

**PLACE
IDENTITY
ARCHITECTURE**

RETHINKING MOMENTS OF TRANSITION
IN THE AGE OF UNIVERSALITY

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PLACE IDENTITY ARCHITECTURE
RETHINKING MOMENTS OF TRANSITION IN THE AGE OF UNIVERSALITY

by

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Author's Declaration

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Design is an opportunity to continue telling the story, not just to sum up everything.

-Tate Linden

Place Identity Architecture
Rethinking moments of transition in the age of universality
Sandra Katarzyna Dorozynska
Master of Architecture 2017
Architecture Program, Ryerson University

Abstract

Places. We shape them - they shape us. They are a fundamental part of our human existence, bestowing on us identities and experiences. However, places, today, are converging on universality and homogeneity, becoming uniform, monotone, and placeless, lacking inspiration of identity and unique experiences due to modernization and globalization. This thesis explores the idea of “being” and “identification” in city gateways, places of transition in cities, such as train stations, within the inevitable modernization. It is especially at the moment of arrival at a place of transition that place and the surroundings affect one’s experience, perception, identity, and orientation of the destination. By understanding how a place of transition can reflect its surrounding context and identity, this approach re-thinks and re-establishes the idea of place at gateways to form impactful and heightened experiences of transitions and connections to the destination, in addition to creating a momentous arrival into a place.

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Appendix A - Design Explorations

Appendix B - Physical Models

Introduction

Modernization and globalization. Although both terms are not new phenomena to the human civilization, they are present and continuously occur since the earliest of times, and further influence and define the new era lived today. The idea behind the new era is to achieve the universal and single ideal of living conditions, economics, politics, culture, traditions, and social orders that have been created and modified by the many various parts of the world and its people. As a result, places around the globe are transforming and evolving into uniform, universal, and homogeneous entities, a single global community, where everything is similar or the same - the global replaces the unique and local, and a loss of identity is a result. The continuous development of technology for connectivity and communication helps in the sharing and common development of this single and global ambition. Portals and networks allow for the spread of ideas, knowledge, and information with ease throughout the world where anyone and everyone can have access to it. With such widespread of information, lifestyles, and mindsets of the global population are changing, and consequently, the people's living environments and contexts change simultaneously away from what they know, the traditional, towards the less known but more predominant around the world, the single uniformity. People have the ability to shape their environments to anything they desire, hence how they shape their surroundings will result in how their surroundings will further shape them.

The progression of human kind can be most evidently seen and felt physically in the design and organization on various scales and types of places - the design, construction and organization of the built and unbuilt world. Architecture and design have taken on a universal language where many cities and buildings in the world look and are experienced in a similar, if not the same, way. Fortunately, with interconnectivity, individuals and groups work off of each other spreading ideas and technology of design and construction, resulting in very similar architecture around the world that embodies a similar look and experience as other buildings. With the possibility of movement of people and professionals, designers of architecture and urban spaces gain influences and inspirations from new places they visit or work in, which they apply to their own design work. In such instances, in small portions of design and ideas are

becoming universal and shared around the world. Westernization as a global phenomenon plays a greater role with many individuals and groups wanting to develop structures and architecture as seen in the Western World as it has the impression of being best. Multimedia, travel, and spread of information multiplies Westernization as images of places are compared to and ameliorated to become as influential and beautiful as those seen in the media. An example of this could be the American glass skyscraper; with few exceptions of iconic designs in the world, many high-rise towers look similar and have no distinction between themselves, therefore have no identity. Many structures are so similar that they can be built in one part of the world and when moved to another part of the world, they would still fit in within their new context. The distinctiveness and identity of places are diminishing, resulting in experiences of places - their value, dynamics, ambitions, and identities - being significantly weakened. Identity is an important aspect of places and people as it has to do with our being and dwelling in a place - it deals with our existence and contexts that affect it. Without identity, one's orientation is distorted and the experience of place becomes meaningless and anonymous. Therefore, one's relationship to place may become nonexistent.

With the increase in travel and movement of people around the globe and the desire of indulging in new cultures and places, identity becomes critical to being and experiencing a place. It is especially at the places of transition, such as airports, train stations and the like, that upon arrival and departure, the experience of place is strong and significant in creating an immediate relationship to a new destination as well as orienting oneself. With a focus on transport and its innovation, especially in the case of the aviation, places of transition became less important and their experience more trivial. Train stations, in particular, have felt this to a great extent. Once being a significant component of the urban fabric in the hearts of cities and people's lives, a symbol of modernization itself, the train stations became invisible and trivial. Many remain in and bring people into the city core; however, they are often outdated, neglected, or design poorly in a purely functional and utilitarian fashion. The experience of place and travel is absent, and therefore a traveller's arrival at and departure from a destination

is monotonous and uneventful. This can be witnessed for the most part in North America where the development of the rail system and the train have ceased to a minimum and where train and train station use has diminished over time. In spite of this, railway popularity is slowly increasing in North America although perhaps not the same as when they first arrived in the cities and provided mass transport for the people. As opposed to this, Europe and Asia, over the past few decades, have been experiencing significant development and investment in high-speed trains and technology related to railway transport. Transport architecture, although it contains many typologies and functions, has merged and created an all-inclusive design language that is extensively applied to the aesthetic components of airports, train stations, and bus terminals worldwide making them look similar or the same.

Nevertheless, today more than ever before, we are experiencing a new Golden Age of travelling with an unprecedented number of travellers showing that people are opting out for rail travel more frequently and train stations are once again becoming lively and popular. Rail travel has changed over time, and so have the stations. However, their importance to the experience of arrival and departure of the traveller at a destination remains the same and relevant. Many now connect to airports located at city peripheries to bring the traveller directly into the city making this a new but noteworthy purpose for the train. There is an opportunity to revitalize train stations to showcase their importance within the urban fabric and create meaningful experiences and interpretation of place identity upon the first and last impressions of a place.

Research Questions

This thesis aims to ask the question of experience in the arrival of the traveller in the contemporary train station as numbers of travellers increase while train stations remain unchanged and or uninspired.

- What is the critical position on place experience of the transit/ threshold dimension?
- As there is an increasing trend in travel as the globalizing world grows in interconnectivity and closeness, what significance will future threshold architecture hold for the traveler?
- How can threshold architecture create a meaningful interpretation of place upon arrival and departure for the individual?

1.0

THE CONTEMPORARY CHANGING WORLD

Globalization as a term is used to define the current contemporary phenomenon in the world regarding economics, politics, ecology, and sociology. Often it is used in conjunction with the terms: modernization, homogenization, and universalization; however, still, the term is still an umbrella for various meanings, depending on the context and the audiences. It is understood that this concept of globalization and modernization has been around since the beginning of human existence due to human's constant strive for progress. Moreover, it has been noted that this evolution has accelerated with the age of Enlightenment and its ideal of progress and humankind's universal modernity. With Enlightenment's invention and sharing of the universal language of technics that belongs to humankind as a whole is spread and adopted to aspire to the single ideal and satisfaction of human needs, "[...] throughout the world an equally universal way of living unfolds" (Ricoeur, 1965, p.274). This universal language includes such knowledge in areas such as science, math, and technology, as well as engages a single rationality of thought. It is an inevitable event that is and will continue to occur, but it does not have to make an irreversible damaging impact to the numerous unique places and societies of the world.

Globalization has been and still is viewed as progress and advancement of humanity and civilization that leaves behind the traditional and inadequate, and moves toward the new and universal. The term in point of fact refers to various forms of progress and has the overall common goal of peace, freedom, and equality. Globalization and modernization both offer changes in lifestyle and ways of thinking of the global population and as a result can be viewed as both a negative and a positive progression depending on the issue at hand. For example, it creates an arena for sharing and exchanging knowledge and facilitation of effortless communication to achieve the greater common good and goals. The web in Figure 1 depicts such interconnectivity. However, this arena also threatens the uniqueness of the parts of the world with homogenization, and in return, a tension between the local and the global arises. "We now ask ourselves how nearby the exotic can be; and not how familiar the exotic can become, but how to preserve the exotic of the unfamiliar" (Govers, 2009, p.1).

However, various technological inventions and advancements are taking place and the world is growing in connectivity and linkages, international interaction, and interdependence. This facilitates opportunities for exchange of information through media, as well as free movement of goods, services, and people. However, this great connectivity also has some consequences, especially of global homogeneity.

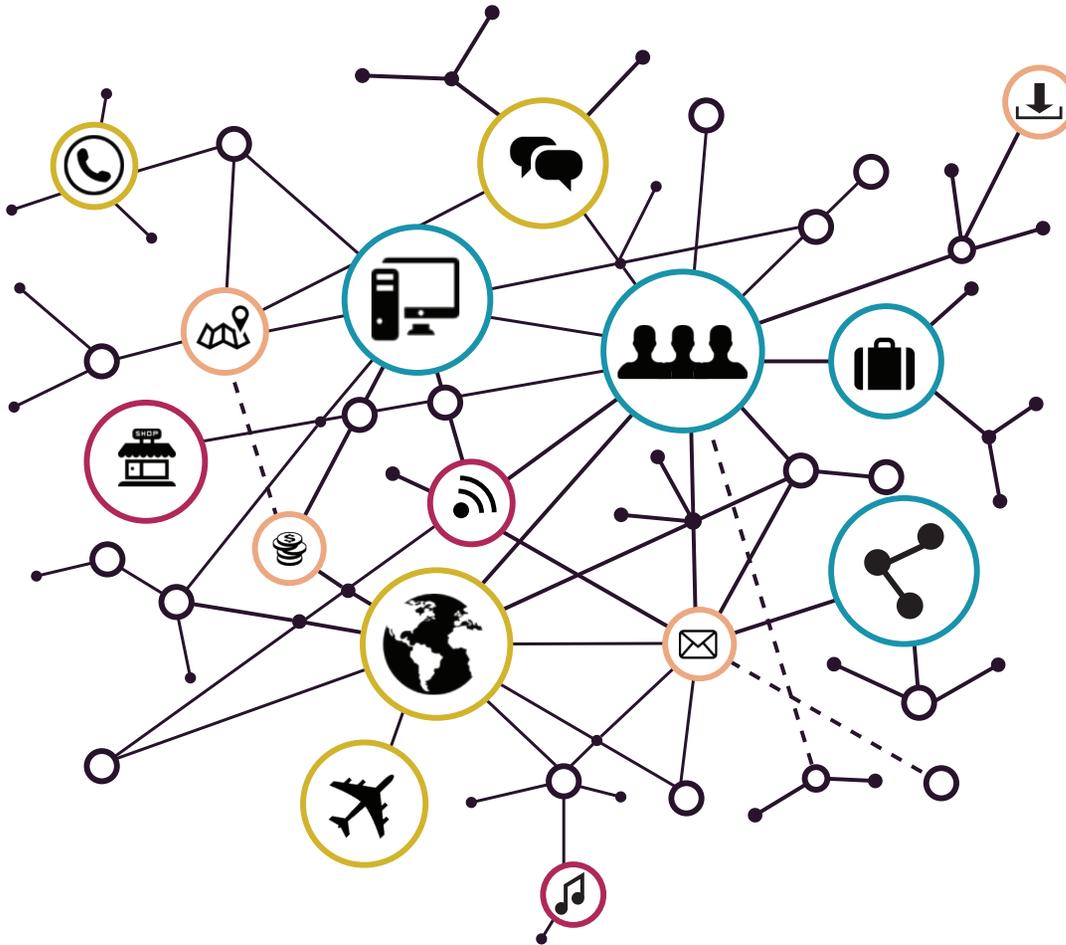


Figure 1: Global Web.

Globalization and Homogenization

“Mankind is on the brink of a single world civilization representing at once a gigantic progress for everyone and an overwhelming task of survival and adapting our cultural heritage to this new setting” (Ricoeur, 1965, p.271). Homogeneity has to do with the changing ways of thinking and interpreting our lives and lifestyles in relation to the rest of the world. Sameness of cultures, a union of all societies in an attempt to create and achieve this global village, its values, and benefits, will eventually create a commonplace and mediocre civilization where heritage, history, and the individuality of people and places will be lost and forgotten. The world, its cultures, and people will transform into a single shade of beige. “We have a feeling that this single world civilization at the same time exerts a sort of attrition or wearing away at the expense of the cultural resources which have made great civilizations in the past” (Ricoeur, 1975, p.276).

It could be observed, that at present, a single, particular vision of modernity is spreading across the world stimulating a change that is destroying the already existing cultures and the local. Bowden (2004) in his “Standard of Civilization” makes a valid point that the world and its international society is changing everything that is not accepted to ameliorate conditions and participate in the global resulting in a movement away from the traditional ways of life, thinking, and production. Even though places in the world may have their visions of values, ethics, and ideas for progress and their cultures, because of modernity and global progress, the discrepancies of these visions are becoming narrower. With these reduced differences, a single, compelling vision emerges, is followed and applied, and hence prevails, creating a single global civilization of universal values and benefits. Figures 2, Figure 3 and Figure 4 are photographs of three different cities around the world; however, it is evident that they have various aspects in common such as the style of construction in the city core, materiality, and design language. The western skyscraper is seen in all three cities, although place specific and well known architecture stands out from the majority of cities, such as the 30 St. Mary Axe building by Foster + Partners, or the replica of the Eiffel Tower in Tokyo that is among the dense built context. The three city images reflect westernization and the overall western



Figure 2: City of Tokyo.



Figure 3: City of London.



Figure 4: City of Minneapolis.

image. Bowden (2004) pushes for the idea that the Western world and its visions are prevailing, setting the moral norms, values, aspirations, and experiences for the global village. As a result, this creates “[...] a world in which there is a more stealthy homogenization of culture to the point at which Western liberal values represent the global culture” (Bowden, 2004, p.65). The world is shaping itself according to the Western society and its ways of life. Westernization is happening.

Placelessness can define what the world is experiencing today with the occurrence and effects of modernization and globalization. Placelessness is a term emphasized and explored by Edward Relph that relates to the decreasing quality of places as modernization attitudes are spread to eradicate semi-unconsciously the identities, character, and associations of place with the single global modernized ideals – the homogeneity, the language, and the technique. This term deals more with the idea of uprooting culture, heritage, and identity of a place and its overall significance. “The overall result is the undermining of the importance of place for both individuals and culture, and the casual replacement of the diverse and significant places of the world with anonymous spaces and exchangeable environments” (Relph, 1976, p.143). Proposed in the latter half of the twentieth century, this concept of placelessness is felt at a greater level in today’s contemporary times. Not only cities around the world look and function alike, but also the built context is indistinguishable that at times it is difficult to differentiate places. Relationships to places become mediocre and insignificant, while experiences, for both permanent dwellers of places and travellers, become weak. “The experience can be diminished if spectacular or essential or well-liked components of it are taken away; it can be weakened or contaminated, or even poisoned, by the addition of inappropriate elements” (Hiss, 1990, p.82). This is evident in many building typologies and urban planning; but speaking of places of transition, the train station in particular, their identity of the train, of place, and of traveller is absent or replaced by monotone and ubiquitous settings. Regrettably, Relph believes that this “placelessness” is inevitable, where the whole world and all its places will eventually merge into nothingness. What in fact is unavoidable is globalization and modernization which currently inspires placelessness; however, complete placelessness might not occur if care for experience and identity is put as a priority in the design of tangible and non-tangible places. Once the global population realizes the occurring state, perhaps some aspects of experience and authentic identity in design can be restored, and places can provide unique moments that shape and impact people giving character and unique qualities to places.

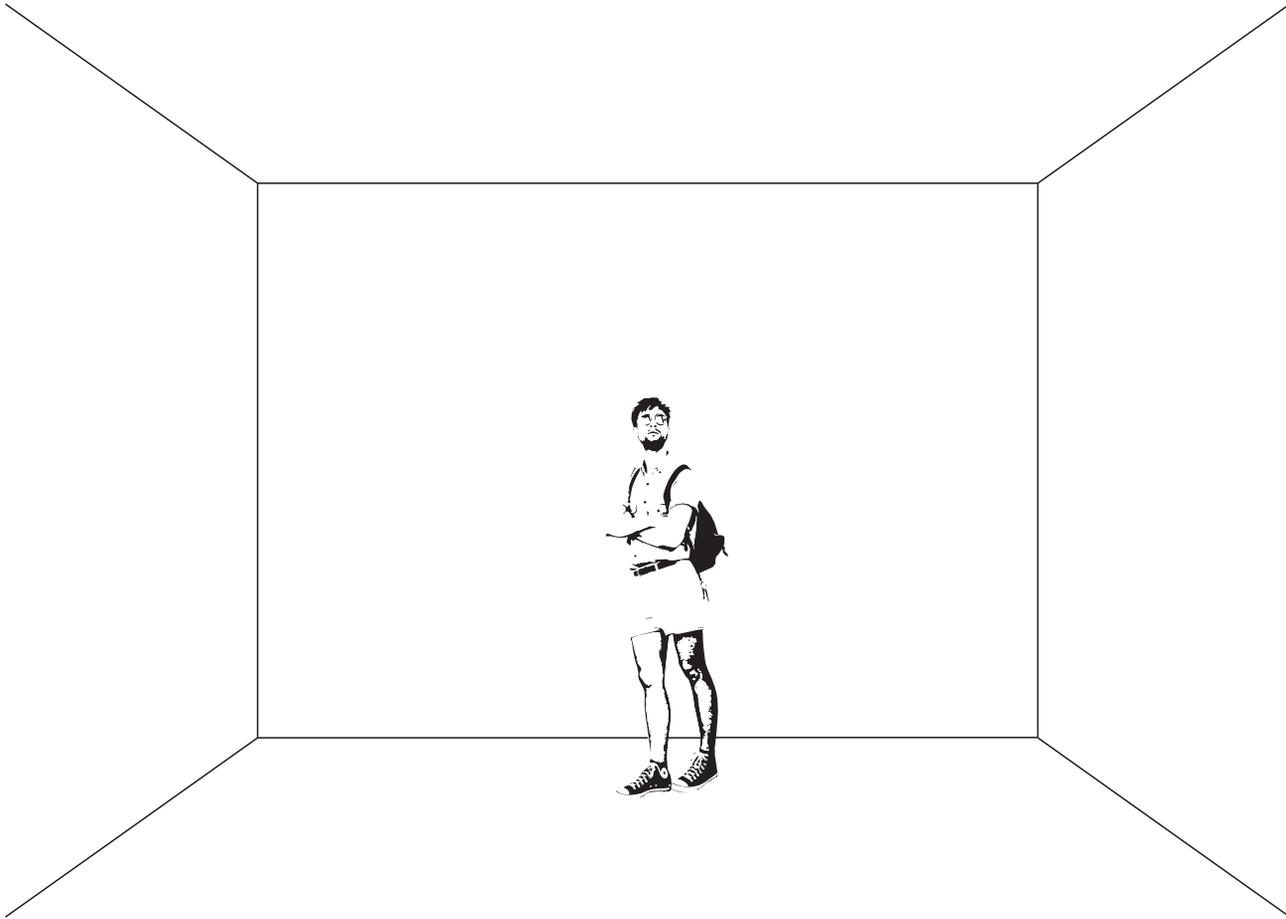


Figure 5: Lack of place in a place.

Globalization, Branding and Experiences

Homogenization is also the effect of creating inauthentic identities of places through branding and marketing. Specific marketing and branding can create an ideal global image of the perfect place and will influence places to aspire to become as similar as possible. As human beings, we are attracted to the idea of branding, “Societies, in other words, have a habit of ‘branding’ their different strata and the individuals within them” (Anholt, 2010, p.24). As a by-product of globalization, place branding is all about attracting people whether the place and its experience are authentic or not. Seeing that globalization has created a free and easy movement of people for business, leisure and migration reasons, there is an increase in competition in the international arena and how places are imagined and associated within the global population. Place branding serves “to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience, all with the intent purpose of creating an image that influences consumers’ decisions to visit the destination” (Govers, 2009, pp.13-14). It forms a single identity and image that will be experienced and shared the same way by every individual that visits that place - it dangerous as it reduces and weakens the place’s spirit of place as well as its real experience if the image created is false or opposite to the spirit of the place. Identities, images, and experiences are being mass-produced by corporations and mass media physically and virtually.



Figure 6: Resort in Cuba



Figure 7: Havana City Centre.



Figure 8: Less fortunate residential area.

This kind of branding of an ideal image of a place or destination can be applied to many popular tourist choices, such as Cuba. As seen in the Figures 6, Cuba is advertised as a vacation paradise with beautiful resorts, beaches and activities. Even as seen in Figure 7, in the capital city, Havana, buildings are in a more proper condition than as seen in the less fortunate areas and the majority of the country as seen in Figure 8. Not many people see the real image of Cuba and the experience that comes with the visit. Such places like Havana have a particular branding image for their resorts and major attractions, but they also have negative stereotypes for its people and society such as crime and violence, which is also brought to the front by use of branding.

Similarly, places can be branded in a specific way due to other branding and advertisements displayed in the city. This is evident in places such as Times Square in New York City or



Figure 9: Times Square in New York City.



Figure 10: Dundas Square in Toronto.



Figure 11: A city in Bangladesh.

Dundas Square in Toronto, seen in Figure 9 and Figure 10, where the city or a particular place is known for the colourful lights, big billboards, advertisements and television screens. This is part of the character and identity of New York City and Dundas Square. On the other hand, physical branding and such as seen in New York City or Toronto can ultimately cover up the character and identity of a place with these types of visual distractions. Many cities and places like Bangladesh pictured in Figure 11 struggle with such branding as it is on the forefront while the culture, the architecture, the character, and the identity is covered up in the background. This kind of branding can facilitate disorientation to the destination as well as the connection to place will not be strong, and its intensity will be reduced.

Globalization and Lifestyle

As globalization and modernization can be seen as negative phenomena, they do not entirely have to be. As a matter of fact, there are some positive aspects to this contemporary global progression. As said before, this progression is about changing the way people think, do, and live – aspects having to do with their whole lifestyle. The advancement of technology and changing environments improves the quality of life for the majority of the world in one way or another. In a global village, the economic, social, and political arenas are interconnected and interdependent providing opportunities and a platform to create a uniform standard of living throughout the world, but of course, this will take time to accomplish this. Progression will be more evident and occur more rapidly in the developing parts of the world as opposed to the developed parts of the world, however, optimistically at some point in the future it can be predicted that the world will have an equal standard of living throughout.

Globalization also has opened unparalleled and endless numbers of portals for communication, for the exchange and sharing of knowledge and information as well as social and cultural engagement. Mass media and various communication systems allow for individuals and groups of people to connect and communicate their ideas, news, and experiences with ease and without boundaries. With such an occurrence, the world is becoming a “planet as one place at one time” (Scholte, 2002, p.18). One can watch a television program documenting a place in detail or a video of someone else’s trip on the internet with just one click of a button. One can see photos of places and descriptions in printed popular press and social media networks. The experience of the world and places has changed where one does not have to spend money to learn and experience other cultures, histories, and places. One has the possibility to do so from the comfort of their home and personal devices.

