

Voices of Toronto
An Intercultural Urban Library

by

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Author's Declaration

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

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

Abstract

In the last one hundred years Toronto's cultural identity has been completely transformed. Once a quiet and thoroughly conservative Anglo-Saxon town, Toronto has become a thriving and dynamic multicultural city. Today, a majority of the city's residents are visible minorities and almost half are foreign-born; the largest of any city in the world. Never before have so many 'different' people shared place. While successive waves of immigration have had a profound and measurable impact on Toronto's cultural and social character, the impact on its public spaces and institutions remains more illusive.

This thesis proposes an architectural design for an intercultural library facing the Christie Pits Park, the site of Toronto's worst race riot. The library seeks to give voice to the principles of diversity that have energized Toronto, while acknowledging the city's history of divisiveness and political indifference toward newcomers. Set adjacent to the Bickford Centre, an existing ESL school dedicated to serving new immigrants, the proposed intercultural library will be part of a larger language learning campus.

Three lines of inquiry structure this thesis. The first is an in-depth sociodemographic investigation of immigration to Toronto. This is followed by an analysis of the meaning and significance of critical intercultural gathering spaces in the city. Finally, the thesis, through the design of the library and re-imagination of the Bickford Centre site, seeks to explore the capacity of architecture to simultaneously unite and provide amenity for a multicultural city population.

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Rob, words cannot express how grateful I am to share my life with you. Without your unwavering support, love and above all patience, these past two years would not have been the same. Thank you.

For Rob

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Toronto,

*It is a city where almost everyone has come from elsewhere - a market, a caravansary
- bringing with them their different ways of dying and marrying, their kitchens and
songs. A city of forsaken worlds, language a kind of farewell.*

Anne Michaels, Fugitive Pieces

Chapter 1

Introduction

“We live in world of fluid borders and identities. The slow movements of migration and conquest that defined the shape of the earth for thousands of years have, in the past few decades, accelerated a hundredfold so that, as in a fast-forwarded film, nothing and no one seems to remain fixed in one place for long. Attached to a certain site through birth, blood-ties, learned affection or acquired need, we relinquish or are forced to relinquish these attachments and shift into new allegiances and devotions that in turn will shift again, sometimes backward, sometimes forward, away from an imagined centre. These movements cause anxiety, individually and socially. Individually, because our identity changes with the displacement. We leave our home forcibly, through choice, as exiles or refugees or as immigrants or travelers, threatened, persecuted in our homeland, or merely attracted by other landscapes and other civilizations. Socially, because if we stay, the place we call home changes. The arrival of new cultures, the ravages of war and of industrial upheavals, the shifts of political divisions and ethnic regroupings, the strategies of multinational companies and global trade, make it almost impossible to hold for long on to a shared definition of nationality.”

Alberto Manguel, The City of Words

‘Toronto the Good’ – 1933

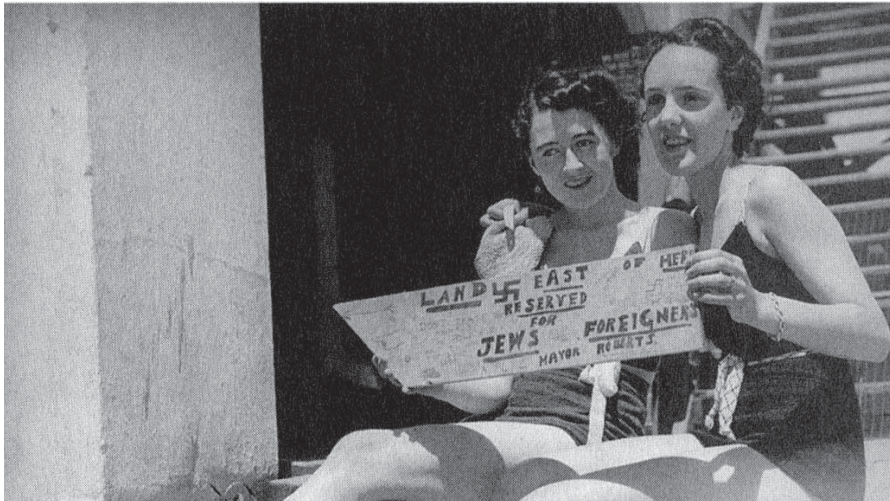
The summer of 1933 began quietly like any other summer in Toronto. The city was a parochial and puritanical place where the dominant Anglo-Saxon population felt a strong attachment to the British Empire.¹ Often referred to as ‘Toronto the Good,’² the city was known as a bastion of Victorian morality. While all Torontonians were not strict Protestant moralists, there were enough of them in positions of power to control the mood of the city. Conservative politics forced a constricted social life by means of by-laws and social pressure. Without street festivals, cafes or any other form of social expression Toronto public life centered on the Protestant church. For many citizens to be out on the streets, for reasons other than work or church going “placed their souls and social positions in jeopardy.”³ Socially and economically Toronto was led by wealthy men with long pedigrees such as MacBride, Weston, Simpson, Eaton, and Rogers. The Orange Order, a Protestant fraternal organization, dominated city politics. Its members included all high-ranking city officials such as mayor William James Stewart and Police Commissioner Dennis C. Draper.⁴

In addition to its ‘hyper-Britishness’, Toronto society was deeply ingrained with racist and openly anti-Semitic attitudes. People had a deep suspicion of foreigners and were hostile to any group that was perceived to be subversive to British morals. At the time, Jews were the largest minority group in the city.⁵ As the most visible minority group they were tolerated, if not officially, “treated according to the tenets of British fair play and justice.”⁶ However, ethnically, religiously, linguistically, culturally and economically they were outsiders.

The Depression had only increased the divide between Jewish ‘foreigners’ and the Anglo-Saxon majority. One third of the working-age males in the city were unemployed.⁷ If they were lucky to have employment, most often in the stifling warehouses of the garment district, Jews were accused of taking jobs ‘rightfully belonging’ to Anglo-Canadians. If unemployed, Jews were assumed to be part of radical Communist labour movements. Social and economic practices ensured that Jews could not buy or rent houses in certain areas of the city, open businesses beyond Kensington Market, attend university or obtain public office. In many areas of Toronto, hotels, restaurants and stores hung signs stating “No Jews or Dogs Allowed.”⁸ Moreover, the rise of Hitler in Germany, the swastika and accounts of the anti-Semitic acts undertaken by the Nazis filled Toronto newspapers. These articles only increased anti-Semitic fervor, fear mongering and hostility in so-called ‘Toronto the Good’.

In August of 1933, the weather had turned hot and humid. Residents with cottages traveled north for their lakeside holidays. Those who could not afford vacations made a weekend routine of taking the Queen Streetcar to the Beaches on the eastern edge of the city. Here thousands of Jewish Torontonians would picnic, swim and take respite from the city heat. Beach locals who were overwhelmingly Anglo-Saxon, were upset by the different customs, cuisine and language of the ‘foreigners’ in their midst. They complained to authorities about the Jews seeming disregard for ‘proper’ behaviour.⁹ They claimed Jews were “littering orange peels across the beach and were changing

into their bathing suits in the open air.”¹⁰ With little response from the authorities, Beach residents formed self-dubbed ‘swastika clubs’ to “control the recent influx of obnoxious visitors.”¹¹ Youth wearing swastika armbands patrolled the beaches on weekends and used force and intimidation to scare off Jewish beachgoers. The number of confrontations between Anglo and Jewish Torontonians became so frequent during the summer of 1933 that the local government officially, if not effectively, banned the ‘swastika clubs’ and guaranteed the right for Jews to enjoy the beaches.¹²



August 16, 1933 - Willowvale Park, now the Christie Pits

By the end of the summer, the tension erupted in violence at the Christie Pits. Two minor-league baseball teams: the Anglo St. Peter’s Club and the primarily Jewish Harbord Playground Team, met for a key match of the city semi-finals. Anti-Semitic incidents had occurred at the previous meeting of the two clubs, and that day supporters for both groups had gathered in strength. Throughout the game anti-Semitic cries and taunts from the crowd led to minor skirmishes among the spectators. Despite these interruptions, the match was completed. Suddenly, the local youth known as the Pit Gang, stood up on a small hill behind the field and unfurled a bed sheet painted with a black swastika, yelling “Hail Hitler” and “Kill the Jews” at the Jewish players. Jewish supporters rushed the thugs holding the sheet. Pit Gang supporters rushed the Jews. Residents around the park (who were overwhelmingly WASPs) spilled out of their homes and into the street armed with broom handles, chains, bricks, bottles and pipes.¹³ Rumour spread to the Kensington Market neighbourhood that Jews were being attacked in the Pits. Men grabbed whatever they could find to fight and ran north to join the swarm. The ensuing riot lasted six hours and involved 200-300 men and 1000 onlookers.¹⁴

Read It in the Morning
While It Is News

The Globe.

THE WEATHER
Probabilities: fresh to strong southeast to west winds;
partly cloudy and warm at first, with thunder-
storms in many districts before night.
Sea calm at 5.30 a.m. and ebb at 7.30 p.m. Standard Time

VOL. XC. NUMBER 26,097.

TORONTO, THURSDAY, AUGUST 17, 1933.

Established 1844

16 PAGES

Swastika Rued Battles in Toronto Injure 4 Fists, Boots, Piping Used in Bloor Street War



Toronto's four English newspapers and the Jewish *Der Yiddisher Zhurnal* reported on the 'battle' the following day, each outlining their respective position on the riot. The liberal *Toronto Daily Star* described how "heads were opened, eyes blackened and bodies thumped and battered."¹⁵ The *Globe* declared the "city in turmoil" laying the blame on both factions.¹⁶ The *Evening Telegram*, a deeply conservative newspaper, ran headlines claiming 'Communists' had incited the riot and that 'Jewish Toughs' began the trouble.¹⁷ While each newspaper held different groups responsible, they all failed to offer any editorial comment about the social conditions and circumstances leading to the violence. Reporters preferred to ignore the widespread racism and xenophobia present in Toronto and instead lay the blame on "wild-eyed and irresponsible young hoodlums, both Jewish and Gentile."¹⁸ Similarly, Mayor Stewart banned the public display of swastikas, believing that the anti-Semitic symbol was the root cause of the violence. He, like most Anglo Torontonians, hoped that the Christie Pits Riot would soon be forgotten by suppressing the social tensions and anti-Semitic propaganda that provoked it.¹⁹

However, the riot would not be forgotten. It would be repeated over and over in words. The story of the Christie Pits Riot became, for Toronto Jews, a symbol of their struggle for acceptance and equality. It marked the first time that the Jewish community asserted itself against Toronto society's widespread and socially accepted racism.

Cyril Levitt and William Shaffir, in the book *The Riot at Christie Pits* note "the trouble in the eastern beaches and the riot in the Christie Pits are as understandable in the Toronto of 1933 as they are inconceivable in Toronto today."²⁰ They suggest the Christie Pits Riot is an important part of Toronto's lore because it reminds us that the city was not always a welcoming place and that Toronto's current cultural and ethnic diversity was never intended or aspired to. The riot marks a turning point in the city's social and civic evolution. After the Christie Pits Riot, Toronto could no longer deny the underlying tension between its Anglo-Saxon majority and a small but growing 'foreign' population. Toronto would have to become a different city. If not racially and culturally harmonious, than a city that let differences quietly exist within its boundaries. Toronto would strike a tenuous balance between 'Us' and 'Them' and become indifferent to its growing difference. Robert Fulford, suggests that the relative calmness of the event reflected Toronto's emerging multicultural spirit,

In a way, it was an expression of the multiculturalism that would be, in the future... It could have been really terrible. And the fact that it wasn't terrible — the fact that people ask how many people died—well, most of those people died in old age homes a lot later. It suggests that there was an instinct towards peace. And so, even though it was a riot, perhaps we can see it as a positive event on the road to a multicultural city.²¹



1. 2 Opposite Page: The only photographic documentation of the Christie Pits riot. The photo was not published until 2008 because it was deemed too blurry for newspaper standards at the time.

1. 3 The *Globe* headlines, August 17, 1933.

The World in a City

Today, Toronto is a vibrant, and uniquely cosmopolitan city whose identity is built upon its ability to embrace and celebrate multiple and at times contending cultures. Today, people of British descent constitute a small proportion of the population.²² As the city reaches a majority/minority population, difference is the norm rather than the exception. Toronto is now home to almost half of all new immigrants to Canada, welcoming 100,000 new residents each year from approximately 100 different countries.²³ Forty percent of the population is foreign-born, the largest proportion of any city in the world.²⁴ Toronto is distinguished from other ‘multicultural’ cities by the racial, ethnic and cultural diversity of its population.²⁵

Furthermore, a unique mix of events and celebrations introduced by successive waves of immigrants have brought animation and dynamism to ‘Toronto the Good’s moribund public spaces, opening up the city’s streets and public squares to social events that unite different groups. In his work on Canadian architecture and literature, D.M.R Bentley describes the new Toronto; “there is a duality in a city whose outwardly cold monocultural form contains the promises of a chaotic, and vibrant multicultural.”²⁶ Similarly, John Macfarlane describes Toronto’s contemporary inclusive character, “Toronto used to be a private city. There was nothing happening on the street, so we built the kind of buildings that allow you to huddle. Now, thanks to immigration, we’ve outgrown that. There’s more street life now and we want to let that life in and we want the people on the street to know what’s inside.”²⁷ Celebrations such as Gay Pride, Caribbana and Taste of the Danforth dominate a summer season full of multicultural festivals. These events have broken apart the monopoly held by the Anglo-Saxon population to define the city’s cultural and social aspirations.

The epithet ‘Toronto the Good’ has been replaced by multiple names that underscore the city’s willingness to embrace cultural difference as its defining characteristic: “Toronto - Picture It Your Way”, “Diversity Our Strength” and “The World in a City”. These names suggest that Toronto cannot be defined as a single idea. Rather the city is a collection: of people, nations, and neighbourhoods brought together by the contemporary forces of globalization and migration.

Never before, have so many ‘different’ people shared place.

Design Intentions

Toronto has been called ‘an accidental city’, in the sense that most of its iconic and meaningful places have emerged from the unintended affects of urban planning, economics, and demographics.²⁸ Robert Fulford writes “a city fulfills itself not by master plans but through an attentiveness to the processes that have created it and an awareness of its possibilities. It achieves a heightened identity by giving form to memory and providing space for new life.”²⁹ Similarly, Toronto author and geographer Amy Lavender Harris suggests that the city we live in is not merely a physical construction of ‘brick and mortar’ but also a product of our imaginations and memories. She writes, “Our cities unfold not only in the building, but in the telling of them.”³⁰ This thesis intends to recognize and give a face to the cultural, social and physical transformation Toronto has experienced as a result of concentrated immigration and ethnic diversity, with the design of an intercultural library and language learning campus on the site of the Christie Pits Riot.

Christie Pits is now home to the Bickford Centre for Literacy and Basic Skills Training - the Toronto District School Board’s primary English as a Second Language teaching facility. The Bickford Centre is one of the many public and private institutions that have emerged to meet the needs of newcomer groups as they acquire the educative, social and economic skills necessary for full participation in Toronto society. Here newcomers are welcomed and actively integrated into the civic population. The Bickford Centre School mandate contrasted against the history of the Christie Pits riot illustrates the shift in Toronto’s approach to difference: from violence and fear; to accommodation, respect and welcome.

The proposed design for the ‘Intercultural Language Centre’ recognizes the diverse and dynamic cultural contributions to the city, while simultaneously acknowledging a history marked by xenophobia and fear. Building upon the existing school, the ‘Intercultural Language Centre’ design adds a new multilingual library, media centre and a connecting landscape component onto the existing Bickford Centre site. These elements leverage the importance of new citizens who bring one hundred sixteen distinct languages to Toronto³¹ and their contribution to the city’s identity. The design envisions the site as a campus of educative, cultural and community spaces that serve as a hub and home for all Toronto residents. Through its architectural form the Language Centre suggests how the site can be re-imagined and re-purposed as a meeting place for intercultural debate and dialogue; a place where the stories of Toronto’s multiple and hybridized cultures can be held, created and shared.

Thesis Methodology and Scope of Work

The thesis will develop the case for the design of the 'Intercultural Language Centre' through the following lines of inquiry:

Chapter Two – 'Translating Toronto' – gives an historical overview of immigration to the city, tracing Toronto's evolution from an 'indifferent' colonial town to a 'different' global city. The chapter describes how Toronto reluctantly emerged in the late twentieth century as one of the most culturally varied and multi-ethnic locations in the world and a primary destination for immigrants. It also evaluates the various ways newcomer population established collective cultural expression in the city, contributing to the expansion of the Toronto's public realm and multicultural identity.

Chapter Three – 'Intercultural Spaces' – explores how contemporary architects are designing gathering spaces that encourage cross-cultural interaction, and represent and respond to the multiple needs of different cultural groups. Social scientists and urban design professionals describe these places as 'intercultural spaces'. They suggest sites that meet universal needs regardless of race, gender, culture or ethnicity; such as markets, community centres, libraries and schools are the primary locations of cross-cultural contact. Case studies exploring 'intercultural spaces' in Toronto and abroad offer design strategies.

Additionally, the library as an intercultural space is evaluated as a precedent for the design of the language centre at the Bickford Centre site - The programmatic, social and symbolic value of the public library in the multicultural city is discussed and evaluated.

Chapter Four – 'The Intercultural Language Centre' – incorporates the knowledge developed in the preceding chapters to inform the design strategy for the Toronto Language Centre. The chapter will describe how the addition of a multilingual library and media centre opens the Bickford Centre site to new uses and users, increasing its potential to foster debate, dialogue and cultural production between different groups. The chapter opens with a description of the physical and programmatic conditions within which the Bickford Centre currently operates. It describes the current challenges facing the site and evaluates its potential as an intercultural gathering space.

Notes

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- 3 Cyril Levitt and William Shaffir, *The Riot at Christie Pits* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1987), 29.
- 4 Ibid.
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- 6 Ibid, 23.
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- 9 Ibid, 79.
- 10 Brianna Goldberg, “The Christie Pits Riot and the Birth of Multicultural Toronto,” *The National Post.com*, August 15, 2008, <http://network.nationalpost.com/np/blogs/toronto/archive/2008/08/15/the-christie-pits-riot-and-the-birth-of-multicultural-toronto.aspx> (accessed January 16, 09).
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- 12 Brianna Goldberg, “The Christie Pits Riot and the Birth of Multicultural Toronto,” *The National Post.com*, August 15, 2008, <http://network.nationalpost.com/np/blogs/toronto/archive/2008/08/15/the-christie-pits-riot-and-the-birth-of-multicultural-toronto.aspx> (accessed January 16, 09).
- 13 Brianna Goldberg, “The Christie Pits Riot and the Birth of Multicultural Toronto,” *The National Post.com*, August 15, 2008, <http://network.nationalpost.com/np/blogs/toronto/archive/2008/08/15/the-christie-pits-riot-and-the-birth-of-multicultural-toronto.aspx> (accessed January 16, 09).
- 14 Cyril Levitt and William Shaffir, *The Riot at Christie Pits* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1987).
- 15 *The Toronto Daily Star*, “Six Hours of Rioting Follow Hitler Shout/Scores Hurt, Two Held,” August 17, 1933: 1.
- 16 *The Globe*, “Swastika Feud Battles in Toronto Injure 4,” August 17, 1933: 1.
- 17 *Evening Telegram*, “Report Gunmen Here to Slay Swazis,” August 17, 1933: 1.
- 18 *The Toronto Daily Star*, “Six Hours of Rioting Follow Hitler Shout/Scores Hurt, Two Held,” August 17, 1933: 1.
- 19 Cyril Levitt and William Shaffir, *The Riot at Christie Pits* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1987).
- 20 Cyril Levitt and William Shaffir, *The Riot at Christie Pits* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1987), 265.
- 21 Brianna Goldberg, “The Christie Pits Riot and the Birth of Multicultural Toronto,” *The National Post.com*, August 15, 2008, <http://network.nationalpost.com/np/blogs/toronto/archive/2008/08/15/the-christie-pits-riot-and-the-birth-of-multicultural-toronto.aspx> (accessed January 16, 09).

- 22 *City of Toronto, City of Toronto: Toronto's racial diversity, April 14, 2009, http://www.toronto.ca/toronto_facts/diversity.htm (accessed November 27, 2009). City of Toronto, City of Toronto: Toronto's racial diversity, April 14, 2009, http://www.toronto.ca/toronto_facts/diversity.htm (accessed November 27, 2009).*
- 23 Ibid.
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- 28 Robert Fulford, *Accidental City The Transformation of Toronto* (Toronto, Ontario: Macfarlane Walter & Ross, 1995).
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Chapter 2

Translating Toronto - From Hogtown to World in a City

“Consider the din of new beginnings, this vagrant fugitive city”

Dionne Brand, Thirsty

*“just me and the city,
that has never happened before, and happened
though not ever like this, the garbage
of pizza boxes, dead couches,
the strip mall of ambitious immigrants
under carcasses of cars, oil-soaked
clothing, hulks of rusted trucks, scraggly
gardens of beans, insballahs under the breath,
querido, blood fire, striving stillettoed rudbeckia*

*breathing, you can breath if you find air,
this roiling, this weight of bodies,
as if we need each other to breath, to bring
it into sense, and well, in that we are merciless”*

Dionne Brand, Thirsty VIII

From “Hogtown” to “The World in a City”

Toronto never intended to be a multicultural city. In fact, for most of its history immigration has been a controversial area of public debate. To understand how Toronto became a ‘different’ city, we must understand how immigration policies have affected the demographic as well as cultural and physical composition of the city.

This chapter will describe how immigration policies reflected Canada’s economic needs and echoed the social and political attitudes of the dominant population – from extreme xenophobia, to tolerance, and ultimately positive reception of immigrants. It will also highlight the political and social barriers new immigrants encountered when settling in Toronto and illustrate how they established collective cultural expression in an indifferent and unwelcoming urban environment. Different immigrant communities enlivened Toronto’s public spaces by claiming parts of the city as their own through the introduction of new informal architectures, cultural traditions and celebrations, ultimately opening the city to new cultural possibilities.



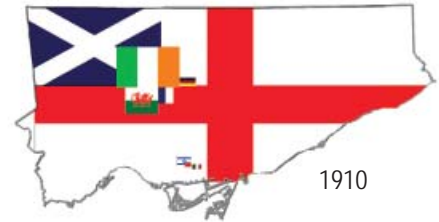
2.1 Come to Stay, printed in 1880 in the Canadian Illustrated News advertises immigration to the Dominion of Canada. (Canadian Archives)

Early Settlement

It was not until the late 1890's that the first substantial flow of non-British immigrants arrived in Canada. The Canadian government had set upon its first concentrated immigration effort to meet the increasing demand for farm labour in the western provinces.¹ Most new immigrants settled in rural regions, taking advantage of the vast amounts of agricultural land available in the Prairie Provinces. Canadian cities, and Toronto in particular, had relatively few new immigrants. The immigration policies at the time systematically sought to stream non-British and non-American immigrants away from cities, fearing that high concentrations of non-English speaking foreigners would provoke anger from the Anglo-Saxon majority. The government preferred if newcomers remained in the relative isolation of rural Canada, employed in labour intensive industries such as railway construction, mining and lumbering.²

Unlike larger industrial and manufacturing cities in the northern US, Toronto in the late 19th century was a regional administrative and commercial hub. The city was colloquially referred to as 'Hogtown' for its large pork processing industry. This created a starkly different urban identity than other North American cities such as New York or Chicago, whose economy depended on immigrant factory workers. They were "places where unskilled and semi-skilled European immigrants stoked the furnaces of American growth."³ In comparison, Toronto saw itself as a provincial outpost.

However, by the first decade of the twentieth century the impact of immigration in Canada had quickly shifted from rural settlements to the city. As Toronto rapidly industrialized, new immigrants from a variety of European nations were sought to fill labour shortages in newly opened textile mills or to work as unskilled labour in the construction of bridges, streetcar tracks, housing and other public works projects. The city grew from 208,000 people in 1901 to 522,000 by 1921, becoming the second largest city in Canada after Montreal. Yet Toronto would remain a largely Anglo-Saxon city, such that in 1911 the population was still 87% British.⁴





- 2.3 Backyards and courtyards off of Terauley Street, now Bay Street, c. 1914
- 2.4 'Slum Children' in Price's Lane, St. John's Ward, c. 1914
- 2.5 An Italian family living in St. John's Ward, c. 1914
- 2.6 A butcher sign advertising to the Wards' Jewish community. The sign, written in Yiddish, identifies the butcher as a "Shechat", or ritual slaughterer. c. 1910

Urban Transformation - St. John's Ward

St. John's Ward was Toronto's first ethnic neighbourhood. The small percentage of minorities living in Toronto at the time, who were mostly Jewish and Italian, lived in highly concentrated conditions. 'The Ward', as it was commonly known, consisted of crowded streets and ramshackle cottages on the periphery of the city; in the area bounded by College Street, Yonge Street, University Avenue and Queen Street. The neighbourhood stood in stark contrast to the homogeneous Anglo-Saxon areas beyond.

Many longtime Torontonians hoped 'The Ward' would be a stopover for foreigners destined for rural Canada. If they decided to stay in Toronto, longtime residents assumed these 'foreigners' would remain in the social and economic shadow of 'The Ward'.⁵ In addition to extreme poverty, 'The Ward' was the destination for 'respectable' British citizens to find vice and crime. Bootlegger bars, gambling dens and brothels were common sights in the neighbourhood. Inside 'The Ward' the Anglo-Saxon majority could confine the economic, social and ethnic 'Other'.

Extreme poverty forced many residents to subdivide cottage housing, with as many as six families sharing one home. Other families built temporary houses, outdoor kitchens and lean-tos in back alleys. These ad-hoc structures created a network of courtyards and pedestrian paths within the existing street grid. The transformation shocked longtime residents, who called upon the city to rid itself of the crowded and 'unhygienic slum'.⁶ Nevertheless, the neighbourhood became an important "staging ground for nascent immigrant communities to establish themselves before escaping to colonize other parts of the booming city."⁷

The Depression and WWII

By the early 1920's anti-'foreigner' sentiment among the public prompted outcry that immigrants were "cramming urban slums and clinging to old-world ways."⁸ It was not uncommon for immigrants speaking their mother tongue in the street or on public transit to be told to "Speak white!"⁹ Anglo-Saxon residents were also distressed that Jewish and Italian groups were creating community or religion based institutions. 'Foreigners' were also competing with skilled native-born artisans and small business owners, demanding access to professions and the political arena. The Canadian government revised immigration laws to restrict entry along racial and ethnic lines, as public demands for immigration cuts began to outweigh the economic benefit.¹⁰

Following the economic collapse in 1929, mass unemployment in urban centres reduced the demand for labour. Immigration was no longer an economic necessity, but an economic liability.¹¹ As a result, Canada accepted only a handful of British immigrants and adopted a 'none is too many'¹² policy regarding newcomers from other countries. The policy was largely intended to prevent Jewish refugees from seeking asylum in Canada in the years leading up to the Second World War. Many Canadians still maintained strong anti-Semitic attitudes. As a result, Toronto would remain socially and demographically unchanged over the next decade.

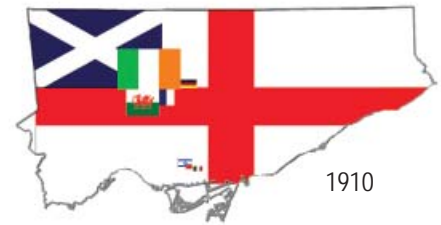


2.7 'New Canadians on Kensington Avenue', 1920.

Urban Transformation: Kensington Market

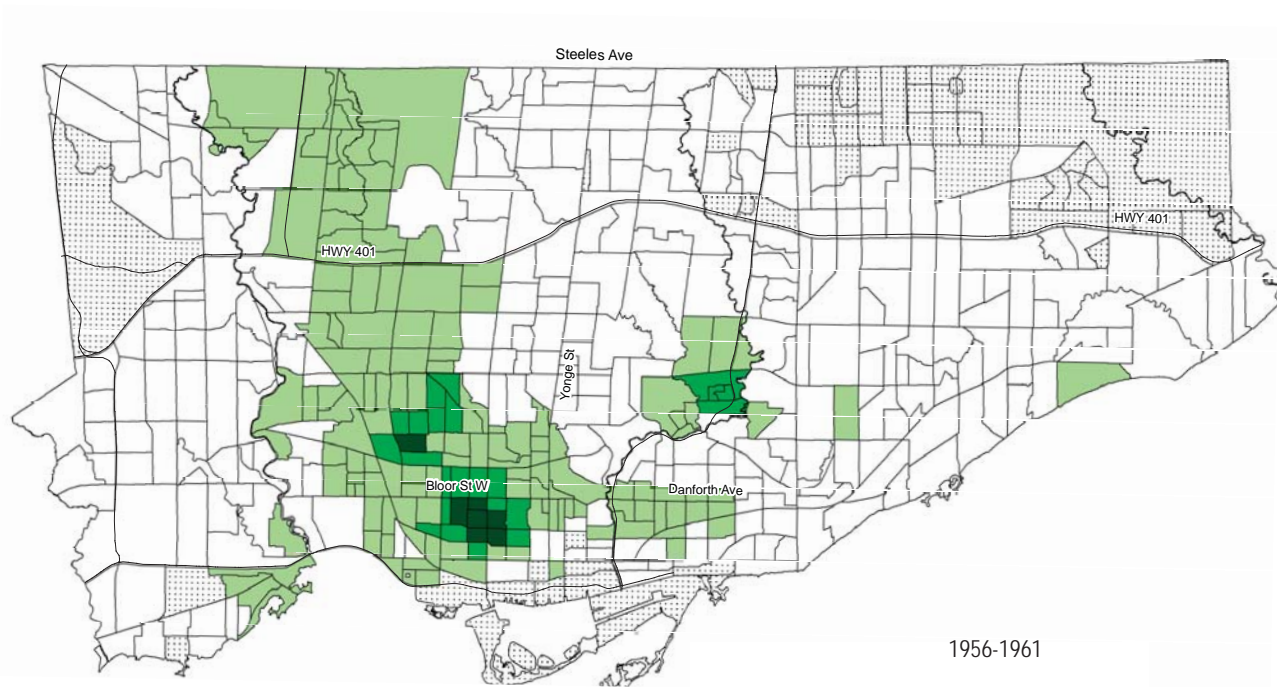
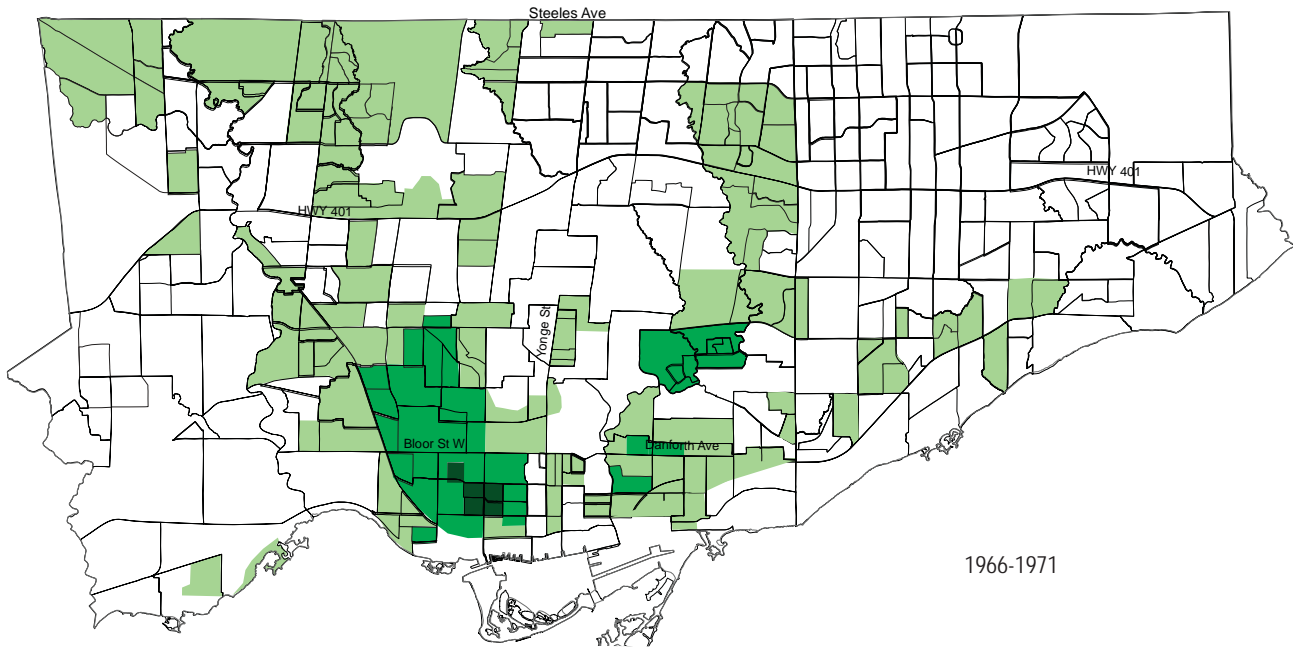
Although few newcomers arrived during the Depression and Second World War, those who had immigrated earlier established themselves in distinct pockets of the city. The Jewish community had moved from St. John's Ward to Kensington Market: a residential area characterized by narrow row houses and small-scale worker housing. Approximately 60,000 Jews lived in and around Kensington Market during the 1920s and 1930s. Here they established an institutionally complete community with synagogues, schools, and social clubs.

The neighbourhood also became Toronto's first open-air market.¹³ Single-family homes were divided into live/work buildings. The front served as commercial space and the rear and upper floors as apartments for multiple families. Merchants added storefronts to the residential facades, expanding the available commercial space into areas originally reserved for lawns and porches. Stalls selling imported goods from Western and Eastern Europe appropriated the narrow sidewalks or spilled onto the street. These layered permeable accretions expanded and redefined the threshold between indoor and outdoor, residential and commercial areas, blurring the line between what were once rigorously defined public and private relationships. The Anglo-Saxon majority, used to shopping in large covered halls such as St. Lawrence Market, quickly characterized the open-air typology as 'The Jewish Market,' distinguishing it from the conventional areas of the city and branding it as 'Other'.



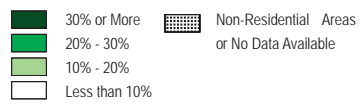
2. 8 Population by National Affiliation.

2. 9 Jewish merchants selling produce and textiles in Kensington, 1924.



2.10 Immigrants who arrived between 1966-1971 as a percentage of the 1971 population

2.11 Immigrants who arrived between 1956-1961 as a percentage of the 1961 population



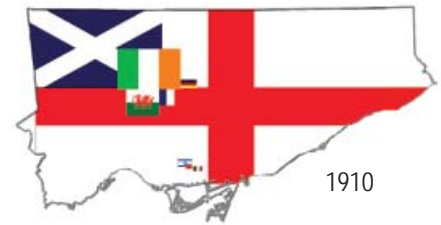
The Post-War Immigration Wave: The World Invades Toronto

Following the Second World War, a boom in the commercial and manufacturing industries and the resettlement of displaced persons from war-torn Europe precipitated a massive wave of immigration to Toronto. Between 1947 and 1957, the immigration rate increased from 12,000 to 282,000 people annually.¹⁴ As a result Toronto's population transformed from primarily British (73 percent) and Canadian-born (69 percent) to include a large cross section of European ethnicities.¹⁵ New immigrants steadily altered Toronto's long-standing Anglo-Saxon hegemony and brought with them a richness of cultural forms and a diversity of social expression that Toronto had never seen before.

Canada's immigration policy remained highly restrictive immediately after the war, despite indications that the economy needed more workers. The government initially feared that the economic boom would end suddenly and the economy would revert to depression-era job shortages. However, the opposite occurred: demand from post-war reconstruction increased the production of commercial goods and led to a rising demand for labour, particularly in industrial cities like Toronto. Recognizing the economic necessity for immigration, the Canadian government adopted new immigration policies that increased immigrant flow and allowed entry to 'displaced persons': people who had fled their homelands during the war or refused repatriation to Soviet dominated countries.¹⁶ These policies were more labour importation scheme than humanitarian effort and "placed new immigrants in low-wage and low status jobs as a price for entry into Canada."¹⁷

As the economic boom continued into the 1950's, the Canadian government further liberalized immigration laws and lifted restrictions against Jewish and Slavic immigrants who were previously unwelcome. While the new legislation dramatically expanded the number of people who had access to Canada, it still allowed the Minister of Immigration discretionary powers. These included the ability to reject individuals or groups based on "nationality, geographic origin, 'peculiarity of custom', unsuitability to the climate, or the inability to become assimilated."¹⁸ Additionally, visible minorities and people from developing world continued to be denied entry into Canada.

During the post war period, the federal government introduced singular Canadian Citizenship. Before 1947, all people living in Canada were legally designated as British subjects – not Canadians. The new legislation rejected the notion of a layered citizenship, which was common in many European countries. Instead, citizenship rights were granted to all residents of Canada, irrespective of race, ethnicity, religion or place of birth. The government hoped that Canadian Citizenship, while providing universal rights, would also become a focal point for national unity that all, Canadian-born and immigrant, could share.¹⁹ For recent and established immigrant groups, the legislation was a significant step toward equality and set the stage for further human rights based initiatives such as equal access to public institutions and equality before the law. Citizenship rights also marked the beginning of a new spirit in urban Canadian thinking: immigrants were no longer 'foreigners' to be tolerated in the city streets, rather they were 'New Canadians' who were residents of the city by legal right.²⁰



2. 12 Population by National Affiliation.

