

The Weft House: A Transitional Housing Program to
Empower Afghan Refugees in Canada

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis.

This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted
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Abstract

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the number of forcibly displaced people is growing yearly. These people flee their country due to war, violence, persecution, famine, and other life-threatening reasons. Most of the refugees arrive in the host country with a traumatizing background and with a high need for support to cure their mental and physical crises, learn the culture and language of the host country, build a community and integrate into the new society, and most importantly to find proper and affordable housing.

As a country with a high refugee acceptance rate, Canada has many homeless people, especially in its big cities like Toronto. Although programs and facilities like transitional housing are available for homeless people, such facilities for vulnerable groups like refugees with their specific needs seem missing.

This thesis research aims to suggest a new transitional housing typology with services focused on the needs and demands of the refugee communities-in this case, Afghan refugees- to support them through the journey of integration into a new environment, ease the process of finding affordable permanent housing, and help them build a community.

This research includes aerial maps to analyze the intended site in Etobicoke, Canada, design drawings to illustrate the design, and images as precedents to support the ideas behind the design.

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<https://www.google.com/maps/place/7+Vanauley+St,+Toronto,+ON+M5V+2A8/@43.6486089,-79.3984836,3a,75y,24.64h,94.57t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1s6ug83c6qEez7W-WQqNlkfA!2e0!7i16384!8i8192!4m5!3m4!1s0x882b34dc8ddf29e7:0x89739e19bee869da!8m2!3d43.6488388!4d-79.3982395>

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https://www.google.com/maps/uv?pb=!1s0x882b33f97a29192b%3A0x7e15c799b4368212!3m1!7e115!4shttps%3A%2F%2Fh5.googleusercontent.com%2Fp%2F2FAF1QipMN8vQj1Bovypdf6nokrTKZvwvody9YWvqwxq%3Dw213-h160-k-no!5shorizon%20for%20youth%20-%20Google%20Search!15sCgIQAQ&imagekey=!1e2!2sC-NU_Pg9SHini3folXNwr2Q&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj5PY1N34AhXOkYkEHb8cDkYQoip6BAhREAM

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<https://www.google.com/maps/@43.6592131,-79.3813329,3a,90y,348.8h,97.37t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1slt40hZDla22e7i79ptlgWQ!2e0!7i16384!8i8192>

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https://www.google.com/maps/uv?pb=!1s0x882b33f97a29192b%3A0x7e15c799b4368212!3m1!7e115!4shttps%3A%2F%2Fh5.googleusercontent.com%2Fp%2F2FAF1QipMN8vQj1Bovypdf6nokrTKZvwvody9YWvqwxq%3Dw213-h160-k-no!5shorizon%20for%20youth%20-%20Google%20Search!15sCgIQAQ&imagekey=!1e2!2sC-NU_Pg9SHini3folXNwr2Q&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj5PY1N34AhXOkYkEHb8cDkYQoip6BAhREAM

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<https://archello.com/project/evas-phoenix>

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<https://archello.com/project/evas-phoenix>

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<https://secure.toronto.ca/AIC/index.do>

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Chapter 1
Introduction to Housing Problem of Refugees

Chapter 1

1.1. Forced Displacement: A worldwide Crisis

According to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country for being persecuted, war, or violence.¹

Ever since World War 2, the number of people considered refugees has increased significantly.² The UNHCR has also announced that international forced migration has reached eighty-four million in mid-2021. Twenty-six million of these displaced people have been refugees.³ The destination countries and the number of refugees they host are more diverse than ever before; moreover, today, the cause of forced migration is not limited to war and conflicts solely. Environmental disasters such as drought, flood, earthquake, famine can be the reason for forced migration.⁴ Poverty, political, economic, and human rights issues, race, religion, nationality, membership of particular social groups are other reasons why citizens of certain countries decide to flee it.⁵

1.2. Refugees' Experience Before, During, and After Forced Displacement

Being forced to emigrate from a country under crisis, refugees

1 "What is a refugee", UNHCR the UN Refugee Agency, Accessed: March 3, 2022, <https://www.unhcr.org/what-is-a-refugee.html#:~:text=Refugees%20are%20people%20who%20have,possessions%2C%20jobs%20and%20loved%20ones.&text=Learn%20more%20about%20refugees> .

2 Vaughan Robinson, The International Refugee Crisis British and Canadian Responses (Hound mills Basingstoke Hampshire: The MacMillan Press LTD, 1993), 3.

3 "Refugee Data Finder, UNHCR the UN Refugee Agency, Accessed: March 3, 2022, <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/>.

4 Olivia Giovetti, "Forced Migration: 6 Causes and Examples" Concern Worldwide US, Last Modified: June 28, 2019, <https://www.concernusa.org/story/forced-migration-causes/> .

5 "Exploring migration causes- Why people migrate", News European Parliament, Last Modified: October 30, 2020, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/world/20200624STO81906/exploring-migration-causes-why-people-migrate> .

"What is a refugee", UNHCR the UN Refugee Agency, Accessed: March 3, 2022, <https://www.unhcr.org/what-is-a-refugee.html#:~:text=Refugees%20are%20people%20who%20have,possessions%2C%20jobs%20and%20loved%20ones.&text=Learn%20more%20about%20refugees> .

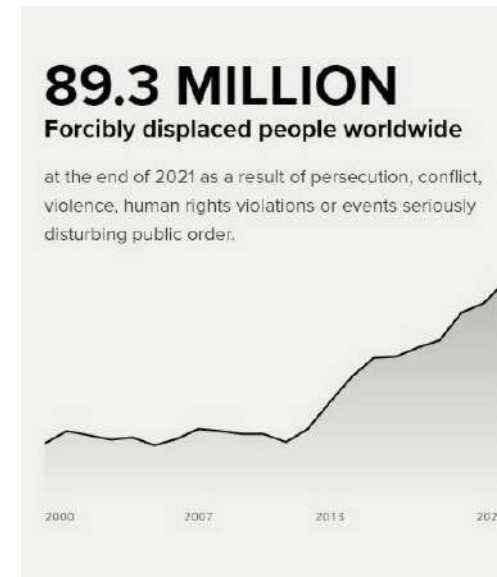


Fig1.1. Number of forcibly displaced people in the world by according to UNHCR

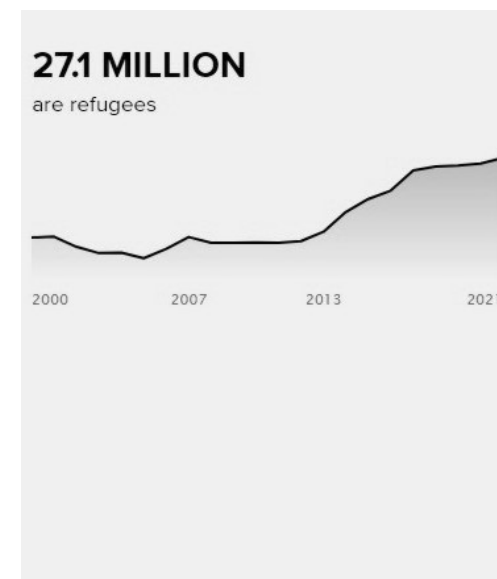


Fig1.2. Number of refugee people in the world according to UNHCR

experience many physical, social, and mental problems before, during, and after their forced displacement. Before their migration, many refugees are imprisoned and tortured ⁶ and a common refugees' pre-migration problem is escaping their country rather than having a planned departure. ⁷

Refugees either lose a family member during a conflict, war or forced displacement, and in some cases, they are reluctant to leave their friends and family members. ⁸

Poverty is another vital problem among refugees. Most refugees lose their job due to the malfunctioning economic situation of their country and tend to be unemployed for a long time in the destination country. Poverty can cause significant psychological damage to refugees that are challenging to recover from. ⁹

Other than the problems mentioned in most circumstances, after migration and when the basic social needs of refugee people are met, they encounter other difficulties such as language barrier and hardship in communication, constant displacement, lack of interaction, social and cultural problems. ¹⁰

1.3 Crisis in Afghanistan

Based on UNHCR's statistics as of mid-2021, Afghanistan, with 2.7 million refugees worldwide, is the third country with the most refugee population. ¹¹ Why do Afghan people escape their country?

Even before the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), commonly known as the Taliban, overtook Afghanistan, people suffered from malnutrition and hunger for decades. ¹²

6 Janet Taylor, "Refugees and social exclusion: What the literature says" *Migration Action* 26, no.2 (2004): 4.

7 Ibid. 5.

8 Lord Clinton-Davis, Yohannes Fassil, "Health and Social Problems of Refugees", *Soc. Sci. Med* 35, no.4 (1992): 509.

9 Taylor, "Refugees and social exclusion", 5.

10 Clinton-Davis and Fassil, "Health and Social Problems of Refugees", 511.

11 "Refugee Data Finder, UNHCR the UN Refugee Agency, Accessed: March 3, 2022, <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/>.

12 Christina Goldbaum, "Facing Economic Collapse, Afghanistan Is Gripped by Starvation", *The New York Times*, Last Modified: Last Modified: December 4, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/04/world/asia/afghanistan-starvation-crisis.html> .

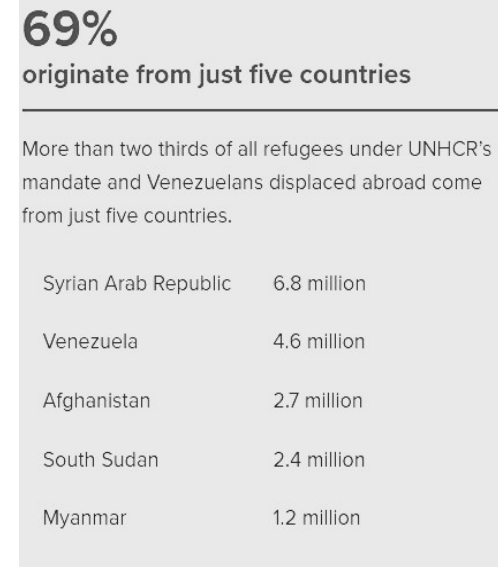


Fig1.3. Afghanistan is the third country with the most refugees in the world. This data is collected through annual statistics activities, with some data going back to 1951.



Fig1.4. Financial sanctions on Afghanistan could lead to near-universal poverty, even as the country confronts an ongoing drought and hunger crisis



Fig1.5. A Taliban guard managing crowd control as Afghans receive food aid during a distribution by the World Food Program in Kabul.



Fig1.6. A severely malnourished child in the intensive care unit of Mirwais Regional Hospital



Fig1.7. Laborers unloading sacks of flour from a World Food Program Convoy.



Fig1.8. Many women and children walked for more than an hour to reach the Red Crescent health clinic in Shah Wali Kot district.

After the Taliban invaded the country again and took control of it, international donor countries instantly suspended a significant number of their non-humanitarian funds and donations to ensure that the Taliban was not using the fund for their benefits.¹³

The absence of funding, however, has made Afghanistan's economy collapse.¹⁴ A shortage of money will eventually cause more malnutrition, food, health crisis, and an increasing poverty rate. In fact, according to the United Nations declaration, it is possible that by mid-2022, 97% of Afghan citizens be impoverished.¹⁵

Poverty is not the only crisis emerging in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is also in danger of health system breakdown. The majority of healthcare workers, civil servants, teachers, and people operating the basic public facilities were highly dependent on the money donated from foreign resources, and due to that reason, more than 90% of the country's health clinics are anticipated to get closed.¹⁶

With the Covid-19 virus spreading around the world and more significantly in third world countries and the war that is going on in Afghanistan, shutting the health centers down will have a devastating impact on Afghan citizens' lives.



Fig1.9. Women and children awaited treatment at a World Food Program-supported health clinic in Kandahar, Afghanistan.



Fig1.10. A baby is being checked for signs of malnutrition at a World Food Program health facility in Kandahar.

13 "Crisis in Afghanistan: Unprecedented hunger after conflict", Rescue.org, Accessed: January 7, 2022, <https://www.rescue.org/article/crisis-afghanistan-unprecedented-hunger-after-conflict> .

14 Christina Goldbaum, "Facing Economic Collapse, Afghanistan Is Gripped by Starvation", The New York Times, Last Modified: December 4, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/04/world/asia/afghanistan-starvation-crisis.html> .

15 "Crisis in Afghanistan: Unprecedented hunger after conflict", Rescue.org, Accessed: January 7, 2022, <https://www.rescue.org/article/crisis-afghanistan-unprecedented-hunger-after-conflict> .

16 Ibid.

1.4 Refugees in Canada: History and Experiences

Centuries before Europeans started living in North America, explorers who arrived here discovered thriving First Nations and Inuit societies with beliefs, lifestyles, and rich history specific to themselves.¹⁷

Today Canada is known for its long and bright history of welcoming and protecting refugees worldwide.¹⁸ Quakers were among the first people known as refugees in Canada. They settled in what is known as southern Ontario in the 1770s.¹⁹ The word refugee (people who do not choose to leave their country but are forced to do so) should not be mistaken for settler (people who intend to occupy indigenous land permanently, claim them as their own, and assert their power over indigenous people.)

The effort of Canada to accept refugees has never stopped. Between November 2015 to February 2016, Canada has accepted 26,166 Syrian refugees.²⁰

In August 2021, the government of Canada promised to expand its resettlement program to support 20,000 Afghans who were forced to leave Afghanistan after the Taliban took over the country.²¹

1.5 Housing Problems of Refugees in Canada

Although the majority of recent Syrian refugees reflect positively on their decision to move to Canada²², the procedure of their integration



Fig1.11. As refugees from the American Revolution, Quakers settled in what is now southern Ontario

17 "History of Canada", Government of Canada, Last Modified: June 08, 2020, <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/history-canada.html#a1>

18 Khaldoun M Aldiabat et al., "The Lived Experience of Syrian Refugees in Canada: A Phenomenological Study", *The Qualitative Report* 26, no.2 (2021): 485.

19 "Canada: A History of Refuge", Government of Canada, Last Modified: August 24, 2020, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/history.html> .

20 Ibid.

21 "Canada expands resettlement program to bring more Afghan to safety" Government of Canada, Last Modified: August 15, 2021, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2021/08/canada-expands-resettlement-program-to-bring-more-afghans-to-safety.html> .

22 Abe Oudshoorn, Sarah Benbow, Matthew Meyer, "Resettlement of Syrian Refugees in Canada", *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 21, (2020): 894, June 6, 2019, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12134-019-00695-8> .

into Canadian society has not been challenge-free.²³ Having a hard time understanding Canadian culture, hardship in access to health care facilities, and the unemployment of household heads are just a few issues refugees face in Canada.²⁴ However, among all the refugees' problems, "finding proper housing" is the most significant issue commonly and repeatedly mentioned by almost all scholars.

1.5. A. Problems upon Arrival

Most Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) stay in temporary housing upon their arrival to Canada. They usually stay in temporary housing until Refugee Assistance Programs (RAPs) find permanent housing for each family. Although their waiting time is usually short-around two months or less ²⁵, refugee families experience difficulties while staying at the temporary accommodations provided. ²⁶

In an interview by Abe Oudshoorn & Sarah Benbow & Matthew Meyer with 17 Syrian refugee families, most of them claimed that they had a hard time staying in temporary housing. This group of refugees was initially settled in hotels and motels and were asked not to leave their rooms to avoid disturbing other hotel guests. As Syrians have big families with many children, except for one family, all other 16 families claimed that it was challenging and frustrating for them to stay in a tiny room with their kids and keep them calm and entertained and doing no damage to rooms. ²⁷ They also mentioned that they felt imprisoned and impatient and often in lack of information about their future and what comes after. Moreover, many of them claimed that hotels' staff and owners did not welcome them.

Another issue faced by refugees living in hotel rooms was communication loss; although they stayed in the same building, they lost contact with other refugee families due to the restrictions on

23 Khaldoun et al., "The Lives Experience", 485.

24 Ibid, 486.

25 Pallabi Bhattacheryya et al. "In search of a "home": Comparing the housing challenges experienced by recently arrived Yazidi and Syrian refugees in Canada", *Applied psycholinguistics* 41, (2020): 1416, December 2, 2020, [10.1017/S0142716420000478](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0142716420000478).

26 Abe Oudshoorn, Sarah Benbow, Matthew Meyer, "Resettlement of Syrian Refugees in Canada", 901.

27 Ibid.



Fig1.13. The Toronto Plaza Hotel is one of many hotels accommodating Syrian refugees in Canada



Fig1.12. The Toronto Plaza Hotel was a temporary home for as many as 600 government-sponsored Syrians.



Fig1.15. Afghan refugees outside of a Scarborough hotel

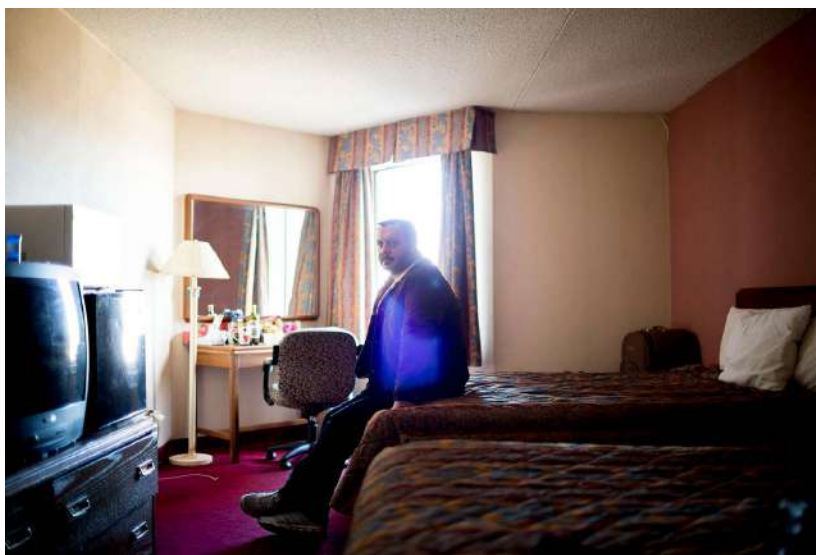


Fig1.14. Osama Aldeen in his hotel room.



Fig1.16. Children occupy their time by playing games in the hotel hallways.



Fig1.17. Afghan refugees have been living in hotels for two months

leaving their rooms.²⁸

In another interview by Maan Alhmidi, an Afghan refugee family who moved to Canada on August 27, 2021, claimed they were displaced multiple times from one hotel in Richmond Hill, Ontario, to another one in East Toronto. Najafizada, 32, says, “Touring the hotels is not very pleasant. I know staying in the hotel is always good when you are traveling, but when it becomes home for you, then you are frustrated, you are disappointed.”²⁹

Nevertheless, refugees’ housing problem, especially GARs, does not end here. Below are some of the most significant housing problems of refugees mentioned and discussed by several resources.

1.5. B. Affordability

In order to make a new start in an unknown country and integrate with a new society, it is essential to find proper and affordable housing close to language training centers, labor market training centers, health services and clinics, and suitable job opportunities.³⁰

Most Syrian refugees entered Canada when the Canadian rental housing market was experiencing extreme inflation.³¹

The shortage of affordable housing continues until today and has made the process of finding suitable and affordable housing for refugees highly challenging to RAPs.³²

According to Damaris Rose, social housing is only available for refugees with the most extreme needs, and other refugees have to look for housing on the private market with the monthly allowance

28 Ibid.

29 Maan Alhmidi, “Afghan refugees in Toronto-area frustrated by multiple, abrupt moves between hotels”, Global News, Last Modified: November 12, 2021, <https://globalnews.ca/news/8369681/afghan-refugees-toronto-frustrated-moving-hotels/>.

30 Damaris Rose, “Creating a Home in Canada: Refugee Housing Challenges and Potential Policy”, (Washington DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2019), 12.

31 Damari Rose, Alexandra Charette, “Finding housing for Syrian refugee newcomers in Canadian cities: challenges, initiatives and policy implications. Synthesis report”, (Montreal: Institut national de la recherche scientifique Centre Urbanisation Culture Société, 2017), <https://espace.inrs.ca/id/eprint/6458/>.

32 Damaris Rose, “Creating a Home in Canada”, 13.

provided by the government.³³

In an interview done by Jillian Kestler-D'Amours with the Radi family- a Syrian family currently living in Etobicoke- they claimed that they receive \$2,200 from the government and spend \$1,600 on rent, not much money is left for them after paying the rent each month.³⁴

Pallabi Bhattacharyya et al., also claim that based on a review done by IRCC, 46% of GARs noted that the financial support given by PARs is often not adequate and does not meet their basic needs.³⁵ According to research done by Valeri J. Pruegger, Toronto is experiencing an increase in the number of refugees in shelters. Calgary, Winnipeg, and other Canadian provinces are facing similar issues.³⁶

We can conclude that low-income refugee households are challenged by the limited availability of affordable private rental and social housing.³⁷ With the growing number of refugee families in Canada, the government must address this problem as soon as possible.

1.5. C. Accessibility

Unfortunately, most of the available, affordable housing is not situated close to the amenities like grocery shops, schools, health care services, settlement services, and jobs. These units are segregated in particular geographic areas creating ghettos and causing marginalization in the areas with little resources and insecurity.³⁸

Damaris Rose mentions that the primary criterion for suitable refugee housing is its accessibility to public transportation³⁹; however, there is a mismatch between affordable housing locations and services.

33 Ibid, 1.

34 Jillian Kestler-D'Amours, "Syrian refugees anxious to find homes, jobs in Canada", Middle East Eye, Last Modified: March 18, 2016, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/syrian-refugees-anxious-find-homes-jobs-canada> .

35 Pallabi Bhattacheryya et al. "In search of a "home", 1418.

36 Valeri J. Pruegger, "Housing Issues of Immigrants and Refugees in Calgary" (Calgary: n.p., 2007), 8.

37 Thomas S. Carter, Chesya Polevychok, John Osborne, "The role of Housing and neighbourhood in the re-settlement process: a case study of refugee households in Winnipeg", *The Canadian Geographer* 53, no. 3 (2009): 308, 10.1111/j.1541-0064.2009.00265.x.

38 Pallabi Bhattacheryya et al. "In search of a "home", 1419.

39 Damaris Rose, "Creating a Home in Canada", 15.

The majority of the integration and settlement services are primarily delivered in large cities in Canada; nevertheless, more affordable and larger housing units are often located in outer suburbs and rural communities with limited access to public transportation.⁴⁰

1.5. D. Lack of Big Units

Syrian and Afghan refugees are two populated refugee groups existing in Canada. They have multigenerational households, and, commonly, senior adults live with their unmarried sons and daughters, and their married son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren also live in the same house.⁴¹

These large families find it challenging to find proper housing suitable for the number of people in the same household since most of the available units were ideal for small Canadian families. This problem was more significant in GARs who looked for accommodation in major cities.⁴²

Housing search workers also mention that specifically in more expensive and bigger cities, they could only rely upon townhouses in low-end market neighborhoods in suburban areas to provide larger families with proper housing, in which case access to public transportation becomes a critical issue.⁴³ Nevertheless, the housing issue of the large families does not end here.

Due to national occupancy rules, no more than two people can share one bedroom, and children cannot share a bedroom with their parents; this made refugees conceal the actual number of their children while signing the contract with the landlord. In some cases, the landlord finally found out they were breaking the national occupancy's rule and

40 Ibid, 1.

41 "Afghan Culture", Culture Atlas, n.d., <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/afghan-culture/afghan-culture-family> .

Thomas Collelo, Syria: A Country Study, Library of Congress, 1987, <http://countries-studies.us/syria/29.htm#:~:text=Syrians%20ideally%20and%20sentimentally%20prefer,and%20other%20miscellaneous%20patrilineal%20relatives> .

42 Damaris Rose, "Creating a Home in Canada", 4&14.

43 Damari Rose, Alexandra Charette, "Finding housing for Syrian refugee newcomers", 15.



Fig1.18. Mohammad Ehsan Saadat, a 33-year-old Afghan who recently arrived in Canada, with his wife and children in Toronto



Fig1.19. Hossein Mahrammi, his wife, Razia Mahrami, and their four sons refugees living in the U.S.

evicted the refugees.⁴⁴

1.5. E. Discrimination

According to Pruegger (2007), one of the systematic barriers experienced by newcomers that contributes to homelessness is discrimination in rental housing and shelter agencies.⁴⁵ Several resources indicate that discrimination is due to race, ethnicity, gender, age, and disability reasons.⁴⁶

Studies in Canada and other countries indicate that African-American refugees and immigrants undergo many difficulties in renting an apartment. In a study of Somali and Ghanaian immigrants in Toronto, it was discovered that over one-quarter of Somali and 15% of Ghanaians had someone without an accent to arrange an appointment for viewing the apartment. Otherwise, there were told that “the apartment is already rented.”⁴⁷

Women more severely experience discrimination in the housing market.⁴⁸ In a study done by Vertovec and his colleagues, it was reported that West Asian refugee women encountered barriers for finding rental housing in Vancouver; almost none of them owned a place, and less than 5% of them had access to affordable housing.⁴⁹

Also, Access Alliances in Toronto gathered some information on female refugees’ experiences in finding housing. They reported: “ I have found in a lot of the female households with refugees..., many times the husband has been lost in the war, and they come with children and sisters, and the discrimination is so profound that sometimes it is to the point that if there is not a male-led household, some landlords will not even accept them as tenants”.⁵⁰

It is mentioned that refugees are also vulnerable to exploitation by landlords because they do not understand the lease and landlords’

44 Pallabi Bhattacheryya et al. “In search of a “home”, 1419.

45 Pallabi Bhattacheryya et al. “In search of a “home”, 1418.

46 Ibid.

47 Pallabi Bhattacheryya et al. “In search of a “home”, 1418.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

50 Valeri J. Pruegger, “Housing Issues of Immigrants and Refugees in Calgary”, 9.

expectations and are not aware of what they should expect of landlords.⁵¹

With all that, we realize that access to adequate, affordable housing is a significant first step in the resettlement process of refugees.⁵²

Beyond shelter, proper housing is an anchor point for a new start in the host country, and it has a vital role in the integration and adaptation of refugees into society.⁵³

Suitable housing is the basis from which newcomers look for jobs, language training, and other services⁵⁴; therefore, it is essential that refugee housing has access to resources services and resources including official language training, labor market training, suitable job opportunities, specialized health care services for refugees and public transportation. This means that the desired refugee housing locations are large and mid-size cities.⁵⁵

Refugee housing should also be in a safe and secure environment where they can establish community with other refugees with the same culture and language from which to seek support.⁵⁶

51 Thomas S. Carter, Chesya Polevychok, John Osborne, "The role of Housing and neighbourhood", 319.

52 Thomas S. Carter, Chesya Polevychok, John Osborne, "The role of Housing and neighbourhood", 305.

53 Damaris Rose, "Creating a Home in Canada", 12.

54 Thomas S. Carter, Chesya Polevychok, John Osborne, "The role of Housing and neighbourhood", 305.

55 Damaris Rose, "Creating a Home in Canada", 12.

56 Ibid, 6.

Chapter 2
Expanding on the Problem of Refugees after
Migration and Suggesting Solution

Chapter 2

The Crisis

Homelessness is a growing, critical and complicated problem in big cities like Toronto.¹ Statistics indicate that more than 10,000 people are considered homeless on any given night in Toronto.²

Homelessness happens for many reasons, including loss of employment, poor physical health, substance use, and other physical, emotional, or mental reasons; however, the primary reason for homelessness in Toronto is the economy and housing market.

