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LOCAL TOURISM PLANNING
AND URBAN DESIGN:
THE REINFORCEMENT OF "IMAGE" AT
NATIONAL PARK TOWNSHIP,
TONGARIRO
NATIONAL PARK

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Regional Planning at
Massey University.

Brent A Vivian
1990

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CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW: 'IMAGE' REINFORCEMENT AND URBAN DESIGN

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Ruapehu District Council wishes to promote and develop National Park township as an attractive tourist destination in light of there being a number of development opportunities for the township. However, achievement of these opportunities is constrained by the fact that the township has a significant 'image' problem at both the pre and post-visit stages of the 'recreational experience'. This has been indicated by summer and winter surveys of users of Tongariro National Park and surrounds, conducted from January to March, and August to September 1989.

As such, the findings of these surveys (summarised in Appendix 1) provide the basis for a statement of the problem situation and study goals which will indicate how the local tourism planner can contribute to overcoming an image problem of National Park township and thereby help fulfil the township's tourism potential.

Before this is undertaken, however, it is necessary to understand the implications of an 'image' problem, the urban design goals that the local tourism planner can adopt to address this problem, and the planning tools available to the planner to facilitate achievement of these goals.

Chapter 1 will therefore involve:

- defining 'image' as it has been applied in the geographical and tourism literature.
- demonstrating why it is important, economically, for a tourist location to evoke positive 'induced' and 'organic' images in people.
- outlining the context in which a favourable 'image' should be sought (in terms of each stage of the 'recreational experience' framework).
- identifying the goals which contemporary urban design should seek to incorporate as guidelines, and describing the nature of design guides.

1.2 DEFINING 'IMAGE'

1.2a 'IMAGES' IN GEOGRAPY

Introduction

In the geographical literature, the term 'image' has appeared under the guises 'spatial image', 'mental map', and 'cognitive map', and been used to refer to:

"a cognitive representation of the nature and attributes of the spatial environment."

(Downs and Stea, 1973, P79)

The use of the former term, first introduced by Boulding (1956) and Lynch (1960), has subsequently declined due to its use in a misleading and restrictive way to emphasise the 'seeing' aspect of imagery, leading some people to equate imagery with the cognitive equivalent of vision (Downs and Stea, 1973). As a consequence, 'cognitive map' is now the preferred term.

The Cognitive Mapping Process

A suggestion of the process involved in the derivation of a 'cognitive map' is given in the following definition of 'cognitive mapping':

"Cognitive mapping is a process composed of a series of psychological transformations by which an individual acquires, codes, stores, recalls, and decodes information about the relative locations and attributes of phenomena in his or her everyday spatial environment."

(Downs and Stea, 1973, P9)

These transformations are in effect a series of stimulus-response type activities of unknown physiological and controversial psychological origins. While it is beyond the scope of this project to investigate the origins of these particular transformations, it is useful to clarify the meaning of 'cognition' in a spatial context and to outline the nature and functions of the cognitive mapping process in light of the potential impact of this particular process on tourism behaviour and therefore on the economy of a tourism dependant town.

In a spatial context, cognition is concerned with the way in which people apprehend, observe and understand the objects and events outside of their immediate visual, aural (hearing), and olfactory (smell) surroundings which are not linked to their immediate behaviour. In this respect, 'cognition' differs from 'perception' by scale as the latter relates to objects and events in ones immediate environment (Down and Stea, 1973).

Stemming from this is the function of the cognitive mapping process which is to enable people to make informed locational decisions about where to travel and what to expect to see at a particular destination. The end product of this process is the 'cognitive map'; the nature of which is dependant upon two main sources of information (Down and Stea, 1973):

The first of these sources is direct information received through the sense modalities, which are visual, tactile, aural, olfactory and kinaesthetic, upon visit to the destination (Down and Stea, 1973). In this respect, visual observations are the most important as 'seeing is believing', while aural, tactile and olfactory senses serve to enrich and expand our visual images, which may be influenced by vivid, emotionally charged memories of past events and scenes (Tuan, 1974).

