A Place in Between

A study of the role emotions play in designing an architecture for teenagers

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

There is a growing recognition that the atmosphere of spaces can influence well-being, and significantly affect one's emotional response to them. A welcoming atmosphere, for instance, can evoke feelings of comfort, safety, and, inclusion. However, understanding how users respond to architectural spaces, whether welcoming or *un-welcome*, remains a challenge. This thesis will begin to explore these challenges specifically for the user group consisting of teenagers.

This thesis is being driven by the following questions; *How can spaces for adolescents be created that support their emotional health and well-being while aiding them in their developmental journey? Can these spaces be adapted to meet the diverse needs of this demographic without forcing a one-size-fits-all approach?*

It also raises the question, *is it truly necessary to design such spaces?* The aim for architecture is often to create environments that are inclusive for all. Yet, there can be an implicit expectation that every space should meet the needs of every unique demographic - a goal that, in reality, can be nearly impossible to achieve. Adaptability, defined as, the capacity to be modified for a new use or purpose, is key to addressing this issue. It also prompts the query: how can existing spaces be transformed to prioritize and cater specifically to the teenage population? The design proposal outlines a series of opportunities as architectural spaces, providing guidelines to better understand this demographic's needs and to design environments that effectively meet them.

By exploring how architectural spaces can better accommodate teenagers, the thesis begins recognizing their needs, acknowledging their role within the community, and fostering their personal and social development. Emphasizing the importance of adaptable and inclusive design, it proposes environments that actively support adolescent well-being.

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If anyone asks how my thesis was - it was slow but steady, like an anxious tortoise.

dedication

for every teenager out there struggling with their emotions and looking for their place in the world.

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introduction

Research studies have explored the understanding of adults and children and their emotions, teenagers are often excluded from the conversation. Burdened with complex emotions, they transition into adulthood, navigating the path to self-understanding and making sense of the world around them. To begin this research, we start with understanding the brain and the psyche of how it works. An intriguing example of this is Yaron Steinberg's *brain/city* installation[1], which mimics his brain and thoughts in physical form. The installation appears as a large, suspended, sculptural model resembling a brain or a spherical city. Inside the installation reveals a layered structure composed of small box-like forms resembling buildings, arranged to create the sense of an enclosed, self-contained world. There is also a pathway that runs through the space, adding depth and complexity. It can be interpreted as a conceptual representation of the human mind as a dynamic, interconnected urban landscape, linking thoughts, emotions, and memories to the organized chaos of a city. Steinberg notes "if my brain was a place, this is what it would look like."[2]



figure 1.0

Yaron Steinberg's brain/city installation.

Understanding teenage emotions is a challenge. The American Academy of Child & Adolescence Psychiatry discusses the study of the teen brain stating, "Scientists have identified a specific region of the brain called the amygdala that is responsible for immediate reactions including fear and aggressive behavior. This region develops early. However, the frontal cortex, the area of the brain that controls reasoning and helps us think before we act, develops later. This part of the brain is still changing and maturing well into adulthood."[3] The distinction between the development of these two regions of the human brain have an impact on how teenagers process and engage with the people and world around them.

James McConchie, researcher and author of the article *What Do Teens' Emotions Feel Like?* comments, "If the skill of differentiating emotions is so important, can teenagers get better at it, or do they just have to accept the old adage that 'you'll understand when you're older?'"[4] In a world where teenagers are often overlooked during the design process, existing in a transitional phase of growing up, can create an awkward middle ground. McConchie describes emotions with the comparison between children, teenagers and adults to illustrate how emotions evolve and change with age over time. He notes that children deal with one emotion at a time

Table 1.

Different kinds of affective responses to objects according to Vischer (1873)

Affective response	Concerning an object's sensory properties	Concerning an object's motor properties
Not involving perspective taking		
Without awareness of others having similar feelings as oneself	*Zuempfindung* (sensing towards)	*Nachempfindung* (sensing along)
With awareness of others having similar feelings as oneself	*Zufühlung* (feeling towards)	*Nachfühlung* (feeling along)
Involving perspective taking		
Without awareness of others having similar feelings as oneself	*sensitive Einempfindung* (sensing into)	*motorische Einempfindung* (sensing into)
With awareness of others having similar feelings as oneself	*sensitive Einfühlung* (feeling into) = "sensory empathy"	*motorische Einfühlung* (feeling into) = "motor empathy"

figure 2.0

"Different kinds of affective responses to objects according to Vischer (1873)"

and have the ability to differentiate between them and what they are, teenagers deal with many emotions at a time and have trouble pointing out what they are feeling, while finally adults feel many emotions at a time and hold the ability to tell apart what they are feeling.[5] This is supported by the Ekman model by Dr. Paul Ekman who studied human 'micro-emotions' and classified them into seven known categories, which are; happiness/enjoyment, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, disgust, and contempt. He discusses how feeling one emotion at a time is entirely possible as a display of 'micro-emotions',[6] where in a span of a couple minutes you are able to feel sadness, anger and frustration all in one, possibly at the same time.

A paper published by the National Library of Medicine, titled *From 'Einfühlung' to Empathy: Exploring the Relationship Between Aesthetic and Interpersonal Experience*, notes "Nowadays, the historical and conceptual roots of the concept of 'empathy' and the related historical account of the relationship between aesthetic and interpersonal experience have got partially out of sight."[7] Emptahy within close connection to emotions starts to bind together how an experience can be affected by the use of one or the other. In 1873, Dr. Robert Vischer explained the different emotional outcomes based on objects, using the concepts of *fuh-ling* and *fin-dung* (figure 1.0). *Einfühlung* specifically, the German word for empathy explores the relationship between perception of the spaces around us and how each person experiences it. It explains how one can *feel* objects just by being present, by connecting an occupied space and architecture having the capabilities to invoke feelings in a person. This concept is crucial in understanding the emotions of teenagers and the role it plays in designing architecture that reflects these emotions – a space where one can simply exist.

A significant role in architecture and its representation lies in visuals, which can be compared to synesthesia, a phenomenon in humans, where numbers, colors, words, and other elements are represented based on individual perception. Richard Cytowic in his book *Synesthesia* says, "Throughout synesthesia's history, we haven't been able to say whether someone whose alphabet is colored will be more likely to see music, taste words, or have aspatial number form. But now we can."[8] The technology today and the theories being worked out have made it possible to understand the relationship between them. We can now try to study the emotions and the psyche of the teenage brain and correlate it to the relationship that spatiality and architecture create. An intriguing concept when proposing a *solution* could also be imagining what emotions expressed by a teenager would look like in an architectural context. Is this a physical space, a series of buildings, landscapes, or something purely conceptual to

explore as a product of one's imagination?

To conduct this research and answer the proposed questions, it is essential to reflect on personal experiences as a youth while also understanding the realities faced by today's adolescents within their environments. As the complexities of adolescence shift with each generation, teenagers' needs evolve in response to technological advancements and societal changes. This proposal aims to explore the emotions teenagers experience by providing them with opportunities to express themselves through artistic and physical mediums, both as forms of personal expression and emotional relief. Art, in its many forms, including visual arts, music, dance, and digital media, offers a powerful means for self-discovery and emotional processing. Likewise, physical activities such as sports, movement-based therapy, and hands-on creative practices provide additional avenues for self-expression and stress relief. By fostering environments where teens feel encouraged to engage in these activities, we can support their mental health and overall well-being.

A key component of this research is understanding how surroundings and architectural spaces influence emotional well-being. This study will explore how thoughtfully designed spaces can serve as safe havens where teenagers feel free to process their emotions without fear of judgment. By incorporating creative and recreational spaces within architectural design, this research seeks to develop environments that nurture emotional resilience and encourage open dialogue.

This exploration will be applied through a series of architectural design proposals that materialize as physical spaces. The research will focus on a specific community within Toronto, Parkdale, examining three distinct sites located along major intersections, including Queen Street West, Dundas Street West, and Bloor Street West. Each site holds unique qualities that will be analyzed through site-specific research, allowing the design proposals to respond to their context and develop distinct characteristics. By integrating artistic expression, physical engagement, and safe communal spaces into the built environment, this research aims to create environments that empower teenagers, foster emotional well-being, and support their growth in meaningful ways.

Notes

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chapter 01: emotions

1.1: what are emotions?

In a journal article by authors Nikita Jain, Vedika Gupta, Shubham Shubham, Agam Madan, Ankit Chaudhary & K. C. Santosh titled, *Understanding Cartoon Emotion Using Integrated Deep Neural Network On Large Dataset*, emotions are defined as as, "a natural instinctive state of mind deriving from one's circumstances, mood, or relationships with others."[1]

A paper published by the University of West Alabama (UWA) notes that "emotions are how individuals deal with matters or situations they find personally significant."[2] This statement implies that all emotions are deeply rooted in something personal and unique to each individual. What makes an emotion important and valid differs from one person to another. It can be easy to confuse the term 'emotions' with one's 'feelings' or 'moods', but the three terms remain distinct as human processes. Feelings are the result of an emotion and how one processes them, whereas a mood as described by the American Psychological Association (APA) is "any short live emotional state, usually of low intensity" (making them different from what emotions are as they) "lack stimuli" and an intent for it to be defined as a formal emotion.[3]

The UWA identifies three components that shape emotional experiences: "a subjective experience, a physiological response and a behavioural or expressive responses."[4] While focusing on these three components, we explore the emotional well-being of teenagers, recognizing that each individual's experience is unique, no two adolescents are the same. Their emotions can be influenced by various factors, including their upbringing, daily life, social interactions, and emotional maturity. Physiological responses, such as physical expressions, body language, or verbal communication, are shaped by these factors and reflect how emotions manifest based on one's personality.

Could the feelings wheel make it easier for adolescents to identify their emotions?[5] Would it assist in deciphering their psyche? Originally created by Dr. Gloria Wilcox[6], the feelings wheel provides a structured approach to analyzing one's emotions with precision. It allows individuals to identify what they are feeling by starting with the first layer of seven core emotions and moving outward to more specific emotions in layers two and three. The wheel breaks down emotional

The Feelings Wheel

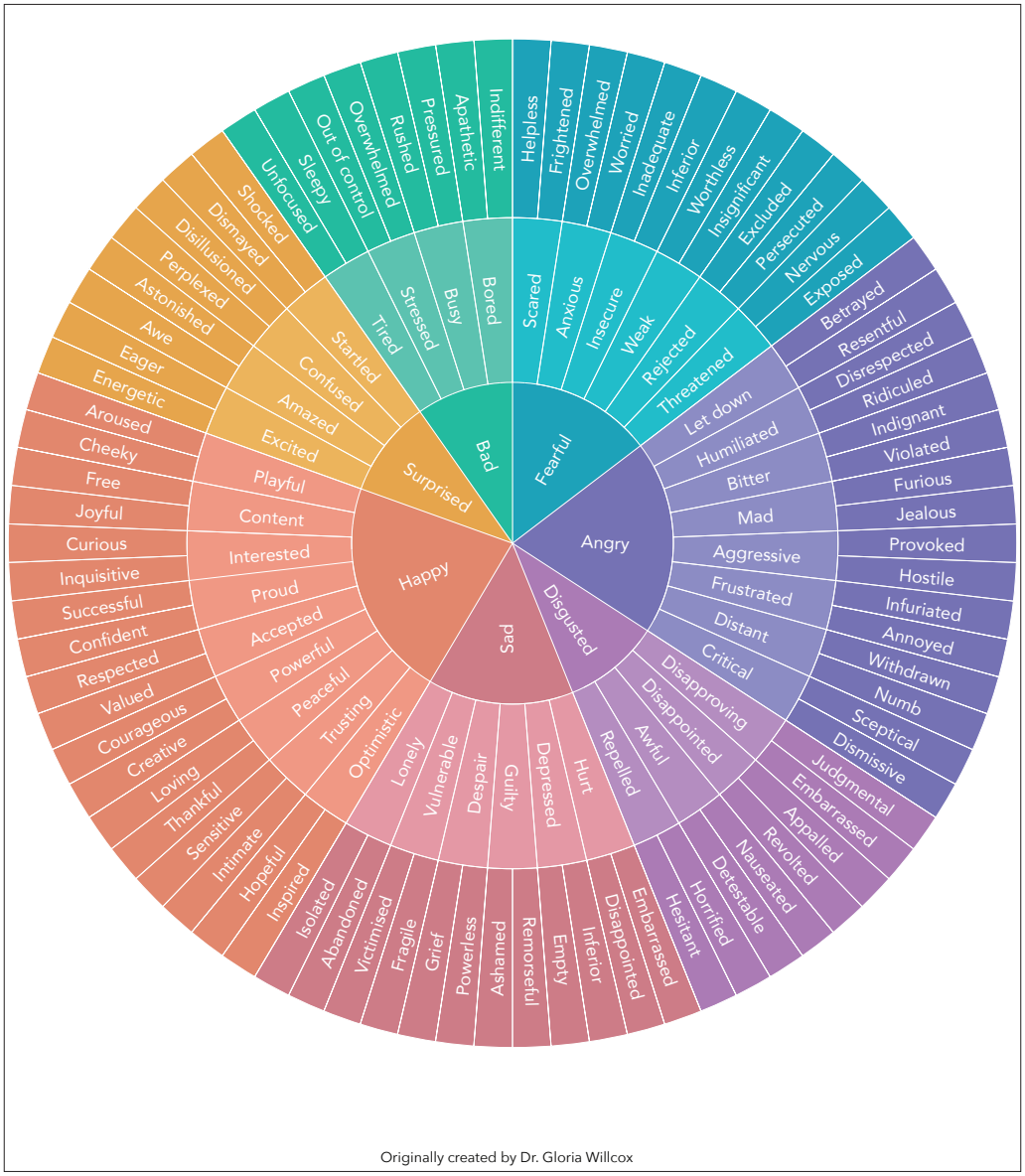


figure 3.0

The feelings wheel by The Calm Application

experiences into distinct categories, helping users articulate what they *feel* or *emote*. If the feelings wheel were to be applied literally, it could serve as a framework for assigning specific architectural elements to emotions and their subcategories. For example, a building could be structured in layers, with the primary framework representing core emotions, followed by substructures, cladding, and ornamentation that correspond to more nuanced emotional states. However, just as emotions are complex and multifaceted, creating architecture is also not a straightforward process. Designing spaces that evoke or respond to emotions requires a deeper understanding of both human experience and the built environment.

For instance, the application *Calm*[6] leverages this concept to assist users virtually. By selecting their current emotion, the application offers tailored guidance. However, while this tool may serve as a helpful starting point, it can also oversimplify the intricate nature of human emotions, which are rooted in far greater complexity.

1.1.1: the science behind emotions

In his book *The Psychology of Emotions,* Carroll E. Izard makes the statement "The psychology of emotions is just now coming of age. It seems strange that something so obviously central to human existence could have remained outside the mainstream of psychology, for more than a century, virtually the lifespan of scientific psychology."[7] For a long time, psychology – despite its focus on studying the mind and, by extension, emotions – has overlooked the urgency of this branch of science.

Paul Ekman's model of human micro-emotions identifies seven universal emotions that are present across all humans. These include, happiness/ enjoyment, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, disgust, and contempt. Ekman asserts that these emotions are integral to daily life and universally experienced.[8] This framework aligns loosely with the structure of the feelings wheel, where general emotions are shared by all, yet become more specific when analyzed in detail. But where do emotions originate? While the Ekman model identifies what emotions are, their importance in daily life raises further questions. As Ekman and Izard collaborated on the study and development of emotional knowledge, Izard questions, "...are they also essential to survival?"[9] In their collaborative

study, as Ekman and Izard examine this question, it is indicated how emotions can feel like a matter of survival. For adolescents, survival may not be a physical struggle for some but can be a mental one for most, as they start to navigate developmental challenges and wrestle with their own thoughts and emotions.

The scientific approach to defining human experience begins to provide us with a framework for understanding and articulating the complexity of emotions. When words fall short, individuals often turn to other forms of expression – art, music, or movement - as a way to both regain control and channel their emotions into tangible representations.

1.2: emotions in humans - specifically teenagers

The term *teens/teenagers/adolescents* in this context refers to individuals aged thirteen to nineteen years. Teenagers occupy an awkward phase of life: they are no longer considered *kids*, who receive constant care and guidance, but they are also not yet regarded as *adults*, with full autonomy to participate in all aspects of adulthood. It is a gray area of life. If one were to identify an age group experiencing emotions at their peak intensity, it would undoubtedly be teenagers.

The American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry highlights the developmental processes of the teenage brain, which continue into adulthood. This research provides a logical explanation for teenage behavior, noting that adolescents are more likely to act on emotions rather than logic.[10] However, this tendency should not be viewed negatively, as it stereotypically can be.

Thus far, this analysis of human emotions has focused on the psyche. Another perspective to be considered is how emotions manifest physically. The authors of the *Near-Living Architecture* elaborate on how movement reflects emotions, stating:

> Sad movements are generally characterized by a drooped head and shoulders, an overall slumped posture and a protective crouch posture; Happy movements are characterized by open and expansive postures, upward hand and arm movements, and advancing movements; Angry movements are characterized by arms akimbo postures, angled forward postures and clenching fists; and Fearful postures seem to show alert, retreating and cowering movements. With regard to the speed of movements, we found that sad movements are slow and are characterized by lingering in time, and happy and angry movements are characterized by fast motions. Fearful movements are long in duration and are characterized by frequent jitteri-ness and freezing postures.[11]

Micro-emotions such as sadness, happiness, anger, and fear are often exaggerated, making them more apparent to others. However, individuals themselves may not always recognize these emotions in real time, as the mind struggles to keep pace with the body's reactions. This exaggeration can lead to the creation of *physical*

emotions – outward expressions that may dominate over verbal communication. For teenagers, these physical emotions often become the focus, especially as they are frequently categorized as *negative*. This can perpetuate stereotypes, painting adolescence as a stage defined by heightened display of negative emotions. As discussed in the *Near-Living Architecture,* these expressions – whether unconscious or habitual, may include resting facial expressions, a rapidly bobbing leg, or hunched shoulders.[12]

Imagine a teenager sitting on a park bench, shoulders drooped, lips curled downward, and eyebrows furrowed–without any visible signs of happiness. Such body language is often interpreted as sadness, based on common visual cues such as upturned lips for happiness and down-turned lips for sadness. This visual shorthand can lead to snap judgments and stereotypes, fostering a habit of casting judgment based on appearances.

Emotions begin to integrate into one's life from an early age. Izard discusses the role of emotions in human existence, describing us as inherently emotional beings, noting that "our reasons for being" are primarily cognitive-intellectual.[13] This suggests that emotions are often sidelined in daily human experiences, including our learning processes.

Throughout our lives, we spend a significant portion – anywhere from ten to thirty years – within learning environments. This spans from preschool and kindergarten to higher education, such as earning a master's or doctoral degree. Regardless of the setting, learning is a constant throughout our lives. Izard's views on education note, "the process of learning facts and theories, the amassing of information."[14] The connection between emotions and learning was explored by theorists in the mid-1900s. Hobart Mowrer, a prominent psychologist of the time, stated, "the emotions play a central role, indeed an indispensable role, in those changes in behaviour or performance which are said to represent 'learning'."[15] Much like research done on children and adult emotions, a similar comparison can be made for research on learning spaces for teenagers, or a there lack of. Teenagers, as they navigate their own learning processes, require emotional balance and appropriate spaces, not only for their personal development but also for their interactions as they acquire knowledge.

Although emotions are increasingly recognized as a significant part of science and psychology, some still consider them abstract. While emotions have a concrete definition, one could argue they are neither purely factual nor theoretical. This ambiguity can render emotions *irrelevant* in a world focused on hard truths. For teenagers, this can further complicate the already challenging emotional landscape they navigate. Given the complexity and significance of emotions in human development, it is essential to explore how they are expressed and experienced within the environments we inhabit. As emotions shape our interactions with the world, architecture plays a pivotal role in either amplifying or soothing these emotional experiences through the spaces it creates.

1.3: emotions in architecture

Einfühlung, the German word for empathy, examines the relationship between how we perceive the spaces around us and how individuals experience them. The article From *'Einfühlung' to Empathy: Exploring the Relationship Between Aesthetic and Interpersonal Experience* discusses the idea that it is possible to understand or empathize with human beings – or even objects – by *feeling into* them.[16] This raises an intriguing question: if Einfühlung allows us to grasp how an object *feels*, could it also help us understand how architecture conveys emotion?

With today's advancements in smart technology and sensors, it is easier to measure and analyze the data surrounding emotional responses to environments. Using technology that can monitor brain activity, sensors that can measure body temperature and heightened or lowered heart rate, can all be linked to one's emotions. However, the challenge lies in translating these emotions into physical spaces and forms that clearly visualize and embody them. Architecture, as a medium, offers a unique lens to explore this translation, bringing with it both complexity and creative potential.

In *The Architecture of Happiness (2006)*, author Alain de Botton explores the relationship between nature, beauty, and architecture, and their impact on the well-being of it's occupants and society. He notes,

> Despite the expressive potential of objects and buildings, discussion of what they talk about remains rare. We appear to feel more comfortable contemplating historical sources and stylistic tropes than we do delving into anthropomorphic, metaphoric, or evocative meanings. It remains odd to initiate a conversation about what a building is saying.[17]

De Botton challenges us into considering questions such as, *How does your building feel?* Although such queries may seem unconventional, it could be the missing element in creating architecture that is truly inclusive and accommodates everyone. While this perspective offers a positive outlook, it is also important to consider the potential negative implications.

JG Ballard, in his 1962 short story *The Thousand Dreams of Stellavista*, provides a cautionary tale of the formally mentioned negative emotions and their consequential impact. The dialogue that stands out is as follows, "the house was not only frightened of us, it was ill."[18] In the story, a house has the ability to absorb its occupants' emotions and cater to their specific needs, physically through the architecture. While this may sound ideal, Ballard reveals the darker side of such an arrangement. This concept illustrates the potential dangers of environments that can amplify emotions. While positive emotions may enhance well-being and support daily life, negative emotions can intensify and spiral, creating alarming consequences. Ballard's narrative warns of the delicate balance needed when designing spaces that respond to the emotions of their users. Ballard creates scenes where even the smallest quarrel and the anger that results from its occupants gets absorbed within the room, storing it in its memory. For example, how a small infraction triggers a physically dangerous response from the house onto one of its newer occupants, driven by suppressed negative emotions from its previous owners.

In contrast to Ballard's cautionary tale, Botton offers a more optimistic view of a house's emotional resonance. He writes, "The house has grown into a knowledgeable witness. It has experienced winter evenings when its windows were cold as bags of frozen peas and midsummer days when its brick walls held the warmth of newly baked bread."[19] This description highlights the positive emotions and comforting atmosphere a house can evoke, fostering warmth and a sense of belonging for its occupants. While the emotional resonance of architecture as suggestive material holds true, it is essential to consider the actual materials from which it is built and the functions they perform. According to Botton, "it is worth elaborating on the curious process by which arrangements of stone, steel, concrete, wood, and glass seem able to express themselves – and can, on rare occasions, leave us under the impression that they are talking to us about significant and touching things."[20] These arrangements must be carefully considered, as different materials can alter the *language* of a piece of architecture.

This consideration goes beyond aesthetics and the beautification of a space to include the relationships that materials create with one another. It is far easier to identify the visual qualities of an object, such as a chair or a beam, than to interpret its emotional impact, which often relies on how we relate it to our own experiences. Rudolph Steiner's theory of Anthroposophy adds another dimension to this discussion, stating that:

> *...[it] postulates the existence of an objective, intellectually comprehensible spiritual world accessible to direct experience and through internal development...to develop faculties of perceptive imagination, inspiration and intuition through cultivating a form of thinking independent of sensory experience, and present the results thus obtained so subject to rational verification.*[21]

This discussion centers on the ability to translate perceptions and subjective experiences into tangible, real outcomes. It raises the question: how do we reconcile the limitless bounds of imagination with the constraints of the physical world? This is akin to how emotions, with their nuanced and tangled nature, challenge us to find clarity in their expression.

Over time, architects have developed distinct interpretations of how buildings are perceived, both personally and publicly. An example of architecture expressing emotion can be observed in the cluster of buildings in Dornach, Switzerland, designed by Rudolph Steiner known as the Geotheanum. This structures, with their free-form walls, create a unique architectural language. They evoke an emotional vision of the world, offering an alternative lens through which to experience built spaces. For instance, Mies Van Der Rohe established modern architectural standards through minimalistic precision with projects such as the Edith Farmsworth House and S. R. Crown Hall in Chicago. While Frank Gehry created ambitious works that inspire wonder, curiosity, and even confusion, observed in projects such as the Museum of Pop Culture in Seattle. In comparison, projects such as The Amsterdam Orphanage by Aldo Van Eyck, with its rigid geometries, contrasts with Steiner's Goetheanum in Dornach, which embodies a more organic and free-flowing form. Some architectural works balance these extremes, blurring the lines between exterior expectations and interior realities. For example, Eyck's Hubertus House uses stark, rigid geometries on its exterior, while its interior reveals a vibrant and welcoming shelter through extensive use of colour and flowing forms. These elements soften the harshness of its functional program, creating a space that surprises and engages its users.

Architecture has developed its own visual language, rooted in imagination. While this language may not be formally recognized as emotional, it varies in perception from every individual, speaking to its users through the experiences and the spaces it leaves in its wake.

1.4: art = emotions?

Emotions are often associated with art, a highly expressive visual form. Narrowing this focus to abstract art seems particularly fitting. A relevant term here is *Gesamtswerk*, which refers to "an immersive art experience," one that combines multiple mediums or experiences into a unified whole, creating something far greater than the sum of its parts. In this context, art becomes a reflection of emotions.[22] Richard Wagner, who first introduced the term *Gesamtswerk* in his 1849 essay *The Artwork of the Future*, states, "consummate artwork of the future... [in which] no one rich faculty of the separate arts will remain unused."[23] Instead of separating disciplines within the arts, Wagner advocates for their integration, where the use of multiple colours or mediums to represent a single element is often more effective than relying on just one.

Regarding abstract art, Alain de Botton notes, "Abstract art, infused as it was with harmony, stillness and rhythm, would appeal chiefly to societies yearning for calm–societies in which law and order were fraying, ideologies were shifting..."[24] He suggests that art not only reflects personal emotions but also mirrors the emotional climate of a community. By fostering harmony, art serves as a unifying force, promoting peace and binding society together.

1.4.1: synesthesia

Researchers at the Psychology Department and the Center for Integrative and Cognitive Neuroscience at Vanderbilt University (VU) in an article titled *What is Synesthesia?* define synesthesia as, "... an anomalous blending of the senses in which the stimulation of one modality simultaneously produces sensation in a different modality."[25] Referring to individuals with this ability as 'Synesthetes,' they explain, "... [they can] hear colours, feel sounds and taste shapes."[26] This unique ability – or possible super-ability – goes beyond conventional sensory associations, such as identifying a banana as yellow, to perceiving, for instance, a banana as the number 7.

Synesthesia is estimated to be rare, occurring in ratios ranging from 1 in 200 to 1 in 200,000. The article from VU also highlights grapheme-colour synesthesia, where individuals associate colours with letters, numbers, or other graphemes. The observations also note that:

> ... such synesthetes all seem to experience very different colours for the same graphemic cues. Different synesthetes may see 3 in yellow, pink or red. Such synesthetic colours are not elicited by meaning, because 2 may be orange but two is blue and 7 may be red but seven is green. Even more perplexing is that synesthetes typically report seeing both the colour the character is printed in as well as their synesthetic colour. For example, [an object] is [associated with] both blue (real colour) and light green (synesthetic colour) [at the same time].[27]

This intriguing ability reveals layers of perception that extend beyond conventional sensory experiences, blending colours, characters, and more in ways that challenge our understanding of the senses. Comparatively architecture forces you to consider these layers while beginning to design a space, and so the consideration of these effects become crucial to understand, if not to implement. The overall perception of a space is forced to be considered in a new light, where the perception of the user becomes an important defining factor.

1.4.2: synesthesia in teenagers and children

Synesthesia, as American Neurologist and Author Richard Cytowic notes in his book of the same name, is most commonly observed in children, who are particularly susceptible to it when it appears at an early age, although most seem to outgrow it as they get older.[28] Cytowic describes synesthesia as "sharing a root with anesthesia, which means 'no sensation'; synesthesia means 'joined or coupled sensation.' A synesthete, as we call these otherwise normal individuals, might not only hear my voice but also see it, taste it, or feel it as a physical touch."[29]

Children's experiences are unique, and each child perceives the world differently. For example, Cytowic explains that for some infants, "the number 8 was an arrogant,

fat lady",[30] while "3 is athletic and sporty, H is a formidable, orange, toned-down woman, and the character # is a beige, hardworking, masculine male."[31] Visualizations rooted in synesthesia remain highly subjective, varying amongst synesthetes.

Similarly, researchers at VU have posed the following satirical questions to suggest whether or not someone has synesthesia,

> When you eat chicken, does it feel pointy or round? Is a week shaped like a tipped-over D with the days arranged counterclockwise? Does the note B taste like horseradish? Do you get confused about appointments because Tuesday and Thursday have the same colour? Do you go to the wrong train station in New York City because Grand Central has the same colour as the 42nd Street address of Penn Station? When you read a newspaper or listen to someone speaking do you see a rainbow of colours? [32]

An anecdote of an instance where the author posed a question to their friends was, "What colours did you associate with these subjects (English, Science, and Math) in school when you were younger?" The author noted their selections as, green for science, red for math, and blue for English, expecting a unanimous conclusion. It was a surprise to learn the diverse associations each person had with each subject, as well as the reasons behind their chosen colours. For example, one friend insisted that math was blue because it made them feel sad, while another was convinced that science was red due to its very literal connection to learning about biology and dissections.

Synesthesia, much like the research on the teenage mind, can be misinterpreted. Researchers at VU note that "synesthetes were dismissed as having overactive imaginations, confusing memories for perceptions, or taking metaphorical speech far too literally."[33] Although this is a minor comparison to the emotional teenage mind, with the added effects of possible synesthesia and its complexities, the conversation remains of great interest.

1.4.3: synesthesia and its effects on art and architecture

With a touch of wit, one might posit that some individuals never fully outgrow childhood. Throughout Isa Genzken's life as an artist and today, she drew on her past experiences while reflecting on the present to illustrate her art. She created architectural and artistic exhibits, often playing vigorously with colour, form, and material in an effort to create impressions that could be interpreted in more than one way. Genzken uses an "unofficial Gesamtkunstwerk", as Martin Herbert claims in his review *Downhill All The Way With Isa Genzken*.[34] This approach of a gesamtkunstwek style of work brings along an overall scattered quality, where elements from different domains come together in harmony, sticking to a common theme.

Frequently creating abstract pieces, Genzken made her intentions clear by addressing important topics such as politics. An example of this can be observed with her piece *Weltempfänger*, which combines architecture and global issues. While this piece literally translates to *radio*, it also serves as a reflection of the type of work Genzken took on. Genzken uses the term *feelers* in two ways: one in reference to emotions, and the other as an extension of the object itself. [35] By creating architecture - or art - that allows you to feel the objects and understand them not only through the eyes of the maker but also from the perspective of each viewer, she demonstrates this as a valuable skill seen in her work.

If synesthesia, in simpler terms, is about the senses and how an individual experiences the world, this phenomenon has long been observed in art across centuries, with varying art styles blending into one another. Architecture, as its counterpart, follows a similar path. Architectural synesthesia is a term coined by the architect and artist-run platform *Pertanto* in collaboration with the New York City Architecture Biennial. The article titled *Architectural Synesthesia: A Harmonious Fusion of the Senses in Design* by Pertanto defines this new term as:

> Architectural synesthesia is a conceptual approach in architectural design that goes beyond the traditional emphasis on visual aesthetics. It involves the intentional integration and stimulation of multiple sensory experiences within a built environment to create a more holistic and immersive encounter for occupants. ... [synesthesia] it implies designing spaces that engage not only the visual sense but also other senses such as auditory, tactile, olfactory, and

even gustatory.[36]

Whether artists who are also architects, or artists collaborating with architects, there is a consistent need from both - or either - to evoke a deeper meaning in the work they create.

1.4.4: the use of colours to denote emotions

The colour wheel and colour theory are often introduced to children at an early age, often as part of their educational journey. As part of an Architect's education, these concepts are further elaborated upon in various contexts. Whether it's using bright colours to create visual impact, designing architecture in a virtual space, or physically building a model and deciding which materials (often tied to their colour) best communicate your ideas and concepts, colour plays a key role in expressing your intentions. Learning in-depth how colour affects your work and distinguishes one drawing from another becomes a valuable tool.

An article by Mental Health America titled, *How Do Colours In My Home Change My Mood? Colour Psychology Explained,* breaks down colours and the emotions they often evoke. For example, "Bright, warm colours (reds, oranges, yellows) stimulate energy and happiness, while cool, subdued colours (blues, greens, purples) are soothing and calming. Bright, warm colours are best in rooms for entertaining, like dining rooms or kitchens, while cool colours work best in relaxing spaces like bedrooms or even bathrooms."[37] This illustrates how *warmer* tones can evoke a sense of calm, while *cooler* tones have the opposite effect, making them suitable for more private spaces where their sharper qualities are less likely to overwhelm.

The theory known as chromotherapy, or *color healing*, posits that colors have their own individual frequencies that can have psychological effects on users, including but not limited to influencing moods and actions.[38] While further research is needed, it remains a theory that suggests a connection between emotions and color.

In the article by psychosocial rehabilitation specialist and author Kendra Sherry, titled *Color Psychology: Does It Affect How You Feel?*, Sherry discusses

how “color is a powerful communication tool and can be used to signal action, influence mood, and even influence physiological reactions. Certain colors have been associated with physiological changes, including increased blood pressure, increased metabolism, and eyestrain.”[39] As previously discussed, color as a means of communication can be a common tool in art providing an expressive medium. Sherry also explores the relatively new field of color psychology, which she discusses the study of various colors and their affect on human mood and behavior. The study also examines how colours can play a role in evoking one’s emotions, but can be influenced by factors such as age and one’s cultural background.”[40]

Keeping with how age influences color perception, it requires consideration of the shifting emotional states associated with growing up. Mood may become a factor in their choice of colors–whether in clothing, daily items, accessories, or even makeup. For example, do people wear darker shades of clothing when feeling down, or is it to be perceived as *edgy*, as often stereotyped in fiction. Conversely, do they choose bright, colorful, and more *cheerful* materials to signal an uplifting mood. This raises the question of whether emotions truly influence color decisions or vice versa, and if certain negative or positive experiences can lead to varying choices from the same individual.

Understanding emotions through artistic and architectural expression reveals the deep connections between sensory experiences and the spaces we inhabit. Whether through the immersive interplay of color, materiality, or form, both art and architecture shape how we feel and process the world around us. For teenagers, this connection is particularly crucial, as adolescence is a time of heightened emotional intensity and self-discovery. Architectural spaces designed with emotional well-being in mind can provide safe environments for self-expression, reflection, and growth. By integrating elements that engage multiple senses, such as color psychology, spatial organization, and interactive design, architecture has the potential to support teenagers in navigating their emotions, fostering creativity, and offering spaces where they can feel seen, understood, and empowered.

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chapter 02: adolescence

2.1: what is adolescence?

Although adolescence is typically described as occurring between the ages of thirteen and nineteen, some research suggests that it can begin as early as nine years old and extend into one's mid-twenties.[1] It is important to note that the terms *adolescence* and *teenager* are often used interchangeably.

The Cleveland Clinic notes the following on *Adolescent Development*,

> Children entering adolescence are going through many changes in their bodies and brains. These include physical, intellectual, psychological and social challenges, as well as development of their own moral compass. The changes are rapid and often take place at different rates. It can be an exciting yet challenging time in the life of a teenager. Adolescence is the time when your child becomes more independent and begins to explore their identity.[2]

Overall, adolescence is considered a time of change, growth, and discovery on many levels. As individuals leave childhood behind, it can be understood that this transition may be daunting, as they will be faced with many experienced and challenges that shape their identity and perspective of the world. Often, the realization of this shift comes only after the period has passed, leaving individuals to reflect on the years gone by and analyze the transformations that have occurred – whether large or small.

2.1.1: adolescence over the years

Although adolescence is a time of growth and a period when individuals are typically healthy, there are instances where one may face injury, illness, or even death. Regardless of the cause, there is always room for prevention and treatment. During this time of self-discovery, various patterns come into play, including dietary habits, levels of physical activity, substance use, and possible sexual activity.[3] These

behaviors can serve as a way for adolescents to understand themselves and others, while also considering their health and the potential risks involved. The World Health Organization (WHO) emphasizes the importance of good health during adolescent growth and development, stating that achieving this requires access to information, including;

> ...including age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education; opportunities to develop life skills; health services that are acceptable, equitable, appropriate and effective; and safe and supportive environments. They also need opportunities to meaningfully participate in the design and delivery of interventions to improve and maintain their health. Expanding such opportunities is key to responding to adolescents' specific needs and rights.[4]

Having access to a variety of appropriate resources is deemed critical, as one of the key health aspects being processed during this human transition is emotional development. While it has been discussed that intense emotions often drive teenagers and their decision-making, this also includes a focus on emotional growth and the identification of any mental health developments. Parents or guardians are a part of most teenagers' lives, but it is often true – despite the stereotype – that this is a time when emotional (or physical) separation begins to take place. While some of this separation can be beneficial for self-exploration and discovery, it also signifies a newly adjusted role in their day-to-day lives.

A significant number of mental health challenges that become more evident in adulthood often have their roots in adolescence or even earlier. The Department of Health and Human Services notes that "one in five young adults has a diagnosable disorder", as mental health disorders, including but not limited to depression, anxiety, and ADHD are often developed during this time, with diagnoses sometimes delayed.[5] All the changes occurring at such an intense level can contribute to making life more challenging. Therefore, it is vital to raise awareness of these issues, not just for teens, but also for those who surround them, highlighting the importance of receiving appropriate services.

Building on the stereotypes surrounding teenagers, common descriptors include; rebellious, distracted, careless, thoughtless, and reckless. Many of which are negative. With limited control over their circumstances, teenagers may seek to regain that control by engaging in activities that could lead to serious consequences, perpetuating the listed stereotypes. Given the mental, physical, and emotional changes previously

described, it can be challenging to define what constitutes *appropriate* behavior, or behavior deemed acceptable by society. As teenagers develop their self-esteem, part of the process involves making mistakes, learning from them, and ultimately holding themselves accountable for their actions and facing any necessary consequences.[6]

Despite the negative oppositions previously mentioned, some cultures, traditions, and religions are also known to celebrate this transition. Often referred to as puberty, or marked during the time, these milestones such as a Quinceañera, a *Sweet 16*, or other rites of passages are honoured, for both males and females.

In line with the societal restrictions they face, the teenage years, although a time of development toward adulthood, can also be the peak years for the development of physical and mental capabilities. "Most physical and mental functions, such as speed, strength, reaction time, and memory, are more fully developed during the teenage years. ... during adolescence, new, radical, and divergent ideas can have profound impacts on the imagination."[7] Research indicates that recovery from a 'bad mood' is typically faster for teenagers compared to adults. It should also be noted that teenagers often possess an incredible natural drive to confront crises and overcome challenges more quickly than most adults.[8]

Erik H. Erikson, a psychoanalyst in the 1950s, described adolescence in modern Western societies as a *moratorium*, defining it as "a period of freedom from responsibilities that allows young people to experiment with a number of options before settling on a lifelong career. Such a moratorium may be appropriate in a culture marked by rapid changes in vocational opportunities and lifestyles."[9] This period is often seen as one of unlimited possibilities, where the choices are abundant. However, while this *freedom* can be beneficial, if it is prolonged, there is a risk of preventing adolescents from learning responsibility and discipline to manage their lives, work, and care for others, leading to unhealthy dependencies.[10] This process is influenced by day-to-day life and the supervision provided by those around them. For example, a teenager whose parents are away for several hours each day may end up spending much of their time alone or with peers. Depending on their personality type –whether introverted or extroverted – this can affect the nature of their interactions.

American government organizations focusing on adolescent health and services have gained significant traction, leading to initiatives such as, *Think, Act, Grow® (TAG)*, which aims to improve adolescent health and development, partnering with various organizations and individuals to support the health of an estimated 42

million adolescents in the United States.[11] Creating a positive environment is key to supporting adolescent well-being. As noted by the Alberta Wellness Family,

> Adolescents need guidance to find and pursue the activities and interests that are most likely to help them form strong, healthy brain connections. Behavioural studies show that adolescents are highly motivated by the admiration of peers and adults. Activities that engage young people with peers, parents, teachers, coaches, and other supportive adults help develop these healthy interests and brain connections. The more closely adolescents are connected by positive relationships to role models and peers in their communities, the more robust their positive neurological connections will become–and the more likely they are to avoid potentially harmful behaviours and addictive substances. [12]

The goal remains unchanged: to provide spaces that are helpful and supportive. The next step is to focus on what these spaces are or can become. Calling to engage the architecture, that exists and can be proposed.

2.1.2: adolescents today

Adolescents' use of digital technology today is more prevalent than ever. With nearly every teenager having access to a smartphone, computer, or both, they are more connected than previous generations, not only to each other but also to the wider world. This constant connectivity brings both opportunities and risks, particularly in relation to mental health and overall well-being. As such, the topic of adolescent technology use remains a point of contention among parents, educators, and academics alike, many of whom express growing concerns about its long-term effects.

Research suggests that the impact of digital technology on adolescents is complex and highly dependent on the nature of its use. A study by Tobias Dienlin and Niklas Johannes, titled T*he Impact of Digital Technology Use on Adolescent Well-being*, states, "... the general effects are on the negative end of the spectrum but very small. Effects differ depending on the type of use: whereas procrastination and

passive use are related to more negative effects, social and active use are related to more positive effects."[13] Their work highlights the importance of distinguishing between passive consumption, such as scrolling through social media, and active, purposeful engagement, such as communicating with peers or creating content.

Moreover, Dienlin and Johannes argue that short-term emotional effects should not overshadow the broader concept of eudaimonic well-being, which encompasses long-term life satisfaction and meaning. Adolescents, while adaptable and resilient, are also navigating a critical transitional phase, making them more vulnerable to the psychological impacts of excessive or negative technology use.

Other studies also support this nuanced view. For instance, in the journal article titled, *Screens, Teens, and Psychological Well-Being: Evidence From Three Time-Use-Diary Studies*, Amy Orben and Andrew K. Przybylski, conducted a large-scale analysis and concluded that the relationship between digital screen time and adolescent well-being is statistically significant but minimal, with many other factors, such as sleep and physical activity, playing more substantial roles in their well-being.[14]

Rather than advocating for a complete rejection of digital technology, a more balanced approach, focused on moderation and intentional use may be more effective. Encouraging adolescents to engage in meaningful digital interactions while limiting passive consumption could help them harness the benefits of technology while minimizing its drawbacks. While in the context of designing spaces or programs for youth, integrating technology in a controlled and thoughtful manner could enhance engagement. By weaving digital tools into familiar environments in ways that feel relevant and inviting, we can create spaces that resonate with today's youth, encouraging connection, creativity, and growth.

2.2: architecture for teenagers

In an article titled, *Learning Through Play* in The Atlantic by Emily DeRuy, play is defined as, "engag[ing]e in activity for enjoyment and recreation rather than a serious or practical purpose."[15] Play is often associated with children, as they engage in activities for entertainment, either individually or in groups. Informally, it can also be synonymous with having *fun*. However, the meaning of play can differ greatly from one individual to another, especially in the case of teenagers. According to research, places where teenagers play often include green spaces such as parks, fields, gardens, or any area with greenery. It also encompasses spaces designed for recreational activities, such as libraries, museums, community centers, and malls, to name just a few. While it is impossible to generalize one activity as *play* or *un-play* that would apply to all teenagers, this is where the exploration begins. The goal is to create architecture that serves teenagers, starting by considering what currently exists and how it can be either learned from or improved upon.

2.2.1: teenagers and their place in the world

A similarity between children and teenagers, perhaps an overlap during the transition, is their resistance to engaging in activities they would rather avoid. These activities may include, but are not limited to, the countless hours spent at school, whether attending classes, doing homework, or working after school. Adding to these hours is the overwhelming amount of knowledge and information being processed, often containing both familiar and new concepts that may feel repetitive or irrelevant. The sentiment, expressed in many different ways, boils down to *I would rather be anywhere but here*. How can society help teenagers finding the *here* or assist them in defining it for themselves?

In the context of a typical Western society, teenagers often prefer spending time in settings where they are with friends and have the freedom to do as they please, with little to no adult supervision. A Western suburban community can also

be where the time spent commuting to and from school, extracurricular activities, or even visiting friends can amount to as much as four hours a day, taking hours out of their day of scheduled activities.[16] While this may seem like a minor inconvenience - unless they are old enough to drive - the issue is not just the time spent commuting, but the lack of a *third place* to go to, somewhere that isn't school or home.

As we begin to explore the planning and design of spaces, researchers have cautioned, "...not to make decisions about what will work for children based on one's own childhood experiences."[17] The focus should be on understanding what exists today and what will be needed tomorrow, considering the needs of the current youth rather than relying too heavily on the designer's own experiences as a teenager. Recreating the past may not be practical and is better left as a moment in history, preserved in memory rather than replicated in design.

Key elements to consider include gaining insight into the values and aspirations of the adolescent community, both in a broader context and within specific local communities. Just as every teenager is unique, so too is the community they belong to. How can we identify what is important in *place-making*? To foster inclusivity in the design, several considerations must be made, including but not limited to:[18]

1. Gender-neutral spaces (creating safe spaces)
2. Spaces responsive to suit different personality types (introversion vs extroversion or something in between)
3. Spaces that can accommodate different activities, for example, larger rooms vs smaller rooms as well as nooks and crannies for individual use
4. A space that reflects their evolving taste and personality
5. Fitting in remnants of their past – childhood – elements that *they* can relate to
6. Making it comfortable
7. Bright or inviting colours, personalized art, posters, neon lights, 'eclectic design elements'
8. Should be well-lit and well-ventilated – natural or artificial light

Place-making takes on a new meaning here, focusing on the relationship between teenagers and architecture, particularly in creating spaces for play and care. The goal is to offer not only places for fun but also environments where individuals can feel safe and comforted.

2.2.2: existing architecture for teenagers

Although architecture's intentions can be to design inclusive spaces, it can frequently overlook certain demographics, creating a hierarchy of whose needs are prioritized in the design process. Teenagers, in particular, have often been excluded from this narrative, resulting in a lack of architecture specifically designed for them. This next section presents case studies illustrating how this gap is represented globally. It aims to differentiate between various types of architecture and explore how they are utilized in different ways, both through their programming and their integration within their communities, whether as standalone projects or part of larger initiatives.

2.2.2/a: architectural initiatives around the world

1. Fremantle Esplanade Youth Plaza (Western Australia) (figure 4.0)
2. Factoria Joven "Youth Factory" (Merida, Spain) (figure 5.0)
3. Block By Block (Worldwide) (figure 6.0)
4. Public Workshop (Philadelphia) (figure 7.0)
5. The Alley Project (Detroit, Michigan) (figure 8.0)

1. Fremantle Esplanade Youth Plaza (Western Australia)



figure 4.0

Fremantle esplanade youth plaza in Western Australia

The youth plaza in western Australia is catered towards all, a public effort but ones that holds special elements specially for teenagers. The space turns into a space the teens can call their own, as later in the night the lights turn off and there is a nudge for the young children to depart. The teen space includes the following,

> A world-class skate park with facilities to cater for all ages, a parkour park, fit for all skill levels, a shipping container turned mini rock climbing wall, ping pong tables, a stage for presentations, music, and performances, shelter from the weather (both heat and rain), plenty of seating and Lighting and access to power.[19]

2. Factoria Joven “Youth Factory” (Merida, Spain)



figure 5.0

Factoria joven “youth factory” in Spain

The youth space created by the Architectural firm Selgas Cano, built from recycled material and described as a “youth playground.” The facilities available to the teens using the space include,

> Graffiti walls for urban art workshops, shelter from the rain and heat, skate and bmx ramps, bowls and rails, a rock climbing wall, a stage for performance, lighting throughout and facilities for tightrope walking. The facility also has indoor features and programs run for young people such as: Group counseling sessions, internet access and music and dance workshops.[20]

3. Block By Block (Worldwide)



figure 6.0

Block by Block in India

Utilizing the technological tools available today for young people to be able to design and visualize spaces of their own, this advancement is crucial with having a sense of control. One of the examples of this is Minecraft, a largely popular gaming platform. In this case, used as a very powerful communication method to be able to relay and imagine (and bring to reality) of what a public community place for the youth would look like.[21] This can be seen as a before and after (figure 6.0) to seeing a vision coming to reality with the youth leading the initiative run by Block by Block.

