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Urban design and tourism in the tropics

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Abstract

This thesis aims to critically examine the process of urban design in a tropical city in terms of its alignment with tourist preferences. Since the European Colonial period the tropics have been imagined and marketed as exotic, paradisiacal and untainted natural places. However, as tropical cities become hubs of economic and population growth, their supporting urban areas are eclipsing the tropical idyll to become a dominant element of the landscape. There is both potential and risk in this: the city experience could provide either an enrichment of the tropical holiday or detract from it. In an age of accessible, online user-based travel reviews, this can have serious implications for the local tourism industry, which no longer has a monopoly on destination image control. In evaluating the effectiveness of the urban design process from the perspective of tourists as users of the city, this thesis examines what tourists value in the experience of the tropical city to propose a method of evaluating the urban design process.

The thesis commences with an analysis of urban design, tourism and a range of other literatures concerned with the dialectical relationship between people and place. Emerging from the analysis of this literature is a conceptual framework for the thesis comprising of shaping the urban landscape, experiencing the urban landscape and context. Within this conceptual framework are four basic quadrants: urban design; urban destination product; experience of place; and tourist experience of place, which are discussed both generally and in terms of the tropical context. The review identifies gaps in the literature concerning: how urban design works as a process in different contexts; how the urban landscape can be used as a tourist resource; how the process of urban design works to deliver an urban landscape that is aligned with user preferences; and how the process of urban design works to deliver an urban landscape that is aligned with tourist preferences. These gaps give rise to four research objectives:

1. Analyse the place, polity and power contexts of urban design in a tropical city;
2. Critically analyse the urban design process in a tropical city from the perspective of those shaping it;
3. Identify the connections and disconnections between how urban designers shape a tropical city and what tourists value in the tropical city experience; and
4. Propose a method of evaluating the urban design process in terms of its alignment with tourist preferences.

To address these objectives, a methodology is developed within a problem-focused pragmatic paradigm to better understand the ‘heart’ of complex, ‘wicked’ or design problems often associated with urban and tourism issues. Using a critical, abductive approach where analysis iterates between data sources using inductive and deductive styles of reasoning to answer the research objective, this thesis is a common, single case study of Cairns. The data in this research is drawn from academic literature; grey literature, including planning schemes, government policies and historical accounts of Cairns; a three-year analysis of online travel review site TripAdvisor.com; 20 websites advertising Cairns; 20 in-depth interviews with urban designers in Cairns; and 526 tourist surveys.

To answer research objective 1, a critical context analysis draws on academic and grey literature to reveal place-based modes of operation in Cairns that have developed in the past and persist today. It reveals a lack of political self-determination at the local level in Cairns that appears to underpin a more general lack of capacity in terms of design, tropical adaptation and policy making. The analysis leads to the development of an organising structure of geography, culture, economy and environment within which to critically analyse the place, polity and power contexts of a place. This makes a theoretical contribution to the literature, but also a methodological contribution through applying a thorough context analysis in a city setting.

To answer research objective 2, a critical analysis of the urban design process draws on the context analysis and urban designer interviews to reveal a process of urban design that is influenced in a measured way by a range of local urban designers, but generally driven by politicians who often have access to or influence on funding sources. Additionally, urban designers identify their key normative priorities for designing for tourists in the themes of Feel, Nature, Built environment and People. This makes a theoretical contribution to the literature by enhancing the way in which we understand urban design as a process influenced more by power and place-based modes of operation, and less by the norms or ideals of the designers themselves. Methodologically, the interview process illustrated the value of in-depth conversations to elicit themes and concepts that were not originally evident to the researcher.

To answer research objective 3, the norms of the designers, context analysis and literature review informs the development of the tourist survey to evaluate how effectively urban designers in Cairns assess the preferences and needs of tourists in the urban design process. The normative preferences emerging from this research are: Nature, Feeling, Design, Aesthetic, Tropicality, Use and Management. Results indicate that in Cairns, the urban designers are mostly in tune with what tourists are seeking from the tropical urban landscape, however in many instances, the process of urban design does not allow the urban designers to produce these outcomes in the city. This makes a number of theoretical contributions to the literature by introducing the assessment of tourist experience as a key indicator of tourism planning effectiveness and gauging the effectiveness of the urban design process.

To answer research objective 4, the abductive, iterative methods used in this thesis are represented as a four-stage method of evaluating urban design process in terms of its alignment with tourist preferences. It contributes to filling a wider gap in the literature concerning the evaluation of user preferences by proposing and operationalising a method of evaluating user preferences in the urban landscape. This is the major theoretical contribution of the thesis.

Recommendations for further research include expanding the proposed method of evaluation to explore all user needs, expanding the analysis to other contexts to assess the validity of the evaluation process, further examining the role of nature in the urban experience, and expanding the method of evaluation of the urban design process to measure changing processes over time.

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Chapter 1

1 Introduction

I recently had the pleasure of eating lunch with my children at our favourite café in our hometown, the tropical city of Cairns in Far North Queensland, Australia. Nestled against one of the oldest and most architecturally significant buildings in the city - the magnificently restored Regional Art Gallery that was once Cairns' main Post Office - the café is a flash of modern tropical architecture juxtaposed against a celebration of built heritage. A dramatic skillion roof complete with ceiling fans protect us from the sun and keep us cool, suspended atop a steel structure with open sides on an elevated wooden deck, where we sit at our funky handcrafted iron table. We are surrounded by tropical street shrubbery, not quite tall enough to obstruct the view of the busy intersection, where sunburnt English backpackers with no shirts on wander idly by, pausing briefly when my oldest loudly wonders how much that will sting later on in the day. The United Nations parade before us – groups of Chinese with grandmothers, mothers and children nattering together are delicately picked through by long-limbed deeply tanned German girls replete with hiking sandals, leather bands on their wrists and bikinis showing under tank tops. A Japanese couple sit beside us, pausing momentarily for a selfie, angled precariously to capture both the background and their best sides. A warm breeze wends its way from the Esplanade Lagoon swimming pool at the end of the street, past the 24-hour McDonalds on the busiest corner in town, through the parked cars and lush old fig trees dotted along the middle of the street, and ultimately to us, fragranced with fries, sunscreen and coconut oil, enough to move our hair but not upset the salad. I sip a crisp white wine and take a mouthful of my exquisite spiced calamari, pomegranate and roasted pumpkin salad.

This, I think to myself, is the Cairns city experience. But I wonder what these tourists around us think, considering most of them were probably sold Cairns on the tropical imagery of a deserted coral cay surrounded by pristine water, a waterfall in the rainforest or the fish sculptures in the Lagoon swimming pool with the ocean and lush mountain backdrop? Does the shape and character of the urban landscape matter if you are only here to experience the natural tropical wonders of the place? Could Cairns' tropical urban landscape be equally as valuable to the tourist experience as the coral cay? Research indicates that whilst key segments of the Cairns tourist market are primarily motivated to visit the city to experience

the Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics World Heritage Areas, visitors engage in a number of secondary and supporting experiences during their stay, including experiencing the urban environment (AEC Group 2011). The value of this urban experience is yet to be determined, however the online user-generated tourism review site Tripadvisor.com regularly rates urban-based 'things to do' more highly than the Great Barrier Reef Experience. The users of this site may not represent the market as a whole, however their preferences raise questions about whether urban design has been underestimated as a component of the Cairns visitor experience and whether it provides the opportunity to differentiate the tropical destination product.

Developing and securing a differentiated tropical product in the world tourism market has been occupying the minds of scholars and policy makers for some years now (eg. Harris & Prideaux 2011; Huybers & Bennett 2000; McNamara, Coghlan & Prideaux 2008; Prideaux, Russel & Rodrigues 2011), yet the idea that the urban design of a tropical city can add value to the destination product as a whole is still to be explored. Outside the tropics, research in the UK and Europe indicates that quality urban places can be a tourist resource (Gospodini 2002; Hubbard 1995, 1996; Specht 2014), and a body of literature on urban tourism (Ashworth & Page 2011) indicates the value of urban places to the tourist experience. There are precedents in tropical places where the tropical urban landscape has become part of the attraction of a destination. Singapore has developed an urban landscape that transcends the surrounding natural assets but also uses nature as a key aspect of design (such as the Gardens by the Bay development) through government masterplanning. Koh Samui and Bali are developing a modern architectural 'tropical style' evidenced in resorts such as The Library and Celadon Modern Villa (Samui) and Rimba and Ayana (Bali) through relaxed planning laws allowing the innovation of private businesses, yet neither have established any level of strategic urban design beyond individual landholders. The urban landscapes of these places are becoming attractions that can surpass the natural attractions of the destinations but little research has been conducted on the processes of how they are shaped and who they are shaped by.

This thesis aims to critically examine the process of urban design in a tropical city in terms of its alignment with tourist preferences. Its driving question centres on whether the perceptions of those who create a tropical city which is economically reliant on tourism are aligned with the preferences of the tourists who visit. This chapter introduces the thesis

and is presented in seven sections. Section 1.1 explains the need for the research and the significance of the study within a tropical context. Section 1.2 details the research aim and objectives. Section 1.3 outlines the research approach, followed by a definition of terms (Section 1.4). Section 1.5 gives a brief description of the Cairns context, followed by an explanation of the limitations of the research (Section 1.6) and an outline of the thesis structure (Section 1.7).

1.1 Significance of the study

The dearth of research generated from within or even about urban design processes in the tropics is a key driver of this research, but raises critical questions around why a place might be considered as ‘tropical’ and not in the context of its other specific place-based characteristics, such as population size, coastal location, topography, people or government structure. Why critically consider a place based on its tropicality? And what does tropicality even mean? Historians such as Arnold (2000) and Driver and Yeoh (2000) argue that the tropical world has long been defined as environmentally and culturally distinct from Europe, viewed as a place of paradise and abundance, but also as a place of pestilence and danger. Tourism researchers have likewise observed how tropical places are imagined or marketed (Bosley 2009; Judd 1999), contending that ‘the tropics’ is not just a zone 23 degrees north and south of the equator but also a particular kind of experience, culture, feel, or look distinct from the rest of the world (Echtner 2002; Echtner & Prasad 2003; Hall & Tucker 2004; Kravanja 2012; Law, Bunnell & Ong 2007). In their analysis of third world tourism marketing, Echtner and Prasad (2003) identify three myths of the tropics projected by those marketing and experiencing it from the ‘first world’: unchanged; unrestrained; and uncivilised. Kravanja (2012) argues that these perceptions also exist in people living within the tropical region.

There is thus a strong body of literature discussing cultural ideas and perceptions of the tropical context as distinct from the rest of the world. One only needs to Google ‘tropical images’ to be presented with homogenous visions of palm trees, beaches and thatched huts to see that these visions of tropicality “did not cease with decolonization” (Cosgrove 2010, p. 197), but persist today. Yet the reality is that the seemingly homogenous ideas and perceptions of the tropics do not reflect the entire region to which the name is given. Driver and Martins (2010) see these perceptions as being problematic because the tropics are generally projected as “fully formed... a position that greatly exaggerates their

coherence and consistency” (p. 5). The tropical context is therefore not the whole story of this thesis - nor the basis for analysis - but an important critical inclusion to a broader consideration of the research questions. It is essential to acknowledge and understand the influence of the tropical context in the production of this knowledge to see whether the tropical city can reach beyond the natural, unrefined product, Echtner and Prasad’s (2003) unchanged, unrestrained, uncivilised vision, or Arnold’s (2000) paradisiacal/pestilential binary.

The pervasiveness of perceptions about the tropical context poses challenges for place shapers and marketers who are seeking to innovate and develop a more refined, complex and intricate city in the tropics. Moving beyond the idyllic imagery to build a city that challenges long-held perceptions of the tropics is a tricky business, even more so than the usual challenges faced by urban designers to create authentic places of meaning and utility. Studies in tropical cities have shown that aspects of the constructed environment such as roads, public transport, and crowded tourist resorts (Ross 1991) or a compromised natural environment (Huybers & Bennett 2000) fall short of the idyll and impact both intent to return and a region’s ability to attract tourists. Additionally, even the unspoiled tropical idyll is in danger of losing brand value. Douglas & Douglas (1996) argue that “the myth of paradise is by now a thoroughly shop-worn cliché... virtually every travel brochure on the region contains similar images” (in Hall & Tucker 2004, p. 10). In an age of accessible, online user-based travel reviews, this can have serious implications for the local tourism industry, which no longer has a monopoly on destination image control.

Innovating, shaping and developing a modern tropical city is challenge enough in itself, but moving beyond the ‘paradisiacal’ expectations of visitors in a tropical city economically reliant on tourism adds further complexity to urban design processes. The tourism industry is of particular importance to tropical places, often being the most significant contributor to the economy. For example, tourism makes up about 45% of Cairns’ earnings outside the region (Tourism Tropical North Queensland 2011), 69.5% of the Maldives’ goods and services exports, 21.8% in Lao PDR and 42.6% in Vanuatu (UNESCAP 2007). Additionally, indicators suggest that tourism provides broad opportunities for micro- and macro-scale investment, contributing to social equity and community development (World Tourism Organisation 2012). Yet the state of the natural places many of these destinations rely on as

attractions are facing threats such as climate change, pollution and deforestation (Markham et al. 2016).

A challenge is thus arising for planners and urban designers shaping tropical places to consider the urban tourism experience as a key aspect of the overall destination experience. At best, quality urban space in the city experience can assist in the differentiation of the nature-based product, and potentially become an attraction in its own right. At worst, neglect of the city and quality of urban spaces can have a significant negative impact on the visitor experience of the destination. Urban design is defined in Section 1.4.1 as the process of shaping places. To date, the urban design literature has considered the process of urban design (eg. Alexander et al. 1987; Carmona 2014; Carmona et al. 2003; Madanipour 1996) yet it has often lacked a critical consideration of how these processes differ across contexts. Only a few have considered urban design specifically in the tropical context (such as Bay & Ong 2006; Chang & King 2011; Kusno 2011; Tay 2001), and these studies tend to focus on built form rather than the process of shaping places. Research in tourism planning has considered the process of planning for tourism (eg. Gunn & Var 2002; Hall 2008b; Inskeep 1991), creation of tourist precincts (Hayllar, Griffin & Edwards 2008; Howard 2010) or bubbles (Bosley 2009; Judd 1999), yet few have considered tourism planning in tropical places. Tourism researchers have tended to focus instead on how tropical places are imagined or marketed (Echtner 2002; Echtner & Prasad 2003; Hall & Tucker 2004; Kravanja 2012; Law, Bunnell & Ong 2007). But Maitland and Smith (2009) argue that "...cities are designed for tourism, not tourists" (p. 186), indicating a broad lack of attention in the literature to the process of urban design and its relationship with the preferences of tourists (Vischer 2008).

Shaping any urban landscape comes with the challenge of balancing the adaption and adoption of 'best practice' from other places with the need to innovate and authentically represent the *genius loci*, or character of a place. Historically, urban policy and practice have travelled from urban centres to 'other' places via networks of infrastructure and power, mutating or evolving through a process of adaption (Peck & Theodore 2010, 2012) to create unique (or not-so-unique) urban landscapes. The process of urban design is a key location for the transformation of these travelling policies and practices, where design inspiration and ideas are drawn from a range of sources and adapted to, and through, the local context (Carmona 2014). In recent times, evidence in urban places around the world

suggests that this process of adaption is failing, resulting in landscapes of non-place or placeless-ness (Arefi 1999; Webber 1964). These failures are at least in part to do with a lack of understanding around the complexities of the context and power in the place-based modes of operation that exist both within a place and with other people and places (see Section 1.4.5 for definition). Peck and Theodore (2010) argue that rather than a straightforward rational transaction, urban policy transfer is “a field of adaptive connections, deeply structured by enduring power relations and shifting ideological alignments” (p. 169). Globally mobile urban policies have attracted critical analysis around the role of context in their transferability, especially to the tropics (Echtner 2002; Echtner & Prasad 2003; Luckman, Gibson & Lea 2009), suggesting that to understand the process of urban design in a tropical place, it is critical to understand the power relationships present within the tropical context. Carmona (2014) concurs with these ideas, conceptualising context as the sum of place (historical place-based modes of operation); polity (policy-influenced political economic context); and power (stakeholder power networks). This thesis uses Carmona’s conceptualisation of power as the basis for context analysis.

This thesis is significant because it contributes in practical terms to a deeper understanding of the role of the urban landscape in the tropical experience as perceived by those who shape it and the tourists who experience it. It considers how processes work in delivering the tropical urban landscape as a tourist product and whether these processes are resulting in a landscape that tourists appreciate. In theoretical terms, this thesis is significant because it proposes a method of evaluating the urban design process from a tourist perspective considering the specific cultural perceptions of the context, in this case tropical. In empirical terms, this thesis is significant because it contributes to the way urban design process is evaluated in terms of how it meets the needs of users and shows how a critical, post-disciplinary approach reaching across disciplinary boundaries can enable the creative consideration of complex, ‘wicked’ problems.

1.2 Research aim and objectives

1.2.1 Research aim

This thesis aims to critically examine the process of urban design in a tropical city in terms of its alignment with tourist preferences.

1.2.2 Research objectives

To achieve the research aim, this thesis has the following objectives:

1. Analyse the place, polity and power contexts of urban design in a tropical city;
2. Critically analyse the urban design process in a tropical city from the perspective of those shaping it;
3. Identify the connections and disconnections between how urban designers shape a tropical city and what tourists value in the tropical city experience; and
4. Propose a method of evaluating the urban design process in terms of its alignment with tourist preferences.

1.3 Research approach

The research in this thesis uses a critical, pragmatic approach to gain an understanding of the urban design process in Cairns and its effectiveness in meeting the needs of tourists. A critical approach is used because of the tropical context and the 'wicked' (Churchman 1967) nature of urban design problems. To acknowledge and understand the philosophies embedded in the urban design of Cairns, a detailed context analysis of Cairns forms the basis for the research (discussed in Chapter 4). The context analysis in this thesis draws from a themed historical narrative developed from accounts of Cairns in academic and grey literature, as well as accounts from urban designers.

Responding to Dovey's (1999) concerns that focusing on phenomenology and experience "runs the risk that the ideological framings of place can remain buried and hence powerful" (p. 44), this thesis uses a pragmatic approach with a critical framing to "unpick the philosophies embedded in urban design" (Maitland & Smith 2009, p. 186). Critical consideration of the urban design process and tourist experiences spans a number of disciplinary foundations. Although debate still exists around their status as a discipline or not, it is widely accepted that urban design and tourism are both interdisciplinary fields of study, with equally complex underlying disciplinary approaches. In the methodology section of this thesis, the dilemmas of disciplinarity and inter-disciplinarity are discussed with a focus on moving towards research that straddles multiple disciplinary foundations to a pragmatic, 'post-discipline' approach. Morgan, D. L. (2007) seeks to transcend the metaphysical paradigm concept of research by proposing a pragmatic approach that enables the researcher to move between qualitative and quantitative approaches. A key tenet of this approach is acknowledging disciplinary and/or epistemological boundaries, but with a focus on achieving the research objectives. This approach is supported by

Amaratunga et al. (2002) who suggest that studies of the built environment are most effective when both qualitative and quantitative analysis are used together.

Within the critical framing this thesis used a post-disciplinary pragmatic approach as defined in Chapter 3. Data collection used a mixed methods approach with a fully mixed sequential equal status design as described by Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2009), annotated as QUAL->QUAL->QUANT. Although in line with the pragmatic approach, the research was less sequential and more iterative, or abductive. *Abduction* is discussed further in Section 3.2.4 as a central aspect of the pragmatic approach of this research. *Abduction* is the iterative process of forming ideas from the data through *induction* using qualitative methods, then testing the ideas through *deduction* using quantitative methods (Morgan, D. L. 2007). In line with this approach, the research was undertaken in five stages at times concurrently and other times sequentially consistent with the objectives outlined in Section 1.2.2 of this chapter:

Stage 1: Context analysis

- Desktop analysis of the historical and policy context in Cairns using current and past strategies, planning documents and online historical records
- Analysis of promotional material both online and as tourist collateral to assess the presence of the urban form in selling the city
- Analysis of current industry based visitor research
- Ongoing collection and analysis of Tripadvisor.com data on the top 5 “Things to do in Cairns” for the duration of the research period

Stage 2: Interviews with urban designers

- 20 semi-structured interviews of 1-2 hours with urban designers in Cairns conducted from December 2013-February 2014. These were coded and analysed through an inductive process to elicit historical, political, and other contextual information about Cairns, and to identify the design priorities of urban designers in terms of tourism and the tropics (objectives 2 and 3).

Stage 3: Tourist surveys

- Drawing from the findings in Stage 2 of the research, 548 structured self-completion surveys administered in popular tourist areas in Cairns for four

months over warmer months in the high and low seasons. Qualitative and quantitative responses are analysed using traditional, visual and mapping methods, both inductively and deductively (objective 3).

Stage 4: Analysis and writing

- Results of the analysis in Stages 1-4 are drawn together to evaluate the connections and disconnections in the supply and demand of urban design in the tropical city from a tourism perspective (objective 4).

The stages are described in more detail in Chapter 3.

1.4 Definitions

Definitions can be a sticking point for the study of urban design and tourism because of the complexity of the phenomena and their disciplinary underpinnings. Kasprisin (2011) observes that “the term urban design represents a wide array of agendas, points of view, approaches, theory, etc. and in short there is no one definition”(p. 10). This equally applies to tourism (Panosso Netto 2009). George (1997) makes the observation that “tourism research carries with it the subtle power to define: to skew: to objectify: to foreground some issues leaving others untouched: to legitimise some methods casting others to the periphery: to privilege some groups while excluding others and to tell stories in particularistic ways” (p. 375). This could also apply to urban design research. These ideas suggest that in defining terms, the researcher is defining their approach to the phenomena, rather than defining the terms themselves. This thesis takes the approach of Carmona et al. (2003), who propose the need for definitions of urban design that “encapsulate its heart or core rather than prescribe its edge or boundary” (p. 5). In line with the pragmatic, post-disciplinary approach of this thesis, the following definitions are intended to be indicators of the heart of the concepts, rather than comprehensive definitions that prescribe the boundary, or edges.

1.4.1 Urban design

Whilst there is certainly not a gap in the literature in terms of attempts to define urban design, there is division. Kasprisin (2011) observes that “the term urban design represents a wide array of agendas, points of view, approaches, theory, etc. and in short there is no one definition” (p. 10). Chapter 3 discusses the disciplinary underpinnings of urban design,

concluding that even though Goldstein and Carmin (2006) present a long list of disciplinary contributions to urban design, it is in essence a field of study at the juncture of urban planning, architecture and landscape architecture (Carmona et al. 2003; Kasprisin 2011). Gunder (2011) argues that urban design is in fact a subset of urban planning, and Cuthbert (2007) argues that urban design is “halfway between the two professions of architecture and planning” (p. 177). Others take a more holistic view, suggesting that urban design is both the process and product of town building, or planning, in a creative and strategic way, comprehensively including all elements of the city: buildings, transport systems, public places, open spaces, and economic, social, environmental and cultural processes (Klassen 2004). Distinguishing urban planning from urban design is therefore not clear-cut nor supported one way or the other in the literature.

In light of the dissent in the literature, Carmona et al.’s (2003) call to define urban design at its heart is particularly relevant. In concert with Madanipour’s (1997) definition of urban design as a “process which deals in shaping urban space” (p. 373), and Carmona’s (2003) definition as “the process of making better places for people than would otherwise be produced” (p. 74), this thesis considers urban design to be a process of shaping urban space as an inherently normative activity, laden with the values of those involved with the process and those using the resultant places. It concurs with Gunder (2011) that urban design is a subset of urban planning, the process of shaping of a place within the context of wider considerations such as social issues, land use allocation, engineering and legislation, however not necessarily only practiced by planners (see Section 1.4.4 below) and not necessarily through conscious processes (see Section 1.4.3 below). Urban design has also been widely used as a term to describe the shape of a city or urban place, however in this thesis, this is described as the urban landscape.

1.4.2 Urban landscape

Landscapes are by definition all of the visible features of the land (Fagence 2014), however Swaffield (1991) argues that the concept of ‘landscape’ is value-laden within the cultural and political standing of those viewing it. This is supported by Winchester, Kong and Dunn (2013) who describe landscapes as ways of imagining the world, invested with cultural meaning through representations of them. This idea of imagined places has already been discussed above in terms of how people imagine the tropics and how this influences their perceptions (Arnold 2000; Driver 2000; Driver & Yeoh 2000), which is particularly relevant when considering the perceptions of place by tourists visiting the region (Kravanja 2012;

Law, Bunnell & Ong 2007) compared with the urban designers shaping the city, some of whom are residents and some who are not. From an urban perspective, Hayden (1997) refers to urban landscapes as collections of urban places, which draws in the previously mentioned definitions of urban design as a process which deals in shaping urban space. Thus, the urban landscape is defined in this thesis as a collection of urban spaces and places that is variously interpreted by those shaping and experiencing them.

As identified in the opening paragraphs of this thesis, the urban landscape is often the location of tourist activity in many tropical places, servicing the needs of tourists as they travel to activities in the surrounding areas, often natural or cultural attractions. As a specific group of users in the city, tourists not only experience the city, but also contribute to the shaping of the city through their use patterns and the businesses that develop to service their needs (Judd & Fainstein 1999). Additionally, whilst cities reliant on different industries such as mining, manufacturing or ship building usually develop with a level of geographic and imagined separation between industry and supporting urban areas, tourism can be more highly integrated within the urban landscape. Thus, the urban landscape of a city reliant on the tourism industry has specific characteristics that influence both how it is shaped and experienced compared with other cities and requires particular consideration.

1.4.3 Self-conscious and un-self-conscious urban design

Shaping the urban landscape through the processes of urban design can be either deliberate or as a by-product of other processes, or as is most often the case, a bit of both. Carmona et al. (2003) identify two distinct forms of urban design processes: Unknowing or un-self-conscious and knowing or self-conscious. Un-self-conscious urban design is essentially an organic style of growth, described by Carmona et al. as a series of small-scale decisions that lack an overall vision or focus. Successes are visible in older cities such as Rome and Paris, built on walkable principles at a slow pace and small scale, but in more recent times this approach has resulted in distinctly unsuccessful places, built on vehicle dependence at a faster pace and larger scale (Gehl 2010; Loukaitou-Sideris 2012). Self-conscious urban design is the planned process of shaping inputs that result in proposals, plans and policies. Successes are visible in newer cities that work to emulate many of the walkable small scale and slow pace and integrate public transport options, but others have been critiqued as producing sterile or urban places lacking authenticity and a 'fine-grain'. Most urban landscapes in today's cities are a combination of both processes based in historical, political, social, environmental and cultural contexts (Carmona et al. 2003).

The tourism industry in particular often shapes the urban landscape through un-self-conscious processes that focus on contributing to a wider tourism system rather than self-consciously contributing to the urban system. This kind of shaping can occur through use of the urban landscape by large numbers of tourists, tourism retail outlets, tour desks, hotels and restaurants, and is often the way regional tourism destinations such as Cairns have developed. In recent times, urban development strategies such as foreshore and precinct developments have attempted to draw together both tourism planning and urban planning principles to better meet the needs of residents and tourists in more self-conscious design strategies (see for example Sandercock & Dovey 2002). These developments have their own issues however in terms of imported ideas and policies and will be discussed in Chapter 2.

1.4.4 Knowing and unknowing urban designers

In line with the self-conscious and un-self-conscious design processes, Carmona et al. (2003) also identify urban designers as knowing and unknowing urban designers who contribute to the creation and design of the city through their policy and decision making, either consciously or unconsciously. Examples of knowing urban designers include planning consultants, architects and landscape architects, who consciously work to shape urban spaces. Examples of unknowing urban designers include elected officials and industry representatives, whose decisions and attitudes can influence and shape the urban landscape, without a conscious urban design agenda. More recently, Carmona's argument has evolved, suggesting that there is not such a stark division between knowing and unknowing actors, but that urban design is in fact undertaken by a diverse group of stakeholders operating in varied ways (2014). These distinctions are explored in Chapter 5.

1.4.5 Place-based modes of operation

As already discussed, this thesis is about the process of urban design, where the urban landscape is shaped self-consciously and un-self-consciously by knowing and unknowing urban designers. Further adding complexity to these already overlapping concepts, Carmona (2014) describes how historically established 'ways of doing things' in a city can influence innovation and the introduction of imported ideas. These forces of 'how things have always been done' in a city can un-self-consciously influence broader processes of urban design and the practices of knowing and unknowing urban designers. Carmona refers to these ways of doing things as place-based modes of operation, which arise from the

interrelated place, polity and power elements of the context. This thesis uses this term extensively to describe 'how things are done' in Cairns. These ideas are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

1.4.6 Natural elements

Another key term used throughout this thesis is natural elements as opposed to man-made. The complexity of nature or natural as a term is widely acknowledged (Soper 1995) and this thesis does not attempt to engage in debates of the boundaries, or edges of what constitutes nature or not. Rather, in line with Carmona et al.'s (2003) approach to define the heart or core of the concept, this thesis uses the term natural elements to describe materials and elements in the urban landscape that occur in nature or are caused by natural processes (Park 2007). A key reason for not being too prescriptive in the definition of this term is that interpretations of what constitutes natural elements can vary across individuals. For example, a wooden deck structure may be considered by some as natural elements, whilst concrete may not, although both are the result of natural materials being shaped by man-made processes. These ideas are discussed further in Chapters 6 and 7.

1.4.7 Tourists, tourism and the tourist city

Considering tourism and tourist activities in the urban landscape requires a definition of what constitutes these terms. Two decades ago, Leiper (1995) observed that there was no commonly observed definition of the terms tourism or tourist. He went on to define tourists in terms of their behaviour:

Tourists can be defined in behavioural terms as persons who travel away from their normal residential region for a temporary period of at least one night, to the extent that their behaviour involves a search for leisure experiences from interactions with features or characteristics of places they choose to visit (p. 11).

Whilst Leiper's definition considers tourists as people seeking leisure experiences, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) defines tourists as people who travel for any purpose at all, such as for medical or business reasons who are overnight visitors for less than 12 months, rather than same-day visitors, or excursionists, who do not stay overnight (UNWTO 2014). For the purposes of this thesis, the UNWTO definition is more appropriate, because experiencing the city is not the sole domain of the leisure tourist, but indeed any person, tourist or local (see section 1.6 for an explanation of why

locals are not included in this research). Research indicates that 62% of tourists in Cairns travel for leisure compared with business or visiting friends and relatives at 17% each (Tourism Research Australia 2016). Additionally, because of the abundance of leisure activities available in Cairns, the people travelling for other purposes may also engage in leisure experiences even if that is not the purpose of their trip.

Tourism is an important term to define in the Cairns context, as some might describe Cairns as a tourism city given it attracts around 2.8 million visitors per year (Tourism Research Australia 2016). The UNWTO (2014) describes tourism as a phenomenon that encompasses the activities of all visitors, tourist or otherwise:

Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes. These people are called visitors (which may be either tourists or excursionists; residents or non-residents) and tourism has to do with their activities, some of which involve tourism expenditure (p. 1).

Whilst the tourism industry is central to the economic vitality of Cairns, care has been taken in this thesis not to describe it as a tourist city but rather a regional city reliant on tourism. This is discussed further in Chapter 4, however the main reason for this distinction in this thesis is because of how key actors in Cairns view the city. Whilst it is widely acknowledged that tourism is fundamental to the economy, there is a strong sense in key actors that the city needs to regain its former diversity in economic base. To describe Cairns as a tourist city in this thesis may preclude its findings from being considered in the wider sphere of decision making within the city and has thus been avoided.

1.4.8 Wicked problems

As discussed in the above definitions this thesis attempts to address the relationship between urban design and tourism, both of which are complex, multi-disciplinary fields of research. The complexity and overlap of self-conscious and un-self-conscious processes in tourism planning and urban planning by knowing and unknowing actors necessitates consideration of how to understand wicked problems. H.L. Mencken notes that: “to every complex problem, there is a simple solution. And it is wrong” (in Lindberg, McCool & Stankey 1997, p. 461). Wicked problems are complex problems with no simple solution. Churchman (1967) describes how wicked problems were first introduced to the academic

lexicon by planning professor Horst Rittel in a seminar in 1967, described as being “ill-formulated, where the information is confusing, where there are many clients and decision makers with conflicting values and where the ramifications in the whole system are thoroughly confusing” (ibid. p. B-141). This definition remains widely unchallenged, but has been simplified, enhanced and clarified since then. The Australian Public Service Commission (2012) define wicked problems as “problems highly resistant to solution” (p. 1), citing climate change, obesity, indigenous disadvantage and land degradation as key wicked problems currently facing the nation. In the planning literature, Rittel and Webber (1973) suggest that wicked problems are essentially societal problems that are much more complex than the more straightforward ‘tame’ or ‘benign’ problems faced by engineers and scientists. They argue that it is “morally objectionable for the planner to treat a problem as though it were a tame one, or to tame a wicked problem prematurely, or to refuse to recognise the inherent wickedness of social problems” (p. 161). They go on to identify ten distinguishing characteristics of wicked problems, arguing that “the aim is not to find the truth, but to improve some characteristics of the world where people live” (p. 167):

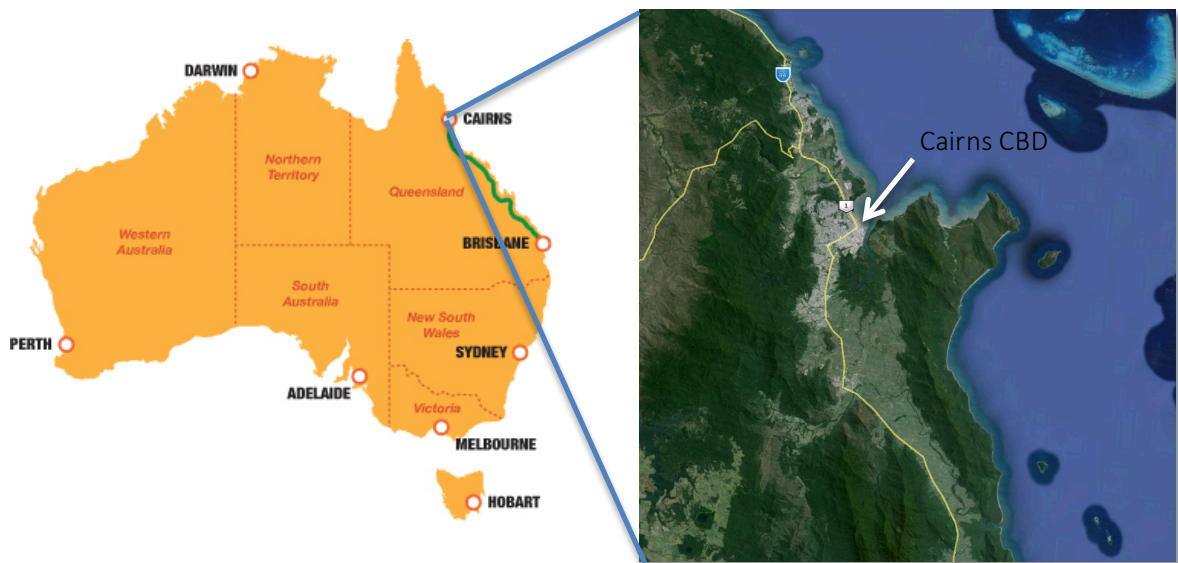
1. There is no definitive formulation of a wicked problem;
2. Wicked problems have no stopping rule (the end of the problem is not obvious);
3. Solutions to wicked problems are not true-or-false, but good-or-bad;
4. There is no immediate and no ultimate test of a solution to a wicked problem;
5. Every solution to a wicked problem is a ‘one-shot’ operation; because there is no opportunity to learn by trial-and-error, every attempt counts significantly;
6. Wicked problems do not have an enumerable (or an exhaustively describable) set of potential solutions, nor is there a well-described set of permissible operations that may be incorporated into the plan;
7. Every wicked problem is essentially unique;
8. Every wicked problem can be considered to be a symptom of another problem;
9. The existence of a discrepancy representing a wicked problem can be explained in numerous ways. The choice of explanation determines the nature of the problem’s resolution; and
10. The planner has no right to be wrong.

Whilst the wickedness of urban problems has been acknowledged and explored for a long time, the wickedness of tourism problems has been discussed less extensively. In his article *A chaos approach to tourism*, McKercher (1999) identifies the limitations tourism scholars have encountered in their attempts to model and simplify complex processes in tourism and argues for an approach that embraces complexity. This is detailed further in Chapter 2.

1.5 Context

Context is a critical element of the research in this thesis and is discussed at length in a full context analysis in Chapter 4. As a summary, Cairns is a tropical city in northern Australia with approximately 154,000 residents (Cairns Regional Council 2014). Located between the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and Wet Tropics World Heritage Areas, Cairns has been settled on and around alluvial plains that were mostly cultivated for sugar cane prior to urban sprawl. The steep hills of the Lamb and Macalister Ranges form a natural barrier that runs north to south, leaving room for agriculture and urban development on the plains between the hills and the coastline of the Coral Sea. Map 1.1 shows the location of Cairns and topography of the area. Whilst Cairns started in much the same way as many of the regional towns on Queensland's east coast, it is now Queensland's fifth largest city and attracts around 2.8 million visitors per year (Tourism Research Australia 2016). The trajectory of development that brought Cairns to its current point has shaped - and been shaped - by a number of place-based modes of operation that exist today.

Map 1.1 Cairns' location and topography



Source: www.gallivantingoz.com.au, Google Earth. Map data © 2015 GBRMPA, Google. Google Earth Images © 2015 Google, © 2015 Digital Globe, © 2015 CNES/Astrium, Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO

1.6 Limitations of the research

This thesis aims to achieve four objectives listed in Section 1.2.2 above. These are deliberately limited to keep within the bounds of a PhD thesis, whilst aiming to make a valuable contribution to the theory and practice of urban design and tourism. Whilst there were many outcomes from the research process, the findings are focused on understanding the process of urban design in the context of Cairns and the effectiveness of this process from the perspective of tourists.

A key limitation of the research is that it does not consider the views of residents either in terms of designing for tourists, or in terms of use by residents. It is acknowledged that resident perceptions of tourism do influence the tourist experience (Ap 1992; McGehee & Andereck 2004) however whilst this research touches on experience of locals, the focus is on the relationship between the urban landscape and the tourists visiting Cairns as a tropical city. Additionally, the scope of the research was such that in examining the process of shaping the tropical urban landscape and testing its effectiveness in terms of its alignment with tourist preferences there was not enough capacity in this study to include the element of locals.

Tourists are a more finite group to study in the context of a city such as Cairns, which is the main base for visits to the Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics World Heritage Areas. As such, the majority of tourists engage with the city through a range of activities a number of times in their stay. Conversely, local residents are far more difficult to define in the Cairns context as it is used as a base for residents in a very dispersed region spanning to the West and North to Cape York and Torres Strait, over one thousand kilometres away. Additionally, locals' use of the city is more sporadic and would require a different methodology outside of the scope of this research.

This study paves the way for a larger scale study that considers these factors. Additionally, the industry leaders and elected members interviewed in the process shared their thoughts on wider public sentiments regarding tourism and tourists, and this was considered in the analysis. Further research into local perceptions on how the tropical urban landscape is shaped with tourists in mind is another potential study for the future.

Another limitation of the research is that it has been conducted in one tropical location in a nation with a high GDP. Whilst cultural ideas and perceptions of the tropical context persist in the region, the nature of the urban design and values of urban designers are likely to differ from those in nations with a lower GDP. This goes similarly for the way tourists may value different components in the tropical urban landscape. Whilst there is undoubtedly an influence of tropical perceptions in the region, there may also exist other perceptions about the region such as its location within Australia or as a town with agricultural heritage. These may influence expectations of the tourist and urban designer values, but falls outside of the scope of this research.

This research draws from the qualitative data collected from urban designers in Cairns and the subsequent quantitative data collected from tourists. Data collection was governed by the need to collect a large amount of diverse data from tourists as a major group of users in the urban landscape through quantitative methods, and the need to deeply engage with the relatively small number of urban designers influencing the shape of Cairns through qualitative methods. Keeping these two very different kinds of data in view is part of the novelty of the research but it is also a limitation. The engagement with both qualitative and quantitative methods limited the ways in which data could be compared and connected, which is discussed further in Section 7.2. Whilst this is a limitation of the findings, the study

presents a way of drawing these data sources together to pragmatically address some of the wicked problems of urban research.

Finally, in a climate of significant growth in Chinese outbound tourism, resource limitations have dictated that the majority of this research has only been conducted in the English language. Whilst English-speaking Chinese people have responded to the tourist surveys, this has still precluded those visitors from all nations who do not speak English. Similarly, language and resource constraints mean that Chinese and other language literature has not been reviewed as part of the thesis.

1.7 Thesis structure

This thesis is presented in eight chapters. Chapter 2 develops an agenda and conceptual framework for the research through an academic literature review focusing on but not limited to urban design, tourism planning and tourism experience. This is followed by Chapter 3, which details the research approach and methodology, analysing the disciplinary foundations of the tourism and urban design fields of study, developing a philosophical approach for the research, and detailing the methods of data collection and analysis. Chapters 4-7 are results and analysis chapters, presented to address the research objectives identified in Section 1.2.2. Chapter 4 analyses the place, polity and power contexts of urban design in a tropical city through a context analysis of Cairns (addressing research objective 1). It draws from a themed historical narrative developed from a number of accounts of Cairns in academic and grey literature, and from in-depth interviews with knowing and unknowing urban designers influential in shaping the city. This is not intended to be a definitive history of Cairns, but rather a critical analysis of how Cairns has been shaped, with attention to the enduring place-based modes of operation emphasised in Carmona's (2014) structure of place, polity and power, discussed further in Chapter 2. Chapter 5 critically analyses the urban design process in Cairns, drawing on both the context analysis and interviews with urban designers (addressing research objective 2). This chapter explores how the urban design process works in Cairns, and considers the normative objectives of the process from the perspective of the urban designers shaping the urban landscape with tourists in mind. Chapter 6 explores the preferences of tourists experiencing the tropical urban landscape to propose an anatomy of tourist preferences in the tropical urban landscape. Chapter 7 draws together how the urban designers have addressed (or not addressed) these elements in their consideration of what tourists want

and considers how the context has influenced their ability to meet the needs of the users in the tropical urban landscape (addressing research objective 3). Chapter 8 concludes the thesis with a reflection on the findings and how they can inform a method of evaluating the urban design process in a small tropical city (addressing research objective 4).

Chapter 2

2 Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This thesis is concerned with the dialectical relationship between the shaping of the urban landscape through urban design and the experience of this landscape by tourists. As discussed in Chapter 1, the tropics have generated little research on the relationship between urban design and tourism, which is surprising given United Nations predictions that by 2050 approximately 50% of the world's population will live in the region (State of the Tropics 2014, p. 1), and the importance of tourism to many tropical economies (discussed in Section 1.1). Although developing and securing a differentiated natural tropical product has received some attention in the literature (such as Harris & Prideaux 2011; Huybers & Bennett 2000; McNamara, Coghlan & Prideaux 2008; Prideaux, Russel & Rodrigues 2011), the idea that the urban design of a tropical city can add value to the destination product as a whole has not.

The urban design literature has considered the process of urban design (eg. Alexander et al. 1987; Carmona 2014; Carmona et al. 2003; Madanipour 1996) and the value of well-designed places to user experience, but lacks a critical consideration of how urban design processes differ across contexts. Only a few have considered urban design specifically in the tropical context (such as Bay & Ong 2006; Chang & King 2011; Tay 2001), but these studies tend to focus on architecture and built form rather than the process of shaping places. In an exception to this, Bissell's (2011) book *Urban design, chaos, and colonial power in Zanzibar* critiques the flaws in the urban design process in a tropical city, however this focuses more on the failures of the British colonial project than on contemporary issues in the urban design processes in the city today.

The lack of literature directly addressing the processes of designing the tropical urban landscape (particularly in tourism-dependent tropical places) indicated a need for this research, although situating the project within the broader context of knowledge was more challenging. To make sense of the complexity of existing ideas and knowledge, an evolutionary inductive analysis of the literature was developed across the entire research

process as new themes and ideas emerged from ongoing engagement with the literature and through fieldwork. Chapter 3 discusses in more detail the disciplinary underpinnings contributing to this research, identifying the need for pragmatic post-disciplinary enquiry to effectively examine the central question with a range of contributing disciplines. The post-disciplinary nature of the research posed a challenge for an effective review of the literature for this thesis. Moving beyond disciplinary confines requires a more open approach to documenting and understanding contributing concepts and ideas (Coles, Hall & Duval 2009), yet in order to provide a meaningful analysis, some kind of conceptual framework is useful. To this end, an inductive analysis of academic literature was undertaken to contextualise the wide range of approaches to understanding the relations between people and place, and how this influences the creation and experience of the tropical urban landscape. Although in a pure sense, the disciplinary foundations of much of the literature can be traced back to geography and sociology, the reality is that these interact with a wide range of disciplines, sub-disciplines and fields, such as urban planning, tourism, environmental psychology, urban design, and many more. As articles, books and chapters were reviewed, a conceptual framework of themes - or quadrants - emerged, with sub-themes and connecting ideas emerging within and between them.

The development of the conceptual framework was revisited and developed iteratively throughout the research as themes from the data began to take shape. It took place in stages, focusing on the central research aim of understanding the process of urban design in a tropical city and how this process aligns with the preferences of tourists. The original approach drew on Gospodini's (2001) argument that urban design can be a means of urban tourism development, where distinction in the urban environment can create a city with personality and thus improve its competitiveness. Dwyer and Kim (2003) make similar observations, arguing that the architectural features of a destination "provides a basic and powerful attracting force for the prospective visitor" (p. 381). This is supported by a growing body of research exploring the developmental advantages of good urban design (Carmona et al. 2001; Gospodini 2002; Hubbard 1995, 1996; Mansfield 2004). These new 'uses' of urban design have been identified as a way of differentiating cities in competition for investment and resources (Gospodini 2002) where the quality of urban space is not only considered to be a 'key issue' that adds value to places (Carmona, De Magalhães & Edwards 2002; Carmona et al. 2001; Hubbard 1995; Mansfield 2004) but 'essential' (DETR & CABE 2000) or even a "prerequisite for the economic development of cities" (Gospodini 2002, p.

60). While focused on Europe, these studies on the new 'uses' of urban design are supported by research in Canada where Murphy, P., Pritchard and Smith (2000) suggest that the overall environment and constructed infrastructure is linked to the quality of the tourist experience.

When considered in relation to the tourism literature, Gospodini's arguments resound with Urry's (1990) 'tourist gaze' which suggests that tourist experiences are innately visual. Urry (1990, 1992) argues that whilst the tourist experience is multi-sensual (such as tasting new dishes, experiencing different climates, encountering new smells etc.) "these experiences are only of importance to the tourist because they are located within a distinctive visual environment" (p. 172). These arguments indicate that understanding the visual signs, symbols and images within the urban landscape is central to learning how urban design can be used as a tourist resource. At a deeper level, Urry (1990) argues that the tourist gaze is socially constructed not only by those experiencing the destination but also consciously by those creating and selling the destination. Urry (1995) uses the example of when tourists see a small village in England "tourists think they are gazing on the 'real (merrie) England'" (p. 133). An instinctive understanding of the value of this gaze - or constructed perception of place - by tourists is drawn upon by urban designers and marketers (either consciously or unconsciously) to shape and sell the destination. These 'image makers' create both physical and represented imagery that are informed by their perceptions of visitor and local preferences as well as their own preferences.

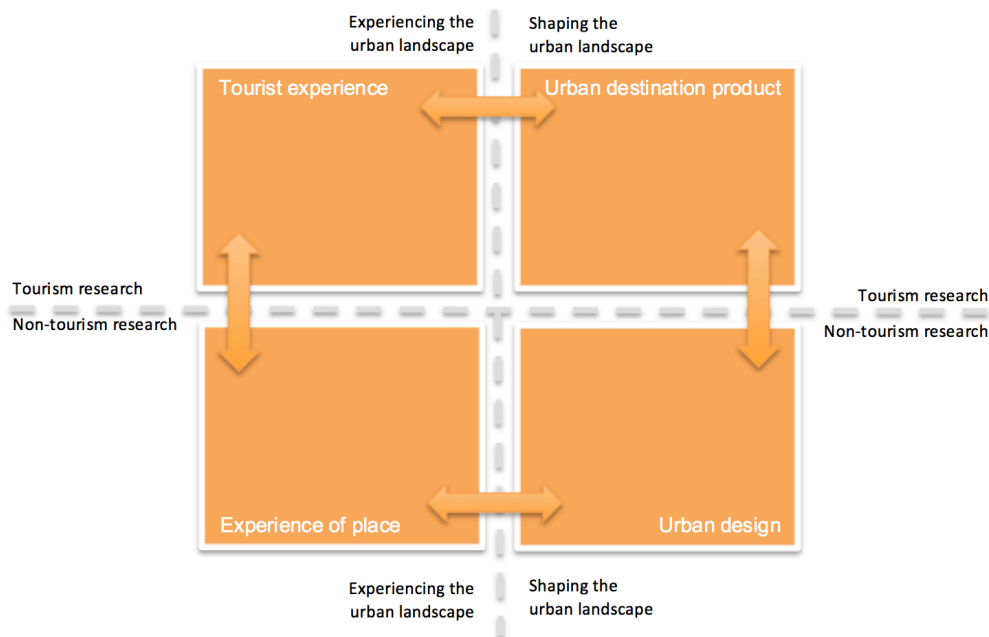
These observations allude to some connections in the literature between quality urban spaces and the tourist experience; the importance of visual signs, symbols and images to the tourist experience; and how visual cues are imagined consciously and unconsciously by tourists, urban designers and marketers. These connections are particularly interesting when considering the urban landscape in tropical places. The tropics often evoke a strong set of visual cues based in nature or primitive culture such as palm trees, lush vegetation, thatched huts or white beaches with clear blue water (as can be seen by a Google search on 'tropical images'). So can urban designers in tropical places create a distinctive tropical urban landscape that can be used as a tourist resource? Chapter 1 identified that there is a significant gap in the literature addressing this question. This thesis makes a start on contributing to this gap by exploring the process of creation of visual cues in the tropical urban landscape by urban designers and considering their alignment with the perception of

these visual cues in the tourist gaze, essentially evaluating the process of urban design in terms of its ability to align with tourist preferences.

2.1.1 Organising the literature

Acknowledging the diversity of the disciplinary underpinnings of urban design and tourism and the lack of literature specifically addressing the topic of this thesis, this subsection discusses how the literature has been organised for analysis. Gospodini (2000) and Urry's (1990, 1995) arguments inform the aim of this thesis, which alludes to four basic themes - here represented as quadrants (see Figure 2.1) - for understanding the complex relations between urban design and the tourist experience. Horizontally, the quadrants are organised so that tourism-related research is represented in the top half and non-tourism-related literature in the bottom half. In their comprehensive review of urban tourism research, Ashworth and Page (2011) lament the lack of engagement of many urban tourism researchers with wider debates in urban studies, highlighting a need to search beyond tourism literature for contributions to these arguments. But as an interconnected component of the parent discipline of planning, and also related to architecture and landscape architecture, urban design is itself part of a wider literature (Cuthbert 2010; Gunder 2011), and in the bottom half of this figure it is supplemented with ideas from urban planning, architecture and environmental psychology to consider the literature which addresses the making and use of the built environment. Vertically, the quadrants are organised so that literature concerned with experiencing the urban landscape is on the left-hand side and shaping the urban landscape is on the right. This organisation is based on the nature of the research considering both the urban designers (shapers) and the tourists (experiencers), but also draws on tourism and non-tourism literature that considers the production and consumption of urban space both separately and simultaneously (such as Ateljevic 2000; Gottdiener 1993; Lefebvre 1991; Saraniemi & Kylänen 2011).

Figure 2.1 Organising the literature: Four quadrants of research linking urban design and tourism



The next subsection describes how the literature engages with the quadrants of Figure 2.1 and the relationships between them. With this structure of review as the basis, the following subsection then gives an outline of how gaps in the literature review will be presented to inform the research.

2.1.2 Quadrants of research

This subsection discusses how the literature is organised across the four quadrants emerging from tourism/non-tourism research and shaping/experiencing the urban landscape in Figure 2.1. The arrows between the themes indicate the range of research that traverses more than one quadrant. As multidisciplinary fields of research, both urban design and tourism literatures are filled with studies straddling topics and disciplines and these are represented in the arrows.

The *Urban design* literature resides in the quadrant of non-tourism research concerned with shaping the urban landscape. The literature in this quadrant draws on a range of contributing disciplines to explore the innately normative and political nature of urban design (such as Cuthbert 2006, Madanipour 1996, 1999, 2006), which raises questions around how the processes of urban design work in terms of ideology and its translation into producing 'better' urban landscapes (Carmona 2014). This analysis develops to consider the processes of tourism planning, reaching across to the *Urban destination product* quadrant. This quadrant is comprised of the tourism literature addressing shaping the urban

landscape, including research on the tourist city (such as Judd and Fainstein 1999, Ashworth and Tunbridge 2011) urban tourist precincts (Hayllar, Griffin & Edwards 2008; Spirou 2008), and tourist bubbles (Judd 1999). Connecting the *Urban destination product* and *Urban design* quadrants are studies such as Gospodini's (2001, 2002) work exploring urban design as competitive advantage for cities.

The *Experience of place* quadrant is comprised of non-tourism-related research concerned with experiencing the urban landscape. Research in this quadrant draws on broader studies in environmental psychology considering place attachment (such as Scannell and Gifford 2010) and sense of place (such as Shamai 1991). These studies are usually concerned with understanding the meanings people construct in places, the process of forming attachments to places, or how the physical aspects of places influence how people feel in a place (Scannell & Gifford 2010). Reaching between the *Experience of place* and *Urban Design* quadrants is the limited urban design literature considering the user experiences of urban design (such as Carmona, De Magalhães & Edwards 2002; Vischer 2008).

There is substantially more research represented in the tourist experience quadrant. Much of the *Experience of place* literature reaches across to the *Tourist experience of place* literature, which resides in the quadrant of tourism research concerned with experiencing the urban landscape. Tourist experience in itself is a finite field of study that has warranted its own reviews of progress (Jennings et al. 2009; Uriely 2005) and books (Jennings & Nickerson 2006; Morgan, M., Lugosi & Brent Ritchie 2010; Ryan 2002), where many of the concepts have drawn on the broader literature represented in the *Experiencing place* quadrant (eg. Gross & Brown 2008). The relationships between tourists and non-tourists connects these two quadrants, representing literature on the social impacts of tourism (Ap 1992; King, B., Pizam & Milman 1993) and the importance of the host community in the tourist experience (Carmichael 2006).

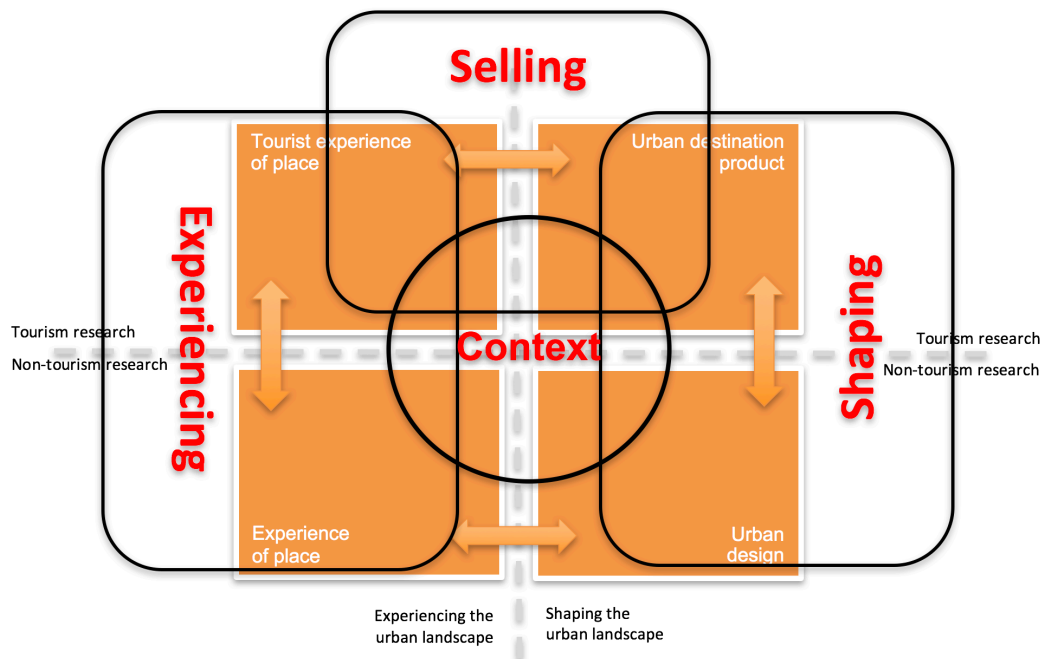
The *Tourist experience of place* quadrant and the *Urban destination product* quadrant is connected by a body of tourism research simultaneously considering the production and consumption of space in terms of the meanings constructed by those using and creating it (Urry 1990, 1992) and the physical attributes of the places required to meet the needs of tourists (Murphy, L., Moscardo & Benckendorff 2007). The imagination of places through branding and imagery (Campelo et al. 2014; Chen & Tsai 2007), and the interpretation of

authenticity in the urban landscape (Hughes 1995; MacCannell 1973; Salah Ouf 2001) also rests between these quadrants, although these also draw from the specific context of the place, which is discussed in the next subsection.

2.1.3 Literature review structure and conceptual framework

This review is divided to align with the major quadrants of the literature and this structure forms the basis of the conceptual framework for the thesis, illustrated in Figure 2.2. In line with this framework, Section 2.2 reviews the body of knowledge on *shaping* the urban landscape. It explores how the planning and urban design literature has produced urban models and manifestos and how these have developed to understand the urban design process. It also explores the tourism planning literature and its contribution to shaping (or not) the urban landscape. Section 2.3 reviews the body of knowledge on *experiencing* the urban landscape from a tourist perspective, drawing on a range of non-tourism literature including place attachment, sense of place and authenticity. Section 2.4 is a smaller review of knowledge about the role of *selling* the urban landscape and how this is influenced by, and influences, the shape and experience of the urban landscape. Section 2.5 then examines the role and components of *context* in the application of models and policies in different places. This leads into the specific consideration of the tropical context, drawing the quadrants of research together to think about how these are represented in tropically specific research. Section 2.6 concludes by drawing together the identified gaps in the literature to formulate an agenda for research.

Figure 2.2 Conceptual framework



2.2 Shaping the urban landscape

This section examines the literature relating to shaping the urban landscape first in terms of the non-tourism-focused *urban design* quadrant of Figure 2.4, and then in terms of the tourism-focused *urban destination product* quadrant.

2.2.1 Urban design quadrant

As detailed in the introduction to this chapter, the urban design quadrant of Figure 2.4 represents the literature concerned with shaping the urban landscape outside of the tourism literature. In keeping with Gunder's (2011) argument that urban design is in fact a subset of urban planning, much of the literature contributing to our understanding of urban design is generated from the urban planning literature. This subsection discusses how the urban design literature has tended to put forward manifestos and normative models rather than critically considering the construction knowledge and its location in the processes of urban design. It examines the relatively small body of work concerned with understanding the urban design process and identifies the need for critique of these works.

2.2.1.1 Evolution of urban design: models and manifestos

Biddulph (2012) argues that a distinction has emerged between thinking *for* urban design as a creative and ultimately normative activity that considers ideal outcomes, plans and philosophies for cities and thinking *about* urban design in a descriptive way to understand the design environment in which these normative activities are created. Forsyth (2014) notes that even attempts at thinking *about* urban design process tend to result in discussions on 'achievable norms'. Thinking *about* urban design and the processes that produce it has not received the exclusive (or extensive) attention of the academy, and very little in professional publications either. In another discipline, a distinction may have developed between the academy thinking *about* and practitioners thinking *for*, however this has not been the case in urban design, where academic writings have persisted with normative undertones as much, if not more, than their practitioner counterparts. No doubt an added dimension to this is the blurring of the academic/professional binary in the urban design field (as with architecture), where often practitioners publish works or teach as academics and academics consult professionally. The lack of consideration *about* urban design and the processes that produce it may be the root cause of a growing disparity between normative goals and on-the-ground outcomes of urban design. This thesis aims to make a contribution to filling this gap by critically examining how the process of urban design in a city works to meet the needs of tourists. In this way, this thesis thinks about urban design through considering how the objectives of users and producers of the tropical urban landscape connect or disconnect.

The failures of the urban design field to achieve 'better outcomes' have been noted by a number of authors in recent times (such as Buchanan 2013; Carmona 2014; Loukaitou-Sideris 2012) who are seeking answers to why, with all of the knowledge and philosophies produced in the past 150 years (and earlier), and with all of the experiences of cities humanity has accumulated since cities first evolved, there still exist urban landscapes that are deeply unsatisfactory to the people who live there. These observations are nothing new; Appleyard and Jacobs (1982) were making similar arguments some thirty years ago, as were Lynch (1960) and Gehl (1976) before them. In truth, manifestos for urban development, urban design and the planning of cities to attempt to address the shortcomings of urban life are almost as old as cities themselves, as observed in the ancient cities of Greece and Rome with their political policies on the division of cities into civic centres, places of worship, marketplaces, and so forth. One of the key issues with these

manifestos - whose production has sped up exponentially in the past 100 years - is that they are responding to a changing world, with innovations and disruptive technologies emerging with increasing frequency (Manyika et al. 2013), creating ever more 'wicked' problems (Churchman 1967) from what were already quite 'wicked' problems to start with. So even though our understanding of the urban condition has grown as we have studied it, the complexity has also continued to increase at a rate that is proving difficult to keep up with.

This philosophy of wickedness in urban problems has had far-reaching implications for the field of urban design, effectively permitting professionals and scholars to accept and embrace the complexity of the problems they deal with and to understand that solutions are rare, and rarely (if ever) comprehensive. Additionally, evidence of these principles can be seen embedded in the philosophies of urban design that persist today. In particular, a lack of modeling in urban design processes and theories could be attributed to the assertion that "planning problems are wicked problems" (p. 160) and that "every wicked problem is essentially unique" (p. 164) – which by rule of logic asserts that planning problems are essentially unique. Given that the Oxford Dictionary (Oxford University Press 2015) definition of a model is "a thing used as an example to follow or imitate", Rittel & Webber's argument suggests that planning problems are un-model-able. The planning foundations of urban design might indicate that these principles could extend to the field, although there is the possibility that urban design, defined by Carmona et al. (2003) as "the process of making better places for people than would otherwise be produced" (p. 74) could be one way practitioners have sought to reduce aspects of planning and all of its complexity into more specific, place-based design exercises.

Defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as "a public declaration of policy and aims, especially one issued before an election by a political party or candidate" (oxforddictionaries.com), manifestos are by nature value-laden, often politically-driven statements of how things *should* be. This raises questions around whether a manifesto is simply a type of normative model, and in some ways it could be. Certainly, the acknowledged wicked nature of urban problems that manifestos attempt to address would indicate that rather than describing right-or-wrong solutions, they are seeking to achieve better outcomes than previously existed, essentially normative outcomes. At their heart, a difference possibly lies in the idea that whilst a manifesto is usually intended to be an

underlying philosophy designed to inform decision making to advance a normative, often political agenda, normative models are a more robust concept designed to be applied across a range of contexts. In reality however, given the complexity and ‘wickedness’ of urban problems, normative models do tend to become ‘guiding philosophies’ from which urban designers and planners select aspects they can work with according to their context rather than complete, replicable ‘models’. For this reason, this section considers both normative models and manifestos as being an expression of a philosophy of what ‘should be’ rather than complete and replicable models in their own right.

Throughout history, cities have been shaped through both *self-conscious* and *un-self-conscious* processes (Carmona et al. 2003). Cuthbert (2007) notes that whilst these processes have existed and been examined for a long time, the notion of urban design as a term or field of research has been recognised formally only since the beginning of the 20th century. These concepts emerged from the ideas of 19th century social reformers and planners thinking *for* urban design who were seeking solutions to the social and health issues presented by the industrialization of cities, such as Robert Owen (1813), James Silk Buckingham (1849) and Ebenezer Howard (1898) (Pacione 2009). Howard in particular presented a utopian blueprint concept of a ‘Garden City’ with “groups of slumless, smokeless cities” (in Pacione 2009, p. 169) that formed the basis of planning philosophies in the early part of the 20th century.

These ideas were challenged however as the modernist movement progressed through the interwar period, culminating in the publication of *The Athens Charter* in 1943 (Le Corbusier 1973). Produced by the architect Le Corbusier and the International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM), this 95-point manifesto outlined a city with four functions: inhabiting, working, recreating and circulating. Key within achieving this were the ideas of collective interest and high density that prioritised the preservation of land use for the common good (Gold 1998). The philosophies within *The Athens Charter* and other publications by Le Corbusier and CIAM (such as *Can our Cities Survive?* (1942) and *The Radiant City* (1966)) influenced city development globally throughout the postwar period. As Appleyard and Jacobs (1982) observe:

Thousands of housing estates and redevelopment projects in socialist and capitalist countries the world over, whether on previously undeveloped land or as

replacements for old urban areas, attest to the acceptance of the Charter's dictums. The design notions it embraced have become part of a world design language... (p. 2)

The philosophies of both the Garden City and The Athens Charter separated work, home, recreation and 'circulation' (roads and motorways) through the zoning of land use as single-use areas, such as 'residential', 'industrial' or 'commercial'. These concepts persist in the 'world design language' of planning today, even though the huge high-density mass-housing developments that arose globally from these philosophies have generated criticism around the lack of human scale and community focus (Appleyard & Jacobs 1982; Gehl 2011). In response to the growing evidence of design failure in the 1940s and 50s, the Rockefeller Foundation research program for Urban Design Studies was established. Laurence (2006) argues that this "contributed significantly to postwar urban theory and to the emergence of the new discipline of urban design out of the overlapping interests of the fields of architecture, city planning and landscape design" (p. 145). One of the first Rockefeller-funded authors to challenge the tenets of postwar urban design philosophies was Kevin Lynch (1960), whose *Image of the City* presented a visual philosophy of legibility, imageability, identity in the city to contrast with the "ugliness, dirt, smoke, congestion and... monotony" (p. 2) of American cities at the time. The strictly visual nature of Lynch's work stopped short of providing an alternative to the modernist philosophies, however it did introduce key concepts that have since formed a basis to critique them. In 1976, Jan Gehl (in Gehl 2011) identified the failure of the "functionalistic architecture and city planning that dominated the period" (p. 7) to address the needs of those using public spaces between buildings, and this also contributed to the growing critical agenda of urban design philosophy.

These critiques of the modernist urban design philosophy laid the groundwork for Appleyard & Jacobs' (1982) seminal work: *Toward an urban design manifesto*. In this, they noted that the world was facing very different problems than those the Garden City and modernist philosophies were attempting to address, namely: poor living environments; giantism and loss of control; large-scale privatisation and the loss of public life; centrifugal fragmentation (now known as urban sprawl); destruction of our valued places; placelessness; injustice; and rootless professionalism. Arguably, more than thirty years later, these problems are still endemic in the cities of today (Loukaitou-Sideris 2012).

2.2.1.2 A world design language

Nevertheless, there has been a “remarkable flourishing of the urban design field” (Loukaitou-Sideris 2012, p. 468) since the publication of Appleyard & Jacobs’ manifesto. Drawing selectively from the most attractive or seemingly successful past urban philosophies, many of the normative models of urban design that exist today conceptualise ideal cities and urban places such as New Urbanism (Calthorpe & Fulton 2001; Katz 1994), Transit Oriented Development (Dittmar & Ohland 2004), People Places (Marcus & Francis 1998) or Place Making (Bohl 2002). A ‘world design language’ has evolved through these with a series of widely accepted urban design norms such as preserving pedestrian access (‘walkability’), encouraging public transport and active transport over vehicle dependence, developing difference and wayfinding in the urban landscape (‘legibility’), preserving and developing green spaces, improving social interactions through environmental design, increasing urban density to reduce sprawl, and energy efficiency (see for example Mikoleit & Pürckhauer 2011).

With such a distinctive and seemingly cohesive language of design emerging from the normative models existent in urban theory today, it might be reasonable to expect that the achievement of ‘better’ urban places is a realistic possibility. However, as Loukaitou-Sideris (2012) observes:

...despite the vibrant design scholarship and the proliferation of various ‘urbanisms’ and calls for action, their impact ‘on the ground’ has not been substantial. While in recent decades we have witnessed more urban infill and mixed-use developments and the construction of some LEED-certified buildings, these efforts remain limited in scale and have not yet made an important dent in the problems of North American cities (p. 468).

This brings the argument back to the observations noted at the start of this section on the growing divide between norms and outcomes in urban design and planning scholarship. Biddulph (2012) cautions urban designers against falling into either of the *about* or *for* camps by uncritically accepting the very political and interpretive contexts within which they work. This hints at a deeper possibility that achieving ‘better’ urban outcomes is as much about critically analysing and acknowledging context as it is to do with separating the concept of thinking either for or about urban problems.

This section has noted the developments in the literature thinking *for* urban design, evidenced through a growing body of work espousing normative goals and manifestos to achieve ‘better’ places for people. It has identified the emergence of an increasingly established ‘world design language’ of accepted norms in urban design, yet also observed a lack of conversion of these norms into actual outcomes in cities. This indicates some shortfalls in the processes of urban design, the interface of where ideas, norms and policies are converted to ‘on the ground’ impacts in the urban landscape. Yet there has been limited research examining these processes to date. This thesis contributes to filling this gap by critically analyse the urban design process in a tropical city from the perspective of those shaping it. The next section examines this limited field and considers the contributions of the literature so far.

2.2.1.3 Urban design process

Consistent with the arguments already advanced here, Inam (2002) argues that the field of urban design has been obsessed with aesthetics of physical form and utopian ideals, emphasising the end product rather than understanding the processes contributing to it. Critical urban theorists have considered these processes in more detail, however in terms of urban design scholarship, there has been very little consideration given to how the process of urban design actually works. Carmona (2014) argues that it is the design, development and political processes that give rise to the creation of urban places that “determine how places are shaped and which, if studied, might provide an irreducible core for the study and practice of urban design” (p. 5). This section explores how research has developed to consider the urban design process and the key aspects of considering that process – context and policy mobility – from a critical perspective.

In his review of urban design scholarship in the 50 years prior to 2007, Cuthbert (2007) notes four authors who have claimed to produce a theory of urban design: Lynch’s *A theory of good city form* (1981), Krier’s *Urban space* (1979), Hillier & Hanson’s *The social logic of space* (1984) and Alexander et al.’s *A new theory of urban design* (1987). Of these, Alexander et al. (1987) are the only authors who specifically address the process of urban design, arguing that “it is the process above all which is responsible for wholeness... not merely the form. If we create a suitable process, there is some hope that the city might become whole once again” (p. 3). The seven rules they present are utopian, normative ideals focused on the shape of the urban environment rather than how it is produced

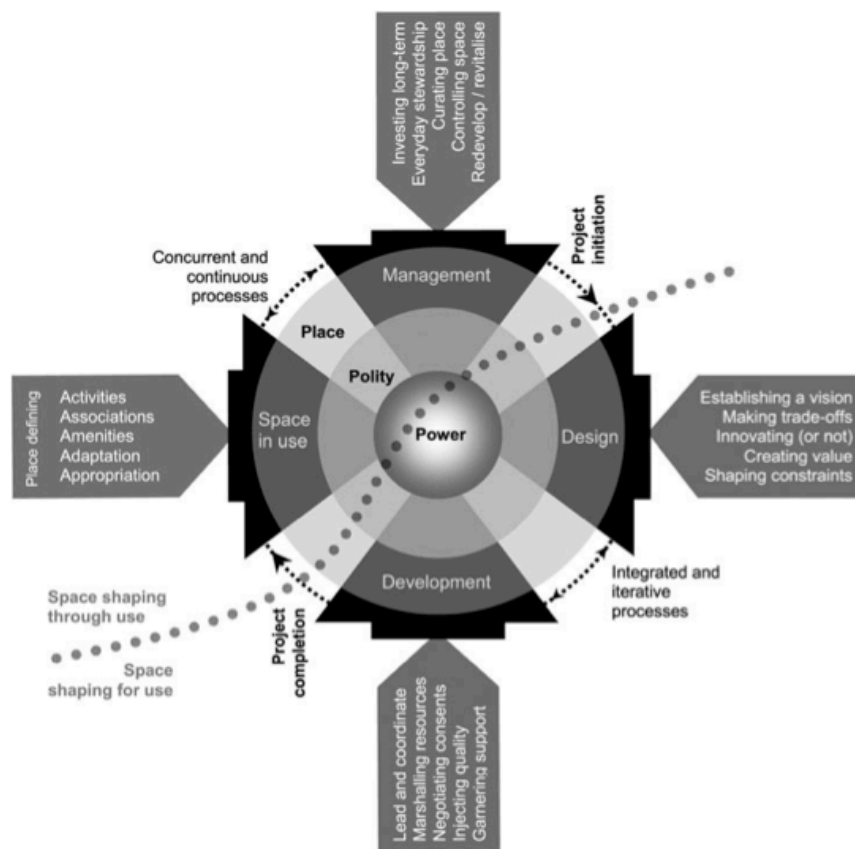
within the one overriding rule of: “every increment of construction must be made in such a way as to heal the city” (p. 22). Whilst this provides an argument supporting the need to examine the urban design process, it does not truly examine the mechanics or processes of urban design as such.

Araabi (2015) posits that urban design theories can be categorised into three types. Type 1 theories are about the subjects *within* urban design, focusing on just one specific aspect of the city, such as public space, images, safety or social interaction. Type 2 theories are about the *object* of urban design, attempting to integrate theories together as a cohesive field. The theories, models and manifestos discussed above and in the previous section fall within these first two types of theories. Type 3 theories are identified as those which are about the knowledge of urban design. Araabi argues that these type 3 theories are unhelpful to actual urban design because of its practical nature, however Biddulph’s (2012) call to think both *about* and *for* urban design indicate that these deeper considerations may in fact be of value in understanding and applying knowledge in urban design.

The process of urban design is a key site of knowledge adoption, adaptation and production, where knowing and unknowing urban designers draw on a range of sources such as personal preference, best practice, government requirements and many others to synthesise and produce knowledge that is then transferred into practice within the specific context. Both Araabi and Biddulph agree that the literature has paid little attention to producing type 3 knowledge to date. Araabi identifies two theories of urban design process that have been proposed within type 3: Madanipour’s (1996) *Design of Urban Space* which draws on multi-disciplinary foundations to suggest that urban design is a ‘socio-spatial process’; and Carmona’s (2014) *Place-shaping Continuum* which examines the process of shaping places both for and through use. Both of these theories focus on the social and political processes of shaping places, but Carmona also introduces the concept of place-based modes of operation drawn from context as a central element of understanding urban design process. This is of particular interest to this research because of its emphasis on context (discussed in more detail in Section 2.5). As discussed in Chapter 1, it is critical to acknowledge and understand the influence of the tropical context to effectively consider how tropical places are shaped and experienced.

Carmona's (2014) model (shown in Figure 2.7) is described by Oc (2014) as "a significant move forward in thinking for our discipline" as it is the first model of its kind to specifically examine the mechanics of the urban design process and to acknowledge the central importance of context. The model was developed out of a study of public parks in London, and although it emphasises the central importance of context and historical place-based modes of operation, no-one to date has critiqued its applicability in research practice or relevance to different contexts, and is yet to attract any serious critical engagement in the literature. With the exception of Araabi's (2015) general criticism as not being of use to urban design due to its type 3 theory status, Carmona's (2014) model is referred to as a contributor to theory (such as Coaffee & Clarke 2015; Khan et al. 2014; White 2015) in an otherwise barren theoretical landscape on urban design process. The model's potential applicability to better understanding the urban design process makes it a valuable tool for analysis in the shaping component of this thesis regardless of its lack of critique, and therefore forms part of the conceptual framework for the shaping analysis. In lieu of genuine critique of the model in the literature, this thesis makes a critical contribution to Araabi's type 3 theoretical body by conducting a critique of the model's applicability in the tropical context as part of the *shaping the tropical urban landscape* analysis in Section 5.3 of Chapter 5. The remainder of this sub-section details some of the key aspects of the model that underpin the critical analysis in this thesis.

Figure 2.3 Carmona's (2014) Place-shaping Continuum



The *Place-shaping Continuum* focuses on the process of urban design in the context of *place*, *polity* and *power*. Showing a multi-faceted process as a circular continuum, it attempts to model the way urban space is shaped both for and through use through *knowing* and *unknowing* place-shaping in *self-conscious* and *un-self-conscious* design processes. In previous work, Carmona et al (2003) identified *knowing* urban designers as professionals such as planning consultants, architects and landscape architects, who *self-consciously* work to shape urban spaces. *Unknowing* urban designers were defined as practically every other person in the community, including politicians at all levels of government, the business community, public servants, investors and householders whose decisions and attitudes can un-self-consciously influence and shape the city without a conscious urban design agenda. Through the *Place-shaping Continuum*, Carmona's argument has evolved, suggesting that there is not such a stark division between *knowing* and *unknowing* actors, but that urban design is in fact undertaken by a diverse group of stakeholders operating in varied ways. Through the model, Carmona attempts to draw these key actors and processes together to describe how the urban design process works in

a more holistic way. He argues that although the process of place-shaping begins with design, the other processes of development, use of space and management are “equally and often more important in determining how the built environment is shaped” (p. 16).

