

Seeking Renewal:  
The Value of Nature and Pausing in Shifting our Focus Inward

by  
Erica Grace Burgsma

A thesis  
presented to the University of Waterloo  
in fulfilment of the  
thesis requirement for the degree of  
Master of Architecture

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2020  
© Erica Grace Burgsma 2020



## 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

We live in a society that is overly fixated on our outer conditions and stimuli rather than our inner state, which is seen through one of the behaviours this outward focus produces, busyness. So often we choose filling every waking moment with a constant stream of distraction and multitasking, becoming more disconnected from ourselves and the world around us, rather than face the increasingly uncomfortable and absent self within. Therefore the aim of this thesis is to begin to address the problem of focusing only on our outward conditions by studying and implementing through design, the ways in which the act of pausing and nature shift our focus to our inner well-being.

The research goes through a number of reasons *why* nature and pausing are the key elements to addressing the problem of busyness and *what* their roles are in shifting our focus and the resulting benefits. The temporal aspect of the act of pausing is considered through studying the practice of Sabbath, leisure and the notion of sacred time. The spatial aspect begins with nature, how it is a sacred place, and how it greatly impacts our internal state and becomes a place of refuge and refreshment. What is then created and increased is the ability to see the enchantment around us, receive spiritual experiences and be filled with gratitude, as we pause and let nature reveal these moments to us.

The application and experimentation of the thesis topic through architecture is expressed through the design of a pavilion. It reflects on *how* designers can learn from nature and pausing to create spaces that encourage this change in focus and discover the signals architecture conveys to stop, relax, slow down and shift our focus. Strategies include engaging the senses to bring awareness to the present, exercising simplicity, using natural materials and forms and designing inviting, comfortable spaces. As well as creating a slow and mindful design through points of focus, interruptions, progression and the highlighting of time through change, movement and materials.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As with any accomplishment in life, this thesis was not done alone, nor would I have gotten here without the help of many.

To my supervisor, Andrew Levitt, thank you for your advice, words of wisdom and ultimately for supporting me to pursue the ideas I am passionate about.

To my friends and classmates who made those, often challenging days, somehow fun and who have left me with some of the best memories. And to the two people that took me going to a different continent to find, thank you for so much laughter, encouragement and a great friendship over the past four years.

To my siblings, Jonathon + Tess, Darren + Bailey and Graham + Natalie, thank you for always being my team. For loving, encouraging, challenging, inspiring and helping me. I love you all.

To the two most important and influential people in my life, Mom and Dad. Words completely fail to express my deep love and gratitude for you. You have pulled me through my darkest days and celebrated my every win. You have reminded me who and whose I am, loved me unconditionally and have been there and supported me in every way possible. You have challenged me and pushed me when I have needed it and brought forth laughter when all I had was tears. Thank you for our hundreds of calls, for 'pumping me up' and sending me out to take on whatever was before me, time after time. Without you, it is questionable whether or not I would be where I am right now, so thank you.

And above all, God. Thank you for being my partner, guide, inspiration and encourager. For giving me peace in anxious times, joy in the mundane, wisdom in the unknown, hope in the darkness and strength when I have nothing left. Thank you for your unending love, forgiveness and for being my constant companion. My life is yours, as is everything I do.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| iii | Author's Declaration                   |
| v   | Abstract                               |
| vii | Acknowledgements                       |
| x   | List of Figures                        |
|     |  |
| 1   | Part 1: The Downfall of Being Busy     |
| 9   | Part 2: The Good in Pausing and Nature |
| 47  | Part 3: The Design Application         |
|     |  |
| 97  | Conclusion                             |
| 101 | Bibliography                           |

## LIST OF FIGURES

All images are by author.

|           |   |     |           |  |    |
|-----------|---|-----|-----------|--|----|
| Figure 1  | A 24/7 Place                                    | xii | Figure 28 | Proposed Park Site Plan  | 56 |
| Figure 2  | Fully Disconnected                              | 5   | Figure 29 | North Facing Site Section  | 58 |
| Figure 3  | Growing!  | 6   | Figure 30 | The Elements of Nature in a Parking Lot                              | 59 |
| Figure 4  | Spring Blossoms                                 | 8   | Figure 31 | East Facing Site Section   | 60 |
| Figure 5  | Afternoon Sunshine                              | 10  | Figure 32 | The Six Elements of Nature   | 61 |
| Figure 6  | Butterfly Park                                  | 13  | Figure 33 | Process Diagram  | 62 |
| Figure 7  | A Foggy Early Morning                           | 14  | Figure 34 | An Early Morning Sunrise   | 64 |
| Figure 8  | Marsh Marigolds                                 | 17  | Figure 35 | A Hot Summer Afternoon   | 66 |
| Figure 9  | My Favourite Tree                               | 19  | Figure 36 | A Stop on an Autumn Day  | 68 |
| Figure 10 | A Snowy Walk                                    | 20  | Figure 37 | A Summer Morning's Rest  | 70 |
| Figure 11 | The Dining Table Plants                         | 22  | Figure 38 | A Windy Winter Morning   | 72 |
| Figure 12 | Cumulonimbus Clouds                             | 25  | Figure 39 | A Late Summer Sunset   | 74 |
| Figure 13 | Sunset  | 26  | Figure 40 | Inside the Middle of the Pavilion                                    | 76 |
| Figure 14 | The Rocky Mountains                             | 28  | Figure 41 | Leaving the Pavilion and Entering The Cambridge Sculpture Garden     | 78 |
| Figure 15 | A Meandering Path                               | 31  | Figure 42 | Pavilion Plan  | 80 |
| Figure 16 | The Hanging Basket                              | 32  | Figure 43 | Exploded Perspective of the Structural Components                    | 82 |
| Figure 17 | A Winter Sunrise                                | 35  | Figure 44 | Structural Detail  | 83 |
| Figure 18 | A Lush Garden                                   | 36  | Figure 45 | Heading North at the Start of the Path On a Spring Evening           | 84 |
| Figure 19 | The Full Moon                                   | 38  | Figure 46 | Site Plan  | 86 |
| Figure 20 | Out the Studio Window                           | 41  | Figure 47 | Vegetation Selections  | 87 |
| Figure 21 | Clementines                                     | 43  | Figure 48 | Heading South at the Start of the Path On a Summer Evening           | 88 |
| Figure 22 | The Pond  | 44  | Figure 49 | Heading East at the Start of the Path On a Winter Morning            | 90 |
| Figure 23 | Third Floor of the Architecture Building's View | 46  | Figure 50 | Design Implications of 'Slow' (pace, focus, movement, time)          | 93 |
| Figure 24 | A Cluster of Experiential Spaces and Pathways   | 51  | Figure 51 | Design Implications of 'Senses' (touch, smell, sound, sight)         | 94 |
| Figure 25 | Perspective Drawing of the Site Context         | 52  | Figure 52 | Key Plan   | 94 |
| Figure 26 | Existing Park Site Plan                         | 54  | Figure 53 | Design Implications of 'Simple' (comfort, inviting, materials, form) | 95 |
| Figure 27 | Images of Existing Park Conditions              | 55  | Figure 54 | Another Beautiful End  | 96 |



6:46pm · 28.02.17

Fig. 1 A 24/7 Place

As the sun sets, lights fill the buildings and streets, allowing the day to continue into the night and deep between the high-rises and skyscrapers the streets are filled with cars as far as you can see.

## PART 1

### THE DOWNFALL OF BEING BUSY

We are a society that is overly fixated on our outer conditions and stimuli rather than our inner well-being, which is seen through one of the behaviours this outward focus produces, busyness. We are a society desperate for rest, for peace and quiet, and for a moment to stop and do nothing. Yet we rarely pause, know how to be still or how to rest well, because it is uncomfortable. Many of us suffer from a 'frantic scheduling syndrome'<sup>1</sup> or a 'busy complex'<sup>2</sup>, filling every waking moment for a number of varied reasons. When we ask others how they are, often the response has become, "Busy!" To say we are busy has become a status symbol, a sign of success, and seen as impressive. Only a century ago the opposite was true; wealth and status was shown by the amount of leisure time an individual had at their disposal, not the hours they worked.<sup>3</sup> But this busy behaviour is not successful, positive or impressive, it is the avoidance of the more difficult, and unseen work of reflecting on and improving our internal state. Danish philosopher, Søren Kierkegaard reflected on busyness as being ridiculous and perpetuates an absent self.<sup>4</sup> Being busy is indeterminate, moving towards nothing and a distraction to the uncomfortable lack of self within.<sup>5 6</sup>

Our busyness manifests itself in a variety of ways, such as multitasking. To be a good multitasker is a skill we learn to develop and is encouraged from an early age. It is a helpful and necessary skill that we use often, such as when you are listening to someone and are simultaneously taking notes. But in reality, our capacity for attention is finite and our ability to truly multitask is very limited to simple or practiced tasks. When we are multitasking, our attention is not on both, but is switching between the objects of our focus. An

- 1 Ray Oldenburg, *The Great Good Place* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Da Capo Press, 1999), 5.
- 2 Thomas Moore, *The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1997) 6.
- 3 Silvia Bellezza, Neeru Paharia, and Keinan Anat, "Research: Why Americans are so Impressed by Busyness," *Harvard Business School Publishing*, Dec, 15, 2016, <https://hbr.org/2016/12/research-why-americans-are-so-impressed-by-busyness>.
- 4 Maria Popova, "Kierkegaard on Our Greatest Source of Unhappiness," *BrainPickings*, accessed March 19, 2020, <https://www.brainpickings.org/2014/05/05/kierkegaard-on-presence-unhappiness/>.
- 5 Olivia Goldhill, "Why The Rush," *Quartz*, April 16, 2016, <https://qz.com/663552/150-years-ago-a-world-famous-philosopher-called-busyness-the-sign-of-an-unhappy-person/>.
- 6 Karl Aho and C. Stephen Evans, "Kierkegaard On Escaping the Cult of Busyness," *Institute of Art and Ideas*, October 4, 2018, <https://iai.tv/articles/how-kierkegaards-idea-of-idleness-can-help-us-diagnose-21st-century-busyness-aid-1150>.



example of this is listening to music while writing. There have been many times when I've 'listened' to an album but when I become aware of the music, I realize it is not the correct artist and I have no idea how long ago the original album ended. This is because when I am focused on my writing, I no longer hear the music playing and if I hear the music, my writing pauses. Each of us attempts this multitasking in our days, but our busyness increases the constant stimuli around us, endlessly splitting our attention resources until there is no focus on one particular thing at all.<sup>7 8</sup> Commonly, being busy hides under the protective banner of being productive. The reason we learn to multitask from a young age in the first place and continue to, is to achieve more productivity. To be productive is a positive attribute, but in our culture there is so much value placed on it and it is easy to forget that there are different and arguably better scales to weigh one's success, value, and life.

Today's level of multitasking and busyness is really distraction. Our lives are now filled with a constant stream of stimuli. We have become used to it and we can feel uncomfortable without it and find it difficult to focus on one task exclusively. We have learned to live in distraction, in busyness, to the degree that our ability to be present, focused or simply be still and quiet is lost. An example of this can be seen in how some students play movies while studying to help them focus or when commuters seem incapable of sitting at a bus stop for more than a moment without scrolling through their phone. It is difficult to be still because our constant stimulus overload leads to our senses being dulled and sometimes lost. The distraction of a busy life numbs the uncomfortable and painful situations of life and the anxiety that can plague our minds, but it also erases beautiful and joyful moments of life.

---

7 "The spotlight model of attention and our ability to multitask | MCAT | Khan Academy," YouTube video, 7:27, Khan Academy Medicine, April 17, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THJgaznSBu8>

8 "Divided attention, selective attention, inattention blindness, & change blindness | Khan Academy," YouTube video, 6:41, Khan Academy Medicine, September 17, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s4JBqLoY3tY>

I've witnessed this culture throughout my six years in architecture school where *busy* is the name of the game. Architecture schools across universities all seem to hold a proud tradition of being notorious for all-nighters, endless working hours in the studio and a culture that celebrated you for it. It was a right of passage, one that I, from the onset, was not in favour of. But as time went by, I became absorbed into the culture of "we are great because we work so hard and non-stop". It was a badge of honour we wore with pride. This mentality is prevalent throughout education, not just in universities or certain programs, and it carries into the professional world. The educational system is a powerful tool that shapes how we behave from a young age and over many years. It contributes to our growing desire for distraction with increasingly filled schedules, unlearning the ability to be still and to reflect inwardly upon oneself.

The act of being still and in-ward focused looks different to everyone. It can range in time from a multi-second pause to admire a flower, to a day free from work doing the things that are the most refreshing and reflective for yourself. But for many, working long days, seven days a week is not optional and we all go through seasons that are demanding. The hope is that a practice of pausing can flow into work and into our weeks and everyday lives, relieving our constant busy state. It is a practice of being still, to suppress the need to fill every quiet moment with activity and noise. It can be simply choosing to take in your surroundings when waiting at a bus stop instead of scrolling through your phone or taking five minutes to stare out the window before starting a new task. To stop, pause and rest can be powerful antidotes to the crisis of busy.

The behavioural problem of our inability or fear of being still and focusing on our internal state has consequences born from our choice of distraction and constant stimulation. A study found Americans spent on average 87% of their time indoors and 6% in an enclosed vehicle, leaving an incredibly small 7% left to being outdoors.<sup>9</sup> As this thesis suggests, nature encourages us to be

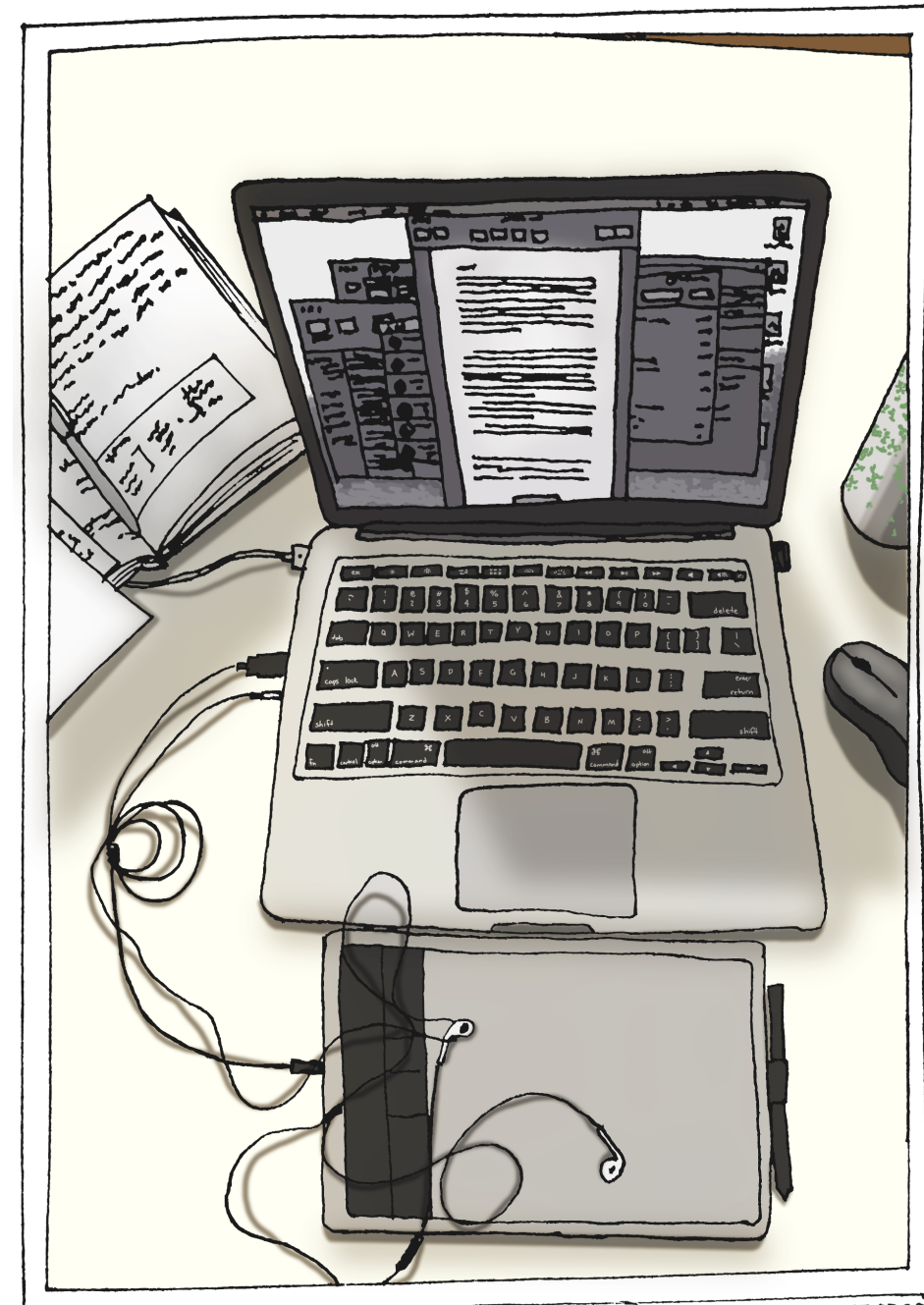
---

9 Klepeis and others, "The National Human Activity Pattern Survey (NHAPS)," *Journal of Exposure Analysis and Environmental Epidemiology* 11, no. 3 (May, 2001): 231-252.

present, still and therefore more aware of our internal self, but we habitually choose distraction and disconnection from nature over awareness of any negative states that might lie within. Inside we can switch on lights, bypassing the sun, turn on heating and cooling systems in our buildings and cars, avoiding the weather and drown out any sounds or distractions with our headphones and TV shows. Our lifestyles are easily disconnected from our natural surroundings, thus our discomfort with the present and being still is easily avoided in our days through distraction.

The problem of fixation on our outer conditions and the behaviours and consequences stemming from this focus is the motivation of this thesis. Being constantly over-scheduled without pausing affects many aspects of our lives from relationships to our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health. The subsequent Parts begin to review how nature and pausing can be the key in creating a change in perspective towards our inner well-being, as well as the importance and benefit that creating this change has in addressing problems produced by our outward focus.

My research progresses through various components of how we can shift focus to our internal state, with each addressing the role of pausing and nature as key elements, and addressing the problems created by an outward focus. There is a focus on the internal spiritual change through revisiting the importance of a religious sensitivity to the sacredness of nature and time with an emphasis on the religious practice of Sabbath. Additionally, there is an emphasis on nature's role in inner emotional change through gratitude and the enchanted moments of wonder and beauty in our daily lives. The discussion and research carried out in Part Two prompts Part Three, which then focuses on the design application and how designers can learn from nature and pausing to create spaces that encourage this change in focus.



2:42 pm • 07.07.20

Fig. 2 Fully Disconnected

What a typical busy day consists of: my eyes fixed on a screen, music plugged in drowning out distractions, disconnected from my surroundings and pushing to complete my long to-do list nearby.





Z.R.p.m. \* 14.03.18

Fig. 3 Growing!

This marigold and basil, planted in a old coffee tin was a delight to watch grow, then bloom, during another long and very cold winter in Sudbury, Ontario.

---

Throughout Part Two, there are drawings taken from my own experiences of moments of pause, awareness of nature and enchantment in the simple everyday. They are both visual images of examples used within the writing, but are also meant to bring inspiration. They provide a moment to dwell upon them, to feel the atmosphere they are expressing and to replace my experiences with similar moments of your own. Whether it is the sense of awe and reflection caused by a sunset or the delight in watching a plant on your table bloom, they serve as reminders of the little joys around us each day. These little joys given from nature are the most common and routinely overlooked, but they begin to slow the busyness.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Maria Popva, "Hermann Hesse on Little Joys, Breaking the Trance of Busyness, and How to Live with Presence," *Pocket*, Accessed April 15, 2020. <https://getpocket.com/explore/item/hermann-hesse-on-little-joys-breaking-the-trance-of-busyness-and-the-most-important-habit-for-living>.



Fig. 4 Spring Blossoms

Another blooming magnolia tree to stop and admire during a late afternoon walk around a residential neighborhood, a sure sign of the new season in full display, bursting with life.

## PART 2

### THE GOOD IN PAUSING AND NATURE

To begin this discussion, I have chosen to explore religion as a basis for my research and to support the roles of nature and the act of pausing as an antidote to the outward focus and byproduct of busyness. Our internal awareness can be described as our spiritual and emotional state. Although our society was built upon a religious past, it has increasingly become 'nonreligious'.<sup>11</sup> The separation of state and religion is considered beneficial and an achievement. But with the rise of secularism comes a general fear of religion and a desire to push religion further to the sidelines of society where its impact is safely diminished. Yet with many things, a balance needs to be struck between the secular and sacred, the profane and religious. Religion can teach us and bring a depth to our everyday lives, for the religious and non-religious alike.<sup>12</sup> This discussion on nature and pausing, and their impact on our emotions with a focus on the sacred, leads towards a different perspective, addressing the problems produced from our outer focus.

