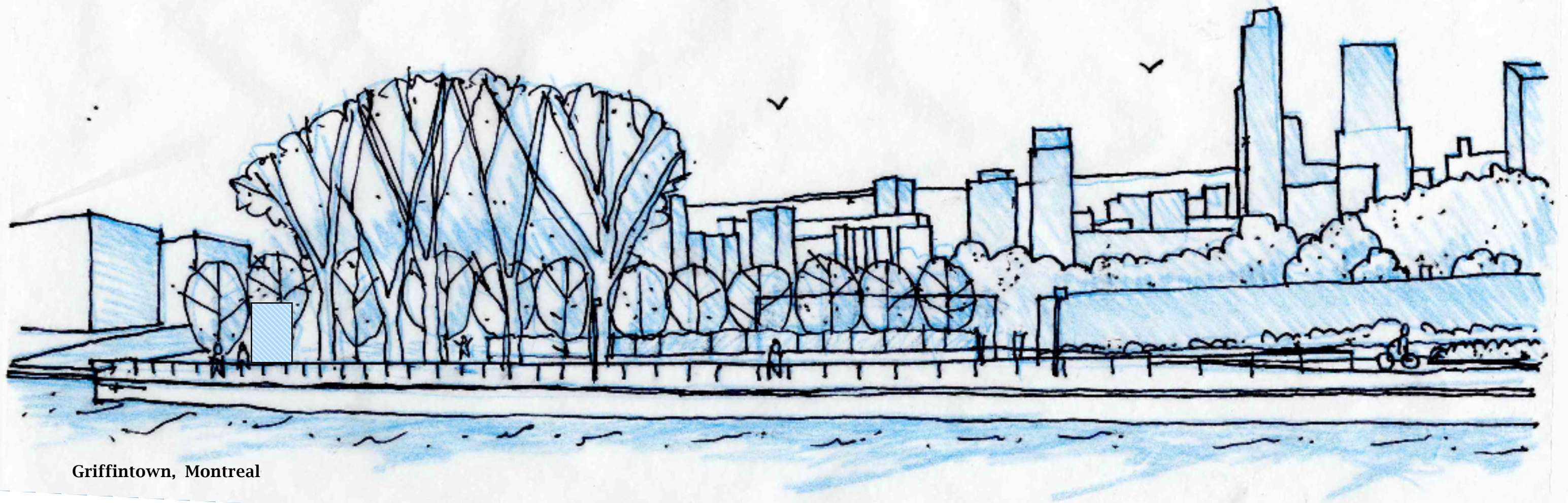


Sacred Places: *Public Spaces*

An inquiry into sacred public places for the Canadian City - with a design response in and around St. Ann's Park in Montreal and urban planning and design recommendations



Griffintown, Montreal

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Abstract

The meanings and relevance of sacred or extra-ordinary places in the Canadian context from an urban planning and design perspective is often overlooked during the development of our built environment. However these special spaces are significant and this project hopes to shed some light onto this topic through a philosophical and theoretical literature review, the design of an enhanced sacred place in and around St. Ann’s Park in Griffintown, Montreal and seven urban planning policy recommendations.

"Sacred Places are like doorways to another world, reminding us that life is more mysterious and wonderful than we can ever imagine. They evoke awe and reverence in us. For some, a sacred place will be connected with their religion - it will be a place of miracles, or where a key figure in their tradition was born, died or gained enlightenment. For others it will be, like the Waimaphi Reserve, a place in nature whose grandeur or beauty evokes a sense of wonder that stills the questing heart and mind with its powerful presence" (Carr-Gomm, 2008: p. 6).

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Dedicated to Alan John Fish

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1.1 Premise

There are unexpected places in cities, spaces where one's senses are remarkably provoked, when one's eyes, ears and nose notice something unusual and our minds register a heightened memory or emotion. Sometimes these places are inside rooms, others outside, some full of people and others experienced in solitude. Often they are built on purpose, while many are liminal - leftovers from something else. These places elicit people to respond beyond the ordinary, that allow one to contemplate on the mysteries of life and draw the poetics of one's experience into focus. While some have overtly religious meaning, many are secular spaces or can be acknowledged for their distinctiveness by anyone.

Often these places represent socially or culturally a touchstone of sorts for a particular group of peoples. They might be places where unique activities happen on a regular basis, or where individuals congregate to explore their own meanings of spirituality. In today's secular, multi-cultural society, these special places become powerpoints appreciated by many groups of people and recognized and celebrated in their own right. Joel Kotkin in his book, *The city. A global history*, writes,

"Since the earliest origins, urban areas have performed three separate critical functions - the creation of sacred space, the provision of basic security and the host of a commercial market" (Kotkin, 2005: xvi).

This project is an inquiry into the definition, meaning and relevance of these contemporary *sacred* urban places. They are an important and critical component in the composition of the built environment (ie. Kotkin, Cities, 2006) and urban planners and designers have unique responsibilities in recognizing, protecting and enhancing these special, spiritual places. This includes recognizing their *absence* and encouraging designers to articulate new or enhanced spaces that can become focal points for all Canadians.

1.0 Introduction

1.2 Methodology

The underlying objective of this project explores the contemporary and secular meanings of sacred space and its existing characterizations, how to recognize these places and possible means to enhance them. This project focuses on *St. Ann's Park* and its surrounding area in Griffintown, Montreal near the Lachine Canal as the physical location to help achieve this.

Section One broaches the topic and establishes a premise and methodology. (See flow chart). Section Two begins by examining pertinent word definitions that help define and surround both the words *sacred* and *place*. It continues by investigating the topic of sacred space and several related ideas proposed by philosophers *Mircea Eliade* and *Martin Heidegger*. Section Two ends by proposing a list of twelve archetypal sacred places, compiled from various sources, as a way to help recognize and catagorize sacred places when urban planners and designers are out in the field.

Section Three further explores the meaning of sacred place in relation to a number of theoretical ideas and frameworks. This includes how the notion of phenomenology relates to the built environment, how emotion and memory influence one's perception of place and how cultural rituals and mythology can inpress society's views on particular locations. A review of Gabrielle Roy's *The Tin Flute* as an example of a literary narrative of Montreal also helps reveal the mythology and cultural uniqueness of the city as well as explore the fictional aspect of sacred space and special places.

Section Three continues by reviewing some of the ideas of Kevin Lynch and Christian Norberg-Schulz, two highly regarded architectural theorists, which are relevant to the idea of sacred place; including the ideas of *genus-loci* and *axis mundi*. The section ends on further review of architectural theories with respect to *sacred place*, some put forth by additional authors, detailing ideas on *site location*, the notion of *threshold*, the importance of *enclosure*, *pathways* and elements of *character*.

Section Four then turns to examine and analyse *St. Ann's Park* near the Lachine Canal in Griffintown. Subsections review ithe site's context within Montreal, the history of Griffintown, including the story of the *Black Rock* from the 1800s, and the current heritage designations in and around *St. Ann's Park*. Subsections also analyse the landscape and urban form of the area including a figure-ground study, biotic features, materiality and street furniture as well as *fronts* and *backs*.

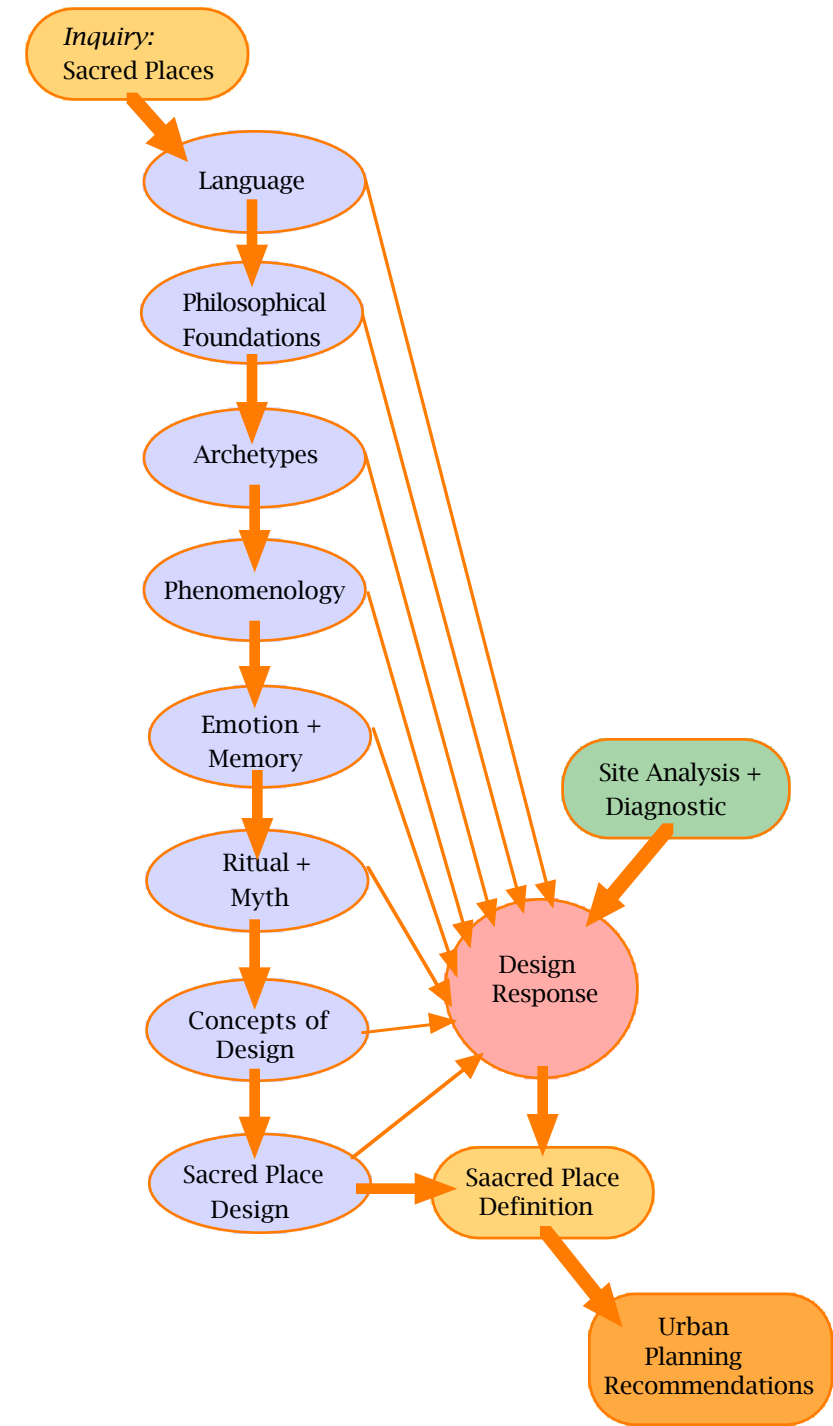
Section Four also explores the area's circulation patterns and issues, as well as its experiential qualities including views, noise, stimulus and responses, and perceived public and private spaces. The final subsection completes a diagnostic of the surrounding area including its many opportunities and constraints.

Section Five proposes a new design for *St. Ann's Park* in Griffintown and its surrounding area near the Lachine Canal with the intention of enhancing its sense of *sacredness*. *Saint Ann's Park* is a culturally and historically charged location in Montreal. It is both a former religious site and spiritual place that will challenge the definition of sacred space and any design response.

Sacred places exist in unique locations and understanding how urban planning and design responds to the sacredness of a particular site is critical. A concept diagram lays out the design, with a plan, detailed plans, sections and perspective views following. The design response incorporates research and information gained from other parts of this project's research.

Section Six then turns to discussion and proposes a contemporary and secular definition of what sacred space in public places means for urban planning and design. It also suggests seven recommendations that encorporate *sacred place* values, principles, goals and objectives for future urban planning policy. The intention is that this project helps to establish the importance of recognizing and enhancing sacred places in Canada for urban planners and designers in the 21st century.

Flow chart



2.1 Language

How can sacred places be defined within the Canadian secular and urban context? If one is to reflect on one's own experience, what qualities describe those unique urban spaces that elevate one's sense of the world - that are mysterious or beyond the everyday?

What does the word *sacred* in fact mean? A worthwhile supposition is to categorically recognize the *spiritual* dimension as well as the religious. The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) describes both, one associated with a deity of some kind and another associated with the concept of *reverence*. Both imply objects or locations that are detached or separated from others and held with great respect. From the OED:

sacred

3. a. Of things, places, of persons and their offices, etc.: Set apart for or dedicated to some religious purpose, and hence entitled to veneration or religious respect; made holy by association with a god or other object of worship; consecrated, hallowed.
d. Applied as a specific defining adj. to various animals and plants that are or have been considered sacred to certain deities.

4. *transf.* and *fig.* Regarded with or entitled to respect or reverence similar to that which attaches to holy things.
5. a. Secured by religious sentiment, reverence, sense of justice, or the like, against violation, infringement, or encroachment.
c. With *from*: Protected by some sanction *from* injury or incursion.
d. *fig.* Devoted to some purpose, not to be lightly intruded upon or handled.

spiritual

A. *adj.*
I. 1. a. Of or pertaining to, affecting or concerning, the spirit or higher moral qualities, exp. as regarded in a religious aspect. (Freq. in express or implied distinction to *bodily*, *corporal*, or *temporal*.)
b. Applied to material things, substances, etc., in a figurative or symbolical sense.

2. a. Of, belonging or relating to, concerned with, sacred or ecclesiastical things or matters, as distinguished from secular affairs; pertaining to the church or the clergy; ecclesiastical.
4. a. Of or pertaining to , consisting of, spirit, regarded in either a religious or intellectual aspect; of the nature of a spirit or incorporeal supernatural essence; immaterial.

The idea of *reverence* helps to draw a clearer picture of defining what sacred space means. It becomes even more important for those urban planners and designers involved in enhancing those spiritual places.

2.0 Definitions

reverence

1. Deep or due respect felt or shown towards a person on account of his or her position or relationship; deference. Now *rare* or *Obs.*
b. Deep respect and veneration for some thing, place, or person regarded as having a sacred or exalted character.

With this thought in mind, however, the issue of *consecration* requires further discussion. Urban designers should not be expected to take on the responsibility of *making places sacred* in the eyes of the general public as some kind of ritual act. This is beyond the scope of their work. Their role as designers are to enhance a physical place, respecting the notion that those using it will explore and respect it as sacred or spiritual.

consecrate

1. *trans.* To set apart (a person or thing) as sacred to the Deity; to dedicate solemnly to some sacred or religious purpose, and so give the object itself a character of holiness; to make sacred or holy and so fit for a religious use. Const. *to*, *unto*.
5. *transf.* To devote or dedicate *to* some purpose; often associated with I, as implying devotion to some cherished principle or pursuit.
6. To render sacred; to make an object of veneration or cherished regard; to hallow, sanctify; to sanction [=mod.F. *consacrer*].
+8. To place among the gods; to deify; to apotheosize. *Obs.* [A Latinism.]

Equally important is to review and understand the subtle yet important distinction between the words *place* and *space*. While not immediately apparent, the two terms are unique and valuable for the urban planner and designer. While *place* emphasizes a presence, or refers to some kind of entity, space doesn't necessarily require one. They both raise the question of how people engage or appropriate particular locations.

place, n.

I. 1. An open space in a city; a square, a market-place.
II. A material space.
3. b. The portion of space actually occupied by a person or thing; the position of a body in space, or with reference to other bodies; locality; situation.
5. a. A portion of space in which people dwell together; a general designation for a city, town, village, hamlet, etc.
b. A residence, dwelling, house; a seat, mansion, palace; formerly sometimes, a religious house, a convent; also *spec.* the chief residence on an estate; a manor-house; a country-house with its surroundings. Also *place-house*. (see 29). (Cf. Welsh *plâs*.)

space

II. Denoting area or extension.
*Without article, in generalized sense.
5. Linear distance; interval between two or more points or objects.
6. a. Superficial extent or area; also, extent in three dimensions.
b. Extent or area sufficient for some purpose; room. Also const. *to* with inf.
7. *Metaph.* Continuous, unbounded, or unlimited extension in every direction, regarded as void of matter, or without reference to this. Freq. coupled with *time*.

St. Ann’s Park, Montreal



Artefacts. St. Ann’s Park. Griffintown, Montreal.

2.2 Philosophical foundations

Well-known author Joseph Campbell, who wrote many books on mythology, has asserted his own thoughts about sacred space. He comments,

"A sacred space is any space that is set apart from the usual context of life. In the secular context, one is concerned with pairs of opposites: cause and effect, gain and loss, and so on. Sacred space has no function in the way of earning a living or a reputation. Practical use is not the dominant feature of anything in the space" (Osbon, 1991: 180).

It follows then that the notion of what a *sacred place* means must be explored in its social and cultural context. For instance, what other kinds of defined places aren't *sacred*? This is an important question when defining what sacred places mean in today's multicultural society; particularly because of each word's multiple meanings.

It is also important to point out that this exploration comes from a *secular* perspective, one that is not associated with any particular religion, but based on a scientific framework and empirical evidence. The assertion, that many people living today *are* affected by religion and that there is a *spiritual* aspect to living, insomuch in being receptive to the mysteries of the universe, however is accepted. From the OED:

secular

A. adj.
1 Of or pertaining to the world.
2.a. Belonging to the world and its affairs as distinguished from the church and religion; civil, lay, temporal. Chiefly used as a negative term, with the meaning non-ecclesiastical, non-religious, or non-sacred.
3.a. Of or belonging to the present or visible world as distinguished from the eternal or spiritual world; temporal, worldly. Also *secular-minded* adj.

Two prominent western philosophers who have contributed much to the discussion regarding the philosophy of place are *Mircea Eliade* and *Martin Heidegger*. Their valuable insights expose some important and fundamental ideas on what sacred place means in today's world.

2.2.1 Mircea Eliade

In his distinguished book, *The sacred and the profane; the nature of religion*, the prominent Romanian

philosopher Mircea Eliade explores the concept of what a *sacred* place is in relation to places that are *profane*. While he asserts that the sacred is experienced by *religious* man, the argument that they can be experienced by anyone with a receptive, spiritual bent is apparent. Eliade asserts,

"For religious man, space is not homogeneous; he experiences interruptions, breaks in it; some parts of space are qualitatively different from others" (Eliade, 1959: 20).

This difference, he argues, helps humanity familiarize themselves in the universe. Sacred locations become beacons for establishing one's physical and metaphysical place in the world. Places that are considered *sacred*, act to become focused seats that encourage this sense of greater significance and create, in a fundamental sense, a place of origin. Eliade writes,

"For it is the break effected in space that allows the world to be constituted, because it reveals the fixed point, the central axis for all future orientation" (Eliade, 1959: 21).

And that,

"The sacred reveals absolute reality and at the same time makes orientation possible; hence it *founds the world* in the sense that it fixes the limits and establishes the order of the world" (Eliade, 1959: 30).

For Eliade, *profane* places, then become the everyday, ordinary locations where people shop, eat, and go about their usual business. From the OED,

profane

1. Not pertaining or devoted to what is sacred or biblical, esp. in **profane history, literature**; unconsecrated, secular, lay, common; civil. as distinguished from ecclesiastical.

