

Imagining Hope: Integrating Shelter and Services in Toronto's Moss Park

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

The winter of 2018 was particularly harsh and its ramifications were evident in the vulnerable homeless populations around Toronto. There is a shortage of accommodations in shelters especially in freezing temperatures and there is also a challenge of integrating people at risk and those from various backgrounds in society. One approach to meeting this challenge has been written by Ivan Illich in his book, *Tools for Conviviality*, where he defines “conviviality” as activities and tools that help individuals.¹ With the goal of helping the community and applying conviviality as a principle to actors in both natural and social realms of Moss Park in Toronto, the proposal involves redesigning the park and buildings as a series of different health care, extended learning, employment support, emergency shelter, and recreation facilities that integrate the exterior landscape as treatment, teaching, and recreation areas. In other words, the proposal links services with access to park space. This landscape is not only an important space for the homeless community but also the rest of the neighbourhood. The thesis proposes that the federal government relocates the current armoury, as it is an obsolete building while acknowledging and maintaining the armoury’s contribution to the community as an emergency shelter over the past two decades. This key contribution is translated into an inter-governmental and multi-service complex through the use of shared facilities, flexible spaces, topographic manipulations, and indoor-outdoor connections. Since the neighbourhood is an underserved area, the new design develops not just a new facility, but also one of interrelated services, which are multi-functional and completely integrated into the park because combining the different services destigmatizes them and allows them to be more a part of the public realm. This thesis proposes a new design for Moss Park through examining how “park buildings”, interconnected buildings and parks, can foster empowering relationships that create a supportive public realm.

¹ Ivan Illich, *Tools for Conviviality*, edited. Ruth Nanda Anshen (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 11.

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Dedication

Dedicated in memory of my Grandpa, who taught me to laugh through difficulties and to have a “butt attitude” when facing adversities.

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Fig. 0.01 *Homewood Patients*, 2013. Graphite drawings by Xiao Wen Xu. This series of portraits was drawn during my time at Homewood. For me, that combination of art therapy and access to park space can generate hope.

In 2013, while I was an undergraduate student at the University of Waterloo, I was sent home from one co-op job and following a second one, shortly after which I was hospitalized for several months. In the whirlwind of unemployment and mental health struggles, I isolated myself. The more friends and family reached out, the more I retreated into my thoughts revolving around “No work. No school. No money.” Guilty and ashamed, I closed myself from the world seeing no hope for the future. Privileged as I was to attend the Homewood Health Centre, a respected mental health and addictions treatment centre, I struggled with my self-image. Disgusted by the preceding life events, I tried to take my own life in the bathroom at the centre.

In that situation at Homewood, I was fortunate to have open access to green space and a variety of resources, including art therapy, physical therapy, and occupational therapy (Fig. 0.01). Group and peer therapy helped me with the process of healing and recovery. I reconciled with my past experiences and came to accept my emotions and inner struggles through talking therapy. The release and sharing of my experiences eventually led to self-acceptance, which came before an acceptance from other people. For me, that combination of different services worked together and was instrumental in my recovery. After I was discharged from Homewood, I received Ontario Works support and later enrolled in the Ontario Disability Support Program. My journey to recovery was fairly smooth compared to those of others.

Many of my fellow patients were not able to get the help and support they needed, as a result, have been bounced between home and hospital life. Others depended heavily on their families or became homeless. Unemployment, homelessness, and mental health shake people to the very core of what they stand for. Many of my fellow patients who were discharged, due to lack of access to information technology, did not know the health, employment, and financial resources that we are entitled to in Ontario.

The site for this thesis is Moss Park, Toronto. The name Moss Park is beautiful and peaceful, but the site currently appears to be the opposite. Moss, a small low lying green plant, is expansive and serene. Park, an area used for recreation, indicates pleasure and leisure. Despite its graceful name, the neighbourhood, however, is stricken with social and economic problems. At present people often occupy the streets in this neighbourhood

sitting on the street curbs and hanging out outside buildings like the Moss Park Arena, the Fred Victor Mission and Dollarama (Fig. 0.02). The site of the Moss Park Armoury, combined with Moss Park is the only public land in the neighbourhood. Any potential for the proposed project rests upon policy changes and the goodwill of the municipal and federal government.

This area is a low-income neighbourhood with a cluster of homeless shelters, sparse employment centres, and in close proximity to social housing projects, which is related to the higher density of homeless population. At present, the homeless shelters simply house the physical body without fuelling the intellectual body, or in other words, not providing resources and employment opportunities to get out of poverty. The few existing employment centres in the area serve as isolated programs totally separated from the shelters people inhabit and other amenities they use. The social housing projects in Regent Park, an area in close proximity to Moss Park, have become dilapidated because of the lack of program and inhabitant diversity. Developers have also written many condominium projects for the future of this area. These new and shiny condos are targeted towards young professionals and will inevitably force the low-income population to leave, as rent prices will rise. This produces a sad and unnecessary kind of expulsion for the local population from their neighbourhood. Additionally, MacLennan Jaunkalns Miller Architects (MJMA), a Toronto architecture firm proposed a recreation facility for Moss Park whose audience is the upper-middle class that will live in the above condominiums.

Furthermore, the Moss Park Armoury sits in the midst of this fragile broader community and its fence that encircles the armoury screams, “keep away” (Fig. 0.03 and 0.04). Because people are attracted to forbidden places, groups of homeless people sit on the small strip of grass that rims the fence – a symbolic fight with a government power structure that excludes at-risk individuals. The gated doors that face Jarvis Street have a sign in big, black, block letters saying, “NO TRESPASSING”. Such examples illustrate the physical barriers that create exclusion instead of inclusion. Instead of utilizing space with arrangements that would and could enhance and enrich the lives of the different groups of people in the community, these barriers bring about more distress, conflict, and isolation. In contrast to the uninviting circumstances, over the past two decades, the

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Fig. 0.02 *Men on Sherbourne: Outside the Moss Park Arena, 2016*. Photograph by Xiao Wen Xu. A sense of hopelessness suspends in the air around the Moss Park neighbourhood, as there are many people hanging out outside and sitting on street curbs.



Fig. 0.03 *Outside the Fenced Moss Park Armoury, 2016*. Photograph by Xiao Wen Xu. The fence that encircles the Moss Park Armoury screams, "keep away". Barriers such as this create exclusion instead of inclusion.

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Fig. 0.04 *Moss Park Armoury: Forces Diagram*. Image by Xiao Wen Xu. The fence that encircles the armoury creates friction between the internal and external forces. Because people are attracted to forbidden places, groups of homeless people sit on the small strip of grass that rims the fence – a symbolic fight with a government power structure that excludes at-risk individuals.



Fig. 0.05 *Moss Park Armoury as Emergency Shelter*. Photograph by Rick Madonik (Toronto Star). The federal government approved the use of the Moss Park Armoury as an emergency shelter for two weeks in January 2018.

armoury has opened its doors five times—with most recently the winter of 2018—to the homeless community during freezing temperatures (Fig. 0.05). These acts of kindness and

the legacy of the armoury's contribution to the community serve as the keystone to my design at Moss Park.

This design thesis argues that social services and shelters should not be separated, stigmatized, and isolated from each other—instead the proposal integrates them in productive, empowering ways while also integrating the services into the public landscape. The thesis proposes shared and flexible spaces that link different social service programs together to mutually benefit the homeless population with the rest of the community. Moreover, homeless populations already use the park, but this is presently considered to be a “problem”. The thesis argues that the park is actually an important social service and amenity for all people. For example, the therapy and job counselling rooms each have access to the interior courtyard, which extends the spaces into the shaded outdoor areas. A mixed program, unexpected activity adjacencies, and access to park space are all tools used here to integrate people of different backgrounds in the neighbourhood. Moreover, The thesis argues that the new condos need to be 30% social housing, which creates a network of dispersed social housing in the community, rather than a concentration. **Imagining Hope** acts as an empowerment tool for this network and the rest of the community.

I aim to strengthen the identity of Moss Park. The proposal imagines that the existing armoury is relocated elsewhere in Toronto, just as it was relocated from University Avenue to this location in the mid-1960. The reservists that train in the current armoury all have civilian day jobs and live throughout the entire city. Since the reservists are already commuting from elsewhere in the city, a relocation of the armoury would be possible. While moving the armoury is an option, moving the homeless community is not because these people on the street have less chance of survival in the suburbs where services are further apart; moving the homeless community would be exacerbating the problem and destroying existing relationships between these individuals. Even though the armoury is relocated, its symbolic contribution to accommodate the disadvantaged homeless community remains. Although the city has 5700 permanent emergency shelter beds and two new shelters that opened in January 2018 with 200 beds, there is still a demand for more.²

² Oliver Moore, “Toronto opens two new around-the-clock shelters from the cold,” *Globe and Mail*, published January, 4, 2018, accessed March 13, 2018, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/ottawa-evaluating-torontos-request-for-help-easing-strain-on-homeless-shelter-system/article37506015/>

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Architecture is one discipline that can provide a solution to this demand and help to establish hope. Programs such as job counselling, adult learning, computer access, and art therapy are all activities that encourage the healing process and societal integration. The access to these resources leads to building confidence and skills, the key to recovery, which builds the foundation for hope. This approach is supported by Ivan Illich's book, *Tools for Conviviality*, where defines "conviviality" as activities and tools that help individuals.³ Applying Illich's convivial principle to architecture involves providing resources and access to park space. In this work, I want to create an architecture of hope, addressing issues of access to space and resources through space creation itself. For this thesis, hope is defined as the trust and the belief that something good may come from opportunities available. Without hope, one enters stagnation or regression. Hope leads to good and positive thoughts, which in turn leads to positive actions. Hope is the only way to move forward. I chose to study this because I personally experienced hopelessness and I believe that design can dignify people transitioning from trauma.

This design thesis helps people transition from trauma through three ways: (1) challenges of the site—a need for emergency shelter, (2) combining learning and job enterprises, and (3) the integration of landscape and social services. First, the design responds to the fragile community with the idea of flexible spaces, such as a spacious hallway, "the spine". The spine transforms into an emergency shelter between mid-December to mid-February each year housing 105 beds with showers, a hangout/eating area, and access to the cafeteria. The rest of the year the spine serves as seating areas and a resource library-on-wheels. For the second concept of combining learning and job enterprises, the Queen Street edge of the complex has storefront social enterprises that echo the narrow layout of shops of Queen Street West, but instead of selling new luxury items, they train and employ people at risk. Above the social enterprise is the "Learn Cube" which has computer access and adult learning classrooms. In the design proposal, social enterprises protect an interior courtyard, from the busy street. For the third design principle of integrating landscape and social services, the design strengthens the connection with nature because, as the literature review in the theoretical inspiration chapter of this thesis concludes, experiences in nature heal the human body. A row of therapy rooms

³ Ivan Illich, *Tools for Conviviality*, edited. Ruth Nanda Anshen (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 11.

encircles the courtyard—each room accesses the courtyard through pivoting glass walls. Within the courtyard, alternate-leaf dogwood, Canada plum, and sweet cherry trees have been chosen for their relatively short stature and low-lying foliage. These trees can be found throughout southern Ontario.

Class integration and gender neutrality are other design principles that the thesis employs. The new recreation centre—ice rink, pools, universal change rooms, gym and fitness studio—integrates into the scheme with the spine connecting them. South of the ice arena consists of hanging out/eating areas for the at-risk individuals and the rest of the community. Both groups can enjoy watching hockey games at play in the ice arena, which has a glass-viewing wall. The regular operation of the recreational facilities and the seasonal operation of the emergency shelter will destigmatize social services by creating a combined holistic approach to health. This combines “positive” activities, such as exercise, with the often-perceived “negative” activities, such as shelters and counselling services. The universal change rooms of the recreation centre are about gender and class neutrality—the idea that people can come as they are and use the same facility. With careful scheduling, the emergency shelter guests and the recreation centre users can both benefit from the universal change rooms and showers.

The combination of these services requires an intergovernmental investment that will decrease future social welfare loads through helping people in Moss become happy and independent. Toronto can benefit from these enabled and empowered individuals as they achieve personal goals, find their life purpose, and make their unique contribution to the community. Effective parks promote social interactions to form bonds with neighbours. With resources and proper care, people can live to their potential. To illustrate, the groups of people that sit on the street curbs in Moss Park could benefit from proper benches and covered areas where they can be shaded from the sun and avoid a downpour. The thesis further argues that a design for Moss Park must respond to the needs of goals of its immediate neighbours, the homeless individuals and the rest of the community. These needs include a place of safety, help to achieve recovery, and the everyday concerns of urban life. **Imagining Hope** investigates how these different elements can live harmoniously adjacent and work together to better the community. This large thesis project can benefit

the local neighbourhood.

The project enhances the neighbourhood through offering a strategy funded by multiple levels of government: federal and municipal. First, the federal government funds the therapy/job counselling rooms and the spine hallway. The federal government has historically funded organizations and facilities such as the Canadian Mental Health Association and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. Second, the municipal government supports the social enterprises, the “learn cube” with its classrooms and tech access, and the new recreation centre. Historically, the City of Toronto Employment & Social Services offers a grant called, Investing In Neighbourhoods, which create meaningful jobs for Toronto residents who are on welfare. Moreover, the city fully funded projects in low-income neighbourhoods, such as it did for the Regent Park Aquatic Centre, where all the swimming programs are free. Such a combined local intervention further responds to global issues of integrating individuals at risk through programs that provide resources and assistance for them.

This intergovernmental facility materializes through a palette that consists of cedar cladding, glulam structure, CLT panels, and slate flooring. The exterior of the building has a cedar strip cladding with its soft greying ageing property. This cladding extends from the wall and becomes the railing for the accessible roof, which enhances the connection between different programs and levels. The thesis employs a glulam structure with CLT panels because of the inherent warmth they bring into the space. Black slate tiles cover the ground because of its durability, low maintenance, and contrast with the wooden interior.

With this material palette, the design proposal aims to create a new landscape in Moss Park through a focus on growth: physical and intellectual. The emphasis on renewal, strength, and dignity deeply embed in the goals of the project. This thesis serves as a counterproposal to the anticipated Moss Park Recreation Centre proposal by MJMA, whose audience is upper-middle class.

In the chapters before “Design Process and Proposal”, the thesis book explains the thought evolution behind Imagining Hope and demonstrates how the project responds to the site and current social and economic circumstances. The design will integrate the park and services, connecting different layers of the city. Imagining Hope examines the

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importance of conviviality as a principle in both the natural and social realms in Chapter One, titled “Theoretical Inspirations.” Four primary texts in this thesis chapter argue that a society’s success is only based on interdependence and mutual reliance. Chapter Two, “Moss Park, Toronto, Canada”, analyses the site through aerial views, site history, and site demographics. Chapter Three, “Design Inspirations”, outlines five design and working precedents that inform the design of this thesis. **Imagining Hope** stands as a unique amalgamation of services that address issues of community requirements, diverse demographics, and access to green spaces. Finally, Chapter Four, “Design Process and Proposal”, illustrates my design process through drawings, model photos, diagrams, and digital renders. In addition to these chapters, the appendix titled, “Portraits of Moss Park”, is a photo essay that celebrates humanity’s hopes and dreams through photographs that capture people sitting in and walking around the Moss Park neighbourhood.

Theoretical Inspirations

Conviviality as a Principle in Natural and Social Realms

Since the Aesclepiion at Epidaurus in ancient Greece, from the fourth century BCE to the sixth century CE (where natural spring waters were used as cleansing rituals along with tree groves), people have been studying how connections between people and nature benefit human health. In addition to that connection, today, there is a widespread and increasing acknowledgement of the necessity for interdependence—a mutual reliance—as an essential tool in survival. Although there is research in this area, the present discussion fails to acknowledge the application of this research in design and how to create spaces for mutually beneficial relationships between actors within a given society.

This design thesis is informed by a discussion on the nature of conviviality, a process and attitude, which binds actors in both natural and social realms. The design decisions of this thesis are an application of the convivial principle explored in this essay. Conviviality is here explained through three realms: the environment, the individual, and the relationship of social and natural realms. The analysis begins with the organization of physical space and its effects on people in a convivial environment. Next, this essay explains the needs of the individual within that environment. Lastly, the scientifically proven healing benefits of nature will be examined. Using these realms as an organization for this essay, the essay investigates Ivan Illich's definition of conviviality and analyzes three primary texts that form the theoretical inspiration for the design thesis. Illich defines "conviviality" in his early book, *Tools for Conviviality*, as activities and tools that help individuals.⁴ Here, actors represent the players in each system of reference and conviviality proves to link these players. In this essay, a broader group of texts is examined to show that a symbiotic network of relationships with other living organisms further supports the well-being and success of people. The issue of underserved communities can be investigated and assisted through the design of empowering spaces that use design philosophies based on readings in urbanism, psychology, and therapeutic landscapes.

⁴ Ivan Illich, *Tools for Conviviality*, edited. Ruth Nanda Anshen (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 86.

To support this thesis' design decision of mixing people and programs, I cite Jane Jacobs' *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. In her book, Jacobs explicates convivial roles and interdependent relationships among different groups of people and the process of mixing programs in space. To understand how to design for the individual, I refer to Abraham Maslow's motivational psychology essay, "A Theory of Human Motivation". This psychology paper writes about the importance people's connections with one another, which lead to satisfied self-actualized human beings. Clare Cooper Marcus and Naomi Sachs's *Therapeutic Landscapes* outlines the crucial role and impact of people's active and passive connections with nature. Applying this concept to the design thesis includes various degrees of human contact with nature. Taken together, these three texts will be the fundamental readings for this thesis design and demonstrate the innate human reliance on other people and the environment and act as the foundational philosophy for designing learning, collaboration, and interdependence at Moss Park.

Defining Conviviality

Ivan Illich argues for the interconnected relationship between the freedom and autonomy of individuals and access to tools and opportunities in society. This serves as a social construct, which proves to be necessary for the reciprocal benefit of both the individual and the collective. Austrian philosopher and Roman Catholic priest Ivan Illich was born in 1926 in Vienna, Austria, and studied histology and crystallography at the University of Florence in Italy, theology and philosophy at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, and medieval history in Salzburg. Illich's influential book, *Tools for Conviviality*, published in 1973 and edited by Ruth Nanda Anshen, argues that as industrial societies become increasingly more focused on specialized technical knowledge for the professional elite, there is an inherent need to develop methods to share practical knowledge and outcomes of such technologies for individuals and communities.

In the second chapter of the book, "Convivial Reconstruction", Illich defines his two elementary terms, "tools" and "conviviality". Illich refers to tools in both the industrial

⁵ Ivan Illich, *Tools for Conviviality*, edited. Ruth Nanda Anshen (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 11.

and social system sense, as he writes that individuals need tools in their lives, for they remedy diseases and serve as a method of communication.⁵ He describes tools as physical objects and methods, which assist individuals in living daily life. Additionally, Illich explains that conviviality in the book refers to reciprocal interactions that help individuals. To illustrate, he recognizes conviviality as freedom provided by the exchange of information between individuals.⁶ For Illich, an ethical value is derived from this interdependent relationship between individuals and their environment as opposed to the forced responses demanded by individuals and the technocratically shaped manmade-environment. A convivial society grants freedom and autonomy to individuals by guaranteeing that community members have free and open access to the tools and opportunities necessary for their personal and collective enrichment.

People around the globe have reacted and understood Illich's text on the conviviality as guidelines for an active process based on collaboration. For example, Orla O'Donovan, a lecturer in the School of Applied Social Studies at University College Cork comments in her 2010 essay, "Ivan Illich's *Tools for Conviviality*" that Illich's book provides a methodology for collaboration as conversation.⁷ O'Donovan writes that Illich created guidelines for productive ways in which members of society can live. She also supports Illich's argument for a new and diverse exchange of skills and knowledge; in other words, this exchange expands human possibilities. Therefore, the influence of Illich's text resonates across disciplines because the dynamism of conviviality is at the heart of all social processes.

Illich's definition of conviviality embodies the sharing of knowledge and resources, which produces a progressive society that helps all of its members. This concept is applied to the thesis through designing spaces that encourage collaboration and the exchange of practical knowledge. For example, the "learn cube" on the corner of Jarvis Street and Queen Street houses computers rooms, language classrooms, extended learning, and meeting areas on the second and third levels. Surrounding the courtyard are job counselling and therapy rooms to help the at-risk individuals and the rest of the community to reach their full potential, which parallels Illich's theories about open access to knowledge. These

⁶ Ivan Illich, *Tools for Conviviality*, edited. Ruth Nanda Anshen (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 11.

⁷ Orla O'Donovan, "Ivan Illich's *Tools for Conviviality*", *Mobilizing classics: Reading radical writing in Ireland*, ed. Fiona Dukelow and Orla O'Donovan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 150.

spaces lay the foundation for self-improvement and assisting individuals in becoming active members of society.

Convivial Environments

Even though designers and thinkers do not use the word “conviviality”, the spaces they describe and discuss share Ilich’s convivial principles. Heterogeneity in programs improves quality of city life by increasing public safety. In these discussions, the emphasis is placed on variety as the key to successful planning practices.

Through the lens of conviviality, author and urban activist, Jane Jacobs elucidates the interdependent relationship between different programs that are crucial for conducting human life. Her influential early book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, establishes man’s relationship with the city, in particular, a complex mixed city of layered activities. Jacobs, born in 1916 in Scranton, Pennsylvania, moved with her sister to New York City in 1935. There, Jacobs attended Columbia University’s School of General Studies for two years, after which she became a writer for the Office of War Information and then a reporter for *Amerika*. The book, published in 1972, explores urban design from a perspective of an active walkable streetscape.

Jacobs’s concepts about mixed uses and activities in urban places embrace and prioritize diversity in the city. For example, she writes that areas must service more than one function to ensure that people with various schedules can share the facility.⁸ Jacobs advocates for diversity in functions, particularly, because they allow for opportunities for the abstract choreography of different groups of people. She also addresses the time scale by indicating that a mixture of different people operating on different schedules uses the space at different times of the day for different activities, will not only increase the occupancy level in terms of economics but also for public safety. This form of neighbourhood watch denotes that at all times, activities on the street are monitored. Therefore, mankind’s connection with the city is through the activation of different programs on different schedules.

While Jacobs’s explanations of urban landscapes shaped by the economy provide path-breaking information, some have argued that urban spaces today follow a different

⁸ Jane Jacobs, “The need for mixed primary uses.” *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1972), 152.

logic than those set forth in Jacobs's days. One example of this argument was written by Klaus Brake, a guest professor of urban and regional development at Berlin University of Technology, in his 2014 essay, "What Would Jane Jacobs Have Said and Her Relevance for Today and Tomorrow", where he states that the increase of creative and knowledge-based jobs demands more segregated and homogeneous spaces.⁹ Moreover, he writes that today's small-scale mixed-use urban spaces perform a different role than those of Jacobs's time where the economy was based on manufacturing.¹⁰ Essentially, Jacobs's concepts may not apply to creative professionals, but their validity still offers organizational ways to deal with dense mixed-use urban areas.

Applying Jacobs' urban observations to the proposed design research involves designing the "spine" hallway which serves as an emergency shelter between mid-December and mid-February each year and serves as a spacious gathering and resources library the other months of the year. Through these overlaps, programs will mutually benefit each other because the emergency shelter guests can receive therapy, job-counselling advice, adult learning opportunities, and Internet access all within this facility and take a step to leave poverty.

Understanding the Individual

Individuals need convivial environments and the best way to understand that is through Maslow's hierarchy of needs. For this thesis, these concepts are explained by Maslow's most well-known essay, "A Theory of Human Motivation". American psychologist Maslow, born in 1908 in Brooklyn, New York, studied at the City College of New York, the University of Wisconsin and later continued his research at Columbia University. The journal article, published in 1943 in *Psychological Review*, outlines a psychological theory which states that through the fulfilment of innate human needs the individual attains self-actualization.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs proposes that in order to move to the next level of fulfilment, the previous level of needs should largely be satisfied. The first two strata

⁹Klaus Brake, "What Would Jane Jacobs Have Said and Her Relevance for Today and Tomorrow." Edited by Dirk Schubert. *Contemporary Perspective on Jane Jacobs: Reassessing the Impacts of an Urban Visionary*. (Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014), 237.

¹⁰ Ibid., 238.

¹¹ Abraham Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," *Psychological Review* 50, no. 4 (July 4, 1943): 372-376.

of Maslow's hierarchy of needs are physiological starting with breathing, food, water, sleep; and the next level includes safety needs: security of body, nutrition, and shelter.¹¹ According to Maslow, after the physiological and safety needs are met, there "will emerge the love and affection and belongingness needs".¹² The love and affirmation from family, friends, and society fuels the individual and encourages him to accomplish personal goals. The fourth level, "esteem needs," is "based upon real capacity, achievement and respect from others".¹³ Through the establishment of family or societal belonging, the individual seeks to sharpen his skills and talents and develop a sense of accomplishment. These personal, private, victories can lead to interpersonal, public, victories. Lastly, "the need for self-actualization" is defined as "[what] a man *can* be, he *must* be".¹⁴ In other words, self-actualization is finding one's life purpose and the culmination of all previous need levels. Moreover, individuals with life goals lead positive lives and contribute to the greater good of society. Therefore, Maslow's hierarchy of needs can be seen as a study of understanding the motivations of the individual as a basis of urban revitalization.

While Maslow's needs theory is one of the most referenced pieces of writing in motivational psychology, it has also stirred some controversy in its lack of research evidence. One example of a revision to his theory is a study by Eugene W. Mathes, an American Psychology professor at Western Illinois University, "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as a Guide for Living", published in 1981. The study suggests an alteration to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in containing only "three levels - physiological, belongingness, and self-actualization".¹⁵ The researchers tested the hypothesis that people subconsciously use Maslow's hierarchy for living. Fifty men and fifty women subjects, not familiar with Maslow's theory, filled out questionnaires which asked for people's need satisfaction priorities. The results showed that while Maslow's hierarchy can serve as a guide, some of his propositions received mixed support and other were totally rejected. Even though people have challenged Maslow's theory, he is still considered a leading proponent of motivational psychology. While Maslow's hierarchy may not be a mirror image of human life, it certainly provides a workable framework for designing building and landscape spaces to help attain the higher levels of need satisfaction.

¹² Ibid., 380.

¹³ Ibid., 381.

¹⁴ Ibid., 382.

¹⁵ Eugene W. Mathes, "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as a Guide for Living," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 21, no. 4 (1981): 71.