It is possible that a "religious sensitivity to the sacredness" of nature could become the essential element to our shift in focus.<sup>13</sup> This 'religious sensitivity' lays dormant in the very words we use and it is lost to most. An excellent example of this resides within the word *ecology*. Firstly, 'eco' comes from the Greek word *oikos*, meaning home. The implications of the word extends from the our human home, a temple and the earth as our home, to our search for an emotional home or a home for our soul. The second part of the word 'logy' means, 'the study of' but its roots are found in the word *logos*, which captures the mystery of the divine or the essence of God. This one word alone reveals the complex and spiritual undertones hidden within our everyday.<sup>14</sup> The primary religious focus within the text is deliberately Christian as I personally am an earnest Christian, thus I both believe in

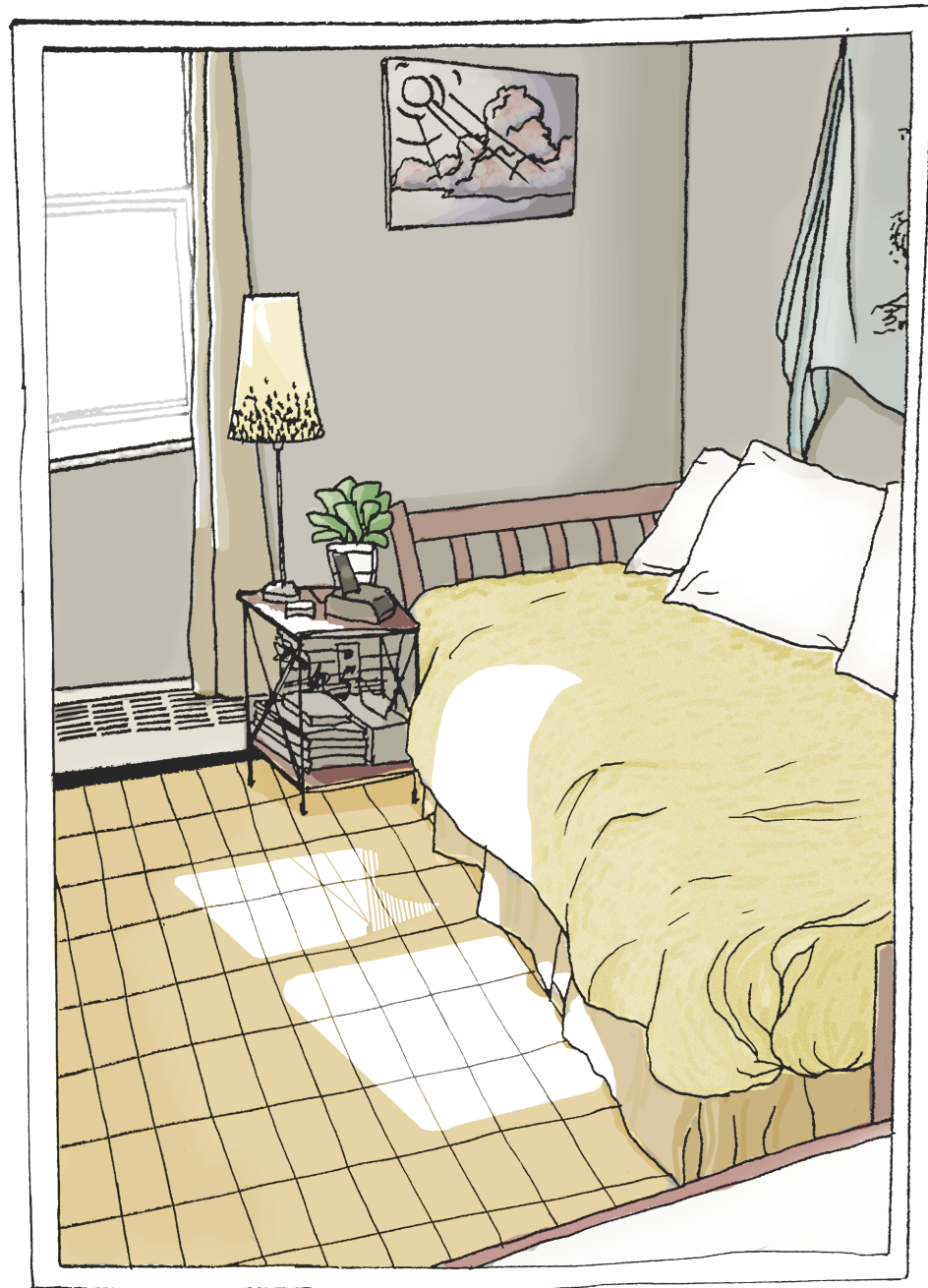
11 Witold Rybczynski, *Waiting for the Weekend* (New York: Penguin Group, 1991), 227-229.

12 Moore, *The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life*, 118.

13 Moore, *The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life*, 20.

14 Moore, *The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life*, 41-42.





1:40pm • 27.03.20

Fig. 5 Afternoon Sunshine

While I worked at my desk the afternoon sun slowly glided across my bed and spilled onto the floor and although it was cold and snowing outside, the sun filled me with warmth and happiness.

and have the greatest understanding of Christianity compared to other religions. Continuing onward, Part Two creates the foundation for the argument of why and how pausing and nature are the keys to our change in focus.

---

When beginning to search for established practices that were focused on pausing and resisting the culture of busy, the Sabbath became a fundamental point of research and exploration. The word *sabbath* is derived from the Hebrew verb *sabat* which means, to stop, to cease or to keep.<sup>15</sup> It is a prominent practice of pausing and rest in my life and in many others who practice Christianity and its influence has extended even into secular systems. Examples include the custom of taking a sabbatical for professors and other professionals or simply in the recent trends of individuals taking technology sabbaths. Simply put, the Sabbath is a religious practice of setting one day aside, every seven days, to refrain from work and to rest. In the Jewish religious tradition, Sabbath begins at sundown on Friday till sundown on Saturday. Within Christianity, Sabbath is celebrated on Sunday, with some denominational exceptions.<sup>16</sup>

The origins of Sabbath come within the first pages of the Bible in the Creation story, where it is written that God spent six days working and creating the world, but on the seventh day He completed his labour through creating rest and declared that day as holy, set apart.<sup>17</sup> <sup>18</sup> The wonder of the Creation story builds to its climax and sets the stage for the ultimate creation, rest.<sup>19</sup> The

15 Craig J Slane, "Sabbath," *Bible Study Tools*, Accessed October 29, 2019. <https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/sabbath/>.

16 John Nevins Andrews, *History of the Sabbath and First Day of the Week*, (Battle Creek: Steam Press, 1873), 18, 127, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100348634>.

17 Genesis 1-2 NKJV.

18 Jurgen Moltmann, *God in Creation*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis, Minnesota: First Fortress Press edition, 1993), 278.

19 Celia Deane-Drummond, *A Primer in Ecotheology*, (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2017), 29.

Hebrew word for rest is *menuha*, which means more than ceasing our labours or activities, but was understood to be the same as happiness, stillness, peace and harmony. Menuha became a synonym for the life yet to come in heaven, eternal life, of which Sabbath is a taste.<sup>20</sup>

So why rest? Seeing as God, who unlike us does not get tired, why was rest the final action? The creation story shows God's will, His work and Him as a creator, but His rest displays *who* God is, His character and His restraint - something we humans often struggle with.<sup>21</sup> <sup>22</sup> With His act of creation completed, He steps back, observing His works and returns to Himself. He does not return alone as before creation, but brings creation to Himself. God's rest, stepping back from work, allowed creation to act on its own accord, therefore allowing creation to 'act on Him.' He rests to experience His creation and so that all of creation can be in His presence. God's choosing to rest granted us an understanding of *who* He is because it made Him *present* among us.<sup>23</sup> A further explanation as to why Sabbath was established is written in the New Testament. During Jesus' ministry on earth, the religious leaders of His time had burdened the people with exhaustive rules, detailing what activities they could and could not perform on the Sabbath. The Sabbath, of which was meant to be a refuge, had become a prison.<sup>24</sup> Into this situation Jesus says to the religious leaders "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath".<sup>25</sup> This statement reveals the Sabbath was made with us and our benefit ultimately in mind, but the response of the religious leaders was produced from our natural reluctance to observe Sabbath and our difficulty with simply pausing.

20 Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath*, (New York: Third Noontday Printing, 1977), 22-23.

21 Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 280.

22 J. Matthew Sleeth. *24/6*, (Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, 2012), 41, SCRIBD.

23 Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 278-280.

24 Sleeth, *24/6*, 63.

25 Mark 2:27 NIV.

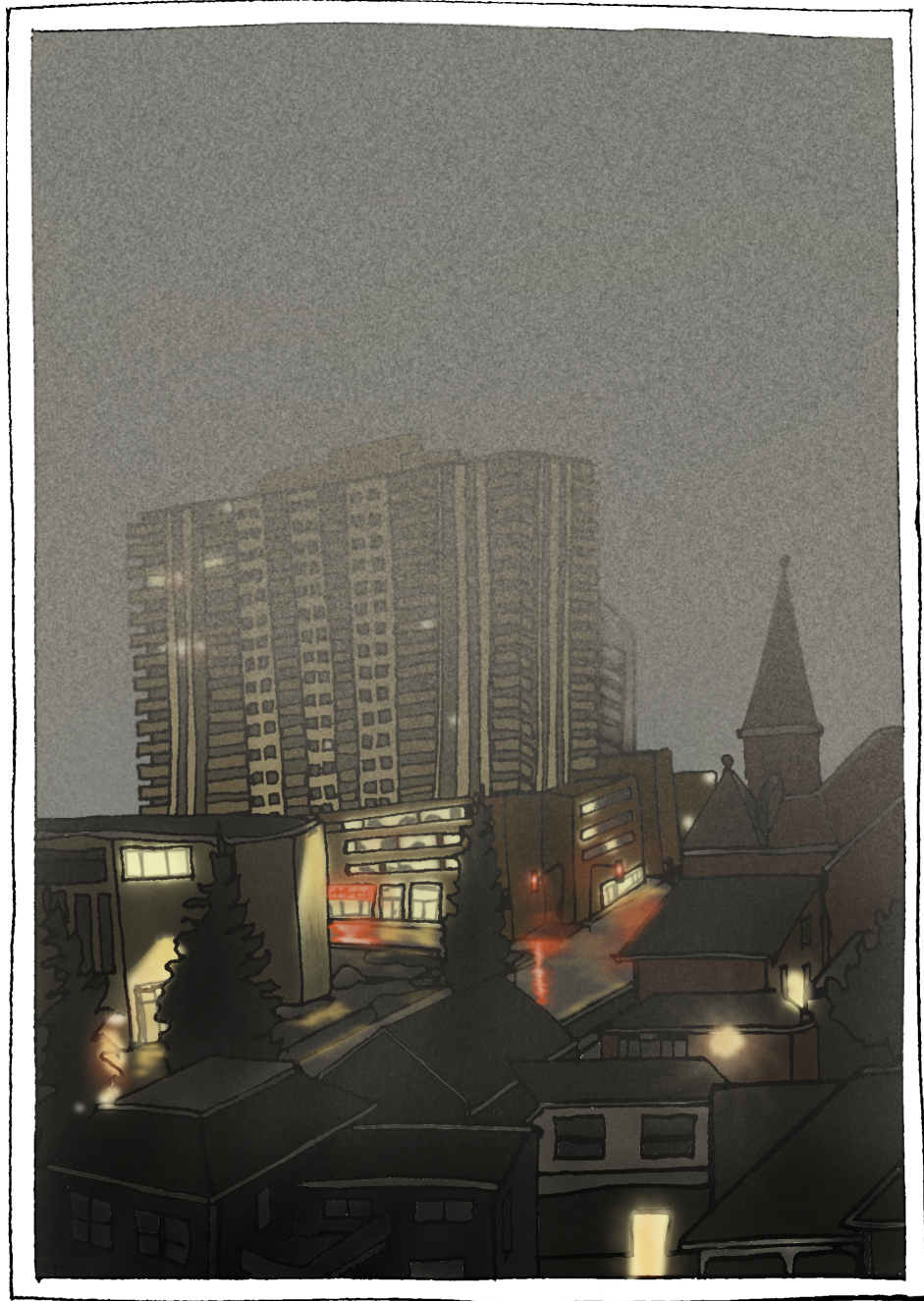


11:03am · 12.08.17

Fig. 6 Butterfly Park

The monarch butterfly has always enchanted me with their intricate patterns and bold colours but it baffles my mind that with those delicate and graceful wings it will migrate all the way to Mexico at the end of each summer.





6:04am - 30.04.20

Fig. 7 A Foggy Early Morning

There is an atmosphere of peace as the street lights change, reflecting across the wet empty street but the fog brings a curious edge of unease as the familiar views become hazy and disappear.

Many of us take time off to be more productive afterwards. I take a break from my writing, to be refreshed so that I can work more efficiently later. But this relationship, rest for the benefit of work, is the opposite of the intentions behind Sabbath. It was not designed as a way to be more productive or as just a day in between weeks. The Sabbath is the climax; the week is on account of the Sabbath, not the Sabbath for the benefit of the week.<sup>26</sup>

Sabbath provides solutions to creating an inner transformation by impacting our behaviours and their consequences. The main impact Sabbath has is in challenging a society that is defined by consumption, maximum production and the commodification of time. The Sabbath is a day to create nothing and to destroy nothing, but to simply enjoy the gifts given to us.<sup>27</sup> Sabbath is a glimpse into the life yet to come, an indication that there is more to life than monetary gain and our lists of to-do's.<sup>28</sup> It is a reminder that our value is not derived from our actions, what we do or what we can produce.<sup>29</sup> It is a deliberate stop, a surrendering of work and agenda to focus on our spiritual and emotional needs, connecting to things beyond our daily tasks and renew our perspectives.<sup>30</sup> The Sabbath can be described in three R's: rest, refreshment and reverence.<sup>31</sup> Although it is a day set apart from the rest of the week, its impact will undoubtedly bleed into the rest of the week.

<sup>26</sup> Heschel, *The Sabbath*, 14.

<sup>27</sup> Mark A. Torgerson, *Greening Spaces for Worship and Ministry*, (Herndon, Virginia: The Alban Institute, 2012), 15-16.

<sup>28</sup> Daniel L. Brunner, *Introducing Evangelical Ecotheology*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2014), 189.

<sup>29</sup> Anita Amstutz, *Soul Tending*, (Nashville, Tennessee: SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2018), 7.

<sup>30</sup> Amstutz, *Soul Tending*, 3-4.

<sup>31</sup> Sleeth, *24/6*, 100.



Time is a key component in our conversation about pausing and its role in shifting our focus. It is the material of which Sabbath and pausing are made of, thus we need to recognize the context and the influence our attitudes have towards our understanding of time. Again, Sabbath provides a position for an alternative view in order to establish pausing as an antidote to our outward focus.

We know that time is a precious commodity. We say phrases like, “don’t waste my time,” knowing, unlike other commodities you cannot get more. But how do you measure the value of time? Our language gives a clue on one of the ways we view time. We say, we *spend* our time doing activities, and we also *spend* our money on items. This *spending* is an exchange of one valuable item for another. When you go to work, you give your employer an amount of time that is measured by what we get accomplished. Our work is then often measured by how much we make and the value of how much money we make is measured by what it allows us to buy. This creates a culture where, “time is money” and thus time is measured often by its monetary value, what it can get you. Time is at the top of the food chain, a frustrating thing at times, seeing as we only get twenty-four hours each day, no less and no more. This combined with our consumer culture, leads us to saying phrases like, “don’t waste your time, be productive and efficient with your time, and spend your time wisely.” But what if we had a different view of time, that it was not just something to be spent, where time was not money, but time was sacred?

Although time is commonly seen as a linear progression, throughout our lives, our days, weeks and years, there are patterns and cycles we follow. Looking at the increment of the week, there are two major phases, characterized by how we use our time. There are the weekdays identified by repeated and reliable routines and there are the weekends, a different and irregular set of activities. The weekend can be seen as sacred time in comparison to the profane or secular time of the



5:11pm \*28.04.17

Fig. 8 Marsh Marigolds

Walking by this flower, it stands out amongst the brown forest floor of the spring and although it is small, a close look reveals intricate veins, thin soft petals and a dusting of pollen.



weekdays.<sup>32</sup> To ground the notion of the weekend as sacred, we will return to the Sabbath.

Sabbath is a celebration of time and it was declared to be sacred time.<sup>33</sup> Revisiting the Creation story, it is written that “God blessed the seventh day and made it *holy*”.<sup>34</sup> The word meaning holy in Hebrew was *qadosh*, which also further represented the “mystery and majesty of the divine.” Throughout the Bible there are many places later pronounced as holy, but time is the first holy creation, not a space.<sup>35</sup> It is a very different way of viewing time, to understand it as sacred. Productivity and efficiency cannot measure sacredness. How do you assign worth to sacred time, especially in a society where the sacred is under-valued and in the case of time, commonly is not even considered sacred at all. Considering time as sacred requires a reversal of values within our society since we consistently prioritize space over time.<sup>36</sup> We give more of our time, working longer hours and making more money, to obtain more space, to buy a larger apartment or a piece of property.<sup>37</sup>

Reflecting on the seventh day of creation, the first Sabbath and sacred time, God rests in-front of his works, He observes and experiences His creation.<sup>38</sup> This brings to consideration the importance of our view of time and its sacredness, and our relationship with nature. Simply observing nature can be a way to alter our perspective of time. Nature moves at different speeds than us. Compared to a wild flower, we have a long life. Observe a tree, the longest-lived form of life on this planet, and compared

32 Anthony F. Aveni. *Empires of Time: Calendars, Clocks and Cultures*, (New York: Basic Books, 1989), 63-65, <https://archive.org/details/B-001-015-434/page/n77/mode/2up/search/sacred>.

33 Heschel, *The Sabbath*, 10.

34 Genesis 2:3a NIV.

35 Heschel, *The Sabbath* 9.

36 Heschel, *The Sabbath*, 5-6.

37 Heschel, *The Sabbath*, 10.

38 Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 278-280.



3:23 pm · 12.06.18

Fig. 9 My Favourite Tree

Standing outside our kitchen window, this old maple tree was one of my favourite places to retreat to, but my time there was just a short season compared to the decades it has lived before me.



Fig. 10 A Snowy Walk

5:38 pm · 25.12.18

Living amongst a forest has brought a greater awareness of the seasons and their corresponding changes. The winter brings a deep quiet and stillness as everything, from the trees to the animals rests for a time.

to it, our life is very short.<sup>39</sup> If we are going to change our attitudes and the speed in which we live, nature can teach us as we spend time in it. We can observe that nature also has its times of rest, or Sabbath, in the form of night and winter.

We give time to what we deem to be important and valuable. We commit great amounts of time to our jobs and other activities for the fulfillment they bring, the change and benefits it creates, or for the money it provides. If we value it, we give time to it. The importance and relevance of sacred time is to view time not as a commodity, but as time that has a deeper value. This changes our perspective and moves our focus away from things that are valued outwardly, such as what we have or do. Instead, just as in the Sabbath, sacred time gives permission, and provides value to focusing on our inner condition.

---

39

Matthew Sleeth, *Reforesting Faith*, (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook, 2019), 24.





Fig. 11 The Dining Table Plants

An interaction with nature and a moment of rest can be as simple as enjoying the presence of some indoor plants as you sit down to enjoy a meal.

The final element that is essential to address in our conversation about pausing is that of leisure time, as it is the most common occasion when we stop for longer periods of time. It is important to consider the role of pausing, not only with a religious lens, but also in the secular, through the weekly and daily acts of leisure at our disposal. This helps us understand how leisure can provide context and a reaction to the problems of being busy.

There is an urgency to our leisure, as it is often compressed to a limited amount of time on the weekend. During the week, evenings have increasingly less time for leisure as commute times increase and there are errands to be done and activities to participate in.<sup>40</sup> This urgency to do something with our free time, to optimize it, occurs in part, from the context of seldom stopping, which increases the pressure on the few times that we do have. The Latin root word for leisure is *licere* which means 'to be permitted.' The fundamental element of leisure, of which urgency and pressure hinders, is freedom. Freedom to do something but also to do nothing. It is a time where our focus can be turned inward for contemplation, rather than outward.<sup>41</sup>

So what does leisure become with an outward focus and in a society which praises being busy and defines itself by what we do? It creates a shift from true leisure to recreation and consumerism. The weekend was a designated time to have the freedom to do the things one wanted to do, but somehow it has become an obligation to do things that the week does not allow for.<sup>42</sup> Recreation focuses on the *doing* of something, including doing it well. For example, learning a new sport begins with buying the correct attire and equipment, time for practicing, and possibly joining a local team or club. There is an inherent level of professionalism preferred and a requirement of skill on which to improve.<sup>43</sup> Recreation can quickly and easily turn leisure into consumerism because purchasing of equipment or tools, has

40 Rybczynski, *Waiting for the Weekend*, 222.

41 Rybczynski, *Waiting for the Weekend*, 225.

42 Rybczynski, *Waiting for the Weekend*, 222.

43 Rybczynski, *Waiting for the Weekend*, 222-224.

become required. The activity has increased its worth through the time and skill dedicated to it, so one potentially feels compelled to invest monetarily to further increase its value.<sup>44</sup>

Another reason there is a focus on recreation rather than leisure is because the role of the weekend is influenced by how our jobs and work have changed in the past century. As technology advanced, many jobs became more reliant on technology and thus many jobs required less skill and craft. Machines produced many benefits for us, but an unforeseen consequence for some, was work becoming less meaningful. Thus recreation stood in-place of work, as a time and place to gain and develop skills, create and express one's talents and their unique abilities.<sup>45</sup> The weekend, our leisure time, became the time to engage in something meaningful, and reinforced the constant need to be doing something.<sup>46</sup> The constant 'being busy' is also exasperated in a society where our work gives us our meaning, therefore more work done quenches our desire for fulfilment.<sup>47</sup>

Eventually we all do stop and rest but the quality can be undermined because there are poor forms of leisure. One of the most popular forms of 'doing nothing' is watching TV, but it is missing the fundamental characteristics of true leisure and that is freedom. Watching TV is focused and structured and consumes the mind, not allowing for the flexibility of the mind to wander at will. Without passive leisure which allows for imagination, reflection and contemplation, we do not rest well.<sup>48</sup> It is often necessary to re-learn how to rest, to experience leisure at its best and to remember how to pause and to do it well.