Homelessness is a consequence of systematic or societal barriers and a lack of affordable and proper housing. The most significant challenge in helping people move out of shelters is affordability.³

According to Arnault and Merali, immigrants and refugees are among the fastest-growing subgroups experiencing homelessness in Canada.⁴ Researchers suggest that, refugees and asylum seekers are most prone to experience homelessness. Losing a sense of home is more often reported than pre-migration trauma.⁵

Also, research on Canada's two large cities, Toronto and Ottawa, indicates that 13-20% of homeless shelter residents are refugees.⁶

While homelessness in Canada happens due to poverty, unemployment, shortage of affordable housing, family breakdown, lack of social support, and addictions,⁷ refugee communities experience

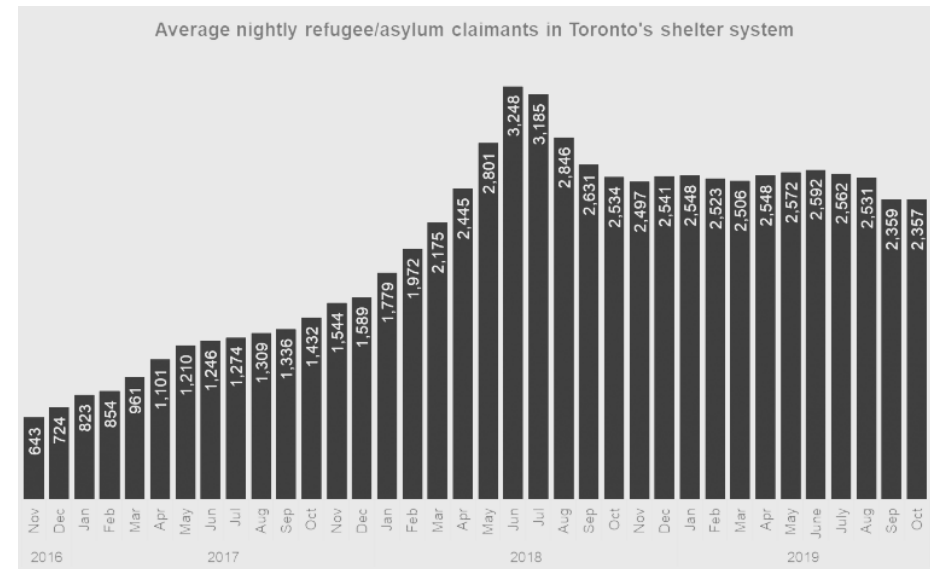


Fig2.1. Average nightly number of refugee/asylum claimants in Toronto's shelter system has increased from an average of 643 per night in November 2016 to 2,357 in October 2019.

1 "About Toronto Homelessness," Homes First everyone needs a home, Accessed: February 7, 2022, <https://homesfirst.on.ca/about-toronto-homelessness/#:~:text=Statistics%20on%20Homelessness,which%20makes%20them%20chronically%20homeless.>

2 "Facts about Homelessness in Toronto," fred victor, Accessed: February 7, 2022, <https://www.fredvictor.org/facts-about-homelessness-in-toronto/>

3 Ibid

4 Ibid

5 Ibid

6 David St. Arnault, Noorfarah Merali, "Refugee Pathways out of homelessness in urban Alberta, Canada: implications for social justice-oriented counselling," *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, (2018), 228, February 10, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09515070.2018.1437540>

7 Nathalie Rech, "Homelessness in Canada", *The Canadian Encyclopedia*,

Surveyed Groups	Did Not Migrate	Migrated (Total)	Immigrant	Refugee/Asylum Claimant	Temporary Resident
Outdoors	76%	19%	12%	6%	1%
City-administered shelters	38%	60%	17%	40%	3%
Single adults	50%	49%	21%	24%	3%
Families	8%	90%	8%	80%	3%
Youth	49%	46%	14%	30%	2%
24-hour respite sites	68%	28%	21%	4%	3%
VAW shelters	31%	68%	42%	18%	8%
All respondents	45%	52%	19%	30%	3%

Fig2.2. The largest share of newcomers in the past six months were families staying in City-administered shelters.

homelessness due to the forced migration caused by persecution, war, and violence.⁸

Refugee communities are very vulnerable since they have had traumatizing experiences in their own country. Besides poverty, unemployment, shortage of affordable housing, other problems like language barrier, discrimination, mental and physical health issues, and separation from family members also contribute to their homelessness.⁹

After looking at the federal data on shelter users between 2005 and 2016, the national shelter study found an “observable increase” in refugees using shelters.¹⁰

According to Tim Richter, president of the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, refugees are forced to turn to homeless shelters due to a shortage in the housing capacity of areas where refugees settle.¹¹ These areas include major cities such as Toronto and Montreal that are known for lack of affordable rental housing.¹²

1 In Search for Hope

1.1. Sense of Homelessness

Anne Golden, in Mayor’s Homelessness Action Task Force, reports three definitions for homelessness:

“Visible” homelessness: People are on the street or stay in hostels.

“Hidden” homelessness: People live in illegal or temporary accommodations. People who are at risk of homelessness soon.¹³

Last Modified: July 9, 2019, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/homelessness-in-canada>

8 “What is a refugee”, UNHCR the UN Refugee Agency, Accessed: March 3, 2022, <https://www.unhcr.org/what-is-a-refugee.html#:~:text=Refugees%20are%20people%20who%20have,possessions%2C%20jobs%20and%20loved%20ones.&text=Learn%20more%20about%20refugees> .

9 “Refugee Settlement”, Roads to Refugee, Accessed: February 10, 2022, <https://www.roads-to-refugee.com.au/settlement/settlement-challenges.html>

10 Teresa Wright, “Growing number of newcomers, refugees ending up homeless in Canada: Studies,” CBC News, Last Modified: August,09,2019, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/homeless-newcomers-refugees-canada-studies-1.5242426>

11 Ibid

12 Ibid

13 Lori Ryan, Jennifer Woodill, A search for Home: Refugee Voices in the Romero House Community”, A Study requested by the city of Toronto, (2000), 4.

In an interview done by Ryan and Woodill, refugees were requested to talk about their experience and feeling of “homelessness,” some refugees spoke about their experience of living on the street and sleeping in “dangerous” Toronto shelters where they had to sleep on a chair because no beds were available.¹⁴

Many refugees also talk about their feeling of fear and being in danger when staying in temporary shelters in Toronto, especially shelters that are not specifically for refugees.

Massud, from Iran, speaks:

“I felt the most homeless in the shelters in Canada because I was with people who were alcoholics and used drugs, and it was very dangerous.”¹⁵

Even after finding permanent housing, some refugees feel homeless, and having this feeling indicates that they are in danger of getting homeless again.¹⁶

Consequently, we realize that the sense of homelessness within refugee communities is not necessarily due to a lack of housing and shelter; many refugees feel homeless because of loneliness, being apart from their family members and community, physical and emotional isolation in Canada, and lack of hope for the future.¹⁷

As mentioned before, many refugees find Toronto’s shelters dangerous. Their trauma in their own country compounds the fear of staying in an unsafe shelter.¹⁸

Refugee shelters availability is another problem mentioned by interviewed refugees. It happens so much that the few refugee shelters in Toronto have no beds available most of the time.

Jaques, a refugee from Congo, shares his story:

14 I Lori Ryan, Jennifer Woodill, *A search for Home: Refugee Voices in the Romero House Community*, A Study requested by the city of Toronto, (2000), 4.

15 Ibid, 11.

16 Ibid, 4.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid, 11.



Fig2.3. Sojourn house is one of the few subsidized transitional housing program for refugees that has 48 fully furnished and self-contained apartments that house an average of 100 refugees. These include 24 single bachelor, 12 double-bachelor and 12 two-bedroom apartments.



Fig2.4. Sojourn House a transitional housing program for refugees in Toronto



Fig2.5. Romero house is a transitional house and wrap around support for one year to 10 newly arrived refugee families



Fig2.6. The existing transitional housing programs for refugees in Canada are not big enough to accommodate the number of refugees in Canada



Fig2.7. Romero house center interior



Fig2.8. Romero house center interior

"I was referred to a shelter in Toronto by another Congolese man. I stayed there for one and a half weeks, disoriented. I did not know where to go, how, or what to do? I asked for help, and someone suggested phoning Sojourn House. They were full...The next night, I had to sleep on a chair at the shelter."¹⁹

Another refugee called Esther, who is a mother of three children and arrived in Toronto from Nigeria explains:

"A nightmare. ... When I ran out of money, I had to go through the phone book, looking for names that were familiar to my country and all that...I called the Salvation Army and they told me there was no room. They said to call back in two weeks. But I have no money and no place to stay".²⁰

1.2. Search for Permanent Housing

Refugees, unlike many other immigrants, confront significant challenges. They typically arrive in Canada with low financial resources and few local acquaintances and family. As a result, most refugees require aid in finding suitable and inexpensive accommodation. This is particularly true for refugees whom governments or private organizations do not support.²¹

The refugees relied mainly on friends, community agencies, and advertisements in local papers (especially the Toronto Star) to search for housing. Some applied for social housing but soon discovered that they did not have much possibility of being accommodated quickly due to the long waiting list.²²

Sponsored refugees used their social networks — friends, relatives, and ethnics — to find their first permanent housing, often in the same apartment building as their friends.



Fig2.9. Fred Victor transitional housing with only 20 units. This housing is not specifically for refugees

19 Lori Ryan, Jennifer Woodill, A search for Home: Refugee Voices in the Romero House Community", A Study requested by the city of Toronto, (2000), 12.

20 Ibid, 12.

21 Robert A. Muradi, "Pathways to Housing: The Experience of Sponsored Refugees and Refugee Claimants in Accessing Permanent Housing in Toronto", International Migration and Integration (2008), no. 9, 82. March 3, 2022, 10.1007/s12134-008-0045-0

22 Ibid

Family, friends, and co-ethnics also assisted refugee claimants; however, for many, housing workers and volunteers in the shelters were crucial in breaking down barriers, including language and the necessity for a co-signer on a lease to guarantee monthly rent payment.

The following examples of refugee claimant experiences, as documented by the interviewers, demonstrate the diversity of experiences:

“He went to a Somali restaurant and met a friend he knew back home in Somalia. His friend allowed him to stay with him, and he is still living there.”

“Volunteer [shelter] helped find a place, spoke to the landlord, explained that she was on welfare, and spoke no English. She helped to move stuff and fill out the contract.”²³

During their first few months in Toronto, refugees who contacted settlement agencies received significantly more support. Claimants in communication with the agencies seemed more successful in finding proper housing in the first few months after arrival.

Claimants who were not in contact with settlement agencies complained about the lack of information about getting support and where to stay. One claimant put it this way:

“There was no housing provided, no accommodation. Have to find by one’s self. Without [my] brother it would have been very difficult. In Norway and Germany refugees are provided with housing, the immigration provides it. Only in Canada they don’t provide.”²⁴

One concern is that migrants staying in government-funded shelters are only there for less than a month before being asked to leave. Although housing assistance workers are available to assist refugees in obtaining more permanent homes, Toronto’s pricey private rental



Fig2.10. Evangeline Residence, the second largest women’s shelter in the City of Toronto, is a 90-bed, clean and safe residence for women experiencing homelessness due to mental health, addiction, domestic violence, financial difficulties, abuse, newly immigrating to Canada and other personal challenges. This housing is not specifically for refugees

23 Robert A. Muradi, “Pathways to Housing: The Experience of Sponsored Refugees and Refugee Claimants in Accessing Permanent Housing in Toronto”, *International Migration and Integration* (2008), no. 9, 82. March 3, 2022, 10.1007/s12134-008-0045-0

24 Ibid

market, especially for larger families, is a barrier to finding housing immediately.²⁵

Moreover, since refugees are desperate to find permanent housing in Toronto, they are prone to scammers. Brahim, an Algerian, paid \$175 to a private apartment-finding agency in the hopes of finding him a place to live. They did not follow through, and he ended up losing the money.²⁶

Refugee participants in Arnault & Merali's research mentioned that when they shared the feeling they were experiencing due to homelessness, they unexpectedly evoked caregiving and advocacy reactions from those around them. They stressed that their advocacy was an undeniable factor in empowering them and made a massive difference in their ability to find affordable housing, regardless of which sources of funds they used to move up the income ladder.²⁷

Even with additional funding, refugees had an inadequate understanding of local housing alternatives and services, how to access them, and poor language skills to intervene in their predicament. Their advocates took concrete steps, such as directly assisting refugees with their housing search, filling out forms or writing letters attesting to their eligibility for subsidized housing, or locating interpreters to assist them in navigating the local housing market and available rental units.²⁸

Most people who became refugee advocates worked as English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, service workers in an immigration agency, or in the health care system. However, some of these individuals were simply friendly Samaritans who happened to interact with them in their ethnic communities.

25 Robert A. Muradi, "Pathways to Housing: The Experience of Sponsored Refugees and Refugee Claimants in Accessing Permanent Housing in Toronto", *International Migration and Integration* (2008), no. 9, 93. March 3, 2022, 10.1007/s12134-008-0045-0

26 Lori Ryan, Jennifer Woodill, *A search for Home: Refugee Voices in the Romero House Community*, A Study requested by the city of Toronto, (2000), 23.

27 David St. Arnault, Noorfarah Merali, "Refugee Pathways out of homelessness in urban Alberta, Canada: implications for social justice-oriented counselling," *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, (2018): 238. February 10, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09515070.2018.1437540>

28 Ibid



Fig2.11. Florence Booth House was founded in 2000 when the City of Toronto asked The Salvation Army to provide an interim (6-9 months) shelter for women experiencing homelessness.



Fig2.12. Located on Queen Street this building has 64 beds

As powerful examples of the effectiveness of this way in quitting homelessness, Arnault & Merali share refugee interviewees' experience:

"My teacher asked me what happen to me. I couldn't explain exactly my situation because lack of communication – I didn't know any English. It was my first class at that time Zero Lingo

What they call it? There was no one. Less than grade one. She call another student from my country who can speak a little more than I do and she call my student advisor and they put me in large room and I cry so many hours and I was so sad because I didn't have anything, you know. Then they gave me all the help in finding me good house."²⁹

"It's too hard – the lucky thing we have good teachers at school. They always advise us. Any paper you bring to school you bring them to read it. Anything you have to tell them they say come and they prepare us ... We had learned where I learned English all about how to get housing and how to fill the forms for housing subsidy. Teachers helped us to fill form."³⁰

1.3. Language Barrier

In "Refugee Voice in the Romero House Community," Ryan and Woodill talk about refugees' lack of familiarity with the English language. They note that most of the refugees interviewed spoke little or no English when they arrived in Canada. As a result, a large portion of their time in Canada is invested in trying to act and feel at ease in Toronto through English language training. When asked about the difficulties that limit refugees from feeling at home in Canada, many of the refugees said that the most significant barrier is language. It is difficult for refugees to participate in Canadian culture in fundamental ways such as shopping for food, utilizing the TTC system, and meeting people at the community center if they do not speak English. Norbert, a former Romero House volunteer, shares about the language barrier:

29 David St. Arnault, Noorfarah Merali, "Refugee Pathways out of homelessness in urban Alberta, Canada: implications for social justice-oriented counselling," *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, (2018): 238. February 10, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09515070.2018.1437540>

30 *Ibid*, 239.



Fig2.13. Fort York Residence is three storeys and houses 74 shelter beds and 24 self-contained bachelor units. The shelter beds are dormitory-style with low level walls dividing the spaces into groups of two or eight. Each resident is provided a locker to store personal belongings and access to a shared laundry facility, lounge, dining hall and resource center.

“Majid (an Iranian refugee) spent two hours on the subway just going up and down and trying to find where he lived. It’s humiliating for an adult who feels he can’t do anything, to not be able to communicate with the world that is something we take for granted.”³¹

Gerry, a worker at Brottier House, shares another example to emphasize the essence of language skills:

“Language is a barrier, because sometimes people don’t understand the rules of renting a place, and may get evicted because they can’t understand the rules. Or sometimes notices are posted in the building for people to come together, and they can’t be involved in that process because they can’t read the sign.”³²

Refugees who cannot speak or read English are unable to read immigration material and may fill out forms inaccurately. This might result in a years-long backlog in the immigration system.³³

Refugees need to learn the skills required to find a job position in Toronto, fill out a resume, and communicate in a job interview, and these skills could be incorporated within ESL classes. English proficiency has a considerable impact on job opportunities in a primarily English-speaking work market.³⁴

In the early years of a refugee’s stay in Canada, low language skills make it challenging to find work. These issues are exacerbated by a lack of Canadian work experience and difficulties obtaining accreditation for foreign educational credentials.

Government-assisted refugees have a lower employment rate and insufficient economic integration than privately funded refugees in their early years in Canada, while privately sponsored refugees earn more on average than other refugee groups.³⁵



Fig2.14. Maxwell Centre is a multi-care facility offering various programs and services with a capacity for 98 men.

31 Lori Ryan, Jennifer Woodill, A search for Home: Refugee Voices in the Romero House Community”, A Study requested by the city of Toronto, (2000), 25.

32 Ibid, 26.

33 Ibid.

34 Lori Ryan, Jennifer Woodill, A search for Home: Refugee Voices in the Romero House Community”, A Study requested by the city of Toronto, (2000), 26

35 Ervis Martani, “Rebalancing and improving refugee resettlement in Canada,” Policy Options Politiques, November,2, 2020, <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/november-2020/rebalancing-and-improving-refugee-resettlement-in-canada/>.

The language barrier is not easily overcome. Refugees study and practice the English language for years. Language skills are necessary for employment opportunities, but learning English also helps one feel safe in their neighborhood.³⁶

Although English classes are essential for refugees to feel at ease in Canada, many refugee women cannot attend since childcare is not accessible.³⁷

Celia, a Mexican immigrant, is unable to attend English class since her four-year-old daughter attends junior kindergarten only in the mornings, so she spends her days learning English through library books. This negatively affects her English language skills, but it also prevents her from meeting new people in the city and forming friendships.

Celia speaks about how tough it is to overcome the language barriers by saying:

“There needs to be English with daycare. I need to know English to work for communication, I am afraid to go outside because I can’t speak English, I am afraid that someone will ask me questions.”³⁸

1. 4- Looking for Community

In Ryan and Woodill’s interviews with refugee people, many of them shared how important it is to stay connected to their culture in Toronto and how cultural links provide them strength.³⁹

Elsa a Colombian refugee, talks with tears in her eyes about how significant cultural friendship is:

“I have friends now in Canada who are also from Columbia and Chile, and our friendship is formed out of solidarity. My friend said that she came as a refugee 20 years ago, and she will help us because she



Fig2.15. This newly renovated 60-bed facility provides shelter and meals, supportive counseling, housing placement and follow up support services and referrals to employment and rehabilitation agencies for men experiencing homelessness.

36 Lori Ryan, Jennifer Woodill, A search for Home: Refugee Voices in the Romero House Community”, A Study requested by the city of Toronto, (2000), 26.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid

39 Ibid, 27.

knows what it's like to be a refugee."⁴⁰

When Arta initially arrived in Canada from Albania, she was utterly broke, and she remembers how other Albanians helped her get through those first few weeks:

"The Greek people who we rented from knew Albanians like us. They phoned us, and the woman said, "Call me if you need anything." The first thing I said was "I don't know who you are, and I hope one day I can give you something back, but right now we need \$50 for food." She came that same day with three bags of food: milk, cheese, meat and cereals."⁴¹

Other refugees described how they felt at ease and welcomed when they met someone from their country.⁴²

In the absence of community, refugees will be isolated and disoriented.⁴³

Arnault and Merali also suggest that counseling psychologists working with refugees connect them to their cultural community members to enable access to resources and opportunities. According to Arnault and Merali, this connection will help refugees exit homelessness faster.⁴⁴

Esther is an example of a refugee who is working to improve the Nigerian community in Toronto so that they can assist one another in times of need. Esther organized a Nigerian pageant to unite the Nigerian community in a spirit of hope. She explains her motivation:

"There are many Nigerians here. But they are not united at all. I think it is poverty that is causing it...There is nothing wrong with inviting someone to stay with me. But you hardly see people do that. Because the community is divided...so I put together this pageant because I felt that it is time for all of us (Nigerians) to come together and get to

40 Lori Ryan, Jennifer Woodill, "A search for Home: Refugee Voices in the Romero House Community", A Study requested by the city of Toronto, (2000), 27.

41 Ibid

42 Ibid

43 Ibid, 2.

44 David St. Arnault, Noorfarah Merali, "Refugee Pathways out of homelessness in urban Alberta, Canada: implications for social justice-oriented counselling," *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, (2018): 242. February 10, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09515070.2018.1437540>



Fig2.16. Wagner Green shelter has 40 beds and we provide harm-reduction and trauma-informed residential services to at-risk homeless young men, ages 16–24.

know one another.”⁴⁵

1. 5- Barriers to Healthcare

Accessing and utilizing mental health services has proven a challenge for immigrants and refugees of all ethnic backgrounds. Some of these barriers are refugees’ lack of mental health knowledge, the stigma of mental illness in their countries of origin and receiving communities, the financial burden of accessing mental health services, and the lack of appropriate mental health training for health and social service providers.⁴⁶

Also, according to Saberpor, although health care services seem to be available in Canada, for refugees it does not necessarily mean that they all have access to those facilities. For many refugees finding an understanding and well experienced healthcare provider who has practice in the refugee patients area is very challenging and unfortunately there are many issues with providing culturally competent care in Canada. Most refugees also have communication problems since they cannot speak English properly.⁴⁷

1.5.A. Not Recognizing Their Problem

In their study, Salami et al. found that refugees’ emotional or mental distress is often expressed and described in terms of physical symptoms. Even when they sensed a lack of overall well-being, refugees did not notice indicators of mental illness.⁴⁸

An interview participant in Salami et al.’s research explains that:

“Our clients wouldn’t even recognize that they are experiencing depression or experiencing isolation or experiencing all these kinds of



Fig2.17. The Horizons for youth provides emergency accommodations for up to 45 youth each night.

⁴⁵ Lori Ryan, Jennifer Woodill, “A search for Home: Refugee Voices in the Romero House Community”, A Study requested by the city of Toronto, (2000), 28.

⁴⁶ Bukola Salami, Jordana Salma, Kathleen Hegadren, “ Access and utilization of mental health Services for immigrants and refugees: Perspective of immigrant service providers,” International Journal of Mental Health Nursing, (2018), 2.

⁴⁷ Tara Saberpor, “Refugee and Asylum Seekers in Canada: Barriers to Health Care Services”, Glendon Journal of International Studies 9, (2016), 11.

⁴⁸ Bukola Salami, Jordana Salma, Kathleen Hegadren, “ Access and utilization of mental health Services for immigrants and refugees: Perspective of immigrant service providers,” International Journal of Mental Health Nursing, (2018), 3.

mental health concerns. They don't have a definition of mental health and they don't even know that they are grappling with the intensity of all these situations."⁴⁹

1.5.B. Language Barriers

Saberpor mentions that the most significant barrier to refugees getting health care services is language challenges and the need for interpretation. According to the Health Authority, language barriers raise the chances of "misdiagnosis, poor patient understanding of his or her disease and adherence to prescribed therapy, reduced satisfaction and confidence, and differences in prescribed treatment."⁵⁰

Salami et al. also suggest that the language barrier is the biggest impediment to accessing and using the health care system across immigrant-serving agencies.⁵¹

One interviewee in their research shares that:

"Many mental health programs, service providers, don't speak the language of newcomers and that is a big issue. When newcomers finally acknowledge that they have an issue and they want to see a psychiatrist or a psychologist somebody else has to go with them to translate and then you have to wait for that somebody to be available."⁵²

Certain groups of refugees are more prone to the adverse effects of the language barrier. For example, refugee women may have less English language proficiency than men since they may not work outside the home and have lower opportunities for language learning.⁵³



Fig2.18. Covenant House offers a variety of transitional housing options where youth learn to live independently.

49 Bukola Salami, Jordana Salma, Kathleen Hegadren, " Access and utilization of mental health Services for immigrants and refugees: Perspective of immigrant service providers," International Journal of Mental Health Nursing, (2018), 3.

50 Tara Saberpor, "Refugee and Asylum Seekers in Canada: Barriers to Health Care Services", Glendon Journal of International Studies 9, (2016), 9.

51 Bukola Salami, Jordana Salma, Kathleen Hegadren, " Access and utilization of mental health Services for immigrants and refugees: Perspective of immigrant service providers," International Journal of Mental Health Nursing, (2018), 3.

52 Bukola Salami, Jordana Salma, Kathleen Hegadren, " Access and utilization of mental health Services for immigrants and refugees: Perspective of immigrant service providers," International Journal of Mental Health Nursing, (2018), 4.

53 Ibid.

1.5.C. Isolation

Health care access for refugees and asylum seekers in Canada is complicated by social, physical, and cultural isolation. Newcomers receive support from their established communities regarding available services, accessibility, procedures, and rules.

On the other hand, many new refugees constantly find themselves isolated within communities, causing discomfort, loneliness, and anxiety. Isolation is made much more difficult by the lack of transit options. Because they are unfamiliar with the city, refugees and asylum seekers often have difficulty getting around. Furthermore, transportation necessitates financial resources as well as system understanding. Due to transportation issues or other considerations, refugees usually miss their appointments.⁵⁴

Isolation effects, like language barriers, are exacerbated by gender. According to Salami et al., Most women felt isolated because they were separated from their families and friends and had no access to child care. They had difficulty transporting themselves to and from the services since they did not know where to get them and thought they had no one to assist them.⁵⁵

2. Role of Transitional housing

Transitional housing serves as a bridge between emergency crisis support and long-term permanent housing. Although it is more long-term, service-intensive, and private than emergency shelters, it is only available for three months to three years.⁵⁶

It is designed for persons who require some structure, assistance, supervision, and skill development to transition from homelessness to stable, permanent residence. It serves as a link for persons who



Fig2.19. Robertson House is a shelter for pregnant women and women with children in need of short-term emergency shelter. Each family is provided with their own room with sleeping accommodations for their family size. There are 37 rooms (some accessible) with shared bathrooms. Families have access to a shared laundry room and eat together in the main dining room. Each resident has 24-hour staff access for assistance.

