

Walking as Designing: The Use of Walking as a Tool for Discovering Landscape¹

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The path affords alternative ways of knowing (and coming to know) landscape. Walking is the primary mode of data acquisition in this research, with design operations the key tools for the interpretation and exploration. Iterative walking and diagramming are combined with temporal and experiential mapping to provide new translations of known spaces (figure 1). While objective methods of looking at landscape make what is made known to us, design exercises enable new and enriched ways of understanding spaces and of finding the diverse materials, processes and meanings that compose them. In this light, they also allow us to imagine new forms of paths and new ways to score landscapes based on their walkability (figure 2).

Walking permeates the field of landscape architecture: as a performance prompted in the landscape (Ingold, 2000, 2004); and as a form afforded by the paths we construct and/or generate (Abbott, 2013; Carter, 1996). Tapping into their rich experiential, sensual and physical qualities is an enduring area of study for the discipline (Jacks, 2004, 2007; Jackson, 1994). However, while construction drawings might describe the structure of a path, such representations fall short in expressing the potency of path and the practices of walking, ambling, strolling, sauntering, hiking, tramping, strolling, trekking, wandering, roaming, trudging, and so on (Halprin, 1965; Thiel, 1997).

Landscape can become known in unique ways by carrying out a series of solo and collaborative walks in a particular site like Banks Peninsula, New Zealand. Creative and critical analysis of such acts of walking can mirror in written form Ingold's (2000, p 230) directive for finding one's way where 'we know as we go not before we go' (figure 3).

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REPORT

Figure 3: Design as walking table. (Image: Author's own)

A process for walking explorations					
Survey activities			Inventory		
Stage 1: Building a typology of materials					
Catalogue and form typologies of materials encountered along the path					
	Step	Aim	Inventory goals	Task	Resource
How are materials, form and interactive elements observed?	Step 1	Determine what is already known and structure study areas	Create a base map and gather existing information	Reading, review Mapping	Existing maps, literature review, historic accounts
	Step 2	Survey and describe material form and features	Compile comprehensive track notes and experiential account	Survey mapping Sighting Drawing Writing (walk journal)	Base map, guide/notes
	Step 3	Examine how features relate and compare/contrast inventory	Structure a catalogue of materials and form types	Sketches Maps Notation	Collected inventory and walk records
Stage 2: Typing operations					
Investigate how material typologies can create itinerary					
	Step	Aim	Inventory goals	Task	Resource
How can materials be used to alter the path?	Step 4	Ideation: Consider how typologies might be explored further	Form a frame of operations and a set of tools/prompts	Design readings/theory Design examples	Type cards, cue cards
	Step 5	Explore a range of relationships between types and explore connections	Build a collection of reworked types and relational sketches	Use design prompts and operations	New typologies and sketches showing structural relationships
	Step 6	Reimagine track materials and experiences based on reordered sequences	Develop track notes and sections from new typologies	Explore notations and sequences, expand to account for path itineraries	Concept sketches and path routes
Stage 3: Recording the temporal as experienced in a walk					
Explore how the walker responds to materials when walking					
	Step	Aim	Inventory goals	Task	Resource
How does the walker move through landscape?	Step 7	Record how the walker moves through space and builds itinerary	Establish itinerary of route taken	Record travel time (time taken), sighting and sensing survey. Observe walker interactions/attention (walk journal)	Base map (topographic)
	Step 8	Examine recorded itinerary	Build timeline of events (establish walk line)	Map out walk (timings) Locate events Correlate with walk notes	Walk journal/walker record of response Photos, sketches Notation Marked-up base map
	Step 9	Analyse walk line. What can the walk line tell us about walker motivations?	Annotated map/sketches and marked-up maps – itinerary of route	Review map and notes, compare changes in line with journal notes	Walk line, maps, walk journal notes

NOTE

- 1 For the MLA thesis on which this report is based, go to <http://researcharchive.lincoln.ac.nz/handle/10182/6821>.

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