Eliade again asserts,

"The profane experience, on the contrary, maintains the homogeneity and hence the relativity of space. No *true* orientation is now possible, for the fixed point no longer enjoys a unique ontological status; it appears and disappears in accordance with the needs of the day" (Eliade, 1959: 24).



Broken carving artefact. St. Ann's Park. Griffintown, Montreal.

2.2.2 Martin Heidegger

The German philosopher Martin Heidegger has examined a number of profound thoughts that run deep alongside the notion of *sacred place*. This project surveys three of his ideas.

To begin, the reader must set aside the immediate topic of *sacred place*, and delve into the vastly philosophical question of how humanity, as a particular group on earth, lives.

Heidegger idea #1: "Dasein"

Heidegger's text, *Being and Time*, is a meaty philosophical discussion regarding the question of 'Being'; what it means to 'Be'. By the fifth paragraph, nevertheless, he has admitted it is undefinable. (Heidegger, 2008: 44) He continues the discussion, nevertheless, asserting a number of very interesting

"The reader will very soon realize that sacred and profane are two modes of being in the world, two existential situations assumed by man in the course of his history" (Eliade, 1959: 14).

2.2 Philosophical foundations

ideas. Heidegger asserts that, in order to understand what 'Being' really is, the subject, or person, who is experiencing this 'being' and is being questioned about it, requires a distinct definition. He refers to this state of being as 'Dasein'.

In his book, *Heidegger An Introduction*, Richard Polt writes,

"This brings us to Heideggers's most important terminological innovation - the expression *Dasein*. This word is usually left untranslated. In everyday German it parallels our word "existence", but etymologically it means "Being-there" (Polt, 1999: 29).

Chapter Five of Heidegger's *Being and Time*, titled *Being-in as Such*, explores, among other things, (including mood, fear and language), the *there* part of what Richard Polt calls the 'Being-there'. Heidegger argues,

"The being which is essentially constituted by being-in-the-world is itself always its "there". According to the familiar meaning of the word, "there" points to "here" and over there" (Heidegger, 1996: 125).

And,

"The existential spatiality of Da-sein which determines its "place" for it in this way is itself based upon being-in-the-world. The over there is the determinateness of something encountered with the world (Heidegger, 1996:133).

In one sense then, life does not exist in a vacuum, but is integrated with the universe around it. Heidegger's idea of "to dwell" expands on this perspective.

Heidegger idea #2: "To dwell"

Under the word *spiritual*, the Oxford English Dictionary includes the phrase *spiritual home*, raising the uplifting subject on how humanity can experience its connection to life here on earth. The idea of *spiritual home* implicitly asks the question of how physical *space* becomes linked or relates to a receptive human *consciousness*. From the OED:

spiritual
I. 1. e. *spiritual home* (with no religious connotation), a place or milieu, other than one's home, which seems especially congenial or in harmony with one's nature, or to which one feels a sense of belonging or indebtedness.

Heidegger wrote extensively about this question in his text, *Building Dwelling Thinking*, and his arguments, in some respects, can be seen as an assertion that humanity should embrace this notion of *spiritual home*. A substantial component of his inquiry surrounding the meaning and relevance of what it means "to dwell" for humanity explores the history of the German word .

Heidegger's idea of *dwelling*, or "to dwell", then in a way, reverberates with the concept of "Dasein". He also writes, "The relationship between man and space is none other than dwelling, thought essentially" (Heidegger, 2008: 359).

Adam Sharr, in his book *Heidegger for Architects* regarding Heidegger, contemplates, "The philosopher's explorations of dwelling and place can be considered as one of many routes that he tried to follow in trying to make sense of the question of being; exploring the situation of being in the physical world of things" (Sharr, 2007: 26).

Heidegger idea #3 "Gathering"

So what does any of this so far have to do with defining sacred places? What one can suggest is that Heidegger is asserting the premise that *any* place where a person might exist has the *potential* to be spiritual or sacred. A metaphor he uses to explore how *place* is created or *gathered*, is an example of a bridge, again from his text *Building Dwelling Thinking*, and is itself imbued with an atmosphere of spiritual and sacred qualities.

"To be sure, the bridge is thing of its own kind; for it gathers the fourfold in *such* a way that it allows a site for it. But only something *that is itself a locale* can make space for a site. The locale is not already there before the bridge is. Before the bridge stands, there are of course many spots along the stream that can be occupied by something. One of them proves to be a locale, and does so because of the bridge. Thus the bridge does not first come to a locale to stand in it; rather, a locale comes into

existence only by virtue of the bridge" (Heidegger, 2008: 355-6).

For Heidegger, his example of a bridge that has *gathered* duly demonstrates how four objects meet, where humanity intersects with the *earth* below, the sky above, and important non-human entities. Interestingly, Adam Sharr, again from his book *Heidegger for Architects*, asserts that, "There is a credible case that when Heidegger talks about something 'gathering', it might also be translated to English as 'placing'" (Sharr, 2007: 52). Sharr also reflects on the spiritual aspect of Heidegger's concept, citing G. Steiner's text *Heidegger*,

"It has been suggested that the philosopher's talk of gods in fourfold neither allowed nor disallowed any confessional outlook (Steiner 1992, 155). His 'beckoning messengers' of the divine stood instead for a mystical dimension of life that can't be rendered rational (1971, 150)" (Sharr, 2007: 44-45).

Whatever one's inclination, this fourth *sense of mystery*, recognises humanity's emotional qualities as well as rational. It is also interesting to note that in his text, *Building, Dwelling Thinking*, Heidegger does appear to argue for several distinct meanings of the word *space*, as well as distinct meanings for the terms *locale*, and *place*. He writes,

"Space is in essence that for which room is made is always granted and hence is joined, that is gathered, by virtue of a locale, that is, by such a thing as the bridge. *Accordingly, spaces receive their essential being from locales and not from "space"* (Heidegger, 2007: 356).

To review Heidegger's philosophy in the context of exploring sacred places is to contemplate humanity's life and relationship to earth and one's immediate experience and interaction with it. In some ways it is an actual *attitude*, a response to stimulus, an action to the phenomena that surrounds everyone. And sometimes, some of those places are out of the ordinary.

"What then does ich bin mean? The old word bauen, to which the bin belongs, answers: ich bin, du bist mean I dwell, you dwell. The way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans are on the earth, is buan, dwelling. To be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell. The old word bauen, which says that man is insofar as he dwells, this word bauen, however, also means at the same to cherish and protect, to preserve and care for, specifically to till the soil, to cultivate the vine" (Heidegger, 2008: 349).

2.3 Sacred Places: important archetypal categories

With a tentative grasp of the philosophical side of *sacred place* now in hand, one can presently turn to a summary of the many substantial examples that exist throughout the world. While their existence is undeniable to those cultures that revere them, the question of how to distinguish them by *structure* or *form* becomes somewhat subjective. From the OED:

archetype
1. The original pattern or model from which copies are made; a prototype
2.b. in *Compar. Anat.* An assumed ideal pattern of the fundamental structure of each great division of organized beings, of which the various species are considered as modifications.
c. In the psychology of C.G. Jung: a pervasive idea, image, or symbol that forms part of the collective unconscious. For the use of the term in Literary Criticism see ARCHETYPAL *a.* 2.

By evaluating from a wide variety of examples from around the world, however, a set of catagorical types with common characteristics emerge that can aid the urban planner and designer in recognizing and defining possible sacred places when out in the field.

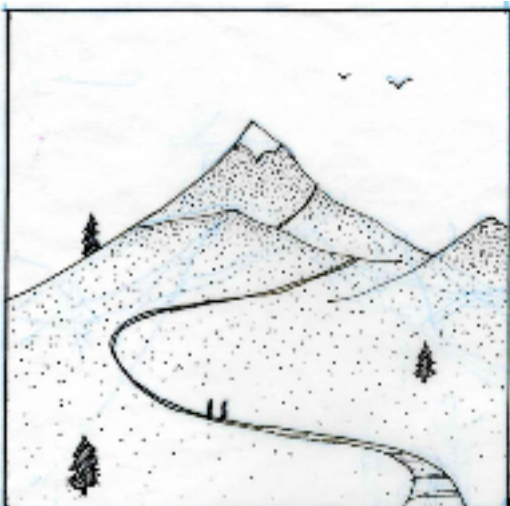
This project proposes therefore twelve distinct archetypes that, while probably incomplete, can also help urban planners and designers to evaluate and enhance other sacred places. These twelve archetypes include:

- 2.3.1 *The Cave*
A landscape feature. Includes an outdoor and indoor space. Associated with paths, earth and a sense of enclosure.
- 2.3.2 *The Mountain*
A landscape feature. Associated with paths, sky and openness and grandeur.
- 2.3.3 *The River*
A landscape feature. Associated with water, earth and sky and time.
- 2.3.4 *The Tree*
A landscape feature. Associated with life, water, earth, sky, time and grandeur.
- 2.3.5 *The Temple*
A built feature. Includes an indoor and outdoor space. Associated with earth, sky and grandeur.
- 2.3.6 *The Path*
A built feature or landscape feature. Associated with earth and sky and time.
- 2.3.7 *The Garden*
A built feature. Can include an indoor and outdoor space. Associated with life, earth and sky and time.
- 2.3.8 *The Large Stone Collection*
A built feature. Associated with a sense of enclosure, earth, sky and grandeur.
- 2.3.9 *The Solar Alignment*
A built feature. Associated with sky, time and grandeur.
- 2.3.10 *The Womb*
A built feature. Can include indoor and outdoor space. Associated with a sense of enclosure and earth.
- 2.3.11 *The Monument*
A built feature. Can include indoor and outdoor space. Associated with a sense of enclosure, earth, sky and grandeur.
- 2.3.12 *The Clearing*
A built or landscape feature. Associated with a sense of enclosure, paths, earth and sky.

Archetypal Catagories



The Cave



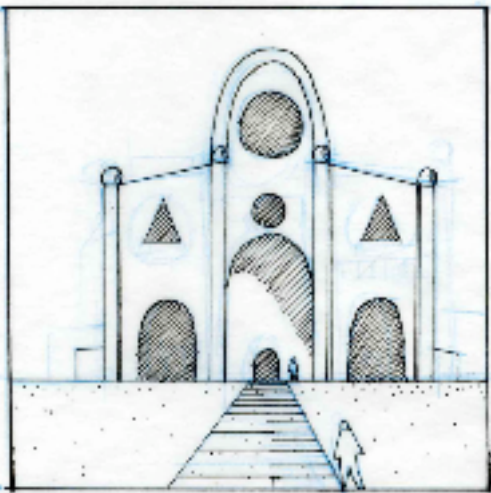
The Mountain



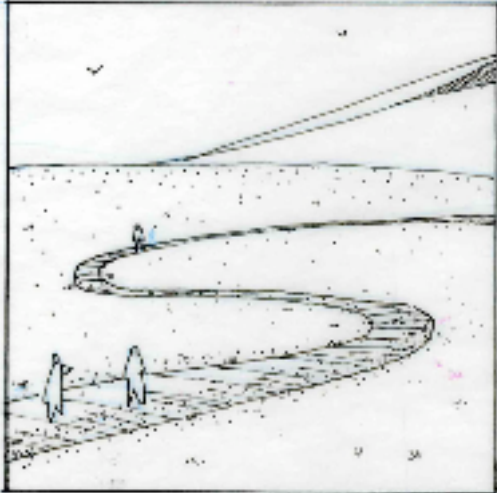
The River



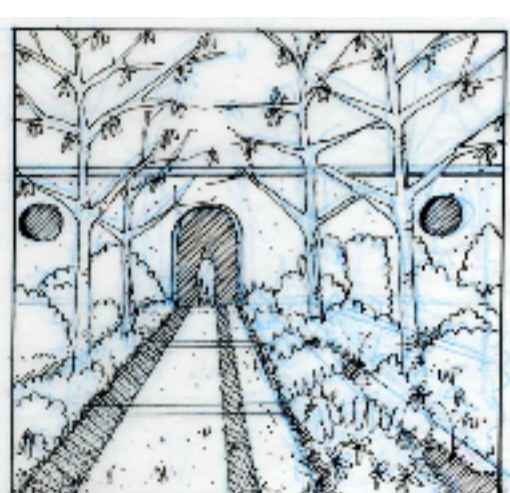
The Tree



The Temple



The Path



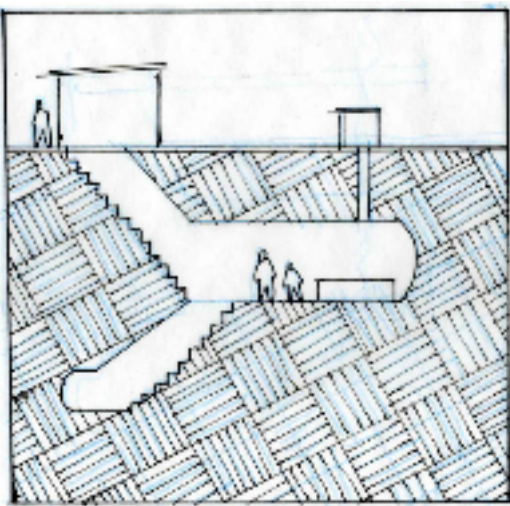
The Garden Grove



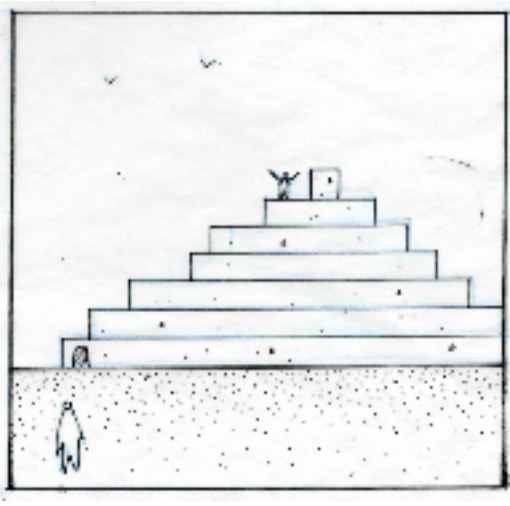
The Stone Arrangement



The Solar Alignment



The Womb



The Monument



The Clearing

2.0 Definitions

3.1 Phenomenology

In addition to the philosophical and historical aspects of sacred places, if one is to articulate their meaning and importance and explore how to recognize and enhance them, the concept of *phenomenology*, as well as thoughts on *emotion*, *memory*, *ritual* and *myth*, as they relate to our surrounding environment would be worth investigating. From the OED:

phenomenology
b. That division of any science which describes and classifies its phenomena; in **Philos.**, the theory, put forward by German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and his followers, to the effect that the pure and transcendental nature and meaning of phenomena, and hence their real and ultimate significance, can only be apprehended subectively; the method of reduction, based, by Husserl on Descarte's method, whereby all factual knowledge and reasoned assumptions about the phenomena as object and the experiencing 'ego' are set aside so that pure intuition of the essence of the phenomenon may be rigorously analysed and studied.

For urban planners and designers, this signifies that it is not only beneficial to validate the senses and experiences that one has when exploring the built environment, but that these phenomena are a relevant and integral part of both analytical study and developing proposals. Senses include not only sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste, but also the feelings and emotions one experiences of a particular place and the memories one has had from past experiences.

"Moving beyond quantitative measurement of empirically measurable facts, a phenomenological reading might include descriptions of phenomena arising from interior reflection, hermeneutic explication of narrative accounts, interpretation of artistic and literary portrayals, and mindful first-hand observation of settings..." (Stefanovic, 1998: 33).

3.2 Emotion + Memory

Determining how emotion and memory relate to any public place is worthwhile. Interestingly, Susan Harrington, in her recent book, *On Landscape*, argues how these two important aspects of the human experience are so often overlooked in scientific analysis with regards to landscape. She asserts,

"Since landscapes have a powerful ability to elicit a chain of memories and associations, they can also trigger strong emotions and feelings. Emotions and feelings featured heavily in eighteenth-century

thinking from art to politics to science. In contrast, during the twentieth century emotions were held as the antithesis to rational thinking. Perhaps this is why some of the most emotive landscapes, such as cemeteries, were excluded from hallmark modernist landscapes like suburban developments" (Herrington, 2009: 83).

These could equally be attributed to the built environment and special places in particular as well. Harrington refers to a quote by Antonio Damasio, a neurology professor who in his book, *The Feeling of What Happens*, writes,

"Twentieth-century science left out the body, moved emotion back into the brain, but relegated it to the lower neural strata associated with ancestors who no one worshiped. In the end, not only was emotion not rational, even studying it was probably not rational" (Damasio, 1999: 39).

Harrington also refers to Damasio to argue the importance of emotion. She writes regarding his work, "...based on case studies of patients, Damasio proposes that emotions are directly tied to cognition, particularly with respect to aspects of interpretation, such as causal thinking" (Herrington, 2009:83). Damasio, again in his book *The Feeling What Happens*, addresses how memory affects emotions:

"It is also important to note that while the biological machinery for emotions is largely preset, the inducers are not part of the machinery, they are external to it. The stimuli that cause emotions are by no means confined to those that helped shape our emotional brain during evolution and which can induce emotions in our brains from early in life. As they develop and interact, organisms gain factual and emotional experience with different objects and situations in the environment and thus have an opportunity to associate many objects and situations which would have been emotionally neutral with the objects and situation as that are naturally prescribed to cause emotions" (Damasio, 1999: 57).

Memories of special places then can hold exceptional meaning and emotion to individuals and to groups of people that share a common history. A public memory of a certain location or object by a group of people of a collective experience can become a place to gather, to possibly reenact certain events, and in which the location become out of the ordinary, a charged powerpoint that is separated from the norm.

3.3 Ritual + Myth

From the OED:

myth
1. a. A purely fictitious narrative usually involving supernatural persons, actions, or events, and embodying some popular idea concerning natural or historical phenomena.

When exploring and describing individual sacred places, the stories told of each particular location help explain each site's unique narrative. Its cultural activities, both past and present, and the site's unique history play a large role in shaping the collective memory of contemporary society and its future generations. In Canada, this includes a society drawn from our many unique First Nation, Inuit and Métis as well as European and others cultures. The rituals, religions and stories of our people help to define and shape our social experience here on earth.

"Religion, mythology, and ritual are fundamental elements of human consciousness and society and have long served as a means to explain the world and humans' place within it" (Barrie, 1996: 4).

Activities by people at these sacred sites might include reenactments of old stories, parades, rituals of celebration or remembrances of important events and people. They help to address important themes that are reflected in some of Heidegger's and Eliade's ideas. Architect Thomas Barrie, in his book *Spiritual Path, Sacred Place* asserts, "A meaningful place needs to possess an environmental identity that gives its inhabitants a sense of belonging and connection. Often this manifests itself in the belief that it is at the center of the world, beyond which lies the undifferentiated unknown." (Barrie, 1996: 52).

He also writes, referring to Joseph Campbell, about emphasizing the strong connection between people's minds, mythology, architecture and place. Barrie argues,

"Myth, according to Joseph Campbell, is the "spontaneous eruption of the psyche." Architecture as built myth is similarly linked to the psyche and its need for spiritual orientation, wholeness, and transcendence" (Barrie, 1996: 6).

