

Port Place Reconsidered

Genius Loci and the Renewal of Port Dalhousie

by
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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

Port Dalhousie, a neighbourhood of St. Catharines located on the southern shore of Lake Ontario, has in recent years experienced an economic, cultural, and social decline. Once the northern terminus of the Welland Canal, and a popular tourist hotspot, Port Dalhousie has undergone a loss of identity and a lack of vision for the future due to a diminished Genius Loci. This thesis posits that the Port Mansion, originally a hotel and operating as the social focal point for Port Dalhousie throughout its lifetime, represented the physical manifestation of the Genius Loci. With the demolition of this historic building, the Genius Loci was weakened, and man as the agent of this prolific force can no longer be informed by it, resulting in incoherent development proposals and the uncertain future of this place.

In this text, the concept of Genius Loci, defined simply as “the spirit of the place,” is outlined, the historical and physical contexts that Port Dalhousie exists within are illustrated, and the stakeholders connected to the site are identified. All are considered holistically to ultimately propose a re-imagining of the Port Mansion as Port Place; a campus of buildings and a modest park which attempt to reinstate the Genius Loci of Port Dalhousie. By re-imagining the Port Mansion as a piece of social infrastructure which engages multiple different demographic groups, the proposal allows the Genius Loci to speak through the actions of the users, therefore restoring its role within the community and securing its advantageous presence into the future.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the people of Port Dalhousie:

that contribute to its spirit through their actions,

that share with others their unique experiences there,

that make it a place worth studying.

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Introduction

Introduction

Nobody can truly forget the places they come from. Simply put, I am from Port Dalhousie, and although I left years ago to begin my adult life, it continues to draw me back in a way I think it always will, even after my family and friends have left and all physical ties to the place have been severed. I have vivid snapshots imprinted on my brain of waving to my mom from the seat of the brilliant white horse that every little girl standing in line to the antique carousel desperately coveted. The most overpowering lake smell that hits you like a brick wall and then just as instantly dissipates during walks on the pier. My sister's sunglasses with flip-up lenses that were too small for my head she would wear on the beach as the sun beat down on us and the lake breeze cut through the heat. Anyone fortunate enough to have any memory of this place would no doubt have their own lucid recollections that play like home movies on the backs of closed eyelids when allowing oneself to revisit Port Dalhousie in one's mind.

Fig 0.1 The Port Dalhousie Pier

But equally as important as the memory is the history and geography of the place. Port Dalhousie, located on a small peninsula on the southern shore of Lake Ontario, is a neighbourhood in the City of St. Catharines. Originally a late 18th century settlement of United Empire Loyalist soldiers, it got its start as the northern terminus of the Welland Canal. Although its origins are in industry, Port's Lakeside Park was a popular tourist destination from the early 1900s onwards, and the rowing course at Port Dalhousie continues to draw athletes from around the continent every year. For decades, Port Dalhousie prospered economically, culturally, and socially, but in recent years this prosperity has come to an end, plunging the community into decline. The loss of industry with the relocation of the

Welland Canal, and the loss of tourism from the destruction of the commercial core has left Port Dalhousie with no purpose or activity. Haphazard and heritage-insensitive development efforts have been made, with demolition succeeding and building failing. Today, Port Dalhousie suffers from a loss of identity, weakened resources, and confusion regarding its role in the looming future, despite the efforts of its dedicated residents who want to see this place restored to its former greatness. The challenge of this thesis is to address this decline in a way that is respectful of the history of Port Dalhousie while still being effective.

This thesis posits that the answer to this problem lies in understanding and utilizing the concept of *Genius Loci*. Outlined by theorists to generally mean the spirit of the place, it is what makes here different from there. More important though is the potential for the *Genius Loci* to inform the agent of change of what a place inherently needs. This thesis states that the *Genius Loci* of Port Dalhousie, reactivated after a time of incoherence, will be the most essential contributor to Port Dalhousie's future success. A newly invigorated *Genius Loci* would act as the compulsive force so desperately needed by this place, but also as a clear framework so that those compelled by the *Genius Loci* could only add constructively to the unique sense of place Port Dalhousie possesses.

This thesis is presented in three parts. Part One, *Genius Loci*, sets the theoretical framework that this exercise exists within. It explains the meaning of *Genius Loci* through the analysis of architectural theorists writing on the subject. It also relates this concept to the location in question, comparing it to the same relationship present in local contexts. Finally, Part One establishes the physical manifestation of the *Genius Loci* of Port Dalhousie as the Port Mansion, a now-demolished built reminder of Port Dalhousie's past.

Part Two, *Contexts*, investigates the conditions that this thesis exists within. The history of the place, its position within a regional context, its urban morphology, and pre-existing architectural fragments are all outlined to paint a vivid picture of Port Dalhousie for those who are unfamiliar.

Part Three, *Dreams*, is the final part of the thesis, the

design proposal that employs the theories of Part One to work with the resources of Part Two to give Port Dalhousie a sustainable purpose, identity, and projections. The proposal for a new Port Mansion, Port Place, is treated as the physical manifestation of the Genius Loci of Port Dalhousie, and a design proposal for this site strengthens the character of the place, informs residents and visitors of what this place is to become, and gives them a space to partake in the rituals of the Genius Loci of Port Dalhousie.

By consulting the Genius Loci of Port Dalhousie, and proposing a new physical manifestation of it in the form of Port Place for all residents and visitors to experience and enjoy, the Genius Loci's power to heal can be illuminated and re-established as a framework to help take Port Dalhousie into its long awaited future.

Part One



Genius Loci

Part One- Genius Loci

Situated on a small peninsula on the southern shore of Lake Ontario exists Port Dalhousie, a historic port town-turned-tourist attraction-turned sleepy suburb, above all a community for those who have chosen to make their homes in an affluent neighbourhood with tangible built reminders of the past and glimpses of a future not yet realized. An interesting and vivid history serves as a unique resource for the prospective prosperity of this place, but a series of detrimental developments in the economy, geography, and social life of Port Dalhousie have sent it into a downward decline. Using its history and its physicality as assets for regeneration, respect for its architecture, landscape, and the people who shaped both for over 200 years serves as a blueprint for what could be. However, in order to use Port Dalhousie's history to an advantage in inventing an optimistic future, the importance of this history must first be thoroughly understood to allow connections to be made to the past, which is not so different from that of many other small-towns in Southern Ontario and beyond.

Fig 1.1 (opposite) **Statue of Genius Loci**

Stone figure of the Genius Loci of a Roman villa, found in the facade of the Church of St. Giles, Tockenham, Wiltshire, England. Identified as a Genius figure by archaeologist and art historian Jocelyn Toynbee in *Brittania* journal in 1978, it contains all symbols known to be associated with Genii; the cornucopia (right hand), the patera (left hand), and the snake (bottom left).

The Compounding Problem of Identity and Genius Loci

While Port Dalhousie faces quantitative problems caused by factors such as its demographics and industrial origins, it also faces a qualitative problem that cannot be measured by surveys and censuses. This quality drives away people in search of a fulfilling place to settle. This is Port Dalhousie's weak identity, and its subsequent lack of vision for the future.

In the past, at any given time, Port Dalhousie served a

purpose that was clear and generative of the economy and social lives of those that lived there. At first, it was a crucial port town on the Welland Canal, and its landscape and community were shaped by its commercial and industrial intention. There was no question amongst the townspeople what purpose Port Dalhousie served, and all their actions and plans for the place were ultimately set in motion to realize this purpose. Dry-docks were established, as were taverns and hotels to serve the seamen who came through the town, and locks were consistently upgraded. There was no confusion as to the identity of the town as a shipping node, and so this governed the behaviour of its people.

When this identity was no longer feasible to maintain into the future, attitudes shifted and Port Dalhousie once again gained a new identity, as a destination for fun and leisure. Again, all urban interventions such as streetcars, ferry boats, and architecture synthesized to lend their advantages to enforcing a new identity that could be shared by both the people who lived there and the place itself. Port Dalhousie once again flourished because all facets of its existence were concentrated on the same goal, ever present and secure in the collective consciousness.

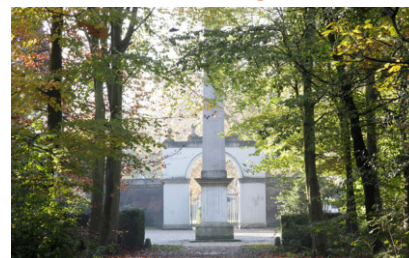
Now, this place which once knew so clearly what it was has been overcome with confusion and incoherence. Port Dalhousie has now faded into an area where people dwell, simply a “part of St. Catharines,” land host to disjointed buildings and enterprises. It has no spirit for its residents to proudly reinforce, no vision for what it is and where it is going. It is no wonder the demographics reflect this monochrome reality and not a vibrant, optimistic force of the landscape. Efforts continue to be made to help Port Dalhousie out of this slump, but how could they be helpful at all when they are so scattered and unfocussed, and have no framework for cooperation? Perhaps the answers to these questions can be found in the concept of *Genius Loci*.

Genius Loci is an ancient Roman religious concept, the latin form of the word meaning literally “spirit of the place.”¹ In ancient times, the *Genius Loci* of a place was akin to a guardian spirit that presided over a site and all that happened there.² The idea of *Genius Loci* has, in contemporary times, morphed into a more secular form of the spirit of place, where a less ambiguous definition of spirit has been traded for a more conceptual one.

Bollo Brook



Obelisk at Burlington Gate



Ionic Temple



Fig 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 **The Gardens at Chiswick House**

The Chiswick House gardens are the birthplace of the English Landscape Movement. Although carefully planned and constructed, the Gardens at Chiswick House appear as if the lightest hand guided by nature itself intervened on behalf of the Earl. Pictured here is Bollo Brook, the Obelisk at Burlington Gate, and the Ionic Temple. The brook, for example, was originally a stream that was widened, its banks manually planted to appear as naturally occurring as possible.

Now, Genius Loci refers less to a specific deity, and more to a creative force that is responsible for all events and matters of a specific place from the very conception of it into the unknown future. Genius Loci is no longer an invisible individual but an abstract, provocative energy.

Perhaps the first widely observed contemporary mention of Genius Loci in this way was by poet Alexander Pope in his 1731 Epistle IV, to Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington, where Pope implored the Earl to take a less heavy-handed approach in the landscape design at his palladian villa, Chiswick House:



Consult the genius of the place in all;
That tells the waters to rise, or fall;
Or helps th' ambitious hill the heav'ns to scale;
Or scoops in circling theatres the vale;
Calls in the country, catches opening glades,
Joins willing woods, and varies shades from shades,
Now breaks, or now directs, th'intending lines;
Paints as you plant, and as you work, designs.³

Pope speaks of the Genius Loci as the true designer of a particular place, which works in harmony with the human designer after being carefully consulted and considered. This is especially in regards to the designed natural landscape or what is now recognized as landscape architecture, but the same can be applied to the design of any place, such as the city. This is the location that interested Aldo Rossi.

Italian architect Aldo Rossi, in his 1981 treatise, *The Architecture of the City*, elaborates on the contemporary meaning of Genius Loci and its place in modern architecture. He very plainly describes Locus first as “a relationship between a certain specific location and the buildings that are in it.”⁴ The result of this truth is another simple truth; a certain place could not be recreated in a different physical location, if a building were to be moved the relationship between the land and the building would be lost and so therefore would the original place be lost as well. This energy between the landscape and the interventions of man on it is what makes a place more than simply geographic coordinates, but a singular setting worthy of living in. More important, however, is the implication in this situation that the Genius Loci would cease to exist in the same manner if the “Loci” were to be changed.

Fig 1.5 'The Fragments of Genius Loci

According to Rossi, the relationship between the site and the buildings on it can be referred to as the Locus (orange circle). When a building is taken out of context or moved to a different location, the original locus is lost, as is the Genius Loci (figure in bubble).

The Role of Man in Genius Loci

Slightly before Rossi, in 1979, Norwegian architect and theorist Christian Norberg-Schulz published his understanding of the Genius Loci in his book, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology in Architecture*. The two men agree on most aspects governing Genius Loci, but Norberg-Schulz makes more discernible the role of man in this abstract architectural relationship, as Pope had in his epistle centuries earlier.

While still presenting Genius Loci as encompassing time, Norberg-Schulz leans more towards the belief that the Genius Loci of any given place is affected more by its physical environment and its architecture than the other way around. Rossi asserts that the Genius Loci is an overarching force that shapes an environment. Genius Loci, to Norberg-Schulz, is a character to be visualized by architecture and in that way it is inseparable from

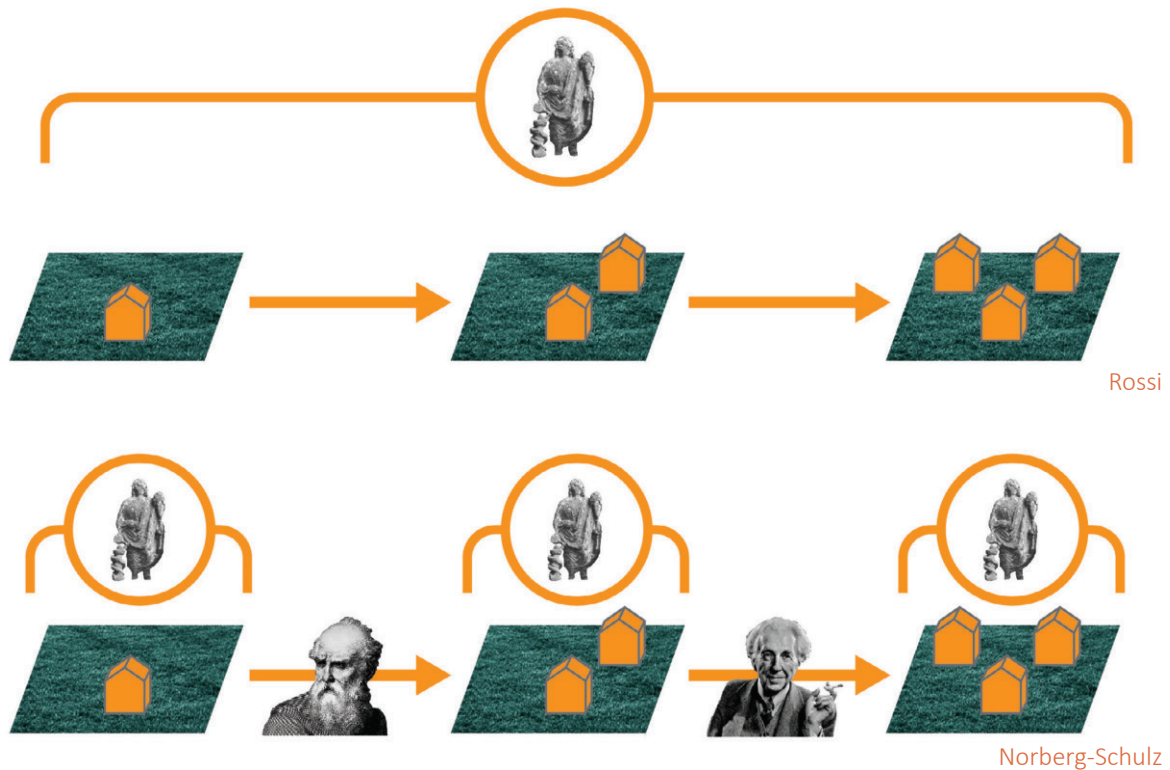


Fig 1.6, Genius Loci as Taught by Aldo Rossi and Christian Norberg-Schulz

In Rossi's opinion, Genius Loci is an overarching quality that is always present throughout the evolution of a place. Norberg-Schulz makes apparent the generational quality of Genius Loci, as well as the importance of man in the process of a place's evolution.

the temporality of the place; one man focuses on the overarching quality of Genius Loci and the other focuses on the generational quality of it. Norberg-Schulz puts emphasis on the abstract character of a place as something that can be felt by visitors, which in turn urges them to add things to the place which embody and further this character. His definition of the concept makes man the undeniable agent of a place's Genius Loci. He writes in his book, "...man "receives' the environment and makes it focus in buildings and things. The things thereby 'explain' the environment and make its character manifest."⁵ Consider statements that have identical meanings but different implications to man's role in his environment: 'the architecture of a place makes the Genius Loci apparent,' in contrast to "The Genius Loci of a place drives the creation of its architecture.' To Norberg-Schulz, the former is what holds weight, while the latter may appeal more to Rossi.

A final author, writing before Rossi and Norberg-Schulz, brings an interesting and unique insight to the discourse on man's role in the forces that compel a place into existence. In his book, *The Idea of a Town*, Joseph Rykwert does not explicitly use the term Genius Loci, however his text proves his acute understanding of this concept, to be outlined by Rossi and Norberg-Schulz fifteen years later. While Rykwert's writing aligns seamlessly with what is understood as Genius Loci, his work concentrates more on how the Genius (more often referred to as "The Cosmos" or "The Divine" by Rykwert) physically shaped the urban world of antiquity.

In *The Idea of a Town*, Rykwert is exhaustive in his examples and explanations of how places were chosen for settlements by the ancients, and how these settlements developed based on the necessity of consulting divine forces in this process. He focusses very intensely on the capability of cosmic energy to form a place from an otherwise unexceptional location. It is the origin of the place, and this happening's dependence on the divine that interests Rykwert in much of the text. He writes, "[Divine] intervention was clearly an integral part of the foundation proceedings, and was always incorporated into the notional apparatus of the inhabitants about their home."⁶ While Rossi and Norberg-Schulz take up the explanation of the power of Genius Loci to propel a place through time, Rykwert concentrates on explaining that, to the people of



Fig 1.7, 1.8 The Divining Liver of Piacenza and The Augur

Rykwert writes of foundation ceremonies performed by the ancients, some involving the practice of haruspicy, where a trained person would examine a sacrificed animal's entrails (like the liver) for signs from cosmos, which would then inform the founders of the town in their undertakings. This model of a liver is of Etruscan origin. Similarly, Augurs could also interpret godly signs in the physical landscape by drawing a *templum* and observing the prospective site. These experts are represented in traditional iconography as holding a curved staff, or *lituus*.

antiquity, the *Genius Loci* was capable of beginning a city from nothing.

Although today's society separates mysticism from civic decision-making, the ancients interpreted myth very rationally. "Modern writers always consider the choice of a site for a town in terms of economy, hygiene, traffic problems and facilities. Whenever the founder of an ancient town thought in those terms he could only do so after having translated them into mythical terms."⁷ Rykwert asserts that in antiquity, the presiding spirits had the authority to veto or validate the emergence of a new human settlement. However, he also emphasizes the role of man in this decidedly divine event, mirroring what Norberg-Schulz wrote of this relationship later; *Genius Loci* always requires the intervention of man in order to manifest in the physical environment. While Norberg-Schulz simply claims the importance of this relationship, it is Rykwert who outlines specifically what this relationship entailed to the people of antiquity. He theorizes that man becomes the agent of *Genius Loci* through the undertaking of sacred ritual, and proves this point through many classical examples.

To Norberg-Schulz and Rossi, the *Genius Loci* is an invisible framework that man can follow or be guided by when building his environment. In Rykwert's assertions too, *Genius*

Loci is the mysterious force that compels man into the correct action for a certain place. In the former's understanding, Genius Loci is an abstract idea where man is the agent, however the specific link between the two is unclear. In Norberg-Schulz's defence, this is perhaps the strength of the Genius Loci, it is in this lack of rationality that man can feel what a place truly needs, and not simply what it lacks. However, to Rykwert, it is the act of ritual that explicitly links Genius Loci and man together. Rykwert says, "The performing of the rites actually fixed the physical shape of the city,"⁸ explaining man's part in interpreting the wishes of the Gods.

Rykwert explains in exceptional detail the foundational rituals used by ancients when establishing the site of a city. An augur would draw a sort-of map, a *templum*, whose purpose was to record the cosmos on physical land. "By the simple act of drawing his cross within his circle, the augur, standing on his hilltop scrying the southern horizon... had put himself at the hub of the sacred universe."⁹ This ritual designated the translated space as sacred. Man's central role in the universal macrocosm is illustrated in this ritual. Similar to the view of Genius Loci Norberg-Schulz holds, Rykwert shows that without man, the Genius Loci of a new settlement would never have an emissary to create place. However it is man's literal central positioning in this rite which suggests his imperative role in the rise of his context, in a way that is not clarified by Rossi or Norberg-Schulz. With this insight from Rykwert, man is upgraded from spiritual servant to the center of, even the reason for, these cosmic forces.

Memory and Genius Loci

It may seem obvious to state, but all places, especially those existing for long periods of time, have rich and layered pasts which cannot soon be forgotten. In fact, it is precisely its past which makes Port Dalhousie a formidable area of study to begin with. In the memory of a place lies its leverage for a future; as stated, the Genius Loci constitutes the force that drives a place towards its destiny, while always considering its history, back to the place's origin.

According to Rykwert's text, the origin ritual of a town was not the only rite performed by the ancients, as ritual was essential not only to the inauguration of a town but throughout the course of its existence as well. With this text, Rykwert illustrates three main purposes of ritual in antiquity. The first and second have already been discussed; to make present the Gods in civic life and to interpret their wills, and to assert man's fundamental value to the Genius Loci.

Rykwert writes, "The rite performed a function in the life of the community: it answered a need which could not be assuaged by its single performance at the foundation of a town."¹⁰ Ritual was performed over and over, not simply ending with the birth of the town; this constant divine reassurance both drove the town forwards in time while also recalling the same cosmic guidance present at its inception. The third purpose of ritual was therefore to evoke memory.

Memory is also an important facet to the essence of Genius Loci, as the latter simply cannot exist without the former. Genius Loci always considers the past; this is the intrinsic nature of Genius Loci. Ritual was performed by the ancients to evoke the memory of the origin rites of a particular place, the memory of the past conjured in the present the original influence of the Genius Loci to manipulate the evolution of the town. Again, recalling what Rykwert has said of the role of man, Genius Loci is realized through man's direct action of performing ritual. It is the act of man's remembrance of this force through ritual that simultaneously animates the Genius Loci in the present as influenced by the past, and gives man the purpose of execution.

The Genius Loci's temporal quality is what gives it such great power over the landscape. The memory of the past in the present is what guarantees that the Genius Loci endures and informs throughout the lifetime of a place. Rykwert, as well as Rossi, have similar views on temporality and the memory of a place, and how it relates to the Genius Loci.

Rykwert again asserts that rite is what allows man to understand the Genius Loci throughout time. He writes, "The function of such incantations is to interrupt the ordinary passage of time and by repeating the archetypal gesture of some mythical ancestor or hero, to renew his powerful action; to take the given

place at which it is applied out of normal influences acting on it, and insert the great time of revelation into the passage of time at this given moment.”¹¹ Ritual did not simply recall a past cosmic force, but took that force and copied it into the fabric of time over and over. After time has passed, people of the city are not only reminded of the past through ritual, but through the geometry of the city, its architecture, and all other physical markers influenced by the rites performed at their creation and at each subsequent modification. It is in this way that memory manifests in the physicality of the town. Ritual becomes an integral part of Genius Loci because ritual is what allows the Genius Loci to shape a town over time through its motivation of man. For example, what is a temple but a permanent manifestation of the templum and the origin ritual which involves it?

Etching by Piranesi



Modern Photograph



Fig 1.9, 1.10 The Arch of Septimius Severus, Then and Now

The Arch of Septimius Severus is an iconic part of the Roman Forum. Depicted in an etching from 1759 by Giovanni Battista Piranesi, its surroundings have obviously changed, however it is still very recognizable today, and interacted with by man in much the same way.

Rossi also adds the dimension of temporality to Genius Loci, describing the locus as something that exists throughout time, as “...the seat of succession of ancient and recent times... its memory.”¹² To Rossi, the Locus does not exist as a fixed and unchanging artifact, but as a symbol of a culmination of moments, lives, and memories. The Genius Loci is therefore a force that is always formative based on a prior narrative embodied within the Locus, that stretches both backwards and forwards from a singular point in time. Rossi gives the example of the Roman Forum as an artifact that “...epitomizes Rome, and is part of Rome and is the sum of its monuments.”¹³ Throughout time the function of this space has changed from market, to square, even to archaeological site, but its essential character as a meeting place, the centre for all of Rome, its Genius Loci, did not change. The Genius Loci forces the Roman Forum from era to era as a continuously important centre, always true to its original purpose. This is the compulsive power of the Genius Loci. It is always embedded where there is architecture and it is the authority with an invisible hand that guides a given place forwards as influenced unwaveringly by the past.

Rossi is very clear about the way in which the persistence of the past physically manifests within the structure of the city. Although ritual is not explored by Rossi, he agrees with Rykwert in that it is the constant observation and recognition of the past which shapes the city and its urban artifacts as they exist in the

present.

Rossi, influenced by French urbanist Marcel Poëte, developed in *The Architecture of the City* his theory of permanences, which explores the enduring nature of monuments as indications of the Genius Loci throughout time. He writes that “...the difference between past and future...[is] that the past is partly being experienced now.”¹⁴ Translated architecturally this means that “permanences...are a past we are still experiencing.”¹⁵ They are physical indications of the memory of a place (and subsequently, its Genius Loci). According to Rossi, there are two types of permanences: propelling, or vital, permanences, as well as pathological permanences. Neither is inherently more important than the other, as they both exemplify a place’s continuous memory, however they are different in certain ways from each other.

Propelling permanences are described simply by Rossi as “a form of a past we still experience.”¹⁶ They are architectural and urban examples where the physical form of the past has continued to function usefully in a society, even if the function has changed over time. A propelling permanence also continues to modify its urban context while remaining a focal point within it. Rossi gives the example of the Palazzo della Ragione in Padua, Italy as a propelling permanence; it continues to function as more than simply a relic, which according to Rossi proves its vitality. Perhaps another important aspect of propelling permanences is its transcendent temporality; one can not only remember the permanence as it was, and see it as it is, but can also imagine a future life for it. The permanence has memory, but also has projections.

Pathological permanences are different primarily because they allow users to experience the past in a way that propelling permanences cannot. While the use of propelling permanences are still “...intimately tied to the city...”¹⁷ despite changing over time, pathological permanences are isolated from the city precisely because they exist so unchanged. Pathological permanences are so essential to the understanding of a place’s past that they must remain unmodified despite serving no useful purpose other than posing as a time capsule, the original use long abandoned. Rossi gives the example of The Alhambra in Granada, Spain to illustrate pathological permanences; it is such an important part of the country’s history that it must be preserved as diligently as possible,



Fig 1.11 The Palazzo della Ragione, Padua

Once the city council building of Padua, the Palazzo della Ragione now serves as a market. On its lower floors are small shops, its upper floor is a large hall featuring historic frescoes and is a popular tourist site.



Fig 1.12 The Alhambra, Granada

Very unlike the Palazzo Della Ragione, the Alhambra palace is separated from the city and everyday life. Although it also has a multi-layered past, it is now kept as unchanged as possible, including in regards to its use. Rather than evolving along with the city, as is the case with the Palazzo, the Alhambra remains a time capsule.

but will never be used as it originally was again.

Although propelling permanences may seem more exciting and practical for the living and changing organism that is the city, both types of permanences are significant because they both constitute the city, in fact, according to Rossi, “A monuments persistence... is a result of its capacity to constitute the city... its being and memory.”¹⁸ Permanences embody the Genius Loci, especially the temporal quality of it. They give citizens reminders of what a place was, is, and wants to be. “The dynamic process of the city tends more to evolution than preservation, and that in evolution monuments are not only preserved but continuously presented as propelling elements of development.”¹⁹ To Rossi, permanences, which are often identified as monuments due to their persistence, are comparable to Rykwert’s rituals. Both recall a past that is meant to inspire man to create his city in the image of Genius Loci.

The Present and Future of Genius Loci in Port Dalhousie and Surrounding Contexts

Both Rossi and Norberg-Schulz also agree that the Genius Loci of a place does not change or get lost; another characteristic of this elusive concept. Rossi, as previously mentioned, chooses to present the Genius Loci as a power that will always honor a place’s original identity and purpose, as illustrated in his Roman Forum example. Norberg-Schulz similarly asserts, “Stabilitas Loci is a necessary condition for human life.”²⁰ Although both men ultimately agree on the unchanging nature of the Genius Loci, Norberg-Schulz gives more space in his view for development, stating “to protect and conserve the Genius Loci in fact means to concretize its essence in ever new historical contexts.”²¹ In his understanding, Norberg-Schulz accepts more freely that over time, attitudes change and so too should the ways Genius Loci manifests, while still always allowing its original essence to prevail.

When considering this concept of Genius Loci and interpreting its meaning through the writings of Pope, Rossi, Norberg-Schulz and Rykwert, and considering the looming development and recent projects undertaken in the area in question,

it becomes increasingly clear that Port Dalhousie's identity crisis could very well be due to a weakened Genius Loci. In its past, Port Dalhousie worked like a well-oiled machine; all cogs and gears fit together snugly, and the town itself was a perfectly contained microcosm of activity that was sustainable and concentrated on its own maintenance and advancement. This pertains not only to the enterprises centred on Port Dalhousie, but even simply the snapshots of humanity that served as Port Dalhousie's emotional architecture, its rituals, to borrow a term from Rykwert: Hellos between friends at the general store, candy floss snuck to a child by a carnival employee, sitting shoulder-to-shoulder while cheering and clapping as favourite rowing teams race for the finish line, kicking a stray volleyball back to its waiting game on the beach, hastily finishing a sandcastle before the tide sweeps it away. The slices of life so easily observed in Port Dalhousie over time contribute just as much, if not more, to the illumination of the Genius Loci of the place than the economic drivers that are commonly credited with the success of it. Economically, Port Dalhousie prospered, but socially it did as well. Its Genius Loci was alive and clear, and compelling in all actions, no matter how small.

Most importantly, the Genius Loci of Port Dalhousie was clear to all people and drove all their actions that contributed to the place. The Genius Loci acted as a readily apparent 'skeleton' that all residents and visitors only had to observe to understand it inherently, and could add pieces to without confusion to produce a whole, healthy body. Man was the agent of this force, and the role of agent was an easy one, because the Genius Loci clearly told man what he was to do. Over time, however, this skeleton has become frail and has fallen apart, some bones turning to fine dust and disappearing completely, others falling into a jumbled heap.

Now that the Genius Loci of Port Dalhousie has been weakened, man has no direction or instruction from the Genius Loci, resulting in chaotic intervention and scattered efforts, contributing to Port Dalhousie's decline. How could man follow guidance from only the faintest whisper? This is why a re-activated Genius Loci could act as one of the most important and effective contributors to Port Dalhousie's future success. This newly invigorated Genius Loci not only acts as a compulsive force, as explained by Rossi, but also as a reassembled 'skeleton,' to continue a pre-

vious metaphor. It would become a new framework which would ensure all efforts made for the betterment of Port Dalhousie only add constructively to the unique sense-of-place that Port Dalhousie possesses.

This newly strengthened Genius Loci, not newly created but awoken, would give Port Dalhousie a clear identity again, attracting newcomers to add to the place's most important resource; its people, and informing them of what is needed to only improve the place more. The final question in this series that this text has posed is simple to state and difficult to answer: if it is such an important generating force, what then is Port Dalhousie's Genius Loci?

This is not as easy as simply stating a characteristic of a place, the simplicity of a word or a phrase is too often confining when trying to define the Genius Loci, in fact to "define" the Genius Loci is nearly impossible. One could say, "Port Dalhousie is influenced most by the water," which, while technically not untrue puts undue focus on a single aspect of the place, and does nothing to indicate the spirit or character that possesses a place. Absolutely, the water influences Port Dalhousie significantly, but to ascribe this fact as the Genius Loci is to misunderstand the meaning of the term entirely.

Theoretically, this brief Literature Review has proven what is and what is not Genius Loci, its rules and truths, but this concept is still abstract and difficult to identify for those that have never sought it out. Perhaps, ease of understanding can come through example. Local contexts that are similar in geography, history, and social attitudes can be examined to explain Genius Loci and its macro- and micro- influences.

Looking at the Southwestern shoreline of Lake Ontario, one can easily see the urban focal points and transitional areas between them, which point to the economic power of this region, its opportunities, and the cultural shift of the population preferring proximity to the city over increased personal space. Toronto plays the role of epicentre and surrounding settlements visibly and literally rise up to the challenge of accommodating unprecedented numbers of people. Not visible, however, are other demographic trends; for example, a rapidly aging Canadian population that have forsaken the metropolis for a slower-paced lifestyle. Both be-



Fig 1.13 Southwestern Shoreline of Lake Ontario

This image of the area sometimes referred to as the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), is illustrative of the urban centres of this region, agricultural and natural areas, as well as the urban tissue that connects the two. Light grey indicates very built areas, darker grey indicates a mixture of green and built space, with green obviously indicating agricultural and natural areas. Burlington and Niagara-on-the-Lake are also marked.

haviours, and every behaviour in between, can be observed in these diverse settlements along the lakeshore.

Burlington, Ontario, may prove an illuminating example when considering these places and the Genius Loci of each. Again, this cannot be reduced to a single word or idea, however the Genius Loci of Burlington can be uncovered in its developments, literally speaking. Like Port Dalhousie and many other settlements along the Lake Ontario shores, Burlington was established due to its lakefront, which served as a port for the dispatch of goods. All of Burlington's history is punctuated by its exceptional population growth, especially its recent history. The city's 2016 strategic plan calls for "higher density" future development in its "mobility hubs," including downtown and waterfront areas, and around its Go Stations.²² The plan emphasizes intensification around these Metrolinx infrastructures, which clearly illustrates the city's connectivity to its surrounding context (namely Toronto), as a major asset. This also, however, shows Burlington's inclination towards becoming a bedroom community for Toronto.

Burlington's existing and projected high density developments are easy to distinguish as the defining characteristic of the city's downtown and waterfront. Unfortunately, these buildings often are sized and sited to impede walkability, only superficially attempt to engage the community through haphazard retail at ground level, but most importantly, simply lack any soulful or exciting character. The Genius Loci is reflected by these generic condominiums that continue, like weeds, to grow in this area. The character visualized by the architecture of Burlington is inanimate, dull, lifeless.

On the complete opposite end of the spectrum is another lakefront example of an easily observable Genius Loci, seemingly more vivacious than Burlington, but with uncanny undertones. Niagara-on-the-Lake seems to the occasional visitor an ideal small town; it is walkable, the definition of picturesque, engaging culturally and commercially, and has very apparent historical roots that are emphasized to their maximum potential by local businesses. Most people would identify its centre as the area called "historic old town," more specifically Queen Street and its buildings and landscape elements, however the countryside surrounding the concentrated downtown consist almost exclusively of vineyards,

serving as the economic and even social and cultural drivers of this region. While the vineyards are a characteristic landscape type of the area, many would agree that a trip to Niagara-on-the-Lake is not complete without having visited the downtown core.

Niagara-on-the-Lake has always been a fairly high-brow place. Having once been the capital of the Province of Upper Canada, its historic townscape coupled with its more recent windfall of wineries has made it a very popular tourist destination, especially for the “classy” traveller perhaps looking to view a play at the nearby Shaw Festival, enjoy a gourmet meal, or even partake in some shopping. The issue with Niagara-on-the-Lake is its ingenuine charm. What appears as a quaint town with personality is actually a consumerist trap, where busloads of tourists cycle through by the day to shop for trinkets in establishments that are housed in historically significant buildings.

A very possible focus on authentic, historical built form showing the lifestyles and architecture of years past is forsaken, instead opposed by a fake representation thinly obscuring business’ efforts to earn money off of those fooled by the illusion of a historically significant site. Whatever history left in the place is enslaved in order to deceive tourists into parting with their money. This, sadly, is the Genius Loci of Niagara-on-the-Lake; an attempt to translate profit from historicism, valuing a fabricated and embellished vision of the past over actual historically significant architectural and cultural examples, which do exist at this site if only to lend validity to the counterfeit image projected by local enterprises. One would only need to visit Niagara-on-the-lake or even observe a photograph of the streetscape at peak season to understand the Genius Loci of this place and how it influences and is influenced by the built environment there.

Finding Genius Loci

Both of the examples presented are similar, not least of all in that they each present problematic trajectories for a contemporary society; cities and towns must be engaging and personable while remaining as un-manufactured and genuine as possible. Perhaps striving for a gentle balance between these two examples

would be beneficial when considering a new proposal of the future of Port Dalhousie in order to enjoy popularity but retain its sincerity. Most importantly, however, is that the Genius Loci be consulted and valued, lest it be destroyed. Unfortunately, this is already underway in Port Dalhousie.

This text asserts that the Genius Loci of Port Dalhousie was, throughout its history, embodied by the Port Mansion, a building holding many purposes over its lifetime; to borrow a term of Rossi's, it was a propelling permanence that was both evocative of the memory of the past and truly beloved by the community in the present as a social and cultural center of the neighbourhood. Although there are other architecturally important buildings with-



Lakeshore Road at Elizabeth Street



Prince of Wales Hotel



Lakeshore Road at Pearl Street



Clocktower and Shops

Fig 1.14, 1.15 The Genius Loci of Burlington

Burlington's high density developments have been implemented with disregard to human activity in the urban plasma between built forms. Walkability and engagement are two major issues that have gone unaddressed by these developments.