54 Tara Saberpor, "Refugee and Asylum Seekers in Canada: Barriers to Health Care Services", *Glendon Journal of International Studies* 9, (2016), 13.

55 Ibid, 14.

56 Sylvia Novac, Joyce Brown, Carmen Bourbonnais, *Finding Home: Policy Options for Addressing Homelessness in Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2009), www.homelesshub.ca/FindingHome.

require a secure, supportive environment to recover from trauma, address the issues that lead to or keep them homeless, and rebuild their support network.⁵⁷

Supportive assistance, job training placement, child care, substance abuse treatment, mental health services, and training in independent living skills are mainly given to homeless families through various combinations and ways. These initiatives' service components were created to treat the mental discomfort caused by displacement and longer-term or ongoing issues.⁵⁸

Transitional programs increasingly include training and employment assistance focused on preparing adult family members to meet local welfare to work standards or enter the job market and parenting, budgeting, and minor home repair workshops.

With the impact of welfare reform, these services are sure to increase. Housing relocation support is also an essential service for long-term housing success. This support includes identifying public and private housing options, preparing for interviews with landlords or tenant organizations, transportation, childcare, and comprehending finance and lease agreements.⁵⁹

Transitional housing offers its members several opportunities. Residents talk about the many options and advantages available to them through the transitional housing community.⁶⁰

A father mentioned:

"It just helps us know that we got a roof over our head."

Another member shared:

"I have medical problems....So they're, you know, helping me with

57 Sylvia Novac, Joyce Brown, Carmen Bourbonnais, *Finding Home: Policy Options for Addressing Homelessness in Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2009), www.homelesshub.ca/FindingHome.

58 National Symposium on Homelessness Research, United States. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Practical Lessons: The 1998 National Symposium on Homelessness Research*, (Michigan: n.p., 1999) <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=-ldHAAAAMAAJ&pg=GBS.SA3-PA6&hl=en>

59 Ibid

60 Ibid



Fig2.20. The Adelaide Resource Centre for Women offers a safe, welcoming place for all women who are homeless, socially alone and isolated, or in need of assistance.

that.”

A parent who is a new member of the community reflected:

“I’m already set up to go to counseling for substance abuse and I’ve already been to a couple AA meetings. I’ve already been to a parenting meeting. I stand to be employed within the next week or so. Wow!”

Participants discussed how other community members helped parents and their children with emotional and tangible support. Being among those who have been homeless, for example, could be helpful.⁶¹

One mother shared:

“It really feels like I have support here....Because a lot of times it’s hard to talk to people who aren’t going through what you’re going through because they don’t understand.”

Parents could also help each other with child care, and many parents saw the advantages of their children being around other children.⁶²

As one mother commented:

“Now [daughter] has friends that she can play with every day and she’s a lot happier.”

Another parent explained:

“Here the kids live together.... It’s like a big family.”⁶³



Fig2.21. Family Residence gives shelter to 52 families in need. Two-parent or single parent families with children, couples and pregnant women with a partner can come to Family Residence when they have no where to go.

61 National Symposium on Homelessness Research, United States. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Practical Lessons: The 1998 National Symposium on Homelessness Research, (Michigan: n.p., 1999) <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=-ldHAAAAMAAJ&pg=GBS.SA3-PA6&hl=en>

62 Kendal Holtrop, Sharde’ McNeil, and Lenore M. McWey, “It’s a struggle but I can do it. I’m doing it for me and my kids’: the psychological characteristic and life experiences of at-risk homeless parents in transitional housing”, *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* 41, no. 2 (2015), 177.

63 Ibid

Precedents

Since there are not many similar examples of a refugee transitional housing in Canada, other social and supportive housing examples are observed as precedents.



Fig2.22. The first precedent is the affordable housing project by Peter Barber in London
<https://www.dezeen.com/2021/10/20/peter-barber-social-housing-estate-neave-brown-award-housing/>



Fig2.23. The housing is arranged around a courtyard
<https://www.dezeen.com/2021/10/20/peter-barber-social-housing-estate-neave-brown-award-housing/>



Fig2.24. The next precedent is the Alvidrez project designed by Michael Maltzan. The Alvidrez is a proposed new permanent supportive housing development in Los Angeles.



Fig2.25. Plans will provide 150 studio apartments, and 1 manager's unit, for formerly homeless individuals.



Fig2.26. The Last Precedent is Eva's Phoenix by LGA architects. A warehouse that is repurposed to be used as transitional housing for youth. Eva's offers safe and inclusive long-term shelter, education and skills training to marginalized youth aged 16-24 in transition from homelessness to independent living.



Fig2.27. Within two, heritage-designated warehouses leased from the City of Toronto, the architects have created a central, interior community faced by ten clean-lined and contemporary townhouses that are awash in natural light from a ceiling of new skylights, whilst securely enclosed by the original brick walls.

Conclusion of the chapter

Based on the problems that most refugees face mentioned above, a new typology must exist founded on the supportive housing model. Such typology should include the following facilities:

First and foremost, it should provide a safe and secure place for living.

Secondly, by providing shared living spaces, it should offer refugees the opportunity to build a community.

Thirdly, language and cultural training programs should be available to make the transition into their new environment easier for refugees. Since many of the refugees are mothers who face the challenge of taking care of children at home, they miss out on opportunities their male family members have. In order to address this, daycare services should be included in this typology. In addition, since many of the children will integrate into a completely different culture and environment, it is essential to provide sufficient information to their parents to educate their children. Therefore, parenting courses should be offered as well.

One other problem refugees face daily is access to mental and physical health care. Therefore intensive health care programs are required. In order to address the challenges refugees will face after leaving these facilities, job training programs should be offered. These programs will help empower individuals and provide them with better future job prospects. On the other hand, this endeavor can also include presenting refugees with social services to aid with employment and finding permanent housing.

According to the definitions of transitional housing, its goal is to provide people with the structure and support they need to manage critical issues necessary to maintain permanent housing and achieve self-sufficiency and based on all the problems discussed above regarding refugees' needs after migration.

It is concluded that a transitional housing program can be beneficial for refugee communities, especially from immediately after they migrate to the time that they are stable enough to find permanent housing and live independently.

The transitional housing programs that are available in Ontario, Canada, are small or re purposed buildings that do not have enough capacity and infrastructure to host a high volume of refugees with different problems and needs; moreover, most of them are designed for specific groups of people with their unique demands like youth, people with addiction, single mothers. Therefore, it is evident that a new typology of transitional housing with higher capacity and diverse programs designed exclusively to address refugees' problems and help them find permanent housing and adapt to the new country is needed.

Chapter 3
Design Proposal

Introduction to the Chapter

Introduction

Refugees are people who were forced to leave their homes and country because of war, violence, persecution, human rights issues, political issues, famine, and other life-threatening reasons.

They face lots of trouble before and after the forced migration. When they arrive in the host country, they need serious help and support to get recovered from the mental and physical damage of forced migration, get along and accept the loss of family members, adapt to a new country with a new language and culture, and finally to find a proper job and appropriate housing in order to have a normal and healthy life again.

Canada is known for welcoming new immigrants and refugees yearly and has different programs for refugees to settle. Upon arrival, most Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) and refugee claimants stay at hotels until they find affordable permanent housing, and the problem starts here. Most refugees cannot find affordable and proper housing that is big enough to house all their family members. Even if they find a place, the house is far from city centers where they can access public transportation, health care facilities, language and training programs, and supermarkets. Being far from public transportation and training facilities makes it difficult for refugees to learn the language and culture of the new country and access health care. This barrier isolates the refugee communities and makes it very difficult for them to find a job; therefore, they will not be able to pay the housing rent, eventually leading to homelessness. Among refugees, women are more vulnerable since, culturally, they are responsible for taking care of children and cooking. They have less time and opportunity to participate in training classes and follow up on their mental and physical health, so there is a higher chance that refugee women become isolated and homeless.

Homelessness is a growing phenomenon in big cities of Canada. As a country that accepts a high number of refugees, it is vital to make sure they can sustain a good life in the host community to integrate into the society and contribute to the country's growth rather than falling into homelessness, being isolated with all the mental and physical traumas they already had.

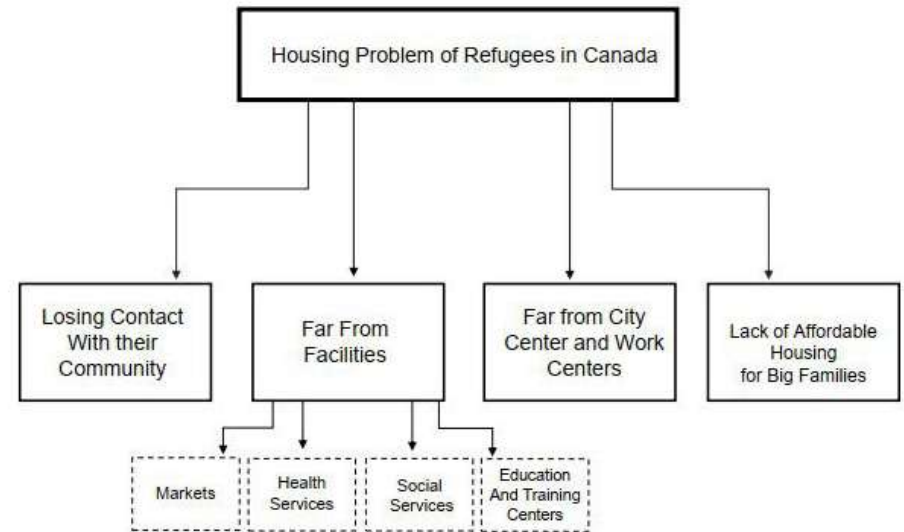


Fig3.1. Because refugees are usually settled in any available accommodation, they face problems after moving to their first permanent housing. This diagram shows only a few refugees' housing problems with permanent housing options.

Although Canada has many transitional housing programs, a lack of transitional housing designed specifically for refugee communities is sensed.

Most of the existing transitional housing in Ontario are either re-purposed history houses and warehouses or dormitory-style that do not have the capacity and facilities to house and accommodate refugees and are designed to house specific groups of people like women, men, youth, and other groups.

A new transitional housing typology is needed to include some facilities that ease refugees' integration into society.

Like workshops and training programs to help refugees learn the host country's language easier, learn about the culture, how to apply for permanent housing and what they should expect, how to apply for health care, how to open a bank account, and get prepared for finding a job, and a daycare to allow women or single women to participate in the workshops and follow up on their needs or have some time on their own.

This thesis suggests a possible transitional housing design for Afghan refugees that have recently been accepted to Canada after the Taliban overtook Afghanistan in the hope of helping Afghan and all refugees in Canada and possibly around the world have a sanctuary of peace and be empowered before they are entirely on their own.

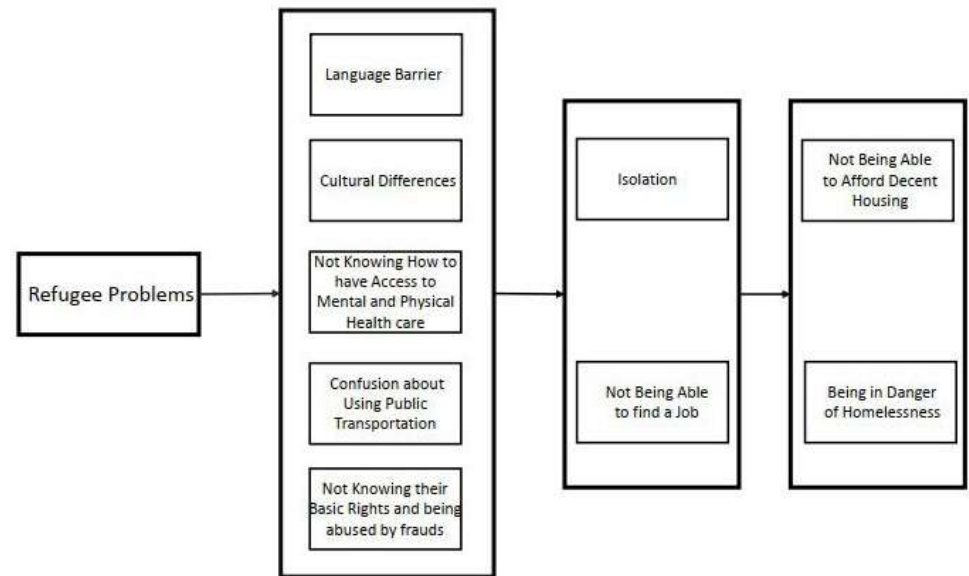


Fig3.2. The housing problem is not the only issue that refugees must face daily. Most refugees face other difficulties like language barriers, cultural differences, access to health care, navigation in the city, and other problems. These problems are more significant with refugee women since they usually take care of the children and do the household work and barely find time to take care of their mental and physical health, learn the language, find a career, and integrate into society.

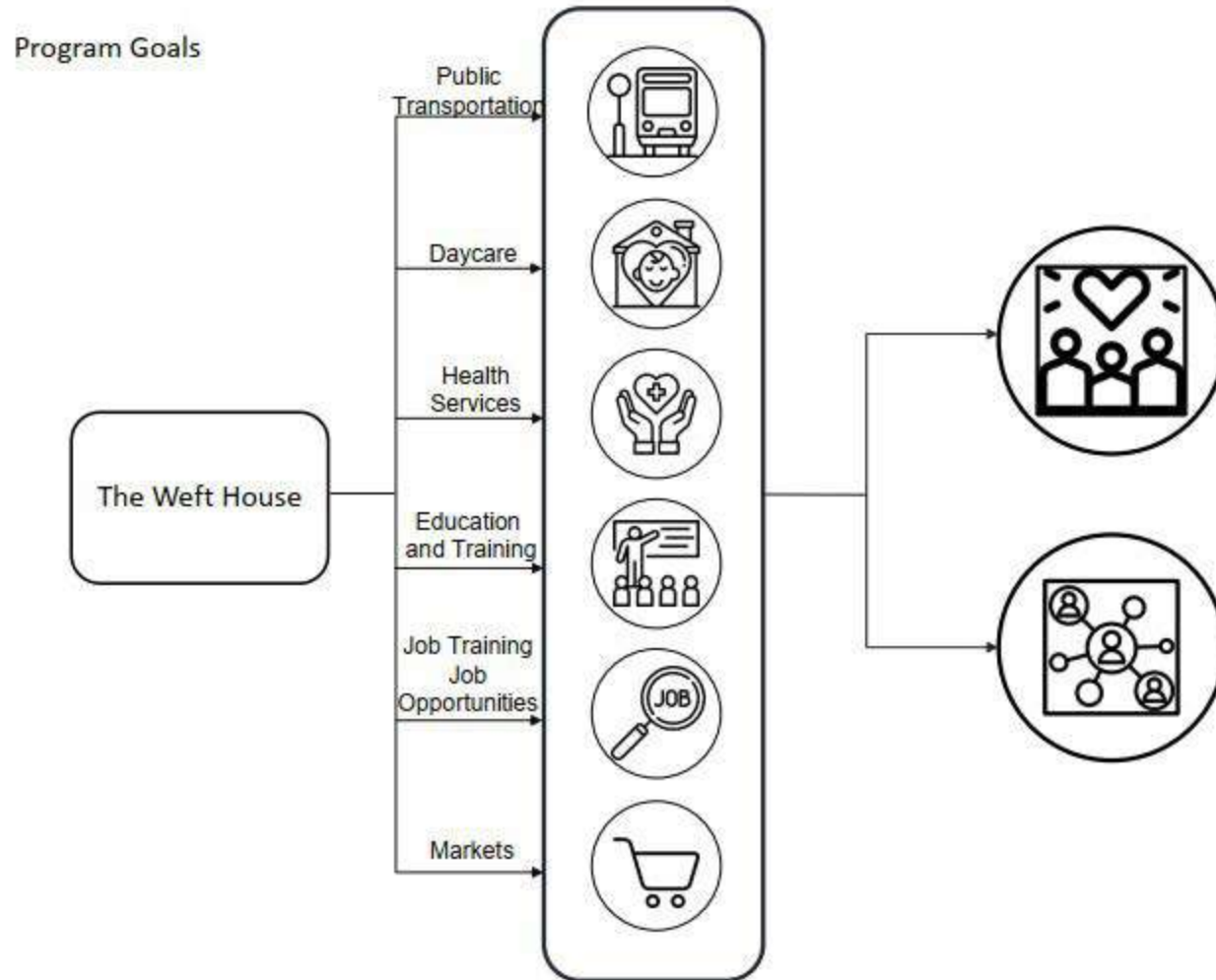


Fig3.3. The Weft House is a Transitional housing Proposal for refugee communities where they can have a safe and, secure and clean space to live and share with their community and family, have easy access to public transportation, receive daycare facilities; therefore, parents, especially women can also have time to take care of themselves and benefit from training facilities, quickly receive mental and physical health care aids, benefit from language and culture and lifestyle training workshops, work and also being trained to find a job more effortless in the future and have access to their desired food and living needs. In order to integrate into have a better life and integrate into the host society.

Site Analysis

Site Analysis: Location



Canada



Ontario



Etobicoke

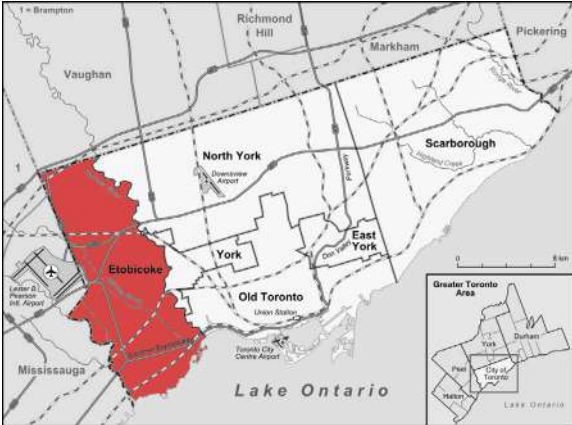


Fig3.4. As mentioned, the program is proposed for Canada; as a part of the City of Toronto, Etobicoke is the chosen site since it has many opportunities for future housing and career development.

Site Analysis: Location

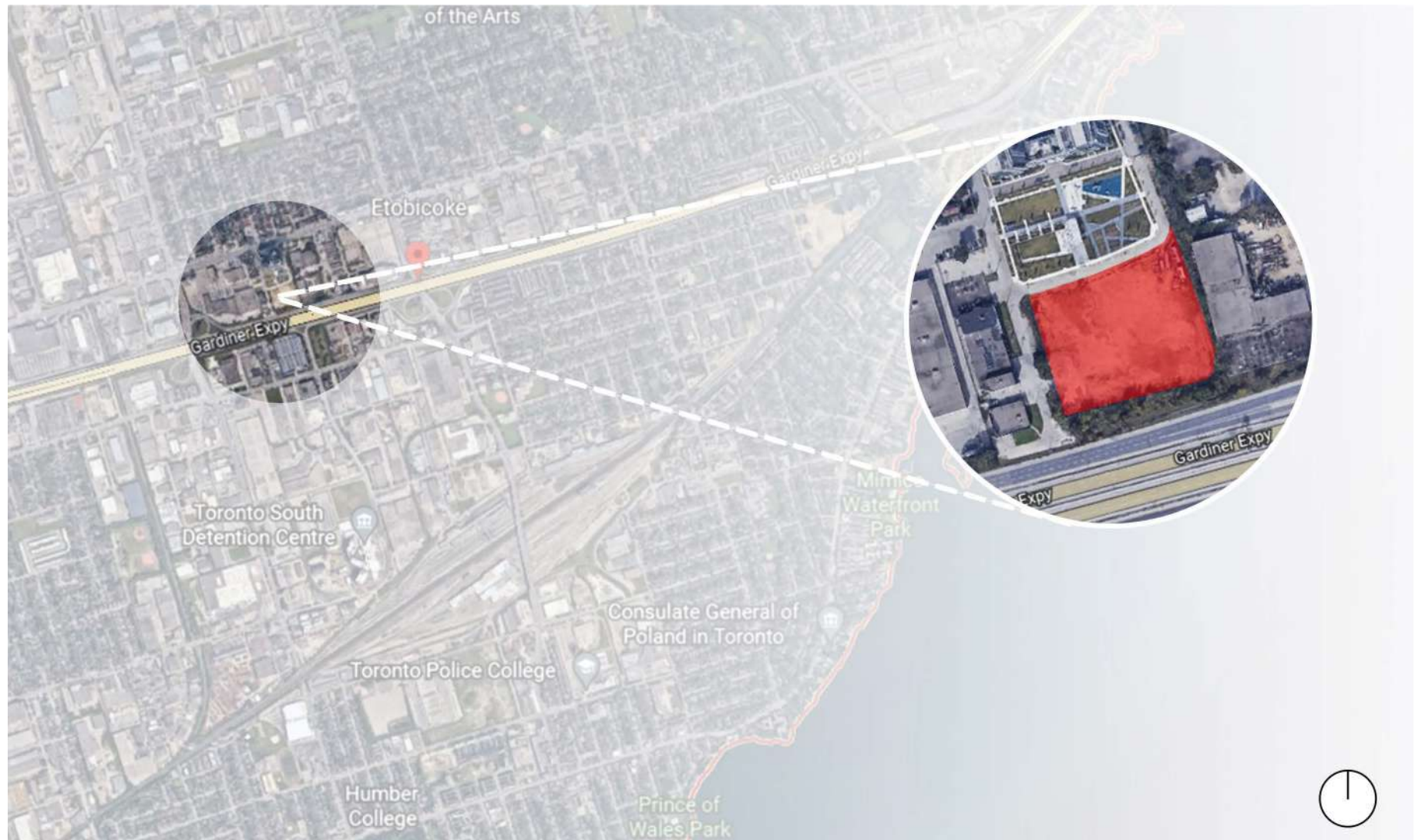


Fig3.5. Site's location in a closer look.

Site Analysis: Access to the site



Fig3.6. The site is between Gardiner Expressway and The Queensway from north and south and in a dead end between Zorra and Caven Street from east and west.

Site Analysis: Neighbours

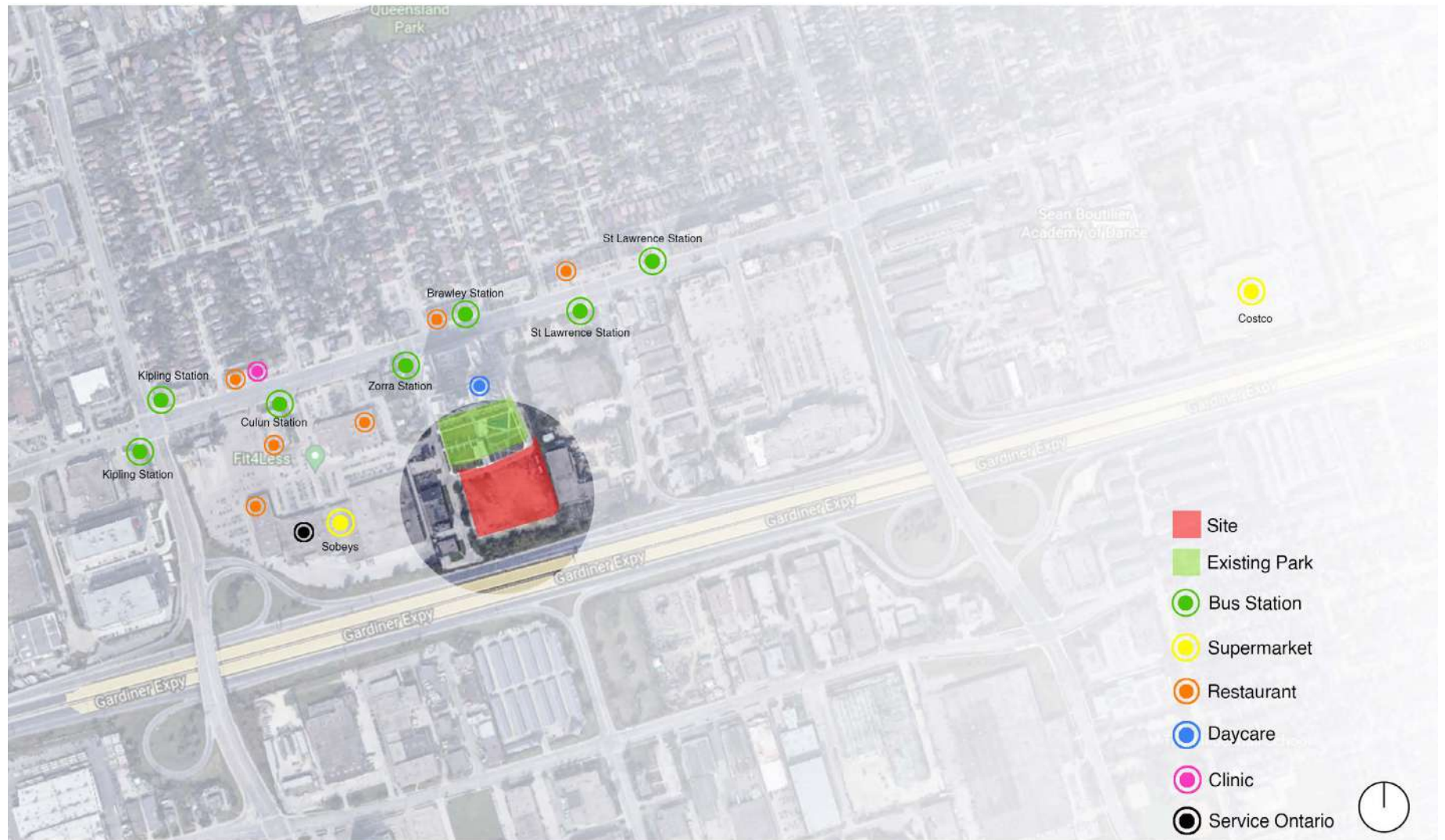


Fig3.7. The site has good access to public transportation (within 45 minutes to downtown Toronto by bus). Besides that, supermarkets, a daycare, restaurants, a small clinic, and a park are close to the site. The Service Ontario location near the site can facilitate the process of getting an ID or a health card and other necessary jobs that need to be done when arriving in Canada. The site also has good visibility from Gardiner Expressway.