A key aspect of the *Place-shaping continuum* is the idea that it represents both the formal production of urban space through *self-conscious* processes such as planned projects and the informal production of urban space through *un-self-conscious* processes such as the shaping of space by other users, or by making trade-offs. Although the circular nature of the continuum indicates that there is no real start or end-point, there is a point labeled ‘project initiation’ which indicates where a formal project would probably start (keeping in mind that the space probably already exists and has had previous iterations through the process already). The design and development inputs are classified as the processes shaping space for use, and the management and space in use inputs are classified as the processes shaping space through use. This acknowledges the idea that those who use space can also contribute to its shape. Through the use of double-ended arrows, the model also acknowledges the iterative and integrated nature of the place-shaping process.

The review in this section has shown that whilst the literature has reflected the growing and changing complexities of the urban landscape and the needs and preferences of the users within it, there has been less attention given to the processes through which needs are assessed and outcomes delivered. A gap exists in the literature thinking *about* urban design generally, or type 3 urban design research in Araabi’s (2015) terms. This thesis makes a contribution to filling this gap by critically examining how the process of urban design in a city works in terms of its alignment with tourist preferences. The next section specifically considers the tourism literature related to the urban destination product.

2.2.2 Urban destination product quadrant

The urban destination product quadrant of Figure 2.4 represents the tourism literature concerned with shaping the urban landscape. This subsection discusses how whilst there have been numerous structural or systems-based models of tourism planning put forward by tourism scholars since the 1970s (such as Gunn 2014; Gunn & Var 2002; Inskeep 1991, 1994), there has been little application of these in the planning or urban design fields. It considers some of the reasons why this might be the case and again identifies the lack of critique and understanding of complexity and contextual issues in tourism studies. It then examines the tourism literature that specifically addresses the relationship between the

city and tourists, identifying a tendency toward descriptive research on how cities develop as a tourist resource rather than understanding the processes that influence this development.

2.2.2.1 Models of tourism planning

So far, this review has explored how the urban design and planning literature have developed models and manifestos to address complex urban problems and the urban design process. The tourism literature has made limited contributions to this field, mostly through research focusing on destination development and tourism planning, usually at the exclusion of other industries. Additionally, the tourism literature has tended to focus on the production of positivist-inspired models rather than the more normative and comprehensive approach of urban design and planning.

The production of positivist-inspired models in tourism planning scholarship is both extensive and long-standing. Thirty years ago, Getz (1986) reviewed the development of over 150 models in tourism to classify them within the groups of: theoretical; planning/management processes; or forecasting models. Within the planning/management processes classification, he identified a number of area-development and planning concept models that specifically considered the planning and development of tourist destinations. Key amongst these was the work of Clare Gunn, described as the ‘founding father’ of academic tourism in the United States (Crompton 2014), responsible for the publication of three separate editions of *Vacationscape* (1972, 1988b, 2014) and *Tourism Planning* (Gunn 1988a; Gunn & Var 2002). Drawing on a philosophy of tourism as a land-use issue, Gunn’s work introduced principles of design for tourism around structural, physical and aesthetic functionalism, providing galleries of well-designed places to illustrate. Inskeep (1988, 1991, 1994) also set out a comprehensive catalog of works on tourism planning at local, regional and state levels, again with a range of illustrative case studies. His work sets out eight elements of approach: continuous, incremental and flexible; systems; comprehensive; integrated; environmental and sustainable development; community; implementable; and application of a systematic planning process. Edgell Sr et al. (2008) also published a tourism planning book: *Tourism policy and planning: Yesterday, today and tomorrow*, with a second edition released in 2013 (Edgell Sr & Swaffield). Both editions consider at length planning within the tourism system, but from a distinctly tourism-focused perspective, generally lacking an engagement with how tourism fits in the broader context of economy, people and place.

Another key contribution to our understanding of destination development comes from Butler (2006) who draws on his original (1980) seminal contribution to tourism geography to propose the *Tourist Area Life Cycle* (TALC). The TALC explains how a destination can develop from exploration by tourists to involvement by locals, development and consolidation of the destination, followed by stagnation that can lead to a range of options from rejuvenation to decline. Whilst the TALC is intuitive and makes a valuable contribution to how we conceptually understand the development of tourist destinations, Prideaux (2000) notes that although it has been published for over 35 years, the model is yet to be successfully operationalised in a practical context. As with Ashworth and Tunbridge's (1990) ideas, there is a gap between the concept of the TALC and the complex, practical reality of cities and their development. These models contribute to our understanding of how destinations develop, but neglect to address the more complex aspects of why they develop. This exposes a gap in the literature around understanding the deeper contextual issues of development and suggests a need to analyse not just the *how* of development but also the *why*. This thesis makes a contribution to closing this gap by analysing the deeper aspects of context in terms of place, polity and power, discussed further in Section 2.5.

Closer to the Cairns region, Dredge and Moore (1992) proposed a methodology for integrating tourism into town planning in Queensland, drawing on examples including Cairns. This practical guide outlined eight key ways of integrating tourism into the planning process, including: setting goals and objectives, resource inventory, identification of market composition and trends and identification of destination image and character. Dredge (1999) also drew on existing models and concepts to propose a model of destination place planning and design, describing systematically the composition of single node, multiple node and chained destination regions. Of note in the works of Dredge and Moore, Gunn and Inskeep is a focus on systems and processes and the physical structure of destination regions. Within these, there is little engagement with ideas of valuing attractions at the destination as 'hero', 'primary' or 'secondary' commonly used in destination planning at a professional level (eg. AEC Group 2011). This lack of detail limits the operational capacity of these models. Additionally, whilst Gunn tends to focus on the physical design of a place and other authors mentioned here on processes and policy, neither examine in detail the complexities of context and the policy/power relationships either within the local area or in the adaption of example case studies to other locations.

These examples show that the tourism literature is replete with models and frameworks describing the tourism system and planning within it, however the reductionist approach of considering the concepts from a rational, tourism-focused rather than a critical policy studies perspective may explain the lack of operational 'take up' of these models in practical planning. By his own admission, Gunn (2004) argues that there is a further need for research on "the linkages among organisations related to tourism development" (p. 5) and acknowledges that research findings originating in tourism planning are unlikely to reach planning practitioners. Even within studies of the tourism system, McKercher (1999) notes that "a number of tourism models have been developed that have tried to explain how tourism works... to a large extent, they all argue a reductionist approach to tourism" (pp. 425-426). He goes on to present a *Chaos approach to tourism*, based on chaos and complexity theory, which are essentially siblings to the wicked problem philosophy: "where even slight changes to initial conditions can lead to profoundly different outcomes" (p. 429) and where "both instability and change are inherent, beneficial characteristics of any tourism system" (ibid.). McKercher's engagement with the complexity of the tourism system is unique in the tourism literature, with most attempting to reduce findings and theories to models designed for broad applicability.

McKercher's (1999) observations indicated the beginning of a more critical consideration of tourism generally. Hall had already begun to engage with these ideas with his publication of *Tourism and politics: Policy, power and place* (1994) and progressed through the 2000s with publications such as *Politics and Place: an Analysis of Power in Tourism Communities* (2003), *Tourism and postcolonialism: An introduction* (Hall & Tucker 2004) and *Tourism planning: Policies, processes and relationships* (2008). The mid-2000s saw a number of authors make inroads to critically engaging with tourism as a political, power based phenomenon, heralding a 'critical turn' in tourism studies that was following with some lag from the 'cultural turn' of the social sciences in the 1980s (Ateljevic et al. 2005; Bianchi 2009). However by 2008, Tribe still argued that the gap between research and practice in tourism demonstrated "tourism to be an insufficiently critical business" (p. 245), suggesting that critical approaches can provide "understandings that technical rationality can overlook" (ibid.). Tribe draws on the work of Kincheloe and McLaren (2003) to identify key distinguishing features of critical theory. In particular, he notes that whilst the positivist

approach to research relies on a 'value-free' paradigm, critical theory takes a different view:

This concentration on technical solutions takes the current ordering of things as given, whereas for critical theory the current ordering of things is deliberately foregrounded as a possible problem. Power is a fundamental issue to be researched and a critical approach to tourism would seek to expose whose interests are served and how power operates in particular formations of tourism as well as in the process of research (Tribe 2008, p. 246).

Here, Tribe clearly identifies a need to explore power and the structures it engenders if the gap between research and practice is to be bridged. This alludes to an underpinning aspect of this research: the critical approach. The tropical and remote context of Cairns necessitates a critical approach to this research because of the historical way small tropical cities have developed. Marcuse (2009) defines critical as: "shorthand for an evaluative attitude towards reality, a questioning rather than an acceptance of the world as it is, a taking apart and examining and attempting to understand the world" (p. 185). Similarly, Brenner (2009) argues that critical urban theorists generally view urban questions as being historically specific and mediated through power relations, rejecting instrumentalist, technocratic and market-driven forms of urban analysis. The focus of this research on understanding the tropical city in practical terms highlights a need to critically consider not only what comprises the process of urban design, but also how it works and how the power structures within the process influence it. Power as a concept is discussed further in Section 2.5.3.

2.2.2.2 City tourism

The previous section discussed how the tourism planning literature has considered tourism processes and planning across a variety of destinations, often considering the relationship of attractions with nodes or gateways of tourist service centres. As a destination, Cairns fits within these examples as it has the natural attractions of the Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics World Heritage Areas as well as the international gateway of Cairns City. These studies have rarely focused specifically on the city however, rather considering the relationships between the key elements of the tourism system at destinations (such as Gunn 2014; Inskeep 1991). Although from a leisure tourism perspective, Cairns is not

traditionally visited specifically for its city features, this thesis shows that city-based elements are key to the visitor experience.

The literature has been historically slow to recognise the importance of cities to tourism and vice versa. Hayllar, Griffin and Edwards (2008) identify Ashworth (1989, 2003) as one of the first to identify the city as a significant setting for tourist activity, however Vandermeij (1984) had already published his article *Assessing the importance of urban tourism* some years before. Since then it has become widely accepted that the relationship between tourism and cities is central to the development and understanding of tourism. In their comprehensive review of city tourism research Ashworth and Page (2011) argue that there exist five 'paradoxes of tourism': 1. Urban tourism has received relatively little attention from scholars, despite its global significance; 2. Large cities can absorb tourists to a point of them becoming almost "economically and physically invisible"; 3. Although tourists use many facilities in the city, these are rarely designed for them; 4. Cities that gain the most from tourism are usually the ones who economically need them the least; and 5. Tourism needs cities more than cities need tourism (p. 1-2). These paradoxes clearly relate to cities that are "large, multifunctional entities" (p. 1) such as London, New York, Melbourne, Boston or Rome, and less to smaller cities that may in fact need tourism more than tourism needs them. This highlights a gap in the literature considering urban tourism in smaller cities, where tourist considerations and use can be a dominating force in decision making. Notwithstanding this lack of specific attention to smaller cities, there are some key works in the urban tourism literature that underpin our understanding of the relationship between tourism and cities that are worthy of note.

Firstly, a key contribution from the urban tourism literature is in terms of the value of heritage and culture to the urban destination product. Ashworth and Tunbridge (1990) made a significant contribution to our understanding of the relationship between tourism and cities in their seminal work *The tourist-historic city*. In this, they explore the complexities of how the heritage of a city can be its key signifier, shaping the tourist experience, but also being shaped by it. They identify that "most tourists originate from cities, and either seek out cities as holiday destinations in themselves or visit the attractions located in cities while holidaying elsewhere" (p. 51). Judd and Fainstein (1999) support this, arguing that "urban culture itself has become a commodity" (p. 261). Ashworth and Tunbridge suggest that even when tourists who originate from cities visit nature-based

destinations such as those found in the tropics, they are likely to seek out attractions located in cities whilst they are there. Evidence of this can be seen in destinations such as Bali in Indonesia, where the marketing imagery is dominated by rich cultural and natural landscapes, yet the urban markets of Kuta and Seminyak are hives of tourist activity. These ideas of the city experience being sought out by tourists even in nature-based destinations adds a complexity to Echtner and Prasad's (2003) ideas of tropical destinations being imagined as 'unchanged' or 'uncivilised', suggesting that although tourists may be seeking natural experiences, cultural experiences are also important.

Secondly, the tropical context of this research and the acknowledged importance of nature to the tropical brand indicates a need to also consider any current literature addressing the value of nature in the urban destination product. Although a connection with nature is evident in the world design language that has evolved in the urban literature (discussed in Section 2.2.1.2), and engagement with nature has already been identified as a central theme in tropical tourism, the examination of tourist engagement with nature in urban areas has received very little attention. Line and Costen (2014) put forward the idea of a 'city-park dyad' where they examine the relationship of a natural area attraction with the gateway city that tourists visit from, however this study concludes that the tourists view the entities as quite separate. This highlights a gap in understanding the role of nature in the urban destination product generally, and specifically in terms of the role of nature in a city reliant on a natural brand.

Thirdly, understanding the role of quality in built form in the city is another key contribution from the literature although originating more widely from urban design and planning literature. As cities and regions compete to secure investment, migration, trade and increased tourism arrivals, a growing body of research is exploring the developmental advantages of good urban design (Carmona et al. 2001; Gospodini 2002; Hubbard 1995, 1996; Mansfield 2004) and differentiated built form (Beriatos & Gospodini 2004; Specht 2014). These new 'uses' of urban design have been identified as a way of differentiating cities in competition for investment and resources (Gospodini 2002) where the quality of urban space is not only considered to be a 'key issue' that adds value to places (Carmona, De Magalhães & Edwards 2002; Carmona et al. 2001; Hubbard 1995; Mansfield 2004) but is also argued to be 'essential' (DETR & CABE 2000) or even a "prerequisite for the economic development of cities" (Gospodini 2002, p. 60). Whilst focused on Europe, these studies on

the new 'uses' of urban design are supported by research in Canada where Murphy, P., Pritchard and Smith (2000) suggest that the overall environment and constructed infrastructure is linked to the quality of the tourist experience. This is supported by Gospodini's (2001) suggestion that urban space morphology can be a means of urban tourism development, where distinctiveness in the urban environment can create a city with personality and thus improve its competitiveness. This emerging field of literature has so far focused on the developmental advantages of good urban design in larger cities, almost exclusively in the temperate regions of the northern hemisphere. Thus a gap exists in the literature in considering whether quality features in the urban landscape can in fact be a tourist resource in the tropics.

Arising from ideas of quality and distinctiveness in urban design is the allocation and design of tourist precincts in cities. In their book *City Spaces - Tourist Places: Urban Tourism Precincts*, Hayllar, Griffin and Edwards (2008) define a tourist precinct as:

A distinctive geographic area within a larger urban area, characterised by a concentration of tourist-related land uses, activities and visitation, with fairly definable boundaries. Such precincts generally possess a distinctive character by virtue of their mixture of activities and land uses, such as restaurants, attractions and nightlife, their physical or architectural fabric, especially the dominance of historic buildings, or their connection to a particular cultural or ethnic group within the city. Such characteristics also exist in combination (p. 9).

Thus the tourist precinct is essentially space in the city allocated to or dominated by tourist activity. Howard (2010) proposes a taxonomy of urban tourism districts drawing on Pearce's (2001) six types of urban tourism districts, which are: 1. Historic districts; 2. Ethnic districts; 3. Sacred spaces; 4. Redevelopment zones; 5. Entertainment destinations; and 6. Functional Tourism Districts. Howard and Pearce's types indicate that the Cairns CBD is essentially a Functional Tourism District, however there are elements of history, ethnicity and entertainment within this. Both of these typologies fit awkwardly with Cairns, illustrating a lack of consideration within them for a city whose entire CBD is tourism focused and in a nature-based tropical place. The Cairns CBD is characterised by swimming pools, esplanade boardwalks and alfresco dining and may in fact be a vehicle for

experiencing the tropical climate and natural surroundings as much as the historical, cultural or entertainment features.

These characteristics of tourism precincts put forward in the literature resemble the criteria for a cultural quarter put forward by Montgomery (2004) as a means of urban regeneration, although he placed a greater importance on the production and consumption of 'new work' produced by artists and designers. Montgomery barely mentions tourism in his discussion of cultural quarters, rather focusing on improving the resident experience of the urban landscape, however the parallels between the two indicate that these areas of human activity in the city have similar preconditions for success. Focusing on tourism precincts have been identified as troublesome however. Judd (1999), argues that "as the tourist spaces become more and more alike from city to city, it becomes easier for cities that otherwise have no outstanding tourist attractions to remake themselves into tourism sites" (p. 39). Of note in Judd's argument is the concept of the *tourist bubble* that emerges from this type of tourist-centred development. *Tourist bubble* is a critical term for tourist precincts that are purely for tourist use, often acting as an insulator or protector of tourists from potential undesirable elements within the urban landscape that may not align with the branding or images of the city portrayed in marketing. A key characteristic of a tourist bubble is a lack of engagement between the local population and tourists, which can have implications for the tourist experience, discussed in Section 2.3. These arguments are of particular relevance when considering a small city reliant on tourism such as Cairns, because development in the city inevitably considers the provision of service to the tourism industry and risks creating a tourist bubble. Whilst this research does not specifically address the presence or absence of a tourist bubble in Cairns, it draws on these ideas to contribute to the critical analysis of how the urban landscape is shaped and experienced.

Whilst subsection 2.2.1.2 identified a 'world design language' in urban design, this subsection has considered some of the key characteristics of a city tourism design language evident in the literature. These centre on principles of a connection with the heritage and culture of the place; quality urban design; and tourist precincts that are more like cultural quarters. Although research has so far not indicated the connection between natural elements in the urban destination product, this section also identified the possibility of a link based on the value of nature to the tropical urban experience.

2.2.3 Research gaps in shaping the urban landscape

This section has discussed the literature that falls into the *shaping* aspect of the conceptual framework described in Figure 2.2. It explored how the urban design literature has produced many normative models and manifestos to create an ever evolving ‘world design language’ of what the urban landscape *should* be, yet identified a lack of conversion of these norms into actual outcomes in cities. It identified the process of urban design as a key site where this conversion seems to fail, yet also identified a lack of research into the mechanics of this process. One current model of urban design process was identified as being potentially of use to the analysis (Carmona 2014), however a lack of critical engagement from the literature has necessitated a critical analysis of its transferability across contexts as part of this thesis. The identification of these gaps led to the following research objective:

To critically analyse the urban design process in a tropical city from the perspective of those shaping it.

Considering this research objective in relation to the research aim of this thesis, which is to critically examine the process of urban design in a tropical city in terms of its alignment with tourist preferences, this section also examined the tourism literature concerned with shaping the urban landscape. It identified a number of structural models of tourism planning that have also lacked any operational take-up from planning practitioners, potentially because of their simplified, reductionist approaches. It identified a growing body of literature critically considering the power networks and structures in tourism development and a number of key contributions from the city tourism literature to a city tourism design language: connection with heritage and culture; quality design; and tourist precincts that are more like cultural quarters. These contributions from the literature provide a basis for analysis of the context of the urban design process, discussed further in Section 2.5. The next section addresses the experiencing section of the conceptual framework in Figure 2.2.

2.3 Experiencing the urban landscape

This section examines the literature relating to experiencing the urban landscape first in terms of the non-tourism-focused *experience of place* quadrant of Figure 2.4, and then in terms of the tourism-focused *tourist experience* quadrant.

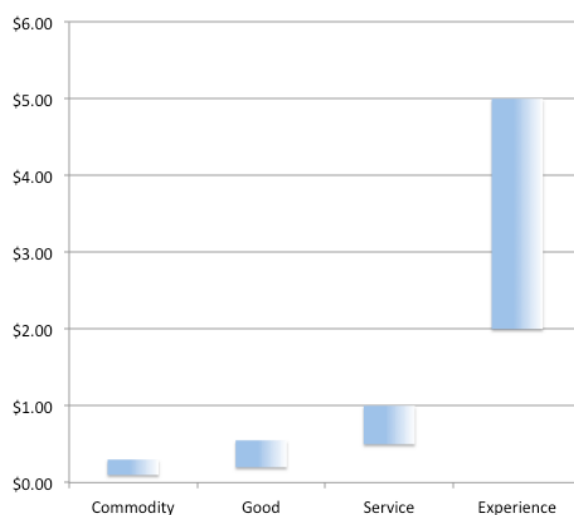
2.3.1 Experience of place quadrant

Whilst Section 2.2 showed that shaping the urban landscape has attracted attention in the literature for more than one hundred years, research concerning the experience of the urban landscape by residents and tourists alike has developed much more recently. This section of the review explores the literature on two key perspectives on experience of place, firstly as an economic activity and secondly as a psychological activity.

2.3.1.1 *The experience economy*

Although the idea of an experience economy was first discussed in the literature by Gilmore and Pine (1998), they credit Walt Disney with pioneering the concept through the development of Disneyland in 1955. Pine and Gilmore (1999) argue that experiences are a “fourth economic offering” (p. 2) after commodities, goods and services. Using the example of coffee, they discuss how a coffee bean can move from becoming a commodity, through processing to become a good, and then created while you wait as a service, each time gaining in price to the consumer. They then identify how the experience of that coffee through where it is served, the atmosphere, ambience or feel of the place, can also influence the price of the coffee, representing the *experience* of consuming it. This is illustrated in their illustration of the price of coffee offerings, shown in Graph 2.1.

Graph 2.1 Illustration of experience as the fourth economic offering (Pine & Gilmore 1999, p. 2)



Not surprisingly, the idea that the surroundings, atmosphere and feel of a place can influence the economic value of goods and services has not gone unnoticed in the planning literature. In a special issue devoted to “the role and transformation of the city in the

experience economy” (Lorentzen & Hansen 2009, p. 817) the *European Planning Studies* journal “explores and discusses the emerging experience economy and its implications to economic geography, physical spaces, mobility, environment, culture, branding, planning and democracy” (ibid.). Although these ideas do not directly address tourism, the debates do engage closely with tourism related issues. In particular in this special issue, Lorentzen (2009) identifies how “in sum, experience products are often place-bound, and the role of place is to increase the value of the product” (p. 835). The specific ways in which these ideas have been discussed in the tourism literature is detailed in the next section.

Although the ideas of the experience economy and urban design have been discussed in the European literature (Lorentzen 2009; Lorentzen & Hansen 2009; Therkildsen, Hansen & Lorentzen 2013), there exists little evidence of specific discussions around these outside of the region. There exists a gap to discuss the interaction of experience and urban design in small tropical cities such as Cairns, particularly as a number of small cities engage with these ideas to boost their competitive advantage. Contrary to Biddulph (2012) and Carmona’s (2014) observations about the disparity between research and practice in planning, the experience economy concept has taken hold in planning and urban design practice in many cities. Therkildsen, Hansen and Lorentzen (2013) argue that:

Many western-world cities are reorienting themselves in order to strengthen their development conditions, often in response to local industrial decline as well as intercity and global competitiveness agendas. Recently, the ‘experience economy’ has emerged as a post-industrial development perspective that may provide a new or different kind of agenda and dynamics to processes of change in urban areas (p. 109).

In particular, Lorentzen and Hansen (2009) identify that smaller cities are able to capitalise on the experience economy concept because the experiences of quietness or lack of busyness they can offer can also be a point of competitive advantage. These ideas of achieving competitive advantage as distinct from other places suggests a need for uniqueness or authenticity, which is discussed further in Section 2.3.2.

This subsection has shown how the economics and planning literature have identified experience as a key economic activity in urban places, but has so far neglected to apply

these ideas to smaller cities or cities outside of Europe. These ideas raise questions not only about the applicability of the experience economy in a small tropical city reliant on a nature-based tourism offering, but also about what experience of place consists of. The next subsection examines how the environmental psychology literature has approached the understanding of sense of place and place attachment, which are critical aspects of place experience.

2.3.1.2 Relationships between people and places

The environmental psychology literature has given broad coverage of the relationships between people and the places they experience for many years and the body of research is continuing to grow (Lewicka 2011). In their analysis of place attachment as “the bond that forms between individuals and their meaningful environments” (p. 1), Scannell and Gifford (2010) propose an organising framework to understand and study the concept: *people*, *process* and *place*. *People* refers to a place’s individual or collectively determined meanings. *Process* refers to the psychological dimension of attachment, psychologically, cognitively and behaviourally. *Place* refers to the how the physical characteristics of a place influence attachment. This tripartite division can be seen in Figure 2.1, where *people* is represented in the experiencing column, *place* is represented in the shaping column, and *process* reflects the relationships between the two, shown as linking arrow. These ‘three Ps’ are cited by Lewicka (2011) as being a useful way of categorising research on “people-place relations” (p. 207). She identifies that a disproportionate amount of the environmental psychology research has focused on *people*, with very little research available on how the physical aspects of place influence place attachment. She also posits that the few studies that do focus on place are yet to develop a theoretical underpinning, or a “place theory of place attachment” (p. 223), indicating a number of opportunities for research on the physical aspects of place that influence how people feel about it.

The focus of this thesis on the process of place shaping through urban design and its alignment with tourist preferences means that it can make some contribution to the development of theories as it discovers the design norms of urban designers and aligns them with the preferences of tourists. Still outside the tourism literature, there have also been a number of studies examining whether place attachment is able to be formed by tourists or whether it is only the domain of locals (eg. Kaltenborn & Bjerke 2002; Stedman 2003), however Lewicka (2011) argues that the empirical evidence for either viewpoint is inconclusive. Additionally, she argues that:

the potential number of physical (natural, architectural or urban) features that may affect attachment is endless... In the absence of a theory the choice of variables either must be very selective, mostly based on common sense, or it must use categories that are very broad (eg. 'nature' or 'physical factors')... (p. 217).

These arguments suggest a caution for analysts examining the components of place in place attachment: a lack of theory and an acknowledged complexity reminiscent of the wicked problems identified in the city tourism and urban design literatures require a strong framework and common-sense based analysis or broad categories. This again brings to mind Carmona's (2003) call to focus on the heart of the problem rather than defining the edges or limits of the variables. These principles underpin the analysis in this research.

Whilst concepts of place attachment and sense of place have developed from the environmental psychology literature, a further understanding of the relationships between people and places based on visual characteristics has developed through the use of 'scape' analyses in a range of disciplines. As discussed in Section 1.4.2, a landscape is by definition all of the visible features of the land, yet laden with cultural and political perceptions of those viewing it. From the tourism literature, Fagence (2014) argues that the concept of 'scapes' has been used widely without agreed definition or critique, citing authors from a range of disciplines in their use of terms such as *experiencescape*, *servicescape*, *consumerscape*, *brandscape* and many, many more.

The term *servicescape* was first coined by Bitner (1992) as a place where service is consumed at the point of generation. More critically, Arnould, Price and Tierney (1998) describe servicescapes as consciously designed commercial places "calculated to produce commercially significant actions" (p. 90). Bitner suggests that the servicescape is "perceived holistically, as a composite of three dimensions: 1. Ambient conditions; 2. Spatial layout and functionality; and 3. Signs, symbols and artifacts" (p. 65). Although Bitner's research was focused on employees and customers of service organisations, the applicability of these findings to the tourism industry have been identified and adopted by a number of tourism scholars (Dong & Siu 2013; Hall 2008a; Prebensen 2011). *Experiencescapes* are essentially a tourism adaptation of servicescape, defined as where tourists' consumption of experiences takes place (Mossberg 2007; O'Dell & Billing 2005). Hall (2008a) conceptualises

brandscales and *mallscapes* as retail spaces within the broader concept of servicescapes, which are within a group of *cityscapes*, *townscapes*, and *streetscapes* where the physical environment is controlled and branded. He argues that:

there is a realization that the conscious design and manipulation of the physical environment in order to enhance atmospherics for consumers is not just internal to retail environments but is being extended to the fabric of space itself and the aesthetic experiences and social interactions that occur within it (p. 238).

Hall locates the majority of servicescapes within experiencescapes and urban *designscapes*, which Julier (2005) defines as “the pervasive and multilevel use of the symbolic capital of design in identifying and differentiating urban agglomerations” (p. 874). Essentially Julier’s definition alludes to the use of design or designers in the creation of parts of the urban landscape across a range of scales. The idea of designscapes relate to the observations of Gospodini (2001) and others (discussed further in Section 2.3.2.1) who argue that quality urban design can add value to a city, yet there is little engagement from the urban design, architecture or planning literature with the idea of scape-based forms at all.

These discussions around scape-based conceptualisations of place essentially seek to link the relationships of people and places through understandings of branding, imagery and cultural understandings or preconceptions. Bitner (1999) puts forward her components of the servicescape as people’s holistic *perceptions* of a place, alluding to the idea that scapes are really about how place is perceived by those experiencing it, but also by those shaping it. This is an interesting discussion to consider in terms of the tropical urban landscape, which has already been argued in Chapter 1 to have a strong cultural conception by those who live both within and outside it. The *tropicscape* may or may not be the homogeneous palm trees and pristine beaches that a Google search on ‘tropical imagery’ presents, but it may influence the shaping of an *urban tropicscape* by urban designers as a specifically tropical urban landscape. It may also influence the way an *urban tropicscape* is perceived or experienced by tourists. The relationship between these is as yet unexamined in the literature. This thesis makes a start on examining these relationships. It uses the term tropical urban landscape to describe the urban tropicscape, however the concept may be further developed in future research.

The concepts of servicescapes, experiencescapes brandscapes and so forth also allude to deeper conversations about landscapes of consumption. Discussions around the production of space have been developing in the urban design literature since famous urban philosopher Henri Lefebvre (1991), conceptualised an ontological 'triad' of how space is imagined, represented and experienced simultaneously. As Lefebvre's *Production of Space* was developed within the Marxist paradigm of production, so discussions around the consumption of space have drawn on Marxist paradigms of consumption. Gottdiener (2000) for example in his book chapter *The Consumption of Space and Spaces of Consumption* introduces his ideas of consumption within a Marxist production-consumption framework, focusing on commodification of space. Tourism is mentioned specifically by both Lefebvre and Gottdiener as a key aspect of the production and consumption of space, suggesting that the economic basis of tourism makes it well suited an analysis in terms of spatial production and consumption. Challenging the dichotomous approach, Ateljevic (2000) argues that in tourism, both production and consumption are interconnected through reproduction, and need to be considered simultaneously, effectively linking to Bitner's (1999) ideas of *servicescapes* or *experiencescapes* where services are produced and consumed in the one place. These sentiments are echoed in the work of Saraniemi and Kylänen (2011) who define destination as a "set of institutions and actors" (p. 133) rather than a stage for production and consumption. This thesis draws on the production/consumption philosophy of urban space, but also addresses Ateljevic, Saraniemi and Kylänen's concerns by simultaneously examining the production and consumption of the tropical urban landscape and analysing the relationship between the two.

Whilst the tourism, geography and environmental psychology literature has engaged with these concepts of place and landscapes and how they are viewed and constructed by people and the planning literature has considered the production and consumption of space in broad philosophical terms, very little attention has been paid to evaluating urban places in terms of user preferences. Appleyard and Jacobs (1982) identify the concept of 'rootless professionalism', where "in too many cases we design for places and people we do not know and grant them very little power or acknowledgement" (p. 10). Carmona (2014) concurs, observing a lack of evidential research in the literature on user needs or evaluation. Vischer (2008) suggests that this may be because of the complexity of understanding people's preferences: "user considerations are rare and unfamiliar in

conventional building procurement processes, perhaps because they appear complex and elusive in comparison to the relatively simple and technology-oriented tools of the builder's trade" (p. 239). Thus there are considerable gaps in the urban design and planning literature around understanding the preferences of users or their relationships with the urban landscape. Additionally, whilst there are other disciplines that do examine these relationships, the urban design and planning literature rarely - if ever - engage with them.

The review in this section has shown that there is a disjoint between different disciplines in how they treat and understand people's relationships with place. It has identified that whilst the tourism, geography and environmental psychology literature has developed an understanding of the relationships between people and places, the urban design and planning literature is yet to adapt these understandings to evaluate the success or failure of urban places. The review also raised questions around the possibility of an *urban tropicscape*, drawn from the literature on landscapes and servicescapes, which will be discussed further in Section 2.5.

2.3.2 Tourist experience of place quadrant

Section 2.3.1 discussed how the literature has treated the experience of place as an economic and psychological activity, considering the relationships of people with places based on perceptions of places created through branding, imagery and cultural preconceptions. This section further explores some of these ideas that have been developed in the tourism literature. The study of tourist experiences has been evolving since it first attracted interest in the 1960s. In his review of conceptual developments of the tourist experience, Uriely (2005) observes that since then, the study of tourist experiences has responded to the 'postmodernist' turn through a series of complementary advances. This evolution of thinking is a common theme in all of the quadrants in Figure 2.1, reflecting the similar sociological and geographical disciplinary foundations in the literature. Uriely's review indicates a deep and broad literature dedicated to understanding the tourist experience, and identifies four significant trends in its conceptualisation:

from differentiation to re-differentiation of everyday life and tourism; from generalising to pluralising portrayals of the tourist experience; from focusing on the toured objects to the attention given to the role of subjectivity in the constitution of experiences; and from contradictory and decisive statements to relative and complementary interpretations (p. 209).

This section discusses how the literature has addressed some of these concepts in relation to the tourist experience of place. In particular it considers the role of subjectivity in the experience of place, the role of subjectivity in the interpretation of place authenticity, and differentiation from everyday life that the visual landscape provides. It identifies that although there are some theories that can connect the urban landscape to the tourist experience, there are few empirical studies that have identified how the qualities of the urban landscape influence the tourist experience.

2.3.2.1 Experiencing the city as a tourist

This thesis is particularly concerned with the consumption of experiences in the tropical urban landscape. In their book *Experiencescapes: Tourism, Culture and Economy*, O'Dell and Billing (2005) engage with the idea that experiences are place-dependent. Here, they discuss multi-faceted and ephemeral nature of experiences:

Experiences are highly personal, subjectively perceived, intangible, ever fleeting and continuously on-going. Nevertheless, as commodities they are more than randomly occurring phenomena located entirely in the minds of individuals. The commodification of and search for experiences has a material base that is itself anchored in space (p. 15).

This concept of experiences being developed in the mind but anchored in space or place has attracted much attention in the tourism literature. In particular, Urry (1992) argues that whilst the tourist experience is multi-sensual – tasting new dishes, experiencing different climates, encountering new smells etc., “these experiences are only of importance to the tourist because they are located within a distinctive visual environment” (p. 172). Outside the tourism literature, Julier (2006) has also observed the development of ‘visual culture’, where “visual has come to be the dominant cognitive and representational form of modernity” (p. 65), however Franklin and Crang (2001) call for a more circumspect view within tourism, arguing that it “is not confined to visual repertoires of consumption” (p. 12). Drawing on the discussion in the previous section around scape-based conceptualisations of place, a preoccupation with visual is evident in the tourism literature examining place, however outside the place-based analyses there is a suite of literature considering the components of memorable tourist experiences (Tung & Brent Ritchie 2011) emotion (Coghlan & Pearce 2009; Pearce, P. 2009) and co-creation, where the tourist participates in

both the production and consumption of the tourist experience (Prebensen 2011). These studies indicate an acceptance in the tourism literature of aspects of the tourist experience that are not exclusively visual, however there are few studies that contextualise these ideas within a distinctive visual environment.

Another way the literature has considered the tourist experience is in relation to the tourists' personal experience. Urry's (1992) observations of tourist experience draw from Lengkeek and Ashworth's (1995) concept of the tourist experience as a *counterstructure* to the familiar environment of 'everyday life', where changes in either the formal dimension of everyday life, the functional dimension of everyday life, or both, are key elements in the tourist experience. These ideas are in part drawn from Cohen (1979), who describes the tourist experience as a way of detaching from 'real life' that can be measured on a five-point continuum ranging from 'recreational', where people step outside 'real life' for entertainment to 'existential', where people seek a new 'real life' in the tourist location. These discussions focus on the central idea that tourists seek to some extent or another experiences different to their everyday life, but in particular that certain tourists wish to step further from their lives than others. Thus, the nature of the counterstructure provided in any experience has a number of highly variable dependencies ranging from where the tourist travels from to their personal life experiences and prior expectations of a place.

A preoccupation with the visual aspects of tourist experience is also evident in the small amount of urban design literature considering the tourist experience. Gospodini (2001) observes that: "irrespective of the particular functions and activities accommodated in space, it is avant-garde design of both buildings and open spaces that can make urban space morphology in itself and of itself a sightseeing, a tourist resource" (p 932). Here, she considers how to achieve urban counterstructures in the context of an urban area or city, or in large groups of cities, arguing that they "can be understood as design schemes that, in virtue of organising principles or/and images and symbols, are in great contrast to the rest of forms constituting the familiar environment, as a whole entity" (p. 931). In essence, Gospodini's theory is that by creating differences within urban areas and by contradicting established trends through avant-garde design, cities can create counterstructures that provide tourists with a way of detaching from the 'real life' familiar environment, and thus provide an appealing tourist experience. The signs, symbols and images - which create the distinctive visual environment - are created in the minds of the tourist well before a trip is

taken through social and cultural understandings, as well as through marketing and promotion. These are described by MacCannell (1976 in Dredge 1999) as 'markers'. Whilst Gospodini's observations ring true, there is little empirical research to support this, and very little research specifically addressing the role of the urban landscape in creating counterstructures in the tropical tourism experience.

Discussions around the conscious design and consumption of place in a commercial sense directly relate to the ideas of tourist precincts, bubbles and cultural quarters discussed in Section 2.2.2, raising questions around how an authentic experience of place can be achieved in a designed environment. The next subsection discusses the concept of authenticity and how it relates to experiencing the urban landscape.

2.3.2.2 Authenticity in the urban landscape

Linked with the literature on tourist experience is the idea of authenticity in the tourist landscape. As discussed in Section 2.3.1.1, Pine and Gilmore (1999) accredit Walt Disney with pioneering the concept of the experience economy through the creation of Disneyland in 1955. The Disneyland experience has a special place in the urban design, planning and tourism literature, where the term 'Disneyfication' is synonymous with commoditised, sanitised places as 'stages' (MacCannell 1973; Pine & Gilmore 1999) lacking character or authenticity, with faux-facades and a darker, hidden, sometimes even sinister 'back stage' (Kennedy & Kingcome 1998; Souther 2007). The lack of desirability for Disneyfication is identified in *Cairns Style Design Guide*:

Importantly, the Cairns Style Design Guide does not suggest that all new buildings should copy 'old' buildings. This practice is discouraged as it would result in a 'Disneyland', rather than a modern tropical region... (p. 11).

So although the literature is generally agreed that Disneyfied landscapes are the opposite of authentic, what is considered to be authentic is still being debated. Whilst the research on what constitutes an authentic tourist or urban experience has considered the value of representing heritage (Ashworth & Tunbridge 2011; Waitt 2000; Willson & McIntosh 2007), culture (Cohen 1988; Lew 1989), and the natural environment (Jive'n & Larkham 2003), there is consensus that within any of these, authenticity is a negotiated concept.

Considered widely in the tourism literature, authenticity is usually expressed as objective (recognition of authentic originals), or constructive (projected onto toured objects by tourists or tourism promoters) (Wang 1999). In terms of authenticity in urban design, a number of studies have rejected the notion of maintaining objective authenticity, arguing that in a functioning city, authenticity should form part of the creation of sense of place. For example, Salah Ouf (2001) suggests that sense of place is about “the creation of enjoyable urban experiences and not the mere retention of authentic urban history for succeeding generations” (p 73). Whilst research acknowledges that tourists and locals favour authentic urban experiences, Jive’n and Larkham (2003) argue that “it is the people—individuals and society—that integrate these features, through their value systems, to form a sense of place” (p 78). These ideas are linked with Wang’s (1999) suggestion that the act of being a tourist is an element of the authentic tourist experience (‘existential authenticity’).

Further research questions the value of ‘true’ authenticity in the tourist experience. Cohen (1988) draws on MacCannell’s (1973) back stage/front stage concept to argue that tourists have a much looser requirement of authenticity than museum curators or anthropologists. In terms of authenticity in the tropical urban landscape, this may also be the case for tourists versus urban designers, although as Salah Ouf (2001) points out, urban regeneration now tends to focus on the creation of places that are enjoyable and imageable rather than an accurate replication of traditional urban settings. Jive’n and Larkham (2003) draw on this further to suggest that the concept of ‘character’ or ‘sense of place’ have become confused, and that a re-definition of *genius loci*, or ‘spirit’ of place that includes the people who use it is central to the creation of ‘better’ urban places:

To use Norberg-Schulz’s schema, the contributions of topography, natural conditions and variations, and symbolic meanings, tend to be given less weight than built form. Although this approach may result in a place with identifiable character, we argue that it is the people—individuals and society—that integrate these features, through their value systems, to form a sense of place (p. 78).

These observations indicate that an understanding of authenticity in the tourism product, whilst acknowledged to be important, is still unresolved in the literature. Carmona et al.’s (2003) approach to urban design to “encapsulate its heart or core rather than prescribe its

edge or boundary” (p. 5) is a potentially useful here though. Whilst scholars have struggled to prescribe the edges of where authenticity stops or starts, there may be some tenets at the heart of the concept that can be described. The next section discusses how the literature has specifically considered concepts that may inform the concept of authenticity in the tropical urban landscape.

2.3.3 Research gaps in experiencing the urban landscape

This section has discussed the literature generated within the *experiencing* aspect of the conceptual framework described in Figure 2.2. It discussed the complex landscape of literature examining the relationships between people and places and identified a number of different approaches taken by different disciplines to understand them. It highlighted how there has been very little crossover between the understandings of the environmental psychology and tourism literature into the urban design and planning literature. Drawing on the observations of a range of authors, it also identified how urban design and planning researchers have neglected to engage in their own analyses of user considerations or preferences. This indicated a gap in the urban design and planning literature concerned with understanding how the urban landscape is shaped with users in mind.

This section also discussed how the tourism and geography literature has engaged with the environmental psychology literature to consider tourism areas as visual landscapes of consumption. It discussed the development in the literature of concepts such as servicescapes, experiencescapes and brandscapes as places consciously designed to elicit commercial activity. These discussions directly relate to the ideas of tourist precincts, bubbles and cultural quarters discussed in Section 2.2.2, raising questions around how an authentic experience of place can be achieved in a designed environment. It also identified that although there are some theories that can connect the urban landscape to the tourist experience, few empirical studies have been conducted to understand how the qualities of the urban landscape influence the tourist experience.

Drawing from Urry’s (1992) argument that sensual travel experiences only take on meaning in a distinctive visual environment, this thesis will contribute to filling this gap by identifying the visual preferences of tourists in the tropical urban landscape, as part of the broader research objective to:

Identify the connections and disconnections between how urban designers shape a tropical city and what tourists value in the tropical city experience.

The previous two sections have identified how people's preferences and preconceptions of a place can influence how they shape or experience it. The next section separately considers these influences through how the place is branded and sold.

2.4 Selling the urban landscape

Unlike *shaping* and *experiencing* sections of the conceptual framework in Figure 2.2, the *selling* section does not circumscribe its own quadrants of research but rather bridges the *urban destination product* and *tourist experience of place* quadrants. This is a smaller section of the review; it does not generate its own research objective nor identify major gaps in the literature to be filled but rather acknowledges the existing research contributing to understanding how a place is sold in terms of its shaping and experience.

2.4.1 Place branding and destination image

The introduction to this thesis discussed the strength of the tropical brand globally in terms of its ability to evoke homogeneous imagery of palm trees, pristine beaches and thatched, wooden constructions. It also identified that the strength of this brand may also be a weakness for individual tropical destinations, partially because it is difficult to differentiate between the homogeneous tropical images and partially because the imagery is often very different to the reality of the place. This is discussed further in terms of the tropical urban landscape in Section 2.5.2, however how the relationships between place branding and imagery is understood in the literature is discussed here. In the third edition of their seminal book *Destination Brands*, Morgan, N., Pritchard and Pride (2011) note that:

Tourism destination development and marketing and place reputation management have a hugely significant but complex relationship and the various connections between brand, image, reputation and identity, and creative and competitive destinations are not well understood (p. 4).

This is despite a well-developed field of research proposing destination branding models examining the links between these (such as Cai 2002; García, Gómez & Molina 2012; Qu, Kim & Im 2011). The extensive literature on place branding and destination image agrees on some key points. Firstly, that brand distinction can provide a significant means of

competitive advantage for products and services (Aaker, D. A. & Joachimsthaler 2012; Aaker, J. L. 1997). Secondly, that this understanding translates to competitive advantage of place brand and enhances destination development (Buhalis 2000; Morgan, N., Pritchard & Pride 2011).

Finally, the place branding literature generally agrees that the brand of a place is reliant on perceptions created not just by the destination marketing organisation or government, but also in the minds of those both within and outside the place gained through broader experiences of the place. Anholt (2011) in particular makes a contribution to this discussion, suggesting that place image has “more to do with regional and national identity... than with branding as it is usually understood in the commercial sector” (p. 21). He suggests that place image is built through six ‘natural’ channels of communication: 1. Tourism promotion activity; 2. Their exported products and services; 3. The policy decisions of the region’s governments; 4. The way in which the region solicits inward business investment; 5. Through cultural exports such as authors or sports teams; and 6. Through the characteristics of the people of the place. Anholt’s use of the term ‘place image’ in place of ‘brand’ evokes the underpinning visual aspect of place branding, although his definitions indicate a much deeper set of perceptions beyond the visual. These ideas link with Urry’s (1992) arguments about the tourist ‘gaze’ being tinted with preconceived cultural perceptions of a place, and that tourist experiences have meaning “because they take place in a distinctive visual environment” (p. 172). Anholt also identifies that in the context of a crowded global marketplace and the complexity of the modern world, most people in other places draw on a few key images or clichés that form the background of their perceptions about a place. These ideas have significant implications for tropical places, which already have a strong visual brand image (as evidenced by a Google search on tropical images) and a deeper background perception of being ‘uncivilised’ and ‘unchanged’ (Echtner & Prasad 2003) or paradisiacal and pestilential (Arnold 2000) but struggle to differentiate between destinations within the region.

The literature has extensively considered how place image might be differentiated through utilising the unique qualities of the people, culture and environment. These ideas have been operationalised in a number of different destinations, such as Thailand marketers using the long-tailed boat in many of their beach promotional images as a cultural marker to differentiate their material from those of Tahiti, Bali or other tropical destinations. The

theory on this has been slower to emerge in the literature, however. Drawing from the work of Aaker, J. L. (1997), who adapted the 'big 5' human personality traits to the brand personality traits of sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness, a number of authors have discussed the concept of destination personality (such as Hosany, Ekinci & Uysal 2006; Murphy, L., Moscardo & Benckendorff 2007; Usakli & Baloglu 2011) as a way of differentiating brand image in the tourism marketplace, although there is yet to appear a solid theory of destination personality in the literature. Others have challenged the usefulness of considering places as products or amalgamations of products, arguing that place image is more meaningful and useful as a series negotiated narratives of local culture and place (Campelo et al. 2014; Lichrou, O'Malley & Patterson 2008, 2010, 2014; Warnaby & Medway 2013). Again, there is yet to emerge a theory on how this could be operationalised.

Hall (2008a) considers the dimensions of place branding in terms of what is essentially tangible and intangible aspects of place branding, suggesting that:

contemporary place branding requires the use of hardware in the form of servicescapes and designscales that are developed via architecture, design and heritage, and software in the form of branding, marketing and promotion (p. 233).

Understanding the interrelationships between how the place is perceived in the 'software' of the brand and how the 'hardware' of the brand is shaped is a key aspect of the research in this thesis. It treats the process of urban design as a key location for these interrelationships, where the 'hardware' of a place is shaped by the urban designers informed by their underpinning beliefs and perceptions of the brand 'software', and in turn the 'software' of the brand is shaped by the 'hardware' that creates the place. The imagery used to sell Cairns is therefore analysed in this thesis as part of the larger research objective to:

Identify the connections and disconnections between how urban designers shape a tropical city and what tourists value in the tropical city experience.

This section has identified how literature has identified the importance of place image and destination personality to differentiating places in the global tourism market. In particular it

has identified that place image is a relatively static phenomenon that is influenced by much more than just tourism marketing material, and that although some have identified destination personality and local narratives, these are yet to develop into full theories. These first four sections have discussed the general theories of shaping, experiencing and selling places, especially the urban destination product. The next section considers how these theories might be applied across contexts, specifically to the tropical context.

2.5 Context

The *context* element is right at the centre of the conceptual framework shown in Figure 2.2. Its placement indicates the critical importance of context in the application of ideas and models across different places in both tourism and urban design. This thesis has already identified the complex and at times ‘wicked’ nature of urban design and tourism problems, particularly in terms of the interwoven relationships between people and between people and places. One response to this may be to retreat from attempting to model or understand the processes in a meaningful way. Another response however could be to acknowledge and embrace the complexity of different contexts and to create a method of context analysis that enables broader understandings or models to be applied in different places. The latter is the approach taken in this thesis.

This section considers how the urban design and tourism literature have made parallel observations of the composition of context and the critical role of power within it. It considers how both literatures have conceptualised power in similar ways and examines how this relates to the transfer of ideas and policies between places. Turning attention to the specificities of the tropical context, it then considers the tropical contributions to the quadrants of research in Figure 2.1 and identifies gaps in the literature focusing on urban design and tourism in the tropical context.

2.5.1 Understanding context

One of Rittel and Webber’s (1973) ten characteristics of wickedness is that each wicked problem is unique, suggesting that context is central when considering wicked problems in a critical way. Central to the arguments discussed above is how people – especially city decision-makers – perceive and do things within a specific context is central to forming place-based modes of operation. This indicates that a consideration of the philosophies and approaches of the people in positions of influence in the city who are either *self-consciously*

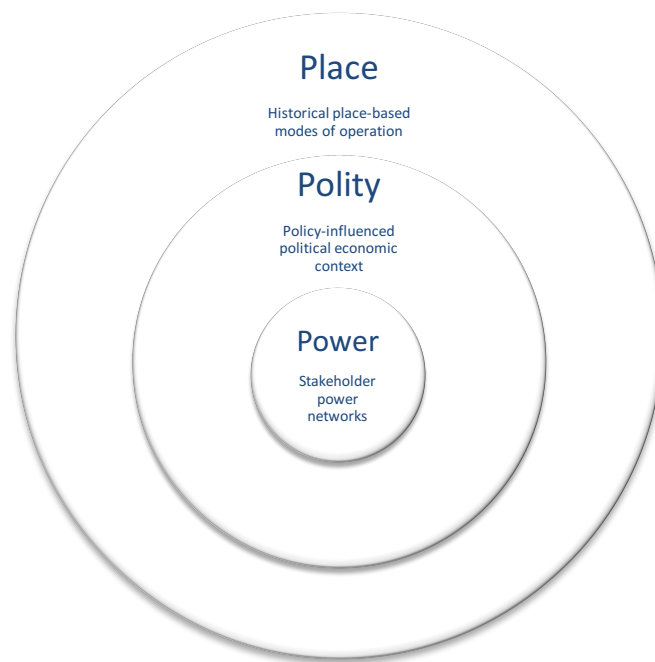
or *un-self-consciously* shaping the urban environment could give insight into how the process of urban design works in the city. The approach of understanding different underlying philosophies of urban shapers has been used by other researchers such as Boyko et al. (2006) and Jepson and Edwards (2010), both of whom were considering the integration of sustainability in planning processes in the city. Dovey (1999) also suggests that deeper understandings of decision-making processes are critical to reveal ‘buried’ ideological framings and Maitland and Smith (2009) argue that it is essential to “unpick the philosophies embedded in urban design” (p. 186). These ideas all indicate a need to examine context in terms of the philosophies and understandings of those involved in the process, which is a key aspect of this thesis and elaborated on further in Chapter 3.

In his ‘place shaping continuum’ model, Carmona (2014) places context at the heart of urban design process, arguing that context is comprised of ‘place’, ‘polity’ and ‘power’. An adaption of this is shown in Figure 2.4. Visualised as a three-tiered relationship, the model shows how historical *place-based modes of operation* are formed by the specific elements of a *place* being entwined with the process of governance, or *polity*, which is developed and then implemented through established networks of *power*. This is fundamental to Carmona’s model, but could be considered fundamental to any model as by nature models are intended to represent a process or phenomenon for application across different contexts. Hall (2003) identifies similar elements of context in the tourism planning literature, noting the connections between place, power and politics in the process of tourism planning. He argues that:

Despite an overall growth in tourism studies as a field of interest in the social sciences, most research is still economically or market oriented... Tourism policy cannot be separated from the milieu in which it evolves (p. 190-191).

Hall (2003) references Roche (1992), who argues that a range of contexts “from macro-level post-industrial/post-national shifts to micro level urban politics and tourism strategy formation” (p. 563) need to be considered in the analysis of urban tourism. Although Hall and Carmona do not cite one another nor engage with the same literature, they effectively surmise the same core argument: that place, polity and power are interlinked and central to decision making in cities – be it for urban design process or tourism planning.

Figure 2.4 The components of context (Carmona 2014)



2.5.2 Power

The previous discussion identified that there is an intertwined relationship between places, the governance of those places through policies and polity, and the power structures that enact the polity. This section further examines how the literature has conceptualised power and how these ideas relate to the concepts examined within this thesis. In a somewhat simplistic conceptualisation of power, McGuirk (2000) draws on the work of Callon, Law and Latour to argue that it is: “The ability to get others to perform action, thus revealing its social production within networks of interactions” (p. 653). Whilst these ideas are intuitively accurate, authors across both the urban design and tourism literatures have drawn on theorists outside their disciplines such as Foucault and Lukes to consider the ‘hidden’ aspects of power and its manifestations across scales of governance.

In the urban design literature, Dovey (1999) argues that “practices of power infuses urban design at every level” (p. 9). In his analyses, he identifies differences between power *to* act and power *over* another, suggesting that “to define power primarily in terms of power over others is a category mistake which constructs a zero-sum game wherein every loss in power is another’s gain” (p. 10). Rather than a binary of power/emancipation, Dovey proposes instead a range of dialectics in which power in places are played out:

“orientation/disorientation; publicity/privacy; segregation/access; nature/history; stability/change; authentic/fake; identity/difference; dominant/docile; and place/ideology” (p. 15-16). These dialectics have clear links to the ‘world design language’ discussed earlier in Section 2.2.1.2, supporting Dovey’s suggestion that practices of power do in fact infuse urban design at every level. These power dialectics indicate a need for research examining urban design process to understand the characteristics and roles of power across a range of scales.

In the tourism literature, Hall (2007b) argues that although “power lies at the heart of the interplay of values, interests and tourism policy... there is also little consideration of power in tourism” (p. 264-65), suggesting that power is a critical, yet understudied element of tourism scholarship. Hall’s sentiments are echoed more recently by Mowforth and Munt (2015) who argue that “much tourism analysis has played down relationships of power, which remain implicit, or are absent” (p. 38). The edited book within which Hall’s argument is made (Church & Coles 2007) is identified by Macleod and Carrier (2010) as a ‘major exception’ to an otherwise lacking body of knowledge tackling “the concept of power as a theme in its broadest theoretical conceptualisation” (p. 9). In his chapter, Hall draws on the works of Lukes (2005) who proposes three different approaches to the analysis of power:

- One-dimensional view emphasising observable, overt behaviour, conflict, pluralism and decision making;
- Two-dimensional view which recognises decisions and non-decisions, observable (overt or covert) conflict, and which represents a qualified critique of the behavioural stance of the one-dimensional view, in particular with respect to recognition of the values and institutional practices within a political system that favour the interests of some, relative to others; and a
- Three-dimensional view which focuses on decision-making and control over the political agenda (not necessarily through decisions), and which recognises observable (overt or covert) latent conflict and hegemony (in Hall 2007b, p. 252).

These three dimensions essentially build on one another in terms of complexity and understanding, at each level introducing deeper, more hidden levels of power. In particular, Hall (2007b) draws extensively on the works of Bachrach and Baratz (1970) to discuss the

impact of 'non-decisions', where decisions that may be contrary to the values or requirements of those holding the power are either muffled, discounted, unable to reach the arena of decision making or in the event that they are enacted, not implemented through practice. These ideas are reflected in the two-dimensional view of power. The three-dimensional view of power considers the deeper ideas of philosophies in the political agenda, where latent conflict or hegemony are evident, a concept supported by Mowforth and Munt (2015), who advance the three-piece 'power jigsaw' of ideology, discourse and hegemony. Considered within the tropical context, which has an historically hegemonic relationship with the non-tropical world, the three-dimensional view of power is particularly valuable to the analysis in this thesis at a range of scales.

Hall (2007b) also identifies the importance of considering the three dimensions of power across scales of governance from global, supranational and national down to local levels, arguing that:

...the activities of the local state itself in tourism are now being undertaken at a broader scale than ever before; that is, local states are, in fact, functioning as international political actors themselves. It is in terms of the development of post-sovereign policy arenas, such as the environment, trade and investment regimes, heritage and culture, and human rights, where tourism is likely to be most impacted and implicated (p. 248).

These arguments allude to broader ideas of policy transference, adoption and adaption between places, discussed in the next section. They indicate that whilst there is a need to consider processes of policy making at a local level, an understanding of the wider landscape of paradigmatic shifts and national, international and supranational power relationships is critical to the local understandings. This is again a critical aspect of the analysis in this thesis, which attempts to understand the urban design process at a local level within a wider context of governmental peripherality and pre-conceived notions of the internal capacity of tropical places to innovate or govern themselves.

2.5.3 Policy transference

Urban design has a long history of policy and practice transference across cities, regions and continents. In cities today we can observe influences of ancient civilisations as clearly as the art deco influences of the early century and the effects of postwar suburbanization

and car dependency. As McNeill (2013) notes: “City councils are seen to be acting as if they were private firm, operating in a marketplace where their city is their product. What has become very interesting is the way in which mayors, along with urban policy-makers more generally, have taken advantage of improved and intensified processes of knowledge circulation to inspect, borrow and copy elements of policy solutions elsewhere” (p. 103). These trends are global, and as the rate of policy globalization continues to increase with technological, travel and communication advancements, complex spaces of global policy transfer are “ripe for interrogation” (Peck & Theodore 2012, p. 23). Green Building Ratings, Creative Cities, New Urbanism, Place Making and Transit Oriented Design are examples of the myriad globally mobile urban design and planning practices being adopted in cities around the world.

Processes that influence the practice of urban design have also been known to travel, usually in the community engagement field such as using design charrettes, Enquiry-by-design (Department for Planning and Infrastructure 2003) and others (Involve 2014). There already exists significant literature on the practices and challenges of policy transfer. In their introduction to *Geoforum*’s special edition on mobilising policy, Peck and Theodore (2010) identify two main approaches in the literature to policy transfer: rational-choice and critical policy studies. They argue that the rational-choice approach to policy transfer limits itself to a “more-or-less efficient process for transmitting best (or better) practices” (p. 169), whereas critical policy studies considers broader issues, “visualised as a field of adaptive connections, deeply structured by enduring power relations and shifting ideological alignments” (ibid.).

The critical policy studies approach is of particular interest in this thesis because of the tropical context. As discussed previously, historians such as Arnold (2000) and Driver and Yeoh (2000) have shown how the tropical world has long been defined as environmentally and culturally distinct from Europe, with policies for distant tropical lands forming part of a power/knowledge regime in the larger project of empire. Their observations of the established ‘difference’ of the tropics - not just through climate or ecology, but through enduring cultural and power relations – give a specific context to Peck and Theodore’s (2010) more contemporary critical policy studies approach. Globally mobile urban policies have attracted critical analysis around the role of context in their transferability, especially to the tropics (eg. Kravanja 2012; Luckman, Gibson & Lea 2009). Nevertheless policy and

idea mobility is a growing, rather than diminishing, phenomenon in the current age of technology, travel and communication (Peck & Theodore 2012).

Section 2.2.1.3 introduced Carmona's (2014) Place-shaping continuum as one of the few attempts in the literature to comprehensively model the urban design process and raised questions around whether such a model developed in the global city of London can truly acknowledge the fundamental power imbalances that exist and underpin urban design processes in a small tropical city. Carmona (2014) himself argues that:

how we act today is shaped by an accumulated history of experience and practice, by established ways of doing things that change only very slowly and that are still (despite globalization) very place dependent, and by the fact that real innovation in design is rare (p. 12).

Here, he suggests that there is inertia in context; that place and place-based decision-making processes are so entrenched that even as policy ideas travel, they are inevitably adapted through established *place-based modes of operation*. This links with the concept of *path dependence*, discussed in the economics literature as how historical events shape the way markets, technologies and institutions behave today and in the future (Arthur 1989; David 1994). Gill and Williams (2011) critique the development of Whistler Resort in Canada within a path dependence framework to discover that whilst the delivery and communication of planning objectives differ over time, the objectives themselves remain much the same. In the case of Whistler, they argue that the political and regulatory system established at its inception locked the community's development into a specific path. In terms of Carmona's model, the concept of path dependence might represent the links between the *place-based modes of operation* in the context and the process of urban design itself.

Ideas of policy transference are not just central to how we apply urban design models and ideas across contexts, but also in terms of the tourist experience in the city. A number of scholars have identified tourist precincts or districts as key spaces in the city that particularly susceptible to the effects of ideas and policy transference. Gonzalez (2010) and Niedomysl (2012) observe how in an effort to stay competitive within the global tourism market, city builders and marketers regularly look to other cities to emulate or draw

inspiration from. Whilst this can have the effect of maintaining competitiveness in terms of the provision of basic tourism infrastructure at the same level as competing destinations, if the design and delivery is not unique or different, there is the possibility of losing the perception of authenticity or character in the urban landscape. Frieden and Sagalyn (in Judd 1999) name this phenomenon the 'mayor's trophy collection', which contributes to the 'standardised tourist bubble' of a city. The 'bubble' usually contains a convention centre, atrium hotel, shopping mall, office towers and restored historic neighbourhoods (p. 52). Bosley and Brothers (2009) argue that collections such as this result in a 'zero-sum game', where the key points of differentiation in the urban environment are so homogenised that they no longer represent an advantage. These observations highlight a tension between the provision of essential tourism infrastructure and authenticity of place.

Beriatos and Gospodini (2004) attempt to explore this tension more closely, arguing that rather than a stark division between homogenous global or differentiated local, there is emerging a 'glocalised' urban landscape. They suggest that urban landscapes (using Athens after the Olympics as a case study) have elements of homogenous globalization but with added innovation 'glocalising' them, or contextualising them to be more place-based. This was considered in the literature as early as 1979, when Lefebvre (1979, in Brenner 2000) suggested that *scale* is the central issue, arguing that "the tension between global integration and territorial redifferentiation has led to a 'generalised explosion of spaces in which the relations among all geographical scales are continuously rearranged and reterritorialised'" (p. 361). These debates highlight a general concern within the literature around the homogenization of the tourism landscape, and in fact the urban landscape in general due to the effects of globalization and policy transference in a global ideas 'marketplace' (Peck & Theodore 2012).

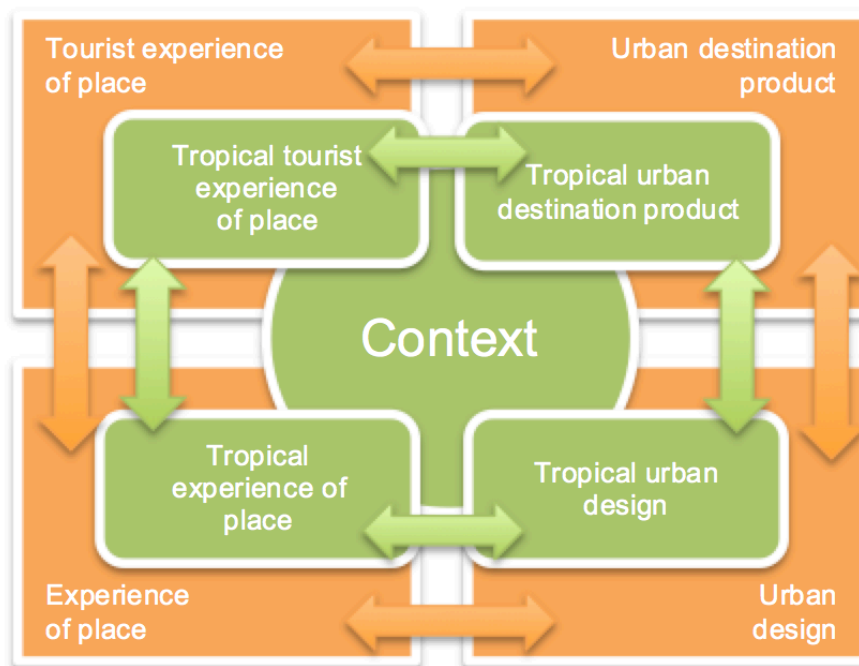
Central to these issues is the question of how decisions are made in the urban design process that produces this combination of scales into globalised, glocalised or localised urban landscapes. Judd (1999) observes that civic elites are less concerned with the profitability or even need for the projects than they are with the vision they share "concerning the overall direction a city is taking" (p. 52). This suggests a prevalence of uninformed decision-making in many cities, where there is little robust cost-benefit analysis or user research undertaken in the planning or delivery of the key pieces of tourism infrastructure. There exists a gap in the literature examining how the urban design process

actually works to process ideas and philosophies into real-world outcomes in cities. This thesis makes a contribution to filling this gap, with a particular focus on the tropical city context. The next section examines the idea of context more closely to create a framework for examination of the tropical context.

2.5.4 The tropical context

The beginning of this chapter identified a lack of engagement in the literature generally with the tropical region in terms of planning, urban design and the urban tourism product. Building on Figure 2.1, Figure 2.4 shows the division of the literature with the specific tropical context overlaid. Much of the research represented in the original quadrants are not specific to any particular context, but seek to more generally understand the relationships between people and places. Research is emerging however that indicates a need to better understand the specificities of local contexts, especially in the current climate of globalization where policies and ideas are commonly adopted across places with little modification or critical thought for the particular geography or culture of a place (Beriatos & Gospodini 2004; Peck & Theodore 2010, 2012). This research suggests that a critical approach is needed to better understand the intrinsic power and political forces at play in the movement of policies and ideas. As discussed in Chapter 1, authors such as Arnold (2000) and Driver and Yeoh (2000) have observed power and political imbalances between the tropical and non-tropical world in the larger project of empire, and globally mobile urban policies have attracted critiques in terms of their applicability to the tropics (eg. Kravanja 2012; Luckman, Gibson & Lea 2009).

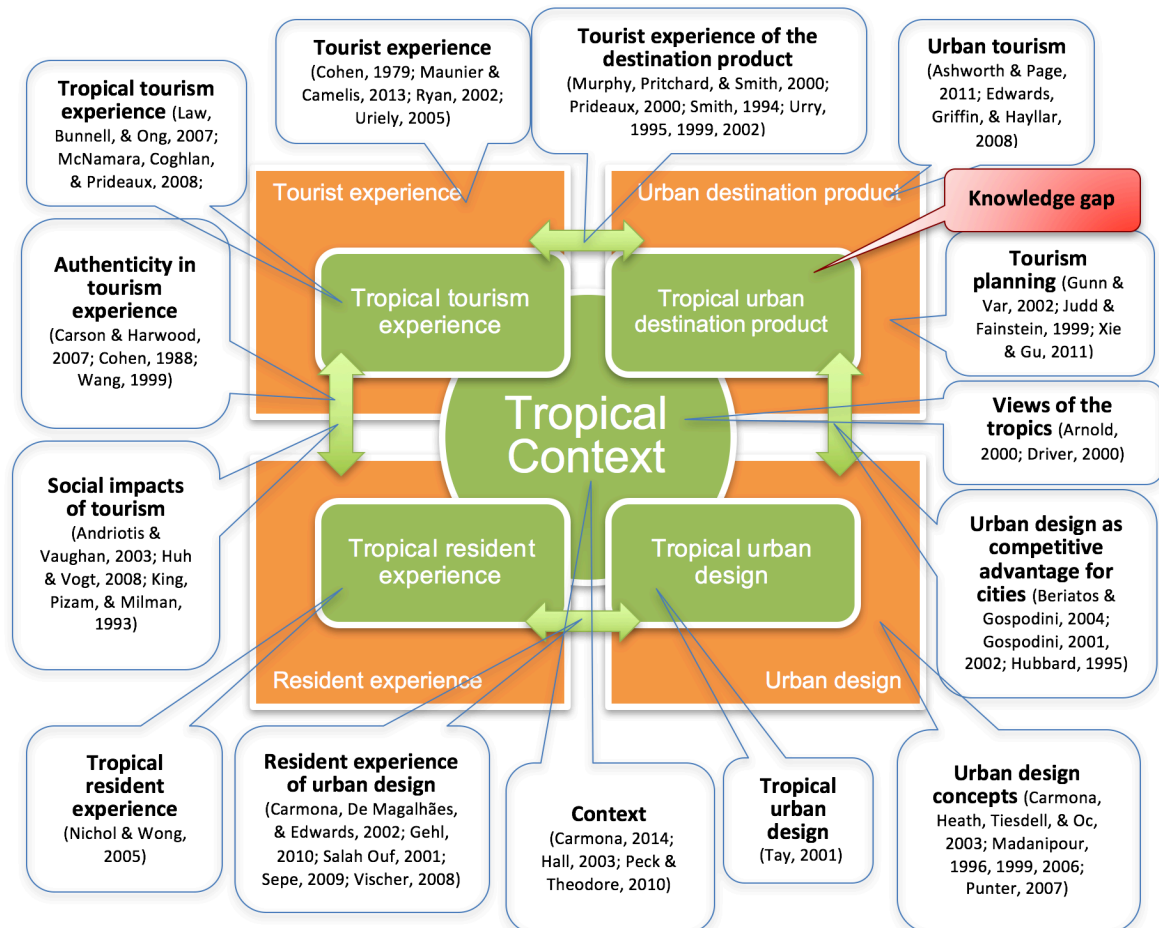
Figure 2.5 Four quadrants of research linking urban design and tourism with tropical overlay



The green sub-quadrants in Figure 2.2 illustrate the literature specifically referencing the tropical context in each quadrant. Key contributors to these quadrants are Tay Kheng Soon (2001, 2003) whose Tropical City Concept sits within the *Tropical urban design* sub-quadrant. Closely related to Tay's work is that of Tzonis, Lefaivre and Stagno (2001) who introduce the idea of critical regionalism to tropical architecture, also an aspect of urban design, however it is focused specifically on building design rather than the urban landscape in general. The *Tropical experience of place* sub-quadrant is limited mostly to studies considering the effects of urban heat islands (Emmanuel & Fernando 2007; Wong & Chen 2009). As mentioned previously, the Tourist experience of place literature is more engaged with the tropics, with a limited number of studies specifically considering the tropical tourist experience in terms of environmental preferences (Huybers & Bennett 2000), construction of tropical place through film imagery (Law, Bunnell & Ong 2007), and the characteristics of non-nature-based tourism in the tropics (McNamara, Coghlan & Prideaux 2008). Finally, the *Tropical urban destination product* sub-quadrant that sits at the juncture of shaping the urban landscape and tourism literature in the tropical context, lacks any specific attention in the literature. Whilst drawing on the wide range of literatures

contributing to this sub-quadrant, the research in this thesis aims to fill this gap, illustrated in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.6 Major contributors to research linking tourism, urban design and the tropics



The previous section of the review showed how little tropically-specific research has taken place in terms of the process of urban design and in terms of the tourist experience. It also discussed some of the unique challenges for tropical places in terms of differentiating their brand and maintaining an authenticity that relies on either colonial legacies or an 'unchanged, 'uncivilised' (Echtner & Prasad 2003) natural element within in the tropical urban landscape. With this in mind, the questions raised across this review so far centre around whether the models and manifestos developed in the non-tropical world could apply equally or even partially within the tropics, and the need for a critical approach to understanding the relationships between place and people. The literature on policy transference shows how the discussions around policy transfer and tropical context

underpin the main concepts of the review. Particular attention is paid to the development of tourism infrastructure and the implications of context in the process of urban design.

2.5.5 Authenticity and place imagery in the tropical urban landscape

The concept of an authentic built environment is particularly complex to navigate in the post-colonial tropics, where much of the built form is a legacy of colonialism that communities may seek to depart from or celebrate to create their own individual character. This section discusses how the literature has developed to consider the elements of authenticity in the tropical urban landscape. As discussed in Section 2.3.2, the literature has discussed how understanding the key counterstructure signs, symbols and images is central to understanding how urban design can be used as a tourist resource. A body of literature has developed around how the tropics are imagined and what specific signs, symbols and images relate to the tropics, arguing that ‘the tropics’ is a particular kind of experience, culture, feel, or look distinct from the rest of the world (Arnold 2000; Chang & King 2011; Driver 2000; Kravanja 2012). Stepan (2001) supports this, arguing that:

Our representations, and therefore our understanding, of tropical nature reflect political, aesthetic and other projects that have the capacity to expand, or limit, our imaginative engagement with the natural world (p. 14).

Arnold (2000) observes that since the European colonial period, the tropics have been imagined and marketed as ‘paradisiacal’ with little distinction between one palm-fringed beach and the next, relying on the strength of the tropical imagery (or brand) as the key counterstructure element of the tourist experience. Similarly, Echtner and Prasad (2003) argue that the tropical signs and symbols are cultivated in the minds of tourists through images and words, such as ‘unchanged’, ‘unrestrained’ and ‘uncivilised’. The homogeneity of the tropical brand can be seen in a Google search on ‘tropical images’, revealing a panoply of turquoise-blue water, white beaches and lush greenery. The only divergence from this underpins the ‘unchanged’, ‘unrestrained’ and ‘uncivilised’ vision, featuring man-made constructions designed to enjoy the natural environment, such as deck chairs, boardwalks, boats, swimming pools, and open-sided thatched huts. These perceptions have implications for urban designers consciously designing the tropical urban landscape as an *urban tropicscape* experience.

The tourism industry relies on such imagery for the selling and experience of destination products, however the literature has identified two key challenges this presents for tropical places. Firstly, Douglas and Douglas identify that the strength of the homogeneous, nature-based tropical image is also its weakness, arguing that “the myth of paradise is by now a thoroughly shop-worn cliché... virtually every travel brochure on the region contains similar images” (in Hall & Tucker 2004, p. 10). There have been some attempts to place identifiers within the tropical scene - a good example is the long-tailed boat invariably tied in the foreground of beach images promoting Thailand. Whilst this uses a cultural differentiator to distinguish the Thai tropical beach from that of their competitors, it remains a traditional, ‘unchanged’ symbol, reinforcing Echtner and Prasad’s (2003) argument about how the tropical brand is cultivated in the minds of tourists.

Secondly, the literature has examined the role of the city as a gateway to attractions. Often, as in the case of Cairns, the tropical city is an urban area that acts as a ‘gateway’ to a natural environment, such as the Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics World Heritage Areas. In this case, the gateway city provides the services, personnel and infrastructure required to maintain the industry. As tropical cities diversify to become hubs of economic and population growth, their urban areas are eclipsing the tropical idyll, and becoming the dominant element of the landscape. In an age of accessible, online user-based travel reviews, this can have serious implications for the tourism industry, which no longer has a monopoly on destination image control. Studies in tropical cities have shown that aspects of the constructed environment such as roads, public transport, and crowded tourist resorts (Ross 1991), or a compromised natural environment (Huybers & Bennett 2000) fall short of the idyll and impact both intent to return and a region’s ability to attract tourists. As discussed in the previous section, in the planning and tourism literature this is expressed as protecting the ‘goose that lays the golden egg’ (see Gottlieb 1995; Hughes 1996).

Whilst the literature has shown that a compromised natural environment is undesirable for a gateway city (Huybers & Bennett 2000), recent research suggests that congruence between the natural elements of a destination and the urban attributes of the gateway city positively impacts nature-based tourists’ perceptions of a destination as a whole (Line & Costen 2014). Line & Costen (2014) argue that nature-based tourists perceive a city-park dyad, which could be defined as a pair of individuals in a relationship. The ‘park’ (natural area) and ‘gateway city’ (urban area used as a base for exploring the natural area) are

described as two individual entities, which are separate but engage with one another. Whilst this may be the case for the natural areas and gateway cities in the United States that formed the basis of Line and Costen's work, it raises questions around whether the same may be applicable in the tropics, where tropical nature is not only 'out there' in the World Heritage Area, but may in fact be simply the feel of humidity and warmth and the presence of tropical vegetation that can equally be experienced in the urban environment.

Additionally, further research from Scandinavia suggests that nature-based tourists are not purely motivated by experiencing nature but rather often enjoy a range of experiences, including cultural and urban-based experiences (Mehmetoglu 2007). This indicates the possibility that rather than a clear distinction between the 'natural environment' and the 'urban environment' there may exist a nature-urban continuum of preference, where nature is appreciated in both predominantly urban and predominantly natural settings. This is supported by McNamara, Coghlan and Prideaux (2008), whose Cairns-based research suggests that whilst the natural environment is a strong pull factor for the majority of visitors, climate and relaxation are also key motivators for travel to the region.