Fig 1.16, 1.17 The Genius Loci of Niagara-on-the-Lake

In contrast, Niagara-on-the-Lake has an extremely engaging and walkable streetscape, however its urban interface hides its manufactured and false nature behind fetishized historicism.

in the downtown area, perhaps even more historically significant, no building tells the overarching story of the community more clearly than the Port Mansion. It is by observing this building one can in turn observe the Genius Loci of Port Dalhousie.

By 1829, construction of the first Welland Canal had been finished, and Port Dalhousie was located at the Lake Ontario Terminus of this important waterway. Hotels and taverns were quickly established to accommodate the many men who passed through for work related to the canal. Shipbuilders, labourers, sailors, etc. gave patronage to the many hotels of Port Dalhousie, eventually leading to the building of hotels such as The Wellington House, The Austin House, The Wood House Hotel, Runchey's Hotel, Pat Herrigan's Tavern, The Temperance Hotel, The Niagara House, Sam Cole's Hotel, and the McNulty Hotel.²³ Very obviously, hotels and taverns, as well as other support enterprise for the Welland Canal, comprised the backbone of Port Dalhousie's economy. Two hotels, The McGrath Hotel and The Pawling Family's Union House, were established next to each other on former Front Street (now Lakeport Road), the main commercial street of old Port Dalhousie due to its visibility from the canal. These two hotels were what much later became the Port Mansion.

Two competing hotels, side by side; an illustrative depic-



Fig 1.18 Former Front Street, as seen from The Canal

The first and last view of Seamen entering and leaving The Welland Canal, respectively. The buildings to become The Port Mansion can be seen at the far right of the streetscape.

tion of the economic context of this rapidly growing village. By the time these hotels were founded in the mid 1800's, the entrepreneurial spirit of the small population of fourteen families had taken over Port Dalhousie and completely animated a new streetscape from nothing. The Genius Loci had begun to transform Port Dalhousie.

Hotels, including the two in question, have forever been romantically tinged symbols. Symbols of the mysterious volatility of impermanence, of the excitement of experiencing a new place, of the contentedness of having a safe spot to rest after a long journey, of a diverse array of people having been collected in the same place for a single moment in time. Hotels are one of Rykwert's temples, where the rituals of transience are repeated over and over, allowed to mingle with the goings-on of mundane, everyday life. There is perhaps no better symbol of Port Dalhousie's history than this local representation of different people always coming and going, a picture of proud residents making an honest living by offering their home to passers through, a lively place to celebrate the connections a place like Port Dalhousie can afford us as social beings.

The hotels were the focal point of social life, and a place where the two cultures of socialization and work could coalesce. These two hotels were multi-use buildings, with McGrath's run-

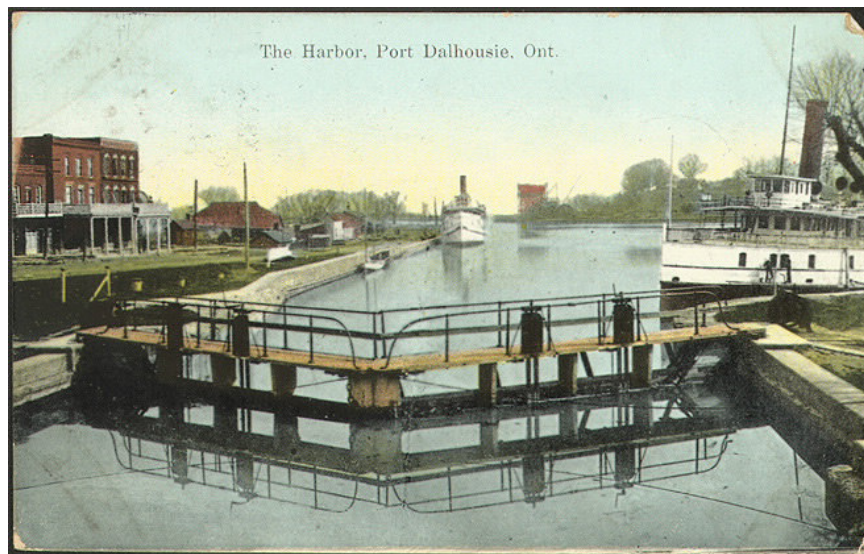


Fig 1.19 Port Dalhousie Harbour

The buildings to become The Port Mansion are seen at the left of this colorized postcard, dated from 1910.

ning a tugboat business and the Union House operating a provisionary out of the ground floors of each respective building.²⁴ Each Inn also had a bar room and a separate sitting room, as well as no less than four guest rooms, according to the requirements for an Inn and Tavern License in the 1880's.²⁵ For decades they served both residents and visitors alike; with the loss of the shipping industry in Port Dalhousie in the early 1930's the tourist industry took over, with the hotels catering to visitors of Lakeside Park, a popular amusement park located on the banks of Lake Ontario at Port Dalhousie. By 1936, the two hotels were consolidated into one, and by 1953 the building was called the Port Hotel, adopting a permutation of its current moniker.

The building continued to be used as a hotel, but as time passed and attitudes towards Port Dalhousie evolved its use shifted towards entertainment and dining. In 1979 the building was bought by a local company called Donatelli Productions, who within the year had begun modifications to the hotel. Many antique fixtures of mansions from around the Northern United States found themselves repurposed in this building; windows and stained glass art came from a mansion in Pennsylvania, wickets from an old post office in Buffalo became part of the new bar, solid walnut arches from a mansion in Syracuse became the portals between rooms, and a variety of antique hearths were repurposed from other old homes.²⁶ The newly renovated Port Mansion became the true social heart of Port Dalhousie. By 1997, a small dinner theatre was in operation in the building, as well as a restaurant and bar, with sitting rooms, a library, and extensive outdoor and balcony space; at night the building transformed into a lively nightclub. The Port Mansion was not the most classy or expensive place to visit, but it didn't need to be; beloved by residents and visitors, the Port Mansion was the hub of activity for Port Dalhousie where any and all were welcome to enjoy and relax.

The Renunciation of The Genius Loci

Again, there are still a handful of historically important buildings located in Port Dalhousie, but none tell the story of the past, both distant and recent, more effectively than the Port

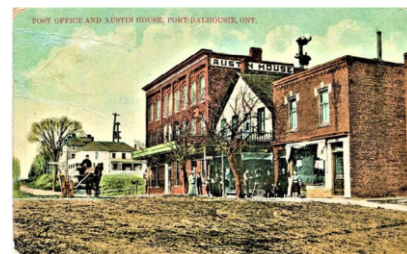


Fig 1.20 South side of Lock Street

Another hotel, Austin House, stood next to the Stanton Building, an early post office and general store, and the Denton Building, in this postcard depicting an early 20th Century view of Lock Street.



Fig 1.21 The Wellington House

This hotel is located just across Lock Street from the abovementioned Austin Hotel. Like many of the buildings pictured, it still stands today as a restaurant and brewery. The original postcard is dated 1905.

Mansion. This is because while these buildings are still standing, some even in operation in one way or another, the Port Mansion is not. Demolished in late 2012, the Port Mansion was torn down in anticipation of a new condominium to be built on the site.

The fate of the Port mansion is part of a years-long conflict between developers and residents, having a lasting effect on the physical landscape as well as the cultural and social centre of the neighbourhood. However, with the destruction of buildings and the built heritage of the area, the residents of Port Dalhousie saw a community effort of opposition unrivaled by any local organizing force to come before or since. While the inevitable downfall of Port Dalhousie's tourist industry and slowing of commercial activities within the core still took place, the collective efforts of the community show the sense of responsibility residents feel in

Fig 1.22, 1.23 **The Modern Port Mansion**

Midcentury, the building was known for a time as The Port Hotel, and was stuccoed over (right). The image below is how the Port Mansion appeared from the late 1970's onward.





Fig 1.24 (opposite, above) **The Port Mansion Doors**

As they appeared from the 1980's until demolition of the building.

Fig 1.26 (right) **The Port Mansion - Interior**

A view of one of the lounges inside the Port Mansion C.1980.



Fig 1.27 (right) **The Port Mansion - Interior**

A different view of the lounge pictured above.



Fig 1.28 (right) **The Port Mansion - Interior**

The bar inside the Port Mansion as it appeared from the 1980s until its demolition. Stained glass and other antique features were sourced from several old mansions in the area.

Fig 1.25 (opposite, below) **The Port Hotel**

Before it was called the Port Mansion, it was the Port Hotel, and still appeared as two hotels before the original brick facade was stuccoed over.





protecting and enhancing their beloved neighbourhood; Man once again demonstrates his agency in attempting to preserve the monuments of the Genius Loci of his environment.

In late 2003, Port Dalhousie's civic centre and parts of its residential periphery became a designated Heritage Conservation District, or HCD, under the Ontario Heritage Act. Many volunteers and residents who worked for the implementation of this designation believed that this would constitute the primary protection of Port Dalhousie's heritage assets. Despite the by-laws and zoning provisions made to strengthen this designation, the security of this district would be short lived. The Port Dalhousie Vitalization Corporation (PDVC, abbreviated), who was able to purchase the majority of land and buildings in the civic centre of Port Dalhousie proposed a change to the zoning by-law in order to begin development within this area.

Initially, many stakeholders viewed a possible proposal with cautious enthusiasm, under the assumption that a development would be ultimately beneficial to the business area while being sympathetic to the historic character of the existing streetscape. However, in the words of former Canadian Canal Society President, Dr. Roberta Stryan, the new proposal would "not only destroy Port's heritage... but also impose a structure that is totally alien in scale, material and general ambience."²⁷ The proposal consisted of a 33 storey condominium tower and commercial space, and would require the demolition of a number of historic build-

Fig 1.29 **The Demolition of Port Mansion**

ings. By comparison, the original zoning by-law governing this land allowed a maximum building height of 11 metres.

With the looming possibility of the destruction of the civic centre, the community of Port Dalhousie rallied and came together to attempt to oppose this proposal. Community initiatives began to form. From the members of the committee dedicated to acquiring HCD status came the Port Dalhousie Conservancy (PDC), the main group to actively oppose the PDVC in the public realm, including government hearings but also fundraising, garnering public support and raising awareness for the cause of preservation of Port Dalhousie. While the PDC can be viewed by those in favour of development as stubborn and antagonistic to change, in the early days of this campaign the group stated their support of a design that was accepting of development while being cognizant of a few realistic reservations.²⁸ Residents of Port Dalhousie, in a survey that was administered to every house within the affected municipal ward, were overwhelmingly supportive of the PDC's stance on development, and further voiced their support for mixed-use development whose main use would be recreational and community-serving as opposed to solely commercial.

A second tower proposal, now 17 storeys in height, was presented to the public, and in March 2006, over 900 members of the community attended a public meeting to voice their opposition of the new proposal. Despite these efforts, St. Catharines City Council voted to approve the PDVC's proposal in June 2006, and Regional Council approved the proposal four months later. The PDVC's proposal now only needed to be accepted by the Ontario Municipal Board in order to be fully approved.

In February 2008, this precedent setting OMB hearing began and lasted over 20 weeks. Prior to this hearing, the OMB had never approved a tower within the boundaries of a Heritage Conservation District, the acceptance of this proposal meaning the vulnerability of other HCDs around Ontario to similar detrimental developments. In 2009 after a long break in proceedings, the development proposed by the PDVC was accepted.

This full process cost the PDC over \$500,000 and thousands of volunteer hours. Although legally incorporated and highly organized, the PDC remains a non-profit organization operated entirely by volunteers from the community. In the words of the

PDC regarding the work towards opposing the tower development:

“We were only able to do this because so many hundreds in the community were committed to saving Port Dalhousie and participated in the countless fundraising events as well as donated generously. In fact, we have been contacted by a number of volunteer organizations across the province to tell us that what the citizens of St. Catharines have accomplished, in professionally participating in this process to the end, and raising the funds, is unprecedented.”²⁹

The efforts of the community in this endeavour are indicative of the ultimate asset of an engaged community that Port Dalhousie possesses. It is encouraging to note that with such an involved and avid population, initiatives and visions for the future that align with residents’ ideals would most likely benefit from continued community support, both financially and in terms of participation.

Since this ruling, demolition has taken place, however no building has begun. In fact, ownership of the development property has changed hands a number of times since the OMB ruling, with the PDVC having dissolved and abandoned their role in the development. Later a company called Fortress Developments gained ownership of the land in 2015 and retained consultants for their new proposal, which was to be a 14 storey mixed-use terraced building. The current owner of the land is Rankin Construction, who have yet to make their development plans known.

No issue in Port Dalhousie’s recent past has been more divisive than this one, with the vast majority of residents vehemently rejecting this development proposal. It plagues the past, and taints the future; how could Port Dalhousie get out of this mess? It seems that development is imminent, and resistance to this unstoppable force is futile. The Genius Loci and memory of Port Dalhousie has been abandoned in favour of fast development cash.

At the time of writing this text, the site of the former Port Mansion lies vacant, construction plans having been revived and abandoned multiple times over the last 6 years. At last the Genius



Fig 1.30 Site of the Former Port Mansion

Today the site of this monument lies empty, the Genius Loci of a community forgotten. In its place: empty benches.

Loci of today's Port Dalhousie is uncovered; a stasis in the face of change; whether that change is towards decline or prosperity no person knows. Local efforts to revive the downtown have also been initiated and abandoned, and Port Dalhousie truly exists in a state of uncertainty, with no clear way forward into any sort of future. However, this site is not a tabula rasa; instead the Genius Loci of Port Dalhousie embodied in this building's history can, with the right assistance, attempt to breathe life back into this listless community.

Fig 1.32 (opposite, above) Illustration by Local Artist K.Schaap

A view of Lakeport Road and the Port Mansion from the East side of the harbour.

Fig 1.31 The Port Mansion

As it appeared from the street before an addition was completed on the north face of the building.





Fig 1.33, 1.34 **Snapshots of the Port Hotel**

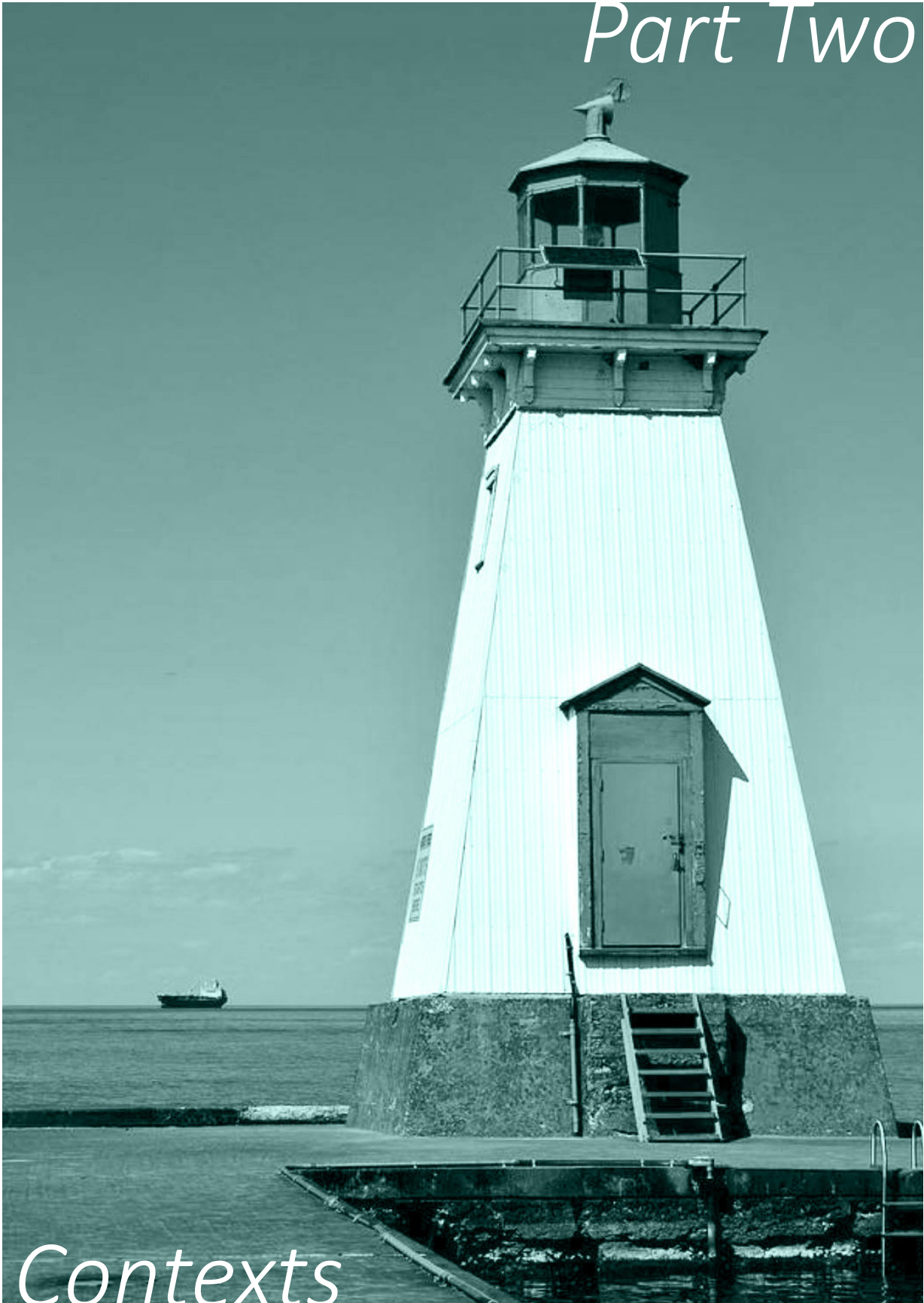
At left, one of the lobbies of the Port Hotel, possibly featuring Port Dalhousie resident Mrs. Tourbin, as it appeared in the mid 1970s. Above, an accident takes out a column supporting the Port Hotel's balcony.

Part One- Endnotes

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5. Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980), 16.
6. Joseph Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 44.
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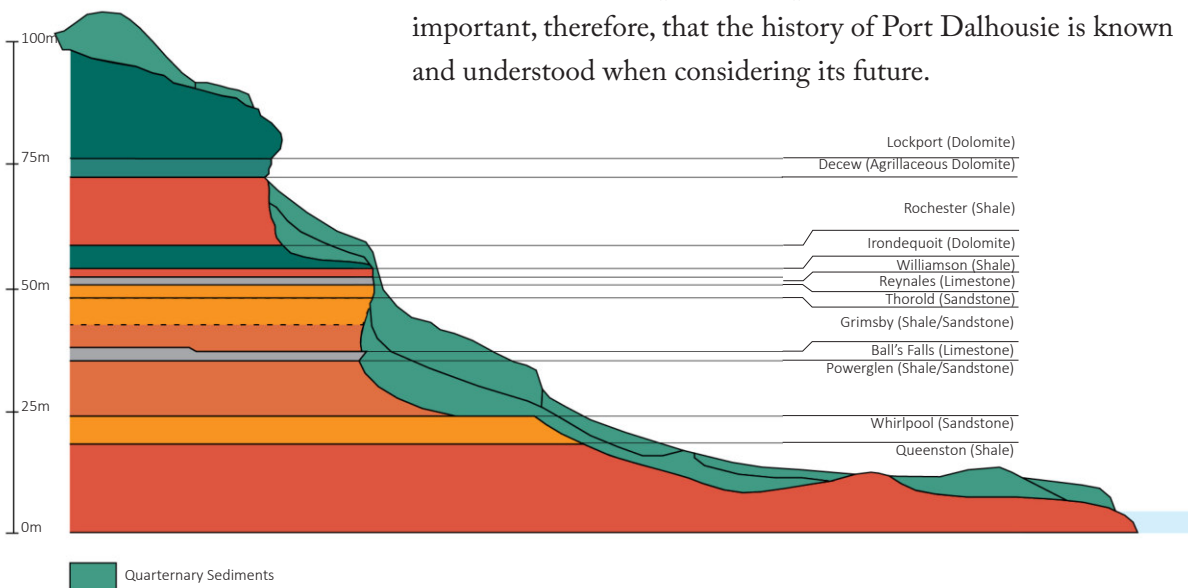
Part Two



Contexts

Part Two- Contexts

As established in Part One, the history of a place simply cannot be excised from the Genius Loci, and the place’s memory from its very origin must always be present and considered if the Genius Loci is to help drive the place towards its destiny. It is important, therefore, that the history of Port Dalhousie is known and understood when considering its future.



Geologic Beginnings

Fig 2.2 Niagara Escarpment Bedrock Geology

The strata and sediments that comprise the Niagara Escarpment geologic formation.

Fig 2.1 (opposite) The Outer Range Lighthouse

Built c. 1879, one of two Lighthouses located at the Port Dalhousie Marina. The interior is closed to the public.

Port Dalhousie, now an area of the City of St. Catharines, is located in Southern Ontario, Canada. This specific part of Ontario was formed during the Upper Ordovician period of the Paleozoic Era,¹ its bedrock consisting of sedimentary limestone, shale, and sandstone.² St. Catharines’ bedrock specifically belongs to the Queenston Formation, and was formed between 488 and 443 million years ago.³ While stating rock types and geologic formations may seem gratuitous, it is because of these geologic phenomena that the Great Lakes and the Niagara Escarpment came to be. Port Dalhousie’s patterns of human settlement can be



attributed to its proximity to this large body of freshwater, as well as the rivers and streams that run towards it, namely the twelve mile creek. The Niagara Escarpment and the subsequent need for transportation over this substantial landmass between Lakes Ontario and Erie, can in some ways be considered Port Dalhousie's reason for existence.

Historic Origins

The first humans to interact with the land now considered Port Dalhousie existed centuries ago. From about 1550, "Neutral Indians" settled the Niagara Peninsula until their assimilation by the Iroquios nearly 100 years later.⁴ Around 1650, the Mississaugas of New Credit, a branch of the Chippewa Tribe,⁵ made their way Southeast along the northern shores of Georgian Bay until they arrived in what is now known as the Greater Golden Horseshoe and parts of Southwestern Ontario. This tribe, as well as those that came before them, undertook clearing the dense brush and forest that previously covered the land, creating paths and roads for travel. Original residents also farmed and developed a system of agriculture in the area, as well as depended on fishing during warmer months of the year. Later Loyalist Settlers were not living in the wilderness when they arrived but at a node in an already working network that spread across the Niagara Peninsula⁶ and even the entire continent.⁷ Even from this early point in the history of the area, the Niagara region was becoming a preliminary



Fig 2.3, (left) Map of the Niagara Escarpment,

The Escarpment Formation is depicted on the map in dark green, it rises 99 m above the level of Lake Ontario.

Fig 2.4 (right) Image of Escarpment at Grimsby

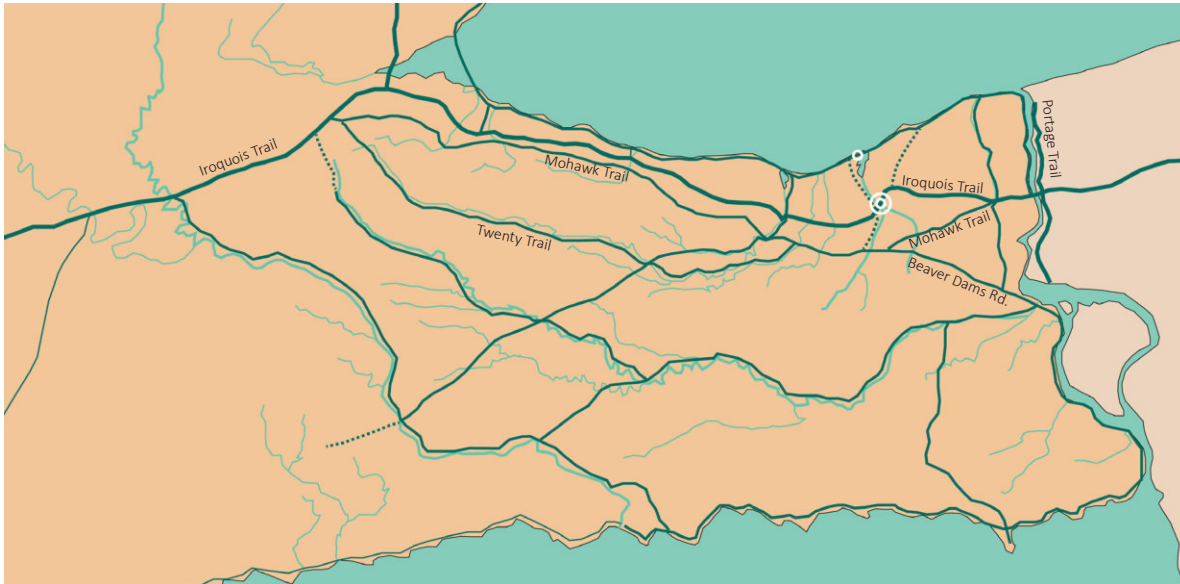


Fig 2.5 The Aboriginal Trails of the Niagara Region c. 1770

The trails created and used by aboriginal settlers, which eventually became a preliminary road network for the Niagara Region. Shipman's Corners (double circle) and Port Dalhousie (single circle) are marked, as well as speculated trails (dashed).

urban system, with organized structures of transportation between junctions that are recognizable as towns and cities within the region today.

First Permanent Settlements

Nearing the end of the 18th Century, in 1783 the Treaty of Paris was signed by the British and Americans to end the American Revolutionary War.⁸ This included setting clear boundaries for the British Empire and the United States, which left many individuals sympathetic to the British within the newly made American border, eager to leave for official British North American land. The soldiers that fought on the side of the British in this conflict are referred to as United Empire Loyalists, and it is these men and their families who were the first non-nomadic peoples to settle what is now known as Port Dalhousie. Peter Tenbroeck, a United Empire Loyalist from an influential Dutch-American family⁹ is credited with having officially owned this land beginning in 1796,¹⁰ the first of any Loyalist settlers. Another Loyalist, Benjamin Pawling, was awarded land directly to the East of present-day Port Dalhousie at around the same time. Tenbroeck and Pawling were members of Butler's Rangers, a company of men who fought for the crown during the American Revolutionary

War of 1775; once the war was over those fighting for the British fled to Canada where they were awarded land for their loyalty to Britain.¹¹ The men were awarded the land after Butler's Rangers disbanded, marking the beginning of Anglo-Canadian colonization in this area which technically continues to this day.

By the 1820's, all land in this area was owned by Nathan Pawling, a descendant of both Pawling and Tenbroeck. Nathan Pawling is considered the founder of Port Dalhousie, although he simply called it "Dalhousie," after the Earl of Dalhousie who was Governor General of Canada at the time.¹² Due to the Scottish origin of most settlers, the land was and continues to this day to be called "Da-loo-zie," rather than "Dal-house-ie."

At the same time as residents tilled the land at Dalhousie, Shipman's Corners - the urban centre of life for Dalhousie and the surrounding Grantham Township - and today the main downtown area of the city of St. Catharines - was rising on the banks of the 12 mile creek further upstream. Named for a popular tavern operated by Paul Shipman, this site became the hub of



Fig 2.6 George Ramsay, 9th Earl of Dalhousie

The man for whom Port Dalhousie is named.

Fig 2.7 Map of St. Catharines c.1875

Today, this area is the downtown core of St. Catharines. The highlighted area is the corner of St. Paul St and Ontario St, the original Shipman's Corners. In the bottom right is the old City Hall building, still standing today.

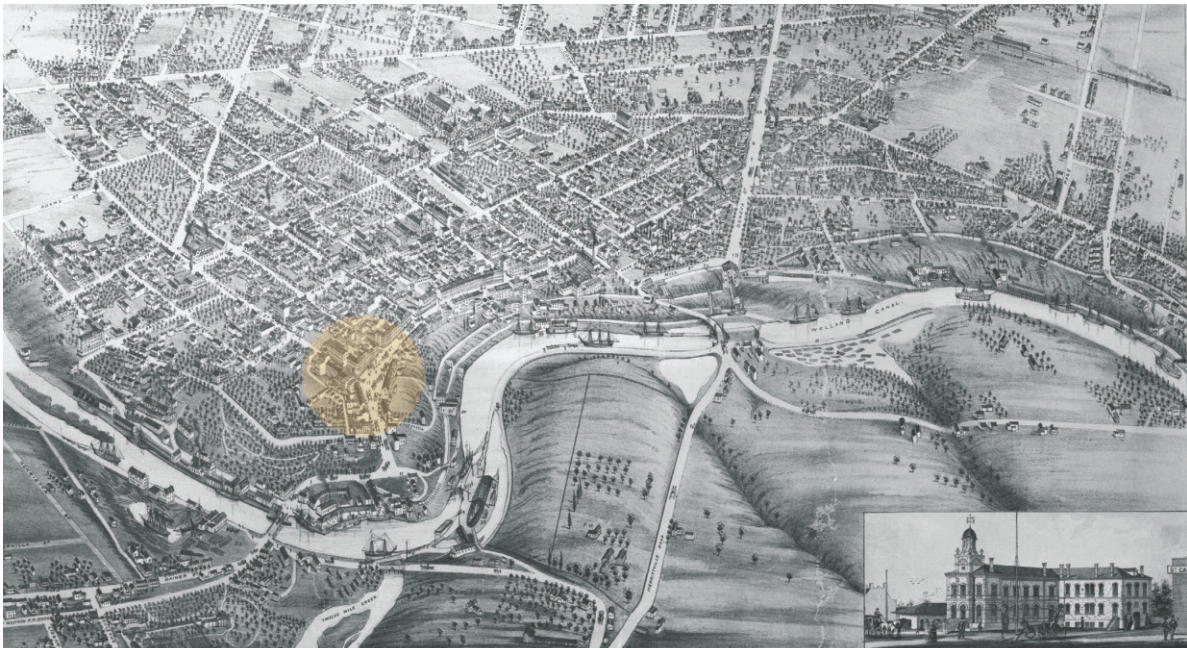




Fig 2.8 The Mills of the First Welland Canal

Following the path of the Twelve Mile Creek, the first Welland Canal passed through Port Dalhousie, Shipman, and Thorold, before continuing south. Mills along this route are marked in orange.

Grantham and surrounding townships because it was where the major man-made roads crossed the 12 mile creek at its “narrowest and most fordable point.”¹³ The 12 mile creek, which carried goods up and down its banks, as well as out to Lake Ontario and beyond to Hamilton, Niagara and York, was the deliverance of life to this area, as merchants and farmers not only relied on this natural resource for transportation, but for the operation of mills as well.

The importance of the existence of mills to the development of Shipman’s Corners cannot be understated. R. Louis Gentilcore of McMaster University emphasizes this point in *The beginnings of Settlement in the Niagara Peninsula*, when he says that “In specific terms, the best indication of the growth of settlement is provided by the establishment and distribution of mills.”¹⁴ he goes on to explain the significance of mills when studying the history of a place: their construction indicates a notable rise in population because they were an attraction for new residents. In addition, their existence also indicates increased agricultural activity, transportation, and industrialization of an area, and more importantly, a rise in the first commercial centres in the Niagara Peninsula.¹⁵

It is unsurprising then, that the man who owned and operated these mills at Shipman’s Corners changed the course of history for the entire Niagara Peninsula forever. William Hamilton Merritt returned home to St. Catharines from his service in the War of 1812 to find it struggling in a post-war economy but with a wealth of natural resources to draw from. He purchased almost all of the land on the east side of the 12 mile creek at Shipman’s, along with all of the mills there that had been spared by the war. Merritt very quickly rose to prominence as a leader of St. Catharines’ economy, but the position was precarious. His mills and other enterprises along the 12 mile creek required more water than they were getting to continue to be prosperous. In addition, it was very expensive to transport goods throughout the Niagara Peninsula, especially when the goods travelled over land, which at the time was lacking any railroad system. The Niagara river was often used for this purpose, but was not a guaranteed shipping route as its control was split between Canada and the United States. In times of conflict, goods as well as military ships could not safely use this path as passage between Lakes Ontario and Erie.

The Welland Canal and the Rise of Industry

The catalyst for action within the Niagara Peninsula came in 1817, when work on the Erie Canal Began.¹⁶ Canadians realized that this canal would redirect commercial activity through the USA, as this new canal would allow ships to bypass essentially all of Lower Canada on their way inland from the Atlantic Ocean. Merritt realized that the fearful need for a secure, Canadian controlled waterway could be taken advantage of to obtain what he needed for his own economic success.

Whether enterprising or exploitative, William Hamilton Merritt proposed the Welland Canal, which was to redirect the trajectory of both St. Catharines and Port Dalhousie from frontier towns dependent mostly on agricultural production and trade to important urban and industrial communities. This canal would be completely controlled by Canadians, and would provide a much needed secure passage of goods up and down the Niagara Escarpment between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, which has an elevation of 99 metres¹⁷. Not only would this become a safe passage for goods through Canada, it would be an engineering feat, moving giant ships effortlessly up and down the sheer elevation that is the Niagara Escarpment. It is this landform that necessitated the building of a canal in particular. Previously, ships travelling up and down the Welland River could only make it as far as Niagara Falls, unloading their goods and portaging their ascent/descent of the escarpment. Merritt was very determined to ensure that the Welland Canal passed by his mills and businesses. Because of this Merritt is remembered as a preeminent visionary with a goal and an unstoppable will to realize it, to the unquestionable and lasting benefit of present day St. Catharines and Port Dalhousie. Indeed if “the village of St. Catharines would have been bypassed by the Canal... its growth to urban status is unlikely to have occurred in such circumstances,”¹⁸ as stated by St. Catharines geographer John N. Jackson.

By the end of its construction in November 1829, The northern terminus of the first Welland Canal at Lake Ontario was at Dalhousie, changing the course of the small community forever. By the end of the 1930’s, “... the village at the entrance to the canal became an important port... [previously] there were about fourteen houses in the settlement and not much more. However,



Fig 2.9 William Hamilton Merritt



Fig 2.10 The Niagara River

The Niagara River’s major change in elevation takes place at Niagara Falls, marked on the above map.

Fig 2.11 The First Welland Canal

The map also includes the Feeder Canal, which was meant to bring water from the Grand River to the Welland Canal, shown as a dashed line.



with lock one located close to Front Street, all sorts of businesses began to spring up.”¹⁹ Port Dalhousie had a new purpose, outside of being a tiny agricultural hamlet, it had shirked that identity in favour of prosperous port town.

The Effects of Change- Industry and Leisure to Modern Time

With the arrival of the Canal, came the arrival of people. The population of Port Dalhousie, as was the case with St. Catharines, rose as people flocked here to find work in the newly transformed industrial sector. The rise of a new socio-economic class, the industrial labourer, began to saturate the agrarian population. The area became a hub of nautical industry, developing enterprises such as shipyards and drydocks, which motivated the area’s urban growth. Today, the identity of Port Dalhousie is rooted in this maritime lifestyle that gained prominence from the mid 1800’s onwards.

With the construction of the second and third Welland



Canals in 1842 and 1875 respectively,²⁰ Port Dalhousie became a self sufficient village with new mills and a developing railroad to move goods from the incoming and outgoing ships. In fact it was this railway, the Niagara, St. Catharines & Toronto railroad that expanded in 1901, laying a track down to the beach near Lake Ontario that stirred the tourism industry that sustained the area for almost 70 years.

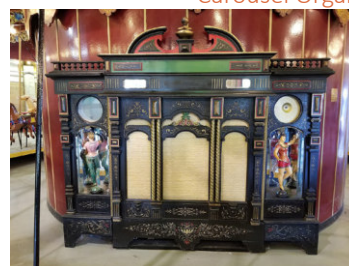
Lakeside Park, the beach and area surrounding the entrance of the canal, became a beloved amusement park, “known all over Ontario as an exclusive summer resort... there was an excellent beach...regular rail and steamship transportation; plenty of entertainment; the maritime atmosphere of the village; and the excitement of seeing shipping from all over the world as it passed through the canal.”²¹ by the mid 1920s Port Dalhousie was a beloved escape for workers in the surrounding areas, from Toronto to Buffalo. One of the enduring symbols of this time is the carousel, made between 1898 and 1905 by Charles FD Loof, the organ of which was used in London’s Crystal Palace.²² Because social classes of the time were changing and the rise of automation changed the way that people worked, individuals had more time to be just that, individuals as opposed to a workforce, and had more time for leisure as opposed to labour. Port Dalhousie’s proximity to

Fig 2.12 **The Second and Third Welland Canals**

Changes in the shipping industry such as boat size as well as ease of travel necessitated the construction of updated canal waterways. The Second Canal is shown in light green, the Third Canal is shown in dark green.

Fig 2.13, 2.14, 2.15 (below) **The Historic Loof Carousel**

Carousel Organ



Lion Carousel Figure



Other Carousel Animals



the water made it both easily accessible by ferry and an attractive beachside getaway.