Urban Transformation: A New Social Domain

As waves of Southern and Eastern European immigrants and ‘displaced persons’ arrived in Toronto, each nationality appropriated distinct areas of the city. These ethnic neighbourhoods were very much separate from the Anglo-Saxon majority and were primarily monocultural. Though they were places held apart from the Anglo majority, ethnic neighbourhoods were also places where newcomers were able to express their collective identities and enact rituals and traditions without fear of discrimination. For Anglo residents, ethnic neighbourhoods offered glimpses of ‘foreign’ cultures inhabiting Toronto streets and were places where the knowledge of cultural differences transferred.



While each group chose a different part of the city to settle, all appropriated existing residential areas. Italians, who were the largest immigrant group, settled in the run-down residential areas close to College Street. Portuguese immigrants adopted Kensington Market from the Jewish community, who had moved north to the newly built suburbs. Similarly, Greek immigrants founded a distinct community along Danforth Avenue, across the Don Valley and away from the city centre.



As thousands of European newcomers were struggling to establish themselves and find a sense of belonging in Toronto, Toronto was “struggling to find itself as a city.”²¹ Author Robert Fulford describes pre-1960’s Toronto as a city that denied it had any identity worth exhibiting: “too British to be American, too American to be British, and too cosmopolitan to be properly Canadian.” Longtime Torontonians still clung to their reserved British manners and immigrants and visitors found this reticence oppressive and isolating. Author Jan Morris, writing in the 1950’s, called Toronto “the most undemonstrative city I know, and the least inquisitive, a place of club and cliques, armour plated against the individual.”²²



Despite the oppressive social environment, Toronto’s new immigrants began to introduce their own cultural traditions and social practices to the city. The Italian community introduced cafe culture to Toronto streets, opening restaurants and cafes serving ‘foreign’ foods such as espresso and cappuccino. New outdoor patios were created along sidewalks, in blatant violation of laws prohibiting eating outdoors. To longtime Anglo-Saxon residents, who still ate the majority of their meals at home, the change was startlingly exotic. Similarly, Southern and Eastern Europeans invigorated the city’s Roman Catholic and Orthodox communities, raising the percentage of Catholics in Toronto from 20 percent in 1951 to 36 percent by 1971.²³ The hegemony of Protestant traditions and reserved social norms was slowly replaced with lively street festivals and parades, closely associated with Roman Catholic and Orthodox religious holidays.

- 2. 13 Market on Danforth Avenue, 1958
- 2. 14 Polish Constitution Day Parade, 1960.
- 2. 15 Site for a new synagogue, 1958.

Author Pico Iyer suggests this social revolution occurred as a result of Toronto's indistinctness,

Toronto, with a self-consciousness and earnestness less common in more settled places, had decided to . . . make itself something half-imagined. Paris and London and New York were all highly international too, of course, but all of them, in their different ways, were too old, too amorphous, or too preoccupied with other matters to adjust very much to their latest immigrants; Toronto, by contrast, with less to lose and a less sharply defined sense of self, had embarked upon a multicultural experiment with itself as a guinea pig.²⁴

Harold Troper, in the book *The World in a City*, describes how in less than one generation Toronto's raison d'être shifted from the "defense of Anglo-Conformity" to the appreciation of, at least, a European mosaic. Longtime Torontonians were gradually becoming comfortable with the new foods, polyphony of languages, festivals and neighbourhoods that immigrants had brought in their wake. Moreover, by the late 1960's public expressions of racism had shifted from being socially acceptable to being anti-social and legally punishable. Troper suggests these social transformations occurred because the "past was cut loose" and "made dysfunctional" by the end of colonialism and the rise of a new and pluralist urban population comprised of immigrant citizens and their children.²⁵



2. 16 College Street in Little Italy, 1970



2. 17 Hungarian refugees arriving in Toronto, 1957.

Toronto's First Refugees

Following the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, Canada accepted its first concentrated group of refugee status immigrants. Like the 'displaced persons' who had emigrated following the Second World War, Hungarian refugees were brought to Canada to boost the country's economy. The experiences of Toronto's Hungarian refugees would become a precedent for future resettlement practices in Toronto.²⁶ The resettlement program was also the first time Toronto leadership had to actively address the issue of integrating and welcoming newcomers to the city.

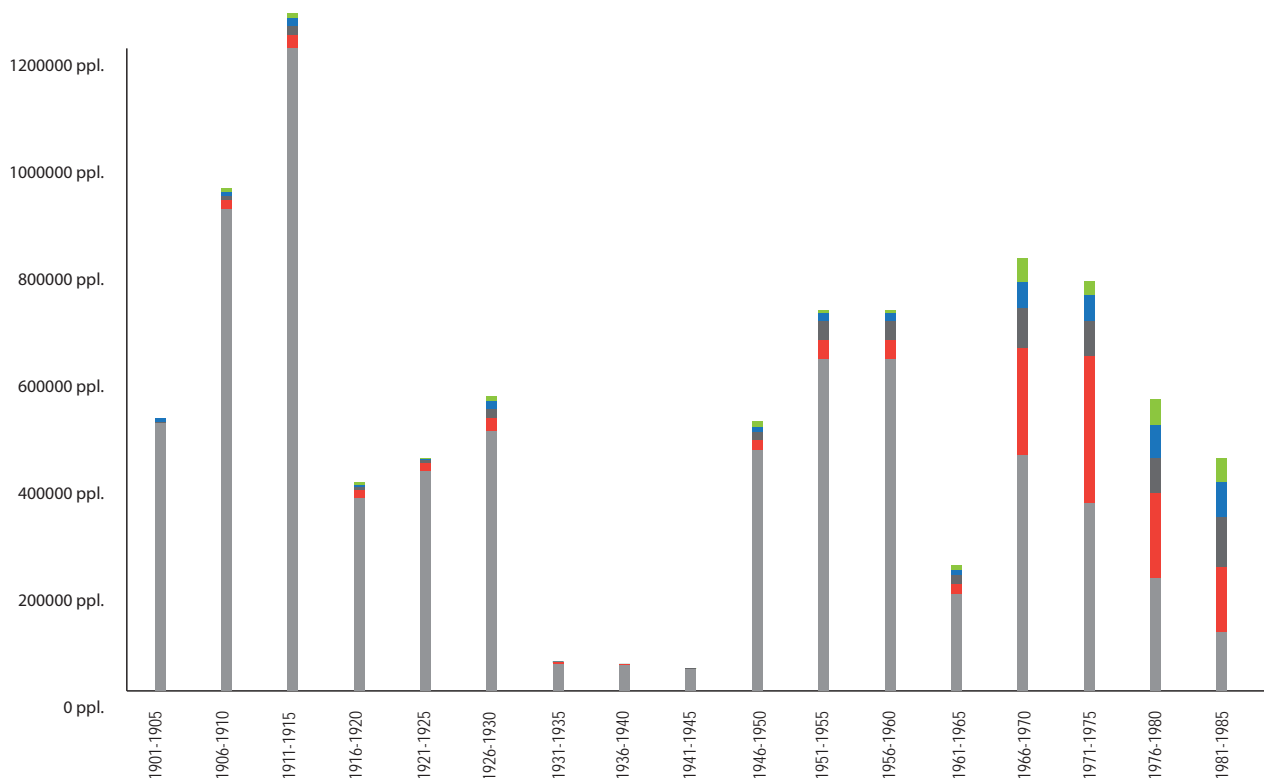
Approximately 37,000 people arrived in Canada over six months, most settling in Toronto. Although the Canadian government had accepted numerous 'displaced persons' after the war, it regarded the Hungarian refugee resettlement as a one-time exception, rather than the initial step in a larger refugee program. Faced with an unprecedented influx of non-English speaking immigrants, the city quickly realized that it must offer language training and settlement services if it wished to capitalize on the skills of the newcomers. However the Anglo-Saxon majority felt little responsibility toward the Hungarian refugees, believing that immigrants must 'help their own.'²⁷ As a result, Toronto's municipal government began to subsidize existing settlement programs operated by established immigrant groups. Private organizations such as the Italian Immigrant Aid Society and the Centro Organizzativo Scuole Tecniche Italiane (COSTI) began to serve all newcomers. Workers would assist with housing, employment and English language training, as well as help recent immigrants obtain the professional qualifications required to practice their trades in Canada. This type of public/private partnership would become the model for resettlement services in the following decades.

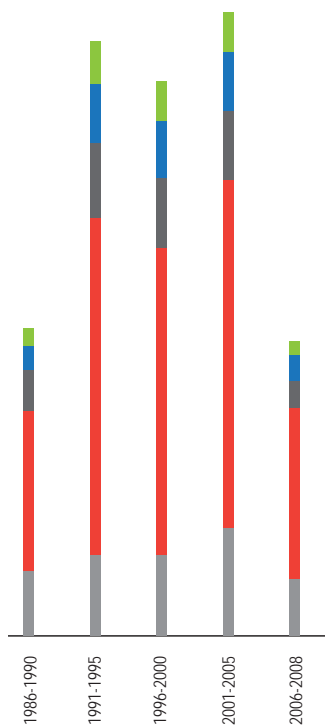
1970 – Present: Ethnic Diversity to Racial Diversity

Three factors were contributing to changes in Toronto’s social and urban landscape by 1970: a major shift of immigration from European to Asian countries, the move from commercial production and industrial manufacturing to information and business economies, and official multiculturalism.

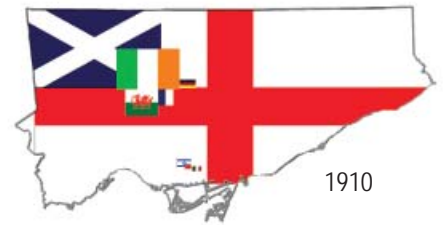
Members of visible minorities now constituted the majority of immigrants entering Canada each year. Ten years earlier, only 15 percent of immigrants into Canada were of African or Asian descent. In comparison most new arrivals in the 1970’s were from regions such as South and East Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. In Toronto, ethnic diversity was quickly transforming into racial diversity. Consequently, today one half of Toronto’s population is a visible minority, in comparison to just 3 percent in 1961.²⁸

This demographic change was a direct result of new immigration policies introduced in 1967 to eliminate all forms of racial and ethnic discrimination in the immigration process. The Points System was a numerically based method, awarding prospective immigrant points for qualities such as education, economic potential, arranged employment and language comprehension. The system was a quantifiable method for selecting new Canadians and did not depend upon the subjective assessment of individual immigration officers, as had the previous systems.²⁹ Critics of the system argued that points rewarding education, language knowledge and professional status continued to disadvantage potential immigrants from the developing world. While the Points System has been revised over the past decades to reflect Canada’s changing economic needs, the fundamental principles of the 1967 system remain in place today.





- Europe
- Asia and Pacific
- South and Central America
- United States
- Africa and Middle East



2. 18 Immigration to Toronto (by geographic origin) 1900-2008.

2. 19 Population by National Affiliation.



Canada's changing economy was the second factor impacting Toronto's social landscape. New investors and skilled professionals were needed to meet increased competition from foreign markets. The government sought to move the current immigration policy's emphasis from family reunification and skilled labour, toward one that would encourage people with professional skills and investment capital to settle in Canadian cities.³⁰ New legislation was introduced in 1976 and established provisions for business-class applicants, who consisted of entrepreneurs required to invest in Canadian business. Critics argued that people entering on investor and entrepreneur visas were essentially 'buying their way into Canada'. The new immigration policy greatly increased the number of immigrant investors arriving from Hong Kong, Mainland China and Taiwan, as well as professionals from South Asia and the Middle East.

The Points System also outlined a new program accepting target numbers of government-sponsored refugees each year. The program replaced the ad-hoc and case-by-case approach the Canadian government had previously taken to refugee acceptance. The combined effects of business class immigration and refugee intake meant that there was now a high differentiation between and within Canada's new immigrant groups: nationality, culture, education and above all economic ability.

While refugee acceptance itself was not particularly controversial, the source of much heated public and media debate was inland refugee applicants – those who, instead of being selected and processed abroad by Canadian authorities, entered Canada illegally and claimed refugee status once they were in the country. Critics warned that migrants who would otherwise be rejected were using the inland refugee policy as a 'back door into Canada.'³¹ Refugee advocates reminded the government that all claimants must be given fair process to prove their refugee status. The issue was most problematic for the city of Toronto as the majority of refugee claimants settled in the city while awaiting their immigration hearing. The city's responsibilities had to be clarified: were claimants entitled to social assistance, municipal housing, and public education? Who would pay the cost for these services – the federal government, the municipal taxpayer or the individual refugee claimant? The Supreme Court of Canada ruled that once they were in the country, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms protected every claimant, entitling them to all benefits granted permanent residents of Canada. Toronto would again increase its settlement and immigration services to support the influx of refugees.

The third factor changing Toronto's social landscape was the adoption of official multiculturalism by the Trudeau government in 1971. The policy was a response to tensions between French and English Canada regarding official language. However the issue quickly expanded to address Canadian cultural identity. While English and French remained Canada's two official languages, Trudeau dismissed the notion that Canadians of British or French heritages retained any right to define the boundaries of Canadian identity.³² Instead, the legislation stated, "there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other. No citizen or group of citizens is other than Canadian, and all should be treated fairly." In his address to parliament Trudeau stated,

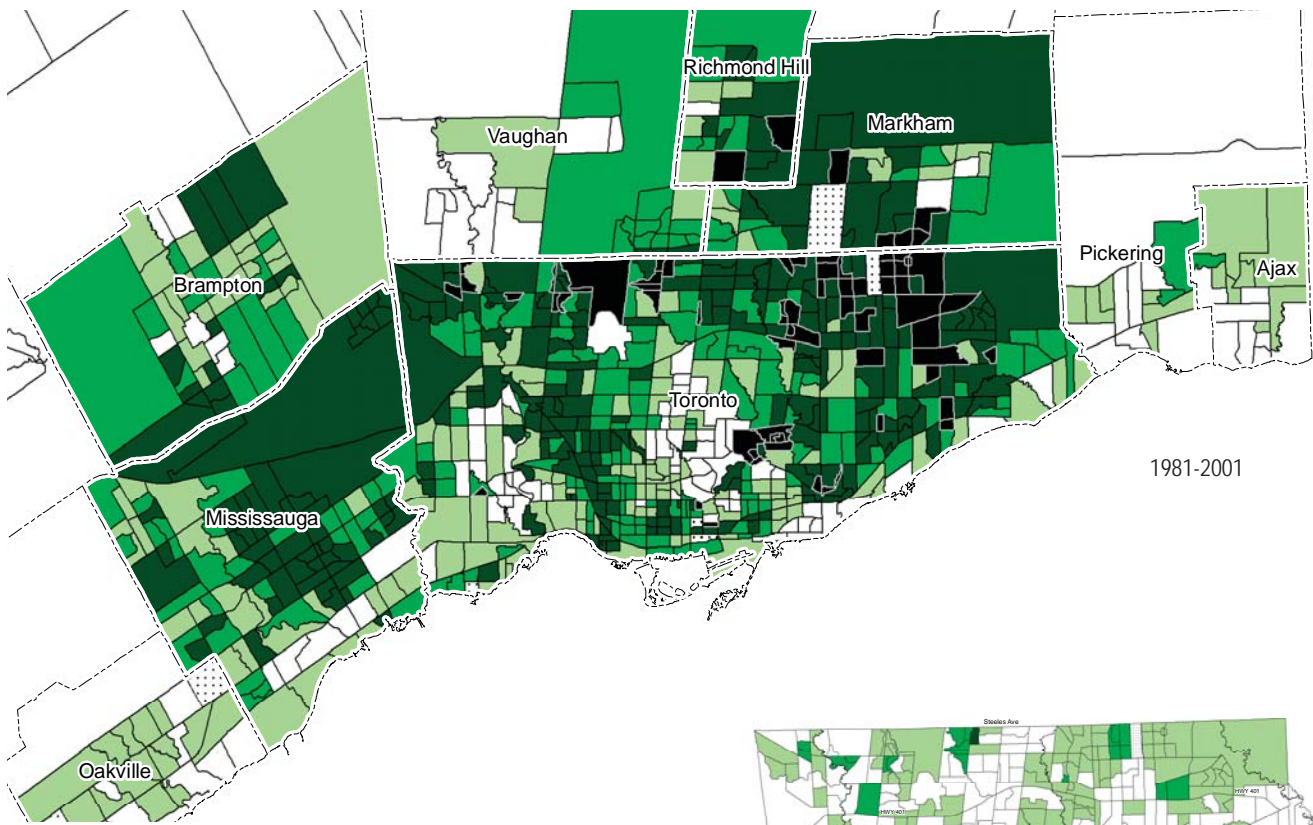
2. 20 Protesting restrictions in federal immigration and refugee policy, 1975.

“I wish to emphasize the view of the government that a policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework is basically the conscious support of individual freedom of choice. We are free to be ourselves. But this cannot be left to chance. It must be fostered and pursued actively. If freedom of choice is in danger for some ethnic groups, it is in danger for all. It is the policy of this government to eliminate any such danger and to ‘safeguard’ this freedom.”³³

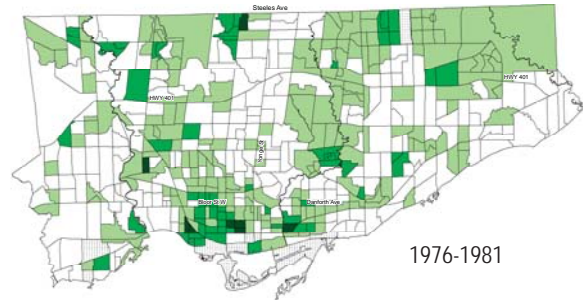
The legislation was a major public policy reversal. It had long been assumed that becoming Canadian required immigrants to discard their home culture, cast aside ethnic identity and assimilate into Anglo-Canadian culture. Conversely, the new policy proposed that Canadian identity no longer depended on British or French allegiance, rather it was articulated as a function of mutual respect rooted in cultural diversity. Multiculturalism was about to open Canada, and in particular Toronto to the expression of difference.

Reduced of its political rhetoric, official multiculturalism promoted a “live and let live” ideology and reflected the already existing diversity of large Canadian cities.³⁴ The initial policy focused funding on arts and cultural initiatives, which prompted critics, such as Himani Bannerji and Neil Bissoondath, to argue that it ignored the continuing marginalization of immigrants from the economic and political mainstream.³⁵ They contended the policy would divide rather than unite Canadians because it essentialized different cultures into distinct groups, further differentiating them from the European majority. They argued only non-whites were presumed to have an ethnicity and that ethnicity is only one of many ways to define a sense of belonging. By focusing on ethnic differentiation “official multiculturalism ensured that no one became a Canadian, but instead, remained forever a Greek Canadian, a Somali Canadian etc.”³⁶ Despite this criticism, multiculturalism has remained part of Canadian government legislation for the last thirty years. Today, it is understood as three different yet related notions: as a specific governmental policy of political pluralism, as a political ideology advocating cultural pluralism, and above all the social reality of Canada’s demographically diverse society.³⁷

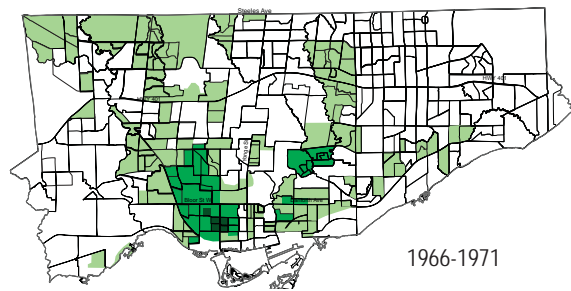
Since 1971, multicultural policy has also evolved into more than a simple ‘celebration’ of fixed identities and become a legal, social and cultural framework for Canadian society. For instance, the federal government introduced the Multicultural Act into the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1988, ensuring “all individuals receive equal treatment and equal protection under the law, while respecting and valuing their diversity.”³⁸ The multiculturalism program has moved from the Heritage branch of the federal government to Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Like the Citizenship Act, the Points System and the inclusion of refugee claimants in the constitution, contemporary multiculturalism reveals the country’s changing attitude toward the acceptance of ‘different’ newcomers, as well as the importance Canadian society now places on the institutionalization of immigrant rights, access and equity.



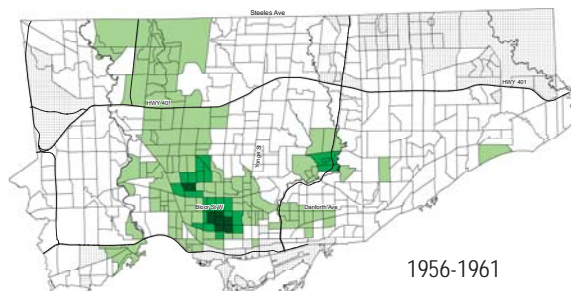
1981-2001



1976-1981

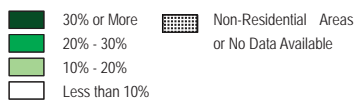


1966-1971



1956-1961

2. 21 Recent Immigrants as a Percentage of the Population



Today - The World in a City

After thirty years of relatively steady immigration from Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America, Canada's immigration program shows no signs of slowing. The country continues to have one of the highest rates of immigration in the world: 1% of the total population³⁹ and the Greater Toronto Area accepts more than two-thirds of these new arrivals: an average of 100,000 people each year.⁴⁰ Today, Toronto is the most ethnically and racially diverse city in the world. Half of its population is comprised of visible minorities and the majority of its residents are foreign-born or first generation Canadian. Home to a hundred diasporas, Toronto is a dynamic and precarious mishmash of people and communities who have never before shared a home.

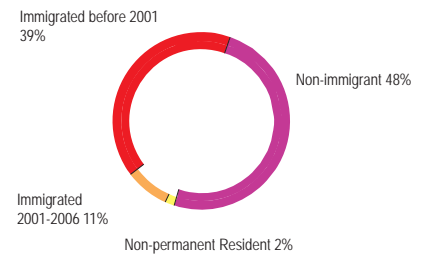
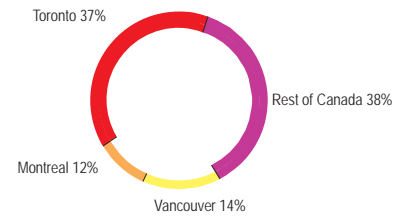
Today, Toronto is made up of a rich montage of overlapping ethnic villages that extends from the inner city to the suburbs. New immigrants flock to vast stretches of single-family homes and high rises, turning once Anglo-dominant neighbourhoods into vibrant pockets of ethnicity. These new villages are accompanied with ethnic shopping, business, and cultural areas where diverse languages and dialects coexist alongside English.⁴¹ The generic shopping malls in Scarborough, Etobicoke and Markham have been transformed into "the main streets of the United Nations."⁴²

Travel author Pico Iyer describes the variety of cultural experiences now available in the city; "slice Toronto along one north-south artery, and you'd find a seething, spicy, uncategorizable something best described by the Little China restaurant, which advertised 'Indian Pakistani-style Chinese food'; slice it a little farther along, and you'd find pure white Highland shortbread."⁴³

Ian Chodikoff suggests that in addition to introducing new cultural experiences, Toronto's ethnic communities are also redefining suburban typologies and expanding local economies,

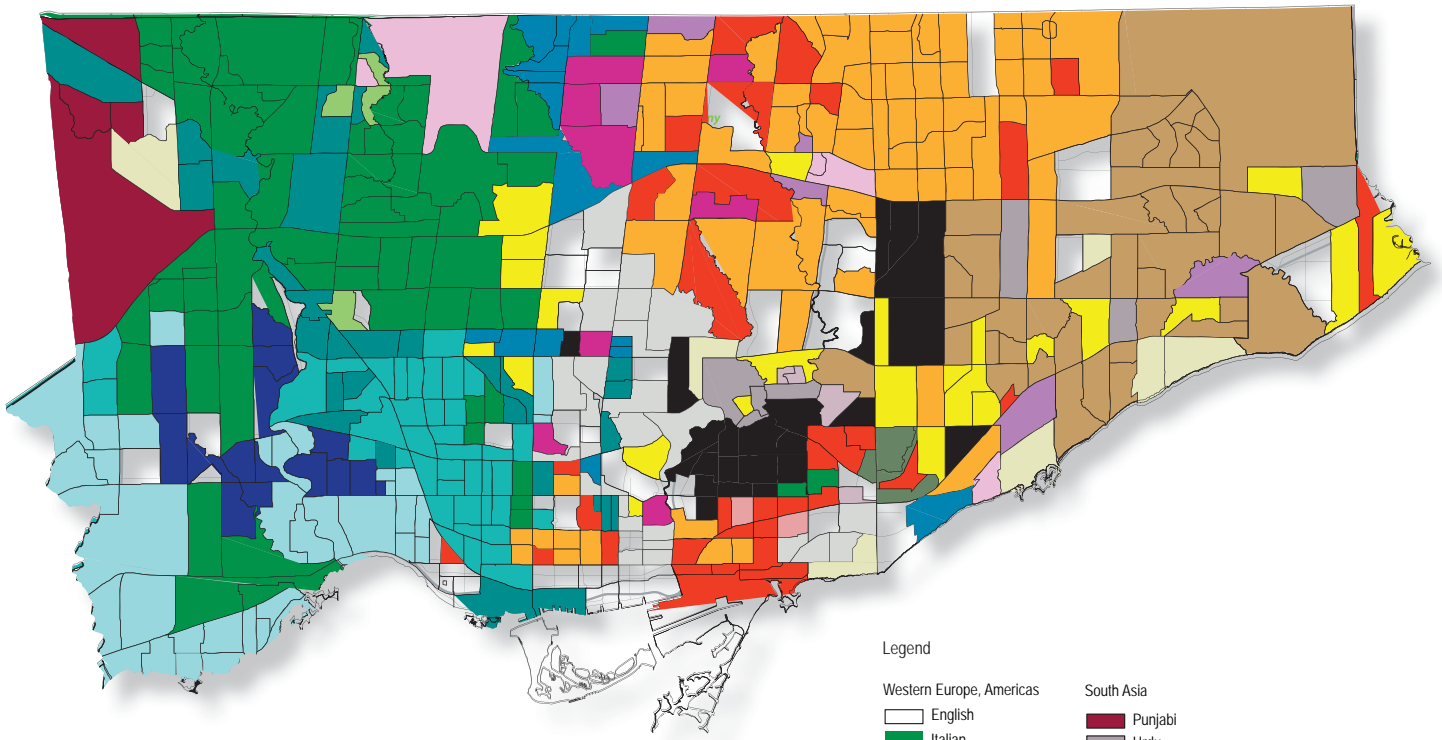
Beyond the phenomenon of signs being printed in multiple languages and the renaming of streets to satisfy local business improvement associations, the global influences placed upon our built environment are contributing to a welcomed introduction of higher densities and a desire to diversify land-use in suburban communities while expanding local economies and secondary real-estate markets such as wholesale distribution centres and forty-year-old strip malls.⁴⁴

Coupled with this explosion of different people and diverse cultural influences across Toronto, is a revolution of the city's spirit and sense of self. Toronto no longer searches for its former connection to the British Empire, or self-consciously compares itself to 'world-class' cities such as New York; today the city embraces its ability to support and collect differences. Slogans such as 'Toronto Live with Culture', 'Toronto Unlimited', and 'Diversity Our Strength' all describe a city that finds value in its multiplicity and recognizes that the sum of its parts is perhaps greater than the whole. A city that recognizes that it is 'world-class' because it is potentially "a model to the whole world, of the whole world."⁴⁵



2. 22 Major Cities Share of Foreign-born Inhabitants, 2001.

2. 23 Toronto Population by Immigration Status, 2006



Legend

Western Europe, Americas

- English
- Italian
- Portuguese
- Spanish
- French
- Greek
- German
- Dutch

South Asia

- Punjabi
- Urdu
- Tamil
- Gujarati
- Bengali

East Asia

- Chinese
- Cantonese
- Tagalog
- Mandarin
- Korean
- Vietnamese

Eastern Europe & Middle East

- Polish
- Russian
- Farsi
- Arabic
- Ukrainian

2. 24 The Language Quilt, Adapted by author from: Toronto Star, source 2006 census, Statistics Canada

2. 24 Mother Tongue after English, 2006

Summary –

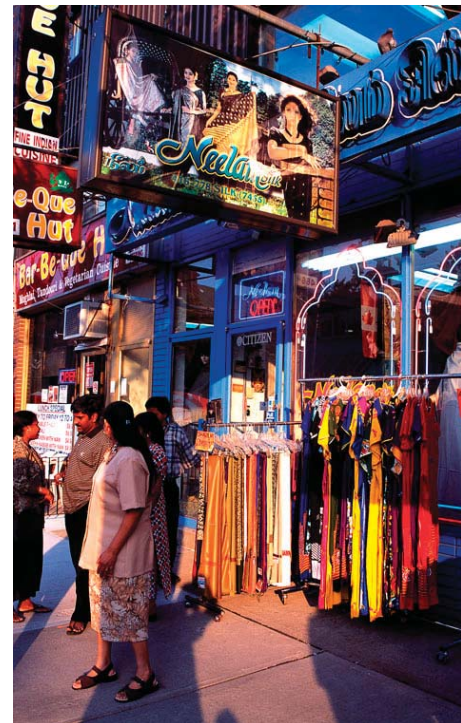
Immigration has been shaping and reshaping Toronto for the last hundred years. Contemporary events would seemingly point to a longstanding history of acceptance and tolerance, however the city's relationship to immigration and difference tells a very different story. By tracing the social, political and economic forces that have influenced immigration policy we can understand Toronto's unlikely, and in many ways undesired, transformation from a monocultural Anglo-Saxon town to an ethnically and racially diverse city.

While not always welcomed, successive waves of new immigrants adopted Toronto as their own. In the process they invigorated the city's spirit and sense of self. Acting as if their old world was part of the city, new immigrants introduced diverse celebrations and social practices to Toronto's streets and public spaces. They opened the city to new forms of expression and different ways of life, transforming Toronto's culture.

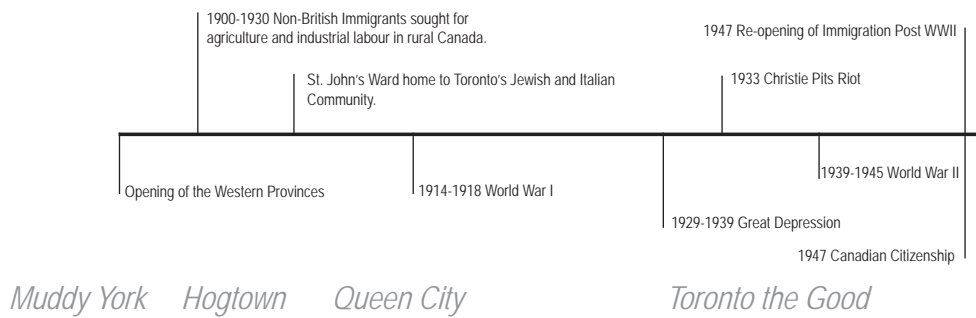
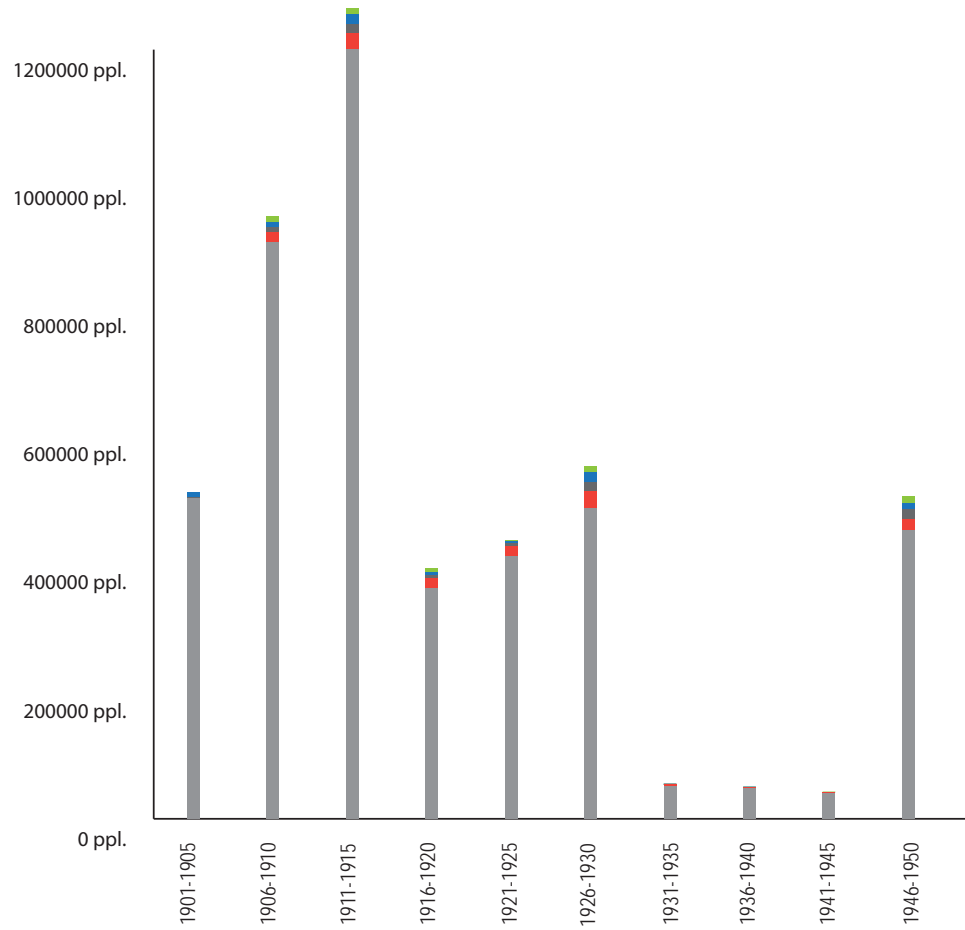
However, Toronto's new immigrants have had limited ability to affect the physical form of the city. Unable to build outright, most new arrivals are forced to reuse the city's existing urban fabric or create ad-hoc interventions. While Toronto's social domain has changed radically its architecture has not addressed these changes.

To fully recognize and give presence to its immigrant population, Toronto must extend beyond the institutional and cultural recognition of differences. It must address how the city's urban form, its architecture and public spaces are acknowledging 100 years of concentrated immigration. This means moving beyond the superficial highlighting of difference with multilingual signs, storefronts and ethnic business districts to a holistic design approach that embodies the dynamic influences, history and aspirations of a multicultural city.

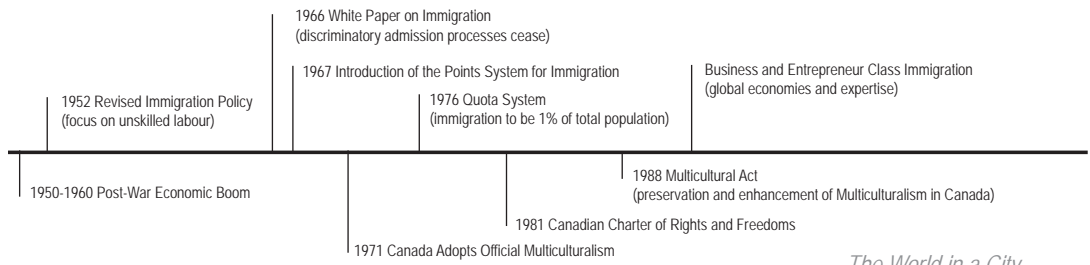
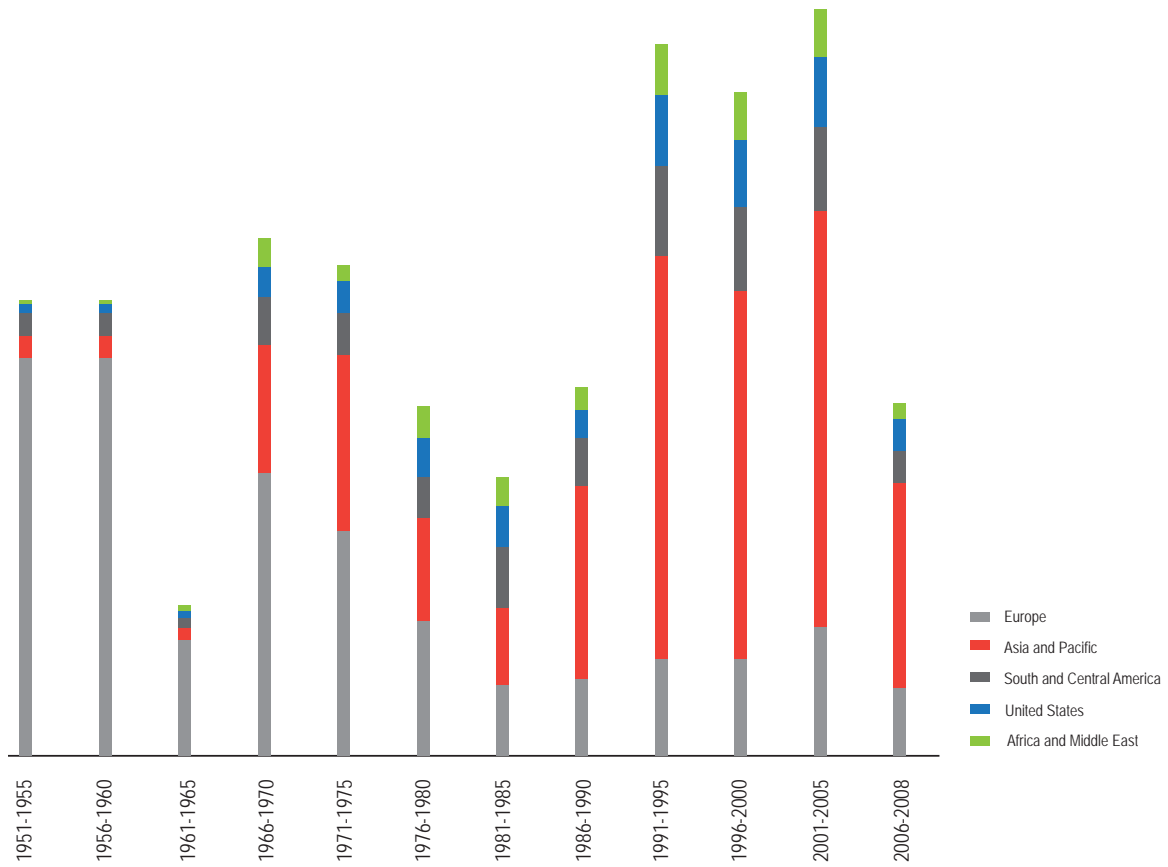
As the immigrant adopted the architecture of the city, the city must now adopt the immigrant into its architecture.



