

Suburban Intensification

cultivating place in the dispersed city

by

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author's declaration

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

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abstract

The sustainable growth and development of our cities are amongst the most important issues of the world today. It is estimated that soon up to ninety percent of the world's population will live in urban centers. How to accommodate such growth, while maintaining high quality of life, is one of the most challenging tasks facing society.

The design proposal will address the future population growth in the City of Toronto with the intensification of an inner suburban area in central Etobicoke. It is founded on principles that address the communities growing needs while working to cultivate a sense of place and improve the livability of the surrounding neighbourhood.

Within this area through the design of a mixed-use development with significant forms of public space and amenities, the neighbourhood would experience increased connectivity with the surrounding environment and improved sense of community. It will draw together the residents of the area and cultivate a new public realm from its now disparate elements, this would raise the areas ability to meet future housing needs and mitigate congestion.

The design for the Etobicoke Centre is a symptom of – and a drive toward – the evolution of a mature suburb to a place aspiring for urbanity. The story of suburban transformation is relevant to metropolitan areas around the continent, and the clarity of the architectural design demonstrates how good public space design can set standards of sophistication, craft, and structure for other developments to follow. New growth in the area has the potential to act as a catalyst for change, demonstrating how existing inner suburbs have the ability to evolve into more urban, sustainable places.

acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Anne Bordeleau for her reliable guidance, patience and enthusiasm throughout this process. I am also indebted to my committee, Rick Andrigetti and Jeff Lederer, for their inspiration and support, as well as my external examiner Christine Burke for her participation in this process.

dedication

to my family.

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introduction

Nowadays, many North American cities are reconsidering their urban development patterns because of major demographic shifts and a desire to create more sustainable communities. As one of the most urbanized countries in the world an estimated 80% of Canadians currently live in metropolitan communities¹. The future growth of our cities matters, because in Canada – as in every other country that it has affected – the processes of urbanization and suburbanization have brought about great changes in living conditions and the social life of our cities².

In Toronto, with the assignment of the urban growth boundary and the proposed intensification of certain existing outer and inner suburban districts, there exists a desire for increased sustainability in our urban form.

In recent decades, the way in which Toronto has been growing has created a very challenging condition for the immediate and surrounding urban region. The region's population is projected to increase by 3.7 million by the year 2031³, growing too rapidly to be accommodated in the city's current low-density housing stock. High-rise condominiums have become a common solution for housing the anticipated population growth in the city's core and along its lakeshore, but this type of development tends to cater to a small bracket of the population and has little amenity in the way of a social public realm. The high turnover of residents in condominium developments leads to a lack of investment in the community and when combined with the lack of communal public space encourages high levels of privacy and social isolation.

The implementation of the provincial and municipal growth plans represents a turning point in the growth of the GTA. These plans encourage designers to look within our current urban form for opportunities to accommodate the future growth of the city, rather than encouraging growth at the periphery. Both the city's planning and environmental strategies are based in part around the ability to create a more urban environment in the 'inner' suburbs that were absorbed into the city after amalgamation. Key to the implementation of these strategies is the development of densely populated cores within these suburbs, where residential and employment uses are close together and integrated with transit infrastructure. These would work to increase the sustainability of our city's built form, by increasing density, promoting mixture of uses and increasing the walkability in our neighbourhoods.

SCOPE OF WORK

This thesis is a contribution to the ongoing debate about the intensification of our inner suburban neighbourhoods. It focuses on the urban design of a pedestrian village and demonstrates the various architectural considerations in the design of the development. This includes infrastructural development, density of the built fabric, and a special consideration of the design of the public space, which will contribute to the cultivation of a new public realm. The discussion seeks to draw out some of the planning and design principles that underpin attractive, successful and sustainable urban environments. The aim is to encourage a wider understanding of how basic layout and design principles can help create a robust urban form and cultivate a 'sense of community', within the context of the 'inner' suburbs of Toronto.

The design will draw from current urban design theories, focusing on three factors to create a more sustainable inner suburban environment: density of urban form, connectivity of infrastructure, and public realm design. This will demonstrate that sustainability comes not only from the intensification of the cities fabric, but also from cultivating a new public realm – focusing on its ability to influence social capital and people's investment in their community.

ISSUES

To deal with issues of suburban development, contemporary urban design often makes reference to three very interdependent aspects affecting the sustainability of our urban form: economic, environmental, and social⁴. Social issues become highly important and are the main focus of the thesis, as suburban densities are often too low to provide an active social public realm. They seldom support the informal social gathering and activities occurring in the street or public spaces, which many sociologists argue is essential to a high quality of life⁵.

Successful intensification of the inner suburban landscape will be driven by strong architectural and urban design, as promoting sustainable lifestyles and compact community

development depends on the design of our physical environment. Establishing a 'sense of community' requires a sense of belonging to an identifiable place, with well-designed public spaces being the cornerstones of liveable communities⁶.

The public space in current suburban neighbourhoods is often referred to as the "space left over after planning" or SLOAP. Seldom has the public domain been the point of departure in suburban developments. As suburbs are increasingly oriented toward more private values, there is a lack of informal gathering places and little nourishment for an active public realm. To address this, the design proposal will focus on the importance of places available for public use, including streets, sidewalks, and plazas, which would provide a stage for the outdoor, social life of the community⁷. Quality public spaces make an essential contribution to the sense of community in a neighbourhood, by allowing an individual to "satisfy a very real need to take a pause, to relax and to reconnect with nature and others"⁸.

One of the most important aspects of creating well-designed neighbourhoods which affects one's quality of life, are the characteristics and quality of the public realm – a network of spaces between buildings that can determine the layout, form and connectivity of the urban fabric⁹. Architect Louis Kahn talked about a city having a treasury of spaces as, for him, a great city had to be much more than a mere collection of buildings¹⁰. Kahn perceived the city as a stage for the unfolding of human drama, understanding that a society defines itself through its public space, though our relationships and actions in our urban places¹¹.

Establishing a sense of community requires a sense of belonging to an identifiable place and to an active public realm, with well-designed public spaces being the cornerstones of livable communities¹². The public realm can be defined as the collection of streets, outdoor spaces and community institutions within a city that every person, without exception, has the right to occupy – free of charge¹³. A true public space is an inclusive space – no one can be kept out – that, unlike the shopping malls of current suburban development, is a fundamentally democratic space. This quality of the public domain contributes to a more

democratic way of life and encourages all to linger, share observations and perspectives. The shape of these public spaces and the way they link together are essential to the cohesion of our new urban neighbourhoods and communities.

Through effective urban design, the forces operating upon cities can be channeled to create attractive, safe, dynamic, and socially inclusive neighbourhoods. This will reinforce a collective identity and sense of belonging through a diverse urban population. This will work to encourage a deeper relationship between the residents and their community. As such, this thesis supports the development an identifiable, durable place to which people are attracted – encouraging them to live and work locally – in turn making the larger region more sustainable. The inner suburban area of Etobicoke provides such an opportunity, with great potential to develop into a distinct pocket of urbanity.

Endnotes

- 1 “According to the 2001 census, close to 80 per cent live in an urban area, defined as a place with a population of 10,000 or more.”
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- 10 James, Geoffrey, et al. *Toronto Places : A Context for Urban Design*. Toronto: City of Toronto and University of Toronto Press, 1992, p. 10
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thesis methodology and structure

01 CONTEXT

This section discusses the societal trends, issues with current development trends and governmental policies, which support intensification of the inner suburban fabric. Some of these issues include population growth, the unsustainable nature of sprawl, changing demographics, and cultural trends. This contextualizes the literary analysis and the design intervention by discussing the context of the future expansion and growth of the City of Toronto, focusing on how intensification of the inner suburban fabric can benefit the surrounding neighbourhoods.

02 BACKGROUND

The second chapter discusses the history of suburban development, coming to an understanding of how its physical form and identity has changed over the past 50 years. This presents a picture of how current suburban developments function, often creating a uniform identity both physically and socially. It demonstrates the essential nature of the 'third place' and how well-used public spaces can work to strengthen the collective consciousness of the urban population, through developing what is known as 'social capital'.

03 THEORY

The thesis then discusses current urban design theory and trends which attempt to deal with the discussed issues with suburban sprawl. Through an examination of influential literature, this section works to identify elements influencing good public spaces, noting the key relationship between life in public and the cultural values of society. The section will also explore and summarize various theoretical frameworks and current urban design strategies that have influenced the design principles of the design proposal.

04 SITE

This section surveys the inner suburban area of Etobicoke, studying the elements of the site and its surrounding neighbourhood. It discusses a brief history of the area including the rapid expansion of the area in the 1950s with the creation of an automobile-oriented suburban environment, and then further in the late 1960s following the arrival of the subway. The infrastructural elements, surrounding site uses, and site conditions are analysed through a series of mapping exercises and photographic studies, which demonstrate the existing conditions, the potentials of the site and possible links to create to the surrounding community.

05 DESIGN PROPOSAL


This chapter outlines certain planning and design principles that would help create a robust urban form and cultivate a 'sense of community, within the context of the 'inner' suburb of Etobicoke. The design will be illustrated in three sections: connectivity of infrastructure, density of urban form, and public realm design. The importance of connectivity, activities/uses, and physical form in the design of the public realm will be illustrated through discussion of theory, illustrated in case studies and then demonstrated through the design. It will present a series of key design principles for re-urbanizing the inner suburban neighbourhoods, which in so doing, will tie the site into the surrounding areas and creating a physical and symbolic centre for the greater neighbourhood.



FIG 1.01 Aerial composite of Toronto's Built Fabric

BRAMPTON

NORTH YORK



... we can take advantage of this metropolitan area growth and, with at least part of it, we can begin building up currently unfit city districts, limping along at “in-between” densities – build them up to the point where (in conjunction with other conditions for generating diversity) these concentrations of population can support city life possessing character and liveliness.

- Jane Jacobs. *The Life and Death of Great American Cities*¹.

01 CONTEXT

managing growth in the City of Toronto

ETOBICOKE

9

TORONTO

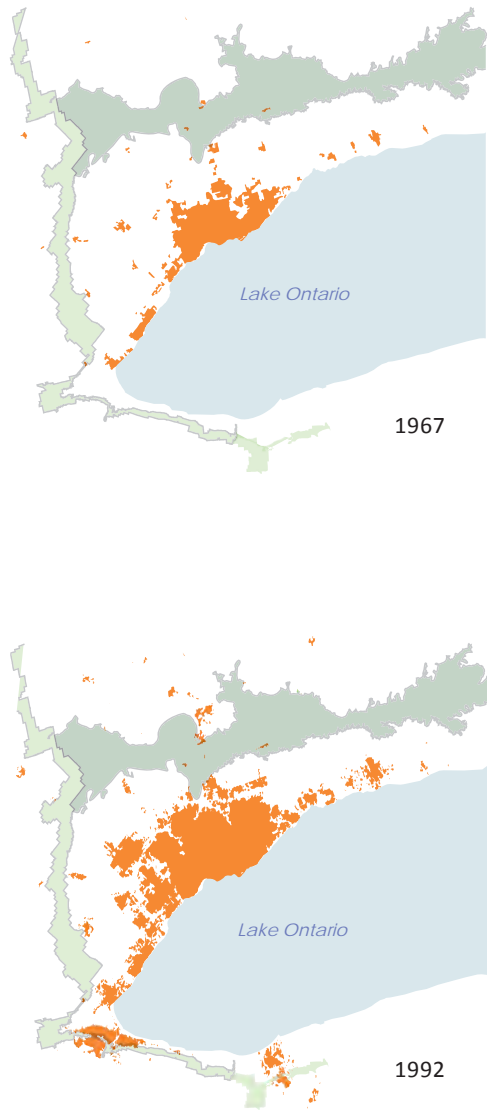


FIG 1.02 1967 and 1992 Urban Areas.

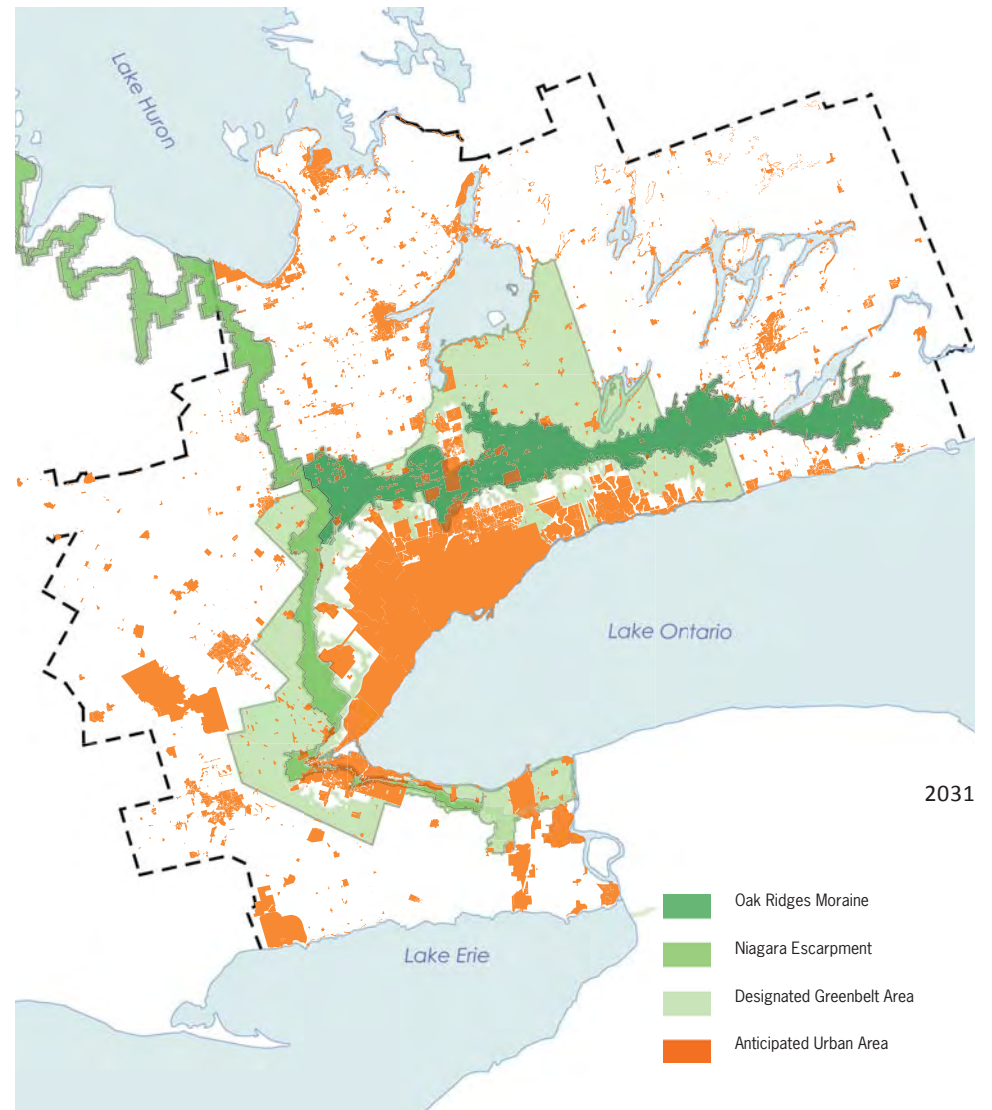


FIG 1.03 Anticipated Urban Area, 2031.

1.1 Urban Expansion of the City of Toronto

Many societal trends in Canada prompt a new look at the form of our urban developments, especially on how we will grow in our undeveloped and underutilized urban lands. Some of these trends include rapid population growth, changing demographics and decreasing household size. To deal with these challenges both the municipal and provincial governments have encouraged intensification with regulation such as the Greenbelt Act, the Places to Grow Act in Ontario, and the City of Toronto Official Plan. Through an overview of the current urban expansion of the GTA and the implementation of these growth plans, we can come to an understanding of the necessity of more sustainable urban forms.

The area in central Ontario, known as the Greater Golden Horseshoe, is by far the fastest growing metropolitan area in Canada, housing almost two-thirds of the residents of Ontario². As one of the fastest-growing urban regions in North America, the region is rapidly approaching the physical limits to growth and sustainable options are necessary to accommodate future expansion in the region.

According to current growth predictions, it is anticipated that an additional 3.7 million people will be requiring new housing by 2031³. With Toronto’s housing stock already at maximum capacity, peripheral development persists. If present expansion trends continue, most of this growth would be found in condominiums or sprawling suburban developments extending beyond the existing metropolitan area. It is estimated that if the current suburban forms of development continue, an additional area almost twice the size of the city of Toronto would be needed to accommodate this growth⁴.

In recent years, there also has been a major shift in Canadian demographics calling for a reconsideration of the detached single family house and condominium tower as the primary building typologies used for housing our growing population.

While typical Canadian households included both parents and children, today the average household size in the GTA has decreased from 3.4 to 2.6 over the past forty years⁵. Now,

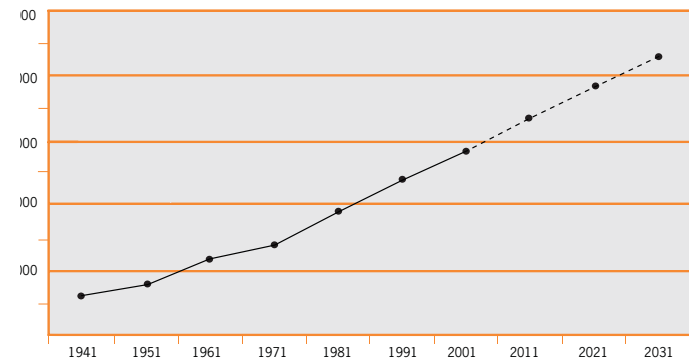


FIG 1.04 GTA Population 1941-2031

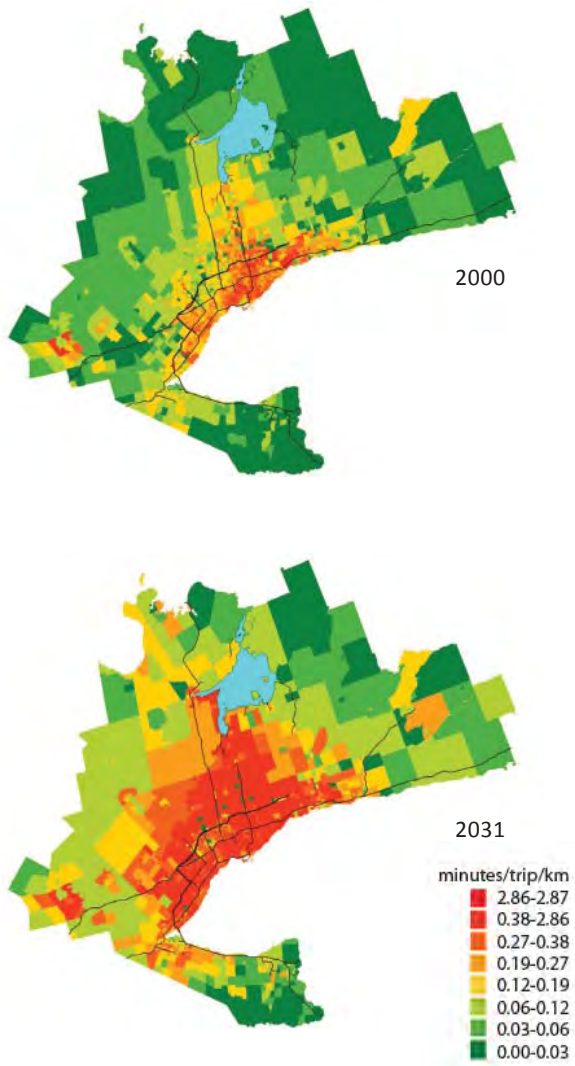


FIG 1.05 Average Travel Delay in the GTA. 2000 and 2031 (anticipated)

smaller household sizes are on the rise, with an average of over 60% of households now consisting of either one or two person households⁶. With this growth in smaller households – including bachelors, roommates, single-parent families, couples, and empty nesters – housing needs in the GTA have changed, with an anticipated 82% of new housing being for these changing demographics⁷.

This decline in the required number of larger households and the growing number of one or two persons households implies that there is not only a market for smaller households, but also that a variety of housing opportunities should be provided in any new development.

Need for Change

If the growth of the GTA continues according to the current growth patterns, there would be many consequences. These consequences are made clear by looking at the specific health, social and environmental problems related to this sprawling form of development.

There is evidence that dispersed urban development, often called “urban sprawl” has actually contributed to increase health, social and environmental risks. It has become common practice to segregate the zoning in the suburbs, such that there is no integrated commercial or office development in the increasingly low-density residential areas. This development increases our society’s dependence on the automobile, making it necessary for even the most basic of necessities. Suburban developments are unable to support effective public transit systems due to their separate zoning of residential, office, and retail spaces and the dispersion of population densities⁸. An overuse of the car relates to health problems of increased air pollution, road rage related to increased commuting distance, increased chance of road injury and fatality, and finally increased chances of obesity⁹.

There are also important mental and social health issues because sprawl erodes our sense of community, degrades the natural environment, and increases the stress of commuting. Thriving societies are typically integrative, emphasizing centrality, continuity and easy

access - with people feeling a sense of community and connection with others. The social capital of a community is strengthened by short commutes, allowing people more time for recreation, voluntary activities, engagement in the civic life, and personal time. Commuting can also have profound mental effects, such as road rage, due to aggressive driving caused by being rushed or behind schedule, and increased congestion and traffic¹⁰. As well, there is a decreased level of informal social engagement in the suburbs, lending harm to high risk groups. For example children, stay-at-home mothers or fathers, and elderly may feel the isolation of the suburbs more than an adult with typical mobility¹¹.

There are also a variety of ecological impacts of current suburban developments. There is a very high level of land consumption due to the low-density development. With the vast expanses of land in both Canada and the United States this is often not considered an issue. However, land originally developed by metropolitan areas is chosen for its proximity to fertile lands. Very often the lands developed for suburbs results in a direct loss of these prime agricultural lands.

Finally, suburban developments may disrupt delicate ecosystems – disconnecting and disrupting the natural ecologies within the city, making it difficult to maintain a balanced ecosystem. An example of how the suburbs disrupt the natural ecosystems relates to the issue of increased areas of impermeable surfaces storm water collection. This water becomes a major source of toxic metals, chlorinated organic compounds, chemical pesticides, fertilizers, and other serious pollutants, resulting in increased levels of acid deposition, smog, and outbreaks due to water contamination¹².

Other ecological impacts involve high water and energy usage, and the resulting pollutants which can be related to climate change, acid deposition and smog. Canadian energy consumption is near the highest per capita in the world, consuming about six tonnes of oil equivalent per capita, which is more than five times the world average¹³.

In conclusion, the health, environmental and social problems associated with the suburbs can be attributed to our dispersed settlement patterns that encourage automobile-based transport as the only viable mode of transportation. Although changing our future methods for development is crucial, investment should be made in the current suburbs considering all the embodied energy that has already been put into their construction.



FIG 1.06 Impacts of Urban Sprawl. Car Pollution and Car Fatality

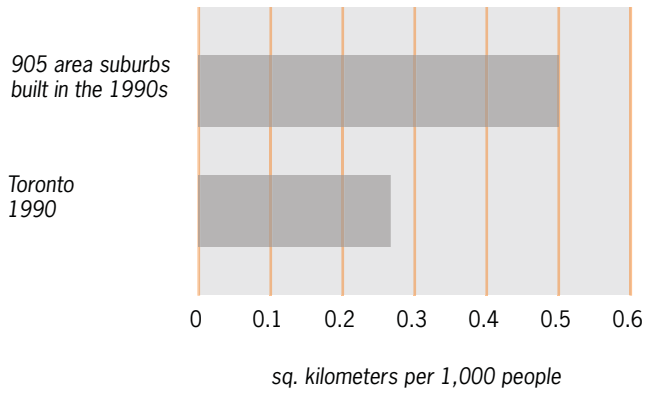


FIG 1.07 The population growth in the suburbs (905 area) compared to the growth in Toronto, in the 1990s

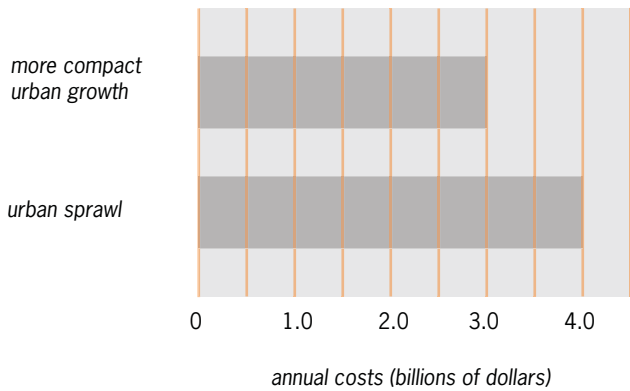


FIG 1.08 Compact urban growth in GTA will save a billion dollars annually according to "The Economics of Urban Form", prepared by the GTA Task Force.

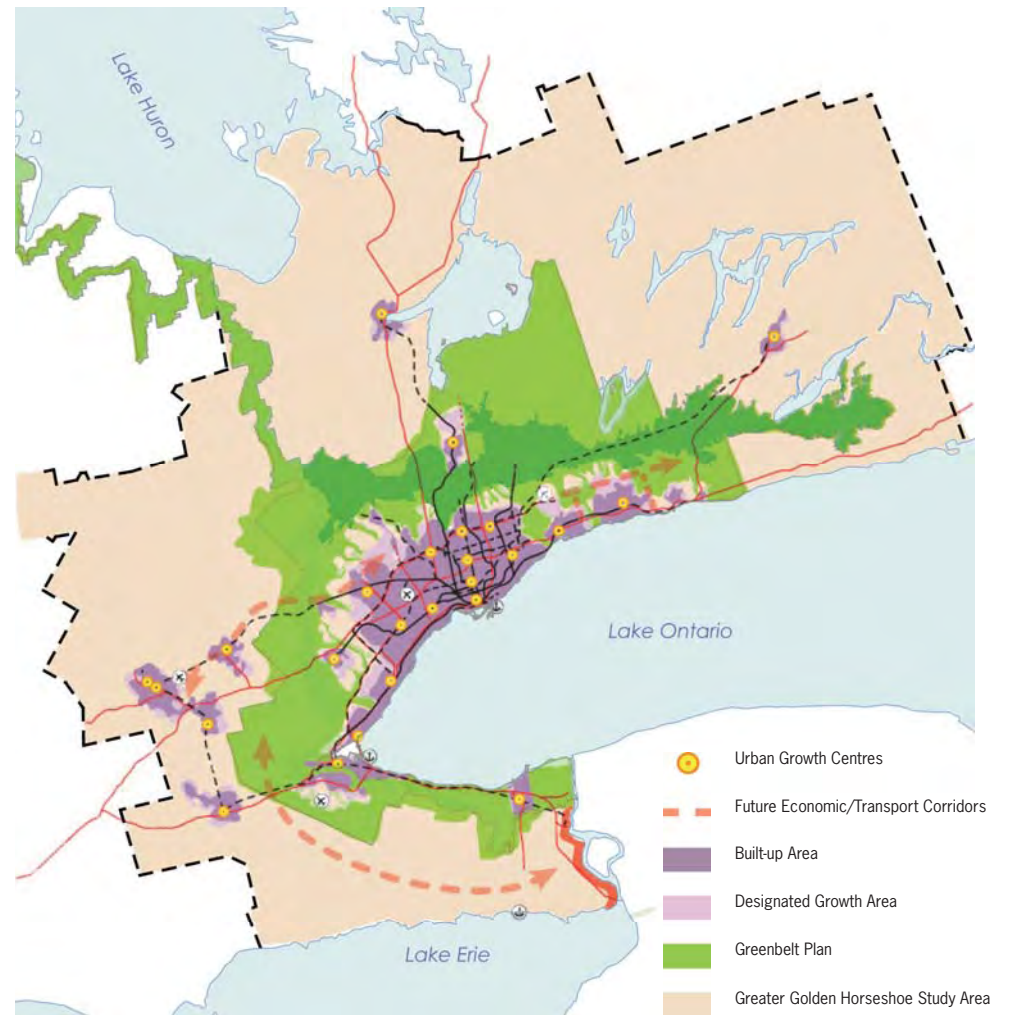


FIG 1.09 Regional Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

1.2 Role of Inner Ring Suburbs

“A coordinated approach to the redevelopment of land within the existing urban fabric to accommodate regional growth is known as re-urbanization. By improving and making better use of existing urban infrastructure and services before introducing new ones on the urban fringe, re-urbanization helps to reduce our demands on nature and improve the livability of the urban region. [...] By shaping the urban fabric of the GTA into a system of mixed use centres and corridors linked by good transit service we will build better communities, strengthen economic conditions and improve air and water quality”. - Toronto Official Plan¹⁴.

Metropolitan urban design trends in Toronto used to overlook inner suburban neighbourhoods, being focused more on concentrated downtown development and the outer suburbs, which growth outlooks statistics predict will continue to grow at a rapid rate. In their current condition the inner suburban areas are not as attractive a destination for development as other locations, since they cannot compete with the lower housing prices and larger lots of the outer suburbs, or with the social, cultural, and recreational draws of the central city¹⁵.

Government Policies

Based on current urban design theories both the local and provincial governments have formed plans to strategically control the predicted population growth and expansion. A provincial attempt to encourage sustainable development in Toronto is shown through the growth boundary (as seen in fig. 1.09) for the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and the Ontario ‘Place’s to Grow’ act, Ontario Smart Growth Plan, and Official City Plan of the City of Toronto. The Ontario Places to Grow: Growth Plan is a prime example of Smart Growth planning, which is encouraging 40% intensification over current density for new development and encouraging intensification for a greater utilization of public transit in urban areas. These policy documents designate a set of primary and secondary growth centres or ‘nodes’ across the GTA, concentrating on intensification and growth within the existing urban fabric.

Public transport accessibility 6 is highest	Location in London	Housing density as habitable rooms per hectare and dwellings per hectare	
6 to 4	Central		650 - 1100 hrh 240 - 435 dph
	Urban	200 - 450 hrh 55-175 dph	450 - 700 hrh 165 - 275 dph
	Suburban	200 - 300 hrh 50 - 110 dph	250 - 350 hrh 80 - 120 dph
3 to 2	Urban	200 - 300 hrh 50 - 110 dph	300 - 450 hrh 100 - 150 dph
	Suburban	150 - 200 hrh 30 - 65 dph	200 - 250 hrh 50 - 80 dph
2 to 1	Suburban	150 - 200 hrh 30 - 50 dph	

Car parking (spaces per unit)	High 2 - 1.5	Moderate 1.5 - 1	Low Less than 1
Predominant development type	Detached and linked houses	Terraced houses and flats	Mostly flats

FIG 1.10 Draft London Plan recommended density levels.

The City of London has a similar growth plan to the GTA, in which they have established a flexible density guideline, allowing for variation based on the projects location in the city and its proximity to public transit.

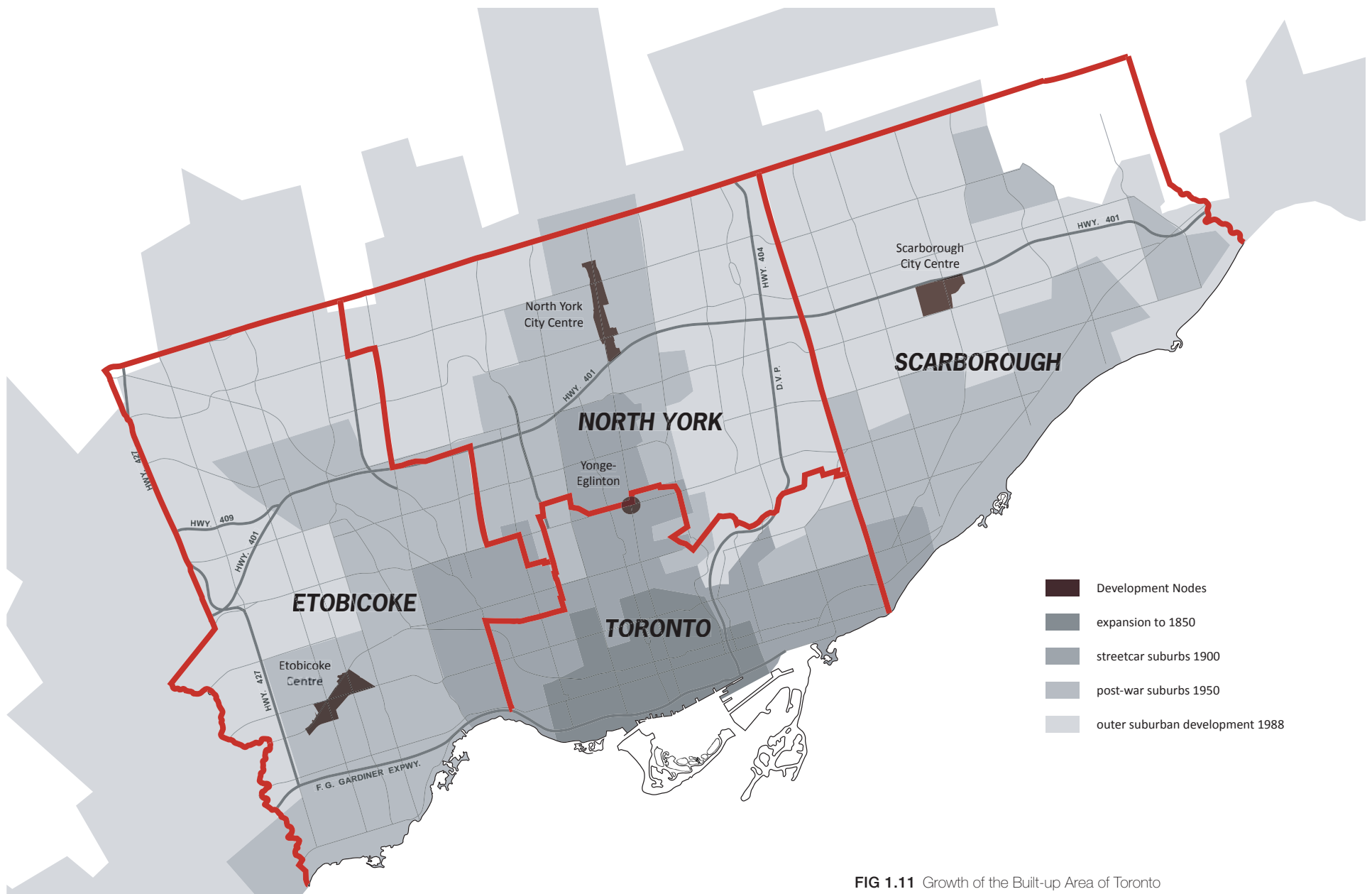


FIG 1.11 Growth of the Built-up Area of Toronto

Working within this provincial growth plan, the *Official City Plan of the City of Toronto* has outlined ways to control intensification and growth in the city by focusing on four nodes for development – respectively Yonge and Eglinton, North York City Centre, Scarborough City Centre, and the new Etobicoke Centre (as seen in fig. 1.11). The plan states that “as a built-out city, Toronto’s future is about re-building and re-urbanizing, about growing up because we have exhausted the opportunities to grow out”¹⁶. Anticipated population increase and projected levels of intensification need to be dealt with through integration – rather than further growth – and the inner suburban fabric could integrate developments that utilize denser housing typologies and diversify their housing options. As well, there are a number of benefits in redirecting population growth towards underperforming locations, such as conserving open space, reusing existing infrastructure and strengthening existing community networks¹⁷.

