

The Architecture of Community
Public Space in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside

by
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thesis requirement for the degree of
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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 public spaces of many low-income, inner-city neighbourhoods are fundamental in forming strong social networks, nurturing the development of community and supporting the needs of vulnerable residents. This aspect of the urban condition is rooted in the understanding of public space as social space, emphasizing the innumerable differences of individuals and their everyday patterns of inhabitation.

This thesis explores Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, a historically marginalized neighbourhood with a strong sense of community that has developed from an accessible and inclusive public life. However, as the neighbourhood undergoes re-development, social polarization threatens the vitality of its public space and the existing sense of acceptance and connection. To mitigate the impact of gentrification on public space, architecture is employed as a tool to support and enhance the area's inclusive public realm. Applying principles of *Everyday Urbanism*, it illustrates the social importance of 'everyday space', emphasizing the human condition and multidimensional aspects of cities.

Three distinct designs propose 'neighbourhood places' at strategic locations throughout the Downtown Eastside. Guided by the principles of 'city design' and four established design goals, each project demonstrates an attempt to anchor the existing community in place, foster a dialogue between different neighbourhood groups and promote a sense of ownership and belonging. Although this thesis concentrates on the Downtown Eastside, it outlines a set of design principles that can be applied universally, increasing community connections and support throughout our cities.

Acknowledgements

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A sincere thank you to my parents, who have encouraged and believed in me from the very beginning.

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Table of Contents

Author's Declaration	ii	THE ARCHITECTURE OF PUBLIC SPACE	
Abstract	iii	Introduction	59
Acknowledgements	iv	Design Proposals	60
Table of Contents	v	Project A - Oppenheimer Park	63
List of Illustrations	vii	Project B - Blood Alley Square	83
Glossary	xii	Project C - Sidewalk Space	103
INTRODUCTION	1	CONCLUSION & REFLECTIONS	
PORTRAIT OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD		Conclusion & Reflections	117
Neighbourhood Introduction	7	APPENDIX	
Development of the Downtown Eastside	9	Description of Housing Types	123
People	13	List of Services and Organizations	124
Housing	17	Housing Policy	127
Services	21	ENDNOTES	130
Business	23	BIBLIOGRAPHY	134
Culture	29		
Character	31		
Gentrification	35		
THE CONDITION OF PUBLIC SPACE			
Defining Public Space	45		
Sociability of Public Space	50		
Understanding the City	47		
Public Realm of the Downtown Eastside	48		
Gentrification of Public Space	53		
The Changing Face of the Downtown Eastside	55		

List of Illustrations

Note: All illustrations and photos by author unless otherwise noted

Page	Fig.	Title/Source	Page	Fig.	Title/Source
		Portrait of a Neighbourhood	15	1.9	DTES Health Data Illustrated by author. Data Source: <i>2005 Housing Plan for the Downtown Eastside.</i>
6	1.1	The Downtown Eastside (2002) Photo by: Stan Douglas.	16	1.10	DTES Housing Map Adapted by author. Base Map: http://vancouver.ca/vanMap/
7	1.2	Location Map of DTES Adapted by author. Base Map: http://vancouver.ca/vanMap/	19	1.11	Images of DTES Housing
7	1.3	DTES Sub-areas Adapted by author. Base Map: http://vancouver.ca/vanMap/	20	1.12	DTES Services Map Adapted by author. Base Map: http://vancouver.ca/vanMap/
8	1.4	Vancouver, 1909 City of Vancouver Archives #P23 N243 From: <i>Stan Douglas: Every Building on 100 West Hastings</i>	22	1.13	Map of Commercial Districts Adapted by author. Base Map: http://vancouver.ca/vanMap/
11	1.5	DTES Timeline	23	1.14	Water Street, Gastown
12	1.6	Portraits of the Homeless Assembled by author. Photography by: Lindsay Mearns From: <i>Street Stories: 100 Years of Homelessness in Vancouver</i>	23	1.15	Pender Street, Chinatown
14	1.7	DTES Population Illustrated by author. Data Source: Statistics Canada, 2006	24	1.16	Hastings Corridor Vacancy Rate Adapted by author. Base Map: http://vancouver.ca/vanMap/ Data Source: <i>2005/6 Downtown Eastside Community Monitoring Report</i>
15	1.8	DTES Demographics Illustrated by author. Data Source: Statistics Canada, 2006	25	1.17	View down Hastings Street Altered by author Source: http://photos.cmaq.net

Page	Fig.	Title/Source	Page	Fig.	Title/Source
27	1.18	Every Building on 100 West Hastings Photo by: Stan Douglas	33	1.27	Friendship Photo by: Frank Thompson
28	1.19	Map of Cultural Amenities and Events Adapted by author. Base Map: http://vancouver.ca/vanMap/			From: <i>Hope in Shadows: Stories and Photographs from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside</i> , pg 93.
29	1.20	Powell Street Festival Source: http://www.deepsicks.com	33	1.28	Women's Memorial March Source: http://www.flickr.com
29	1.21	Powell Street Festival Source: http://www.flickr.com	33	1.29	Untitled Source: <i>The Heart of the Community: The Best of the Carnegie Newsletter</i> , pg 187.
29	1.22	Chinese New Year Parade Source: http://attractions.uptake.com	34	1.30	Map of Development in the DTES Adapted by author. Base Map: http://vancouver.ca/vanMap/
30	1.23	Posters for Events and Rallies in the DTES Assembled by author. Various Sources.	35	1.31	Hunt & Gather Source: Unkown
32	1.24	Untitled Source: http://www.megaphonemagazine.com/	36	1.32	Housing Stock Expectations Illustrated by author. Data Source: <i>Housing Stock in the DTES 2005-2012</i> , City of Vancouver Memorandum
32	1.25	Breaktime on Columbia Photo by: Donna Gorill From: <i>Hope in Shadows: Stories and Photographs from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside</i> , pg 143.	37	1.33	Untitled From: <i>The Heart of the Community: The Best of the Carnegie Newsletter</i> , pg 218.
32	1.26	Untitled	38	1.34	Limits of Gentrification Adapted by author Base Map: http://vancouver.ca/vanMap/

Page	Fig.	Title/Source	Page	Fig.	Title/Source
39	1.35	Map of Non-Market Housing Since 2006 Adapted by author Base Map: http://vancouver.ca/vanMap/	54	2.7	Piegeon Park's Trasformation Source: http://www.flickr.com
40	1.36	North Star Hotel Adapted by author Source: http://www.nowpublic.com	55	2.8	Wake-up call for Homeless Source: http://www.flickr.com
41	1.37	Grand March for Housing Source: http://www.flickr.com			
The Condition of Public Space					
46	2.1	Daily Visit for Free Bread From: <i>Hope in Shadows: Storied and Photographs of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside</i> , pg 82.	60	3.1	Location of Design Proposals Adapted by author. Base Map: http://vancouver.ca/vanMap
47	2.2	Local Asian Market	62	3.2	Location Map of Oppenheimer Park Adapted by author. Base Map: http://maps.google.com
49	2.3	Photographs of the DTES	63	3.3	Drum Circle at Totem Pole
50	2.4	Public Space in the DTES Adapted by author. Base Map: http://vancouver.ca/vanMap/	64	3.4	Historical Timeline Assembled by author Photos: Various Sources
51	2.5	Third Places in the DTES Source: http://maps.google.com	65	3.5	Location Map Adapted by author Base Map: http://vancouver.ca/vanMap
52	2.6	Universal Citywalk Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org	65	3.6	Amenities Map Adapted by author. Base Map: http://vancouver.ca/vanMap

Page	Fig.	Title/Source	Page	Fig.	Title/Source
66	3.7	Diagram of Existing Park Usage Adapted by author. Base Map: http://vancouver.ca/vanMap	75	3.20	Ground Plan
68	3.8	Looking North East across the Park	76	3.21	Sections
68	3.9	Looking West across the South side of the Park Source: http://ahamedia.ca	77	3.22	Elevation
68	3.10	Looking East across the South side of the Park Source: http://www.bloggernews.net/118124	79	3.23	View of Dining Pavilioin from Park
68	3.11	Looking South-West across the Park	81	3.24	Communal Dining Event
69	3.12	Site Photo Source: www.facebook.com - Oppenheimer Park - DTES Communities Backyard	82	3.25	Location Map of Blood Alley Square Adapted by author. Base Map: http://maps.google.com
69	3.13	Site Photo Source: www.facebook.com - Oppenheimer Park - DTES Communities Backyard	83	3.26	Blood Alley Square Source: http://www.sitelines.org/webatlas/
69	3.14	Site Photo Source: http://ahamedia.ca	84	3.27	Location Map Adapted by author Base Map: http://vancouver.ca/vanMap
69	3.15	Site Photo Source: http://ahamedia.ca	85	3.28	Analysis of Block Usage Adapted by author Base Map: http://vancouver.ca/vanMap
70	3.16	Site Documentation Source: http://maps.google.com	86	3.29	Blood Alley Square - Looking SE
70	3.17	Japantown Facades	86	3.30	Blood Alley Square - Looking SW
73	3.18	Site Plan	86	3.31	Entrance to Trounce Alley Source: http://www.beyondrobson.com
74	3.19	Diagram of Use	87	3.32	Condo Construction
			87	3.33	Salt Tasting Room
			87	3.34	Constuction nears Completion
			88	3.35	Cordova Street

Page	Fig.	Title/Source	Page	Fig.	Title/Source
88	3.36	Cordova Street North Elevation	111	3.55	Street View - Pocket of Public Space
89	3.37	Gathering under Breezeway Source: http://maps.google.com	113	3.56	Interior Courtyard
89	3.38	Corner of Carrall and Water Streets Source: http://maps.google.com	Conclusion & Reflections		
92	3.39	Site Plan and Program	119	4.1	People's Pigeon Park Photo by: Wilda From: <i>Hope in Shadows: Stories and Photographs of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside</i> , pg 243.
92	3.40	Massing Study - Cordova Street			
92	3.41	Massing Study - Alley			
93	3.42	Design Diagrams			
94	3.43	Ground Floor Plan			
95	3.44	Second Floor Plan			
96	3.45	Building Sections			
97	3.46	Building Elevations			
99	3.47	Bath House - Cordova Street			
101	3.48	Bath House - Blood Alley Square			
102	3.49	Site Selection Strategy Adapted by author Base Map: http://vancouver.ca/vanMap			
105	3.50	Activity Diagrams			
106	3.51	Hierarchy of Public Space			
106	3.52	Circulation, Inhabitation and Views			
107	3.53	Building Sections			
108	3.54	Building Plans			

Note: All illustrations and photos by author unless otherwise noted

Glossary:

Gentrification: A process of neighbourhood upgrading usually associated with the declining stock of affordable housing and the displacement of low-income communities from where they have traditionally lived and accessed services. Where direct displacement of low-income residents is minimal, (due to new build as opposed to renovations) there remains an upgrading of social character in the neighbourhood; the public realm becomes transformed into a consumption space for the middle class, excluding traditional residents and decreasing the atmosphere of sociability.¹

Everyday Urbanism: An informal, bottom up approach towards urban design, with a goal of celebrating and building upon the ordinary life of a community. It seeks to observe and remain open to the diversity of cities, practicing inclusive, non-dogmatic urbanism. Design choices are to be shaped by individual circumstances and an understanding and acceptance of the life that takes place within a community, thus promoting a multiplicity of responses to specific times and places. Centralized within the in-between spaces of the city, it seeks to activate the everyday space of city life, allowing it to fulfill its social potential.²

Situational Tactics: The recognition that each person is constructing space and place with the act of daily life, allowing architecture and urban spaces to be shaped by the community.³ Responding to site specific conditions, such as the inhabitation and use of thresholds, the role of boundaries, and the effects of enclosure, the human condition becomes fundamental to the design process.

-
1. Walks, R. Alan, and Richard Maaranen. 2008. *The Timing, Patterning, & Forms of Gentrification & Neighbourhood Upgrading in Montreal, Toronto, & Vancouver, 1961 to 2001*. Toronto: University of Toronto, Center for Urban and Community Studies.
 2. Chase, John, Markgaret Crawford, and John Kaliski. 2008. *Everyday Urbanism*. Expanded Ed. New York: Monacelli Press.
 3. Chase, 2008, *Everyday Urbanism*.

Introduction

Accessible public space is essential for the development of community and the support of individuals. In marginalized neighbourhoods, the vulnerable depend heavily on developing social connections and ties within the community. The ability to form a strong social network, despite economic and civic isolation, is a phenomenon recognized in the casual public space of many low-income, inner-city neighbourhoods. However, as gentrification spreads through these areas, the existing qualities of tolerance and acceptance become threatened. This thesis will examine the role of architecture in supporting and enhancing the inclusive and supportive public realm of low income neighbourhoods.

Urbanists such as Jane Jacobs and Henri Lefebvre have established the importance of quality public space for the health of the city. Spontaneous social encounters, diversity and the priority of use over exchange are common values when discussing the benefits of the urban condition. This view stems from the contemporary understanding of public space as social space, a space that emphasizes the innumerable differences in individuals and their everyday patterns of inhabitation. It stands in contrast to the traditional view of public space as political space, which focuses on unity, equality and harmonious co-existence.

In the contemporary city, the traditional urban realm has been privatized and segregated through the prominence of private vehicles, suburbia and the shopping mall. Public/private partnerships have also established a new type of homogenous public space, where only certain activities and users are tolerated. This condition is viewed as a loss of public space

by many contemporary urbanists, giving rise to the concept of *Everyday Urbanism*, which focuses on informal everyday spaces as the site for the social urban condition.¹

Everyday Urbanism places emphasis on the human condition and multidimensional aspects of cities. It utilizes the term ‘everyday space’ to discuss the informal, banal space where every life takes place. This thesis will focus on ‘everyday space’ as the site for social support and community identity within marginalized neighbourhoods. As many of these spaces are fragile, undefined and unofficial, they are extremely susceptible to forces of gentrification. However, if appropriate design measures are taken, these neighbourhood spaces can become focal points, helping to anchor the existing low-income community in place and foster a dialogue between different neighbourhood groups, promoting a sense of ownership and belonging in the public realm.

The design of these fragile spaces is not accommodated by traditional planning practises of abstraction and design essentialism. The concept of ‘city design’, as described by John Kaliski in *Everyday Urbanism*, poses a new architectural approach to urban design. Contrary to top-down planning models, ‘city design’ is the “architecture of situation tactics in social space.”² Without specific design rules, ‘city design’ focuses on the everyday life of a place. The voices, activities, signs and symbols of daily life must saturate the entire planning and design process. The specifics of place as opposed to generalized design principles should drive the project.

In an effort to follow the guidelines of ‘city design’, this thesis develops three architectural interventions in direct response to an in-depth study of Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. This historically marginalized neighbourhood is a unique area with a strong sense of community and a rich public life that has formed out of its accepting and tolerant public realm. However, gentrification in the area is on the rise, and pressure for the city to ‘clean up’ the area is mounting. The influx of high income residents could result in a socially divided neighbourhood and increased tension over existing public space. This thesis will look to architecture as a means to limit the public realm from being redeveloped into a sanitized homogeneous zone, creating spaces that will remain inclusive to all residents of the area and promoting social exchange.

This thesis will begin with an exploration of the Downtown Eastside. Statistics, photo documentation, written work and personal experience will portray a unique, vibrant and valuable community. It is through the understanding of this community and its daily life that the image of a social public realm is developed. The second chapter will then explore the meanings and condition of public space, applying the concepts of ‘everyday space’³³ and Ray Oldenburg’s ‘third place’³⁴ to describe the formal and informal public realm of the area. It will also examine the effects of gentrification on the public realm, explaining why attention must be paid to the realities of redevelopment and the human dimension of the public realm.

The combined understanding of the condition of public space and the nature of the Downtown Eastside will inform three distinct design proposals, explored in the third chapter. Guided by the principles of ‘city design’ and four established design goals, each project will establish a relevant site of intervention, effective programming, and a design that focuses on inclusive public space. The first project proposes a dining pavilion located in Oppenheimer Park, improving the community gathering space at the center of the neighbourhood. The second project sits along the border of the area’s redevelopment, a community bath house is proposed to face onto Blood Alley Square, enhancing physical and visual connections and creating a welcoming space to all members of the area. The third project works with the city’s *Housing Plan for the Downtown Eastside*⁵, and develops a strategy for non-market housing which will incorporate informal pockets of public space throughout the Downtown Eastside. Each project will address the needs of the neighbourhood by developing ‘everyday spaces’ that are accessible to everyone, respecting the existing patterns of inhabitation and giving a voice to the community.

PORTRAIT OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD

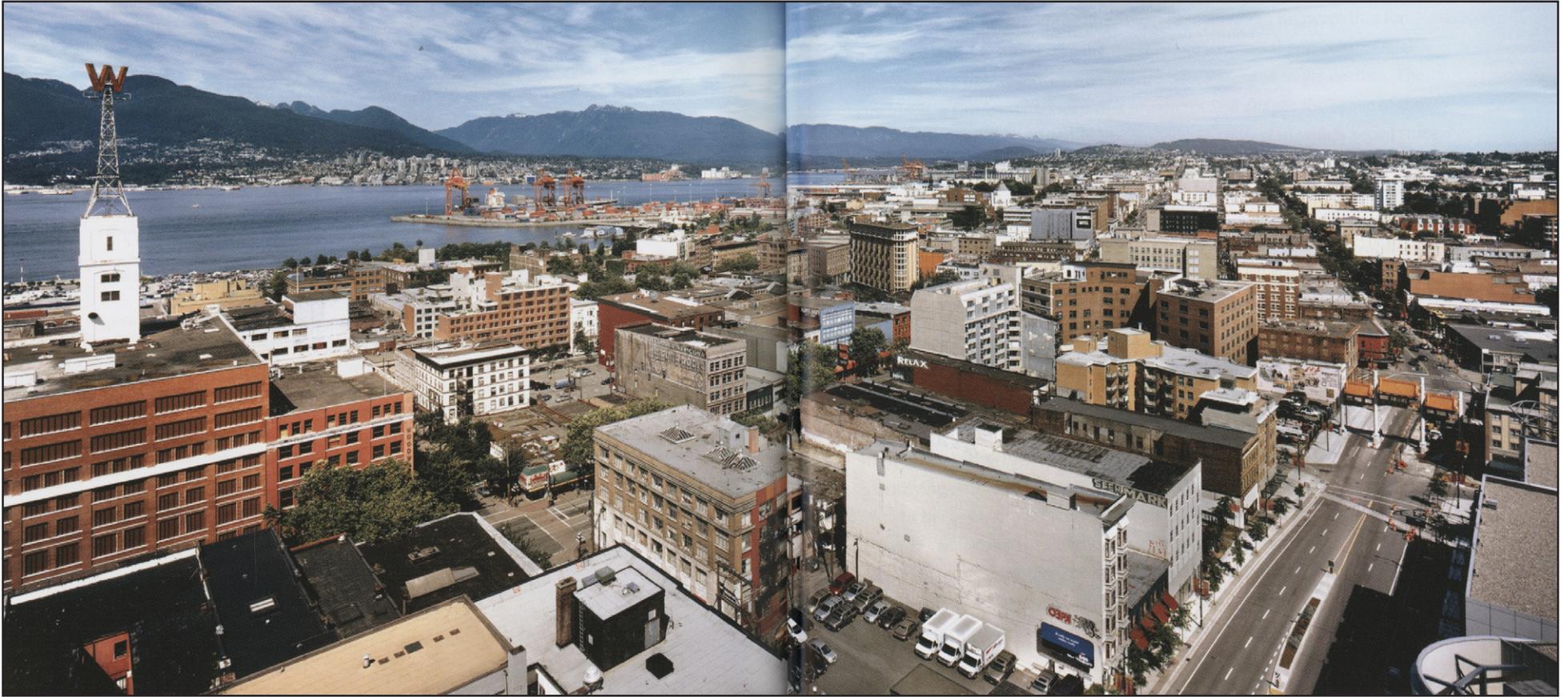


Fig. 1.1 The Downtown Eastside (2002), Stan Douglas

*“It is a community of people from many backgrounds and experiences who share the place as home in sometimes dire circumstances. It is a place of poems, plays, art, activism, solidarity, hope, and still, the resistance to be of its own mind and future.”*¹ -Libby Davies, Member of Parliament, Vancouver East

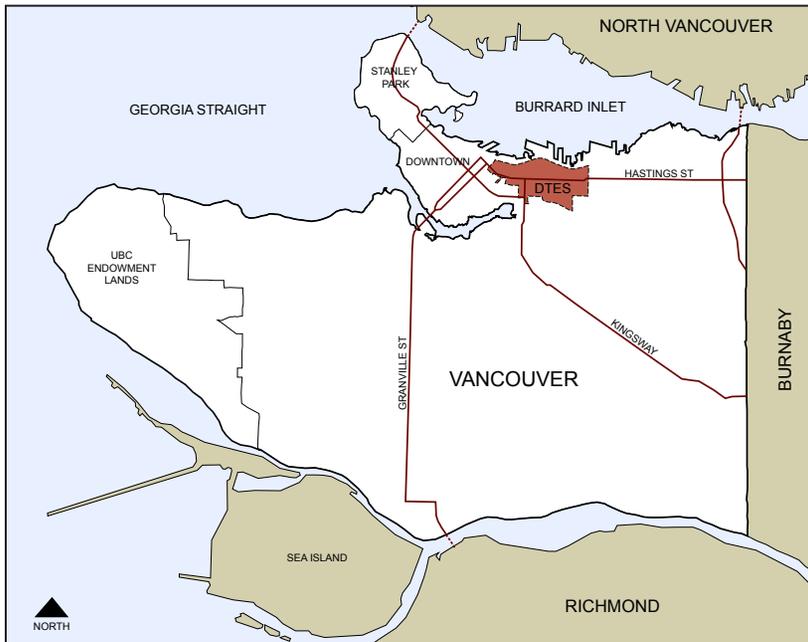


Fig. 1.2 Location map of the DTES

Neighbourhood Introduction

Located in the prosperous city of Vancouver, the Downtown Eastside is known as the poorest neighbourhood in Canada. Home to 18,000 residents, it is a densely populated low income community located directly East of the Downtown Core and sandwiched between rail lines.

The neighbourhood is made up of seven sub-areas: Gastown, Victory Square, Chinatown, Thornton Park, Oppenheimer, Strathcona, and the Industrial Area. These sub-areas are representative of the diversity of the neighbourhood, home to both the affluent and the homeless, First Nations and Chinese-Canadians, historic buildings and modern developments. Although known most for its volatile drug and street culture, the area is also home to artists, activists and families, leading to its most valuable characteristic: a remarkable sense of community, unmatched by most other Vancouver neighbourhoods.

The Downtown Eastside holds a century old stigma and has become socially segregated from the city. Too often depicted by shocking imagery or ambiguous statistics, the following portrait will attempt to see past these stereotypes and provide an unbiased view of this complex neighbourhood.

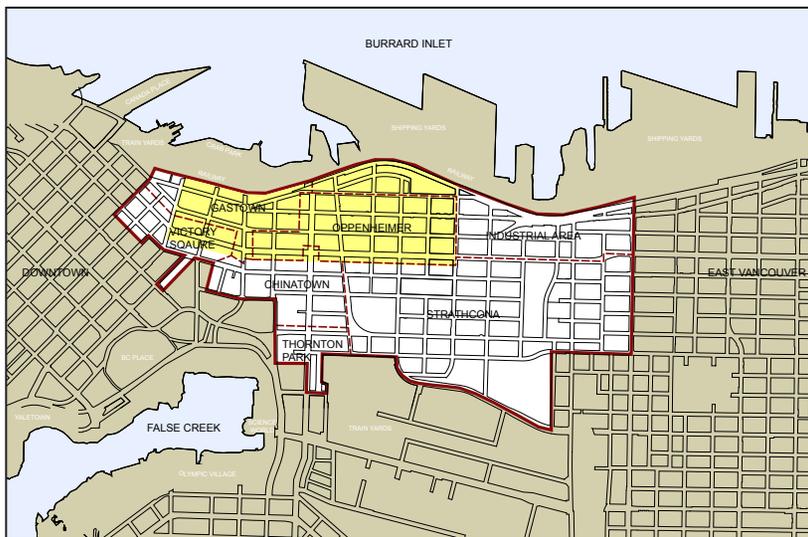


Fig. 1.3 DTES Sub-areas

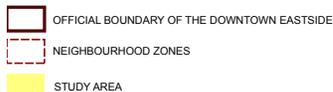




Fig 1.4 Vancouver, 1909

Development of the Downtown Eastside

The history of the Downtown Eastside is intrinsically linked to beginning of Vancouver. It was the original town site, formed by the opening of the Hasting Mill and the Terminus of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Vancouver's first banks, theatres, courthouse and City Hall were built along Hastings Street close to Victory Square. Surrounding this main strip were Chinatown and Japantown to the East, and the area known as 'Skid Road' stretching north to the waterfront mill. It wasn't until the 1970's that the area was named the Downtown Eastside.

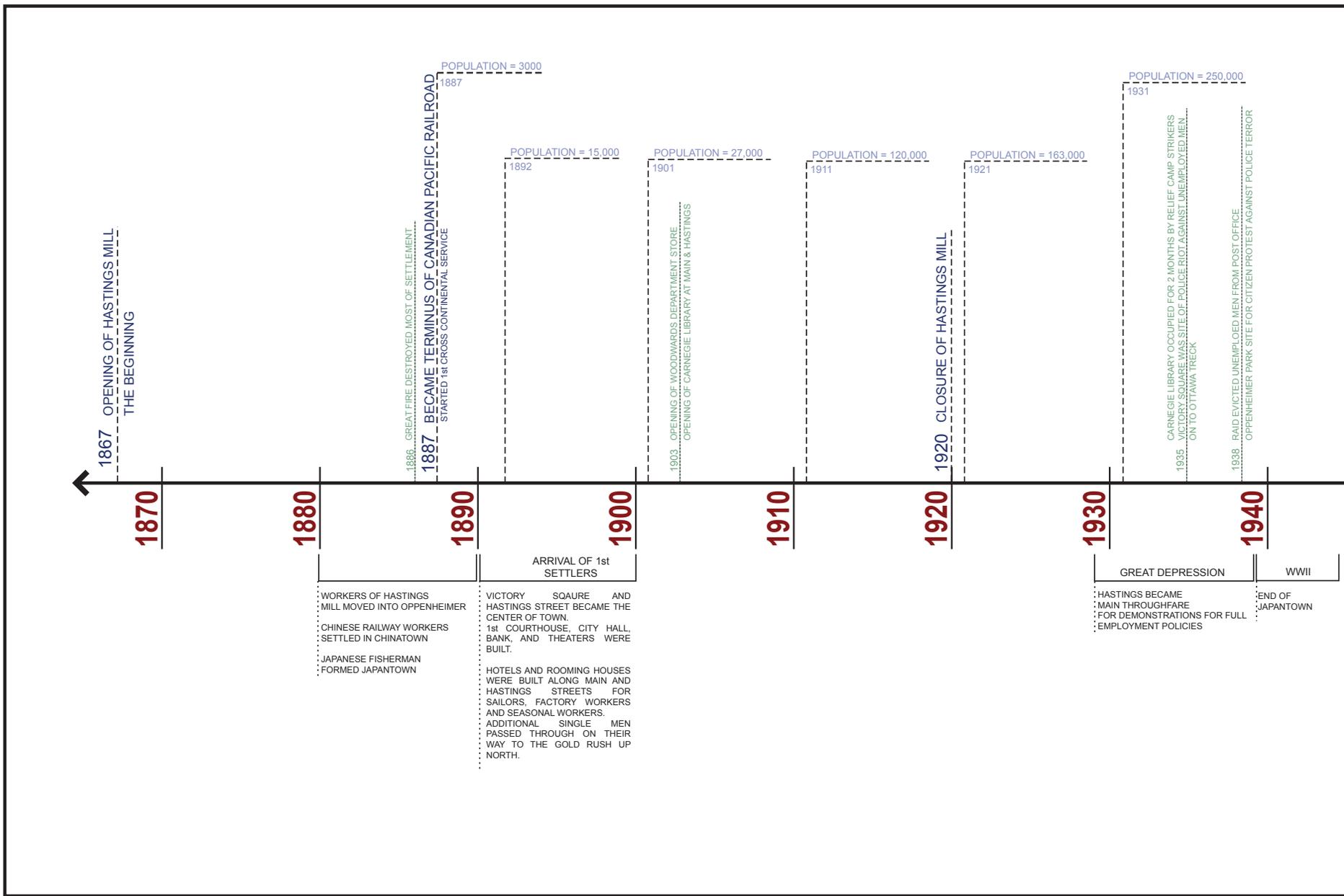
Bordering the waterfront industry 'Skid Road' was home to thousands of transient single men: fishermen, factory workers, seasonal workers and those on their way to the gold rush further north. Originally named after the roads used to transport logs to the mill, the term became synonymous with neighbourhoods characterized by the rooming houses, brothels, and drinking and gambling establishments that supported its hard-living, single male residents.