Theoretical Inspirations



Fig. 1.01 *Moss Park: Homeless Shelters vs. Employment Centres Map*. Adapted from GIS Toronto Open Data. The map is chosen as it focuses on Moss Park and shows the relationship between the number of homeless shelters, social housing, and employment centres. The map demonstrates the need for integrated services, like extended learning and employment centres to offer the hope to move forward.

Observing the context of the design site at Moss Park in Toronto, the local shelters and social housing satisfy the physiological and safety needs of the individual, but there is still a large innate human need for love, belonging and life purpose. There are fourteen shelters near Moss Park, but only three employment centres. Accessible spaces to learn and socialize are missing. Shelters and social housing care for the physical body, but they leave the intellectual body behind and leave dreams and aspirations, homeless. At present, the ratio of shelters to enriching services is disproportionate, resulting in the stagnation of self-improvement for those in need (Fig. 1.01). Moreover, the isolation and alienation of the homeless group in shelters prevent social integration – the essential societal connection

¹⁶ Abraham Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," *Psychological Review* 50, no. 4 (July 4, 1943): 380.

to any recovery. Only through overcoming challenges, can the individual feel the merge of “love and affection and belongingness” into society; with a found sense of belonging, the individual can hold high evaluation of himself.¹⁶

In the proposed research design, convivial services like extended learning, employment centres, and social enterprises combined with the emergency shelter offer the hope to move forward. Even if the individual lives in a small quarter, they can explore these services. The doing of the activity, whether training or working, gives a feeling of accomplishment. Giving food and shelter to someone is combined with training and employment programs to foster a sense of community and individual accomplishment. They can have something to look forward to the next day that will help them better themselves. The spine hallway’s emergency shelter functions alongside the training and therapy services to make long-term changes in people. With such social services, the individual is able to imagine a new life and this thesis aims to offer these resources for the individual. The efficacy of this exposition builds on the innate human ability to achieve and accomplish as outlined by Maslow.

Healing Benefits of Nature

While Jacobs describes the design of physical spaces and Maslow elucidates the needs of the individual, Clare Marcus and Naomi Sachs explores conviviality in terms of humanity’s relationship with nature. Research from the past thirty years acknowledges nature’s healing and restorative benefits in humans. Marcus and Sachs’ design manual book, *Therapeutic Landscapes: An Evidence-Based Approach to Designing Healing Gardens and Restorative Outdoor Spaces* describes the research behind the effects of nature and provides methods to design successful user-centred healing gardens through the analysis of global restorative landscape examples. Marcus is a retired British professor of architecture and landscape architecture, and she was born in London, England. Sachs is the Founding Director of the Therapeutic Landscapes Network and is currently a PhD candidate in architecture. The book, published in 2014, provides insight, with global case studies, into the relationship between nature and human health.

¹⁷ Clare Cooper Marcus and Naomi A. Sachs, *Therapeutic landscapes an evidence-based approach to designing healing gardens and restorative outdoor spaces* (Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley, 2014), 1.

The book begins with a brief history of restorative landscapes and goes on to explain the importance of connecting with nature. To illustrate, Marcus and Sachs write that a “large body of research shows that connection with nature is beneficial—even vital—for health.”¹⁷ This theory lays the foundation for any participatory design processes because people’s well being depends on the natural environment. Roger S. Ulrich, one of the references made by Marcus and Sachs, first examined this subject, in 1984, and found that even passively experiencing nature can benefit people in his study, “View through a Window May Influence Recovery from Surgery”. This investigation studied surgical patients’ recovery when assigned to a room with a window view of a natural environment at a hospital in Pennsylvania. The results were that patients required shorter postoperative hospital stays and took less pain-relieving medication than those patients with a window facing a brick-building wall.¹⁸ If people in trauma, the surgical patients, are able to recover faster with even passively experiencing nature then the average person can also experience nature’s restorative benefits. Marcus and Sachs use this investigation to show that people can connect with nature passively and experience its healing benefits. Overall, this investigation expresses the passive convivial connection between the natural and social worlds.

Another study explained in *Therapeutic Landscapes* is a concept introduced by the Forest Agency of Japan of *shinrin-yoku*, taking in the forest atmosphere or forest bathing, to promote walking, health, and topiary as therapy. A group of Japanese scientists studied that visiting a forest increases the body’s production of anti-cancer proteins, in their 2008 study, “Visiting a Forest, but Not a City, Increases Human Natural Killer Activity and Expression of Anti-Cancer Proteins”.¹⁹ This research proves that the latent potential of breathing and experiencing nature can have profound influences on human life, not only in terms of relaxation but also increase the body’s fight against terminal illnesses such as cancer. Here, this investigation proves that the act of connecting with nature fosters more creative individuals, which in turn creates more effective collectives.

¹⁸ Roger S. Ulrich, “View Through a Window May Influence Recovery from Surgery,” *Science*, New Series, Vol. 224, No. 4647 (1984): 420 – 421, accessed July 23, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1692984>.

¹⁹ Li, Q., K. Morimoto, M. Kobayashi, H. Inagaki, M. Katsumata, Y. Hirata, K. Hirata, H. Suzuki, Y.j. Li, Y. Wakayama, T. Kawada, B.j. Park, T. Ohira, N. Matsui, T. Kagawa, Y. Miyazaki, and A.m. Krensky, “Visiting a Forest, but Not a City, Increases Human Natural Killer Activity and Expression of Anti-Cancer Proteins,” *International Journal of Immunopathology and Pharmacology* 21, no. 1 (2008): 117-27.

Theoretical Inspirations

Research has studied how people passively and actively experience nature and as the studies prove, people do not need to go into the woods to experience nature's benefits. Visceral experiences of nature, even opening windows and inhaling "green odour" from gardens nearby, can have profound effects on human health. This inherent quality is captured in the design thesis through the use of large pivoting glass walls between the inner courtyard and the therapy rooms surrounding the courtyard. This arrangement provides visceral experiences of nature in two ways: (1) passively, through opening windows and inhaling "green odour", and (2) actively, through expanding the treatment area outside into the patio and inner courtyard. Taken as a whole Marcus and Sachs' investigations show that the incorporation of nature into everyday life is essential to human well-being. The design at Moss Park employs a continuous running/walking track to promote exercise and daily exposure to nature. This track becomes a part of the ramped roof that stitches together the building and the park. Additionally, preserving the mature trees along the eastern perimeter of the site encourages forest bathing especially because large tree canopies take years to establish. Not only are the mature tree preserved, new English Oaks are planted as a densifier because they are tall and extremely long lasting, living many centuries.

Imagining Hope's mission is to become an inclusive hub that inspires a holistic way of personal growth by providing adult education, recreational programs, and job opportunities to promote engagement with the community. These activities stimulate senses of touch, smell, and sight. Additionally, Accessibility is key to the organization and with active programs and daily schedules; at-risk individuals can recover through the act of doing. A sense of accomplishment can be achieved which leads to fulfilled individuals within the community.

Illich's definition of conviviality—activities that help individuals—proves to be universal in social and natural spheres. He argues that convivial relationships between the freedom and autonomy of individuals and access to tools and opportunities in society are vital for sustainability. Next, Jacobs explains the importance of designing convivial environments. With an understanding of the hierarchy of individual needs, as outlined by Maslow, suggests the convivial behaviour amongst community members. Moreover,

Theoretical Inspirations

Marcus and Sachs's research demonstrates the essential connection between nature and human well-being. Here, four primary texts are examined and concludes that with the understanding of the role of conviviality in the social and natural territories, environments can be designed to foster empowering relationships between these elements and improve the public realm. This thesis design proposes a new network of mixed programs composed of an emergency shelter, recreational facilities, and social services with an urban street edge in the West end of the site to free open more courtyard and park spaces in the East end of the site. This focus and integration of park and social services encourage and celebrate collaboration and interdependence at Moss Park. Incorporated into the design are the convivial values of Illich, the mixed programs of Jacobs, the individual understandings of Maslow, and the healing natural benefits explained by Marcus and Sachs. As such, the gap in current design research fails to bridge the theoretical understanding of psychology and the benefits of experiencing nature. In addition to these academic texts, this design is a synthesis of these principles and is a physical manifestation of these abstract ideas. The future of Moss Park can be created through design research based on the knowledge of realms outside of architecture, including urbanism, psychology, and therapeutic landscapes.

Moss Park, Toronto, Canada

Moss Park Toronto

Moss Park Toronto



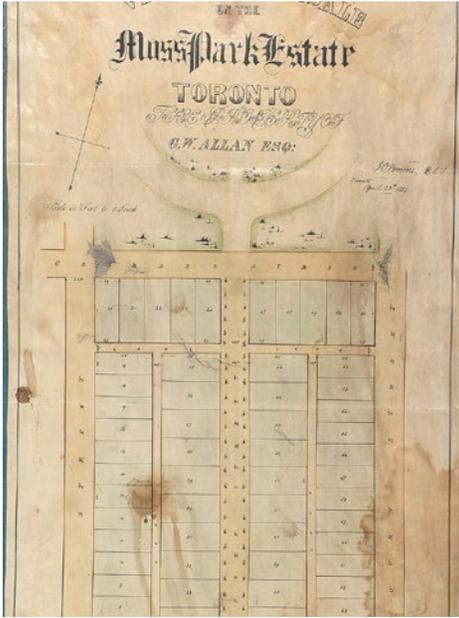
Fig. 2.01 *Toronto Moss Park Aerial 1942*. Photograph by City of Toronto Archives. This aerial map shows the fine grain qualities of smaller buildings that occupied the site before the armoury. These qualities are incorporated into the design to create more intimacy between the visitors and the building.

Moss Park Toronto



Fig. 2.02 *Origin of Moss Park Toronto: Site Timeline*. Graphics by Xiao Wen Xu with photographs by City of Toronto Archives. William Allen, a businessman and one early Toronto's wealthiest citizens, originally owned the site at Moss Park in Toronto. After he built his estate, he named it "Moss Park". And, after the death of William Allen, his only surviving son, George William Allen, divided the estate into 69 lots and sold them for suburban house construction. In 1962, the Moss Park houses were demolished to build the Moss Park apartments. In September of 1966, the Moss Park Armoury was constructed and the four training regiments moved from the original armoury on University Avenue. Since the current armoury is already a relocation, moving it elsewhere would be possible.

1854

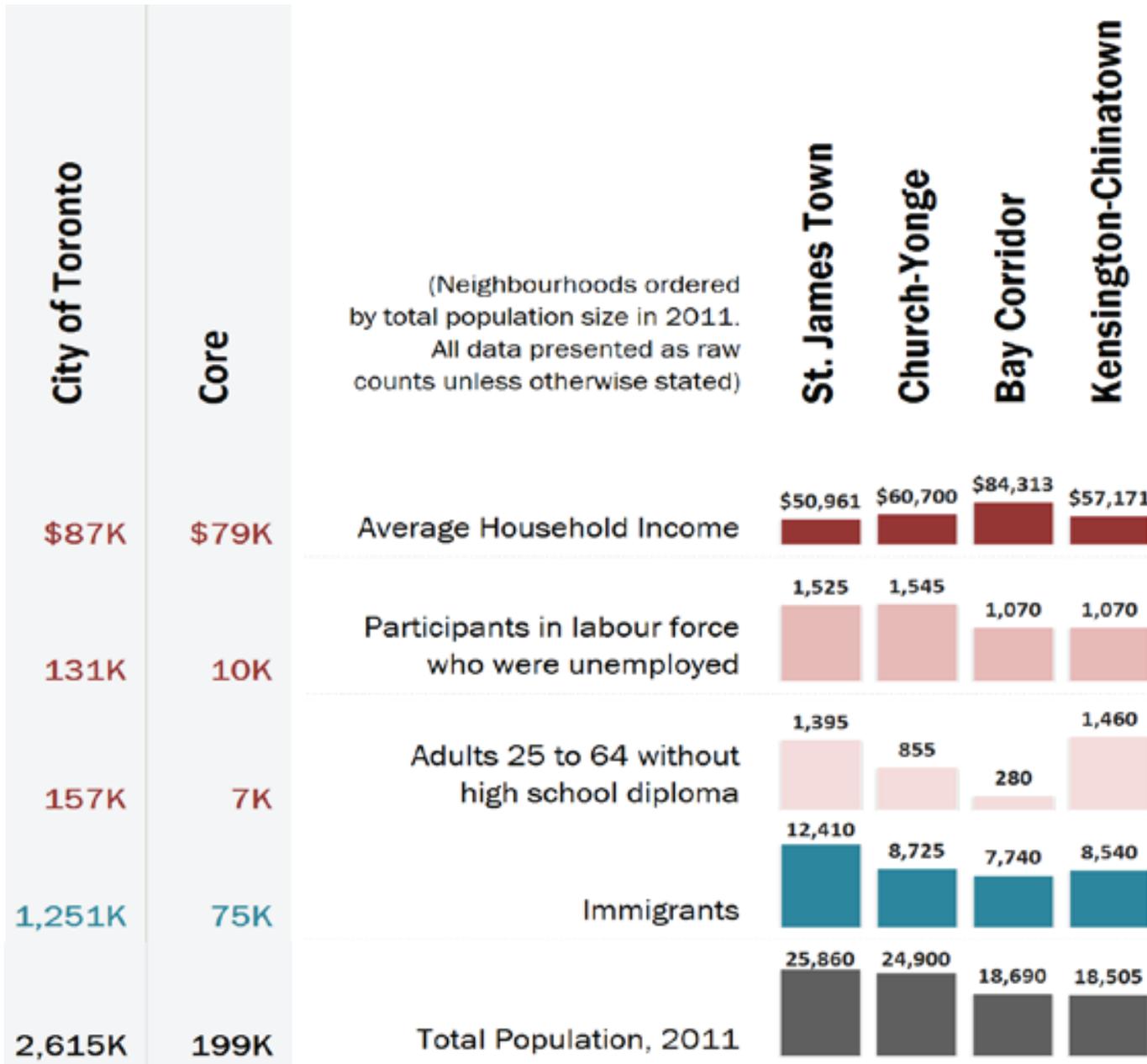


Sixty-nine lots were laid out from present day Dundas up to Gerrard for suburban houses.

1962



Moss Park houses were demolished to build Moss Park apartments.



toronto core

3.5 %

adults 25 - 64 without high school diploma

moss park

10 %

adults 25 - 64 without high school diploma

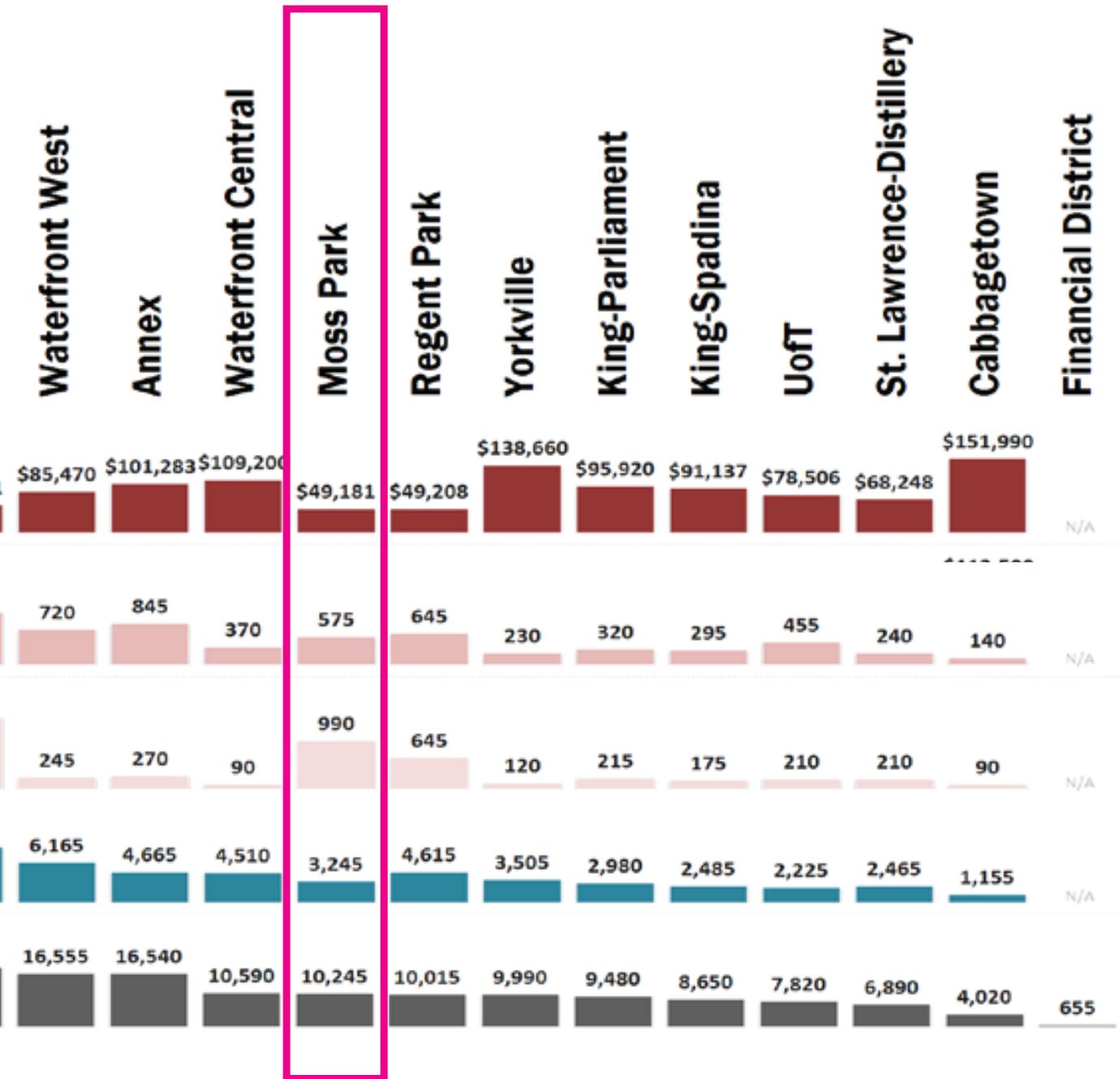


Fig. 2.03 Demographics of Moss Park Compared to Toronto Core. Adapted from: POANeighbourhood Population Profiles. This shows the Demographics of Moss Park compared to the rest of the Toronto core. It has the lowest household income and the highest rate of individuals without a high school diploma. It is clear there is a need for adult learning and job opportunities.

Design Inspirations

In a world with an over emphasis on individualization, this design on integrating shelter and social services creates community and support systems. Projects from a diverse set of contexts and time periods were researched for their creativity and inventiveness through forming connections between people, businesses, and landscapes. Five precedents were examined for innovative responses to the concept of integration: *Dance* by Henri Matisse; St. John's Bakery in Toronto, Ontario; Community of Hearts in Guelph, Ontario; OMA and LMN's Seattle Central Library in Seattle, United States; and Snøhetta's Oslo Opera House in Oslo, Norway. These precedents embody convivial connections, which create a community of shared resources. While each project slightly differs from **Imagining Hope: Integrating Shelter and Services in Toronto's Moss Park** either in terms of typology or context, key aspects of their designs were reinterpreted for use in the proposal.



Fig. 3.01 Henri Matisse's *Dance*, 1910. Photograph by Hermitage.

Dance

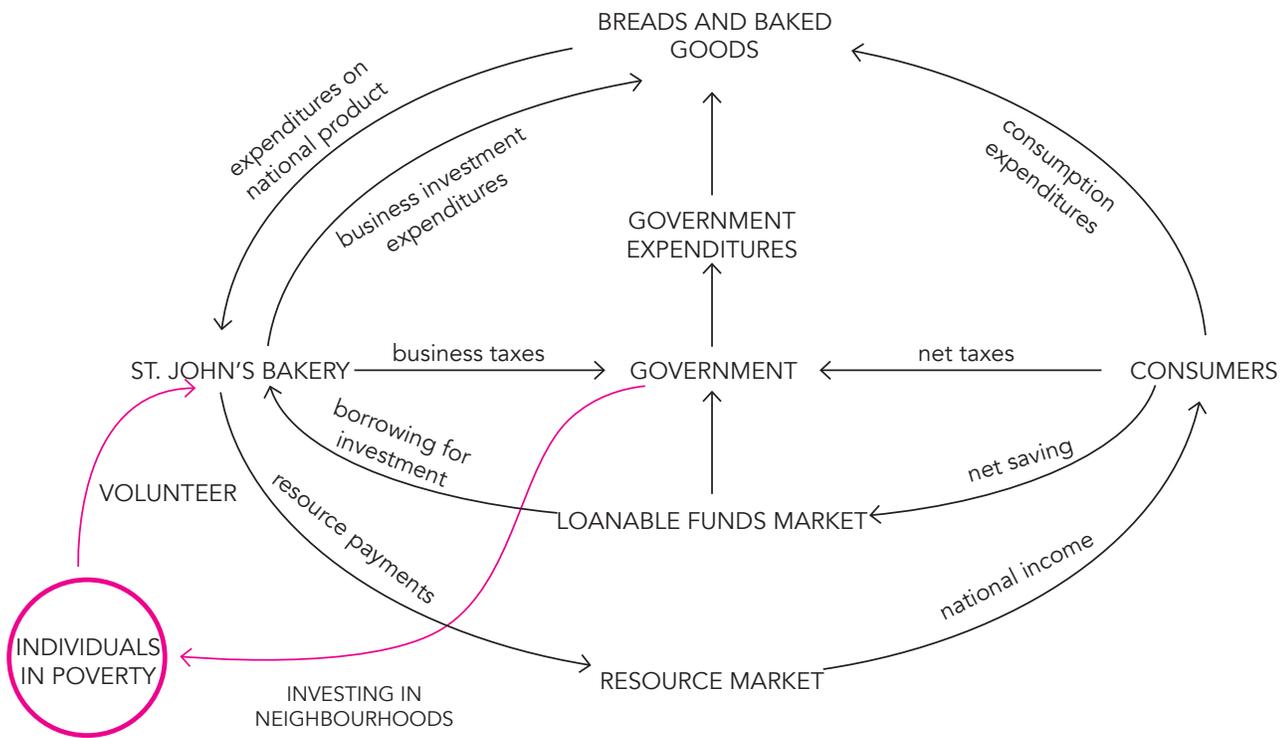
Dance by Henri Matisse serves as the first precedent for this thesis because of its communal theme (Fig. 3.01). The painting was the latter of two commissions for Sergei Shchukin, a Russian importer of oriental fabrics. Matisse painted the dancing figures with faces without individual details, which focuses on the community of people rather than the individual. The expressive nude figures are fully absorbed in the inner world of dance with their faces hidden and bodies curled. *Dance* focuses on movement and connections and this is achieved through the rhythm of the lyrical figures. From the subtle caressing curves of the dancing limbs to the linking hands, the viewer's eyes move across and around the canvas. This dynamism emphasizes the human need for connections. Moreover, the juxtaposition of complementary colours—red and green—adds to the lively positive connections implied the painting.

While *Imagining Hope* is a landscaped building and *Dance* is a painting, what *Dance* offers as a precedent are characteristics for community and connection with nature. **Imagining Hope** is an architectural adaptation of this convivial collaboration. First, the cupping hand-like gesture of the designed building opens towards the park creating a courtyard in its palm. This gesture formally and functionally connects the building with the park landscape. Second similar to the general faces of the painting, this design centres around the idea of flexible spaces, instead of individualized space, where a spacious hallway, “the spine” transforms into an emergency shelter between mid-December to mid-February each year. The rest of the year “the spine” serves as seating areas and a resource library-on-wheels. While *Dance* provided the key inspiration for the overarching concept of collaboration and integration in this thesis, the proposed social enterprises required great attention to their business model.

St. John's Bakery

The inspiration for the business model of this thesis comes primarily from the economic model of St. John's Bakery in Toronto, Ontario (Fig. 3.02). The bakery is a social enterprise business of artisanal baked goods run by St. John's Compassionate Mission, and it provides skilled employment to immigrants, recovering addicts, and people with

Design Inspirations



st. john's bakery circular flow business model

Fig. 3.02 (top left). *Streetview of St. John's Bakery*. Photograph by Google Maps.

Fig. 3.03 (top right). *Inside the bakery*. Bakers at work. Photograph by Xiao Wen Xu.

Fig. 3.04 (bottom). *St. John's Bakery circular flow business model*. Adapted from Gwartney, Stroup, Sobel, & Macpherson. Image by Xiao Wen Xu.

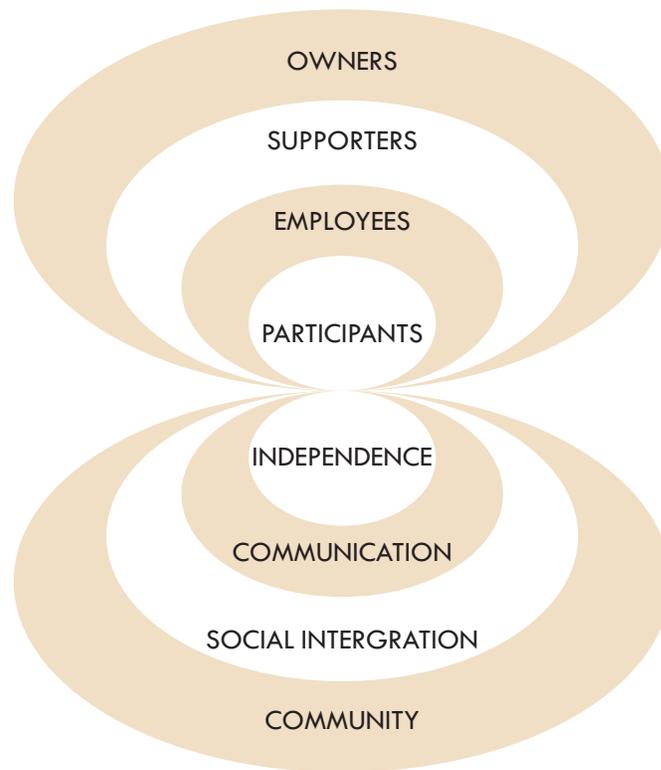
disabilities (Fig. 3.03). Moreover, the bakery hires 50% professional bakers and uses a circular business model to train the other 50%, who are volunteers. The most important aspect of the bakery is the circular business model, where an initial investment is made to train those individuals who have faced severe challenges in their life. There is a miniature loop created by utilizing programs such as Investing in Neighbourhoods—a Toronto grant that financially supports Toronto residents who are on welfare to work meaningful jobs (Fig. 3.04). In this transitional program, the at-risk individuals gain skills and contribute to the business and community. To make this model work, the managing staff and professional bakers receive crisis training. Restaurants and select grocery stores in Toronto carry and sell bread from St. John's Bakery.