These arguments in the literature indicate a 'heart' of authenticity in the tropical urban landscape that centres on interactions with the natural environment, from both within the city and in the natural areas it acts as a gateway to. This raises questions around how tourists might perceive the tropical urban landscape with different levels of natural elements, and how this influences their experience of the city generally.

2.5.6 Research gaps

The research in the context section of the review has considered how the literature has highlighted the importance of context in understanding the process of urban design. This section of the review has explored arguments about how the wicked problems of urban design and tourism are context-specific, drawing on Carmona's (2014) Place-shaping continuum and Hall's (2003) arguments that context is not only central to the analysis of urban design and tourism, but also that it is comprised of place-based modes of operation developed through the elements of place, polity and power. This was further discussed in terms of Peck and Theodore's (2010) arguments around urban policy mobility and the intrinsic role of power relationships in the transfer of ideas from one city to another. The review also revealed that despite its recognised importance in the literature generally, and

in the tropical literature specifically, consideration of the tropical context in terms of urban design and tourism has received very little attention in the literature. This thesis aims to make a contribution to that gap through another objective of this thesis, to:

Analyse the place, polity and power contexts of urban design in a tropical city.

This section of the review has also identified how many of the principles of planning imported from other places through either the colonial project or policy emulation and transfer may not always provide tropical cities with the unique urban landscapes that can differentiate them in the competitive global market. Additionally, observations in the literature note a “gulf in understanding... between those devoted to understanding and critiquing the urban realm and those focused on changing it (through policy and practice)” (Carmona 2014, p. 2), not only in the tropics, but in urban contexts around the world. As a key location of policy transfer and innovation, Carmona (2014) identifies the process of urban design as central to understanding these observations, indicating a need to understand not only how the process of urban design works but also the power context within which it operates and its effectiveness in meeting the needs of those who use it.

2.6 An agenda for research

Although this review has noted a number of gaps in the literature it aims to fill, the aim of this research is to critically examine the process of urban design in a tropical city in terms of its alignment with tourist preferences. A key aspect of this critical analysis is evaluating the effectiveness of the urban design process through identifying the connections and disconnections between how urban designers shape a tropical city and what tourists value in the tropical city experience as discussed in Section 2.3. Thirty years ago, Getz (1986) argued that tourism planning models were “often narrowly defined and lacking comprehensiveness” (p. 31), suggesting a need for “the interactive process of research, modelling and evaluation” (p. 32) in tourism planning. Carmona (2014) identifies that this need still exists today: “A reading of the literature on public space demonstrates how partisan and polemical much of it is... but also that particular views about public space—either negative or positive—are often espoused on the basis of remarkably little evidence” (p. 2). He also notes that “a key problem... lies in the fact that few urban design interventions are subjected to analysis that compares outcomes with process of delivery” (p. 4). This thesis draws on this observation of a gap in the literature and aims to propose a

method of analysis of urban design that compares outcomes with the process of delivery. Whilst the process of delivery might be gleaned through an analysis of process according to those shaping the urban environment (as discussed in Section 2.2.3), an analysis of outcomes for comparison might require the assessment of user preferences in the urban landscape.

Appleyard and Jacobs (1982) identify the concept of ‘rootless professionalism’, where “in too many cases we design for places and people we do not know and grant them very little power or acknowledgement” (p. 10). In terms of user evaluation of the design norms in urban spaces, there exists little in the literature in the professional or academic spheres. Vischer (2008) argues that: “user considerations are rare and unfamiliar in conventional building procurement processes, perhaps because they appear complex and elusive in comparison to the relatively simple and technology-oriented tools of the builder’s trade” (p. 239). This appears to be true across the evaluation of urban design and tourist experience of cities as well. The complex landscape of tenure and power structures between landlords, lessees and councils may be at the heart of this; after all, what is the point of researching user needs if no-one can agree on whose responsibility it is to meet them? These wicked characteristics of urban planning problems have undoubtedly hindered any investment in research on user needs at scales larger than specific projects. Even in the development of precinct masterplans, post-occupancy review or research is rare, possibly because by the time the project is finished, the scale of investment is such that there is little scope to improve or change the outcome anyway.

Understanding user needs and how designed public space meets these needs is much easier in a finite project such as a public park or precinct, however as noted in Chapter 1, the urban landscape is comprised of both *self-conscious* and *un-self-conscious* design coalescing side by side. The complexity of how these places interact and how people interact with and within them is outside the scope of any single design brief, yet central to understanding how the urban landscape satisfies the people who use it. There have been some practical analyses in the literature of unsuccessful urban spaces evidenced in the prevalence of crime, social exclusion, vehicle dependence or lack of use (e.g. Cozens (2002)) or successful urban spaces evidenced by high use, walkability or durability (e.g. Podobnik (2002)), or tourist use (McKercher et al. 2011; Shoval et al. 2011). These indicators are generally based in quantifiable statistical data, such as user numbers or crime

statistics. More qualitatively, phenomenological studies on place attachment in the urban landscape have gained ground since the 1990s (Altman & Low 1992; Manzo & Devine-Wright 2014), although some of these have become more quantitatively focused (such as Brown, Raymond & Corcoran 2015; Sepe 2009). Carmona's (2014) Place-shaping continuum presented 'achievable norms' (Forsyth 2014), a kind of realistic proposition for how the process of urban design generally works, referenced to projects in the UK. Although Carmona's model is comprehensive in describing process, it raises a key question: How do we know if the urban design process is working? Carmona explains how he thinks the process works, however within this, he has not asked whether the process is effective or not. Whilst these studies can contribute to an understanding of user preferences, the assessment of the urban design process through an evaluation of how well it meets user needs has escaped attention. There exists a gap, not just in terms of analysing the urban design process in the tropical city, but in any city, in terms of its ability to assess and meet the needs of the users of the urban landscape. This thesis aims to fill this gap by drawing on the outcomes of the research to:

Propose a method of evaluating the urban design process in terms of its alignment with tourist preferences.

This review has considered how the production and consumption of space can engage with the tropical context. It discussed how the complexity of the wicked problems in urban design and tourism necessitates a critical approach, concerned with finding better solutions rather than correct ones. It also discussed how the process of shaping urban space is an inherently normative activity, laden with values on both the preferences of those involved with the process and the perceived preferences of those using the resultant places. Whilst Carmona (2014) proposed a model of urban design process in the form of a Place-shaping continuum, the focus of his research on London raised questions regarding the transferability and applicability of such a model, in particular: can the model be used in research practice to help us understand the urban design process in a small tropical city? These questions formed the basis of the research aim of this thesis:

To critically examine the process of urban design in a tropical city.

This review has shown that there are a number of gaps in the literature across disciplines in understanding the process of urban design generally and in a tropical city specifically. In particular, gaps in understanding the processes of planning for tourism and designing city-based tropical tourism experiences were identified. An agenda for research has thus been developed to both achieve the aim of this thesis and contribute to the gaps in the literature, with the following objectives:

1. Analyse the place, polity and power contexts of urban design in a tropical city;
2. Critically analyse the urban design process in a tropical city from the perspective of those shaping it;
3. Identify the connections and disconnections between how urban designers shape a tropical city and what tourists value in the tropical city experience; and
4. Propose a method of evaluating the urban design process in terms of its alignment with tourist preferences.

Because there is such a dearth of research on the tropical specificities of urban design and tourism experience, rather than identify a gap in the literature as such, this review has shown how this thesis engages with non-tropical and specifically tropical philosophies to advance into only partially charted academic territory of tropical urban design and tourism. It is clear that to address these issues, an approach is required that spans across disciplines and traditional boundaries of inquiry. The next section discusses in detail the post-disciplinary, pragmatic approach of this thesis and describes the methods used to gather data within such a paradigm.

Chapter 3

3 Research approach and methodology

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to critically examine the process of urban design in a tropical city in terms of its alignment with tourist preferences. The review in Chapter 2 exposed a number of gaps in the literature, especially regarding how the urban design process works in the tropics compared with the larger temperate cities where most of the research has previously been conducted. It identified four key objectives through which a critical examination of the urban design process can be undertaken. These are:

1. Analyse the place, polity and power contexts of urban design in a tropical city;
2. Critically analyse the urban design process in a tropical city from the perspective of those shaping it;
3. Identify the connections and disconnections between how urban designers shape a tropical city and what tourists value in the tropical city experience; and
4. Propose a method of evaluating the urban design process in terms of its alignment with tourist preferences.

This chapter describes and justifies the disciplinary, conceptual and empirical approach of the research in this thesis. First, the complex disciplinary foundations of the thesis are discussed, presenting a case for moving beyond disciplinary boundaries to a pragmatic, 'post-disciplinary' approach. This discussion leads to a description of the ontological and epistemological basis of the research, drawing from the pragmatic paradigm into a critical realist case study using abductive, sequential mixed methods. From this, a detailed description of the methodology follows.

3.2 Research approach

This section examines current ideas on the development of disciplines and interdisciplinary research to evaluate the concept of post-discipline as a progression in academic approach. Two fields of research in different stages of maturity are drawn on to examine this development – urban design and tourism. Both of these fields are relatively new and both have undergone analysis on their status – in urban design as a discipline (Cuthbert 2003) multidisciplinary field (Pinson 2004) or profession (Schurch 1999), and in tourism as a

discipline (Echtner & Jamal 1997; Tribe 1997), multidisciplinary field (Graburn & Jafari 1991; Tribe 2010), or 'post-disciplinary' field (Coles, Hall & Duval 2006). First, the terms discipline; multidisciplinary research; interdisciplinary research; and post-discipline will be discussed. Second, a review of current literature on tourism and urban design disciplinarity is presented. A discussion will then compare and contrast the fields to consider the value of interdisciplinarity and the potential of post-discipline for these fields.

3.2.1 Disciplinary approach

To create knowledge from observing things requires an acknowledgement of how you look at them. Traditionally in academic research, this has required the situation of a theoretical framework within disciplinary boundaries. So what of studies that sit within interdisciplinary fields, and indeed, within multiple interdisciplinary fields, which draw from a range of disciplinary underpinnings? And at what point does interdisciplinarity move to post-discipline?

These questions are central to this research because of the interdisciplinary nature of both urban design and tourism (Goldstein & Carmin 2006; Jafari & Brent Ritchie 1981). A key strength of both fields is the way they draw together different ways of looking at things from different disciplinary perspectives to consider problems and phenomena. Because of this, declaring a singular discipline or perspective to situate the research is not particularly useful or necessary. This chapter discusses the evolution of the post-disciplinary approach as a concept and in relation to tourism and urban design as fields of study. The conclusions drawn from this discussion provide a foundation for the ontological, epistemological and methodological approach taken in the research for this thesis, followed by a description of the methods used.

The shaping of knowledge into disciplines is argued by Moran (2010) to have been developing since Aristotle first organised different subjects "according to whether they were theoretical, practical or productive"(p. 3), and has since undergone many transformations according to political, social and cultural changes. Yet the original concept of classifying bodies of knowledge into disciplines remains - albeit in a more complex form - having developed further into "a set of practices by which that knowledge is acquired, confirmed, implemented, preserved and reproduced" (Post 2009, p. 751). This set of practices encompasses methodologies, ethics, and other disciplinary norms, which enable researchers to build on and further develop accepted truths and established theories. In

this sense, the other meaning of discipline as a controlled behaviour resulting from being trained to obey rules or a code can be equally applied (Turner 2006).

A number of scholars have critiqued disciplines as constructs of norms and codes developed through the commonality of discourse, governmentality and training, in order for us to organise an intrinsically disorganised body of knowledge. These scholars have drawn from a vast array of philosophers to support this notion. For example: Sholle (1995) and Turner (2006) draw on Foucault to critique the development of disciplines as discursive constructs that create power structures and influence behaviour; Echtner and Jamal (1997) and Sholle (1995) critique the rigid requirements for the classification of a discipline put forward by Kuhn; Echtner and Jamal (1997) draw on Bernstein's assertion that there is no rigid boundary between the sciences and the social sciences; and Moran (2010) and Turner (2006) consider the philosophies of Lyotard (1984), arguing that a computerised world is outmoding the traditional organisation of knowledge. This is not an exhaustive list - Moran (2010) acknowledges that "the critique of the academic disciplines as limited and confining is as long-standing as the disciplines themselves" (p. 13).

Yet disciplinary structure persists. Sholle (1995) observes that:

"This separation and hierarchical division of intellectual knowledge proceeds despite the weight of evidence from contemporary critical theories and histories (from Kuhn to Foucault) demonstrating the conventionality of all legitimate knowledge – that is, the growing acknowledgement among intellectuals that all knowledge is historically, materially and discursively situated" (p. 130).

The attachment of the academy to disciplinary structure is understandable to an extent, since people like to make sense of the world through organising information, codes of practice and discourse, and it is difficult to master a body of knowledge without some form of internal organisation. However it is also possible that this division of intellectual knowledge is proceeding simply because the disciplines are a juggernaut of power, structure and government (Moran 2010). The entire code of academia rests within university structures, academic associations, promotional and publishing conventions. Two related challenges arise from this: firstly, it is nearly impossible to reject the notion of disciplinarity when tackling problems that transcend disciplinary boundaries; and secondly,

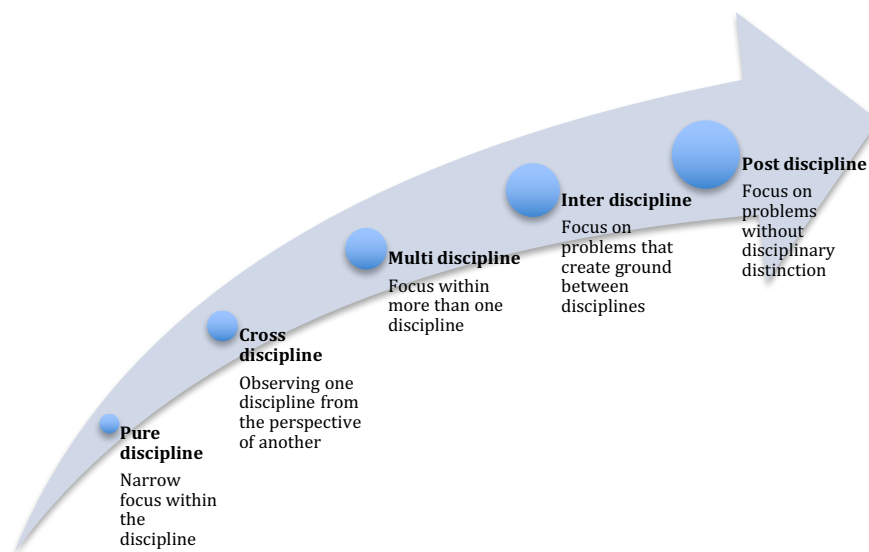
the entrenched nature of the existing disciplines hinders the emergence of new disciplines. The extent of this is varied across institutions and disciplines, however Post (2009) argues that this problem is exacerbated in the humanities more so than the sciences.

As advances are made in knowledge, methodologies and technology, the development and re-shaping of disciplines is imperative. Increasingly, researchers are being faced with problems that transcend traditional disciplinary boundaries. Quite often, the differentiating factor of many projects emerging today is an ability to look beyond the traditional confines of the researcher's original discipline. These are usually described as 'multidisciplinary' or 'interdisciplinary' studies. Leiper (1981, 1990) defines 'multidisciplinarity' as combining multiple disciplines, working within the confines of the disciplinary practices and codes. Identifying this concept as problematic and complex, Leiper suggests that 'interdisciplinarity' is a more usable concept, where studies sit between the disciplines, using what is required from the disciplines involved as needed. There exists a range of shades on the disciplinary spectrum, and many authors have attempted to produce definitive definitions and terms. Stember (1991) produces a "typology for enterprises within and across disciplines" (p. 5) gradually increasing in scope from intradisciplinary (within disciplines) to cross-disciplinary (looking at one discipline from the perspective of another), multidisciplinary (involving several disciplines each providing a perspective on a problem), interdisciplinary (integrating the contributions of several disciplines), and transdisciplinary (uniting intellectual frameworks beyond the disciplinary perspectives). More recently, Krishnan (2009) argues that interdisciplinarity occurs simply when disciplinary boundaries are crossed, and in fact encompasses all of these definitions (with the exception of intradisciplinary). He goes on to suggest that the key lies not in defining the ever-expanding list of terms, but rather being able to identify when disciplinary boundaries are crossed – in essence, understanding the core of the issue rather than the edges.

Although the list of authors engaging in the debate on the levels of disciplinarity is long, there is general agreement on the use of interdisciplinarity as the concept of crossing disciplinary boundaries. The level of integration within this concept is still being debated, however a number of authors in recent years have considered the movement beyond the disciplines to a 'post-disciplinary' approach away from the traditional ways of organising knowledge into disciplines and towards a more problem-focused approach that emphasises

epistemological plurality. Figure 3.1 shows a simplified continuum of the broadening focus of disciplinary research, where further down the line from 'interdisciplinarity' would be 'post-disciplinarity'. Coles, Hall and Duval (2006) suggest that tourism studies in particular would "benefit greatly from a post-disciplinary outlook... which is more problem-focused, based on more flexible modes of knowledge production, plurality, synthesis and synergy" (p. 293). Sholle (1995) presents much the same argument for media studies, suggesting that the "walls of disciplinarity be replaced with bridges" (p. 141), Barnes (2006) for economic geography, and Painter (2003) for political geography. Although not calling for post-discipline by name, Robinson (2008) argues for much the same thing in his calls for issue-driven interdisciplinarity in the sustainability field. These arguments stress that they are not wishing to remove the organisation of knowledge altogether in an 'anti-discipline' approach, but rather promote an acceptance of the wide range of research that falls beyond the limits of the traditional disciplines through a 'post-discipline' approach.

Figure 3.1 The changing focus of disciplinary research (adapted from Echtner and Jamal 1997, Jafari and Ritchie 1981, Sholle 1995, Stember 1991)



In keeping with Lyotard's philosophies, post-discipline may be a response to the recent acceleration in the level of access to information and knowledge. Access to journals and other online research and collaboration tools has enabled researchers to reach across disciplines like never before, and the reality of this in terms of funding and management structures within and between institutions are often a challenging prospect. As these interdisciplinary fields are developing more rapidly, the academy's weighty disciplinary

structure is struggling to keep up. For those researchers regularly engaged in interdisciplinary research, the post-discipline concept can be appealing because of the things it promotes – problem solving, pragmatism, plurality and synergy. Krishnan (2009) takes a longer view however, and considers what would be lost in the post-discipline approach, arguing that “it is unlikely that a single post-disciplinary science could be possible or successful or even desirable” (p. 51). In particular, Krishnan draws our attention to the value of situating claims to truth and world views within disciplines to enable them to make sense. It is here that the views of Krishnan and those of the post-disciplinarians who claim not to be anti-discipline seem to converge: in a place where the value, traditions and theories of a discipline are acknowledged within an interdisciplinary study, but which is not constrained by the imperialism or silo mentality of the disciplines.

3.2.2 Disciplinarity in tourism

Tourism as a field of research has matured through a long self-analysis, which has ultimately side-stepped the idea of becoming a discipline in what is either the progression to a post-disciplinary state that still acknowledges disciplinary boundaries, or the acceptance of an interdisciplinarity that is not constrained by the silo mentality of the traditional academic structure (Tribe 1997, 2010; Tribe & Liburd 2016). This section proposes that this evolution of the tourism field can act as a guide to other disciplines facing similar disciplinary dilemmas, using urban design as a case study.

Much of the self-analysis in tourism commenced in the late 1970s. In his 1977 preface of the *Annals of Tourism Research*, editor Jafari argues that until that time, tourism scholarship had focused on the benefits of tourism rather than taking a critical approach, with the definition of tourism as an “inter-disciplinary and multi-dimensional enquiry” (p. 8). Buck (1978) followed soon thereafter with an assessment of tourism scholarship as being divided into the “two relatively isolated camps... of business enterprise and development, and the impact and externalities camp” (p.110), a deep division that arguably persists to this day (Tribe 2010). A year later, Leiper (1979) offered a framework for the general study of tourism with the aim of presenting what has become an elusive definition of tourism, tourist, and the tourist industry. This led to Leiper’s (1981) “case for a distinct discipline”, arguing that “a new discipline can be created by organising the existing body of knowledge and that such a discipline can be the core of an interdisciplinary approach” (p. 69).

The debate has continued with a resistance to the formation of tourism as a discipline for a range of reasons, mostly centred on the lack of a distinct theoretical framework, and a lack of ability to define the field, or indeed the subject of study. Echtner and Jamal (1997) conclude that whilst tourism is showing some signs of becoming a distinct discipline, there are a number of “practical and philosophical reasons that hamper its evolution” (p. 880). In terms of moving to post-discipline, Tribe (2010) finds that there is currently little evidence of the post-disciplinarity suggested by Coles, Hall and Duval (2006, 2009), asserting that tourism is still a multi-disciplinary field, a position supported in more recent times by Crouch and Perdue (2014). It seems that whilst there are areas of contention over definition and distinction, it is widely acknowledged in the literature that the strength of tourism as an interdisciplinary field enables researchers to more freely explore problems within a number of disciplinary traditions, rather than be restricted within one.

3.2.3 Urban design and tourism as post-disciplinary fields

Coles, Hall and Duval (2006) argue that “the nature of disciplinary organisation functions as a major hindrance to truly inter-disciplinary collaboration” (p. 300). This is a compelling case to consider in the context of working within two separate fields based on similar disciplinary underpinnings. As spatially, socially, economically and environmentally dependent fields, the disciplinary foundations of urban design and tourism are closely related, yet the fields use distinctly different languages and assert themselves as being concerned with different, but overlapping phenomena.

Urban design can learn much from the journey travelled by the tourism field to a place of general acceptance as an interdisciplinary field. The comparison of urban design and tourism is valid: aside from both being based in multiple disciplines, there are a number of similarities between tourism and urban design. First, both have struggled to define the field and the subject of study in clear, widely accepted terms (see for example Hall 2007a; Kasprisin 2011). Second, both are widely used terms that define professions and products as well as fields of research, and as such, research contributes to decision making processes around the product development rather than actually creating the product (George 1997). Third, neither have strong theoretical underpinnings, but rather borrow and adapt theory from contributing disciplines. And finally, both are fundamentally based in the juncture of people and spatiality.

The first two similarities are interrelated. Definitions are a key sticking point for urban design and tourism because they have so many meanings and applications. Tribe (2006) makes the observation that “tourism research carries with it the subtle power to define: to skew: to objectify: to foreground some issues leaving others untouched: to legitimise some methods casting others to the periphery: to privilege some groups while excluding others and to tell stories in particularistic ways” (p. 375). In other words, often tourism research can tell us as much about the researcher, their biases and disciplinary underpinnings as it does about the subject of the study. The same can be observed in the urban design literature.

The third similarity between urban design and tourism is that neither have strong theoretical underpinnings (Echtner & Jamal 1997; Kasprisin 2011), but rather borrow and adapt theory from contributing disciplines. The disciplinary essence of urban design and tourism is diverse (see for example Goldstein & Carmin 2006; Jafari & Brent Ritchie 1981), however there are some key disciplines which contribute to both, and which will contribute to this research. The dominant study areas in tourism are identified by Echtner and Jamal (1997) as being: sociology and social psychology; geography; anthropology; organisational and strategy research; and marketing and consumer research. These bear some resemblance to the model of the creation of tourism knowledge put forward in the same year by Tribe (1997) who argues that the tourism field is split into TF1 – business, and TF2 – non business. Tribe and Liburd (2016) have since developed this concept further to suggest that tourism knowledge is more helpfully divided into the fluid terms of disciplinary knowledge, problem-centred knowledge and value-based knowledge.

It could be argued that urban design is based in a number of parallel disciplines to tourism with the addition of architecture and landscape architecture, and as such has a different language and focus. In terms of disciplinary underpinnings, urban design could be described as having many homes but living in none of them. Carmona (2014) argues that urban design is “a mongrel discipline that draws its legitimising theories from diverse intellectual roots: sociology, anthropology, psychology, political science, economics, ecological, physical and health sciences, urban geography and the arts; as well as from the ‘professional’ theories and practices of: architecture, landscape architecture, planning, law, property, engineering and management. Indeed, wherever it can” (p.3). More simplistically, Kasprisin (2011) places urban design as a field of study within the disciplines or fields of planning,

architecture and landscape architecture. Goldstein and Carmin (2006) present a long list of disciplinary contributions to urban design that is not unlike the list put forward by Jafari and Brent Ritchie (1981) for tourism. Whilst architecture and landscape architecture are widely acknowledged as disciplines in their own right, urban planning is much like tourism in that it is an interdisciplinary field (Pinson 2004). Forsyth (2012) suggests that planning has “strong links” with fields such as design, economics, geography, public health, law and history.

This discussion leads finally to the fourth similarity between tourism and urban design as being fundamentally based in the juncture of people and spatiality, as discussed in Chapter 2. Whilst all of the disciplines mentioned above are contributors to research in urban design and tourism, the context of each is reliant on place and people. In their review of progress in tourism geography, Hall and Page (2009) identify geography as underpinning a wide range of tourism studies including regional development and urban planning. With the addition of the study of people and society, it could be seen that sociology and geography are the underpinning disciplines of all urban design and tourism research, but with influences from many other places.

The problems being considered in this thesis have a basis in a number of disciplines within urban design and tourism. In this way, this research is well suited to a post-disciplinary approach. In keeping with the requirements put forward by Coles, Hall and Duval (2009) to acknowledge disciplinary boundaries and when they have been crossed, this research refers back to the disciplinary foundations of the concepts and problems being discussed, whilst not being situated in any particular one of them.

3.2.4 Pragmatic paradigm

An underpinning concept of the post-disciplinary approach is a focus on addressing research objectives rather than established disciplinary methodologies. Morgan, D. L. (2007) discusses this, arguing to transcend the metaphysical paradigm concept of research to propose a pragmatic approach that enables the researcher to move between qualitative and quantitative approaches, shown in Table 3.1. A key tenet of this approach is acknowledging disciplinary and/or epistemological boundaries, but with a focus on achieving the research objectives. Table 3.1 identifies that in the qualitative approach, the connection of theory and data is characterised by *induction*, where theories are derived and built from themes emerging from the data, which is a subjective process. Conversely, the quantitative approach connects theory and data with *deduction*, where already formed

theories are tested by the data in what some describe as an objective process, although it is acknowledged that every research process is laden with the values of the researcher and their processes. The pragmatic approach is described by D. L. Morgan (2007) as a ‘middle ground’ where both induction and deduction are used in an iterative process so theories can emerge from the data and be tested. This iterative process is referred to in Table 3.1 as *abduction*. Abduction has previously been applied in design thinking contexts, identified by Dorst (2011) as a valuable way to focus on the ‘core’ of design issues, where the ‘what’ and ‘how’ are unknown but the desired result of ‘value’ is known. This is closely related to Carmona et al.’s call to focus on the ‘heart’ of urban design problems rather than prescribe boundaries or edges.

Table 3.1 A Pragmatic alternative to the key issues in social science research methodology (Morgan 2007, p.71)

	Qualitative approach	Quantitative approach	Pragmatic approach
Connection of theory and data	Induction	Deduction	Abduction
Relationship to research process	Subjectivity	Objectivity	Intersubjectivity
Inference from data	Context	Generality	Transferability

The pragmatic approach is particularly valuable used within a critical framing. Critically considering the process of urban design within context and across disciplinary and structural boundaries could be considered more useful than a phenomenological approach, which seeks only to describe a particular phenomenon. In the urban studies literature, Banai (1995) argues that critical realism “seeks to reveal causation, not just the manifestation of urban and regional development phenomena” but also “calls for accountability to the motivations, intentions, and actions of actors, agents, or participants in the context of urban and regional development processes, not just with the outcome of their actions” (p. 570). These considerations are echoed by Dovey (1999), who argues that focusing on phenomenology and experience “runs the risk that the ideological framings of place can remain buried and hence powerful” (p. 44). Within this philosophy, this thesis uses the basis of a critical context analysis drawing on historical documents, online resources, grey literature and the perceptions of people to establish a framing to understand the urban design process.

This in-depth consideration of place, polity and power and how it influences both the shaping and experiencing of a specific place could be described as a critical case study

within a pragmatic paradigm. Easton (2010) argues that critical realism is a “way forward” (p. 119) for case study research, and that it is well suited to the pragmatic examination of finite, but complex systems and relationships common in the case study approach. Easton draws on Sayer’s (1992) basic assumptions of critical realism to propose a critical realist case method. Key features this method explores are objects or entities as basic theoretical building blocks that have causal powers and liabilities, linked by relationships within a specific context. Although Easton’s philosophy speaks specifically from (and to) the discipline of Marketing, the basis of his approach resounds with an examination of urban design process. It also has entities such as people, organisations and relationships that have causal powers and liabilities within a specific context, as described in Chapter 2.

This research explores the process of urban design in a descriptive sense, but in considering its effectiveness as process also considers the concept of tropical urban design in a normative sense. This is supported by Loukaitou-Sideris (2012) who argues that in the ‘struggle for good urban environments’ urban designers need to test urban design outcomes. Although often neglected, testing outcomes is intrinsic to the concept of understanding and evaluating any process of design, as it is inevitably a process concerned with improving value, an inherently subjective concept. To illustrate this, Carmona (2003) defines urban design as “the process of making better places for people than would otherwise be produced” (p. 74). The concept of what is ‘better’ or ‘worse’ in place experience is open to interpretation, however it is clear that there are places people generally like to be more than others. As discussed in Chapter 2, Carmona goes on to produce a model of urban design process (2014) that is intended to be descriptive, but also focusing on achievable norms (Forsyth 2014). This research therefore critically examines the urban design process in Cairns through first analysing the place, power and polity elements of the Cairns context, then through analysing the process from the perspective of those within the process, and finally through analysing the effectiveness of the process in terms of its alignment with tourist preferences.

3.2.5 Ontology & Epistemology

The underlying ontological assumption in this research is that there is a reality that is possible to know, but that reality is socially constructed and needs to be critically considered. Guba & Lincoln (2005) identify that this knowable but subjective reality is shaped by a range of social, economic, political, cultural and other values. Chapter 2 has already discussed how previous research has shown that the concept of tropicity in

particular has mediated the way in which people see a place as peripheral, ‘other’, ‘uncivilised’ or ‘uncultured’, and that these enduring ways of thinking influence perceptions of urban designers and tourists. This research critically considers the process of urban design as a reality within a specific context from the perspective of those who are involved in it, and from the perspective of those who experience the results of it. The critical approach seeks to unearth hidden elements that are fundamental to the reality yet not necessarily known or acknowledged by those who are a part of the process. Table 3.2 shows a summary of the research approach used in this thesis.

Table 3.2 Research approach

Paradigm	Pragmatic		
Ontology	Critical realist		
Epistemology	Subjectivist		
Research approach	Deductive Inductive	Abductive	Inductive
Research methodology	Case study with abductive analysis		
Data collection methods	Questionnaire Statistical analysis Website analysis	Semi-structured interviews	Context analysis Interviews Policy analysis TripAdvisor analysis

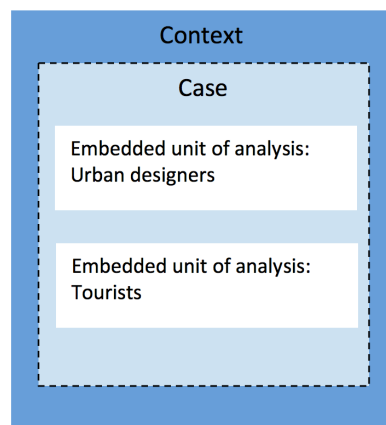
The critical approach also requires an acknowledgement of personal perspective in the research (Ateljevic et al. 2005). As a resident of Cairns who has worked within both the tourism and planning industries, my personal approach was informed by an innate knowledge of ‘how things are done’ in the city from previous experience. Although best efforts have been made to take the stance of an independent observer to elicit an objective critique of the urban design process, it is acknowledged that the research design, data collection and analysis bore some influence of my personal beliefs and perceptions. This was particularly evident in the identification and interviewing of urban designers for the research and will be discussed in further detail in Section 3.3.2 below.

3.3 Research methods

As shown in Table 3.2, the pragmatic, critical case study nature of this research informed a methodology that used mixed methods analysed in deductive, inductive and abductive processes. Using Yin’s (2014) typology of case study design, this research is a single case study with two embedded units of analysis. The case is defined as the urban design process in Cairns, with the two key units of analysis being the urban designers and the tourists.

Within this design, Yin also notes the critical role of context, which forms a box around the entire case shown in Figure 3.2. According to Yin's definitions, the case study is designed as a common case study, where "the objective is to capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday situation... because of the lessons it might provide about the social processes related to some theoretical interest" (p. 52). Although the specificities and complexity of city contexts have already been acknowledged, the analysis of these contexts may also provide an understanding of the commonality between cases.

Figure 3.2 Case study design adapted from Yin (2014) p.50



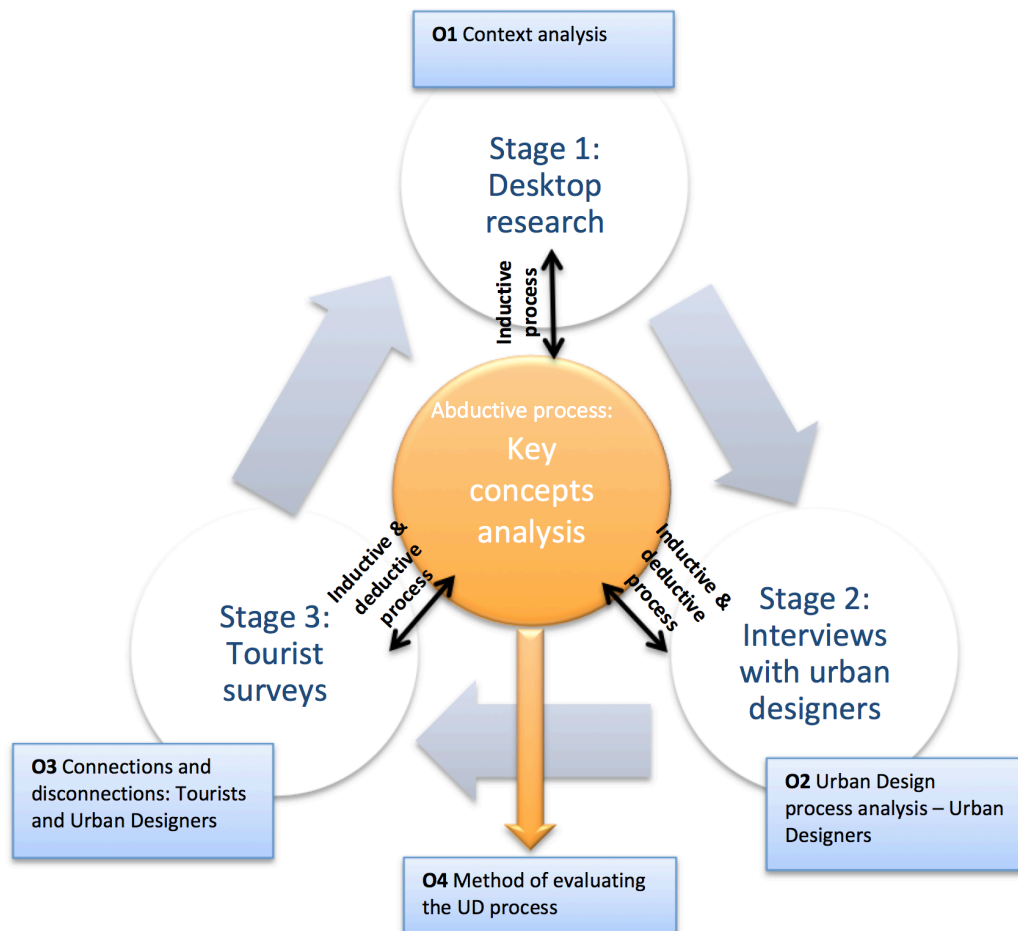
This section details and discusses how the research was conducted to address the four research objectives. The research processes developed for this thesis evolved in iterative - or abductive - stages, where data collection and analysis overlapped throughout the process, commencing in February 2012 and concluding in February 2015. Data collection comprised of three stages, tied together by ongoing analysis, which informed the iterations, and writing as the findings emerged. These three stages were:

1. Context analysis
2. Interviews with urban designers
3. Tourist surveys

The structure of the research process and how these address the research objectives is shown in Figure 3.3. Each of these stages was developed to address specific aspects of the research aim and objectives. The process represented in Figure 3.3 is described as the *abductive* research process, drawing from D. L. Morgan's (2007) concept of abduction as 'middle ground' between inductive and deductive reasoning, and Dorst's (2011) concept of abduction as a critical aspect of design thinking. Figure 3.3 shows where inductive and

deductive reasoning are used iteratively and to complement one another in an abductive process.

Figure 3.3 The abductive research process



Because they involved people, stages 2 and 3 were subject to the James Cook University ethics approval process. The approval form for this process can be viewed in Appendix 1. The following sections detail the processes undertaken within each stage of the research, as well as across the stages, with the central focus on addressing the research aim and objectives.

3.3.1 Stage 1: Context analysis

Although this is described as Stage 1, in truth this was an ongoing process as new documents were produced and came to light over the period of the research. The foundation of the context analysis was a comprehensive desktop research process critically examining grey literature. Grey literature is described by the New York Academy of

Medicine (2014) as being "that which is produced on all levels of government, academics, business and industry in print and electronic formats, but which is not controlled by commercial publishers" (www.greylit.org). The context analysis was conducted in a critical manner using triangulation techniques (Yin 2014) where possible to enhance and corroborate written and oral accounts. This was not intended to be a definitive history of Cairns, but rather a critical analysis of how Cairns has been shaped, with attention to the enduring place-based modes of operation emphasised in Carmona's (2014) structure of place, polity and power. Created from a range of already constructed historical texts, it is acknowledged that the context analysis is essentially a subjective story of Cairns, and I make no claim that it represents absolute fact. What the narrative does show however is a generally accepted story created by a number of people that informs the consciousness and decision-making of those shaping and experiencing Cairns today. Within the narrative, these place-based modes of operation were inductively grouped into four themes. These themes mesh well within the original principles of sustainable development of environment, economy and culture (Brundtland 1987) but include the added dimension of geopolitics, as location is a fundamental aspect of context.

True to the abductive and pragmatic nature of this research, the context analysis also provided a basis of understanding for the interviews with the urban designers, and supplemented the tourist survey results through analysis of tourism trends in current tourism research, destination marketing and online review sites. In the same sense, the interviews with the urban designers contributed to the context analysis through providing rich, current contextual data not evident in the desktop research. This section describes the key sources used in the desktop research, most of which formulated the narrative in the context analysis, but includes others that contributed to overall analysis of results in this thesis.

3.3.1.1 Historical sources

To build a picture of the history and traditions of Cairns' place, polity and power, a desktop analysis of secondary data such as historical documents and news articles was undertaken. Historical sources used were:

- A comprehensive thematic history of Cairns used widely by local government as a definitive source (Heritage Alliance 2011);
- A proposed village plan for the Palm Cove locality circa 1982, cited for changing the way development was approached in the region (Ratcliffe 1982);

- A published history of the Cairns Chamber of Commerce 1909-2009, detailing major developments over the past 100 years and the circumstances that led to them (Schofield 2009);
- A thesis on the History of Cairns and its relationship with the South Pacific (Bottoms 2002); and
- Published government documents on historical events (Office of Economic and Statistical Research 2009; Office of State Revenue 2013).

A key source in this list is the report authored by Melbourne-based Heritage Alliance Conservation Architects and Heritage Consultants in 2011. This 140-page report was prepared for the Queensland Department of Environment & Resource Management and the Cairns Regional Council to inform planning decisions and identify heritage places for management. It draws on extensive referencing to historical documents, archives and media archives and is widely accepted as a key reference point for the history of Cairns.

3.3.1.2 Government policy documents

To develop a picture of contemporary polity in Cairns, a number of current plans, documents and policies were accessed online and reviewed. This review also provided a knowledge base and context for the interviews with urban designers. Buckley (1998) and Omar (2002) acknowledge that many of the most powerful policies associated with government approval processes are often unwritten, unspoken and unacknowledged, which is why a review of these documents alone was not considered sufficient as an indicator of priorities, but rather as a supplement to the interviews.

Government planning and policy documents were considered relevant to the research if they concerned planning and urban design processes in Cairns. Although tourism is a key aspect of many of the planning documents, tourism specific documents were treated as industry research documents (see section 3.3.1.3 below), with the exception of Next Generation Tourism Planning, which is essentially a planning guideline. Key government policy documents used were:

- Cairns Regional Council Planning Scheme (Cairns Regional Council 2009);
- Cairns City Centre Masterplan (Cairns Regional Council & Architectus 2011);
- Queensland Plan (Queensland Government 2014)
- Far North Queensland Regional Plan (Queensland Government 2009);
- Next Generation Tourism Planning (Queensland Government 2015);

- Cairns Style Design Guide (Cairns Regional Council 2010); and
- Creating places for people: An urban design protocol for Australian Cities (Australian Government 2011).

3.3.1.3 Industry research documents

The industry research documents examined in this research were classified as such because they were concerned specifically with the tourism industry, rather than conducted by members within it. Generally, any tourism research conducted by the industry was confidential and not made available to the researcher, although evidence suggested that there was little conducted in this manner anyway. The available industry research was generally commissioned or conducted by a government agency to inform and assist the industry and city decision-makers. Key industry research documents used were:

- Tourism and Events Queensland Strategic Plan 2013-2017 (Tourism and Events Queensland 2013)
- Destination Q Blueprint 2012-2015 (Queensland Government 2012)
- Cairns-Townsville experience development strategy (AEC Group 2011)
- National long-term tourism strategy (Australian Government 2009)
- Initiatives for the development of tourism in Tropical Australia (Pearce, P. 2013)
- An investigation into factors that may affect the long term environmental and economic sustainability of tourism in Northern Australia (Prideaux 2013)
- TNQ - Destination Tourism Plan (Tourism Tropical North Queensland 2014b)
- Regional snapshots based on research by Tourism Research Australia (eg. Tourism and Events Queensland 2012, 2014)

3.3.1.4 Online resources

A number of online resources supplemented the context analysis and the findings of the research. These included Google searches, the Lost Cairns Facebook page, which provided background historical information that was corroborated in other texts, and the Lonely Planet online guidebook. In particular, two specific analyses of online content informed and supplemented the analysis of data in this thesis. The first was an analysis of Google search results of the terms “Cairns Australia” and “Visit Cairns” to gain an understanding of how Cairns is sold to tourists to supplement the interpretation of the tourist survey data. This drew from the academic literature arguing that how people perceive a place is shaped by their initial perceptions of that place. The top twenty tourism-based sites returned for each search were listed and their content analysed in terms of what percentage of natural and

built features appeared on the first page. This was a visual analysis aimed at understanding the level of natural elements versus built elements are being sold as part of the Cairns product. The process of this analysis is described with the results in Chapter 6, Section 6.6.1 and the table of analysis is shown in Appendix 9.

The other specific analysis of online content supplementing the data was an analysis of the top five things to do in Cairns on the online user-generated review website TripAdvisor.com between 2012-2015. This was initially embarked on because it was observed by the researcher in 2012 that a number of city attractions were rating more highly on the site than the Great Barrier Reef or Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, which are known as the main 'hero attractions' of the region (Tourism Tropical North Queensland 2014b). Additionally, a small number of academic researchers have begun to note the usefulness of TripAdvisor.com in particular as a source of data and as an influencer of destination success as it gains popularity (such as Boon, Bonera & Bigi 2013; O'Connor 2008, 2010). At random times over the period, an excel spreadsheet was used to record the name, number of reviews, overall rating, three most recent comments and the origin of the comment author if specified. The results of this were analysed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The quantitative method involved graphing the top five as they appeared over the period according to the number of reviews they had received. Since these ratings are sometimes biased towards attractions with low numbers and very high ratings rather than attractions with high numbers and reasonably high ratings (such as 42 people giving an average of 5 stars compared with 1150 people giving an average of 4.5 stars), the change in number of reviews for the top five rated attractions were measured rather the ratings in isolation.

3.3.2 Stage 2: Interviews with urban designers

The second stage of the research was developed to address the second research objective, which is to critically analyse the urban design process in a tropical city from the perspective of those shaping it. As already mentioned, true to the abductive, pragmatic approach taken in this research, this stage contributed to the context analysis as well as part of the third research objective, which is to identify the connections and disconnections between how urban designers shape a tropical city and what tourists value in the tropical city experience. The most appropriate method to address these objectives from the perspective of the urban designers was considered to be in-depth semi-structured interviews. This method was chosen because if approached in a critical way, the researcher could observe and elicit

‘buried’ or ‘unspoken’ underlying themes within the urban design process. Veal (2006) suggests that semi-structured, in-depth interviews are appropriate in three different situations: 1. When there are relatively few people in the population; 2. When the information is expected to vary and is complex in nature; and 3. When a topic is explored as a preliminary stage in planning a larger study (p. 198). All three of these applied to the urban designers in Cairns. Semi-structured interviews gave focus to the interviews, but allowed for flexibility in discussion to enable themes to emerge and develop. Aside from the need to develop these themes through a qualitative approach, a quantitative approach was not possible because of the limited numbers of people involved in the urban design process in Cairns.

3.3.2.1 Sampling

As pointed out in Chapter 2, Carmona et al’s (2003) earlier identification of knowing and unknowing urban designers evolved to a less defined distinction in the Place-shaping Continuum, however the classifications proved useful in the selection of participants in the research and for analysis of roles. In line with Forsyth and Crewe’s (2009) widely quoted argument that urban design is “one of the key intersection points between planners, architects and landscape architects” (p. 434) (see also Gunder 2011; Kasprisin 2011) these professions comprised the knowing element of the urban designers to be interviewed. Unknowing urban designers are more difficult to access as their role is less clearly defined. A number of people approached to participate in this research felt unqualified to speak about urban design, for example, and declined to be interviewed. Drawing on the results of the context analysis, unknowing urban designers were defined and selected as key decision-makers in the city, rather than the full complement of community groups, households and so forth identified by Carmona et al. (2003).

Having previously worked as a planner in Cairns, the polity and power landscape of the city was familiar to me as a researcher. This knowledge was used as a basis to target an initial group of key people in the decision-making landscape of Cairns. Veal (2006) describes this as convenience sampling (selecting those who are conveniently located or known to the interviewer), and criterion (selecting on the basis of criteria). The eligibility criteria were based on achieving representation from the knowing and unknowing urban designers who have influence in decision-making in Cairns, thus the criteria for subject selection was simply those who are involved in any professional capacity in shaping the urban landscape. Further referrals from the original interviewees based on these criteria were used to extend

this understanding of networks and influence. Morgan, D. L. (2013) refers to this as snowball sampling, where a small pool of initial informants nominate other participants who meet the eligibility criteria for the study. Interviews continued until a core of key theories emerged from the respondents and no new or relevant information was being added. Saumure and Given (2013) refer to this as data saturation. The interviews continued until both a representation of the categories of knowing and unknowing urban designers had been achieved and a point of data saturation had been reached. The final makeup of the sample was comprised of 20 urban designers in the following categories:

Knowing urban designers:

Architects (5)

Planning consultants (2)

Landscape designers (2)

Unknowing urban designers:

Industry representatives (2)

Elected Officials (past and present) (5)

Public administrators (4)

Although these categories give an idea of the main influences of the interviewees, the groups are far from homogenous. A number of the interviewees fell into more than one category: one elected official was also a property developer and 'building designer', one industry representative was also an engineer who had worked as a planning consultant, one architect was also a public administrator, and two architects also described themselves as urban designers, although their skills were built from an architectural background. These distinctions are discussed further in Chapter 5.

3.3.2.2 Interviews

Interviews with urban designers were conducted over a period of four months from November 2012 – February 2013. These were semi-structured interviews based around a series of questions developed from the literature. A copy of the information sheet provided to the respondents is in Appendix 2. Because these interviews were qualitative, and specific to people in decision-making positions, respondents were also required to complete an informed consent form, to allow them to be quoted in the research and to be identified if necessary in publication. A copy of this form is in Appendix 3. As identified in the context

analysis, Cairns has a relatively small decision-making community, which meant that many of the respondents were already known to me as a researcher, and they also knew my personal networks and connections. Whilst this may have influenced how some respondents expressed themselves in case their views were not kept confidential, all efforts were taken to behave professionally and to assure respondents of confidentiality, which were detailed in the informed consent form.

Interviews lasted from 45 minutes to two hours, depending on the relative time constraints and generosity of the respondent. These were set up via email and telephone conversations and took place at a location of the respondent's choosing. This was usually in a café or at the respondent's office. Interviews were recorded on a digital recorder and then transcribed into a standardised format for analysis, guided by the requirements of the Leximancer software.

3.3.2.3 Question development

Questions guiding the urban designer interviews were developed to enable the abduction process, moving iteratively between inductive and deductive reasoning. The questions guiding the in-depth interviews were kept purposely broad and open-ended to enable the inductive process of allowing themes to emerge from the data. In the earlier part of the interview, respondents were encouraged to speak freely about their ideas on urban design and how it relates to tourists. Frey (2013) identifies that the open-ended question becomes a 'linguistic event' where the interview becomes more of a negotiation between the respondent and the interviewer rather than a passive question and answer engagement. This was the case with these interviews, where tangents were pursued in search of deeper thoughts and ideas on concepts that may have been significant to the respondent or represented in the literature. Further in to the interviews, some of the concepts that had arisen from the literature review were raised specifically.

The rationale for the groups of questions is detailed below. A copy of the full list of questions is in Appendix 4.

Basic information

The first group of questions were designed to gain an understanding on the background and potential contextual framework the respondents operate within for later analysis:

1. Name:
2. Organisation:
3. Role:
4. Location:
5. Years involved in your current industry:
6. Years working in/on jobs in Cairns:

General open questions

To enable an inductive process of eliciting themes as they emerged, these initial open questions were not based in literature but rather general and open as possible to elicit answers that were guided by the respondent rather than the interviewer:

7. What is urban design to you?
8. What do you think makes good tropical urban design?
9. Can you name some key areas with successful urban design in the Cairns Region, and some key unsuccessful areas? What do you think makes this so?
10. What do you think tourists want from the urban design of a tropical city such as Cairns?

Identifying knowing or unknowing urban designers

Drawing from Carmona et al.'s (2003) concept of knowing and unknowing urban designers, and self-conscious and un-self-conscious design processes, these questions were asked to gain an understanding of whether these divisions applied to the urban designers in Cairns. Whilst an initial assumption had been made of who classified as knowing or unknowing urban designers, respondents were given the opportunity to classify themselves:

11. Do you have a role in providing this?
If not, who does?
If so, what is your role?
12. Do you consider that you fit within one or more of these categories of urban designer: producer, regulator, user.
If not, what category would you place yourself in?

Considering the needs of tourists

As discussed in the literature review, user considerations in urban design are considered by some to be “rare and unfamiliar” (Vischer 2008, p. 239). These questions were designed to test this idea through ascertaining how the urban designers shape their perceptions of the needs of tourists. Questions 14 and 15 were designed to gain an understanding of how the urban designers value specific needs of tourists in terms of allocating space to them in planning schemes and in the city:

13. Have you ever conducted or used research on what tourists want or need in the Cairns urban experience?

If so, what?

14. Research shows that engaging with locals is critical to the experience of tourists. Do you think planning needs to be done specifically for tourism, or as a comprehensive plan for all?

15. Do you think the Cairns Region should have tourist precincts?

If not, why not?

If so, where?

What should they look like?

Specific examples – in context

An underpinning element of Carmona’s (2014) place-shaping continuum is the idea of context. This question was designed to elicit a comparison between the contexts of two high-use tourism localities in the region:

16. Palm Cove & Port Douglas are key tourism destinations within the Cairns region. Do you think their urban design is effective?

If not, what would you change?

If so, what are their best attributes?

Perceived value of quality in urban design

This final question was an experimental way of addressing the respondents' perspectives on Murphy, Pritchard and Smith's (2000) suggestion that perception of quality in the destination product is a "positive distinguishing characteristic" (p. 43) for tourists:


17. Where would you place your own approach to urban design quality on this continuum?

Appropriate

Provide the minimum necessary to accommodate use or secure investment.

Sustainable

Provide the best quality for optimum use and sustainable construction practices.



In the first two interviews, the two ends of the continuum were titled: *Sustainable* or *Appropriate*, however it became clear that the term *Sustainable* was being confused as an environmental reference rather than as balancing environmental, economic and social needs. For the remaining interviews, these titles were removed.

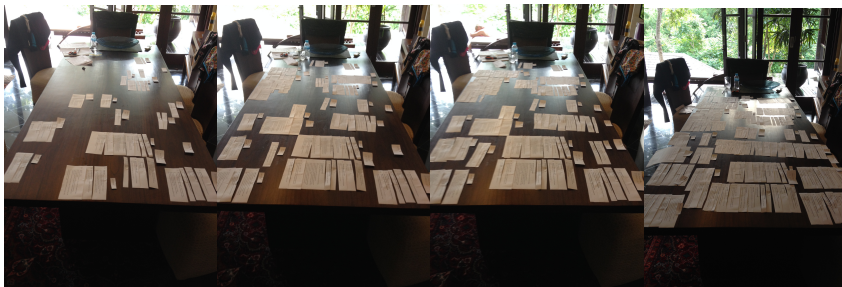
3.3.2.4 Interview analysis

The data analysis in Stage 3 was initially conducted through listening to each of the interviews and organising the data from the transcribed document into the order of the questions asked. This was done because conversations invariably moved from topic to topic throughout the interviews as respondents explored concepts and ideas. These were organised into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet with a unique identifier and a column identifying the respondent. Each question was given a numbered sheet so all responses were grouped together for each question. In the event that a response addressed two questions, it was split into the according two questions, but no replicas were created. This was designed to avoid any weighting of responses in a subsequent Leximancer analysis.

During the process of listening to the recording and separating the transcribed questions, a list of analytic memos were made. Saldana (2013, pp. 44-5) argues that analytic memos can be used to: reflect on and write about emergent patterns, categories, themes, concepts and assertions; and to reflect on and write about the possible networks (links, connections, overlaps, flows) among the codes, patterns, categories, themes, concepts and assertions. The analytic memos were recorded in a Microsoft Word file with a summary title and explanatory sentence with a reference if applicable to a particular transcript page number.

As concepts and themes emerged, new references and ideas were added to existing entries or if unique, a new entry was created. A total of 220 analytic memos were created using these guidelines. The pages of memos were then printed and cut into individual memos to be grouped and re-grouped in a three-day inductive process where themes and concepts could emerge. Figure 3.4 shows a series of images of this process. These were then re-organised in a Microsoft Excel (Mac:2011) spreadsheet and grouped accordingly, as a list of key themes that referenced back to quotes in the original transcripts.

Figure 3.4 Inductive grouping process of analytic memos



The themes developed from the analytic memos created a framework for analysis using NVivo (Mac version 10.2.0) to code and analyse responses. As a supplement to the main analysis, Leximancer (version 4) was used to elicit any further themes or connections through the computer-generated ‘unsupervised’ analysis of natural language patterns in the interviews into semantic and relational patterns (see Smith & Humphreys 2006 for evaluation). In their analysis of destination image formation in bloggers visiting China, Tseng et al. (2015) identify that Leximancer is useful for analysing meaning within passages rather than word frequencies or coding styles supplied by other programs. This was considered a useful supplement to the coding process to identify any meanings that may have gone unnoticed by the researcher. Word cloud analysis was also used to gain an overall feel of the responses to key questions such as: “what do you think tourists want from the urban design of a tropical city such as Cairns?” This gave an indication of some of the dominant themes within the data from the outset. This range of supplementary qualitative analysis methods were designed to unearth any hidden concepts or relationships that may have gone unobserved in the analytic memo process. The result of these analysis techniques was a rich, textual image of how the urban design process works in Cairns, deeper political issues within the process, and an image of the normative outcomes decision makers in Cairns consider important in designing for tourists. The majority of these findings are discussed in Chapter 5.

In terms of establishing trustworthiness, this research employed all of Beuving and de Vries' (2015) four recommended methods of establishing validity and reliability in qualitative data. Firstly, theoretical concepts were developed through the inductive analysis to systematically develop theoretical concepts, identified through coding and analytical memos. Secondly, simultaneous use of different data collection methods were used to triangulate findings. Interview data was triangulated using interviews with other urban designers and through secondary data which forms the basis of Chapter 4. Thirdly, note taking and diary keeping created a research log and the analytical memos of observations. Fourthly, checking and re-checking with respondents to clarify findings took place through email, phone and in-person conversations, as well as occasional research reports based on the findings distributed throughout the project duration.

3.3.3 Stage 3: Tourist surveys

The purpose of Stage 3 was to identify what tourists value in experiencing the tropical urban landscape. Whilst Stage 2 identified a series of normative outcomes for urban design in the tropical city, this stage addressed the second half of the third research objective, which is to identify the connections and disconnections between how urban designers shape a tropical city and what tourists value in the tropical city experience. Surveys were chosen as the basis for data collection at this stage for two reasons. Firstly, in line with the abductive, pragmatic approach of the research, a quantitative element provided an opportunity for deductive reasoning to be applied with statistical significance. Tourists were the obvious choice for quantitative data collection as they represent a large and diverse population visiting Cairns, with around 2.8 million visiting Cairns per year (Tourism Research Australia 2016). Veal (2006) argues that questionnaire methods are useful for many reasons, in particular because tourism is a mass phenomenon which requires quantified information for policy and business decision-making, and questionnaire methods provide a relatively transparent set of research procedures within which to acquire information about tourists within this phenomenon. Secondly, the qualitative data gained from the interviews in Stage 2 provided a number of conceptual themes that could potentially be tested with a survey instrument, such as whether tourists really do prefer urban places with vegetation, whether the vegetation needs to include palm trees or not, and whether tropical feel is important. Additionally, a long-term research project on tourist decision-making and preferences was already being conducted in Cairns Airport with a standard set of

demographic and preference questions at the front end of the survey. Including this standard set of questions at the front of the tourist surveys for this research could enable the results to be compared with the results of this ongoing research.

As with the urban designer interviews in Stage 2, the tourist surveys provided data that enabled analysis through both inductive and deductive reasoning. The majority of the tourist survey was designed as a deductive process, where a number of ideas arising from the literature review and context analysis were tested. Five qualitative questions at the end of the survey also enabled an inductive process of reasoning, where themes were elicited to retrospectively analyse the urban designer interviews to discover any potential connections and disconnections between the urban designer priorities and tourist preferences.

3.3.3.1 Survey administration and sampling

The self-completion surveys were originally designed to be administered at the Cairns Airport to obtain a relatively random sample, however due to the ongoing survey research already operating there, permission was not secured for this. A secondary strategy was developed to administer the surveys in high use tourist areas of Cairns. This was done to maximise the possibility of engaging with tourists. Permits were acquired to conduct the survey in the following locations:

- The Esplanade (except within 100m of the Swimming Lagoon) (n=90)
- City Place & surrounds (n=222)
- Reef Fleet Terminal (n=33)
- Cairns Botanical Gardens (n=41)
- Palm Cove Beach (n=162)
- Port Douglas Beach

After consideration, Port Douglas beach was excluded from the list of locations because of the safety (risk assessment) aspects for researchers to travel there, and because of the possibility that tourists could travel directly to Port Douglas without encountering the Cairns CBD at all. As some questions in the survey required experience of the Cairns CBD, it was deemed to be more productive to focus on locations closer to Cairns. Map 3.1 shows a map of the locations surveyed. Administering at these locations did introduce some bias to the responses. In particular, it was anticipated that the high-use public areas may be more heavily populated with backpackers than families or professional couples, who might be

more inclined to remain within their resort during the day. As Palm Cove is known more as a resort area, an attempt was made to balance collection at Palm Cove Beach with collection near the Esplanade Lagoon (known as a backpacker area). Additionally, the Botanical Gardens and the Reef Fleet Terminal are less dominated by the backpacker demographic so were also focused on to access a broader stratum of the tourist population.

Map 3.1 Locations surveyed



Source: Google Earth. Map data © 2015 GBRMPA, Google. Google Earth Images © 2015 Google, © 2015 Digital Globe, © 2015 CNES/Astrium, Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO

Another issue with administering the surveys away from the airport was that respondents were being approached at some stage during their trip, rather than at the end of it. When people are waiting in an airport departure lounge, their holiday has reached its conclusion, but when people are lying on a beach, they could be one day or two weeks into their holiday. This limited some respondents who were early on in their trip in terms of what they could say about the actual city experience in Cairns. To counter this, a series of questions using a visual preference method focused on rating images that were taken of Cairns rather than on the actual experience of Cairns itself to supplement the 'lived

experience' questions about the city. Additionally, a question was added asking how many days the respondent planned to stay in the region.

Surveys were conducted according to James Cook University ethics and risk management policies. This required the production of an information sheet for respondents (see Appendix 5) and a survey procedure developed in accordance with these policies (see Appendix 6). A team of four researchers administered the surveys in the permitted locations in October-December 2013 and April-May 2014. These periods were chosen because they straddled high and low season tourist times in an attempt to avoid any bias in responses based on the presence or absence of other people in the city experience. The very low tourist season (late December to March) was avoided because it was too difficult to find people willing to sit outside long enough in the mid-wet season heat and/or rain to complete the survey. These periods were also chosen because they are warmer months than in the June-September period. It was considered that a degree of warmth would be more productive to give a tropical framing to respondents thinking about the tropical city.

Convenience sampling was conducted in accordance with Veal's (2006) guidelines for site/user/visitor surveys where the respondents are stationary and the interviewer is mobile. Veal argues that care must be taken to target different sites at different times of the day when using this method, so a timetable was made to ensure variation across collection times, locations and weather. Veal also suggests that to avoid self-selection of only people "with something to say" (p. 286), care must be taken in issuing self-completion surveys to ensure the return from all who agreed to complete the survey. All surveys issues were collected and checked upon return. Respondents were selected on a 'next available' basis, where 20 surveys were handed out to the next person who was seated in the area and not in deep conversation or obviously in a hurry to get somewhere, then collected by the interviewers upon completion. The guidelines for the survey administrators is in Appendix 6.

Veal (2006) indicates that the sample size should not be selected on the basis of its relationship to the size of the population, but on the absolute size of the sample, regardless of the size of the population. This should be determined by:

1. The required level of precision in the results;

2. The level of detail in the proposed analysis; and
3. The available budget (p. 288).

Within these criteria, a sample size of 500 was selected. Although there was a degree of randomness in the sampling as every available person in the immediate area of the interviewer was approached, the location and style of interviews classified the sampling as non-probability method (Burns & Bush 2014; Veal 2006). Veal (2006) indicates that a random sample size of 500 gives 95% confidence within ± 4.4 at 50% and ± 0.9 at 1 or 99%, so this was used as a guideline for the non-probability sample size. As Vischer (2008) points out, very few quantitative surveys of city users have been conducted, making it difficult to find comparable surveys to draw a 'rule of thumb' for sample size from. However in user-based tourism studies, Bramwell (1998) based his research on 390 participants, and Chen and Tsai (2007) based theirs on 393 respondents, indicating that a sample size of over 500 could draw reliable conclusions.

The survey administration continued until this number was exceeded, plus an extra 50 were collected to manage the risk of any low-response questions. In total, 548 surveys were collected and entered into an SPSS (version 22) database. From this, a calculation was made to identify any invalid responses. In accordance with Hair (2010) and Cunningham's (2008) statistical guidelines, an invalid response was classified as any entry with less than 80% of the questions answered. This was calculated using a series of formulae in Microsoft Excel (Mac:2011) where each question was allocated one mark and each survey entry was allocated a mark from each question using the COUNTIF function. This resulted in a percentage completed mark allocated for each survey entry, and those falling below 80% were eliminated. This process left 526 valid responses for analysis. Figure 3.5 shows tourists completing the survey at the Reef Fleet Terminal in Cairns.

Figure 3.5 Respondents completing the survey in Cairns



(used with subjects' permission)

3.3.3.2 Questionnaire development

A pilot survey was developed to gauge the quality of responses and the time taken to complete the survey. The demographic information questions at the front end of the questionnaire were taken from those in a larger research project conducted under the National Environmental Research Program (NERP) using exit surveys at Cairns Domestic Airport conducted from 2011 to 2014 (Prideaux, Sakata & Thompson 2012).

The second part of the questionnaire addressed key items found in the literature review, desktop analysis in Stage 1 and urban designer interviews in Stage 2. Feedback was sought from respondents on any questions they found difficult to answer or felt to be unclear. After the first 7 surveys were conducted, a number of changes were made based on this feedback and an analysis of the responses. One point of feedback was that the survey was too long, so an effort was made to cut it back by one page. This process resulted in the removal or change of the following questions:

- During your trip to the Cairns region, please indicate the location(s) that you have visited: [list of localities in the region] - removed because this information was not deemed to be central to understanding the nature of the tourists or their preferences on urban design.
- Please tell us what features of Cairns have added to your experience? [open-ended question with 3 spaces for answers] – The quality of the responses in these questions were of little value in analysis. Names of places were often given with no explanation of why this was the case.

- Please tell us what features of Cairns have detracted from your experience? [open-ended question with 3 spaces for answers] – as with the previous question, little of analytical value was gleaned from the responses.
- When experiencing a tropical city, how important are the following factors to you? [17 options on a Likert scale including palm trees, outdoor dining, open space] – although theoretically this looked to be a valuable question, the responses were almost entirely marked as ‘very important’ or, occasionally, ‘important’. It was considered more valuable to develop a better qualitative question that respondents might be more inclined to answer if the survey were shorter.
- In your view, is there an urban experience that would make Cairns a more attractive place to visit? [open-ended question] – this was re-worded more simply to become Q 23 (see below) because the question was either missed or responses did not reflect the question being asked.

The rationale for the groups of questions in the final survey is detailed below. A copy of the survey is in Appendix 7.

Basic survey questions

Demographic and basic questions from the NERP survey were adapted to the survey to enable validation of the data back to the long-term research. These questions were:

1. Are you: ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. Where do you usually live? Australia (postcode) _____ Overseas (country) _____

3. Please indicate the year you were born: 19 _____

4. How would you best describe your occupation: (Please choose one only)

<input type="radio"/> Self-employed	<input type="radio"/> Professional	<input type="radio"/> Retail	<input type="radio"/> Domestic duties
<input type="radio"/> Management	<input type="radio"/> Office/Clerical	<input type="radio"/> Public Service	<input type="radio"/> Manual/Factory worker
<input type="radio"/> Service Industry	<input type="radio"/> Tradesperson	<input type="radio"/> Student	<input type="radio"/> Retired

5. Which of these best describes your immediate travel party:

<input type="radio"/> Alone	<input type="radio"/> Couple (partner/spouse)	<input type="radio"/> Tour group	<input type="radio"/> Club
<input type="radio"/> Friends	<input type="radio"/> Family with children	<input type="radio"/> With relatives	

6. Is this your first visit to the Cairns region?

<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	If No, how many times have you visited? _____
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7. How many days do you plan to stay in the Cairns Region? _____

8. How many days have you been in the Cairns Region so far? _____

9. What is the main type of accommodation you are using during your visit to the Cairns region?

<input type="radio"/> Motel	<input type="radio"/> Resort/hotel	<input type="radio"/> Backpackers hostel	<input type="radio"/> Holiday apartment/unit
<input type="radio"/> Caravan park/cabin	<input type="radio"/> Camping	<input type="radio"/> Bed & breakfast	<input type="radio"/> Friends/relatives

10. During your visit to the Cairns region, where will you stay the most nights? (Select one only)

<input type="radio"/> Cairns	<input type="radio"/> Palm Cove	<input type="radio"/> Port Douglas	<input type="radio"/> Daintree
<input type="radio"/> Mission Beach	<input type="radio"/> Trinity Beach	<input type="radio"/> Cape Tribulation	<input type="radio"/> Other _____

11. Please indicate the highest level of formal education that you have received so far:

<input type="radio"/> Secondary	<input type="radio"/> Trade/TAFE	<input type="radio"/> Diploma	<input type="radio"/> Degree	<input type="radio"/> Other _____
---------------------------------	----------------------------------	-------------------------------	------------------------------	-----------------------------------

12. Where did you find out about the Cairns region? (Select all that apply)

<input type="radio"/> Internet	<input type="radio"/> Tourist guide books	<input type="radio"/> Friends/family	<input type="radio"/> Advertisements in print
<input type="radio"/> Travel Agent	<input type="radio"/> TV documentary	<input type="radio"/> Visitor centres	<input type="radio"/> Advertisements on TV/radio
<input type="radio"/> Been before	<input type="radio"/> Facebook	<input type="radio"/> TripAdvisor	<input type="radio"/> Other _____

Tropical feel

A Leximancer textual analysis of the interviews with urban designers in Stage 2 indicated a strong relationship between the use of the words 'tropical' and 'feel' (discussed further in Chapter 5). This showed that in the interviews with the urban designers, the word most likely to appear with 'tropical' was 'feel'. Other concepts emerging from the Leximancer

analysis in terms of ‘tropical’ included ‘trees’, ‘environment’ and ‘design’ which as tangible visual elements in the landscape were able to be tested through rating images. To test the less tangible idea of feel, a straightforward quantitative question around the value of tropical feel was included to understand whether people value a ‘tropical feel’ in Cairns City:

13. Is it important to you that Cairns City has a tropical feel?

<input type="radio"/>	Yes	<input type="radio"/>	No	<input type="radio"/>	Don't care
-----------------------	-----	-----------------------	----	-----------------------	------------

Interaction with locals

Drawing from comments from the urban designers that interaction with locals is a key element of the tourist experience, two questions were included to gauge the actual value and level of local interaction:

14. When on holiday in Cairns, do you like to be in a place where the locals spend time?

<input type="radio"/>	Yes	<input type="radio"/>	No	<input type="radio"/>	Sometimes
-----------------------	-----	-----------------------	----	-----------------------	-----------

15. Have you had a conversation with any locals in Cairns?

<input type="radio"/>	Yes	<input type="radio"/>	No	<input type="radio"/>	Only when purchasing something
-----------------------	-----	-----------------------	----	-----------------------	--------------------------------

Understanding how tourists use the city

With the exception of a major Global Positioning System (GPS) tracking project in Hong Kong resulting in a number of subsequent journal articles (Lew & McKercher 2006; McKercher et al. 2011; McKercher, Wong & Lau 2006; Shoval et al. 2011), there have been few published findings on how tourists use cities, particularly outside of Hong Kong. Shoval (2008) notes that the field of urban studies has also been reticent in harnessing the opportunities GPS tracking presents to urban analysis. Key outcomes of the Hong Kong study were the findings that tourists stay close to their hotels, that GPS has issues with the ‘canyon effect’ of urban environments, and that participants are generally wary about being tracked by their mobile phone or a GPS for the duration of their holiday. Additionally, they observe that GPS- or mobile- based tracking methods are yet to evolve to the point of adding qualitative interpretation to the data – why people go places, or what their impression of places are whilst they were there. Survey- and Diary- based tracking methods are also flawed however, with some studies showing that the intricacies of movement and engagement with the landscape are lost when respondents report on places they have

been, either because they only report on the main places they went or because they don't always remember all the places they went (Shoval & Isaacson 2007). Also, the survey method may not capture the full extent of the respondent's use of the city if the survey is not conducted at the very end of the trip.

There are a number of benefits of the survey-based tracking method though. Firstly, if they are accurate, GPS or mobile devices track where people actually go, whereas the survey method tracks where people remember going, giving an insight into the temporal perceptions of tourists who experience the city. Secondly, the survey method gives an opportunity to reference responses within a wider context of the experience, inviting notes or further analysis on preferences and motivations. For this reason, a self-mapping methodology was developed for this survey to enable a better understanding of where the tourists were going in Cairns.

A map of the Cairns City Centre was developed using Adobe Illustrator overlaid on a Google Map of the Cairns CBD. Drawing on other published tourist maps accessed through Google Images, a tourist map typology was developed to draw a 'tourist-style' map that respondents were asked to indicate where they had visited and where they had walked during their time in Cairns so far. The map marked areas of established tourist attractions in the city: The Esplanade Lagoon, Esplanade Boardwalk, Muddy's Playground, The Pier, Mondo's at the Hilton on Trinity Inlet, local supermarkets, Cairns Central, Cairns Night Markets, Rusty's Markets and the Botanical Gardens Precinct. A selection of major hotels and landmarks were also included to assist people in orienting the map to their experience of the city. Figure 3.6 shows the map section of the survey.

[illegible]

Images of the city

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attracted critique for their subjectivity (Palmer & Hoffman 2001). In an attempt to counter this subjectivity, qualitative questions were also asked of respondents to identify the things they liked least/most about their two favourite or least favourite images (discussed further below). This gave a deeper context to the image preferences, yet the Likert scale provided opportunities to analyse correlations between groups, so both forms of analysis were of value.

Another limitation of the image rating approach is that it is restricted to the respondents' visual impression of place. Research shows that the experience of the city is not restricted to the visual, but is also sensual (Urry 1999). Suggestions from the desktop research in Stage 1 and urban designer interviews in Stage 2 indicated the importance of 'tropical feel', which can be illustrated by the "feel of the warm air on your skin" (landscape architect) or 'tropical smells' (AEC Group 2011). Whilst some of these elements were able to come out in the open-ended questions at the end of the survey, researching these elements of 'feel' were outside the scope of the research.

Respondents were asked to rate images taken in high-use tourism areas around Cairns City and Palm Cove in the following question:

18. Have a look at the pictures of places in the Cairns region. What do you think of these places? Please rate the image from 1 - 5

1 = strongly dislike 5 = really like.						1 = strongly dislike 5 = really like.					
	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Photo 1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 6	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 7	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 8	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 4	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 9	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 5	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 10	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 11	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 16	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 12	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 17	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 13	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 18	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 14	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 19	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 15	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 20	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 21	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 26	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 22	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 27	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 23	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 28	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 24	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 29	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 25	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 30	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Images were captured to illustrate presence/absence of concepts and themes identified in Stages 1 and 2 to test whether there was any difference in rating between them. 30 images were chosen from 411 photos taken by the researcher on 31st July, 2013. This was a sunny

day with mostly blue skies and the weather stayed consistent throughout the day. Images were chosen based on the criteria of showing presence/absence between the following elements:

Interface with the natural environment:

- Natural vistas/no natural vistas
- Vegetation in the city /no vegetation in the city
- Palm trees/native trees
- Built walking path/no built walking path

One industry of many – no special tourism planning areas

- Shops aimed at tourists/shops aimed at locals
- Signage, obvious tourism place/no signage

Sense of place/uniqueness:

- Vernacular/modern architecture
- Architectural eras of hotels
- A locally preserved place that may not be loved by tourists/a heritage place that may be loved by tourists

It was decided not to include the very popular Esplanade Lagoon on the foreshore of the city (which has by far the highest number of reviews on TripAdvisor.com's Cairns Attractions), as it is already known as an iconic tourist attraction and was a focal area for survey administration. As a best/worst comparison was used in the following question, it was felt that the Esplanade may overshadow more subtle choices for the 'best' options, and also influence choice because most respondents would have had personal experience of the place that may influence opinions of it. Appendix 8 shows the images and a justification of why they were chosen. Map 3.2 shows the locations of where the images were captured in the Cairns CBD. Images were chosen based on representing the selection criteria around what was perceived by the researcher as the main areas of use in Cairns.

Map 3.2 Image capture locations in Cairns



The quantitative ratings of the images provided a tool to test the concepts arising from Stages 1-2 in the research. Respondents were also asked to rate the two images they liked most and least and to give a reason why. This approach of exploring reasons for both satisfaction and dissatisfaction is supported by Alegre and Garau (2010), whose research suggests that an absence of satisfaction does not necessarily indicate the presence of dissatisfaction, and vice versa. This is discussed further in Section 6.6.2. Additionally, the qualitative aspect of this question provided the opportunity to introduce new concepts to the analysis that may not have been identified by the urban designers.

Respondents were asked the following questions:

19. Of the images you just looked at, which two did you like the most, and why?

Liked Photo # _____ Why? _____

Liked Photo # _____ Why? _____

20. Of the images you just looked at, which two did you like the least?

Disliked Photo # _____ Why? _____

Disliked Photo # _____ Why? _____

Open questions

The final three questions in the survey were open-ended and non-specific to elicit any previously unidentified concepts of urban design in the city that were of importance to the respondents:

21. What do you like most about Cairns City? _____

22. What do you like least about Cairns City? _____

23. In your view, what would make Cairns City a more attractive place to visit?

3.3.3.3 Survey analysis & measures

All data from the tourist surveys was entered into SPSS software (version 22), which served as the central storage point for all responses. Statistical analyses were conducted in SPSS, and further analysis was conducted using Microsoft Excel software (Mac:2011). A number of key analyses were performed on the data from the tourist surveys:

1. Reliability of the sample

It was initially envisaged that the statistical reliability of the sample would be measured against the NERP survey results as it is the only specific long-term tourist data in the region aside from more general surveys like the National Visitor Survey, which does not give the level of detail required for comparison. It was discovered through further analysis that the NERP survey has limitations because it is administered as an exit survey in English language

through the domestic airport, which means it only samples those people who are departing domestically by air. Tourism Research Australia (2016) data indicates that in 2015, 43% of International visitors arrived not by air (ie. Drive, rail or cruise ship), and 54% of domestic visitors arrived not by air. Additionally, this does not break down whether those who did depart by air went through the domestic or international terminal. By engaging in next-available sampling in public areas with a large sample size of 526 valid responses, the research in this thesis presents a picture of tourists who use the Cairns urban landscape, whereas the NERP survey may capture tourists who have only travelled to Port Douglas or stayed out of the city. This may also indicate a limitation in the research because those who do not use the public areas of the city - potentially because they see it in a less favourable light – may not have participated in the research.