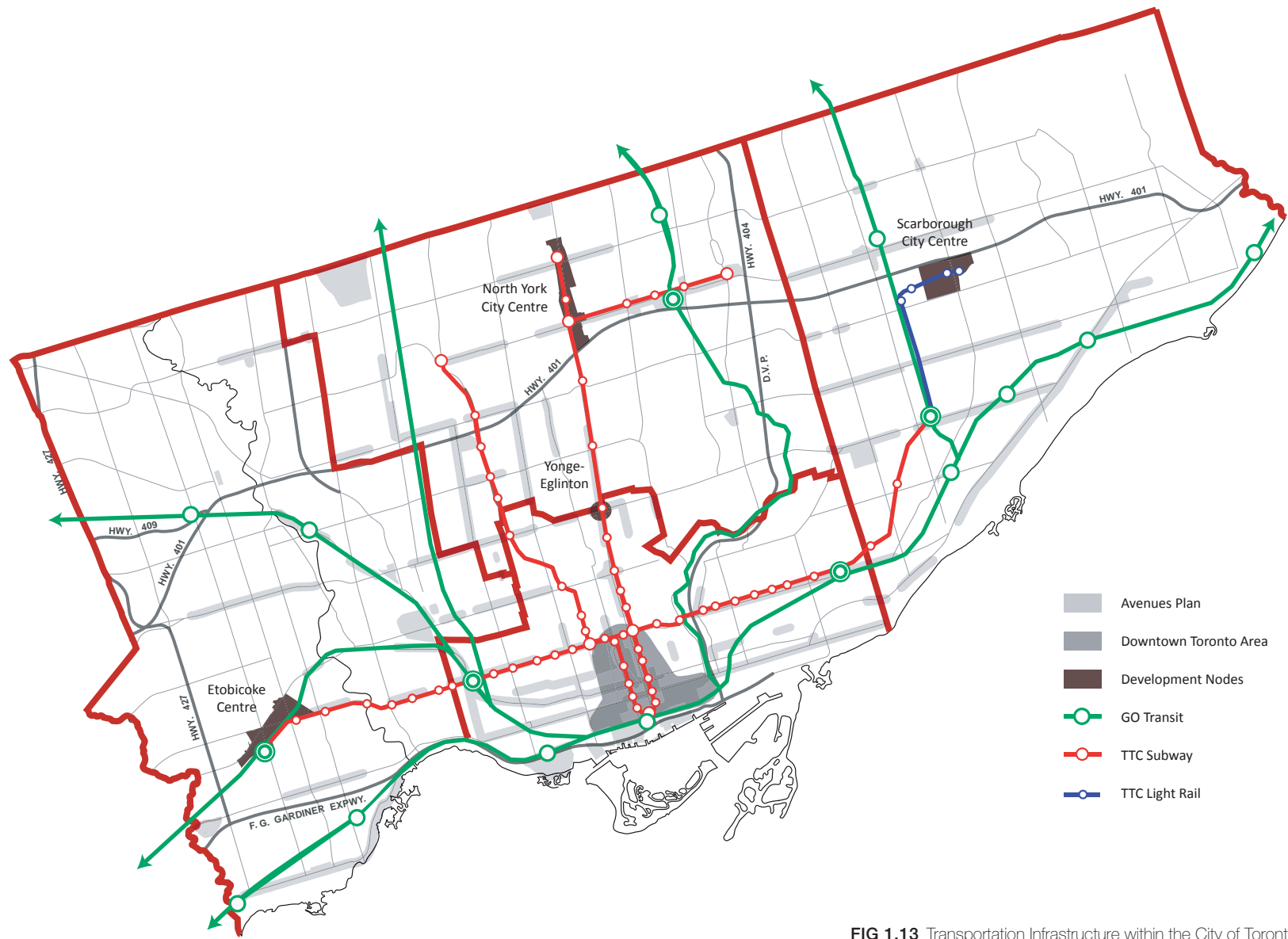
Within the city, the first areas to begin intensification of the urban fabric have been the North York City Centre and the area surrounding Yonge and Eglinton. The area surrounding Yonge and Eglinton was once considered the northern edge of the city, being the final location on the Yonge TTC line until its expansion in the 1970s¹⁸. Both were surrounded by pre-dominantly post-war housing and have experienced great intensification driven by this extension of the subway. Both areas have since developed into vibrant mixed-use land developments which demonstrate many urban qualities, such as density, walk-ability and improved public life. The Etobicoke Centre and Scarborough Centre are two further areas which have been identified as primary locations for intensification, hoping to raise the population to 400 people and jobs per hectare by 2031¹⁹.

The main goal of these proposed growth plans would be to accommodate population growth while creating more livable communities – where individuals have greater access to public amenities, such as shops, parks, jobs and other services²⁰. However, currently due to single-use zoning, only about a fifth of the land in Toronto actually mixes work and housing²¹, which can be changed with the intensification and redevelopment of existing inner and peripheral suburban areas.



FIG 1.12 Suburban downtown in North York started with the building of North York Civic Centre.

In the late 1980s and through to today North York City Centre has been transforming into a vibrant suburban downtown. However, there is little transition in the city fabric between the high-rise condominiums and the low-density post-war housing. The change between the two typologies is abrupt and creates a visible edge against the surrounding neighbourhoods.



- Avenues Plan
- Downtown Toronto Area
- Development Nodes
- GO Transit
- TTC Subway
- TTC Light Rail

FIG 1.13 Transportation Infrastructure within the City of Toronto.

The *Toronto Official Plan* calls for sustainability “based on social equity and inclusion, environmental protection, good governance and city-building. [...] It encourages decision making that is long range, democratic, participatory and respectful of all stakeholders”²². Yet, few projects have been built at present which reflect these ideals. In 2003, Neptis²³ produced a report looking at the Smart Growth within the GTA, outlining the obstacles associated with sustainable growth. Through workshops with developers, city officials, and community members, the report concluded that the Ontario Building Code regulations do not cater to medium-height, medium-density buildings²⁴, which are essential to smart growth developments.

From the 1990’s, an attempt has been made by city officials to urbanize the avenues of Toronto, increasing the allowable height of buildings along its main streets to permit five to six-storey buildings along designated streets. City officials envision these main streets developing into avenues similar to European ‘high streets’ or primary business streets – lined with mixed-use buildings, integrating smaller scale shops and offices into our predominantly residential neighbourhoods²⁵.

These concepts both point to the fact that there is a need to consider higher density developments that fit better with the low-rise residential fabric of inner suburban environment. These higher densities help improve the economy of the area, making more desirable amenities viable options: “the bottom line is that more compact patterns of urban development, anchored by relatively high-density central cities, result in greater economic development. The emerging literature is beginning to show that gross domestic product is improved by both larger city size and higher densities”²⁶.

In conclusion, there is great potential in the development of the inner suburban areas of Toronto, which can play a key role in the entire expansion of the region. This intensification has the ability to “set the stage for truly urban places [...] with the richness, variety, amenity, walking environment and intricacy that has until now only been associated with the historic city core”²⁷. It will create diversity and intensity in the contemporary inner



FIG 1.14 Edinburgh High Street.

‘High Street’ is a generic name (and frequently the official name) of the primary business street of towns or cities in the United Kingdom. It is usually a focal point for shops and retailers in city centres, and is most often used in reference to retailing.


suburban landscape by housing people in concentrations, which will cultivate a public social realm, creating opportunities to develop vibrant city life, and enhance the character of existing neighbourhoods²⁸. In order to become an attractive destination these areas need to take advantage of the existing infrastructure and their rapid transportation connections, becoming infused with a vitality of program. In this way they will become vibrant sub-centres for the urban expansion of Toronto.

Endnotes

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- 4 Dill, Paula M., and Paul J. Bedford. *Toronto at the Crossroads : Shaping our Future*. Toronto, Ont.: Urban Development Services, 2000, p. 13
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- 6 2006 Census shows that 26.8% of Canadian households are one-person, while 33.6% are two-person, totalling 60.4% between the two. This percentage has grown from 2001, where one and two-person households in Canada comprised 58.3% of the population.
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- 23 Neptis is an independent, privately-capitalized, charitable foundation, which studies the city at a regional scale. They contribute reliable knowledge and analysis on regional urban development to support informed public decisions and foster understanding of regional issues. <<<http://www.neptis.org/>>>
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FIG 2.01 Suburban residential community in Milton.



... a multitude of uniform, unidentifiable houses, lined up inflexibly, at uniform distances, on uniform roads, in a treeless communal waste, inhabited by people of the same class, the same income, the same age group, witnessing the same television performances, eating the same tasteless prefabricated foods, from the same freezers, conforming in every outward and inward respect to a common mold, manufactured in the central metropolis.

- Lewis Mumford, *The City in History*⁸.

02 BACKGROUND

SUBURBIA_a study in uniform identity



FIG 2.02 (left) Image of pre-war suburban housing in Toronto.
Aerial view of Earlscourt.

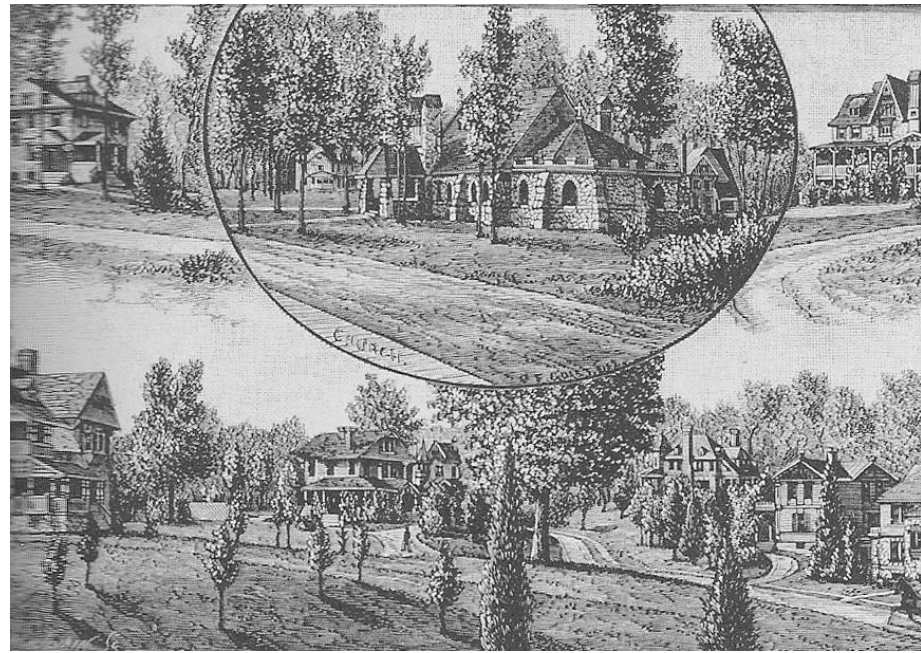


FIG 2.03 (right) Early suburban aesthetic (Short Hills, New Jersey)

Since its conception and rise in the late 1800s, suburbanization has become an international phenomenon, a defining feature of our urban landscape. After World War II, due to a booming economic climate and the rise of family culture, suburban developments flourished. While they have become ingrained in our culture, it is becoming increasingly clear that the current form of the suburbs is unsustainable. Natural landscapes are rapidly consumed, traffic congested, air and water polluted, public health endangered, and we face a potential energy crisis making the 1970s oil crisis look mild in comparison. Overall, it is a time to change our current form of development.

To understand urban design's role in the future of the inner suburban realm, one must understand the current discourse of the field, from both the history of suburban development and roots of contemporary urban design theory to treat the issues related to suburban development. This chapter discusses the history of suburbia and its current identity, leading into a discussion of current theories in urban design, revealing the shifting importance of a 'sense of community' and the public space that supports it.

2.1 History of Suburbia

In the seventeenth century the idea of the city referred not only to a collection of buildings and streets, but to ideas of a coherent political and cultural system. The city was the place where civic culture or a public domain developed – in which all citizens were equal, enjoying the freedoms of the city as an arena for the exchange of ideas. Therefore, the importance of the city was far more than a mere collection of buildings, houses, institutions and businesses – it was tied to the space between buildings, the system of streets and squares, in which public life could develop.

The recognizable roots of contemporary urban design lie in efforts to give new form to the Industrial cities of the mid- to late-nineteenth century. At the end of the nineteenth century and during the course of the twentieth century, suburbanization became the target of new urban design and government policy. The changes unleashed by the Industrial Revolution – beginning with the unprecedented growth of cities – triggered a need to revisit basic assumptions about the form and organization of urban communities. The explosive growth of industry and the resulting influx of people from the countryside, led to massive overcrowding and lack of sanitary living conditions in the inner city environments. Up to that time, few cities in human history had attained anything close to the size and complexity of the Industrial city² and new forms had to be considered to house the growing population.

These conditions were treated through decongestion (a de-densification of the urban form) and functional zoning, or separating living and working neighbourhoods to reduce pollution and improve sanitation. These conditions grounded the theories of many early modernist urban projects], such as Ebenezer Howard's *Garden City* (1902) and Frank Lloyd Wright's *Broadacre City*. As such, their ideals were widely adopted in the post-war era, resulting in the planning language of the North American suburb.

Garden City Movement

The roots of modern suburban development can be tied to the Garden City movement in England, which Robert Fishman referred to as “the birthplace of suburbia”³.



FIG 2.04 Slum housing in the Ward, c. 1911.

The tenements of the Ward were the main area of settlement for immigrant Jews and Italians in Toronto in the early 1900s.

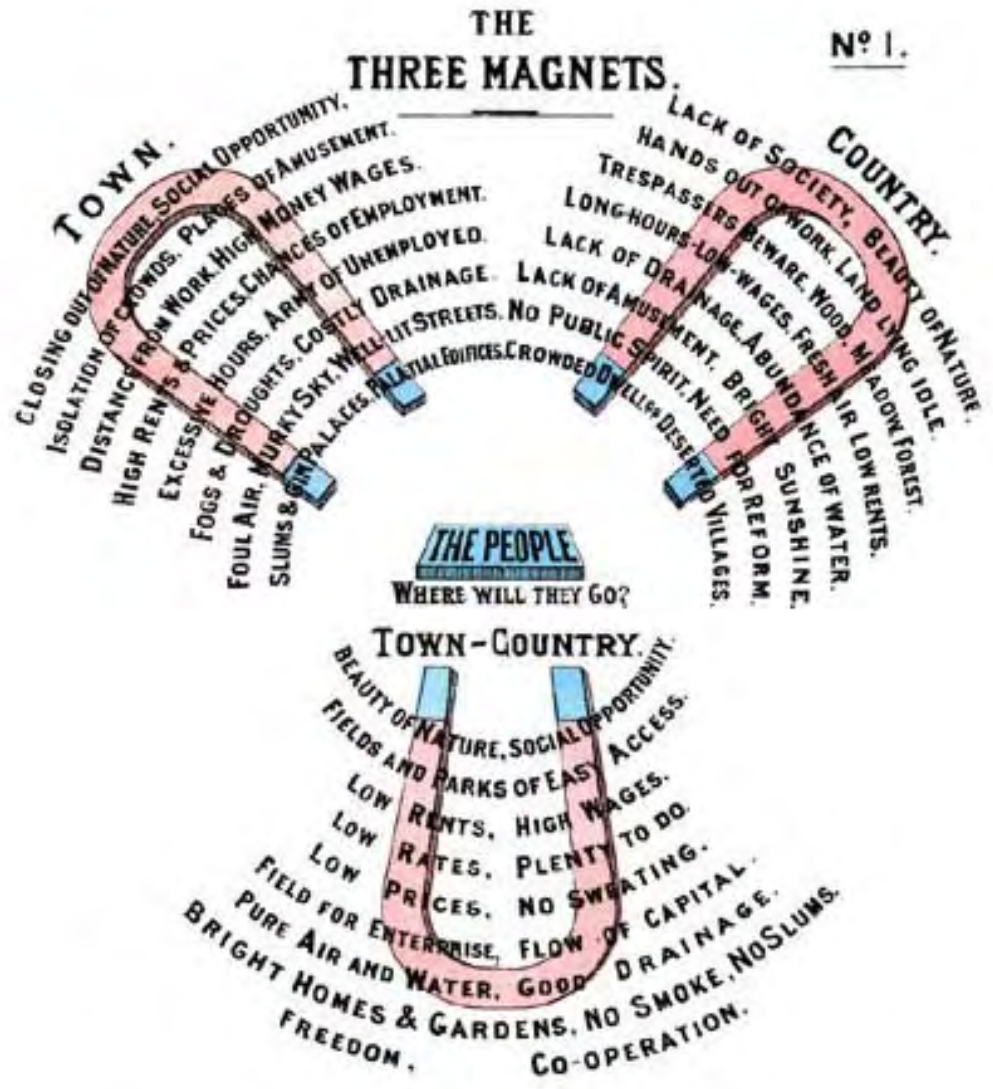


FIG 2.05 Howard's Diagram of the 3 Magnets

This diagram was to demonstrate the advantages and disadvantages of Town and Country and the proposed melding of best aspects of both in the Garden City.

Suburbanization in this period was related to a desire to escape the problems of the Industrial city, seeking to create a suburban condition which combined the best qualities of urban and rural developments.

The most influential author of the movement was writer Ebenezer Howard in his work *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (originally published *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, 1898)⁴. In this he argued that while the city or town offered the family social opportunities and cultural activities it removed them unnecessarily from nature, as well as presented a polluted environment through industry and vehicular congestion. In turn the country, although directly connected with nature, lacked much in the way of society or amusements when compared with the city⁵.

To this Howard proposed what he referred to as Garden Cities, which were planned communities of about 30 000 people that would exist on the fringe of existing urban centres. They would maintain the existing agricultural land and exist as pockets of urbanity within the rural landscape.

Through this the Garden City movement sought to develop a regional scale model, a hierarchy of central cities which were connected by rapid transit lines to a surrounding system of garden cities or suburbs⁶. With this model the historical city core would remain the centre for economic and consumer society, the suburbs existing only as 'bedroom communities' complimenting the existing infrastructure of the city. This form of suburbanization was made possible by advances in transportation technology, as the railway was the primary means used to decongest the industrial city and segregate the urban functions, changing forever the form of our urban environments.

Broadacre City

Other theoretical works greatly influenced the vision for future suburban development, such as Frank Lloyd Wright's *Broadacre City* (first published in 1935). Wright's intentions were similar to Howards, in his strategies of decongestion and functional zoning; however, he adopted extremely low-density housing and didn't focus the development around recognizable town centres.

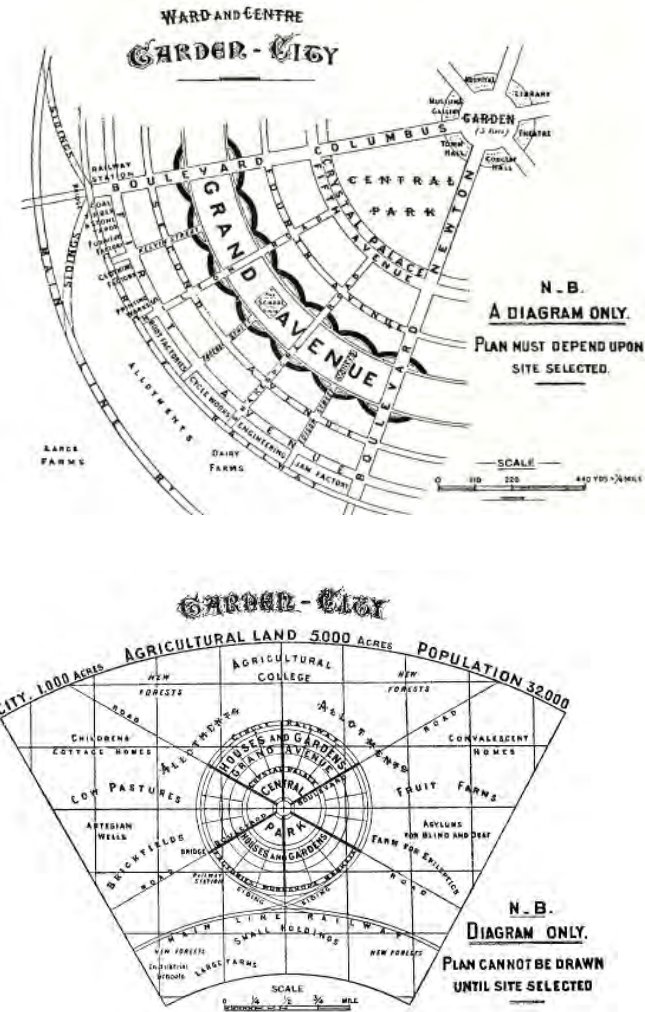


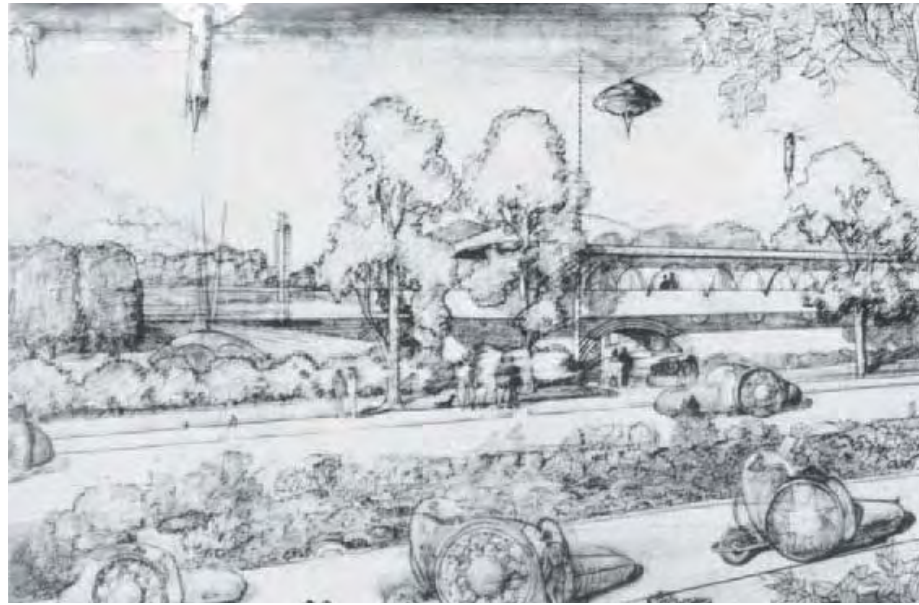
FIG 2.06 Diagrams of The Garden City.

Demonstrates series of garden cities connected by infrastructure of canals and railways.



FIG 2.07 Visionary plan of Wright's Broadacre City landscape

FIG 2.08 Pencil drawing by Wright of Broadacre City landscape



Where Howard and his followers looked to the close-knit English village for inspiration, Wright looked towards the “Jeffersonian tradition in American thought which celebrated the self-reliant rural proprietor”⁷. He broke up the regional model of Howard’s garden city, permitting each citizen and his family to live their own lives on their own ground. He surrounded each unit with an acre of greenery, providing them with abundant private open space.

If the Garden city was influenced by the railroad era, Wright built his model around the rising influence of the automobile. He used a grid street system to segregate urban functions and proposed an extensive vehicular infrastructure, revolving mainly around private car ownership⁸. Designing the city around the use of the automobile allowed Wright to design a new kind of city, with a dramatically new urban scale. His dissent from the symmetrical design of the grid allowed a patchwork urban fabric to develop, which was intended to grow without a city centre.

Suburbanization in Post-War Era

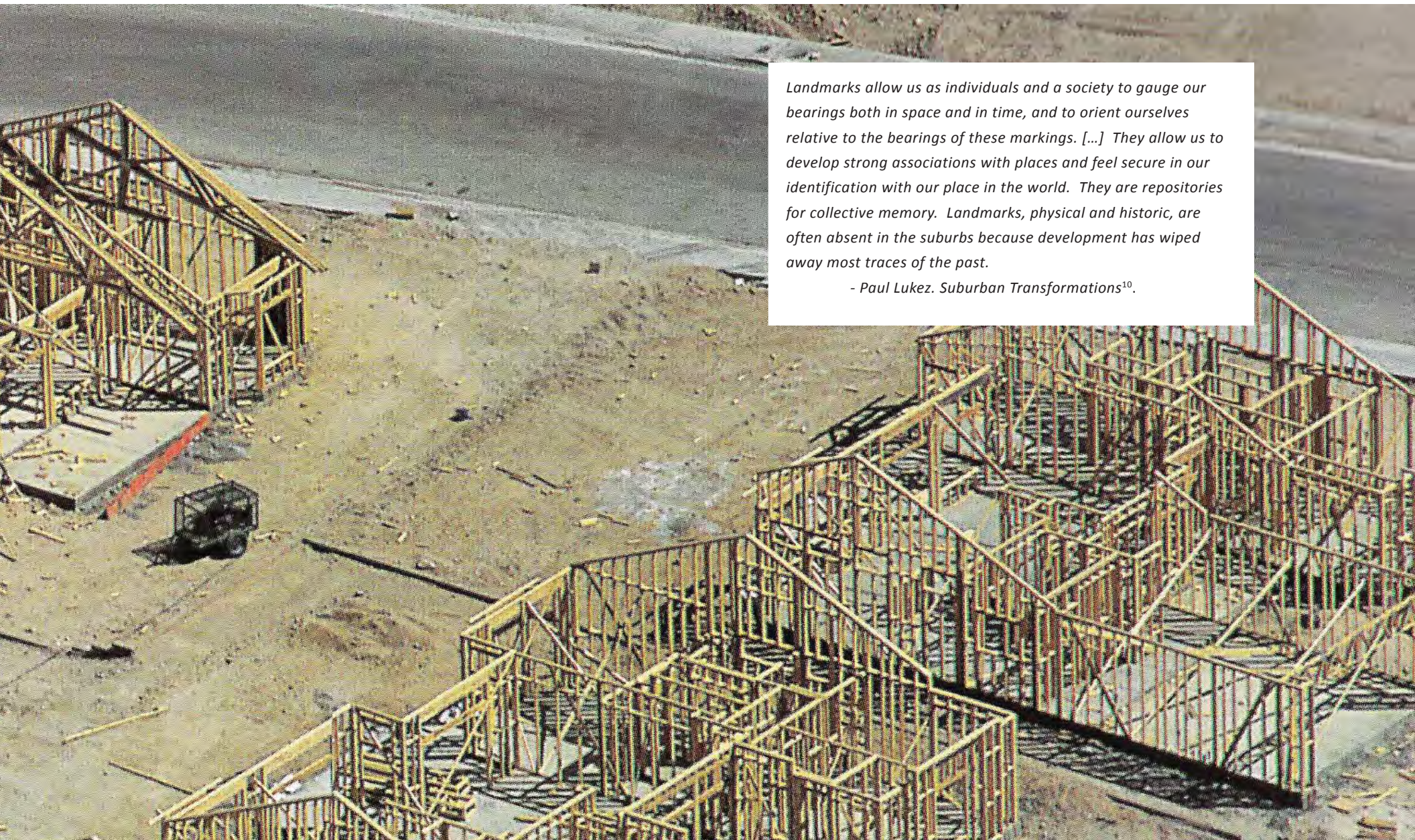
In the years following World War II the process of suburbanization in North America was greatly affected by advances in transportation technology with the explosion of the automobile industry. There became a deeply-rooted conviction that owning a detached house with its own plot of land and an automobile, as private means of transportation, were pre-eminently the realization of the “American Dream”⁹. Thus suburban development became centered around massive transportation networks of highways, expressways and parkways – rather than other forms of mass public-transit such as train and tram networks, as was advocated in the Garden city movement.

This was expressed in Toronto after World War II when the city began to grow in leaps and bounds. As in other Canadian cities, standardization and mass production began to dominate the housing market which resulted in very large developer led projects, such as that seen in Don Mills, one of Toronto’s first planned communities, or later in Erin Mills. As demand was high in this period this resulted in the production of many new suburban neighbourhoods and urban apartment blocks.

Only twenty years after the initial building boom these modernist suburban visions had become a concrete reality. As imagined by Frank Lloyd Wright, North American suburban culture had become centered upon the private life, centering largely around our networks of home, work, and school. The suburban environment had become increasingly insular – characterized by a segregation of land-use, housing types and economic status. This era saw the movement of centers of employment and retail to the suburbs, which removed the dependence of the periphery on the cultural and economic infrastructures of the city core. If they chose to do so, people could go about their daily lives without ever having to venture downtown. The streets of suburbia became car-dominated transportation corridors, rather than being based around effective pedestrian circulation.



FIG 2.09 Typical suburban home of the 1950s



Landmarks allow us as individuals and a society to gauge our bearings both in space and in time, and to orient ourselves relative to the bearings of these markings. [...] They allow us to develop strong associations with places and feel secure in our identification with our place in the world. They are repositories for collective memory. Landmarks, physical and historic, are often absent in the suburbs because development has wiped away most traces of the past.

- Paul Lukez. Suburban Transformations¹⁰.

FIG 2.10 Mass production of suburban units.

2.2 Uniform Identity of Suburbia

Now, almost a half century since the suburban utopia was born, it appears that the ideals of the suburbs may no longer be considered ideal. In the architectural field, the suburbs are often criticized on an aesthetic level, as lacking variety and identity, which results in a quality where the suburb could be everywhere or 'nowhere'. This distinct lack of context can also have cultural and social implications as it hinders the creation of a sense of 'community'. The physical form of these areas has resulted in a monotonous suburban landscape – where low density, a lack of variety of possible activities and absence of well-designed public space demonstrate these urban forms lack the capacity to assimilate new urban functions, activities and lifestyles¹². These prevent the development of what could become a rich suburban complex¹³.

Processes of mass construction and development may also have a role to play in this, as “eighty percent of everything ever built in America has been built in the last fifty years, and most of it is depressing, brutal, ugly, unhealthy, and spiritually degrading”¹⁴. James Howard Kunstler considers this condition to be form from designing buildings as objects rather than as a coherent fabric, with a focus on speed of construction and ease of automobile mobility, which result in a banal housing stock¹⁵. As a select group of developers have constructed the majority of suburban housing across the country, there is less variance in architectural styles and neighbourhood identity. In *Common Place* Douglas Kelbaugh claims that the architectural losses include a lack of detail, human scale, authenticity, and varied building typologies¹⁶, but these are all essential in creating identity in neighbourhood design. The commodification of architectural images is also encountered with franchised entities, such as fast food, big box, or retail outlets¹⁷, that there is little to distinguish one neighbourhood from another.

Critics of the suburbs have argued that thriving societies are typically integrative, emphasizing centrality, continuity and easy access¹⁸ - where residents feel a sense of community and connection with others. These conditions represent the social capital¹⁹ of a community, strengthened by short commutes that allow people more time for recreation, voluntary activities, engagement in civic life, and personal time²⁰. In suburbia there is a distinct lack of conventional forms of urban and public spaces, where the

*... there's is no there, there. – Gertrude Stein, speaking of suburb in Oakland*¹¹



FIG 2.11 Standardization of suburban units.

Suburban developments often bulldoze the existing landscape in order to create a blank slate or tabula rasa off of which to build. This requires little variation for the units allowing for standardization and mass production of units. However, it also creates neighbourhoods which lack identity and have little relationship to the physical context around them.

Roads, railways, airports, cutting across or imposed on the landscape rather than developing with it, are not only features of placelessness in their own right, but, by making possible the mass movement of people with all their fashions and habits, have encouraged the spread of placelessness well beyond their immediate impacts.

- Edward Relph. Place and Placelessness²².



FIG 2.12 Highway interchanges tend to dominate the suburban landscape

private shopping centre and commercial strip have replaced the street and the square as the main settings for social gathering²¹. Thus, critics are concerned that suburbanization, along with increasing privatization of the public realm, have led to a decline in social capital and retreat from public life.

Non-Place

A quality of “nowhereness” or the proliferation of the ‘non-place’²³, – a term popularized by French anthropologist Marc Augé pervades the suburban landscape. This term was first brought up for discussion back in the sixties by the American geographer Melvin Webber in his famous essay “*The urban place and the non-place urban realm*”²⁴. Webber argued that the highly mobile nature of our modern lives meant a break between our physical surroundings and our circle of public life.

Augé furthered the concept using this term to describe the placelessness of modern developments, which he claims contradicts the very notion of ‘place’. ‘Non-place’ refers to spaces dominated not only by their transitory character, but also marked by their fleeting, temporary and ephemeral experiences, such as spaces of circulation (freeways, airways), consumption (department stores, supermarkets), and communication (telephones, faxes, televisions, cable networks)²⁵. They are characterized as having little to no relation to their context – neither physically, historically, or symbolically – and demonstrate a lack of relationship between the individual and their physical context, as seen in modern suburban developments.

Suburban neighbourhoods are also increasingly oriented towards the private realm and values, where our public meeting spaces are mostly franchised, privately owned establishments. Hence, there is a lack of informal gathering places, which provides little nourishment for the development of an active public realm²⁶. As such, suburbanization has gone hand in hand with a reduction of the use of public space, as the main arena for public city life²⁷.

Transient Nature of Our Modern Lives

In traditional cities, ideas of ‘community’ were very directly related to ones physical surroundings, as physical interactions in neighbourhood public spaces were the only real opportunity for communication and communal activities, providing an essential forum for public discourse²⁸. Public spaces have historically been ‘living spaces’ or an extension of the home, which complemented the generally small private living spaces of the Industrial city. Nowadays, many question the relevance of these traditional ideas of ‘community’ and its relationship to public space – arguing that ‘virtual communities’ organized around common interests are replacing communities of propinquity and place²⁹. With the rise of the internet and cell phone, people started to communicate across great distances, developing social connections with people of similar interests. For example, some of the informal networks necessary to develop social capital can be seen in Internet chat rooms. These “interests” then begin to define an individual’s identity, independent of our neighbourhoods, districts and other places that we play out our lives. This implies that the rise of virtual communication makes the physical location of one’s home less important in establishing social relationships.

Yet, rather than providing an adequate substitute for the forms of socialization in public space, these virtual meeting spaces appear to have fed a greater desire for the experience of connectivity, of a ‘sense of community’, especially in the suburbs³⁰. As we are social creatures, needing to socially engage with people to be mentally and physically attuned, it can be argued that the quality of this virtual interaction – through media such as internet or cell phones – is not as beneficial as face-to-face interaction. Therefore, the provision of public spaces where people can congregate and meet together freely remains an essential factor in retrofitting inner suburban environments into more urban places.