4. Public Workshop (Philadelphia)



figure 7.0

Public Workshop in Philadelphia

Public Workshop is a project aiming to engage young people, children and families with projects through school[s], universit[ies]y and the communit[ies]y using a design-build technique to be able to design for public spaces and make them their own. Playing with the idea of *for the people, by the people*.[22] Here comes an opportunity for young people to create spaces that they feel are viable and suitable to them, rather than being told what to make and how to feel in that place. This lets them have a sense of control of their surroundings and the places they would then use, in this case being more playful and physically engaging.

5. The Alley Project (Detroit, Michigan)



figure 8.0

The Alley Project in Michigan

A creative public project that has managed to engage over 120 young people in workshops to design for galleries, gardens and alley ways to be able to not only make them a little bit brighter and full of life but also create an engagement and connection to the community by interacting with it.[23] Driven by community, this project gives agency to young people, where design acts as a powerful tool, influencing emotional responses to spaces.

2.3: what do teenagers need?

Considering the community and the local areas to which individuals have access, it is crucial for communities to provide support for their inhabitants' growth and development. What is needed are carefully curated spaces within both the larger and local community that can accommodate young minds, offering them room to play, learn, socialize, relax, escape, process, and engage with others in a diverse, stimulating, and, most importantly, emotionally and physically safe environment.

The central question remains, how do you create inclusive spaces? Here to understand this, inclusive spaces for adolescents and architecture that can accommodate their needs as a demographic, regardless of gender, race or any other factors. To start, it is essential to grasp what the programs of these spaces should require. These points outline the starting considerations:[24]

1. The hierarchy of activities; is it group, individual, community led, social, formal or informal.
2. What does the space consist of; Inspiring, safe and supportive spaces considering colours, feelings, moods, light, volume and material.
3. The purpose; are they multi use spaces or just a space away from home, a third place?
4. Connection; to the local community, services and activities to understand the context, find what is missing and create additions.

To successfully engage young people within the built environment, particularly in spaces where such engagement is lacking, the following must be considered. First, it is essential to involve the youth in the design process by taking their opinions into account. Giving them a sense of control over the spaces they will inhabit allows them to recognize that these spaces are not only for them but can also be shaped by their input. If the space is intended for them, they should have a voice in its creation. A deeper understanding of how the space is designed and built can also be achieved by identifying what is missing, understanding the community, school, and existing services, and fostering collaboration between these services. The key point here is the emphasis on collaborative space creation. Ultimately, if young people feel empowered in this process, it can lead to a sense of ownership and pride, making the space feel

like theirs. This sense of ownership, in turn, can foster greater respect for the space, both mentally and physically, and how it is treated.

2.3.1: how do teenagers fit into the context?

Adaptability, previously defined as "the capacity to be modified for a new use or purpose,"[25] is important when considering how to transform existing spaces. For example, how can an existing library space be re-designed to better cater to a larger teenage population. While making permanent changes to such spaces can be challenging, teenagers often have a unique ability to adapt these spaces, turning them into their own, particularly as gathering areas.

Drawing from research on adolescent well-being and understanding discussed so forth, what is required to make their transition to adulthood more successful, we are posed with the following question: How do we ensure that the existing context is one that suits their needs? The short answer is that we cannot be entirely certain. The more complex approach, much like the complexities of their emotions, is to allow them the freedom to experiment and to gain control over spaces designed specifically for them. Providing the initial space is a crucial step toward engaging them and attracting their participation. Over time, the aim is to build enough momentum throughout this process so that they can adapt the space to fit their needs, transitioning smoothly across various environments.

As noted in a journal titled *Teenagers' Perception of Public Spaces and Their Practices in ICTs Uses*, "'Good' public spaces can play an important role in teens' socialisation. As Childress (2004) has shown, teens need to mark 'their' places (with graffiti, skateboarding or even loitering). This calls for providing teenagers a legitimate and unchaperoned public space, designed in such a way as to make them feel welcomed."[26] This aligns with the argument that creating such spaces not only fosters a sense of identity but also ensures that their freedom does not overstep boundaries.

When considering how adolescents are able to take spaces not available to them and still find a way to make it their own, it is well argued in the following statement,

> Thus, young people are seemingly invisible in the urban landscape (Travlou et al. 2008); they are excluded from the dominant 'adult' public space through controls and rules, afforded only with 'leftover' or 'token' spaces (Matthews 1995; Childress 2004), which are usually not sufficient to their needs (Lieberg 1995). In their attempts to contest adults' spatial domination and to declare their independence, adolescents develop their own 'micro-geographies' in space (Matthews et al. 1998). That is, they resort to alternative patterns of public space usage and leave their own markers (e.g. graffiti) as symbolic gestures of resistance to adult hegemony (Bell et al. 2003; Valentine 1996; Matthews 1995). These actions are sometimes seen as threats to the safety of other user groups (ACS, 2013), giving rise to conflicts and generating stricter controls on the part of the adults (Livingstone et al. 2015; Bell et al. 2003).[27]

To address concerns regarding safety and ensure that this demographic has a space that truly fits their needs, the importance of a *third place*, one that is predominantly theirs, becomes clear. As these spaces are often shaped by their actions, they become markers of identity, carving out a sense of ownership and personal history within the urban environment. This dynamic also ties into their memories of these spaces. Over time, the places where they have left their marks or claimed as their own become intertwined with personal narratives and memories, serving as lasting reflections of their experiences and social interactions during a critical period of their lives.

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chapter 03: representation

3.1: what is representation?

Brown University defines representation as, the transformation of an idea into a tangible reality that subjectively interprets the idea based on the bias of the whatever or whomever originated the representation. [...] Because representation is a tangible translation of something intangible, the end result is always open to dispute.[1]

This definition links an individual's perception of something to its broader significance, emphasizing the subjective nature of interpretation. While commonly associated with art, representation also plays a crucial role in architecture. For instance, a drawing or diagram can evoke unique meanings based on a viewer's personal experience and knowledge, transcending its visual components – such as colors, forms, and shapes–into something deeply personal and interpretative.

A phenomenon that parallels this concept is *pareidolia*, defined as, "the tendency for perception to impose a meaningful interpretation on a nebulous stimulus, usually visual, so that one sees an object, pattern, or meaning where there is none."[2] This phenomenon highlights how interpretation can project meaning onto representations, illustrating how what is seen visually often goes beyond mere shapes or patterns to reflect personal associations and perceptions.

3.2: representing emotions disguised as architecture

Bringing back *Einfühlung* and the theory of sensory empathy and *feeling into* an object. This theory also derives that perception and decoding of external forms of objects or people involves an imitation - via muscular tension - of the lines of tension that these forms depict or imply, creating lines of motion and movement to dictate its relationship to the overall concept.[3] A line that flows versus one that constricts itself or one that keeps going and draws itself out for an infinite amount.

Apart from the representation of emotions within objects, can they also be represented within larger contexts, landscapes, or sites? Psychogeography starts to define this notion. In an article titled *Psychogeography* by Tate, it notes,

> How do different places make us feel and behave? The term psychogeography was invented by the Marxist theorist Guy Debord in 1955 in order to explore this. Inspired by the French nineteenth century poet and writer Charles Baudelaire's concept of the flâneur–an urban wanderer–Debord suggested playful and inventive ways of navigating the urban environment in order to examine its architecture and spaces.[4]

Psychogeography explores how geographical locations influence the emotions and behaviors of individuals. It delves into the idea that emotions can embed themselves into physical spaces, shaping our perceptions and experiences. Writer and psychogeographer Wilfred Hou Je Bek claims, "Psychogeography is also the fact that you have an opinion about a space the moment you step into it. This has as much to do with the space as with our hardwired instincts to determine if it is safe."[5] Similarly with architecture, it can be easy to make a judgment on a space simply based on visuals or prior biases, ultimately influencing one's emotions - if only to determine it's safety.

Dissecting the word Psychogeography further to its origins, Karen O'Rourke in the article titled, *Psychogeography: A Purposeful Drift Through the City* explains it as such,

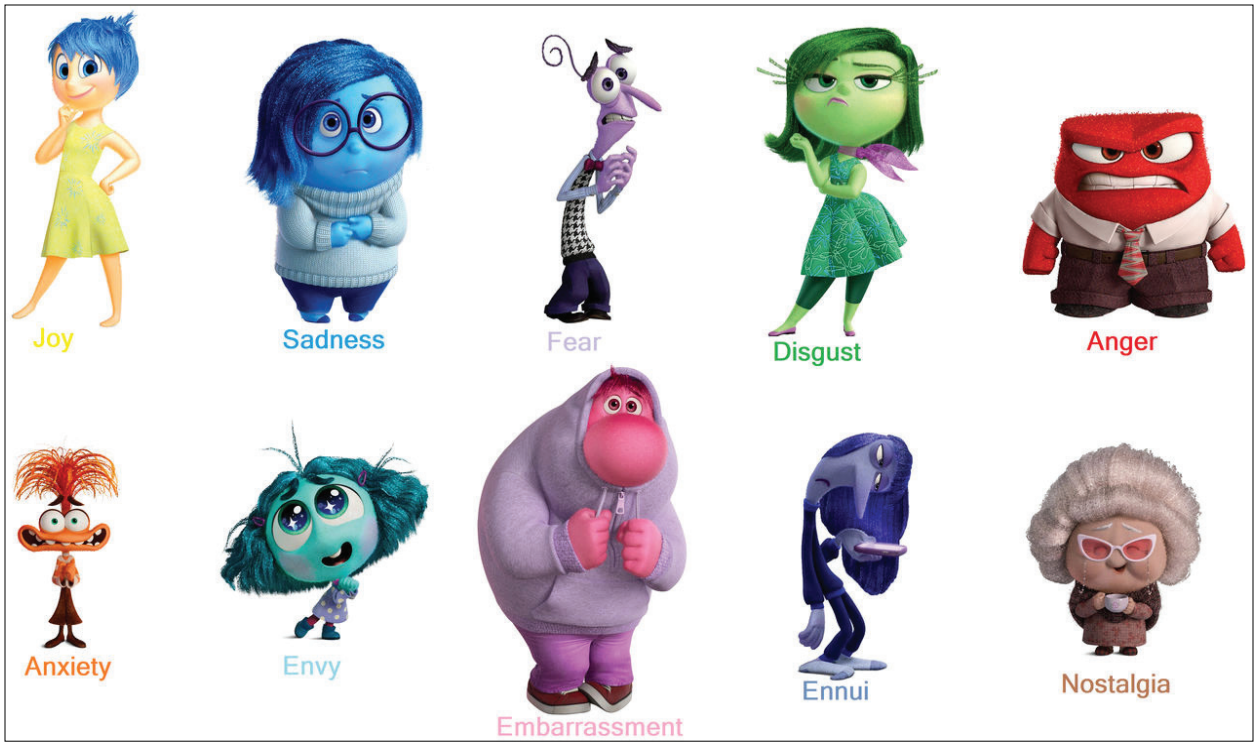


figure 9.0

Inside Out emotions



figure 10.0

Monster House interior

> The term 'graphy' originates from the Greek word *graphein* (which means, to write), which is deeply polysemic. Geographers 'carve,' 'draw,' or 'write' the earth (geos), but what do psychogeographers do? The Latin prefix psyche (breath) introduces a soulful dimension, connecting the earth, mind, and foot. ... Wilfried Hou Je Bek aptly describes it as 'the city-space cut-up'.[6]

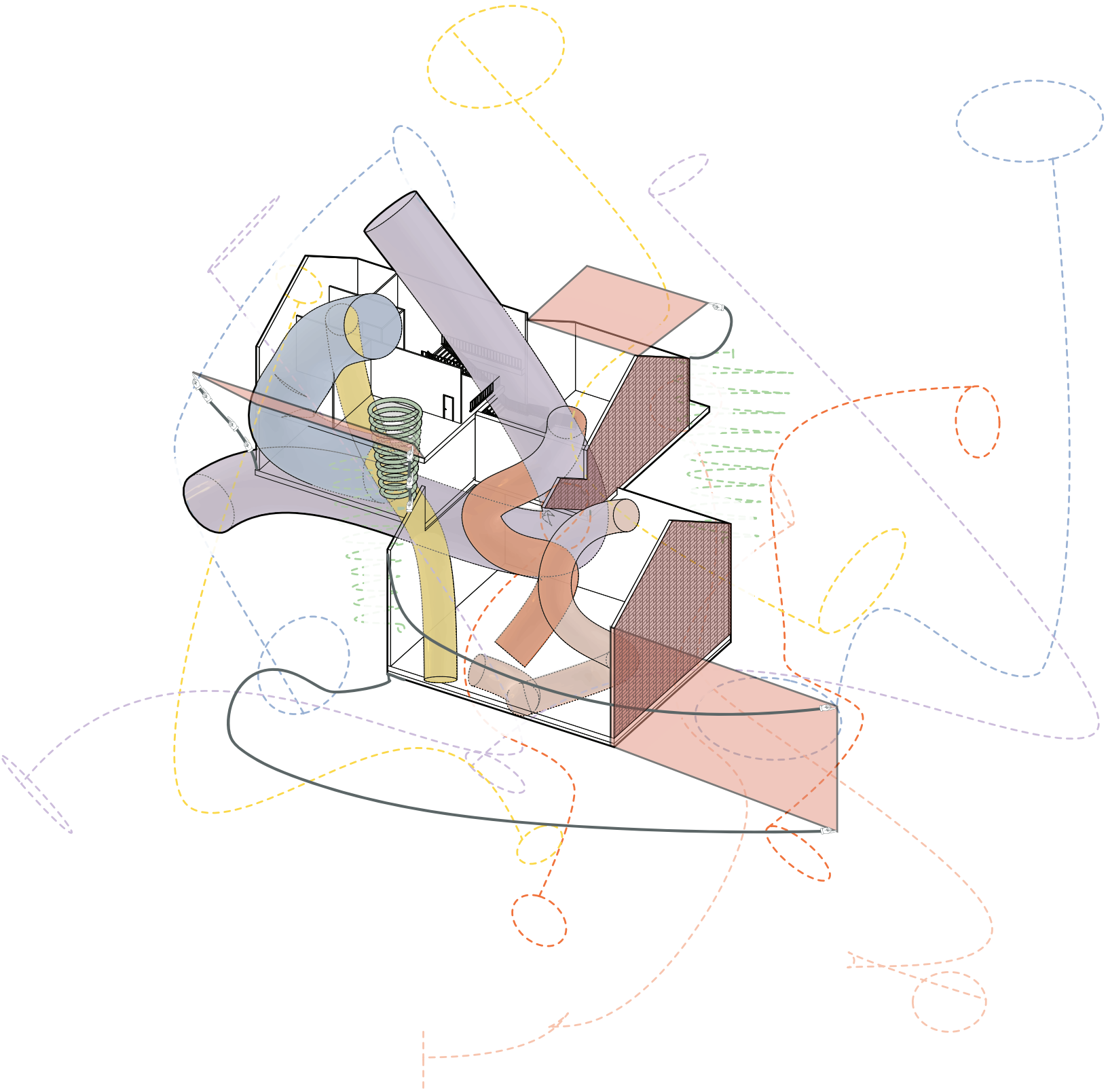
The theories of representation and the perception of emotions within spaces are often reflected in fiction, especially in movies aimed at children, where they can be simplified. For example, in the animated film *Monster House*, the haunted house on the block becomes the main character.[7] The story follows two friends who bravely venture inside the *monster* house, only to face the house's architectural elements working against them, seemingly, attempting to hurt or expel them. Their eventual discovery reveals that the house's erratic, lifelike behavior stems from the unresolved pain of a previous owner, whose emotions remain embedded in its very walls.

A more recent example is the Disney-Pixar production of the *Inside Out* movies.[8] These movies delve directly into emotions, initially personifying core feelings such as Joy, Sadness, Anger, Fear, and Disgust and later adding more complex emotions such as Anxiety, Ennui, Embarrassment, Envy and Nostalgia. These characters navigate the emotional complexities that arise as the protagonist transitions into adolescence. The movies emphasize that no single emotion, not even Joy, is the *correct* solution to every problem – teaching a valuable lesson about emotional balance. Additionally, it also brilliantly portrays the architecture of the mind, crafting mechanisms and spaces that represent various emotional processes. These include slides that stretch endlessly, dark rooms where fears and secrets linger in the shadows, a landfill of forgotten items, swooshing tubes transporting memories to archived at the end of each day, and a mountain range symbolizing the mind's deeper recesses and vulnerabilities. The visual storytelling captures both the chaos and beauty of navigating emotions and memories, offering a universal resonance that extends beyond its younger audience.

Despite being targeted at children, these representations can be a lesson to older audiences as well. By weaving together relatable emotional and spatial metaphors, they create a cohesive narrative that allows viewers of all ages to find meaning, making them an exceptionally successful form of representation.

figure 11.0 (page 80)

The Emotion breaking free from within the Architecture



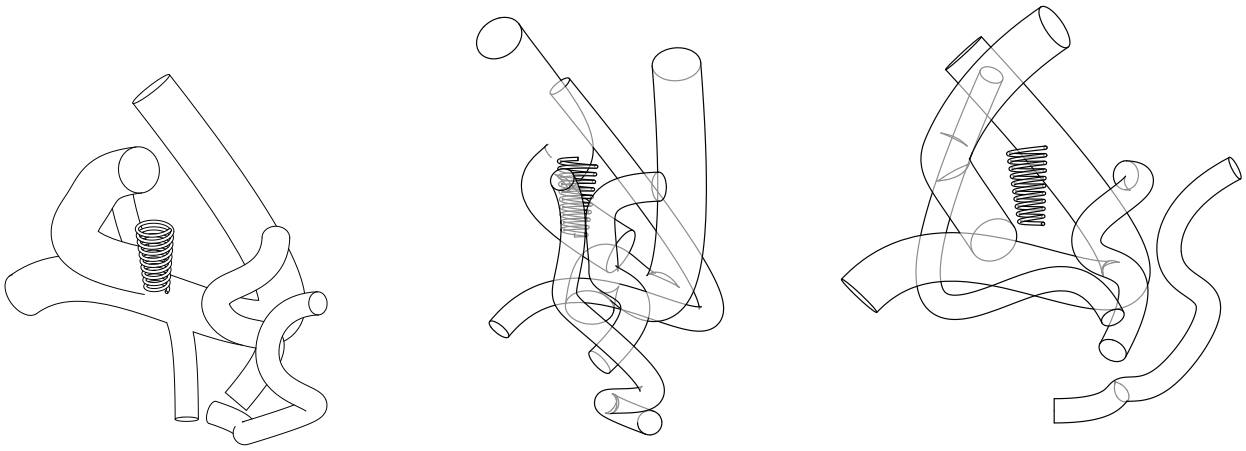


figure 12.0

The representation of ‘emotions’



figure 13.0

The form of the ‘emotions’

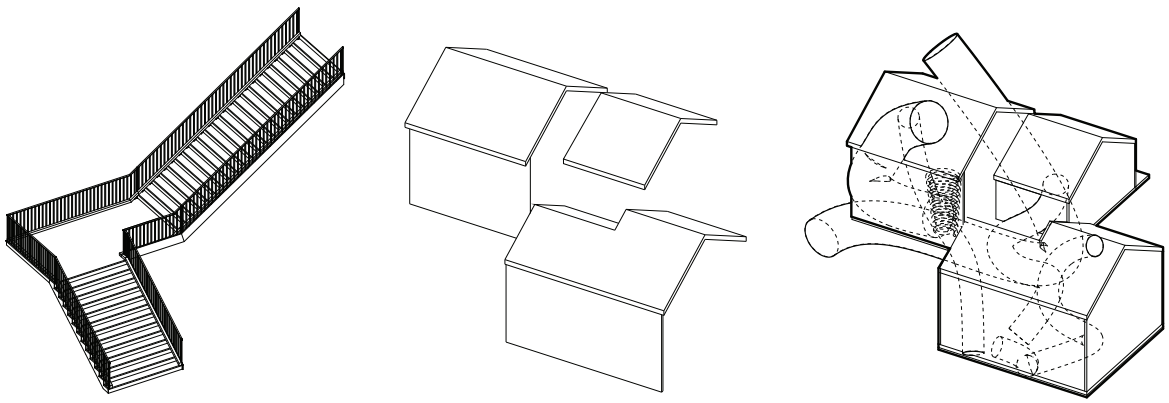


figure 14.0

Separating the Architecture

How do emotions come to be? How can they be represented visually in ways that are clear - or perhaps intentionally unclear - given the difficulty of distinguishing one emotion from another? As previously noted, teenagers often experience multiple emotions simultaneously and may struggle to differentiate them. This representative drawing (figure 11.0) explores a house as its foundation (figure 14.0), using the structures (figure 12.0) to symbolize the chaos of emotions. This is done through passages and architectural elements such as, rooms, doors, multiple floor levels and a set of stairs, all converge into a single form, implying a sense of emotional complexity.

Slides, commonly associated with children's playgrounds, are used here as a metaphor for the transition from childhood. While initially playful in appearance, they begin to shift, reflecting the evolution of emotions. Each slide - like each emotion - is distinct, yet they all coil and weave chaotically, straining to stay contained within the traditional structure of a house. This struggle is meant to mirror the difficulty of keeping emotions under control as they develop and intensify over time.

Representation, in this instance, is shown artistically and remains open to interpretation, much like a piece of art, free from any restrictions on its true meaning. It starts to rely on its audience and their perception, to define it's qualities.

Notes

1. "*Art in Antiquity: Representation*," Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology & the Ancient World - Brown University, 2008, https://www.brown.edu/Departments/Joukowsky_Institute/courses/artinantiquity/7151.html#:~:text=Representation%20in%20its%20broadest%20sense,or%20whomever%20originated%20the%20representation.

2. Chen Wang et al., "*Pareidolia in a Built Environment as a Complex Phenomenological Ambiguous Stimuli,*" International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health 19, no. 9 (April 24, 2022): 5163, https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19095163.

3. Ganczarek, Hünefeldt, and Belardinelli, "*From 'Einfühlung' to Empathy: Exploring the Relationship Between Aesthetic and Interpersonal Experience*," 143.

4. Tate, "*Psychogeography | Tate*," n.d., https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/p/psychogeography#:~:text=Psychogeography%20describes%20the%20effect%20of,emotions%20and%20behaviour%20of%20individuals.

5. Karen O'Rourke, "*Psychogeography: A Purposeful Drift Through the City*," The MIT Press Reader, July 16, 2021, https://thereader.mitpress.mit.edu/psychogeography-a-purposeful-drift-through-the-city/.

6. O'Rourke, "*Psychogeography: A Purposeful Drift Through the City.*"

7. Monster House (Sony Pictures, 2006).

8. Inside Out (Disney-Pixar, 2015) & *Inside Out 2* (Disney-Pixar, 2024).

chapter 04: toronto and public art

4.1: public art in toronto

Public art is a form of representation and expression, using visual, tactile, and spatial elements to evoke emotions and foster connections. Public art initiatives can create shared experiences within a community, translating abstract feelings into tangible forms that invite interpretation and engagement. Much like the chaotic yet intentional design of the 'emotional house' (figure 11.0), public art installations can serve as focal points for dialogue, reflection, and a collective sense of identity.



Stargate

Artist: Blue Republic / Passakas, Anna / Kudlinski, Radoslaw

Date: 2020

Address: 150 and 155 Redpath

Ward: Toronto-St. Paul's

Commissioned by: Capital Developments and Freed Developments

Emerging from two portals at 150 and 155 Redpath, this multi-component artwork, titled 'STARGATE', animates the neighbourhood with a crew of intergalactic characters in varying states of materialization, transforming a busy and populated corner of Canada's largest city into a window of outer space, Embodying Toronto's energy and diversity, STARGATE's brightly coloured protagonists remind us of our own feelings of arriving at a destination for the first time. Welcome their vibrant looks, enjoy their presence. Home at last.'

External website

figure 15.0

Toronto's Public Art database

The city of Toronto as a whole is a playground for artwork being displayed sporadically throughout, in a variety of mediums. Executed through graffiti covered alley ways, giving way to tourist spots like Graffiti Alley, murals on bridges, walls, and even train stations. Public art seems to have no boundaries, seemingly uncontained and in abundance. By creating a formal database with a comprehensive list of art displayed around the city, titled *Public Art Map* (figure 16.0-19.0) the city starts to showcase the art.[1] The collection is also equipped with providing details (figure 15.0). This includes, a detailed description about the pieces, the artist and often providing resources linking to the artist and more of their work. This starts to dive into a form of promotion as well as exposing the artists and their work to a much larger crowd. Providing a start to curating the public art experience.

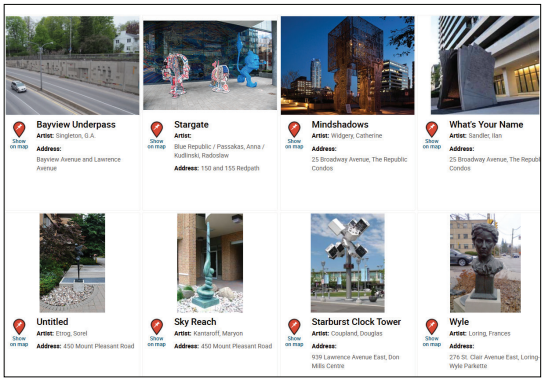


figure 16.0

Public Art in Toronto - 1/4

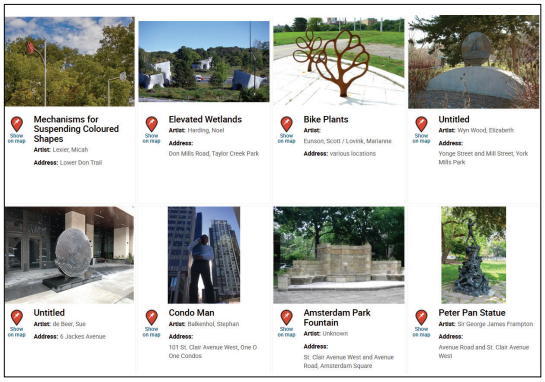


figure 17.0

Public Art in Toronto - 2/4

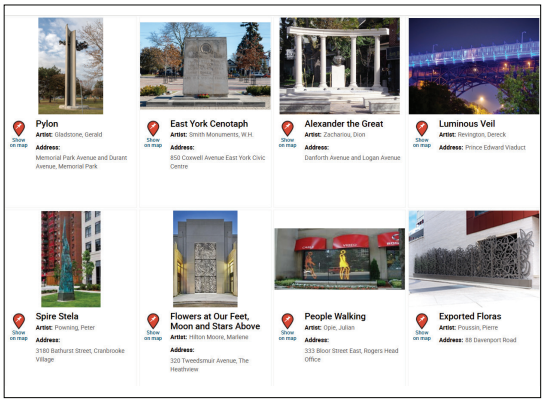


figure 18.0

Public Art in Toronto - 3/4

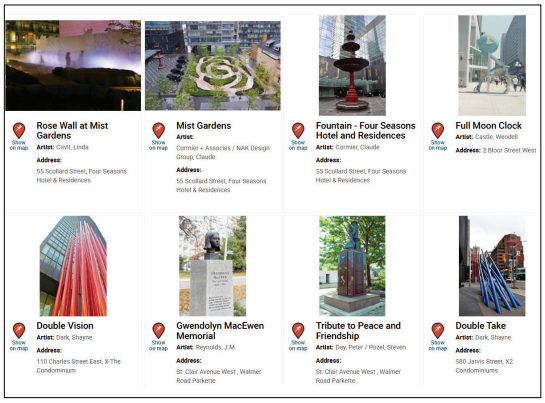


figure 19.0

Public Art in Toronto - 4/4

4.1.1: collections around the city and its culture

The art collection in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) extends beyond museums, spilling into the streets and even onto the roads. By showcasing works from local artists in public spaces, the city transforms its urban landscape into a celebrated, open-air exhibition. Given Toronto's harsh winters, a hallmark of Canadian weather, there is a noticeable lack of year-round activity and art-based spaces that can be enjoyed outdoors. To address this, many winter activities are shifted indoors, ensuring the city's vibrancy persists despite snowy skies. Despite the winter months, which dominates much of the year compared to the shorter summer months, bring its own unique opportunities for engagement and exploration.

The following programs and initiatives highlight the city's efforts to integrate artistic expression into public spaces, emphasizing the significance of artists and their contributions to Toronto's cultural fabric.

4.1.1/a: public art and monuments collection

Building on Toronto's collection of 400 public art pieces and recognizing the contributions of Indigenous lands and artists, the City of Toronto has developed a 10-year plan to promote public art. Managed by the City's Economic Development and Culture (EDC) Division, this initiative is detailed in the document titled, *Toronto Public Art Strategy (2020–2030)*.[2] The strategy outlines a vision to expand public art across the city, aiming to enhance the impact of Toronto's public art programs for the benefit of both residents and visitors.[3]

With a focus on celebrating the city's culture, diversity, and creativity, the initiative oversees more than 1,500 works of art under Toronto's management.[4] In addition to the existing collection, programs like the Percent for Public Art Program and StreetARToronto (StART) contribute to a comprehensive trifecta of initiatives that enrich the community and its public spaces.

4.1.1/b: percent for public art program

The Toronto Official Plan encourages the integration of public art in major private sector developments throughout the city. Through development reviews, Official Plan amendments, and rezonings, City Planning collaborates with private developers to secure contributions that support public art initiatives, such as the *Percent for Public Art Program.*[5] Operating under the principle that public art adds significant cultural and aesthetic value to the urban environment. It is meant to enhance public spaces, creating a more vibrant and engaging experience for both residents and visitors alike. The artwork, often privately owned, is designed to enrich the visual appeal of buildings and public areas, improving the overall quality of life in the city. By incorporating art into public spaces, the program helps transform the urban landscape into one that is both visually stimulating and accessible. To ensure public access, the program also stipulates that the art must be visible and accessible. In some cases, City Planning may direct contributions toward projects located on city-owned public lands, ensuring that the art reaches a broad and diverse audience.[6]

Integrating art into public spaces not only beautifies the environment but also plays a vital role in fostering community connection. Public art creates opportunities for dialogue, reflection, and shared cultural experiences, enhancing the sense of belonging and engagement within the city. For private art collections, this initiative offers an opportunity to share valuable works with a much wider audience. By placing private art in public view, it becomes an important cultural asset, allowing the public to interact with and experience art that might otherwise remain unseen. This exposure encourages greater appreciation of diverse artistic expressions and adding to the development of a more inclusive and accessible cultural scene.

Toronto's commitment to incorporating public art reflects its dedication to creating a dynamic, accessible, and inclusive public realm. By removing barriers between private collections and the public, this initiative ensures that art is not confined to exclusive spaces but is instead woven into the fabric of the city, enriching the lives of all who encounter it. The visibility of art in everyday spaces fosters creativity, sparks inspiration, and nurtures a deeper connection between the public and the cultural life of the city.

4.1.1/c: street art Toronto (StART), graffiti and non-sanctioned public art

StreetARToronto (StART) comprises of a range of innovative initiatives designed to enhance Toronto's streets and public spaces through art. Launched in 2012 as part of the city's Graffiti Management Plan, StART has successfully transformed areas prone to *graffiti-vandalism* (used as a single term by the city) into vibrant, community-oriented spaces featuring dynamic street art.[7]

The programs under StART contribute to creating safer and more visually appealing streets, promote active transportation such as walking and cycling, support local artists, mentor emerging talent, and reduce the costs of infrastructure maintenance.[8]

Toronto's Municipal Code, also reflects the points of the Graffiti Management Plan by distinguishing between *graffiti art*, defined as, "a legitimate, permission-based form of street art" and *graffiti vandalism,* which typically lacks the property owner's consent.[9] The code includes provisions that support graffiti art as a valuable and legal artistic practice, fostering creativity while managing unauthorized defacement in public spaces. The main difference here is the implementation of an official code by the city that separates what may or may not be considered *graffiti*. This may be considered a positive spin on the stereotypical aspects of graffiti, and encouraging it but with a different name. This aligns with the broader goals of the City of Toronto's Graffiti Management Plan, which adopts a proactive and collaborative approach to addressing graffiti vandalism while fostering artistic expression that enriches the urban environment.[10]

To enforce this further, The Graffiti Management Plan outlines the following: [11]

1. Establishing a centralized body to coordinate graffiti management activities.
2. Supporting and recognizing authorized graffiti and street art through investment in programs that nurture local artistic talent.
3. Providing assistance to individuals or organizations affected by graffiti vandalism.
4. Enforcing measures against unauthorized tagging.

An integral feature of the program is also the *StART Artist Directory*.[12] Similar to the database provided for public art, this highlights the work of local street artists and provides a valuable resource for exploring their contributions. This tool enables community members, property owners, and organizations to look up specific artists, facilitating collaboration and showcasing the diverse artistic talent within the city and creating possible opportunities for them to expand beyond.

Notes

1. City Of Toronto, “Public Art Map,” City of Toronto, December 17, 2024, https://www.toronto.ca/explore-enjoy/history-art-culture/public-art/public-art-map/#location=&lat=43.716527&lng=-79.371414&zoom=11.

2. Micah Lexier. “Toronto Public Art Strategy 2020/2030,” December 2019. https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/92e1-Toronto-Public-Art-Strategy-2020-2030.pdf.

3. City Of Toronto, “*Public Art & Monuments Collection*,” City of Toronto, October 23, 2024, https://www.toronto.ca/explore-enjoy/history-art-culture/public-art/public-art-monuments-collection/.

4. Toronto, “*Public Art & Monuments Collection.*”

5. City Of Toronto, “*Percent for Public Art Program*,” City of Toronto, December 11, 2024, https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/design-guidelines/percent-for-public-art-inventory/.

6. Toronto, “Percent for Public Art Program.”

7. City Of Toronto, “*StreetARToronto*,” City of Toronto, October 10, 2024, https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/streets-parking-transportation/enhancing-our-streets-and-public-realm/streetartoronto/.

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10. Toronto, “Graffiti Management.”

11. Toronto, “Graffiti Management.”

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chapter 05: the proposed 'third places'

5.1: the sites within parkdale

The sites are all located along major streets in Toronto, surrounded by the boundaries within the Parkdale community. The sites are a journey of three, starting from Queen Street West a bubbling lively street where site one is tucked away in the smaller residential streets between Sterling Avenue and Harvard Avenue. Moving up north towards site two, it is bordered by some of the more industrial businesses surrounded by factories and major transportation ways intersecting right at Dundas Street West and Sterling Road. Moving further up north, there is a mix of commercial program. Showcasing the artistic side of the city, site three is highlighted right at Bloor Street West intersecting with Perth Avenue. The proposal is a journey to be taken, whether you experience the sites on their own or as a transition from one to the other.

5.1.1: the history of parkdale

In the late 1800s, Parkdale began to develop as an affluent residential area. The timeline of its major history can be noted as follows. By January of 1878, as a part of it's growing rhythm, it was established as a village.[1] While 1879 saw the first year of the annual Toronto Industrial Exhibition, now known as the Canadian National Exhibition, in the village's close proximity.[2] Eight years later, Parkdale saw itself transitioning into a town in January 1886.[3] As 1889 followed close, it saw comprehensive public involvement with decisions whether Parkdale was to be a part of the City of Toronto. As it was voted in favour, this lead to its annexation, to what we know Parkdale to be today.[4] As the twentieth century rolled around, in 1922, Parkdale was starting to be known around as Toronto's *lakeside playground* due to the addition of Sunnyside Amusement Park and Bathing Pavilion on its beaches.[5] Sunnyside became a vibrant social hub for Torontonians adding to its growing culture. However short lived, in 1956, the park was closed, to accommodate the Gardiner Expressway and the redesigned Lake Shore Boulevard today, seeing light for approximatively thirty-four years.[6] These developments severed Parkdale from its lakeside heritage, triggering a period of where it was considered to be on a decline, faintly removing itself from the city once again.

Although the village celebrates over 143 years since its incorporation, the area's history dates back millennia. For over 10,000 years, this land was part of the region inhabited by the Indigenous peoples, which served as vital portage routes for communities such as the Huron, Iroquois, Chippewa, Senecas, and Mississaugas.[7]

During its early years, while Parkdale was celebrated for its proximity to Sunnyside Beach, the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE), and its picturesque summer homes set amidst lush greenery, it was known for what grew on its lands. The area was covered by forests of sugar maples, beech, yellow birch, white ash, and hemlock trees. Its name - PARK-dale, coined in the 1870s, was intended to evoke imagery of decorative gardens and fertile countryside.[8]

Over time, the area's main thoroughfare underwent various name changes from Niagara Road to Burlington Road, Lot Street, and Lake Shore Road - before settling on its current name in 1859 to Queen Street.[9] By 1878, Queen Street had become Parkdale's primary artery, reflecting its role as a central hub for the community and connecting it to the rest of the City of Toronto, today - through Lakeshore, the TTC and into the heart of downtown.[10]



figure 20.0

Queen Street West, looking east from Brock Avenue in 1910

5.1.2: parkdale today

A review of Parkdale by Destination Toronto, and all it has to offer, states:

> Parkdale is Toronto in a microcosm: eclectic, artsy and ever-changing. This west-end neighbourhood boasts a rich immigrant history, with waves of Polish, Afro-Caribbean, Filipino and Vietnamese immigrants having called it home. Today, Parkdale hosts one of North America's largest Tibetan expat communities - and has the restaurants to prove it.[11]

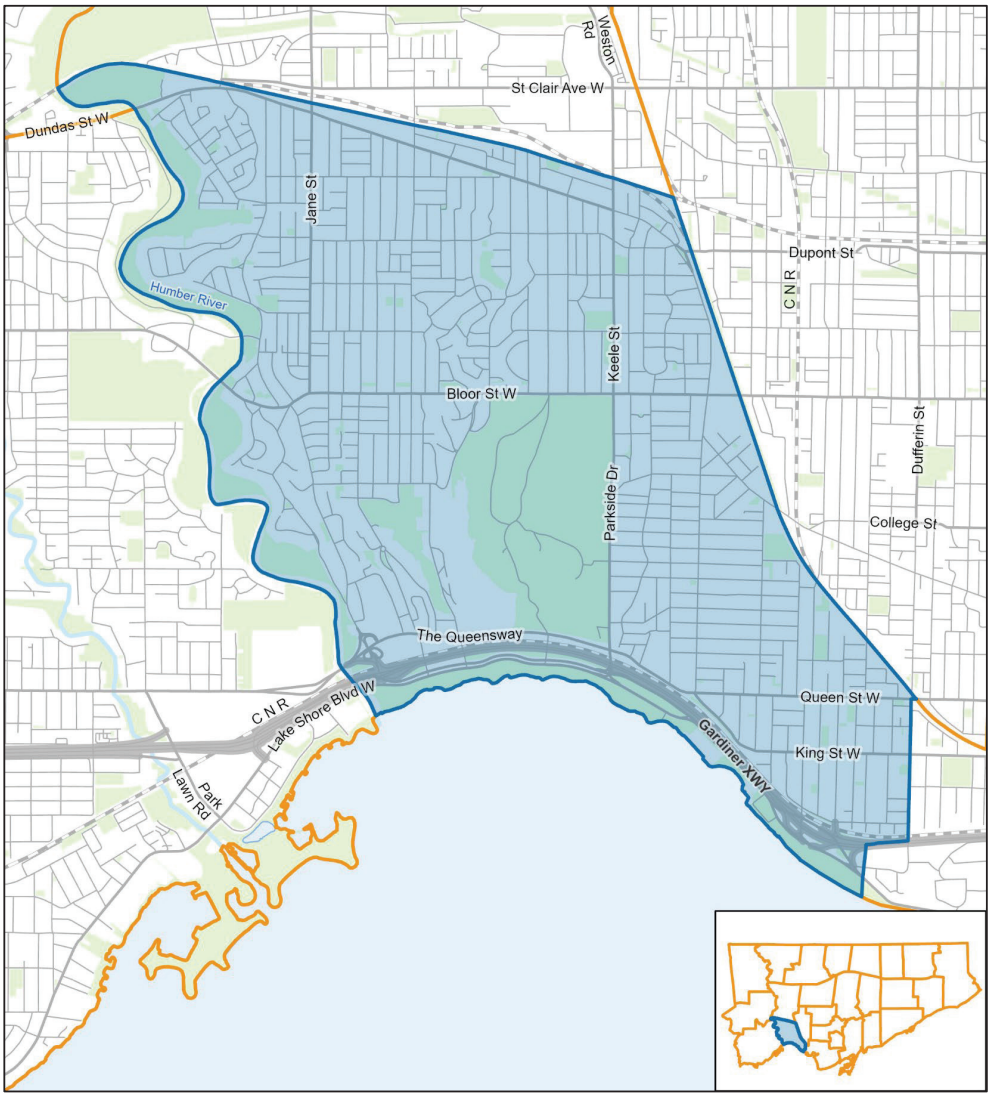
Highlighting the varying cultures, and mingling of diversity that makes up the community, we see a beautiful amalgamation and its results. As Parkdale undergoes revitalizations, it marks a new chapter in its storied history, although controversially also referred to its *gentrification*. This Toronto neighborhood is starting to be on the up and again to be highlighted as one of its prominent parts of the city.

Parkdale benefits from its strategic location, within walking distance of 400 acres of green also known as High Park and the extensive recreational paths along Toronto's harbour and waterfront.[12] It is home to four community centers: Holy Family Community Centre on Close Avenue, Masryk Cowan Community Recreation Centre on Cowan Avenue, McCormick Recreation Centre on Sheridan Avenue, and the Parkdale Community Centre on West Lodge Avenue. These facilities, alongside the Parkdale Public Library on Queen Street and the High Park Public Library on Roncesvalles Avenue, offer a variety of programs and resources to residents.[13] Placing its emphasis on community involvement with its array of opportunities.

Innovative projects significantly continue to contribute to Parkdale's cultural assets. The *Impressions* initiative, one of North America's largest outdoor street photo installations, showcases over 560 photographs imprinted on the bases of more than 70 street planters.[14] Created by artist Jim Bravo and photographer Kate Young with the support of Mural Routes and the City of Toronto, this project combines archival images and contemporary portraits of residents, transforming public spaces into dynamic street galleries that foster a sense of community, further adding to the public art aspect of its surroundings.

Parkdale-High Park

TORONTO
City Planning
Strategic Initiatives, Policy & Analysis



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Note: The boundaries on this map are part of the City of Toronto's 25 municipal wards, effective December 1, 2018.

figure 21.0

Map of Parkdale-High Park

Throughout its history, Parkdale has experienced numerous transformations some including, name changes, official boundaries, closures, extensions, additions and more. Today, it is characterized by its socio-economic diversity, encompassing working-class residents, new immigrants, artists, students, and young professionals.

With an estimated population of 106,750 based on a 2021 census[15], Parkdale is a vibrant and eclectic neighborhood that has become a sought-after destination, often recommended for its shops, food and the culture. Revitalization efforts are driven by collaborative community initiatives. The following four start to speak to it. First, The *Parkdale Community Economic Development (PCED) Planning Project*, launched in 2016, was a comprehensive, 18-month planning process involving residents, businesses, and community leaders.[16] The resulting *Parkdale Planning Study* in 2016 as well then emphasized inclusiveness, affordability, diversity, and equity as core values. Similarly, the *Parkdale Cycling Study* in 2016 highlighted the economic and environmental benefits of pedestrian and cyclist accessibility.[17] While the *Urban Garden Development Project* revitalized community gardens and historical markers in 2012, with its (six) 'reinvigorated' community gardens along Queen Street West, connecting Parkdale's past with its evolving identity.[18]

5.2: site documentation and analysis

What is a Garden? What defines a Safe Space? What is Art? These are the terms being used to define each site and each proposal. Raising the question, what do all three terms have in common, to connect them as a defining guide for teenagers? The following proposals for the three defined sites begin to answer the queries outlined throughout the thesis while posing others along the way. Most of the site areas analyzed consist of unused or partially occupied spaces with existing program.
As part of the Parkdale community, the architectural proposals stand as individual pieces but also as a experience that follows one to the other. A journey, with a start, middle and end. Starting from the Garden you head north towards a Safe Space and end at Art as its final destination. All coming together to create the *third place(s)*.

Staring with site photography analysis before the boundaries were defined. It is followed by 2D and 3D analysis around the immediate site context to get a sense of the surrounding. This was carried out to understand the areas of Parkdale and gather evidence of what could be proposed in these sites in addition to it's existing landscape. Ensuring the proposals are appropriate and fit the built context, all while focusing on the chosen demographic of teenagers.

site 1 - queen street west & triller avenue

photograph positions

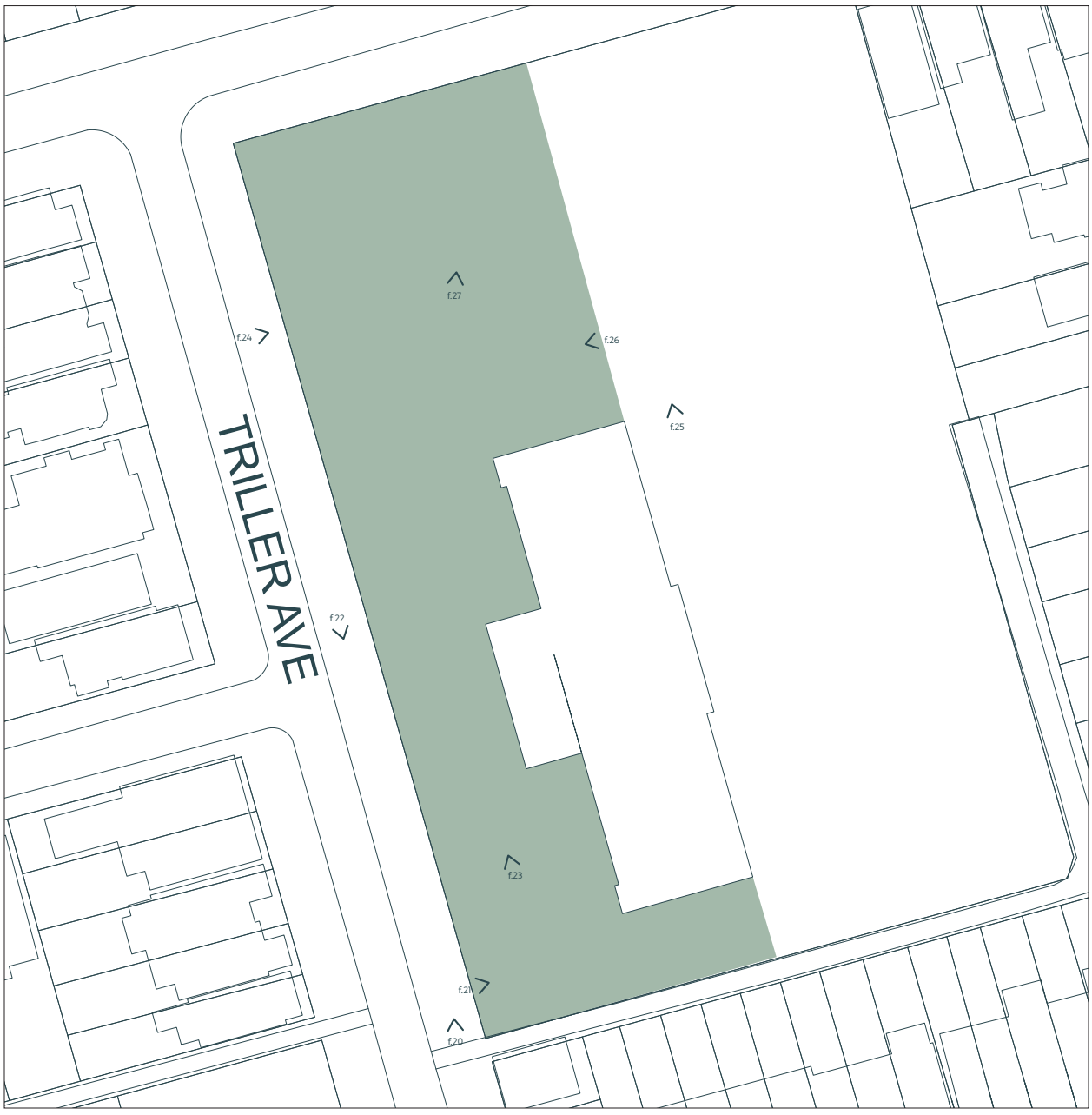


figure 22.0

Site 1 - Plan noting photograph positions

site 1 - queen street west & triller avenue

1/4

The approach to the first site from Queen Street West. Heading towards Triller Avenue, the Triller Place apartments are in view surrounded by residential housing.

A narrow, mildly sloped stairway on the apartment grounds that leads to the back of house and parking, parallel to the laneway on its right.



figure 23.0

Site 1 - Image 1 - Approach to Triller Avenue



figure 24.0

Site 1 - Image 2 - Existing steps

site 1 - queen street west & triller avenue

2/4

Moving further down Triller Avenue on the sidewalk along Triller Place, there is a roundabout entryway.

Standing on the stairway on the apartment grounds looking towards the round-about and towards the main entrance.