Yet the mythology of places can be both big and small. While stories of creation have their place, the stories of particular waterfronts or songs of specific street corners have an equal value. It's these

"To know a place one must know its memories" (England, 1998: p. 9).

3.3 Ritual + Myth

narratives of place, the stories of certain areas; the poems, the songs and historical anecdotes that refer to specific urban hotspots that help to build the mythic and experiential memories of the sacred places in the city. And they can often expand on the qualities of life that are common to everyone. Barrie, again from his book *Spiritual Path, Sacred Place*, asserts,

"Nevertheless, I make what I believe to be the reasonable assumption that certain aspects of the myths the architecture symbolizes in all ages are still powerful and meaningful. In other words, the myths that we invent to give our lives meaning have aspects that are fundamentally timeless and universal, and therefore so is the architecture of the sacred path and place" (Barrie, 1996: 9).

3.4 Concepts of Design

Kevin Lynch and Christian Norberg-Schulz are two leading and influential architectural theorists. Kevin Lynch's books on the built environment include, *The Image of the City*, *Site Planning* with Gary Hack and *A Theory of Good City Form*. Christian Norberg-Schulz books include, among others, *The Concept of Dwelling*, *Genius loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* and *Existence, Space & Architecture*. Both have explored concepts in line with what has been previously discussed and many segments of their writing help to bridge the gap between some of these philosophical notions and the designing of the physical environment.

3.4.1 Kevin Lynch

In his book, *A Theory of Good City Form*, Kevin Lynch lays out seven "...performance dimensions for the spatial form of cities..." (Lynch, 1981: 117). The second one, what he calls *Sense*, is the quality that holds most interest to this paper's discussion. Lynch asserts,

"*Sense*: the degree to which the settlement can be clearly perceived and mentally differentiated and structured in time and space by its residents and the degree to which that mental structure connects with their values and concepts - the match between environment, our sensory and mental capabilities, and our cultural constructs" (Lynch, 1981: 118).

It is this quality that incorporates elements of *phenomenological experience* and Heidegger's notions of *dwelling* and *gathering*. Lynch argues,

"Most people have had the experience of being in a very special place, and they prize it and lament its common lack. There is a sheer delight in sensing the world: the play of light, the feel and smell of the wind, touches, sounds, colors, forms. A good place is accessible to all the senses, makes visible the currents of the air, engages the perceptions of its inhabitants" (Lynch, 1981: 132).

Lynch also writes, "The simplest form of sense is identity, in the narrow meaning of that common term "a sense of place". Identity is the extent to which a person can recognize or recall a place as being distinct from other places - as having a vivid, or unique or at least a particular, character of its own" (Lynch, 1981: 131).

In his seminal 1960 work, *The Image of the City*, Kevin Lynch also discusses a number of important ideas that also relate both directly and indirectly to the concept of *phenomenology* and notion of sacredness. His theories on urban design and how to experience *urban spaces* can also be applied in order to recognize and enhance *sacred places*.

Lynch argues that just as cities, landscapes and the entire built environment are experienced by people, the idea of how *clear* these experiences are, can be explained by how strong an individual's mental *image* of that particular place is. Lynch asserts that the stronger an image one has of a particular place - its *legibility* - the better one is able to *orient* oneself in their environment. (Lynch, 1960: 4-6)

Perhaps the most relevant point Lynch makes for this discussion, however, is his full recognition of sacred places and their importance to the *legibility* to the environment. Some areas in the world, Lynch recognizes, are beyond the everyday, and evoke special meanings. He writes,

"Certain holy areas may become very highly charged, so that there is a strong focusing of attention, a fine differentiation of parts, a high density of names" (Lynch, 1960: 124).

Interestingly, Lynch does not attempt to define what he means by *holy* or *sacred*, but he does argue that these special places can be experienced beyond a single cultural group. He asserts,

"Other features may not only be noticeable and distinguishable but even have a "presence," a sort of animation or peculiarly vivid reality, that is felt by peoples of utterly different cultures" (Lynch, 1960: 135).

And Lynch also recognizes as many others do, that landscapes in particular can become spiritual places. He writes,

"At the other end of the scale, there are visual qualities in some landscape features which make them the inevitable subjects of attention, despite the selective power of the eye. Most often, sacredness is concentrated in the more striking natural features, such as the connection of the Ashanti gods with the great lakes and rivers, or the common reverence attached to great mountains" (Lynch, 1960: 134).

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3.4 Concepts of Design

3.4.2 Christian Norberg-Schulz

Christian Norberg-Schulz, follows in the footsteps of Heidegger, Eliade and Lynch and applies many of their ideas to architecture and the built environment. His themes as they pertain to cities and landscapes can also be applied to shaping a more comprehensive explanation of what sacred places are and a conceptual framework for how they can be enhanced. From the OED:

genius
1. With reference to classical pagan belief: The tutelary god or attendant spirit allotted to every person at his birth, to govern his fortunes and determine his character, and finally to conduct him out of the world; also, the tutelary and controlling spirit similarly connected with a place, an institution, etc. (Now only in *sing.*)
3.d. With reference to a place: The body of associations connected with, or inspirations that may be derived from it. (Cf. 1 and 7.)
7. *phr.* **genius loci** [L. = 'genius of the place'], the presiding deity or spirit (see sense 1); but often used in the sense of 3d.

One concept that Norberg-Schulz refers to in his books, is that of the *genius loci*, an idea which goes a long way to help explain what sacred places are and what one might look for in enhancing them. (Norberg-Schulz, 1971: 27, 1985:19-20) *Genius loci* helps give meaning to those special places on earth that conceptually articulates the special qualities of a place that create a unique atmosphere. In his book, *Existance, Space & Architecture*, Norberg-Schulz declares, with text reminiscent of Lynch,

"Since remote times man has recognized that different places have a different character. This character is often so strong that it in fact determines the basic properties of the environmental images of most people present, making them feel that they experience and belong to the same place. The *genius loci* in many cases has even proved strong enough to dominate any political, social and cultural changes" (Norberg-Schulz, 1971: 27).

Norberg-Schulz also introduces to this discussion another very interesting notion that is relevant to the urban designer when contemplating the immediate manner of enhancing sacred places. He asserts,

"On the basis of a theory of 'existential space', I therefore develop the idea that architectural space may be understood as a concretization of environmental schemata or images, which form a necessary part of man's general orientation of 'being in the world'" (Norberg-Schulz, 1971: 7).

Norberg-Schulz argues that '*existential space*' is made up of three important ingredients; *centres*, *areas* and *directions*. These three parts help form a context for defining *place* within a three-dimensional arena (Norberg-Schulz, 1971: 17-27). He writes,

"If we want to interpret these basic results of perception psychology in more general terms, we may say that the elementary organizational schemata consist in the establishment of *centres* or places (proximity), *directions* or paths (continuity) and *areas* or domains (enclosure). To orient himself, man above all needs to grasp such relations, whereas the geometrical schemata develop much later, to serve more particular purposes" (Norberg-Schulz, 1971: 18).

The first two, *centres* and *areas*, establish the idea of differential space, that a particular physical spot or node - a *centre* - is physically embedded within a larger field - an *area*. In other words, a particular larger environment provides context by surrounding a more prominent focal point. (Norberg-Schulz, 1971: 18-20, 23-25) Norberg-Schulz declares,

"I have already pointed out that the concept of place implies an inside and an outside, and that existential space usually comprises many places. A place is therefore 'situated' within a larger context, and cannot be understood in isolation" (Norberg-Schulz, 1971: 20).

The third idea Norberg-Schulz asserts involves *directions* and the *path*. (Norberg-Schulz, 1971: 20-23). Here the idea is that not only does movement move horizontally, as lines between centres but also vertically, both upward and downward. The notion of horizontal movement is easier understood; this is the theoretical procedure as to how people transport themselves from one location on earth to another. The second is more difficult to wrap one's head around. Norberg-Schulz explains it this way -(citing

Eliade, M.. *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, 1958: 111)!

"The vertical, therefore, has always been considered the *sacred* dimension of space. It represents a 'path' towards a reality which may be 'higher' or 'lower' than daily life, a reality which conquers gravity, that is, earthly existence, or succumbs to it. The *axis mundi* is thus more than the centre of the world, it represents a connection between the three cosmic realms, and it is only at the central axis that a breakthrough from one realm to another can occur²¹" (Norberg-Schulz, 1971: 21).

For Norberg-Schulz, a *path* and its direction becomes more than a physical entity but a metaphysical construct as well. This vertical movement, whether concrete, visual or imaginary opens the discussion to exploring the mysteries and meaning beyond humanity's profane routine. How one interprets this notion, of course is a subjective decision. In a way, this is not a new idea or his alone.

AXIS MUNDI (L., "world axis") The world pillar, or cosmic axis, described in the cosmologies of divers cultures. It provides a center to the cosmos by connecting all three realms: that of the underworld, that of human beings, and that of the gods. It may take on any one of a number of forms: for example, that of a giant tree, a mountain, a bridge, or a ladder. (Moon, 1991: 36)

Norberg-Schulz also incorporates the idea of *axis mundi* into his discussion. (Norberg-Schulz, 1971: 18, 21-22, 1985: 22-23, see also 25). By refering to this concept, he acknowledges the relevancy of a supernatural component in the universe, if only to aid in his explanation of the importance of phenomenological architectural analysis and design.

"Since remote times man has recognized that different places have a different character. This character is often so strong that it in fact determines the basic properties of the environmental images of most people present, making them feel that they experience and belong to the same place. The *genius loci* in many cases has even proved strong enough to dominate any political, social and cultural changes" (Norberg-Schulz, 1971: 27).

3.5 Sacred Place Design

Designing sacred places is a daunting task; incorporating the extensive qualities of rational urban design that also includes the sympathetic feel of the phenomenological. There is no guarantee of a positive experiential outcome for each site's participants. In his book, *Spirit & Place. Healing our environment. Healing environment*, architect Christopher Day writes,

"How, in today's materialistic culture, can we make sacred places? As with everything that touches upon mystery, there can be no formula. Any place that makes us aware of the presence of spiritual powers, changing our inner state and inducing reverence, is a holy place. This experience, both humbling and ennobling, transforms our relationship to the world around us. It's personally, socially and environmentally therapeutic" (Day, 2002: 239).

Roberta Feldman, in her 1996 article *Constancy and Change in Attachments to Types of Settlements*, articulates the contemporary research on how humanity relates to specific places. While her particular study concerns individuals, "...of the Chicago metropolitan area" (Feldman, 1996: 423), her conclusions assert wider ramifications. She writes,

"Empirical evidence suggests that people form psychological bonds with types of settlements, expressions of which are similar to those identified in past research as indicative of psychological bonds with the tangible surrounding of the home, and that residential mobility may be best conceptualized as sustaining bonds, temporary dislocations reunions, and reorientations in bonds with a type of settlement rather than as disruptions in bonding processes" (Feldman, 1996: 419).

How does this relate to sacred places? It might speak to the notion that special locations, for those individuals who have moved, can be discovered by individuals in *any* location. Sacred places are *not* strictly confined to any single spot.

Studying existing sacred places and their associated mythologies, several physical forms emerge that while not prescribing a defined design protocol, suggest an objective *modus operandi* that can support either generating or enhancing special and spiritual places.

While some critics might argue that even to distinguish public spaces as sacred in the built environment is beyond the scope of urban planning and design, a number of authors argue that these physical forms can be not only be recognized but employed for future development. In his book, *Spiritual Path, Sacred Place. Myth, Ritual, and Meaning in Architecture*, architect Thomas Barrie, for one, asserts,

"If we accept that there are common elements that religion and mythology comprise, and that architecture is a spatial and temporal symbolization of myth and religion, then the question as to whether there are shared architectural patterns in architecture is valid" (Barrie, 1996: 19).

For Barrie, each sacred site is different, each place representing its own meaningful expression due to its history, mythology, geography and culture. He writes,

"The sacred place is a place apart, separated from the profane world. It communicates shared symbolic meanings and provides a place where God or gods are worshiped and rituals enacted. Examples range from a simple clearing in the forest to complex architectural setting" (Barrie, 1996: 52-53).

What commonalities then, are there which sacred places share? What are the characteristics often found in sacred places?

3.5.1 Site location

"We're not as free to choose ideal locations as were past peoples, but we can modify places to make the sacred kernel - usually a building, sometimes a garden - the inevitable end point of a journey; and the energy, visual, even auditory and olfactory, focus of the immediate area. From Nature's sacred places, we can learn the life-fertilizing power of the elements and enhance their presence as appropriate" (Day, 2002: 239).

Christopher Day, also from his book, *Spirit & Place. Healing our environment. Healing environment* refers to both the *built environment* and to *nature* as potential sites for developing sacred places. His reference to the experiential aspects of sacred places stresses the importance of phenomenology in each site's design. He also makes reference to outstanding powerpoints

in the landscape, though while less applicable to urban environments, as important to identify. Day writes,

"Such places exist in nature and have been made, or enhanced, from prehistoric times on. Typically the more significant ones have great elemental power. Amongst the most sacred are mountains - just earth (rock and crystallized water) and air. They tend to be magnetic features in the landscape - visually dominant, and perhaps also 'magically' strange. Sacred places often, perhaps always, are at concentration points of 'geo-energies' - though whether these were always there or have grown through sacramental usage isn't known" (Day, 2002: 239).

Architect Thomas Barrie asserts, in his book *The Spirit of Place*, that "The creation of a sacred place has principally provided the existential means for people to establish a center and thus define their place in the world" (Barrie, 1996: 53). This conceptually relates to Christian Norberg-Schulz's description of the *axis mundi* and would seem to be a strong theme in the history and mythology of a particular group of people and where they, as Heidegger would no doubt note, *dwell*.

In his book, *The Spirit of Place*, architect Richard England writes passionately of the importance of *genus loci*, with its obvious connection to the theories of Norberg-Schulz. Such a subjective but considerate argument for incorporating the importance of location builds a strong case for sacred place design. England stresses,

"In all my works, the site, or genius loci has been the initiator of the whole creative process." The location must always be regarded as the spring-board for the whole design process, not only in terms of its physical data (geography, topography, climate and materials), but also its memory data (tradition, culture, legend and history), for it is not only what is visible that is important but more so the "present absences" and absent presences" of a place, which are also inherent properties of identity" (England, 1998: 11).

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3.0 Theoretical positions

3.5 Sacred Place Design

3.5.2 Thresholds + Enclosures

Expanding on the importance of a particular site's location, one can also begin to integrate Norberg-Schulz's three ideas of a *centre*, its surrounding area and associated pathways. A number of authors have explored these themes, further developing relevant concepts of *thresholds* and *enclosure*. Thomas Barrie in particular, writes,

"The sacred place took many forms, as it still does today, but was characterized by the marking of a sacred area and a clear separation from the secular world, principally established by enclosure" (Barrie, 1996: 56). From the OED:

enclosure

- 1. The action of enclosing. **a. spec.** The action of surrounding or marking off (land) with a fence or boundary; the action of thus converting pieces of common land into private property. Also *attrib.* in **Enclosure Act, Commissioner.**
- 4. That which is enclosed: **a.** A space included within or marked off by boundaries. *spec.* on a racecourse (see quot. 1963)

By enclosing space, one can shape the *centre*. But it is a fluid gesture, by forming the inside, one can also form the area outside of it. In urban design, and in particular public places, there are many ways to do this. Equally important then, is the space that is created between the centre and surrounding area. This boundary form becomes a *threshold*. As defined by the OED:

threshold

- 2. *transf.* and *fig.* a. Border, limit (of a region); the line which one crosses in entering. *spec.* in an airfield: the beginning of the landing area on a runway.
- b.** In reference to entrance, the beginning of a state or action, outset, opening. (In quot. 1659, in reference to going out or leaving, close, end.)

Mircea Eliade writes about the spiritual and physical aspects of *threshold* and how it acts as an intermediary in both cases;

"The threshold that separates the two spaces also indicates the distance between two modes of being, the profane and the religious. The threshold is

the limit, the boundary, the frontier that distinguishes and opposes two worlds- and at the same time the paradoxical place where those worlds communicate, where passage from the profane to the sacred world becomes possible" (Eliade, 1959: 25).

Thomas Barrie echoes this idea in describing the narrative aspects of *thresholds* in public spaces and their extraordinary qualities. He argues, "Transitional spaces of this type not only establish a boundary, but symbolize passage from one mode of existence to another. That is why bridges and narrow gates are common mythological themes concerning spiritual transformation" (Barrie, 1996: 58).

3.5.3 The Path

There doesn't have to be, as well, only one threshold. Depending on the location, the actual size of the place, how many people are in the area, and its cultural history, more than one is certainly possible. This measured exposure of layers, as one moves towards an inner centre, not only creates anticipation, it also develops a mysterious sense of the unknown. Ingrid Stefanovic, in her 1998 Journal of Environmental Psychology article, *Phenomenological Encounters with Place: Cavtat to Square One*, writes about special places in general but could be writing about a particular aspect of some kinds of sacred places. She asserts,

"Not unlike the heightened sensuality of a seductively semi-clothed body, rather than one fully present in its nakedness or one fully absent as wholly covered, the human settlement which preserves the interplay between revealedness and concealedness inspires the oneiric wonder of the human imagination, and in this regard, remains ever engaging and alive, precisely because it mirrors the essential structure of human understanding itself" (Stefanovic, 1998: 38).

It is this movement, from here to there, that is also reflected in Thomas Barrie's suggestion to create a series of threshold spaces leading to the centre, which brings up Norberg-Schulz's third idea of *direction*. Barrie argues,

"To reach the threshold and sacred place, often there is a path and entry sequence. The path that leads to the place can take many forms, from an axial, linear progression, to a labyrinthine maze, and typically involves a series of spaces or events, each becoming increasingly more sacred" (Barrie, 1996: 59).

How an urban designer might shape and develop a particular path or multiple paths that lead towards a sacred centre from a surrounding area and through one or multiple thresholds can be wide-ranging and again depends on many site specific factors. The path cannot be thought as simply an afterthought. Looking both historically and in the present, one can find the pilgrimage as an equal program to that of the site itself. And after all; what is life, if not the journey. Barrie asserts, "It is my premise that architecture, and particularly sacred architecture, often involves a dynamic between both the path and the place" (Barrie, 1996: 39-40).

3.5.4 Character

"I would submit that one of the most essential elements in the creation of a sense of place consists on the *retention of mystery* within the settlement. Inasmuch as human beings are finite, knowledge of phenomena cannot ever be complete and exhaustive' something always yet remains to be seen or understood" (Stefanovic, 1998: 37).

The idea of *mystery*, that Stefanovic argues for when creating a 'sense of place' also helps to define what is a sacred place. It is part of the overall *character* of a place, a phenomenological quality that Swiss Architect Peter Zumthor explores as well, in his 2003 lecture entitled *Atmospheres. Architectural Environments. Surrounding Objects*. During this lecture, Peter Zumthor aptly describes nine more experiential and sensory qualities of the environment that can help create an environmental mood. These nine can play a large role in enhancing sacred places and are important factors for urban planners and designers to consider. They include: the material compatibility, the sound of space, the temperature of space, surrounding objects, between composure and seduction, tension between interior and exterior, levels of intimacy, and light on things. He also touches on architecture of surrounding and coherence and beauty of form.