In **Imagining Hope**, the community outreach businesses along Queen Street East adapt this circular flow business system from St. John's Bakery. The businesses within the thesis include a café, cafeteria, used clothing store, bike repair shop and cleaning services. These type of businesses combine training and employment, which teach at-risk individuals practical skills that can easily lead to employment in other similar businesses in the future. Through skilled training and social integration, the individuals who have faced difficulties can gain confidence, build specific skills, and develop a collaborative team spirit. In addition to serving these individuals, the businesses also serve the community and the emergency shelter. For example, the kitchen of the cafeteria physically connects to the emergency shelter, which allows for convenient servicing when the spine is operating as an emergency shelter.

Community of Hearts

If *Dance* focuses on a convivial community and St. John's Bakery focuses on a circular business model, Community of Hearts in Guelph, Ontario is a critical precedent in terms of how it combines multiple social service programs. The Community of Hearts is an extended learning facility for post-secondary students with disabilities in the Old Quebec Street Shops, a shopping centre in downtown Guelph (Fig. 3.05). Founded in 2012, Community of Hearts empowers participants to build self-confidence. Through social activities, learning opportunities, and volunteering pursuits, participants gain the necessary skills to become more socially engaged.

Design Inspirations



RINGS OF CONNECTION

Fig. 3.05 (top left). *View of the Community of Hearts from Old Quebec Street Shops.* Photograph by Xiao Wen Xu.

Fig. 3.06 (top right). *"Storefront" with multi-purpose meeting table.* Photograph by Xiao Wen Xu.

Fig. 3.07 (bottom). *Rings of Connection for Community of Hearts.* Image by Xiao Wen Xu.

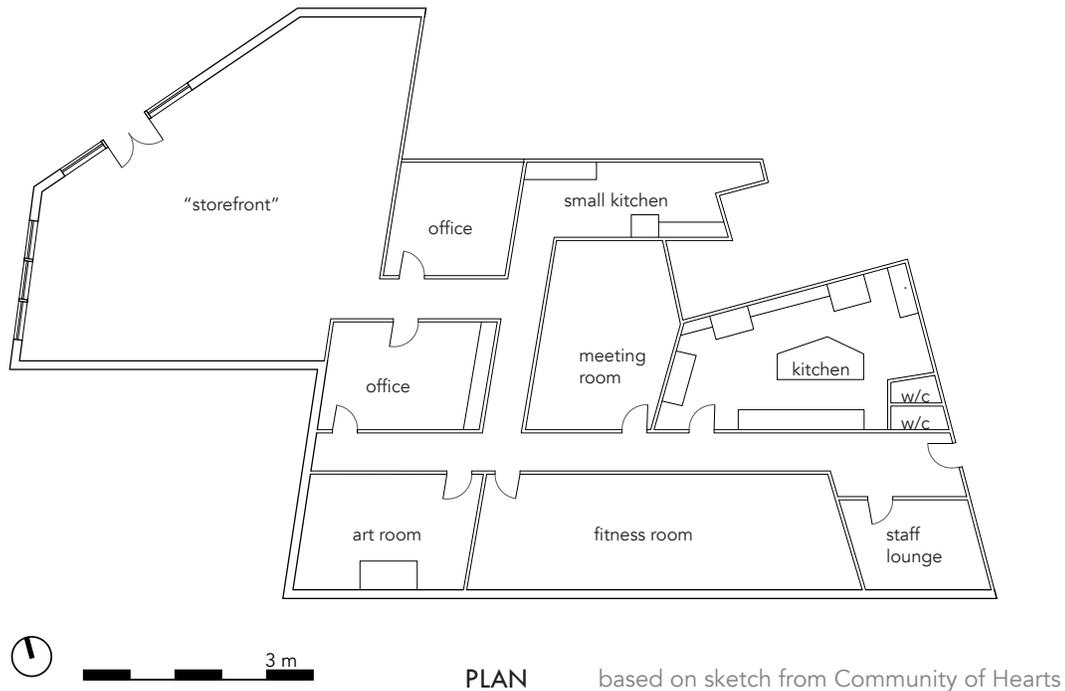


Fig. 3.08 *Plan of Community of Hearts*. Based on a sketch from Community of Hearts. Image by Xiao Wen Xu.

The facility has a large glazed “storefront,” an area facing the hallway of the shopping centre, because of its inviting qualities even for the passerby. The glazing makes the space transparent, friendly, and welcoming. Moreover, inside the “storefront” is a large multi-functional table that the participants and staff eat at (Fig. 3.06). This arrangement places the participants visually in the realm of the community, instead of isolating them (Fig. 3.07). Additionally, the facility has a “back-of-house” with different fitness and art activities and administrative areas (Fig. 3.08). The storefront combined with the back-of-house focuses on a holistic approach to health. Community of Hearts has a unique separation between the public, storefront, and more private areas, back-of-house.

Using this duo organizational technique, **Imagining Hope** encourages interactions with the community through its own public storefront-like social enterprise businesses along Queen Street East. In addition, the social enterprises protect the semi-public areas of the inner courtyard from the busy street. Moreover, the new recreation centre serves as the back-of-house with its ice rink, pools, and fitness gym work in combination with group therapy and job counselling to provide a variety of activities and services. These

“back-of-house” programs provide a similar holistic approach to health as the Community of Hearts. With these diverse activities and opportunities for social integration, at-risk individuals can build self-confidence and ultimately become healthy independents.

Seattle Central Library

The Seattle Central Library in Seattle, United States by OMA and LMN serves as the fourth precedent because of its role as the city’s “living room” (Fig. 3.09 and 3.10). This library redefines the idea of a library as an information hub through multiple media. Instead of separating programs, each space has multiple functions with specific duties. The building was a winning competition entry and opened in 2004.

Using this idea of flexible spaces, **Imagining Hope** promotes interactions between the emergency shelter guests and the rest of the community in the spine hallway and the learn cube. First, The spine operates as an emergency shelter between mid-December and mid-February each year with 105 beds, universal change rooms and showers, eating/hanging out areas, and access to the cafeteria. All of the furniture is moveable and can be stored away ten months of the year when the spine operates as a resource library.



Fig. 3.09 View of the Seattle Central Library. Photograph by Philippe Ruault.



Fig. 3.10 *Seattle Central Library's "public living room"*. Image by Philippe Ruault.

Second, the learn cube serves as a public living room because of the open access to the Internet and extended learning classrooms. The informal meeting areas have comfortable armchairs and the glass pavilion classrooms further emphasize the thesis's design principal of transparency of information and openness. The learn cube opens to the public and because of its multiple activities; one might spend an entire day there.

Oslo Opera House

Snøhetta's Oslo Opera House in Oslo, Norway serves as the last design inspiration because the building becomes fused with the landscape (Fig. 3.11). For example, Snøhetta created the concept of "The Carpet", an accessible sloped roof that cover the entire building and recalls the form of the Norwegian fjord. The monumentality of the roof brings about togetherness and foster connections between different social classes and elements (Fig. 3.12). The opera house is situated in Central Oslo and was completed in 2007. The building won the culture award at the World Architecture Festival in Barcelona in 2008 and the 2009 European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture.

Design Inspirations



Fig. 3.11 View of the Oslo Opera House's "carpet", the accessible roof. Photograph by Snøhetta.

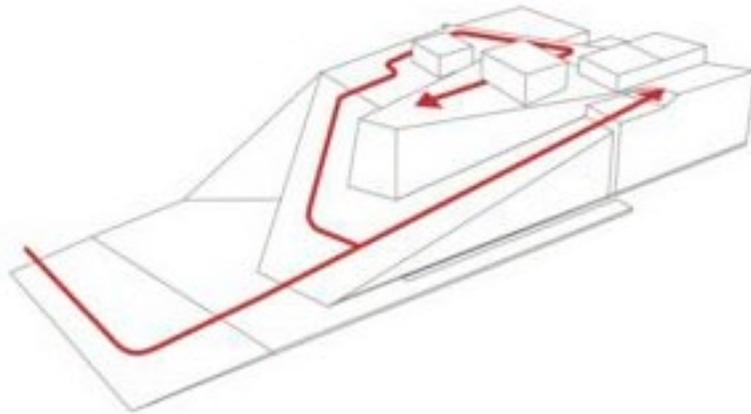


Fig. 3.12 Parti diagram of the Oslo Opera House. Image by Anonymous on Pinterest.

Drawing inspiration from the walkable carpet of the opera house, **Imagining Hope** employs a roofscape that promotes public exercise and engagement. This roof contains a walkable track that extends on top of roof and into the park. This is made possible through a sloping roof that allows the track to come to the ground. Thus, the opera house serves as an example for the ramped roof of this thesis. Similar to the Oslo Opera house this track helps connect the building and the park. The symbolic contribution of this further emphasizes the importance of interconnectivity and interdependence to help achieve a convivial society.

Through my research of design precedents, I sought strategies that could encourage convivial connections between people, buildings, and landscapes. In order to encourage convivial collaboration between people and different social services, Imagining Hope has the spine hallway, which was inspired by Henri Matisse's painting, *Dance*. To better integrate the at-risk populations with the rest of the economic community, the thesis utilizes a circular business model for its social enterprises, which was inspired by St. John's Bakery in Toronto, Ontario. To accommodate the range of social services, this thesis proposes that public programs face Queen Street and semi-public areas face the inner courtyard, which was inspired by the Community of Hearts in Guelph, Ontario. To link the facility to the neighbourhood, the spine and learn cube in the design thesis serve as the public living room, which was inspired by OMA and LMN's Seattle Central Library in Seattle, United States. Lastly, Imagining Hope connects the building with the park landscape through a ramped and accessible roof, which was inspired by Snøhetta's Oslo Opera House in Oslo, Norway. Thus, Imagining Hope presents a proposal for a challenging underserved site and addresses concerns for sharing tools and resources while connecting different layers of the city.

Design Process and Proposal

Design Process and Proposal



1 Moss Park Armoury



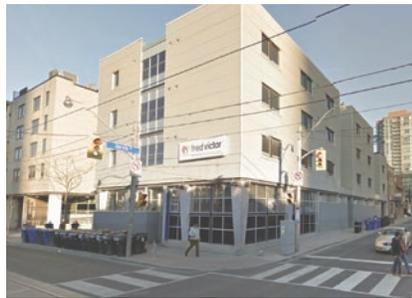
2 John Innes Community Recreation Centre



3 Moss Park Arena



4 Maxwell Meighen Centre, shelter



5 Fred Victor, multiservice shelter



6 Home First Society, shelter



7 Parachute Community Employment Centre



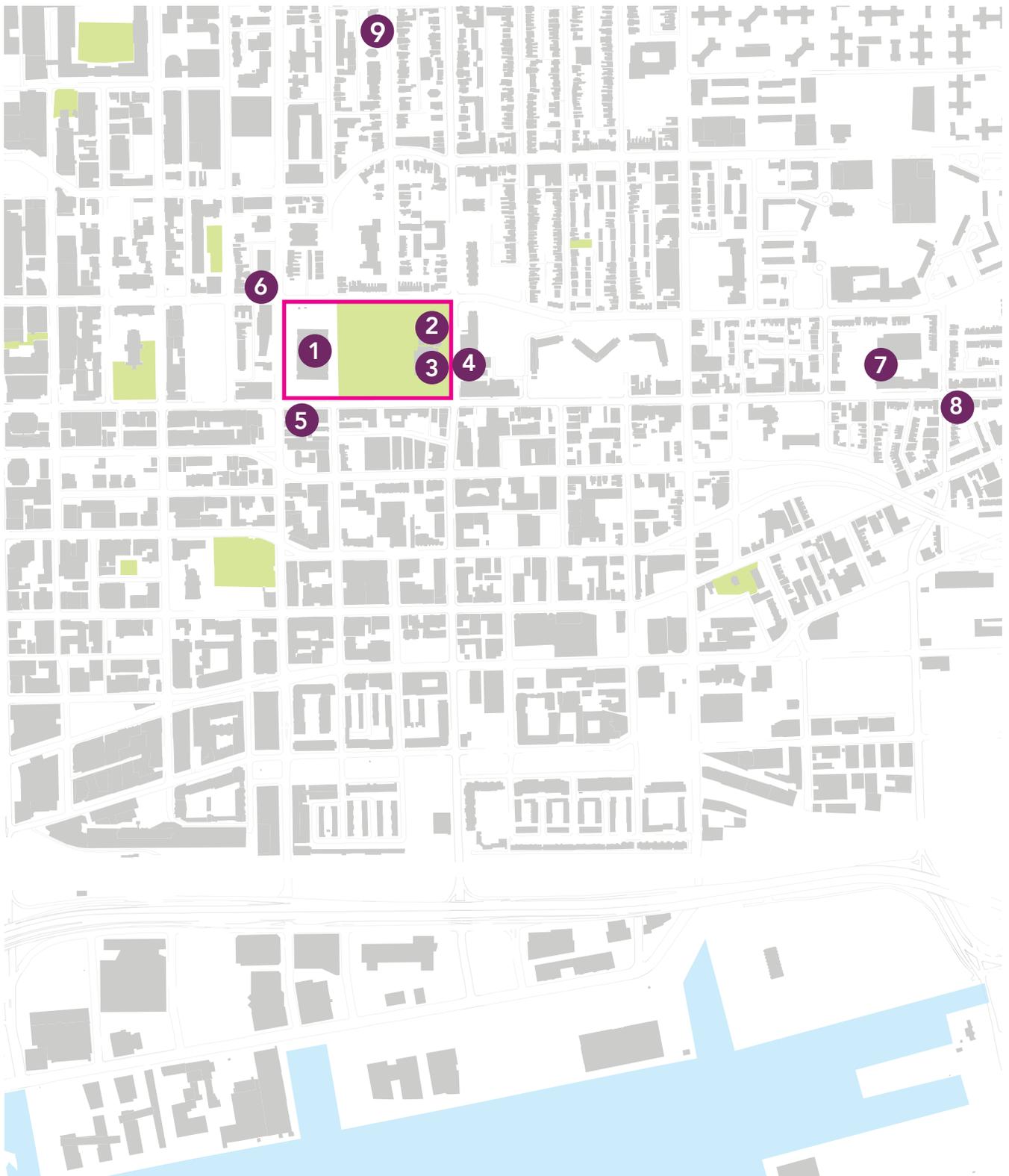
8 Dixon Hall Employment Services Centre



9 Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment & Training

Fig. 4.01 *Moss Park Neighbourhood Present Building Map*. Graphics by Xiao Wen Xu with photographs by Xiao Wen Xu and Google Streetview and map adapted from GIS Toronto Open Data. This present neighbourhood building map of Toronto shows the informal and formal services available. At present, the shelters and employment centres are totally separated and isolated from each other.

Design Process and Proposal





10 88 Queen St. East, condo + mixed use



11 245 Queen St. East, condo



12 The Bartholomew, townhouse + condo

- Future Condo Developments

Design Proposal



13 Pathways to Employment



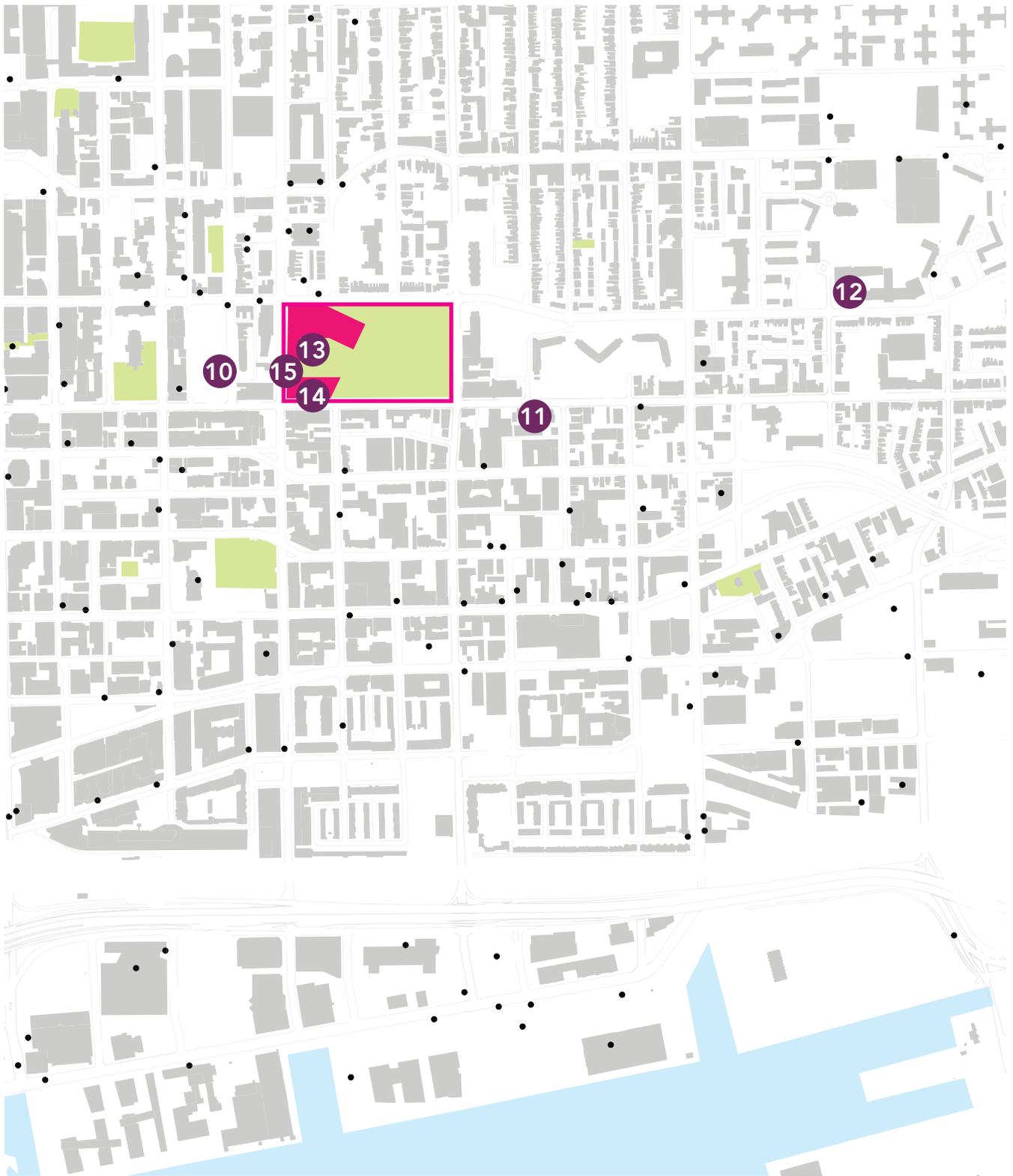
14 Tech Access



15 Emergency Shelter

Fig. 4.03 *Moss Park Neighbourhood Future Building Map*. Graphics by Xiao Wen Xu with images from Urban Toronto and map adapted from GIS Toronto Open Data. Developers have also written many condominium projects for the future of this area. These new and shiny condos are targeted towards young professionals and will inevitably force the low-income populations to leave, as rent prices will rise. This produces a sad and unnecessary kind of expulsion for the local population from their neighbourhood. This design proposes that new condos need to be 30% social housing, which creates a social housing network rather than a concentration. Imagining Hope acts as an empowerment tool for this network and the rest of the community.

Design Process and Proposal



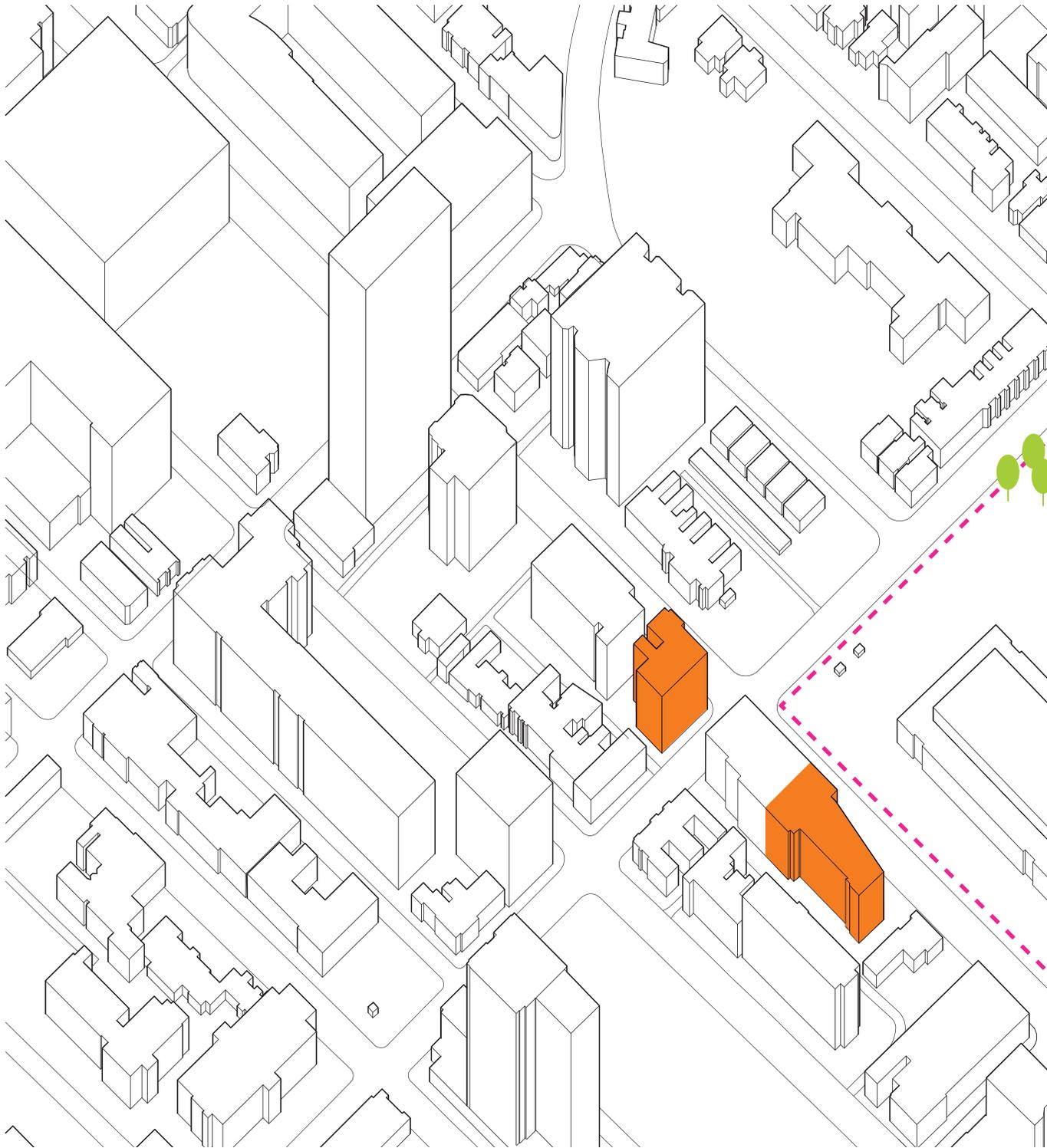
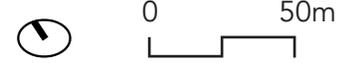


Fig. 4.03 *Existing Condition Massing*. Image by Xiao Wen Xu. The existing armoury and recreation centres are obsolete buildings. They lack communication and involvement with the parkscape.

Design Process and Proposal



 homeless shelters



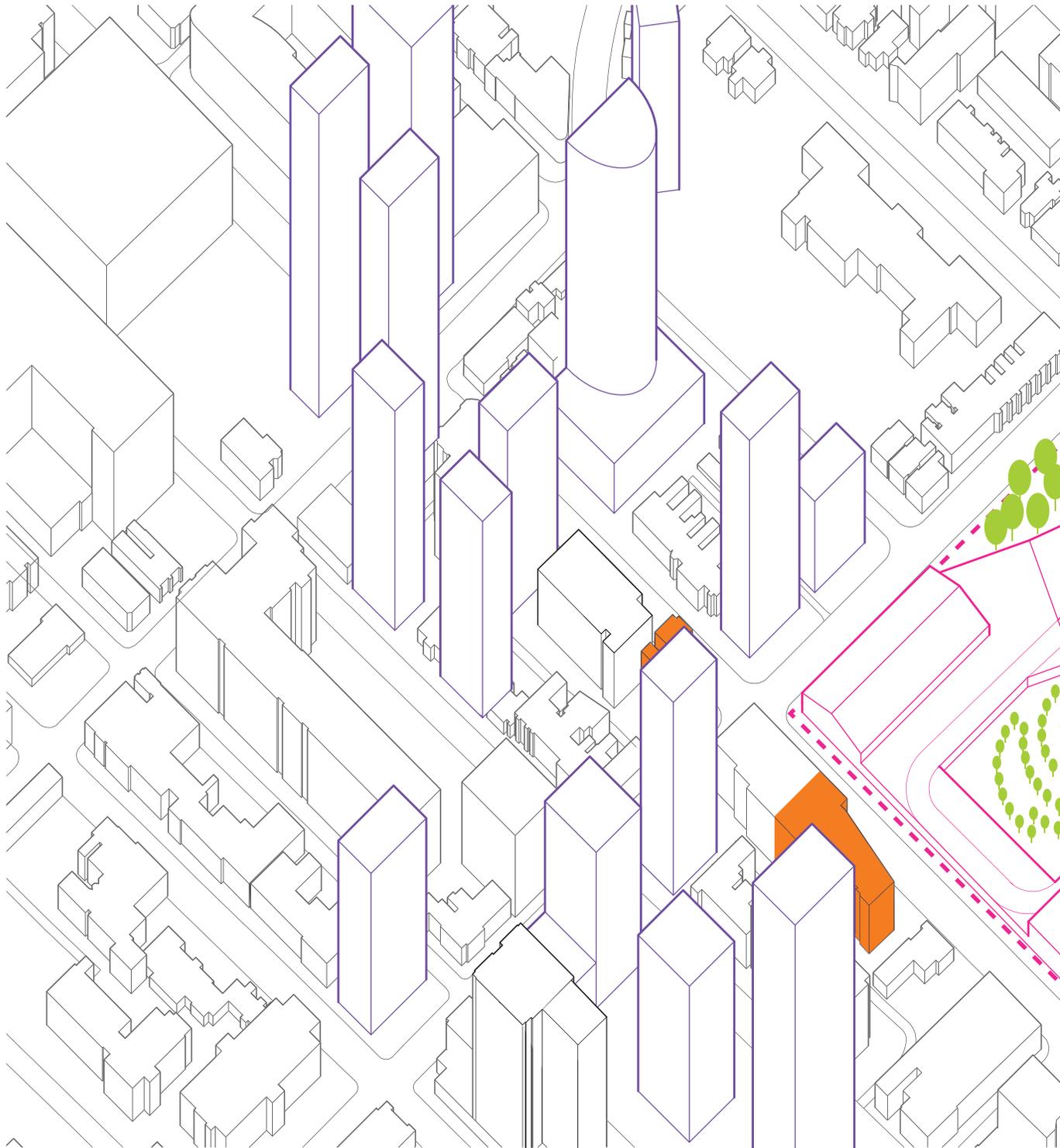
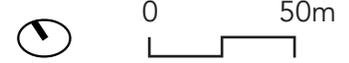


Fig. 4.04 *Future Development Massing*. Image by Xiao Wen Xu. Massive condo developments will surround Moss Park. The design proposal densifies the existing mature trees along the peripherals of the site with English Oaks and a continuous running track covers the ramped roof further connecting the building with the park.