Third Place

Essential to the development of a ‘sense of community’ would be those gathering places that provide people with a backdrop for engaging in informal community life. In *Great Good Place*, sociologist Ray Oldenburg referred to these locales as ‘the third place’,



FIG 2.13 Out of office workers in a coffee shop in San Francisco.

People have started interacting virtually with people differently since the rise of telecommunication.



FIG 2.14 Photographs of typical strip malls located near westwood theatre lands

highlighting their separation from our professional and personal lives. Unlike the more private realms of home and work, Oldenburg argues that this third place is essential for cultivating the human need of belonging to a community in the city, to feel a ‘sense of place’. It functions as the location for convenient open-ended socializing – “places where individuals can go without aim or arrangement and be greeted by people who know them and know how to enjoy a little time off”³¹. These third places act as neutral territories, where class distinctions and hierarchical roles that separate and distinguish people at home and work are dropped.

Oldenburg believes that suburbia is genuinely lacking in these ‘third places’ – which is not to suggest that suburbia lacks any form of social activity per se, merely that such activity has become centered on the home, workplace, or school. Areas of communal gathering in suburbia are often more exclusive to a specific age or interest group and aren’t conducive to more casual forms of socializing as one would experience in a third place³².

Oldenburg isn't alone in connecting the loss of more public forms of social behaviour with our suburban development patterns. Robert Putnam, a Harvard sociologist, documented this decline in *Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital*, highlighting what he saw as a decreasing level of investment and civic engagement in North American communities, with a diminished membership in groups and institutions such as churches or political organizations³³. He argued that the suburban development patterns could be directly and indirectly seen as the root of this decline.

The predominant public space in suburbia can be seen as centering around consumptive activities, whether the strip mall, the neighbourhood or regional mall, or big box stores and outlets. The strip mall was originally designed to suit the automobile, consisting of destination shopping with outdoor activities and no places to encourage lingering on the site. The neighbourhood or regional mall might be thought of as a social space – after all it is designed in a way similar to traditional public spaces, with streets lined with shops and central spaces at which people congregate. However, it does not allow the same informal interactions that other types of public space afford. Mall culture is not about overcoming isolation and connecting with others, but is rather an environment where individuals “privately surf from store to store – in the presence of others, but not in their company”³⁴.

Therefore, to establish a ‘sense of place’ in the dispersed city urban planning should work to reinforce the local identity, history, and character of the place, while providing situations conducive to open-ended socialization. In the following sections the thesis will explore urban design theories and practices, establishing for the design proposal a set of processes and design principles that will work to foster a public social realm in the test site in the inner suburb of Etobicoke. Through the intensification of the urban fabric around a network of well-designed public spaces and the design of a central cultural community building, this project will become an anchor for the future development of an expanded Etobicoke City Centre. It will have the potential to draw together residents of the area, providing a physical and symbolic centre for the community.



FIG 2.15 Example of a third place as demonstrated in *A Bar at the Folies-Bergères*, by Edouard Manet

The third place is a term used in the concept of community building to refer to social surroundings separate from the two usual social environments of home and the workplace.

In his influential book *The Great Good Place*, author Ray Oldenburg argues that these third places are essential for of civil society, democracy, civic engagement, and establishing feelings of a sense of place.


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FIG 3.01 Skating Rink outside Toronto City Hall.



"The making of place in the post-modern city has been discussed within architectural, planning and political circles. The post-modern city is seen as the antithesis of the modern city. There is a belief in 'public space' and that these spaces will be a communal vessel for shared activity. There is a new respect for place and tradition. If modernism was driven by universalizing forces, then the postmodern city is a return to difference and particularity."

- Christian Norberg-Schulz. *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*¹

03

THEORY

URBAN DESIGN_cultivating the public realm



FIG 3.02 Photograph of Greenwich Village, examined by Jacobs in her text *The Life and Death of Great American Cities*

3.1 Urban Design After Modernity

Much discussion emerged in the field of urban design in the late 1970s, partially as a reaction to issues associated with the suburban condition and partially as a desire to return to the primacy of the public realm. Although it is a generally accepted notion that the opinions and ambitions of the modernists of the twentieth century are outdated, many of the present themes in the debate surrounding urbanization resemble those themes that were raised at the time: creating conditions for, and giving form to, new forms of sustainable urban development on the one hand, and focusing on the need for identity and creating community spirit on the other. Whereas modernist strategies focused on decongestion by establishing intricate car infrastructure and functional zoning, post-modernist strategies aimed to improve the suburban condition, often advocating mixed-used zoning, densification of people and building typologies, and a pedestrian-oriented infrastructure.

In the late 1970s and 80s three landmark books – Jane Jacob’s *Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Kevin Lynch’s *Image of the City*, and Christopher Alexander’s *Pattern Language* and *A New Theory for Urban Design* – inspired many urban designers to establish the primacy of the public realm as the launching point for their work, expanding their focus to include the quality and character of entire neighbourhoods and districts.

In *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jane Jacobs was one of the first theorists to relate the vibrancy generated in the public realm with the physical form of the city. Her critique of modern architecture’s method of urban design pointed to more traditional elements of city form – such as the city block, mixture of uses, combining older and new buildings, and a pedestrian-oriented streetscape – as essential in establishing a high quality of city life². Thus, she appealed to city planners to move away from single-use zoning and car-oriented thoroughfares, instead encouraging high-density and variation in housing types in order to encourage a mix of populations and enterprises³, best promoting a district’s diversity and quality of life. She made a clear distinction between a neighbourhood being “high-density” and being “overcrowded”, as the undesirable



FIG 3.03 Images from two ‘Jane’s Walk’ tours in Toronto.

The ‘Jane’s Walk’ was inspired by Jane Jacob’s and her grassroots approach to city building, where one needed a first-hand experience in order to understand the potentials for a neighbourhood.

It is a free, multi-city, community-based series of urban walking tours, led by volunteer guides. The second annual Jane’s Walk in Toronto featured 69 free neighbourhood walking tours from Parkdale to East Scarborough, and the West Donlands to Jane/Finch.



situation of overcrowding often results from economic factors which do not allow inhabitants to leave. In this she demonstrated that a density of at least 40 households per hectare would be an asset for a well-designed and diverse community⁴.

However, the ideal on which she built her theories, New York's Greenwich Village, is quite singular and is often criticized as being limited to this specific context of the city core, which doesn't apply to many new urban forms⁵. Therefore, despite her strict anthropological approach, it could be said that she was too quick to associate these specific typologies with ideas of good urban form⁶.

Following Jacob's desire for a more incrementally designed urbanism – as opposed to the functionalism of Modernism – Christopher Alexander proposed every building be crafted in response to the existing physical and social patterns⁷. He devised a system of two hundred and fifty “patterns”, which are suggested as guidelines for creating practical, safe, and attractive designs at a variety of scales. These described how entire regions, cities, communities and homes could be built and rebuilt incrementally over time. Through his various books – from *Oregon Experiment* through *Pattern Language* and finally *A New Theory of Urban Design* – Alexander was able to illustrate his concept of incremental urbanism, where the urban design process shapes the structure and form of the city, but not always with predictable consequences. As Alexander stated, “the master planner [may] create the initial form but the beauty that we find it so difficult to recreate is the result of decisions made by hundreds, even thousands of people over decades and sometimes centuries”⁸.

Like Jacobs, Alexander advocated density in urban areas, although he denounced the high-rise apartment, stating that “there is abundant evidence to show that high buildings make people crazy”⁹. Instead he encouraged density through low-rise apartments, row housing and other incremental forms of density. By calling into question the size of North American housing Alexander argued that dwellings and neighbourhoods should be based on a more appropriate human scale, stating that a reasonable sized dwelling for a single person need only be 30-40 m² ¹⁰.

FIG 3.04 (left) Images from *A Pattern Language* demonstrating different necessary elements of the urban structure, as discussed by Alexander.

a) Small public squares



View 1. Looking east out of the Piazza San Marco towards the colonnades, around Brunelleschi's Piazza della Santissima Annunziata...

View 2. As soon as the corner is turned, the Piazza della Santissima Annunziata is entered and an equestrian statue directs the view onwards

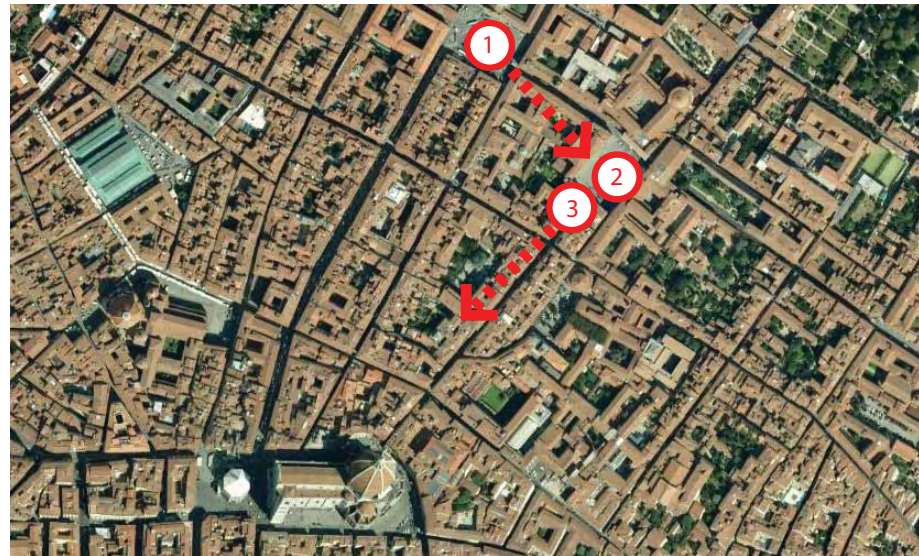
View 3. the equestrian statue directs the eye to the landmark dome upon Florence's cathedral.

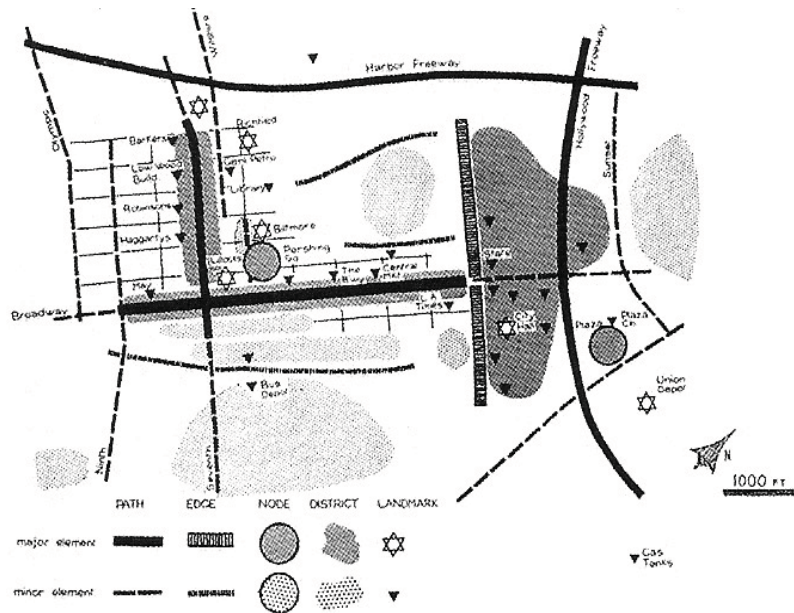
FIG 3.05 (left) Photographs of a sequential route from the Piazza San Marco to the cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence

FIG 3.06 (right) Plan of route

Like Alexander, Kevin Lynch's work *The Image of the City* sought to create a new language for mapping the conditions of the urban environment in order to help guide the field of urban design. He discussed how the urban environment was made legible through organizing elements such as paths, nodes, landmarks, views, vistas, edges, and districts – all of which combine to help structure the built environment in a meaningful way¹¹. The process by which Lynch used these elements to create a map of existing places involved looking critically at an urban environment and the forces that affect it. Lynch's methodology combined this by overlaying maps with user surveys to create "psychogeographic"¹² mappings of different areas, which also attempts to understand the relationship between an individual's psychological relationship to place and the physical context of the area.

These combine to create a narrative sequence, sometimes referred to as serial vision, which influences the individual's movement through an urban environment. This concept of serial vision can be demonstrated on a short walk from the Piazza San Marco, a square that is associated with the University of Florence and is located approximately 100 m to





the west of Brunelleschi’s Piazza Della Santissima Annunziata. From the Piazza San Marco, the colonnades around the Piazza Della Santissima Annunziata can just be seen down the interconnecting street, as a kind of beaconing landmark (view 1). On walking down the interconnecting street towards Brunelleschi’s colonnades, the Piazza Della Santissima Annunziata gradually unfolds before one’s eyes (view 2). First, more of the colonnades can be seen, and then the enclosing buildings, and then an equestrian statue is revealed standing within the square. This statue serves as a focal point, it is aligned to the south, where it directs the eye down the street that Brunelleschi orientated to connect with the cathedral. Following the statue’s orientation, one faces down Brunelleschi’s street and sees that major landmark of the cathedral dome (view 3). The whole sequence results in a legible and memorable environment as the pedestrian is pulled onwards to greater sights.

In his work *Good City Form*, Lynch spoke to the fact that there might not be any one correct urban morphology, rather identifying certain traits of city form – namely vitality, fit, sense, access, control, efficiency, and justice¹³ - which might lead to a vibrant urban environment.

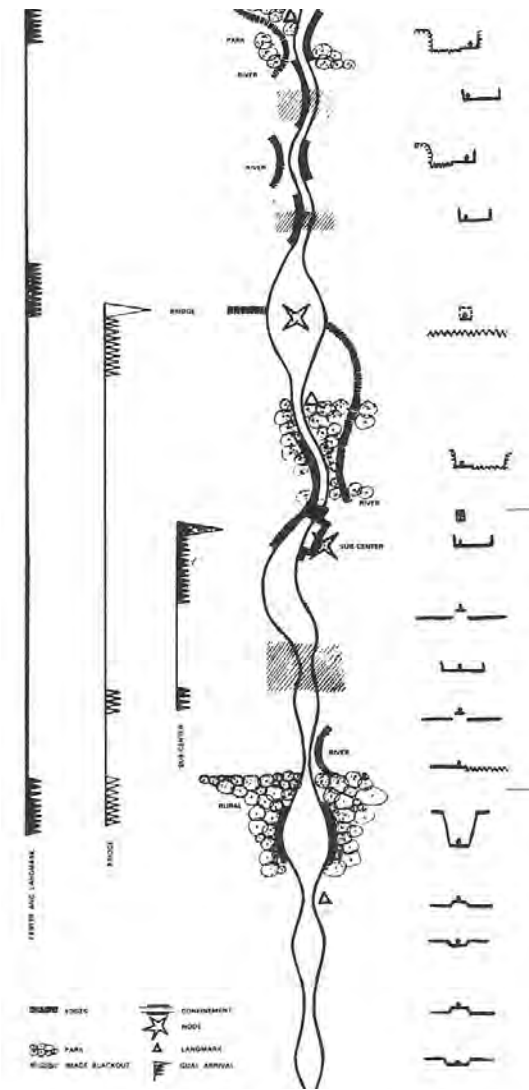


FIG 3.07 (far above) Psychogeographic mapping of downtown L.A. (1950s)

FIG 3.08 (above) Diagram of a visual sequence by Lynch

A visual sequence to be experienced in motion while on a highway, showing movement, views, and scale of adjacent spaces and buildings.



FIG 3.09 Photograph of Seaside, Florida.

The current approaches to urban design, which began to take form in the 1980s and 90s, were greatly influenced by these and other works. They attempted to bridge the gap between our need for increased density in urban form and a desire for a high quality of life, by focusing on restoring human scale and urban vitality to our communities¹⁴. The question then became whether there was an explicit way to incorporate these qualities, capturing the social and experiential multiplicity of urban life into the practice of urban design and architecture?

New Urbanism

New Urbanism started in the 1970s with emerging urban visions and theoretical models proposed by prominent architects such as Peter Calthorpe and Andrés Duany, under the *Congress for New Urbanism* in 1993. Since then, it has become an international movement, focusing on raising our quality of life and standard of living by creating what they termed ‘better places to live’¹⁵. New Urbanism focuses on the revival of ‘place-making’ that involves the focus on the public space of our communities and an essential re-ordering the built environment into more compact new towns and villages¹⁶. They attempt to use these strategies to cultivate a sense of community, by creating mixed-use developments that return to a more integrated type of modernism as seen in early American towns and villages.

This reconfiguration is done in both new greenfield developments and in-fill developments to help improve the environment of our existing suburban developments. Today, there are more than six hundred new towns, villages and neighbourhood founded according to New Urbanist principles¹⁷ in North America – including the Cornell neighbourhood in Markham, a prominent example in the GTA.

A concept developed by New Urbanist architect and author Peter Calthorpe, the ‘Transit-Oriented Development’ (TOD), expands upon these concepts by integrating the civic, retail activities and mixed use neighbourhood around a transit ‘node’. It encourages maximum access to mass transit and alternative forms of transportation¹⁸. The critical element of this type of development is that it is primarily a pedestrian environment, bringing a

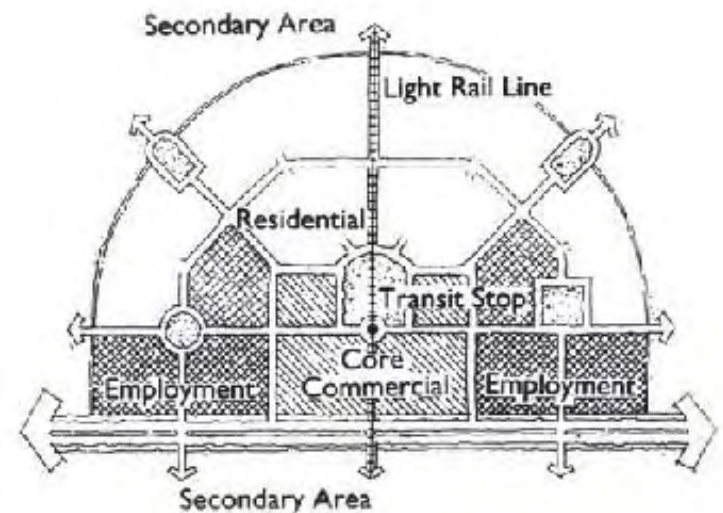


FIG 3.10 Diagram of basic planning for Transit Oriented Development



FIG 3.11 Parking or vacant lots are often temporarily taken over by informal markets in Everyday Urbanism.

variety of destinations such as local shopping, parks, day care, and civic services into close proximity to each other.

This form of urbanism is often criticized as being overly nostalgic, advocating the traditional aesthetics and values of small town America, however without the authentic foundation for the neighbourhood of established community infrastructures. As well, their approach is still limited to constructing new developments on the periphery, rather than retrofitting existing city or suburban structures. Although they have recently acknowledged the issues with our inner cities and older suburbs – with their disinvestment due to the continual flow of people to the outer suburbs – their approach cannot be applied to these parts of the urban landscape¹⁹.

Everyday Urbanism

A relatively new movement Everyday Urbanism is not as utopian as New Urbanism doctrine. This form of urbanism privileges human experience as “the city is, above all, a social product, created out of the demands of everyday use and the social struggles of urban inhabitants”²⁰. In this the designer celebrates ordinary or everyday life, looking towards the resourcefulness and imagination of the everyday citizen and how they occupy the marginal spaces of the city to inform urban design.

This form of urbanism is much more bottom-up urbanism, playing on the informality of grassroots looking at the way that independent groups inhabit the different spaces of the city. For instance, as seen in the adjacent images Everyday Urbanism often involves various forms of observation. These images demonstrate how spaces such as front yards and vacant parking lots are temporarily taken over by indigenous and migrant groups in rather resourceful and imaginative ways. The way in which they “appropriat[e] space for informal commerce in parking and vacant lots, as well as private driveways and yards for garage sales, is urban design by default rather than by design”²¹.

As such, Everyday Urbanism allows a sense of community to develop naturally through human interaction and appropriation of space. It is an open-ended approach that aims to incorporate those elements of the urban form that remain elusive to so many other urban

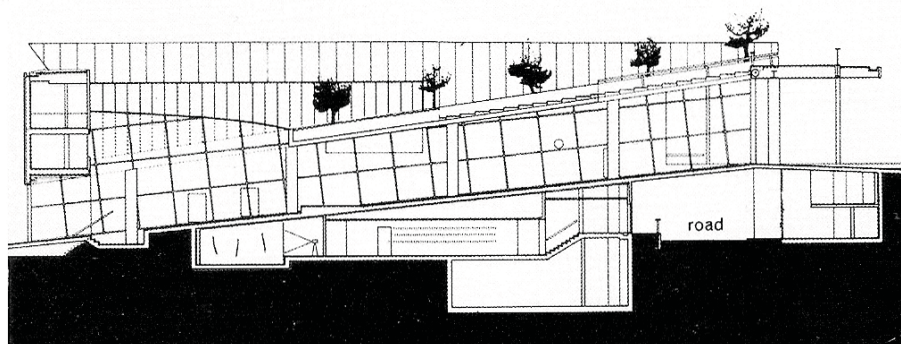


FIG 3.12 This furniture store appropriates unused space, expanding their store into an adjacent vacant lot. (Central Avenue and Forty-First Street, South Central LA)



FIG 3.13 Images of the Kunsthall, Rotterdam
 a) Night view of Western glazed facades
 b) Interior and Exterior Ramp Conditions

FIG 3.14 Section through Kunsthall



designers “ephemerality, cacophony, multiplicity, and simultaneity”²².

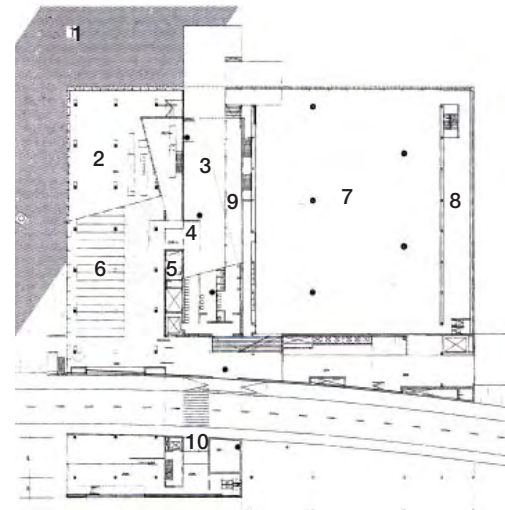
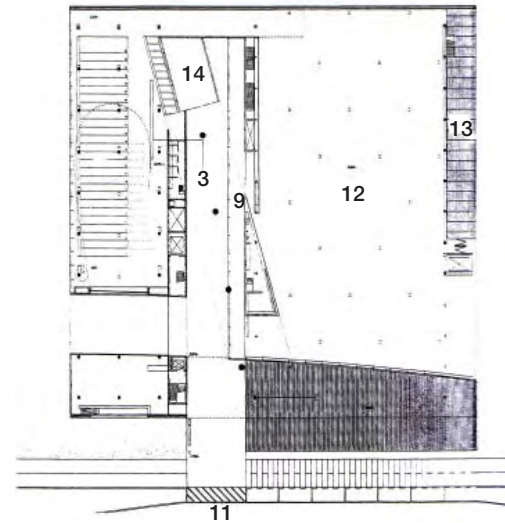
This approach points to the fact that new public spaces should allow for the unexpected to occur, being more open-ended in design with the ability to accommodate multiple forms of occupation and appropriation.

Neomodernism and Posturbanism

In reaction to these movements in urban design Rem Koolhaas in his essay “The Generic City” advocates a return to larger scale top-down planning or “Bigness”²³. Michael Sorkin and Douglas Kelbaugh, among others, have come to label this assertion of urban renewal practices as “post-urbanism”. He embraces the generic typologies of the contemporary metropolis, finding beauty in the culture and hyperactivity of airports, hotels, shopping centres and theme parks²⁴, although lamenting that this perpetuation of the non-place or “Generic City” works to “perpetuate its own amnesia”²⁵.

It is clear that while Koolhaas shares the New Urbanist conviction that architecture has a unique ability to act as an urban catalyst, he is opposed to their forms of aesthetic traditionalism²⁶. His reaction is mostly focused on the unnecessary historicism and traditional aesthetics of the developments – such as Seaside and Celebration, Florida – which he believes is insufficient to deal with the issues of 21st century urbanization²⁷.

In his own work Koolhaas focuses on creating a transparent architecture that reveals the social, intentionally arranging the program of many of his buildings to incorporate the more social components of the urban street²⁸. For instance, in his design of the Kunsthal in Rotterdam, Koolhaas and O.M.A. worked to incorporate an exterior street making a connection from the street front to the Museum Park beyond. This pedestrian path then opens directly into the main public space of the building, the auditorium, which acts as a foyer for the art gallery/institution. From both inside looking out and conversely outside looking in, the permeability of this gesture breaks down the physical barriers separating architecture and a sidewalk culture²⁹. As well, the Kunsthal has very densely packed programs, which Koolhaas relates in section, using fissures between the spaces to create opportunities of overlook, for programs to spill from one into another.



1. Park
2. Restaurant
3. Ramp outside
4. Main entrance
5. Ticket office
6. Auditorium
7. Hall 1
8. Lower gallery
9. Ramp inside
10. Staff entrance
11. Dike
12. Hall 2
13. Upper gallery
14. Roof garden

FIG 3.15 (far above) Dike level plan of the Kunsthal

FIG 3.16 (above) Park level plan



FIG 3.17 New Years at Toronto City Hall

3.2 Cultivating the Public Realm

From the study of these theories and current design practices we begin to draw certain conclusions about the design considerations required for a renewed focus on the primacy of the public realm in the intensification of the inner suburban realm. It becomes clear that public spaces are crucial for supporting the public life that binds a community. As humans are social and cultural animals, we have a basic need which is only fulfilled through sharing our lives with others, connecting in some significant way – forming a ‘community’. As our society becomes increasingly insular and privatized, creating a ‘sense of community’ or ‘sense of place’ is essential to satisfy a need to be part of something greater than ourselves³¹.

For many years, prominent architects and urban planners have argued that the quality of a city's public spaces have much to do with the quality of life of their inhabitants. The best public spaces cultivate a vibrant public realm, attracting people through the multifaceted and cumulative result of all their activities and spaces³². Besides allowing for a series of programs and functions, these spaces often have a strong public presence and symbolic character, with which people identify. Public spaces not only afford the opportunity for planned encounters and communal celebration, but also for informal socialization that binds people in a community together. As Jan Gehl (2001) stated, there is a “need for [informal] contact where opportunities for meeting and daily activities in the public spaces of a city or residential area enable one to be among, to see, and to hear others, to experience other people functioning in various situations”³³. The necessity of life between buildings is predicated by the opportunity to be with others in a relaxed and undemanding way; where one is not necessarily with a specific person, but one is, nevertheless, with others³⁴. This is a prerequisite for other more complex interactions which create vitality in the public realm.

Thus it is a key principle in the design that focusing on providing the necessary density, while simply providing the typical forms of open space is not enough. The design proposal will work to create spaces that encourage a variety of human interactions, focusing not only on providing essential uses, but also allowing for informal social encounters. As such, the public spaces must be welcoming, safe, and attractive, while connecting seamlessly to the street but still maintaining their edges and definition³⁵.

The great function of the city is to encourage and incite the greatest potential number of meetings, encounters, challenges, between all persons, classes and groups, providing, as it were, a stage upon which the drama of social life may be enacted, with the actors taking their turn as spectator and the spectators as actors.

- Jane Jacobs, The Life and Death of Great American Cities³⁰.

Endnotes

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FIG 4.01 Aerial of Central Etobicoke



04

SITE

ETOBICOKE_a western focal point for toronto

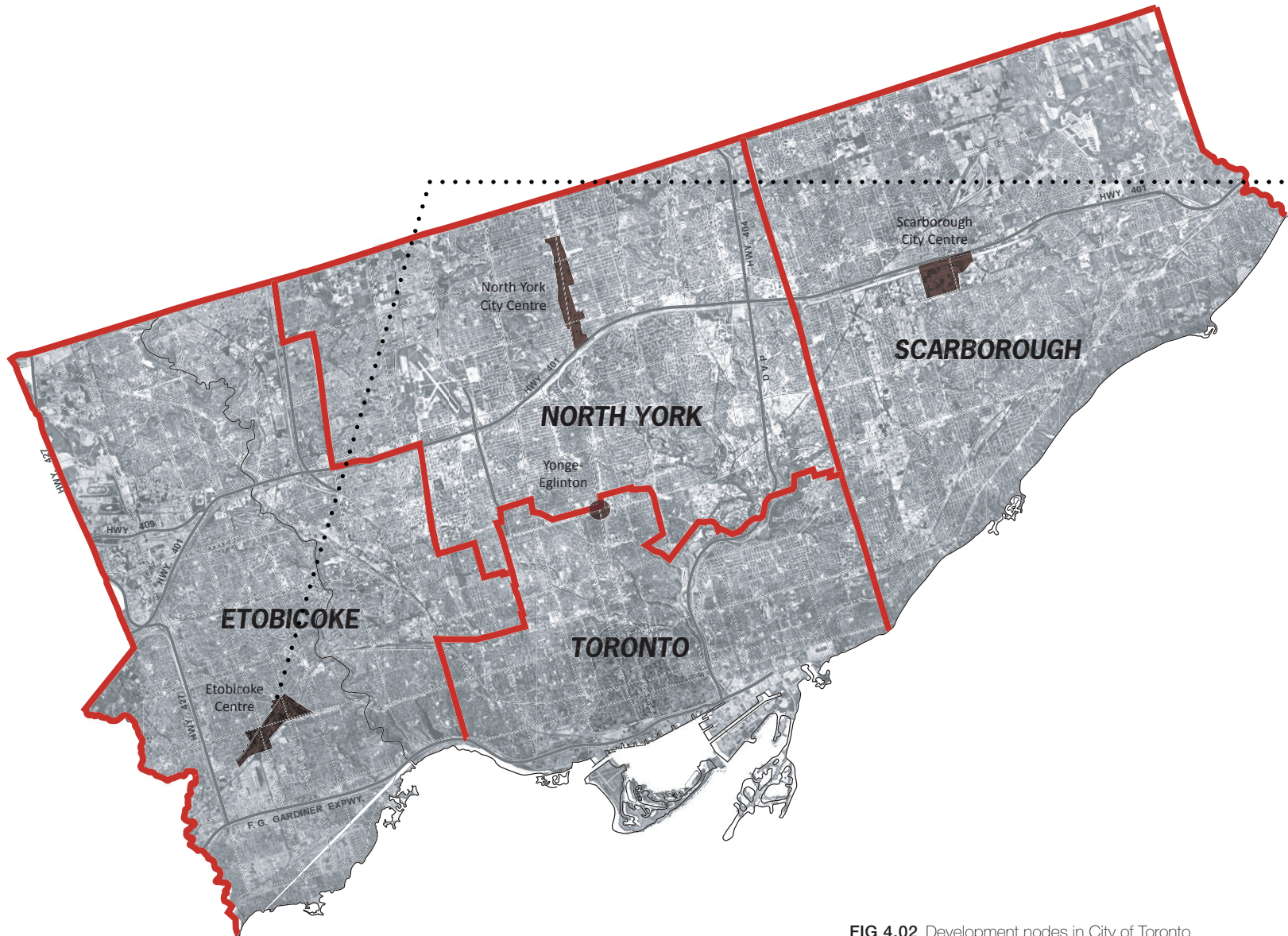


FIG 4.02 Development nodes in City of Toronto

4.1 Site Context

CENTRAL ETOBICOKE

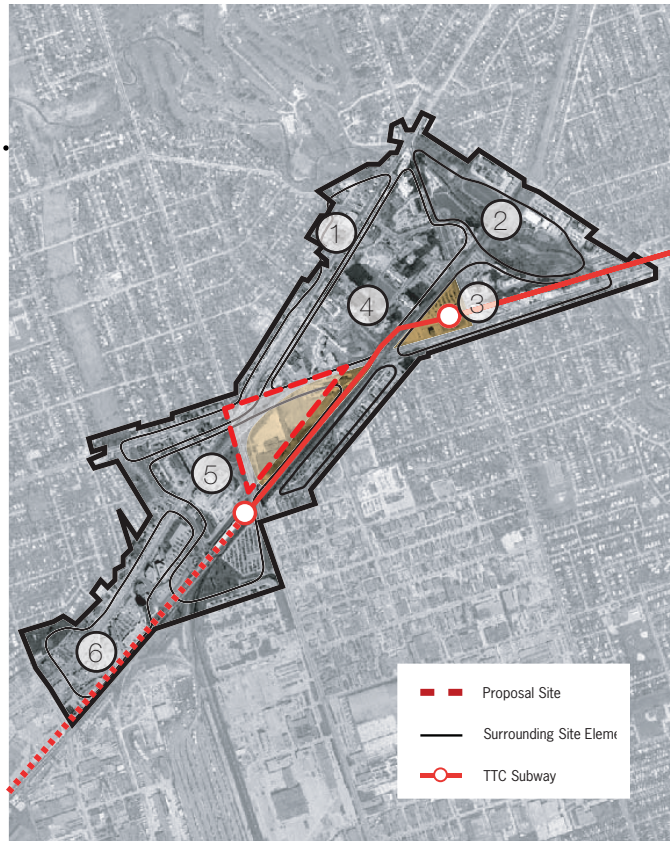


FIG 4.03 Central Etobicoke_Urban Growth Centre

1. Historical Islington Village,
2. Tom Riley Park,
3. Bloor/Islington Area,
4. Central Apartment Neighbourhood,
5. Six-Points Interchange,
Westwood Theatre Lands
6. Dundas West

The area in central Etobicoke is a key location to create an urban focal point, or node, as it has extensive transportation infrastructure and large tracts of vacant and underdeveloped land, which at present are underutilized. Of the former municipalities, Etobicoke still retains the lowest average population density and has been more isolated and difficult to develop than the other amalgamated municipalities due to the large industrial lands located there.

The City of Toronto’s planning strategies are based around the ability to create a more urban environment in the “inner suburbs” that were absorbed into Toronto after amalgamation. Key to this strategy is the intensification of central areas, where residential and employment locations are placed close together, integrated with infrastructural networks and public transit systems. As an inner suburban area central Etobicoke is well-connected with the downtown area. Being approximately 15 kilometers outside the downtown core it is a quick 20 minute subway or GO Transit ride to the city core. The area is also well connected with highway infrastructure, with Highway 427 connecting the two major east-west arteries into the city, Highway 401 and the Gardiner Expressway.

“Located at the western gateway to the city between Lester B. Pearson International Airport and Toronto’s downtown core, Etobicoke Centre offers a strategic location to attract business and residents alike” - Etobicoke Centre Secondary Plan¹.