With all of this thought regarding what *sacred place* means, or could mean, from an attitude about how to live life on this planet to recognising unique places and how they can affect each individual, the whole notion of *sacred place* perhaps comes down to how people over time can distinguish the special places they interact with and respect.

Is it not a fitting topic in this age of digital technology and material consumption to reflect on how one can experience the real environment that plays in front of one's eyes?

"To reach the threshold and sacred place, often there is a path and entry sequence. The path that leads to the place can take many forms, from an axial, linear progression, to a labyrinthine maze, and typically involves a series of spaces or events, each becoming increasingly more sacred" (Barrie, 1996: 59).

4.1 St. Ann's Park: Context

The project now turns to its second major component: while attempting to incorporate the first, develop a design response to a particular site with the notion of enhancing it as a *sacred place*. The analysis of St. Ann's Park's neighbourhood context, history, landscape and urban form, circulation and experiential qualities will help to establish the foundation for a design diagnostic and proposal.

When thinking about what particular examples of *sacred public places* in Canadian cities currently exist, often one might consider the selection from a religious perspective; such as a cemetery. Outside of urban areas, many might consider a space sacred if it is somehow connected with a particular place in nature, such as Cathedral Grove on Vancouver Island.

While this project hopes to push beyond the notion of considering only religious sites when defining *sacred public places* in the Canadian city, *St. Ann's Park* just happens to have not only a bit of nature but also include the location of a historically religious site.

St. Ann's Park is located in the South-West Borough of Montreal, Quebec, south of Downtown Montreal, near Old Montreal and the St. Lawrence River. It is bound by Montagne Street to the north, Wellington Street to the east, Basin Street to the south-east and Rioux to the south-west.

The park sits in the old neighbourhood of Griffintown, once a thriving working-class section of homes and industry. Now, however, the area is very different. While the area does appear to have the occasional retail store and some residential buildings, such as in the block across the park from Montagne street, most of the remaining surrounding blocks consist of warehouses, large buildings and parking lots. In 2001, there were only between 1000-5000 people per square kilometer in the Census tract where St. Ann's Park sits (Montreal. *Population*, 2003: 6). And while Griffintown was

once a predominantly Irish-Canadian community, in 2001 the same Census tract shows only 0.0-0.1 % of Irish origin (Montreal. *Ethnic Origins*, 2003: 11). Interestingly, this Census tract recorded an average household income (revenu moyen) in 2000 of 70,000 to 99,000\$ per year (Montreal. *Income*, 2003: 20).

The old Lachine Canal is only two blocks south of St. Ann's park and the Peel Basin is about two blocks east. A number of railroad lines cross the Canal nearby, as does a vehicular bridge with pedestrian sidewalks. The Bonaventure Autoroute is also located nearby, not far towards Old Montreal. The old communities of St. Henri and Point St Charles are located further south near the Lachine Canal as well.

There are also several other parks located in the vicinity. Gallery Park is located between Basin and Olier located just south of St. Ann's, and the Lachine Canal is now a National Historic site of Canada (Parks Canada, website) and includes a bike path and pedestrian trail. St. Patrick's Park, currently in desperate need of repair, is located across from the Canal, on its southern bank. Mont Royal Park is located up the hill to the west.

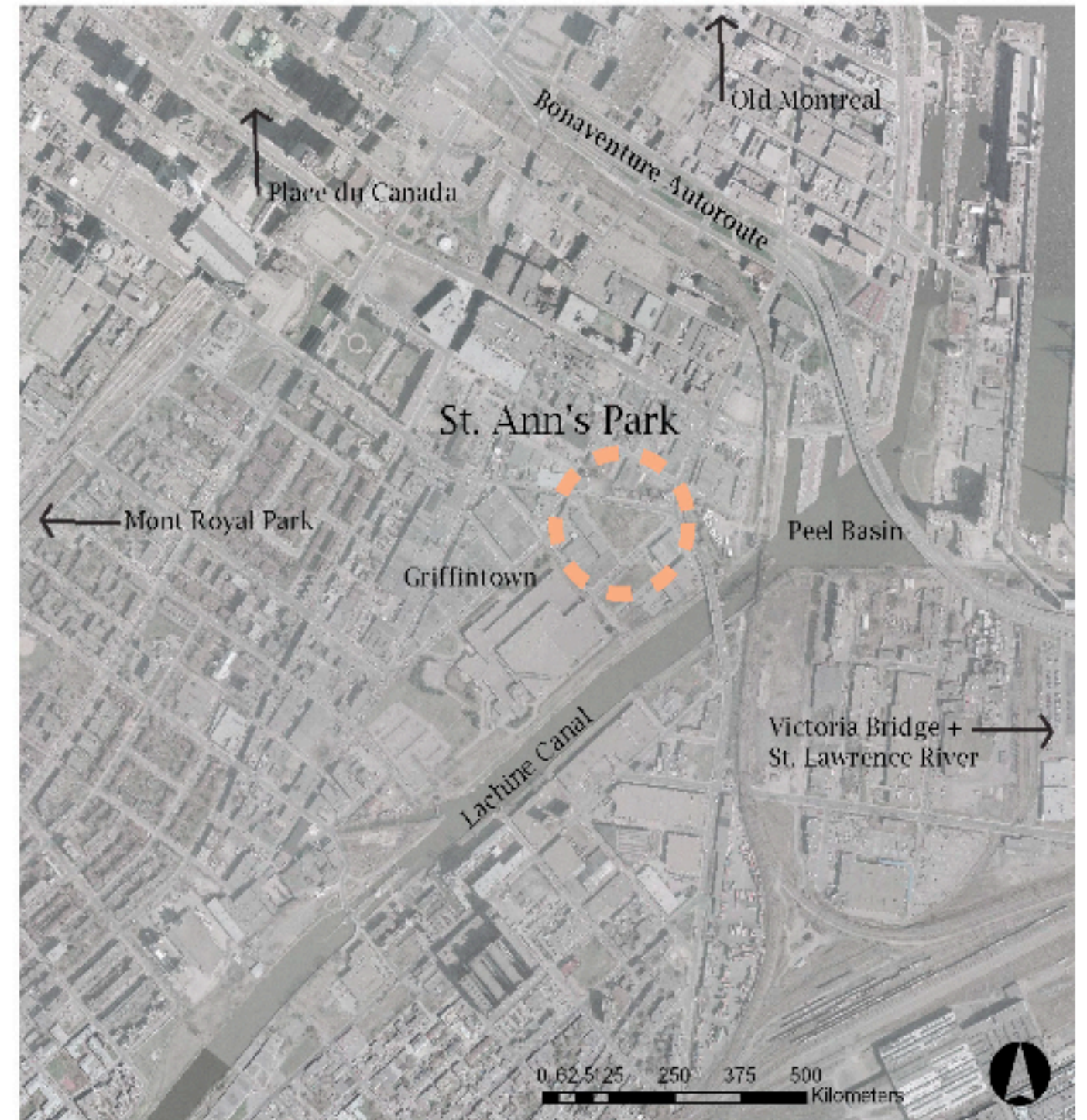
St. Ann's Park is fairly easily accessible by car, foot or bicycle, with bus routes 74, 61 and 107 running along Wellington. The closest metro station however, Bonaventure, is quite a distance away to the north-west of the site.

Park vicinity



Information from: City of Montreal

Context



Information from: City of Montreal, Montreal Metropolitan Community

4.2 History

4.2.1 Griffintown, Montreal

The unique history of St. Ann's Park is in sense, an example of the changes that have happened over the many years to the surrounding community. Currently, Griffintown as mentioned, is a lonely neighbourhood comprising a desolate mix of warehouses, industrial buildings, parking lots and some retail and residential buildings. But this was certainly not always so.

During the 1500s, the land that would eventually become Montreal was inhabited by a group of First Nations called the St. Lawrence Iroquoians (Linteau, 2009). It quite possibly was a land of bountiful harvest. When Samuel Champlain explored the area in 1612, he described the surrounding area, writing,

"... there is a little river which goes some distance into the interior, all along which there are more than sixty acres of deserted land, which are like meadows, where grain can be sown and gardens made. Formerly the savages tilled these, but they abandoned them on account of the wars they had here" (Demchinsky and Naves, 2000: 23-24).

Of course later in 1642, the area that would become Montreal became established as a Catholic church colony, under the leadership of Paul de Chomeday de Maisonneuve (Demchinsky and Naves, 2000: 20). And later still, the area became a centre of continental fur trade activity and an outpost of the British Empire in 1760 (Linteau, 2009).

Bryan Demchinsky and Elaine Kalman Naves, in their book *Storied Streets. Montreal in the Literary Imagination*, write

"The next step came with the construction of the Lachine Canal in the 1820s. The waterway finally conquered the rapids that had hindered travel and transportation into the interior of the continent since Cartier's time. Montreal would remain a place where lake boats transferred their cargoes to ocean-going ships, but henceforth the volume of traffic would be vastly increased, making the city one of the great inland ports of North America" (Demchinsky and Naves, 2000: 64).

The Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network, on their website and in their pamphlet entitled, *Griffintown and Point St. Charles Heritage Trail*, write about the working

neighbourhoods of Griffintown and Point St. Charles and the Irish settlers that moved there. Located near the Lachine Canal between the St. Lawrence River and Mount Royal Mountain, the pamphlet writes a discouraging review of these two communities. It reads, "Griffintown and Point St. Charles were Canada's first industrial slums, home to Irish immigrants who fled the potato famines in the 1800s and generations of their descendants" (Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network). It is a brutal history. The pamphlet recounts,

"At the height of famine in the 1840s, as many as 30,000 Irish immigrants arrived in Montreal each year. Thousands died of typhus in fever sheds along the harbourfront. Some who survived the journey

settle where they landed, on low-lying land at the edge of the St. Lawrence River. Here they laboured on the docks, in local foundries, brickworks, soap factories, breweries, flour mills and train yards" (Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network).

In the 1896 document entitled, *The City Below the Hill*, author Herber Brown Ames surveyed the conditions of living in Griffintown, as well as the nearby districts of St. Henri and Point St. Charles. His writing painted a vivid picture of life at the turn of the 20th century. In Section XXV (25), where St. Ann's Park sits, 84% of the inhabitants were Irish, (377 people) with the remaining being British and French-Canadian. There were an

average of 8 people per dwelling, with 81% of tenements having an "...out-of-door-pit-in-the-ground-privy..." (Ames, 1972: 45) and with the remaining being indoor 'water-closets' (Ames, 1972: 45). Ames also recorded three (3) saloons and eight (8) liquor grocers in Section XXV (25); the greatest number for all of the sections of his study. Interestingly, the area south of St. Ann's park, along the Lachine Canal is noted as non-residential, presumably used for canal industry.

The name St Ann was commonly used throughout the area. Griffintown was once part of the old Montreal suburb (also called a ward, or foubourg in French) called St. Ann. And in fact the full name of St. Ann's Park in French is called Parc



Montreal, 1892. Anonyme - Anonymous.
1892. McCord Museum.

4.2 History

du Fouberg-Sainte-Anne. St. Ann's Park was also the site of the St. Ann's church, which now no longer stands. One can still see many of its foundation walls and other granite remains placed near the south-east corner of the site. The Griffintown and Point St. Charles Heritage Trail pamphlet notes the date of its construction and relevance to the Irish Canadian community. It exclaims, "St. Ann's Church was the heart of Griffintown's Irish Catholic community. Built in 1854, it was Montreal's second English Catholic church after St. Patrick's (1847)" (Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network).

According to at least one report, during the early 1930s, the area around St. Ann's Park was in dire straights. In a 1935 document called, *A Report on Housing and Slum Clearance for Montreal*, St. Ann's Park was placed within a map in a section entitled "Areas tending towards Slum Conditions" (Montreal Board of Trade and City Improvement League, 1935: 21). Some of the areas immediately to the north and west of the then existing Church were labelled as "Blocks permeated with Slum Property" (Montreal Board of Trade and City Improvement League, 1935: 21). For the authors of this report at least, "The finding is that there are forty blocks of buildings, housing some 18,000 persons, to be dealt with by slum clearance measures" (Montreal Board of Trade and City Improvement League, 1935: 6).

Griffintown's recent history, not unlike the story of St. Ann's Church, is one of decline and deterioration. The Griffintown and Point St. Charles Heritage Trail summarizes what has happened.

"The population of Griffintown began declining after World War II and in the early 1960s the city decided that Griffintown no longer had a future as a place for people to live. It was zoned as an industrial area in 1963. Then in 1967 part of the neighbourhood was demolished to make way for the Bonaventure Espressway. Having lost most of its parishioners, St. Ann's church was torn down in 1970" (Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network).



Houses for Mr. Meredith, Montreal, QC, 1903
Wm. Notman & Son
1903. McCord Museum.



The Grand Trunk Railway at Point St. Charles
Anonyme - Anonymous. 1869.
McCord Museum

Historical Photographs



The Spring Floods - The Rising Water, a Sketch in Griffintown. Edward Jump.
1873. McCord Museum



Side wall of St. Anne's Church during demolition, Point St. Charles, Montreal, Qc, 1970
David Wallace Marvin
1970. McCord Museum

4.0 Site Analysis + Diagnostic

4.2 History

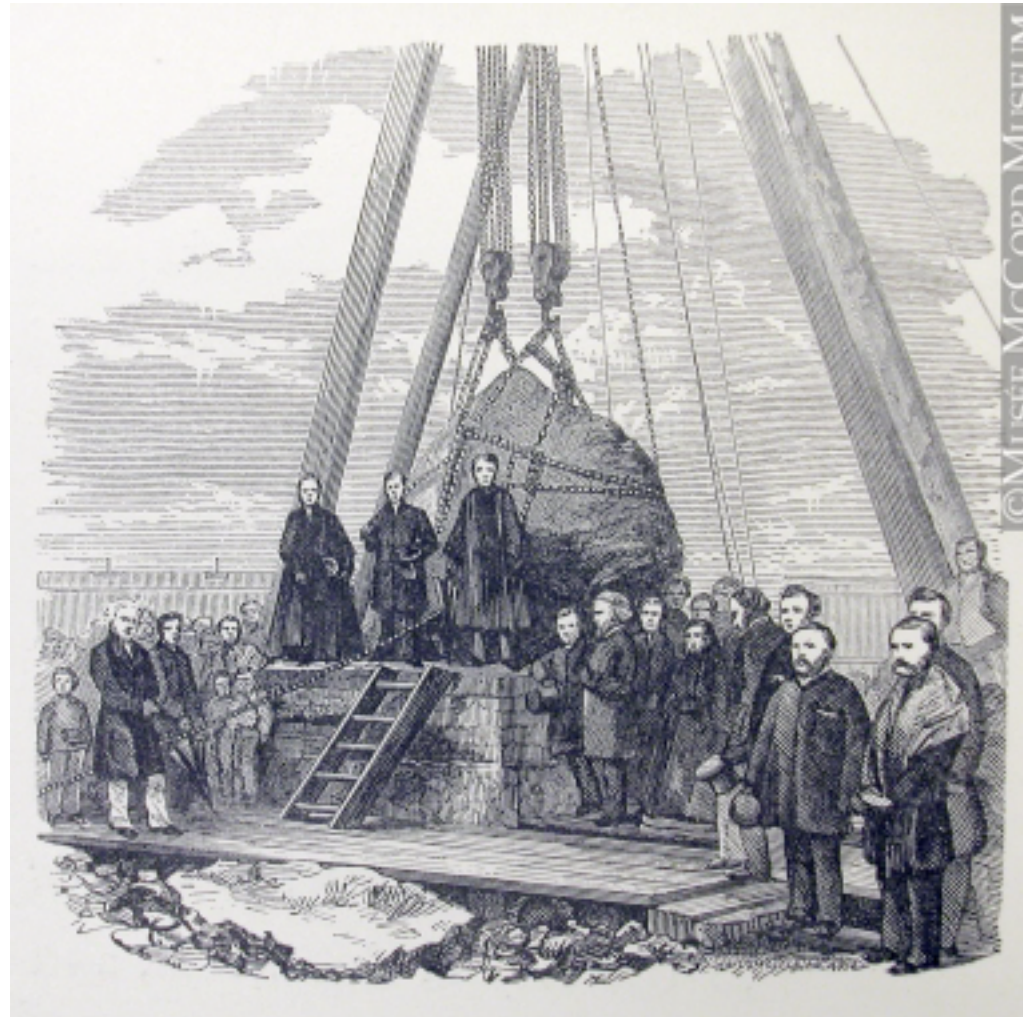
4.2.2 The Black Rock

In 1859, during the building of the Victoria Bridge, labourers heaved from the St. Lawrence River a very large and dark coloured rock. Thirty tons of stone, it was dedicated to the 6000 Irish immigrants who in 1847 had contracted the Typhoid disease and were buried where the stone sits now (Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network). The *Irish Commemorative Stone* is a very important monument and there are still members of the Irish-Canadian community who together visit the site each year near the north end of the Victoria Bridge (Montreal Gazette and Irish Central, website).

Unfortunately, the Black Rock is not an easily reached destination by foot, as it is located quite a ways from Downtown Montreal and in a very industrial part of Montreal near the St. Lawrence River. It is also placed in the median of the road to and from the bridge. While it could presumably be easily seen by those travelling by vehicle, it appears difficult to stop one's vehicle nearby to admire the rock and read the message written into its face.



Black Rock, near Victoria Bridge, Montreal



Laying the Monumental stone, marking the graves of 6000 immigrants near Victoria Bridge. 1869. McCord Museum

The Tin Flute by Gabrielle Roy

The story told in the famous Canadian novel, *The Tin Flute*, by Gabrielle Roy, is set in the neighbourhood of St. Henri, not far from the community of Griffintown. Set during the beginning of World War II, Roy creates a beautifully historical painting of life and activity for those living near the Lachine Canal. One could imagine life in Griffintown, near St. Ann's park, not unlike the images that Roy describes of St. Henri.

In one passage, Roy describes the movement of a railroad train as it rumbles through the neighbourhood. She writes, "A train rolled by. The acrid smell of coal filled the street. A swirl of soot rose just above the rooftops, then, as it began to swoop down, the belfry of St. Henri's Church appeared, floating, without a base, like phantom arrow amid the clouds" (Roy, 1989: 33).

Shortly after she continues the juxtaposition between the church and hustle and bustle of industry. She reveals,

"The parish appeared again out of the smog, falling into place with its own tranquil durability. School, church, convent: a close-knit, century-old alliance, as strong in the heart of the urban jungle as in the Laurentian valleys. Beyond them, streets with low houses, descended in two directions toward the areas of greater poverty, on this side to Workman Street and St. Antoine, and on the other, down to the Lachine Canal where St. Henri stuffs its mattresses, spins its thread of silk or cotton, runs its looms, reels off its spools, while the earth trembles at the rushing trains, and the foghorns blast, and the ships, engines, screws, rails and whistles spell out the adventure of the world" (Roy, 1989: 34).