The deterioration of the Downtown Eastside began after the Second World War when the Downtown shifted West to Granville and Robson Streets, attracting many banks, shops and theatres. The train line along Pender Street closed and industry started to move out of the area, diminishing the use of migrant workers. However, the established drinking venues and rooming houses remained in the area and heroin, entering Canada through the nearby port, took up roots in the neighbourhood. By the mid 1960's property values were diminishing by as much as 50% and the deteriorating environment threatened to engulf Hastings Street².

In 1970, the Eaton's flagship store followed development trends and moved to Granville Street taking other retail shops with it.

The neighbourhood became the destination for the popular drug culture of the 60's and 70's, with local cafés and pharmacies known to sell illicit drugs. The 1980's brought an increase in the Heroin and Cocaine trade, and in the 1990's Crack made its way into the market, remaining the drug of choice to this day. The area was becoming economically and socially segregated from the rest and of the city, and in 1993 the Woodward's department store closed, virtually eliminated the remaining retail culture and leaving a block long vacancy along Hastings Street. Increasing the vacancy rate, the city's attempt to clean up the area led to a massive closure of "problem premises" along Hastings Street, forcing the drug trade onto the streets. These measures coincided with the moral panic over HIV in the mid 90's when, responding to the development pressures in other areas of the city, authorities pushed most of the city's drug and sex trade into the area.

While focus is often placed on the increase in visible drug and crime rates, there have also been important developments in community activism. The formation of the Downtown Eastside Residents Association and the recognition of the neighbourhood as a functioning low income community began in the 1970's. Since this time local organizations have been representing the rights of the residents and fighting to improve conditions in the Downtown Eastside.



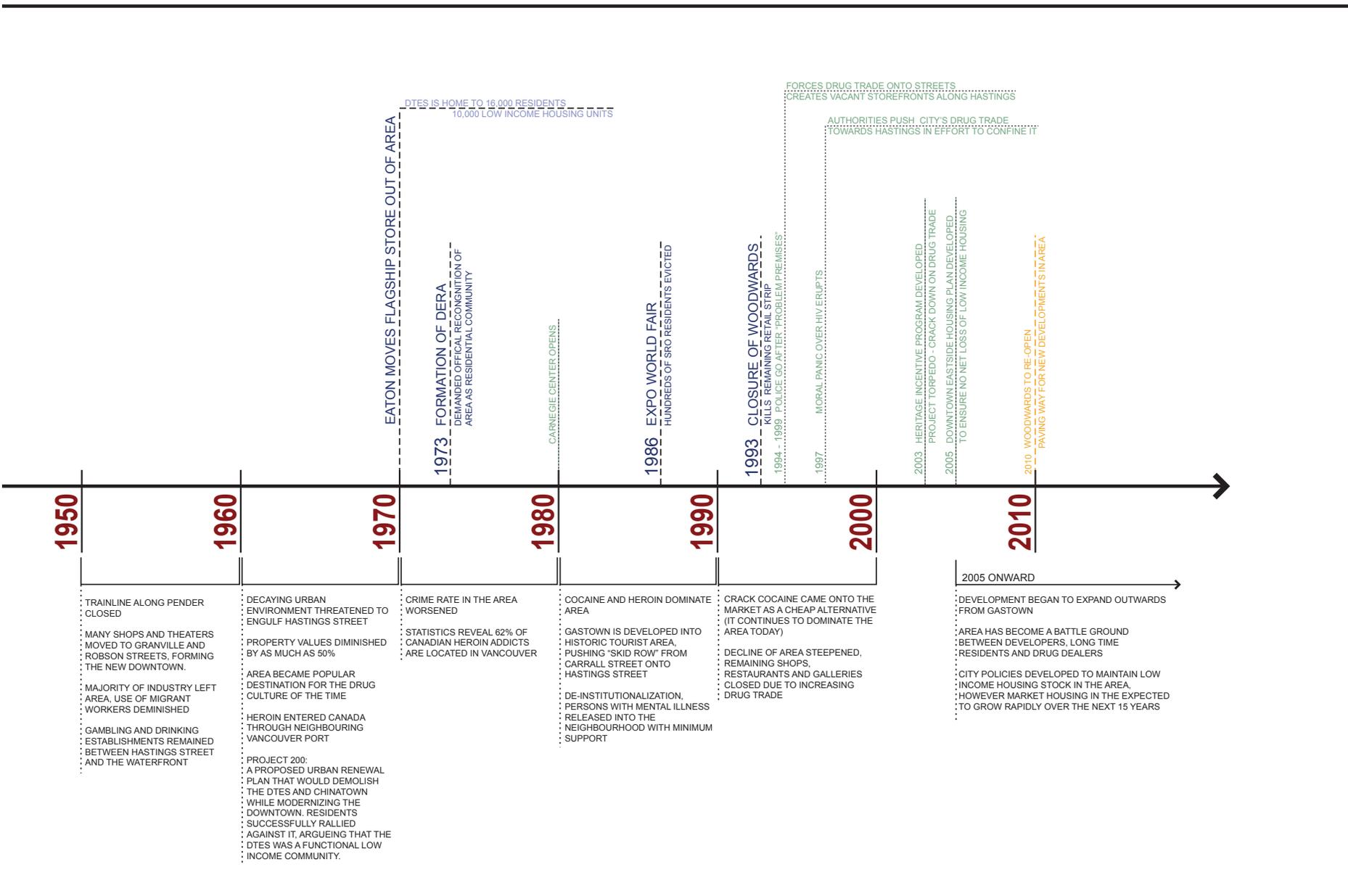


Fig. 1.5 DTES Timeline

KEN PARTRIDGE, 34
AND HIS TWO DOGS GAGE AND
JERSEY COW. ORIGINALLY FROM
TORONTO HE WORKS
CONSTRUCTION DURING THE
SUMMER MONTHS



THOMAS KARL BENTHAM, 39
FROM THE SUNSHINE COAST. USED
TO BE A ROOFER, LOGGER AND
SHAKE CUTTER, BEFORE AN
ACCIDENT PUT HIM IN A WHEELCHAIR
FOR A YEAR.



ROBERT SHARP, 59
ORIGINALLY FROM THUNDER BAY,
HAS LIVED IN GASTOWN FOR
20 YEARS.



SUSANNAH ROBERTS, 19
FROM EDMONTON.
CAME TO VANCOUVER IN SEARCH
OF A FREE TATOO.
WANTS TO FINISH SCHOOL. .



RANDY WAKELIN, 43
BORN IN SASKATCHEWAN, BUT
LIVED IN BC SINCE HE WAS 13.
HAS ONE SON.



GEORGINA 'GINA'
HAS HIV AND HEP C
EATS MANY MEALS AT
THE POT LUCK CAFE



JOANNE
"RUNNING MIDNIGHT WOLF"
AND FIANCEE MELVIN "RAVEN",
JOANNE HAS ONE DUAGHTER



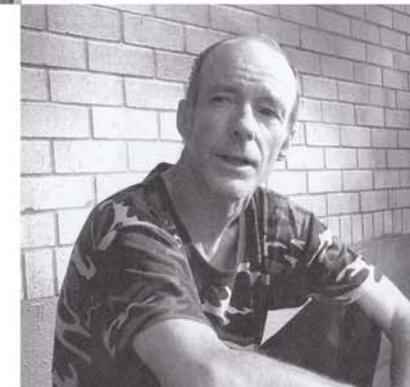
CHRIS WOODCOCK
WOULD LIKE TO LIVE
SOMEWHERE WHERE HE
CAN PLAY GOLF EVERYDAY



TIMOTHY DOUGLAS KNAPP, 28
BORN IN SURREY, GREW UP IN SANTA
BARBARA,
SPENDS MUCH OF HIS LIFE TRAVELING
NORTH AMERICA BY HOPPPING TRAINS.



CARLA, 31
FROM RED DEER, ALBERTA
OKEENE, FIRST NATIONS
OFTEN SLEEPS ON THE BEACH.



People

The Downtown Eastside is a densely populated community comprised of 18,000 people.³ The area has traditionally been home to many low income groups including seniors, seasonal workers and the disadvantaged. The number of residents has remained stable over time, however their profile has changed. Due to the growing drug culture of the last 30 years, older resource-based workers have been replaced by younger people with mental issues, and where alcohol was once dominant, hard drugs are now most common among those with substance abuse issues.

The average resident in the DTES can be described as a Caucasian male, between 40-60, single, low income, with a high risk of substance abuse and/or mental illness. However, while this profile may describe much of the population, it is not inclusive. The area contains people from many ethnic backgrounds including Aboriginals, Chinese, Japanese, South and Southeast Asian, French Canadian, Latin American, Arab and African. There are families and couples, close friends and relatives, seniors, children and youth. And while statistics show that drug use and mental illness is high in the area, the majority of people in the neighbourhood are simply living on a low income.

Population Profile:

The population is generally older than city as a whole, and has a much larger male population. Most people are single, and live alone, with far fewer families than the rest of Vancouver.

The average income is much lower here compared to Vancouver; 1/3 of the population is receiving social assistance and the unemployment rate is twice that of Vancouver as a whole.

Health issues are another major concern in the area, life expectancy for men is only 66 (10 years less than average) and 78 for women (5 years less than average). The most common cause of death is due to alcohol and drug abuse, and in 2005 it was estimated that of the 16,000 residents there were 4,700 injection drug users living in the area (29% of the population). This is closely linked to the high rate of HIV, which was 38 times the provincial average in 2001.⁴

Mental health issues in the area have continued to rise since deinstitutionalization in the 1980's, and they are often diagnosed in conjunction with substance abuse, coining such terms as dual or multiple diagnosis. In 2005, the DTES made up 20% of the mental health cases in Vancouver (compared to 3% of the total population), and this number was rising.⁵

Although the homeless are not included in Canadian Census Polls; they are also a significant presence in the area. The 2008 Homeless Count indicates there were at least 1,547 homeless in the city of Vancouver.⁶ And although these people were found throughout the city, it is evident that the majority reside in or close to the Downtown Eastside.

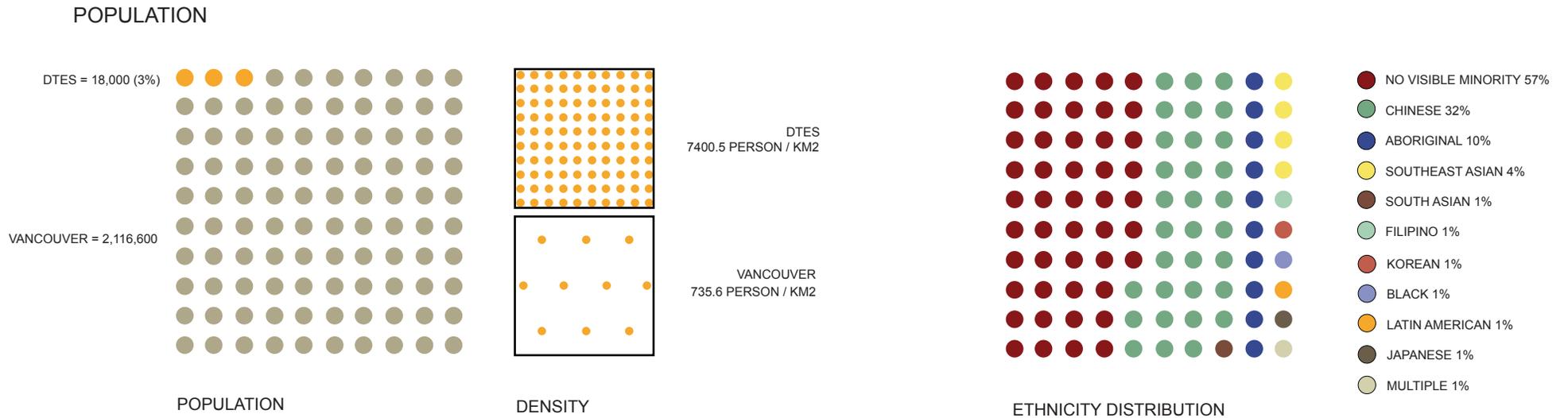


Fig. 1.7 DTES Population

Source:
 Population and Demographic Data from the 2006 Canada Census
 Health Data from the 2005 Housing Plan for the Downtown Eastside

Note: The DTES totals include the Strathcona sub-area, however this area's population more closely resemble the city average. Results for the study area are therefore more extreme than those represented here.

DEMOGRAPHICS

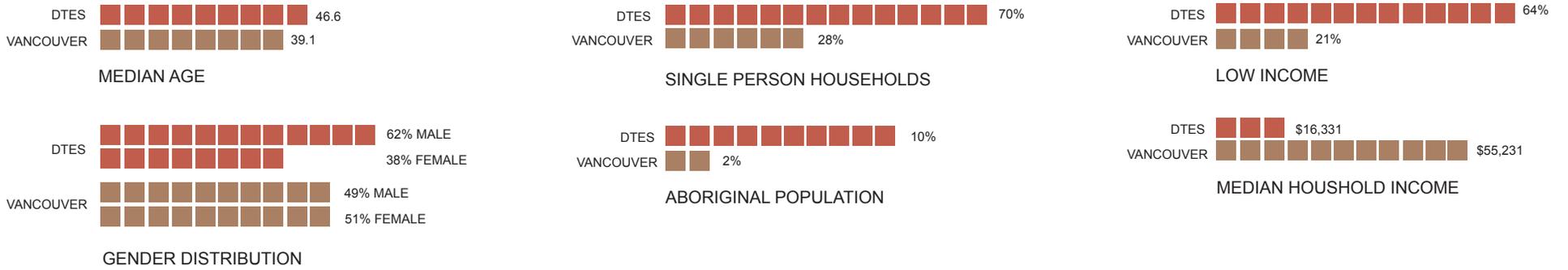


Fig. 1.8 DTES Demographics

HEALTH ISSUES

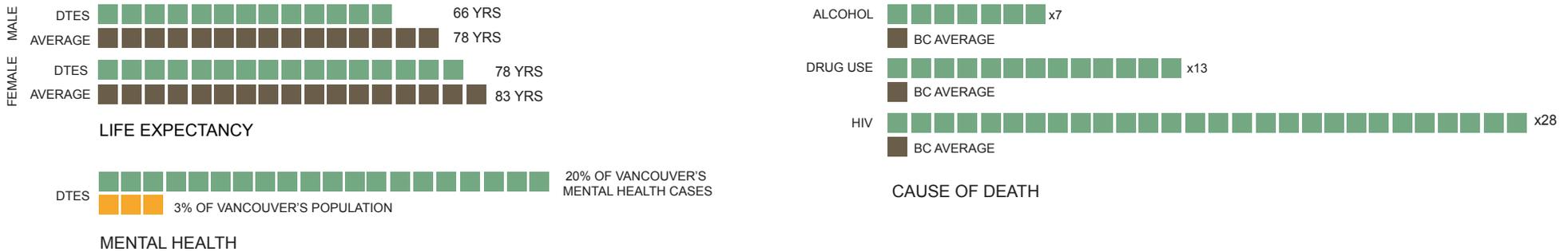
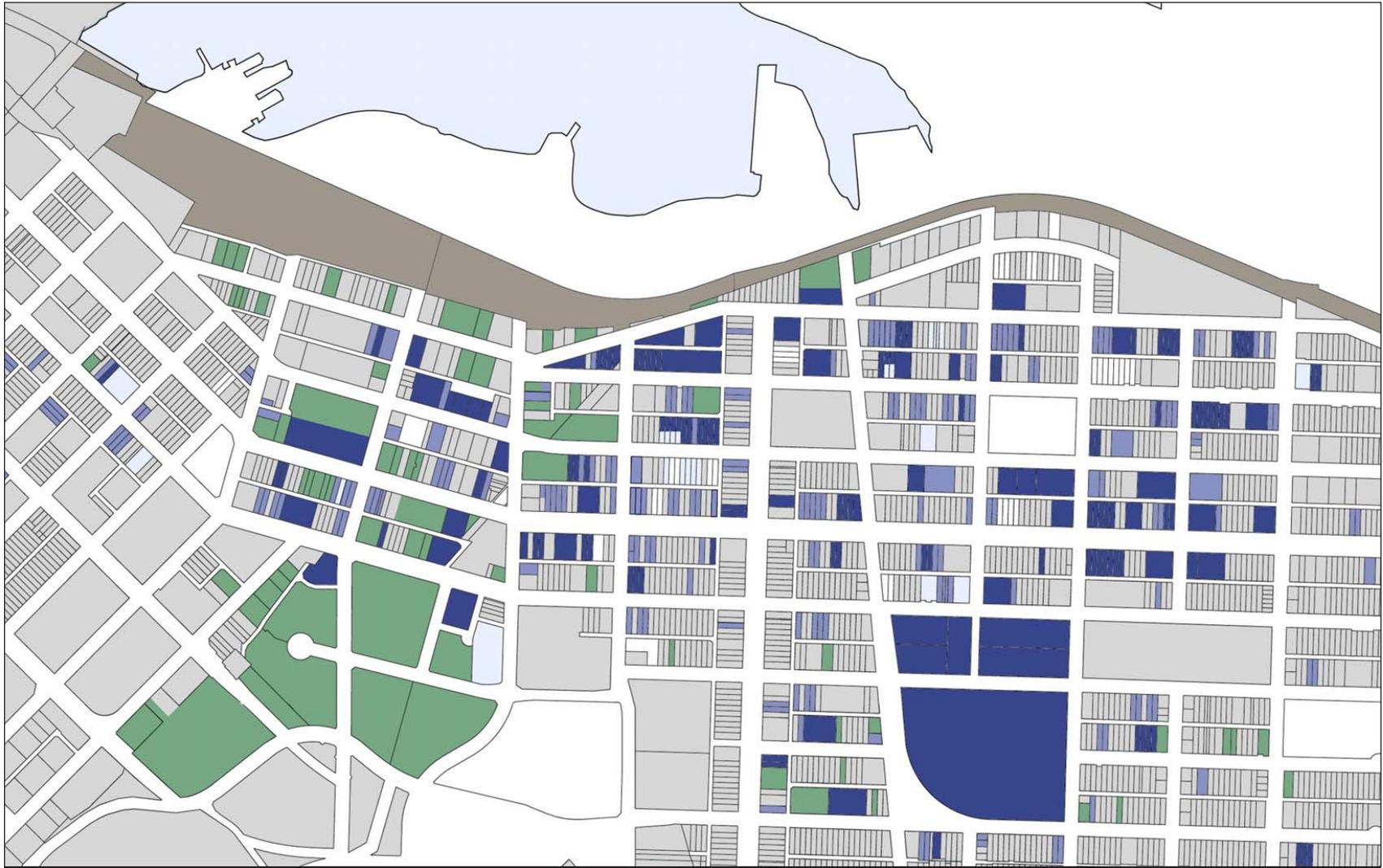


Fig. 1.9 DTES Health Data



- NON MARKET HOUSING
- SRO
- SNRF
- MARKET HOUSING BUILT 1994-PRESENT

Fig. 1.10 DTES Housing Map

Housing

Housing in the Downtown Eastside has been a public concern for over 50 years, and increasing the quality and quantity of affordable housing is of utmost importance. Of the current 13,000 units in the area, approximately 10,000 are designated low income.⁷

The city of Vancouver classifies all housing in the following categories; Single Room Occupancy (SRO), Non-Market Housing, Market Housing, and Special Needs Residential Facilities (SNRFs). (Definitions and descriptions of these are located in the Appendix.) In the DTES most buildings classified as SROs are residential hotels or rooming houses built before the 1st World War. Current conditions of these buildings are substandard; rodents, insects, windowless rooms and broken bathrooms are all common problems, while crime, drugs, overcrowding and dishonest landlords contribute to these issues. These units are the most basic, most affordable shelter provided by the market, and are often the last option before homelessness.

Non-market housing, also known as social housing, is reserved for those who cannot afford market rents, and are generally newer buildings in reasonable condition. They are often multi-family apartment buildings with self contained units, each with private cooking facilities and full bathrooms. Both supportive housing, and co-op housing is included in non-market housing.



Single Room Occupancy Hotel



Single Room Occupancy Hotel



Single Room Occupancy Hotel



Jim Green Residence (supportive housing facility and home of the Lookout Society)



Bridge Housing for Women (home of DTES Women's Center and includes emergency housing for women)

Fig. 1.11 Images of DTES Housing



*this map may not represent all the services in the area

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|  COMMUNITY SERVICES | 1 - CARNEGIE COMMUNITY CENTER | 4 - LOOKOUT EMERGENCY AID SOCIETY |
|  CHILD CARE + EDUCATION | 2 - DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN'S CENTER | 5 - SAFE INJECTION SITE |
|  FREE/LOW COST FOOD | 3 - LIFE SKILLS CENTER | |

Fig. 1.12 DTES Services Map

Services

The Downtown Eastside has a large quantity of social services and support to assist its unique population. Many of the City's Health and Social Services are located in the area, as well as large variety of free and low cost meal locations. There are numerous meeting places and community centers, child care facilities, and community kitchens. Two major learning centers are located in the Downtown Eastside, as well as many other private business and trade schools. There are also 2 food box depots and 3 community gardens servicing the area. (A list of these facilities is located in the appendix.)

Significant Neighbourhood Facilities:

(1) Carnegie Community Center:

Open since 1980, the Carnegie Centre provides a range of social, recreational and educational programs. It is often described as the community's living room, a place where people can come to participate in programs or to simply relax and socialize with others. It produces a neighbourhood newsletter, hosts town hall meetings and contains the only Vancouver Public Library not requiring a proof of address.

(2) Downtown Eastside Women's Center:

The centre provides for basic needs and works towards positive change for women and children in the DTES. Its services include advocacy, workshops, and crisis intervention. The drop-in centre offers free clothing, showers, and programmed activities. It also provides a mental health and HIV program.

(3) Life Skills Center:

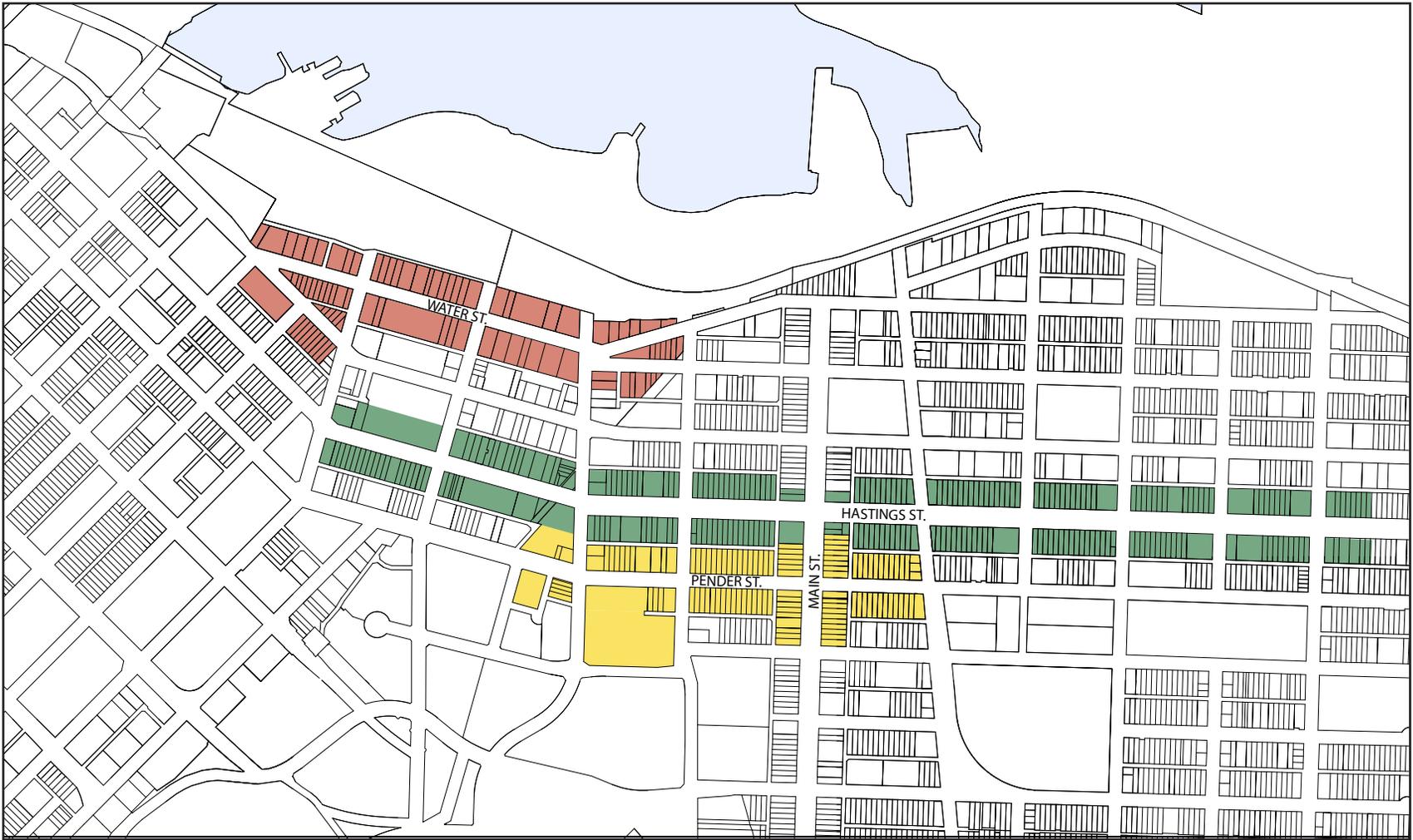
Offers peer counselling, life skills development, prevocational skills training, and literacy-rich programming, as well as educational classes, services, and support to street-involved adults with multiple barriers. Additional services include free phone, internet, showers, laundry, meals and a community kitchen.