Referring to the issue of places conforming to the global ideal and losing their identities there cannot be a single humanity in this world. Even though modernity and globalization instill common characteristics within each culture making them more similar and connected, cultural diversity will remain as it cannot be entirely erased and replace everything traditional.

Conversely, progress of time and the culture and heritage of place can, in fact, co-exist and feed off of each other to strengthen each entity. “To others, globalization brings about localization [...] and the ways in which people relate to places” (Gustafson, 2001, p.5). It is not to erase and deny the old, but to create relationships between the universal and the particular. It is in taking the single global idea and using it to ameliorate conditions while incorporating the local, unique elements and spirit within to make it the particular within the universal because everyone needs progress and heritage at the same time. A nation’s society, its heritage, customs and morality, can continue being when the culture can integrate the scientific rationality and understanding of the modern intellect of globalization. With this mindset, in addition to having access to mass media, there is a growing number of people who, have the possibility and can afford frequent excursions, are in search of heritage and have a greater desire to travel and immerse in the exotics, cultures, and experiences. Globalization has also created a monotony of everyday tasks for the majority of the global population; one takes the same route every day to work or school, one shops at the same grocery store, one does the same tasks at work every day, the list goes on. Thus the progress of globalization and modernization allowed the expanding horizons and ease of travelling and places and the desires to explore and indulge in the unknown while spending unprecedented time at places of transition - threshold places in the process, such as airports, train stations, and bus terminals. “But many people do want to experience particularity, to maintain and nurture their own cultures, values, and customs that they believe are constitutive of their identities, and without which their communal way of life would be substantially diminished” (Bell & De-Shalit, 2011, p.5).

Globalization and Architecture

As this issue of globalization is indeed of a sociological, economic, and political nature on the greater part of how we perceive and identify ourselves, nevertheless, it still affects architecture. As humans, we build and live in our world, and it is closely tied to how we shape our environments, which in turn shape us. Architecture is a large component of how we live life, how we understand life and places, it defines our interpersonal relationships with one another, and reflects who we are and our existence. “Cities reflect as well as shape their inhabitants’ values and outlooks in various ways. The design and architecture of their buildings reflect different social and cultural values” (Bell & De-Shalit, 2011, p.2). With the people learning and adapting the values and ethics of a single ideal, it will be applied to architecture, and it will create sameness in the built world and hence sameness in experiences of places; each place, each city, will have the same identity and same experience. Architecture and design focus on creating iconic and innovative design and construction, more so a competition, where monotone and meaningless spaces and places are created with the prescribed innovative design language, materiality, programmes, and styles, where many have little to no relationship to the urban space, landscape and their surroundings. Three different projects depicted in Figure 12, 13, and, 14 demonstrate this as they are three distinct scales, locations, and uses. Nonetheless, the overall design of the three buildings shown are of the same design dialect with similar structure and form, and although the scales are different, the technique and language remain the same. Also, architecture from other places influences new architecture; there is a loss of identity. Designs of buildings are and will become hollow and dislocated from their local, but located in the global meaning that a building could stand anywhere in the world and still be fine as it fits into the surroundings. All these surroundings are becoming the same, without differentiation of context, culture, and values. The cities and places of the world will blend into one shade of beige. However, this is creating the global village where the world is one place made up of similar to each other components instead of the many unique and colourful components. One can see this within the three cities, Tokyo (Figure 2), London (Figure 3), and Minneapolis (Figure 4) on page 9, that the architecture within them looks very similar. Being in three different places yet looking similar, are the identities of these different or similar? Perhaps these three cities and other



Figure 12: Kansai International Airport, Japan.



Figure 13: Vennesla Library, Norway.



Figure 14: Stazione Termini, Rome.

cities may be told apart from one another if they have any iconic or place specific buildings within them. Nonetheless, their root identities and characteristics that make them unique have been covered or replaced by the contemporary architecture of the globalizing world. This is Westernization and architecture is becoming placeless, having little to no relationship to the urban space, landscape and their surroundings.

Thresholds in a Globalizing World

Places of transition, threshold places, are essential architectural components of any city, and on a smaller scale, of any building. With the changing social and cultural conditions, they too have been affected and what's more, affect how one perceives and orients themselves in a place. Threshold places are places or zones of transition where one crosses from one place into another, from one moment to another. They are "a change, a passage, the ebb and flow" (Teyssot, 2005, p.90). They are not an edge limit condition like a boundary, but the space in between two edge conditions – it is a space that mediates. Another term to describe this condition is the word gateway. Threshold places hold within them the physical, tangible crossing between two places, conditions or contexts, such as different climates, the interior and the exterior, light and dark. At the same time, thresholds also contain within themselves the psychological mindset of changing settings, attitudes, and sentiments – the crossing of "boundaries that are not physically concrete" (Grice, 2005, p.16). This is the reaction to a place that the individual comes into contact with and engages in a relationship with it, in addition to preparing oneself for the experiences that lie ahead. "In our mind's eye or with a turn of the head, a searching of who we are, what it is we seek, and some creative summoning to avail ourselves of what is necessary to face whatever might come next" (Leung, 2015 p.19).

The significance of threshold and gateway conditions is of immeasurable value. These circumstantial conditions provide a gradual transition connecting two, possibly, different contexts as both points "of entering or beginning" (Grice, 2015, p.14) and points of exiting or ending. They are symbolic of exchanges, encounters, of happenings (Teyssot, 2005). There are many thresholds in our world - the natural and the man-made. However imagine places and spaces without particular meaningful threshold conditions. There would be no concrete beginning or end of a particular place or space. Furthermore, there would be no concrete beginning or end to experiences, but a continuum that has no effect on the individual dwelling in that space or place. Many places of transition such as airports and train stations are significant places during one's journey between two destinations or between work and home. Arriving at a destination without a threshold one could become confused, disoriented, or feel



Figure 15: Meaningful thresholds.

alienated upon arrival into the new place from the old because the transition would be harsh. “Transit stations, airports and bus stops are similar thresholds in our day-to-day comings and goings, presenting moments of pause when feelings of anticipation are undermined by a questioning of where we’re going, and why” (Leung, 2015, p.19). Threshold and gateway conditions allow for reflection of place, identity, and experience, in addition to stimulating our sensory perception informing the individual what the place is and what it represents both consciously and subconsciously.

It has become evident that, over centuries, the meaning and significance of threshold places and gateways, especially ones that receive and send off travellers, have changed. With a focus on technological innovation, modernization, and the effect of globalization, many places

of transition, such as airports and, in particular, train stations, have become characterless, thus creating irrelevant places and uninspiring experiences. The experience is solely of a physical nature of “passing through”, where the emotional and psychological components to experience are absent and not engaged. Clean of identity, of character and sense of place, contemporary design has created environments of sterility, security, control, and monotony, where experiences of place, arrival, and departure are unattainable and such spaces have nothing special to offer. Leung (2015) in his article about threshold places identifies the current condition of transitory spaces as spaces of nothing – as places that have no concrete identity embodied in them. With more focus on airports than train stations, train stations have been affected by this trend of placelessness to a greater extent. Contemporary design trends became dominant in the ideas of separation, including the separation of environments, the separation of the program, and affect the experience of place and sense of place. The gateway component between train and place is deficient. In particular gateway places of transition, with such a mindset in design, do not facilitate a gradual transition between the moment of arrival and the destination. This lack of transition is further amplified by a disconnect between the train station and its surroundings. Sometimes, the built form seems alien to where it is located creating tension and contrast in the relationship with its surrounding context - there is little harmony between the two. This is more evident in new design rather than the old because the architecture of the past is fused by time while the new stands out by contrast. The stations of the past, although monumental in scale and hierarchy in the urban context, built a relationship and unity with the rest of the surroundings to create a character and identity of place.

2.0 **THE TRAIN** **&THE** **TRAVELLER**

Place, Authenticity, and Experience

Place is more than just a location although it does not have any set properties or prescribed attributes to what makes a place “a place.” They change with time as we humans shape it and give it qualities that reflect and inform how things are while are the same time give reasons for people to use and visit specific places. Edward Relph identifies the influences of places to be that “they are defined less by unique locations, landscapes, and communities than by the focusing of experiences and intentions onto particular settings” (Relph, 1976, p.141). Furthermore, social and cultural values and outlooks are reflected in the design of urban landscapes and built forms (Bell and de-Shalit, 2011). Places draw people to experience and dwell in their surroundings and contexts as to create relationships with them to deeper root their meaning, being and existence in the natural and built world and deepen their “emotional and psychological ties” (Relph, 1976, p.141). Wesener (2016), among other authors of work about places and experiences, writes that the authentic experience is formed by the genius loci of a place that incorporates tangible and non-tangible components such as the social, cultural, spatial and temporal contexts in with authenticity is experienced. Many authors concentrate on emphasizing that experience and authenticity of place for an individual depends on the physical destination, place, and the values and characteristics it embodies. However, it would be untrue to say this. Authentic experience encompasses both the physical location, built form or space, but it also needs the individual and his or her authenticity. What is meant by this is one needs to be open to the experience that lies ahead of them, as well as they need to desire the real and authentic experience, not the prescribed and stereotypical. “Authenticity is constructed in response to personal goals and values rather than common standards” (Wesener, 2016, p.70). Only then can authentic experience of place occur when one fully immerses oneself into an authentic place with their authentic selves.

The Re - Awakening

The act of travelling and the desire to travel began with the early days of the train in the nineteenth century, when the train opened up horizons, possibilities, and opportunities to visit and experience foreign and distant lands. With continuous innovations and inventions of faster and more comfortable ways of travelling, more people were able to partake in their dreams and yearnings for exotic exploration. Although rail travel moved scores of people across countries, it was the aircraft that spurred the Golden Age of Travel and later when flights became inexpensive and affordable for anyone there was an increase of travellers. It was a time when flying was luxurious and very much desired. One's dreams of discovering and experiencing new places and cultures were possible - it was a freedom with no boundaries.

Paralleling such a time of the twentieth century, is today, the early twenty-first century when people are on a constant move between places in the world for not only leisure travelling but also for business and immigration. It could even be said that travelling rates are the highest they have ever been. There is especially a renewed interest among the young individuals to discover, immerse, and indulge in the multi-cultural world that is growing closer together due to globalization. It is a way of finding oneself with exploration and corresponding experiences. Mass media and social media promote and intensify the desire to travel, while tourism companies and cities promote their places in the world of tourism. Travelling, also known as *wanderlust*, is becoming a lifestyle and has become easier to practice and participate in with visa lifts, ease of travel transportation, and the popularity and openness of countries to tourism. It could be said that the Golden Age is actually occurring now, not only for the technological innovations in transportation, comfort, and the luxury of travel but also with the global movement and desire to visit and see what the world has to offer.

The figure on the left, Figure 16, attempts to depict this parallelism but also show the difference in the interest of travel. In the Golden age of travel, people travelled for social status and to experience the great machines that took them from one part of the world to another. Today, people travel to explore and to see the new places and everything they have to offer.



Figure 16: Travelling then and now.

Beginning in the nineteenth century, born out of the Industrial Revolution, the invention and development of the trains quickly became the symbol of modernization, freedom, the conquest of space, and the future. Many stations introduced significant technological advancements in other areas of machines such as the luggage mechanism at the Gare d'Orsay (Figure 20) - a station that introduced many technological innovations to the world of travel. "More than any other technical design or social institution, the railway stands for modernity" (Judt, 2010). Before the train, the majority of people did not have the opportunities, reasons or resources to travel into foreign landscapes, distant lands and towns, and if one did have the luxury of travel, it took a great deal of time and energy to do so. The idea of the train at the time was to move as many people, mail, and cargo across a long distance in a shorter time. The train closed the gap of distance and time between far-away destinations with its unprecedented speed, which continues to innovate itself to this day with such technology as the high-speed trains in Europe and Asia.

With the train came the new typology of the train station that became a significant structure within a city. "Trains are about moving people. Figure 17 as well as Figure 18 and Figure 19, show great numbers of people embarking and disembarking trains - a large amount of passengers. But their most visible incarnation, their greatest public monument, was static: the railway station" (Judt, 2010). Built in city centres train stations played an integral role bringing freedom and vast possibilities of travel, a quick exchange of goods and services, and knowledge. "It was part and parcel of the creation of this land, a symbol of a nation" (Brown, 2008, p.179). Placing such a building in the centre of the city allowed for the urban life to grow and flourish with the motivation to modernize the city as well as bringing in great numbers of people into the city core. Train stations were not only functional organizers of space and people, but they were also a place of social and cultural encounter and a place of enjoyment and thrill not only for the traveller but also for the urban dweller. "They were about travel as pleasure, travel as adventure, travel as the archetypical modern experience. Patrons and clients were not supposed to just buy a ticket and go; they were meant to linger and imagine



Figure 17: Pennsylvania Station, 1911.



Figure 18: Kensington Station, 1940.



Figure 19: Victoria Station, 1927.

and dream” (Judt, 2010).

Train stations also gained significance during trying times in many countries where many men and women departed for the World Wars as well as many seeking refuge in new lands. “It was the gateway for many newly arriving Canadians, it was the social heart of small-town Canada, it was the gateway through which immigrants entered to seek new life in a new land, and it was the door through which many Canadians left their homes, some never to return” (Brown, 2008, p.179). It was through train stations that people first arrived in their new land, their new home. It was a place of warm welcome and hope that could be felt through the monumentality of train stations such as the Toronto Union Station in Toronto and many other stations around the world.

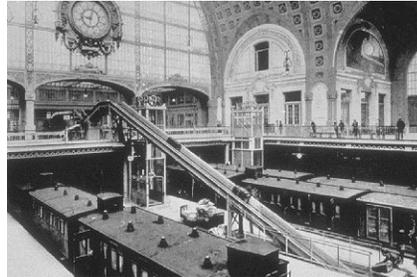


Figure 20: Innovative technology at Gare D'Orsay, 1900.



Figure 21: Fare-wells at a station.



Figure 22: Busy Sandpoint Station with trains and cars.

Train stations also gained significance during trying times in many countries where many men and women departed for the World Wars as well as many seeking refuge in new lands. “It was the gateway for many newly arriving Canadians, it was the social heart of small-town Canada, it was the gateway through which immigrants entered to seek new life in a new land, and it was the door through which many Canadians left their homes, some never to return” (Brown, 2008, p.179). It was through train stations that people first arrived in their new land, their new home. It was a place of warm welcome and hope that could be felt through the monumentality of train stations such as the Toronto Union Station in Toronto and many other stations around the world.

The Decline

Train stations were widely used and popular until they became crowded and uncomfortable. For the reason that they were a mass transportation and inexpensive, the number of users grew steadily. During the World Wars, especially the Second World War, there was an upsurge in usage by soldiers, sailors, and pilots going to war (Brown, 2008). However, around the same time, with the introduction of the personal vehicle in the 1930's which offered a comfortable and private transport, trains and consequently train stations began to decline. Moreover, with the design and construction of intercity and cross-country highways, the demise of the train and train stations escalated quickly in the mid-twentieth century. Such changes in transportation and urban landscape freed the personal vehicle to travel farther distances at the same speed and time as a train for short and medium range trips. The personal vehicle also became the prime method of transportation of commuters in suburban areas to the city core. Popularity and usage of the train and train station further declined during the Golden Age of travel and after, between the 1950's and the 1980's, when air travel was advertised and made less expensive and more feasible for long range travelling. As mentioned before, with drastic declining numbers of passengers, rail companies, seeing that rail travel was becoming unprofitable, trips were cut, and many stations were closed, boarded up or demolished completely because they had little to no use. The decline of the train was felt in many parts of the world, especially in Canada and the United States of America. Stations that were still in use were left to decay or were moved underground and out of sight. Detroit Station is an example of a decaying station - once majestic but now left to the elements and unused (Figure 23). Some stations were converted to other uses such as the well-known Gare d'Orsay in Paris - it is now an art museum (Figure 24) or like the Julio Prestes Train Station in San Paulo that was converted into a concert hall as seen in Figure 25. The significance of rail travel and rail stations was gone- they have become placeless. "In just two short decades the railway stations of Canada had gone from being the most important institution in town to usually a hole in the ground, its many vital functions distant memories to the millions for whom the station had been the heart of the community" (Brown, 2008, p.163).



Figure 23: Deteriorating station in Detroit, Michigan.



Figure 24: Gare d'Orsay Museum, Paris.



Figure 25: Julio Prestes Train Station Concert Hall, San Paulo.

Moving into the twenty-first century and the re-birth of the age of travel, train stations are regaining their status in transportation and their socio-cultural aspects among the global population, in particular, the seasoned travellers. “Trains, it would seem, are perennially modern—even if they slip from sight for a while” (Judt, 2010), trains and train stations will always be innovative, and a symbol of modernity, and their use, purpose and built typology will progress with time. However, for the reason that rail stations are located in the city centre they will continue to be the gateway for many people travelling and arriving in cities. Many stations today remain placeless that lack character and identity to become an arena for heightened and impactful experiences upon arrival or departure into the city or urban area.

The Comeback

With the re-awakening of interest in travelling the world within the global population, also known as Wanderlust, places of transition, especially train stations are making re-emerging as significant transportation hubs and nodes. As well, with the various methods of transportation, there is great selection and choice in how to travel in between destinations where more and more people are opting for rail travel depending on preference and criteria of travel.

As shown in Figure 26 which compares train travel to air travel, travelling by train, one has the enjoyment of witnessing their journey through the urban, suburban, and rural landscapes which create a rather more pleasurable, memorable, and conscious experience of travel and place. It heightens the experience of arriving at a new destination as one observes the change experience, but instead, creates a disconnect and disorientation between one destination and another. Moreover, airports located on the city peripheries are disconnected from the city and have little capacity to create a meaningful experience of arrival or departure for the traveller regarding experience and do not embody the identity of the city as a destination and place. As well, their sterility clean the place of the experience of travel replacing pleasure with an anxiety of security and control. Train stations on the other hand, because they are in the city centre, have that capacity and opportunity of creating an identity and meaningful arrival, departure and experience. Furthermore, train stations like the Union Pearson Express are connections of airports to the cities making the airport a stepping stone of the arriving in the city and experiencing the place. “Such stations, in many cases, are livelier and more important to their communities than they have been at any time since the 1930s. True, they may never again be fully appreciated in the role they were designed to serve—as dramatic entrance portals to modern cities” (Judt, 2010). With time everything changes and unfortunately the train station and its role changed as well, however, it would not be fair to state that train stations will never achieve the status of train stations of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Further innovation on trains may bring back their status to a greater level than current times.

Another driver for the comeback of trains and train stations is the cost and feasibility of travelling

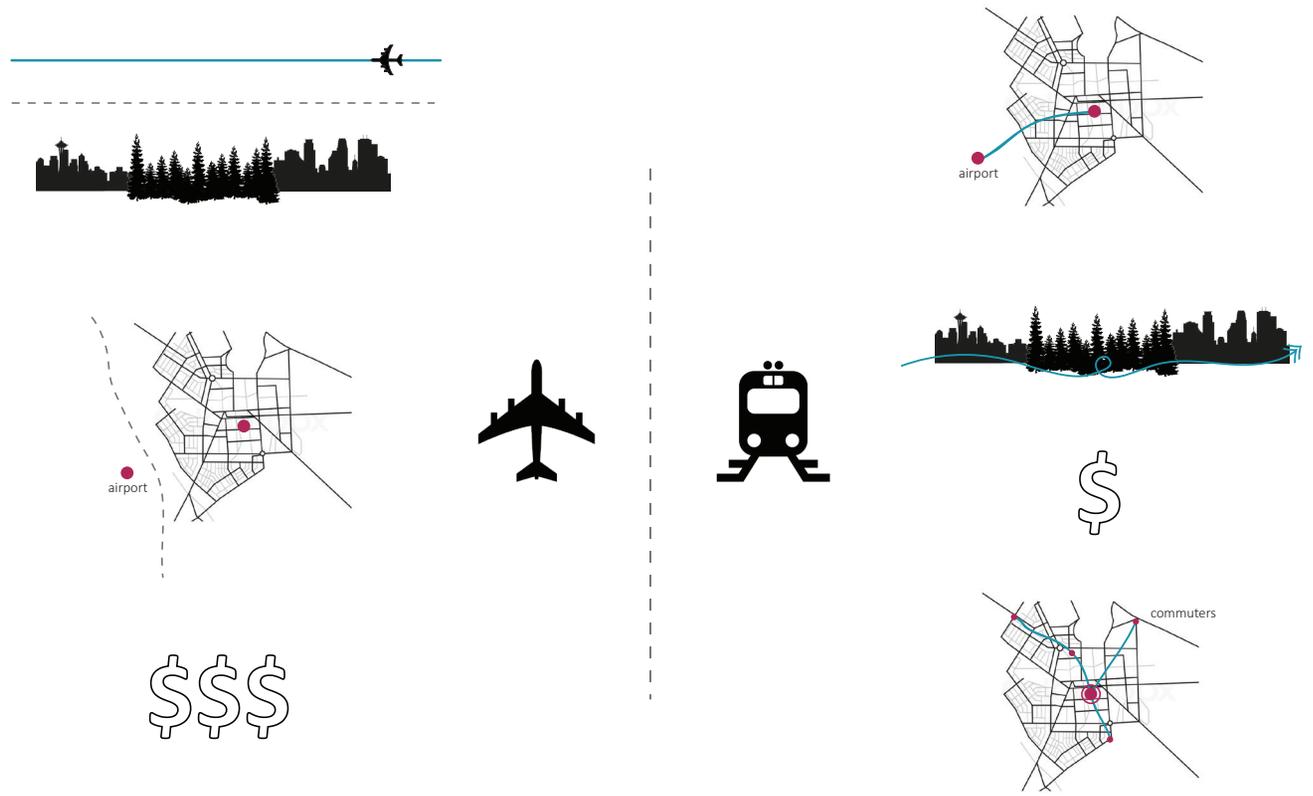


Figure 26: Comparison of air travel to rail travel.



Figure 27: Japanese bullet trains.



