

## Health: The Design, Planning and Politics of How and Where We Live

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

Nudging towards urban walkability in a car-centric New Zealand neighbourhood.

- **Format:**

Written paper and in-person presentation

- **Author(s) Name:**

Sam Kebbell, Jenny Ombler

- **University or Company Affiliation:**

Victoria University of Wellington, Otago University

- **Abstract (300 words):**

New Zealand cities are currently undergoing a transition between car-oriented urban sprawl; and infill development with greater reliance on active transport. Urban sprawl and car-centrism is linked to sedentary lifestyles and greater emissions, and the associated health implications such as obesity, heart disease, respiratory illness, and type two diabetes. Yet the standard for New Zealand living is a standalone house, on a large section, using cars as the primary form of transport. In recent years, urban planning has challenged this standard, by introducing greater commitments to infill development, but blanket policy implementation will not meet the realities of transitioning from car to pedestrian transport. What role might architects play in this transition, and what opportunities exist within urban idiosyncrasies?

This research explores the potential of converting a car-centric neighbourhood of Wellington, New Zealand, to a walkable one, beginning with the specific conditions of

a single new house. The house is on a sloping site, below the road and above a public reserve and a beach. From the beginning, it was attractive to create a path between the road and the beach. The path could also be used as a shortcut for properties further up the hill. Pedestrian pathways up and down the hill are common in this hillside suburb, and they mostly run perpendicular to roads that generally follow the contours. But the pedestrian network is discontinuous and secondary to the road network. Connecting them would make a more walkable suburb, linking the beaches with the village, the school, and the public park at the top of the hill.

The research exposed both quantitative and qualitative implications of a strengthened pedestrian network in this part of the city, including increased density and nudging towards a more active lifestyle. This paper will present data and images of a newly imagined neighbourhood.

• **Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

Dr Sam Kebbell is co-founder and Director of KebbellDaish Architects in Wellington. In addition to his work in practice, Sam is a Senior Lecturer at the School of Architecture, Victoria University of Wellington (VUW). Sam completed his PhD at RMIT University in Melbourne in 2016 in which he examined the design processes, motivations, and context of his work in practice. His research revealed the creative potential of a tension between rarefied international ideas and common local traditions, and explained new ways of intersecting them. The findings contribute to a broader understanding of creative practice in architecture. In 2015, he was an ADAPTr Research Fellow at the University of Westminster in London. He graduated from VUW with a B.Arch (1st class Hons) in 1998 which included an exchange to the Penn State University visual arts program and the Penn State architecture program in Rome. He completed his Masters of Design in History and Theory (Distinction) at the Graduate School of Design at Harvard in 1999. Sam worked in Boston, New York, and Amsterdam before he returned to practice in Wellington. KebbellDaish has won numerous architectural awards and competitions, and has exhibited in New Zealand, Australia, the UK, and Europe.

Jenny Ombler is a researcher with the New Zealand Centre for Sustainable Cities, and He Kainga Oranga/Housing and Health Research Programme, at the University of Otago. Her research centres on environmental and social resilience in urban areas, with a particular focus on governance and policy, public participation, and equity. She is a core researcher on the 'Ending Homelessness in New Zealand: Housing First' research programme. She graduated from Victoria University in Wellington with a Master of Arts in International Relations (Distinction) in 2016, prior to which she worked in the New Zealand parliament as an Executive Assistant to Kennedy Graham MP, working mainly on climate change, human rights, and global (foreign) affairs.