

*I would like there to exist places that are stable, unmoving, intangible, untouched and almost untouchable, unchanging, deep-rooted; places that might be points of reference, of departure, of origin [...]*

*Such places don't exist, and it's because they don't exist that space becomes a question, ceases to be self-evident, ceases to be incorporated, ceases to be appropriated. Space is a doubt.*

—George Perec, *Species of Spaces*



It might be helpful to start outside. I like Google maps because it has an option that allows you to look at street view over a number of years. In the case of Ōtautahi this means that you can click between a pre-earthquake (2007) city and a range of post-earthquake (2015-2020) versions of the city.

Here are some observations of this digital record of Colombo Street: Platform D disappears, the entranceway becomes Workshop, Star Mart (good slushies) turns into a shop called Seed Heritage, NZ Post/Kiwibank becomes Barkers, the bus platform disappears from in front of Ballantynes, the air bridge above the street gets cleverly blended into the sky then abruptly reappears. The same thing can be done at the end of High Street approaching the the Hack circle – although as you get closer to the city mall the 2007 record disappears and only the post-2015 version of Ōtautahi can be accessed.

This digital record layers time in a way that I find both helpful and very sad. I click through, remembering grimy bricks, other people's arguments and thick exhaust fumes, while I watch a street I knew become incrementally unfamiliar. The re-built city is aesthetically sharp, clean and exciting

but I find the newness can sometimes feel disorienting and sterile.

When I was at school I didn't catch my bus from platform D, but I would go there if I wanted to see friends or avoid someone who was in my platform. In contrast to the street, inside the transit lounge was bright, warm, and out of the way. After school I would sit with friends near (but never on) those colourful seats trying to kill time between buses. The mood in this room could shift from painfully dull to action-packed in minutes. I remember seeing people inside the platform skating, making-out, and yelling at each other, to then passively get on the bus (one-headphone in) like any other commuter. All the teenage-stereotypes fulfilled in a couple of moments.

I asked some old friends if they had any memories about the bus exchange from 2009-2011. One remembers being trespassed from the building for holding a skateboard while he was waiting for a bus — he caught security on a bad day. Another friend tells me about being harassed in platform D and having to defend herself by hitting a man with a can of Impulse, then escaping by getting onto a bus. These two events highlight the problem of

trying to monitor a transient space like the exchange. Sometimes people who actually need help are overlooked, while others who fit a particular image get confronted. I'm not sure that the design and layout of the new bus exchange has solved this.

The monitoring/policing of space extended into the city mall as well. Council appointed security guards called 'city ambassadors' wandered the CBD offering directions and enforcing bylaws. The main issue that the council seemed to have was with different groups of teenagers hanging around the Hack Circle. The way deemed best to discourage loitering was to play classical music throughout the day in an attempt to calm and annoy. It had little effect, being either completely ignored or thoroughly enjoyed. Eventually the council realised that the only way to stop people from gathering was to remove the Hack Circle along with the Stewart Fountain; a decision that was met with protests and sadness by many who frequented these spaces. Both spaces were demolished in 2007.

A place that no longer physically exists still inhabits a space in memory that affects how we perceive what has taken its place. For me, remembering Ōtautahi during this period I feel reassurance and loss, warmth and uncertainty.

- Liam Hayward

There are 275 texts remaining on your 500 text plan and 6 minutes left to wait for the bus. Rainbow seats, glowing walls, hot gossip. The click of phone buttons and a waft of Lynx and BO fills the air around you. When I imagine platform D, it smells like a vape cloud - even though vapes didn't exist then.

Attending an inner-city school with a futuristic, alternative vibe, Bena had a taste of urban life before the destructive 2011 earthquakes in Ōtautahi Christchurch. *Camera phone* memorialises the short-lived platform D of the city's central bus exchange, envisaging an alternate direction for the rebuild and for her teenage years.

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Liam Hayward attended the same school. He lives in Ōtepoti, writing and making chocolate.

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Image: Platform D C. 2009. Courtesy of the architect Crispin Schurr, Christchurch City Council