Site Analysis: Existing Neighbors



Fig3.8. Currently, the majority of residential buildings in the area are low-rise to mid-rise developments.

Site Analysis: Development Applications

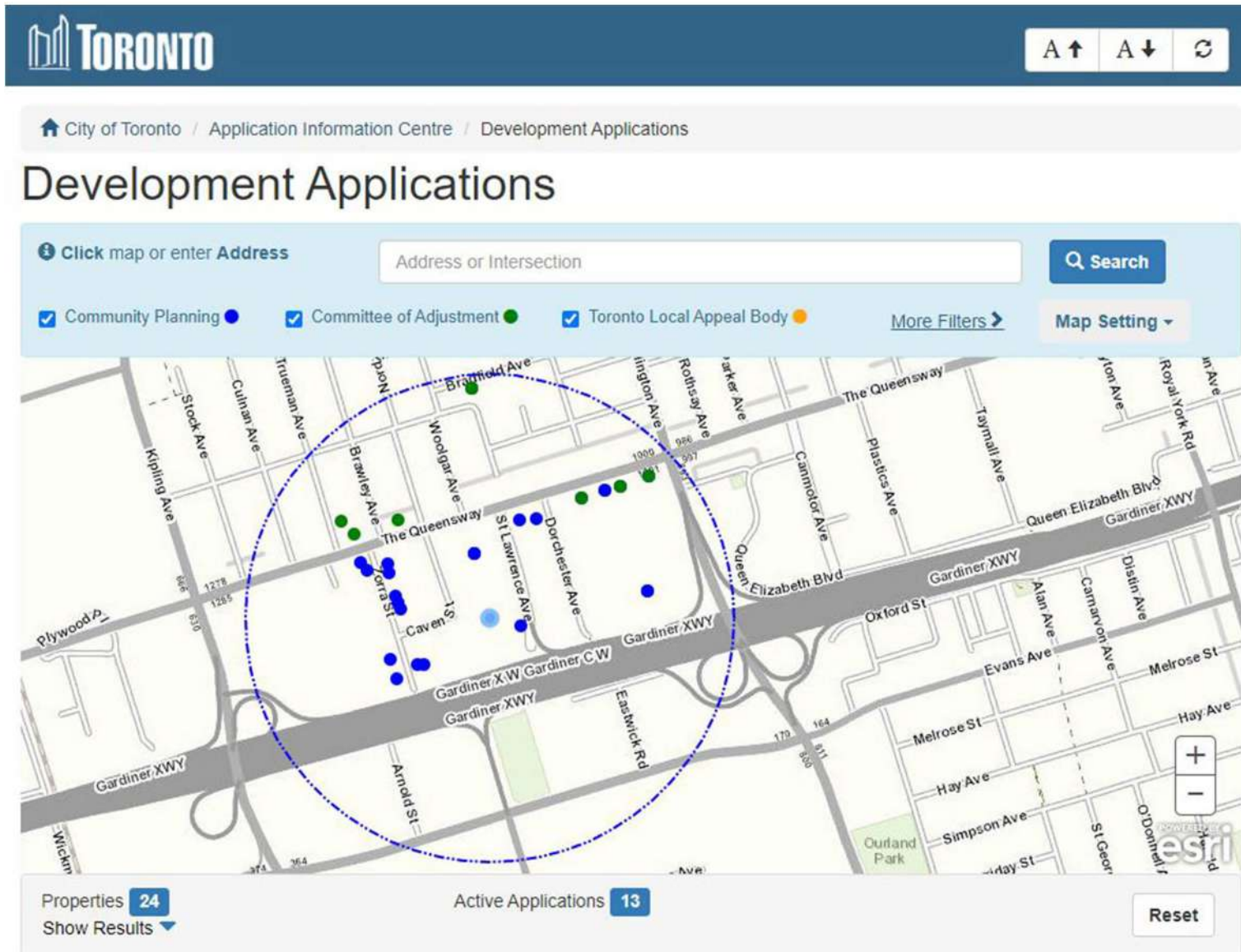


Fig3.9. The development applications submitted to the City of Toronto were observed to see the site's and neighborhood's future.

Site Analysis: Future of the Site and Neighborhood



Fig3.10. The neighborhood is becoming a residential neighborhood, and unfortunately, most of the proposed designs are high-rise condominium towers. Most of the condominium tower developments do not have affordable units, and they also make the urban environment unpleasant by casting shadows and creating wind tunnels.

Massing Studies

Massing Study

Big Family Units
 Small Family Units
 Retail and Public Facilities
 Courtyard

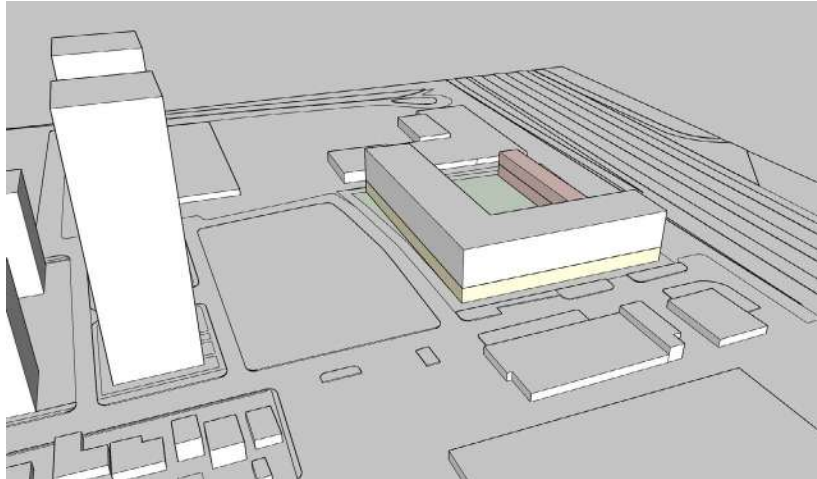


Fig3.11. First Alternative

- The residential building has good lighting ☑
- The residential building receives less noise from the highway since the Big Family Units Building faces the Highway. ☒
- Courtyard is Private ☑
- Retails have good visibility from the highway since the Big Family Units' Building blocks them. ☒

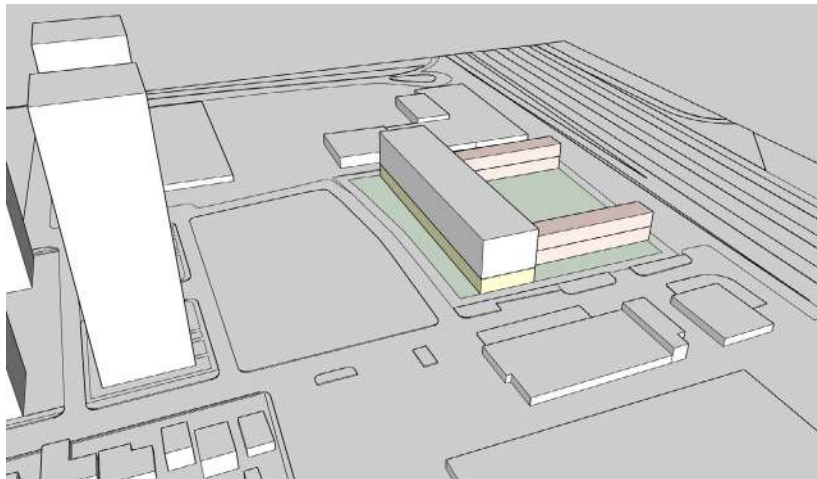


Fig3.12. Second Alternative

- The residential building has good lighting ☑
- The residential building receives some noise from the highway ☑
- Courtyard is Private ☒
- Retails have good visibility from the highway ☒

Massing Study

Big Family Units
 Small Family Units
 Retail and Public Facilities
 Courtyard

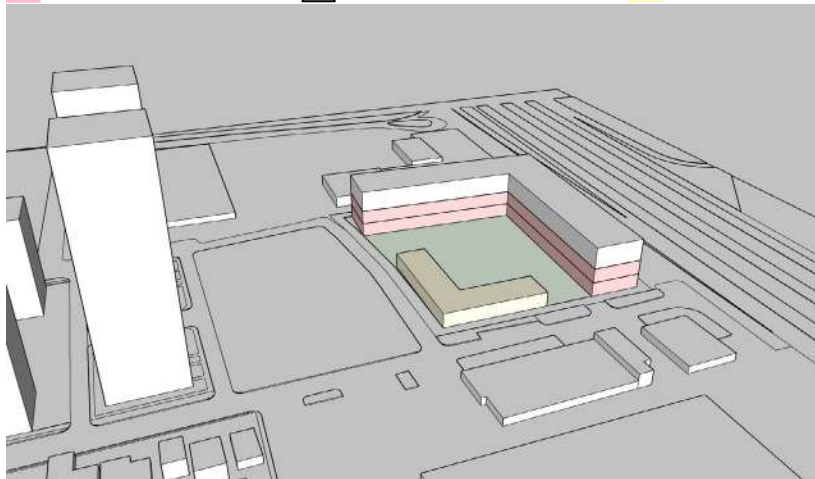


Fig3.13. Third Alternative

- The residential building has good lighting ✓
- The residential building receives less noise from the highway ✗
- Courtyard is Private ✓
- Retails have good visibility from the highway ✗

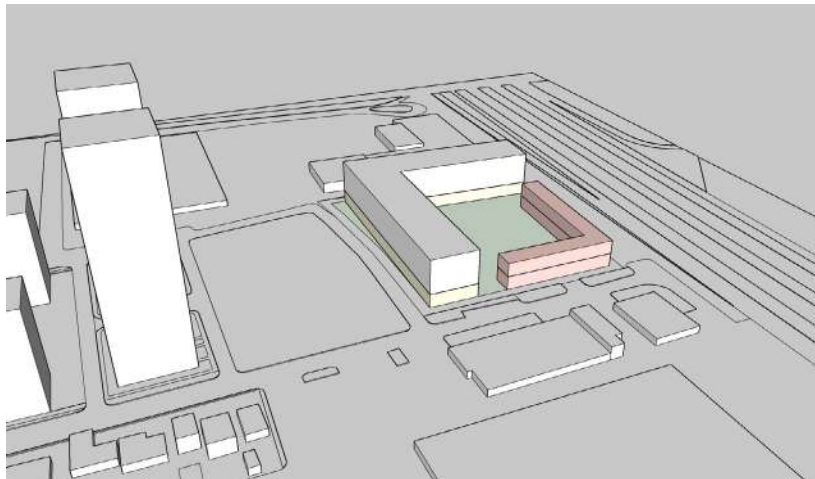


Fig3.14. Fourth Alternative

- The residential building has good lighting ✓
- The residential building receives less noise from the highway since the Big Family Units Building faces the Highway. ✗
- Courtyard is Private ✓
- Retails have good visibility from the highway since the Big Family Units' Building blocks them. ✗

Massing Study

Big Family Units
 Small Family Units
 Retail and Public Facilities
 Courtyard

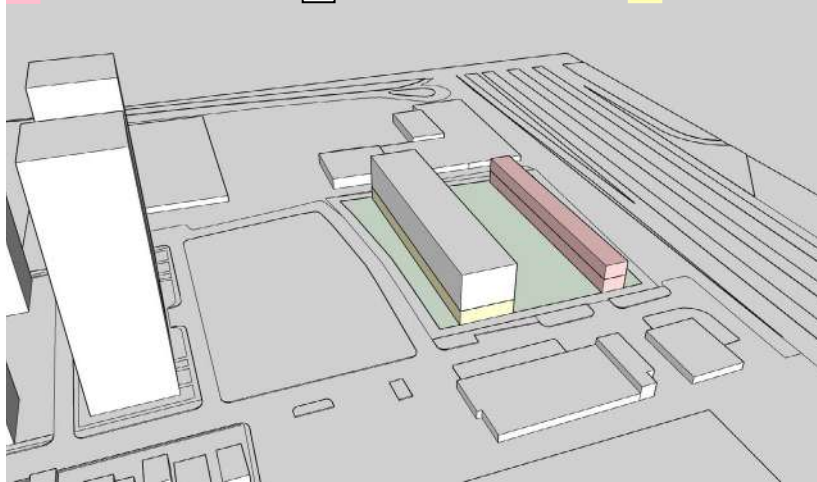


Fig3.15. Fifth Alternative

- The residential building has good lighting ☑
- The residential building receives less noise from the highway ☒
- Courtyard is Private ☑
- Retails have good visibility from the highway ☒

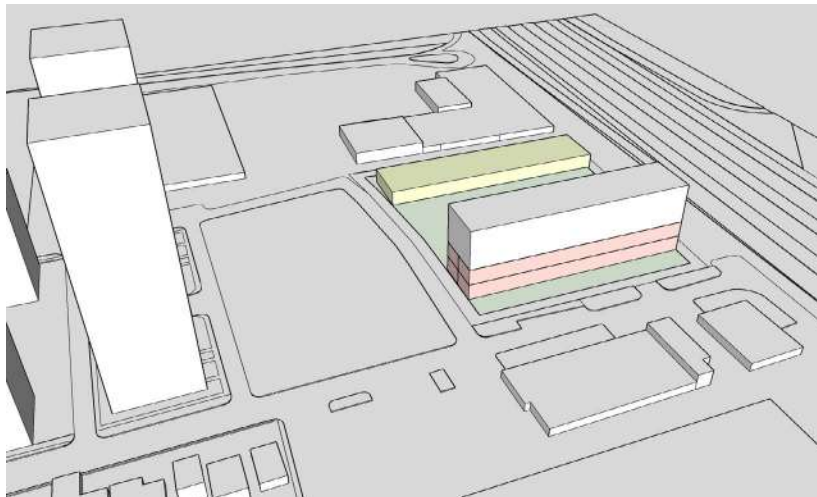


Fig3.16. Sixth Alternative

- The residential building has good lighting ☑
- The residential building receives less noise from the highway ☒
- Courtyard is Private ☒
- Retails have good visibility from the highway ☑

Massing Study

Big Family Units
 Small Family Units
 Retail and Public Facilities
 Courtyard

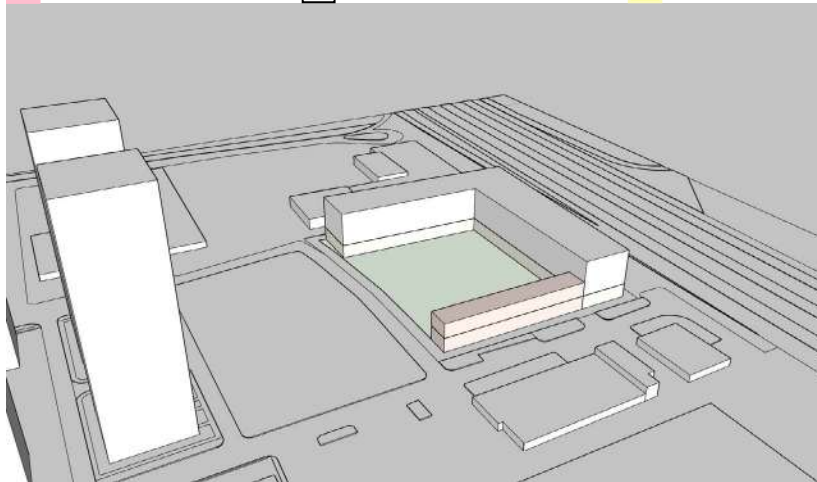


Fig3.17. Seventh Alternative

- The residential building has good lighting ☑
- The residential building receives less noise from the highway ☒
- Courtyard is Private ☒
- Retails have good visibility from the highway ☑

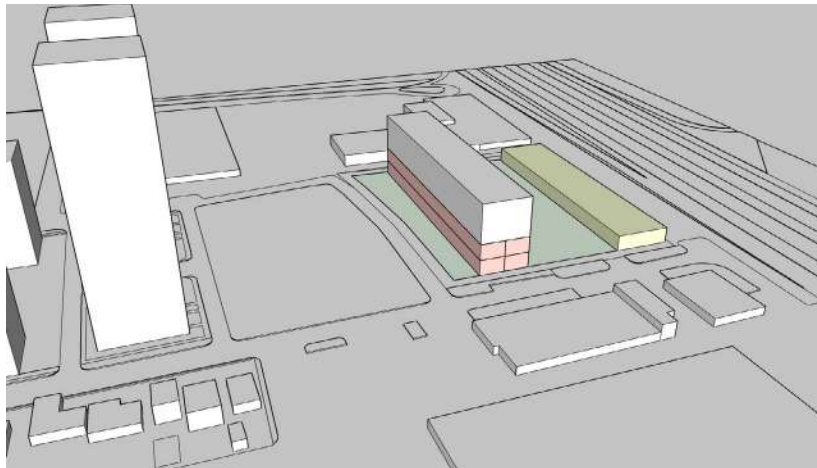


Fig3.18. Eighth Alternative

- The residential building has good lighting ☑
- The residential building receives less noise from the highway ☑
- Courtyard is Private ☑
- Retails have good visibility from the highway ☑

Massing Study

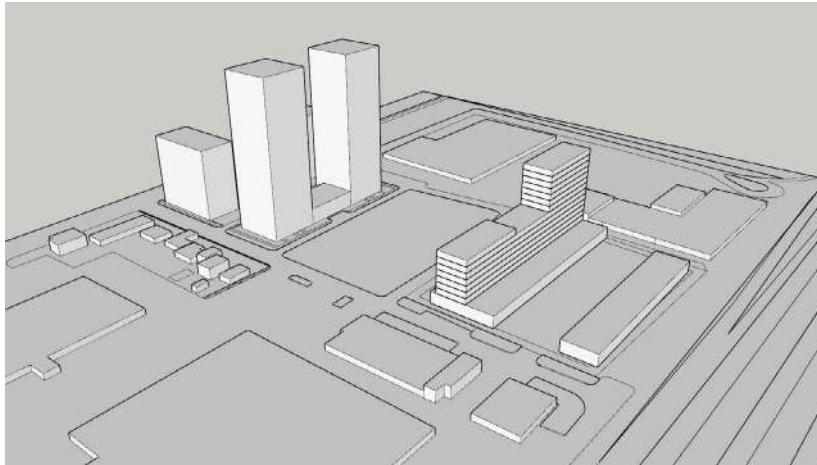


Fig3.19. Ninth Alternative

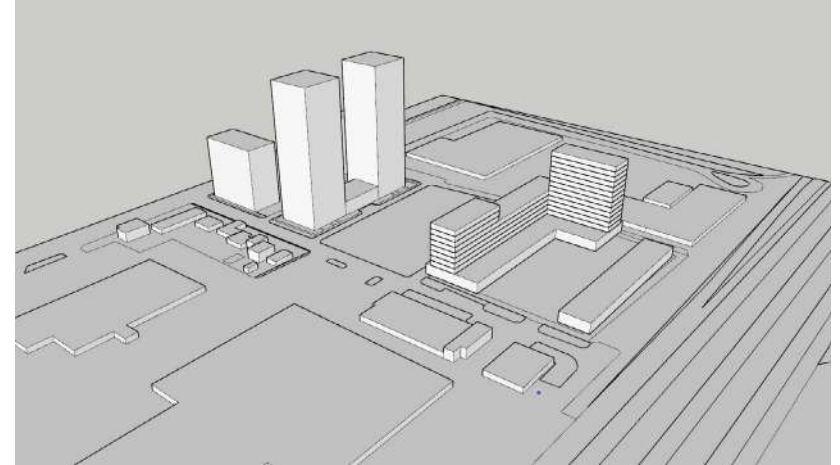


Fig3.20. Tenth Alternative

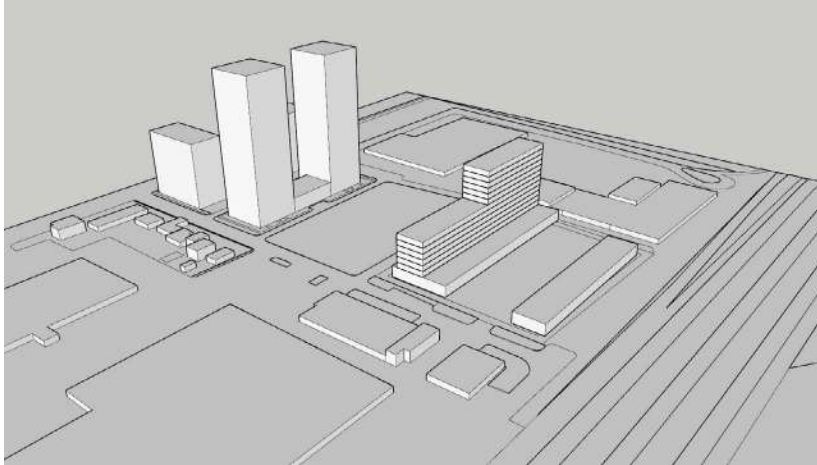


Fig3.21. Eleventh Alternative

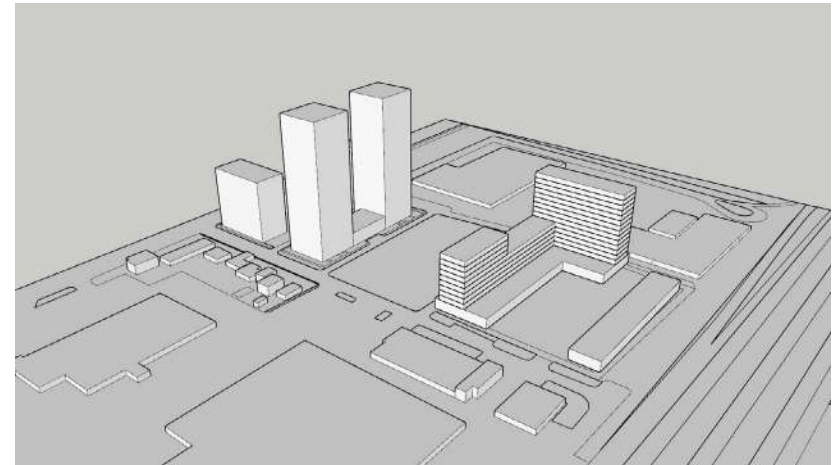


Fig3.22. Twelfth Alternative

Based on the initial massing study, it was decided to have the residential program farther from the highway (A residential program with amenities on two floors of double height podium and units on upper floors) and the retail and public program closer to the highway.

Massing Study

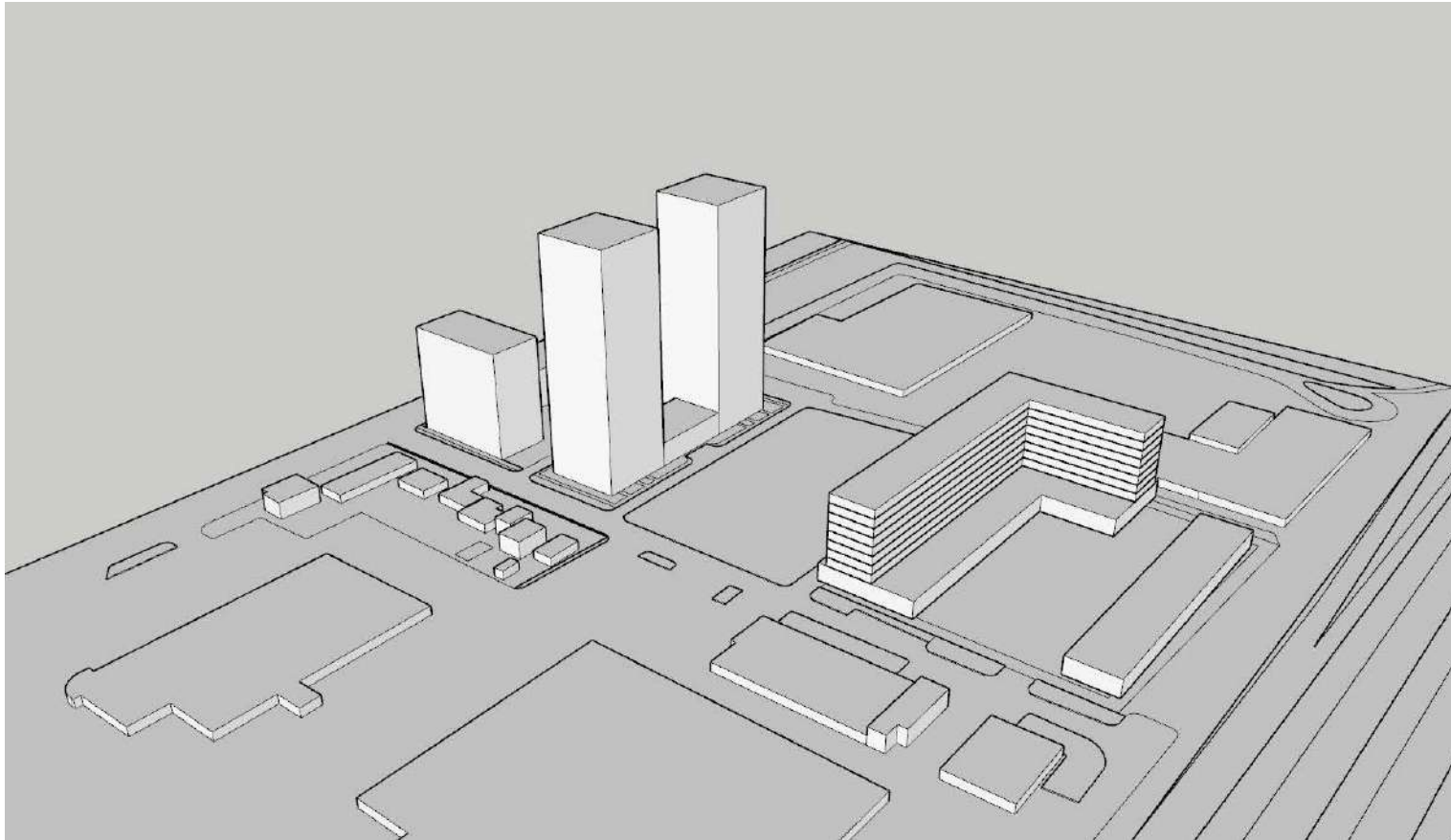


Fig3.23. Final Alternative

Among all tower and podium alternatives, the one that looked simpler to build, needed fewer staircases, could fit a good number of units and was not too high or too low was chosen.

