

On **Wednesday 31.05.2023 at 10:25 AM** *pre:fab members met with Te Kāhui Whaihanga Board members at their annual in-person meeting in advance of the institute's AGM later that day. pre:fab was invited to develop ideas already shared with the board in their presidential nomination application and advise the institute on how it can remain relevant to both the profession and all those who call Aotearoa home.* All current and incoming board members were in attendance including the incumbent President Elect Huia Reriti and CEO Teena Hale Pennington.

**Mihi [0.5min] [Tessa]**

E ngā mana,  
E ngā reo,  
E ngā karangatanga maha,  
Ko tēnei taku mihi ki ngā mana whenua o ngā rohe nei  
Ka mihi hoki au ki ngā tohu o ngā rohe nei  
Nō reira Tēnā koutou, Tēnā koutou, Tēnā koutou katoa.

**[0.5] Thankyou > pre:fab Self Introduction [1min] [Sakina]**

We welcome this opportunity to discuss the future of Te Kāhui Whaihanga. We are excited to explore new and different ways for this institution to continue its mission to support, develop and advocate for the profession, practice and presence of Architecture in Aotearoa with the President, Board and Chief Executive.

We come with great respect and optimism for the potential of this institution and the profession it represents. Thankyou for the radical generosity you have shown by inviting us here today.

pre:fab began in 2022 as a free alternative to the in:situ conference held by Te Kāhui Whaihanga that year. Its mission was to highlight perceived inequities in access to both the professional community and expert discourse, and to connect global content with local issues. pre:fab has since grown into a mutli-modal platform for architectural advocacy, collective intelligence and knowledge sharing, alternative practice, discourse and publication.

*We are pre:fab.*

**[1.5] Acknowledgements > Thanks > Endorsement [1min] [Isaac]**

We want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who nominated us, and all those who contributed to our campaign and encouraged us to participate in the Presidential nomination process for Te Kāhui Whaihanga.

We are proud of our campaign for the presidency, and its optimistic contribution to the evolution of Te Kāhui Whaihanga and what this institute means, not only to its members, but to Aotearoa. In the spirit of this aspiration, pre:fab hereby rescinds its presidential

campaign for the incoming term, and formally endorses Huia Reriti for President of Te Kāhui Whaihanga.

We hope that our presence and presentation here today demonstrates the optimism and sincerity of this endorsement, and our aspiration to assist the current and future president, board, and executive of Te Kāhui Whaihanga as they move to reshape this institution for the benefit of all in Aotearoa.

[2] **Ritual Johns** [0.5min + badges + intros(<10)] [Leonard]

We now invite you to join us in a ritual we have developed for pre:fab gatherings.

Please share these name badges amongst the group. [Simon to hand out John name badges]

This ritual has been instrumental in helping us build the pre:fab community and vision, and for this reason we believe it will be equally constructive here. We hope that by the end of this meeting you will see why and agree. [pre:fab put on badges]

If you have not already put on your name badge please do so now.

The meeting will begin with a round of introductions. Please introduce yourself with your name and a brief reflection about pre:fab's nomination application. [pre:fab members to begin] []

[12.5] **Description of presentation** [1min] [Nick]

Tēnā tātou e ngā John.

Thank you for those reflections, and for joining us in this conversation.

That we are here today reflects your thoughtful consideration of our nomination application. We now want to learn as much as possible from your collective insight and experience.

To open this kōrero, we will now give a brief presentation. The straightforward purpose of this presentation is to help us reaffirm why we are all here, and to provide fertile ground for what we hope is the beginning of an enduring conversation.

We will do this through introducing a series of couplets for consideration. On one side an earnest reflection of how we believe Te Kāhui Whaihanga is often perceived and/or perceives itself, and on the other, a non-oppositional reframing of that concept; a dramatic shift in perspective that opens up new and different futures for this institution.

We also acknowledge that many board members may already share these or similar aspirations for Te Kāhui Whaihanga, and are already working towards their realisation.