Immigration to Toronto 1900-2008



2. 25 Immigration to Toronto (by geographic origin) 1900-2008.



The World in a City
Diversity Our Strength *Toronto Picture It Your Way*
Toronto You Belong Here *Live with Culture*

Notes

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- 4 Troper, "Becoming an Immigrant City: A History of Immigration into Toronto since the Second World War."
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- 22 Robert Fulford, *Accidental City The Transformation of Toronto* (Toronto, Ontario: Macfarlane Walter & Ross, 1995), 14.
- 23 Jansen & Lam, "Immigrants in the Greater Toronto Area: A Sociodemographic Overview."
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- 29 Troper, "Becoming an Immigrant City: A History of Immigration into Toronto since the Second World War."
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Ibid, 54.
- 32 Ibid.
- V. Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates*.
- 33 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, *Living Multiculturally*, May 30, 2008, <http://archives.cbc.ca/society/celebrations/topics/3517-15251> (accessed January 5, 2009).
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- 35 Himani Bannerji, "On the dark side of the nation: Politics of multiculturalism and the state of "Canada";" *Journal of Canadian Studies* (Canadian Scholars Press), 1996.
- Neil Bissoondath, *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 1994).
- 36 Bissoondath, *Selling Illusions*.
- 37 Patricia K. Wood and Liette Gilbert, "Multiculturalism in Canada: Accidental Discourse, Alternative Vision, Urban Practice," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 2005: 679-691.
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- 39 Paul Anisef and Michael Lanphier, "Immigration and the Accomodation of Diversity," in *The World in a City*, 3-4 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003).
- 40 City of Toronto, *City of Toronto: Diversity*, January 1, 2009, http://www.toronto.ca/quality_of_life/diversity.htm (accessed January 4, 2010).
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- 42 Shawn Micallef in *The State Of The Arts: Living With Culture In Toronto (Utopia Series)* (Toronto: Coach House Books, 2006).
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- 44 Ian Chodikoff, "Fringe Benefits: Cosmopolitan Dynamics of a Multicultural City," in *Ourtopias*, ed. Phillip Beesley, 41-50 (Cambridge, Ontario: Riverside Press, 2008), 41.
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Chapter 3

Intercultural Spaces

The lived complexities of migrant integration occur in the city. Given this reality, some scholars as well as political activists have begun to talk of a new notion of citizenship understood as the practices through which individuals and groups formulate and claim new rights or struggle to expand or maintain existing rights to the city, on the basis of their difference. This involves a substantive notion of citizenship that goes beyond the formal, legal notion of becoming a citizen and extends to the lived, everyday, sociological experience of being a citizen. This in turn involves attempts by immigrant groups to establish collective cultural expressions of their identity in the form of places of worship, commercial environments, recreational facilities, community centres, as well as claims on and the use of public space in everyday life, the ability to transform the built environment in ways to reflect cultural diversity and a subjective sense of belonging.¹

*Leonie Sanderoock,
Cosmopolis II Migrant Cities in the 21st. Century*

This chapter will explore how different cultural groups in Toronto are creating a sense of belonging and establishing collective cultural expression through formal architectures and events. It will also explore several contemporary responses by Canadian and international architects who are responding to their own interpretation of what a multicultural city can be.

Intercultural Spaces – Everyday Places of Exchange

Social scientists and urban planning theorists suggest, “Reducing intolerance, stigma and marginalization can only be accomplished by addressing the cultural as well as material dimension of recognition and presence.”² In addition to economic, political and power disparities, cities and municipal governments must address the creation of places for developing new stories and symbols of identity and belonging. This can be accomplished not by asking; “How can we help the different races to get along?” But ‘how can we [as architects], regenerate the spaces and institutions that bring us all together, across the many factors that might possibly divide us – age, gender, class, as well as ethnicity.’³

Addressing the issue of the recognition and presence of minority and immigrant cultures in contemporary multicultural cities is achieved by increasing the opportunity and necessity for dialogue and exchange between ‘different’ and ‘dominant’ groups.⁴ Ash Amin suggests a vocabulary of local accommodation to difference – “a vocabulary of rights of presence, bridging difference, and getting along.”⁵ To adopt the language of Henri Lefebvre, this could be expressed as the right to difference and the right to the city. Lefebvre suggests these rights are not inscribed on paper but cultivated through sharing space. While normative rights provide citizens with political voice, they do not prevent social, cultural and economic marginalization. Lefebvre argues every person has the ‘right to the city’, since the city is the utmost site of social interaction and exchange. Therefore, the ‘right to the city’ and the “right to difference’ connote a sense of engagement in the public and urban realm.⁶ The achievement of these rights depends on a politics of active local citizenship, an agonistic politics of broad social participation in the never completed process of making meanings, and an always emerging, negotiated common culture.”⁷

Social scientists Ash Amin, Leonie Sandercock and Patricia K. Wood agree that these negotiations must be ‘grounded’ in the concrete architectural spaces of the city that require necessary day-to-day interactions between diverse individuals.⁸ They argue that difference cannot be mediated in the so-called public space of the civic square, shopping mall, and cafe because these ambiguous spaces tend either to be territorialized by particular groups or are spaces of transit, with very little contact between strangers. Moreover, the ‘flagship’ public museum, or cultural centre, risks reflecting the values, identity, and interests of one group at the expense of marginalizing difference, or offering a staged symbolic representation of cultures or heritages that are assumed to be static. Rather, Hajer and Reijndorp suggest inclusive spaces “often

develop in and around the in-between spaces in the archipelago of homogeneous and specialized islands, in surroundings that belong to different social, economic and cultural landscapes. These places often have the character of 'liminal spaces': they are border crossings, places where different worlds of the inhabitants of the urban field touch each other."⁹ These spaces are found in the everyday places of urban life for instance: work places, schools, libraries, markets, and community gardens. They provide particular day-to-day amenities, which answer the widespread local and regional needs of the larger collective, regardless of race, religion or cultural affiliation. They also offer a place where people can engage in debates and discussions and where alternative possibilities for political action can emerge. These spaces are "sites of banal transgression and habitual engagement,"¹⁰ and are referred to by planners and social scientists as 'intercultural spaces.'¹¹

'Intercultural spaces', as truly accessible public spaces, offer a common ground that may be claimed at different times by different people. They are places where dialogue and prosaic negotiations between different groups are necessary, and as a result are platforms for the expression of different or subaltern communities. "They exposed the gaps between the everyday and discursive practices of multiculturalism by forcing all of us, members of differentiated and dominant groups, to reconsider our specific acts of recognition, gestures of accommodation, limits of our tolerance. As mundane as these acts and gestures appear, they are nevertheless the beginning of differential politics that might foster larger public debates of multiculturalism, beyond its institutional and mediatized rhetoric."¹² Here, people from various cultures come together, creating the possibility for accidental encounter and new social 'attachments' that go beyond the boundaries of race, religion and ethnicity and connect through engaging in activities together.

'Intercultural spaces' also offer the opportunity to positively observe different lifestyles in action, free from oversimplified or stereotypical depictions. Hajer and Reijndorp suggest in their discussion of heterotopic possibilities of public space, "The core of successful public spaces lays not so much in the shared use of space with others... but rather in the opportunities that urban proximity offers for a 'shift' of perspective. Through the experiences of otherness, one's own casual view of reality gets some competition from other views and lifestyles."¹³

By studying built forms espousing multicultural ideals, the limits of multicultural programming are explored and understood. The following case studies will explore how architects, designers and everyday citizens are constructing and generating 'intercultural spaces' at multiple scales and degrees of formality or permanence: from the municipal institution to the garden plot. When compared and contrasted, the case studies reveal common characteristics that are essential for creating 'intercultural spaces'. The public library as a building typology and as cultural institution is also studied in depth as a precedent for the intercultural design proposal in Chapter 4.



The Public Library

This section evaluates the role of the public library as an intercultural space. It focuses specifically on how the Toronto Public Library has incorporated and adapted to an increasingly diverse and multicultural population by expanding and diversifying the contents of its collection, the programs it offers and the physical characteristics of library buildings.

The following characteristics identify the library as a unique and important intercultural civic space:

- Its long-standing commitment to universal access and political neutrality;
- Its ability to offer multiple services and amenities that appeal to diverse groups of people including newcomers and longtime residents;
- Its ability to promote complex encounters between different people as a public space in its own right;
- Its renewed commitment to dialogue and public interaction;
- Its ability to accommodate multiple ideologies and dissent within the contents of its collection; and
- The library's universal value as a symbol of knowledge and the pursuit thereof.

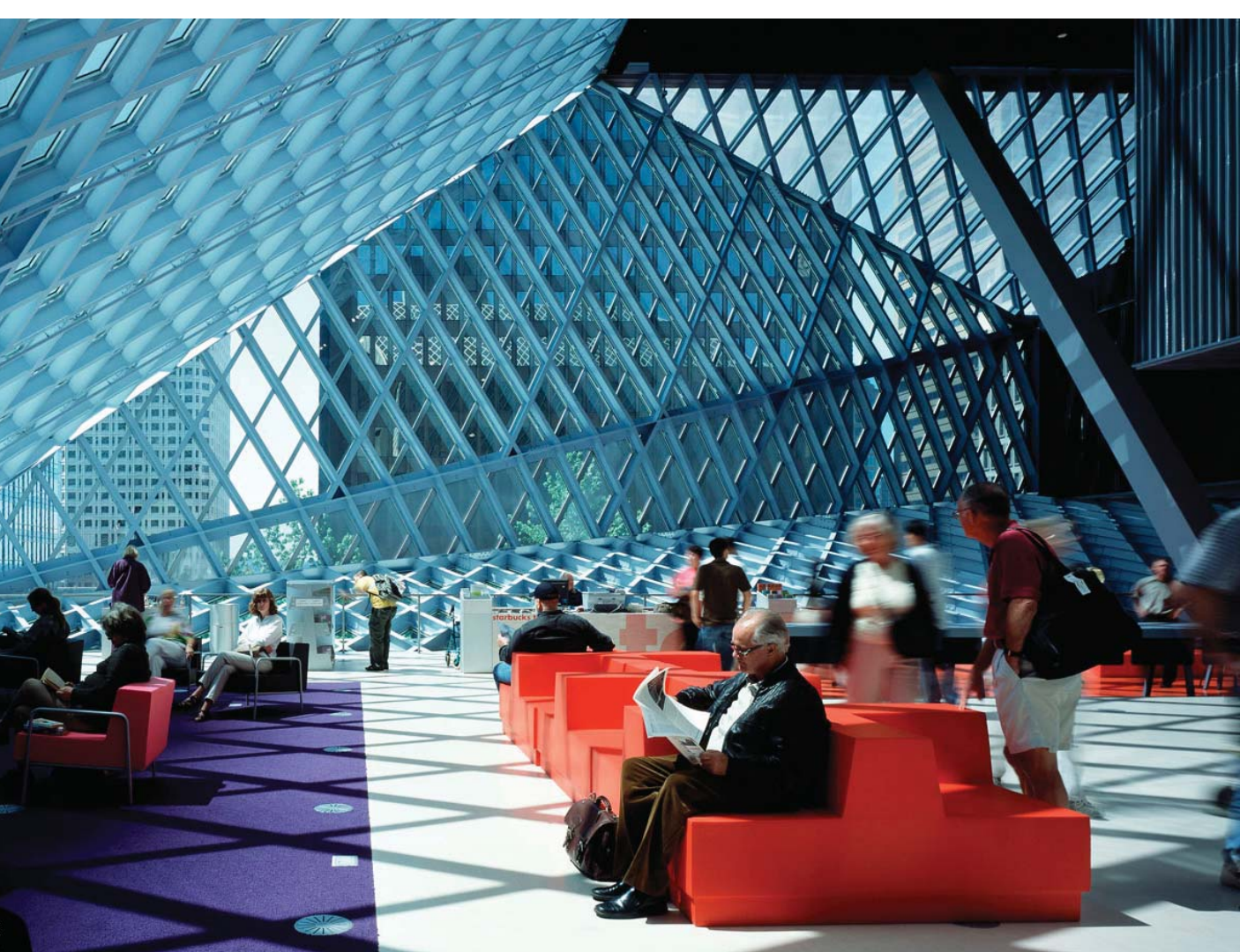
The library has traditionally served two equal purposes: a public infrastructure and physical space dedicated to the storage of information and educative resources, and a symbolic place for collecting and sharing cultural narratives. However, the library's role is changing. As information transfers to less permanent, yet easier to disseminate media, there arises a contradiction between 'placeless' digital information and the physical 'place' of the library. In the wake of this technological shift, critics argue that the library must reinterpret and broaden its purpose beyond storage to the mass distribution and interconnection of various media formats.¹⁴

Additionally, the de-territorialization of cultural and national borders associated with the effects of globalization over the last thirty years have brought new feelings of insecurity to people dispersed from their physical 'place' and forced to redefine their cultural and national affiliations.¹⁵ Despite these dramatic shifts in cultural and technological territories the library has been able to survive because its patrons continue to impart value on the physical place only a building can provide.¹⁶ Academic librarian Sarah Michalak supports this opinion, "There will be a continuing need for the library as a social and intellectual commons, an integrative location, which in its accessible and accommodating environment, provides [for the city] — a symbol of continuity between the past, and the future".¹⁷ In this context the library has the potential to be an important vehicle for connection, not merely to new forms of information but between individuals, their community and their locality.¹⁸



- 3.1 Opposite Page: La Bibliotheque National de Quebec, grand reading room.
- 3.2 La Bibliotheque National de Quebec concourse connects to the street and underground programming such as theatres and galleries, as well as the metro.

To meet these new needs the public library is expanding its program to accommodate a spectrum of private and public activities. Conventional uses such as research and quiet study now take place adjacent to language classes, computer tutorials, lectures, and debates, as well as cultural celebrations and performances. Moreover, by increasing its programmatic complexity, different and contending social and cultural groups can find shared value in the resources and amenities provided. Groups may appropriate the library space for their own uses instead of conforming to fixed set of practices, conventions or ideology. Therefore, the library is a relevant and inclusive civic gathering place because it can be “anything thing to anyone”.¹⁹ As a result, the contemporary public library has acquired a new role. In addition to its traditional role as a repository of knowledge, the contemporary library is an ‘intercultural space’: a public meeting place that promotes connection between heterogeneous groups.²⁰



An intercultural meeting place

The public library is an ‘intercultural space’ because it can accommodate change and difference within its neutral modest framework. More social infrastructure than ‘institution,’ the library serves the day-to-day needs of the public that are often unmet by ‘representative’ public buildings such as City Hall, cultural centres or public museums. The public library is more broadly inclusive than the consumer focused realms of the commercial high street or the suburban mall. Library scholar T. D. Webb argues that as city populations become more diverse, the library is one common amenity that remains valuable to all. “[It] is a cornerstone of ‘we all do this for everyone, so that everyone can use it.’”²¹ In comparison, Toronto’s other cultural institutions are more like tourist attractions. They are assembled downtown, and are often more concerned with their role as civic icons rather than community resources.

The complexity and variety of encounters offered at the contemporary public library reinforces its role as an ‘intercultural’ meeting place. The manifold amenities within the library setting engage a variety of users who are able to participate in different activities and encounters at multiple levels of intensity with relative ease. The library presents a range of social scenarios similar to those found in traditional public spaces. Informal meetings with friends and unplanned encounters between strangers, expose users to people across the divisions of class, education and ethnicity.²² These associations bridge across social, political and cultural disparities and unite strangers in a shared pursuit or interest.²³ Acknowledgement of, and negotiation between oneself and ‘others’ is necessary to navigate these encounters and, as a result, the library becomes a key location for the developing cross-cultural communication and relationships between heterogeneous groups; often referred to as ‘bridging social capital’ by social scientist such as Ray Oldenburg and Robert Putnam.²⁴

Architects designing libraries now focus on how the physical public spaces of libraries can encourage social interaction and connection among multiple user groups. For instance, the design for the Seattle Public Library combines lounges, Internet terminals, a café, bookstore, circulation desks, and popular collections in one large gathering space at ground level. The self-styled ‘Mixing Chamber’ is the first space that one encounters when entering the library orienting and connecting users to the multiple amenities available in the library. Private spaces, including the primary collection stacks and research areas, overlook the ‘Mixing Chamber’ but remain separate from the social activities taking place below.



3.3 Opposite Page: The ‘Mixing Chamber’ in the Seattle Public Library combines lounges, Internet cafe, bookstore, reception, periodicals and adult fiction in one large open space at ground level.

3.4 Reading rooms project into the public atrium in the Bishan Community Library, Singapore.



For a newcomer like me, the library not only provides me with books to read and videos to watch, it is also a place that display social equality in the sense that people, no matter what social or economic class are given equal access to information. This... distinguishes a democracy from an autocracy.

Toronto Public Library User

“We cannot possibly hope to make people feel at home in our society, to make them feel as though they belong and can participate without a strong public library system. [Libraries] bring people together in an atmosphere in which they can cultivate their minds, shape their attitudes towards the people and places where they live and also to imagine that there are other ways of life, there are other ways to grow. They learn what truth and freedom are really all about, that they are not about being on one side or the other or always sharing the same views. Freedom is about access and opportunity within a society, where each of us can find a dignified way to contribute to a united whole.

And it’s this that I wish to have for our new citizens. That they can enter a library and feel that they are going to be at home, that there will be ways of giving them special access to the technology which might be difficult if they don’t speak English well, to reading groups, to activities which involve more than the solitary (albeit delightful) joy of one person, one book. The humanity of what reading brings to us is essential for us to understand each other.”

*R. H. Adrienne Clarkson, former Governor General of Canada
Speech to the Canadian Urban Libraries Council,
October 11, 2007*

The Public Library and Newcomer Populations

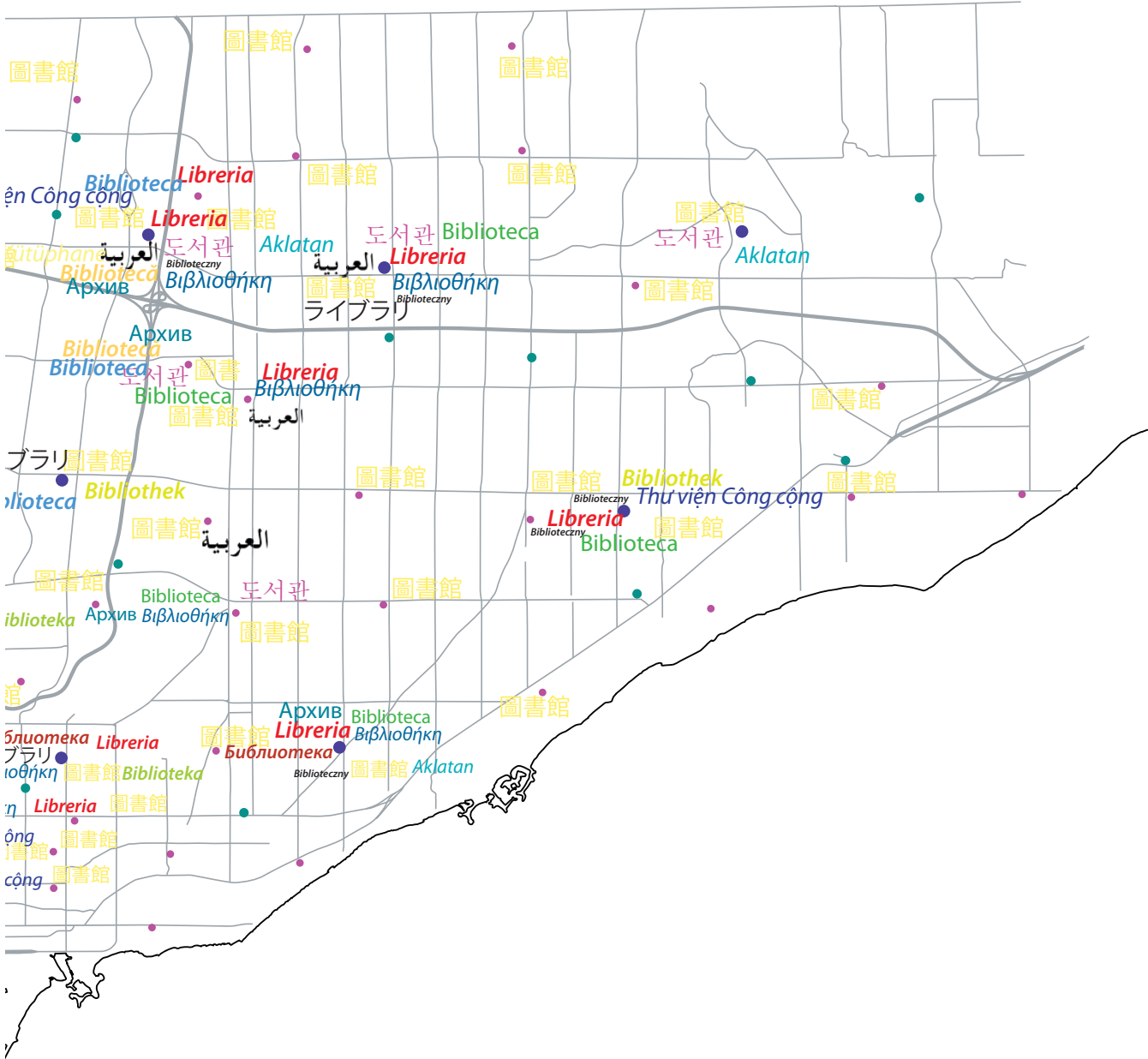
The Toronto Public Library is the busiest urban library system in North America and second in the world after Hong Kong, welcoming an average of 16 million visitors each year.²⁵ The library system functions at three interconnected scales of operation: the neighbourhood branch, the district library and the citywide reference library. Each of the 99 branches focus their collection toward the needs of the local community, specifically addressing groups who are otherwise not powerful: children, the elderly, those with low levels of education and newcomers.²⁶ The Toronto Public Library collects 40 foreign languages and disperses multilingual collections across the city according to the demographic character of local neighbourhoods. Foreign language materials currently account for 12 percent of the library system's total circulation.

Like most early North American library systems the Toronto Public Library, began its first multilingual collections in the late 19th century. A small number of books in German, French, Italian, Russian and Yiddish were made available to immigrant labourers arriving in the city.²⁷ These collections and their associated reading spaces served as arenas for newcomers to interact with longtime residents, free from the social hierarchies imposed in other public spaces. However, these early public libraries were not simply benevolent information resources. They were also mediums for social control and cultural dominance. They also imposed bourgeois European and British social norms and cultural narratives upon non-English speaking immigrant groups through the English language collections, legitimizing these norms as the only accepted culture.²⁸

The library, however, has progressed over the last century from a place of cultural definition and dominance to one of cultural negotiation and interaction. This shift is the direct result of the expanded services and amenities that the library now offers newcomers and non-English speaking groups. Multilingual collections from forty different cultures have expanded the Toronto Public Library into what researchers Tufte and Riis describe as a 'cultural front': a 'grey zone' or 'frontline' where dominant and 'different' discourses and collective identities meet and interact. As a result, the space of the library "reflects and traces the dynamics of situated conflicts and tensions" found in a multicultural city.²⁹ Through observation as well as interaction between dominant and 'different' groups new identities, political positions, and attitudes are negotiated. Other experts continue this argument and contend that the library, as an intercultural meeting place, provides a platform to observe and engage in activities and political discourses of a 'different' group that are otherwise unavailable in the general political discourse of the city.³⁰ It offers a place where the acceptance of difference and cultural inclusion can be developed because it is a political sphere in its own right, where multiple and often conflicting cultural cannons are made available to everyone. American Library Association President, Nancy Kranich notes that,

*Libraries are the only institutions that make knowledge, ideas and information freely available to all citizens. They are where people can find differing opinions on controversial questions and dissent from orthodoxy. They serve as the source for the pursuit of independent thought, critical attitudes, and in-depth information.*³¹

3. 5 Opposite Page: Checking out foreign language material at a Toronto Public Library. Many libraries have staff who speak the predominate languages of the neighbourhood.



The Toronto Public Library Locations and Multilingual Collections

العربية	Arabic	도서관	Korean	தமிழ்	Tamil
հայերեն	Armenian	Biblioteka	Lithuanian	Kütüphane	Turkish
শুনিয়	Bengali	Библиотека	Macedonian	لائبریری	Urdu
圖書館	Chinese	Бiblioteка	Panjabi	бібліоте́ка	Ukrainian
Biblioteka	Croatian	کتابخانه	Persian (Farsi)	Thư viện Công cộng	Vietnamese
Raamatukogu	Estonian	Biblioteczny	Polish		
Bibliothek	German	Biblioteca	Portuguese		
Βιβλιοθήκη	Greek	Bibliotecză	Romanian		
תלמוד	Hebrew	Архив	Russian		
वाचनालय	Hindi	Biblioteka	Serbian		
közkönyvtár	Hungarian	maktabad	Somali		
Libreria	Italian	Biblioteca	Spanish		
ライブラリ	Japanese	Aklatan	Tagalog		

Newcomer-specific Services

Currently foreign-born residents access the Toronto Public Library more often than native-born Canadians. In 2001, 30 percent of foreign-born residents in Toronto used the library weekly, more than double the rate of those born in Canada. The same year, while overall circulation increased nine percent, multilingual circulation increased by 28 percent.³² The library's public nature suggests it is a stigma-free place for newcomers to access the services and resources necessary for resettlement and integration into a new society. The Toronto Public Library is the first place many new immigrants seek out after securing housing.³³ For newcomers, the library functions as a gateway to access the public services and social networks available in Toronto. The library also offers dedicated programming such as second language training, settlement resources, legal aid, and citizenship classes in collaboration with public/private organizations such as Culture Link.

After establishing themselves in the city, newcomers continue to use the library more frequently than native-born residents, accessing social programs and educative resources in both English and their native tongues.³⁴ Digital workstations and web terminals are key communications centres for mobile populations, which include new immigrants as well as refugees, temporary or traveling workers and tourists. They use the public library as an electronic 'poste restante' — where they may drop-in daily to check e-mail, chat online, and make international calls. Simultaneously they can engage with their physical locality and experience face-to-face social contact with other residents.

For example, a Canadian citizen of Pakistani origin can use the library both to meet friends from the neighbourhood, send e-mail to relatives in London and in Pakistan, read local newspapers or Pakistani literature published abroad, or he or she can simply borrow the latest Canadian best-seller. As such, the library connects local physical place with the virtual social spheres of today's global diasporas, bridging between fixed territories and unfixed identities and affiliations.³⁵

It has been a year away from my home but Toronto Library has kept me close to the music, culture and ethnicity of my country.³⁶

Toronto Public Library User

Despite all of these new provisions and services, the library does not have to cater specifically to the newcomer to remain relevant to immigrant and multicultural populations. What makes the library accessible to new residents is the amenity it provides as a benevolent and safe place to engage in the pursuit of knowledge and social participation. It may offer nothing more than pleasant place to read. This activity is something that all people find value in and can share as common experience. The simple amenity of the library appeals to everyone regardless of age, race, ethnicity or religion.

The Meaning of the Library as an Intercultural Space

As suggested earlier, the public library is no longer a specific architectural type. Freed from the physical constraints of place-bound media, there are now infinite ways to design a library, to conceive of its organization, programmatic content and physical form. What remains unchanged is the symbolic value of the library: civic trust, tolerance, inspiration for learning and knowledge, and the benevolence of a welcoming 'place' regardless of race, religion or ethnicity.

Author Michel Melot, in his essay *Nouvelles Alexandries*, speculates that the continued existence and rise of the grand library building is one of symbolic rather than functional value. For him, the library building remains relevant as a 'symbol' and "an emblem of knowledge – and the thirst and quest for, and use of it".³⁷ Library scholar T. D. Webb continues this argument, noting 'the library stands... for the ability of society... to accommodate all knowledge, even knowledge yet undiscovered.'³⁸

In the library, everything is available to everyone. Just as we vary as individuals, the knowledge and the nature of the potential for discovery that is derived from a visit to the library will be different for each person. The same can be said of the multicultural city. In their idealized forms, both afford the opportunity to engage in unknown worlds, to bridge across social and cultural boundaries, to share ideas and create new narratives. While the multicultural city collects different individuals, groups and cultures within its borders, the library holds within its walls their collective identities. Therefore, the library is a manifestation of the open-mindedness and gathering of different people in a multicultural city and a symbol of trust and locus for community culture, values and identity.³⁹

In his 2007 essay, *The City of Words*, Canadian Argentine-born writer Alberto Manguel suggests the library is the multicultural city's most precious resource:

*A sense of who we are individually coupled with a sense of being citizens, collectively, of an inconceivable universe, lends something like meaning to our life – a meaning put into words by the books in our libraries... Language is our common denominator... Stories are our memory, libraries are the storerooms of that memory, and reading is a craft by means of which we can recreate that memory, by reciting it and glossing it, by translating it back into our own experience, by allowing to build upon that which previous generations have seen fit to preserve... Reading is a task of memory in which stories allow us to enjoy the past experience of others, as if it were our own.*⁴⁰

Yi-Fu Tuan agrees, arguing that the library's ability to diffuse minority languages helps draw attention to the experiences and voices of the 'Other,' concretizing their presence in the city. 'Speech alone cannot materially change form however it can direct attention, organize insignificant entities into a significant composite whole and in doing so make things formerly overlooked - and hence invisible and non-existent – visible and real.'⁴¹

The following case study compares two cultural centres in London's culturally and racially diverse East End: Rich Mix - a multicultural media and arts complex, and the Idea Store - a hybridized public library and community information resource. Both projects take different approaches toward the programming and architectural design of inclusive cross-cultural meeting space and achieve different degrees of success.

Rich Mix – Spitalfields District London, UK.

Penoyre and Prasad Architects

Rich Mix is a culture and arts initiative concerned with intercultural engagement. Its primary aim is to enable cross-cultural exchanges between segregated and culturally under-served groups in the Spitalfields District in London's East End, as well as celebrating the contribution successive generations of immigrants have made to the economic and cultural life of London. The centre accomplishes these aims by bundling and connecting sociocultural activities, cultural organizations and institutions that rarely interact in everyday life. Traditionally segregated experiences are juxtaposed, emphasizing and questioning the boundaries between different 'micro-worlds'. However, Rich Mix is more than a 'staging ground' for contrasting ethnocultural activities. It is also a place where individuals, groups and communities are given resources and space to develop new forms of expression. The centre provides venues such as cinemas, a performing arts venue, education and workshop spaces, exhibition galleries, café/restaurant and affordable creative workspaces for educative charities and creative businesses as well as a variety of cultural media including music, dance, film, plastic arts and information technology.

Rich Mix's interior transforms a derelict garment factory by inserting a central foyer that connects the diverse new facilities with their associated publics. The foyer is more than a traditional circulation artery, acting as a 'shared antechamber' where different groups can interact and appropriate the central space. Primary circulation spaces line the edges of the 'antechamber' and function as permeable thresholds between the freely accessible foyer and the semi-public cultural spaces. This design allows for the coupling of different spheres, facilitating multiple uses both spatially and temporally.⁴²

In contrast, Rich Mix's external architectural relationships limit exchange possibilities. The centre is strategically located at a boundary zone between contrasting urban spaces: a goods yard, private and public housing estates, Banglatown, and Shoreditch's emerging creative district. However, the exterior façade, expressed as a flat 'billboard' fails to recognize the physical and social tensions inherent to the site. Instead it superficially highlights cultural diversity with a field of multi-coloured louvers. Additionally, the façade fails to articulate the spatial complexity of the interior public foyer or 'antechamber'. Preoccupied with its role as a landmark rather than a dynamic threshold between interior and exterior public realms, Rich Mix remains detached from actualities of its site. As such, critics question the centre's ability to foster cross-cultural exchange. They suggest its success depends entirely upon the fragile mix of cultural programming, rather than accessible and inclusive spatial design. Consequently, Rich Mix 'could easily convert to another institution of the cosmopolitan creative class, that celebrates difference without engaging it'.⁴³



- 3. 7 Multicoloured louvers and columns superficially highlight diversity.
- 3. 8 Rich Mix's flat 'billboard' facade fails to interact with the surrounding streetscape.



Idea Store – Whitechapel Road, London, UK

David Adjaye Architects

The Idea Store is essentially a local library: a centre of learning and research, a market place for ideas and an exchange point for knowledge. While Rich Mix describes itself as a ‘multicultural institution’, the Idea Store aims to de-institutionalize its library programming. The Idea Store accomplishes this goal by incorporating, and reinterpreting retail strategies and services – billboards, display windows, cafes and escalators – with traditional library typologies and programs. The Idea Store is conceived as a public room rather than public building, a ‘trading floor’ where different forms of information and knowledge are exchanged in the same manner as the marketplace. Its location on Whitechapel Road - an ethnically diverse commercial high street - increases its accessibility, such that users ‘pop in’ without a predetermined purpose, browsing in the same manner as they would in a store. However, the notion of a store also suggests a kind of repository where knowledge is kept, placed in reserve and stored for preservation. In this sense, the Idea Store is also a cultural archive.



In contrast to Rich Mix, the Idea Store embodies the social, political tensions of a multicultural community through its site relationship. It acts as a central node that connects different physical spaces and diverse people by precisely articulating and coupling the relationship between interior and exterior spheres, between library users and the public domain. The Idea Store engages its surrounding urban context: Whitechapel Street market, the parking spaces of a large supermarket, a sports centre, council housing and a hospital complex. Rather than reconciling these different urban elements, the Idea Store positions itself as an interstitial place where conflicts and negotiations are possible; a place where, “civic concord must exist between users, yet with a maximum potential for the exercise of difference rather than conformity.”⁴⁴ The different forces present on the site, both spatial and non-spatial extend in to the library and provoke new relationships. For instance, the vertical atrium joins the Idea Store with the activity of the sidewalk, and “its passing movements... daily trading, momentary transactions and interactions of the street market.”⁴⁵

The Idea Store also uses its material language to unite the surrounding public spaces with its program. The façade is simple and precise, consisting of transparent and translucent coloured and metal panels in vertical stripes. The rhythmic patterning and colours reference the striped awning of the market stalls adjacent to the Idea Store, while the glass itself reflects the surrounding buildings. However, the exterior walls do more than divide inside from outside. They also act as ‘borderlands’⁴⁶ where visual interaction and sensory engagement is possible between the passer-by on the commercial street and library user. Similarly the library enlivens the banal spaces between its neighbouring buildings. For instance, the design visually connects active interior spaces in the library with the busy passage to the supermarket.

- 3. 9 The facade of the Idea Store overhangs the sidewalk, sheltering library users as they enter.
- 3. 10 The facade also provides a canopy for the adjacent vendor stalls.
- 3. 11 Opposite Page: The Idea Store maintains the scale and colour palette of the commercial high street.

Rather than embracing the notion of neutrality in order to guarantee the inclusion of maximum groups, as is the case with Rich Mix, the Idea Store embraces spatial and material distinctiveness. The precise design enters into dialogue with the surrounding urban context, the public realm and its users, bridging across these separate worlds to encourage new places of interaction and exchange. Author Saskia Sassen writes that Adjaye's buildings "embed a built distinctiveness that allows for disaggregating of social/cultural/religious diversity, producing parallel deployment of component identities and buildings rather than holistic and unitary presences of each."⁴⁷





The great monuments of this city are not buildings or boulevards but festivals, parades and fairs. Seen collectively these events create instant communities of like-minded people from across the city, North America, and around the world.⁴⁸

- 3. 12 Aerial Shot of Caribbana along Lakeshore Boulevard, 2009.
- 3. 13 Hindu adherents chant and dance along Yonge Street in devotion to the god Krishna at the Festival of India, July 2009.