Analytical Diagrams

Conceptual Form Diagram

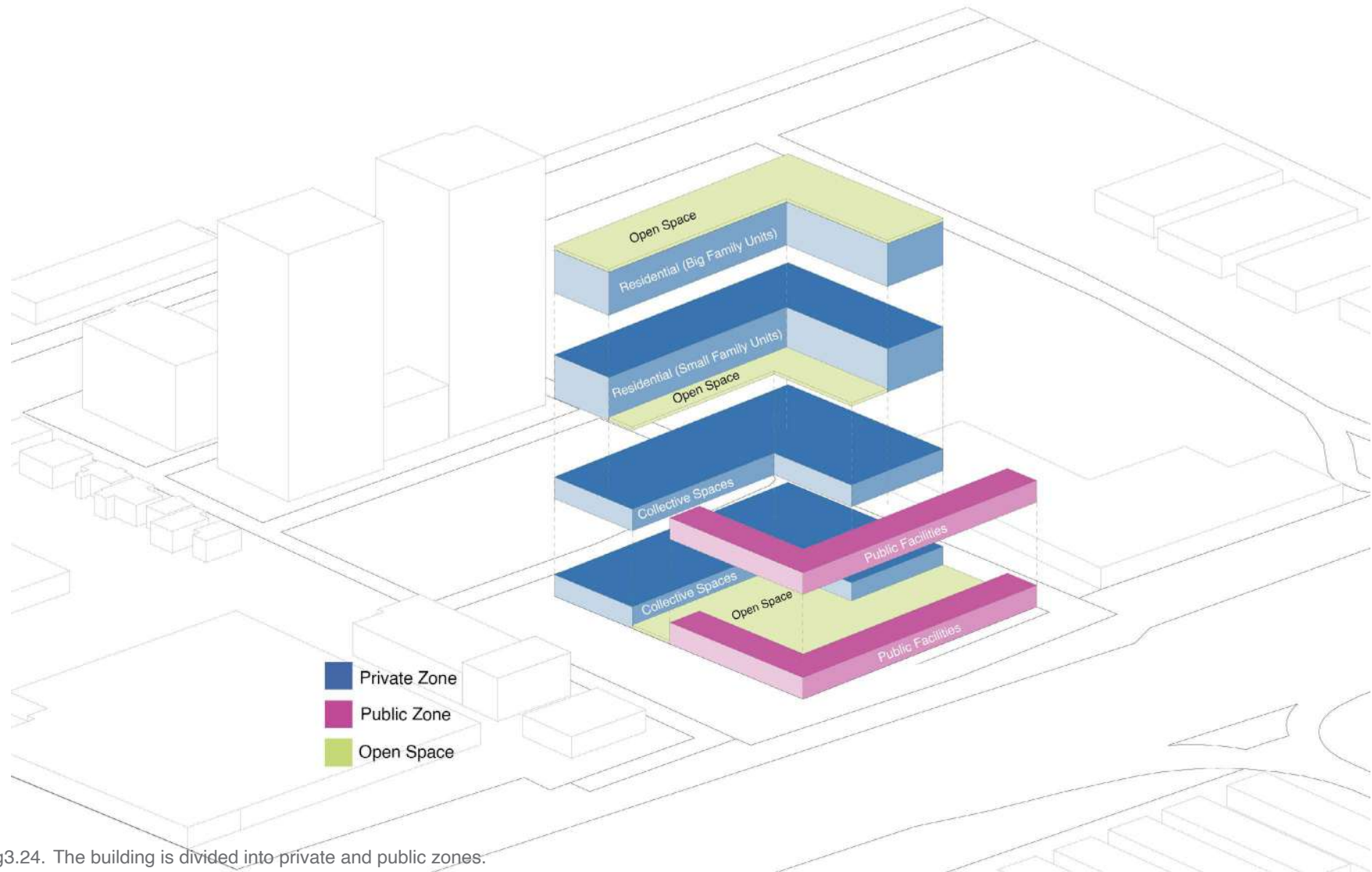


Fig3.24. The building is divided into private and public zones.

The public zone is situated closer to the Highway, and the private zone is closer to the open space and the residential towers on the site's north side.

Public Building includes retail and other Facilities, and, in the private zone, collective activities are placed on the first two floors, and residential programs are located on the upper floors.

Zoning Diagram

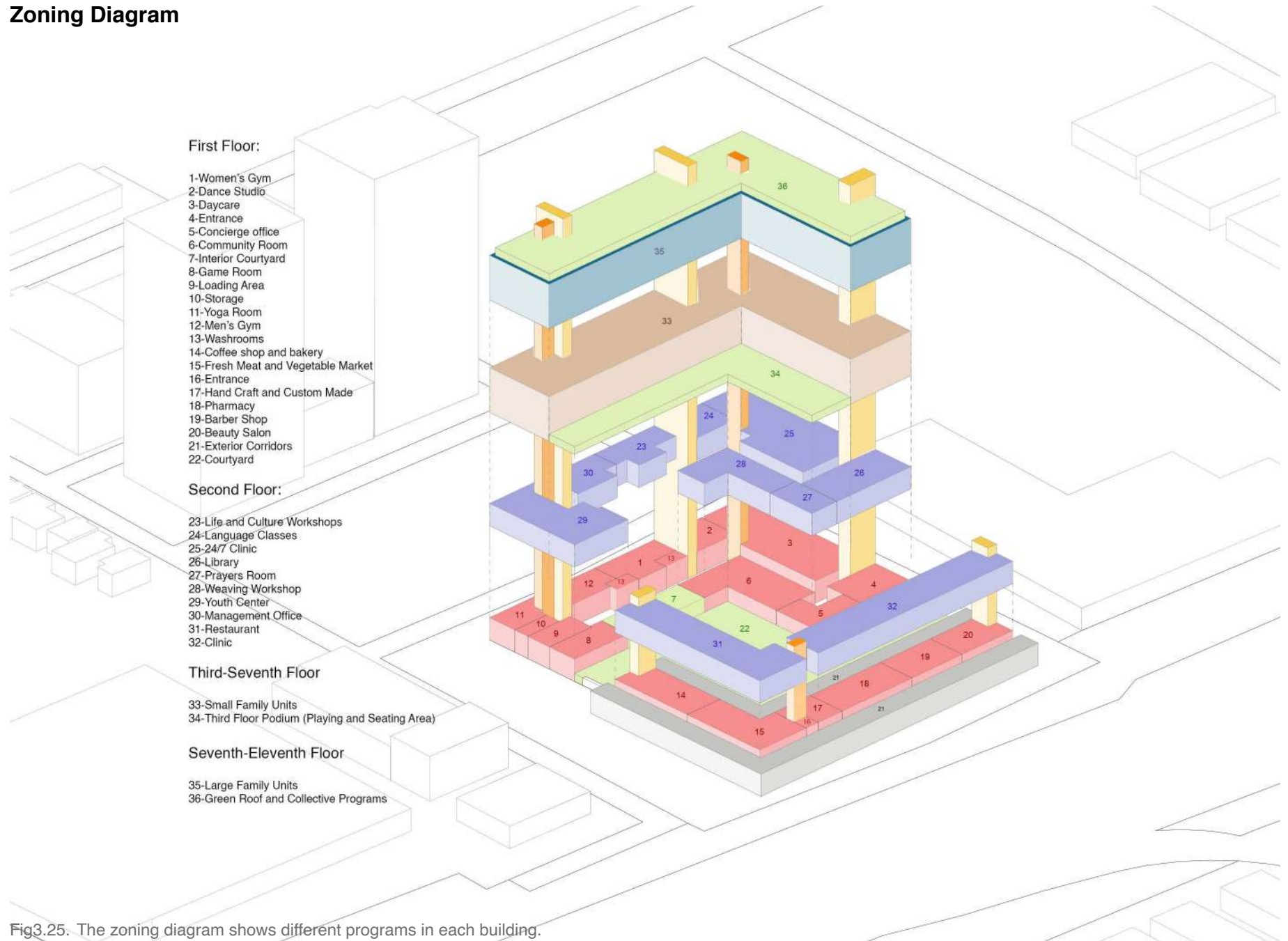


Fig3.25. The zoning diagram shows different programs in each building.

Building General Floor Plans

Access to the building

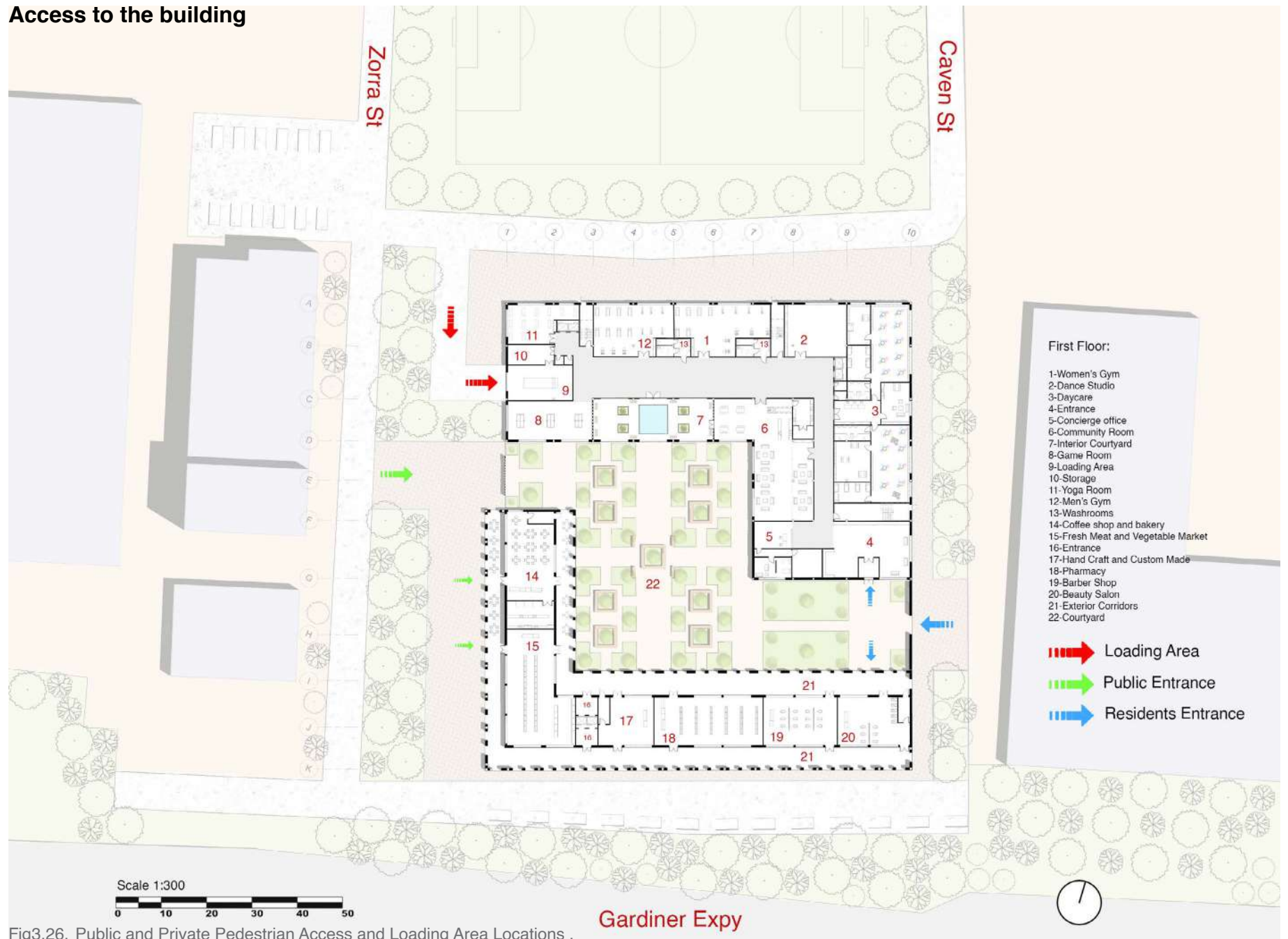


Fig3.26. Public and Private Pedestrian Access and Loading Area Locations .

Ground Floor Plan

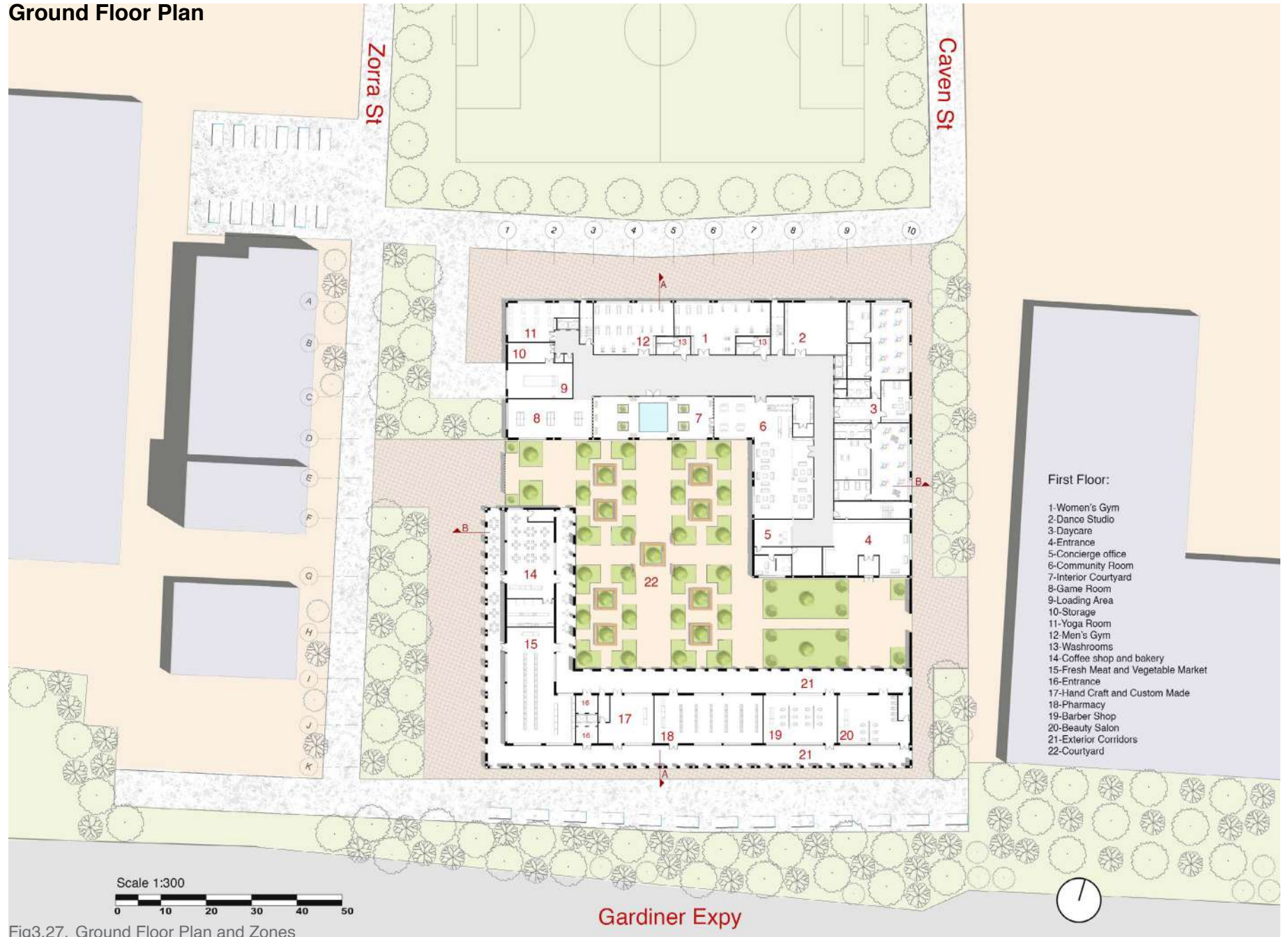


Fig3.27. Ground Floor Plan and Zones

Second Floor Plan

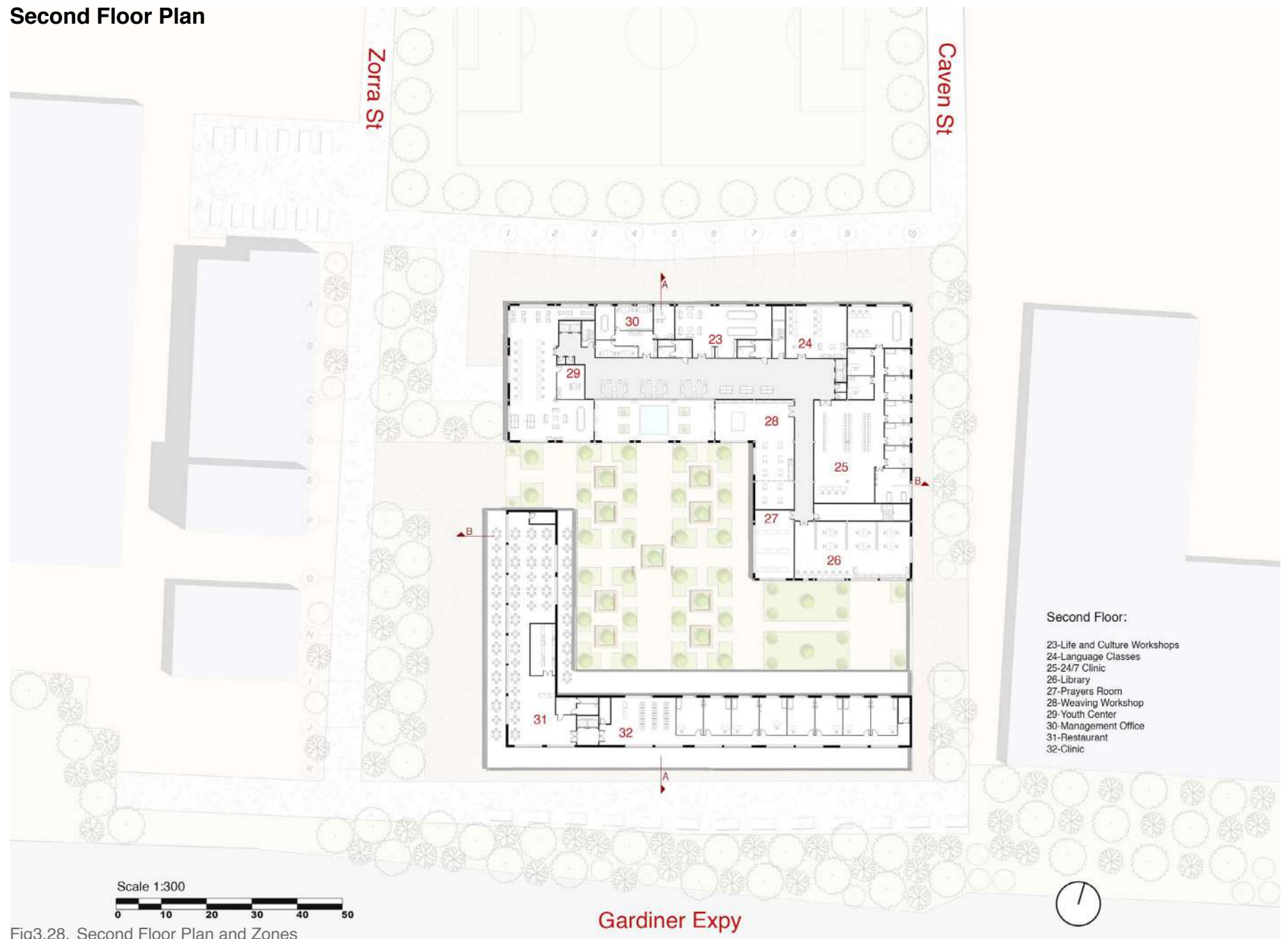


Fig3.28. Second Floor Plan and Zones

Second Floor Plan-Alternative

It is anticipated that the building will get filled gradually. However, even after all the units are occupied, public amenities can be booked in advance so that all the residents can reasonably access the amenities. In this alternative, two rooms are added to the program; room 29 is an extension to the existing prayer room and can be repurposed in response to the residents' needs. Room 30 is a governance office for a better building organization.

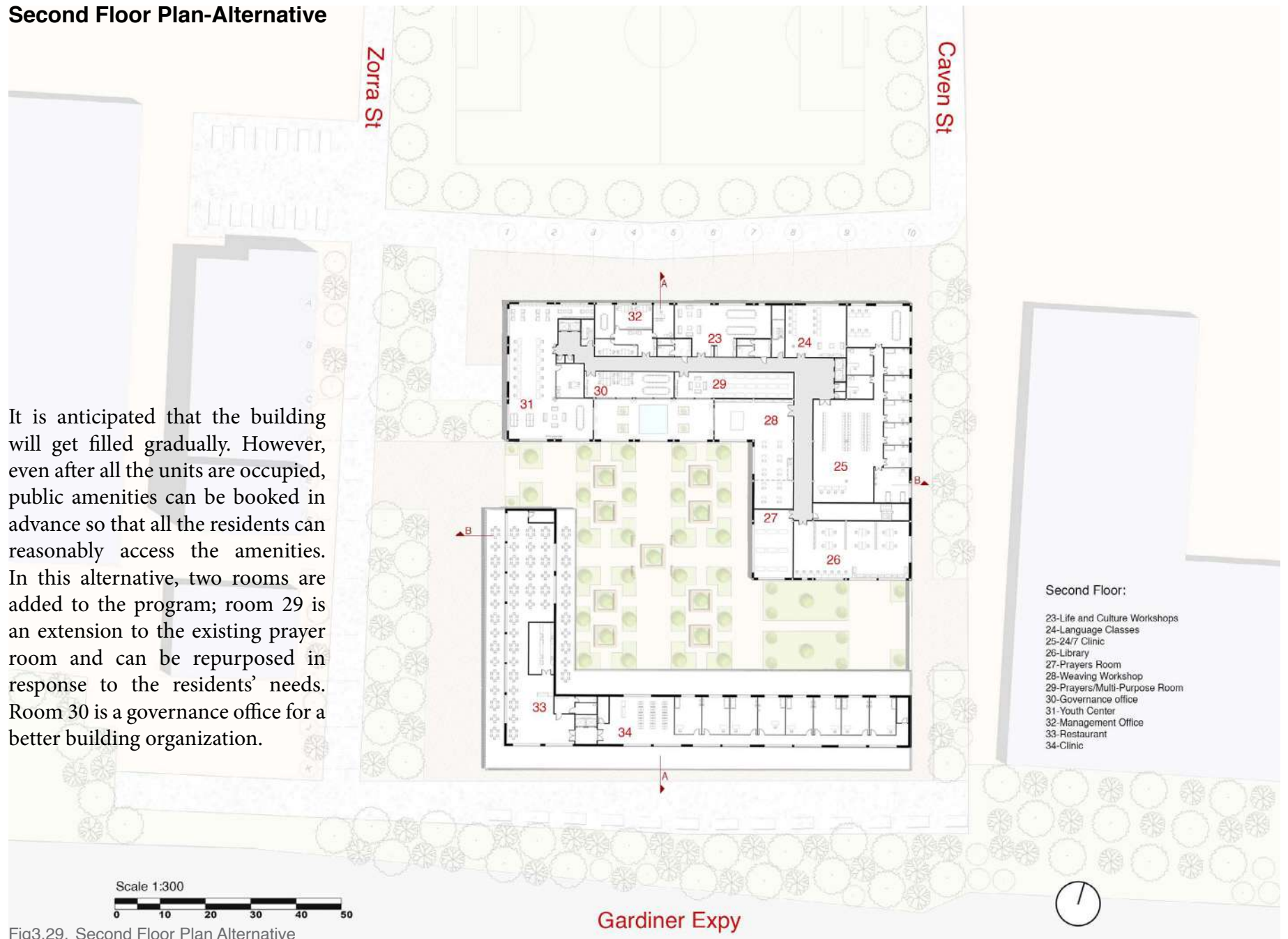


Fig3.29. Second Floor Plan Alternative

Third to Seventh Floor Plans

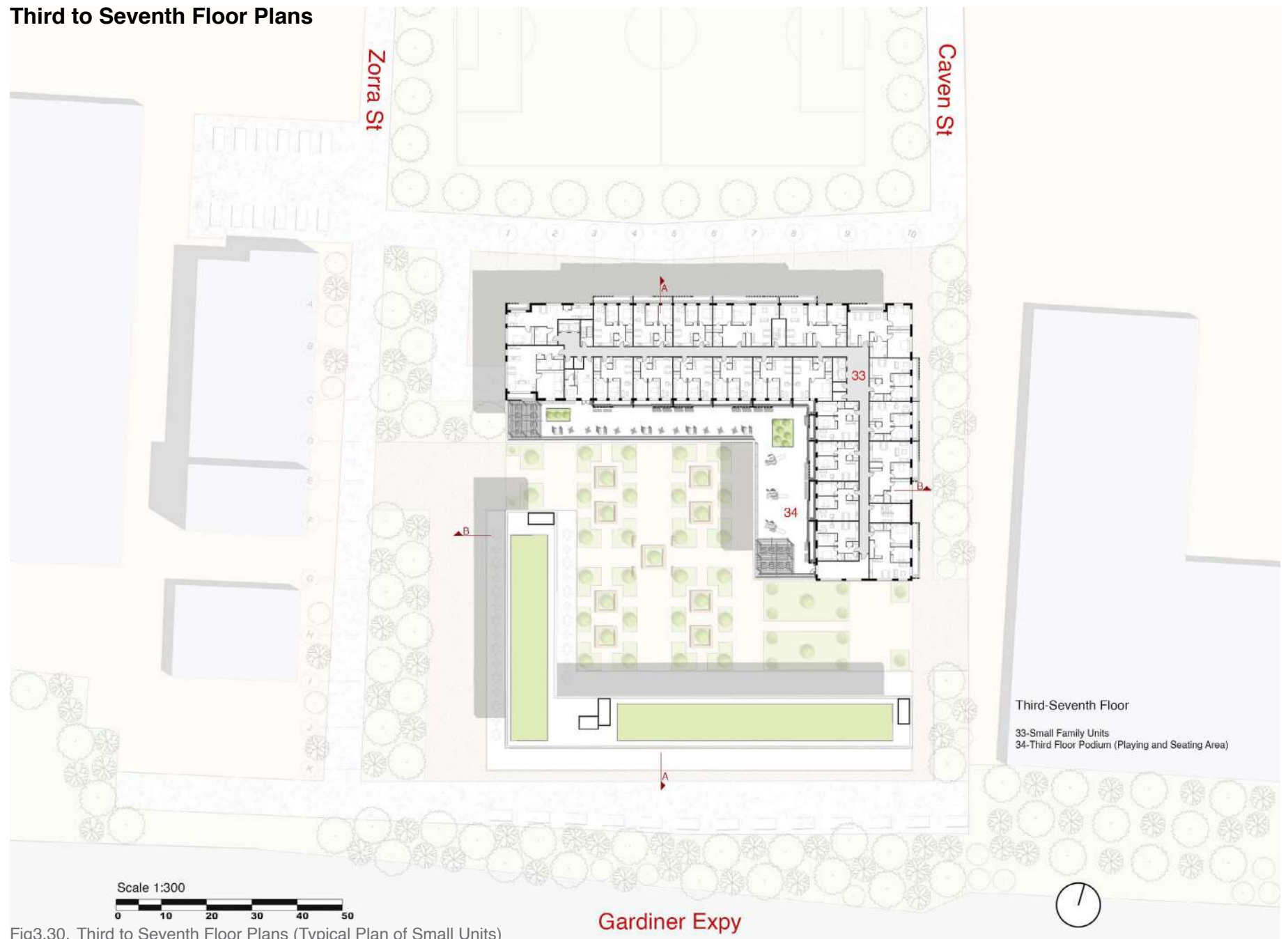


Fig3.30. Third to Seventh Floor Plans (Typical Plan of Small Units)