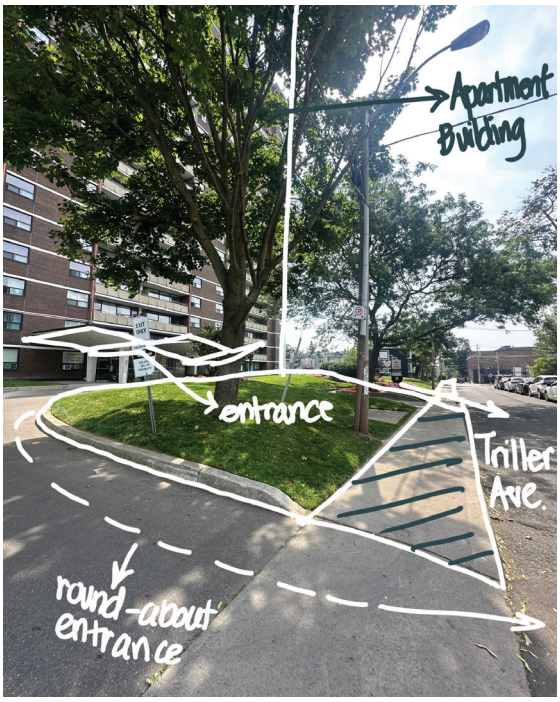


figure 25.0

Site 1 - Image 3 - Looking towards Queen Street

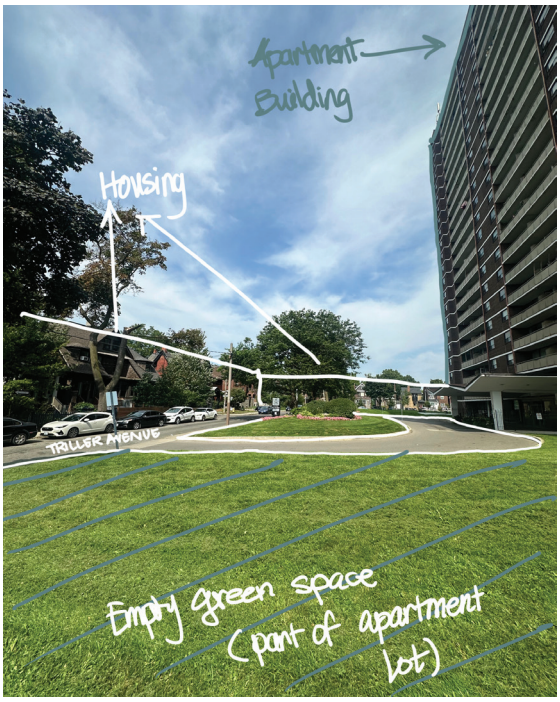


figure 26.0

Site 1 - Image 4 - On steps parallel to Triller Avenue

site 1 - queen street west & triller avenue

3/4

Towards the end of Triller Avenue at the intersection with Harvard Avenue. The tree, one of many planted along Triller Avenue frames the view of the empty (unused) green space.

Looking at the green space from the back of the building. Back of house includes, garbage collection, above and underground parking access.



figure 27.0

Site 1 - Image 5 - View from Triller



figure 28.0

Site 1 - Image 6 - Apartment parking

site 1 - queen street west & triller avenue

4/4

The underground parking entry is tucked away parallel with the green space that vastly covers the grounds. Standing along you have an unobstructed view of Triller and Harvard Avenue.

The empty green space is a middle ground of the surroundings of the residential housing on all four sides.



figure 29.0

Site 1 - Image 7 - Underground parking entrance



figure 30.0

Site 1 - Image 8 - Looking towards Harvard Avenue

site 2 - dundas street west & sterling road

photograph positions

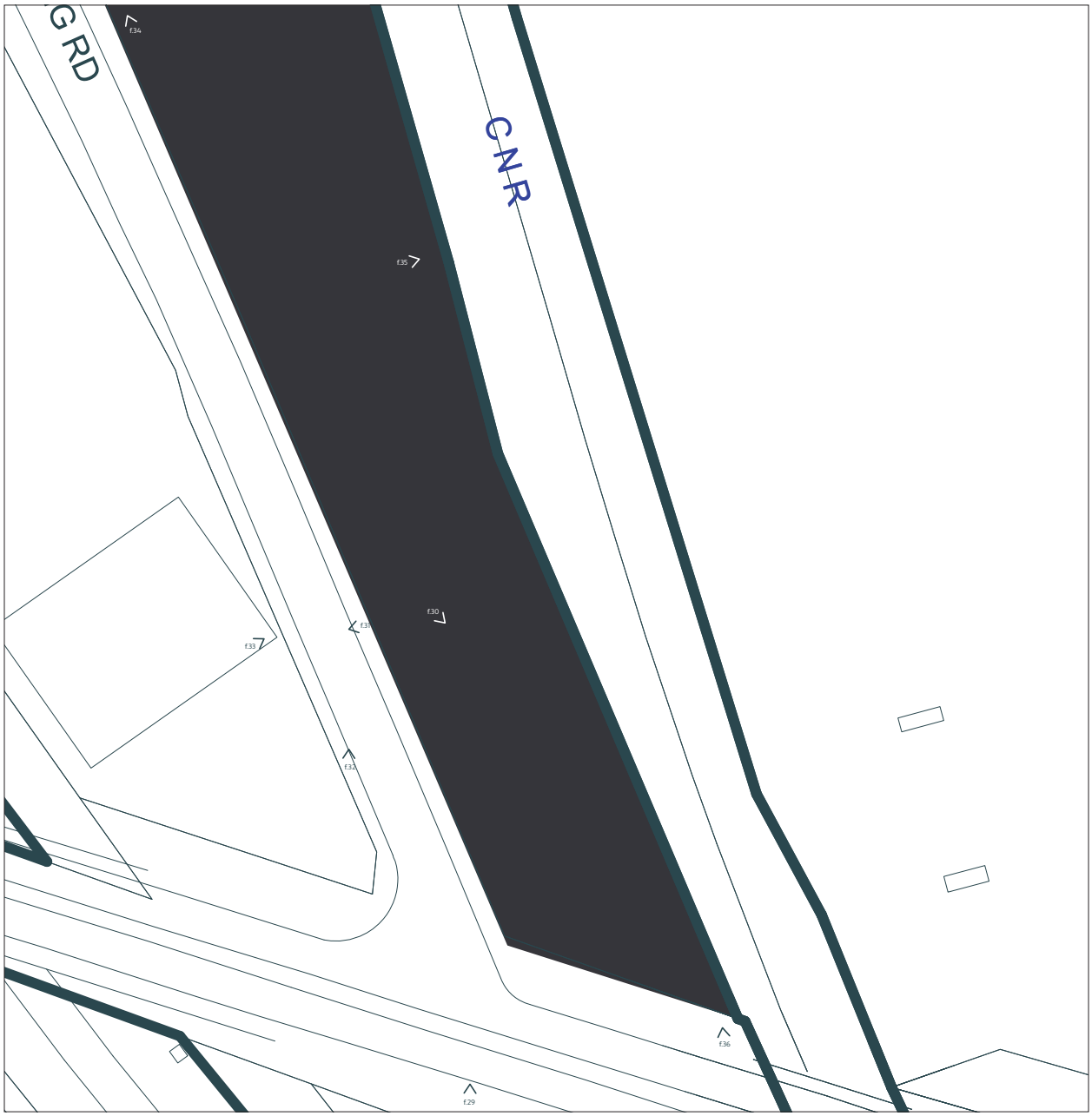


figure 31.0

site 2 - Plan noting photograph positions

site 2 - dundas street west & sterling road

1/4

The approach towards site on Dundas Street West, over the multiple rail lines giving the site multiple levels of topography.

The site itself stretches vastly with the parking lot remaining mostly unoccupied. One the railway tracks and the Dundas bridge is visible from the sloped down site.

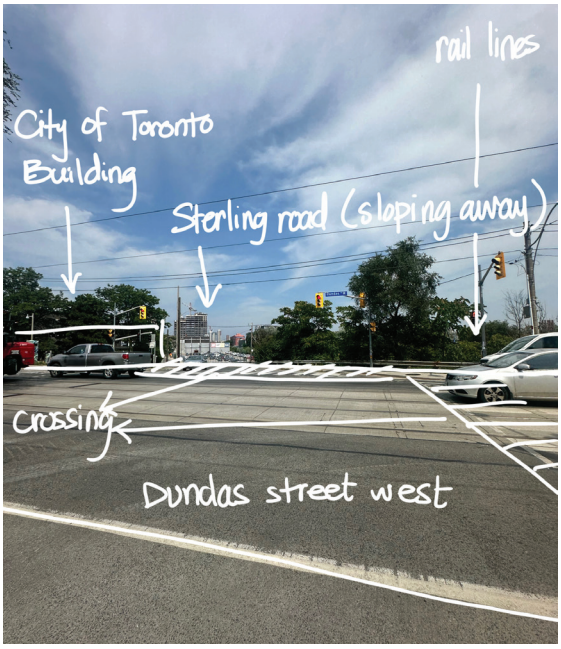


figure 32.0

Site 2 - Image 1 - Walking along Dundas Street West

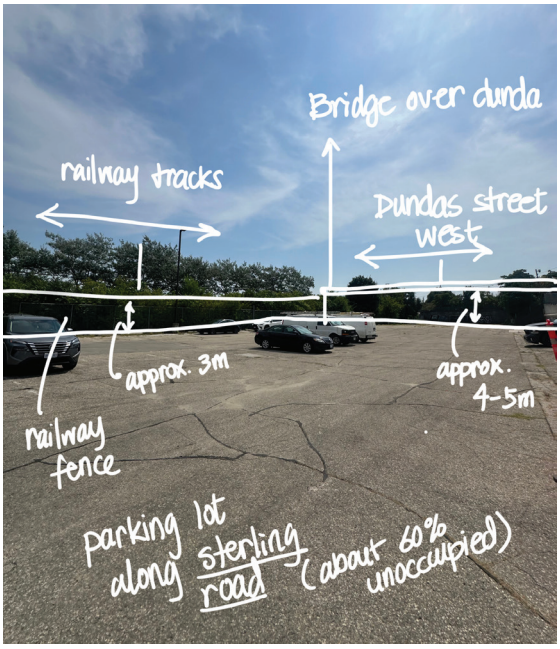


figure 33.0

Site 2 - Image 2 - On parking lot looking towards Dundas Street West

site 2 - dundas street west & sterling road

2/4

Just across the site, the first building along Sterling Road is a previously operated City of Toronto Social Services building that served high park.

Sterling Road along the site very gradually slopes down from Dundas Street West. You see a variety of industrial factories in the area.



figure 34.0

Site 2 - Image 3 - Looking across the street towards the City of Toronto High Park/ Parkdale Employment & Social Services building

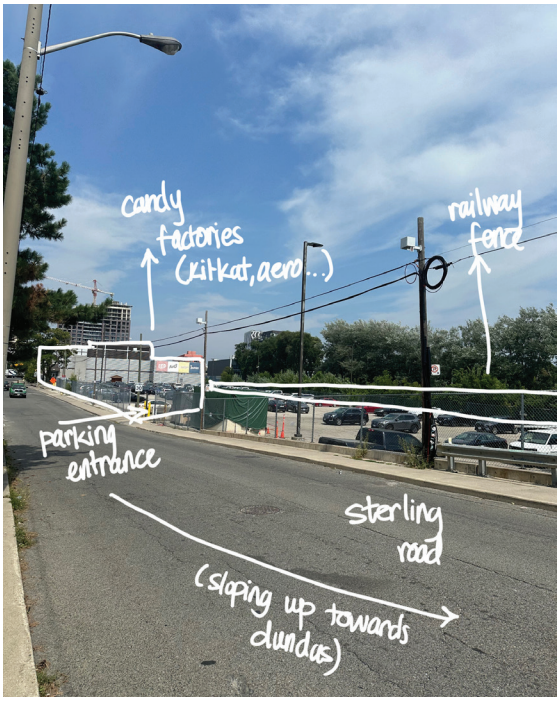


figure 35.0

Site 2 - Image 4 - Looking down Sterling Road

site 2 - dundas street west & sterling road

3/4

Looking directly across from the (previously) City building steps, the parking lot stretches long. Fenced in by the tracks, that follows it perimeter.

There is one main entrance into the lot, as it is metered. It sits right along the factories (Nestle, etc.) with minimal business around.

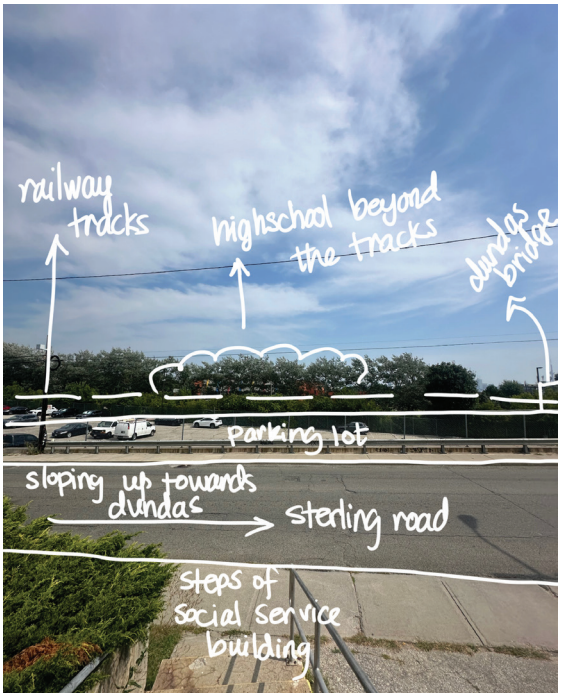


figure 36.0

Site 1 - Image 5 - Looking across the street from the City of Toronto High Park/ Parkdale Employment & Social Services building



figure 37.0

Site 2 - Image 6 - Looking from edge of parking lot

site 2 - dundas street west & sterling road

4/4

The fence separating the tracks can be very clearly seen. Just across the tracks on the other side are hints of the school playground.

Viewing from Dundas Street West, an overview of the whole parking lot, paralleled by the tracks and the busy green creating the divide between the school.



figure 38.0

Site 2 - Image 7 - Railway boundary on parking lot

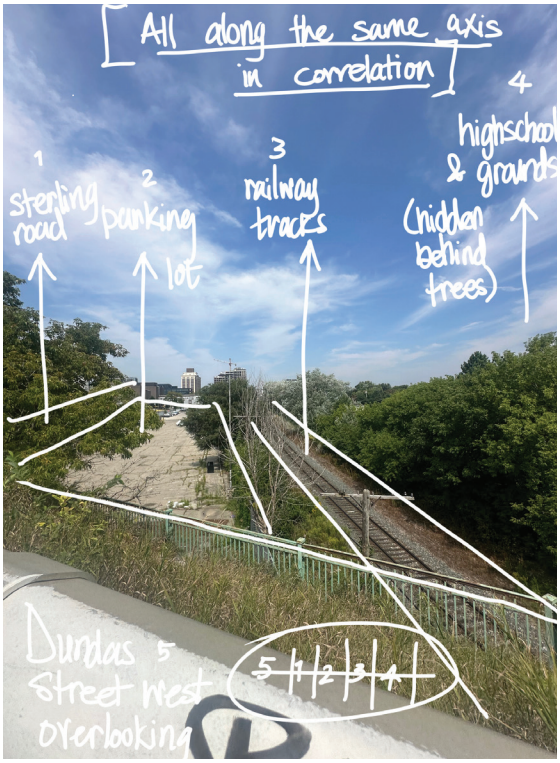


figure 39.0

Site 2 - Image 8 - View of parking lot and railway looking down from Dundas Street West

site 3 - bloor street west & perth avenue

photograph positions



figure 40.0

Site 3 - Plan noting photograph positions

site 3 - bloor street west & perth avenue

1/3

Peaking into the abandoned site through a crack in the boarded up perimeter. Site is empty and seemingly abandoned.

The perimeter around where the site is boarded shows unsanctioned public art (graffiti) as well as the underpass in the background along Bloor Street West.



figure 41.0

Site 3 - Image 1 - Existing empty site at the intersection at Bloor Street West and Perth Avenue

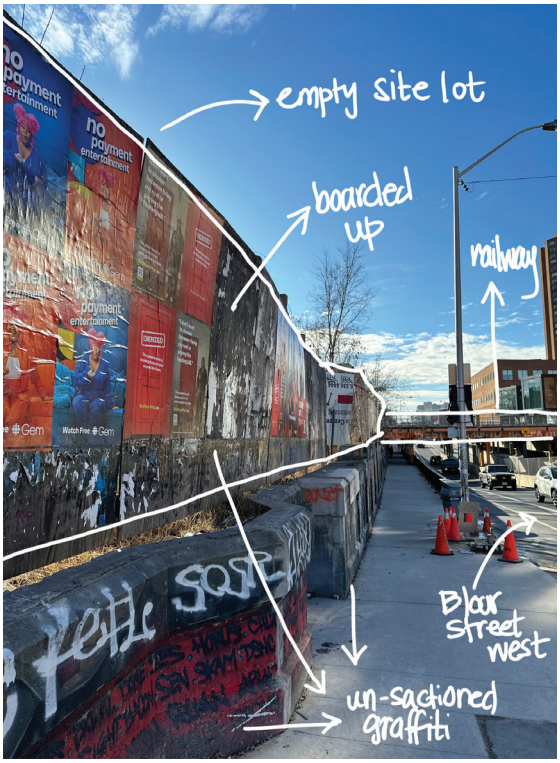


figure 42.0

Site 3 - Image 2 - Empty site boarded up along Bloor Street West

site 3 - bloor street west & perth avenue

2/3

Approaching the underpass, surrounded by apartment buildings and social housing. The underpass slopes down from the bridge doubling as the railway tracks,

Directly beneath the underpass, there is a view of the UP express buildings and an entrance to Bloor GO. A relatively busy area also under construction.

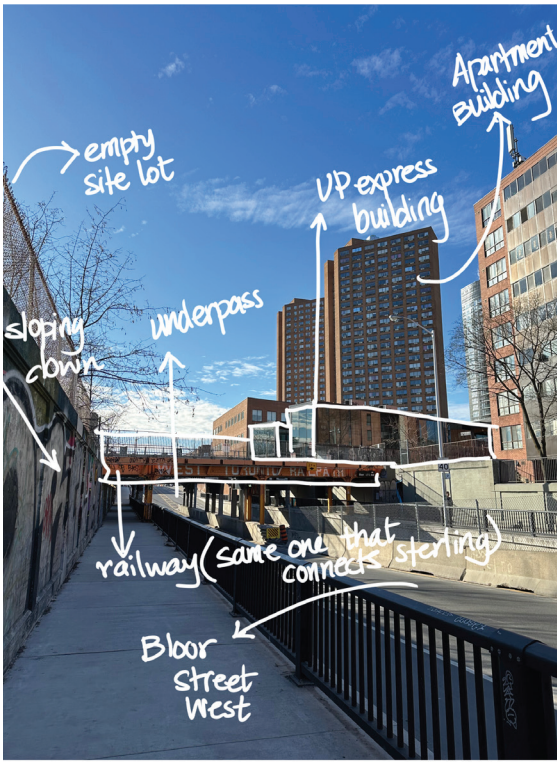


figure 43.0

Site 3 - Image 3 - Walking towards the underpass on Bloor Street West

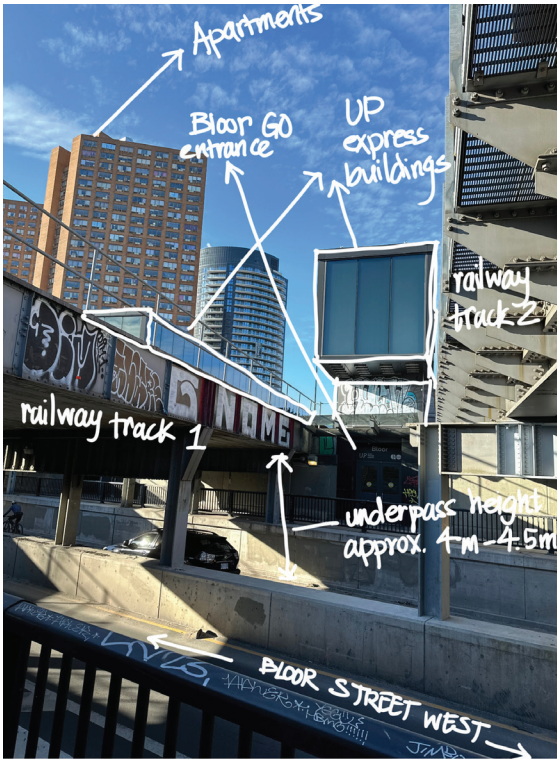


figure 44.0

Site 3 - Image 4 - View looking under the bridge and railway along Bloor Street West

site 3 - bloor street west & perth avenue

3/3

Thus this portion of Bloor Street West is rather busy, with uneven fencing on both sides, concrete blocks separating the roads, in addition to bike paths.

The entrance to the high school and the playground can be accessed towards the end of Bloor Street West, as it transitions into a driveway.



figure 45.0

Site 3 - Image 5 - Looking towards railway buildings across on Bloor Street West

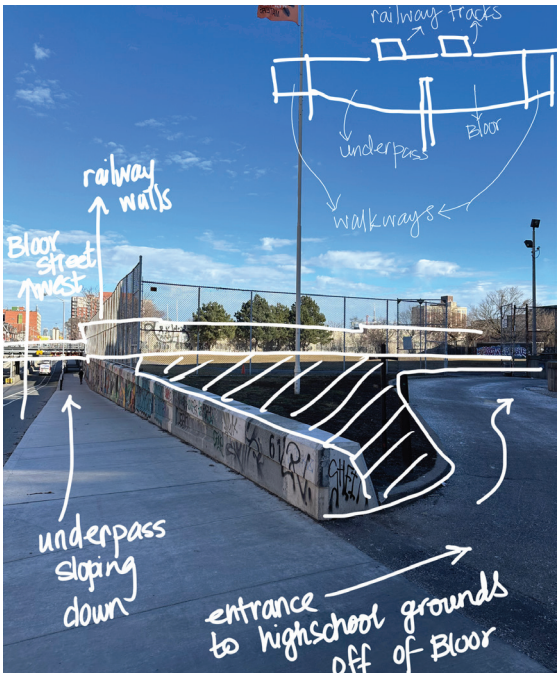


figure 46.0

Site 3 - Image 6 - High school field entrance off Bloor Street West

site analysis

overview of all sites within parkdale

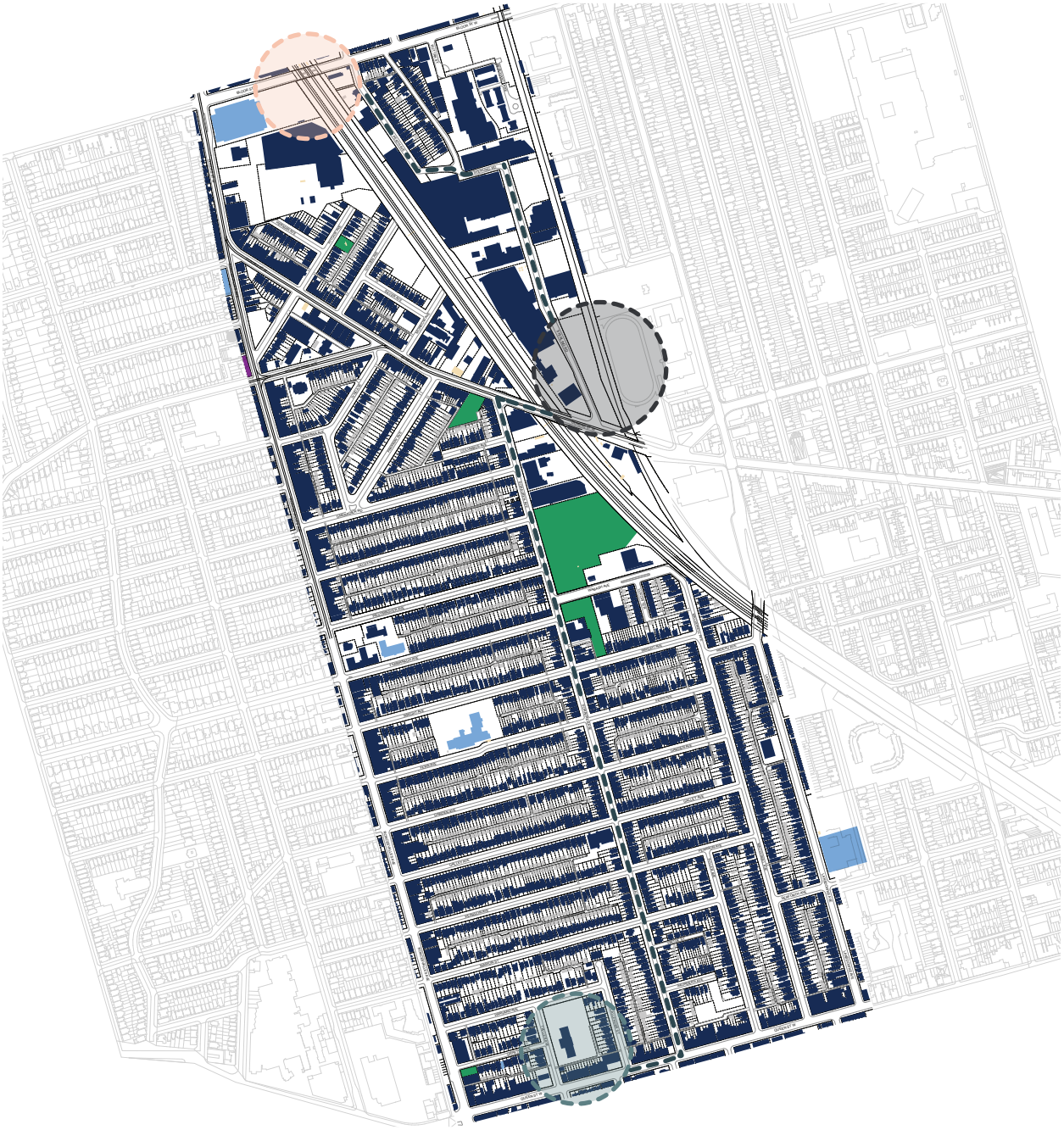


figure 47.0

Context Plan Analysis - 1:12000

site specific analysis

overview

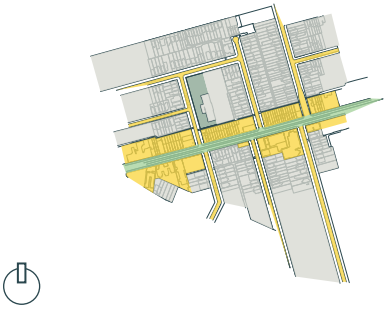


figure 48.0

Site 1 - Surrounding context analysis - 1:15000

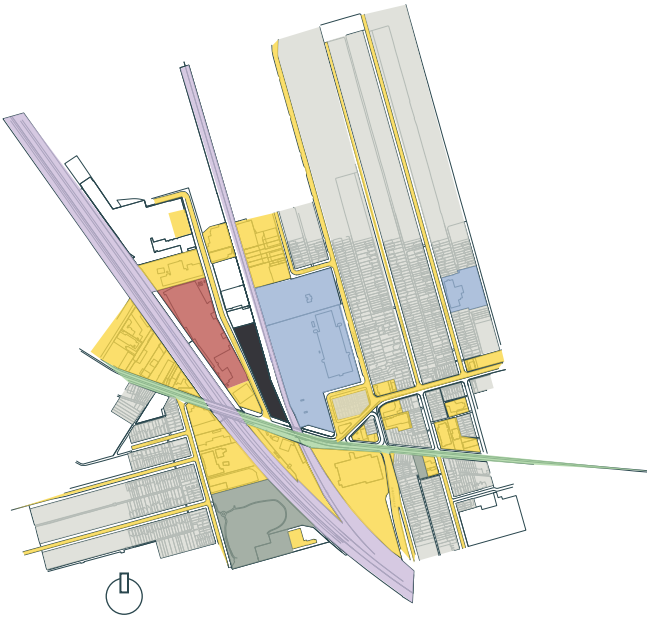


figure 49.0

Site 2 - Surrounding context analysis - 1:15000

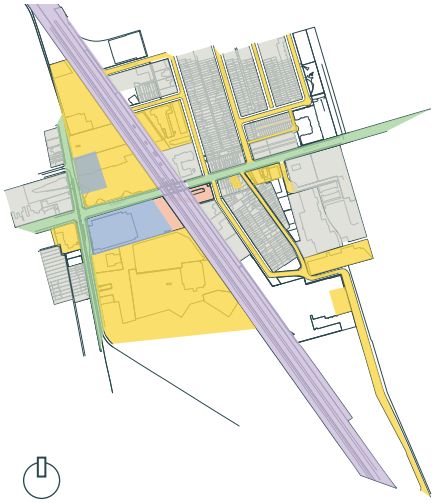


figure 50.0

Site 3 - Surrounding context analysis - 1:15000

site specific analysis

major roads and travel access

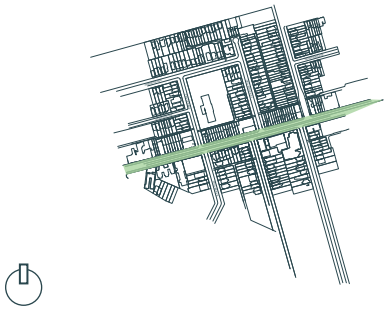


figure 51.0

Site 1 - Major roads - 1:15000

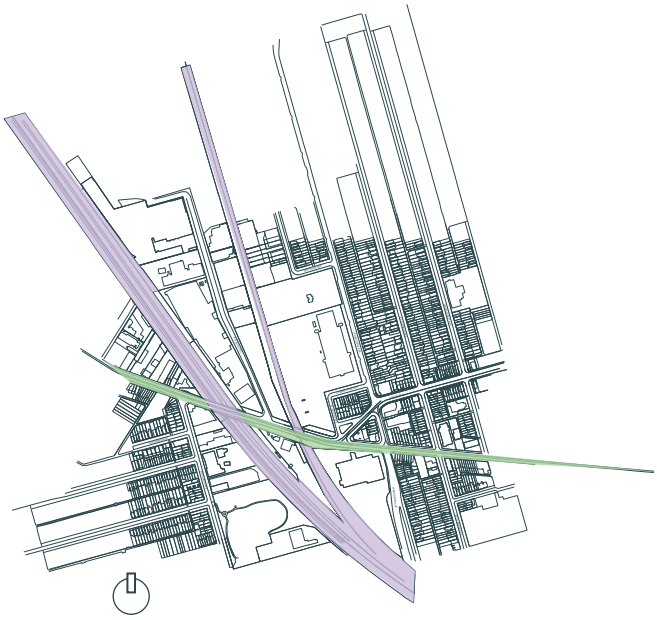


figure 52.0

Site 2 - Major road and railway paths - 1:15000

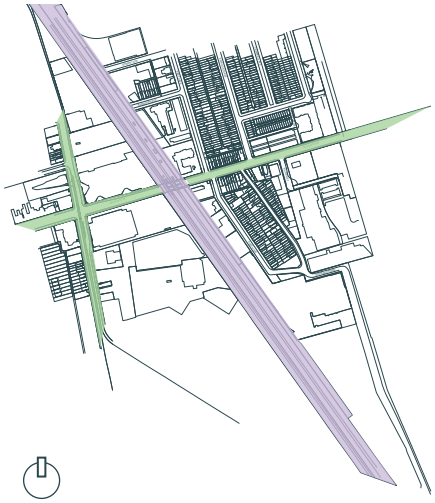


figure 53.0

Site 3 - Major road and railway paths - 1:15000

site specific analysis

minor roads and laneways

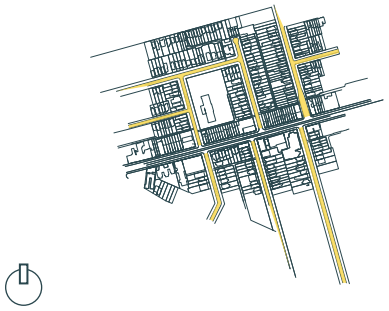


figure 54.0

Site 1 - Minor roads and laneways - 1:15000

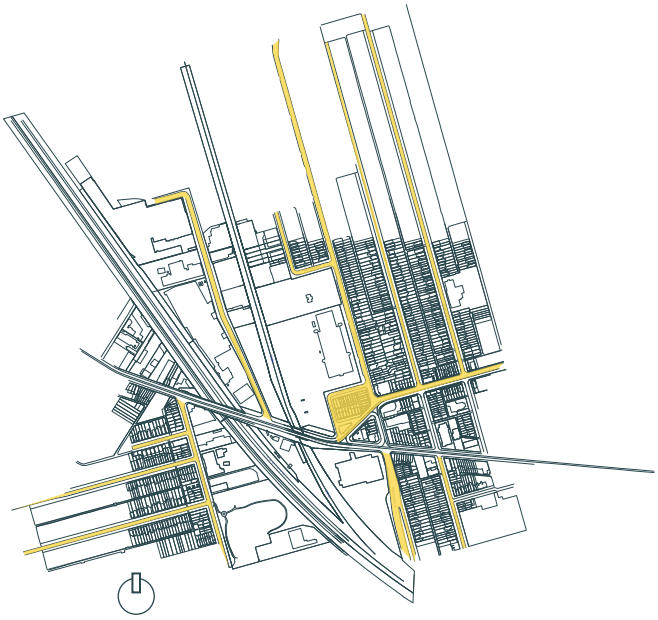


figure 55.0

Site 2 - Minor roads and laneways - 1:15000

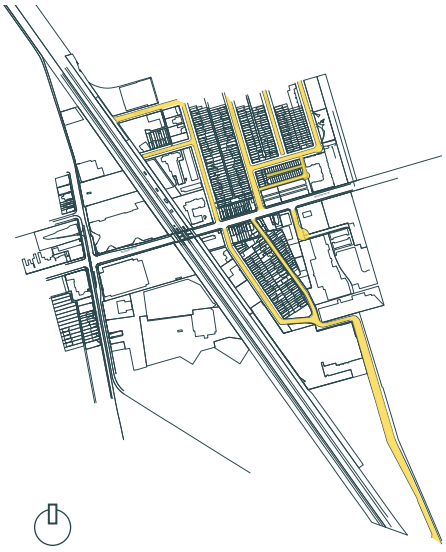


figure 56.0

Site 3 - Minor roads and laneways - 1:15000

site specific analysis

residential, commercial, institutional and industrial context

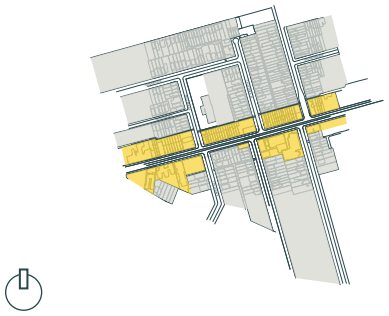


figure 57.0

Site 1 - Surrounding program - 1:15000

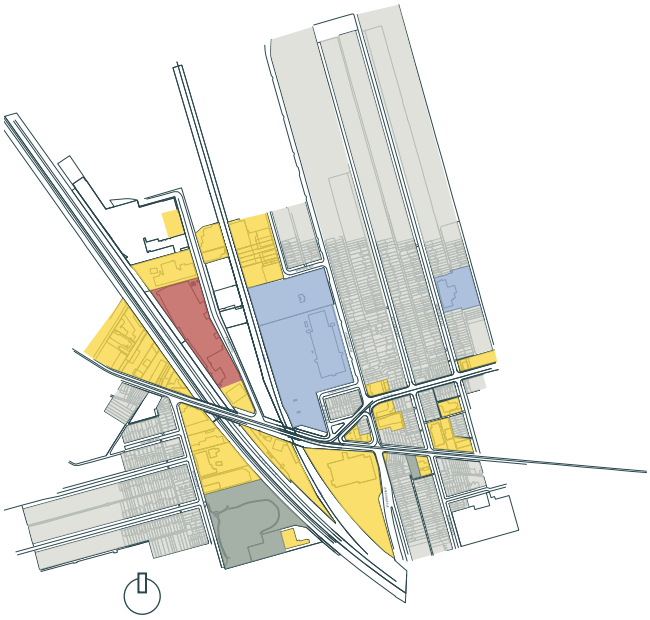
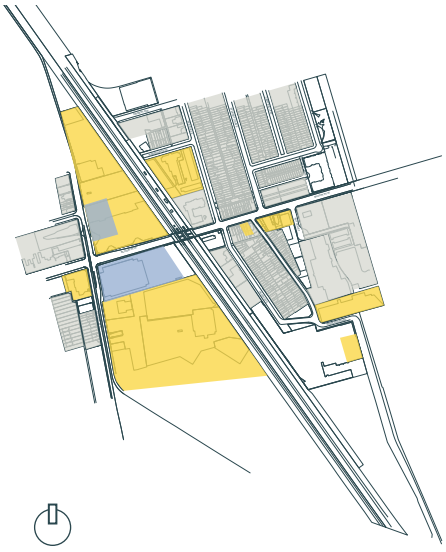