Figure 28: Naples high-speed train terminal.

as an impactful factor for travellers. While air travel was extremely popular in the Golden Age of travelling because it was less expensive to travel any distance than other modes of travel - long, medium, or short - today this is not the case. Air travel remains an excellent option for long distance journeys, however, it is for the short and medium distances that more people choose to travel by train. On the other hand, in parts of the world, high-speed rail travel is becoming more popular and feasible regarding cost and time, for travelling long distances pleasantly and comfortably as opposed to air travel. Such trains as the Japanese bullet trains (Figure 27), the French TGV (Train à Grande Vitesse) are examples of the improving technology of trains making them competition to other transportation options. Throughout past legislative discussions there was debate on high-speed rail trains especially on the Toronto - Montreal corridor, however, the province of Ontario brought back the issue to light recently. There is a proposal to build a high-speed train line for the Toronto - London corridor as there is continuous

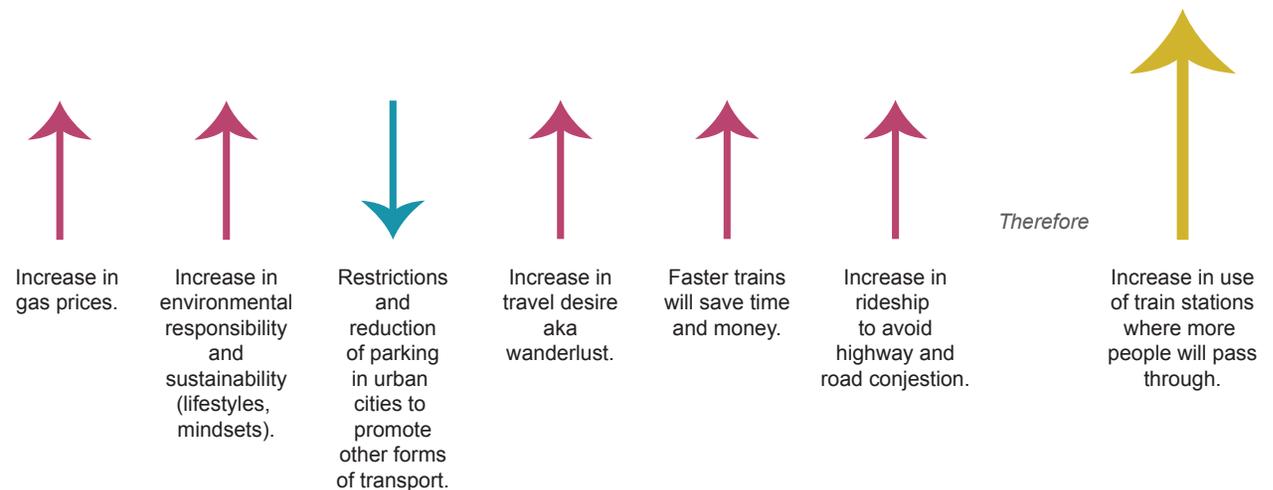


Figure 29: Reasons for increase in rail travel.

urban and business development and population growth (Hume, 2017). Consequently, their popularity and the idea of high-speed travel is growing and spreading around the world, while making train stations livelier at the same time. Furthermore, some high-speed train station designs reflect on the fast travel concept such as the train station proposal by Zaha Hadid Architects for the Afragola High-Speed Train Terminal in Naples, Italy (Figure 28). On a side note, rail stations will as well increase in use while residents from local urban and suburban areas will opt to use rail transport for daily work and leisure commutes for the following reasons and ones depicted in Figure 29. Increasing gas prices and congestion on highways and in the city core is a main concern and reason for this change and increase in rail use for individuals to save on time and cost of travel. As well, with globalization, environmental consciousness and sustainability are a growing concern and responsibility for natural resources and the planet is rising with the changing and declining ecological conditions.

The Traveller's Experience

Experiences are exceptionally subjective, individual, and continuously on-going and changing intangibles seeing that they depend and are created by personal perception and understanding of a place. In return, experiences set up and give highly personal meanings of particular places. In saying this, experiences are momentary and temporary, but nonetheless, later on, they translate into memories of the linkage generated between the sense of place, time and the values shaped by the physical space and place. Between different individuals, experiences may differ from one another even though the persons or groups may be performing the same actions in the same place such as arriving, transitioning and departing from the same train station. Each individual, depending on their personal backgrounds, values, and expectations, will experience and interact with their surroundings differently resulting in varying descriptions of a particular place. Experiences cannot be prescribed or choreographed by a third party, but they can only be described through personal contact and connection to that place. "Experiences are existential. They are embodied in people, they are personally felt and can only be expressed. People's moods and personal feelings of the moment affect their experience" (Comic & Kalmic, 2015, p.59).

As human beings, our experience, the way we perceive and feel about a place when we come into contact, is greatly dependant on our senses of sight, touch, sound, and smell to inform us of the place, its character and identity. It is especially the sense of sight that has the greatest impact on our experiences, as we are known to be visual people (Hiss, 1990). It could be the way in which light plays with the space that creates a unique condition in which one could feel welcomed and particular. It could be the sounds of the shuffling of people's feet and rolling suitcases against a stone or tile floor, of the soft conversations between people and the grinding of the coffee, while the intercom announcements of arrivals and departures are transmitted. All these tangible but at the same non-tangible aspects that prompt "an awareness of the inner-body senses that register equilibrium and momentum - information that seldom reaches full awareness" (Hiss, 1990, p.34). It is a brain-body reaction and response to the people, places and surroundings - it is awareness.

At a place of transition, such as the train station where one either departs or arrives home or in a foreign destination, experiences are important for the traveller. The very component of travelling in any trip is significant and has a great impact on the traveller. For a reason that train stations bring travellers from all over to a specific city destination, they are places of first interactions and impressions of a destination, as well as the last. At such moments, upon arrival, the experience can set the mood and expectations of a place for the trip, while upon departure the participation through the station reflects the city destination and acts as an encapsulation of the trip and place experience. Furthermore, they are gateways in and out of the city; they are gateways between static and motion of travel; they are gateways between one place and another.

The Mass versus The Seasoned

Experiences of also place differ depending on the kind of traveller and what kind of individual one is. Consequently, travellers can be differentiated from one another as a mass traveller (Comic & Kalmic, 2015) or as a seasoned traveller. Each individual of the two groups will experience and describe their experience differently depending on their knowledge and depth of their experience. On the one hand, we have the mass traveller who experiences a place as the given stereotype of the destination as presented to him or her by third parties. Mass media, social media, and place-branding are massive bodies that create such stereotypical identities and experiences before one even travels. Furthermore, with scheduled and planned travelling in addition to research about the destinations and its treasures, traveller experiences are belittled and more stereotypical occurring as little more than like exercises in recognizing already seen places. “Unfortunately, modern mass-tourism provides less opportunity for surprises, for enjoying in discovery of new and unknown things” (Comic & Kalmic, 2015, p.64). Such travellers, cannot participate in the real experience and hence their response and description of their encounter with place will be based on the provided stereotypes. Moreover, their experiences may indeed be similar to other people’s encounters as they many not express their authentic experience of place but the learned experience from other people, research and media.

On the other hand, we have the seasoned traveller movement of individuals. “The members of this movement are more aware of their surroundings and their guest experience as they explore a new host city” (Sin, 2016, p.29). Their experience is deeper and much more real as they are conscious of all the contexts that create identity and experience for a place. These seasoned travellers are aware of everything that is around them that makes an impact on their experience of place; heights of buildings, waterfalls, people, window shopping, lighting, temperature, everything (Sin, 2016). The experiences are not planned - they are spontaneous. These types of travellers do not take into consideration the stereotypical identities and experiences that the major mass bodies promote and sell to the global population. They absorb the authentic components of their travels and create their own personal, authentic experience.

The experience of a traveller begins with the resolution to travel, choosing a destination, selecting a mode of transportation which sets a mindset how the place will be experienced. On the one hand, individuals and groups of people seek to find and explore more exotic and “experience rich places” (Comic & Kalmic, 2015). These places that offer something beyond the tangible objects and spaces - places that provide thoughts, feelings, and reflection of oneself, the social and cultural contexts, and the physical surroundings. The new and the unknown hold a sense of secret and hence the desire to travel to see and experience them; the world presents itself through a place and requires us to engage with it. “Tourists are in search of symbolic authenticity” (Rickly-Boyd, 2013, p.682). Travelling, as an act and as an experience is a form of knowledge, which is of exceptional value to the individual as it allows one to connect, learn, and understand the world they live in. This includes learning about the various cultures and heritage, as well as learning about and rediscovering oneself and meaning of being human within the unfamiliar - finding your own identity and self-realization. “It is a desire for sensual, almost physical experiences, immersing or interpenetrating with a space” (Comic & Kalmic, 2015, p.68). Heidegger (2008) emphasizes the concept of being and of experiencing the tangible and non-tangible to strengthen our knowledge of existence. Travelling, exploring, and learning strengthen our sense of existence as individuals by virtue and value of unknown places - by dwelling in them. We dwell, we exist. This type of drive and experience could be applied to the seasoned traveller as opposed to the “mainstream” mass traveller.

On the other hand, people become travellers to arrive at and experience an imagined or researched utopia in an aim to separate oneself from the monotony of everydayness - to escape reality. Such travellers are in search of experience that is opposite to their current surroundings and circumstances. Within these utopian travels, one can also become someone different, someone who they are not on a day to day basis. One can pretend to be someone they are not for the time that they are away since nobody else knows their true self. This concept embraces the idea of forgetting the difficulties that are in reality and “back home”.



Figure 30: Everyday life versus travel dreams.

Such a traveller embarking on such a journey may not necessarily be looking for authentic experiences due to such a mindset - a mindset where one escapes total reality and into their own fantasy utopia.

Yet, furthermore, there are other travellers that become travellers solely for social status and or trend. Such individuals travel to places of excess and luxury because they can afford this or because it is trendy to travel to a particular part of the world. In such cases, experience of place and its authenticity is devalued and superfluous. Some attention is paid to aspects of place but for the most part, the experience is either elite or “the same” for the “mass” in the case of trend travel.

Identity and Experience

Experiences and identity go hand in hand. Through direct experiences, one may form an identity for the place through what one feels emotionally and physically as one dwells in and through space. Conversely, it also may be true that an identity of what the place aspires to be, has already been formed for a particular place, and can impact the experiences one has upon arrival and departure of place. In addition, experiences may and can differ between the time of arrival and the time of departure influencing a change in identity to a given place by an individual.

Every space and place, an environment, has a particular identity that is given by the genius loci of that locality. The genius loci is a “spirit” that inspires the built context and carries the identity and value of place – it gives orientation. It is what gives the place or space a unique and significant identity with a distinct atmosphere and character and, “place means something more than location” (Norberg-Schulz, 2007, p.128). What’s more is that the real identity giving features are the people’s lives in that place. This includes features like dwelling, belonging, and being, how the place was made and its character. Everyday experience - life - embodies both the tangible and intangible – how things are. “The relation between locale and space lies in the essence of things as locales, but so does the relation of the locale to the man who lives there” (Heidegger, 2008, p.356). One needs to understand the genius loci of a particular place to be able to dwell in and experience a place since it denotes the essence of place. “When we visit a foreign city, we are usually struck by its particular character, which becomes an important part of the experience” (Norberg-Schulz, 2007, p.130). A place’s identity has a direct impact on experience as one dwells and responds to their surroundings.

Identity is important for cities and places as it shapes and reflects the values and lives of its citizens and how the citizens have shaped their communities within – places shape people and people shape places. One can tell what the city represents by way of life there, the dynamics, the architecture, and what matters to the people. It’s about the morals of people about life that make a city; it’s about the initiatives and aspirations. “The city is a place, a centre of meaning,

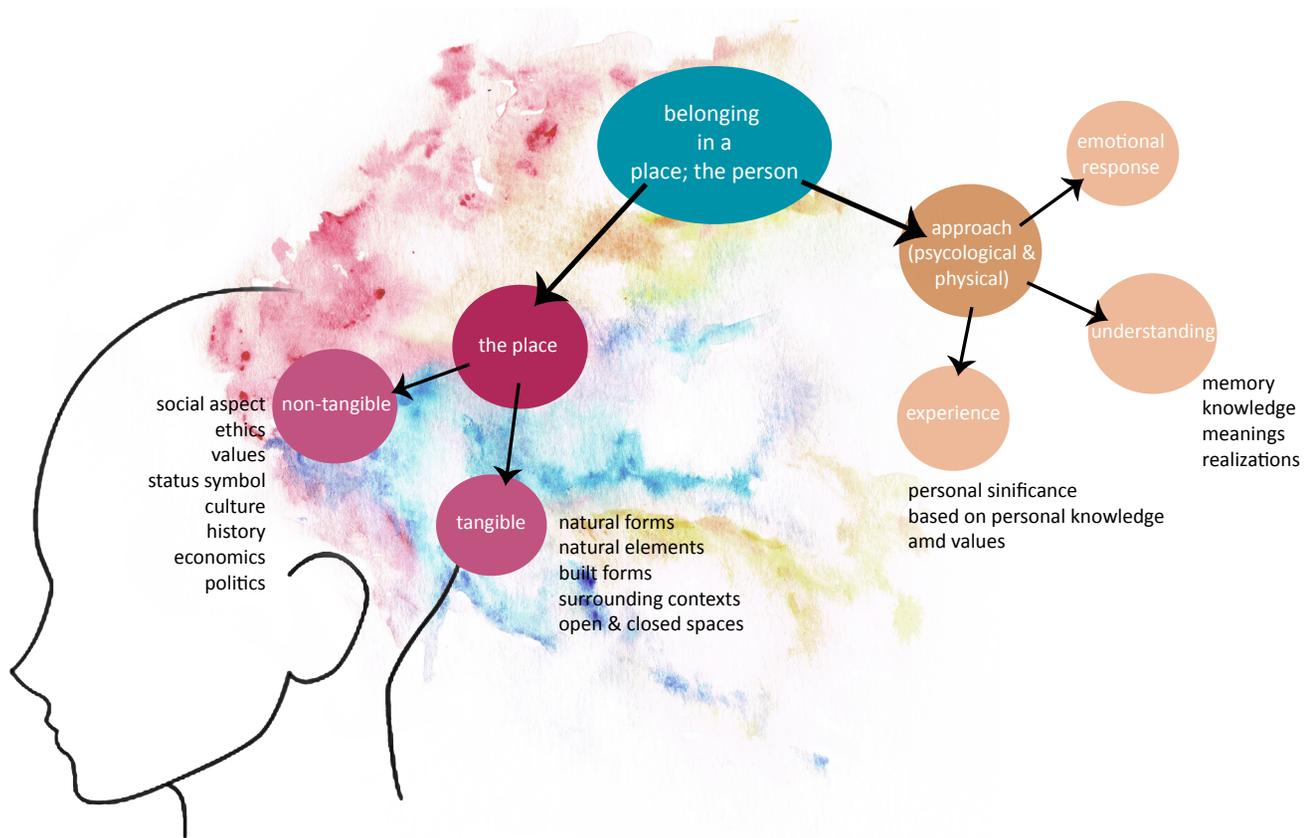


Figure 31: Aspects that determine and influence one's experience.

par excellence. It has many highly visible symbols. More important, the city itself is a symbol” (Tuan, 1977, p.173). For example, bicycling in Copenhagen is a direct product of extremely high taxes and fees on personal vehicles that became policy and an initiative to reduce carbon emissions. As a result, this necessity and the resulting policy changed the mindset of the citizens of Copenhagen creating an identity for the place and its people, an identity of concern, care, and initiative for green living and environmental responsibility that is known throughout the world. The identity of a place allows its citizens and foreign travellers to have a sense of belonging, orientation, and a sense of being. Coming in contact with places, reacting to the identities and the place’s dwelling, one is forming a psychological response to it, which is an experience. Identity can allow one to know themselves; who they are and where they come which is an essential in human existence. “To be human is to live in a world that is filled with significant places: to be human is to have and to know your place” (Relph, 1976, p.1). For the reason that being is dwelling and dwelling are building (Heidegger, 2008), architecture plays a significant role in helping understand one’s identity and place. Places of transition such as train stations, places of first and last contact for the traveller, need identity to heighten the experience of place and generate an impactful response to the destination.

One’s experience depends on the physical place and its tangible and non-tangible aspects to form an identity and experience for the traveller and city dweller. Furthermore, How one approaches the place determines the quality and type of experience one will have. For example, one can be open or closed to a new place or experience and this will affect how one will view and like the place they are in (Figure 31).

Traveller, Threshold, and Transition

For the reason that there are not many resources that deal with the journey of a traveller, therefore this section is a speculation and theorization of such a journey, which includes the critical components of experience of place upon moments of arrival, transition and departure between point A and point B.

Figure 32 illustrates the journey of any traveller to a destination differentiating “home” from “transition” from “place”. One’s travel journey truly begins at one’s home, where, as mentioned before, the individual becomes a traveller as their mindset and behaviour are changed to thoughts of exploration, transition, and experience. It should be pointed out that home is not

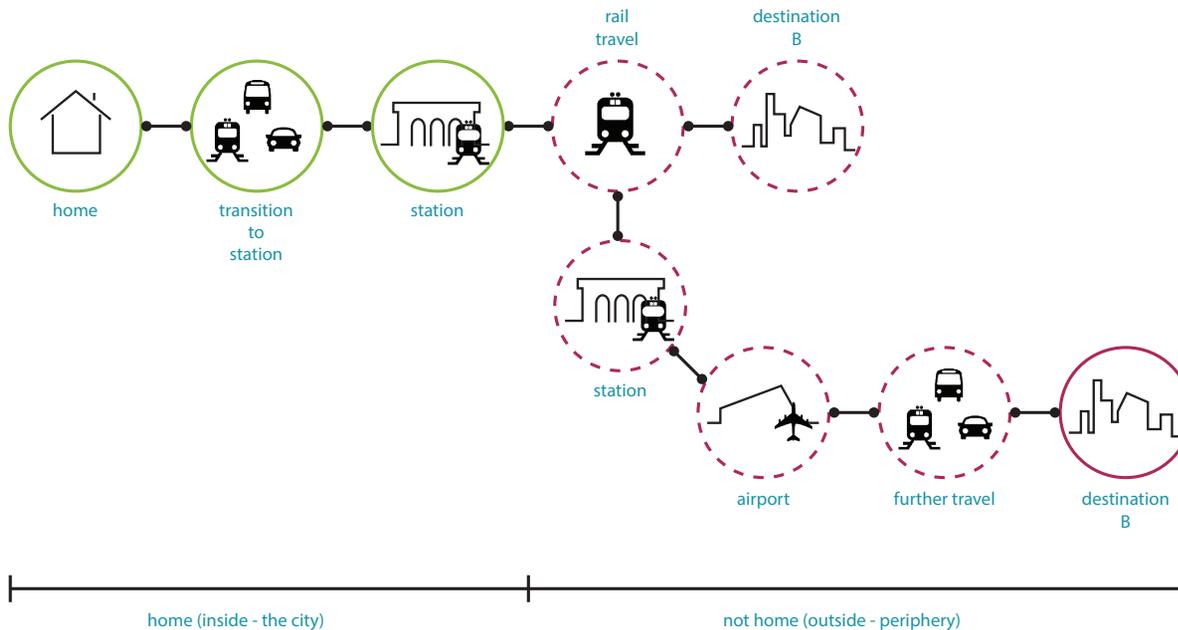


Figure 32: A traveller's journey and critical points in their journey.

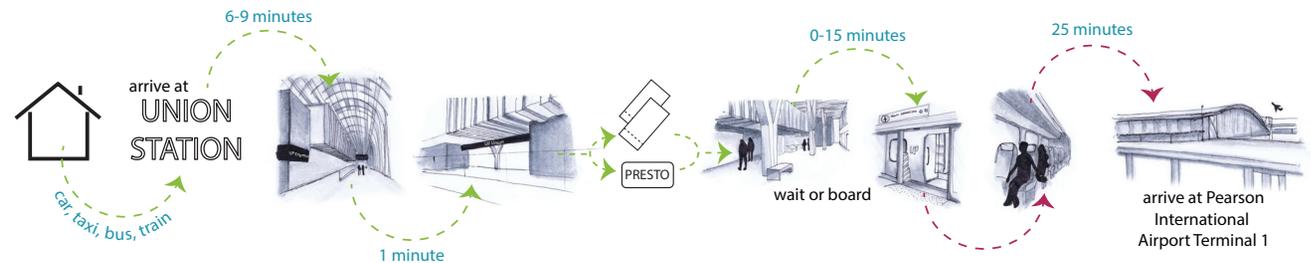


Figure 33: Journey of departure.

limited to the physical house typology one inhabits on a daily basis, but it is the community, and the city that one lives and experiences daily for our homes are not the only places and spaces we inhabit. It has to do with all that is familiar to us. “Building as dwelling, that is, as being on the earth, however, remains for man’s everyday experience that which is from the outset “habitual” - we inhabit it” (Heidegger, 2008, p.349). Therefore, it could be said that the moment of departure from a place, the moment of leaving, is hence at the rail station, perhaps at the moment of stepping onto the train from the station platform. This same explanation applies to the moment of arrival home - one arrives “home” at the station. Once one is in the train off to another destination or another mode of transit such as the airport, one is already travelling and is in a placeless state because of the act of transition and movement.

Many airports are set on the periphery of cities and therefore the arrival and departure, for both the city inhabitant and the foreign traveller is the city - they arrive and depart the destination

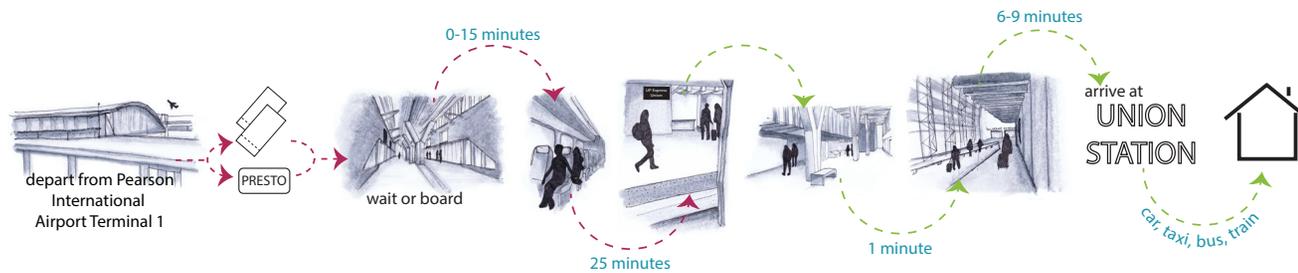


Figure 34: Journey of arrival.

in the city, the rail station, not the airport, as one's home or accommodations are located in an urban centre. The airport is considered to be part of the transition from one place to another. For the traveller, the moment arrival is the moment of the first contact with the destination, the first impression of what you see, what you hear, what you feel upon that first step at a new destination from the transition of travel. The arrival is a split moment that begins to form your perception of the place as the place informs you of what it is, what it aspires to be and how it welcomes you. Likewise, the moment of departure is like the moment of arrival, but the "end". It is the last impression of a place that summarizes the place, its identity, and its aspirations.