Event – The Parade and Cultural Festival

At the turn of the previous century, people living in ‘Toronto the Good’ had few opportunities engage in public celebrations. In a city that banned dancing on Sunday, the only socially acceptable public festivities included the Royal Winter Fair and the Orange Day Parade; traditions deeply rooted in the city’s English and agricultural history. More than a century later the city’s cultural celebrations have expanded and diversified to include innumerable festivals, parades, rallies and public gatherings, introduced by successive waves of immigrants bringing traditions from their homelands. Parades and festivals are successful intercultural venues because they present the opportunity to engage with and observe difference in action. They offer opportunities for confrontation and negotiation between different cultural groups as people simultaneously express difference and are exposed to other cultural manifestations.

Gay Pride, Toronto’s largest and most vibrant parade, travels down Yonge Street, the city’s primary axis, the first weekend of July each year. Men and women energetically celebrate GLBT culture by dancing in the streets to pounding dance music. When it is finished, the Pride Parade leaves no physical trace behind. The streets are cleaned and the banners, streamers and flags are put away for the next year. Two weeks later during the Festival of India, Hindu worshipers chant and dance along Yonge to City Hall and Nathan Philips Square. Late in the summer, the Caribana Festival, with its elaborately coloured costumes and floats, awakens Toronto’s moribund shoreline and Lakeshore Boulevard, filling them with the sounds and rhythms of the Caribbean.

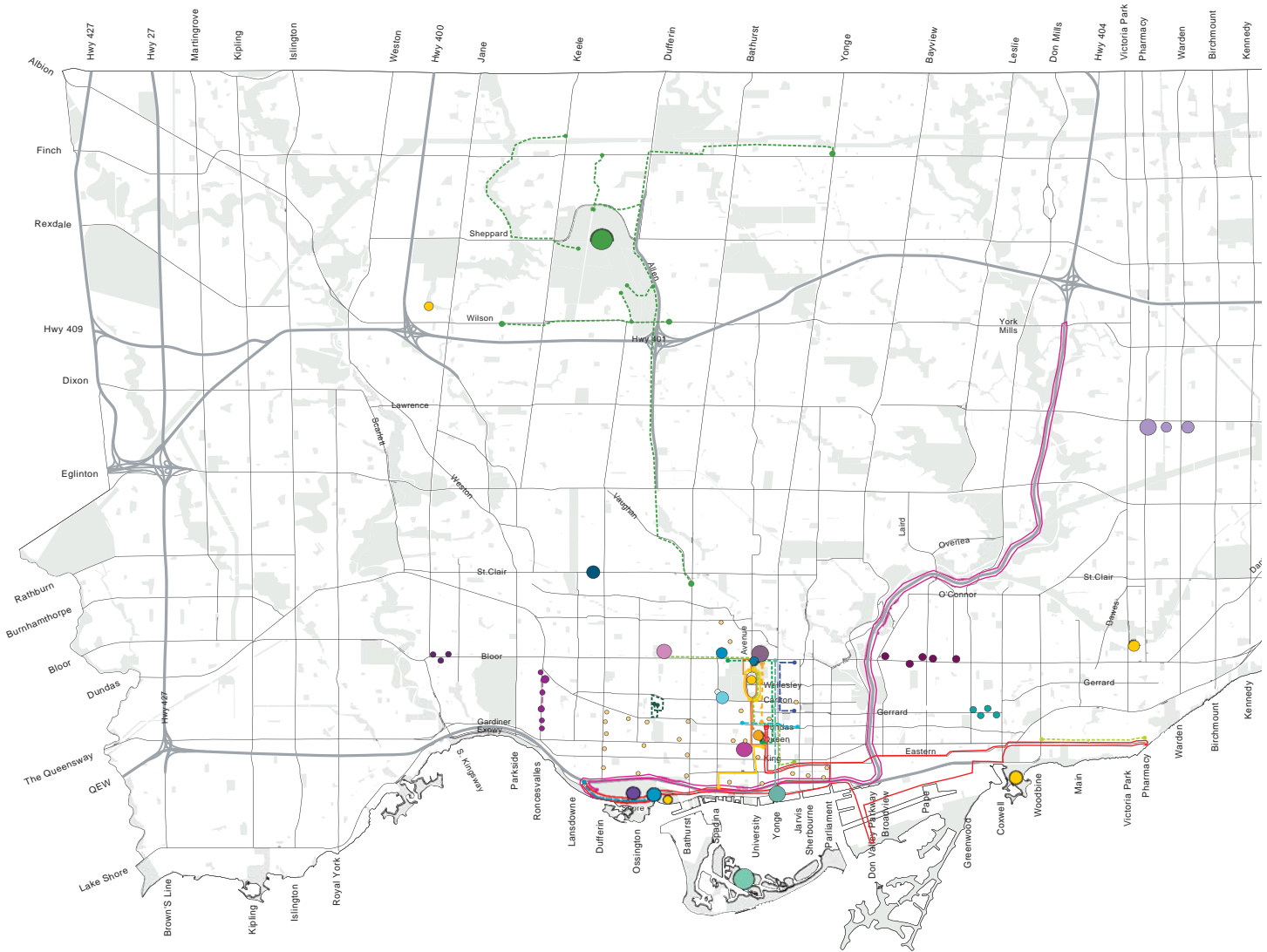
Street festivals, picnics, and concerts also invigorate Toronto’s public spaces, streets and city parks. On a weekend close to the June Summer Solstice, in keeping with the traditional Chinese calendar, dragon boats glide across the harbour, their drummers filling the air with a pounding heartbeat. The CHIN International Picnic, hosted by the city’s first multicultural radio station, brings together performers in music and dance at the Toronto Islands. For three days, different language groups and nationalities gather together to watch headline acts from home and abroad. The Taste of the Danforth, the Corso Italia Festival, the Festival of South Asia and the Taste of Lawrence fill a different neighbourhood each weekend with the smells of international cuisine. People come to experience flavours that were unknown to the city’s palette a few decades ago.

These events have not only invigorated the city with new forms of expression, but also allowed minority groups to claim presence and exert what Lefebvre and Mitchell refer to as their ‘right to the city’. Parades and festivals appropriate city spaces, in the sense of use rather than ownership, and allow groups to shape city spaces in their own image, if only for a brief period of time. The result is the democratization public spaces that may be traditionally dominated by the majority population. Mitchell suggests the ‘right to the city’ is “more than the right for groups to access the resources that the city embodies: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city more after our heart’s desire...the freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves.”⁴⁹



3. 14 The Italian community celebrates as Italy wins the semi-final of the World Cup, College Street, 2006.

3. 15 Floats travel down Yonge Street at the Pride Parade.



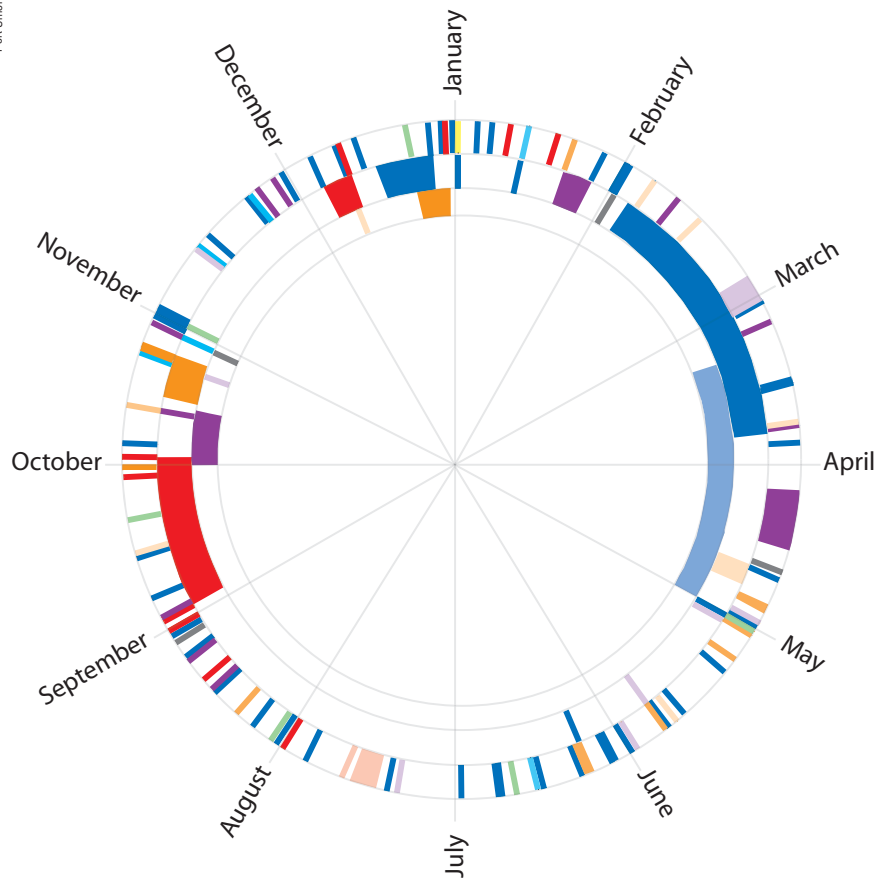
Festivals and Parades, Toronto, 2009

FESTIVALS:

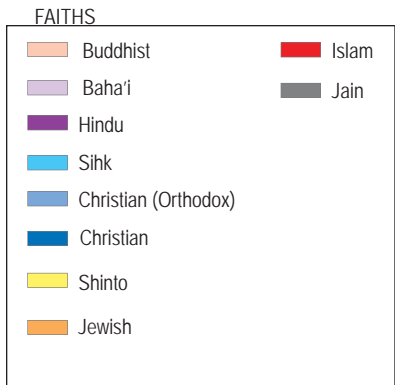
● Canada Day Celebrations	● Jewish International Film Festival
● Nuit Blanche	● Korean Dano Spring Festival
● Toronto Winter City Festival	● Mabuhay Philippines Festival
● Ashkenaz Festival	● Roncesvalles Polish Festival
● Caribana	● Taste of the Danforth
● Chinese New Year	● Taste of Lawrence
● Corso Italia	● Toronto Chinatown Festival
● Dragon Boat Festival	● Vietnamese Lunar Festival
● Festival of India	● West Village Ukrainian Festival
● Festival of South Asia	● World Youth Day

PARADES:

—●— Canada Day Parades	—●— St. Patrick's Day Parade
—●— Grey Cup Parade	—●— Good Friday Procession
—●— Caribana Parade	—●— World Youth Day Pilgrimages
—●— Dozynki Procession	—●— Becel Ride for Heart
—●— Dragon Dance Parade	—●— CIBC Run for the Cure
—●— Festival of India Parade	—●— Toronto Waterfront Marathon
—●— Pride Parade	
—●— Beaches Easter Parade	
—●— Santa Claus Parade	



Multifaith Calendar 2009



3. 16 Map of cultural festivals and parades, 2009.

3. 17 Multi-faith Calendar of religious festivals and holidays, 2009.



Noor Cultural Centre, formerly the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre

Moriyama & Teshima Architects

Built in 1963, the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre (JCCC) was a place where the Japanese community set about the task of integrating into mainstream Canadian society after their internment during the Second World War. Raymond Moriyama, a young Japanese Canadian architect who had been interred with his family, was chosen to design the cultural centre. Rather than adopting a traditional Japanese vernacular, Moriyama chose to interpret Japanese iconography through modern architecture. His design emphasized the architectural discourse of the period, identifying that the Japanese community was part of contemporary Canada, while expressing the scale and influence of traditional Japanese vernacular.⁵⁰ The Cultural Centre was therefore a uniquely Japanese-Canadian creation. In his 1964 essay for *The Canadian Architect*, Moriyama describes the intentions of the JCCC design:

The end of internment and rigid control brought forth a new ideal: to become re-established in the mainstream of Canadian life, avoiding any cliquishness; to contribute positively to the cultural mosaic of Canada – a necessity to fulfill the responsibility of a regained freedom... Architecturally we expressed pride in our ancestral and Canadian heritage with a sense of solidity and stability, creating a place comfortable for and open to all Canadians.⁵¹

The Noor Cultural Organization, a group committed to fostering the education and understanding of Islam, now occupies the historically designated building. To meet the different needs of a new community and culture, Raymond Moriyama was commissioned to renovate and adapt his design. The most significant changes were made to the building's lower level, where load-bearing walls were replaced with structural columns and movable glass partitions. The east-facing Prayer Hall can now be opened up to the adjoining multipurpose room to accommodate larger groups of worshippers. The former Judo Hall has been transformed into a children's play area with connected change and nursing room. Locker rooms abutting the washrooms are dramatically refurbished for ritual ablutions. The full-length windows that line two walls of the main floor auditorium are covered with fixed wooden latticework screens, a device common in Islamic architecture. Additionally, one of the building's most Japanese-looking features – a pair of lanterns flanking the main entrance and rising above the roofline – were designed to greet visitors attending evening functions, and orient toward the lunar path. Today, they are transformed into culturally appropriate signage for the Noor Cultural centre with metal inserts in the shape of Islamic arabesques.

The Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre's original design illustrates how architecture can represent a cultural or ethnic community without simplifying its iconography. The continued use of the building by the Noor Cultural Organization also demonstrates how the focus on high quality and useful space is equally appealing to people across a spectrum of cultures, religions and time periods.



3. 18 Opposite Page: Wooden screens, made of a latticework of Islamic text, cover the windows at grade. This device is common in Islamic architecture.
3. 19 Opposite Page: Loadbearing walls were replaced with columns and glass partitions so that the east-facing sanctuary could be opened for larger groups.
3. 20 The Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre shortly after construction, 1963.



University of Toronto Multi-Faith Centre for Spiritual Study and Practice

Moriyama & Teshima Architects

The Multi-Faith Centre aims to provide a dignified space for spiritual contemplation for the 52,000 students of diverse cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds who attend the University of Toronto's St. George Campus.⁵² The design challenge for architects Moriyama and Teshima was to create a versatile 'faith-neutral' religious celebration space in which students and leaders of all faiths would feel equally welcome and valued, while also creating elements that would allow faith groups to adapt spaces to suit their particular needs. Adding to the challenge was the need to create the Multi-Faith Centre within an existing building and with only selective alterations to the interior.

The modest budget for the Multi-Faith Centre was used to transform the second floor of the existing Koffler Centre into a sequence of spaces that provide gradual distancing from the secular environment to the sacred environment of the Activity or Prayer Hall – a single expansive room. Also included in the programme are ablution (ritual cleansing) facilities, small contemplative spaces and a group dining room and kitchen.

The design for the Prayer Hall avoids the use of icons and symbols. Instead, 'light', in both the spiritual and metaphysical sense, is integrated into the design as a theme uniting all faiths. A luminous ceiling and wall of backlit translucent white onyx panels illuminate the Prayer Hall. They are arranged into a mosaic using sacred numbers and geometries from a variety of religious traditions. For instance, in Buddhism there are three pillars to represent the life forces, in Christianity there is the holy trinity, in the Sikh religion there are four stages of spiritual evolution, in Hinduism there are four cardinal points and in Islam prayer beads are organized into multiples of threes.⁵³ Using this technique creates a single architectural feature that subtly references the religious structure of all faiths.

Similarly, the Prayer Hall's open floor plan allows for multiple forms of gathering and religious worship. The floors and walls constructed of high quality tactile materials: wood, limestone, and Venetian plaster, create an intimate sensory experience for the worshiper regardless of how they inhabit the space. The minimal material palette also creates a neutral backdrop for the religious icons and symbols that groups use to decorate the Prayer Hall during worship. When they are not in use, sacred objects are stored in wood-lined cupboards, behind door discreetly incorporated into the luminous onyx wall. Additionally, the celebration spaces are negatively pressurized and the air is constantly changed, so that the smell of burning incense or grasses, used in many forms of worship, may be discreetly extracted before other faith groups enter.

The University of Toronto Multi-Faith Centre is an inclusive and welcoming gathering space that is perceived as a sanctuary and retreat for all. The design incorporates universally appreciated qualities: high quality materials, generosity of space and sensory engagement.



3. 21 Opposite Page: The main activity or prayer hall is configured for a Christian service. The ceiling and luminous wall are a neutral backdrop for any faith to practice.
3. 22 Opposite Page: Different activities, with different spatial configurations, take place in the Multifaith Centre. They are accommodated through the open floor plan.
3. 23 A concert in the Main Hall, 2007.



3. 24 The new Collingwood House complex, was planned and designed with the participation of representatives from various community groups.

Collingwood Neighbourhood House, Vancouver Canada

dysarchitecture

Located on the East side of Vancouver, the Collingwood Neighbourhood House is a non-profit community agency which offers a variety of social programming, community recreation programs and settlement services for a multicultural neighbourhood of 42,000. About 70% of Collingwood community residents come from other countries and only 32% of the population speaks English as a first language.⁵⁴ The aim of the Neighbourhood House is to provide 'a place for everyone':⁵⁵ an accessible and inclusive location for bridge building between community members of different cultures, immigration status and economic ability.

As a precedent, the Collingwood Neighbourhood House offers insight into programming intercultural meeting places. It is an example of how overlapping social activities and programs can encourage unexpected encounters and dialogue between strangers from different cultural backgrounds. Comprised of a two-storey complex, the house includes both recreational programming (gymnasiums, meeting rooms, rooftop gardens and a day-care) and social services (job search and training, settlement services, and ESL classes.) At its heart of the house is a large industrial style community kitchen (functional as well as symbolic of the heart of the home, the hearth, and the universal connection to food and its ability to describe culture). Several different religious groups (Christian, Muslim, and various Chinese traditions) share the facility as a place of study and worship. The House integrates the community amenities provided by the adjacent public elementary school, public health facility and police station into its programming. These multiple spaces and activities support increased awareness and understanding between users, meeting and interacting at the thresholds between programs.

Collingwood Neighbourhood House also acts as a transitional zone to other public institutions, allowing newcomers to access them gradually, integrating as they wish with the community. From their experiences at the Collingwood House, newcomers may branch out to other resources in the city such as universities and workplaces. Users volunteer and work with other community members sharing their experiences and training. For instance, former clients, having sought additional training, fill many of the agency staff positions. Children and families grow up using the facilities and volunteering at the House, so that the place becomes part of their day-to-day existence and identity.

A specific architectural form or style is not important or necessary for the Collingwood Neighbourhood House to function as an intercultural space. Rather, the many programs, which lie adjacent to one another, are inclusive because they offer choice and focus on common amenity. They meet the needs of neighbourhood users and unite them in a shared community building. Author Leonie Sandercock suggests, 'the very idea of a neighbourhood house implies a place with no sub-cultural affiliation, and no shared interest other than creating a community based on common residency.'⁵⁶



3. 25 Children and caregiver at the Collingwood House day care.
3. 26 Women sell traditional weaving at the Collingwood Multicultural Summer Market.



Landscape

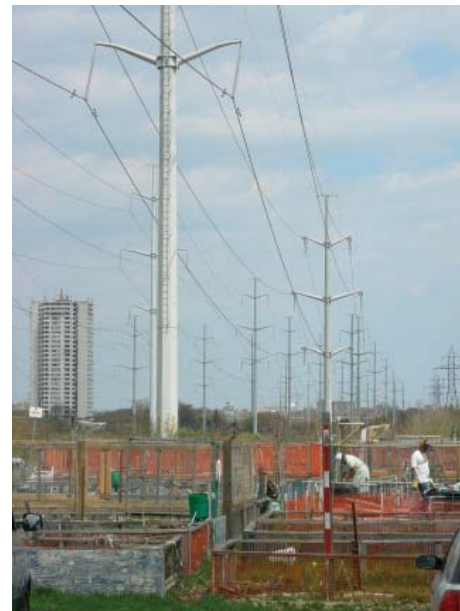
The Community Garden

Toronto has 110 community gardens in its greater metropolitan area. Most often situated in loose appropriated spaces that are under used by the public. Vacant lots, backyards, rooftops and community institutions such as churchyards or community centres are typical locations. Some community gardens are associated with regional or municipal agencies in public parks. However, most are entirely independent community run organizations comprised of ethnically and economically diverse individuals.

The community garden provides a loose and socially integrative platform for multicultural community development through interaction. Many community gardens often occupy vacant or abandoned land, which requires that the gardeners communicate with one another and join as a community to negotiate land use claims or ownership contestations by developers and the city. On a smaller scale individual gardeners must negotiate garden rules and shared infrastructure. These interactions at an individual and community level enable diverse groups to communicate and unite under a shared stewardship.

Community gardens have become catalysts for development in marginalized neighbourhoods. Residents unite in a shared place taking ownership of the garden and responsibility for the beautification of the community. Newly arrived immigrants, benefit from the loose space of a community garden. There is no socially prescriptive architecture impeding the creative potentials of each gardener on his individual plot. It is here that newcomers are able to create order and individuated place in a new socioeconomic and physical environment where they have limited control. Many families choose to grow culturally specific foods that are otherwise unavailable or too expensive in grocery stores. As a result, garden plots begin to reflect the landscape memories and identities of ethnically diverse gardeners.

Through group communication and spatial looseness, Toronto's community gardens have the ability to integrate its diverse citizenry without limiting the expression of individual or ethnic identity.



3. 29 Thorncliffe Park Community Garden. The apartment blocks in the background house high numbers of recent immigrants. Many use the community garden, located in the industrial business park, to grow produce that is unavailable in Canada.
3. 27 H.O.P.E (Healthy Organic Parkdale Edibles) Community Garden in Parkdale teaches community youth organic gardening techniques.
3. 28 The Thorncliffe Park Community Garden is located on a Hydro Corridor right-of-way. It makes use of limited green-space in the neighbourhood.

Summary

Crafting Intercultural Spaces

The projects examined in this chapter illustrate how architects, designers, and institutions are addressing the needs of a multicultural and multiethnic city population. The case studies range from buildings designed for specific cultural groups (the JCCC and Noor Cultural Centre) to formal and informal public gathering places, which foster and support difference while simultaneously uniting people in a shared pursuit. When compared and contrasted to one another, the case studies reveal the following common characteristics, or qualities of place, that are essential for creating ‘intercultural spaces:’

- *Provide a mixture of programs*

The Toronto Public Library, Collingwood Neighbourhood House, and Rich Mix Cultural Centre bring a number of elements that are meaningful to different groups into close proximity with one another. This strategy creates the opportunity for bundling and connecting sociocultural activities, cultural organizations, and institutions that rarely interact in everyday life. Segregated experiences may be juxtaposed, and individual perspectives may be shaken by interaction with people from other cultural manifestations.

- *Include features that are universally valued*

Engaging people in activities which are valued by a large cross section of the population, such as sports, recreation, education, and leisure create bonds across the dividing lines of race, age, culture, or gender; producing what Oldenburg and Putnam refer to as ‘bridging social capital’.⁵⁷ People from different backgrounds can find common ground in a shared pursuit or activity: the cultivation of a community garden, a football game, music festival, or a computer class.

Collectively held values can also be used to create places that hold meaning for multiple groups. For instance, architects Moriyama and Teshima incorporated the universal idea of ‘sacred light’ and religious numerology as a theme for the design of the Prayer Hall at University of Toronto Multi-Faith Centre. The use of culture and religion-specific iconography is avoided by focusing on a single idea that unites different groups through shared values. Likewise, the public library continues to be an important institution for multicultural populations because of the value all cultures place on education and the universal tradition of storytelling.

- *Focus on unique qualities of experience, site, and material*

In the case studies examined, both the Idea Store and the University of Toronto Multi-Faith Centre reject the idea of neutrality to guarantee the inclusion of maximum groups. Instead, both buildings respond to specifics of their site and their program. The Idea Store’s simple and precise form is modeled according to the influences of the site. For example, the library’s primary entry extends directly from the sidewalk, under the library skin to the second floor, so that pedestrians flow into the building as easily as they would down the street. The transparent and translucent building skin integrates the scale, colours, and patterns of the surrounding context while visually connecting the

active interior spaces with the busy passage to the supermarket or the street.

In comparison, the University of Toronto Multi-Faith Centre creates a unique sensory experience by incorporating a highly tactile material palette into the otherwise simple design of the Prayer Hall. All groups using the Centre can find value in the haptic experience while engaging in their different forms of worship. Similarly, the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre's original design avoided the simplistic and stereotypical representation of the Japanese community by focusing on the creation of high quality spaces using light, materials, and relationship to site, within a modern architectural aesthetic. As a result the building continues to be relevant and valued to the Muslim community today, even though they inhabit the building in a manner altogether different from its original concept.

- *Allow for appropriation*

Open-ended or 'loose' spaces may be appropriated by diverse people at different times and for different purposes. 'Loose' space is characterized by the absence of the determinacy common to place types with assigned and limited functions. In comparison, 'loose' spaces provide the opportunity for multiple and often unforeseen uses and encounters. For instance, the University of Toronto Multi-Faith Centre accommodates different forms of worship with an open floor plan that may be particularized by the addition of furniture, sacred objects and other forms of iconography. Similarly, different groups may claim the city street at different times and for different purposes: cultural and religious events, street festivals, parades, protests or demonstrations. They alter the banal street environment into a social forum, celebration space, or political platform with the addition of an event. At a smaller scale, the community garden plot is a fixed space appropriated season after season. Each person claims the plot as their own with the plants, vegetables, and landscaping techniques they choose.

- *Emphasize connections, thresholds and 'liminal spaces'*

The design task for intercultural spaces does not solely lie in intermingling different groups but also in making what Hajer and Reijndorp refer to as the "sutures that connect those dissected worlds in the design of in-between places."²⁵⁸ Architects must focus on the design of the transitions, crossings, connections, and in-between spaces where intercultural experiences (confrontation with otherness, a change of perspective and exchange) occur. The Idea Store design follows this approach by emphasizing its position between heterogeneous precincts, extending their influence into the library to provoke new relationships. Similarly, the atrium in Rich Mix acts as a gathering point or nexus for people undertaking different activities within the building. Primary circulation spaces line the edges of the atrium and function as permeable thresholds between this freely accessible space and the semi-public cultural venues. The community kitchen at the centre of the Collingwood Neighbourhood House functions in much the same way, gathering people together at the symbolic hearth of the 'home.'

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- 2 Phil Wood and Charles Landry, *Intercultural city: planning for diversity advantage* (London; Sterling, VA: Earthscan, 2008), 34.
- 3 Ibid, 34.
- 4 Ash Amin, "Ethnicity and the multicultural city: living with diversity," *Environment and Planning A*, June 2002: 959-980.

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- 5 Amin, "Ethnicity and the multicultural city: living with diversity", 17.
- 6 Liette Gilbert and Mustafa Dikec, "Right to the City: Politics of citizenship," in *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre*, ed. Kanishka Goonewardena, Stephan Kipfer and Christian Schmid, 250-263 (New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis, 2008), 258-259.
- 7 Sandercock & Lyssiotis, *Cosmopolis II*, 96.
- 8 Ash Amin, "Ethnicity and the multicultural city: living with diversity".

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- 9 Maarten A. Hajer and Arnol Reijndorp, *In search of new public domain: analysis and strategy* (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2001), 128.
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- 18 Thomas Tufte and Maja Riis, "Cultural Fields, Communication and Ethnicity: Public Libraries and Ethnic Media Supply in a Neighbourhood of Copenhagen," *Gazette* (SAGE Publications), August 2001: 331-350.
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Chapter 4

The Language Centre

*"I did hear the city's susurrus,
loud, wide, promising, like wine, obscurity and rapture,
the bright veiled Somali women hyphenating Scarlett Road,
the eternal widows, Azorean and Italian at Igreja de Santa
Inez and Iglesia de San Antonio. At the Sea King Fish Market,
the Portuguese men have learned another language. "Yes
sweetie, yes dabling, and for you only this good good price."
This to the old Jamaican women who ask, "Did you cut the fish
like I told you?" Why are you charging me so much?" This dancing,
these presences, not the least, writing the biographies
of streets, I took, why not, yes as wonderful"*

*"at these crossroads, transient selves flare
in the individual drama, in the faith of translation,"*

Dionne Brand, Thirsty XXII

The Intercultural Language Centre is conceived as a gathering place to encounter, share in, and celebrate the complexity and vitality of Toronto as a unique multicultural city. The design re-imagines the Toronto District School Board's primary ESL training school, the Bickford Centre, as a language learning campus dedicated to the education, amplification and continuance of the over 100 different languages spoken in the city. The Intercultural Language Centre acts as a portal through which individuals can encounter and engage in cultural knowledge other than their own. Building upon the existing educational facilities, the Intercultural Language Centre provides new infrastructures for the display and performance of literature, art and expressive cultural works by Toronto's new and diverse cultural communities. Moreover, the centre is a platform for the declaration, negotiation, and understanding of cultural differences.

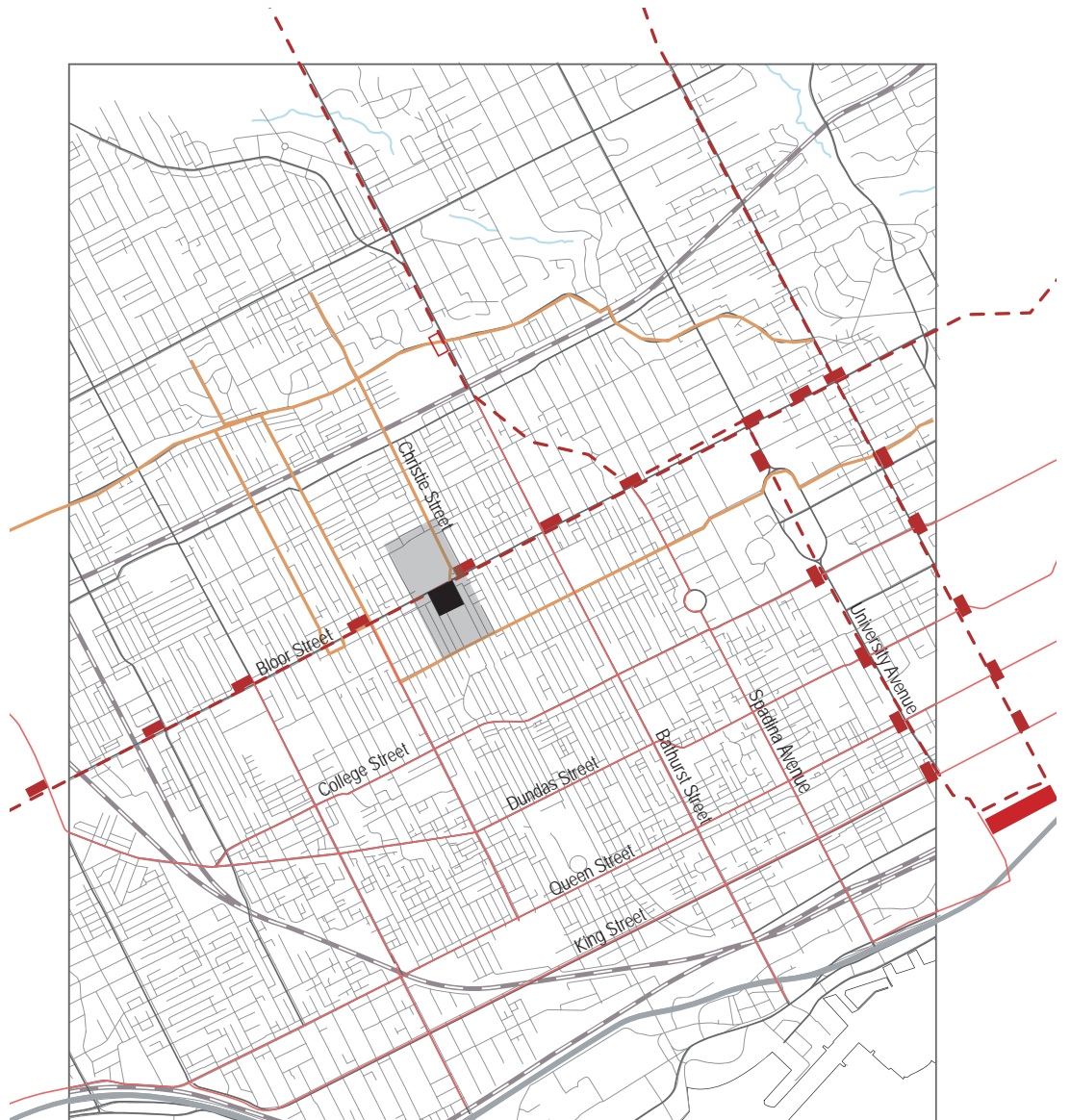
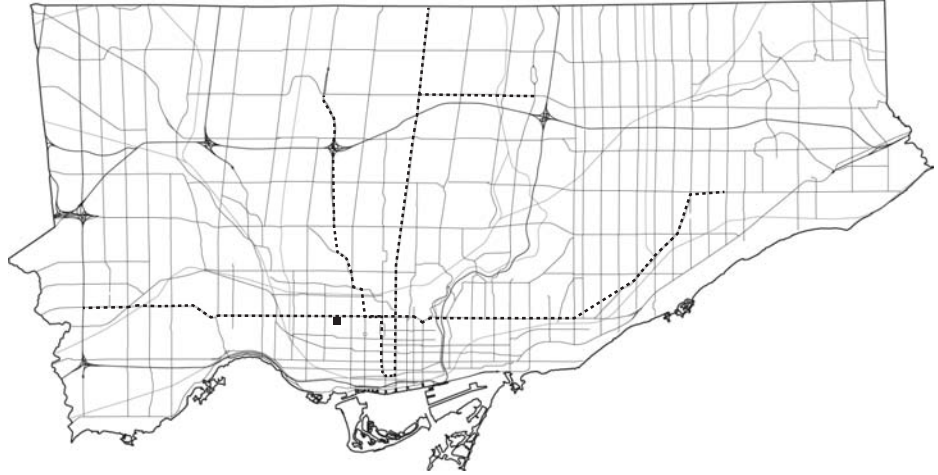


A new multilingual Library is the focus and primary feature of the Intercultural Language Centre proposal. The library includes a circulating collection of print, audio-visual and digital media in 100 different languages, from Afrikaans to Zulu. It is also an archive and storehouse of the cultural narratives, history, and imaginations of Toronto's diverse population. The library gives voice and physical presence to the often-unrecognized dynamic multicultural influences that have shaped and continue to shape the city's hybrid identity.

The Intercultural Language Centre affords the city an opportunity to draw upon the stories of the city's new and established immigrants. Residents both new and old can engage unknown worlds, bridge across social and cultural boundaries to discover similarities as well as differences, find overlapping interests, and create new hybrid cultural narratives. The Intercultural Language Centre offers a vision for a new kind of gathering: the city as anthology.



4.1 The Intercultural Language Centre from Christie Pits Park.



4.2 Site Location relative to major transit lines

4.3 Context Plan 1:5000

- - - Subway
- Streetcar Route
- Bus Route



The Site

The design for the Language Centre reflects challenges inherent to its location at the intersection of Christie Pits and Bloor Street, adjacent to the site of the Christie Pits Riot.

Furthermore, the site occupies a threshold location between Toronto's emblematic core, flagship institutions, and the day-to-day activities of the city's residential neighbourhoods. The site is positioned along the Bloor-Danforth subway line and serves to connect a string of ethnic enclaves and business districts, including Greektown on the Danforth, Little Portugal, and Koreatown.

Three distinct urban typologies surround the Language Centre site: an ethnocentric retail corridor (Koreatown), a culturally diverse residential neighbourhood, and municipally owned parkland – Christie Pits Park to the North and Bickford Park to the South. They engage a variety of people from a cross-section of cultures, classes and races typical in Toronto's core. The Language Centre's location at the centre of these typological zones has the potential to mediate and enrich the relationship between these distinct city spaces.