Within the region there are a variety of distinct areas which contain various site elements. These encompass a variety of building typologies and distinct suburban conditions. Understanding the context of each of these areas is important in establishing the background of the design site, as the design intervention will explore ways of increasing connectivity between these site elements. The location of each of these areas is shown in the adjacent image and they are further described in the following sections. The chapter will first explain the historical context and development of the area. Then it will examine existing site conditions, combining mapping at different scales and site photography to understand the infrastructural networks, built fabric and public space of the surrounding context.



FIG 4.04 Dundas Street, Islington c. 1925 (looking west across the Mimico Creek, west of Islington Avenue)

History of the Site

Layers of buildings, landscapes and community institutions have built up over time, contributing to the area's city fabric. The Etobicoke Centre has roots going back to the early 1900s with the development of the Islington Village, which developed along Dundas Street, extending from Islington to Kipling. The area now known as Etobicoke began as mainly rural area, with a collection of small villages that developed around a rudimentary system of rail lines and arterial road systems. In the mid 1900s this area of Etobicoke was still vastly undeveloped land, with the population focused in the southern portion in the railway suburbs of Mimico and New Toronto closer to the waterfront. Of these inner suburban areas, Etobicoke still has the lowest population density² lacking any definite structure or centre in its form.

In 1998, the municipalities of York, East York, North York, Etobicoke, and Scarborough amalgamated to become the City of Toronto. Thus, although this area is now considered part of the city of Toronto, it used to exist as the suburban periphery, which is reflected in its dispersed urban form. When compared to these other inner suburban areas in Toronto one can see the distinct difference in the development of their urban form. This can be tied to the fact that the inner suburban areas of York and East York developed after the war as typical streetcar suburbs, containing relatively dense and mixed use main and arterial streets. However, the neighbourhoods in Etobicoke, Scarborough, and North York were developed in the post World War II housing boom, and have always been more automobile oriented, which is reflected in their density and the lack of mixed-use in their developments³.

In the two decades following the Second World War, the population of Etobicoke exploded from 40,000 to 200,000⁴, which required the rapid production of thousands of houses, hundreds of offices and shops, dozens of new schools and miles of new roads to support this new explosion of population taking over the rural landscape of the area⁵. The coming of the subway in the late 1960s resulted in the destruction of many streets and homes



FIG 4.05 Images of typical strip malls in Etobicoke, circa 1950.



FIG 4.06 Tridel Development Site, immediately adjacent to Kipling station

with the building of the denser high-rise apartments in a centrally located apartment area⁶.

There was a lot of new development at that time, predominantly rental apartment buildings and social housing, north of the Islington Subway station close to Islington Village.

Today there are many new mixed-use developments which are located closer to the Kipling Subway and GO Station. There are two sites immediately adjacent to the study area which are currently under construction – the Tridel Development to the west and the Concert development to the north. Altogether, there are as many as 7,000 units of residential either planned, under construction or recently completed in the area, which will greatly increase the population in the area⁷.

The area adjacent to the Islington subway station to the west of the study area is the main location of office space in the area. This is primarily in The Clarica Centre located at the intersection of Bloor Street West and Islington Avenue, which consists of three towers, a concourse level, and underground parking⁸. Other than the dense development at the main intersection, the commercial and office space consists mainly of two-storey ground floor typologies. Running east from this site is a “main street shopping district” with runs past Royal York road, extending towards the Kingsway commercial area.



1 - go transit station



2 - kipling drop off area



3 - kipling subway station



4 - kipling ave. northbound



5 - dundas st. westbound



6 - islington subway station

FIG 4.07 Site Images of Transportation Infrastructure

4.2 Mapping: Central Etobicoke

Transportation Infrastructure

CN Rail: the subway lines and railway lines runs to the south of the site, connecting with extensive industrial areas to the south of the site.

Public Transit: site located at the western end of the Bloor-Danforth subway line, in between the Islington and Kipling stations. These subway locations accommodate both local and regional transit facilities, through the Toronto subway and bus network, the Mississauga Transit system and the adjacent GO Transit Station.

Arterial Roads: major intersection of Dundas St. West, Bloor St. West and Kipling Ave. located on the proposal site






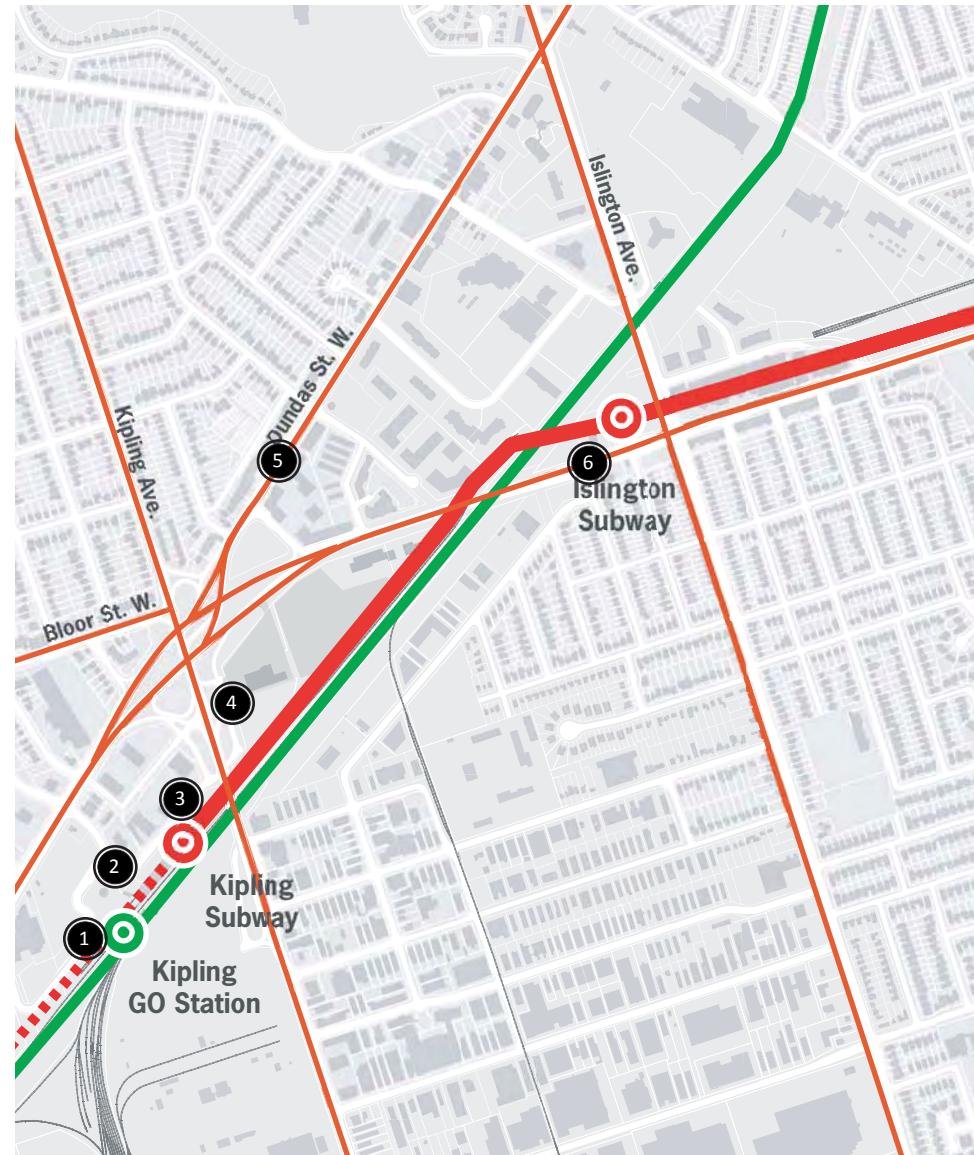
-  ttc subway station
-  go transit station
-  subway track
-  rail line
-  arterial roads

FIG 4.08 public transit diagram





1 - post-war single-family detached housing



2 - new single-family detached housing



3 - townhouse



4 - ground floor commercial



5 - mid-rise podium apartment building



6 - high-rise tower apartment building

FIG 4.09 Site Images of existing building typologies

existing building typologies

Residential Neighbourhood: site is bordered by both the historic Islington Village and Eatonville – two residential communities which began as small farming communities in the 1800s – and the large industrial lands lying to the south. Both of the residential communities are comprised primarily of single-family dwellings and medium-density housing.

Central Apartment Neighbourhood: This area forms a core of high density residential apartment buildings and is located directly north of the Islington subway station on the other side of the subway, GO Transit and CPR railway lines.

- high-rise apartments
- mid-rise apartments
- ground-floor commercial
- townhouses
- detached house

FIG 4.10 existing building typologies diagram





1 - tom riley park



2 - bloor/islington business area



3 - islington village



4 - church of the resurrection



5 - police division 22 station



6 - former westwood theatre

FIG 4.11 Site Images of existing land uses

land use

Islington Village: originally developed in the early 1900s this area of Etobicoke has become a historical district and consists mainly of buildings along Dundas St. West between Islington and Kipling Ave.

Bloor/Islington Business Area: area adjacent to the Islington subway station is the main location of the office space within the Etobicoke Centre area.

Tom Riley Park/Mimico Creek: Tom Riley Park is the major greenspace in the area covering 29.2 acres⁹, with Mimico Creek winding through the park. This area is part of a natural heritage system in the city of Toronto, with pedestrian and bicycle pathways extending into the adjacent residential areas. Facilities in the park include a baseball diamond, tennis courts, ice rink, football/rugby/soccer fields, a lawn bowling field, playgrounds and outdoor pool¹⁰. With increased pedestrian access across the Etobicoke Centre site this area will become an activity-filled open space destination.

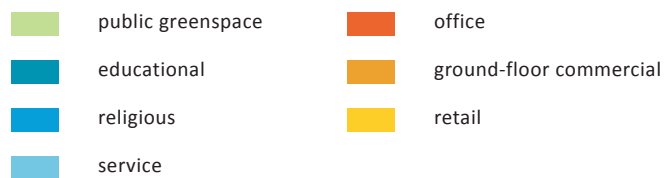


FIG 4.12 existing land use diagram





FIG 4.13 Photo of the former Westwood Theatre

4.3 Mapping: Site

Proposal Site

The site chosen for the proposal lies at the centre of the study site and is referred to as the Westwood Theatre Lands. This 19.7 acre site is significantly underutilized, with the majority of the land being parking lot. The theatre now lies vacant and the parking lots on the site are used temporarily as a parking lot for the GO Transit and for snow removal. At the eastern edge of the site lies the Police 22 Division Station, which is to remain until another suitable location for the facility could be found.

The site is also segregated from the surrounding neighbourhoods by the complex road intersection known as the 'Six Points Interchange', which extends across the northwest edge of the study site.

It has been nicknamed by local residents "spaghetti junction" and was designed half a century ago when much of the neighbourhood was still farmer's fields¹¹. This complex network of ramps and bridges where Bloor, Dundas, and Kipling converge was designed for maximum vehicular efficiency rather than pedestrian access, thus it acts an immense barrier to effective pedestrian movement from the areas north of the site to Kipling Station, just southwest of the site.

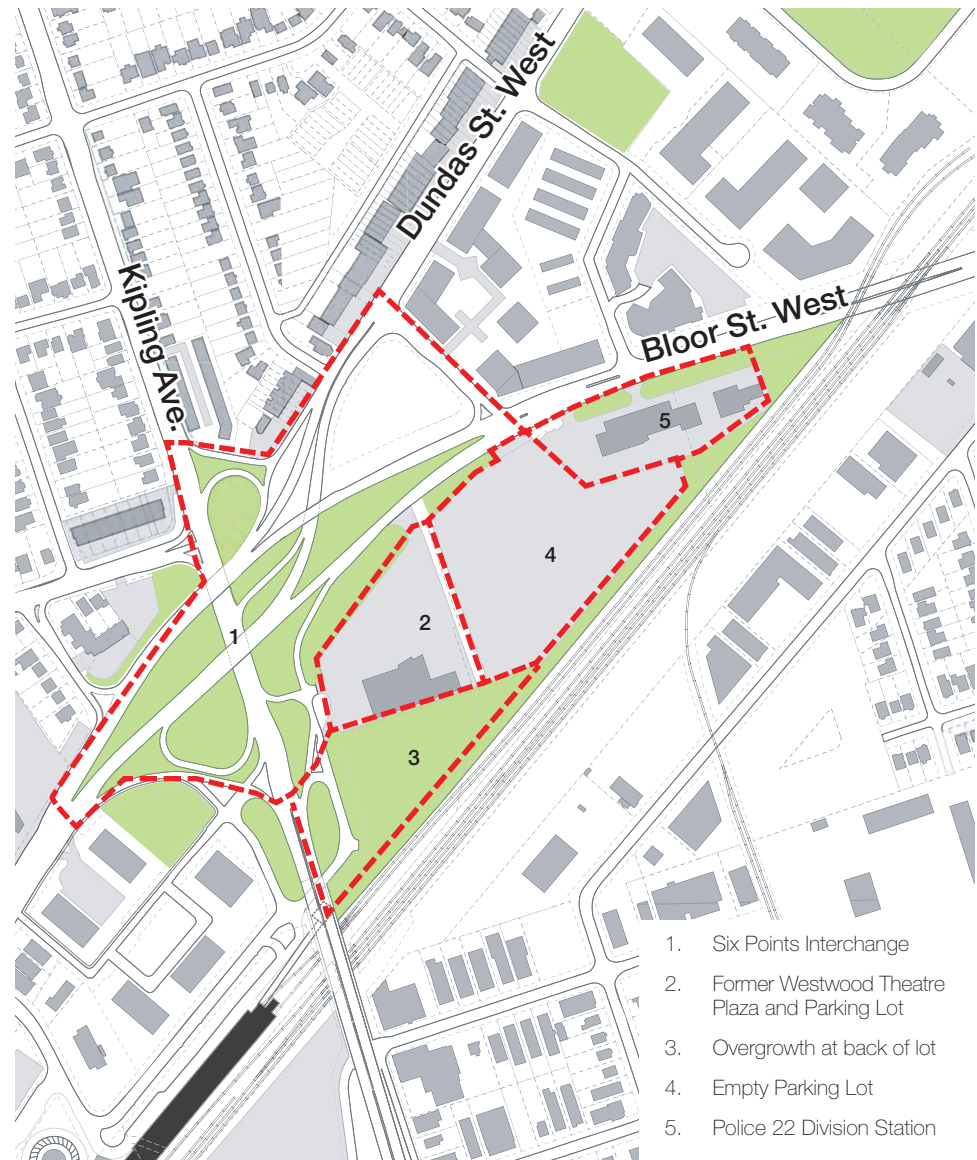


FIG 4.14 Existing Site Plan

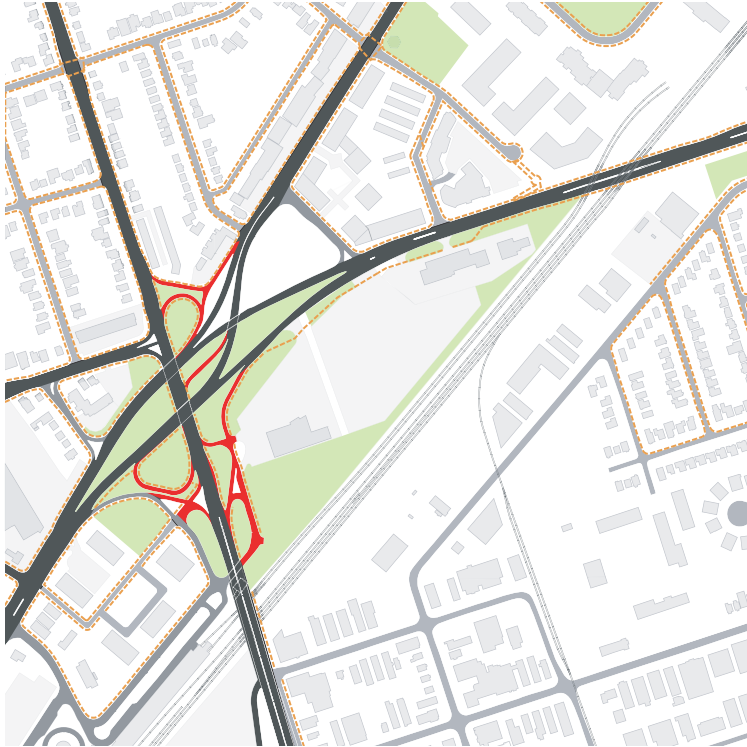


FIG 4.15 Vehicular Connections

- arterial road
- secondary road
- residential road
- on/off ramps
- pedestrian path



FIG 4.16 Building Typologies
(Residential)

- high-rise
- mid-rise
- low-rise
- detached
- other



FIG 4.17 Building Uses Diagram
(Public)



- office
- industrial
- religious
- service
- private buildings



FIG 4.18 Vacant Land Diagram



- parking lots
- vacant land
- open greenspace
- parkspace

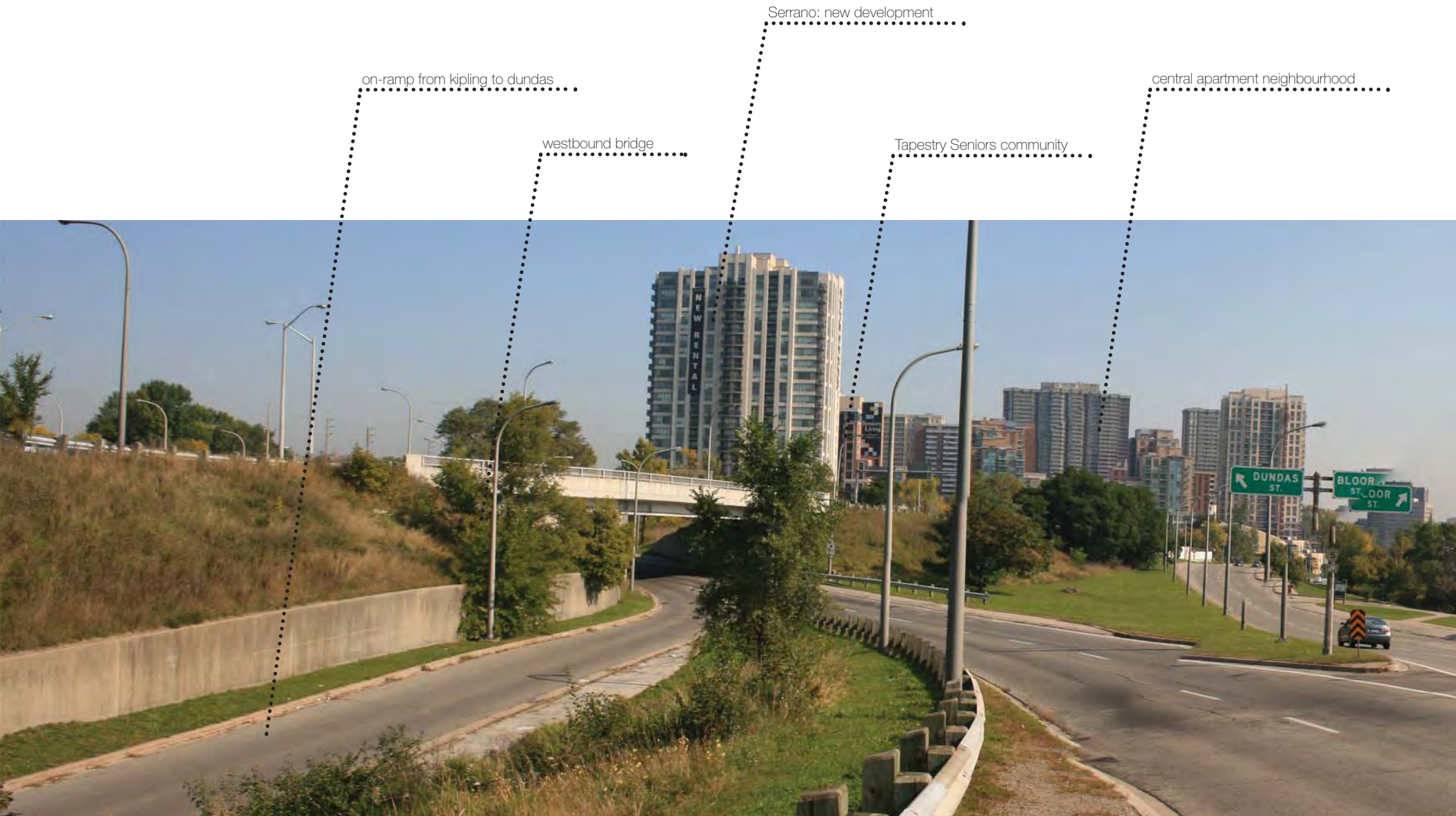
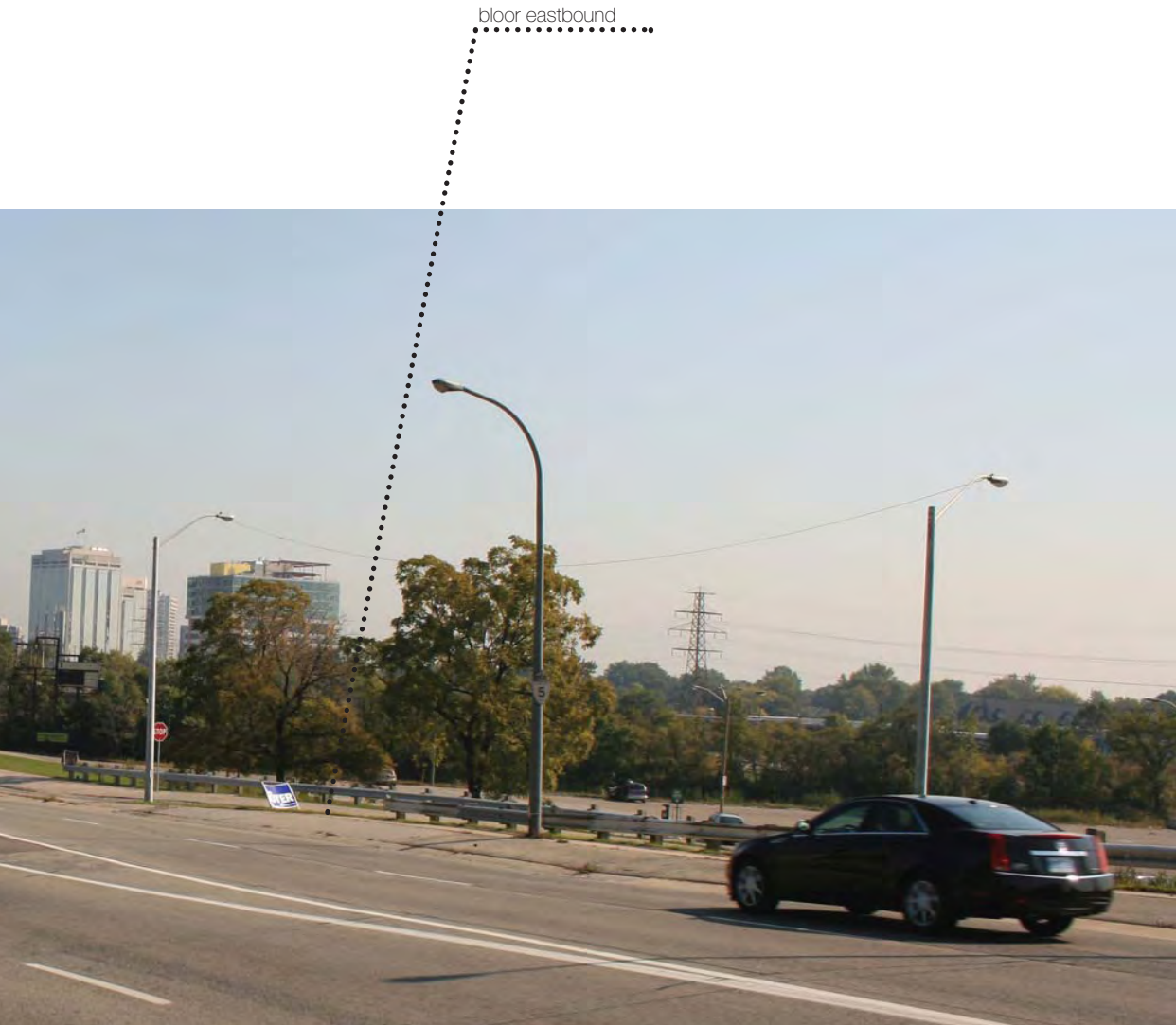


FIG 4.19 Panorama 1 - Bloor Eastbound



bloor eastbound

Six Points Interchange

The intersection between Dundas St. West, Bloor St. West, and Kipling Ave. results in a complex traffic interchange, consisting of ramps and bridges which don't provide anywhere for safe pedestrian passage.



Key Map



FIG 4.20 Panorama 2 - Kipling Northbound



Six Points Interchange

In order to connect from Kipling Ave. to Dundas St. West or Bloor St. West the individual needs to drive through a complex set of on and off ramps.





FIG 4.21 Panorama 3 - Vacant Parking Lot



Vacant Parking Lots

A large proportion of the site is undeveloped land, which the city has used as temporary parking lots. The centre portion of the site is used as a temporary snow removal storage site for the city.

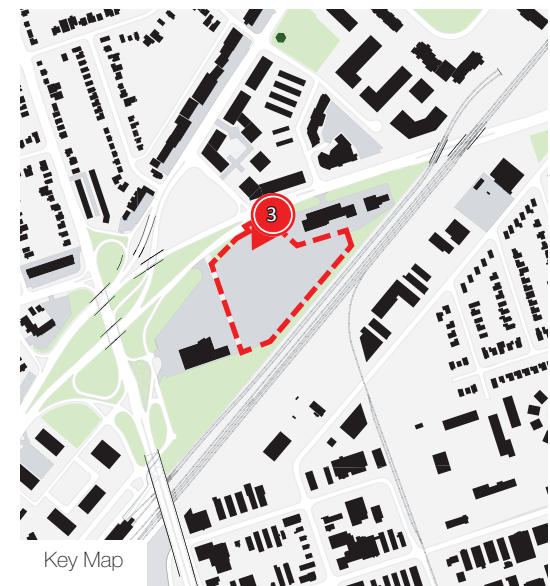




FIG 4.22 Panorama 4 - Overgrowth at back of lot

central apartment neighbourhood



Overgrowth of Property

The southern portion which borders the TTC subway and railway tracks has become an overgrown and unkept field, with no real purpose.




Endnotes

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FIG 5.01 Vignette of Streetscape (Dundas St. West)



The availability of quality public space is one of the varied characteristics with which we have sought to define the city and has always shaped the character of the urban with intensity. Besides allowing us to fulfill an extensive series of functions, public space, as a place, has had – and still has today – a symbolic character which is indispensable to urban life. If is a referent in which the inhabitants, on the one hand, recognize themselves as members of a community and encounter and recreate their collective history, and, on the other, are confronted with change and innovation: essential elements of the city.

- Albert Garcia Espuche. *The Reconquest of Europe: Why Public Space?¹.*

05 DESIGN PROPOSAL



FIG 5.02 Aerial of new urban design

5.1 Urban Design

This chapter focuses on characteristics of good urban design that produce quality public space and promote sustainable urban development, such as the importance of density, mixture of uses, architectural design and crucially, the layout of public spaces. In this it illustrates key design principles which could then be used to encourage sustainable urban development in cases of intensification of existing inner suburban environments.

The urban design of the new Etobicoke Centre addresses its isolation from the surrounding suburban fabric, the vast amount of underutilized open space, the barriers to effective pedestrian movement and the sites single use functional zoning. The site has great potential due to its close proximity and public transit connections to the city core, its central location in Etobicoke.

First the design establishes a strong urban structure through a legible network of enclosed streets and urban public spaces based on new systems of movement. Then perimeter block, mid-rise buildings and high-rise typologies with a regulated height and continuous frontages are used, providing the necessary density and giving substance to a strengthened urban structure.

The underlying intention of the urban design has been to create a coherent mixed-use precinct which provides variety in its system of open spaces. It is important to cultivate a sense of individual character – a ‘sense of place’ – in a high-density mixed-use development surrounded by suburban development. Otherwise there is a risk that the scheme repeats the errors of the past, developing the psychological character of a great, impersonal ‘dormitory’, or bedroom suburb. Thus, the blocks within the scheme have been deliberately arranged around a variety of public spaces, integrating other programs to the blocks to create this sense of locality. This results in a hybrid mixed-use neighbourhood that has the ability to integrate with the surrounding suburban landscape, providing the necessary intensification with a variety of living options and a new vibrant public realm.

The urban plan is illustrated in three descriptive sections:

- a) **CONNECTIVITY of Infrastructure**, introduces the new street sections and streetscape elements that will form the vital public space for the neighbourhood;
- b) **DENSITY of Urban Form**, examines the overall form and program of the development and the various housing typologies used to create diversity and density in the urban form;
- c) and **PUBLIC REALM DESIGN**, demonstrates the planning considerations for the design of the public realm, as demonstrated in the design of the main public spaces of the proposal.

The final section then goes into the architectural design of the community centre, which was considered as part of the pedestrian landscape, being greatly connected to the public spaces around it. This section demonstrates the cross pollination of program between the interior and public spaces surrounding the building, as well as the various programs housed within the new institution.

Within these sections the design proposal is organized around the following six design principles, for the intensification of the urban fabric and integration of the site into the surrounding neighbourhood:

Hierarchy of systems of movement

To establish a coherent hierarchy of streets, paths, and laneways which relate the site to the surrounding neighbourhood, integrating it with the infrastructure of the city.

Legibility of Urban Structures

To promote accessibility and local permeability by establishing connections to surrounding neighbourhood, making spaces that connect clearly with each other and are easy to move through.

Promote Diversity in Building Fabric

To promote diversity, both in density and mixture of unit types, combining compatible uses to create a walk-able vibrant mixed-use environment.

Variety of Destinations

Provide a mixture of compatible uses/destinations within the public realm, creating viable places that respond to local needs.

Spatial Enclosure and Scale

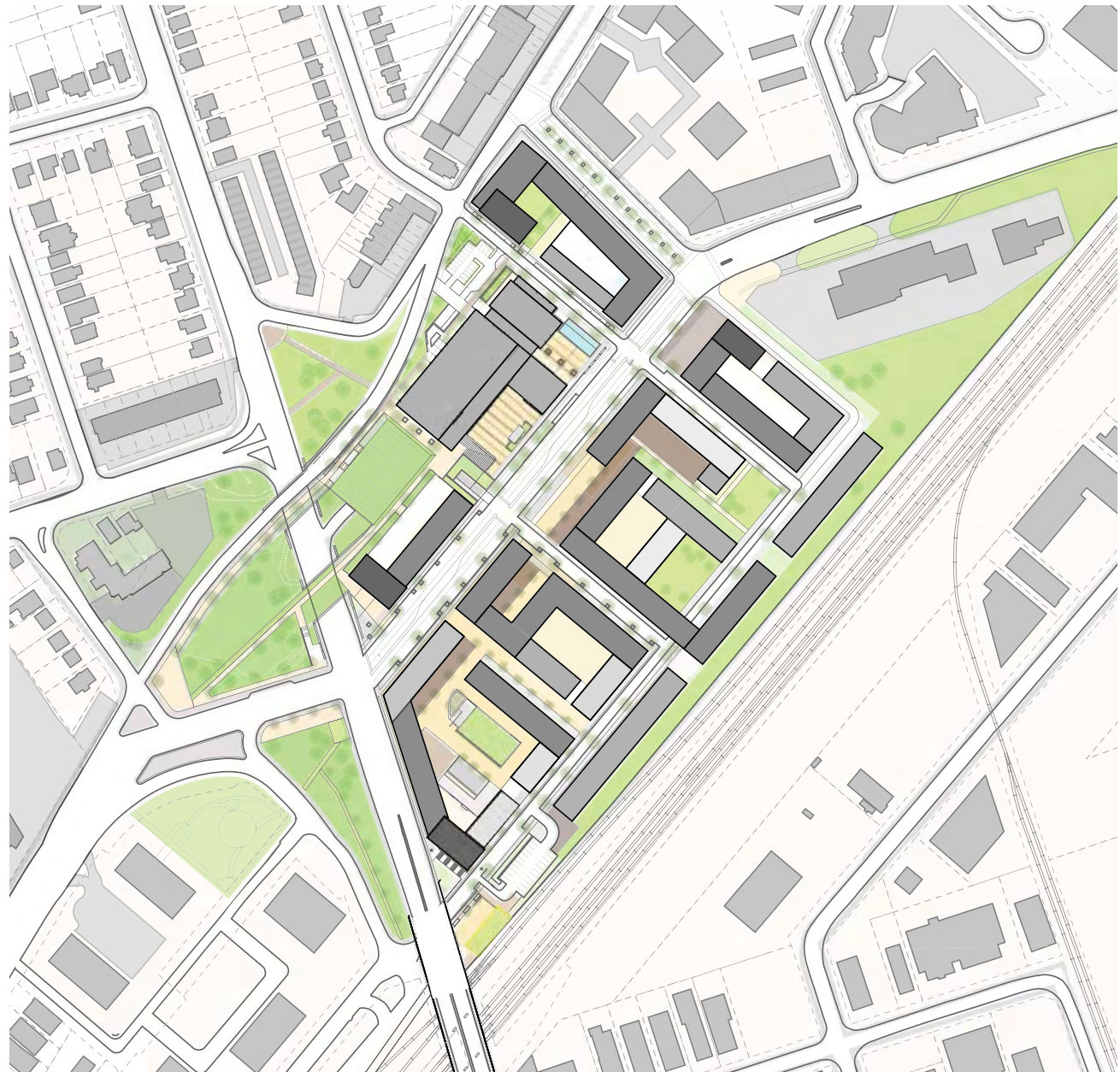
To promote the continuity of street frontages and the enclosure of space through consideration of the relationship between built fabric and public space.

Programming the Public Realm

To establish public spaces that encourage multiple forms of social encounter, through an open-ended approach to design, allowing multiple forms of activity and the personal appropriation of space.

- greenspace
- public space
- high-rise
- mid-rise
- low-rise
- rooftop patios

FIG 5.03 Site Composite





Road Network



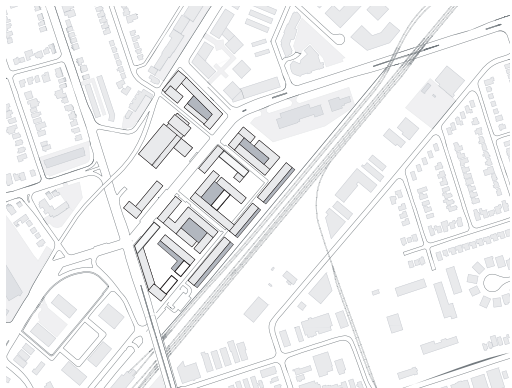
Pedestrian Paths



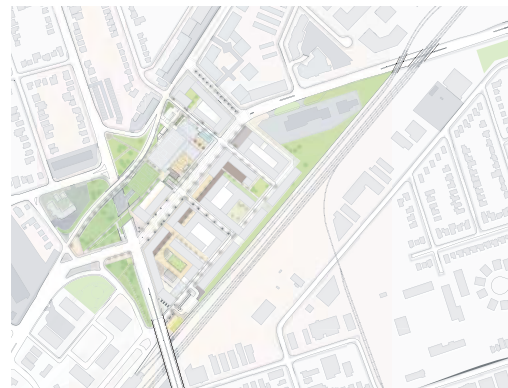
Built Form



Public Buildings



Private Space



Public Space

Design Overview

The design intervention is composed of various systems, introduced below:

Road Networks: the new road network creates a connection through the site of bloor and dundas, with the other roads being for mainly residents use

Pedestrian Paths: the new pedestrian network has connecting the various public spaces, extending over the bridges establishing connections to the surrounding neighbourhood.