The reverse order of this figure may be applied to the return from "place" to "home" via "transition". Figure 33 and 34 both depict the specific journey a traveller to or from Toronto would take via the Union Pearson Express Union Station to Pearson International Airport.

At train stations and airports, or any other place of arrival and departure, transition is a significant part of travel. At such nodal points, it has a significant impact and meaning on the traveller, their experience, memories, and their overall trip as they are part of either the beginning or ending stepping stones to the traveller's journey. Train stations are unique entities as they are both static and transitory. They are static as they are the final place of transition between travel and place, and also for the reason that one is no longer in journey, one formally arrives at their destination at the station. Furthermore, places of transition have the capability of creating a pause for the individual in all of the travel commotion. This may be a pause in motion or a pause for contemplation. At a train station pauses make "it possible for a locality to become a center of value" (Tuan, 1977, p.138). Conversely, they are transitory as the station is the facilitator of transition between one point - it connects two places and creates a gradual change of place for the individual. It is where the citizen of a destination still feels at home although he or she is already in transition to their next and new destination or where the traveller begins their adventure and feels "foreign" because they are no longer home and everything else around them is new. A place of transition provides the first impression of place - a welcome and introduction to a new place informing and orienting the individual or group gradually as they arrive in a foreign place. Orientation of the traveller occurs on both the physical and psychological levels. Physical orientation in the sense of guiding one with ease and swiftness from platform to city or other modes of transport and vice versa via tools like walkways, views, as well as signage. For example at the Union Pearson Express station in Toronto, one needs to pass through the Skywalk and, depending on the need, through Union Station to arrive in the city. With many crossings between buildings, walkways and doors, the transition becomes long and meaningless and where one does not focus on their arrival at the station and further arriving at their destination city but on their possibility of disorientation in place. Psychological orientation occurs when one begins to feel comfortable in the place and destination they arrive in - one does not feel lost, unsafe or in danger, or alienated, they can "feel at home". The emotional experiences and encounters at the transition places give meaning and identity to place and how the individual will perceive the destination they have arrived in or are departing

from. "The built environment, like language, has the power to define and refine sensibility. It can sharpen and enlarge consciousness" (Tuan, 1977, p.107). One's awareness of being and arriving in a new, different place awakes as one steps off the train into the destination and consequently the train station as architecture has the role to exert a direct impact on the traveller. A train station is a complex place as it stimulates awareness and consciousness on the large and small scale. The large scale takes into account the urban context that is the city. In this case, the awareness is of the place as the destination is linked to orientation and knowing where one is through establishing visual connections between the train station and city, in addition to inviting the city into the station through strategic framed components of the urban context. To contrast, the small scale is the station, and its immediate surroundings are its own distinct place. Awareness and consciousness have to do with knowing one is in the train station. The train aspects, including the actual train, are visible establishing the sense of place and purpose of the space.

Being aware and conscious of where one finds oneself is essential, however, at a place of transition, a key moment that is underappreciated and overlooked is arrival. Many people when reminiscing trips and vacations begin their stories with "when we arrived" and this usually references when their transitional part of their journey has come to an end. Many emotions and thoughts are a whirlwind as one arrives, it can even be described as a euphoria and the climax of one's transitional journey from point A to point B, and it is a significant component of experience and sense of place. There is a need for this moment and to make it a metaphysical procession and entrance into a new destination. Through a guided path or succession of spaces that lead one to the exit, this will heighten the experience of passing through the station and coming into a relationship with place and the components within it. This can elevate one's awareness and consciousness of place further resulting in a memorable impression. This being said, each individual will have a different experience based on their own unique self.

Experiences are entities that vary from person to person. Not only is each person different -in

how they experience place, but also regarding their purpose in the space or place can affect how one experiences a particular place, their attitude and perception. At a place of transition such as the train station, various people pass through it, and each has a different purpose for being there. To identify the obvious, there are those that arrive and those that depart at the destination - the distant traveller. There are also people, the locals, that are either greeting or farewelling their traveller or travellers. In each scenario, the place and its identity plays a different role and creates a different and contrasting experience. Therefore, the moment of arrival at the station for each of these types of people is different and what makes the experience memorable, unique, and personal as well. For the distant traveller, arrival is a moment full of overwhelming emotions be it excitement, elation, and or relief that the journey is over. Arrival means a new beginning and the start of the new adventure, since transition, the journey, is its own entity and chapter of the trip. It means the beginning of learning, orientation and a challenge in all positive aspects. Contrary to the distant traveller, an individual in motion is the more static local that arrives at the station to welcome or farewell an individual or individuals. Their experience will certainly be different because the destination is their place, it is their home. Their arrival is part of the anticipation of another, a guest. Emotions and awareness to place can have the have feelings of pride linked to the destination and place and excitement to show this person everything. Perhaps being at a train station that creates pauses and reflects the destination, a local can learn something new and find new meanings in what they already know from a long time.

3.0

CASE

PRECEDENTS

Although some of the case precedents are of a larger scale, they were studied and analyzed for their aspects of transition, their role of a gateway into the city, whether they represented or showed identity and relationship to place. Furthermore, these case precedents were studied from the point of view of what the experience of a traveller would be upon arrival at the station either from the city or the platform. The stations were viewed as thresholds and their significant role in bringing and introducing the travellers to the destination, which was helpful for the design of the thesis project the Union Pearson Express Union Station, although it is a relatively smaller scale. Smaller case studies of places of transition that were not only train stations were also selected to analyze and use as a design precedent for their relationship of place, orientation, traveller's experience, as well as identity of place.

Case precedents on a smaller scale with the same function of threshold for the traveller were also chosen and studied to exemplify aspects that promote heightened experience of place and the experience of transition at these symbolic thresholds through design that influences one's orientation and being in a specific place on both physical and psychological levels subconsciously to one or another degree. Dworzec Gdański Metro in Warsaw, Poland, the Bilbao Metro in Bilbao, Spain, Museum Metro Station in Toronto, and The Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport Pedestrian Tunnel in Toronto, Canada were selected.

World Trade Centre Transportation Hub

Architects: Santiago Calatrava

Location: New York City, New York, USA

Project Year: 2016



Figure 35: Skeletal structure showcasing the ribbed wings and the oculus skylight.

World Trade Centre Transportation Hub station is a case study demonstrating a lack of identity of place for the experience of the traveller and the overall lack of significant and meaningful experience. This transport hub is a terminal station in Lower Manhattan and immediately east of the site of the World Trade Centre Twin Towers, the 9/11 memorial site. The station was initially opened in 1909 as the Hudson Terminal but rebuilt and re-opened as the PATH station at a different location in 1971 as part of the World Trade Centre complex (“World Trade Centre



Figure 36: Oculus hall.



Figure 37: Interior concourse.

Timeline of History”, n.d.). The station connected the twin towers and other buildings via an underground concourse and shopping centre in addition to connections to the New York City Subway. With the events of September 11, 2001, the PATH station was destroyed, and a temporary station was built to resume service. At the same time, there was a competition called for a new design of the terminal (“Santiago Calatrava’s World Trade Center transit terminal to quietly open next week”, 2016).

The new station is designed as a ribbed “Oculus,” a vast open public space that brings in natural light in the day and later turns into a lantern at night (“World Trade Centre Transportation Hub/ Santiago Calatrava”, 2016). The design’s intention is to create a break among the skyscrapers, as pictured in Figure 35, while connecting the green and open spaces on the ground level



Figure 38: Concourse to the train platforms.



Figure 39: Train platforms.

together as one public space. It has a two level shopping concourse and walkway between towers and connections to the city subway system (Bozikovic, 2016). It seems that the train station aspect of the design was pushed aside and focus was put on the shopping aspect; the aspect of travel is converted immediately into consumerism, and the experience of place is weak (Kimmelman, 2016).

The moment of arrival at this terminal is most awing as one ascends from the underground platforms into the grand white hall that is brightly lit by natural light and has a feeling of lightness and elegance as the sunlight plays with the Oculus, as well as the shadows as seen in the Figure 36. The moment of arrival and departure at the World Trade Centre platforms is not as impactful of an experience as spending time in the Oculus Hall as the train aspect is

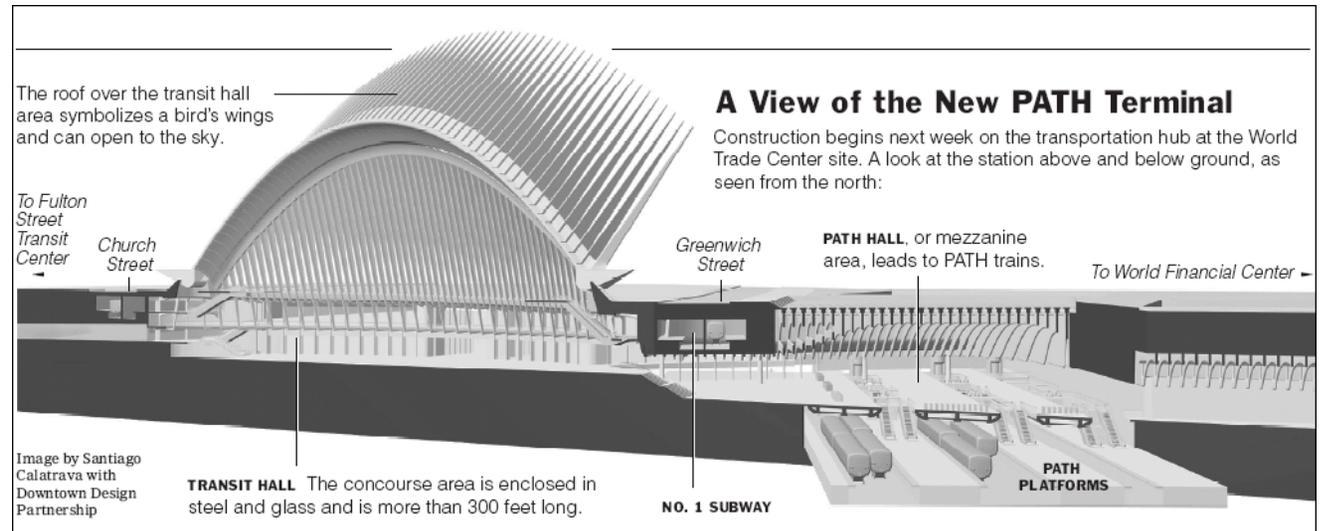


Figure 40: Train station design section drawing.

fitted underground and away from the focus of the people, even though this is a transportation hub. The transition between the platforms and the Oculus Hall is somewhat gradual with the mediating space of the escalators and concourses as depicted in Figure 37, Figure 38, and Figure 39. Entering from the city context, one is in the grand Oculus hall. The hall still represents the quality and character of New York, bringing in an ambience of the natural aspects of the city, such as the natural light and peeking views of the city skyline between the ribs of the hall. From here there is a procession towards the subway or the PATH trains. One passes through the shopping concourse first, linked to the Oculus Hall, and arrives at the subway station as depicted in image 40. Following another concourse level and passing through the transit hall, one arrives at the other train platforms as depicted in image 40. The overall transition

through the station is long and has no significant impact on the traveller, where, also, the train aspect is hidden far underground and the connection between destination and station is weak. The concourses do not contain anything exciting to make the journey impactful on the traveller, and they do not have any identities hidden within them that could represent rail travel or the destination, New York City. The design is aesthetically beautiful and makes an impression on the traveller creating an experience of contemporary, monumental, iconic design - the experience of a landmark. Nevertheless, as magnificent and beautiful the design is, the identity and character of place are absent. It represents New York's ambitions and contrasts the glass skyscrapers through an intricate design; however, it may seem that the station lacks the important characteristic of memory and memorial - the 9/11 remembrance. The station is dislocated from time and place when compared to the memorial museum next door. It is clean of memory and only "an artistic gesture" (Smith, 2013). Furthermore, the building is more representative of the Santiago Calatrava and his architectural identity and brand. His skeletal structures and white palette are well known globally through the other similar structures that he has designed such as the Milwaukee Museum and Gare de Lyon (Smith, 2013). For this reason, the experience of the memorial is absent, and if one desires to experience the architecture of Calatrava, one does not need to travel to New York to do so. If one wants to have a deeper experience of memorial and reflection, this station does not allow for this; one would be distracted by the shopping concourse and the various activities within. This limited architectural language and branding do not speak of identity as any of these buildings could be placed anywhere and function well - they are object-buildings. They are beautiful structures but do not create a relationship with place and the traveller, as well as invoke emotion and lasting impact and sense of place upon the arrival and departure of an individual. At the World Trade Centre Transportation Hub it is Santiago Calatrava's identity that shines through the design, not New York's, not the memorial's.

Rotterdam Centraal Station

Architects: Benthem Crouwel Architects, MVSA Meyer en Van Schootten Architecten, West 8

Location: Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Project Year: 2014



Figure 41: Exterior photograph from the city view.

This station, the Rotterdam Centraal Station, on the other hand, is a case study, which displays the identity of Rotterdam and creates an experience for the traveller as well as the city dweller. Rotterdam as a city has always been in the shadows of Amsterdam, however, in recent years it has become more prominent. During the Second World War, the city was one of the worst bombed cities in Europe resulting in the lack of historical context today (“Rotterdam is “the city of the future” say architects”, 2016). For this reason, the city had little heritage to preserve and



Figure 42: Aerial view of the neighbourhood contrast.



Figure 43: Grand entrance to the station.



Figure 44: Exterior aerial view of the station and plaza.

became a platform for urban regeneration and optimism through unprecedented architectural innovation, experimentation, and new technologies especially in architecture as can be seen through this station design. It is dubbed as the city of the future and the “architecture city” where new building styles and technologies are tested; sustainability, structure and materiality, and technology (“Rotterdam is “the city of the future” say architects”, 2016). Each building is aimed to have a layer of information and experience in addition to the city’s inventive and free spirit. This is the city’s identity and its aspirations. The city’s central station, Rotterdam Centraal Station, exhibits these qualities and responds to the city’s character.

Before the Second World War, Rotterdam, in fact, did not have a central station. Instead, four stations that were located around the city core serviced the city and its inhabitants. In

1957, Rotterdam received its own central station, which was soon connected to the city metro system (Centraal Station - Sybold van Ravesteijn", n.d.). Being in the center of the country, it was and still currently is an important transportation hub within the Netherlands and Europe, bringing in many travellers, both local and international. In due time, it was decided that the station no longer met the needs and demands of a modern transportation hub, and was once again rebuilt.

The current station was opened in 2014, and as a whole, the design focuses on the aspect of transportation with an emphasis on trains themselves. It is a host of many transportation methods highlighting Rotterdam's efficiency and its ambitions for urban renewal and development - high-speed rail, light rail, buses, trams, cars, and bicycles all at one station. At the border of two different neighbourhoods, the city and the residential area as seen in Figure 42, the station connects and treats the two in a gradual transition from one to the other through scale, materiality and architectural language ("Rotterdam Central Station", n.d.). It marks Rotterdam's cultural axis and a gateway and creates an intriguing experience of two differing contexts within on structure. From the residential area (Figure 45), the station is modest in design and height, and respectful of the residents and with its glass facade; it has a smaller impact and presence in the area giving it transparency. This transparency also continues throughout the station and guides and allows the person to locate the city and the trains; the trains are visible from inside the station. On the other side, the urban side pictured in Figure 41, is the gateway into the city with a grand design motif pointing to the heart of the city, which also leads the person to the city and back to the station- it is welcoming (Betsky, 2014). This impressive gateway condition is a successful moment as it creates a unique experience for travellers as they arrive, making them feel important and making the act of travel grand. The transition into and through the station is gradual and clear between the city and the rail components of the station in the way that the station was designed with the employment of varying degrees of transparency. With the inviting grand point at entrance pictured in Figure 43, it brings and compresses one into the station space from the open outdoors and further compresses as one



Figure 45: Exterior photograph from the neighbourhood view.



Figure 46: Interior of the station hall.



Figure 47: Interior of the train platforms and station shed.

nears the platforms to create a focus on the rail facet. The circulation and intentional views guide the traveller through the station and continuously focusing on the platform area. Having the glazing roof components allows the traveller to still connect to Rotterdam, the destination, and hence the transition from outside to inside is gradual. Such a transition does not seem like it “cuts one off” from the surrounding context as experience at the World Trade Centre Transportation Hub, where the stations are all underground, and there is a great disconnect from the city once you reach the concourse areas and levels. At Rotterdam, the glazing allows for a continuous knowledge of orientation and visual connection to the city although one is already at the station or platforms. With a large, and open congregation plaza at the front of the station on the city side, the station encourages people to come in and engage with the station while engaging in public activities and events as well as interact with the travellers and

a major city gateway. The geometry and design of the station are imaginative and part of the experimental built context in Rotterdam; the gateway condition from the city, as well as the intertwining of traditional materials with new materials. To further showcase the city's ambition and innovation, all glazing units on the roof have solar cells ("Central Station", n.d.). As seen in Figure 47, not only does the roof cut down on the carbon dioxide emissions but it also brings in natural light and distinctive light and shadow patterns that create an inimitable experience of place upon arrival and lingering in the station.

Toronto Union Station

Architects: Ross and Macdonald, Hugh Jones, John M. Lyle

Location: Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Project Year: 1927



Figure 48: Exterior photograph of the station from Front Street and Bay Street.

During the early twentieth century, there was great innovation in rail travel and design of trains, locomotives, and rail stations. Since this advancement was happening at such a great speed, many train stations were built around the same time, and hence may be of similar aesthetic characteristics and style. Toronto Union Station was chosen as a case study to showcase that although it is a monumental and important structure, its experience could be similar to another station, such as the Chicago Union Station that was chosen to contrast Toronto. These two



Figure 49: Toronto Union Station interior great hall.



Figure 50: Toronto Union Station small waiting hall area.



Figure 51: Station platforms.

stations were chosen to show how even in the past, the language and uniqueness of stations began to disappear. As grand and elegant structures, they show their importance to the city through their scale, design, and location, however, they share their design style and language with other institutional buildings such as banks and courts, as seen in Figure 54, the Bank of Montreal in Toronto. Both designed in the Beaux Arts style, they are monuments of the Beaux Arts railway stations where in the past they were made to be centralized communications centres for various rail travel. The universal architectural language with the classical motifs and materiality embodies the essence and spirit of a train station from the past, and its importance through the massiveness. This can be seen especially in the hard and flat limestone facades of the stations with Roman order columns, imitation of a flat roof, and other design elements that remind one of the Italian palazzos as seen in Figure 48.



Figure 52: Chicago Union Station exterior.



Figure 53: Chicago Union Station interior great hall.



Figure 54: Old Bank Of Montreal building in Toronto.

As impressive as these structures are, they are very similar in design, and hence one may be unable to experience the city, its spirit and essence through the architecture. The design is universal and showcases the idea of monumentality of trains and train stations only- in part an economic statement of cities and places. Inside and outside, they look very similar - the limestone façade treatment, the colonnades, vaulted ceilings, and the great hall. The layout of spaces could also be seen as similar. There are other similar stations found mostly in North America as well. A comparison of Toronto Union Station to Chicago Union Station is evident in Figure 48, Figure 49, Figure 52, and Figure 53. Overall, the designs of such railway stations incorporated a meaningful transition from travel to city destination through the varying gradient of grandeur of spaces and program sequence, as well as the distinction between the train yard and the station building. One would arrive in front of the station on a great plaza only to enter

the grand hall with artwork and specific railway elements such as the ticketing booths, the central clock, and train schedules. Among such spaces were also areas for social interaction and lingering to daydream about travelling. These would lead to a waiting room and lastly the platform, then a separate component to the train station. The transition from outside to inside, to the train, was in a way a ritual - an eloquent way to arrive at the platform. Arriving at such stations, as the Union Stations of North America, one experiences the railway travel and the station of the past, not the destination, what it has to offer and what it stands for. This is not only limited to the stations of North America but, this can also apply to stations in numerous other countries around the world where a universal language and technique to design were applied and stations look similar to each other.

Los Angeles Union Station

Architects: John & Donald B. Parkinson, Jan van der Linden

Location: Los Angeles, California, USA

Project Year: 1939



Figure 55: Exterior photograph.

The Los Angeles Union Station is a historical case study that, like the contemporary Rotterdam Centraal Station, displays distinctive features that have an impact on a traveller and their experience arriving and departing from this station. As well it is contrasted with Toronto Union Station and Chicago Union Station for the purpose and demonstration that although modernization and innovation of the train and rail station were rapidly evolving in the 1920's and 1930's, keeping identity of place and character is possible to create meaningful



Figure 56: Interior great hall and waiting area.



Figure 57: Interior main concourse hall.



Figure 58: Detailing of the interior - regional influence.

experiences of travel.

Designed in the Art Deco, Mission Revival, and Spanish Colonial Revival styles, the Los Angeles Union Station was once a bustling place of rushing passengers during the first half of the twentieth century. During this time soldiers and troops would arrive and depart for war as well as trains bringing in tourists from all over the United States (“A history of Los Angeles Union Station”, n.d.). With the advent of the personal vehicle and air travel, like any other station in the United States of America, Los Angeles’ Union Station vanished from the spotlight. Today it still is the centre of communications on the Western part of the United States.

The architecture design of the exterior of the building and the interior differs from other Union

Stations across North America reflecting the local architecture and design styles; materials, form, shape, culture as seen in Figure 55. The exterior plaster treatment and the geometry of the facades plaster soften the building and relate to the construction of the surrounding contexts and influencing cultures. Separating it from other Union Stations it the design of the great hall (Figure 56) and waiting area where instead of the arch vaulted ceiling as seen at the Toronto Union Station and the Chicago Union Station, this station has a gabled ceiling, which makes it unique adding to the experience of place and identity of place. As well it is accented with materials and details common to the southern cultures and southern states. The mosaic-like stone floor has a motif of the Southern and Latin cultures, as well as the patterns on the coffered ceilings, and the colours support the “southern” environment and these motifs. Furthermore, with the terra cotta floor tile in addition to the marble and travertine floor and wall treatments, as one passes through, one is already experiencing the grandeur and seductive climate of California; the warmth, the sun, and the Southern culture through the design motifs, forms, materials, and even lighting (Figure 57 and Figure 58).

Experience at this station is no doubt unique and different from many and most Union Stations in North America due to the region-specific design motives and influences. However, the transition through the station, arriving at the station or arriving at the platforms is relatively similar as it was designed and built around the same time as other Union Stations in North America. Through identity of the region and its culture reflected in the design, experience is heightened and begins immediately upon arrival continuing beyond the train station.

Dworzec Gdański Metro Station

Architects: Kurylowicz & Associates Architects

Location: Warsaw, Poland

Project Year: 2003



Figure 59: Exterior entrance to the station.

