

Urban Actuation
Public Space as a Catalyst for Urban Revitalization

by

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

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

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

ABSTRACT

The physical and social benefits of public space apparent to architects, landscape architects, and urban designers are endangered in many North American mid-size cities as residential, commercial and industrial development spreads further from the core of the city. Enduring a surplus of surface parking, vacant storefronts and abandoned lots, the physical ailments of distressed city centres have an equally negative impact on the social environment. As a result, the community's perception of public space is in a fragile state as their experience of a fragmented urban environment creates feelings of insecurity and vulnerability.

Engaging this vulnerable territory of the city, this thesis explores public space as a testing ground for new ideas to be hypothesized, tested and developed. The proposal, a product of an in-depth study of the theory and practice of *Everyday Urbanism* and *Temporary Use*, develops a method for design and analysis titled *Urban Actuation*.

Applied to the site of Galt City Centre, Cambridge, Ontario, the *Urban Actuation* process provides an inclusive way to perceive, value and develop urban public space. Proposed interventions emerge from empirical observation of the existing physical and social conditions of the city and are tested as a means of engaging the community and receiving feedback into the process. Intended to accompany market-driven development, *Urban Actuation* champions the design professional and city leaders to educate the community on the importance of public space while fostering physical and social urban change.

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DEDICATION

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“For me, a lack of aspiration is the biggest threat to humanity. And the architect's task is to counter this.”^[1]

[1] Alsop, Will. *Architecture as Branding* from: Ed. Oswalt, Philipp. *Shrinking Cities Volume 2: Interventions*. Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag. 2006. p763

The Big Move and the Starchitect

In May 2005, after spending the previous terms of undergraduate experience on the suburban campus of the University of Waterloo, my classmates and I found ourselves transplanted to Galt City Centre in Cambridge, Ontario. After much discussion and deliberation about the move of the School of Architecture and praise for the positive implications on the future of the educational experience it will provide, it was time to experience it firsthand.

Spending the previous term immersed in the ancient history and culture of Rome, it was a shock to find oneself living in the center of a dilapidated mid-size city where the only bright spot seemed to be the new school itself, a well-executed tactical renovation of an old silk mill on the bank of the Grand River. Many questions ran through our minds:

- What did the move have to do with our architectural education?
- Are we not supposed to study the great buildings and cities of the world?
- What are the consequences of being in a location remote from main campus?
- What inspiration can be drawn from vacant store fronts, abandoned lots and lifeless streets?

Transpiring concurrently with the relocation, my classmates and I were presented with the prospect of being the first class to require a Master of Architecture degree to complete our studies. An intimidating decision, we had to determine what the focus of our studies would be over the next few years of our lives. The combination of these new experiences left many of us in a state of limbo.

For myself and two colleagues, Kate Bowman (*A New Role for Student Housing – Revitalizing a Mid-size City Core – 2007*) and Court Sin (*Envisioning the Downtown - The Design of Third Places to Revitalize Town-Gown Downtowns - 2007*), that all changed one evening when the School of Architecture was visited by one of the most renowned architects of our time, whose influence on contemporary architecture and city building may not be agreeable, but is undeniable – the infamous Will Alsop.

As he spoke of cigarettes, wine and the Friday afternoon office ritual of sketching nude models, he became an instant source of inspiration. However, once he began presenting his work on the urban regeneration projects of New Islington, Barnsley and Bradford, ideas for a thesis proposal began to develop. Images of rundown city centres and their oppressive concrete structures being replaced with images of structurally evocative and creatively clad buildings, inducing a new public life to the area, were being presented to us. Professionally developed videos, advertising bold ideas for city development, were enough to convince anyone to engage Alsop's services. Clearly, it was enough to inspire the cities themselves, as it seemed like mid-size European cities were lining up to initiate their regeneration projects.

Although this 'starchitect' approach was about selling provocative images to city leaders and could be criticized for a lack of depth in revealing the origins of the proposals and their impact on the city, it allowed myself and my colleagues to view our new-found urban environment from a different perspective and provided us with the inspiration required to pursue the Master of Architecture program. Questions of concern and confusion turned into questions of intrigue and fascination:

- What is the future of Cambridge and the School of Architecture?
- What kind of partnership would be possible to renew the urban and cultural fabric of the city?
- Would the students play an integral role in the city's future?
- What lessons could be learned from urban areas under stress?

It is clear the relocation of the school was orchestrated with these questions, and even preliminary answers, in mind. However, to us, this was a revelation that changed the course of our studies in the Master of Architecture program.

“To cause a public memory of a place that will again metamorphose and acquire still new and different meanings in the continually transforming urban landscape.”^[1]

[1] Eds. Pars, Hieke & Schutten, Iris. Interfering: A Publication About Contextual Interventions in Public Space. Rotterdam, The Hague: Hieke Pars, Architecture Studio de Ruimte, 2003. pp 10.

As part of a M1 elective *Festival, Location & Performance*, lead by Professor Mike Elmitt, a group of colleagues (*Kate Bowman, Lily Kim, Court Sin, Somya Singh and Kristy Wung*) and myself developed a project, *Exhibition 16*, that would serve as the starting point for this thesis.

Exhibition 16 proposed a festival, occurring every sixteen months, to celebrate art and architecture as a means of temporarily re-inhabiting the neglected spaces of the city and serving as a catalyst for the redevelopment of Galt City Centre. The viability of the proposal encouraged Professor Elmitt to extend the project into another elective the following term, titled *A Necessity for Risk*. The focus of the follow-up elective was placed on applying the theories developed in the previous elective into a physical application of the installations we envisioned occurring during *Exhibition 16*.

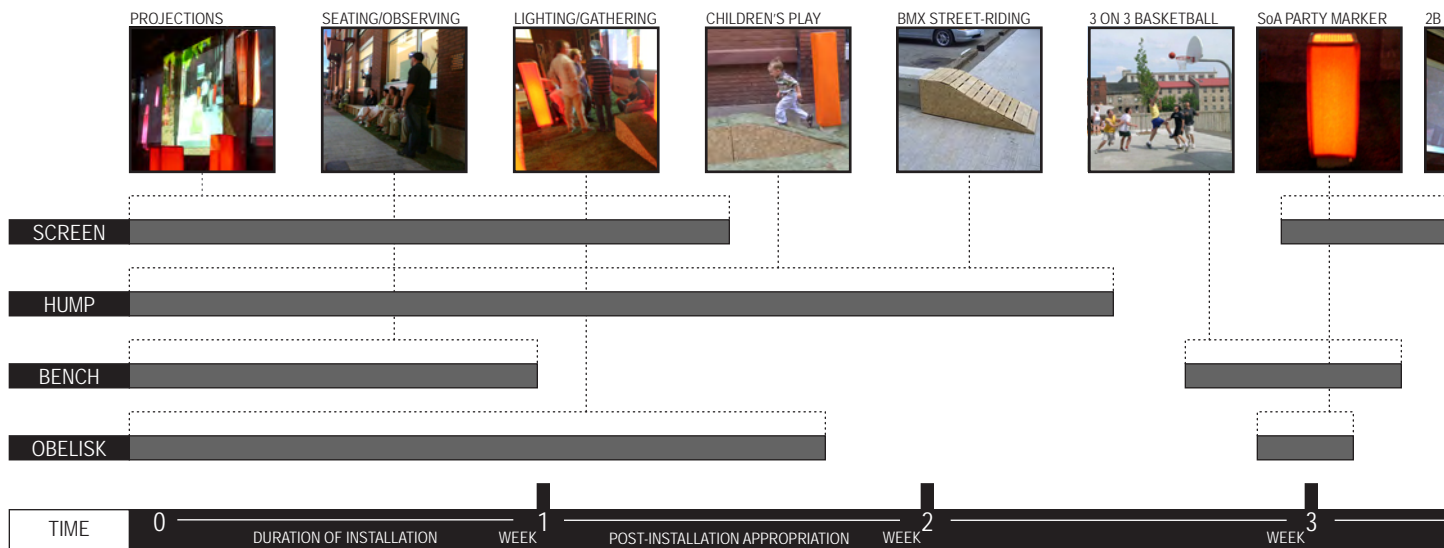
The resulting project culminated in a week long installation, titled *Pocket Park*, which opened as part of the 2006 Mayor's Festival of the Arts. The installation was located in the West Courtyard of the School of Architecture. Intended to host outdoor lectures and impromptu events, the courtyard was under used by the students and citizens of Cambridge.

Emerging from the depressed area of the courtyard and appropriating a portion of the public sidewalk and street, *Pocket Park* enticed passersby to discover the re-enlivened space. Upon entering the courtyard, the public were exposed to a multi-sensory experience that included video projections, ambient music, custom-built lighting

and seating, all on a carpet of sod, which fostered a new interaction with the space and each other. As a temporary installation, the main goal of the project was to inflict a new experience and memory upon an overlooked space and inspire those whom experienced it to imagine similar possibilities throughout the city.

The success of the staged event on opening night was apparent and attracted much positive attention. For myself, the most intriguing aspect was not the staged event but the reaction that ensued - the appropriation of the installation's components for unintended use and the urban activities that it inspired [Fig.01]. *Pocket Park* became a new venue for everyday activities such as social gatherings, sunbathing, street-biking and a movie night, serving as a place for the community and students to gather, interact and play. Children were overjoyed by the discovery of an element for spontaneous play in the city. Youth skateboarders, roller bladers and bike riders adapted components to create new performance spaces. Adults, both young and old, were confronted with the urge to interact with the installation but apprehensive of how to do so. All of these revealed a latent human desire for physical engagement with the urban environment, observation of which served as the launching point for inquiry into the following thesis question:

In the process of urban regeneration, can employing the public realm to socially engage the community and test alternative public uses of residual space act as a catalyst for future development?



The public realm, the physical space that binds the city together, is a vital component of any successful city. The identity of an urban area relies on the condition of its public realm to contribute to a sense of safety, health and inclusion within the community. If neglected, it can equally contribute to an undesirable sense of danger, vulnerability and exclusion. The crucial role the public realm plays in the health of a city and its ability to engage all facets of the community make it an indispensable resource in urban development processes. This thesis explores the ability of public space as a physical testing grounds for the city, where new ideas can be hypothesized, tested and developed as a means of generating physical and social change. The following is a concise outline of the thesis structure:

Chapter 1, *Urban Decay: The Problem*, highlights the negative effects of de-urbanization and the issues facing cities as a result of urban sprawl, decline and low economic activity. The discussion reveals the physical and social characteristics of the resulting urban fabric, namely high vacancy rates and a lack of urban public life. The chapter concludes by noting how current urban development struggles to respond in times of low economic activity and posits a reconsideration of current modes of urban development.

Chapter 2, *Urban Actuation: Development*, examines alternative theories of urban development, *Everyday Urbanism* and *Temporary Use*, as a means of proposing an inclusive and incremental approach to urban regeneration. Rooted in a more heterogeneous understanding of the

physical and social aspects of public space, these theories represent a means of examining and discovering new programmes and ideas for the city. The chapter concludes with a call for an expanded role of the design professional that is more proactive, publicly engaged and participatory.

Chapter 3, *Urban Actuation: Case Studies*, introduces select public space interventions of varying scales, temporality, and community engagement which employ methods and theories discussed in the previous chapter. An operational and formal tactic, as well as the temporal quality of the intervention, is extracted from each case study to develop the design model applied in the following chapter.

Chapter 4, *Urban Actuation: Design Model*, reveals the five step *Urban Actuation* process. Developed with the community and host municipality as the intended audience, the process illustrates an alternative method to perceive, value and develop public space. Each step of the process, *Consult, Situate, Hypothesize, Test* and *Develop*, is applied to the study area of Cambridge, Ontario, specifically, Galt City Centre, to illustrate the value it adds to current modes of development and the public space interventions which may emerge.

In closing, *Urban Actuation: Conclusion*, addresses the benefits, challenges and limitations of the *Urban Actuation* process, as presented in this thesis, and the role of the architect in championing and administering it. Considerations for testing and implementing the process are proposed as suggestions for further research and development of the process.

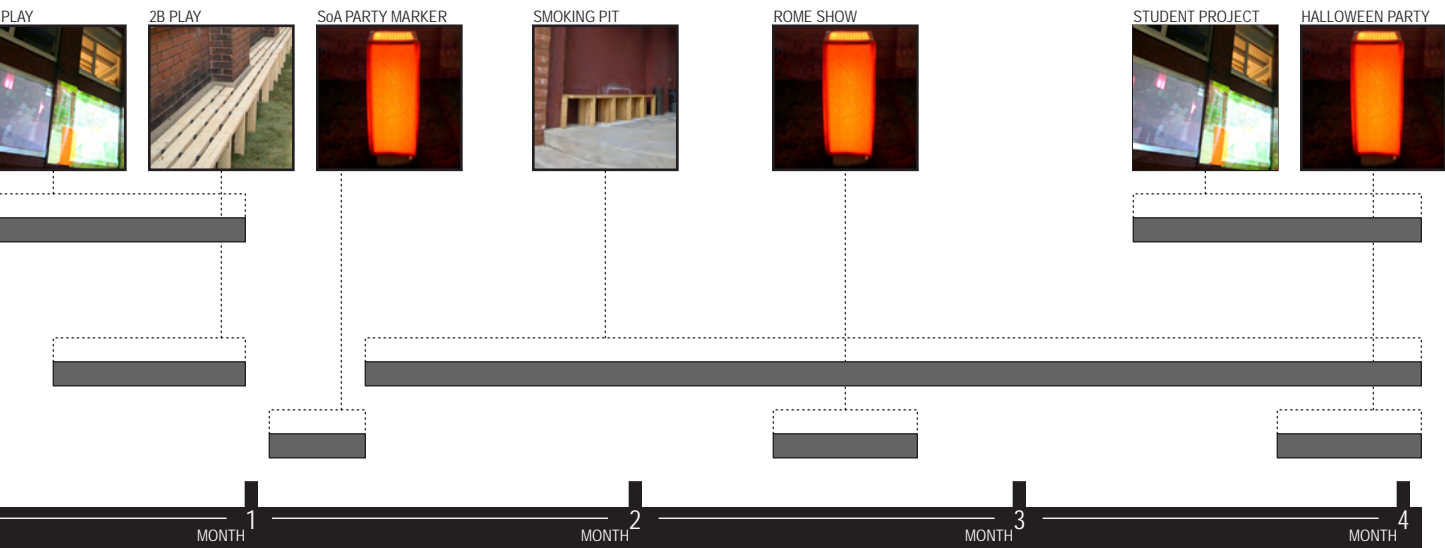
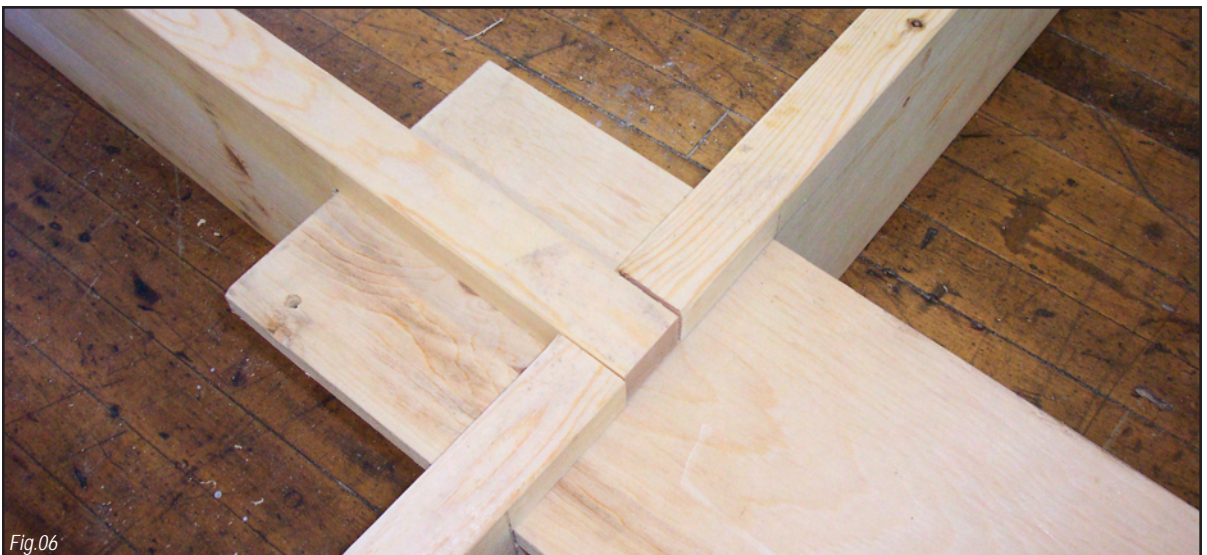
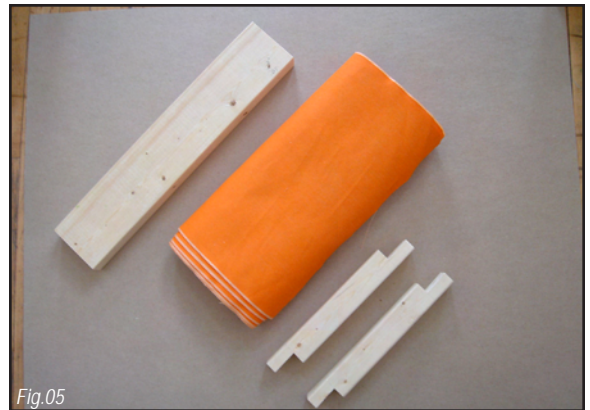
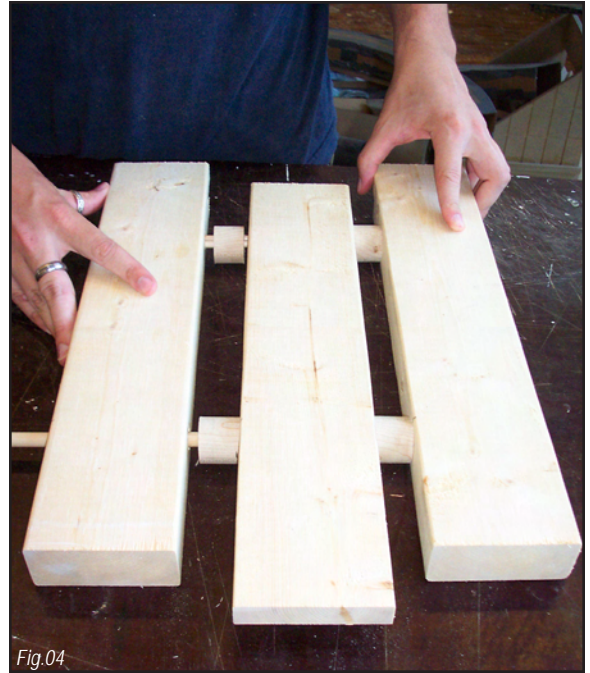
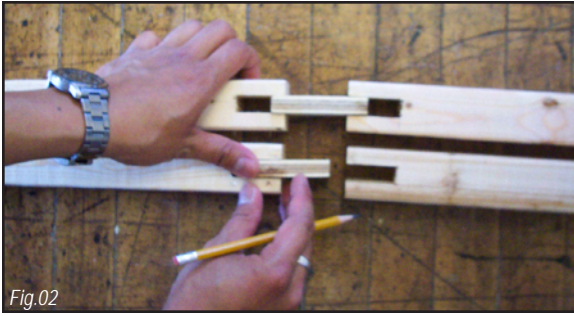


Fig.01 Pocket Park Component Tracking.

URBAN ACTUATION INTRODUCTION



URBAN ACTUATION INTRODUCTION



Fig.07



Fig.08



Fig.09



Fig.10



Fig.11

“The city is being fragmented into distinct and homogenous life-styles attributed to fixed locations, where only a highly specific and limited social experience is possible.”^[1]

[1] Cupers, Kenny & Miessen, Markus. Spaces of Uncertainty. Wuppertal: Verlag Muller + Busmann. 2002. p17.

“While North American cities escaped the destruction of war, great damage was inflicted to the core of cities through ill-advised urban renewal policies, traffic planning priorities, zoning policies, and the construction of single function large scale commercial centers.”

[1] Lennard, Henry & Crowhurst Lennard, Suzanne (eds). *The Wisdom of Cities: Architecture, Place, Community, Neighbourhood, Identity, Planning and Values*. Carmel, CA: International Making Cities Livable Council, 2004. p3.

1.1 Urban Fragmentation: The Effects of De-urbanization

De-industrialization, suburbanization and disinvestment have combined to threaten the economic, social and spatial health of many North American cities. Originally diverse urban environments including industrial, commercial and residential uses, the city centre served as the heart of the city.

In the early 20th century...downtowns were centers of highly concentrated activity, with streets and sidewalks that pulsed with human activity, the highest land values in the city, and the full spectrum of economic functions.^[1]

Early developments of the suburbs in North American cities served only a residential function as they were located in close proximity to the city centre. The residents, in this case, were still dependent on the city centre for social, commercial and entertainment purposes. However, as populations grew and transportation technologies developed, the desire for detached residential homes and personal vehicles became increasingly popular. As a result, the suburbs spread further into the surrounding farm lands, distancing themselves from the city centre.

The success of suburbia was facilitated and embodied by a number of crucial phenomena: the enormous growth of the fleet cars, a multi-billion dollar endeavour to construct urban expressways and federal highways, and a spectacular increase in the number of houses.^[2]

The switch from public transportation to private vehicles and the desire for detached homes facilitated the decentralization of functions that were once exclusive to

the city centre. As residential areas developed further from the downtown, the demand for convenient commercial functions grew. Commercial development, in the form of shopping centers and strip malls, quickly followed the new residential developments to provide convenient access to commercial amenities.^[3] Built with the efficiency of the car in mind, these commercial centers acquired large expanses of open land to accommodate their open-span, warehouse type structures and large expanses of on-grade parking. As a result, the scale of the urban environment is drastically different from traditional city centres, catering to the scale of the personal automobile over the individual as a pedestrian. Responding to this change in scale, the architecture has to attract the attention of the individual from a distance and at an increased rate of speed. The building components are scaled relatively, resulting in oversized signs advertising store names visible from the street and neglecting the scale of the pedestrian at the sidewalk and building interface.

Accompanied by the dispersal of residential and commercial activity, was that of local industries. The growth of transportation by local roads and highways facilitated the development of industries on the perimeter of cities. Adding to this relocation was the change in manufacturing processes based on the assembly line. Where "earlier industrial architecture often consisted of multi-floor buildings, the increasing organization of labor along conveyor belts necessitated the construction of mono-volumes with a single stretched-out floor. The large plots of land required for such plants were only available in suburbia."^[4]

[1] Kent Robertson Downtown Redevelopment Strategies in the United States: An End-of-the-Century Assessment, Journal of the American Planning Association, Vol. 61, Issue 4, (Autumn1995) p429.

[2] Ghent Urban Studies Team [GUST]. *The Urban Condition: Community, and Self in the Contemporary Metropolis*. Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1999. p22.

[3] Ibid. p22

[4] Ibid. p22

“Public spaces are – or at least should be – places where individuals and the community can, openly, and insecurely, meet. The functional units, the highly structured, programmed, and controlled spaces in the contemporary city, mean to threaten the city’s crucial characteristics, namely openness and unpredictability.”^[1]

[1] Cupers, Kenny & Miessen, Markus. Spaces of Uncertainty. Wuppertal: Verlag Muller + Busmann. 2002. p22.

Hespeler Road, in Cambridge Ontario, is an edifying example of this form of development. A six lane road, it occupies the northern portion of Highway 24 between Galt City Centre and Highway 401. Bordering either side of the road are expansive parking lots leading to the Cambridge Centre mall, big box stores, commercial strip malls, a wide variety of fast food and restaurant chains and industrial warehouses. The result is an urban environment solely dedicated to commerce and vehicular transportation. As illustrated in *Fig.12 & Fig.13*, the scale of the development area is drastically different than that of Main Street, a traditional street typology in Galt City Centre. In the same cross sectional area, Hespeler road encompasses one road intersection, two parking lots and two low rise buildings, compared to the more dense urban fabric of Main Street which includes two street intersections, a parking lot, and five low to mid-rise buildings. The resulting pedestrian experience is drastically different in

both environments [*Fig.14 to Fig.19*]. The Main Street environment provides a familiar and comfortable scale with a welcoming building-street interface. On the other hand, Hespeler Road induces a sense of danger, alienation and placelessness as the design fails to engage the public on an individual level.

The migration of local residents, businesses and industries to the fringes of the city resulted in city centres characterized by the dominance of vehicular infrastructure, derelict sites and high vacancy rates. Although certain North American cities have recovered from these de-urbanizing processes, most still struggle with these phenomenon as a common part of their urban fabric.



Fig.12 Hespeler Road Street Section - Typical Suburban Commercial Development.

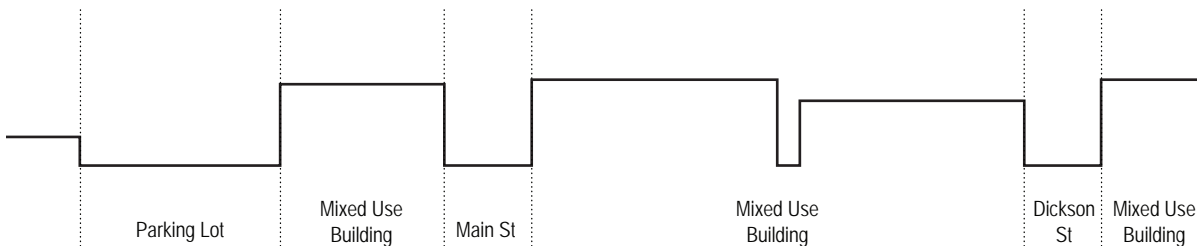


Fig.13 Main Street Street Section - Typical Urban Development.



Fig.14 Cambridge Centre - Cambridge, ON.

“By declaring buildings to be autonomous objects, modernist planners created desolate fields of non-urban space that made brutal cuts through neighbourhoods and radically isolated people. The ensuing wastelands, wholly tailored to the car, lacked all form of human scale...”^[1]

[1] Ghent Urban Studies Team [GUST]. *The Urban Condition: Community, and Self in the Contemporary Metropolis*. Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1999. p41



Fig.15 Hespeler Road - Cambridge, ON.

“The faster the street, the more oblivious we are of its space. For the commuter, the city could exist in solely two radii. The streets are used one dimensionally and are left to slowly sink into unconsciousness. By reducing the street’s activity to one of by-pass, we are killing a whole field of possible interactions.”^[1]

[1] Kenniff, Thomas-Bernard. *The Clean Street Paradox*. Architectural Research Quarterly, Cambridge University Press, UK, v.6, n.2, 2002, p115-119.



Fig.16 Big Box Store Development - Cambridge, ON.



Fig.17 Main St and Water St - Galt City Centre, Cambridge, ON.

“For social life is always embedded in a meaningful arrangement of buildings; their function, use and significance all influence the kinds of public life possible.”^[1]

[1] Lennard, Henry & Crowhurst Lennard, Suzanne (eds). *The Wisdom of Cities: Architecture, Place, Community, Neighbourhood, Identity, Planning and Values*. Carmel, CA: International Making Cities Livable Council, 2004. p1



Fig.18 Cambridge Famers' Market - Cambridge, ON.

“If smaller urban centres are to prosper and maintain their identities in the face of mass cultural influences and big-box retailing, they need to think critically about notions of scale, space, and place.”^[1]

[1] Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Random House. 1961. p14.



Fig.19 New Civic Administration Building on Dickson Street - Galt City Centre, Cambridge, ON.

“In city areas that lack a natural and casual public life, it is common for residents to isolate themselves from each other to a fantastic degree.”^[1]

[1] Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Random House. 1961. p65.

1.2 No One to Act: An Impaired Urban Public Life

The effects of de-urbanizing processes, and the general decline of urban areas, extend beyond the physical realm of the city and permeate the social realm as well. As cities become more and more dispersed, and increasingly privatized, the relationship between public space and everyday life begins to malfunction, portraying perceptions of fear and insecurity, which threaten the urban identity and public life of the city.

“The essence of the city is found in its public urban spaces and its public life. The public realm is essential for the enactment of vital social processes. As these processes atrophy incivility, group conflict, even violence are the result.”^[1]

Founded on the concept of designing an internalized city, the mall has disrupted the heterogeneity offered by our city centers by reducing the experience of the individual to the single act of consumption.^[2] Intentionally sheltered from the possible dangers of the city, shopping is arguably becoming our only remaining public activity. This controlled consumer experience contributes to the city becoming progressively fragmented into homogeneous zones of public consumption that offer limited social experiences. As a result, our understanding of public space becomes increasingly distorted, seen as a “waiting room for urban addicts, where the active players have vanished.”^[3]

Aside from the physical public spaces of bars, cafés and squares, urban public life must be supported by “forms of interaction that are open to noncommittal chance encounters with the other people and by ready contact to the new.”^[4] If the public realm lacks such urban diversity,

discouraged residents are unable to identify with their city’s urban environment and tend to retreat into the comforts of their home. When they do emerge from their home, the tendency is to travel by personal automobile in order to minimize the distance travelled by foot and maximize efficiency of time. The result is a reduced rate of encounter with other community members because the majority of the time is spent travelling inside their vehicle, instead of navigating the streets by foot where chance encounters are more probable to occur.

“Our ability to improve the well-being of city dwellers has suffered from a failure to see cities as complex social organisms, with physical and social features in close interdependence.”^[5]

The threatened urban identity and public life created by de-urbanizing processes and our continual transformation into homogeneous consumers adds further urgency to the regeneration of a central urban core that promotes and sustains urban diversity: “even if a post-modern understanding of public life does not depend necessarily on a central town square, the symbolic value of the town center as a crystallization point of civic identity should not be underestimated.”^[6] In this sense, “both demolition and rebuilding projects give rise to questions about the compatibility of the (dis)continuity of the built environment and the (dis)continuity of people’s biographies.”^[7]

[1] Lennard, Henry & Crowhurst Lennard, Suzanne (eds). *The Wisdom of Cities: Architecture, Place, Community, Neighbourhood, Identity, Planning and Values*. Carmel, CA: International Making Cities Livable Council, 2004. p3.

[2] Cupers, Kenny & Miessen, Markus. *Spaces of Uncertainty*. Wuppertal: Verlag Muller + Busmann. 2002. p14.

[3] Ibid. p17.

[4] Durrschmidt, Jorg. *On the Crisis of Urban Public Life* from: Ed. Oswalt, Philipp. *Shrinking Cities Volume 2: Interventions*. Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag. 2006. p676.

[5] Lennard, Henry & Crowhurst Lennard, Suzanne (eds). *The Wisdom of Cities: Architecture, Place, Community, Neighbourhood, Identity, Planning and Values*. Carmel, CA: International Making Cities Livable Council, 2004. p5.

[6] Durrschmidt, Jorg. *On the Crisis of Urban Public Life* from: Ed. Oswalt, Philipp. *Shrinking Cities Volume 2: Interventions*. Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag. 2006. p680.

[7] Ibid. p676.

“Creative capacity is not generated in isolation. Innovative responses are sparked by recognizing that a situation is causing problems or is otherwise inadequate: it is much more difficult to generate innovation where everything is seen to be satisfactory. A self-conscious recognition that a city has a crisis or challenge that needs to be addressed is the starting point for considering creative solutions; without this no political will or sense of urgency can be generated to drive creativity.”^[1]

[1] Landry, Charles. *The Creative City – A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*. London: Earthscan Publications, 2000. p106.