(4) Lookout Emergency Aid Society:

The organization provides services to adults with problems such as mental illness, mental or physical disabilities, medical problems, social dysfunctions, legal concerns, and/or substance abuse. Their resources include emergency shelters, support and life skills programs, and supportive and transitional housing facilities.

(5) Safe Injection Site:

Opened in 2003, it is the first legal safe injection facility in North America. Providing a clean, safe environment where users can inject their own drugs under the supervision of clinical staff. Nurses and counsellors provide access and referrals to addiction treatment services, and other health care.



- GASTOWN
- HASTINGS
- CHINATOWN

Fig. 1.13 Map of Commercial Districts



Fig. 1.14 Water Street, Gastown.



Fig 1.15 Pender Street, Chinatown

Business

There are three main commercial areas in the Downtown Eastside; Gastown, Chinatown and Hastings Street. While physically very close to each other, these three districts have unique atmospheres and serve very different markets.

Gastown:

Originally developed along Water Street as a tourist destination in the 1980's, Gastown has since developed into a trendy inner city neighbourhood. High end loft condominiums, boutiques and restaurants have all settled in the area along with popular nightclubs and chain coffee shops. Above the ground level retail lofts, offices and other services have moved in. The neighbourhood surrounding Gastown has since become a blend between this stylish high end district and its gritty unfrequented surroundings, leading to low budget bars, clubs and vintage clothing shops attracting a younger crowd.

Chinatown:

Running along Pender Street and overflowing onto Main Street, historic Chinatown remains a vital part of the Downtown Eastside. Dating back to Vancouver's beginning, Chinatown was once home to both working men and wealthier immigrant families. Today, most incoming Chinese immigrants move to Vancouver's neighbouring cities. However Chinatown remains a distinctive market; providing Chinese goods and services, as well as being an important tourist destination.



In 2007 the vacancy rate along Hastings St. from Richard to Gore was 29%, the worst being from Cambie to Abbott at 57%. Vancouver's average vacancy rate is 10%, with popular retail streets as high as 2%.

note: the rate is calculated as a percentage of the linear distance of storefrontage

Fig. 1.16 Hastings Corridor Vacancy Rate (2007)



Hastings Street:

Hastings is the main commercial and transportation corridor running through the Downtown Eastside. Once the center of town and a major retail destination, many business moved West in the 50's and 60s to the new downtown core. The closure of Woodward's in 1993 confirmed the end of this once thriving retail street. From 1994-1999 the city cracked down on drug trafficking in the area, resulting in the closure of many businesses further intensifying the vacancy rate.

Hastings Street has never recovered from this period and vacancy rates remain high. Drug trafficking, drug use and prostitution are the activities most commonly associated with Hastings Street; the corner of Main and Hastings being what many describe as the epicentre of the area's drug trade.

Most legal businesses along Hastings Street service the local population: convenience stores, check cashing stores, pawn shops, pizza parlours, bars and pharmacies make up the majority of occupied storefronts. Many local organizations and community services are also located along Hastings, although they are difficult to spot.

In 2010 Woodward's will re-open as a mixed use development incorporating; mixed-income residential, the SFU School for Contemporary Art, and commercial space. This substantial development will re-animate the 100 block of West Hastings Street.

Fig. 1.17 View down Hastings Street





Fig. 1.18 Every Building on 100 West Hastings, Stan Douglas (2001)



- CULTURAL CENTERS
GALLERIES, THEATERS
- ARTIST WORKSPACE + RESIDENCES

ANNUAL CULTURAL EVENTS AND FESTIVALS:

- a WINTER SOLSTICE LATERN FESTIVAL
- b POWELL STREET FESTIVAL
- c CHINESE NEW YEAR PARADE
- d KID'S ARTSWIRL
- e CHINATOWN ARTS AND CULTURE DAY
- EASTSIDE CULTURE CRAWL
- HEART OF THE CITY FESTIVAL

*this map may not represent all the cultural amenities in the area

Fig. 1.19 Cultural Amenities and Events



Fig. 1.20 Powell Street Festival



Fig. 1.21 Powell Street Festival



Fig. 1.22 Chinese New Year Parade

Culture

The diverse population coupled with a high number of artists in the area has led to an extremely rich cultural neighbourhood. Chinese, First Nations, Japanese, Artist and musicians are among the groups that hold celebrations and events each year, including: the Powell Street Festival, Chinese New Year, Winter Solstice Lantern Festival, Chinatown Arts and Culture Day, the Heart of the City Festival, the Eastside Culture Crawl, and the Chinatown Night Market. These large annual events bring people into the neighbourhood from across the city and serve as a sense of pride for local residents.

There is a supply of artist live/work units in the area, with a portion of these units reserved for low-moderate income artists. In 2005 there were 245 official artist live/work units located in 6 buildings; however there are also many smaller residences used this way.⁸ The 2006 Canada Census reports that occupations in art/culture/recreation in the DTES makes up 9% of the labour force compared to 4% for the rest of Vancouver⁹, this number does not represent the many unemployed or homeless artists living in the area.

9-11 MEDIA BASH!!

Presented by the Olympic Resistance Network's Media Committee

FRIDAY SEPT. 11 8:00PM
THE CLAY DRIVE
SUGGESTED DONATION: \$15-10

FILMS!
AN POQUITO DE TANTA VERDAD
MUSIC!
RESIST 2010
ALEX RAMBALD WITH MARK FENNER
DJ USHNEEDLS

PLUS FOOD REFRESHMENTS AND MORE!
 100% OF PROFITS GO TO THE 9-11 FOUNDATION

FEATURING GUESTS ACCORD FEATURING LIVE PERFORM BY:

ANALOG BEAT SERVICE
SUN WIZARD APE
MARK MAKEUP
HAROLD DONNELLY
WHEEL RECORDS
THURS. AUG. 13, 09

FREE OUTDOOR FOOD ON GARDEN STREET MARKET!
 10% TO SUPPORT LIVE TO GIVE MUSIC!

Bekoh Dear Friends

the Listening Jar

Magical Musical Journey From the Streets of the World

Presented by **THE MUSICAL FLOWER POT**
 in partnership with **PIVOT**

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26th
UNTIL SUNDAY, MARCH 1st
DOORS 7PM. SHOW AT 8PM
 followed by a Dance Party and Social

Russian Hall, 600 Groulx Ave. in Strathcona

Advance Tickets \$10 (online at WWW.DUSTYFLOWER.POV.ORG)
 out of Door/Leau. (615 E Hastings)
 \$20-\$30 sliding scale at the door

ONE PERFORMANCE BY BOKANOUT
 SATURDAY FEBRUARY 28th
 7:30pm - 9:30pm at OCEAN

RESIST 2010

POLICE REPRESSION
STOLEN NATIVE LAND
homelessness
HUGE PUBLIC DEBT
environmental destruction.

MISSING WOMEN

THE POSSIBLE
 MUSIC AND ART SHOW

TIME DATE: SUNDAY, AUG. 24TH 1-9PM
PLACE: CHAPEL ARTS VANCOUVER

ARTISTS: Min Foster, Dean HOOK, Dan Bateock, Isaac Abbey, Carver, Zeddy, Andrew Burt

East Vancouver Garden Tour
 Sun., June 10 am - 4 pm
 Still only \$10

try new things
 make an art book
 be yourself

Tiny School of Art

have fun

a free child and parent workshop series

8 Saturdays running from August 8th through to September 26th
 10am to 12pm snack included

located at EWMA studio: 54 East Cordova, Vancouver
www.tinyschool.com

contact 778-828-8359 or tinyschoolofart@hotmail.com to join

POW OLYMPICS

2009

Presented by **PIVOT**

POWELL STREET FESTIVAL

31st Annual

August 4 & 5, 2007
 11:30 am - 7:00 pm (free!)

Activities include: DANCE, YOGA, MEDITATION, MARIJUANA, MATHS, ARTS, TAIKO, MUSIC, TEA, HOP, HOP, KIDZ

oppenheimer park - Ernie Ball arts centre

HUNGER MARCH!

SUNDAY, FEB. 17TH
 2PM
 VICTORY SQUARE (HASTINGS AND CAMBIE)

RESISTANCE MARCH TO SOUP KITCHEN AT OLYMPIC CLOCK!

Anti-Poverty Committee

Vancouver Chinatown Night Market

Booth rentals are available

Costs & Hours: Enquiry: 604-682-8888

We're All In This Together

April 19-29, 2007
 8pm Russian Hall

MISSING WOMEN TASK FORCE

MISSING WOMEN TASK FORCE

1-877-412-3377

JUSTICE SPQR

Free rock in the park

August 29, 2009 2pm - 8pm
 Strathcona Park (Plow & Waverley)

the missing women not forgotten

November 21+22+23
 Friday, Saturday + Sunday

INDIGENOUS CITY

MULTIMEDIA EVENT WITH DEBRA SPARRO, KIMBLE TODD, JEFF THORLES

U B C ROBSON SQUARE THEATRE
 800 ROBSON ST. 6:00PM

A WOMAN'S PLACE IS EVERYWHERE!

A VISUAL PRESENTATION & WORKSHOP

by FAVIANNA RODRIGUEZ

12th Annual Eastside Culture Crawl 2008

The eastside culture crawl is an annual 3-day event that involves artists from Vancouver's Eastside in an area bounded by Main St., 1st Ave., Commercial Drive, and the Waterfront.

World class living?

We can do better than this.

Eastside Stories

The People. The Voices.

FRIDAY JUNE 19 - SUNDAY JUNE 21 2009

SHUTDOWN COUNTDOWN 2010

Monday March 12, 2007
 5:15 PM @ City Hall (12th & Cambie)

Carnegie Radio Plays

Theatre in the Raw
 Ukrainian Hall, 805 East Pender
 October 9, 2004 @ 8:00pm

HOMES NOW!

Sunday, October 14th
 2pm Victory Square - Cambie and Hastings

LESS TALK. MORE SQUATS!

FRANK PAUL MEMORIAL RALLY

WED DEC 6 3 PM
 177 E. 2ND AVE. ALLEY BEHIND VANCOUVER DETOX

POWELL STREET FESTIVAL

30th Anniversary

August 3 & 4, 2008
 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Heart of the City Festival

THE 4th ANNUAL 2007 DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE

Character

The Downtown Eastside has been known as a troubled area since its beginnings. Alcohol, drugs, crime, prostitution, poverty and sickness are all affiliated with area, and terms such as urban ghetto and slum are often used to describe it. However, the image magnified by the media is only one side of the neighbourhood. Many positive qualities also exist in the Downtown Eastside, most predominantly the strong sense of community that has developed to eclipse most other Vancouver neighbourhoods.

Stigma of the Downtown Eastside:

Although the stigma attached to this area can be traced back through most of the 20th century, the extreme views known today are relatively new. The 1980's brought escalating crisis to the area, beginning with Expo '86 which caused hundreds of tenants to be evicted from SROs, as well as a city wide effort to funnel the drug and sex trade onto Hastings Street. Finally the closure of Woodward's department eliminated the need for Vancouverites to visit the area. Shortly after, panic over HIV and injection drug use erupted and took aim at the Downtown Eastside as the source of the problem. The idea of HIV and drug use was automatically linked to poverty, mental illness and homelessness, causing the low income residents and their neighbourhood to be seen as a threat to the rest of the city.¹⁰

Opposite page:
Fig. 1.23 Posters for events and rallies in the DTES

The media has since exploited the area for sensational headlines, bringing the Downtown Eastside into international view by focusing on shocking images of activities in the area. While the neighbourhood does struggle with issues of drug use, poverty, and illness, these factors are only some of its characteristics and do not define it.

Positive Side of the Downtown Eastside:

What the media fails to portray about the Downtown Eastside are the murals, roof gardens, parks, flower boxes, churches, missions, and the many local organizations that support the neighbourhood. The area is a home to people from all backgrounds, experiences and ambitions, most of which are not drug addicts or criminals. Initially arriving in the neighbourhood in search of affordable housing and social services, or escaping a difficult past, many people soon find that they now belong to a community and are part of a family. For those fighting to cope with their personal lives this support and acceptance is paramount to their survival. Through the common experience of suffering, struggle and triumph, a strong community has formed; a community that is open and accepting to anyone, one that does not judge or ignore those facing difficulty, but comes together in support of those who need it the most.

The community is full of activism - fighting for the rights of its residents, celebration – embracing the talents and culture of its people, and compassion – including everyone who calls the neighbourhood home.



Fig. 1.24

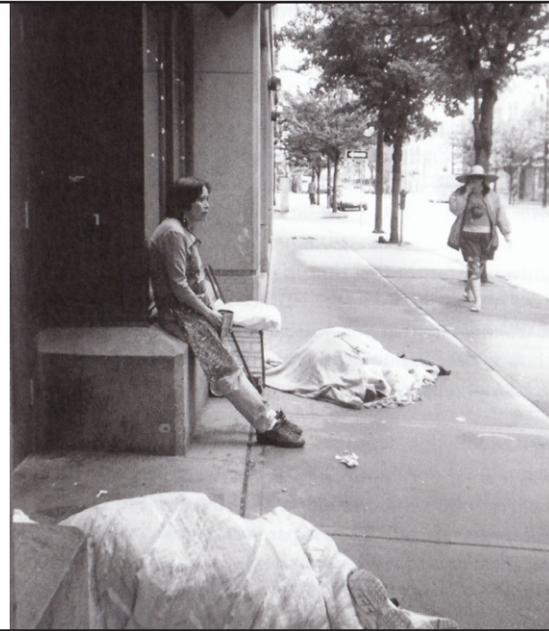


Fig. 1.25



Fig. 1.26

“A haven for the rejects of society like the alcoholic, addict and sex deviate who cannot cope with the demands and frustrations of general society, but...can function within their own group...not just a geographical accident, but a hard core of human failure.”¹¹ - 1996

“A disease-ridden enclave of filth and desolation,” resulting from “an influx of new denizens – career criminals whose only solace is prolific intravenous drug use where the price is humanity and their dignity.”¹² – Police Constable, 1998

“Vancouver’s worst neighbourhood...probably Canada’s worst neighbourhood.”¹³ – Vancouver Sun, 1998



Fig. 1.27



Fig. 1.28

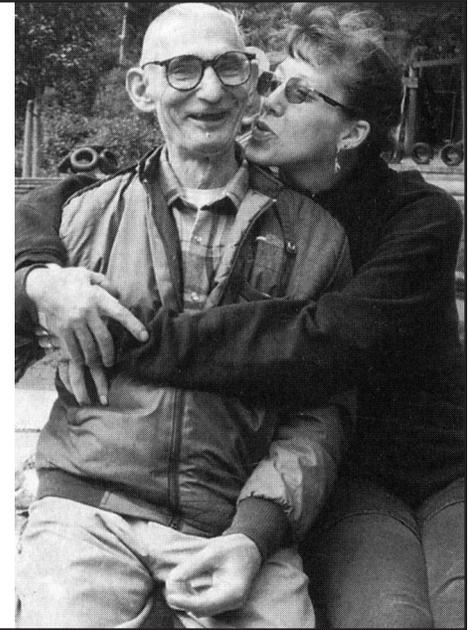
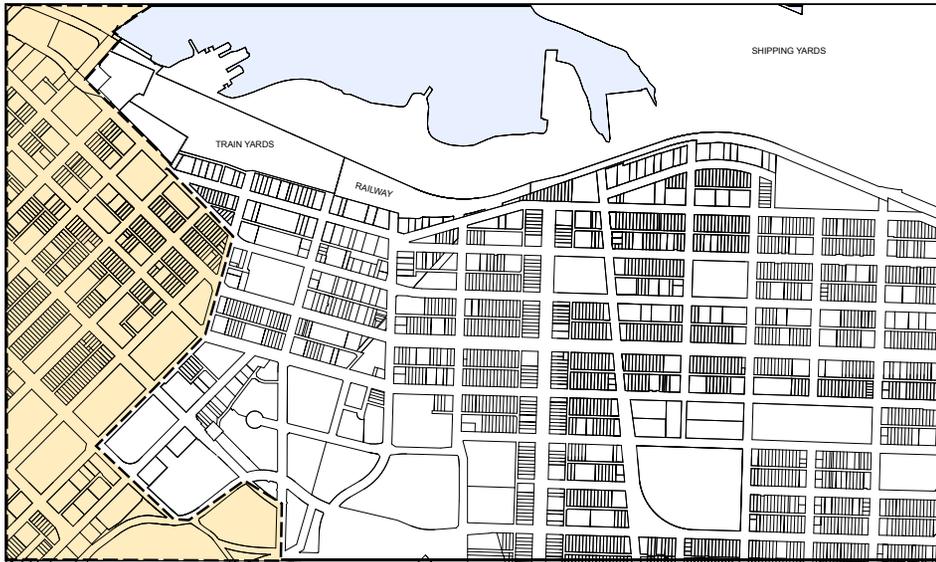


Fig. 1.29

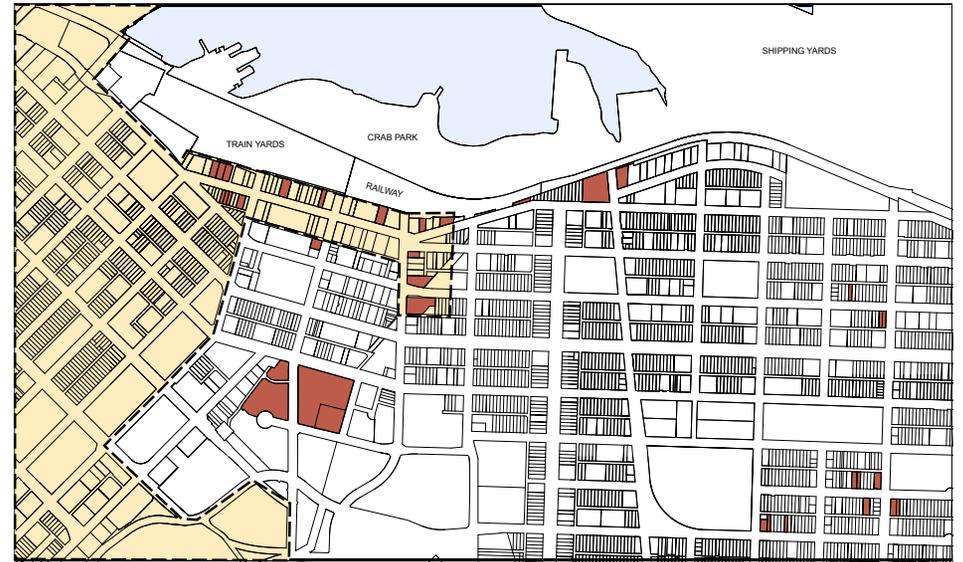
“People who live in this fragile yet highly resilient community have endured much and have given much. From their experience comes the truest sense of community that you will ever encounter.”¹⁴ – Member of Parliament, Vancouver East, 2008

“That’s what people say about the Downtown Eastside – it’s one big community and everybody is always helping each other out. It’s not like anywhere else in Vancouver.”¹⁵
– DTES Resident

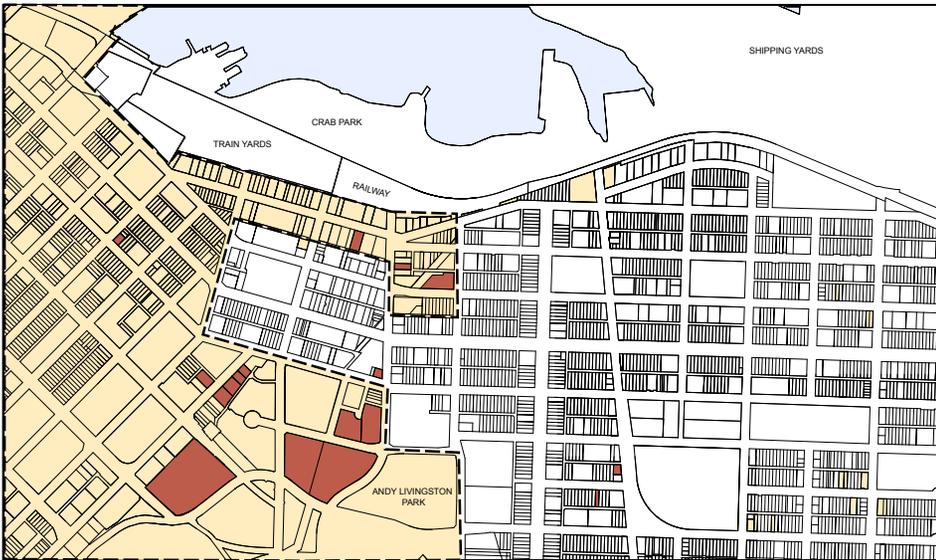
“Community is important down here and believe it or not people come here to feel safe. To fit in. That baffles me because it’s the Downtown Eastside. Worst drug place in B.C. But here you never pretend to be something that you aren’t and anyone can fit in.”¹⁶ – DTES Resident



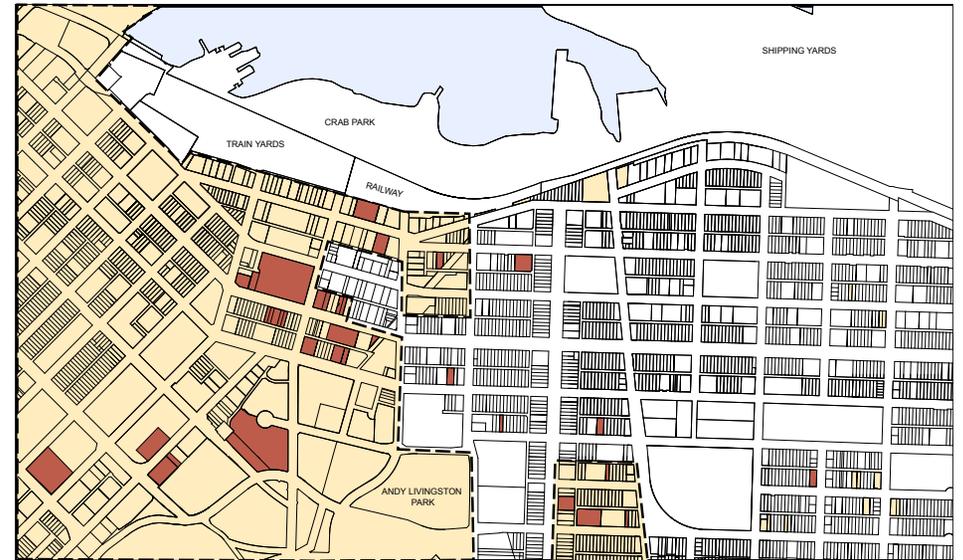
LINE OF DEVELOPMENT BEFORE 1995



DEVELOPMENTS COMPLETED FROM 1995-2006



DEVELOPMENTS COMPLETED 2006-2008



DEVELOPMENTS APPROVED OR UNDER CONSTRUCTION AS OF 2009

Fig 1.30 Map of Development in the DTES



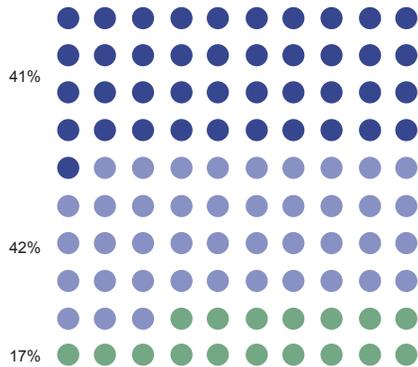
Fig. 1.31 Hunt & Gather, 225 Carrall Street
One of the first fashion boutiques to open in the area

Gentrification

Gentrification, a term coined in London in the early 1960's, is an urban phenomenon associated with declining stocks of affordable housing and the displacement of low income communities. It is a form of neighbourhood upgrading. While it can be positive, improving building quality, reducing crime and stabilizing property values, these benefits are transferred to the new upper class residents and not enjoyed by those who traditionally lived in the area.

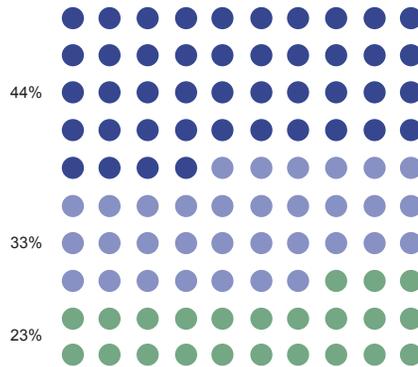
There are 3 major waves of gentrification that have been experienced in North America: the early wave in the 1960's-1970's was marked by sporadic but direct state projects, the second wave from the early to late 1980's was characterized by the rollback of state intervention and resulting dependence on private market forces, and the third wave which emerged after the early 1990's recession, in which the state actively encouraged gentrification through market-friendly policies and public-private partnerships. This third wave is linked to an enhanced role of global capital, and the competition between cities on the world stage.¹⁷ One of North America's largest redevelopments, Vancouver's Concord Pacific Place located in Yaletown, is a prime example of this third wave.

Vancouver's gentrification follows a concentrated pattern in comparison to other major Canadian cities. Its inner city has always contained significant numbers of middle class residents providing a safe starting point for development, which then spilled over in to neighbouring areas. Gentrification began in historic neighbourhoods close to the downtown and the waterfront.¹⁸ Fairview Slopes and Kitsilano, just south of the



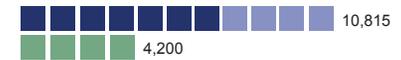
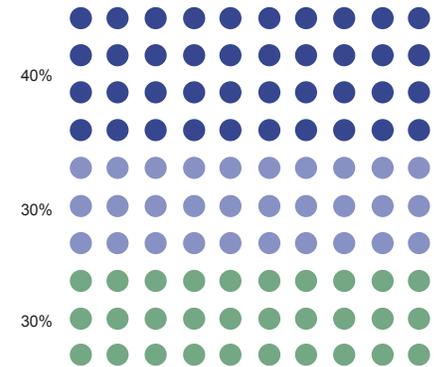
2005 HOUSING STOCK

LOW-INCOME TOTAL =	10,253
NON-MARKET UNITS =	5,053
SRO UNITS =	5,200
MARKET HOUSING UNITS =	2,100
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS =	12,353



2009 HOUSING STOCK

LOW-INCOME TOTAL =	9,890
NON-MARKET UNITS =	5,618
SRO UNITS =	4,272
MARKET HOUSING UNITS =	3,000
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS =	12,890



2013 HOUSING STOCK EXPECTATIONS

LOW-INCOME TOTAL =	10,815
NON-MARKET UNITS =	6,939
SRO UNITS =	3,876
MARKET HOUSING UNITS =	4,200
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS =	15,015

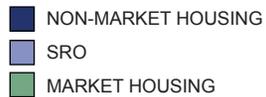


Fig. 1.32 Housing Stock Expectations
Data from a City of Vancouver Memorandum: Housing Stock
in the DTES 2005-2012, May 15th, 2009

downtown, were the first areas to be developed in the early 1970's. In the 1980's development had moved into the downtown, and proceeded to expand including Gastown, Yaletown, Strathcona and Grandview/Woodlands. Vancouver trends indicate that full gentrification of a neighbourhood will take between 10 and 20 years.¹⁹ Yaletown, previously waterfront industry and pre WWII construction has been completely transformed with the last of the high rise condominiums being completed this year. The impact in Strathcona, a low density residential community, is much less obvious, however housing prices now rival that of other Vancouver neighbourhoods and the population is no longer representative of the traditional Downtown Eastside resident. Gastown, originally planned as a tourist destination, is still renovating storefronts and adding high end condominiums to its rooftops, however it has almost reached its capacity and new projects have been spilling over the edges.