figure 58.0

Site 2 - Surrounding program - 1:15000



residential
commercial
institutional
industrial
parks

figure 59.0

Site 3 - Surrounding program - 1:15000

site analysis

determining site boundaries - site 1

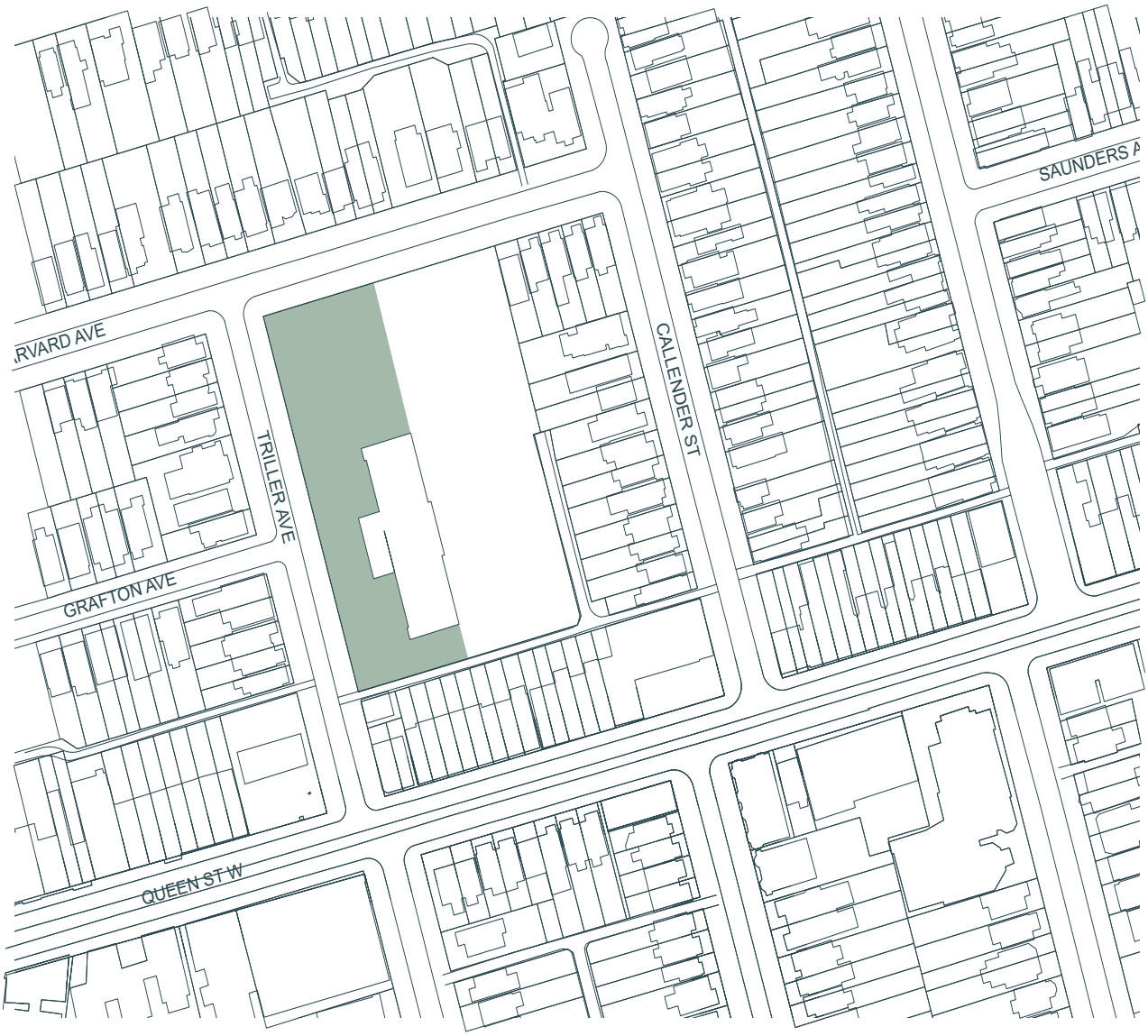


figure 60.0

Site 1 - Site boundary selection - 1:5000

site analysis

determining site boundaries - site 2

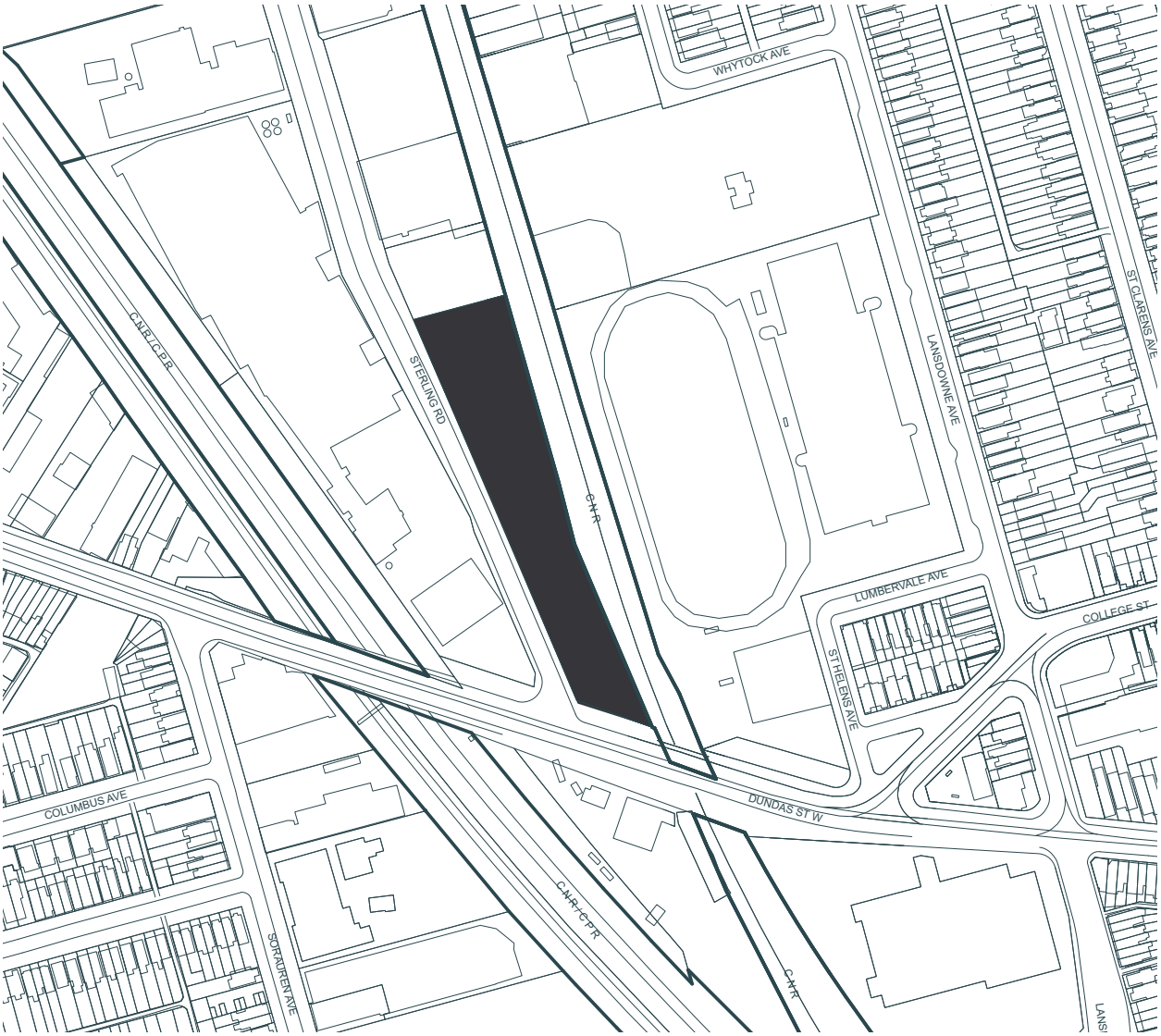


figure 61.0

Site 2 - Site boundary selection - 1:7000

site analysis

determining site boundaries - site 3

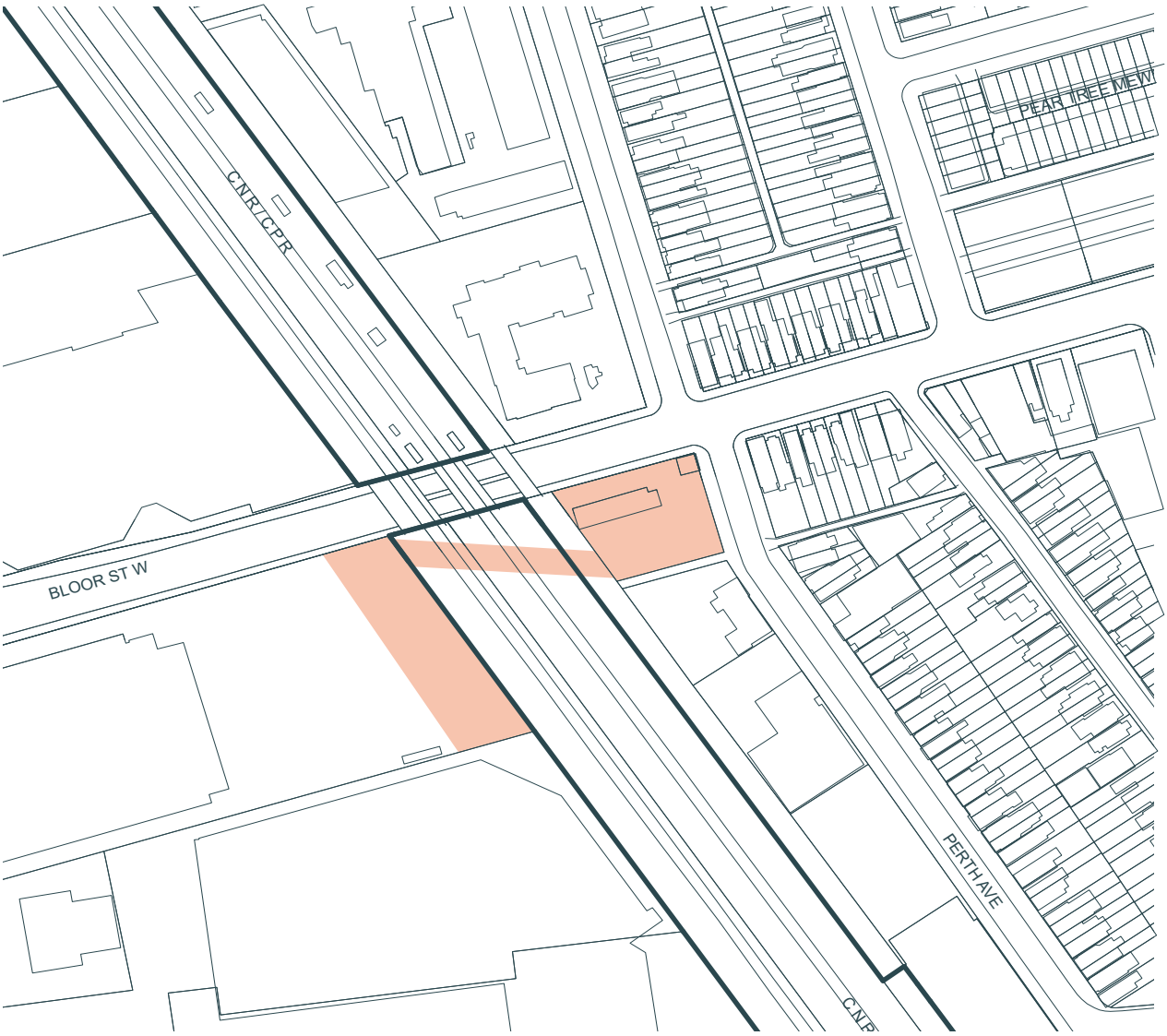


figure 62.0

Site 3 - Site boundary selection - 1:9000

site analysis

axonometric view - site 1

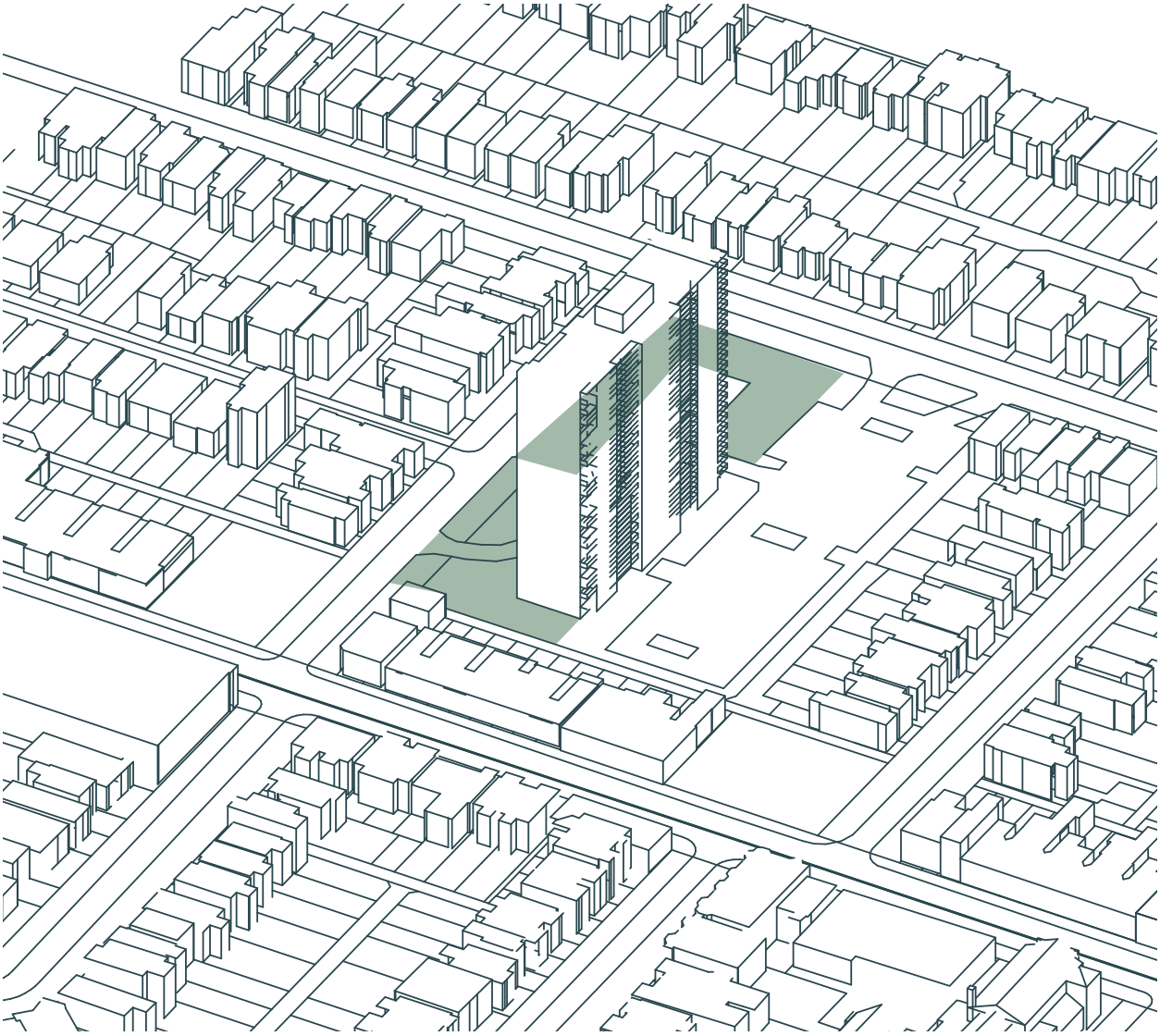


figure 63.0

Site 1 - Site boundary axonometric

site analysis

axonometric view - site 2

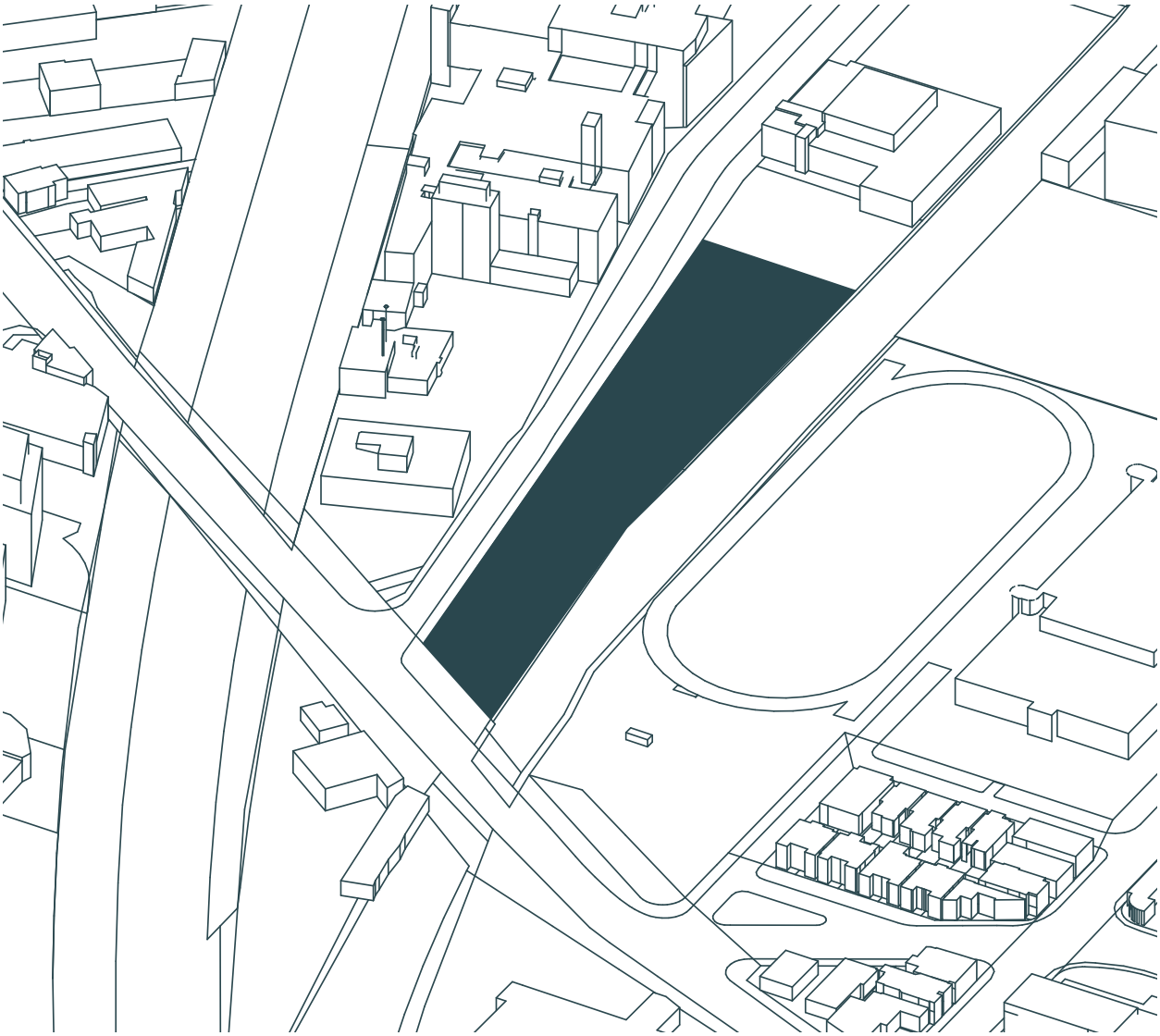


figure 64.0

Site 2 - Site boundary axonometric

site analysis

axonometric view - site 3

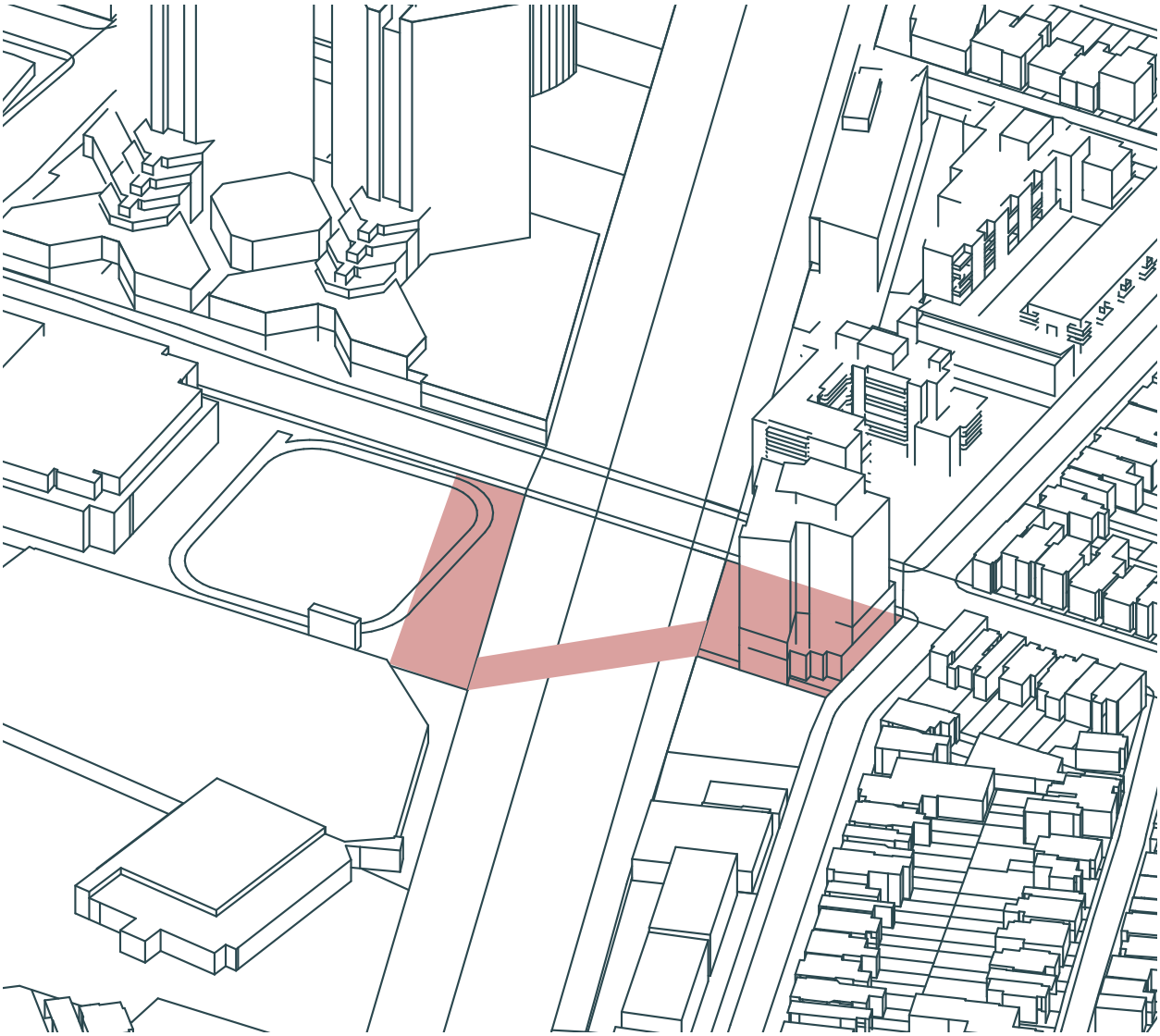


figure 65.0

Site 3 - Site boundary axonometric

5.3: the garden

According to the National Gardening Association, a Garden is,

> ...both natural and unnatural. We take nature and arrange it in rows or swaths, draw a 'line in the sand' where the grass can and can't grow, and choose which plants live side by side. We orchestrate a symphony of vegetables, flowers, turf, shrubs, vines, trees, and a host of other plants, deciding what grows where and when. To continue the music analogy, we're constantly composing, recomposing -- and decomposing -- to create the beautiful results we desire.[19]

The author of the publication Skip Richer, makes the following claim, "I've found that a garden is some other things as well as a place for plants. A garden is a rejuvenating retreat. When I get out in the garden among vegetables, herbs, or flowers the cares of the day go away and I can enjoy restful moments of peace and quiet or creative calm."[20] Focusing on its defining factors as a retreat and a peaceful and creative zone we have The Garden.

The *Garden* is the starting point in the narrative of creating spaces that become reflective of their activities. Connected by two more, the garden starts of the journey of its user to experience what it has to offer. Divided into three main components, the area is taking up space on the existing site located at Parkside Place on 55 Triller Avenue, right off of the business on Queen Street West. The site holds a vast area of unused green space surrounded by a suburban scenery tucked away.

Surrounded by Harvard Avenue on the north, Triller Avenue on the West and North Queen East Triller Lane, the site takes up the sidewalk on Triller and re-purposing most of the green park space surrounding the Parkside Place apartments.

Divided into three distinct parts, the first being an outdoor garden, this space is meant to be used and accessed by the community but encouraged to be led by teenagers looking to take part in building their green thumbs. The outdoor garden provides access to varying sizes and types of crop and planting opportunities along with space to store and gather materials in the form of a shed. A year round proposal, this is an effort in trying to utilize it with planting and experiencing winter and

summer crops. This can include but is not limited to plants, flowers, fruits, vegetables. The second part making up the site are the panels. Spread all along down the line that take up Triller Avenue limiting to the sidewalk on 55 Triller, the panels are a variation with permanent and seasonal displays. The panels are open to exhibiting a variety of material, open to community suggestions or having displays of any permissible material. The panel labeled *Garden*, (figure 69.0) as an example, makes up one of the permanent ones on site to aide you as an informational guide. The third and final part of the site is a greenhouse space to compliment the outdoor garden, this can be used as a learning tool for people more prone to working indoors or growing crops better suited for a greenhouse environment.

As a community effort it is encouraged to treat this space as your own and to be mindful of the space and its efforts for yourself but also to provide the opportunity for others who may want to experience it in its entirety. Whether you are new to gardening or an expert, working together to create a space that can be enjoyed by all is the goal.

Certain elements are to be provided to get started including basic gardening equipment, soil and mulch as needed, access to water, a variation of seeds, as well as labels and signs to mark a certain area that is growing something specific or if it has been occupied. The greenhouse could also provide access to tutorials and guides (paper, audio and visual) on how to get started and where to find what you may be looking for. Meant to be part of Parkdale's initiatives, this is an addition to its growing community and gardening efforts.



figure 66.0

The Garden - Site plan - 1:2000

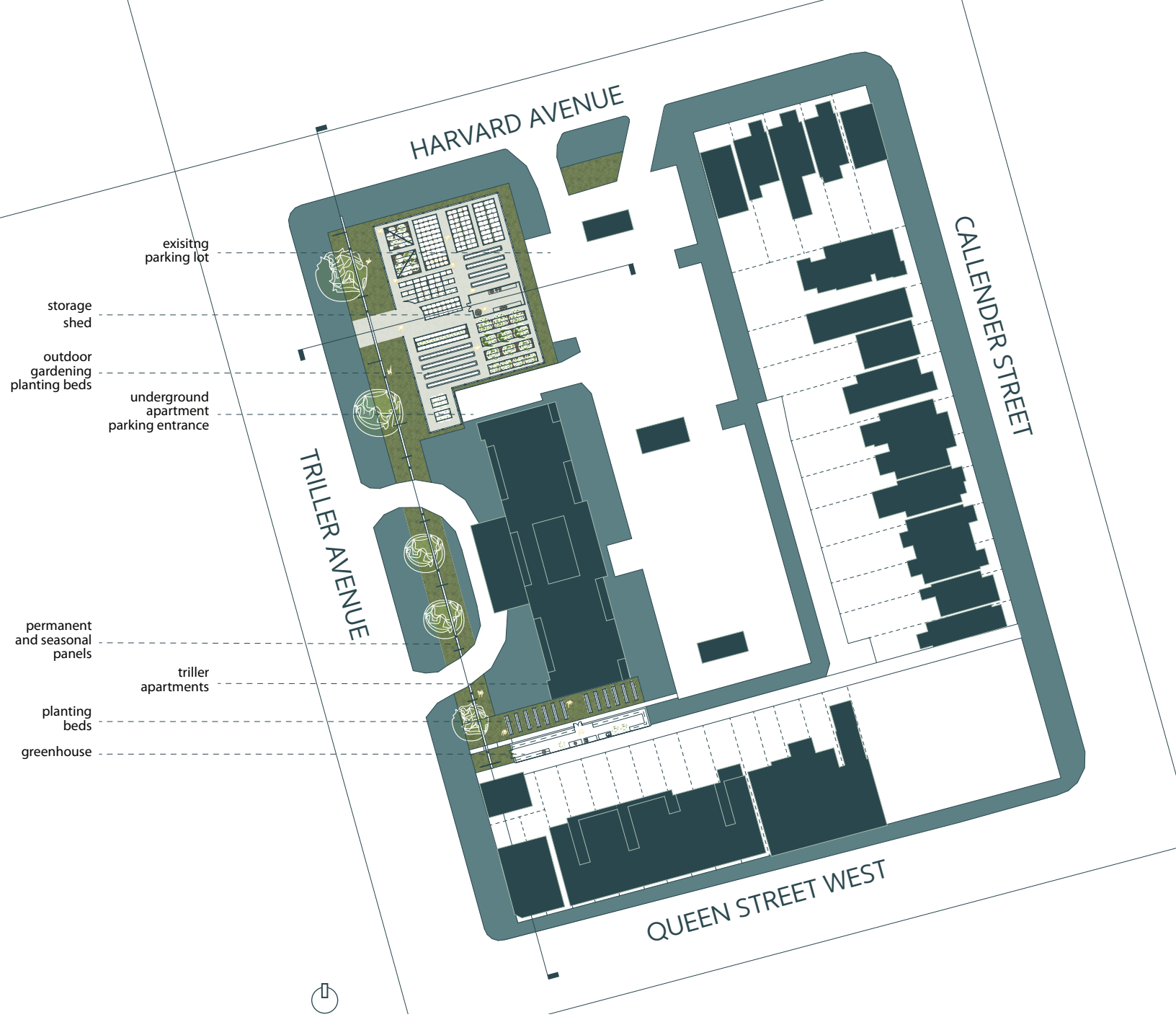


figure 67.0

The Garden - Plan - 1:1400

figure 70.0 (page 132)

The Garden - Experiential section N/S - 1:7000

figure 71.0 (page 133)

The Garden - Experiential section W/E - 1:300

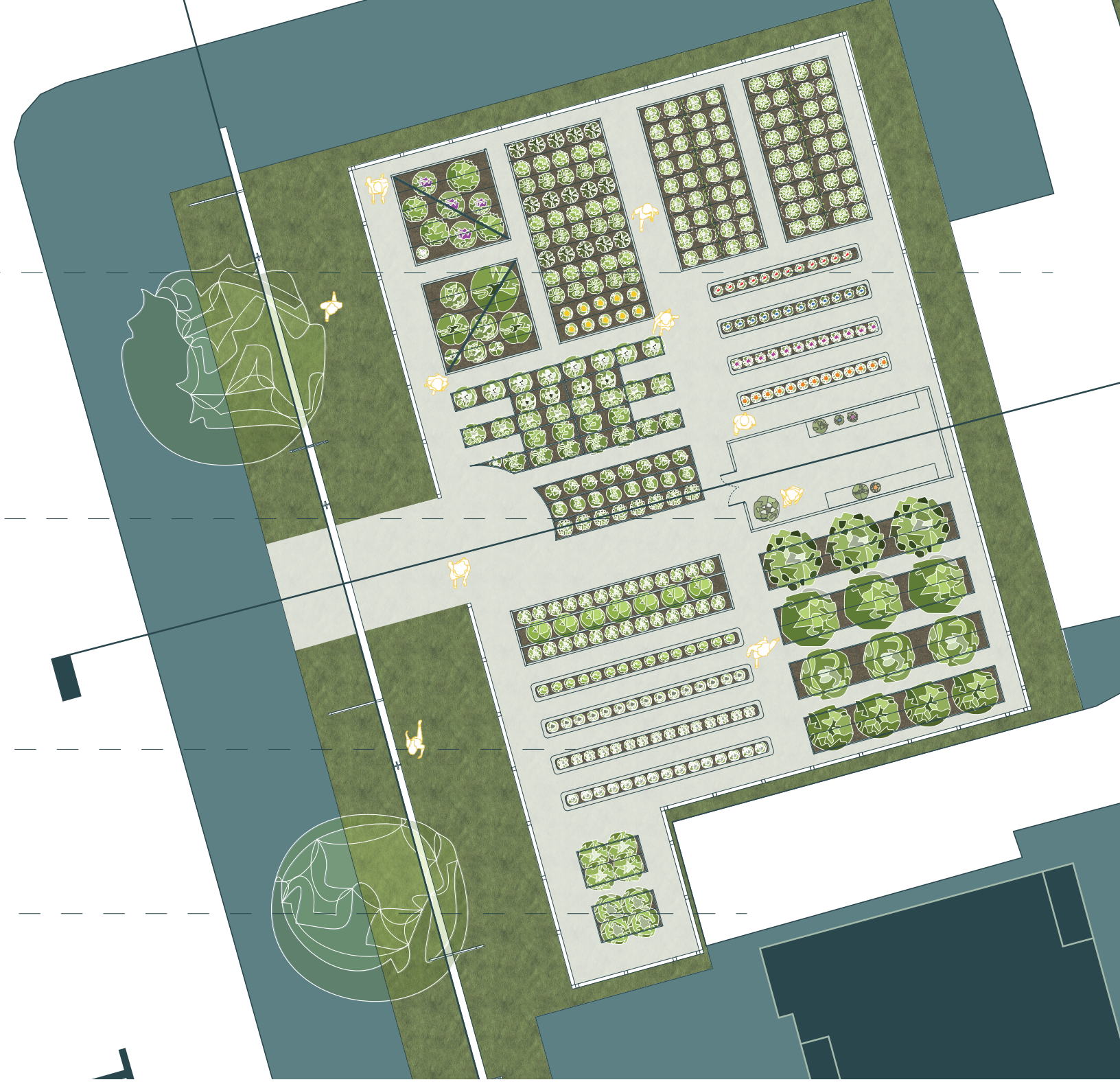


figure 68.0

The Garden - Plan - 1:1400

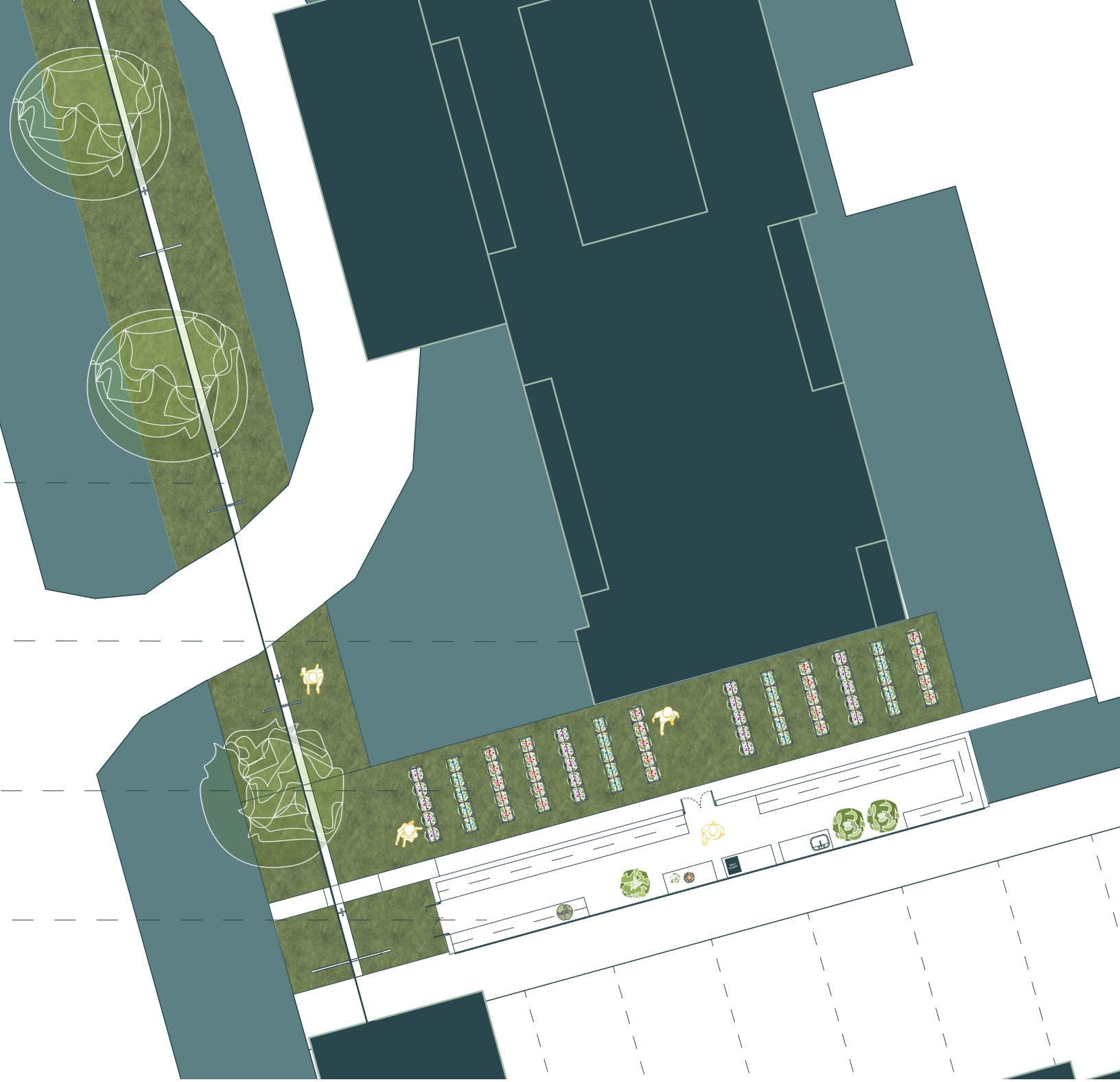
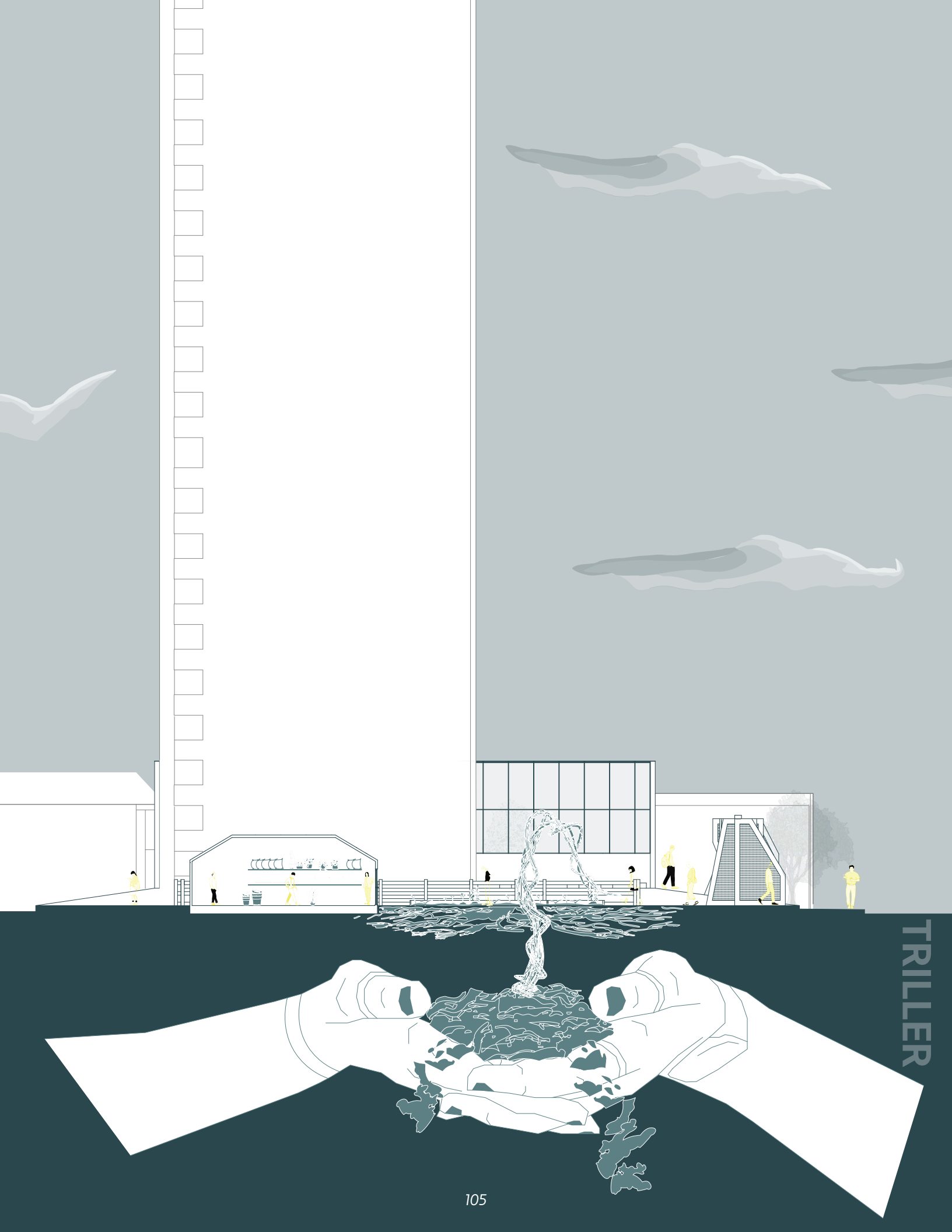


figure 69.0

The Garden - Plan - 1:1400


TRILLER


HARVARD

permanent panels

proposed panel layout - type 1 - neighbourhood information

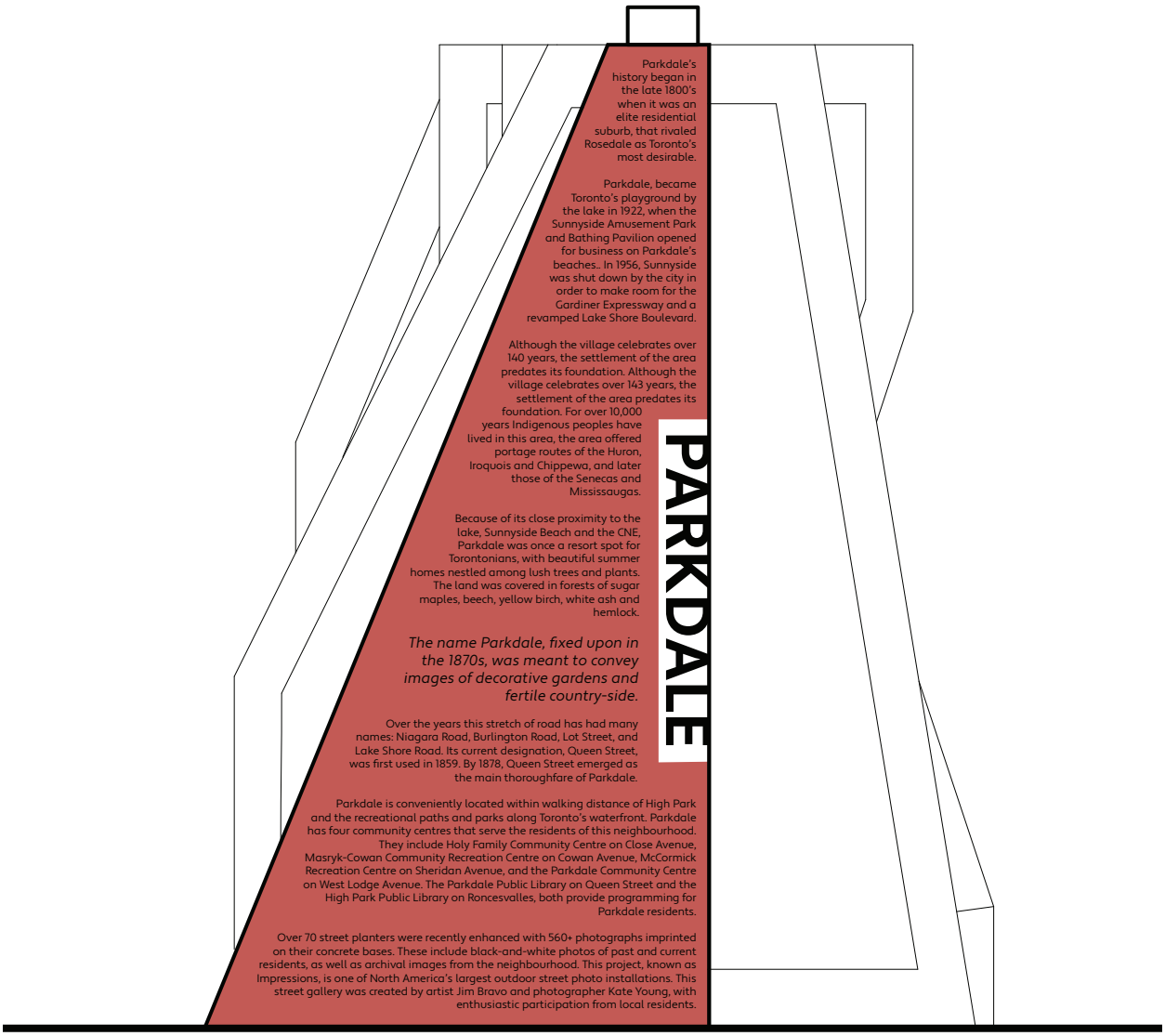


figure 72.0

The Garden - Proposed panel layout - 1/5

permanent panels

proposed panel layout - type 2 - about the initiative

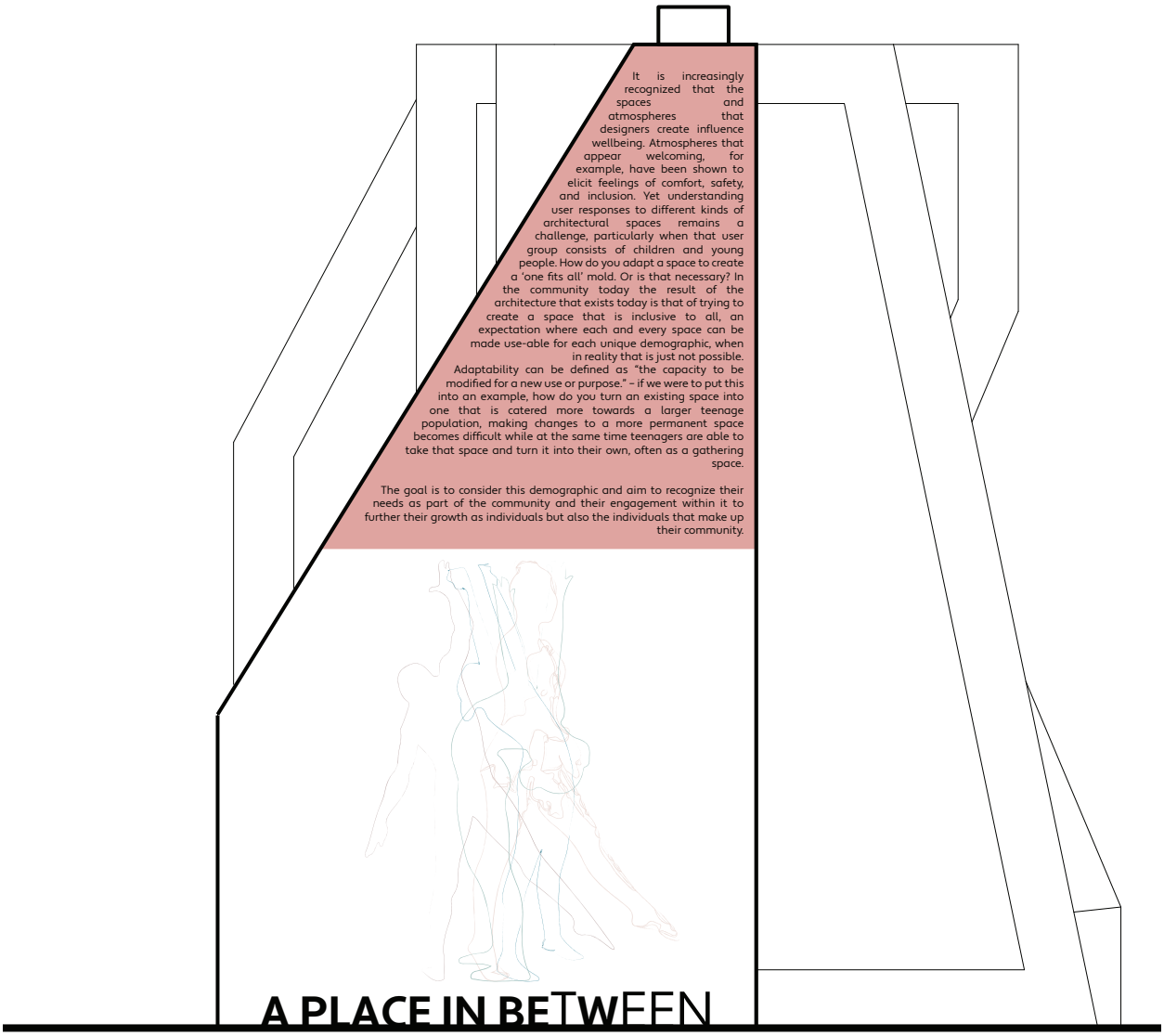


figure 73.0

The Garden - Proposed panel layout - 2/5

permanent panels

proposed panel layout - type 3 - site information

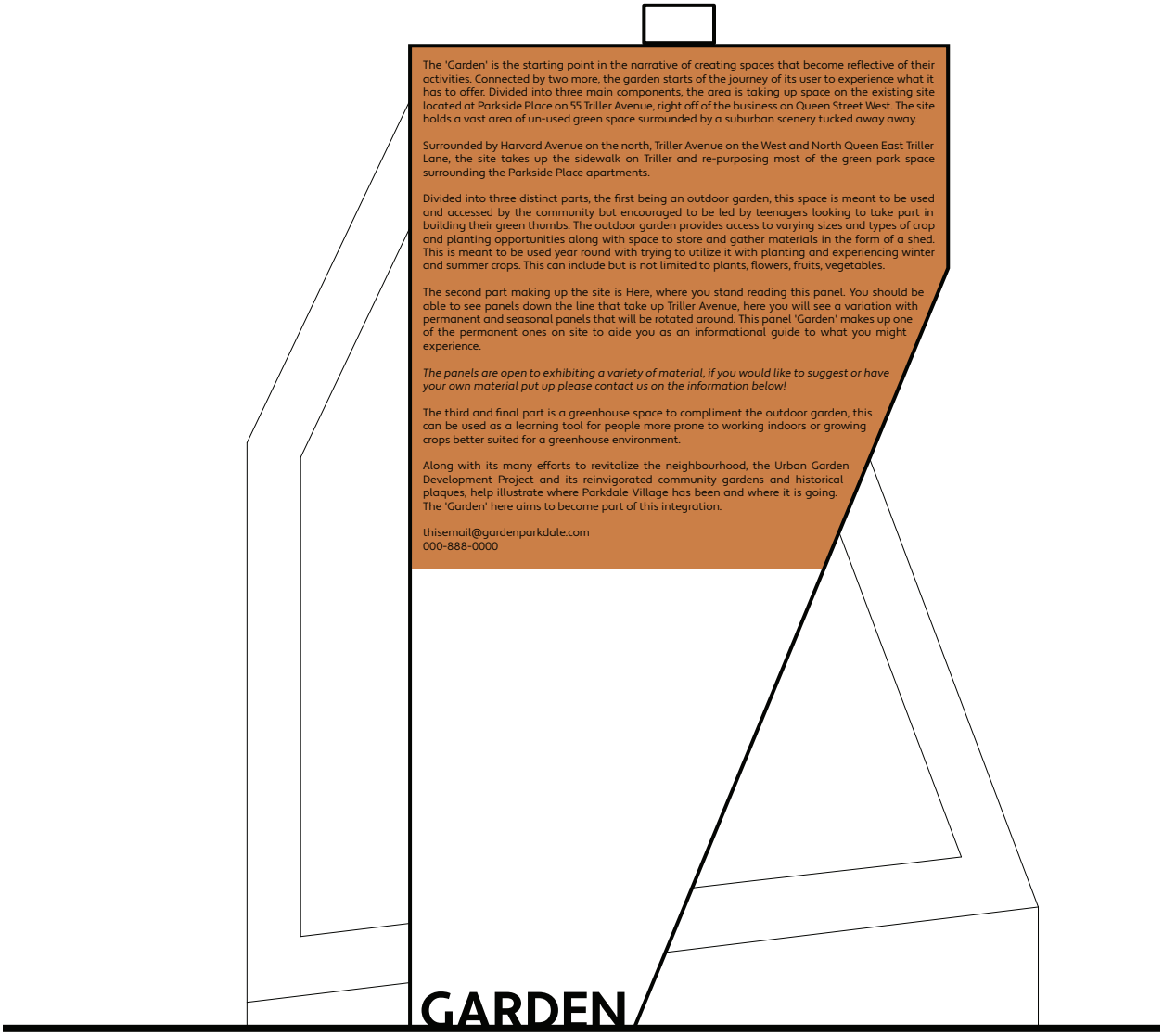


figure 74.0

The Garden - Proposed panel layout - 3/5

permanent panels

proposed panel layout - type 4 - site specific ‘how-to’

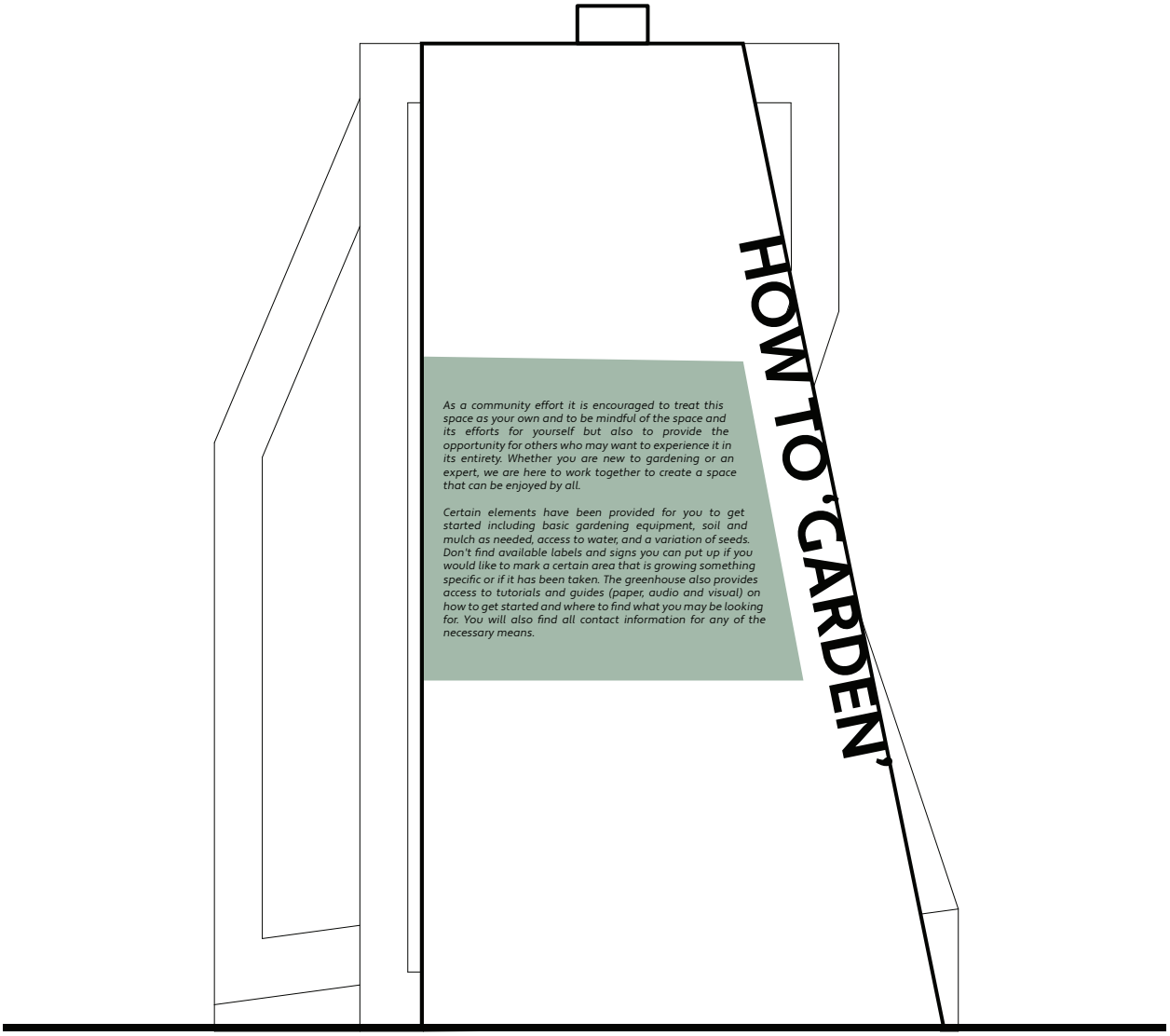


figure 75.0

The Garden - Proposed panel layout - 4/5

permanent panels

proposed panel layout - type 5 - future plans for the initiative

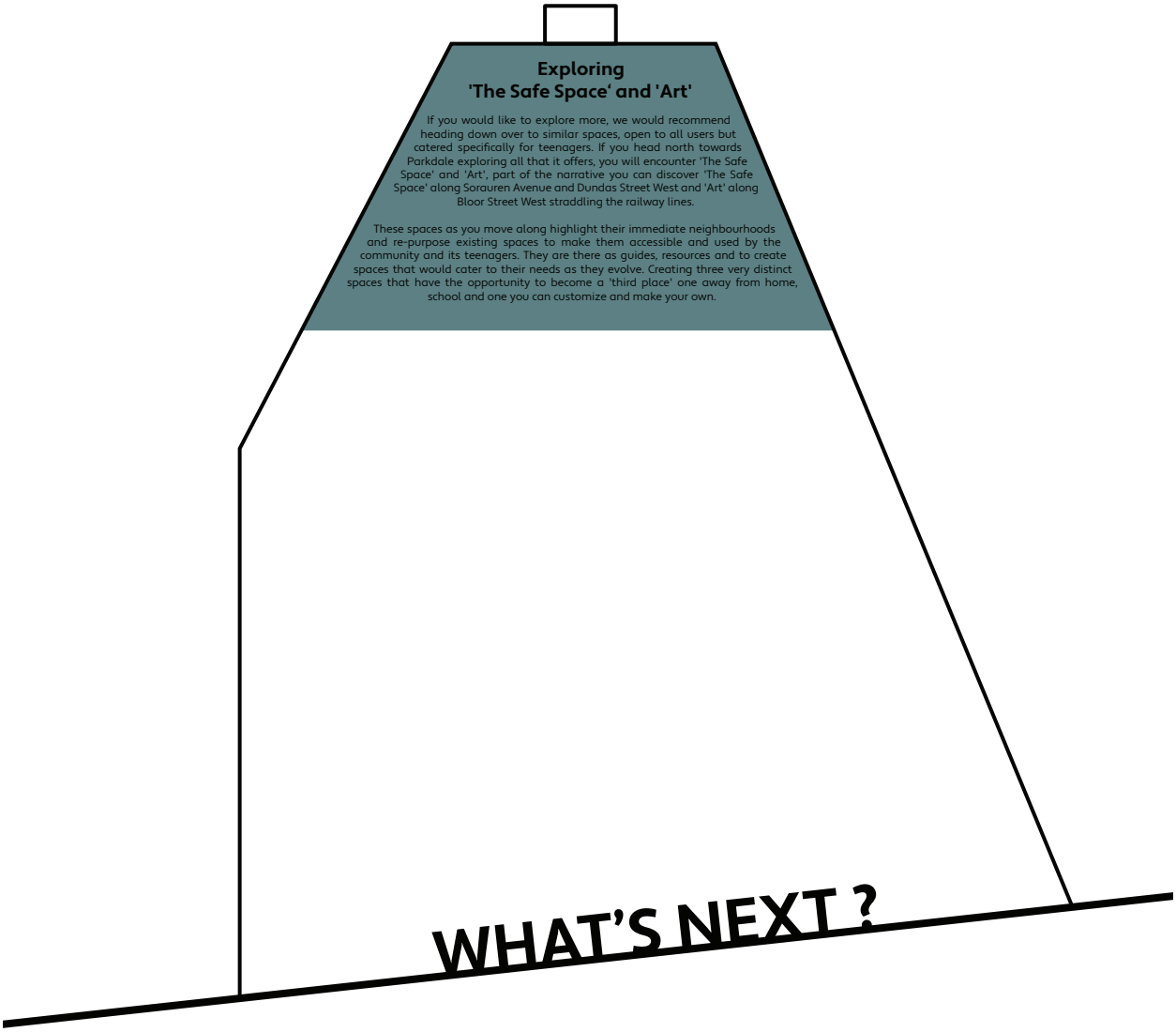


figure 76.0

The Garden - Proposed panel layout - 5/5

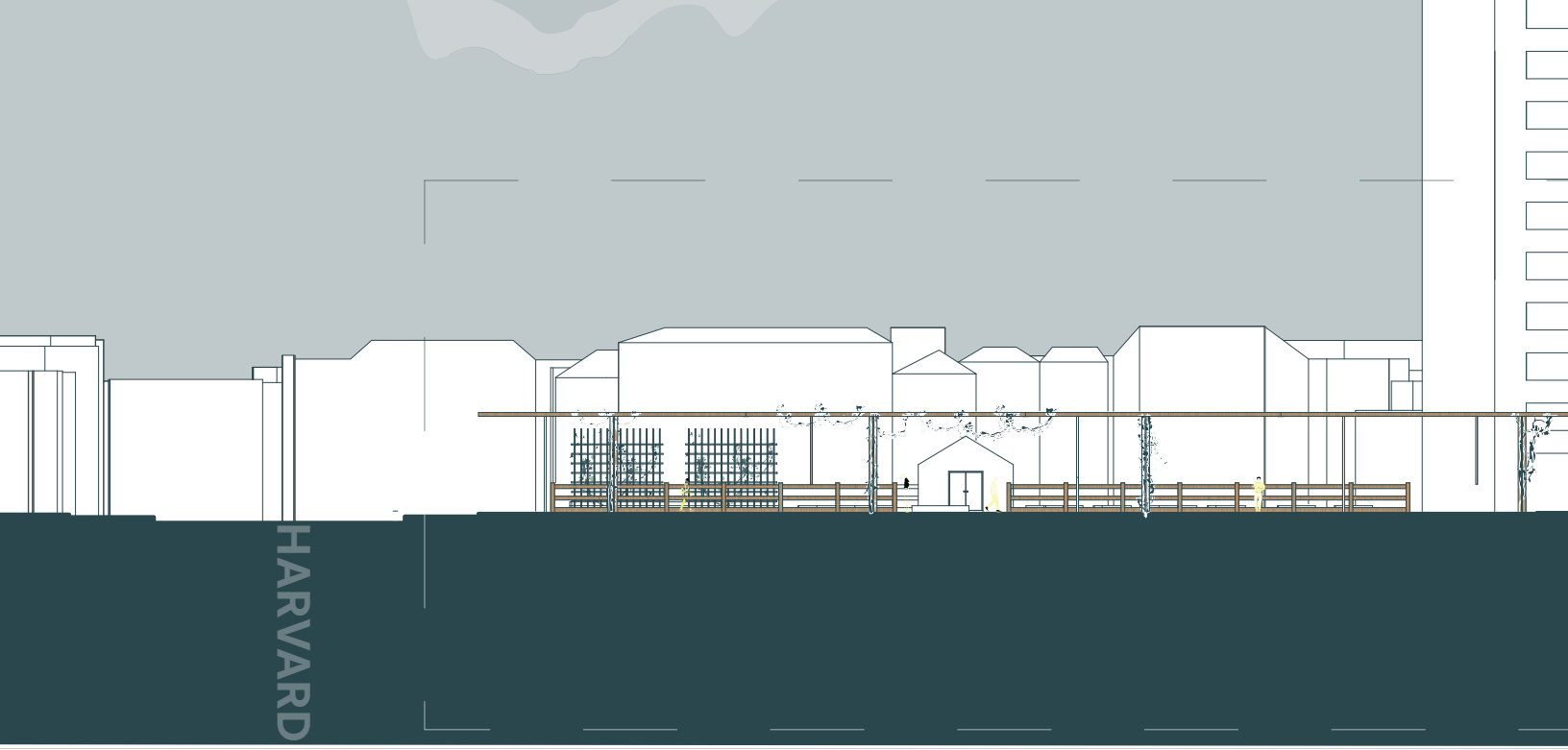
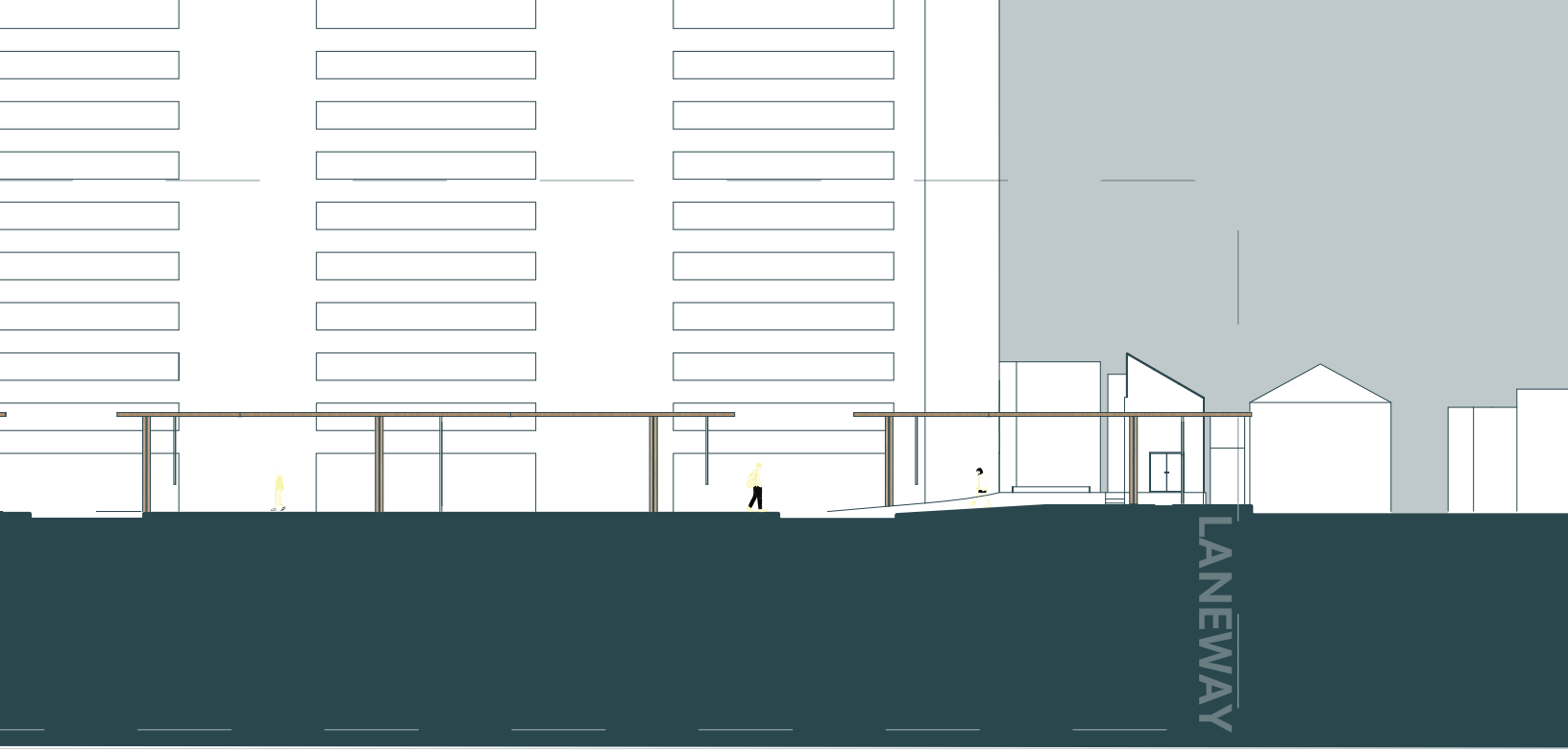




figure 77.0

The Garden - Elevation on Triller - 1:400
(above)