1.3 Reconsideration: A Call for New Models of Urban Development

As cities expand to the periphery, city centres have struggled to attract public and private investment. Due to a lack of demand, vacant buildings and lots remain empty as their market value is less than desired by prospective property owners. In the same context, the risk of failure for external investors and developers is often too high, resulting in their migration to more affluent areas. This produces a ‘time gap’ – defined as a “moment of standstill between the collapse of a previous use and the beginning of new commercial development”^[1] – in the development process. The duration of this time gap is largely determined by the economic and social fabric of the urban area, which have struggled to initiate the process.

If development projects do occur under these circumstances, they tend to follow traditional patterns of commercial development. Site owners commission a design to be negotiated with local authorities, the goal being to create a desired end condition to be translated into a master plan.^[2] This describes the current ideal path of implementation for urban planning. As determined by Studio Urban Catalyst in their report *Urban Catalysts: Strategies for Temporary Uses*^[3], the concerns with traditional urban planning include the following:

- *Dependent on large scale financial investment and economic climate*
- *As singular actors become less and less powerful, and more and more dependent on other stakeholders and outside forces, the realization of these ideal visions becomes more and more case difficult, if not impossible*
- *Traditional master planning is a very slow process, taking years to be legalized and complete, unable to adapt to short term change*
- *Traditional formal planning addresses the question of what should be developed, while the question of how to develop is left unanswered*

Many times, current developments are primarily focused on investment potential and ignore or fail to recognize the impact of socio-spatial relationships. The inability of market-driven developments and urban planning models to generate and sustain change in declining urban areas necessitates the development of alternative models to create sustainable urban change.

[1] P. Misselwitz, P. Oswald, K. Overmeyer. *Urban Catalyst: Final Report (Extract)*. www.studio-uc-overmeyer.de.

[2] Ibid

[3] Studio Urban Catalyst. *Urban Catalysts: Strategies for temporary uses – potential development of urban residual areas in European metropolises*. Berlin: www.template.com. 2003.

“Cities are always places of contestation and contradiction, conflict and counter-cultural engagements. While some architects and planners seem to want to homogenize the city, rendering it into a uniform plane of public squares, promenades and polite cafés, there will always be others who want to make noise or be silent, pursue sex or read philosophy, ride motor-cycles or sun-bathe; the rhythm of suits-on-weekdays and sweaters-on-Sundays will always be interwoven by those quietly yet determinedly making their own lives in countless different subtle yet explicit ways. For this is urban life.”^[1]

[1] Borden, Iain. 1998. *An Affirmation of Urban Life*. Archis 149 Englandspiel: 46-51. NAI Publishers.

“Everyday life is organized by time as much as by space, structured around daily itineraries, with rhythms imposed by patterns of work and leisure, week and weekend, and the repetitious gestures of commuting and consumption.”^[1]

[1] Chase, John, Crawford, Margaret & Kaliski, John. (eds.). *Everyday Urbanism*. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1999. p26.

2.1 The Overlooked: Investigating the Everyday

As discussed in the previous chapter, urban space is subject to cycles of economic upturns and downturns. During the course of these economic cycles, time gaps in utilization form, moments of transition and uncertainty where former uses have been abandoned and new programs have yet to be planned or implemented.^[1] The resulting vacant spaces and lack of public activity are problematic for cities as they convey a sense of abandonment and an associated lack of health, security and safety in the urban environment.

At the same time, active users are always present within an urban environment as we embark on our daily routine activities which exist between the domestic (home) and gainful (workplace) environments^[2], be it the commuting, recreational, shopping, or eating rituals. Often perceived as trivial and commonplace, these unique individual patterns are an indispensable aspect of our urban culture as they formulate our experience of the city.

Margaret Crawford, in *Everyday Urbanism*, calls for a reconnection of these daily physical and social experiences in the practice of urban design and planning to facilitate potential transformation.

“The everyday city has rarely been the focus of attention for architects or urban designers, despite the fact that an amazing number of social, spatial, and aesthetic meanings can be found in the repeated activities and conditions that constitute our daily, weekly, and yearly routines. The utterly ordinary reveals a fabric of space and time defined by a complex realm of social practices – a conjecture of accident, desire and habit.”^[3]

[1] Haydn, Florian & Temel, Robert (eds.). *Temporary Urban Spaces: Concepts for the Use of City Spaces*. Berlin, Germany: Birkhauser, 2006. p75.

[2] Oldenburg Ray. *The Great Good Place*. New York, NY: Paragon House, 1989. p14.

[3] Chase, John, Crawford, Margaret & Kaliski, John. (eds.). *Everyday Urbanism*. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1999. p8.

The historic and political notion of public space presents the community as a singular collective public, embodied in the form of the Civic Square.^[4] In contrast, everyday space exposes the inherent heterogeneity of the public realm, representing the community as a collective of multiple publics with varying cultural interests. This expanded view of the community, as a larger group comprised of various subcultures, creates a more open concept of public space; the connective tissue that binds our daily lives and experiences together.

“The intersections between an individual or defined group and the rest of the city are everyday space - the site of multiple social and economic transactions, where multiple experiences accumulate in a single location.”^[5]

Once the concept of everyday space is consciously engaged, one is able to observe first-hand the people who use it and the activities that take place within it. Such observations reveal subtle characteristics of space which hint at a much more complex system of spatial and social relations.^[6]

“Urbanism should therefore be understood as a discourse of both human, meaning social, and spatial studies. To be able to map the actual cultural and social geography of the city, we therefore have to investigate into the tiny moments and memories of street-life, the corners, and the spaces behind the supermarket. These are the interstitial places where public and private experiences overlap.”^[7]

[4] Cupers, Kenny & Miessen, Markus. *Spaces of Uncertainty*. Wupertal: Verlag Muller + Bussmann KG, 2002. p35.

[5] Chase, John, Crawford, Margaret & Kaliski, John. (eds.). *Everyday Urbanism*. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1999. p11.

[6] Mehrotra, Rahul (ed.). *Everyday Urbanism, Michigan Debates on Urbanism: Volume 1*. New York, NY: Distributed Arts Press, 2005. p18

[7] Cupers, Kenny & Miessen, Markus. *Spaces of Uncertainty*. Wupertal: Verlag Muller + Bussmann KG, 2002. p49.

“It is futile to plan a city’s appearance, or speculate on how to endow it with a pleasing appearance of order, without knowing what sort of innate, functioning order it has.”^[1]

[1] Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York, NY: Vintage, 1961. p14.

Crawford's theories on everyday space reflect the sentiment shared by urban activist Jane Jacobs in *The Life and Death of Great American Cities*. Jacobs shunned the practice of urban planning, which by her observation did not attempt to learn from real life situations and instead imposed totalitarian solutions upon the city.

“Cities are an immense laboratory of trial and error, failure and success, in city building and city design. This is the laboratory in which city planning should have been learning and forming and testing its theories. Instead the practitioners and teachers of this discipline (if such it can be called) have ignored the study of success and failure in real life, have been incurious about the reasons for unexpected success, and are guided instead by principles derived from the behavior and appearance of towns, suburbs, tuberculosis sanatoria, fairs, and imaginary dream cities—from anything but cities themselves.”^[8]

Jacobs promotes acceptance of the varied activities that were apparent to her observations at street level, noting that the “ubiquitous principle is the need of cities for a most intricate and close-grained diversity of uses that give each other constant mutual support, both economically and socially. The components of the diversity can differ enormously, but they must supplement each other in certain concrete ways.”^[9] Diversity of use provides opportunities for regular contact with others in the public realm. These intricate public encounters, and the urban experiences they generate, gradually develop a mutual web of trust between community members, building a public identity and giving the city its life and character.

[8] Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Random House. 1961. p6.

[9] Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York, NY: Vintage, 1961. p14.

Engaging the everyday urban experiences, that Crawford and Jacobs advocate, does not seek to propose a definitive endpoint or resolution to a given problem, but rather it provides an indispensable starting point: a way to read, interpret and understand the city as it exists. Observations are a critical tool which allow the unexpected socio-spatial conditions of everyday space to provide insight into the inner-workings of the city and the culture it produces. Instead of disregarding these moments as commonplace, they need to be engaged in order to provide hints and direction as to how the cities spatial, social and economic processes may evolve.

“To understand the layered and paradoxical way that contemporary urban places are used nowadays, one needs to transcend the narrow and normative definitions of both public and space, and rigidly conceived notions of private and public, should be left behind. In order to find a way out of the rhetoric of loss one can only give up these fixed definitions by starting with the field of practice, actions, and behaviour: the production, constant readjustment, and restructuring of space in the contemporary city.”^[10]

A broader understanding of public space allows one to engage the city more directly, highlighting, amplifying and building upon the unique attributes the city offers and providing opportunities for the latent activity and culture of the city to evolve.

[10] Cupers, Kenny & Miessen, Markus. *Spaces of Uncertainty*. Wupertal: Verlag Muller + Busmann KG, 2002. p49.

“Temporary users do not develop in isolation, but in heterogeneous clusters with specific use profiles and identities. The users’ capital is not financial means, but creativity, commitment, and social networks.”^[1]

[1] Misselwitz, P., Oswald, P. & Overmeyer, K (eds). *Urban Catalyst: Strategies for Temporary Uses - Potential Development of Urban Residual Areas in European Metropolises*, Final Report (Extract). Berlin, Germany: www.studio-uc.de, 2003. p2.

2.2 Vacancy as Opportunity: Revealing the Temporary

Although everyday space and vacant lots are often overlooked by urban design and planning practices, their uncertainty and openness tend to attract marginal groups of users who appropriate the space for creative use. Often perceived as “undesirables” from the point of view of the city, they are regularly sought out by authorities who exert measures to have them removed from the various premises.

An emerging alternative practice of urban planning, originating in Berlin, Germany, has identified the creative potential these subcultures, or *temporary users*, contain and have begun studying and understanding them as a valuable part of the cities culture whose strategies and tactics can have positive influence on urban planning practices and the development of abandoned sites.

According to *Studio Urban Catalyst* in their publication *Urban Catalysts: Strategies for Temporary Uses*, temporary users are urban actors who:

- *Claim vacant spaces as breeding grounds for the development of ideas*
- *Follow precise spatial criteria such as retreat, exposure or niche*
- *Recycle and appropriate existing structures and spaces with minimal interventions*
- *Often attract similar users to the same or nearby sites*
- *Become possible through the determined action of key agents, who bridge the gap between the different milieus of the users, the site owner and municipal authorities and therefore create a protective umbrella which allows for the flourishing of temporary use*
- *Create an unique environment of experiment, where ideas can mature in time^[1]*

[1] Misselwitz, Phillip, Oswald, Phillip & Overmeyer Klaus (eds.). *Urban Catalysts: Strategies for Temporary Uses – Potential Development of Urban Residual Areas in European Metropolises*. Berlin, Germany: www.template.com, 2003. p5.

Temporary users tend to choose their location strategically, using the criteria of a central location with good access to public transportation and public exposure to allow for strong interaction and integration with the local community.^[2] The adoption and adaptation of such tactics into urban planning practices has the ability to make urban planning more flexible and responsive by expanding upon the linear processes of development that currently exist. Temporary use should be supported as a means to pro-actively manage vacant sites as well as contribute to sustainable socioeconomic urban development.^[3]

“Initiating and supporting temporary uses...creates potential space by means of experimental demand. This new urban planning no longer views space exclusively in terms of its physical boundaries but also recognizes ‘intelligent’ space, which...stimulates and reveals opportunities for using the city.”^[4]

By reflecting on the character of what exists and what might be possible in the future, temporary use is able to spark interest among the general public, local businesses and neighbourhood initiatives. This allows a wide range of the public to begin identifying with vacant sites as a valued part of the community from which quality urban environments can emerge.

The adoption of temporary use has begun to surface in North America, specifically in the United States where the economic downturn has cities looking at ways to creatively increase the public image of their urban areas to re-ignite stalled development opportunities. One method being employed in San Francisco is to find alternative uses for lots that were in the early planning and development stages

[2] Overmeyer, Klaus. *Urban Pioneers: Temporary Use and Urban Development in Berlin*. Berlin, Germany: Jovis Verlag, 2007.

[3] Overmeyer, Klaus. *Urban Pioneers: Temporary Use and Urban Development in Berlin*. Berlin, Germany: Jovis Verlag, 2007. p123

[4] Haydn, Florian & Temel, Robert (eds.). *Temporary Urban Spaces: Concepts for the Use of City Spaces*. Berlin, Germany: Birkhauser, 2006.

“They develop public activities in unused city spaces, create intensive exchange between different social groups, and compensate for the deficits of urban infrastructure.”^[1]

[1] Misselwitz, Philip, Oswalt, Philip & Overmeyer, Klaus (eds.). *Urban Catalyst: Strategies for Temporary Uses - Potential Development of Urban Residual Areas in European Metropolises*, Final Report (Extract). Berlin, Germany: www.studio-uc.de, 2003. p4.

but now sit vacant due to stalled development plans. The developers are being encouraged to convert their lots into green spaces or provide space for artist installations as a way to raise the profile of these lots and contribute to the pleasant and welcoming environment of the area^[5].

Another method was recently applied in St. Louis where a new streetscape design was temporarily installed for a 30-day trial period in order to illustrate the concept to the citizens, allow for their feedback and gauge the effects the proposed changes will have on the operations of the urban area. The project was so successful that the city decided to leaving the temporary components in place until the final construction begins.^[6]

What amounts to a small investment in testing the proposed changes, when compared to the cost of the large-scale developments, can result in jump-starting the previously planned development sooner than expected or providing previously unimaginable development ideas. If properly incorporated as tools and techniques for urban regeneration, incremental change and temporary use can improve the quality of life and health of cities by revitalizing vacant spaces while directly engaging the multiple publics it is to serve. Intended to support and augment standard urban design practices, temporary use is best understood as a test, a way of examining and discovering new programmes and ideas for the city. It should be "equated with a kind of prototype that forms a point of departure for future, stable programmes."^[7]

[5] King, J. (2009). *High-rises on hold: What to do with empty lots?*. Retrieved July 14, 2009, from <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2009/07/06/MNAP189P39.DTL>

[6] Moynihan, M. (2009). *Sustainable Streetscape: St. Louis test green road design*. Retrieved November 21, 2009, from http://www.archpaper.com/e-board_rev.asp?News_ID=3917

[7] Haydn, Florian & Temel, Robert (eds.). *Temporary Urban Spaces: Concepts for the Use of City Spaces*. Berlin, Germany: Birkhauser, 2006.

“If the university is to produce intellectuals capable of playing a role in political and cultural regeneration, it cannot afford to be cut off from the concerns of the people”^[1]

[1] Hirst, Paul. Education and the Production of Ideas. AAfiles 29, p44-5.

2.3 Enabling Change: Assuming the Role of Spatial Practitioner

Generating positive social change requires an expanded role for the design professional; one that is more proactive, publicly engaged and participatory. This requires examining the potential of combining the expanded view of public space as multiple publics inhabiting a shared public realm of everyday space, the transition of vacant lots from urban blemishes to sites of opportunity and the adoption of temporary-use as a means to investigate and develop new urban programmes and experiences.

The common approach in urban regeneration is to seek the large-scale master plan. However, the master plan often attracts opposition from the public, as they feel the solution is being imposed on them, and are “subject to complex political, logistical, and financial obstacles. Once an elaborate design has been committed to, backing away from it—or even altering it—becomes both politically and mechanically complicated.”^[1] If the project is successfully implemented, the municipality, designers and planners are unable to accurately gauge the public’s response, and therefore the success of the project, until all allocated time and financial resources have been exhausted.

Incremental changes and temporary use, offer many advantages and potential insights into these common issues. They require less financial resources, allowing them to be implemented faster and therefore affecting change at a greater rate. They are also adaptable to change, so the design professional can expand on what works and alter or eliminate what does not work. Although they may be viewed as isolated projects, the incremental changes may be part of a broader strategy which maintains a level of negotiation between past, present and future developments. This liberates the more commonly understood master plan from being overly restrictive and instead allows it to adopt a more flexible, organic process where it emerges from within - a dynamic master plan.

[1] Manshel, A. (2009). *A Place is Better Than a Plan*. Retrieved October 26, 2009 from <http://www.city-journal.org/2009/eon1019am.html>

As Andrew Manshel states in his *City Journal* article 'A Place is Better than a Plan', “profound change is more likely to result from a deeply considered idea that alters an essential component of an urban environment than from an elaborate master plan that requires abundant resources and considerable political capital.”^[2] For planners, urban designers and architects, this means a more direct involvement in and with the community, who become active participants in the planning of the city. The engagement of the local community and testing of new urban programmes is not solely about creating another portion of the built environment but “equally about giving young committed and innovative people a place and opportunity to develop.”^[3]

Markus Miessen and Shumon Basar, editors of *Did Someone Say Participate? An Atlas of Spatial Practice*, make a strong case for a shift to this expanded role. Rooted in the disappointment of existing practice as a physical manifestation of one individual's formal ideology, they seek an alternative image of the profession as “a means of affecting existing socio-spatial conditions through the utilization of parallel investigation and non-populist modes of participation to fuel ambitious and often self-generated projects.”^[4] Using the existing physical and social geography of the area as a basis for their work, Miessen and Basar emphasize public space as an essential platform; “the zone of balance, an inclusive territory facilitating dialogue.”^[5] A proactive and socially ambitious spatial practice, it is embedded in a heterogeneous view of the city and its people:

[2] *ibid.*

[3] Overmeyer, Klaus. *Urban Pioneers: Temporary Use and Urban Development in Berlin*. Berlin, Germany: Jovis Verlag, 2007. p115.

[4] Miessen, Markus & Basar Shumon (eds). *Did Someone Say Participate? : An Atlas of Spatial Practice*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2006. p273.

[5] Miessen, Markus & Basar Shumon (eds). *Did Someone Say Participate? : An Atlas of Spatial Practice*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2006. p281.

“A recalibration of the image of the architect has to be undertaken in order for these new kinds of practice to emerge.”^[1]

[1] Miessen, Markus & Basar Shumon (eds). *Did Someone Say Participate? : An Atlas of Spatial Practice*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2006. p287.

“The protagonists of such sociopolitical urban practice take popular and marginal cultures into account. They base their work on urban sociology, which fits with the organization and experience of its citizen and propagates a much more direct relationship with the city.”^[6]

Whether the interventions remain as short-term or long-term use depends on the response displayed by the public and is not of primary concern. A definitive goal does not accompany these spatial explorations as the social engagement allows direct collaboration and cooperation to emerge between the community and practitioner. It broadens their experience of the city and allows them to collectively intervene, not by generating a formal proposal, but rather by producing a series of hypotheses to be tested and developed on a temporary basis as a means of generating urban change.

Activating the participation of the community, public authorities and private investors, allows these players to have an integrative function in both the given project and society in general. They simultaneously contribute to the development of the site as well as the social capital of their city. The participation of local actors reinforces a self-confidence and endurance that can begin to cure fragmented social conditions and improve communal action with minimal monetary investment.

“Civic commitment to such a project and the skills gained through participation in it can justly be considered building blocks of a civil society.”^[7]

According to Miessen, the time is ripe for a “new generation to further transform practice, enable students and upcoming practitioners to understand and utilize these ideas as a critical and stimulating platform for their future work, and re-calibrate the outdated author-relationship.”^[8]

[8] Miessen, Markus & Basar Shumon (eds). *Did Someone Say Participate? : An Atlas of Spatial Practice*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2006. p287

[6] Miessen, Markus & Basar Shumon (eds). *Did Someone Say Participate? : An Atlas of Spatial Practice*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2006. p286

[7] Schmidt, Birgit. *Alternative Investment in Shrinking Cities* from: Ed. Oswald, Philipp. *Shrinking Cities Volume 2: Interventions*. Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2006. p386

“The specific qualities of sites and their situations provide both the rationale and the raw material for making new projects. The form and character of a subsequent design derives from the physical fabric as well as the inherited attributes (past conditions) of the site and its larger territory.”^[1]

[1] Marot, Sebastien. The Reclaiming of Sites in Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Architecture. New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999. p 49.

This chapter analyzes fifteen case study projects which employ the theories discussed in the previous chapter. The case studies are successfully executed site-specific projects which enhance the everyday experience of the city, demonstrate the role temporary use can play in engaging the community and illustrate various ways for the design professional to engage the public realm.

Case studies 1 to 3 are temporary interventions which occurred as a one-time installation, exploring elements of social interaction and play within their urban environment. Case studies 3 and 4 are temporary installations which recur on an annual basis, transforming an under-used space of the city into a pedestrian haven. Case studies 6 to 9 are public space projects which have permanently altered an urban space, contributing to the development of their host community. Case studies 10 and 11 are permanent building projects which combine the building program with the surrounding ground surface to strengthen the interface between building and public realm. Finally, case studies 12 to 15 explore community engagement measures as a means of soliciting ideas from the community, identifying development opportunities and testing proposed design solutions.

The case studies are reviewed using a combination of four criteria: *temporality*, *operational tactic*, *formal tactic* and *community engagement*. The purpose of each criteria is as follows:

Temporality

Temporality identifies the temporal quality of the project, which ranges from a one-off temporary installation to a permanent intervention within the city.

Operational Tactic

Operational tactic identifies how the project operates, or how it responds to and encourages activity on the site and between its users.

Formal Tactic

Formal tactic identifies how the physical form of the project enhances its operation and attracts users.

Community Engagement

Community engagement identifies the means by which the community is engaged and for what purpose.

CASE STUDY O1

Project
Residual Space Interventions

Architect
SYN

Location
Gatineau/Hull, Quebec



Fig.20

Luc Levesque and Jean-Francois Prost of SYN, believe there are spatial qualities favourable to temporary occupation in the residual space produced by contemporary urbanization. They explored these circumstances in two urban interventions which exploit the potential of forgotten spaces to offer new possibilities of interaction with the urban environment.

The first project, entitled *Hypothese d'amarranges* consists of a series of picnic tables located throughout the city center, offering a "moving network" that become appropriated for by different users for different uses. The intervention reveals that the "existing conditions conceal potentials that can be made visible or accessible by discreet, almost immaterial gestures."^[1]

[1] Levesque, L. (2001-2003). Interstitial Landscapes as Resources. Retrieved April 10, 2007, from http://www.amarrages.com/amarrages/amar_textes/amar_textes.html

The second project, entitled *Hypothese d'insertions* reveals a level of play in the city through the use of a moveable element, the ping-pong table. The main goal of the project was to discover new urban spaces on which to play and act as an invitation to "change the way we look at and use existing urban spaces... inspiring other urban practices of play."^[2]

[2] Levesque, L. (2002-2003). Assumptions of Insertions. Retrieved April 10, 2007, from http://www.amarrages.com/insertions/insert_textes/insert_textes.html

Temporality: *One-off*
Operational Tactic: *Mobile Program*
Formal Tactic: *Kit of Parts*

Exploiting the potential of residual space through a *mobile program* that encourages unexpected opportunities for social interaction and play.



Fig.21



Fig.22

CASE STUDY O2

Project
Public Art Installation

Architect
RACA

Location
Berlin, Germany



Fig.23

As an event within the 2005 exhibition *Urban Art Stories* in Berlin, Pulska Ravn and Johan Carlsson of RACA designed a user-friendly intervention for one of Berlin's most prominent squares, Alexanderplatz.

The installation, which took place over the course of one week, consisted of placing 100 deck chairs in a set pattern in the middle of the square where the public were free to interact with them. The concrete benches were removed from the square's periphery and replaced by the deck chairs in the center of the square. Each chair contained a white head-rest which doubled as writing surface for people to leave their "mark", whether it be a drawing, message or tag.

Understood as an exploration in the "potentials of urban space and urban furniture

in relation to the user,"^[1] the public became conscious of their surroundings, allowing them to organize the chairs according to their social needs and desires, enlivening the square and resulting in a new perspective of the urban environment.

[1] RACA. (2005). Alexanderplatz: An Event within the Exhibition "Urban Art Stories". Retrieved April 12, 2007, from <http://www.raca.dk/>

Temporality: *One-off*
Operational Tactic: *Reconfigurable*
Formal Tactic: *Kit of Parts*

One time event in an established public square allowing users to temporarily personalize public space through *reconfigurable seating*.



Fig.24



Fig.25

CASE STUDY O3

Project
Jumping Field

Artist
Gronlund/Nisunen

Location
Helsinki, Finland



Fig.26

As part of the "Under the Same Sky" exhibition at the Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, the artist team of Tommi Gronlund and Petteri Nisunen constructed the temporary installation entitled *Jumping Field*.

Situated in a half-kilometer long and thirty-meter-wide grass field at the southern tip of an industrial peninsula in Helsinki, *Jumping Field* consists of a forty-by-forty-foot platform intended to replace a portion of the existing landscape with an interactive artificial one. Covered in artificial grass and supported below by a series of springs, the platform appears, at first glance, to be a standard playing field. However, once the user engages the space, its instability reveals itself and responds to the user's movement.

Eliminating the possibility for any traditional game to take place, *Jumping Field* presents an unexpected user-surface relationship which provokes new forms of urban play and spontaneous social interaction to occur.

Temporality: *One-off*
Operational Tactic: *Hybrid Programs*
Formal Tactic: *Operable Surface*

Altering a standard playing field into an *operable surface* that responds to user movements and encourages physical and social interaction.



Fig.27

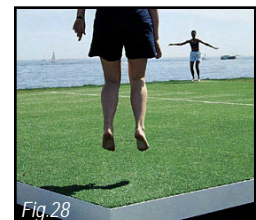


Fig.28

CASE STUDY 04

Project
MOMA PS1 YAP

Architect
Varies

Location
Queens, NY, USA

The Museum of Modern Art and MOMA PS1 hold a yearly competition called the Young Architects Program (YAP), which invites emerging architects to propose a temporary building project, lasting from June through to September, for the entrance courtyard of MOMA PS1 in Queens.

Established in 2000, the objective of the program is to identify emerging talent in the field of architecture and provide visitors with an outdoor leisure area and refuge from the urban environment for the warm summer months. The courtyard also hosts the annual *Warm Up* music concert series.

The selection process begins with a group of deans of architecture schools and editors of architectural publications nominating approximately 25 architecture students, recent graduates and established young architects experimenting with new materials and techniques to submit a portfolio of work. A select jury then chooses three finalists who are invited to submit preliminary proposals from which one winner is chosen for construction. The winning team is involved in every aspect from design through to construction and must meet strict program and budget parameters.

The winning entries, although similar in program, have varied greatly in materials and execution and continue to attract thousands of visitors each year.

The inaugural entry *Dunescape* in 2000 by SHoP Architects provided visitors with varying ways to enjoy the summer weather through a continuously transforming wood platform constructed of over 6,000 2x2" cedar strips. The various spatial configurations provide shade, seating, lifeguard and change areas along a continuous wading pool allowing visitors to socialize, sunbathe and cool off.

The 2004 winning entry, by nArchitects entitled *Canopy*, created a continuous bamboo canopy that dipped to the ground in order to form open air rooms, each with their own attraction. These consisted of the Pool Pad, the largest of the outdoor rooms, which incorporated a wading pool; the Fog Pad, which consisted of fog nozzles providing a cool mist across the users; and Sand Humps which oriented itself to maximize sun exposure.

BEATFUSE! by OBRA in 2006, consisted of seven curved, interconnected plywood shells encompassing three outdoor spaces offering a different climatic experience through such components as tidal pools, water misters and light strainers.

In 2008, WORK Architecture Company transformed the courtyard into an urban farm with their winning entry *P.F.1. (Public Farm One)*. The project is a continuous living canopy constructed of interconnected cardboard tubes which host a variety of plants and vegetables. Below the canopy exist zones of activity which include swings, fans, sound effects, seating and a wading pool.

Other winning entries include: ROY (2001), William E. Massie (2002), EMERGENT Architecture (2003), Xefirotarch (2005), Ball-Nogues (2007), MOS (2009), Solid Objectives (2010) and Interboro Partners (2011).

Temporality: *Recurring*
Operational Tactic: *Reconfigurable*
Formal Tactic: *Varies*

Annual re-configuration of an existing space to host a public event which promotes innovative design solutions and social interaction.



Fig. 29



Fig. 30



Fig. 31



Fig. 32

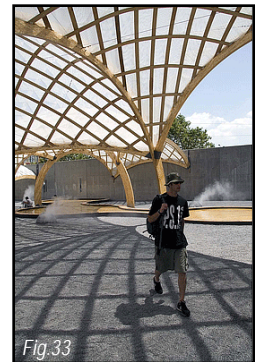


Fig. 33

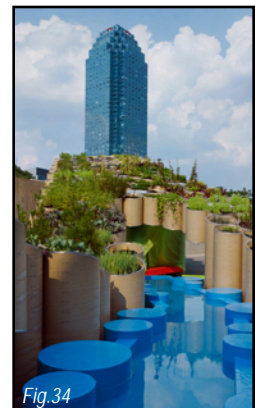


Fig. 34

CASE STUDY 05

Project
Paris Plage - Urban Beach

Scenographer
Jean-Christophe Choblet

Location
Paris, France

Since 2002, from mid-July to mid-August, Paris Mayor Bertrand Delanoë has commissioned scenographer Jean-Christophe Choblet to replicate a beach environment in the center of the city by importing 3,000 tons of sand, beach umbrellas, spray stations, and palm trees. A two-mile section of the Georges Pompidou expressway is temporarily closed off for the two month duration and exposes the river to pedestrians, roller bladers, sunbathers, and street performers. Multiple leisure stations line the urban beach including rock climbing, beach volleyball, swimming pool, mini-golf, as well as being home to a concert and film series.

Paris Plage has become a popular destination for both residents and tourists alike. In fact, its success has inspired other

cities, such as Amsterdam, Berlin, Brussels, Budapest, Prague, Vienna and Rome to host similar events along their waterfronts. Often situated along rivers and canals, where swimming is not recommended or forbidden, the temporary urban beaches activate these under-used portions of the city, offering a new urban experience by importing familiar beach activities to an unfamiliar urban location.

Temporality: *Recurring*
Operational Tactic: *Varies*
Formal Tactic: *Varies*

Temporarily converting vehicular infrastructure with a prime waterfront location into an active and passive leisure space dedicated to pedestrians.



Fig. 35



Fig. 36

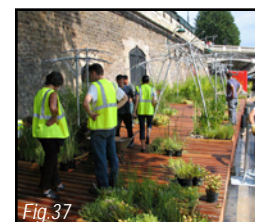


Fig. 37

CASE STUDY 06

Project
Various Schoolyards

Architect
NIPpaysages

Location
Quebec, Canada



Fig.38

Schoolyards, although private property, are community nodes which contribute to the health and vitality of their neighbourhood. Unfortunately, their playgrounds remain uninspired expanses of asphalt and grass which provide the bare minimum requirements for play - basketball courts, hopscotch courts and soccer fields to name a few.

NIPpaysages was provided the opportunity to redesign and renovate a number of school yards in various locations throughout the province of Quebec to "reduce existing heat islands and create a rich diversity of athletic, leisure and educational activities."

Working with the limited budget appointed by the school boards, NIPpaysages elaborated on the ubiquitous line markings of typical schoolyards to create a colourful

layering of playing fields, running tracks, and playful graphics to further engage children in the structured and spontaneous play which typically occurs in these spaces.