---

44 Oldenburg, *The Great Good Place*, 11-12.

45 Rybczynski, *Waiting for the Weekend*, 232.

46 Rybczynski, *Waiting for the Weekend* 223-224.

47 Sleeth, *24/6*, 152.

48 Rybczynski, *Waiting for the Weekend*, 192-193.



Fig. 12 Cumulonimbus Clouds

One of my favourite things in nature is the sky and on a hot summer's day you can often watch these impressive and beautiful clouds billow and rise in the east, high up in the sky like a real time-lapse video.





7:29pm · 22.09.18

Fig. 13 Sunset

To me, there is something sacred and profoundly spiritual in the air when the sun sets, marking the end of another day in a stunning fashion and it brings me to the present moment, allowing me to reflect and reminds me of my Creator.

Now that we have established a reasoning for the role of pausing in shifting our awareness, we will turn our concentration towards the second critical element of the argument which is the role of nature. The strong connection between nature and its impact on our internal states and our focus is once again made very apparent when analyzing nature's role and value within religion. Having considered the temporal aspects of the argument within religion, the concentration turns to the spacial aspects through reflecting on the notion of sacred places as the entry point into nature's role.

For myself, when I think of sacred places, the first thought that comes to mind are religious buildings, specifically an image of a grand, gothic stone cathedral with its quiet and dark interior. When traveling Europe, I visited cathedrals that matched this description and with each visit, the experience was similar. Outside, it could be sunny and warm, a string of tourists talking in-line, waiting to go in, taking pictures and posing in front of the facade with their friends. But the moment one entered into the cathedral, the atmosphere changed drastically. People walked slowly, they sat or stood still, taking in their surroundings. Few people talked, but if someone did, they lowered their voice to a whisper. Whether the visitor believed in the religion for which the building was built or not, there was an instinctual response from everyone who walked into that cathedral. Our behaviour seems to unconsciously be altered when in a sacred place; the sacred takes us outside of ourselves.<sup>49</sup>

Our lives are filled with sacred spaces, noticed or un-noticed, and to reserve the title of a sacred place to the interiors of religious buildings would be limiting. Our environments are filled with sacred places including those of nature. Have you ever witnessed a group of people get quiet and still when watching a sunset, or had a conversation fade away when walking through a silent snow-covered forest on a still winter's day? If so, then

<sup>49</sup> Snyder, *Practice of the Wild*, 101.



7:05pm • 18.08.19

Fig. 14 The Rocky Mountains

A mountain's scale and rough and powerful presence is otherworldly. Looking up at them I could only begin to imagine the other world that must be at the peak, removed from the life we live below.

maybe you too have felt the affects of being within the sacred place of nature. This sacredness of nature is a key aspect to understanding why nature is so essential and deeply connected to our internal states. These sacred qualities are powerful and have the ability to influence our emotions, shift our awareness to the present and cause us to slow down. This makes it clear as to why nature is instrumental in religions. Being among it is part of the spacial traditions of many religions because the sacredness of nature impacts our inner conditions, our spirit and emotions.

This idea is far from a revolutionary concept. There is a deep and rich history of people believing that nature was sacred and that it has significance in our spiritual lives. Within the prevalent Asian religions, mountains were considered to be sacred places and created an escape from society and the communities living in the valleys below.<sup>50</sup> Within both Buddhism and Taoism, they situated their temples within nature as a way to be detached from the realities of everyday, to connect to the sacred. Some of the preferred locations included alcoves, valleys, cliffs, caves and mountains. Buddhist temples often required a pilgrimage to arrive, moving out of the moral world, withdrawing to the mountains to be within paradise.<sup>51</sup> These religions and contextual cultures strived for balance and harmony with nature on their sites and had a respect for the landscapes' sacred qualities, as their relationship with nature was connected with their internal values.<sup>52</sup>

Around the world there is evidence of these ancient untouched areas marked as sacred landscapes. such as in Japan where the presence of sacred landscapes remains prevalent.<sup>53</sup> In India, the existence of ancient sacred tree groves

50 Snyder, *Practice of the Wild*, 106-108.

51 Nan Shunxun and Beverly Foit-Albert, *China's Sacred Sites*, (Singapore: Himalayan Institute Press, 2007), 31.

52 Shunxun, Foit-Albert, *China's Sacred Sites*, 3.

53 Snyder, *Practice of the Wild*, 94.



displays the connection between nature and sacredness.<sup>54 55</sup> But the practice of escaping from the secular and everyday to the sacred and restorative atmosphere of nature extends beyond religious or ancient practices. During the nineteenth century in England, as the invention of trains became more affordable for the working class the venture of a 'day-trip' to the countryside or to the seaside flourished. Those that lived within the dirty and congested cities of that time, would take the train on their day off, Sunday, to escape to more natural settings, a reprieve from the life within the city. And for those who could not leave the city, parks began to become a vital element of the city, a retreat within the urban environment. To go for 'a walk in the park' became the most dominant activity to participate in on these 'nature' outings, as the only function of early parks were paths to walk.<sup>56</sup>

Even today we see this practice of retreating to nature through activities such as camping, cottaging, and rural retreat centres. The pastime of walking and spending time in parks or on hiking trails continues to be a common interest. This sanctuary that nature produces, from which we benefit greatly, is recognized and sought after throughout human history. It is practiced even in the Bible, when during his years in ministry, Jesus repeatedly withdrew to the wilderness, a mountain or a grove of trees, to be renewed and refreshed.<sup>57 58</sup>

This tradition of withdrawing to nature is a returning to the sacred spaces in our lives. We know that being within nature can not only positively impact our physical health, but it also can be nourishment for our souls because it holds something that is beyond us, the sacred. Nature, as does the sacred, takes us beyond ourselves, and refreshes our spiritual and emotional

54 Snyder, *Practice of the Wild*, 84-85.

55 Amberly Polidor, "Sacred Groves of India," Sacred Land Film Project, June 1 2004, <https://sacredland.org/sacred-groves-of-india-india/>.

56 Rybczynski, *Waiting for the Weekend*, 103-105.

57 Sleeth, *Reforesting Faith*, 159.

58 Luke 5:16, 6:12, 9:28, 22:39, Matthew 14:23 NKJV.



5:56pm · 31.05.20

Fig. 15 A Meandering Path

I often go for a walk for something to do, to get outside and clear my mind and I enjoy finding paths like this one through a tranquil but humming-with-life forest.





Fig. 16 The Hanging Basket

Even in dense urban centres a simple hanging basket, overflowing with flower brings a soft, bright and colourful splash to the man-made surroundings and produces a sweet fragrance for those passing below.

elements. From an ancient old growth forest, to the rock or potted plant on a desk, or the flowers in a hanging basket on a busy city street, all of nature is sacred, not just select prestigious sites. This view allows nature to play a critical role as it facilitates introspective behaviour and causes us to be aware of our spiritual and emotional state through the sacred place it provides.

---

The basis of the argument, set previously through the analysis of the Sabbath, leisure and the sacredness of nature and time, provides the foundation by which both pausing and nature can impact change by shifting our focus away from our outer conditions to within. This understanding prepares the way for certain consequences and experiences in ones life. There are many benefits to the shift in focus I am proposing, but there are three I will elaborate on: spiritual experiences, enchantment and gratitude. I will show how a shift in focus can increase these benefits.

First, our relationship with nature and our state of busyness both greatly affect and are tied to spiritual experiences. They require pausing and if we do, the natural world can reveal these moments, only if we are attuned to the sacred and are slow enough to feel it and see it in the moment. The traditions and practices of leaving for renewal and placing ourselves in nature, create time and spaces for spiritual interactions and experiences. From the Buddhists and Taoists and the placement of their temples, to the desert monks and hermits within the history of Christianity, many religions appreciate nature as an integral part of spiritual experiences.<sup>59</sup>

Life is full of these experiences that provide a brief glance “into the eternal that lies beyond.”<sup>60</sup> It could be the beauty of a

<sup>59</sup> James A. Nash, *Loving Nature*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 80-87.

<sup>60</sup> Moore, *The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life*, 299.



waterfall that humbles you by its power, or the peace and hope that fills the air at sunrise. You can be aware of the significance of the moment as it happens, or it is only in looking back that you see the power of the moment. These 'spiritual experiences' look different from person to person and from one time to another, but often nature plays a crucial role. Nature inspires wonder at every scale, from the veins in a leaf to the grandeur of a mountain. It carries through our everyday, from the sun spilling onto a bedroom floor, to the wind on your face during your walk to work.<sup>61</sup>

Thomas Moore describes spiritual awareness as "when we get a glimpse of life going on in ways that transcend or are at least different from human ways."<sup>62</sup> Nature is a very 'everyday' glimpse into this transcendent world beyond us. For example, you and I cannot make a blade of grass grow. Sure chemists can modify it, and we might place the seed in the soil and in the location we want, but we do not build the grass. It grows. And if you allow yourself to be awed or be like the slightly less knowledgeable child-like version of yourself, you may see the magic of this blade of grass in its growing. If you have ever observed an ant hill, you can watch as they come and go, bringing their treasures of plants and dead bugs into their home, all on a mission. It is a kind of chaos, but if you watch closely, it is purposeful. In the area below your shoe a whole world goes on, and you realize this only if you are patient and stop to observe it. There is a spiritual awareness gained when we realize nature is transcendent of us, though still, we share the same world.

Looking specifically at the Bible as a precedent, there are many instances of spiritual experiences or revelations through nature. A few examples include the sign of God's faithfulness and promises to Noah through the phenomena of a rainbow. Through the life of Moses, God spoke to him through a burning bush, he saw the parting of the Red Sea, and met with God on the top of a

61 Moore, *The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life*, 299.

62 Moore, *The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life*, 9.



7:46 am • 12.03.18

Fig. 17 A Winter Sunrise

Watching the sunrise slowly wash over the sky and softly light the cold and grey world below, it always brings a great sense of calm, encouragement and hope for the fresh new day ahead.





10:58am \* 27.07.05

Fig. 18 A Lush Garden

Tucked under the shade of the largest lilac tree I have ever seen and placed amongst the ferns, lilies and hostas was a bench. It was one of the many quiet and whimsical places within the gardens that my Mom loved to create.

mountain.<sup>63</sup> During Jesus's ministry there was the calming of the storm, the miracle of the coin found in a fish, the large catch of fish by the disciples or the spontaneous withering of a fig tree.<sup>64</sup> But why? Why is there such a strong connection between spiritual experiences and nature, and why are revelations repeatedly given to people in the Bible through nature?

I would like to point out two possible reasons for this. The first is that we catch a glimpse of heaven through nature. Consider the two descriptions given in the Bible of places without sin, in essence, heaven, and it is evident that the position of nature is a major component. In Genesis, in the world before sin entered it, God put the first man in a *garden*. The garden of Eden is said to hold every tree that grew and was "pleasant to the sight and good for food." It also details the rivers that flowed through the garden.<sup>65</sup> Secondly, in the book of Revelation, there are visions of the new earth to come including again, a river flowing through the middle of the street with the tree of life on either side.<sup>66</sup> Both of the descriptions place focus on nature, that is, a glimpse of heaven.

The second reason for this connection is, just as in the Sabbath, nature reveals *who* God is. Through creation we can see and understand God and who He is.<sup>67</sup> Nature all around us declares his glory, and speaks to who He is, and it is able to be 'heard' and understood by all people.<sup>68</sup> As nature is all around us, it goes across time, cultures, economics and geography; it is something that everyone can understand, there is no special knowledge required, thus it is a fitting instrument for cultivating spiritual experiences.

63 Genesis 9:8-17, Exodus 3, 14, 24:9-18 NKJV.

64 Mark 4:35-41, Matthew 17:27, John 21, Mark 11:12-25.

65 Genesis 2:8-17 NKJV.

66 Revelation 22:1-3 NKJV.

67 Romans 1:20 NIV.

68 Psalm 19:1-4 NIV.





9:28pm · 29.05.18

Fig. 19 The Full Moon

Enchantment filled the cool evening air as I watched a full moon slowly rise above the horizon as the sky turned a deep royal blue and the first stars begin to appear above on my last night in Sudbury after 4 years.

The second quality that arises from pausing and nature and the change in focus they encourage is enchantment. Enchantment can be both a product of pausing, as well as the force that stops you. To be enchanted is to recognize the moments of beauty and wonder of which nature continuously displays. It is reminiscent of the careful and slow-paced child, the ones who are filled with wonder at the world around them.<sup>69</sup> To live with enchantment is to choose to see and remain in the places where beauty and the good rise to the top. This is not to say we should throw off every concern or problem, but view enchantment as an antidote to any impending despair and as a great motivator to increase the places of beauty and good where we are.

Enchantment has an unknown quality. It is elusive to us, as many characteristics of the spiritual world are. It can be difficult to place your finger on the feeling it gives or to describe the moment to someone else. Yet at the same time, we have all experienced these mysterious moments, thus we can grasp what enchantment is from our memories and experiences. One could describe enchantment as when the soul surfaces, or when the spiritual takes over. It is like a spell cast on us, it changes what we see, and how we perceive our surroundings and our emotions. It is the food that gives nourishment and refreshes our soul, as real food does for our physical bodies. It can be a fleeting moment, or be a way of life that creates space and time for many moments of beauty, wonder and charm.<sup>70</sup>

It may seem like an unreasonable and frivolous reaction to serious problems, to foster enchantment, but it is significant. It is influential over our internal states, whether spiritual or emotional, and it inhabits the ordinary, daily lives we live. If Sabbath is a weekly practice, enchantment is a daily practice and is embedded into our everyday. It creates “a condition that

69 Sleeth, 24/6, 93.

70 Moore, *The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life*, ix.

allows us to connect, for the most part lovingly and intimately, with the world we inhabit".<sup>71</sup> A relationship with nature is relevant as nature itself is enchanting and therefore is a central force for shifting our focus and creating positive change. Yet this can not happen when we are running non-stop through our days. The enchanted moments are risked when we are too preoccupied to enjoy the flowers growing through the sidewalk cracks, too hurried to see the swans flying passed the window or too exhausted to stand beneath the stars. Without the act of pausing and being still, enchantment is restricted.

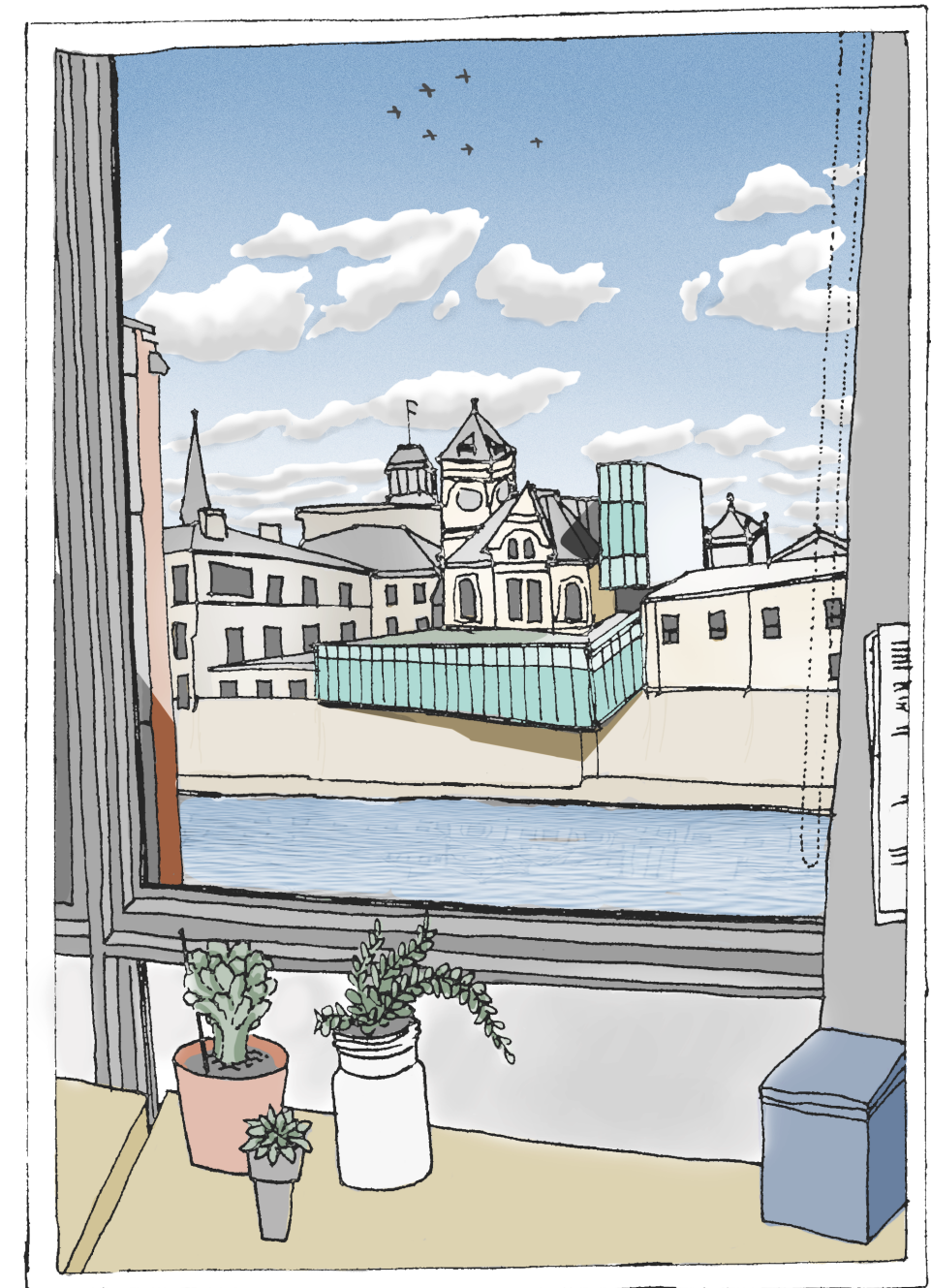
The last quality, gratitude, is a consequence of enchantment resulting from when you alter the lens through which you view the world. When you allow for those moments when your soul comes to the surface, it can change our attitudes, and gratitude grows. Nature performs two key roles in developing gratitude which affects our shift in focus to be inward. First, nature can lead to gratitude which turns us away from always working towards more and it helps us be more aware and present. Often we are absent from ourselves, living in the past or the future making being present and living in the now the most difficult.<sup>72</sup> It is an effective aid in fighting against a distracted and busy life as gratitude brings a level of awareness to the moment which is necessary to witness enchantment. Although you can be grateful for things of the past, gratitude is grounded in the present and it helps you see and appreciate what is around you.

Gratitude requires us to become more aware, which nature can stimulate, rather than distracted. This is nature's second role, that it gives us many things to be grateful for. A thoughtful person can be enchanted by and take pleasure in the ordinary.<sup>73</sup>

71 Moore, *The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life*, xi.

72 Popova, "Kierkegaard on Our Greatest Source of Unhappiness."

73 Gary Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild*, (California: Publishers Group West, 1990), 164.



2:44pm · 08.11.19

Fig. 20 Out the Studio Window

For two terms I watched the world slowly go by out the window by my studio desk. The only thing that moved was the water below, the sky above and the occasional flock of birds flying by.

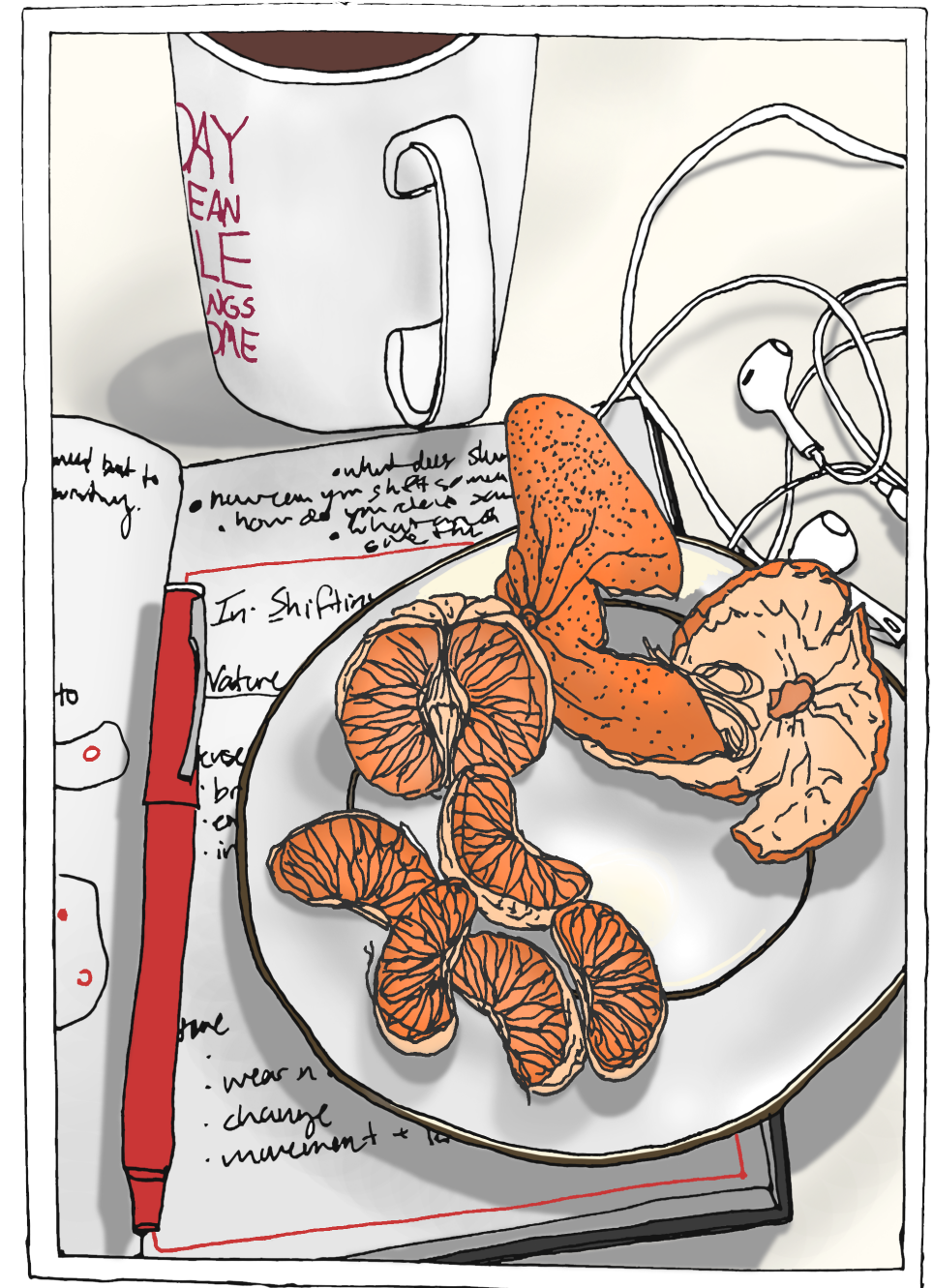


One can find gratitude for the ordinary, yet profound blessings from nature within their everyday life, from the clean water that pours from the tap, the warmth of the sunshine, to the very oxygen we inhale with each breath. The more we are sensitive to nature, the more we are conscious of the many ways in which nature supports us. In a typical moment there are thousands of natural systems and forces around us that we are unaware of. From the ozone layer and the magnetic field far above your head protecting us from the sun's deadly rays, to the micro-organisms in the oceans producing oxygen, nature supports us.