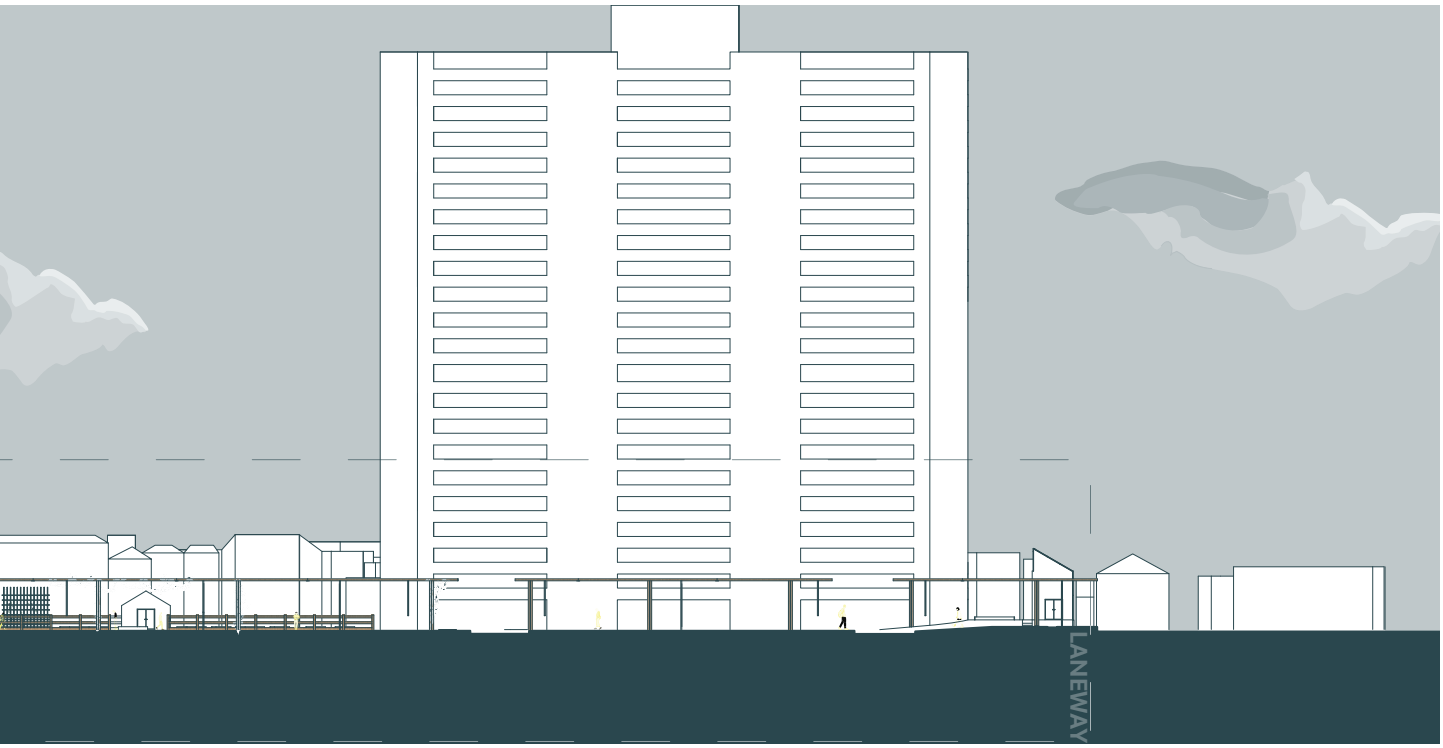


figure 78.0

The Garden - Elevation on Triller - 1:800
(below)

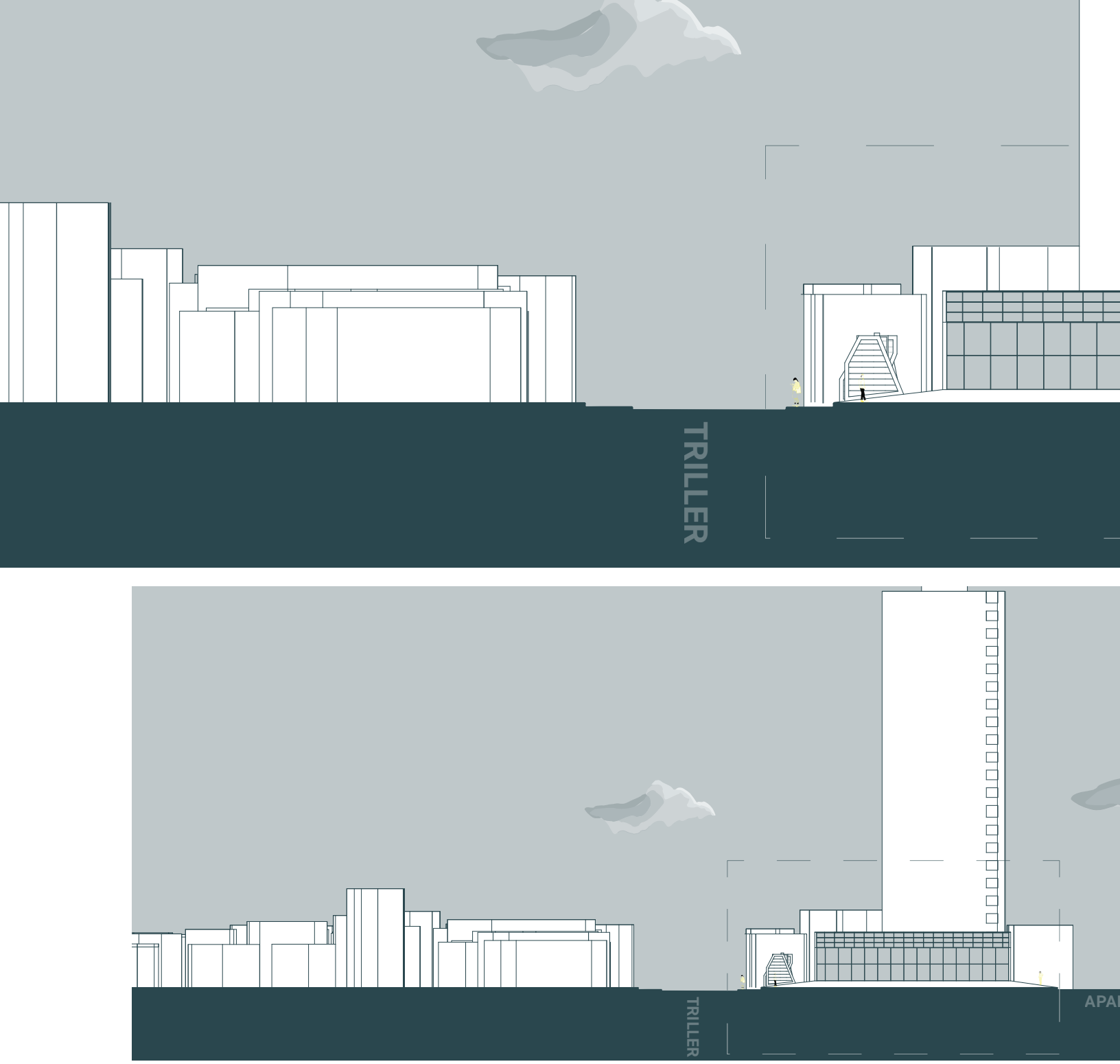


figure 79.0

The Garden - Elevation on Laneway - 1:400
(above)





figure 80.0

The Garden - Elevation on Laneway - 1:800
(below)

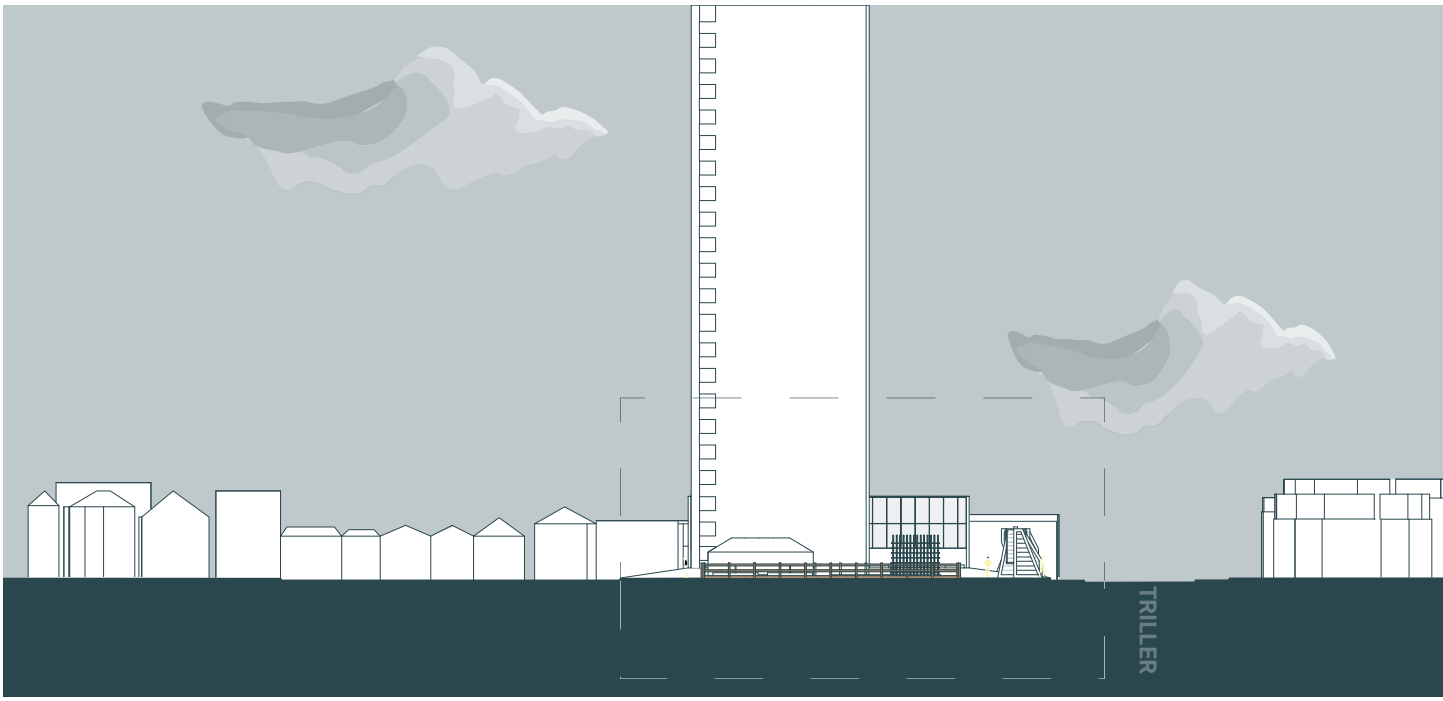


figure 81.0

The Garden - Elevation on Harvard - 1:400
(above)



figure 82.0

The Garden - Elevation on Harvard - 1:800
(below)



figure 83.0

The Garden - Rendering - Approach from Harvard



figure 84.0

The Garden - Rendering - Looking towards Triller Apartments



figure 85.0

The Garden - Perspective - Panels



figure 86.0

The Garden - Perspective - Approach towards Greenhosue

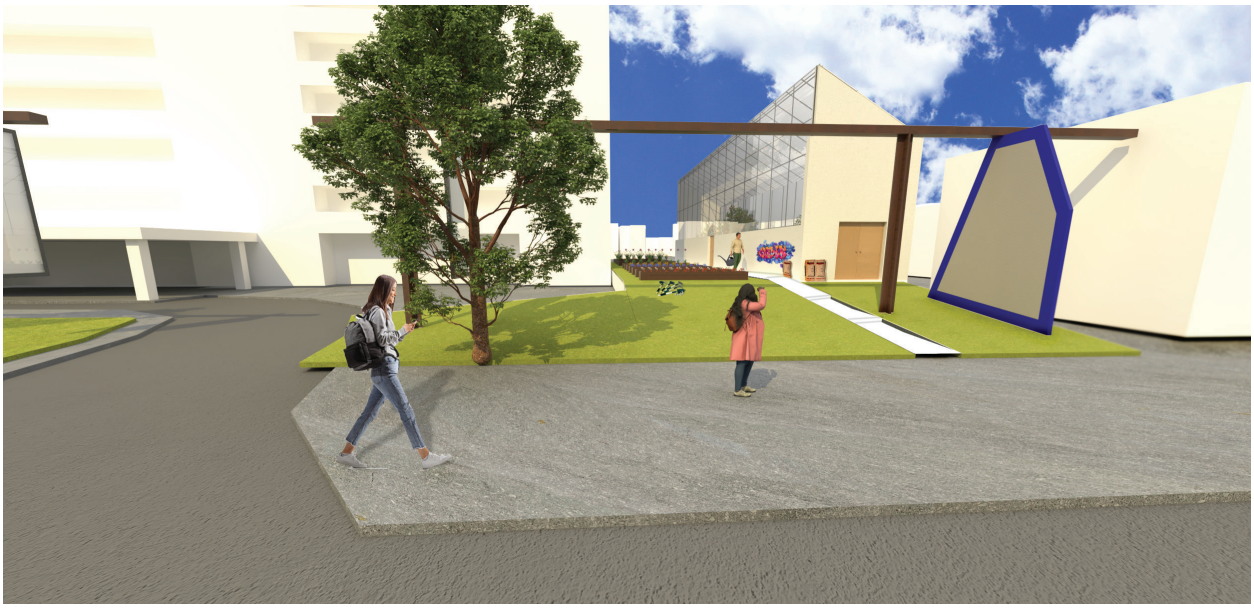


figure 87.0

The Garden - Perspective - Approach towards Greenhosue



figure 88.0

The Garden - Perspective - Greenhosue



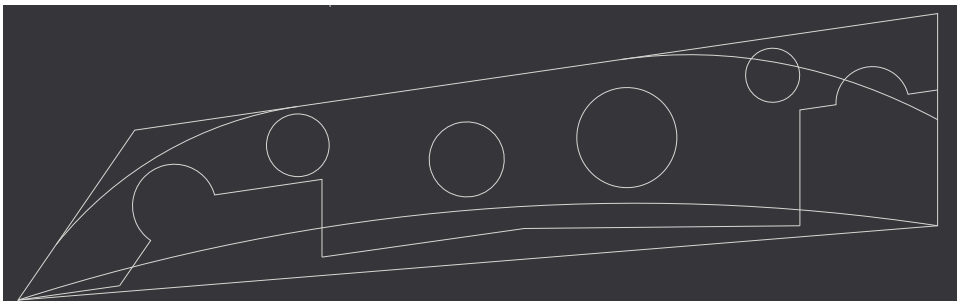
figure 89.0

The Garden - Perspective - Planters outside the Greenhouse

5.4: the safe space

A Safe Space can be any place where an individual feels safe and comfortable. To some this could be their home, or even ones room. Defining what makes up a safe space is no longer limited to just a physical three dimensional space but this proposal starts to be. The site situated at Dundas Street West and Sterling Road is located neighbouring the CNR line. Sloping south towards Dundas, the site is surrounded by Commercial factories, government buildings, transportation zones as well as a contemporary museum (the museum of contemporary art or MOCA) located north of Sterling Road. The existing site consists of a rather large parking lot that sits west of a school divided by the fence. The decision taken here was to section of some of the existing parking spaces and revitalize the rest into a skate park with some programmed indoor elements.

The result of this exploration on the site is a semi covered skate park located away from the residential neighbourhoods to make sure its occupants can enjoy their time on the grounds. The roof starts to follow a similar language in form dictated by the skate park, trying to achieve a more open look (with the large perforations) and creating a secondary layer. The final element within the site is two pavilions located on either end of the site. Each pavilion highlights a slightly different program but is meant to be lightly programmed with flexibility for seating and rooms. Two important programs within the pavilions to highlight are, the expressive blank canvas rooms, meant for any individual who wishes to express themselves using any artistic medium in the rooms with floor to ceiling blank sheets. The other being the counseling rooms, to ensure the well-being and providing opportunities for those who would like to utilize the service being offered, individually or in a group setting.



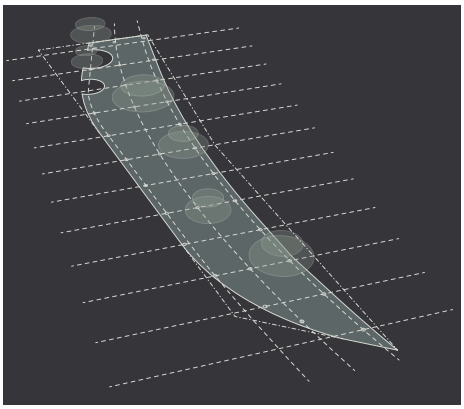


figure 90.0

The Safe Space - Spatial diagram & Parti

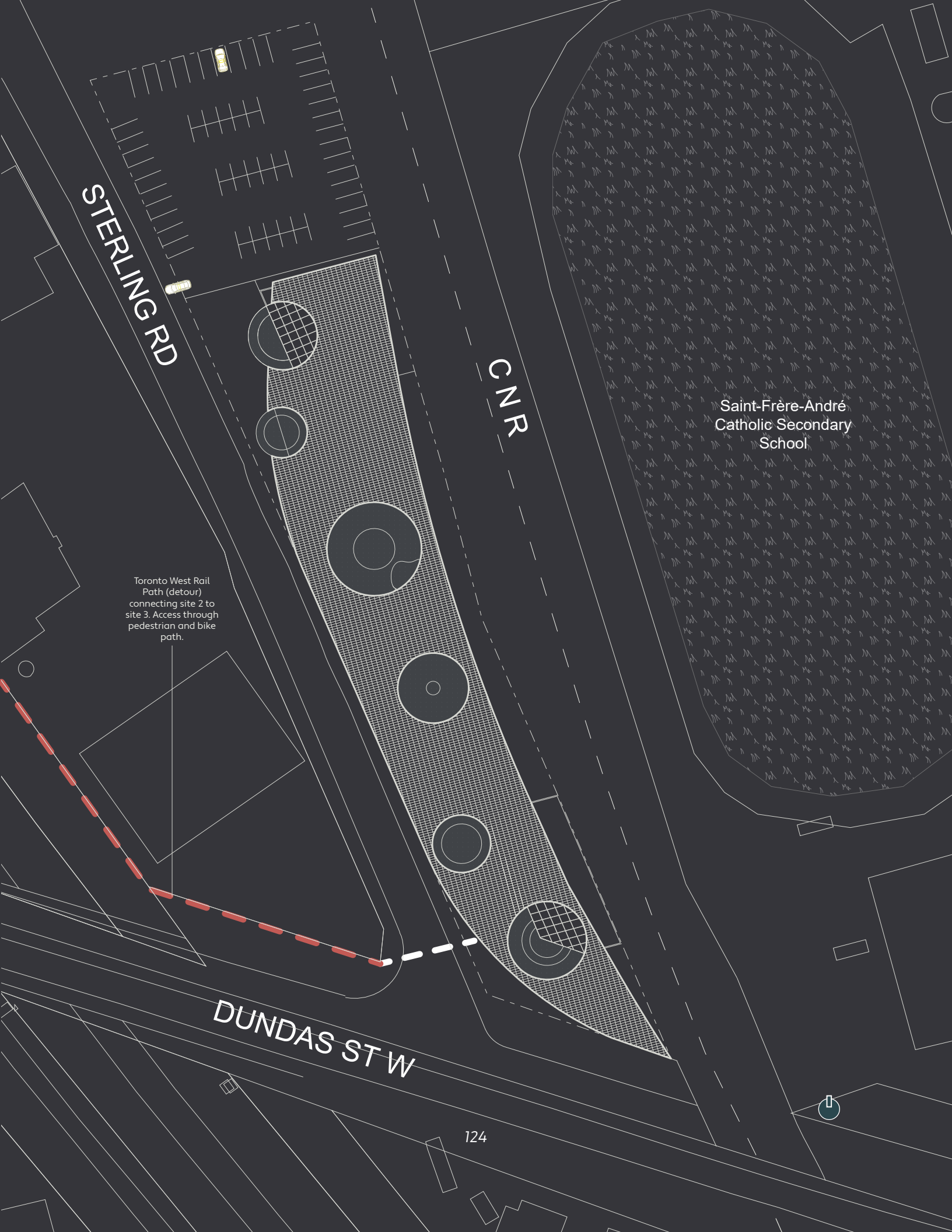
The site, currently a parking lot, offers a long and narrow space. It is bordered by Dundas Street West at an elevated level on one side and a railway intersection on the other. With no immediate towering buildings obstructing views, the site receives ample sunlight. A skate park, by nature, is an active and often noisy space, filled with the sounds of skateboards performing tricks, rolling, and occasionally falling, as well as groups gathering and socializing. The proposed design envisions a playground that remains connected to the surrounding landscape while being subtly tucked away from the city's hustle, maintaining an open perimeter to encourage engagement with its environment.

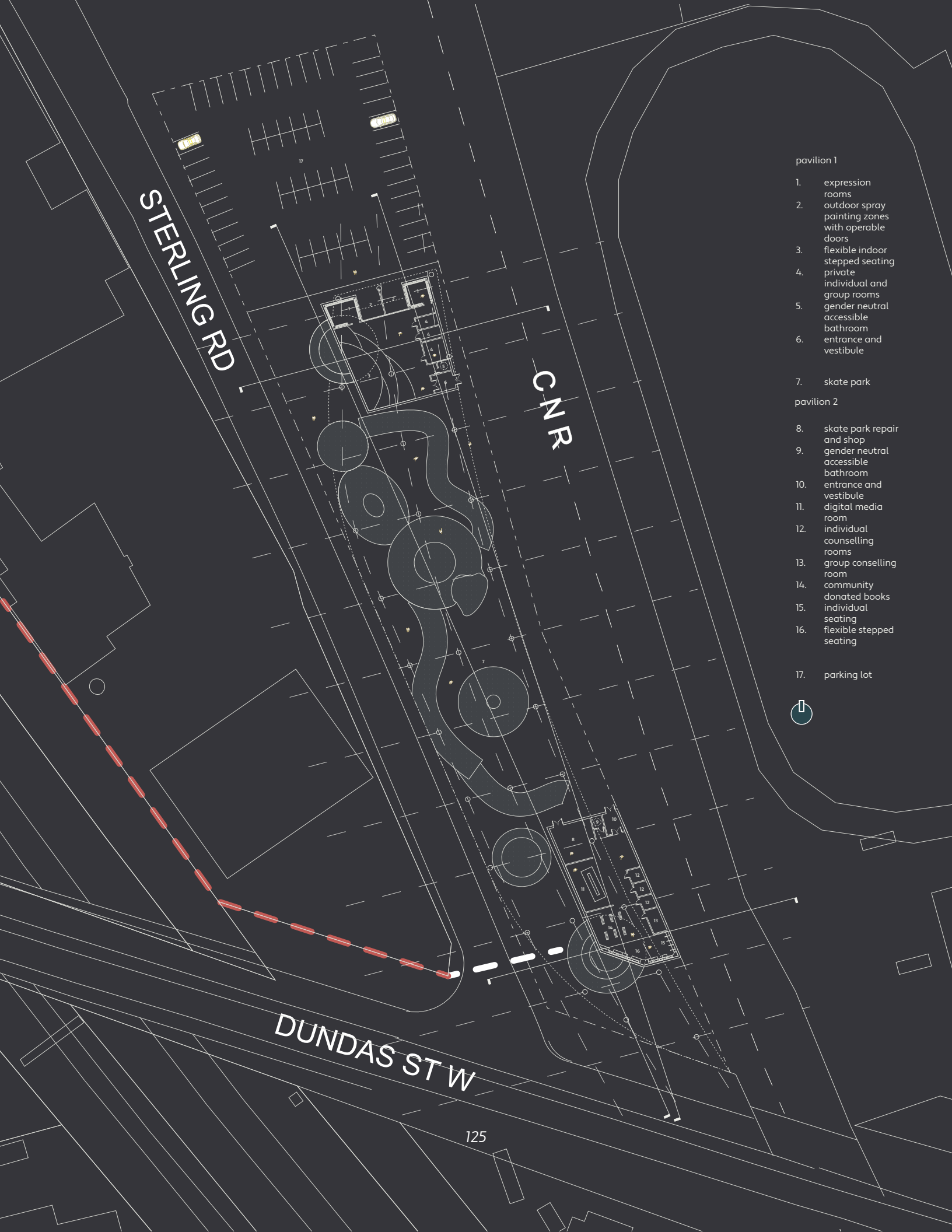
figure 91.0 (page 151)

The Safe Space - Plan - 1:900

figure 92.0 (page 152)

The Safe Space - Site plan - 1:800


STERLING RD
C N R
Saint-Frère-André Catholic Secondary School
Toronto West Rail Path (detour) connecting site 2 to site 3. Access through pedestrian and bike path.
DUNDAS ST W



pavilion 1

1. expression rooms
2. outdoor spray painting zones with operable doors
3. flexible indoor stepped seating
4. private individual and group rooms
5. gender neutral accessible bathroom
6. entrance and vestibule

7. skate park

pavilion 2

8. skate park repair and shop
9. gender neutral accessible bathroom
10. entrance and vestibule
11. digital media room
12. individual counselling rooms
13. group conselling room
14. community donated books
15. individual seating
16. flexible stepped seating

17. parking lot

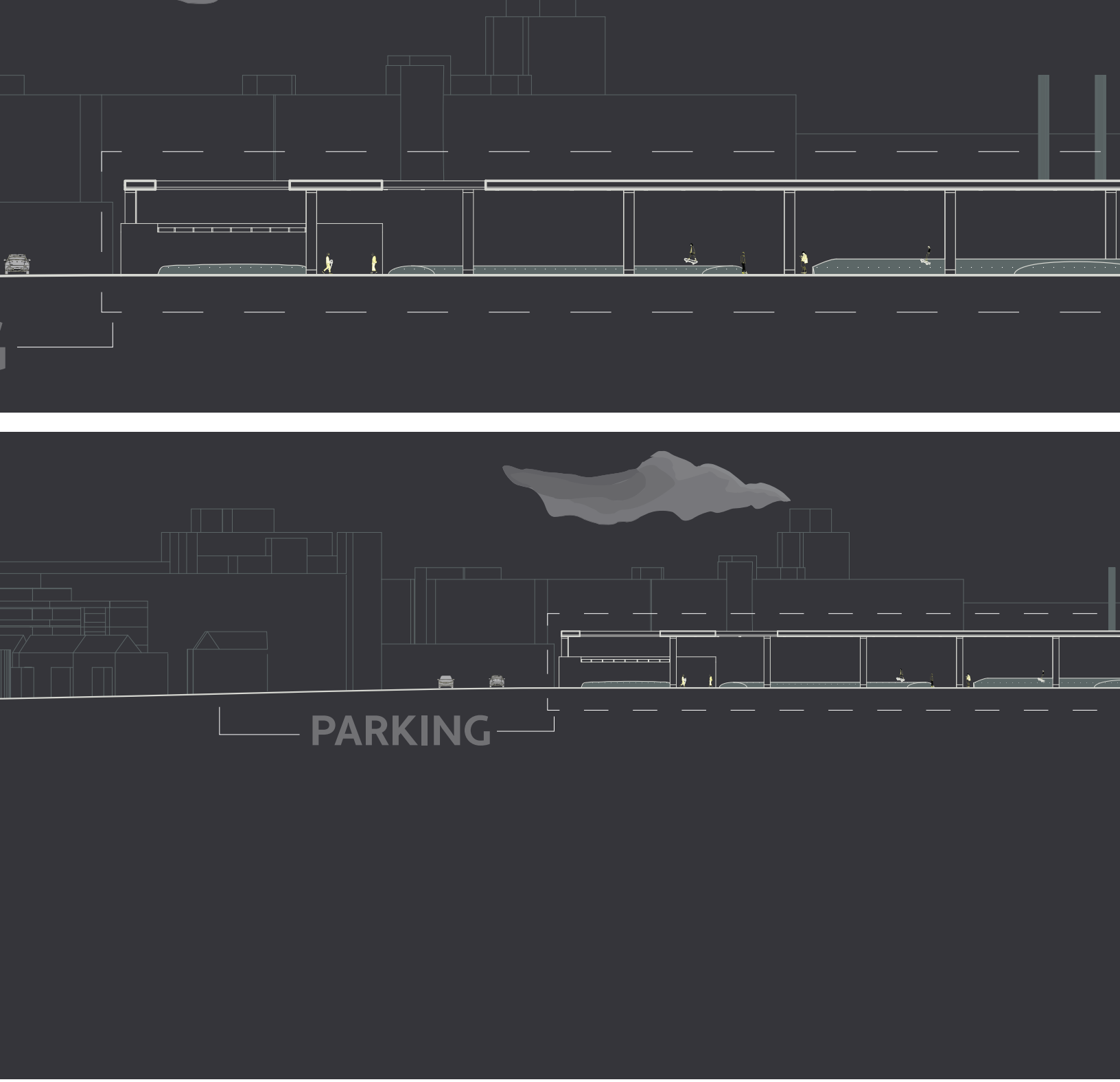


figure 93.0

The Safe Space - Elevation - 1:500 (above)

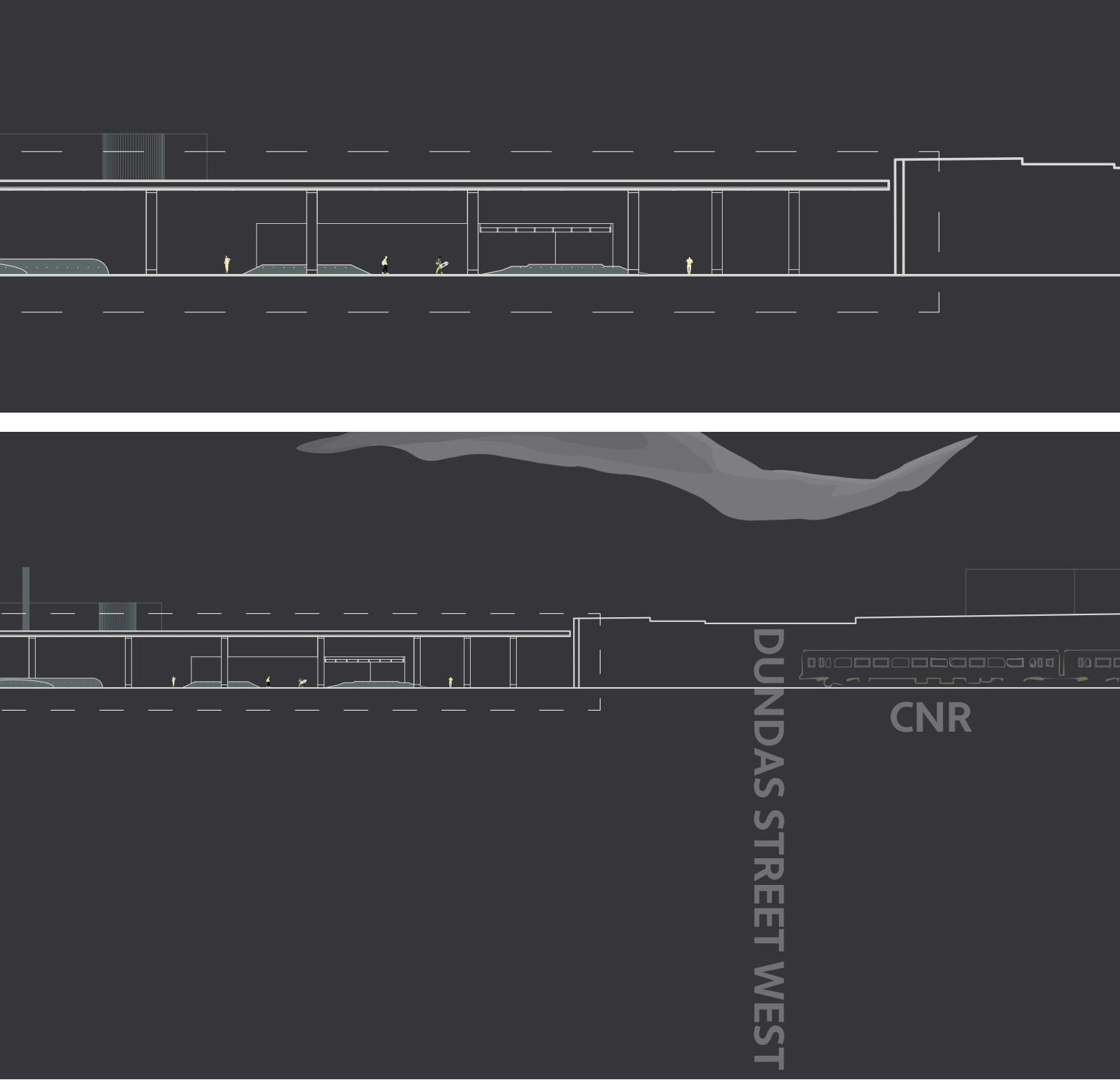


figure 94.0

The Safe Space - Elevation - 1:800 (below)

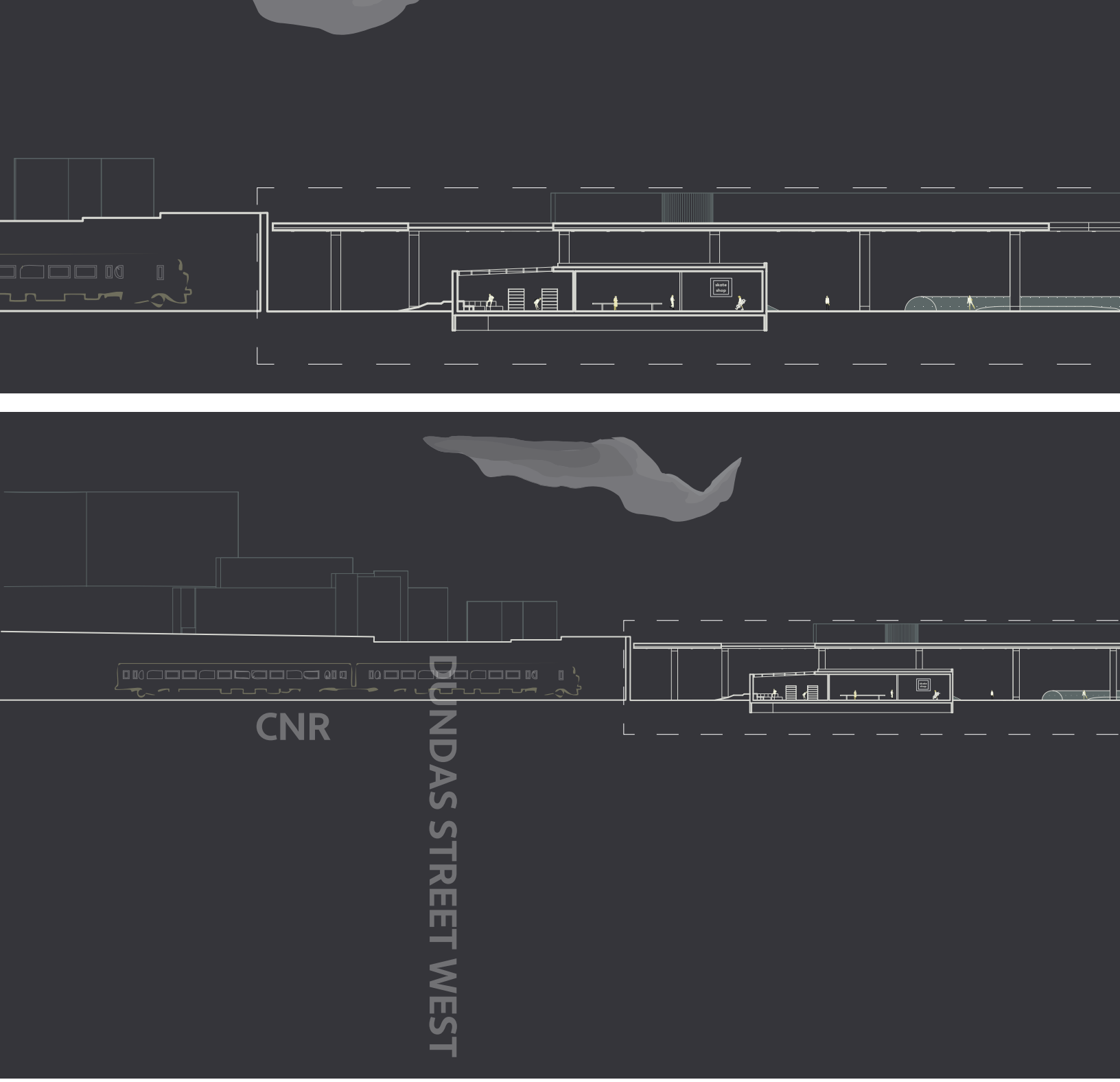


figure 95.0

The Safe Space - Section NS - 1:500 (above)

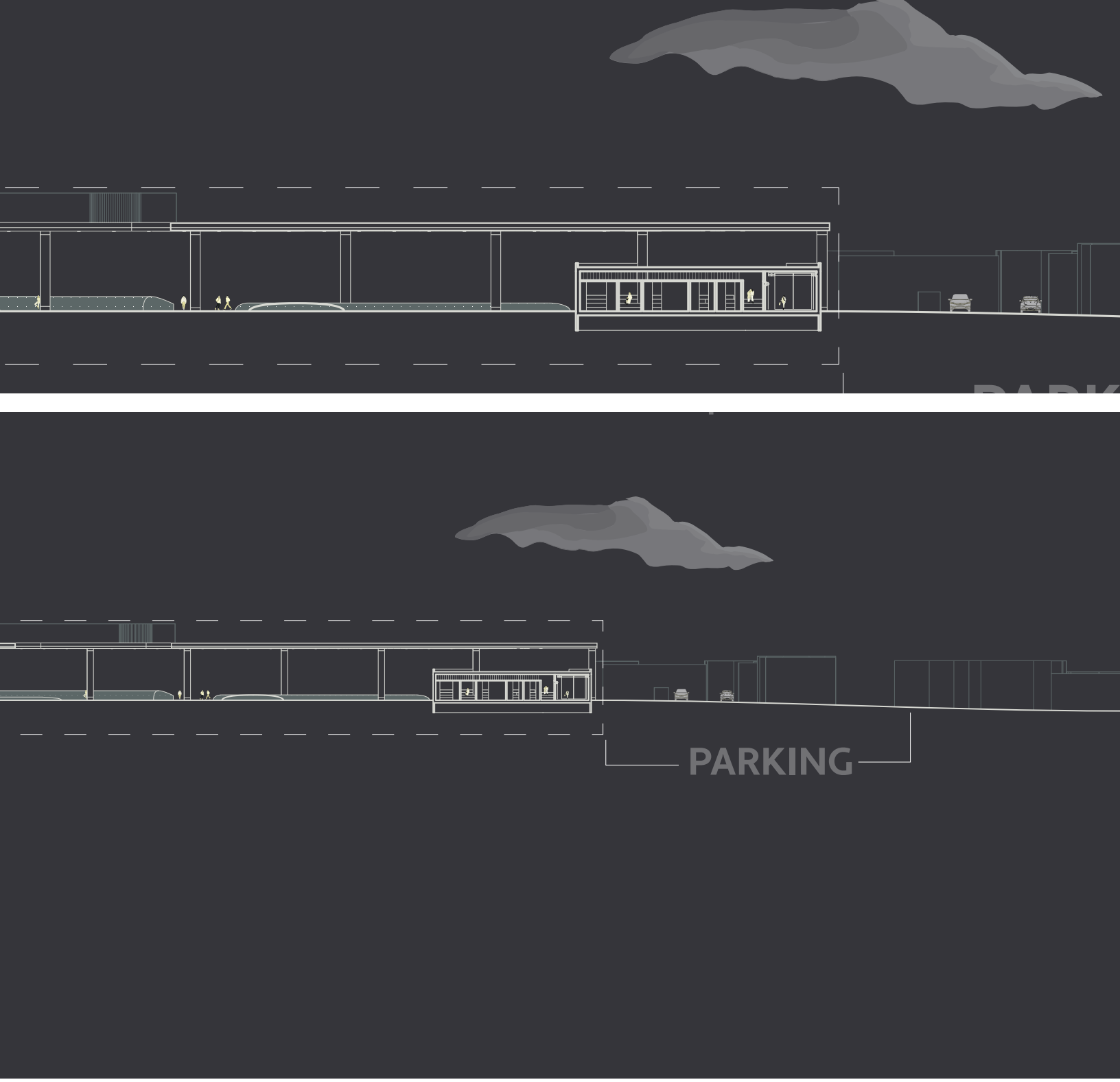


figure 96.0

The Safe Space - Section NS - 1:800 (below)