[13.5] **Conceptual Couplets** [4<min<5]

**Authority** [Vanessa] [timed at 1.5min]

**Guide/Companion**

It is natural that a professional institute might come to see itself as an authority: of what constitutes legitimate knowledge within that profession; who can use it: and how it is deployed. However, this self-image is often accompanied by a set of unintended qualities that colour how it is perceived and perceives the world; Over time authorities tend to become centralised, hierarchical, controlling, didactic, and inflexible.

Alternatively, the image of a “Guide” or “Companion” immediately brings to mind qualities like movement, growth, collaboration, intimacy and adaptation that resist authoritarian tendencies, while still invoking a unique responsibility to the people and spaces they serve.

At their worst, authorities can be competitive, histrionic, monopolistic, moralising, and contemptuous. In contrast, guides try to be encouraging, generous, accessible, questioning, and wise.

These ideas reimagine Te Kāhui Whaihanga as a guide for all those who call Aotearoa home, whose role is to catalyse and develop architectural knowledge and spatial agency where and whenever it is needed. And to support professionals and non professionals alike on their journey to better understand and contribute to our present and future environment.

*[An example of this could be supporting earth building education in school and university curricula; direct and enduring engagement with local and national government through formal advisory and engagement roles; or increased transparency in, and self knowledge of, institutional practice and the professional community.]*

#### **Promotion** [Simon on behalf of Hannah]

#### **Cultivation**

“Promotion” is also a natural role for a professional institution to take on. But its frequent use in Te Kāhui Whaihanga materials calls attention to other qualities that are often bundled up inside it, like scarcity, prestige, individualism, and reification, along with acquisitional and transactional attitudes.

In a constantly evolving space like architecture these qualities can become accidental proxies for measurement, and finally undeclared aspects of the goal. Pursued for their own sake these qualities lead to narcissism, extraction, and dishonesty.

However, “Promotion” at its best is just one small aspect of “Cultivation” in the context of *culture* defined as shared values, common knowledge and collective resources.

Cultivation makes the best objectives of promotion explicit—like care, partnership, education, tenderness, growth and nurture—and extends its ambition to include community, collective development and shared prosperity.

*[This could be fostering communities of alternative and expanded field practices, and educating client communities about the skills and value they can bring to public life; or structured and strategic support of journalism and public debate in the future environment—something similar to the Media Science Centre]*

#### **Protectionism** [Mason]

#### **Advocacy**

[1.5min] Te Kāhui Whaihanga’s recent response to MBIE’s proposed review of architectural licensing highlights a more challenging aspect of its role as bastion of the profession.

Protectionism is the natural first response to a perceived threat, but it is rarely the best one—especially when that response is broadly unanimous and reactionary. More creative and courageous leadership is required.

That the profession of architecture persists without an obvious monopoly over its expertise, or easy agreement over its purpose, is a miracle and a wonder; Architecture is, and will always be a question. Recourse to fixed criteria can only lead to irrelevance as others find new ways to meet changing circumstances.

Protectionism tends to be defensive, nostalgic, fearful, brittle, intransigent, myopic, self-serving, undermining, and violent.

“Advocacy” refocuses our attention on *purpose* without defining it. On advocating for the self through advocating for others. On seeking out ways that architectural knowledge and agency can be useful and accessible to all, thereby increasing its reach and value.

Where “Protectionism” is obsessed with boundaries, “advocacy” has a strong centre and a weak periphery. “Advocacy” is curious, empathetic, centred, futuristic, liberatory, courageous, purposeful, supportive, and validating.

*[Advocacy means taking courageous, progressive and futuristic positions in support of local, national and global issues related to architecture and the future environment, even when and especially if this challenges modes of thinking and behaving in the profession.]*