Design Process and Proposal



-  homeless shelters
-  future developments



Design Process and Proposal



1) The singular diagonal building laid on the site promotes circulation between the streets with two parks on either side of the building. This arrangement maximizes the access to the park from interior spaces.



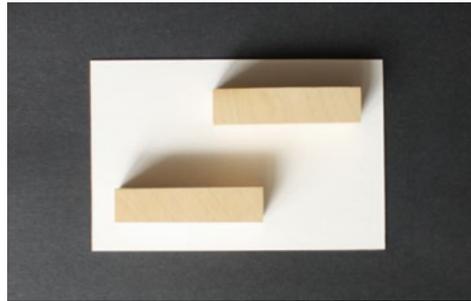
2) The single-loaded corridor of the thin zigzag-shaped building maximizes light penetration within the building: with retail and service spaces on the ground level, and classrooms on the second level. The triangular building houses the armoury facility.



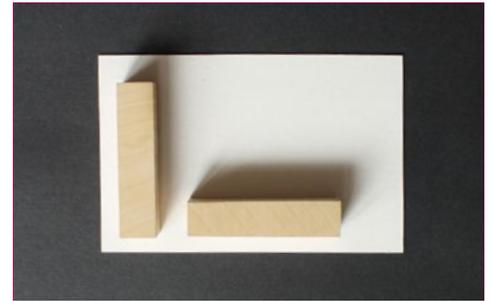
3) The building opens to the park, where the existing trees are kept. The armoury is in the larger protruding trapezoid, while the recreation centre is in the north end of the building. Both have classrooms above for extended learning and training.



7) The tower in the south-west corner of the site responds to the proposed condo developments, while the lower bar-building humbly sits and serves the community with retail/services on the ground level and classrooms above.



8) The sliding of the bar-volumes maximizes the views from each building with one bar housing the recreation centre and the other for community services.



9) The L-shape of the buildings benefits from the street exposure while maximizing the area for the park.



13) The "building" opens to the park with the ground plane lifting up at the northeast corner to make way for the underground parking. The building's interface with the street is composed of shops and services, while its inversion, the interface with the park is composed of classrooms.



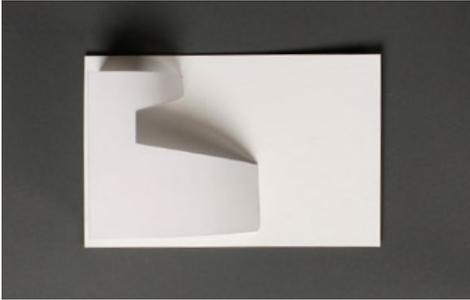
14) A sliver is cut out from the building to allow for more access to the park from the street. And, the armoury in the northeast corner is deeply embedded in the site with an occupiable ramped roof.



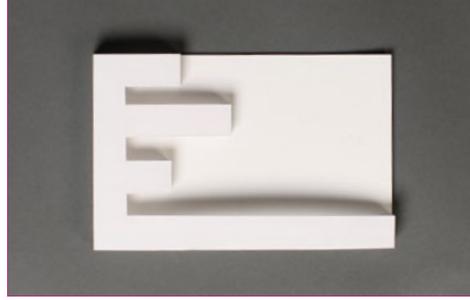
15) Another section is cut into the built form to expose more faces of the building to the park which promotes interactions between the interior and exterior spaces.

Fig. 4.05 *Studies in Park Buildings*. Models and photographs by Xiao Wen Xu.

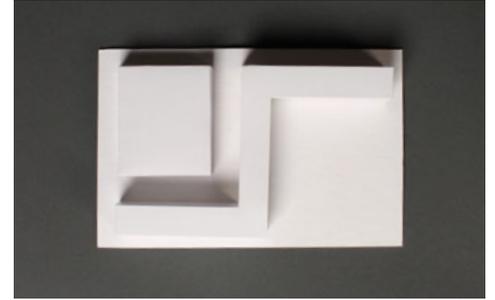
Design Process and Proposal



4) The building with a curved roof has a trapezoidal cut out inside which invites the experience of park into the interior. The curvature of the roof minimizes the shadows casted on to the inner park.



5) The building maximizes the urban exposure where it sits close to the Queen St. and Jarvis St., while responding to the benefits of the park with thin building strips. The healing experience of being in and close to nature is brought into the project with classrooms open to the park.



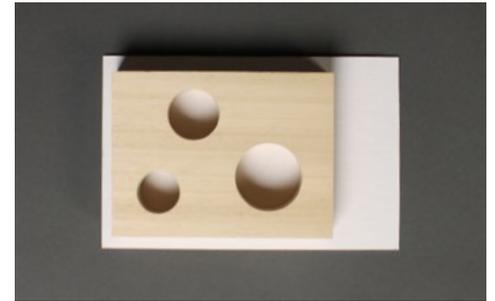
6) The strip building has a single-loaded corridor to maximize light penetration within the building, with retail and service spaces on the ground level, and classrooms on the second level. The rectangular building is the armoury.



10) The two bar buildings promotes the spontaneous human interactions and connections that occur on the street. With retail/services on the ground level and classrooms above.



11) Pocket parks bring aspects of the park and the external world into the building and create micro-climatic zones. These parks face different directions and are planted with flora suited for each orientation.



12) Pocket parks create light wells deep within the built form. Several floors can benefit from this which brings the outdoors inside. The east side is not built as to preserve many existing trees on the site.



16) The introduction of another interior street into the south building allows for more access to the park from the street.

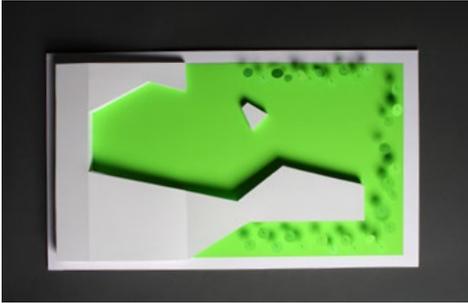


17) By moving one of the south buildings to the southeast corner elevates the significance of the park by placing it in the centre.

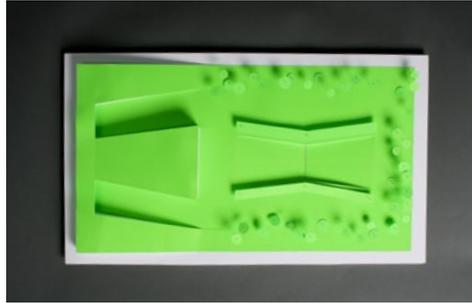


18) By moving all the built form to the north end of the site reduces shadowing over the park. A park-focused Queen Street exposure in the south side of the site allows for maximum visibility of park activities—the key to effective parks in the city—to engage with community life.

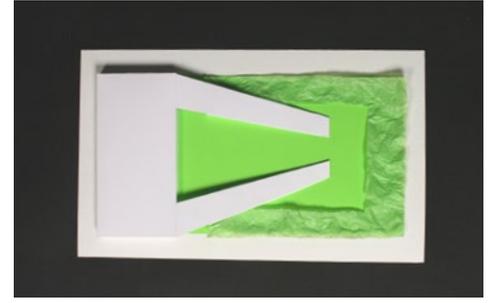
Design Process and Proposal



19) In keeping the mature trees along the east, the building is pulled back from the street while opening to the park creating a semi-enclosed courtyard.



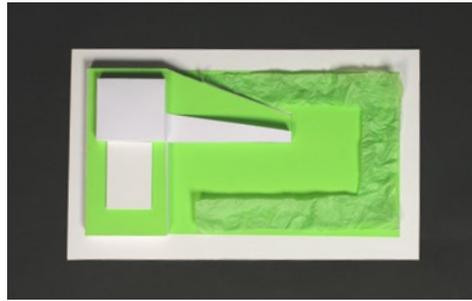
20) The building is pushed into the west side of the site to preserve the mature trees on the east. A continuous running route runs along the perimeter of the building forming a ramped path.



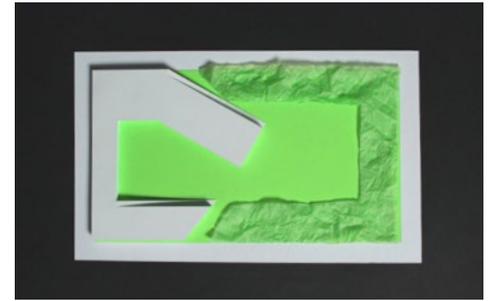
21) The ramped portions of the building is extended further into the park, which creates a semi-enclosed and semi-private courtyard for outdoor therapy and adult classrooms.



22) Ramps located on both sides of the therapy rooms and classrooms creates a continuous running path. This arrangement also preserves the mature trees on the north, east, and south edges of the site.



23) A single ramp is located on the north side of the building with therapy rooms and classrooms south of it and facing the park. This open hand gesture encourages inclusivity.



24) Two ramps create a running loop that continues from the park and on top the building. The cupping hand-like gesture of the designed building opens towards the park creating a courtyard in its palm



25) Two ramps create a running loop that continues from the park and on top the building. Three volumes anchor the complex with skating, swimming, and learning programs.



Fig. 4.06 *Tree arrangement concept model: clusters of trees.* Model and photograph by Xiao Wen Xu. These deciduous tree clusters create outdoor therapy rooms with a row of coniferous trees in the background to serve as a sound buffer.



Fig. 4.07 *Tree arrangement concept model: allée of trees.* Model and photograph by Xiao Wen Xu. An allée of deciduous trees provide a calming rhythm when walking between the trees.

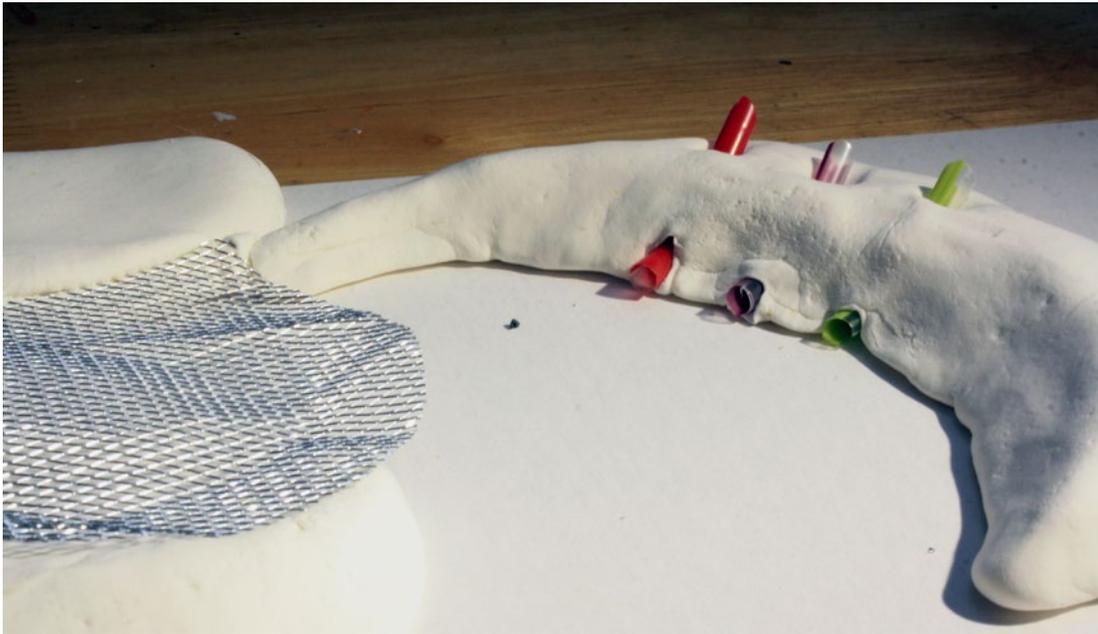


Fig. 4.08 *Concept Model: Playground Tunnel Slides*. Model and Photograph by Xiao Wen Xu. The proposed playground's landscaped cones start at one metre above the ground level track and drop three metres on the opposite side. This results in a three-metre crawl space inside the playground.



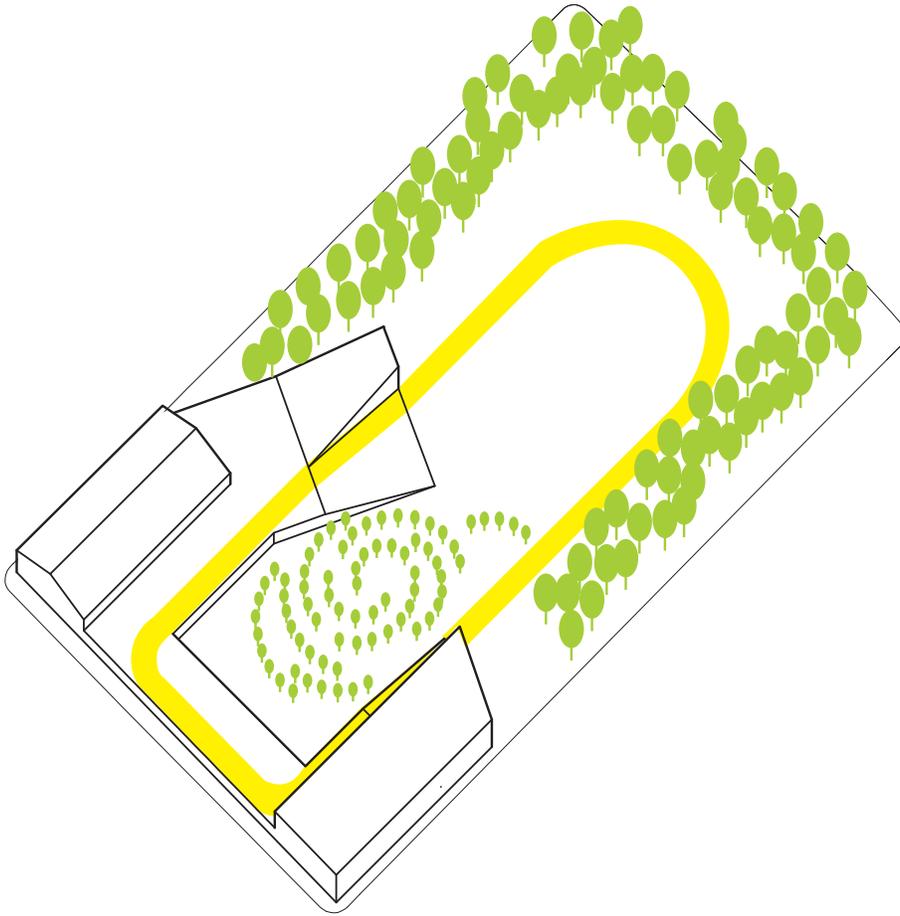
Fig. 4.09 *Concept Model: Tunnel Slide Entrances*. Model and Photograph by Xiao Wen Xu. Tunnel slides pierce the conical hills and a hanging net suspends between the hills.



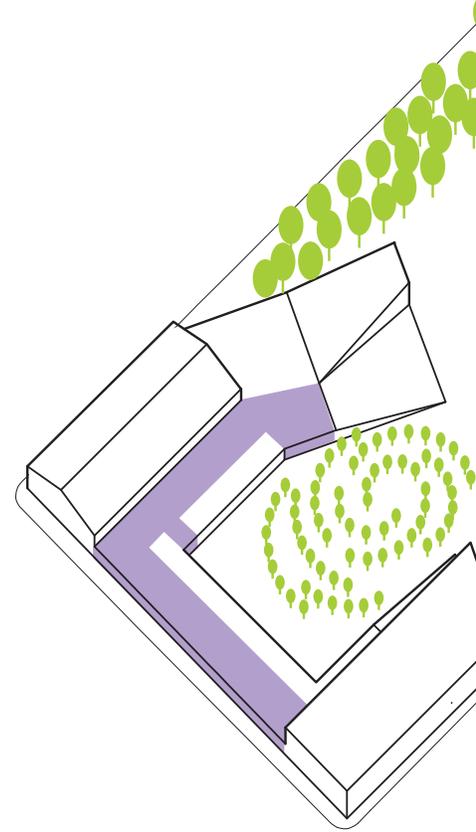
Fig. 4.10 *Finished Model: Playground Tunnel Slides*. Basswood Model and Photograph by Xiao Wen Xu.



Fig. 4.11 *Finished Model: Tunnel Slide Entrances*. Basswood Model and Photograph by Xiao Wen Xu.



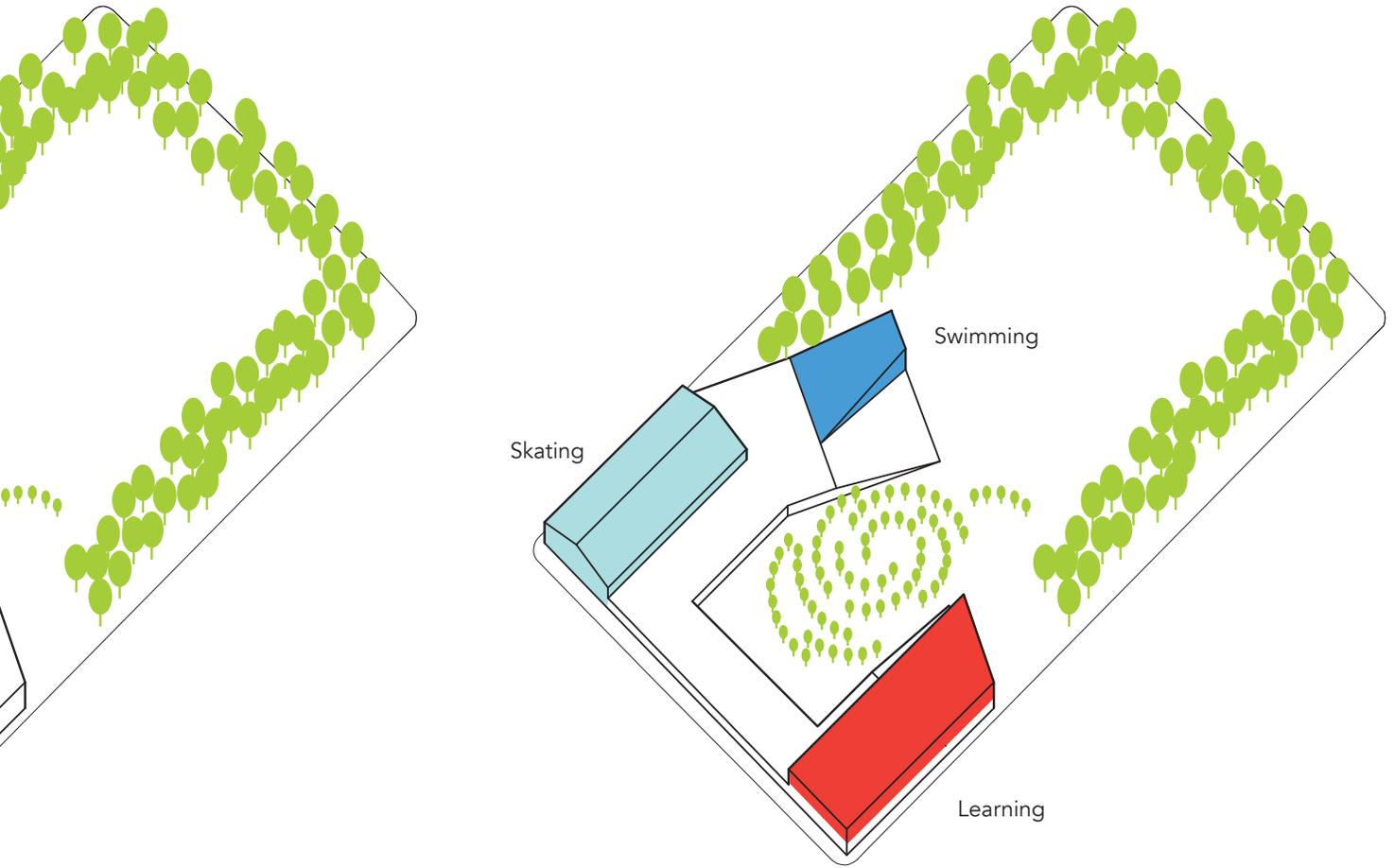
Running Track



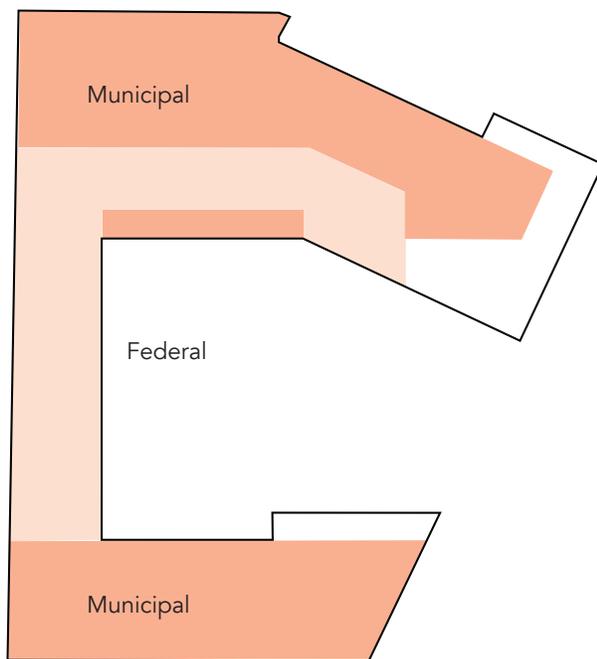
The "Spine" Circulation
(Emergency Shelter)

Fig. 4.12 *Parti Diagrams*. Images by Xiao Wen Xu. The first diagram illustrates a continuous running track that spans the site and goes up the two ramps. This promotes the integration of physical exercise into everyday activity. The second idea of the design centres around flexible spaces, such as a spacious hallway, "the spine". The spine transforms into an emergency shelter between mid-December to mid-February. The rest of the year the spine serves as seating areas and a resource library-on-wheels. The third idea the project conveys is a holistic approach to health with three anchoring activities: skating, swimming, and learning. The combination of services destigmatizes them.

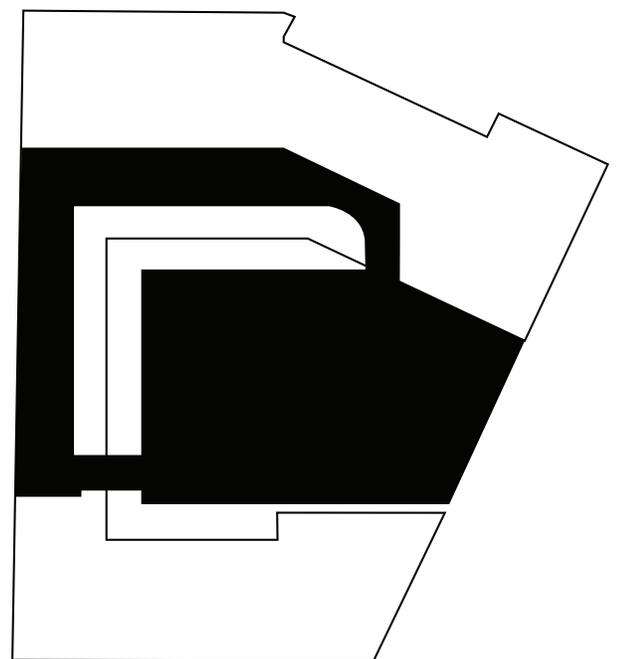
Design Process and Proposal



Program

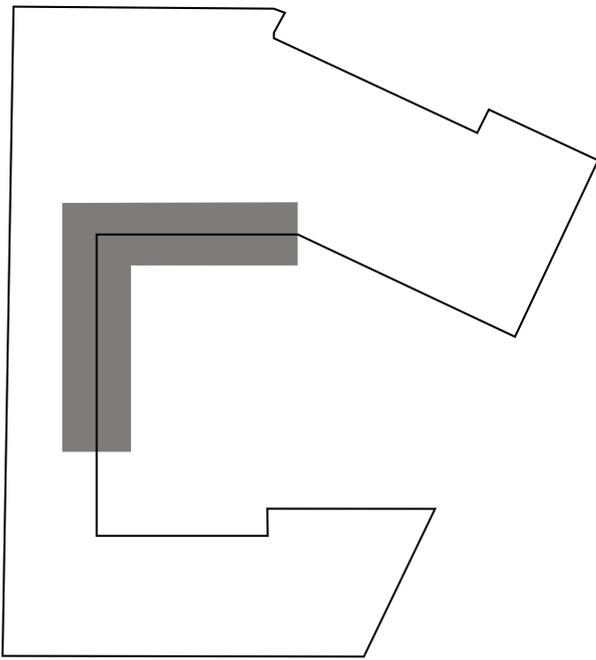


Government

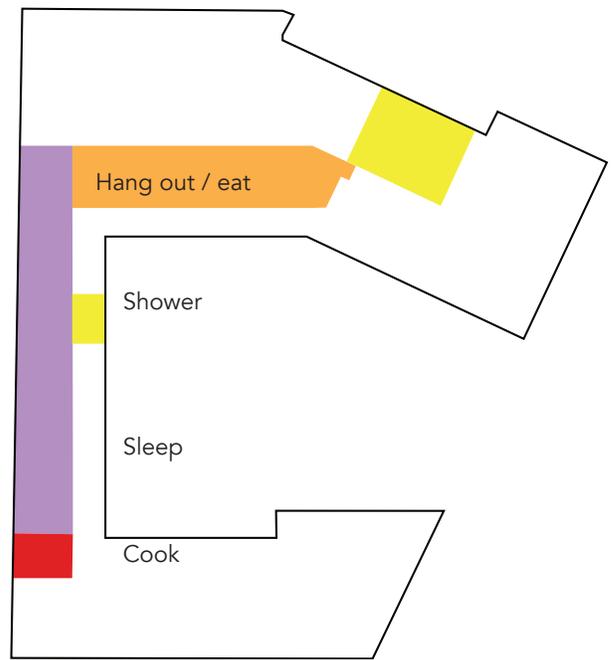


Public Space

Fig. 4.13 *Programmatic Parti Diagrams*. Images by Xiao Wen Xu. The project offers a strategy funded by multiple levels of government: federal and municipal. First, the federal government funds the therapy/job counseling rooms and the “spine” hallway. Additionally, the municipal government supports the social enterprises, the “learn cube”, and the new recreation centre. Such a combined local intervention further responds to global issues of integrating individuals at risk through programs that provide resources and assistance for them. The second diagram shows the public space of the project, which is the courtyard and the spine. The third diagram shows the semi-public spaces, which are the group therapy and job counselling rooms and the patio. The last diagram shows how the emergency shelter operates.