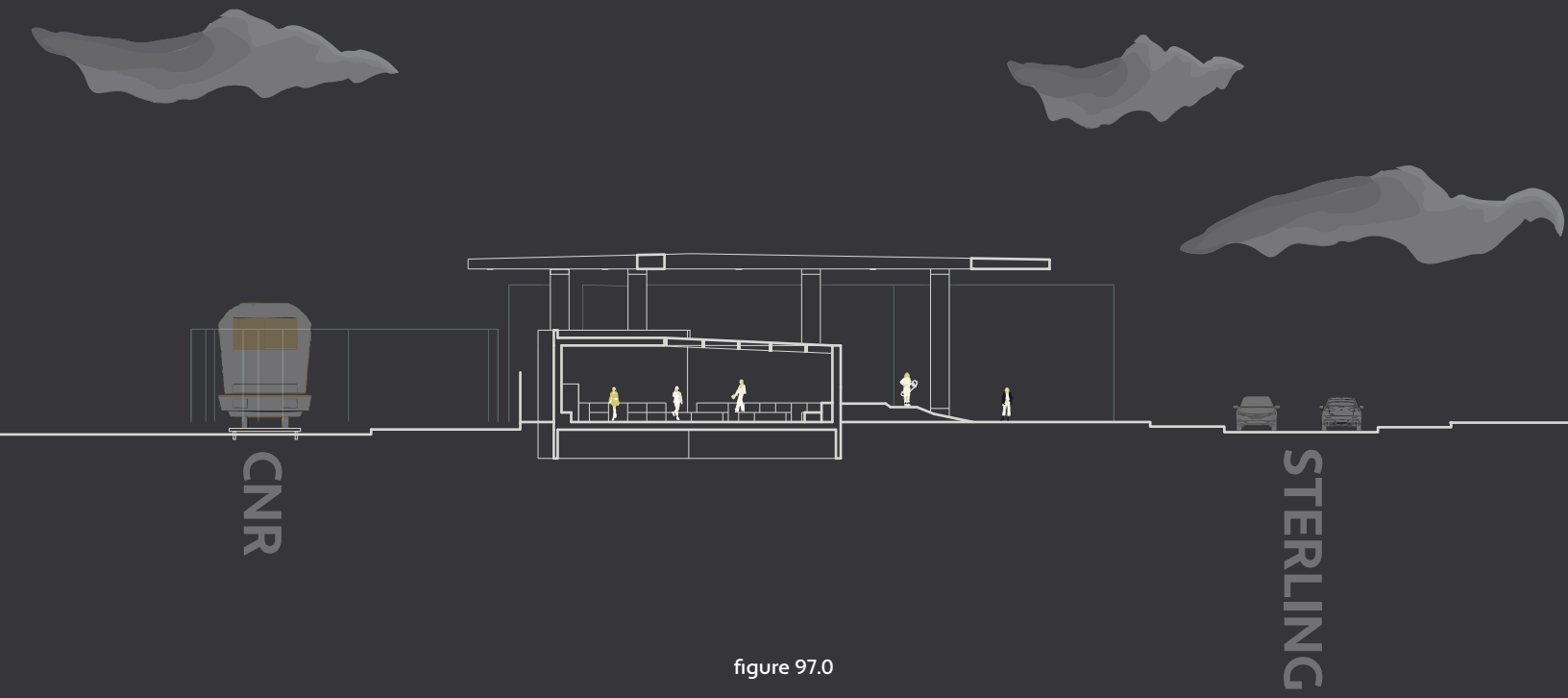


figure 97.0

The Safe Space - Section through Pavilion 1 - 1:400

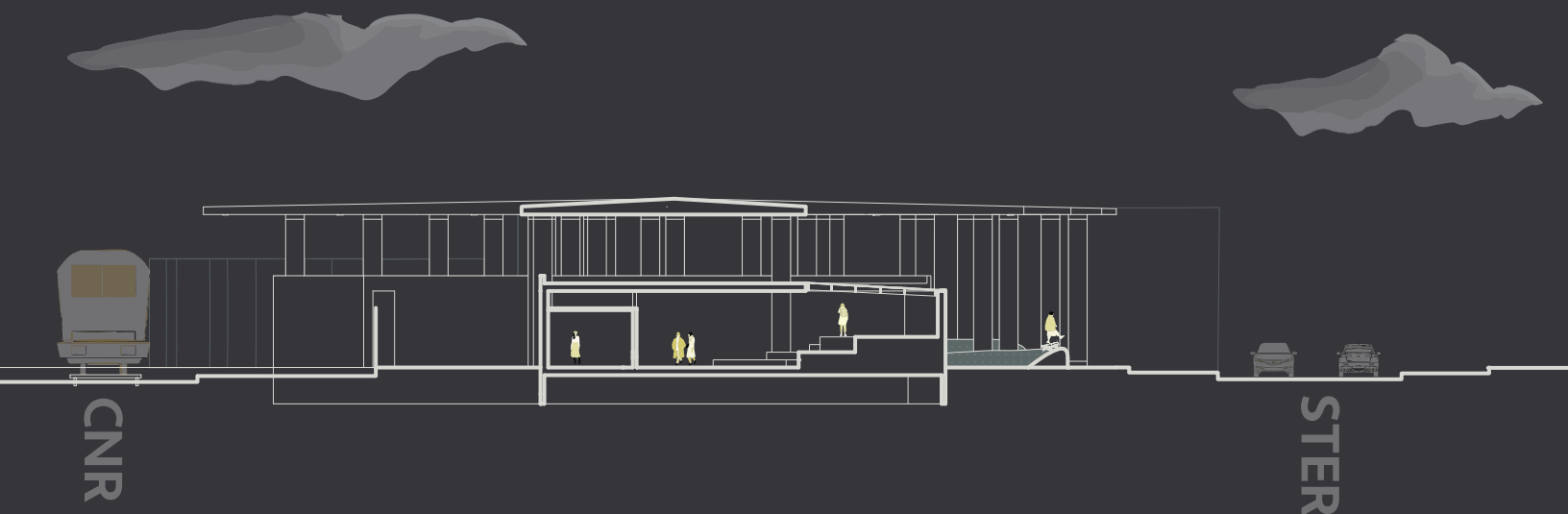
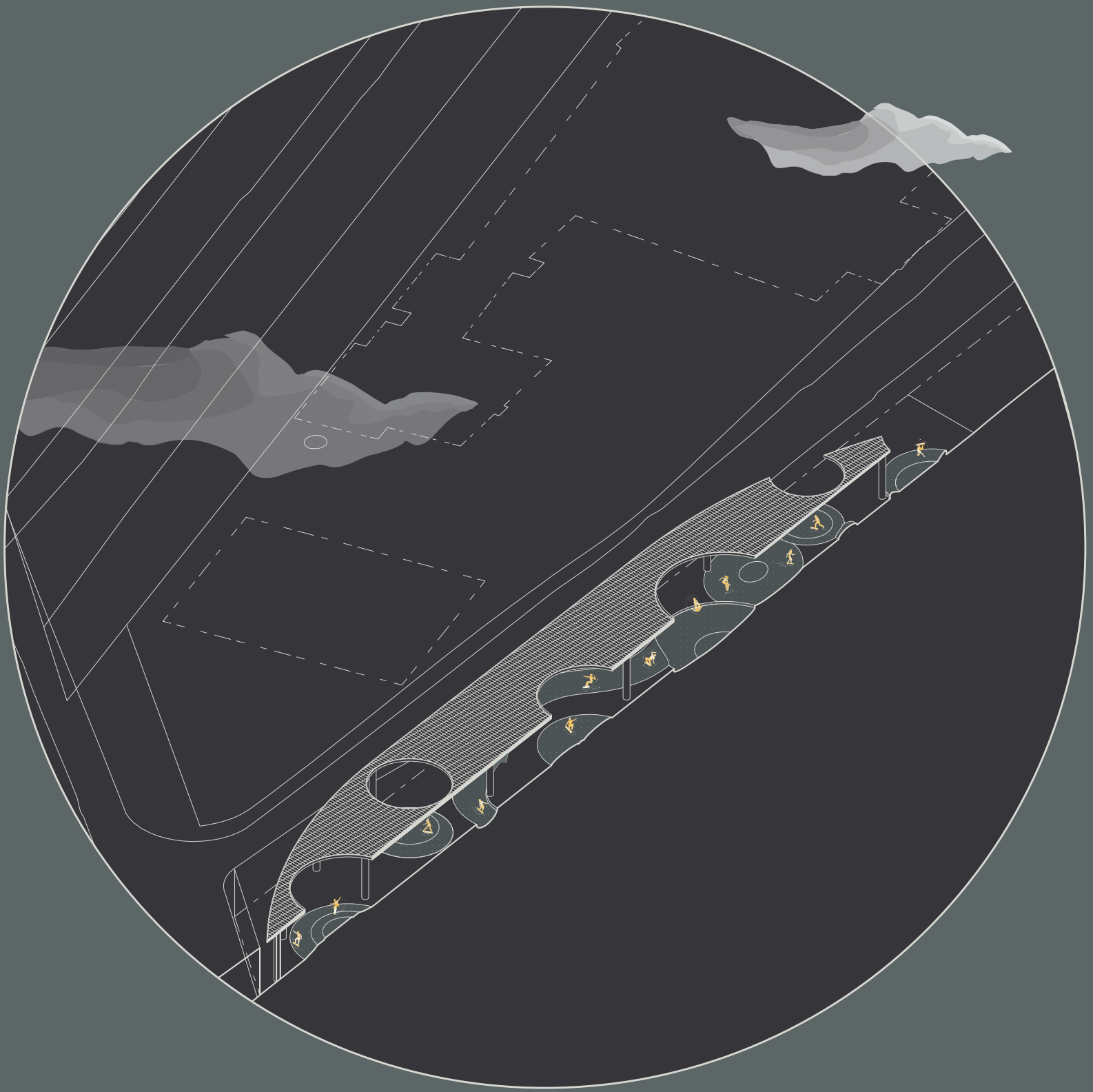


figure 98.0

The Safe Space - Section through Pavilion 2 - 1:400

figure 99.0

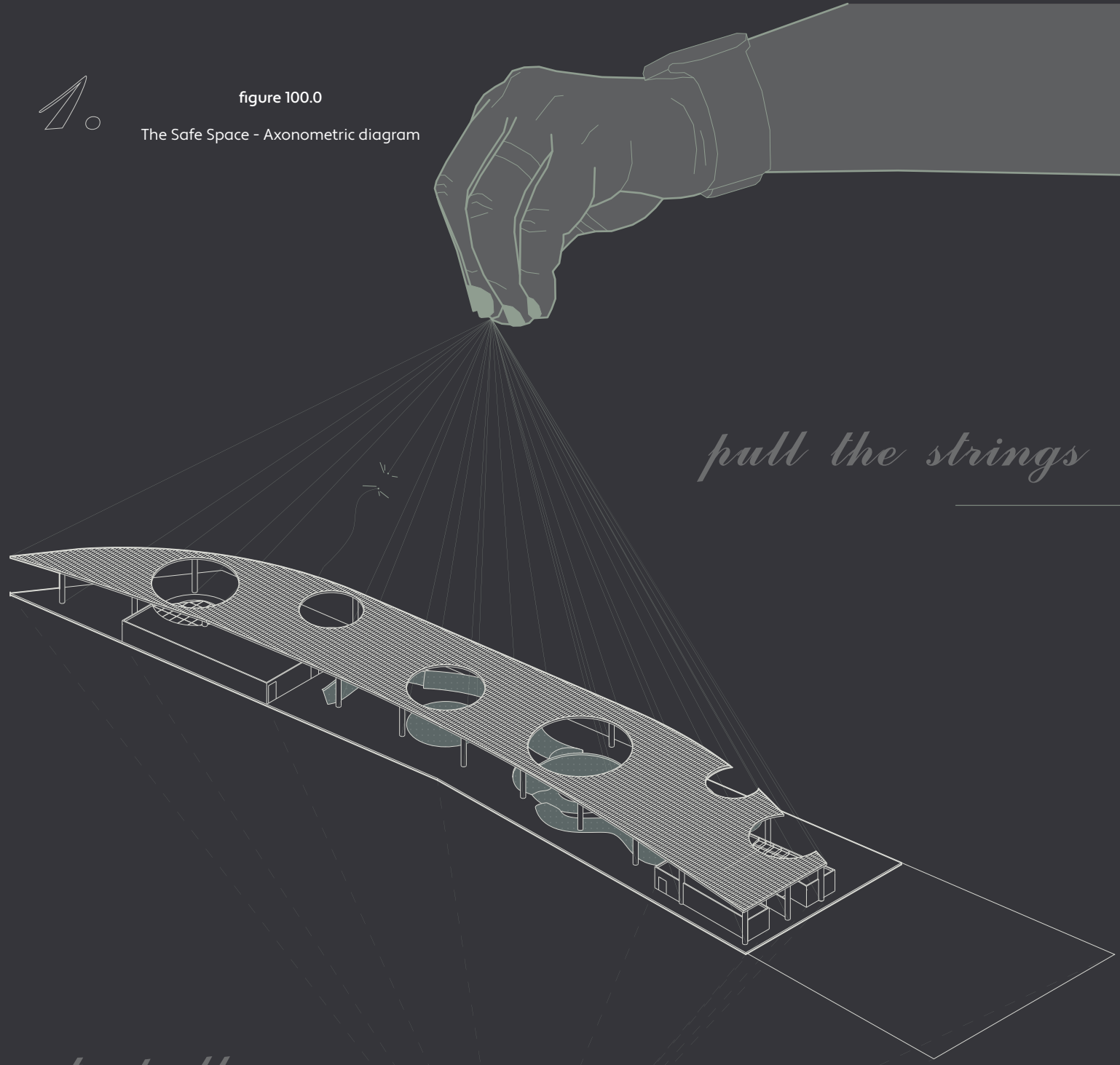
The Safe Space - Sectional Axonometric



1.0

figure 100.0

The Safe Space - Axonometric diagram



pull the strings

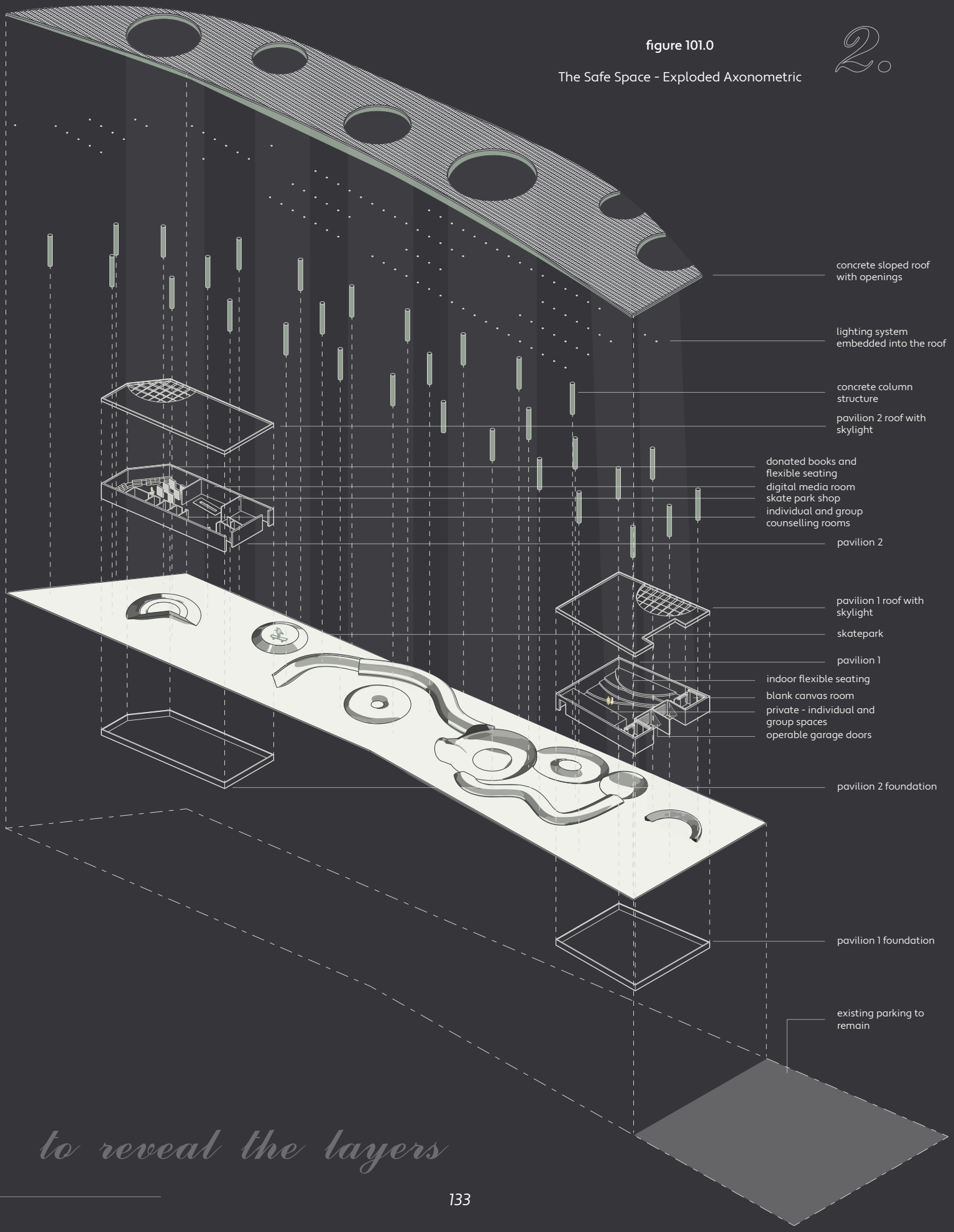
to pull

it apart

figure 101.0

The Safe Space - Exploded Axonometric

2.



to reveal the layers



figure 102.0

The Safe Space - Rendering - Overview of site



figure 103.0

The Safe Space -Rendering - Pavilion 1 indoor seating

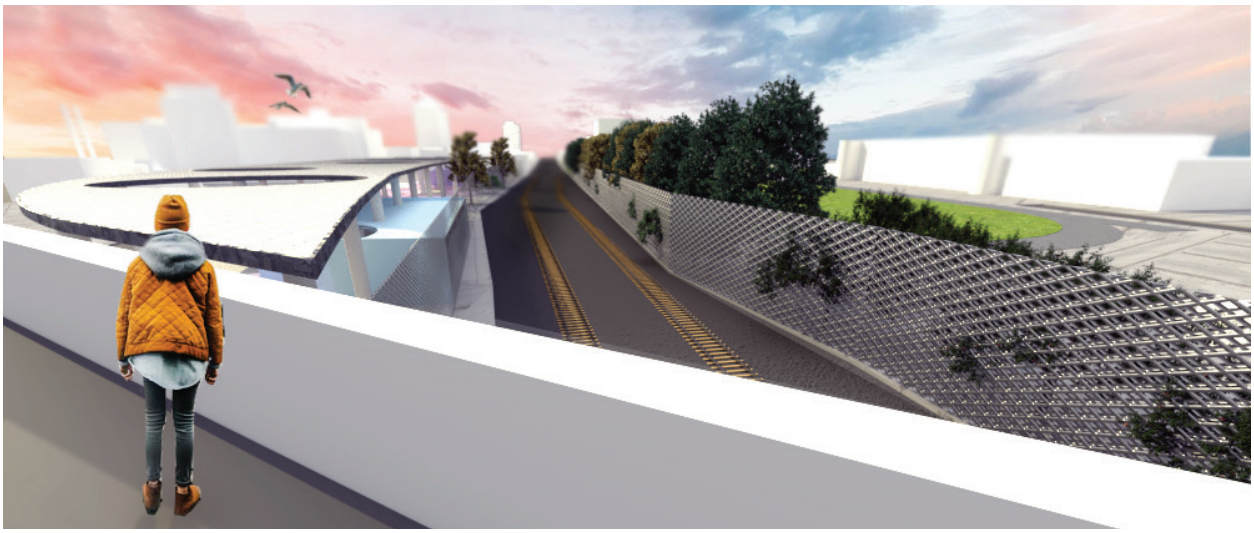


figure 104.0

The Safe Space - Rendering - Site and CNR over-looking from Dundas bridge



figure 105.0

The Safe Space - Rendering - Pavilion 1 art expression room & garage door





figure 106.0 (above)

The Safe Space - Rendering - Skate park

figure 107.0 (below)

The Safe Space - Rendering - Skate park

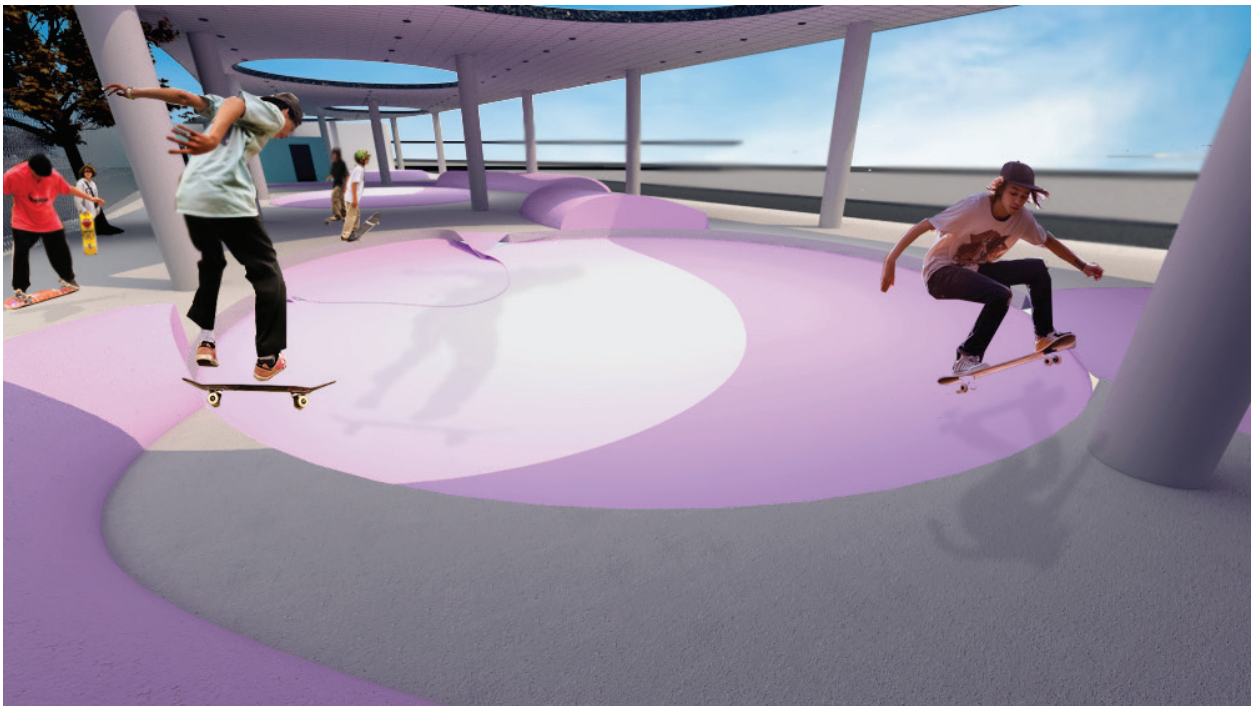




figure 108.0 (above)

The Safe Space - Rendering - Skate park

figure 109.0 (below)

The Safe Space - Rendering - Skate park

5.5: art

Art can mean many different things, and something uniquely different to every individual. In an article by Lisa Marder, titled *Ways of Defining Art* she notes, "The term 'art' is related to the Latin word 'ars' meaning, art, skill, or craft. The first known use of the word art is revealed in 13th-century manuscripts. However, the word and its many variants (artem, eart, etc.) have probably existed since the founding of Rome."[21]

On the final site it becomes a literal as well as a metaphorical representation of what opportunities can be and to utilize them to be able to transform the space, much like a blank canvas gaining colour from the brush being yielded by the hands that paints it. Located right off of Bloor Street West and rounding up the journey of the guide, The Art can be accessed either at the intersection of Bloor Street West and Perth Avenue or through the school grounds to the west where you can enjoy the journey on the pedestrian bridge, gaining views of the city and getting linked to the programed areas of the site. The bridge is also a connection between the school and programmed areas but also a stand alone element mimicking the language of the panels from Site 1 but also supporting the bridge. The light-weight concrete panels are meant to invite graffiti and provide a passage for anyone, separated from the underpass on Bloor Street West. The program is meant to expand on the existing activities in some of the surrounding institutions (Sault College & the Secondary School), but also invite other youth in the immediate or larger community to be able to integrate and make use of the site. The site being named Art is largely due to the programs it offers including but not limited to, sculpture making, dance or movement, vocal or instrumental music, photography and encouraging graffiti or 'street art' as per the City of Toronto. A final element to note within this site is the central outdoor courtyard with a sculpture proposed in the middle by the author. While referencing the discussion in the representation chapter and its commentary on teenage-hood, the sculpture is a start, adding to the public art collection.

This public endeavour, is proposed to be run by the community. Reaching for a joint venture with the city's development services and local community leaders, after highlighted the importance of such spaces and to not only support them now but in its future developments based on these guides for architectural spaces catered towards teenagers for their well being. As public art in the city gets supported by the public, municipal government and private organizations, combining this as part of the public art collections could prove to be extremely beneficial. It would provide an opportunity for anyone accessing and creating art within the facility to be able to showcase it on a larger scale.

The program wrapping up this guide and narrative can be experienced as stand alone but also services being offered across each site, connecting each one by small elements within but also a larger concept throughout.



figure 110.0 (page 167)

Art - Site plan - 1:2500

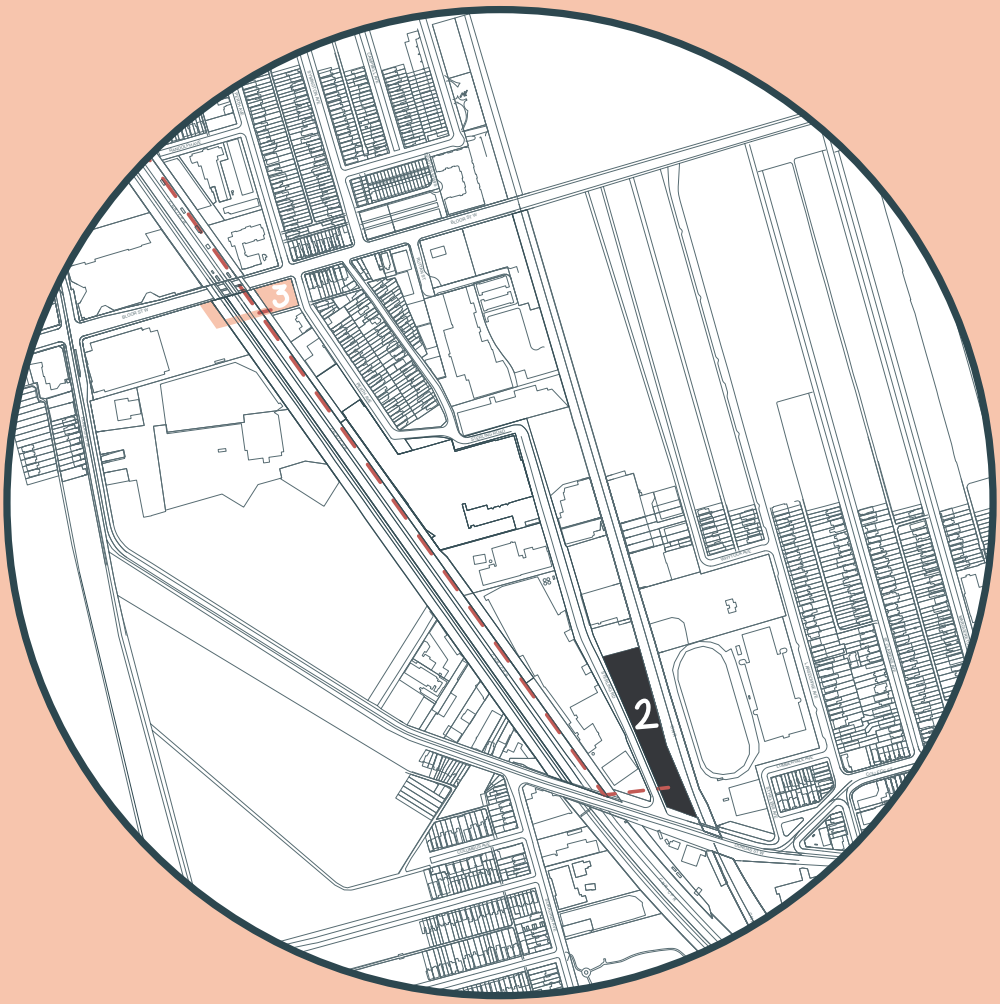
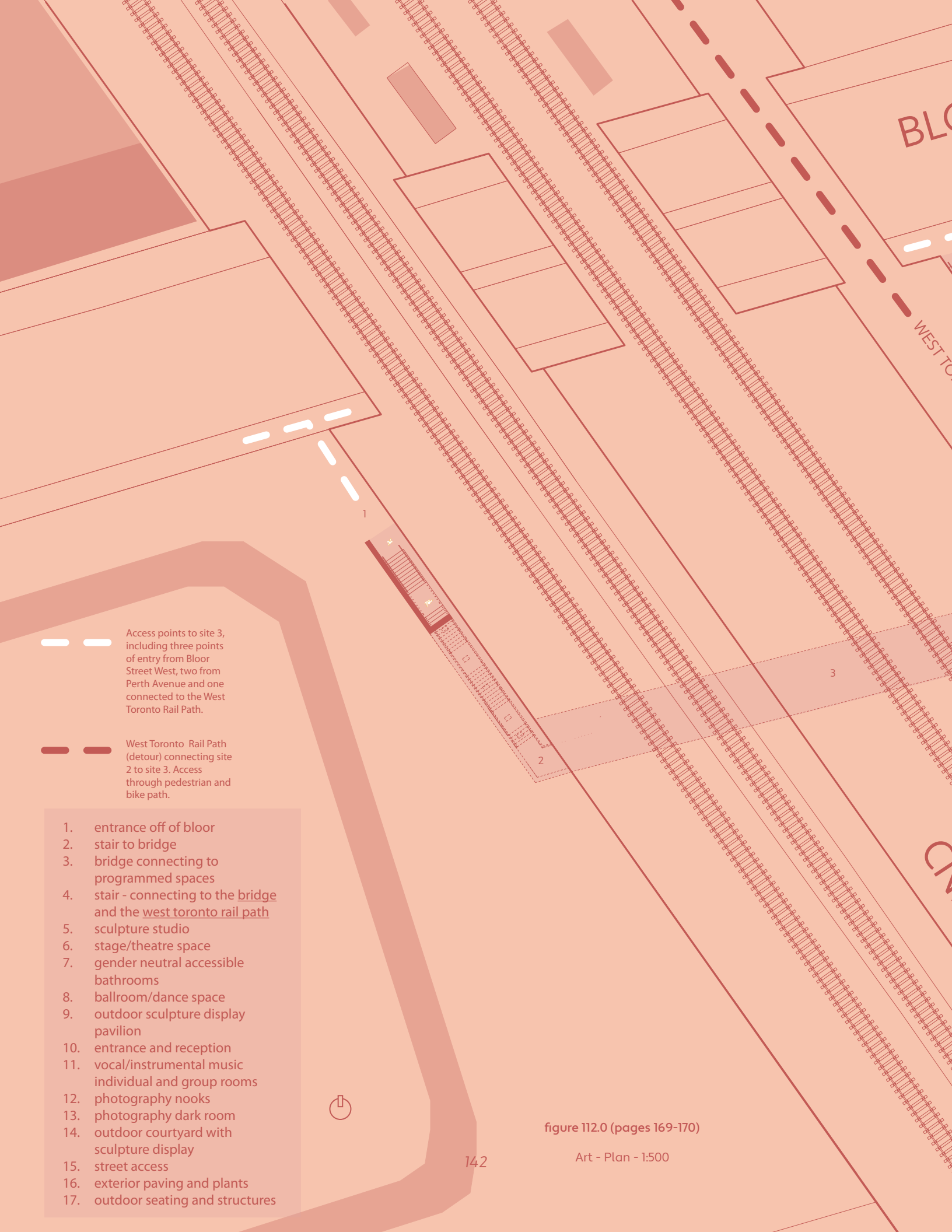


figure 111.0

Art - Site plan - West Toronto Rail Path
connecting site 2 and 3 - 1:10000

Connecting the Safe Space (Site 2) and Art (Site 3), the West Toronto Rail Path, described by the Friends of West Toronto Rail Path, a volunteer group focused on working with the WTR:

> The West Toronto Rail Path is a 2.1 km multi-modal human-powered trail that runs north to south through Toronto's Junction Triangle. Built on an abandoned rail line, WTR was designed as a safe, car-free, linear park. Rail Path follows what was one of many Indigenous trails starting at the shoreline of the ancient Glacial Lake Iroquois; now Davenport Road. Since opening in 2009, it's naturalized ecology has become a canvas for art, a lively community gathering space, and a catalyst for major neighbourhood changes and connections.[22]



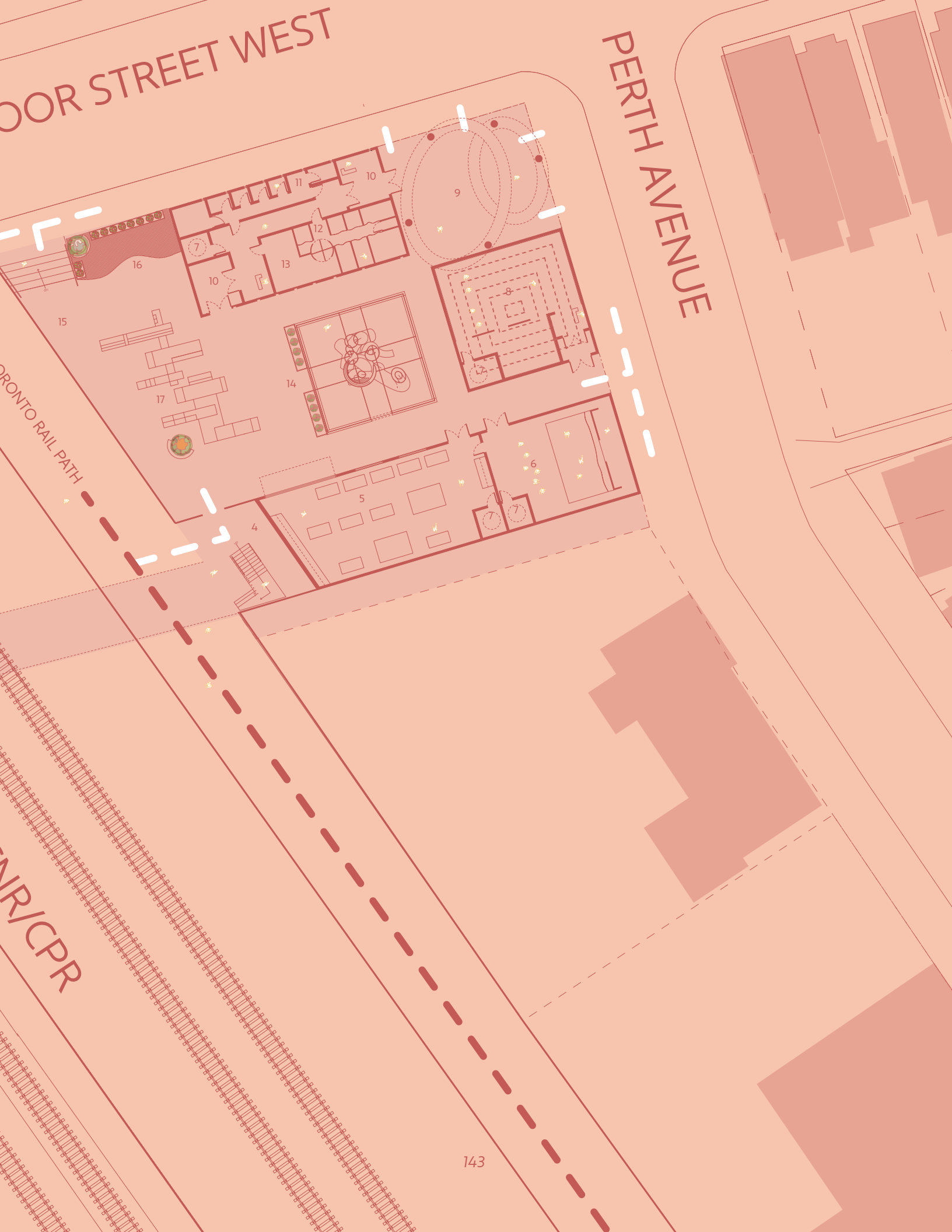
Access points to site 3, including three points of entry from Bloor Street West, two from Perth Avenue and one connected to the West Toronto Rail Path.

West Toronto Rail Path (detour) connecting site 2 to site 3. Access through pedestrian and bike path.

1. entrance off of bloor
2. stair to bridge
3. bridge connecting to programmed spaces
4. stair - connecting to the bridge and the west toronto rail path
5. sculpture studio
6. stage/theatre space
7. gender neutral accessible bathrooms
8. ballroom/dance space
9. outdoor sculpture display pavilion
10. entrance and reception
11. vocal/instrumental music individual and group rooms
12. photography nooks
13. photography dark room
14. outdoor courtyard with sculpture display
15. street access
16. exterior paving and plants
17. outdoor seating and structures

figure 112.0 (pages 169-170)

Art - Plan - 1:500


OOR STREET WEST
PERTH AVENUE
ORONTO RAIL PATH
N/R/CPR
16
15
17
14
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9
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7
6
5
4
143

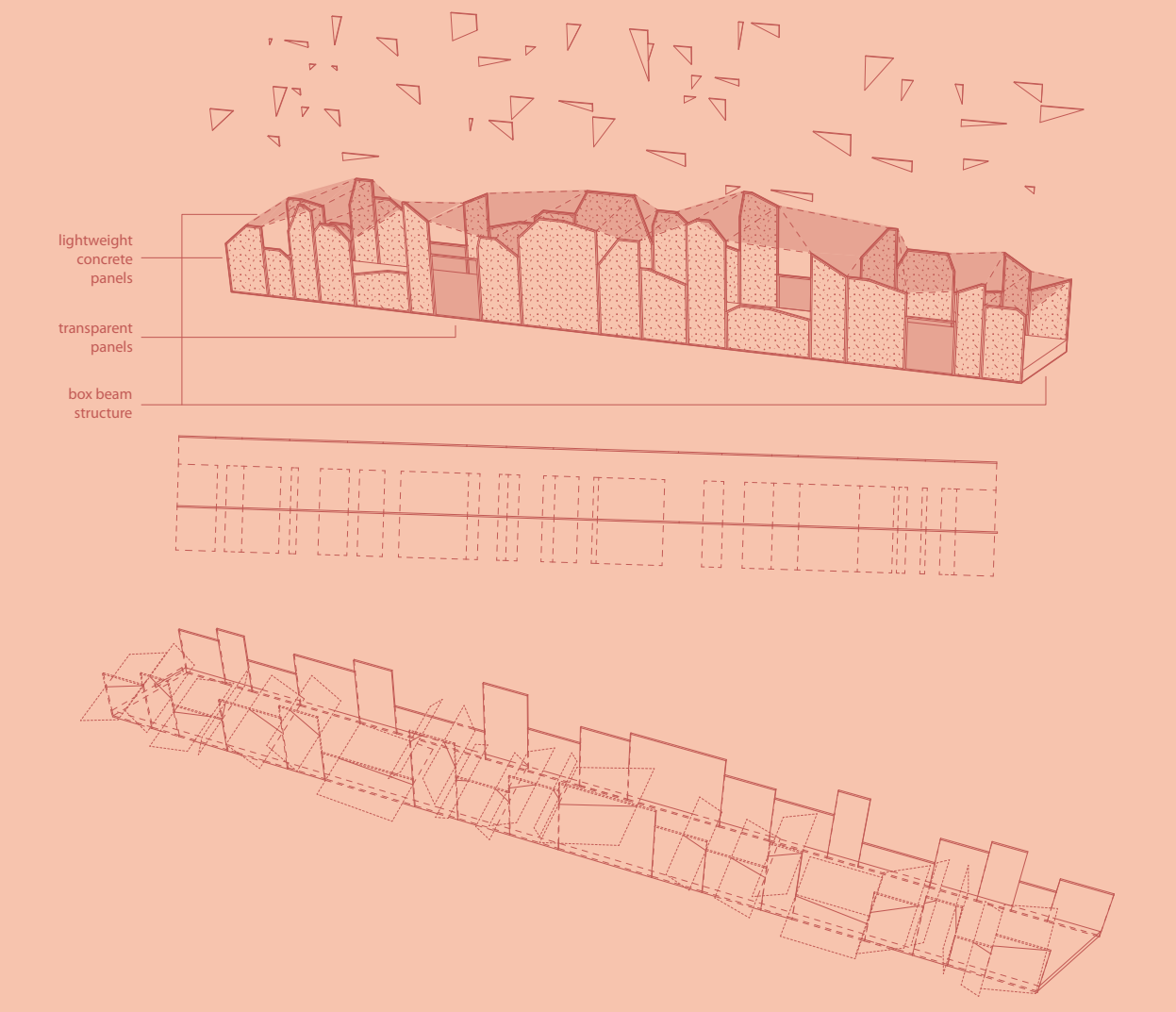


figure 113.0

Art - Bridge diagrams

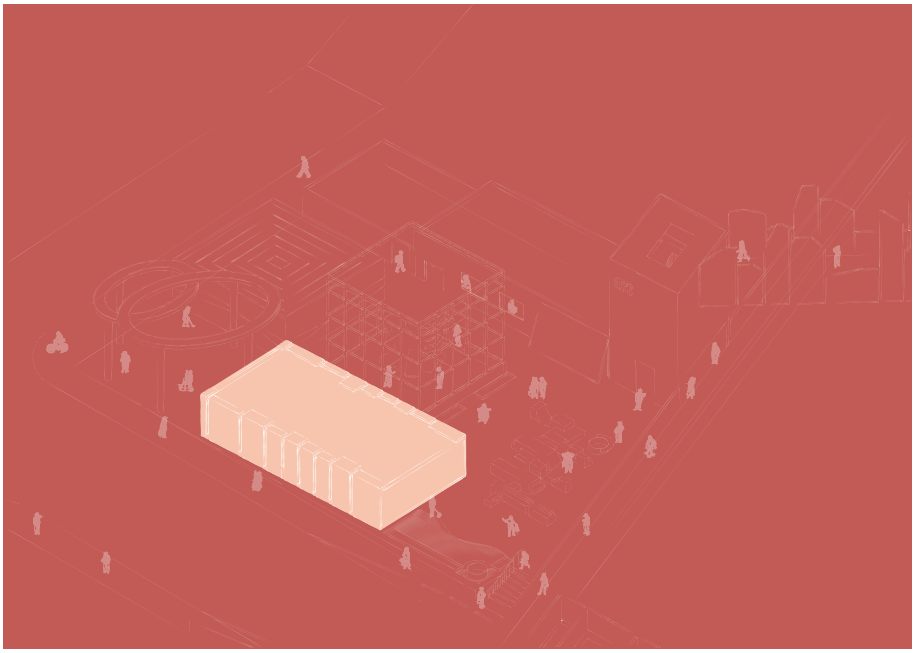
The bridge connects the school to the programmed space across the railway. It is reflective of the garden with its paneling system using light weight concrete. Acting as more than a passage, it is an invitation to Art.

figure 114.0 (pages 172-173)