The projects contribute to the neighbourhood dynamics by providing new urban experiences which enhance social interaction and play within the community.



Fig.39

Temporality: *Permanent*
Operational Tactic: *Hybrid Programs*
Formal Tactic: *Graphic Layering*

A graphic layering of typical playing field lines and playful graphics engage youth in new forms of spontaneous play and social interaction.



Fig.40

CASE STUDY 07

Project
Spree Bridge Bathing Ship

Architect
AMP w/ G. Wilk & S. Lorenz

Location
Berlin, Germany



Fig.41

The *Spree Bridge Bathing Ship* was a result of a competition held by Berlin's Public Art Association to generate ideas for linking the city of Berlin with the Spree River.

Recalling the 19th-century floating bathhouse, the design team of AMP arquitectos, architect Gil Wilk and artist Susanne Lorenz, modified a 30-year-old shipping barge to create a modern-day fresh water urban bath. The project consists of three components: the barge pool, two wooden sun-bathing platforms which mimic the proportions of the barge, and a bridge connecting the platforms to the bank, which is home to a beach, bar and changing rooms.

The intervention, originally intended for temporary seasonal use in the summer months with the possibility of being transported

elsewhere along the river, has become so popular that in 2005 Gil Wilk, along-side architect Thomas Freiwalk, designed an air-filled membrane to enclose the pool and deck areas, allowing the facilities to be open year-round. The *Spree Bridge Bathing Ship* has far exceeded its original intentions and has created an unique urban bathing experience within the Spree River.

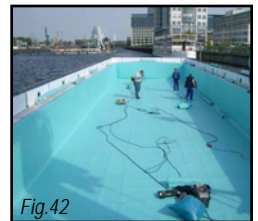


Fig.42

Temporality: *Permanent*
Operational Tactic: *Mobile Program*
Formal Tactic: *Kit of Parts*

Intervening on an underused space in the city, the river, with a familiar leisure activity, bathing, to provide a new urban destination for the public.



Fig.43

CASE STUDY 08

Project
Chess Park

Architect
Rios Clementi Hale Studios

Location
Glendale, California, USA

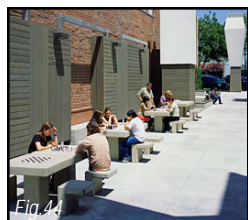


Fig.44

Based on the history and rituals of chess, the *Chess Park*, a 4500 square foot pocket park, has transformed an unremarkable residual space into a local landmark while acting as a catalyst for the transformation of the downtown pedestrian precinct in the city of Glendale.

The plan of the park, home to 16 chess tables, is based on the strategic movements made in a game of chess. Five light towers, whose form is inspired by the different chess pieces, dominate the park. The function and location for each tower is derived from the nature of the chess piece and an anticipated program of the park. For instance, the King Tower acts as throne for seating and performance, while the Rook Tower contains storage and technical support for special events in the park.

Although inspired and dominated by the game of chess, the *Chess Park* attracts more than just chess enthusiasts, playing host to day-to-day lunch gatherings and informal events, creating a social and intellectual hub within the city.



Fig.45

Temporality: *Permanent*
Operational Tactic: *Extended Interior*
Formal Tactic: *Kit of Parts*

Transformation of a residual space into a welcoming public space through the use of the familiar strategic game of chess and a play on the table lamp.



Fig.46

CASE STUDY 09

Project
Westblaak Skatepark

Architect
dS+V Rotterdam

Location
Rotterdam, The Netherlands



Fig.47

The culture of skateboarding is rooted in urban play and discovery. Along with the concrete quality of the streetscape, it is a social performer-audience relationship, where the participants perform for fellow skaters as well as the surrounding public, that attracts skaters to the city. Through this performative and experimental nature of skateboarding, public space gets appropriated as a giant playground. Unfortunately this culture is often regarded negatively and understood as intruders rather than an embraced facet of the city.

Dissatisfied with this exclusion from the city, a group of skateboarders in Rotterdam drafted a petition to voice their opinion to the municipal government. The response from the city was very positive, resulting in a skate park in the middle of Westblaak Boulevard.

The Westblaak Skatepark, covering an area of 72,000 square feet, combines street style with the standard ramps and obstacles. More than your standard inner city skate park, its unique location inserts a common form into an unexpected location, resulting in a collision of street and skate park, enhancing the user experience and opportunities for urban play and social engagement.

Temporality: *Permanent*
Operational Tactic: *Hybrid Programs*
Formal Tactic: *Manipulated Surface*

Appropriate the center median of a major urban Boulevard for skateboarding and associated activities of the popular youth culture.



Fig.48



Fig.49

CASE STUDY 10

Project
Basket Bar

Architect
NL Architects

Location
Utrecht, The Netherlands



Fig.50

The campus development at the University of Utrecht is slowly transforming the area from a mono-functional non-place into a multi-functional combination of urban programs and functions. A major player in this transformation is the BasketBar project by NL Architects.

In response to the lack of night life and growing population of students in the area, a local bar was required. Serving as the informal heart of the campus, the building situates itself along the main access road to the campus and in close proximity to many public buildings.

An extension of the existing bookstore, the bar is sunken into the ground, creating a greater floor height, and offering a new perspective of the surrounding public square. An 'orange pool' connects the ground level

to the bar level while also providing a small amphitheatre, ideal for informal social gatherings. The roof of the bar becomes the location for the campus basketball court, creating a platform for the performance and display of advanced skills. The centre of the court is constructed of translucent glass, further enhancing the users awareness of their unique interaction.

Temporality: *Permanent*
Operational Tactic: *Hybrid Programs*
Formal Tactic: *Manipulated Surface*

Creating a social hub for the University campus by extending interior building program outdoors and combining disparate programs and activities.



Fig.51



Fig.52

CASE STUDY 11

Project
Maritime Youth House

Architect
PLOT Architects

Location
Copenhagen, Denmark



Fig.53

Upon discovering the site was polluted by heavy metals, the client decided to dedicate nearly a quarter of the overall budget to site remediation. Instead of accepting this option as the given solution, PLOT decided to propose using the allotted portion of the budget to cover the entire site with a wooden deck, allowing the budget to be spent on the architecture, program and overall effect.

The wooden deck is the result of negotiating between the demands of two clients: a sailing club, who needed the site to dock their boats, and a youth centre, who desired outdoor space for play. In order to achieve this, the undulating surface responds to programmatic needs by rising to allow for storage and interior program beneath, while maintaining a continuous play surface above.

The wooden deck acts as the major 'room' of the building, emphasizing the outdoor activity while uniting all programmes, both indoor and outdoor.

Temporality: *Permanent*
Operational Tactic: *Extended Interior*
Formal Tactic: *Manipulated Surface*

Manipulating a typical wood deck to provide a playscape for youth and docking area for boats while incorporating building program below.



Fig.54



Fig.55

CASE STUDY 12

Project
Neuland

Architect
Studio Urban Catalyst

Location
Marzahn-Hellersdorf,
Netherlands



Fig.56

In 2005 and 2006 alone, almost 40 day care centers and schools in Marzahn-Hellersdorf will be demolished due to the depleted numbers of children in the area. Neuland is an integrative communications concept that, by marking the newly (or presently) vacant lots, seeks to address potential user groups, inform them about the vacant lots and use a uniform design to place the various spaces in a common context. Marking strategies developed to individually highlight the character and accessibility of each respective space nonetheless draw on a common stock of graphic and material "tools" in kit form.

The basic kit comprises oversized arrows, flags, mown areas and signs to be used as physical markers, and typography, hatching

and icons as graphic elements. The Marking Open Spaces project will be advertised by means of postcards, leaflets and an Internet site www.neuland-berlin.org.



Fig.57

Temporality: *Interim Use*
Community Engagement: *Site Marking, Website & Blog*

Raising awareness of vacant lots within the city and promoting temporary use by varying user groups until more permanent development ideas emerge.



Fig.58

CASE STUDY 13

Project
Malmö City's Parascopes

Designer
Unsworn Industries

Location
Malmö, Sweden



Fig.59



Fig.60

Malmö, Sweden's third largest city and southern Sweden's commercial centre, is transitioning from an industrial city to a city of knowledge. Older industries are being replaced by investments in new technology and Malmö University, which opened in 1998, is Sweden's most recent venture in the field of higher education.^[1]

In a 2007 campaign the Streets and Parks Department of Malmö City surveyed the public for suggestions on how to reduce vehicular traffic in Malmö. The surprising result was over a thousand clever and innovative proposals.^[2]

As a way to visually communicate the potential of the community generated ideas, the department collaborated with Unsworn Industries to develop the concept of a series of Parascopes, also known as Future Binoculars, to display panoramic images based on the citizens' proposals.^[3]

Resembling scenic observation binoculars the Parascopes, instead of showing the present situation, display illustrations of how the future of a particular place in the city may be.

The multiple benefits of the Parascopes are as follows:

- serve as a platform for giving shape to and testing potential proposals
- serve as a way to continue the dialogue between the city and public
- inspire the citizens to actively imagine and discuss what their city could be like to live in if biking, walking and

public transportation were prioritized

In addition to the Parascopes working on site throughout the city, the project's homepage (<http://www.kikainframtiden.se/Kungsgatan-Amiralsgatan>) provides the public a platform for discussing and providing feedback on the future of their city.

The public participation does not stop there, in the next phase of the project it is planned that anyone will be able to upload their visions to the project website.^[4]

Avoiding the typical approach of displaying technical drawings and printed development plans at City Hall, a venue rarely activated by the general public, the Parascopes immerse the user in an on-site experience of future city environments. As described by Erik Sandelin of Unsworn Industries: "you are in the middle of it all, free to explore different scenarios. This way, we hope the futures will be more tangible, clear, and easier to consider... realising that the design of urban space is not set in stone, feeling that change is possible is a first step towards participating in and acting upon how the urban environment is shaped."^[5]

[4] *ibid*
[5] *ibid*

Temporality: *Catalyst*
Community Engagement: *Viewing Apparatus, Public Survey, Website & Blog*

Installation of a viewing apparatus to allow the public to visualize the impact their own suggestions could have on the urban environment.



Fig.61

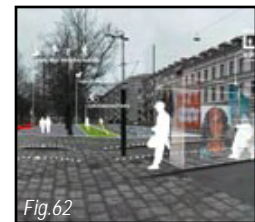


Fig.62



Fig.63



Fig.64

[1] City of Malmö (n.d.). Malmö - a City in Transition. Retrieved July 10, 2010, from <http://www.malmo.se/english>

[2] Unsworn Industries (n.d.). Imagine Potential Futures With Malmö City's New Parascopes. Retrieved July 10, 2010, from http://www.unsworn.org/press/parascopes_20090115.php/

[3] *ibid*

CASE STUDY 14

Project
Quay to the City

Architect
West8 & DTAH

Location
Toronto, Ontario, Canada



Fig.65

As part of the winning entry for the Toronto Central Waterfront Competition by West8 and du Toit Allsopp Hillier (DTAH), *Quay to the City* was a week-long temporary landscape installation which staged a portion of the proposed design as a way of testing the citizens reactions and use of the space, as well as immersing them in the future of the waterfront. In order to achieve this, the two east-bound lanes of Queens Quay were shutdown and replaced by two square kilometers of grass, 12,000 red geraniums and an installation piece constructed of 600 bicycles. This provided a continuous bike path along the waterfront and offered pedestrians places to relax, picnic and stroll without being dominated by vehicular infrastructure.

Described as an experiment in reclaiming public space, *Quay to the City* demonstrates what may be a possible evolution in the design process: an interaction between the temporary, as testing grounds, and the designed, as permanent form, informing one another and creating a reciprocal relationship between the everyday use of the public and the imagined use of the designer.

Temporality: *Catalyst*
Community Engagement: *Experiment, Public Survey*

Temporarily altering existing infrastructure to demonstrate and receive public feedback on a proposed design solution.



Fig.66



Fig.67

CASE STUDY 15

Project
University/Community Design Partnerships (UCDP)

Architect
Tulane City Center

Location
New Orleans, LA



Fig.68

Tulane City Center houses Tulane's School of Architecture urban research and outreach programs. The programs vary but maintain a common theme of improving cities, specifically New Orleans, through "fostering global urban research, the development of flexible and innovative urban strategies, and the provision of environmentally and culturally informed principles to guide the design and revitalization of the contemporary metropolis."^[1]

One of their most successful programs is the University/Community Design Partnerships (UCDP) which vary from small design/build projects to large scale site planning and urban design. Each project is coordinated by a Tulane School of Architecture faculty member who is supported by a group of students and serves as a "flexible and responsive mechanism...to mobilize the skills and knowledge of faculty and student body in support of community based organizations across New Orleans."^[2]

Partnered with Broad Street Community Connections, the Tulane City Center team developed a proposal to transform the Broad Street corridor from a vehicular dominated road into a pedestrian-friendly avenue through a series of pedestrian scaled interventions strategically located at key intersection along the road. The interventions were assembled of a select group of components, including benches, bike racks, green walls and bus shelters, which were combined in different forms depending on the need of the

intersection in question. After presenting the proposal to the community it was decided that suitable funds would be raised to develop one of the interventions as a prototype and catalyst for further development along the street.

The Hollygrove Greenline initiative identified a vacant infrastructure corridor as an opportunity to develop an unique community amenity and parkscape. Currently the fifty foot wide band of land above an underground canal cuts diagonally across the street grid creating a series of uniquely shaped but inaccessible plots of vacant land. The proposal focuses on developing these spaces into community infrastructure in the form of active and passive public park space, storm water management systems, community gardens and urban farms. The project "layers green infrastructure strategies over conventional engineering practices in a way that seeks to support neighborhood enhancement and economic development."^[3]

The projects pursued by the Tulane City Center through their UCDP demonstrate the potential for change available when higher education institutions engage the community and the real urban issues that surround them.

[3] *ibid.*

Temporality: *Catalyst*
Community Engagement: *Storefront Think-tank, C-U Partnership, Website*

Creating a social hub for the University campus by extending interior building program outdoors and combining disparate programs and activities.

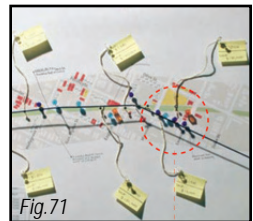


Fig.71



Fig.72



Fig.73



Fig.69



Fig.70

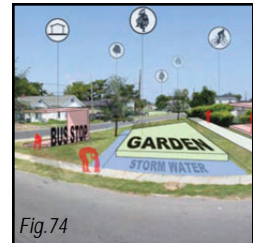


Fig.74

[1] Tulane University (n.d.). Tulane City Center. Retrieved February 26, 2012, from <http://www.tulanecitycenter.org/home/>
[2] *ibid.*

Each case study, executed in different cities by various design professionals, addresses an site-specific circumstance within the public realm. Although independent projects, their analysis derives a series of tactics for the given criteria, which are as follows:

Temporality

- *One-off* - See Case Study 01, 02 & 03
- *Recurring* - 04 & 05
- *Interim Use* - 12
- *Catalyst* - 13, 14 & 15
- *Permanent* - 06, 07, 08, 09, 10 & 11

Operational Tactics

- *Extended Interior* - 08 & 11
- *Hybrid Programs* - 03, 06, 09 & 10
- *Reconfigurable* - 02 & 04
- *Mobile Program* - 01 & 07

Formal Tactics

- *Manipulated Surface* - 09, 10 & 11
- *Kit of Parts* - 01, 02, 07 & 08
- *Graphic Layering* - 06
- *Operable Surface* - 03

Community Engagement Tactics

- *Storefront Think-tank* - 15
- *Public Survey* - 13 & 14
- *Community-University Partnership* - 15
- *Site Marking* - 12
- *Website & Blog* - 12, 13 & 15
- *Viewing Apparatus* - 13
- *Experiment* - 14

Together, the tactics create a tool kit for exploring the physical and social development of the urban public realm through temporary and permanent public space interventions. This tool kit is elaborated upon and employed in the Urban Actuation process of the following chapter.

Fig. 75 Urban Actuation Logo Explanation.

Public space interventions help mend the fragmented physical and social urban fabric.



URBAN FABRIC INTERVENTIONS

THE URBAN ACTUATION PROCESS CONTAINS FIVE
FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

01 ▶

CONSULT

02 ▶

SITUATE

03 ▶

HYPOTHESIZE

04 ▶

TEST

05 ▶

DEVELOP

The Urban Actuation process provides the city with a new way to perceive, value and develop urban public space. It is interested in ways of triggering social interaction in the public realm in order to stimulate and attract different demographics to a given urban area. Once the inhabitants become engaged with the multiple temporalities of the urban area through a series of public space interventions, they slowly begin to identify themselves with it. Working alongside the physical regeneration of the area, the Urban Actuation process experiments with and develops new urban programmes, promotes new development and encourages public participation and interaction throughout the process. Creating an approach which values social change as much as physical change, it allows for the creation of a more dynamic public realm rather than a place with a limited and vulnerable identity. By identifying fertile urban conditions and developing a series of public anchor-points, the proposal integrates new and existing building development into a larger cultural and social context. As the area continues to develop, it will attract both temporary visitors and permanent residents alike from around the city and abroad.



01 ▶
CONSULT

02 ▶
SITUATE

03 ▶
HYPOTHESIZE

04 ▶
TEST

05 ▶
DEVELOP

01 The first step of the Urban Actuation (UA) process involves winning support for, and receiving input into, the process from people inside the City and community.

'What can it do for us?' - The City and Urban Planning Department

This is a question that is bound to arise when introducing a new concept for urban development, as the city and community need to understand and be confident of the process before committing their own resources to it.

The UA process is able to provide insight into and improve the physical and social condition of a given urban area in a number of ways:

- Develop new urban programmes
- Encourage public participation
- Encourage public interaction
- Promote new development
- Attract new actors and demographics

To gauge the urban improvement value of investing in UA, the city needs to determine how such a strategy could improve the existing urban situation and what other possible benefits may occur, such as increased economic activity.

Once the area's needs and desires are fully understood, the specific opportunities that the UA process offers can be identified and communicated.

Complete commitment by the city to the process is required in order for it to succeed. If not, it may become isolated from the current development processes and not reach its full potential.

'What's our approach?' - Introducing the UA strategy

An urban improvement strategy requires a long-term view, sustained by commitment, motivation, adequate resources and regular monitoring if it is to bring about the desired results.

For UA to work, the City and Urban Planning Department must learn to value the role of public space in their city in the same regard as profit generating entities. Clear goals need to be set alongside a general budget and timeline. In developing a strategy, the following questions might help to identify future trends and organizational capabilities. Answer them by considering what the City currently offers, what it would like to offer and what it must do to respond.

1 External Trends

Are there emerging or existing trends of public activity that are currently not offered in your urban area?
Is there a possible local demographic that would display an interest in such an activity?

2 Knowledge of local citizens

Do you understand the public's positive and negative perceptions of the urban area?
Do you monitor feedback provided by the community relating to the improvement of the urban area?

3 New urban development

Do you consider the implications on the surrounding environment and the existing social conditions when accepting new developments?
Do you place an emphasis on improving the urban public realm when integrating new urban development?

'Who can help?' - Engaging multiple stakeholders

There is no shortage of people who will have their own aspirations about how to improve the public realm. All are valuable.

The stakeholders first need to be identified. They should range from community, private and public interests.

Local Community

The local community represent pools of knowledge on how areas function and the dreams and desires they maintain. They should be engaged as experts of locality while at the same time raising their awareness of the potentials of the UA process.

Private Sector

The private sector should involve local academic institutions, property and business owners and developers. The possibility of improving their students practical experience or initiating development of their site and business will attract them to enter into a partnership arrangement.

Public Sector

The public sector is the role of the city to proactively facilitate the partnerships, bringing together the different players and maintaining the development process.

Different stake holders are able to contribute different abilities, expertise and resources. They need to be formed into partnerships which are able to produce and implement new development strategies that benefit the interests of all parties.

01 ▶

CONSULT

02 ▶

SITUATE

03 ▶

HYPOTHESIZE

04 ▶

TEST

05 ▶

DEVELOP

02 The second step of the UA process involves situating oneself within the historical, physical and human geography of the study area.

The *Situate* phase allows the UA team to gain a better understanding of the urban area under investigation. Instead of studying the area at high a level from a remote office in a different city, the UA team will physically occupy an abandoned or unoccupied space within the city centre to employ empirical observation techniques. Establishing a *Storefront Think-tank* (See *Case Study 15*) has the following benefits:

- Fill a void in the streetscape which will have an immediate impact on the life of the street
- Demonstrate commitment by the parties involved to have an intimate relationship with the inner workings of the area and the specific sites as they develop
- Provide an opportunity for local educational institutions to provide hands-on experience for their students as intern positions would be made available as part of the process
- Bring the process to the people, allowing them to interact with the UA team, provide input and track the process as it develops

The *Storefront Think-tank*, open to and benefitting from all minds, would serve as a hybrid between a research & design centre and interactive public gallery. Implemented in the early stages of the process, it will serve as a host to the UA process as it evolves.

Once the *Storefront Think-tank* is in place, the UA team will initiate a *comprehensive inventory analysis* to reveal patterns of use that are highly specific and unique to the urban area. Operating at a community-wide scale, these observations, in terms of historical, social and physical geography, establish unique elements of the area that can be strengthened through new development. Analyzing the site ensures that nothing of value is lost.

Historical Analysis ►

Purpose: To understand the biography of an area

The history of the city reveals it's foundation and the physical and social morphology that has produced the existing urban condition. The public's perception of place is rooted in this urban morphology and often results in a nostalgic view of the city, one which desires the past, rather than a progressive view of the city, one which desires a new future. Understanding the biography of the area will reveal whether a change in perception of place is required to enable a repositioning of a nostalgia for what 'was' into a desire for what 'could be'.

Social Geography Analysis ►

Purpose: To identify the existing and potential actors of an area and what urban programmes may be used to further attract them

The socioeconomic details of the local population need to be considered to ensure that the development is in response to local needs and desires. Data gathered from the local population characteristics should involve the resident and working populations, including their age, sex, ethnicity and general area of residency.^[1]

Accompanying the demographic information, it is important to be aware of the existing urban programmes and activities within the area and which demographics they currently attract. Other desired and possible future programmes and activities can then be included for reference when developing a given area. Combined, this creates a *Demographic Program Inventory* that can be applied depending on the physical and social character of the site.

Physical Geography Analysis ►

Purpose: To identify the existing physical character of an area and begin to indicate how it may be transformed

The physical geography of an urban area needs to be studied and understood as it is the physical space subject to transformation. The following aspects should be considered:

- Urban Fabric: pattern of blocks, plots and buildings
- Infrastructure: vehicular and pedestrian routes
- Landscape: form and natural features
- Building Program: significant building programs
- Public Space: existing public spaces
- Opportunity: vacant lots^[2]
- Latent Activity: existing informal public activity

These provide useful headings for the analysis and, when combined, begin to inform existing and possible *zones of urban intensity* that become potential sites for intervention and experimentation. The physical geography analysis will remain a 'working' document, evolving as development progresses and new information emerges.

[1] Corbet, Nick. *Transforming Cities: Revival in the Square*. London: RIBA Enterprises Ltd, 2004. p45

[2] Corbet, Nick. *Transforming Cities: Revival in the Square*. London: RIBA Enterprises Ltd, 2004. p64

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

The following is a *Historical Analysis* of Cambridge Ontario to reveal the biography of the city, how it began and how it developed into the urban fabric that exists today. The *Historical Analysis* reveals the current mindsets of long-time residents as Galt, Preston and Hespeler continue to search for their individual identities and overcome their differences in an amalgamated city. Simultaneously, it reveals the rise and fall of Galt as the manufacturing, social and recreational hub of the city as commercial activity was pulled out of the core towards Hespeler Road with recent trends emerging to reverse this effect.

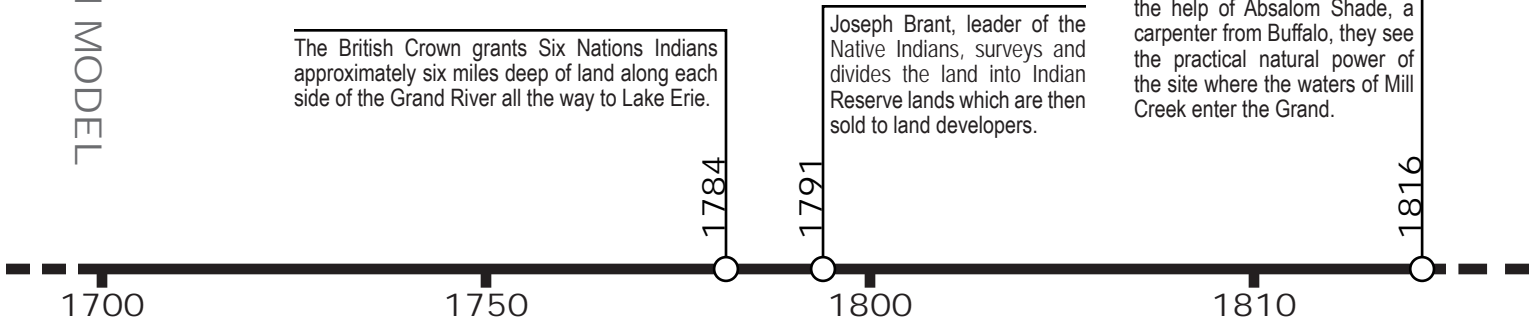
Dickson advertises "Shade's Mills" in the Township of Dumfries popular press of Scotland's lowlands to encourage growth. John Telfer hired further encourage emigration in Scotland.

The Official Town Plan is initiated as the mills are arranged in the settlement of "Shade's Mills". The 90,000 acres of land along the Grand River is named North and South Dumfries Townships.

The Honourable William Dickson, a land developer, buys 90,000 acres along the Grand River. He divides the land into smaller lots to sell primarily to Scottish settlers in hopes of populating the countryside. With the help of Absalom Shade, a carpenter from Buffalo, they see the practical natural power of the site where the waters of Mill Creek enter the Grand.

The British Crown grants Six Nations Indians approximately six miles deep of land along each side of the Grand River all the way to Lake Erie.

Joseph Brant, leader of the Native Indians, surveys and divides the land into Indian Reserve lands which are then sold to land developers.



The village's first bank is built and Galt's first foundry joins an industrial complex built by Robert Dickson. The Duncan Fisher's Galt Foundry and Machine Works (later Cowan & Co.) is a major manufacturer of Canadian machine tools.

Textile production on an industrial scale begins in Galt, Preston and Hespeler. It is a tightly knit group with industry leaders moving from one enterprise to another and often from one community to another. The productivity of the numerous factories, including James Cowan's Dumfries Foundry, makes Galt into the "Manchestor of Canada".

The government of Robert Baldwin decides to extend the idea of local government to smaller manageable political units. The village of Galt attempts to become the administrative centre to surrounding townships but fails to gain a county seat.

The census lists 3 banks, 3 insurance agencies and 13 factories in Galt.

A great fire destroys most of the business district.

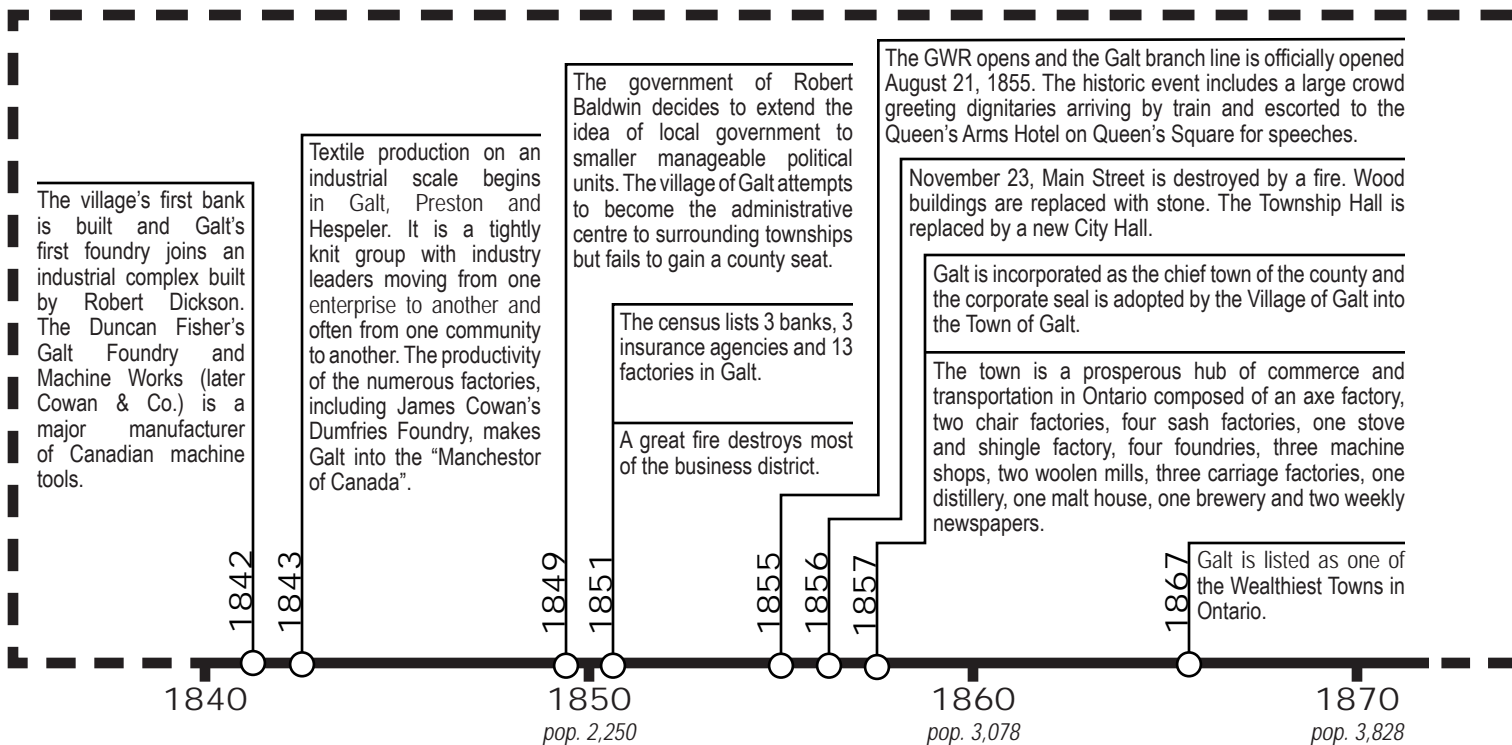
The GWR opens and the Galt branch line is officially opened August 21, 1855. The historic event includes a large crowd greeting dignitaries arriving by train and escorted to the Queen's Arms Hotel on Queen's Square for speeches.

November 23, Main Street is destroyed by a fire. Wood buildings are replaced with stone. The Township Hall is replaced by a new City Hall.

Galt is incorporated as the chief town of the county and the corporate seal is adopted by the Village of Galt into the Town of Galt.

The town is a prosperous hub of commerce and transportation in Ontario composed of an axe factory, two chair factories, four sash factories, one stove and shingle factory, four foundries, three machine shops, two woolen mills, three carriage factories, one distillery, one malt house, one brewery and two weekly newspapers.

Galt is listed as one of the Wealthiest Towns in Ontario.