In a third passage, Roy explores a cold and wintry scene with one of the characters, not far from the water.

"Quickly he got ready and went out. The street was silent. Nothing is as quiet as St. Ambroise Street on winter nights. A passerby will slip past from time to time, drawn to the feebly lit window of a grocery-restaurant. A door opens, light splashes on the snowy sidewalk, the sound of a voice comes from far away. The passerby disappears, the door slams shut and in the deserted street, between the pale fire of family lamps in the house on one side and the sombre walls bordering the canal on the other, nothing is left but the heavy power of night" (Roy, 1989: 28).

4.0 Site Analysis + Diagnostic

4.2 History

4.2.3 Heritage

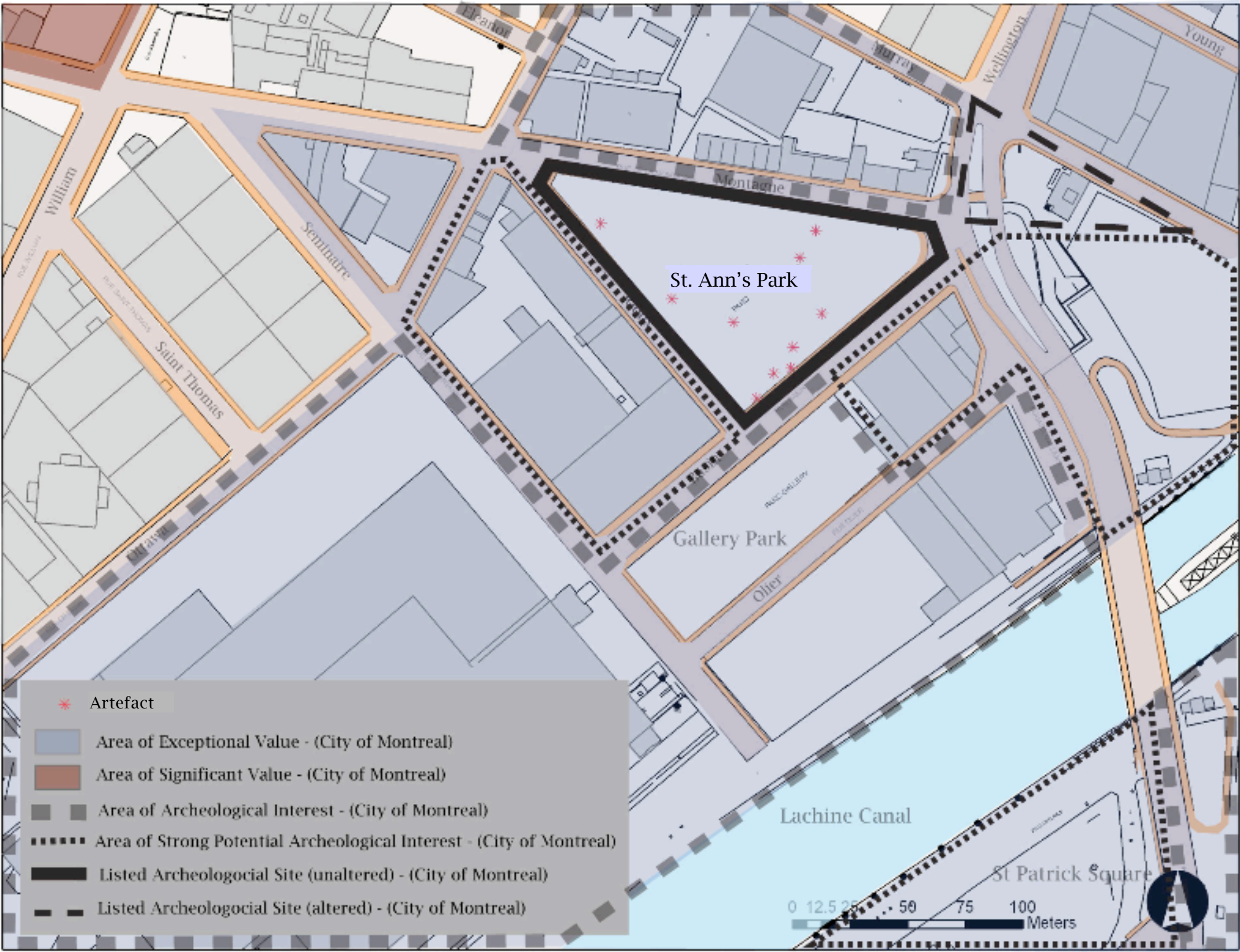
According to Montreal’s *Master Plan*, the area around St. Ann’s Park in Griffintown is rich with history and heritage. Part 1, Section 2.6 of the Plan is titled, ‘*An enhanced built, archaeological and natural heritage*’ (Montreal Master Plan Section 2.6, 2004:149).

In this section, two maps, titled *Built Heritage* and *Archaeological Heritage* define a number of specific locations in and around St. Ann’s Park as important. These include areas labelled as ‘Area of Exceptional Value’, ‘Area of Significant Value’, ‘Area of Archaeological Interest’, ‘Listed Archaeological Site (unaltered)’, ‘Listed Archaeological Site (altered)’ and ‘Area of Strong Potential Archaeological Interest’ (Montreal Master Plan Section 2.6, 2004: 155, 161). St. Ann’s Park is recorded as a ‘Listed Archeological Site (unaltered)’ (Montreal Master Plan Section 2.6, 2004: 161) presumably because the foundation walls of the church are still there.

Section 2.6 also declares an *Objective 15* which states, "Preserve and enhance the built and archaeological heritage" (Montreal Master Plan Section 2.6, 2004: 151). It also presents four *Actions*, for *Objective 15*, including *Action 15.1 Protect areas of heritage value*, *Action 15.2 Protect Heritage Buildings*, *Action 15.3 Protect and enhance Montreal’s archaeological heritage*, and *Action 15.4 Maintain and intensify heritage education and enhancement efforts* (Montreal Master Plan Section 2.6, 2004: 153, 157,160, 163 respectively).

According to Section 2.6, these *Actions* will be carried out by a number of *Implementation measures*, that will, for example,

"Protect the heritage areas of exceptional value shown on Map 2.6.1 by tightly controlling construction, renovation and demolition work. Depending on the area's characteristics, by-laws on Site Planning and Architectural Integration Programs (SPAIP) will prescribe, for example: Parcelling;; Building bulk and volume; Treatment of facades that can be seen from public thoroughfares; Landscaping. Depending on the context, some characteristics of these area could be governed by standards rather than evaluation criteria" (Montreal Master Plan Section 2.6, 2004: 154).



Recognizing this information is important during the design proposal stage of this project. The heritage diagram as shown also notes the general

locations of a number of artefacts that exist in St. Ann’s Park. These include various stones, a beautiful carving and the old church’s foundation walls.

Information from : City of Montreal, Montreal Metropolitan Community

4.3 Landscape + Urban Form

4.3.1 Figure-ground study

These four figure-ground drawings show the changing urban development of St. Ann Park and its surrounding vicinity over a 117 year range from 1890 to 2007 and possibly onward.

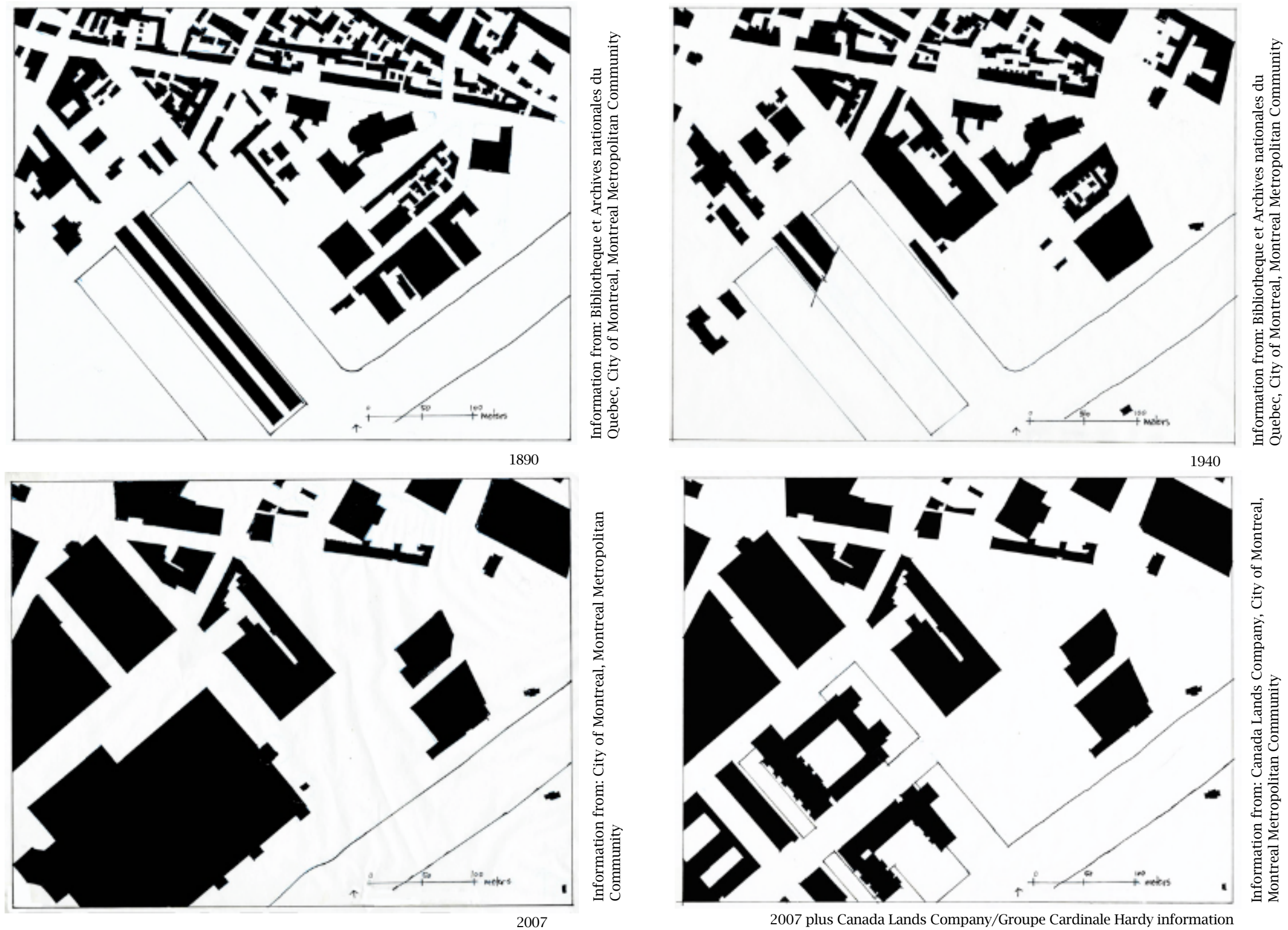
Notice the small, human-scale construction that is prominent in the 1890 figure-ground. These fine-grained structures appear to create many intimate spaces within each block and multiple opportunities for pedestrian and possibly vehicular circulation between them. The obvious exception to this is the Lachine Canal in the lower part of the drawing. Its two nearby Basins and nearby, presumably industrial, buildings. Also notice the prominence of St. Ann's Church, its connecting structure to the south-west and its proximity to the water.

The 1940 figure-ground shows an evolution of development with some of the smaller buildings appearing to expand into single, larger entities and a number of building beng removed. Notice the appearance of a very large structure built between the Church and Basin.

By 2007 almost all of the small, fine-grain buildings, have gone. Only a few smaller fine-grain buildings now exist, north of where St. Ann's Church once stood. The remaining are large monolithic structures that seem to incorporate entire city blocks. The two Basins have been filled in, and the monstrous structure found where they once were is the former Canada Post mail distribution centre. Notice the open space that now exists between St. Ann Park and the Lachine Canal.

The final figure-ground shows what the area *might* look like with the future development of the Canada Lands; where the old Canada Post building currently sits. Proposed by the *Canada Lands Company* with the *Groupe Cardinale Hardy*, their *Preliminary Master Plan*, (or *Proposed Development* as titled from their November 2008 information) shows housing development and water infrasture where the old Basins once were connecting to the existing Canal. (Canada Lands Company, 2009 - both sources) This creates a distinct opportunity along the perimeter of their proposal for public design and development options.

4.0 Site Analysis + Diagnostic



In early 2008, Erin Hale of *The McGill Daily* reported of another redevelopment proposal for Griffintown. Hale writes,

"Devimco, a Quebec-based real estate company, plans to invest \$1.3-billion over 10 years - the largest private investment ever in Montreal - to redevelop the area by offering to buy up the 25-acre region's property at \$100 per square foot" (Hale, E., 2008).

Hale goes on, however, to quote Jean-Claude Marson, writing,

"The concept of the project of Devimco is based on a commercial centre - the lifestyle centre of the USA, Florida, California - a commercial centre when you go by car," said Jean-Claude Marsan, an architecture professor at Universite du Quebec a Montreal.

"It has nothing to do with history or culture of Griffintown. They will destroy the quality of the place," Marsan said" (Hale, E., 2008).

With this in mind, in early 2009 it was reported by CBC News that, "Officials with the company Devimco have told the city that they no longer need as much land as originally requested for the \$1.3-billion project southwest of the city's downtown. "Due to the economic situation, and especially due to the difficult access to bank financing, Devimco has informed the City of Montreal that it no longer needs to acquire all the land within the original project boundary at this time," the company said in a statement Tuesday afternoon" (CBC, 2009).

Because of the shifting project dimesions of this proposal , it will not be incorporated within this project.

4.3 Landscape + Urban Form

Biotic

4.3.2 Biotic features

This diagram shows approximate existing tree locations in St. Ann's Park as well as other vegetation locations in the surrounding area. There are many large canopied, mature and healthy trees throughout the neighbourhood including those not only in St. Ann's Park but along the Lachine Canal as well. A fair amount of vegetation also exists in the old Canada Post site, which presumably will be removed during future construction.

The diagram also shows the location of some water pooling, presumably after a rainfall. Historically, this area has been affected by flooding (Demchinsky and Naves, 2000: 150-51). With the proximity to Lachine Canal and the St. Lawrence River, this shows an opportunity to incorporate the water element.

Wind patterns seem to indicate that the direction comes predominantly from the south-east, perhaps from along the Lachine Canal or from the north-east perhaps from Mont Royal Mountain.

Birds can be heard throughout the area, including in particular gulls of some kind. The observation of a dog in Gallery Park is also noted.



Information from: City of Montreal, Montreal Metropolitan Community

4.3 Landscape + Urban Form

4.3.3 Materiality + Street furniture

The materials found on the streets and sidewalks near St Ann Park consist predominantly of concrete and asphalt. While there are some street trees, the major components consist mostly of hard surfaces with cold and monotonous colours.

A number of interesting building facades, however, can be found. Some are made of brick, and one building in particular near the Lachine Canal is made with beautiful Art Deco detailing. There is also a series of row houses across the street from St. Ann's park with finely proportioned and rythmic roof lines.

There is very little street furniture in the area and few if any benches exist outside of the parks. The exception is one of the many city-wide information kiosks found on Wellington near the intersection to the bridge.

The parks other than St. Ann, including Gallery Park and the Lachine Canal, have trees and grass and are quite a relief from the harshness of materials in other parts of the neighbourhood. St. Patrick's Square is in dire need of repair, the iron gate seems to be all that's left of anything that was previously built there.

Materiality

Rusted metal wall

Brick

Articulated roof line

City Kiosk

Asphalt, Concrete + Bark Mulch

Wire

Drainpipe

Pavers under asphalt

Gravel pedestrian path

Iron gate

Art Deco facade

Grass

Information from: City of Montreal

4.3 Landscape + Urban Form

The materials found within St. Ann's Park, nevertheless, are rich with life and history. A grove of tall, mature and stately trees, most likely made up of predominantly Cottonwood (Populus deltoides). Other trees on site could include White Ash, Silver Maple and American Elm (Arrondissement du Sud-Ouest, 2009)

Remaining artefacts from the old St. Ann's Church are scattered throughout the park. Its foundation walls are prominent in the eastern portion of the site. A large, broken artistic carving sits nearby. A stone wall rests next to the sidewalk in the south-east corner. And a number of stone groupings are placed throughout the area.

Grass covers the ground along with many old fallen leaves and smaller branches. Earlier, and presumably typical for Montreal winter, the Park seemed more stark and empty with its surface blanketed in white snow and parts of it covered in ice. Benches have been placed approximating where the pews once were in the church. Several small informational plaques explain the history of the park.

While many places around St. Ann's Park are old, run-down and poorly maintained, there is evidence in the vicinity of new sidewalks being recently constructed. There are also parts that appear rich in history and give reason to pause and explore. While there are many cracks in the sidewalk, in one case near Gallery Park, older pavers show through the worn away asphalt street surface. And not all areas are just concrete and asphalt; at least one street incorporates granite curbs; which are, however, poorly looked after.