In all the unique places we live on earth, each has their own unique plants, animals, waterways, weather patterns and sun path. Yet many of us are so disconnected from these elements of our surrounding natural environment, that we have lost much of our biological awareness. We buy our fruits and vegetables from a grocery store, our water comes from a tap, and light comes at any time from a light fixture. Our increasingly urban environments leave little room for the local plants and animals, and many of the waterways are built over. This loss of a biological awareness, a loss of nature, is dangerous as it is critical to teaching and developing a deep sense of gratitude in life.<sup>74</sup>

Within the scale of a week, the practice of Sabbath is a process of making ourselves conscious again to creation and how interconnected and dependent we are to it, re-establishing our gratitude.<sup>75</sup> As modelled during the first Sabbath, the focus was not on passive rest but rather an active appreciation of the creation made.<sup>76</sup> Gratitude is an intentional and daily choice, bringing joy and opportunities for enchantment, while nature is an instrument in developing gratitude and an awareness of the present, an antidote to busyness and an outward focus.

74 Snyder, *Practice of the Wild*, 42.  
 75 Amstutz, *Soul Tending*, 50.  
 76 Drummond, *A Primer in Ecotheology*, 29-30.



1:02 pm · 23.04.20

Fig. 21 Clementines

Even through the winter when the days are cloudy, cold and the earth appears to be lifeless, studying a clementine with its small pods of delicious juice all packed neatly into a slice is reason for gratitude.



Fig. 22 The Pond

The sun's low angle shining on the dewy grass, the fresh plants lighting up and the warm fog hanging low in the air, the early morning is completely enchanting to me. There is expectation in the air yet it is calm and soothing.

There is immense value in this sacred-filled and enchanted way of living, although it may appear overly simple or be a seemingly unheroic way to live or take action against these complicated problems of today. Many parts play their roles shifting our focus through nature and pausing: Sabbath and leisure, considering time and nature as sacred, creating opportunities for enchantment, gratitude and spiritual experiences in daily life. These actions all oppose our outward focus, our busyness, and benefit us in direct and indirect ways. Focusing on creating internal changes, spiritual and emotional, is powerful as it leads to the necessary external changes in our behaviours.

Yet, the notion of pausing and of doing nothing is far from celebrated, rather it is often looked down upon, described with negative words like idleness and being lazy. Guilt can overshadow our times of leisure or sacred time because we cannot identify or value the significance of pausing, especially in a society that prioritizes being busy and productive.<sup>77</sup> Sometimes we need to be given permission to do nothing, to be reminded that there are moments where time is our's and where its highest purpose may be to enjoy, be refreshed and be still.<sup>78</sup> Some things do not have a practical function in worldly standards, but rather in the spiritual and internal and our lives also require time without practical functions demanded of it.

This transformation requires a re-evaluation of principles. From first grade we are taught information over imagination and observe that you are rewarded only if you are hardworking and driven, and are called smart if you are reasonable and logical. The frivolous and quaint nature of enchantment and the spirituality of the sacred can often be limited to a minority or reduced to a catchy quote, but when seriously applied, we easily question its validity and potential.<sup>79</sup> Yet I think we are also eager for change and are in desperate need of it, to see that there is value in pausing and in nature to shift our focus and to see things anew and stop the constant hustle of being busy. It may be an under-valued and an unassuming path, but it is influential and one our world requires.

<sup>77</sup> Rybczynski, *Waiting for the Weekend*, 225-226.

<sup>78</sup> Rybczynski, *Waiting for the Weekend*, 234.

<sup>79</sup> Moore, *The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life*, 381.





Fig. 23 Third Floor of the Architecture Building's View

## PART 3

### THE DESIGN APPLICATION

Previously, Part Two established *why* nature and pausing are the key elements to addressing the problem of busyness and *what* their roles are in shifting our focus and the benefits from it. This final section is a reflection on *how* designers can learn from nature and pausing to create spaces that encourage this change in focus and discovering the signals architecture gives to stop, relax, slow down and shift our focus. The aim is to provide the application of these ideas through practical design points that are effective in answering these key questions of *how*. Although this topic is often very ephemeral and focuses on emotional and spiritual states, there can be and are concrete and practical actions that can be taken to achieve these ideas. Also, it is important to clearly state elements designers can learn from, practice and be able to apply them to any project. Through further research and precedent study, the practical design elements taken from nature and pausing to achieve a shift in focus through architecture have been placed into three main topics. These topics become the foundation and are expressed later through the design of a pavilion which becomes the grounds for the application and experimentation of the thesis topic through architecture.

---

#### Slow (Pace, Focus, Removal, Time)

Although it may be obvious, a key aspect of pausing and escaping the busy is slowing down. Slowing down allows the mind to turn inwards, to create stillness and a pace for reflection. Starting with the pace in which we travel through spaces, a hurried mindset focuses on traveling from one place to another in the most efficient way possible. A flat and straight path performs well by these standards but it allows our minds to wander as the task at hand does not require careful attention. Thus to encourage a slower pace one can elongate the path, have it meander and create irregularities along the way. These



irregularities also work to draw focus to the surroundings through details such as changing ground surfaces or, as used in Japanese gardens, placing stepping stones with inconsistent spacing to require attention as one walks across the stones.<sup>80</sup>

In traditional Japanese architecture, *michi-yuki*, the journey, is used as a spacial concept to create mindfulness through the deliberate orchestration of the progression through a space. Mindfulness is heightened through explicit points of focus to regain attention through a framed view, an object on display or through the act of opening and closing doors. The journey can also utilize the separation of spaces and remove an individual from the surrounding context past corners and turns to bring awareness to the moment.<sup>81</sup>

Lastly, slowing down can be achieved by bringing awareness to the passing of time as seen through change. To be present in the moment not only includes time itself but also place and nature contributes to a slower sense of time since the changes in nature are more gradual.<sup>82</sup> Time can be shown through highlighting the seasons through blooming cherry trees in the Spring and the bright red and orange leaves of a maple tree in the Fall or the movement of the sun path from solstice to solstice.<sup>83</sup> Daily, time can be shown at the unhurried speed of the sun through the moving shadows that are cast across a space. Allowing materials to patina and wear shows the passing of time and display the traces of use.<sup>84</sup>

---

80 Paulina, Shahery, "Architecture of mindfulness: Paulina Shahery at TEDxTrousdale," *YouTube* video, 12:05, TEDx Talks, June 19, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRjlgB1Xqol>.

81 Dr. Yoko Kawai, "Designing Mindfulness: Spatial Concepts in Traditional Japanese Architecture," *YouTube* video, 58:21, JapanSocietyNYC, June 1, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcGH6rqssfs>

82 Solveig Bøe, Hege Charlotte Faber, and Brit Strandhagen, *Raw: Architectural Engagements with Nature*, (Farnham, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014), 66-67.

83 Dr. Yoko Kawai, "Designing Mindfulness: Spatial Concepts in Traditional Japanese Architecture," *YouTube* video, 58:21, JapanSocietyNYC, June 1, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcGH6rqssfs>

84 Peter Zumthor, *Thinking Architecture*, 3rd ed. (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2017), 24.

Simple (Comfort, Inviting, Material, Form)

A motif in this thesis is keeping it simple, as one is encouraged to use nature and the act of pausing in a practical, simple and uncomplicated way. When designing, all the fundamental decisions from aesthetics, to detailing, to the formal composition and the material choices each should support the intentions and the values of the project. Thus pausing requires a created space that is comfortable and inviting for the users. This includes ergonomic furniture that allows for sitting or laying on for extended periods of time and a safe place to linger.

There are many ways nature impacts our internal well-being but two elements of design that we can learn from and observe within nature are material and form. Simple use of natural materials when possible present unique characteristics, from the texture of stone to the warmth of wood bringing in the qualities of nature. The forms of nature vary but create a harmonious composition. A building can create a sense of calm when it is understandable, not filled with signs and symbols to be interpreted but is plainly performing its intended purpose.<sup>85</sup> Reducing the apparent complexity so that the form does not distract while still supporting the main objective and revealing the honest components that make the design. Even the joinery can point to a sense of care and skill and our attention can be caught by simple assembly details.<sup>86</sup> Form can also play a role in increasing our awareness through spaces where the boundaries are in motion. These in-between places, such as a porch where one is neither outside or inside or on a staircase where one is neither up or down, can blur boundaries as in nature.<sup>87</sup>

---

85 Peter Zumthor, *Thinking Architecture*, 3rd ed. (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2017), 17.

86 Peter Zumthor, *Thinking Architecture*, 3rd ed. (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2017), 11-16.

87 Dr. Yoko Kawai, "Designing Mindfulness: Spatial Concepts in Traditional Japanese Architecture," *YouTube* video, 58:21, JapanSocietyNYC, June 1, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcGH6rqssfs>

## Senses (Touch, Smell, Sound, Sight)

Engagement of the senses, as exemplified in nature, is an essential tool to bringing awareness to the present, establishing atmosphere and directing attention to specific elements in the surroundings. Also lessening stimuli for our senses can allow us to encounter greater stillness and make a shift in focus away from our outer condition.<sup>88</sup> Having our minds wander fosters unhappiness but nature can capture all our senses slowing our busy multitasking and focusing our distracted minds.<sup>89 90</sup> Touch can be engaged through the textures and temperature of materials or through interaction with the spaces.<sup>91</sup> Architecture often focuses on the sense of sight but it should address and recognize our full spectrum of sense through the smells and sounds within a space.<sup>92</sup> Considering if the design calls for a dampening of the surrounding sounds or are certain sounds amplified through proximity or materiality, is valuable.

The sense of sight can assist in capturing our attention through elements that move or change in contrast to what remains stagnant. A design can reduce or expand our depth of view and can choose to frame the context or keep it hidden from view. Choosing to not reveal everything in a single glance allows for the imagination to complete the image and creates intrigue to further explore and experience the spaces. In traditional Japanese aesthetics the term *yugen*, meaning mysterious or dim, can be produced through this way of designing, slowly revealing the unknown.<sup>93</sup> In architecture this can also be achieved through use of light and shadow to contribute to the atmosphere and curiosity of place.<sup>94</sup>

88 Paulina, Shahery, "Architecture of mindfulness: Paulina Shahery at TEDxTrousdale," *YouTube* video, 12:05, TEDx Talks, June 19, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRjlgB1Xqol>.

89 Amstutz, *Soul Tending*, 38.

90 Jason Castro, "A Wandering Mind is an Unhappy One," *Scientific American*, November 24, 2010, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-wandering-mind-is-an-un/>.

91 Peter Zumthor, *Atmospheres* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2006), 28-32.

92 Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses* (Cornwall: John Wiley and Sons Ltd, 2012), 43.

93 Dr. Yoko Kawai, "Designing Mindfulness: Spatial Concepts in Traditional Japanese Architecture," *YouTube* video, 58:21, JapanSocietyNYC, June 1, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcGH6rqssfs>.

94 Peter Zumthor, *Atmospheres* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2006), 56-61.

## INTRODUCTION

To explore the architectural implications and strategies of this thesis the design of a pavilion was chosen. The pavilion design incorporates the practical measures described previous and aims to create a place where one's focus can turn inward though creating a pause in their day to experiencing nature. This is a place of enchantment, reflection and a sacred place of Sabbath and leisure for those who enter it.

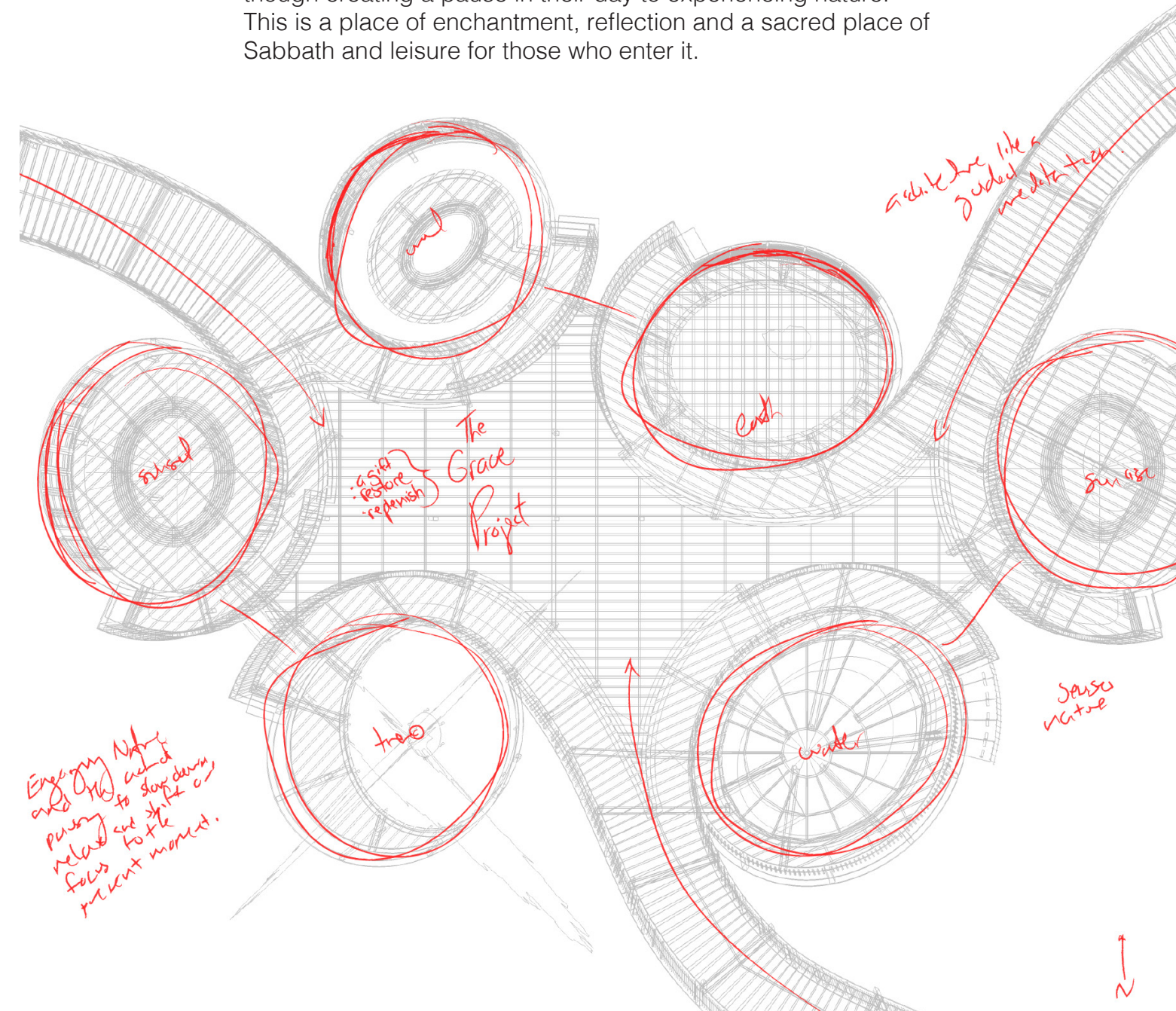
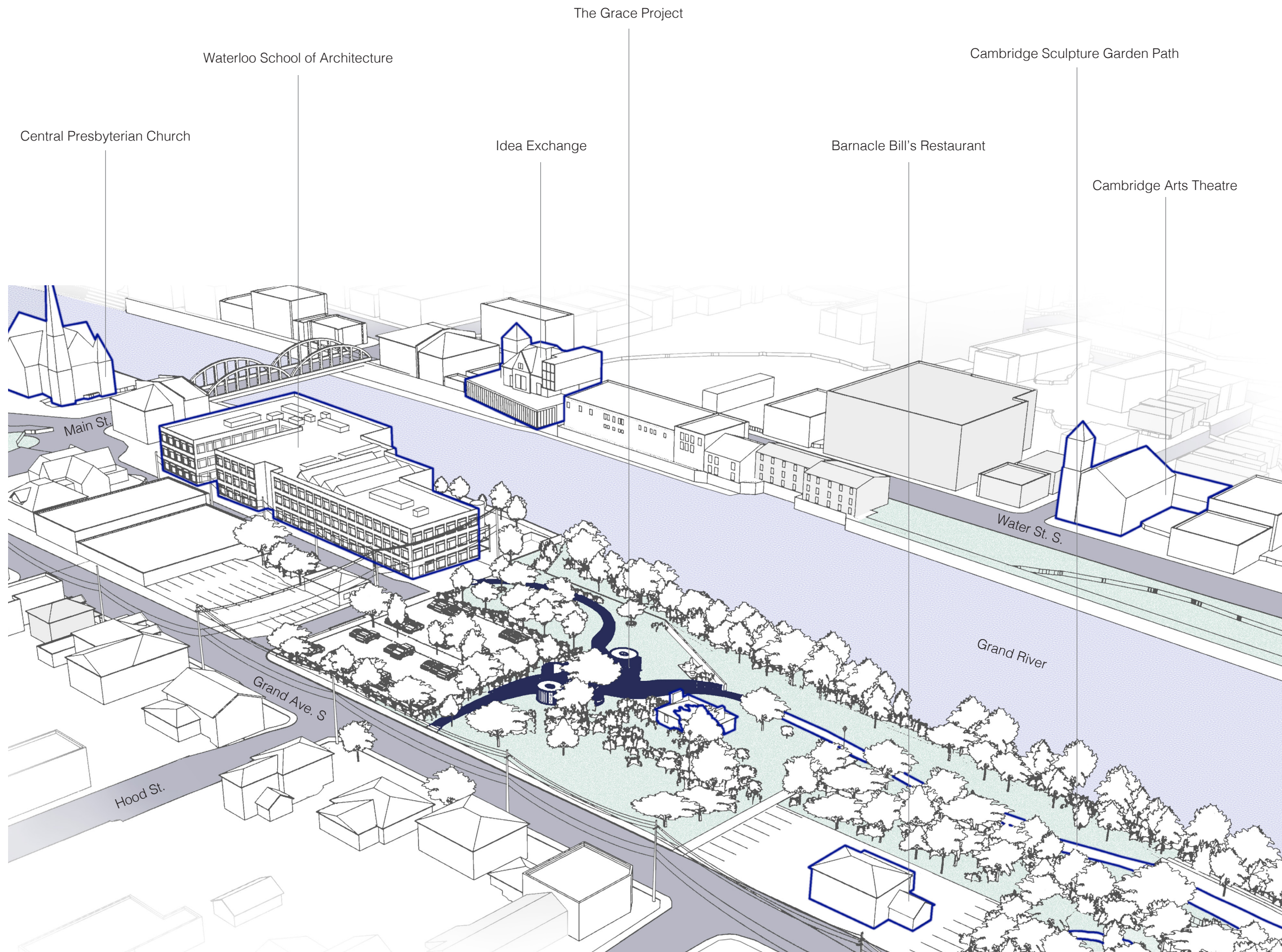


Fig. 24 A Cluster of Experiential Spaces and Pathways





## LOCATION

The design is located in downtown Galt, Cambridge Ontario, in the parking lot of the Waterloo Architecture School. When selecting the site for the pavilion design, a busy urban setting and one with little access to nature was deliberately chosen to challenge the design. The goal is to demonstrate that the proposed design elements which support the argument of the thesis and help shift one's focus are valid in many types of environments, not just in ideal park-like settings.

The majority of people live in dense urban places where access to nature is limited and where our society of busy and the bombarding of constant stimuli is evident and unavoidable. Thus a design that slows people down and connects them again to nature and to the present moment is even more beneficial and relevant in urban places. The site was also chosen based on my personal experience and time spent there over the past two years which allowed me to use my intimate knowledge of the place and context to support the design.

Additionally, the parking lot is a common urban place found in any town or city and this design poses an adaption to these places. The design itself is not meant to be universal but provoke a conversation and provide an example of how redesigning these spaces can create solutions to our busy environments in any urban setting.