Buildings: new housing is organized in a modified hollow-block pattern, varied to create different sizes of public, semi-public, and private courtyard spaces.

Public Buildings: office and retail uses line the main vehicular and pedestrian paths, connecting to the public transportation hubs and the surrounding neighbourhood. The new community centre and library lie at the centre of the development.

Private Space: there are different types of private space provided for the units such as balconies, roof terraces, and communal private courtyards which are slightly raised above grade to separate them from the main pedestrian paths.

Public Space: the main public spaces for the development are located off of the main throughfare, anchored by the public buildings. Smaller courtyards and public spaces create variety in the urban form.

FIG 5.04 (left) Design Layers



5.2 Connectivity of Infrastructure

01 Hierarchy of Systems of Movement

To establish a coherent hierarchy of streets, paths, and laneways which relate the site to the surrounding neighbourhood, integrating it with the infrastructure of the city.

One of the most important aspects of creating a pedestrian-oriented place in this inner suburban environment is embracing the human-scale, while still accommodating traffic and parking convenience. Most compact and well-ordered neighbourhoods demonstrate a well-connected pattern of streets and public spaces with a clear hierarchy and relationship between the major through-routes and the more subtle structure of local streets². To achieve integration with the surrounding environment, therefore, the design considers each open space not as an isolated unit – be it a street, park or square – but rather as a part of a network, an interconnected urban landscape – a series of paths and nodes³. The design task for the public realm rests in emphasizing the relationship between these different nodes of activity and focusing on the design of the systems of movement – of transitions, crossings, and connections and in-between spaces⁴.

Introducing a new system of public streets and laneways is established with a finer-grained street and block pattern, creating a pedestrian-friendly environment. As demonstrated in the site strategy parti, the main vehicular connection is moved into the site itself, connecting from Bloor St. West and the Islington Village to the north to the commercial strips to the southwest. Then a typical block typology is created with smaller street blocks and shorter through-traffic streets to control and minimize vehicular traffic through the neighbourhood.

The urban design will encourage people to consider alternative modes of transportation, establishing pedestrian and bicycle links, providing ample parking, and well-established connections to public transportation. As visiting people from the surrounding neighbourhoods will still desire to drive to the site, the design will allow them the opportunity to park underground then walk between multiple uses. As well, vehicular movement through the residential areas has been restricted to one-lane of traffic accommodating, wherever possible, parking spaces for the adjacent dwelling units. On-street parking and underground lots eliminates the need for large surface parking lots.

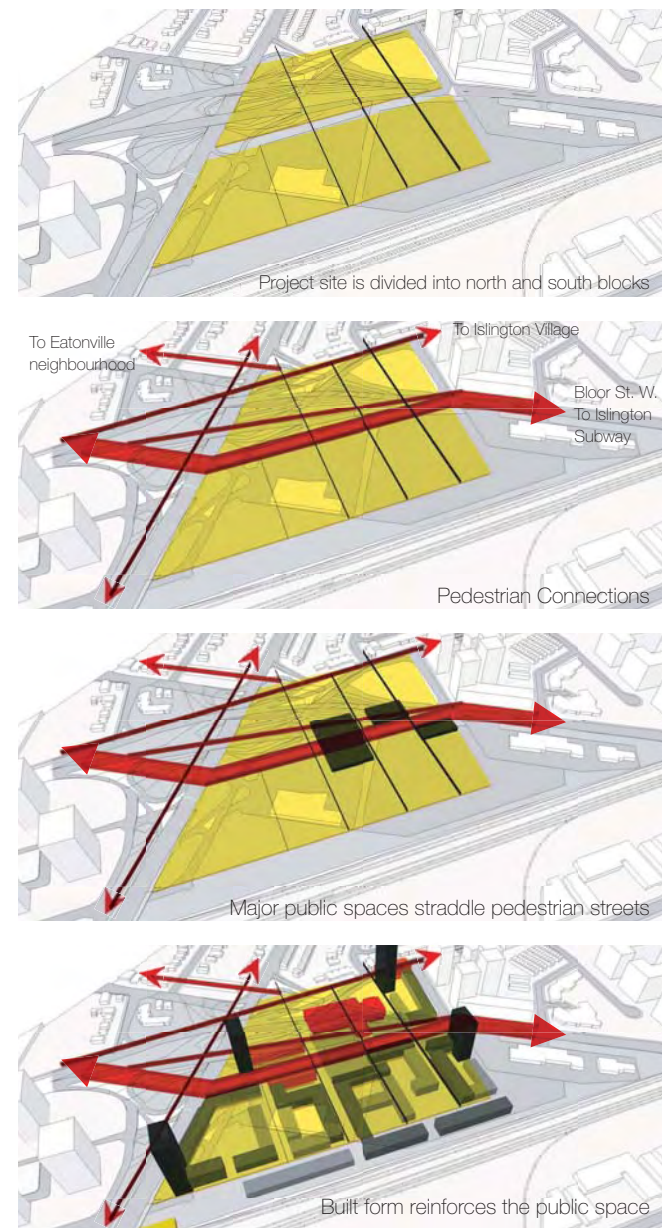


FIG 5.06 Site Strategy Parti



FIG 5.07 Street Section A-A
Dundas St. West - 30 m wide

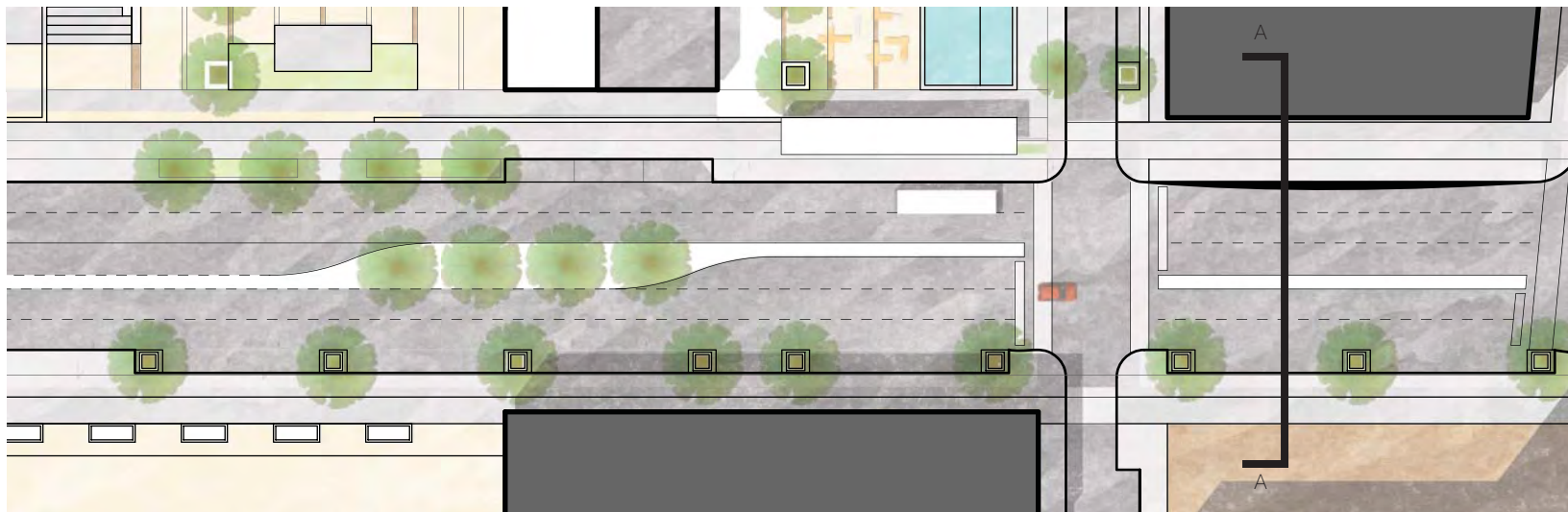


FIG 5.08 Plan of Dundas St. West extension - 30 m wide

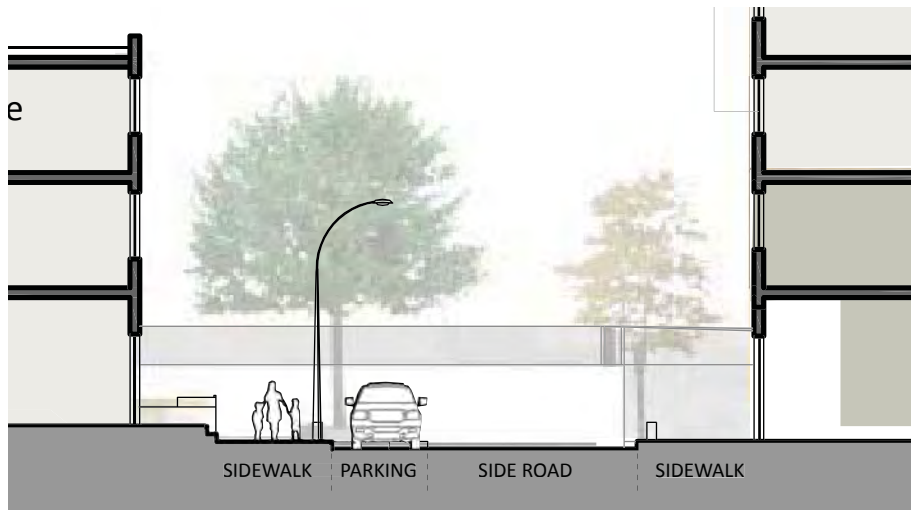


FIG 5.09 Street Section B-B
Two-Way Residential - 20 m wide

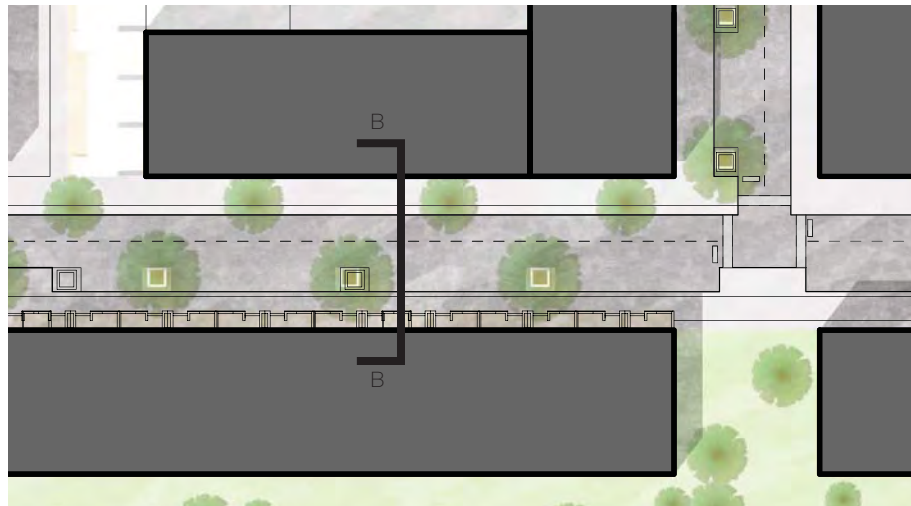


FIG 5.10 Plan of Two-Way Residential street - 20 m wide

Street Sections

Dundas St. West street section - 30 m wide

As the main arterial road going through the site Dundas consists of two lanes of traffic in both directions with a turn lane, on-street parking, and raised bike lane. Ground floor retail units open onto a raised podium or generous 3 m sidewalk. New light standards that illuminate both the street and the sidewalk are added.

Two-Way Residential street section - 20 m wide

The residential streets accommodate two lanes of traffic and on-street parking. The ground floor units of the adjacent buildings are either residential, retail space or live/work studios.



FIG 5.11 Test rendering of residential streetscape



Low-rise townhouses



Mid-rise walk-up



Streetscape Elements

To design places to be experienced by foot at a human scale – rather than from a car – the sidewalk itself becomes the focal point of a streetscape. Along the main street connections the vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle traffic is divided into separate lanes. The streetscape is then defined with hard and soft-scaped edges, through the use of street trees, grass strips, bollards and specialty curbing, which create a more comfortable environment for the pedestrian⁵.

As well, there are certain proportions that the streetscape conforms to, creating a pleasant pedestrian environment. To maintain a human-scale setting, buildings fronting onto an arterial street or public square should step back after five storey's, “the height at which it is still possible to identify a face at the top window or call down to a friend in the street”⁶. This will work to create a pleasant and appropriate sense of enclosure in the street or public space.

FIG 5.12 (left) Diagram of streetscape elements

main arterial streetscape

The main arterial road cuts through the development, bypassing the previous Six Points Interchange. The main thoroughfare's wide streetscape accommodates two lanes of traffic, a bike lane, some on-street parking, as well as generous sidewalks. The pedestrian is separated from the traffic by various streetscape elements, including landscape islands, raised walkways, and various types of street furniture.

The sidewalk in front of the community centre is slightly wider, accommodating an elevated walkway leading to the main public plazas. The southern edge of the plaza is defined by a covered seating area, which doubles as a bus waiting area.



Key Map



FIG 5.13 Main Arterial Streetscape

1. Connection to Dundas St. West
2. Connection to Condominium Development
3. Pedestrian Promenade
4. Playing Field
5. Civic Plaza
6. Community Centre
7. Library Entrance Plaza
8. Connection to Islington Village
9. Connection to Bloor St. West
10. Restaurant/Retail Plaza
11. Small Neighbourhood Park
12. Market Shopping Street
13. Transportation Connection

The adjacent map notes the following:

nodes of surrounding activity/
density,

paths that could be established
between the different elements,

and **edges** that currently are
preventing the development of
the site.

-  nodes of activity
-  existing pedestrian network
-  primary pedestrian paths
-  pedestrian paths
-  built form

FIG 5.14 Figure Ground Diagram
(Paths and Nodes)



02 Legibility of Urban Structures

To promote accessibility and local permeability by establishing connections to surrounding neighbourhood, making spaces that connect clearly with each other and are easy to move through.

As one of the two essential elements of the public realm, streets have the ability to mold the character of a community. Many modern cities have developed into an amorphous urban sprawl where we no longer expect to see the clearly defining features – such as city walls, gates, or processional routes – that used to be essential in the structuring of the whole city. As described in the previous chapter, these features are what promote legibility in the city fabric, by creating identifiable markers for orientation and establishing coherent paths for systems of movement. Kevin Lynch in his work *The Image of the City*, outlined organizing elements – including paths, nodes, landmarks, views, vistas, edges, and districts – all of which combine to structure the built environment in a meaningful way⁸.

As demonstrated in the site plan of the Bibliotheque de Charlesbourg the designers desired to create long vistas away from and towards the project, creating a series of vistas and paths of movement which drew an individual through the site. The historical site had agricultural roots, which formed a trapezoidal plan for the centre of the city. In order to establish connections to existing paths surrounding the building, the designers produced a radial plan, extending landscape elements and paths along these established lines of sight.

Similarly, the design proposal considers the existing organizing elements of the surrounding environment in order to tie the public space into its context. Effective siting provides a choice of routes into the site – establishing a narrative sequence through the layout of streets and the arrangement of landmark features – which works to lead people to the main public space, establishing it as a clear focal point in the neighbourhood. Long vistas away from and towards the site are created with pedestrian paths. These connect to existing and new paths of circulation, linking to the different areas of activity surrounding the site. As well, it is proposed that the streetscape elements in the design extend out into the connecting roads which combined with landmark features and buildings will create legibility in the proposed design.

A modern boy travels a hundred miles with less sense of liberation and pilgrimage and adventure than his grandfather got from travelling ten.

- C.S. Lewis. Surprised by Joy⁷.



FIG 5.15 view of pedestrian approach and green roof

density carriers

The towers are located at the periphery of the development, standing as landmarks within the surrounding landscape. They relate in scale to the surrounding condominium developments, being intentionally located at the end of a vista approaching the site, either from an approaching street or across the pedestrianized bridges.

It is proposed that the streetscape elements of the development would also extend into the surrounding neighbourhood, extending landscaped medians, bike lanes, pedestrian friendly sidewalks and street furniture, to create a more pedestrian environment leading up to the new development.





FIG 5.16 Density Carrier(view from Dundas St. West)

subway entrance plaza

The subway entrance plaza is located next to the proposed eastern entrance for the Kipling subway station, which is then linked to the main subway terminal. Adjacent to the plaza would be a temporary parking area for passenger pick-up, as well as taxi lines and a drop off area. There would be retail lining the southern edge of the plaza, with convenience stores, coffee shops and other smaller transit-oriented uses.

Extending from the plaza would be a generous ramp and stairs, which would lead up to Kipling Ave. at street-level. As well the street leading into the heart of the development would have street-related development along the main throughfares. A pathway is created at the southern edge along a new linear park, which extends the length of the new development.



Key Map



FIG 5.17 Subway Entrance Plaza



FIG 5.18 Pedestrianized Bridges

Pedestrian Landscape

To relate the site to the surrounding neighbourhoods one needs to integrate it effectively into the existing infrastructure. In its present state the site presents a serious barrier for the pedestrian, being surrounded by varying grade conditions along its edges. This is due to the series of bridges and ramps which were used to resolve the intersection of three major thoroughfares – Bloor, Dundas, and Kipling. In order to circumvent this barrier to effective pedestrian movement the bridges are partially pedestrianized. The southern bridge becomes an extension of the park to the west and the northern bridge has an extended sidewalk, but maintains one lane of traffic in either direction.

The sloping grade of the site is then exploited to create a new pedestrian level at the height of the bridges, which connects with the built form and cultural institutions at their second level. Occupying the space in-between and around the bridges are a variety of new public spaces and cultural programs, which establish this area as a new pedestrian realm, which is then extended to connect with existing paths of movement, tying the new development with the existing areas beyond.

The pedestrian realm consists of a new garden area to the west of Kipling, which ties in with the church garden to the north. The pedestrian promenade from this area crosses over the bridges, extending between the playing field and a raised patio area. On the other side of the field there is temporary parking, sloping steps and platforms, which act as a viewing area for sports events. There are then pedestrian pathways that connect from these areas down to Kipling Ave. at street level.

Through this intervention, what was once a busy transportation interchange and barrier to pedestrian movement becomes a bustling hub of activity for the community at the heart of the new development.



FIG 5.19 test rendering of pedestrian connection

pedestrian promenade

The previous Six Points Interchange is partially pedestrianized, maintaining lanes on the northern bridge connecting Dundas St. West. The pedestrian pathways cross the bridges allowing smooth transition from the surrounding residential neighbourhoods into the heart of the development. A park space is created on the western side of the bridges, with a new pedestrian crossing making north-south circulation more convenient.

A pedestrian promenade is created on the southern bridge which runs between a patio area and the playing field created above the underground parking for the community centre. The swimming pool and the main north-south pedestrian connection define the eastern edge of the field. The promenade then runs directly into the second level of the community centre, into the 'spine' - the main circulation space of the building.

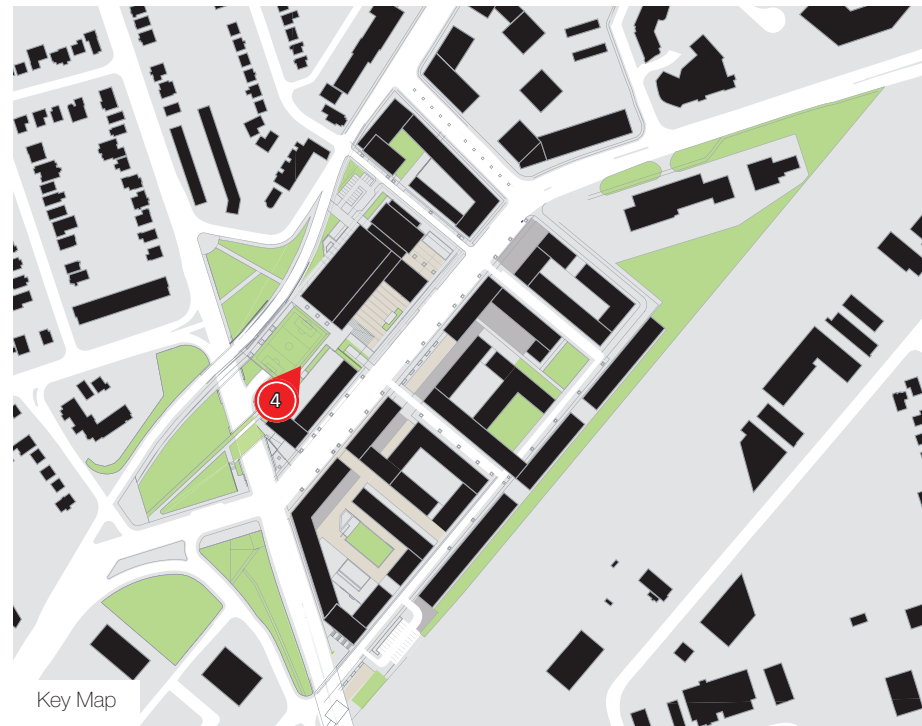
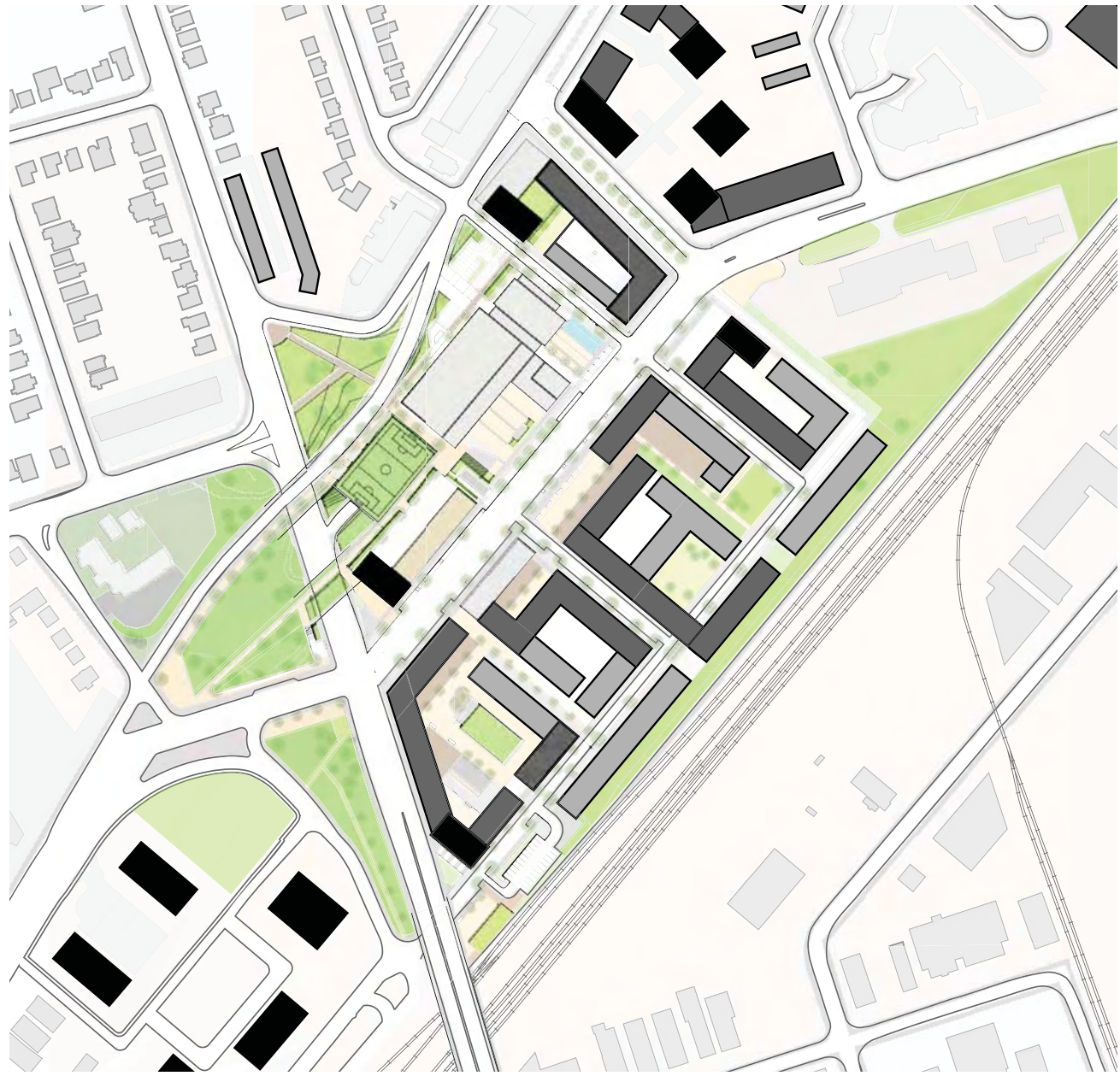


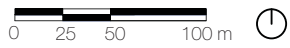


FIG 5.20 Playing Field and Pedestrian Promenade



- high-rise
- mid-rise
- low-rise
- detached
- other

FIG 5.21 Building Typologies Diagram
(Residential)



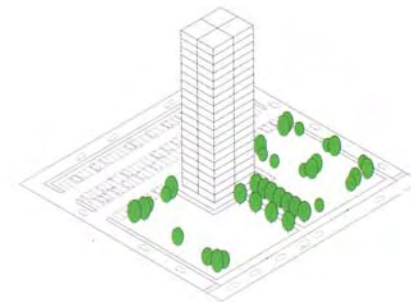
5.3 Density of Urban Form

03 Promote Diversity in Building Fabric

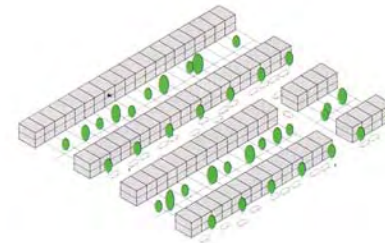
To promote diversity, both in density and mixture of unit types, combining compatible uses to create a walk-able vibrant mixed-use environment.

A good mixture of uses – whether within a building, street or an urban area – can help to determine how well-used a neighbourhood is, and through that what economic and social activities it will support. Jane Jacobs argued in her work *The Life and Death of Great American Cities* that to encourage high quality of life in our suburban neighbourhoods designers need to focus on two aspects that they currently lack: diversity and concentration of people⁹. Diversity in the urban population implies a wider variety of population demographics, built-form uses and types of residential occupancies. The urban design achieves this mixture by moving away from the predominant suburban housing typologies of the single-family dwelling and the point tower. Instead the design presents a compact mixed-use development, which can accommodate a wider range of people in the same neighbourhood. Therefore, the ideal balance between diversity of occupation and concentration of population is achieved through the use of a medium rise-medium coverage distribution on the site, allowing for a variety of built-forms, public spaces, and uses.

In order to demonstrate this concept, the adjacent image shows how distribution of form affects the quality of the urban environment. All three images represent forms built to the same density, with great differences in the type of public and private spaces they produce. The first example, illustrating a high-rise development in open space – a situation typical of suburban environments – demonstrates a lack of relationship between the building and its surrounding and personal private space for the inhabitants. The second example is that of a typical residential street layout, which has abundant private space, but due to the high site coverage minimises the potential for communal spaces and a more varied urban landscape. The third example demonstrates how the same elements can be rearranged to create a strong urban environment in a residential community. It organizes a variety of building types at a mid-rise height around communal open space with a community-based facility, such as a community centre, daycare or playground. With commercial and public activities distributed along the ground floor this maintains an active street frontage, while still providing for personal private spaces for residents.



High-rise development



Residential Street Layout



Mid-Rise Mixed-Use Development

FIG 5.22 Relationship between density and urban form

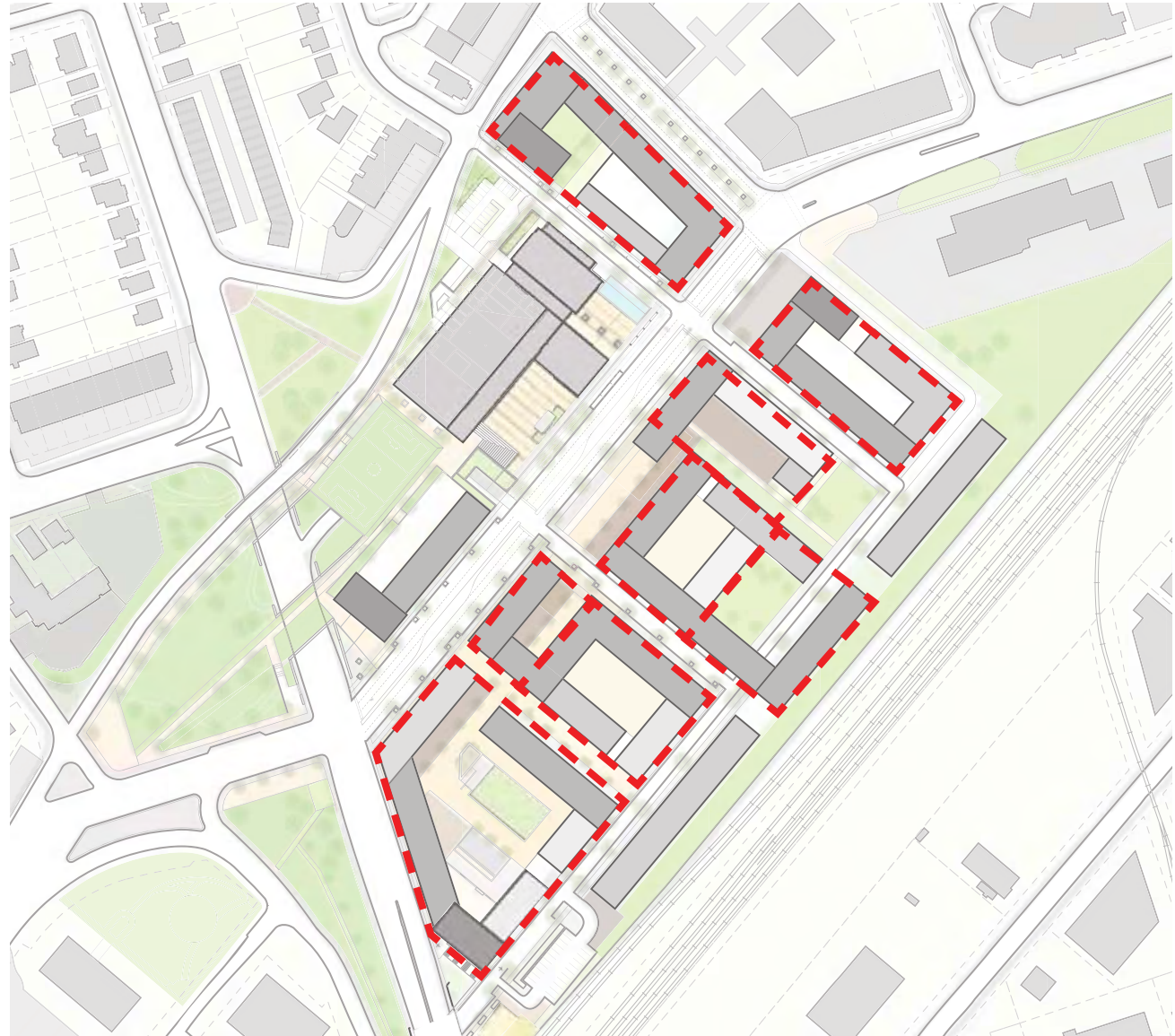


FIG 5.23 Housing Block Diagram



Housing Blocks

A number of housing typologies have been designed, which provide the density and variety necessary in the urban fabric. The mixed-use blocks were designed to offer an architecture that had sufficient scale and presence to respond to the surrounding context – as a way of creating a specific sense of place and community, with a unique identity – but also provide high levels of privacy and communal amenity for the residents.

The final morphology used for the design is an adapted hollow-square model, which helps define the blocks as a whole, providing the right level of external enclosure. Individual street blocks take the form of perimeter development with buildings facing outwards towards the edge of the block, either towards a vehicular street or pedestrian pathway. This provides the basis for active street frontage, with windows and doors overlooking and opening out onto the street to provide good surveillance of the street and the activity within it.

Within this form low and mid-rise typologies were used to accommodate a variety of units, which then appeal to a broad range of potential residents. A few higher towers are density carriers, located along main vehicular arteries at the periphery of the development. These are similar in scale to the other towers surrounding the site, therefore extending the scale of the streetscape at these edge conditions. The primary typology utilized is mid-rise walk-up apartments as this provides front doors and living spaces which open directly onto the street and activate the public realm. These are planned in a series of long, compactly-planned blocks, with passages strategically placed for efficient pedestrian circulation.

Within this adapted model the dwellings are arranged around a series of open courtyards, which allows various forms of private and semi-private community amenity. This space can be occupied in a variety of ways including spaces for gardens, informal recreational activities, and social gatherings.



FIG 5.24 Coin St. Housing, precedent of Hollow-square Housing model

This model is most frequently for multi-storey apartment buildings, where the habitable rooms of the dwellings face outwards to the street and where access sometimes takes place on the internal face¹⁰, such as Coin St. Housing in London, England. In this space the units face into a courtyard, with private gardens for ground-level units. The courtyard was designed into a series of subspaces allowing the residents to appropriate the space for a variety of activities. Some of the best examples of its success are in the garden squares of Notting Hill, where private gardens open on to the communal garden shared by occupants from opposite ends of the site¹¹. In both these cases the typology has proved very successful, the central space becoming a focus for shared ownership and interaction.