Steady Scottish immigration influx pushes that the town be renamed from "Shade's Mills" to "Galt". The change is suggested to provide the town with a distinctly Scottish identity, ie. Galt honours the Scottish novelist and Canada Company Commissioner, John Galt. The original name was practical and unofficial, representing the process of the settlement.

The local population did not receive the name change well until a visit by John Galt. Population growth means more services: John Clark's Inn, two mills, a blacksmith shop and livery stable, two general stores, a distillery and Shade's store were the "heart" of Galt.

Galt's first school house is erected at Dickson and Water Street North.

Wealth began to accumulate as men of education began to appear, farmers were becoming more prosperous and new enterprises were being formed. Galt had assumed the form of an independent, self governed community.

William Dickson lays out a plan for a public square named Queen's Square. The hotel adjacent to the square, The King's Arms Inn, later renamed The Queen's Hotel serve as a major coach stop on the stage coach line and act as the centre of social life in the community.

A new toll road (Hwy #8) is constructed by provincial authorities to pierce the Beverly Swamp and connect Galt to the more populous areas of Dundas, Hamilton, Toronto and Upper Canada.

Robert Dickson, Honourable William Dickson's eldest son acts quickly and hires John Cain of Montreal to build a dam across the Grand River. The canal or mill race, provides water power for Dickson's planned flour, saw and woolen mill. The assured water power encourages new businessmen to build their factories along the banks of the Grand River.

Shade builds his "Red" or Credit store at the east end of the bridge on the south west corner of the intersection of Main and Water Streets so that settlers of the town and countryside have to pass the store in order to cross the bridge.

The first sawmill is erected on Mill Creek.

Ten buildings compose the village: Dumfries Mill, a saw mill, a blacksmith, Absalom Shade's house/store, three log houses, a tavern, the remains of a temporary mill and the area's first distillery.

The new settlement grows slowly due to its remoteness and is discussed in the first Town Meeting of local municipal government. The village is self sufficient with its own mills, stores, school and tradesmen due to its isolation from the more populated markets at Dundas, Hamilton and Toronto.

Shade accompanied his "Red" store with a "White" or Cash store and Galt's first school is replaced.

1817
1820

1824
1825

1827
1828

1830
pop. 250

1831
1832

1834
1835

1837
1840

The property west of the Town Hall is purchased for a market building. The size of the market building doubles as a wholesale wood market before coal, oil and gas heating is common and a large number of butchers constituting the retail centre locate themselves in the basement.

Local electric rail transportation, Galt and Preston Street Railway, is organized to provide a frequent and low fare passenger and freight service to meet the increasing social and business exchange between Galt and Preston.

The electric rail cars generate considerable local excitement and by 1896 the company is carrying about 35,000 passengers and 1,000 tons of freight each month.

1880 - 1897
1880
pop. 5,187

1890
pop. 7,250

1896
1900
pop. 7,746

Study suggests that almost 85 percent of industrial assets of the Preston-Hespeler-Galt complex were controlled outside Canada.

Hespeler Road, which for the first 20 years after the war remained farmland, attracting hay rides and toboggan parties, had become a five-lane roadway edged with American chain fast-food restaurants and suburban sprawl.

The demolition of the Gore Mutual Insurance Building outrages local heritage supporters enough for them to campaign against any further destruction of the city's architectural heritage.

Dr. Fyfe's report recommends that the County of Waterloo be replaced by the Regional Municipality of Waterloo and that the City of Galt would amalgamate with the towns of Preston and Hespeler to form a single city. Galt, Preston and Hespeler strongly opposed the change.

Centennial Fountain activated at Queen's Square to the sight of 2,500 onlookers.

Provincial government appoints Dr. Stewart Fyfe to conduct a review of the Waterloo Area Local Government with the goal of revamping the way the county is governed.

Dobbie Industries announced the formation of a new company, Lady Galt Towels Ltd, and two new factories, one in Galt and the other in Burford. The Galt factory is currently occupied by Waterloo Architecture Cambridge.

City Hall renovated by architect Peter Stokes.

Electric freight service officially comes to an end on October 1st.

Opening of the four-lane MacDonald-Cartier Freeway (HWY 401), linking the area directly with Toronto, becomes a major catalyst for change as buses and diesel engines replaced electric trains, and the commercial and industrial centre of the three communities began to be pulled toward Highway 401.

Bank of Nova Scotia replaces the recently demolished Gore Mutual Insurance Building, an architectural landmark since its construction in 1892, with the modern concrete and glass building that exists today.

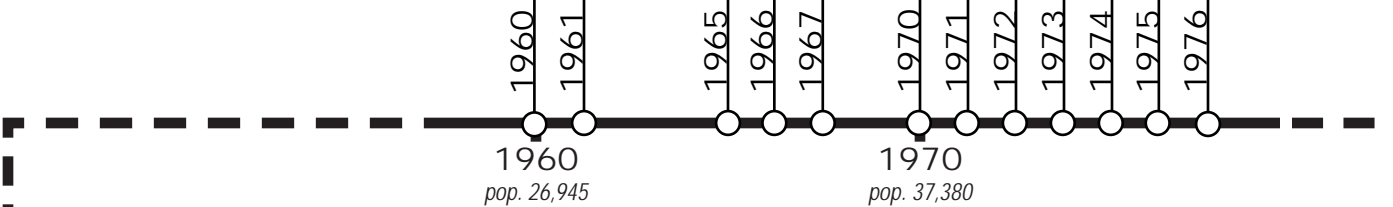
Galt's Dobbie Industries, once the largest privately owned textile enterprise in Canada, goes into receivership. Imports from Third World countries undercut the Canadian market, and plastics and vinyls begin to replace textiles in a whole range of areas.

The opposition increases in Preston and Hespeler when it is announced the merged municipalities are to adopt the name "Galt", which became known as the "Name Game". On January 1st, 1973, after drawn out controversy, the people choose the new city name of "Cambridge".

One Day in May. On May 17th, the city saw its most severe flood, reaching a depth of 6 feet in the downtown. As devastating as the flood was, it was the first time the newly amalgamated communities pulled together, acting as the people of Cambridge.

In the mid-1970's it is estimated that Newfoundlanders claim the largest ethnic group in Cambridge at 15,000 residents, while the Portuguese are the second largest at 10,000.

Hespeler Road, known as the "Golden Strip", triples in size from 50 businesses to 148.



Electric streetlights were activated for the first time.

The new hydro-electric system was inaugurated, ushering in a new era of growth and prosperity. This altered the development of industrial plants, as they no longer needed to be located along the river or rail lines.

First movies were shown at Scott's Opera House.

Carnegie Library was established.

Scott's Opera House, which operated until 1928, was the site for many weekly theatrical productions.

Although still rare, automobiles were owned by the wealthiest families and the demands for "good roads" came immediately.

War period was one of accelerated industrial and business expansion.

Galt acquires city status.

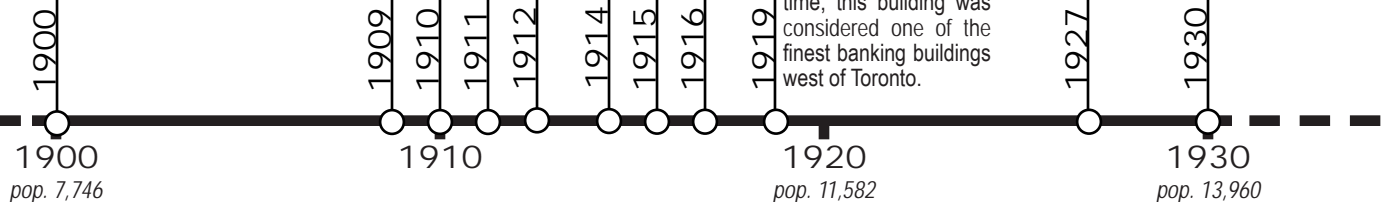
The Imperial Hotel, located on Water Street south of Main, burns to the ground.

A new bank building is erected on the northeast corner of Main and Water Street. At the time, this building was considered one of the finest banking buildings west of Toronto.

Galtonians owned over 3,000 automobiles and was describing itself as "the 'Highway Hub', claiming 'the first position in Western Ontario'."

Residential development around Victoria Park was becoming established as the exclusive residential area for Galt's elite.

The Capitol Theatre, with the sole purpose of showing movies, was built on the site previously occupied by the Imperial Hotel. It closed in 1977 and was demolished in 1995.



More than 80 percent vote in favor of the city's independence and negotiating its way out of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, however, it is not passed.

City Council approves an \$8.2 million flood control project along the banks of the Grand River in downtown Cambridge.

Concept for a dome-covered pedestrian mall in the downtown Cambridge shopping district is revived with the release of a feasibility study prepared by a team led by Barton Meyers Architect.

Proposal to build a pedestrian bridge over the Grand River at the C.P.R. bridge is rejected.

New YMCA building opens on Queen's Square.

Former Water St Baptist Church is renovated to accommodate the Galt Little Theatre.

First Grand Riverfest takes place as part of the Cambridge International Festival.

City Council adopts restrictions which limit the height of new downtown residential development.

The area south of Main St between Water and Ainslie is designated as the first Heritage Conservation district.

Toyota Motor Corporation announces its plans to build its Canadian automobile manufacturing plant in Cambridge.

Heritage Cambridge purchases 89 Grand Ave S. The purchase is the first using the Community Heritage Fund that is designed to be used to purchase heritage buildings and refurbish and designate them prior to re-sell.

Cambridge Centre Mall approved by Ontario Municipal Board.

A long awaited feasibility study for the building of a Civic Centre in downtown Cambridge is released. The project is the subject of a much debate, resulting in it being set aside for future consideration.

Newlands & Co., a major player in the textile industry, announces that their Ainslie Street plant is closing. The plant is demolished and replaced by the Cambridge Transit Terminal, which opens in 1993.

First Annual Mill Race Festival of Traditional Folk Music.

The Our Common Future public forum is launched proposing to develop a common vision, objectives and action plan to guide the city into the next century.

Plans are unveiled for a "more user friendly" Civic Square and parking lot located between the Market and old City Hall.

Council approves a requirement for the owner of any heritage building that is to be demolished to provide the city with architectural drawings, a land history and photographs prior to demolition.

Cambridge Centre Mall is granted regional mall status.

YMCA building on Queen's Square is demolished and replaced by the Queen's Square Terrace, a senior's residence.

Plans to transform the Cambridge Riverfront into a "vibrant people place" are unveiled. Plans include multiple boardwalks and a discovery centre.

A Civic Square masterplan is unveiled, which covers the block bordered by Ainslie, Dickson, Wellington and Thorne Streets.

Cambridge Council agrees to invest \$7.5 million over the next fifteen years to bring the UW School of Architecture to Cambridge.

Waterloo Architecture Cambridge opens in the former Riverside Silk Mill on Melville Street.

Region of Waterloo announces plans for a regional light rail transit system.

The new Civic Administration Building opens on Dickson St., between the old City Hall and the Cambridge Centre for the Arts. The project includes a new civic square which defines a formal civic precinct for the city.

1980
pop. 75,716

1982

1985

1987

1990
pop. 88,600

1993

1994

1996

1998

2000
pop. 108,360

2004

2008

2010
pop. 122,000

Current Main St. Bridge Opened
Note: Main St. Bridge was washed out or severely damaged by floods in 1831, 1849, 1854, 1857, 1859, 1896, 1912, and 1929.

The Galt Post Office, built by G.H. Thomas and Son, opens at Water St. N. and Dickson St.

The Palace Theatre, located on Main St., operated until 1959. During this period, Galt had a total movie theatre seating capacity of 2,420.

Galt, due to its diversified industries, managed to withstand the depression better than many other municipalities.

The Galt Aircraft School opens at the Canada Machinery Corp. (CMC) building at Concession and Water Street.

Local electric rail reaches its highest level of service at 85 cars per day. The Lake Erie & Northern Railway offered 12 daily trips from Galt to Port Dover with a one-way fare of \$1.60.

Three separate floods occur this year, the first two came two weeks apart in March and the third coming in October which resulted from the effects of Hurricane Hazel.

Grand River Railway renews its request to discontinue passenger service and on April 14th, electric rail passenger service came to an end.

Collapse of the C.P.R. Bridge brings visitors from miles around.

1931

1936

1939

1940

1940
pop. 14,584

1950
pop. 18,306

1954

1955

1956

1960
pop. 26,945

SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY ANALYSIS

The following is a *Social Geography Analysis* of Cambridge Ontario to reveal the socio-economic details of the city, who lives here and where the varying age populations tend to reside. It includes census mapping and community survey results. The *Social Geography Analysis* reveals greater population levels for the elderly and singles in the urban core, while families have greater populations in the surrounding suburbs.

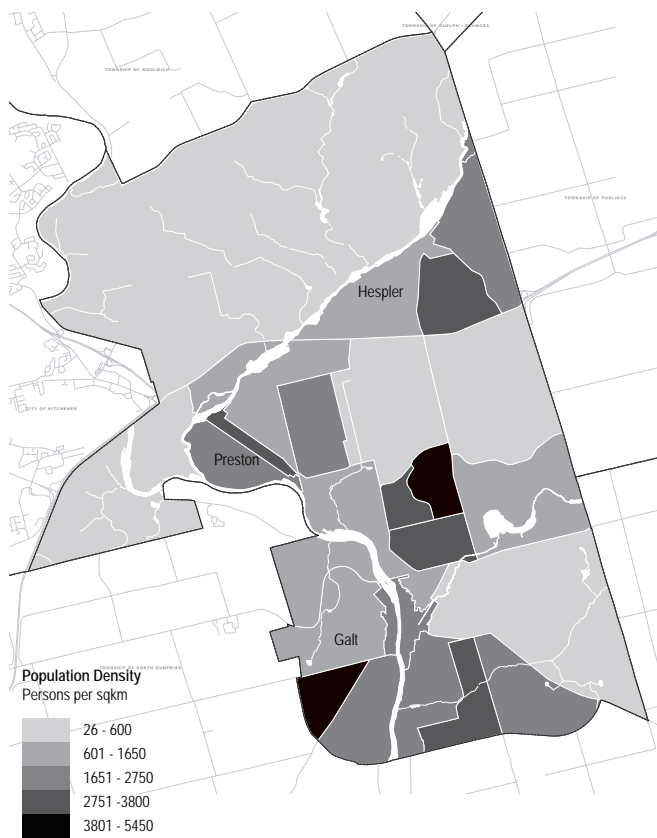


Fig.76 Population Density - Cambridge, ON.

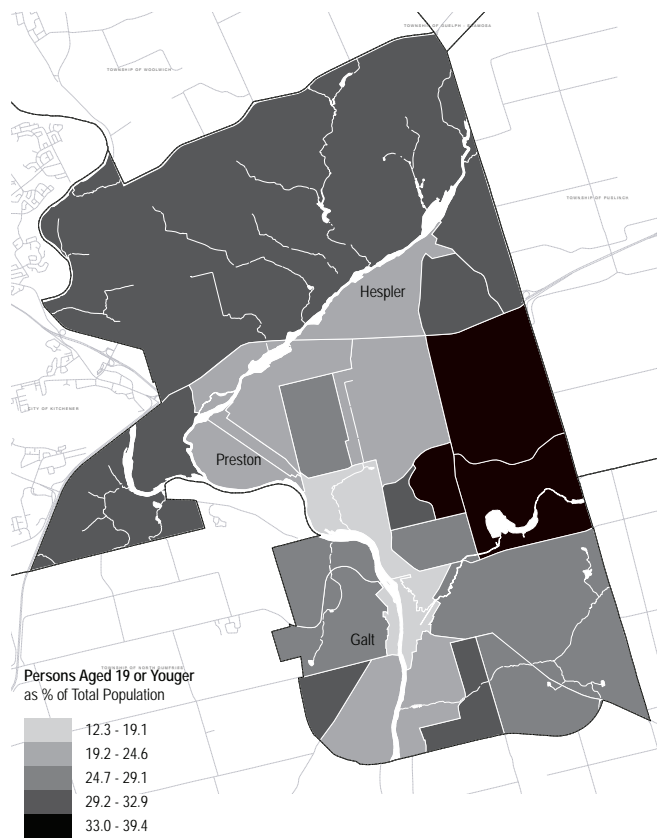


Fig.77 Persons Aged 19 or Younger - Cambridge, ON.

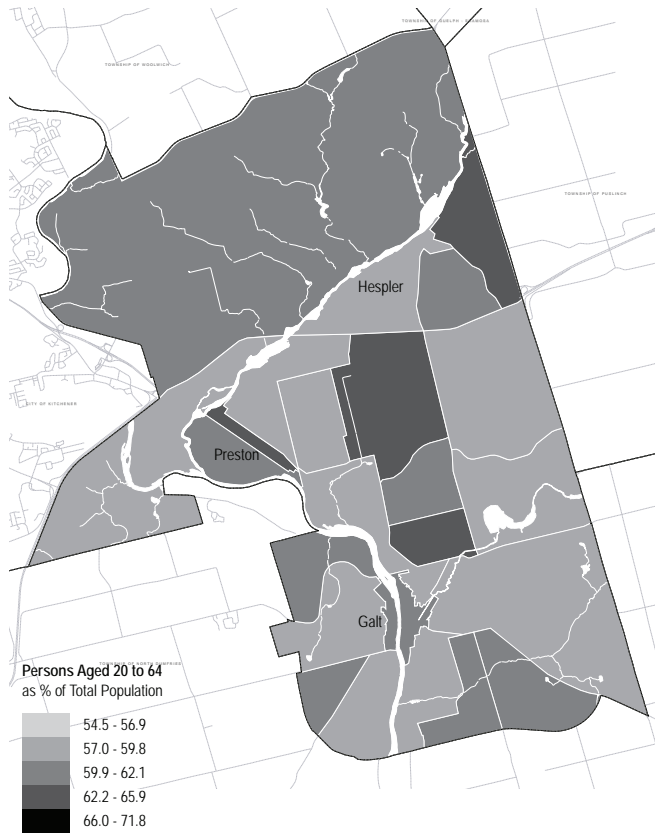


Fig.78 Persons Aged 20 to 64 - Cambridge, ON.

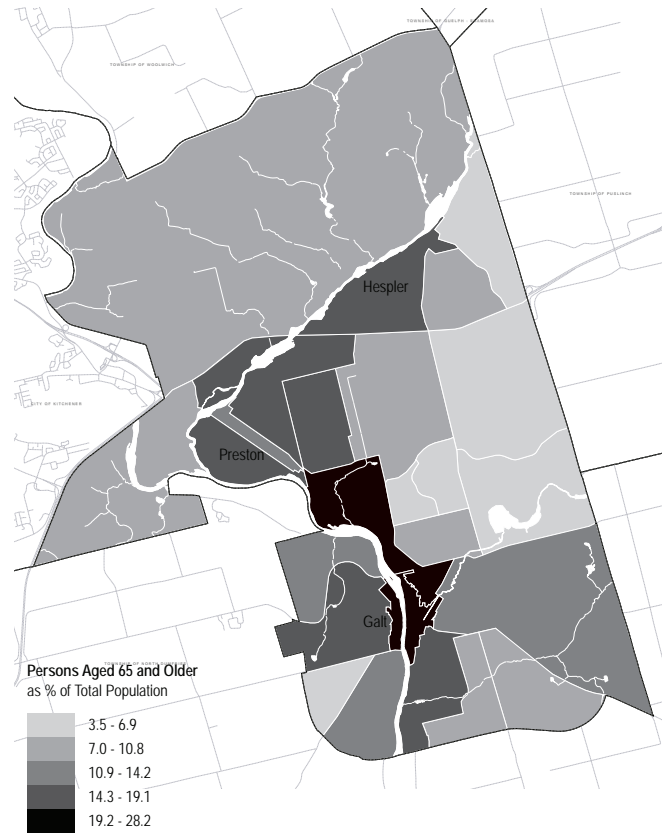


Fig.81 Persons Aged 65 and Older - Cambridge, ON.

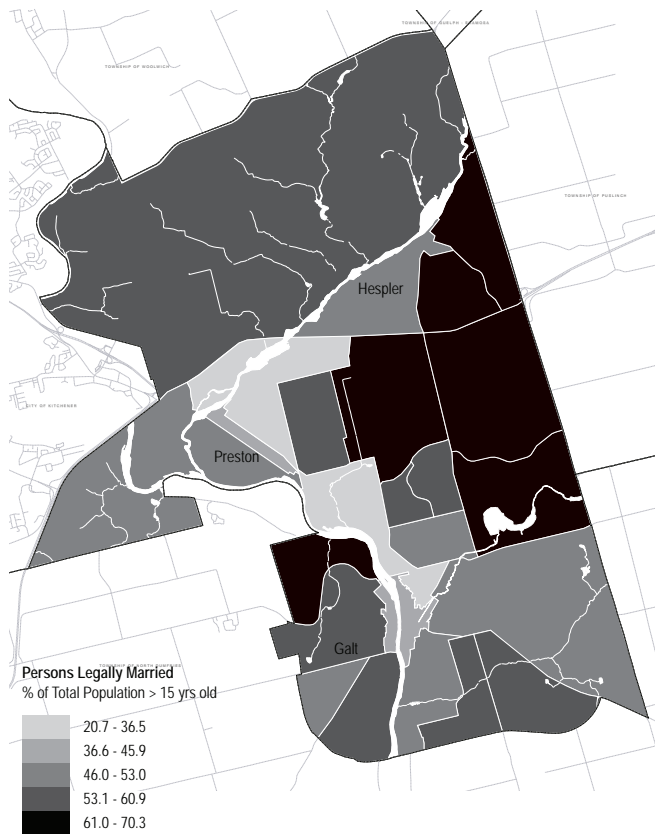


Fig.79 Persons Legally Married - Cambridge, ON.

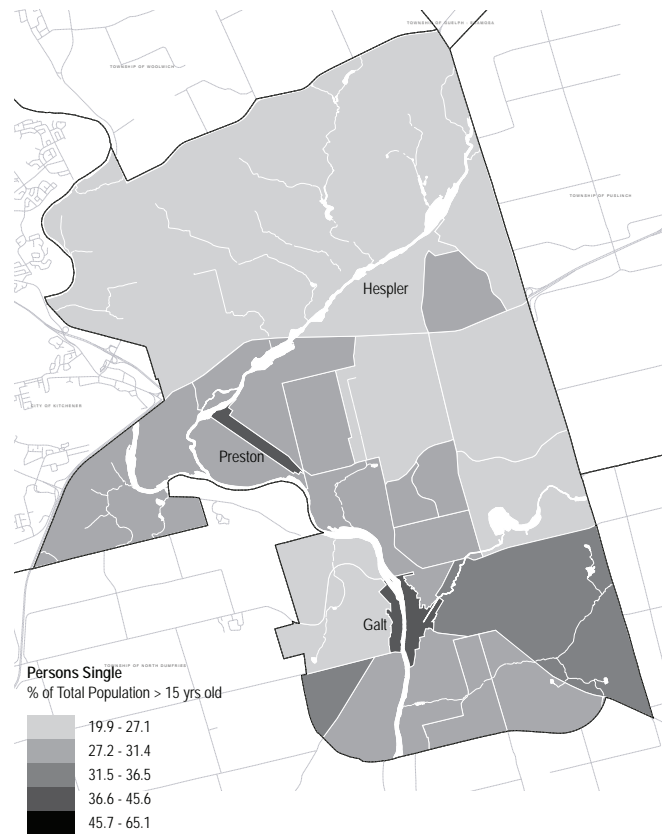


Fig.80 Persons Single - Cambridge, ON.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

The following are results from the *What's Your Opinion?* community survey of Cambridge Ontario, the purpose of which is to reveal the opinions of the School of Architecture community as well as that of the general public. This is not the complete report and presents only the information that was relevant to the development of this thesis.

Survey participants were asked to rank considerations on how to improve Galt City Centre. The following are the top ten priorities:

Priorities among School of Architecture respondents:

- 1 Greater variety of night life activities
- 2 Greater variety of independent retail and restaurants
- 3 Safer and more welcoming environment
- 4 Better public transportation
- 5 More accommodating business hours
- 6 Recreational facilities and events
- 7 Maintenance and reuse of vacant buildings/lots
- 8 Pleasant 'walkable' environment for pedestrians
- 9 Inviting public space around the Grand River
- 10 High quality green space and public gardens

Priorities among community respondents:

- 1 Better maintenance and reuse of vacant buildings/lots
- 2 Create a litter free and well-maintained Galt City Centre
- 3 Greater variety of independent retail and restaurants
- 4 More high-quality green space and public gardens
- 5 Safer and more welcoming environment
- 6 Pleasant 'walking' environment for pedestrians
- 7 Controlled volume of trucks on main streets
- 8 Inviting public space around the Grand River
- 9 Convenience of parking spaces
- 10 Better public transportation

Would you be interested in participating in activities that involved community members and students?

School of Architecture respondents:

55% Interested 42% Maybe 3% Not interested

Community respondents:

56% Interested 34% Maybe 10% Not interested

Business respondents:

57% Interested in proposing project ideas to students
55% Consider displaying student work

What small change could make the biggest difference in Galt City Centre?

School of Architecture participants:

- 34% Need for student friendly stores
- 17% Need for public improvement initiatives
e.g. awareness, employment, homelessness, aesthetics, security, public spaces for community
- 16% Need for greater student population
- 9% General infrastructure improvements,
e.g. river treatment, traffic concerns, vacant properties
- 7% Need for student initiatives
e.g. create a better place for the community
- 4% Political solutions involving City Hall
- 4% Need for student residences and public spaces

Community participants:

- 27% Need for better maintenance of public space
e.g. river, streets, lighting, street furniture
- 24% Need for storefront improvement
e.g. hours of operation, lower rent, signage
- 14% Improved parking availability and convenience
- 8% Need for restoration of abandoned buildings
- 6% Improved availability of upscale housing
- 5% Traffic improvements
e.g. return to one-way, reduce through-traffic
- 5% Remove homeless and 'trashy' people
- 3% Remove label 'Galt'
- 3% Improve civic pride and presence

COMMUNITY QUOTES

The following are anonymous quotes that were submitted as part of the comments section of the survey and offer a glimpse into the individual opinions of the community on the state of public space in downtown Cambridge.

"More access to the waterway with boardwalks and kiosks along the waterfront." - Anonymous

"It would be great to have more benches around the downtown. Nice flower pots and even chess/checker board style tables could also be great because they might attract people." - Anonymous

"A place that integrates uses in innovative and unexpected ways."
- Anonymous

"Pedestrian friendly with a lot of outdoor cafe's and spaces along the Grand to picnic, walk and sit while enjoying the river." - Anonymous

"People-friendly, full of activity, more like a European square. Sidewalk cafes, access to the river, plants and flowers, clean streets." - Anonymous

"Lots of public space to enhance the best features - the river." - Anonymous

"Cleaning up the core is critical. I love downtown, but often feel unsafe at night." - Anonymous

"The river is an amazing asset that needs to be emphasized." - Anonymous

"More benches and trees along the streets, less parking." - Anonymous

"Installations of art by UW students throughout Galt." - Anonymous

"Green space by the river or giving access to the river where you could eat, drink, read and visit." - Anonymous

"Engagement. Events in the downtown which could help to re-imagine and enliven the spaces." - Anonymous

"Turning underused parking lots into parks." - Anonymous

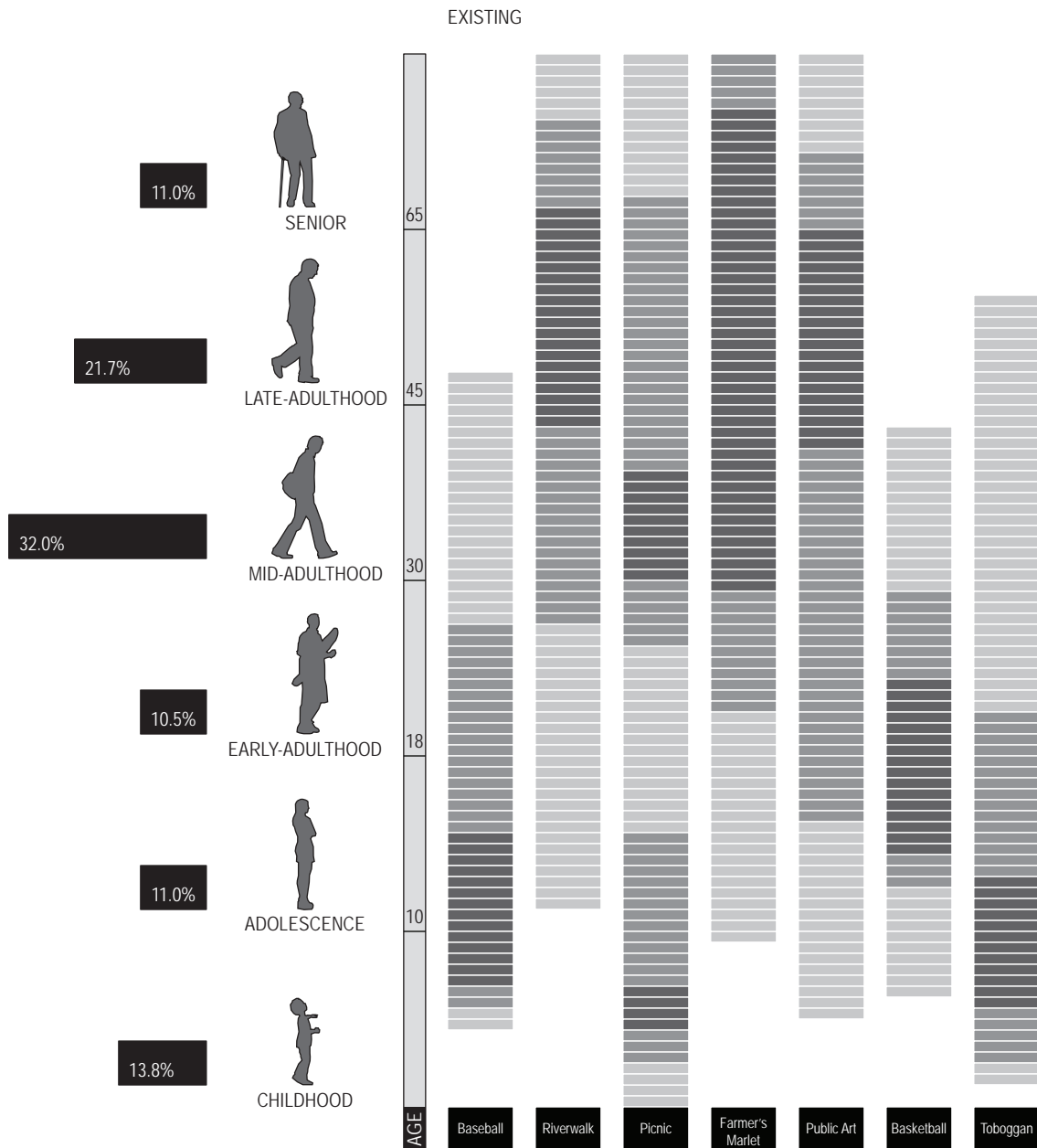
"Lectures or workshops to encourage the public to realize the current state of Galt and brainstorming together ways of improving it." - Anonymous

"Public square that isn't a parking lot or surrounded by traffic." - Anonymous

"Have Architecture faculty and students form a consulting committee that would collaborate with city staff on public projects - parks, rivers, downtown, event facilities, public art, etc. Cambridge could become an architectural playground with wonderful subtle or not so subtle influences throughout the public and private space. We should not lose the opportunity to make use of the many ideas that come from an academic institution." - Anonymous

DEMOGRAPHIC PROGRAM INVENTORY

Accompanying the demographic information acquired above, the *Demographic Program Inventory* tracks the urban activities present and missing that may play a role in attracting certain urban actors to the urban core. As a catalogue of urban actors and their related urban activities, it is referenced throughout the Urban Actuation process to monitor which existing programs are functioning well and which future programs may be developed to incubate new and existing urban actors; helping sculpt a range of possible futures.