By the 1950's Lakeside Park's attendance began to decline due to the rise of transportation by car, opening up new and further options for trips and vacations. The most impactful blow to Port Dalhousie's prosperity though was the situation surrounding the Welland Canal; with the opening of the 4th and final Canal in 1932, the Lake Ontario terminus moved eastward away from Port Dalhousie, and any business related to the shipping industry moved with it. Lakeside Park, being tied to this industry from its inception, closed down. Finally, Port Dalhousie was amalgamated with the City of St. Catharines in 1961. The old seafaring ways of life were gone forever, and Port Dalhousie nestled into its role as a suburb of St. Catharines.

This may have been the industrial downfall of Port Dalhousie, however it is far from its total downfall. Port Dalhousie continued to be a tourist destination and suburb of St. Catharines for many decades, and people continue to visit and call it home to this day.

Fig 2.16, 2.17, 2.18 Lakeside Park of the Past

The Garden City Paddle Steamer brought visitors along the shore of Lake Ontario to other Ports, pictured here c. 1912. The Beach at Lakeside Park appears later, c. 1941. Finally the Sports Field is pictured at bottom left, date unknown.



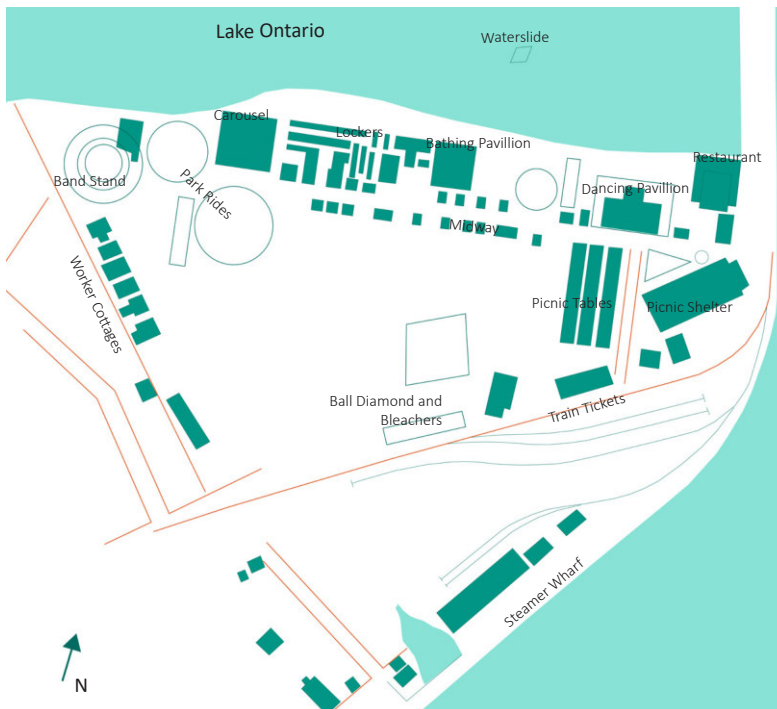


Fig 2.19 Lakeside Park Map

This Map of Lakeside Park shows the general layout of the park c. 1925, operated by Canadian National Railway.

Present Regional Physical Context

Port Dalhousie is located in the north-westernmost corner of the City of St. Catharines. It is a small peninsula, separating Lake Ontario to the north, and Martindale Pond, which leads to the 12 mile creek, to the south-east. This proximity to water helped shape the history of this place as previously discussed, but also lends to Port Dalhousie a nautical feel which continues to permeate the identity of the place today. A beach and marina at the northernmost point of the neighbourhood, as well as many waterfront residential properties ensure that the water is always in the peripherals of residents and visitors alike. It is difficult to escape this pervasive feature in Port Dalhousie. Lake Ontario is therefore the natural northern boundary of Port Dalhousie, and also St. Catharines. Martindale Pond is the natural south-eastern boundary of Port Dalhousie. Beyond, the natural boundary of St. Catharines is the Niagara Escarpment, an important and dominating landform of the region and beyond.

Beyond Port Dalhousie to the south and the east is the city of St. Catharines, more specifically residential neighbourhoods. To the west, however, lies the largest area of St. Catharines: Louth, which is mostly agricultural land. These rural lands surrounding St. Catharines, as well as other rural areas stretching



Fig 2.20 **The Fourth Welland Canal**

The final iteration of the Canal is shown in dark green, including the 8 locks along its path.

between the cities and towns of the Niagara Peninsula, comprise some of the best farmlands for growing tender fruit (such as peaches, cherries, grapes, and more) in the country, known as the Niagara Fruit Belt. To the North is, of course, Lake Ontario.

These nearby boundaries contribute directly to the area's propensity for agriculture, and produce perfect growing conditions for tender fruit and grapes especially. Lake Ontario and the Niagara Escarpment, working in harmony with the ideal soil create near perfect growing conditions that make the Niagara Region, especially the shoreline along the lake, an indispensable natural resource to capitalize on.

The temperature of Lake Ontario, being a large body of water, changes very slowly and it absorbs heat during the summer months. This influences air temperatures to lean warmer than other areas of the province not affected by the lake, as well the temperature stays warmer for longer, extending the growing season substantially. The Escarpment, in turn, protects this air and keeps it concentrated over a small area, mostly the shore of the lake from Hamilton to Niagara on the Lake. These climate trends make Niagara one of two major tender fruit and grape growing areas in Ontario, the Essex and Kent Counties being the other major area due to their exceptionally long growing season, caused by their



Fig 1.21 St. Catharines, Ontario

Pictured is the City of St. Catharines as it appears today. The area of study (Port Dalhousie) is marked by the dashed line. The city's downtown core and former Shipman is marked by the round orange marker as well. Major 400 series highways and arterial roads also appear. Louth is easily identifiable as the green land in the city's west.



Fig 2.22 Port Dalhousie

Showing indicated area from the St. Catharines map (opposite). Important buildings, institutions, parks, etc. are shown.

southern location.²³ These two major areas produce together over 85% of Canada's tender fruit and wine grapes, and therefore represent one of the country's most invaluable natural resources.

Port Dalhousie, coincidentally, is located in the very epicentre of this growing area. To its west is the Beamsville Bench, a sub-appellation for wine grapes that benefits from excellent air circulation from the natural topography of the area as well as complex soil that is added to by erosion of the Escarpment.²⁴ To the East of Port Dalhousie is the entire Niagara on the Lake appella-

tion (otherwise known as a viticultural area), which benefits from gentle slopes resulting in good sunlight for these farmlands.²⁵ In addition to close proximity to these rural areas, Port Dalhousie is also located within the municipality of St. Catharines, close to the many consumers of these regional crops. While Port Dalhousie itself is classified as a built urban area, its proximity to some of the country's richest farmland puts it in a unique position as a possible urban anchor for these rural activities.

Transit Infrastructure and Connectivity

Because it is separated from the rest of the city by water, there are only two ways in or out of Port Dalhousie, it is rather removed physically from the rest of St. Catharines. Main Street, Port Dalhousie's main arterial road, leads into the west end of Port Dalhousie from either the Louth Agricultural Lands or Martindale Road, another important arterial that runs north-south through the west end of St. Catharines. On the east end of Port Dalhousie, Lakeport Road crosses over the site of the old Welland Canals and leads into the north end of the city. Anyone entering Port Dalhousie would do so by way of either of these bottlenecks including the single city bus that services Port Dalhousie twice per hour.

These routes connect Port Dalhousie to The City, and The

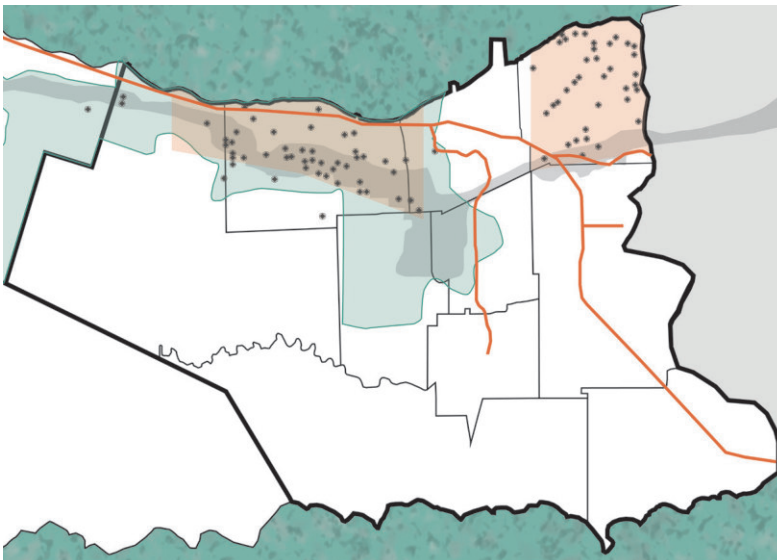


Fig 2.23 Niagara Region Wine Map

Wineries in the region are indicated, and orange areas are the two appellations that constitute the wine grape growing lands: Beamsville Bench and the Twenty Valley to the west and Niagara-on-the-Lake to the east. Wineries are marked. included are the Greenbelt (green) and the Niagara Escarpment (grey).

City is connected to the Niagara Region and beyond by major provincial highways. The Queen Elizabeth Way, the 405 and the 406 are the major 400 series highways that move people throughout the region. The QEW runs east-west, bisecting St. Catharines and channeling vehicular traffic westwards towards Toronto and eastwards towards Niagara Falls, the 405 branching off towards the Queenston-Lewiston Border Crossing into the United States. Highway 406 runs north-south through the city, beginning at the QEW and continuing south towards Welland. It is these highways that make St. Catharines a highly connected city compared to others in the Niagara Region; there are many ways to move to, through, or out of the city by car.

St. Catharines is also serviced by GO Transit, both by bus and train. Most trips, which take just under 2.5 hours to complete from St. Catharines to Toronto's Union Station, are serviced by a bus which connects riders to a train in Burlington which continues along the Lakeshore West line to Toronto. This service is not offered as an ideal method of commuting to a workplace, it is maintained as transportation for tourism and for general mobility throughout the Greater Golden Horseshoe.²⁶ A train does make the direct trip between St. Catharines and Toronto twice daily on weekends during the summer months.

The land-area servicing Toronto, however, is expanding as we move into the third decade of the 2000's; house prices in the GTA are rising and many families cannot afford to live within Toronto's city limits. Metrolinx is realizing its role in the productivity of the Greater Golden Horseshoe region, and as of spring 2018 has plans to invest 21.3 billion dollars to shift GO Transit from a commuter service to a regional rapid transit system.²⁷

St. Catharines is slowly starting to be considered within the realm of the GTA, and advances in the regional transportation system reflect this. The distance between these two places 30 years ago was fairly significant, today it is becoming more and more reasonable to consider living in one city and commuting to another over 100 kilometers away, especially with the goals the province has set for its transportation network. In 2019 GO commuter service train service reached St. Catharines, and families are now more easily able to choose a smaller city lifestyle while still being connected to all the nodes of the country's most important

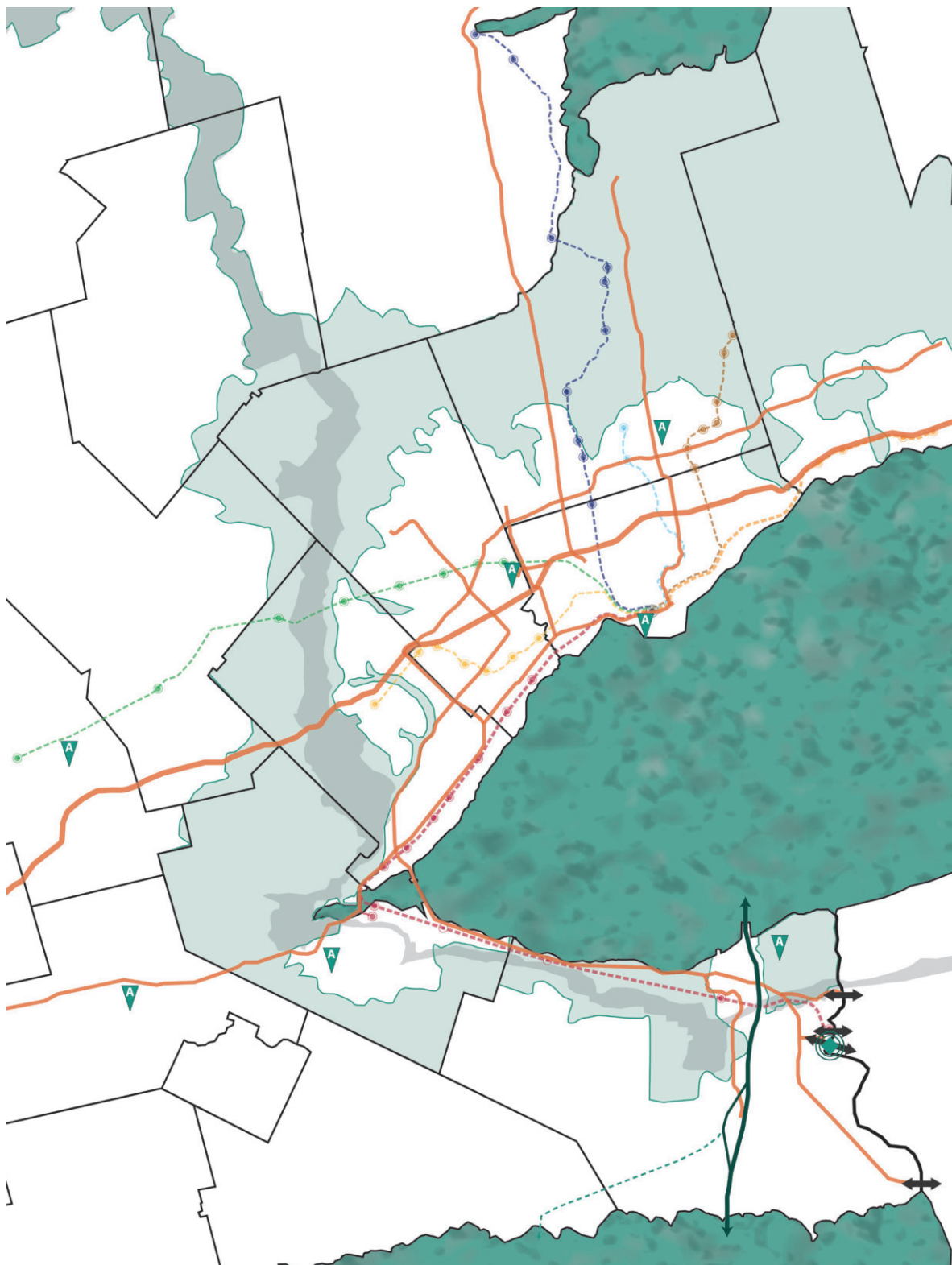


Fig 2.24 **Transit in the Greater Golden Horseshoe**

Go Transit lines and stations are pictured, as well as other methods of transport and connectivity in the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

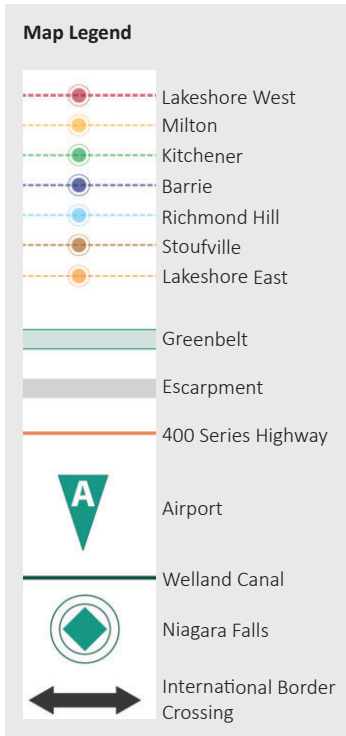


Fig 2.25, 2.26 **St. Catharines Train Station**

Today, this station services public passengers using GO Transit as well as VIA Rail.

economic engine.²⁸

This move towards greater connectivity is predicted to have a positive economic benefit to both the Niagara Region and the Province of Ontario.²⁹ More important to this text, however, is the demonstration of the fact that communities outside of Toronto hold a place in the regional narrative of the future.

Built Environment

What makes Port Dalhousie so unique is the historic quality that permeates the built form of the entire neighbourhood. Fragments of Port Dalhousie’s origins can be seen when one enters a former tavern, walks down a tree-lined residential street, even from the air when evaluating the layout of roads within the matrix of the peninsula on which Port Dalhousie is perched. While other ports along the former path of the Welland Canal have similarly transformed into towns or neighbourhoods, Port Dalhousie remains one of the more important,³⁰ as its enduring historical physical and architectural landscape makes it one of the best preserved 19th century port towns in Southern Ontario.³¹

Port Dalhousie can easily be split into two identifiable areas: the Civic Centre and the Residential Periphery. The residential periphery dominates the land-area of Port Dalhousie, comprising roughly 90% of the neighbourhood. The residential streets can be separated into two distinct areas, especially when looking at an arial photograph.

The houses to the northeast are considered part of the Heritage Conservation District, designated by the City of St. Catharines in 2002. This portion of the residential district has continued to grow since Port Dalhousie’s inception in the late 1700s, and has housed “many individuals from an eclectic mix of social classes.”³² Many of these houses are built in the Gothic Revival, Colonial Revival, and Neo-Classical styles, popular in Ontario throughout the 1800s, Port Dalhousie’s primary period of growth, but the area includes contemporary houses as well. The road patterns are a very uniform rectilinear grid, lining up with Main Street, running the length of the small peninsula roughly on axis with the lake shore. These streets are picturesque, tree-lined,



and have very low traffic, lending to the small-town feel of the community. The three churches of Port Dalhousie are all located within this part of the residential periphery. The Anglican and United churches both date from the mid 1800s, while the Roman Catholic church was established in 1918.

The other houses located in Port Dalhousie are located on land that was formerly Cole Farm, a fruit orchard once owned by the Cole Family.³³ In 1975, this valuable farmland was converted into low-density residential area, and the road patterns here feature cul de sacs, courts and crescents, very characteristic of more recent subdivision planning in North America. A large park adjacent to two elementary schools, Cambria Park, and a cemetery are nestled in the middle of this residential fabric.

In addition to these two distinct areas comprising the residential periphery, an island serving the sporting community within the population can be located to the southwest of the residential streets. Henley Island is where the Rowing Club of St. Catharines is based. Not many buildings are on the island, only a clubhouse and storage building for boats, however the real importance of this island are the events that it facilitates. Since 1903, and personally approved by the famous Canadian oarsman Ned Hanlan³⁴, the rowing course at Port Dalhousie has been the location of the Royal Canadian Henley Regatta, as well as other annual regatta events. This tradition is another that ties the people of Port Dalhousie to the water; every August the community is animated by the visiting athletes and the conviviality of competition aroused by the spectacle of sport.

Fig 2.27, 2.28 **Main Street, Port Dalhousie**

A part of the streetscape on Main Street, at the end closest to the civic centre of Port Dalhousie.

Fig 2.29 (opposite) **Port Dalhousie's Main Identifiable Areas**

Depicts the Residential Periphery and Civic Centre of the neighbourhood.

Contexts



North Side



South Side





While Port Dalhousie's civic centre is only a fraction of the land area of Port Dalhousie compared to the residential periphery, it is one of the city's most indispensable historic resources and constitutes the 'heart' of Port Dalhousie. The civic centre itself has two distinct types of landscape; natural areas, and the commercial core.

The natural areas of Port Dalhousie's civic centre are unique within the city as they provide a connection to the lake and other surrounding waterways, both physically and visually. Lakeside Park beach is St. Catharines' main beach; parents bring their small children to splash in the water, volleyball tournaments take place amongst friends, and ships large and small can be spotted between the sandy shore and the hazy horizon. Further inland is a grassy lawn which is where the picnic pavilion, public washrooms, and carousel can be found. Member of parliament Chris Bittle's statement that Lakeside Park is "clearly one of the gems of St. Catharines,"³⁵ illustrates the importance of its continued usage and its significance in the municipal fabric.

To serve visitors to the carousel, lakeside park, and in fact most of the commercial centre, a large paved parking lot exists as one of the only designated places to leave a vehicle. This valuable land lending views of the harbour stands between the main

Fig 2.30, 2.31, 2.32, 2.33 **Old Houses of Port Dalhousie**

Marked on the map (opposite) in light orange.



Fig 2.34, 2.35 **Churches of Port Dalhousie**

St. Andrews United Church is pictured above, St. John's Anglican below.



Fig 2.36, 2.37, 2.38, 2.39 **New Houses of Port Dalhousie**

Marked on map (right) in dark orange.

Fig 2.40 **Divide Between New and Old areas of Port Dalhousie, Rowing Areas**

To the North-East of the orange line is the old (pre 1980's) residential construction, South-West of the line is the newer (1980's to present) residential construction. In green, Henley Island, the rowing course, and the grandstand are shown.



natural areas and the commercial centre of Port Dalhousie's core. The Waterfront Trail serves as a pedestrian bypass of the paved lot. At one end of this path is the western of two piers that mark the entrance of the third Welland Canal. On a clear day, from the end of the pier that juts out from the East side of Lakeside park, Toronto's tiny skyline is visible. For nearly three years, however, the pier has been closed due to a compromised structure that would cost over \$30 million to repair,³⁶ but recently the 2018 federal budget has allocated money to this cause, ensuring the existence of the seasonal walking path enjoyed by residents and tourists alike. The other end of this segment of the waterfront trail leads to built-up commercial core and Rennie Park, with the residential periphery beyond.

The other major natural area of Port Dalhousie is Rennie Park, separated from Lakeside park by the commercial core but connected by the waterfront trail that provides views over the harbour. While Lakeside Park is oriented towards Lake Ontario, Rennie Park looks out onto Martindale Pond, more specifically the finish line of the Henley Regatta rowing course. This park is much less used by the public recreationally, however it is larger than Lakeside Park and features a pedestrian bridge spanning Martindale Pond and providing an access point to Port Dalhousie for those residing more inland. Overlooking Rennie Park is the historic Lincoln Fabrics building, formerly a rubber factory, a tex-

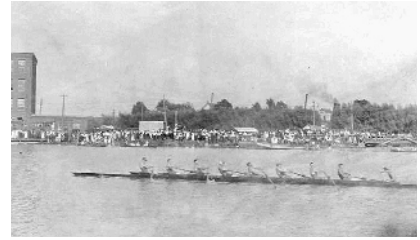


Fig 2.41, 2.42 Rowing in Port Dalhousie

Pictured top are rowers on the Port Dalhousie course c. 1920, bottom is a poster for the Regatta in Port Dalhousie from 1967.



Fig 2.43 Aerial View of Lakeside Park

The beach and washrooms are shown at the bottom of the image, with the rest of Port Dalhousie appearing at the top.



Fig 2.44 View of The Pier

Fig 2.45 Map of Port Dalhousie's Civic Centre

Hilighted in orange are the commercial area of the civic centre. The northern green area is Lakeside Park, while the southern green area is Rennie Park.

Fig 2.46, 2.47, 2.48, 2.49 Images of Lakeside Park



Picnic Pavilion



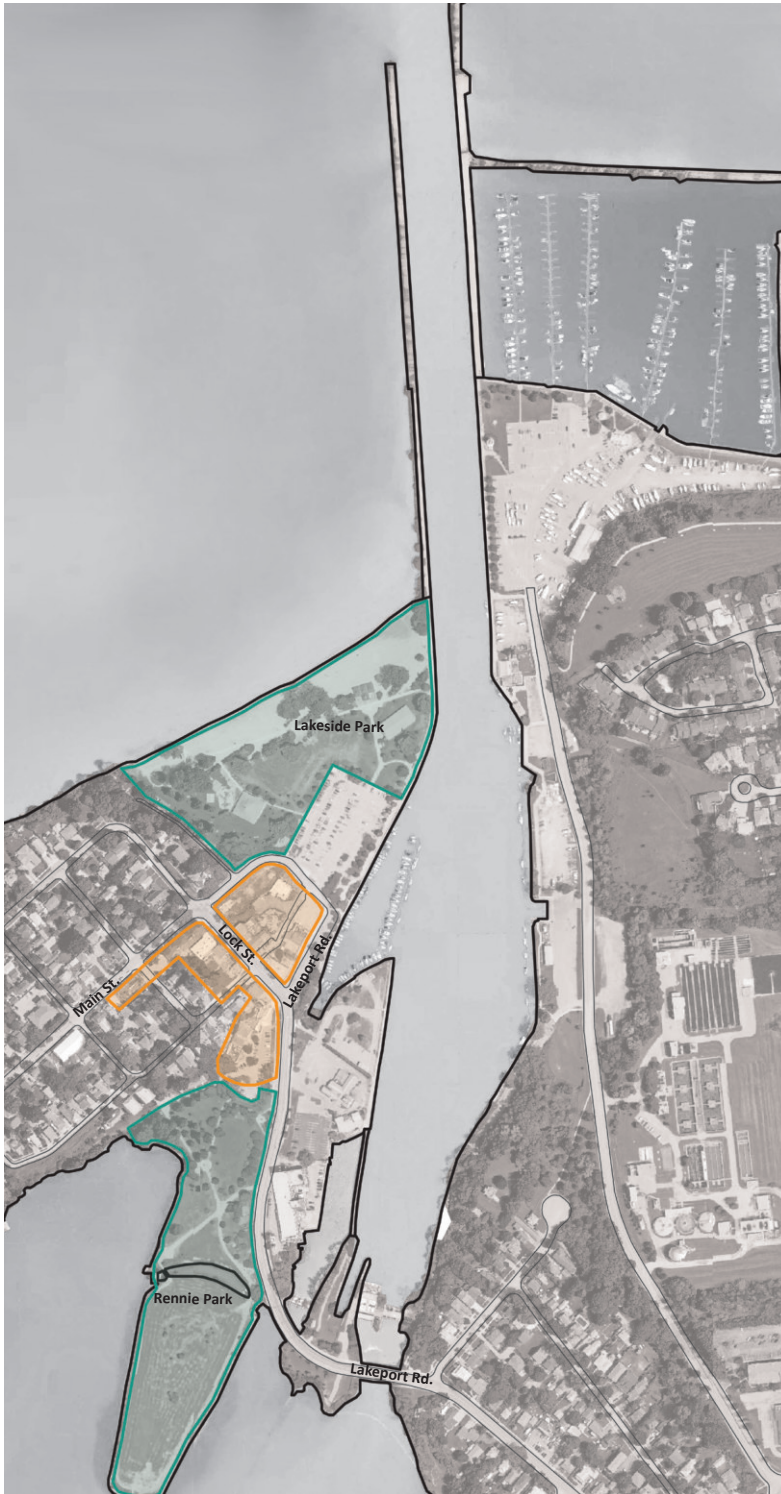
The Beach



Carousel Building and Playground



Bandshell



tiles factory, and finally, a condominium building which is at the time of writing is under preliminary renovation.

The commercial core of Port Dalhousie, surrounded by these natural areas, is mainly comprised of 3 streets; Lock street,



Lakeport road, and Main street, which each have a combination of newer and historic buildings.

Lock street, arguably the most important street to Port Dalhousie's modern economic activity, connects the two roads leading out of the neighbourhood, and so is mostly unavoidable when travelling through Port Dalhousie. This street, along with Lakeport Road, is where the majority of the 19th Century buildings reflecting Port Dalhousie's role as an important town along the Welland Canal are located. Roughly half of these buildings are constructed in the Italianate style, such as the former Lions Tavern building, constructed c.1877. Italianate features can easily be identified on the facade of the building, such as the slender windows with ornamented segmental arches, two-tone brick, and the ornamental cornice with decorative brackets appearing to support it. This style was popular in Ontario between 1860 and 1890,³⁷ the height of Port Dalhousie's industrial age. Today, the building houses a brewery and casual restaurant.

Most other historical buildings located in the commercial core are vernacular wood frame, which were popular for their ease of construction and inexpensive materials. This explicitly mercantile architecture reflects the commercial history very intimately tied with Port Dalhousie's industrial past. This former glory is represented today by these buildings, repurposed into shops and restaurants. Both the Italianate and wood buildings of Port Dalhousie often feature a second storey balcony, lending to the

Fig 2.50 **The Pier and Harbour**

The right of the panorama shows the portion of the pier that juts into Lake Ontario. The right of the image shows the waterfront trail that extends inland along the edge of the harbour.

Fig 2.51 **Dalhousie House**

A historic structure located in Rennie Park, Once part of Muir Dry Docks.



Fig 2.52 **Lakeside Park Parking Lot**

Facing south. pictured at left is the harbour, at right the carousel building can be seen.



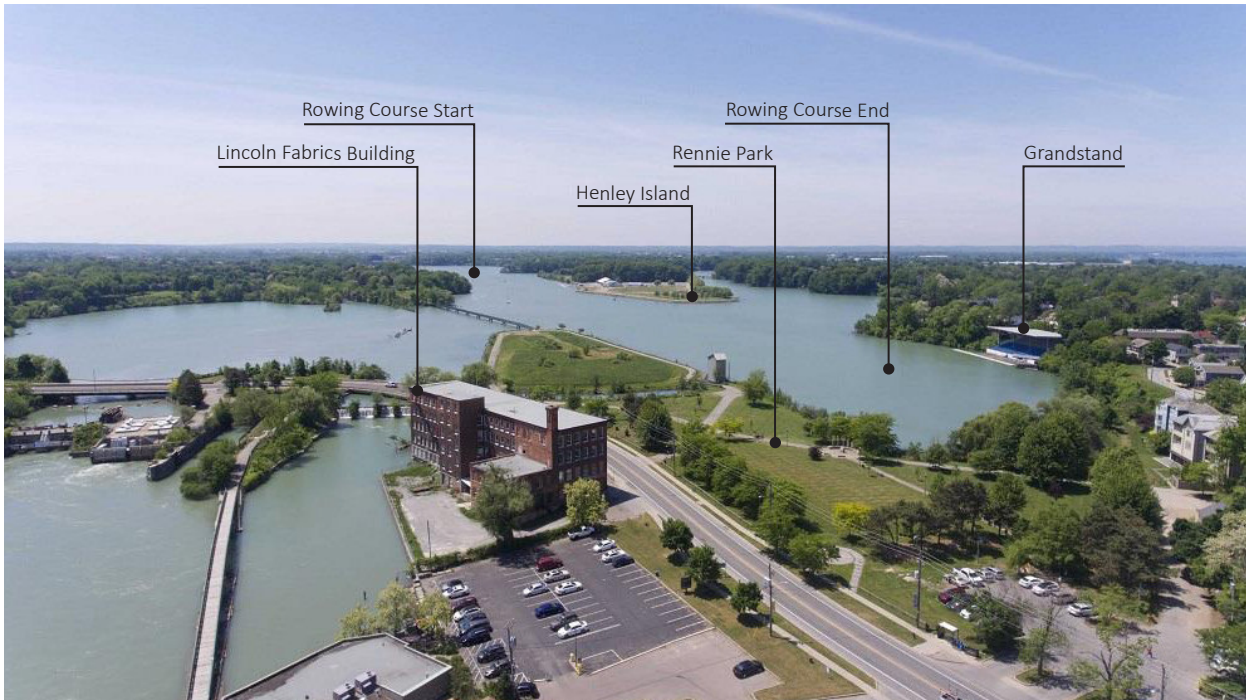


Fig 2.53 (above) Aerial View of Rennie Park

Photo taken looking south, towards Matindale Pond and the rowing course.

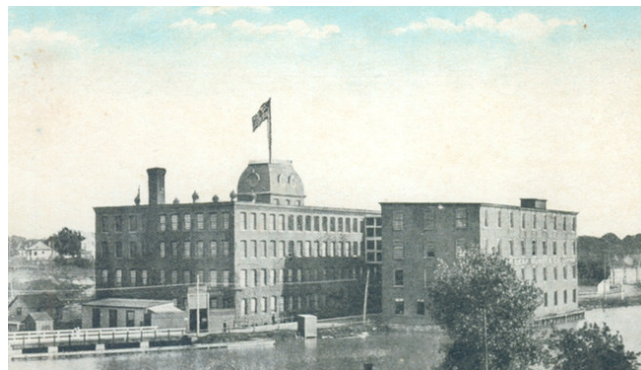


Fig 2.54 (left) Grandstand

Used to watch rowing races on Martinadle Pond, this structure was built after the previous grandstand was damaged by wind c.1931.

Fig 2.55, 2.56 (below) Lincoln Fabrics Building

As it appears today (bottom left) and when it was Maple Leaf Rubber Factory (bottom right) c. 1920.





streetscape a layered and multi-level atmosphere.

Notable exceptions to these styles also exist. The former Stirling Bank, built in 1907³⁸ and now a popular cafe, is a very well preserved example of Edwardian architecture in Ontario. Robust and symmetrical, this building belongs to Balzac Coffee; while not a Niagara-owned company is still a local one, with locations across Southwestern Ontario. Its streetfront presence contributes to the financial success of this location. North on Lock Street is the Lock and Main Marketplace, a less successful commercial building built in 2004. At a time in Port Dalhousie's recent history, when investors saw much potential in this location as a tourism hotspot, a parking lot was converted into this small shopping centre. This building, however, does not contribute to the vibrancy of the neighbourhood; the building consists of a long corridor with shops fronting not onto the street but an indoor, dead-end hallway. Businesses flounder in this setting and the building receives little foot traffic, an apt metaphor for the current state of the commercial core of Port Dalhousie as a whole.

Finally, the last important area in Port Dalhousie's commercial core is Lakeport Road; formerly Front Street in the days of the Welland Canal and an indispensable resource in the ship-

Fig 2.57, 2.58 **Lock Street, Port Dalhousie**

On the North Side, the left of the image shows an empty lot where a residential development was to be constructed.



North Side



South Side



Fig 2.59 (left) **Example of Wooden Vernacular Construction**

Today a retail store, This building was once the Port Dalhousier post office.



Fig 2.60 (right) **Former Wellington Hotel**

Pictured as The Lion Tavern, today houses the Lock Street Brewing Company, (see fig. 2.58).

ping economy of Port Dalhousie, it is now a sleepy side street seeing little activity even in the peak tourist months of the summer. Lakeport Road's former importance is reflected clearly in its mostly commercial Italianate architecture, that were once a sailor's first view from incoming ships, with the site of the former Port Mansion a welcoming beacon of the many hotels and taverns that could once be found on this street.

Today, the streetfront of Lakeport Road consists of only the hollow bones that hint at its former energy; most storefronts are empty and unoccupied, with the void left by the demolition of the Port Mansion a jarring hole to be examined by any person making their way towards the beach. This street, especially the site of the former Port Mansion, can be seen as representative of the



fate of Port Dalhousie. A once important streetscape alive with activity, plentiful in its opportunities to see into the past through its many examples of historic architecture, and an animated view of the harbour, this street is now simply a thoroughfare and parking location for cars. What once was arguably the heart of historic Port Dalhousie could once again be restored, not to its former glory but instead as a hopeful, sustainable, future-focussed hub for the community.

All of these main areas of Port Dalhousie are located on the west side of the Port Dalhousie harbour, what was once the entrance to the second and third Welland Canals. While these are the main community areas of Port Dalhousie, there is a marina for boats to be stored, located on the east side of the harbour, which is often referred to as the Michigan Side. While still a part of the neighbourhood, most tourist and community activity takes place on the west side of the harbour, while only very specific activities take place on the Michigan Side. The Port Dalhousie Sailing Club, the aforementioned Yacht Club Marina, a restaurant, and a large parking lot comprise the amenities on this side of the harbour. Further south on this side is also a wastewater treatment plant tucked into a pocket of trees and partially obscured from view. Mostly serving those who dock or store boats in the Marina, the



Exterior



Interior



North Side



South Side

Fig 2.61, 2.62 (opposite) **Lock and Main Marketplace**

What once was a parking lot, is now a small shopping centre, which includes retail stores, a small ice cream shop, as well as a connection to the pub located next door.

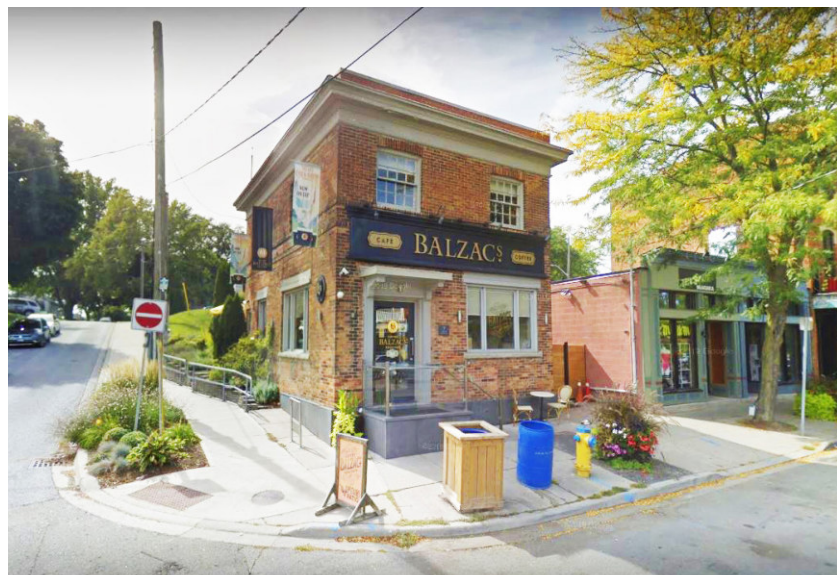
Fig 2.63, 2.64(above) **Lakeport Road, Port Dalhousie**

At the right of the North Side streetscape, the former location of the Port Mansion can be seen. The south side of the street features parking and a view of the harbour.

