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Intertwining Community-Driven and Student-Built Approaches to Activate Suburban Streets



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Abstract

Suburban streets often lack vitality and fail to foster social interaction and community cohesion. Traditional approaches to retrofitting tend to focus on static spatial interventions, proving costly and inadequate for addressing dynamic community needs. This paper explores flexible, cost-effective solutions that can activate suburban streets and enhance cultural cohesion. Through a brief review of street retrofitting concepts and practices, the authors investigate ways in which an inclusive approach can promote community engagement and transform streets into dynamic social spaces. This approach consists of a community-driven and student-built collaborative design, prefabrication and installation, and adaptive use by the community. Examining Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland as a context rich in cultural diversity and with a demand for vibrant public spaces, the authors tested this new approach through design interventions by Unitec architecture students in Open Streets events in Avondale, Tāmaki Makaurau.

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The aim of *Asylum* is to provide a platform for non-traditional research outputs that are generally underserved within the architecture field in New Zealand and Australia. We seek to create an outlet for staff and student research collaborations, contributing to the research culture of Unitec's School of Architecture, as well as inviting submissions from other institutions. <https://www.unitec.ac.nz/epress/index.php/category/publications/journals/asylums/>

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