*NOTE: The Age Characteristics of the Population is based on data from the Cambridge Community Profile by Statistics Canada.

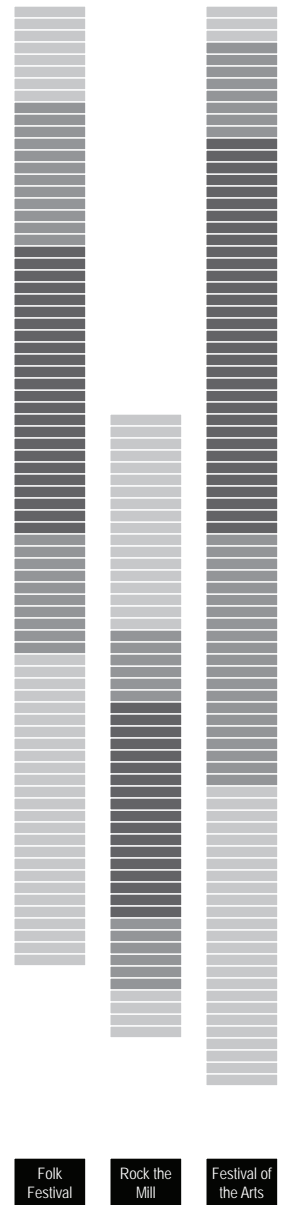
EXISTING - LATENT



POSSIBLE



FESTIVALS



PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY ANALYSIS

The following is a *Physical Geography Analysis* of Galt City Centre to reveal the physical characteristics of the natural and man made landscape. The *Physical Geography Analysis* reveals the prominent natural features of the area, the main vehicular and pedestrian routes and the density and scale of the existing urban fabric. It proceeds to analyze in finer detail the major building programs, existing public spaces, and vacant lots. The results are combined to identify *Zones of Urban Intensity*, which are micro-areas of high potential within Galt City Centre that can be targeted for exploration and intervention.

URBAN FABRIC

The urban fabric of Galt City Centre consists of low to mid-rise buildings, many of heritage significance, surrounded by single-family residential neighbourhoods. Once a thriving industrial and commercial centre, the building density has weakened as the development of the nearby Hespeler Road commercial strip developed. The result is a fragmented urban fabric with a surplus of surface parking lots and vacant land.

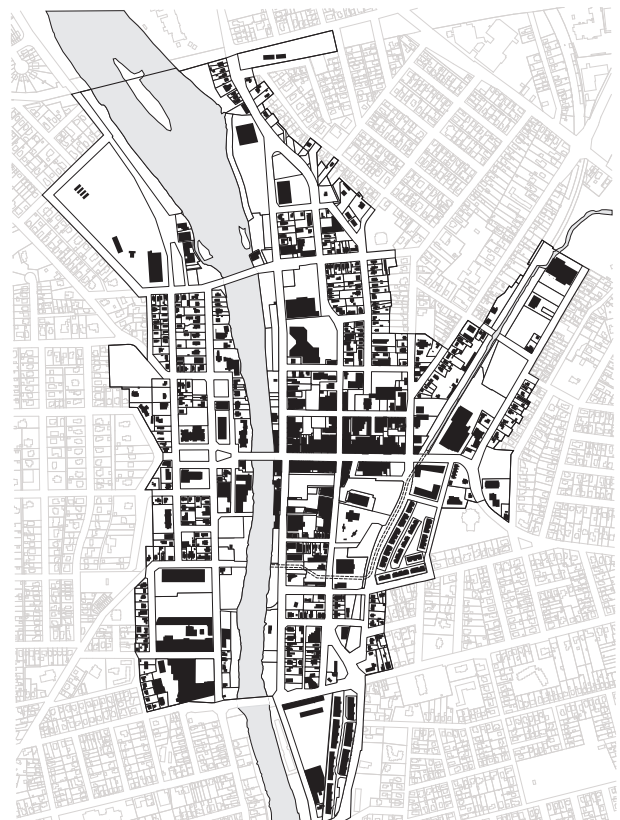


Fig.82 Urban Fabric - Cambridge, ON.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Galt City Centre is primarily divided by three north-south and three east-west oriented routes. Highway 24 is the primary north-south thoroughfare which connects Brantford to the south and Guelph to the north and is a heavily travelled route for transport trucks. The three east-west oriented routes connect the land on either side of the Grand River through three bridges with the primary thoroughfare being Highway 97.

- Primary Vehicular Routes
- - - Secondary Vehicular Routes
- Pedestrian Routes

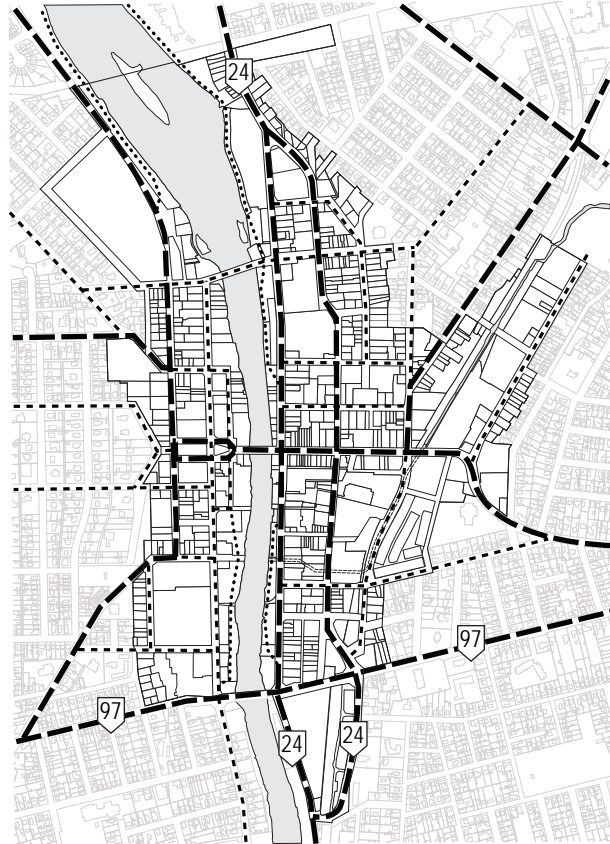


Fig.83 Infrastructure - Cambridge, ON.

LANDSCAPE

The urban landscape of Galt City Centre is dominated by the Grand River bisecting the core and dividing the urban area into east and west land masses. The topography forms a valley along the Grand River and rises to the east and west, creating a natural focal point which includes large expanses of green space, promenades and river views as one travels throughout the core.

- Grand River
- - - Topographic Ridge Lines



Fig.84 Landscape - Cambridge, ON.

BUILDING PROGRAM

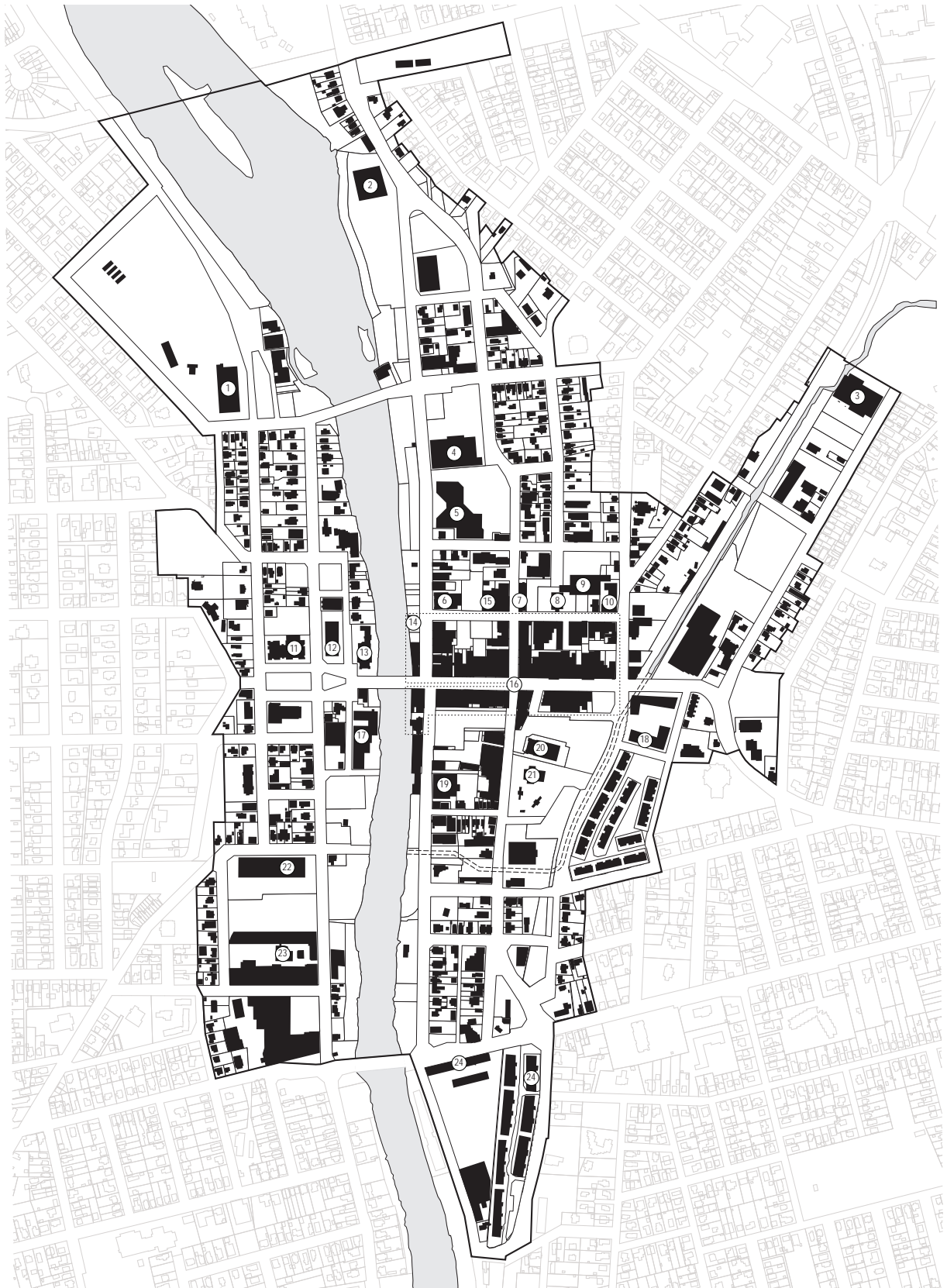


Fig.85 Building Program - Cambridge, ON.

01 Dickson Arena

Single pad arena
Date: 1967



06 Post Office

Post office
Date: 1936



11 Queen's Square Library

Public library and art gallery
Date: 1969



16 Main Street

Main commercial area
Date: circa 1820



21 Transit Terminal

Main hub for local bus service
Date: 1993



02 Waterscape

Condominiums
Date: 2010



07 Farmer's Market

Local vendors within 100km
Date: circa 1830



12 Queen's Square Terrace

Senior long-term care living
Date: 1999



17 WAC

School of Architecture & cafe
Date: 2004



22 Performing Arts Complex

Performing arts theatre
Date: planned for 2012



03 Galt Arena

Oldest operating arena in Ont.
Date: 1922



08 Old City Hall

City hall archives
Date: 1858



13 Central Presbyterian

Community Church
Date: 1880



18 Wellington Square

Townhomes & condominiums
Date: 2003-2006



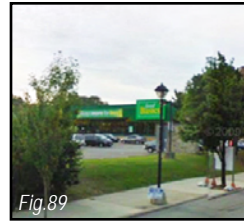
23 Southworks Outlet Mall

Retail outlet
Date: 1847



04 Food Basics

Grocery Store
Date: Unknown



09 New City Hall

Civic administration
Date: 2008



14 Carnegie Library

Abandoned historic library
Date: 1903



19 Tiger Lofts

Rental apartments
Date: 2009



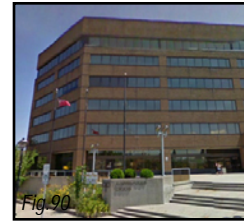
24 The Grand Lofts

Condominiums
Date: 2012



05 Cambridge Place

Office Space
Date: 1981



10 Cambridge Arts Center

Community arts centre
Date: 2001



15 Fraser Block

Fitness studio & residential
Date: circa 1920



20 Cambridge Armoury

Highland Fusiliers of Canada
Date: 1915



25 Ainslie Street Townhome

Townhomes
Date: 2005



PUBLIC SPACE

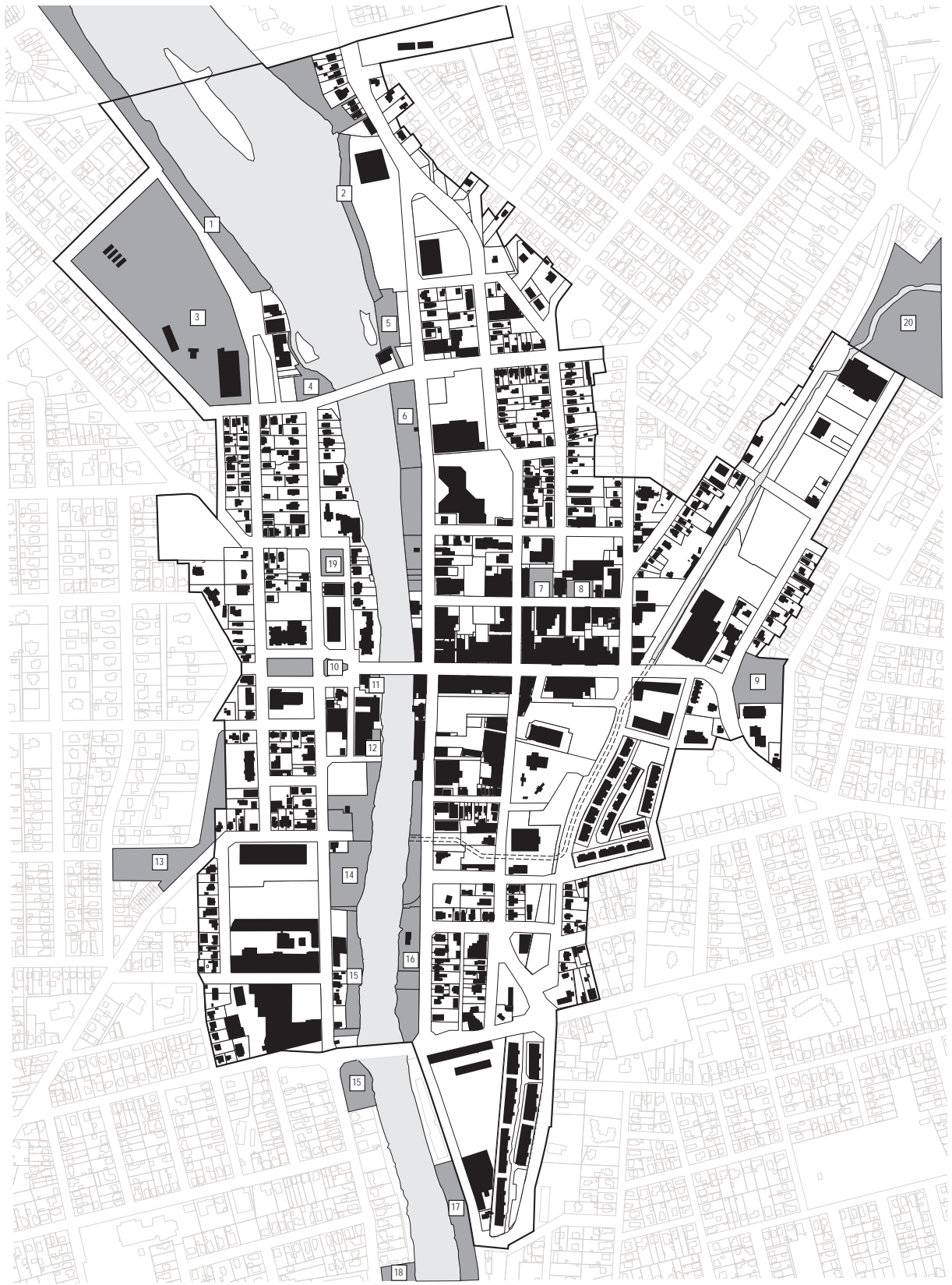


Fig.111 Public Space - Cambridge, ON.

01 Riverbluffs Park

Playground equipment, picnic areas, natural trails, river access, rowing club
Area: 3.1 hectares



Fig.112

02 Eastbank Levee

Natural trails, river access
Area: 1.5 hectares



Fig.113

03 Dickson Park

Playground equipment, picnic areas, two baseball diamonds, tobogganing hill
Area: 5.9 hectares



Fig.114

04 Parkhill Road Lookout

River access, river viewing
Area: 0.31 hectares



Fig.115

05 Riverbank

Natural trails, river access, river viewing
Area: 1.1 hectares

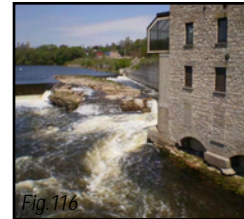


Fig.116

06 Mill Race Park

Amphitheatre, river access, picnic area, building ruins, L.A. Frank's
Date: approx. 2.5 hectares



Fig.117

07 Market Square

Parking lot with temporary use for outdoor Farmer's Market and related events
Area: approx. 0.1 hectares



Fig.118

08 Civic Square

Concerts, civic meetings, special events, public art
Area: approx. 0.2 hectares



Fig.119

09 Centennial Park

Seating areas and gardens, outdoor skating rink
Area: 0.5 hectares



Fig.120

10 Queen's Square

Seating areas and memorial fountain
Area: 0.9 hectares



Fig.121

11 Dalton Court

Seating area, river access, Melville Cafe patio
Area: 0.07 hectares



Fig.122

12 WAC Basketball Court

Basketball court, seating area, river viewing, special events, community garden
Area: 0.1 hectares



Fig.123

13 St Andrews Park

Concerts, civic meetings, special events, public art
Area: 1.6 hectares



Fig.124

14 Sculpture Garden

Artist sculptures, seating areas, gardens, natural trails, river viewing
Area: 1.5 hectares



Fig.125

15 Absalom's Walk

River viewing, seating areas, gardens
Area: 1.25 hectares



Fig.126

16 Founder's Point

River viewing, river access, seating areas
Area: 95 hectares



Fig.127

17 Barradell's Walk

River access, river viewing, seating areas
Area: 38 hectares



Fig.128

18 Waterworks Park

Two baseball diamonds, river access, picnic area
Area: 1.4 hectares



Fig.129

19 Melville Square

Open green space
Area: 0.2 hectares



Fig.130

20 Soper Park

Playground, two baseball diamonds, tennis court, picnic area, spray pad, pool
Area: 16.5 hectares



Fig.131

VACANT LOTS

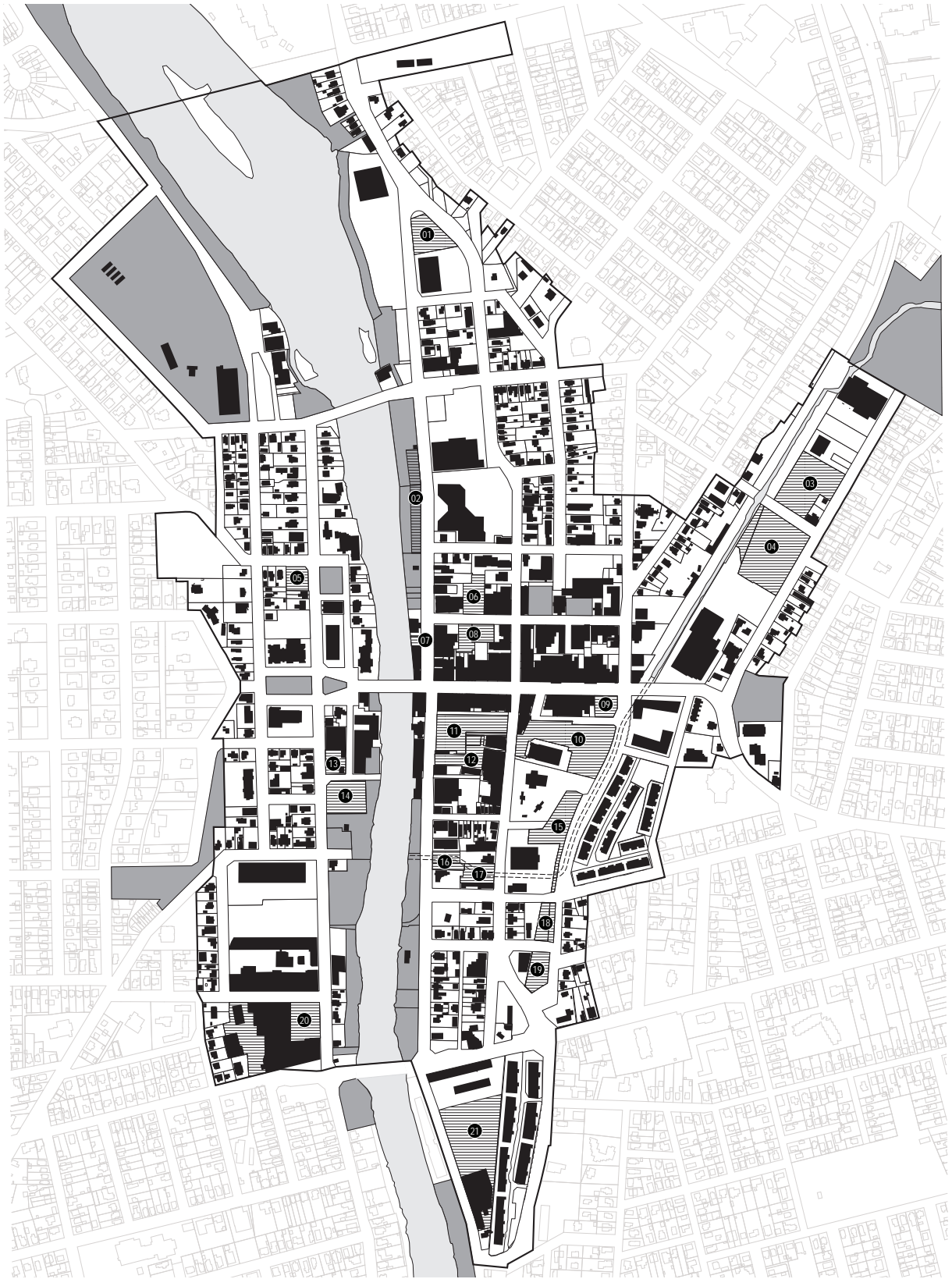


Fig.132 Vacant Lots - Cambridge, ON.

01 Water St & Ainslie St

Un-occupied
Area: 0.72 acres



02 Water Street North

Parking lot
Area: 0.69 acres



03 Shade Street

Un-occupied
Area: 1.58 acres



04 Shade Street

Un-occupied
Area: 2.23 acres



05 Grand Avenue

Parking Lot
Area: 0.33 acres



06 Fraser Block

Parking lot
Area: 0.49 acres



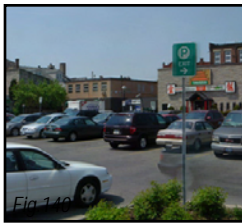
07 Water Street North

Vacant
Area: 0.07 acres



08 Dickson Street

Parking lot
Area: 0.52 acres



09 Wellington & Main St.

Parking lot
Area: 0.30 acres



10 Wellington Street

Parking lot
Area: 2.04 acres



11 Water Street South

Parking lot
Area: 1.17 acres



12 Water Street South

Vacant
Area: 0.54 acres



13 Grand Ave. S & River St.

Parking lot
Area: 0.30 acres



14 Grand Ave. S & River St.

Parking lot
Area: 0.83 acres



15 Wellington Street

Vacant
Area: 0.97 acres



16 Water Street South

Vacant
Area: 0.21 acres



17 Ainslie Street

Parking lot
Area: 0.39 acres



18 Ainslie Street

Vacant
Area: 0.46 acres



19 Ainslie Street

Vacant
Area: 0.49 acres



20 Grand Ave & Cedar St

Vacant and parking lot
Area: 0.70 acres



21 Ainslie Street

Vacant
Area: 4.87 acres



ZONES OF URBAN INTENSITY

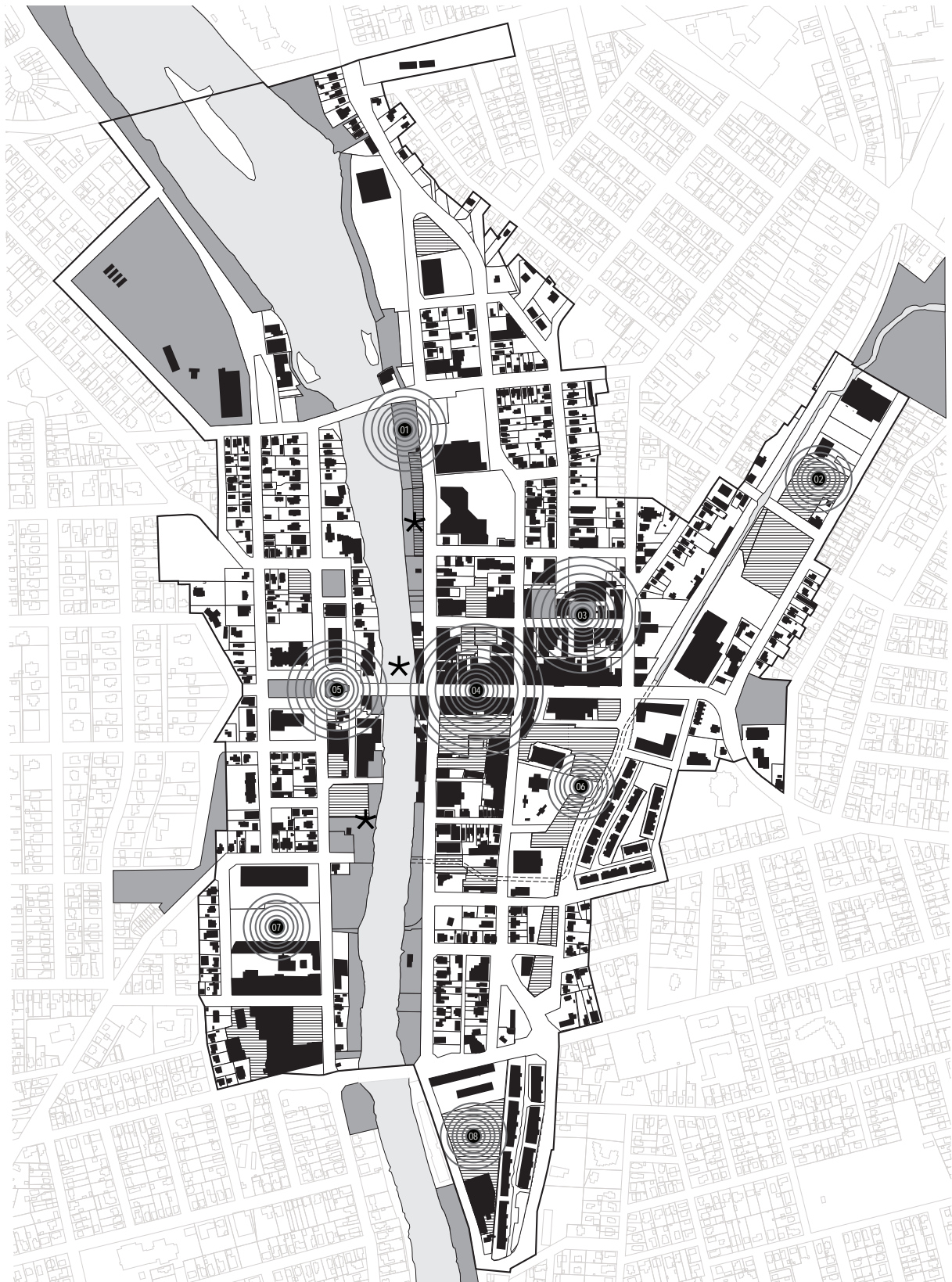


Fig.154 Zones of Urban Intensity - Cambridge, ON.

01 Mill Race & Riverwalk

Building Program
Waterscape Condominiums, Grocery Store, Cambridge Place, L.A. Frank's

Public Space
Amphitheatre, river access, picnic area, building ruins

Events
Concerts in the Park, Mill Race Folk Festival, Rock the Mill

Opportunity
Although popular for special events, a large portion of the park is allotted to parking which disconnects it from the river and limits the attraction on a daily basis.



Fig. 155

02 Shade St & Soper Park

Building Program
Galt Arena, Cambridge Tennis Club, Galt Lawn Bowling Club

Public Space
Baseball diamonds, tennis court, spray pad, outdoor pool

Events
None

Opportunity
A large strip of land connecting Main Street to Soper Park, this area has potential to enhance the heritage of Galt Arena and proximity of Soper Park to develop into an active recreational branch extending from the city centre.



Fig. 160

03 Civic District

Building Program
Farmer's Market, Old City Hall, New City Hall, Cambridge Arts Center

Public Space
Outdoor Farmer's Market, concerts, special events, public art

Events
Cambridge Arts Festival, Mayor's Celebration of the Arts, Family Movie Nights, Whimsical Wednesdays

Opportunity
A recent addition to the city, the Civic District is very well programmed and inhabited.



Fig. 157

04 Commercial District

Building Program
Main commercial area, heritage buildings, restaurants, pubs

Public Space
Main Street Streetscape Plan

Events
Galt Grandfest

Opportunity
Surrounded by surface parking lots, the successful Main Street corridor leaves opportunities to further increase the density and diversity of the area. The Main Street Streetscape Plan will help unify and identify the area.



Fig. 158

05 Queen's Square

Building Program
Queen's Square Library, Queen's Square Terrace, Waterloo Architecture Cambridge, Melville Cafe

Public Space
Memorial fountain, courtyard, basketball court, cafe patio, river access

Events
WAC Special Events

Opportunity
Surrounded by major institutions, easy access to the river should be celebrated as such an opportunity is rare for any City and it's citizens.



Fig. 159

06 Transit Station

Building Program
Transit Station, Wellington Square, Cambridge Armoury, Main Commercial Area

Public Space
None

Events
None

Opportunity
Close proximity to the main commercial area and recent residential developments, a vacant strip of land along the south edge of Wellington Street is ideal for future building development.



Fig. 160

07 Performing Arts Complex

Building Program
Performing Arts Complex, Southworks Outlet Mall

Public Space
Sculptures, gardens, river viewing, seating areas

Events
None

Opportunity
A new performing arts centre will affect the development of this area. Proximity to the School of Architecture, Grand River and Sculpture Garden opens opportunities for commercial development and enhancement of the riverwalk.