Michigan side also welcomes some visitors who wish to walk on the east pier, or get a closer look at the inner and outer range lighthouses built in the era of the Second Welland Canal. The inner range lighthouse is one of only 3 remaining octagonal lighthouses located on the Great Lakes.³⁹

Fig 2.65 **Balzac's Coffee**

Formerly the Sterling Bank, serving the community of Port Dalhousie, is the area's only example of Edwardian architecture.





Context's Ongoing Role

This text does not substitute for a visit to Port Dalhousie. However, the images and words of this chapter aim to help the reader understand both the apparent setting of this thesis, as well as the underlying feelings, intuitions, and most importantly, spirit of the place in question. It is these contextual fragments that will be taken by man and assembled, along with new proposals and ideas, into a new place with engagements and opportunities for those that inhabit it. The next chapter begins to do this, synthesizing the old and the new into one possible proposal that allows the Genius Loci to manifest and continue to propel Port Dalhousie into the future.

Fig 2.66, 2.67 **Lock One of the Second and Third Welland Canal**

Fenced off and left to the elements until 2017, when it was turned into a performance space, financed by the Kiwanis Club.



Fig 2.68 **Inner Range Lighthouse**

One of two lighthouses located on the Michigan Side. The outer range lighthouse can be seen on the first page of this chapter.

Fig 2.72 (opposite) **Port Dahousie Marina**

Photo taken facing east. The east side pier helps shelter the boat slips of the marina. The residential north end of St. Cahtarines can be seen at the top of the image.



Fig 2.69 **Locktender's Shanty**

Built in 1887 next to the Canal, it is one of the first signs of the historic district when entering Port Dalhousie from Lakeport Road.

Fig 2.70, 2.71(below) **The Jailhouse**

The Historic Jailhouse built by Alexander Muir in 1845. At left is the jail as it appeared in the 1960's. The right image is how the structure appears today. For a period of time in the early 2000's, the Jailhouse was a popular bar.



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Part Three



Dreams

Part Three- Dreams



Fig 3.2 The Genius Loci

The Port Mansion as the manifestation of the Genius Loci of Port Dalhousie.

Fig 3.1 (opposite) Lakeside Park and the Port Dalhousie Beach

On a busy summer day.

Through the text of this thesis, Port Dalhousie as a site has been profiled, as has its Genius Loci. Part One explained the meaning of the abstract construct of Genius Loci, and Part Two established the site and its context. The Locus, or the relationship between the location and the human interventions within it, was described, and so the spirit presiding over this relationship was said to project through a specific building; The Port Mansion. With this physical manifestation of the Genius Loci lost to destruction, the identity and path of Port Dalhousie has become muddled and confused. Finally the purpose for this text is revealed; a proposal for a new Port Mansion to help awaken and reform from its fragments the Genius Loci of Port Dalhousie.

The aim of this proposal is to reestablish Port Dalhousie's identity as a charming community, where residents and visitors can feel its history, where people feel engaged by the landscape both natural and architectural, and where the spirit of the place inspires all who go there to improve the area for years to come. Part Three of this thesis consists of a hypothetical building and park proposal that is informed by the literature outlined in Part One and also takes into account the contexts described in Part two. It aims to help Port Dalhousie move into a future assisted by an active and informative Genius Loci, and away from the decline it has been experiencing in recent years due to the weakening of this spirit or energy via insincere development plans. The design proposal puts emphasis on the Genius Loci as the force that will help Port Dalhousie prosper financially, culturally, and socially as it has in the past. The temporal, physical, contextual, and ritualistic qualities of this place are all considered and expressed in the design proposal through its program elements, site treatment, materiality, goals for public engagement, and practicality to the end user.

The Port Mansion has, for over one hundred years, represented the Genius Loci of Port Dalhousie as the physical manifestation of this mysterious force. Especially in its demolished state, it is indicative of the weakened Genius Loci that this thesis posits as the factor that most contributes to the decline of Port Dalhousie. But, if this is to be taken as fact, another truth emerges; The Port Mansion can be rebuilt, and with it the Genius Loci of Port Dalhousie can be reactivated to encourage man to partake in restorative and ultimately constructive actions, propelling the community towards an optimistic and prosperous future. Thus, this thesis proposes a design for Port Place, a new, expanded, and more accessible Port Mansion as well as updates to the surrounding Lakeside Park that merge these two formerly distinct spaces into a holistically functional location, where site and building complement each other.

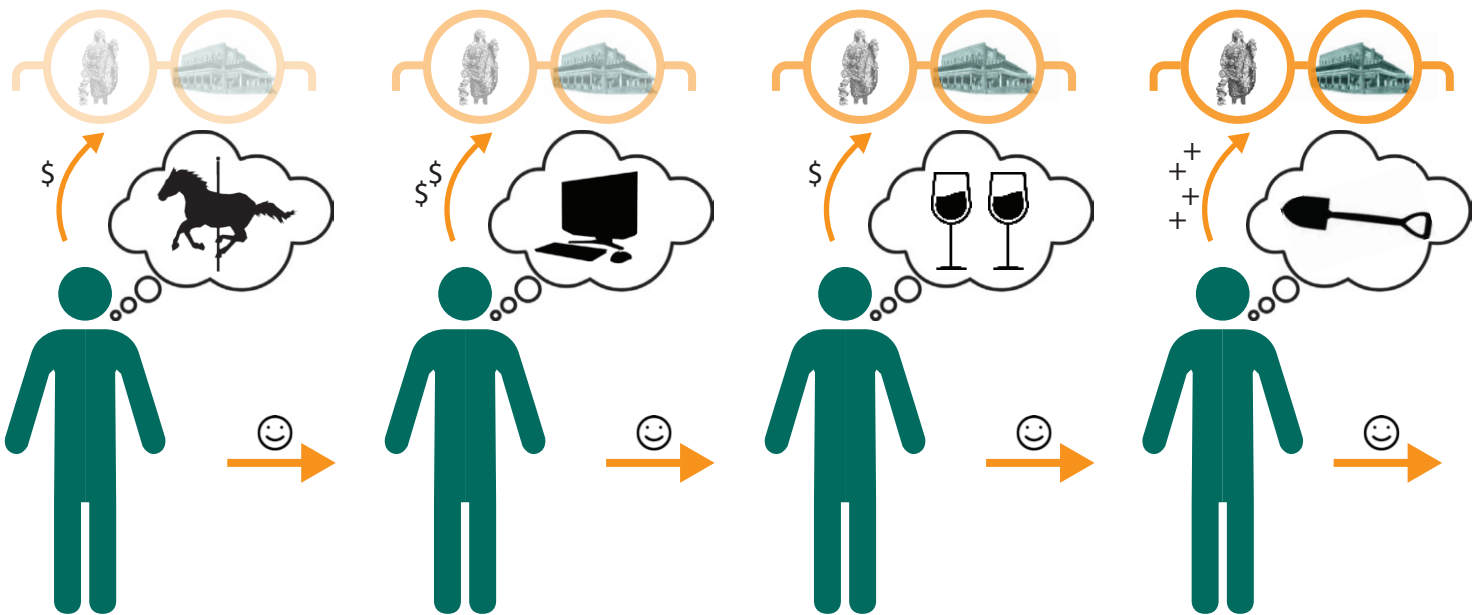


Fig 3.3 The Role of The Agent

The relationship between ritual and The Agent which partakes is illustrated, along with the effect this relationship has on the Genius Loci.

Identifying the Stakeholders

As stated by Christian Norberg-Schulz and repeated in Part One of this thesis, Genius Loci is a character to be visualized by architecture and made apparent by the interventions of man on the landscape. Also stated by the theorists cited in Part One, is the fact that man plays arguably the most important role in Genius Loci revealing itself, he is The Agent that receives instruction from the place and acts upon it to further establish his surroundings. This relationship between Genius and Agent is what Joseph Rykwert states is instrumental to the success of human settlement. The first goal of identifying the Genius Loci in this particular location has been accomplished, but the next step is to identify the Agent that the Genius is to influence. Who is to be the Augur of today?

There are three main groups of people who this proposal aims to engage as The Agents guided to aiding Port Dalhousie. The identification of these groups is based on the most abundant companies of people, so that the proposal can reach as many users as possible to help with the rebuilding of this area. These three groups of people are: the current residents of Port Dalhousie, who reflect in an amplified manner the trend of an aging Canadian population; young professionals and their growing families looking to escape Toronto for a slower pace of life while maintaining a connection to the GTA for work and pleasure; and tourists, who visit the Niagara Region from other parts of the province, country, or world, primarily interested in the viticultural (and subsequently the agricultural/culinary), historical, and geographical sites that drive the tourist economy in this region.



It should come as no surprise that the current population of Port Dalhousie is significantly aged when national trends as a whole are observed. As announced by the 2016 National Census and reported by the CBC, for the first time in the history of this country, seniors (people over the age of 65) outnumber children.¹ This trend of aging is predicted to continue into the coming years in Canada, due to a host of factors such as the baby boom generation aging, low mortality rate, and decreased fertility.² This paradigm is only magnified as a reduction in scale is considered in the Niagara Region. In Canada, the 65+ population comprises 16.9% of all people. In comparison, the St. Catharines - Niagara CMA

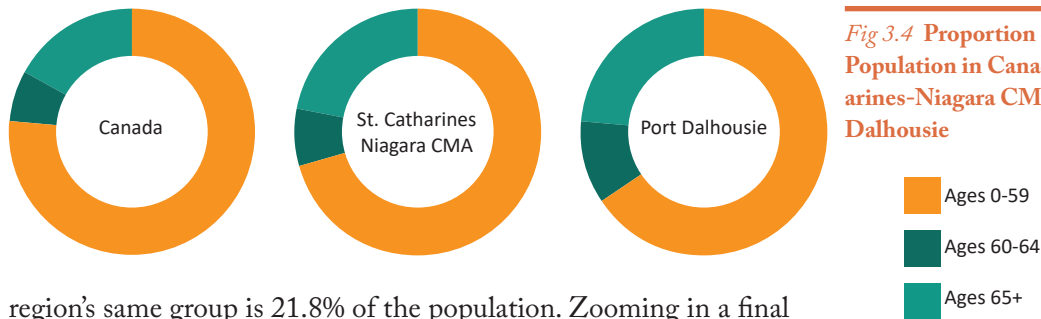


Fig 3.4 Proportion of the Aged Population in Canada, St. Catharines-Niagara CMA, and Port Dalhousie

region’s same group is 21.8% of the population. Zooming in a final time, the 65+ cohort in Port Dalhousie is an immense 23.6%. If one were to include all people within the ages of 60-64 as well, this percentage jumps to 34.3%. One in three people living in Port Dalhousie is aged 60 or over, a more than 10% increase when compared to the National value of 23.4% for people who are 60+.³ Those within this aged population often look for certain things in a place to retire, such as widely used public areas to decrease isolation, community initiatives to spend time participating in as opposed to being idle, and activities aimed to keep mental and physical faculties sharp while still being accessible for those with lower mobility.

Another group this proposal aims to interest are young professionals and their new or growing families. In recent years due to prohibitive living costs, there has been an exodus of people, especially young people still outside the housing market, from Toronto and the GTA. In fact, house prices in Niagara have jumped more than 40% within the last three years,⁴ due in part to the demand for housing that is outside of the GTA while still remaining connected to it through transportation infrastructure. This trend may also reflect a wish for a smaller-city lifestyle to raise a family and the benefits that come from that lifestyle. Younger demographic groups, especially those of young prospective parents

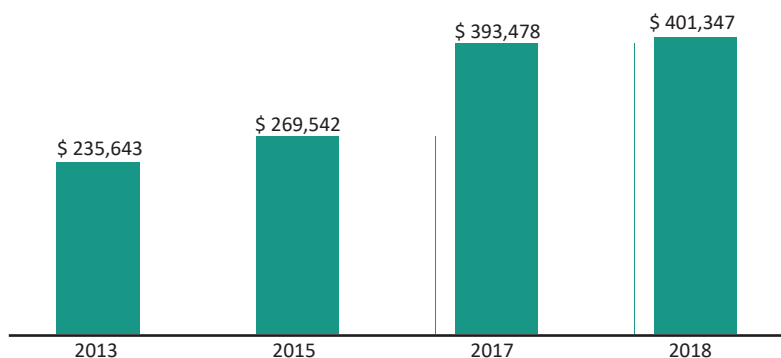


Fig 3.5 House Prices in the Niagara Region for 2013, 2015, 2017, 2018

Listed is the HPI Benchmark price.

looking to begin families, may be more attracted to a place where the average age of residents are higher, as it suggests that the crime rate in that area is lower than places with a lower percentage of aged residents. According to a 2014 study by Statistics Canada, crime rates decrease almost always in increasing age groups.⁵ Additionally, a British study by the Centre for Cities stated that for the percentage of the population of “family-rearing age,” persons aged 35 to 54, the safety and security of the neighbourhood one lives in is a significant factor in choosing where to live.⁶ Considering these facts suggest that Port Dalhousie would be an ideal place for this demographic group to relocate. This group would therefore be interested in recreational and social programs that give back to the community to teach good values to their children, activities to do as a family to bond, and convenience of location for their professional lives.

The final stakeholder group identified as important to this proposal are tourists. This is an obvious group when considering Port Dalhousie’s past as both a hotel hotspot for Welland Canal workers and a popular beachside attraction for travellers from nearby communities. It becomes even more obvious when Port Dalhousie’s central positioning within the Niagara region, famous worldwide for its tourist attractions of Niagara Falls and abundant vineyards, is recognized. Today, the Niagara region has a booming tourist economy, and in 2016 visitor spending in this area totalled over \$1.5 billion. In comparison to nearby Hamilton-Halton-Brant’s value of only \$845 million, tourists in the Niagara Region are not a group to be forgotten. In 2016, Niagara received over 10 million visitors, with the top three categories for spending money being Food and Beverage (\$558,902,000, with \$454,472,000 being spent in restaurants and bars), Accommodation (\$394,197,000), and Recreation and Entertainment (\$240,789,000).⁷ As the saying goes, “money talks,” and so this stakeholder group is saying clearly that they value establishments to enjoy the food and wine Niagara has to offer, places to rest overnight, and interesting and pleasant places to relax and be entertained.

All of the people in these user groups have been accommodated and indulged by the design proposal for Port Place, and their role as Agents of the Genius Loci is spurred on by this



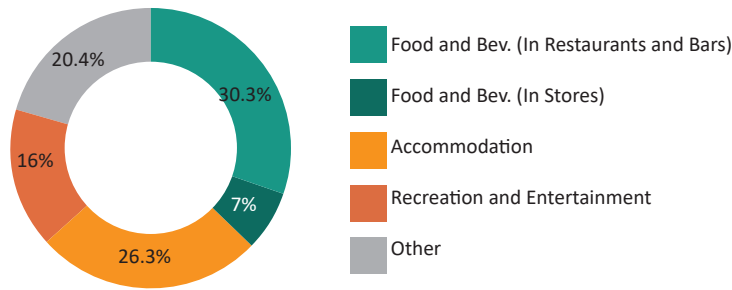


Fig 3.6 Tourist Spending in The Niagara Region in 2016

hypothetical new development. They all have their rituals they take part in; planting bulbs in the spring for a beautiful garden come summer, commuting to work, tasting a new wine by swishing it in one's mouth, sitting down to a family meal, sharing stories of times that once were. This is just a diminutive flash of the infinite number of daily, weekly, and seasonal rituals these people undertake absentmindedly at every moment of every day. If a place could provide an opportunity to facilitate these rituals and make the simple processes of performing them delicious, stimulating, symphonic, the user would be irresistibly drawn to that place to perform them again and again. This is the Genius Loci at work, asserting itself over and over endlessly; this is Port Place, the physical representation of the Genius Loci.

The Agent, The Rituals, The Spaces

Once the Agents of Genius Loci were identified, the rituals they partake in most often were examined, a list of program elements was compiled, and a design strategy at the scale of the site as well as the building was established. As previously explained, the program and its subsequent architectural expression were developed to interest and engage the Agents by implementing space where these rituals can take place in a pleasant and habit-forming manner, thus reawakening the Genius Loci of Port Dalhousie and allowing it to influence the actions of its agents for years to come. Therefore Port Place proposes to provide specialized spaces to fulfil these stakeholder groups' needs.

When the users of Port Place participate in the rituals of everyday, the memory of these rituals in the past is copied and pasted into time over and over. The actions that gave Port Dalhou-

sie its identity, character, and success in the past are reaffirmed in the present and as long as these rituals continue to be done. For example, the simple daily ritual of cooking and serving a meal has long taken place in the many taverns and hotels of the Port Dalhousie of yore, drawing seamen into smoky rooms away from their

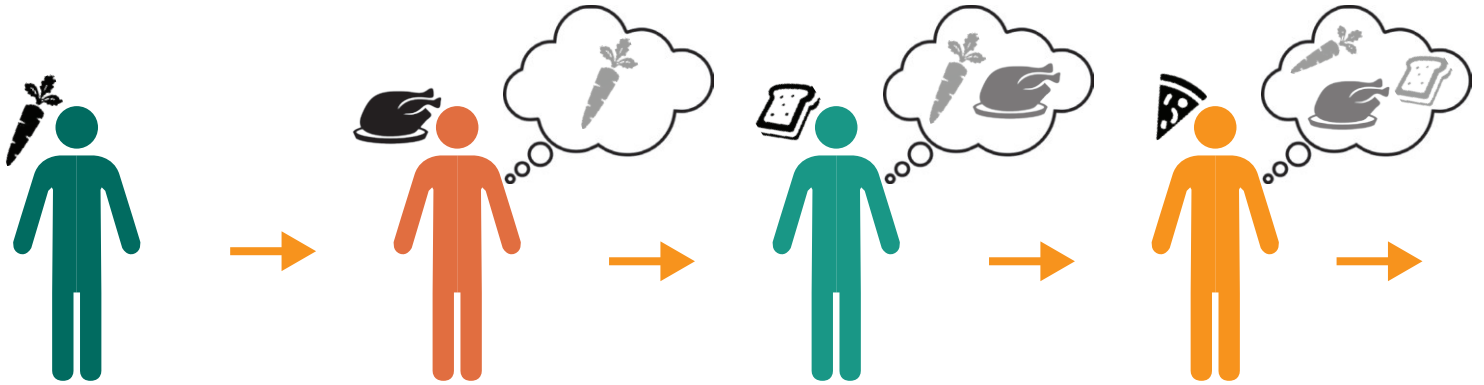


Fig 3.7 How Memory is Reaffirmed by Ritual

An action repeated recalls the same action in the past, even when performed by different individuals. Pictured is the example of food consumption; important meals of the past are recalled when repeated in the present.

tiresome workdays. It has taken place in kitchens preparing for father's company picnic at Lakeside Park on hot summer days. It has taken place in the ice cream parlours of childhood, fruit flavoured scoops wrestled onto crumbling cones before being enjoyed in the sunset from the farthest end of the pier. Such an uncomplicated ritual performed in the past is instantly evoked by the same ritual taking place in the present; a steaming plate of seasonal vegetables set on the white tablecloth by a friendly face from your neighbourhood working at the newly opened restaurant at Port Place.

Through the inhabiting of this new building, and its use evocative of old ways as well as in changed new ways, the Genius Loci of Port Dalhousie can be reawakened, expanding and enveloping the people, the temporality, and the physical landscape of this place. The proposal for Port Place will help all Agents of Genius Loci co-operate seamlessly to help rebuild Port Dalhousie guided by the newly strengthened magnetism of its prevailing spirit.

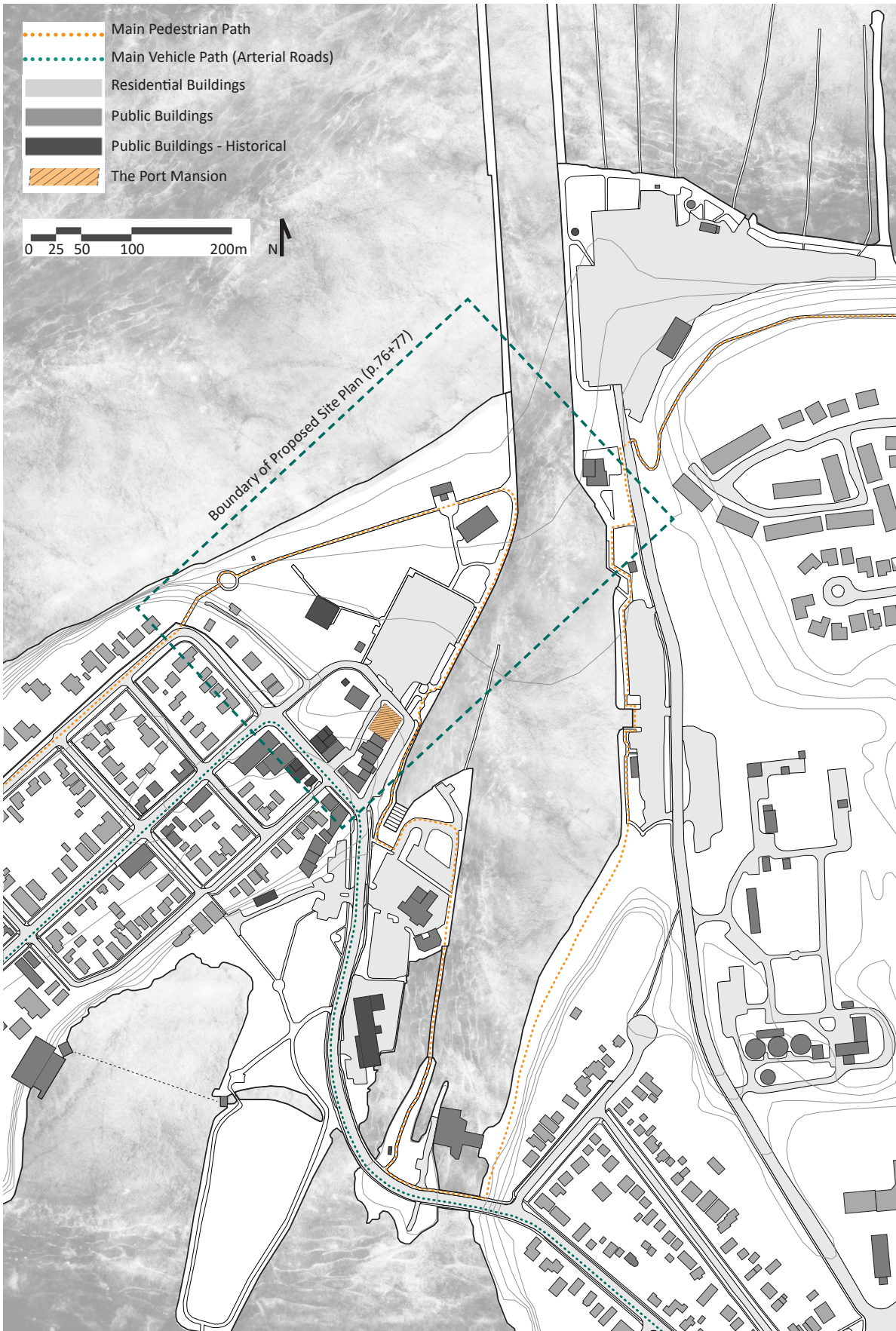
The Proposal- Port Place

In 2012, the Port Mansion was demolished in anticipation of a new condominium development, named Port Place by the developers.

From the logic of the concept of Genius Loci, the memory of Port Dalhousie, and the strength of the three stakeholder groups, finally comes a new proposal. A reclaimed Port Place; the reconsidered Port Mansion as a piece of social infrastructure to reinstate the Genius Loci of Port Dalhousie.

Fig 3.8 (next spread, left) Port Dal-
housie Site Plan, Existing

Fig 3.9 (next spread, right) Port
Dalhousie Site Plan, Proposed







Martindale Pond

Lakeport Rd.

Heywood Generating Station

Rowing Course

Rowing Viewing Tower

Lighthouse Rd.

The Harbour Club

Rennie Park

Port Dalhousie Waste Water

Proposed Pedestrian Bridge
(By Others)

Royal Port

Kiwanis Stage

Port Dalhousie Harbour

Union Waterfront

Main St.

Port Place

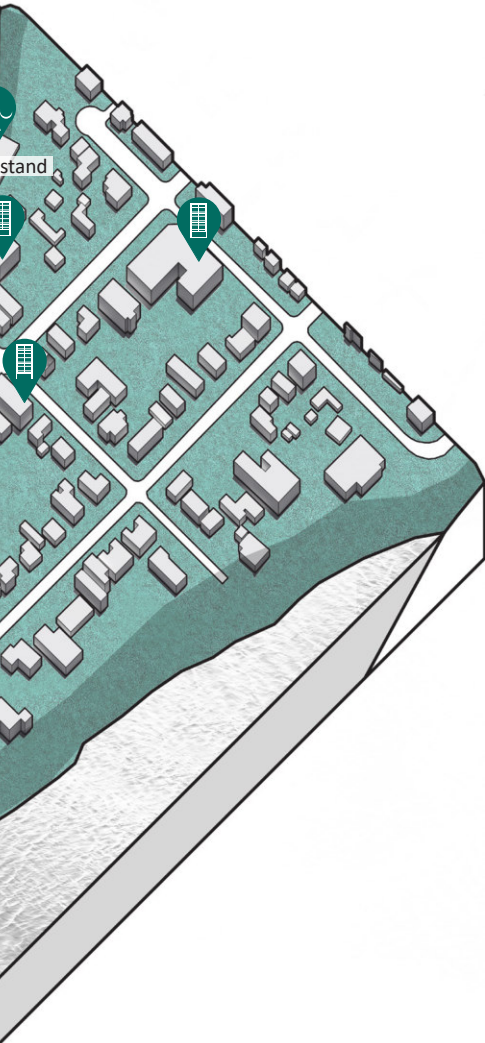
The Beaches at Port


Lakeside Park


Lake Ontario

Fig 3.10 Aerial Axonometric Diagram of The Site


Depicting existing and proposed (by others) high-density housing, recreational rowing buildings, and some noteworthy infrastructure.



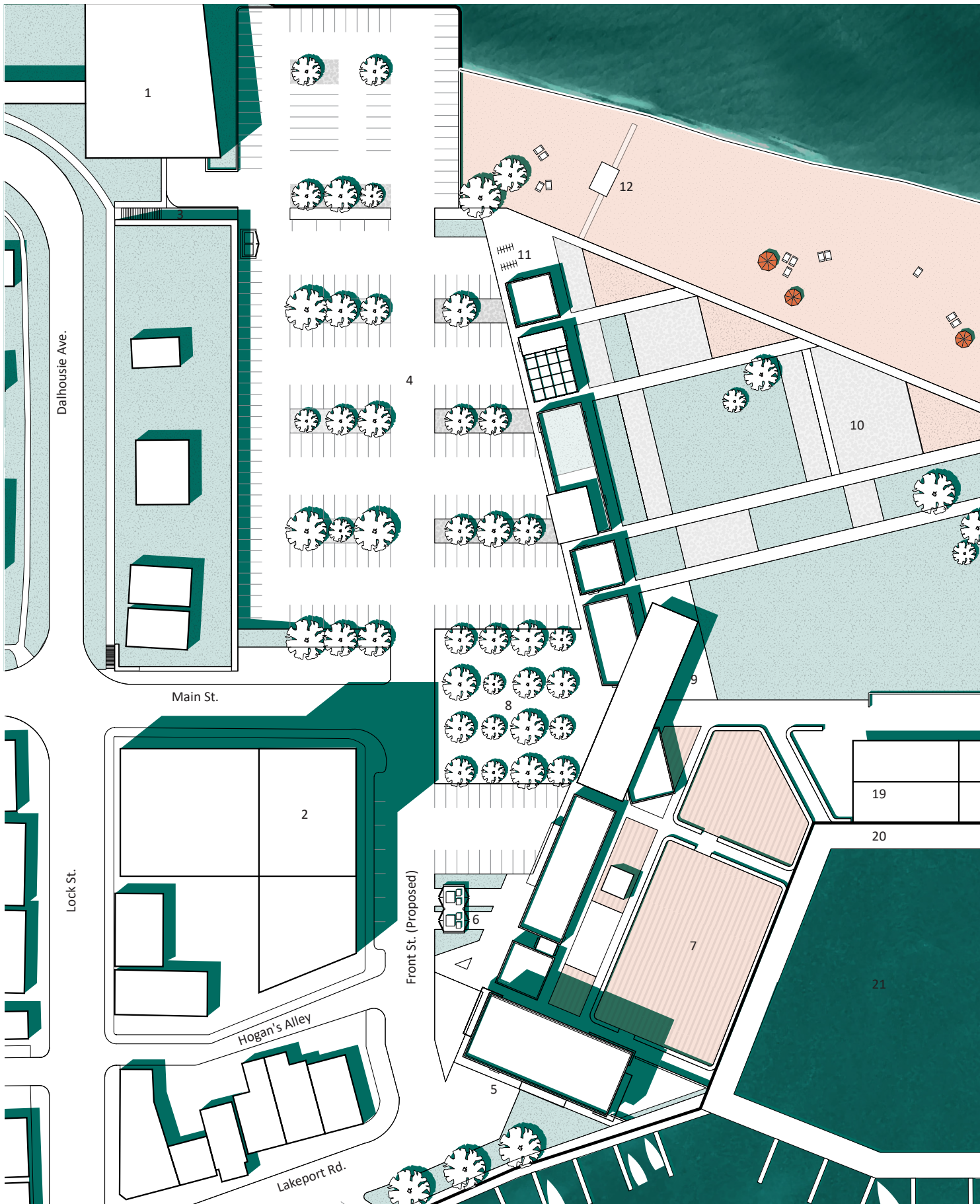
 High-Density Residential
(Apartment and Condominium Complexes)

 Recreational (Rowing) Buildings

 Infrastructure

 Proposed (by others) High-Density Residential
Buildings

 Commercial Buildings



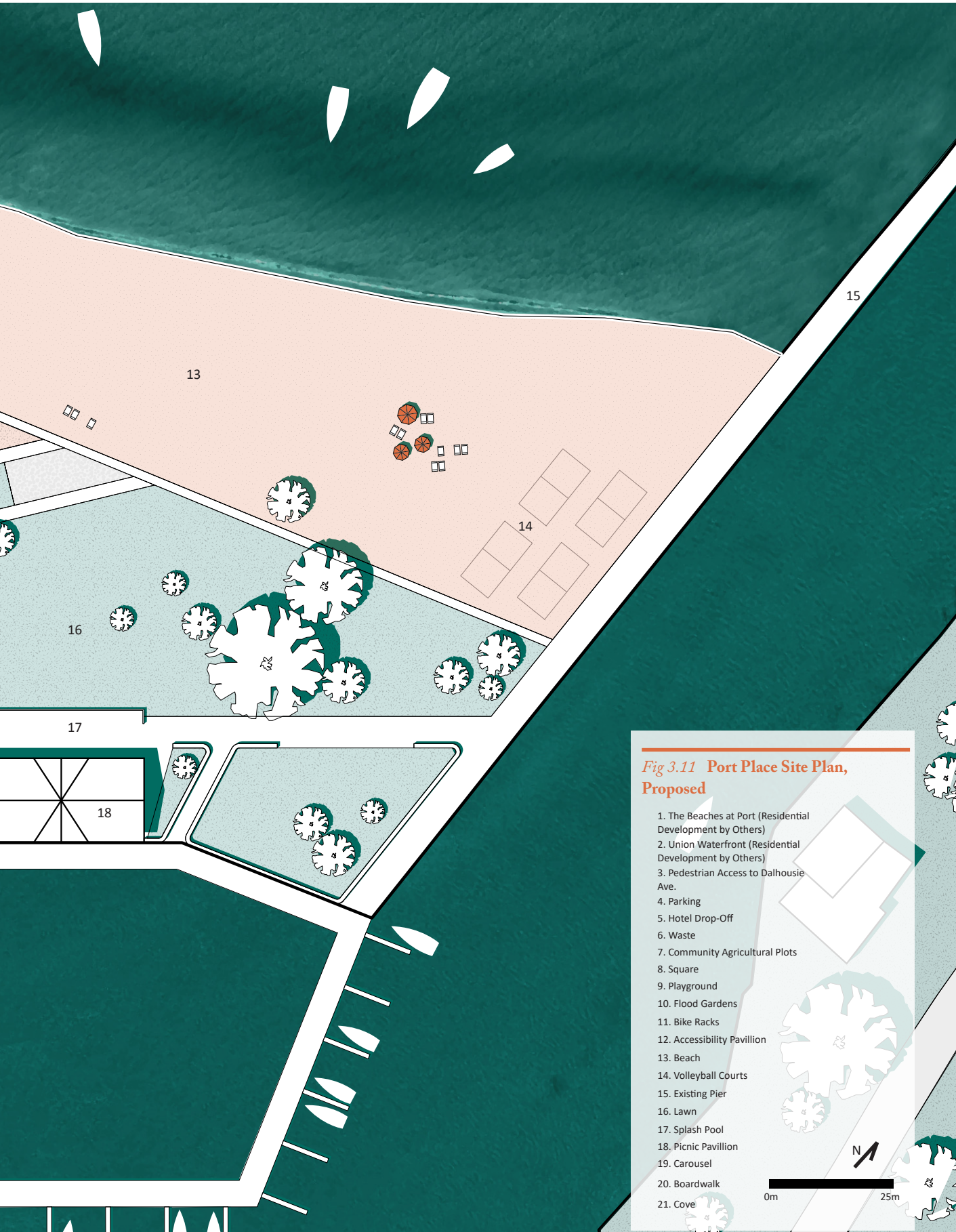


Fig 3.11 Port Place Site Plan, Proposed

- 1. The Beaches at Port (Residential Development by Others)
- 2. Union Waterfront (Residential Development by Others)
- 3. Pedestrian Access to Dalhousie Ave.
- 4. Parking
- 5. Hotel Drop-Off
- 6. Waste
- 7. Community Agricultural Plots
- 8. Square
- 9. Playground
- 10. Flood Gardens
- 11. Bike Racks
- 12. Accessibility Pavillion
- 13. Beach
- 14. Volleyball Courts
- 15. Existing Pier
- 16. Lawn
- 17. Splash Pool
- 18. Picnic Pavillion
- 19. Carousel
- 20. Boardwalk
- 21. Cove



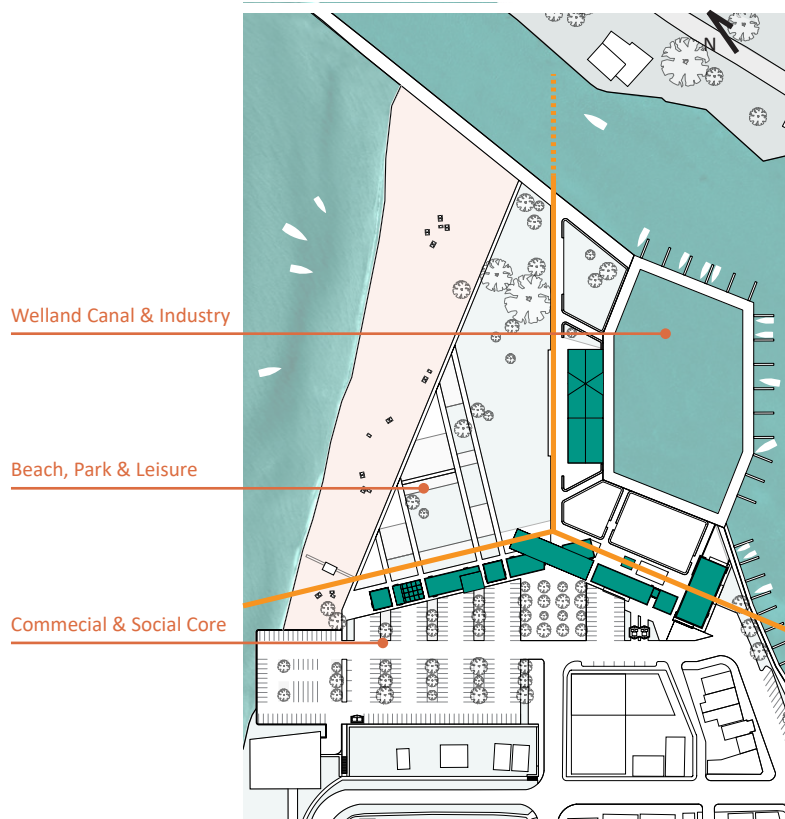


Beach & Midway

Ship Entering Canal



Lock St. Stores



Welland Canal & Industry

Beach, Park & Leisure

Commercial & Social Core

Fig 3.12 (above) **Parti Diagram**

The site of Port Place is organized according to what history each triad of space was originally associated with.