Fig. 25 Perspective Drawing of the Site Context



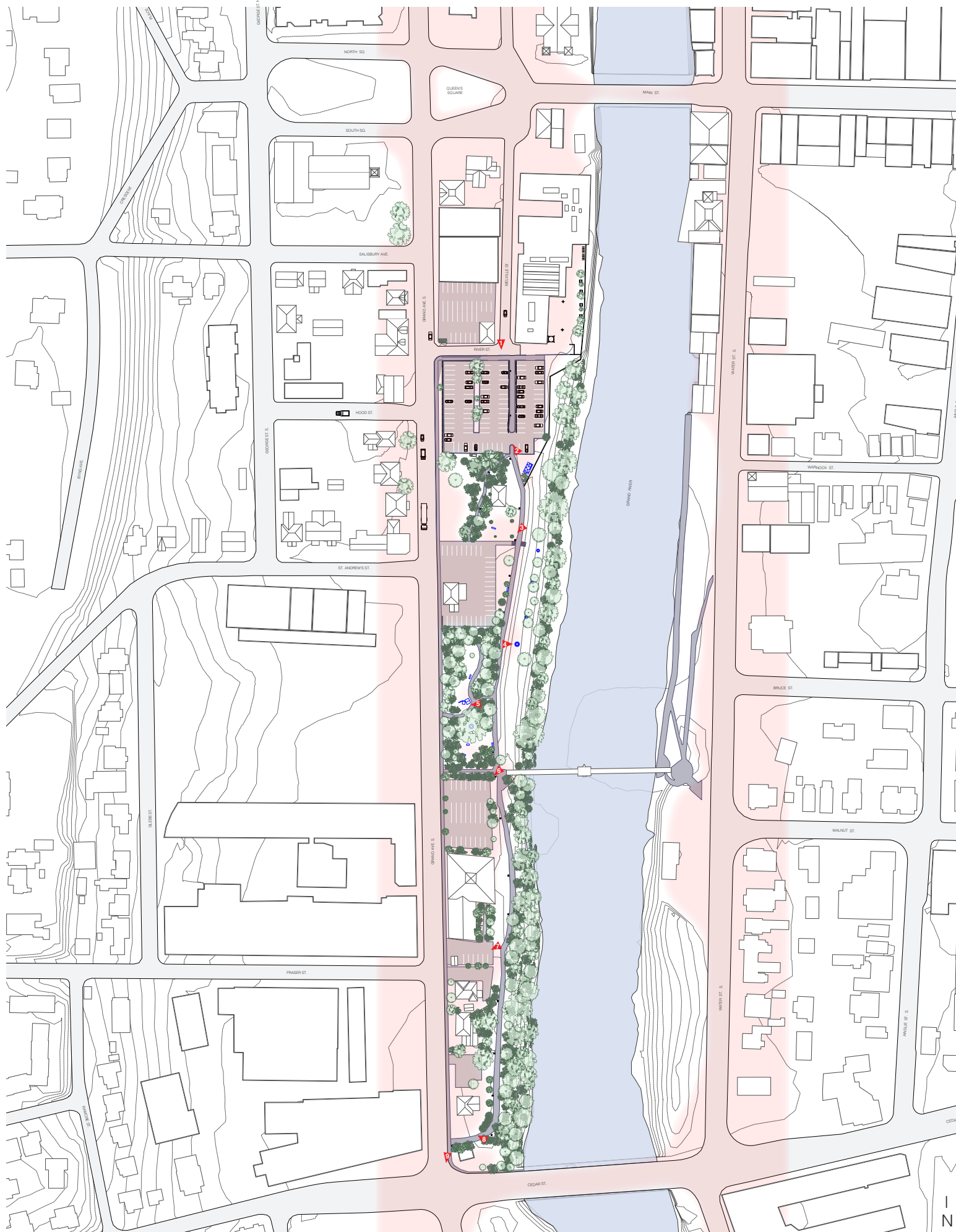


Fig. 26 Existing Park Site Plan

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

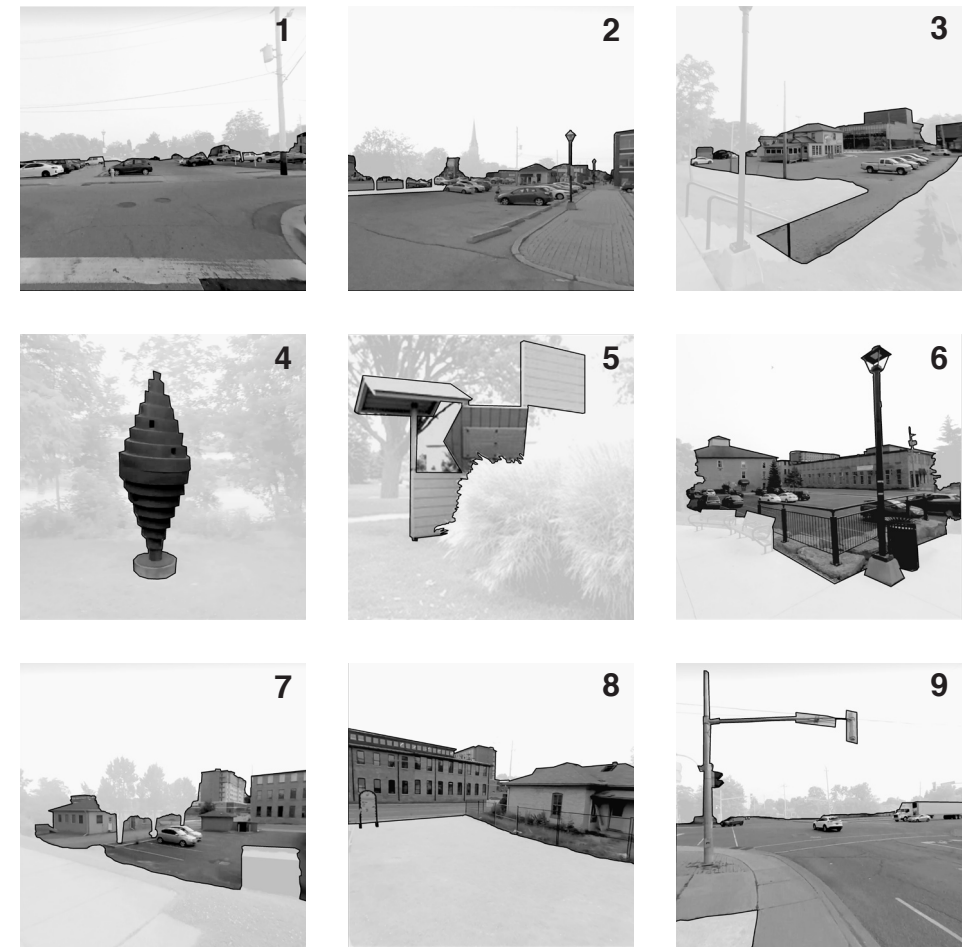


Fig. 27 Images of Existing Park Conditions

The immediate site of the Architecture School's parking lot is part of a greater pathway and park along the Grand River. Walking along the path pedestrians can view the beautiful Grand River and its vegetated banks while the opposite side of the pathway regularly opens onto parking lots, the back of buildings and the busy street of Grand Ave. S. beyond.

The red shade over the map highlights the 'anti pausing and nature' areas where there is greater vehicular noise, movement, with hard man-made surfaces. The photos feature views into these places along the path. Sculptures are scattered along the path as part of the path moves through the Cambridge Sculpture Gardens.

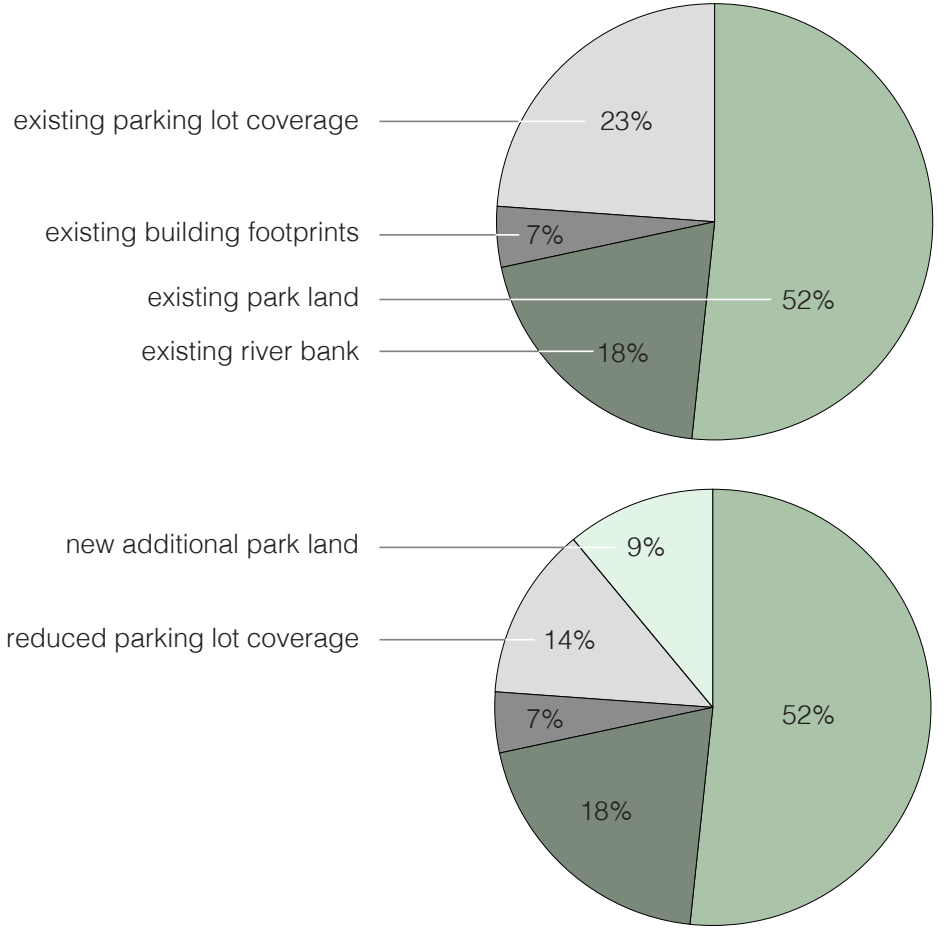


Fig. 28 Proposed Park Site Plan

### PROPOSED CONDITIONS

In urban settings parks are places of nature, encourage a slower pace and can create a moment of pause in someone's day, yet this path fluctuates from a dense tree lined path to walking through an asphalt parking lot. When analyzing the composition of the park, it becomes clear how large an area the parking lots take.

In order to enhance the experience for the pedestrian, the parking lots adjacent to the pathway are reduced. The new park land is then planted with trees and gardens to develop a more continuous park experience and to be further removed from the busyness of the surroundings. The site of the pavilion also extends the park and becomes the point of transition from fast to slow, man-made to nature and hard to soft.





## THE PAVILION

When thinking about a parking lot, the first images that come to mind are flat, gray rectangles of asphalt with lines painted in white or yellow with a splatter of cars parked between them. Initially a parking lot's access to different elements of nature is not apparent. But after some contemplation, there are multiple elements of nature that some parking lots have available to them.

First the sun, with the light, heat and shadows it creates when it moves across the sky, beginning with a sunrise in the morning and descending into the horizon at sunset. The second element is the wind as it blows across the surface, moving and tossing objects in its wake. Third is the earth itself. Growing between the cracks can be plants and underneath the asphalt lies soil and rocks. The fourth element are trees. Not every parking lot can have them, but if possible then they are usually planted neatly spaced apart along the borders or down the median. And lastly, the element of weather, brings water to the site in its various forms from fog, rain, ice and snow.



Fig. 30 The Elements of Nature in a Parking Lot

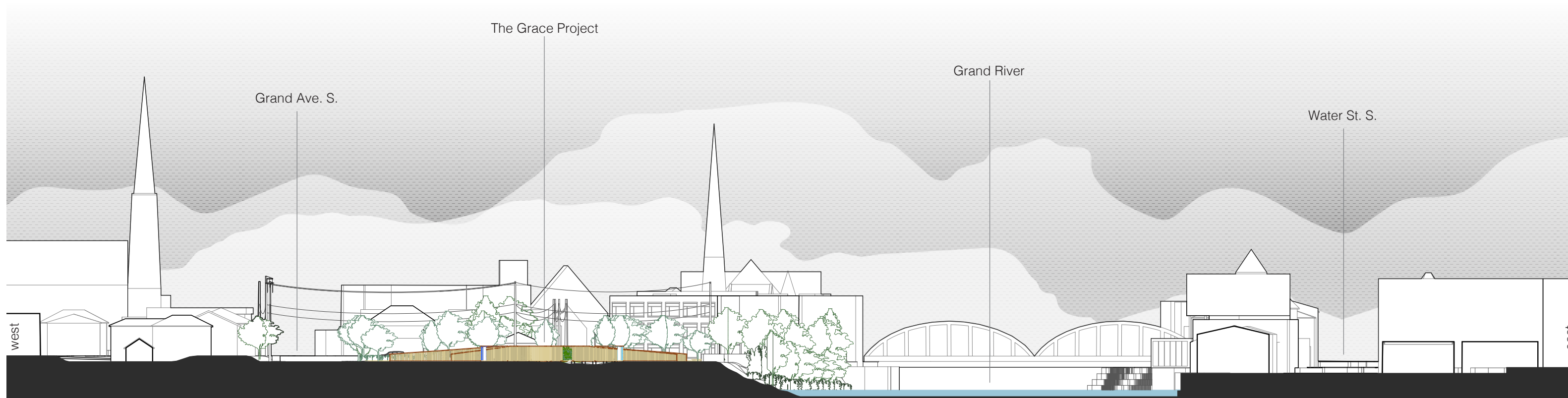


Fig. 29 North Facing Site Section

## THE PAVILION

The elements of nature inspired the design of the pavilion structure which is comprised of a series of spaces each with a unique focus on one of the elements of nature accessible to the parking lot. Although you can experience each of these parts of nature outside of the pavilion, the aim was to present them in a way that a participant experiences or visualizes it differently than they might in a typical day. The pavilion is a place of reflection, encouraging a slower pace, bringing awareness to the present moment and engaging the senses.

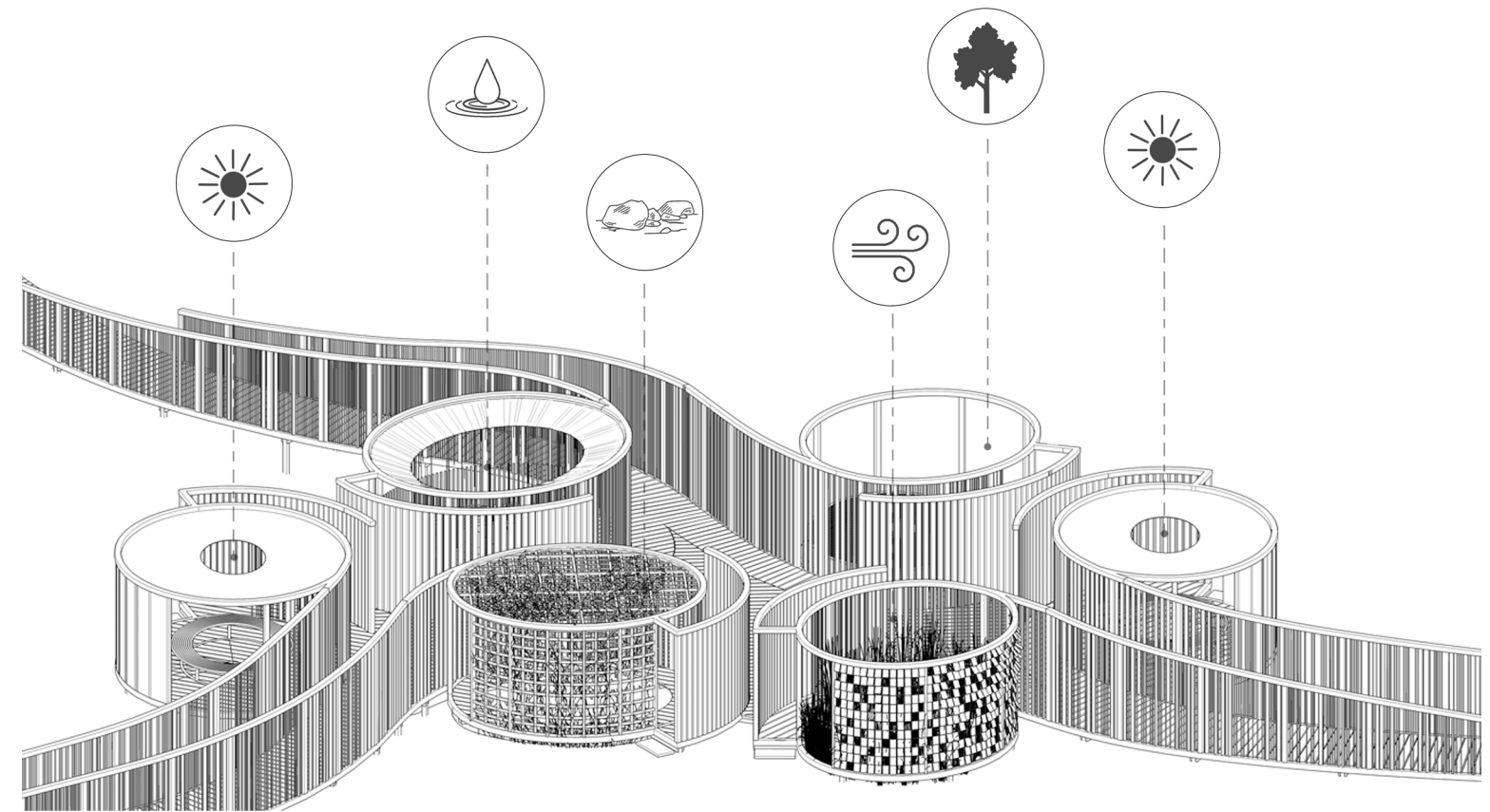


Fig. 32 The Six Elements of Nature

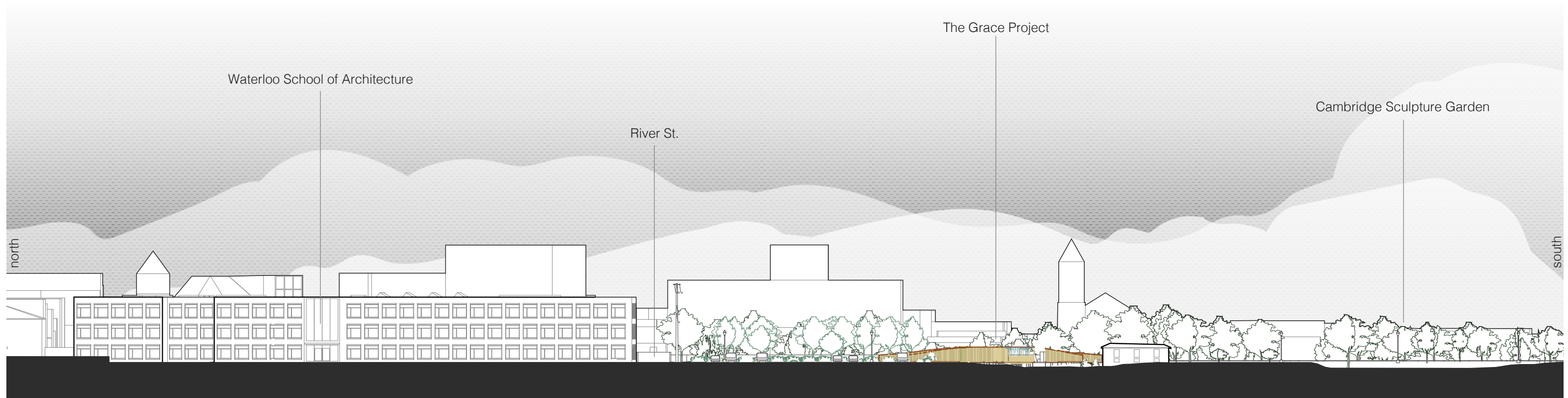
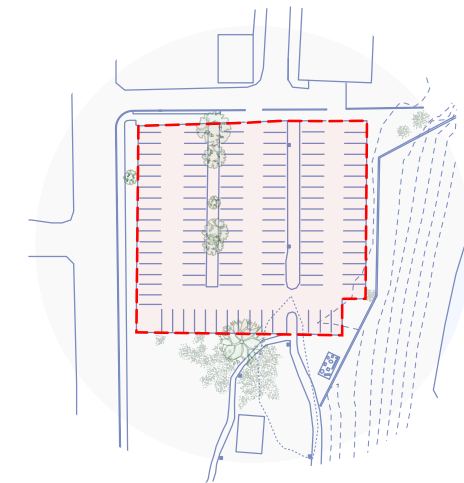


Fig. 31 East Facing Site Section

# THE PROCESS

Within the boundaries of the existing parking lot, the pavilion was placed in the south east corner which is the farthest away from traffic and the noise and movement that it brings. The parking lot was then reduced on the south and east sides to accommodate the pavilion and allowing for ample space around any paths to connect to and from it. Each unique space of the pavilion was then situated based on the site parameters best suited for the corresponding elements of nature.

The existing pathway across the site was redesigned to pass through the pavilion and move pedestrians away from the parking lot and a new path was created for access from the west. The paths join together at the pavilion and meander through the site to purposefully slow down all those passing through. The form of the pavilion was then derived from the pathways and the optimum locations for each experience. The previously asphalt areas were landscaped.