Fig. 161

08 Cedar & Water Street

Building Program
The Grand Lofts, Ainslie Street Townhomes, Galt Brewing Company

Public Space
Founder's Point, Barradell's Walk

Events
None

Opportunity
Recent residential development surrounding an abandoned industrial lot shows signs of the site becoming a residential complex with a shared courtyard.



Fig. 162

★ Denotes proposed site for intervention

Three sites are identified for intervention in the following phase of the Urban Actuation process.

The sites are chosen based on three scales - small, medium and large - and potential impact on the public space network of the city. The potential impact is determined by proximity to zones of urban intensity as well as proximity and accessibility to the Grand River - the most prominent natural feature of the city.

01 ▶

CONSULT

02 ▶

SITUATE

03 ▶

HYPOTHESIZE

04 ▶

TEST

05 ▶

DEVELOP

03 The hypothesize phase grows from the body of knowledge generated by the situate phase to inform the development of possible public space interventions.

Once the situate phase has been completed, the site analysis can focus in on the scale of the individual site. Working within and responding to the *zones of urban intensity*, the UA team will employ the following design methodology to help generate possible public space interventions.

Site Typology ►

Site Typology is concerned with the physical geography of the site. Establishing the physical elements distinct to the site identifies the existing character, allowing the physical strengths to be built upon, indicating how it may be transformed.

The site characteristics to be identified can follow those previously determined in the situate phase, however, they are now applied at a more detailed scale of the individual site in question versus the larger scale of the community as a whole.

Actors + Programs ►

Actors and Programs maintain a reciprocal relationship and are concerned with the human geography of the site. They are separated into two interrelated components: *current* and *possible*. Determining adjacent building programs and how the physical geography of the site is currently occupied on a day-to-day basis and during special events provides an understanding of the urban actors involved and the target demographic markets that the site may respond to. The *current actors* and *programs* advise *possible actors* and *programs*, sculpting a range of possibilities for attracting a wider range of users to the site.

The site occupation that should be identified at this stage includes:

- Who occupies it? Who could occupy it?
- How do they occupy it? How could they occupy it?
- When do they occupy it? When could they occupy it?

UA Design Tactics ►

tac-tic [tak-tik] - *noun*

3. a plan, procedure, or expedient for promoting a desired end or result. ^[1]

The *Hypothesize* phase employs two categories of design tactics, *operational* and *formal*, which are concerned with the physical development of the design interventions. A set of four *operational* tactics provide options for how the intervention may best respond to the needs of the site, actors and their related programs. Subsequently, a set of four *formal* tactics provide options for how the intervention may evolve formally alongside the physical characteristics of the site to achieve the desired design intentions.

Operational Tactics ►

Extended Interior - See Case Study 08 & 11

Extended Interior can also be understood as domesticating public space. It makes unfamiliar territory familiar through evoking the intimacy of the interior.

Hybrid Programs - See Case Study 03, 06, 09 & 10

Hybrid Programs combines two or more familiar activities resulting in unexpected interaction between varying cultures.

Reconfigurable - See Case Study 02 & 04

Often public space is presented with the challenge of responding to multiple uses in a single space. *Reconfigurable* allows multiple combinations to emerge within a space depending on the desired activity, allowing users to temporarily personalize public space.

Mobile Program - See Case Study 01 & 07

Mobile Program allows for a given program to re-locate to different spaces whether familiar or unfamiliar, temporarily engaging the users in a new experience of the space.

Formal Tactics ►

Manipulated Surface - See Case Study 09, 10 & 11

Manipulated Surface allows public space to respond to program needs, to be continuous across changing topographies and integrated with adjacent building programs.

Kit of Parts - See Case Study 01, 02, 07 & 08

Kit of Parts provides a set of components that are capable of being constructed and deconstructed for temporary occupation.

Graphic Layering - See Case Study 06

Graphic Layering can be as simple as marking playing field lines on urban ground surfaces, offering clues towards new forms of urban play within the city, or using graphics as a sign of identity for the area.

Operable Surface - See Case Study 03

Operable Surface incorporates multiple layers of use into a single space by the use of manual or mechanical operation.

[1] tactic. (n.d.). Collins English Dictionary - Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition. Retrieved April 28, 2012, from <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/tactic>

INTERVENTION 1.0 - FROM VOID TO PLATFORM

Site Typology ►

The proposed site for the first intervention is a small, 0.08 acre, site on Water Street North just south of Dickson Street. It is a riverfront property located next to the old Carnegie Library and in close proximity to the main commercial area on Main Street. The following diagram will explore the current state of the surrounding area.



Fig.163 Water St N & Dickson St - Existing Context Plan.

01 Mill Race Parking Lot

The Mill Race Parking Lot plays host to annual festivals such as the Mill Race Folk Festival and Rock the Park.

02 Riverwalk

The Riverwalk is the major pedestrian network of the City Centre, providing public access to the Grand River.

03 Riverlanding

The Riverlanding exists as a mundane concrete ledge. It hosts sporadic activities, such as fishing, but for the most part remains uninhabited.

04 Riverwall

The Riverwall protects the City Centre from the fluctuating water levels of the Grand River while forming the foundation wall of the buildings along the river's edge.

04 Dalton Court

Dalton Court is a small garden and sitting area with a public access point to the river's edge.

05 Melville Cafe Patio

The Melville Cafe Patio is an extension of Melville Cafe which allows patrons to enjoy a meal outdoors near the river's edge.

Currently the site is vacant and surrounded by plywood scaffolding. As can be viewed in the site photos and Site Section A-A, the foundations of the previous building remains, acting as a large planter box which allows vegetation to grow wild over time into a small forest within the City Centre.



Fig.164 Water St N & Dickson St - View From SE Corner of Intersection.



Fig.165 Water St N & Dickson St - View From Carnegie Library.



Fig.166 Water St N & Dickson St - View From River Wall.

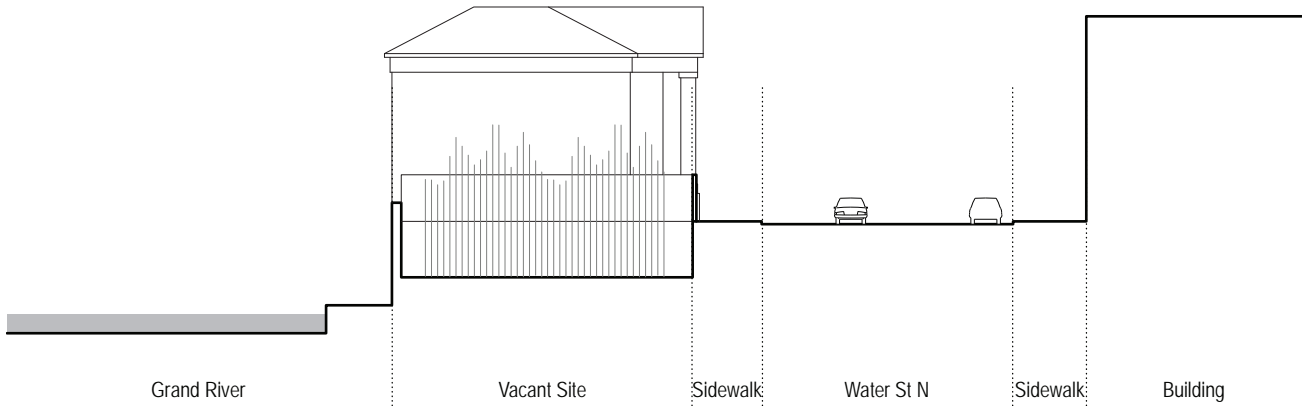


Fig.167 Water St N & Dickson St - Existing Site Section A-A.

Actors and Programs ▶

As a vacant site, there are no existing actors and programs to draw from so anything proposed will be a new experience to the site. The existing site lends itself to a river lookout point, providing a unique vantage point of the river while extending the sidewalk into an intimate public square that will provide reprieve from daily activities. The site lends itself to contemplative activities that will allow community members to relax under a canopy of trees overlooking the river or engage in a game of chess with a friend or passer-by.

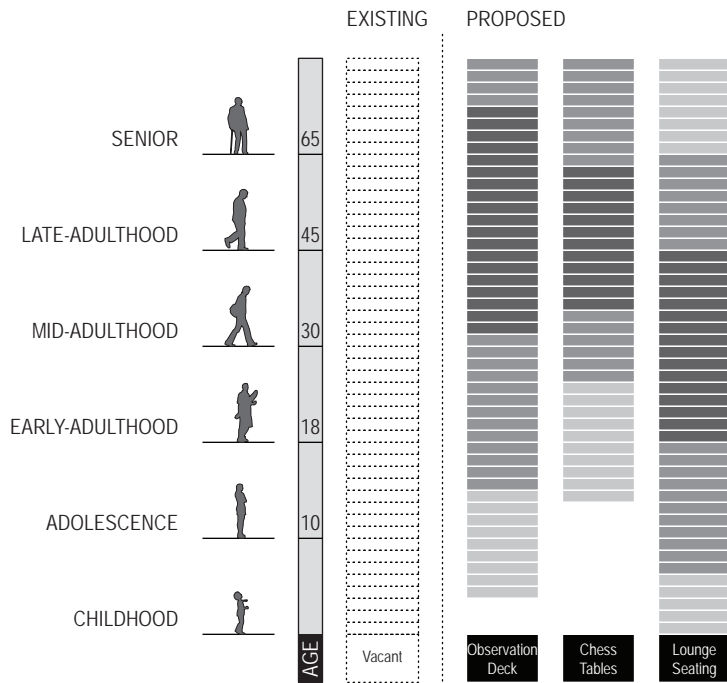


Fig.168 Water St N & Dickson St - Existing and Proposed Programs - Age Variable.

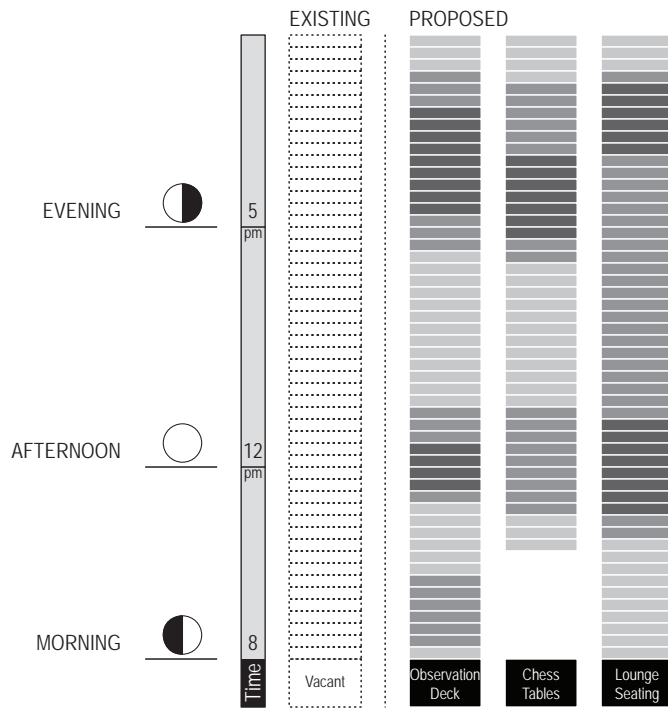
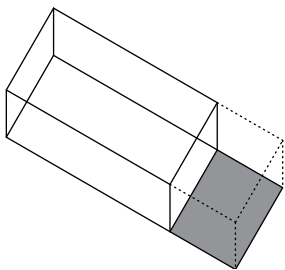


Fig. 169 Water St N & Dickson St - Existing and Proposed Programs - Time Variable.

Design Tactics ▶

The following *Operational* and *Formal Design Tactics* will be used to synthesize the new programs with the existing site topography to generate the design proposal.

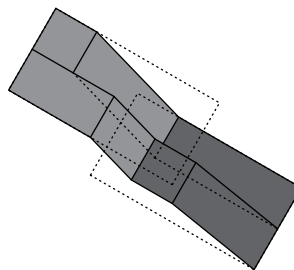
Operational Tactics ▶



Extended Interior

Extended Interior will bring the familiar acts of eating lunch, playing chess and lounging in the sun to an intimate outdoor public space.

Formal Tactics ▶



Manipulated Surface

Manipulated Surface will integrate the proposed programs with the existing site topography, allowing the programs to float above the existing foundation walls while extending out over the river.

Design Proposal - Spanning the Void ▶

The latent potential of the site exists in the unique physical characteristics, an abandoned building foundation overgrown with vegetation. The intervention should incorporate these unique features while allowing public access to the site.

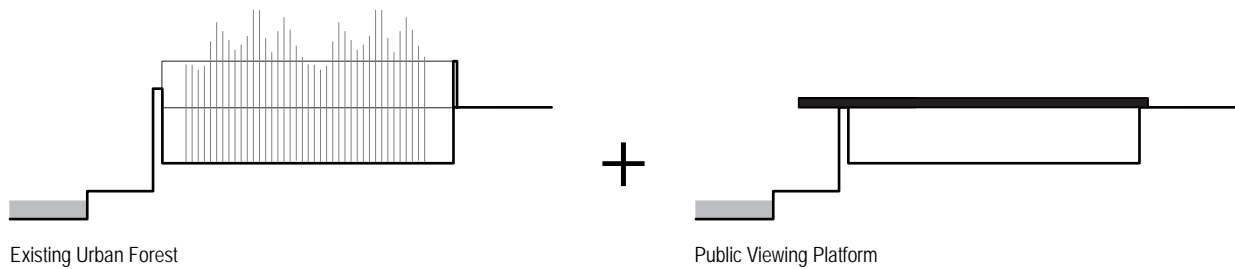


Fig.170 Water St N & Dickson St Parti Diagram.

Finding ways to combine the viewing platform with the existing physical characteristics of the site will provide for an unique public space within the city. Instead of passing by a derelict site surrounded by scaffolding on a daily basis, community members will be provided a new vantage point of the river through a viewing platform which hovers over the existing foundations while morphing to include chess tables, planter boxes and lounge seating.

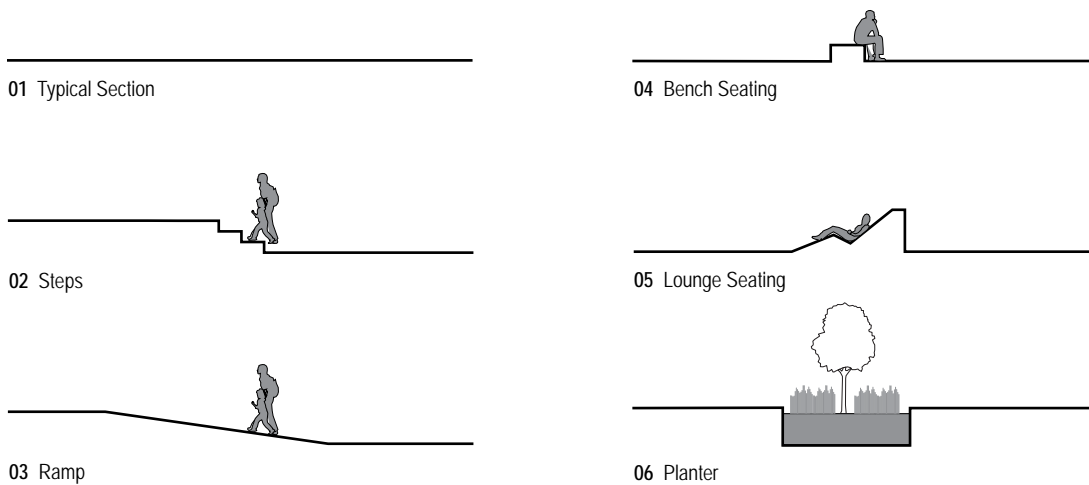


Fig.171 Water St N & Dickson St - Potential Platform Configurations.

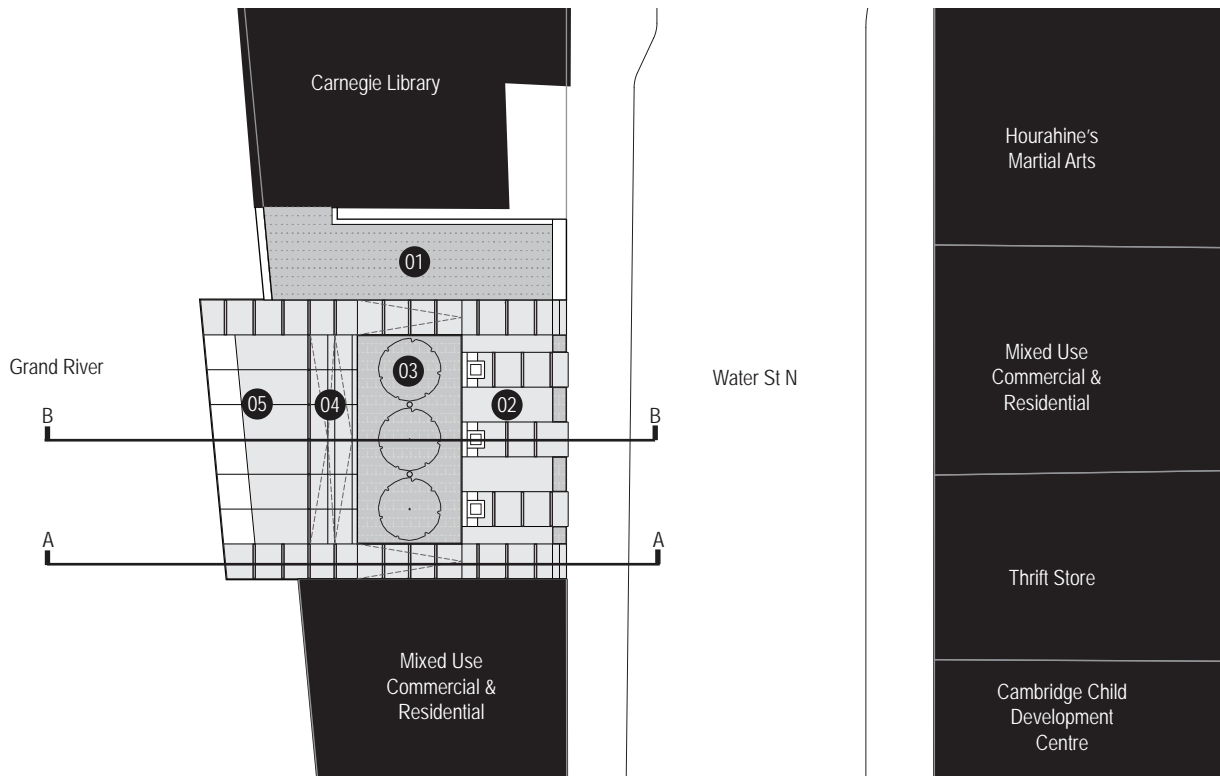


Fig.172 Water St N & Dickson St - Proposed Site Plan.

The proposed leisure and viewing deck serves as a respite from the daily activity of the city. Providing a place of contemplation as it transitions through three zones from the street to the river wall.

01 The Lawn

The Lawn provides a patch of grass in the middle of the main commercial district, welcoming community members to kick off their shoes and take a moment to relax as they enjoy their lunch break.

02 Street Deck

The Street Deck is raised from the sidewalk, allowing a subtle threshold from the street where one feels they have entered a new quiet and more private space. The grade difference is high enough to allow for bench seating and planter boxes at the edge of the site to address the sidewalk and street. Moveable chairs and tables can populate this area of the site in the warmer months to allow for flexible seating options.

03 The Void

The Void is inspired by the existing site condition of an overgrown planter box. It is intended to simulate the depth of the hollow foundations below while introducing native trees and vegetation to the site. The north and south edges are glass, allowing views onto the vegetation, while the east and west edges transform into chess tables and lounge seating, respectively.

04 Lounge Seating

The Lounge Seating, separated from the activity of the street by the Void and Street Deck, allows community members to remove themselves from the city for a contemplative moment at the edge of the river wall. It is designed to encourage a natural reclined seating position so the body can be fully at rest.

05 River Deck

The River Deck punctures the concrete river wall to cantilever over the Grand River. The railing and portions of the deck floor are glass to offer community members a rare view of the river from above. The sensation of floating above the river is an unique experience that all visitors to the site will want to experience.

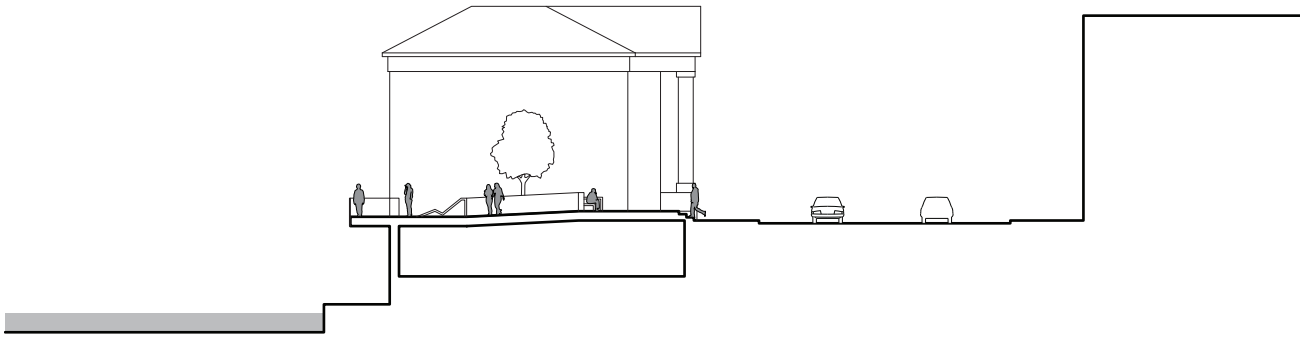


Fig.173 Water St N & Dickson St - Proposed Site Section A-A.

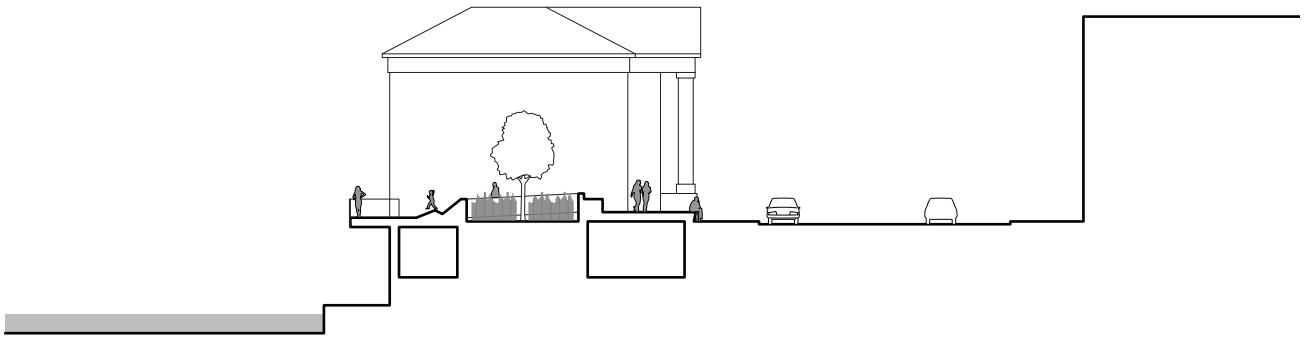


Fig.174 Water St N & Dickson St - Proposed Site Section B-B.



Fig.175 Water St N & Dickson St - View of Platform From SE Corner of Intersection.



Fig. 176 Water St N & Dickson St - View of Platform from Carnegie Library.

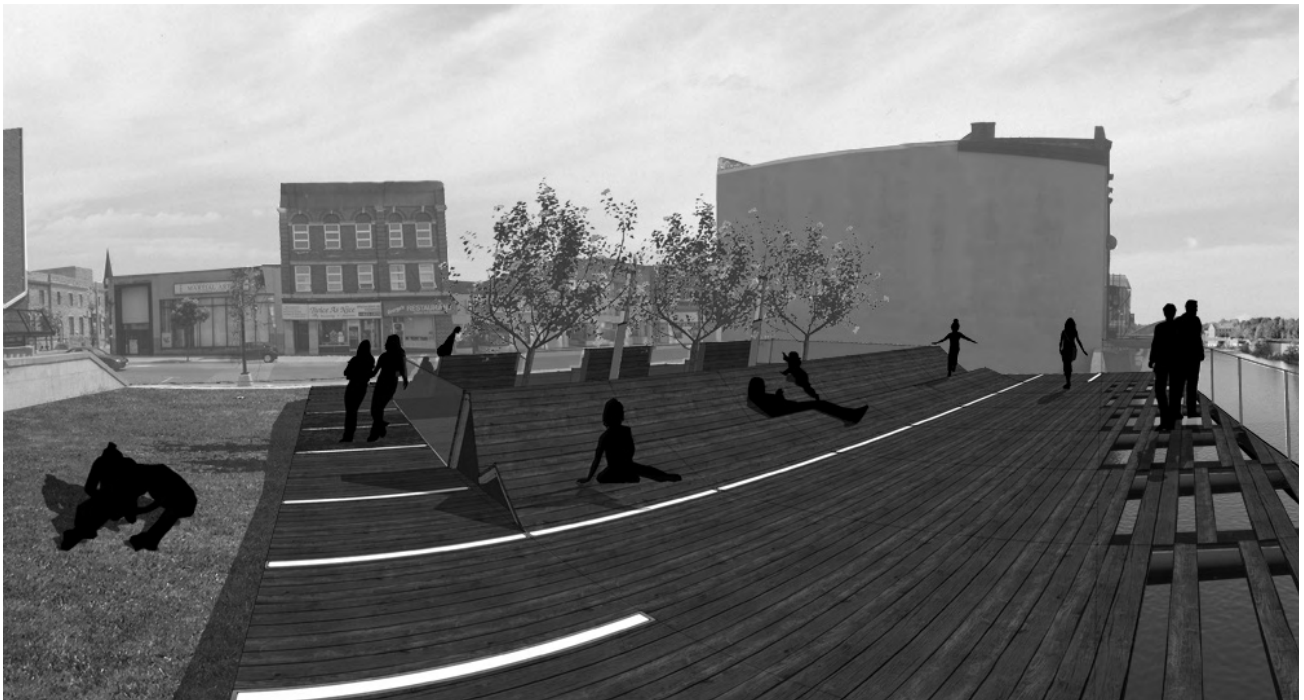


Fig. 177 Water St N & Dickson St - View of Platform from River Wall.

INTERVENTION 2.0 - FROM SLOPE TO TERRACE

Site Typology ►

The proposed site for the second intervention is a medium sized, 0.5 acre, site located south of the University of Waterloo School of Architecture at the end of River Street. It is a riverfront property, located on the west side of the Grand River, in close proximity to major amenities such as Queen's Square, the Queen's Square Library and Gallery, the School of Architecture, and various retail outlets. The following diagram will explore the current state of the surrounding area.

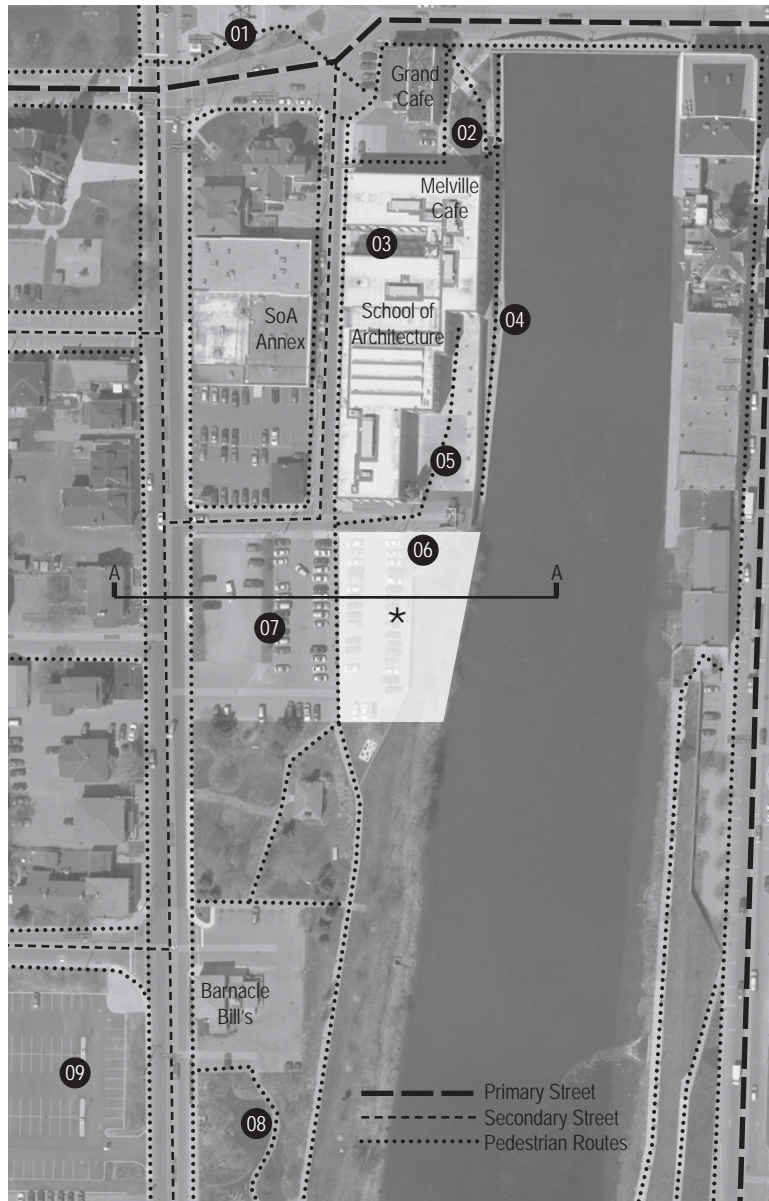


Fig. 178 River St - Existing Context Plan.

01 Queen's Square

Queen's Square is the terminus of Main Street and host to the Centennial Fountain.

02 Dalton Court

Dalton Court is a small garden and sitting area with a public access point to the river's edge. It also hosts the outdoor patio of Melville Cafe.

03 School of Architecture West Courtyard

The West Courtyard hosts student installations and outdoor lectures.

04 River Landing

The River Landing exists as a mundane concrete ledge. It hosts sporadic activities, such as fishing and canoeing, but for the most part remains uninhabited. It is also disconnected from the River Walk network, reducing accessibility for the community.

05 School of Architecture East Courtyard

The East Courtyard includes a basketball court and hosts large outdoor school events. It also attracts a number of youth skate boarders, an activity undesired by management of the school.

06 School of Architecture Community Garden

A small community garden operated by students of the School of Architecture.

07 Parking Lot

Currently a vacant property, the parking lot is an ideal location for future development.

08 Sculpture Garden

The Sculpture Garden is part of the River Walk network and hosts a number of sculptures from various artists.

09 Future Performing Arts Complex

The proposed site of the Future Performing Arts Complex provides a great opportunity to ensure new development is well integrated into the urban fabric.

The site currently bisects the river walk and re-routes the pedestrian network away from the river's edge, however, it has the potential to be a critical site in the development of the city's public space network. Section A-A illustrates how the natural topography of the site lends itself to a more natural and inviting access point to the river's edge.



Fig.179 River St - View From Across Grand River.



Fig.180 River St - View From Pedestrian Path.



Fig.181 River St - View From River Bank.