Materiality - St. Ann's Park



tree leaves



snowy ground



broken carving



park benches



Corner of Rioux - Montagne



tree twig



Information from: City of Montreal, Montreal Metropolitan Community



tree canopy



foundation wall



tree trunk



stone artifacts



wood pole



stone wall

4.3 Landscape + Urban Form

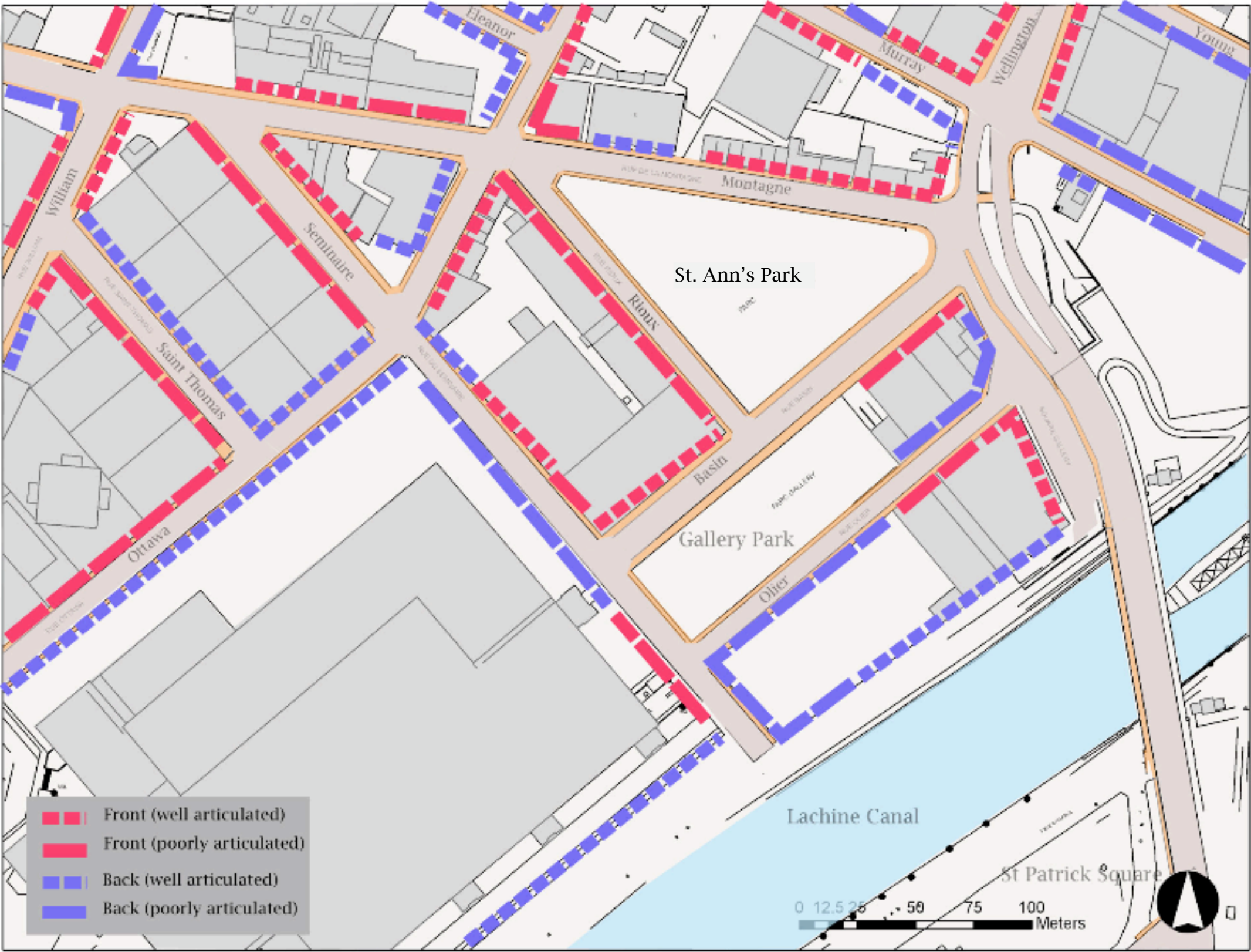
Fronts and Backs

4.3.4 Fronts and Backs

This diagram analyzes streets and building facades that surround St. Ann's Park in terms of the technique of *fronts and backs* (Bentley, Alcock, Murrain, McGlynn and Smith, 1985: 17). Here the red lines indicate a *front*, in which a particular area bordering a street can be considered a public and open space with its associated social activities. The blue lines indicate a *back*, in which a particular area bordering a street can be considered private and closed with its associated personal activities.

The two variations of dashed lines for both *fronts and backs* indicate whether the vertical architectural aspects are *well* or *poorly* articulated. The finer dashed line indicates a more intricate, detailed vertical street facade. For example, the three storied brick row housing across Montagne from St. Ann's Park demonstrates a well articulated building front facade. (see photo this page) The longer dashed line indicates a poorly articulated, more monotonous building facade. For example the single-story blue building with few if any windows across Basin Street to the south-east of St. Ann's Park demonstrates a poorly articulated and monotonous vertical street front. (see photo this page)

A large number of building facades around St. Ann's Park, while facing the street, actually seem to be more like *backs* rather than *fronts*. For example, the old Canada Post building almost around its entire perimeter seems more of a *back* than a *front*. While many of the older brick buildings are finely detailed, human-scaled and seem to be well articulated *fronts*, many of the warehouses and industrial buildings are simply large monotonous structures with very little architectural detailing or visual permeability between their inside space and the outside environment.



well articulated front



poorly articulated front

4.0 Site Analysis + Diagnostic

4.4 Circulation

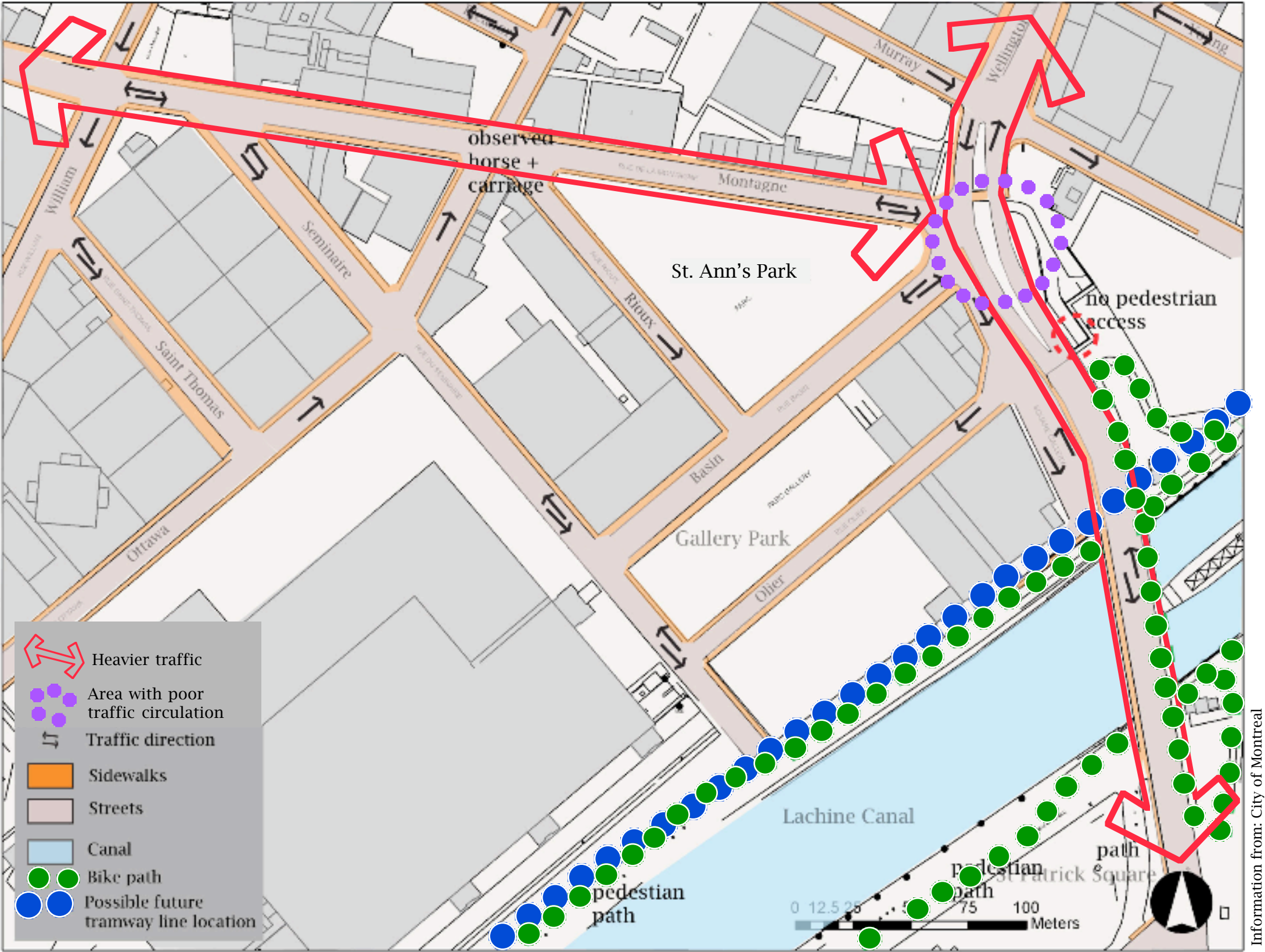
4.4 Circulation

Traffic is heaviest along Wellington and Montagne, presumably with vehicles moving between the city centre and south across the bridge beyond the Lachine Canal. The intersection where the two meet appears particularly awkward for both vehicular and pedestrian movement and interaction. This suggests a number of opportunities for street redevelopment in terms of improved pedestrian and traffic calming features along all of Wellington and Montagne. These could be incorporated in conjunction with any other design proposal.

Other streets in area, such as Basin, Olier and Seminaire, are for the most part quieter and less busy. Some stretches of streets could be characterized as underutilized which suggests the argument to develop the area in order to maximized the existing infrastructure. Further traffic studies would be beneficial.

Most, if not all of the blocks have designated pedestrian sidewalks. There are also pedestrian paths and bikeways along the Canal. A possible streetcar or tramline location is also shown, as outlined by the Montreal Harbourfront Corporation (Montreal Harbourfront Corporation, 2003). A horse and carriage has also been observed in the area. Many of the streets are one-way; not uncommon in Montreal, presumably for snow removal operations.

Circulation



Information from: City of Montreal

4.5 Experiential Qualities

4.5.1 Views, noise and stimulus/response

This diagram accounts for a variety of stimuli and personal responses experienced in the area as well as perceived noise levels and noted prominent views. Not all of the qualities experienced have been noted here.

Text found in red signify experienced stimulus such as birds heard chirping or muffled traffic. Text found in blue are phenomenological responses to the environment, such as feeling exposed, pleasant, isolated or safe.

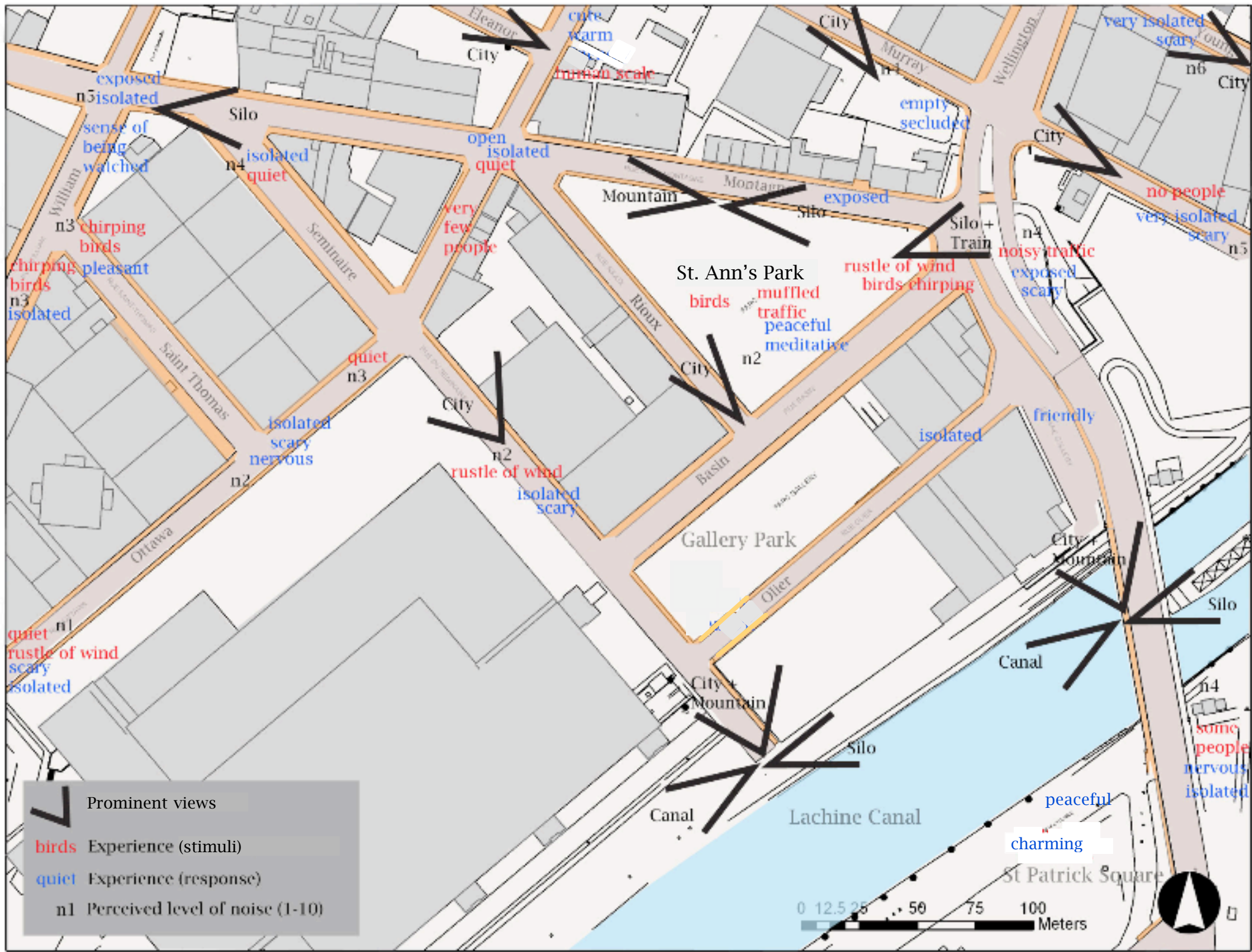
Many areas around St. Ann’s park feel isolated. Some areas around the old Canada Post site for example even feel scary. Much work is required to bring a sense of comfort and vitality to this corner of Montreal.

Other areas, however, are not as discouraging. Some areas feel friendly or pleasant and St. Ann’s Park feels both peaceful and meditative.

While most areas around St. Ann’s Park do not have many distinct long distance views, there are several that are outstanding. The two vantage points from the bridge and, as mentioned, the Lachine Canal at the foot of Seminaire have excellent views of Downtown, the Mont Royal Mountain, the Canal itself and the Silo. The views from the northern part of St. Ann’s Park of Mont Royal Mountain and the Silo are also quite good.

The noise levels, based on a scale of one to ten, reached a maximum of six. The highest levels, with the exception of an area in the north-east corner of the diagram on Murray and Young, are along the busy streets of Montagne and Wellington. The remaining areas are quite low on the scale typically either a level of one or two.

Views, noise and stimulus/response



Information from: City of Montreal

4.5 Experiential Qualities

4.5.2 Perceived public/private spaces

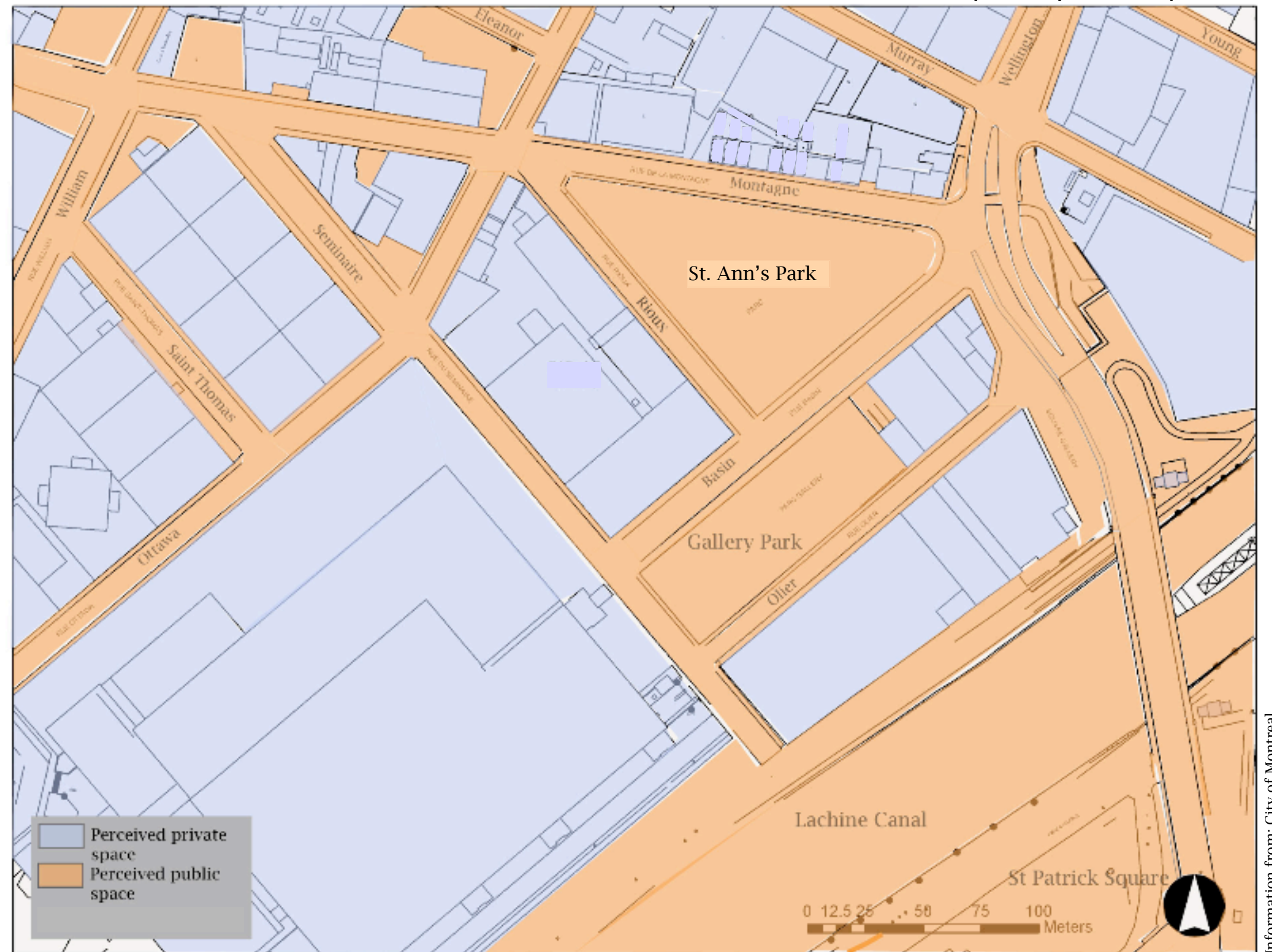
Accompanying the experiential qualities of St. Ann's Park and surrounding area is an analysis of how its public and private spaces are perceived. Obviously the streets, sidewalks, bridge and Canal are perceived as public. However certain parking lots also feel public even though they most likely sit on private property.

Interestingly, the open public spaces of St. Ann's Park, Gallery Park and the Lachine Canal create a broad crescent swath that sweeps down over to the southern bank into St. Patrick's square.

The area north-east of the bridge and near the underground infrastructure, is also public. However unlike the previously mentioned Parks, this particular space feels much more isolate and expresses very experientially unpleasant qualities. Further research of this area and possible development could benefit this unusual corner of Montreal.

Notice as well the very large areas, such as the old Canada Post land, that consume large private spaces, some entire city blocks that potentially divide the movement of public circulation. The urban fabric is very impermeable in these cases.

Perceived public/private spaces



Information from: City of Montreal

4.6. Synthesis: Diagnostic

St. Ann's Park currently is a unique and atmospheric space, full of beautiful mature trees and fascinating history. It is, however, underutilized and could truly benefit from improved design and programming. Any opportunity to improve the park and create a focal point for future residential or commercial activity would be an advantageous decision for the City of Montreal to take.

The park's proximity to Lachine Canal is currently not obvious. A strong visual barrier exists between the two and there is much potential at the foot of Seminaire for some kind of connection. The fact that Gallery Park exists between St. Ann's and the Canal only strengthens any sort of potential link .