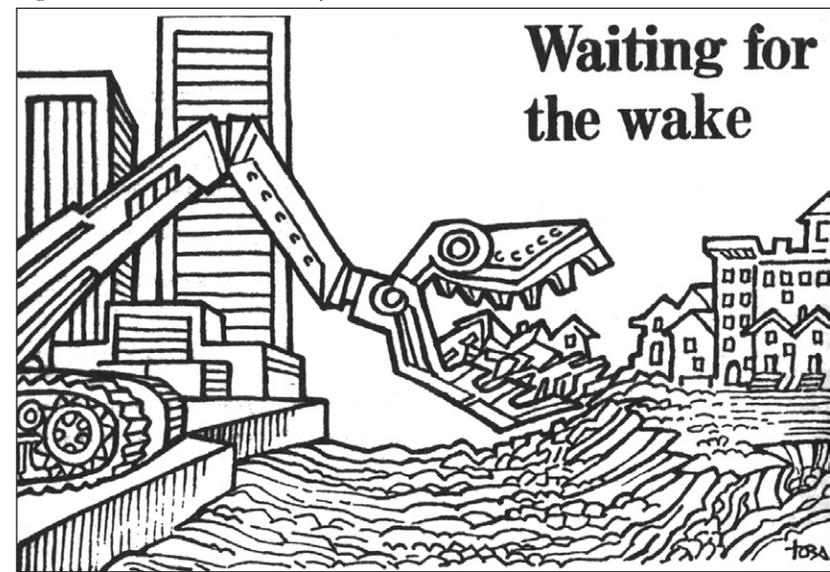
The Downtown Eastside is the last undeveloped neighbourhood within close proximity to the downtown, and its neighbours have already started to creep in. Vancouver's low vacancy rates and high housing prices coupled with low property value in the area make it an ideal location for economic investment. The city also has a lot to gain. The infamous social problems and crime in the area have reflected poorly on this "world class" city, new developments will bring much needed capital, fill empty storefronts and diversify the population.

Developers have taken notice of this rare opportunity; 860 new market housing units were built between 2005 and 2009, surpassing expectations

the city made in the 2005 DTES Housing Plan.²⁰ Woodward's, a new mixed use mega project opening in the fall of 2009, will make a significant impact on the area, bringing in 536 units of market housing, as well as the SFU School for Contemporary Arts, retail and commercial space, and 200 units of low income housing. New condo developments are already in the works for neighbouring sites, including sites along Hastings Street, which only a decade ago was deemed the worst block in Canada by the Vancouver Sun.²¹ The city currently estimates an additional 1,203 units of market housing will be built by 2013.²²

Limits of Gentrification:

Fig. 1.33 Untitled - Illustrated by DTES resident





- NON MARKET HOUSING
- COMMUNITY SERVICES
- CITY OWNED LOTS

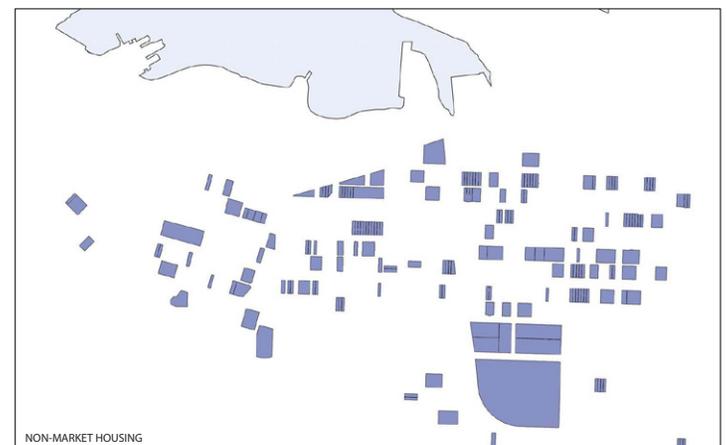
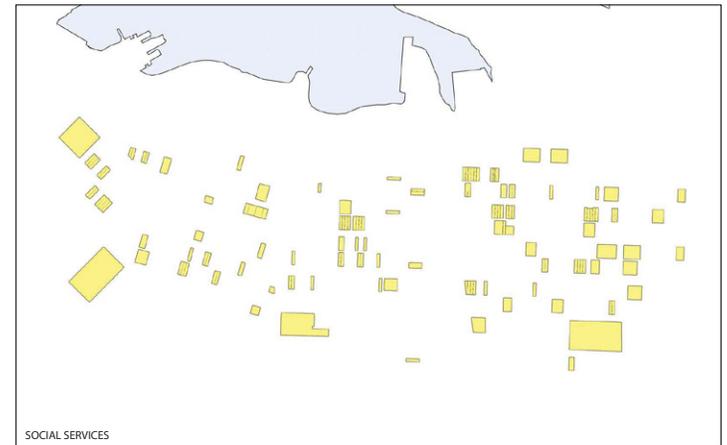
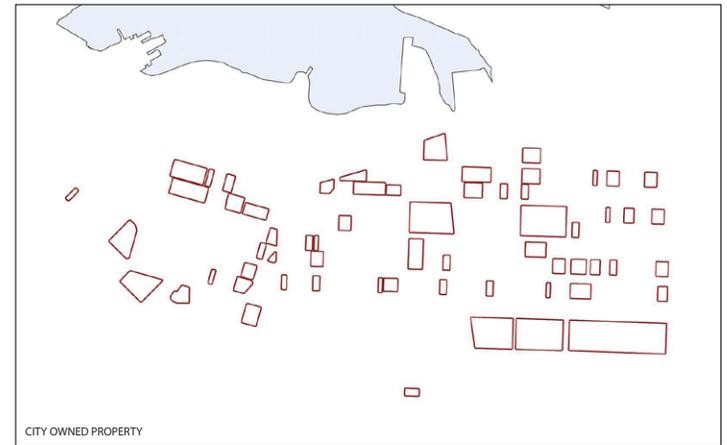


Fig. 1.34 Limits of Gentrification

The city is aware of the dangers of gentrification, and recognizes the Downtown Eastside as an important low income community serving a vital role within the city. Of the area's 18,000 residents, approximately 11,500 fall into the low income bracket and occupy 10,000 units of low income housing.²³ The 2005 DTES Housing Plan was created specifically to monitor the rate of change of housing in the area and combined with the 2003 SRA By-law has managed to minimize the amount of low income housing lost to gentrification. (See Appendix for Housing Policies) Efforts to purchase aging SROs and increase the amount of low income housing, combined with the current stock of government owned non-market housing will ensure a continued supply of low income housing in the area.

In addition to the large supply of low income housing, the majority of the city's social services are located in the Downtown Eastside. Health clinics, food banks, homeless shelters and social assistance offices are among the many vital services that are needed to sustain this unique population. These services, which have been traditionally located in this area, would have difficulty finding a new home, and will most likely remain fixtures of this community.

The combination of city owned land, the large quantity of social services and city housing policies will make it difficult for full scale gentrification of the Downtown Eastside to occur. While there may be substantial growth in market housing and a shifting of neighbourhood boundaries, the majority of the area will remain primarily low income.



Fig 1.35 Non-Market Housing Since 2006
Since the adoption of the Downtown Eastside Housing Policy, the province has been actively buying SROs for upgrading and conversion, purchasing 20 buildings between 2006 and 2008.

Resident's Fight Against Development:

The residents of the Downtown Eastside also play an important role in fending off gentrification. Activism in the area is extremely powerful, dating back to the 1960's when residents successfully rallied against Project 200, an urban renewal plan featuring a tower studded waterfront and freeway that would demolish the Downtown. Only one tower from this plan was ever built, and a precedent was created for this, now recognized, community. The formation of DERA (Downtown Eastside Resident's Association) in the 1970's was the next major step for the community, and since this time residents have fought for city policies on housing conditions and tenant rights as well as an increase in the housing stock. The protest of the original Woodward's development in 2002 is



Fig. 1.36 North Star Hotel
Squatted for housing in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, 2006

Primary DTES Community Organizations:

- Anti-Poverty Committee
- Carnegie Community Action Project
- Citywide Housing Coalition
- Downtown Eastside Residents Association
- Impact on Community Coalition
- Indigenous Action Group
- Pivot Legal Society
- Save Low Income Housing Coalition

Sample of Community Advocacy Events:

- Annual Women's Housing March
- Annual Poverty Olympics
- Grand March for Housing (April 4th, 2009)
- Candlelight Vigil to end Homelessness (April 25, 2009)
- Jane's Walk – Vision for the Downtown Eastside (2009)
- Pied Piper Rally to End Homelessness (Oct. 2007)
- North Star Hotel Squat (2006)
- Woodward's Squat (2002)

another success story for the neighbourhood, they fought for ownership over the famous building and insisted social housing was the only responsible future for the site. The project was eventually cancelled and the provincially owned building sat empty until 2006 when construction started on the new plans, incorporating social housing, community space and a public square.

With this level of determination, the residents of the Downtown Eastside will continue to influence the future of their neighbourhood. Economics and development trends indicate that the Downtown Eastside is the next step towards a completed developed Downtown. However, city policies, the existing quantity of social housing and services and the power of this tight-knit community will greatly limit the ability for full scale gentrification to occur.

“Elsewhere in North America, most other low-income inner-city neighbourhoods have been obliterated: demolished, gentrified, and sanitized, and some left empty and uninhabitable. Not so here. The only reason is because the people of the Downtown Eastside fought back.”²⁴

- Libby Davies, Member of Parliament, Vancouver East



Fig. 1.37 Grand March for Housing, 2009

THE CONDITION OF PUBLIC SPACE

Defining Public Space

Public space is the fundamental programme for society; it provides a place for gathering, exchange and social encounter. It is defined as the space of the city that is accessible to all groups; a democratic space which stresses both difference and common experience.

“The city as a social concept stresses the innumerable differences in the people, in the way they use, characterise and define the spaces they inhabit. At the same time, the political city represents a society in which people’s differences are, albeit temporarily, put aside in the name of community.”¹

– Kenny Cupers + Markus Miessen, 2002

This excerpt from Kenny Cupers and Markus Miessen’s *Spaces of Uncertainty* establishes the modern contradiction of public space: unity vs. multiplicity. The political definition of public space focuses on solidarity and co-operation, while the social meaning is one of heterogeneous coexistence.² Both views speak of a space that is democratic and accessible, however today’s modern city with its everyday reality of conflicts and unforeseeable encounters, questions the relevance of the traditional political emphasis.

Early concepts of public space date back to the classical polis, where the agora served as a public platform of collective decision-making. This political definition of public space focused on the overall sense of community, unity, and successful co-existence. The Roman Forum and Medieval Square are prime examples of this traditional, idolized public space. The form of these spaces become large, singular, formalized

elements centrally located and carefully defined. This political understanding of public space has historically dominated the fields of philosophical and urbanist thinking about the city.³ Contemporary critiques of the city focus on the lack of official public space, and relate this to a loss of public life.⁴ However, as our cities have developed, grown and become further diversified, the belief that harmonious formal public spaces are needed to foster public life should be reconsidered.

The contemporary cosmopolis brought with it a new understanding of the city as a place of sociability and the coexistence of difference.⁵ With an emphasis on the innumerable differences in individuals, and the way the use and occupy space, it sees the city as a heterogeneous place, where encounters with the ‘other’ are a necessary enrichment for the individual.⁶ This view takes the emphasis away from the functional behaviour and ritual events of political space, and instead considers the everyday patterns of inhabitation that characterize social space. The urban realm becomes subdivided into socio-economic and cultural patterns, not only defined by public-private distinction.⁷ It is no longer a singular formalized artefact for one homogeneous public, but becomes multiple publics occupying multiple spaces throughout the city.⁸ This is not to say that that the concept of unity is completely lost; connection to the larger community is achieved through personal encounters and the collective experience of place.

The Sociability of Public Space

“...the presence of other people, activities, events, inspiration, and stimulation comprise one of the most important qualities of public spaces all together.”⁹

– Jan Gehl, 1980

Urbanists such as Jan Gehl and Jane Jacobs have written much about the importance of daily encounters within the city as a means to build community and fulfill social need. Jane Jacob’s *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* describes the value of casual public contacts and a strong informal street life as essential elements to successful cities. Jan Gehl’s *Life Between Buildings* investigates types of urban encounters and describes what he calls ‘living cities’, “ones in which people can interact with one another, and are always stimulating because they are rich in experiences.”¹⁰

Gehl elaborates on the importance of low-intensity contacts, such as passive contact (seeing and hearing others) or chance contacts. This is the basic level of social exchange in the public realm, and is needed to develop other forms of contact such as acquaintances, friendship and close friendship.¹¹ Overtime, these casual contacts can develop into a network of social support, and an increased connection to the community, producing an informal collective. Low-intensity contact eliminates the boundaries between isolation and inclusion, even the ability to see and hear others is a positive, inclusive experience compared to being alone.¹² They are also a medium for the unpredictable, the spontaneous and the unplanned, leading to a stimulating and engaging public realm. It is by



Fig. 2.1 Daily visit for free bread

meeting people with different values that society can learn to appreciate diversity, and the advantages it brings.¹³

“The sum of such casual, public contact at a local level...is a feeling for the public identity of people, a web of public respect and trust, and a resource in time of personal or neighbourhood need.”¹⁴ -Jane Jacobs, 1961

Understanding the City

*“The city is above all, a social product, created out of the demands of everyday use and the social struggles of urban inhabitants.”*¹⁵ - Margaret Crawford, 2008

Everyday Urbanism is a contemporary approach to understanding the city, reflecting the modern view of a heterogeneous and social public realm. It places emphasis on the human experience and the city’s multidimensional qualities. It does not seek overarching solutions or attempt to create a universal strategy, but instead promotes a multiplicity of responses to specific times and places, derived out of an understanding and acceptance of the life that takes place there.¹⁶ It criticizes professional design discourse as being pre-occupied with aesthetics and abstract principles, instead of focusing on human impulses and experiences.¹⁷

Influenced heavily by Henri Lefebvre, who stressed the importance of everyday life as the basis for all social experience, the idea of the ‘everyday’ governs the work of *Everyday Urbanism*.¹⁸ The term ‘everyday’, refers to ordinary human experience: the banal and repetitive daily routines of urban residents which form complex patterns of inhabitation. The term ‘everyday space’, delineates the physical domain of this daily activity, and can also be identified as what Edward Soja’s called ‘thirdspace’¹⁹, or Jan Gehl’s term ‘life between buildings’.

‘Everyday space’ is identified differently than traditional public space, relying primarily on its qualities and activities as opposed to its physical properties. It is the space in between buildings, the connective tissue of

the city including; sidewalks, streets, alleyways and empty lots. It does not represent the totality of public space, but is the formation of multiple public domains, accommodating the diversity of contemporary cities. It stands in contrast to the officially designated and often underused public spaces of the city, moving the emphasis of public space from the formal to the informal and from the physical to the social. The importance of social interaction is intrinsic to ‘everyday spaces’. Casual, low-intensity social exchanges foster a sense of community and can develop into a network of social support. The ability of ‘everyday space’ to generate spontaneous social encounters is its most valuable quality, allowing people to feel connected to a larger community and enriching their quality of life.



Fig. 2.2 Local Asian Market, always bustling, attracting a diverse crowd

The Public Realm of the Downtown Eastside

The inhabitation of ‘everyday space’ can be observed in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. This marginalized area is home to a diverse group of people, many of whom have become socially isolated from their families and society as a whole. Many residents of this community do not have a place of work, and often live alone in substandard conditions, leaving ‘everyday space’ as their main source of social connection. As boundaries between private and public life are loosened, the public realm becomes an extension of home. Although public space carries a heightened importance in the Downtown Eastside, there is very little formal public space in the area. The unique qualities of this community and its social structure are therefore highly dependent on ‘everyday spaces’. The public life of the area is cultivated along its sidewalks, through its alleyways and by local organizations.

While some ‘everyday spaces’ are spontaneous and momentary, such as a lunch time gatherings, street vendors or food handouts, others are lasting and have become focal points within the community. Ray Oldenburg’s concept of the ‘third place’, as described in his book *The Great Good Place*, emphasizes the importance of these enduring but seemingly insignificant venues. He describes ‘third places’ as “the core setting of informal public life”²⁰ and “remarkably similar to a good home in the psychological comfort and support that it extends.”²¹ A ‘third place’ can be any type of location where groups of people routinely gather, a place that is always welcoming and where casual friendships are easily maintained. While Oldenburg often associates them with the neighbourhood pub or coffee

house, in the Downtown Eastside they can be found in community organizations, at important intersections and along sidewalks. These places allow the residents of the Downtown Eastside to belong to a community, and to find social acceptance and much needed support. They are often the only stable conditions in their fragile lives.

”A community life exists, when one can go daily to a given location and see many of the people he knows.”²² - Sociologist Philip Slater

This so called “loitering” of the urban poor, would be unacceptable in most formal spaces of city, or on the majority of consumer driven streets. The Downtown Eastside is a unique place, where acceptance and tolerance is fostered; a rare quality in contemporary cities.

The Sidewalk:

The Sidewalk is an important site for social contact, leading to a heightened sense of community and social support. In the Downtown Eastside, certain sections of sidewalks are consistently filled with people. Often found around local organizations; soup kitchens, bottle exchanges or community centers, they have become places of social gatherings, where one can always find a conversation.

“People say I am famous for being found on Main and Hastings. I’ve been there for three-and-a-half years now. It’s the one place we sit everyday. My circle’s just getting bigger and bigger.”²³
– DTES Resident, 2008



Temporary food stand provides free snacks along Powell St. sidewalk

The Alley:

While the alley is intended for utilitarian purposes, for some this space constitutes their everyday life. In the Downtown Eastside it is common to find individual shelters or groups of people appropriating this space for personal use. It provides a sense of enclosure and a degree of privacy from the busy streets, giving a hierarchy to the public space in the area. For those who feel intimidated by the public realm, it provides comfort.

“I feel more comfortable walking down a back alley than I do walking down Robson Street. That’s a culture shock to me – everybody’s all prim and proper.”²⁴
– DTES Resident, 2008



Couple walks down DTES alley

Soup Kitchen:

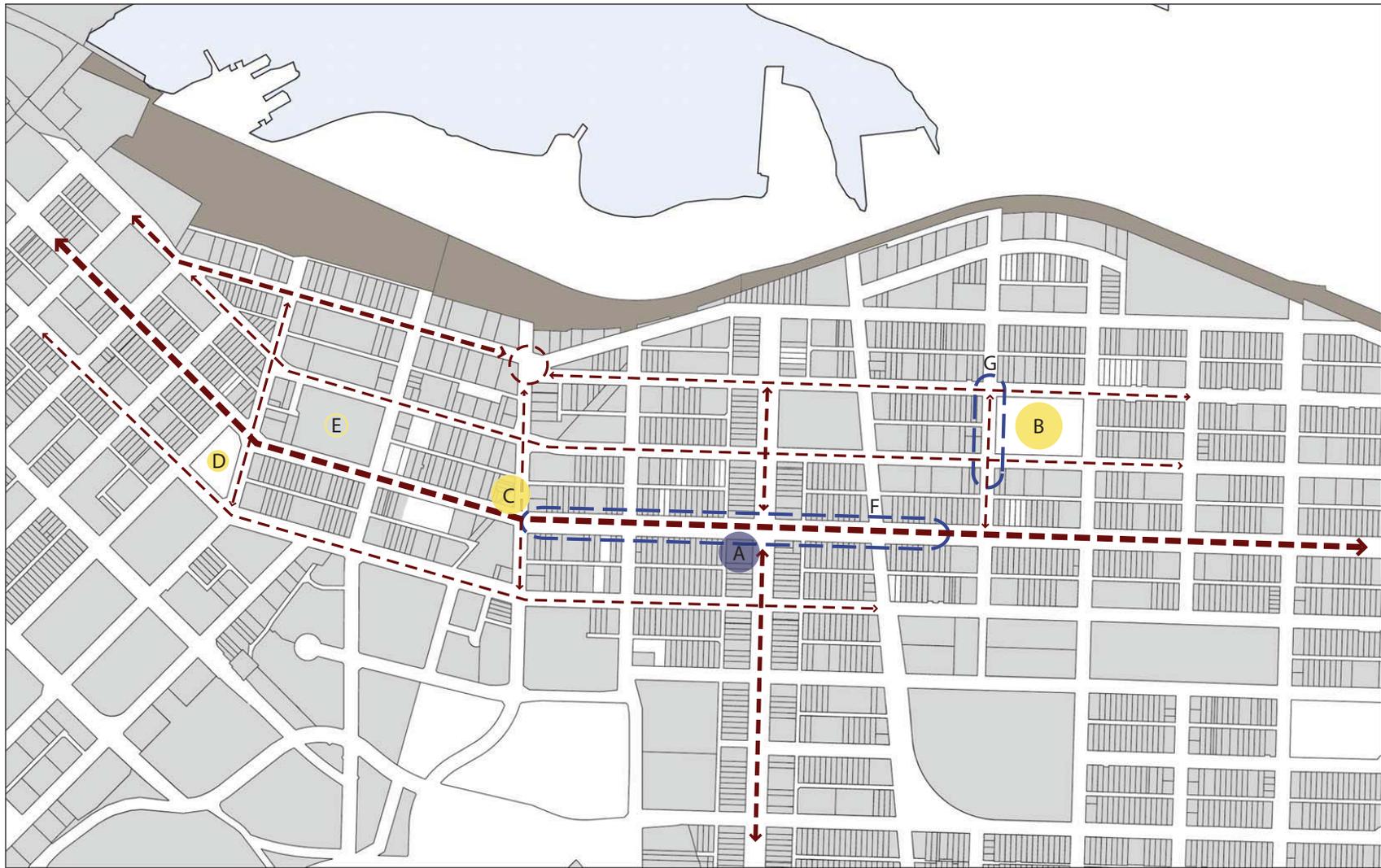
The poor, and especially the homeless, are socially isolated from most of society and often estranged from friends and family. Soup kitchens and similar organizations offer a non-judgemental place to socialize and development new relationships.

“Soup kitchens are popular not because of their free food, but because they are one of the only places left for the poor urban nomad to find social acceptance.”²⁵
- Bart Campbell, Soup Kitchen Volunteer



Fig. 2.3 Photographs of the DTES

Line-up forms outside the Salvation Army Soup Kitchen, bringing people together daily



- | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|---|---------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
|  | OFFICIAL PUBLIC SPACE |  | FUTURE PUBLIC SPACE | A - CARNEGIE LIBRARY STEPS/SIDEWALK | E - WOODWARD'S COURTYARD |
|  | INFORMAL GATHERING SPACE | | | B - OPPENHEIMER PARK | F - HASTINGS ST SIDEWALKS |
|  | LOOSE GATHERING SPACE | | | C - PIGEON PARK | G - DUNLEVY ST SIDEWALK @ OPPENHEIMER PARK |
|  | PRIMARY PEDESTRAIN ROUTES | | | D - ANY LIVINGSTON PARK | |

Fig. 2.4 Public Space in the DTES



A) Gathering outside of Carnegie Library



B) Edges of Oppenheimer Park



C) Pigeon Park at the corner of Carrall St. and Hastings St.



G) Dunlevy Street Sidewalk, across from Oppenheimer Park

Fig. 2.5 Third Places in the DTES



Fig. 2.6 Universal Citywalk, Los Angeles California

Gentrification of Public Space

*“Our cities are undergoing a process of sanitization, an effort to redesign complex urban environments with a narrower palette pitched to bourgeois sensibilities.”*²⁶

–J. Max Bond 2001

The gentrification and privatization of the public realm has occurred throughout North American cities since the 1950’s, reflecting our consumerist culture and society’s growing social divide. The car, the suburbs and the shopping mall, have been criticized for eroding the traditional public realm, segregating people and privatising space.²⁷ Modern examples of the privatization of public space include New York’s Bryant Park, the redevelopment New York’s 42nd Street sponsored by Disney and Los Angeles’s Citywalk, a shopping and entertainment district simulating an authentic cityscape but privately operated by M.C.A. and Universal Studios. The popular appeal of these developments rests on their crime-free image, upheld by the ability to exclude anyone seen as undesirable. This exclusive vision of public space is driven by a desire for safety and predictability. It establishes a set of acceptable activities and users, developing a homogenous public realm.

*“Today’s urban environments produce an easy, self-conscious identity by throwing up an image of who belongs in the city and who does not. By attracting only regular, normal users, space for different minority groups is increasingly threatened.”*²⁸

– Kenny Cupers + Markus Miessen, 2002

Gil Dorin, the founder of Transgressive Architecture, is concerned with the gentrification of the public realm occurring in London. He

criticizes London’s Urban Task Force’s concept of the ‘outdoor room’, which he says “clearly embodies notions of exclusivity, confinement, and segregation of public space.”²⁹ Similar concerns are expressed by Margaret Crawford over the struggles occurring in Santa Monica, where the city is “incrementally redefining the nature of public space and gradually expelling the homeless from the city.”³⁰ Tactics employed by authorities include the night-time closure of public parks and underpasses, the zoning of specific types of public places, the banning of food programs from city parks and preventing the expansion of social agencies. This exclusionary drive is explained by Dorin as “an aesthetic conception of open space and by blindness to its social uses”.³¹ The desire for a harmonious public life, denies the existence of minorities and attempts to control public activity.



Fig. 2.7 Pigeon Park's transformation into Pioneer Square nears completion, 2009

The Changing Face of the Downtown Eastside

Until recently, the historic isolation of the Downtown Eastside has resisted development trends which have transformed the rest of Vancouver. On one hand this segregation has further marginalized the neighbourhood but it has also allowed for a democratic public realm to survive, accommodating a variety of activities and people. This accepting, casual environment has cultivated the resilient community that supports the area today. However, new development has begun creeping into this segregated community, transforming its character and threatening the nature of its public space. While city policy ensures the preservation of low income housing, as mainstream society moves into the area, conflicts over the public realm will be inevitable and pressure to ‘clean up’ the area will be heightened.

Since the summer of 2009, two of the area’s significant social centers have been closed for redevelopment: Oppenheimer Park and Pigeon Park. Pigeon Park, which currently holds a reputation for being one of the most crime ridden corners in the area is to be re-named Pioneer Place, and will become part of the Carrall Street Greenway, a pedestrian and bike friendly corridor connecting the Seawall to the South with Crab Park to the North. While benches, water fountains and a public toilet are part of the new plans, a prominent Bank is expected to open onto the square changing the quality of the space dramatically. As Oppenheimer Park is located deeper into the low-income community, it holds a better chance of retaining its original character; however the year long closure of this vital community element will undoubtedly have negative effects on local residents. Woodward’s, the most significant development in the

area, is currently nearing completion and promises a public square and passageway through the site. However, as seen in other cities, the reality of this privately owned ‘public space’ may be as exclusive and controlled as the adjoining interior atrium.



Fig. 2.8 Wake-up call for Homeless - police intolerance is on the rise

THE ARCHITECTURE OF PUBLIC SPACE

“In the process of area development it is worth taking the time and trouble to search for places that matter. Everyday space teaches us a great deal about how a neighbourhood is used and perceived, such as the routes people follow, the importance of borders and physical landmarks, the settings in which people carry out their activities, the relevant scale level, the district’s intimate places and trouble spots, and the collective spaces that serve to connect the residents to each other and to the neighbourhood.”