2. Use of the city analysis

The map data was entered in SPSS as a present/absent value (1 or null) for the points and the paths drawn. The paths were divided into 124 segments representing approximately half a city block or a whole city block, depending on the intensity of use. This enabled a frequency analysis to be performed in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for each of the points and paths visited in the city, which were then imported into ArcGIS software (version 10.2) to represent tourism use hotspots in the city. Attributes were classified using graduated symbology within an automated Natural Breaks (Jenks) classification method.

3. Image rating analysis

The 30 images in the survey were rated on a Likert Scale (Veal 2006) ranging from 1 (strongly dislike) to 5 (really like). Reliability tests were conducted on the scales using SPSS Statistics, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.934, identified by Pallant (2010) as representing very good internal consistency reliability because it is over 0.8. Preliminary results were assessed using mean image ratings calculated using SPSS and then transposed in Microsoft Excel to create a table in order of highest to lowest mean value. This was represented in bar graph form, which enabled a grouping analysis, where groups of values became evident. This was also represented in a line graph form, which was then used as a standard benchmark for all responses so preferences of different demographic groups could be compared with the overall results.

Further analysis of the image ratings was conducted using one-way between-groups analysis of variance to explore the impact of Region of origin, Age and Accommodation style on image preference. For the region of origin analysis, respondents were categorised into the following four regions:

Group 1: Australia and New Zealand (New Zealand is considered 'domestic' because of cultural similarities in the population and ease of access to the region due to its proximity).

Group 2: Asia (China, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Korea, Taiwan)

Group 3: Europe/Scandinavia (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Netherlands, UK)

Group 4: Americas (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, USA)

It is accepted that these groups are far from homogenous, however creating larger groups made for more valid comparison and there are some cultural similarities within the regions. There was a statistically significant difference at the $p < 0.5$ level in 25 of the images between the regions. The effect of the difference was calculated using Cohen's (1988, p.22 in Pallant 2010) guidelines of strength of effect. Cohen gauges the eta squared calculation (% of variance explained) in terms of small (1%), medium (6%) or large (13.8%) effect. In Table 6.5, this is shown as small ($S \leq 1\%$), small to medium ($S-M=2-5\%$), medium ($M=6\%$), or medium to large ($M-L=6-12\%$). Despite reaching statistical significance, the actual difference in mean scores between the groups for 19 of the images was small to medium, with the effect size calculated using eta squared, at or below 0.05. Six images had a medium to large effect size of 0.06 or more also using eta squared. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test identified a number of significant differences between the groups which are discussed in Chapter 6.

For the age analysis, respondents were categorised into age groups for many of the analyses in this study, however the categories were condensed for comparing the differences between means to add clarity to the interpretation. Drawing from the year ranges for generations as specified by the Center for Generational Kinetics (2016)

- Group 1:** Millennials (1996-present) (n=5)
- Group 2:** Generation Y (1977-1995) (n=319)
- Group 3:** Generation X (1965-1976) (n=100)
- Group 4:** Baby Boomers (1946-1964) (n=81)
- Group 5:** Traditionalists (before 1945) (n=17)

There was a statistically significant difference at the $p < 0.5$ level in 22 of the images between generations. Despite reaching statistical significance, the actual difference in mean scores between the groups for 19 of the images was small to medium, with the effect size calculated using eta squared, at or below 0.05. Three images had a medium to large effect size of 0.06 or more also using eta squared. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test identified a number of significant differences between the groups which are discussed in Chapter 6.

For the accommodation style analysis, only respondents staying in the three most popular styles of accommodation were analysed, representing 85.6% of the sample, as each of these had more than 100 respondents compared with less than 25 in each other category. The main three groups analysed were:

- Group 1:** Resort/Hotel (n=185)
- Group 2:** Backpackers (n=149)
- Group 3:** Apartment/Unit (n=116)

These groups were analysed because as previously mentioned, it was considered that people staying in different types of accommodation might use the city in different ways. There was a statistically significant difference at the $p < 0.5$ level in 17 of the images between accommodation style groups. Despite reaching statistical significance, the actual difference in mean scores between the groups for 11 of the images was small to medium, with the effect size calculated using eta squared, at or below 0.05. Two images had a medium to large effect size of 0.06 or more also using eta squared. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test identified a number of significant differences between the groups which are discussed in Chapter 6.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the image scores between males (n=239) and females (n= 284). There was a statistically significant difference for males and females in six of the images at the $p < 0.05$ level. Despite reaching statistical significance, the magnitude of the differences in the means was small in all six images, with an eta squared value of less than 0.02 in each.

A frequency analysis of the images liked most and least was also conducted. First and second choice frequency values were combined in Microsoft Excel to create a graph of most liked images in descending order. The same was done for the least liked images.

Comments on why images were liked or least liked were listed in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and coded in through an inductive process, where themes emerged as coding progressed. This was conducted in an iterative fashion, so if a new code was added, a revision of previous comments was conducted so no coding was missed. 72 themes developed for the liked most comments and 44 developed for the liked least comments. A frequency analysis of the themes was conducted, producing a graph of the most popular reasons why images were liked or disliked.

An inductive analysis of the open-ended questions used the same coding technique as for the least/most like images to identify any key themes that might have been missed in the survey.

3.4 Conclusion

This Chapter has discussed and justified the pragmatic, abductive approach of this research. It identified that as it draws on urban design and tourism as two interdisciplinary fields of research, a post-disciplinary approach is appropriate for the study, requiring disciplinary boundaries to be acknowledged but not to confine the research. This supports the development of the conceptual framework in Chapter 2, where literature from a range of disciplines and fields was drawn from but still identified within a broader framework of knowledge. This chapter also identified that the pragmatic approach is well suited to the problem-focused methods of post-disciplinary research, drawing on D.L. Morgan's (2007) philosophical arguments and Dorst's (2011) design thinking concepts to present an abductive approach to the research (Figure 3.3), where inductive, qualitative approaches and deductive quantitative approaches are used iteratively to answer the research aim.

Within the abductive process, an inductive context analysis and interviews with urban designers inform and support a deductive analysis of tourist preferences through questionnaires, although some induction was also present within the qualitative aspects of the tourist surveys, which further informed the context analysis and online content analysis.

This complex, iterative system of inductive and deductive reasoning combined to form the abductive approach of the research. Carmona et al.'s (2003) approach to urban design to “encapsulate its heart or core rather than prescribe its edge or boundary” (p. 5) is a key element to this analysis, where commonality and similarity are focused on rather than analysing outliers and attempting to define boundaries. This may be considered a limitation of the research, however given the complex and at times ‘wicked’ nature of urban design and tourism problems, maintaining focus on central elements is also a key strength. The following three chapters (4, 5 and 6) report on the results of Stages 1, 2 and 3 of the research, with some crossovers indicative of the iterative, abductive approach. Chapter 7 uses abduction to find the ‘middle ground’ and draw the results together in an analysis of the connections and disconnections in the data.

Chapter 4

4 Context

4.1 Introduction

Context analysis is a key aspect of the pragmatic approach to research. Morgan, D. L. (2007) identifies that pragmatism acknowledges the middle ground between context and generality. The purpose of this chapter is to better understand this middle ground through an analysis of the specific and general context of Cairns as a tropical city to add a contextual meaning to the models developed in this thesis. In his 'place shaping continuum' model, Carmona (2014) places context at the heart of urban design process, arguing that context is comprised of 'place', 'polity' and 'power'. Hall (2003) makes a similar argument in the tourism planning literature, identifying connections between place, power and politics in the process of tourism planning. As discussed in Chapter 2, although these two authors do not cite one another nor engage with the same literature, they effectively surmise the same core argument: that place, polity and power are central to decision making in cities – be it for urban design process or tourism planning. This indicates that it is critical to understand the influence of context if a useable model of urban design and tourism is to be developed. Using this framework for a context analysis, this chapter introduces Cairns as the site of the research.

As discussed in Chapter 2, context is critical to understanding how policies and ideas are transferred across places and cultures. Arnold (2000) argues that historically, the tropics as a region has been defined as a place seen as environmentally and culturally distinct from by Europe: "constituting an impoverished and pestilential region, largely unsuited to white settlement and agriculture, yet reliant upon outside agency for prospects of development" (p. 6). Driver and Yeoh (2000) elaborate on this further, suggesting that: "The identification of the northern temperate regions as the normal, and the tropics as altogether other – climatically, geographically and morally – became part of an enduring imaginative geography, which continues to shape the production and consumption of knowledge in the twenty first century world" (p. 1). These observations of the established 'difference' of the tropics - not just through climate or ecology, but through enduring cultural and power

relations - gives a specific context to Peck and Theodore's (2010) critical policy study approach.

Urban design is fundamentally an interface between the public and private realms, which engages public policy and planning. Chapter 2 has already discussed how urban design has a long history of policy and practice transference across cities, regions and continents, noting that as the rate of policy globalization continues to increase with technological, travel and communication advancements, complex spaces of global policy transfer are "ripe for interrogation" (Peck & Theodore 2012, p. 23). Also discussed was how globally mobile urban policies have attracted critical analysis around the role of context in their transferability, especially to the tropics (eg. Kravanja 2012; Luckman, Gibson & Lea 2009), raising questions around how to better understand context and how it influences mobile policies and ideas. The central consideration in this chapter is Carmona's (2014) argument that:

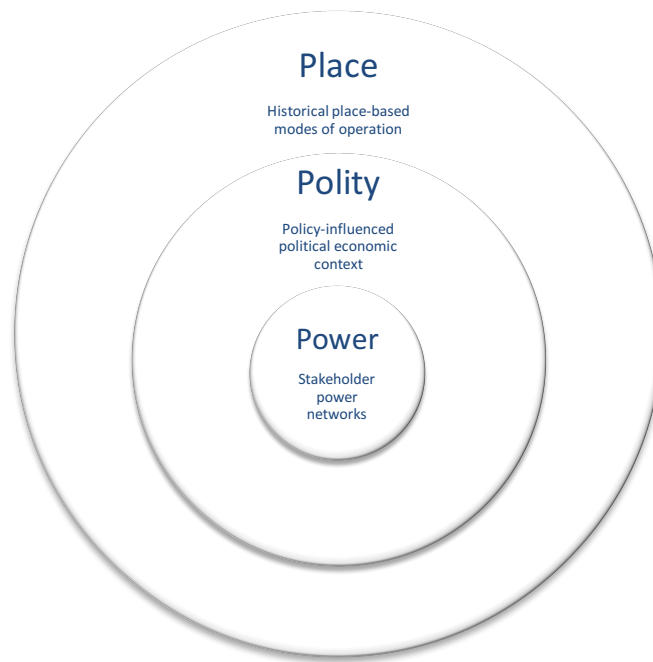
how we act today is shaped by an accumulated history of experience and practice, by established ways of doing things that change only very slowly and that are still (despite globalization) very place dependent, and by the fact that real innovation in design is rare (p. 12).

Here, he suggests that there is an inertia in context, that place and place-based decision-making are so entrenched that even as policy ideas travel, they are inevitably adapted through established place-based modes of operation. Similarly, Dredge and Jenkins (2007) identify the importance of understanding the historical context to develop rich insights into the present, quoting Hecllo (1974):

The fact is that "every innovator with a bright idea staggers forward with and against a vast deadweight of accumulated practices and ways of thinking" (p. 70).

Carmona's context is visualised as a three-tiered relationship (pictured again below in Figure 4.1) where historical place-based modes of operation form the basis from which policy is developed and then implemented through established networks of power.

Figure 4.1 The components of Context (Carmona 2014)



Chapter 2 discussed the critical and underpinning importance of power in tourism and urban studies, both in terms of its characteristics and scale. Highlighted were the works of Hall (2007b) and Lukes (2005) who argues that we should consider power in three dimensions, not just in terms of observable, overt behaviour, but also in terms of covert behaviour of decisions and non-decisions (Bachrach & Baratz 1970) and observable latent conflict and hegemony. The latent conflict or hegemony are of particular interest to an analysis of the tropical context, which has an historically hegemonic relationship with the non-tropical world. Mowforth and Munt (2015) conceptualise this third dimension as a three-piece ‘power jigsaw’ of ideology, discourse and hegemony. Considered in the context of Figure 4.1 which links place to power through polity, these understandings of power in three dimensions provide a critical tool for analysis of the generation of place-based modes of operation. In particular, the multi-scalar nature of the third dimension of power is a critical element in understanding the governance from afar and policy transference in a tropical place.

This chapter introduces Cairns through a context analysis within the ‘place’, ‘polity’ and ‘power’ framework. Following an outline of the methods used for the analysis, a thematic historical narrative identifies six themes of place-based modes of operation that have developed in Cairns over the period of human settlement. Using these themes, an analysis

is then provided of the polity and power structures in Cairns. A discussion on the more specific contexts of the study then identifies the key themes of place, polity and power specific to Cairns. Conclusions are drawn on the transferability of the specific themes developed within the 'place', 'polity' and 'power' framework, and how this functions as a method of context analysis.

4.2 Methods

Approached from a critical realist perspective, this chapter draws on historical accounts of Cairns in academic and grey literature to create an historical narrative of how the city has developed as a destination. In the urban studies literature, Banai (1995) argues that critical realism "seeks to reveal causation, not just the manifestation of urban and regional development phenomena" (p. 570). These considerations are echoed by Dovey (1999), who argues that focusing on phenomenology and experience "runs the risk that the ideological framings of place can remain buried and hence powerful" (p. 44). With this in mind, I use an historical narrative of Cairns to reveal why the city has developed in the way it has.

This is not intended to be a definitive history of Cairns, but rather a critical analysis of the story focusing on how Cairns has been shaped, seeking to reveal some deeper aspects of the context through the lens of place, polity and power. As the story of Cairns developed in the narrative, a number of themes emerged to identify legacies of place-based modes of operation that endure today. These themes of place-based modes of operation were inductively analysed to form four groups. The groups fitted well within the original principles of sustainable development of environment, economy and people (Brundtland 1987) but with the added dimension of geography, as location is key to context. These groups provided the basis of the polity and power context analysis, resulting in a thematic context analysis table for Cairns as illustrated in Table 4.1.

Although a number of sources have been drawn from and referenced in the historical narrative, a key source is a report authored by Melbourne-based Heritage Alliance Conservation Architects and Heritage Consultants in 2011. This 140-page report was prepared for the Queensland Department of Environment & Resource Management and the Cairns Regional Council to inform planning decisions and identify heritage places for

management. It draws on extensive referencing to historical documents, archives and media archives and is widely accepted as a key reference point for the history of Cairns.

4.3 Historical narrative: The shaping of Cairns

Carmona (2014) suggests that understanding the history of place and place-based modes of operation can provide the basis for exploring the policies and power networks that develop from it. This section draws on historical texts to provide an historical narrative of the key events in Cairns' history that shaped the region and the place-based modes of operation that exist today.

4.3.1 Early settlement

For more than 40,000 years, Cairns has been home to the Irukandji, Buluwai, Idindji and Kongkandji *Bama* (rainforest aboriginal people) (Bottoms 2002; Heritage Alliance 2011), who remain today the traditional guardians of the land in and around the region. Because of the rich natural resources in the rainforest and reliable water supply, the *Bama* lived in established semi-permanent camps in the region. Their walking paths and campsites eventually formed the basis of some of the roads and settlements built by the Europeans as the Queensland Government progressively seized land in the area and sold it to colonial settlers (Heritage Alliance 2011). During this time, hunting grounds disappeared as land was cleared for settlement, agriculture and timber, and the *Bama* gradually moved out to more remote communities or to take up residence in one of a number of government-allocated compounds in Cairns. Whilst the *Bama* culture is celebrated in the region today through a range of arts and culture programs, disadvantage and disparity in social opportunity between *Bama* and non-*Bama* persists (Australian Government 2014). Colonial settlers arrived in Cairns in the 1880s, first as small exploration and logging parties, and then as a formal settlement of Queensland. Although the British explorer Captain James Cook visited the Cairns area in 1770, he decided not to recommend it for settlement due to his difficulties navigating the Great Barrier Reef, the thick vegetation and the tropical climate (Heritage Australia 2014). Over 100 years later in 1873, George Dalrymple's survey party reported more favourably on the potential of Trinity Inlet as a suitable port. This followed the discovery of gold at Palmer River 370 kilometres north west from Cairns in 1872, and the subsequent discovery of the more extensive Hodgkinson River goldfields further south in 1876 (Heritage Alliance 2011). Ships converged on the port from Townsville and Cardwell carrying freight, horses, government officials and

passengers, and the Queensland government declared Cairns as a port of entry on 8th October 1876.

The settlement of Cairns took place 17 years after Queensland separated from the colony of New South Wales. With no support from the crown or New South Wales and only seven and a half pence in the treasury (which was stolen some weeks later) (Office of State Revenue 2013), Queensland started life as an independent colony, relying on bank finance to establish government. This independent and enterprising culture of Queensland was translated into the settlement of towns along the approximately 2,000km of coastline between the capital of Brisbane in the southeastern corner of the colony and Cooktown in the north. At this time, regular steam ship services were operating up and down the coast of Australia from Melbourne, Brisbane, Townsville, via Cardwell, to Cooktown, and the Queensland government was in the process of establishing a telegraph line from Cape York down the coast to Brisbane. Cairns was not only established because of its proximity to the Hodgkinson River goldfields, but also because of its strategic location on the telegraph line (Heritage Alliance 2011).

4.3.2 Shaping the layout of Cairns

The Queensland government claimed land at the Cairns and nearby Smithfield sites and commenced surveying within ten days of the port of entry declaration. In Cairns, streets were laid out in grid form with main streets in line with the sand dune ridges that had built up in previous cyclones running parallel to the shoreline away from the port. Surveyor Sharkey had been instructed to use 33 foot frontages for the allotments in the survey, however pressure from the settlers resulted in 66 foot frontages being used in the central town area to “guard against tropical evils...” (Rockhampton Bulletin Nov 1876, cited in Heritage Alliance 2011, p. 25). This frontage configuration remains in the city today. Areas where the 33 foot frontage were maintained create a more compact urban form in small pockets of the inner city, and the 66 foot frontages characterise the central business area and along the Esplanade. The survey also allowed for reserves to accommodate public administration buildings such as the Customs Boat Shed, Customs House and Police and Court House, and park areas. Although the Queensland government rejected a request from the newly formed Cairns municipality in 1885 to appoint an engineer to draw up a plan of the settlement, a local surveyor and engineer was appointed to lay out the roads, footpaths and drainage within the confines of Surveyor Sharkey’s original plans (Heritage Alliance 2011).

A harbor survey was also completed in 1878, showing a number of wharves and jetties. At this time, a distinctive waterfront style emerged in Cairns around Wharf and Abbott Streets and the Esplanade, however with less than eight feet of depth ships needed to tie up to a buoy and send goods ashore by boat. An ensuing petition from the people of Cairns to the government in Brisbane precipitated an ongoing harbor-dredging program that continues today. Although Cairns Harbour was once called the “finest harbor in Queensland” (Pugh's Almanac in Heritage Alliance 2011, p. 52), the shallowness of Trinity Inlet and associated dredging issues remains a limitation on port development, including restricting the size of cruise ship arrivals (Ports North 2013). The dredging has also influenced the development of the waterfront style, with dredge spoils being used to fill swampland and reclaim the shoreline, progressively disconnecting the original waterfront area from Trinity Inlet and changing the shape and character of Cairns into what it is today.

In the twenty years after the settlement of Cairns, various mineral discoveries and logging activity attracted workers and families to the region. Chinese settlers in particular arrived “in large numbers to the northern goldfields” (Heritage Alliance 2011, p. 14), although legislation such as the Chinese Immigration Restriction Act 1888 and the Gold Fields Amendment Act 1877 combined to limit opportunities for them in mining operations (ibid. 2011). As these changes occurred and the gold rush slowed over the following two decades (Heritage Australia 2014), many of the European and Chinese prospectors stayed on in the region to work in agriculture, logging or the service industry. Chinese people in particular established large market gardens in and near the settlement, also establishing a Chinatown in what is now Grafton Street in the centre of the Cairns CBD. This area was not only a focus of trade for agricultural produce, but also for opium dens, gambling houses and brothels. Law (2011) identifies that there are few architectural legacies remaining in Grafton Street from this time, but rather ‘signs’ in the urban built form of the previous uses. She suggests that one of these is Rusty’s Market, where “the current activities of marketing and multicultural exchange... summon the past life of the site, a time when the city’s multicultural fabric was diversely constituted” (p. 672). Established in the 1970s, Rusty’s sells fresh fruit and vegetables and other local produce, and is also a visitor attraction in the city.

One of the market gardens established by the Chinese settlers was a syndicate farm known as Hap Wah estate, just west of the Cairns settlement. This estate not only supplied a significant amount of the fresh fruit and vegetables in the early years, but was also the site of Pioneer, the region's first sugar mill, in 1882. Two more mills opened in the next two years amid the establishment of more sugar plantations however this growth did not last. Low prices and the introduction of the Pacific Islanders Labourers Act 1880 (amended 1884), which gradually controlled the use of Melanesian (or South Sea Islander) labour, limited the profitability of sugar until the introduction of the Sugar Works Guarantee Act in 1893. This act encouraged smaller co-operative farming practices to use central mills, and this formed the basis of what is now the mode of operation for the local sugar industry in Cairns. Some of the sugar mills still operate, although urban sprawl has significantly reduced the acreage of land under cane and as such the capacity of the region to produce has been reduced. Hap Wah Estate was eventually developed for real estate and now is the site of the second-largest shopping centre in the region, Stockland Earlville, located on the arterial road heading southbound from Cairns (Heritage Alliance 2011).

4.3.3 Shaping the buildings of Cairns

Aside from mining and sugar, timber was a foundation industry in Cairns in the late nineteenth century and continued to be so for many years. The first sawmill was established on Trinity Inlet in 1877, within a year of settlement. Cedar, hardwood and kauri pine were harvested for building, clearing, mining works and for export. The construction of the railway line from Cairns to Kuranda in 1886 reduced the need to rely on bullocks for timber hauling, and significantly improved the industry, reaching its peak in the early to mid 1920s. The timber industry continues today, although it took a significant reduction in resources in 1988 when the federal government declared many of the harvesting areas to be World Heritage Areas. This change saw a number of mills close, with the surviving mills mostly cutting only plantation timber.

The built character of Cairns reflects the reliance of the region on timber, as well as a reliance on southern firms for design expertise. Until the 1920s, simple timber buildings with a gabled front, corrugated iron roof and sometimes a verandah were the prevalent building form. After cyclones in 1911, 1918 and 1920 caused significant damage to these buildings, more substantial timber houses were built. These houses were generally built to published designs by Brisbane-based firms, which produced "construction-ready houses that could be railed to any location in Queensland" (Heritage Alliance 2011, p. 85). The

Queensland State Advances Corporation went so far as to provide finance for the construction of houses in their design catalogues, providing a “convenient and costed set of plans developed by the Public Works Department” (ibid. p. 86). These homes became known as ‘Queenslanders’. Queenslanders are characterised by timber construction, corrugated iron roof, large verandahs, high ceilings, louvered or sash windows and are usually elevated to promote airflow. This style forms the basis of much of the built character in the Cairns region and across Queensland. Although the style of kit home has changed since the 1920s, the reliance on externally-generated design for residential housing endures today in Cairns, with many estates in the region being wholly constructed in styles developed in temperate climates such as Melbourne or Sydney, with little regard for the tropical climate.

The centre of the city has its own design legacy. From 1905-1911, having been given permission to do so from the Queensland government, Cairns declared a number of ‘first-class’ building blocks in the centre of the town, where only fire-proof concrete or brickwork buildings were to be erected in a conscious move away from timber construction. Although the council moved to abolish the first-class blocks in 1923, community pressure led to the motion being rescinded. As Heritage Alliance (2011) note: “Essentially this action defined what was to become the business centre of Cairns as it is today... these consolidated by-laws had great implications for the evolving appearance of this tropical city” (p. 88). One of the key implications of the first class blocks was that in addition to the town centre becoming fire-proof, structures were also becoming cyclone-proof.

As ensuing cyclones destroyed wooden buildings in the first class blocks, concrete and masonry buildings took their place. Bricks were only available in limited supply in the region until 1948 – until then bricks were either shipped in to the region or made at a brick works in small numbers for a limited period. Nonetheless, the first class block rule and a need for more cyclone resistant structures led to a number of brick constructions in the city from about 1907 onwards. A number of these constructions form key landmarks in the city centre today, including the School of Arts (1907), the third Cairns post office (1907), the Court House Hotel (1908) and the first section of the Cairns Post Building (1908). At this time, reinforced concrete was available in limited quantities, however by the 1920s it was used extensively in construction throughout the region. A building boom in the 1920s

produced mostly reinforced concrete structures on the first class blocks and both timber and reinforced structures in other areas of the city. During this period many classical civic buildings were constructed. Heritage Alliance (2011) note that most of the civic buildings in Cairns built in the early part of the 20th century were built in the classical style, characterised by “symmetry, columns or pilasters on porches and verandahs, the use of eaves blocks and gutter decoration such as acroteria” (p. 90). These white columned civic structures form a key aspect of the character of the city centre today. An example of this is the Cairns Regional Gallery, which was previously the State Public Offices, designed from the Government Architect’s Office in Brisbane (Heritage Alliance 2011).

4.3.4 Shaping the natural landscape of Cairns

As the built character of Cairns was changing, so was the natural landscape. In the early years of settlement, growth in agriculture, mining and timber harvesting resulted in extensive clearing of the land in and around Cairns. Colonial settlers who were granted land were required to clear it as a condition of occupancy (Wet Tropics Management Authority 2013). As Griggs (2014) notes:

The territory that became known as the British colony of Queensland occupied approximately 1.72 million square kilometres or nearly a quarter of the Australian landmass. Much of the area was forested and the European colonists, especially after 1860, commenced a massive wave of deforestation. They felled or killed trees by ringbarking to create arable land and better grassed pastoral lands; to provide timber for buildings, railway sleepers and bridges; and to generate firewood for domestic and industrial purposes (p. 441).

This large-scale clearing changed the natural landscape of Cairns, with most flat and accessible land on the northern side of Trinity Inlet being cleared to develop settlements or cultivate sugar. The steepness of the mountains protected many of the surrounding hillslopes from early development, with only some foothills being cleared for grazing. These have subsequently become housing estates or been reforested. The legacy of keeping most of the surrounding hills forested has resulted in a cultural attachment in the Cairns Community to the vistas of green hills, which is evidenced in the presence of a hillslopes overlay in the local planning scheme (Cairns Regional Council 2009).

Whilst the hinterland was being extensively deforested, a small number of large established fig trees were allowed to remain in the centre of the settlement and along the Esplanade. Griggs (2014) notes that in the early period of settlement across Queensland in the mid 1800s, people began to realise that the removal of trees in settlements resulted in dangerously hot conditions for residents. This led to the establishment of the Queensland Acclimatisation Society in 1862, which concerned itself primarily with identifying which exotic and native species of trees would be best suited to planting in Queensland cities and towns. By the time Cairns was settled in 1876, there was a recognised need to retain some shade trees. Griggs also notes that the establishment of gardens in preference to native vegetation was effectively an effort to advance the civilised world. He suggests that:

Street tree planting and botanic garden formation in Queensland can also be considered part of the earliest town planning efforts to improve the quality of the new urban landscape, especially through the provision of shade and attractive surroundings. It was a component of a wider international campaign against the 'ugliness of cities', being associated with the City Beautiful Movement which first emerged in the United States of America in the 1890s. Street beautification was also seen as a sign of progress following the initial phase of clearing the native vegetation to create the settlement (p. 442).

Although street tree planting commenced in Cairns in 1909, the Botanical Gardens were established in 1886. Gardens and reserves were allowed for in the design of towns and cities across Queensland during the settlement period from 1850-1914 (Griggs 2014). These were partially planted for the enjoyment and comfort of the residents of the settlement, but also as sites for trials of prospective crops and potential food production. Gardens and street trees remain today a key aspect of the design of Cairns. The Cairns Botanical Gardens are a key community and tourist resource, and ongoing street-tree management systems and landscaping forming a fundamental aspect of the *Cairns City Centre Masterplan* (Cairns Regional Council & Architectus 2011).

4.3.5 Shaping the tourism industry in Cairns

Cairns has been sold as a tourist destination since the 1890s. Its attractions have always been based around nature, as Heritage Alliance (2011) note:

Attracted by the natural attributes of the region, tourists have visited Cairns and the hinterland, to visit islands, beaches, lakes, forests, waterfalls, mountains and

tablelands. The close proximity of the Great Dividing Range to the coast at Cairns, the range and its attractions have always been promoted as very accessible from the town. The Kuranda railway, constructed in 1886-91, and tours to the Barron Falls were amongst advertised highlights from the late 1890s (p. 52).

As with most destinations, visitor arrival numbers grew as transport access to the area improved and accommodation and attractions became available and sold to those who could afford to travel. The first hotels were constructed in the Cairns settlement in the 1890s in response to visitors arriving by sea from Melbourne to Cairns during the dry months (May to October). Private shipping companies such as the Adelaide Steamship Company were promoting the region and offering passage to tourists as a way of supplementing their freight businesses. This became particularly popular between the first and second world wars, but the advent of air, passenger rail and road transport ended this era by the 1950s. It was during the sea travel period that Cairns established itself as a winter destination (Heritage Alliance 2011).

By 1910, the Queensland government was promoting Cairns as a tourism destination through the Queensland Government Tourist Bureau (Office of Economic and Statistical Research 2009). The bureau actively promoted touring by car, which was still developing due to low rates of car ownership, economic limitations of the depression and some of the roads being relatively undeveloped. During the depression, Government-sponsored employment programs led to the further development of some of the roads, in particular the Gillies Highway, which linked the south of Cairns to the Atherton Tablelands in 1926. The true potential of car touring was not realised however until after World War II (Heritage Alliance 2011), when car ownership became more common. Car touring is now a cornerstone of Tourism and Events Queensland's tourism development strategy (Tourism and Events Queensland 2013).

Queensland Railways also promoted Cairns as a destination before the line was completed; travellers could train the 500km from Brisbane to Gladstone and then board a ship for the remainder of the journey. Rail travel further developed the tourism industry in Cairns when the line was completed from Brisbane in 1924, and then upgraded in 1935. This precipitated the establishment of the Sunlander luxury passenger train from Brisbane to

Cairns, which by the 1950s operated 5-6 times a week (Heritage Alliance 2011), and has only recently ended in 2014.

World War II from 1941-45 was elemental in shaping Cairns as it is today. Its northerly location made Cairns a strategic base for allied forces defending against the threat of a Japanese invasion. Cairns was a base of operations for the Battle of the Coral Sea, as well as point of evacuation from Papua New Guinea, Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands. This period saw the development of Cairns airport from an unsealed landing strip on a salt pan to a fully operational airport with a sealed runway, standing aprons, storage sheds, hangars, control tower, perimeter fencing and radio range (Heritage Alliance 2011). Roads were also upgraded and built during this period, including the road from Cairns to Kuranda, linking the north of the City with the Atherton Tablelands. Additionally, large camouflaged oil tanks were built at the base of Mt Whitfield next to the Cairns Botanical Gardens, which were eventually renovated to become The Tanks Arts and Entertainment Centre.

Changes in Australian society after World War II saw increases in disposable income and a subsequent increase in both holiday travel and car ownership. Cairns was able to benefit from these changes because of the improvements made on the airport, roads and rail during the war, resulting in a small boom in visitor arrivals by road, rail and air. By the 1950s, Cairns was attracting 40,000 visitors per year (Heritage Alliance 2011). Small scale, low-rise motels were built in the city during the ensuing three decades, mostly located between the Cairns Central railway station in the centre of the city and the airport to the north, and east towards the esplanade. Many of these motels still operate in this area today and are a key aspect of the urban form.

The creation of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation (QTTC) in 1979 was the beginning of an “aggressive campaign” by the Queensland Government “to sell itself to the world” (Dredge 2011, p. 156). Using the platforms of the 1982 Brisbane Commonwealth Games and the 1988 World Expo also in Brisbane the QTTC was able to develop Queensland’s international profile with Cairns as a major beneficiary. A “property investment bonanza” (ibid. p. 154) in Queensland in the 1980s was underpinned by the use of “boosterist policies, fast-tracking and preferential treatment of development applications” (ibid. p. 152) for a number of developers who had ‘close relationships’ with the Premier Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen (ibid.). The argument of the government at the time

was that the local government planning schemes were unable to handle the complexity of mixed use development (Dredge 2011). This era effectively ended in the late 1980s when a government inquiry revealed “wide-ranging, systemic problems in the way the state had been governed”(ibid. p. 157).

It was against this backdrop in the late 1980s that the tourism industry eclipsed agriculture and logging in its contribution to the regional economy (Cummings 2012). Although there were many contributing factors, the construction of Cairns International Airport which opened in 1984 is widely regarded as underpinning the growth in visitor arrivals in Cairns during the 1980s and 1990s (Heritage Alliance 2011). During the 1960s the Cairns Regional Development Bureau was established, which by 1978 was called the Far North Queensland Promotion Bureau Ltd. It was this organisation that created the Cairns Airport Development Committee, which secured local ownership of the airport and enabled it to be upgraded to receive direct international flights (Tourism Tropical North Queensland 2014a).

Two further Federal Government policy interventions in the 1980s contributed to the later development of the city’s tourism sector. The listing of the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) and the Wet Tropics Rainforest (WTR) as World Heritage Areas provided a tremendous stimulus to the tourism sector and along with the construction of the international airport started a tourism-led building boom that greatly changed the city’s urban form. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park was progressively protected by legislation commencing with the gazetting of Green Island as a national park in 1937. From 1975 the GBR was managed under its own state act (Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 1981). The World Heritage listing of the WTR was a more controversial listing and became a battle between economic and environmental interests. The Queensland government was opposed to the listing, concerned that it would adversely affect the timber industry and the communities that relied on this resource. Despite this resistance, the Federal Government persisted with the WTR being listed as a World Heritage property in 1988¹ (Wet Tropics

¹ Section 51 (xxix) of the Australian Constitution makes provision for the Australian Government to enact powers over the States if they have signed an international agreement. The ratification of the World Heritage Convention by Australia gave the Federal Government the power to identify potential sites for World Heritage Conservation (UNESCO 2014), so when the Commonwealth Science and Industrial Research Organisation

Management Authority 2013). Ultimately the protected forest generated far more tourism related jobs than during the logging era (Prideaux & Falco-Mammone 2007).

Capitalising on World Heritage listings of its key environmental assets and its international airport, the tourism sector grew rapidly from 1981 and in the process changed the city's skyline, its accompanying urban form and its sense of self. In 1982, a concrete high-rise development was approved for the foreshore in the Northern Beaches suburb of Palm Cove. In an effort to overturn the approval, Melbourne-based architect Leigh Ratcliffe - who had designed and built an existing low-rise development in Palm Cove - wrote a brief document titled Palm Cove Village Strategy Plan and submitted it to Mulgrave Shire Council (Anderson, S. 2008; Ratcliffe 1982). At the time, local government in Cairns was divided into Cairns City Council, which administered Cairns city and Mulgrave Shire Council, which administered the remainder of the Cairns region. Mulgrave Shire adopted the principles of the plan and a "nothing higher than a palm tree" rule was instituted in the region around Cairns City. This rule has had a significant impact on the development of Cairns as a destination, distinguishing the beachside suburbs from other coastal Queensland resort destinations such as Mooloolaba, Maroochydore and Surfer's Paradise, which all have high rise buildings on the coastline.

The opening of the international airport in 1984 sparked a Japanese-led investment boom in Cairns. In 1986, Japanese property developers Daikyo began buying vast amounts of property in Cairns, further changing the urban and cultural fabric of the city with a significant influx of Japanese workers and visitors. The style of the buildings were distinctively 1980s postmodernist, often with elements of cultural reference such as colonial verandahs or gabled roofs, but constructed in heavy concrete with closing glass doors and reliant on air conditioning for cooling. Schofield (2009) notes the key property holdings secured by Daikyo that year:

The company acquired the Hilton, Paradise Palms, Smithfield Royal Palms site, Cannon Park farm (later to be developed with Delfin into Forest Gardens), land in Digger and McLeod streets, Cairns International, Matson Plaza, National Mutual Tower, Great Adventures [reef tour company], Village Lane and the Yamagen

(CSIRO) identified the Wet Tropics as an area of key natural significance, the Federal Government nominated the area for listing.

Restaurant. Daikyo held leases over Trinity Wharf, Marlin Wharf, Fitzroy and Green Islands (p. 35).

Christopher Skase, one of the developers who had a 'close relationship' with Premier Bjelke-Petersen at the time, also made a key contribution with the Sheraton Mirage development at Port Douglas 70km north of Cairns (Schofield 2009). Opened in 1987, the Sheraton Mirage is a classic example of the 1980s postmodern architecture; transforming the township of Port Douglas and opening it up the region further to a resort tourism market. The Esplanade area of Cairns was also substantially changed during this time, with Cairns Port Authority granting approval for the construction of the Pier Marketplace on reclaimed mudflats at the mouth of Trinity Inlet. This area has since become a focus of tourist activity in Cairns City.

Development in Cairns slowed after the stock market crash of 1987, which resulted in the bankruptcy of Christopher Skase in 1989. Other contributing factors included the 1989 Australian Pilot's dispute, a change of government in Queensland in 1989, and the destruction of the newly built Marlin Marina by Cyclone Joy in 1990 (Schofield 2009). The early 1990s saw a decline in hotel construction across Australia (King, B. & McVey 2006), and this was mirrored in Cairns. In many ways, this gave the city an opportunity to 'catch up' on public administration buildings to service the growing population and visitor numbers. During this period, the multi-story police station and courthouse (1992), the Cairns Regional Art Gallery (1994), James Cook University's Smithfield Campus (1994), and Cairns City Council Chambers (1998) were built, marking a fundamental shift from frontier resort town to administrative regional centre. As the economy recovered, a number of new tourism developments emerged. The Skyrail Cableway (1995) linked Cairns to the rainforest town of Kuranda in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Centre (1996), further established the eco and cultural tourism markets and opened up the northern corridor; and the Reef Hotel Casino (1996) now dominates an entire block of the city's tourism precinct. In addition to this, keystone developments physically shaping the CBD into its current form were undertaken: The Cairns Central Shopping Centre (1996) was built over the Cairns Central Railway Station, forming one corner of the triangular CBD core; The Cairns Convention Centre (2000), extended the core to Trinity Inlet; and the Cairns Esplanade Lagoon Development (2003) and Reef Fleet Terminal (2003) completed a CBD 'doughnut' to the reclaimed land at the mouth of Trinity

Inlet where the Pier Marketplace had been built more than a decade earlier. In the surrounding areas, cane fields were converted into concrete block urban sprawl serviced by large shopping malls surrounded by vast car parks, modeled on designs from Melbourne and Brisbane. Heavy concrete construction was seen to be the only effective resistance to the destructive cyclones that regularly occur in the area. As had happened since the 1920s with 'readybuilt' wooden Queenslander homes being railed to Cairns, the majority of suburban homes were (and continue to be) designed for template estates in the more populous southern cities. Although this period had the potential to define a characteristic tropical style for the region, many of the commercial and residential structures were built to standard design formulae, with little or no concession to the tropical environment.

Tourism has shaped Cairns in a number of ways, particularly in terms of economic growth, which has influenced population. For example, the population of Innisfail, a town of similar heritage and situation approximately 90 kilometres south of Cairns with sugar as its cornerstone industry has declined from 16,644 in 1947 to 8,987 in 2013 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013). Conversely, the population of Cairns grew from 49,000 in 1981 to an estimated 127,000 in 2006 (Heritage Alliance 2011). Concurrently, annual air arrivals increased from 840,000 in 1982 (Schofield 2009), to its highest to date of nearly 2.5 million in 2006 (Tourism Research Australia, in Prideaux 2013). Both the city and the region were re-created during this period. Some historical buildings survive, such as the Cairns Post Office and the City Library, but by and large, much of the CBD has been reinvented. Since 2006, the population of Cairns has continued to rise to its current 157,000 (Cairns Regional Council 2014), however visitor numbers are showing signs of stagnation and decline, with the region now attracting approximately 2.2 million visitors per year, indicating a loss of market share in international arrivals and no net increase since 2000 (Prideaux 2013). External influences such as the US invasion in Iraq, the Sudden Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) virus, the high value of the Australian dollar and the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) have been cited by the Cairns Chamber of Commerce as the cause of the decline in the tourism industry (Schofield 2009), however Prideaux (2013) suggests that there may be other contributing factors as well:

With hindsight the causes appear to include an uncompetitive product, high value of the Australian dollar, impacts of global events such as the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) and swine flu, structural issues within the industry, the failure to retain key

markets such as Japan, a growing number of new destinations, and not offering the types of experiences now being demanded by tourists (p. 4).

The economy of Cairns now relies on tourism as its major export, even though indications suggest the sector stagnated during the period of the resources boom. Although access to tropical nature through the World Heritage Areas remain the cornerstone of Cairns' competitive market advantage, research shows that only 6.1% of domestic visitors actually visit the Great Barrier Reef (National Visitor Survey 2013 in de Waal 2014). A lack of investment in other sectors and difficult global financial circumstances indicate the potential for the Cairns economy to further decline in the future, however the current slow economy and associated low real estate prices have proved to be attractive to investors (Dalton 2014), with some significant tourism infrastructure projects in the planning and construction phase. Examples include an aquarium in the city, Double Island Resort (Danckert 2013) and Aquis, one of the largest tourism infrastructure investments in Australia's history. On completion the developer claims that the AU\$8.15 billion integrated mega-resort will generate more than one million extra visitors to the region per year, and more than 20,000 new jobs (Aquis 2014). If the Aquis project proceeds, it will usher in a new phase of development in Cairns, changing the urban and city form substantially. The proposal has been declared a 'project of state significance' by the Queensland Government, meaning the approvals will be managed by the state's Coordinator General in a specially streamlined process (Anderson, A. & Prideaux 2014).

In a recent destination analysis, Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ)² CEO Alex de Waal (2014) identifies a 'positioning Trifecta' as a guiding framework for developing Cairns as a destination. This document is intended to influence policy making in Cairns to further develop the city as a destination of choice. As the Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO), TTNQ has become a key player in the development of Cairns at a local and state level, receiving funding from both tiers of government to develop the tourism market to the region. Although as an RTO, TTNQ is responsible for tourism product development and market development, they have focused on marketing as their core business. This has historically meant that product development is uncoordinated and at times uninformed (Prideaux 2013).

² Previously the Far North Queensland Promotion Bureau

4.3.6 Shaping local government in Cairns

Local government in Cairns was established initially as a road board just after settlement in 1876, tasked with identifying and building roads into the surrounding land. The road board was then formed into the Cairns Divisional Board in 1880 after the state government enabled the establishment of divisional boards. As Heritage Alliance (2011) notes:

The *Local Government Act* of 1878 enabled the establishment of municipal councils in towns in Queensland... The *Divisional Boards Act* of 1879 resulted in the division of Queensland into 74 divisions and Cairns was amongst these. This division was extensive, from Cape Tribulation to Cape Grafton, and was subsequently divided further into a Port Douglas Board and a Cairns Board in 1880. Elections for the first Cairns Divisional Board were held that year (p. 94).

Although it had been renamed, the construction and maintenance of roads remained a priority for the Cairns Divisional Board. It was not until 1883 that proposals were made to undertake town improvement works and to construct a town hall. A petition from the residents of Cairns to the Queensland Government in 1885 led to Cairns being proclaimed a Municipal Borough with its own Council, sitting within the much larger Divisional Board area. The Municipal Borough Council covered the land between the Barron River to the north and Trinity Inlet to the south. The Divisional Board became the Cairns Shire Council when the *Local Authorities Act* was passed in 1902 (Heritage Alliance 2011). This division of city³ and hinterland governance persisted until the amalgamation of Cairns City and Mulgrave Shire⁴ in 1995 (Schofield 2009). As was mentioned in the previous section, a number of legacies distinguishing Cairns City from the old Mulgrave Shire persist today. A particular example of this is the “nothing higher than a palm tree” approach to planning approvals, which has resulted in the characteristic low-rise development surrounding Cairns.

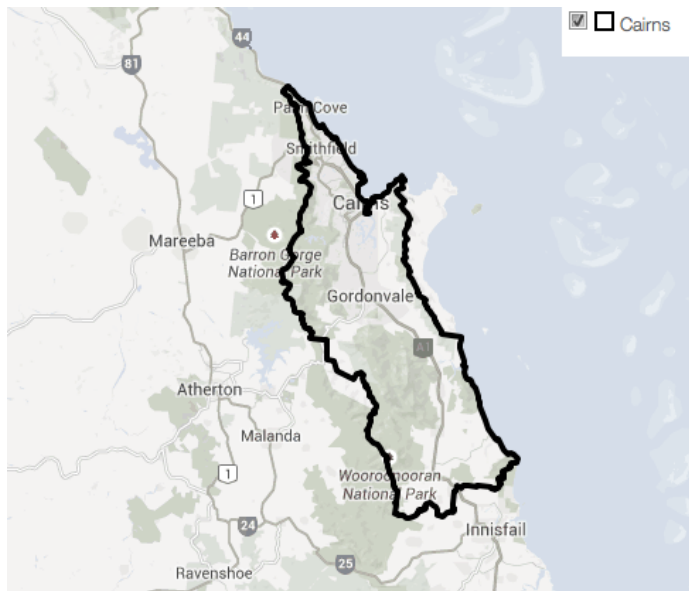
Cairns’ local government has experienced two amalgamations forced by the Queensland State Government. The first was the aforementioned merger of Cairns City Council and Mulgrave Shire Council in 1995. The second was a controversial amalgamation with Douglas Shire to the north, to become Cairns Regional Council. This was later undone after

³ Cairns Municipal Borough was proclaimed a city in 1923 (Heritage Alliance 2011)

⁴ Cairns Shire was renamed Mulgrave Shire in 1940 (Heritage Alliance 2011)

a change of state government and vote from Douglas Shire residents (Schofield 2009). As a result of the de-amalgamation, boundaries were redefined at the start of 2014 (see Map 4.1).

Map 4.1 Cairns Regional Council Boundaries 2014



Source: altlas.id (2014)

Although local government in Queensland is responsible for the drafting of planning schemes, the scope and limits of these are prescribed through the *Local Government Act* 2009 and the *State Planning Policy* 2014. The *State Planning Policy* 2014 details the key areas of state interest in planning schemes⁵, and includes the *State Planning Provisions*, a template that guides the format and content of every local government planning scheme in Queensland. Additionally, as mentioned in section 4.3.5, if a project is considered by the state government to be too large, too complex or too important for the local government to assess, the Coordinator General can declare it as a ‘coordinated project’ and take control of the approval process. The Queensland State Government has also influenced the allocation of land in Cairns through the management of reserves and wharf facilities. As Heritage Alliance (2011) note:

⁵ The state interests in plan making and policies in Queensland are identified in the State Planning Policy as: Liveable communities and housing; Economic growth; Environment and heritage; Safety and resilience to hazards; and Infrastructure.

While controlled under the Divisional Board, a number of the town's early reserves which were of State jurisdiction, were allocated. These included harbour, police, customs and school reserves. The Board and the subsequent Municipal Council identified reserves on behalf of the residents of Cairns. These included parkland, recreational areas and cemeteries. Over a long period, the State Government also required land for a railway, infectious diseases hospital and high school to be set aside from sale. Similarly, the sea and waterways were regarded as being in the possession of the Crown and any jetty or wharf structure into the sea or river required a special lease. After 1906, the Cairns Harbour Board took over the responsibility for allocating landing places that were within their realm of operation. These covered a substantial portion of the shoreline of Trinity Inlet (p. 96).

The Cairns Harbour Board became the Cairns Port Authority (CPA) in 1981 (Schofield 2009). This organisation controlled not only the "substantial portion of the shoreline of Trinity Inlet" noted by Heritage Alliance above, but also Cairns Airport. Although Cairns Airport was sold in 2008 (Cairns Airport 2014), CPA remains a key player in the development of Cairns, particularly in terms of tourism infrastructure. Its control of key areas of waterfront land such as The Pier Shopping Centre, part of the Esplanade Boardwalk, and the Reef Fleet Terminal (where all Cairns-based Reef tours are operated from) make CPA influential in the creation of the Cairns city tourist experience.

4.4 Context analysis

As in most cities, the geopolitics, economy, environment and culture of Cairns are part of larger state, national and global systems. A key factor of context is how these elements interplay within both the city and these larger systems, which is in essence a factor of polity and power. The context analysis through Carmona's (2014) *place, polity* and *power* structure revealed a number of enduring place-based modes of operation that have developed throughout the history of Cairns, a summary of which is represented in Table 4.1. This illustrates the entwined relationship between key aspects of the *place*, how they relate to the processes of governance, or *polity*, and the established networks of *power* that develop and implement them. Here I present a summary of the key place-based modes of operation that have emerged from the analysis.

4.4.1 Geopolitical context

Effectively the sum of *place*, *polity* and *power*, the geopolitical context analysis shown in Table 4.1 represents the broader place-based modes of operation in Cairns underlying the economic, environmental and people contexts. The analysis revealed three interrelated factors influencing place-based modes of operation within the geopolitical context: Limited self-determination as a city; the privileging of access to the region in policy making; and strong ties with Asia and the Pacific.

Firstly and most fundamentally, the analysis exposed a lack of self-determination for Cairns as a city. From a geopolitical perspective, this was associated with being a regional city, remote, and in a tropical place. The relatively small population and location of Cairns more than 2000km from centres of state (Brisbane) and federal (Canberra) government has resulted in policies that cater to the larger population centres in different climates with different policy priorities. Historically, Cairns was like many settlements in the colony of Queensland, established as a port to ship mining exports and developed as an agricultural and logging region with the express purpose of supporting the development of Queensland through population growth and generating tax and duty income. As with many tropical outposts at the time, a dependency relationship developed early between Cairns and these governing centres, with the city both reliant on government investment for infrastructure, design and planning but also at the whim of changing political forces. From a planning perspective, state policies have dictated much of the content and structure of local planning schemes, with the capacity to override local planning processes in the case of large, strategic or complex proposals (Department of State Development 2013). Additionally, federal legislation not only regulates World Heritage Areas but Australia's constitution has enabled the federal government to commit large tracts of land and sea to World Heritage listing regardless of local or state sentiment.

Cairns' distance from major population centres, government and trading partners has resulted in a policy emphasis on access to the region. Since white settlement, milestones of development in Cairns have been reached as a direct result of investment in infrastructure such as roads, rail and airports. Key areas of development in the city can be dated according to which particular boom they were associated with. The 1920s building boom was a result of a state-led infrastructure campaign to alleviate the effects of the depression. This boom generated a number of historical structures in the heart of the city.

The wartime building boom in the 1940s created key points of infrastructure and developed the airport as Allied military forces used the city as a base for operations in the Pacific. The 1950-60s tourism boom was the result of further state investment in roads, an increased awareness of Cairns after the war, increased access to air travel and the development of the Sunlander Train to and from Brisbane. This boom generated enclaves of 'motels' typical of the era, many of which still operate today. The 1980s building boom saw the entire city change character as high-rise hotels were constructed in the city by Japanese corporate giant Daikyo after the international airport opened in 1982. The 1990s boom saw the state and federal governments constructed public buildings to accommodate the significant increase in population from development in the 1980s (Heritage Alliance 2011). The analysis found that with the exception of the Cairns Airport development in 1982, the majority of the key city-shaping events in the history of Cairns have been precipitated by events external to the city decision-makers. This emphasis on access continues today as key election issues in the city surround the construction of a cruise liner terminal, attracting more airlines to use the airport and flood-proofing access highways.

Additionally, the emphasis on access has further developed historically strong ties with the Asia Pacific Region. The location of Cairns so far north in Australia has in many ways distanced it from the southern Australian cities, but at the same time driven an engagement with Asian and Pacific neighbours such as Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Singapore, Japan and China. An example of this is the development of agriculture in Cairns. In the early days of settlement, many Chinese settlers arrived in Cairns to work the goldfields, however racist policies made it difficult for them to secure prospecting licenses. Seeking alternative incomes, the Chinese used their knowledge of the climate and agriculture to develop market gardens, and continue to this day to supply and distribute much of the produce in the area. More recently, direct flights from Japan, China and Indonesia have underpinned the development of the tourism industry in Cairns since the 1980s.

Cairns' ties with these neighbouring Asian and Pacific nations has also led to much of the city's 'tropicality' in design and landscaping being informed by notions of the tropics developed from outside the region. Many of the species used in the tropical gardens around Cairns are informed by ideas of the tropics and are often mistaken as being native

when in fact they are tropical species that are not native with much inspiration drawn from Singapore (City of Cairns 2007). This is discussed further in Chapter 5, however it is worth noting here that the lack of innovation and self-determination in design and landscaping in Cairns extends to its idea of what tropicality is, and ultimately its tropical identity. This interlinks and overlaps with the cultural context as well.

4.4.2 Economic context

The geopolitical context has given rise to a number of factors influencing place-based modes of operation in the economic context. A lack of political self-determination has led to a lack of economic self-determination. Decisions made by the state and federal governments with little or no engagement on a local level have left the region reliant primarily on tourism, leaving it exposed to the vagaries of fortune many tourist destinations experience, such as rising dollar values and changing tourist preferences. This has also resulted in a privileging of power to the tourism industry in Cairns in local decision-making processes, which has customarily championed a 'development at all costs' mentality in the Cairns CBD. Consequently, Cairns is a city locked in a tourism boom-bust cycle, where a range of factors outside the control of city decision-makers influences the cycle.

4.4.3 Environmental context

The boom-bust cycle generated by fluctuating tourism markets and world events is also linked to environmental events such as climate change, flooding and cyclones. Cairns is a typical tropical tourist city that relies on the natural environment as its anchor attraction. Any impact on the integrity of key attractions such as the Great Barrier Reef or Wet Tropics World Heritage areas inevitably impacts the desirability of the destination overall, compounded by visitor concerns around safety and comfort. These natural events also influence the shape of the city through strict cyclone rating building codes and a prevalence of non-tropical designers choosing designs to withstand rather than embrace the outside climate. This has resulted in a city heavily reliant on power generation for climate control with the majority of the buildings built in concrete and steel styles suited to different climates. The non-tropical influence is particularly noticeable in the Australian Green Star Building rating program, where a number of key rating requirements are not suited to the tropical environment and as such are not recognised by the state government (Tropical Green Building Network 2012).

4.4.4 Cultural context

Within the fluctuations of the global and national economy, geopolitical context and environmental events dwell the people of Cairns. The limited self-determination evident in these contexts has manifested in some key underlying factors influencing the place-based modes of operation. In particular, the influences of outside investors and government have systematically deprived the people of Cairns with the opportunities to innovate and design. Since first colonial settlement, Cairns has relied on southern architects to design key elements of the built environment: as with many colonial settlements, the initial survey was done by the state surveyor and many early buildings were designed by the government architect, based in Brisbane (Heritage Alliance 2011). Even Cairns' most characteristic building style, the Queenslander, was a product of early kit homes designed and prefabricated in Brisbane and railed to the city as early as the 1920s (ibid). Although some design innovation has occurred in Cairns, this is generally the exception rather than the rule. Regardless of this, Cairns' indigenous and colonial cultural history is still valued within policy through the requirement to engage with local indigenous people with traditional ownership rights in development applications, and through the heritage listing of a number of key colonial buildings in Cairns.

4.4.5 Context analysis summary

Emerging from this analysis is the picture of Cairns as a city that has been historically influenced by the power and polity of the capital cities that govern it, perhaps more so than other cities in Australia that do not have federally controlled tenure such as World Heritage Areas in close proximity. Additionally, Cairns has developed as a city more at the mercy of political, natural and economic events than as a city that generates or controls them. The analysis revealed most significantly that a lack of self-determination within the region underpins many of the place-based modes of operation and that direct policy in Cairns has been an underpinning influence on the development of the city.

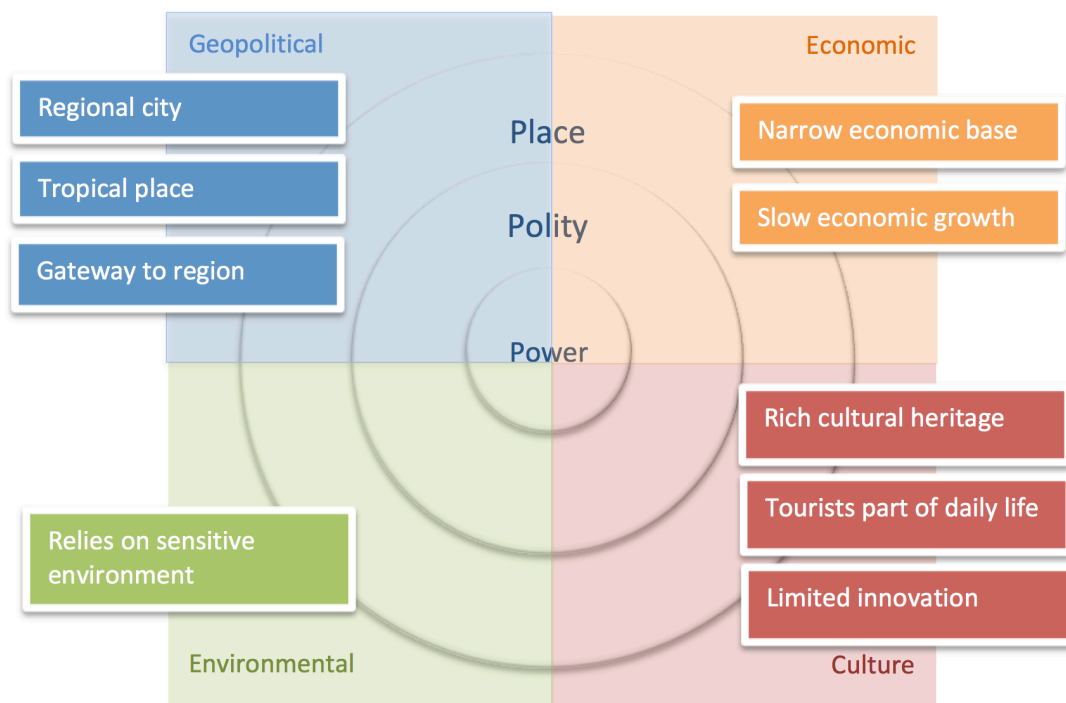
Table 4.1 The place, polity and power context of Cairns

Place	Polity	Power
Geographic context		
Regional, remote city	All state and federal laws and policies administered in larger cities such as Brisbane (state) or Canberra (federal) more than 2000km south of where Cairns is located.	Limited power in the region to override or adapt state and federal policies to the regional context.
Tropical place	All state and federal laws and policies administered in non-tropical places with little scope for tropically specific amendments. Local laws and planning schemes governed by state planning policies with limited scope for innovation in planning practice. Building accreditation programs such as Green Star Ratings not tropically specific.	Limited power in the region to override or adapt state and federal policies to the tropical context. Limited power in the region to adapt globally recognised accreditation programs generated from non-tropical places.
Gateway City to wider region	Indigenous cultural influences in policy and decision-making. Long history of engagement with Asia and the Pacific as a source of migrants has led to engagement with Asia and the Pacific for policy inspiration and economic engagement.	Seat of power for indigenous engagement and some policy-making. Sense of identification with Asia and the Pacific. Growing Chinese and Asian market for trade adds influence to Asian-based policy development.
Economic context		
Narrow economic base	Magnified importance of a single industry in policy and legislation. Tourism strategy developed in the region by RTO.	Disproportionate power to dominant industry decision making at local level.
Slow economic growth	Magnified importance of the economic aspect of development.	Investment prioritised over social aspects. Power rests with investors and state government to prioritize economic development.
Environmental context		
Relies on sensitive environment	Federal legislation governing environmental issues.	Power rests with Federal Government to decide on key environmental issues. Natural disasters and climate change also influence attractiveness of natural attractions.
Cultural context		
Rich cultural heritage	Engagement with indigenous people in development processes. Policies aimed at preserving European and indigenous heritage.	Traditional owners have negotiated power in land use approval if under native title. European heritage listing controlled at state level.
Tourist town	More tourists per year than residents. Tourism policy and land use planning developed at local and state level.	Power relationship exists between perceived needs of tourists and residents' needs.
Design and innovation limitations	Design and innovation lacks recognition in planning approval and assessment. 'Cairns Style' based on imported design ideals.	Designers and innovators not prioritised in decision making processes.

4.5 Place-based modes of operation in Cairns

The context analysis yielded a number of key themes in the historical development of Cairns that influence the modes of decision-making today: Cairns is a regional city; it is a tropical place; it has a narrow economic base; there is slow or no economic growth; it is located in, and relies upon a sensitive natural environment; it has a rich cultural heritage; and it is a gateway city to wider region. These themes fall into four key categories that resemble the framework of sustainable development, but with an added geographical element. This is represented as a framework for analysis in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2 Place-based modes of operation in Cairns: framework for analysis



Following are two illustrative examples of the connection between place, polity and power in Cairns:

1. The importance of nature as a key tourism pull (Dann 1977) is an element of *place*. The World Heritage Area listing of the GBR and Wet Tropics has meant that activity within these areas is controlled by the Federal Government, an element of *polity*. Although the administering organisations of the Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA) and Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) are based within the region, they are still

governed by acts administered by the Federal Government, effectively limiting local input but still engaging with locals, generating complex *power* relationships. An example of this influencing the destination development is when an application was made to construct a gondola from Cairns to Kuranda through the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. Whilst the local Chamber of Commerce and council actively promoted and supported the construction (Schofield 2009), the approvals process lasted from 1987 to 1994 (Skyrail 2014). *Polity* and *power* as a result of the environmentally sensitive *place* were key to this project taking seven years to approve.

2. The city's location on the nation's northern periphery is an element of *place*. The promotion and marketing of Cairns has been guided by agencies of the Queensland Government from 1910. Even the operational mandate of the destinations marketing organisation, Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) is controlled from Brisbane, an element of *polity*. Tourism development in Cairns is now controlled within a hierarchy where TTNQ sits beneath the priorities of Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) and the priorities of TEQ sits beneath Tourism Australia (TA) as the national marketing body. As with the environmental management, *power* relations between these bodies are complex in the development of policy and strategy for tourism in Cairns, and understanding these are critical to understanding the context of the destination development. An example of this influencing the destination development is the focus of TTNQ on a number of priority areas because funding (received from the state and local government) is tied to those areas. Drive tourism in particular has historically been a priority of Tourism Queensland and is therefore a priority of TTNQ because of funding availability, even though air arrivals are the main source of visitors to the region.

The Cairns example evidences Carmona's (2014) argument that despite the global mobility of policies and practice, the entrenched modes of operation in a place influences how these are adopted and adapted. Emerging from the results of this analysis is the picture of Cairns as a city that has been historically influenced by the power and polity of the capital cities that govern it, perhaps more so than other cities in Australia that do not have federally controlled tenure such as World Heritage Areas in close proximity. Additionally, the reliance of Cairns on the natural environment, which is subject to influences of climate change and natural disaster, leaves it exposed to changes it cannot control. Events beyond the control of decision makers in Cairns have left the region reliant primarily on tourism with little

depth to its economy, leaving it even further exposed the vagaries of fortune many destinations experience, such as rising dollar values and changing tourist preferences. This analysis, summarised in Table 4.1, has shown that power (or lack thereof) within the region underpins many of the place-based modes of operation and that direct policy in Cairns has been an underpinning influence on the development of the destination.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the place, polity and power contexts of urban design in Cairns and has thus met the first research objective of the thesis. It has shown that a standard description of context that details the current population, local topography, number of visitor arrivals per year and key attractions as described in Chapter 1 of this thesis is unhelpful in understanding how to further develop a destination through policy or design. Drawing from the urban design and tourism planning literature, this chapter has shown that using a disciplined approach to understand context through the lens of place, polity and power can expose entrenched place-based modes of operation. Additionally, this chapter shows that considering these modes of operation in terms of the specific geography, environment, economy and culture of a place makes the place, polity and power context analysis more workable from a practical research perspective.

Analysing the context of Cairns in terms of place, polity and power has shown that the tiers of context are so closely interlinked, it is difficult to discuss them separately. That said, this research confirms that Carmona's (2014) three-tiered structure provides a useful tool to not only consider the context of urban design in a city, but also the context of tourism policy as well. This chapter has contributed to the literature (Carmona 2014; Hall 2003; Roche 1992) by illustrating the value of a disciplined approach to context analysis in destination development research. Understanding place-based modes of operation and how they have developed over time can give an insight into how policies will be adapted as they are transferred from other places, and ultimately how successful they will be.

Whilst this chapter has developed a thematic concept through which the context of a city can be analysed, it has also acknowledged the complexity of a city context. In line with considering the 'heart' of a 'wicked' problem such as urban design in a tropical city, this chapter has attempted to acknowledge and embrace the complexity rather than simplify it. The findings and nuances illustrated in the historical narrative of this chapter has provided an understanding of the context within which place-based modes of operation have

evolved in Cairns over time. This forms the basis for the following three chapters, which analyse the process through which Cairns has been shaped, how it is experienced by tourists and what the connections and disconnections are between the two. The next chapter draws particularly on this context analysis to examine the roles and rationales of urban designers shaping Cairns.

Chapter 5

5 Shaping the tropical urban landscape

5.1 Introduction

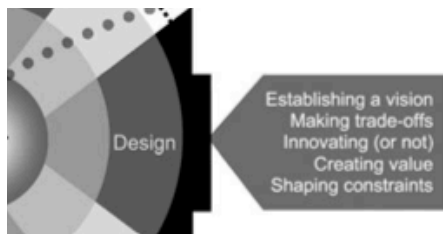
So far, this thesis has established an understanding of some key place-based modes of operation in Cairns through the context analysis in Chapter 4. Drawing from these, this chapter critically examines the process of urban design in Cairns from the perspective of those shaping it. As discussed in Chapter 2, thinking *about* urban design, there have been few attempts at describing a general theory of urban design process in the literature, with the exception of Carmona's (2014) place-shaping continuum. In contrast, thinking *for* urban design, there have been many attempts to identify good or best practice in urban design across both academia and industry, aiming to guide or instruct urban design practice from a range of perspectives (such as Australian Government 2011; Calthorpe & Fulton 2001; Department of Health and Ageing 2009; DETR & CABE 2000; Hammonds 2011).

Rather than support Biddulph's (2012) view that research needs to think either *for* or *about* urban design, this chapter argues that in thinking *about* the process of urban design, it is valuable to consider how urban designers think *for* urban design and to evaluate their effectiveness through comparing this with what users value in the urban landscape. Additionally, as Forsyth (2014) notes, Carmona's (2014) Place-shaping continuum proposes a series of *achievable norms* in the urban design process, a general theory of urban design that attempts to explain how the process of urban design works, but with a normative element of how good practice might be achieved, rather than a simple description of what is. This chapter draws on this idea to critically examine the process of urban design in Cairns with a view to proposing a series of *achievable norms* in tropical urban design later in the thesis.

Supporting the concepts in Carmona's (2014) Place-shaping continuum, the context analysis in Chapter 4 underpins the analysis in this chapter. Understanding the complex economic, environmental, cultural and geopolitical place-based modes of operation in the city lends a depth of understanding to how the process of urban design works, how the

urban designers perceive their roles, and what their design priorities are. This chapter draws on the semi-structured interviews conducted with 20 urban designers (as discussed in Section 3.3.2 of Chapter 3) to critically examine the process of urban design in Cairns and considers the applicability of the design aspect of Carmona's *achievable norms* (shown in Figure 5.1) to the process of shaping the tropical urban landscape in Cairns. The chapter goes on to consider the normative design goals of the urban designers in shaping the tropical urban landscape for tourists. Chapter 6 then explores the preferences of tourists in the design of the tropical urban landscape, followed by analysis of connections and disconnections between these in Chapter 7.

Figure 5.1 The design aspect of Carmona's place-shaping continuum



5.2 The process of urban design in Cairns

This section uses a critical analysis to think *about* the urban design process in Cairns. Drawing from the literature discussed in Chapter 2, this thesis argues that the process of urban design is a key location for policy transference, where 'success stories' and ideas from other places are drawn from and adapted to, and through, the local context. Peck & Theodore (2010) argue that this process of transference is unlikely to be a "more-or-less efficient process for transmitting best (or better) practices" (p. 169), but rather "a field of adaptive connections, deeply structured by enduring power relations and shifting ideological arguments" (ibid.). Hall (2007b) draws on Lukes' (2005) three dimensions of power to argue that these power relations are evident across all scales of governance, from local to supranational and global. Chapter 4 highlighted a number of key place-based modes of operation that illustrate this point from an historical perspective. This section builds on these ideas of policy transference, power and place-based modes of operation to examine how the urban design process works in Cairns in the present day. First, it explores a number of underpinning urban design 'best practice' documents that influence and inform the process of urban design in Cairns, followed by a discussion on how the urban designers perceive their role/s within the process, and finally a critical consideration

of how the urban design process works in Cairns within Lukes' (2005) three dimensions of power.

5.2.1 Planning and urban design in Cairns

The planning and policy landscape of urban design in Cairns is characterised by politically-driven masterplanned projects usually designed or at the least overseen by an architect or designer from a different city. As discussed in Chapter 4, the shape and location of these developments are often determined by the availability of land through commercial interests (such as Hap Wah estate selling to develop Stockland Earlville and Daikyo's large-scale purchases in the city in the 1980s). Planning schemes are generally used to control and guide development, but are often compromised to achieve the goals of large-scale projects. The urban fabric of Cairns is thus an agglomeration of masterplanned projects and urban fabric governed by the current planning scheme and regional plan, which are amended and re-written approximately every ten years.

Possibly because the urban design process is innately creative and context dependent, it has not attracted solid legislation in Australia, but rather a series of 'best practice guides'. Both masterplanning and city planning processes in Cairns draw from key urban design 'guides' that have been generated locally, at state level and national level. At the national level, *Creating places for people: An urban design protocol for Australian Cities* (Australian Government 2011), is an Australia-wide guide for urban design best practice which underpins a number of state and local policies and guides. Additionally, *Healthy Spaces & Places* (Healthy Spaces & Places 2009) is a guide to creating places that encourage physical activity. Although these documents are not legislated, adherence to their precepts may influence government funding or support for major projects. This is similarly the case for state level planning and design guides such as *Next Generation Planning* (Council of Mayors (SEQ) & Queensland Government 2011) and *Next Generation Tourism Planning* (NGTP) (Queensland Government 2015). The former of these documents focuses on Southeast Queensland (Brisbane and surrounds), and the latter on market driven creativity within a neoliberal philosophy of 'market knows best'. Although the NGTP guide specifically highlights 'knowing the needs of the tourist' as a cornerstone of all planning or policy processes, the document itself does not draw on research conducted on the preferences of tourists to support its recommendations and lacks any guidance on how to assess these needs. Rather the message is that "tourism operators and developers often

know the characteristics of the market and are able to design a proposal to accord with a robust commercial understanding” (p. 10).

The *Cairns Plan* (2009) is the current planning scheme in Cairns. Written within the legislative requirements of the since twice-superseded Queensland Integrated Planning Act (1997), it is structured to first set a regional context and strategic direction which then governs a series of ‘desired environmental outcomes’ for the city, within which rest development codes of assessment and mapping. The distinctive style and tropicity of Cairns is clearly an underpinning philosophy in planning in Cairns. ‘Tropical lifestyle’ and ‘distinctive Cairns style’ is mentioned throughout the plan as part of the desired environmental outcomes, for example:

Fundamental to the liveability of any city is the need to encourage visitors and residents to use and contribute to the cities’ urban and natural landscapes. Ensuring access to open spaces that promote an active, outdoor, tropical lifestyle is essential to the realization of Cairns as a liveable city (Cairns Regional Council 2009 p. 2-25).

This impetus for tropical style drew from a vision developed by a previous mayor of the city who used Singapore as an inspiration and model to generate the *Cairns City in a Garden Master Plan* (City of Cairns 2007), which specifically addressed green corridors and street tree planting in particular areas of the city. As he notes here:

I wanted to make sure the gardens sort of replicated as much as they could the botanical gardens of Singapore – elected official.

As part of this impetus, Cairns Regional Council drew from local expertise and ‘best practice’ to produce the *Cairns Style Design Guide* (2010), a guide for the built environment reinterpreting characteristic Queensland style features into a ‘modern tropical style’. Whilst this guide contributes to the design of the urban landscape in Cairns, it is limited to the built form and lacks legislative power, although as with the state and federal guides, compliance may encourage funding or planning approval. Another key document at the local level commissioned by Cairns Regional Council to advance the creation of distinctive and modern tropical style is the *Cairns City Centre Masterplan*

(Cairns Regional Council & Architectus 2011). This document has influenced significant change in the urban fabric of Cairns throughout the research and writing of this thesis, and was referred to regularly by respondents in the urban designer interviews. It aims to create Cairns City Centre as a:

...compelling, must visit magnetic tropical city, a cultural hub celebrating its unique Indigenous, European and multicultural heritage, its creativity, and its close association with Micronesia and Southeast Asia... a place where the rainforest predominates, and a city which nurtures, supports and celebrates Cairns tropical lifestyle, climate and natural beauty (p. 5).

Most of the change in the city guided by the Masterplan is still being completed at the time of writing, so this thesis cannot provide a commentary on the outcomes it has facilitated, however the process of producing it is discussed later in this section. A realisation of the goals of these planning documents and urban design guides is therefore difficult to assess. As Buckley (1998) and Omar (2002) both acknowledge however, many of the most powerful policies associated with government approval processes are often unwritten, unspoken and unacknowledged. This resounds with Lukes' (2005) second and third dimensions of power, where outcomes can be achieved through covert methods such as non-decisions (Bachrach & Baratz 1970) and ideology, discourse and hegemony (Mowforth & Munt 2015). McNeill (2013) lends weight to this idea with his suggestion that "mayors have agency, both in their ability to construct 'imagined communities' around their cities, but also in the ability to construct the scope of opportunities that the city's executive can pursue" (p. 110). So whilst the policy and planning landscape of Cairns lends itself to the concept of 'modern tropical style', perhaps the more pressing question is whether the key agents of power in the urban design process are as invested in the outcome.

The mayor cited above has since been succeeded twice, once by another mayor who was also interviewed in this process, and once by one who declined (the current mayor at the time of writing). Although a fierce political adversary, the immediate (female) successor carried on to complete the production of the *Cairns Style Design Guide*, Botanical Gardens and Tanks Arts Centre precinct, and the *Cairns City Centre Masterplan* and secured substantial federal funding to design and construct an entertainment precinct in the city.

Due to a number of factors (including the significant public spending involved), the latter project proved to be too contentious for the electorate, and the current mayor was elected with a mandate to redesign the entertainment precinct and to 'put more balls into council' (ostensibly meaning to spend the funding on a rectangle stadium for the city). This led to the loss of the federal funding, and subsequently no entertainment precinct or rectangle stadium has been commissioned. This example suggests that the mayoral commitment to a vision is a critical aspect of the urban design process. The next section considers this idea of power and agency in the wider context of urban designers in the city.

5.2.2 Role of urban designers in the process

In discussing the Place-shaping Continuum, Carmona indicates that *self-conscious* urban design is mostly practiced in shaping space *for* use and *un-self-conscious* urban design is mostly practiced in shaping space *through* use. Correspondingly, the *knowing* urban designers seem to mostly act in the design and development capacities, and the *unknowing* urban designers seem to act in the management and use capacities. Although this might be a handy distinction for analytical purposes, respondents in this research did not classify themselves as part of the process in this way. When asked whether they had a role in the urban design of Cairns, all but three of the respondents believed that they did. Of the three who did not, two were architects who classify in Carmona's *knowing* category. These architects believed that the remit of their influence did not extend beyond the site they were commissioned to design. The other who did not believe they had a role was a public administrator within the state government. In all three cases, the feeling was expressed that they were merely pieces of a larger puzzle and that their power to influence decisions was limited. As one architect observed:

... those people are all servants to their masters, and so it'll end up being those people who are the developers with the money to be able to undertake the work. In most instances we do our best...

On the other hand, all of the respondents who classified as *unknowing* urban designers in Carmona's framework considered that they did have a role to play in the urban design of Cairns. When one state government elected official was asked if he had a role, his response was:

...we will give approval. We will help things get going.... In a little while we will see some major investment come back to this town. Which has been severely lacking. Potentially, I could assist in these sorts of things, these sorts of projects.