The second source of information is vicarious, which refers to face-to-face and second-hand contact, for example, through verbal description, a cartographic street map, a T.V film, a colour photograph, or a travel brochure. In this respect, the way in which people process vicarious information may lead to their 'cognitive map' of a particular destination being either incomplete, distorted, schematized (the categorising of spatial information, for example, according to convention) or augmented (containing fictitious elements) in relation to reality (Down and Stea, 1973). This may also occur as a result of distorted advertising of a particular destination and this needs to be borne in mind in relation to peoples expectations of places which are partly derived from advertising.

1.2b 'IMAGES' IN TOURISM

Introduction

The definition of the cognitive mapping process and the summary of its nature and functions provide an understanding of the term 'image' in a spatial context. As such, it gives an appropriate background in which to consider 'image' as it has been applied in the tourism literature.

In the tourism literature, a differentiation has been made between an 'induced' and 'organic' image (Gartner and Hunt, 1987, in reference to earlier work by Gunn, 1972). Both of these terms will now be discussed:

Induced Images

An 'induced' image refers to the negative and/ or positive impressions (or perceptions) and evaluations held individually or collectively of a travel location to which people haven't been to before. (Gartner and Hunt, 1987, in reference to earlier work by Gunn, 1972; World Tourism Organisation, 1979; McLellan and Foushee, 1983). It may be acquired through direct and vicarious sources, such as conversations with acquaintances, advertising and promotion, news accounts, and editorial stories (Gartner and Hunt, 1987, in reference to earlier work by Hunt, 1971).

Direct attempts to create a favourable induced image at a place is known as boosterism. In the United States alone, there are 183 cities and towns that boast the epithet 'Gate' or 'Gateway' to emphasise their respective character as a passageway or route. Differing in approach but not in aim are postcards, which project a clear, visual image of the worthiness of a main street, a park, or a memorial, in order to capture the essential character of a town or city (Tuan, 1974).

It is important to recognise that induced images can vary markedly according to a person's age, home residence, individual characteristics, and interests (Pearce, 1982). People interested in camping, for example, will have an image of a place which will differ from that of people who seek other forms of accommodation (La Page and Cormier, 1977). This tends to suggest that significant differences exist in the cognitive maps of different groups.

Organic Images

An organic image is the impression (or perception) formed by the tourist through actual visitation of a travel location (Gartner and Hunt, 1987, in reference to earlier work by Gunn, 1972). As with an induced image, an organic image may involve an evaluative component. This type of image is derived from our visual, aural, and olfactory sense modalities, and involves, for example, an evaluation of the location and surroundings, the authenticity of the site, the weather, social encounters, and the hospitality of the resident population. An organic image will also be influenced by individual attitudes, preferences, and the extent to which the expectations of the visitor are met.

As with an induced image, it is important to acknowledge that organic images can vary markedly according to a person's age, home residence, individual characteristics, and interests (Pearce, 1982).

1.3 THE BENEFITS OF 'POSITIVE IMAGE'

1.3a INTRODUCTION

The role of a favourable image in contributing to the economic prosperity of a tourist location will now be considered. This is necessary because without evidence of the benefits that accrue to a community as a consequence of image enhancement, there is no justification for attempting to achieve this.

The distinction made between an induced and organic image will provide the framework in which to consider this:

1.3b INDUCED IMAGES

Hunt (1971, 74), Mayo (1973), and Embacher and Buttle (1989) have recognised that the induced image that potential travellers evoke of a tourist location when they are thinking about and planning for a trip, is a critical factor in determining whether they actually visit that destination. Fridgen (1984) has noted that induced images can influence spending patterns, planned length of stay, and planned activity patterns. Research conducted by Gartner and Hunt (1983) has quantified these assertions by finding, circumstantially, that non-resident travel to the state of Utah, in the United States, from 1971 to 1983, increased at the same time that image improvement occurred, and that one of the two main reasons for this trend was an induced factor.¹ This means that 'induced image' is extremely important because it affects the likelihood of a place fulfilling its tourist potential and accruing the economic benefits derived from this. A distorted, negative image, for example, of the natural environment, climate, and people of a place will detract from it benefiting economically from tourism (Gartner and Hunt, 1987, in reference to earlier work by Hunt, 1971).