– Leeke Reinders

Introduction

The gentrification of public space in the Downtown Eastside threatens the fragile social environment that is essential local resident's quality of life. Community gathering spaces and informal activities play an important role in the everyday lives of the area's isolated residents. However, as the neighbourhood changes and the middle class population expands, the current sense of ownership and belonging that allows low-income residents to appropriate public space could diminish. The following design proposals seek to enhance the existing qualities of 'everyday spaces' in the neighbourhood. Following principles of *Everyday Urbanism*, or what John Kaliski terms 'city design'², the projects demonstrate a ground up architectural approach, which will address specific issues of inhabitation and social relations.

The idea of 'city design' begins with an understanding and acceptance of what takes place in a specific community. John Kaliski develops this concept in *Everyday Urbanism* after a thorough exploration of traditional urban design as well as the contemporary approaches of New Urbanism and Rem Koolhaas' 'Generic City'. He criticizes traditional urban design for an overemphasis on top down programming, which often employs abstract diagrams and design essentialism. He believes it neglects to recognize urban complexity and vitality, denying the human voices which compose the city. While identifying some improvements with the architectural focus of New Urbanism and the 'Generic City', he accuses both of an "architectural fixity that ultimately homogenizes the collective everyday."³ In response to this discussion, Kaliski proposes 'city design' as a means to reconcile the intellectual abstraction of urban

design and the formalism of architecture with the plural forces of the everyday city.⁴

'City design' is the architecture of situational tactics; engaging the daily without abandoning standard architectural components (structure, form, light and material). It focuses on the 'present city'⁵ as the starting point for design, as opposed to architectural precedent or utopian ideals. Each project is therefore unique, shaped by individual circumstances and careful observation. By reassembling the narratives of place; the voices, activities, signs, and symbols of daily life, it reveals commonalities as well as difference, emphasizing the ordinary stories of city life and communicating with the inhabitants.⁶

Primary Principles of City Design⁷:

- To imagine the present as opposed to precedent
- To acknowledge that each person and entity is constructing space and place with the acts of daily life
- To design tactically from ground up
- To reveal commonalities as well as difference
- To design for diversity and inclusivity
- To communicate with the inhabitants of a place

Design Proposals:

In an effort to preserve and enhance the everyday life of low-income residents in the Downtown Eastside, the design proposals will follow principles set forth in Kaliski's 'city design'. Three socially significant sites have been identified as potential 'third places' within the community: Oppenheimer Park, Blood Alley Square and the common sidewalk. Each site plays a unique role within the daily life of the community and can be developed to celebrate the diversity and social networks of the neighbourhood. An emphasis on social interaction, low-intensity

encounters, and appropriation of space will allow these projects to become part of the everyday life of the neighbourhood. Each project will explore the possibilities that exist within the neighbourhood and demonstrate the impact design can have on the creation of community spaces. While this thesis focused on the role of design in the success of social spaces, it is important to recognize that the involvement of local organizations, city support, and the quality management of each project would also play an essential role to their success.



Fig. 3.1 Location of Design Proposals

Design Goals:

Each project will be developed individually in specific response to the daily patterns and potential of their site. However, in an effort to create successful neighbourhood spaces, four design goals are shared by all three projects:

1. Encourage spontaneous social interaction
2. Encourage multiplicity (diverse users and activities)
3. Design from the ground up
4. Acceptance and anticipation of use

Architectural Strategies:

In order to achieve their common goals and create successful neighbourhood spaces, the design proposals have been guided by three principle design strategies. These strategies have been primarily influenced by the writings of Jan Gehl, as well as the works *Everyday Urbanism* and *Loose Space*.

1. Open Ended Space:

- Create a framework for fixed, flexible, and fleeting events
- Create a complex environment that allows for multiple functions and users
- Allow for adaptations that accommodate spontaneous change

2. Soft Edges:

- Create porous boundaries
- Create good staying areas and places of pause

3. Inhabitable Threshold:

- Perforate the perimeter
- Encourage crossing of boundaries
- Develop in-between space



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158 m

Opposite Page:

Fig. 3.2 Location Map of Oppenheimer Park



Fig. 3.3 Drum Circle at Totem Pole, Oppenheimer Park

Project A - Oppenheimer Park

Oppenheimer Park is located in the heart of the Downtown Eastside. It is situated a block north of Hastings Street in a predominantly residential area. It was one of the first playing fields in Vancouver, opening in 1898, and has played an important role in the community and city ever since. It has been a site for numerous demonstrations and rallies, as well as a multitude of festivals and community events. It is a highly diverse area: Japantown runs along the north side of the park; the Japanese Buddhist Church, a Christian co-op, and the Sisters of Atonement Mission face onto the park; and the park itself is often a sight for First Nation celebrations. It is a model of inclusiveness, no one group claims ownership and it is often used to bring the community together for celebration.

The park's reputation began to deteriorate beginning in the 1980's, when the drug and sex trade began to dominate park usage. Since then, the number of families who use the park has diminished, however during nice weather or special events the role of the space as a neighbourhood center is evident. Groups of people routinely gather for socializing, relaxing, street vending or to partake in one of the many free meals. It is also used as a location for free food and clothing hand-outs, holiday festivities and memorial services.

Oppenheimer Park is one of the few designated public spaces in the Downtown Eastside, and is an important social space within the community. It provides a unique opportunity to develop a permanent structure to enhance the daily activities which shape the park.

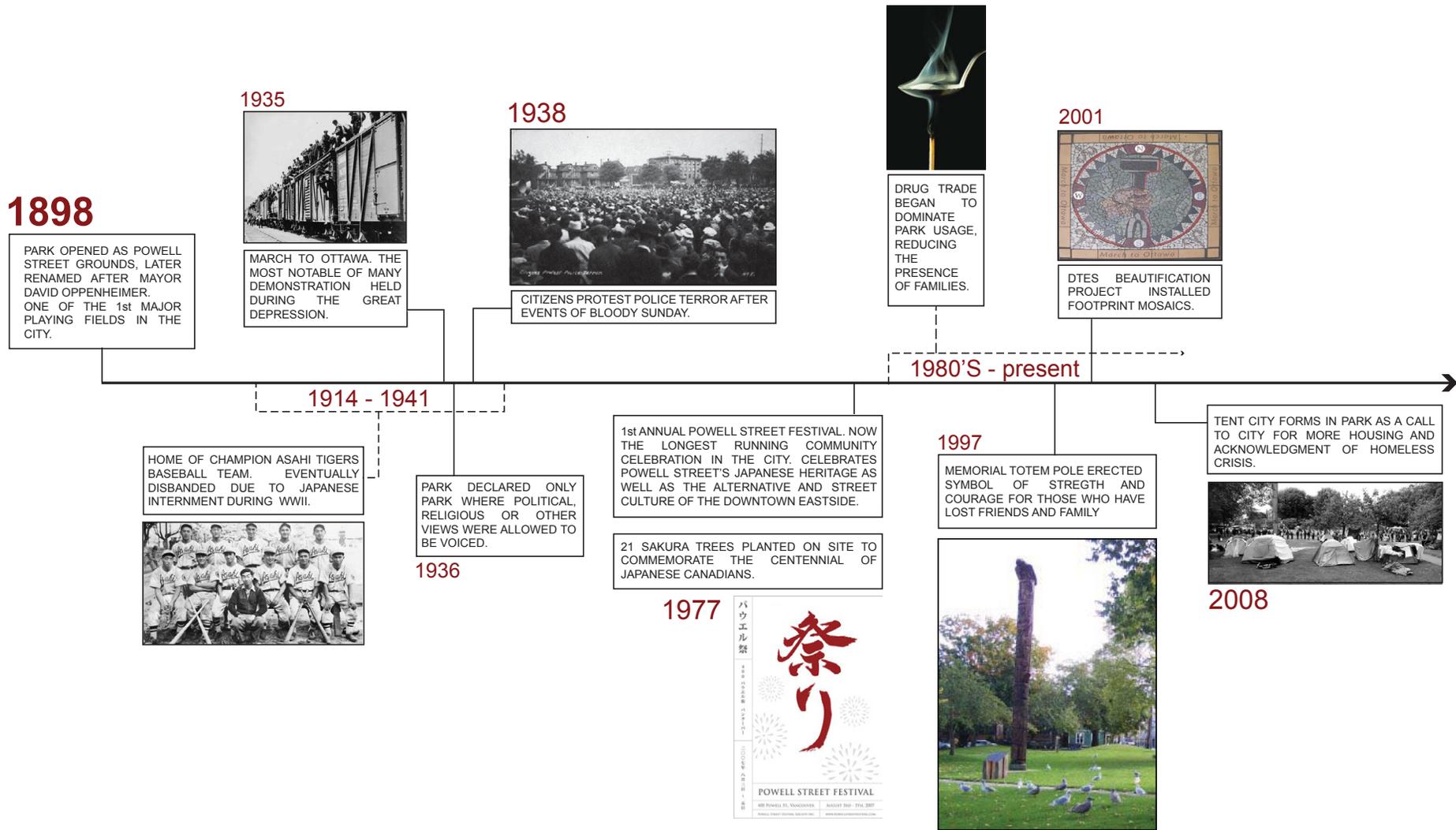


Fig. 3.4 Historical Timeline of Oppenheimer Park

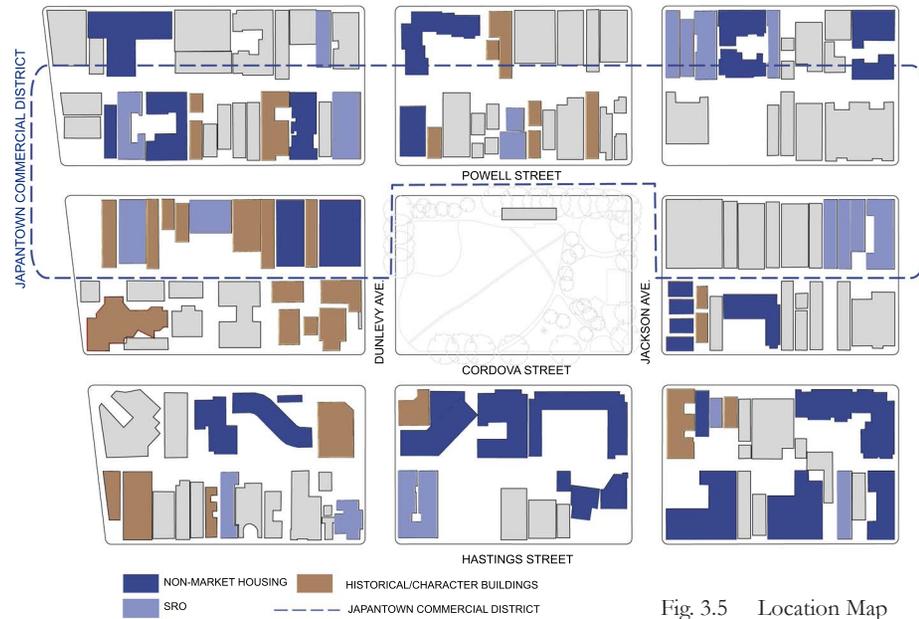


Fig. 3.5 Location Map

Site Analysis

Location:

The park is located in the heart of the Downtown Eastside, one block North of Hastings Street in-between Dunlevy Avenue and Jackson Street. Japantown, a two block section of Powell Street characterized by historic boom-time architecture, runs along the north side of the park, adding to its unique character.

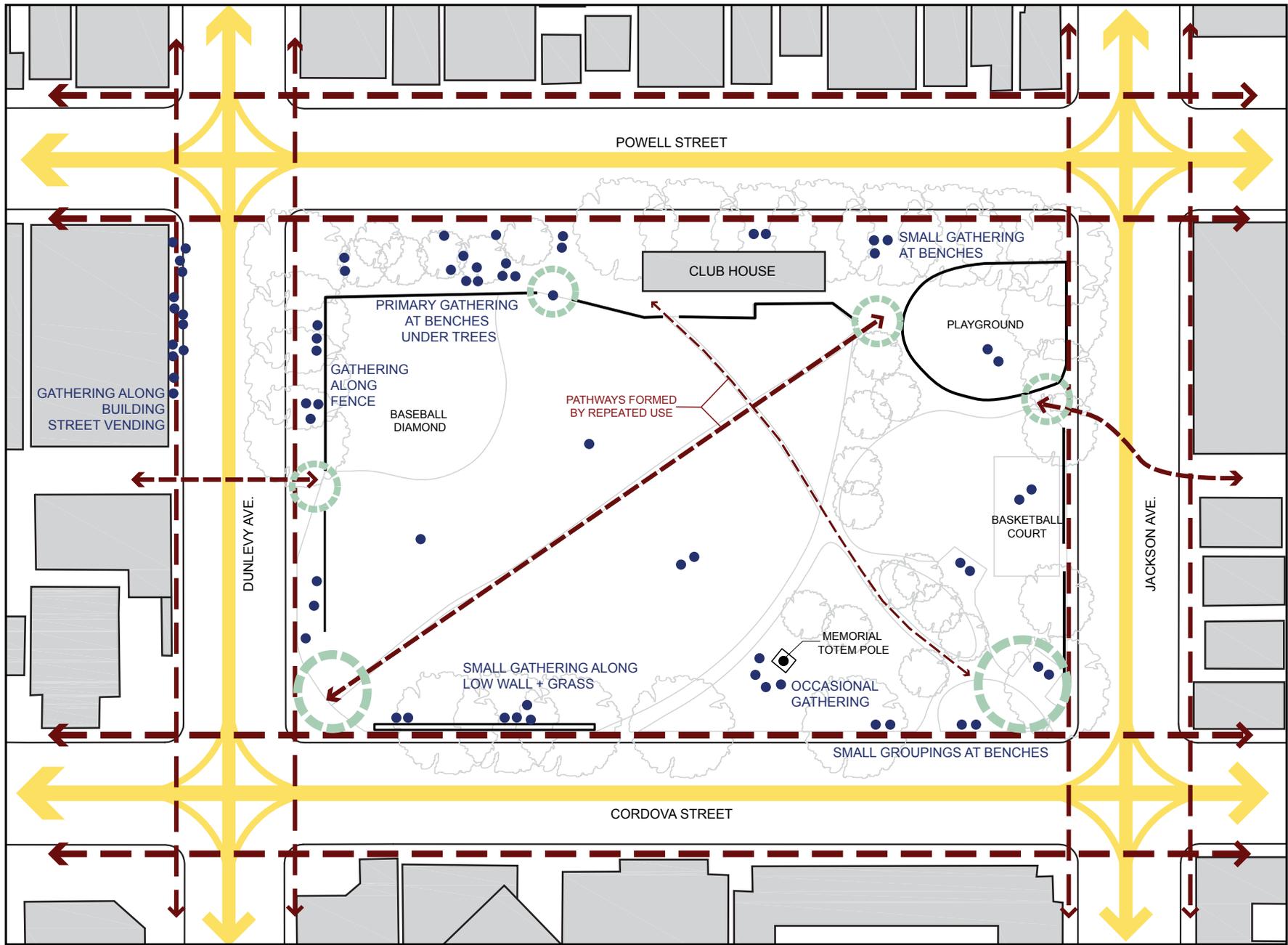
The surrounding area consists primarily of low-income housing; SRO's, social housing, and market rental stock. Powell Street provides a small strip of commercial storefronts, focusing on Japanese goods and services.



Fig. 3.6 Amenities Map

Local Amenities:

Like most of the Downtown Eastside, the area contains many amenities for low-income residents. Food programs, religious organizations, and a variety of essential services surround the park, attracting residents from throughout the DTES. The neighbouring Sisters of Atonement Mission has been one of the longest running food programs in the neighbourhood, handing out free food for over 50 years.



Activities and Users:

The park is primarily used by local residents for socializing, gathering and lounging. The baseball field is rarely used; however the children's park and basketball court provide activities for local children and families. The clubhouse hosts a variety of programs including an art program, band practice and a public bathroom, although the hours of the clubhouse are limited.

The park is also frequently used as a location to hand out free food and clothing. Typically a temporary table or a tent is set up along the sidewalk, and small groups gather around benches located along the perimeter. Occasionally large events take place, such as the free annual community Thanksgiving Dinner, where multiple tents and tables are erected and catering trucks prepare meals.

Drug users, prostitutes and the homeless are also frequent users of the park. At night, the park is primarily used for these purposes, while during the day these activities are less obvious. Street vending, often of found or stolen goods, is a common sight along the Dunlevy sidewalk opposite to the park and gathers a daily crowd.

Memorial Totem Pole:

A thirty foot totem pole stands on the South side of a park. It was erected in 1997, and displays symbols of strength and courage for those who have lost family and friends in the Downtown Eastside. It was a local initiative, organized and funded by the Oppenheimer Park Committee. The carving of the pole took place in the park, and local residents and park users were encouraged to participate. The totem pole is often a sight for First Nations events and gatherings.

Opposite Page:

Fig. 3.7 Diagram of Existing Park Usage



Fig. 3.8 Looking North East across the Park



Fig. 3.9 Looking West across the South side of the Park



Fig. 3.10 Looking East across the South side of the Park



Fig. 3.11 Looking South West Across the Park



Fig. 3.12 Local band practices under temporary tent during the park's closure



Fig. 3.13 Free Refreshments from the Neighbourhood House Roving Community Kitchen



Fig. 3.14 Free BBQ brings the community together



Fig. 3.15 Food line-ups are a familiar sight



Looking South West from Powell Street



Looking West down Powell Street

Fig. 3.16 Site Documentation



Fig. 3.17 Japantown Facades: Powell Street Elevation, across from Oppenheimer Park



Existing Clubhouse is closed in-between scheduled activities



Looking South-East from Powell Street, benches provide a popular gathering spot



Design Proposal:

The design proposal for Oppenheimer Park seeks to enhance the daily use of the park and to provide a dependable community gathering place. In order to better serve the needs of the community, a new structure is proposed to replace the existing clubhouse, forming a soft, permeable edge to the park.

Siting and Form:

The structure is located at the North end of the site, extending the Powell Street sidewalk, replacing the existing clubhouse and responding to the primary gathering spaces. The design will have minimal impact on the site, all existing trees and pathways will remain intact. Stretched along the street, the pavilion will create a permeable edge, framing the park and encouraging passage through. It is predominantly open air, providing a defined, sheltered space while remaining open, accessible and inviting to everyone. Two enclosed sections will allow for specific programming and weather protection while also breaking up the open space below the canopy. These spaces can be appropriated for multiple activities by multiple users or the entire pavilion can be occupied for one large event. A separate public bathroom facility is pulled away from the building, extending the line of the edge condition, while allowing a separation of activities and users.

Program:

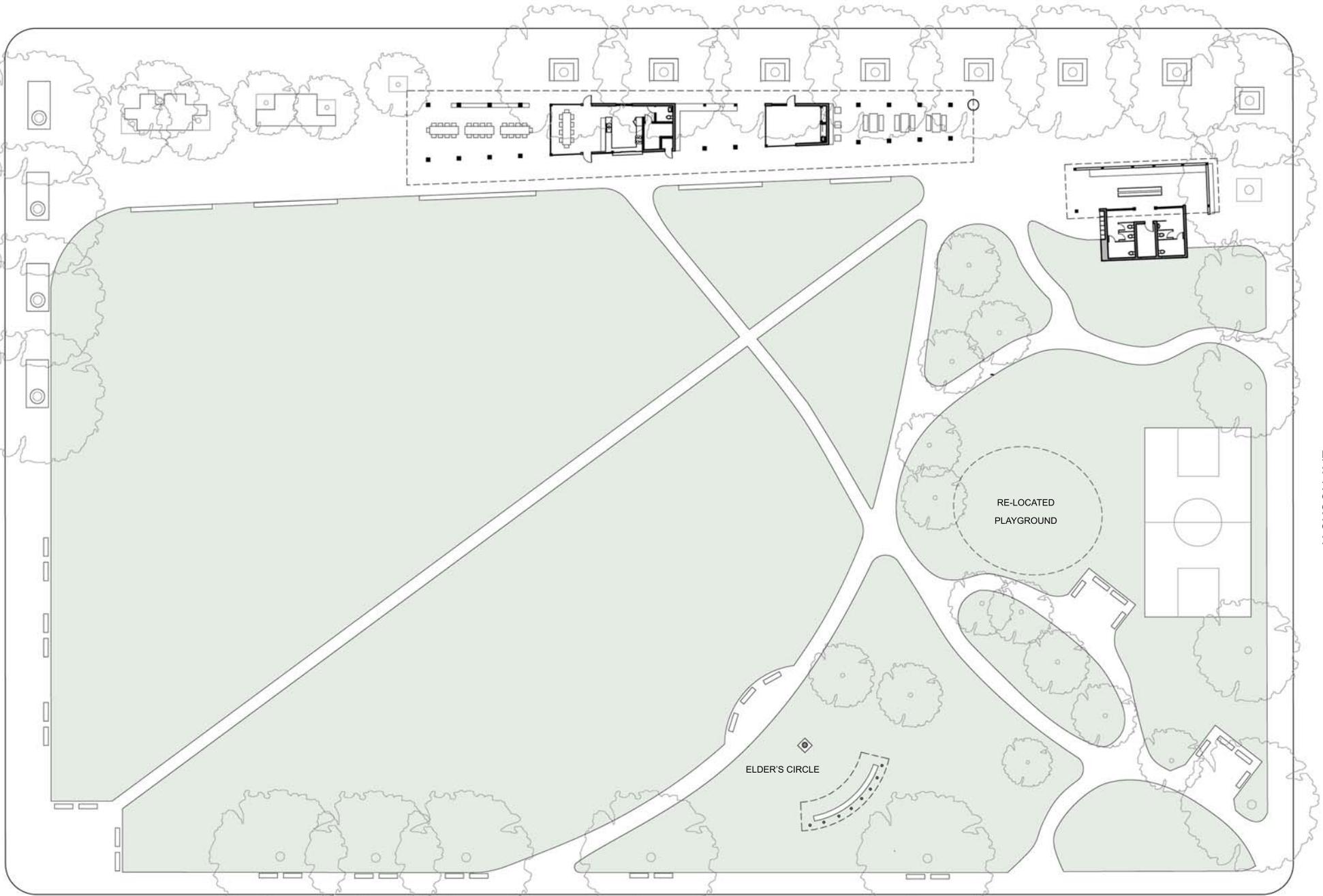
While most of the pavilion remains open for appropriation, the concept of a community dining pavilion remains central to the design. The importance of food is heightened in the Downtown Eastside, free meals are essential to many low-income residents, and the act of communal dining is a staple of social life. The park is frequently used as the location for food hand outs, or large community meals, however there are no fixed facilities for these activities. The enclosed community kitchen could be used by small groups for simple semi-private meals, for community cooking classes, or by organizations who wish to serve food to the entire community. The second enclosed space can be used for a variety of activities including the art classes and band practices currently held in the clubhouse. The design of the pavilion allows for groups of various sizes to use the appropriate amount of space, leaving the remaining space open for a variety of public use.

Opposite Page:
Fig. 3.18 Site Plan

POWELL STREET

DUNLEVY AVE.

JACKSON AVE.