This statement exposes a deeper understanding of the significant influence of the state government on what is developed in Cairns and the perception that things will proceed in the city because the state government will make it happen. This is not only consistent with the findings in the context analysis, but also across the other interview respondents. The view of politicians as significant contributors in the process was common amongst all five elected officials who were interviewed across the local, state and federal government levels. The elected officials were the only group who confidently asserted “that is mine” of urban design outcomes in the city. As one local government elected official stated:

... collaborate and get something together that you could put your finger on when you finish... Keith De Lacy can always point to the casino and can always point to Cairns Central. So they were his great things... I can point to what I've just spoken to you about... And I can also point to where we're having lunch right now. That was mine, you know. So that goes on the list...

A number of elected officials claimed the same key areas – at least three declared that the award-winning Esplanade Lagoon development on the waterfront in Cairns was ‘their project’. Another two claimed key elements of the popular Botanical Gardens Precinct as their own original idea. Clearly the personalities of politicians and their necessity for self-promotion are a key element in these sentiments, however they do indicate an undercurrent of political power in the process of urban design, and thus a key role for elected officials, in terms of direct, overt power, but also in terms of covert actions such as generating discourse and influencing the ideology of the urban design objectives. Carmona (2014) identifies power relationships such as these as operating “like a lens, focusing the process of urban design in different directions and in diverse and inconsistent ways, decisively molding the nature of outcomes in the process” (p. 11). This appears to be the case in Cairns: The power of the political sphere to influence and appropriate urban design processes does seem to have molded the nature of the outcomes in the high use areas of the city.

The idea that key urban design projects in the city 'belong' to various politicians as legacies of their era was not challenged by any other respondents. It appears that politicians often fill the role of champion with projects in the region. Amongst the remainder of the respondents, there was a sense that urban design is a large, innocuous thing that moves through a process guided by a number of contributors who shape, facilitate and design into it without any having full ownership of it – thus all are contributors, but none are real owners. In general, interviewees were very aware of where their influence stopped and started, and most had a clear idea of how they influenced the process and outcomes of urban design, with few speculating on how they could change it if they wished to. This is evidence of Lukes' (2005) third dimension of power, where the discourse created by the politicians creates an ideology of development and the need for politicians as champions. So whilst these people may be classified as *knowing* urban designers, their influence did not seem to extend to self-conscious urban design outcomes in Cairns. A number of the *knowing* respondents referred to their citizen power as a way to equally influence design outcomes as in their professional capacities. As one planning consultant observed:

As a citizen, it's about influencing your elected representatives. As a planner, it's about influencing elected representatives, isn't it? ... and your clients. It's about steering people. That's what I do.... trying to help them understand how to milk a little bit more out of whatever it is that they're doing. What is tropical. I understand the principles, apparently, so I should be trying to get it into everything that I do. I don't want tilt-slab blooming Woollies or Cairns Centrals, but if you can help those people understand those elements, it is tropical design, even if it's a fan on a patio. It's about making it liveable and contributing. What is my role? Influence ... there it is. That's my role. That's how I see it.

Respondents used a number of key terms to define their roles in the process. Table 5.1 shows that there is little commonality within the groups in terms of what they classify themselves as in the urban design process. The exception was Architects and Landscape architects, who all defined themselves as designers, which is not unexpected. Of interest is that none of the respondents volunteered ownership terms like 'driver', 'owner' or 'director' to describe their role in the process. The term 'producer' was closest to this and

was used across all categories except the industry representatives. The other terms used were more passive, indicating a contribution to the process without ownership of it.

Table 5.1 How respondents describe their roles in the urban design process

	Producer	Influencer	Designer	Educator	Regulator	Facilitator	Stakeholder	Proposer
Architects	1	0	4	1	0	0	0	0
Elected officials	2	2	1	0	3	2	0	2
Industry representatives	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
Landscape architects	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Public administrators	1	0	0	1	2	2	0	0
Planning consultants	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0

The diversity of terms used in Table 5.1 may also indicate the range of skills within the group interviewed. Whilst the categories of urban designer give an idea of the main influences of the interviewees, they are not mutually exclusive. One elected official was also a property developer and ‘building designer’, one industry representative was also an engineer who had worked as a planning consultant, one architect was also a public administrator, and two architects also described themselves as urban designers, although their skills were built from an architectural background. This indicated that classification of roles of urban designers, professionally or as *knowing* or *unknowing* is limited in value for practical research terms in a small city such as Cairns (and perhaps elsewhere). What emerged from the interviews was the image of a diverse group of people influencing the urban design process *self-consciously* in incremental measures, guided in some way by the drive or vision of a champion, usually a politician.

5.2.3 How the urban design process works in Cairns

Carmona’s model refers to the urban design process as being comprised of both self-consciously designed projects and the un-self-conscious processes of urban adaption and change, marking project initiation at one point on the continuum before *design* and project completion at the opposite side after *development*, with the processes of *space in use* and *management* also operating concurrently and continuously. The model encapsulates a process that can be used effectively to describe the development of finite urban design projects like the public spaces in London Carmona describes. Carmona’s intention however is to represent “a new theory of urban design process... for others to

test and develop and/or challenge at different times, in different contexts and with different development scenarios” (p. 11). The Cairns example gives us the opportunity to consider this theory in a town setting, where *self-conscious* and *un-self-conscious* urban design outcomes coalesce.

A number of key *self-conscious* urban design projects have shaped the contemporary landscape of Cairns. These resemble components of the ‘mayor’s trophy collection’, defined by Frieden and Sagalyn (1990 in Judd 1999) as the set of ‘must have’ attractions a city needs to stay ‘competitive’, including a waterfront redevelopment, shopping mall and convention centre (all of which have been built in Cairns). As public space projects, all of these developments have been government-led and funded in partnership with local and state government. It is these developments that were most often identified by interview respondents as key areas of successful urban design in the city. As one architect notes:

The Esplanade rocks. Even though it's predominantly all touristy. It's very vibrant and very diverse, and... it's got a lot of richness to it.

‘Public-private partnerships’ - the catch cry of the previous conservative state government – remain unrealised in the provision of space for public use. Currently, public use in privately funded developments in the CBD is limited to shopping centres and hotels. It is these developments that were most often identified as key areas of unsuccessful urban design in the city. As one planning consultant observed of one shopping centre:

Even the Pier [shopping centre], which at different times is successful, is better on the inside than the outside, and I think I find that rude. Rude to us as a city ... as a community of we, the locals, or tourists, and how do you get to know what a place is or even what’s going on? It’s sat out there like a pimple forever, and it actually used to be a really good place on the inside. It used to be an awesome space on the inside there and I don’t understand how they killed it. I just don’t understand how they did that.

And a public administrator observed of the main shopping centre in the CBD:

You know a lot of people don't like Cairns Central for its look and feel and we've been having conversations with Lend Lease who just bought them recently and they acknowledge that that McLeod street frontage is inappropriate...

A planning consultant was less moderate:

Cairns Central – it's horrendous! It's sucked the life out of the city...

All of the private and public developments mentioned above fit within Lang's (2005) typology as singular, one-off projects, although some were influenced by policies such as the *Cairns City in a Garden Masterplan* (City of Cairns 2007) and the *Cairns Style Design Guide* (2010). Like many cities, Cairns has become an agglomeration of self-conscious urban design projects knitted together in a relatively *un-self-conscious* way, guided by a code-based planning scheme designed to regulate land use rather than to *self-consciously* guide the design of the city.

In a move toward creating more *self-consciously* designed modern tropical city, Cairns Regional Council commissioned the *Cairns City Centre Masterplan* (Cairns Regional Council & Architectus 2011). The progress and development of this plan is illustrative of the urban design process in the city. From inception, there were a number of key inputs to the process that derived from the established place-based modes of operation in the city. Firstly, the professionals commissioned to complete the Masterplan lived in Queensland's capital city, Brisbane, some 2000km to the south. This was indicative of a long-standing legacy of looking to Brisbane and other southern Australian cities for innovation and design.

Secondly, the design terms for the Cairns City Centre Masterplan were dictated by a number of state government prerequisites that constrained innovation options. The Far North Queensland Regional Plan (FNQRP) (2009) was legislatively required to be a key guiding document in the City Centre Masterplan. Developed by the state government, the FNQRP gave prescriptive limits on land use and growth with the specific requirement of "transit-supportive, more intensive and mixed use development". Although local

communities were consulted in the development of the FNQRP, the resultant plan focused on statewide planning agendas, at times at the expense of local preferences⁶. Relatedly, the state government enforced a transit corridor through the centre of the city as part of the brief for the City Centre Masterplan, which opened Cairns' central pedestrian mall to road traffic. This event sparked heated and ongoing debates around citizen power and political self-determination in the city (Save City Place Cairns 2014). Many of the interview respondents agreed with the need to change City Place, however a number did not agree with the proposed outcome prescribed by the government, as one architect articulates:

I think it's wrong. I think it's wrong to take a pedestrian place back to transport, particularly when it's heavy transport, like buses.

After inception of the City Centre Masterplan, Cairns Regional Council began seeking funding to deliver the outcomes. This exposed a key place-based mode of operation in the city: reliance on external funding to deliver urban design projects. The implementation of the City Centre Masterplan has become characterised by an incremental 'creep' toward the designed outcome as funding becomes available, either internally or through grants. One public administrator argued that small changes over a long period could be a positive for the city:

...despite the best intentions in the world, we don't always get it right the first time and I think we just have to accept that urban design sometimes takes a couple of goes. If you look at South Bank in Brisbane post Expo '88, what's currently there is the third version post Expo '88. The first two didn't work. But the third version has worked and we can learn from previous mistakes... the reality is that sometimes with urban design, we might not always get it right the first time... I think one of the challenges is that... a good urban design is delivered probably after decades and... we're impatient. We just want to have it all now. But I think one of the important things with urban design is to have an overall masterplan, and you can achieve a lot incrementally.

⁶ In response to voter pressure, in 2012 the newly elected state government revised Regional Plans across the country and scaled back their statutory power.

This process of incremental 'creep' towards urban design outcomes is characteristic of development in Cairns. As this 'creep' occurs, 'easy wins' are pursued and trade-offs are made to achieve the outcomes of the Masterplan in more moderate ways than first detailed. As a senior public administrator articulates:

We still haven't been able to have a commitment out of the Council for those big, big dollars that... the document goes through with regard to the major footpath refurbishment. And then all the street furniture and those elements that we want to roll out. The Council has money committed to it like the tree planting and we're going to do some more design work, get some proofs, concepts for the furniture and bits and pieces. And that will be rolled out in the next couple years... They just need to keep on funding it. The issue of... the footpath is, is of note because there's debate going on as to how important the form of the footpath should be... I've come to the view that if I'm a tourist, nine times out of ten, I'm looking up and out and not down. And all I want to ensure is that that the ground that I'm walking on is safe and not a trip hazard and so that I can look up and out with full knowledge that I'm not having to watch my next step. And so, therefore how important is whether we have terrazzo slight tiles or whether we have China marble or Chillagoe marble or whether we have in fact concrete that's got a got a color put to it that's very simple to put down and cheap and easy. As long as it's functional. It can have a bit of a design element to it, but doesn't have to be very pretty. What can the community afford? Yes, you can go to that high standard and it costs it can cost you a fortune and we know that it can then cost us another fortune to maintain it. Getting the bubblegum off it and the, the rubbish etc...

This statement from an implementer of the City Centre Masterplan shows evidence of a series of compromises and prioritizations for 'easy wins' so residents can see changes and progress made on the Masterplan even though its implementation is not fully funded. This process of compromise may also have been made easier for local government administrators because the key political champion of the Plan was the mayor of the city at the time of adoption, but was voted out of office in 2012. The new council was voted in based on promises of a rectangular stadium in the city and the abandonment of a cultural precinct near the waterfront with A\$40 million federal government funding (ABC Far North Queensland 2010).

A characteristic of the way urban designers approached the design process in Cairns was to draw on personal experience to inform design decisions rather than from researching potential users. As a case study, the research in this article examined how the respondents allowed for tourist preferences in their design decisions. The results of the interviews indicate that the urban designers have specific and definite thoughts on the preferences of tourists in the tropical city. From the outset, the majority of interviewees perceived a need to design with tourists in mind. This was generally linked to the reliance of the city on tourism earnings:

Especially in our type of city whereby we have that tourism focus... that we are more, I suppose we need to be more careful and more distinct about our image – public administrator.

And so you've got to be able to ... you know, forty percent of our economy is tourism. We've got to be prepared to sacrifice some of our spaces to meet the needs of... the people that we're wanting to attract – elected official.

An underlying conflict in the urban designers' thoughts on *self-conscious* versus *un-self-conscious* urban design were present when considering whether to specifically plan for tourists or not. Whilst some saw that compromise for tourists was inevitable, others believed that authenticity would be compromised through tourism-specific planning:

But I don't think we should design cities for tourists. I think... we design cities for the people who live there, and if that's done properly the tourists will enjoy it also – elected official.

This recognition of the need to be distinct about the image of the city and to accommodate tourist preferences was not necessarily translated into researching the needs and preferences of tourists. Of the twenty urban designers interviewed, only seven had conducted any form of research into tourist preferences, and the majority of these were for specific one-off projects. Although the local university conducts longitudinal tourist research in the city, few people use this as a tool for decision-making, perhaps because the findings do not specifically address preferences in the city environment. So

despite the considerable reliance upon tourist trade within the city, very little is known by the decision-makers about tourist preferences. One previously elected official recalls devising the planning process in the city:

Because our philosophy was, why do we need to ask them... the people that really are the stakeholders are the residents here.

Another planning consultant who was previously a public administrator in the local council suggested the same:

Sometimes you do a community survey, but not a tourists' survey. Not me, anyway.

A lack of concrete research knowledge about the preferences of tourists did not seem to impede the urban designers' willingness to speculate on their wants and needs. Many drew from their own preferences and experiences as tourists, within the city and through speaking with visitors to the city to formulate their own views:

...I have a real passion for travel, so I always try to think of the things that I like to see when I go to cities – public administrator.

What do they want? Having been a tourist and landing in Cairns before I moved up here you are looking for... – planning consultant.

I'm highlighting to you a little bit of a personal slant because I live here. I've made an investment to live in the city. And I see it every day and every night... - industry representative.

It's about the story or the history of the place too and that's more ... that's what attracts me... - architect.

5.3 Critique: Carmona's Place-shaping Continuum in the Cairns context

As discussed in Section 2.2.1.3 of the literature review, aside from Carmona's (2014) model of urban design process developed from an analysis of public places in London

(shown in Figure 2.7) there are very few models of urban design process in the literature. Carmona's model is described by Oc (2014) as "a significant move forward in thinking for our discipline" as it is the first model of its kind to specifically examine the mechanics of the urban design process and to acknowledge the central importance of context, but it is yet to attract any serious critical engagement in the literature (see Section 2.2.1.3 for discussion). This section therefore conducts a partial critique of Carmona's model in terms of its design aspect and its applicability to the tropical context.

Emerging from the analyses of context and urban design process in Cairns is the image of a city lacking political self-determination borne partly out of a reliance on external public and private entities for funding and innovation and partly out of exposure to the vagaries of external influences such as natural events and tourism visitation trends. The place-based modes of operation generated from these underpinning issues have resulted in a process of urban design that is influenced in a measured way by a range of local urban designers, but is more generally driven by politicians who often have access to or influence on funding sources. These overtly powerful actors have also influenced, and been influenced by the overtly and covertly hegemonic policies of the state and federal governments (such as through the World Heritage Listing, detailed in Chapter 4). A perceived need by these actors to adopt 'best practice' from other places and perceptions of a need to change to become more attractive to different types of tourists (such as drawing from Singapore or providing 'wide open places' for the Chinese) have also created imbalances of power in Lukes' (2005) third dimension of covert power through Mowforth and Munt's (2015) ideology, discourse and hegemony. These processes have led most respondents to consider themselves as having a role in the process although not necessarily in Carmona et al's (2003) neat typology of *knowing* and *unknowing* urban designers. These processes in Cairns are distinct and different from those generating the London City public spaces of Carmona's research, although the self-conscious processes of urban design, represented in the 'shaping space *for use*' aspects of design and development are a useful framework for discussion.

Although Carmona's model shows clearly that all four key input processes contribute to the shaping of urban space, the process of urban design in professional terms (and the focus of this thesis) is most clearly represented in the design input process. Carmona characterises this as what a standard design process might look like: "a cyclical, analytical,

creative and synthesising process in which design is ‘self-consciously’ used as the tool to ‘knowingly’ shape the future of places” (pp. 16-17). In Carmona’s model, the design input is made up of five key processes: 1. Establishing a vision; 2. Making trade-offs; 3. Innovating (or not); 4. Creating value; and 5. Shaping constraints. These five processes provide a useful framework within which the urban design process could be analysed and are therefore the focus of this critique.

5.3.1 Establishing a vision

Carmona found that the generation of an agreed vision for positive change represented the ultimate purpose of the intentional design processes he studied. Although Cairns also had a clear vision in urban design projects such as the City Centre Masterplan, these were not necessarily agreed in a democratic sense, but rather championed by powerful actors. These powerful actors tended to use both overt and covert methods of power. Overtly, these actors - usually politicians – can access funding and assist with government approvals, as asserted by the elected official: “We will give approval...”. As an example, in the case of the proposed Aquis integrated resort development (discussed in Section 4.3) ultimate planning approval continues to rest on a state government decision on whether a casino will be approved or not. The first people the investors met with in Cairns were the local politicians, to garner their overt support for the development. Covertly, the politicians influence the range of options available to the public before the public are made aware of them, in line with the concept of non-decisions put forward by Bachrach and Baratz (1970). Again in the Aquis example, ‘a casino or no development at all’ was the decision put to the people of Cairns, with no other options advanced for a smaller development or development without a casino (In Australia, casinos generate significant tax dollars for governments but are also politically difficult). The politicians of Cairns generated a discourse of ‘development at all costs’, where the development is put forward as the ‘saviour’ of the city’s economy. Major projects are generally visioned in this way in Cairns, with overt power displayed through politicians asserting themselves as leaders, but also using covert methods to present limited options and generate discourse supporting a particular paradigm of development, supporting Lukes’ (2005) three dimensions of power. This research found that the vision of urban design projects generally was championed most often by politicians, appropriated from public administrators, architects or planners.

5.3.2 Making trade-offs

Carmona articulates this as a need to address competing calls on limited space, particularly with reference to pedestrians and traffic. Whilst the City Place example discussed above resulted in a conflict regarding pedestrian and traffic demands, this was not the result of a trade-off but rather the requirements pre-determined by the state government according to state policy. Trade-offs were however made in different ways to accommodate funding shortfalls, such as with the footpath treatments and staging of the City Centre Masterplan implementation. The act of making trade-offs was further complicated by the political dimension of the urban design process, where the changing landscapes of power influenced the progress and priority of different projects.

5.3.3 Innovating (or not)

Carmona's research reveals that in London, there are "widely-shared empiricist prescriptions about what makes for a 'good' place" (p. 18). This research found that in Cairns, urban designers tended to draw from personal preferences rather than empirical findings, although there did exist some widely-held views around user preferences of nature in the tropical landscape and active landscapes. The research also supported Carmona's suggestion that the inertia of the place-based modes of operation often overrun any true capacity for urban designers to innovate. Within established processes and systems in Cairns, *knowing* urban designers who might be trained in innovation and creative practices lack the power to influence urban outcomes, compared with the *unknowing* urban designers, who seem to have much more power. This imbalance of power for the creative professionals has led to a limitation for Cairns to innovate in the urban landscape. In the wider context of creating an urban tropicscape to enhance tourist experience, this is an opportunity lost to create a distinctive tropical urban landscape.

5.3.4 Creating value

Respondents in this research did not extensively discuss the creation of value in the urban design of Cairns although when they did it was most often in relation to the improvement of yield from tourist visitation since the questions focused on tourism. Carmona identifies that commercial uses in places draws people in and provides a number of benefits, including a return on investment. This may be the crux of why the urban designers were less inclined to consider the creation of value: the projects discussed as good examples of urban design were all publicly funded infrastructure which have previously had little requirement for return on investment. The exception to this is the Cairns Esplanade,

which was a publicly funded project but was designed to add value to the tourist and resident experience of the city through the provision of an active water frontage and public swimming facility.

5.3.5 Shaping constraints

Regulatory and financial constraints have been an underpinning element of the urban design process in Cairns. Carmona suggests that these “represent a constant that decisively shape outcomes” (p. 19), and this is clearly the case in the Cairns example. The Cairns City Centre Masterplan was created on the basis of key regulatory constraints from the state government such as the provision of a transit corridor, and has since progressed incrementally because of funding constraints. The institutional actors involved in this process were exerting overt and covert power over one another through a number of Lukes’ (2005) three dimensions. As an example, the state government exerted overt power over the outcomes through controlling funding and state-based approvals such as the transit network. Covertly, the state government engaged in non-decisions, where they did not present a ‘non-bus option’ for the design of City Place, but rather conditioned the design brief for the consultants on having a bus corridor in the design. This also created a more covert type of discourse, where although the Cairns City Centre Masterplan was a Cairns Regional Council project, it was seen as being controlled in many ways by the state government.

5.3.6 Urban design policy and power in Cairns

These five aspects of design in the Place-shaping Continuum are useful for considering the process of urban design in a small tropical city. However since each is so intrinsically linked to the context, perhaps a more useful element of Carmona’s model in this case is the underlying framework of *place*, *polity* and *power* in understanding the place-based modes of operation. Articulating the place-based modes of operation and how their inertia influences the urban design process has been the most useful aspect of this analysis. Whilst there may exist a tacit understanding in urban design circles of these modes of operation in large cities like London, the importance of articulating these in different cultures and contexts cannot be understated. This lends particular gravity to Peck & Theodore’s (2010) suggestions that we view urban policy transfer not just as a rational-choice “more-or-less efficient process for transmitting best (or better) practices” (p. 169), but rather as a critical “field of adaptive connections, deeply structured by enduring power relations and shifting ideological alignments” (ibid.).

The research so far in this chapter shows that the place, polity and power context of the urban design process in Cairns is better understood within the critical rather than rational-choice framing. Power relations in all three of Lukes' (2005) dimensions arising from the historical place-based modes of operation seem to be at the heart of how the urban design process works in Cairns. This rationale could indicate that the urban design process in Cairns is less focused on producing 'best (or better)' results than it is on satisfying the requirements of particular people who wield power in the city. These two are of course related: in the case of the elected officials, if there are too many policy failures in the eyes of local residents they may face an election loss in the future, which can also impact the public administrators in their roles. But this is a complex relationship tied in with deeper political loyalties, policies in other portfolios and other electorates in the case of state and federal politicians. On balance, the delivery of a successful urban outcome may consolidate the careers of those involved, however the delivery of an unsuccessful outcome is unlikely to spell the end of a political, consultant's or public administrator's career.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the delivery of successful or unsuccessful urban outcomes can however have a significant impact on the competitiveness of a city in terms of migration and tourism (Gospodini 2002). This raises questions around how an urban design process that functions within such a significant power network with few true disincentives for failure can deliver outcomes that benefit the city. This chapter has already identified that within the process in Cairns, urban designers do not consider research on user preferences valuable or necessary, preferring to rely instead on personal preferences and experience, particularly in terms of tourists, making it difficult to measure the success or otherwise of a project or plan. To enable a truly critical analysis of the effectiveness of the urban design process in Cairns, the next section of this chapter examines how the urban designers create the tropical urban landscape with tourists in mind to identify key design priorities for tourists. Chapter 6 will then examine the characteristics and preferences of tourists visiting Cairns and Chapter 7 will draw these together to identify the connections and disconnections between the design priorities of the urban designers and tourists.

5.4 Shaping the tropical urban landscape

Drawing on ideas of experiencescapes (Mossberg 2007; O'Dell & Billing 2005), servicescapes (Bitner 1992) and consumerscapes (Fagence 2014), as places consciously designed for experience, service or consumption, the discussion in Chapter 2 identified the possibility of an *urban tropicscape* as a place consciously designed to experience as tropical. As already discussed, the process of urban design in Cairns faces a number of limitations in terms of financial and innovation capacity whilst operating within a power network that favours politicians and people from outside the region rather than local designers or planners. This section seeks to identify a series of norms within these complex networks around how urban designers shape the tropical urban landscape as a landscape of tourist experience and consumption. This section draws on the whole interviews with urban designers, but with a particular focus on the responses to the question: What do you think tourists want from the urban design of a tropical city such as Cairns? As a starting point for the qualitative analysis, a word frequency cloud was generated using online tool Wordle.net on urban designers' responses to the question, shown in Figure 5.2. This reveals a number of key words centred around sensual perception and experience, such as *look*, *see*, *feel*, *interesting*, and *experience*. *Different* and *interesting* are also prominent, reflecting a general sentiment among respondents that character and difference in the urban landscape is considered important. This section identifies a number of central norms that emerged from the interviews that were considered critical in distinguishing Cairns as an urban tropicscape.

Figure 5.2 Word frequency cloud of urban designers' responses: What do you think tourists want from the urban design of a tropical city such as Cairns?



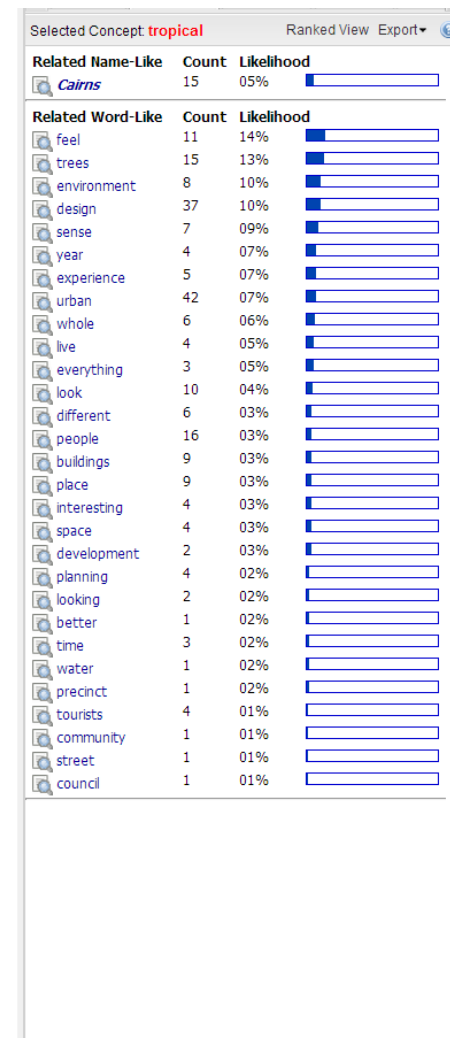
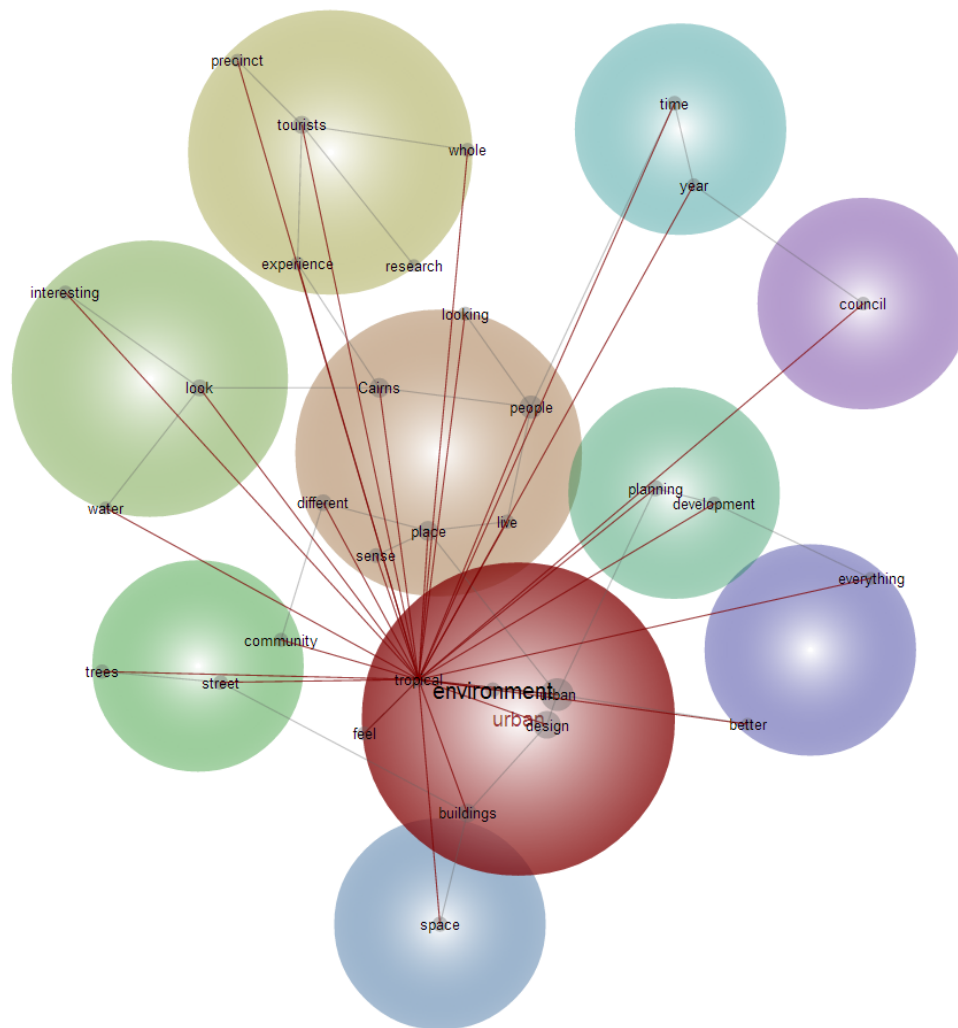
Note: Unrelated words such as *know*, *think*, *going*, *come*, *sort*, *really* removed

5.4.1 Tropical feel

It is evident from the representation in Figure 5.2 that some of the responses were specifically tropical, but others were more about creating a 'good' urban landscape regardless of tropicality. This is discussed at greater length in Chapter 6, however it is worth noting here that as an underpinning aspect of the context, tropicality is considered in this thesis to be a part of, and to influence, every aspect of how the tropical urban landscape is created. As discussed in section 5.2.1, Cairns has had a documented commitment to achieving 'modern tropical lifestyle' in some form or other since at least 2007. This concept emerged in this research as *Tropical Feel*. The terms *tropical*, *urban* and *design* were central to the interview responses because they were introduced into the language by the interviewer from the outset of each interview through the title of the project and the wording of the questions.

An initial Leximancer analysis of the whole contents of the interview transcripts was performed to elicit any underlying themes that may not have emerged from the analytical memo process. As discussed in Chapter 3, Leximancer identifies semantic and relational patterns in the text to present an image of theme strength and relationships between themes using programmed algorithms. A Leximancer map typically illustrates a range of spheres with the central theme represented in a warm colour (such as red), and more peripheral themes in cooler colours (such as blue) with graduations between. Larger spheres contain more concepts identified by the algorithm as key words and lines between concepts identify relationships between concepts. Each sphere is labelled by the dominant theme in the concepts. To generate these maps a number of cleaning exercises are undertaken, such as merging like concepts (eg. *precinct* and *precincts*, or *design* and *designed*), and eliminating non-central concepts (eg. *think* and *know*). After these steps were completed, a previously unidentified theme did emerge that seemed central to the ideas of the urban designers: *Feel*. This was considered significant because the term was not introduced by the interviewer and because of its high likelihood (14%) of co-occurrence with *tropical* (as opposed to simply occurring within a sentence as 'I feel...'). Figure 5.3 shows a concept map generated in Leximancer with an analysis of the concept *tropical*. The red sphere shows the central theme of *urban*, which contains the concepts *tropical*, *urban*, *environment*, *design*, *buildings* and *feel*.

Figure 5.3 Leximancer content analysis of urban designer interviews – *tropical* concept.



Feel was used by respondents particularly when talking about urban design, that the real advantage of a *good* urban space over a *bad* urban space is the way it makes you feel. Thus *design* as opposed to *non-design* emerged as being an underpinning concept of the sensory reaction to urban space in the minds of the urban designers:

I think urban design is sort of a, is a condition too, isn't it? You know, like it's how you feel like you're living, you can see it around it here... – landscape designer.

I like Palm Cove because it seems to have retained its small footprint feel – elected official.

So whilst *feel* was used in a way that was not specifically tropical, it was more often used when describing tropicality. The specific sense of *tropical feel* emerged as a term when thinking about the city in the tropics:

But [the tropics] makes you feel good, it makes you feel your skin. I would say to my friends back home, I have never felt so in my skin – landscape designer.

I wanted people when they come in to this city to feel as if they're in a tropical city – elected official.

The feeling of being in the tropics was described variously as a response to temperature, humidity, sensuality, sexuality, freedom and lifestyle. For example:

understanding of the tropical exotic ... sexually free, all the rest of it – public administrator

Out here, in the tropical areas... I think it's freedom. And I think there is a quality of life, I think, that you can't get in, in more temperate climates – elected official

The comments above suggest that *tropical feel* is an intangible, amorphous and diverse concept that is widely dependent on personal experiences and the philosophies of the individual (discussed further in Chapter 6). There was a sense from the interviews that *tropical feel* was the sum of a range of factors - tangible and intangible - such as warmth,

moisture, smells, building design and views with natural elements. In particular, achieving tropical feel seemed central to the urban designers' ideas about distinguishing Cairns as a tropical city and as a place of difference.

5.4.2 Interface with nature

The most commonly mentioned concept identified by the interview respondents around the creation of good tropical urban design and what tourists want from Cairns City was an interaction with the natural environment. Central to this was a broad perception that tourists in particular seek a 'point of interface' between the safety or comfort of a well-designed built environment and the elements of nature.

To get that feel, to get the actual feel, not the functioning. To get the place functioning it's that interaction between the building - the function of the building, indoor, outdoor etc. to make the place function and how you get people past there and where your traffic goes and where your people are walking and parking. But if you actually get a feel for it, it's very much about that landscaping. It's very much about the natural setting that we create within our urban environment for Cairns – planning consultant.

Outdoor, they want outdoor. Lots of trees, viewing platforms, vistas, birdlife... from a tourist perspective, we've got the balance right. We've got the Pier, we've got the Esplanade, we've got the city... tourists, we need easy access to these areas – elected official

We would go to the surf club and we would go, obviously, for a walk along the marina. That's what you do. That's what you do here, too. Again, it's the edge and it's not about the buildings. It's about the interface – planning consultant

In genuine terms, in terms of creating tropical feel, it was going to be all about shade and that indoor, outdoor space – planning consultant.

This sentiment was echoed by an architect who also observed that urban design is not just about interface with nature, but the interface between the built form and public space. He suggested that an interaction with nature "seems a basic human want" in any climate, but that in the tropics, there are more opportunities to engage with the outdoors year-round.

Additionally, a planning consultant argued that interface is important not just between the built and natural environment, but also between elements of the natural environment:

...you are looking for that interface between the ocean, the water and the rainforest – planning consultant.

It is evident from these comments that there are a number of elements of the natural environment that contribute to the interface. A number of respondents considered that the deep green colour of the vegetation indicated tropicality in the environment, particularly in the mountainscape. One respondent even considered the 'clouds in the sky' to look tropical⁷:

I think people understand we're very tropical as soon as they hop out of the aircraft and they don't see a palm tree, but they're, whoa... the colours of green, the colours of blue. That green that we have here that people get very, very wow. So I think the mountainscape for us, and... just the clouds in the sky... - industry representative.

But one of the main things that hits you when you get to Cairns is our backdrop and that green rainforest backdrop... that's one of the most distinctive things I can remember about landing at the airport and coming in from the northern side into the airport... it's the backdrop of the hills... that is different – planning consultant.

Maintaining the natural backdrop with views and ocean and mountain vistas was a key aspect of most respondents' ideas of maintaining tropicality in Cairns:

There are some pretty amazing views. You've got the mountains that way, you've got the mountains that way, you've got the inlet, you've got the ocean, um, you've got Mount Whitfield over there, uh. So there are some pretty amazing views to be had in the CBD but there's nowhere for... tourists to see them – public administrator.

⁷ The University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR) identify that clouds in the tropics are in fact different shapes and are higher than at other latitudes (Gardiner 2008).

That people can see those mountains and the perception is that the other side of the Inlet is totally undeveloped... In a sense you could say wherever there's great mountains or vistas why not let people see those beautiful vistas? And, you know, the Esplanade is a fantastic example where people love it because you look out at those beautiful mountains on the other side don't you? – public administrator.

Another key aspect of the tropical environment mentioned regularly by respondents was the presence of vegetation. As discussed in Section 4.3.4, by the time Cairns was settled in 1876, there was a recognised need to allow large trees to remain in the city to provide shade, and a number of state-wide programs existed to promote the 'civilization' of the natural environment through creating gardens and landscaping in the city (Griggs 2014). This included the establishment of the Cairns Botanical Gardens. This appears to have generated a deep-seated belief in the decision makers of the city that trees and vegetation are critical ingredients in a quality urban environment:

I think the vegetation is critical in the whole thing - landscape architect.

You know, you walk along that, that waterfront and you're in the blazing sun... I think shade is important. I think... tropical vegetation, big trees... are important – public administrator.

I'm going to say, because we're in the tropics, and particularly that's my experience in Port Douglas as well ... is that in the end, you can hide all manner of sins with a tree, for a tropical landscape, can't you? – planning consultant.

I think there... is a lot to learn there with, with the greening of buildings and the green rooves and the like when you get high-density living with a tropical feel – public administrator.

These comments indicate that not only are the trees important from a shade perspective, but a growing appreciation for the importance of energy efficient design in the tropics, capitalising on the ability of trees and vegetation generally to absorb heat to naturally cool buildings and open spaces. The last comment above is indicative of a growing philosophy of tropical urbanism that embraces innovative building design incorporating greenery.

Another aspect of the tropics that was mentioned in a number of ways was the role of water in the tropical climate. From about January to April every year, Cairns experiences a 'wet season' much like the Asian monsoon season, where vast quantities of rain can fall in short periods of time (or indeed for prolonged periods). The wet season is synonymous with high humidity, flooding, mosquito-borne diseases (such as Dengue Fever), active crocodiles in swollen rivers and stingers in the ocean. In terms of Arnold's (2000) paradisiacal/pestilential binary, the wet season could be described as pestilential, yet this is defined by a number of the respondents as key to what makes the tropics distinctive and attractive:

Water's essential. Greenery, shrubbery and shade – public administrator.

If you're looking at the tropics, people immediately think of juicy leaves, I see wet, rain forest or water, or humidity or something like that. So all that stuff is stuck together, adds up in my mind you know an approach to... the condition – landscape architect.

I really wanted the idea of knowing that we're in a wet space... And unfortunately, that doesn't come across very often. That we can perceive that we're in a wet space. People... engineers do like covering in drains and you can't see the effect of water in the environment... architect.

The creation of interface in the built environment to facilitate interaction with the natural environment in terms of views, mountains, vegetation and water emerged from this analysis as the underpinning norm for urban design in Cairns.

5.4.3 Design of the tropical urban landscape

Respondents' thoughts around the design of the built environment and urban landscape were informed heavily by the underpinning norms of interface with nature. This was mostly in terms of minimising heat retention in hard surfaces such as roads and concrete buildings to minimise the urban heat island effect (see Wong & Chen 2009) the presence of trees or vegetation and minimising energy usage to become more sustainable as a community. As one industry representative notes about the central mall in Cairns:

It's not necessarily a welcoming kind of space. It's too hot, you know. It's like you've got this really hot hard surface... but it's not naturally a natural space that gets used because it's unappealing.

Ideas around how to manage the hot and humid climate through the built environment were a dominant theme in the responses around what comprises good tropical urban design. It was interesting to note that often within these answers, respondents would refer primarily to sustainability and climate responsiveness in buildings rather than in the design of the urban landscape. This may reflect a general lack of dialogue around urban design in comparison with the more dominant discourse around sustainable architectural design brought about by programs such as Green Star ratings. As these respondents observed:

...listening to a lot of people that I talked to, a lot of visitors, they're amazed at what they see and how it all works together. You know in particular, the tropical gardens, the backdrop of the mountains... So the buildings have to be designed to sort of cater for that. So in the good weather, open them up and let the natural breeze and the outside come in and then where it's particularly hot like this, you should be able to close them but you can see out but cool the place down... for our visitors – elected official.

You know, it's all well and good to say the windows have to be open all the time to give a tropical feel, but when you're working in 35-degree heat and 99% humidity, it's not always practical – public administrator.

To my mind, it's looking at the - and this is probably using really simplistic terms - but it's moving away from the block and glass structure to something that is a) sustainable and b) sensitive to the climate – public administrator.

You see the smart designers and how they can channel and funnel breezes and light... through ceilings and that sort of stuff. It should be... I'm not for this big climate control stuff with your lights... I see where you're utilising light through ceilings and breezeways and so forth because I grew up with no fans, no air conditioner, nothing in a hot climate – elected official.

An exception to this is the observation by one public administrator who is also an architect, considering the wider issues of climate responsiveness in an urban design context, although they may still actually be talking about individual structures:

Unsuccessful urban design is stuff which requires a heavy amount of active energy usage from my perspective and doesn't work because it's copping all of the sun from the wrong direction and it doesn't perform climatically, and so your energy bills go through the roof because you have to maintain it. I think around Cairns is full of unsuccessful urban design.

Some respondents alluded to the deeper idea that tropical urban design is more than just climate-responsive design, but rather a product of how people who shape and experience the tropical urban landscape view the tropics, or 'tropical condition'. As one Brisbane-based architect involved with sub-tropical design observed:

There is a strong push that climatic things and ... you know, passive energy and low energy design is a key part of subtropical design. You know, I accept all that. But it's also... about cultural perceptions... it's about how we stop and do this.

These ideas were more deeply considered by a landscape architect:

I think it's cultural... there's probably an underlying sense that we're first world, not third world... Because I think we often think of the Asian tropics as being a little... they're Buddhist, they're quite shambolic maybe. The charm is that they're not structured and European and familiar whereas here, it's different isn't it... But I think it's difficult because it's part of that relaxed feeling that is what's appealing. The fact that it is so exotic and I think that's what's challenging for us is... the exoticism, how do you manifest that exoticism... when you still have the cultural similarities ... when I came it was an English based place. With English, everyone understands you, the food's the same. You can dip into the Asian foods but you're not seeing oxen on the street with kids and things running around. It's the policy of roads. It's safe. It's policed. The systems are similar. I think a lot of us have been going further back in that whole sense of the tropics as paradise and that whole

Gauguin experience and the French colonial thing and the way that that became part of our language and understanding of the tropical exotic... sexually free, all the rest of it. It's ah, yes, I don't know how you put it in Cairns...

This landscape architect is responsible for much of the Cairns Regional Council's public landscaping, who considers the challenges of 'representing the tropics' versus 'representing an authentic Cairns'. He recounts having to consider the tensions between community perceptions of what is actually native and representative of Cairns are informed by what is tropical, rather than what is actually native:

I don't know if anyone talked about this authenticity but when we did some work with Douglas [shire council], those words were quite important to the community. It's very difficult to know what they mean by them, people think these palms are authentic or coconuts and gingers... What's native? People keep saying oh, that tree is a native tree. I'm going, that's not a native tree. That's a native. No, it's not. It's a tropical. It's not a native tree - landscape architect.

At the heart of the tensions explored by this landscape architect is the idea of place identity, another fundamental concept of urban design raised by respondents. As discussed in Chapter 4, the identity of Cairns has historically been linked with innovation and direct policy from southern metropolitan centres, particularly Brisbane, but also Melbourne and Sydney. The most obvious example of this is the characteristic 'Queenslander' style home, celebrated and used as inspiration within the Cairns Style Design Guide but the majority of which were not designed nor even manufactured in Cairns, but rather delivered as one of a limited choice of kit homes by rail from Brisbane. Or indeed the kit homes and 'cookie cutter' residential estates generically designed for Melbourne estates and built en masse in low-cost housing estates throughout the Cairns (and tropical) region still today.

The concept of place identity is linked to a discussion around how to achieve authenticity or sense of place in the urban landscape in a city with a short European history and where the natural environment is the dominant element of distinction, or point of counterstructure. The *Cairns Style Design Guide* and *City Centre Masterplan* make a start on this by attempting to create or inspire a modern tropical city, although both work within legislative confines that restrict innovation. As discussed in Chapter 2, Cohen (1988) argues that

tourists have a much looser requirement of authenticity than museum curators or anthropologists. In terms of authenticity in the tropical urban landscape, this may also be the case for tourists versus urban designers, although as Salah Ouf (2001) points out, urban regeneration now tends to focus on the creation of places that are enjoyable and imageable rather than an accurate replication of traditional urban settings. Central to a number of responses from the urban designers was the idea that 'if we design for the locals, the tourists will come', arguing that this would bring a level of 'genuine-ness' to the urban fabric and design of Cairns. A number of respondents mentioned Venice as a key example of this:

I mean I love Venice, and I love Venice because Venice is designed for Venetians... – elected official.

I do like cities and getting a sense of the culture, like for example one of the most interesting things in Venice is you can tell who lives in the house because they just dress up and they're usually old women in these mink coats and things... they come out in the afternoon and you can tell who the tourists are and you can tell who the locals are, and I like that, getting a sense of who lives in the place and who's a visitor and that's fine... and of course, you know, the food you can eat there as well is obviously a key part of the authenticity of a place – architect.

However, as another architect observed:

I think there's a spectrum, and on the extreme end of the spectrum is Venice where it has something like 60 million visitors a year and 60,000 residents, or something horrendous... we were there two years ago, and shortly before we'd been there, the local residents had a funeral for the city because effectively, you know, it really didn't have an intact local economy anymore, and it really didn't have a local sense of... the day-to-day and being in Venice with that knowledge, I found that really, really... it's so beautiful, but it's really, really hard to engage with, and I think that's a really damaging thing to have done to that, to have happened to that place.

Regardless of questions around the need for authenticity or what authentic even means, the need to distinguish Cairns as a place of difference to other tropical places or cities in

Australia was widely accepted by respondents. The basic theory of maintaining both competitive and comparative advantage over other cities competing with Cairns for migration and tourism was acknowledged as critical by many:

...particularly in downtown urban Cairns because what would make the greenery and that setting that everything's in that's going to make us tropical Cairns. Otherwise you could go to Brisbane and be downtown at South Bank, walking along all the restaurants with water in front of you. What's going to make it different here is the greenery that we've been able to sustain in the surroundings – planning consultant.

...tourists want to experience new and different things really. So it can't be the same as everywhere else – elected official.

What a great market, Rusty's. We don't have a market like that in Brisbane. So it's stuff that's really very special to Cairns and then all that stuff close by is really nice. And I think there's heaps of potential to do more with that. And then, you just need the city foreman, the places in the city to support that experience and, and reinforce that experience, I think, because it's there and, you know, just ... I think you're looking for a genuine experience of specialness – architect.

...it's got to be on our heritage. Our design's got to be ours, what we're all about. It's got to be... part of it to be an indigenous history and part of... the fact that we've got a port and the wharf and whatever. That's ours, and visitors come to see what is ours. They don't want to see what they've got at home, definitely not. Even we're getting some kickback, yes some basic signage is really good, but we don't want them on every street – industry representative.

These comments do not necessarily address the shape of the tropical urban landscape, but rather a need for an experience of difference in the city, some of which can be achieved through the urban design process. Other aspects of city design were also mentioned by respondents that may not be specifically tropical, but address the needs of tourists specifically (emphases added by author):

the **quality of the place and walkability** is important because as a tourist you often don't have a car so being able to walk and being able to experience and come to terms quickly with the culture and character of the place – architect.

...for me, one of the biggest things that I think we, we need to improve within Cairns is our **engagement with the street frontage** – public administrator.

...tourists generally want to have a bit of a walk around, so I guess... **legible pathways** is probably important – public administrator.

It's all about **connection**. People don't almost get hit by a car or run across a set of lights or something – landscape architect.

Additionally, a number of urban designers expressed concern about the quality of the urban landscape in the city centre, citing a lack of reinvestment, updating and maintenance of the privately owned buildings as key reasons for this. The city centre was widely acknowledged as being 'let down' by a number of 'old families' who control the real estate as landlords, and are perceived to not invest enough in their buildings:

It's old, for one. Even bits that have been redone... Primarily because old families own it and they don't spend money... - planning consultant.

You know, like for years, [my business partner] and I have often talked about the master plan for the city, for the CBD, I don't know how many there've been and the changes of paving and different trees, now pull this out and put this in... I said you know what, let me look around, really. All this place needs is a coat of paint. When you look at some of the buildings that are owned by really old Cairns families who are derelict in their duty of presentation – landscape designer.

We've still got a lot of work to do all the time... we've got to have this philosophy of reinvesting, and making sure we don't let stuff go to the dogs... And also, look at those buildings, how bloody dirty. So I'd like a policy whereby the buildings, every couple of years, were basically nearly forced to ... or the council would charge them an extra levy and come and do it. Like clean the building, there's nothing like that...

And if there's legislation that needs to be put in... the landlords would hate it but I think quite frankly they have a responsibility... - industry representative.

Everybody is kind of disappointed with our CBD, you know and it's shabby – industry representative.

Whilst the respondents acknowledged that the city experience may be able to provide some points of difference from other tropical places, there was a general sentiment that Cairns' true competitive advantage lie in its proximity to the Great Barrier Reef:

Because that's why people come here... They either come here for the Barrier Reef or the tropical, you know, the tropical green experience - architect.

...we look at Singapore and we say how are we going to get Singaporeans to visit Cairns... It's the reef, simple, clear and simple. It's the reef. Yet, because of a lot of the diversity of their rainforest is gone, there could be elements of the rainforest [to attract them] as well, but it's the reef that's the key point of difference – industry representative.

Although it was accepted by respondents that the true comparative advantage of Cairns rests in the natural environment, particularly the Great Barrier Reef, there was a broad acknowledgement that the design of the city can contribute to the tourist experience. Key design norms for the tropical city included providing an interface with nature in the city; representing and connecting with the city's indigenous, European and other cultural heritage (especially the Asian and Pacific linkages); retaining key aspects of 'good' tropical urban design such as walkability, street frontages and signage management; and most critically, to be distinguishable from other cities competing for migration and tourism.

5.4.4 How the city is used

A number of respondents identified that how people use the urban landscape influences both how they perceive their experiences and the experiences of others. These ideas are also addressed by Carmona (2014) in the place-shaping continuum, attributing an entire quarter of the model to how a place is shaped by how it is used. This concept is known in marketing and tourism literatures as experience co-creation (Binkhorst & Den Dekker 2009), where people experiencing a place (or product) are not considered to be idle

participants, but an active part of the experiential process. Ideas emerging from this research indicated that a key measure of the effectiveness of a place is whether it is used and how it is used. In particular, the activity level generated in a space seems to be key to the perception of place success in a city, and to some extent may be a self-propagating phenomenon. How and to what extent a space is used was generally accepted by respondents as the main test of the effectiveness of the design:

There's always activity, so there's a lot of people there and I think that's a sign that the place works – public administrator

[City Place] fails a critical test of activity. People walk through it but no one stops – public administrator.

I ride my bike home most afternoons; there's always people there. There's always activity, so there's a lot of people there and I think that's a sign that the place works – planning consultant.

Key activities mentioned by respondents in terms of how people use the city included engaging in activities such as swimming, night-time activities, experiencing the city as a local. Swimming was considered important by some as an important asset to the tropical feel of Cairns:

I guess people attract people. I think that they're probably looking for shade and vegetation... but I think one of the other things they are looking for is somewhere to swim. So I think that's probably one of their key criteria is somewhere to swim – public administrator.

Obviously the Esplanade is a success for a whole variety of reasons... whether that's necessarily tropical urban design in its purest form, but the function that it performs, the elements that we've provided in there with the swimming lagoon and the Muddy's Playground for the kids and other facilities all adds to the character and the feel of the city – public administrator.

A number of respondents mentioned the need for a night-time economy in Cairns to better service the needs of tourists, particularly those from Asian countries that generally have active night-time communities. The benefits of engaging with the night-time economy have been discussed in both planning (Bianchini 1995) and tourism (Vanhove 2011) literatures, however the specific advantages of capitalising on the warmth of tropical evenings to develop tropical cities has received little attention. This was considered particularly important by respondents, but some thought lacking in Cairns:

So you want a coastal resort style village, you've got that, but then if you wanted to come in and you wanted to have a night time event or party, choice of restaurants, the buzz of people having fun and enjoying the night life and whatnot, Cairns is the place you can actually do that – industry representative.

...the Chinese. I just think it's all too quiet and there's not enough activity in the city at night. And because they live on the streets and we don't – elected official.

it's an interesting one, the hours of operation and the types of stores, I mean I was in the CBD the other night, and the Chinese visitors are just walking the streets with nothing to do because they're used to being out at night where they travel, but nothing is open except the night markets, and we really don't service it, save for a few restaurants and a lot of nightclubs – elected official.

It is interesting to note here that the elected officials considered these issues to be important to the experience of the city but even they – as potential 'owners' of projects and design in the city – considered the influence of developing a night-time economy beyond the remit of their influence. The impression given was that this was an issue for the business owners in the city to address.

The other key point raised by the urban designers was the need for tourists to engage 'as a local' in their city experience. These ideas were most often generated from the personal preferences of the respondents rather than any supporting research. In particular, 13 of the 20 respondents argued that whilst the city requires areas of business and service co-location that service the needs of tourists, there was no need for specific tourist precincts in the city. The consensus of argument for this centered around the need to be a

functioning city that attracts people for its innate qualities rather than a 'tourist city'. These arguments circulate back to suggestions made previously in this chapter about retaining authenticity in the city:

I'd like a foot in both camps. There's some benefits of having it all combined. An area as precinct, but again that linkage of the local flavour into it so it can't be fenced off. A tourist island would never work – public administrator.

I think that tourism is looking to engage locals and to see that local. I know from my tourist experiences, um, places that are predominantly tourism centred I find it a little bit sterile and not genuine – public administrator.

The tourist experience, is more of a holistic one that is enjoyed by the locals as well – industry representative.

These also hint at a deeper sentiment widely expressed by respondents that the services provided to the tourists in the city both enrich and expand local residents' opportunities and experiences as well, thus enhancing the value of the tourism industry to the city.

5.4.5 How the city is managed

Although less prevalent than the other points raised here, some respondents considered that the high standard of living and urban management set Cairns apart as a tropical city when compared with competing Asian and Pacific destinations. The idea of a 'developed tropical city' was considered a key aspect of Cairns' competitive advantage:

Because I think they come here they want to make sure we, we've got clean, everything's clean. There's not a lot of litter around. Our toilet systems work... and if you went to the Philippines I reckon you'd be going from four star down to two star. There'd be the smell of sewerage, all those sorts of elements – public administrator.

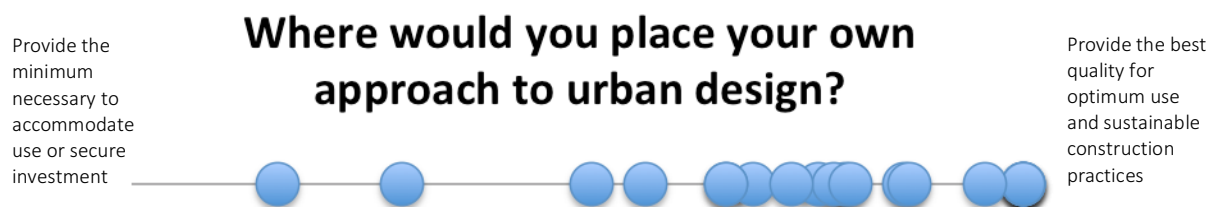
They want to be able to have easy access to places, convenient facilities, and I think especially when you're travelling in the Western world... you expect ease and convenience and good quality services – elected official.

These sentiments also drew on wider ideas of the quality of the surrounding natural environment, in particular the World Heritage Areas. As one elected official noted:

The one thing that keeps us is the quality of our Great Barrier Reef, which is the best in the world. And there will always be people who want to come here because they know that's where you go to really see high quality, well-managed reefs.

Although the management of the city is not necessarily a design norm in itself, the concept of the city as clean and 'developed' with quality facilities, up-to-date design and a natural environment underlies these sentiments and contribute to the design philosophies in Cairns. This aligns with the arguments of Murphy, P., Pritchard and Smith (2000), who suggest that the perception of quality in a destination product is a "positive distinguishing characteristic" (p. 43) for tourists. Respondents were asked specifically to locate their attitudes to urban design quality on a continuum, seen below in Graph 5.1. This shows that the majority of respondents were closer to the 'best quality' end of the continuum than 'minimum necessary'.

Graph 5.1 Urban designers' attitudes to urban design quality



Of particular interest in this question were the conservative elected officials whose political values suggest that they would provide the minimum necessary to accommodate use or secure investment. In one case, the respondent struggled for some time before finally placing his mark at second from the left end. His counterparts all placed their marks at the very right hand end of the continuum. There appears to be little correlation between the four most left-hand points: both female and male respondents consisting of two public administrators, a politician and a planning consultant. This indicates that in general, although they may not feel they have ownership of the urban design process, the majority

of urban designers in Cairns believe that they approach urban design to provide the best (or close to the best) quality for optimum use and sustainable construction practices.

5.4.6 Design norms in the tropical urban landscape

This section has discussed how the urban design process works in Cairns in terms of assessing user needs and explored what urban designers consider important in shaping the tropical urban landscape with tourists in mind. Overall, the urban designers presented a number of clear design norms in designing the tropical urban landscape with tourists in mind. As discussed earlier in the chapter there has been little research conducted (or accessed) by the respondents on what tourists actually want from their experiences, but rather these norms have been formed by personal preferences and experiences of tourists whilst they are in the city. An illustration of the diversity of opinions on what tourists want can be seen in the responses about Chinese tourists – a major emerging tourism market in the region. One elected official believed - based on his personal encounters with Chinese tourists – that all Chinese prefer closed-in urban environments, and have little tolerance for open space:

The Chinese are not into wide open spaces... You know, they get beside each other. And when you put them in an open space they shit themselves – elected official.

Or as an industry representative who had accessed research put it:

The Chinese are getting more sophisticated very quickly, and they like engagement and interaction. They like restaurants. We've got infrastructure facilities to maintain... We need a mixture of audience, local and visitor – industry representative.

On the other hand, a public administrator and architect believed that the tropical city would provide a counterstructure to the developed hustle and bustle of China:

So it appears that the new Chinese market of tourists love - are enjoying Cairns because it's so different from China, because of the low scale of development and the natural beauty it offers – architect.

I think the Chinese will probably enjoy seeing greenery, lower density - public administrator.

No doubt each one of these statements applies to at least some of the approximately 1.3 billion people currently residing in China, however very little publicly available research has been conducted on their preferences in travelling to small tropical cities such as Cairns. This illustration highlights how underpinning design norms might inform design decisions but may also be at odds with one another.

Keeping the lack of user research in mind, Table 5.2 shows a summary of the design norms that emerged from the responses of the urban designers. It is important to note that these norms are just part of the story. Chapter 4 and Section 5.2 of this chapter have highlighted that the place-based modes of operation that enact these norms can skew the outcomes in favour of the perceptions of those with positions of financial power or connected to the power bases of government in Canberra, Brisbane, or to a lesser extent the local council. Nevertheless, respondents were targeted because of their influence in city decision making and thus whether they perceive themselves to hold influence or not, their underlying normative philosophies do have some impact on the city, either through policy or design.

Table 5.2 Key normative elements in the design of the tropical urban landscape with tourists in mind – urban designers

Theme	Elements	Specifics
Feel	Tropical feel	Interface with nature
		See below
		Design of built environment
		See below
	Tropical 'condition'	Feel on your skin
		Smells & taste
		Relax
		Nature
		Expectations
		Traditional perception of the tropics
		Verandahs

Theme		Elements	Specifics
Nature	Interface with nature	Views/vistas	Mountainscape
			Beauty
			Colour
			Ocean
			Sky & clouds
			Vegetation
		Water	Rain & drains
			Ocean & rivers
			Swimming pools
		Vegetation	Lush green colour
			Native/non-native (palms)
			In the city
			In vistas
		Air	Feel on skin
			Humidity
		Hot/cool	Shade – trees & buildings
			Verandahs
Built environment	Physical design	Interface with nature	See above
		Design	Cairns - tropical innovation centre
			Innovation in design
			Hard surfaces/ soft surfaces
			Light and bright
			Quality in design
			Up-to-date or well-maintained buildings
			Beauty
		Scale	Small scale
			Nothing taller than a palm tree
			Open areas and space
		Climate responsive	Hard & hot surfaces
			Urban heat island effect
			Shade & shelter from elements
			Verandahs
			Sustainable practices
			Still able to work – cool & sealed
		Authenticity	Create difference
			Genuine
			Diversity
			Tropical 'condition'
		Connection & walkability	Pedestrian oriented
			Walkable from place to place
		Management	Clean
			Working amenities
		Streetscape	Not too commercial
			Servicing tourist needs
			Street frontages
People	Activity/use	Places with people	Meet user needs
			Safe
			Be busy
			Markets
			Swimming
			Picnic/BBQ areas
		Night time economy	Warm nights
			Creation of busy-ness
			Key aspect of tropical holiday
		Engage as local	Experience the city as a local
			Engage with locals
		Alfresco dining	Warm nights
			Creation of busy-ness
			Key aspect of tropical holiday

The themes shown in Table 5.2 illustrate the interrelated nature of these concepts, where physical design is seen as needing to provide an interface with the elements of nature but also shelter from it. In many ways, the form and function of the verandah illustrates these points most clearly. The form of a verandah has an historical tropical colonial connotation (Myers 2003), an aesthetic design function and function for cooling the central structure it is attached to, a place of activity between inside and out (often where alfresco dining is located), and also a place where a person can be outside and enjoying the interface with nature such as views, vegetation, the feel of the air on their skin and potentially rain and wind whilst still being protected. Together with cultural perceptions of what the tropics 'feel' like - the tropical 'condition' - the sum of these elements have the potential to create what the urban designers have termed *Tropical Feel*.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter critically considered the urban design process in Cairns from the perspective of those shaping it within the design aspect of Carmona's (2014) place-shaping continuum. It found that whilst this aspect of the place-shaping continuum is a useful tool for analysing the urban design process in a tropical city, the context analysis is a fundamental - rather than secondary - aspect of the analytical process. The findings in this chapter also supported the development in Carmona's argument from 2003 to 2014 that there is little distinction between knowing and unknowing urban designers, especially in a small tropical city such as Cairns. Nevertheless, self-conscious urban design processes in the city are still influenced by people who exercise power in an unknowing way through political and financial decision making, suggesting that the geopolitical, historical, environmental and cultural contexts in which the urban designers are operating are woven within their design practice, both consciously and unconsciously.

This chapter also established that despite the diversity of perspectives amongst the urban designers, there exists a series of agreed on design norms in shaping the tropical urban landscape for tourists, although these are mostly founded within personal encounters and preferences. These norms centre on interface and engagement with nature in the city, authenticity in design, measuring success of urban spaces, co-creation of experiences with locals and the provision of quality urban spaces. The next chapter considers these concepts against the preferences of tourists visiting Cairns to evaluate the effectiveness of the urban design process in delivering positive outcomes for the city.

Chapter 6

6 Experiencing the tropical urban landscape as a tourist

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to identify what tourists value in their experience of the tropical urban landscape. Chapters 4 and 5 identified a number of systemic issues in the process of urban design in Cairns where user preferences are rarely researched and little value is placed on understanding the preferences of the tourist, even though the city attracts over 2.5 million visitors per year and the industry contributes about \$2.6 billion in total visitor spend to the region (Tourism Tropical North Queensland 2014b). This raises questions about how effectively the urban designers in Cairns incorporate the needs of tourists in the urban design process. In other words, does a lack of research necessarily translate to a lack of understanding of tourist needs? Vischer (2008) argues that generally in the built environment the consideration of “user needs are rare and unfamiliar” (p. 239), and this is evident in the Cairns example, even though there exists a considerable literature around understanding the needs and preferences of tourists in both the city experience (Ek et al. 2008) and in the tourist experience in general (discussed in the literature review in Chapter 2).

Experiencing the tropical urban landscape as a tourist is different to experiencing it as a resident, although many key elements of preference are no doubt the same. Matsuoka and Kaplan (2008) argue that: “wherever they may be, urban residents express a desire for contact with nature and each other, attractive environments, places for recreation and play, privacy, a more active role in the design of their community, and a sense of community identity” (p. 14), which are all things that a tourist also might appreciate in their experience of an urban place. In essence, the literature suggests that the difference between the experience of a place as a tourist rather than as a resident lies within the frame of reference. The literature review in Chapter 2 explored Cohen’s (1979) description of the tourist experience as a way of detaching from real life and Gospodini’s (2001, 2002) arguments that the city can provide a ‘counterstructure’ to the everyday life of the tourist. Gospodini draws on examples such as Bilbao in Spain to suggest that avant-garde design

can provide these counterstructures. This research draws on these ideas to suggest that counterstructure may be found in the city not just in terms of avant-garde design, but also in terms of tropicity and tropical design in the city as a point of difference to the everyday life of the tourist.

Hence, this thesis is about urban design process in the tropical urban landscape as distinct from any urban landscape. Chapter 4 argues that context underpins what and how things are done in a place, identifying a number of key place-based modes of operation in Cairns that have developed out of its place, polity and power context. These place-based modes of operation are not derived simply from the tropical climate, but also from the geographical, cultural and political climate that is influenced by Cairns' tropicity. Many urban policies are driven by a basic need of the user that is not tropically specific, such as safety, public transport and pedestrian walkways. The process of solving these issues and the solutions themselves however are underpinned by the tropical place, polity and power context. Similarly, in asking what tourists value in their experience of the tropical urban landscape, tourist preferences will emerge that may or may not be obviously tropically related. In *The Tourism System*, Mill and Morrison (2009) argue that every destination is comprised of five essential elements: attractions, facilities, infrastructure, transportation and hospitality. Additionally, Alegre and Garau (2010) suggest a range of destination characteristics that contribute to tourist satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Lew (1987) presents an ideographic typography of tourist attractions that centres on either nature, nature-human interface, or human elements. None of these elements are tropically specific, however if experienced within a tropical setting may become so. For example, the presence or absence of trees in the urban landscape may be a general indicator of tourist satisfaction or dissatisfaction. In the tropical urban landscape, the presence or absence of palms or native trees may contribute to or detract from the tropical feel of a place and influence tourist satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Drawing on this argument, this chapter critically considers all elements of the urban landscape experience identified by tourists as being an experience of the tropical urban landscape.

Perceptions of the tropical urban landscape are not simply visual but multi-sensual. As one landscape designer described in Chapter 5, the tropics is much about the "feel on your skin" as it is about the observation of palm trees and beaches in the surrounding environment. In particular, the sense of feeling hot and humid is a feeling specific to the

tropics and forms a key aspect of the counterstructure to the tourists' everyday life at home. This research considers this idea in light of Urry's (1992) suggestion that the multi-sensual experiences of the tourist are only of importance "because they take place in a distinctive visual environment" (p. 172) and Lynch's (1960) argument that nothing in the city "is experienced by itself, but always in relation to its surroundings" (p. 1). It considers the idea of how tropical feel - a key concept identified as of value to tourists by the urban designers in Chapter 5 - is represented visually in the tropical urban landscape. After describing the characteristics of the tourist survey sample, this chapter considers whether tropical feel is as critical to the tourists using the city as the urban designers perceive it to be. Then, using a number of sources, it examines in more detail the preferences of what tourists like most or least in their visual experience of the tropical urban landscape, and whether different types of tourists have different preferences. This chapter concludes to propose the key components of urban design in the tropical context from a tourism perspective.

6.2 Characteristics of the Tourist Survey Sample

6.2.1 Sources

This chapter details the results of a tourist survey conducted in Cairns and nearby Palm Cove over busy and quiet tourist seasons in 2012/13. The aim of the survey was to identify what tourists who use Cairns City like and dislike in the tropical urban landscape, with a view to building an image of what elements of the tropical tourism landscape are valuable in the tourist experience. The design and administration of the survey is detailed in Chapter 3. In keeping with the pragmatic mixed methods approach of this research, the findings of the tourist survey are supplemented with information from other sources, in particular a three year analysis of online user-generated review site TripAdvisor.com and an analysis of websites selling Cairns as a destination to tourists. The rationale and methods of this analysis are also detailed in Chapter 3. Where relevant, the results of the tourist survey are contextualised against data from other available tourism data on the region such as exit surveys at Cairns Domestic Airport over the same period conducted within the National Environmental Research Program (NERP) (Prideaux, Sakata & Thompson 2012) and Tourism Research Australia's (TRA) National and International Visitor Surveys (NVS and IVS) (Tourism and Events Queensland 2014; Tourism Research Australia 2014). It was originally envisaged that this survey could be compared with the larger dataset of the NERP survey, however as

discussed in Section 3.3.3, differences in sampling and a lack of representativeness in the NERP data made the comparisons invalid.

6.2.2 Tourist survey – sample characteristics

As discussed in Chapter 3, a sample size of 500 was selected for the tourist survey. In total, 548 surveys were collected, 526 of which were valid. This section details the characteristics of the sample. Table 6.1 shows a summary of the sample characteristics.

Table 6.1 Summary of tourist survey sample characteristics $n=526$

Gender	%	Age	%
Female	54.0	under 20yrs	2.9
Male	45.4	20-29 yrs.	43.9
		30-39 yrs.	16.5
		40-49 yrs.	16.9
		50-59 yrs.	8.6
		60-65 yrs.	5.9
		over 65 years	4.4
Education	%	Origin - region	%
Secondary	14.3	European	29.1
Trade/TAFE	12.7	Asia	20.7
Diploma	28.5	Australia	17.9
Degree	39.9	Germany	9.9
Other	1.5	UK & Ireland	9.3
		North America	6.3
		Latin & South America	3.8
		Scandinavia	1.5
		New Zealand	1.0
		Other	0.2
Occupation	%	Domestic/International	%
Self-employed	26.8	Domestic	18.3
Professional	17.7	International	81.6
Student	13.5		
Public service	8.9		
Retired/semi-retired	7.6		
Office-clerical	6.8		
Service industry	4.9		
Tradesperson	3.2		
Management	2.7		
Domestic duties	2.7		
Retail	2.5		
Manual/factory worker	2.3		
Travel party	%	Information sources	%
Friends	43	Friends/relatives	67.3
Couple	26.6	Internet	43.0
Tour group	14.4	Guide book	39.5
Alone	7.8	TV/Radio advertisements	25.7
Family with children	5.7	Travel agent	23.0
Relatives	2.3	Visitor centre	18.1
		Been before	7.6
		TV documentary	4.9
		Facebook	2.5
		Print advertisements	1.9
		Other source	1.5
Accommodation	%	Previous experience	%
Backpackers	35.2	First visit	86.1
Resort	28.3	Been before	13.1
Holiday apartment/unit	22.1		
Hotel/Motel	4.8		
Friends/Relatives	3.4		
Camping	3.2		
Caravan park	2.3		
B&B	0.6		

6.2.2.1 Gender

Women are overrepresented in the sample, a result almost exactly mirrored in the NERP data. Although there is no obvious explanation for this, one reason could be that during survey administration when a couple were approached, women tended to offer to complete the survey on behalf of both people.

6.2.2.2 Age

Graph 6.1 shows that the sample had a higher percentage of respondents in the 20-29 years age group than in any other category, a distribution that was mirrored in the NERP survey responses, but not in the TRA data, where all age groups are around 15% with the exception of 55+ age group at 42%. Overall, the respondents were younger than the NERP respondents and this is considered to be a reflection of the high use public locations at which the surveys were administered. One reason for this could be that the 20-29 age group are more likely to be backpackers who may not have swimming pool facilities at their accommodation, or may be more inclined to use the public facilities such as the Lagoon swimming pool, beach and Esplanade, which were key survey collection areas. This data cannot be compared with the NVS and IVS data as the groups are not compatible. Table 6.2 shows a crosstabulation percentage of accommodation style against age group in the sample. This shows a heavy representation in the sample of backpackers in their twenties, with 26.6% of the sample in this category. Although this may be considered to be a limitation of the data, it may also provide a more accurate reflection of preferences in the city by the tourists who actually use it.

Graph 6.1 Age distribution of respondents

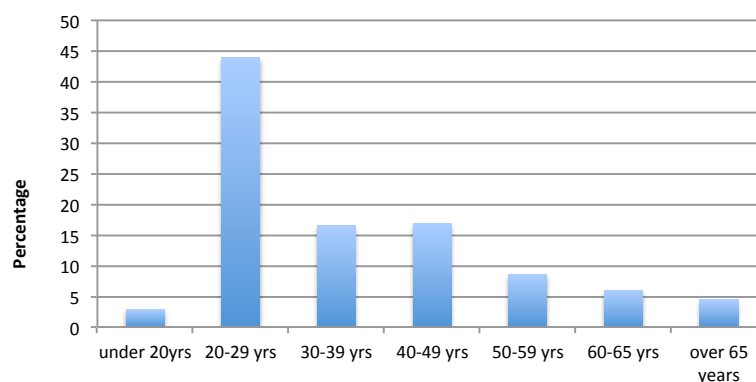


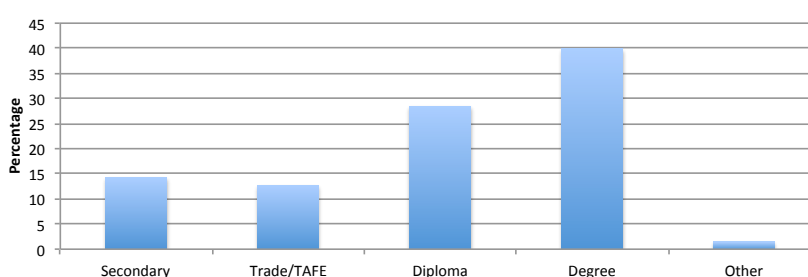
Table 6.2 Crosstabulation of accommodation style and age group in the sample

Accommodation		Motel	Caravan park	Resort/Hotel	Camping	Back-packers	B&B	Holiday unit/apt	Friends /Rels	Total
Age	< 20yrs	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.2%	1.7%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	2.9%
	20-29 yrs.	2.3%	1.1%	7.3%	2.1%	26.6%	0.4%	3.6%	1.0%	44.4%
	30-39 yrs.	0.6%	0.0%	6.3%	0.2%	5.4%	0.0%	3.6%	0.6%	16.7%
	40-49 yrs.	0.8%	0.6%	7.3%	0.0%	0.8%	0.2%	6.9%	0.6%	17.0%
	50-59 yrs.	0.6%	0.2%	3.1%	0.8%	0.2%	0.0%	3.1%	0.8%	8.6%
	60-65 yrs.	0.2%	0.4%	2.7%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	2.1%	0.4%	5.9%
	65 yrs. +	0.4%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	1.9%	0.4%	4.4%
	Total	4.8%	2.3%	28.4%	3.3%	35.4%	0.6%	21.6%	3.6%	100.0%

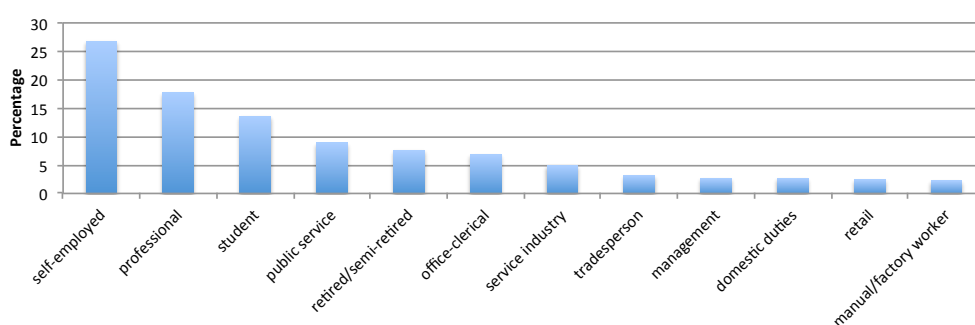
6.2.2.3 Education and occupation

Graph 6.2 shows that the sample contained mostly university (39.9%) and diploma (28.5%) graduates. This was lower than the NERP data, but given the younger sample, may indicate that some may not have completed university prior to travelling. Graph 6.3 shows that over a quarter of the sample was self-employed (26.8%), followed by professionals (17.7%), students (13.5%) and public servants (8.9%).