Located in the largest and at the same time capital city of Poland, the Dworzec Gdański Metro station is part of the M1 line of the restrained subway system within Warsaw. For the reason of political turmoil over the years and slow redevelopment and contemporization of the city, the subway system is not as extensive compared to other metro systems in Europe, Asia, or the Americas; the city and its infrastructure are still developing and growing.



Figure 60: Street view of the entrances to the underpass.



Figure 61: Halls of the underpass at an entrance to the station.



Figure 62: Platforms of the station as well as the "gallery".

Opened in December 2003, this station design takes on the task to modernize the post-communistic architecture and bring the city into modern times. With the nature of being a metro station, the design is faced with the common above the ground – below the ground condition of a threshold that has significance to the experience of place, arrival, and transition. As well, like any other metro station, the experience of the station is extended to not only travellers but also city dwellers with the pedestrian underpass.

Being situated at a major intersection, combined with the station is the function of an underpass with shops and services for pedestrians. With this underpass, the experience of the station is shared between both the traveller and the permanent citizen; it is an underpass as well and has the threshold moments between two parts of the city (Figure 60). However, it is how

the flow of circulation and the threshold moment is addressed regarding design to enhance passenger and traveller experience. The vertical circulation of the elevators, escalators, and the diagonal circulation of the stairs are emphasized through the glass cube volumes at the entrance threshold to the station from street level as seen in Figure 59 and Figure 60. This creates a significant moment of entrance to the metro station as the above ground transparent components come in contact and contrasts the solid grade and the underground level. Also, the natural versus artificial lighting further puts emphasis on the threshold between the above ground and below ground conditions. This creates a clear and concise manner for travellers and commuters to easily orient themselves and to further facilitate connections between spaces of the station and creating a fluid and significant transition of arrival through the station by use of mezzanines, open walkways, and open spaces as seen in Figure 61. These mezzanines or “galleries” are also part of the experience of the station as travellers can linger on these platforms and watch the motion of the trains and travel. The designers of this station used circulation as a means of creating meaningful transition and forming of the space.

Bilbao Metro Stations

Architects: Foster + Partners

Location: Bilbao, Spain

Project Year: 1988 - 1995



Figure 63: Entrances from street level.

Another station that has demonstrated significance at the threshold moment between the station and the place is the Bilbao metro stations in Bilbao, Spain. In the nineteen-nineties, when Bilbao was being re-envisioned and strengthened with its new mission of “forward-looking” with many projects such as the Bilbao Museum by Frank Gehry, the new design for its developing metro system was also sought out for. With the ideas of being the future, forward thinking, and timeless, Norman Foster developed such a design that adds to the identity of



Figure 64: Threshold between light and dark.



Figure 65: Descending to the station.



Figure 66: Mezzanine and platforms.

Bilbao and in some instances is the identity. Even though these designs are for metro stations and were built in 1995, they are notable, iconic, and influence the experience of place and of the train station for people that interact with it. They continue to remain contemporary.

Similar to the Dworzec Gdański in Warsaw, Bilbao metro stations use circulation as a means and method to create a sense of place and orientation for the traveller. Beginning with the curved glass canopies at grade level, drawing in the individual into them and further orienting and directing the traveller to the mezzanines and platforms. They are designed in such a way to express what is occurring underneath in the below ground condition of place. During the daytime, they draw in natural light into the stations, while at night they are illuminated from the stations below. The mezzanines and walkways in the station, the design provides moments

of pause in addition to passage and transition from city to platform. Such moments can be seen in Figure 66. Furthermore, tunnels, mezzanines, stairs, and other paths of circulation are design attempts to attain a guiding path of transition from the platform to the city and vice versa. Moreover, such clear paths allow for a transition that creates orientation for the traveller on a subconscious level and not on the conscious and obvious level. Therefore you do not need any signage to orient oneself in the platform as paths, stairs, tunnels, and mezzanines are the elements that guide one throughout the station and it is understandable. Figure 64 and Figure 65 show the tunnels from entrances that lead one in and out of the station and into or from the city at that significant threshold moment. Overall, the design has a specific character and identity only known and prescribed to metro stations throughout the city of Bilbao as all stations carry the same design language in form, materiality, and concept.

Museum Metro Station

Architects: Diamond and Schmitt Architects

Location: Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Project Year: 2008



Figure 67: Platform lined with decorative columns.

Opposing the Dworzec Gdanski and the Bilbao Metro is the revitalized Museum metro station in Toronto where the identity of place and orientation of the traveller to the city is taken to an obvious “in your face” level. The design intends to be a catalyst for how other metro stations of the Toronto Transit Commission could be revitalized in the future to reflect art, culture and the communities above ground – a reflection of place. This in return will increase civic pride as well as provide an identity of place and way-finding for people on the train underground.



Figure 68: Threshold between city and station.



Figure 69: Threshold between platform and ticketing hall.



Figure 70: Arrival in the ticketing hall.

The station is located below the Royal Ontario Museum, which therefore makes use and borrows inspiration for aesthetics from the artifacts found within the museum. The designers of this station, Diamond & Schmitt, selected five various artifacts as seen in Figure X to represent the identity of place and the Royal Ontario Museum that are supposed to become visual clues as to what the activities above ground are. For some, this may come off as too obvious and kitschy. Is place only reduced to symbols and visual signage and are these the only components that create a meaning of place for the individual experiencing the place? Places, if they are part of our being in the world and helping us orient ourselves to place and its identity, need to touch us on the deep subconscious level to stimulate our minds, our belonging, and our own participation and relationship to place. It is through the interaction with the place and what it represents that we build such relationships and identities for places in our minds. At this metro



Figure 71: St. Patrick Station platform.



Figure 72: Queen's Park Station platform.



Figure 73: St. George Station platform.

station, the relationship is weak and shallow, and where the visual symbolism rather than deeper ties to place entertains the traveller. Although, a note should be made that Museum station is one of the very few stations in the Toronto subway system that attempts to create a sense of place and orientation for the traveller. Furthermore, when speaking of thresholds, the station has the generic metro threshold moments that can be seen at any other metro station in Toronto – the classic stairs going downwards to the ticketing booths and further stairs to the platforms. The threshold between city and station is not emphasized or made special through design and hence does not have any effect on the traveller (unless it goes straight into the museum then it creates a transition between transit and the place of the Royal Ontario Museum). It is purely functional and utilitarian. This can be seen in Figure 71 through Figure 73 of different subway entrances to Museum metro station and other stations in Toronto.

Billy Bishop Airport Tunnel

Architects: ZAS Architects, ARUP Canada

Location: Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Project Year: 2014



Figure 74: Tunnel Terminal on the mainland of Toronto.

Looking at thresholds for travellers, stations and airports are the only types of transitional spaces where the experience of a place can occur. The new Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport Pedestrian Tunnel is a unique threshold condition and space of transition that leads the traveller to and from the city to or from the island airport. The newly built and opened tunnel is not a new idea that the city of Toronto has been discussing as it first conceived in the Great Depression. The project aims to provide a convenient a fast transition from the island airport



Figure 75: Elevator core on the mainland - above ground.



Figure 76: Elevator core - underground.



Figure 77: Entrance to the Tunnel from the elevators.

to the mainland.

The experience walking underwater and dislocated from the surroundings due to the distinctive site, the tunnel contrasts the ferryboat transfer that is offered above ground to cross over the water to the airport. Transitioning from the mainland to island, one arrives at the mainland pavilion where a stack of elevators will descend the traveller into the tunnel as seen in Figure 75 and Figure 76. It is already at this moment of arrival at this pavilion that one's experience of place is more utilitarian and not significant to place. As Lisa Raitt stated the main goal of the tunnel is efficiency in the movement of people between the island and the mainland and reduce line-ups for the ferryboat (Mikaluk, 2015). The tunnel itself, does not allow for the formation of personal psychological orientation of place and identity, as it does not have the

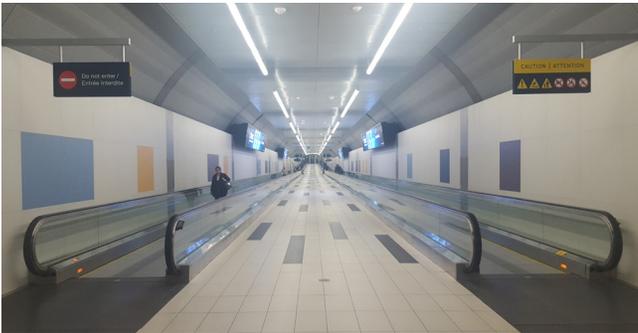


Figure 78: The tunnel.

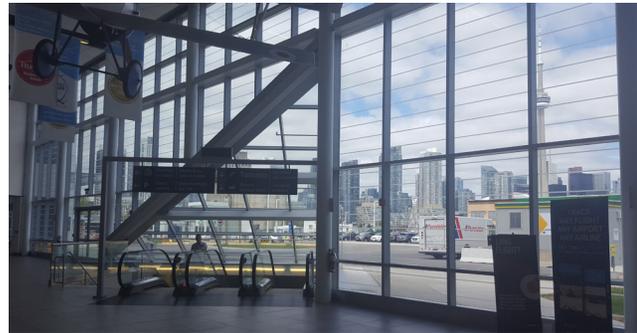


Figure 79: Threshold from the airport to the tunnel.

physical capacity of doing so, nonetheless, the tunnel embodies a functional character rather than an experiential character pictured in Figure 77 and Figure 78. Similar to the threshold between one airport and another, the destination disappears upon departure from end of the tunnel and reappears upon arrival at the other end of the tunnel. The tunnel itself does not embody place, identity, or create a meaningful arrival at the airport or on the mainland Toronto. Furthermore, having generic materiality and television screens with information, there are no aspects of visual representation to where one is located, and there are no references to the city of Toronto. Heather Mallick in her article blatantly reinforces this tunnel space and its impact on the traveller when she states “you wanted people to feel as they feel in almost every airport in the world, as if they were in a holding pattern, an unnameable non-space where one goes numb” (Mallick, 2015) about the design and about how the architects and designers



Figure 80: Ascending the escalators from the tunnel.

Figure 81: Descending to the tunnel.

managed the tunnel design. Although the tunnel and the elevator pavilion on the mainland are less successful in providing a heightened experience of place and of transitioning from one condition to another, the arrival at the airport, the threshold between the tunnel and the airport check-in hall is rather appealing. From this location and vantage point, the traveller gets a beautiful view of the lake and of Toronto from a viewpoint that only people arriving in Toronto and on the island as well as on the ferryboat are able to experience (Figure 79). Being glazed and well lit the space is optimistic and welcoming while orienting the traveller to the pedestrian tunnel below with the angular geometry. As well, arriving at the airport from the tunnel, the threshold moment at the escalators is also refreshing, as the contrast between underground and above ground, as well as, light versus dark is experienced heightening the moment of arrival at the airport (Figure 80 and Figure 81).

Case Precedents Overview

Each case study presented interesting responses to the design condition, its surroundings, and time that they were built in. Each was analyzed in how it treats and reflects its surroundings and its relationship to place and time. Furthermore, each was analyzed how one could be experiencing the station and the destination. For both the modern and historical, one case study is more successful than the other, although both in each category are good precedents in their own ways.

The case studies chosen are of two times: the historical past and the modern contemporary. Rotterdam Centraal Station and the World Trade Centre Transit Hub contrasted each other in their relationship with their surrounding contexts, overall city identity, and how design elements informed one of place. Rotterdam Centraal Station and its form is a precedent to how the train station is a gateway to the city. Through its form and engagement with both the built and open space, it creates a presence that draws people into it as well as bringing people out of the station. With a public plaza in front of it, Rotterdam Centraal Station connects and interacts with its urban surrounding contexts. The World Trade Centre Transit Hub station, although it does not focus on the train and station aspect as much, it presents the station as a social hub for people to meet and intermingle. With its skylight, it brings the built context and the natural components of New York City into the station Oculus Hall framing and highlighting significant views and features. This heightens the arrival into the city.

Contrasting the modern case precedents are two well-known historic stations, Toronto Union Station and Los Angeles Union Station. Learning from the past is always constructive and analyzing how both reflect their different urban contexts, and the train aspect is important. Although built at relatively the same time and both being significant and beautiful structures, one is more successful in certain aspects than the other. Both stations present a procession of meaning from the city to the platform that heightens the experience of arriving in the city and of being at a train station. With great halls, this is especially true and emphasized as one can feel their grandness and importance to the city. However, it is Los Angeles Union Station

that exemplifies extended reference to its surrounding context and cultural influences through its unique form and materiality on the interior and exterior. Toronto Union Station is built to the similar language of other Union Station in North America and moreover similar to other significant city buildings such as banks and museums.

The four smaller case studies analyzed, Dworzec Gdanski Metro Station, Bilbao Metro Stations, Museum Metro Station, and Billy Bishop Airport Tunnel are precedents that displayed the threshold conditions for arrival in the place as well as the critical conditions between the city and the station – in most cases the above the ground versus the below the ground conditions. How each precedent addressed the city – station threshold varied from design to design. Dworzec Gdanski had a unique approach to display the various axes of circulation through the station by use of the glass structures that pierce the ground level and attract people to come into the station. Furthermore, the Bilbao Metro Stations have a similar approach with their curved volumes that create attractive entrances that also promote transparency of the station although they are located underground. In addition, the Bilbao Metro stations display Bilbao's identity of change and development. Opposing these precedents that subtly suggest identity while creating a meaningful transition at thresholds is the Museum metro station in Toronto. At platform level the design approach displays the identity of place that is above ground. However, this design approach is not subtle and can be viewed as kitsch - symbolism and meaning has become literal. On the other hand, at the threshold to the station at city ground level the arrival at the station is the least meaningful with no identity of travel or of place as seen in the various figures for that case precedent. Lacking identity of place and creation of a meaningful experience is the Billy Bishop Airport Tunnel in Toronto. The two thresholds that the design incorporates vary on the degree of success. The airport – tunnel threshold is significant as it from that view point, one is introduced and welcomed to the city of Toronto by framed landmark buildings such as the CN Tower as well as the distinctive skyline. The threshold itself, through its geometry and design, guide the traveller towards Toronto and into the tunnel via directional escalators. As well, there is the light above ground that contrasts with

the darker underground emphasizing the relationship between island, city, and tunnel. It is this kind of threshold that is more successful than that of the elevator tower on the mainland that leads you down to the tunnel. The tunnel itself is characterless and disorients the traveller. The experience is ordinary and travellers don't engage with the place and the gateway built form. Perhaps the experience is not as profound as it could be as well.

Each case study became a precedent for creating a relationship with surroundings and its users, for the creation of the heightening of the experience of arrival, for a presence in the city, and for bringing in and introducing the city within the train station.

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Introduction

Global advancement is continuously occurring spurred by modernization and globalization where technologies are evolving which provide a platform for sharing knowledge and information among the global population in addition to extensive interconnectivity and growing popularity of travel. As ideas are shared, many become common and developed as an ideal for lifestyles, cultures, and architecture. However, this puts uniqueness of cultures, places, and their identity at risk of being devalued as well as their experience. With the common ideal spreading throughout the world, places are becoming characterless and uninspiring - placeless - and therefore the experience within such places is insignificant. Modernization and globalization have also spurred an increase in travel with the advancement of transport technology. It is especially the train that was the first to open up horizons and possibilities to travel to distant lands. The train station was a significant part of the urban fabric welcoming the arriving travellers and farewelling departing travellers. They were important gateways into cities. Nonetheless, with time, quicker, more comfortable, and more private transport options gained greater popularity, and the train became less used resulting in the train and the train station to fade away. They have become sterile, monotone, and characterless, where arrival in such places of transition is uninspired and insignificant. Furthermore, it is evident that even with new contemporary (modern) design, focus on airport design prevails when compared to the design of train stations. Overall, the experience of place, of transition, and of arrival is at times minute or absent.

However, thanks to modernization and globalization, the train has been evolving and developing with high-speed trains and other technological innovation, and with growing population that travels the train gaining more popularity around the world, especially in Europe and Asia. Therefore, train station will once more become a significant part of the city. With this in mind, this thesis examines the new significance of threshold architecture for the traveller including but not only the experience of arriving and departing, the experience of place, orientation, and identity of place. The thesis explores what critical position threshold architecture has on the traveller experience between two destinations and how threshold architecture can create

meaningful interpretations of place upon arrival at the platform. With a desire to improve the quality of places of transition, such as the train station, this thesis project will explore elements and components that create a heightened experience of place, allow for orientation of the traveller, and the transition is made significant not only for the traveller but also for the citizen of the destination.

Project Site



Figure 82: Exterior of the station from the South - the track side.

The site selected for the design project of this thesis is the Toronto Union Pearson Express at Union Station. Located in the heart of Toronto and in very close proximity to various other major transportation communication systems, this train station has a critical function as accumulates people from the Toronto and its surrounding suburbs, including tourists, sending them off to the airport at the city periphery. As well it brings its citizens back home and tourists from the airport to their final destination - the city. It is a threshold, a place of transition between one destination and another with the act of transitioning in between.

The recently completed current rail station fails to create that special experience of arrival and

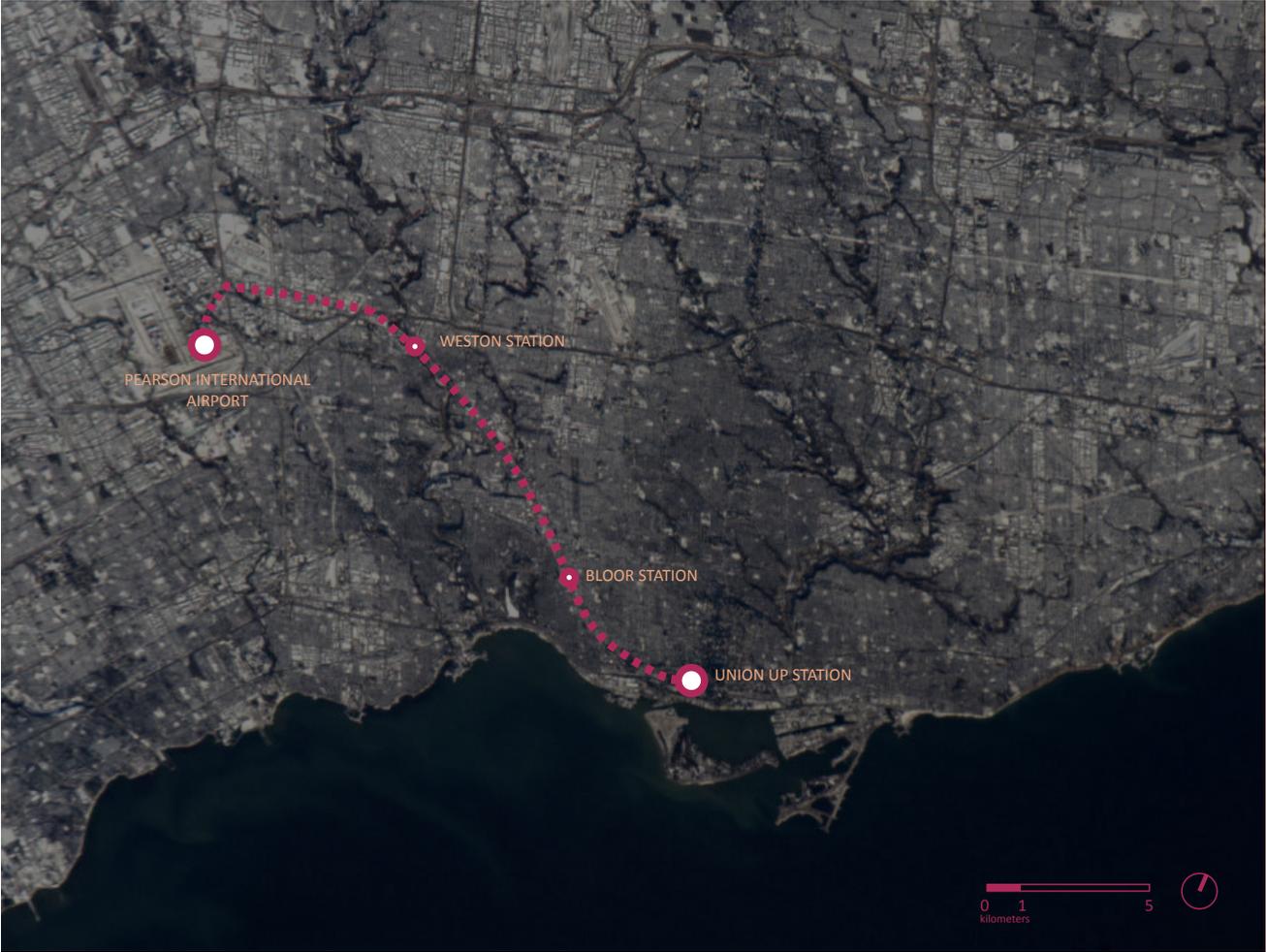


Figure 83: Map of the UP Express train route.