Semi-Public Space



Emergency Shelter



Fig. 4.14 *Queen Street and Jarvis Street Approach*. Image by Xiao Wen Xu. One of the design principles is the combination of learning and job enterprises. This is a view of the approach from the intersection of Queen Street & Jarvis Street. This exterior view shows the Learn Cube, on the second and third level, stacked on top of the social enterprises that train and employ people at risk.



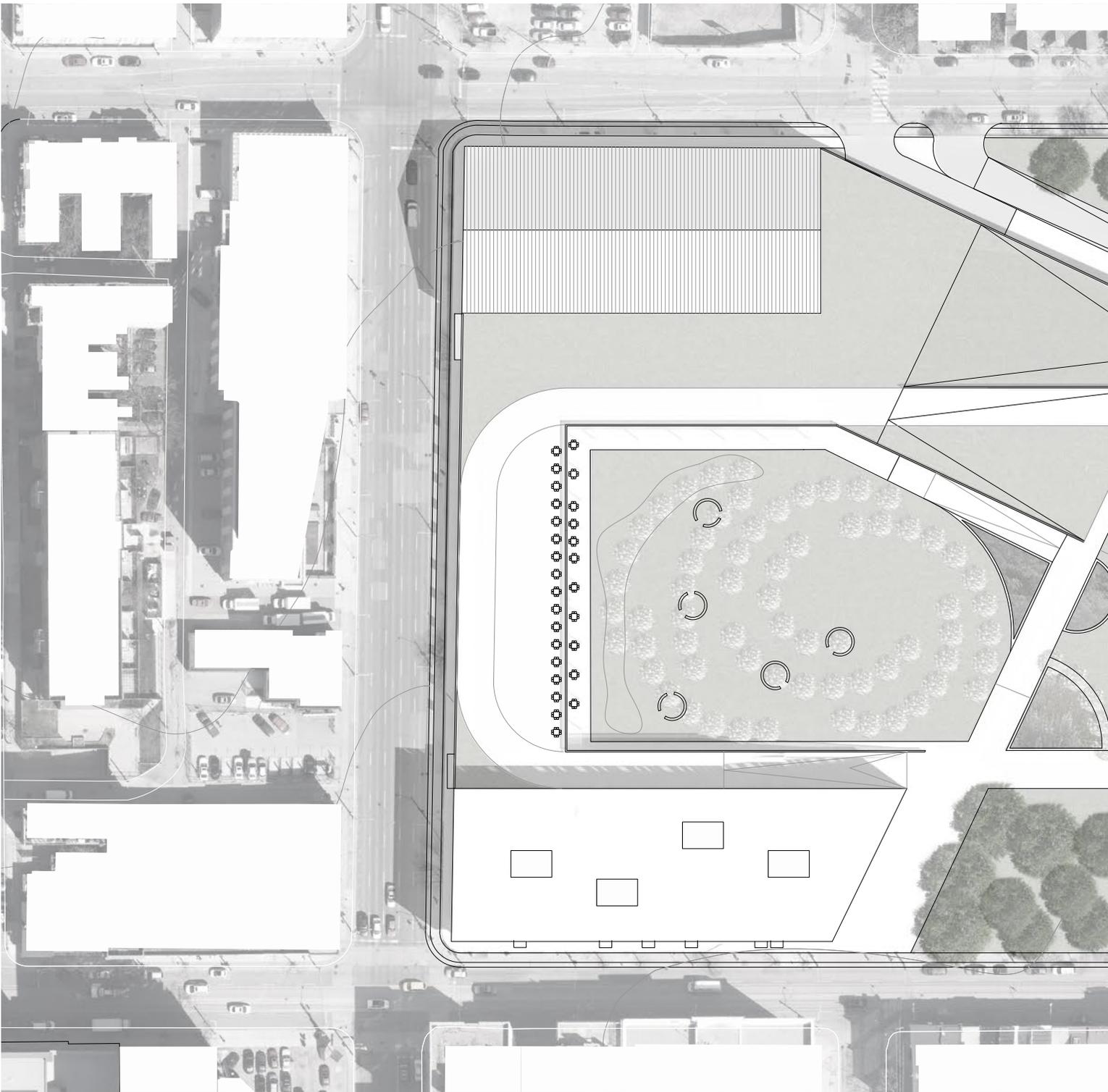
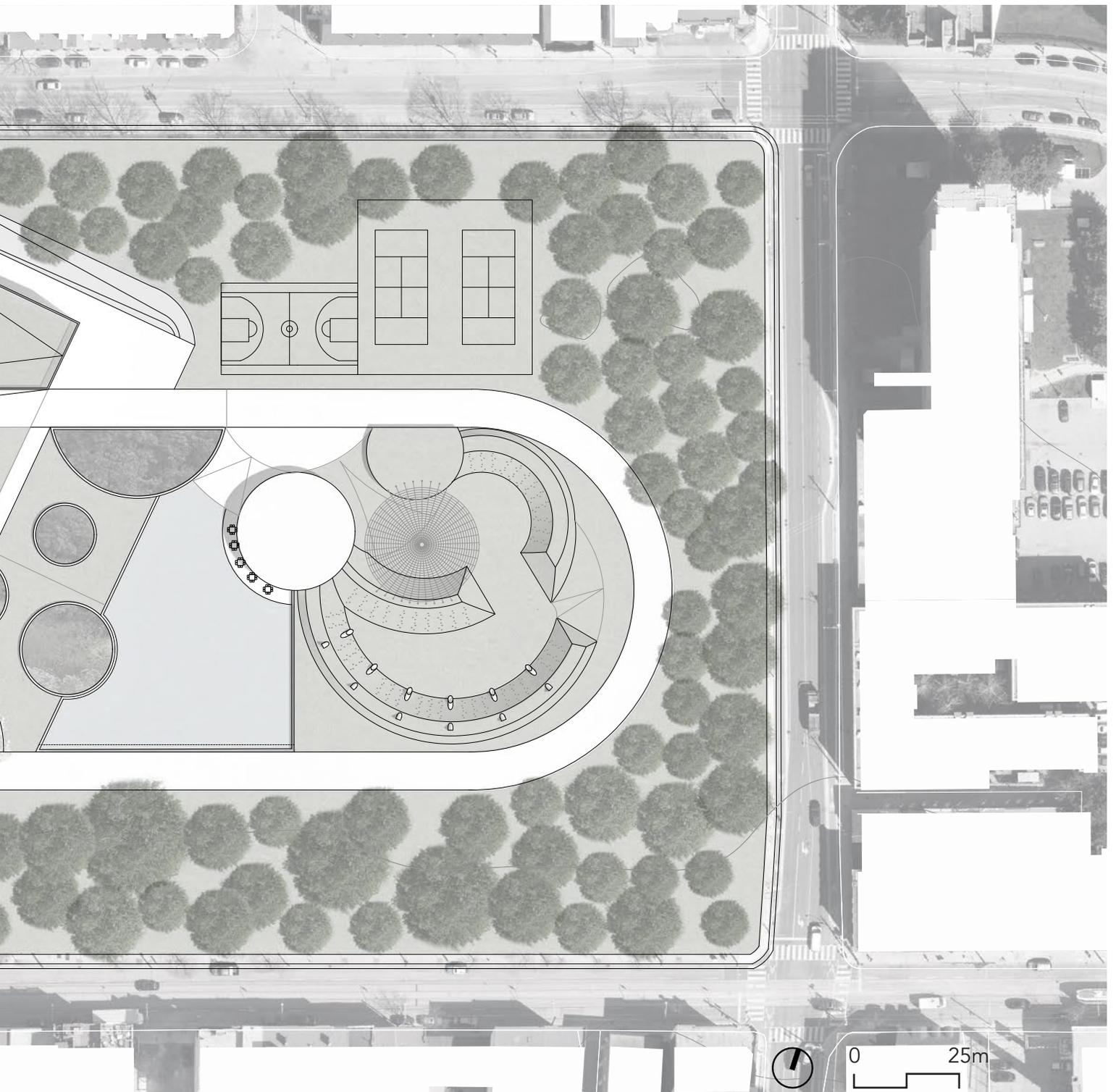


Fig. 4.15 *Site Plan*. Image by Xiao Wen Xu. The building sits on the east end of the site with its cupping handlike gesture opening towards the park and creating a courtyard in its palm. There is a continuous running track that stitches the park together with the building and promotes public exercise and engagement. The landscape of the park extends and wraps around the building to enhance the connectivity between the interior and exterior spaces. Alternate-leaf dogwood, sweet cherry, and

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Canada plum trees are chosen for the courtyard because of their short stature and delicate low-lying foliage. To densify the existing mature trees along the perimeter of the park, English oaks are planted for they are tall and extremely long lasting, living many centuries. The fruit and vegetable gardens on site will provide seasonal foods to the cafeteria and cafés. These vegetables are chosen for their adaptation to the southern Ontario climate and they include peas, fresh beans, swiss chard, and kale.

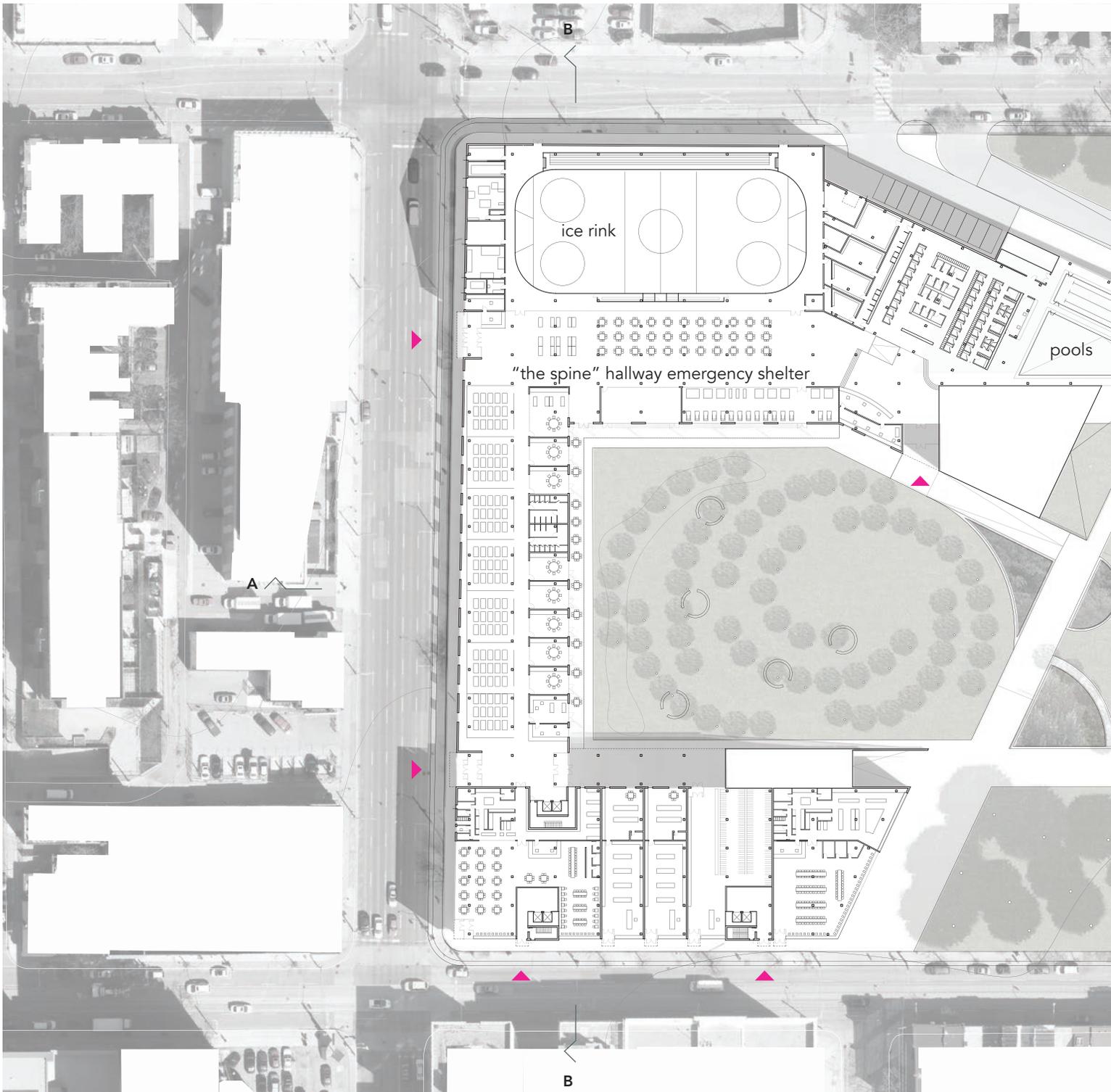
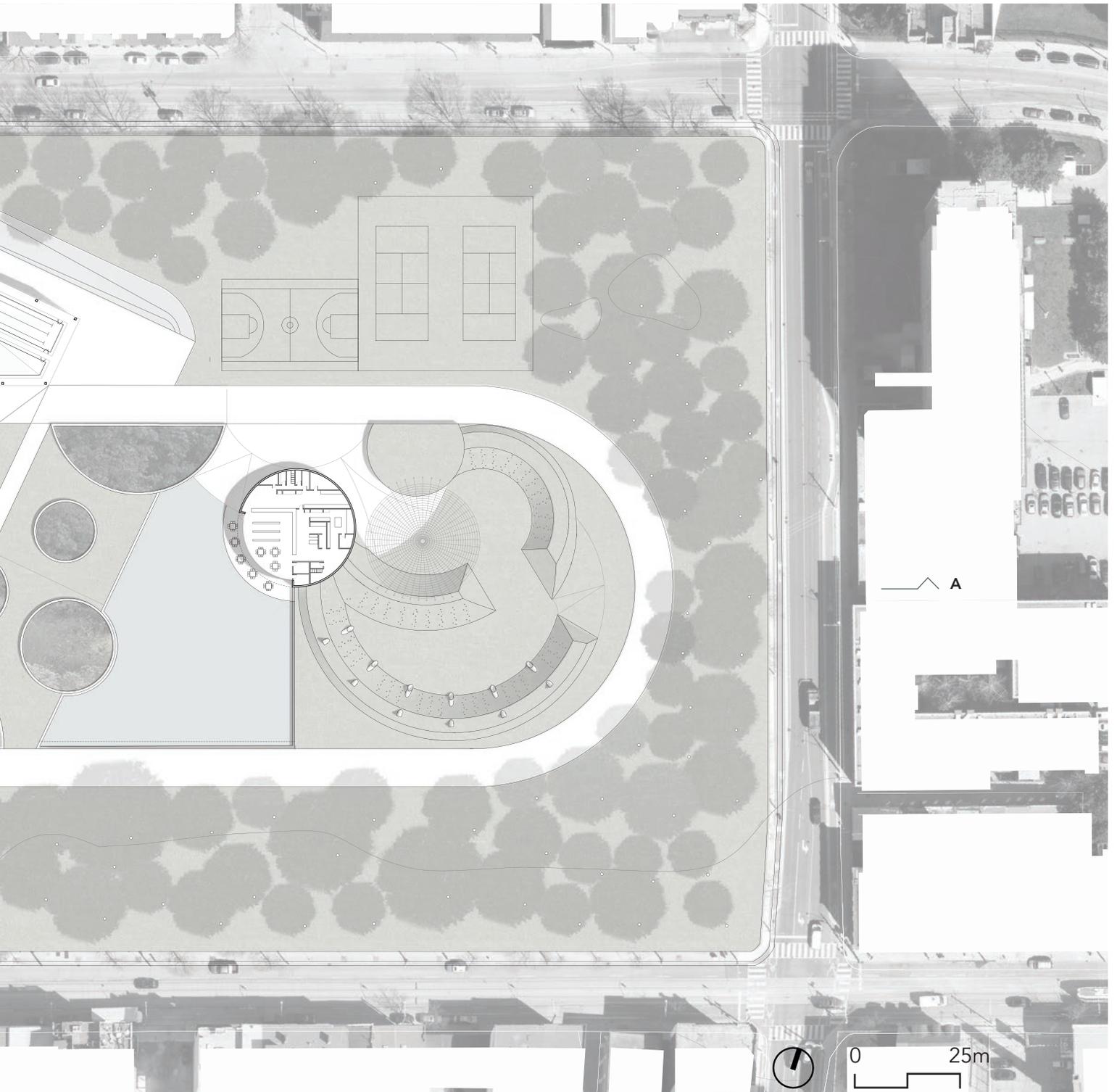


Fig. 4.16 *Ground Plan*. Image by Xiao Wen Xu. This shows the facility in the emergency shelter mode. The social enterprises are located along Queen Street, which includes the cafeteria, cleaning service and supply store, used clothing store, bike repair and storage, and café. The recreation centre is in the north

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and comprises of the ice rink, fitness gym, pools, and universal change rooms which can be used by the emergency shelter guests and the recreation centre users.



Fig. 4.17 *The Spine Resource Library (Mid-February – Mid-December)*. Image by Xiao Wen Xu. This is a view of the spine in the Resource Library mode. This is obviously advantageous because the sharing of knowledge and resources becomes the common bond between different groups of people. Used in conjunction with the job counselling, therapy, adult learning, and computer rooms, the library gives the at-risk individuals opportunities and spaces to learn about skills and job opportunities available, taking a step to leave poverty.





Fig. 4.18 *The Spine Emergency Shelter Night (Mid-December - Mid-February)*. Image by Xiao Wen Xu. Another design principle of the thesis is the creation of an emergency shelter. This is a night view of the spine in emergency shelter mode with the fabric panel screen partitions that create smaller sleeping pods of fifteen beds.





Fig. 4.19 *Group Therapy / Job Counselling Room*. Image by Xiao Wen Xu. This is an interior view of one of the group therapy or job counselling room. The design thesis enhances the connection with nature through the use of large pivoting glass doors between the inner courtyard and the therapy rooms surrounding the courtyard.





Fig. 4.20 *Semi-Public Courtyard Patio*. Image by Xiao Wen Xu. The arrangement of large glass doors and windows provide visceral experiences of nature in two ways: (1) passively, through opening windows and inhaling "green odour", and (2) actively, through expanding the treatment area outside into the patio and inner courtyard. There is a trellis that shades the seating patio and the dogwood trees in the courtyard serve as an outdoor screen.





Fig. 4.21 *Public Courtyard*. Image by Xiao Wen Xu. The last design principle is enhancing the relationship between the park landscape and social services. As a result of some earlier study models, I decided on curved arrangements of the courtyard trees. The semi-circular arrangement creates calming paths between the rows, while simultaneously creating semi-enclosed rooms. These “rooms” have circular wooden benches.



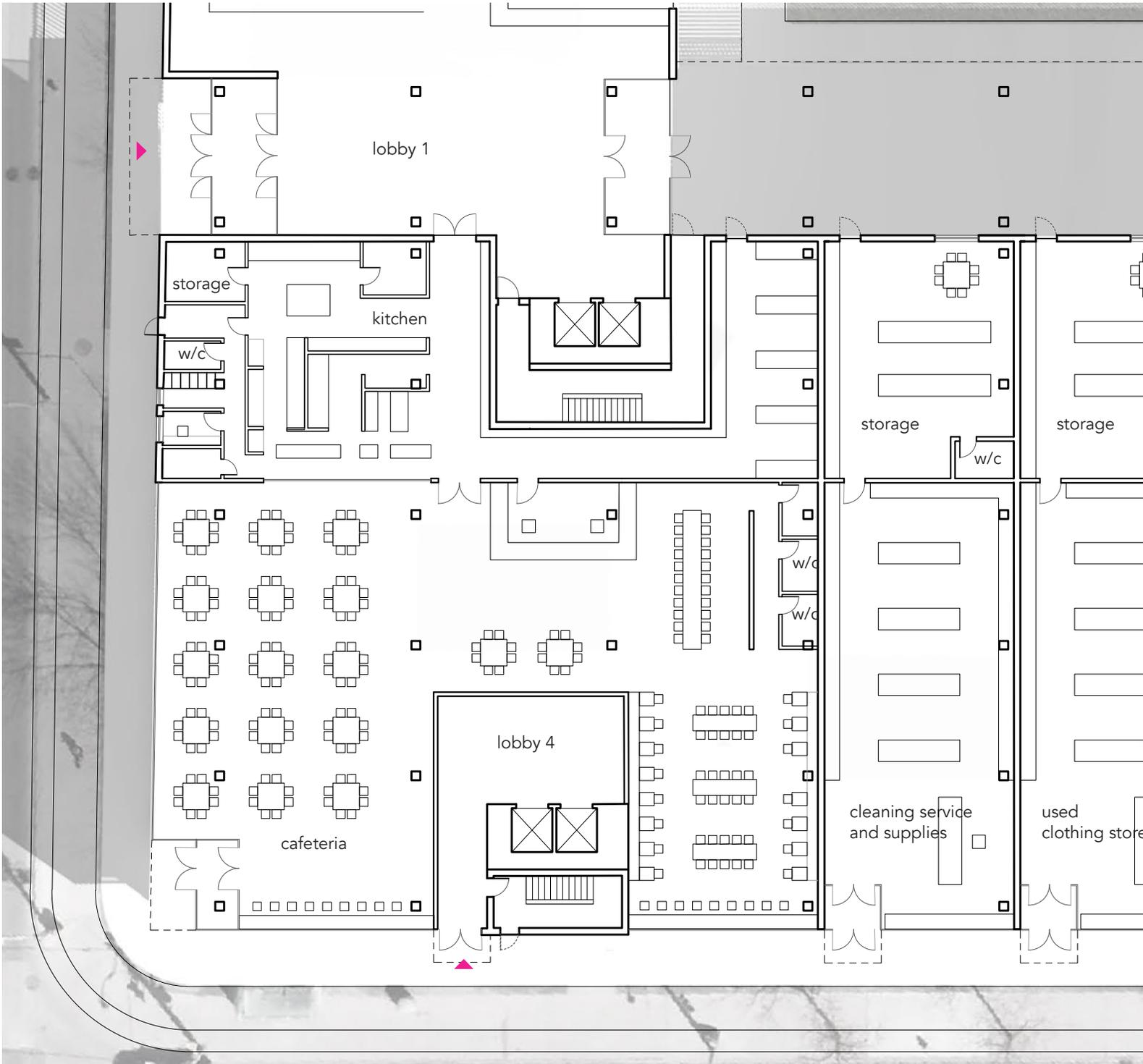
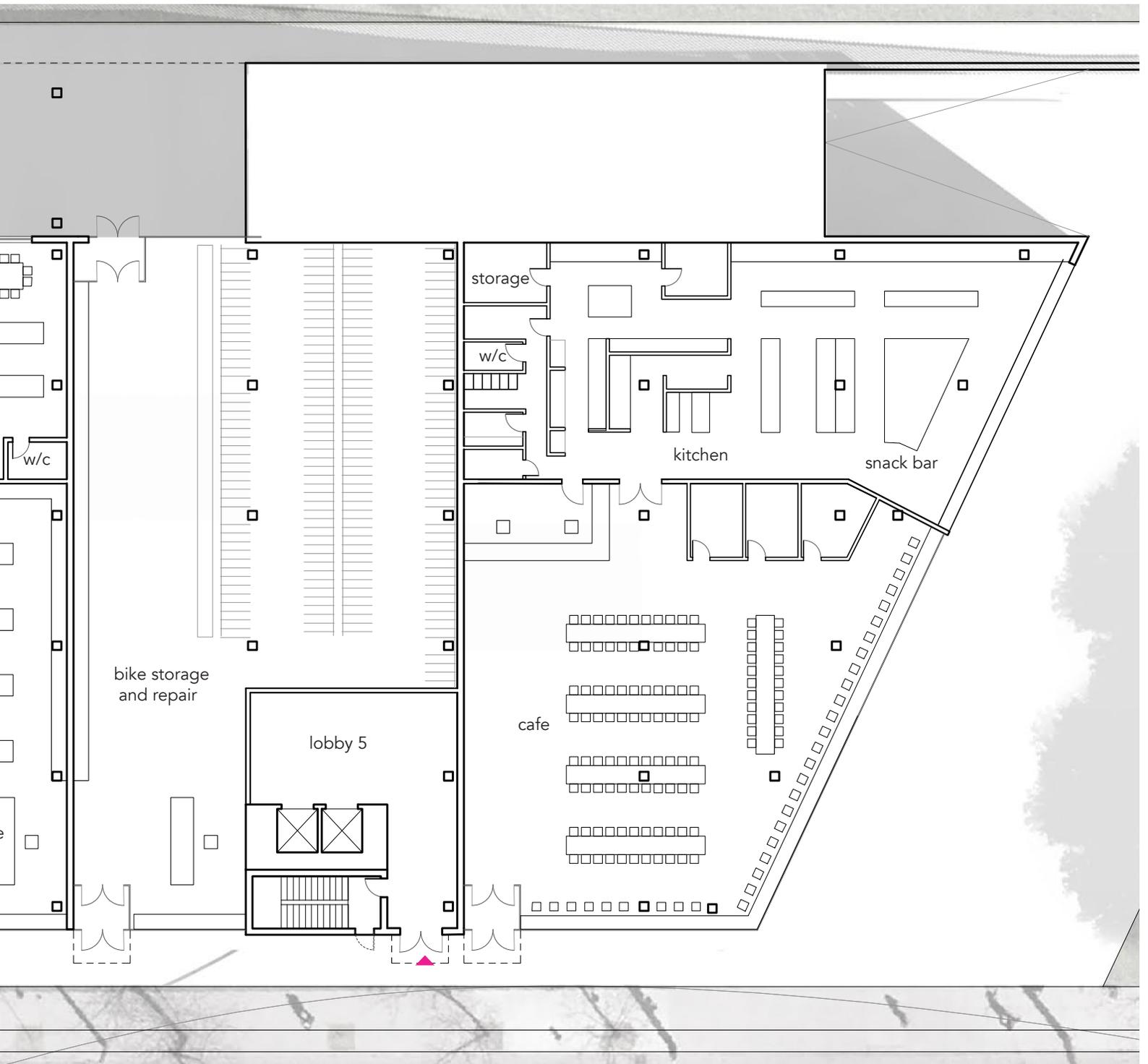


Fig. 4.22 *Ground Retail Detail Plan*. Image by Xiao Wen Xu. For the second concept of combining learning and job enterprises, the Queen Street edge of the complex has storefront social enterprises that echo the narrow layout of shops of Queen Street West, but instead selling new luxury items, they train and employ people at risk. In the design proposal, social enterprises protect an interior courtyard from a busy street.