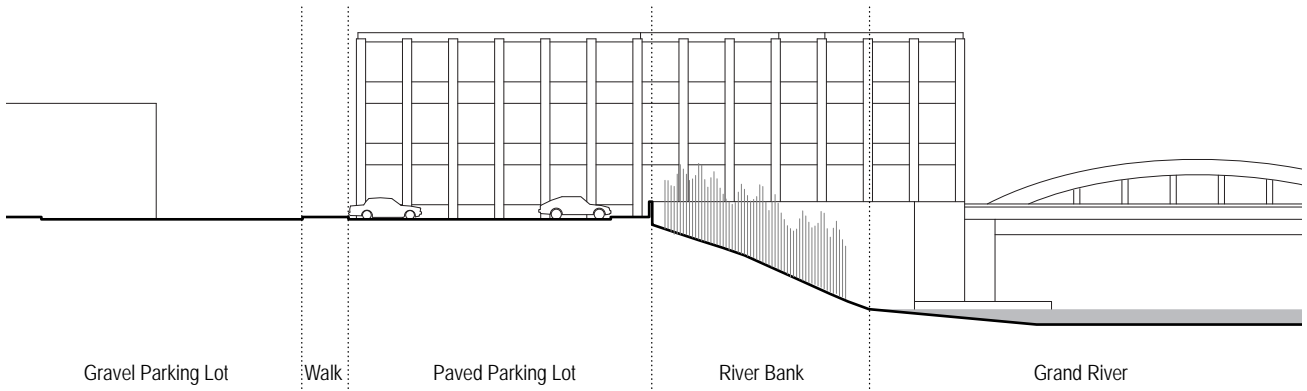


Fig.182 River St - Existing Site Section A-A.

Actors and Programs ▶

The critical location and natural topography along the riverwalk combined with the surrounding building programs and the latent activity of the site provide many building blocks for development. The undeniable attraction of the local skate boarding culture to the site, one that extends into many of the students of the School of Architecture, is currently considered an undesirable by-product of the creative culture and concrete hardscape provided by the East Courtyard. However, instead of posting "no skateboarding" signs in attempt to remove the local youth culture from the area, the development of the site can combine this creative act with the creative culture of the School of Architecture, Community Garden, Sculpture Garden and future Performing Arts Centre, transforming the site into an arts and cultural node for the community.

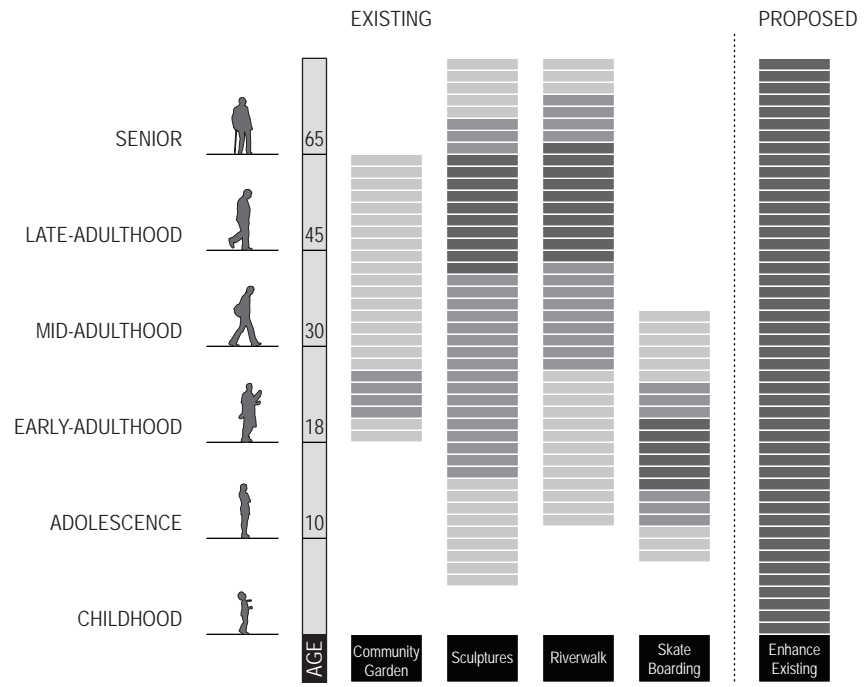


Fig.183 River St - Existing and Proposed Programs - Age Variable.

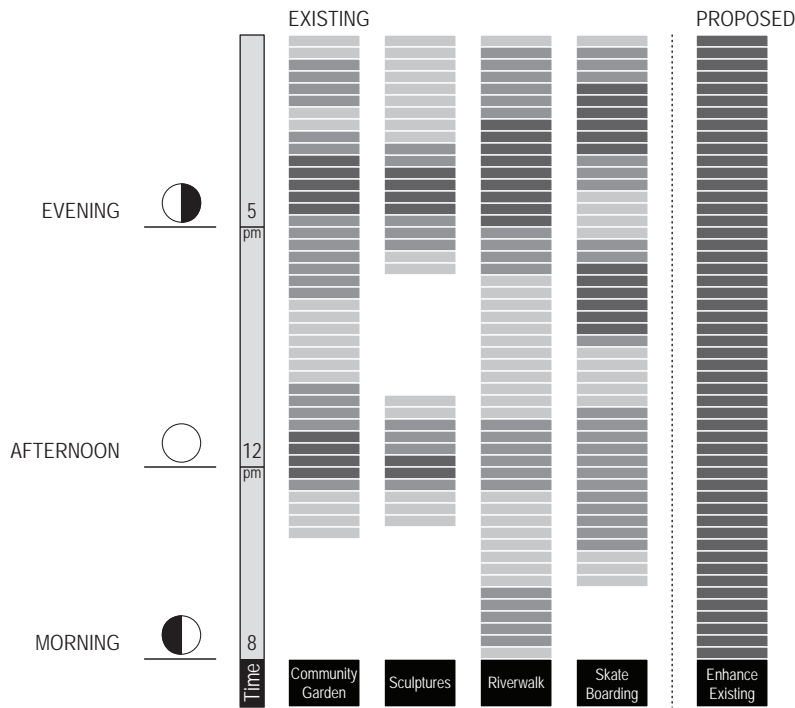
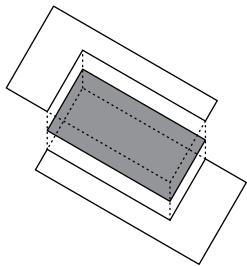


Fig.184 River St - Existing and Proposed Programs - Time Variable.

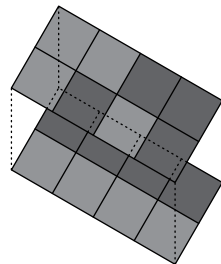
Design Tactics ▶

The following *Operational* and *Formal Design Tactics* will be used to enhance the existing programs with the existing site topography to generate the design proposal.

Operational Tactics ▶

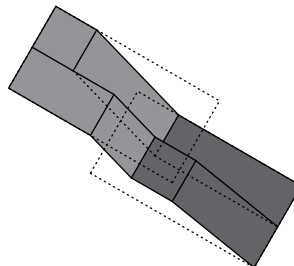


Hybrid Programs
Hybrid Programs will integrate the existing programs into an urban plaza at the River's edge.

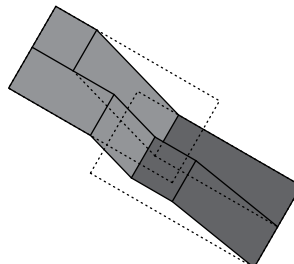


Re-configurable
Re-configurable will allow the site to be appropriated by its users over time, as the community gardening initiative grows, the public art collection develops and the popularity of skateboarding diminishes or changes to a new urban act.

Formal Tactics ▶



Manipulated Surface
Manipulated Surface will adapt the existing site topography to connect the upper river walk with the river landing, allowing ease of access from to the Grand River.



Operable Surface
Operable Surface will allow for user customization of the site as various plots are employed for community gardening or public art sculptures.

Design Proposal - Employing the River Bank ▶

The existing site is naturally divided into three zones, a pedestrian pathway, a parking lot and a river bank with a natural topography to the river's edge. The intervention will employ these three zones to create a public space open to the various sub cultures of the city while providing a unique and inviting access point to the river.

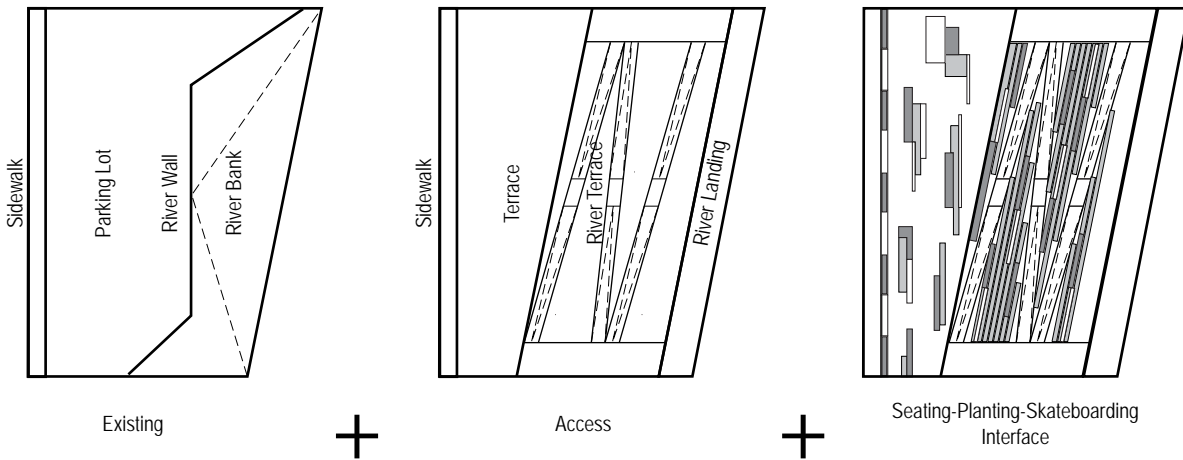


Fig.185 River St - Parti Diagram.

Discovering new ways to inhabit the river bank and parking lot will improve the site's relationship to the river walk, sculpture garden and river landing while attracting a broader range of the public on a daily basis. Access to and from the river's edge will become more apparent to the community as they welcomed into the site through the upper terrace and down to the river's edge through stairs, ramps and terraced seating. The upper terrace can be designed to be skateboard friendly, being inclusive of the youth and subcultures of the city, without it being design as a traditional skate park.

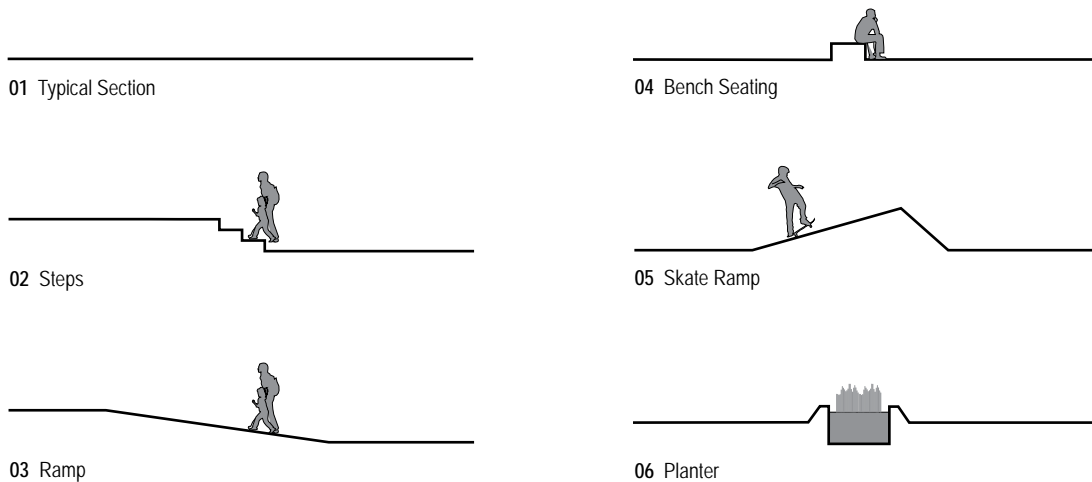
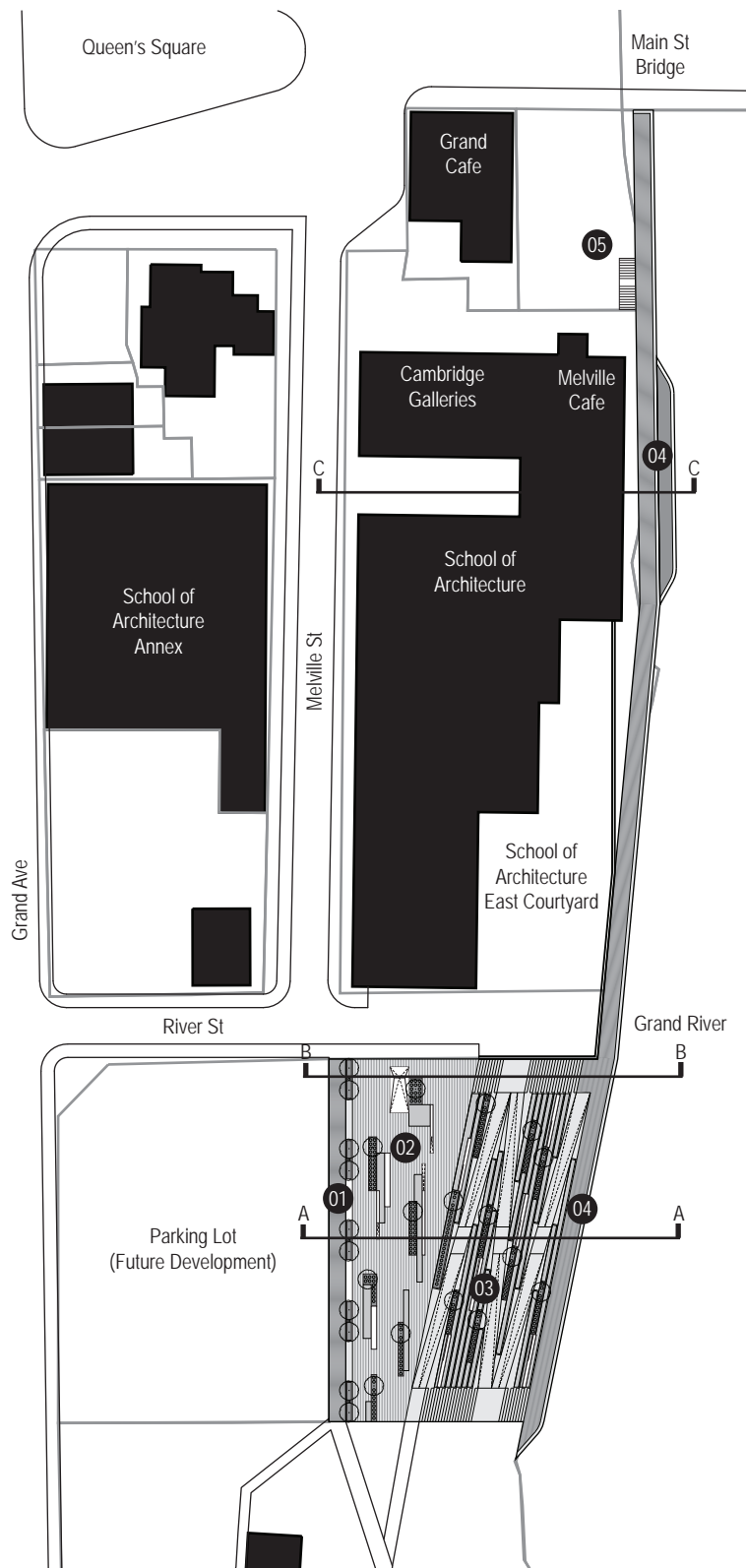


Fig.186 River St - Potential River Bank Inhabitations.



The proposed alterations to the River Street site transform it into the primary river access point. The adjacent parking lot would be ideal for future mixed-use development employees, residents and patrons would benefit from the proximity and accessibility to the River's edge.

01 Pedestrian Path

The Pedestrian Path connects the existing River Walk paths to the street network of the city while separating the site from the parking lot.

02 Upper Plaza

The Upper Plaza area appears as a typical urban plaza at first glance, with seating, landscaping and water features, however, upon further observation the multi-functional use of the site, skateboarding and community gardening, becomes apparent.

03 Terrace

The Terrace provides gradual access to the Grand River, inviting the community to the river's edge, or to sit on the terraced seating in the shade to enjoy the sounds of the river on a warm afternoon.

04 River Walk and Landing

The River Walk and Landing allows community members to access the river for leisurely walks, canoeing or urban fishing.

05 Dalton Court

Dalton Court remains as a secondary access point to the river, connecting the river walk back into the pedestrian network of the city's streets.

Fig.187 River St - Proposed Site Plan.

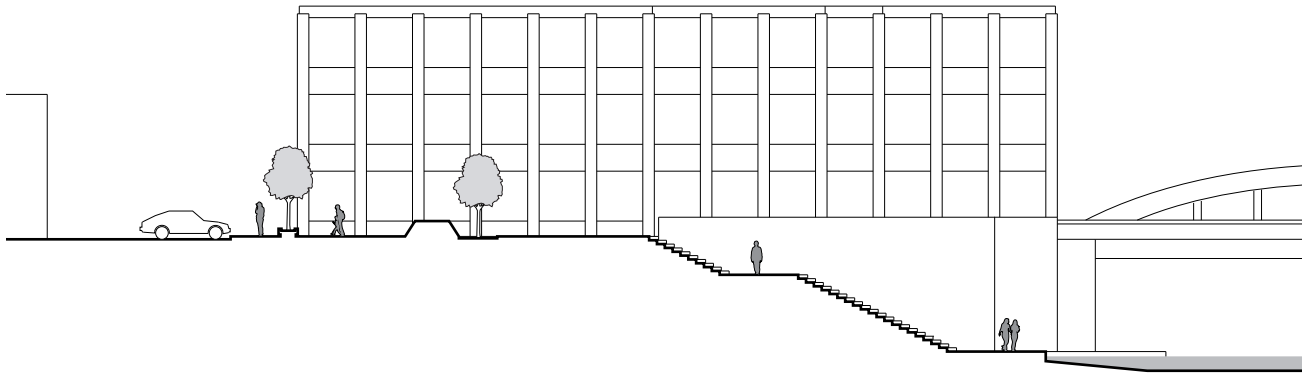


Fig.188 River St - Proposed Site Section A-A.

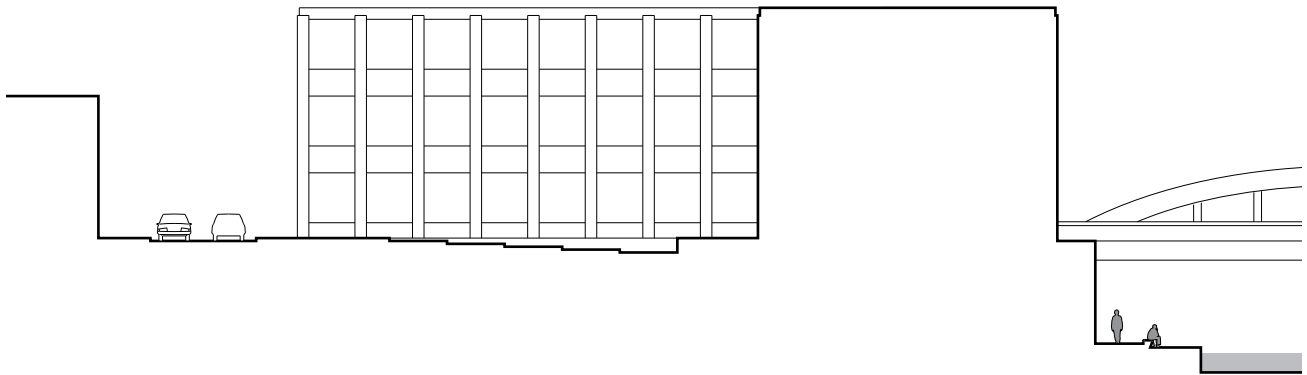


Fig.189 River St - Proposed Site Section B-B.

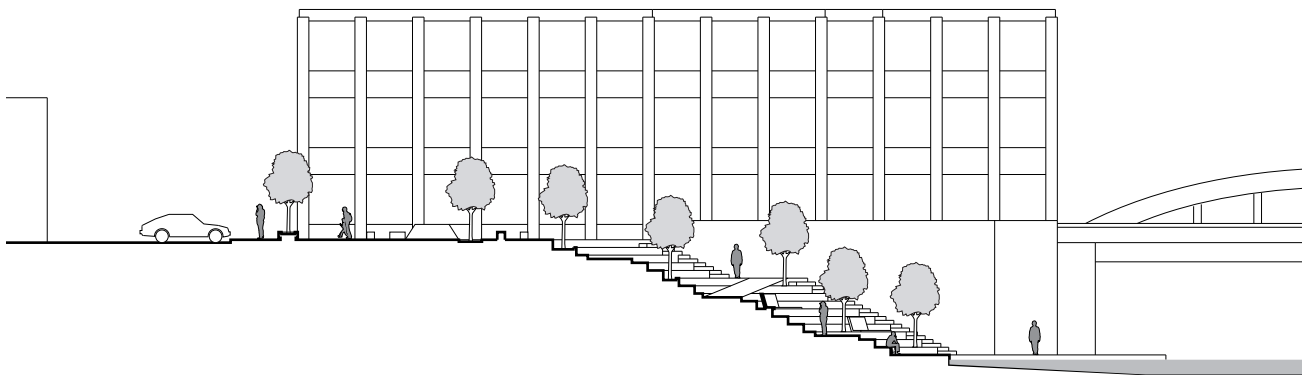


Fig.190 River St - Proposed Site Section C-C.



Fig.191 River St - Aerial Illustrating Everyday Inhabitation.



Fig.192 River St - View From River Wall.

INTERVENTION 3.0 - FROM PROTECTION TO INHABITATION

Site Typology ►

The proposed site for the third intervention is a large, 1.4 acre, site on Water Street North adjacent to Mill Race Park. The site is a prime example of how the existing infrastructure of the city, implemented to address a previously perceived issue of public mobility, service and safety, can both help and harm the experience of the city. The following diagram will explore the current state of the site and surrounding area.

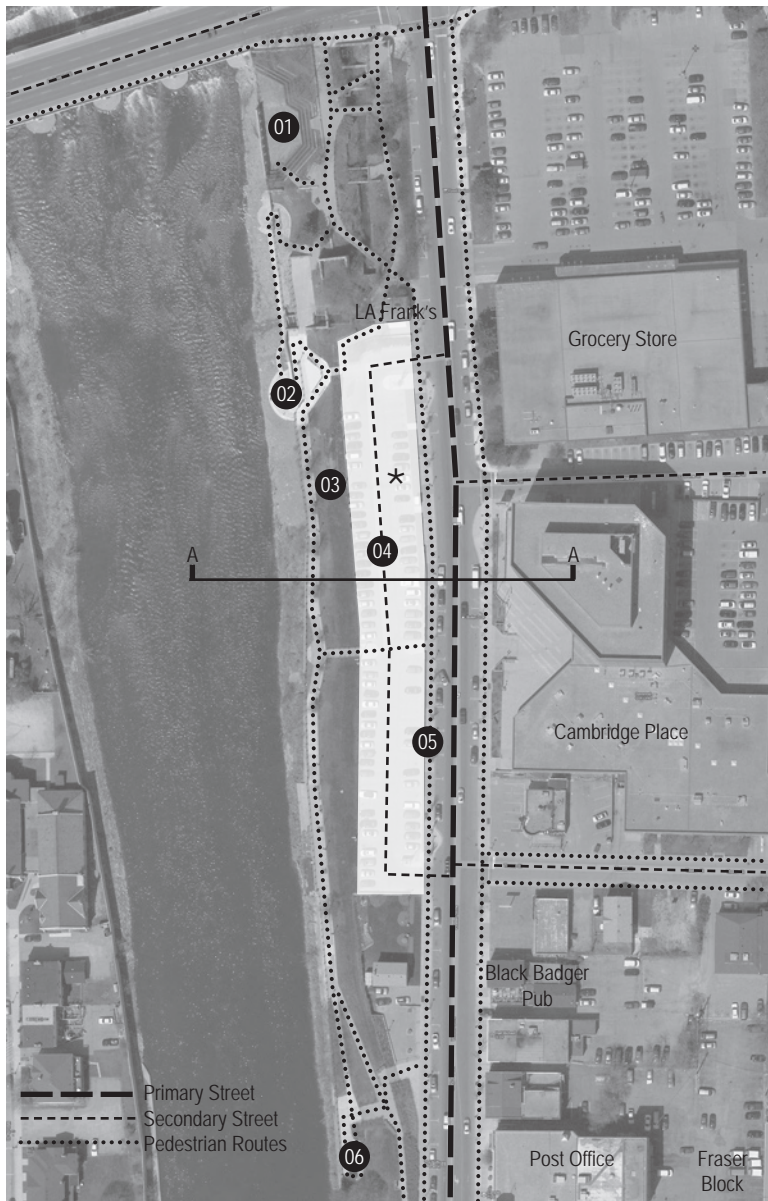


Fig.193 Mill Race Park - Existing Context Plan.

01 Amphitheater and Ruins

The Amphitheater and ruins play homage to the old Mill that used to inhabit the site and provides a venue for the annual festivals and wedding ceremonies.

02 Riverwalk and Landing

The Riverwalk provides public access to the Grand River, the foundation of the city, from street level and down to the river's edge through a River Landing. Although, it is one of the more successful aspects of the site, the access points remain understated where new visitors to the area may be unaware of its existence.

03 Berm

The berm's primary service is protection, marking the 100 year flood line that once invaded the core, causing irreparable physical and emotional damage to the city. Intended to protect the city from the potential destructive effects of nature, it also, unintentionally, acts as a barrier between the river, the city and the community.

04 Parking

The parking lot demonstrates the level of importance current modes of urban planning place on the personal automobile. Over seventy percent of a prime riverfront property is dedicated to temporarily storing automobiles instead of providing public amenities for community members.

05 Street Wall

The street wall serves as yet another barrier, this time as an attempt to disguise the parking lot from the pedestrian. Subconsciously, the city is ashamed that such a beautiful site is used for parking, however, instead of addressing the issue, the wall attempts to hide the glaring blunder.

06 Dead-end

Continuity in pedestrian circulation routes are crucial to avoid hidden pockets of space which tend to foster undesired activities. The pedestrian infrastructure needs to be considered as carefully as the vehicular infrastructure in order to properly contribute to the experience, functionality and efficiency of the city.

Combined, the existing components result in a site based on functionality and protection from nature, while simultaneously separating the river from the city and community. As can be viewed in Section A-A, the components maintain a linear relationship to one another, each one acting as another barrier to the river with minimal interaction between them. They are mono-functional, either protecting the city from the river, providing parking for personal vehicles, or providing a walking path for pedestrians.



Fig. 194 Mill Race Park - View of LA Frank's.



Fig. 195 Mill Race Park - View of Existing Parking Lot and Berm.



Fig. 196 Mill Race Park - View of Existing River Landing.

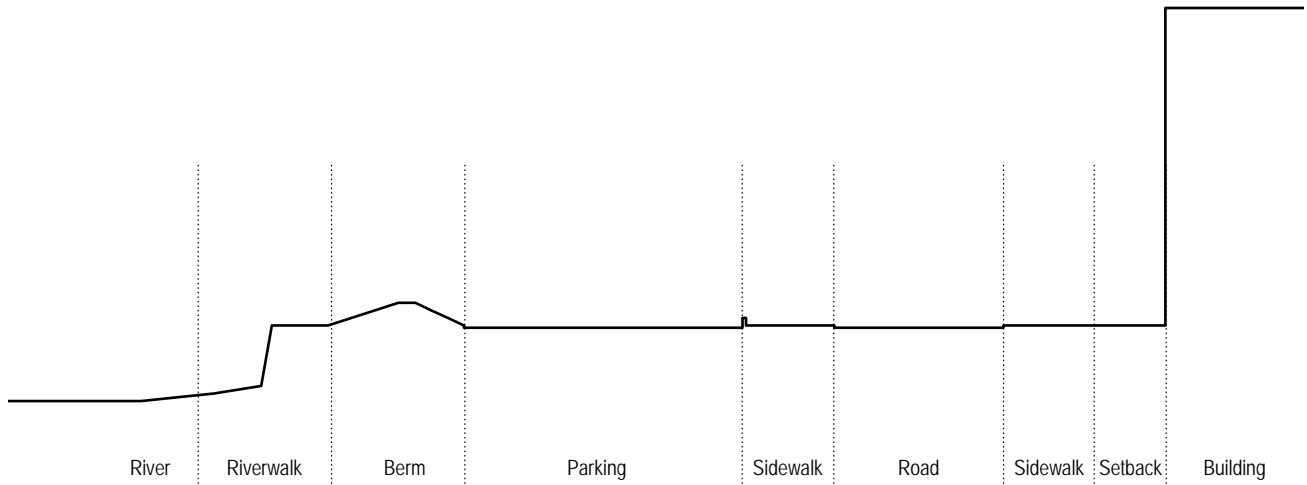


Fig. 197 Mill Race Park - Existing Site Section A-A.

Actors and Programs ▶

Mill Race Park is currently one of the more activated public spaces within the city center, next to the newly established Civic Square. It hosts L.A. Frank's, a popular summertime eatery; an outdoor amphitheatre, host to the Mill Race Folk Festival, Rock the Mill and local wedding ceremonies; and a riverwalk and landing. These programs tend to attract people of all ages, but beyond the festivals, there is limited daily activity as there are not many reasons to linger at the site after finishing a meal at LA Frank's or passing through the site on a leisurely walk. However, the site already attracts and is well known to a wide range of community members; combine that with the blank slate of the parking lot, an opportunity emerges to transform the site into an active recreational and leisure hub within the city.

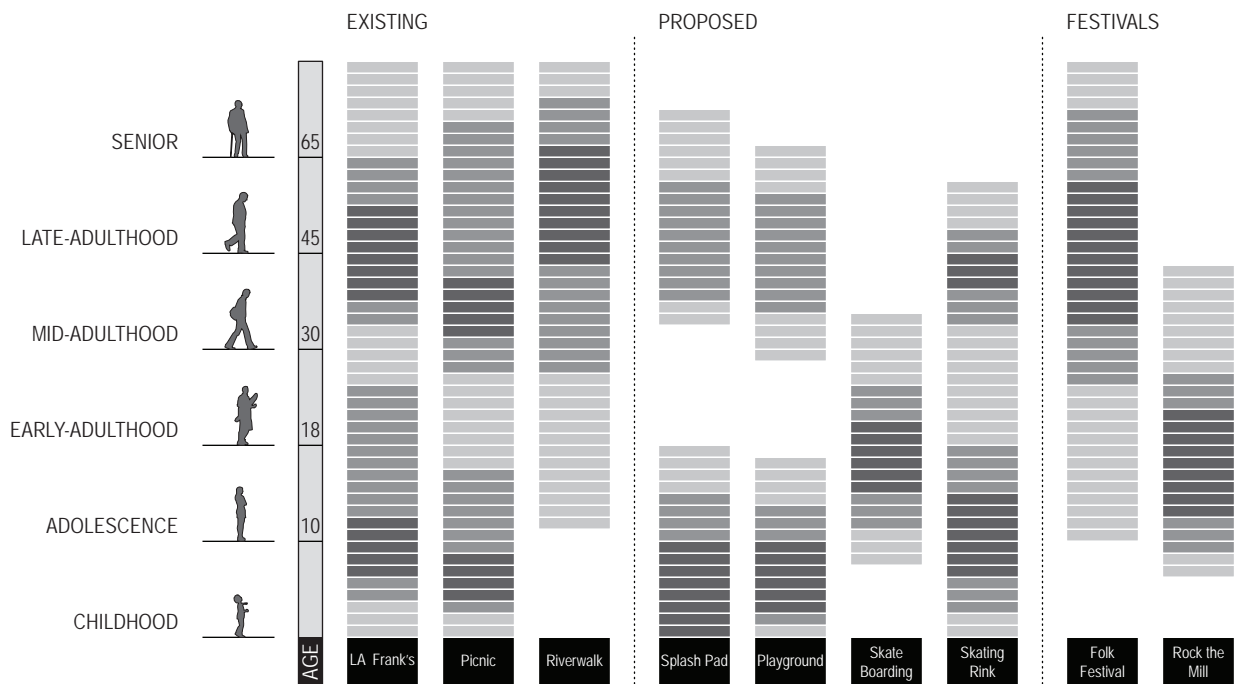


Fig. 198 Mill Race Park - Existing and Proposed Programs - Age Variable.