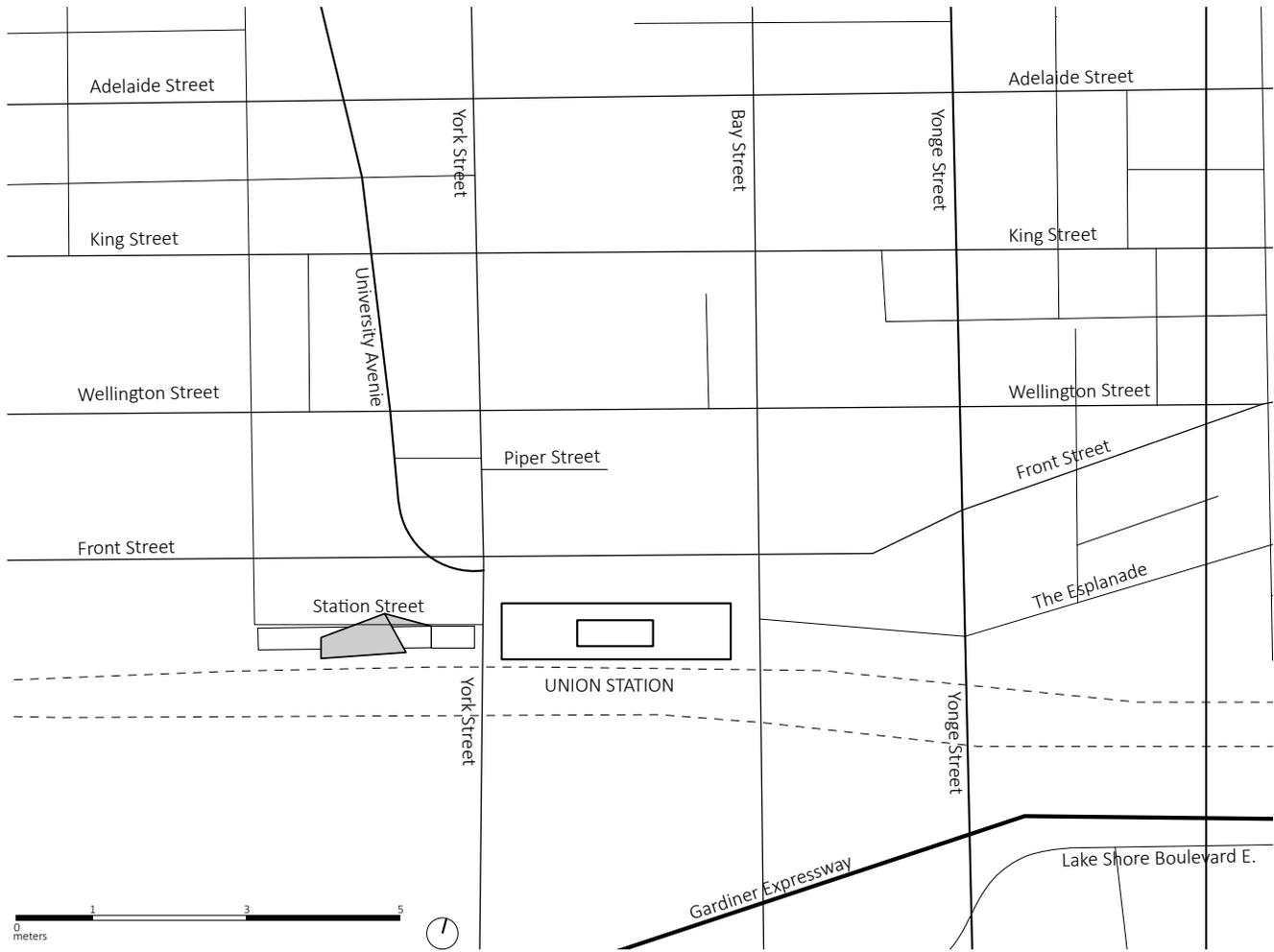


Figure 84: Context map of the site area.

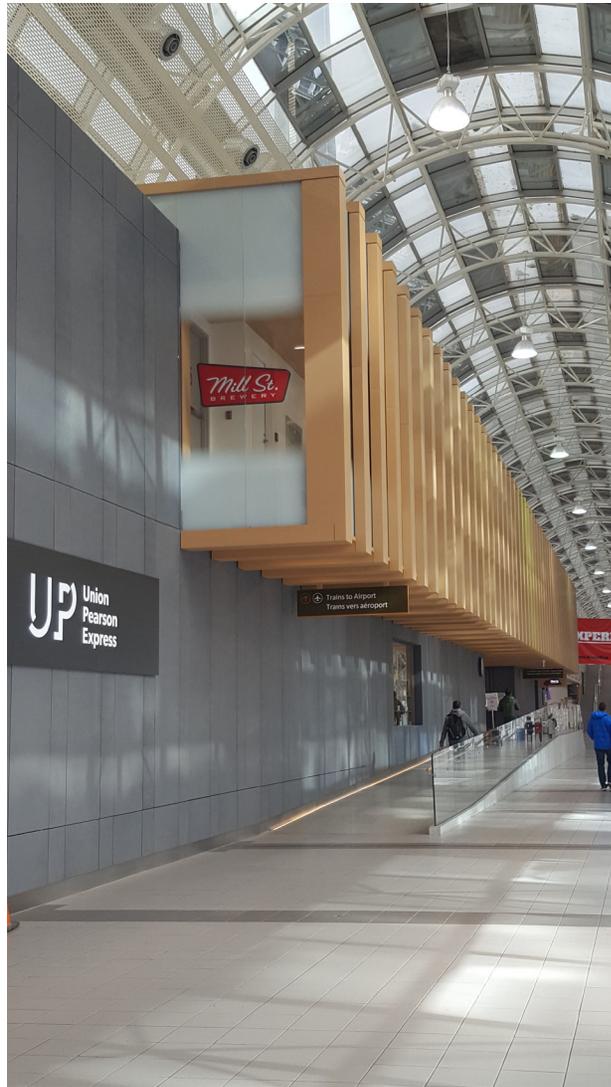


Figure 86: Entrance to the station from the Skywalk.



Figure 85: Raised floor to create a difference of spaces between the station and the Skywalk.

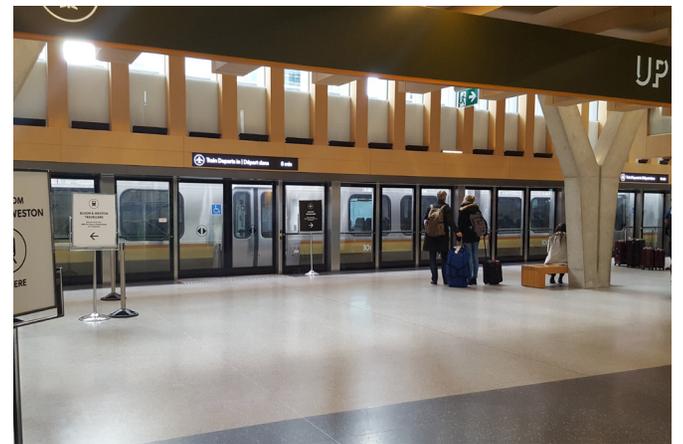


Figure 87: Station waiting area and boarding area.

departure in Toronto. Overall the station seems disconnected from the city itself, as well as the main Union Station. Physically speaking, the structure appears to look like it has been attached to the existing structure of the skywalk building where it has a different architectural language with that structure as well as its surrounding contexts (Figure 84 and Figure 88). Walking to the station via the Skywalk, the station is on the side and away from focus for the pedestrians - the threshold moment between city and station is minuscule and reduced (Figure 83). Dwelling at the station, attention is taken away from the train aspect, with the distracting design that partially blocks off the view of the train. As well, the view towards the exterior is limited and framed in such a way that one does not see much (Figure 85). Stepping out of the train into the station, one does not feel as if they have fully arrived at their destination, but as if they are only at another stepping-stone in their transition. Furthermore, because of the frequency of the train schedule, waiting is not an issue anymore and changes the amount of time and how one lingers in the station. The waiting area is only a few benches and the few tables in the café area (Figure 85 through Figure 87). With such a “go-go-go” attitude, the experience of place is rushed, and where one does not have time to appreciate the place and be relaxed.

Lastly, the exterior of the station is not part of the experience upon arrival or departure of the traveller (Figure 82). It cannot be viewed from the train as one arrives at the station as well as when one departs the station. The only views of this are the GO passengers travelling west, people walking the bridges, workers in the adjacent buildings on the south side, as well as the residents of condos and the hotels. The traveller is not aware of what it looks like, where they have arrived and so the experience of the place, and the impact architecture can make upon this threshold moment of the traveller is dwarfed and insignificant relying on the moment of arrival at the “platform”. Furthermore, there is no direct access to the city realm from the station, but through a web of hallways leading to Union Station creating an insignificant arrival and possibly disorientation of place.



Figure 89: Waiting area/ cafe and boarding area separated by columns.



Figure 88: Waiting area and cafe - from the boarding area.



Figure 90: Exit ramp in the Skywalk to Union Station.

Toronto's Identity

Identities of places are the unique aspects of the place that differentiate it from the rest of the world. It is both the tangible and non-tangible aspects that make it unique and memorable in an exclusive manner. Many identities are associated with architecture, landmarks, people, culture, religion, and geographical feature. Many places in the world have also received their identity through their history and world events. For example, Paris is known as the city of lights, especially the fully lit Eiffel Tower, as well as the city of romance and art. Another example could be San Francisco, where this city is known for its geographical topology, accustomed Victorian architecture and cable car infrastructure and San Francisco's well-known iconic structure, the Golden Gate Bridge. These cities mentioned, and many others around the world, are cities with a diverse, rich, and mature history that layered itself to create an irreplaceable identity and character for the place it represents. Identities of places are important as they represent, form and reflect the values embodied within the city and the citizens. They can help inform someone of their orientation of a specific place as well as the orientation of the place to the rest of the world in terms of contrast. In spite of this, many of today's cities are too large, too pluralistic, and too new to embody place specific character which in return make it stand out and unique within the global community. However, in some cases, it is the social, cultural and political values that emerge and have the opportunity to create distinctiveness. Moreover, a city's initiatives and what they desire to achieve becomes part of their developing, or already developed, identity and distinct character. However, this is not always the case, and it is possible that some cities do not have a created identity.

In the case of the city of Toronto, a single unique identity is difficult to apply. Being the largest city in Canada, it is also one of the younger cities that emerged as a result of the development of its central business district that migrated from Montréal. As a result, the city developed and grew from the many migrating people from around the country and from around the world and their cultures to the multicultural central business district that it is today. However, speaking exclusively of Toronto, it is a city of diversity and of a collection of identities that cannot define a city in a singular characteristic or identity. As an urban and cultural fabric, Toronto is



Figure 91: Chinatown.



Figure 92: Kensington Market.



Figure 93: Mirvish Village.

interwoven with varied and numerous cultures, activities, people, places, and architecture. This diversity takes the form of ethnic and cultural enclaves and neighbourhoods with unique characteristics, activities, people, experiences, and identities that contrast each other not allowing for a single identity to be prescribed. For example, there is Palmerston – Little Italy, Little India, Chinatown (Figure 89), Kensington Market (Figure 90), Mirvish Village (Figure 91) and many others. Hence, diversity can be a character or identity applied to Toronto, but at the same time, it perhaps is too vague and common of a theme to become an identity people associate Toronto with.

Concerning architecture, Toronto is still developing and maturing while becoming a denser city. Most of the architecture follows the ideas of Westernization, as Toronto is the Western

world, having the universal language of glass, concrete, modern architecture and skyscrapers. In some ways, Toronto has an architectural identity of the concrete jungle from the years that brutalism and concrete architecture was predominant for the city built landscape. The city does have landmarks and significant built structures that promote and are known around the world by everyone such as the CN Tower, the Sky Dome now known as the Rogers Centre, Toronto City Hall or the Ontario Legislative Building at Queens Park. However, can this “identity” or nickname be applied to the city? Perhaps not so much today. Today, in addition to Westernization, Toronto is also seeing Manhattanization where the city is building larger and taller high rises that look a lot like Manhattan in New York City. Resembling more New York City than Toronto, this is in a way a borrowed identity. Furthermore, because many cities are following densification of downtown cores, this feature is becoming more common globally.



Figure 94: Collage of Toronto's Identity.

Project Goals

For the reason that the Union Pearson Express station is connected to Union Station via a bridge, the three buildings were taken into account when looking at the transition. The proposal is interested in the contrast between the limestone Union Station, as well as 7 Station Street, with the glass skywalk, and hence further develops a contrast between the Skywalk and the new proposed Union Pearson Express Station. Since the Skywalk seems outdated and not connected to the language of contrast to the Union Station or 7 Station Street, it will be re-designed as well.

The design project has four main objectives that it desires to address to create experience at threshold.

Firstly, the project aims to create an experience of meaningful arrival, departure, and transition at the Toronto Union Pearson Express station that emphasizes these moments and creates a heightened experience of Being in Toronto. To define and design for this kind of arrival and departure identification of significant thresholds between the train station and its context is necessary to differentiate between the impactful and the functional. Possible exploration can reveal a direct access point and threshold into the city, which the current built station lacks and which can ultimately heighten the moment of arrival into the city - orientation. Furthermore, there is an aim to make social pauses and pauses of reflection of place and journey within the station to foster lingering and socializing, and to counter the fast-paced and “stressful” travel present today.

Secondly, an objective of the project is to bring the station’s visibility and presence within the urban fabric (physical presence, through interaction and animation). Being hidden and away from the eye is an aspect and drawback of the current station design. Instead of being isolated and seeming like it is an attachment to the side of the skywalk, this thesis project approach aims to integrate the train station into the path of the Skywalk on the pedestrian realm and to create engagement of the station with its context, people, and surroundings. This new design

addresses to construct an animated space that stimulates interaction on various platforms to create a social and a livelier space.

Through the form investigation that the design will be able to generate a presence physically in the urban fabric for the station, interest people to interact and engage with the form and activities within, and to create an identity for the station itself.

Lastly, the project's intention is to heighten the experience of place, the station and Toronto for the traveller and non-traveller, to introduce one into their destination upon their arrival. A major objective in this design is how to represent Toronto within the station to create a gradual introduction to itself without overstating identity and letting it become kitschy. Moreover, as the city is young and its identity may still be in formation, the design will frame timelessness of characteristics and representations of Toronto through thorough thought and investigation; what represents Toronto today, what will represent it tomorrow, and what (components of the image of the city) will not change.

The Design



Figure 95: Identifying direct thresholds to the city (exterior).

When identifying significant thresholds into the station this diagonal threshold came to light and is emphasized further by views in figure 102 on page 106. These two thresholds form the main access point to the platforms and a direct arrival into the city.

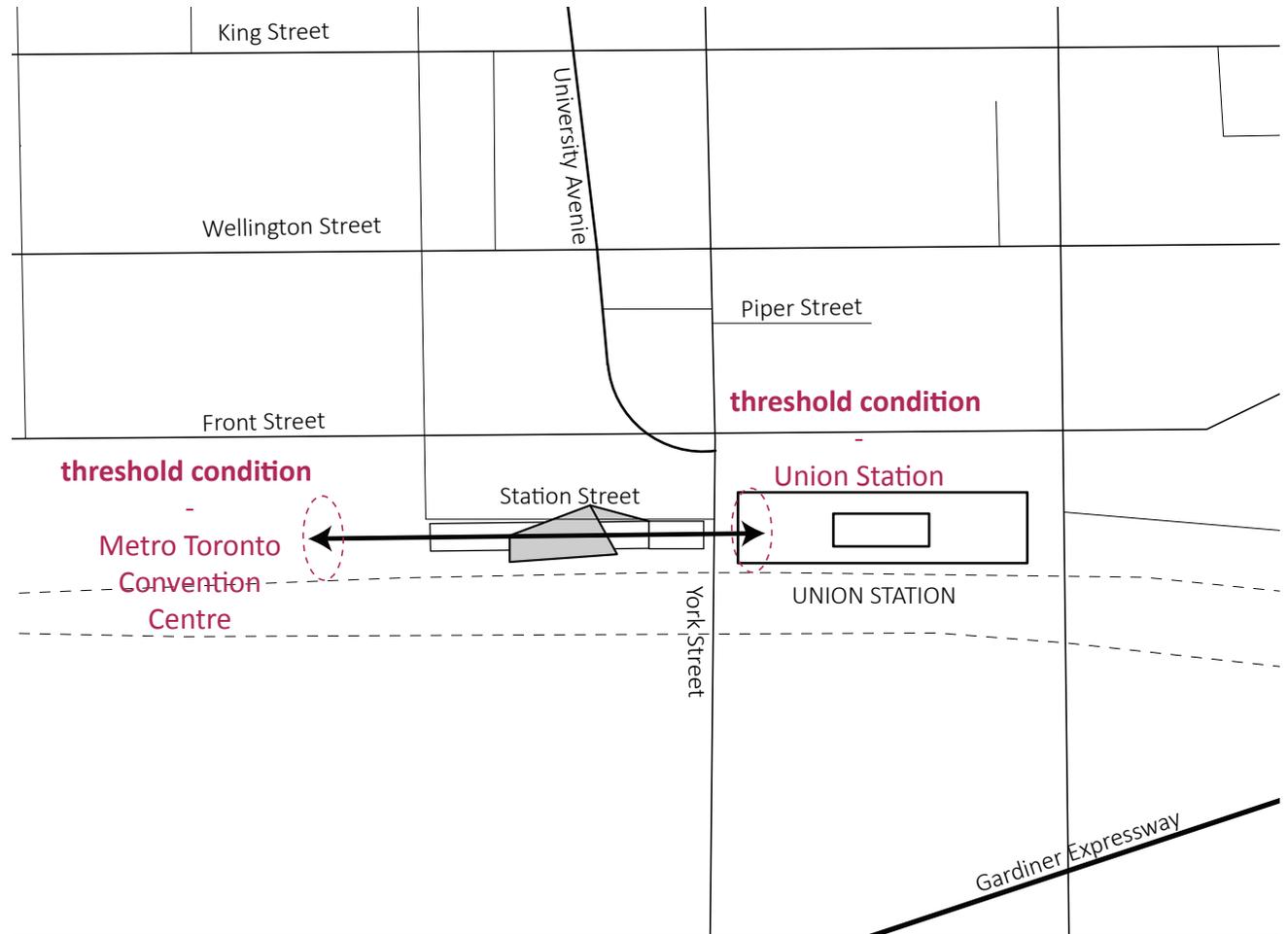


Figure 96: Identifying existing building thresholds (interior).

Due to its location in the Skywalk the station has pre-existing threshold conditions from Union Station and the MTCC.



Figure 97: Program gradient.

The station has varying degrees of program that form an interactive and animated space. Urban program/ context includes the exterior context that is brought into the station, general program defines the space of the Skywalk while merging with the train station program.

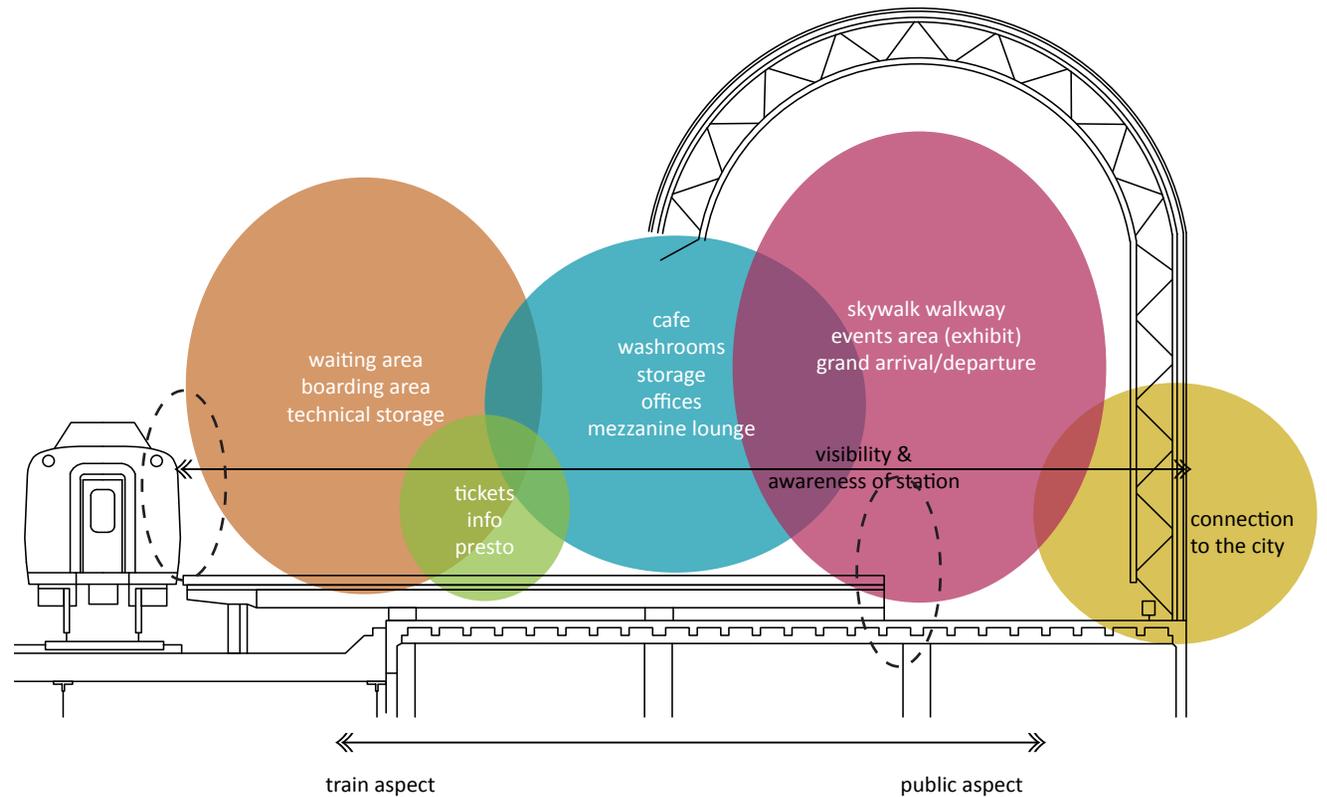


Figure 98: Program sectional gradient.

This diagram further explains the converging program in one space to create connection and interaction between the exterior, the Skywalk and the station. Having program overlap will increase activity and bring more people into the station to linger.

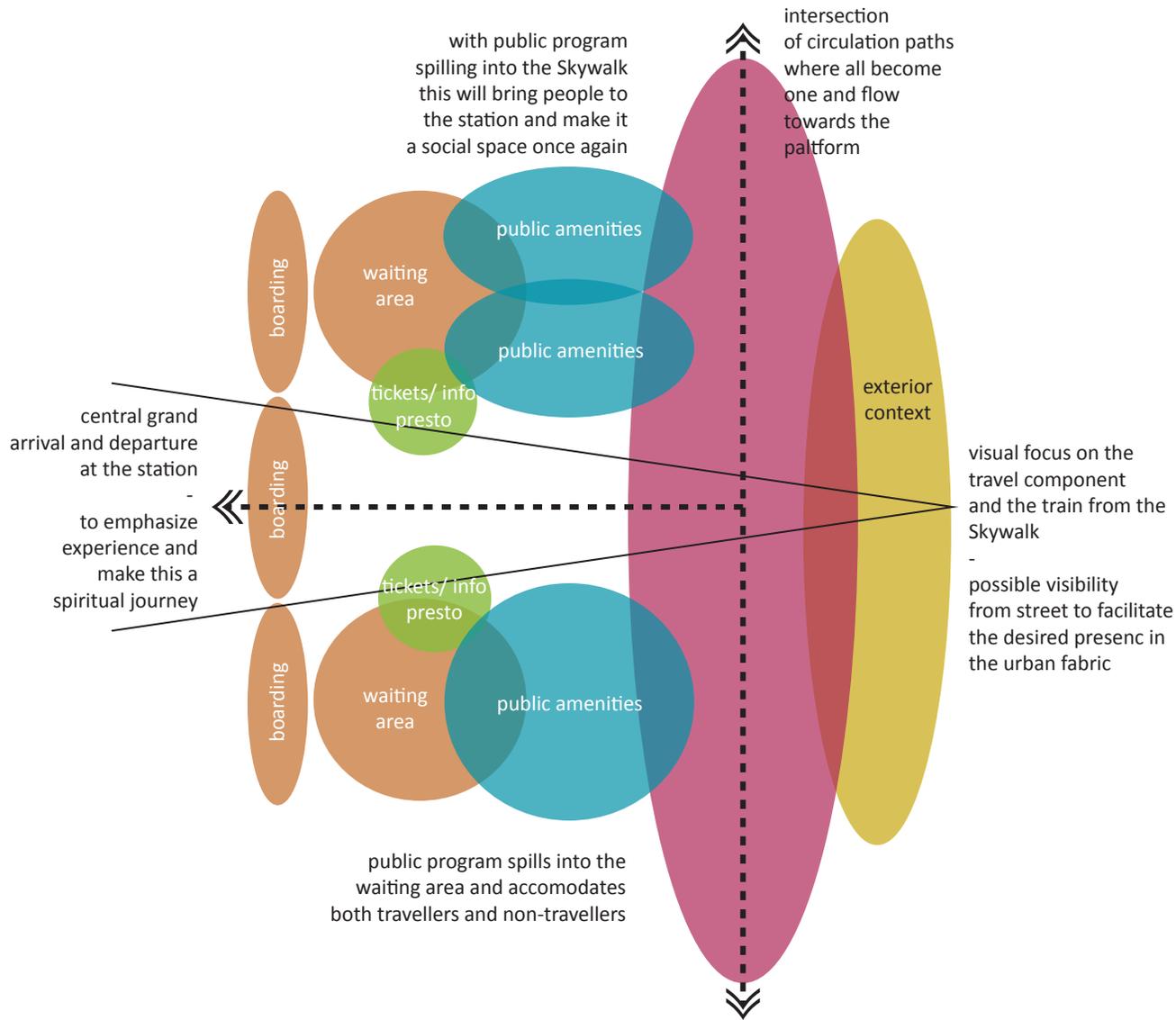


Figure 99: Diagram of major design decisions and moves.