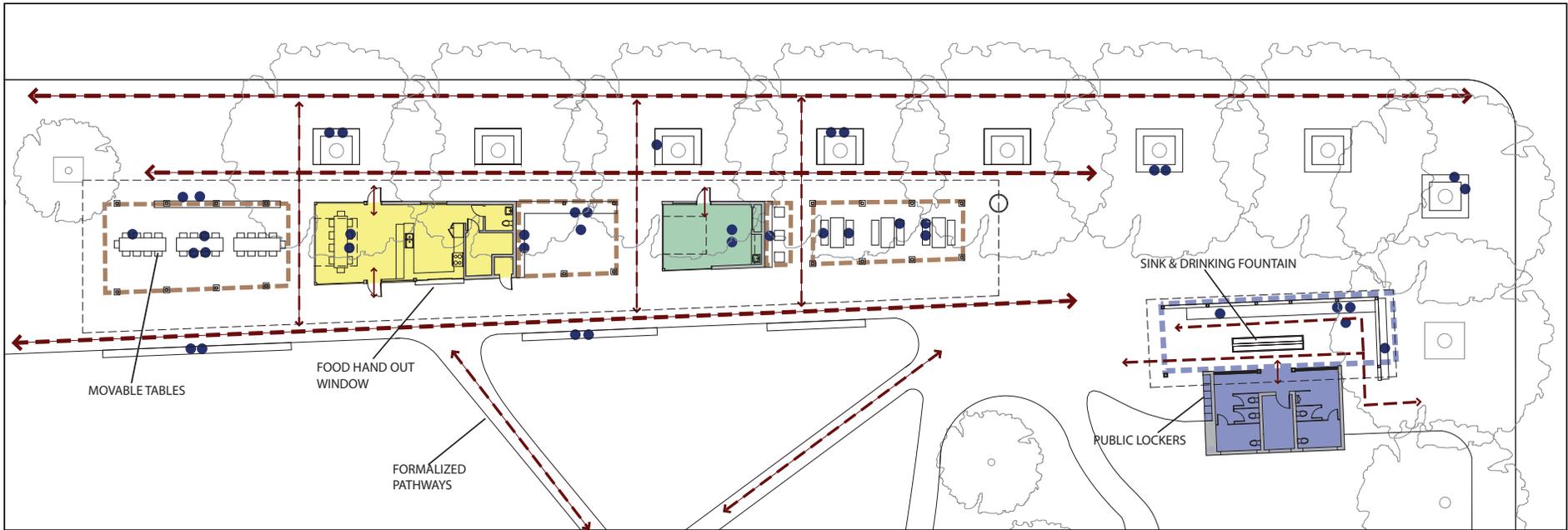


CORDOVA STREET

73

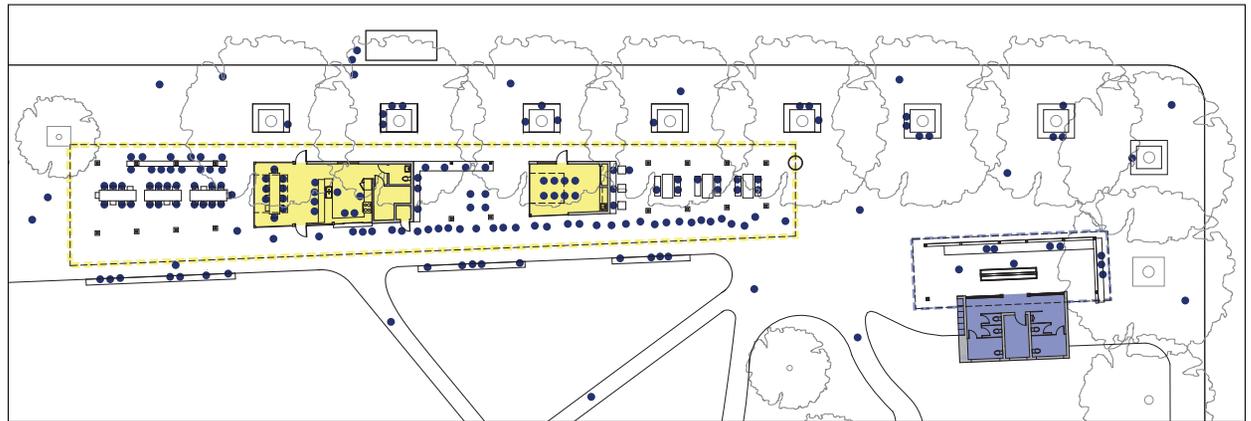
SITE PLAN
SCALE = 1:500





MULTIPLE ACTIVITES AND USERS CAN BE ACCOMMODATED DAY TO DAY

- COMMUNITY KITCHEN / DINING
- ACTIVITY AREA (MUSIC ROOM + ART STUDIO)
- PUBLIC BATHROOM
- FLEXIBLE ZONES:
GROUP MEETINGS
DINING
LOUNGING
SLEEPING
SOCIALIZING
- PEDESTRIAN FLOW
- PERSON



SPECIAL DINING EVENTS CAN APPROPRIATE THE FULL STRUCTURE

Fig. 3.19 Diagram of Use

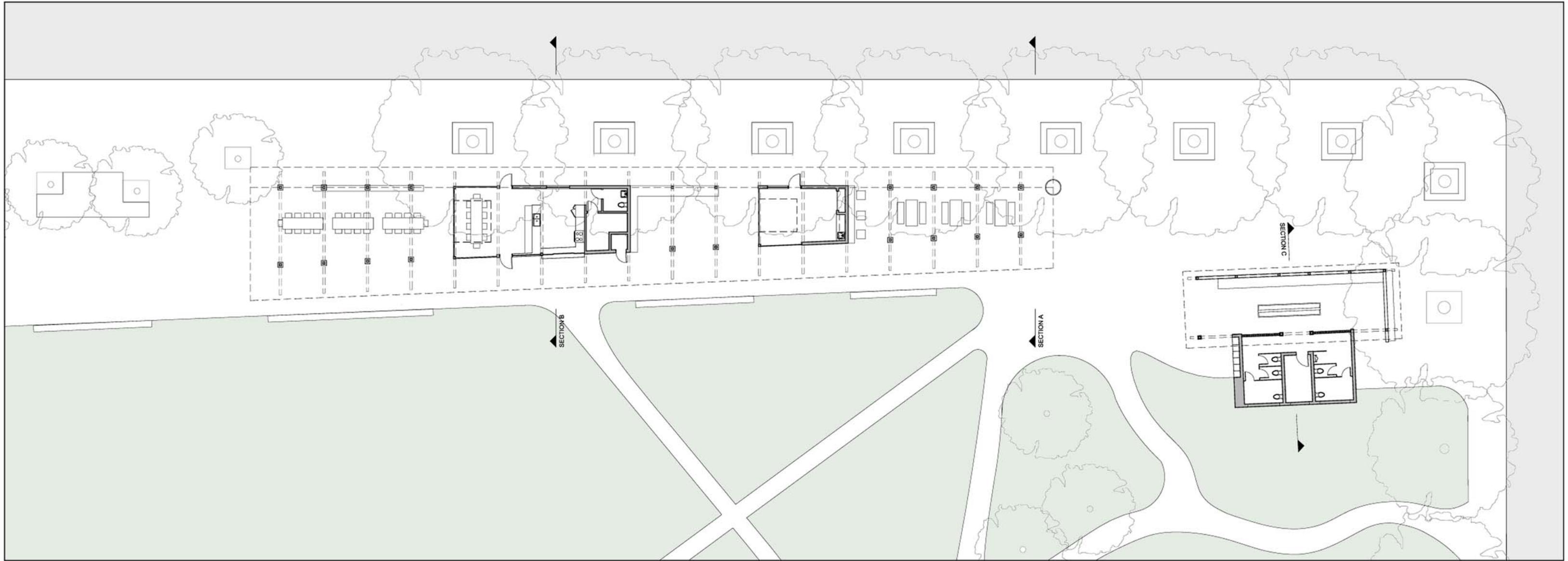
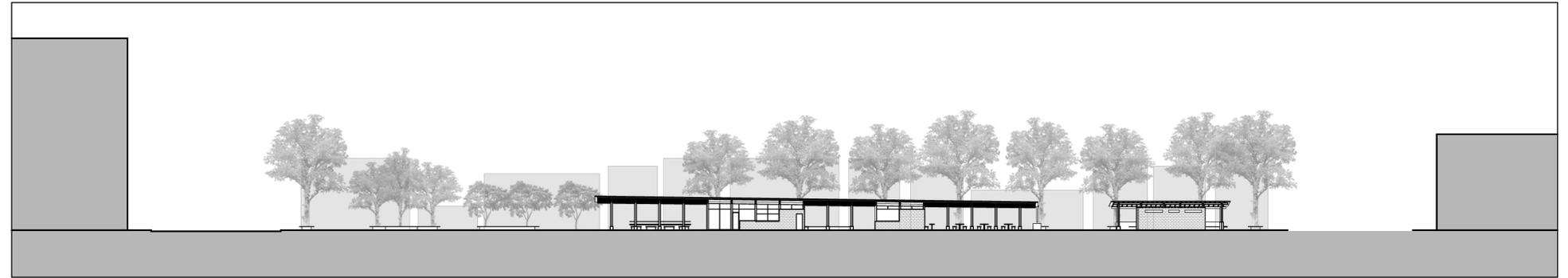


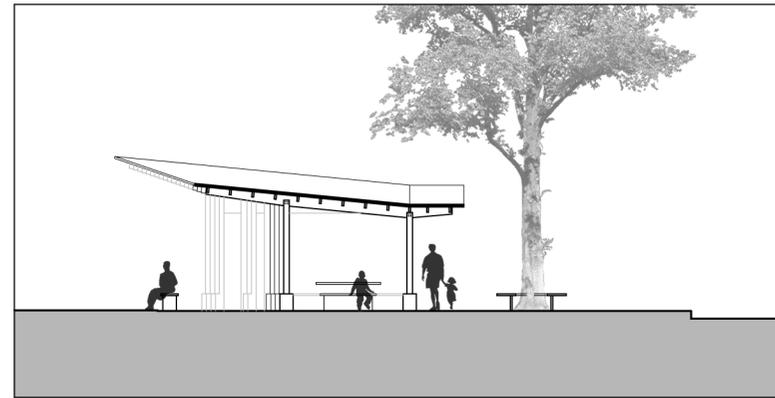
Fig. 3.20 Ground Plan

GROUND PLAN
SCALE = 1:250

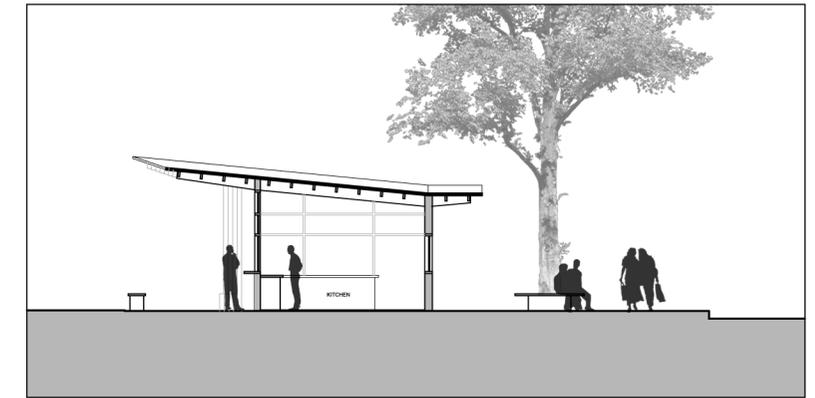




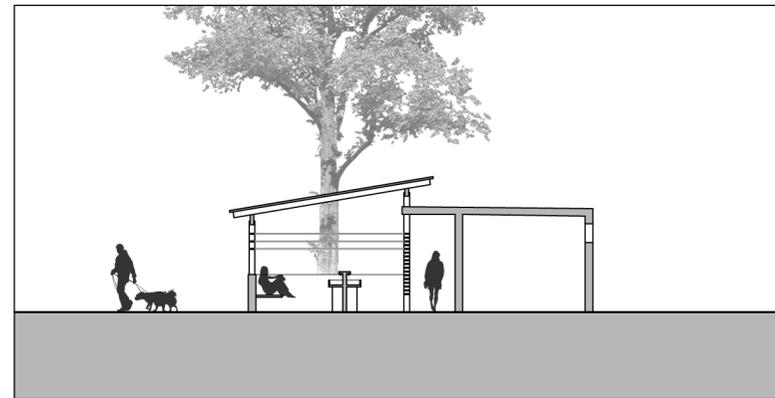
SITE ELEVATION 1:750



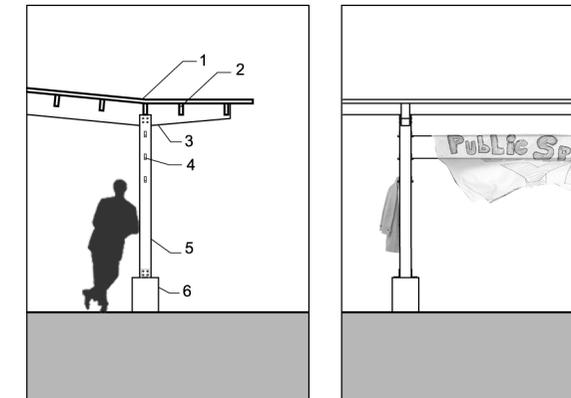
SECTION 1:200



KITCHEN SECTION 1:200



WASH AREA SECTION 1:200



STRUCTURE DETAIL 1:100

- 1. METAL ROOF
- 2. WOOD JOISTS
- 3. GULAM BEAM
- 4. METAL HOOKS
- 5. STEEL POST
- 6. CONCRETE BASE



ELEVATION
SCALE = 1:250

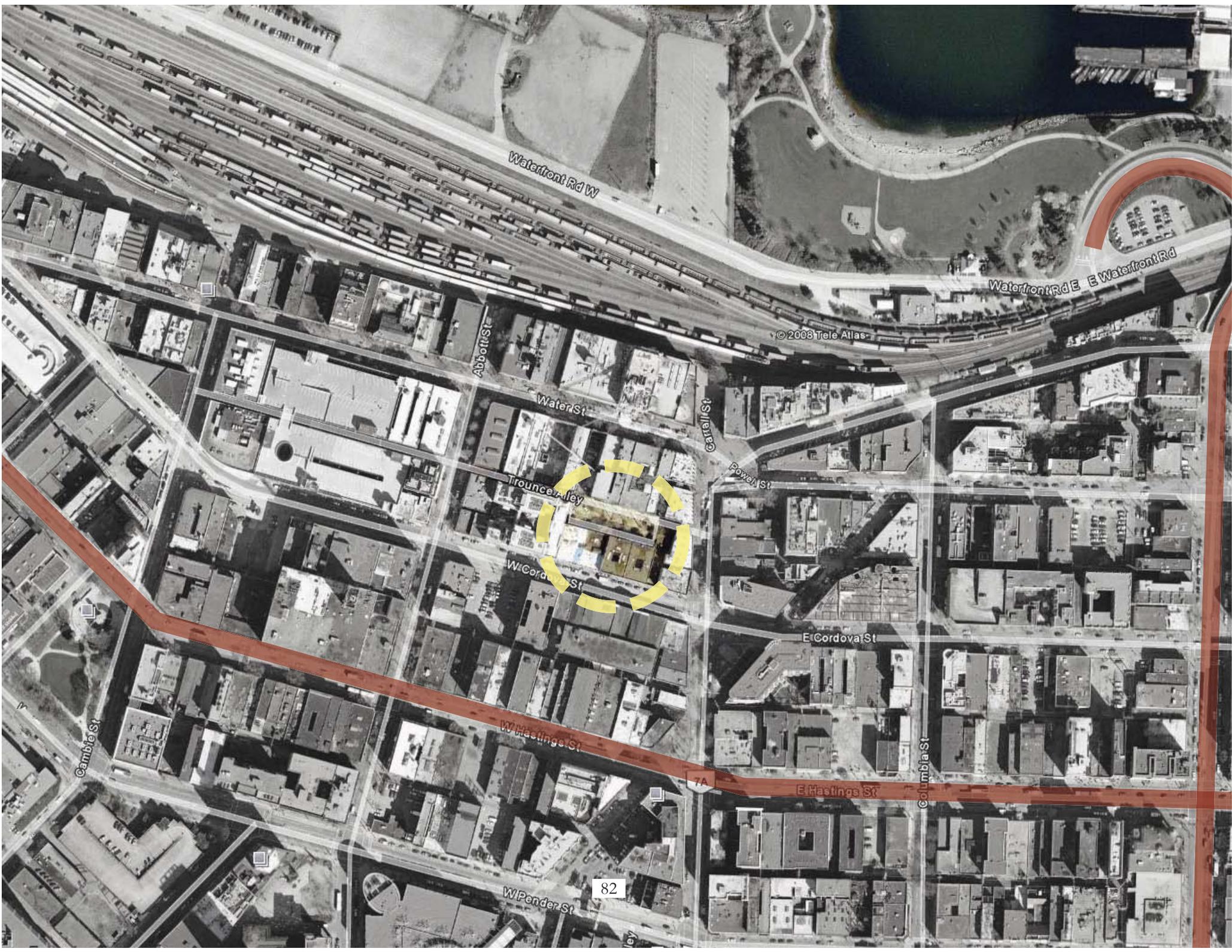
Opposite Page: Fig. 3.21 Sections
Above: Fig. 3.22 Elevation



Fig. 3.23 View of Dining Pavilioin from Park



Fig. 3.24 Communal Dining Event



Waterfront Rd W

Waterfront Rd E E Waterfront Rd

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Abbott St

Water St

Carroll St

Powell St

Trounce Alley

W Cordova St

E Cordova St

Cambie St

W Hastings St

E Hastings St

Columbia St

W Pender St

82

Opposite Page:

Fig. 3.25 Location Map of Blood Alley Square



Fig. 3.26 Blood Alley Square

Project B – Blood Alley Square

Blood Alley Square is located on the border of current development in the Downtown Eastside. It is part of Trounce Alley, which runs in-between Gastown to the North and the low-income area to the South. It is a unique condition to the area, with a large portion of the alley extending into an enclosed public square. Currently, the primary reputation of the square is similar to most Downtown Eastside alleys; drug use, prostitution and homelessness. However, as development moves further into the neighbourhood, the character of the square has begun to change. The opening of an exclusive wine bar directly in the alley paved the way for the current boom of condo developments, storefronts and restaurants.

These forces of development provide Blood Alley Square with the ability to become an important neighbourhood space. It has the potential to be a space shared by both high and low income residents, where simple everyday activities could lead to spontaneous interaction and experiences. Maintaining the quality of the square as a unique and inclusive environment will allow the diverse identity of the Downtown Eastside to be portrayed.

Site Analysis:

Location:

Sandwiched in-between Water Street and Cordova Street, Blood Alley Square is a prime example of the social divide growing in the area. One side of the square consists of hard-to-house supportive housing, an SRO and the Lore Krill non-market housing co-op, while the other is home to an exclusive wine bar, a whisky bar, and nearly completed condominiums.

Activities and Users:

Sheltered from the street and most public activity, Blood Alley Square provides a sense of privacy and quiet from the hectic city. The few benches and steps in the square allow for small gatherings, and a peaceful place of rest under the trees. This secluded space is also a site of drug use and prostitution, and is frequently used by the homeless; tents and sleeping bags are often visible on the balconies of the Stanley/New Fountain supportive housing building. The addition of the high-end wine bar has brought limited traffic to the alley from neighbouring Gastown, most of which does not stop long in the square itself. Gailor's Mews, a redeveloped nook of Gastown, contains additional shops, services and tourist attractions; however the potential connection to the square has been blocked with a metal gate. Two new condominium developments are nearing completion, which have built a strip of storefronts to open onto the square. These new developments are sure to attract additional new users to the square, and intensify the area.



Fig. 3.27 Location Map

Opposite Page:
Fig. 3.28 Analysis of Block Usage

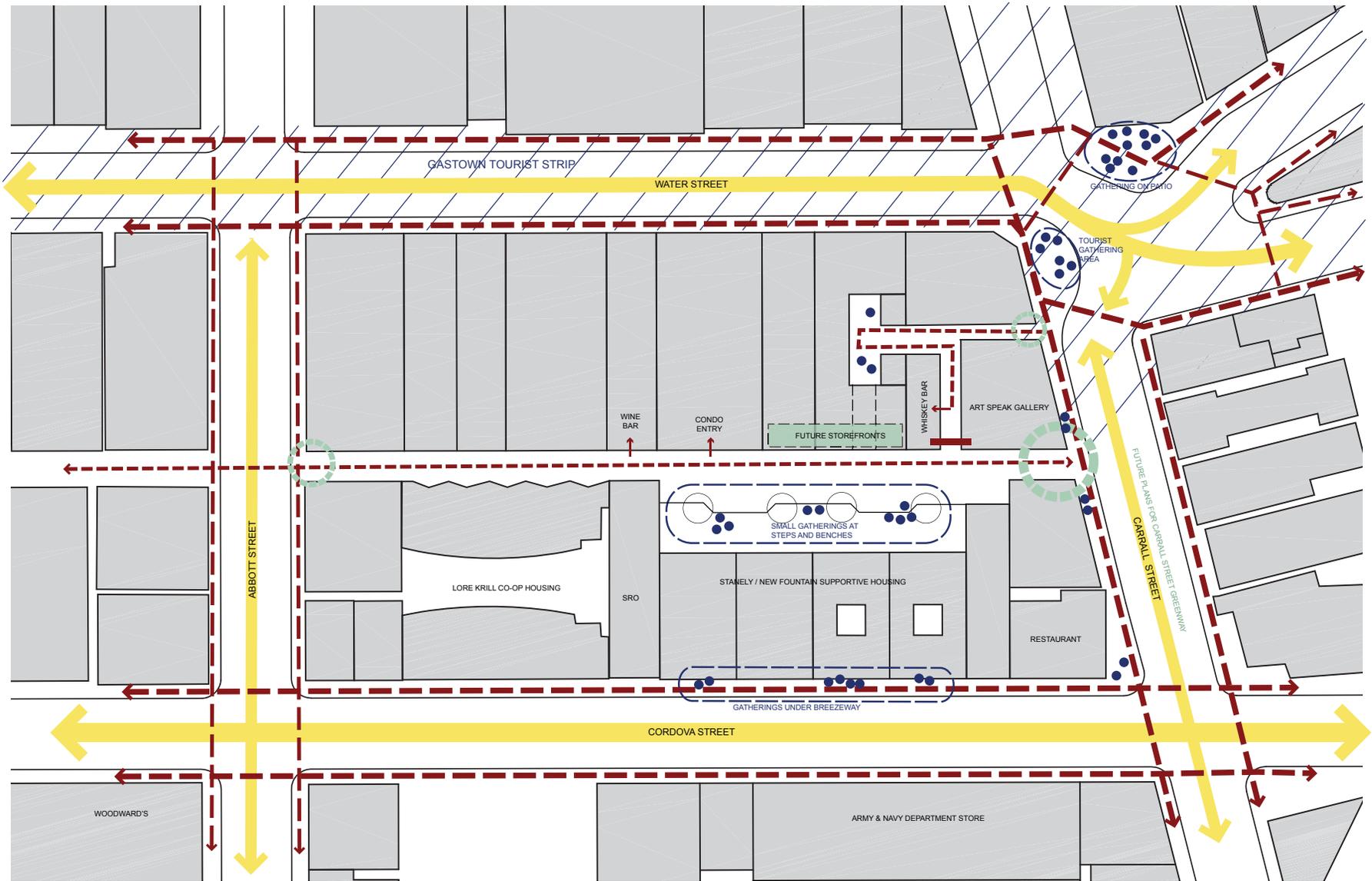




Fig. 3.29 Blood Alley Square - Looking South East



Fig. 3.30 Blood Alley Square - Looking South West

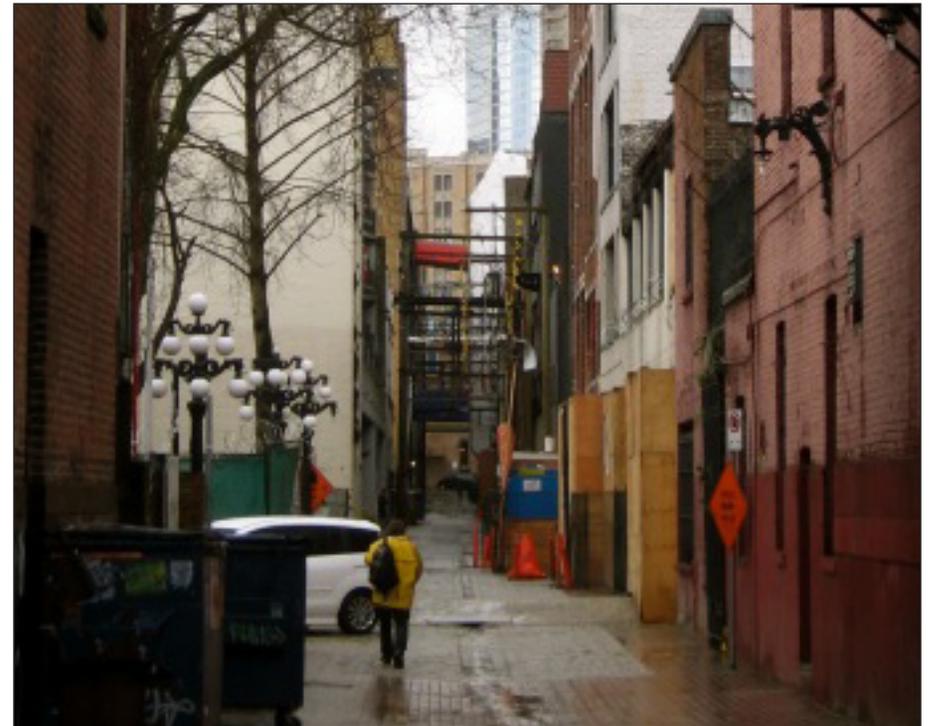


Fig. 3.31 Entrance to Trounce Alley, off of Carrall Street



Fig. 3.32 Condo Construction



Fig. 3.33 Salt Tasting Room - Exclusive wine bar in Trounce Alley



Fig. 3.34 Construction nears Completion, glazed storefronts face onto square

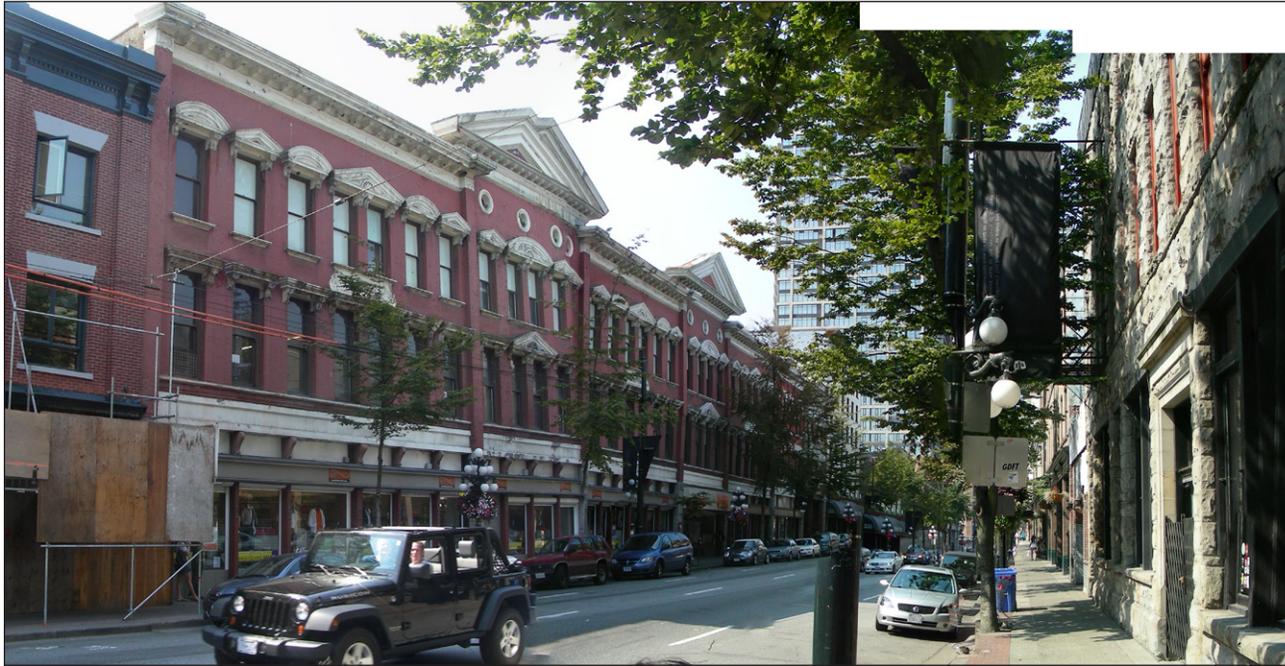


Fig. 3.35 Cordova Street -Looking West towards Army & Navy Department Store



Lore Krill Housing Co-op

SRO

Fig. 3.36 Cordova Street - North Elevation



Fig. 3.37 Gathering under Breezeway, Cordova Street



Fig. 3.38 Corner of Carrall and Water Streets, Looking South



Stanely / New Fountain Supportive Housing

Vacant

Restaurant

Design Proposal:

The design proposal for Blood Alley Square is aimed towards creating an inclusive neighbourhood place that promotes the crossing of boundaries. The idea of a 'neighbourhood place' is developed in *Everyday Urbanism* by Wall Wilson, where he defines three key ingredients: a civic presence, an open space, and a commercial enterprise.⁸ The civic presence will establish the 'neighbourhood place' firmly in the public domain, open space will allow the spontaneous gathering of people, and a commercial enterprise has the potential to become a staple in everyday life. The combination of these three elements will provide a balance of vitality and stability, creating a space that will enrich the lives of residents and strengthen bonds within the community.⁹

In Blood Alley Square the 'neighbourhood place' must speak to multiple groups of people. It attempts to bring together people from different income groups, cultures and lifestyles. Through multidimensional programming and spatial organization, the space will allow multiple users and activities to coexist, fostering a dialogue between user groups. It is also important that the design speaks to the low-income community, maintaining the square as an inclusive space and anchoring them in place.

Siting and Form:

The design proposes a drastic renovation to the existing block; the removal of three buildings along Cordova, as well as the renovation of an existing SRO. The new building is designed to read as a two-storey block, maintaining the human scale of the existing square and a sense of enclosure. However, it will also act as a threshold, perforated with three direct links from the street to the alley; it will allow both a physical and visual connection between the two spaces. These connections will encourage movement between the two spaces, enhance use of the square, engage the interior spaces of the buildings, and create new in-between spaces.

Program:

The design proposal is composed of multiple programmatic elements, chosen to attract a wide variety of people and activities. The anticipated restaurants and storefronts could open directly into the square, activating the space and providing the primary attraction for higher income groups. Therefore the proposed design will focus primarily on attracting low-income groups.

The primary identity of the proposed building is a neighbourhood bath house, focusing on daily social activities. There are four main programmatic elements which combine to create the bath house: a drop-in center for public bathing, a recreational public pool and fitness facility, a community cafe and cooking school, and office space reserved for non-profit organizations. While overlaps and connections exist between

certain programs, each element can be self-contained and functions individually, allowing the square to become the dominant common space.