Seventh to Eleventh Floor Plans (First Floor of the Two Story Units)

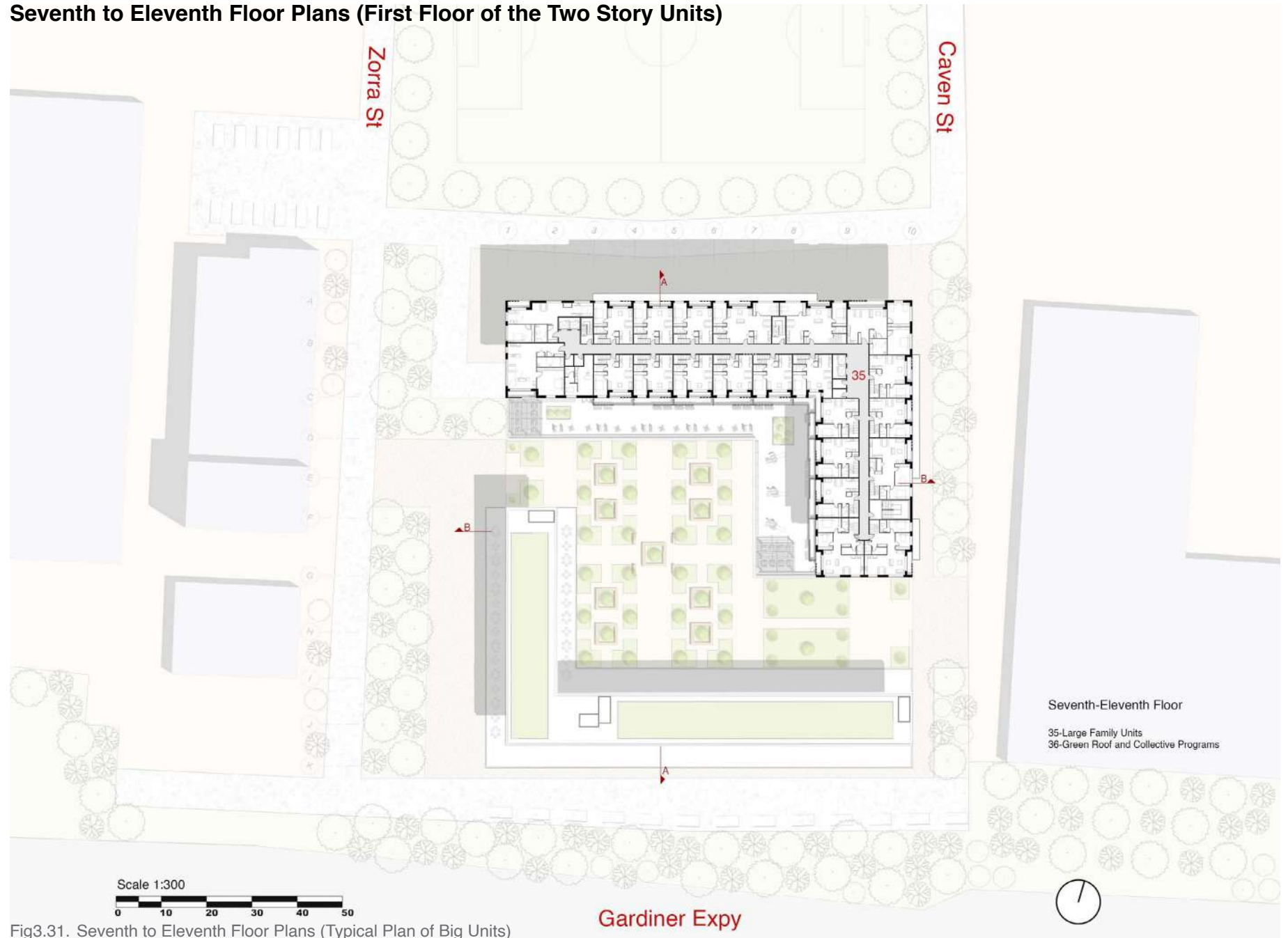


Fig3.31. Seventh to Eleventh Floor Plans (Typical Plan of Big Units)

Seventh to Eleventh Floor Plans (Second Floor of the Two Story Units)

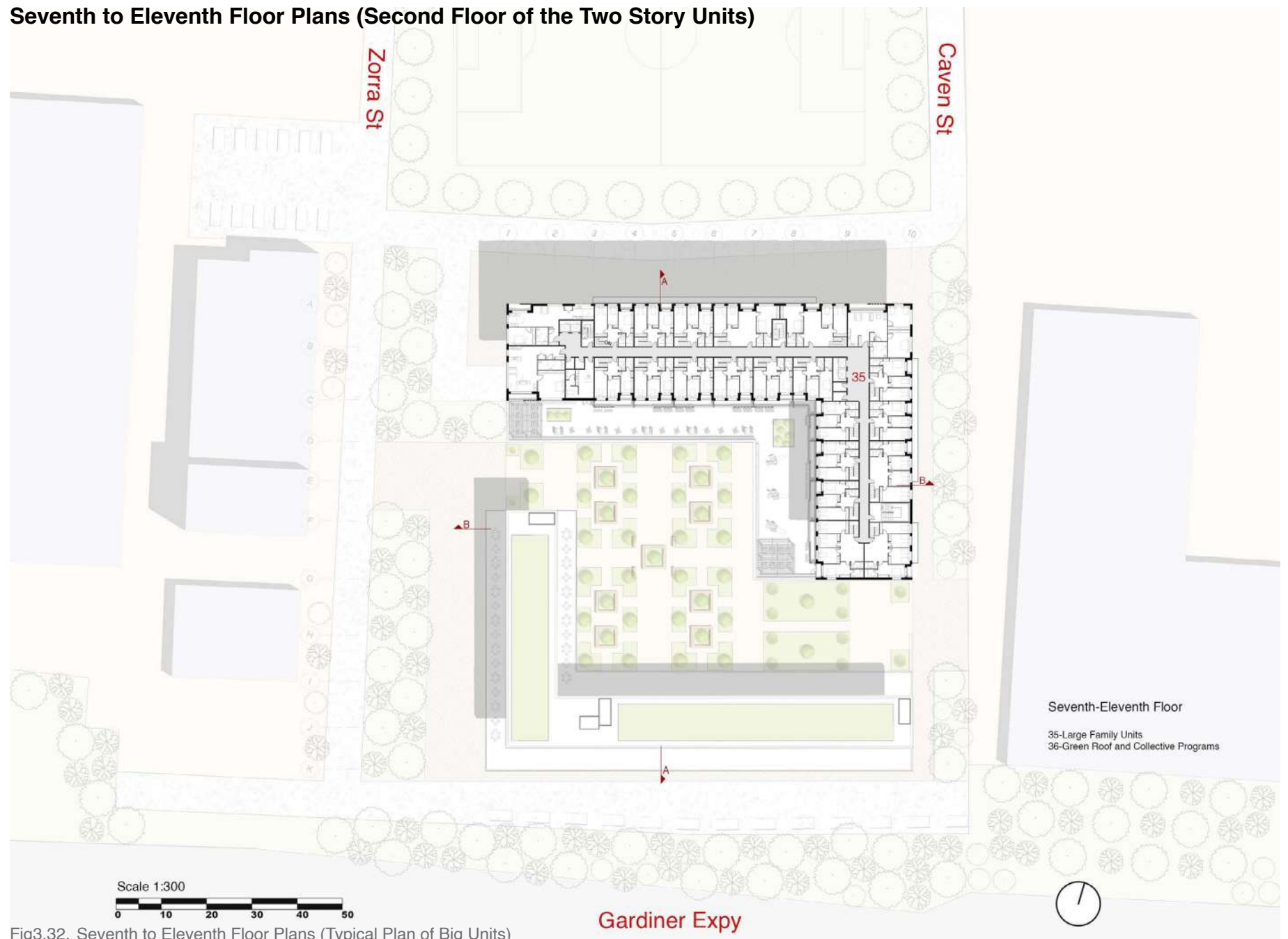


Fig3.32. Seventh to Eleventh Floor Plans (Typical Plan of Big Units)

Roof Plan

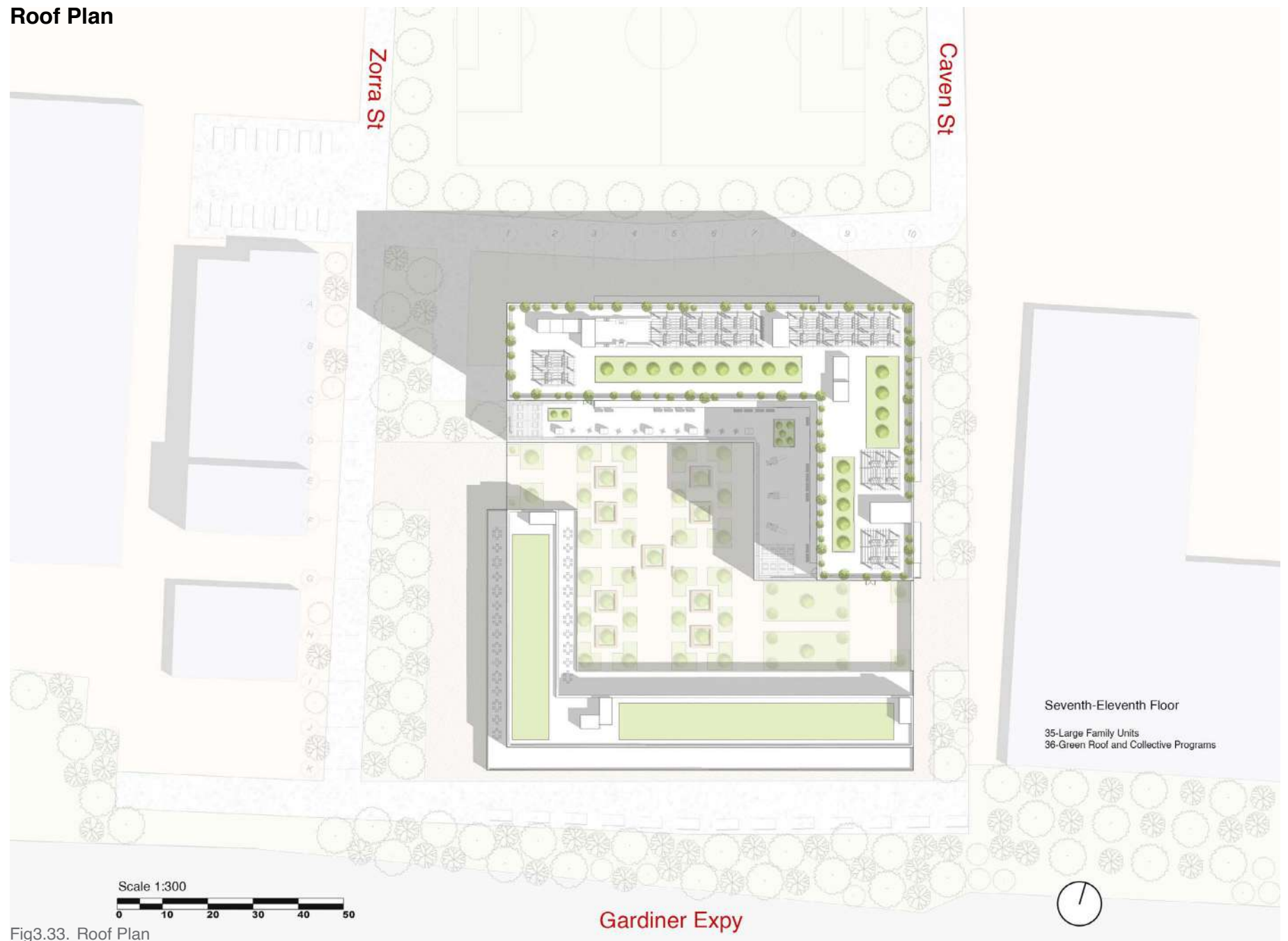
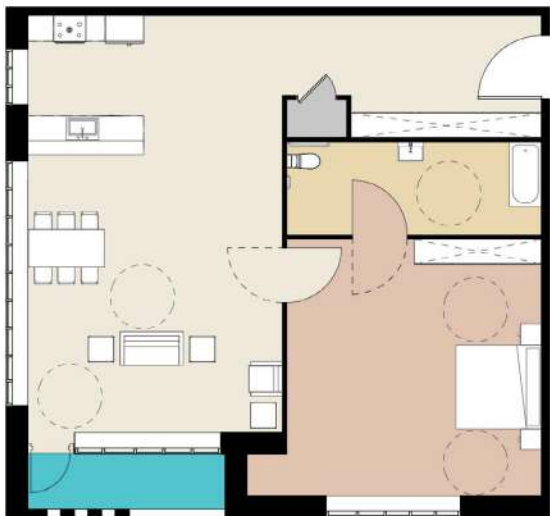


Fig3.33. Roof Plan

Residential Unit Floor Plans

Barrier Free Unit 1



Area= 130 Sqm



Fig3.34. There are three types of barrier-free units on each floor. It is possible to customize the design of the units according to users' needs, for instance, if the washroom door opens in the bedroom or the entrance corridor.

Barrier Free Unit 2

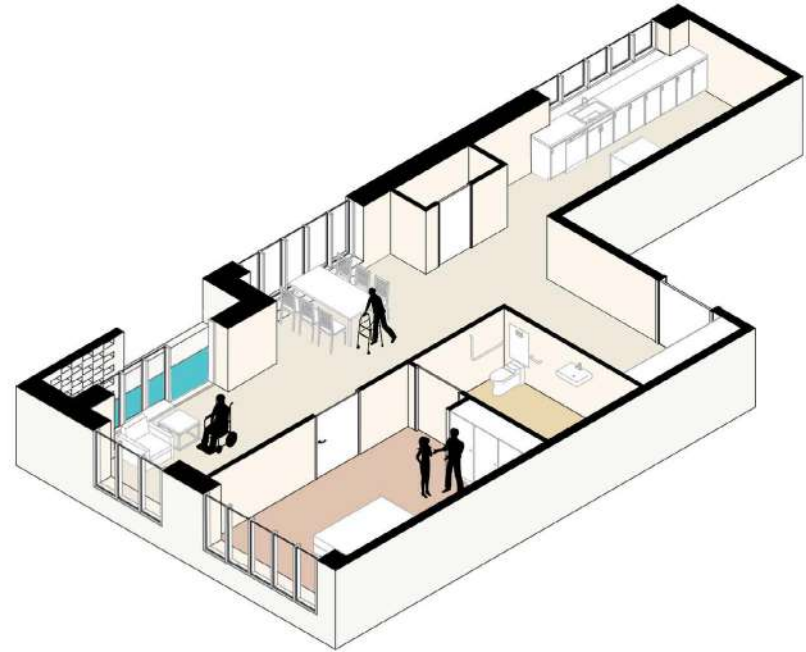


Area= 130 Sqm



Fig3.35. Barrier Free Units: Second Alternative

Barrier Free Unit 3



Area= 115 Sqm

Fig3.36. Barrier Free Units: Second Alternative

Big Family Units



First Alternative



Second Alternative
Area= 70+70=140 Sqm

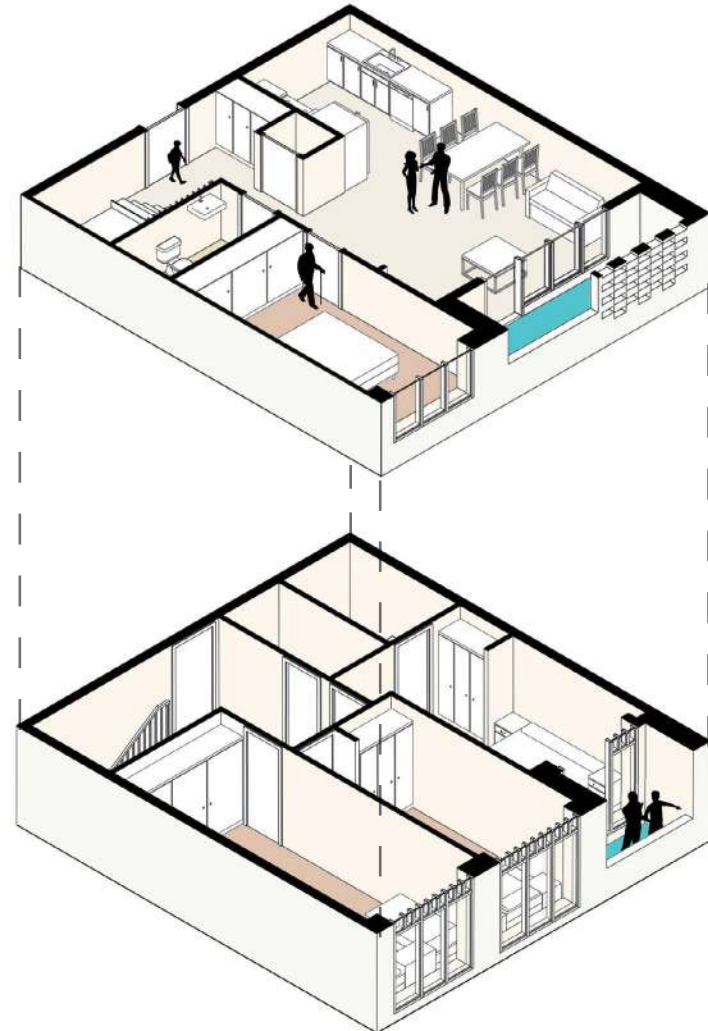
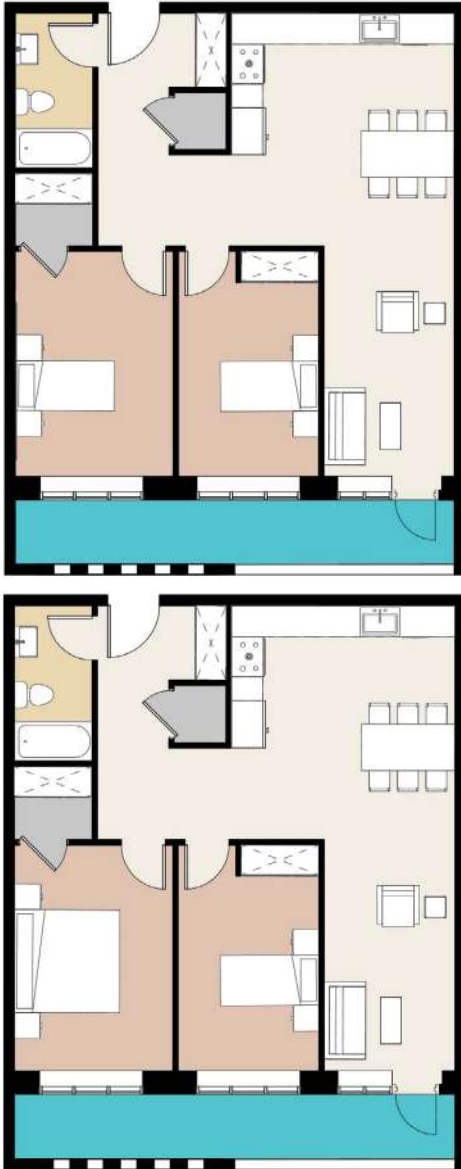


Fig3.37. Since Afghan people come from big multi generational families, the first big family unit alternative is for a family with grandparents and three kids, and the second is for a family with five kids.

Small Family Units



Area= 70 Sqm

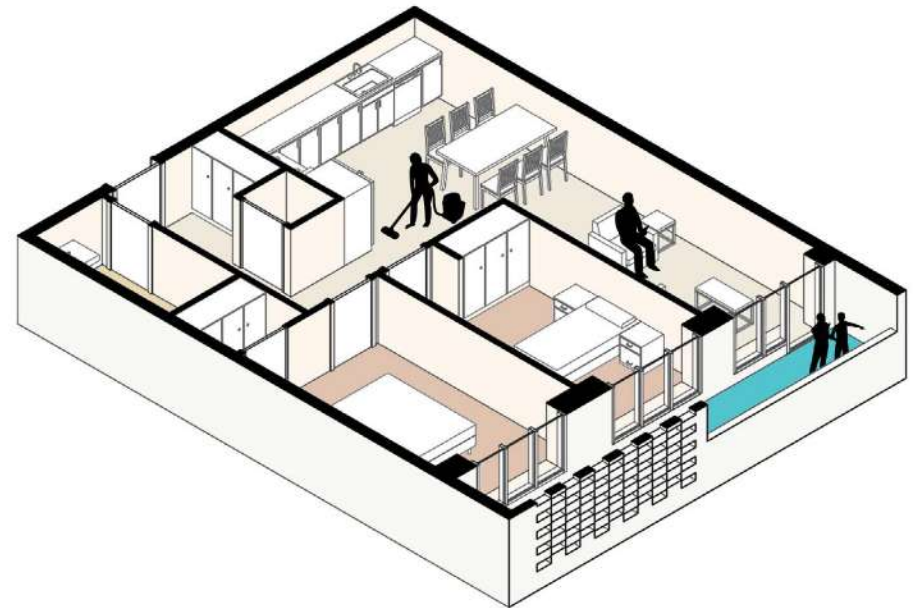


Fig3.38. Small units are either for families with one kid or two single people

Suggestions and Improvements

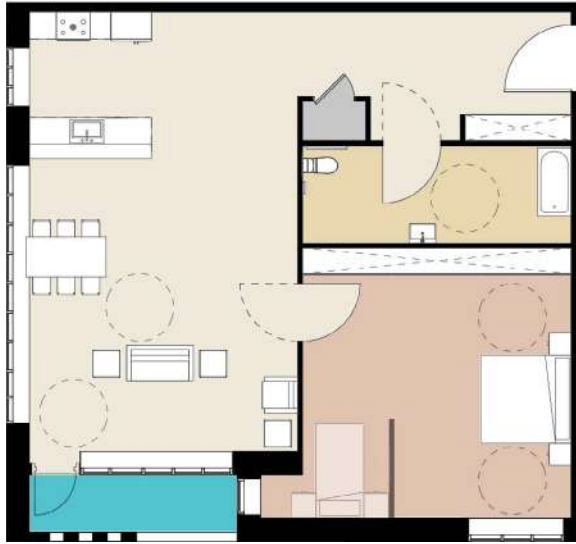


Fig3.39. Barrier-free unit-1 with the possibility of adding one bed.

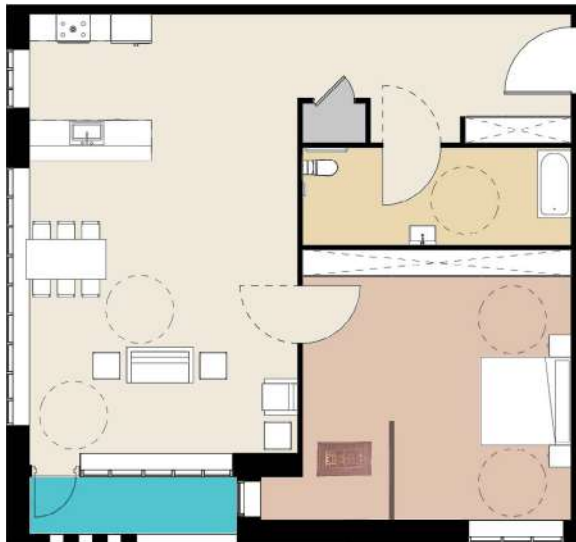


Fig3.40. Barrier free unit-1 with the possibility of adding individual prayer space.



Fig3.41. Barrier-free unit-2 with the possibility of adding one bed.



Fig3.42. Barrier-free unit-2 with the possibility of adding individual prayer space.

Suggestions and Improvements



Fig3.43. Barrier-free unit-3 with the possibility of adding one bed.



Fig3.44. Barrier-free unit-3 with the possibility of adding individual prayer space.

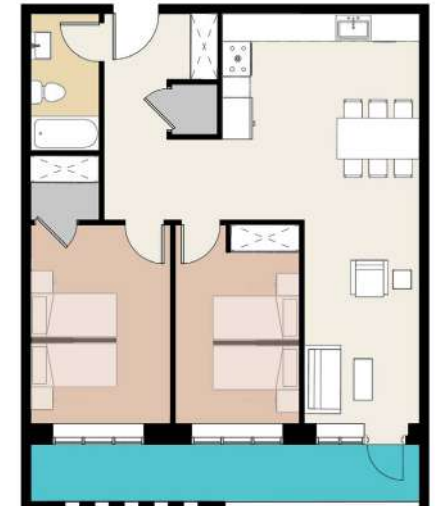


Fig3.45. Small Family unit with the possibility of adding more beds.

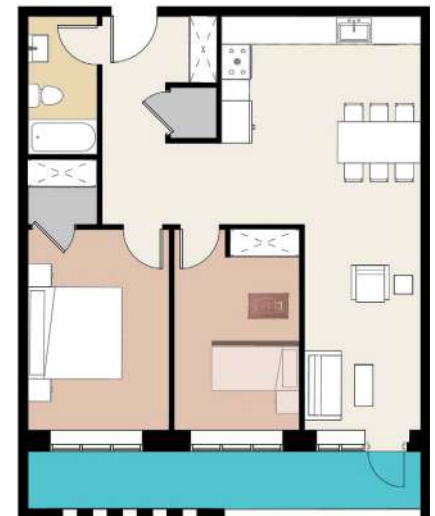


Fig3.46. Small Family unit with the possibility of adding one bed and individual prayer space.

Suggestions and Improvements



Fig3.47. Big Family unit with the possibility of adding one bed and individual prayer space.

Building Sections

Section A



Section A- Scale 1:300

Fig3.48. The basement includes a mechanical room, bike storage, and unit storage spaces.