¹For an examination of the methodology, results and discussion of this study refer to: Journal of Travel Research; Volume 26, Number 2; Fall 1987; Pp 15-19

1.3c ORGANIC IMAGES

Work by Kaplan and Talbot (1983) has found that for people back from a wilderness experience, negative experiences fade, while the more positive experiences are recalled with more accuracy (Fridgen, 1984). However, this does not address the often reported case in which a traveller will remember a serious negative event or circumstance for years (Fridgen, 1984).

In terms of the implications of a traveller returning home with a negative organic image of an overseas country, Pieruccina (1974) has stated:

"The adverse publicity this country receives in a local pub when a dissatisfied Briton returns home from his trip to the United States cannot be offset by spending thousands of dollars in the promotion of United States Travel Brochures"

(Pieruccina, taken from McLellan and Foushee, 1983, P2)

This indicates that in order for a tourist location to fulfil it's tourist potential and accrue the economic benefits that accrue from this, it is essential to ensure that the tourist returns home with a positive organic image of the place they have visited.

1.4 CONTEXT OF 'POSITIVE IMAGE'

1.4a INTRODUCTION

Having established the economic reasons why it is desirable for a place to have a positive image, it is necessary to consider the 'image' conditions required at all stages of the 'recreational experience framework' in order to ensure that a tourist location will benefit economically from tourism.

The 'recreation experience' framework was developed by Clawson and Knetsch (1966), and has been credited by Fridgen (1984) with providing a meaningful link between environmental and social processes, and travel and tourism behaviour (Fridgen, 1984).

The induced and organic 'image' conditions required at each step of this framework will now be discussed.

1.4b INDUCED IMAGE

Anticipation

At the anticipation stage of the recreation experience, potential tourists plan and think about their trip. As they do this, they consult with direct and vicarious sources of information including brochures. It is therefore imperative that advertising and promotional brochures invoke a positive induced image of a location. As Mayo (1973) has stated, whether an induced image is a true representation of what a destination has to offer, is less important than the fact that as far as each potential tourist is concerned, their image represents reality.

Little (1967) (taken from Gartner and Hunt, 1987) and Goodrich (1978) have suggested how a positive induced image may be achieved. They state that astute advertising and marketing of the unique and diverse facilities of a given area

can play an important role in improving image and capturing the economic benefits that can be derived from tourism.

In this sense, 'unique' refers to the fact that every place has a combination of geological and human history, climate, socio-economic, religious, and political characteristics, plants and animals (etc), characteristics that make this particular place unique.

Rosenow and Pulsipher (1979) have stated that the unique features of a place are those that generally give a community a 'sense of place'. Similar in meaning are 'spirit of place' and 'genius-loci'. The Essex County Council (1973), Garnham (1985), and Park (1989) have referred to these terms as meaning 'special uniqueness', 'character', and the attendant 'spirit' allotted to every place at birth. Genius-loci will be the term adopted throughout the rest of this project to refer to these special characteristics of place.

Travel to the Destination

At this stage of the recreation experience, the induced image of tourists will be reinforced or tarnished as they travel to their chosen destination, especially if the means of travel is overland, by bus, car, or train. If the sights viewed in the approach to the chosen destination are contradictory to expectations, then the induced image that people have of their chosen destination will be negatively affected. In this respect, Evans and Wood (1980) consider that negative perceptions of scenic corridors increase as the number of artifacts of human intrusion increase. Undoubtedly, this is related to peoples expectations of what they will see in scenic corridors.