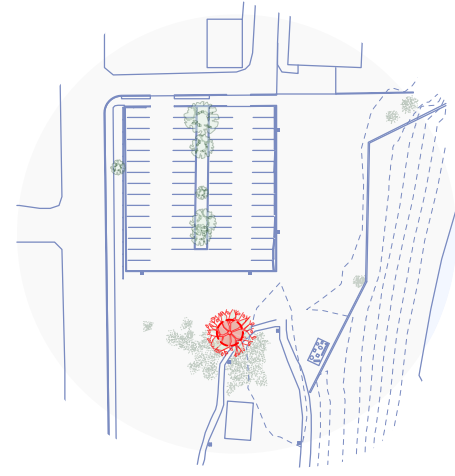
the proposed site



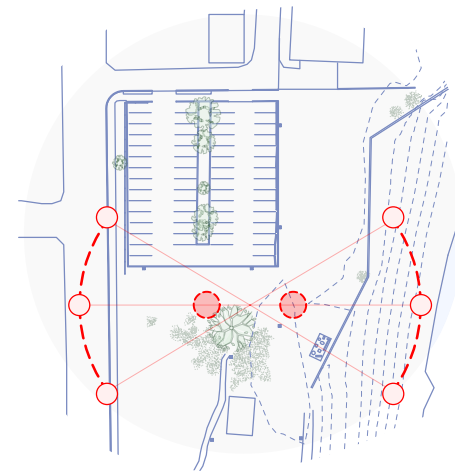
pavilion located away from the nearby streets



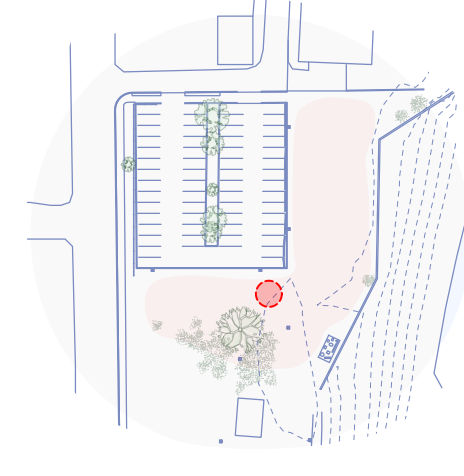
reduced parking lot



location of 'tree' per existing mature pine tree on site



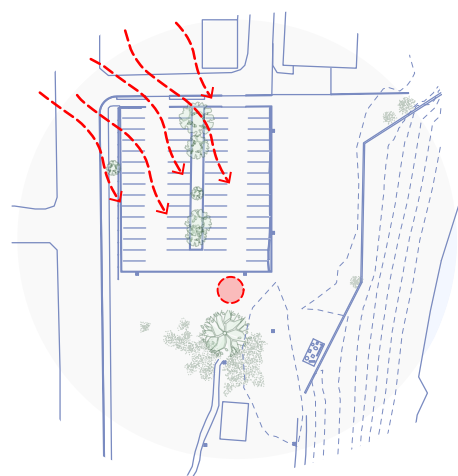
location of 'sunrise/set' per site views and sun direction



location of 'earth' per site condition



location of 'water' per site topography



location of 'wind' per site prevailing wind conditions



pathways through the site



form of the pavilion



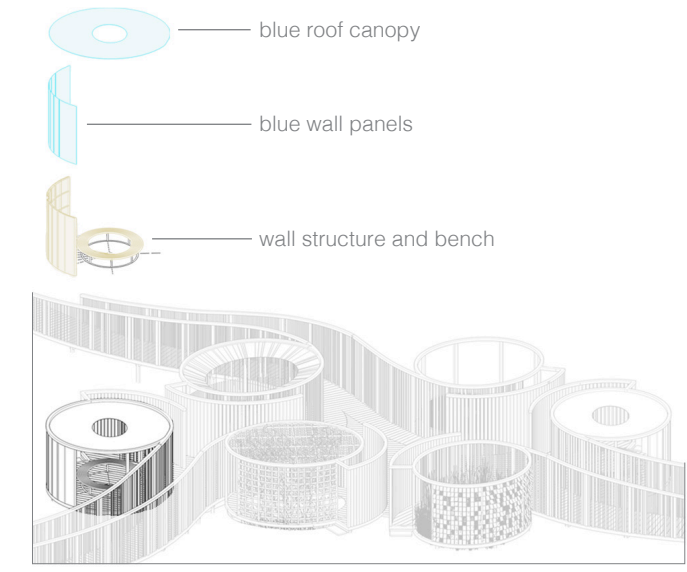
landscaping of the site



SUNRISE



Fig. 34 An Early Morning Sunrise



sunrise

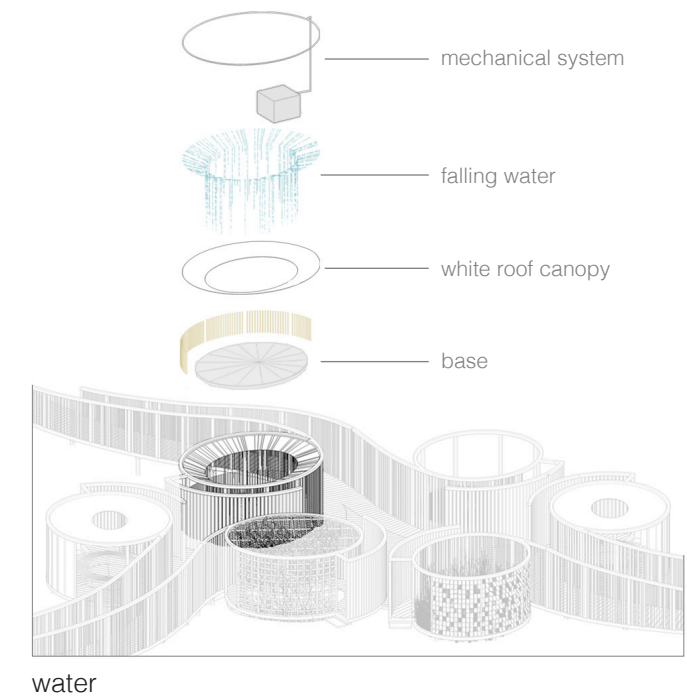
Through the year, the point of the sun's rising and setting moves across the horizon from due east at the spring and fall equinoxes to the northern extreme at the summer solstice and the southern extreme at the winter solstice. The gradual movement across the sky is so incremental that it often goes unnoticed although it changes 66 degrees over the year. The sunrise space highlights this change through slits in the wall at each month with a larger opening at due east, the equinox. The blue paneled wall and removable blue roof canopy contrast the soft pinks and warm yellows of a sunrise to create a unique perspective as one sits on the bench and enjoys this daily display of beauty as the world starts another day.



# WATER



Fig. 35 A Hot Summer Afternoon

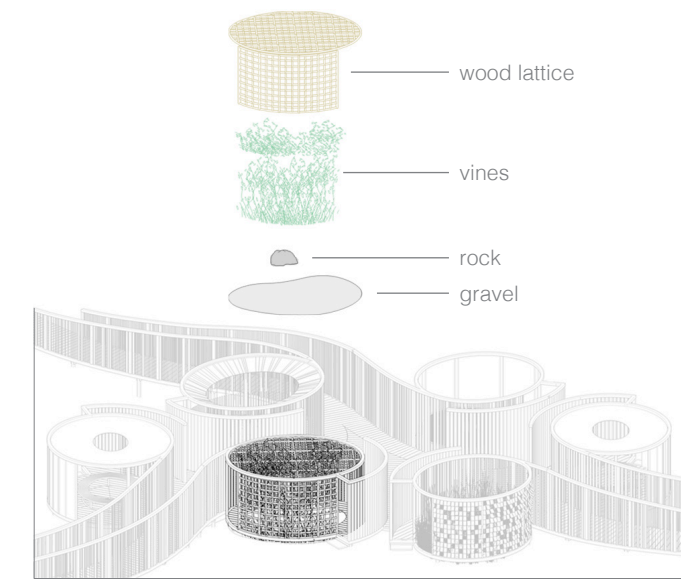


This area captures the senses with the rhythm of falling water. The water engages our sense of sound, smell and touch as it falls and splashes onto the shallow curved base. The water passing through the porous hose above runs down the canopy which projects the droplets past the bench below allowing someone to sit without getting wet but still be able to reach out their hand or extend their legs to feel the falling water. The collected water is then filtered and stored in a small reservoir below the base, as the topography forms a sunken area below, to be pumped back to the top again. This space allows for engagement and the calm of watching a light rain fall.





Fig. 36 A Stop on an Autumn Day



earth

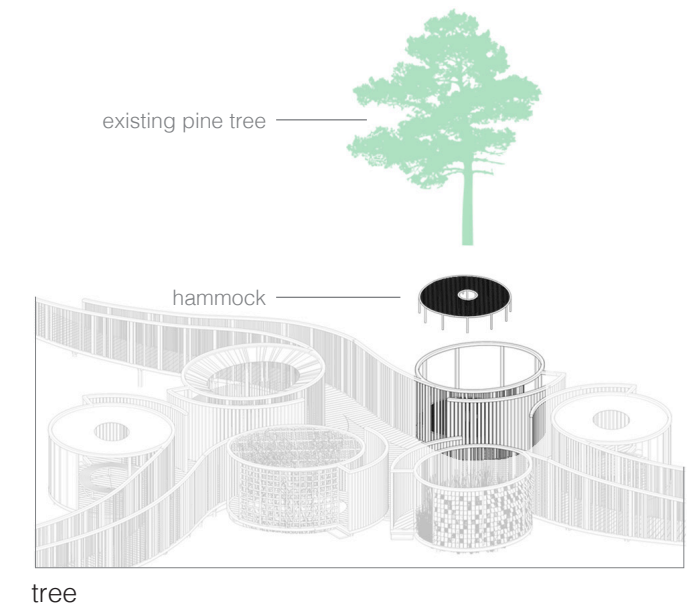
The rock and soil that is the earth is often neglected and unnoticed yet it is the literal foundation on which we stand each day. This space exposes the ground and provides a bench around the perimeter. Placed within the opening is a large rock, which is a strong and hard element of nature. Inspired from the tradition of a Chinese scholar's rock, it creates a focal point. The lattice and vines filter the light from above casting shadows on the ground below and creates a visual barrier to the surrounding context. Like a Zen garden, the ground is layered gravel which leaves the mark of the users in their passing and allows the freedom to create patterns on the ground as one reflects and enjoys a leisurely moment.



TREE



Fig. 37 A Summer Morning's Rest

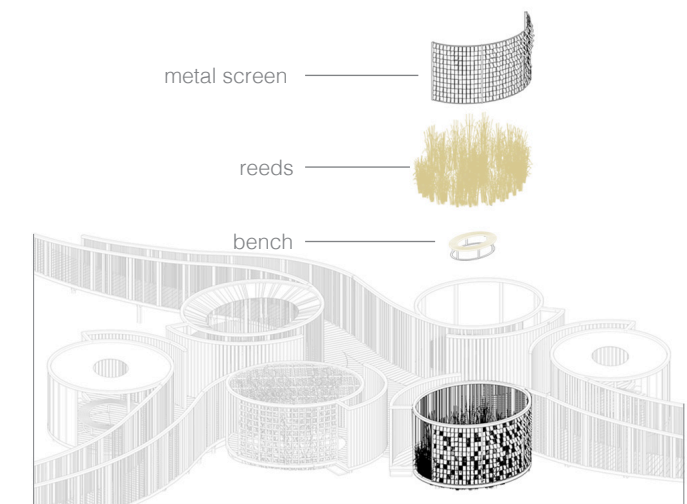


A tree is not an uncommon sight but much less often is it seen from directly below as one sits or lays under it and stares up at the canopy spread above. This space provides that unique perspective and allows the user to rest on a hammock structure that surrounds an existing large white pine tree at the edge of the parking lot. Below the grasses and wildflowers can grow as one hovers lightly in between. The tree dapples the light from above and provides interesting and moving shadows to dwell upon.





Fig. 38 A Windy Winter Morning



wind

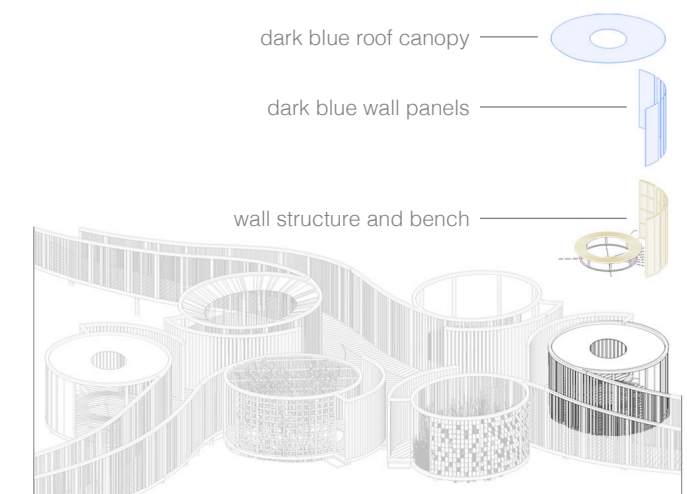
Although the element itself is not visible, the affects of wind can be clearly seen. This space attempts to bring our attention to nature's unseen element through the movement and thus the sounds it produces. Along the side is a metal screen which faces north west where the prevailing winds come across the site. The metal screen is a framework that holds small metal fins that sway in the wind. The floor is open around the perimeter and in the centre. In these openings there are tall reeds planted. The reeds sway and rustle in the wind giving visual clues and sound to the unseen air passing by.



# SUNSET



Fig. 39 A Late Summer Sunset



sunset

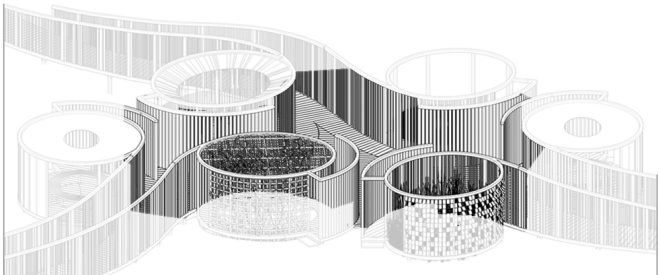
Similar to the sunrise space, the sunset space highlights the movement of the sun across the western horizon. The largest openings in the wall are at either solstice position and the blue wall and canopy are darker in colour to contrast with the often fiery reds and bold oranges of the sunset. Watching the sunset provides a moment of reflection, stillness and can allow for a spiritual experience. Also, sitting in this area during the day and looking up at the clouds rolling past, framed through the oval opening of the blue canopy, invites a moment of stillness.



THE INTERIOR



Fig. 40 Inside the Middle of the Pavilion



interior

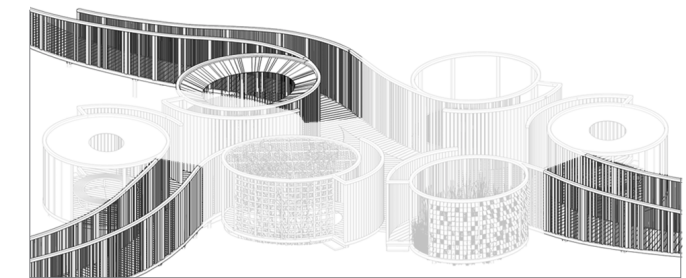
Each space is divided using a screen as it allows for some privacy and definition of space while still maintaining the ability to see others passing through or relaxing in the spaces. Walking through, the curves of the walls allow for the opacity of the screens to shift as the areas closer will be more visible through the screen while farther away, views will be blocked. The screen array playfully varies in density with the combination of natural rope, wood slates and structural wood columns. Like a walking meditation with architecture as the guide, the screen's act like the breath, inhaling and exhaling, opening and closing to reveal what is beyond or to focus on what is within.



## THE PATHS



Fig. 41 Leaving the Pavilion and Entering The Cambridge Sculpture Garden



paths

Both the paths and the screen walls establish a progression as one enters and then later exits the pavilion and the park. The beginning is marked with the change in ground plane as one walks from the stone or asphalt path to the wood boardwalk. Shortly thereafter, one of the screen walls begins then the second, both gradually rising from the height of a railing to the total eight foot height of the pavilion. The screen also becomes more dense as one approaches the pavilion. This all establishes a slow movement from the outside to the inside, from fast to slow. The entrance to each of the unique areas is the moment of greatest enclosure as they pass by a densely arrayed wall of wood columns. The journey ends in the opening up into the unique space and the progression is then reversed as one exits the pavilion. The length of the paths also correlate to where they are connecting to. Coming from the park, the path is the shortest while the others, when coming from the urban streets, are longer to create more time to slow down and return to the present.



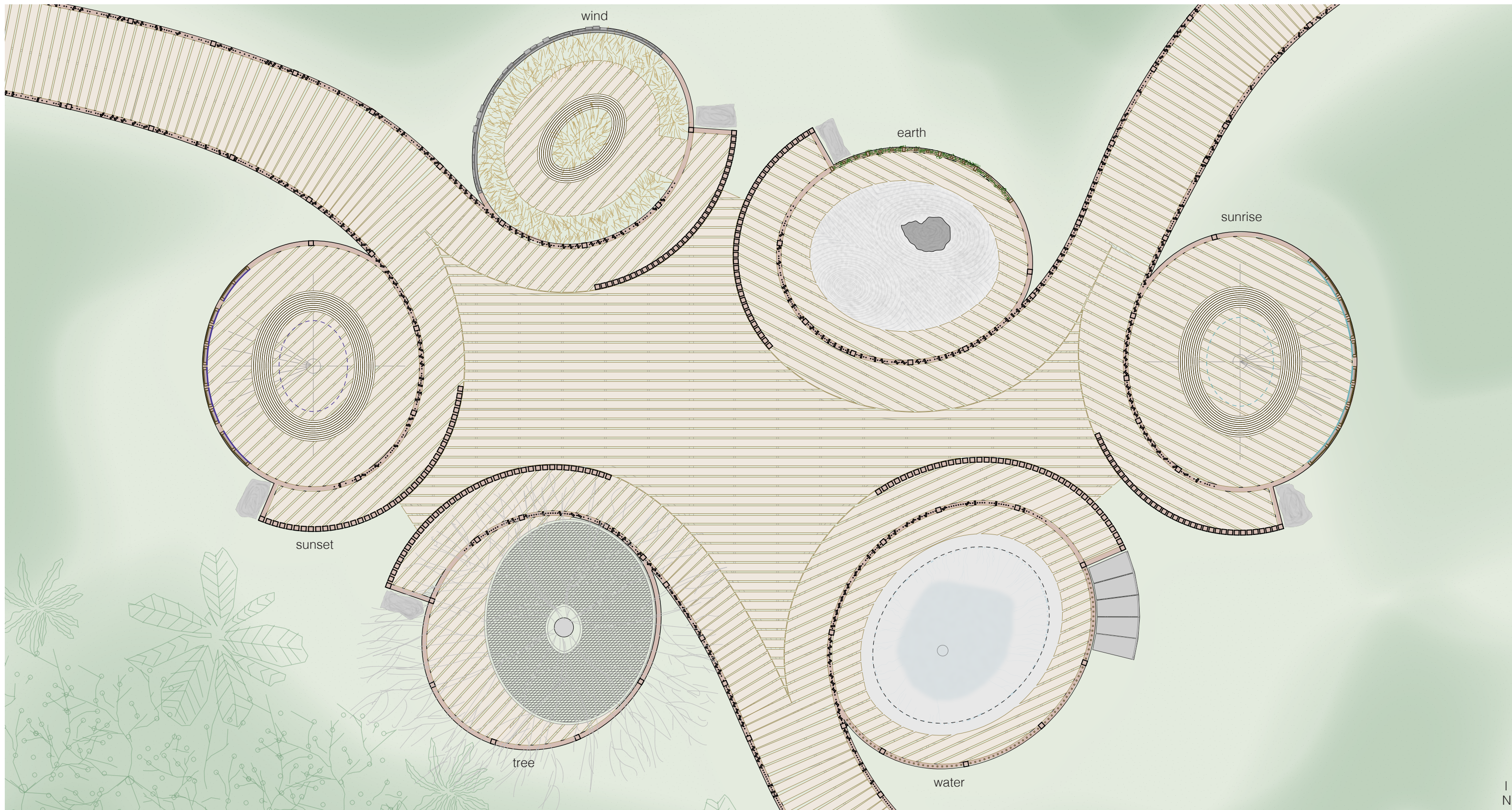


Fig. 42 Pavilion Plan

The plan and form of the spaces and paths allow for a user to move through the spaces in a non-prescriptive manner as each of the spaces open into the larger central area. The structure is raised a single step above grade with exception to the south-east corner where the topography lowers. The path visually divides into two spaces where it ends at an opening and

a single flat stone offers the invitation to step out and explore the landscape and return by another opening. The entrances to each space are sheltered by a densely arrayed column wall to obscure the views from the adjacent space. The boundary between each space, the paths and the site beyond are blurred through the screen that fluctuates in density and rhythm.