Fig 3.13 (left) **Site Organization Diagram**

The Site

While the site of the original Port Mansion was located on Lakeport Road, Port Place has been situated within the current boundaries of Lakeside Park. This was decided for three reasons, the first being that logistically, all the program elements to be included would not fit on the original site without rising up into a building of alien scale, the exact form that was poorly received by residents and that the Port Mansion was originally demolished for. Another reason for moving Port Place from the original Port Mansion site was so that the new building could have a direct physical relationship to Lakeside Park, which was to be the primary outdoor area of the proposal and a major support for the building scheme. Finally, Port Place is not located on the Port Mansion site due to a simple yet pivotal design decision; while Port Place is to be the reimagining of the Port Mansion, it is simply impossible to reverse time. Port Place can never be the same building that the Port Mansion was, even if it was constructed exactly the same. The design decision to set Port Place apart physically from the Port Mansion was made to illustrate this fact, as well as the fact that providing a space for the past rituals of the Genius Loci to take place as the old Port Mansion did was more important than fidelity to repeating a certain form. Thus, the site of Port Place becomes Lakeside Park, which is transformed subsequent to the following organizational logic.

The transformation of the site of Lakeside Park recalls three important aspects of Port Dalhousie's past and gives them a physical form in the present; the emergent power of the Welland Canal, the role of the beach landscape as a popular leisure destination, and the social and commercial strengths of the community throughout time. Lakeside Park was already spatially organized in this way, but this proposal aims to amplify these pasts through interventions that facilitate the respective spaces' rituals into the future. The former Welland Canal is located to the Southeast, the beach to the North, and the commercial area is located to the Southwest.

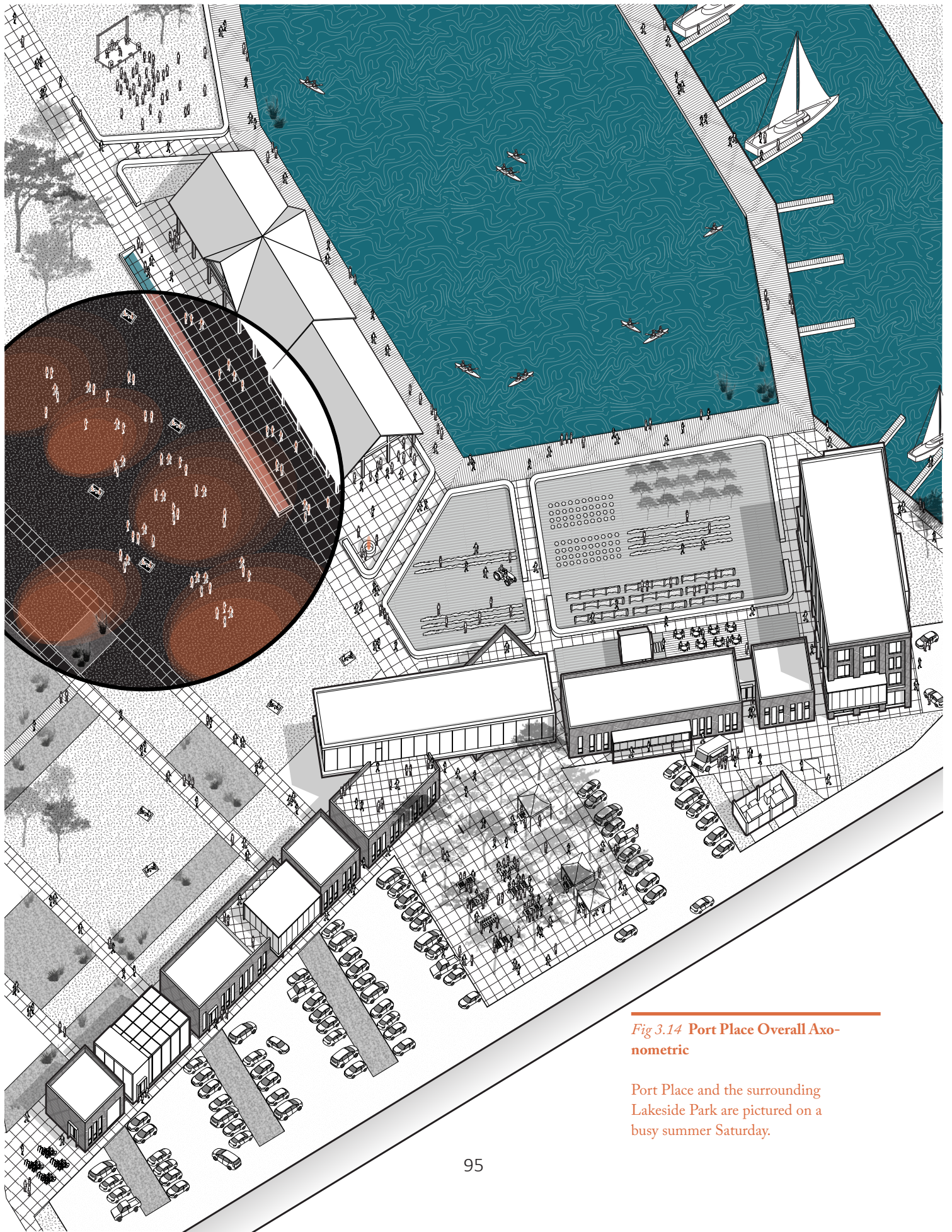


Fig 3.14 Port Place Overall Axo-
nometric

Port Place and the surrounding
Lakeside Park are pictured on a
busy summer Saturday.

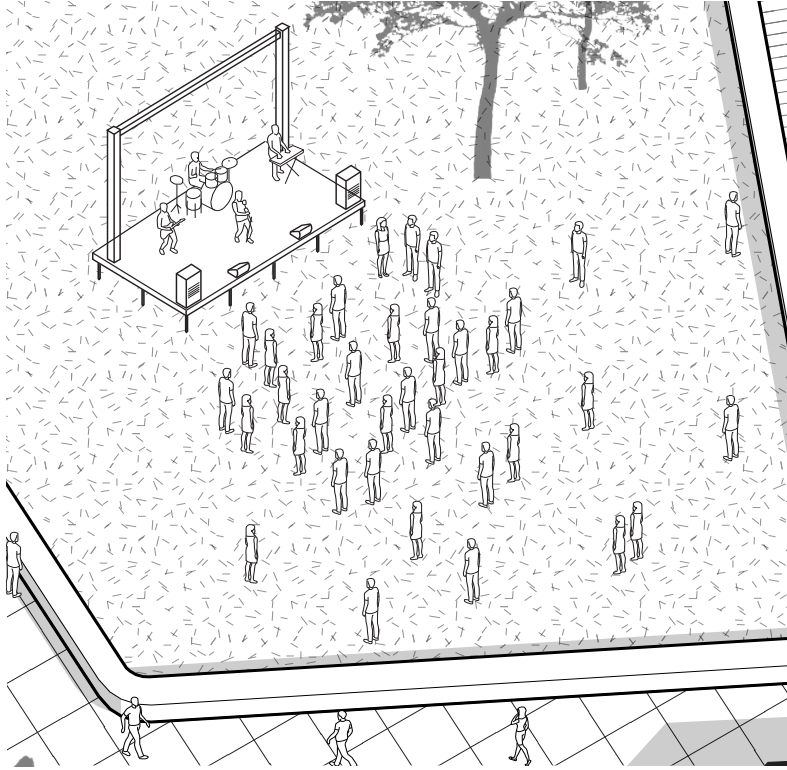


Fig 3.15 Axonometric Detail -
Concert

Fig 3.17 Axonometric Detail -
Watching Fireworks

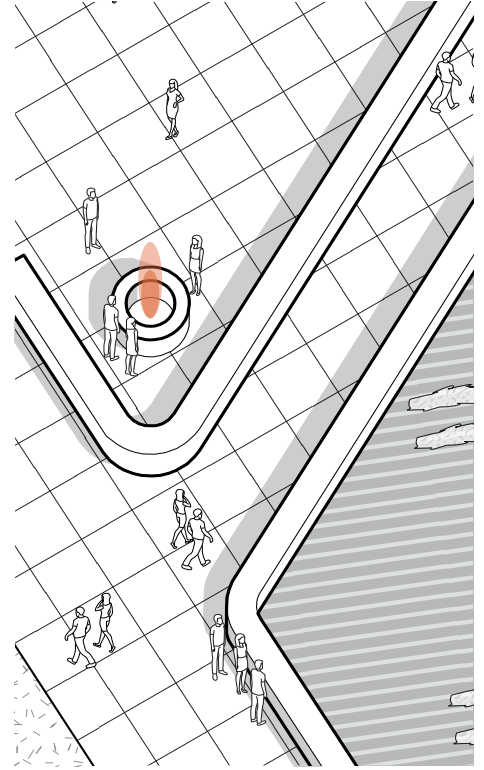
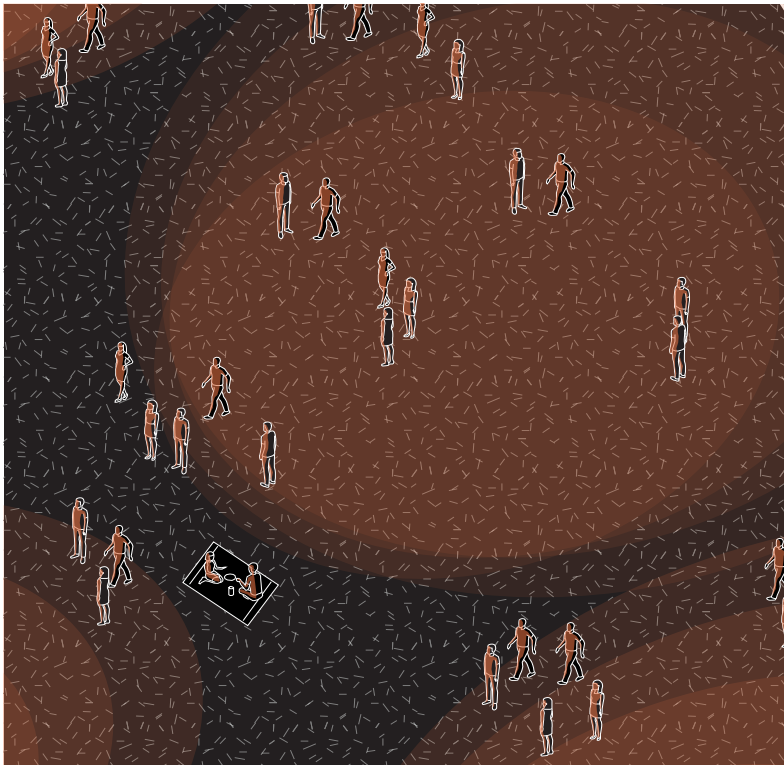
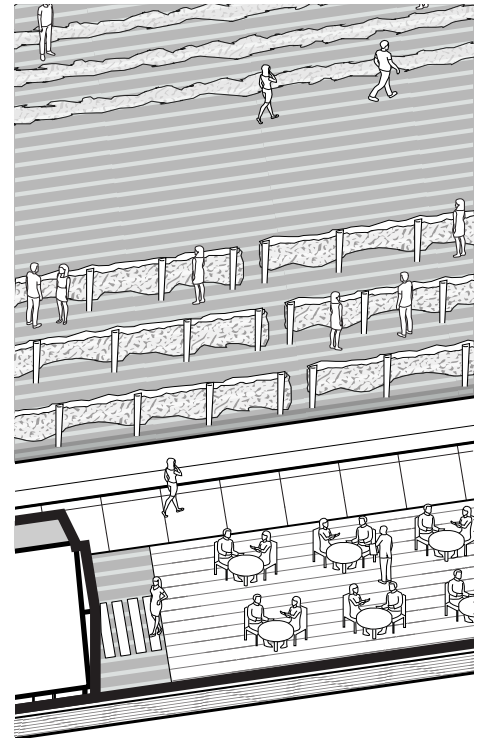


Fig 3.16 Axonometric Detail -
Bonfire

Fig 3.18 Axonometric Detail -
Restaurant Patio



The Canal

It has been previously affirmed that Port Dalhousie would not exist as it does or has without its proximity to the Welland Canal. The Canal is the force that gives and takes away, so the site's connection to the water is critical. Part of the land of Lakeside Park has been removed completely and replaced with the water, encompassed by a loop of boardwalk, lowered to the level of the water so those who walk out on it can see, hear, smell, or even feel the lifeblood of Port Dalhousie's past that is the water running through the Canal. This intervention is literally within the canal, and people can walk out on it and experience Port Dalhousie from the point of view of sailors of long ago. This boardwalk also has a practical application, boats can dock along its perimeter allowing passers by to converse with a group of people they were previously separated from by the existence of a marina. It also provides a more sheltered aquatic area for visitors to experience the water. Aquatic plants can grow, Paddle boats can be rented in the summer, and in the winter it can be converted into a skating rink. Visitors to Lakeside Park in the distant past have been able to partake in both of these activities.

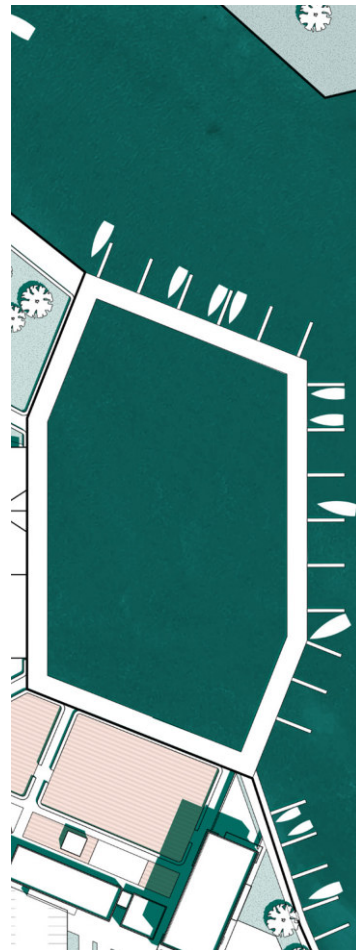
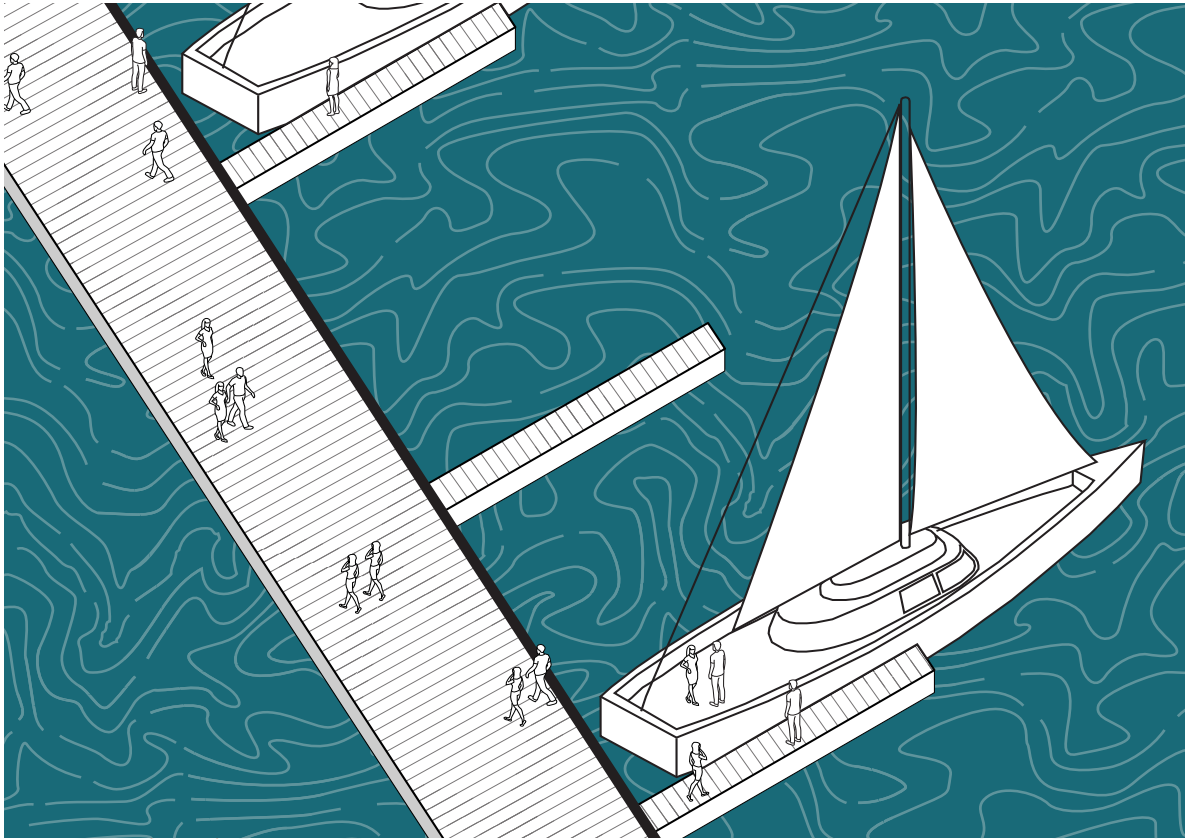


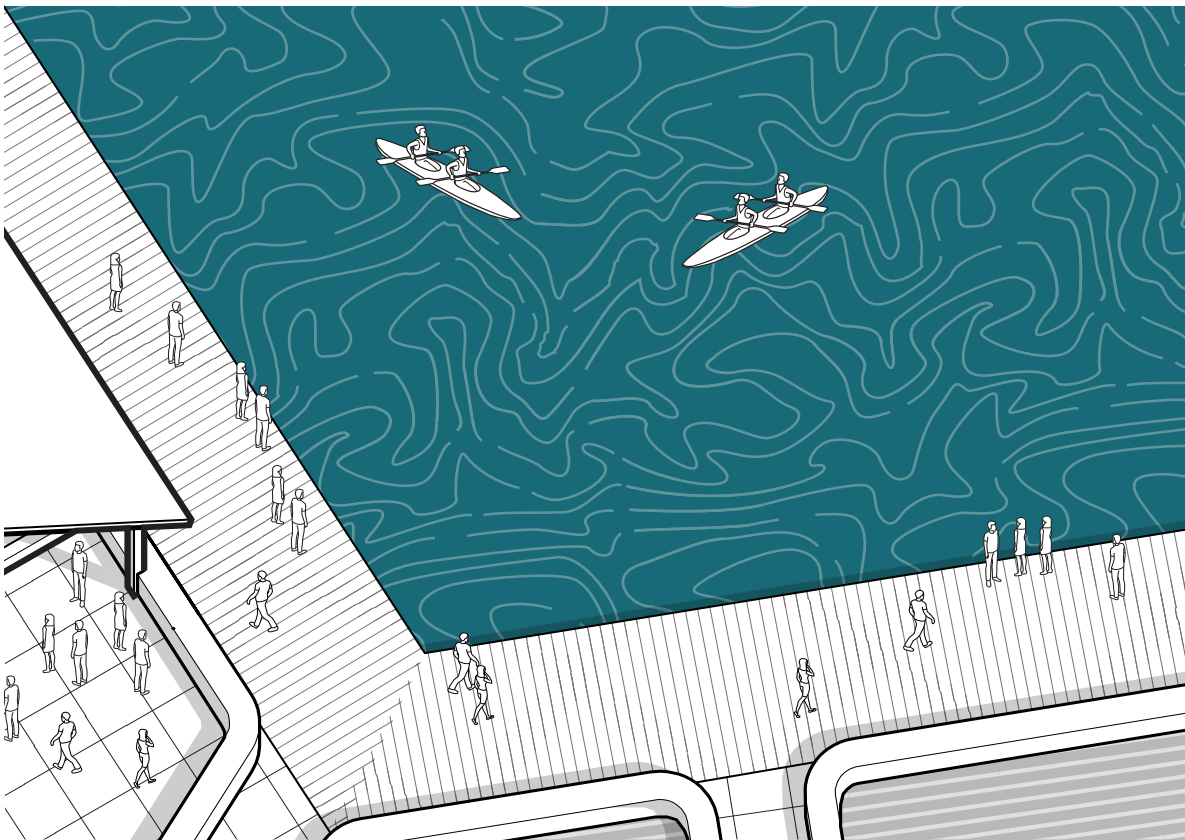
Fig 3.19 (above) **Detail of the Canal Boardwalk**

Fig 3.20, 3.21 (opposite) **The Canal Boardwalk**

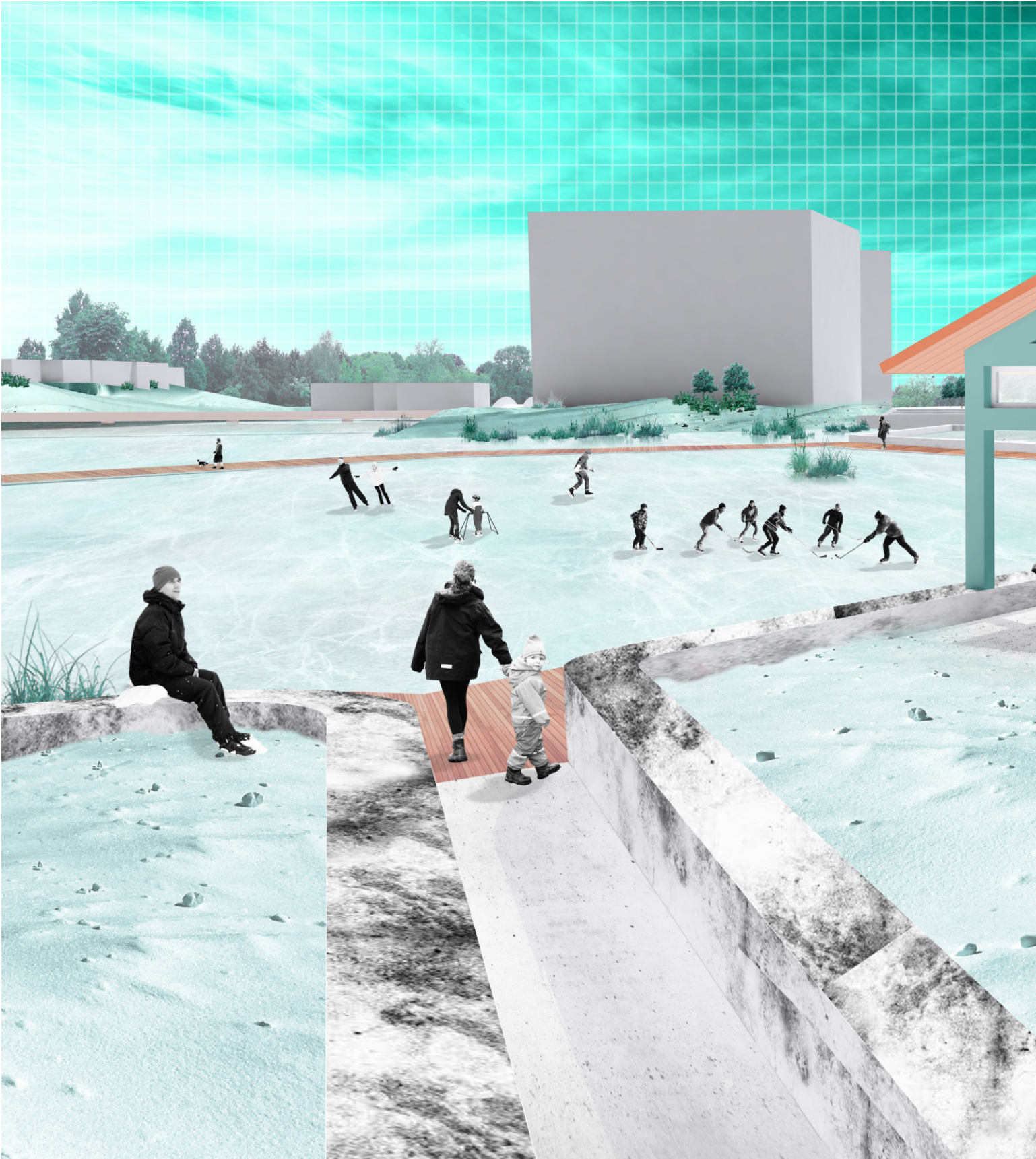
Fig 3.22 (next spread) **The Cove and The Boardwalk - Winter View**



Boat owners and passerby interacting.



The Cove provides a sheltered aquatic area for watercraft such as kayaks and paddleboats.





The Carousel and Picnic Pavilion

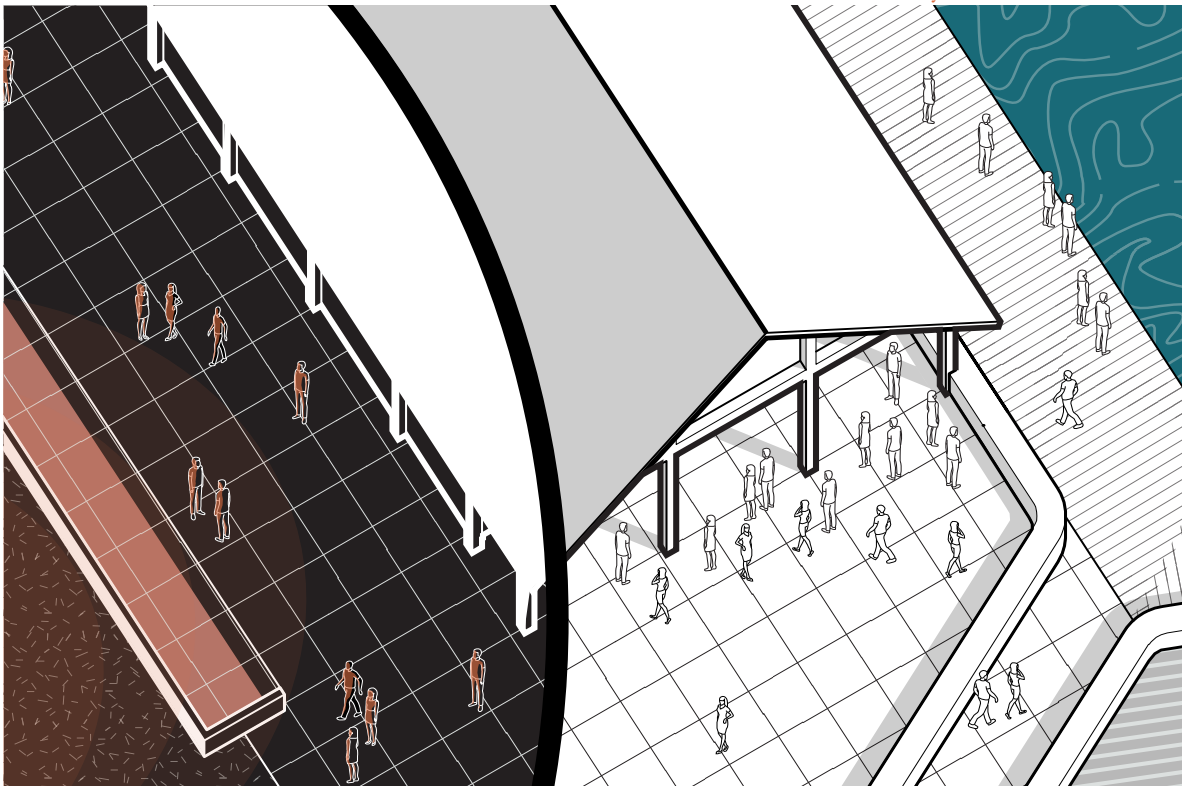
In this proposal, the amenities of the park are modernized and made more visible, a past proudly displayed.

The new carousel building, located along the main pedestrian artery of the park, exposes the carousel more effectively to the park visitors while protecting it from the weather and elements. The existing picnic pavilion, erected in 2016, is to be dismantled and moved, with a small addition to be added as the enclosure for the historic carousel, which will look out over the harbour. Directly adjacent to the pavilion is a small splash pool so that parents monitoring children on both the carousel and splash pool can do this easily and safely. The beach is left mostly undisturbed by the proposal.

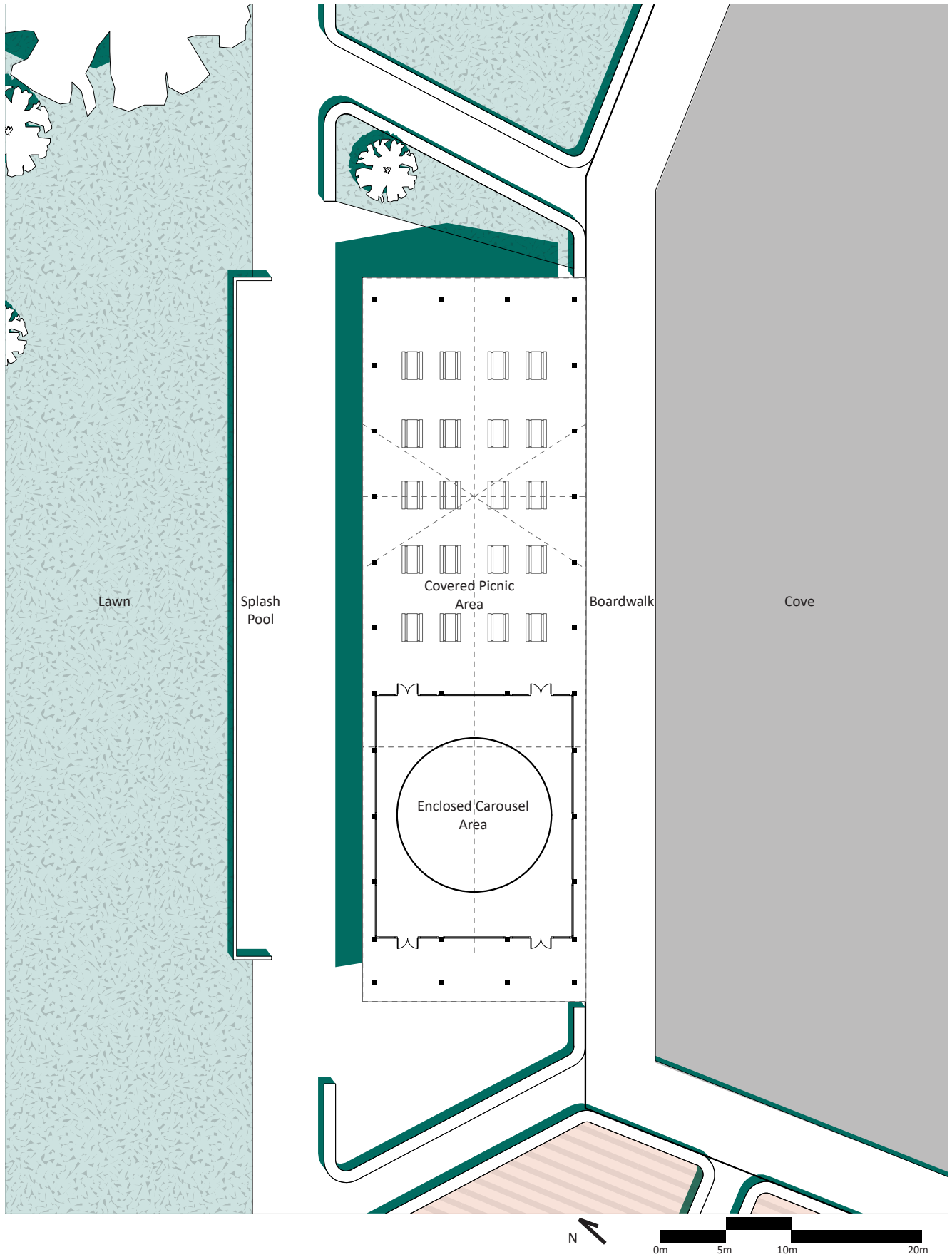
Fig 3.24 (opposite) **Carousel Pavilion - Floor Plan**

Fig 3.23 **Carousel Pavilion**

Partially rendered in a night view as well as day.



Parents can be close to their children and easily watch both the carousel and splash pool.



The Flood Gardens

The area of the park that faces out onto Lake Ontario has in recent years been prone to flooding. While the park space has been determined as not large enough for flood prevention measures such as a sea-wall or berm, the flooding can at least be seen as advantageous when water collection is concerned. A large portion of the site is grass which must be watered in the summer months, and there is also a large community garden and farm area related to Port Place that would require some form of irrigation as well. Drainage of the park is facilitated through rocky outcrops designed as a landscape feature close to the beach, the area most prone to flooding. When water infiltrates this area of the site, large debris are filtered out by the rocks and then a grate as the water drops into a basin. This water is then stored in underground cisterns to be used as grey water to irrigate the site when needed. The electrical component of these systems is kept in the farming storage area located in the ground floor of the hotel building. The system is also capable of collecting water for irrigation from the lake during dry seasons.

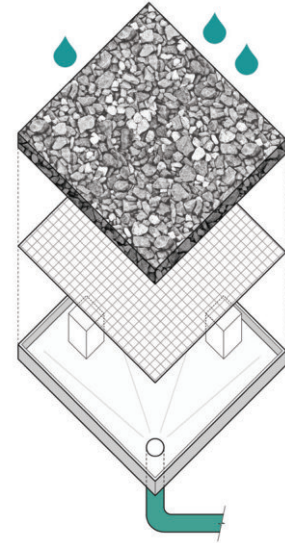
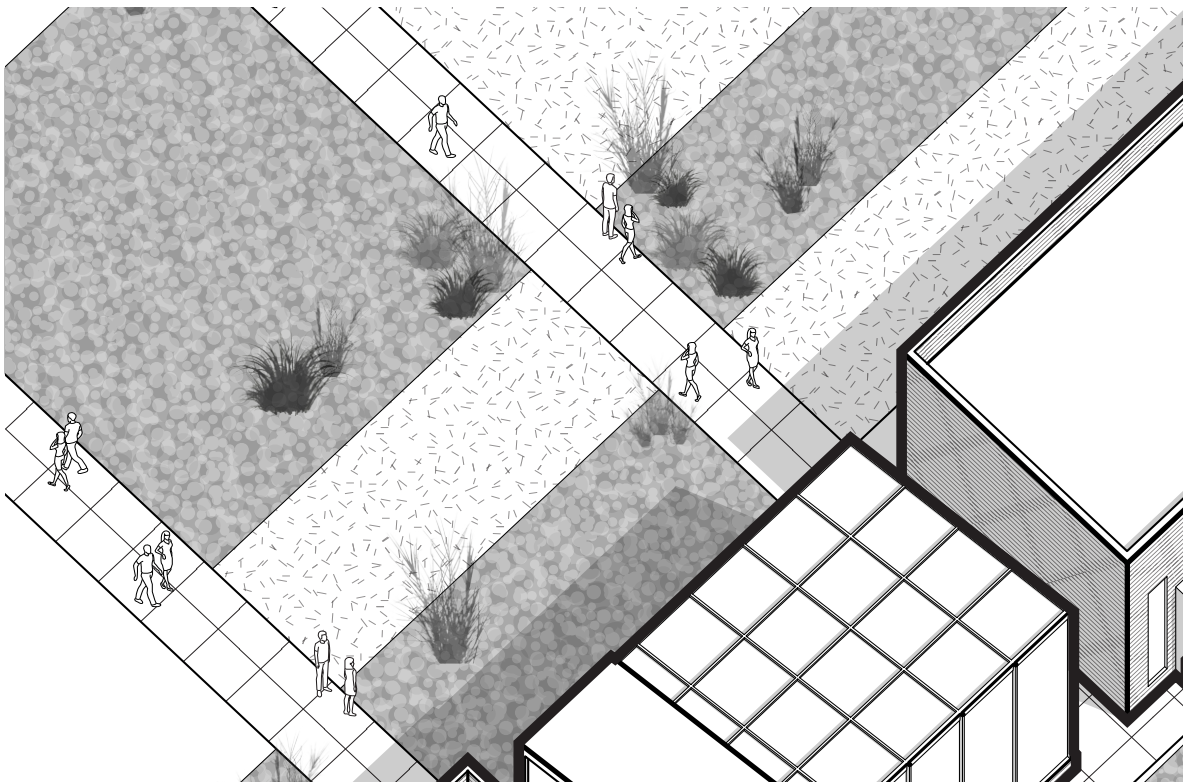


Fig 3.25 Flood Garden Assembly



Flood Gardens are both functional and landscape elements.