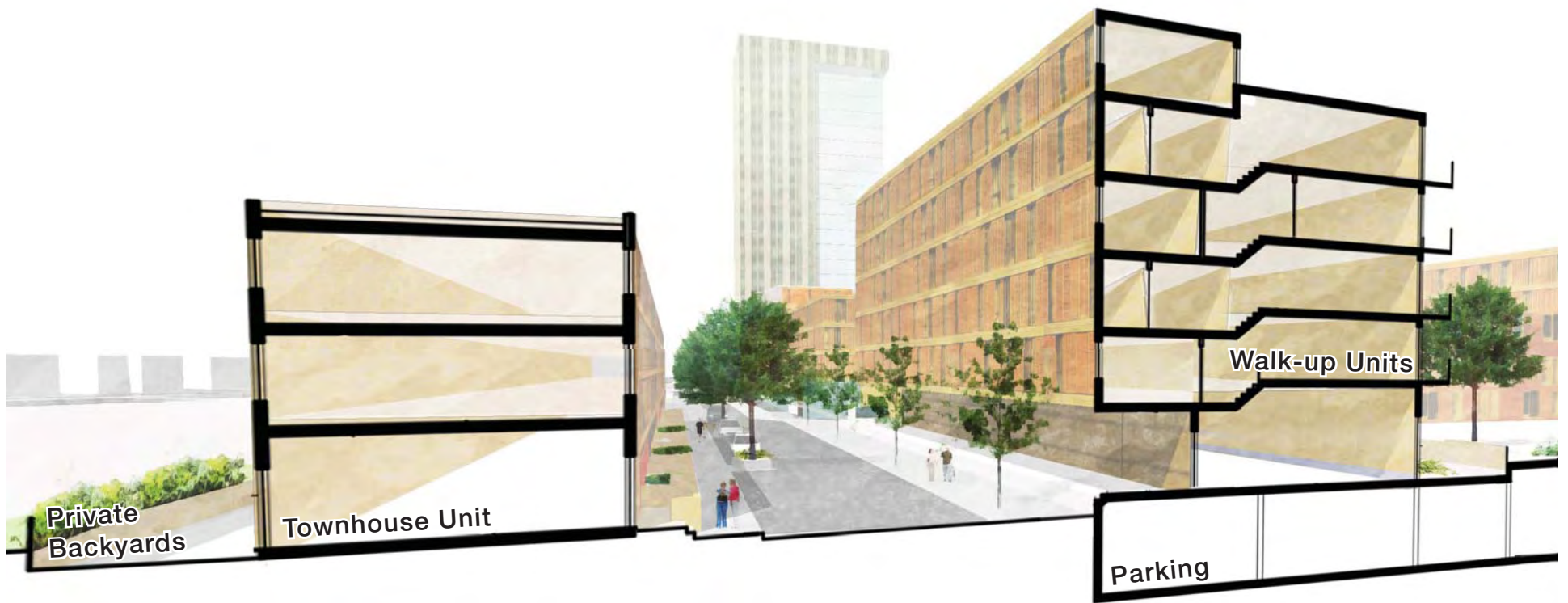
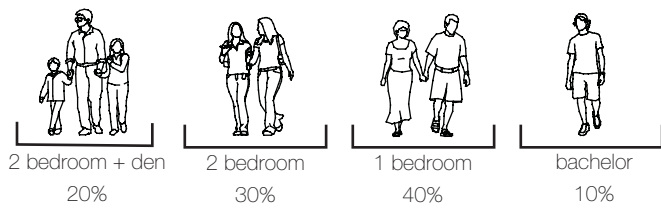


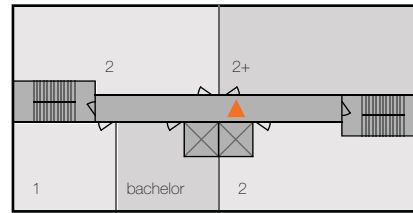
FIG 5.25 Unit Typology - Section 1

FIG 5.26 CONDOMINIUM/APARTMENT TOWER (20-25 storeys)

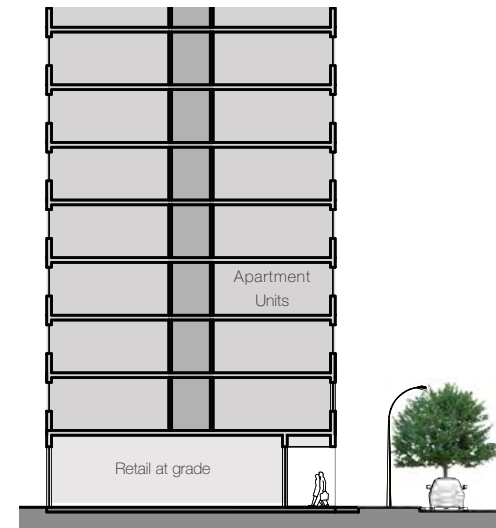
The apartment towers acting as landmarks, marking the edge of the new development. They contain both rental and condominium buildings, providing the option to buy or lease the apartments. The size of units ranges from bachelor units to 2 bedroom + den units, with larger units available towards the top of the tower.



Unit Types



Typical Plan



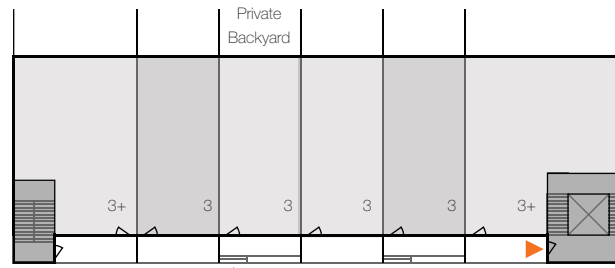
Typical Section

FIG 5.27 WALK-UP UNITS (6-8 storeys)

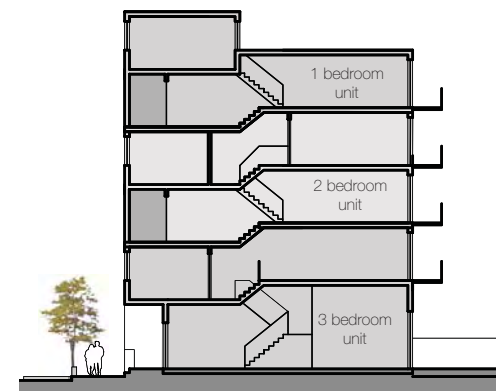
The walk-up units are located along the residential streets and pedestrian pathways. They are designed circulation corridors skipping every second storey, such that every unit gets windows on either side of the block. As well, each unit has a private balcony and access to the communal courtyard space below. There are three sizes of units, ranging from 1-3 bedrooms, with the three bedroom units having private backyards at grade.



Unit Types



Typical Ground floor Plan



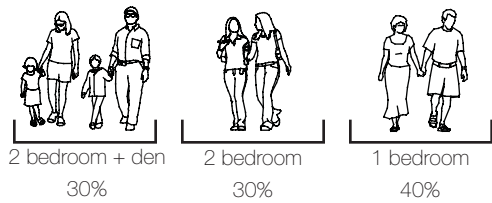
Typical Section



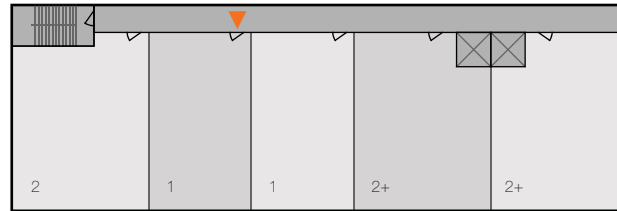
FIG 5.28 Unit Typology - Section 2

FIG 5.29 APARTMENT BLOCK (5-6 storeys)

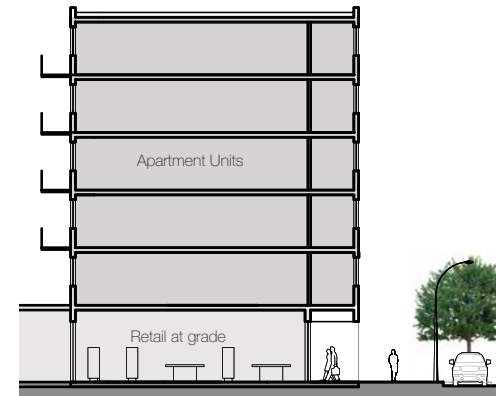
The apartment blocks are mainly located along the main arterial road and pedestrian pathways. The size of units ranges from 1 bedroom units to 2 bedroom + den units. The apartment units typically have private balconies and raised courtyards, as communal public space.



Unit Types



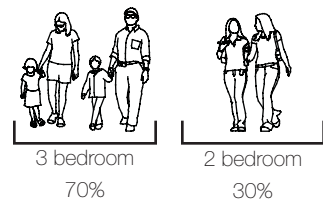
Typical Plan



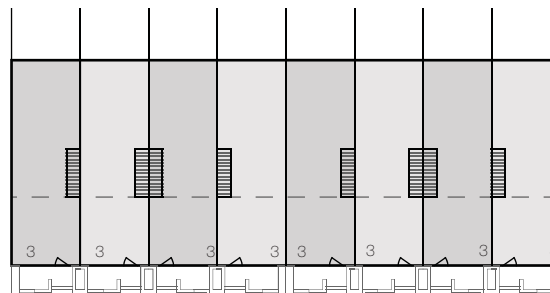
Typical Section

FIG 5.30 TOWNHOUSE UNITS (3-5 storeys)

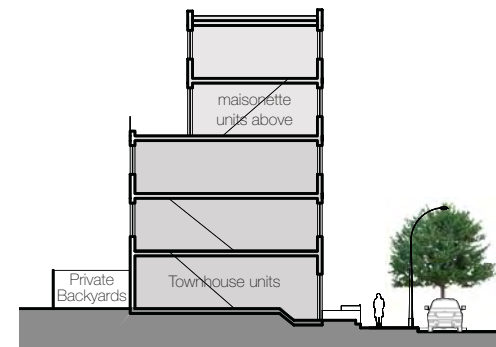
The townhouse units are located on the quieter residential streets, mostly towards the southern edge of the development. There are two different units contained within the type, the 3 bedroom ground-level townhouse unit and the optional two-level maisonette unit above, which are accessed from corner apartment units at the end of each block.



Unit Types



Typical Ground floor Plan



Typical Section

- community centre and library
- office
- mixed-use (retail at grade)
- religious
- service
- private buildings

FIG 5.31 Building Uses
(Public)



04 Variety of Destinations

Provide a mixture of compatible uses/destinations within the public realm, creating viable places that respond to local needs.

In the typical suburban environment, one of the most problematic qualities for encouraging pedestrian circulation is single-use zoning, where destinations are often too far to walk and the monotonous environment provides little visual stimulation for the individual. Thus in order to pedestrian circulation, planners often cite the five or ten-minute walk as the typical distance people are willing to walk, thus this would be the optimal distance between destinations¹². However, a good design can actually increase this by decreasing the perception of distance to the pedestrian, by providing a visually stimulating environment¹³.

To attract people to the street, you need places for them to go that are within walking distance. The destination could be as humble as a post box or as practical as a store. The city can encourage the creation of destinations by systematically encouraging shopping, work, and residential areas to exist within walking distance.

Another way of creating destinations is to apply 'triangulation'¹⁴. This concept is promoted by the Project for Public Spaces (PPS), a nonprofit group committed to improving the quality of urban outdoor spaces. Triangulation works to bring together seemingly unconventional combinations of uses to help increase the activity around them. "There is something that goes on if you take a playground, a children's reading room in a library, a coffee shop, and a Laundromat, and put them all together near a bus stop"¹⁵. Thus, the simple configuration of both public/private uses around these public spaces creates essential destinations that encourages pedestrian access.

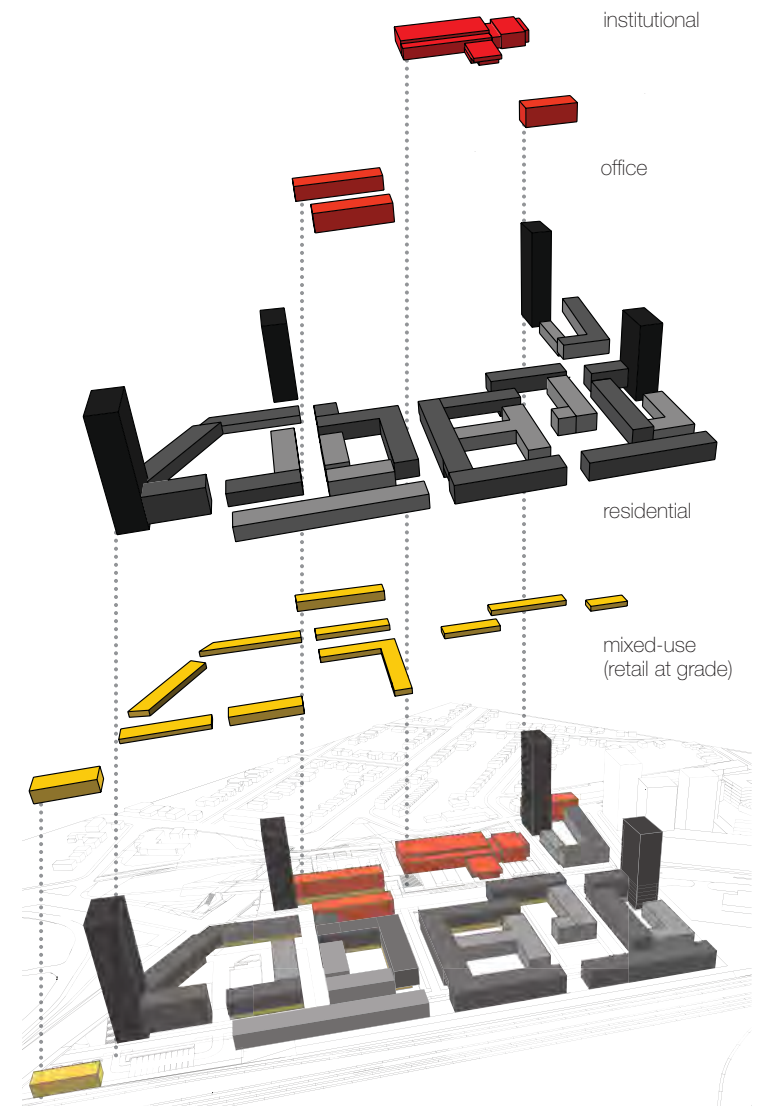


FIG 5.32 Building Use Aerial



FIG 5.33 Figure Ground Diagram
(demonstrates ground plane)



5.4 Public Realm Design

The two areas discussed previously – connectivity of infrastructure and density of built form – both support the cultivation of a new public realm. However, the design of the space in between, of the public spaces, takes special consideration. The design principles for this section are further elaborated with a series of factors, which work together to affect how well a public space is used and the forms of occupation possible. These are then demonstrated in a series of aerials and vignettes that demonstrate the different aspects of the design.

The systems of a city – its buildings and monuments, streets and squares, gardens and parks – meet in complex ways presenting a series of experiences as one progresses through the urban fabric. In more historic cities the pedestrian's experience of space is intimate – with a direct sensory bonding between the individual and the place¹⁷. Cities such as Venice present a series of experiences, of contrasting spaces of complexity and intensity, from canal to street to private garden. The human body moves slowly through these spaces, in direct contact with the city around them. Spatially modern cities are experienced very differently, with very different ideas of distance, movement and scale within the built fabric. North American cities are much more disparate than their predecessors, which deeply affects the pedestrian experience and through this the relationship of an individual to 'place'.

Good public spaces are the building blocks of the public realm and every good public space, regardless of scale, location or function, possesses certain formal and ephemeral characteristics that contribute to its success. In most suburban areas today, destinations are typically surrounded either by vast parking lots or by acres of landscaping. They are often only accessible by wide, high-speed streets. Making these into walk-able districts requires the reconfiguration of large stretches of asphalt or open fields to create finer grained, pedestrian-scaled districts, as demonstrated in the design. As such, designing for the human scale – creating destinations – and improving physical access will all help improve the definition, connectivity and walk-ability of these neighbourhoods. The elements need to combine to define an identity for a particular location, forming a sense of place¹⁸.

*What, then do we mean with the word 'place'? Obviously we mean something more than abstract location. We mean a totality made up of concrete things having material substance, shape, texture and colour. **Together these things determine an 'environmental character', which is the essence of place.** In general a place is given as much a character or 'atmosphere.' A place is therefore a qualitative, 'total' phenomenon, which we cannot reduce to any of its properties such as spatial relationships, without losing its concrete nature out of sight."*

- Christian Norberg-Schulz. *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*¹⁶.



FIG 5.34 Aerial Perspective of Community Centre and adjacent public spaces

05 Spatial Enclosure and Scale

To promote the continuity of street frontages and the enclosure of space through consideration of the relationship between built fabric and public space.

In the design of the public realm, there needs to be a certain relationship between the size of the open space and the height of the surrounding buildings. Successful public spaces are often well-defined spaces, with a coherent architectural composition that results in a pleasant 'sense of enclosure'. These allow a person to feel a sense of intimacy, which encourages social interactions. The sense of enclosure of a public space is dependent upon the length and width of a square, and upon the scale, height, and proportions of surrounding buildings and other architectural features¹⁹. In assessing how the proposed public spaces were likely to be perceived both physically and psychologically, the relationship between the scale of the surrounding buildings and the public space needs to be carefully considered. If the surrounding buildings are too low, then the sense of enclosure would be weak and the open area of the square will appear too large – such as that experienced in the vast Tiananmen Square in Beijing. Conversely, if the surrounding buildings are too high they would appear excessively dominant, which can create a sense of claustrophobia. Therefore achieving an appropriate sense of enclosure is therefore a vital consideration.

Therefore, the design of the main public spaces was generated from ideas of physical enclosure and perimeter thresholds. The framing of the street oriented public spaces by the built form of the community centre is particularly effective. A narrow two storey space projects towards the street, effectively dividing it into two distinct public spaces. This projection is anchored by a variety of busy activities, such as community meeting rooms, offices and café. The deeper volume stretching across the northern portion of the site provides a convincing backdrop for the generously scaled plazas. The two squares are of different sizes and characters, with the civic plaza extending across the street into the mixed-use development. This area employs a variety of surface treatments, adaptable outdoor furniture, vegetation and space for temporary market stalls. These collaged elements work to break up the space into a series of smaller areas, allowing for a variety of informal social activities, which works to animate the space.



FIG 5.35 Oversized public space in Tiananmen Square in Beijing.

NOTE: According to the German architect Hermann Maertens an individual's typical range of vision is about 27 degrees, which means that if a building is to be viewed clearly and easily, the viewer needs to stand away from the building at a distance twice the buildings height. Hence, in order to appreciate the composition of the square, the ratio between the size of the square and the height of the buildings needs to be about 1:2.



FIG 5.36 Library Entrance Plaza

Defining the Edge

While the squares were designed to be perceived as distinct places, there also needed to be a clear continuity from the surrounding streets to make them visible and easily accessible to those on the street in order to encourage their occupation²⁰. The more that a person on the street feels that the square is an extension of the space that they are in, the more likely they are to feel invited to enter²¹. As such, the influence of the public squares begins from at least a block away²², with the extension of the activity and the design elements into the connecting streets helping make this possible²³.

The boundary between the two spaces – street and square – also needs to be well defined, raising one’s awareness of the fact they are passing from one space into the next²⁴. This concept is demonstrated in the design of Paley Park in New York, where in order to enter the plaza the individual passes up a very slight set of steps and then through an entrance marked by two gate houses on either side. Once within the space the surface treatment changes slightly and they enter a nicely shaded area with various seating opportunities. These subtle changes in the interstitial and transitional spaces act to heighten this experience of crossing the threshold from street to square.

A partly raised square can be very successful, as long as it retains visual continuity with the street and has clearly defined entry points. However, major changes in level can be harmful upon the use of the public space, as if it is significantly higher or lower than the connecting streets it runs the risk of being detached from street activity. This would act as a barrier, as it would reduce the number of people who would access the space and would reduce the visibility of activities from the street²⁵.

In the design this was done in many ways, such as articulation in the ground plane – through simple changes in level or materiality – changes in intensity of light and/or sound, and/or variety in enclosure of spaces. For example, as seen in the adjacent image the simple move of slightly raising the civic squares above the arterial streets, provides a feeling of protection, as well as relief from the resultant noise and pollution. This is then combined with landscape islands and water features works to further buffer the space from the noise of the vehicular traffic.



FIG 5.37 Edge condition of Paley Park.



FIG 5.38 Civic Plaza

06 Programming the Public Realm

To establish public spaces that encourage multiple forms of social encounter, through an open-ended approach to design, allowing multiple forms of activity and the personal appropriation of space.

The program and liveliness of the buildings that surround a public space greatly affect its accessibility and use²⁶. If the boundaries of a space are dull and unanimated then they do not present a successful backdrop for the space. As such, the programming of the interior spaces adjacent the public squares has great impact on the activity of the square. The design works to encourage cross pollination of program from interior to exterior, the library doors open right onto the square; people sit outside and read on the adaptable benches. As such, an active, welcoming outer boundary has been used to animate the space in both of the public squares adjacent to the cultural centre.

As demonstrated in the Centre Pompidou the high permeability of the main façade increases observation across the threshold, which works to generate pedestrian activity – the public looks down from the escalators at the square below, while the people below look up at movement in the Centre Pompidou. The circulation through and around this building fills the public space with activity, with the building acting as a backdrop for the spectacle that ensues. The square is quite minimal with its only furnishing being a mobile stage, however, being gently sloped from one end to the other it provides many forms of overlook that generate vibrancy in the space²⁷.

This was considered in the design of the civic square allowing for the opportunity of overlook. In the civic plaza instead of a permanent stage, a retractable or temporary stage was designed to fit in with the existing landscape islands. The steps which define the one side of the civic plaza also offer great opportunity for occupation. From there and the raised pedestrian landscape above the opportunity is provided to look down upon the activities in the civic plaza allowing the individual to feel both separate from, and yet a part of the social scene. This increases the theatrical aspect of the public space, by creating a sense of observation for those at the higher position and increasing the sense of surrounding human presence for those at the lower²⁸.



Perspective of Square



Articulated Facade

FIG 5.39 Images of the Centre Pompidou



FIG 5.40 Library Forecourt

Social Aspects

In many successful public spaces one finds that – as in good stage design – the space has been designed with different opportunities of overlook in mind. It is not accidental that the theatrical character of a public space is often emphasized by designers. For example, Adriaan Geuze’s rearrangement of the central Schouwburgplein (Theatre Square) in Rotterdam worked to create an effective stage-set, on which various groups of young people were able to exhibit themselves and their particular lifestyles. The edge of the space was articulated with a series of benches, designed such that they provided for many different forms of occupation. As the different groups claim spots both on and around the edges of the square, the interactions between these different groups affect the nature of the space, which is in an ongoing state of flux and development:

“break dancers on the square, the parade of Antillian youngsters driving around the edge of the square in front of the De Doelen concert hall and congress centre in their cars on Friday and Saturday evening, groups of young women who cluster together on the long benches opposite the multiplex cinema”²⁹.

Thus the design was concerned with both how people would occupy the space, but also how people would be able to view others within the space. It is advantageous to have a variety in seating options –through both permanent built elements and more flexible benches and seating – allowing the occupants to adapt the space to their own specifications³⁰. In the design of the library entrance plaza adaptable seating was designed such that the space could be reorganized to accommodate different sizes of groups. In their static position the benches are lined in rows perpendicular to the library. However, once moved they could form any number of combinations of seating options.

Other elements used to define the space can be utilized as temporary resting spaces, such as the low walls or steps, which can be a support to lean on or a surface for sitting and reclining. These were designed in combination with planters and walls to create simple back and arm rests. These also create territories, boundaries and focal points for individuals and groups, through which any number of different subspaces could be created, such as alcoves for smaller groups or informal amphitheatres for large groups to watch entertainment³¹.



FIG 5.41 Adaptable seating in Schouwburgplein.



FIG 5.42 Aerial Perspective of Community Centre and adjacent public spaces

5.5 Community Centre Design

To create a destination, the new development needs to appeal both to the local community and the larger urban community. This will be done through the combination of a variety of daily amenities as well as unique programming that draws people from a larger area. Through the insertion of new cultural institutions the site will become a new public destination for cultural exchange and public discourse, addressing the current and future needs of the community.

A multi-layered program for the development emerges from a careful study of the needs of the greater community. In this way, the community's needs³² have become the design's program focusing on the future cultural facilities to be located at the Etobicoke Centre.

The community center holds a unique role of strengthening a sense of identity within a neighbourhood. The proposed community centre was designed with an expanded scope, which will accommodate cultural, recreational, educational and social programs for children, youth, adults and seniors – cultivating a diverse social atmosphere through the juxtaposition of program. Therefore, the building design works to directly address the needs and interests of a local community with the aim of enriching the daily life of its residents.

Finally, the Brentwood District Library would be relocated to this site, as it is quickly outgrowing its current site at Bloor Street West and Royal York Road. With an expanded collection, more developed facilities, and more central location this library would greater serve the community around it. The library provides an alternative seat of learning, where people from all walks of life can enjoy a civilized public environment.

These new facilities would lie at the heart of the rapidly developing community, being located adjacent to the main pedestrian paths of circulation and centres of activity. In order for the community centre to become a contributing member of the community it must open its doors for public movement and use, extending its programs into the adjacent public spaces. When a cultural institution is designed with clear entrances and

POTENTIAL PROGRAMS CONSIDERED:

School space to educate the growing population of young children, mainly from an anticipated influx of immigrant families.

A **community centre** that offers an expanded social and recreational programs for children, youth, adults, and seniors.

Relocate the **Brentwood District Library** to this site, [and expanding its collection] since it is quickly outgrowing its current site at Bloor Street West and Royal York Road.

A **community market** and perhaps **small arts theatre**, to support and showcase local artisans.

A **Western Rapid Transit Extension** extending the Bloor-Danforth TTC line to Mississauga Square One. The Mississauga Bus Terminal located at Islington would be relocated along this line, freeing up the land where the bus terminal is currently located.

* **NOTE:** *The community's needs were derived from the Etobicoke Secondary Plan and Appendix Reports, and are based on the future population predictions.*

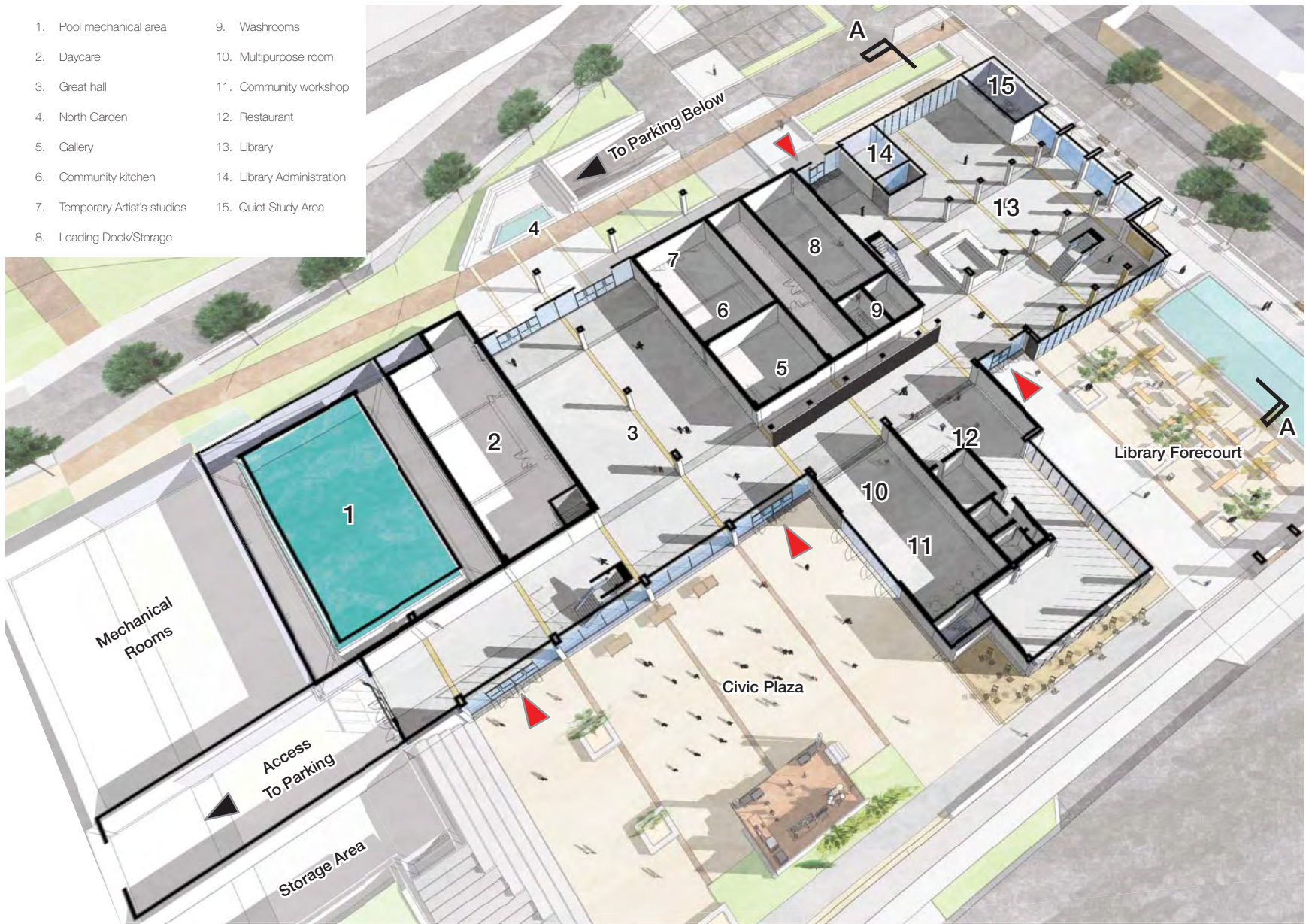


FIG 5.43 Community Centre plan (Level 1)

includes large windows that reveal people inside, it generates a sense of life and activity that provides valuable surveillance over the public realm³³.

Therefore the ground floor of the building is very permeable, acting as an extension of the street and the public realm. Here the public community-oriented programs have a direct relationship with the adjacent public spaces. The more private recreational and educational activities are then located on the upper floors, where access can then be controlled.

The main entrance on the ground level is located at the intersection of the buildings three main functions; library, community meeting spaces, and recreational facilities. On this level are located many spaces for artistic and cultural activities, with a temporary art gallery, as well as studios and a workshop for local artists. As well there are a variety of community meeting spaces include the large multipurpose great hall, which has access to a community kitchen and can be used for many different sized events. This space then spills out into the garden north of the building, which provides quieter outdoor space for community events. The day-care is also located off of the great hall, making use of its space for children’s activities and events.

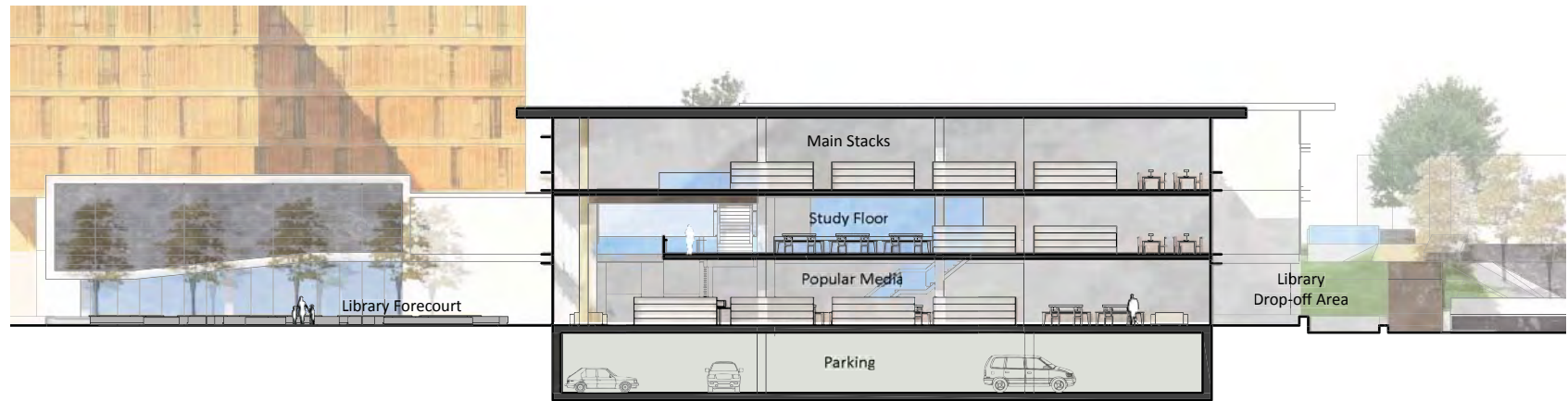


FIG 5.44 Detail Building Section A-A



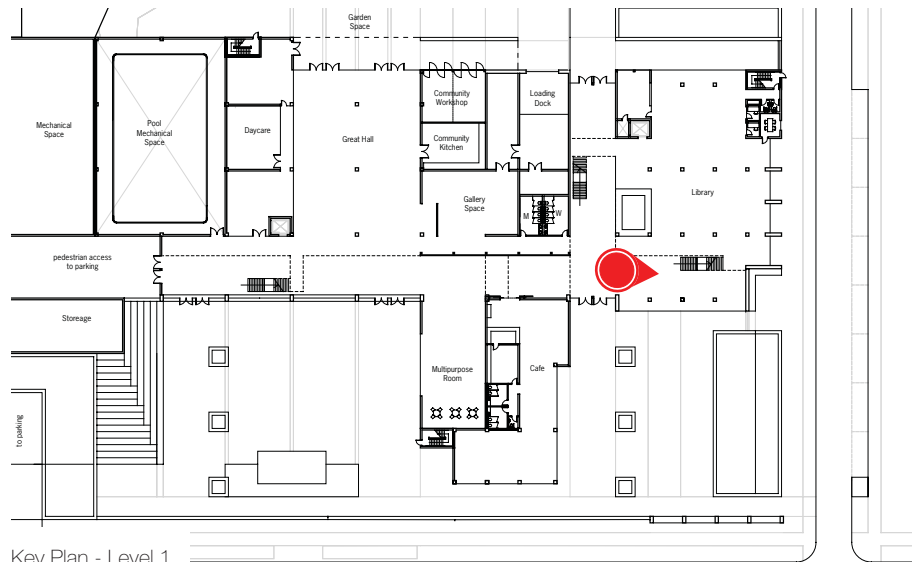
FIG 5.45 Library Entrance - Main Level

Library

The central spine extends into the library space creating the southern atrium, which looks out towards the plaza. This would be the most public portion of the library, where the popular reading material, magazines, and multimedia centres would be located. Moving north through the building are the study rooms, stacks, and meeting spaces that provide spaces of quiet contemplation within the library. The main circulation desk is centrally located with the library administration immediately behind.

The second and third floors house the main stacks of the library, with quiet reading areas located near the windows on either side of the building. There are also enclosed computer workstation areas, which can be used for both private work and e-classroom courses.

The heavily articulated angled fins along the eastern façade work to relate the building to a row of trees lining the edge of the site. The façade would be a minimal steel frame which would minimally obstruct the view out towards the plaza.