Section B



Section B- Scale 1:300

Fig3.49. Sections show the relation between two buildings and how they are situated.

Isometric and 3D Views

Isometric Views



Fig3.50. Isometric View

Isometric Views



Fig3.51. Isometric Render

Isometric Views

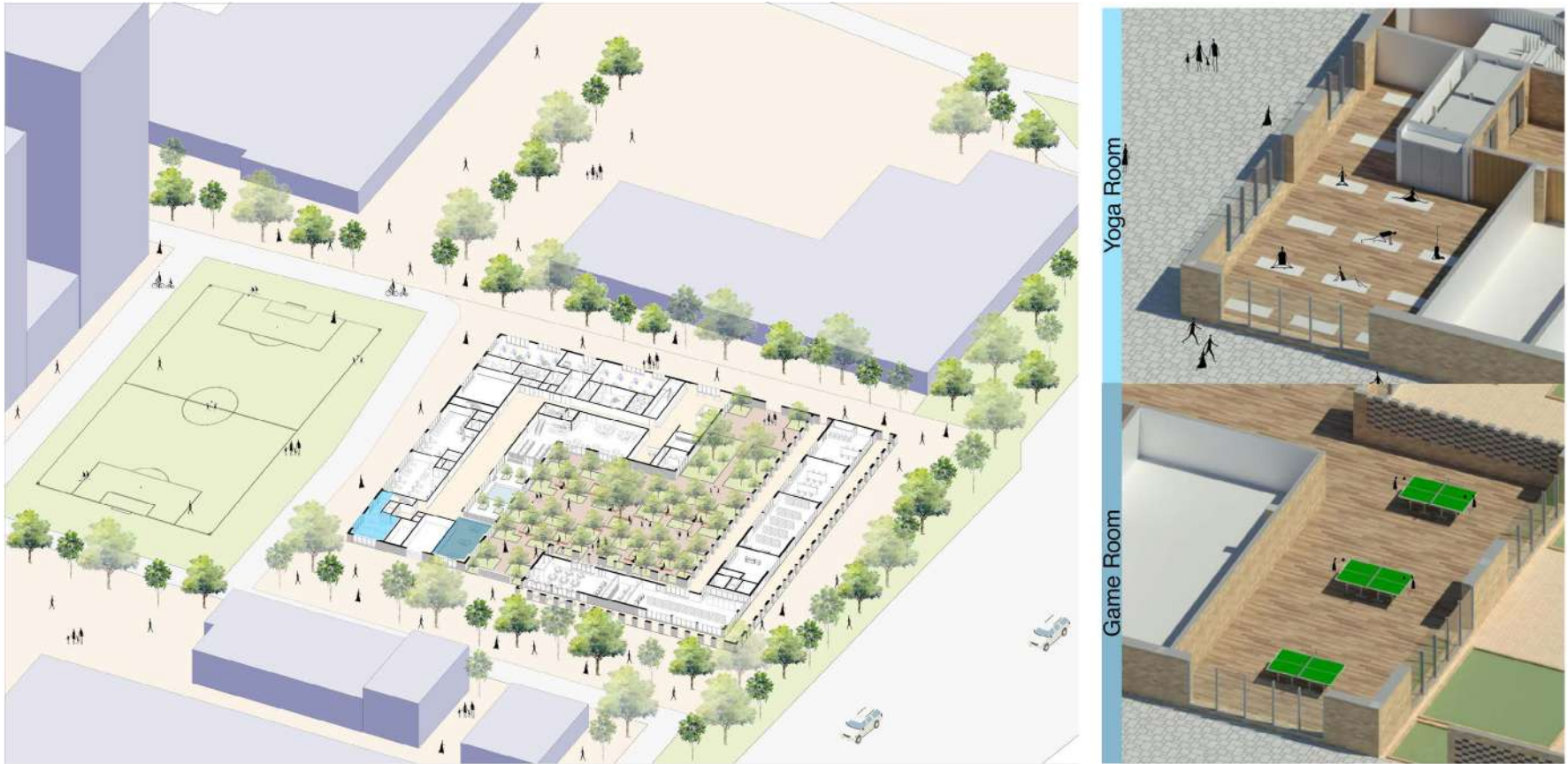


Fig3.52. The yoga room is for meditation and relaxation, and the game room is a space for residents to play.

Isometric Views

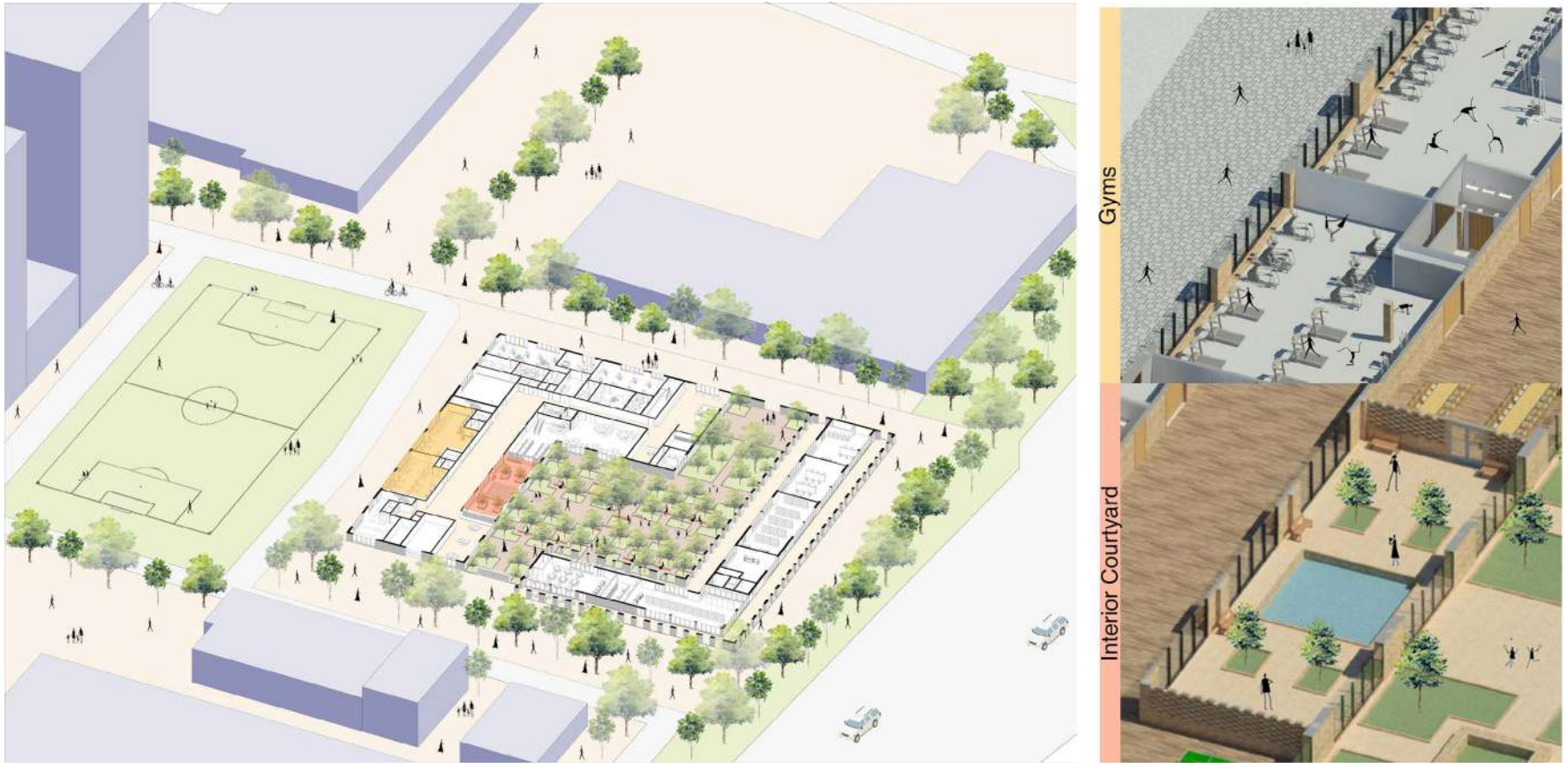


Fig3.53. Gym and Interior Courtyard View.

Interior Courtyard

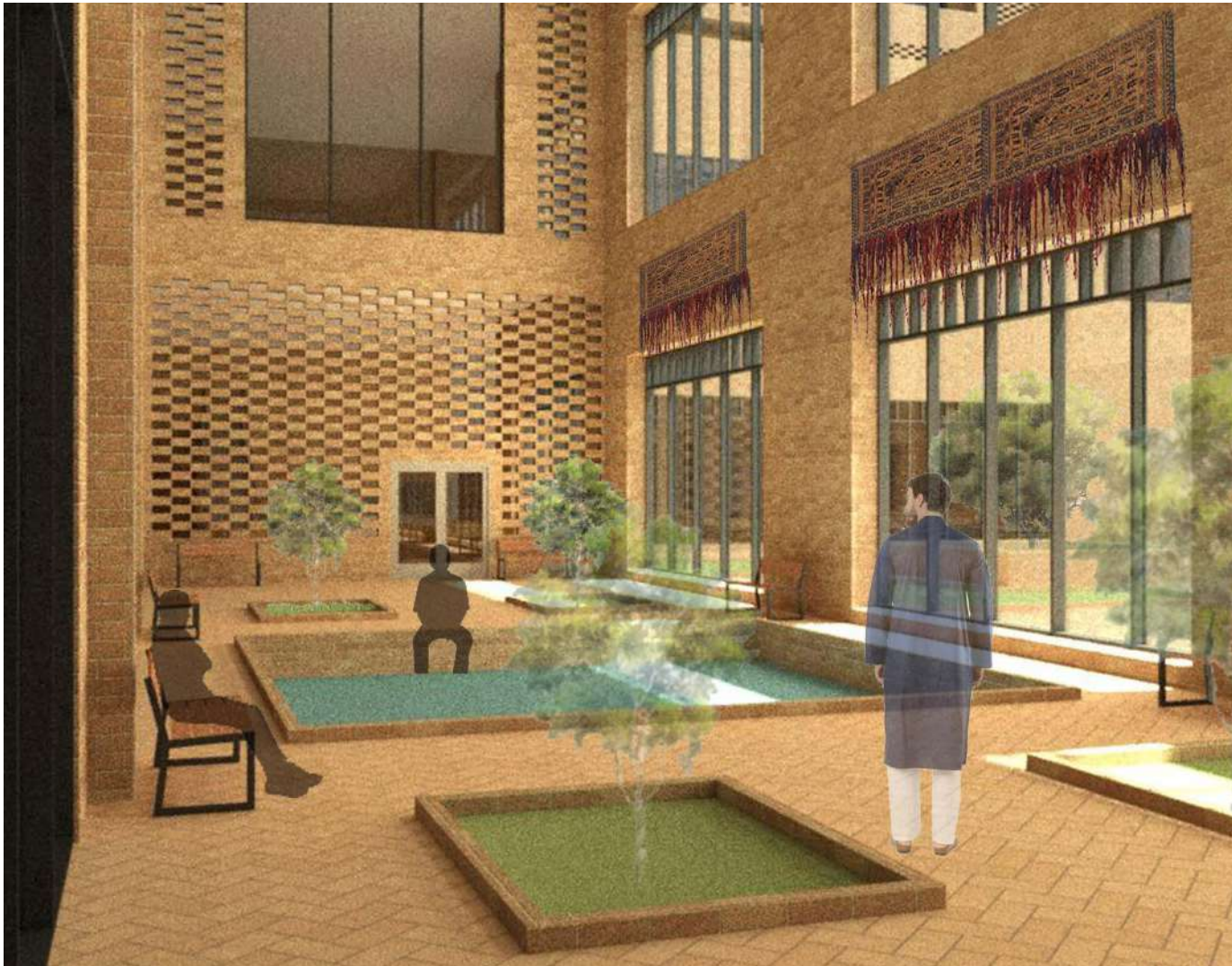


Fig3.54. The courtyard is an undeniable part of every traditional Afghan architecture. Since Canada has a cold climate, this double-height interior space with a shallow pool and vegetation is an attempt to imitate the quality of a courtyard, and also, the place can be used in every season as a gathering space and a place to rest and have peace of mind.

Isometric Views

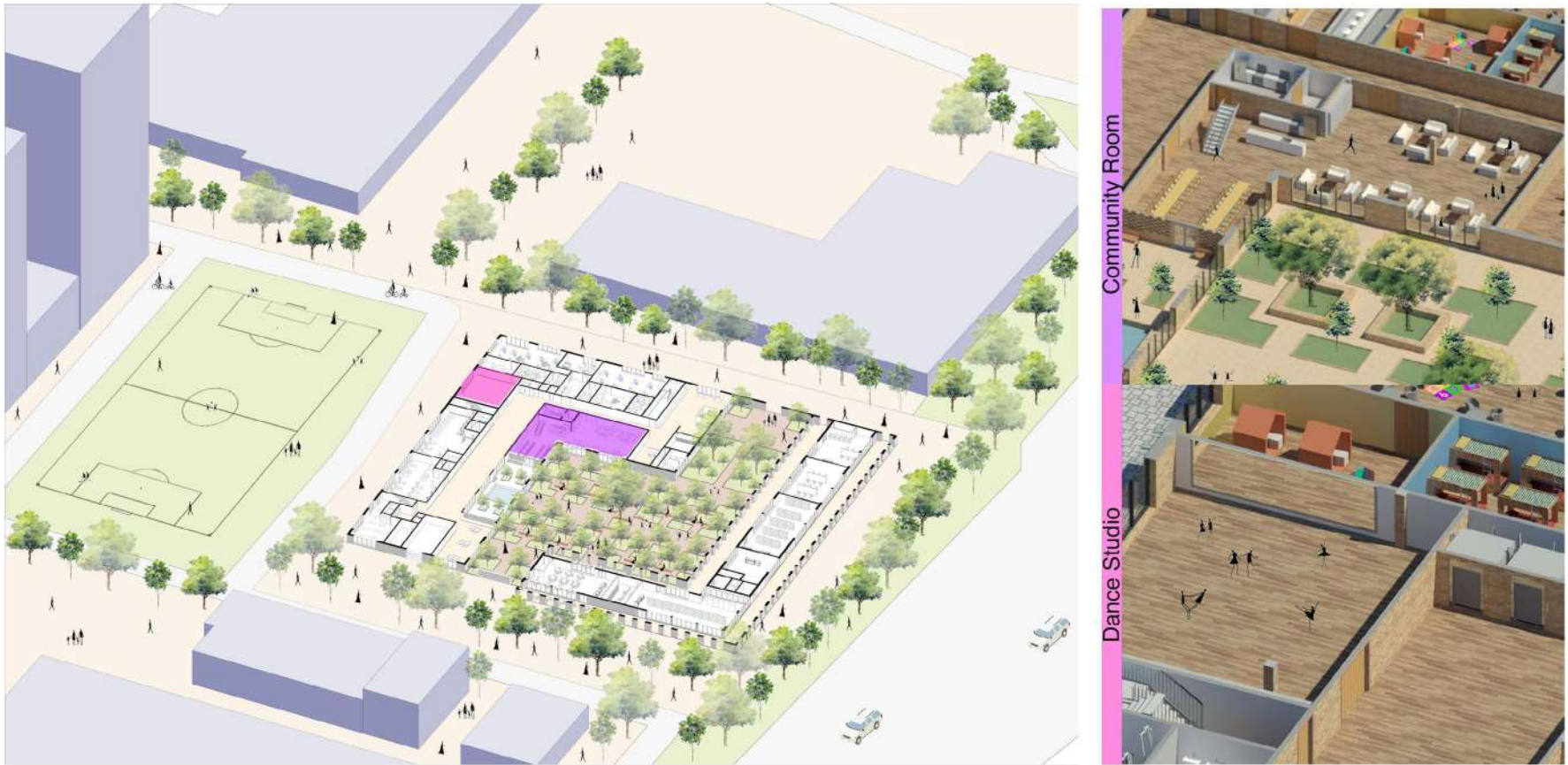


Fig3.55. View of the Community Room and Dance Studio

Community Room

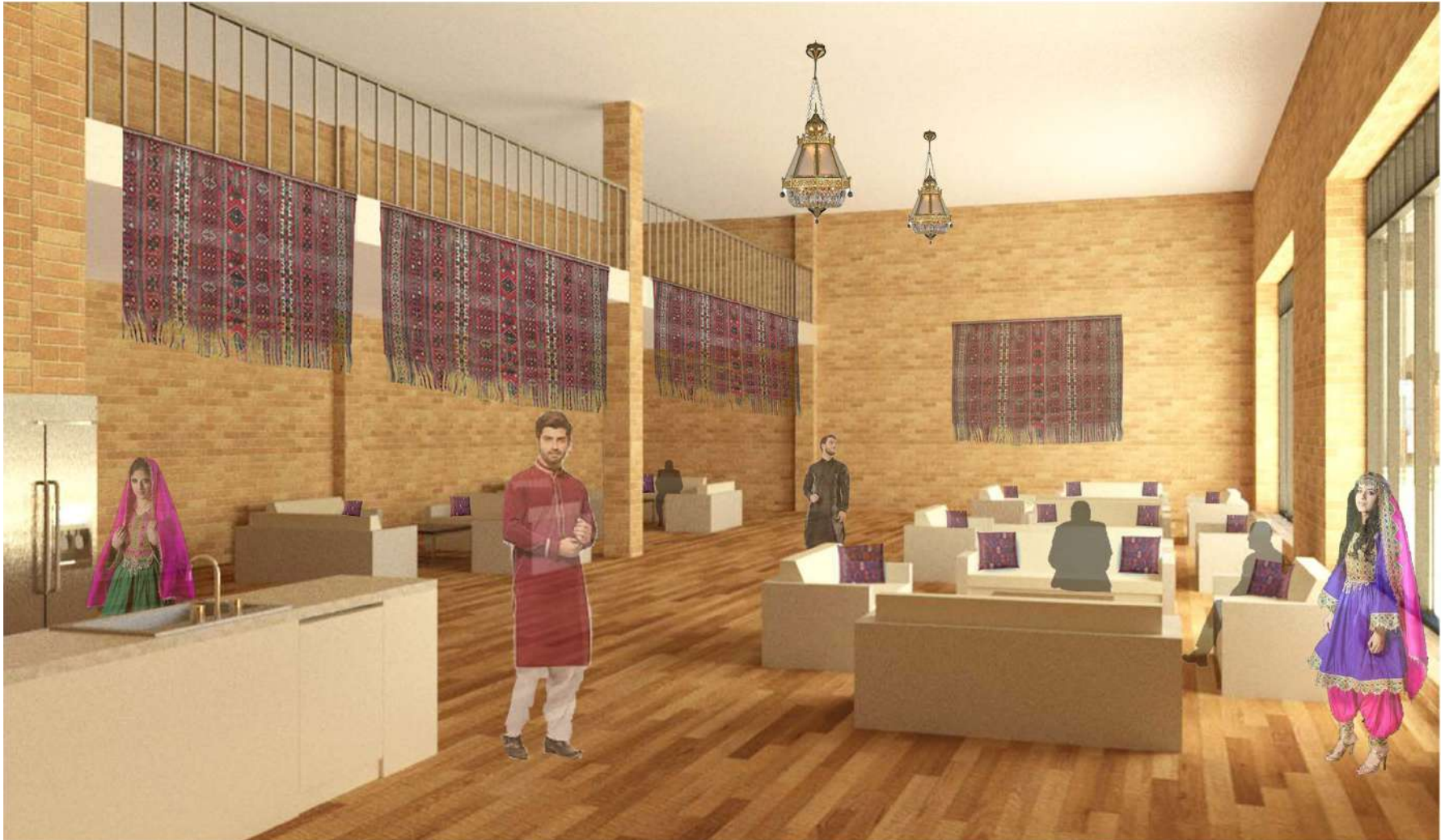


Fig3.56. The community room is an intimate space for all residents to gather around, talk, meet, cook, eat together, share their experiences, and stay in touch.

Community Room



Fig3.57. The community room has a direct view of the exterior courtyard and access to the interior courtyard at the same time.

Afghan Dance Tradition



Fig3.58. Afghan women doing Attan dance



Fig3.59. Afghan men doing Attan dance

Dance Studio



Fig3.60. Dancing is part of the Afghan people's tradition. The dance studio is where Afghan men and women can gather, dance, practice, or learn dancing and do a physical activity that boosts their mood and keeps their culture and traditions alive.

Isometric Views



Fig3.61. View of Daycare

Daycare



Fig3.62. Daycare in the project allows children to spend time together, play, and learn the language (English, Dari, or Pashto) and culture. It also gives mothers free time to attend language learning workshops, rest, work, and follow up with their mental and physical health situations.

Daycare



Fig3.63. Daycare Playing Room

Isometric Views



Fig3.64. View of Barber Shop and Beauty Salon

Beauty Salon

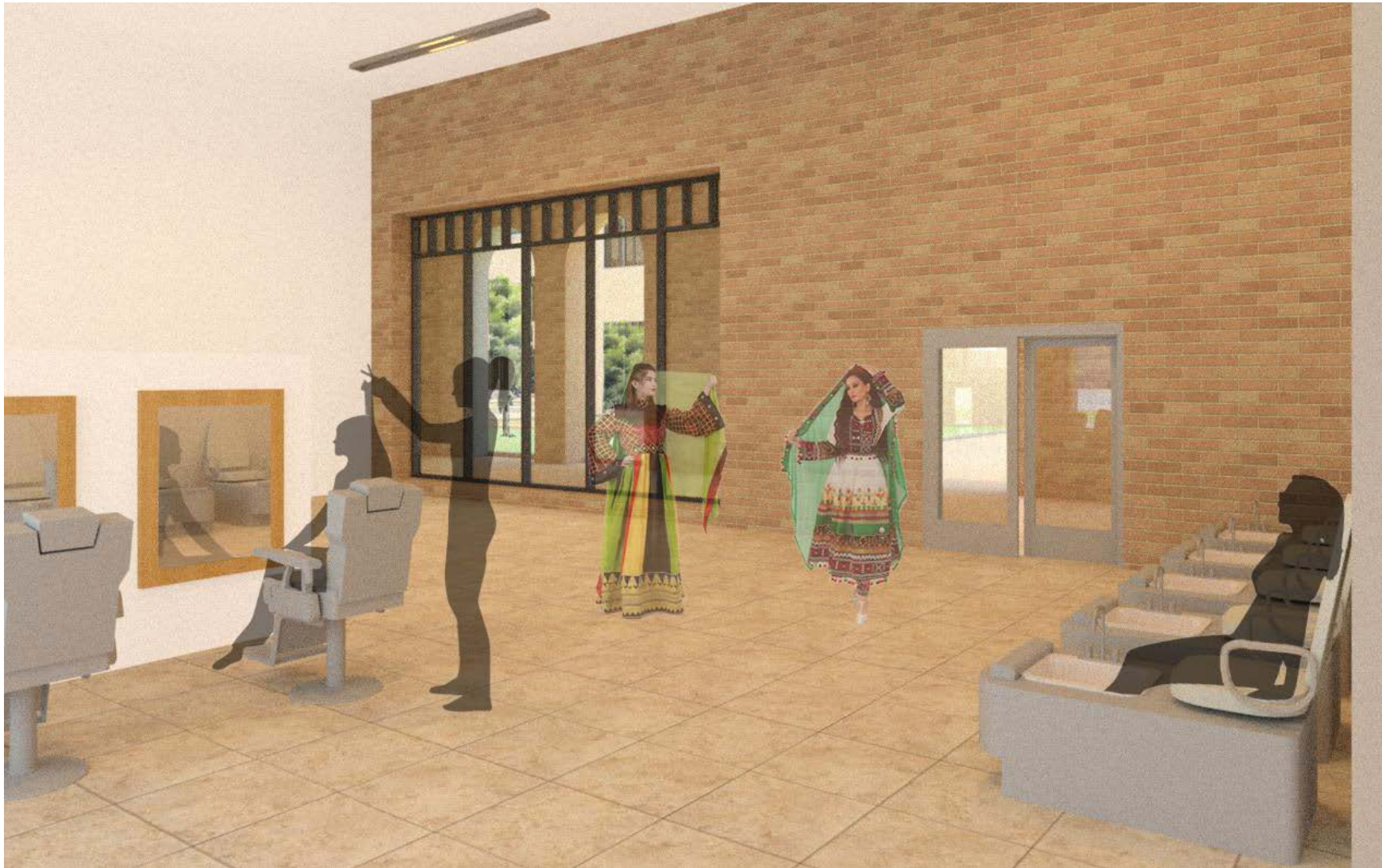


Fig3.65. Barbershop and beauty salon are gender-specific activities that Afghan people can share with other people visiting the building. These spaces can also be a place for gathering, talking, and interacting with local people. Training programs are available for people willing to work in these services

Barber Shop



Fig3.66. View of Barber Shop

Isometric Views



Fig3.67. The Coffee shop and bakery is a place that residents share with the public; both the Afghan community and local people can come together and spend time in the coffee shop. Training programs will be available for Afghan people willing to work in the bakery and coffee shops and contribute to their family economy. Fresh Meat and Vegetable market are where Afghan people can easily access Halal meat and buy their basics, like the coffee shop, residents willing to work in the supermarket receive training.