Fig 3.26 The Flood Gardens

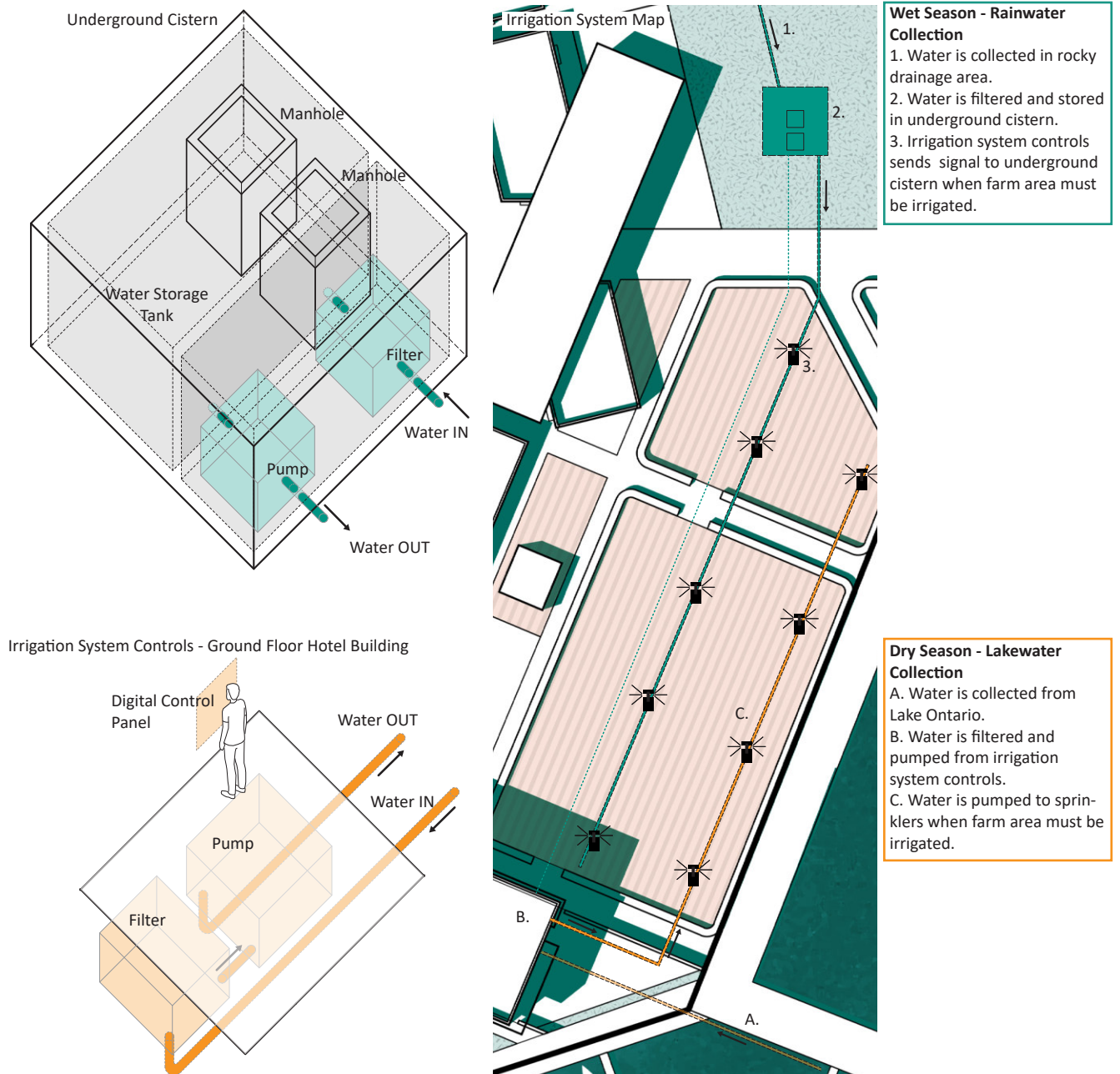
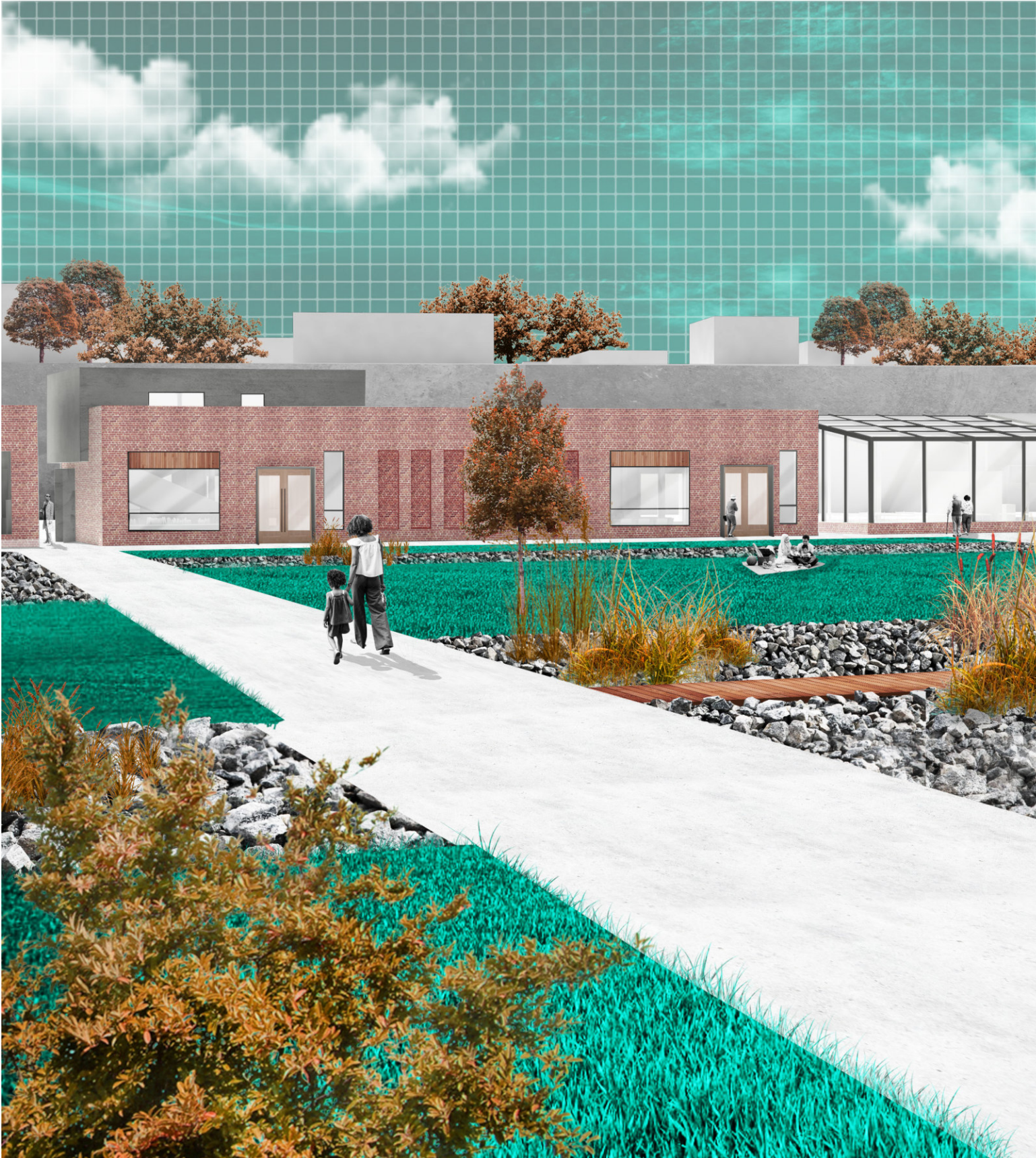


Fig 3.27 Rainwater Collection System - Cistern, Irrigation System Controls, and System Map

Fig 3.28 (next spread) Flood Gardens - Autumn View

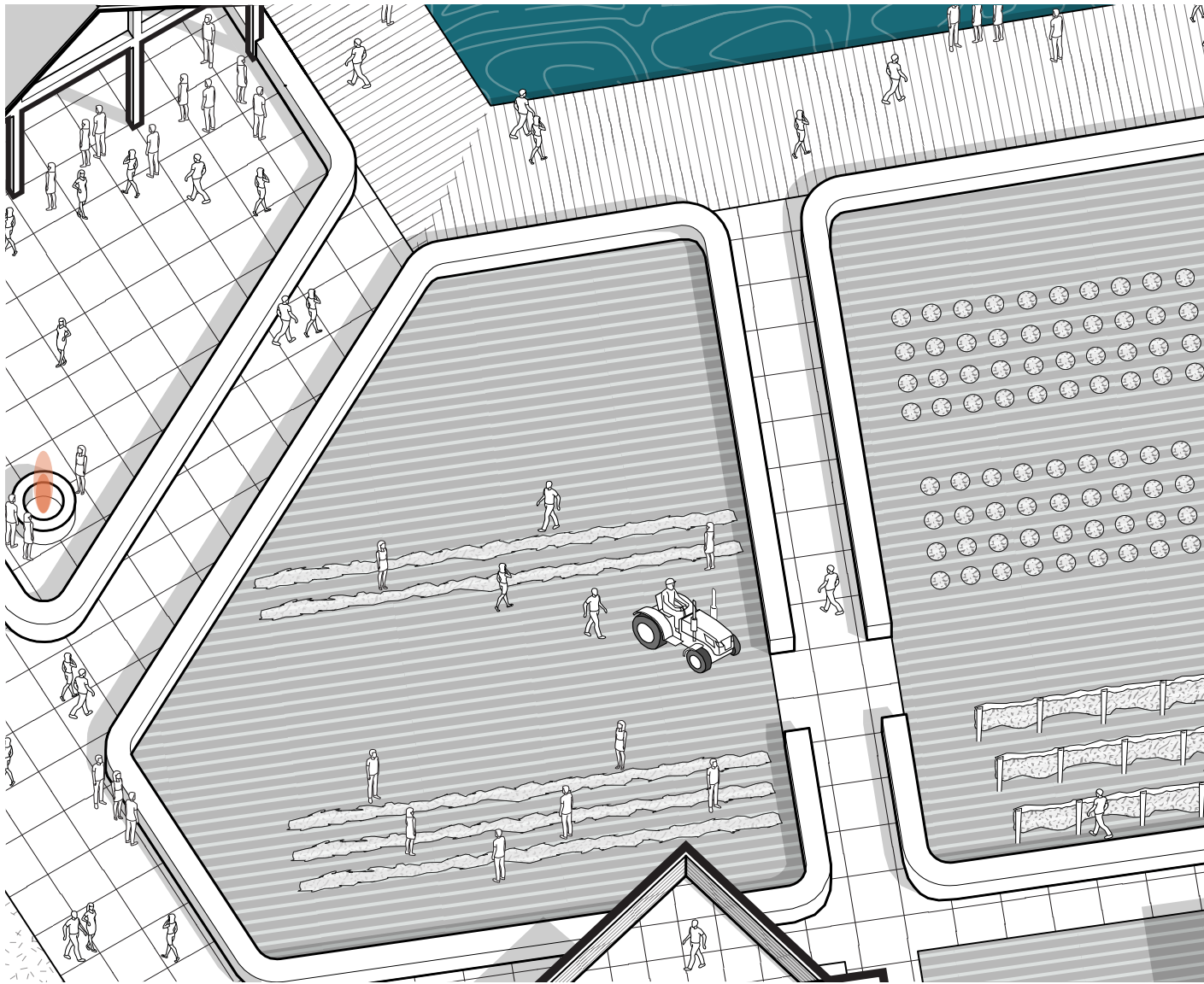




The Community Gardens

This area of the site includes a large plot of land for a small, community-run agricultural operation. Directly adjacent within the hotel building is a storage room for all the necessary tools and equipment. The agricultural area is to be worked on by all members of the stakeholder groups, with local farms being given the opportunity to donate money, equipment, and knowledge in exchange for positive publicity within a community that values buying local, as well as the exclusive privilege of their produce being served in the restaurant or sold at the farmers' market, both

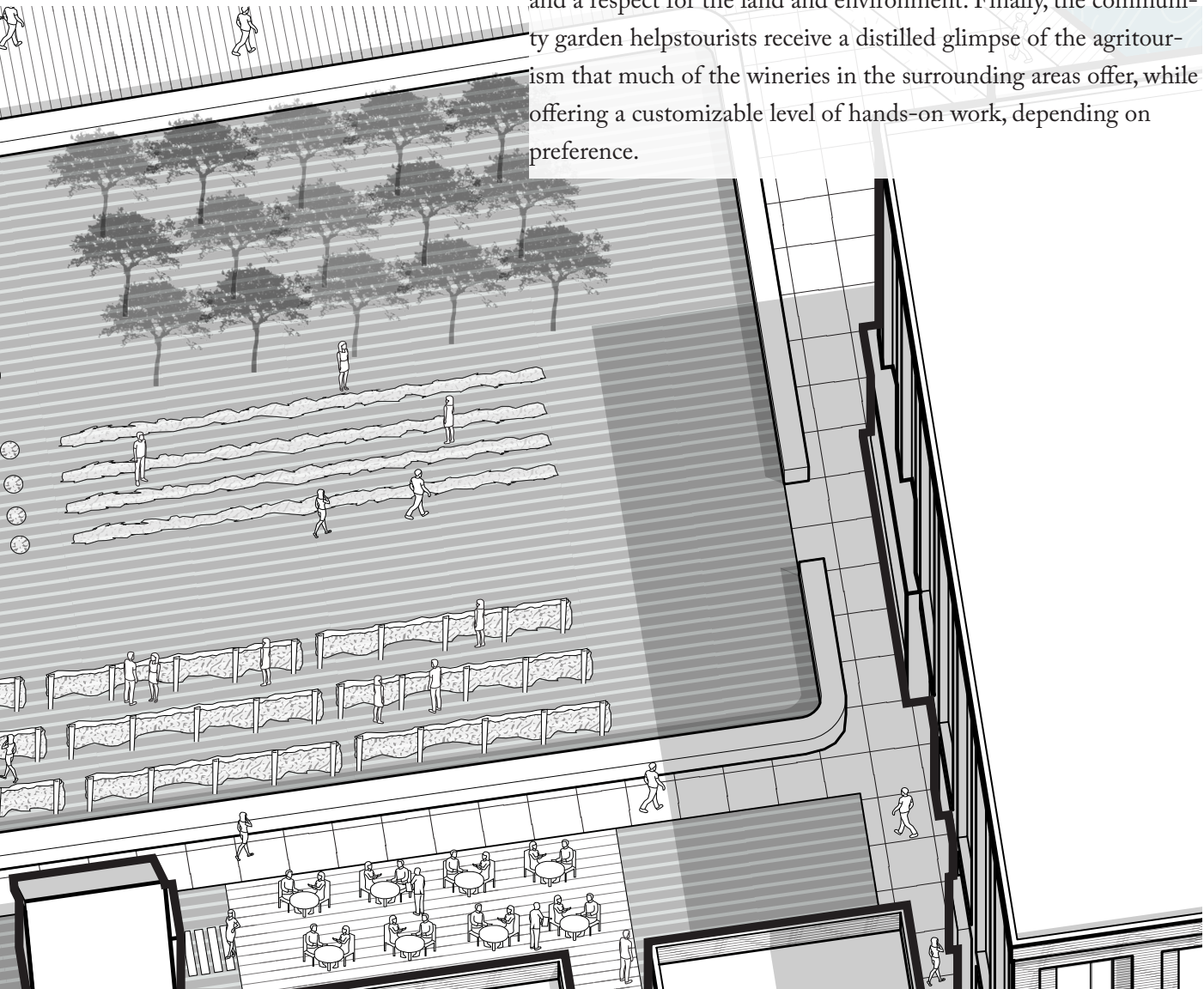
Fig 3.29 The Community Gardens



Local fruits and vegetables can be grown in the community gardens and consumed by the same people producing them.

of which are located on the site. This landscape element is meant to reflect the frontier life faced by the very first settlers of this area, as well as call attention to the agricultural regional context within which the site is located.

The garden provides a constructive activity to help the aged stakeholder group interact with each other, which helps combat loneliness and idleness, which are two serious risks for those who are older. Gardening is also a popular low-impact hobby for those of retirement age and so this group in particular has developed skills to share with other users of this space. This area also gives families an activity to do together or with others, teaching children social skills among both similar and different age groups, and a respect for the land and environment. Finally, the community garden helps tourists receive a distilled glimpse of the agritourism that much of the wineries in the surrounding areas offer, while offering a customizable level of hands-on work, depending on preference.



The Square

The commercial and social hub of the proposal is another site component, and this is where the new buildings reimagined as Port Place are to be located. This series of buildings and their immediate exterior features serve as the streetfront that greets users as the first thing they see when approaching Lakeside Park. It creates an edge to the space and helps people to understand how to interact with the site through direction from obvious circulation paths. Between the street and Port Place is a market square, accessible and visible from all areas of the building. This provides a space for accessible cultural activities like concerts or festivals, an outdoor centre where people can meet and relax, and a financial driver for locals looking to sell or buy produce or other goods at the weekly farmers market to take place here. Lakeport Road, the street directly adjacent to the marketplace, is shifted southwest by roughly 20 meters to make room for this market square, and is renamed Front Street to mark this streetfront as distinct from Lakeport Road and Main Street, which lead to it. A new parking lot which takes up the least valuable portion of the site, as well as added parking around the Port Place building and the commercial core adds more parking spaces than originally available.

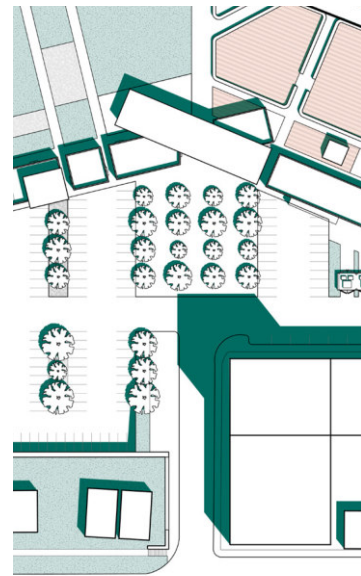
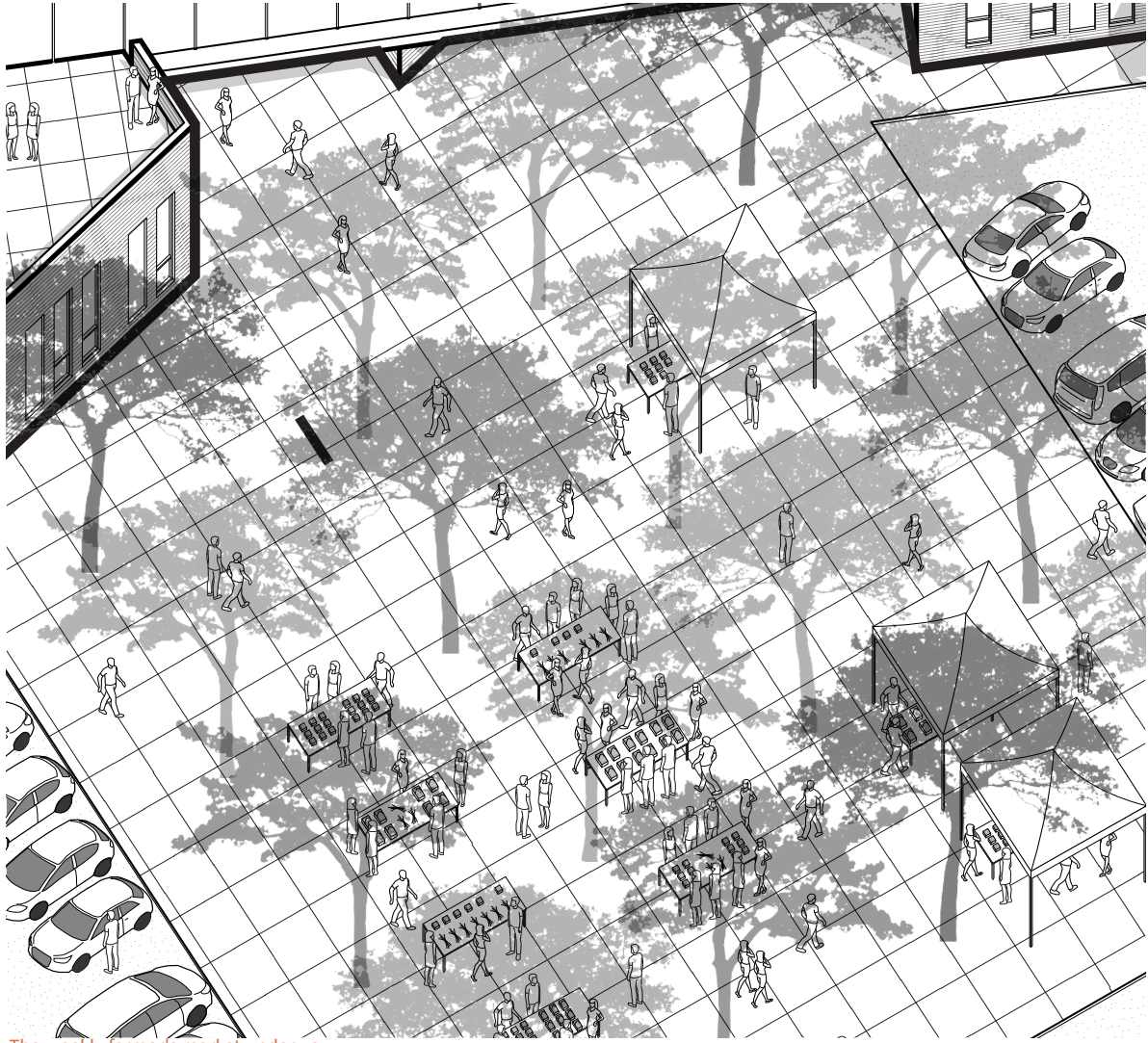


Fig 3.30 **Detail of The Square**

Fig 3.31 (opposite, above) **The Square**

Fig 3.32 (opposite, below) **The Square Overflow**

Fig 3.33 (next spread) **The Square - Summer View**

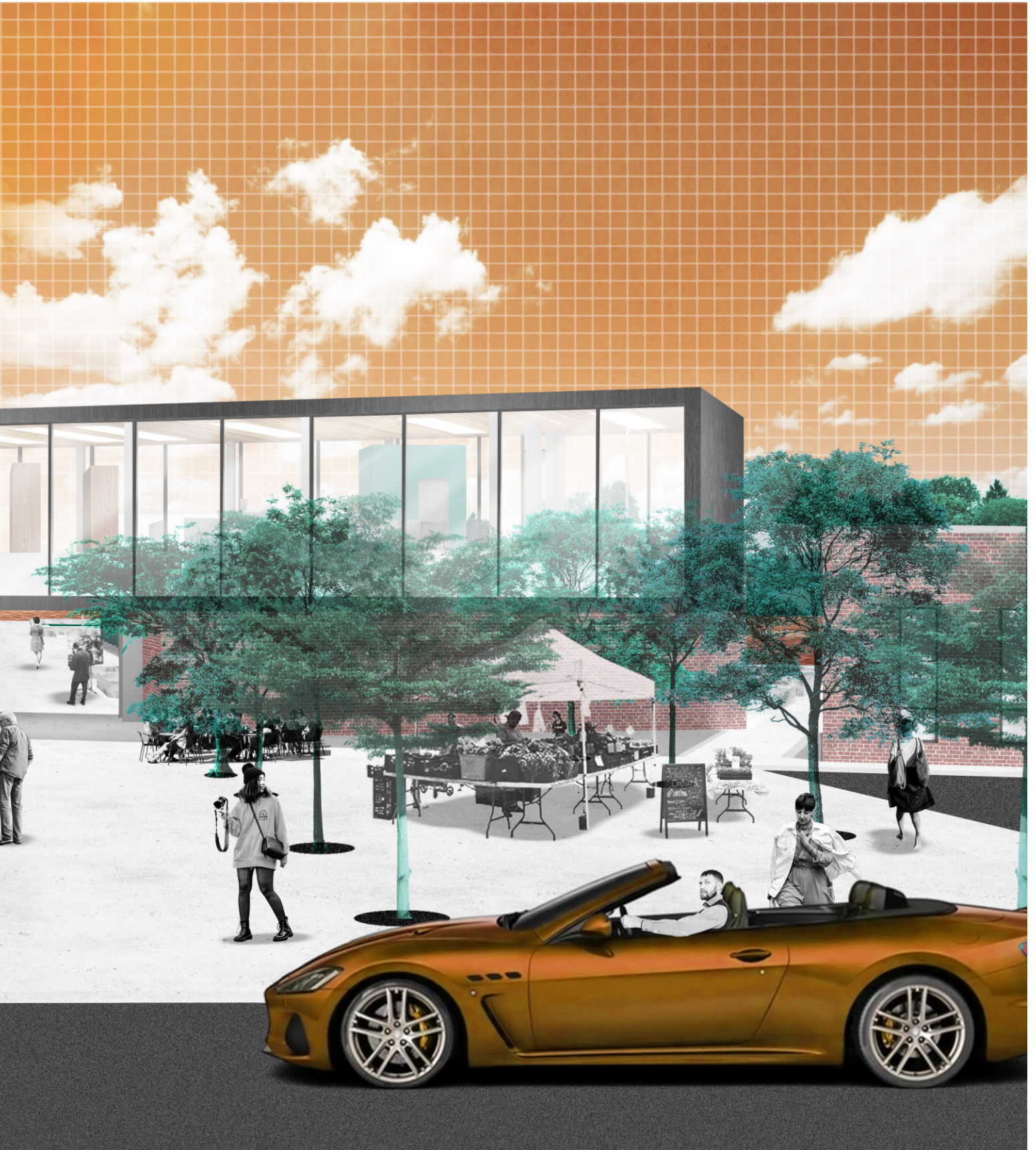


The weekly farmer's market underway.



Another public area near The Square serves as overflow.





The Building

The new buildings comprising Port Place are simple and subdued. The built fabric of Port Dalhousie still displays physical remnants of years past, and it is these buildings that served as architectural examples on which the aesthetics of Port Place are based. The rhythms and cadence of the characteristic Italianate commercial facades informed the physical appearance of the buildings of Port Place. The memory evoked by these traditional buildings has been reimplemented in a contemporary way which recalls the historic architecture that gives Port Dalhousie its vintage appeal.



Fig 3.34 **Murphy's Building**

Originally built c.1885, the former Murphy's Provisions and later hotel and restaurant is built with red brick, the vernacular of Port Dalhousie. Narrow arched windows and glazed storefront are exemplary of commercial Italianate Architecture





Fig 3.35 Wellington House Building

The former Wellington House (now Lock St. Brewing Co.) and the Sterling Bank Building (now Balzac's coffee), also built with red brick.

Some physical similarities exist between the old and proposed buildings of this area, namely their material of red brick that is seen abundantly in this region, however although it calls to mind the styles of the past, the architectural style of Port Place was chosen to not detract from the previously outlined fact that while Port Place is to replace the Port Mansion, it could never imitate it completely.

Port Place is comprised of a series of buildings which serve as the edge of Lakeside Park, whose programmatic elements provide ample opportunity for the rituals of the stakeholder groups to take place over and over, as long as Port Place exists.

Fig 3.36 Overall Building Floor Plans



The Hotel

Perhaps the strongest functional callback to the Port Mansion, the hotel included in the Port Place design proposal was a requirement for evoking the past building within the new. Not only is the Port Mansion reflected in this block, but all of the many hotels that have existed in Port Dalhousie throughout time. Most program elements of this proposal take on a small function of the Port Mansion and expand on it, making it relevant to present-day society. The hotel, however, is directly related to the old building by serving the exact same purpose.

Included in the amenities of the hotel are a spa, a wine bar, and a games room/ lounge.

Also included is an indoor support area related to the community gardens located directly adjacent to this building. Storage for farm equipment and a small indoor potting area provide the users with a convenient area to contribute to the community agricultural effort.



Many retirees have come from the GTA to St. Catharines for a small-town feel, but maintain relationships from their original hometowns. Family and friends visiting can stay in this hotel. This also applies to the young professional group.

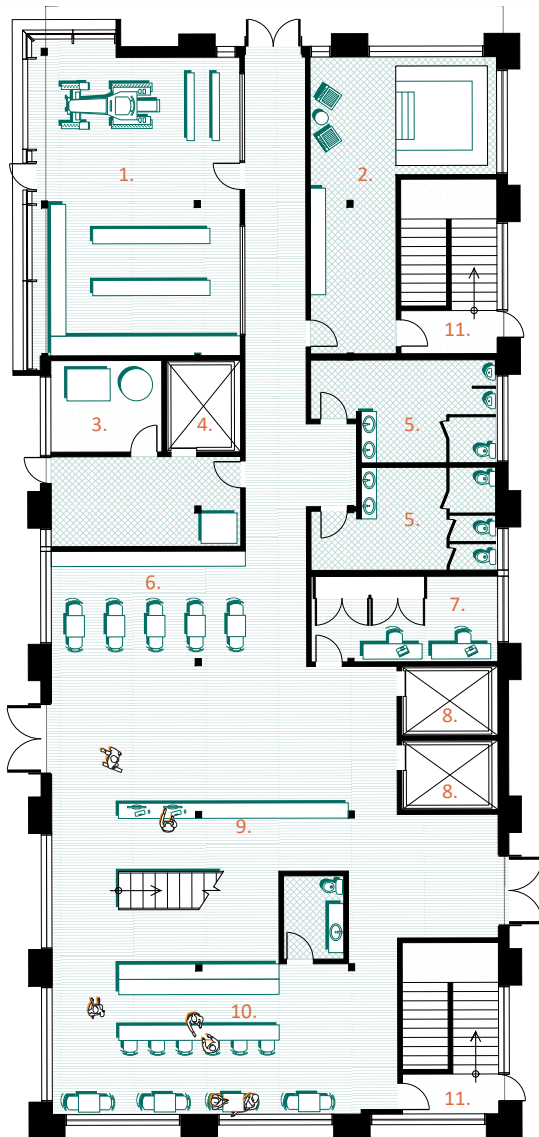


For Tourists, accommodation offerings are an obvious need. As stated, this group spent almost \$4 million on lodgings in the Niagara region in 2016 alone.

- 1. Community Garden Support and Potting Area
- 2. Spa
- 3. Mechanical/Electrical Room
- 4. Service Elevator
- 5. W/C
- 6. Breakfast Buffet
- 7. Hotel Office
- 8. Elevators
- 9. Hotel Desk
- 10. Wine Bar
- 11. Emergency Stair

- 1. Guest Room
- 2. Vending
- 3. Laundry/Service Room
- 4. Service Elevator
- 5. Elevators
- 6. W/C
- 7. Wine Bar
- 8. Emergency Stair

First (Ground) Floor



Second Floor

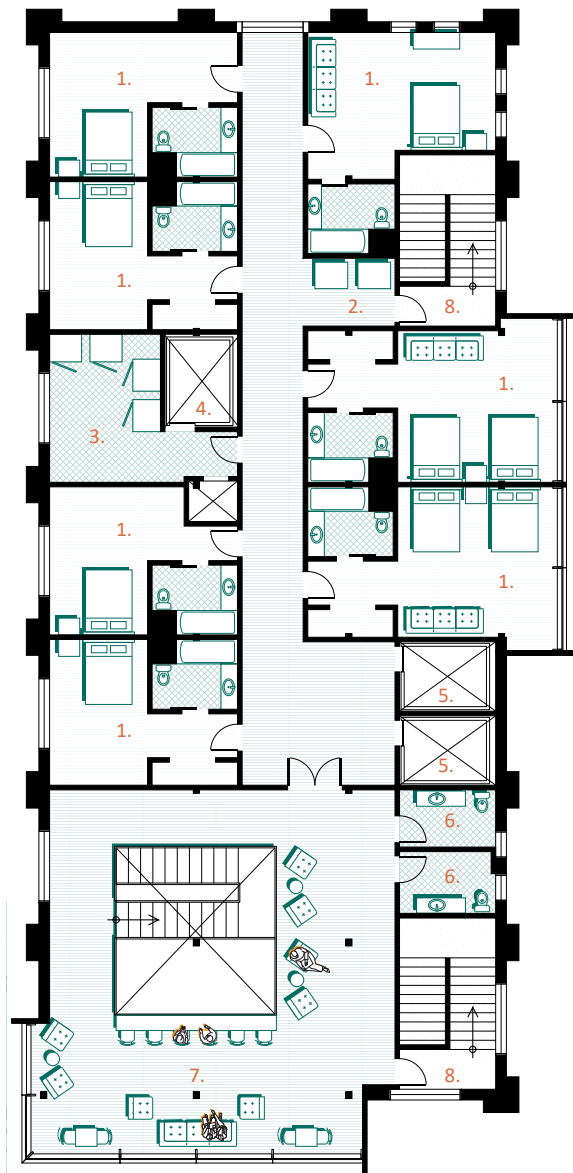
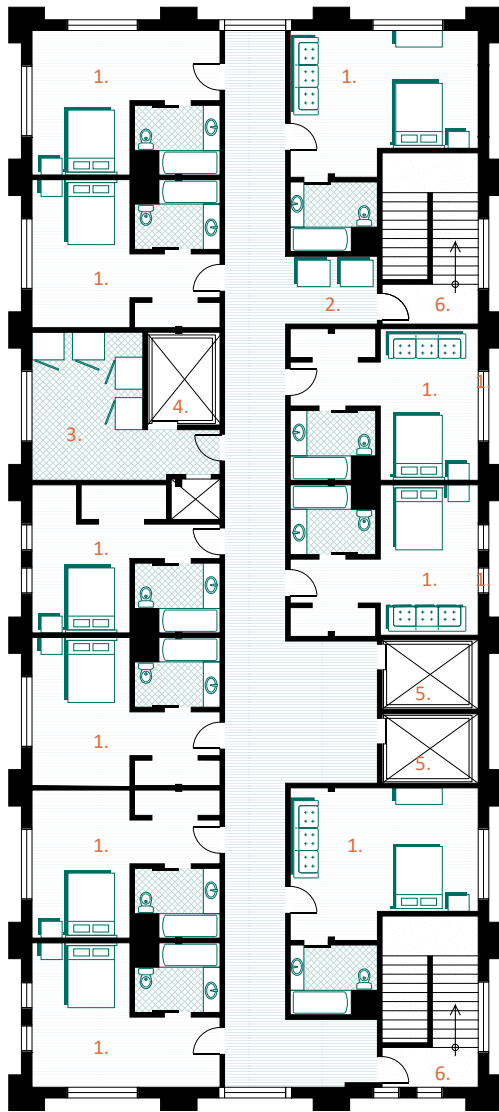


Fig 3.37 Hotel Floor Plans

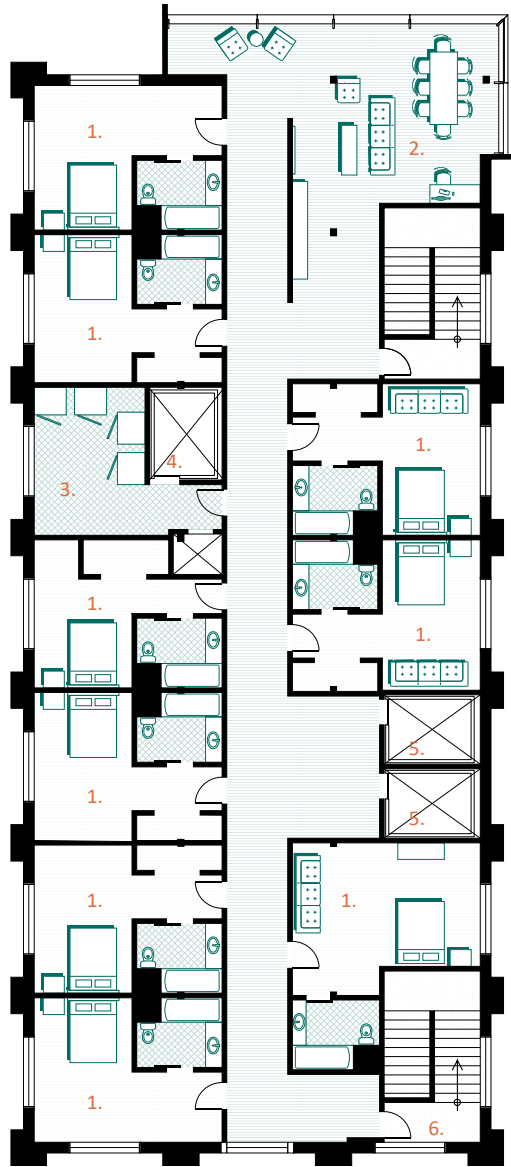
- 1. Guest Room
- 2. Vending
- 3. Laundry/Service Room
- 4. Service Elevator
- 5. Elevators
- 6. Emergency Stair

- 1. Guest Room
- 2. Lounge/Games room
- 3. Laundry/Service Room
- 4. Service Elevator
- 5. Elevators
- 6. Emergency Stair

Third Floor

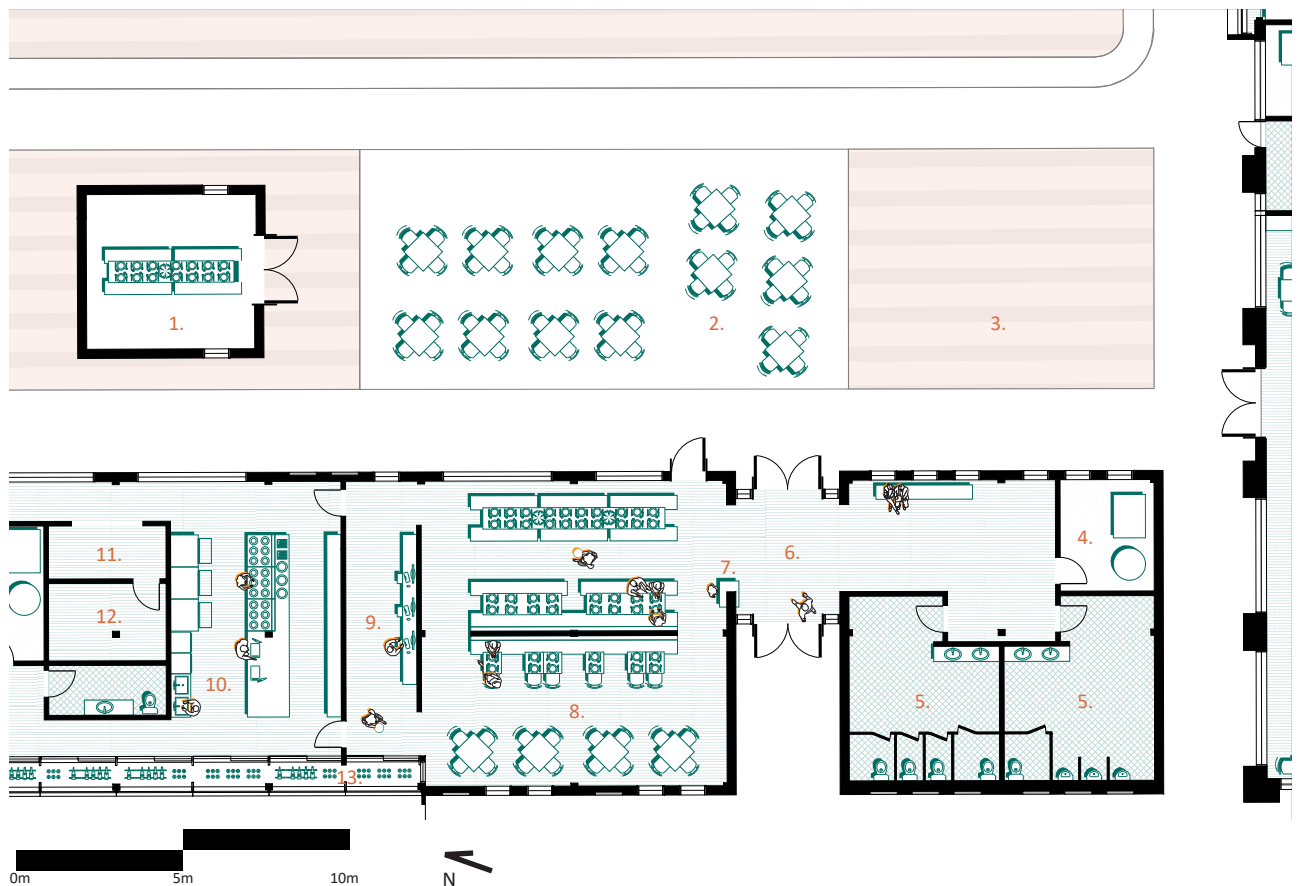


Fourth Floor



1. Private Dining Room (Formerly Jailhouse)
2. Restaurant Patio
3. Herb Garden
4. Mechanical/Electrical Room
5. W/C
6. Foyer
7. Host Podium
8. Dining Room
9. Cash Registers
10. Restaurant Kitchen
11. Pantry
12. Freezer
13. Wine Display

Fig 3.38 The Restaurant Floor Plan



The Restaurant

This area of Port Place engages users not interested in the production of food who still want to participate in the culinary background of the Niagara Region. Fresh produce from this site as well as from the many nearby farms, and wine from the surrounding appellations can be enjoyed by all stakeholder groups in the restaurant. Existing within Port Dalhousie itself are several restaurants that already draw diners from the neighbourhood and the surrounding city, these establishments can benefit from the harmony of these program elements with similar businesses nearby.