This point is important because it highlights the need to ensure that images derived from approach roads to tourist locations are consistent with the images projected of these places in tourist brochures.

1.4c ORGANIC IMAGE

Travel to the Destination

It is important for communities en-route to other places to elicit the curiosity and empathy of travellers (Fridgen, 1984). Unfortunately, little research has been done regarding how this may be achieved, but significantly, Rosenow and Pulsipher (1979) have suggested that billboards are ineffective.

Tuan (1977) has provided an insight into this problem by stating that travellers deliberately search for highly 'visible' or 'imageable' landmarks on the horizon. In this respect, Appleyard (1979) has stated that high visibility is desirable in areas adjacent to the main road network, while high imageability is achieved through surprising or unique design incorporating distinctive height, length dimensions and other means of differentiation, including colour, texture, style and form.

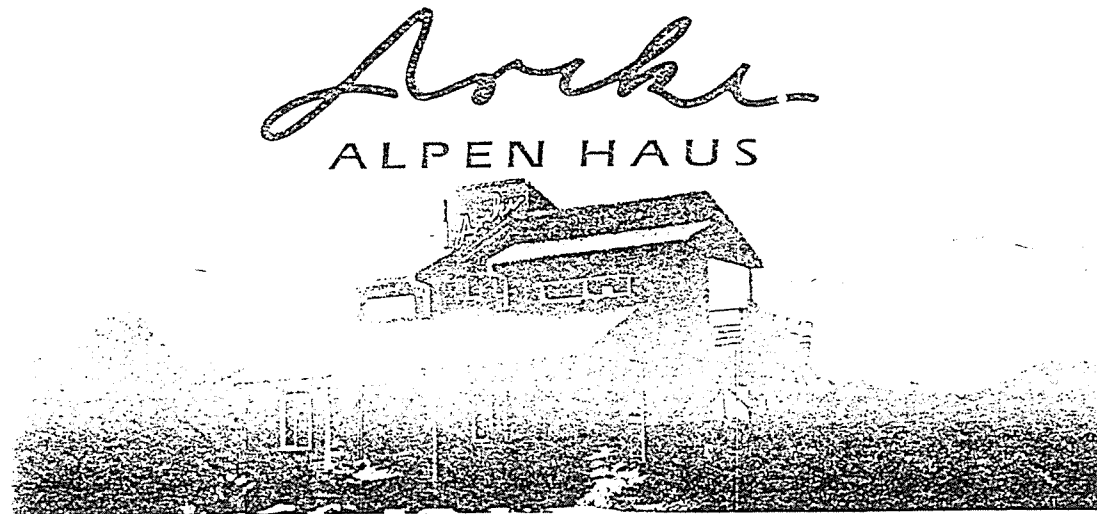
By providing a positive image in terms of high imageability and visibility, the passer-by may be induced into stopping for a brief while, purchasing items or even staying overnight, thereby increasing the economic benefits accruing to a local community.

On-site Experiences, Evaluations, and Impressions

Tourists form organic images of their destination at this stage of the 'recreational experience, and these images are based on their expectations prior to the trip and on impressions and experiences formed during the trip and on immediate arrival at their destination.

It is very important for the on-site (organic) image to reflect the image evoked prior to departure (induced) in order to ensure that expectations of natural and built qualities, weather, cost and availability of facilities, services and activities, and social atmosphere of the destination are actually met.

Figures 1 and 2 are photographs of the same alpine accommodation lodge taken from identical positions. The top photograph has been extracted from a tourist brochure, while the bottom one has been photographed by the writer.



GUEST HOUSE ACCOMMODATION WITH A COMFORTABLE HOMELY ATMOSPHERE IN TRUE MOUNTAIN TRADITION INCLUDING DINNER, BED AND HOT BREAKFAST.

SPA
SAUNA
DRYING ROOM
OPPOSITE TENNIS COURTS
OPPOSITE PUB

WE CATER FOR COUPLES,
SMALL GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS,
WITH DAILY, WEEKLY, MONTHLY
OR SEASONAL RATES.