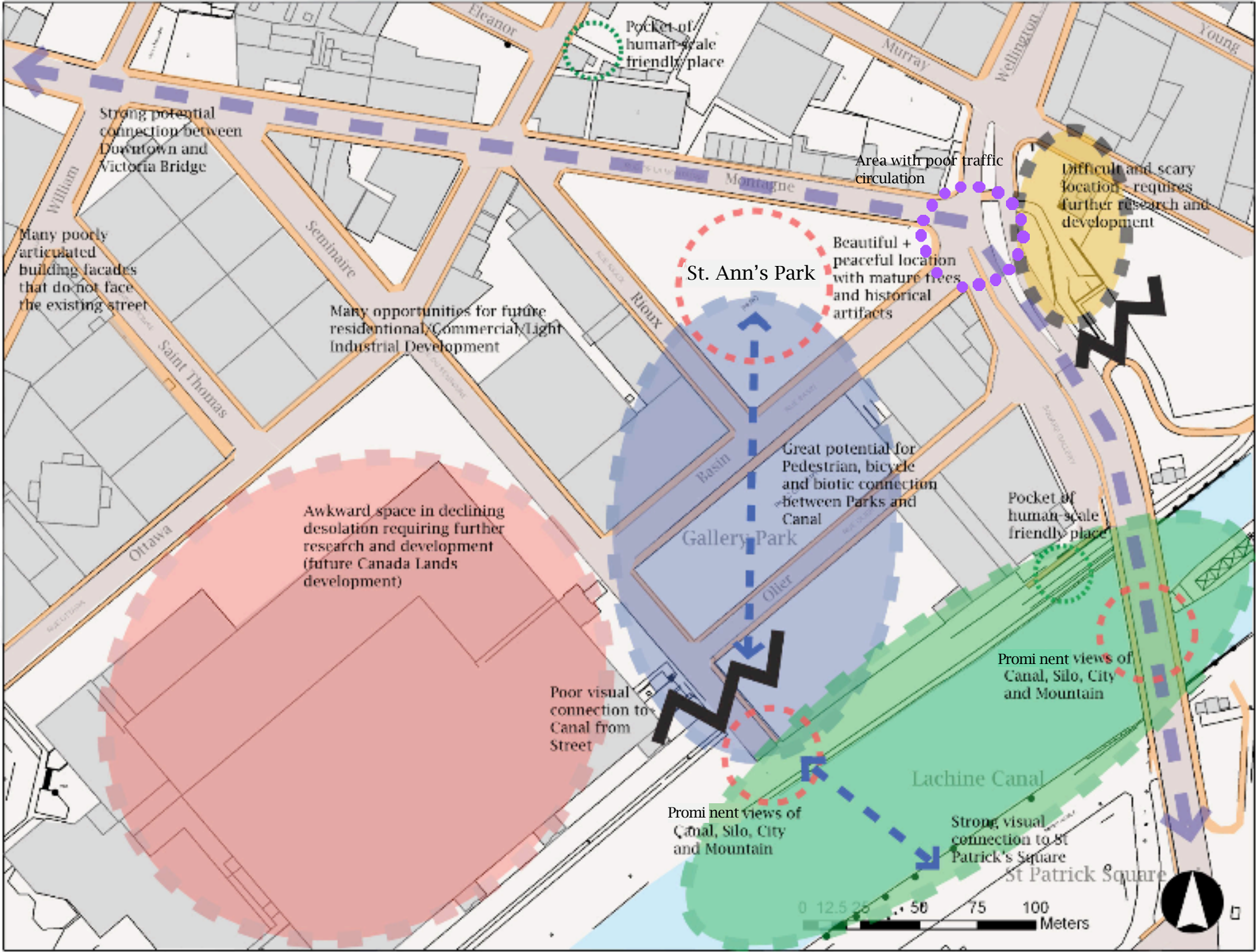
The area around St. Ann's park, predominantly warehouses, is for the most part, isolated and underutilized. With its proximity to downtown and the Canal, opportunities for residential, commercial and light industrial development are strong.

The views at the foot of Seminaire are outstanding, not only of the City, Mountain and Canal but also across the Canal to the St. Patrick's Square; obviously another Irish-Canadian connection.

While most of the local streets are underused and poorly maintained, Montagne and Wellington appear to be the most active traffic corridors. These two streets create a natural boundary for any future community development.

While the old Canada Post building is very poorly built for people using the surrounding vicinity, future development proposed by the Canada Lands Company calls for some interesting features, particularly along Seminaire which could fit neatly with any design proposal regarding St. Ann's Park.

Diagnosis



5.1 Concept Diagram

Three major elements to this design proposal drive the objective of recognizing and enhancing the site's embodiment of sacred place.

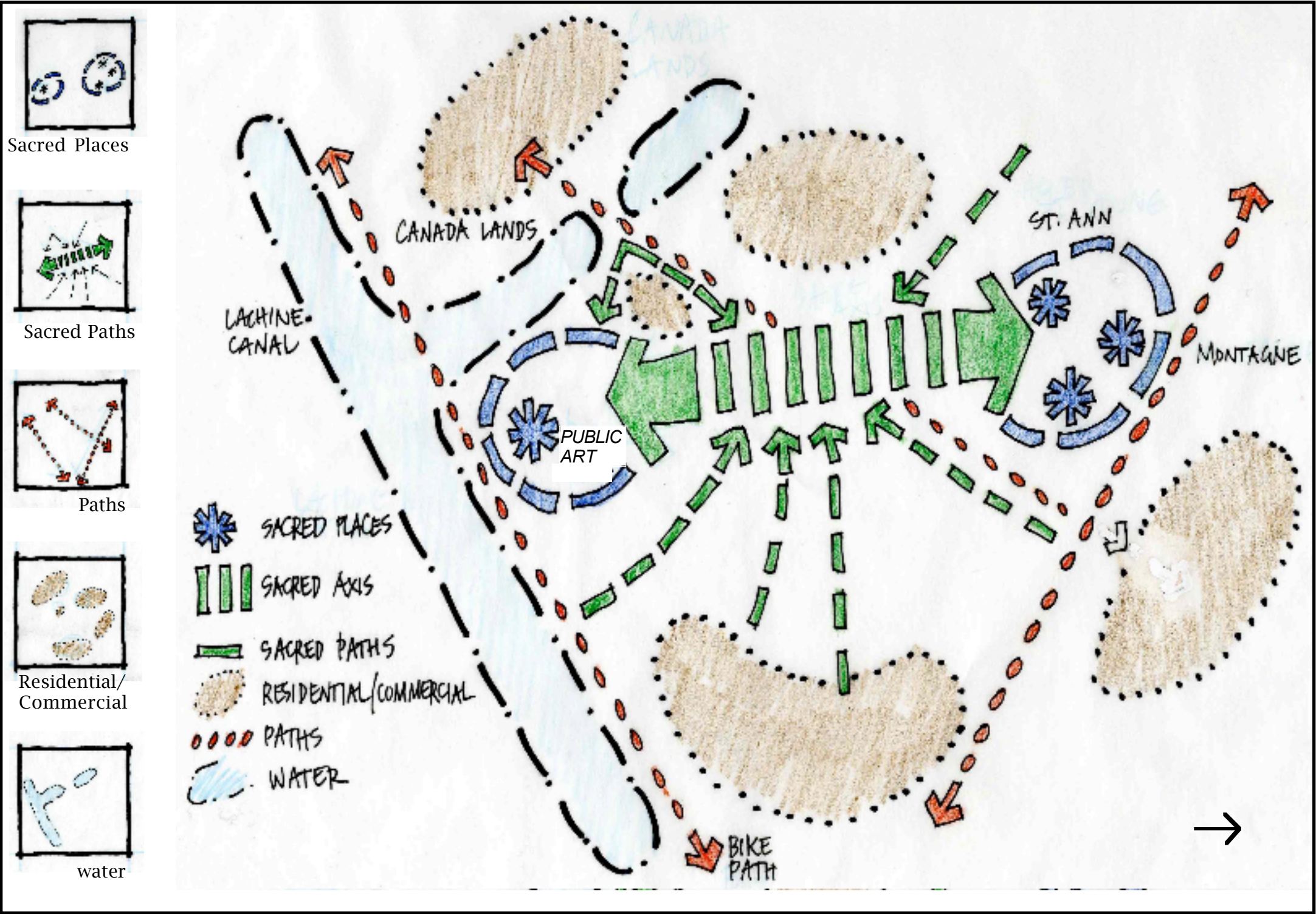
The first involves creating a greater sense of *connection* between St. Ann's Park and the Lachine Canal. Movement between the two can be accomplished by a *sacred axis*. This corridor, linked with other smaller *sacred paths*, connects two substantive *sacred places*. The first place, is the existing grove of trees in St. Ann's Park. Here, three smaller places have also been proposed within the park that utilize the existing stone artifacts and celebrate its unique history.

The second *sacred place*, and second major element of the design is the placement of a Public Art Piece dedicated to Irish-Canadian Heritage next to the water of the Lachine Canal. Initially, the idea of moving the *Black Rock* from its current location at the foot of Victoria Bridge to this site was considered. However, the very fact that its existence, as written on its face is, "*TO PRESERVE FROM DESECRATION THE REMAINS OF 6000 IMMIGRANTS...*" (see photo), means that it is too important to move. Thus a public art piece in a small open square by the water of Lachine Canal, at the foot of Semnair street makes the most sense.

A public art competition could be held; the piece dedicated to Irish-Canadian history which could give Montreal residents the opportunity to appreciate this City's unique heritage on a more intimate, deeper level. The site would be grounded on two sides of water if the future Canada Lands development proceeds. The art piece would be the result of a competition and would therefor allow the citizens of Montreal to have a say in their public open space.

In addition, by encouraging pedestrian and non-motorized movement between the well used Canal and St. Ann's Park, the area can also become a stronger hub of activity for any future residential, commercial or light industrial activity and become an opportunity for users to learn more about the Irish-Canadian history of Griffintown.

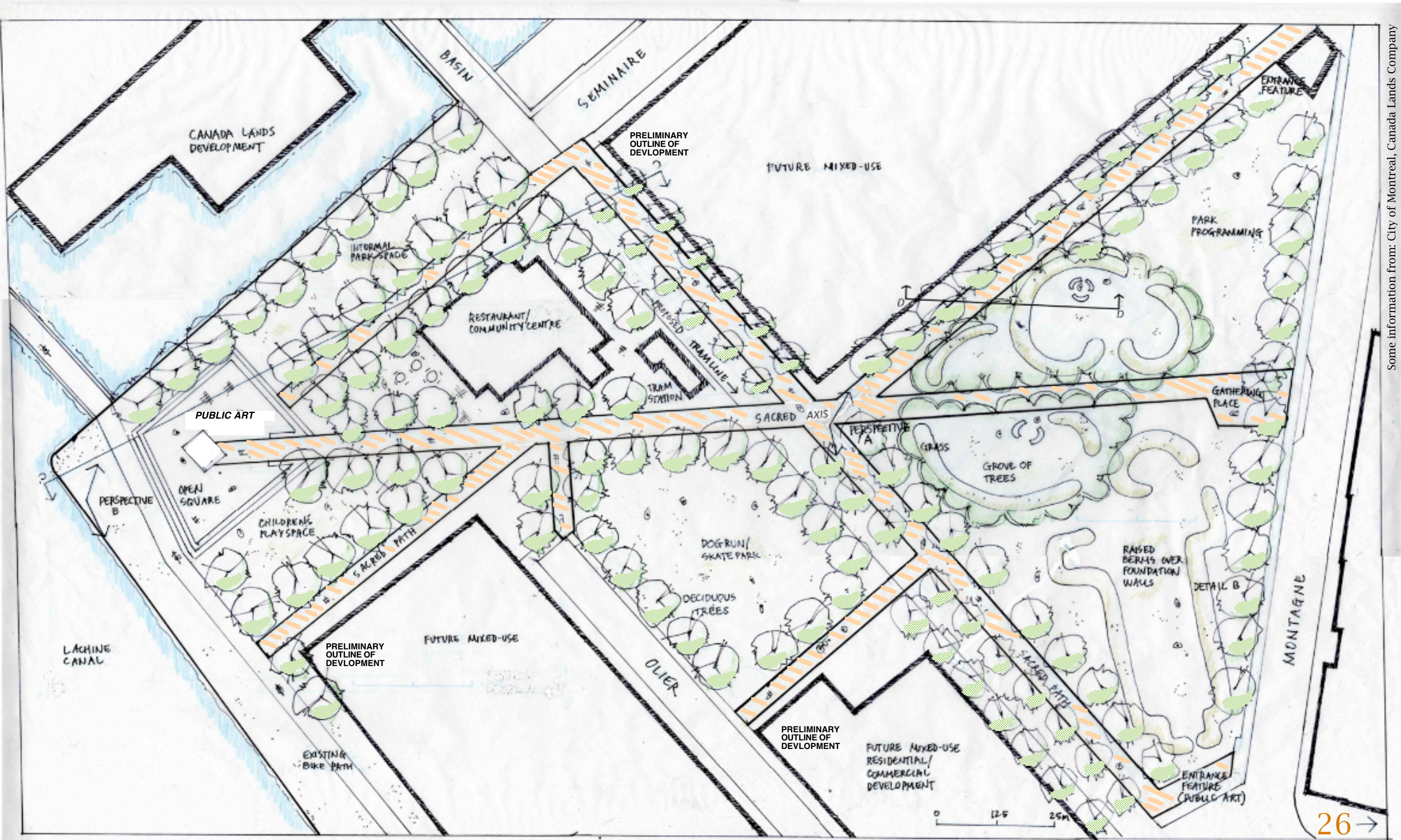
The third major element to this design is to relocate the future tramline not along the Canal at this point, but immediately south of St. Ann's Park running from



Some information from: City of Montreal, Canada Lands Company

Willington, west between St. Ann's Park and Gallery Park and proceeding to the Canada Lands development. A tramline station could be placed near Seminaire street with a community centre, restaurant/cafe and other park and sport facilities.

This contrast between the *sacred* and the *non-sacred* will create a wonderful atmosphere, be full of character and encourage all users in the area to enjoy this special site in Montreal.



5.3 Detailed Plans

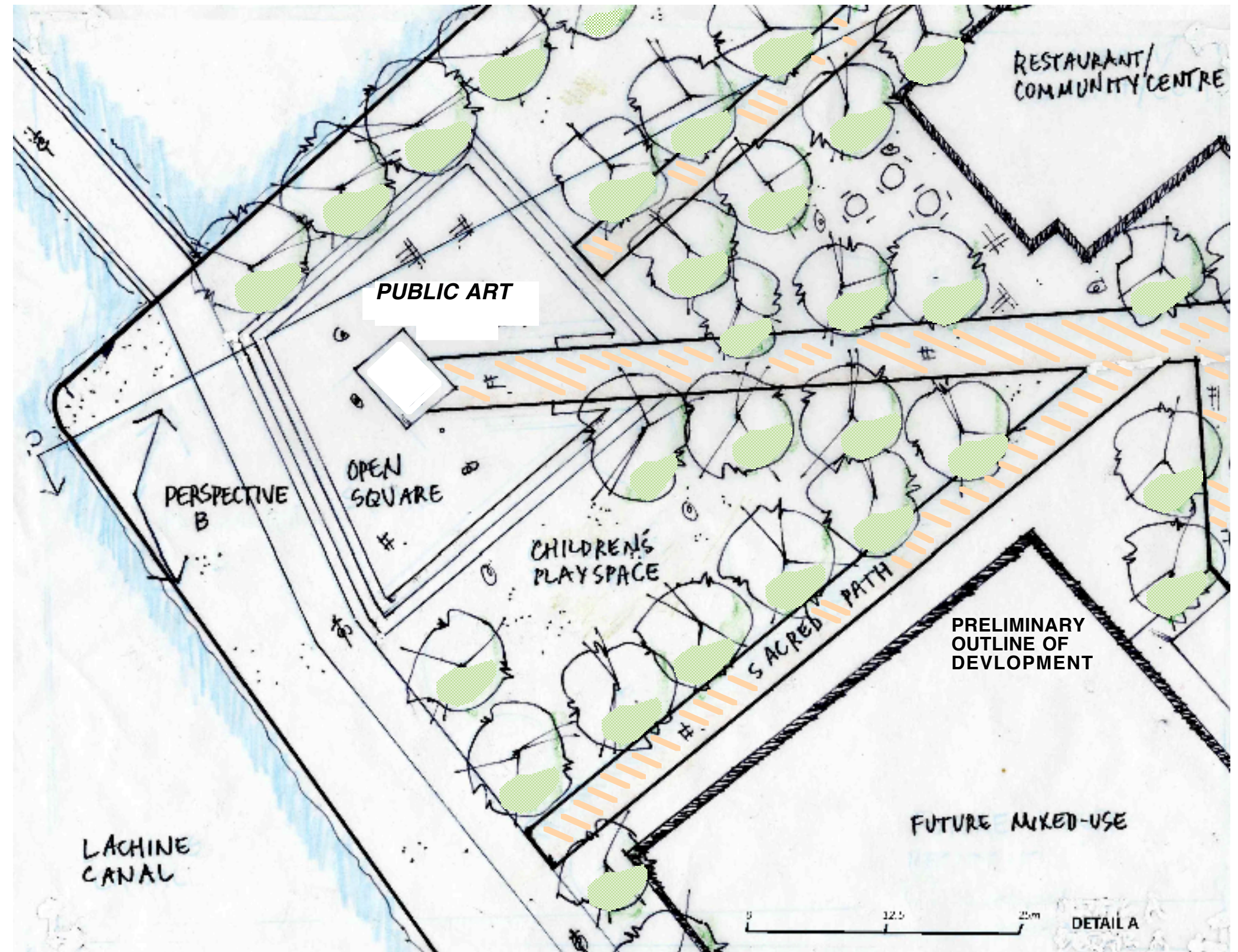
This detail plan shows the placement of a Public Art Piece set next to the Bike path along the Lachine Canal and at the end of the *sacred axis* that leads to St. Ann's Park. Surrounding the Art Piece is a small square, slightly lowered into ground to allow people greater access to the object and feel more affinity with it in its proximity.

A children's playspace is located next to this square and rows of trees line the two other *sacred paths* that lead away from the water. Across the Canal one is able to see and feel connected to St. Patrick's square. The views from this area are stunning not only along the Canal but up toward the Mountain and to downtown Montreal.

Towards the north, a restaurant/cafe space brings people in from the Canal to stop and rest and grab a bit to eat or have a drink. Future residential/commercial development facing the park along the eastern and western edges will be ventilated with distinct construction detailing, and have unique and multiple street addresses off the main floor.

Section C, as partially seen here, shows the various zones that exist in the area. Perspective B includes how the Canada Lands Development might interact with this design proposal including the Public Art Piece, *sacred axis* and restaurant/cafe.