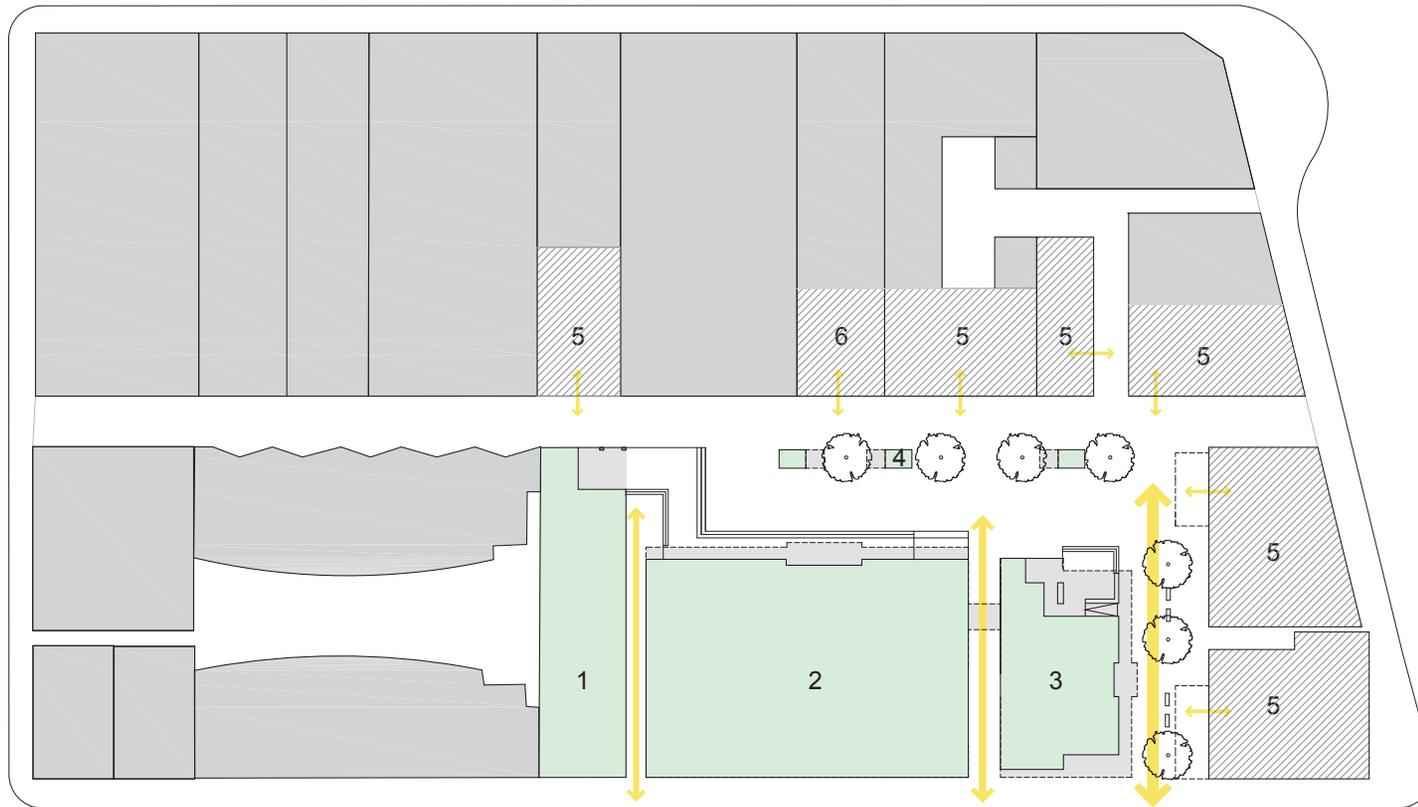
The public bathing center is aimed towards the lower-income levels — homeless individuals or those living in sub-standard conditions. It is envisioned as a 24-hr drop-in center, with a small lounge, storage lockers for carts and belongings, and individual public washrooms. It provides for the basic personal needs of those who do not have access to safe, clean facilities. It will also function as a place of refuge and social gathering space, where relationships can develop over time through daily encounters.

The public pool is open to all residents of the area and would attract various groups including local families and youth. Additional fitness facilities, a gym, and two studio spaces, would also provide much needed amenity space for the area. Studios could be used by local residents to who wish to start their own classes such as yoga, music, or dance and also be accessible from the drop-in center for organized events.

The community cooking school would provide valuable training and opportunities to local resident, as well as running a 24 hr low-cost cafe, which opens onto the square. This cafe would provide meals to less affluent members of the community and provide a welcoming interior space accessible throughout the night.

The office tower sits above the two-storey podium of the bath house. As land and rental prices rise in the area, affordable office space for local organization will become rare. The addition of office space to the square will provide much needed low-rent office space and will attracted a wider group of users to the space.

There are also three small kiosks located in the square. These kiosks would be operated by the bath house, but could be used free of charge by individuals or local organizations for various activities such as the sale of arts and crafts, information booths, or the sale of the street calendar and newspapers. These kiosks would close up securely when not in use, and fold out to accommodate rain shelter and benches when occupied.



- 1 - CAFE, LAUNDRYMAT & HOUSING
- 2 - PUBLIC POOL & FITNESS
- 3 - DROP-IN CENTER, COOKING SCHOOL & OFFICE TOWER
- 4 - COMMUNITY KIOSKS
- 5 - COMMERCIAL SPACE
- 6 - CONDOMINIUM

Fig. 3.39 Site Plan and Program

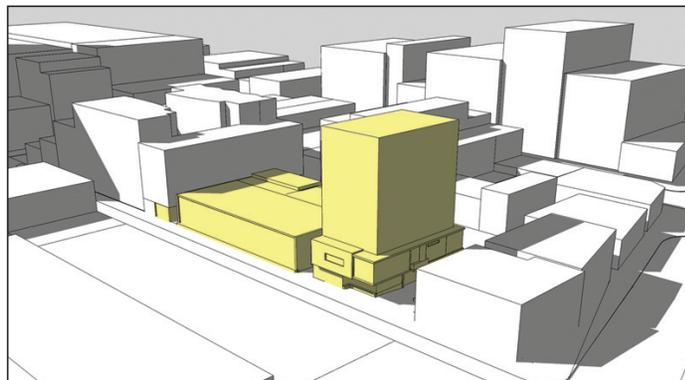


Fig. 3.40 Massing Study - Cordova Street

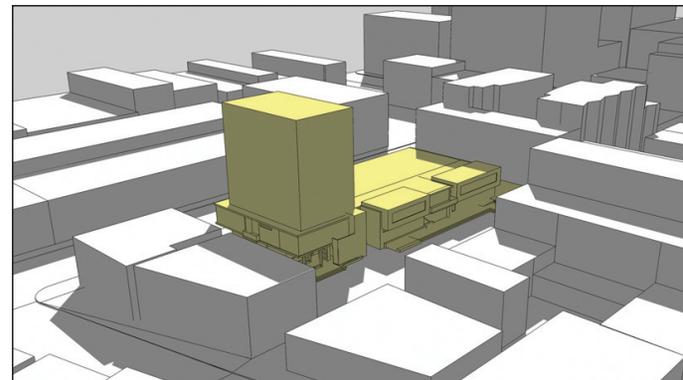


Fig. 3.41 Massing Study - Blood Alley Square

EXTENT OF PUBLIC SPACE



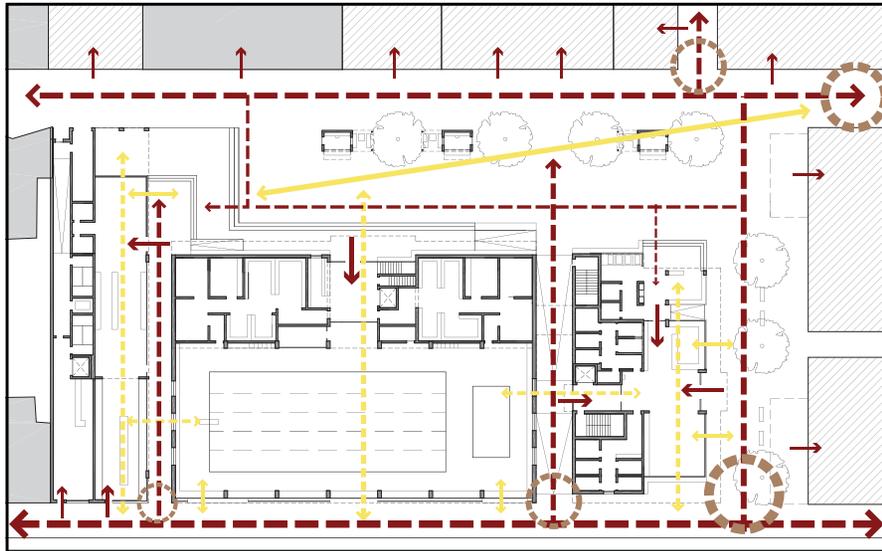
- PRIVATE HOUSING
- PUBLIC SPACE
- COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENT

PROGRAM AND HOURS OF OPERATION



- RESTAURANT
- SERVICE
- ART GALLERY
- RETAIL
- FITNESS

PHYSICAL AND VISUAL CONNECTIONS



- PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT
- FILTERED VISUAL CONNECTION
- ENTRANCE
- DIRECT VISUAL CONNECTION

INHABITATION



- PERSON
- PRIMARY GATHERING SPACES

Fig. 3.42

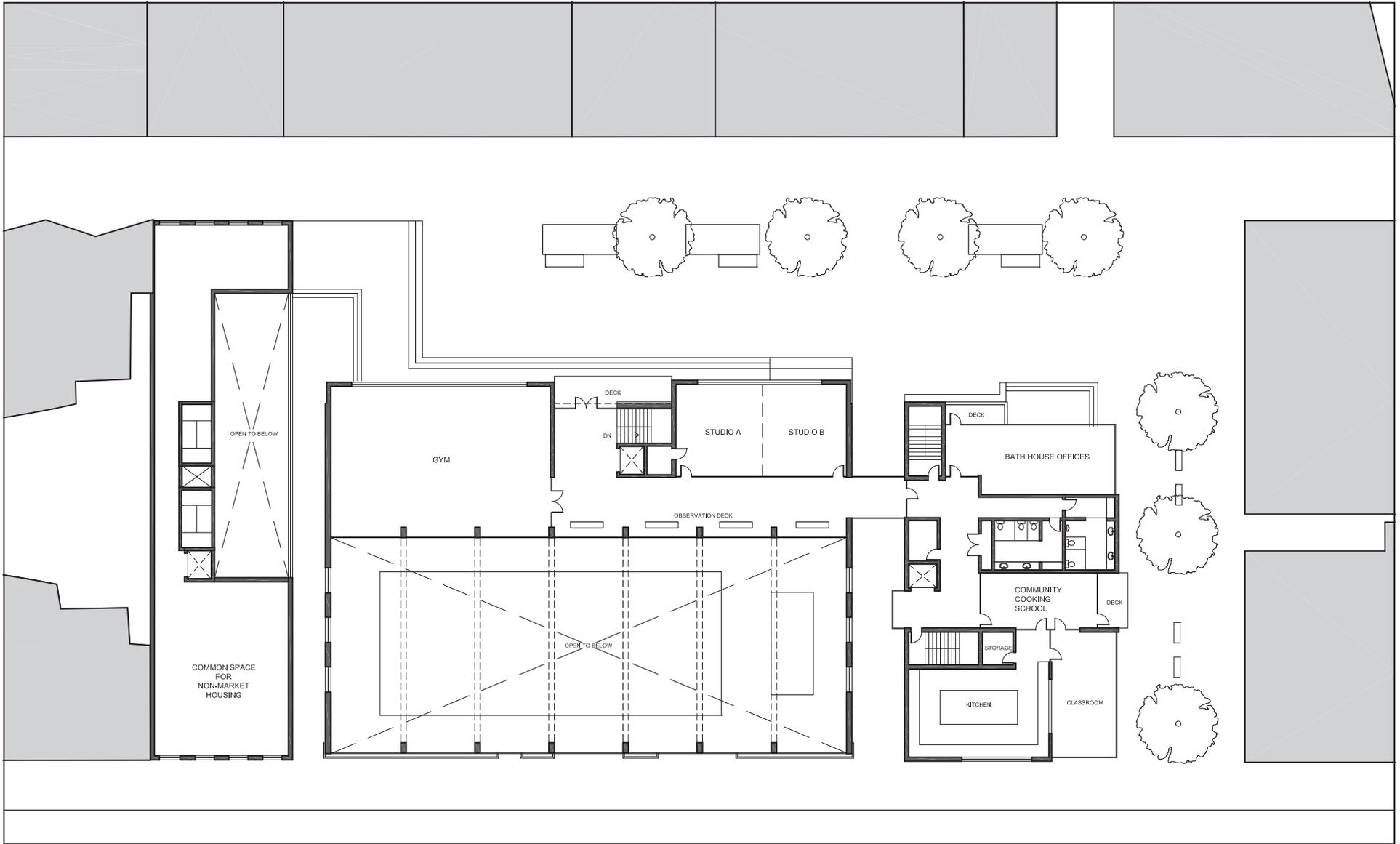
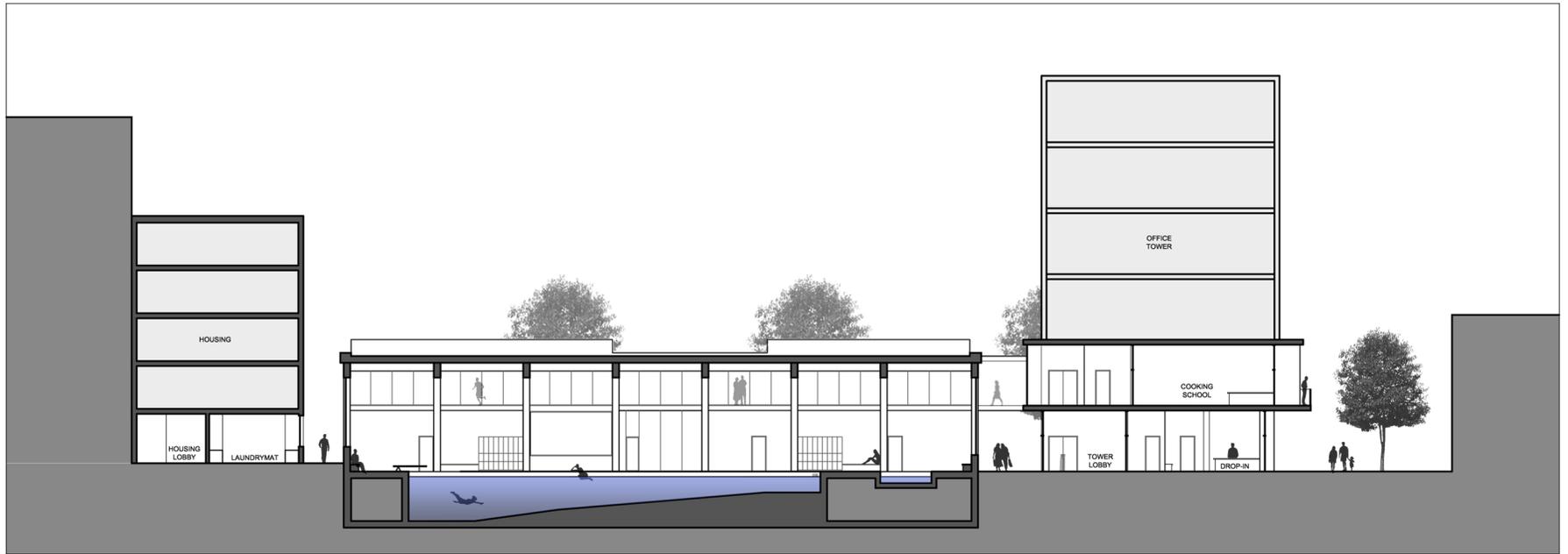
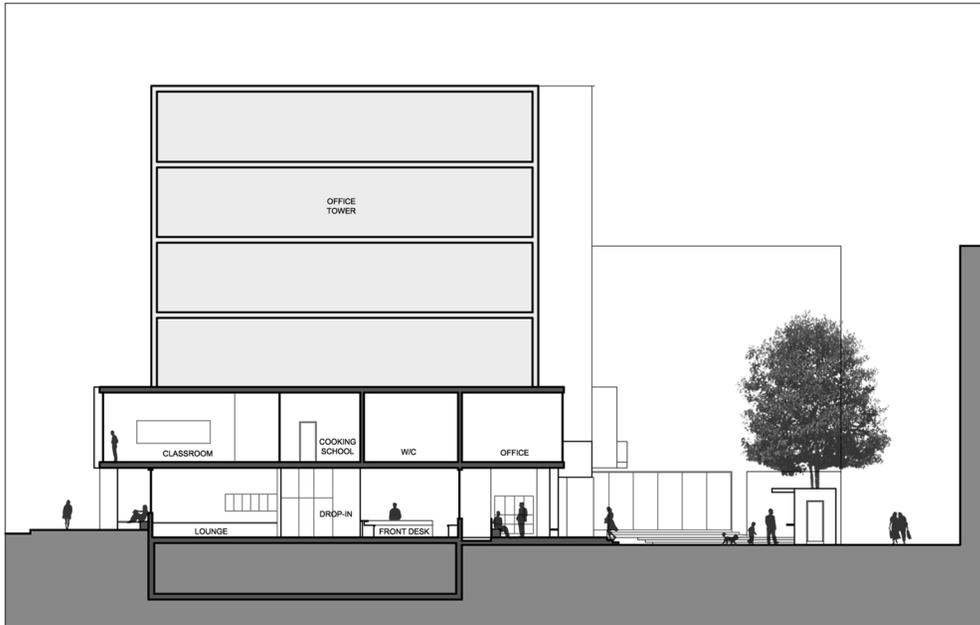


Fig. 3.44

SECOND FLOOR
SCALE = 1:400 



SECTION A
SCALE = 1:400



SECTION B
SCALE = 1:400



SECTION C
SCALE = 1:400

Fig. 3.45



STREET ELEVATION
SCALE = 1:400



SQUARE ELEVATION
SCALE = 1:400

Fig. 3.46



Fig. 3.47 Bath House - Cordova Street



Fig. 3.48 Bath House - Blood Alley Square



■ Total SRO Buildings in DTES = 109



Standard Lot Sizes:

■ Single (7.5m x 37.5m) = 32 Buildings

■ Double (15m x 37.5 m) = 43 Building + 5 Empty Lots



Total Double Lots = 48

■ Heritage Rating = 14

■ Double Corner Lots = 10

Total Remaining Double Lots = 24

Fig. 3.49 Site Selection Strategy

Project C – Sidewalk Spaces

Sidewalks are the physical infrastructure of a pedestrian oriented neighbourhood like the Downtown Eastside, playing an essential role in the formation of community and daily life. This project will explore a strategy to extend the vibrant space of the sidewalk, creating small zones of public space throughout the neighbourhood. These zones will provide much needed pockets of ‘everyday space’ for various casual activities and multiple users. They will allow the residents of the community to continue using informal public space in their daily lives, fostering individual relationships and the overall level of community.

The city’s policy to replace existing SROs with social housing provides a unique opportunity to develop a new design strategy for the neighbourhood. By incorporating public space into the design for new housing, a network of public spaces will be created throughout the area. These spaces would be owned by the city, but would be operated by the management of the housing complex, resulting in a heightened degree of ownership for those who live within the building.

Site Selection Strategy:

There are currently one-hundred and nine SROs remaining in the Downtown Eastside. Standard lots sizes in the area are 37.5m x 7.5m, however many SROs are two lots wide resulting in a 15m wide frontage. SROs on double lots appear to be the most common scenario; there are forty three SROs and five empty double lots in the area.

The following design proposal will work from a blank site and will be based on a standard double lot, located mid block with buildings on either side. It will be directly applicable to twenty four sites in the Downtown Eastside and the principles developed in the design could be applied to heritage building conversions and corner lots, or similarly to narrow or unique lots.

Design Proposal:

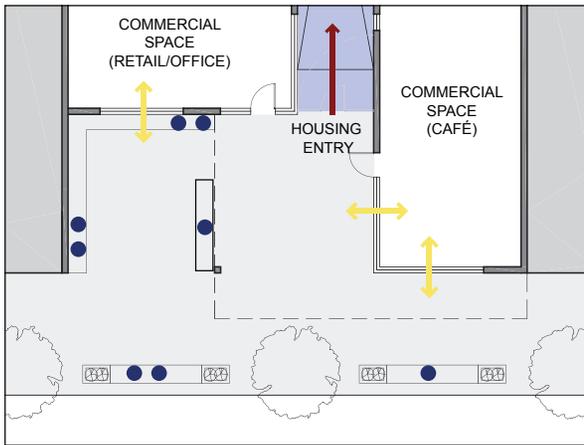
An extension of sidewalk space allows the street to become more habitable, improving the everyday life of pedestrians in the Downtown Eastside. The public zone can be manipulated to accommodate a diversity of features and activities that people can use on a regular basis, strengthening the bond between individual and the streetscape, as well as between street and building. The small size of these spaces combined with their connection to the housing complex and commercial spaces, allows a wide variety of activities to take place. Small groups of people are able to transform these spaces and hold their own events such as vending, repair services for bikes or carts, community barbeques, garage sales, art and craft sales, food hand-outs, clothing hand-outs, or simply socializing and people-watching. Public facilities could include drinking fountains, mailboxes, pay phones, newspaper stands, dog-walking amenities, public lockers, street vending stands, bbqs, benches, community bulletin boards, chess or card tables. Each building can develop their space individually, expressing their own character and identity, and allowing the residents of the building to partake in the design. These spaces will undoubtedly change over time, reflecting the needs and values of both the community and residents of the building.

The building design focuses on the creation of thresholds, and provides a gentle progression from the public street to the private domain of the unit. Creating a public zone along the front of the building, allows a softening of typical housing boundaries, providing an opportunity to create a connection between the life of the building and the life of the street. Commercial space, such as a cafe, retail, or local organization has

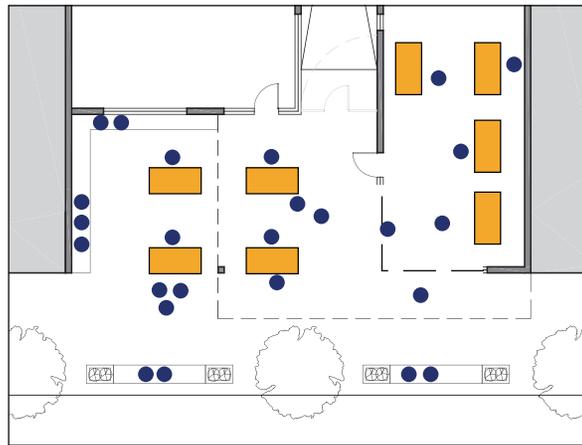
been proposed along the street facade, enhancing the public feeling of the fore-court and engaging the public with the building. This public feeling is enhanced by the double height of the space which also allows visual connections from the communal spaces above. This will enhance safety in the public space as well as the sense of connection to the space for residents of the building.

The housing portion of the building has been developed around an internal courtyard, providing a semi-public space within its boundaries. This courtyard is visible from the street and commercial spaces, allowing a relationship to exist between building and public life. The courtyard provides a safe outdoor space for residents and promotes a sense of community within the building. Its connection to the public realm would also make it an ideal venue for hosting small neighbourhood events such as barbeques or performances.

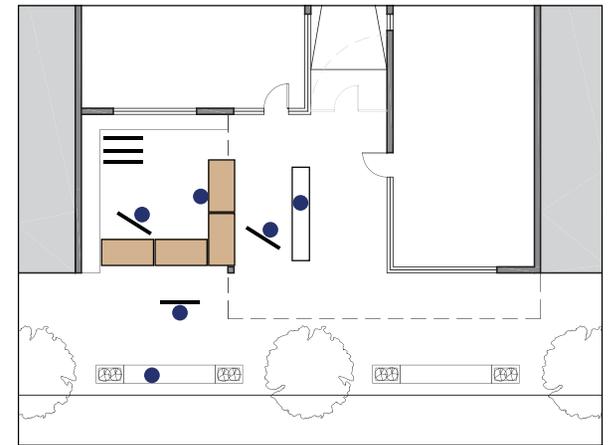
Above the courtyard sits the second layer of semi-public space, a communal kitchen, dining room, lounge and patio look out to the street and public space below. All residents of the building have access to this space, providing a visual connection to the neighbourhood and encouraging community within the building. Communal spaces would be monitored by staff members and allow the individual units to be more compact.