Isometric Views

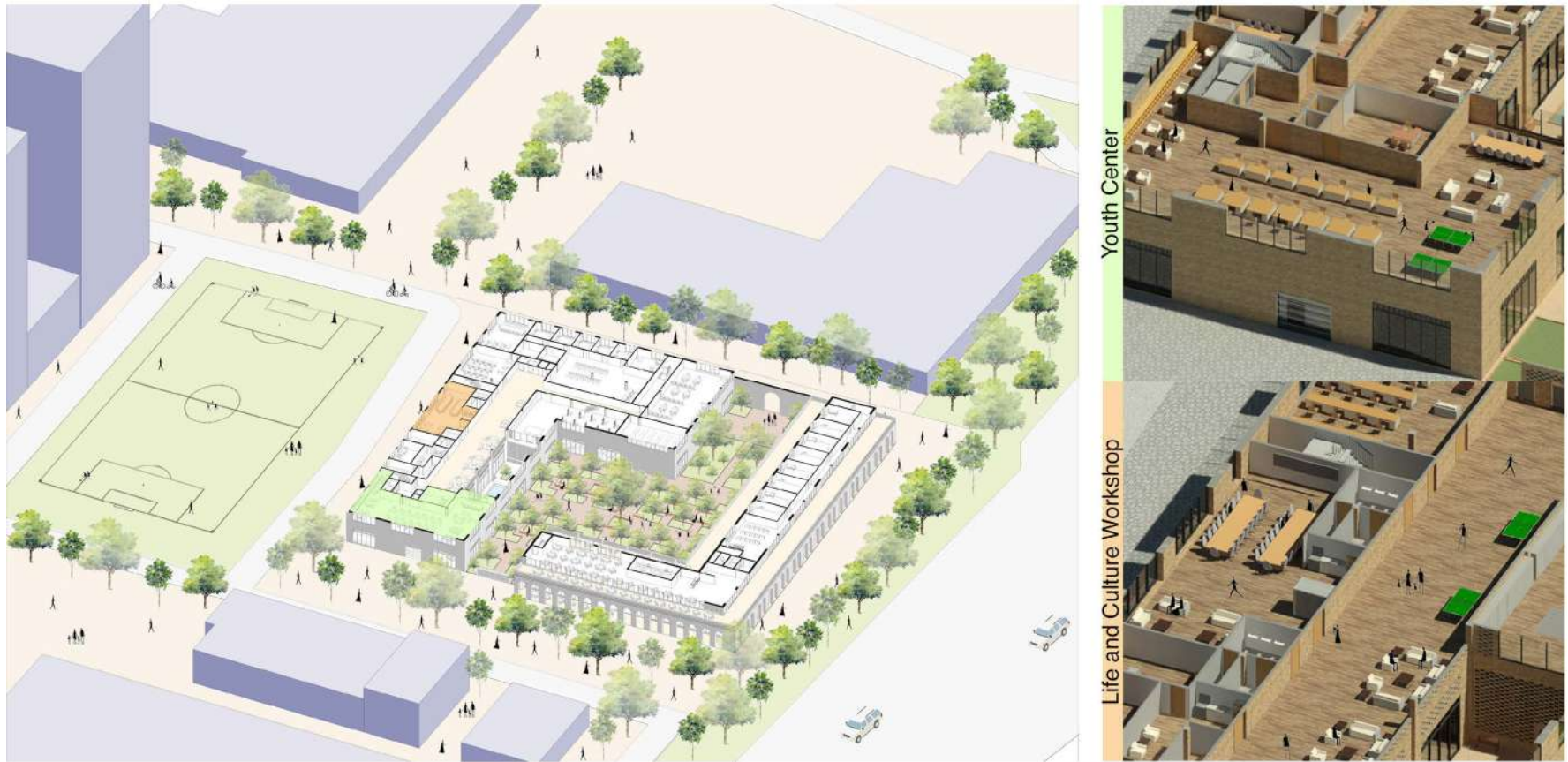


Fig3.68. Life and culture workshops is a workshop space for people to attend weekly workshops about Life in Canada as a new country. About culture, lifestyle, transportation and navigation, and generally the principles and rules of Canada to help them get accustomed to a new country. This Workshop is also an opportunity for people to discuss their experiences and difficulties and consult with experts if they have any problems. Parents can also benefit from parenting workshops.

Youth Center



Fig3.69. The youth center has workspaces, gathering, playing, and reading spaces. A consultation office is also in the youth center to help young people in their career paths.

Isometric Views



Fig3.70. The Language workshop is a workshop space for people to attend weekly Language Training, speaking, and listening classes. A 24/7 clinic is also available to residents for mental and physical health problems and urgent matters.

Isometric Views

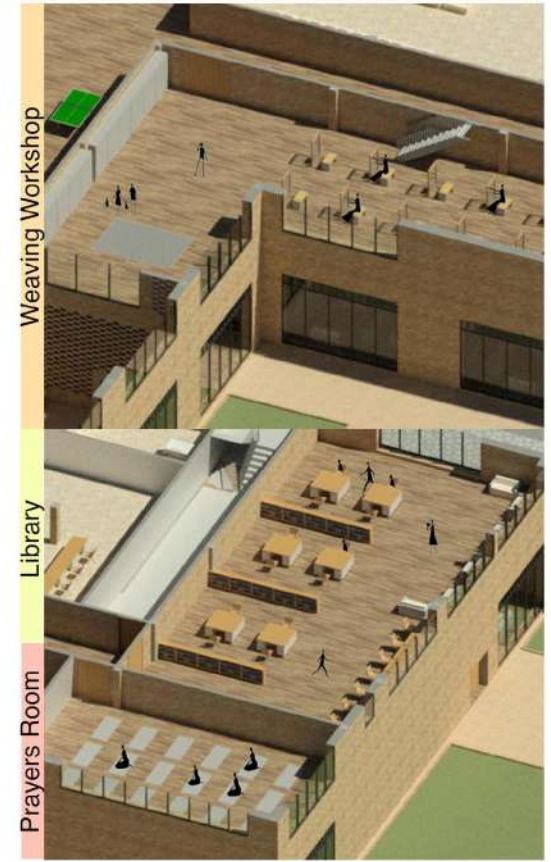


Fig3.71. The prayer room is a place for saying prayers in groups or having religious activities.

Weaving Tradition in Afghanistan



Fig3.72. Afghan girls weaving carpets.



Fig3.73. Afghan women weaving carpets.

Weaving Tradition in Afghanistan



Fig3.74. Afghan woman weaving carpets.



Fig3.75. Afghan men weaving carpets.

Weaving Workshop



Fig3.76. Afghan carpet and crafts are very popular. The weaving workshop room provides space and facility for people to produce carpets, cushions, and weaving arts and sell them in the handcrafts store. This can be a source of income for those interested in craft making.

Library



Fig3.77. Library is a space for people to do the assignments of the language workshop, read new English books, access the Internet, and read in general.

Isometric Views

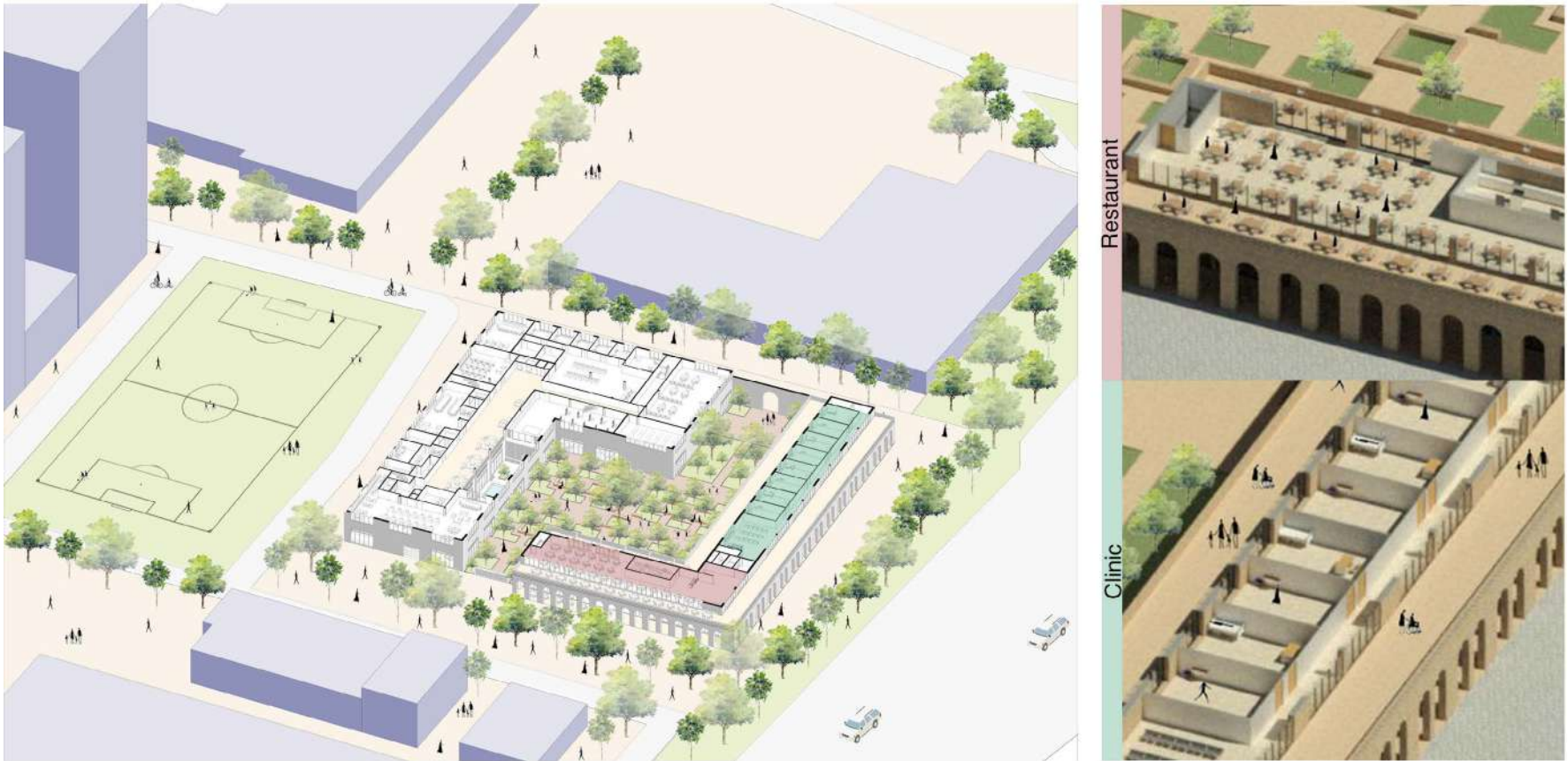


Fig3.78. Like the coffee shop, the restaurant is a place for refugee people to have a meal with their families, interact with locals, and receive training work if they are interested in working in the restaurant.

Clinic

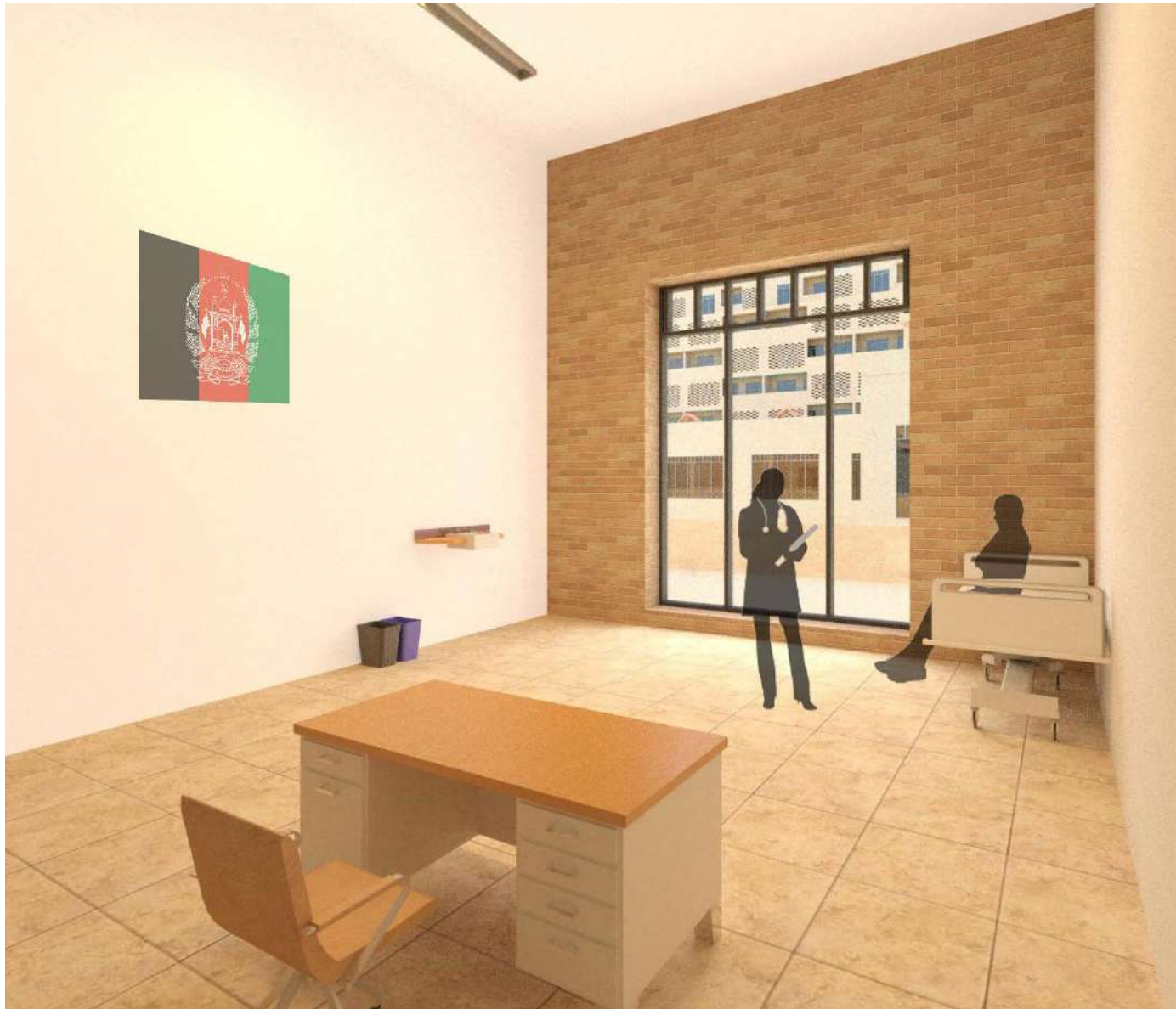


Fig3.79. Another clinic is on the site for both the refugee community and the public due to the high demand of the refugee community.

Isometric Views



Fig3.80. View of third-floor open space.

Third Floor Open Area



Fig3.81. Open space on the third floor is a place for children to play and families to sit and talk while their children are playing.

Third Floor Open Area



Fig3.82. Another view of the third-floor open space.

Isometric Views



Fig3.83. View of the roof's program.

Roof Area



Fig3.84. Green roof, a place to plant flowers and vegetables, gather and talk.

Roof Area



Fig3.85. Having barbeque parties is another activity to do on the roof.

Other Interior Spaces



Fig3.86. The entrance of the building welcomes Afghan refugees with a handmade Afghan rug showing the Afghanistan skyline, cars, and trees to remind them of home. Also, it is written welcome to Canada in both English and Afghan language.

Other Interior Spaces



Fig3.87. It is tried to use the corridor areas as places where people can meet and interact.

Facade and Landscape Design Precedents

Façade Design: Material Palette



Fig3.88. Minaret of Jam, Ghor, Afghanistan.



Fig3.89. Khwaja Abdulla Shrine, Herat, Afghanistan.

Façade Design: Material Palette



Fig3.90. Khwaja Abdulla Shrine, Herat, Afghanistan.



Fig3.91. Friday Mosque, Herat, Afghanistan.

Façade Design: Precedents



Fig3.92. Shah do Shamshira, Kabul, Afghanistan.



Fig3.93. Darul Aman Palace, Kabul, Afghanistan.



Fig3.94. Bagh-e-Babur, Kabul, Afghanistan.



Fig3.95. Darul Aman Palace, Kabul, Afghanistan.

Façade Design: Precedents



Fig3.96. Traditional old Afghan houses.



Fig3.97. Traditional old Afghan houses.



Fig3.98. Traditional old Afghan houses.



Fig3.99. Traditional old Afghan houses.

Façade Design

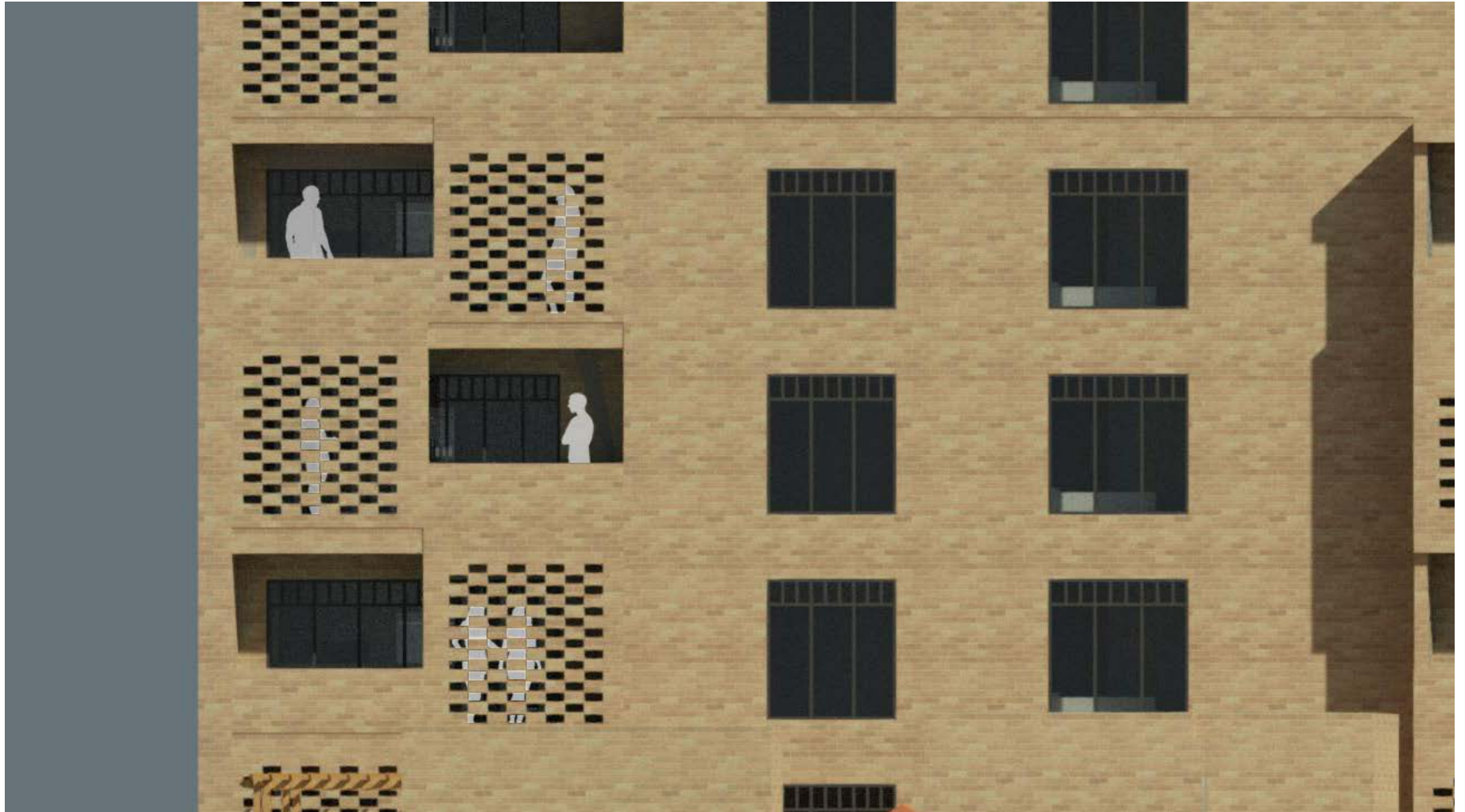


Fig3.100. Old Afghan house window styles inspire the project's windows, and the brick pattern covers parts of the balconies so that Afghan women can spend time on the balcony without wearing hijab.

Landscape Design: Precedents



Fig3.101. Peacock House, Kabul, Afghanistan.



Fig3.102. Bagh-e-Babur, Kabul, Afghanistan.



Fig3.103. A hospital in Afghanistan



Fig3.104. Chihilsitoun Garden and Palace, Kabul, Afghanistan.

Landscape Design



Fig3.105. The project's landscape is also inspired by old Islamic gardens common in traditional Afghan buildings. These gardens are called "Chahar Bagh"(Four Gardens). Generally, the central element of the Chahar Bagh is a pool; however, the pool is moved inside the building to the far end of the garden due to the cold weather of Canada.

Exterior Views

Exterior Spaces

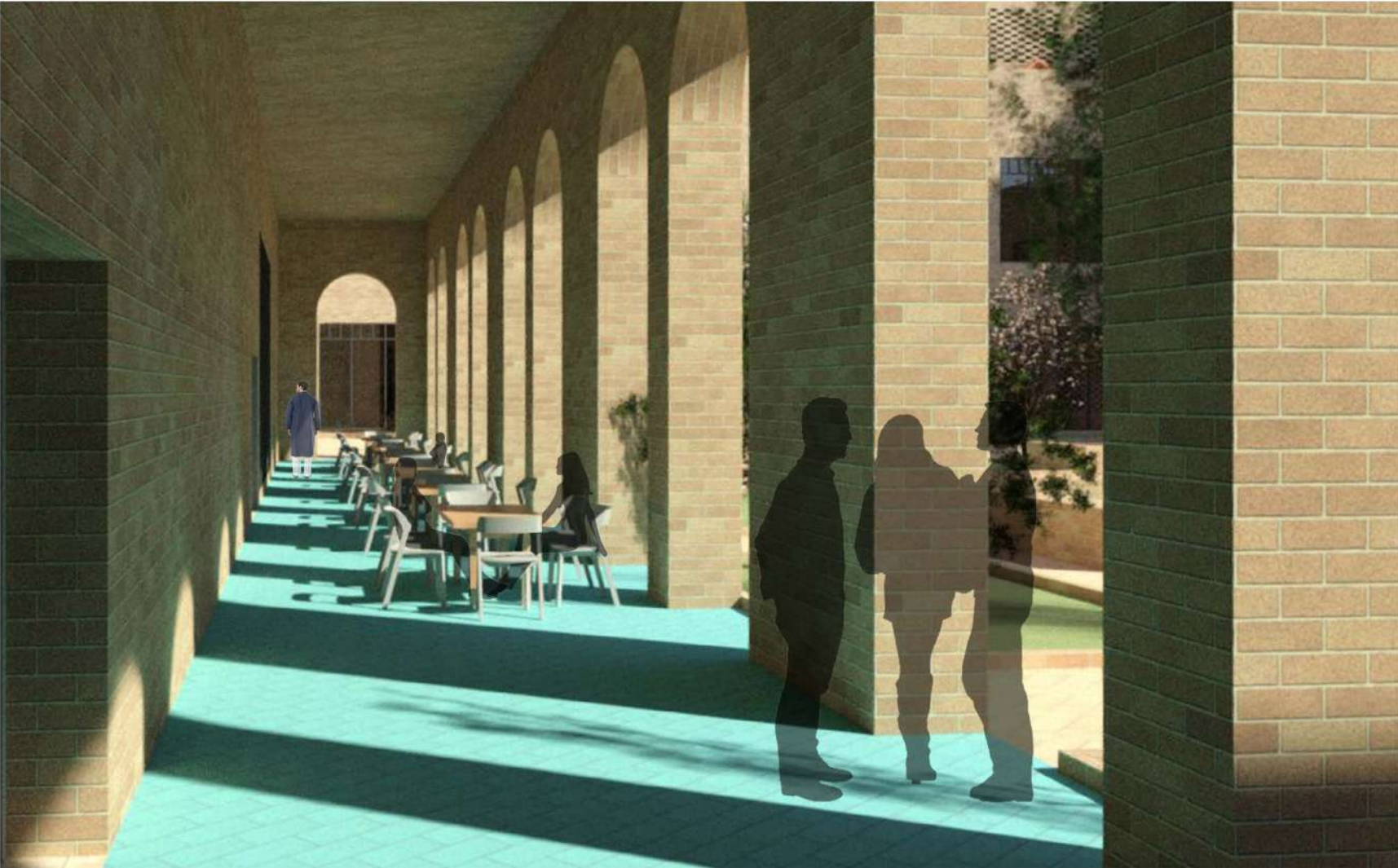


Fig3.106. View of the arcade facing the courtyard. Seats belong to the coffee shop and bakery on the site and are a place for residents to enjoy a coffee with a view of the courtyard.

Exterior Spaces



Fig3.107. View of the Exterior Courtyard

Exterior Spaces



Fig3.108. Exterior courtyard is a place for residents to spend time, sit under tree shadows or walk.

Building Exterior Views



Fig3.109. View of Building from Gardiner Expressway

Building Exterior Views



Fig3.110. View of Building from Gardiner Expressway

Summary of the Project

┌ ─ ─ ─ ┐
│ Culture │
└ ─ ─ ─ ┘



┌ ─ ─ ─ ┐
│ Nature │
└ ─ ─ ─ ┘



┌ ─ ─ ─ ┐
│ Community │
└ ─ ─ ─ ┘

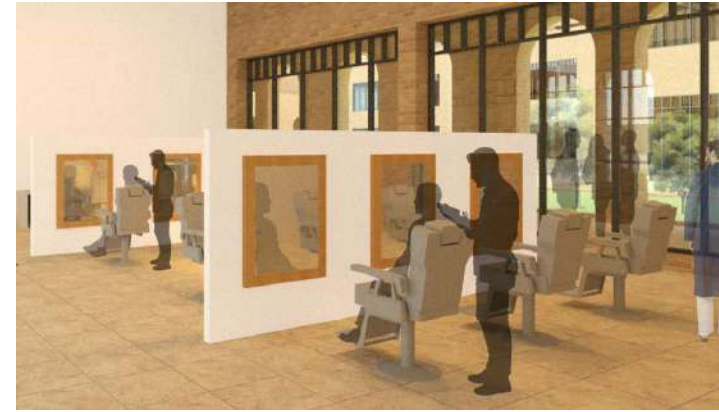


Fig3.111. To sum up, the building is an attempt to gather culture, nature and people as a community together.

Conclusion

The weft house is a new housing typology for refugee communities. It includes different programs to help refugees easily transition to the new country. In the weft house, refugees can learn the English language, learn about Canada's culture and environment, know how to open a bank account, learn how to navigate the city, and have the chance to be trained, work, and earn money. The building has several programs for all ages and all tastes. The youth center is a place for the young to gather around, work, and have fun; the kindergarten in the project is a place for children to play, learn the new alphabet and interact while it provides a safe place for them. The kindergarten program also gives mothers some spare time to follow up on their language lessons, work, attend dance classes in the dancing studio, or rest. The community room is a family place for residents to cook, eat, and gather. At the same time, the weaving and dancing workshops are two other optional programs for residents interested in traditional craft making and physical activity while doing a group activity. Gender-specific programs like the beauty salon and barber shop are two other programs for Afghan men and women to access, use, and meet new people. Two clinics on the site are where refugee people can have quick and easy access to health and medical care. In general, the program tries to help the refugee people by strengthening their community while helping them integrate into the new and unfamiliar society to make them feel at home and have a better future. Although it has been tried to design a building that resembles traditional Afghan architecture, at the same time, it is tried to make the design usable by all the communities. So later, if other refugee groups occupied the building, it would not be an unusual and strange place for them to live. All the workshop spaces can be re-purposed as per current or future residents' needs.

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