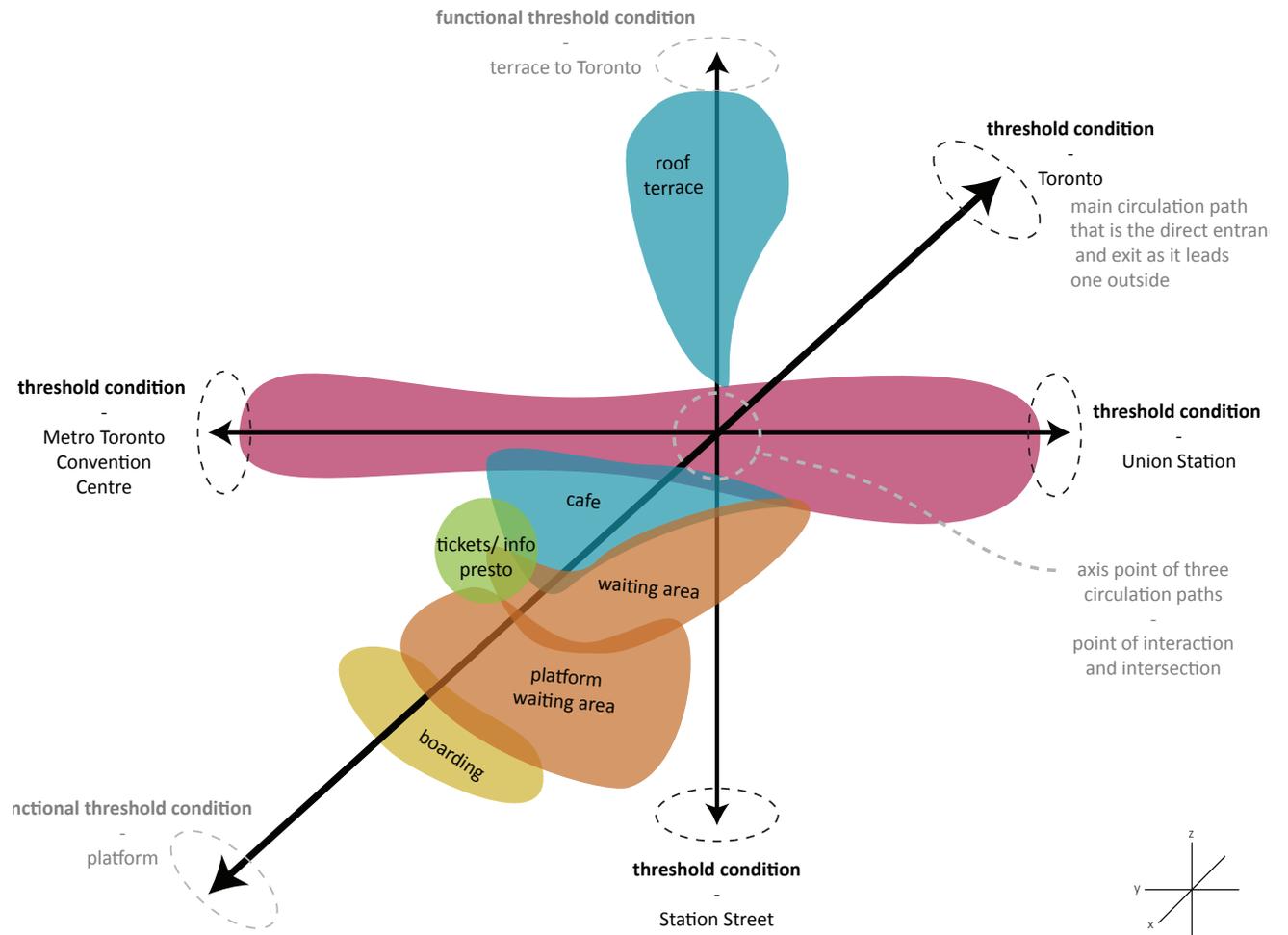


Figure 100: Program diagram identifying station characteristics and thresholds..

The program of this station proposal aims to create a space of interaction between activities and the varying users. It also identifies the main access points - thresholds - on the three axes of circulation condition through out the station.

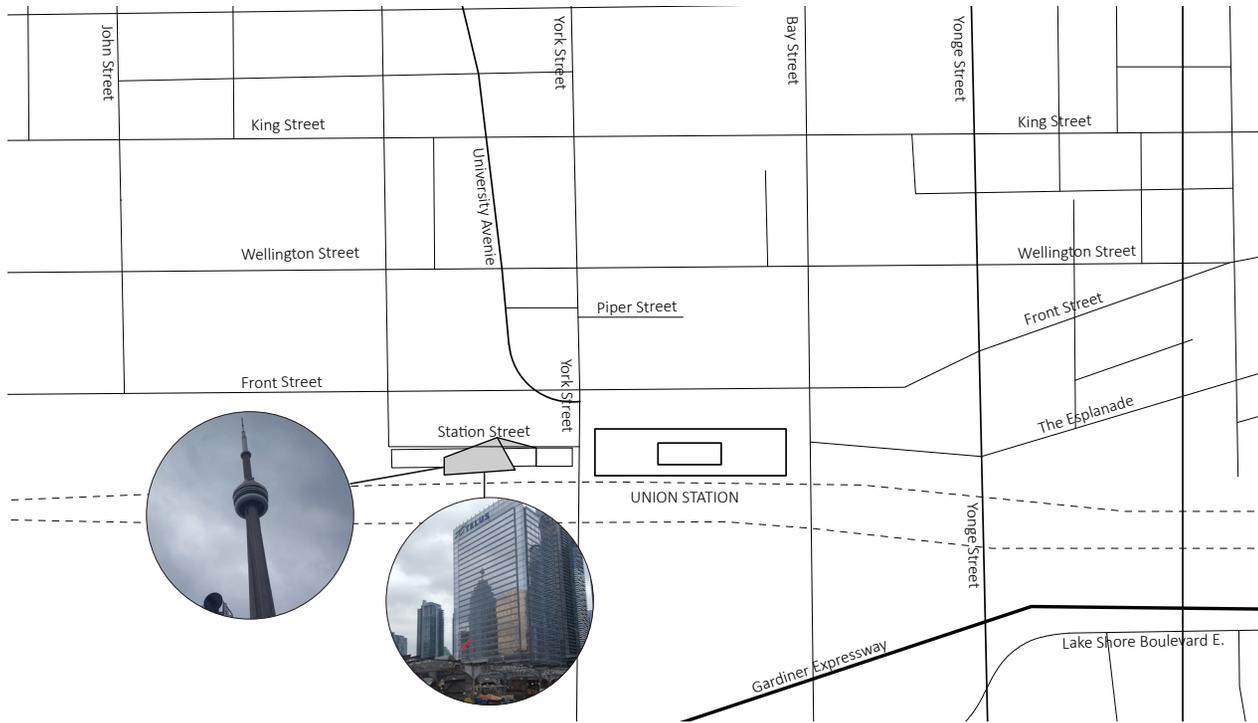


Figure 101: Views from platform and mezzanine.

Particular views from the platform are also framed by glazed wall components at the station from the city to the platform. The views framed are as shown in Figure 107. Once one has arrived at the platform one sees the iconic CN Tower, the landmark that is visible from all parts of the city, for the first time as it is not as visible from the train windows. The southern views are of the city fabric, although they are not as significant and will not be as emphasized.

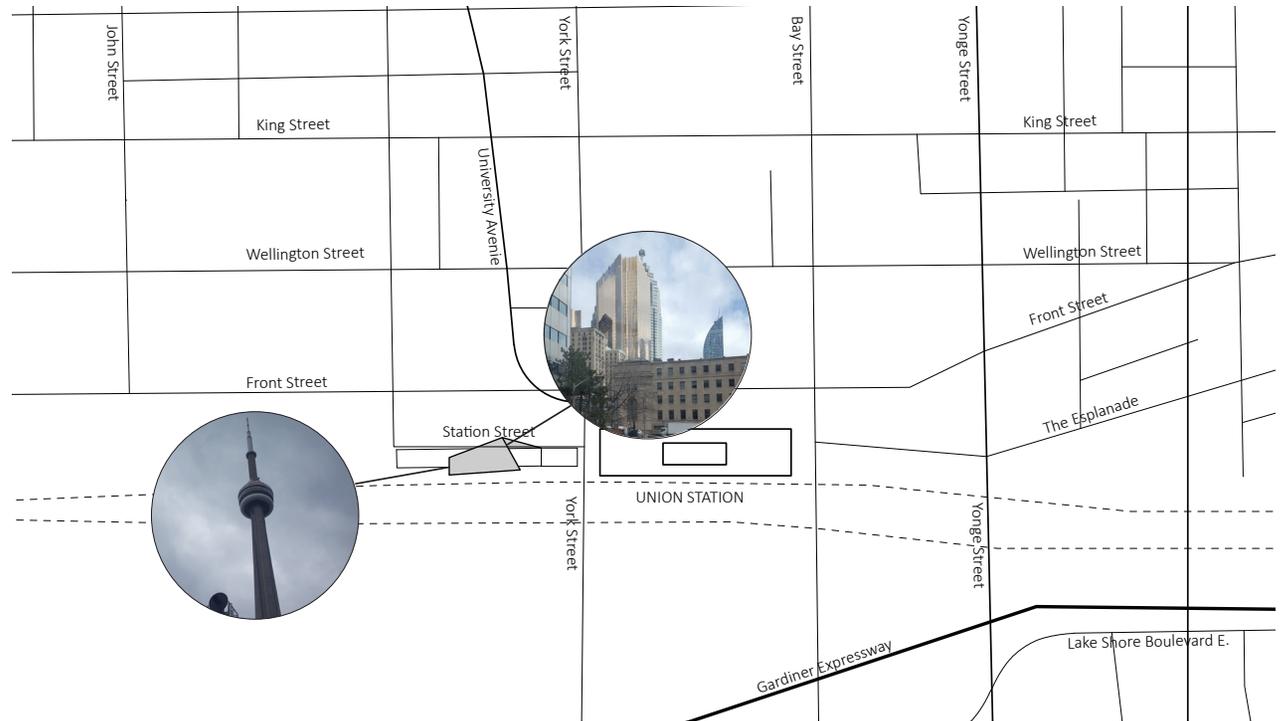


Figure 102: Views framed by the diagonal skylight.

In lieu of creating orientation and bringing the city into the station, specific framed views have been chosen to emphasize and show Toronto from the station.

At the arrival from the platform to the destination, these views as seen in Figure 106, the CN Tower as well as the city core will be points of view that are significant and are informative of place for the traveller as well as the citizen. Being at two ends of the diagonal in plan, these specific views create a connection in the urban fabric. As one arrives in the city one views the city core. As one arrives on the platform one views the iconic CN Tower one last time before departure to the airport.

To avoid the sameness and create unique experiences specific to place, one needs to understand that each place and station is different and various factors contribute to its identity and design. The multitude and specifics of geographical, natural, cultural, political, and social factors and contexts vary from place to place and are the elements that make a place unique. Therefore, predetermined design guidelines that could be applied universally would be difficult to develop, and counterproductive to the main idea addressed in this thesis. When designing for a specific gateway threshold condition, preliminary research and knowledge of the place and the site are key elements that lead to successful design. This includes immersing oneself in the city or destination - being open to what the place offers, to interact with the place and the people, and truly experiencing the destination. From this, one can begin to attain a specific character and identity of place that can then further be applied to design.

Finding a singular identity was difficult due to the complexity of Toronto's urban fabric and population unlike in some case studies like Rotterdam Centraal Station. As discussed in the Toronto's Identity section (page 93-96) of this thesis, Toronto has many small parts that make it unique, however, finding one particular identity with all is difficult. Rotterdam, because it was devastated after wars, was able to create its own unique identity of innovation, experimentation, and exploration from the beginning and currently that is its identity for all components of the city. Every place in this world is different, and many different contexts and aspects will influence design and experience - no place on Earth is the same, and hence, no experience in these places is the same, no design will be the same. The destination of Toronto and its experience is present within the design of the new station and therefore is site specific.

The said and identified views between the city core and the track side along with the CN Tower (Figure 101 and Figure 102) were chosen to be used as a method of orientation and guide from platform to city - a method of introducing the traveller from the travel side dimension into the dwelling and visiting dimension, the destination. The diagonal skylight brings the city of Toronto into the station and is present continuously until one exits onto the terrace. The

terrace as well provides a place for viewing the city and creates a pause for reflection of destination and its splendor. Bring the city and destination further into the station, the curved lines of the design reflect and represent Lake Ontario that is not visible from this station and site, although it is in close proximity. As a prominent part of the city, its geographical and natural context, and its history, the lake is a noteworthy feature in Toronto's identity and was incorporated as a significant design component. This further brings the destination from the outside into the station. To make the station destination specific, the new Union-Pearson station echoes Toronto's built forms and urban layout through the use of the rigid city grid lines of horizontality and the odd diagonal as per particular streets such as the Esplanade. These lines reflect circulation throughout the city and hence are applied to the circulation to the station, in addition to the already existing movement through the Skywalk. Moreover, circulation was a big element that helped shape the station to create a grand entrance and arrival into the city from the station that the current UPX station lacks. The station design creates an appealing moment of intersections of traveller circulation from the X, Y, and Z-axes, to create significant threshold moments upon arrival at the station and in the city destination.

Natural elements such as sunlight are used by the design to highlight and celebrate the arrival to the city as one walks in a procession from the platform to the city. This heightens the experience of place and arrival in the destination in the diagonal design element of this station. For the reason that this diagonal is a significant design component creates a direct access to the destination, the design has effort to emphasize it and elevate its experience.

Materiality-wise, the station ties to the "concrete jungle" identity of the city through use of concrete throughout the station as well as glass. Besides, with the desire to create contrast between the old and the new, between Toronto Union Station, the Skywalk and the new Union Pearson Express, materiality facilitated the gradual change; the limestone being old transitioning through a glass skywalk (neutral material) and into the new "stone" material, concrete. This helps in accentuating and putting a spotlight on the new station.

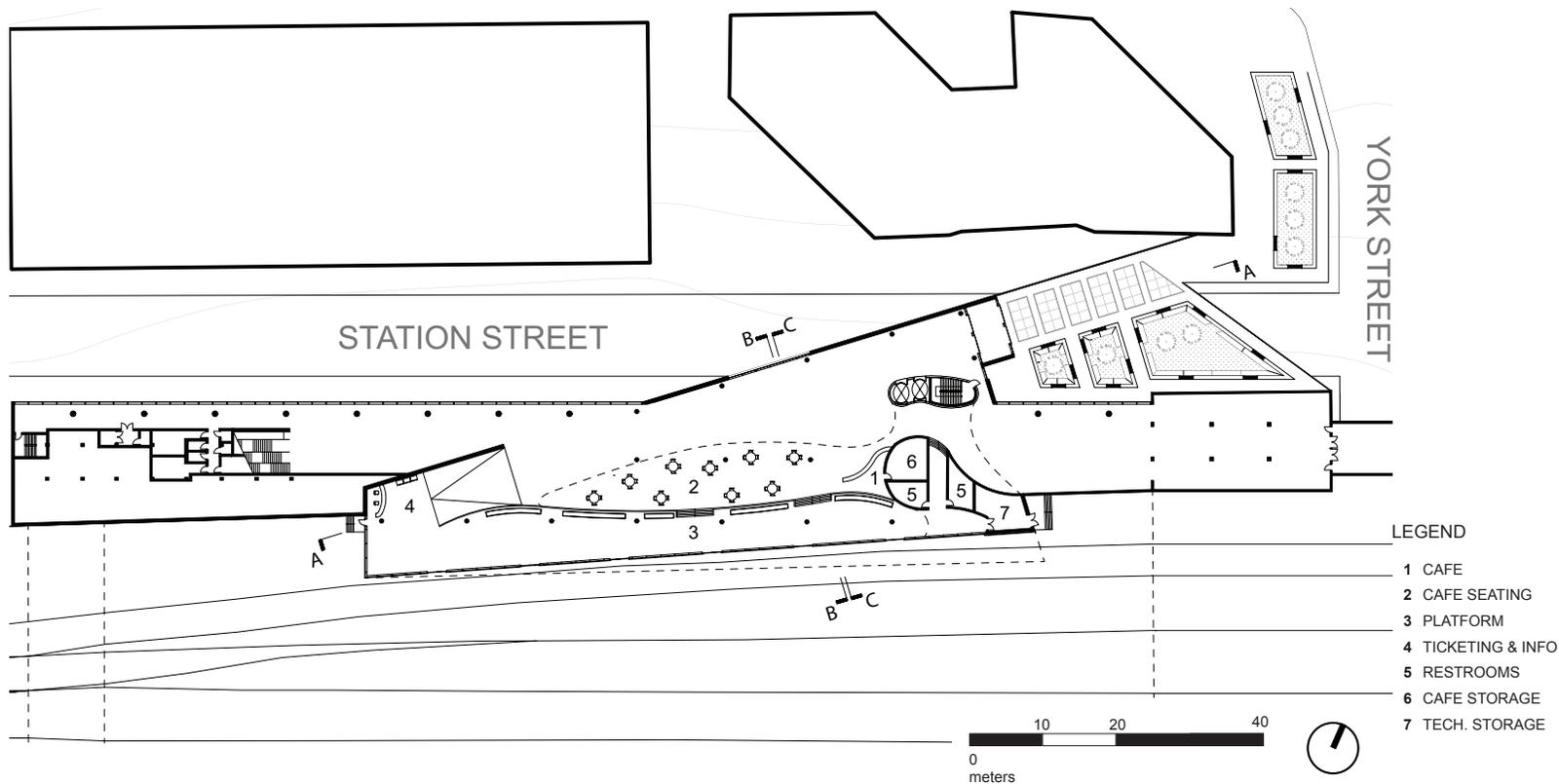
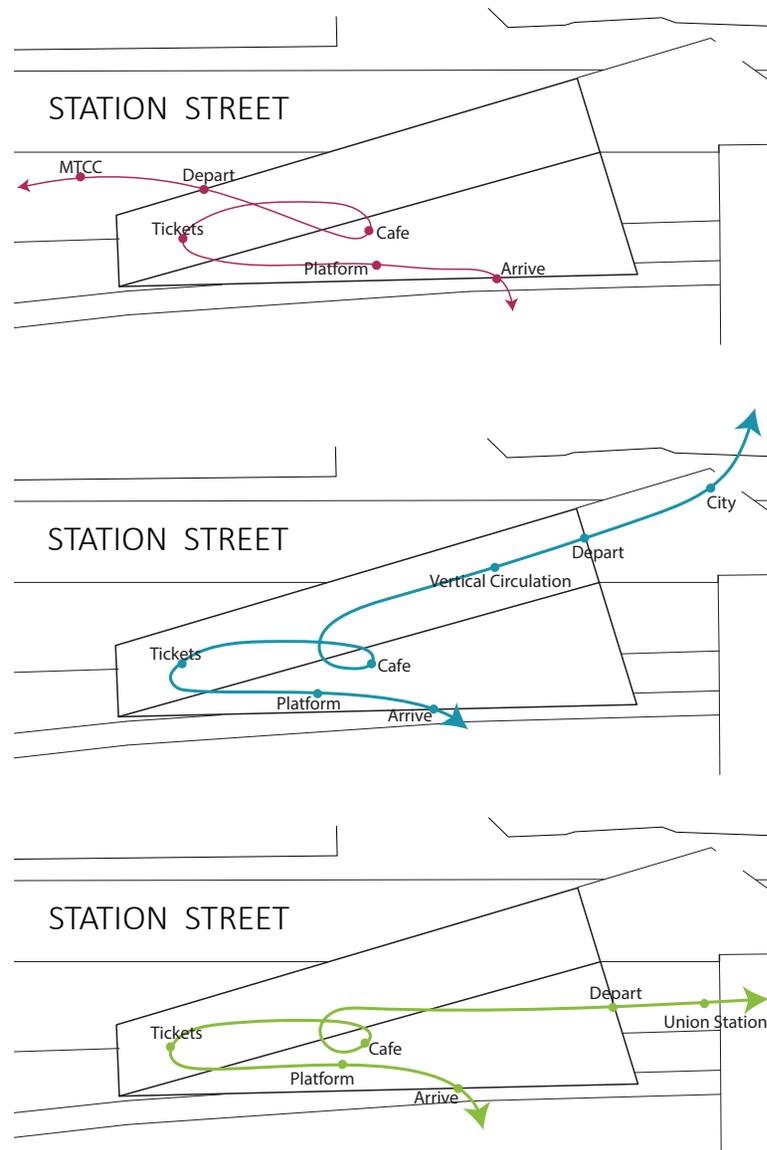


Figure 103: Main level floor plan of the station.