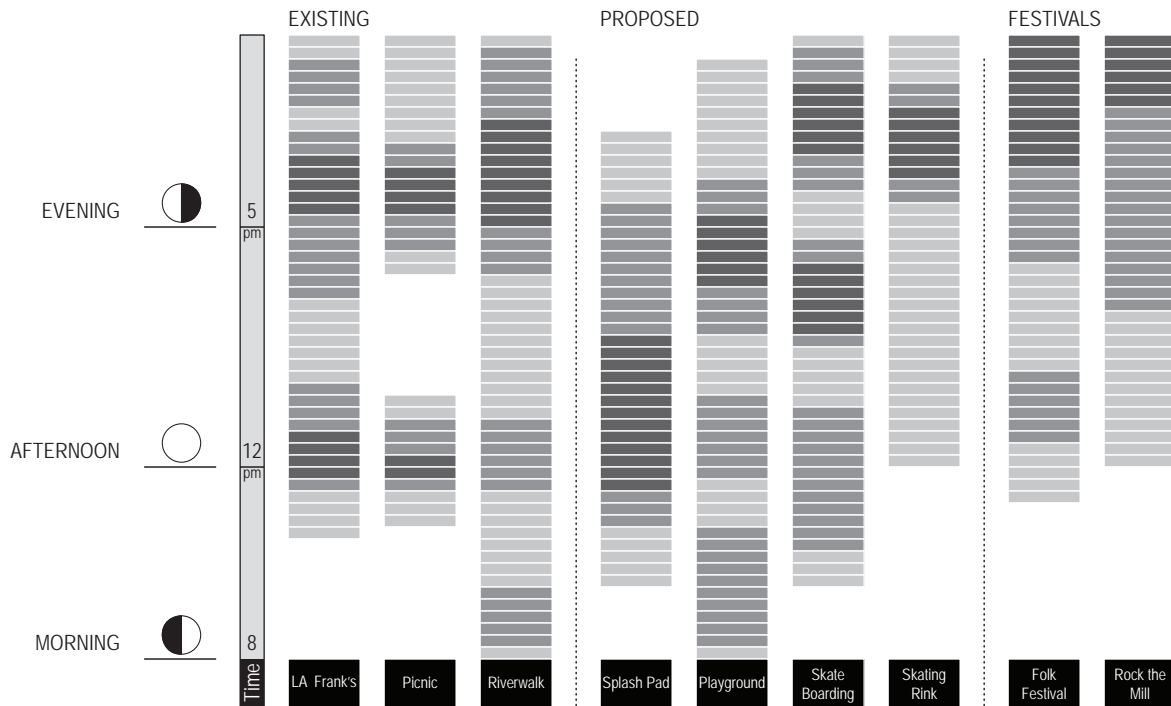
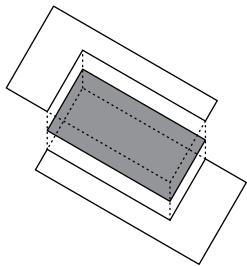


Fig. 199 Mill Race Park - Existing and Proposed Programs - Time Variable.

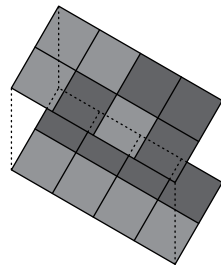
Design Tactics ▶

The following *Operational* and *Formal Design Tactics* will be used to synthesize the new and existing programs with the existing site topography to generate the design proposal.

Operational Tactics ▶

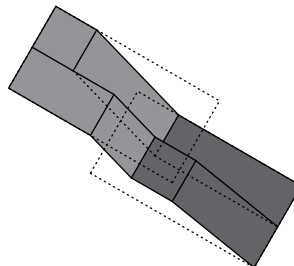


Hybrid Programs
Hybrid Programs will allow the various proposed programs, splash pad, playground and skatepark, to co-exist, creating new recreational and social opportunities.

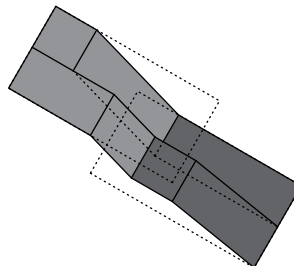


Re-configurable
Re-configurable will expand the usability of the parking lot, allowing it to convert into a market, stage or outdoor skating rink.

Formal Tactics ▶



Manipulated Surface
Manipulated Surface will integrate the proposed programs with the existing site topography, specifically the berm.



Kit of Parts
Kit of Parts will provide the components necessary to convert the parking lot into a market, stage or outdoor skating rink.

Design Proposal - Inhabiting the Berm ▶

In order to overcome the physical and emotional barriers of the site, the restraints must be viewed as opportunities. Since the berm is a necessary element for flood protection, the site needs to take advantage of this unique feature and celebrate it - *inhabit it*.

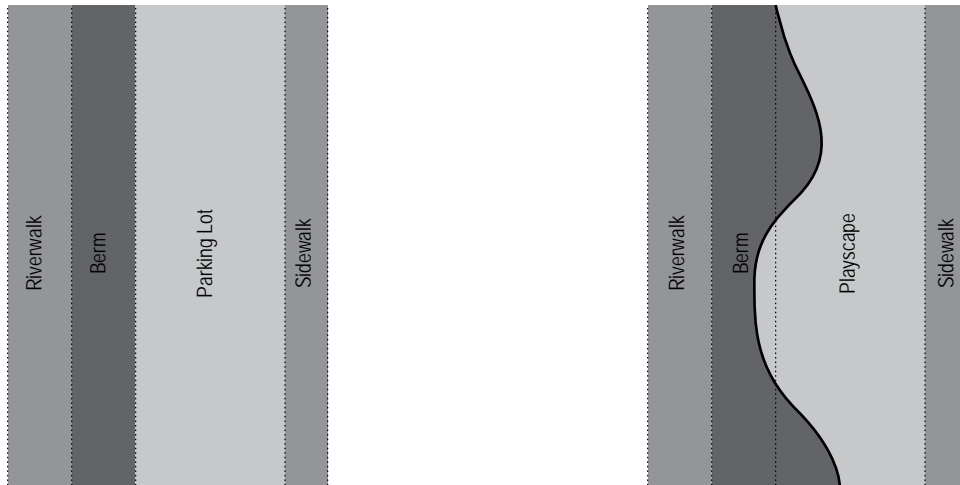


Fig.200 Mill Race Park - Parti Diagram.

Discovering new ways to inhabit the berm and parking lot will improve the site's relationship to the riverwalk and street while attracting an even broader range of the public on a more daily basis. Access to and from the river's edge will become more apparent to the community as they are encouraged to interact with the berm through passive and active modes of participation. Instead of just passing over the berm, one can sit, slide, skate and climb on it or take cover under and pass through it.

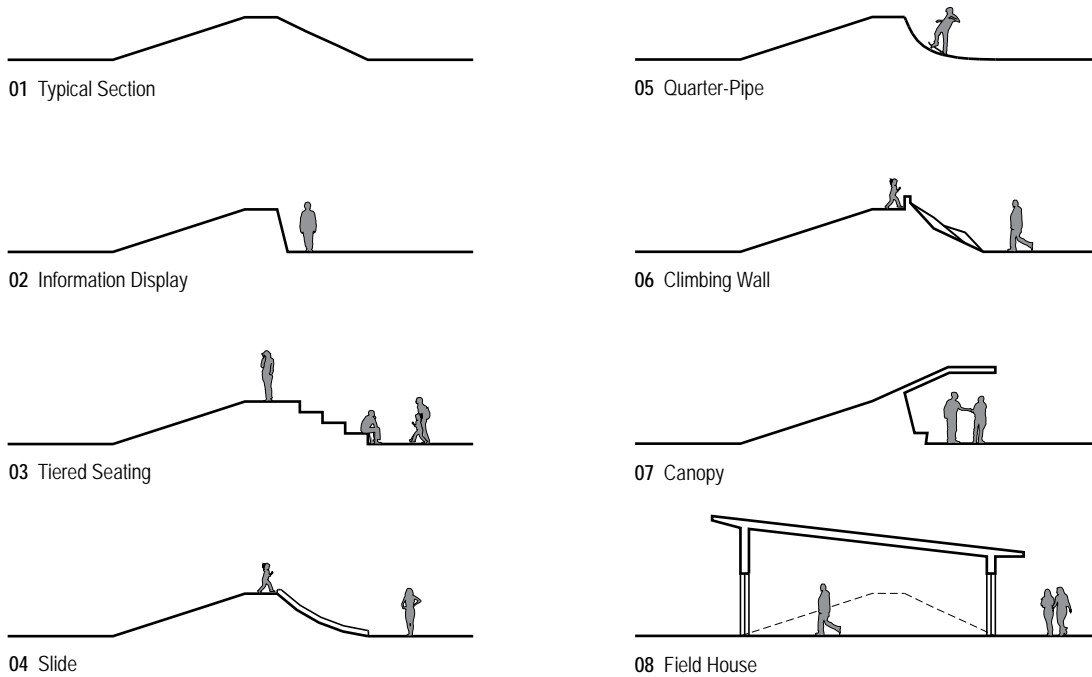
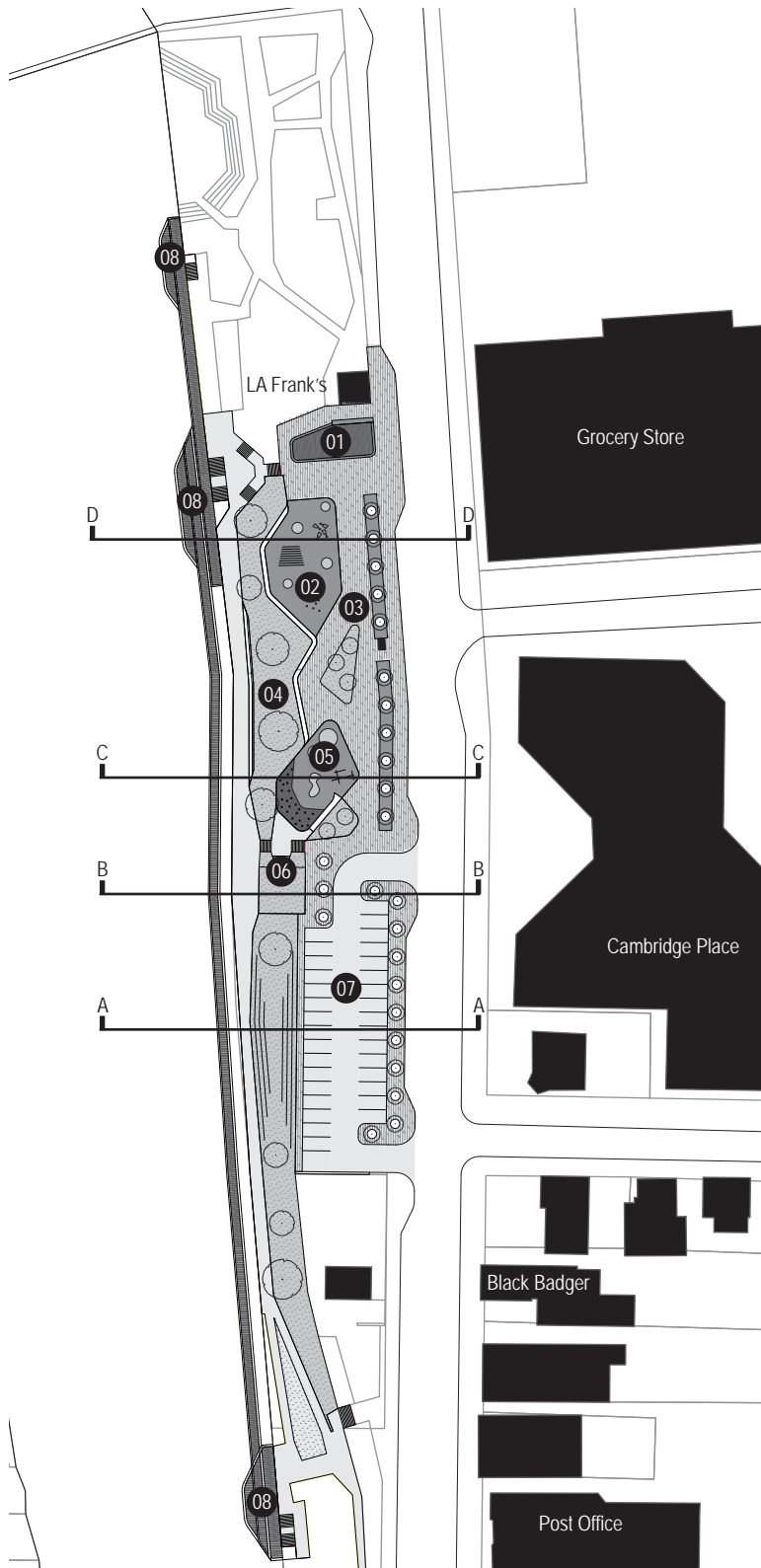


Fig.201 Mill Race Park - Potential Berm Inhabitations.



The proposed alterations to Mill Race Park transform it into a true community space and recreational hub of Galt. Drawing on the seasonal attraction of LA Frank's and the annual festivals, the attraction of the original site is expanded into a multi-functional space that provides passive and active recreational opportunities for people of all ages.

01 Raised Patio

The raised patio provides a casual dining and seating area to the site, allowing patrons of LA Frank's to linger for longer periods of time, observing the activity of the site.

02 Splash Pad

The splash pad is the first recreational pod which attracts community members, specifically families with young children, to cool off on a warm summer's day.

03 Plaza

The Plaza provides a mix of hard and soft surface with seating throughout, allowing people to pass through the site or linger and people watch. The Plaza is also designed to be 'skater-friendly', allowing the local youth culture to be more integrated with the urban landscape without dedicating a space solely to the act of skateboarding.

04 Berm

The berm is now the multi-functional spine of the site, physically connecting the various programmatic elements and inviting community members to engage and interact with it.

05 Playground

The playground is the second recreational pod which provides a diverse playscape for children alongside seating areas for watchful parents.

06 Field House

The field house provides washroom and storage facilities for the site while providing an unique experience of physically inhabiting and passing through the berm.

07 Parking Lot

The parking lot has been reduced in size while also being designed to accommodate temporary inhabitation such as market stalls, a stage, and an outdoor skating rink in the winter months.

08 Riverwalk and Landing

The Riverwalk and Landing are extended to provide a greater experience of the river's edge. A new stair eliminates the dead end condition and connects to the river landing.

Fig.202 Mill Race Park - Proposed Site Plan.

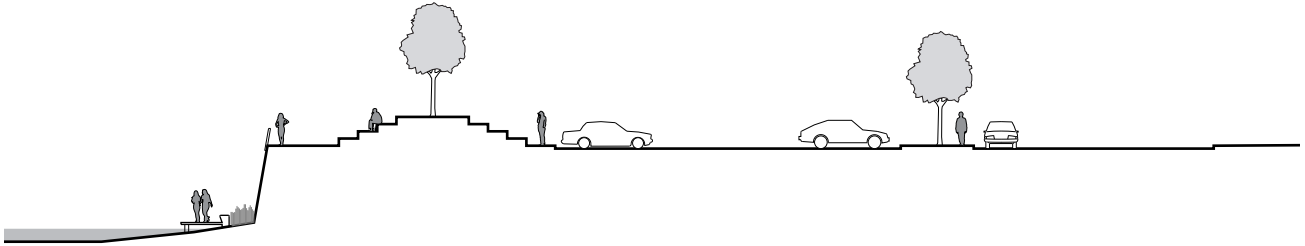


Fig.203 Mill Race Park - Proposed Site Section A-A.

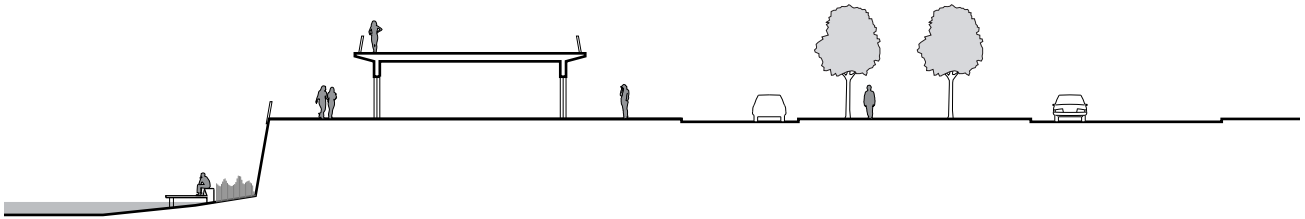


Fig.204 Mill Race Park - Proposed Site Section B-B.

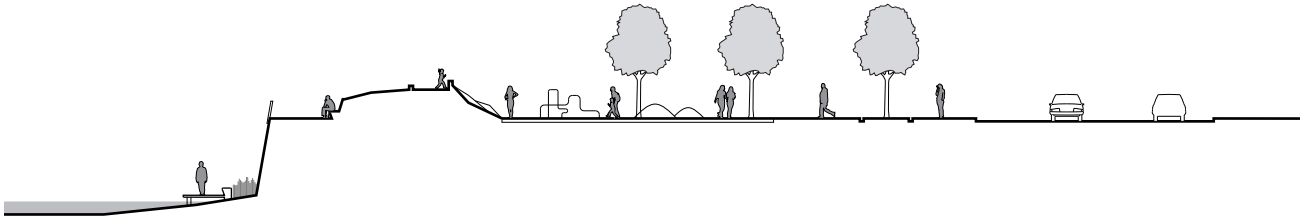


Fig.205 Mill Race Park - Proposed Site Section C-C.

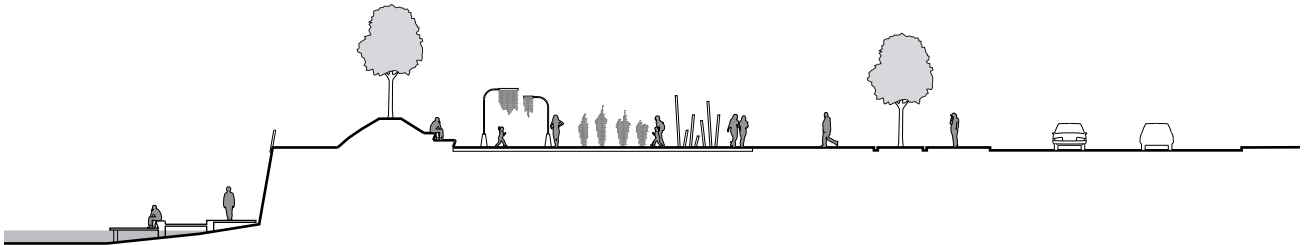


Fig.206 Mill Race Park - Proposed Site Section D-D.



Fig.207 Mill Race Park - Aerial Illustrating Everyday Warm Weather Inhabitation.



Fig.208 Mill Race Park - Aerial Illustrating Everyday Cold Weather Inhabitation.



Fig.209 Mill Race Park - View of Splash Pad in Summer.



Fig.210 Mill Race Park - View of Playground in Summer.



Fig.211 Mill Race Park - View of River Landing.



Fig.212 Mill Race Park - View of Outdoor Skating Rink in Winter.

01 ▶

CONSULT

02 ▶

SITUATE

03 ▶

HYPOTHESIZE

04 ▶

TEST

05 ▶

DEVELOP

04 The fourth step involves engaging the community and testing how the hypothesized design solutions will effect the inhabitation of the sites.

The *Test* phase proposes validating the hypothesized design solutions by testing them in the form of temporary public space interventions. The *Test* phase has multiple purposes:

- Raise awareness of and promote the hypothesized design interventions
- Increase community support for the projects
- Validate the design intentions
- Receive user feedback so design interventions can be adjusted accordingly
- Test proposed design solutions before committing the full resources to it

The following are examples of possible tactics for testing proposed design solutions and engaging the community physically and socially in the urban design process. These tactics are encouraged to be realized simultaneously throughout the process as combined they are greater than the sum of their parts.

Public Survey - See Case Study 13 & 14

A *Public Survey* is a standard form of acquiring public opinion on a given matter. Typically conducted by phone, mail, internet or in person, they are valuable in understanding the communities perception of a given urban area and acquiring ideas as to how it may be improved.

Community-University Partnership - See Case Study 15

Community-University Partnerships serve to engage the local community through the lens of design and building, increasing their awareness of design as a useful cultural tool. The direct engagement of the community helps broaden the relevance and value of design beyond an interest in the physical infrastructure and into the larger social, cultural and economic context the structure resides in. Simultaneously it engages clients that may be overlooked or do not have the tools available to advocate for a desired change.

Site Marking - See Case Study 12

Site Marking is a tactic for identifying possible zones of intervention and allowing them to enter the community's consciousness as potential sites for future use versus abandoned voids in the city to remain hidden from view. As these sites are released back to the community, they can be observed for any temporary uses that could provide hints to the potential user groups and development of the site.

Website & Blog - See Case Study 12, 13 & 15

The website and blog is the virtual equivalent of the *Storefront Think-tank* and serves as a host social media platform for communicating the projects intentions as well as collecting and disseminating public opinion. Attracting and informing a broader audience than the local community, it engages the internet community while initiating and coordinating the public debate surrounding specific project proposals and the overall intentions of the *Urban Actuation* initiative.

Viewing Apparatus - See Case Study 13

The *Viewing Apparatus* can take multiple forms, from billboard, information pod, to telescope, which all have the common goal of identifying the site for intervention and communicating the proposed design solution to the community. Located on the ground and within the site under question, they engage the community in the production of the space, making the project more tangible and increasing their level of participation.

Experiment - See Case Study 14

A portion of a larger project proposal is physically tested on site for a specific period of time in order to gauge its future use and gain public opinion on the proposal. Through engaging the community physically in the design of a space you can begin to observe how the proposed design alters behavioural patterns for different demographics and traffic patterns for both pedestrians and vehicles.

01 ▶

CONSULT

02 ▶

SITUATE

03 ▶

HYPOTHESIZE

04 ▶

TEST

05 ▶

DEVELOP

05

The final step of the UA process involves administering the development of the interventions and evaluating their community affect.

The results of the testing phase are open to multiple possibilities as the development of the proposed design interventions are allowed to unfold over time. As the proposals develop, perish or mutate, the broader strategy, commonly understood as the 'Master Plan', emerges from within.

The following typologies^[1] reveal the possible effects temporary interventions and programme testing can have on the development of a given urban area.

One-off - See Case Study 01, 02 & 03

The temporary use has a lasting effect on the site through public memory, but only uses the vacant space in order to question its current use or celebrate a single event.

Interim Use - See Case Study 12

The intervention does not have any lasting affect on the site and only uses the vacant lot for the time available. The site goes on to be developed in a manner non-related to the intervention.

Catalyst - See Case Study 13, 14 & 15

The intervention acts as a catalyst for the future development of the area by establishing new programs and activities.

Recurring - See Case Study 04 & 05

The physical space of the intervention remains the same but is temporarily transformed to host a recurring public event.

Permanent - See Case Study 06, 07, 08, 09, 10 & 11

The intervention establishes itself at a given site and is developed into a permanent space within the city.

Keeping these possible outcomes in mind, the development of the area is not limited to a single planned and implemented project. The open-source development process allows the physical and social nature of the urban area to be shaped through a collaborative process between the city and community at large.

[1] Adapted from: Studio Urban Catalyst. Urban Catalysts: Strategies for temporary uses - potential development of urban residual areas in European Metropolises. www.template.com. 2003.

Evaluation ►

For future reference, it is essential to evaluate the community response to the UA process as future proposals will benefit from any such feedback.

The following questions should be considered when reviewing an implemented project:

- How was the behaviour of the community altered as a result of the intervention?
- What aspects of the intervention enhanced physical and social interaction within the space?
- What has been the response of community members to the project?

This information is vital in informing future proposals, thereby actively increasing their success rate as well as informing further development possibilities.

“For me, a lack of aspiration is the biggest threat to humanity. And the architect's task is to counter this.”^[1]

[1] Alsop, Will. *Architecture as Branding* from: Ed. Oswalt, Philipp. *Shrinking Cities Volume 2: Interventions*. Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag. 2006. p763

ac-tu-ate [ak-choo-eyt] - verb

- 1. to incite or move to action; impel; motivate
- 2. to put into action; start a process; turn on ^[1]

The predominant role of the architect in practice is that of a service provider. In this role, projects are identified by institutions, private developers, and public agencies which issue a request for proposal to which professional firms respond in hopes of persuading the potential client of their suitability for the project at hand. In this situation, the design profession is reactive, responding as problem solvers who provide value in implementing a solution to the issues identified by an external client group. A rigid approach, it exerts extensive effort in issuing promotional material to sell the services of the firm while relying on others to identify and promote the need for physical, social and economical change and development within the city.

The *Urban Actuation* process, as presented in this thesis, champions an alternative role of the architect as a proactive problem identifier and activist.

The laboratory for the activist is not the office work station, but the public space of the city where problems can be identified and solutions hypothesized, tested and developed.

The critical tools of the activist are not the latest CAD programs and rendering techniques, but a passion and desire for measurable change within their community.

The projects are not large scale multi-million dollar master plan attempts to recreate the urban environment as a whole, but temporary, experimental and executed on a limited budget.

The results are tangible, having a discernible impact on the physical and social characteristics of the city. Vacant and undeveloped territory is transformed by temporary installations which induce reactions and feedback from an increasingly engaged citizenry. The result is an outward facing, mutually beneficial exchange with the community which increases the reputation of the architect as a participatory change agent.

The *Pocket Park* installation, which served as the initiator for this thesis, embodies this proactive spirit of the architect as activist; a collective group of designers responding to a set of perceived issues which were identified through direct experience with the city. The host space was an under utilized space within the city, open for reinterpretation and recreation. The precondition for such a response was a collective sense of apathy, yet opportunity, within a physically and socially fragmented community and a willingness to affect change. The easiest response to this sense of apathy is cynicism and retreat, however, as experts on the city, the architect maintains a higher responsibility to the public and the profession to make a pertinent decision - *act, or get out.*



Fig.213

[1] actuate. (n.d.). Collins English Dictionary - Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition. Retrieved April 28, 2012, from Dictionary.com website: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/actuate>

“The mindset that says ‘that is the way we do things **here**’ is often a disguise for simply accepting existing power configurations. The power constellation in cities determines how urban problems are addressed. Usually those individuals concerned with ‘hard’ infrastructure are **at the top of the hierarchical tree – engineers, land use** or transport planners. Any solution to a problem is seen through that prism. Mental pictures – concepts – drive what we do and how we do it. This group’s concept of the **city is as a machine, which leads them to find mechanical solutions. In contrast, those who see the city as a living** organism would focus on the dynamic effects of the people who inhabit it.”^[1]

[1] Landry, Charles. The Creative City – A Toolkit for Urban Innovators. Earthscan Publications. London, 2000. P163

“Community is the voice, we are the translator and architecture is the platform”

In collaboration with Court Sin, 'Design Place, Not Space' was our submission to the Centre Block Graduate Student Design Competition.

Tired of external developers eager to take advantage of your city and imposing their solution to make as much profit as possible!? Wait no longer, Customize Your Centre Block! Design Place, Not Space!

The Centre Block Project is not just about developing a block of land surrounded by four streets, it is about the early stages of designing a socially responsible and sustainable urban community.

Instead of proposing a totalitarian design solution, The Agents of Urban Change believe in the power of community to generate and sustain urban change.

For developers, architecture is about building spaces for maximum short-term monetary profit. For The Agents of Urban Change, architecture is about building places for maximum long-term community profit.

Since all good design must begin with a clear understanding of the existing physical and social geography of the site in question, it struck us that a vital component of the design process lies in the relationship

between the designers and the inhabitants of the existing space to ensure its conversion from a monofunctional space into a valued multifunctional place. As such, our proposal for the Kitchener Centre Block is structured around a collaborative four-phase research and design process. This process would take place over the course of six-months (a time period dependent on community participation) in a converted vacant space within the former Mayfair Hotel. As an efficient think-tank open to and benefiting from all minds, the converted space is conceived as a hybrid between a research/design centre and proactive/interactive public gallery.

PHASE 1: FOUNDATION

Understanding the Patient's History

Goal: Familiarizing Each Other With Place Within a Third Place

Assumptions can be deadly to any sort of critical decision making. By asking questions first, about the history and culture of a community, the vision of the site can grow.

PHASE 2: DISCOVERY

Cataloging the Symptoms

Goal: Food For Thought For Everyone, Good and Bad

Observing existing site conditions and directly engaging the community is essential for understanding current perceptions and future aspirations of place. This is achieved through a series of documentaries and discussions from first person encounters with community members on the streets and within the proverbial 'think-tank'.



Fig.214 Design Place, Not Space - View of Temporary Inhabitation of Site.

PHASE 3: COLLABORATION

The Diagnosis and the Best Treatment

Goal: Proposing Elastic Treatment Options and Deciding Together

Emerging from the information and experience acquired through the preceding phases, a series of menu-like options for programming the site (commercial, residential, recreational, etc.) are generated which are responsive to the needs and desires of the community. The possibilities are endless because the design is an interdependent collaboration between the community and the Agents of Urban Change.

PHASE 4: IMPLEMENTATION

Staying Fit

Goal: Keeping the Generations Involved

The implementation of the design into reality reaffirms the roles of the community and the agency to create valued places in the urban area. Members of the community and the agency continually work together as pathfinders who recognize the potential future, how to get there and when to get the project to the next milestone.

For us, there seems to be a void in the process of city planning and development, as the contemporary city is often burdened by legislative concerns and is unable to commit the time and resources required to completely indulge the needs and desires of the community. And in return, the community is not provided with an appropriate platform to allow those needs and desires to be heard or discussed. It is the ‘Think-tank’, the communal third-place of the Research Gallery, that serves as the incubator of the process to allow all interested parties to meet, discuss and produce inclusively.

The benefits of the ‘Design Place, Not Space’ process are threefold: First of all, it provides a laboratory for investigative research, communication and education. Secondly, it increases public interest and user participation in the development of their community. And finally, it generates a project proposal that values places for maximum community profit over spaces for maximum monetary profit.



Fig.215 Design Place, Not Space - View of Community Think-Tank Interior.

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