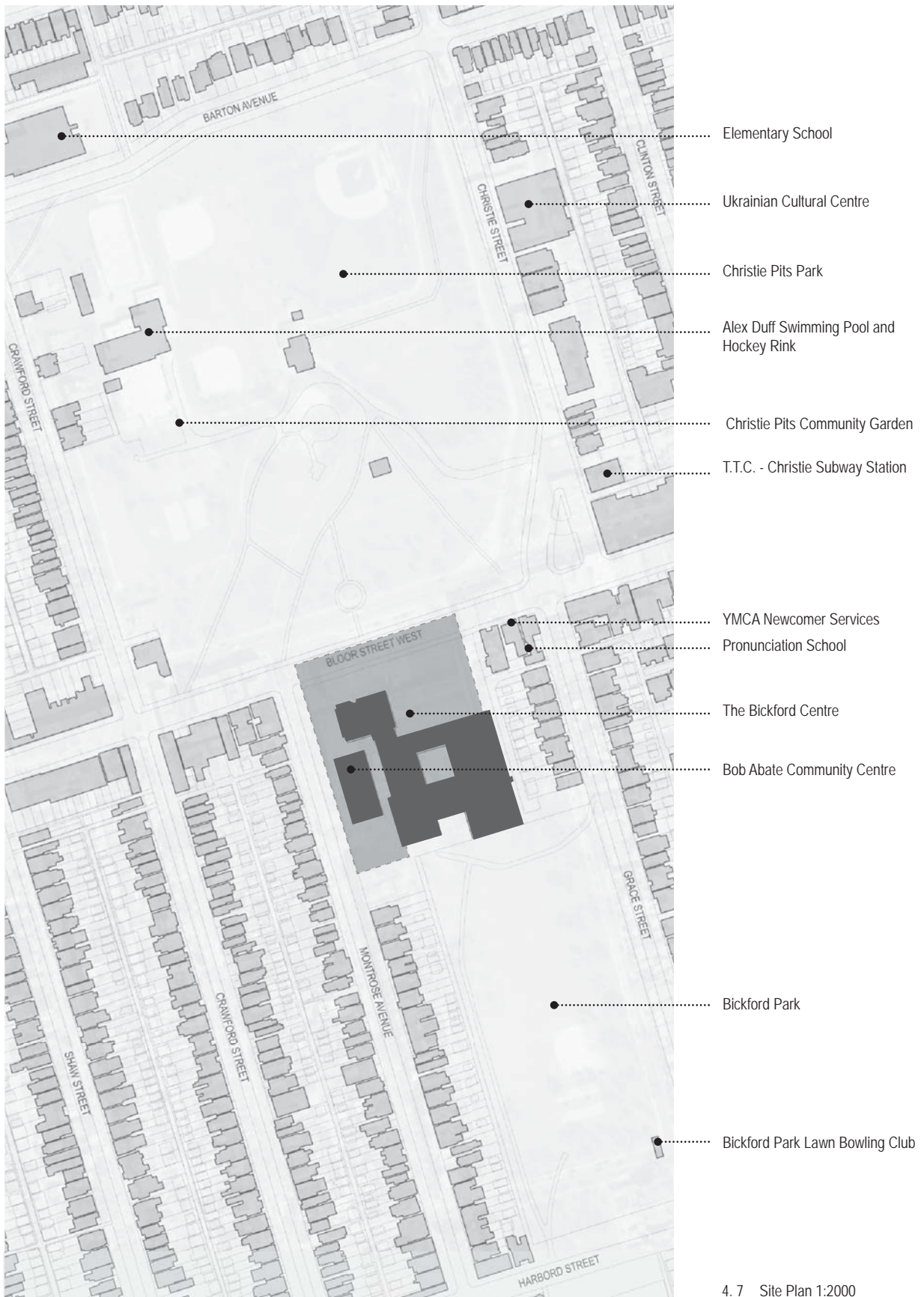
Since the 1950's the surrounding neighbourhood has hosted a variety of newcomer groups: Italian, Portuguese, and more recently Latin American and Korean communities. Each group has contributed to the public and urban character of the neighbourhood. However, few new immigrants are settling in the area today. Young native-born and middle-class professionals and established Southern Europeans immigrants are the primary residents of the Christie Pits neighbourhood.

Despite the decreasing number of new immigrants in the immediate neighbourhood, the Language Centre site continues to be relevant to Toronto's newcomer populations because it occupies a threshold position between a variety of language and settlement services. The current facility on the site – The Bickford Centre – is the Toronto District School Board's (TDSB) primary English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching facility. It is one of the many publicly-funded, non-profit organizations serving the area in conjunction with several local private, for-profit language schools. In addition to traditional ESL training, the Bickford Centre hosts employment specific literacy classes, citizenship preparation courses, and English tutoring under the federally funded LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) program. The Centre is one of three Language and Skills Assessment Centres operated by the Toronto District School Board. These regional centres evaluate prospective students' language ability and direct them to the appropriate ESL programs in their local neighbourhoods.

The Christie Pits neighbourhood is named after the former Christie Sand Pits, which were located on the north side of Bloor Street in the early twentieth century. Christie Street itself is named after William Mellis Christie, founder of Toronto's Christie & Brown Cookie Company, today known simply as Mr. Christie. The Christie Pits name is used in reference to the park and the surrounding neighbourhood to this day.



- 4. 4 Willowdale Park (Christie Pits) 1929.
- 4. 5 Two storey commercial buildings with apartments or offices above line Bloor Street from Spadina Avenue to Christie Street.
- 4. 6 Koreatown is centered at the intersection of Bloor and Manning Streets.



4.7 Site Plan 1:2000

Challenges and Potentials

In addition to the TDSB, the Bickford Centre site currently houses three other significant public institutions: the University of Toronto, the West End Alternative Secondary School and the Bob Abate Community Centre. The University of Toronto's Hart House manages the school's existing auditorium and hosts a variety of community theatre productions as well as student arts and music festivals. The West End Alternative Secondary School occupies the Bickford Centre's third floor. Approximately 75 high school aged students, with a variety of learning and behavioral disabilities, attend the alternative school each semester. Adjacent to the Bickford Centre, the Bob Abate Community Centre incorporates a variety of municipally operated recreation amenities, such as music rooms, a community kitchen, gym and dance studio. The community centre also administers access to the Bickford Centre school gymnasium. This mixture of both newcomer specific and general use amenities at, and adjacent to, the Bickford Centre, make it relevant to a large cross-section of user groups, increasing its capacity to act as an intercultural gathering place.

The school's current design fails to engage the public realm and its unique site context – both key factors for creating intercultural spaces. Programs on the Bickford Centre site operate within the confines of their existing structures and are effectively orphaned from the street and adjacent parks. The interstitial spaces, including the original courtyard, forecourt and connections to the Bob Abate Community Centre, are treated purely as spaces of passage, rather than places of encounter and exchange. The building's primary entrance is pulled back from Bloor Street and sunken below the level of the sidewalk, breaking the continuity of Bloor Street's commercial strip and disconnecting views to the Christie Pits Park. These flaws prevent the site from fulfilling its urban and architectural potential. There is little interaction between the various stakeholders and user groups on the site or in the public spaces beyond. For example, Bickford Centre students rarely use the site for more than literacy training purposes, assuming that the adjacent recreation amenities are unofficially 'reserved' for the community residents. Similarly, the community members ignore the language programming and students.





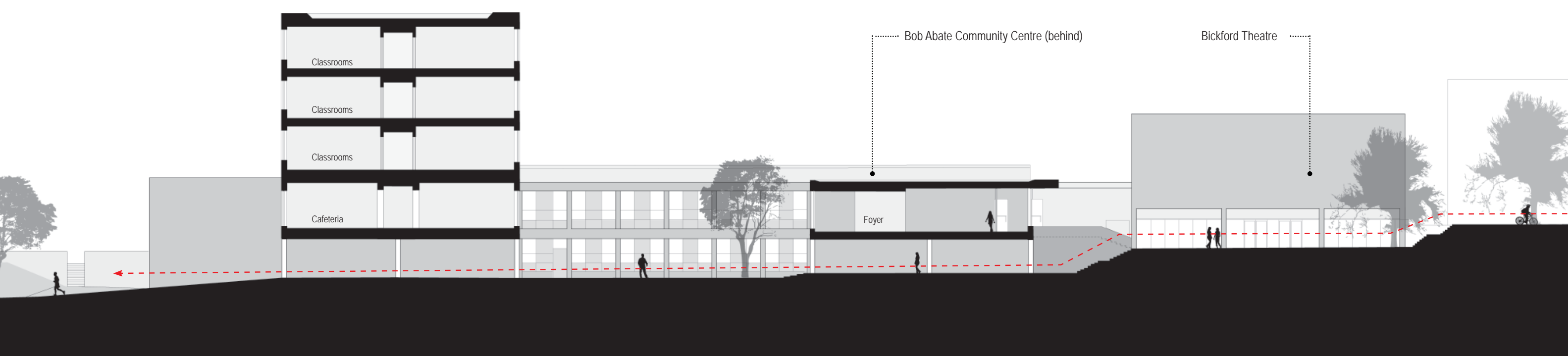
4.8 Opposite Page: Site plan of the existing Bickford Centre. The building was constructed in 1965 by Page and Steele Architects.

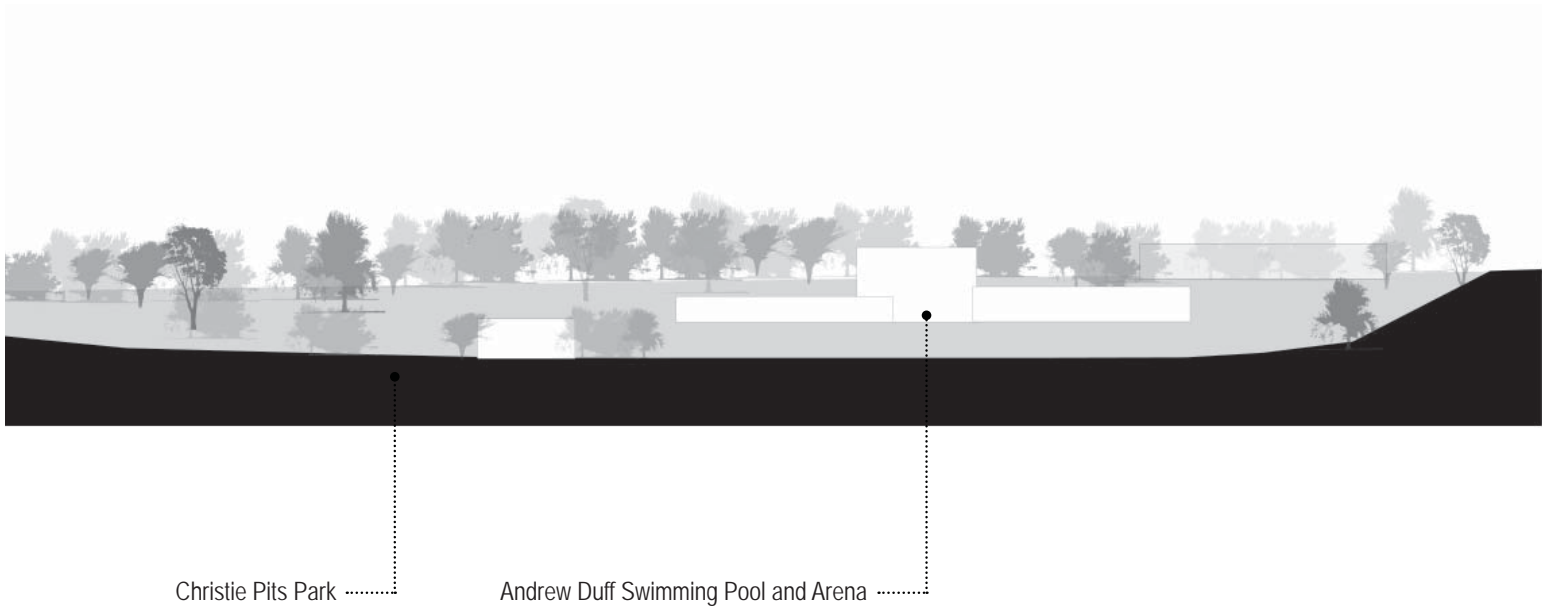
4.9 The Bickford Centre for Literacy and Basic Skills Training - main entrance and fore-court. The Bickford Theatre entrance is to the right.

4.10 Forecourt from West End Alternative School entrance.

4.11 Inner courtyard looking North

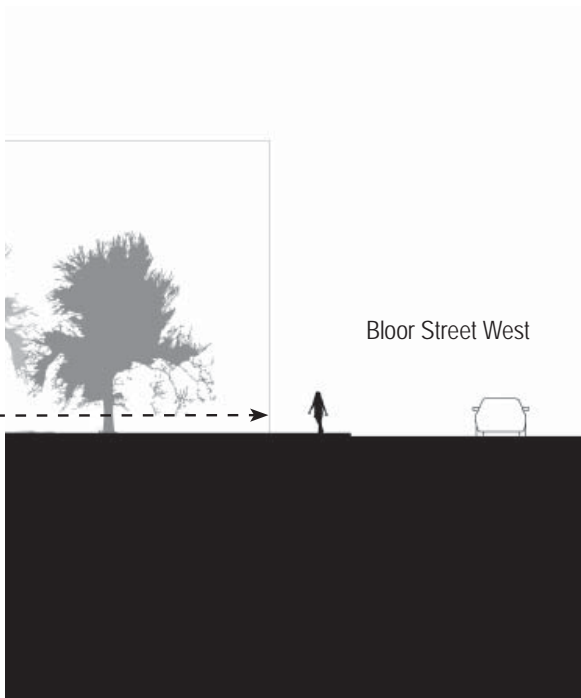
4.12 South facade from Bickford Park



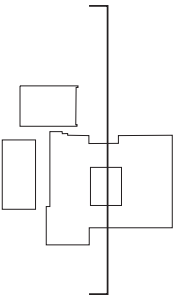


Christie Pits Park

Andrew Duff Swimming Pool and Arena



Bloor Street West



Garrison Creek Ravine: The site is part of the Garrison Creek watershed system. The creek originally ran through the Christie Pits quarry and Bickford Park until 1915 when it was diverted into a culvert north of Bloor Street. The creek originally flowed under bridges at Harbord and College Streets, until the early 1940's when the creek and bridges were buried underground. The balustrade of the bridge at Harbord Street is still visible at the south end of Bickford Park today.

The Bickford Centre is named after the original property owner: Colonel E. Oscar Bickford.

- 4. 13 Long section through site 1: 1000
- 4. 14 Long section through site 1: 500

Retail and Restaurant

CIC Resource Centre

Intercultural Library

Art Gallery

Striated Landscape

Community Gardens



Design Approach -

Integrating the knowledge gained from the previous chapters, the Language Centre and Multilingual Library design follows three primary approaches:

Gateway/Access – The Language Centre provides access to multiple community resources through a single gateway by enhancing the Bickford Centre’s existing campus condition and introducing several new venues to the site. Like the city with its network of public spaces and destinations, the Language Centre creates a series of addresses within an otherwise public setting. These addresses become places of convergence that host a number of interactive venues relating to issues of language and cultural production. The Multilingual Library, Art Gallery, and Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) resource centre compliment the current education and recreation programmes and invite new audiences to participate on site. Community residents and literacy school users can engage in new activities and participate in social and cultural arenas they may not otherwise have the opportunity to access. Residents may also encounter diverse groups and individuals as they seek out new resources or simply observe different ‘others’ as they participate in habitual activities and venues.

The new programmatic additions are positioned along Bloor Street to increase the site’s street presence, engage with the Christie Pits Park, and encourage connections to the adjacent retail corridor and Koreatown. Retail and restaurant programmes at the base of the library continue the scale and patterning of the surrounding commercial typologies and activate the Bloor Street sidewalk. Similarly, the art gallery frames and activates the existing Bickford Centre fore-court, intensifying the campus design.

Landscape – The Language Centre design re-connects the site with its surrounding urban and ecological context and local community by uniting disparate programmatic, urban and environmental systems. Finite delineations of space including dichotomies of public vs. private, indoor vs. outdoor, circulation vs. gathering, and landscape vs. hardscape are reinterpreted and sometimes erased in favour of expanded and liminal relationships.

Similarly, a continuous striated landscape boardwalk permeates the interstitial spaces and newly formed courtyards between existing and proposed programs, linking them to one another and to locations beyond the site. The boardwalk re-conceives these currently monofunctional circulation spaces as open-ended and non-prescriptive public gathering areas that may operate in conjunction with Language Centre activities or be appropriated for informal or unforeseen activities by Language Centre users and the public in general.

Design Expression - The architectural form is attuned to the unique phenomenology of its site and context, both urban and environmental, and offers amenity to library users through rich sensory experiences. The architectural language not only embodies the cultural and urban tensions inherent to the site, but more importantly reflects the vitality and dynamism brought to the city via immigration.

Christie Pits Park

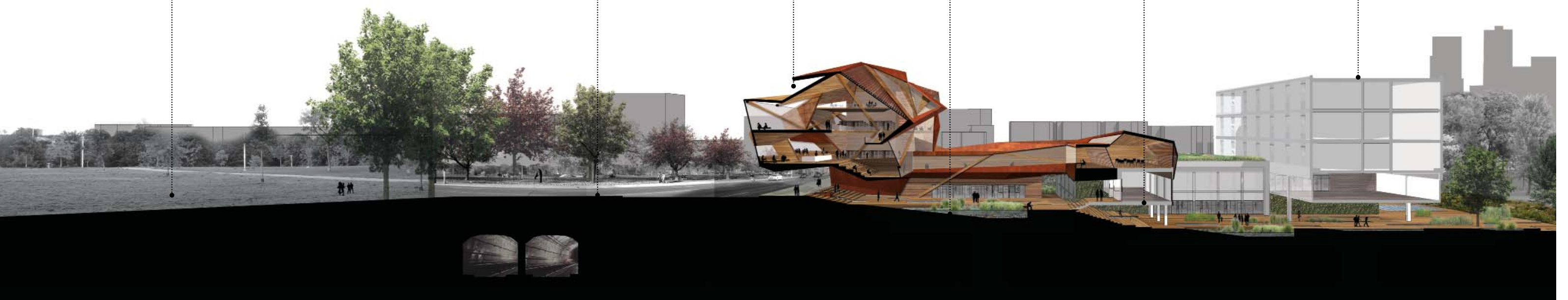
Bloor Street

Multilingual Library

Collection Pool and Courtyard

Bickford Centre main entrance

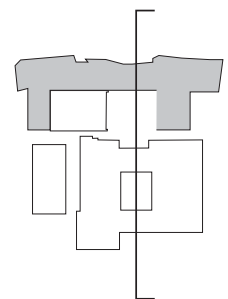
Existing Bickford Centre building



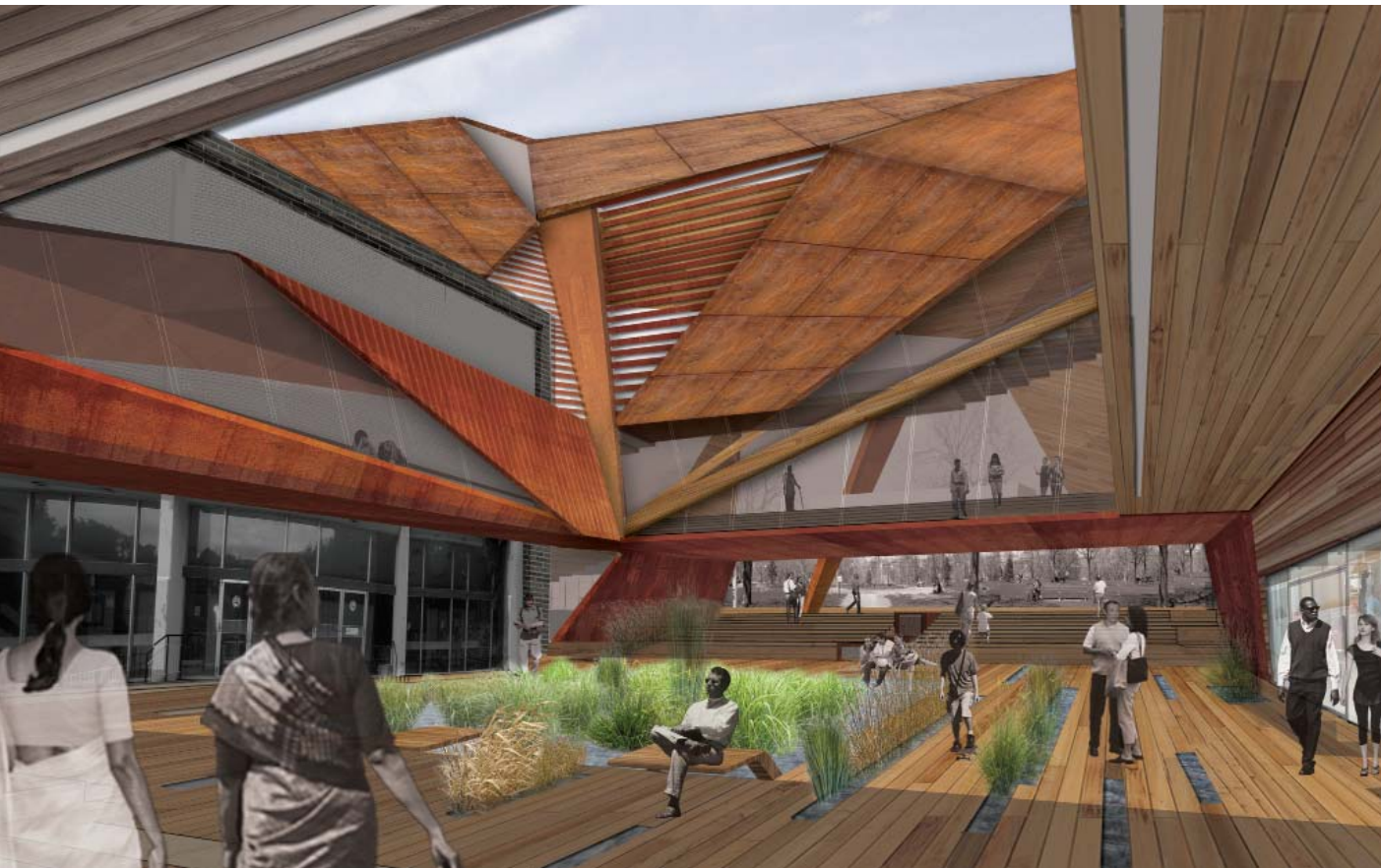
The Boardwalk - Connections

A striated landscaped boardwalk reconciles the various programs, buildings, and interstitial spaces on the Language Centre site and binds them into a cohesive campus. Following the site's natural slope, the boardwalk is divided into a series of terraces and courtyards. These landscaped spaces create a navigable link between the Christie Pits and Bickford Park ravines and extend their influence into the Language Centre site.

Tracing the path of the former Garrison Creek, the boardwalk is also a constructed 'wetland' that filters and collects rainwater runoff, reducing the Language Centre's dependence on the Garrison Creek sewer system. The surface is marked with parallel troughs corresponding to the dimension and orientation of the boardwalk's wood planking. The troughs, planted with indigenous grasses and wetland plants, collect runoff as it follows the natural slope of the site and passively filters it into the surrounding soil. Larger collection pools, located in the Bloor Street and Bickford Courtyards, retain excess rainwater and direct it to the south edge of the site, where it is stored and used to irrigate the adjacent community gardens. This 'constructed wetland' system not only provides sustainable site drainage and rainwater decontamination, it also re-connects and reveals the site's ecological history as part of Toronto's ravine system.



4.16 Site Section - Boardwalk Landscape
1:1000



Courtyards

The courtyards and terraces interspersed along the landscaped boardwalk are envisioned as informal gathering spaces and zones of encounter between Language Centre users and individuals travelling across the site. With the addition of landscaping and informal seating, the courtyards act as outdoor rooms or antechambers to Language Centre amenities. People are invited to linger and interact in these loose and open-ended areas as they travel between more clearly defined programs. The public courtyards also offer potential for gatherings to occur outside of the Language Centre operating hours or between people who do not wish to engage with the formally programmed spaces.

The Bloor Courtyard, framed by the multilingual library to the north, the existing Bickford Centre School and new art gallery to the West, acts as a vestibule to the Language Centre site. As the primary point of entry off of Bloor Street, the Bloor Courtyard orients users to the various programs and amenities available at the Language Centre. It is also the Language Centre's principal outdoor social gathering area. At the centre of the Bloor Courtyard is a large collection pool, which provides a focal point for formal and informal gatherings and events associated with the adjacent programs and buildings.

4.17 Bloor Courtyard, looking toward intercultural library.



Similarly, the existing Bickford Courtyard is linked to the Bloor Street Courtyard via the boardwalk. The formerly abandoned and undefined outdoor space now contains fixed benches in a shifting pattern with the boardwalk water troughs and a large collection pool. These interventions create an interactive environment for people to gather and socialize. The Bickford Courtyard is also the primary point of entry to the Bickford Centre gymnasium, which is able to function separately from the language learning school.

4. 18 Bickford Courtyard, looking toward gymnasium



1

2

2

4

3



Community Gardens

The southern edge of the Bickford Centre is re-imagined as a permeable and variegated threshold between the Language Centre and the Bickford Park ravine. Community garden plots, each measuring 2x3 meters, extend into Bickford Park like fingers. They are arranged along wood-plank pathways, connecting back to the landscape boardwalk. Each garden plot is irrigated with site runoff that is stored and filtered through the system of collection pools on the site. The existing Bickford Swimming Pool, closed in 2008, is re-purposed as the southern most collection pool and dedicated specifically to the community garden. The exterior walls surrounding the swimming pool are removed, opening up the pool deck to the boardwalk. The existing steel structure is retained to act as a sunshade and trellis for the garden. The new collection pool connects to a smaller system of irrigation channels threaded through the community garden, giving access to water at each individual plot.

The community gardens are operated in conjunction with the Christie Pits community garden north of the Language Centre Site. Garden memberships are allocated to a mix of local residents and families, and individuals or groups from the school and library community. The Bob Abate Community Centre and the Language Centre also participate in the community garden, which supplements produce served in the community centre common kitchen and the language school cafeteria.

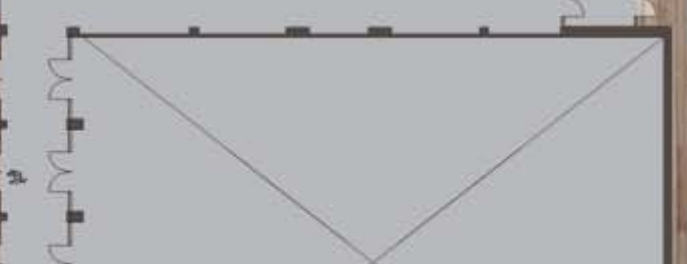
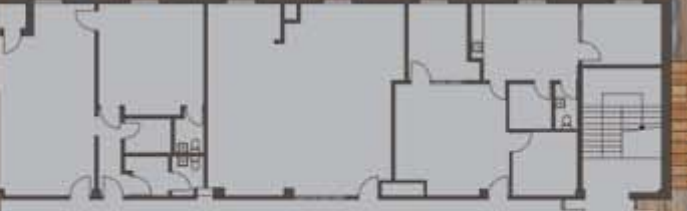
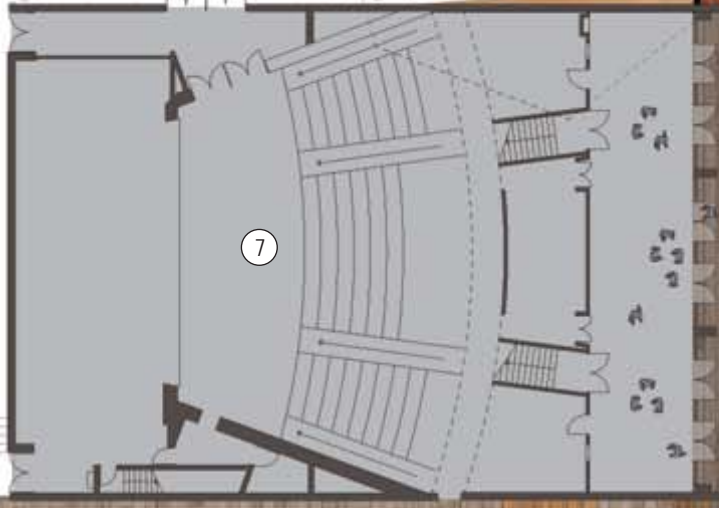
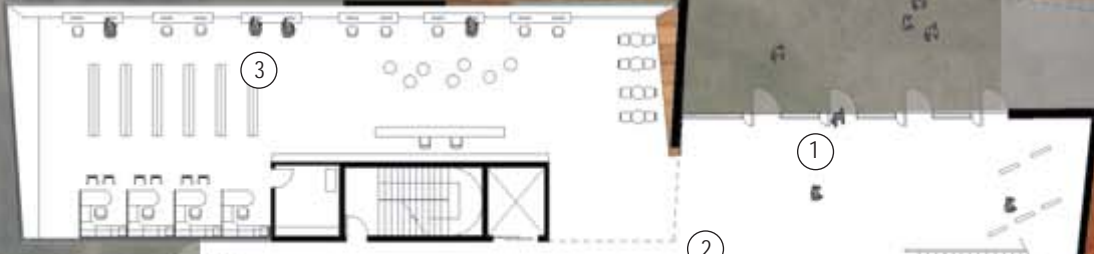
4.19 Community Gardens and retention ponds feed into Bickford Park 1:1000

1. Collection Pool (Re-purposed Bickford Swimming Pool)
2. Community Gardens
3. Plank Pathways
4. Irrigation Channel





4.20 Community Gardens and Bickford Park



-0.50 m

100



The Intercultural Library - Collection

The Intercultural Library's collection consists of domestic and internationally produced media in 116 different languages, as well as international materials currently found at the Multilanguage Centre at the Toronto Reference Library. The Intercultural Library's collection is divided into three layers, according to media format and level of public access. The collection is also placed above street level, on the second and third floors in the manner of a 'piano nobile,' to afford maximum views to Christie Pits Park and Bloor Street.

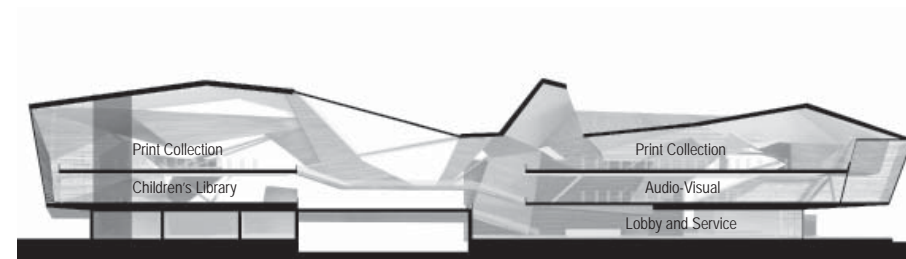
The ground level is preserved for the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) resource centre. The centre is a branch of the federal immigration agency and provides immigration services, legal counseling and information regarding various government sponsored immigration programs. New immigrants, permanent residents, and refugees can access the resource after traditional business operating hours.

Two retail spaces and an independently operated restaurant/café are located at the base of the Intercultural Library. They are designated for small business entrepreneurs in the neighbourhood and are leased from the Language Centre at reduced rates.

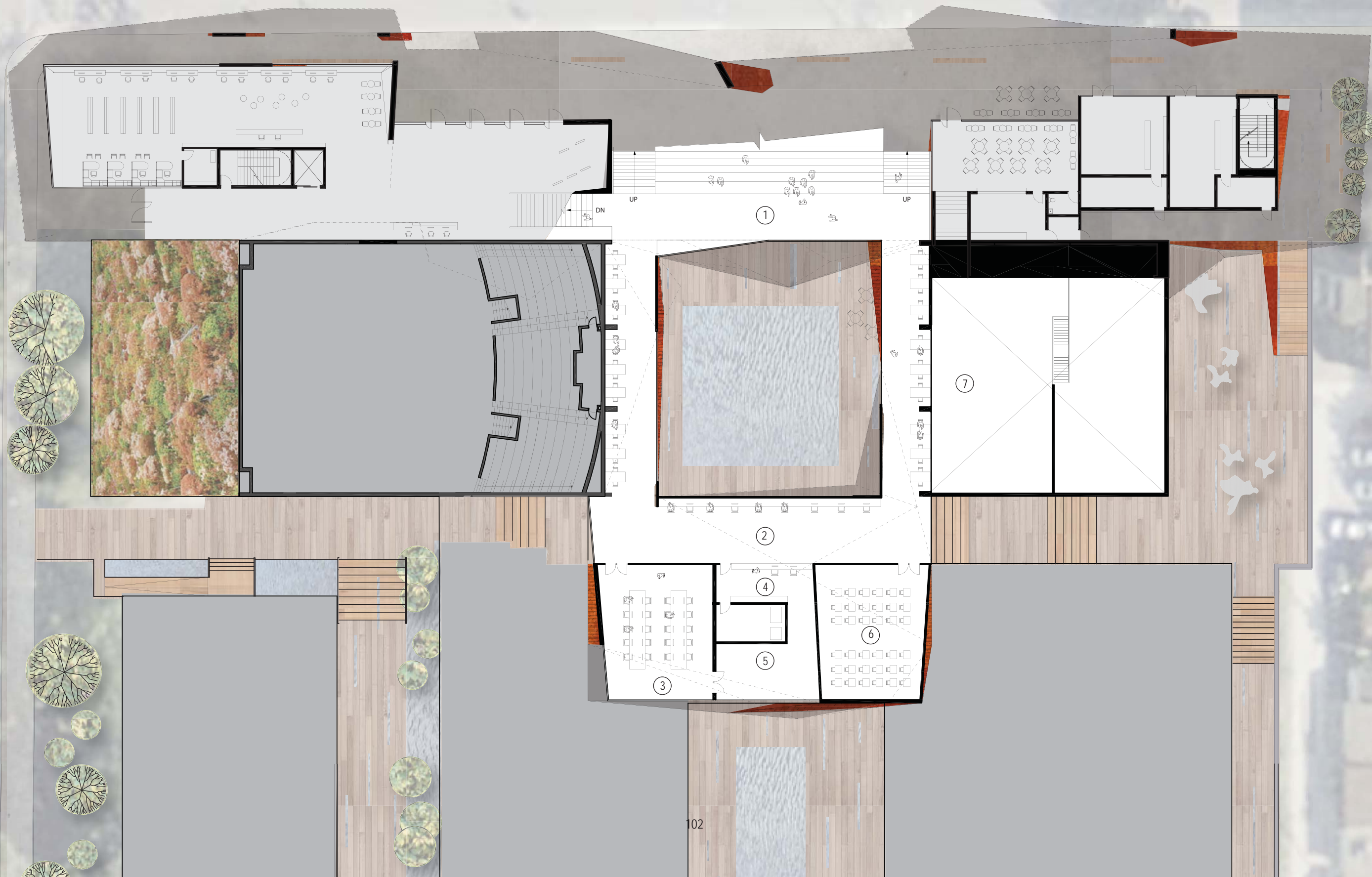
The Intercultural Language Centre curates the new art gallery and presents exhibitions that include the work of local artists, community members, or students attending the Intercultural Language Centre. A sculpture garden between the art gallery and the eastern edge of the site connects to Bloor Street and the existing West End Alternative School Entrance.

4.21 Ground Floor 1:500

1. Library Lobby
2. Circulation Desk
3. CIC Extended Hours Resource Centre
4. Administration
5. Restaurant
6. Retail
7. Bickford Community Theatre
8. Community Art Gallery
9. Sculpture Garden
10. Bickford Language Learning Centre
11. Bob Abate Community Centre



4.22 Intercultural Library Organization





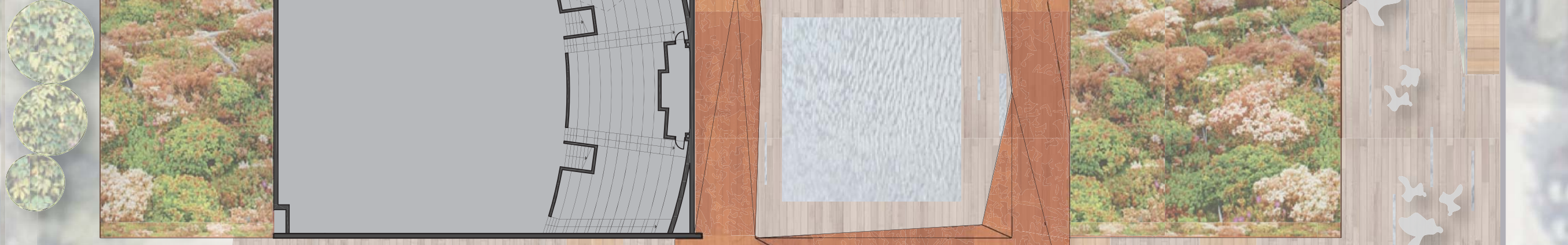
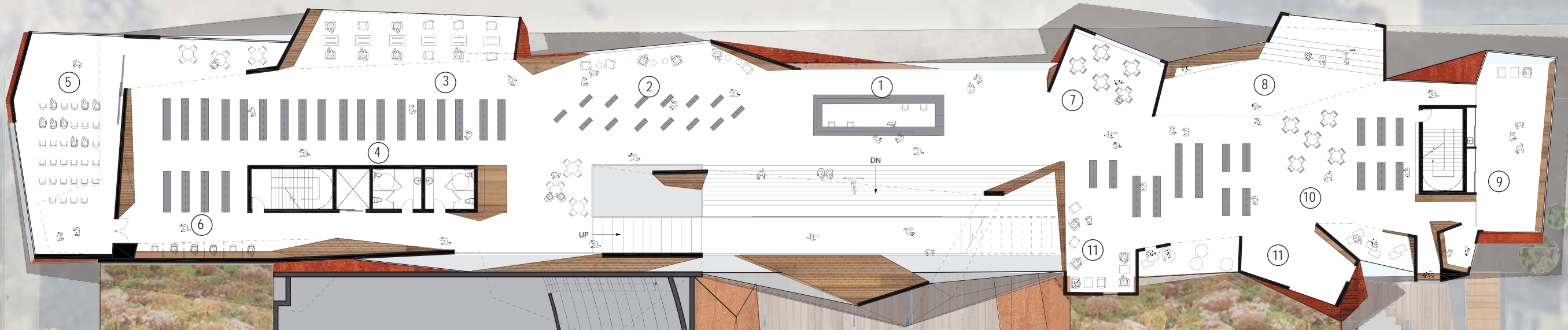
Intercultural Library - Digital Commons

The Digital Commons consists of 40 computer workstations and Internet terminals housed in a folded and perforated copper volume, which wraps the perimeter of the Bloor Street courtyard. The Commons forms an arcade and canopy around the entrances to the Bickford Theatre and Art Gallery and ties into the existing theatre building, the Bickford Centre school, and the new art gallery. It extends over the existing Bickford Centre to form a second storey, which contains classrooms, a digital support centre, and conference room.