Art - Site overview isometric




art



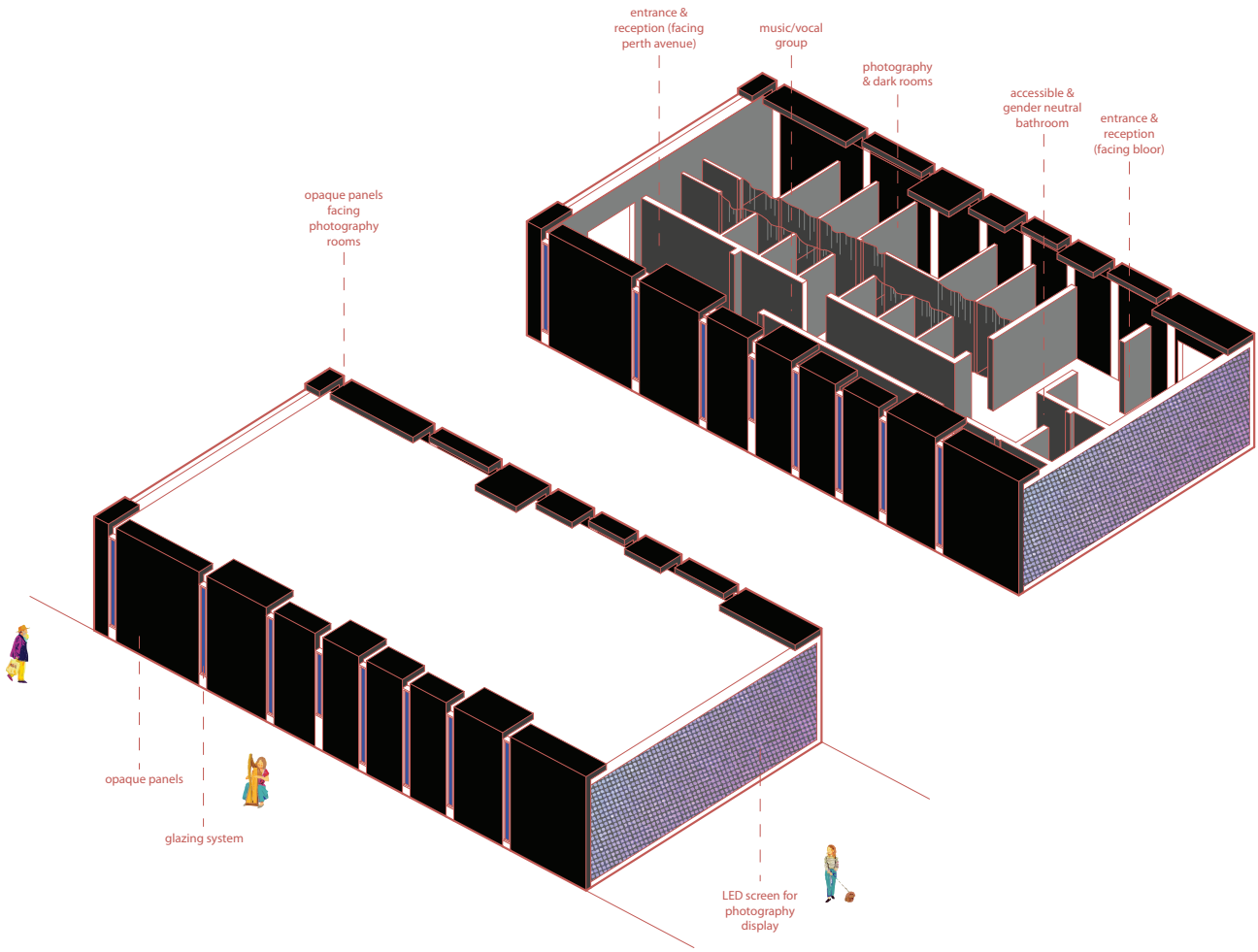


figure 115.0

Art - Site and photography/music space isometric



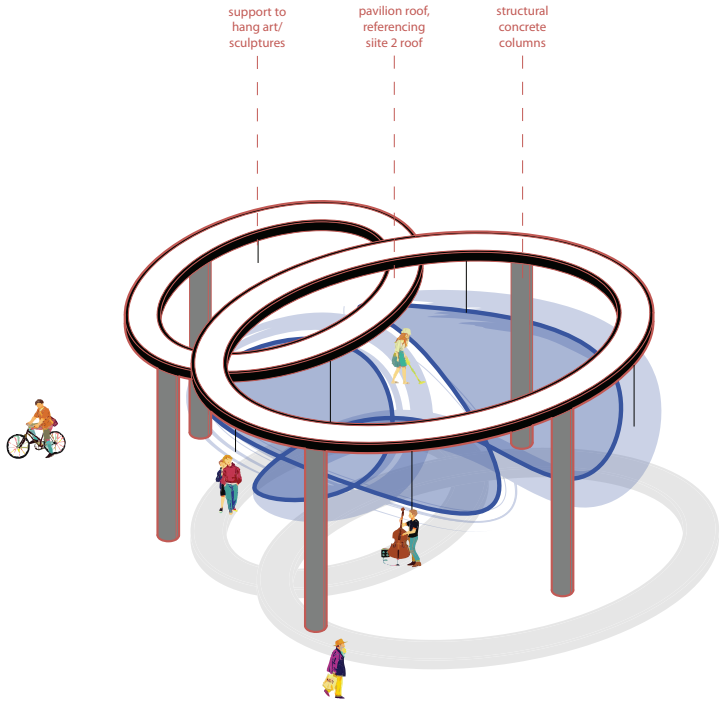


figure 116.0

Art - Site and sculpture exhibit/pavilion isometric



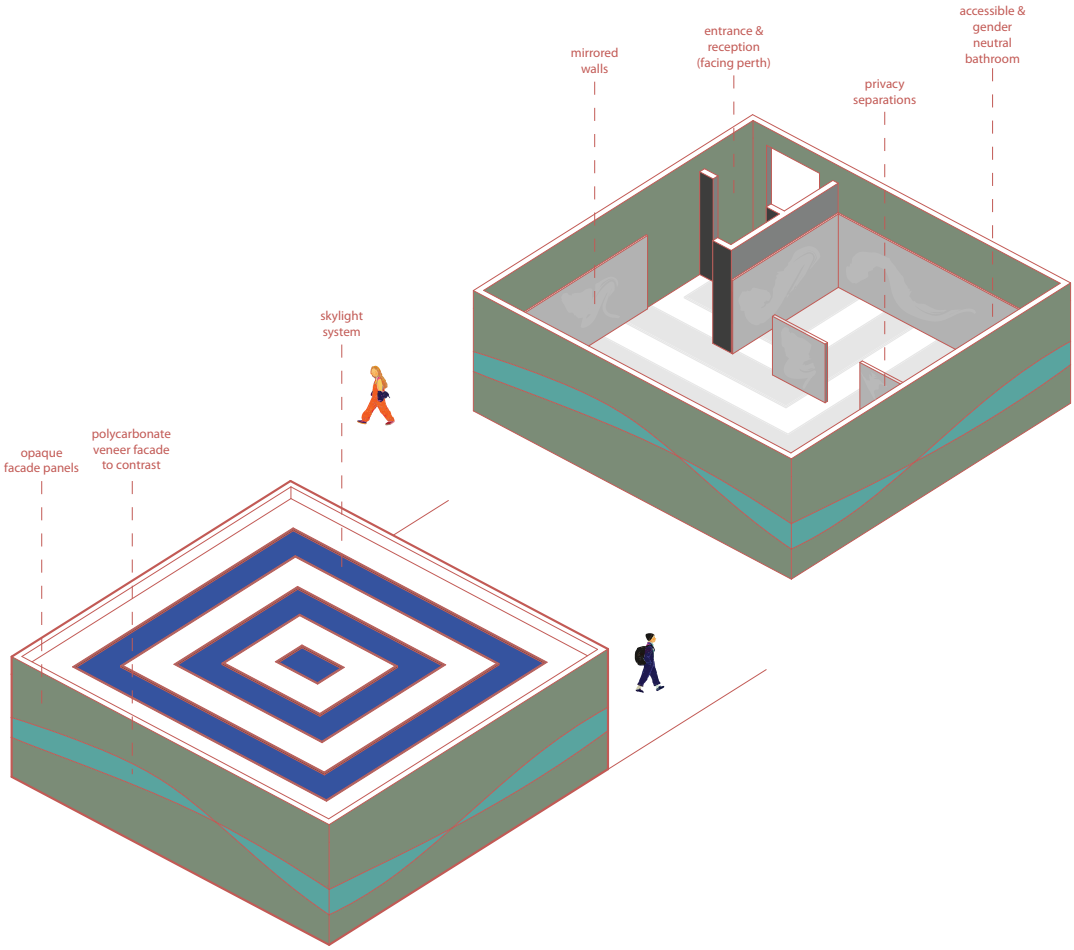
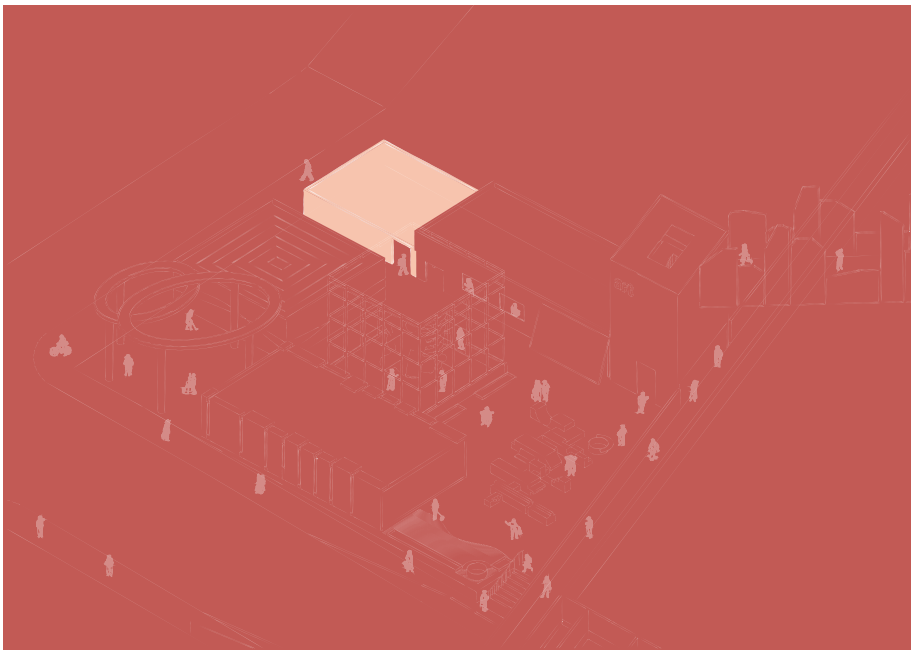


figure 117.0

Art - Site and dance space isometric



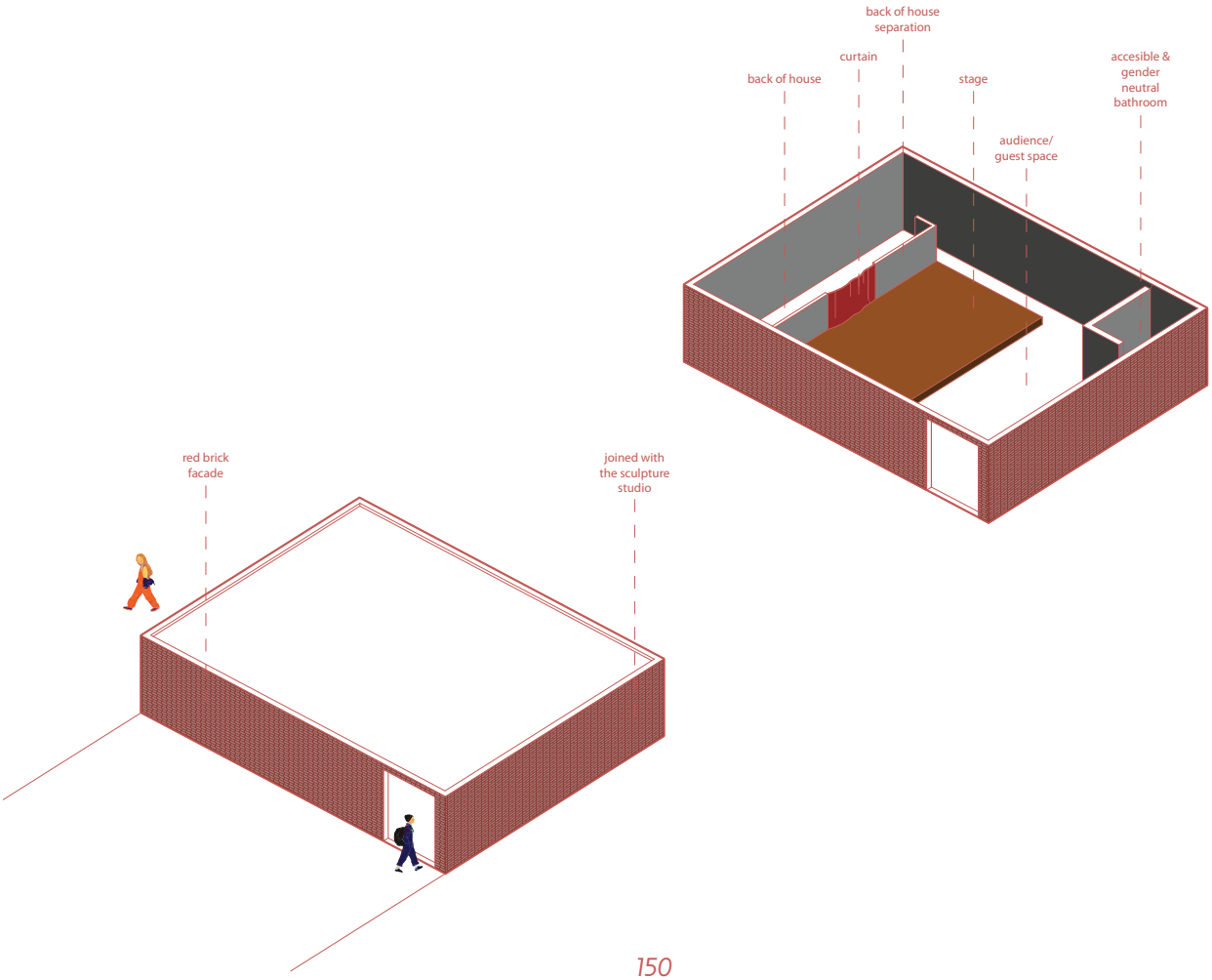
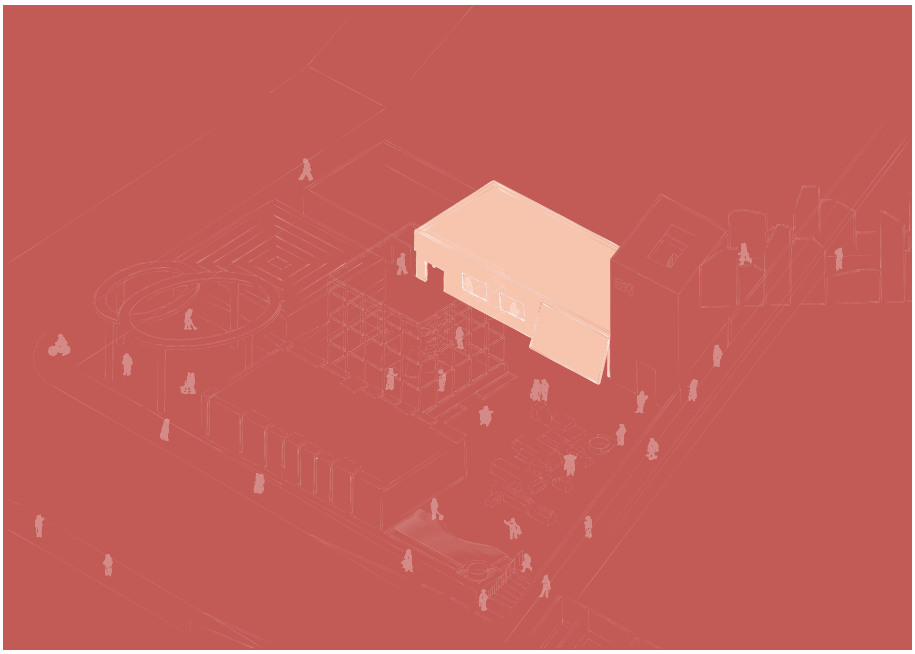


figure 118.0

Art - Site and stage/theatre space isometric



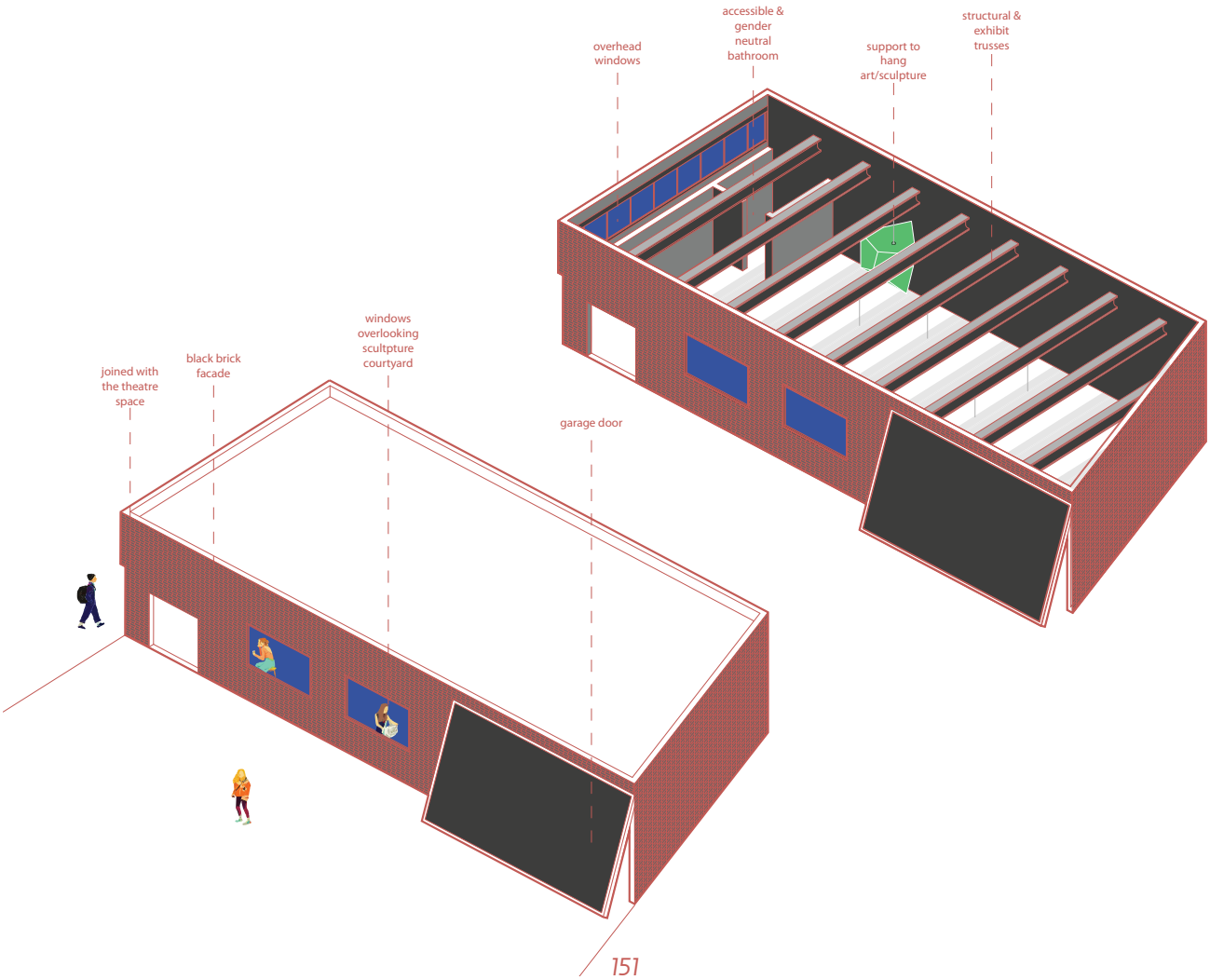
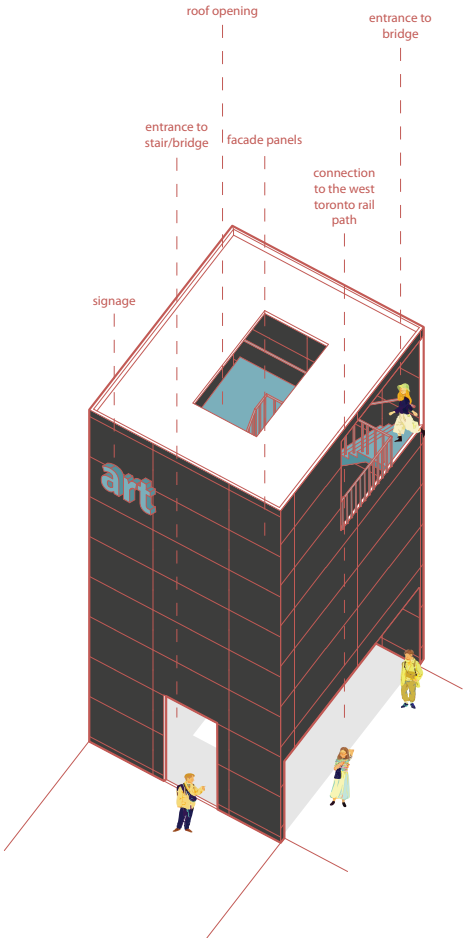


figure 119.0

Art - Site and sculpture studio isometric





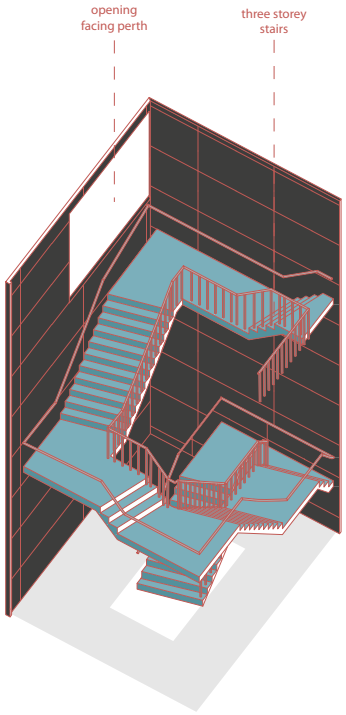


figure 120.0

Art - Site and stair isometric

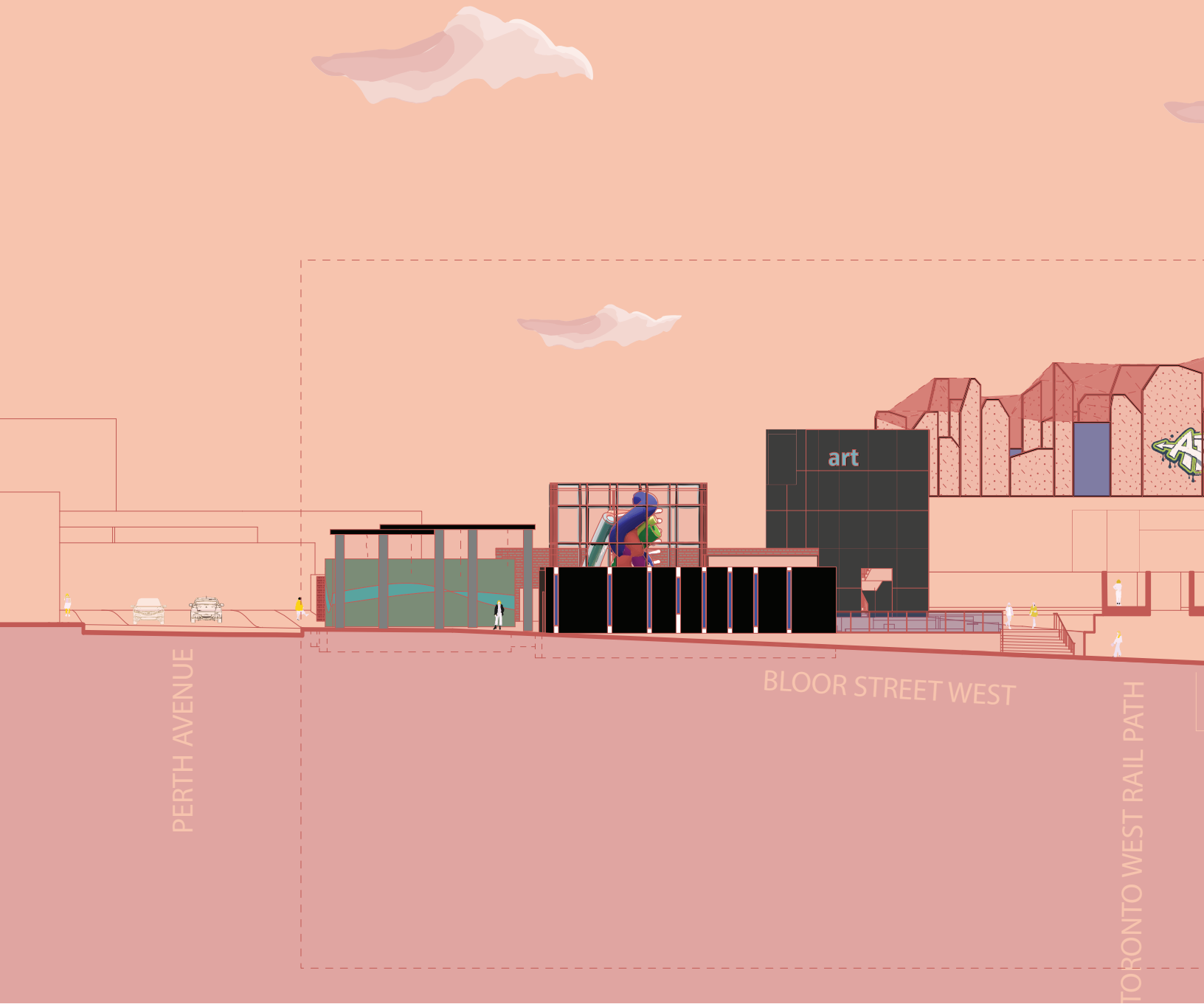


figure 121.0 (pages 180-181)

Art - Elevation at Bloor St W- 1:500 - 1/2

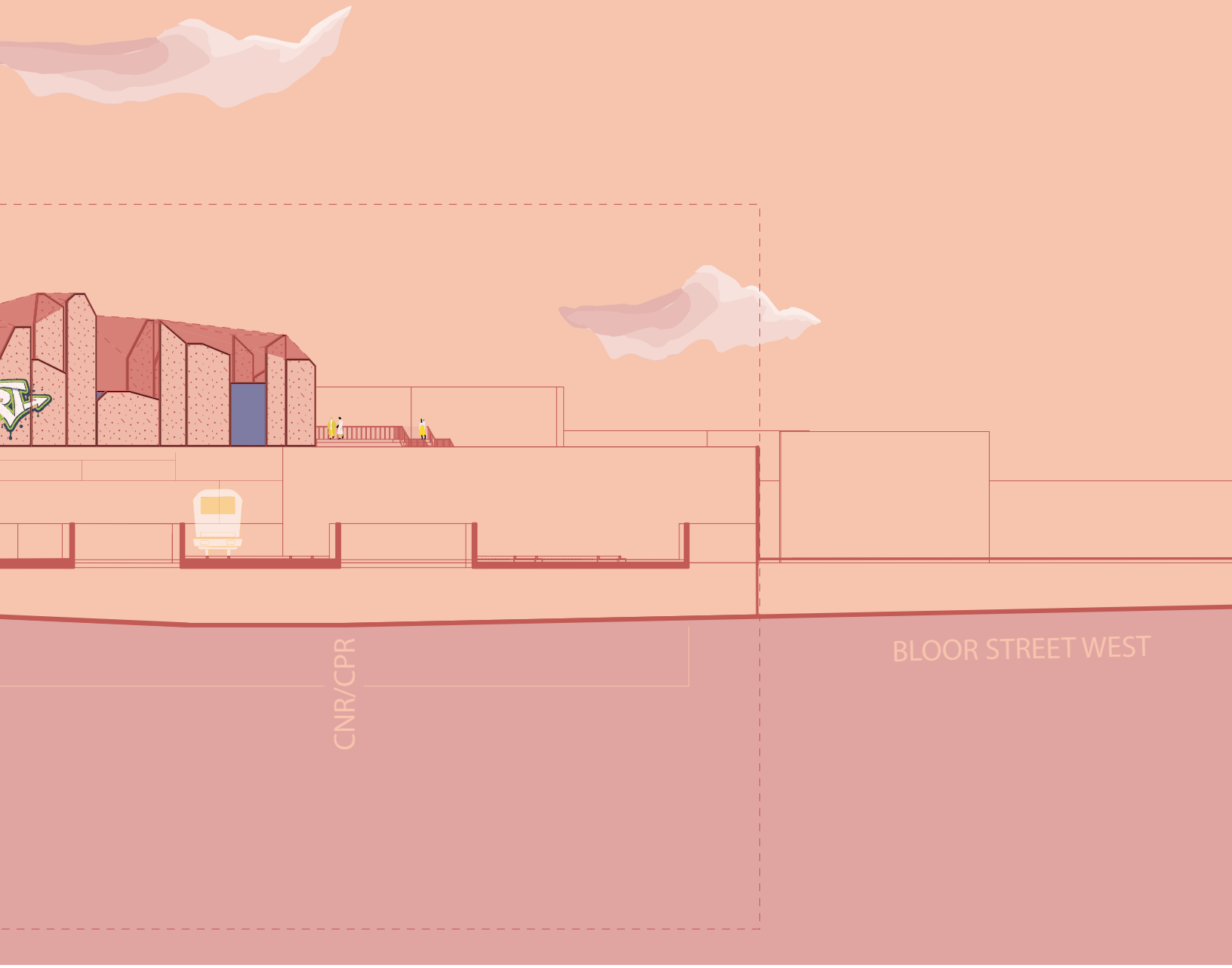

CNR/CPR
BLOOR STREET WEST



figure 122.0

Art - Plan noting experiential section path - 1:2500

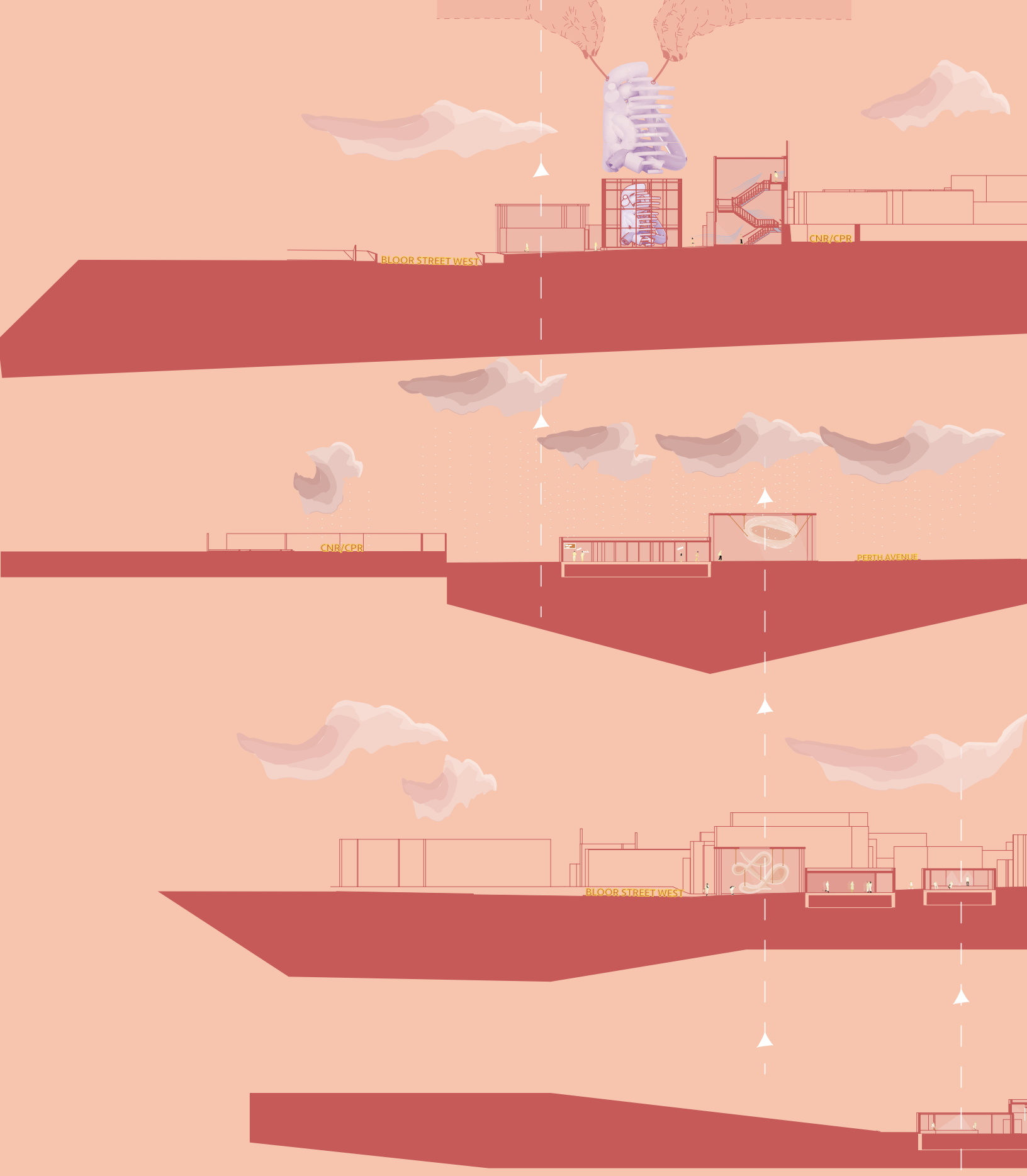
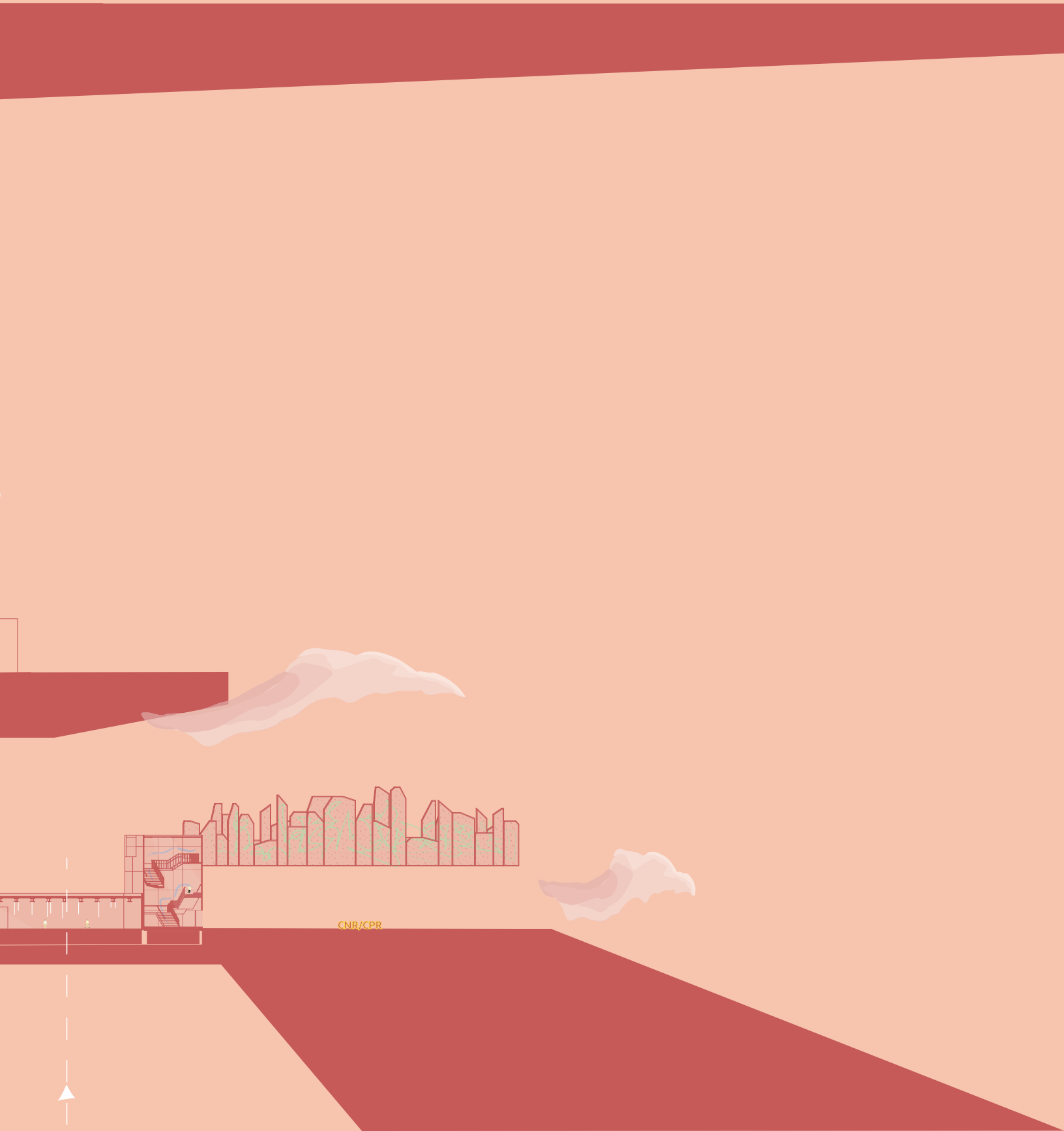
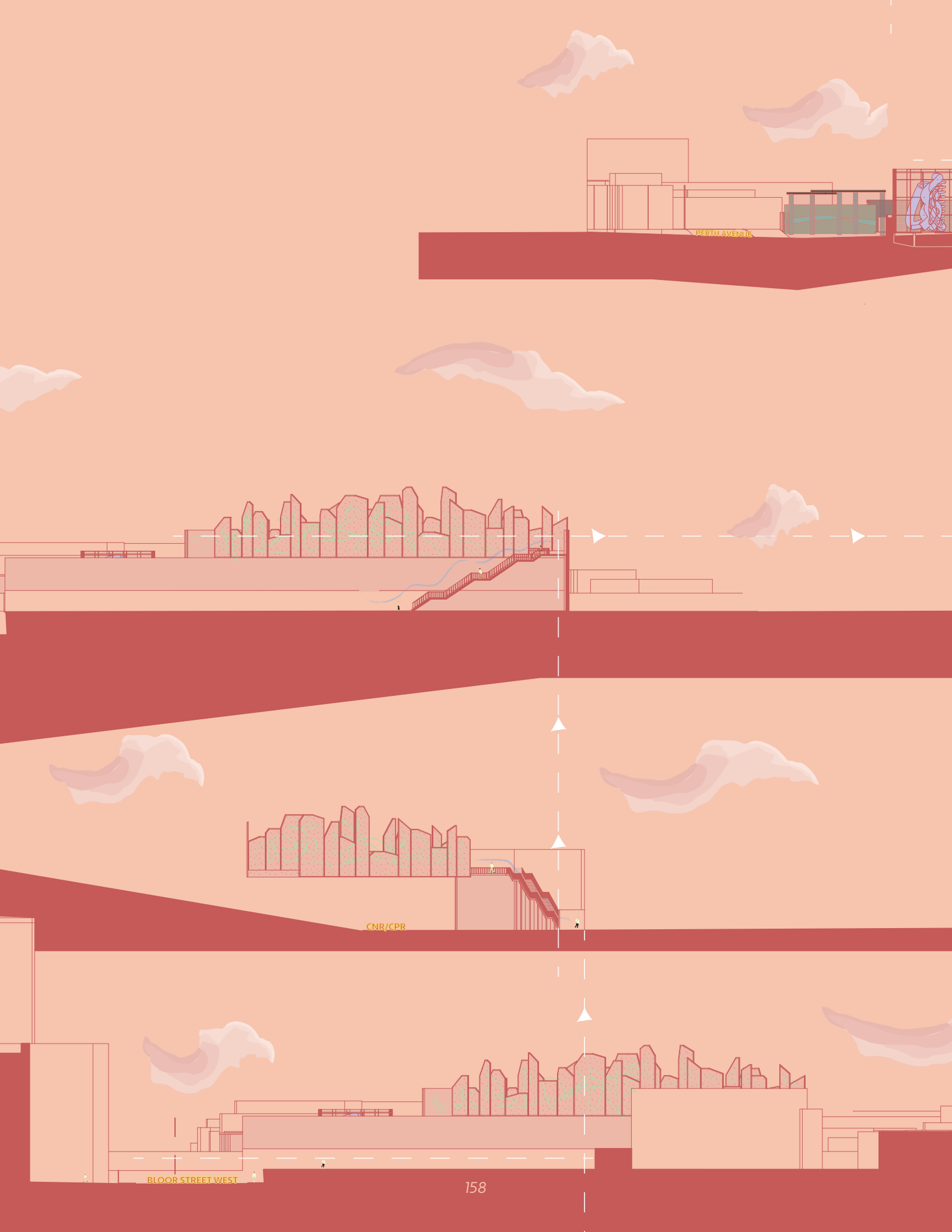

BLOOR STREET WEST
CNR/CPR
CNR/CPR
PERTH AVENUE
BLOOR STREET WEST

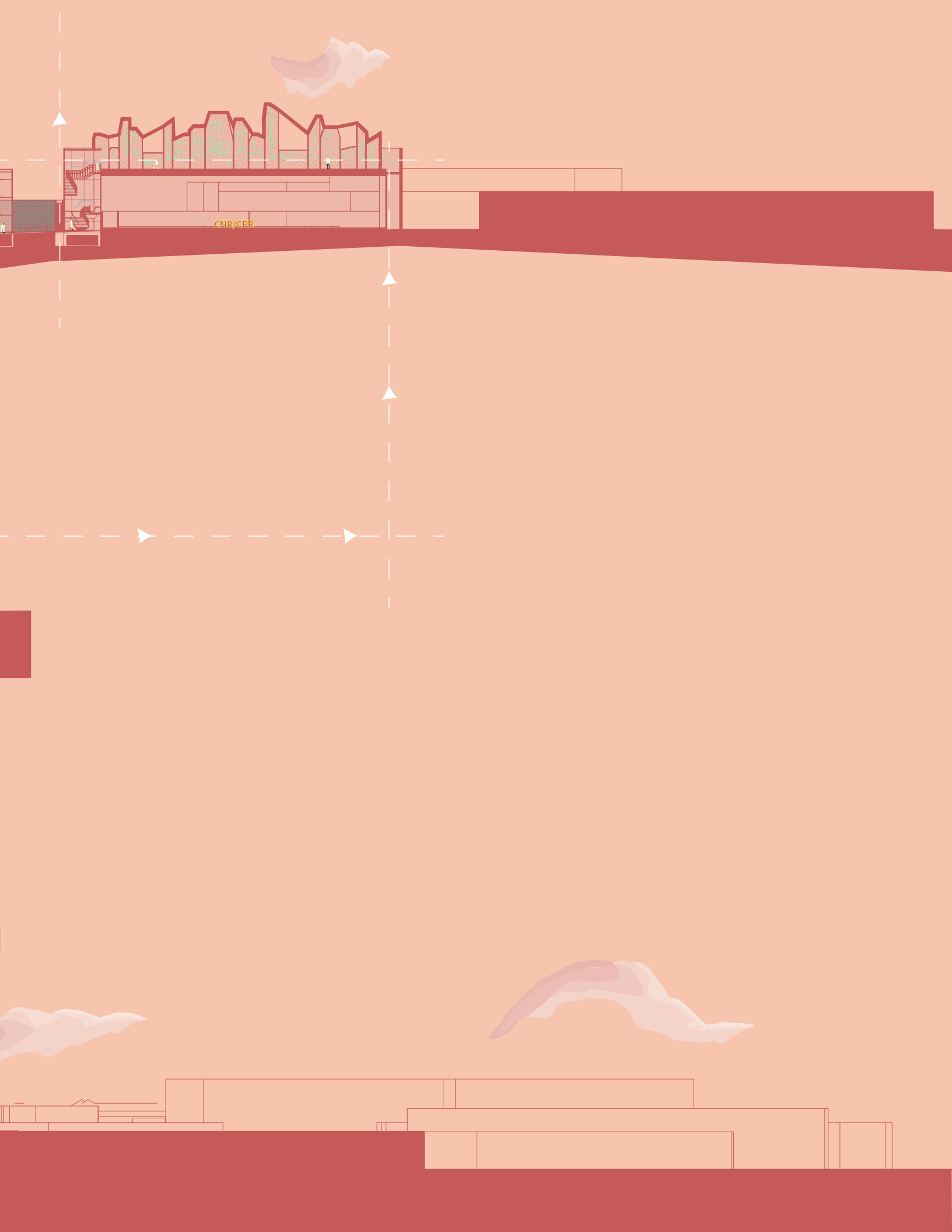
figure 123.0 (pages 183-187)

Art - Experiential sections - 1:600




BLOOR STREET WEST


PERTH AVENUE
CNR/CPR
BLOOR STREET WEST


CNR/CPR

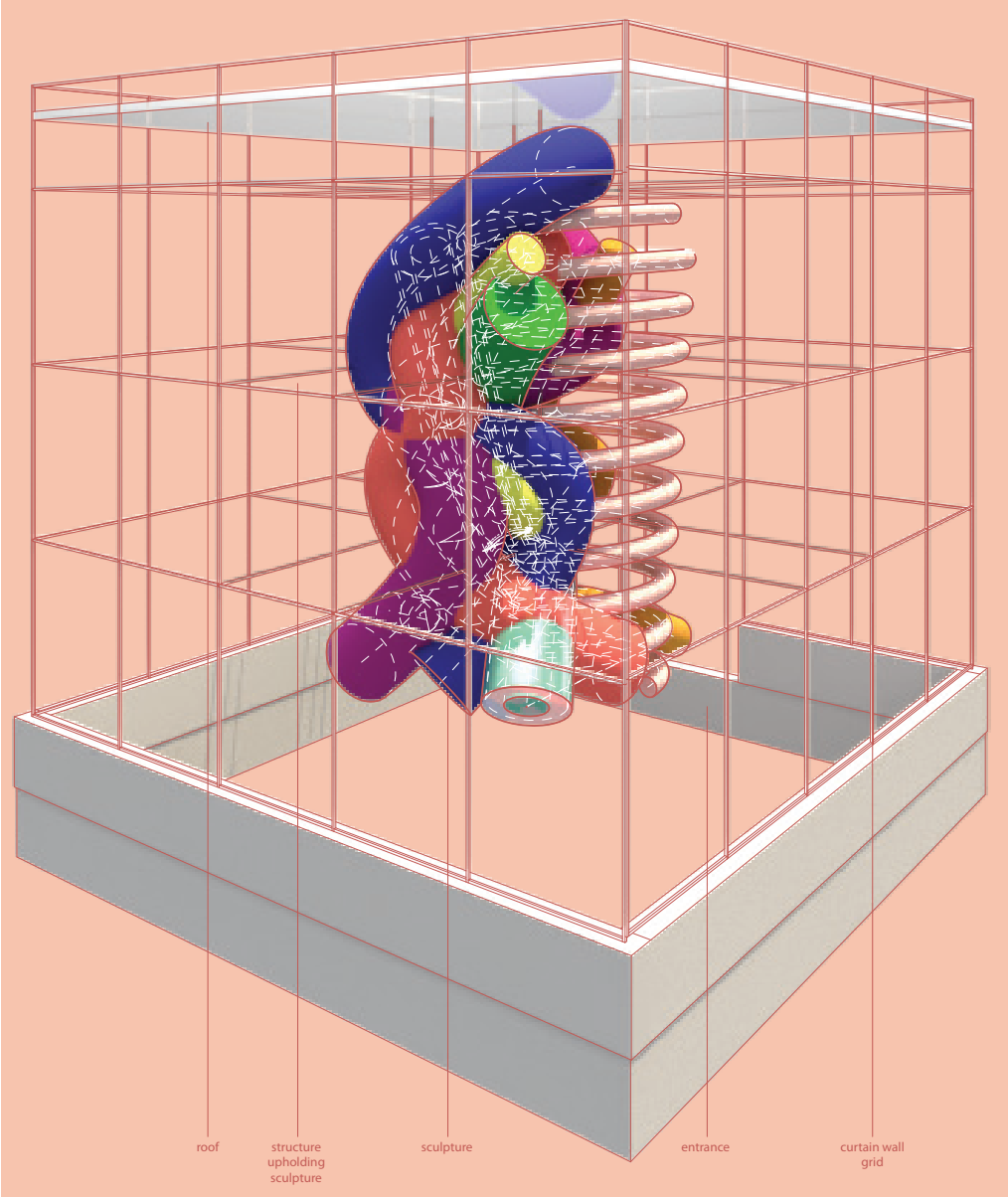


figure 124.0

Art - Sculpture diagram

An example of a sculpture part of the courtyard. Located right across the sculpture studio space. An installation referenced as a representation of entanglements of emotions and its embodiment as a physical form.



figure 126.0

Art - Rendering - Looking to site from Bloor



figure 125.0

Art - Rendering - Looking from across the street

5.6: 3D models

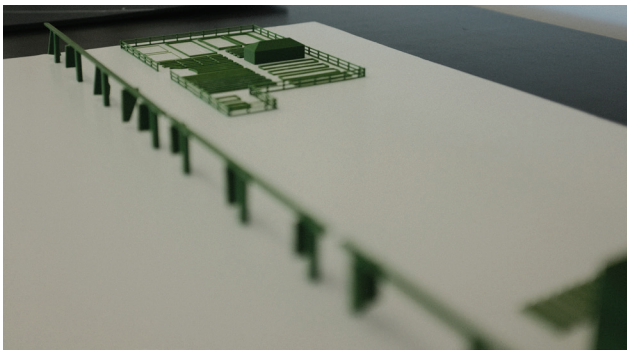


figure 127.0

The Garden - 3D Physical Model - Image 1

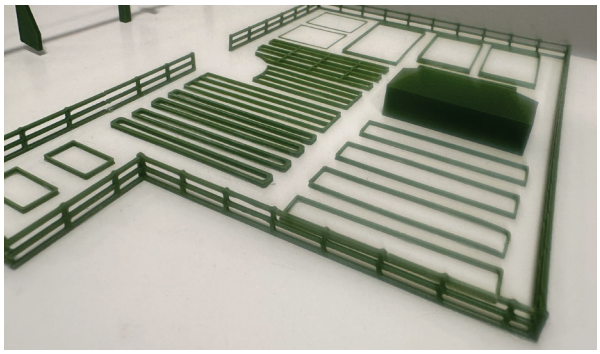


figure 128.0

The Garden - 3D Physical Model - Image 2

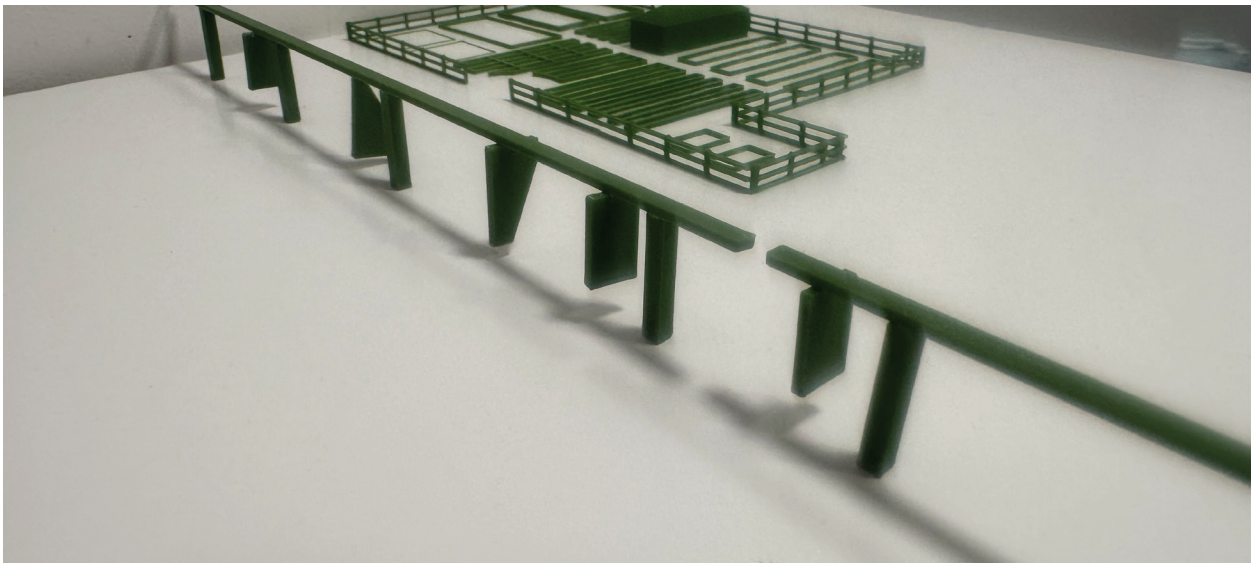


figure 129.0

The Garden - 3D Physical Model - Image 3

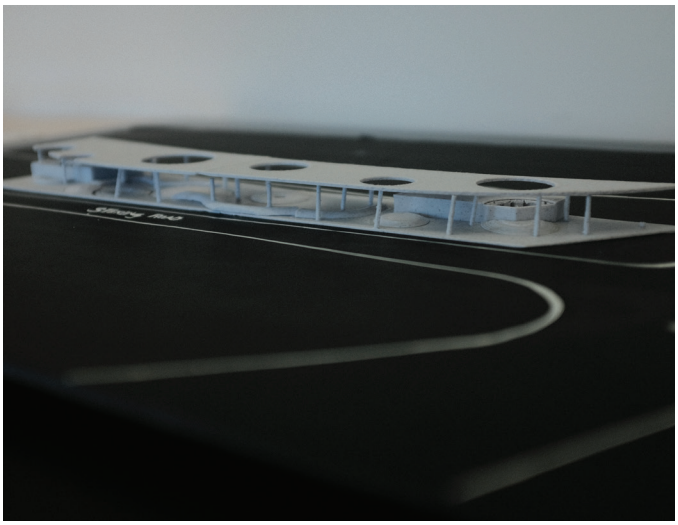


figure 130.0

The Safe Space - 3D Physical Model - Image 1

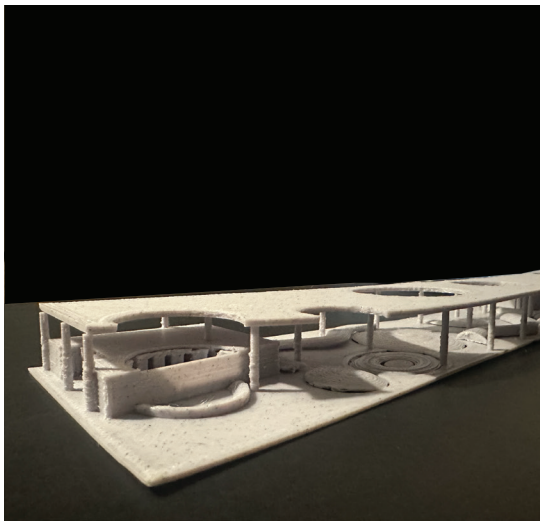


figure 131.0

The Safe Space - 3D Physical Model - Image 2



figure 132.0

The Safe Space - 3D Physical Model - Image 3



figure 133.0

Art - 3D Physical Model - Image 1

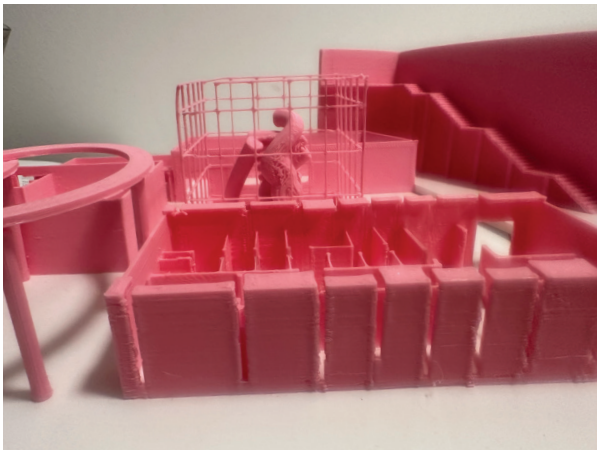


figure 134.0

Art - 3D Physical Model - Image 2

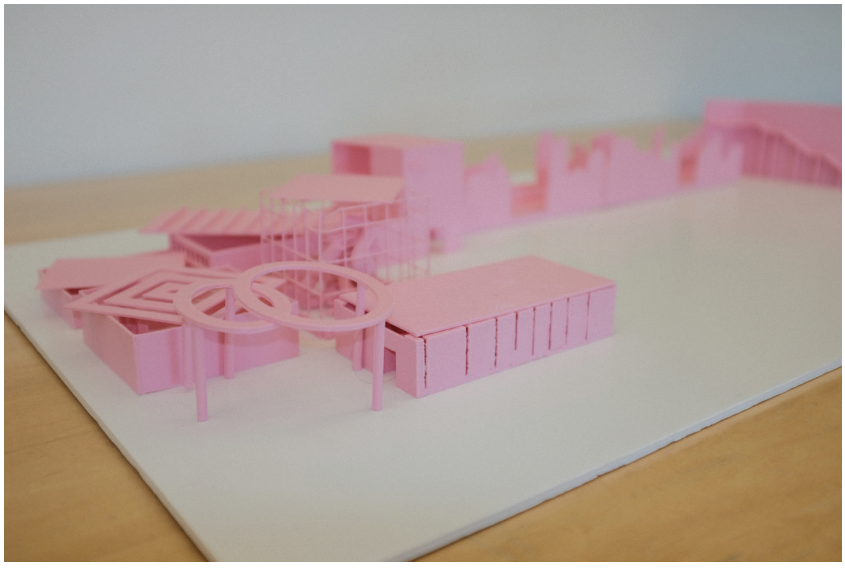


figure 135.0

Art - 3D Physical Model - Image 3

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conclusion

The adolescent phase of life is within a state of liminality. One that can be described as a gray area, when in reality its something much deeper. A time when the ideas, discovery, and notions of exploring the world seem larger than life. Yet, alongside this excitement, teenagers carry the significant burden of self-discovery and navigating their formative years.