This is a sophisticated place for residents to enjoy the final product of their gardening and farming achievements.



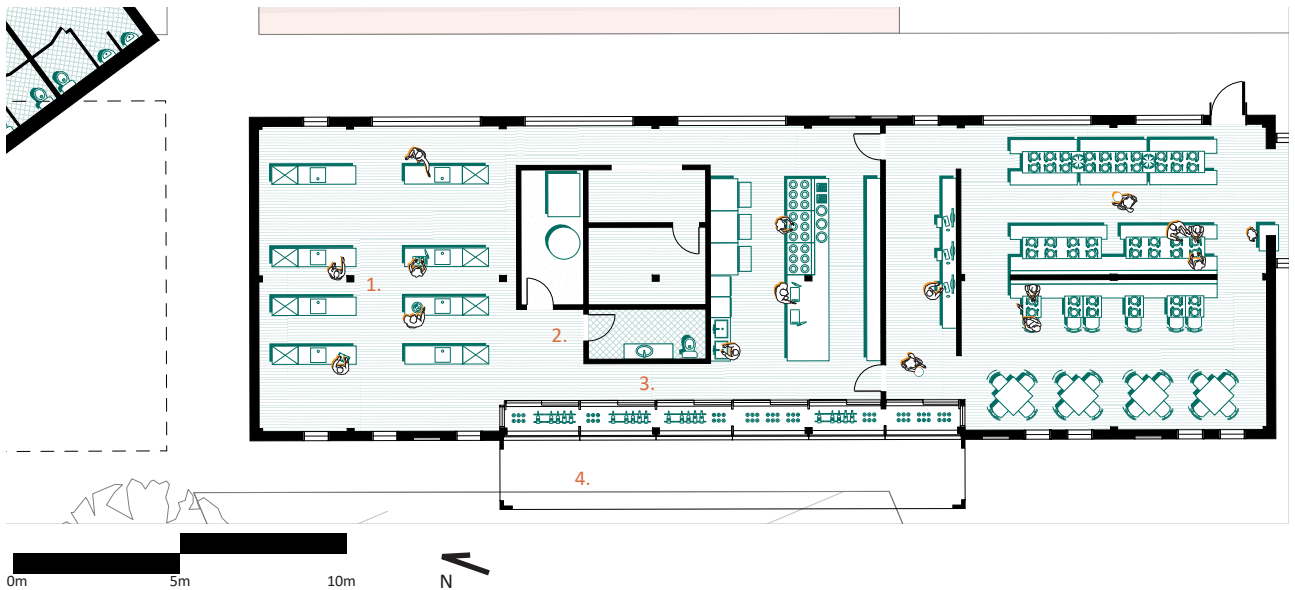
The restaurant provides an easy family outing that supports local efforts. According to Canada's food guide, the importance of eating meals with others and planning to take time out of the day to eat is emphasized as part of a healthy diet.¹ Sitting down and eating a meal with those you love is as important for children as it is for adults.



Food and Beverage is the largest spending category for tourists, so it is obvious that this group values this type of space. A restaurant to attract visitors to spend money not only in these specific restaurants but other stores and establishments in Port Dalhousie is important to the financial success of Port Place and the surrounding neighbourhood.



- 1. Community Kitchen
- 2. Mechanical/Electrical Room
- 3. W/C
- 4. Wine Display



The Community Kitchen

This program element is a community kitchen, the layout of which is optimized for teaching cooking classes and sharing knowledge of food preparation between users. Again, the area's propensity for agriculture is showcased through produce that can be used for these purposes. A wide window facing the community garden provides a visual connection to this tradition of growing food. Opposite this window is the wine display, an expansive storage area to showcase local wines and provide a glimpse into the kitchen for those not involved in cooking but passing by the building. This community kitchen is also to be used to prepare large meals for the needy, for any festivals that require a large quantity of food, or even as an overflow campus for culinary classes offered by nearby Niagara College to enrolled students.

Fig 3.39 (opposite, above) **The Wine Display - Section**

An exterior covered walkway allows an outside look through local wines into the community kitchen.



Again, this area provides a place for interpersonal interaction, but also for sharing time-perfected cooking techniques and old family recipes to small groups of people.

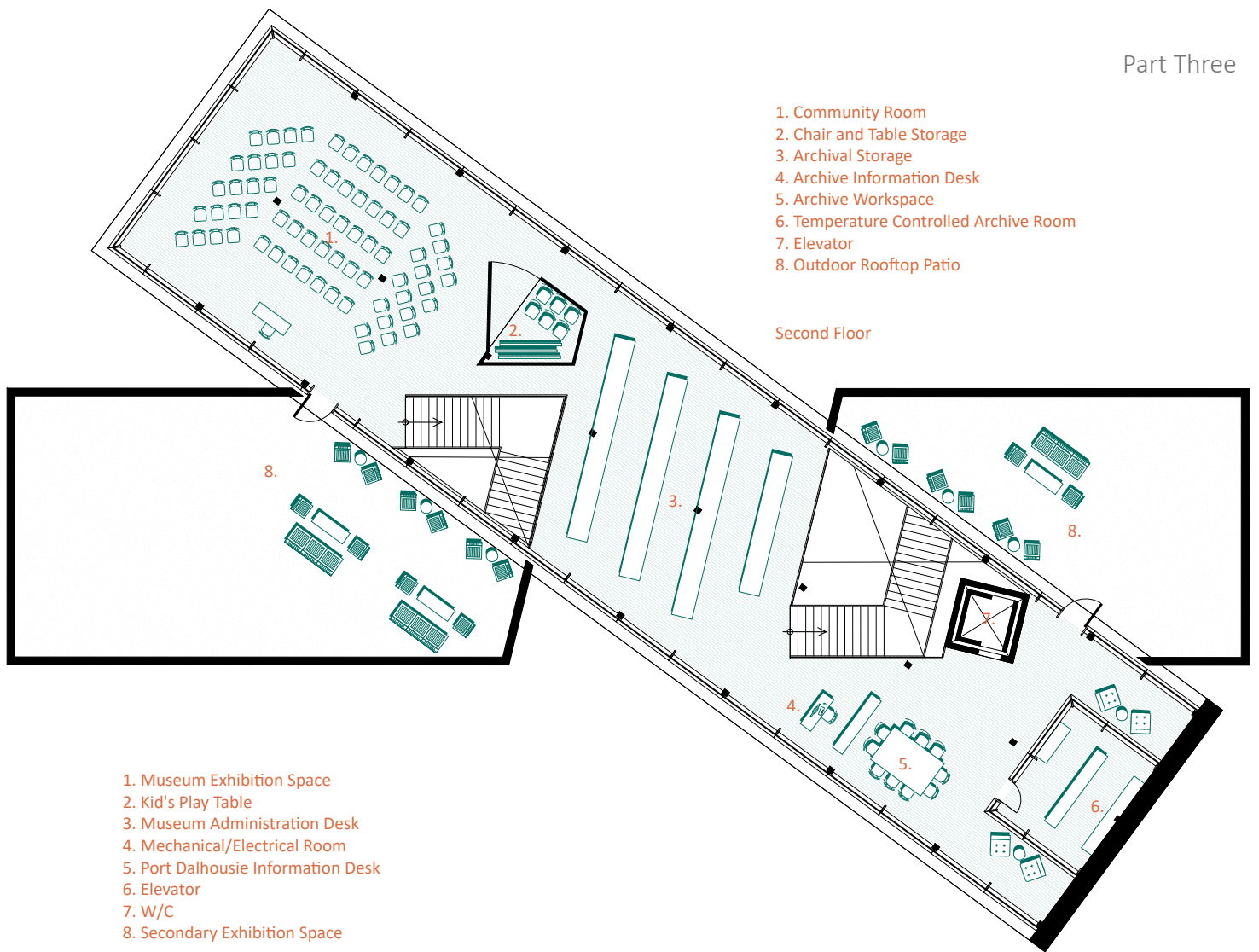


This space can help people learn food literacy to ensure a healthy family. It is also accessible to children as learning to cook is an important skill to develop at an early age, and can provide entertainment for camps and childcare programs taking place after school, during summer breaks, or on weekends.



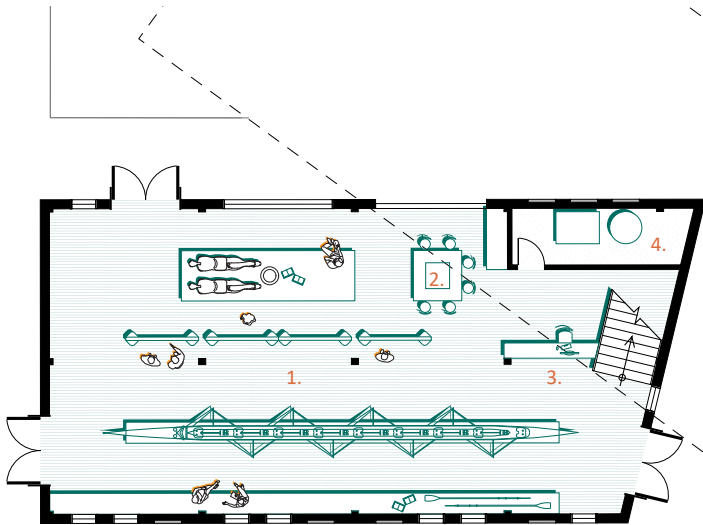
For tourists, a cooking class using fresh and locally-sourced produce can be a very entertaining and unique experience. Taking into account tourist spending on entertainment and recreation, this would undoubtedly be a draw for tourists visiting the area, especially those visiting to experience the culinary profile of the Niagara Region.

Fig 3.40 (opposite, below) **The Community Kitchen Floor Plan**

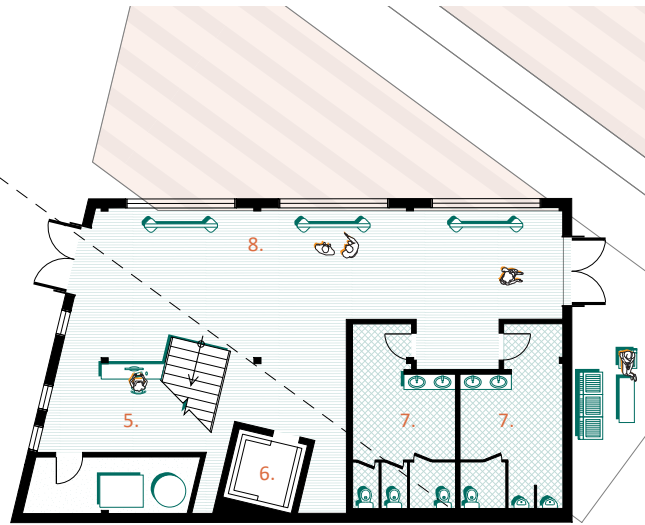


- 1. Museum Exhibition Space
- 2. Kid's Play Table
- 3. Museum Administration Desk
- 4. Mechanical/Electrical Room
- 5. Port Dalhousie Information Desk
- 6. Elevator
- 7. W/C
- 8. Secondary Exhibition Space

First (Ground) Floor



Second Floor (Above)



The Community Centre

The contextual infrastructure related to the Welland Canal inspired this "bridge" that greets visitors to the site, providing an archway for those entering Lakeside Park from the public square. The ground floor of this building serves as a museum, meant to host artifacts donated from people within the community willing to share the history of the place with all.

Fig 3.41 (opposite, above) **The Community Centre Second Floor Plan**

The second floor of this building provides archival storage for these artifacts and photos when not on display, easily seen by those outside the building passing below. As well, a multi-purpose community room provides a community space for civic events such as lectures, galas, classes, etc.



With the past so prominently displayed, seniors can reminisce on their youth spent in Port Dalhousie. The cross section of people visiting this space also gives them a chance to share their stories with others by volunteering to give tours to visitors or even curate exhibitions. The community room provides a space for activities such as seniors' dance classes, reunions, etc.



This space can educate newcomers to the area on the origins of the community. The museum is also an optimal place for kids to learn, and the community room will serve as a space for childcare and recreational programs for kids.

Fig 3.42 (opposite, below) **The Community Centre First Floor Plan**



The museum provides easy access to information about the history of the site for visitors when they visit. Outsiders may not be familiar with Port Dalhousie so this provides a good opportunity for them to learn about it.

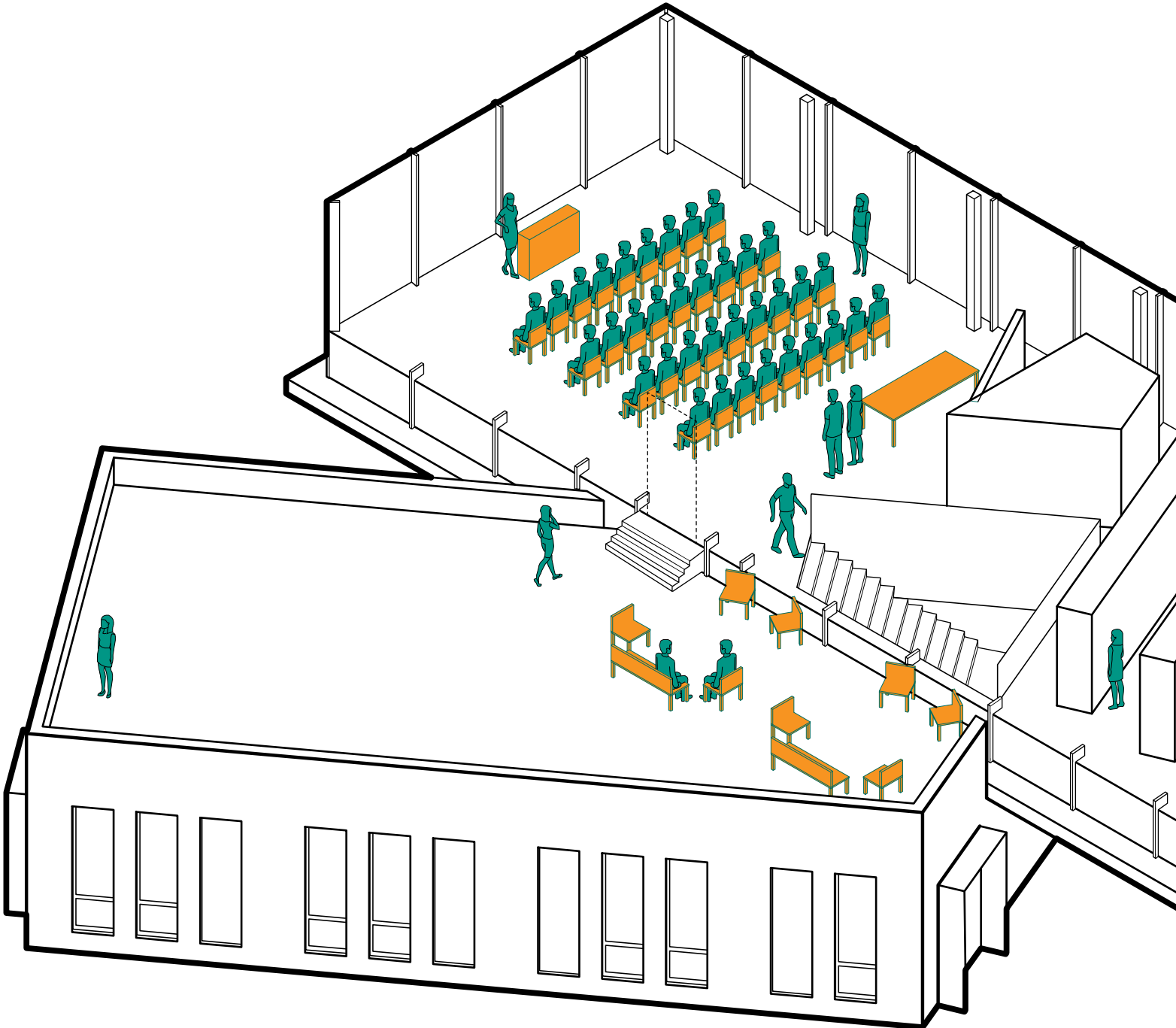


Fig 3.43 The Community Room -
Lecture Configuration

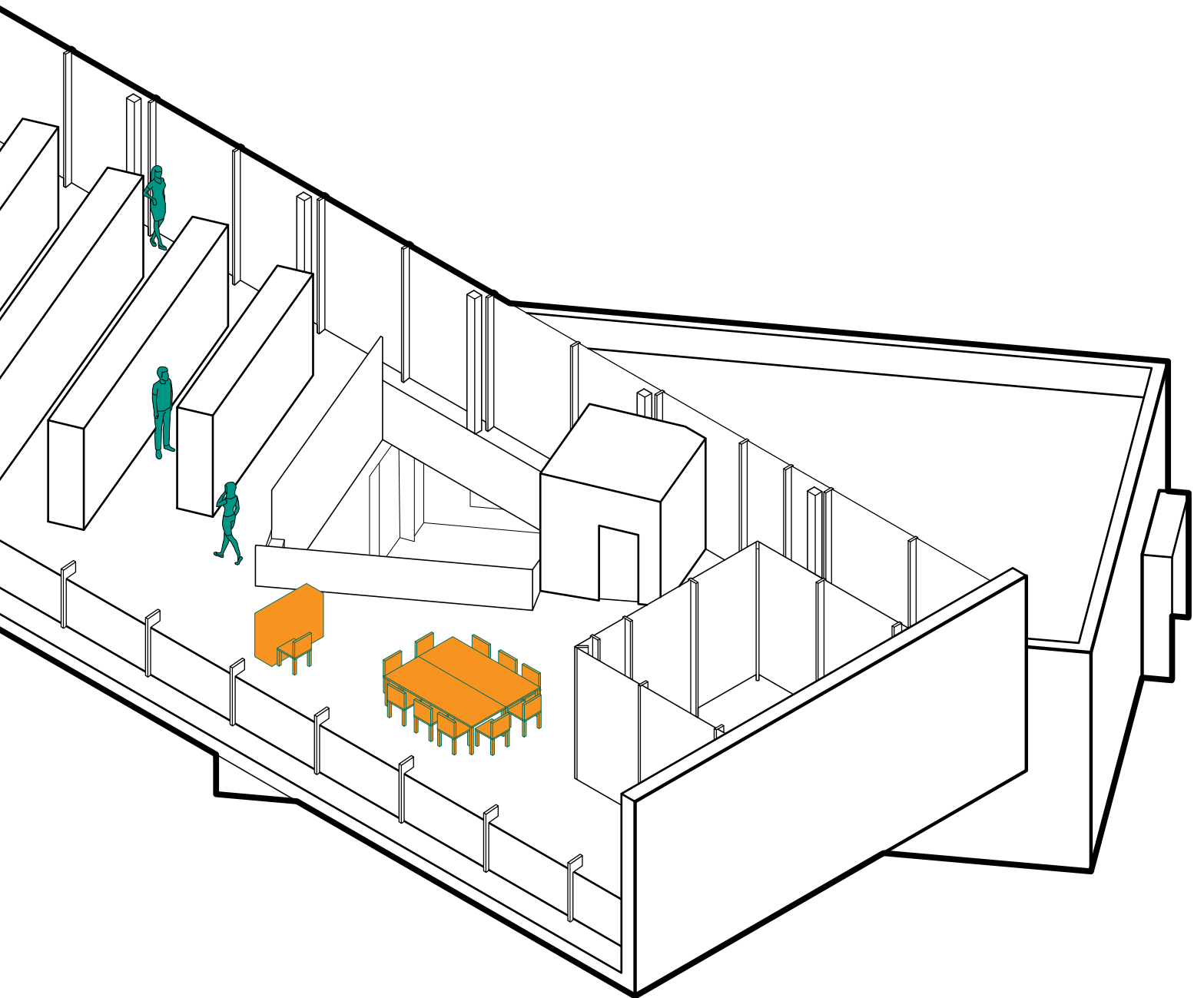


Fig 3.44 The Community Room -
Election Day Configuration

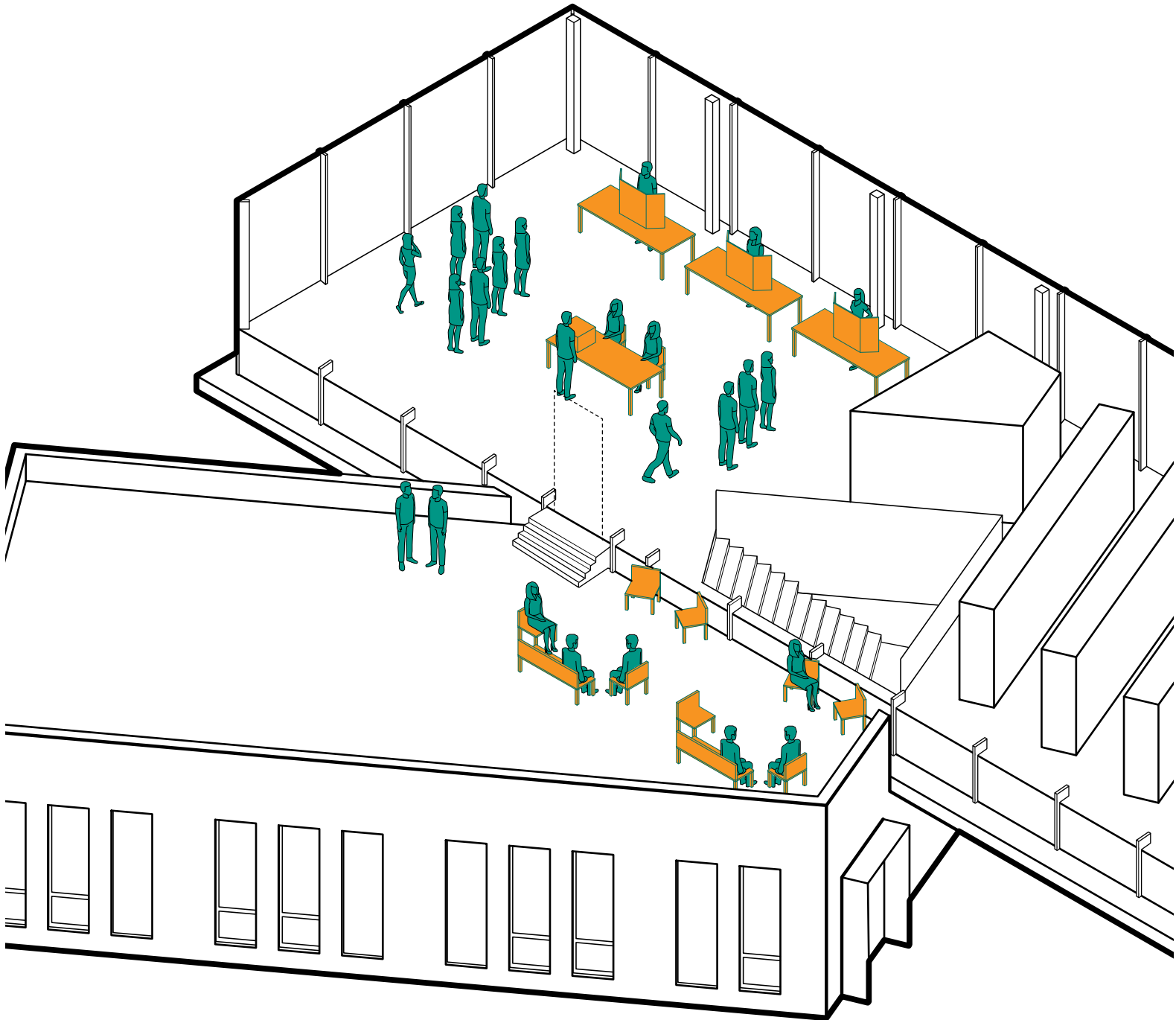
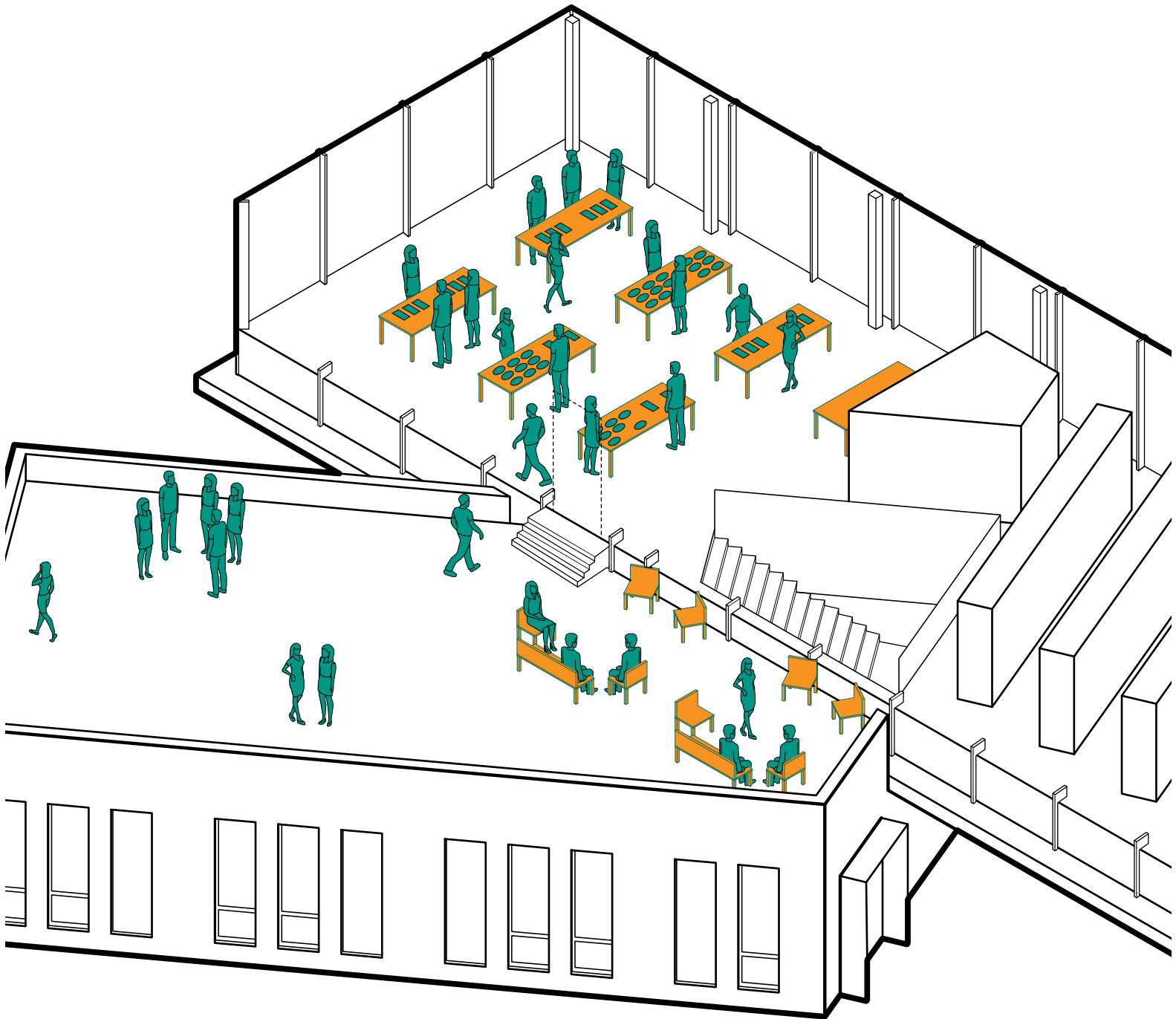


Fig 3.45 The Community Room -
Artisan Market Configuration



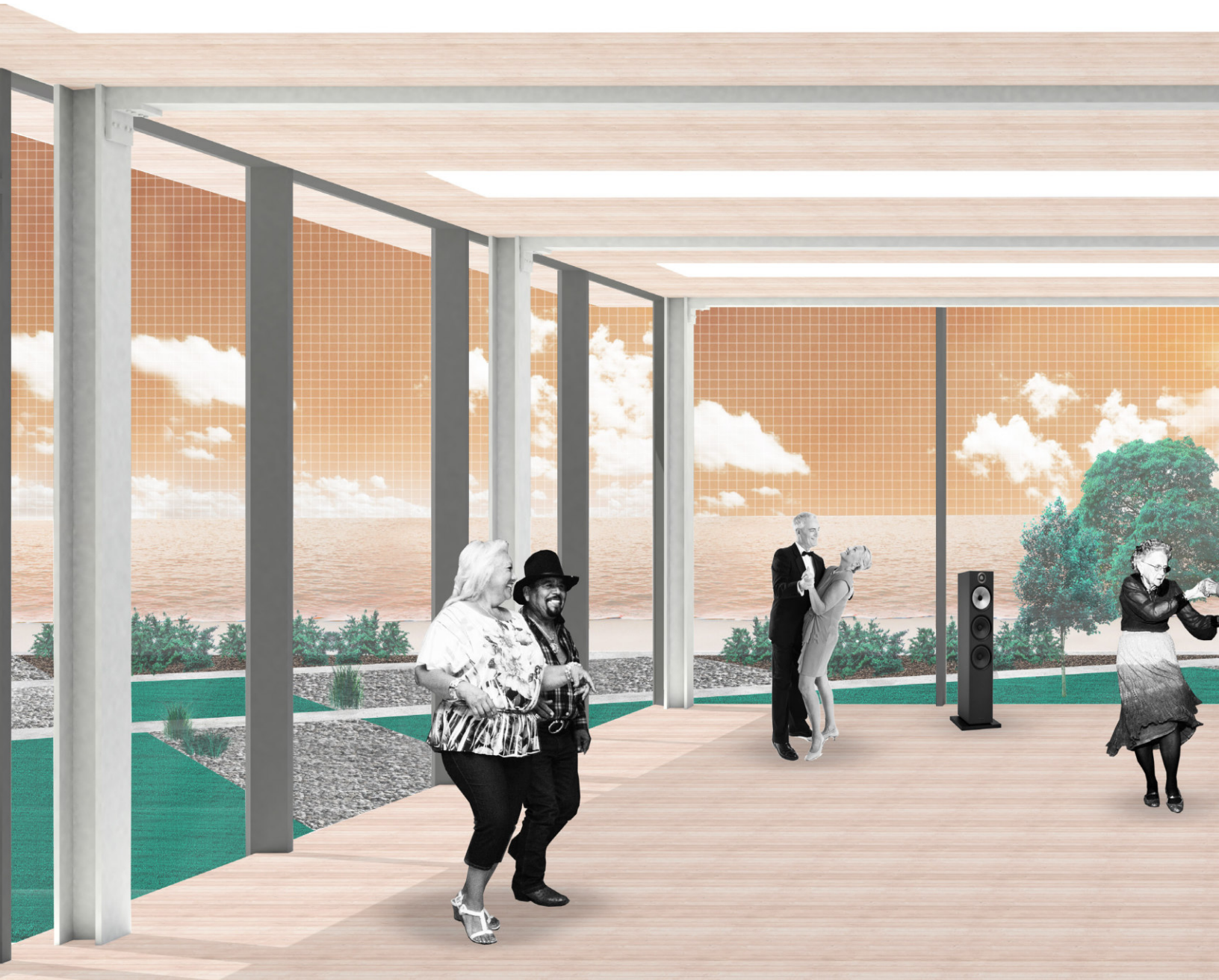
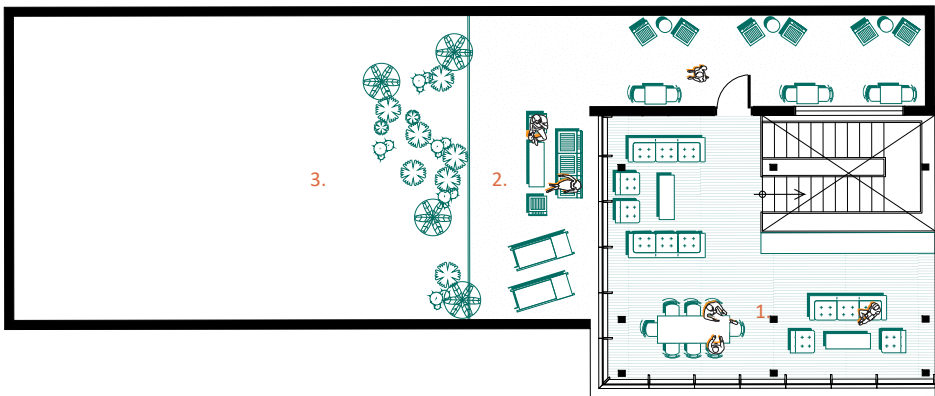




Fig 3.46 The Community Room -
Seniors' Dance Class

- 1. Library/ Lounge
- 2. Rooftop Patio
- 3. Green Roof

Library Second Floor

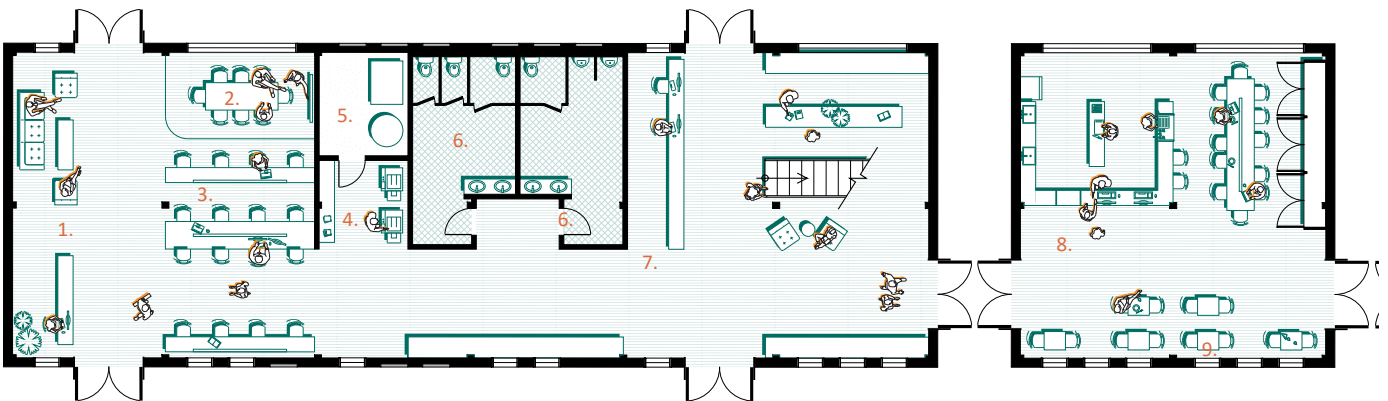


- 1. Office Lobby
- 2. Meeting Area
- 3. Workspaces
- 4. Printer and Copier Room
- 5. Mechanical/Electrical Room
- 6. W/C
- 7. Library Administration Desk
- 8. Cafe Serving and Preparation
- 9. Cafe Seating

Co-Working Space

Library (Ground) First Floor

Cafe



The Library, Co-Working Space, and Cafe

A small library where people can read about the history of Port Dalhousie is connected to a co-working space, available to individuals who may be employed in the GTA but are able to work remotely. On the second floor of the library is an indoor lounge and outdoor patio that looks onto a green roof. Next to this building is a small cafe.