4.23 Digital Commons 1:500

1. Stair and Stage
2. Digital Commons Computer Terminals
3. Classroom
4. Digital Support Centre
5. Conference Room
6. Classroom
7. Art Gallery Open to Below

4.24 Section through Digital Commons and Bloor Courtyard



Intercultural Library - Audio-Visual Collection

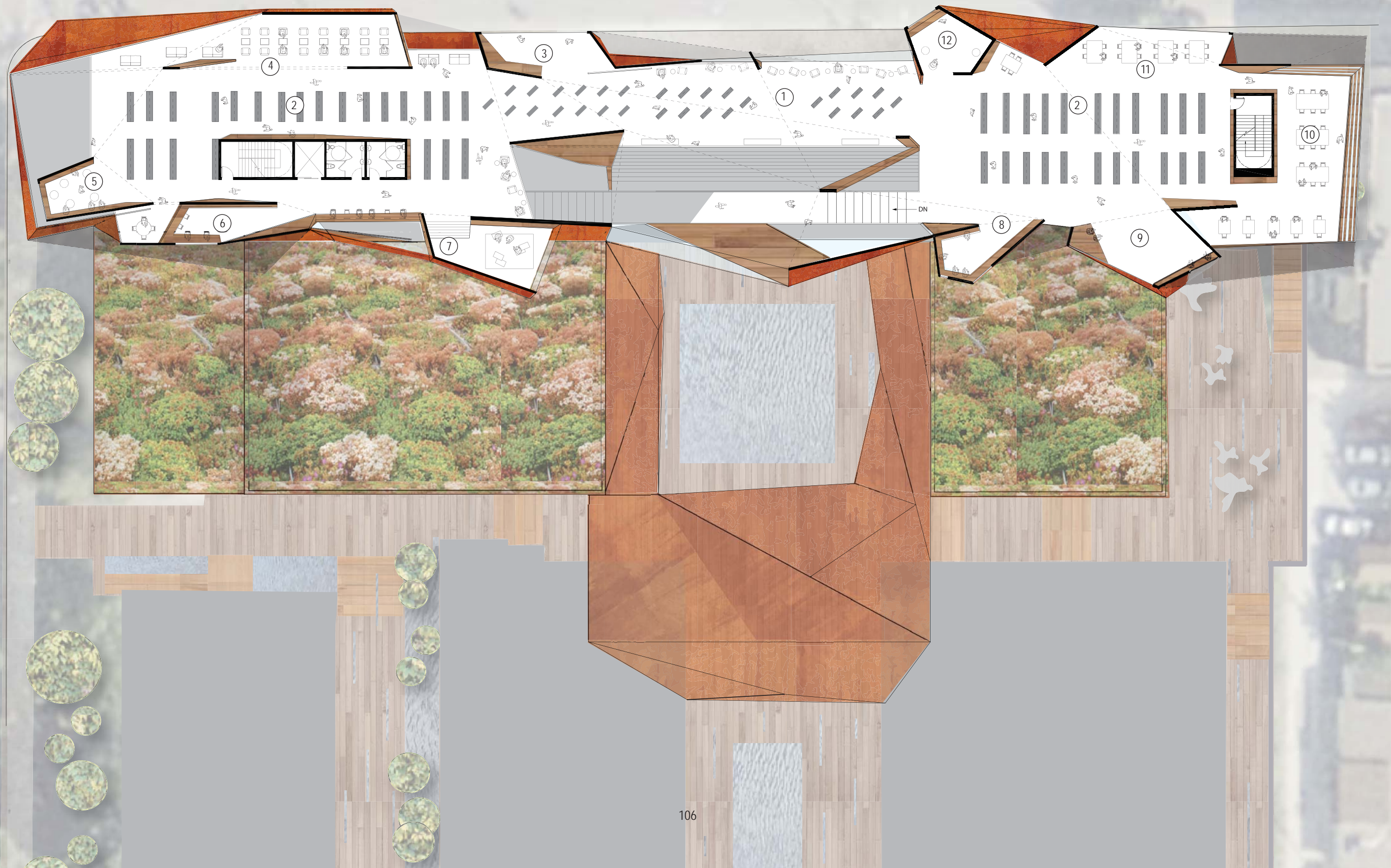
The audio-visual collection and children's library are located on the second floor of the multilingual library and are separated into distinct areas by the central circulation space, an informal amphitheatre, and information desk. The multilingual audio-visual collection includes audio books and language learning materials as well as collections of foreign film, television and music. Digital listening stations, viewing terminals, and audio study carrels compliment the collection and allow users to access additional online material in situ. The adjacent multipurpose performance hall offers practice and recital space for small groups of musicians, singers and other performers. The performance hall also functions as a small lecture theatre for library education programs and speakers.

Intercultural Library - Children's Collection

The children's library includes multilingual collections of stories, picture books, fairy tales and rhymes for children as well as literature and graphic novels for young adults. The wrapping and folding library skin forms intimate nooks and nested gathering spaces for quiet reading and group storytelling around the central collection space. A multipurpose studio is located at the edge of the children's collection and serves as an informal classroom, dance studio and crafts spaces.

9.4 Second Floor 1:500

1. Information
2. Popular DVD Collection
3. Media Viewing Stations
4. Audio/Visual Collection
5. Performance Hall
6. Listening Booths (Language Audio Study)
7. Children's Open Classroom
8. Children's Stage
9. Children's Multipurpose Room
10. Play Area
11. Reading Nooks





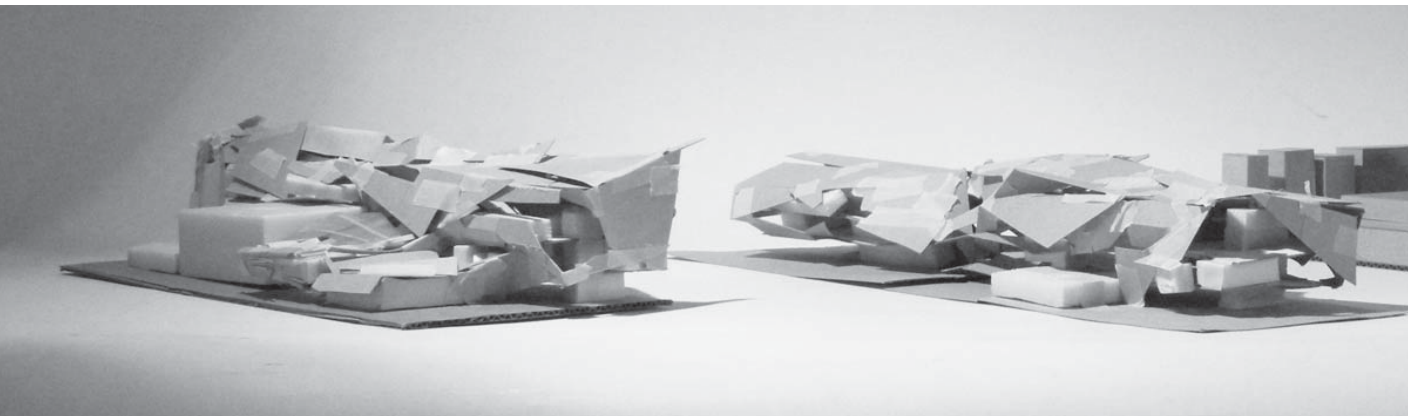
Intercultural Library - Print Collection

Located on the third floor, the print media is housed in a triple height space that spans the length of the Intercultural Library block. A roof comprised of interpenetrating planes connects the entire print collection and the associated reading and studying spaces. The print collection, which is arranged according to language first, then to the traditional subject organization, includes popular literature in its original language, Canadian literature in translation and multilingual periodical and newsprint collections in 100 languages. Additionally, books on cultural traditions and other areas of general interest such as biography, cuisine, travel, folklore, myths and legends, history, arts and music are included alongside their associated language group. An extensive reference section is also located on the third floor and includes multilingual, bilingual and unilingual dictionaries, phrase books, thesauri and visual dictionaries, specialized encyclopedias in areas of culture, civilization and history, and books on linguistics including grammar and instructional materials.

4.27 Third Floor 1:500

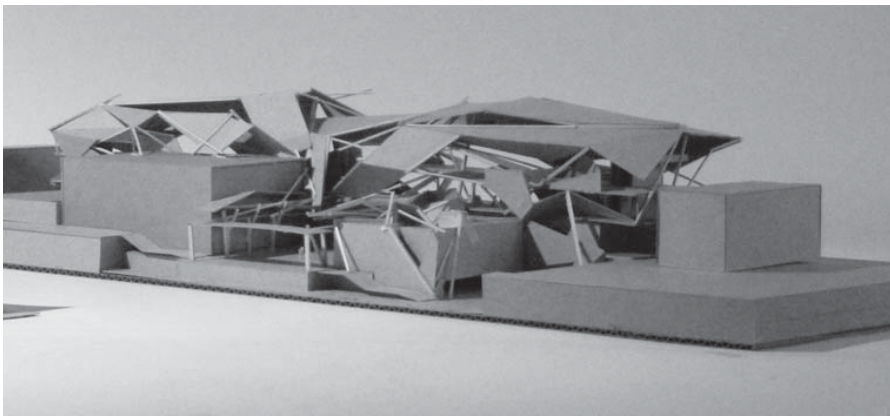
1. Periodical and Newsprint Collection
2. Print Collection
3. Gathering Room/Lecture Space
4. Reading Lounge
5. Small Group Study
6. Quiet Study
7. Small Group Lounge
8. Small Group Lounge
9. Large Group Lounge
10. Group Study
11. Quiet Study
12. Group Meeting Room

4.28 SKETCH -Third Floor Print Collection and Periodical Reading Area

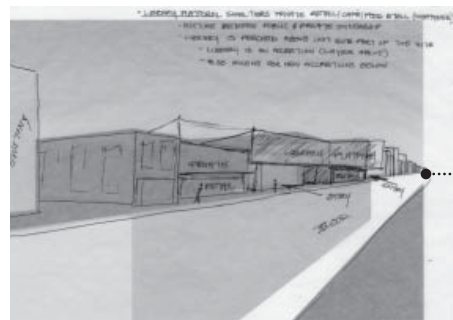
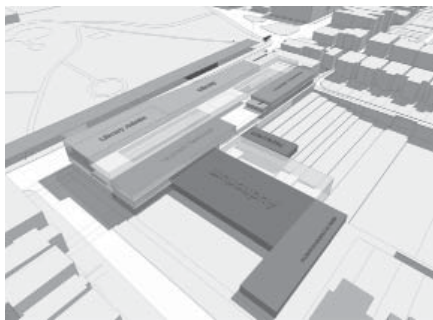
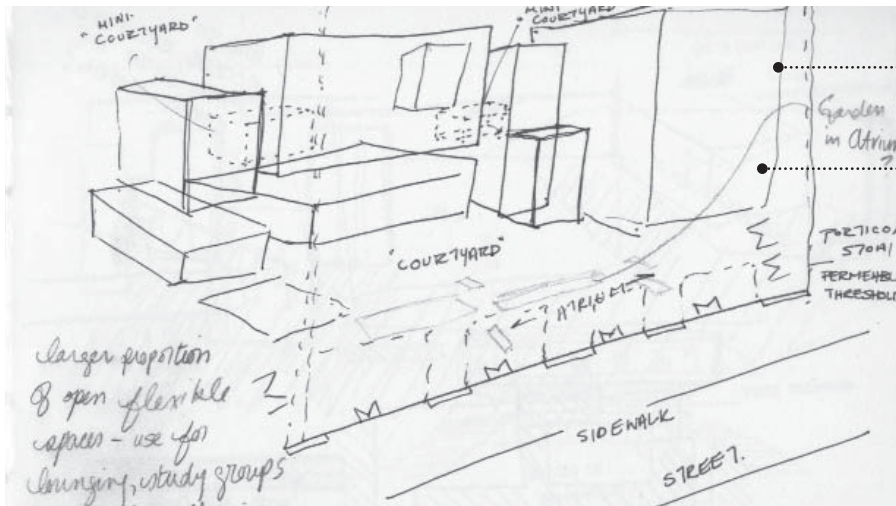
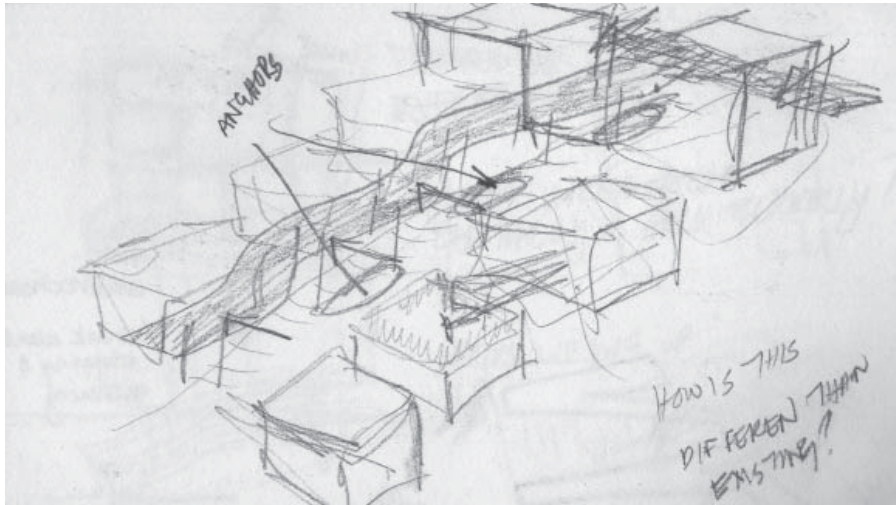


Design Expression - Form, Material and Phenomenology

The Intercultural Library design also explores the challenge of creating an authentic architectural form that articulates the dynamic influences shaping Toronto. The following design journal stands as a narrative of the project and documents the development of an architectural language over the course of the thesis. It traces the evolution from a programme and infrastructure-based approach, focused on the creation of 'loose' and 'open-ended' library spaces, to a strategy that engages the unique phenomenological qualities of the site: including light, weather, material and landscape, to inform an expressive and dynamic architectural morphology.



4. 29 Process models for library skin design.



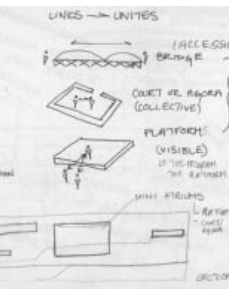
THE BRIDGE
SPACES OF CONNECTION AND BECOMING

• natural infrastructure that facilitates an interaction we can each affect it

CONNECTION - TRANSPARENT
 - HIGH OFFICE
 - TRANSPARENT COMMUNICATION

ACTION - GIVE COMMUNITY AVANCE
 - EXHIBITION
 - EXHIBITION
 - EXHIBITION
 - EXHIBITION

SPEECH - LANGUAGE CLASSES
 - LANGUAGE CLASSES
 - LANGUAGE CLASSES
 - LANGUAGE CLASSES
 - LANGUAGE CLASSES



VISIBLE, ACCESSIBLE, COLLECTIVE - using of interior spaces

EXCHANGE

- an opportunity to create one's initial action (forms - Space of Appearance)

- as a visual filter or volume used by public spectators or performers so that they seem to view by their audience

PLATFORM

March/April 2009 – Design Proposal

- The intercultural centre brings different groups together through a wide mix of cultural programming. Intercultural connections would occur as different people seek out different activities and access the programming provided.
- Centre has outright mandate for promoting intercultural connections between different groups.
- Will include programming evaluated in case studies.

Design Development

- Remove existing building from site: it does not support mixing, does not have a relationship to public realm, crumbling infrastructure and not originally designed for current programming.
- Incorporate the current language school programming with: library, theatre, community kitchen, small gymnasium, dance studio, day care, artists studio space, auditorium, restaurant/cafe and community garden, in one new 'Intercultural Centre'. (Similar to Rich Mix and Collingwood House)

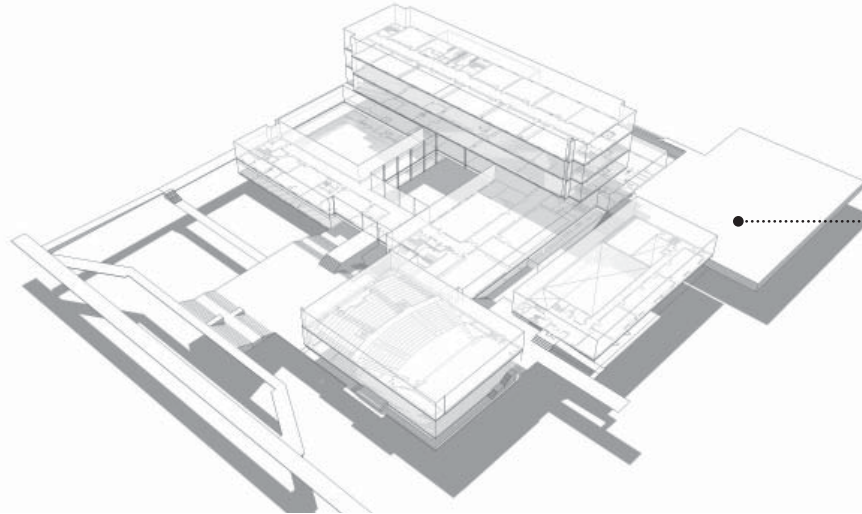
- Realign with the Bloor Street
- Engage with Bickford Park to the south.

- Focus on the thresholds and liminal spaces between different programmes and spaces to create 'weak borders.' Create charged borders where contrasting activities and groups meet and engage with each other.

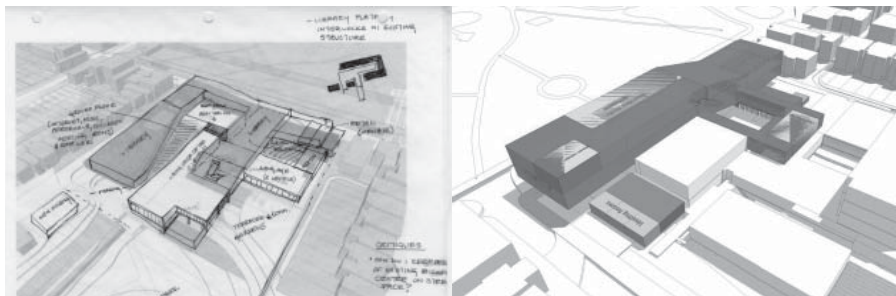
Critique

- An 'Intercultural Centre' is not a physical construction. By creating a place that emphasizes difference as its mandate it is really a vehicle of exclusion. It is impossible for a building to make people get along, also would not be frequented by everyone... would become a cultural centre without a specific culture to serve. Could become part of the existing multiculturalism rhetoric, rather than advancing beyond it. (See criticisms of Rich Mix.)
- Existing building already includes most of the programming that I am proposing and has an existing 'campus' condition.
- Impossible for one mega-building 'Intercultural Centre' to incorporate all of these activities into one structure. Different stakeholders would want separate spaces for security and ability to operate at different hours.

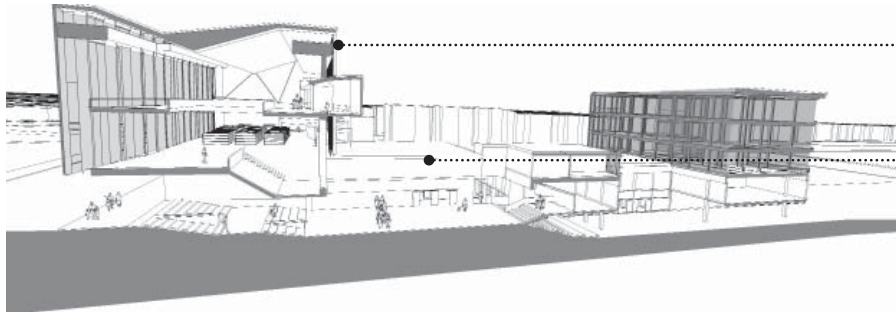
Techniques/Media: Sketchup volumetric sketches



Existing Bickford Centre structure and site circulation system



Site massing studies to determine the Multilingual Library's position in relation to the existing Bickford Centre. Options for keeping different amounts of the existing Bickford Centre structure.



Proposed Library bar building and new Bloor Courtyard.



Case Study - Applique, accretions and connections of Chinatown signage, Spadina Avenue, Toronto

May 2009 – Site Strategy

- Focus on the library for the intervention. It is already an intercultural programmes: resource valued by everyone, serves the broadest range of the city's population, and the biggest impact. (See case study on library, Chapter. 3 2)

- Expand the existing campus condition - different spaces for existing and new stakeholders. Keep existing building to house ESL training facilities and Bob Abate C.C. for leisure activities. Focus on the relationship between buildings: these spaces are liminal and connective zones – ideal for encounter.

- Library will be the accretion onto the existing site. Use the banal architecture of the existing Bickford Centre as an armature for the new intervention.

- Library building frames the site on Bloor – the public face of the Language Centre. The accretion opens the banal architecture to public realm and to the city.

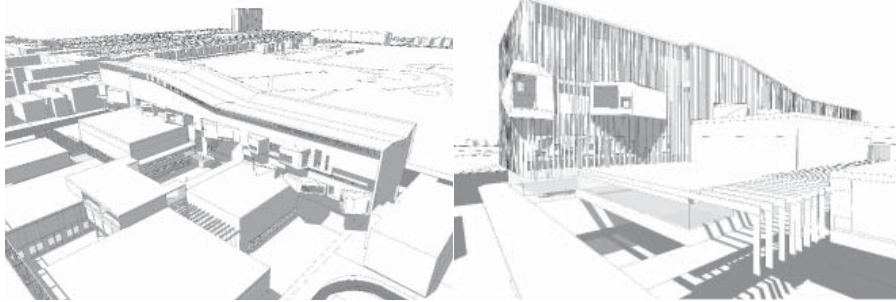
- Long Bar building design: Print collection on third floor in one large common room, ground floor: lobby/retail, second floor: A/V, children's collection.

- New Art gallery frames the existing courtyard with the theatre, and school.

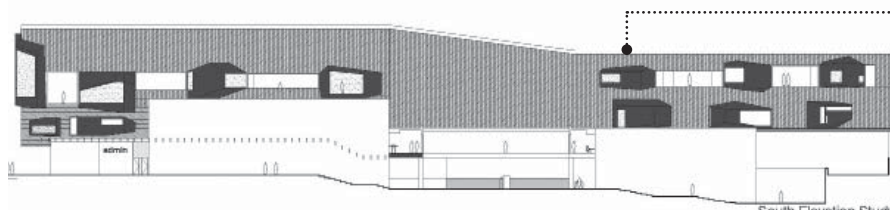
- Look at the techniques that people use to appropriate intercultural spaces or adopt existing architectural form to make culturally distinct places, such as Chinatown signs, parade routes etc. adopting neutral, banal buildings and adding a distinct layer of built form or accretions to unite the architecture with the public realm and express a unique identity.

- Propose landscape intervention to remediate the interstitial spaces between existing buildings.

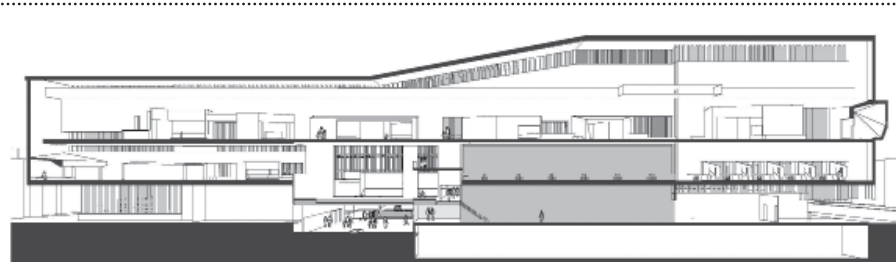
Technique: Sketchup volumetric sketches, hand sketches, photo study of Chinatown and parades.



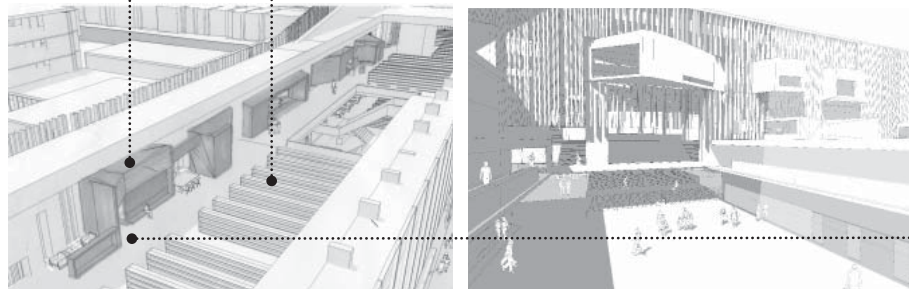
South Facade Study - wood-clad 'Gathering Rooms' project from a metal panel facade.



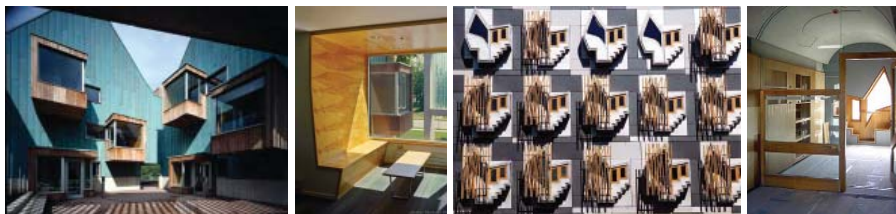
Library Section looking South



'Gathering rooms' and collection spaces



Inspiration for form and material of 'gathering rooms' - Bornheutter Hall LTL Architects, Scottish Parliament, Enrique Miralles



Bloor Facade Study - Overlapping glass panels in different levels of opacity create a block-length 'window' to Christie Pits Park



June/July 2009 – Library Architecture

The design strategy focuses on the design of ‘culturally accessible’ library spaces that can be appropriated and modulated according to the activity and specific needs of the occupant. The design is concerned with how the shape of ‘gathering rooms’ encourage intercultural encounter, and act as a container for event – an anticipatory infrastructure and programmatic surface.

The Gathering Rooms

- Place on the South façade, filter south light into the library collection spaces.
- Represent the individual pockets of ethnicity in Toronto, may be appropriated by different groups at different times. Each ‘gathering room’ to have different form and spatial character dependent upon activity, light, sound etc. ‘Gathering Rooms’ are distinct addresses that can be read from the exterior of the building.
- The print collection forms a core at the centre – shared realm of the ‘city’ that feeds the different districts of the gathering rooms.
- Internet Commons wraps around existing courtyard onto the Bickford Centre to animate the space during all seasons.

- North façade a layered glass wall – window to the park.

Critique

- North face is billboard-like and does not describe the unique program inside the library. Not vital or vibrant but ‘confrontational’ to the street
- Gathering rooms on south facade not distinct enough... need to project into library space to create gathering areas in negative space.

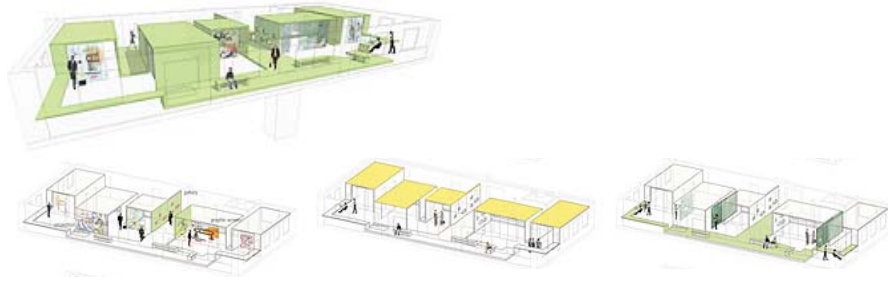
Design Development

- Place gathering rooms around the whole building – The library’s interactive programming lines the perimeter of the collection core, forming a semi-public zone of study, and lounge spaces or ‘gathering rooms’ where patrons can interact with, share and interrogate the library collection.

- Incorporate gathering room forms into the modulation of the façade such that it folds in/out to create them. [Not a neutral box with ‘rooms’ sticking out. The gathering rooms should become transitional spaces between interior and exterior... inhabiting the threshold.]

Technique: Sketchup volumetric sketches and vignettes, hand sketches.

Anticipatory Infrastructure - Moveable partitions, chalkboards, video screens, internet connections, seating, and enclosure integrated into a single 'programmable surface'. Images Mark Boutin Studio



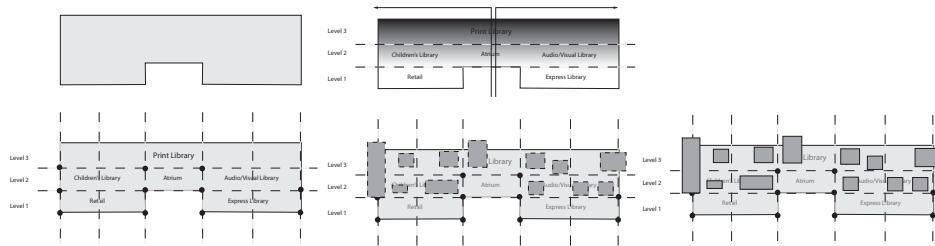
Gathering Room sketches - base design around anticipated programmes and different gathering configurations. Start with neutral box shape and morph form according to need.



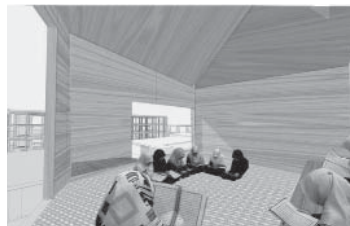
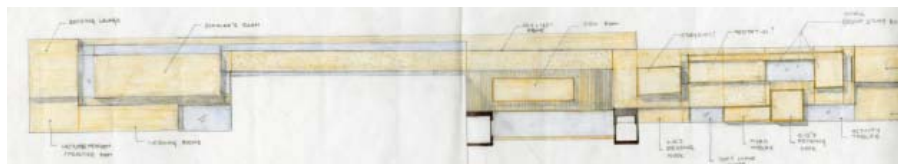
Library Sections - East and West wings



Elevation and Shadow Studies - Placement of the Gathering Rooms on the North and South Facades



Elevation and Shadow Studies - Placement of the Gathering Rooms on the North and South Facades is derived by shadow and light qualities necessary for the programs inside.



- How can I as an architect design the shape and form of the building while keeping it accessible and inclusive? It will always have my ‘stamp’.

- Feel building is too aestheticized. If it is to be appropriated by different groups, by different cultures the gathering rooms and the building itself need to be neutral. Like everyday spaces described by Amin, and Sandercock: banal and almost infrastructural. At the very least, modest, so that anyone can affect and appropriate it.

- If the building wishes to engage difference does it have to look different? Does different always have to have a crazy form... how does this make the building more inclusive?

Design Development

- Design the building with amenity at the forefront. Most intercultural spaces are infrastructural and formally neutral. Work with the programmatic criteria to derive form, rather than aesthetic choice of architect... what is necessary for the activity in the gathering room: Anticipatory infrastructure.

- Gathering rooms are like a programmatic surface that is folded, wrapped and push/pulled to create spaces for inhabitation. Connected to infrastructure such as wireless, power outlets, Ethernet hookups, lighting, library collection database etc. Form is derived from a series of programmatic/activity derived criteria and qualities such as sound/size of group/light.

- The façade is dictated by the push and pull of each of the individual rooms.

Critique -

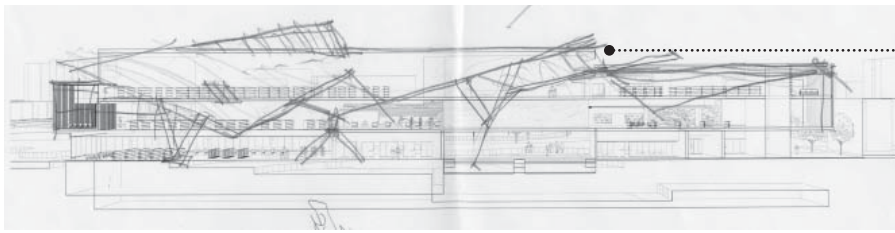
The current design is indifferent. It is undefined, has no sense of self, no identity - bland. Different groups will not appropriate the library spaces because the design is too neutral, and in fact alienating. A person or group of people cannot see themselves reflected in the space and therefore cannot identify with it. The library is not a place, but a space - an institution.

- The building is STATIC! The building is not reflecting the dynamic character of Toronto; it is not reflecting the positive contribution of difference immigration has brought to the city and the tension that is present in that dynamism.

- The different activities that happen in the gathering rooms are not all that different. They do not create a spectrum of forms unless I design them specifically to look different. They are prescriptive, because they are the same.

Technique: Sketchup volumetric sketches and vignettes, hand sketches.

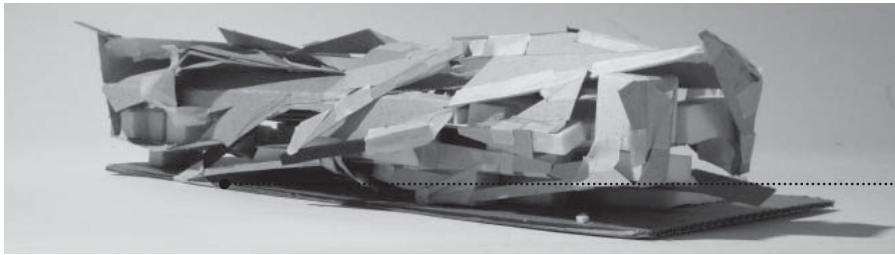
Initial Sketches of new expressive skin over a print of the previous design.



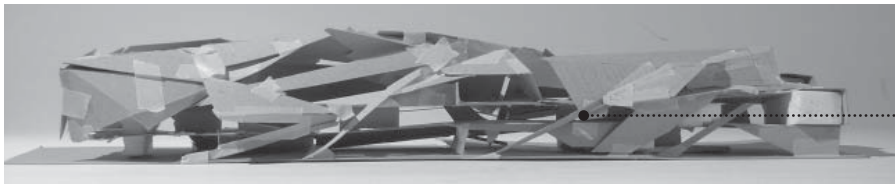
Sketch Model 1 - Bloor Street Facade



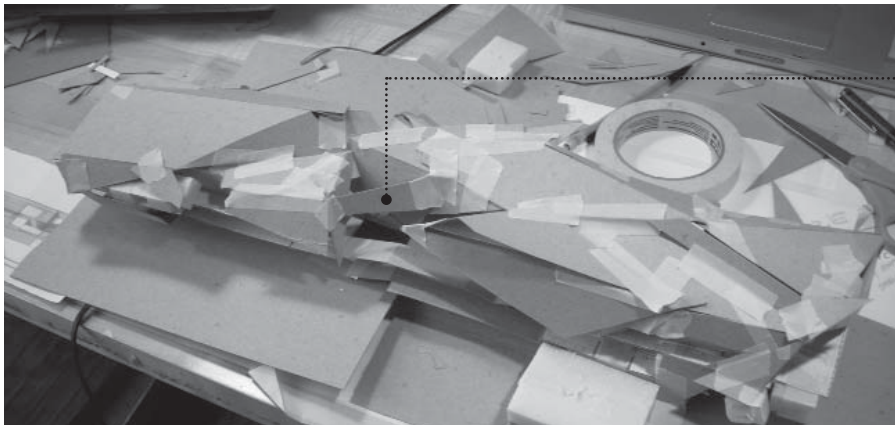
Sketch Model 2 - Oblique View looking East along Bloor Street



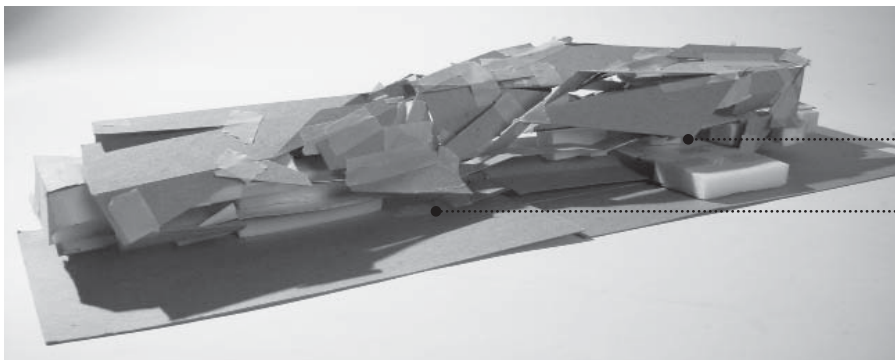
Sketch Model 3 - Bloor Street Facade. Model refines and articulates forms generated in Model 2



Sketch Model 3 - Light Study on South facade. Aerial View. Looking into Bloor Street Courtyard.



Sketch Model 3 - Facade Light Study



October/November 2009 – New Design

Design Development

The new design strategy looks toward specificity, rather than neutrality. It reflects the complexity and diversity of the city of Toronto through the unique experiences of the Language Centre site: its urban relationships, its history, its ecology, and diurnal cycles. The new library design is about vitality, energy, and expression: adjectives that describe Toronto's new hybrid and multicultural identity.

• Keep general layout of the building, change form to be more dynamic, vibrant and expressive. ALIVE.

• Wrap the rational floor plan (similar to previous design) with a dynamic skin that folds and bends to create a variety of different spaces that have unique qualities such as height, light, seating, enclosure, exposure and privacy etc. The building is inclusive because the different spatial relationships provide a range of different spaces for people to inhabit; the building is inclusive through the provision of choice.