Graph 6.2 Highest education level reached by respondents



Graph 6.3 Occupation of respondents

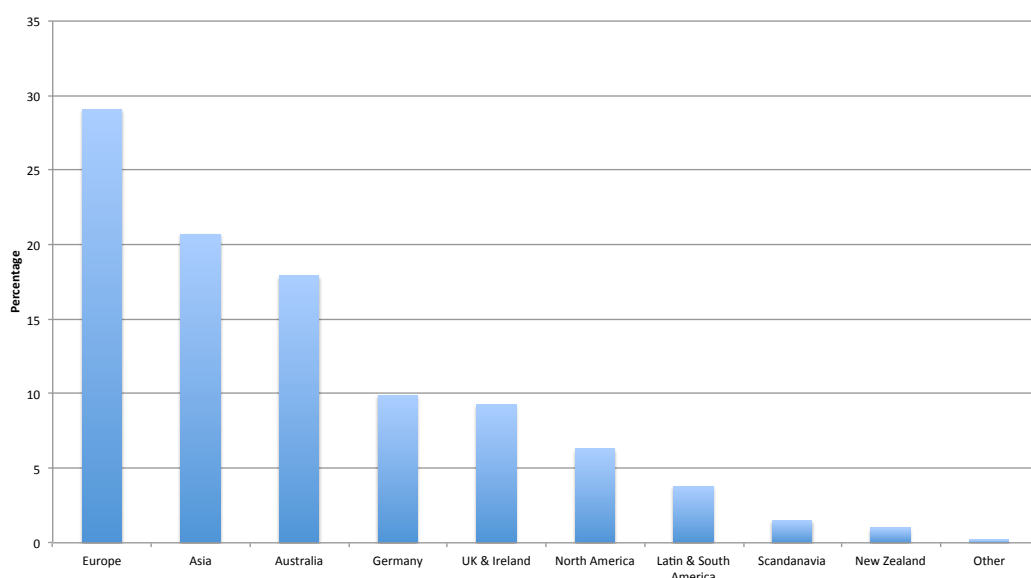


6.2.2.4 *Origin of respondents*

International visitors were over-represented in the sample (81.6%) compared with the NERP (55.3%) sample. Some skew in this data was anticipated due to the fact that the NERP survey was administered in the Cairns Domestic Airport, however both surveys were skewed to international visitors compared with the TRA data, which indicates that holiday visitors to Cairns are approximately 56.9% domestic and 43.1% international. This is partly to do with the fact that the NERP survey does not capture the drive market, but could also indicate that international visitors are more likely to use the public areas of the city than domestic visitors, or perhaps that the international visitors were more receptive to completing the survey.

Graph 6.4 shows that the majority of the international visitors in the sample are from Europe (21.9%). As with the age data, the representation of Europeans in the sample may indicate the nationality of the large group of backpackers in their twenties. Second to Europeans in the sample are Asians (20.7%). Europeans, Asians and Australians made up nearly 77.6% of the entire sample, including the 9.9% of German respondents. The representation of Europeans and Asians may indicate a tendency for these groups to use the public areas of a city rather than staying within resorts and other private areas.

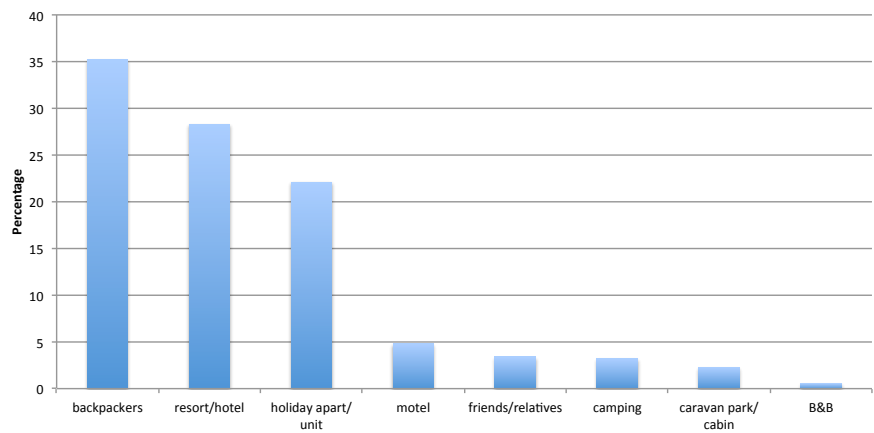
Graph 6.4 Region of origin of respondents



6.2.2.5 Accommodation style

As already noted, the sample had a higher percentage of people staying in backpackers (35.2%) than any other style of accommodation, which may indicate a greater tendency for the demographic who use backpackers to engage with public areas in the city. The rest of the sample mostly comprised people staying in resorts/hotels (28.3%) and holiday apartment/units (22.1%). These three categories combined made up 85.6% of the entire sample. Graph 6.5 shows the distribution of accommodation style in the sample.

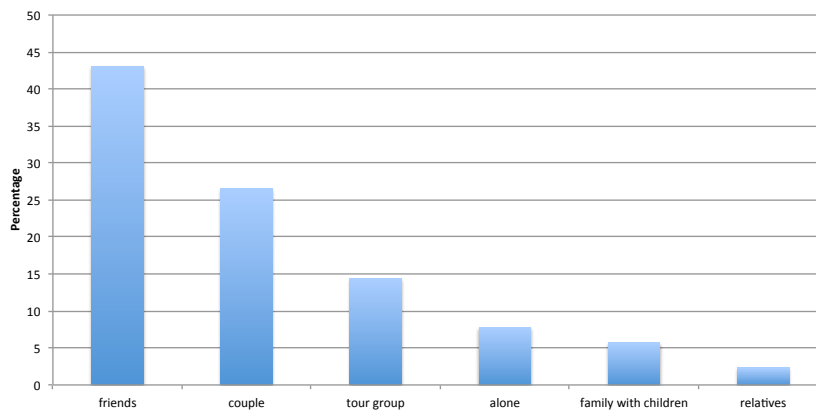
Graph 6.5 Accommodation style used by respondents



6.2.2.6 Travel party

Consistent with the backpacker demographic, Graph 6.6 shows that nearly half of the sample were travelling with friends (43.0%) and a quarter as a couple (26.6%). The lower representation of families may be because of the self-administration style of the survey, where busy parents may not have had the 10 minutes available to complete the questionnaire.

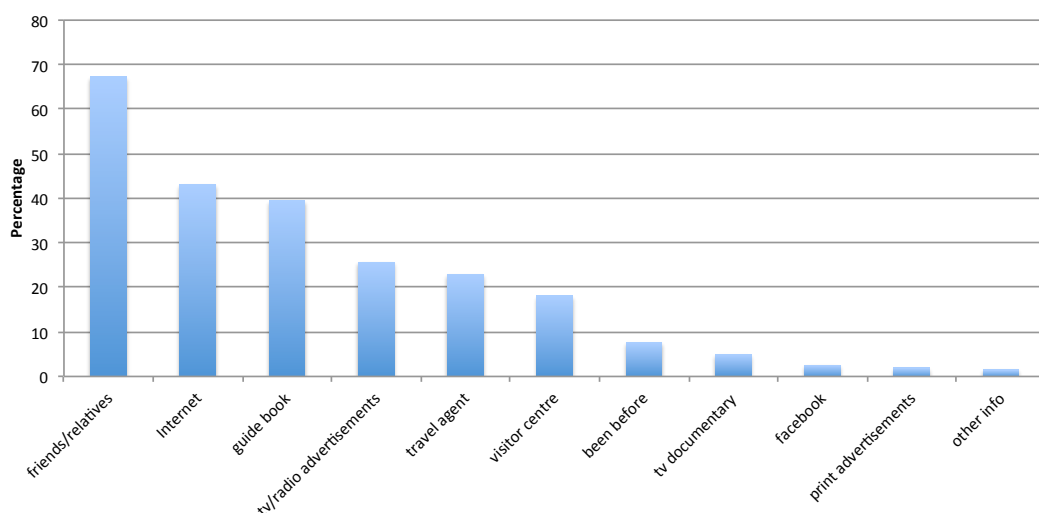
Graph 6.6 Travel party characteristics in the sample



6.2.2.7 Information sources

Graph 6.7 shows that respondents in the survey had found out about the Cairns Region primarily from friends and relatives (67.3%), followed by the internet (43.0%) and guide books (39.5%). Unlike the previous categories, this question was not mutually exclusive, so a number of options could be selected, which made the percentages higher. Interestingly, 7.6% said they had found out about the region because they had been before, however 13.1% of the sample stated that they had visited the region before.

Graph 6.7 Information sources used by the sample



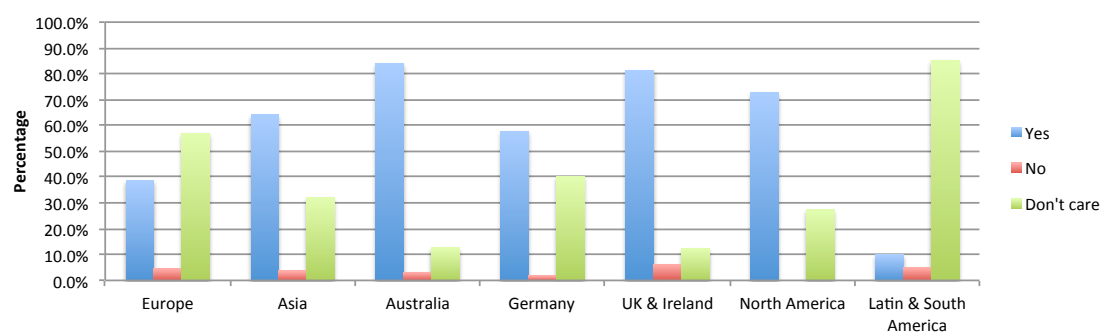
6.2.2.8 Summary of the sample characteristics

Although a range of demographics are represented in the sample, the tourist survey respondents are mostly younger backpackers from Europe, Asia and Australia travelling with friends or as a couple who are self-employed or professional with at least a diploma qualification. Because of the large sample size, next available sampling technique and range of locations surveyed in Cairns and Palm Cove, this is considered be less a bias in the data and more a representation of the type of tourist who engages in the city and public places, since all of the surveys were administered in high tourist-use public places such as the Esplanade Lagoon, Esplanade Boardwalk, Palm Cove Beach, Botanical Gardens and City Centre. It is acknowledged however that those who completed the survey are more likely to be those who use the city more than others as they were spending some kind of idle time in these public places in order to be sampled. Other groups such as those staying in resorts or older people may be more inclined to spend their idle time in private settings such as their accommodation or resort pool, but nonetheless still engage with the city at a different level or in a different way. The sample size has still provided representatives from these groups so their preferences can be analysed. The following sections further analyse the tourist survey data to better understand whether respondents value tropical feel, and their perceptions of Cairns and the tropical urban landscape.

6.3 The value of tropical feel to tourists in Cairns

In Chapter 5, Urban Designers in Cairns identified *tropical feel* as a key element of what they believed the tourist is seeking from their experience of a tropical city such as Cairns. To test this in a preliminary way, the tourist survey asked tourists if it was important to them that Cairns City has a tropical feel. Overall, 60.1% of the sample said that it is important, 3.6% said that it is not important, and 36.1% said that they don't care. Within this, the most distinctive divide in preference was between domestic and international visitors, with 84.4% of Australians saying it is important compared with 54.9% of international visitors. Graph 6.8 shows that in particular, the majority of Europeans and Latin & South Americans in the sample did not care about whether Cairns has a tropical feel or not, however it was more important to the Asians and those from the UK & Ireland and North America. Whilst the Germans overall had more preference for tropical feel, 40.4% of them did not care. New Zealanders and Scandinavians were not included in the analysis because low numbers in their categories made them invalid for comparison.

Graph 6.8 Is it important that Cairns has a tropical feel: Region of origin



The differences in preference between Australians and international visitors is most likely to do with the reasons for travel. In the NERP survey report, Prideaux, Sakata and Thompson (2012) rank travel motivations for domestic and international tourists, shown in Table 6.3. This indicates that whilst international visitors are motivated to visit and engage with the Great Barrier Reef which may or may not be perceived as tropical, domestic visitors are more motivated by rest, relaxation and climate, which may be found in a tropical destination. The idea that international visitors may not initially perceive Cairns as a tropical destination is supported by the first and repeat visitor preferences. Whereas 56.1% of first time visitors said they thought it was important that Cairns has a tropical feel, 85.3% of return visitors thought it was important. This may indicate that once a person has experienced Cairns as a tropical place, its tropicity may become more important in subsequent visits.

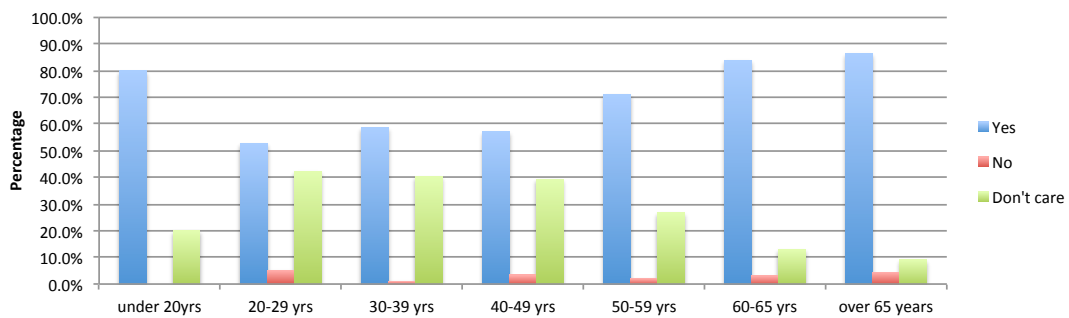
Table 6.3 Rankings for travel motivation to Cairns.

Rank	Domestic visitors surveyed	International visitors surveyed
1	Rest and relaxation	Visit Great Barrier Reef
2	Climate	Snorkelling and diving
3	Visit Great Barrier Reef	See Australian wildlife
4	Experience the natural environment	Visit rainforests

Source: (Prideaux, Sakata & Thompson 2012)

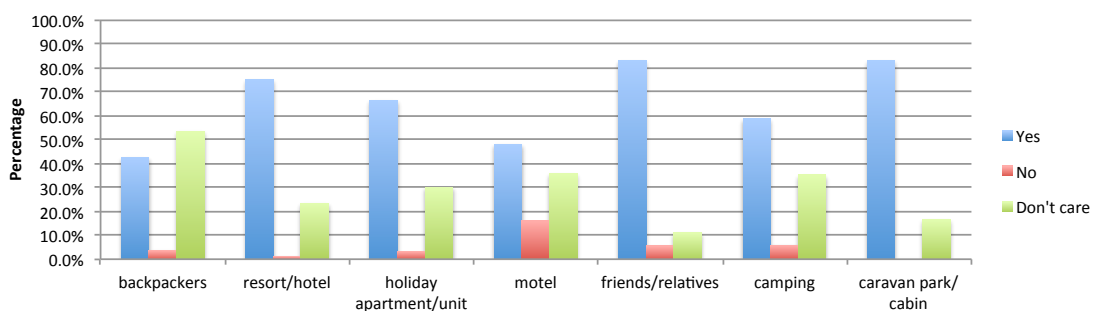
Rather than say that tropical feel was not important, respondents were more inclined to answer either ‘yes’ or ‘don’t care’. Graph 6.9 shows that people under 20 years and 50 years or above are more inclined to care about whether Cairns has a tropical feel than those aged between 20-49 years. Additionally, it was found that 64.1% of females considered tropical feel to be important compared with 56.3% of males.

Graph 6.9 Is it important that Cairns has a tropical feel: Age group



The style of accommodation respondents were staying in also reflected the importance of tropical feel. Graph 6.10 shows that all but the backpackers considered tropical feel to be important. This may be because the majority of backpacker respondents in the sample were international tourists, the reasons for which have already been discussed. An interesting feature of Graph 6.10 is that 16.0% of motel stayers in particular did not think tropical feel was important at all. Those staying in bed & breakfast accommodation were not included in the analysis because low numbers in their categories made them invalid for comparison.

Graph 6.10 Is it important that Cairns has a tropical feel: Accommodation style



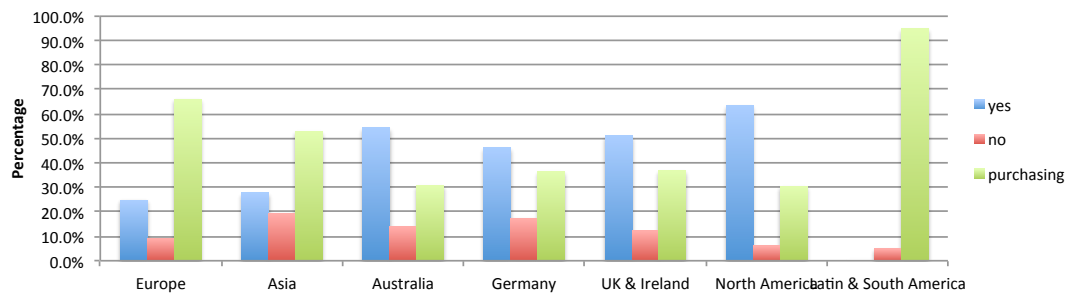
These results support the urban designers' perception that tropical feel is important to visitors. They also show that there is a definite profile of visitor to Cairns who considers tropical feel to be important in their experience of Cairns. In particular, domestic and returning visitors are more likely to value tropical feel, especially those aged under 20 or over 50 years old.

6.4 The value of engagement with locals to tourists in Cairns

Another key point raised by the urban designers in Chapter 5 was the importance of engaging with locals to the visitor experience in Cairns. In terms of urban design, this links with questions around the provision of tourist precincts within a city and how locals use them. As with tropical feel, the tourist survey asked specifically about interactions with locals, firstly asking if respondents like to be in a place where locals spend time, and secondly asking if respondents had engaged in conversation with locals during their time in Cairns. Overall, 52.5% of the sample said they like to be in a place where locals spend time, 4.6% said no, and 42.8% said sometimes. This supports the notion that engaging with locals is important to tourists, with 95.4% of this sample indicating that they like at least some time in areas where locals are. Additionally, 37.5% of the sample had conversed with locals, 49.6% had conversed with locals only when purchasing something, and 12.5% had not conversed with locals at all.

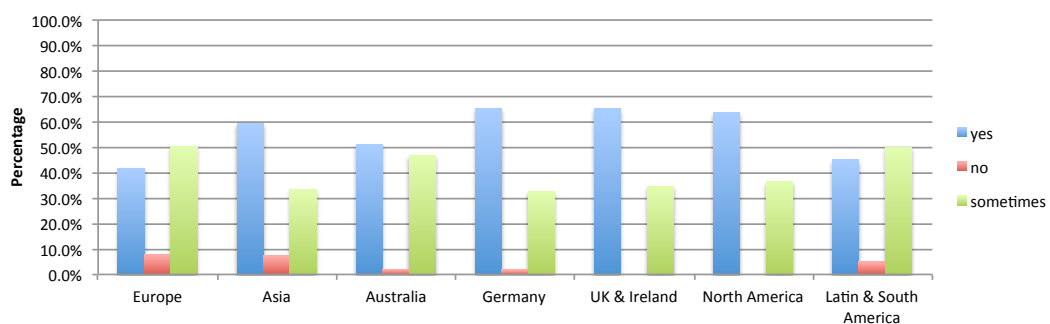
There was little distinction in the preferences of males and females in terms of engaging with locals. 50.8% of men and 53.9% of women said they would like to be in a place where locals spend time, and 34.3% of men and 40.6% of women had had conversations with locals. Similarly, there was little distinction between the domestic and international travellers, with 51% of domestic respondents and 53% of international respondents saying they would like to be in a place where locals spend time. This differed more with engagement of conversation, with 53.1% of domestic respondents saying they had conversed with locals, compared with 34.1% of internationals. Graph 6.11 shows that this is probably language related, showing that respondents from English speaking regions such as UK & Ireland and North America are more inclined to have a conversation with locals than those from regions where English may not be their first language. Germany is the exception to this, however it may be that generally, Germans speak English more fluently than their fellow Europeans. As with the Tropical Feel question, New Zealanders and Scandinavians were not included in the analysis because low numbers in their categories made them invalid for comparison.

Graph 6.11 Have you had a conversation with any locals in Cairns: Region of origin



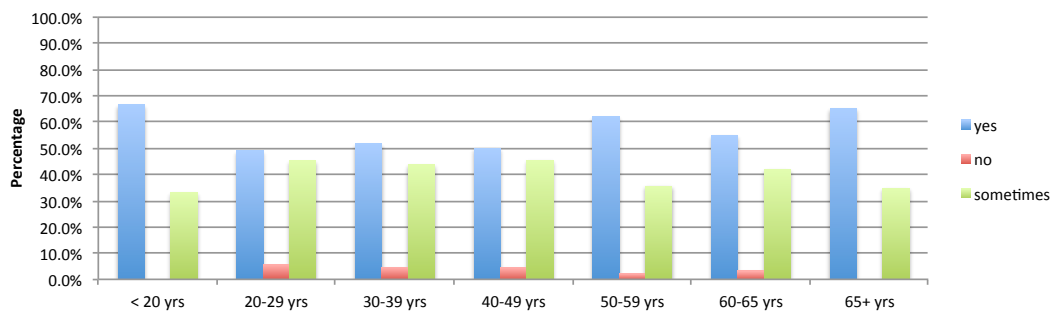
Having engaged in conversation with locals does not seem to mirror the respondents' preferences to be in places where locals spend time. Graph 6.12 shows that respondents from the international English speaking regions and Germany express a preference to be where the locals spend time, and this is also the case with the Asian respondents. This may reflect a preference for the busy, market-oriented nature of the Asian cities these visitors originate from. Additionally, Australians and Europeans show a tendency to only sometimes like to be in a place where locals spend time.

Graph 6.12 Do you like to be in a place where locals spend time: Region of origin

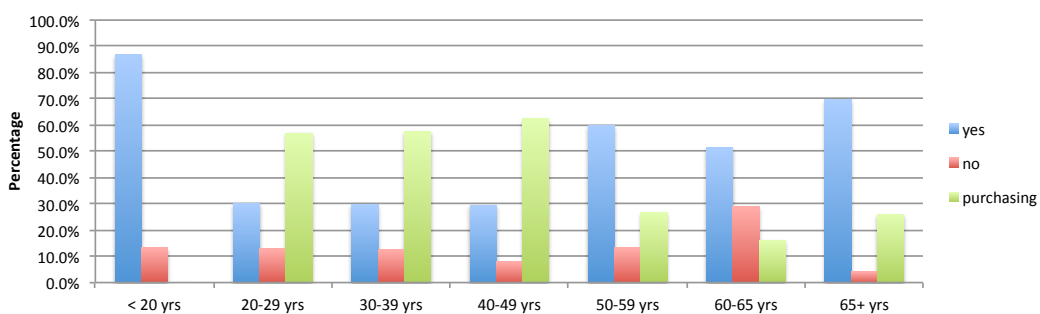


As with the responses on tropical feel, there was a distinction in preference between the 20-49 year old respondents and the under 20 and 50 years and above age group. Graph 6.13 and Graph 6.14 both show a clear difference in preference to be in a place where locals spend time and in conversing with locals. This appears to show a general difference in preference between these two age groups in their preferences of experiencing the city.

Graph 6.13 Do you like to be in a place where locals spend time: Age group

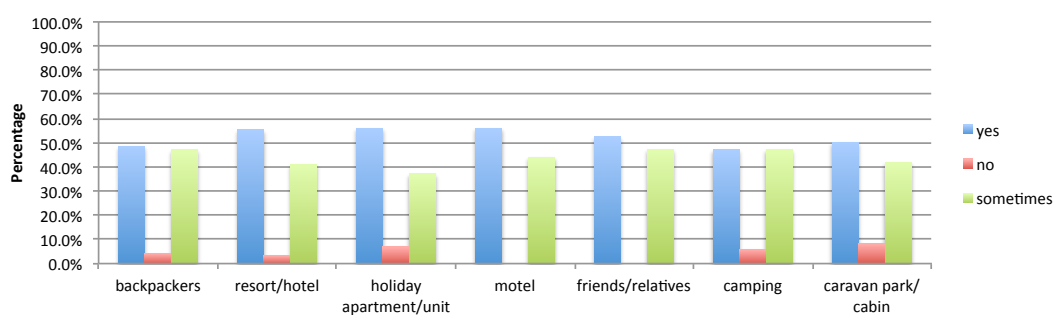


Graph 6.14 Have you had a conversation with any locals in Cairns: Age group



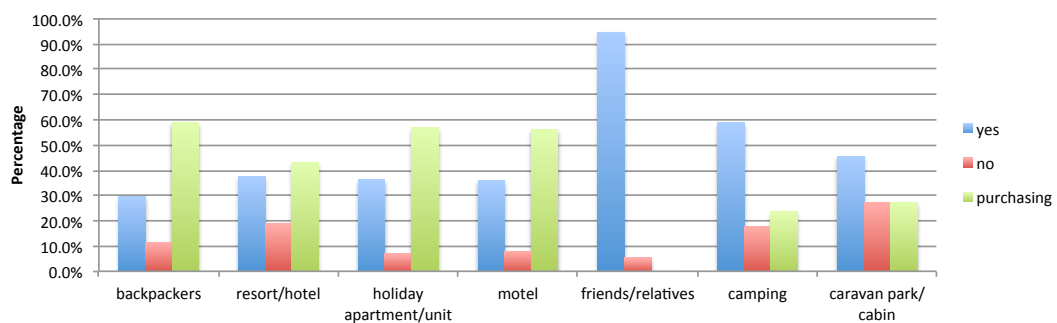
The preference for being in a place where locals spend time bore no clear relationship to the style of accommodation respondents were staying in. In every accommodation category except for camping where the split was equal, there were slightly more people preferring to be where locals spend time than those who prefer it sometimes. Graph 6.15 shows some marginal indication that those most likely to want to spend time where the locals are stayed in holiday apartments and units (56.0%), resorts (56.0%) and motels (55.4%).

Graph 6.15 Do you like to be in a place where locals spend time: Accommodation style



Graph 6.16 shows that there was a clearer divide in respondents who had had a conversation with locals by accommodation style. Predictably, those staying with friends and relatives had almost all (94.7%) engaged in conversation with locals. Those camping and staying in caravan parks had also engaged in conversation with locals more than they had not, whereas the remainder of the respondents had mostly only conversed with locals when purchasing something. Those staying in bed & breakfast accommodation were not included in the analysis because low numbers in their categories made them invalid for comparison.

Graph 6.16 Have you had a conversation with any locals in Cairns: Accommodation Style



These results support the urban designers' perception that engaging with locals is important in the visitor experience. The responses indicate that as with tropical feel, engagement with locals is more important to those outside the 20-49 year old category, and also more important to Asians, Germans and English speaking international visitors than to Australians and Europeans. Additionally, caravanners, campers and those visiting friends or relatives are much more likely to engage in conversation with locals than those staying in any other kind of accommodation. The data also indicates that a lack of English language may inhibit tourists' engagement with locals.

6.5 The value of the city experience to tourists in Cairns

In 2011, the Cairns-Townsville Experience Development Strategy (AEC Group) identified that a key sector of the tourist market – the International Experience Seekers – placed little value on experiencing Cairns' CBD. It argued that:

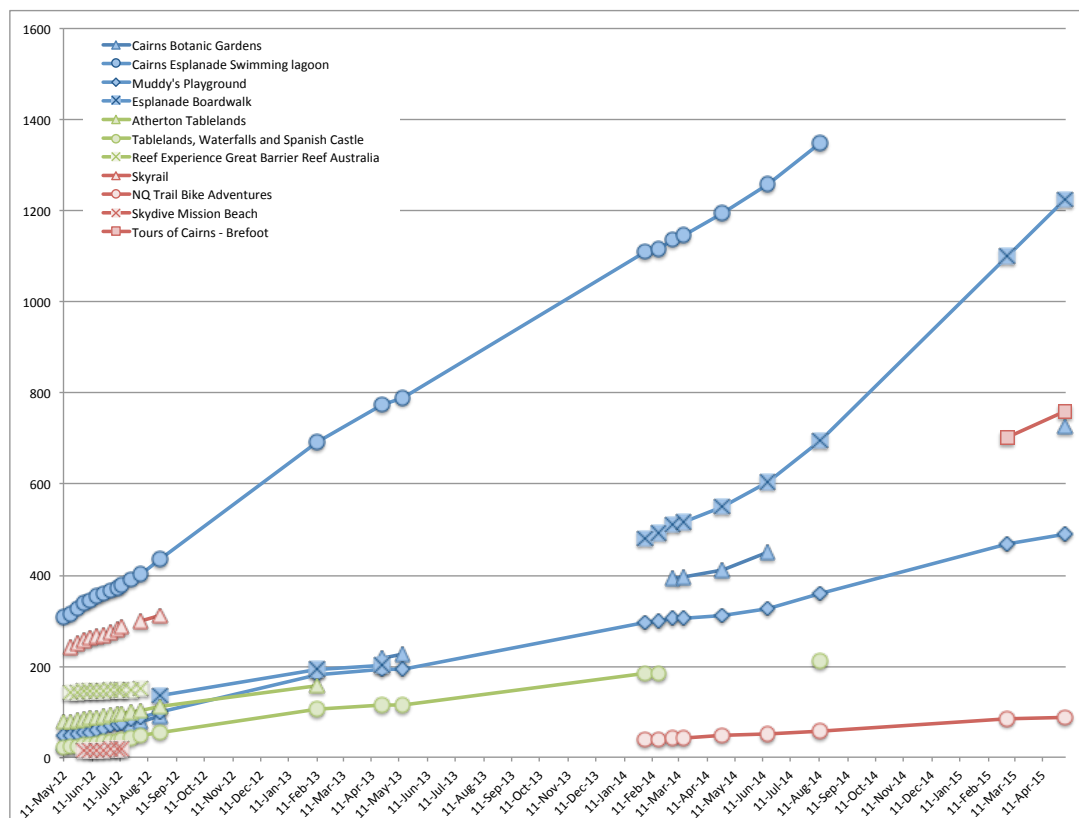
The Cairns CBD itself has relatively little to directly offer the International Experience Seeker. There is a perception that Cairns CBD is primarily a dormitory and sales desk for experiences in the region, and the results of the product audit largely confirm this (p. vi).

These findings are not supported by this research or any other published research on Cairns and may illustrate some issues with the psychographic methodology of the research. In terms of use of the city generally, whilst the CBD may have “little to offer the International Experience Seeker”, this does not seem to hinder the international tourists’ use of the area. The sample in this research reported spending an average of 41.9% of their waking hours in Cairns CBD area, defined on a map in the survey questionnaire in Appendix 7. This did not differ significantly between domestic (average 38.3%, std. dev. 28.0) or international (average 42.45% std. dev. 22.3) visitors, or between region of origin, with valid responses ranging from a mean of 38.5% (Australians) (std. dev. 28.2) to 50.3% (Latin & South Americans) (std. dev. 18.3) awake time spent in the city.

Other indicators also suggest that Cairns City is a key aspect of the tourist experience in the region. The two ‘top picks’ on the Lonely Planet website’s ‘Things to do in Cairns’ is Cairns Esplanade, Boardwalk and Lagoon, and waterfront bar and restaurant Salt House, with the Great Barrier Reef listed after these and the Botanical Gardens listed fifth (Lonely Planet 2015). Also, between 2012-2015, four city attractions regularly appeared in the top five things to do in Cairns on the online user-generated review website TripAdvisor.com. Since these ratings are sometimes biased towards attractions with low numbers and very high ratings rather than attractions with high numbers and reasonably high ratings (such as 42 people giving an average of 5 stars compared with 1150 people giving an average of 4.5 stars), the number of reviews over that time have been measured rather the ratings in isolation. Graph 6.17 shows the review numbers of attractions rated by users in the top 5 on the TripAdvisor.com ‘Things to do in Cairns’ from 2012-2015. The blue lines show four city attractions: Cairns Botanical Gardens, Cairns Esplanade Lagoon, Muddy’s Playground and the Esplanade Boardwalk, all of which have higher numbers of reviews than other attractions, with the exception of Tablelands tour company Barefoot Tours. These attractions share a number of similarities in that they are all free to access, involve an interaction with nature or natural elements, and are engaged with in an active way (mostly through walking or playing). The green lines show general experiences outside the city (the Tablelands, Waterfalls and Spanish Castle previously held many reviews for Barefoot Tours

before the categories were augmented in early 2015). The red lines show specific businesses, all of which have actively promoted TripAdvisor.com as a feedback mechanism for guests. Of note in these results is that the Great Barrier Reef and reef experiences have not been present in the top five for the majority of the three-year period.

Graph 6.17 TripAdvisor.com review numbers - top 5 attractions in Cairns 2012-2015

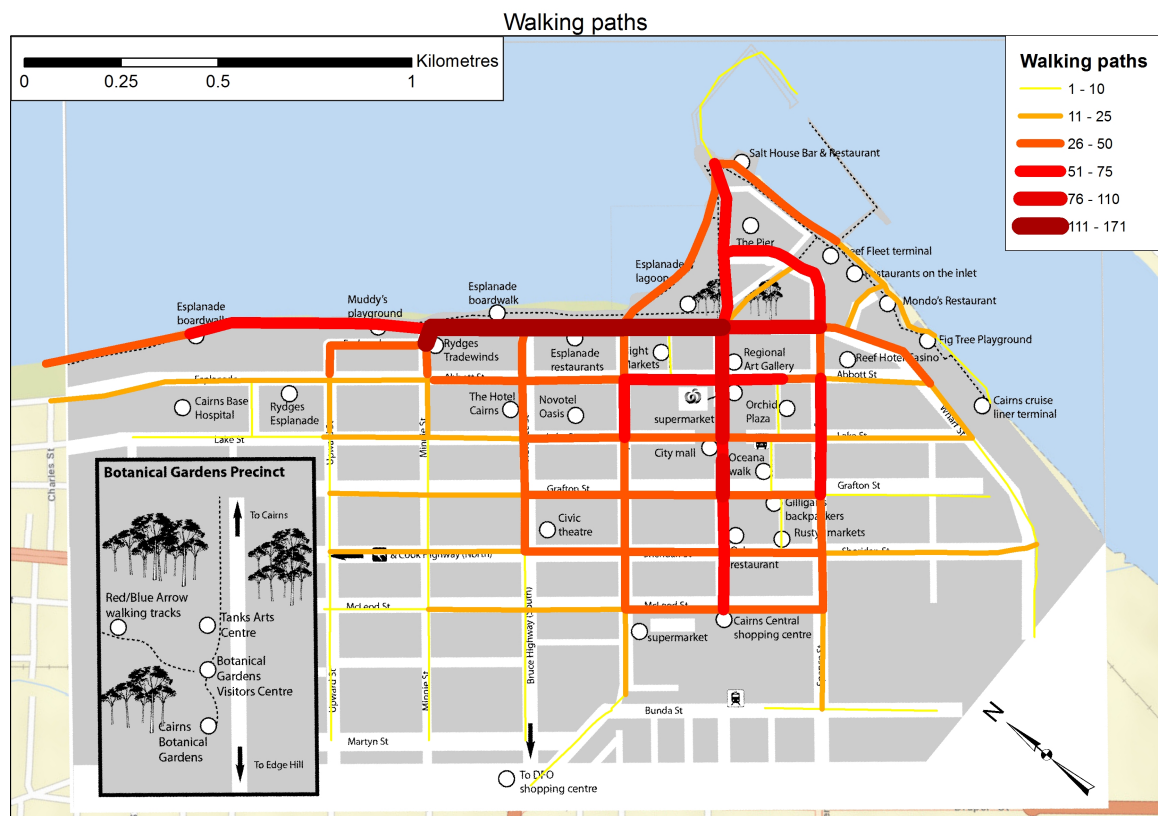


In addition to analysing the number of reviews of the top five things to do in Cairns on TripAdvisor.com, the most recent three reviews of each attraction were recorded for qualitative analysis at each random time of collection. The origin of the reviewer was also recorded if they chose to share this information. From this, 169 reviews about the top five ranked attractions in the region - both positive and negative - were recorded for analysis, the results of which are discussed later in the chapter. Of the 169 reviewers, 59.8% were from Australia, 13.0% from the UK & Ireland, 7.7% did not specify their origin and 7.1% were from North America. The remaining regions each represented less than 5% of the total reviewers. Whilst this data does not provide significant information about the city-based preferences of international visitors, it does consolidate the notion that domestic visitors have a preference for city-based attractions in Cairns. This is supported by a recent destination positioning report from regional tourism organisation Tourism Tropical North

Queensland (TTNQ) which identifies that only 6.1% of domestic visitors to the region visit the Great Barrier Reef and 20.7% go bushwalking or on rainforest walks, compared with 60.3% eating out at restaurants and 29.3% going shopping for pleasure (de Waal 2014). This supports the ideas put forward in Section 6.3 that motivation to experience the Great Barrier Reef or natural environment generally may be secondary to other activities for domestic visitors.

Because of the high proportion of international visitors in the sample (81.6%), the tourist survey in this research gives an insight into the behaviour of this market in Cairns city that has previously had little research. As discussed in Chapter 3, the survey used a mapping survey technique to elicit information about where the respondents had spent time in Cairns CBD during their visit. Respondents were asked to draw a line to indicate where they had walked and were invited to note any other places of interest on the map. A number of popular landmark places were pre-marked on the map to assist with orientation, and respondents were asked to check which of these places they visited. The survey map can be viewed in Appendix 7. The walking route drawing question did not elicit a high response rate within the survey with only 35.7% of the sample drawing a route on through the city. There was not a significant difference in response rate between domestic and international respondents, with 54.2% of domestic visitors not responding compared with 66.4% of international visitors. There were also only a small number of notations on the maps, which were not deemed sufficient in number to analyse. A number of anomalies were also evident in the map completion, where respondents might draw two lines to show where they had walked in the CBD and then checked some other pre-marked places they had visited in the CBD with no line to them. This may indicate that they drove to these landmarks, but it may also suggest that respondents have drawn where they walked as an experience, rather than where they walked with purpose. The prevalence of the Esplanade Boardwalk, Lagoon area and single line up the centre of the city as walking routes suggest that this may be the case. A deeper analysis and segmentation of the walking routes in the city was unable to be done due to the low response rate, however a map of walking routes in the city was generated from all valid responses, seen in Map 6.1. This shows a clear pattern of tourist usage in the Cairns CBD.

Map 6.1 Walking route frequency in the city as mapped by respondents (n=188)

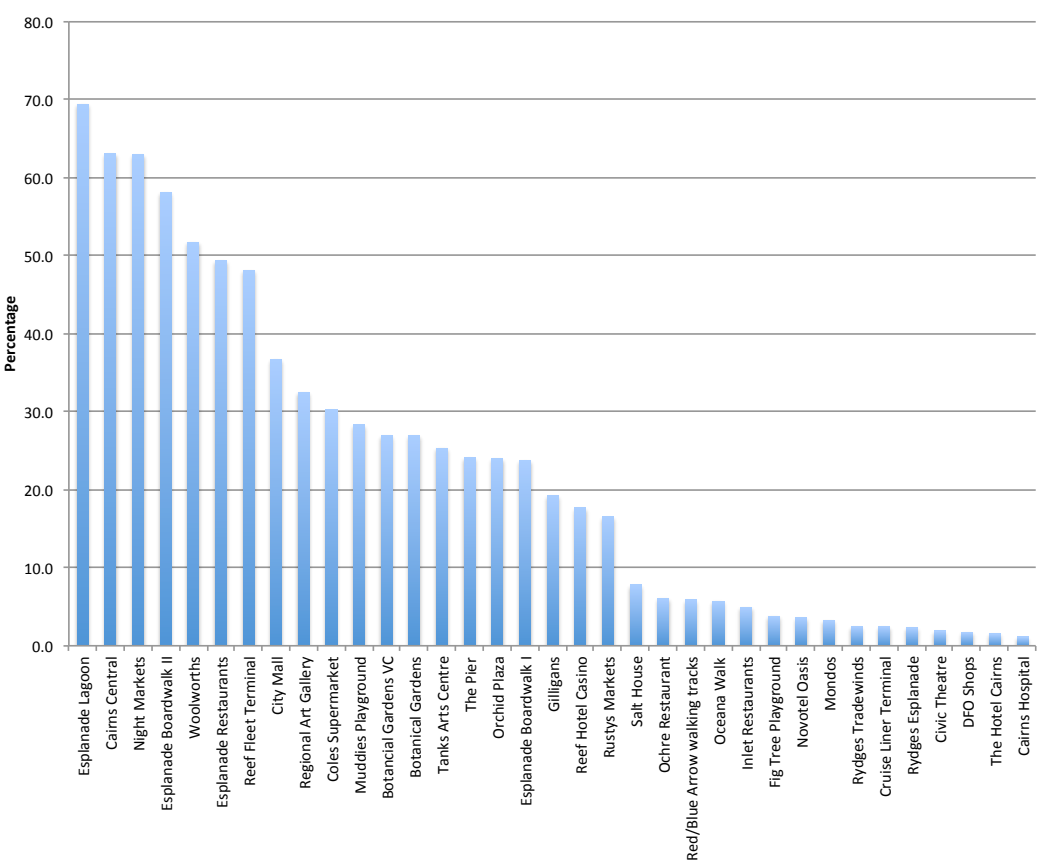


Map drawn by author using Adobe Illustrator CS5.1 using Google Maps as a template. Data represented using ArcMap 10.2.

As with any map, the data represented in Map 6.1 is a simplification of the routes recorded in the survey. For ease of analysis, routes were recorded in blocks and half-blocks (depending on natural breaks such as the Night Markets and Orchid Plaza), and a section was recorded if a person indicated they had been on any part of it. This could be considered a limitation of the data, however if a person had been on any part of a route section, their visual corridor would have extended to the end of the section. Alternatively, if a person did not enter a section at all, they may have seen down a street or alleyway and not recorded it, which may indicate some limitation. Additionally, the Esplanade route can be walked on the Esplanade Boardwalk by the water, through a walking/bike path between the boardwalk and the street, or on the street. Given the number of ways to travel this path and the shared visual corridor of the routes, the map record treated these paths as a single Esplanade path between the joining of the Esplanade Lagoon walkway and Rydges Tradewinds. Those who had specifically been on the Esplanade Boardwalk or at the Esplanade Restaurants (on the road side) were able to check these as pre-marked places to give a better indication of how this area is used.

TripAdvisor.com received a high number of visitors, with 69.4% of tourists visiting the Esplanade Lagoon, 58.2% visiting the southern end of the Esplanade Boardwalk, 28.3% visiting Muddy’s Playground (this may be skewed because of the relatively low number of families in the sample) and 27% visiting both the Botanical Gardens Visitors’ Centre and the Botanical Gardens themselves.

Graph 6.18 Locations visited in Cairns CBD



This section has shown that there are specific areas of heavy tourist use in the Cairns CBD, and that both international and domestic tourists engage particularly with shopping areas, eating areas, and key urban design features of the city such as the Esplanade Lagoon and Boardwalk. Although it is difficult to tell from this data whether the international tourists are using the city as nothing more than a ‘dormitory and a booking desk’ or whether the city is a key aspect of their visit, it is clear that they spend a significant amount of their holiday time in the city and that they use specific parts of the city. Understanding where these visitors go within the CBD raises a number of questions about why they go there and what their preferences are within the tropical urban landscape. The next section draws on image ratings and qualitative data to explore these questions further.

6.6 Tourist preferences in the tropical urban landscape

As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, this research critically considers Cairns within its tropical context, and as such tourist preferences are considered within the tropical context, whether they are obviously tropically related or not. So far, this chapter has built a picture of how tourists in Cairns value tropical feel, engagement with locals, and engagement with the city itself. Drawing on Urry's (1992) argument that tourist experiences are only of importance if they take place in a 'distinctive visual environment', this section considers tourists' visual preferences of the tropical urban landscape and explores the idea of how tropical feel in particular is conveyed through this. It first considers how the expectations of tourists might be shaped by the imagery in a key visual information source, the internet. With this context in mind, this section then considers visitor preferences of images taken in high tourist-use areas of the city and nearby Palm Cove. This is followed by a more open-ended exploration of what tourists like least and most about Cairns city.

6.6.1 Imagery expectations: How Cairns is sold

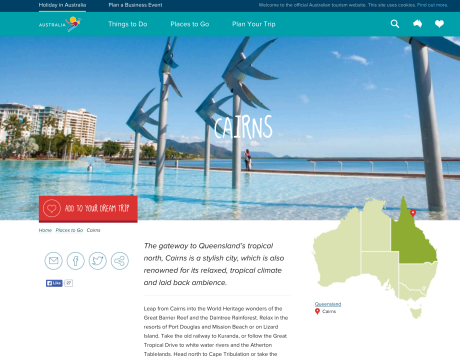

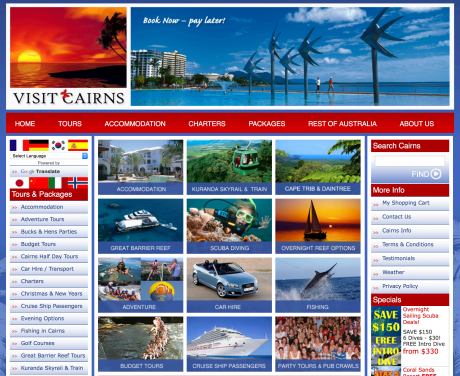
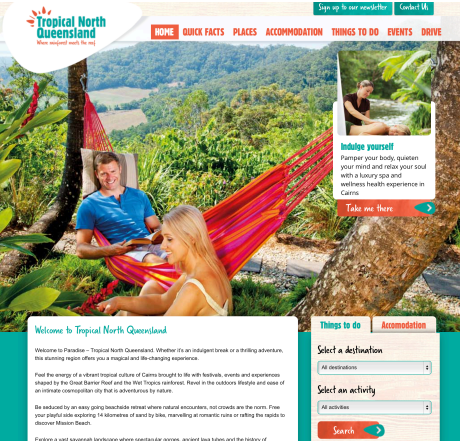
Whilst this research has not set out to measure the perceptions of visitors prior to arrival in Cairns, it does acknowledge Urry's (1995) argument that the tourist gaze is made up of a collection of symbols and signs pre-supposed by the visitor, many of which have been "self-consciously organised by professionals" (p.173). This 'professional' organisation of symbols and signs is mostly carried out through marketing and promotion of the destination. As discussed in Chapter 4, Cairns in particular has a history of promoting the natural environment as the main attraction in Cairns (see also Huybers & Bennett 2000), even though the evidence presented in this chapter shows that the city is also a key attraction.

Table 6.1 showed that 86.1% of the respondents to the tourist survey were visiting Cairns for the first time. It also shows that 67.3% found out about the region through friends and relatives, 43.0% from the internet and 39.5% from guide books. Whilst it is difficult to analyse the content of family and friends' recommendations, an analysis of Cairns' internet presence was considered an effective way of evaluating how Cairns is sold to tourists before they arrive. This analysis was conducted using a Google search of the terms "Cairns Australia" and "Visit Cairns" on the 9th January 2015. The top twenty tourism based sites returned for each search were listed and their content analysed in terms of natural and built features, since Cairns has already been noted as a nature-based destination. Accounting for repeated websites that appeared within both searches, this method yielded

32 website results, a table of which can be viewed in Appendix 9. The analysis indicated that Cairns is sold via the internet primarily on either an image of the Esplanade Lagoon area or on tropical imagery that lacks specific Cairns-based markers.

Table 6.4 shows the top two Google ranked website front pages from each of the search terms 'Cairns Australia' and 'Visit Cairns'. The official website operated by TTNQ shows two people and a hammock in an isolated natural tropical environment, and the remaining three websites all show an image of the fish sculptures in Esplanade Lagoon swimming pool. These sculptures are the most recognizable and marketed icons of Cairns and are key symbols of the city. Seven of the 32 websites used the Esplanade Fish as part of their imagery on the front page of their website. 17 used city imagery in general, such as the Esplanade Boardwalk, aerial shots of the city or Muddy's playground. 23 of the websites showed images of tropical nature, 12 of which showed people experiencing nature through activities such as snorkeling, diving, quad-bike driving and skydiving. 15 of the 23 websites showing images of nature were comprised of more than 90% nature-based images.

Table 6.4 Top ranked websites advertising Cairns as a tourist destination

Website front page	Google rank	Webpage details
	<p>#1 'Cairns Australia' #9 'Visit Cairns'</p>	<p>Title: Cairns Australia - Things to do Organisation: Tourism Australia Address: http://www.australia.com/explore/cities/cairns.aspx</p>
	<p>#3 'Cairns Australia' #15 'Visit Cairns'</p>	<p>Title: Cairns Australia: Organisation: Tourist guide and holiday accommodation Address: http://www.cairns-australia.com</p>
	<p>#1 'Visit Cairns'</p>	<p>Title: Visit Cairns Organisation: Visit Cairns Address: http://www.visitcairns.com.au</p>
	<p>#2 'Visit Cairns' #5 'Cairns Australia'</p>	<p>Title: Cairns & Great Barrier Reef's Official Tourism Site Organisation: Tourism Tropical North Queensland Address: http://www.cairns-greatbarrierreef.org.au</p>

The images in Table 6.4 and analysis in Appendix 9 shows that the urban landscape in Cairns city forms a key aspect of selling it to tourists, but also shows how important the natural landscape is to selling Cairns. Additionally, the urban landscapes used in selling Cairns on the websites almost always include natural landscape imagery within them, such as the ocean or hills in the background, situating the city within a natural environment. For example, whilst the fish sculptures at the Esplanade Lagoon are undoubtedly built features of the urban landscape, their imagery appears to be very nature-based. The images in Table 6.4 also show an ocean horizon beyond the Lagoon Swimming Pool and hills beyond with no development on them as well as buildings in the background. This suggests that as a city, Cairns is sold as a tropical urban landscape with natural features both within and surrounding it. This may influence both the expectations and preferences of tourists once they arrive in Cairns.


6.6.2 Image preferences in Cairns

In line with the critical approach of the research the method of analysis in this section draws on Alegre and Garau's (2010) findings that an absence of satisfaction does not necessarily equate to a presence of dissatisfaction, and vice versa. Therefore the tourist survey sought to consider both what respondents liked about the tropical urban landscape and what they disliked. The tourist survey pilot originally asked tourists specific questions on a Likert scale of importance about the specific features of the tropical city as identified by the urban designers and the researcher. These features included palm trees, views of nature, verandahs and modern tropical architecture. This question was abandoned for the final survey because in most cases all of the features were selected as 'very important' by the respondents and so the data lacked contrast for analysis. Given that 39.9% of tourists said that either they didn't care whether Cairns had a tropical feel or did not think it was important, this indicated that either the features listed that were considered by the urban designers as tropical were not considered tropical by the respondents, or that although the respondents said tropical feel was not important they may still value the traditional images of tropical elements in the tropical urban landscape. Thus an inductive approach was taken where respondents were invited to rate images on a Likert scale and then identify which two they liked the most and why and which two they liked the least and why.



Table 6.5 shows the images ranked by preference based on their mean rating by respondents. The images with grey shading behind indicate images taken in Palm Cove and the non-shaded images are in Cairns CBD. The method of image selection and analysis is



discussed in Section 3.3.3.2 and detailed in Appendix 8. The remainder of the table shows the differences in means between groups in the region of origin, accommodation style, generation and sex. Generation was used rather than age group in this analysis in an attempt to reduce the number of categories so the mean comparisons made more sense. The method of this categorisation is described in Section 3.3.3.3. The differences between the means in region of origin, accommodation style and generation were calculated using one-way ANOVA and post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test, also described in Section 3.3.3.3. The differences between mean ratings of male and females was calculated using an independent samples t-test, also described in Section 3.3.3.3. In this column, the sex with the higher preferred mean is indicated in those images with a statistically significant difference. The difference/effect column at the left hand side of each of the category columns indicates whether a statistically significant difference was detected between the means of that category, and if so, what the effect of that difference is based on Cohen's (1988, p.22 in Pallant 2010) guidelines of strength of effect. Cohen gauges the eta squared calculation (% of variance explained) in terms of small (1%), medium (6%) or large (13.8%) effect. In Table 6.5, this is shown as small ($S \leq 1\%$), small to medium ($S-M=2-5\%$), medium ($M=6\%$), or medium to large ($M-L=6-12\%$). Note there were no large effects in Table 6.5. The remainder of each category shows the mean difference of each statistically significant difference between the groups within the categories in region of origin, accommodation style and generation. For ease of viewing, these have been shaded blue.


Table 6.5 Images ranked by mean preference ratings showing statistically significant differences in means across region of origin, accommodation style, generation and sex




Rank	Image no.	Image	Mean	Region of origin						Accommodation				Generation										Sex	
				Difference/effect	AustNZ-Asia	AustNZ-Europe	AustNZ-Americas	Asia-Europe	Asia-Americas	Europe-Americas	Difference/effect	Resort-B'packers	Resort-Apt.	B'packers-Apt.	Difference/effect	Mill.-Gen Y	Mill.-Gen X	Mill.-B'Boom	Mill-Pre-war	Gen Y-Gen X	Gen Y-B'Boom	Gen Y-Pre-war	Gen X-B'Boom	Gen X-Pre-war	B'Boom-Prewar
1	i6		4.32	No .004							S-M .025	.241		-.229	No										S .019 F
2	i1		4.18	M-L .070	-.639	-.370	-.574	.269			S-M .021		-.250	-.279	S-M .033								.382		No
3	i7		4.15	S .017				.222			S-M .030	.192		-.283	No										S .010 F

Rank	Image no.	Image	Mean	Region of origin						Accommodation				Generation										Sex		
				Difference/effect	AustNZ-Asia	AustNZ-Europe	AustNZ-Americas	Asia-Europe	Asia-Americas	Europe-Americas	Difference/effect	Resort-B'packers	Resort-Apt.	B'packers-Apt.	Difference/effect	Mill.-Gen Y	Mill.-Gen X	Mill.-B'Boom	Mill-Pre-war	Gen Y-Gen X	Gen Y-B'Boom	Gen Y-Pre-war	Gen X-B'Boom	Gen X-Pre-war	B'Boom-Prewar	Difference/effect
4	i5		4.06	S-M .043		.430	.401	.351			M-L .071	.585	.279	-.306	S-M .037						-.420		-.445			No
5	i8		4.12	S .015							S-M .027			-.307	No											No
6	i22		4.00	S-M .038	-.541	-.374	-.421				S-M .023	-.364			M .059					-.294	.356		.651	.843		S .011 M

Rank	Image no.	Image	Mean	Region of origin						Accommodation				Generation										Sex		
				Difference/effect	AustNZ-Asia	AustNZ-Europe	AustNZ-Americas	Asia-Europe	Asia-Americas	Europe-Americas	Difference/effect	Resort-B'packers	Resort-Apt.	B'packers-Apt.	Difference/effect	Mill.-Gen Y	Mill.-Gen X	Mill.-B'Boom	Mill-Pre-war	Gen Y-Gen X	Gen Y-B'Boom	Gen Y-Pre-war	Gen X-B'Boom	Gen X-Pre-war	B'Boom-Prewar	Difference/effect
7	i21		3.99	S-M .036	-.552	-.326					S-M .022	-.343			S-M .044					-.338			.544	.839		S .011 M
8	i23		3.82	S-M .042	-.594	-.396	-.520				S-M .034	-.453	-.300		M .055					-.446			.707			S .014 M
9	i3		3.73	S-M .041	-.446		-.388	.337			No				No											No

Rank	Image no.	Image	Mean	Region of origin							Accommodation				Generation										Sex	
				Difference/effect	AustNZ-Asia	AustNZ-Europe	AustNZ-Americas	Asia-Europe	Asia-Americas	Europe-Americas	Difference/effect	Resort-B'packers	Resort-Apt.	B'packers-Apt.	Difference/effect	Mill.-Gen Y	Mill.-Gen X	Mill.-B'Boom	Mill-Pre-war	Gen Y-Gen X	Gen Y-B'Boom	Gen Y-Pre-war	Gen X-B'Boom	Gen X-Pre-war	B'Boom-Prewar	Difference/effect
10	i29		3.64	S-M .029	-.425			.239			S-M .021			.275	S-M .045						.444					No
11	i2		3.61	M-L .076	-.785	-.488	-.682	.297			S-M .021	-.246	-.329		S-M .031						.382		.486			No
12	i24		3.59	No .015							S-M .051		-.311	-.475	S-M .048					-.423			.334	.742		No




Rank	Image no.	Image	Mean	Region of origin							Accommodation				Generation								Sex			
				Difference/effect	AustNZ-Asia	AustNZ-Europe	AustNZ-Americas	Asia-Europe	Asia-Americas	Europe-Americas	Difference/effect	Resort-B'packers	Resort-Apt.	B'packers-Apt.	Difference/effect	Mill.-Gen Y	Mill.-Gen X	Mill.-B'Boom	Mill-Pre-war	Gen Y-Gen X	Gen Y-B'Boom	Gen Y-Pre-war		Gen X-B'Boom	Gen X-Pre-war	B'Boom-Prewar
13	i28		3.58	S-M .021	-.344						S-M .035	-.240		.365	M .056						.527					No
14	i30		3.56	S-M .025	-.394			1	1		S-M .021			.315	S-M .049					.332	.446					No
15	i11		3.43	No .008							No				No										No	

Rank	Image no.	Image	Mean	Region of origin							Accommodation				Generation										Sex	
				Difference/effect	AustNZ-Asia	AustNZ-Europe	AustNZ-Americas	Asia-Europe	Asia-Americas	Europe-Americas	Difference/effect	Resort-B'packers	Resort-Apt.	B'packers-Apt.	Difference/effect	Mill.-Gen Y	Mill.-Gen X	Mill.-B'Boom	Mill-Pre-war	Gen Y-Gen X	Gen Y-B'Boom	Gen Y-Pre-war	Gen X-B'Boom	Gen X-Pre-war	B'Boom-Prewar	Difference/effect
16	i27		3.26	S-M .050	-.686	-.335	-.446	.351			M .058	-.364		.540	S-M .051						.576					S .010 M
17	i20		3.22	S .018	-.315						S-M .024	.238		-.235	S-M .020											No
18	i13		3.03	No .005							No				S-M .023						.310					No

Rank	Image no.	Image	Mean	Region of origin						Accommodation			Generation											Sex	
				Difference/effect	AustNZ-Asia	AustNZ-Europe	AustNZ-Americas	Asia-Europe	Asia-Americas	Europe-Americas	Difference/effect	Resort-B'packers	Resort-Apt.	B'packers-Apt.	Difference/effect	Mill.-Gen Y	Mill.-Gen X	Mill.-B'Boom	Mill-Pre-war	Gen Y-Gen X	Gen Y-B'Boom	Gen Y-Pre-war	Gen X-B'Boom	Gen X-Pre-war	B'Boom-Prewar
19	i19		3.03	M .061	-.615	-.302		.313	.358		No				S-M .033							1	1		No
20	i17		3.03	S-M .039	-.490			.316			No				S-M .042				-.263			.437	.789		No
21	i26		3.03	M .057	-.698	-.321		.377	.389		S .017	-.251			S-M .052					.498					No

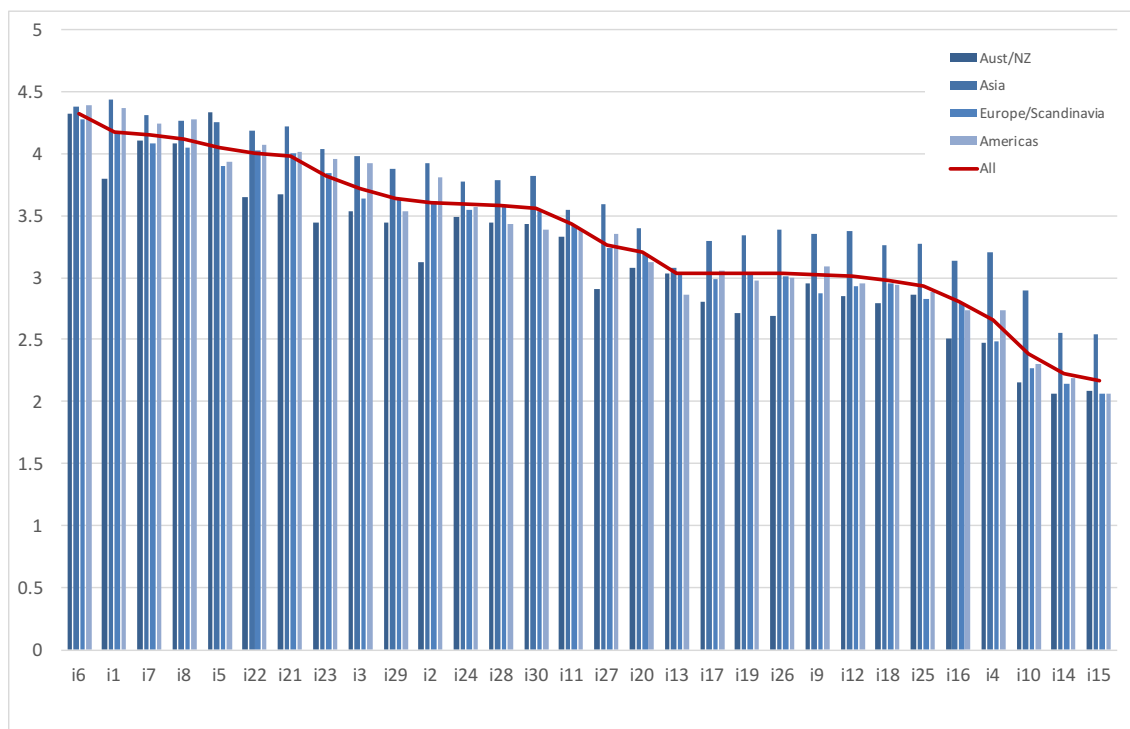
Rank	Image no.	Image	Mean	Region of origin							Accommodation				Generation											Sex
				Difference/effect	AustNZ-Asia	AustNZ-Europe	AustNZ-Americas	Asia-Europe	Asia-Americas	Europe-Americas	Difference/effect	Resort-B'packers	Resort-Apt.	B'packers-Apt.	Difference/effect	Mill.-Gen Y	Mill.-Gen X	Mill.-B'Boom	Mill-Pre-war	Gen Y-Gen X	Gen Y-B'Boom	Gen Y-Pre-war	Gen X-B'Boom	Gen X-Pre-war	B'Boom-Prewar	Difference/effect
22	i9		3.02	S-M .049	-.390			.468			No			No											No	
23	i12		3.02	S-M .051	-.536			.453	.420		No			S-M .038					.330			.378			No	
24	i18		2.99	S-M .035	-.461			.303			No			S-M .033							.617	.332	.711		No	

Rank	Image no.	Image	Mean	Region of origin							Accommodation				Generation											Sex
				Difference/effect	AustNZ-Asia	AustNZ-Europe	AustNZ-Americas	Asia-Europe	Asia-Americas	Europe-Americas	Difference/effect	Resort-B'packers	Resort-Apt.	B'packers-Apt.	Difference/effect	Mill.-Gen Y	Mill.-Gen X	Mill.-B'Boom	Mill-Pre-war	Gen Y-Gen X	Gen Y-B'Boom	Gen Y-Pre-war	Gen X-B'Boom	Gen X-Pre-war	B'Boom-Prewar	Difference/effect
25	i25		2.93	S-M .040	-.413			.435	.380		S .002				No										No	
26	i16		2.81	M .061	-.631	-.286		.345	.401		No				S-M .038				.377						No	
27	i4		2.67	M-L .098	-.726			.724	.470		No				No										No	

Rank	Image no.	Image	Mean	Region of origin						Accommodation				Generation											Sex
				Difference/effect	AustNZ-Asia	AustNZ-Europe	AustNZ-Americas	Asia-Europe	Asia-Americas	Europe-Americas	Difference/effect	Resort-B'packers	Resort-Apt.	B'packers-Apt.	Difference/effect	Mill.-Gen Y	Mill.-Gen X	Mill.-B'Boom	Mill-Pre-war	Gen Y-Gen X	Gen Y-B'Boom	Gen Y-Pre-war	Gen X-B'Boom	Gen X-Pre-war	B'Boom-Prewar
28	i10		2.39	S .011	-.734			.627	.584		No				S-M .023										No
29	i14		2.23	S-M .045	-.489			.407	.376		No				S .019										No
30	i15		2.18	S-M .052	-.443			.464	.376		S .014	.257			S-M .023					.307					No

The results represented in Table 6.5 will be further discussed in the following sections, however there are a few general observations that can be made here. The most frequent differences across all analyses in Table 6.5 occurred between those from Australia/New Zealand and Asia, with 23 out of the 30 images being statistically significant in their rating differences. The largest statistically significant difference across all categories and all images in the analysis was how different regions rated street parking and pavement image i4, the third least preferred image overall ($F(3, 520)=18.7$, eta squared 0.1). This image was significantly more preferred by Asians than either of the other two groups. The second most frequent differences in means were between Asians and Europeans, with 20 out of the 30 images being statistically significant in their rating differences. Graph 6.19 shows a comparison of means by region organised by the overall mean rating of the images. It shows that Asian respondents consistently rated the images higher than the others with the exception of three images, i5, i6 and i8, although there was no statistically significant difference between the groups for i6. The natural palm tree and ocean image i5 was scored most highly by Australians, and i8 showing a natural scene with native vegetation was scored most highly by those from the Americas. This may indicate a preference in the Asian market for built elements in scenes rather than predominantly natural places.

Graph 6.19 Australia, Europe and Asia region of origin compared with all respondents – mean image rating in rank order



The consistently higher ratings from Asians could indicate the possibility of cultural differences in completing Likert scales, although the results contradict the observations of Lee et al. (2002) who note that Japanese and Chinese respondents more frequently check the midpoint of a scale than North Americans. There is also the possibility that, given the recent colonial heritage of Asia and a potential similarity across much of the region in terms of Echtner and Prasad's (2003) third world 'un-myths', there is a distinction between their perceptions of tropical places compared with others. If there is truly a distinction between how Asians view the tropical urban landscape compared with urban designers, who say they draw on little or no tourist research to carry out their roles, this has implications for urban designers in Cairns, especially as the Chinese, Korean and Indian markets continue to grow. None of the urban designer interviewees in this research were of Asian origin or heritage, although some were of European background.

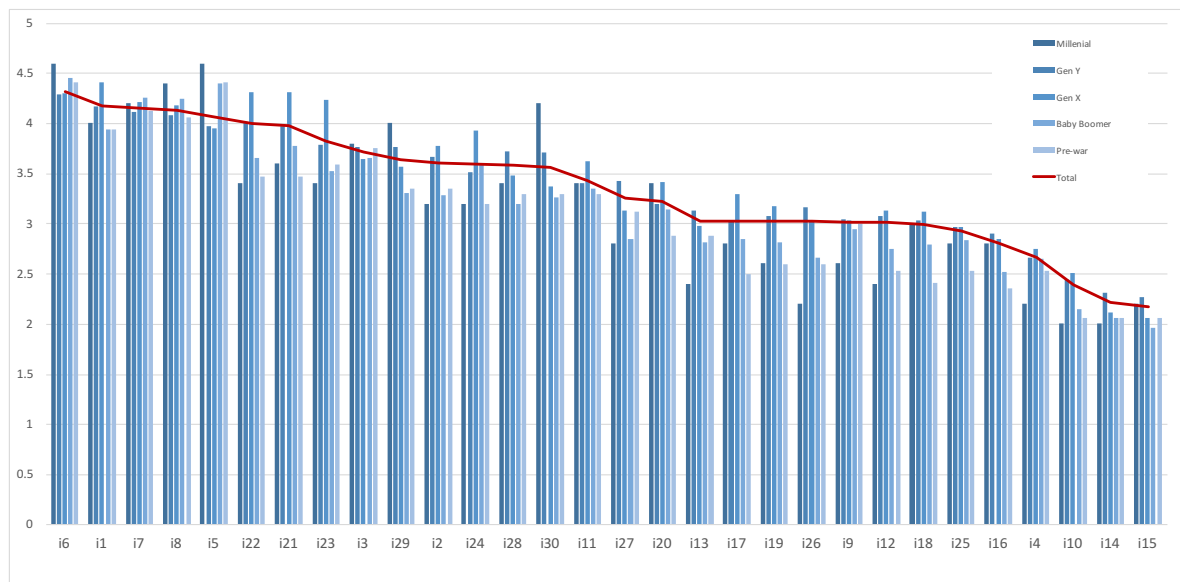
Table 6.5 also shows that there were very few differences between male and female respondents, with six images showing only a small statistically significant difference. Females rated the natural images i6 and i7 higher, and males rated i21, i22, i23 and i27 higher, the first three of which show alfresco dining options and the latter showing a wide open lawn with structures in the background.

Other differences shown in Table 6.5 are between the mean ratings of those staying in backpackers and apartments/units, with 12 images showing statistically significant differences. Within the images showing difference, the majority of those images favoured by the backpackers over people staying in apartments/units or resorts/hotels were images i26, i27, i28, i29 and i30, showing open spaces and parks, mostly in the Esplanade boardwalk area. The open grass image with buildings in the background i27 showed a significant difference across the accommodation groups ($F(2, 443)=13.8$, eta squared .06). Those staying in apartments/units showed favour for the alfresco dining and board walk in scenery images i1, i2, i7, i8, i21, i22, i23 and i24. Of these the alfresco setting in front of the heritage building in i24 showed the most significant difference ($F(2, 441)=11.9$) with an eta squared value of .05. Those staying in resorts/hotels showed favour for the natural settings as shown i5 and i6. The natural setting with palm trees in i5 showed the most significant difference in rating across the accommodation styles ($F(2, 446)=17.1$) with an eta squared value of .07. These results indicate that although some of the differences between the means across the accommodation styles were small, there was a clear pattern of

preference between the groups: Backpackers prefer open park images, those staying in apartments or units prefer alfresco dining images, and those in resorts prefer predominantly natural settings.

In terms of preference in different age groups, there were fewer large differences across the generations, but a clear difference between Generation X and Baby Boomers (11 statistically significant differences) and Generation Y and Baby Boomers (12 statistically significant differences). The largest difference between the generations was in image i22 ($F(4, 516)=8.0$, eta squared .06), and the third largest difference was i23 ($F(4, 518)=7.41$, eta squared .06), both of which showed alfresco dining in Palm Cove, and both of which were more preferred by Generation X and Y over the Baby Boomers. The second largest difference in the sample was i28, which was more preferred by Generation Y than any of the other groups. Graph 6.20 shows a comparison of mean ratings across the generations in the sample. It shows a much higher preference of the Millennials for images i5 and i6 (palms or native trees and ocean) and i29 and i30 (park areas near the Esplanade Lagoon) compared with the other generations. It also illustrates the finding that Generation X has higher preference ratings for alfresco dining areas.

Graph 6.20 Comparison of mean ratings across generations in rank order



The final general observation of Table 6.5 was that there were little or no differences observed across the means of all groups for three images. i11 is an image of a heritage building in the Cairns CBD which rated exactly in the middle of the rankings at number 15

and achieved no statistical differences across groups. Its mean rating 3.43, indicating that it was universally liked in a moderate way.

6.6.2.1 *What tourists like in the tropical urban landscape*

The previous section discussed some of the specificities within the sample between the region of origin, accommodation style, generation and gender groups in the data, observing some differences between what different groups prefer. Whilst this analysis is valuable in terms of better understanding the movements and preferences of different markets, it is important to note that the planning and design of the urban landscape works on different time scales to the fluctuations in tourist flows. Planning schemes and documents are typically produced every 5-10 years, and projects subject to these schemes can take years to plan and develop. Paying too close attention to the preferences of any specific tourist markets when tastes, trends and economies can change within a year or less is an error that has already been made by many destinations, including Cairns with the Japanese market in the 1980s. Therefore whilst acknowledging the differences and specificities of the groups that make up Cairns tourists, these next sections seek to encapsulate and describe some of the core preferences across tourists. Having said that, some observations of differences between international and domestic markets are observed as these may impact our understanding of how urban designers in Cairns (who are predominantly Australian and tend to rely on their own preferences in place of tourist research) view the tropical urban landscape compared with tourists.

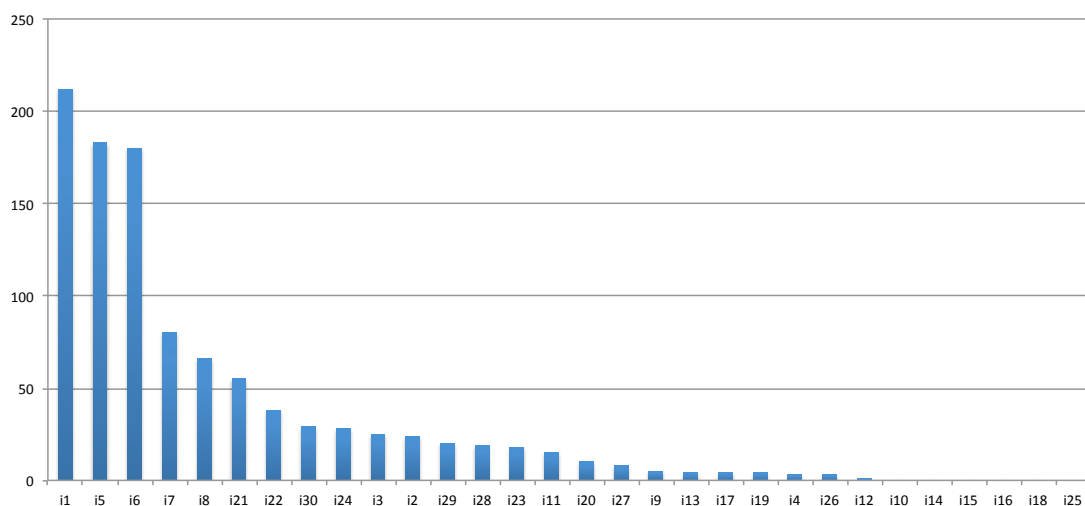
A key point of interest in the ratings of the images shown in Table 6.5 is that only the bottom six images rate as 'dislike' or 'strongly dislike' on the Likert scale. The top ranked images indicate a preference for natural elements through the presence of trees, sky and water, and a clear preference for images taken in Palm Cove rather than in Cairns CBD. The top ranked images show a range of path treatments such as dirt, boardwalk or paving and a range of vegetation types such as native coastal trees (i6), melaleucas (i8), and palm trees (i7, i5). i6 and i5 were deliberately taken from the same location and placed next to one another in the list to elicit a preference indicator for palm trees rather than native vegetation, as this was a topic that arose with the urban designers (discussed in Chapter 5).

The top five preferred images located in Cairns CBD (i1, i3, i29, i2, i24) indicate a clear preference for natural elements, however the presence of architectural elements also

appears to be a contributing factor. These images were preferred above five other images with an equal or higher percentage of natural elements (i28, i30, i27 and i20), but with different styles of architecture also in the image. As already discussed, some differences exist between the groups shown in Table 6.5, particularly indicating that Australians prefer palm tree images, those staying in resorts prefer more natural images and Asians tend to have a lower preference for predominantly natural images. Of note in i29 is the timber playground structure in the foreground (as well as the large fig tree), in i2 is the finely-grained vertical streetscape with a range of architectural styles, and in i24 is the traditional Queenslander style historical structure with pedestrian area and alfresco dining.

When asked specifically which two images were liked the most, the responses did not directly correspond with the images that received the highest rankings on the scale, however it is clear that images i1, i5 and i6 were the most preferred images. Graph 6.21 shows a graph of the frequency of the most liked images. Comparisons across frequencies for the regions, accommodation style, generation and sex are not made in these analyses because the frequency measure is skewed by the different sizes of each group. Images i7, i8 and i21 correspond with the ratings shown in Table 6.5, however i30 ranks higher as a most liked image at eighth most liked and i23 ranked lower at 14th most liked.

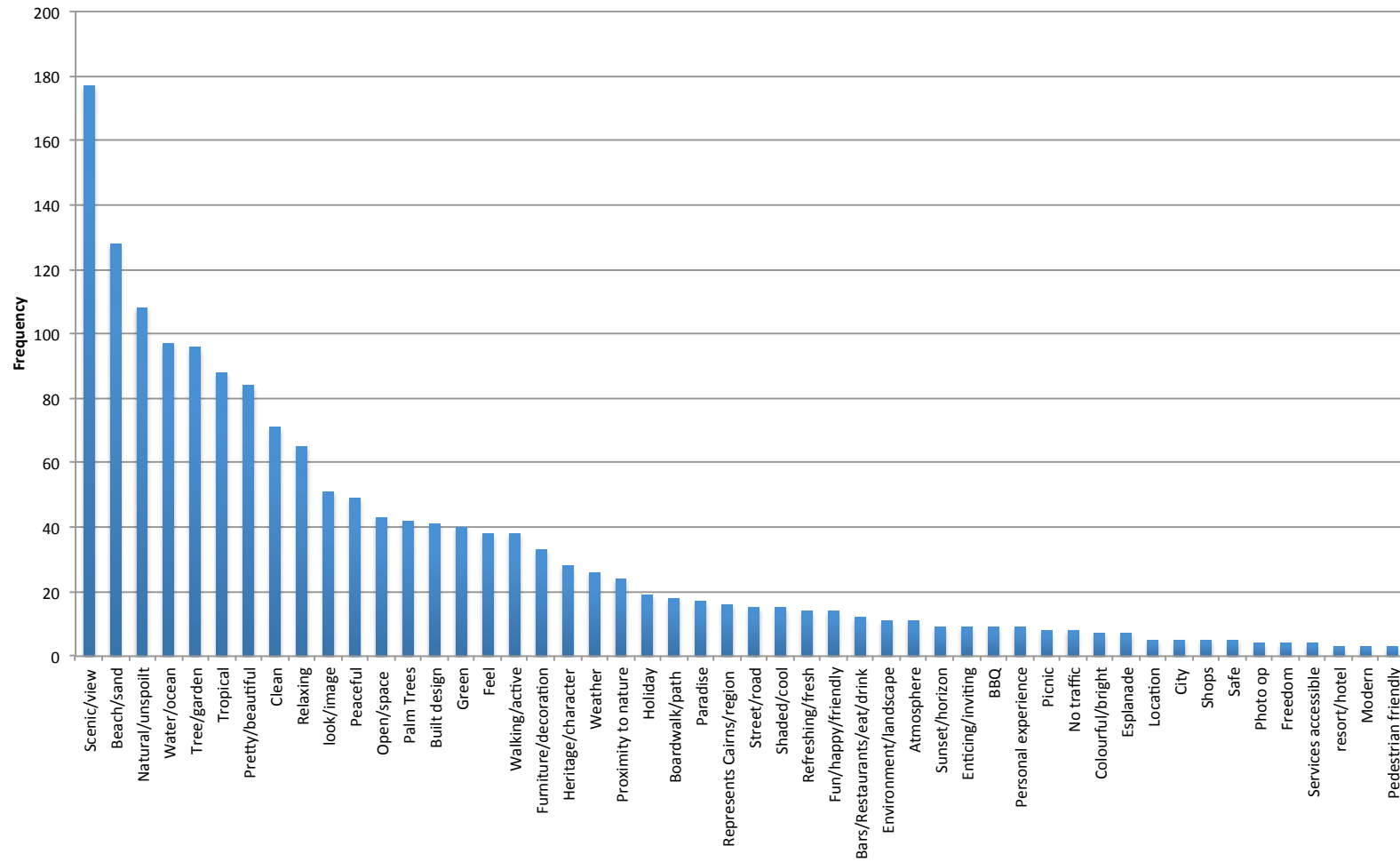
Graph 6.21 Frequency of two most liked images



When asked why they liked these images, respondents indicated a wide range of preferences in comment form. These comments were listed and coded inductively and abductively with categories added or expanded as the coding of both the most liked and

least liked comments progressed. Since the comments were often multi-faceted and concerning more than one element within the image, they were coded to as many categories as they applied. Overall, there were 1664 codings made from 928 comments. The coding process resulted in 64 categories of preference, the most frequent 50 of which are shown in Graph 6.22.