Administrative positions at the library can be filled by retirees looking to volunteer within the community.



Kids' programs at the library provide supervision in an environment that is close and convenient to their parents who may make use of the co-working space. The co-working space helps make Port Dalhousie a viable residence for those who work in nearby urban centers but want to live in a smaller community.



In the library, anticipated to be popular amongst locals, tourists can mingle with residents while perusing the books on display.

Fig 3.47 (opposite, above) **The Library Second Floor Plan**

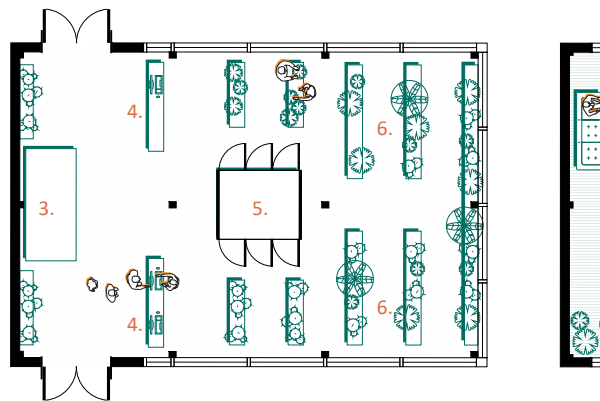
Fig 3.48 (opposite, below) **The Co-Working Space, Library First Floor, and Cafe Floor Plans**

- 1. W/C
- 2. Waste Storage
- 3. Mechanical/Electrical
- 4. Cash Registers
- 5. Storage Cupboard
- 6. Greenhouse Workspace

Service Building



The Greenhouse



The Greenhouse

A small greenhouse building allows the community's agricultural efforts to continue year-round. Open to the public, visitors and residents can use this space for their small-scale gardening efforts, as well as buy small plants or seeds native to this area. A public washroom and service building serves visitors to the beach and stores waste.



The Aged are able to work a part time job here, or host workshops on gardening to share their skills and knowledge with other members of the community.



Children may attend these workshops, or others focussed on local wildlife as observed in the flood gardens located directly adjacent this building.



Visitors can take a piece of Niagara's agricultural traditions home with them by purchasing plants or seeds.

Fig 3.49 (opposite) **The Service Building and Greenhouse Floor Plans**

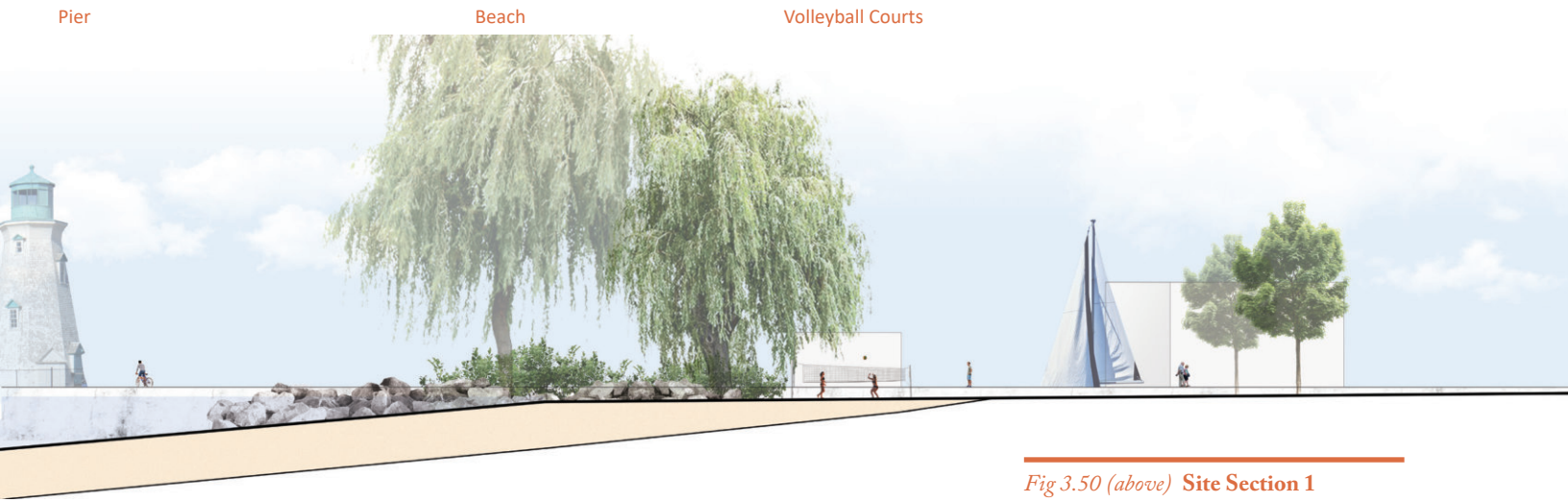


Fig 3.50 (above) **Site Section 1**

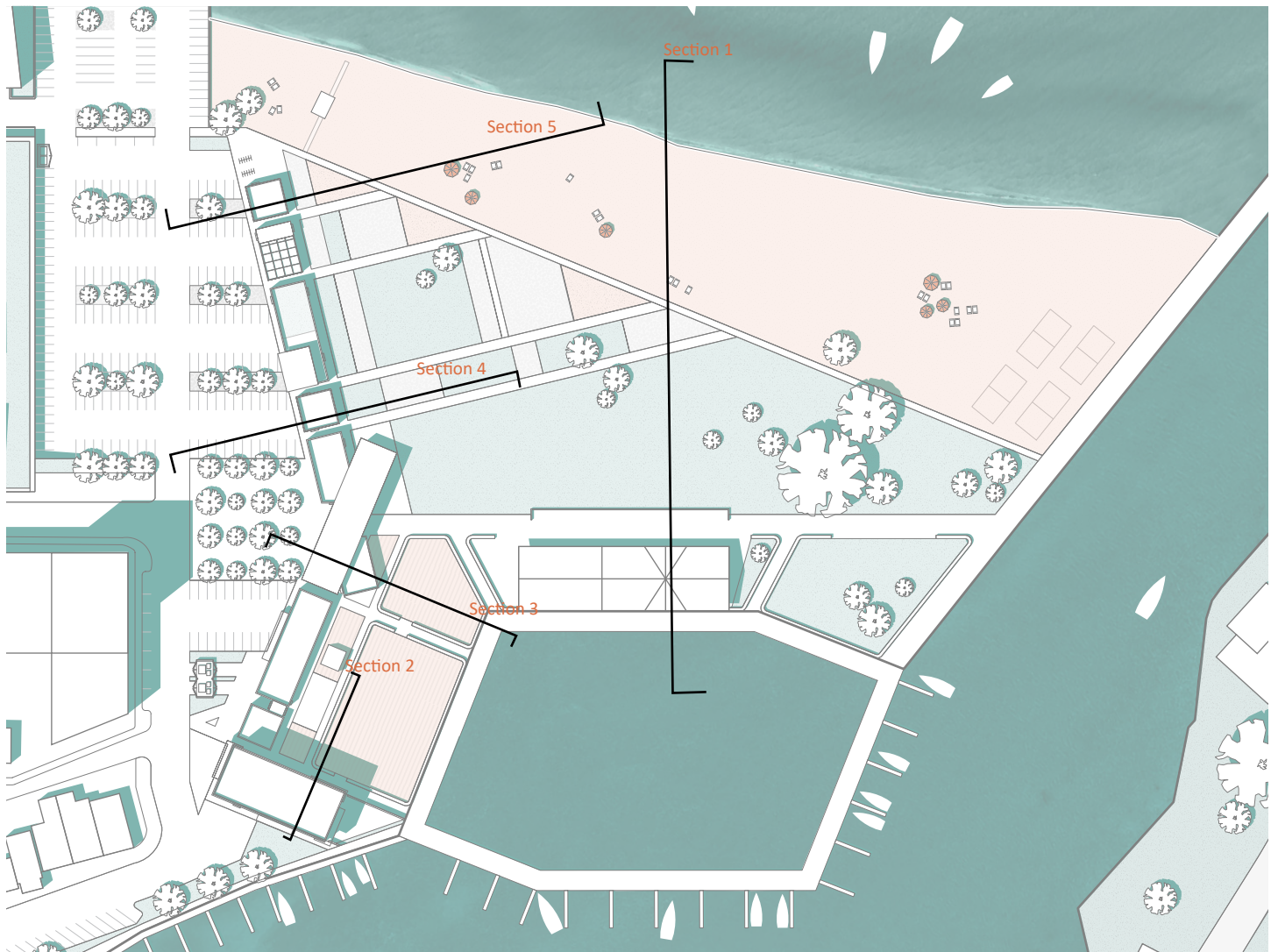
Site Section Renderings

A series of site sections have been rendered to depict the interplay between physical volumes, programmatic uses, and the stakeholder groups who inhabit these areas. These images show the micro-programming that has been considered to allow the rituals of the stakeholders to have the best chance of taking place.

Fig 3.51 (opposite) **Site Section Legend**

Dreams

Lawn Splash Pool Carousel Pavillion Boardwalk Cove



Lakeport Road Streetscape



Harbour

Boardwalk

Spa

Fig 3.52 Cross Section - Hotel

Hotel

Union Waterfront Condominium



Agricultural Storage

Community Garden



Fig 3.53 Cross Section Detail - Spa

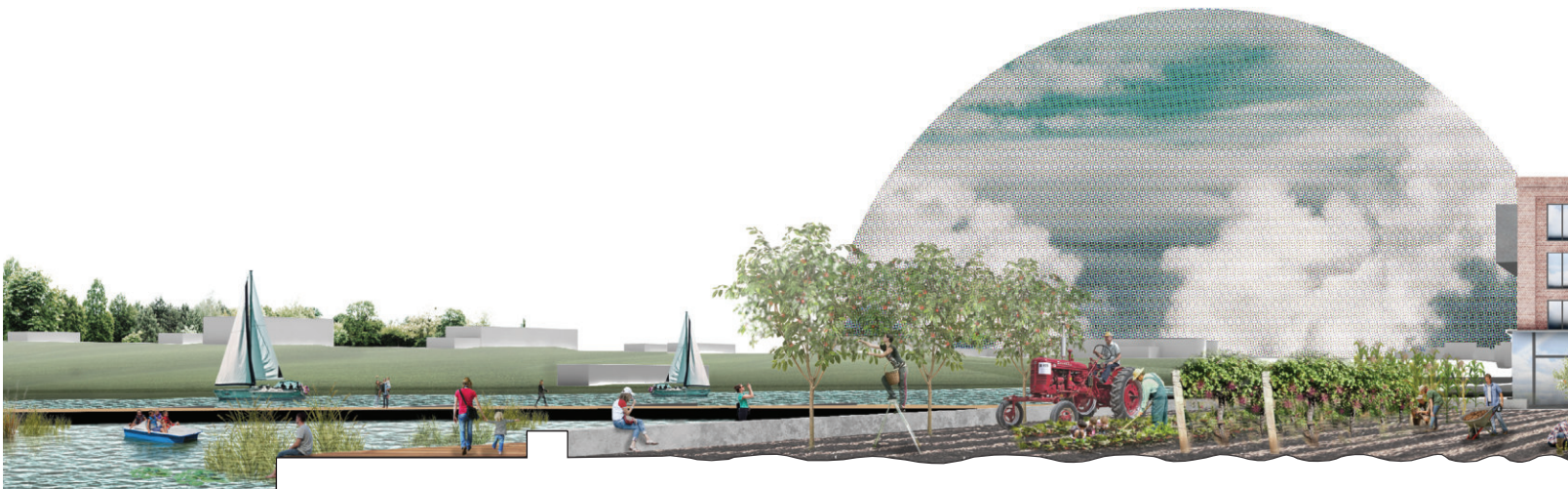
Fig 3.54 Cross Section Detail - Agricultural Storage and Garden





Fig 3.55 Cross Section Detail -
Boardwalk and Harbour





The Cove

Boardwalk

Community Garden

Fig 3.56 Cross Section - Agricultural Area and Community Kitchen

Hotel

Union Waterfront Condominium



Herb Garden

Community Kitchen

Parking

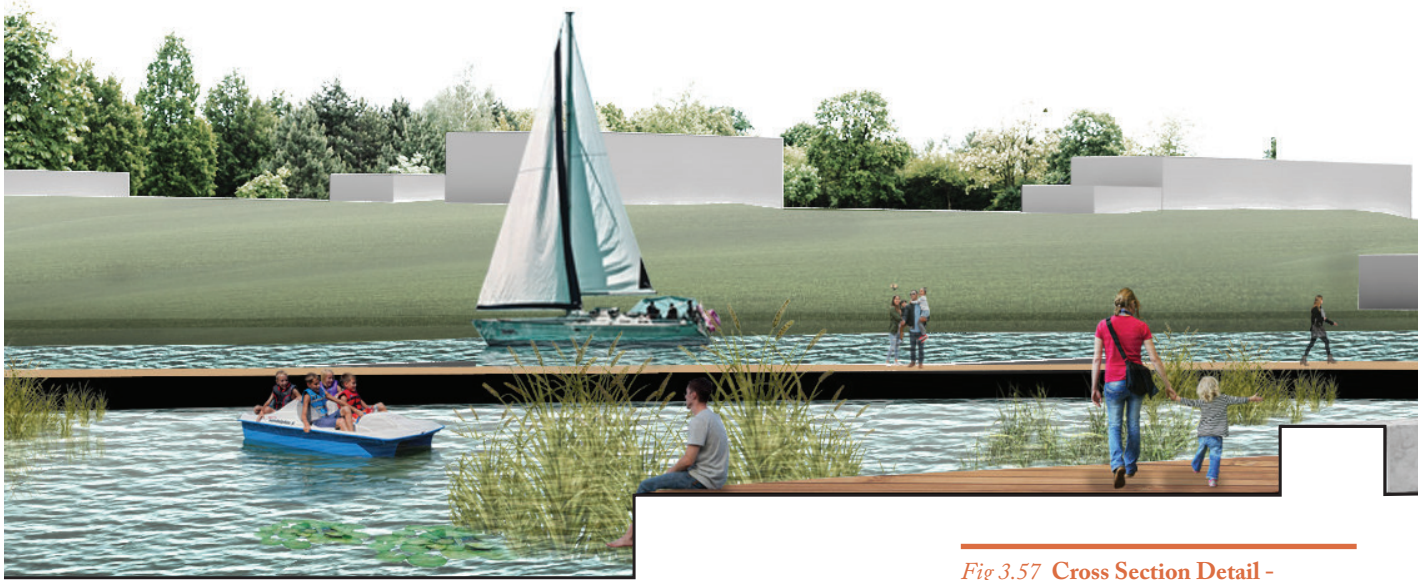


Fig 3.57 Cross Section Detail -
The Cove and Boardwalk

Fig 3.58 Cross Section Detail -
Herb Garden and Community
Kitchen





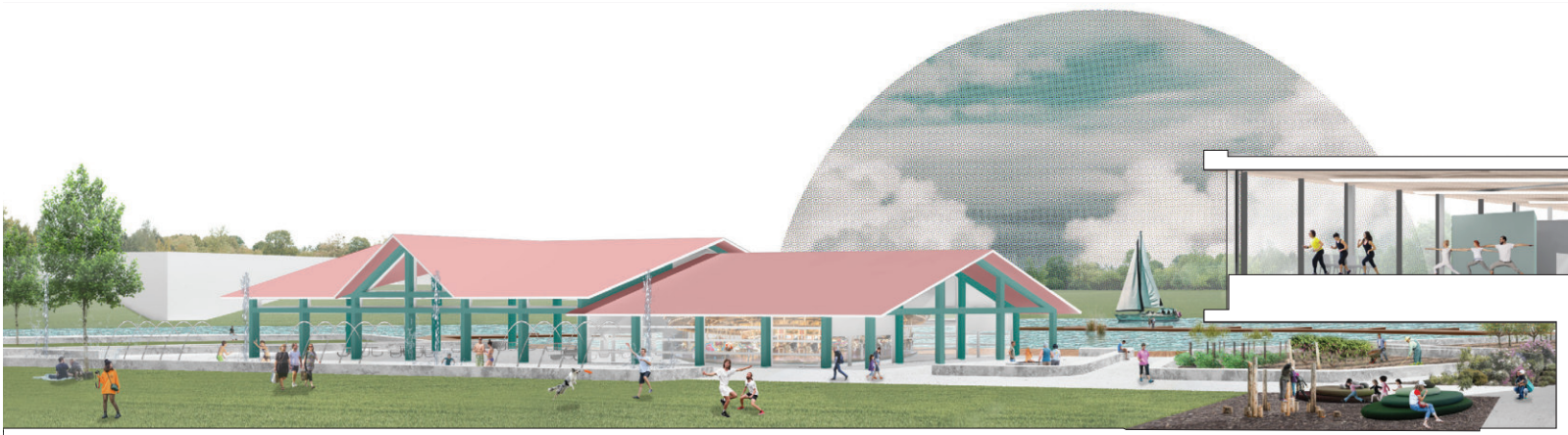
Fig 3.59 Cross Section Detail -
The Community Garden



Picnic Pavilion

Carousel Pavilion

Community Room



Lawn

Splash Pool

Playground

Fig 3.60 Cross Section - Lakeside Park, Community Centre, and Square

Rooftop Patio

Hotel

Hogan's Alley

Union Waterfront Condominium



Exhibition Space

Market Square

Front Street

*Fig 3.61 (next spread, above) Cross
Section Detail - The Picnic and
Carousel Pavilion*

*Fig 3.62 (next spread, below) Cross
Section Detail - The Community
Centre*









Fig 3.63 Cross Section Detail -
The Market Square

Residential Area

The Beaches at Port Condominium



Parking Lot

Greenhouse

Fig 3.64 Cross Section - Greenhouse and Beach

Lake Ontario



Flood Gardens

Beach



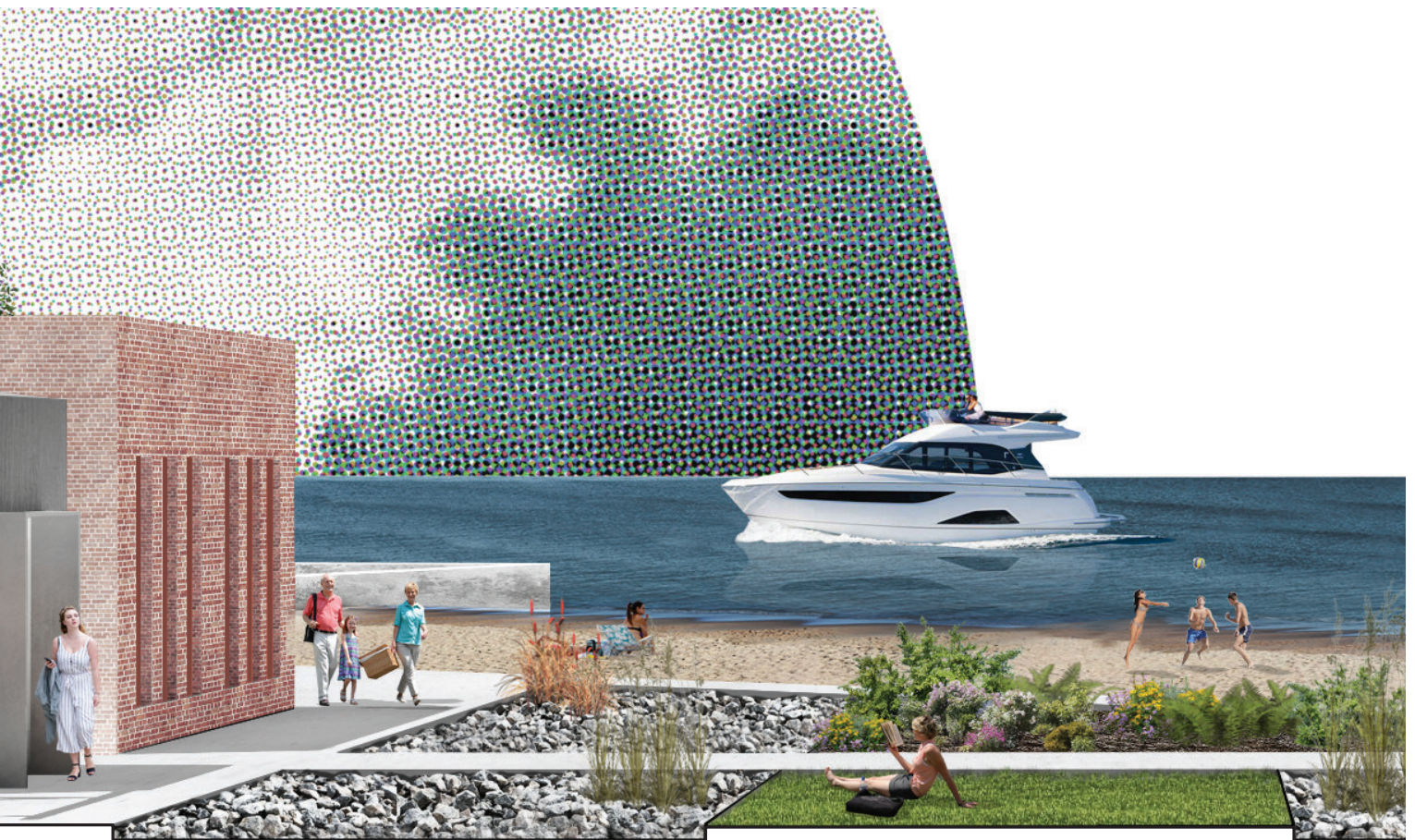


Fig 3.65 Cross Section Detail
- The Greenhouse and Flood
Gardens

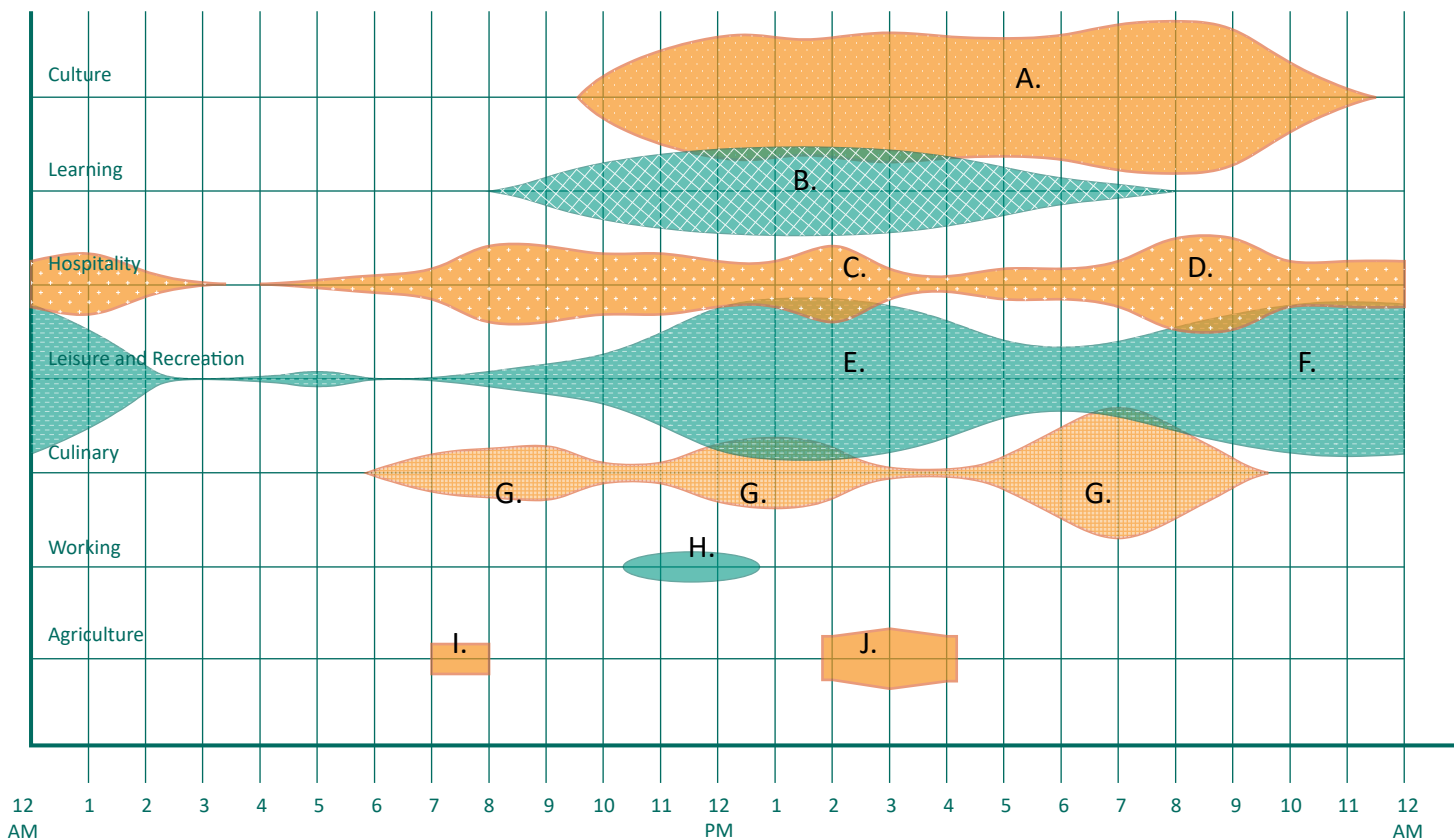
Daily Ritual

These graphs show the activity throughout the site on two very different days; Canada Day on July 1st, and during the annual Icewine Festival on January 18th.

Canada Day - July 1st

- A. Local Canadian bands play concerts through the day.
- B. A steady stream of visitors to the museum from open to close.
- C. Hotel rooms are cleaned.
- D. Hotel guests retire for the evening or get a drink at the hotel wine bar.
- E. Swimmers and sunbathers enjoy the beach.
- F. Setting up blankets and chairs on the lawn, then watching the Canada Day fireworks.
- G. Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner.
- H. A few diligent workers go to the office for an hour or two for quiet work.
- I. Minimal garden maintenance.
- J. Community garden workshop to attract volunteers.

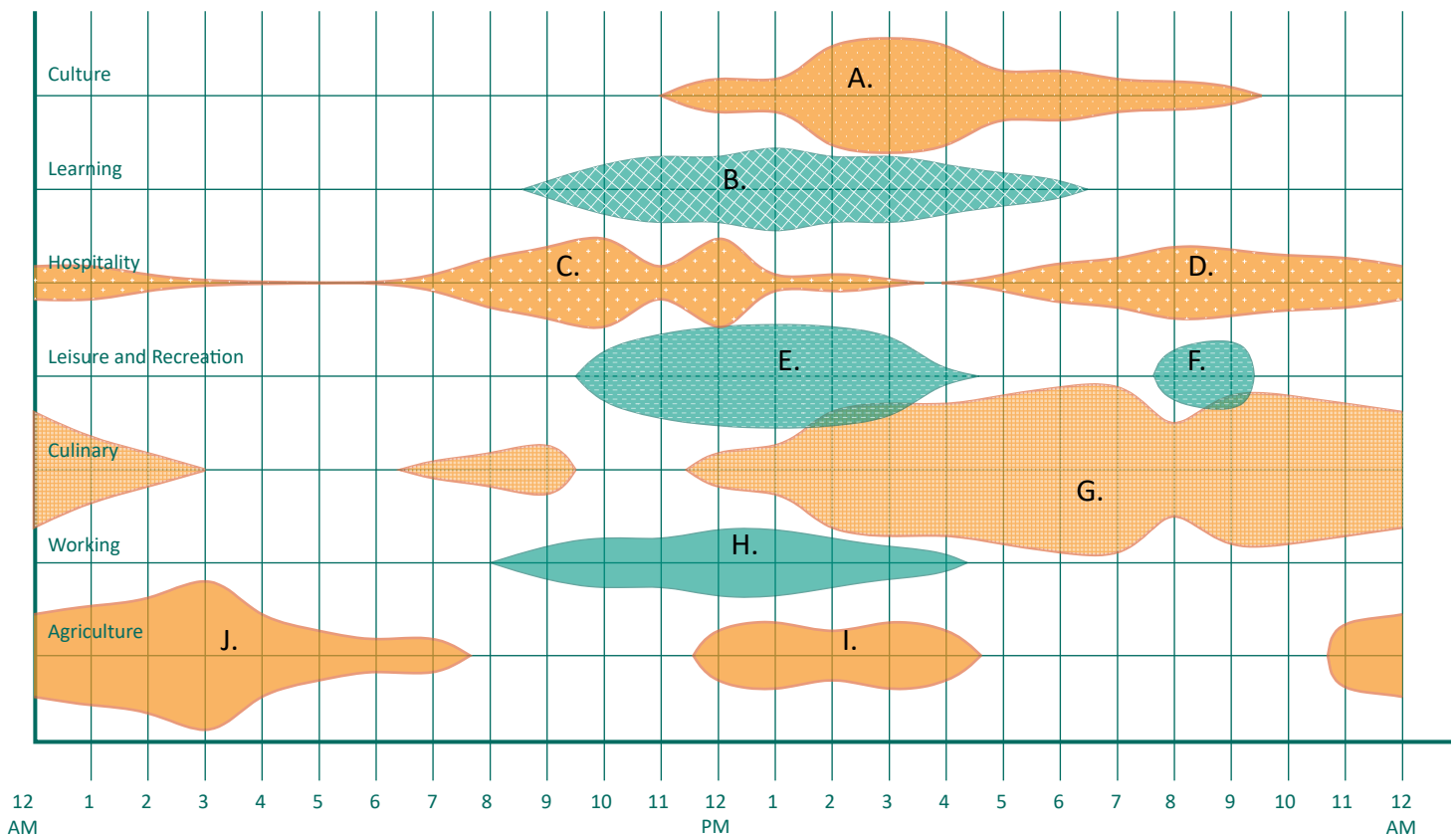
Figure 3.66 Site Activity - Rituals of Canada Day



Icewine Festival - January 18th

- A. Fire dance and ice sculpture carving to entertain in the square.
- B. Escape from the cold is sought in the museum.
- C. Hotel guests arrive and check-in.
- D. Hotel guests retire for the evening or sit in lounge with friends playing cards.
- E. Skating and hockey on the frozen-over cove.
- F. Chestnut and marshmallow roast on bonfire.
- G. Various wine tasting events and food pairings throughout the day.
- H. Some workers make short visits to the office.
- I. Minimal garden maintenance.
- J. Icewine grapes are traditionally harvested at night when it is coldest.

Figure 3.67 Site Activity - Rituals of the Icewine Festival



Part Three- Endnotes

1. Eric Grenier. "Canadian Seniors Now Outnumber Children for 1st Time, 2016 Census Shows," *CBC News*, May 7 2017, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/2016-census-age-gender-1.4095360>.
2. Ibid.
3. "2016 Census Profile for Canada, St. Catharines- Niagara CMA, and Dissemination areas 35260736, 35260410 - 14, 35260416 (Port Dalhousie)," Statistics Canada, accessed June 12, 2019, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=C-MACA&Code1=539&Geo2=DA&Code2=35260410&SearchText=35260410&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&TABID=3&type=0>.
4. Adam Bisby, "GO Train Fuels Niagara Housing Boom," *The National Post*, July 4, 2019, <https://nationalpost.com/life/homes/go-train-fuels-niagara-housing-boom>.
5. Mary K. Allen and Tamy Superle, "Youth Crime in Canada, 2014," Statistics Canada, last modified February 17, 2016. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2016001/article/14309-eng.htm>.
6. Elli Thomas, Ilona Serwicka and Paul Swinney, "Urban Demographics: Why do People Live Where They Do?," Centre for Cities, published November 3, 2015. <https://www.centreforcities.org/publication/urban-demographics-2/>.
7. "Regional Tourism Profiles, Region 2: Niagara," Ontario Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, last modified August 16, 2017. <http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/research/rtp/rtp.shtml>.
8. "Canada's Food Guide, Healthy Eating Habits," Government of Canada, last modified July 16, 2019. <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/healthy-eating-habits/>.



Conclusion

This thesis proposes that Port Place is the new artifact that embodies the Genius Loci of Port Dalhousie, in the same way the Port Mansion did before it. It draws the old, young, and all in between, and engages them in daily, monthly and yearly rituals that reasserts the power of Genius Loci to envision a clear future for a place whose next steps are currently uncertain and vague. Port Place is hypothetical, but very real is the passage of time and with it, the opportunity to take action and keep Port Dalhousie from fading into a spiritless non-place. This is how I began this thesis; I saw a place which I loved and wanted to help. Quickly I understood that to really help a place like Port Dalhousie is as much about considering yesterday as it is about anticipating tomorrow.

I am under no impression that this thesis is anything but an imaginary play that exists solely within this book. However, while Port Place may be a fiction of my own making, in reality the altering of the landscape of this place is currently underway. At the time of writing, there are four new condominiums being built, as if chosen from a catalogue and deposited wherever there was room. The community of Port Dalhousie has no choice but to embrace the fact that the landscape they know and cherish is changing. This thesis acknowledges this, as well as the ideal that an engaged population might take initiative in order to direct this changing landscape towards a future where Port Dalhousie might enjoy popularity and importance once again.

Change is guaranteed with or without this proposal. The streetscapes of this past settlement will no doubt be very different from those to be experienced by settlers to come. It is this fact that drove the outcome of this design exercise. Port Place, while informed by the architecture and the people of Port Dalhousie, is also an unmistakably contemporary intervention. There is no point

Fig 4.1 The Beach

With Lake Ontario pictured beyond.

in trying to hide it; Port Place plays the role of artifact while simultaneously existing as a modern building. But, its history is balanced with its contemporary nature, and it exists as an antithesis to the “ArchDaily,” globally popular modern design sensibilities of today. It is not an exact replica of the existing historical buildings, nor is it an ultramodern, minimalistic object of design popular in the present. Port Place is an exercise in striking a balance between the novel and the preexisting, a true monument of the Genius Loci.

Port Place has been conceived as one of Rossi’s “propelling permanences.” It allows visitors to experience the past while being functional and useful in modern day. The type and function of the Port Mansion has been transformed into this new intervention which aims to continue to modify the urban fabric within which it exists. It has not simply been placed from above but has risen from below the heavy layer of history that sits upon the site in the form of existing and forgotten architectures and landscapes. It wants to expand against its confines and allow man to create new spaces and uses as the Welland Canal once did. It wants to remind the community where it came from and inspire them to see what it can be.

Nobody can truly forget the places they come from. Simply put, I am from Port Dalhousie. With this thesis, I consider a possible future where anyone can hope to be fortunate enough to say the same.

Conclusion

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