Key Plan - Level 1

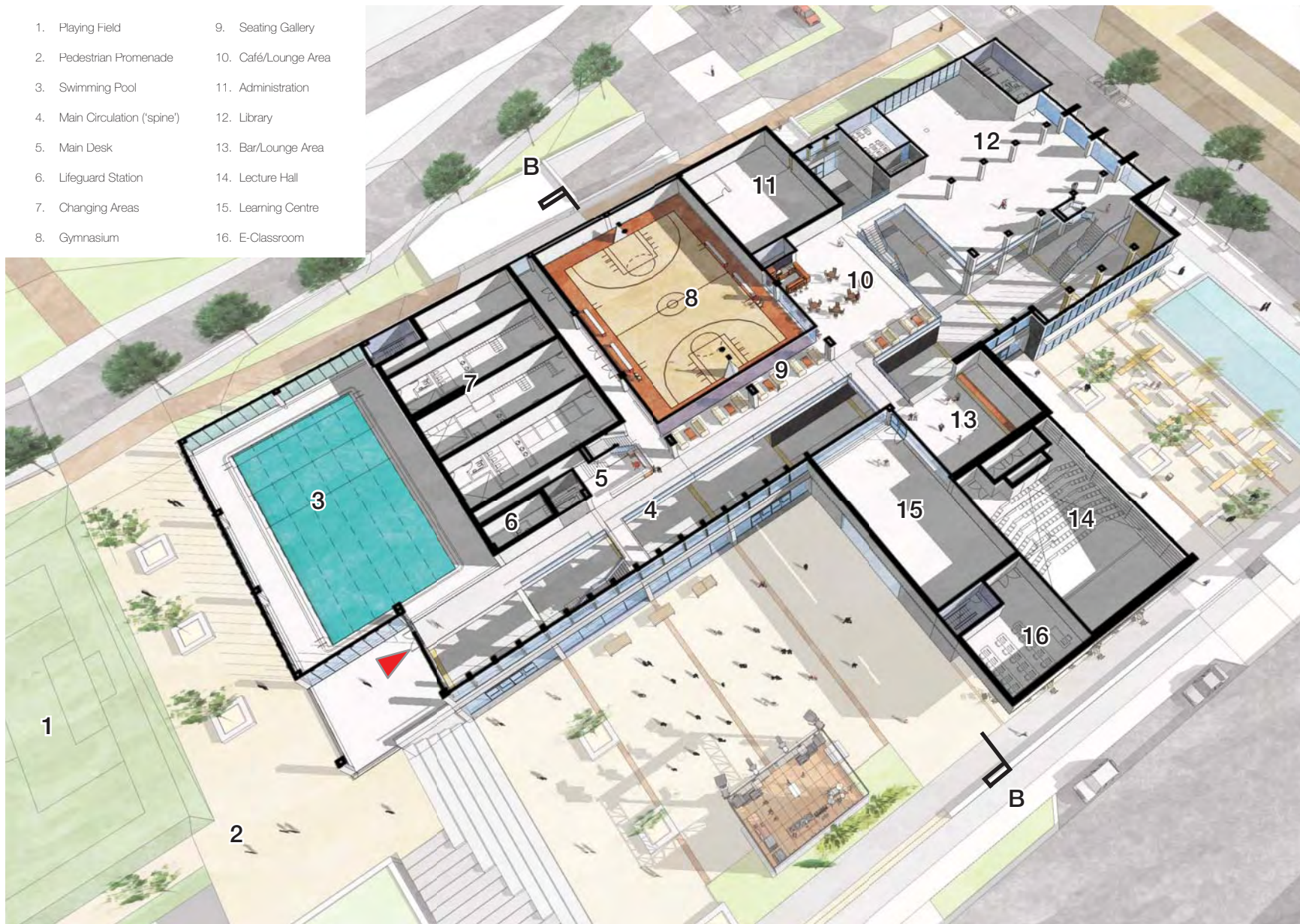


FIG 5.46 Community Centre plan (Level 2)

Recreational Programs

There are many outdoor recreational activities that can occur around the community centre, with a large playing field laying immediately to the west of the building. This area has viewing platforms and grassed hills surrounding it, as well as benches on the pedestrian promenade.

The building entrance from the new pedestrian landscape is directly connected to the 'spine' the main circulation space of the building. From this level the individual would access the recreational portion of the community centre. The change rooms are located in between the two main functions of the community centre, the gymnasium and the swimming pool. Many different sports can be accommodated in these facilities, such as basketball, ball hockey, indoor soccer, and karate. At the second level the gymnasium is surrounded by windows, which allows spectators to watch from the lounge area in the spine, as well as the Café/Lounge Area at the centre of the building.

Other athletic facilities including fitness/dance studios, weight rooms, and squash courts and are then accessed from behind the main entry desk via a controlled elevator and

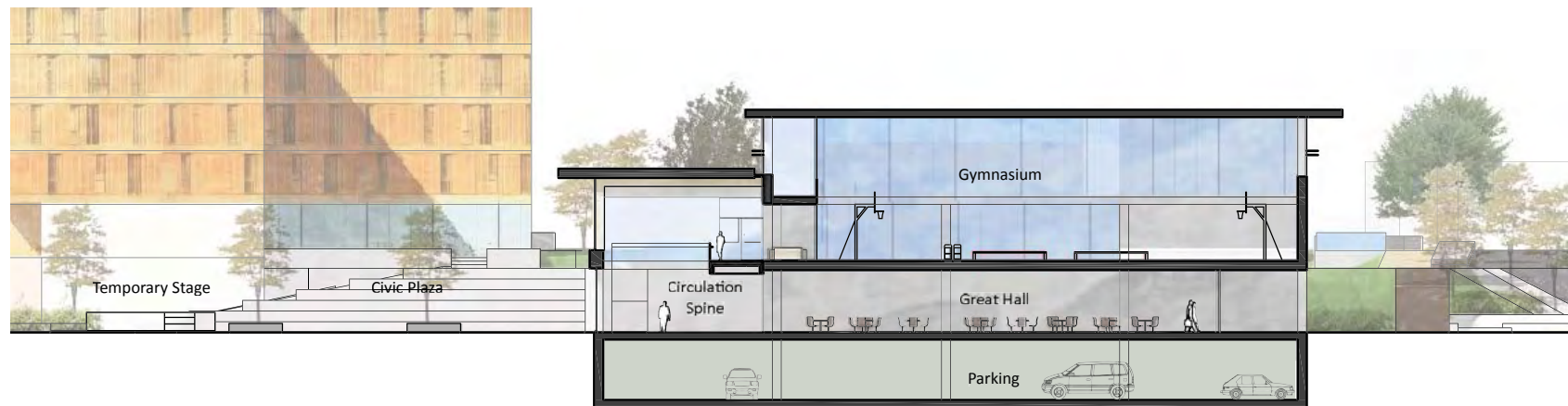


FIG 5.47 Detail Building Section B-B

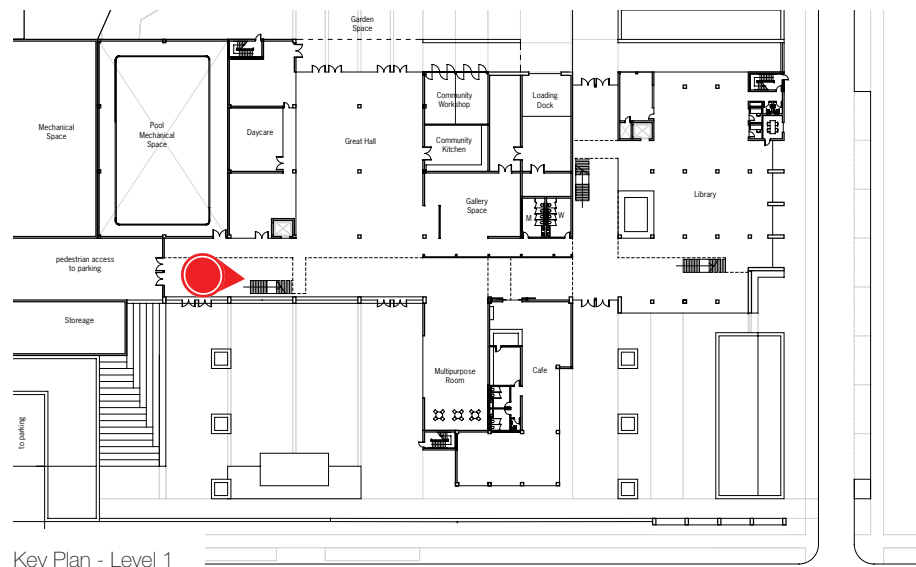


FIG 5.48 The 'Spine' - central circulation space

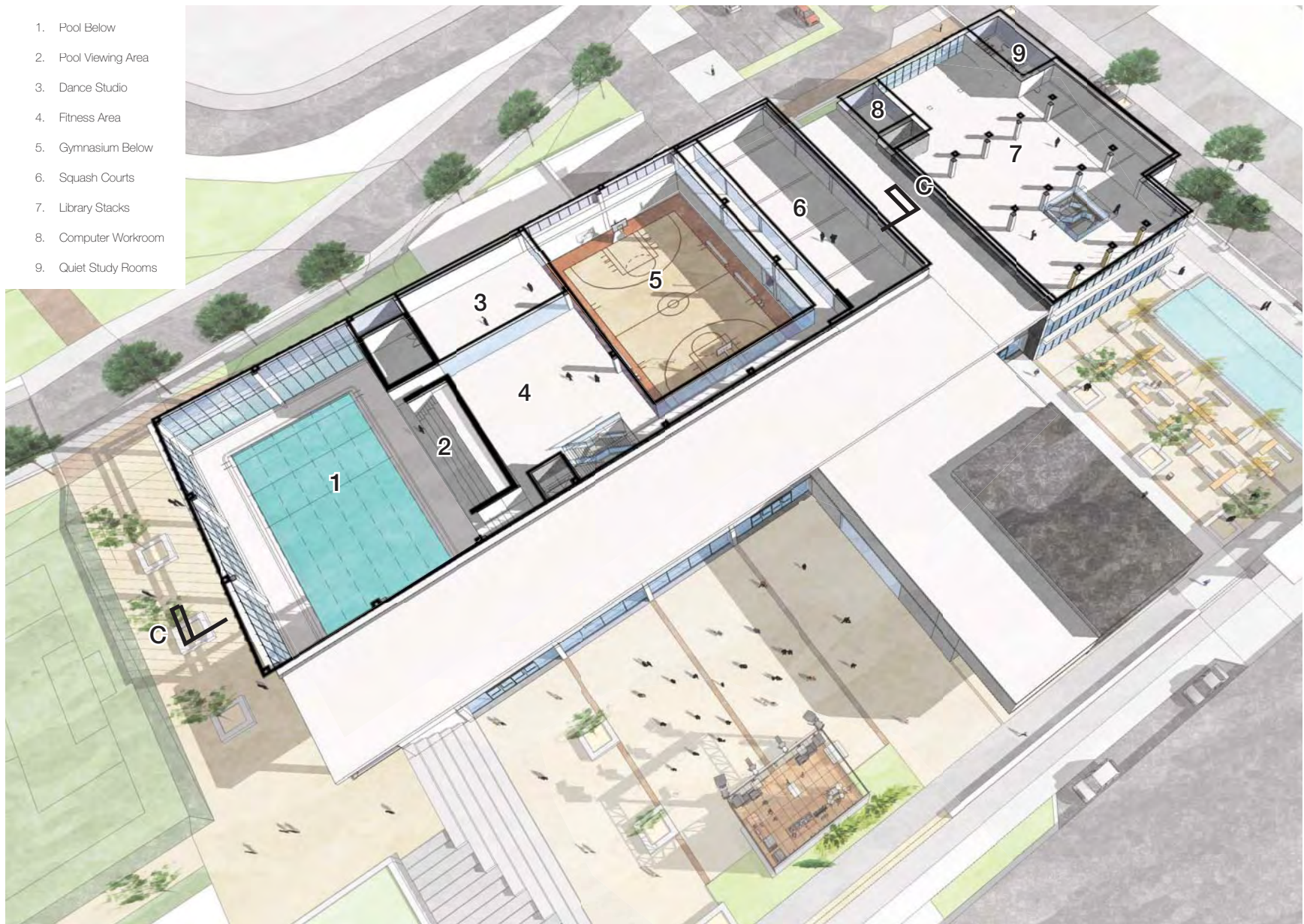
staircase. From this upper level there is a designated viewing area for the swimming pool below, with the fitness area and squash courts looking down upon the gymnasium space.

The Spine

The pathway across the new pedestrian landscape extends into the community centre, becoming the 'spine' – a generously scaled galleria with exposed glulam structure. This space acts as the main organizing element of the building linking all of the various program components. This space is multifunctional, running the entire length of the building and being directly connected with the large interior gathering space. This is the main space for public gatherings, events and receptions, the activities of which can spill out into the hardscaped civic plaza or onto the more intimate terraced spaces and gardens to the north of the building. The double height space runs the entire length of the building,



Key Plan - Level 1



- 1. Pool Below
- 2. Pool Viewing Area
- 3. Dance Studio
- 4. Fitness Area
- 5. Gymnasium Below
- 6. Squash Courts
- 7. Library Stacks
- 8. Computer Workroom
- 9. Quiet Study Rooms

FIG 5.49 Community Centre plan (Level 3)

but the pedestrian circulation is redirected at the entrance to the library across the other plaza.

There is a rhythm of light and dark in this space created by the pattern of the large exposed beams and robust structural elements. The patterned floor finish of the spine extends into the public space beyond, helping to reinforce the larger structural order of the space.

Social Programs

The social services include telecommuting facilities, public meeting spaces, a daycare and youth facilities, space for ESL and after school programs, a community kitchen, as well as job-training and learning centres. The large lecture hall on the second floor is adaptable by design and can be used for large community meetings, as well as smaller community theatre productions. The space has its own lobby area, located on the second floor, adjacent to the drink and snack bar and directly above the larger café/restaurant.

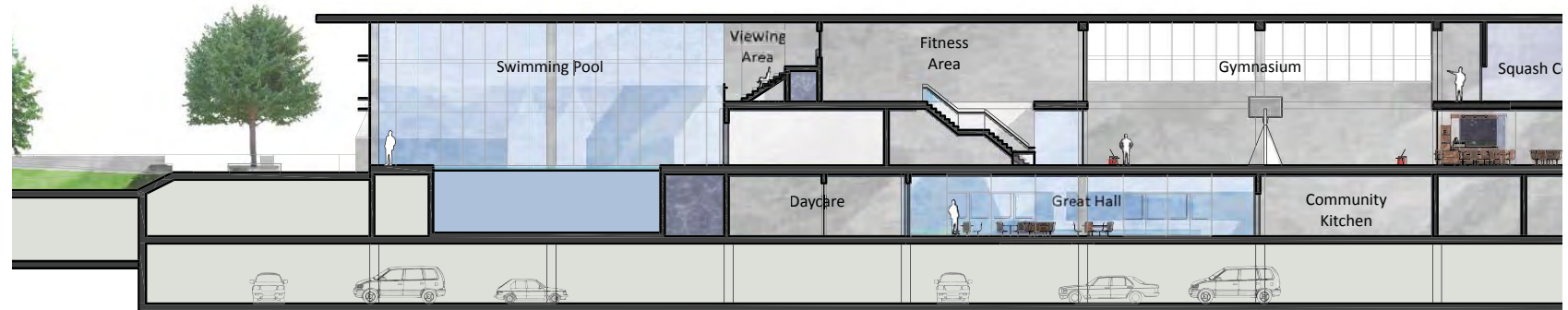


FIG 5.50 Detail Building Section C-C

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conclusion

Over the past 100 years, there has been a growing trend towards homogeneity in the urban environment with the rise of suburbanization. This trend is mainly due to many of the following factors: i) the lack of density and centrality of our planning, ii) the absence of boundaries to our urban fabric, and iii) the car-dominant society that harms the relationship between the pedestrian and urban space. These factors affect the quality of the public realm in our suburban areas. As suburbs are increasingly oriented towards private values, there becomes a lack of informal gathering places, hence little nourishment for an active public realm. This thesis focused on the architectural interventions associated with the creation of a new community, on the cultivation of a new public realm within a dispersed urban form. Neighbourhoods developed with this higher building density and a mixture of land uses will promote proximity over mobility and increase the sustainability of the larger area.

The thesis seeks to bridge the gap between our need for increased density in urban form and a desire for a high quality of life that is often associated with suburban development. By focusing on restoring human scale and elements of urban vitality to our communities, it brings to question how to incorporate these qualities. How can designers capture the social and experiential multiplicity of urban life into the practice of urban design and architecture? Looking to current urban design theory, practice and case studies, this thesis explores various ways to create a 'sense of place', establishing architecture's relationship to community building.

The design introduced a set of principles and components for intensification of the inner suburban fabric, while still adding much needed density within the area through infill development. Infill development makes better use of existing infrastructure and services, rather than building new ones at the periphery. These principles focused on cultivating a 'sense of place' and/or locality within the surrounding community.

The study area in central Etobicoke was used to examine suburban intensification at various scales of inquiry. This study established the foundations for the design by noting the existing site conditions, as well as revealing the potentials for development and ideal connections to establish with the surrounding community. The surrounding site elements are the points of departure for the character and identity of the existing site – establishing the everyday rituals that occur around the site.

These components and principles can be applied to other inner suburban neighbourhoods within the city. In so doing, it presents a method of intensification that is sensitive both to the existing conditions of the inner suburban neighbourhoods, their predominantly post-war housing and the vision that the city has for such areas.

Challenges

Early in the thesis, it was noted that to create a robust and sustainable urban form, one would have to consider economic, environmental and social factors. While social issues became the focus of the thesis, it is noted that the economic and environmental issues (although outside the scope of the thesis) still need to be addressed for these forms of intensification to occur.

Toronto has grown out of a culture of private development, whereby developer driven projects determined the future of our city. Government's control through the Places to Grow legislation prioritizes long-term goals over short-term thinking and has the potential to bring about the necessary changes in the suburban realm.

Ownership patterns related to low-density urban development have dominated the GTA for decades, creating an urban environment that is unsustainable in many different ways. For market demand to drive this transformation of the inner suburban realm, architects will need to make these destinations more competitive and attractive economically over more typical downtown and greenfield developments.

Thus, rather than prescribing to the typical approach for infill development, the architect must work to encourage more 'place specific' design solutions. They must begin by

looking at the existing site conditions as a starting point for analysis, working to establish where existing and potential lines of movement through the site could occur. This will ensure that their program will tie seamlessly into the surrounding neighbourhood and taking advantage of existing conditions as the launching point of design.

This thesis synthesizes the lessons learned from theory, current urban design strategies, and a study of case studies to create a hybrid community that bridges between the existing inner suburban conditions towards a more urbane community. In an area clearly in transition, it remains sensitive to the existing conditions of the inner suburban neighbourhood, but also looks to the future – creating a bridge between the new and old city fabric.

APPENDIX

urban design terminology
precedent case studies
design drawings

Urban Design Terminology

Adaptive reuse using an existing building (which may or may not be vacant) and renovating it so that it can be put to use again for another purpose

Brownfield redevelopment new development on sites which either have or are perceived to have some degree of environmental contamination because of a previous use

Density (hph) residential density is defined by the average number of households per hectare (hph). This figure is created by dividing the approximate number of households by the physical area of a particular residential community, including supporting public streets and alleyways.

Infill development new construction on vacant parcels of land which are served by utilities and surrounded by other urban development

Intensification A Canadian term, first introduced with affordable housing discussions in the 1980s to denote strategies to increase the residential utility of a specific land parcel or community. Intensification strategies include infill, redevelopment, adaptive re-use, and suburban densification.

The following descriptions are loosely based on the categories developed by Kevin Lynch in *Image of the City* (1976):

Paths This is the network of systems of movement along which people within the city move, such as footpaths, streets,

canals, cycle paths, etc. They are like blood vessels that bring the lifeblood - people - to all parts of the city.

Nodes These are the most accessible and notable sites within the city, located at intersections of pathways. The node acts as a focal point – a space that a person has a sense of entering into – and as such it provides a sense of interest and incident along the pathways that connect with it.

Landmarks These are points of reference which are often identified with a neighbourhood and support way-finding and orientation when travelling through the city. They are often located within or around nodes, where they act to mark its presence and distinction from the surrounding area. Landmarks often provide perspective by creating emphasis with a long view or focal point.

Views and vistas Open sight lines through the city that reveal built or natural forms that are of special significance to the city. The frame and backdrop to a view is often designed to emphasize the significance of the vista.

Edges These linear elements form the boundaries or barriers between different parts of the city, such as railway lines or highways. They act as obstacles and have to be bridged if the areas they separate are to be connected.

Districts These are distinct areas of the city that are identified for their unique identity, whether due to the people that live or work there, the layout of streets and public spaces, to their prevailing uses, or to their architectural style.

PRECEDENT CASE STUDIES

Schouwburgplein, Rotterdam

Adriaan Geuze and West 8, 1991.

The work by West 8 can be seen to represent a situationalist ideal, where through the individual's interaction with the public space, the boundaries between spaces can be understood as flexible, **“transform[ing] in response to the desires and moods of the city dweller, the random events of the city and environmental changes that occur over time”¹**. This public space takes on a theatrical quality with the creative use of lighting and materials to delineate space. As well, it allows for the popular activity of ‘people watching’ and other forms of informal social gathering in its subtly designed subspaces.

Responsive Boundaries

In West 8's project, Schouwburgplein, the square is divided into different territories subtly by the use of different surface textures. The junctions between the surface materials are used to loosely mark where different activities might occur. The materials include perforated galvanized steel panels, timber boarding, epoxy, box-section steel grille and a strip of rubber, which are designed to be easily transgressed, which **“dissolve[s] in response to changing activities in the surrounding areas or to a change of mood or idea by games players themselves”²**. The entire plaza is also raised off of grade slightly and under lit, which gives the plaza the appearance of a suspended podium³, clearly defining its boundaries in relation to the urban fabric.

Street Furniture

The spaces are thus organized in a series of strips with the eastern edge across from the plaza being defined by three large ventilation shafts, which have been made into three tall towers. Alongside these towers is a series of 13 long benches, which are long enough to seat hundreds of people. As well, they are designed such that they can be sat on in a variety of ways, either seated, or half leaning against the back of the bench.

Transformation at Night

The plaza also undergoes a great transformation at night with the surface of the square transforming between daylight and darkness⁴. One of the most dramatic effects would be the large series of crane lamp posts, which flood the space with light. They are programmed to change position at programmed intervals, but also can be moved by passers-by⁵

Both the boundaries and the qualities of the surfaces use lighting techniques to delineate space. For example, strip lighting has been installed beneath the steel panels, which is revealed through perforations at night. As well, a subtle box-steel section which runs along the plaza is light up with a green light at night. Thus what is a seemingly invisible boundary during the day becomes a primary axis, cutting across the plaza in front of the theatre. This reacts to the different functions the plaza has during the day and at night, which focuses the attention towards the theatre at night.

This lighting emphasizes the theatrical quality of the public space, by producing a stage floor⁶. This makes it usable for informal social gatherings, but also stimulates and incites certain activities.



FIG A.01 Perspective of light feature



FIG A.02 Views looking south over Schouwburgplein with different forms of occupation.



FIG A.03 Aerial of Schouwburgplein

Kunsthal, Rotterdam

Rem Koolhaas and OMA, 1992.

The Office of Metropolitan Architecture, or OMA, often demonstrate a number of design strategies which focus on ideas of public space and its relationship with the global city. The Kunsthal is a prime example of how OMA have tried to connect their projects in direct and fundamental ways to their surroundings¹.

Independently Functioning Programs

The clients had asked the architects to create a very flexible building in which the gallery functions were held separate from the other more public functions. In this way the programs could function independently with separate entrances. In order to do this the Kunsthal focused on a series of approaches to the building, making a series of primary and secondary entrances. This leads to a spatial permeability, as one could enter the building from a variety of possible entry points.

Resolving Elevation Changes

The building is located on the south end of a Museum Park and was placed directly adjacent to a 6m-high dike. As the main access road for the site is on top of the dike the building has to resolve these elevation changes between the front and back facades of the building. In order to make this connection Koolhaas made an exterior cut through the building. They incorporated a pedestrian path through the building which runs from the main access to the park beyond. This however, raised certain questions of inside-out relationships, as part of the interior of the building was now exposed to the outside environment.

Relationship between Interior and Exterior

Another strategy used to relate the museum to the city is that of transparency, where on three of the four

elevations the ground-level is full-glazed. This allows pedestrians to view the activities of the interior. The elevations often reflect the interior programs, such as the auditorium floor being accentuated on the western façade.

As well, the Kunsthal provides a continuity of materials between the interior and exterior, such that places such as the interior and exterior pedestrian ramps the glass façade is the only thing separating the spaces (fig. 7). This goes along with Koolhaas's will to open the building to the exterior, with idea that the interior can read as an exterior or vice versa. Another example of this would be the tree trunks that puncture through the main gallery halls or the metal grid of the parvis which slightly enters into Hall 2 (fig. 8).

Openness of the Facade

However certain aspects of the design can be seen to undermine the design strategy of openness and permeability of the facades. For example, although the majority of the ground-level is glazed in certain areas the glass is highly coloured, which manipulates the appearance of the outside world². As well, at night the interior lighting will often spill out into the park. Finally, with the main entrance off of the ramp the connection between main entrance and museum is often disorienting.



FIG A.04 night view of western glazed facades

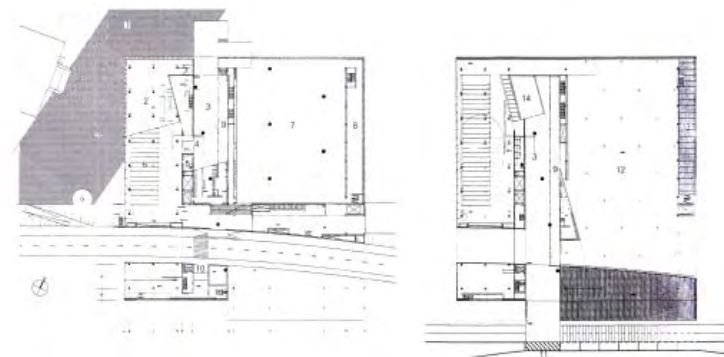


FIG A.05 Park (left) and Dike level (right) floor plans of the Kunsthal
SOURCE. Tsukui, N. OMA@work.a+u. Tokyo: E ando Yu, 2000.

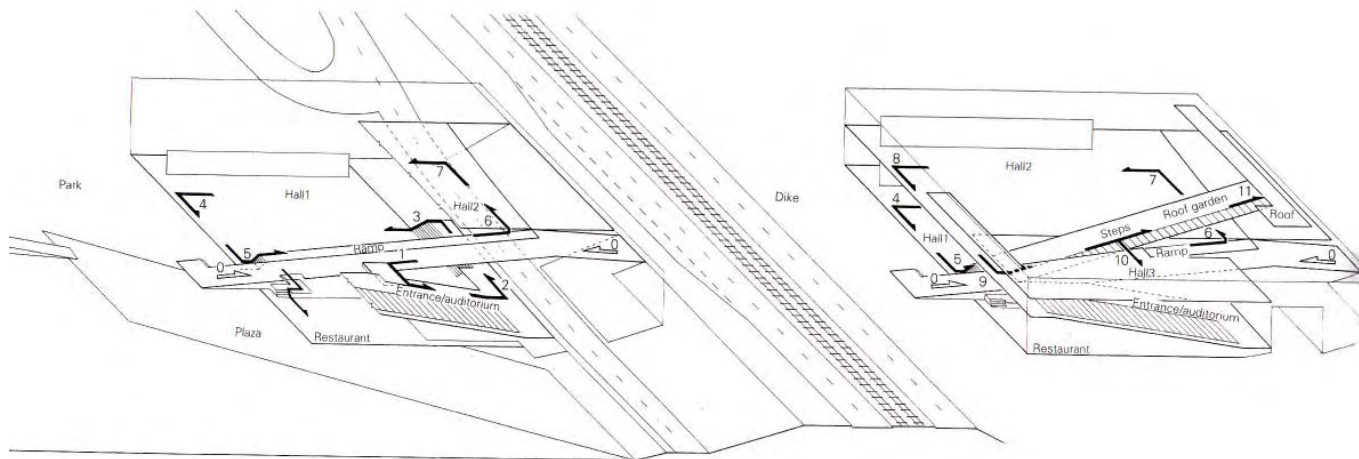


FIG A.06 The concept of the building is to create a continuous circuit of circulation.

- 0 pedestrian ramp
- 1 main entrance
- 2 auditorium
- 3 stairway to hall 1
- 4 hall 1
- 5 ramp
- 6 entrance to hall 2
- 7 hall 2
- 8 far end of hall 2
- 9 ramp along roof garden
- 10 hall 3 (single height)
- 11 roof terrace

Overlaying Programs/Functions

The Kunsthall has very densely packed programs and in order to relate them together to make the spaces continuous Koolhaas often relates them in section. The programs are organized in a series of strips, each with its own atmosphere and character³. They are then laid one on top of another and offset. In the fissures between the spaces glass walls, slits, door and voids are used to frame views from one space into the next. In this way the individual is there are visual connections made between the spaces, drawing the individual through the building.

As well the internal thresholds are often permeable, being established through elements such as angled concrete columns, thin metallic columns, wooden and metal railings, horizontal bracing elements, changes in ground materials or height, and lowered ceilings⁴. In this way Koolhaas retains the visual connection between the spaces, while providing physical barriers.



FIG A.07 wooden railing separates auditorium space from ramp

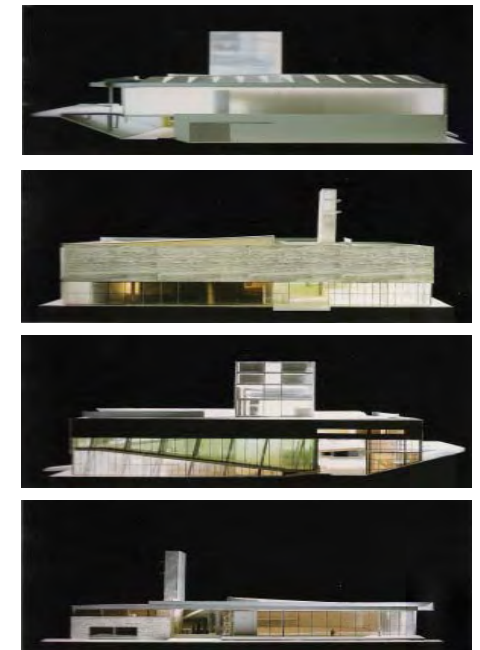


FIG A.08 Elevations of a model of Kunsthall

Museum Park (Kunsthal), Rotterdam

OMA, 1995.

The Museum Park functions as a green connection between the city centre and the Park of the Maas, and as open space in the midst of various cultural institutions.

The park consists of a series of very different zones, each with its own special design. The transition areas between the zones are abrupt and they are juxtaposed in such a way that they emphasize these differences in the environment.

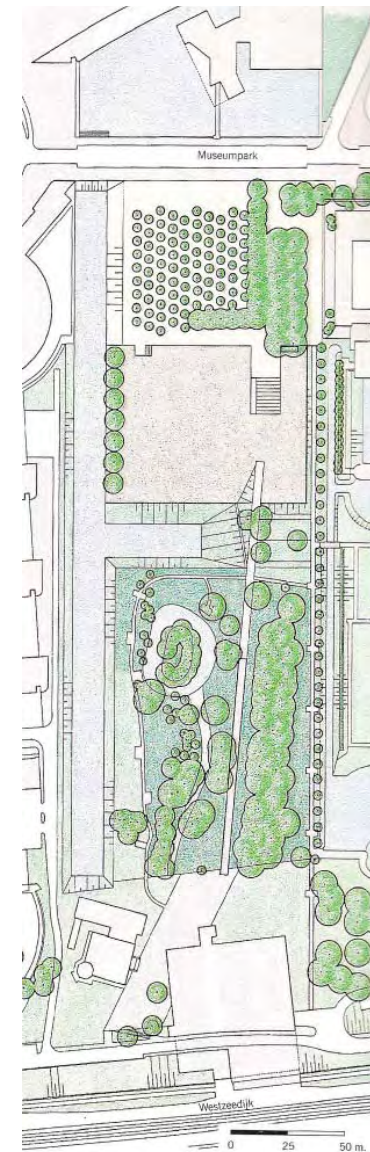
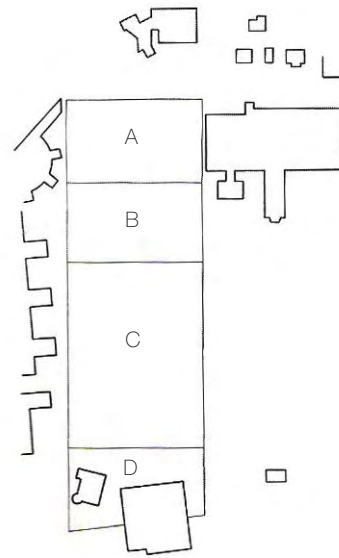
The first zone, was designed as the forecourt with a large plaza underneath the gentle shade of a grove of apple trees surrounded by light-coloured gravel. Between this zone and the next lies a long mirrored wall, upon which sits the second zone, an elevated asphalt stage, which in contrast provides no shading elements. Details of the asphalt – stripes and lines – are reminiscent of roads and runways, and vegetation here adds an exotic tint to the picture. The third zone is an adaption of Villa Dijkzigt's historical romantic garden. The addition of a multi-coloured carpet of flowers and blooming shrubs, along with tinted spotlights in the old trees, creates a fairy-tale atmosphere. After sundown, when the spotlights cast colourful beams across the garden, the image of a nightclub is evoked. Part of the existing pond was preserved and part was converted into a stony creek of rock and glistening marbles of blue glass leads the pedestrian over a sea of flowers to the terrace fronting the Kunsthal.

FIG A.09 Sections of the park

- a) forecourt
- b) stage
- c) romantic garden
- d) museum area

FIG A.10 Image of mirrored wall in forecourt.

FIG A.11 Rendered plan of the Museum Park



Bibliothèque de Charlesbourg, Quebec

Croft Pelletier Architectes, 2006.

It can be said that the provincial government of Quebec recognizes the essential nature of civic and cultural institutions in the growth of its communities, [as] since 1990 they have launched a good number of competitions which have resulted in the transformation of Quebec's cultural landscape¹. These projects which include many museums, theatres, libraries and other cultural facilities are perfect examples of how architecture can work to stimulate a community .

Among these buildings is the newly renovated library located in the Trait-Carré area in Charlesbourg, which is now part of Quebec City. The project is located within a historical zone in the city, thus the design while focusing on creating a new centre for the neighbourhood was also very sensitive to the surrounding context, tying itself seamlessly into the existing fabric.

Sensitive Use of Materials

The materials for the design were chosen to also reflect the sites agricultural roots and respect its historical designation. Hence, low rising thick stone walls and "torrefied" wood recall the architecture of the old farm buildings in the area.

Historical Siting

The designed public space of this site was used in a manner that it extends out into the surrounding landscape, working to draw individuals onto the site.