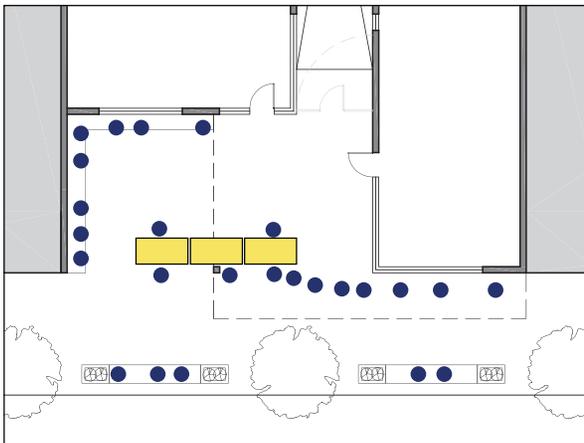
SIDEWALK SPACE



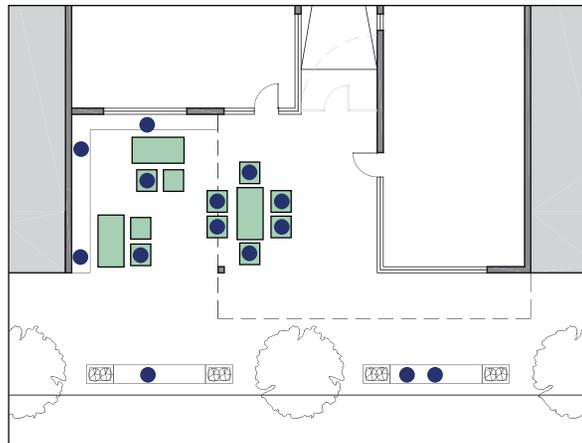
STREET VENDING
ARTS & CRAFTS
SECOND HAND GOODS



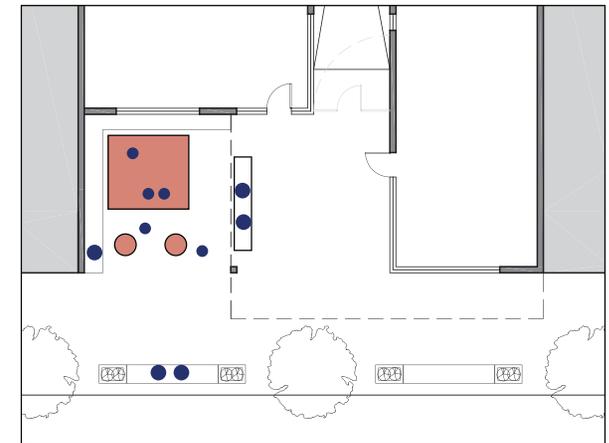
REPAIR SERVICES
BIKES
CARTS



FREE HAND-OUTS
FOOD/DRINK
CLOTHING



GAME TABLES
CARDS
CHESS



MINI PARK
CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA
SMALL DOG PARK

● PERSON

Fig. 3.50 Activity Diagrams

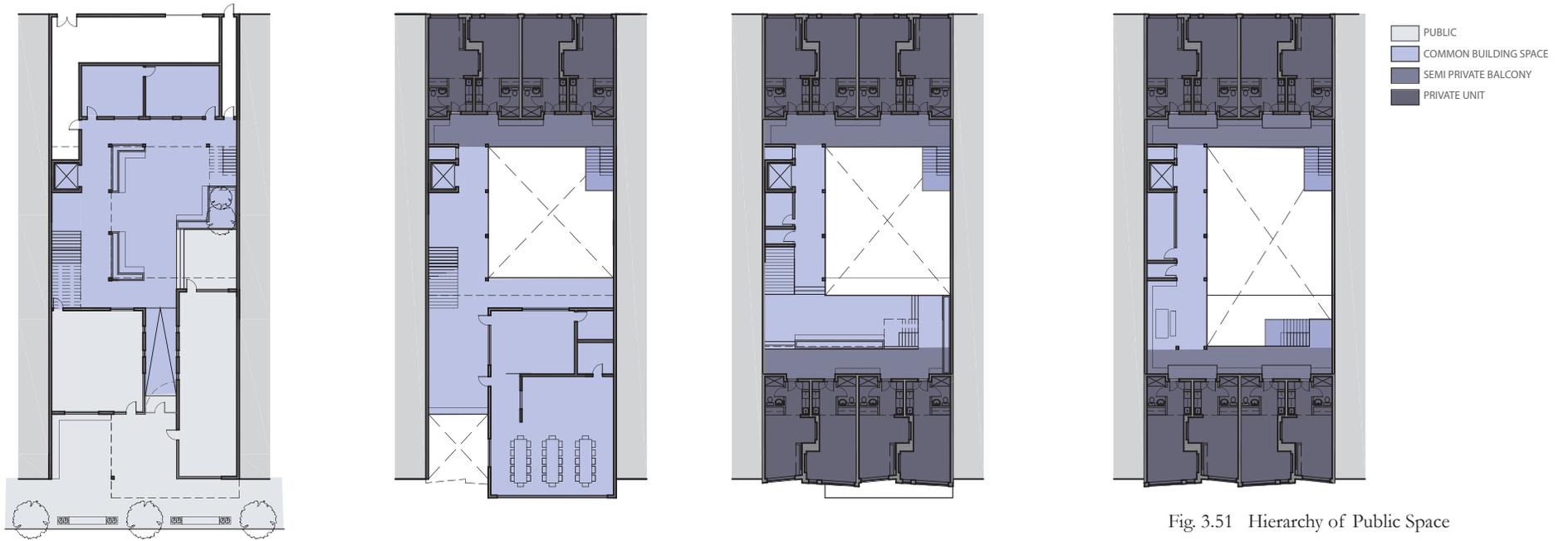


Fig. 3.51 Hierarchy of Public Space

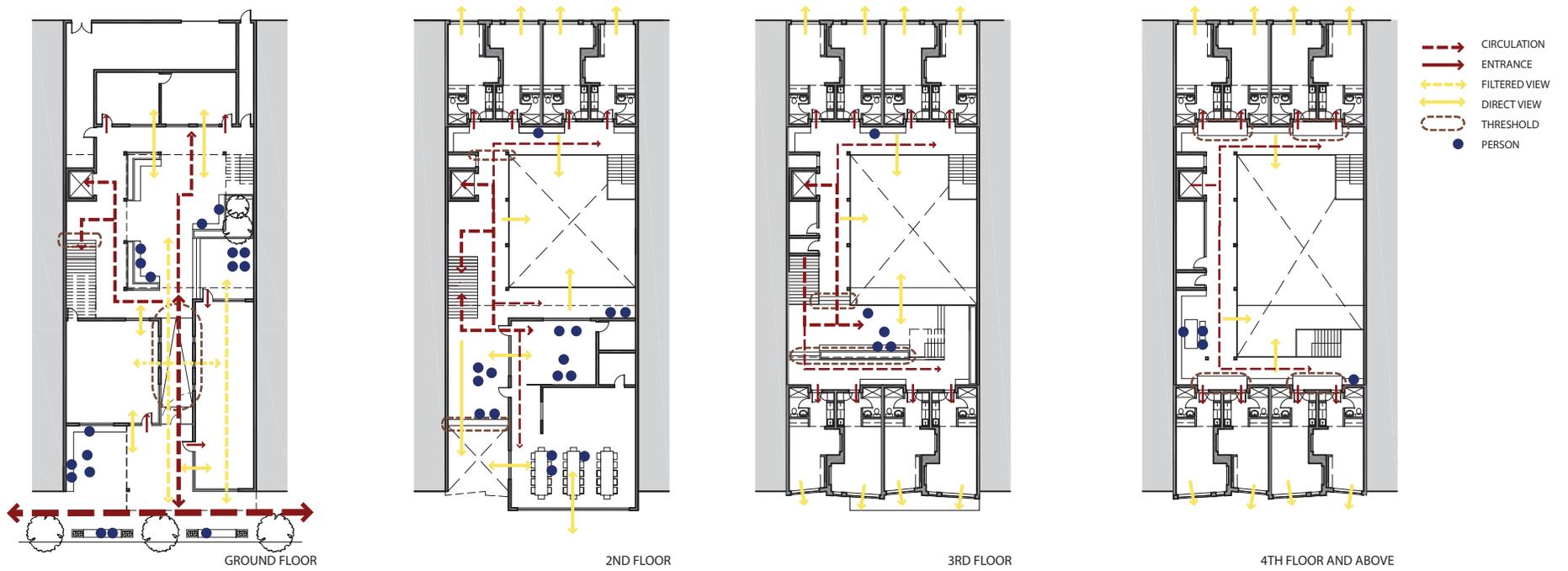
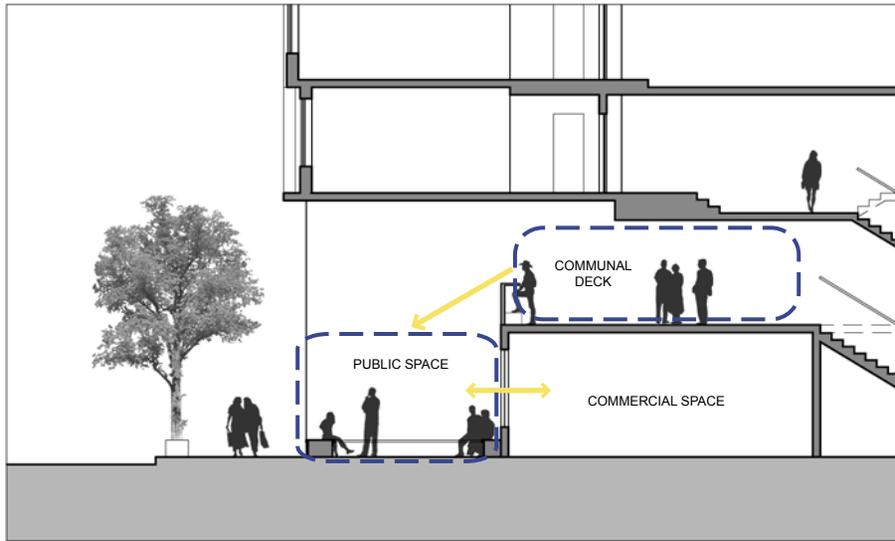
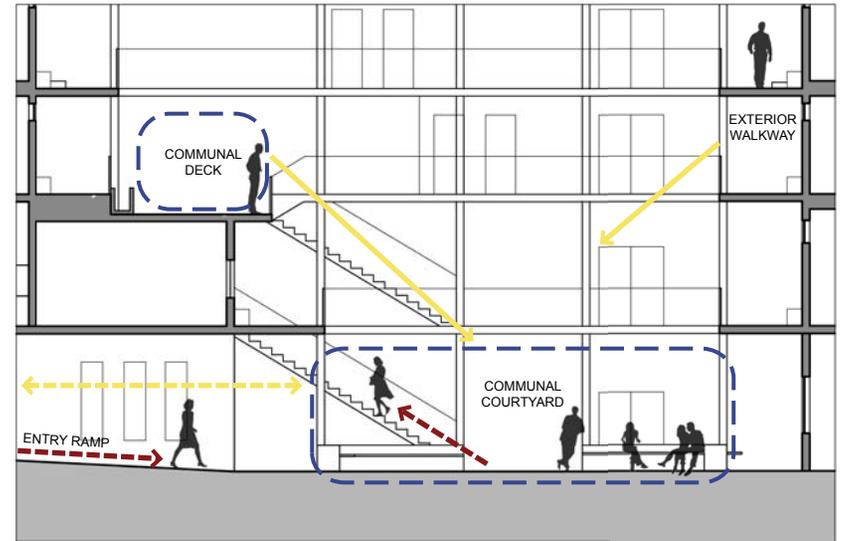


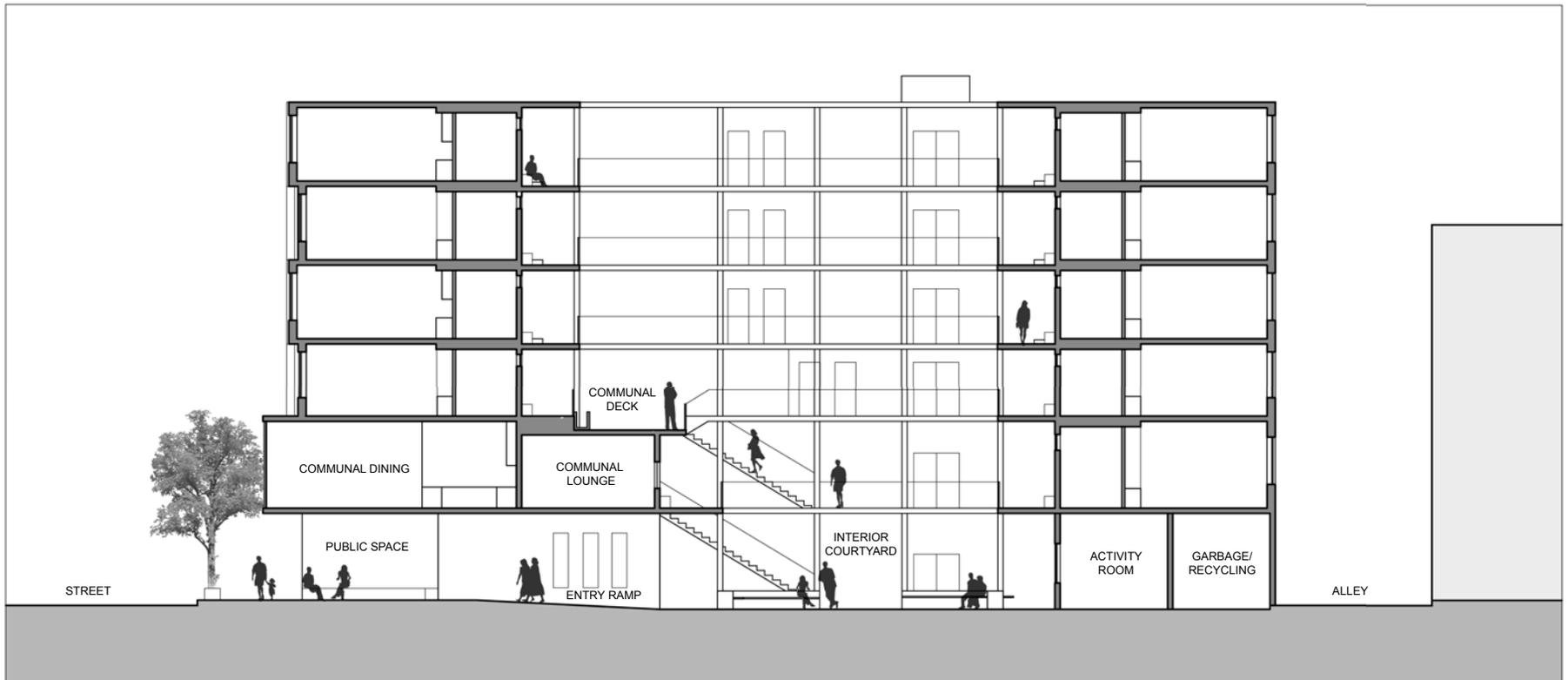
Fig. 3.52 Circulation, Inhabitation, Views



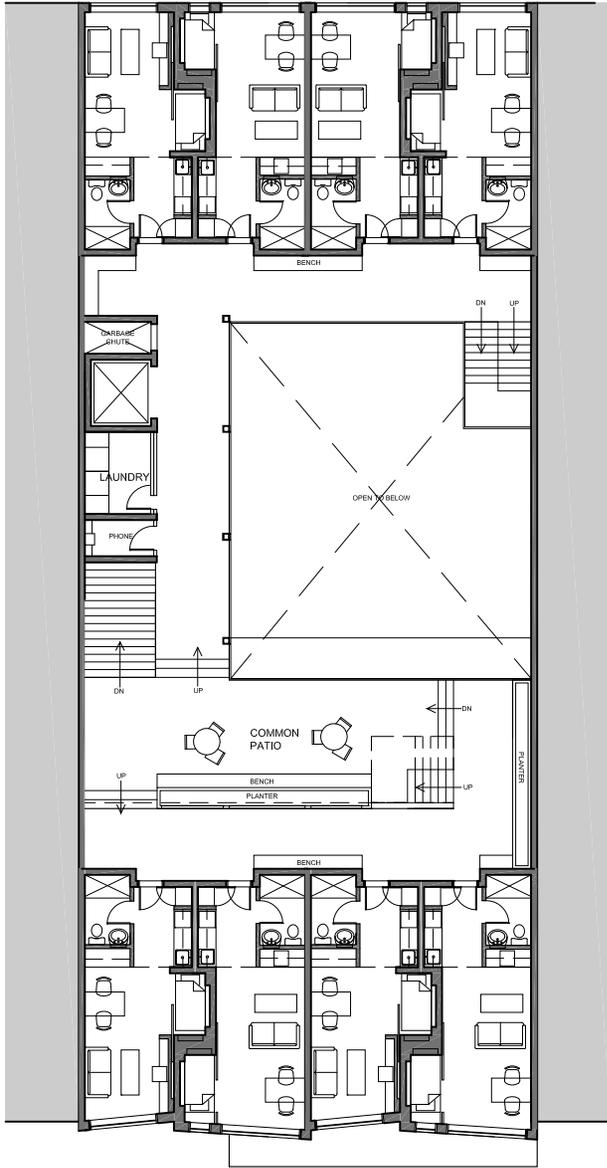
SECTION THROUGH PUBLIC SPACE
SCALE = 1:200



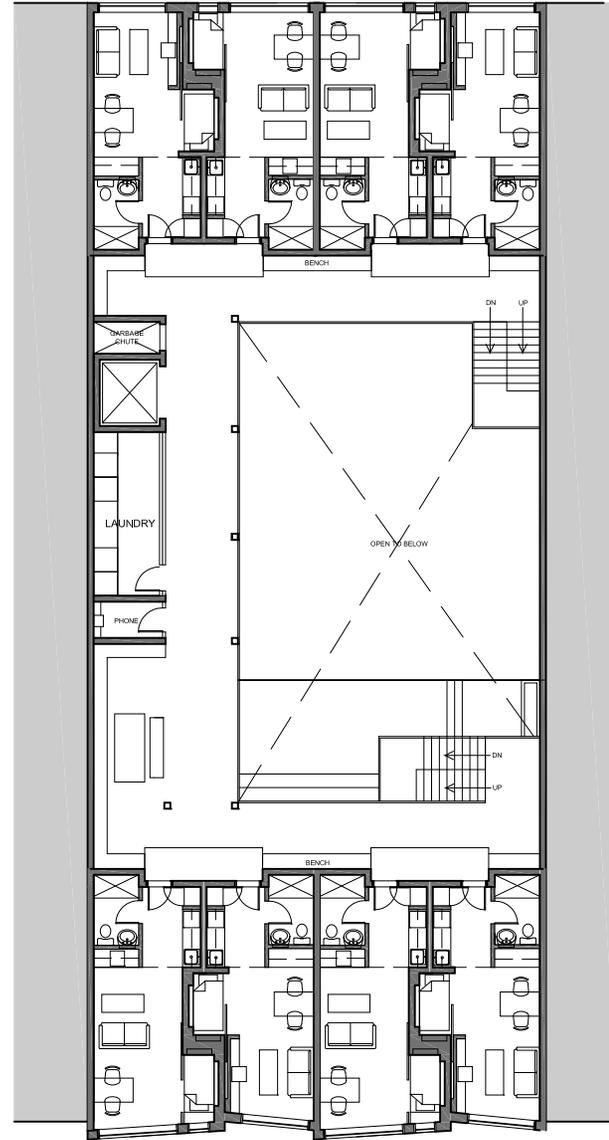
SECTION THROUGH COURTYARD
SCALE = 1:200



BUILDING SECTION
SCALE = 1:250



3RD FLOOR
SCALE = 1:250



4TH FLOOR & ABOVE
SCALE = 1:250



Fig. 3.55 Street View - Pocket of Public Space



Fig. 3.56 Interior Courtyard

CONCLUSION & REFLECTIONS

Conclusion & Reflections

Despite the Downtown Eastside's economic and spatial isolation, its vulnerable population is sustained through an exceptional sense of community and social support. This strong social network has formed through the understanding of shared experiences and reoccurring public contact, making the public realm of the Downtown Eastside essential to its vitality. The recognition of the neighbourhood's 'everyday spaces' as the primary site for social interaction generated an architectural design problem: how can architecture promote inclusive, supportive public spaces that will enhance the level of community and social interaction within the neighbourhood? This question becomes particularly significant in the context of current development trends which threaten the area's tolerant and inclusive environment.

Everyday Urbanism became the guiding theory behind this thesis, establishing the basic strategy that the design proposal embraced; an exploration of individual architectural projects as opposed to an overarching urban plan. Three sites were selected based on their existing importance or location within the community as well as their potential for development into a 'neighbourhood place.' Each project developed a program in direct response to its site, born out of an understanding of the area's needs, current uses and future plans. While each site and program posed its own architectural challenges, the focus of each design remained primarily on the creation of accessible and inclusive public space. The success of each design project would rely on its ability to encourage the public to use the space as a part of their everyday life,

becoming a regular meeting place where they could participate in the life of the community.

A primary principle of 'city design' and the development of a 'neighbourhood place,' is the direct involvement of local residents in the design process. Location and time constraints prohibited this process from taking place during this exploration, which has limited the development of the design projects. Community participation would have led to a greater understanding of the community as a whole, as well as provided specific input to each design project. Further development of this thesis could begin to incorporate elements of this process by obtaining feedback on the current design proposals and modifying them accordingly. The involvement of local residents would not only improve the design of the projects but would also increase the sense of ownership and belonging for local residents.

Along with community participation, the involvement of local organizations and the city would be essential to the success of each project. Financing, land acquisition, and the operation of facilities are large tasks that would require cooperation between various levels of government as well as independent organizations. The city has already begun to 'clean up' certain public spaces in the area due to development trends, and with the participation of local organizations and residents, these new developments could become the 'neighbourhood spaces' this thesis envisions. However, gentrification could also prove to be the

biggest obstacle in the success of the projects. While the goal of each project is to enhance the level of community in a neighbourhood, in reality these new projects may contribute to the area's sanitization and resulting exclusion. Residents may view these projects as an extension of the high-end development which is changing their neighbourhood. Would the proposed Blood Alley Square actually appeal to all sectors of the population, or would this development contribute to its gentrification? The design proposals attempt to confront this issue through specific programming aimed towards multiple sections of the population while creating an inviting and open public space. The operation and management of these facilities would also have a significant impact on their success, balancing safety with accessibility would be essential.

While the Downtown Eastside has a strong social network, its residents are fragile and have fewer supports and resources than average city dwellers. This, along with the threat of gentrification, heightens the importance of community building within this neighbourhood. However the lessons learned in the thesis stretch beyond marginalized and gentrifying areas. The encouragement of community and public life should be incorporated throughout North American cities, regardless of economic class. The principles discussed in this thesis establish that the design of meaningful community places must begin with an understanding and acceptance of the life that takes place there, and can be applied to a wide variety of spaces and situations. This thesis demonstrates the role 'everyday space' plays in the development of social networks and illustrates possibilities for architecture to affect them. By incorporating the design strategies

of supportive and inclusive public space, future building in our cities could help cultivate communities as valuable as the one found in the Downtown Eastside.



Fig. 4.1 People's Pigeon Park, 2007
Photograph by Wilda, DTES Resident

APPENDIX

Description of Housing Types:

Single-Room Occupancy (SRO):

SRO's are privately owned buildings containing three or more rented single occupancy units. The units are small rooms, typically 10 x 10 feet, with a common bathroom and cooking facilities (if any). In the DTES most buildings classified as a SRO are residential hotels or rooming houses built before the 1st World War. SRO units are the most basic, most affordable shelter provided by the market, and are often the last option before homelessness.

Current conditions of SROs in the DTES are substandard; rodents, insects, windowless rooms and broken bathrooms are all common problems.

Welfare provides \$375 dollars per month for shelter, however recent surveys show SRO rents have increased to \$425/month and above.

Non-Market Housing:

Non-market housing is reserved for those who cannot afford market rents. They are often multi-family apartment buildings with self contained units, each with cooking facilities and full bathrooms. However recently in Vancouver, SROs have been bought by the city and converted to non-market housing for low-income singles. Both supportive housing, and co-op housing is included in non-market housing. Residents of many of these units are income-tested and pay no more than 30% of their income on rent.

Non-market housing is usually funded through senior government and managed by non-profit societies or government. Land and additional funds are often provided by the City.

Special Needs Residential Facility (SNRF):

SNRFs are residential facilities for people who are temporarily or permanently unable to live independently. They are provincially licensed to provide professional care or treatment to people with mental illness, brain injuries, addiction, severe disability or who are dying. They can be either self contained units or, more commonly shared accommodation, occasionally combined with non-market housing. The City includes both emergency shelters and transitional houses under the SNRF classification.

Market Housing:

Market housing is defined as privately owned, rented or owner occupied housing, including live/work suites. Generally they are larger than 320 sf and self contained with cooking facilities and bathrooms.

Source:

City of Vancouver, 2005, Housing Plan for the Downtown Eastside

List of Services and Organizations in the Downtown Eastside:

Community Centers and Meeting Places:

SUCCESS

Chinese Cultural Center

The Dugout

DTES Women's Center

Carnegie Community Center

Evelyne Saller Center

Lookout Society

YAC – Youth Action Centre

Strathcona Community Center

DTES Senior's Center

The Living Room

Ray-Cam Co-op Center

Health and Social Services:

Chinese Community Library

DAMS + Atira

Downtown Eastside Community Health Clinic

Downtown Eastside Residents Association

Downtown Eastside Youth Activities Society

DEYAS Needle Exchange

DEYAS Youth Detox

The Door is Open

DTES Community Health Clinic

DTES Women's Centre

First United Church & Wish

Franciscan Sisters

Health Contact Centre

LifeSkills Centre

Lookout Emergency Aid

Inner Ministerial Services

NAOMI

PACE

Pender Health Clinic

Phillipino Women's Centre

St. James Community Services Society

St. James – cheque pick up

Safe Injection Site

Salvation Army

Salvation Army – The Haven

Sheway & YMCA

Strathcona Mental Health Team

Strathcona School Dental Clinic

Street Nurses

Sunrise Hotel Dental Clinic

Union Gospel Mission

Union Gospel Mission – Drop-in Centre

United Native Nations

VANDU

Vancouver Community Mental Services

Vancouver Native Health

VINDUS

WATARI

Child Care Centres:

New Puitak Day Care Centre

Crabtree Corner

Waterside Children's Centre

Eagle's Nest Preschool

Strathcona School

Strathcona Community centre

Raymur Place Day Care

RayCam Community Centre

Schools a Education Facilities:

Carnegie Learning Centre

The UBC Learning Exchange

Private Business and Trade Schools:

Bershire College

Bodwell Language School

BUD College of English

English Bay College

Food and Resource Group/Cook Studio

Gastown Business College

Helen Lefaux (Fashion School)

International Education Community College

International Language School of Canada

Japanese Language School

Kitty's Beauty School Ltd.

London School of Hairdressing

Tradeworks training Society

Vancouver Chinese Public School

Vancouver Film School

Various Business and Trade Schools

Free/Low Cost Meals Available to Everyone:

Anchor of Hope

All Tribes Mission

Asian Society for the Intervention of AIDS

Carnegie Centre

Crosswalk

Door is Open

Dugout Drop-In

Evelyne Saller Centre

First United Church

Food on the Corner

Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement

Lookout Downtown Shelter

Harbour Light Centre (Salvation Army)

Mission Possible

QUEST Outreach Society

Potters Place

Rainbow Mission

Street Church at Foursquare Gospel Church

Triage

Free/Low Cost Meals Available to Select Groups:

Belkin House (Men Only)

D'TES Senior's Centre (Seniors Only)

D'TES Women's Centre (Women Only)

Drop-in Centre for Women (Women Only)

Haven (Men Only)

Living Room Drop-in Activity Centre (Mental Health Customers Only)

Powell Place Shelter for Women (Women Only)

Watari Street Youth Day Treatment Program

WISH Drop-In Centre (Women Only)

Community Kitchens:

Abbot Mansions

Antionette Lodge (Seniors Residence)

Health Contact Centre

Jubilee Rooms (Jacobs Well)

LifeSkills Centre

Seymour Cooking Fun for Families

The Stanely New Fountain Community Kitchen

Princess Rooms

Windchimes Community Kitchen

Good Food Box Depots:

65 W. Cordova

239 E Georgia St.

Places with Multiple Programs and Services:

Positive Outlook Program HIV/AIDS

Potluck Cafe

Sheway and YMCA Crabtree Corner

Strathcona Community Centre

Union Gospel Mission

VANDU

Community Gardens:

Cottonwood Community Garden

Environmental Youth Alliance Community Garden

Strathcona Community Garden

Housing Policy:

In 2003, the Single Accommodation (SRA) By-law was enacted to regulate the change in the supply of low-income housing in the downtown core. SRA includes; SRO hotels, rooming houses, and non-market units 320sf or smaller. The policy dictates that owners wishing to convert or demolish designated SRA rooms must apply and obtain a SRA Permit. City Council decides all SRA Permits on a case by case basis.¹ The SRA By-law has been somewhat successful in maintaining the quantity of housing stock, however vacancy rates have declined, and rent increases have made some SRA accommodation unattainable for many residents.

In 2005, the Downtown Eastside Housing Policy was developed. The “fundamental goal is revitalization and improved living conditions, and increased diversity of housing without displacing low-income residents or their community or compromising its city and regional role as the primary low-income neighbourhood.” The policy aims to maintain 10,000 units of low-income housing stock in the area and to increase its quality over time. SROs are to be bought and replaced with new self-contained social housing for singles, some being supportive housing units. The plan also encourages an increase of market housing, with an emphasis on affordability in rental and owner occupied units.²

Notes:

1. City of Vancouver, 2006, 2005/06 Downtown Eastside Community Monitoring Report
2. City of Vancouver, 2005, Housing Plan for the Downtown Eastside

ENDNOTES

Endnotes:

Introduction

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