This thesis set out to explore the needs of the defined user group of teenagers and creating a third place for them. So, where did this term *third space* originate? Ray Oldenburg, a sociologist, coined the term, *third space*. In 1989, he researched and discussed the importance of the following three spaces: "The third space is an informal public space separate from our home (first space) and work or school (second space). These third places are neutral grounds where individuals gather, communicate, and build relationships on their own terms, away from institutionalized settings' pressures."[1]

The ultimate goal of this thesis was to propose designs that responded to the emotional needs of teenagers, enabling them to express themselves through physical and artistic mediums. By drawing on personal insights and contemporary research, these solutions aimed to create environments that not only provide relief and expression but also foster a deeper connection to one's emotions. Through small-scale, community-focused interventions, this research aspires to establish architectural spaces that prioritize and celebrate the complexities of teenage emotions.

Teenagers possess a unique capacity for adaptability, and shared spaces present a valuable opportunity for them to express that trait. As adapting in this context is defined as modifying an existing place and giving it a new purpose, these environments allow them to leave their mark. Infusing each space with their own identity, preferences, and a sense of belonging. This might take shape through creative expressions like graffiti, personalizing areas with their own possessions, or redefining the purpose of a space through how they choose to use it. In doing so, they not only adapt to their surroundings but actively transform them into something meaningful

and distinctly theirs. This creates the third place or in this case places, with a series of proposals, each with its unique qualities.

The proposals, throughout Parkdale iterated the three spaces identified as, The Garden, The Safe Space and Art. To summarize, first is “The Garden” is a community-focused project transforming the underutilized green space at Parkside Place on 55 Triller Avenue. Creating a hub for collaborative activities. The site is divided into three main components, first, an outdoor garden, a space encouraging teenagers and the community to engage in year-round gardening, offering areas to grow plants, flowers, fruits, and vegetables, supported by a storage shed. second are panels, with informational and display panels along Triller Avenue showcasing permanent and seasonal exhibits based on community input. Finally, is a greenhouse, an indoor space complementing the outdoor garden, providing a controlled environment for growing crops and serving as an educational resource. This initiative aims to fosters inclusivity, equipping participants with tools, materials, and guides to make gardening accessible for all. It contributes to Parkdale’s broader community gardening efforts, creating a shared space for learning, growth, and connection.

The second proposal is The Safe Space, transforming the site at Dundas Street West and Sterling Road into a multi=functional area fostering community engagement and emotional well-being. Situated near the CNR rail line and surrounded by factories, government buildings, and the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), the site revitalizes a portion of a large parking lot into a dynamic skate park with complementary indoor programs. The main spaces include, a semi-covered skate park, designed with large perforations in the roof for an open and inviting aesthetic, ensuring the space is welcoming while being set apart from nearby residential areas to minimize disruptions. The pavilions consist of two single storey small buildings, one on either end of the site offering diverse programming. An overview of the program, as it includes, expressive blank canvas rooms, counseling rooms, as well as flexible indoor seating. This project balances active recreation with reflective and therapeutic spaces, creating an inclusive environment that caters to physical activity, creative expression, and emotional support.

The final proposal, Art, much like it’s name holds different meanings for everyone, reflecting personal interpretation and expression. The final site embodies this diversity both metaphorically and literally, offering opportunities

for transformation. Located near Bloor Street West and accessible via Perth Avenue or a pedestrian bridge connected to the high school grounds across, the site blends accessibility with a creative spirit. The program includes, the afore-mentioned pedestrian bridge, community art programming, expanding on nearby institutional activities - such as sculpture-making, dance, music, photography, and graffiti, promoting creativity and self-expression, and finally, a central courtyard This public initiative envisions collaboration with the city's development services, local community leaders, and private organizations. Designed to support teenagers' well-being, the space invites creativity and provides a platform for showcasing art on a larger scale, creating a meaningful integration into Toronto's public art initiatives.

Based on the design proposals, this thesis explores the challenge of creating spaces for teenagers by addressing their emotions and needs. Through site-specific scenarios, the proposed designs can be used as guidelines for developing such architecture. These spaces are not intended to address every emotion at once, something teenagers can also struggle with, instead of keeping the focus on smaller elements that collectively form a cohesive whole.

There are several areas of related research that remain unexplored within this thesis, which could be valuable for future study. These include, examining the evolution of community centers and shopping malls, commonly assumed spaces for teenagers, and delving into the history of their architectural development. Additionally, engaging directly with teenagers to discuss their perspectives on creating such spaces, as well as their mental health and daily experiences, which could provide deeper insight into the needs and realities of today's youth. This demonstrates that the author is aware of a body of work and research that the thesis is positioned in relation to. As such is part of a larger disciplinary discourse regarding the realities of today's youth, which is a core intention of academic work in any given field.

By beginning to understand the needs of teenagers, recognize their role within the community, and support their growth–both as individuals and as they establish their place in the larger social fabric. The thesis explores how architectural spaces can be designed and adapted to support adolescent well-being, as it highlights the importance of balancing inclusivity with adaptability. The proposed design aims to provide meaningful opportunities for creating environments that not only accommodate but also nurture this demographic, ensuring that spaces contribute positively to their emotional and developmental journey. This thesis not only proposes architectural solutions tailored to teenagers' emotional and social needs but also lays the groundwork for future explorations, beginning to inspire an understanding of how different models of architectural design can shape and support the well-being for the next generation.

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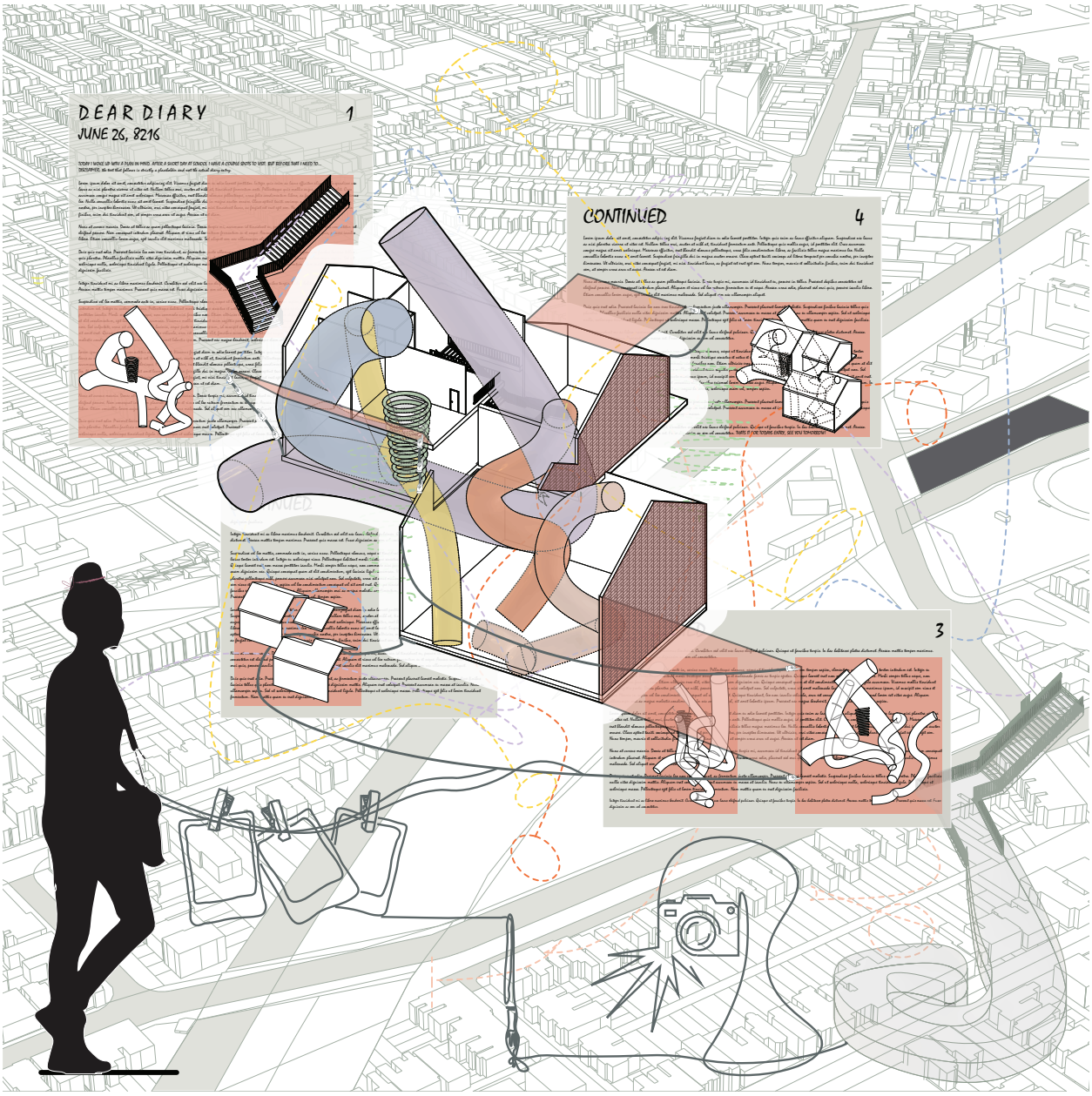
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appendix


DEAR DIARY
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CONTINUED
4
3

Below is a Graphic Methodology developed as part of the course ARCH 510 - DRAWING AS RESEARCH during Spring 2024. This was used as a tool to explore existing concepts being used in my thesis and develop them graphically as a tool on their own and to develop a visual language to aid the work being carried out. The accompanying graphic can be found on the previous page..

GRAPHIC METHODOLOGY

Layer 1

Typology: Actor: Teenager, the character that is being observed for their day in the life.
Time period: This could be classified as either present or a speculative future since it does consider design proposals.
Drawing type: The actor is shown as a silhouette with their describing elements shown as line drawings.
Why: I wanted the character and their describing elements to be as simple and open for interpretation as possible.
Scale: A human scale with as needed detail to highlight certain elements.
Why: I did not want irrelevant detail that was arbitrary to take away from the rest of the drawing,
Drawing tools and techniques: Illustrator and hand digital sketching.
Why: Back to my point of keeping it simple and to the point of getting the needed information across.

Layer 2

Typology: Actor: The set of 'Slides'.
Time period: Speculative future.
Drawing type: Isometric, perspective, line drawings and renders
Why: The variety is present to show the extent and detail as a representation on emotions and their entanglement within each other and as separate entities.
Scale: Detail and sized to the building
Why: The scale is meant to show a human scale when placed inside the house to show it is 'usable' as well as abstract and representative to show how it was derived and all angles of how it interacts with each other.
Drawing tools and techniques: Rhino, Rhino render, Illustrator
Why: Rhino was used to design the structure and to render it for certain aspects and illustrator was the best tool to use within the post production process.

Layer 3

Typology: Actor: Frames/Pages of a diary
Time period: Speculative future
Drawing type: Drawn as pages of a diary framed around the main house in the middle.
Why: I wanted this element as an actor to have some connection to the teenager as someone who journals their thoughts – theoretically – in this case to show their day to day (not with the placeholder text) but with the smaller detailed drawings scattered throughout the pages.
Scale: Detail
Why: Showcasing the individual pages which show the details of the house and its architectural elements as they were before being affected by the 'slides' as emotions.
Drawing tools and techniques: Rhino and Illustrator
Why: This was to act as a comic book of sorts to tell a story of the architectural details around the distorted architectural elements of the consolidated house in the middle.

Layer 4

Typology: Site: The house
Time period: Speculative future
Drawing type: Isometric and Section
Why: These two types were combined to show the maximum amount of detail with elements of the house (i.e. walls and roof) pulled apart to show what is inside
Scale: Building
Why: The typology is as simple as a house at its core but starts to become distorted as it interacts with the slides ('emotions') that linger inside and starts to take shape accordingly.
Drawing tools and techniques: Revit, Rhino, Illustrator
Why: To create a clean base model Revit was utilized and to further add details Rhino was used and taken apart to distort it from its original 'normal' form.

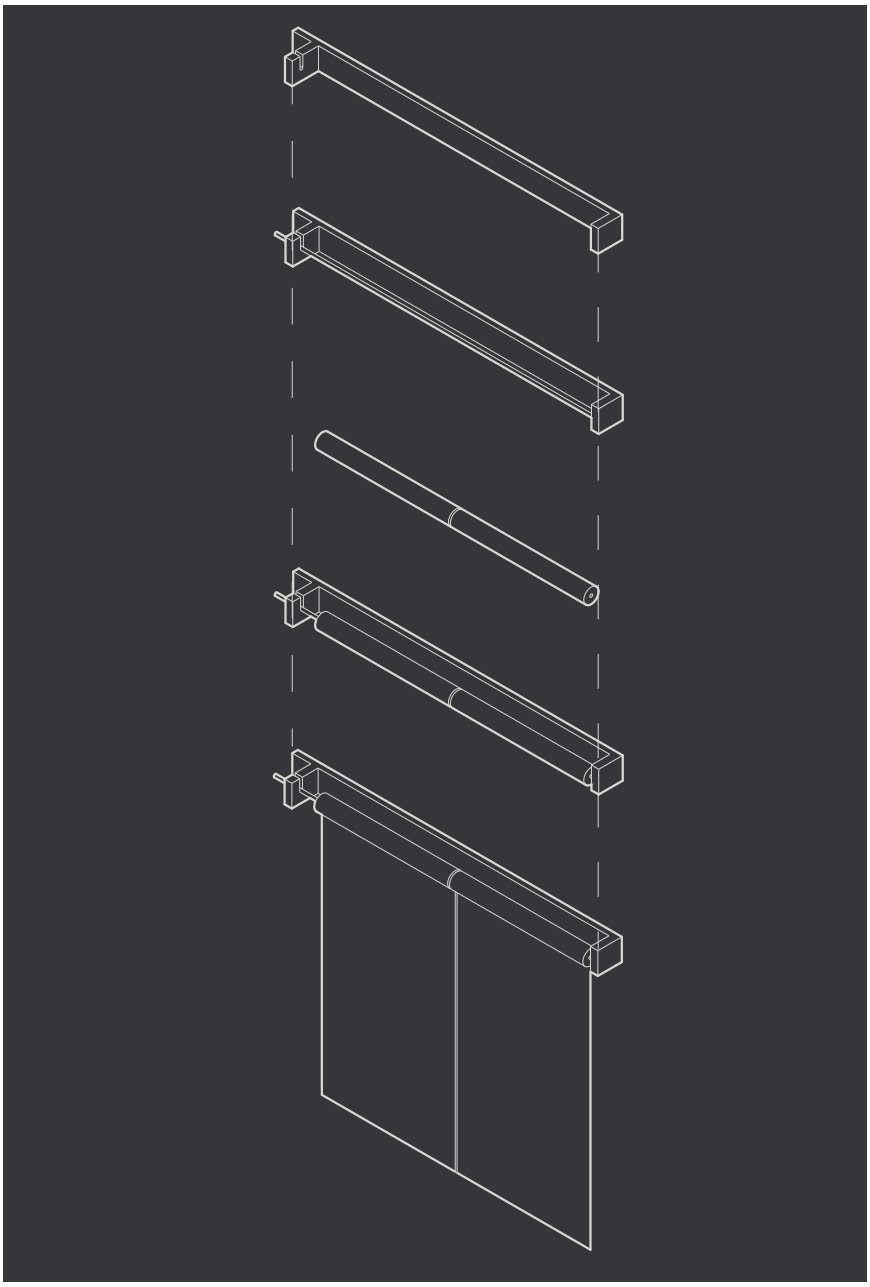
Layer 5

Typology: Site: Context of the City of Toronto
Time period: Present
Drawing type: Perspective
Why: To showcase the context to its maximum extent a perspective was used to capture the architecture, infrastructure, and their connections to each other. The

context is intentionally taken within Parkdale as it relates to the overall thesis research and showcases the sites being taken into account as well.
Scale: Neighbourhood
Why: To tie back the representative aspects of the drawing back to its realistic counterparts.
Drawing tools and techniques: GIS, Rhino, AutoCAD, Illustrator
Why: The 2D and 3D data was collected through the city of Toronto's open data maps to be utilized and analyzed as part of the research process.

Compositional Technique(s) Where do these stories converge and where do they diverge? Is this research linear in nature? Which story has hierarchy over the other (if at all)?

The story of a teenager begins as an element, a tool to further the research and present it in the form of a drawing. How do emotions come to be? How can they be represented visually in a clear or perhaps an unclear manner, after all it can be hard to distinguish emotions from one another. Proven in research on teenagers, they tend to feel emotions more than one at a time and can often have trouble distinguishing them from one another. Taking this course, a house as the base was created that tells the story of this teenager as their space but representative of them in many forms of chaos, passages and architectural elements of rooms, doors, different levels and a set of stairs all converging in one. The hierarchy of the elements becomes rather clear with the context in the back, second being the character of the teenager and their defining elements, next being the house with the 'slides' and finally the frames as they scatter and protrude from around the house. The selection of slides as a representation of emotions was also intentional, the slides become a commentary on a element commonly found in children's playground, strongly being associated with them, here it is representing perhaps that childhood being left behind as the slides although playful to the eye start to become intentional and start to serve a purpose on their own but also together.



The drawing above shows the blank canvas room panels from the site The Safe Space (site 3). It is a breakdown of how the panels are assembled, the type of paper roll used - 48” and stretching as long as 900’.

chapter: memory

what is memory?

According to the National Library of Medicine, memory is defined as, "the capacity to store and retrieve information."[1] This definition extends beyond just information, but includes, events, growth, and lessons as a necessary part of life as one ages. While memory understood through the lens of molecular neurobiology, as a scientific process is described as, "largely a neuro-chemical process, which includes conditioning and any form of stored experience."[2] This is a start to understanding memory as a combination of science and one's experiences.

Author Jorge Luis Borges, in his short story *Funes The Memorious*, the narrator notes, "we all live by leaving behind", noting that life would be impossible without forgetting, almost like we have to make room to move forward from what has been.[3] Does the brain have a limit to its memory? When do you start forgetting and remembering past a certain point in time? When does a time experienced become a *memory*? Some of these questions start to get answered in the article titled, *Memory: An Extended Definition*, which states;

> In popular culture, memory is often thought of as some kind of physical thing that is stored in the brain; a subjective, personal experience that we can recall at will. This way of thinking about memory has led many to wonder if there is a maximum amount of memories we can have. But, this idea of memory is at odds with advances in the science of memory over the last century: memory isn't really a fixed thing stored in the brain, but is more of a chemical process between neurons, which is not static.[4]

If following the concept that memory is a physical element that gets stored, it is heavily reiterated in *The Thousand Dreams of Stellavista* by Ballard, where the house becomes a vessel of memory and the storing of emotions, reacting and forming accordingly.[5] When reading Ballard's short story about living houses, there is a feeling of awful dread. While the creation of nearly living houses as organisms is certainly achievable, is it necessary? Technology is omnipresent in our lives, but do we want technology to consume our lives as well? Although living in these highly sensitive and responsive houses can be exhilarating it would last only for a short period of time, before one starts to crave the *normal*. Living in an environment that can infuse

your emotions and mirror them back to you, would only deepen them further. When it comes to positive emotions, they are easier to process and digest, but when they are negative, it could be troubling, as they start to entangle in their complexity, fighting with reason. This is observed, when the anger from a small quarrel stays in the room longer, or when a small irritation creates a physical response from the house and tries to harm Fey - one of the occupants created by Ballard.[6] This is repeatedly noted in the discussion about teenagers and the impact of negative versus positive emotions. The representation of this short story is a striking one, presented in the form of digital art by the artist Julien Pacaud (figure 8.0).[7] The images note exaggerated moments from the story, presenting the house and its features as alien elements.

One cannot fully recall all of their memories from the earliest moments of childhood to the present, let alone the complexities of their teenage years. As their mind goes through the developmental stages evolving and leaving a handful of memories behind.



Julien Pacaud's 'psychotropic house' and 'neurotic hostility' illustration based on the short story The thousand dreams of stellavista by J.G. Ballard

once upon a teenager

We were all teenagers once, each with a unique experience, where the essence of what brings us together is our perception of the world, and its critique towards us. The following is a short overview of memories of my not so distant years as a teenager.

I remember reading countless books, mostly fiction. Some talked about teenagers in high school, on vacation, living their life after school, working jobs, and with friends,.Their life always seemed worlds away in an alternate reality, one that was very different from my own, and maybe that is what drew me to them. My teenage years were divided between living in a community with apartments and one within a suburban context towards the end of my teenage-hood. In between moves, I believed I had gained a strong perspective, on the two different styles of lives I was leading, and the differences and similarities that they came with.

On one hand, was a community with access to walkable amenities, friends, family and even school. This was my bubble, and it consisted of; volunteering, spending countless hours at the library across the street - multiple times a week and weekends, strolling around the parks, and hanging out with my friends who conveniently lived either across the street or just down the road. It was comfortable, it was convenient and it was all I knew (at least on this side of the world).

On another hand, the suburban environment is where I was faced with more secluded spaces away from the bustling city. A quieter place with my access limited by the need of a car as the buses were scarce or often doubled your time to get to your destination. My time there, while not at school, also consisted of more visits to the library, taking advantage of the vast empty bike paths, keeping busy with volunteering, and playing sports. The memories that I recall of being a teenager consist of keeping busy and planning for a future that was so close but yet so far. As I grow up, I realize time during those years was in infinite abundance and so I buried myself in more books. It always came back to the books, with a variety of genres, this was my escape. It was easy to lose track of time, comfortably tucked in bed in my aquamarine room, for hours late into the night, not knowing when sleep took over, where a dream started, and my adolescence ended.



Map of Author's Urban Neighbourhood - 1:15000

Notes

1. Gregorio Zlotnik and Aaron Vansintjan, "*Memory: An Extended Definition*," Frontiers in Psychology 10 (November 7, 2019), https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02523.

2. Zlotnik and Vansintjan, "*Memory: An Extended Definition*."

3. Zlotnik and Vansintjan, "*Memory: An Extended Definition*."

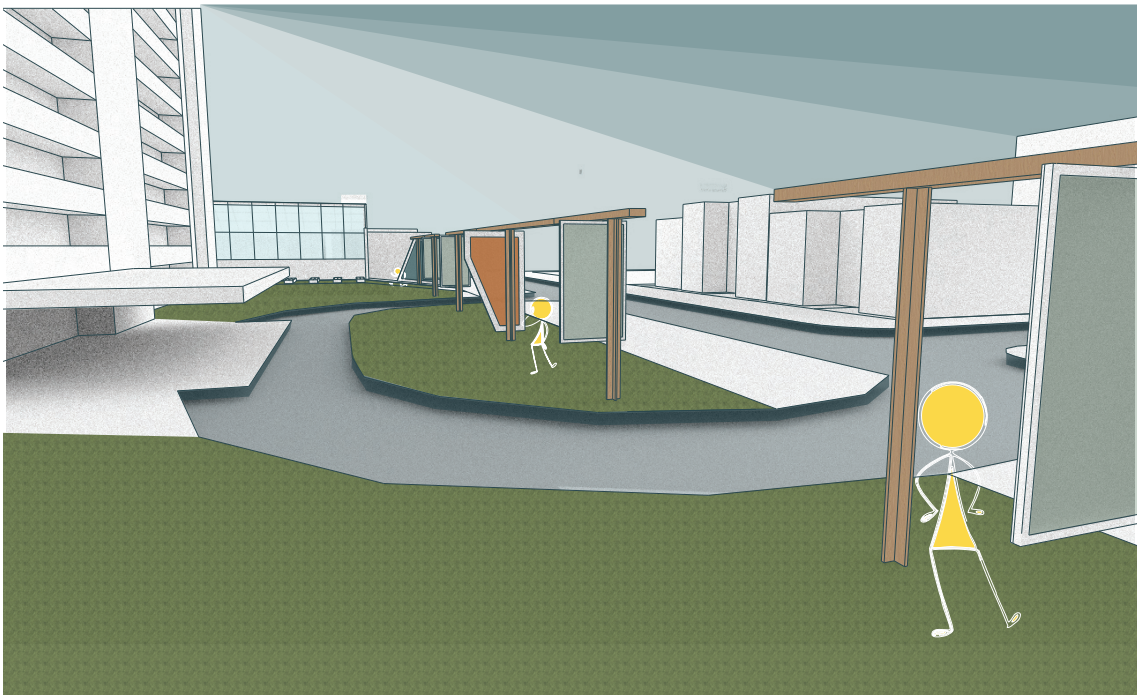
4. Zlotnik and Vansintjan, "*Memory: An Extended Definition*."

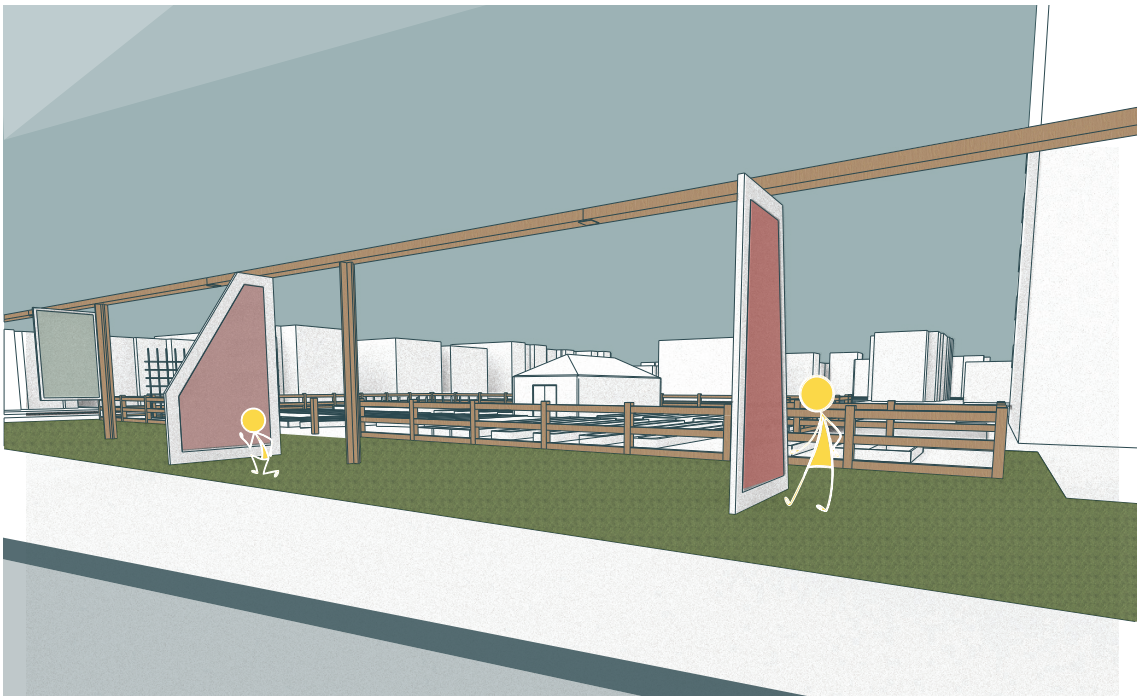
5. Ballard, "*The Thousand Dreams of Stellavista*."

6. Ballard, "*The Thousand Dreams of Stellavista*."

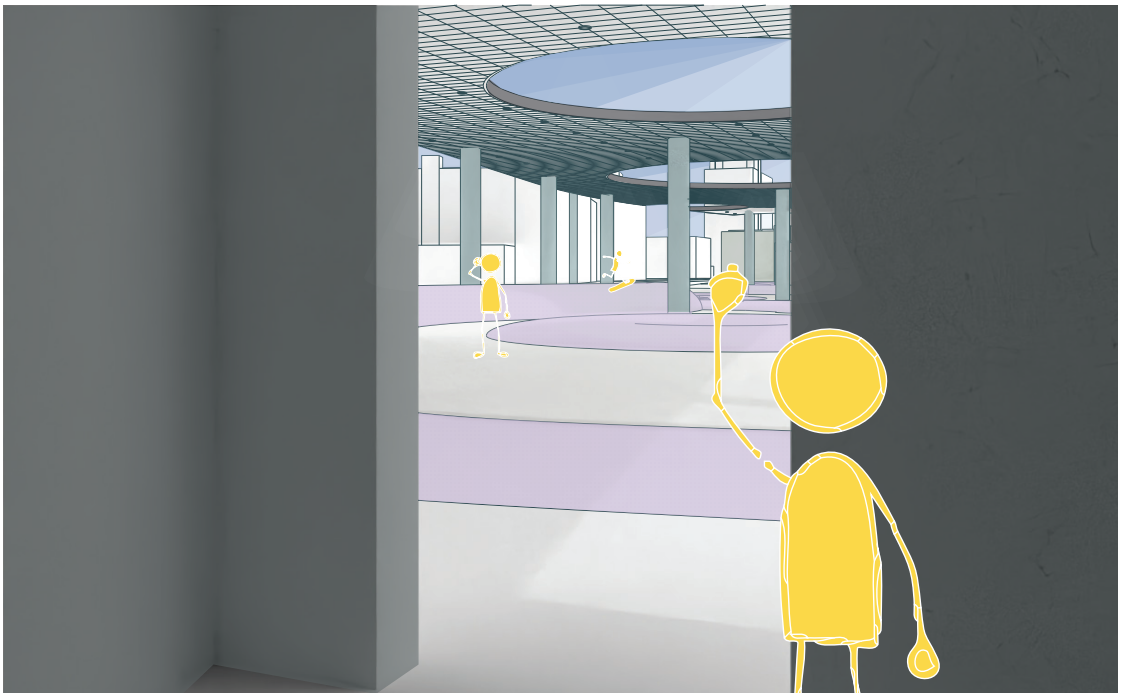
7. "Vermilion Sands – Julien Pacaud - Digital Collage Artist," n.d. https://julienpacaud.com/Vermilion-Sands.

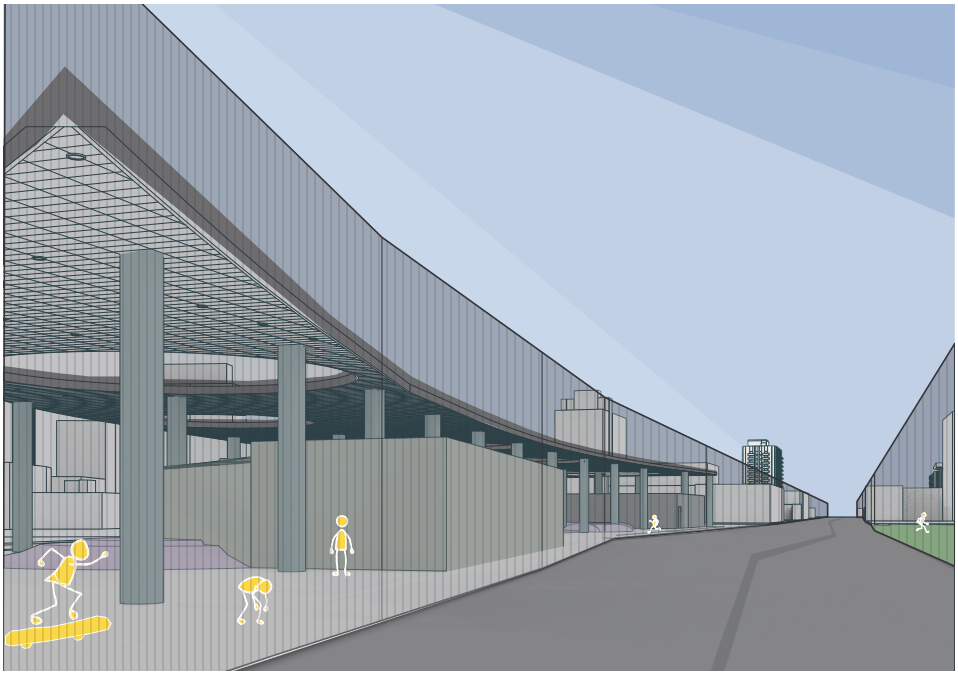
SITE 1 - PRELIMINARY PERSPECTIVE GRAPHICS



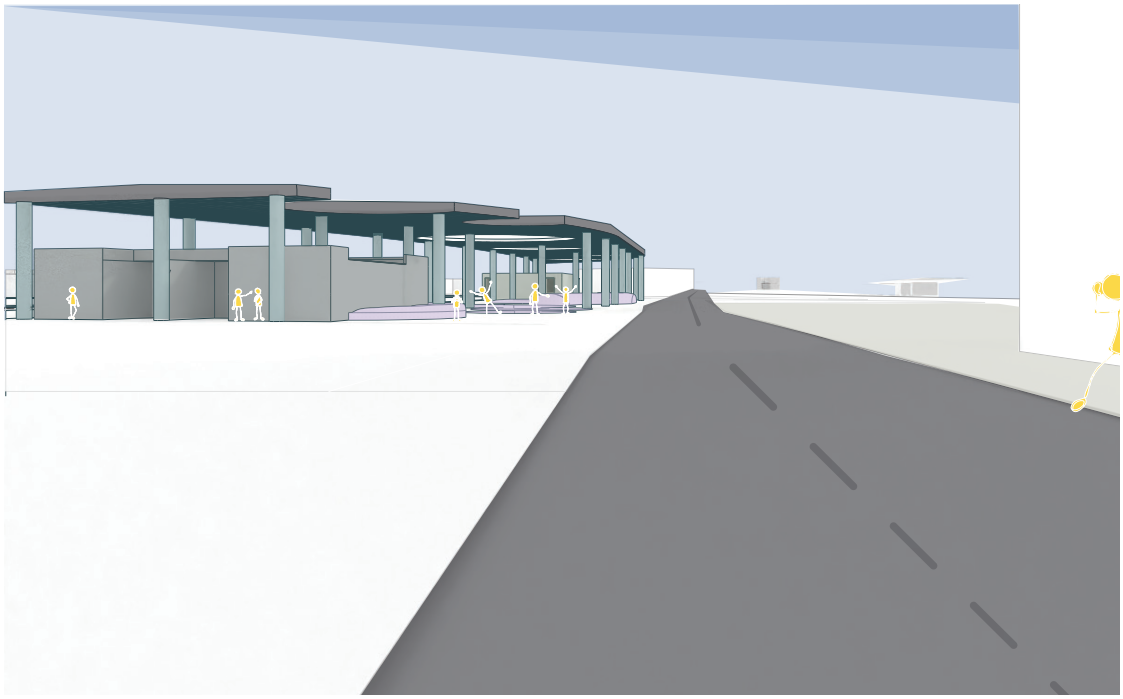


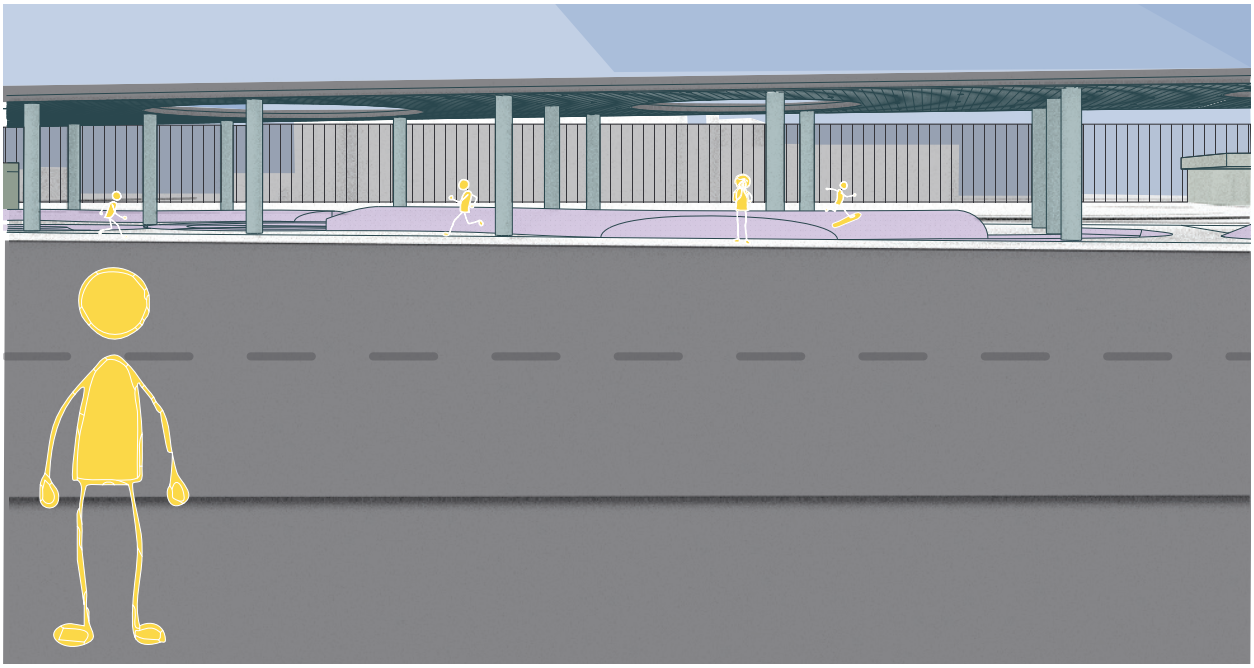
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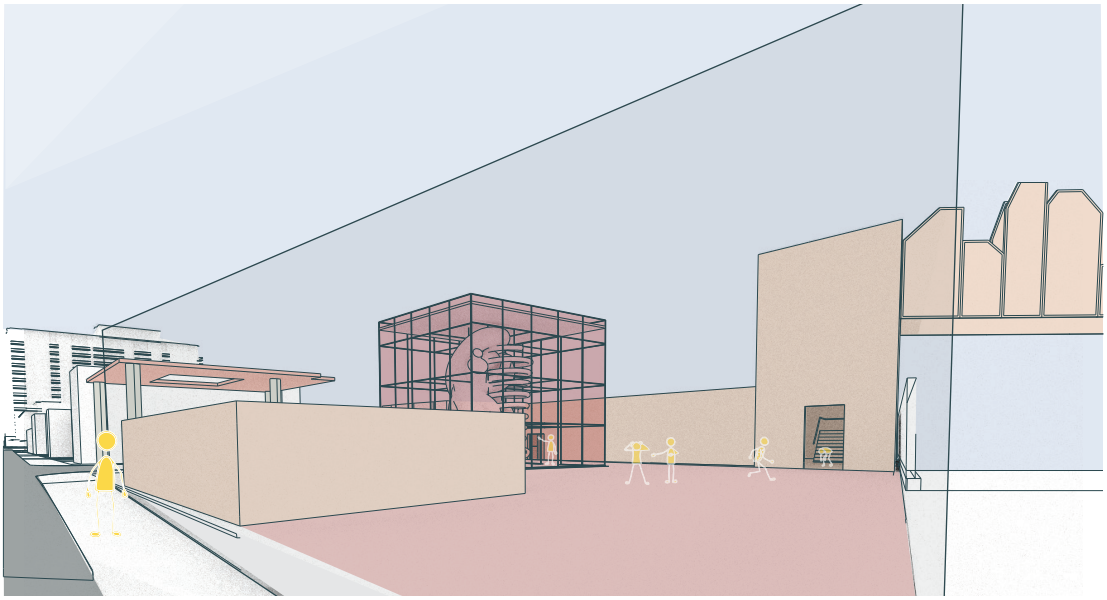


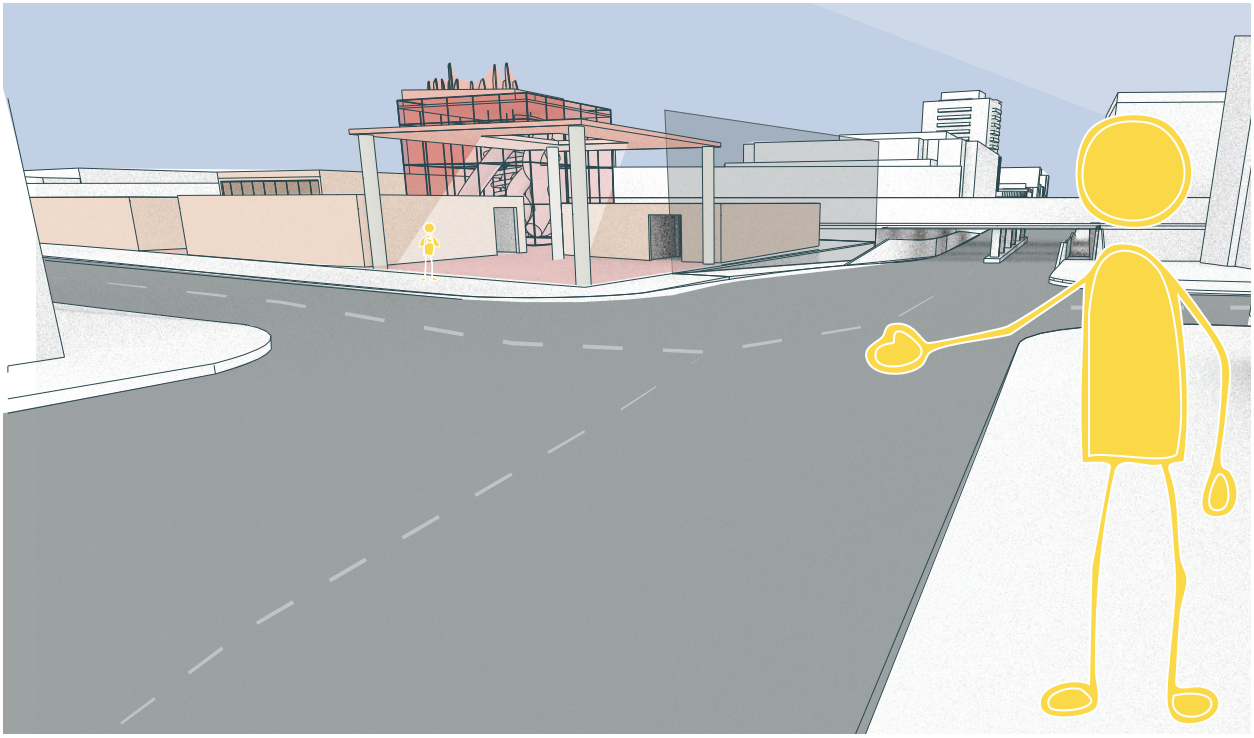
SITE 2 - PRELIMINARY PERSPECTIVE GRAPHICS





SITE 3 - PRELIMINARY PERSPECTIVE GRAPHICS





glossary of terms

1. **Adolescence:** The period of life between childhood and adulthood, typically between the ages of 12 and 18, characterized by physical, emotional, and psychological development.

2. **Adaptability:** The ability to adjust to new conditions, environments, or situations effectively.

3. **Amygdala:** A part of the brain involved in processing emotions, particularly fear and pleasure, and plays a role in memory formation.

4. **Anthroposophy:** A philosophical movement founded by Rudolf Steiner that emphasizes spiritual science and the belief that human beings can understand the spiritual world through direct experience and inner development.

5. **Apophenia:** The tendency of humans to perceive meaningful connections or patterns in unrelated or random data. It is a broader concept that encompasses a wide range of cognitive phenomena, including seeing connections in events, objects, or data that may not actually exist.

6. **Atmosphere:** The mood or feeling created by a place, situation, or work of art. In psychology, it can refer to the emotional environment that surrounds an individual.

7. **Colour:** A characteristic of visual perception that corresponds to the types of light wavelengths being reflected by objects. In psychology, it is often associated with emotions and moods.

8. **Einfühlung:** A German term, often translated as “empathy” or “feeling into,” referring to the ability to emotionally connect with or understand another’s feelings or experience.

9. **Emotions:** Complex psychological and physiological responses to stimuli, including feelings like happiness, sadness, anger, or fear, that involve mental states and physical reactions.

10. **Feelings:** Subjective experiences of emotions, often used to refer to the internal experience of an emotional state.

11. **Gesamtswerk:** A German term meaning "total work," often used to describe the collective work of an artist or creator, especially when it includes all aspects of their production.

12. **Liminality:** In anthropology, liminality is the quality of ambiguity or disorientation that occurs in the middle stage of a rite of passage, when participants no longer hold their pre-ritual status but have not yet begun the transition to the status they will hold when the rite is complete.

13. **Moods:** Emotional states that are generally less intense but last for a longer period compared to emotions. Moods can influence one's perception and behavior over an extended time.

14. **Micro-emotions:** Small, fleeting emotional experiences that are less intense than full-blown emotions but still have a measurable impact on behavior or mood.

15. **Moratorium:** A temporary suspension or delay of certain activities or decisions, often used in the context of adolescence to refer to a period of exploration and uncertainty before making life decisions.

16. **Pareidolia:** A specific type of apophenia, where people perceive familiar patterns, typically faces, in random stimuli like clouds, rock formations, or inanimate objects. It is a subset of apophenia but specifically related to visual stimuli, often leading to the perception of faces or figures where none exist.

17. **Perception:** The process of interpreting sensory information from the environment and forming an understanding or mental image of it. This includes the ways we see, hear, and interpret our surroundings.

18. **Psychology:** The scientific study of the mind, behavior, emotions, and mental processes, including how individuals think, feel, and act.

19. **Psyche:** The human soul, mind, or spirit. It encompasses the mental and emotional aspects of an individual, including thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

20. **Puberty:** The period of physical development during which a child's body matures into an adult body capable of sexual reproduction, typically occurring between ages 8 and 14.

21. **Psychogeography:** A field of study that explores the influence of geographical environments on emotions and behaviors, often through the lens of how individuals perceive and experience urban spaces.

22. **Psychotropic:** Substances or drugs that affect mental processes, mood, or behavior, including those used to treat mental health conditions or recreational substances that alter consciousness.

23. **Representation:** The way in which information, thoughts, or feelings are symbolized, depicted, or conveyed, often in the form of images, language, or mental models.

24. **Synesthesia:** A neurological phenomenon where stimulation of one sensory pathway leads to involuntary experiences in another, such as seeing colors when hearing music or associating specific numbers with specific colors.

25. **Wellbeing:** A state of being comfortable, healthy, and happy, encompassing physical, mental, and emotional health, as well as a sense of satisfaction and purpose in life.

26. **Weltempfänger:** (a German word meaning "world receiver") traditionally refers to a type of shortwave radio receiver capable of picking up broadcasts from around the globe. These radios were particularly popular in the mid-20th century as they allowed users to tune into international stations and stay connected to events worldwide. Metaphorically, the term can describe someone who is highly receptive to diverse cultural, emotional, or intellectual influences, embodying an openness to the world.