Graph 6.22 Frequency of top 50 reasons given for liking the images



To further consolidate the inductive analysis performed by the researcher, a brief analysis was conducted using qualitative data analysis software Leximancer (version 4). All qualitative responses were imported to the software via an excel spreadsheet, and a number of non-specific words that had not automatically been removed by the software were removed. Examples of these words include: stuff, things, probably, and fact. Although this still allowed for some researcher manipulation, the resultant image showed a series of spheres that did not seem to genuinely represent the data, where 'free' was identified as the central concept, although the word only appeared six times in the data set. It was concluded that this might show a limitation of the Leximancer program, where a large quantity of short responses may not effectively elicit a valuable analysis. A word frequency cloud generated using online tool Wordle.net shown in Figure 6.1 appeared to more accurately represent the general themes of why respondents most liked the images. The larger the word in the cloud, the more frequently the word has been mentioned.

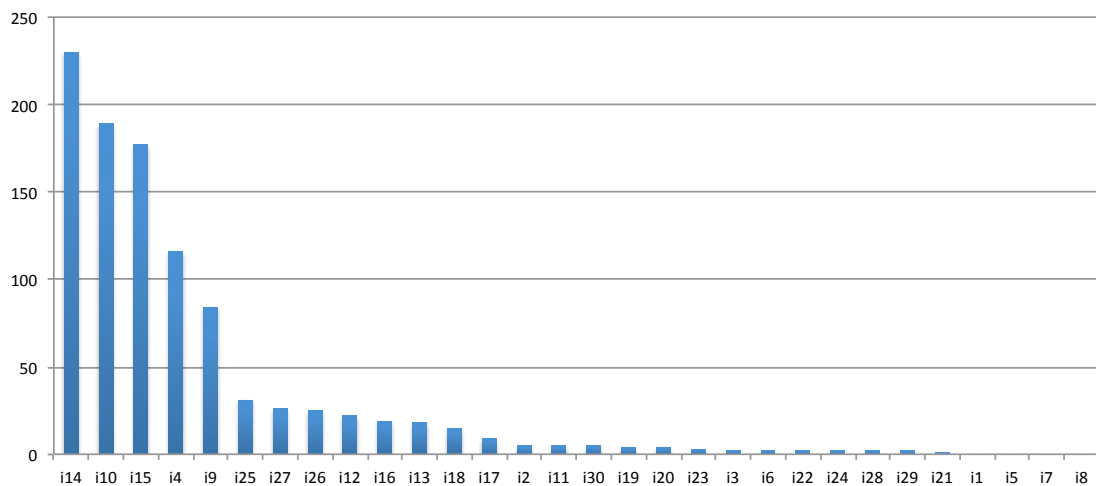
Figure 6.1 Word frequency cloud representation of why images were most liked



The same word frequency analysis was also performed on the reviews people wrote on TripAdvisor.com about the four highly rated areas of urban design in Cairns: The Esplanade Lagoon, Esplanade Boardwalk, Muddy's Playground and Cairns Botanical Gardens. The result of this is shown in Figure 6.2. It is important to note that these reviews were not all positive, however the cloud does show that the top word was *great*, indicating a general

respondents more frequently identified i14 (f=230) and i10 (f=189) than i15 (f=177), shown in Graph 6.23.

Graph 6.23 Frequency of two least liked images



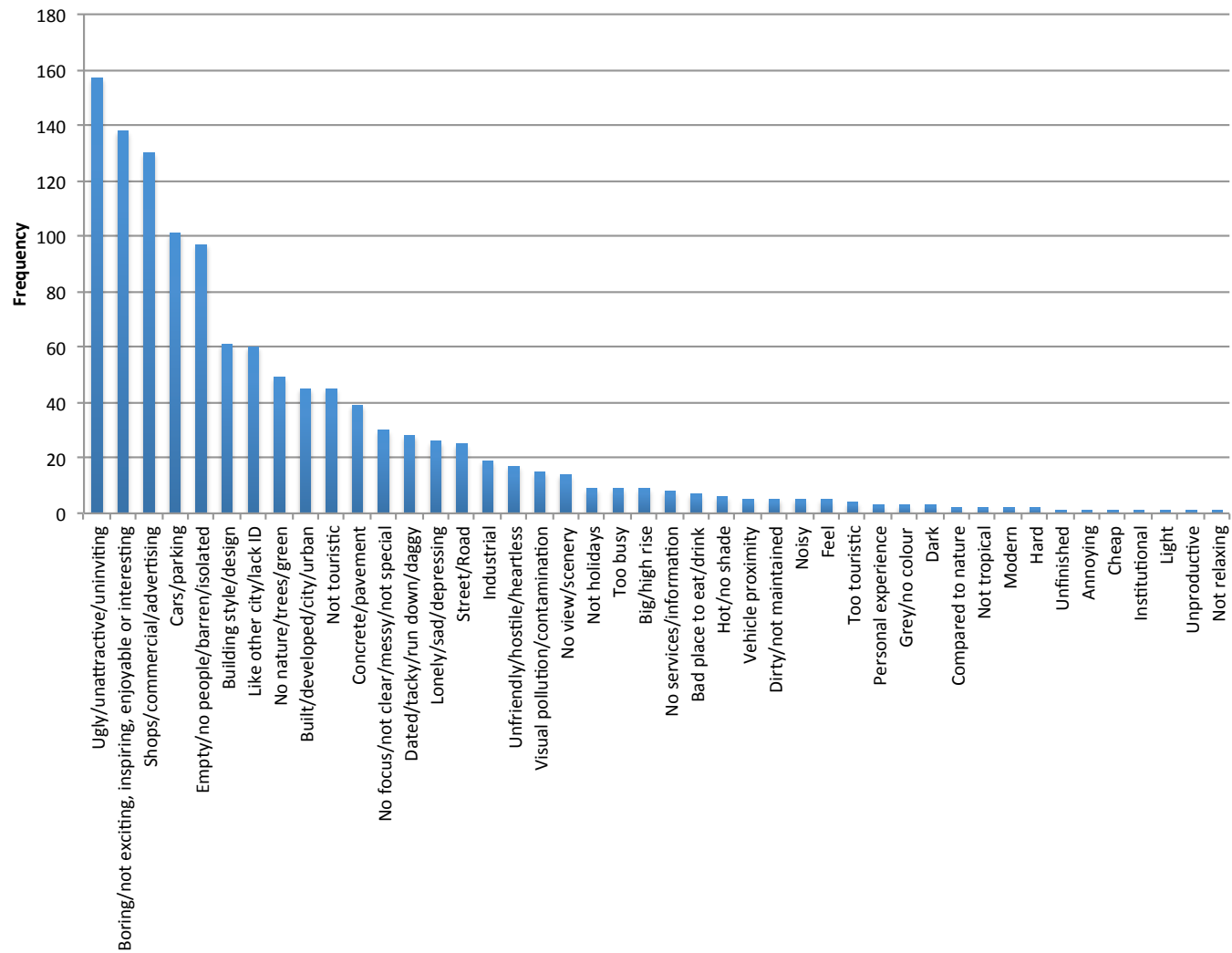
A key point to note about the ten least preferred images is that they are all taken in Cairns in areas indicated as high tourist use in Map 6.2. In particular, the third least preferred image (i10) is located in one of the busiest pedestrian walkways identified in Map 6.2, the path between two most highly visited places in Cairns CBD: the Esplanade Lagoon area and Cairns Central Shopping Centre. Additionally, the least liked image i14 is located directly across the road from Cairns Central Shopping Centre. This suggests that if the attraction of a location in the city is strong enough, the quality of the urban landscape along the path to that location may not be a factor in the decision to walk there. It also indicates that there are key areas in the city that are used frequently by tourists but also actively disliked by them.

The image i9 was the fifth least liked image, however ranked more highly in the scale rankings in Table 6.5, at number 22 out of 30. i9 was unique in the selection of images because it is the only image that shows tourist-based retail out on the footpath. This image had a much higher mean rating from the Asian respondents (3.35) than from the Europeans (2.88) or the Australians/New Zealanders (2.96). This image also rated higher by the Asian respondents than the image of Rusty's Markets (i13), indicating either a stronger preference against food retail or a stronger preference for tourist-based retail in the Asian respondents generally. Although following a similar trend to the overall pattern of preferences shown in Table 6.5, the Asian respondents were more favourable towards the

lower ranked images than people from other countries. The twelve lowest ranked images shown in Graph 6.19 have a significantly higher preference from Asian respondents. These images are all cityscapes characterised by hard surfaces, commercial and built development and low levels of vegetation.

As with the most liked images, respondents indicated a wide range of reasons for disliking their least liked images, which were recorded in comment form, inductively and abductively categorised and themed. Comments were coded into multiple categories if required. Overall, there were 1192 codings made from 867 comments. Comments about the least liked images were more homogenous than those about the most liked images, generating 44 categories through coding. The frequency of comments in each category are graphed in Graph 6.24. The key reasons given for not liking the images are most frequently about the lack of aesthetic appeal and feelings of boredom, lack of joy and hostility they generate. Another key factor is the presence of commercial activity such as shops and signage. The presence of cars and parking, as well as the absence of people and activity were also common reasons for disliking the images.

Graph 6.24. Frequency of reasons given for disliking the images



A word frequency cloud was also created using Wordle.net to elicit another perspective on the reasons why people disliked the images in the survey, shown in Figure 6.3. The top most frequently used words such as *nothing*, *empty*, *shops* and *ugly* consolidate the findings from the inductive coding analysis, creating an image of an empty commercial place with little interest. Mentions of trees or attractive were framed in the negative such as ‘no trees’ or ‘not attractive’. A number of these responses formed the negative aspect of the themes already identified in the most liked themes, indicating a presence of two-sided key attributes such as *nature* and *aesthetic* that create satisfaction if they are present and dissatisfaction if they are absent.

Figure 6.3 Word frequency cloud representation of why images were least liked



6.6.3 The key components of tropical urban design from a tourist perspective

Further inductive and abductive analysis saw a grouping of the 64 categories of reasons why respondents most liked the images and 44 categories of why they least liked the images into seven themes. These were: Nature, Aesthetic, Management, Feel, Design, Tropicality and Use. Table 6.6 shows how these categories were grouped into the themes and shows a sample of some of the comments that were about the most liked images (marked with a ☑) and the least liked images (marked with a ☒), followed by which image they were talking about (in brackets).

Table 6.6 Thematic grouping of categories of responses to most liked and disliked images

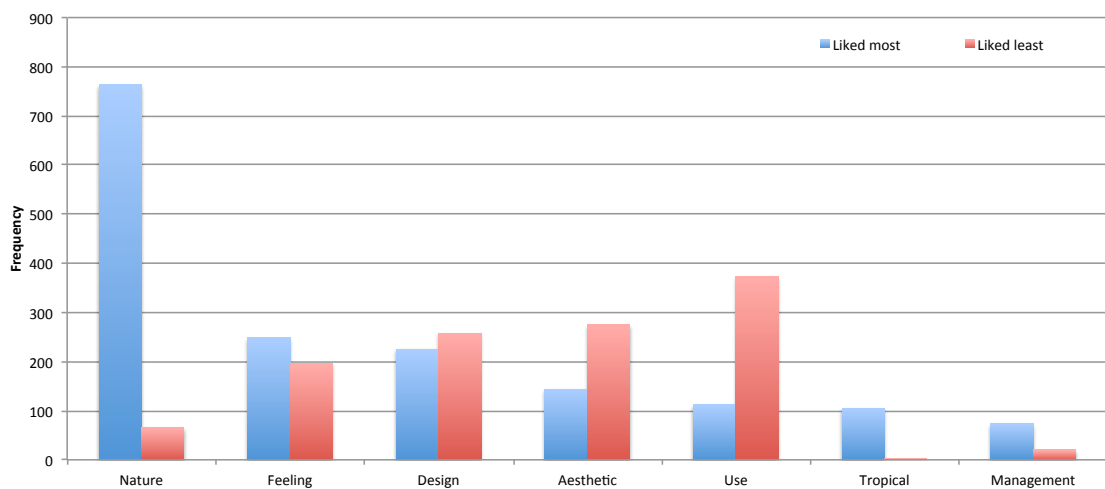
Most like	Dislike	Examples of comments
Nature		
Beach/sand	No nature/trees/green	☑ Natural beauty (i5)
Natural/unspoilt	No view/scenery	☑ Small scale, green, well managed (i1)
Water/ocean		☑ Walking along the water (i1)
Tree/garden		☑ It looks clean, quiet and natural (i1)
Palm Trees		☑ I like this tree. Very unique (i3)
Green		☑ It was nature, beaches, ocean and trees (i5)
Weather		☑ Amazing view, ready to enjoy the sunset (i1)
Proximity to nature		☑ I like the style of the patio and foliage (i4)
Environment/landscape		☑ Love the sea and nature (i5)
Sunset/horizon		☒ It is just a car park, no trees, no scenery (i4)
Birds/fauna		☒ No trees or greenery, built up, noisy (i14)
Fresh air		☒ Not nature, just concrete (i4)
Mountains		☒ No nature in the city (i14)
Feeling		
Relaxing	Boring/not exciting, inspiring, enjoyable or interesting	☑ Feel of freedom (i1)
Peaceful	Lonely/sad/depressing	☑ Nice walk and relaxing view (i1)
Feel	Unfriendly/hostile/heartless	☑ Nature feeling (i3)
Holiday	Not holidays	☑ Tropical feel (i4)
Shaded/cool	Feel	☑ Summer holiday feeling comes up (i5)
Refreshing/fresh	Not relaxing	☑ Happy, holiday feelings and horizon (i5)
Fun/happy/friendly		☑ Portrays pleasant holiday atmosphere (i5)
Atmosphere		☑ Peaceful and relaxing (i5)
Enticing/inviting		☑ Very inviting (i5)
Safe		☒ Sad corner (i10)
Freedom		☒ Lonely, just stores (i9)
Remind of home		☒ Industrial feel (i10)
luxurious		☒ Not holiday feel (i10)
Diverse		☒ Bare. Lacks any feeling (i14)
Harmony		☒ It looks like an unfriendly city (i14)
Design		
Open/space	Building style/design	☑ I love open spaces (i5)
Built design	Like other city/lack ID	☑ Iconic building, very traditional (i11)
Furniture/decoration	Not touristic	☑ Modern, good design (i21)
Heritage/character	No focus/not clear/messy/not special	☑ Great design and decoration (i21)
Boardwalk/path	Dated/tacky/run down/daggy	☑ Spectacular design, nice furniture, shade trees (i22)
Represents Cairns/region	Big/high rise	☑ Captures Cairns city feel (i2)
Street/road	No services/information	☑ I like the boardwalk (i1)
No traffic	Hot/no shade	☑ I love wood furniture (i22)
Location	Modern	☒ Not attractive just infrastructure (i14)

Most like	Dislike	Examples of comments
Services accessible	Unfinished	☒ It is a boring building (i15)
Modern	Institutional	☒ Classic and boring city (i15)
Pedestrian friendly		☒ Non descriptive, non activated, impersonal, unwelcoming (i14)
Wood		☒ It is a concrete building. Not very exciting (i14)
No buildings		☒ Built up, plain, boring (i14)
Unique/different		☒ Boring and hot (i4)
Small scale		☒ Concrete jungle! (i4)
Indigenous		☒ No legibility, no local identity (i10)
Aesthetic		
Pretty/beautiful	Ugly/unattractive/uninviting	☒ Tropical style, attractive (i21)
Look/image	Built/developed/city/urban	☒ Natural beauty (i7)
Colourful/bright	Concrete/pavement	☒ Beautiful place, nice view (i6)
What I imagined	Street/Road	☒ Is what I imagined it would be like (i1)
Scenic/view	Grey/no colour	☒ The colours are awful and it doesn't look inviting (i14)
	Dark	☒ Just ugly and has no sense (i14)
	Hard	☒ Not interesting, looks ugly (i14)
	Light	☒ Too grey (i15)
		☒ Visual pollution (i10)
Use		
Walking/active	Shops/commercial/advertising	☒ Enjoyed lots of walks along here (i6)
Bars/Restaurants/eat/drink	Cars/parking	☒ Ideal for walking (i6)
BBQ	Empty/no people/barren/isolated	☒ I like being down at the Esplanade especially the fitness classes and spending time with friends having picnics (i5)
Personal experience	Industrial	☒ Nice beach, service available, parking (i7)
Picnic	Too busy	☒ Gardens with a lot of shadow where I can rest (i3)
Esplanade	Vehicle proximity	☒ Peaceful to read and take some pictures (i1)
Shops	Too touristic	☒ Refreshing site for a picnic (i7)
Photo opportunity	Personal experience	☒ Free BBQ with friends is really fun (i30)
Resort/hotel	Bad place to eat/drink	☒ Just shops and car parking (i14)
Conversation/friends		☒ It is just a corner full of machinery (i10)
Pier		☒ Shops and parking not tourism (i10)
Reading		☒ Looks super industrial, no nature (i10)
Market		☒ Busy environment/crowded (i25)
Parking		☒ Feels crowded (i25)
Swim		☒ Shit tourism places (i26)
No people/uncrowded		
Tropical		
Tropical	Not tropical	☒ Tropical and relaxing view, clean walkway (i1)
Paradise		☒ It shows a tropical area (i1)
		☒ Very tropical, a lot of trees (i3)
		☒ No concept, not tropical (i10)

Most like	Dislike	Examples of comments
Management		
Clean	Visual pollution/contamination	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clean city, nice street (i2)
Well managed/maintenance	Dirty/not maintained	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sunny and clean (i1)
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> It looks like it doesn't get looked after (i14)
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Looks not clean, old painting, looks empty, boring (i14)

Evident in Table 6.6 is that the qualitative analysis was an act of interpretation, showing one way – but not the only way - of grouping the comments into categories and the categories into themes. Since the comment categorisation was not mutually exclusive, themes were able to emerge through the coding and the researcher developed a feel for the themes within the data. The examples of comments show that many were coded across different themes, however every comment that was made fell into at least one of the themes, indicating an exhaustion of the data. Although the comments and coding were not treated quantitatively, for analytical purposes the frequency of comments of most liked and disliked images within each theme were graphed to gain an idea of how the data looked, shown in Graph 6.25. This shows that respondents noted the presence of *nature*, *feeling*, *tropical* and *management* more than they did an absence, and that the presence of nature in the images was by far the most significant reason for liking an image. All themes with the exception of *tropical* were mentioned in terms of absence and presence, although an absence of positive *design*, *aesthetic* and *use* were generally noted more than a presence. The presence of *tropical* was noticed as a positive factor in images, however an absence of tropicality was only noted in the least liked images twice. The reasons for this may align with the lack of any comments about safety, the absence of which is immediately noticeable, but the presence of which is rarely considered.

Graph 6.25. Frequency of comments in the seven themes



Whilst coding the nature-based comments was straightforward – if a comment mentioned any natural feature, it was coded within the *nature* theme – the overlap between design and aesthetic was less clear, as a comment about good design might be deemed to have a favourable aesthetic. A distinction was made between these two however because a comment about good design may also mean that the area felt better or more useable, or even more tropical. Thus, any comment about how a space had been created (self-consciously or un-self-consciously) was allocated to the *design* theme. Additionally, comments about use could also have been a factor of design or management, as how a place is designed and managed would inevitably affect how it is used. Use was considered as a separate theme however because of its ephemeral nature compared with design, and also because of the high number of respondents commenting on how they had already or might personally use the space or how it was being used in the image.

6.7 Conclusion

Using a range of methods, this chapter has examined the value of the urban landscape in tourists' experiences of a tropical destination and identified key elements of the tropical urban landscape that tourists value in their experience. Whilst previous research has examined general preferences in a range of destinations (such as Alegre & Garau 2010; Elands & Lengkeek 2012; Murphy, P., Pritchard & Smith 2000), this research has specifically considered tourist preferences in the tropical urban landscape. It has shown that although the attractions of the Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics World Heritage Areas underpin the tourism industry in Cairns, city-based public space attractions are key to the actual

tourist experience of Cairns. Since the quality of the experience for the tourist is a precursor to repeat visitation (Alegre & Cladera 2006) and positive word of mouth (Baloglu 2002), this research has shown that the quality of the tropical city experience is a key aspect of a tropical destination.

A key finding in this chapter has been that tourist preferences of the tropical urban landscape can be themed into nature, aesthetic, management, feel, design, tropicality and use. As discussed in the introduction, these preferences may not be tropically specific, however may become so if experienced within the tropical context. In fact, many of the preferences expressed in this research resound with Lew's (1987) tourist attraction typology, which notes a collection of tourist preferences that are not tropically specific such as mountain and coastal panoramas, beaches, plants, climate, settlement morphology, commerce, way of life, meeting touristic needs, activities and meals, plus a number of others. This raises questions around the differences between tourist needs and preferences in the tropics compared with those in other places. One key area of difference is the desire for 'tropical feel'.

This chapter has identified that tropical feel in the tropical urban landscape is important to 60.1% of tourists. It has also identified a stronger preference for tropical feel in Cairns in domestic and returning visitors than in international visitors generally and Europeans specifically. This suggests that those with a preference for tropical feel in Cairns may be more educated about the destination than those who do not care about tropical feel or who do not think it is important. It may also indicate that tourists' reasons for travelling to Cairns influences their perceptions: Europeans may travel to experience the natural beauty of the World Heritage Areas without the perception of the place as tropical, Asians may travel to experience a western nation that is close by, and Australians/New Zealanders may travel to experience a tropical place within a similar cultural sphere. Although this chapter does not answer these questions, it does indicate possible areas for further research on the relationship between travel motivation and experience of a destination.

This chapter has also identified that visitors have a preference in the city for places that are free to access, activity based, and have nature-based elements. It has shown that nature in particular is a key aspect of preference in the tropical city experience, and that the customary tropical imagery of palm trees and beaches are not necessarily the most

valuable aspects of the nature experience to the tourist in the city. In fact, in terms of selling Cairns to tourists, the most valuable image has been identified as the distinctive artworks of the fish sculptures in the middle of the Esplanade Lagoon Swimming Pool, with a background of built and natural vistas.

The research in this chapter has considered tourists' value of and preferences in the tropical urban landscape. Whilst this is valuable in terms of assessing the effectiveness of the urban design process in addressing the needs of tourists, it would be useful in future research to consider whether residents have similar values in their experiences. In particular this research has contributed to the growing literature on the value of nature in the urban environment, particularly in nature-based destinations (such as in Line & Costen 2014), but also from the perspective of residents.

Chapter 7

7 Connecting urban design norms and tourist preferences

7.1 Introduction

So far, this thesis has described the context of Cairns in Chapter 4 through a critical analysis of the place, polity and power elements that have historically developed a series of place-based modes of operation that exist today. From this foundation, Chapter 5 presented a critical analysis from the perspective of those shaping the tropical urban landscape of Cairns describing a process of urban design based within the existing place-based modes of operation and identifying a series of design norms existing in the shaping of the city. Following this, Chapter 6 explored what key components of the tropical urban landscape are valued by tourists. Research objective 3 of this thesis is to identify the connections and disconnections between how urban designers shape a tropical city and what tourists value in the tropical city experience. The rationale behind this objective is to evaluate the effectiveness of the urban design process through its ability to meet the needs of end users, in this case tourists. This chapter draws together the threads of the previous chapters to identify the connections and disconnections between how urban designers shape a tropical city and what tourists value in the tropical city experience. Drawing on the data presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, this chapter analyses the research findings to evaluate the process of urban design in Cairns in terms of its ability to meet the needs of tourists as end users, and proposes a model for this evaluation.

This chapter first completes an analysis of the connections and disconnections between the normative outcomes identified by urban designers in Cairns as a table followed by an explanatory analysis of the qualitative results. This comparison is preceded by a discussion on the methodological differences of the data collection and how this may influence the outcomes of the research. This chapter then combines these elements to propose a conceptual model of tourist preferences in the tropical urban landscape. An analysis then considers whether the process of urban design in Cairns has to date been successful delivering a tropical urban landscape that aligns with tourist preferences in high tourist-use areas. Drawing on the abductive methods of this research through which inductive and

deductive reasoning are iteratively applied across the four stages of research, a method for evaluating the urban design process in terms of its ability to meet the needs of tourists is then proposed. This chapter concludes with an identification of key areas of disconnection in the urban design process.

7.2 Methodological differences & analytical process

As discussed in Chapter 3, the data being compared in this Chapter was collected using two different methodologies. Whilst the interviews with the urban designers was in-depth and qualitative using an inductive process to elicit themes, the tourist preferences were assessed against some of these themes but with open ended questions in a survey format to elicit further preferences.

A point to note is that in seeking a list of norms, respondents were asked what they think tourists want out of the urban design of a tropical city such as Cairns, not what they think they don't want. The framing of this question somewhat precluded responses about what tourists might not want, such as outdated buildings or industrial feel. There were some responses from urban designers addressing the converse – for example, 'dirty, not maintained' as a negative comment from tourists was addressed by 'clean, working facilities and amenities' norm from the urban designers. There were others however that were not directly comparable, that addressed part of the tourist preferences but not all, such as the 'visual pollution/contamination' negative comment from tourists. The nature of these comments were mostly about advertising signage, which classified within the 'not too commercial' norm from the urban designers, however there were also comments simply saying 'visual contamination' or 'visual pollution', which may cover more than just signage and advertising. Whilst these issues indicate a limitation in the research, they also indicate the complexity of the considerations in urban design and of different personal preferences in the urban landscape. Comparison issues such as these bring Carmona et al.'s (2003) philosophy of urban design research into focus, seeking to "encapsulate its heart or core rather than prescribe its edge or boundary" (p. 5). Thus, although there is the possibility that there are a range of elements in visual contamination, at the heart of this comment is the over-commercialization of the urban space. This treatment was applied to a number of themes that showed a clear 'heart' concept, relying on the perceptions of the researcher to assess whether the interviews with urban designers did in fact address the 'heart' of the tourist preferences.

Another issue in the analytical process was the diversity of comments from respondents in both datasets. For example, whilst some tourists found fault with an image because it was too 'modern', others commented on a different image that they liked it because it was 'modern'. It appeared from this that 'modern' is a contested concept, used as both a positive and negative descriptor, meaning different things to different people. Whilst the in-depth nature of the urban designer interviews enabled a clarification of definitions the survey nature of the tourist preferences left ambiguity around meaning. To circumvent this to some extent, the images being commented on were compared to consider what the different meanings might be. A negative comment about 'modern' showed a 1970s style strip shop (i15), indicating a modernised landscape with few cultural or locational references, whereas a positive comment about 'modern' showed a recently constructed boardwalk and railing looking out to the ocean (i1). Additionally, the 'visual contamination' comments discussed above were all about an image showing many signs on a footpath (i26). This contextualization added meaning to ambiguous responses and contributed to the analysis.

Keeping these analytical processes in mind, the next section discusses the connections and disconnections within the themes of nature, aesthetic, management, feel, design, tropicity and use. Drawing on the context analysis and analysis of urban design process discussed by the urban designers, within each theme is an analysis of whether the disconnections are methodologically based and warrant further research or based in the path-dependent, place-based modes of operation existing in the urban design process in Cairns.

7.3 Connections and disconnections: urban design norms and tourist preferences

There emerged from the research a number of key areas of connection and disconnection between what urban designers perceived tourists to want from their experience of the tropical urban landscape, and what tourists actually preferred. Drawing data from Table 5.2 and Table 6.6 from Chapters 5 and 6 respectively, each subsection below gives an explanatory analysis of the connections and disconnections between the design norms expressed by the urban designers and the preferences of tourists within the themes of 'interface with nature', 'aesthetic', 'management', 'feeling', 'design', 'tropicity' and 'use'.

As discussed in Chapter 1, urban design problems are often ‘wicked’ problems, with no right-or-wrong answer but rather better-or-worse outcomes. Also discussed was how a tendency to over-reduce these problems to simplistic models can result in outcomes that are essentially meaningless in the complex milieu of urban issues. Therefore, rather than try to simplify the range of urban design norms to align them with the tourist preferences, the data presented in the subsequent tables remains deliberately complex to highlight areas of connection and disconnection between how the urban designers shape the tropical city and what tourists value in the tropical city experience.

In line with the abductive nature of this research, where a disconnection was identified between the urban design norms and tourist preferences, a text search was conducted on the interview transcripts to be sure that it was not previously missed in the analysis. In some cases, only one urban designer might have mentioned something that was identified in the tourist preferences, if this was the case, it was identified as a weak connection. If more than one urban designer mentioned the same thing, this was considered to be a part of the design language to some extent, and was thus considered to be a connection. Additionally, tourist responses were included if more than one person expressed the preference, although since the frequency of these responses was two or more, a low tourist response frequency did not constitute a weak connection. The tourist preferences are arranged in order of frequency, which is shown in brackets after each tourist preference to give an idea of the gravity of the responses.

7.3.1 Interface with nature

As discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, *nature* is recognised a key element of preference in the tropical urban landscape by tourists and urban designers alike. Table 7.1 shows how all tourist preferences on nature with the exception of ‘birds and fauna’ were acknowledged within the urban designer group as being important to the tourist experience of the tropical urban landscape. Although at times the language used was different – such as ‘sunset/horizon’ versus ‘views & vistas’, the underpinning ‘heart’ of the experience of nature in the tropical urban landscape appeared to be closely aligned. As discussed in Section 5.4.2, in the interviews with the urban designers, the idea of ‘views & vistas’ was most regularly discussed in terms of looking out to the natural environment from the urban environment including beaches, vegetation and mountainscapes. Therefore this category has appeared against multiple tourist preferences.

Table 7.1 Connections and disconnections: Nature

Tourist preference (n=)	Urban design norm	Connection/ disconnection
Interface with nature		
Good		
Beach/sand (128)	Views & vistas	Connection
Natural/unspoilt (108)	Sky & cloud views	Connection
Water/ocean (97)	Ocean views	Connection
	Rain & drains	Connection
	Ocean & rivers	Connection
	Swimming pools	Connection
	Vegetation	Connection
Tree/garden (96)	Shade trees	Connection
	Vegetation in the city	Connection
	Non-native vegetation	Connection
Palm Trees (42)	Lush green colour	Connection
Green (40)	Humidity	Connection
Weather (26)	Warm nights	Connection
	Native vegetation	Connection
Proximity to nature (24)	Somewhere to swim	Connection
	Vegetation in vistas	Connection
Environment/landscape (11)	Views & vistas	Connection
Sunset/horizon (9)	Mountainscape views	Connection
Mountains (2)	Birdlife	Weak connection
Birds/fauna (2)	Feel of air on skin	Connection
Fresh air (2)		
Bad		
No nature/trees/green (49)	As above	Connection
No view/scenery (14)	As above	Connection

Whilst the analysis in Table 7.1 is useful as a graphic to show the clear connections between the urban design norms and tourist preferences, it may also be illustrated with the most preferred images matched with the comments of some urban designers. Table 7.2 shows the two most preferred images in the tourist survey and illustrates the understanding of these preferences through the comments by urban designers. These results indicate that urban designers are connecting with the preferences of tourists in terms of interface with nature in the tropical urban landscape.

Table 7.2 Connections of images and comments: Nature

Most preferred images by tourists



i6



i1

Urban designer comments

I think tourists need, I think they are looking for kind of the feel of the natural environment... - industry representative

...you are looking for that interface between the ocean, the water and the rainforest
– planning consultant.

Outdoor, they want outdoor. Lots of trees, viewing platforms, vistas, birdlife...
- elected official

That people can see those mountains and the perception is that the other side of the Inlet is totally undeveloped... In a sense you could say wherever there's great mountains or vistas why not let people see those beautiful vistas? And, you know, the Esplanade is a fantastic example where people love it because you look out at those beautiful mountains on the other side don't you?
- public administrator

You know, you walk along that, that waterfront and you're in the blazing sun... I think shade is important. I think... tropical vegetation, big trees... are important
– public administrator

Additionally, supporting Lew's (1987) identification of nature as a key element in his typology of tourist attractions, these results indicate that a preference for nature also exists within the urban landscape. This raises questions around whether these preferences exist specifically within a tropical urban landscape or whether they would exist in any urban landscape. Although this question is outside of the bounds of this research, the occurrence of 'unspoilt' as a frequently used term in the favourable description of nature resounds with Echtner and Prasad's (2003) observations of the tropical place being imagined as 'unchanged', 'unrestrained' and 'uncivilised' or Stepan's (2001) "purer or less spoilt place than our own" (p.11). This may indicate that a level of primitiveness, lack of refinement or engagement with nature in the city may be more highly preferred in the tropical urban landscape. The most highly preferred image of a construction in the preferences rated by tourists supports this notion. Shown in Figure 7.1 with a mean rating of 4/5, it shows a more basic and unrefined design than other constructions in the selection of images in the survey. Also shown is the second most preferred image of a construction, which is very close in preference level to the most preferred with a mean rating of 3.99/5. This shows a

café with colonial-inspired architecture. This may also indicate that the imagined colonial identity of the tropics still exists in the minds of tourists today.

Figure 7.1 Top two most preferred images by tourists including a construction



7.3.2 Feeling

Whilst there is a clear connection between urban design norms and tourist preferences in terms of nature in Cairns, there are some disconnections in terms of *feeling*. Table 7.3 shows that there are a number of key terms used by tourists to describe feel, however these are not matched in the vocabulary of the urban designers. As discussed in Chapter 5, the concept of *tropical feel* was identified by urban designers as central to the design of the tropical urban landscape (discussed in Section 7.3.7 as a separate theme), so they clearly understand that feeling is important, however the vocabulary around what comprises feeling seems to be less extensive as designers than as consumers. This may be a function of the different methods used to collect the data: whilst the tourists were responding to actual images presented to them and were asked to explain why they liked or disliked them, urban designers were speaking in more abstract terms about their perceptions of tourist needs. It may also be because the urban designers have a focus on the structural and concrete legal provisions from the discipline of urban design. Regardless of the reasons why, the presence of disconnections with such a high number of tourist responses highlights a need for urban designers to engage with the users of urban spaces to allow for their vocabulary on space to be extended and hopefully more understood.

Table 7.3 Connections and disconnections: Feeling

Tourist preference (n=)	Urban design norm	Connection/ disconnection
Feeling		
Good		
Relaxing (65)	Part of tropical feel is relaxing	Connection
Peaceful (49)		Disconnection
Feel (38)	Feel of tropical air on skin	Connection
Holiday (19)	What people want on a tropical holiday	Connection
Shaded/cool (15)	Shade – trees	Connection
	Shade – verandahs	Connection
	Hot surfaces	Connection
	Urban heat island effect	Connection
	Shade & shelter from elements	Connection
Refreshing/fresh (14)		Disconnection
Fun/happy/friendly (14)		Disconnection
Atmosphere (11)	Be busy/creation of busy-ness	Connection
	Alfresco dining	Connection
Enticing/inviting (9)	Active streetscape	Connection
	Busy/activity	Connection
Safe (5)	Safe	Connection
Freedom (4)		Disconnection
Remind of home (2)	Needs to be like home	Weak connection
Bad		
Boring/not exciting, inspiring, enjoyable or interesting (138)		Disconnection
Lonely/sad/depressing (26)		Disconnection
Unfriendly/hostile/heartless (17)		Disconnection
Not holidays (9)	What people want on a tropical holiday	Connection
Feel (5)	Tropical feel	Connection
	Feel of air on skin	Connection

Table 7.3 shows that the key areas of disconnection in terms of feeling between urban designers and tourists centered on the concept of peacefulness, boredom, lack of interest or inspiration, loneliness, friendliness/unfriendliness and freshness. Of particular note in these results is that a high number of tourists used 'peaceful' or 'boring' as descriptors, yet not one urban designer engaged in this vocabulary. Feeling is a subjective concept: one person's boredom could be another person's peacefulness, however a look at the frequency of mentions with the images shows a clear pattern in the responses of what 'boring' looks like. Figure 7.2 shows the two images with the highest frequency of 'boring/not exciting, inspiring, enjoyable or interesting' comments. Conversely, Figure 7.3 shows the two images with the highest frequency of 'peaceful' comments. Interestingly, the two images with the highest frequency of 'boring' (i14 and i15) also received the highest frequency of 'lonely/sad/depressing' comments. These results show that although 'boring' 'lonely' or 'sad' may be subjective terms, they are often used to describe a place of hard surfaces with little design, detail or natural elements. Figure 7.4 shows the images with the highest frequency of 'refreshing' or 'fun' comments. These results also show that the positive descriptor of 'peaceful' generally contain a high level of natural elements and natural building materials, and that 'fun' or 'refreshing' places also include a high level of natural elements but also show places of activity such as walkways and barbeque areas.

Figure 7.2 Images with the highest frequency of 'boring' comments from tourists

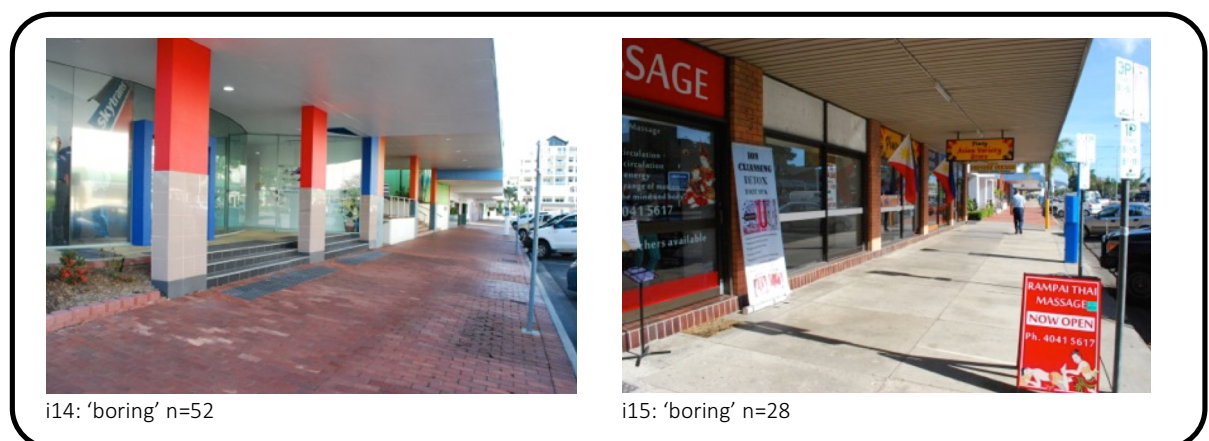


Figure 7.3 Images with the highest frequency of 'peaceful' comments from tourists



i1: 'peaceful' n=15



i6: 'peaceful' n=10

Figure 7.4 Images with highest frequency of 'refreshing' or 'fun' comments from tourists



i7: 'refreshing/fresh' n=5



i30: 'fun/happy/friendly' n=4

In the interviews with urban designers, a number of respondents did acknowledge the issue of hard surfaces - particularly concrete - as a key element of unsuccessful urban design. This is supported in a number of normative urban design guides and policy documents (such as Australian Government 2011; DETR & CABE 2000; Hammonds 2011). One industry representative identified the large-scale concrete-slab style of superstores such as Bunnings Hardware as being the 'enemy' of successful urban design: "I think that's an anti-Christ... We need to soften the edges". The concept of 'edge softening' was considered by other urban designers as well. As one public administrator comments:

Landscaping is important. I think if you look at what makes a boulevard and boulevards look much more visually appealing than a street that doesn't have it. It's about the landscaping and so it's about the trees and softening the edges so it's not just all that hard surface.

Section 5.4.3 discusses this more comprehensively in terms of the design of the built environment. These results suggest that although tourists use a range of terms to describe places they like or dislike, they are not significantly misaligned with the urban designers' perceptions of what tourists prefer in the tropical urban landscape.

7.3.3 Design

As with feeling, the concept of 'good' or 'bad' design is subjective. Table 7.4 shows that there are a number of disconnections between the tourist preferences and urban design norms. A key point to note is that although these results have separated out physical design and feel for ease of analysis, there are many interconnections between the concepts. In particular, the previous section identified the presence of hard or soft surfaces as being central to the 'feel' of the urban landscape, which is treated in this analysis as an element of design. The overlap can also be seen in terms of 'boardwalk/path', with the highly preferred images i1 and i7 discussed in the previous section as 'peaceful' or 'refreshing' also featuring a boardwalk or path.

Table 7.4 Connections and disconnections: Design

Tourist preference (n=)	Urban design norm	Connection/disconnection
Design		
Good		
Open/space (43)	Open space	Connection
Built design (41)	Innovation in design	Connection
	Quality in design	Connection
Furniture/decoration (33)		Disconnection
Heritage/character (28)	Authentic/genuine	Connection
	Create difference	Connection
Boardwalk/path (18)		Disconnection
Represents Cairns/region (16)	Authentic/genuine	Connection
Street/road (15)	Active streetscape	Connection
No traffic (8)	Pedestrian oriented	Connection
Location (5)		Disconnection
Services accessible (4)	Walkable and connected	Connection
Modern (3)	Innovation in design	Connection
Pedestrian friendly (3)	Pedestrian oriented	Connection
Wood (2)		Disconnection
No buildings (2)	Open space	Connection
	Natural vistas	Connection
Unique/different (2)	Authentic/genuine	Connection
	Create difference	Connection

Tourist preference (n=)	Urban design norm	Connection/ disconnection
Bad		
Building style/design (61)	Good design	Connection
Like other city/lack ID (60)	Authentic/genuine	Connection
	Create difference	Connection
	Tropical 'condition'	Connection
Not touristic (45)	Servicing tourist needs	Connection
No focus/not clear/messy/not special (30)	Authentic/genuine	Connection
Dated/tacky/run down/daggy (28)	Up-to-date or well-maintained buildings	Connection
Big/high rise (9)	Nothing taller than a palm tree	Connection
No services/information (8)	Servicing tourist needs	Connection
Hot/no shade (6)	Shade – trees & verandahs	Connection
Modern (2)		Disconnection

Table 7.4 shows that a key disconnection between tourist preferences and urban design norms centres on 'furniture/decoration'. This is most likely because of the perceived division of public/private responsibility for the urban environment. The images most commented on for 'furniture/decoration' support this. As Figure 7.5 shows, both of the images are privately owned cafes, where the furniture and decoration are the responsibility of the café owners and operators rather than the city decision makers. This result highlights that whilst urban designers who work to shape the urban landscape are aware of the jurisdictional divide between public and private domains, to users the urban landscape is experienced as a whole.

Figure 7.5 Top two images liked by tourists because of 'furniture/decoration'



The results from this analysis indicate that there are few items of disconnection in design preferences between urban designers and tourists. The main areas of disconnection are

potentially more to do with the perceived boundaries between public and private responsibility than in any lack of perception of tourist needs on the part of the urban designers. Having said that, this section has highlighted that a number of items of design falling within the private realm do influence the tourist experience of the tropical urban landscape. This suggests a need for urban designers to examine ways of influencing or controlling design outside of public control to create a more positive experience of the tropical urban landscape. As discussed in Section 5.4.3, this was considered important by a number of urban designers, especially in relation to the city centre. One public administrator suggests a solution:

If you could get the five property owners on a section of Grafton Street to say, “You know what? We’ll, we’ll revamp our buildings,” and even just minor cosmetic things, like a paint job and a few hanging garden walls or something like that, we’ll do it all within a 12-month period of each other. So you’ve got an example to say, “Look, this is what we’re ultimately trying to achieve on the ground,” whether there is a grant subsidy that Council could help, a relaxation on fees for applications, whether it’s providing some resources within Council insofar as helping with design so that they don’t have to...

This tension between the public and private realms of urban design is indicative of deeper issues in planning about the extent of government responsibility for - or influence on - the practices of private landholders (Rowley 1998). This is influenced by the philosophy of the government at all levels: In Australia, the conservative government generally favours the rights of the individuals, whilst the labour government generally favours the rights of the collective. Thus, the connections and disconnections in terms of the public/private realms in the urban landscape in Cairns can be partially reliant on the polity context and the philosophies of the government at the time.

7.3.4 Aesthetic

As discussed in Section 6.6.3, *aesthetic* is closely linked to a number of the categories, yet the high number of aesthetically-based responses from the tourist survey and Urry’s (1992) assertion that “these experiences are only of importance to the tourist because they are located within a distinctive visual environment” (p. 172, emphasis added), indicated that a separate category was warranted. Table 7.5 shows that the urban designers had a

connection with all of the identified tourists' aesthetic preferences, although some allowances were made for the methodological differences. In particular, urban designers were asked what they thought tourists wanted, not what they thought they didn't want, whereas the tourists were invited to frame their responses negatively when asked what they disliked about the images. Some of the urban designers' thoughts on negative places were picked up when they were asked about areas of unsuccessful design in Cairns, but this was not always matched closely. As a result, some of the positive norms are used to connect with the 'bad' tourist preferences.

Table 7.5 Connections and disconnections: Aesthetic

Tourist preference (n=)	Urban design norm	Connection/ disconnection
Aesthetic		
Good		
Scenic/view (177)	Views/vistas	Connection
Pretty/beautiful (84)	Beauty	Connection
Look/image (51)	Views/vistas	Connection
Colourful/bright (7)	Colour	Connection
What I imagined (2)	Expectations	Connection
Bad		
Ugly/unattractive/uninviting (157)	Beauty	Connection
Built/developed/city/urban (45)	Vegetation in the city	Connection
Concrete/pavement (39)	Hard surfaces/soft surfaces	Connection
Street/Road (25)	Hard surfaces/soft surfaces	Connection
Grey/no colour (3)	Colour	Connection
Dark (3)	Light and bright	Connection
Hard (2)	Hard surfaces/soft surfaces	Connection

Table 7.5 shows that aesthetic was mostly described as 'scenic/view' or 'pretty/beautiful'. Similarly, the absence of 'beauty' was mostly described as 'Ugly/unattractive/uninviting'. Whilst scenic/view generally described natural views in the images, the concept of what is 'pretty/beautiful' or 'Ugly/unattractive/uninviting' were considered to be more subjective and so the four images most frequently described this way are shown in Figure 7.6 and Figure 7.7. These again show a prevalence of nature as a key determinant of aesthetic quality in the tropical urban landscape. Additionally, these images show a difference in preference for footpaths. Whilst all four images in Figure 7.6 show paved footpaths of various styles, and two images in Figure 7.7 show footpath and a boardwalk. It appears from these that a narrower path surrounded by a natural element such as grass or a

boardwalk style surrounded by natural elements are more highly preferred than broad tracts of paving with no natural elements.

Figure 7.6 Four images most frequently described as ‘Ugly/unattractive/uninviting’ by tourists



i14: ‘Ugly/unattractive/uninviting’ n=45



i10: ‘Ugly/unattractive/uninviting’ n=33



i15: ‘Ugly/unattractive/uninviting’ n=27



i9: ‘Ugly/unattractive/uninviting’ n=16

Figure 7.7 Four images most frequently described as ‘Pretty/beautiful’ by tourists



i5: ‘Pretty/beautiful’ n=25



i1: ‘Pretty/beautiful’ n=24



i6: ‘Pretty/beautiful’ n=15



i7: ‘Pretty/beautiful’ n=5

These results further support the notion that natural elements are a key determinant in the positive tourist experience of the tropical urban landscape. It also evidences again that the design norms of the urban designers are generally aligned with the preferences of the tourists.

7.3.5 Use

Use is described in Carmona’s (2014) Place-shaping continuum as one of the four main ways a place is shaped. As discussed in Section 2.3.2, this also links with concepts discussed in the tourism literature around experience co-creation, where the use or representation of a space by others influences the experience of the individual. Results from the tourist surveys indicated that a number of respondents considered how they and others might use a space in the images provided. Table 7.6 shows that the positive comments were mostly centered around active pursuits such as walking, playing and picnicking, or dining in cafes, whereas the negative comments were generally around how the space was used by others such as commercial uses, parking and busy-ness.

Table 7.6 Connections and disconnections: Use

Tourist preference (n=)	Urban design norm	Connection/ disconnection
Use/people		
Good		
Walking/active (38)	Walkable from place to place	Connection
	Connected	Connection
Bars/Restaurants/eat/drink (12)	Alfresco dining/busy-ness	Connection
BBQ (9)	Picnic/BBQ areas	Connection
Picnic (8)	Picnic/BBQ areas	Connection
Esplanade (7)	Esplanade	Connection
Shops (5)	Servicing tourist needs	Connection
Photo opportunity (4)		Disconnection
Resort/hotel (3)	Servicing tourist needs	Connection
Conversation/friends (2)		Disconnection
Pier (2)		Disconnection
Reading (2)		Disconnection
Market (2)	Markets	Connection
Parking (2)	Parking	Connection
Bad		
Shops/commercial/advertising (130)	Authentic/genuine	Connection
	Not too commercial	Connection
Cars/parking (101)	Pedestrian oriented	Connection
Empty/no people/barren/isolated (97)	Busy	Connection
Industrial (19)	Not too commercial	Connection
Too busy (9)		Disconnection
Vehicle proximity (5)	Pedestrian oriented	Connection
Noisy (5)		Disconnection
Too touristic (4)	Authentic/genuine	Connection
	Not too commercial	Connection

Most of the key points of disconnection shown in Table 7.6 involved a small number of tourist preferences that were not directly addressed by the urban design norms. These included finding places to read, take photos and have conversations with friends. The urban designers generally understood that being too commercial, too vehicle oriented or too 'touristy' was not what the tourists want from their experience of the tropical urban landscape, however there was no articulation around being too busy or too noisy. This is an interesting point from the perspective of city decision-makers generally, who are usually aiming to attract as many people to their city as they can and thus may be reluctant to recognise that too many people in their city attractions may detract from its appeal. Another interesting point is that the tourists described places as looking noisy, as they were

only ranking images, not witnessing the places in person. Figure 7.8 shows two images described as 'noisy'. These suggest that the word 'noisy' may relate to visual noise, rather than acoustic noise. Incidentally, these two images also received the highest number of 'too busy' comments as well.

Figure 7.8 Two of the images described as 'noisy' by tourists



These results show that the norms of the urban designers are mostly aligned with the preferences of tourists in terms of use of the tropical landscape, although they may lack some dialogue around the influence of busy-ness in terms of signage and the use of the space by other people. Carmona (2014) suggests that "Use gives meaning to space and decisively shapes the experience of it" (p. 22), and that "commercial decisions to a large extent dictate use" (p. 24). This suggests that commercial decisions have the power to give meaning to space, and in these examples, this seems to be likely. Again, a tension between the activities of the private realm and its influence on shaping the public realm are evident in this example.

7.3.6 Management

As with *use*, *management* is identified in Carmona's (2014) Place-shaping continuum as a key force in shaping a place. This corresponds with both the preferences of the tourists and the norms of urban designers as being key aspects of a positive experience of the tropical urban landscape. Table 7.7 shows that there are only four key issues mentioned within the management theme, and that tourists and urban designers alike considered these issues to be important. The key issues within management centered on keeping the city clean, with functional amenities and facilities, whilst managing the level of signage and other 'visual pollution' in the city.

Table 7.7 Connections and disconnections: Management

Tourist preference (n=)	Urban design norm	Connection/ disconnection
Management		
Good		
Clean (71)	Clean	Connection
Well managed/maintenance (2)	Working facilities and amenities	Connection
Bad		
Visual pollution/contamination (15)	Not too commercial	Connection
Dirty/not maintained (5)	Clean	Connection

Table 7.7 shows that cleanliness is the most frequently mentioned aspect of management from the tourists' perspective. As with a number of concepts discussed in this analysis, the concept of clean can be subjective. Figure 7.9 shows the top four images described by tourists as 'clean'. Each of these images has a clear paved footpath or road in the foreground with no vehicles and a small amount of signage or none. Although some of the less favoured images such as i14 and i15 also have clear paved paths in the foreground, those do not have any natural elements. None of the images showed any areas with an undue amount of rubbish or litter, so there is the possibility that the natural landscaped elements alongside the clear paths provide a cleaner 'feel' than those that are without natural elements.

Figure 7.9 Top four images described as 'clean' by tourists



i2: 'clean' n=15



i1: 'clean' n=14



i24: 'clean' n=11



i7: 'clean' n=8

7.3.7 Tropical Feel

Tropical feel has been identified throughout the analysis and results of this thesis as being important to both urban designers and tourists. Although Table 7.8 shows that there is a weak connection in terms of the use of the word 'paradise', Arnold (2000) argues that the concept of 'paradise' is linked closely with tropicality in the minds of those imagining the tropics. An explanation for the disparity in the use of these terms may be that whilst as residents the urban designers need not imagine the tropics, tourists (who are mostly on short trips from non-tropical regions) are more heavily influenced by their imaginings from afar, thus more likely to use 'paradise' as a descriptive term.

Table 7.8 Connections and disconnections: Tropical Feel

Tourist preference (n=)	Urban design norm	Connection/ disconnection
Tropical feel		
Good		
Tropical (88)	Tropical feel	Connection
Paradise (17)	Tropical feel	Weak connection
Bad		
Not tropical (2)	Tropical feel	Connection

The connection between tropicality and nature can be seen in Figure 7.10, which shows the four images most frequently described as tropical as predominantly natural scenes with trees and water views. I5 and i6 were also the top two images described by tourists as ‘paradise’. These results support the notion that ‘tropical feel’ is closely linked with an interface with nature. Additionally, the only images including constructions that were mentioned as ‘tropical’ multiple times by tourists were the images identified in Figure 7.5 as being most liked images including a construction. This further supports the notion that tropical feel is a preference for tourists in the tropical urban landscape.

Figure 7.10 Images most frequently mentioned by tourists as ‘tropical’



Another point of note with the images in Figure 7.10 is that only two of them contain palm trees. As discussed in Section 3.3.3, images were deliberately selected to represent both palm trees (seen in i5 and i7) and other vegetation such as the ‘swamp gums’ (Melaleucas) that Palm Cove is ironically famous for (shown in i8) and the Casuarinas and other non-palm trees along the Palm Cove foreshore (shown in i6). This indicates that palm trees are not a precondition of tropical feel, although i5 did get more ‘tropical’ descriptions so may indicate a stronger association with tropical imagery.

7.4 Tourist preferences in the tropical urban landscape

A key finding so far in this chapter is that there are few true disconnections between what urban designers in Cairns think tourists want from the tropical urban experience and what the tourist preferences actually are. The key areas of disconnection in this analysis appeared to be mostly derived from the perceptions of urban designers on the boundaries between public and private domains in the urban landscape, and a lack of dialogue on feel. The key areas of connection however were extensive. Underpinning these is a basic tenet of achieving ‘tropical feel’ through an interface with nature in the tropical urban landscape. This indicates the presence of a series of design norms in the tropical urban landscape within the interlinked themes of ‘interface with nature’, ‘feeling’, ‘design’, ‘aesthetic’, ‘use’ and ‘management’. These themes have some parallels with Carmona’s (2014) Place-shaping continuum: ‘design’, ‘space in use’ and ‘management’ are three of the four key shaping processes in the model. The fourth process in Carmona’s model is ‘development’ which will be discussed further in Section 7.6. Although all of the themes describe the normative characteristics of the tropical urban landscape, the themes of ‘nature’, ‘feeling’ and ‘aesthetic’ are purely outcome-focused, whilst ‘design’, ‘space in use’ and ‘management’ are outcomes resulting from specific shaping processes. To attempt to make sense of the complexity of these interlinked themes, *an anatomy of tourist preferences in the tropical urban landscape* is proposed, shown in Figure 7.11. This is not intended to be a model, but rather a graphic representation of the key elements of consideration in the complex series of relationships of urban design norms which have been identified as central to the shaping and experiencing of the tropical urban landscape.

Figure 7.11 An anatomy of tourist preferences in the tropical urban landscape

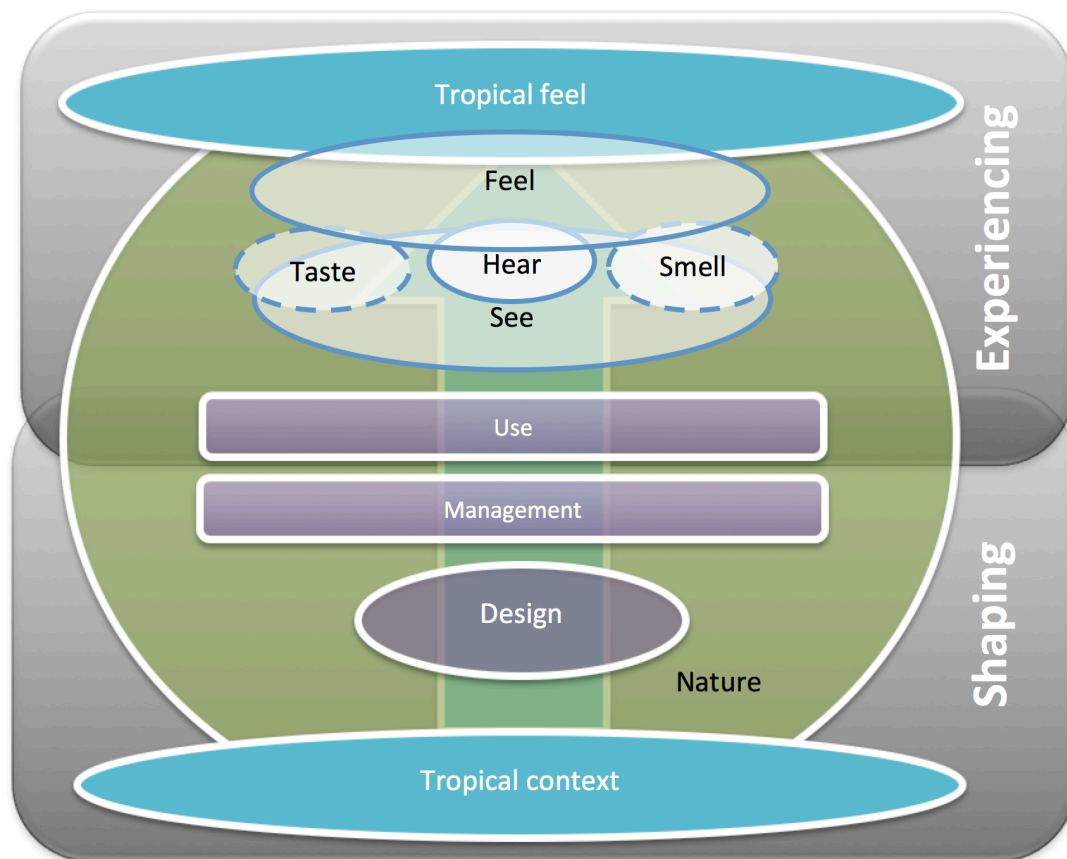


Figure 7.11 attempts to map how the tropical context forms the experience of the tropical urban landscape through a series of design norms. It shows the relationship between the *shaping* and *experiencing* forces and how these impact the creation of tropical feel. Underpinning and connecting tropical context and feel, it shows how natural elements are the most fundamental aspect of creating tropical feel, arising directly from the tropical context, shown as *nature*. *Nature* influences how the urban space is designed, shown as *design*. *Design* includes materials choice, construction style, authenticity and access to services, all of which influence how the urban environment is managed. This is shown as *management*, which is essentially cleanliness and maintenance (or lack of). *Use* is unique because it is both a shaping and experiencing force, since how a place is used shapes a place and also influences how it is experienced. All of the preceding elements influence how the tropical urban environment is experienced sensually. This was originally depicted as aesthetic, however since *noisy* was a category within the *feeling* theme in Table 6.6, and previous literature (such as Urry 1992) suggest that the experience of a place is multi-sensual within the context of a distinctive visual environment, *taste*, *hear* and *smell* were

couched to overlap *see* and *feeling*. Taste and smell are dashed inclusions because although the visual nature of this research precluded their inclusion in the responses, previous research indicates that they might be present if a different approach were used (Law 2005). *Feeling* was given the same prominence as *see*, because both *aesthetic* and *feeling* were key themes in the responses shown in Table 6.6. The prominence of *feeling* in the responses is a key finding of this research, because even though the research was approached in a distinctively visual method, it elicited a significant number of responses in the *feeling* theme (n=444) when compared with responses in the aesthetic theme (n=596). Note that this represents some multiple responses from respondents as it analyses the responses for the two most/least preferred images, not one per respondent.

7.5 Connections and disconnections in the tropical urban landscape: Palm Cove and Cairns

The previous section considered the connections and disconnections between the norms of the urban designers and the preferences of tourists. As section 6.6.2.2 noted however, although the people shaping the tropical urban landscape and the people experiencing it are mostly in agreement on what makes a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ place, there still exist a number of ‘bad’ places in high-use tourism areas, particularly in Cairns city centre. This section draws on the design norms for the tropical urban landscape represented in Figure 7.11 and considers these in the context of Cairns city and Palm Cove. Map 7.1 shows the location of Palm Cove relative to Cairns city.

Map 7.1 Location map - Cairns city and Palm Cove



Source: Google. Google Earth Images © 2015 Google, © 2015 Digital Globe, © 2015 CNES/Astrium, Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO

The differences in the urban landscape between the high tourist-use areas of Palm Cove and Cairns city were noted as a starting point in this research. All but one of the urban designer respondents identified Palm Cove as an example of successful urban design. As a result, images were taken from Palm Cove as well as from Cairns city to compare preferences on the tropical urban landscape. As identified in Chapter 6, only one of the top eight images rated by tourists was located in Cairns city centre, and the rest were in Palm Cove. Similarly, only one of the bottom ten images were in Palm Cove and the rest were in Cairns city centre. This may be partially to do with the selection of images; as the most popular and iconic attractions in Cairns, the Esplanade Lagoon swimming pool and Muddy's Playground were not included because they are already acknowledged as high value tourist attractions in the tropical urban landscape. It can be assumed based on use and the

Tripadvisor.com data represented in Section 6.5 that these images would have ranked highly, and therefore Cairns city centre may have received some more positive responses to images if they were included. This aside, there were a number of areas in the Cairns city centre that were mapped as high tourist use but with areas that were identified by tourists in the images as areas they disliked, whereas Palm Cove had one image (i18) with a result beneath the middle rating of '3' on the Likert scale, with an average rating at 2.99. Figure 7.12 shows that this image is predominantly of a building with few natural elements. Interestingly, the more dated and less contemporary hotels in Palm Cove with more landscaping such as i17 and i19 rated marginally higher than i18. These results further support the idea that natural elements are central to the tourist preferences in the tropical urban landscape.

Figure 7.12 Comparison of low rating images in Palm Cove



As discussed in Chapter 4, Palm Cove was originally slated for high-rise tourist development in the early 1980s, with a development approved for a multi-story hotel on the Esplanade. This was challenged by local architect and developer Leigh Ratcliffe, who in 1982 proposed the 'Palm Cove Village Strategy Plan'. This plan had the key elements of restricting traffic flows whilst maintaining access, protecting the natural vistas and landscape, resisting

homogeneity in design and keeping to a limited scale, using the ‘nothing taller than a palm tree’ rule of thumb historically applied in the area. The norms expressed in this document resemble the norms in the ‘world design language’ discussed in the literature review in Section 2.2.1.2. Loukaitou-Sideris (2012) observes that these norms do not seem to have found a foothold in design outcomes in cities, however Palm Cove is in many ways an exception to this. The guiding tenets of the Palm Cove Village Strategy Plan has informed subsequent local area plans within council planning schemes and maintained the original vision of a village feel. The research in this thesis shows that the original tenets of the Palm Cove Village Strategy Plan have essentially resulted in the outcome of ‘tropical feel’ in Palm Cove, which is acknowledged by tourists and urban designers as central to the tourist experience of the tropical urban landscape.

This raises a question around how, if the city decision-makers have shown an understanding and capacity to create tropical feel in Palm Cove, this is not achieved throughout the city environment in Cairns? Especially since the evidence in this research suggests that there are high tourist-use areas that are not liked by tourists? The reason for this is most likely to do with the differences in how those shaping and experiencing the tropical urban landscape perceive Palm Cove and Cairns city.

Firstly, those shaping the city may have a different perception of where the tourist ‘front stage’ (MacCannell 1973) begins and ends than the actual experience of the tourist. Usage data developed in this thesis indicates tourist usage of a number of places in the city centre, not just the focal points of the Esplanade Lagoon Swimming Pool, Muddy’s Playground and the Ports North Complex. This is possibly because of the draw of Cairns Central Shopping Centre, which is often accessed on foot from these key tourist areas and thus expands the tourist experience through the centre of the city. Cairns Central is a key retail area in Cairns and as such is viewed as an amenity for residents and may be a part of the ‘back stage’ in the minds of the urban designers and residents, even though 63.1% of respondents to the tourist survey indicated that they had visited Cairns Central. Palm Cove on the other hand has a smaller and more clearly defined tourist ‘front stage’ of the Esplanade, with businesses along this strip generally tourist-based. Although some accommodation is located further back from the Esplanade in Palm Cove, no attempt has been made to stretch the ‘front stage’ back to these places, but rather the tourist area is

clearly defined as one specific strip of businesses, beach and road, with a clear tourist focus.

Secondly, the scale of use and expectations of Cairns as a city and service centre may mean that tourists need to delve into the 'back stage' to meet their service needs. This indicates a complexity in the urban product of Cairns city whereas as a tourist village, Palm Cove is more straightforward in terms of both expectations and planning. This suggests that there is a difference between a tourist 'village' and a tourist 'city' - even a small tropical tourist city – in terms of achieving tropical feel. Vehicle hire businesses, shopping centres, medical facilities, transport hubs and post offices are all key aspects of the urban landscape that may be designed for locals but used by tourists in the city, and thus may be designed more for practicality than to achieve tropical feel.

Thirdly, whilst the needs of tourists are important in Cairns city, there are also competing needs. Cairns also acts as a service centre to the wider region of Cape York and other industries in the area such as agriculture, education and defense. An example of this can be seen in Map 6.1 in Section 6.5 showing Spence Street as the main path of access for tourists between the Esplanade Swimming Lagoon and Cairns Central. Although attempts have been made along this route to landscape and create uniform paved areas, the 'use' of the space as a commercial service area creates a 'back stage' feel for the tourist. Figure 7.13 shows i10, one of the lowest rated images in the survey, which is on Spence Street. It shows a pallet hire business with Cairns Central Shopping Centre in the background and paving in the foreground. This less-than-satisfactory outcome for the feel of the city is a product of the planning system in Cairns and existing local perceptions about the character of the city. Dictated by the Queensland Government, the planning system is based on maintaining private owners' rights to land use with little capacity for the effective strategic planning of the city. What this means is that if an area such as this is identified as an area that needs changing to improve the overall feel of the city, it is very difficult for the Cairns Regional Council to do so, both legally and in terms of local pressure to maintain the city as a service centre for their needs rather than as a 'tourist city'.

Figure 7.13 Commercial use in Spence St.



i10

Fourthly, in much the same way as it is difficult for the regional council to relocate an inappropriate land use away from the high tourist-use areas of the city, it is equally as difficult for the local council to influence the look and feel of the private realm. This has already been discussed in Section 7.3.3, where a disconnection was identified between what is perceived as within the influence of the urban designers and what is outside that influence. A difference between Palm Cove and Cairns city emerges here; whilst the businesses in Palm Cove are acutely aware of the destination brand and their reliance on the tourist dollar, not all of those in Cairns city are. Alex de Waal, CEO of Tourism Tropical North Queensland argues that many businesses in Cairns benefit indirectly from tourism, however they do not acknowledge the value of the industry to their businesses (Dalton 2015). As a 'tourist city', Cairns contains a wide range of businesses directly supported by tourism but also indirectly supported by tourism as a major contributor to the economy. As a 'tourist village', Palm Cove has a closer relationship with tourism as its supporting industry and is potentially more in tune with the needs and preferences of the tourists they rely on.

The research in this thesis has identified that a number of urban design elements in Palm Cove achieve what both tourists and urban designers classify as 'tropical feel', which has been identified by both groups as being important in the tourist experience of the tropical urban landscape. This thesis has also identified that the city experience is an important aspect of the tourist experience and suggests that if the quality of the tropical urban landscape were to improve, the tourist experience of the destination would also improve. The points above identify some reasons why Cairns city has not developed into a place with 'tropical feel' as Palm Cove has, however there exists some opportunity to improve the Cairns city product through the adoption of some of the key elements in *An anatomy of*

tourist preferences in the tropical urban landscape, shown in Figure 7.11. The next section discusses the deeper contextual issues of urban design process that may impede this development, however if these are overcome, there are a number of ways a 'tourist city' may learn from the tropical feel of a 'tourist village'.

'Learning' from another place, even if it is within the same local government area, raises questions around policy transference across contexts. Section 2.5.3 reviewed the literature on policy transference and identified gaps in the research around policy transference and the tropical context. In particular it discussed Carmona (2014) and Hall's (2003) similar arguments that an understanding of context and power relationships is central to the analysis of urban design and tourism and related this to Peck and Theodore's (2010) arguments about the power relationships in policy transference. Even at close range, this section has listed a number of key differences between the two contexts of Palm Cove and Cairns city that influence the way in which urban ideas and policies might be applied, however the elements of Figure 7.11 may be applicable in different ways. The following subsections briefly discuss some ways of applying these elements in the Cairns context as a 'tourist city'.

7.5.1 Interface with nature

Nature underpins all of the elements in Figure 7.11 because it has been identified in this research as the most fundamental aspect of creating tropical feel. The second most preferred image in the tourist survey was i1, a predominantly natural image taken from the Esplanade Boardwalk in Cairns, shown in Figure 7.14. Of course, this level of natural interface is difficult to achieve within the city centre where the less favoured images such as i10, i14 and i15 were taken, however there are a number of elements of interface with nature in the tourist comments that could influence the creation of tropical feel in the tropical urban landscape. These are:

1. *Preserving vistas of the natural environment through viewing corridors.* This has already been partially addressed by Cairns Regional Council through a highly political hillslopes overlay map in the *Cairns Plan* (Cairns Regional Council 2009), which is aimed at controlling development on the hills surrounding Cairns. The maintenance of viewing corridors within the city itself however has not been addressed in strategic plans or design guidelines.

2. *Integrating natural elements such as vegetation in the urban landscape.* Whilst acknowledged by urban designers and tourists as critical to topical feel, there are a number of other factors at play in the integration of landscaping and gardens in the city. Maintenance issues such as pruning, watering, wildlife (such as flying foxes), and minimising flying debris from trees in cyclones all consume council resources and are a significant expense for the city. These are also issues for private property owners who may wish to create gardens or green walls on their properties but lack the expertise or resources to install and maintain them.
3. *Creating a combination of 'hard' and 'soft' surfaces.* A key aspect of the urban designers and tourists' preferences centered on a combination of hard and soft surfaces in the tropical landscape. From the responses, a 'soft' surface defined as a natural surface such as grass, ground, ocean, beach, garden or even wood. A 'hard' surface is generally concrete, stone or paving. Whilst hard surfaces are essential for the upkeep and durability of an urban space, the combination of hard and soft surfaces seems to be a preference for tourists in the visual landscape. The integration of hard and soft surfaces is an integral part of the Cairns City in a Garden Masterplan (City of Cairns 2007) and the Cairns City Centre Masterplan (Cairns Regional Council & Architectus 2011), however it is not articulated in the *Cairns Plan* (Cairns Regional Council 2009) as a strategic urban design guideline.

Figure 7.14 Interface with nature achieved in Cairns



i1

7.5.2 Feeling

As discussed in Section 7.3.2, the evidence in this research shows a strong connection between natural elements in the tropical urban landscape and the level of positive or negative feeling associated with it. In addition to this, expressions of boredom, loneliness

and sadness in the landscape appear to be associated with scenes that include vast areas of construction, road or pavement that have little texture or detail. It is possible that the inclusion of natural elements in the landscape provide this texture and are thus part of the reason why they invoke positive feelings in the tourists. This is evidenced in Figure 7.15, which shows i24 in Cairns and i22 and i21 in Palm Cove described as friendly but without nature as a dominant element. The images show intricate, fine-grained built design using a variety of materials, but also show references to colonial heritage (i24 & i21) or a more primitive ‘hut’ style of structure (i22). This indicates the possibility that positive feelings can be invoked by the built landscape through interest and intricacy of design, use of a range of materials, and a reference to the built heritage of the area. *The Cairns Style Design Guide* (Cairns Regional Council 2010) refers to these elements, which are aspects of design, discussed in the next section.

Figure 7.15 Friendly without nature as dominant in Cairns



i24: 'fun/friendly' n=1



i22: 'fun/friendly' n=2



i21: 'fun/friendly' n=2

7.5.3 Design

The previous two sections have noted how interface with nature, intricacy in design, variation in materials, and a connection to the built heritage of the place tend to invoke positive feelings in the tourist experience of the tropical urban landscape. From a design

perspective, this provides a ‘tropical design’ brief to work towards achieving tropical feel in the city, which is in many ways encapsulated in the *Cairns Style Design Guide* (Cairns Regional Council 2010). Whilst the *Cairns Style Design Guide* encourages the use of natural materials, particularly the traditional elements of “timber and tin, it also suggests a balanced use of multiple types of materials to add intricacy to the overall effect of a building. This document is valuable in the creation of tropical feel in Cairns, however it is limited its non-legislative power and that it is aimed at architecture at the site scale without integration to a broader city scale. Section 7.6 discusses further some of the obstacles to achieving this within the reality of the urban design process in Cairns.

7.5.4 Aesthetic

As with a person’s face, the beauty of a place is not merely the sum of a group of attractive parts, but an arrangement of attractive elements in proportion to one another that is pleasing to the eye in its entirety. Although aesthetic is a difficult concept to quantify or legislate, there is clear evidence in this research that it is important to the tourist experience of the city. Also clear is what is considered beautiful or ugly, as discussed in Section 7.3.4, and the components that make up a beautiful place, identified in Figure 7.11. This research shows that aesthetic beauty is a precondition of tropical feel and that aesthetic ugliness invokes feelings of loneliness, sadness and boredom in the tropical urban landscape. Palm Cove was able to achieve tropical feel because of the *Palm Cove Village Strategy Plan* (Ratcliffe 1982) guiding the overall aesthetic of the place. A lack of strategic planning across the entire tourist ‘stage’ of the Cairns city centre has meant that the aesthetic qualities of the place have not been a guiding factor in the historical development of the city. Although the *City in a Garden Masterplan* (City of Cairns 2007) and the *Cairns City Centre Masterplan* (Cairns Regional Council & Architectus 2011) were both intended to address these issues, they have both been lacking in scope and funding.

7.5.5 Use & management

Section 7.3.5 identified that whilst active pursuits such as barbecuing, picnicking, walking, alfresco dining and photography were considered positive uses of the tropical urban landscape, commercial uses were considered to have a negative influence that commercial uses have on the tourist experience in the tropical urban landscape. In particular, the ‘visual noise’ created by too many signs or too much commercial activity seemed to counter the preferences for a fine grain and intricacy of design. Palm Cove has managed this with a

lower level of signage and a higher quality of graphic design. A strict and enforceable signage policy would assist Cairns city in eliminating a number of negative tourist experiences and contribute to the creation of tropical feel.

‘Visual noise’ is described in Section 7.3.6 as a management issue although it is also a use issue. There were very few other issues raised in Cairns about the other management issues of cleanliness and facilities, possibly because this is generally well managed in Cairns.