MID-WEEK (TWIN SHARE)	WEEKENDS (TWIN SHARE)	WEEKLY (TWIN SHARE)
\$65. ⁰⁰ PER PERSON PER NIGHT	\$75. ⁰⁰ PER PERSON PER NIGHT	\$405. ⁰⁰ PER PERSON PER WEEK

8 WARD ST., P.O. BOX 13. NATIONAL PARK. N.Z. Tel: (64)(0812)(22)801.

Figure 1- Promotional Brochure of Arika Alpen Haus, National Park township

The picture in Figure 1 is designed to create a positive induced image of the lodge and its surroundings. Notice however that the details of the immediate surroundings have been blurred and that the mountains and native bush have been sketched in to reinforce the 'unique alpine setting' of the lodge.



Figure 2- Photograph of Arikī Alpen Haus, National Park township

In contrast, this photograph gives a better indication of the lodge in reality. It can be seen that the 'native bush' is really broom, that the power poles have been deleted from the brochure picture, and that the Tongariro mountains are obscured from view at this particular angle.

These photographs show how an induced image can be created which differs from its image at the organic level. In this instance, a negative tourist experience will likely occur as the expectation of the tourist will not met in reality. In light of this, it is the task of the local tourism planner and marketer to work together to ensure that images portrayed in brochures are actually grounded in fact.

At this stage of the recreation experience, the hospitality experience which consists of the interaction between the tourist, host, and facility is also important in helping realise the tourist potential of a location. In this respect, surveys of behaviour-settings¹ should be undertaken to facilitate an understanding of tourist-host conflicts, and to provide an insight into measures that can be adopted to avoid these conflicts in the future (Fridgen, 1984, in reference to earlier work by Wicker, 1981).

It is also important that the tourist location be perceived as being authentic. Indeed, Cohen (1979) and Pearce (1982) have suggested that satisfaction is related to the perception of authentic tourist attractions, and that satisfaction is diminished if the tourist feels that the settings are faked or staged.

Return Travel

At this stage of the recreation experience, tourists return to their homes. During this stage, it is important for tourists to form favourable organic images of the return trip, since it is this part of the trip which is the freshest in the mind of the returned traveller.

At the regional level, this means that the images projected on overland departure routes should be reflective of the image of the location that has just been visited. Through the provision of side-trips, activities and facilities are provided that can reinforce the image of the chosen destination.

Recollection

During the recollection phase of the recreation experience, the tourist consolidates impressions and perceptions of the travel experience into memories, emotions, and evaluations (Fridgen, 1984).

¹A tourist destination is comprised of a multiple of behaviour-settings, many devoted to the satisfaction of the tourist

Where tourists induced and organic image of a particular destination are similar, the prospect of their return to this destination is greater as their expectations are more likely to have been met. In addition, the impression they give to friends and acquaintances is more likely to be positive, and this can help maximise the economic benefits that can accrue to a settlement through tourism.

1.5 URBAN DESIGN GOALS

1.5a INTRODUCTION

A role of the local tourism planner is to ensure that the tourist has a favourable experience at the 'on-site' phase of the 'recreational experience'. The local planner must therefore ensure that the visual, aural, and olfactory characteristics of a settlement are attractive to the tourist and meet their expectations.

The local planner may achieve this in two ways. Firstly, by formulating design guidelines and a works programme that attempt to achieve recognised urban design goals. Clues as to the nature of these goals have already been expressed, which include 'visible' and 'imageable' design. Secondly, by co-ordinating with the local tourism marketer to ensure that the unique, positive image that tourist marketing literature attempts to evoke, is actually grounded in fact at the organic level.

This project is concerned with the first of these points. The 2 goals that contemporary urban design should seek will now be discussed.

