative processes as a way to become more informed about place and community. The studio provides a forum for ideas that can be taken through to a degree of resolution. Studio provides a particular space where, through a range of design processes, learning about place, culture and the environment can be explored using a range of media to render our ideas in various forms. Design studios are the space where engagement with community and issues connected to place are objectively explored and addressed.

The studio is a process of inquiry, continuously evolving to explore the issues and opportunities that become highlighted along the way. It is a process in which the acts of engagement, observation, analysis and design are reflected on and brought together into a situation where at times it might even be hard to distinguish between them. The process as such has a rather more emergent nature where design and analysis constantly inform the direction according to your reflections and interactions with communities associated with specific spaces and places. The ability to observe and listen in a process of enquiry and learning opens the possibility for surprise, discovery and innovation. It is an exploration and testing of ideas by means of creativity and design.

The key to this studio is to let go of any preconceptions you may have about ‘designing’ and landscape. You will need to explore your own connections, associations with and preconceptions of landscape. Knowing your own values will assist you in expressing your own unique position and design stance. Our role as professionals is to provide advice to our clients – they don’t want to pay someone that doesn’t have a perspective on matters. We often fall back on a default position when it comes to landscape design: a bark garden, a water feature, a concrete path, etc. Try to avoid this! As stated above the landscape itself and associated communities hold the key to the design: it is our job to reveal, embrace and highlight a landscape's unique qualities.