Detailed Plan A



Some information from: City of Montreal, Canada Lands Company

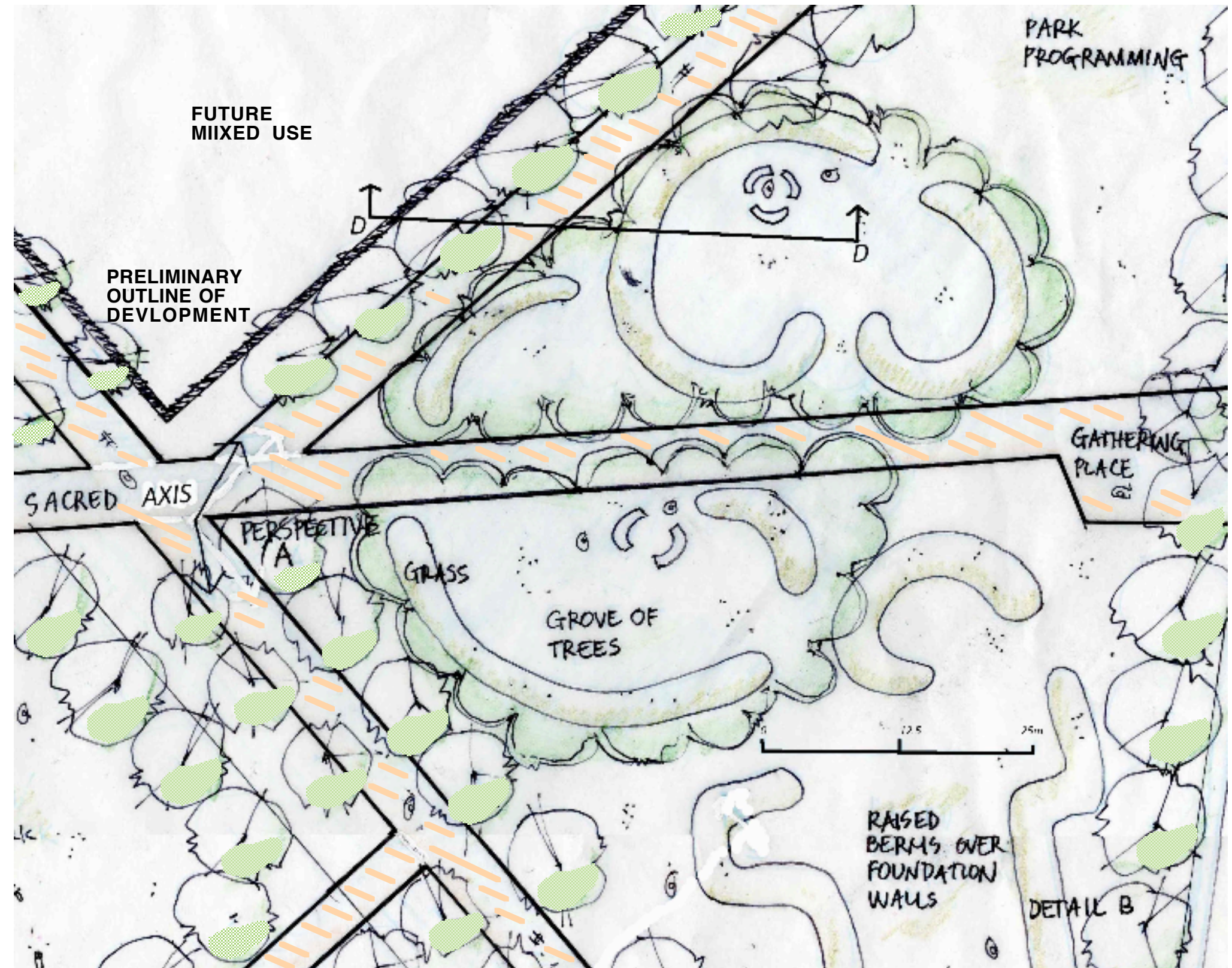
5.3 Detailed Plans

This second detail plan shows the heart of St. Ann's Park with its *sacred axis* running through the Grove of trees towards the Gathering Place. Two other *sacred places* utilize existing artefacts currently found on site. Grassy, mounded berms, about 3 feet high, cover the foundation walls of the old church, which allow users greater access and play opportunities, while still recognizing their history.

The berms also create a certain kind of barrier between areas in St. Ann's Park, creating physical *thresholds* and *enclosures* for the *sacred places*. However, visibility throughout the park is still high to encourage a sense of safety.

Section D also shows the various zones across the site, from the mixed use frontage to the west, through the *sacred path* and over the berm to the *sacred place*. Perspective A shows how people might interact there, where people might play and ride their bicycles. The *sacred axis* leads one into the the Grove of trees towards the Gathering Place next to Montagne street and its stunning views.

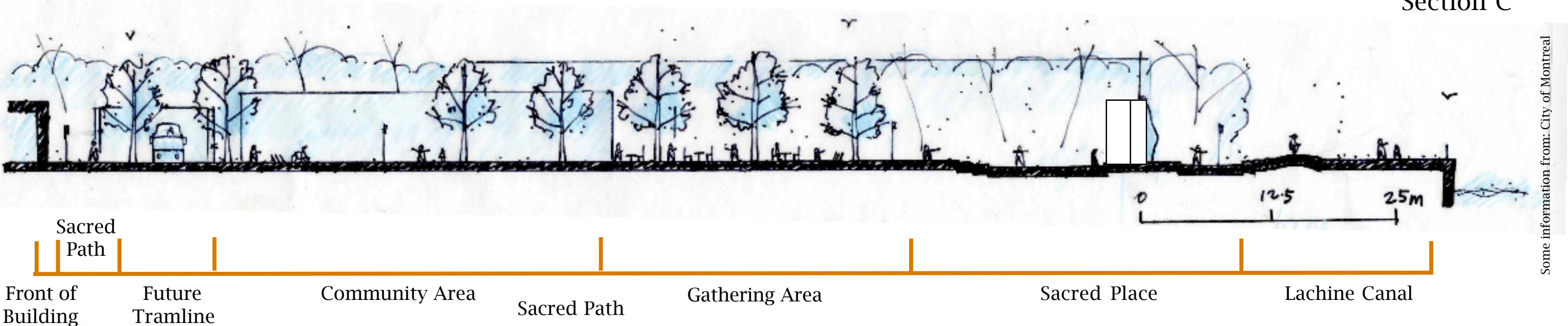
Detailed Plan B



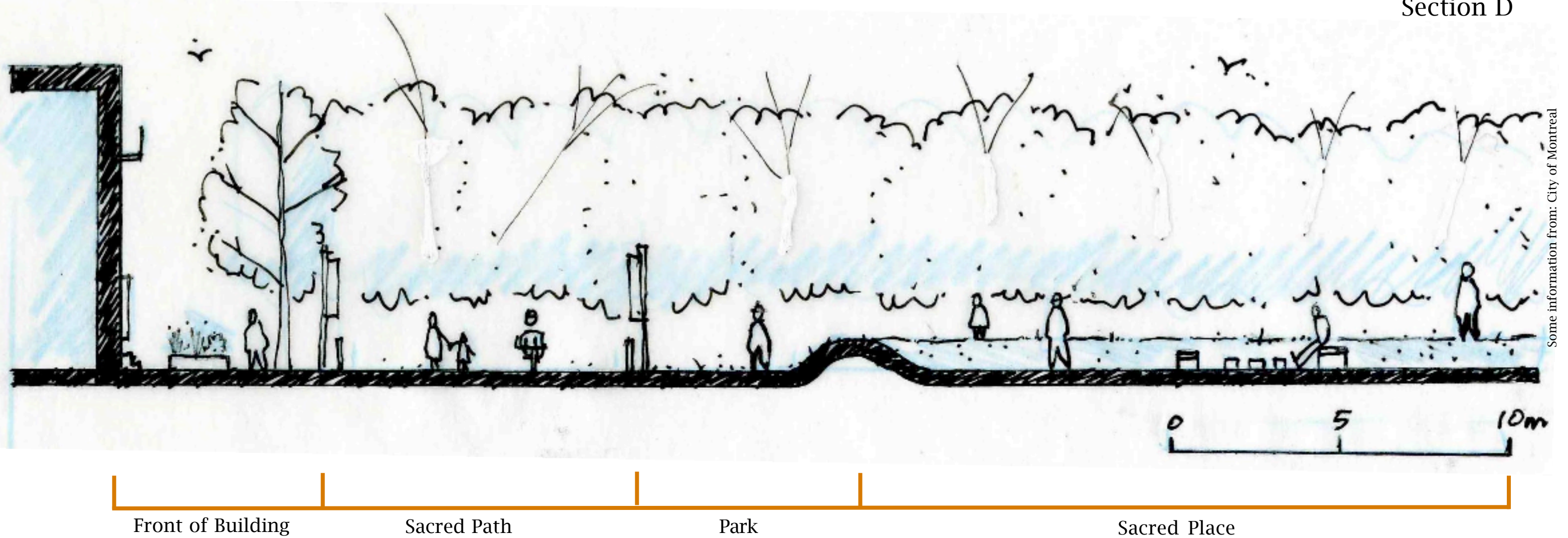
Some information from: City of Montreal

5.4 Sections

Section C

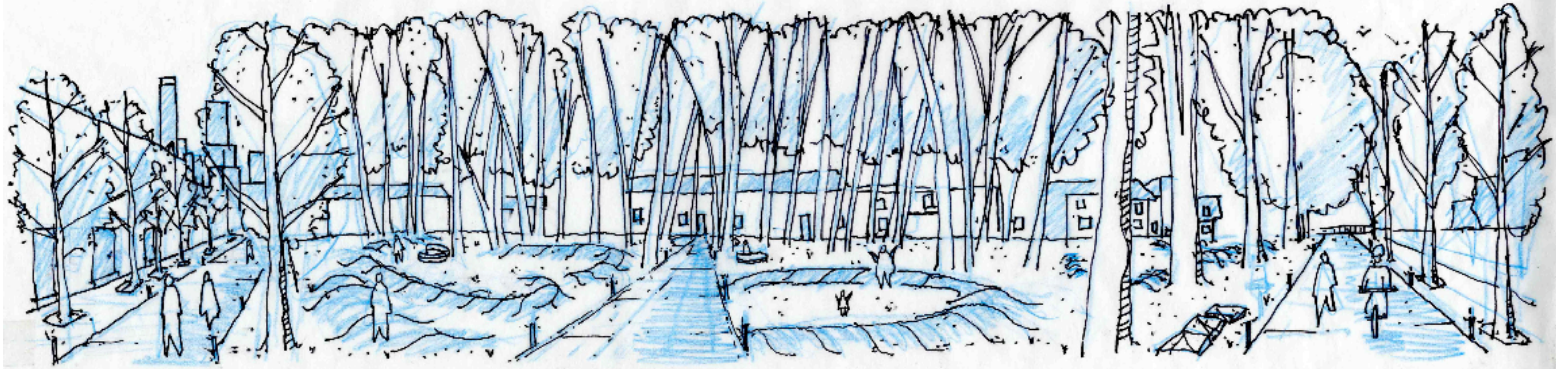


Section D

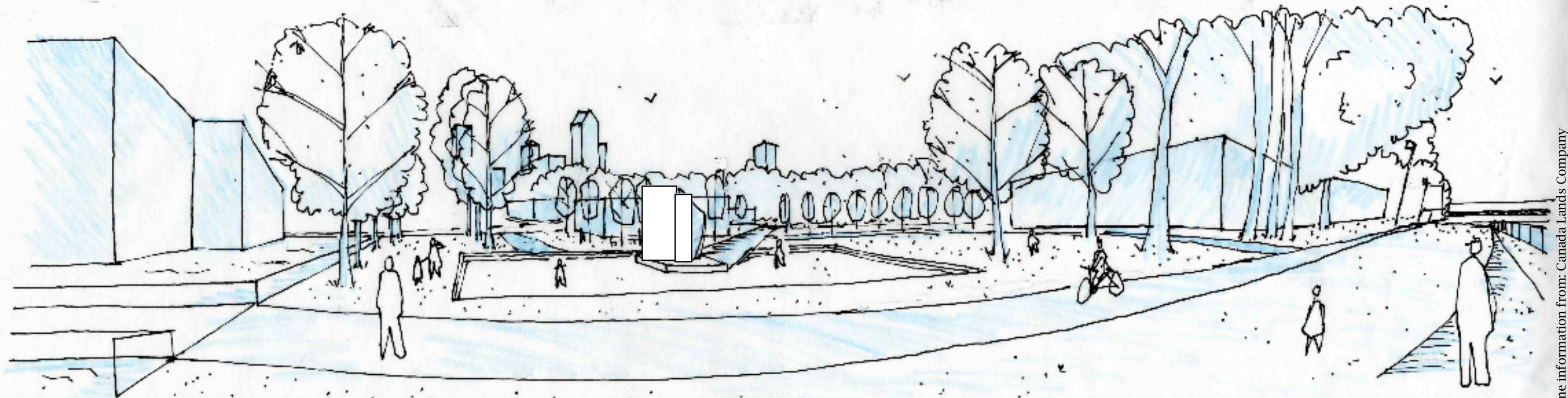


5.5 Perspective views

Perspective A



Perspective B



Some information from: Canada Lands Company

6.0 Discussion and Recommendations

The effort to research the meaning and relevance of *sacred places*, and endeavour to deepen a particular existing urban sacred place through design, leads one to a simple, if not working definition and seven suggestions for urban planning in the 21st century Canadian city.

Definition:

A public *sacred place* in the Canadian context is an out-of-the-ordinary special place, with history and meaning, a sense of mystery to some and somewhere that people can feel comfortable to explore, or are overwhelmed by, their own thoughts and feelings. Many people would have strong negative thoughts and feelings if it were to be removed.

Recommendations:

1. The first is that, just like other public places, *sacred places* must be *open* and *available* to wide range of users. Mothers with their children, older folks who may be handicapped in some manner, recent immigrants and teenagers must have *access* when exploring and experiencing any public *sacred place* in the city.

2. The second is that all users must feel *safe* and *secure* when exploring these public sacred places as well. While private sacred places may allow for wider design options, public space safety requirements are important.

3. With this in mind, during the design development phase of a *sacred place*, areas that might be considered 'everyday' or *profane* must be included in the design. It is this interaction between the two and the encountered contrast that assists in creating the phenomenological stimulus and response of one experiencing an elevated sense of place.

4. The interaction, however, between a particular area considered *sacred* and an area that is not, is not necessarily strictly rigid. While creating a series of *thresholds* and *enclosures* as one moves towards a more *sacred* centre can be seen as applicable, not having this transistion does not necessarily diminish any experiential heightened sense of living.

4. Enhancing this transition between *thesholds* and *enclosures*, however, depending on site analysis, might work.

5. Take the time to explore the opportunities of the site, while acknowledging its particular history. This is important for enhancing sacred places.

For example, during the beginning of the design phase of this project, the Grove of trees was the initial focus of development. However as the project progressed, a second element, along the Lachine Canal, at first the Black Rock, but then changed to a Public Art Piece gained significance. These two nodes, both with potentially strong imagery, create *direction* between the two unique *centres*. The vertical axis of the tree trunks from the Grove of trees, and perhaps from the public art piece, create *direction* between earth and sky.

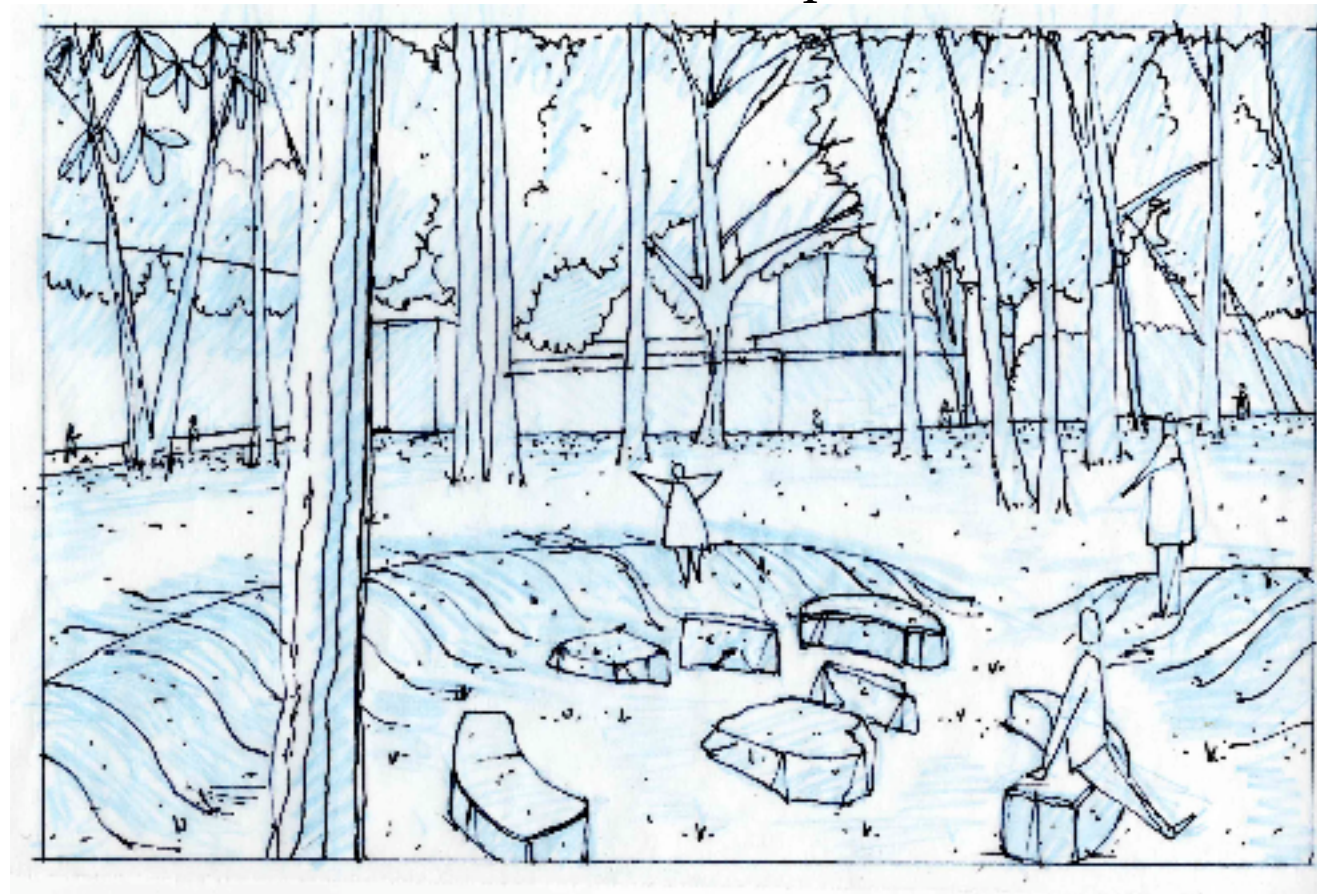
6. Ensure that nature is incorporated into the design.

Whether there are existing elements already in place or not, taking the opportunity to add or enhance vegetation, water features or topography seems to add a richer experience. For example, in this project the Grove of trees in St. Ann's Park and its associated phenomena as well as Public Art Piece next to the Lachine Canal would enhance the specialness of the place.

7. Don't force a design response so much that it breaks apart those places that are important to the people that already live there.

When Heidegger writes about *Dwelling*, and Norberg-Schulz about *Genus-Loci*, how the urban planner and designer incorporates these ideas into a particular place means in someways that one must recognize that things can't be forced too much. People may live nearby and local histories are present. There already is significance in objects or particular places and they are often important enough to be recognized and integrated into any development construction.

Proposed Grove of Trees



6.0 Discussion and Recommendations

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