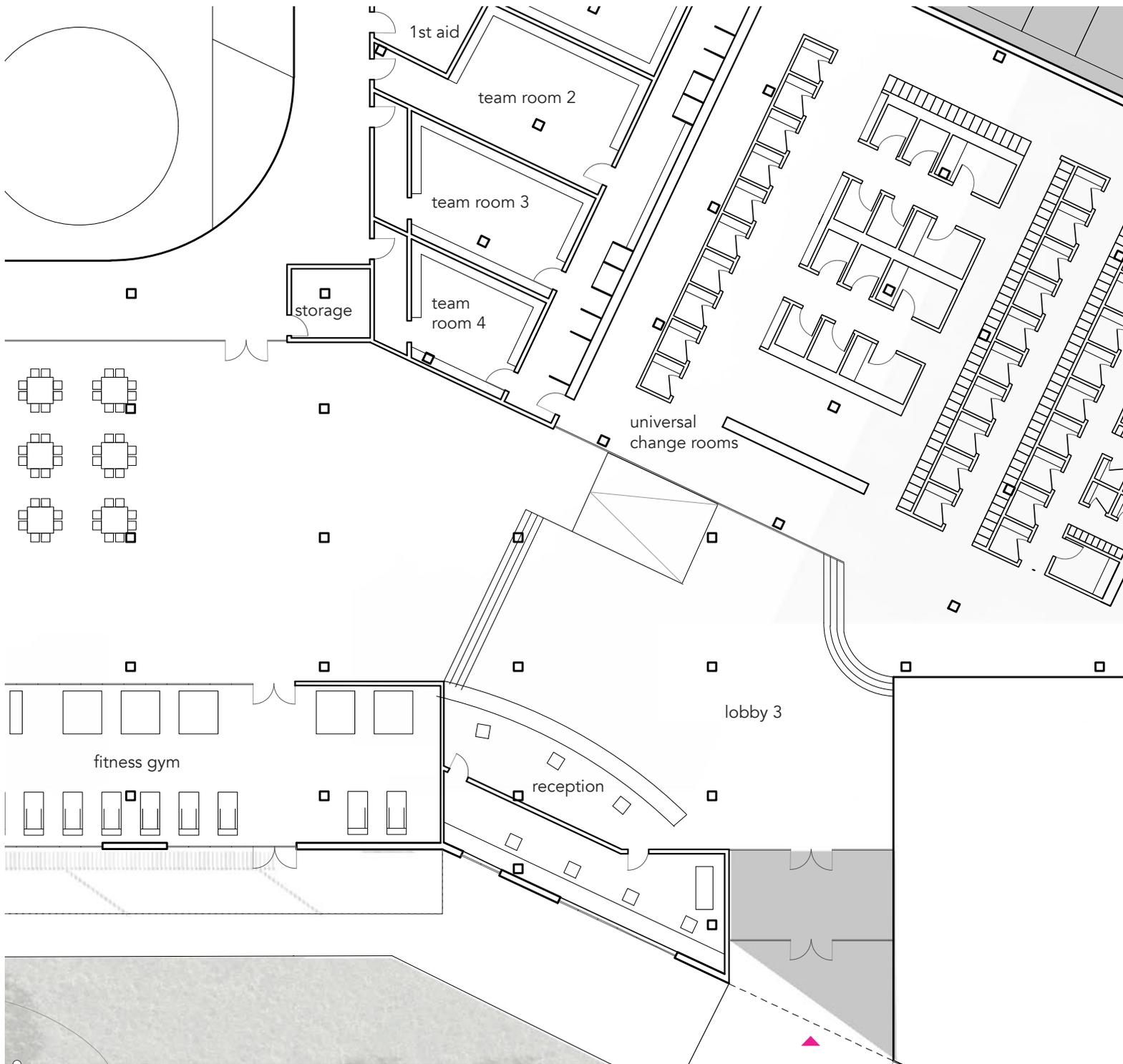


Fig. 4.23 *Ground Pool Detail Plan*. Image by Xiao Wen Xu. The universal change rooms of the recreation centre are about gender and class neutrality—the idea that people can come as they are and use the same facility. With careful scheduling, the emergency shelter guests and the rest of the community can both benefit from the universal change rooms and showers

Design Process and Proposal

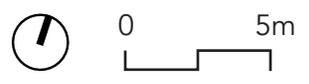
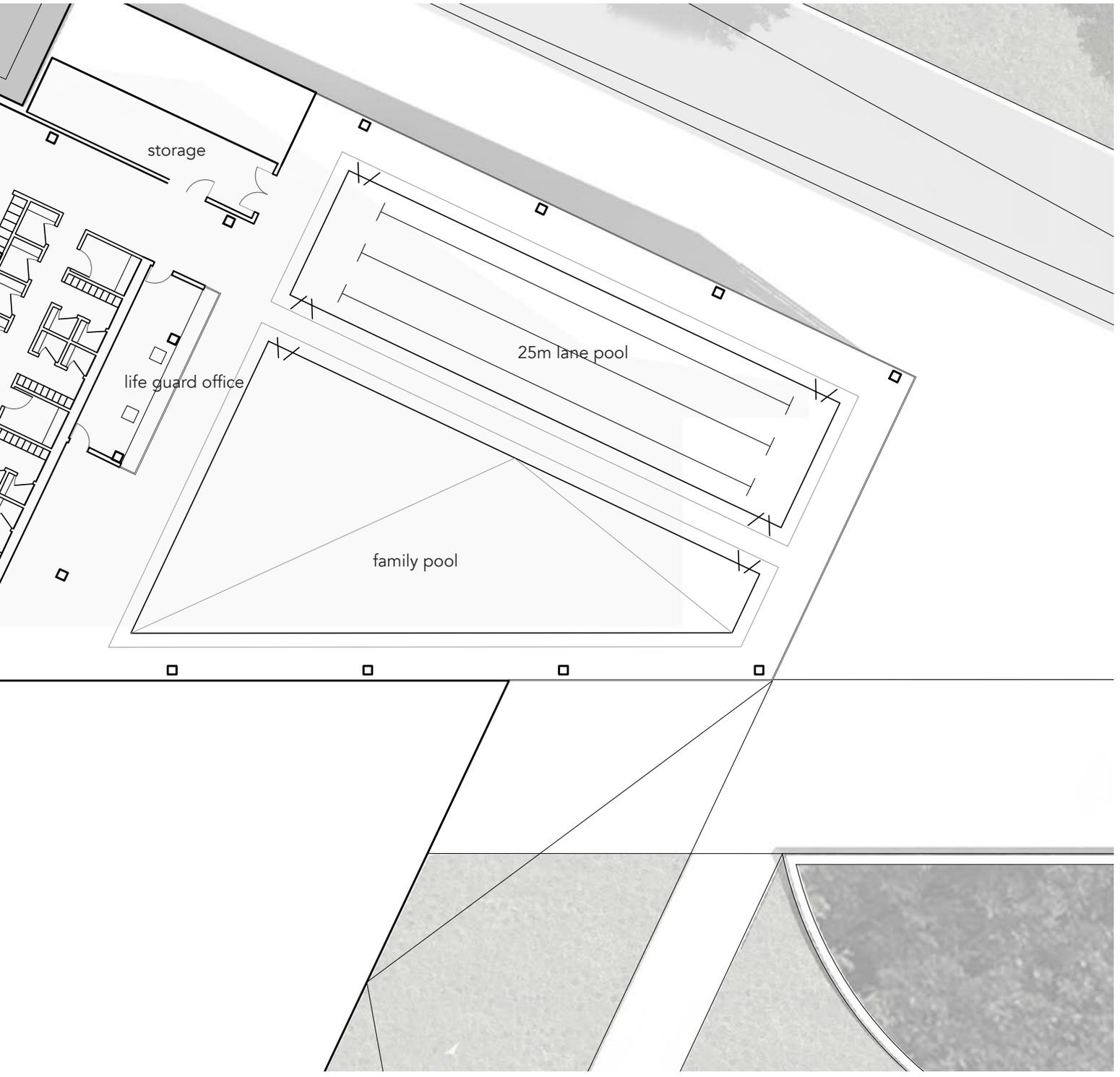




Fig. 4.24 *Vegetable Garden and Pool Exterior*. Image by Xiao Wen Xu. This is an exterior view of the vegetable garden and pool building with its ramped accessible roof. Underneath the ramped roof is another ramped slate-tiled path that leads the visitor to the main entrance of the recreation wing of the facility.

Design Process and Proposal





Fig. 4.25 *Swimming Pools Interior*. Image by Xiao Wen Xu. This is an interior view of the lane and family pools looking east towards the park. The glass curtain wall visually connects the pool activities with the park.



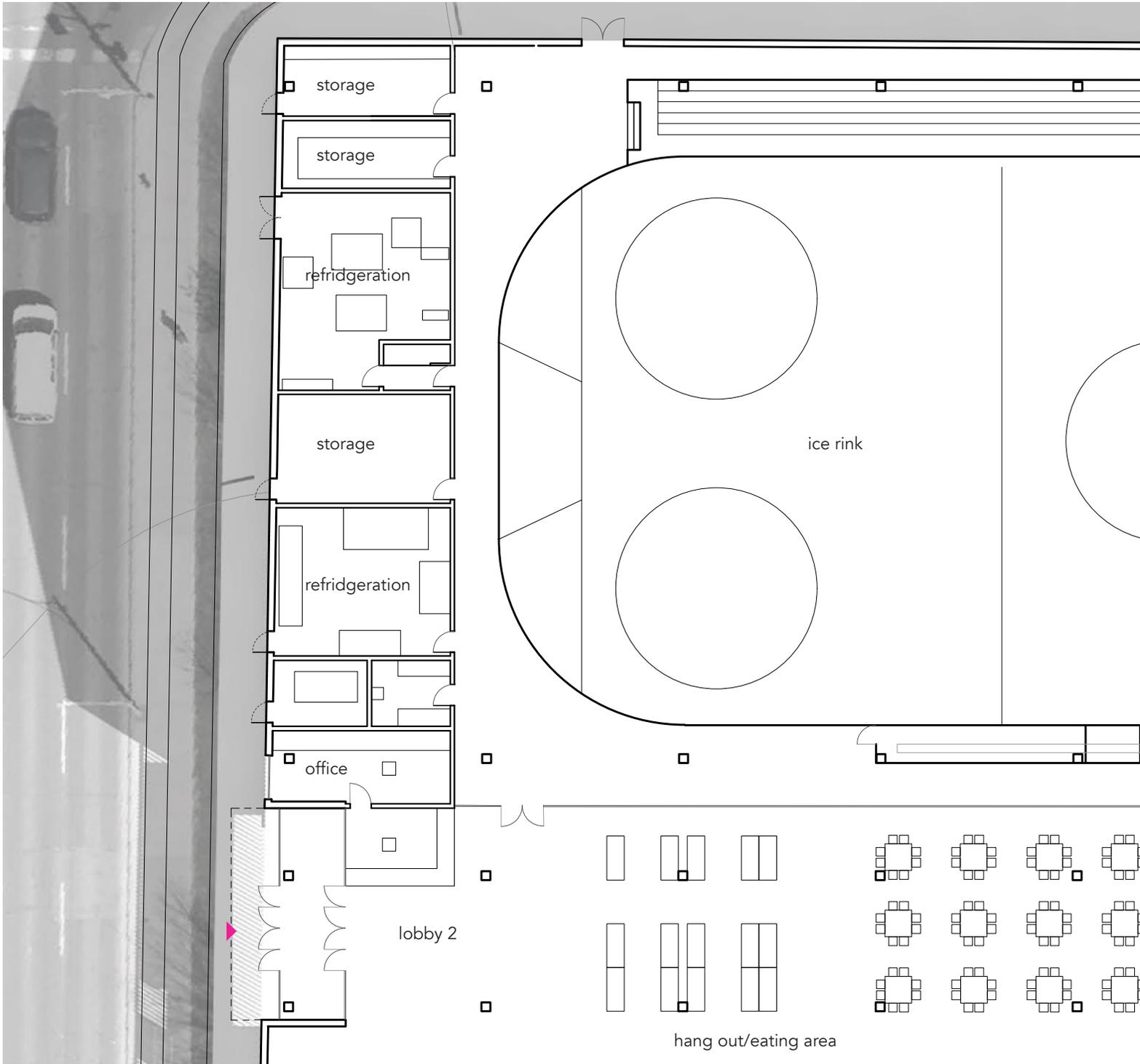
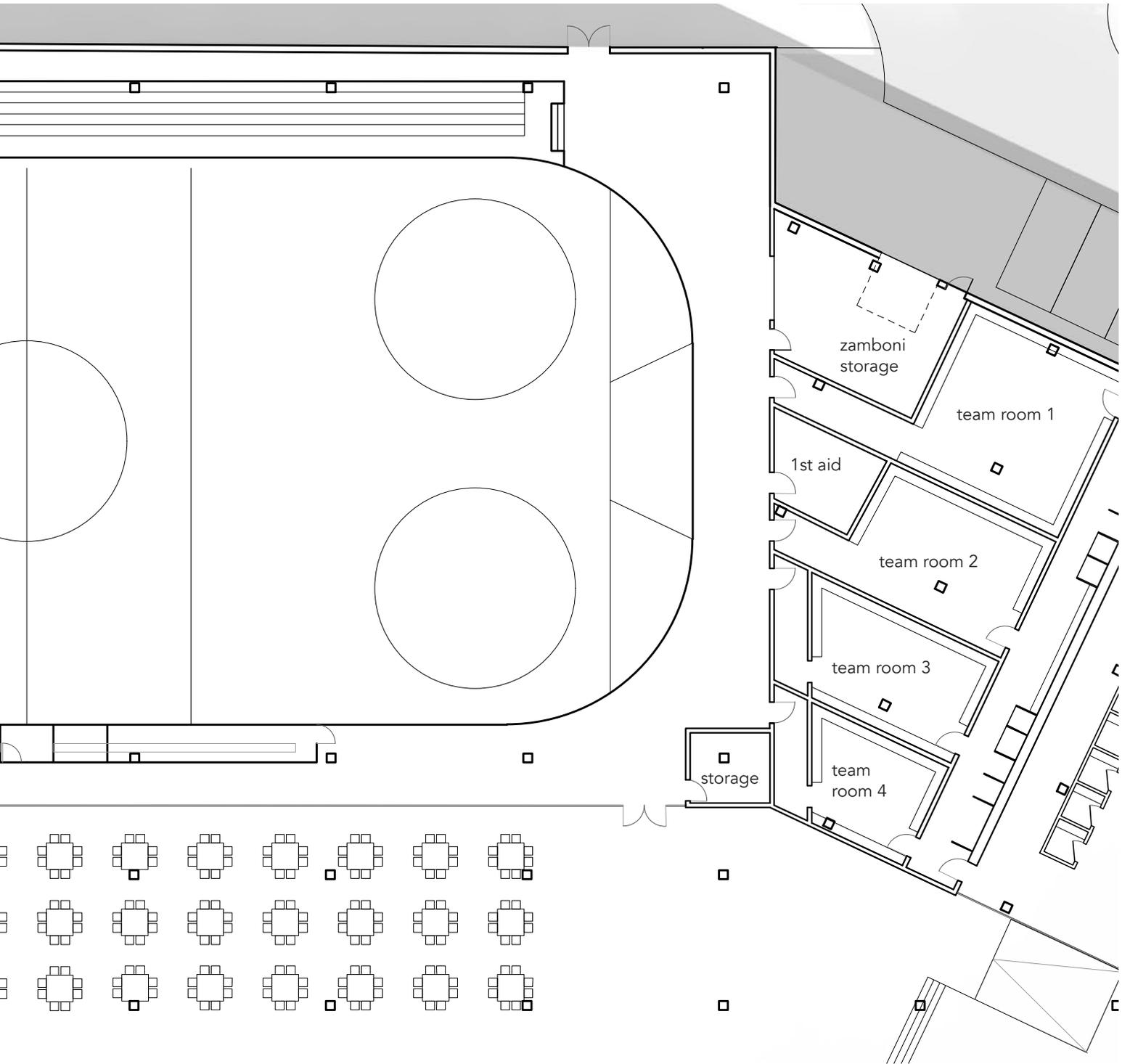


Fig. 4.26 *Ground Ice Rink Detail Plan*. Image by Xiao Wen Xu. The new recreation centre—ice rink, pools, universal change rooms, gym and fitness studio—integrates into the scheme with the spine connecting them. South of the ice arena consists of hanging out/eating areas for the emergency shelter guests and the rest of the community. Both groups can enjoy watching hockey games at play in the ice arena, which has a glass-viewing wall. The regular operation of the recreational facilities and the seasonal operation





of the emergency shelter will destigmatize social services by creating a combined holistic approach to health. This combines "positive" activities, such as exercise, with the often-perceived "negative" activities, such as shelters and counselling services.



Fig. 4.27 *Indoor Ice Rink*. Image by Xiao Wen Xu. This interior view of the ice rink shows the glulam structural columns, arch-beams, and CLT panels, which bring warmth to the space.



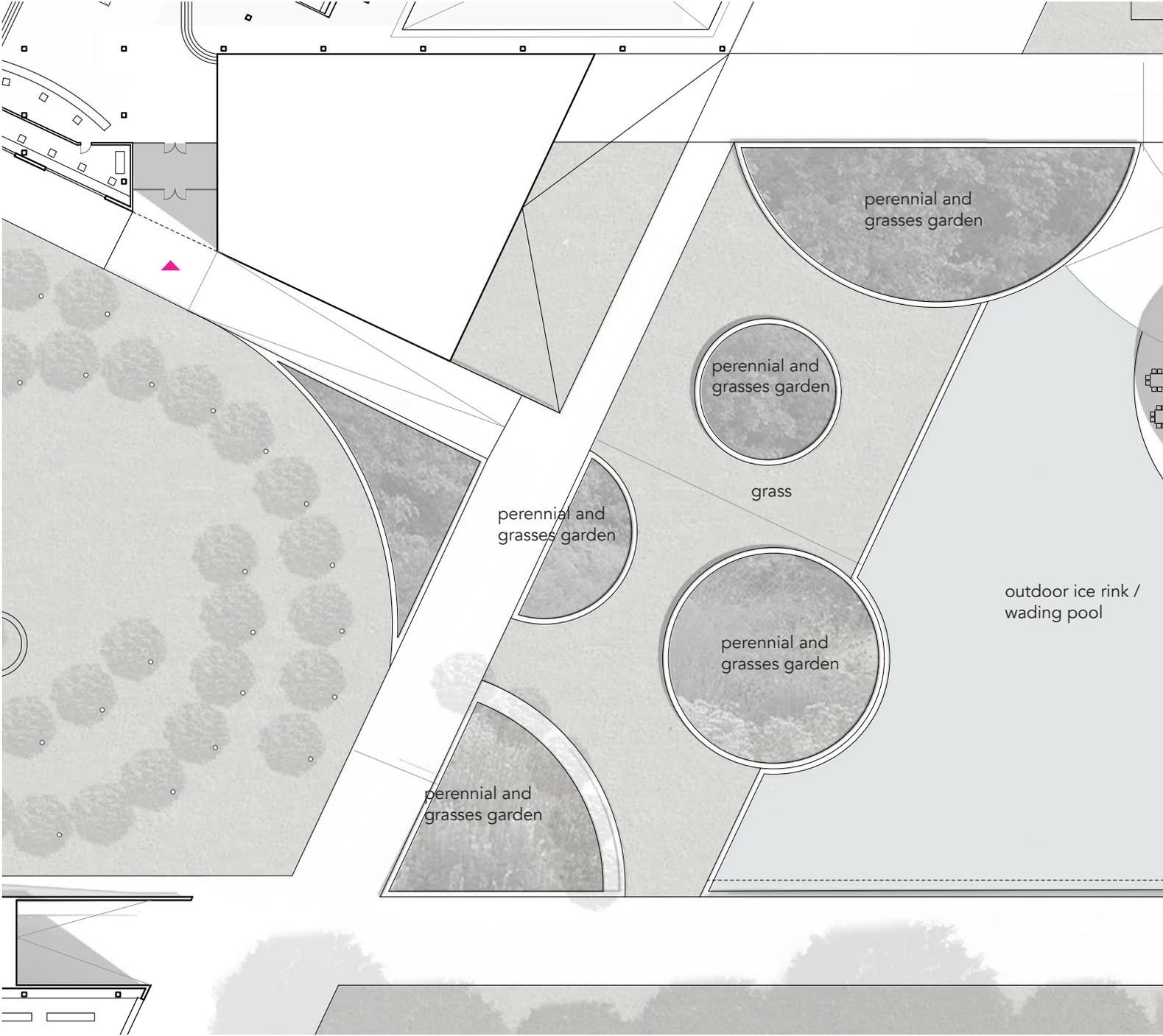
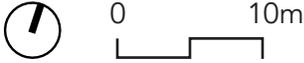
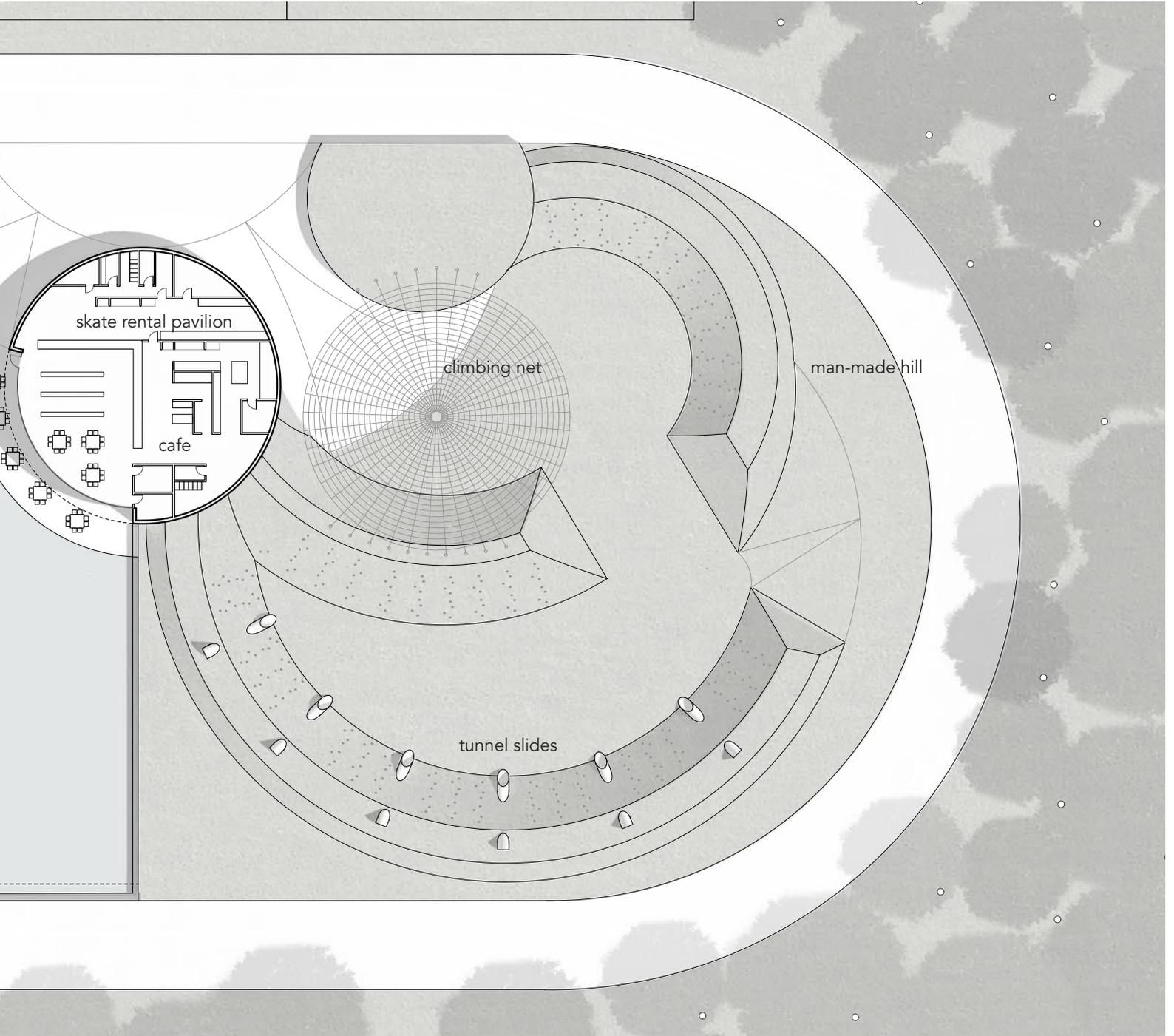


Fig. 4.28 *Park Detail Plan*. Image by Xiao Wen Xu. The sunken skating rink operates in the winter and performs as a splash pad in the summer with seating around. There is a circular skate sharpening and rental pavilion with a café. The topographical playground has rock climbing grips and tunnel slides. The walls are rubberized and the ground is AstroTurf.