7.5.6 Tropical Feel in Cairns

The creation of tropical feel has been identified in this research as being relatively successful in Palm Cove and relatively unsuccessful in the Cairns city centre with the exception of the Esplanade precinct. This section has identified a number of ways in which those shaping Cairns city could adopt elements of practice in Palm Cove to create tropical feel and therefore improve the tourist experience of the city. As with the Palm Cove example, this would be best achieved through a comprehensive design strategy for the entire city centre including built environment and landscaping that is funded, legislated, supported and adhered to. This would include:

1. Actively preserved view corridors to the mountains and sea;
2. Increased levels of vegetation in the city;
3. Improved integration of ‘hard’ pavement and building surfaces and ‘soft’ landscaped natural surfaces;
4. Increased use of natural materials in the built environment;
5. A fine-grained, detailed design that avoids homogenous use of materials or hard surfaces;
6. Attention to scale and design quality for overall aesthetic beauty; and
7. Strict, enforceable guidelines on signage in the city.

This section has detailed some reasons why Palm Cove has developed with ‘tropical feel’ and Cairns city has not. The essence of these reasons centres around a number of context-specific issues. As discussed in Chapter 4, Cairns is a city that has been historically influenced by the power and polity of the capital cities that govern it, as well as the vagaries of fortune many destinations experience such as rising dollar values and changing tourist preferences. This lack of self-determinant power has resulted in a reluctance of businesses to acknowledge their reliance on tourism and for many city decision-makers to seek out ways to diversify the economy. To acknowledge Cairns as a ‘tourist city’, making planning

decisions favouring tourism over other industries (such as relocating the pallet business in Spence Street), is seen by the urban designers as fraught with danger, putting all of their 'golden eggs' in one basket. Of the urban designers interviewed, only three of the twenty acknowledged a need to plan Cairns specifically with tourists in mind, whereas the remainder believed that tourism is simply one of many industries in Cairns and should be a part of a comprehensive planning strategy. This reluctance to acknowledge and specifically plan for tourism in Cairns city has been consolidated by a lack of strategic capacity in planning and design in Cairns. As discussed in Section 5.2.3, even the *Cairns City Centre Masterplan*, a key tool aimed at improving the city experience for tourists and locals was designed by an architect from Brisbane with specific requirements detailed by the Brisbane-based government on public transport requirements. So not only do the city decision-makers lack the capacity to strategically plan at a high level, they also lack the power to do so. This highlights a central finding of this thesis: that the true disconnection in the urban design process lies not in a lack of understanding of tourist preferences on the part of urban designers, but rather a lack of capacity, resources or power on the part of the urban designers to actually shape outcomes in the city. The final section of this chapter discusses how these findings relate to Carmona's (2014) Place-shaping continuum.

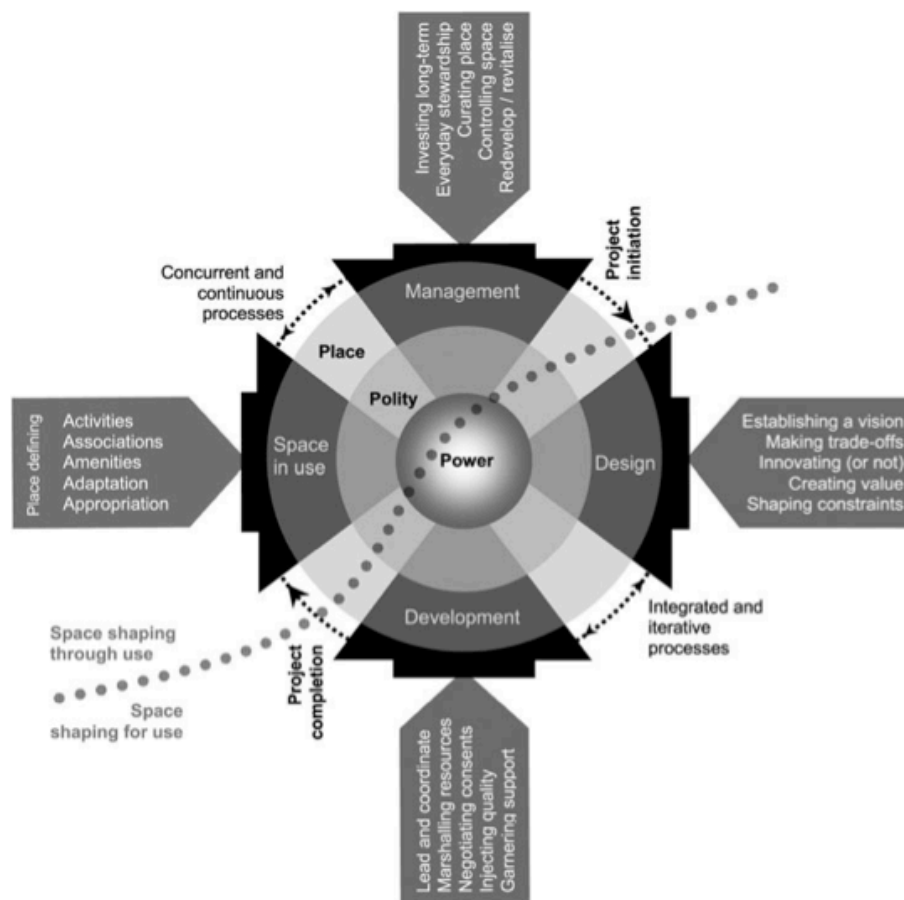
7.6 'Development' and shaping the tropical urban landscape in Cairns

This chapter has shown that although there exists little research on the needs of tourists as a key user group in Cairns, urban designers mostly understand their preferences and have an insight into what creates tropical feel. This research has also shown however that there are a number of busy tourist locations in Cairns city centre that are disliked by tourists, and this suggests a disconnect in the process of urban design. As discussed in the previous section, there are a number of reasons for this disconnect associated with the place-based modes of operation that have developed in Cairns through its history. These include a limited capacity for political and economic self-determination, a limited capacity for innovation, a susceptibility to environmental events such as cyclones, and an over-reliance on the surrounding natural environment to support a narrow economic base.

The discussion about Carmona's (2014) Place-shaping continuum in Section 2.2.1.3 of the literature review identified a gap in knowledge regarding how such a model developed in the UK might be applied in the context of a small tropical city. Given the comprehensive nature of the model, this discussion specifically critiqued the 'design' aspect of the

continuum and used this as a basis for further examination of the shaping of the tropical urban landscape. Although this was the stated focus of the research, the inductive nature of the research process has allowed a number of themes to emerge that upon reflection fit well into other aspects of the model. In re-examining the model, shown again in Figure 7.16, it can be seen that the themes of ‘management’ and ‘use’ fit clearly as two other main shaping forces in addition to ‘design’. This raises the question of whether the aspect of ‘development’ was also elicited through the analytical process of this thesis.

Figure 7.16 Carmona's (2014) Place-shaping continuum



Going back to Carmona’s original discussion about ‘development’ in the continuum, it becomes clear that not only is this a key aspect of the urban design process, in the case of Cairns it is the most influential. The studies in Carmona’s research covered a range of projects identified in Lang’s (2005) urban design typology; singular one-off projects, a phase within a larger masterplan, part of the incremental implementation of a long-term policy framework, and as infrastructure to fix future development. Although these varied in scale and style, Carmona identified five common sub-processes that are also evident in the processes in Cairns:

1. *Lead and coordinate.* Carmona identifies through his research the critical task of a leader or champion in progressing urban design projects that typically involve “a bewildering array of stakeholders” (p. 20). In the case of Cairns, this person was identified in Chapter 5 as being almost always a politician. Although implementation and delivery is often ‘officially’ lead by a professional person, the influence of politicians over these people is often strong. In this research five of the urban designers interviewed were elected officials, and all of them claimed a leadership role in the key planned urban design features of the city.
2. *Marshalling resources.* Resources are a key issue in a small tropical city like Cairns. Located more than 2000km from the state government, and with a small population, translating into lower voting capacity, the role of politicians as champions in the procurement of public funding is central. Attracting private investment is also politically influenced, with local members of parliament regularly participating in trade missions to key trade partners in nearby nations such as China, Papua New Guinea, and Indonesia. Additionally, major investors such as the Hong Kong-based Fung family considering the development of the Aquis resort (discussed in Section 4.3.5) are actively courted by civic leaders, mostly politicians, who make promises with little or no consultation with local designers that are then incorporated into a coordinated project approval overseen from Brisbane. The intertwined relationship between politicians and investors (public and private) forms a key power base that effectively governs the development of the city with little input from design professionals or user preferences.
3. *Negotiating consents.* Carmona identifies three critical instruments for public space schemes: Planning controls, highways orders, and listed building consents (for heritage buildings). These are similar to the consent negotiations for urban design projects in Cairns, however with the added legislative layer of environmental legislation relating to the surrounding World Heritage Areas. Many of the planning controls within these three categories are negotiable at a state level, although the environmental controls are often less negotiable because they are enacted through an international treaty or agreement at the federal level of government. In most

cases, projects deemed worthy by politicians - often those with significant financial investment - are advocated and generally are approved.

4. *Injecting quality.* Carmona draws on the arguments of Bentley (2004) to argue that the role of urban designers is essentially divided into masterplanners working on larger development projects and public space designers working on single projects within a larger plan or masterplan. Within these, the influence of the urban designers ranged from 'fundamental' to 'peripheral'. Section 5.2.2 discussed how the urban designers interviewed for this research generally saw themselves as a small part of a larger process that they work to influence unless they were politicians. Section 5.4.5 identified that most of the urban designers interviewed in this research considered it important to provide a higher quality of urban design than just the basic provisions required for investment. The provision of quality is often linked to financial resources. Whilst the urban designers identified the need to inject quality in the tropical urban landscape in Cairns, the realities of providing this within the city's limited resources has hamstrung their ability to provide these spaces consistently across the tourist 'stage'.
5. *Garnering support.* Carmona identifies that in London, there is a gap between the idealised version of community engagement discussed in text books and the reality of varying levels of enthusiasm and participation from the community and urban designers. This has often been the case in Cairns as well. In particular, it seems that the community has a sense of how political and financial power tends to influence the eventual outcome of a project more so than their perspective and input. This is with one key exception: if a project is so unpalatable to the community that it threatens votes, it is often quickly abandoned by the key political champions. Dredge (2010) notes how this occurred with a large project in Southeast Queensland, where the politicians misjudged the public interest and attempted to progress a major coordinated project, only to abandon it when it became clear that the governing party could lose an upcoming election.

7.7 Evaluating the urban design process with tourists in mind

This thesis has demonstrated a critical analysis of the process of urban design in a small, regional tropical city. Within this, the analysis has critiqued Carmona's (2014) Place-shaping

continuum, presented as an 'achievable norm' (Forsyth 2014) - or a realistic proposition - for how the process of urban design generally works. The literature review in Chapter 2 identified that this model has no capacity for evaluation though, raising the question: How do we know if the urban design process is working? Carmona has told us how he thinks the process works and this research has supported his model, however within this he has not asked whether the process is effective or not. Carmona (2014) observed the lack of evidential research in the literature on user needs or evaluation, a sentiment supported by others (Appleyard & Jacobs 1982; Vischer 2008). The first three research objectives of this thesis were to:

1. Analyse the place, polity and power contexts of urban design in a tropical city;
2. Critically analyse the urban design process in a tropical city from the perspective of those shaping it; and
3. Identify the connections and disconnections between how urban designers shape a tropical city and what tourists value in the tropical city experience.

This chapter and the preceding chapters have addressed these objectives. The findings from the analyses of these contribute to the final research objective, which is to:

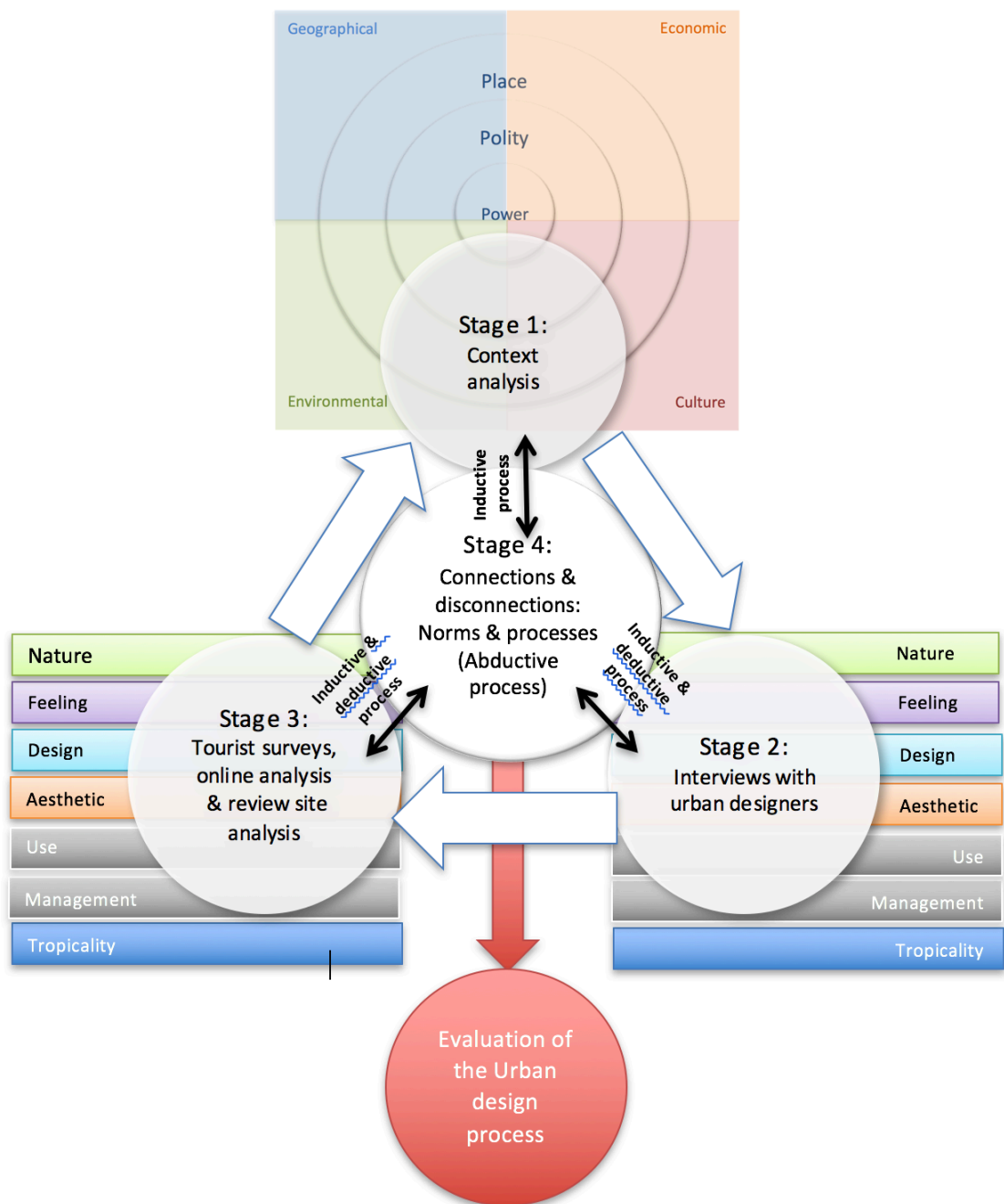
4. Propose a method of evaluating the urban design process in terms of its alignment with tourist preferences.

This section draws in the processes used in this thesis to address research objective 4. Cuthbert (2006) argues that any author 'falling into the trap' of proposing a new theory of urban design is doomed to failure: "while some may have generated quite admirable and credible models of various aspects of urban design, each has done so at the cost of vastly oversimplifying essential interactions between social relationships and design processes" (p. xi). These arguments resound with McKercher's (1999) criticisms of the reductionist approaches of models in the tourism literature and indicate yet again the wicked nature of urban design problems. Indeed, a number of authors have attempted to consider specific aspects of urban design such as through sustainability (Boyko et al. 2006), ecological design (Palazzo & Steiner 2011) or biophilic cities (Beatley & Newman 2013), but few have been game to comprehensively tackle the broader concepts of urban design. Cuthbert himself (2006) made a strong argument for urban design theory to be "redirected towards critical

theory and spatial political economy” (p. xi), proposing a move away from reductionist modeling to a more critical spatial approach. He cites a number of influential thinkers in critical and spatial political theory such as Soja, Castells, Appadurai and Foucault who have all influenced the way we examine the urban, arguing that this approach leaves the complex, wicked problems of urban more open to ‘better’ outcomes. With these arguments in mind, this thesis has attempted to draw on critical and spatial political theory through emphasising the critical examination of place, polity and power in context, and embrace the complexity and wickedness of the problems of urban and tourism through focusing on the ‘heart’ of the issues (Carmona et al. 2003). This thesis does not aim to propose a model of urban design but rather a method of evaluating urban design process.

Chapter 3 discussed Getz’ (1986) still relevant argument that tourism planning models are “often narrowly defined and lacking comprehensiveness” (p. 31) and that there remains a need for “the interactive process of research, modeling and evaluation” (p. 32) in tourism planning. This research objective contributes to filling this gap through proposing a method of evaluating the urban design process, in this case in terms of tourist preferences in the tropical urban landscape. Drawn from the research approach used in this thesis shown in Figure 3.3, Figure 7.17 shows a method of evaluating the urban design process. Dorst (2011) identifies that in design thinking, the abductive approach is critical to identifying the ‘core’ of the ‘how’ and ‘what’ required to produce results of value in urban problems. Figure 7.17 shows an abductive process that commences with Stage 1, a thematic context analysis using an inductive process. Key within this process is the identification of place-based modes of operation that develop over time in a city, generated from the place, polity and power contexts. In this research, this involved the production of a detailed historical narrative specifically focused on the trajectories of tourism and urban design since European settlement in 1876 (see Section 4.3). Drawing on key historical documents and texts, a critical reading of this narrative in terms of place, polity and power relationships indicated a number of place-based modes of operation in Cairns, and indicated some evidence of path dependence (Section 4.4). Key amongst these were an emphasis on political and financial power in decision making over professionals such as planners and architects, and a lack of self-determination as a city in light of direct policy intervention from distant centres of government.

Figure 7.17 A method of evaluating the urban design process in a tropical city in terms of its alignment with tourist preferences



The identification of place-based modes of operation through the context analysis provides the foundation for Stage 2, a qualitative, inductive analysis based on interviews with key urban designers who both self-consciously and un-self-consciously shape the urban landscape. Movement between the context analysis and the urban designer interviews is not necessarily a linear process, but rather a process of discovery through iterations of induction and deduction in an abductive process. A one-directional arrow illustrates a clear

progression from each stage to the next for clarity in procedure, however the interaction with the central analysis bubble in Stage 4 shows how the abductive process allows for iterations in the analysis. Key within Stage 2 is to identify both design and planning professionals and key power brokers in the city. There is an underpinning need for this stage to be informed by local decision makers or a researcher with a long history in the area involved with urban design to gain an insight into who the key players in the city are. In the case of this research, I was able to draw on a history of involvement in urban design and tourism in the city as a researcher and engage with people through my networks who were able to then direct me to others in a snowball recruitment method (described in Section 3.3.2). Such insight enabled a detailed and intuitive understanding of the place-based modes of operation to be inductively developed more efficiently and possibly more effectively than if an 'objective' researcher approached the research with positivist philosophies. There is no specific requirement for objectivity in this stage of the research, but rather an acknowledgement of the researcher's position as a critical analyst (Ateljevic et al. 2005) (as detailed in Section 3.2.5).

In this research, Stage 2 consolidated and clarified the place-based modes of operation identified in Stage 1. It also identified several design norms underpinning the way the tropical urban landscape is shaped in Cairns (detailed in Section 5.4.6). These design norms and supporting academic literature formed the basis for image selection and questions in the tourist survey. These were themed as *feel*, *nature*, *built environment* and *people*, which were developed further in Stage 3 through the tourist surveys to form the seven themes of urban design analysis in terms of shaping and experiencing as discussed earlier in this chapter: nature, feeling, design, aesthetic, use, management and tropicity.

The findings from Stages 1 and 2 provides the basis for Stage 3, illustrated through the two-directional arrows moving through Stage 4. Stage 4 is the central analysis stage, and thus each stage feeds into it and from it. Stage 3 is a quantitative and qualitative analysis of tourist preferences in the form of a survey, website analysis, and review website analysis. Again, this process is best informed by locals and/or review websites to provide an understanding of where high-use areas are in the city so usage patterns can be identified. In the Cairns example, these areas were known to the researcher but also informed by the urban designers interviewed and review website Tripadvisor.com (discussed in Section 6.5). The findings from this process contribute to an understanding of the interplay between

usage patterns and user preferences in the city, and informs the analysis (as discussed in Chapter 6). This research is focused on tourists as a key user group, however the process shown in Figure 7.17 could possibly apply to evaluating the urban design process in terms of resident preferences. This is discussed in Section 8.3.

In the final stage of the process, the findings from Stages 1-3 combine to contribute to Stage 4, an abductive assessment of the connections and disconnections in both the process of urban design and the design norms. Although this is shown as a finite stage as it needs to be completed last, the double ended arrows indicate that the analysis is ongoing throughout the research process. The process of analysis of the connections and disconnections between urban designers and tourists or other users provides an evaluation of the urban design process from a tourist perspective. In the Cairns example, the evaluation yielded a number of findings, most notably that the urban designers generally understand what tourists want, but that the process is lacking because of power relationships in three dimensions (Lukes 2005) borne from a number of place-based modes of operation in the city.

7.8 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the key connections and disconnections between what tourists like in the tropical urban landscape and the capacity of the urban design process to deliver these preferences. It discovered that although the urban designers seem to understand what tourists want from their experience of the tropical urban landscape, the deeper issues of context and processes of development as identified in Carmona's (2014) Place-shaping continuum influence their capacity to deliver these outcomes. In particular, the place-based modes of operation in Cairns that have developed over time have created a path dependence that privileges the political and financial power over user preferences and community engagement. This has meant that generally in Cairns, the key champions of projects are politicians and investors. In addition to this however, the areas of Cairns that have not attracted urban design 'projects' have been left without champions, leaders or resources to strategically plan in line with any overall urban design strategy for Cairns. This chapter has also proposed a method of evaluating the urban design process in terms of its alignment with tourist preferences in a small tropical city such as Cairns. The final chapter of this thesis provides a reflection of the research process, concluding the main arguments developed through these analyses and discusses their contributions to the literature.

Chapter 8

8 Conclusion: The process of urban design in the tropical landscape

8.1 Reflection

The start of this thesis detailed my ideal Cairns city experience, eating lunch with my family in an open air café in the heart of Cairns' busiest tourist precinct. I wondered then what the tourists around us thought of the place and whether the character of the urban landscape even mattered in the tropics considering most people are sold the destination on predominantly natural images. This research has shown that it does matter. Chapter 5 identified that although those shaping the tropical urban landscape have a number of philosophies on good tropical urban design and what components tourists value, a commonly held view amongst urban designers was that the 'anchor attraction' of the region is access to natural assets such as the Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics World Heritage Areas. This is supported by the findings from the *Cairns-Townsville Experience Development Strategy* (AEC Group 2011), which identifies these as 'hero experiences', and Cairns City as "little more than a dormitory and a sales desk" (p.vi). Although there is no question about the brand value of the Great Barrier Reef on the international stage (King, L. 2011), this research has highlighted that in line with Gospodini's (2002) philosophy of urban space morphology being "in itself and of itself a sightseeing, a tourist resource" (p. 932), the city of Cairns is also proving to be a key aspect of the tourist experience.

An increase in the importance of the urban landscape of Cairns to the tourist experience brings with it increased pressure to design a tropical city that is not just functional as a gateway to nature-based attractions, but also an attraction in its own right. The research in this thesis has highlighted a number of place-based modes of operation (Carmona 2014) that have historically limited those shaping the city in their capacity to innovate and change Cairns in a unique and original way. This has been previously identified as *path dependence* (Arthur 1989; David 1994; Gill & Williams 2011), where institutions and decision makers are 'locked in' to do what they have always done, rather than approach problems from a new or innovative perspective. This path dependence in the decision-making of Cairns has led to a limited capacity to adapt imported policies and ideas that genuinely reflect the local

context. Whereas cities such as London, New York or Singapore possess both the resources and innovative capacity to 'glocalise', or process ideas and policies from other places into something that suits their city uniquely, or in fact to innovate urban solutions themselves, this research has shown that a small tropical city such as Cairns can lack the power or capacity to make these adaptations themselves. Considered within Lukes' (2005) three dimensions of power, this lack of capacity is most likely a combination of local power brokers building overt power structures, but within a wider 'power jigsaw' of ideology, discourse and hegemony (Mowforth & Munt 2015) through decisions and non-decisions (Bachrach & Baratz 1970).

These observations raise questions around how a small tropical city reliant on tourism such as Cairns might improve their capacity to innovate or effectively adapt imported policies to their specific context. In commencing this research, my perception was that there needed to be more research conducted on the needs and preferences of tourists in the tropical urban landscape to better inform the urban design process. Whilst this remains true - since understanding the complexities of the needs of key users in the urban environment can never be a bad thing - what emerged from this research was only some disconnection between what urban designers think tourists want and what they actually want. A more evident disconnection emerged between the design norms of urban designers and what outcomes in the city they are able to achieve within the place, polity and power contexts of the city. In other words, it seems that the urban designers mostly understand what tourists want from the tropical city experience, but there are barriers to achieving these outcomes that are context-specific.

Although authors such as Hall (2003), Carmona (2014) and Peck and Theodore (2010) have argued that these dimensions of context are central to urban or tourism development, I originally saw the context analysis in Chapter 4 as perfunctory in the research process, as simply a stage-setting exercise to inform the reader of the specificities of Cairns as a place. Through this process however I discovered the centrality of the thematic context analysis to the urban design process in Cairns as a small tropical city. As with any city, the genesis of place-based modes of operation are highly individual, 'wicked' (Churchman 1967) and complex, yet still necessary to tackle if even a basic understanding of the city is to be gained. This thesis has made an attempt to undertake this type of context analysis to

underpin a more insightful evaluation of the urban design process than might otherwise occur.

One aspect of the research that did not yield any surprises was the importance of nature in the tropical urban landscape. Previous research has already identified the imagined tropics as 'paradisiacal' (Arnold 2000; Driver 2000) 'unchanged', 'unrestrained' and 'uncivilised' (Echtner & Prasad 2003) or 'pure' and 'unspoilt' (Stepan 2001), dominated by nature-based imagery of lush vegetation, palm trees, beaches and clear blue water evidenced in Google Image searches on 'tropics'. This was supported unequivocally in this research through both the design norms of the urban designers and preferences of the tourists. Not only was a connection to natural elements such as natural vistas and vegetation important, but also the use of natural-style building materials such as wood and stone. In addition, historically-referenced building styles such as Queenslanders (such as i21) and hut-like structures (such as i22) were preferred over modern styles. A more nuanced finding from this was that the use of hard-wearing, practical materials such as concrete or pavers was not actively disliked by tourists if complemented by natural elements such as vegetation or less refined materials such as wood or stone. These preferences are clearly linked to how the tropics are imagined as unspoilt natural places, and highlight a number of key issues for place shapers in tropical cities such as Cairns. In particular, how and whether to develop a sophisticated city within such a strong natural brand image? And how to differentiate the city as a destination within such an homogenous tropical brand? The centrality of nature in the tropical imagination is not without foundation; the rate of vegetation growth, high volumes of water and sun, and cyclonic storm events are not easily or wisely ignored. The tropical city does need to work within this natural tropical imagining, if not to please to tourists who visit then to embrace the reality of life with nature in the tropics.

From this reflection, there are three key empirical findings in this thesis:

1. The process of urban design is limited in its ability to align with tourist preferences less because of a disconnection in the perception of user needs and more because of contextual place-based modes of operation;
2. The tropical urban landscape is a key aspect of the tourist experience in Cairns; and
3. Interface with nature in the city is key to the tourist experience in the tropical urban landscape.

The next section details how the research in this thesis has addressed the research objectives that were developed from the literature in Chapter 2. This is followed by suggestions for further research that was outside of the scope of this thesis and then a conclusion.

8.2 Contributions of the research

Responding to a gap in the literature considering the relationship between urban design and tourism in the tropics, the aim of this thesis has been to critically examine the process of urban design in a tropical city in terms of its alignment with tourist preferences. Drawing on design thinking methods and using abductive reasoning as a ‘middle ground’ drawing on inductive and deductive reasoning within a pragmatic paradigm (Dorst 2011; Morgan, D. L. 2007) (see Section 1.3), the research in this thesis attempted to transcend traditional disciplinary approaches to consider the ‘heart’ (Carmona et al. 2003; Dorst 2011) of the ‘wicked’ (Churchman 1967; Rittel & Webber 1973) problems associated with shaping and experiencing urban space in a tropical city in a post-disciplinary study.

Although Section 1.1 in the introduction indicated that the tropical context is not the whole story nor the basis for analysis in this thesis, it observed that the pervasiveness of perceptions about the tropics (as identified by Arnold 2000; Driver & Martins 2010; Echtner & Prasad 2003) poses challenges to place shapers and marketers who are seeking to innovate and develop a more refined, complex and intricate tropical city than the natural, unrefined product (Echtner & Prasad 2003). This indicated a need to approach the research from a critical perspective as a wider consideration of the tropical context. At a broad scale, this thesis has contributed to a dearth of academic work generated from within the tropics about the relationship between urban design and tourism. Although many of the findings in this thesis are not specifically tropically related, the fact that the knowledge has been generated from within the tropical context is in itself important. As Driver and Martins (2010) observe:

This would enable the production of knowledge about the tropical world to be understood as a more differentiated, more uneven and ultimately more human process; and moreover it would give more agency, and autonomy, to the world being represented – understood not simply as a [tropical] screen but as a living space of encounter and exchange (p. 5).

Thus, the tropical context has formed a critical inclusion for analysis and provided an intrinsic value for the research because of its tropical location.

The literature analysis and review provided a conceptual framework of shaping, selling, experiencing and context that formed the basis of the thesis structure, and the four research objectives:

1. Analyse the place, polity and power contexts of urban design in a tropical city (addressed in Chapter 4);
2. Critically analyse the urban design process in a tropical city from the perspective of those shaping it (addressed in Chapter 5);
3. Identify the connections and disconnections between how urban designers shape a tropical city and what tourists value in the tropical city experience (addressed in Chapters 6 and 7); and
4. Propose a method of evaluating the urban design process in terms of its alignment with tourist preferences (addressed in Chapter 7).

The abductive, pragmatic methods used to address the first three objectives brought together a deep understanding of context and power processes in the urban design process in Cairns based in history and lived experience and an evaluation of the process from the perspective of tourists as a key group of users. An analysis of this process formulates the final research objective, which is discussed below in Section 0 of this chapter.

To achieve the aim of this research, these research objectives necessitated a range of methodological approaches such as qualitative in-depth interviews, quantitative surveys and content analysis, with a focus on the central problem of understanding the connections and disconnections between how urban designers shape the tropical urban landscape and how tourists experience it (described in Chapter 3). The key empirical findings that emerged to me as a researcher within this process are detailed in the reflection above. This section discusses how the findings and analysis arising from the research objectives of this thesis satisfy the aim of the thesis and contribute to the wider body of knowledge on theoretical, methodological and empirical levels.

8.2.1 Analysis of the place, polity and power contexts of urban design in a tropical city

The first objective of the research was to conduct a context analysis. The literature review in Chapter 2 identified that the wicked problems of urban design and tourism are context-specific, drawing on Carmona's (2014) Place-shaping continuum and Hall's (2003) discussions on politics and power to suggest that context is not only central to the analysis of urban design and tourism, but also that it is comprised of place-based modes of operation developed through the elements of place, polity and power. Drawing on the work of Lukes (2005), Bachrach and Baratz (1970), Mowforth and Munt (2015) and Hall (2007), power was conceptualised as three-dimensional, not limited to overt practices but also including the covert practices of non-decisions, hegemony, discourse and ideology. This was considered particularly relevant to the tropics given the colonial history of many tropical places (including Cairns). This was further discussed in terms of Peck and Theodore's (2010) arguments around urban policy mobility and the intrinsic role of power relationships in the transfer of ideas from one city to another. The review also revealed that despite its recognised importance in the literature generally, and in the tropical literature specifically, consideration of the tropical context in terms of urban design and tourism has received very little attention in the literature.

Drawing on these ideas, Chapter 4 presented an analysis of the place, polity and power contexts of Cairns through an historical narrative. Weighed down by the complexity of the interrelationships between the many elements of place, polity and power, the analysis identified a need to further organise the narrative according to geographic, economic, environmental and cultural themes, shown in Figure 4.2. Supported by the urban designers interviewed in Stage 2 of the research, this analysis exposed a number of historically entrenched place-based modes of operation in Cairns that underpin the processes of decision-making in the present and likely into the future, shown in Table 4.1. Cairns was identified through this analysis as a city that has been historically influenced by the three dimensions of power and the polity of the capital cities that govern it; has developed as a city more at the mercy of political, natural and economic events than as a city that generates or controls them; that a lack of self-determination within the region underpins many of the place-based modes of operation; and that policy generated from outside the region has been an key influence on the development of the city. These findings support contentions by Peck and Theodore (2010), Echtner and Prasad (2003) and Kravanja (2012) that policy transfer practices are influenced by historical legacies of power imbalance

within Lukes' (2005) third dimension of power and Mowforth and Munt's (2015) 'power jigsaw' of hegemony, ideology and discourse. It also underlines the critical importance of understanding place-based modes of operation in the analysis and practice of urban design and tourism management in a tropical city. Understanding place-based modes of operation and how they have developed over time can give an insight into how policies will be adapted as they are transferred from other places, and potentially how successful they will be.

From a methodological perspective, this thesis applied Carmona's (2014) three tiered structure of place, polity and power to a different context. From a theoretical perspective, this drew on other theories of context, power and policy transference (Hall 2007b; Peck & Theodore 2010) to identify the process of urban design as a key location of policy adaption and adoption. This research contributes to theoretical knowledge by showing that a context analysis of place, polity and power is a critical inclusion in any analysis of urban design process. Through operationalising a full context analysis, this research also developed a second dimension of context analysis to consider the geographic, environmental, economic and cultural aspects of place, polity and power, further enhancing the theory of context analysis.

Also from a methodological perspective, the thematic organisation of the context analysis provides a more practical way of applying it in research practice through better organising the context analysis into key themes. It provides a useful tool to not only consider the context of urban design in a city, but also the context of tourism policy, illustrating the value of a disciplined approach to context analysis in destination development research. Overall, this research objective contributed to the aim of the thesis through providing an understanding of the historical place-based modes of operation, and enabling a critical understanding of the urban design process specifically associated with designing for the tourist experience in the tropics. It illustrated the centrality of context in the urban design process, identifying that 'how things have always been done' has a significant influence on how things are done in the present and is critical to understanding how to plan for innovation in the future.

8.2.2 Critical analysis of the urban design process in a tropical city from the perspective of those shaping it

The second objective of the research was to critically analyse the urban design process from the perspective of those shaping the tropical urban landscape. This was considered in two main ways. First was an examination of how the urban design process works in Cairns (discussed here) and second was an identification of design norms (discussed in the next section). The literature review in Chapter 2 discussed Carmona's (2014) UK-based research attempts to model the urban design process (shown in Figure 2.3), but identified that there is yet to be an analysis of how the model might apply across different contexts. It drew on ideas from the previous research objective around policy and ideas mobility (Peck & Theodore 2010) and the centrality of place, polity and power contexts to urban design, planning and tourism research (Carmona 2014; Hall 2003).

Responding to this gap in the literature, Chapter 5 critically considered the urban design process in Cairns from the perspective of those shaping it. It drew on in-depth interviews with 20 urban designers to gain a deeper understanding of the philosophical and perceptual viewpoints of those shaping Cairns and specifically considered the design aspect of Carmona's (2014) place-shaping continuum: establishing a vision; making trade-offs; innovating (or not); creating value; and shaping constraints. A key finding of this analysis was that the urban designers themselves acknowledge a lack of power over outcomes and the process of urban design in general. The place-based modes of operation identified in the context analysis shown in Table 4.1 identify a process of urban design that is influenced in a measured way by a range of local urban designers, but is more generally driven by politicians who often have access to or influence on funding sources. Through identifying power imbalances in all three dimensions (Lukes 2005), it surmised that, particularly in a small tropical city, the context aspect of the model is central, rather than secondary to the analysis of the urban design process. Additionally, these processes led most respondents to consider themselves as having a role in the process although not necessarily in Carmona et al's (2003) neat typology of *knowing* and *unknowing* urban designers (shown in Table 5.1). This is supported by the development in Carmona's argument from 2003 to 2014 that there is little distinction between knowing and unknowing urban designers, especially in a small tropical city such as Cairns.

From a theoretical perspective, this analysis has enhanced the way in which we understand urban design as a process influenced more by power and place-based modes of operation (Carmona 2014) and less by the norms or ideals of the designers themselves. This supports the findings in the previous research objective. Methodologically, the research conducted in this thesis shows the value of in-depth conversations to elicit themes and concepts that were not originally evident to the researcher. These results show that purely quantitative or deductive methods would not have elicited the ‘buried’ ideological framings of place (Dovey 1999) - such as the power influences in the process - that ultimately shaped the key findings (discussed in Section 5.3.6). Another finding from the processes in this research was that although the original intent of the analysis was to examine ‘design’ as one specific aspect of Carmona’s (2014) Place-shaping continuum, the inductive aspects of the research elicited themes that addressed three of the four aspects of the circular continuum and further highlighted some of the ‘buried’ aspects of the urban design process that were not originally understood by me as a researcher. These findings, discussed in Section 7.6 further supports the applicability of Carmona’s (2014) model. Empirically, this thesis has articulated a number of place-based modes of operation that were previously known but not directly acknowledged by decision-makers in Cairns, such as the limitations on innovative capacity and influences of government policies developed from outside and imposed upon the region. Understanding these may assist in the development of a vocabulary around how things are done in the city. Overall, this research objective contributed to the aim of this thesis by providing a critical analysis of the embedded power relationships and processes within the production of urban space in a tropical city.

8.2.3 Identification of the connections and disconnections between how urban designers shape a tropical city and what tourists value in the tropical city experience

The third research objective introduced the tourist experience to the critical analysis of the urban design process in the tropical city. The findings that contributed to this research objective were discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, but directly addressed in Chapter 7. Drawing on arguments in the urban design literature that “user considerations are rare and unfamiliar” (Vischer 2008, p. 239) a gap was identified in the literature, not just in terms of analysing the urban design process in the tropical city, but in any city, in terms of its ability to assess and meet the needs of the users of the urban landscape. The essence of this research objective was to understand how and whether the process of urban design in a tropical city such as Cairns was meeting the needs of tourists as a key user group in the city.

This was approached by comparing the design norms of those shaping the tropical urban landscape and the preferences of the tourists who experience it, responding to Ateljević's (2000) argument that the production and consumption of urban space should be considered together.

In terms of shaping the tropical urban landscape, the literature review in Chapter 2 identified how norms have developed through a 'world design language' (Appleyard & Jacobs 1982) of what the urban landscape *should be*. It discussed how this normative approach has often meant that the nature of knowledge produced to support urban designers is inextricably linked to the underpinning philosophies of the designers. This suggests that there is a need to critically analyse the perspectives and philosophies of designers and the context within which they work if we are to truly understand the design process (Biddulph 2012). The analysis of the context and processes was addressed through the previous research objectives and provided the basis for an analysis of the design norms of the urban designers. These norms were identified through an analysis of the interviews with the urban designers, discussed in Chapter 5. Chapter 5 established that despite the diversity of perspectives amongst the urban designers, there exists a series of agreed on design norms in shaping the tropical urban landscape for tourists (Table 5.2 p. 197), although these are mostly founded within personal encounters and preferences. The key norms that emerged through the inductive analysis fell within the themes of feeling, nature, built environment and people.

In terms of experiencing the tropical urban landscape, the review in Chapter 2 also identified that whilst previous research examined general preferences in a range of destinations (such as Alegre & Garau 2010; Elands & Lengkeek 2012; Murphy, P., Pritchard & Smith 2000), little research has specifically considered tourist preferences in the tropical urban landscape. A number of gaps in the literature specifically relating to tourist preferences in the tropical urban landscape were addressed through this research. Firstly, research from Europe shows that urban design can be used as a tourist resource (Gospodini 2001, 2002; Mansfield 2004), although there has been no analysis of whether this is the case in the topics other than to suggest that poor urban design can have a negative effect on the tourist experience (Huybers & Bennett 2000). This thesis has addressed this gap by showing that although the attractions of the Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics World Heritage Areas underpin the tourism industry in Cairns, city-based public space attractions

are valued more highly by some tourists. Secondly, the literature also suggests that the development of the tropical destination product is potentially limited and in some cases threatened by urban development and expansion of other industries (Huybers & Bennett 2000; Ross 1991). This research supports this argument, showing a clear lack of visual preference for areas in the city that show competing uses such as car parking, commercial and industrial premises, such as seen in images i14, i10 and i15. Thirdly, observations in the literature suggest that interaction with the natural environment may be at the heart of authenticity in the tropical urban landscape (Echtner & Prasad 2003), however there exists a gap in understanding whether this is the case and what other elements influence the tourist experience. This research contributes to this conversation by showing a clear preference for nature and natural elements and a relationship between the description of 'tropical' or 'paradise' and natural elements in images of the tropical urban landscape. Drawing from the identification of tropical feel as a theme in the design norms identified by the urban designers in Chapter 5, 60.1% of tourists also identified *tropical feel* as important in their experience of the tropical urban landscape. Chapter 6. Here, it was identified that tourist preferences of the tropical urban landscape can be themed into nature, aesthetic, management, feel, design, tropicality and use.

The findings and analysis in Chapters 5 and 6 formed the basis of the analysis in Chapter 7, which explored the key connections and disconnections between what tourists like in the tropical urban landscape and the capacity of the urban design process to deliver these preferences. As discussed in the reflection above, it discovered that although the urban designers seem to understand what tourists want from their experience of the tropical urban landscape, the deeper issues of context and processes of development as identified in Carmona's (2014) Place-shaping continuum influence their capacity to deliver these outcomes. In particular, the place-based modes of operation in Cairns that have developed over time have created a path dependence that privileges the political and financial power over user preferences and community engagement. This has meant that generally in Cairns, the key champions of projects are politicians and investors. This supports research by McNeill (2008, 2013) who examined the role of mayors and their networks in decision making in cities. In addition to this however, the areas of Cairns that have not attracted urban design 'projects' have been left without champions, leaders or resources to strategically plan in line with any overall urban design strategy for Cairns.

From a theoretical perspective, this thesis has contributed to the tourism planning literature by introducing the assessment of tourist experience as a key indicator of tourism planning effectiveness (cf. Gunn 2014; Inskeep 1991), and the urban design literature as a way of gauging the effectiveness of the urban design process (such as that described by Carmona 2014), and tourism geography literature by considering not just how destinations develop, but why they develop and what underlying forces contribute to their development (cf. Butler 2006). This thesis has also been one of the first studies to explore what tourists value in the specific context of a tropical city. It extends previous research by Huybers and Bennett (2000) to suggest that not only does nature play a central role in tourist preferences in the tropics generally, but also specifically in the tropical city.

From a methodological perspective, this research objective showed how the pragmatic, abductive approach (Dorst 2011; Morgan, D. L. 2007) to research across a range of methods can yield an effective analysis of 'wicked' urban problems (Rittel & Webber 1973) by avoiding distinctions and definitions of exactly how or where things begin and end and focusing on the 'core' or 'heart' of the problem (Carmona et al. 2003; Dorst 2011). For example, rather than become bogged down in the exact distinctions of where the concept of tropical feel might begin or end, this thesis has focused on the core values of tropical feel as a starting point for analysis. This does not mean that such distinctions are not important, but are not critical in considering the central question of where urban design norms and tourist preferences connect or disconnect. This provides a basis for further research. This thesis has also contributed to how we understand tourists' experiences in tropical cities compared with tourist experiences in cities generally (such as Urry 1999), and the value of the city product in tropical destinations compared with studies in Europe (such as Gospodini 2001; Gospodini 2002), and extended our understanding of how user needs are assessed by urban designers in lieu of research, building on Vischer's (2008) ideas of a user-centred theory of the built environment.

Empirically, this research has identified a small number of disconnects between what urban designers think tourists want and what they actually want in the tropical urban landscape, but also provided a number of key disconnects in process that are rooted in power and path dependence, discussed in Chapter 7. Overall, this research objective has contributed to the aim of the thesis by providing an evaluation of how well the urban design process meets the needs of tourists in a tropical city such as Cairns, concluding that whilst the

shapers essentially know what tourists want, the processes are not always able to deliver the desired outcomes.

8.2.4 A method of evaluating the urban design process in terms of its alignment with tourist preferences

The fourth research objective was to draw on the methods used to evaluate the urban process used in this thesis to propose a method that may be applicable in other places. Discussed in Section 7.7, Figure 7.17 responded to calls by Cuthbert (2006) to draw on critical and spatial political theory through emphasising the critical examination of place, polity and power in context, and embrace the complexity and wickedness of the problems of urban (Rittel & Webber 1973) and tourism (McKercher 1999) through focusing on the 'heart' or 'core' of the issues (Carmona et al. 2003; Dorst 2011). The literature in Chapter 2 and analysis of Carmona's (2014) model of urban design process in Chapter 5 identified a gap in the literature in the evaluation of the urban design process. This thesis has not sought to propose a model of urban design but rather a method of evaluating urban design process in terms of its alignment with tourist preferences. This is the major theoretical contribution of the thesis, and has contributed to filling this gap.

Figure 7.17 encapsulates the key aspects of evaluating the urban design process in a tropical city based on the findings of this research. The themes of nature, feeling, design, aesthetic, use, management and tropicity have been shown in this research to be central in the consideration of the tropical urban landscape from the perspective of those shaping and experiencing it, however in a different context there may be different considerations that may emerge from the context analysis. In particular, the term 'tropicality' could potentially be substituted with a number of other regionally-specific terms that attract critical consideration. For example, 'peripherality', 'arcticity' or 'asianity' may also equally fit the method of evaluating the urban design process. In this sense, 'tropicality' may be able to be replaced with 'regionality' in other contexts.

In an operational sense, this method of evaluating the urban design process in a tropical city could enable researchers or planning and design practitioners to assess not only the connections and disconnections between urban design norms and tourist preferences of the outcomes in the city, but also to respond to Dovey (1999) to reveal 'buried' ideological framings and Maitland and Smith (2009) to "unpick the philosophies embedded in urban design" (p. 186). From a tourism perspective, this method of evaluation of the urban design

process elevates the need for cities to engage more effectively with users of the urban landscape to better meet their needs. A measure of urban design evaluation based on how well the urban landscape meets the needs of tourists as a specific user group that contributes measurably to the economy could potentially provide tourism businesses and agencies with a planning-based dialogue to engage with city decision makers. In a tropical city such as Cairns, where the tourism dollar is critical to the economy but the product relies on natural resources lacking brand distinction and potentially facing a number of risks such as climate events and pollution, there is potential for the tropical urban landscape to develop as an attraction in its own right. This method of evaluation could assist in this process.

8.3 Further research

The research in this thesis has specifically focused on the research aim and objectives identified through the literature review in Chapter 2. Through the research process however, a number of other potential research questions emerged that were outside of the scope of this thesis. This section details some key areas for potential future research.

1. *Expand the method of evaluation to explore all user needs rather than specifically tourists.* Vischer (2008) previously identified the need to develop a more user-centred theory of the built environment and in response to this, the research in this thesis has considered urban tropical feel from the perspective of tourists as a specific group of users. Whilst this is valuable in terms of assessing the effectiveness of the urban design process in addressing the needs of tourists, it would be useful in future research to consider whether residents have similar values in their experiences. This would also contribute to a greater understanding of the role of urban design in the host-tourist relationship, and enable the consideration of the importance tourism as an industry plays in the provision of quality urban design in the tropical urban landscape for residents. Additionally, those tourists not accessed in this study because of a possible lack of engagement with the city (ie. Those who 'stay away' because they don't like the city) may also make a valuable contribution to understanding tourist preferences in the tropical urban landscape.
2. *Gain a deeper understanding of the specificities of preference in the tropical urban landscape.* The breadth of this research at times precluded a deeper analysis of the

data gathered from the tourists and urban designers. There was the capacity in the data to draw further inferences on gendered or cultural interpretations of space in the tropical city building on previous city-based work by Urry (1995, 1999), however this did not directly contribute to the research aim. The growth of the Chinese outbound tourist market in particular led a number of urban designers in this research to speculate on Chinese tourist preferences in the city, indicating a further need to understand the preferences of this burgeoning market not just for Cairns, but for all destinations. Complementing this need to be a deeper analysis of the decision-making and cost-benefit analysis processes engaged in by destinations seeking to develop to accommodate such a potentially voluminous market.

4. *Expand the analysis of the urban design process to other contexts to assess the validity of the evaluation process proposed in Figure 7.17.* This research has drawn extensively from Carmona's (2014) place-shaping continuum to develop an evaluation process based on the case study of Cairns, acknowledging the significant influence of the historical place-based modes of operation on how the urban design process works. It would be valuable to apply the principles of analysis detailed in this thesis across other contexts, tropical or not, to analyse the validity and potential variations of Figure 7.17.
5. *Further examine the role of nature in the urban experience generally.* This research has built on suggestions made by Huybers & Bennett (2000) to show unequivocally that nature and natural elements play a key role in the tourist experience of the tropical urban landscape, but has identified that this could be linked to the outsiders' imagination of what the tropics looks and feels like, as suggested by Kravanja (2012) and Echtner & Prasad (2003). Further research on residents' preferences of nature in the tropical city, tourists' preferences for nature in a non-tropical city, and residents' preferences for nature in a non-tropical city are all key areas for potential research that also have a sustainability impetus to consider.
6. *Further development of tracking studies in the urban landscape.* This research drew on examples of tracking studies in Hong Kong using GIS and travel diaries (McKercher et al. 2011; Shoval et al. 2011) and this research drew on a unique, map-based survey technique that elicited a relatively low response rate. McKercher

et al. (2011) encountered issues of their own around the privacy requirements of study participants in an electronic tracking survey. Further research potentially using 'ping' technology to track unique mobile phone signals throughout the city may provide valuable data on *how* tourists use the city, but further research is still required to better understand *why* they use the city.

7. *Expand the method of evaluation of the urban design process shown in Figure 7.17 to other user groups or to measure changing processes over time.* This research proposed a method of evaluating the urban design process from the perspective of tourists as a specific user group. There exists the potential to expand the analysis of the process of urban design to consider how it might meet the needs of other specific user groups such as the education, health or defence communities. Additionally, the method could be expanded to consider the impacts on the urban design process of innovations and disruptions in the future such as the introduction of different transport systems or technologies.

8.4 Conclusion

This thesis has critically examined the process of urban design in a tropical city. It has done this through critically analysing the context in terms of place, polity and power (Carmona 2014, Hall 2003) to identify a series of specific place-based modes of operation particular to the tropical city of Cairns. Using these modes of operation as a basis, it has critically analysed the process of urban design and identified a series of design norms in the 'design language' (Appleyard & Jacobs 1982) of urban designers in Cairns. Drawing from these norms, it has critically analysed the preferences of tourists as a key user group in Cairns to assist in the identification of connections and disconnections between urban design norms and tourist preferences. Responding to Vischer's (2008) argument that "user considerations are rare and unfamiliar" (p 239), this thesis used the analysis of connections and disconnections between shapers and users as a basis for the critical evaluation of the urban design process. This evaluation indicated that the design norms of urban designers in Cairns are generally aligned to the preferences of tourists despite there being a lack of research or analysis of user needs.

The literature review in Chapter 2 noted that the tourism planning literature has customarily concerned itself with the spatial arrangement of destinations and attractions

(Dredge 1999; Gunn 1988b), however few have engaged with debates around the relative value of these attractions and the power structures that underpin the attribution of this value (with the notable exceptions of Hall 2003, 2008, Hall & Tucker (2004) and Dredge 2010). This thesis has made a contribution to the urban design, planning and tourism planning literature through an in-depth assessment of the urban design process in a tropical city reliant on tourism. It has exposed a number of place-based modes of operation developed from an historical context of place, polity and power, and considered how these influence the shaping and experiencing of the tropical urban landscape, linking to Lefebvre's (1991) original ideas of the production and consumption of urban space. Additionally, although this thesis set out to engage specifically with the design aspect of the Place-shaping continuum proposed by Carmona (2014), the results that emerged showed that the main gaps in the urban design process in Cairns were most easily understood through the model in its entirety.

The evaluation identified that there is a disconnect in delivery of urban design outcomes due to a lack of power mandate or ownership of the urban design process for urban designers. This has meant that politicians yielding the most power and access to funding are usually project champions in the city, and decisions are regularly made for political or historical reasons rather than on the expertise of designers. This has led to a city with a number of high-use areas with an urban form that is actively disliked by tourists, coexisting with Palm Cove, a local tourist 'village' that achieves tropical feel, whose urban form is rated highly by tourists. This shows that strong strategic planning and leadership can achieve tropical feel and poses a challenge to decision makers in Cairns to critically consider their power networks and the true implications of these. Overall, this thesis has made a contribution to the understanding of the complex, 'wicked' problem (Rittel & Webber 1973) of planning for tourism in a city that, although heavily reliant on tourism, rejects the notion of being a 'tourist city'. I hope it has given a vocabulary to decision-makers to think about how 'what they have always done' and the influence of political and financial power, influences their actions, innovation, policy, and ultimately the shape of the city.

9 References

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10 Appendices

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Appendix 2: Urban designer interview information sheet

Information sheet - Interviews

PROJECT TITLE: **Places with personality: Urban design in the tropical tourism landscape**

You are invited to take part in a research project about what the people who create tropical places think is important and what the people who use tropical places think is important, particularly tourists. The study is being conducted by **Allison Anderson** and will contribute to a **PhD** at James Cook University.

If you agree to be involved in the study, you will be invited to be interviewed. The interview, with your consent, will be audio-taped, and should only take approximately 30 minutes of your time. The interview will be conducted at a venue of your choice. There is also a questionnaire that you may complete, which asks you about your relationship with urban design, the tropics and place. The questionnaire should only take 10 minutes to complete.

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary and you can stop taking part in the study at any time without explanation or prejudice. You may also withdraw any unprocessed data from the study.

If you know of others that might be interested in this study, can you please pass on this information sheet to them so they may contact me to volunteer for the study.

Your responses and contact details will be strictly confidential. The data from the study will be used in research publications and reports. You will not be identified in any way in these publications.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact – **Allison Anderson or Lisa Law**

Principal Investigator:
Allison Anderson
School of Earth Sciences
James Cook University

Supervisor:
Lisa Law
School of Earth Sciences
James Cook University

Email: Allison.Anderson@jcu.edu.au

Email: Lisa.Law@jcu.edu.au

If you have any concerns regarding the ethical conduct of the study, please contact:
Human Ethics, Research Office
James Cook University, Townsville, Qld, 4811
Phone: (07) 4781 5011 (ethics@jcu.edu.au)

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Appendix 4: Questions for urban designers

Places with personality: Urban design in the tropical tourism landscape



Semi-structured interview questions

1. **Name:** _____
2. **Organisation:** _____
3. **Role:** _____
4. **Location:** _____
5. **Years involved in your current industry:** _____
6. **Years working in/on jobs in Cairns:** _____
7. **What is urban design to you?**

8. **What do you think makes good tropical urban design?**

9. **Can you name some key areas with successful urban design in the Cairns Region, and some key unsuccessful areas? What do you think makes this so?**

Successful: _____

Unsuccessful: _____

10. **What do you think tourists want from the urban design of a tropical city such as Cairns?**

11. **Do you have a role in providing this?**

11a. If not, who does?

11b. If so, what is your role?

12. **Do you consider that you fit within one or more of these categories of urban designer:**

- ☐ Producer
☐ Regulator
☐ User

12a. If not, what category would you place yourself in?

13. **Have you ever conducted or used research on what tourists want or need in the Cairns urban experience?**

- ☐ No
☐ Yes

13.a If so, what?

14. **Research shows that engaging with locals is critical to the experience of tourists. Do you think planning needs to be done specifically for tourism, or as a comprehensive plan for all?**

- ☐ Tourism specific
☐ Comprehensive

15. **Do you think the Cairns Region should have tourist precincts?**

☐ No

15a. If not, why not? _____

☐ Yes

15b. If so, where? _____

15c. What should they look like? _____

16. **Palm Cove & Port Douglas are key tourism destinations within the Cairns region. Do you think their urban design is effective?**

☐ No

16a. If not, what would you change? _____

☐ Yes

16b. If so, what are their best attributes? _____

17. **Where would you place your own approach to urban design quality on this continuum?**

Provide the minimum necessary to accommodate use or secure investment.

Provide the best quality for optimum use and sustainable construction practices.



Appendix 5: Tourist survey information sheet

Information sheet - Surveys

PROJECT TITLE: **Paradise with personality: Urban design in the tropical tourism landscape**

You are invited to take part in a research project about what the people who create tropical places think is important and what the people who use tropical places think is important, particularly tourists. The study is being conducted by **Allison Anderson** and will contribute to a **PhD**. at James Cook University.

If you agree to be involved in the study, you will be invited to complete a survey, and should only take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Completion of the questionnaire indicates your consent for the information to be used in this project.

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary and you can stop taking part in the study at any time without explanation or prejudice.

Your responses will be strictly anonymous. The data from the study will be used in research publications and reports. You will not be identified in any way in these publications.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact – **Allison Anderson or Lisa Law**

Principal Investigator:
Allison Anderson
School of Earth Sciences
James Cook University

Supervisor:
Lisa Law
School of Earth Sciences
James Cook University

Email: Allison.Anderson@jcu.edu.au

Email: Lisa.Law@jcu.edu.au

If you have any concerns regarding the ethical conduct of the study, please contact:
Human Ethics, Research Office
James Cook University, Townsville, Qld, 4811
Phone: (07) 4781 5011 (ethics@jcu.edu.au)

Appendix 6: Tourist survey procedure

Survey procedure

City User Survey October – November 2013

Allison Anderson

Ph 0409334223

Email Allison.Anderson@jcu.edu.au

Before departing

Let me know where you will be surveying so I can ensure no double ups, and register you on Field Trip Tracker.

Getting there

If travelling in your own vehicle, obey the road rules, drive to the conditions and be safe. It is not worth the volume of paperwork for you or for me if you have a crash whilst on university time!

Locations

We have permits for:

- The Esplanade (except within 100m of the Lagoon)
- City Place
- Reef Fleet Terminal
- Cairns Botanical Gardens
- Palm Cove Beach
- Port Douglas Beach

Best to survey these places at their busy times to maximize survey returns and to stay safe.

Equipment

Wear sensible shoes, supplied JCU shirt, sunscreen and insect repellent and a hat if out in the sun. Take water, keep hydrated.

Sampling

We are convenience sampling tourists in high tourist usage areas. We select people only sitting down and not in deep conversation. We don't want anyone who seems like they're in a hurry or who might rush to do it, but people who will consider the answers.

Script

"Hello, I'm from the university here in Cairns. We're conducting a survey of tourists, and I'm wondering if you are a tourist if you would mind filling one in for me?" Or similar.

If yes – hand the survey folder and a lolly.

If no – "ok, no worries." Or similar

Collection

Collect completed surveys from the respondents and hand to me with a record of the date, approximate time and location of the batch so I can record it.

In event of aggression or stress

Move yourself away from the situation. If required, call me on 0409334223 if you need to talk about it.

Upon return

Let me know with a text or email when you return safely from surveying.

Appendix 7: User survey

PLEASE MARK YOUR RESPONSES LIKE THIS ➔ ●

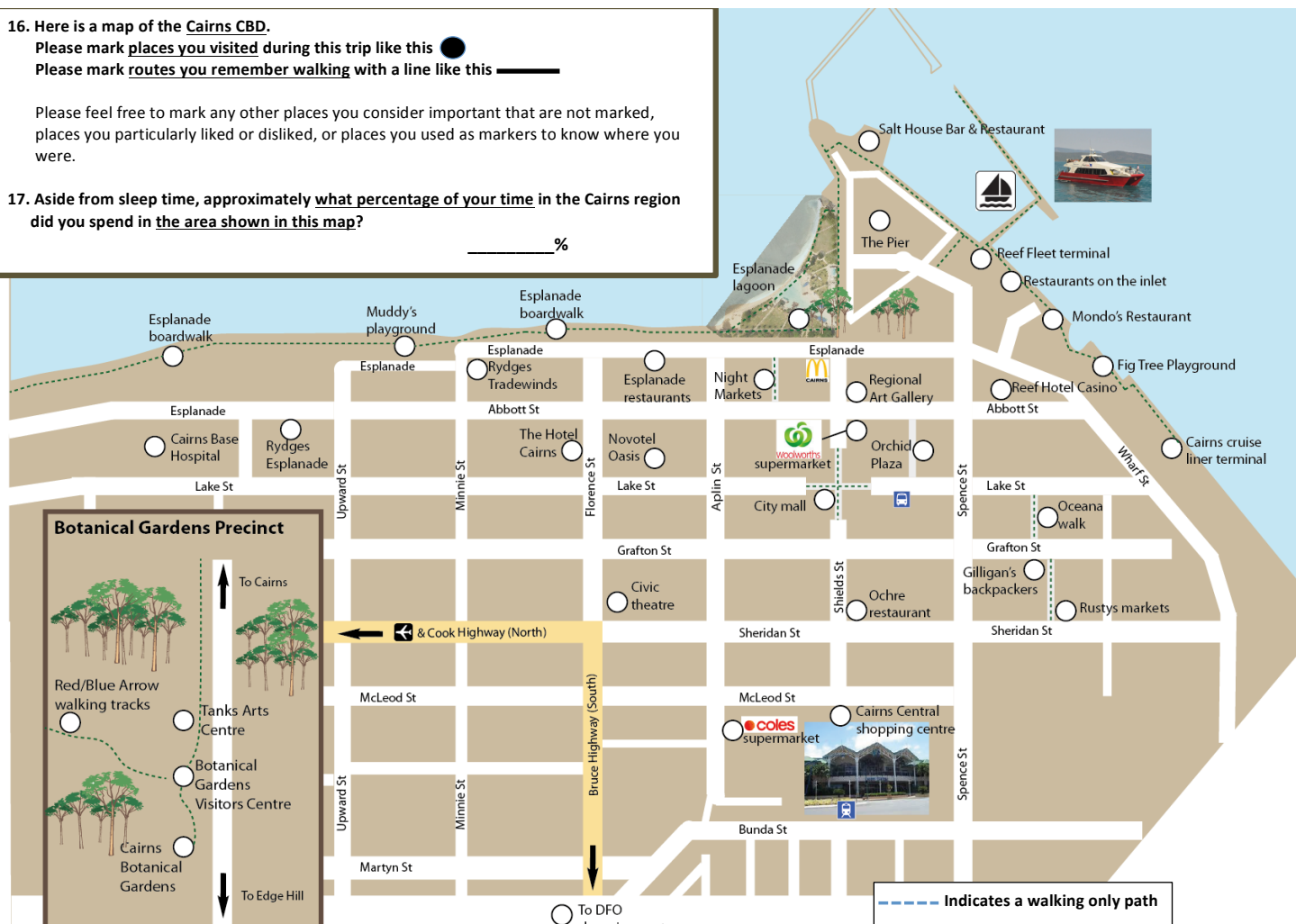
1. Are **you**: ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. Where do you usually **live**? Australia (postcode) _____ Overseas (country) _____
3. Please indicate the **year** you were **born**: 19 _____
4. How would you best describe your **occupation**: (Please choose one only)
 - ☐ Self-employed ☐ Professional ☐ Retail ☐ Domestic duties
 - ☐ Management ☐ Office/Clerical ☐ Public Service ☐ Manual/Factory worker
 - ☐ Service Industry ☐ Tradesperson ☐ Student ☐ Retired
5. Which of these best describes your immediate **travel party**:
 - ☐ Alone ☐ Couple (partner/spouse) ☐ Tour group ☐ Club
 - ☐ Friends ☐ Family with children ☐ With relatives
6. Is this your **first visit** to the Cairns region?
 - ☐ Yes ☐ No If No, how many times have you visited? _____
7. How many **days** do you plan to stay in the Cairns Region? _____
8. How many days have you been in the Cairns Region so far? _____
9. What is the main type of **accommodation** you are using during your visit to the Cairns region?
 - ☐ Motel ☐ Resort/hotel ☐ Backpackers hostel ☐ Holiday apartment/unit
 - ☐ Caravan park/cabin ☐ Camping ☐ Bed & breakfast ☐ Friends/relatives
10. During your visit to the Cairns region, where will you stay the **most** nights? (Select one only)
 - ☐ Cairns ☐ Palm Cove ☐ Port Douglas ☐ Daintree
 - ☐ Mission Beach ☐ Trinity Beach ☐ Cape Tribulation ☐ Other _____
11. Please indicate the highest level of **formal education** that you have received so far:
 - ☐ Secondary ☐ Trade/TAFE ☐ Diploma ☐ Degree ☐ Other _____
12. Where did you **find out** about the Cairns region? (Select all that apply)
 - ☐ Internet ☐ Tourist guide books ☐ Friends/family ☐ Advertisements in print
 - ☐ Travel Agent ☐ TV documentary ☐ Visitor centres ☐ Advertisements on TV/radio
 - ☐ Been before ☐ Facebook ☐ TripAdvisor ☐ Other _____
13. Is it important to you that Cairns City has a tropical feel?
 - ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't care
14. When on holiday in Cairns, do you like to be in a place where the locals spend time?
 - ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes
15. Have you had a conversation with any locals in Cairns?
 - ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Only when purchasing something

16. Here is a map of the Cairns CBD.

Please mark places you visited during this trip like this ●
Please mark routes you remember walking with a line like this —

Please feel free to mark any other places you consider important that are not marked, places you particularly liked or disliked, or places you used as markers to know where you were.

17. Aside from sleep time, approximately what percentage of your time in the Cairns region did you spend in the area shown in this map? _____ %



PLEASE MARK YOUR RESPONSES LIKE THIS € ●

18. Have a look at the pictures of places in the Cairns region. What do you think of these places? Please rate the image from 1 - 5

1 = strongly dislike 5 = really like.						1 = strongly dislike 5 = really like.					
	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
Photo 1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 6	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 7	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 8	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 4	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 9	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 5	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 10	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 11	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 16	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 12	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 17	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 13	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 18	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 14	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 19	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 15	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 20	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 21	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 26	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 22	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 27	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 23	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 28	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 24	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 29	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo 25	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Photo 30	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. Of the images you just looked at, which two did you like the most, and why?

Liked Photo # _____ Why? _____

Liked Photo # _____ Why? _____

20. Of the images you just looked at, which two did you like the least?

Disliked Photo # _____ Why? _____

Disliked Photo # _____ Why? _____





21. What do you like most about Cairns City? _____

22. What do you like least about Cairns City? _____

23. In your view, what would make Cairns City a more attractive place to visit?

Many thanks for your time in completing this survey

Appendix 8: Tourist survey images and rationale

No.	Image	Reason for choice
i1		Nature/city interface Captures the interface between nature and the city. Includes water and a new boardwalk targeted at heavy tourist traffic.
i2		High use area of city One of the most heavily used pedestrian intersections in Cairns. This sits directly adjacent to the Esplanade Lagoon reserve.
i3		Native vegetation in the city A controversial area of the city, this tree sits in the central City mall area and is a dominant element of the landscape.
i4		Parking & streetscape Located across the road from the popular Rusty's local produce Markets (see i13), similar images to this are replicated around the city centre. Dominated by car parking, changing footpath treatments and low level pedestrian usage, there is also very little landscaping.

No.
i5

Image



Reason for choice

Vegetation type & vista

Palm trees and ocean view.

Images 5 & 7 and 6 & 8 were purposely captured to be as similar as possible but for the style of vegetation to test the importance of palm trees rather than native vegetation. Also to test the importance of water views.

i6



Vegetation type & vista

Native trees and ocean view.

See above.

i7



Vegetation type & vista

Palm trees and paved view.

See above.

i8



Vegetation type & vista

Native melaleucas and paved view.

See above.

No.
i9

Image



Reason for choice

Commercial activity

Images 9 & 10 were captured to illustrate commercial activity in the city – 9 specifically for tourists and 10 specifically for locals.

i10



Commercial activity

See above

i11



Architecture style

Image 11 shows a heritage-listed landmark example of vernacular architecture in the centre of the city, compared with Image 12, which shows the modern 'tropical' style currently favoured in new buildings in the city.

i12



Architecture style

See above

No.
i13

Image



Reason for choice

Commercial activity and street frontage
Open food market with integrated
engagement.

As with Images 9 & 10, Images 13–16
were captured to illustrate how different
styles of commercial activity interact with
the street frontage.

i14



Commercial activity and street frontage
Modern style office frontage with no
engagement.

See above.

i15



Commercial activity and street frontage
1970/80s style shop frontage with little
engagement and some signage.


See above.

i16



Commercial activity and street frontage
Modern shop frontage with little
engagement.

See above.

No. i17	Image 	Reason for choice Date of construction 1980s Images 17–20 were captured to gauge whether the different eras of architectural styles in hotel construction made a difference to the impressions of tourists. These were all chosen at a similar scale and with some vegetation.
i18		Date of construction 2000s See above.
i19		Date of construction 1980s See above.
i20		Date of construction 1990s See above.

No.
i21

Image



Reason for choice
Alfresco dining styles
Queenslander style architecture.
Alfresco dining is a key element of the tropical urban landscape and dominates many high-use areas of the city. A comparison of styles is made across Palm Cove and Cairns City.

i22



Alfresco dining styles
Natural building materials – Palm Cove.

i23



Alfresco dining styles
Presence of advertising and plastic outdoor furniture – Palm Cove.

i24



Alfresco dining styles
Queenslander style architecture – Cairns City.

No.	Image	Reason for choice
i25		Alfresco dining styles Street side dining with parking – Cairns City.
i26		Alfresco dining styles Street side dining with bus mall – Cairns City.
i27		Open space Large grassed area with no shade trees.
i28		Open space Large paved area with few shade trees and some design elements.

No. i29	<p>Image</p> 	<p>Reason for choice</p> <p>Activity</p> <p>Children's playground with large shade tree.</p> <p>A key design feature of the Ports North Development, this area provides an opportunity for children to engage with the urban landscape.</p>
i30		<p>Activity</p> <p>BBQ areas with shade trees.</p> <p>A key design feature of the Esplanade Lagoon Development, this area provides an opportunity for adults to engage with the urban landscape.</p>

Appendix 9: Analysis of websites selling Cairns

Analysis - urban design content on Cairns tourist websites

9-Jan-15

14.01.15

Seq	Page title	Organisation	Web address	Google search position (excl. ads)		Structure first page	What	% Nature first page	What
				Cairns Australia	Visit Cairns				
11	Down Under Tours: Book Cairns Tours & Cairns Day Tours	Down Under Tours	http://www.downundertours.com		12		0%		Experiencing nature – hot air ballooning, deserted beaches
16	City of Cairns – Cairns Australia – Cairns Visitor information	Cairns Visitors information Guide	http://www.cairnsweb.com.au/cairnsfca-irns-city.asp		17		0%		0%
19	Skydive Cairns – Skydive over the Great Barrier Reef	Skydive Cairns	https://www.skydivecairns.com.au		20		0%		Experiencing skydiving
24	FAQ – Cairns Visitor Centre	Cairns Visitor Centre	http://www.cairnsvisitorcentre.com/faq			10	0%		Secluded beach and island
26	Cairns Tours Advice & bookings, Cairns Travel Deals	Cairns Tour Advice & Booking Centre	http://www.cairnstouradvice.com			13	0%		Experiencing nature, snorkelling, swimming, boats
27	The best time to visit Cairns, Australia. Experience OZ	Experience OZ	http://www.experienceoz.com.au/best-time-of-year-to-visit-cairns			14	0%		0%
31	Cairns Central	Cairns Central Shopping Centre	http://www.cairnscentral.com.au			19	0%		0%
32	Explore Tropical North Queensland, Cairns Queensland	TTNQ Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/tropicalnorthqueensland			20	0%		Fauna, underwater pics, food. calm snorkelling area, snorkeller, boats on the reef, green map of the
6	Cairns Info.com – Holiday packages and things to do in Cairns	Travstar.com	http://www.cairnsinfo.com		7	12	1% Hotel room	99%	area
29	Cairns Tours, Things to do in Cairns, Save up to 44%	Discover Australia Holidays	http://www.discoveraustralia.com.au/queensland_holidays_visitingcairns_toursf			17	2% Esplanade Boardwalk, Lagoon	98%	Experiencing nature

5 Cairns, Australia – Lonely Planet	Lonely Planet	http://www.lonelyplanet.com/australia/queensland/cairns	6	8	3%	Aerial city shot	Experiencing nature – paraglising on the beach, scenic railway in the
Cairns Tours, Great Barrier Reef 25 Tours, Cairns Diving Tours	Cairns Visitor Centre	http://www.cairnsvisitorcentre.com		11	3%	Aerial view of Cooktown	90% rainforest Experiencing nature – helicoptering, islands, accom in
Cairns Tourist Accommodation & 22 Tour Information Centre	Cairns Tourist Information Centre	http://cairnstouristinformation.com.au		6	5%	Hotel shots	97% nature, boats Experiencing nature and culture, reef and
Cairns Australia – Things to do – 1 Tourism Australia	Tourism Australia	http://www.australia.com/explore/cities/cairns.aspx	1	9	10%	Esplanade fish	95% rainforest
3 The Cairns Tourism Website – Cairns	Cairns Local tourism network	http://www.cairnstoday.com.au	4	3	10%	Hotel pool	deserted beaches, palm trees, snorkelling, wildlife
Cairns & Great Barrier Reef's Official 4 Tourism Site	Tourism Tropical North Queensland	http://www.cairns-greatbarrierreef.org.au	5	2	10%	Markets, massage shot of shopfronts in the city	deserted beach, rainforest, ocean, skyrail, scenic railway.
Pro Dive Cairns – Great Barrier Reef 17 Scuba Diving	ProDive Cairns	http://www.prodiver-cairns.com.au	18		10%		Snorkel pic underwater, rainforest, coral
20 Visit Cairns	Visit Cairns	http://www.visitcairns.com.au		1	10%	Aerial city shot, Esplanade Fish	90% cays
7 Cairns Attractions	Cairns Attractions	http://www.cairnsattractions.com.au/cairns.php	8	5	30%	Esplanade fish & go kart racing	Reef shots, boat
Twenty reasons to visit Cairns – 21 Traveller.com.au	Traveller	http://www.traveller.com.au/20-reasons-to-visit-cairns-2015		4	30%	Esplanade fish	90% shots Experiencing nature or reef and rainforest

Cairns Accommodation: Best rates 9 guaranteed	Cairns Holiday Specialists	http://www.cairnsaccommodation.com http://www.tripadvisor.com.au/Tourism-g255069-Cairns_Cairns_Region_Queensland-Vacations.html	10	50%	Hotels, pier, Esplanade aerial shot	Experiencing nature – hot air ballooning, 50% deserted beaches
Cairns Tourism: 188 things to do in 8 Cairns, Australia	Tripadvisor	http://www.tripadvisor.com.au/Attractions-g255069-Activities-Cairns_Cairns_Region_Queensland.html	9	70%	Hotels, outside and inside, Muddys, restaurant Esplanade Boardwalk, Esplanade Fish Muddys, Esplanade boardwalk, Lagoon, botanical gardens	Palm fringed 30% deserted beach Experiencing nature, empty 30% beach
The Cairns Australia Travel Guide 28 CATG	Cairns Australia Travel Guide	http://www.cairnsaustraliatravelguide.com		16	70%	
Top 30 things to do in Cairns – Cairns 30 Attractions – TripAdvisor	Tripadvisor	http://www.tripadvisor.com.au/Attractions-g255069-Activities-Cairns_Cairns_Region_Queensland.html		18	70%	Experiencing 30% nature
Cairns Australia: Tourist guide and 2 holiday accommodation	Cairns-australia.com	http://www.cairns-australia.com	3	15	90% Esplanade fish & hotels	10% rainforest Underwater reef image, rainforest 10% image
15 Pacific Hotel Cairns	Pacific Hotel	http://www.pacifichotelcairns.com http://www.yha.com.au/hostels/qld/cairns-and-far-north-queensland/cairns-backpackers-hostelf http://www3.hilton.com/en/hotels/queensland/hilton-cairns-CRNHITWf	16	90%	Hotel, shot of hotel in city	
10 Cairns YHA Australia	YHA Australia		11	100%	YHA Hostel	0%
Cairns Hotels Hilton Cairns, Cairns 12 QLD	Hilton Hotels & Resorts		13	100%	Aerial city shot Map of hotel location, hotel	0%
Cairns Accommodation, Hotels in 13 Cairns, Rydges Hotels	Rydges Hotels & Resorts	http://www.rydges.com/faccommodation/cairns-qldf	14	100%	shots	0%
Gilligans Backpackers Hotel & Resort 14 Cairns	Gilligans Backpackers	http://www.gilligans.com.au	15	100%	Hotel, party shots	0%
Cairns Resort, Accommodation, 18 Wedding Venue, Holidays	The Hotel Cairns	http://www.thehotelcairns.com http://www.queenslandholidays.com.au/destinations/tropical-north-queensland/places-to-visit/cairns/	19	100%	Hotel shots	0%
Cairns – Places to visit – Tropical 23 North Queensland	Tourism & Events Queensland		7	100%	Esplanade fish & map	0%