Exceptionalism [Tessa]	Value
<p>“Architectural exceptionalism” sees architecture and its supporting practices as essential, unique, superior and entitled.</p> <p>Over the past 30 years, this conceit has reduced architecture to a commodity and isolated it from its own expanded field, ironically reducing its social, political and economic value.</p> <p>By allowing ourselves to be seduced by exceptionalism we miss out on seeing—and benefiting from—the underlying reality that architecture is a part of the rhizomatic ecology of diverse actors that comprise this planet and all that inhabit it. From communities, to landscapes, to complex ecological systems, to the intangible realms of history, spirit and culture, we can become a far more relational and relevant discipline, working ‘for and with’, rather than conceptually ‘apart and above’.</p> <p>Architectural thinking is not special, but it does have value. Architecture as value is welcoming, relational, meaningful, and ecological.</p> <p><i>[Architecture as value means understanding and communicating when and how architectural knowledge is useful and how it needs to adapt to be so. It means refocusing our attention away from capital based metrics, and towards soft skills and process, and less object oriented forms of appreciation and assessment. It means building ‘with’ communities and ‘in’ public.]</i></p>	
<p>[18] <b>Conclusion</b> [1.25min] [Nick]</p> <p>By sharing these couplets we hope to present Te Kāhui Whaihanga with a compass or tool kit to help inspire and guide its continued evolution; To expand the attitudes and perspectives that have underpinned its historical successes and development to include</p>	

those it will require to remain vital, relevant, and valuable; And to demonstrate how aspects of its existing role and image can be reimaged to better face new and different challenges.

Guidance, Companionship, Cultivation, Advocacy and Value are foundational to pre:fab. These concepts are at the centre of everything we do, including our presidential nomination application. They are a priori commitments we make and remake before we act and through this shape those actions.

We are conscious of our naivety regarding the daily challenges faced by this institution, its board and executive, so have chosen to share these concepts with you now in place of more direct or specific claims about, or ideas for, Te Kāhui Whaihanga.

**[19] Reverse Johns [1min] [Leonard]**

In the spirit of this shift in perspective illustrated by these couplets, we would like to invite everyone to now flip the card in their name tags, revealing their new role in the dialogue moving forward. [Await card flips]

This is a ritual act, and the space that we now inhabit is a ritual space of collective imagination and discovery.

We would like to invite all of the board members to reflect on our presentation. How do these couplets resonate with your experience of the profession, with the time spent and knowledge gained on this board, and how do you imagine they could be developed in Te Kāhui Whaihanga's future?

We invite you to take the rākau in the spirit of your new roles and the ritual space of speculation they open up; We will now stop talking.

**[20] Dialogue [9.5min (could be up to 12min) or whatever is left less 0.5 min]**

General:

- Remember Board member John responses
- Bring the couplets in: Will be on visuals
- Someone as facilitator: do we need this?
- Monitor how things are going and redirect conversation as required: Nick?
- Create/use prompts as necessary: Team

Detail to refer to:

- Public Education around architecture
  - Science Media Center as a precedent
  - Support earth building in schools and universities
  - Support carbon and life-cycle analysis education as above
- How to frame what 'awards' mean
  - Awards as grants etc
- Being more political and politically engaged - having some non-negotiables
  - Taking positions on local/national/global issues relating to architecture
- Support for regional practices? + provide a similar framework for alternative practices
  - Alternative practice network
  - Cultivation these services and education of clients about their value
- Acknowledging other ways of practising claiming these are architectural practice
  - Expanded field: Support innovative practitioners and programmes actively

- reimagining how we engage with and think about architecture,
- And those redeploying architectural knowledge in new and different ways/contexts.
- R&D what we said in our nomination app etc.
- Rethink in:situ
- Release club
- Transparency
  - Who are we
    - Data survey on where architects come from, where they end up, how and why they take those trajectories, how to open up the pipeline
    - Remuneration surveys / salary transparency
  - Stop prioritising Directors/Principles/Owners
  - Democratic/transparent practices
- Publishing - books, journals, a focus on the practice of architecture rather than its objects - Making Space a great start into this.
- ...

[29.5] **Close** [0.5 min] [Simon]

[Adlib as required]

We would like to again thank the board for their invitation to attend the meeting today, and for their contributions and insight in our discussions. Moving forward, pre:fab's intention is to continue operating independently as an advocate for architectural discourse and alternative practice, and as a collective events and publication label as was our original purpose.

We welcome further engagement with Te Kāhui Whaihanga.