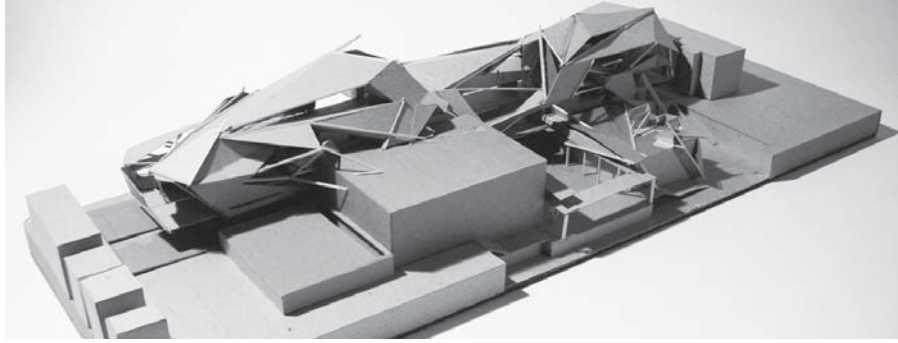
• The building morphology should seem to shift, move and change by the day; it doesn't feel permanent or static.

• Expressive form brings specificity of 'place' to the otherwise linear and rational layout of the library. Each fold, fracture, etc. creates a unique gathering area that is its own destination. Different groups can also appropriate these distinctive spaces as their own for a period of time.

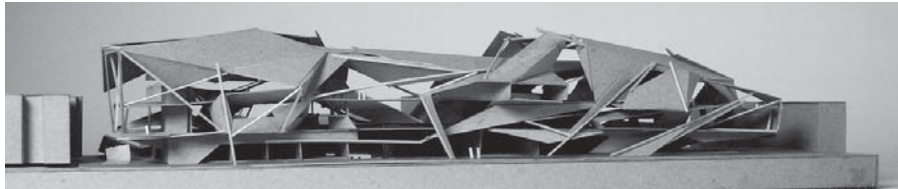
• Focus on how the roof and skin fold down to shape and create space at human scale – intimate reading/writing/conversation etc.

• Light studies: Skin wraps and delaminates, turns into screen at key locations on South façade (atrium, performance hall, east wing) to control light as it enters into the library collection space. Skin fractures into larger openings on the north side for views to Christie Pits Park and along Bloor Street - especially in the centre atrium areas.

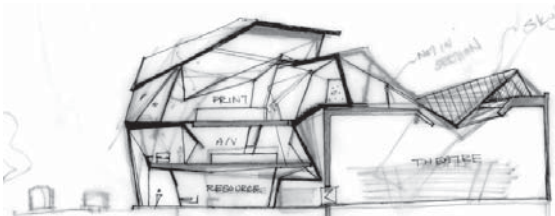
Technique: sketch models, photographs, Photoshop collage, hand sketches



Sketch Model 4 - Refines Structure and Skin relationship.



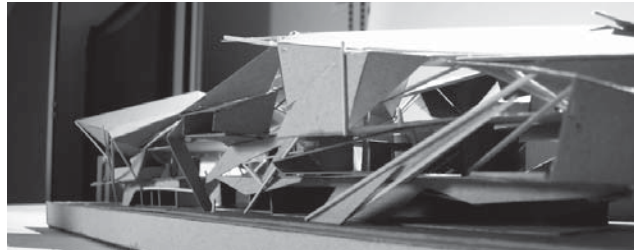
Sketch Model 4 - Relationship to existing Bickford Centre building - study



Sketch - Library lobby and existing theatre connections.



Photo Studies - Public spaces and library structure.



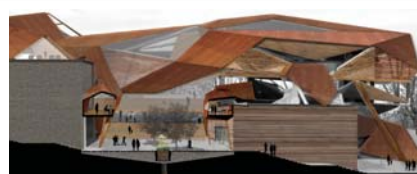
Photoshop Exterior Cladding Material Studies - Wood and Cor-ten Steel



Sketch Model 3 - Print Collection interior study - Light Study



Sketch Model 4 - Section - Material and Light Study - Wood Interior



• Fractured and folded skin is supported by a steel structure that punctures through the library floor planes to reveal connections between levels. Canted columns create gathering points, seating where they touch grade.

• How does the library structure connect to existing buildings? Connections are ‘explosive’ collisions between two different morphologies. Intersections create new mutually beneficial conditions, such as skylight windows into the existing spaces.

• How does the building structure and skin meet the public domain. How does it invigorate these spaces?

• Atrium is the culminating point of the wrapped and faceted skin. Eruptive and expressive sectional relationships are the most distinct at this location.

• Maybe tripartite design? Eruptive and expressive architecture at central circulation point i.e. Roof folds down and wraps to become amphitheatre and support main staircase, building form more calm at extremities.

• Skin Material Studies: Cor-ten - richly coloured, raw, unfinished and exposed. Its surface is dynamic and weathers according to rain, sunlight, wind and orientation. It registers the changing environmental conditions of the site. The cor-ten also contrasts with the grey and white brick of the existing Bickford Centre building.

• Wood interior – the building interior will be dynamic as it develops a patina from use and from sun exposure. Rich textures and warm finishes create an inviting interior environment. Continuity of wood surface inside suggests all surfaces are inhabitable; there is no prescriptive ‘sit here’ condition.

The cor-ten skin is the primary means of expression for the Intercultural Library. It forms an expressive envelope around the library’s otherwise rational floor plan and creates a dynamic interface between the interior and exterior realms. As the skin wraps and winds it forms distinct ‘gathering places’ around the library perimeter that may be appropriated by different groups. Each ‘gathering place’ is articulated according to the programs inside, as well as the quality and quantity of light and view desired.

The cor-ten skin seems to shift and move in comparison to the Bickford Centre’s heavy brick facades. The dynamic skin emphasizes the tension between the existing site and the new Intercultural Library. Connections between the two buildings are ‘explosive’ collisions that create new conditions such as skylights or windows. Similarly, the exposed steel weathers according to rain, sunlight, wind and orientation. It registers the changing environmental conditions of the site and also contrasts with the grey brick on the existing building.

Technique: sketch models, photographs, Photoshop collage, hand sketches



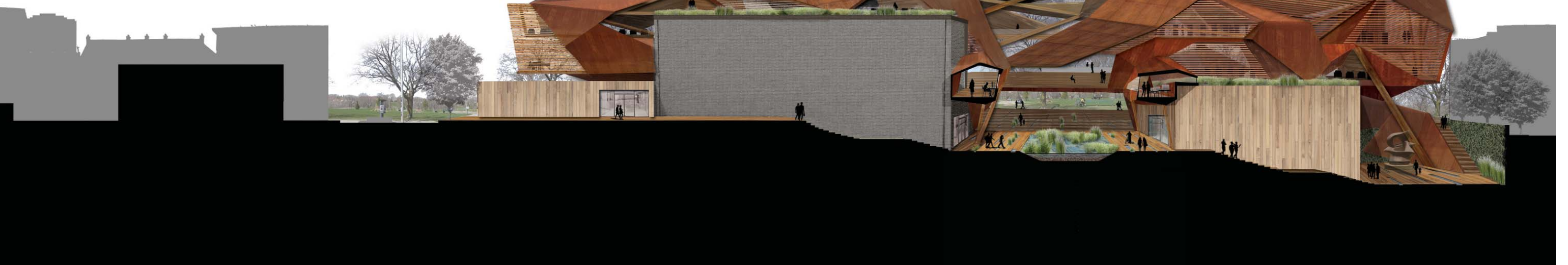
Design Journal Summary

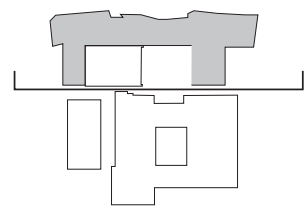
Throughout the design process there was a struggle to find an architectural language that enhanced the potential for intercultural gathering experiences, while simultaneously expressing the dynamic spirit of the Language Centre. In order to develop an authentic architectural voice I had to undertake an iterative design process; one that depended as much on the strategies and precedents developed in the thesis research as on my own intuition and creative energy.

The design journal also reveals an evolution of design technique, from two-dimensional drawing and digital modeling to an iterative process of physical model making. The shift to a more intuitive and tactile technique ultimately imbued the Intercultural Library and Language Centre design with new energy and focus.

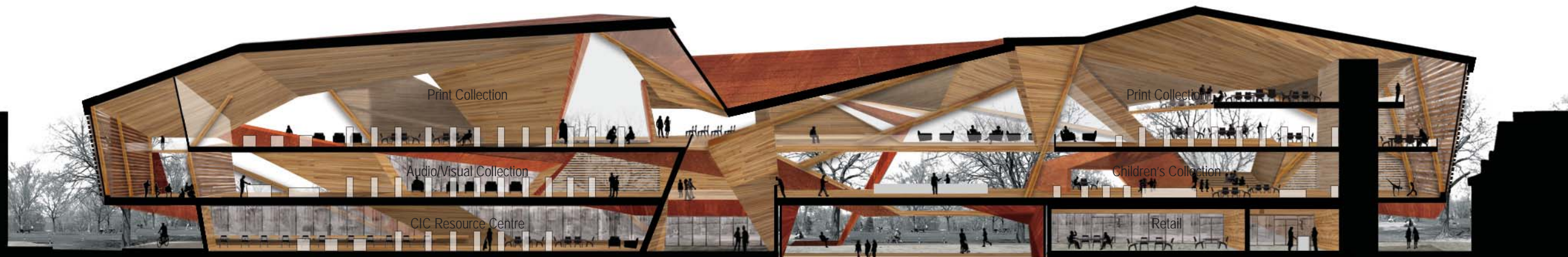


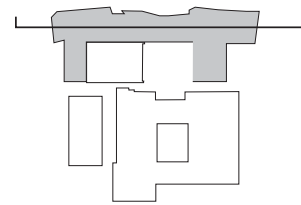
4.30 Sketch Vignette - Language Centre
from Christie Street and Bloor Street





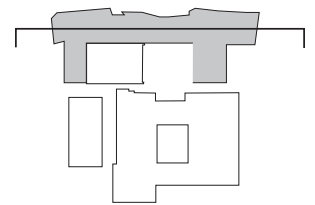
4.30 Section through Bloor Courtyard
looking North toward library and
Christie Pits Park beyond 1:500



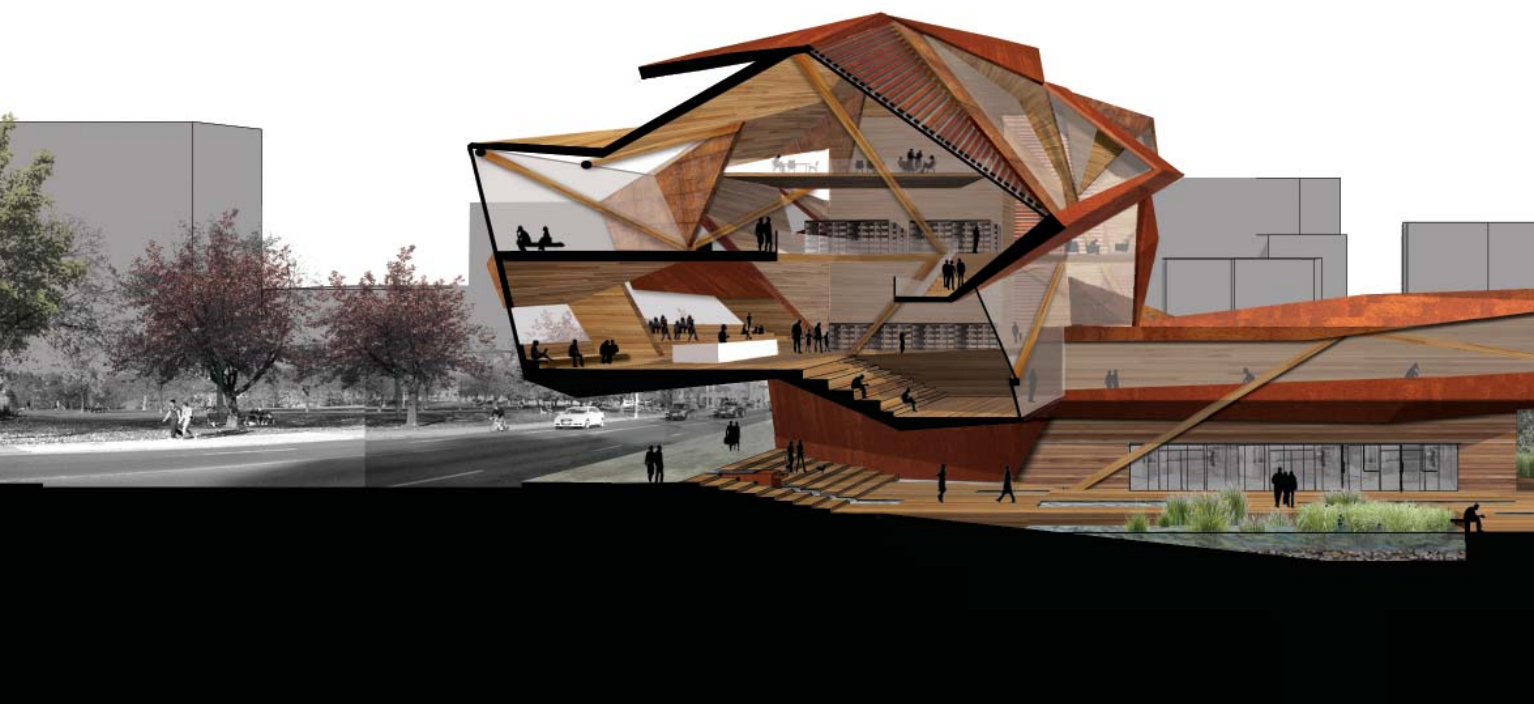


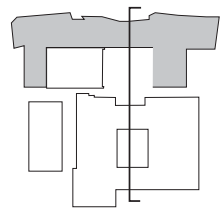
4.31 Section through Library looking North
toward Christie Pits Park 1:500





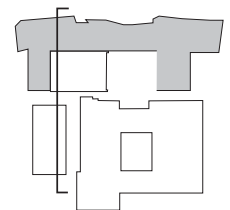
4. 33 Section through Library looking South toward the Bickford Centre 1:500





4. 34 Library Section through Intercultural Library and Courtyards 1:500





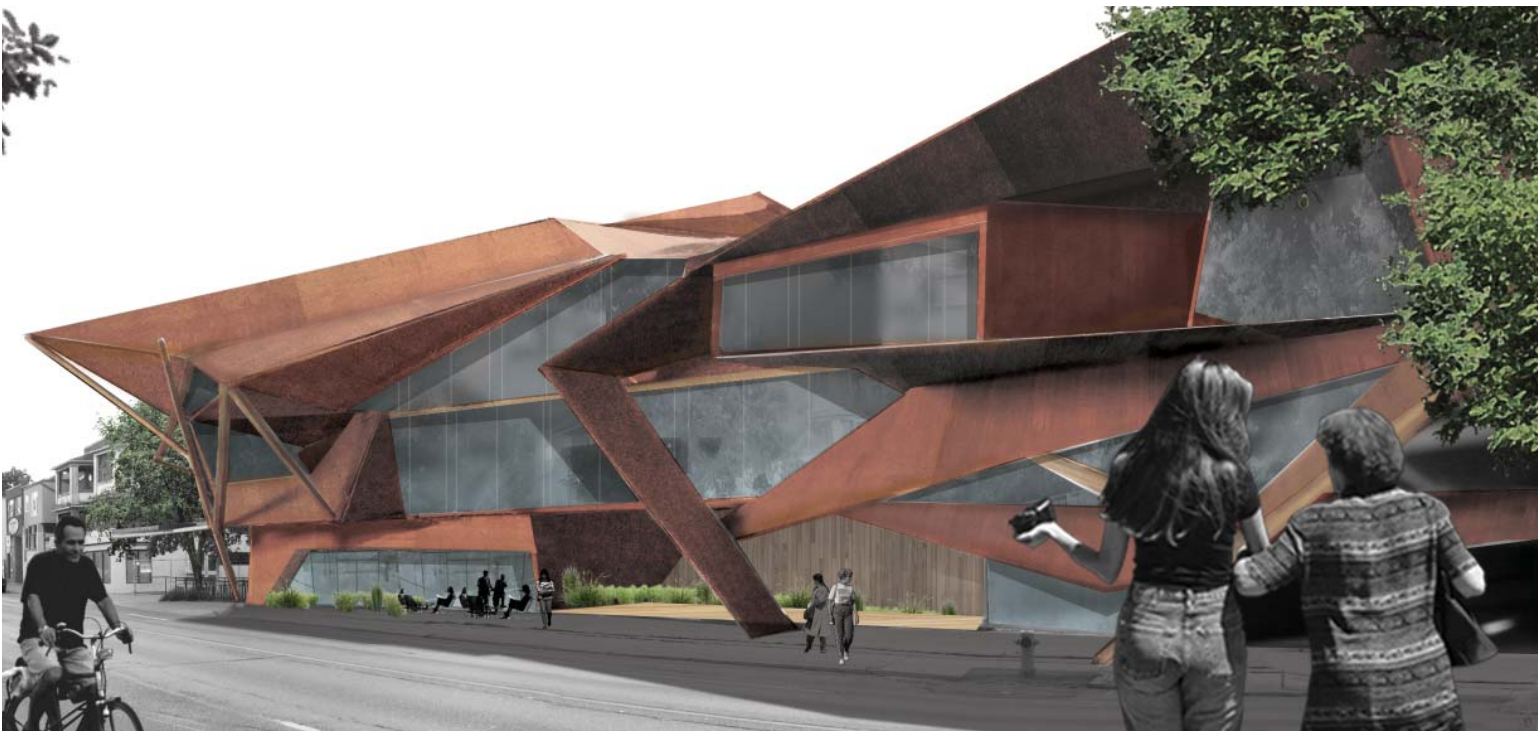
4. 35 Cross-section through Intercultural Library, Bickford Theatre and Bob Abate Community Centre 1:500



4. 36 The Multilingual Library from Bloor Street Looking West

“I can’t be Japanese and I can’t be Western - but I can understand both. I am double-binded, but - and this is perhaps most important - I am also in a position that generates a great deal of energy and creativity.”

*Arata Isozaki,
describing his “schizophrenic eclectic,”
brand of architecture*



Chapter 5

Conclusion

*These are the muscles of the subway's syrinx,
Vilnius, Dagupan, Shaowu, Valparaiso, Falmouth and Asmara.
The tunnel breathes in the coming train exhaling
as minerals the grammar of Calcutta, Colombo,
Jakarta, Mogila and Senhor do Bonfim, Ribeira Grande
and Hong Kong, Mogadishu and the alias St. Petersburg*

Dionne Brand, Thirsty XI ii

An Intercultural Language Centre at Christie Pits

Toronto's unlikely transformation from a monocultural town to a racially and ethnically diverse city inspired this thesis. At the beginning of the last century most citizens of Toronto would have said the task of assimilation lay solely in the hands of the newcomer. However, as large waves of new immigrants adapted to the city they began to change Toronto by narrowing and finally blurring the line that divided newcomer and host society. In this process of discovering a home in Toronto immigrants began to change the energy and identity of the city. Today, Toronto's less narrowly defined sense of self can be experienced in a dynamic city that plays host to multiple cultures, languages, diets and behaviours. From these cultural collisions, Toronto has fashioned a unique form of social and cultural integration. It is this unlikely source of identity that in many ways the design for the Intercultural Language Centre is drawn from.

If the impact and transformation of the city's culture is legible through demographic analysis, the impact of immigration on the architecture of Toronto's public spaces and institutions remains more illusive. By researching 'intercultural spaces', I was able to understand the importance of the everyday places of urban life: markets, streets, squares and public parks, as significant tools for the integration and expression of difference in a multicultural city. Public institutions such as schools, community centres, and libraries have the capacity to support difference in the same manner. These day-to-day amenities answer the widespread needs of a larger collective and unite diverse people in shared pursuits. However, the architectural design of public institutions is not often focused on this potential.

A survey and assessment of Toronto institutions led me to examine the Bickford Centre. With its language and educative programming as well as its historically charged location adjacent to Christie Pits Park, it seemed not only an ideal location to explore an architectural proposal for an intercultural space but to also examine the potential for architecture to activate and express the new urban reality of Toronto.

The Design Struggle

Throughout the design process there was a struggle to find an architectural language that enhanced the potential for intercultural gathering experiences, while simultaneously expressing the dynamic spirit of the Intercultural Language Centre. As the design progressed it provoked new questions for the thesis: what is the expressive capacity of architecture? Can institutional architecture tell stories that are relevant to the new immigrant? How does the design of public space and institutions authentically reflect a multicultural city? In order to develop answers to these questions, I had to trust the iterative design process; one that depended as much on the strategies and precedents developed in the thesis research as on my own intuition and creative energy.

My research into intercultural spaces and design precedents informed the programming and the campus organization of the Language Centre yet they were not always helpful in the development of an architectural language for the library itself. Most precedents avoided highly sculpted architecture in favour of 'loose' spaces or infrastructural grids: the city street, an open floor plan or the garden plot. These spaces are tuned and made specific by the user, rather than the designer. The precedents' focus on objective programming and neutrality initially made me apprehensive of formally complex architectures. I felt an architecturally expressive design for the Intercultural Library would be too subjective, representing my own values and aesthetic tastes. I also felt a highly sculpted architecture had the potential to be too prescriptive and would limit the possibilities for appropriation inside the library. It could superficially suggest diversity without actually providing the resources necessary for differences to be accommodated. As a result, the initial design schemes focused on programmatic criteria to shape the library's interior spaces and façade.

Ultimately, this approach produced a functional but static design, which did not satisfy me. The Intercultural Library was a banal institution rather than a welcoming and dynamic gathering place. Its form did not embody the vibrant influences of the site or the multicultural city that had initially inspired me. This realization became a major turning point for the thesis and changed my design approach. I began to focus on an architectural language that incorporates the needs of library users but is not exclusively governed by them. Rather the unique urban potential of the site: its existing spaces, current and proposed programs, and the possibility for landscape driven strategies began to generate an expressive and unconventional library form.

A New Design Approach

The new design approach made me return to the precedents I had studied and re-evaluate the strategies the designers had used to shape these intercultural spaces. Many of the strategies were still programmatic. However, I was also able to see how the architects had focused on experiences distinctive to their site: light and weather phenomena, highly tactile materials, as well as sensitivity to expressing ecological processes. This led me to focus on the unique and persistent urban qualities of the Bickford Centre site. While the initial thesis intention was not to study urbanity, I began to discover that the layering of experience, the multiple number of connections, thresholds, liminal spaces, and border crossings inherent to highly urban environments created the ideal conditions for the expression and support of difference; that the phenomenon of urbanity itself was a potent reflection of diversity. Rather than embracing the notion of neutrality in order to guarantee the inclusion of maximum groups, the final design for the Intercultural Language Centre embraces spatial and material distinctiveness. The design enters into dialogue with its surrounding context, the public realm and its users, bridging across these separate worlds to encourage new places of interaction and exchange.

Some cities are shaped by their great avenues or iconic buildings, but no one sees Toronto as a city framed by great architectural or urban plans. Rather Toronto, as we know it today, is ‘an accidental city.’ One that has emerged from the unintended affects of concentrated immigration. Robert Fulford writes:



A city fulfills itself not by master plans but through an attentiveness to the processes that have created it and an awareness of its possibilities. It achieves a heightened identity by giving form to memory and providing space for new life.¹

The Intercultural Language Centre aspires to be such a place. It gives voice to the idea of transformation. Immigration has been Toronto's great shaper. Like the new immigrant to the city, the Intercultural Language Centre is intended to invigorate and bring new life to Toronto. As experienced by the new immigrant integrating into a new culture, the centre is intended to offer a dynamic sense of opening: to new experiences, new audiences and new opportunities.

While the thesis investigation and Language Centre proposal are specific to Toronto, the work has broader relevance as it speaks to the demographic shifts many countries and cities are experiencing thanks to globalization. As massive waves of immigration and increasing racial diversity become the norm, the recognition and inclusion of difference is emerging as a primary concern for architects. Toronto has the potential to not only serve as a model of social and cultural integration, but also as a model for the capacity of built form to authentically reflect this condition. Toronto is uniquely positioned as a "model of the whole world, to the whole world,"²² to lead by example as it matures into a city that formally acknowledges its own transformation and diversity.



Notes

- 1 Robert Fulford, *Accidental City The Transformation of Toronto* (Toronto, Ontario: Macfarlane Walter & Ross, 1995), 14.
- 2 Andrew Levitt, *The Inner Studio* (Cambridge, Ontario: Riverside Architectural Press, 2007),

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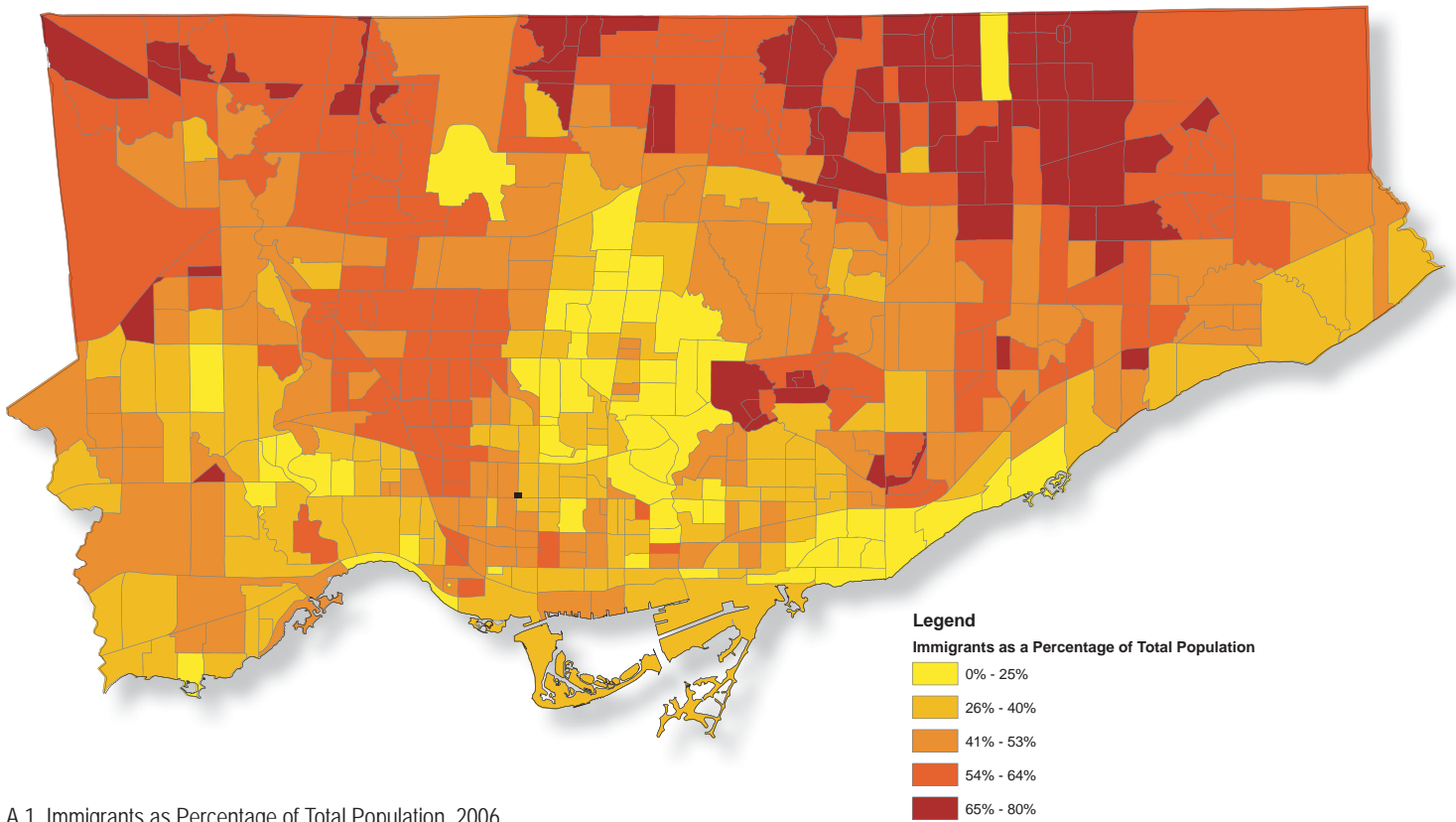
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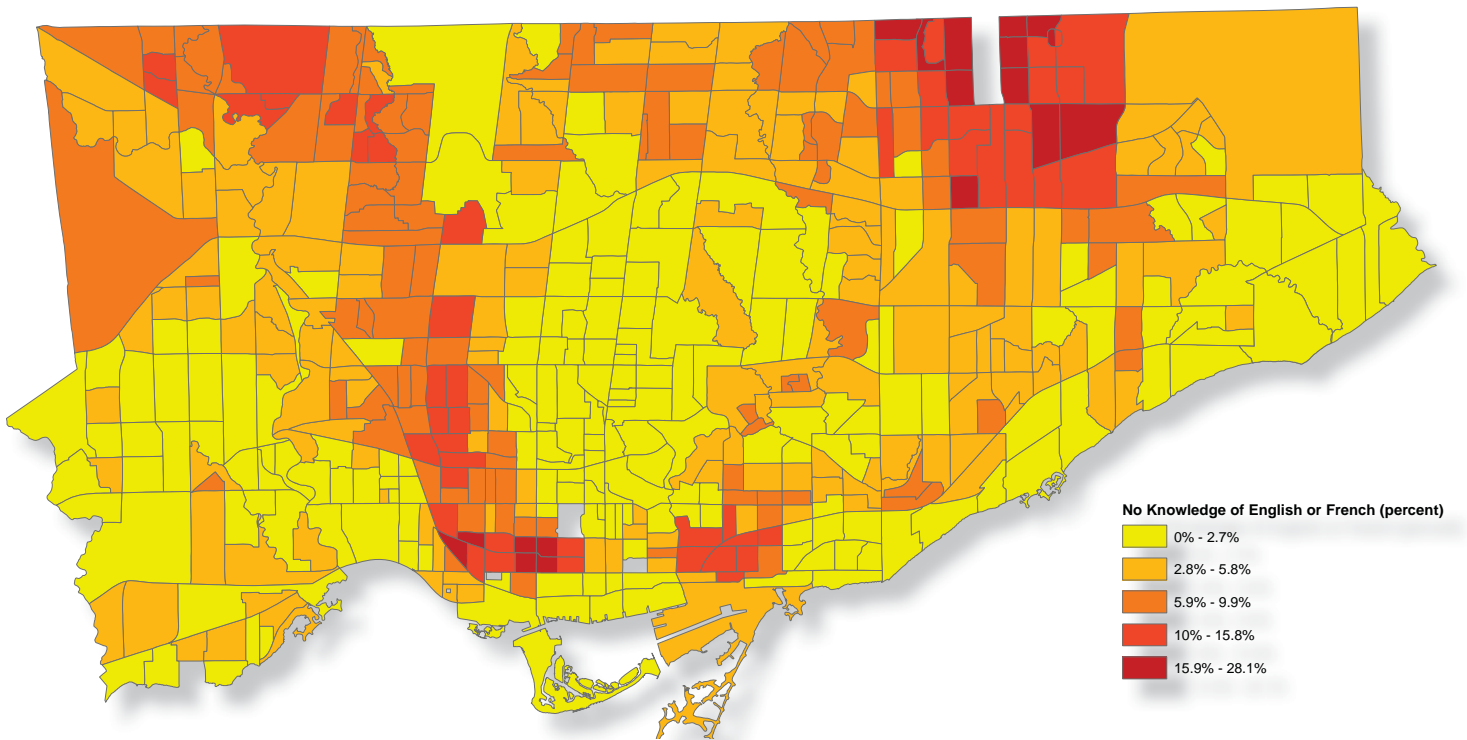
Appendix A

Toronto Demographic and Immigration Data



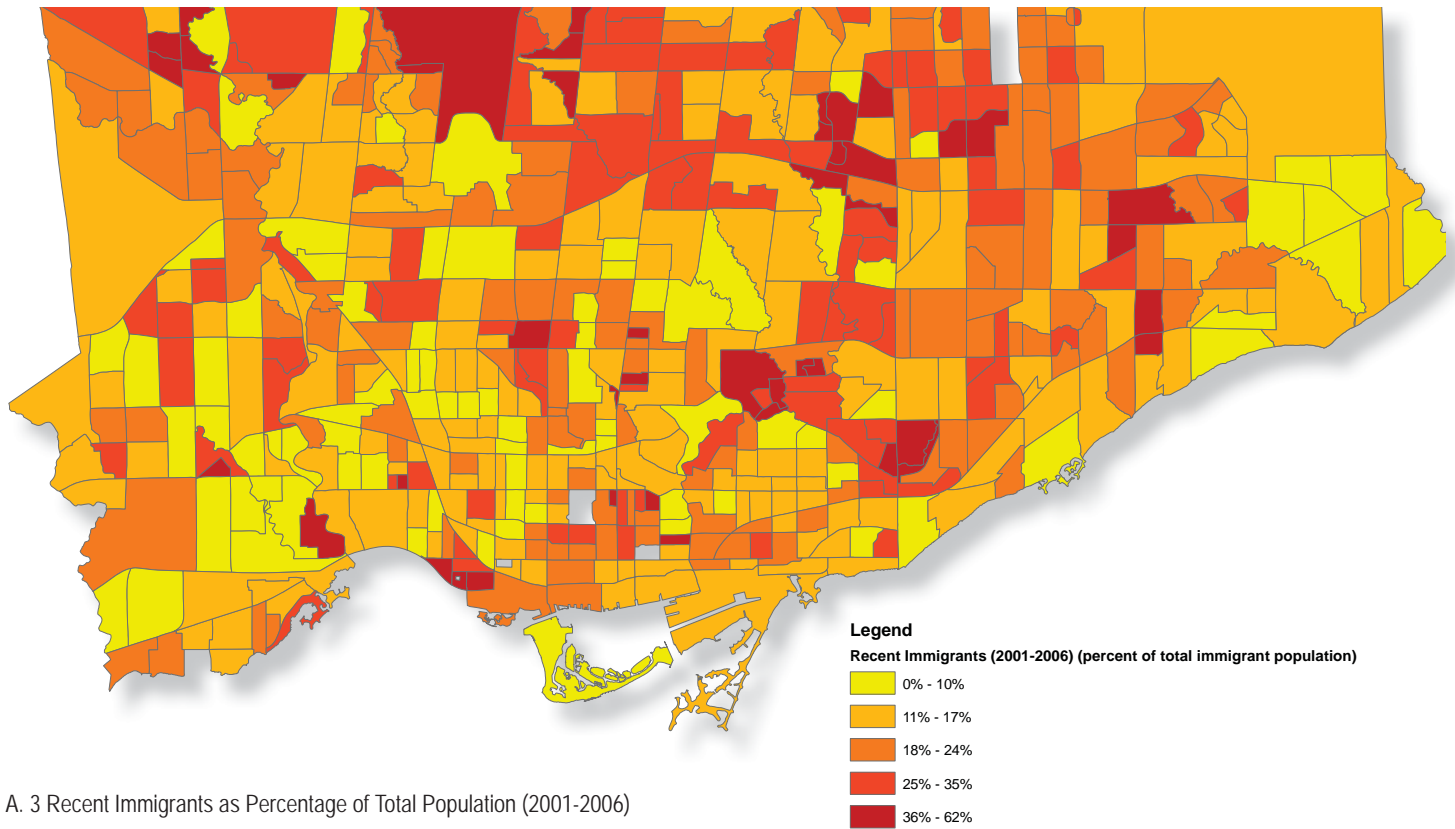
A.1 Immigrants as Percentage of Total Population, 2006

Adapted by author from: Immigrants as Percentage of Total Population, City of Toronto Social Policy Analysis and Research, 2007. WEBSITE
 Original source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006, City of Toronto



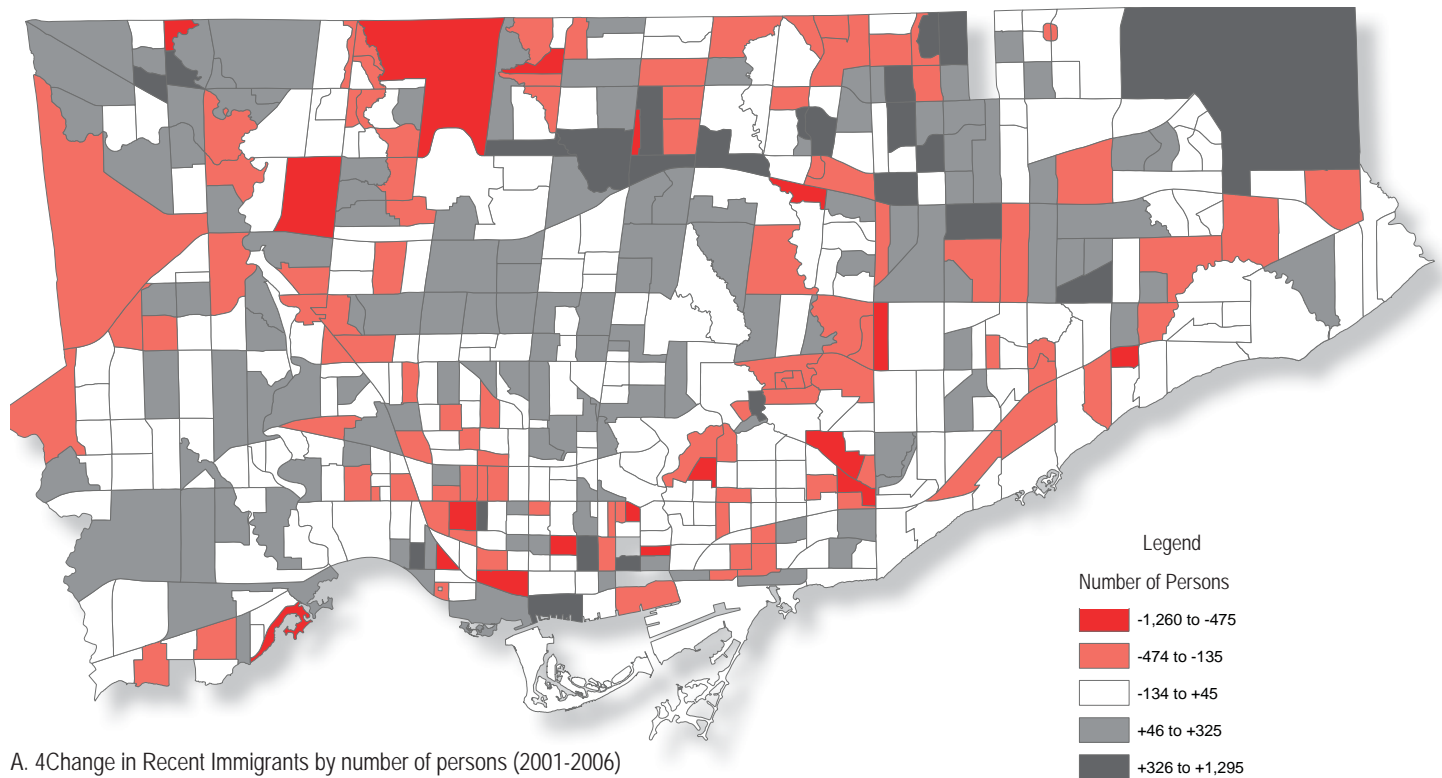
A.2 No Knowledge of English of French (Percent Population) 2006

Adapted by author from: TITLE, City of Toronto Social Policy Analysis and Research, 2007. WEBSITE
 Original source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006, City of Toronto



A. 3 Recent Immigrants as Percentage of Total Population (2001-2006)

Adapted by author from: Recent Immigrants as Percentage of Total Population (2001-2006),
 City of Toronto Social Policy Analysis and Research, 2007. WEBSITE
 Original source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006, City of Toronto



A. 4 Change in Recent Immigrants by number of persons (2001-2006)

Adapted by author from: TITLE, City of Toronto Social Policy Analysis and Research, 2007. WEBSITE
 Original source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006, City of Toronto

Appendix B

Mapping the Toronto Public Library

In 2001, the library's circulation was 50 percent larger than the busiest library in the United States, Queen's Borough Public Library, in New York. This usage is significant considering that Toronto's population of 2.5 million, is only 25 percent larger than the borough of Queens. What links these two library systems is their commitment to providing services for their large newcomer and immigrant user populations.