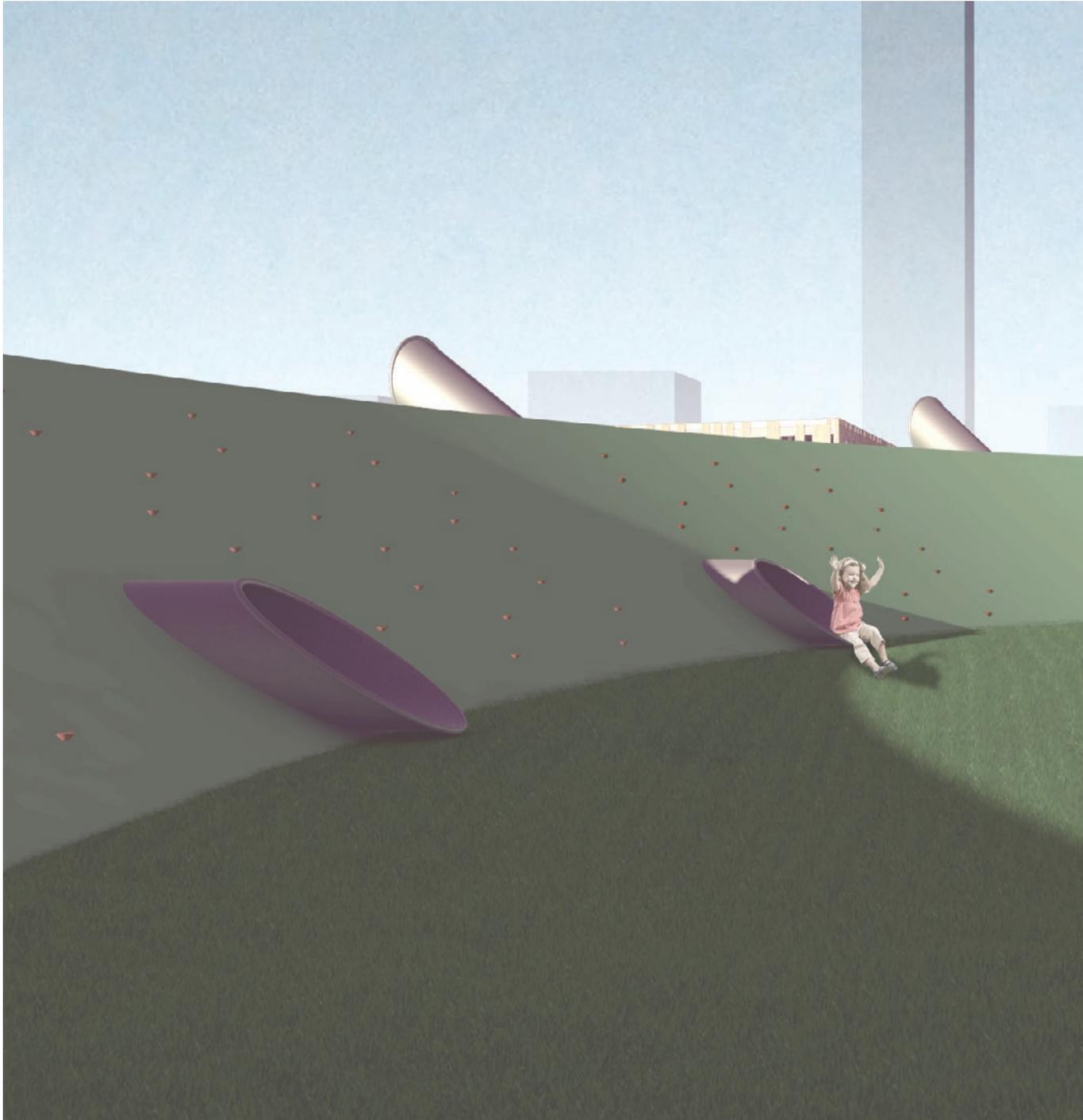


Fig. 4.29 *Playground*. Image by Xiao Wen Xu. The proposed playground's landscaped cones start at one metre above the ground level track and drop three metres on the opposite side. This results in a three-metre crawl space inside the playground. It also has tunnel slides piercing the conical hills.



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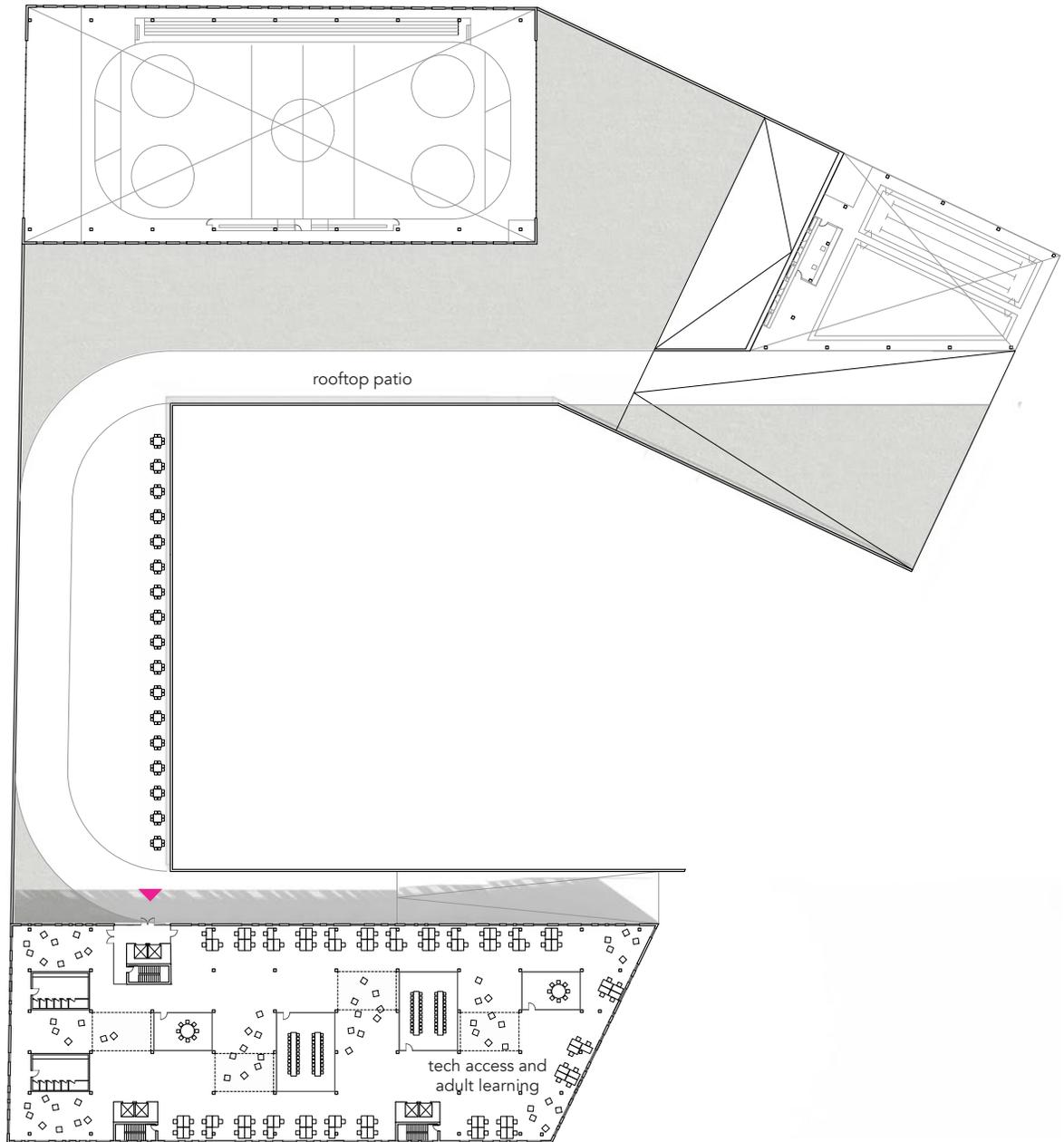


Fig. 4.30 Level Two Plan. Image by Xiao Wen Xu.



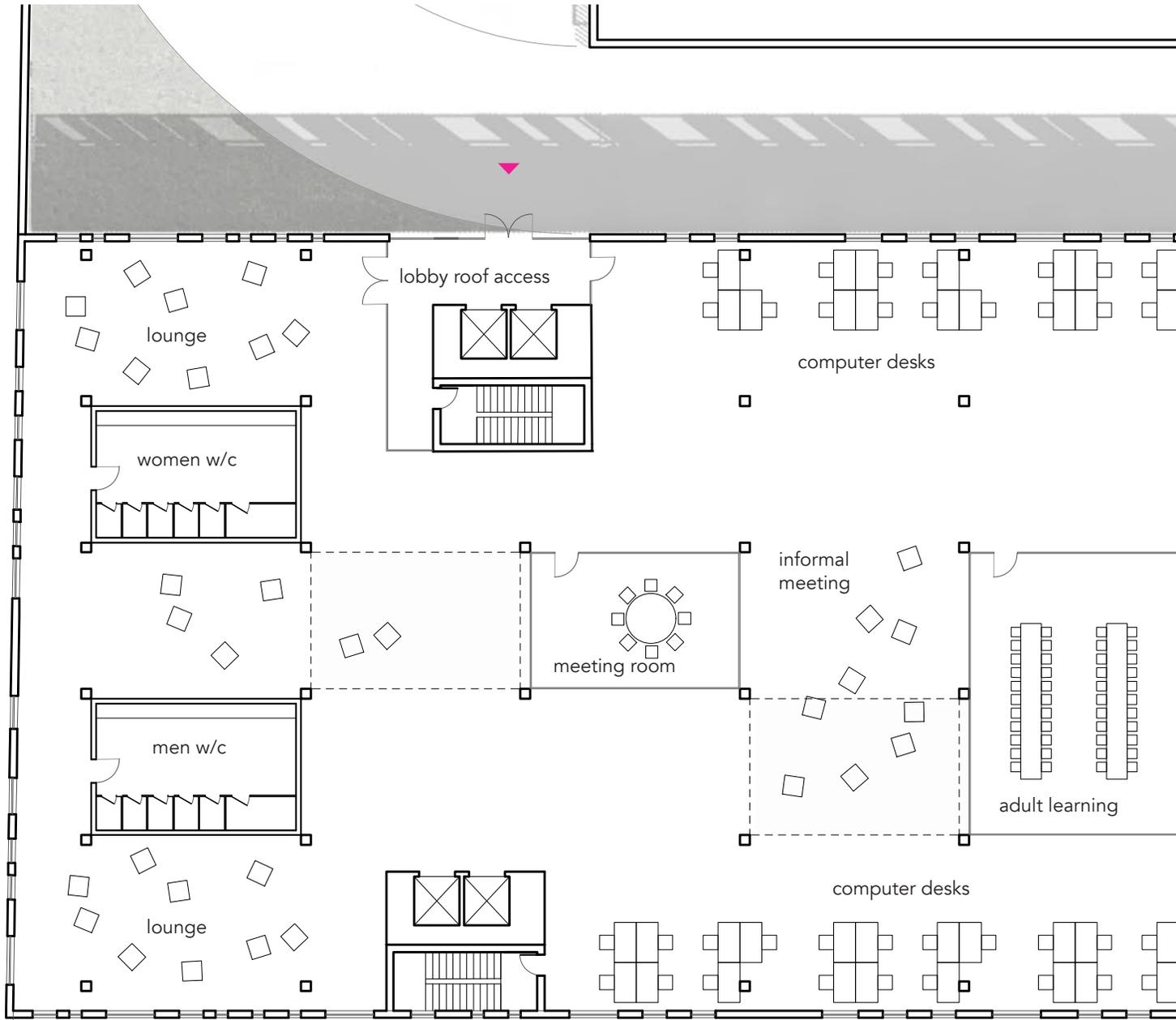


Fig. 4.31 Level Two "Learn Cube" Detail Plan. Image by Xiao Wen Xu. The Learn Cube has computer desks that rim the perimeter with glass adult learning pavilions in the middle of the floor plate. There is also a rooftop access to the patio and running track.



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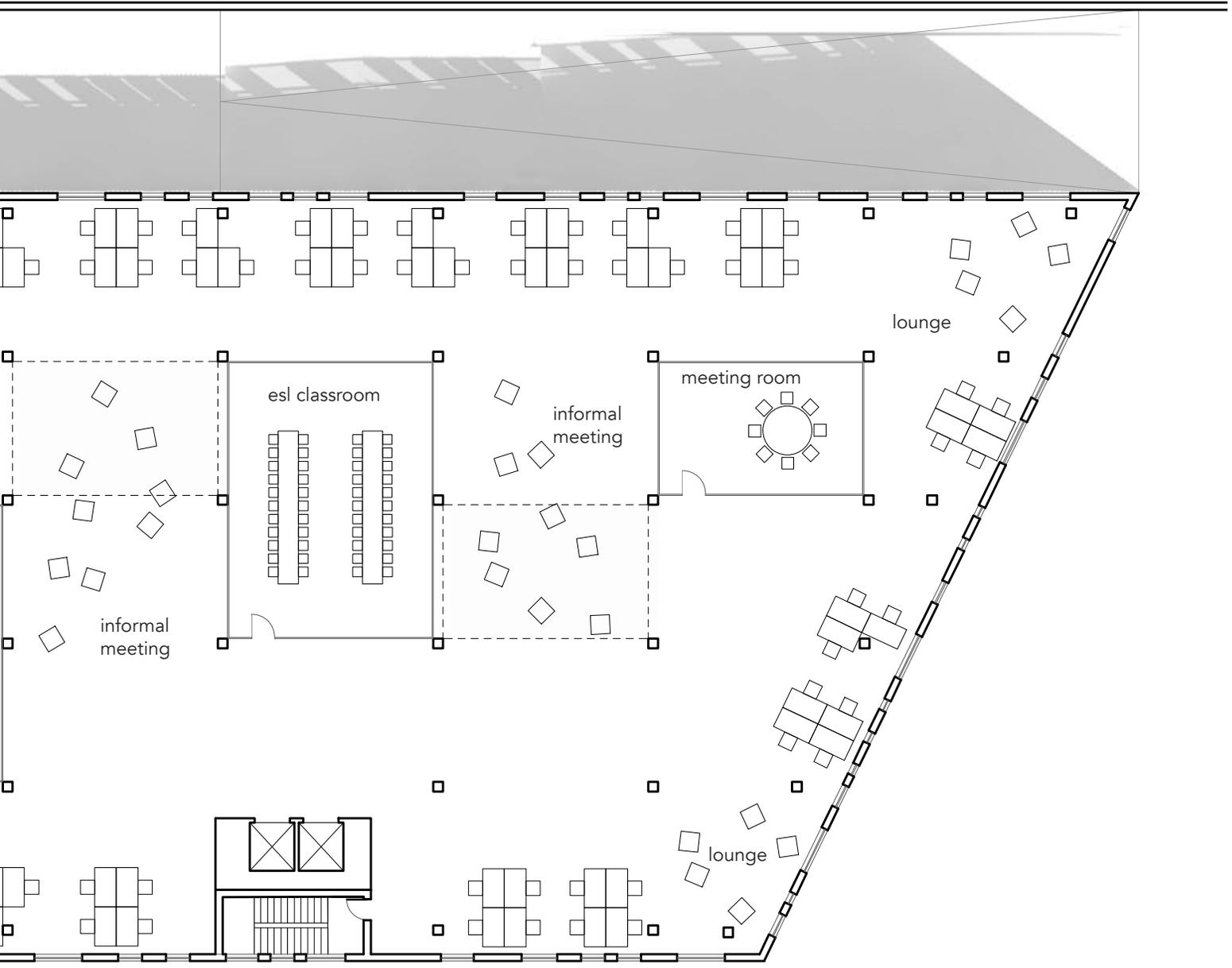




Fig. 4.32 *Learn Cube Interior*. Image by Xiao Wen Xu. This is a view of the Learn Cube with its computer desk areas, informal meeting spaces, and glass adult learning classrooms. It is about conviviality—an open access to knowledge and resources.





Fig. 4.33 *Jarvis Street Elevation*. Image by Xiao Wen Xu.



Fig. 4.34 *Queen Street East Elevation*. Image by Xiao Wen Xu. The Learn Cube's stripped windows connect the different levels of programs together, combining the learning levels on the second and third floor with the social enterprise businesses on the ground floor.

Design Process and Proposal



0 10m



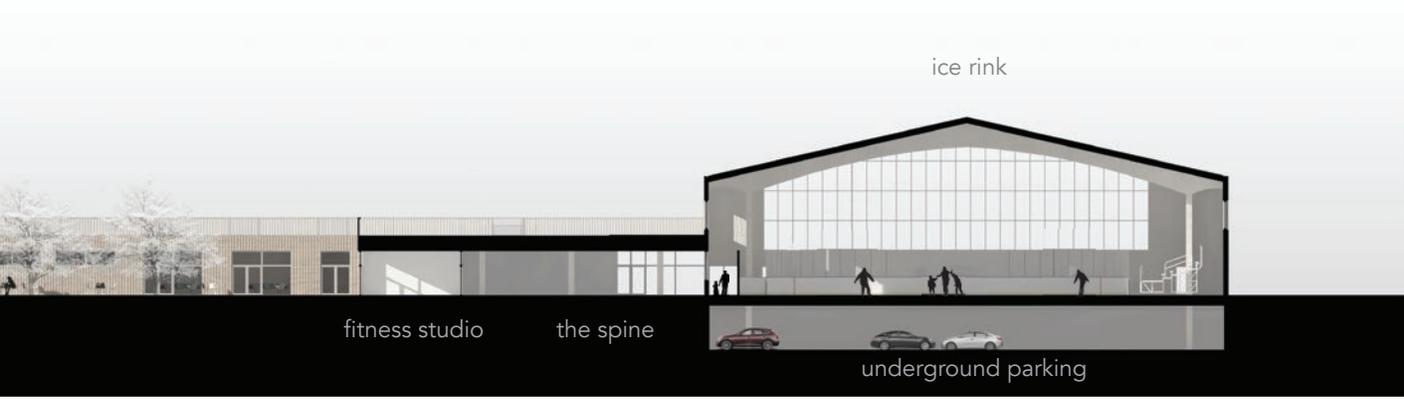
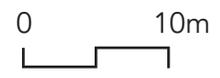


Fig. 4.35 *Sherbourne Street Elevation*. Image by Xiao Wen Xu.



Fig. 4.36 *Section BB*. Image by Xiao Wen Xu. The learning programs are stacked on top of the job enterprises in the Learn Cube. Moving north, underneath the ramped track, is a covered walkway. The dogwood trees in the courtyard serve as an outdoor screen with their delicate low-lying foliage.

Design Process and Proposal



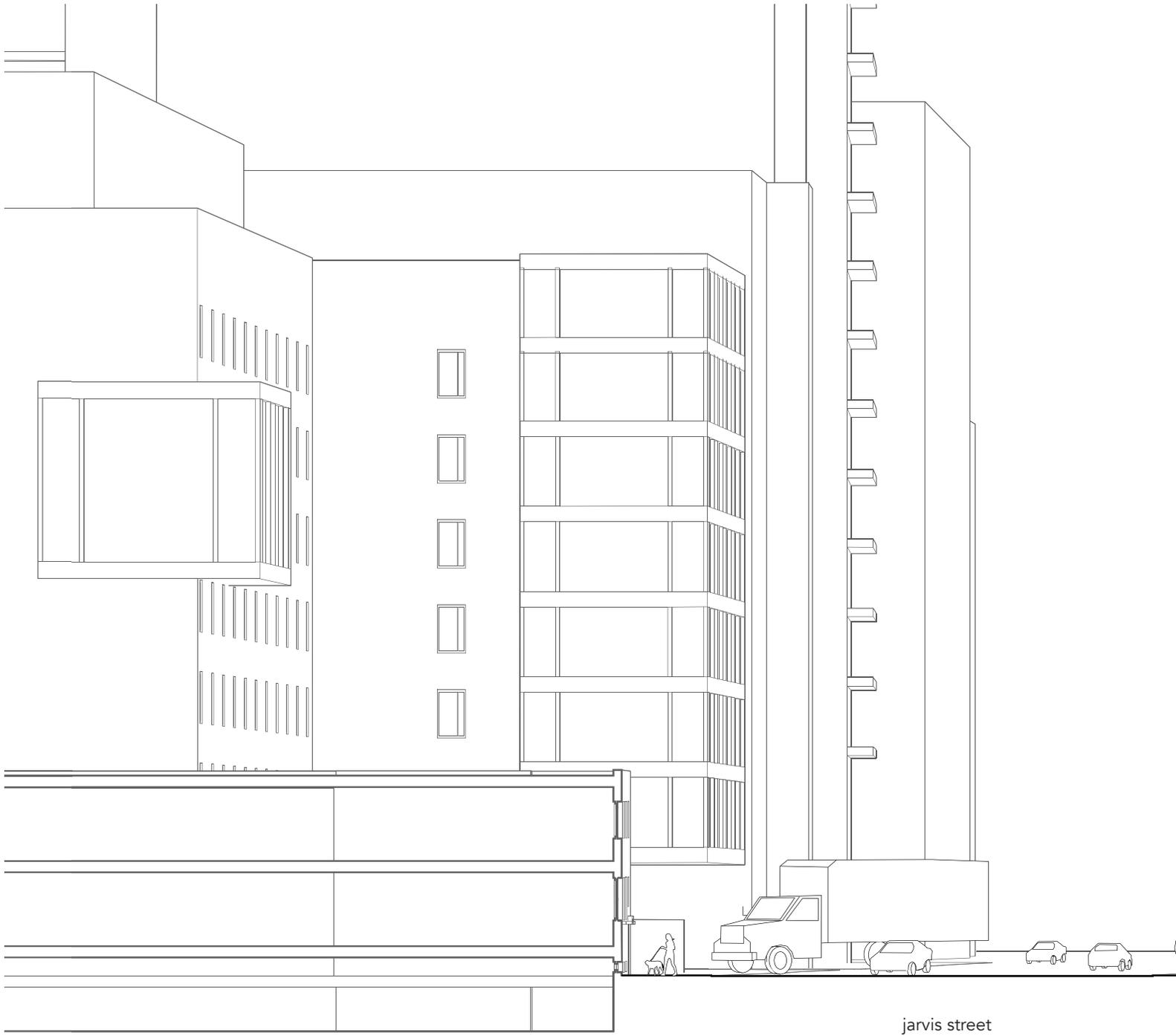
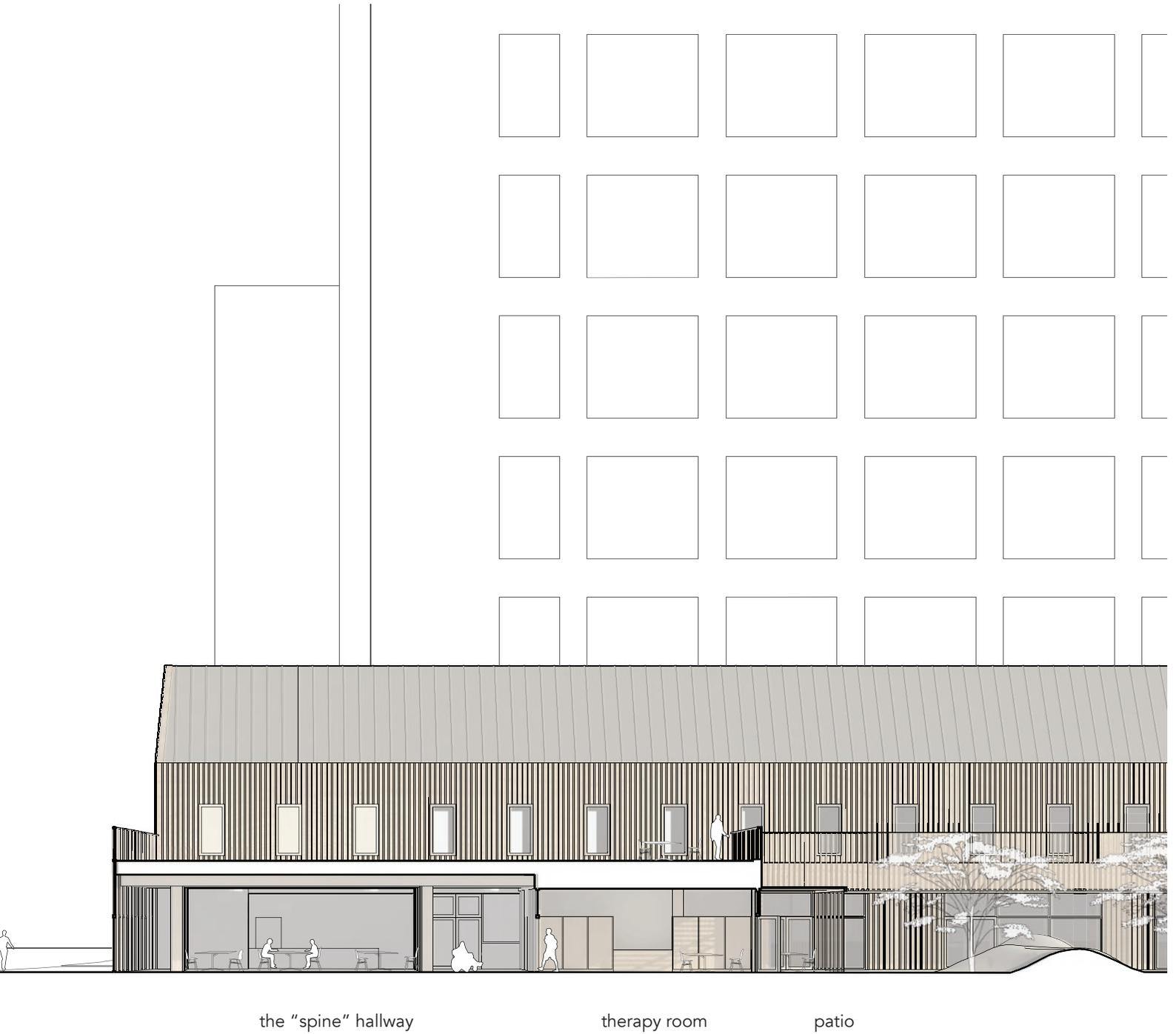


Fig. 4.37 Section AA. Image by Xiao Wen Xu. This east-west section cuts across the site.