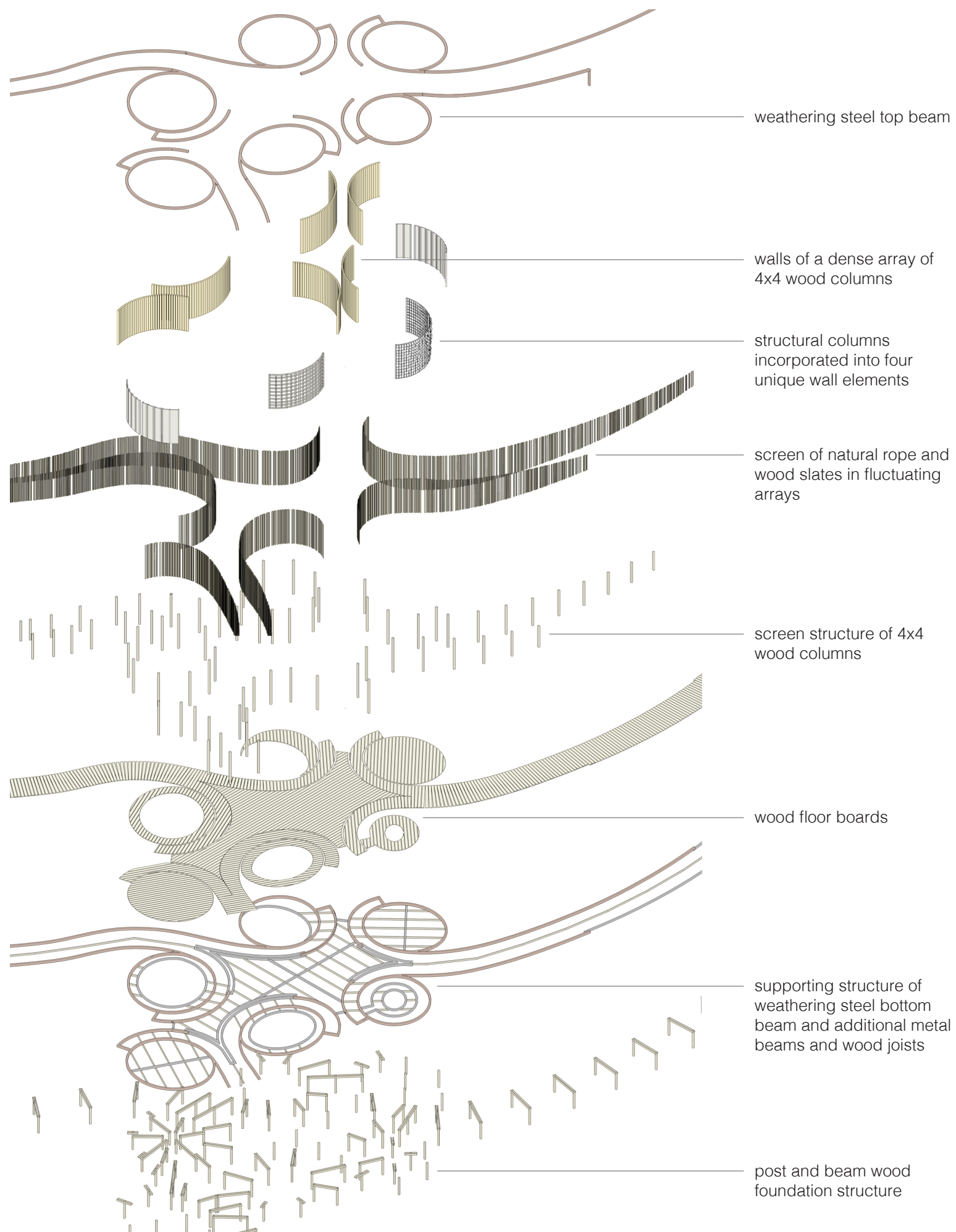


Fig. 43 Exploded Perspective of the Structural Components

## STRUCTURE

Wood is the primary structural material for the walls, floor and foundation structure. The top and bottom weathering steel beam provides the structural integrity needed as well as highlighting the curved form of the pavilion. The wood columns blend within the screen array and the pattern the floor boards create visually supports the flow and separation of each space. Elements such as the lighting and the ropes, as well as the wood slats and columns are replaceable due to their accessibility, bolt connections and the removable top cap.

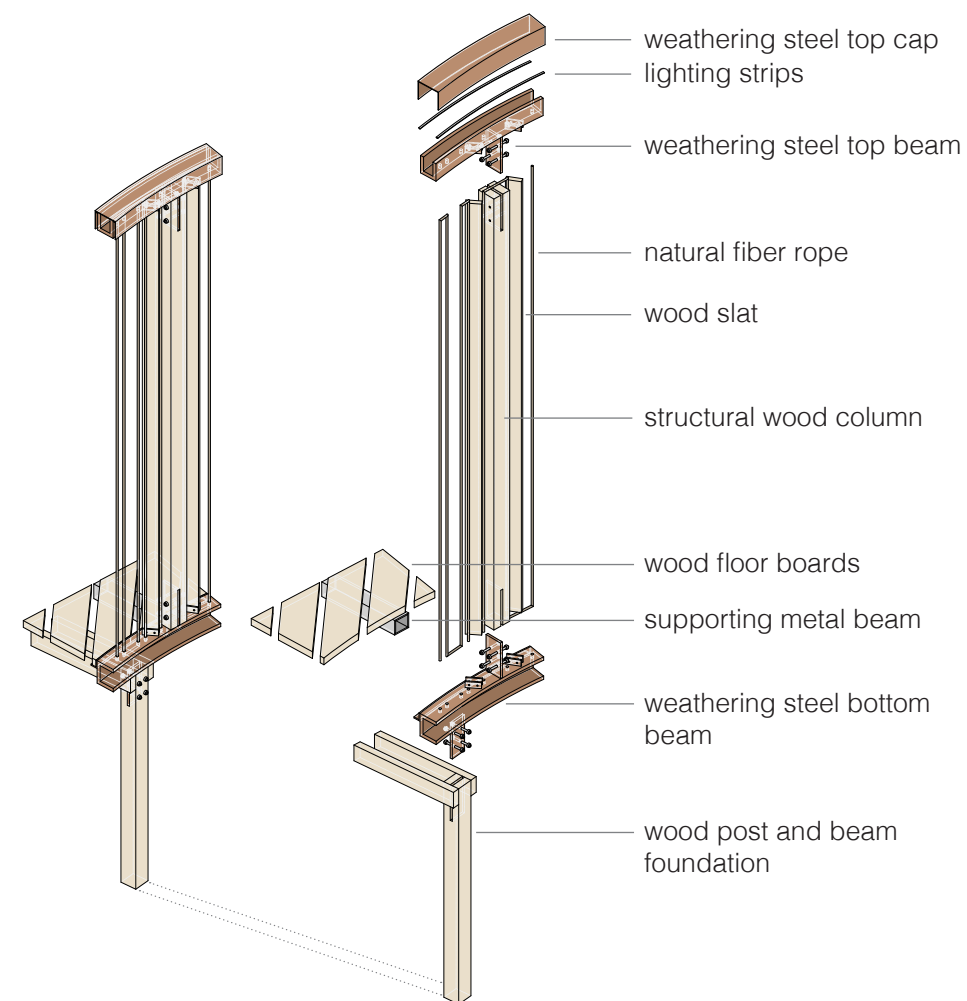


Fig. 44 Structural Detail





Fig. 45 Heading North at the Start of the Path On a Spring Evening

Safety is an important consideration in a publicly used design especially in the evenings therefore the top beam throughout the pavilion holds the LED lighting which shines down

every wall and screened areas of the pavilion and path so that every space is well-illuminated creating a safe and transparent environment. (see fig. 44)





Fig. 46 Site Plan

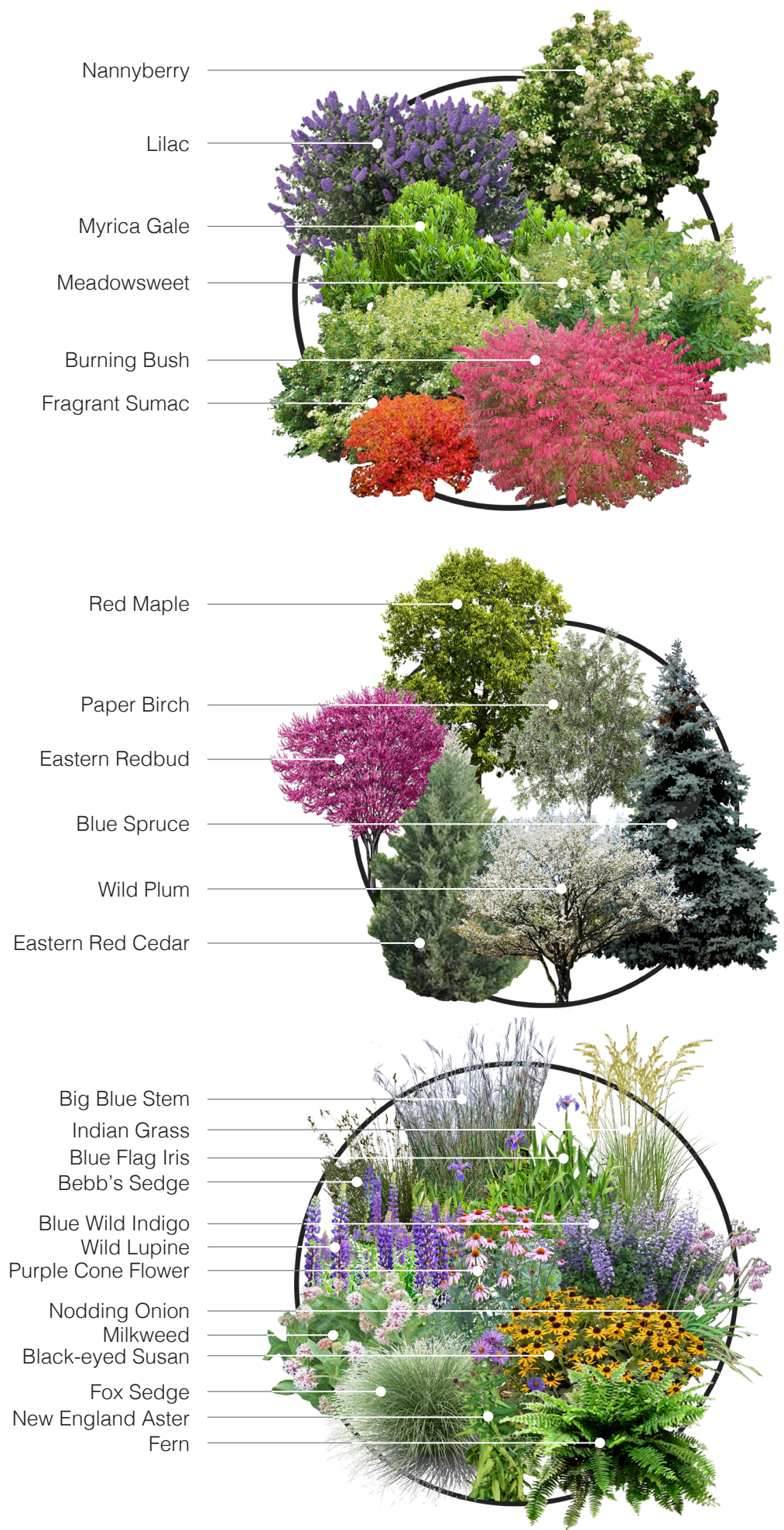


Fig. 47 Vegetation Selections





Fig. 48 Heading South at the Start of the Path On a Summer Evening

Inspired from boardwalks through marshlands in many conservation areas, there are three boardwalks that lead to the pavilion. Raised one step up, the path meanders through a meadow, filled with native grasses and wild flowers. The meadow allows for exploration and is low maintenance once the species have been established. Patches of grass between the wildflowers invite you to sit or to walk and rest on one of the benches under a tree. Scattered throughout are native tree species, chosen for

their seasonal interest, whether it blooms in the spring like the wild plum tree or turns vibrant red in the fall like the red maple tree. Planted closer to the parking lot are evergreen trees to create a visual boundary between the park and the parking lot. (see fig. 46)

The site landscaping is purposefully simple and natural to create a sense of calm and a 'breath of fresh air' as one moves in or out of the park and pavilion.





Fig. 49 Heading East at the Start of the Path On a Winter Morning

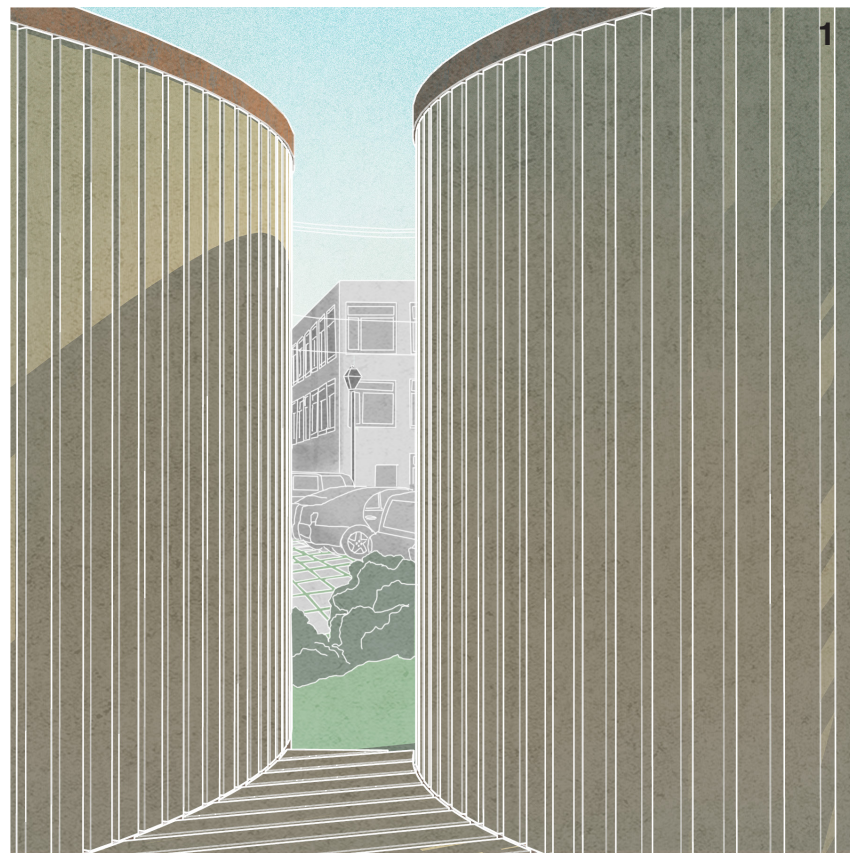
Planted around the parking lot are native bush species to create a border around the parking lot. Additional trees are planted on the west side of the lot and the pavement is replaced with permeable paving stones. The paving stones at the north

end of the architecture building would extend to the south and connect to the path, making a clear and continuous path for a pedestrian. (see fig. 28 + 46)

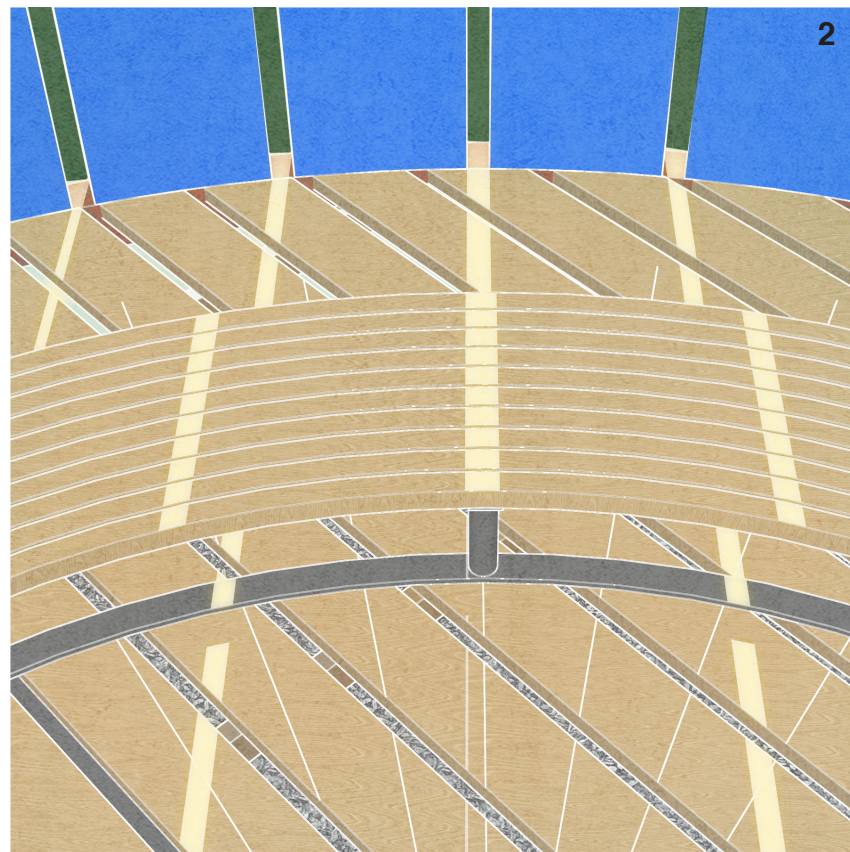


# SLOW

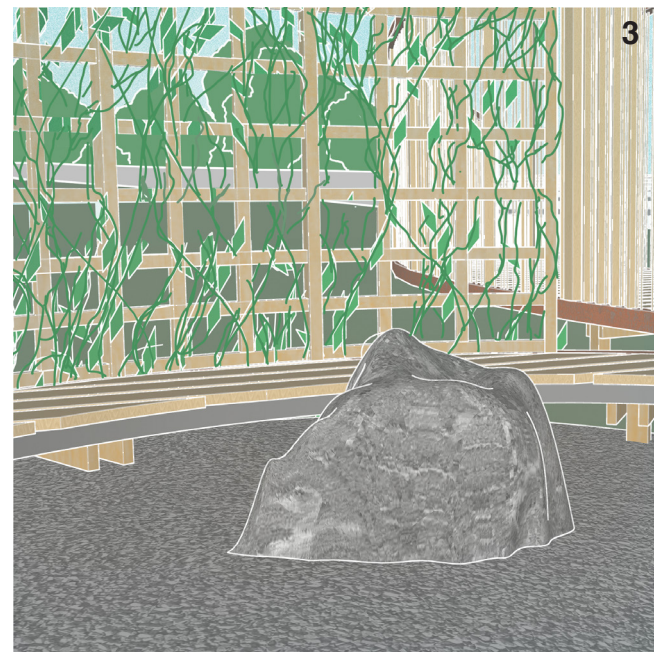
Some of the practical implications of the previously described categories of Slow, Senses and Simple incorporated into the design.



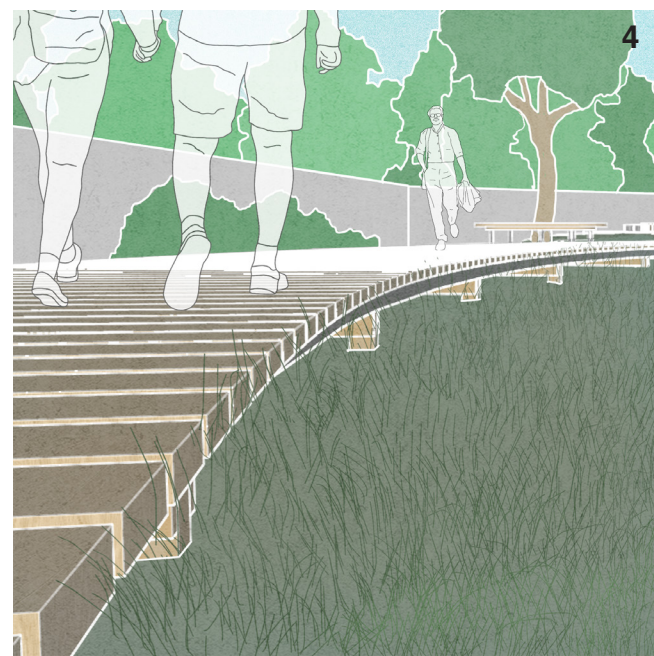
Removal from the surrounding context and framed views.



Highlighting the slow movement of nature shown through the changing angle of the sun.



Points of focus.

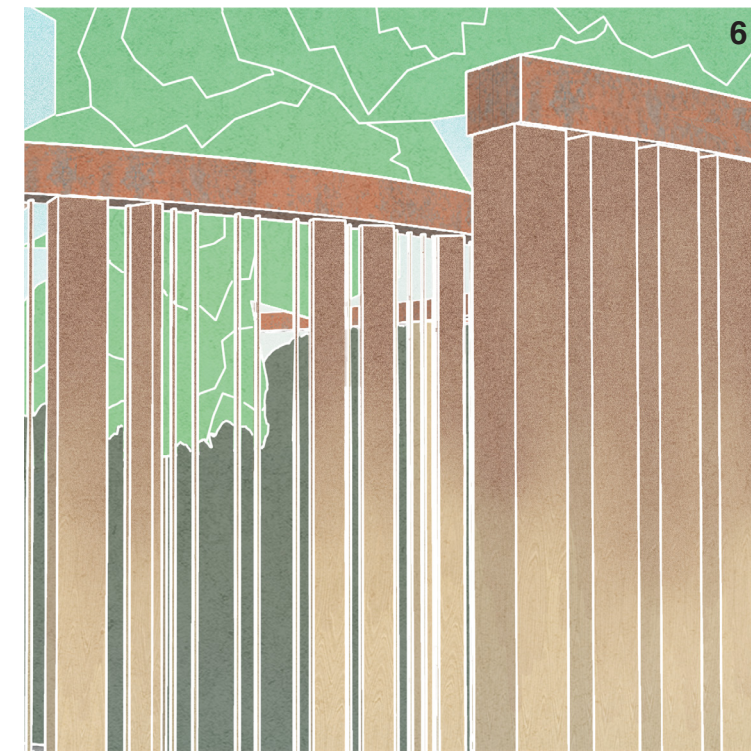


Changes in the walking surface and meandering path to create a slower pace.