The Toronto Public Library circulates more items and handles more public visits than any other library system in North America and is the second busiest urban library system after Hong Kong.



Walk in visits annually: 16.6 million (2003)

Virtual visits annually: 17.3 (2003)

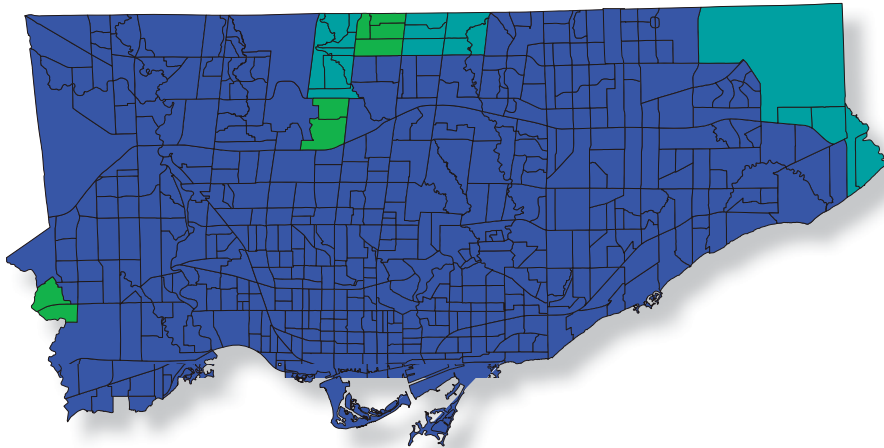
Items borrowed annually: 28.6 million

Number of registered borrowers 1.55 million (in a city of 2.5 million)

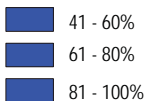
98% of Toronto residents live within walking distance of a library branch.

The TPL has 99 locations which are organized in a four-tiered structure:

- 83 neighbourhood branches at 10,000 sf, serve population of 20,000-50,000 users within a 1.6km radius. These collections focus on children and adult fiction, local history and internet resources.
- 16 District branches at 50,000 sf each, serve population of 100,000-250,000 users within a (8.0km radius). These collections include specialized career and business information, research materials, as well as children's and adult fiction.
- 1 Citywide Reference/Research library
- 32 Bookmobile Stops serve neighbourhoods where libraries are closed for renovation, as well as areas that are underserved by the current library location.



B. 2 Percentage of Residents within Walking Distance of a Library Branch



Walking Distance: 1.6 km (neighbourhood branch), 2.4 km (district branch)

B. 1 Opposite Page: The Toronto Reference Library Atrium

B. 2 98% of Toronto residents live within walking distance (1.6km) of a library branch. (NEIGHBOURHOOD SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN TORONTO, Prepared for the Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force, April 2005 By Social Policy Analysis and Research Unit City of Toronto)

The Toronto Public Library - Timeline



1830 - York Mechanics' Institute established "for the mutual improvement of its members in useful Scientific knowledge...A library of reference and circulation will be formed."

1834 - Town of York became the City of Toronto, and the York Mechanics' Institute was renamed Toronto Mechanics' Institute. To educate workers (mechanics), the Institute provided a library and offered classes ranging from philosophy and music to science, electricity and architectural drawing.

1861 - Toronto Mechanics' Institute moved into its new home at the northeast corner of Church and Adelaide streets. Designed by F. W. Cumberland & G. W. Storm, the building contained a library with a separate reading room, a lecture hall and a large music hall.



1883 - Free Library By-Law approved by a huge majority of Toronto voters, Jan. 1. Toronto and Guelph were the first municipalities in Ontario to create free public libraries.

1884 - Toronto Public Library officially opened in the Mechanics' Institute building, Church and Adelaide streets. Two branches, Northern and Western, were also opened in 1884.

1885 - Books in German and French bought, the beginnings of the library's multilanguage collections. Works in Russian, Yiddish, Italian and Lithuanian were added in the 1910s for recent European immigrants.

1887 - Policy to collect Canadiana established. James Bain, the first chief librarian, began building the library's special collections of publications and manuscripts documenting Canada.

1903 - Carnegie grant of \$350,000 for a new central library (1909) and three branches: Yorkville (1907), Queen & Lisgar (1909-1964), and Riverdale (1910). A second Carnegie grant of \$50,000 built Beaches, High Park and Wychwood branches (1916). Libraries at West Toronto (Annette Street, 1909), Weston (1914), and Mimico (1915-1966) also were constructed with Carnegie funds.

B. 3 Newspaper Reading Room, Central Library, Church & Adelaide streets, c. 1900

B. 4 Children's room at Dovercourt (Now Bloor/Gladstone) Branch, c. 1912

1909 - Toronto Reference Library opened at College and St. George streets with 97,788 books.

1967 - Metropolitan Toronto Library Board established. The Central Library collections and other special collections were transferred from the Toronto Public Library to the new Metro Board.

1970 - Judith Merrill donated to the Toronto Public Library her collection, the beginning of the Merrill Collection of Science Fiction, Speculation and Fantasy

1977 - New Metropolitan Toronto Library opened at 789 Yonge Street at Asquith Avenue

1997 - The City of Toronto Act (Bill 103) passed by the Ontario Legislature, amalgamating the seven existing municipal governments of Metropolitan Toronto

1998 - Seven library boards in Metropolitan Toronto united into one library called the Toronto Public Library, with 98 locations, the largest public library system in North America serving a population of 2.3 million

1999 - Integrated online catalogue of the library's collections completed, giving unified access to nine million books, magazines, CDs, CD-ROMs and other materials in a hundred different languages

1999 - Virtual Reference Library launched, providing Internet access to information on key subject areas through a series of gateways, digitized collections and research databases

2000 - Installation of more than 400 Internet workstations acquired through a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

2000 - Strategic Plan prepared to guide Toronto Public Library into the new millennium

2001 - Toronto Public Library was the world's second most used public library by circulation after Hong Kong.

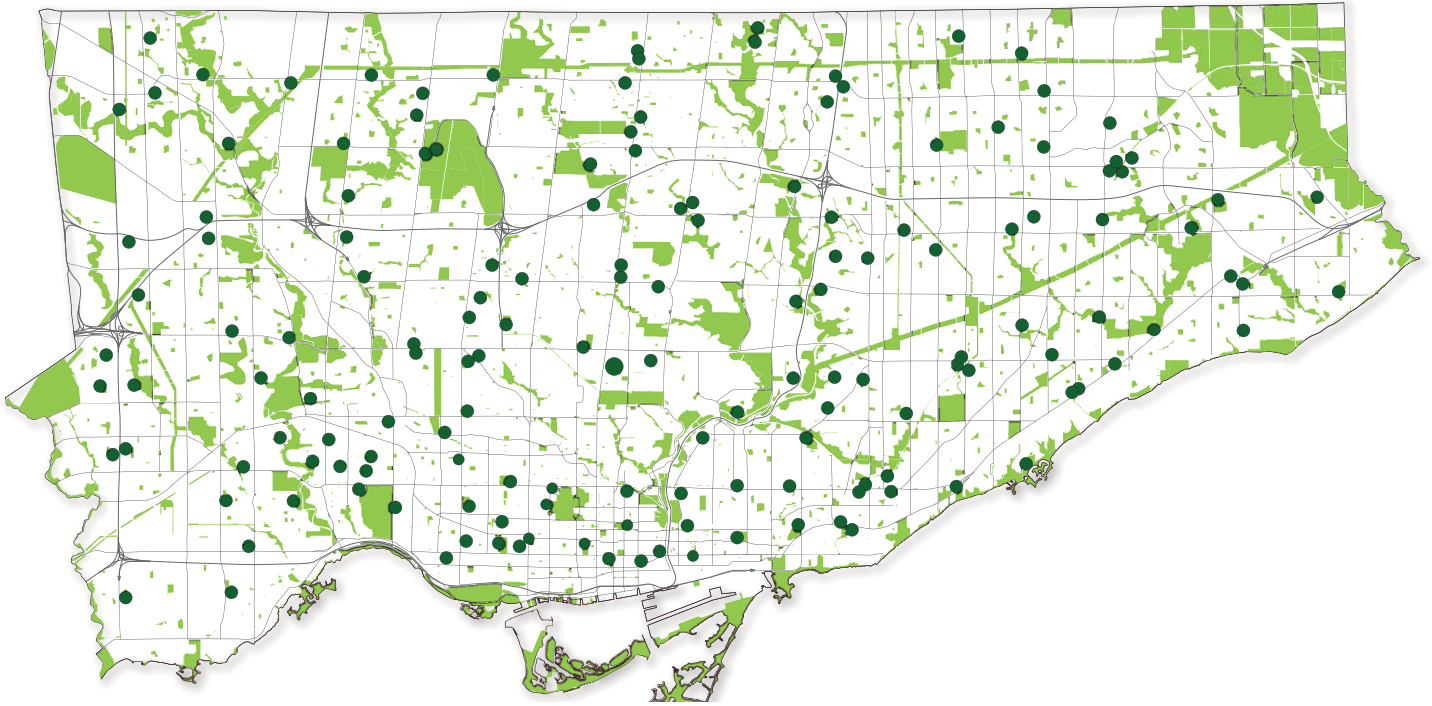
2009 - The Toronto Public Library includes 40 international language collections including childrens books, audio/visuals materials, periodicals and print media.



- B. 5 The Digital Commons at the Toronto Reference Library.
- B. 6 A family visiting the Bookmobile in the Thronecliffe Park Plaza parking lot. This Bookmobile visits the community while the local library branch is under renovation.

Appendix C

Site Context and Demographic Diagrams



C. 1 Toronto Parks and Community Recreation Centres

Adapted by author from: The City of Toronto Parks and Recreation Hours and Locations WEBSITE

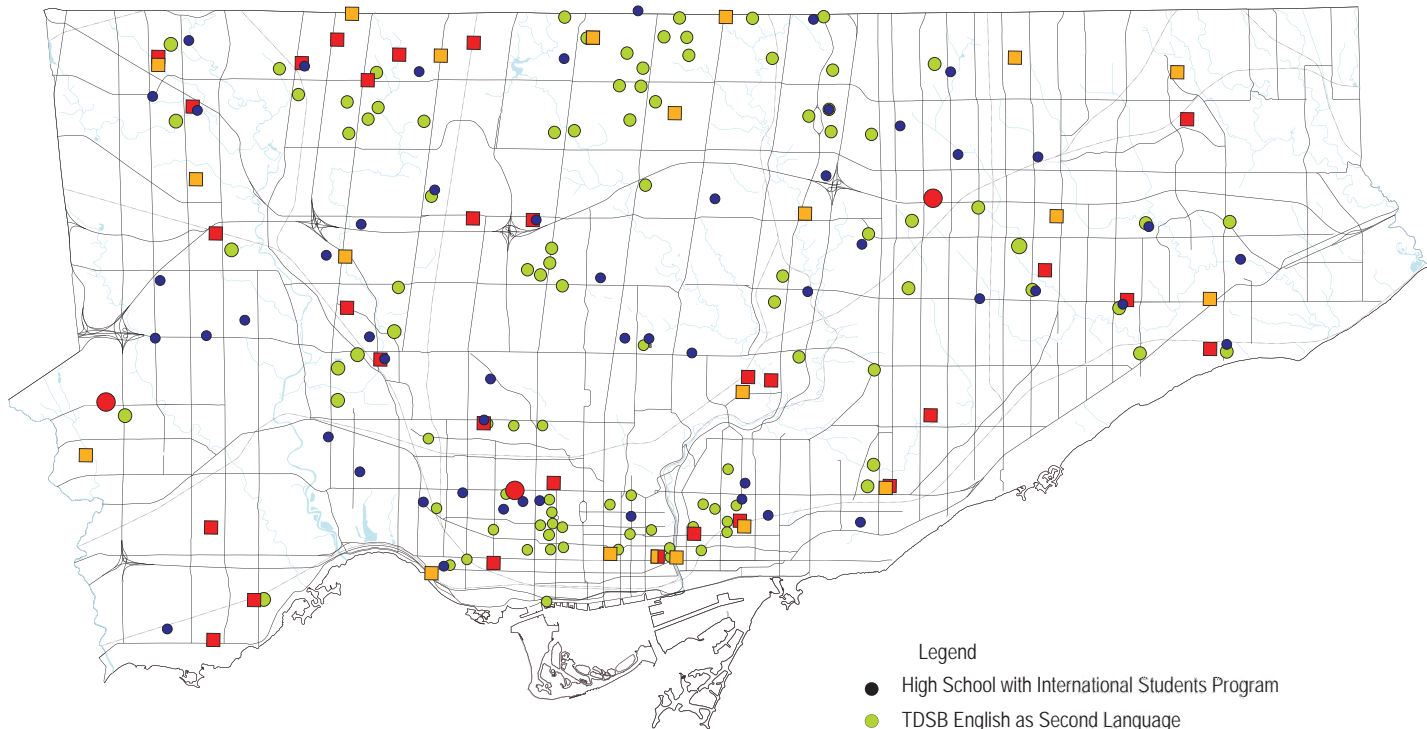
Legend

- Community Recreation Centre
- Public Park

Programmatic Network - Toronto Parks and Community Recreation

Garrison Creek, buried in the early 20th century, originally flowed across the Bickford Centre site linking the Christie Pits and Bickford Parks. These municipal parks now include the Bob Abate Community and Recreation Centre and the Alex Duff Swimming Pool and Arena, both are part of the Toronto Parks and Recreation network of recreation amenities. Baseball fields, basketball courts, children's playground and splash pad, and a community garden are also found in the Christie Pits Park. Bickford Park, south of the Centre, is an off-leash dog park and includes a lawn-bowling club and baseball field.





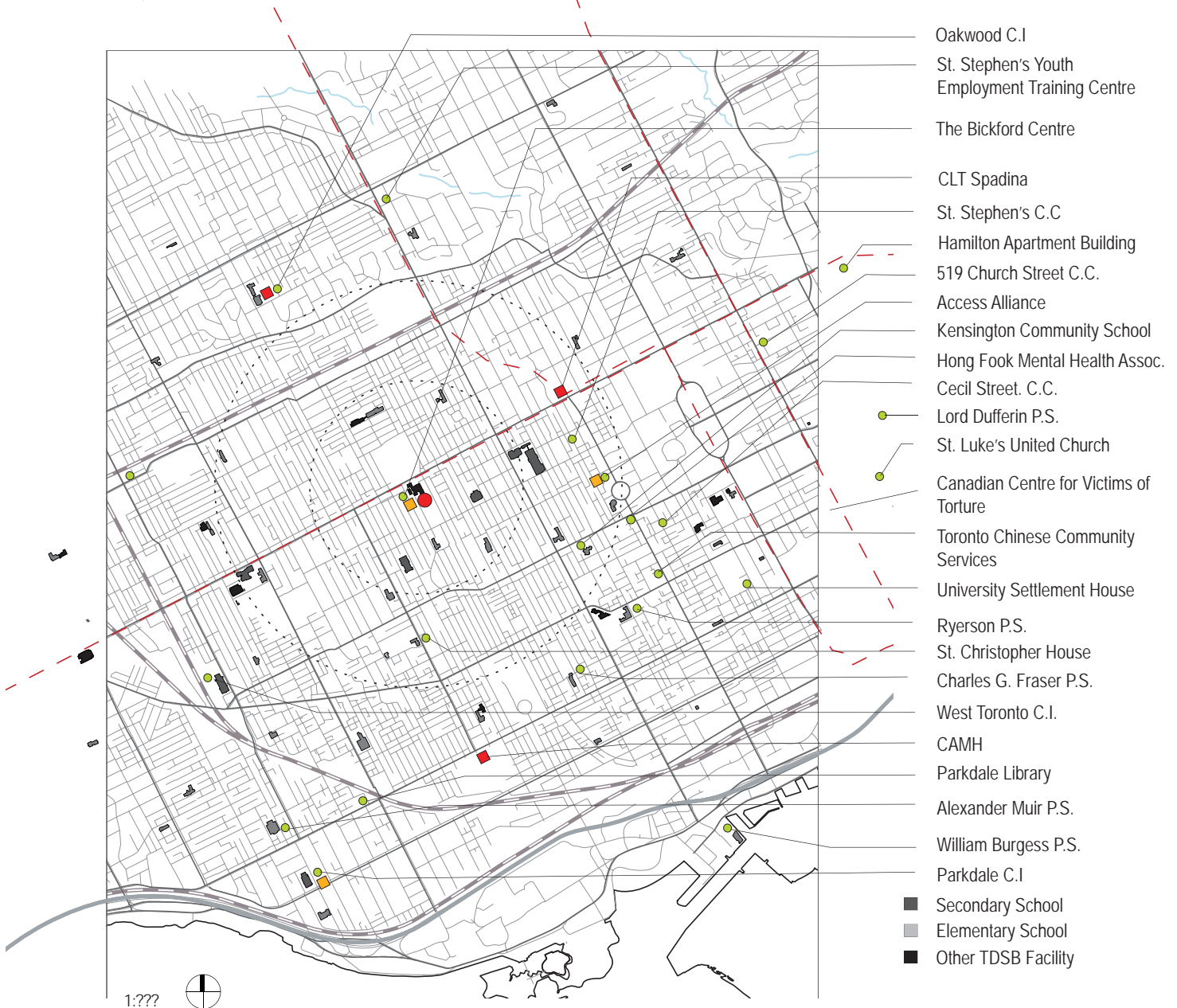
C. 2 Toronto District School Board Literacy and Basic Skills Training Locations

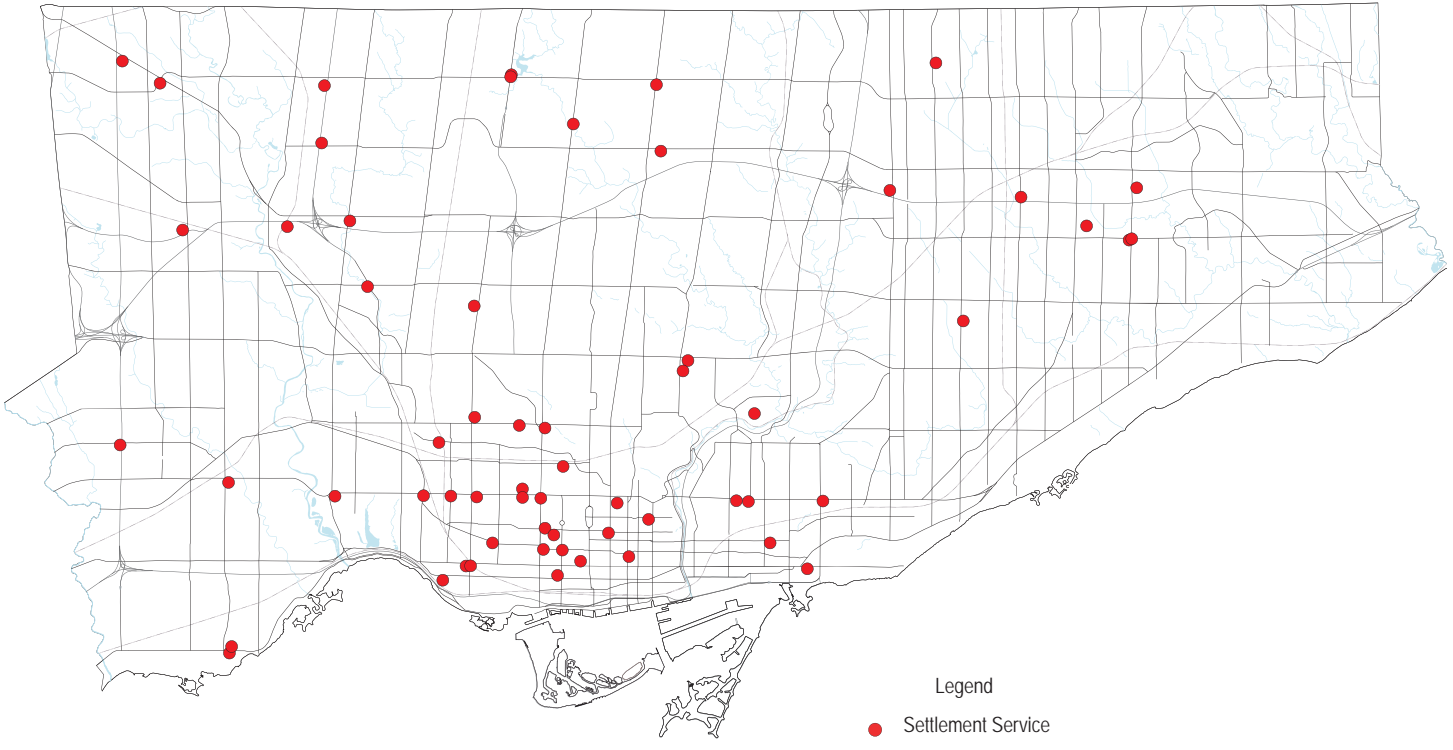
Adapted by author from: the Toronto District School Board ESL Class Calendar, 2009. TDSB website

- Legend
- High School with International Students Program
 - TDSB English as Second Language
 - Literacy and Basic Skills Regional Assessment Office
 - Literacy and Basic Skills Learning Centre
 - LINC (Literacy Training for Newcomers to Canada)

Programmatic Network - Language Training

The language and skills training program within The Bickford Centre is part of a citywide network of English language training services, both public and private. The Toronto District School Board is the primary ESL provider in the city. The Bickford Centre is one of three Language and Skills Assessment Centres operated by the Toronto District School Board. These centres assess language ability and connect students to local ESL services in their neighbourhood. The Bickford Centre also offers employment specific literacy classes, such as Accounting for Cantonese Speakers, which are not offered in local ESL programs and is affiliated with the government of Canada's LINC program ((Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) – a service that provides free basic French and English language courses to adult permanent residents). The Bickford Centre offers day and night, full-time and part-time classes.



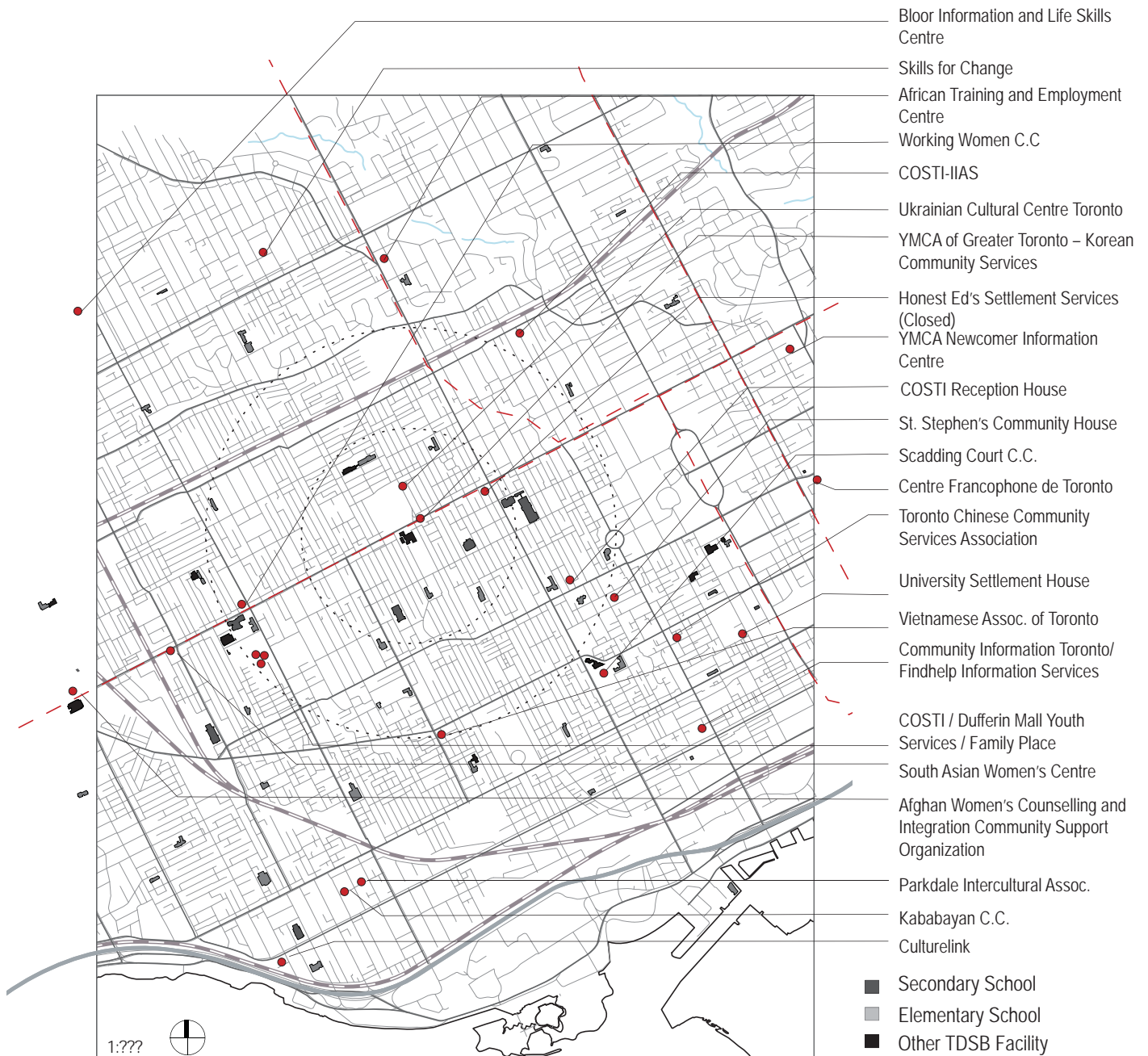


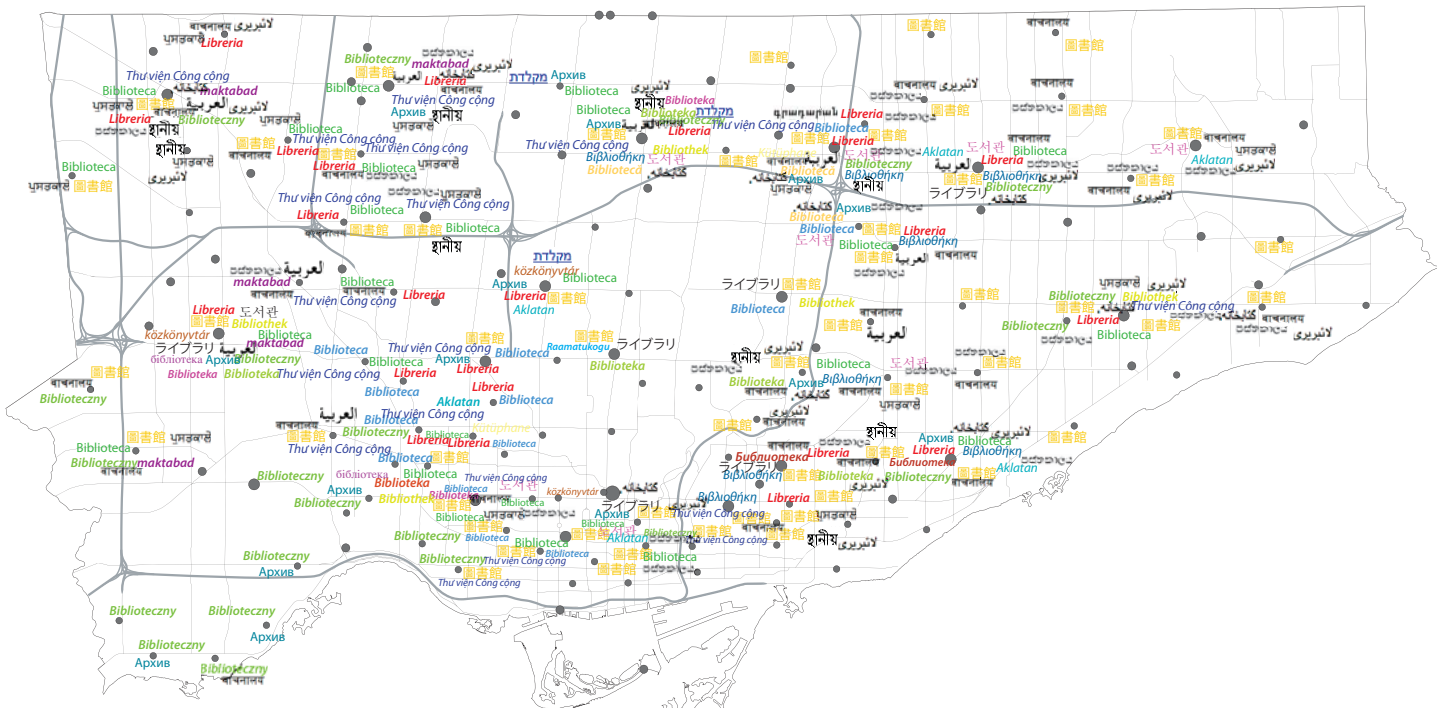
C. 3 Settlement Service Locations (Public and Private)

Adapted by author from: Settlement Ontario, Find Help Close to Home, *Immigrant Serving Organizations in Toronto*, <http://www.settlement.org/findhelp/default.aspx?service=12&location=Toronto%20Ontario%20Canada&latlng=43.670233,-79.386755&search=0>

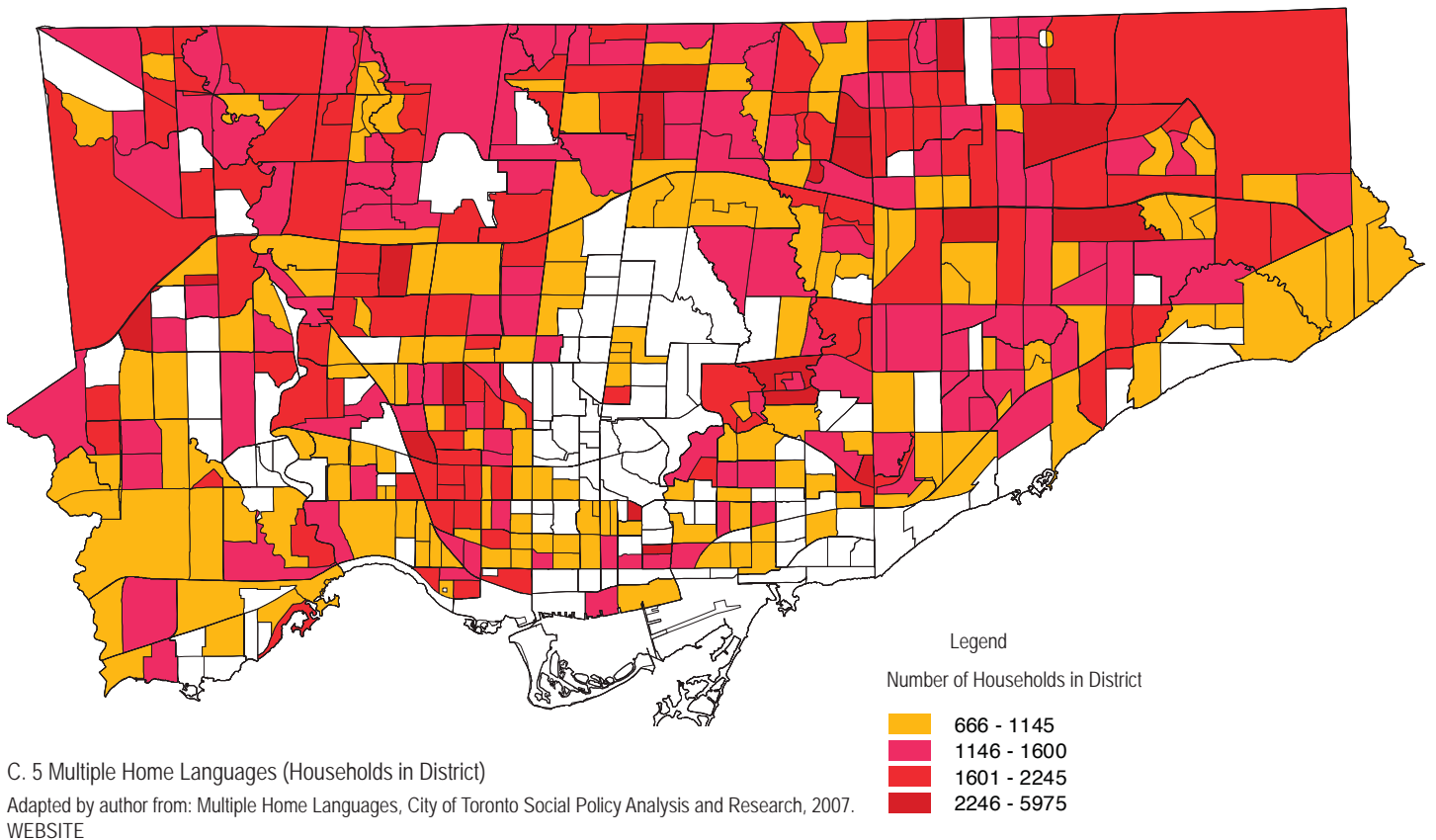
Programmatic Network - Settlement Services

The Bickford Centre is also in close proximity to private immigrant settlement, education and employment agencies such as COSTI, Access Alliance and St. Christopher House. While the Bickford Centre is not an affiliate of these agencies, it is part of a public/private network of settlement services in the area. The areas adjacent to the Bickford Centre and the Christie Pits neighbourhood have continually supported a large number of recent immigrants. Settlement services have therefore concentrated in these areas. These services are housed in a variety of architectural typologies: storefronts, malls, office buildings, community and cultural centres, churches, and even retail outlets such as Honest Ed's.





C. 4 Library Locations and Language Collections Toronto Wide
 Created by author with information from the Toronto Public Library Website - Branch Locations and Collections WEBSITE



C. 5 Multiple Home Languages (Households in District)
 Adapted by author from: Multiple Home Languages, City of Toronto Social Policy Analysis and Research, 2007. WEBSITE

Programmatic Network - The Toronto Public Library

The Bickford Centre is located within the south district of the Toronto Public Library system. To the West of the site, the Bloor/Gladstone District library holds approximately 60,000 items, including six adult and children's multilingual collections in Chinese, Hindi, Portuguese, Spanish, Tamil and Vietnamese. To the East, two small neighbourhood branches, Palmerston and Spadina, hold approximately 40,000 items each with three multilingual collections in Korean, Spanish and Hungarian (Toronto Public Library 2009).