The siting and landscape design of the project recall the historic sites agricultural roots, as the neighbourhood was designed along a radial plan. This form created individual farms of trapezoidal shape, which converged upon the centre of town². Hence, in order to bring back the memory and traces of the previous site the architects tied their landscape elements into this radial pattern, extending the designed public space into the surrounding landscape.

Extending Public Space into the Landscape

This creates long vistas away from and towards the project, which creates a series of public spaces or [vistas/a narrative sequence] which draws individuals onto the site. As well the building uses a green roof design which makes the building essentially disappear from the northern façade³.



FIG A.12 site plan of library



FIG A.13 view of pedestrian approach and green roof



FIG A.14 front approach to library

Plaza of the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers, 1976.



FIG A.15 Site Plan of the Plaza of the Centre Georges Pompidou

In the historic centre of Paris one of the main gathering spaces has become the Plaza of the Centre Georges Pompidou, popularly called “Beaubourg”. This public space presents a huge sweep of public plaza which attracts an extraordinary array of street performers. The result is a variety of events on this vast square, which was designed as a multi-level space, creating an amphitheatre for people to watch the activities both on the street and on the ground, and from the many viewing places within the building (Carr, p. 112).

The Pompidou centre has become a great Paris attraction, with many people being drawn to the activity in the public space. As such this plaza encourages the various forms of necessary social interaction – including opportunities to relax, to observe the activity in a passive manner, or opportunity to participate and discover new recreations.



FIG A.16 Perspective of Square



FIG A.17 Facade of the Centre Pompidou

Human Rights Square, Evry, France

Kathryn Gustafson, 1991.



FIG A.18 perspective of square

This square forms an important cultural precinct in the town of Evry. It is bordered by a major boulevard, by the new Town Hall, a cathedral by architect Mario Botta, and by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. As part of the square is built over underground parking vehicular and pedestrian access needs to be controlled within the square. The space is conceived as a stage, consisting of a series of planes which provides for a variety of artistic performances and other events. The light-toned, granite paving is chosen to highlight the surrounding buildings and its grid pattern structures and gives scale to the square. Pools and jets of water and a grid of vegetation break up the square into a variety of spaces and lighting effects add to the theatrical atmosphere.

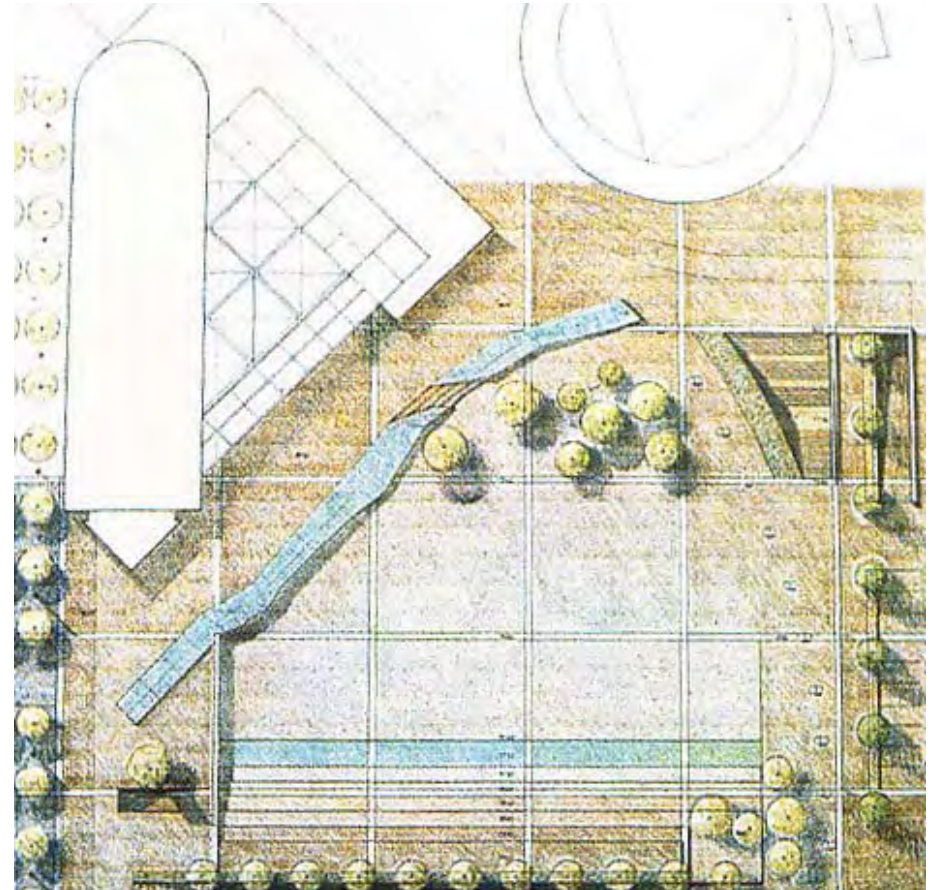


FIG A.19 site plan of Human Rights Square



FIG A.20 detail of fountain

Plaza de la Constitucio, Girona, Spain

José Antonio Martínez Lapeña, 1983.

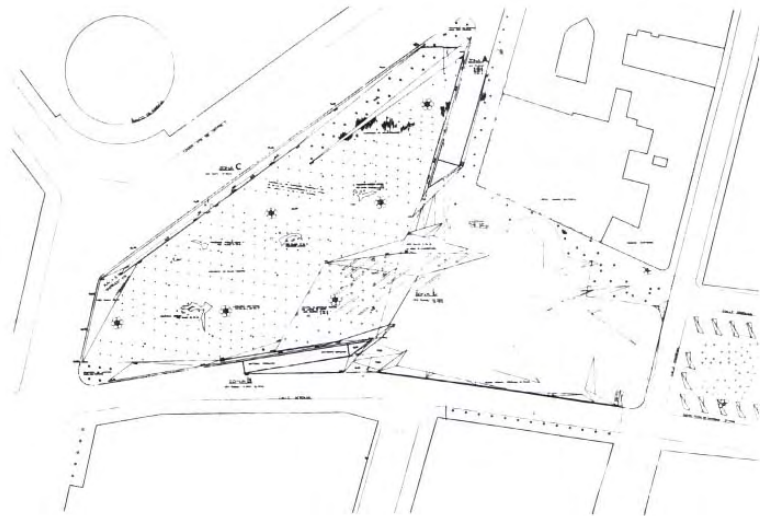


FIG A.21 site plan of Plaza de la Constitucio

The significance of the Plaza de la Constitucio is the hierarchies of open space created in this public square, located at a large street intersection. Two large ramps create a “V” at one corner of the park, with one side open as a pedestrian ramp, which acts as a barrier to the adjacent vehicular traffic. The other side of the “V” is a ramp going to underground parking. In the space above a series of open spaces are formed by the subtle changes in environment. A field of trees, changes in paving and sculptural undulations in the ground and in short walls form the different spaces.

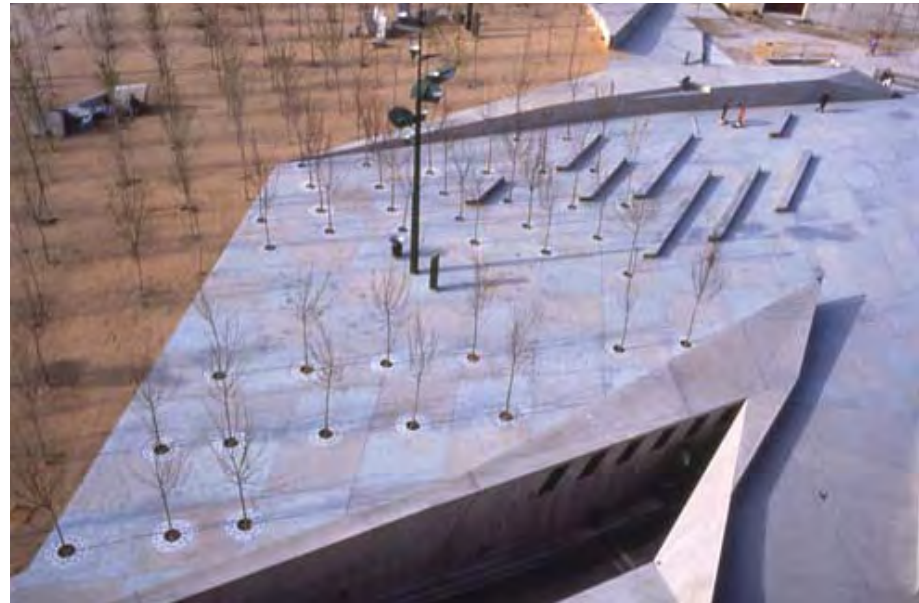


FIG A.22 Aerials of plaza

Coin St. Housing, London, England

Howarth Tomkins, 2002.

Density: 74 dph

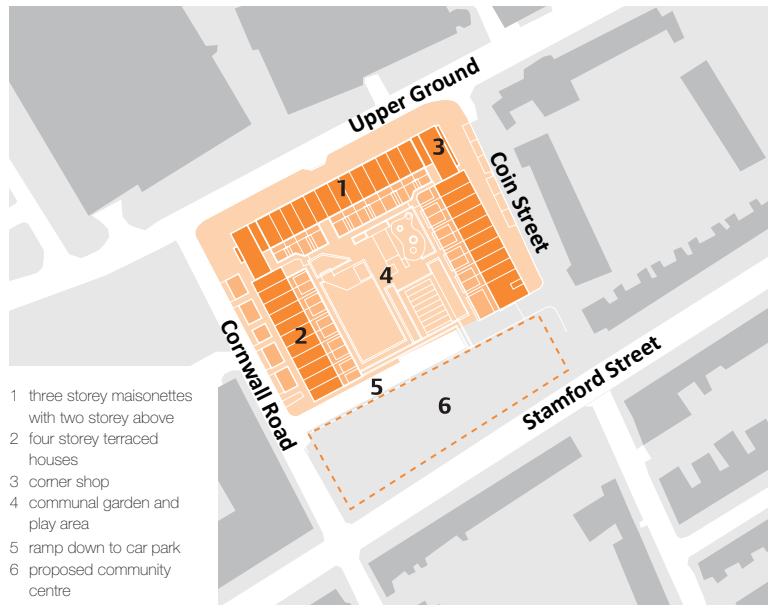


FIG A.23 site plan of Coin St. Housing

This housing development, located in central London is a good example of how the hollow-square housing model creates flexible communal public space. The houses surrounding the central courtyard are three storeys with two-storey maisonettes above, accessed via a common external balcony, again overlooking the courtyard. The increased height is a response to the busy urban thoroughfare.

A simple set of principles established the layout of these different units. All the street-level units have private entrances and gardens opening onto the courtyard, whereas the flats and maisonettes above have large private balconies instead. They establish a layer of privacy at street level by having a raised pavement area, from which the units are accessed, separated from the main thoroughfare by storage bins and architectural metalwork.



FIG A.24 Photo of Interior Courtyard



FIG A.25 Hardscaped and softscaped areas in courtyard

Kings Wharf, London, England

Davy Smith Architects, 2001.

Density: 328 dph

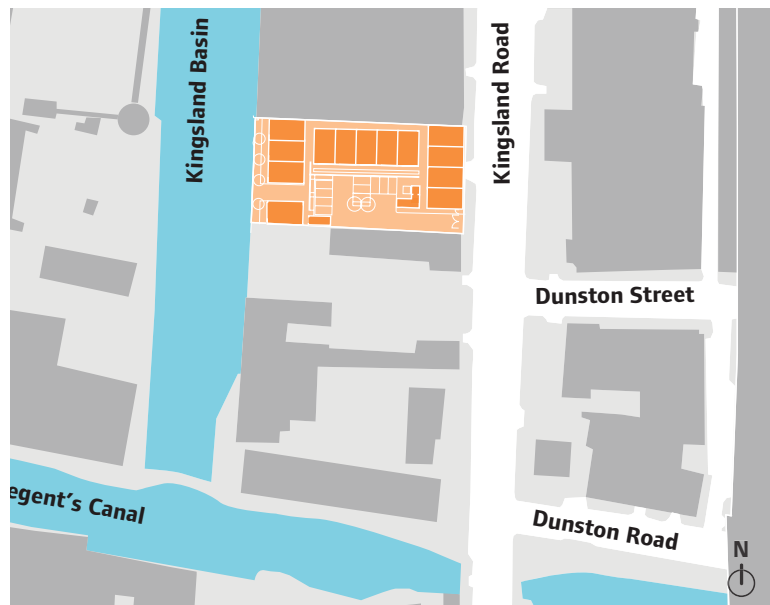


FIG A.26 site plan of Kings Wharf

This housing development, located between a loose, low-rise stretch of Kingsland Road and the adjacent canal basin achieves a remarkably high density on a very tight infill site. The ten storey block of apartments (each occupying two floors) are arranged around a south facing courtyard that opens to the street and to the canal. There are eight commercial units at ground level, four facing the street and five facing onto the courtyard. Ten car parking spaces are provided in the central courtyard.



FIG A.27 Typical Floor Plans of Kings Wharf

Ground Floor Plan

- 1 Entrance to courtyard
- 2 Courtyard with 10 parking spaces
- 3 Commercial Unit
- 4 Two-bedroom flat
- 5 Stair and Lift Tower

Third floor plan

- 1 Open access walkway
- 2 Two-bedroom flat
- 3 open plan living area
- 4 bedroom
- 5 bathroom



FIG A.28 Photos of Interior Courtyard and view from canal

Rue de Meaux, Paris, France

Renzo Piano Building Workshop, 1991.

Density: 317 dph



FIG A.29 site plan of Rue de Meaux

This housing development in north-east Paris is composed of a series of five and six storey blocks. The building presents a strong facade to the street, with four storeys of apartments above large commercial units. The street frontage is cut by two three-meter wide pedestrian routes leading to the interior of the block. Internally, the building encloses a courtyard that offers a quiet retreat from a busy street. The garden was designed to be calm and intimate - a space to look onto rather than a focus for community activities or play. The light foliage of the birch trees helps create a sense of privacy, by interrupting views of other apartments while letting in diffuse light.



FIG A.30 Photo of Interior Courtyard



FIG A.31 Photos of Pedestrian access and Street frontage of Rue de Meaux

DESIGN DRAWINGS

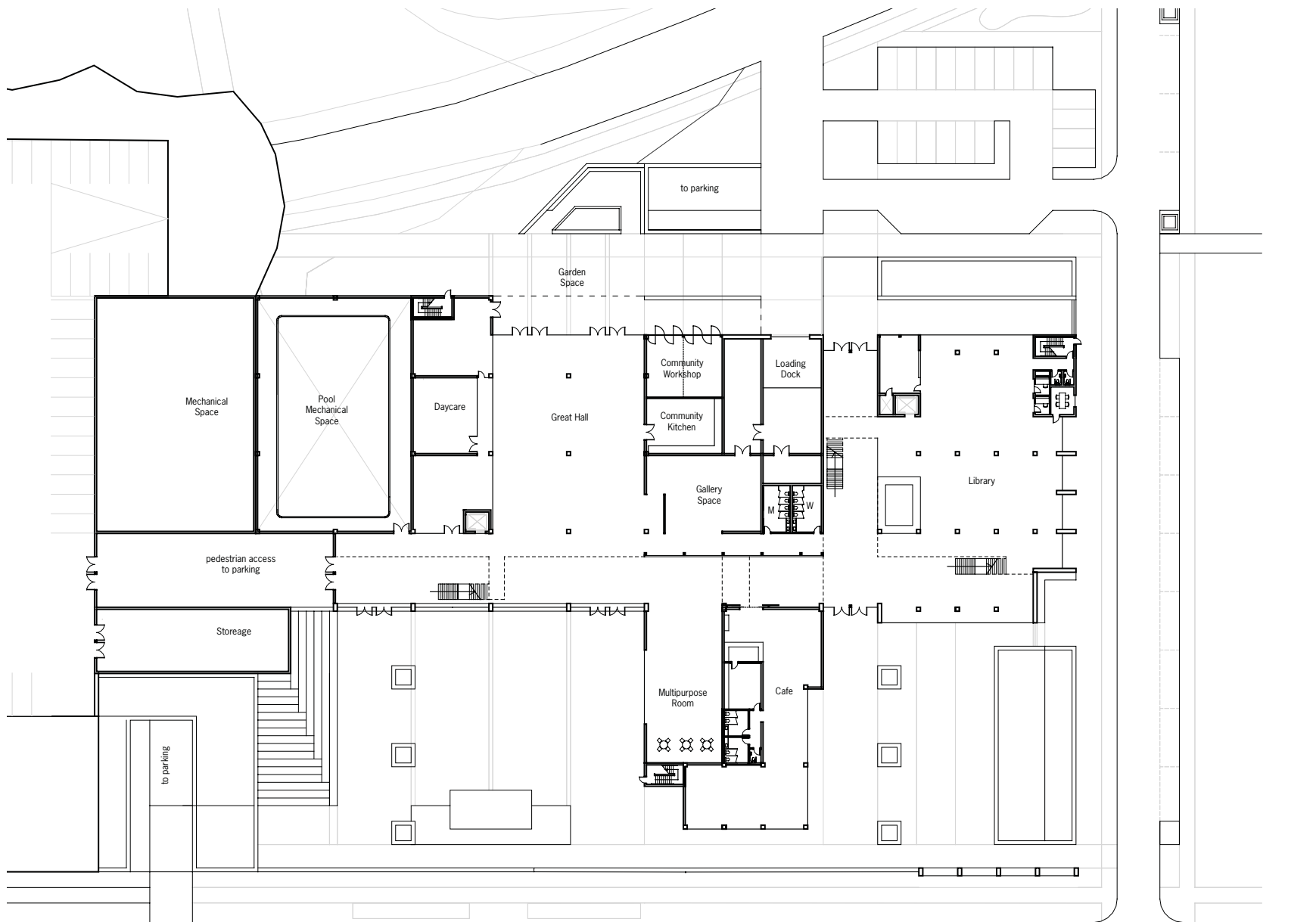


FIG A.32 Community Centre plan (Level 1)

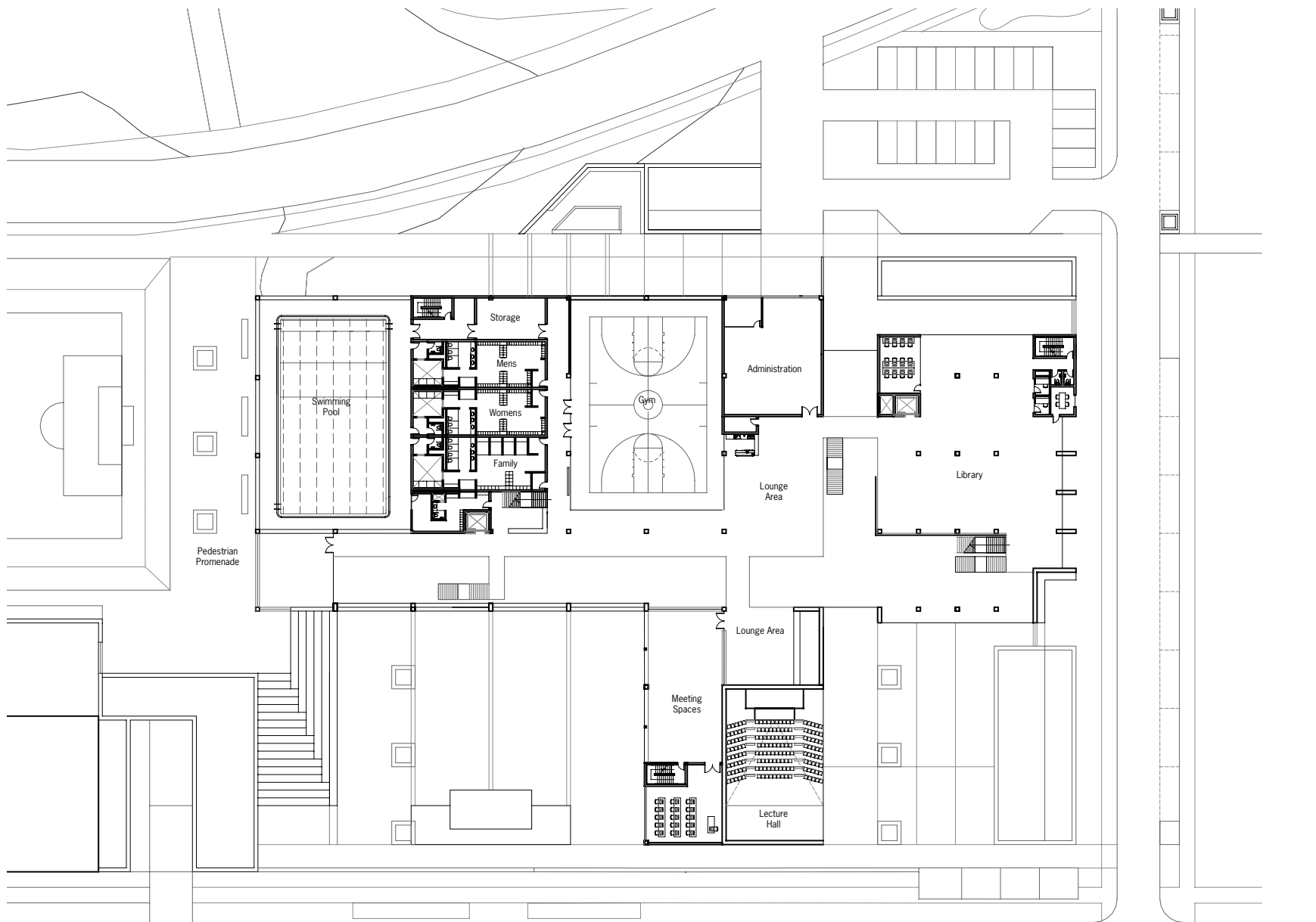


FIG A.33 Community Centre plan (Level 2)

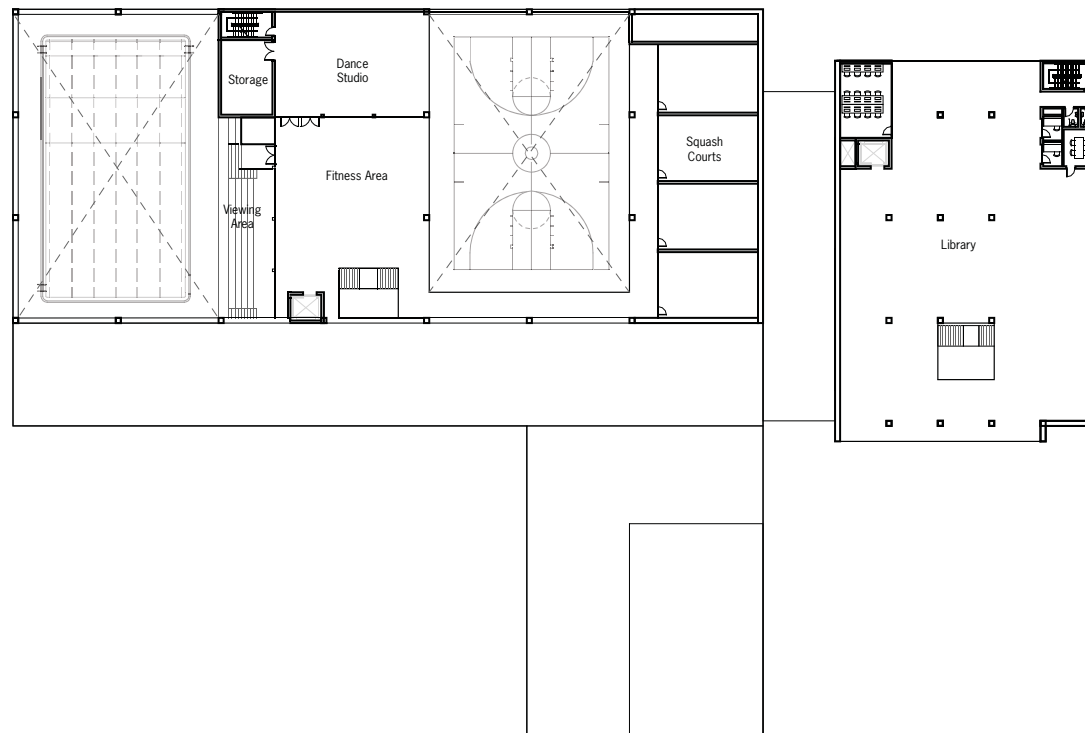
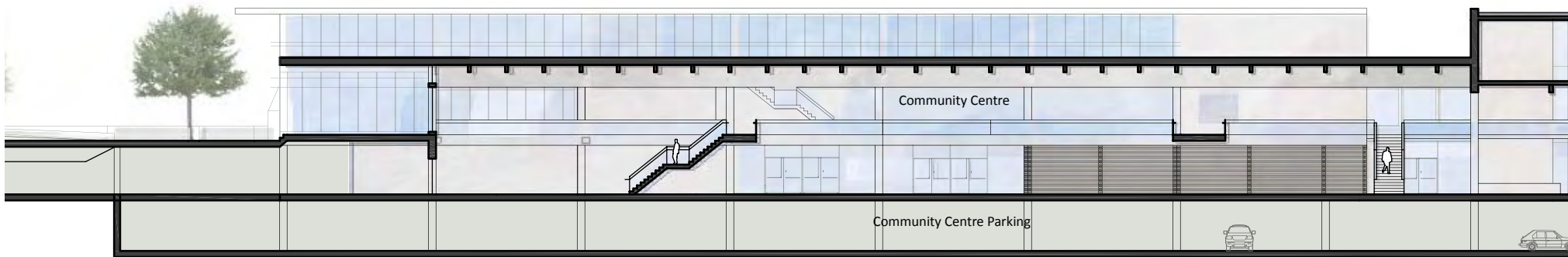
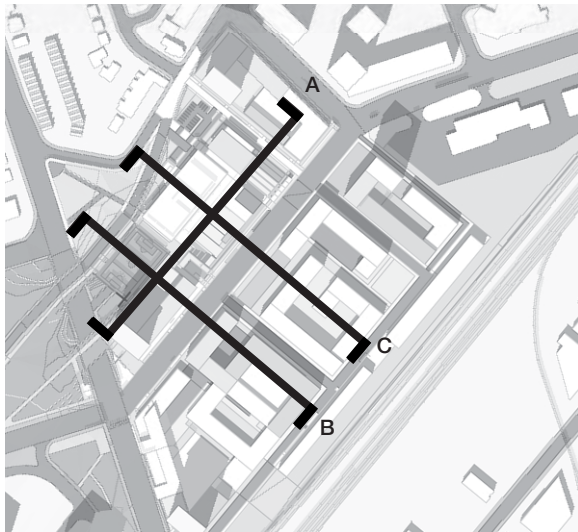


FIG A.34 Community Centre plan (Level 3)



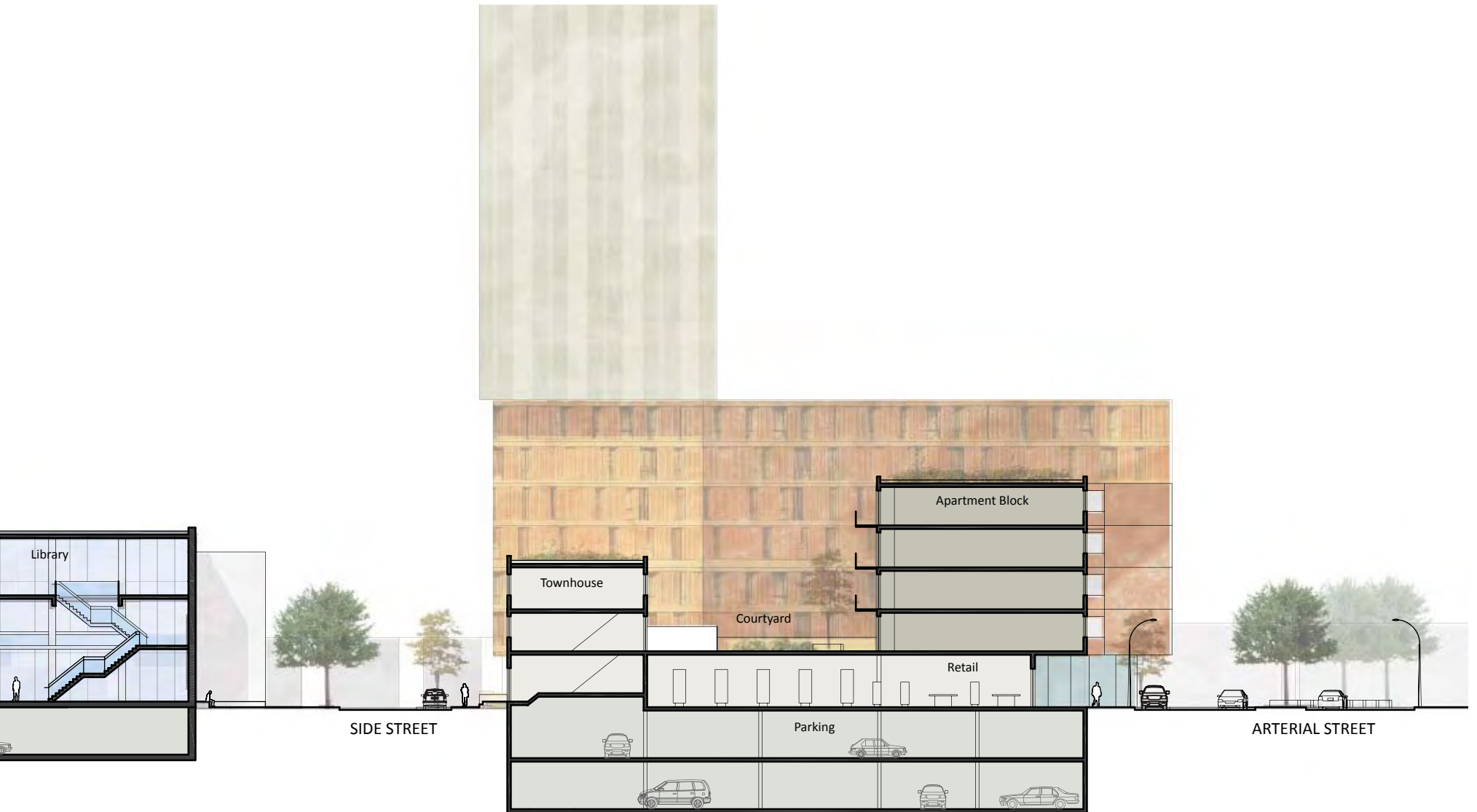


FIG A.35 Section A-A

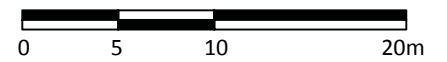






FIG A.36 Section B-B (Part 1)

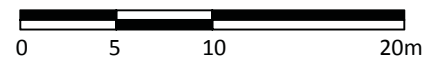






FIG A.37 Section B-B (Part 2)



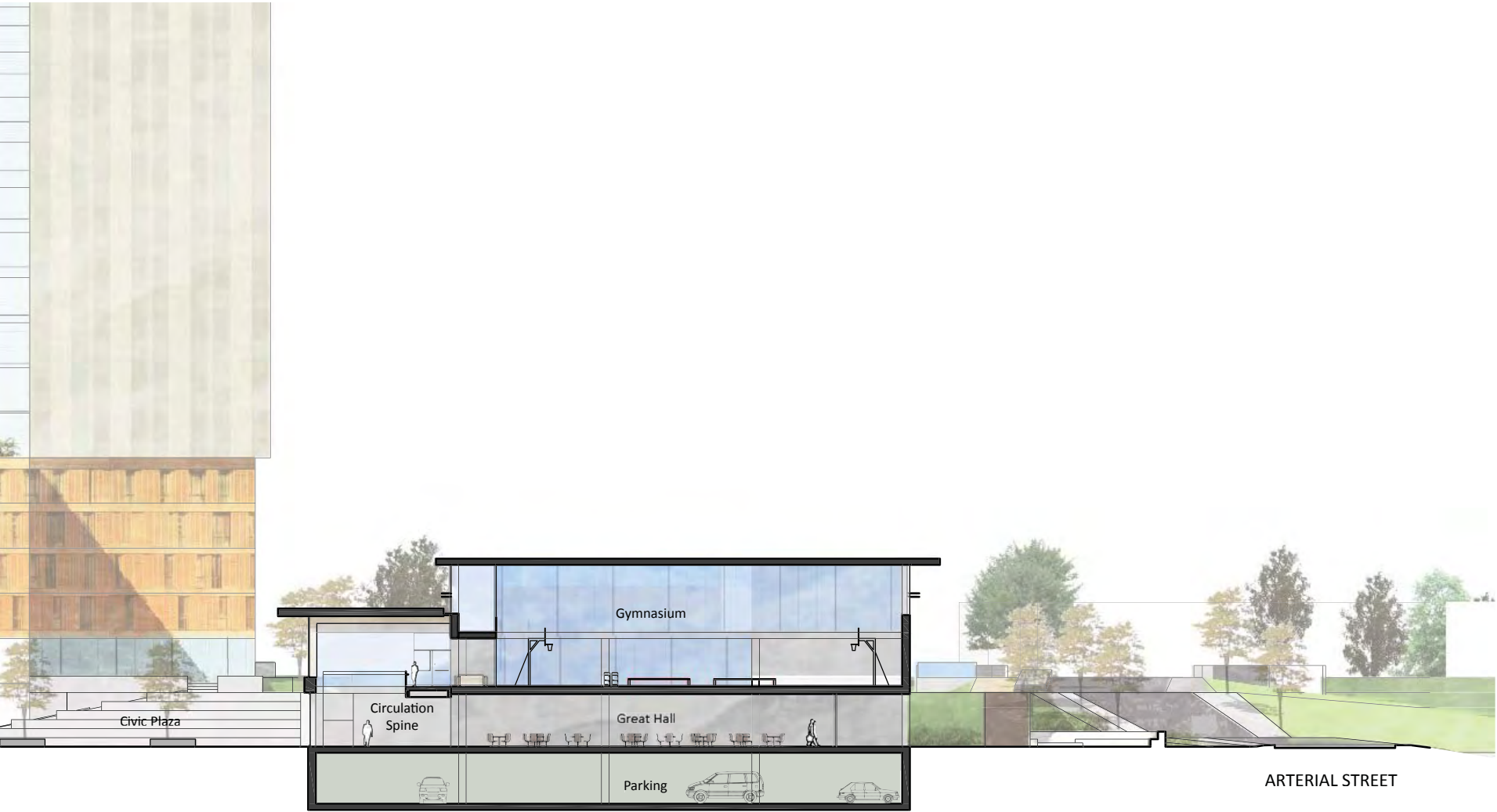


FIG A.38 Section C-C (Part 1)

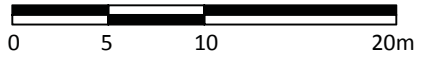
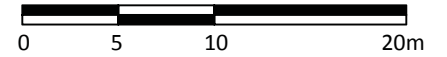






FIG A.39 Section C-C (Part 2)



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