1.5b DESIGN GOAL 1

- *to provide a safe, convenient, and visually and physically satisfactory built environment.*

There are also a number of other goals that have been outlined in the urban design literature which reinforce this more general goal. They are:

- to give visual coherence and organisation to the relationship of buildings, or masses, to each other, and to the spaces they enclose, and, in turn, the relationship of the spaces to each other, in contrast to adhering to the process of piecemeal and unco-ordinated block-by-block redevelopment. This type of design is described as 'holistic', and is the essence of urban design (Lynch, 1960; Cullen,1961; McConnell,1968).
- to provide a 'responsive' public space, in which the opportunities of users are maximised by the degree of choice available to them. The qualities which go towards making a responsive environment are:
 - permeability- affects where people go.
 - legibility- enables people to 'read' their environment.
 - robustness- allows people to use places for different purposes.
 - variety- enables a place to offer people a range of experiences.
 - visual appropriateness
and richness- the extent to which a design puts up visual clues in detail from it's surroundings and helps people to interpret the meaning of their environment.
 - personalisation- the extent to which people can put their own stamp on their environment.

(Bentley, Alcock, Murrain, McGlynn, and Smith, 1985)

In addition, these qualities should be applied to all relevant elements of the physical environment at the detailed scale of public space. Tibbalds (1986) states that these include buildings, roads, footpaths, hard and soft landscaping, signage, lighting, seats, colour, sounds, and smells.

- to ensure adequate visual and aural privacy, sunlighting and daylighting, and private open space is provided for each dwelling (Essex County Council, 1973; Department of Local Government, Melbourne, 1979; Den-Ouden, 1980; Ministry of Works and Development (N.Z)).
- to ensure structures and roads have appropriate form, scale and proportion, pattern, colour, and texture features (Essex County Council, 1973; Reekie, 1972; Den-Ouden, 1980; Howe and Alexiou, 1989).
- to build structures that are functional and reflective of their use (Knox, 1988; Goodey, 1988; Downton and Hamnett, 1988).

1.5c DESIGN GOAL 2

- *to provide development in the present day built environment that reinforces the unique image, distinctive character, and spirit of place or genius-loci of a place* (Duerksen, 1986; Essex County Council, 1973; Lynch, 1960; Rosenow and Pulsipher, 1979; Garnham, 1985; Collins, 1986).

1.5d DESIGN GUIDES

The planning tool that is used to achieve urban design goals is the design guide.

Design guides indicate the basis upon which development can or cannot take place, by establishing reasonably definitive criteria for certain aspects of performance, in terms of their effect on 'innocent' neighbours. Examples include privacy, access, and visual and noise intrusion. Because they take a positive approach to development control, and appear to promote both quality and efficiency in the environment, they have found increasing favour over the last fifteen years as a means of controlling development (Reed, 1979).

Of all the design guides produced in the U.K, the forerunner is "A Design Guide for Residential Areas", formulated for the Essex County Council in 1973. The aim of this guide is to combine the creative expertise of the architect with the

financial knowledge of the developer, and to gain a greater quality in any resulting changes (Reed, 1979).

In Australia, a leading set of urban design guidelines are those for the city of Adelaide. These guidelines form a non-statutory addendum to the plan and seek to translate its descriptions of 'desired future character' into visual images. In other words, they consist of an illustrated rulebook, or manual, containing examples of what is regarded as 'good' or 'bad' urban design in the Adelaide context (Downton and Hamnett, 1988).

These guides provide useful models from which to derive appropriate design guidelines for National Park township.

1.6 SUMMARY

The implications of a settlement having an induced and organic image problem are profound. It can serve to undermine the economic benefits that can accrue to a community when the tourism potential available to it is fulfilled.

Fulfilment of this potential can be facilitated by ensuring that the tourism marketer and planner enforce a number of 'image conditions' at each stage of the 'recreation experience'. These are predominantly based on projecting a 'unique' image.

A specific role of the local tourism planner is to ensure that a positive organic image is evoked at the on-site stage of the 'recreation experience'. Incorporating the goals of urban design into design guides can facilitate this.