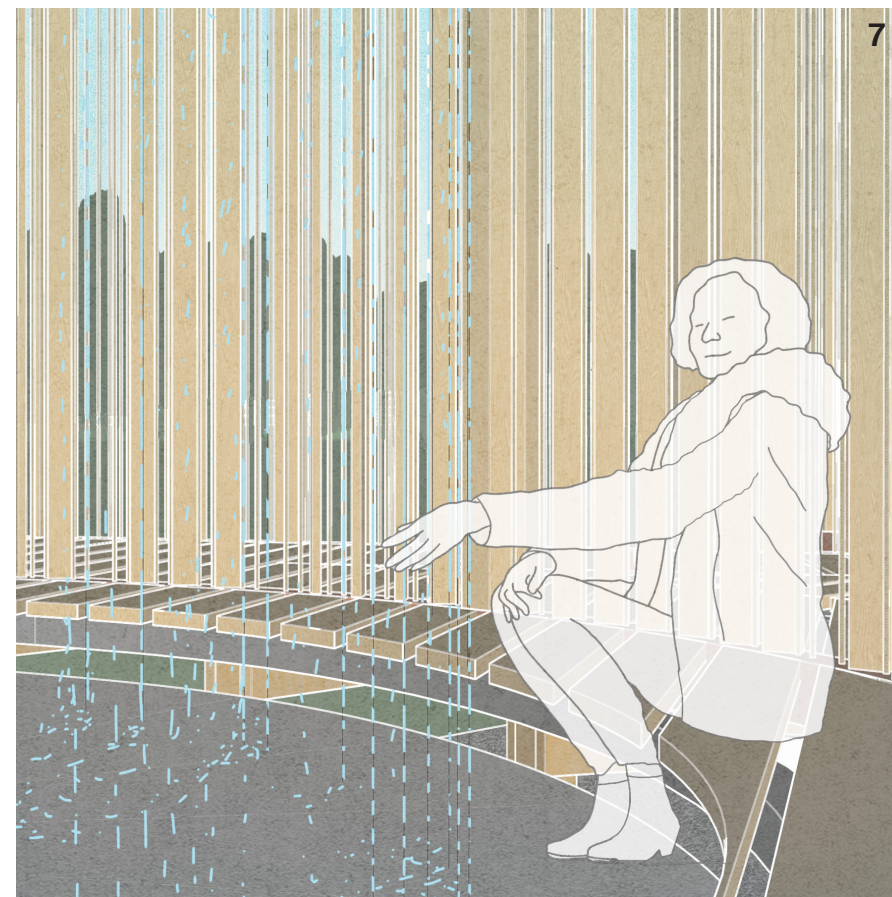
Interruptions and fluctuating visibility.

Fig. 50 Design Implications of 'Slow' (pace, focus, movement, time)



Time shown through the patina of materials.

# SENSES



Touch and interaction.

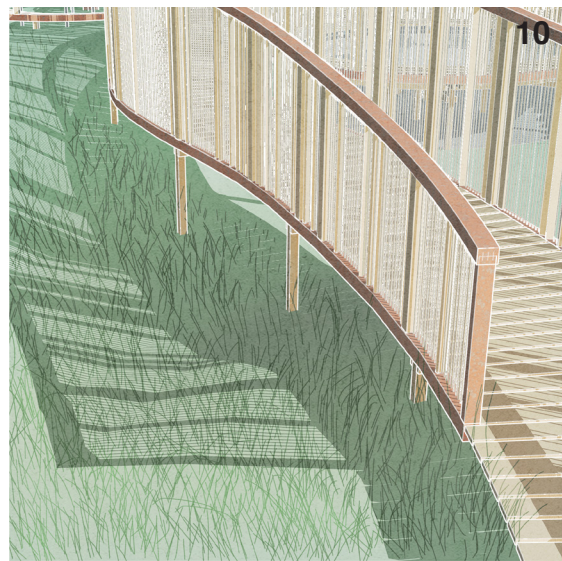


Visual contrast.

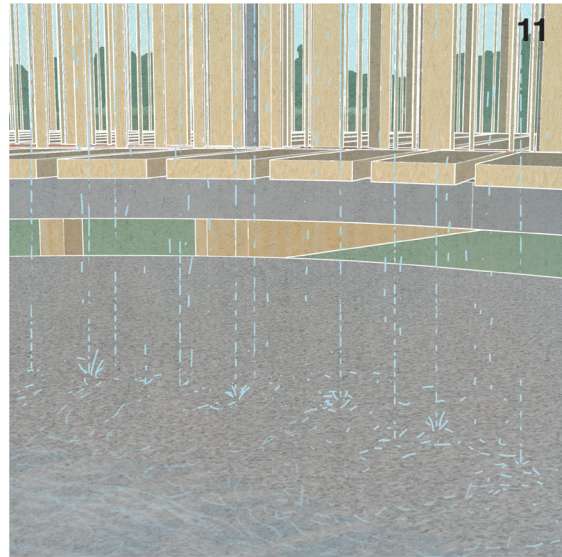


Engagement.

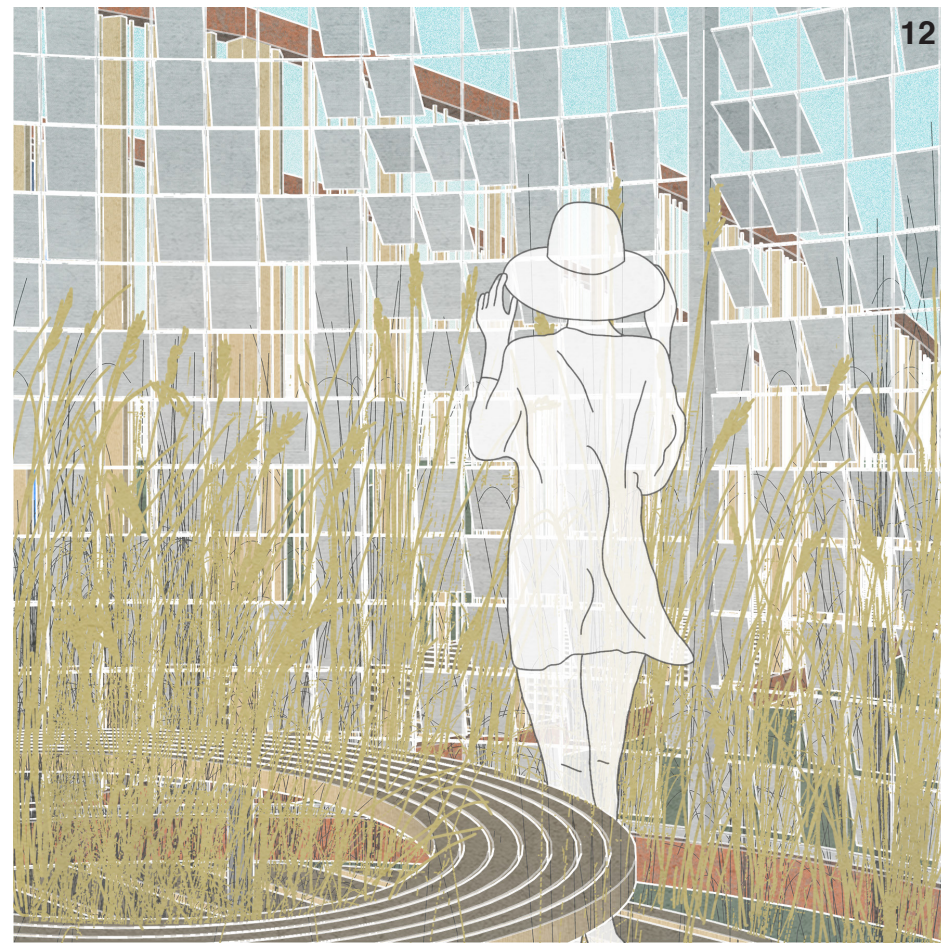




Light and atmosphere through shadows.



Sounds and smell.



Movement and sound.

Fig. 51 Design Implications of 'Senses' (touch, smell, sound, sight)

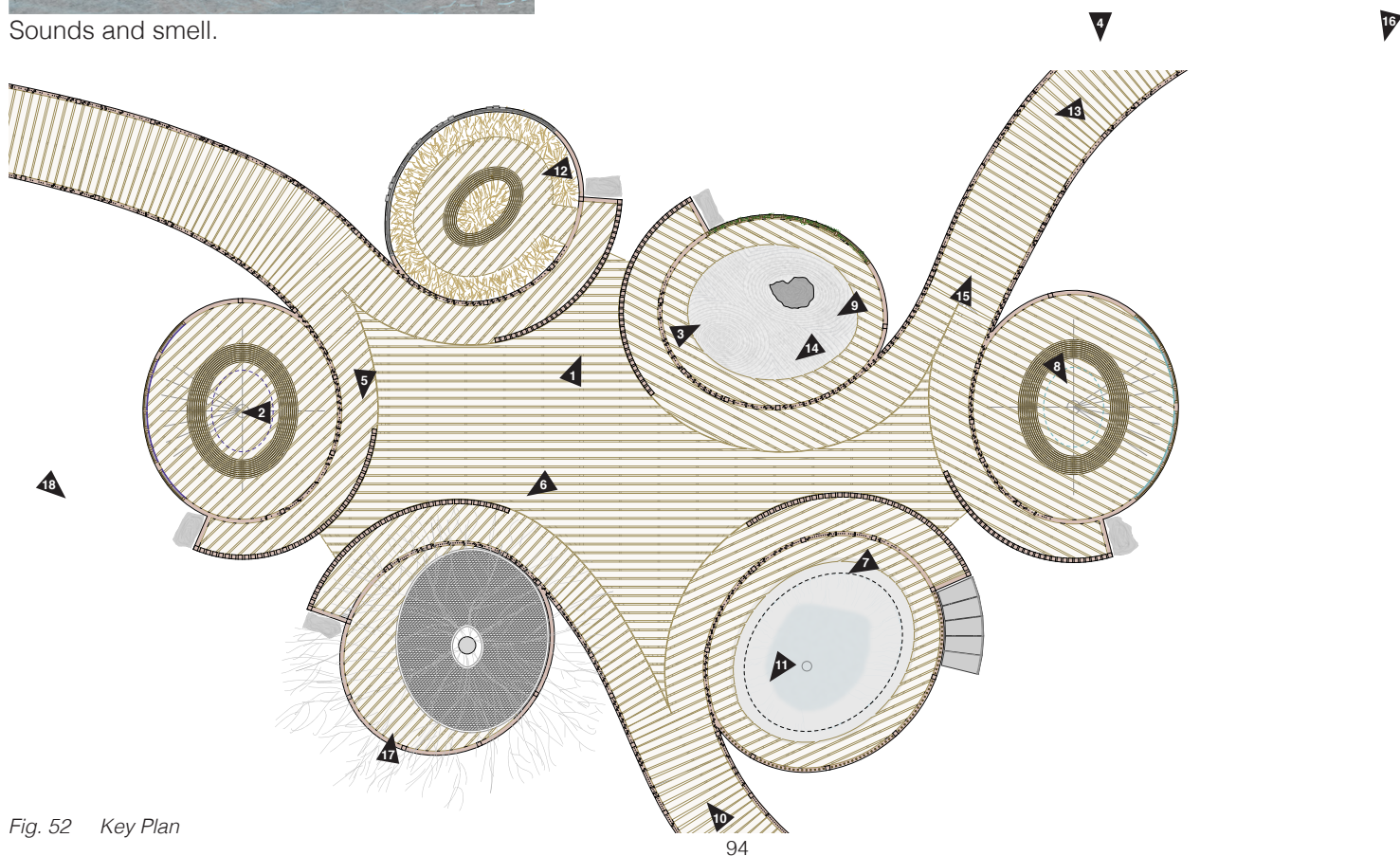


Fig. 52 Key Plan

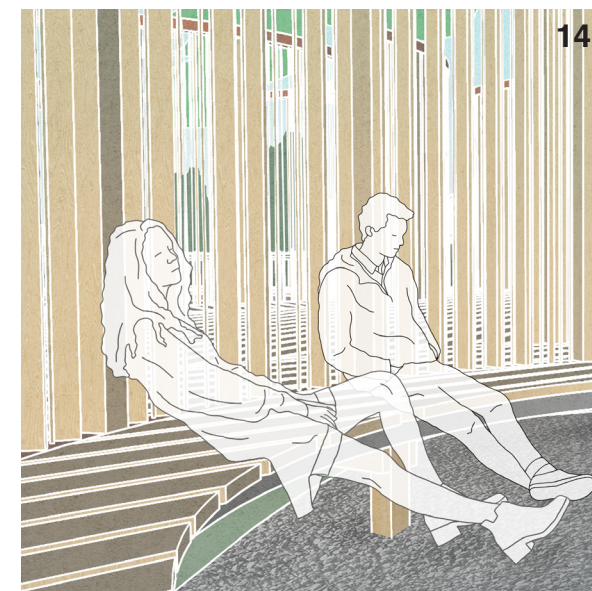
SIMPLE



Natural materials.



Landscaped with native wildflowers and grasses.



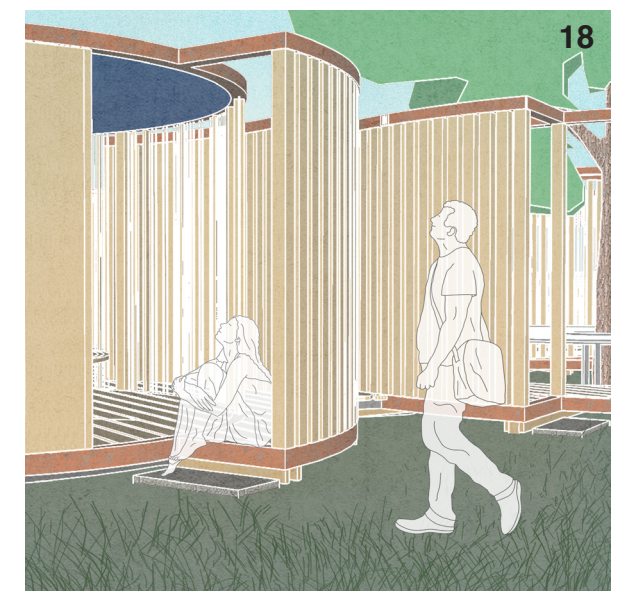
Benches to sit and rest on in each space.



Inviting and comfortable.



Curved forms.



Flexibility and an ability to explore.

Fig. 53 Design Implications of 'Simple' (comfort, inviting, materials, form)





Fig. 54 Another Beautiful End

Perched on top of a grain silo, with a clear view to the sky in every direction, I found sunsets have always been the perfect time to look back, reflect and then go get some rest again.

## CONCLUSION

As I sit to write this conclusion, I have opened a document on my computer that I created exactly one year ago today entitled, "Intro to Finding a Thesis Topic." I had went to a Starbucks, sat down and began the first steps of this thesis, writing down anything I thought would be a good thesis that I would enjoy studying and was passionate about. Of the eight ideas I listed on those first two pages, five of them pointed to what this thesis would become.

Everyone has been given something for which they are passionate about. Mine had always been this: the simple things, nature and slowing down to truly appreciate and see it. It gets me excited and emotional because I know and feel the power that lies within that way of living. It waits there quietly for anyone willing to leave the busyness behind for a moment and be still. I am not disillusioned: pausing and nature is not a cure-all or a guarantee of a happy blissful life. Even while I was researching, reading books and writing about this topic for my thesis, I often just sat behind my computer, putting in long days filled with too much to do and being frustrated. But as with many good things in life, it is a daily choice to be made again and again. To create time for Sabbath and leisure, to find places that are sacred to you or to look for the enchanted moments and be filled with gratitude.

Over my six years of architecture school, I have come to learn that architecture can be much more than well-designed and assembled structures. It can become another method to embody and support values that are meaningful and necessary. As architects, we strive to make this world a better place through our discipline and although architecture alone cannot, I think we have a duty to always *try* and that is what I have aimed to do. To encourage a re-evaluation of where our focus lies, question the pace at which we run our lives and to be reminded of the potential lying within the simple act of pausing and in the incredible nature all around us.



This is my Father's world,  
And to my listening ears  
All nature sings, and round me rings  
The music of the spheres.  
This is my Father's world:  
I rest me in the thought  
Of rocks and trees,  
Of skies and seas- -  
His hands the wonders wrought.

This is my Father's world:  
The birds their carols raise,  
The morning light, the lily white  
Declare their Maker's praise.  
This is my Father's world:  
He shines in all that's fair;  
In the rustling grass I hear him pass,  
He speaks to me everywhere.

This is my Father's world:  
O let me ne'er forget  
That though the wrong seems oft so strong,  
God is the Ruler yet.  
This is my Father's world:  
Why should my heart be sad?  
The Lord is King; let the heavens ring!  
God reigns; let the earth be glad!

Maltbie Davenport Babcock (1901)



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aho, Karl, and C. Stephen Evans. "Kierkegaard On Escaping the Cult of Busyness." *Institute of Art and Ideas*, October 4, 2018. <https://iai.tv/articles/how-kierkegaards-idea-of-idleness-can-help-us-diagnose-21st-century-busyness-auid-1150>.

Amstutz, Anita. *Soul Tending: A Journey into the Heart of Sabbath*. Nashville, Tennessee: SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2018.

Andrews, John Nevins. *History of the Sabbath and First Day of the Week*. 2d ed., enl. ed. Battle Creek: Steam Press, 1873. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100348634>.

Aveni, Anthony F. *Empires of Time: Calendars, Clocks and Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1989. <https://archive.org/details/B-001-015-434/page/n771/mode/2up/search/sacred>.

Bellezza, Silvia, Neeru Paharia, and Keinan Anat. "Research: Why Americans are so Impressed by Busyness." *Harvard Business School Publishing*, December 15, 2016. <https://hbr.org/2016/12/research-why-americans-are-so-impressed-by-busyness>.

Bøe, Solveig, Hege Charlotte Faber, and Brit Strandhagen. *Raw: Architectural Engagements with Nature*. Farnham, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014.

Brunner, Daniel L. *Introducing Evangelical Ecotheology: Foundations in Scripture, Theology, History, and Praxis*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2014.

Castro, Jason. "A Wandering Mind is an Unhappy One." *Scientific American*, November 24, 2010. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-wandering-mind-is-an-un/>.

Cooper, David E. "Religion and Nature." In *Spirit of the Environment*. London: Routledge, 1998. <https://epdf.pub/spirit-of-the-environment-religion-value-and-environmental-concern.html>.

Deane-Drummond, Celia. *A Primer in Ecotheology: Theology for a Fragile Earth*. Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2017.

"Divided attention, selective attention, inattention blindness, & change blindness | Khan Academy." *YouTube* video, 6:41. Khan Academy Medicine. September 17, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s4JBqLoY3tY>.



Goldhill, Olivia. "Why The Rush: 150 years ago, a world-famous philosopher called busyness the sign of an unhappy person." *Quartz*. April 16, 2016. <https://qz.com/663552/150-years-ago-a-world-famous-philosopher-called-busyness-the-sign-of-an-unhappy-person/>.

Gottlieb, Roger S. *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment*. 2. ed. New York: Routledge, 2004. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203426982>.

Heschel, Abraham Joshua. *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man*. New York: Third Noonday Printing, 1977.

Horowitz, Alexandra. *On Looking: A Walker's Guide to the Art of Observation*. New York: Scribner, 2013.

Kawai, Dr. Yoko. "Designing Mindfulness: Spatial Concepts in Traditional Japanese Architecture." *YouTube* video, 58:21. JapanSocietyNYC. June 1, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcGH6rqssfs>.

Klepeis, N. E., W. C. Nelson, W. R. Ott, J. P. Robinson, A. M. Tsang, P. Switzer, J. V. Behar, S. C. Hern, and W. H. Engelmann. "The National Human Activity Pattern Survey (NHAPS): A Resource for Assessing Exposure to Environmental Pollutants." *Journal of Exposure Analysis and Environmental Epidemiology* 11, no. 3 (May, 2001): 231-252. doi:10.1038/sj.jea.7500165. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/sj.jea.7500165>.

Moltmann, Jurgen. *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*. Translated by Margaret Kohl. Minneapolis, Minnesota: First Fortress Press edition, 1993.

Moore, Thomas. *The Education of the Heart*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1996.

Moore, Thomas. *The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1997.

Nash, James A. *Loving Nature: Ecological Integrity and Christian Responsibility*. 2. print. ed. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992.

Oldenburg, Ray. *The Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons, and Other Hangouts at the Heart of a Community*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Da Capo Press, 1999.

Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy: an inquiry into the non-rational factor in the idea of the divine and its relation to the rational*. London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1923. <https://archive.org/details/theideaoftheholyy00ottouoft/page/n3/mode/2up>.

Pallasmaa, Juhani. *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses*. Cornwall: John Wiley and Sons Ltd, 2012.

Popva, Maria. "Hermann Hesse on Little Joys, Breaking the Trance of Busyness, and How to Live with Presence." *Pocket*. Accessed April 15, 2020. <https://getpocket.com/explore/item/hermann-hesse-on-little-joys-breaking-the-trance-of-busyness-and-the-most-important-habit-for-living>.

Polidor, Amberly. "Sacred Groves of India." Sacred Land Film Project. June 1 2004. <https://sacredland.org/sacred-groves-of-india-india/>.

Popova, Maria. "Kierkegaard on Our Greatest Source of Unhappiness." *BrainPickings*, Accessed March 19, 2020. <https://www.brainpickings.org/2014/05/05/kierkegaard-on-presence-unhappiness/>.

Rybczynski, Witold. *Waiting for the Weekend*. New York: Penguin Group, 1991.

Shahery, Paulina. "Architecture of mindfulness: Paulina Shahery at TEDxTrousdale." *YouTube* video, 12:05. TEDx Talks. June 19, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRjlgB1Xqol>.

Shunxun, Nan and Beverly Foit-Albert. *China's Sacred Sites*. Singapore: Himalayan Institute Press, 2007.

Slane, Craig J. "Sabbath." *Bible Study Tools*. Accessed October 29, 2019. <https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/sabbath/>.

Sleeth, Matthew. *24/6 : A Prescription for a Healthier, Happier Life*. Carol Stream: Tyndale House Publishers, 2012. SCRIBD.

Sleeth, Matthew. *Reforesting Faith: What Trees Teach Us About the Nature of God and His Love for Us*. Colorado Springs: Waterbrook, 2019.

Synder, Gary. *The Practice of the Wild*. California: Publishers Group West, 1990.

Torgerson, Mark A. *Greening Spaces for Worship and Ministry: Congregations, their Buildings, and Creation Care*. Herndon, Virginia: The Alban Institute, 2012.

*The Holy Bible, New International Version*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2004.

"The spotlight model of attention and our ability to multitask | MCAT | Khan Academy." *YouTube* video, 7:27. Khan Academy Medicine. April 17, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THJgznSBu8>.

Zumthor, Peter. *Thinking Architecture*. 3rd ed. Basel: Birkhäuser, 2017.

Zumthor, Peter. *Atmospheres*. Basel: Birkhäuser, 2006.