Design Process and Proposal



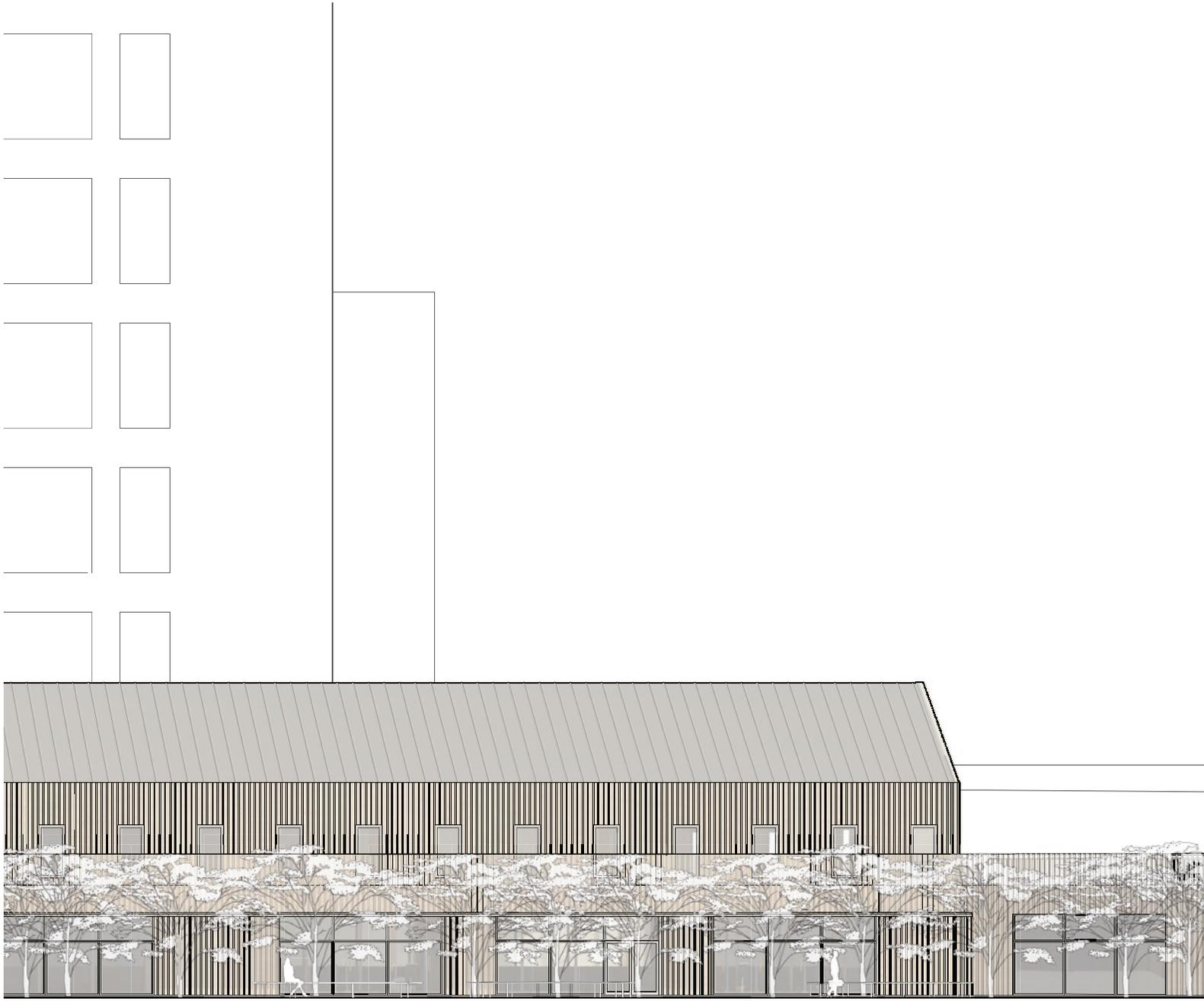
the "spine" hallway

therapy room

patio

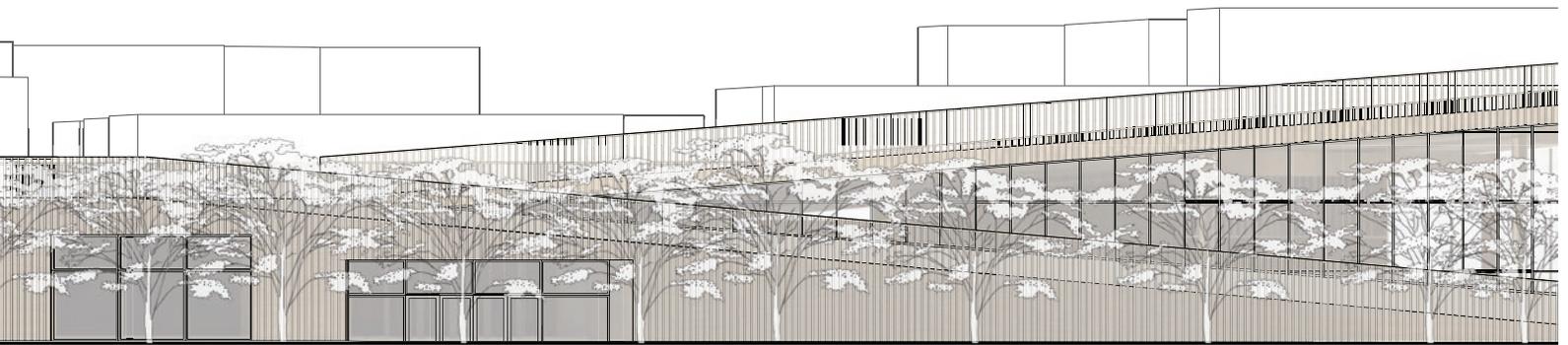


Design Process and Proposal



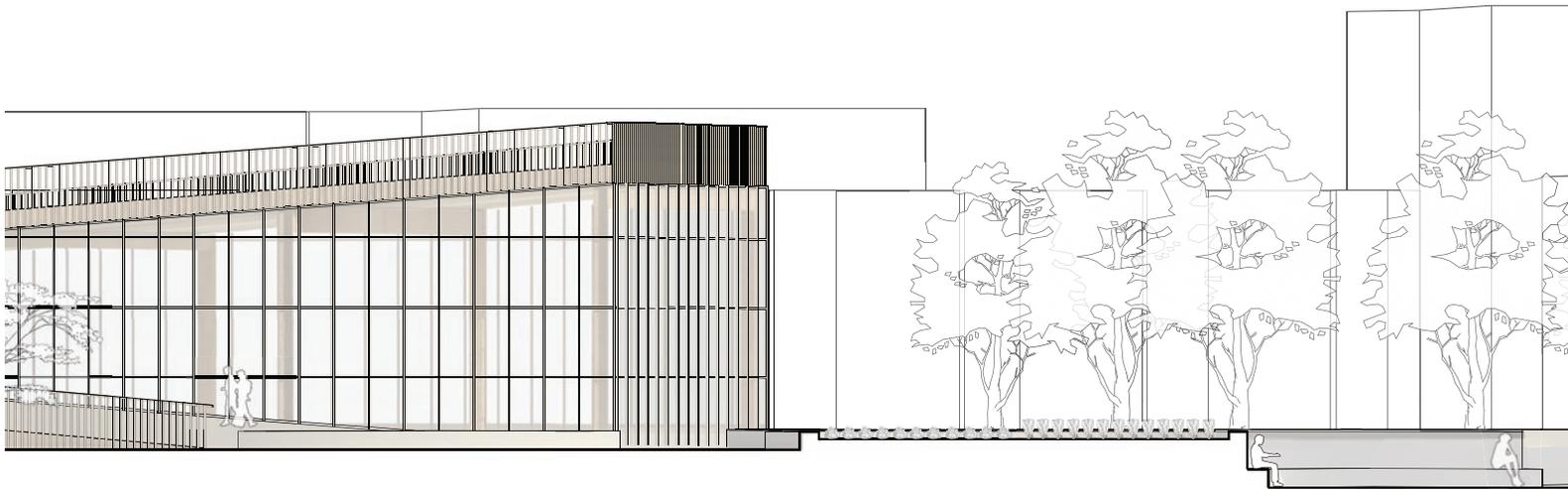
courtyard

Design Process and Proposal



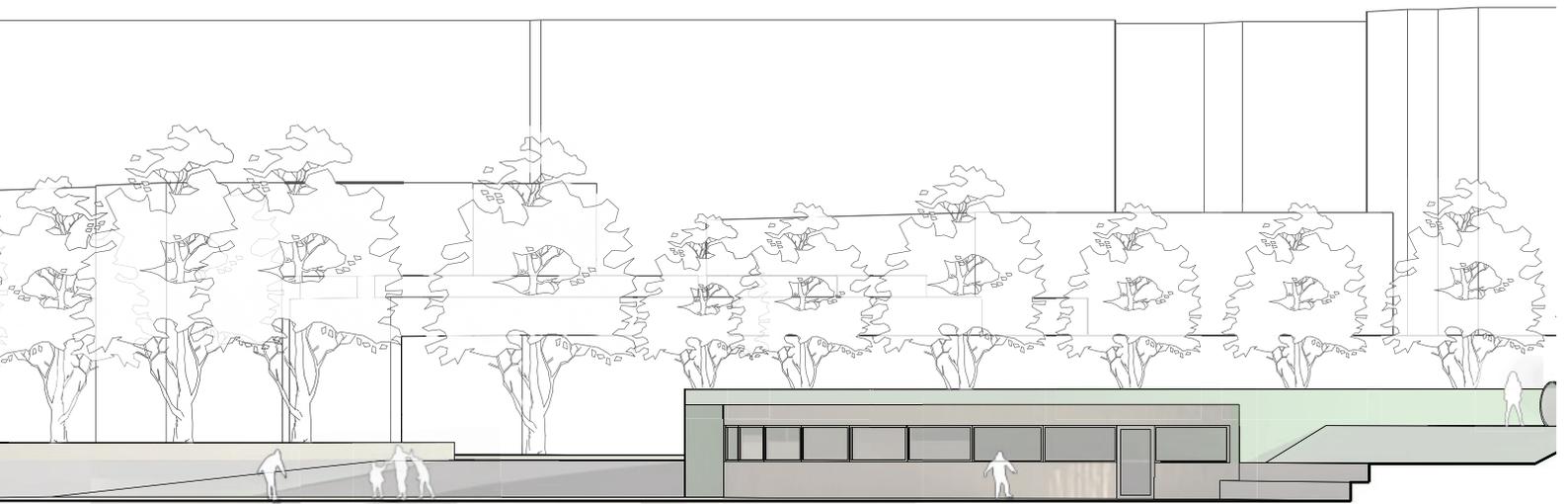
0 4m

Design Process and Proposal



vegetable garden

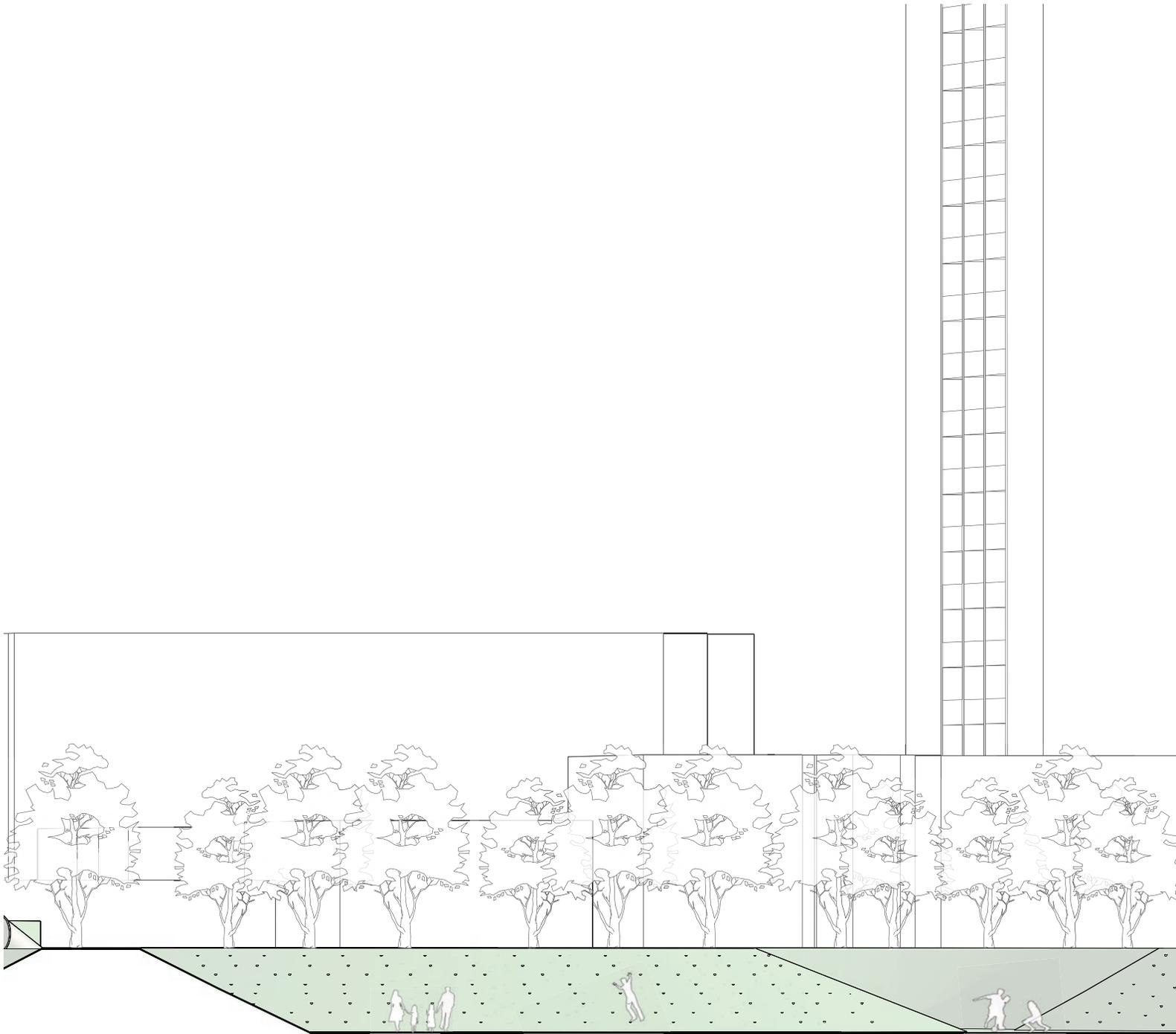
Design Process and Proposal



splash pad / skating rink



Design Process and Proposal



climbing hills playground

Design Process and Proposal



0 4m

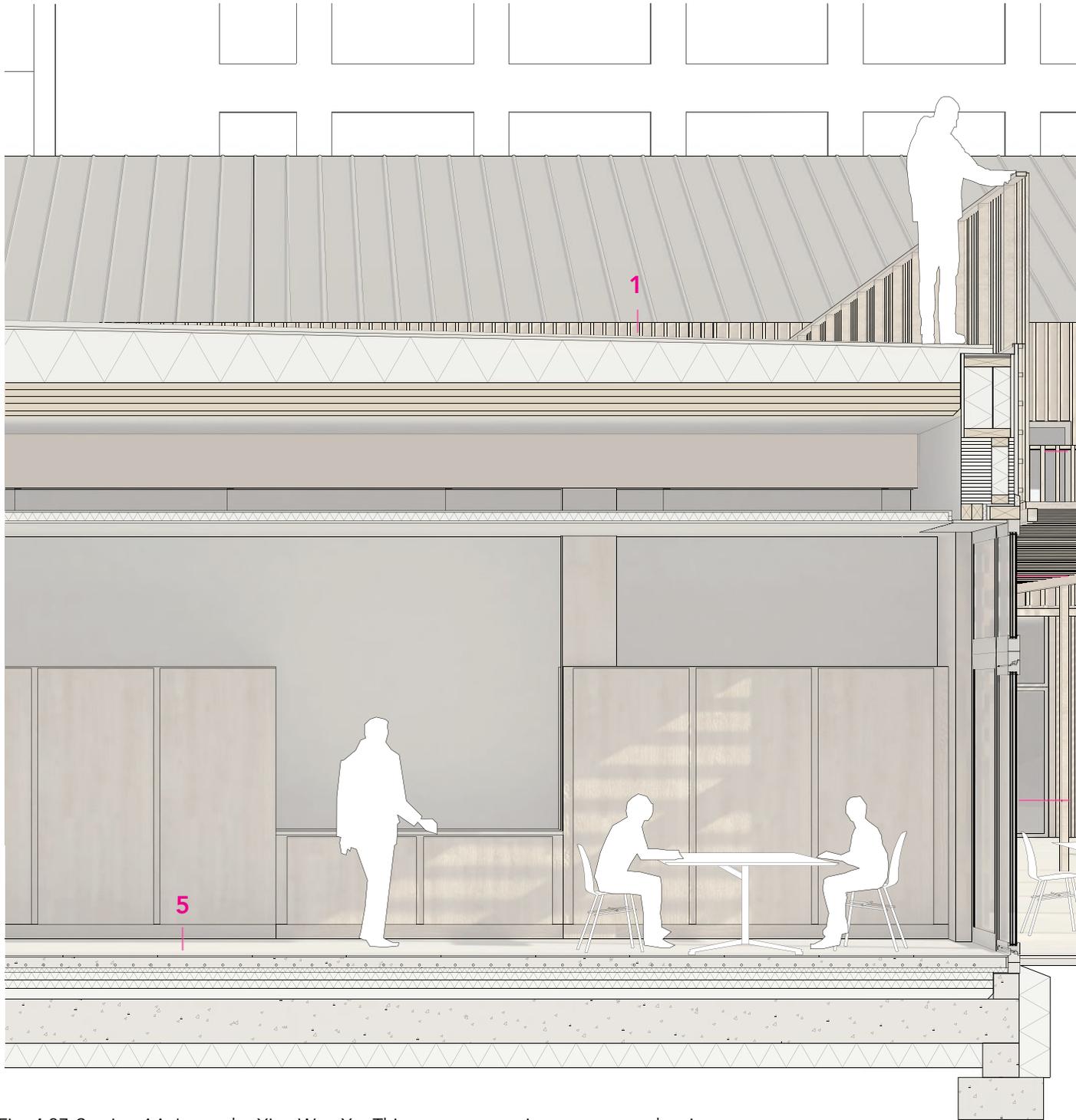
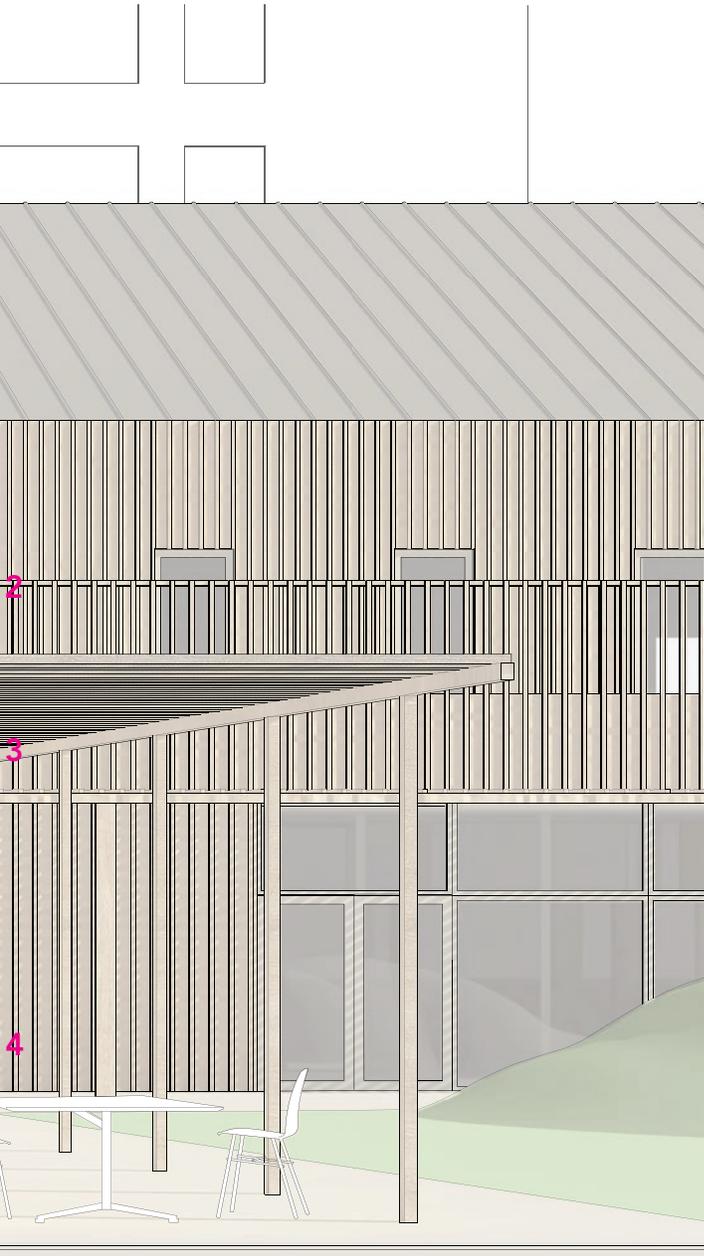


Fig. 4.37 Section AA. Image by Xiao Wen Xu. This east-west section cuts across the site.

Fig. 4.38 Detail Section AA. Image by Xiao Wen Xu. This is a detail section of the group therapy room. The

Design Process and Proposal



- 1** 20mm slate tiles
10mm grout
roof membrane
220mm EPS thermal insulation
vapour barrier
clt panel
400/400mm laminated timber beam
50mm accoustic insulation
15mm gypsum plasterboard
- 2** 30 x 30mm vertical cedar strip cladding
20mm cedar panel
30mm battens/ventilated cavity
air barrier
35mm composite wood boarding
115mm mineral-wool thermal insulation
200/440mm laminated timber beam
vapour barrier
- 3** window: triple glazing in aluminium frame
- 4** door: triple glazing in aluminium frame
- 5** 10mm slate tile flooring
70mm underfloor heating screed
polythene separating layer
200mm batt insulation
300mm reinforced poured in place concrete slab
water, air and vapour membrane
150mm batt insulation

0 0.8m

Inner Courtyard Vegetation



- ALTERNATE-LEAF DOGWOOD
+ profuse spring flowers, scarley autumn leaves and purple, bird-attracting fruits
+ 5 - 10m tall
+ 5 - 10cm trunk diameter

+ planted near therapy rooms' hill



- SWEET CHERRY
+ fruit baring
+ up to 20m tall
+ straight trunks, 60 - 90cm diameter

+ planted near therapy rooms' hill



- CANADA PLUM
+ fruit baring
+ 6 - 10m tall
+ 12 - 25cm trunk diameter

+ planted near therapy rooms' hill

Filler Vegetation for Existing Tree Canopy



- ENGLISH OAK
+ hardy
+ slow growing, can survive centuries
+ 25 - 35m tall
+ straight trunks, 60 - 90cm diameter

+ planted on 15m grid

occupiable roof also overlooks the courtyard with the cedar wall cladding that extends to become the railing.

Fig. 4.39 *Southern Ontario Vegetation*. Graphic by Xiao Wen Xu. Alternate-leaf dogwood, sweet cherry, and Canada plum trees are chosen for the courtyard because of their short stature and delicate low-lying

Building Materials



CLADDING

CEDAR STRIPS

- + on exterior facade
- + gracefully aging to a soft grey



STRUCTURE

GLULAM STRUCTURE + CLT PANELS

- + chosen for the warmth they bring to the space
- + different combination of the two elements for different rooms:
 - + beam over column for hallway
 - + tree-like structure for pool
 - + pitched arches for ice arena



FLOORING

BLACK SLATE TILES

- + durable
- + contrast with wooden interior

foliage. To densify the existing mature trees along the perimeter of the park, English Oaks are planted for they are tall and extremely long lasting, living many centuries.

Fig. 4.40 *Materials*. Graphic by Xiao Wen Xu. This is the material palette for the project. The exterior of the building has a cedar strip cladding with its soft greying ageing property. The thesis employs a glulam

Conclusion

The thesis investigates the possibilities of creating a more integrated model for social services, recreational facilities, parks, and emergency shelters for Moss Park, through shared facilities, flexible spaces, topographic manipulations, and indoor-outdoor connections. It explores one strategy in the face of shelter and service shortages in the city by proposing a model that operates through intergovernmental management and displays increased sensitivity to vulnerable populations and landscapes. The design proposal that grew out of these ideas is not intended to be a complete solution to all the problems Moss Park is facing, but instead offer a suggestion intending to serve as a first step in provoking a discussion about the ways in which we might begin to conceive and optimize social services and recreational resources to help communities in a convivial manner.

The proposal attempts to create a scenario where the at-risk populations and the rest of the community are integrated, but in a manner that is beneficial to both the at-risk populations and the rest of the community. The most important design strategy in the thesis that achieves this is the spine hallway, where both groups use the space as a resource library from mid-February to mid-December each year. This is obviously advantageous because the sharing of knowledge and resources becomes the common bond between the groups. Used in conjunction with the job counselling, therapy, adult learning, and computer rooms, the library gives the at-risk individuals opportunities and spaces to learn about skills and job opportunities available, taking a step to leave poverty. While this project requires financial support from the federal government, the rewards of this preventative investment will continue to benefit the public because fewer tax dollars will be required for social welfare. In addition to having this library function, the space also serves as an emergency shelter from mid-December to mid-February. While the space functions as an emergency shelter, all the other activities, such as the job counselling, therapy, fitness gym, ice rink, and pools, are fully in operation. The thesis is about a holistic approach to health combining the positive activities, such as exercise, with perceived negative activities, such as shelter and counselling. The proposed design would translate to increased return on investment through healthier and more enabled individuals contributing to society.

Reduced dependence on social welfare not only reduces financial stress on the government but also amounts to decreased homeless populations in the city. The proposal still creates the enjoyable spaces that the rest of the community can use, and in fact exaggerates it greatly, like the tall and spacious hallway.

While the design proposal does begin to address some of the social services and shelter shortage in the city, there are still a number of challenges that arise, especially in regards to this operation that spans several levels of government. The success of the proposal rests on the collaboration between the federal and municipal government. These different levels of government, or in other words, stakeholders, may experience interest clashes and neglect responsibilities. Although the different levels of government may have conflicting agendas, it is possible that this proposal will serve as an alternative to traditional single-use recreation centres, emergency shelters, and social services because of this unique resource pooling.

A mixed program and unexpected activity adjacencies should be seen as a design tool for integrating people of different backgrounds in the city. By leveraging shared and flexible spaces to transform the notion of occupancy into a convivial society, we might begin to develop spaces that encourage growth and inspire hope that does not require the city to choose between helping the at-risk population and the rest of the community.

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Appendix

Portraits in Moss Park

This series celebrates humanity's hopes and dreams. The large colourful cosmic rings of knowledge that encircle the people sitting and walking represent their individual aspirations. Moreover, when given the tools and resources, individuals can find their life purpose and achieve personal greatness.



Fig. 5.01 *Man on Sherbourne*. Photograph by Xiao Wen Xu.

Portraits in Moss Park



Fig. 5.02 *Men on Sherbourne*. Photograph by Xiao Wen Xu.

Portraits in Moss Park



Fig. 5.03 *Dreams of Mother and Child*. Image by Xiao Wen Xu.



Fig. 5.04 *Man with a Bicycle and Many Things*. Photograph by Xiao Wen Xu.



Fig. 5.05 *Man Cleaning Window Graffiti*. Photograph by Xiao Wen Xu.



Fig. 5.06 *Conversation Outside Fred Victor*. Photograph by Xiao Wen Xu.

Portraits in Moss Park



Fig. 5.07 *Hope of the Man with His Head Down*. Image by Xiao Wen Xu.



Fig. 5.08 *Hope of Another Man with His Head Down*. Image by Xiao Wen Xu.