On the main level of the station, the three axes of circulation and arrival meet - the vertical, the horizontal, and the diagonal. At that particular moment, the arrival is concentrated into the diagonal that leads one in a procession under the skylight to the ticketing and information and then further onto the platform via ramp connected by the views in Figure 102. The layout of the program is open and inviting to form interaction between individuals and between station and individuals. The curve language of the space opposes the regular angles of the city grid as well as the exterior of the station to facilitate a unique experience. Furthermore, these curves reference Toronto's geographical location near Lake Ontario.



This diagram set further depicts the three axes of circulation.

A hypothetical analysis and study was taken up to predict what a typical circulation path of a traveller would be if they were arriving from three main points, the city of Toronto itself, Toronto Union Station, or the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

In each of the scenarios, the traveller arrives at the station from the outside, then proceed to the café or tickets, and finally arriving at the platform. The same path can be applied to a traveller arriving into the city as a reverse (reason for two ended arrows).

Figure 104: Circulation diagrams on the main floor level.



Figure 105: Building section A-A.

On the main level of the station, the three axes of circulation and arrival meet - the vertical, the horizontal, and the diagonal. At that particular moment, the arrival is concentrated into the diagonal that leads one in a procession under the skylight to the ticketing and information and then further onto the platform via ramp. The layout of the program is open and inviting to form interaction between individuals and between station and individuals. The curve language of the space opposes the regular angles of the city grid as well as the exterior of the station to facilitate a unique experience. Furthermore, these curves reference Toronto's geographical location.

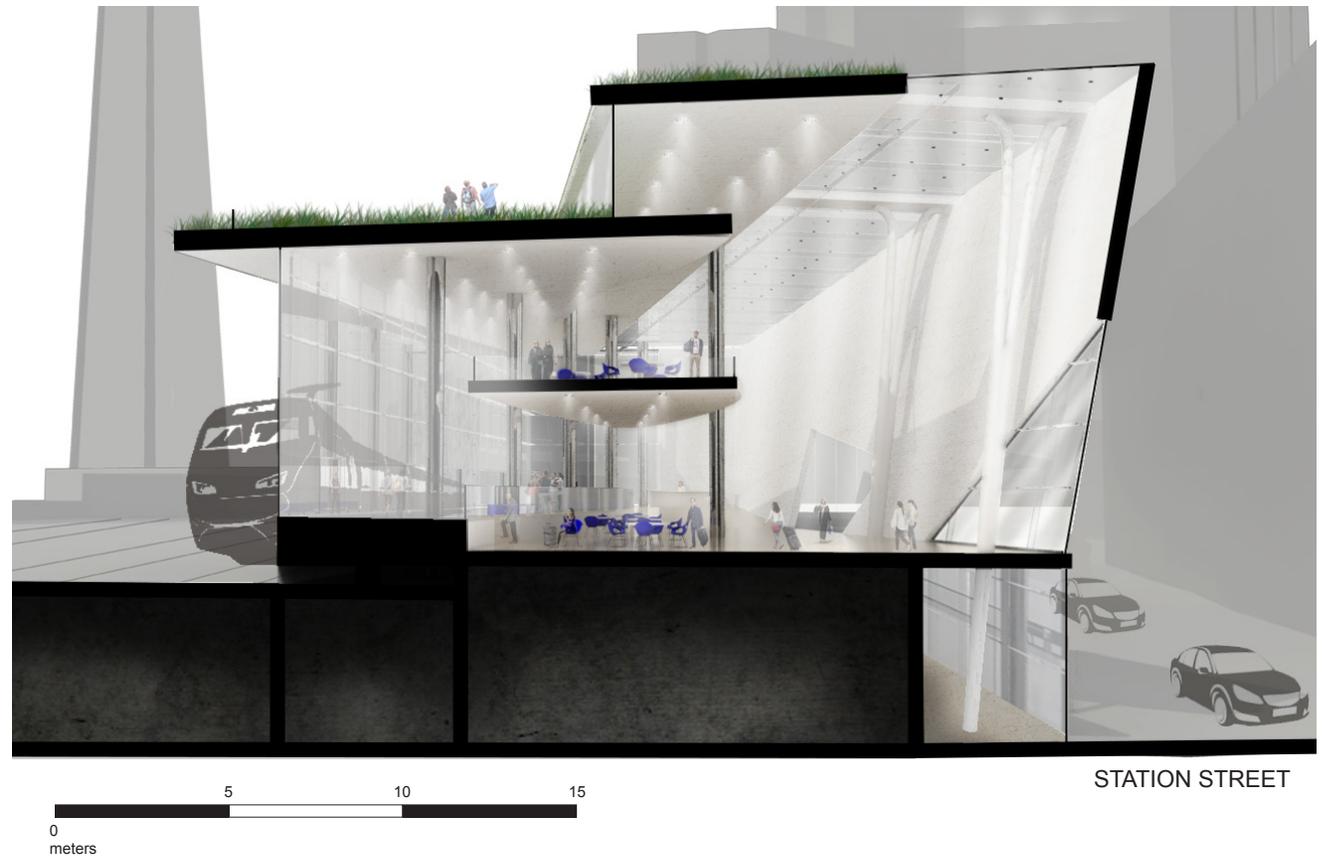


Figure 106: Building section B-B.

Section B-B displays the relationships between the multiple levels of the station - the transparency, connectivity. It provides a visual representation of the diagonal path and its characteristics that create the heightened experience of place and of arrival in relation to the other spaces within the station. This section, as well as Building section C-C in Figure 109 both depict the connection that the station creates between the street and city with the station platform and train tracks.



Figure 107: Building section C-C.

This building section drawing depicts the circulation crossings and the arrival into the city. With the vertical circulation core, this section shows the different station levels and activities that engage the individual to participate in the experience of the station and the city as well as to create moments to experience the destination. At the same time this section shows moments and places of pause in relation to the circulatory moments in arrival.



Figure 108: Exterior render of the Station proposal - Grand entrance over Station Street.

The journey of arrival and departure through transition of space begins at one of the thresholds identified as significant of arrival at the station from the city or vice versa - arrival to the city from the train station. The main thresholds to and from the city is the main “grand” entrance with the public terrace over Station Street and the interior entrance from Toronto Union Station via the Skywalk. These thresholds provide immediate access to another mode of transportation or direct access to the city - a direct arrival, and invite the city and people to participate within the station whether it is on the inside or the outside.

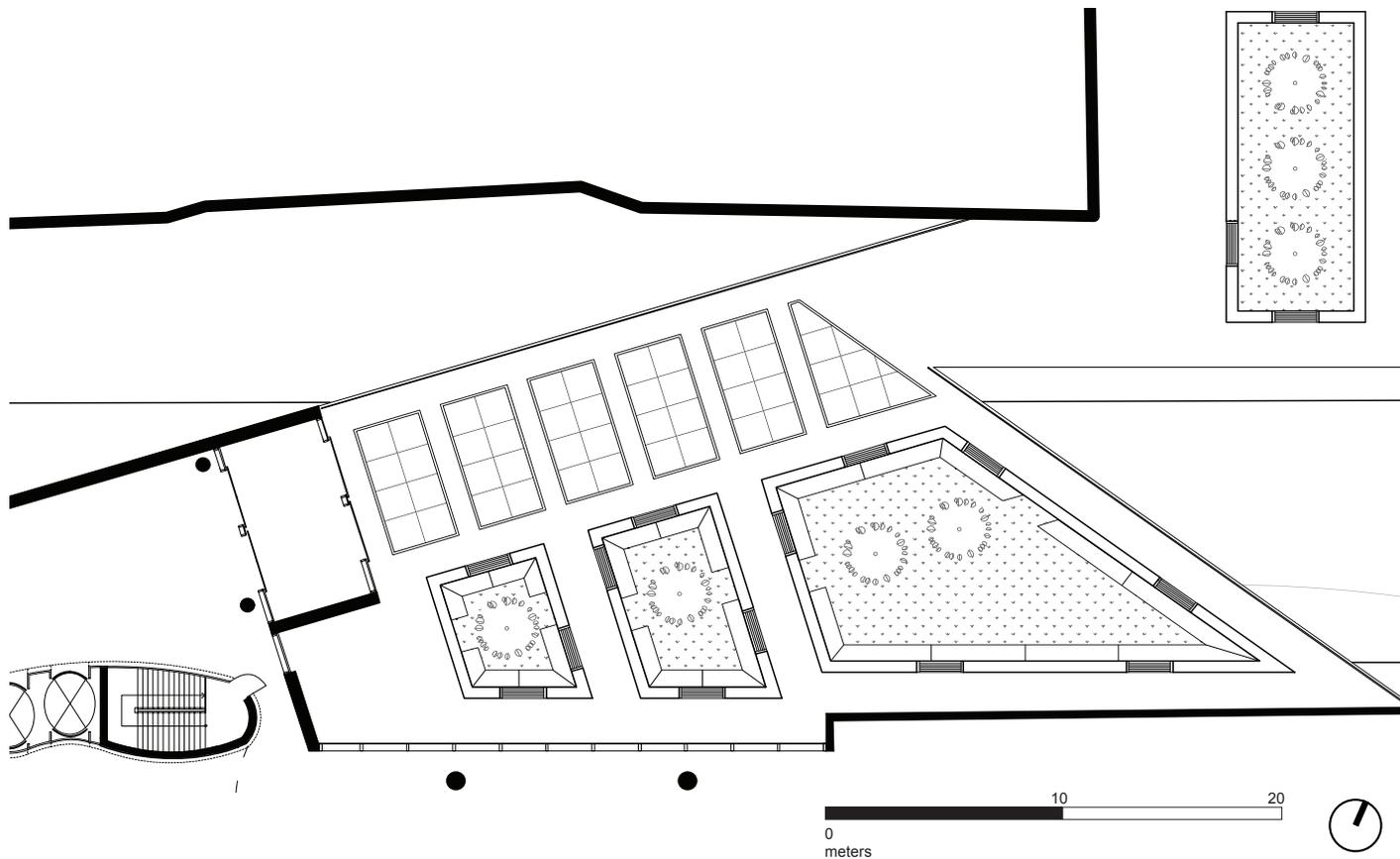


Figure 109: Exterior terrace floor plan - over Station Street on the main level of the station.

The terrace bridging over Station Street is an extension of the grand entrance threshold directly from the city and provides open public space for events, individual moments of pause and thought, and another access point into the city via the small green area located across the street from the Station - one has direct access to Front Street. To accentuate the diagonal axis and guide the traveller to Front Street and the city, the path is lined with illuminated translucent glass and furthermore this design element brings natural and artificial light to the street below.



Figure 110: Exterior render of the terrace over Station Street at the entrance to the station.

This render of the terrace and entrance to the station further depicts the use of the space by travellers and non-travellers. Planters with trees and grass are provided with built in benches for moments of pause and thought, and for children to run around on. There are also skylights between the grass and concrete lining to provide additional light to the street below.

Direct sunlight and glare is not an issue as the space receives shade from the Skywalk and the station for the majority of the day time throughout the year (reference to the sun light study in the Appendix A).



Figure 111: Interior render of the threshold between the station and the Skywalk.

The threshold entrance into the station from the Skywalk (from Toronto Union Station) is open and inviting with a transparency of the activities that occur in the station. There is connection to the station mezzanine above as well as the diagonal path that leads to the station platforms. It was an intention to create another contrast at the threshold moment to heighten the experience of arrival with play on the light versus dark concept. With the design of the Skywalks opaque wall just before the entrance and the opacity of the mezzanine floor that bridges over the horizontal axis path this was made possible.



Figure 112: Interior render of the moment where the three axes of circulation meet at the diagonal.

From this vantage point one can observe the moment where and when the vertical circulation core, the diagonal circulation from the terrace and city, and the Skywalk horizontal circulation meet. This space is animated with movement in all directions and which also guides one into the station platform to buy tickets, obtain information, and or wait for the train. With the mezzanine being open to below, there is some limited interaction with the circulation below adding to the experience of place and of the station. To facilitate more interaction the space is open and a cafe with seating, which also creates moments of pause for individuals.

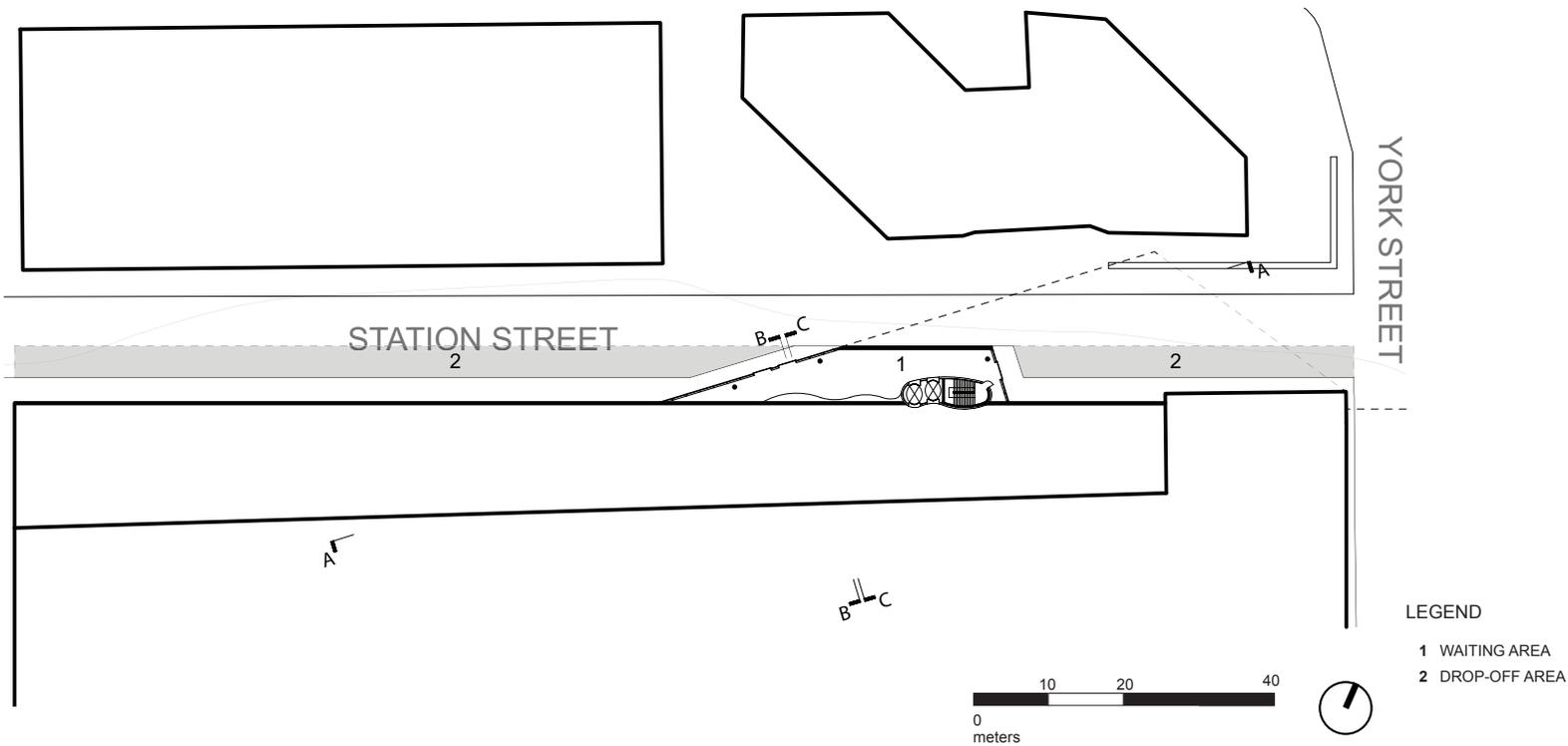


Figure 113: Ground level floor plan - Station Street pick-up and drop-off area and vestibule.

As mentioned before, the current Union-Pearson Express train station is disconnected from the Skywalk and furthermore, its nearby context and the city. It currently has two points of access through one threshold from as one approaches the Station via the Skywalk only. To ameliorate the current situation and moreover, create a direct experience of the moment of arrival for the traveller arriving by car or taxi, a vestibule with a pick-up and drop off area is proposed. This threshold stimulates vertical circulation within the station beginning on Station Street and ending on the Station terrace above the station. The vertical circulation core is integrated within the existing building as to create another access point from that building to the station.



Figure 114: Interior render of the vestibule, pick-up and drop-off area (ground level).

The vestibule is more of a functional threshold than a “spiritual” threshold as it is a place of waiting. One waits for their taxi or car. In this vestibule, as well, the arrival into the station begins where one takes the elevator or stairs to arrive into the station - this is the vertical circulation axis - and one arrives in the station diagonal path.

The design aims to create a light space that is welcoming and which, with its angles of walls, guides one visually to the vertical mode of circulation. Although it is not entirely light, the intention is to create a threshold of contrast between light and dark, ground and above ground.



Figure 115: Interior render of the arrival to the platforms via the diagonal pathway.

Once in the diagonal, the path leads the traveller or the non traveller to the platform via ramp. At this moment in transition through the station the path is clear with no other options to arrive at the station. As seen in the other renders, the path is high-lighted with natural light from the skylight to emphasize this procession of arrival to the platform and from the platform to the city. This skylight also provides for views that are framed to bring particular moments of the city into the station and facilitate a gradual and early experience of the city. Other glazed components of the station design frame other particular views. This also creates orientation to place.



Figure 116: Interior render of the moment at ticketing and information.

Standing at the ticket and information area, looking onto the station, one can view and experience the station in its many facets. From this vantage point one can experience the platform and the diagonal path of circulation (arrival) simultaneously - all the activities that occur and the city view from both the diagonal and the platform.



Figure 117: Vestibule entrance and city view.

At this moment in the station, the vertical circulation core and the vestibule, one will be exiting the station and entering the destination. Such a view welcomes and introduces one to the new place of arrival and gives a hint of the experience and ambience of place through such a view. Although the whole city is not visible, this vantage point provides a view for a taste of what is ahead in the urban fabric.



Figure 118: Platform views.

At the other end of the diagonal the view is of the track side and the CN Tower is visible at this vantage point and along the diagonal. For the reason that the CN Tower is very tall, at this point the CN Tower is not as visible as in the diagonal path way.



Figure 119: Interior render of the platform.

The platform engages the mezzanine and the rest of the station with its open concept. To separate this moment of arrival from the rest, the platform is elevated minimally to demarcate its presence in the station and not to lose the feeling of “station life.” Long benches are provided for those waiting a longer time for their train or taking a pause in their journey. There are also two access points to the cafe via stairs from the platform.

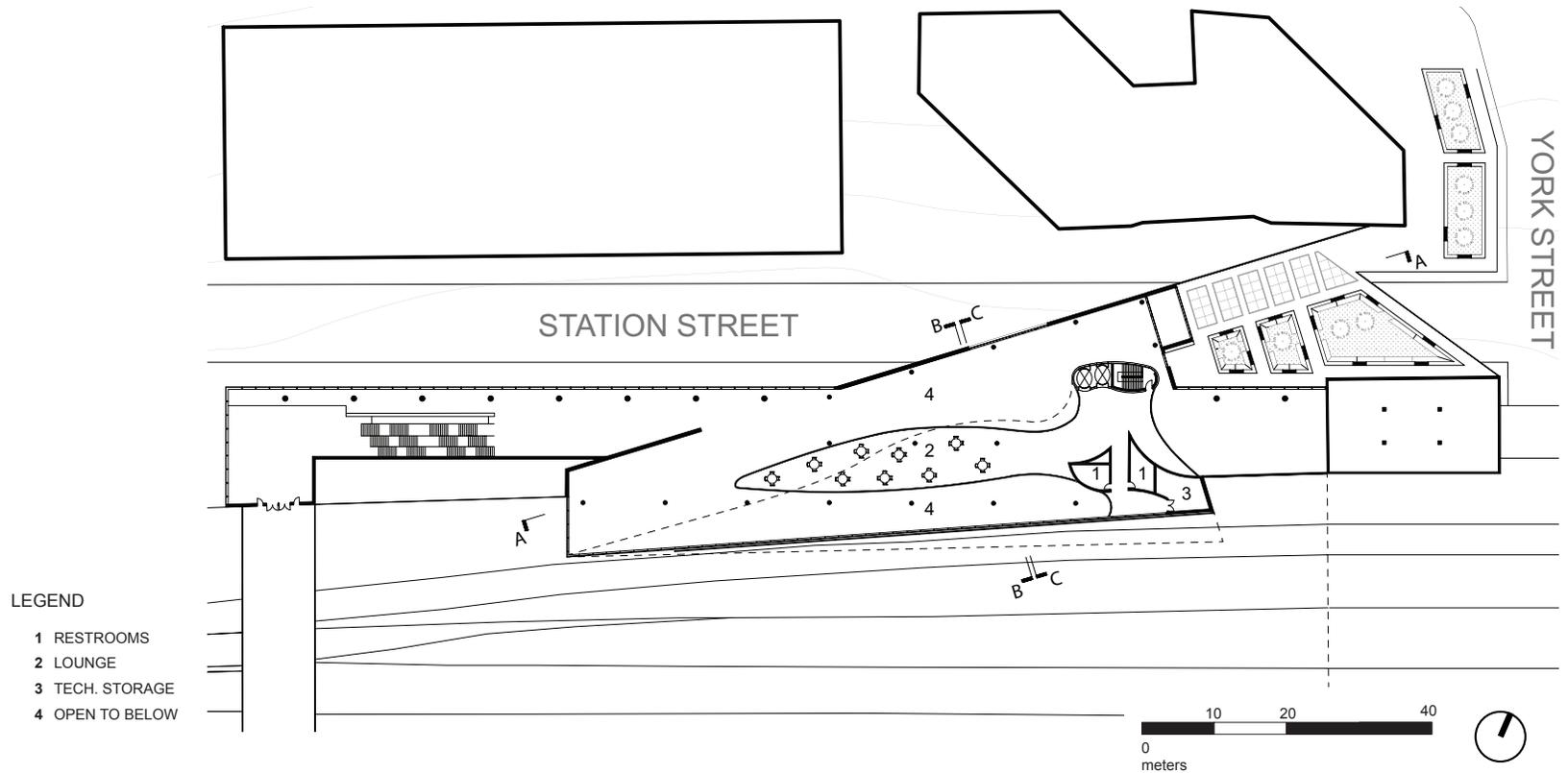


Figure 120: Mezzanine level floor plan.

The mezzanine lounge is a space provided for both travellers and non-travellers to take a pause or break from their journey through the station and enjoy their time in transition. It is a spot intended for travellers who have time to linger. For non-travellers that work nearby the station, this is a potential space for gatherings and breaks throughout the work day. For non-travellers that are passing by, the mezzanine can be a space of pause as well as observation of the world of travel and or place where one can day dream about travelling else-where. With this said, it can also be a place of interaction of different individuals.



Figure 121: Interior render of the mezzanine lounge from the elevator core.

The mezzanine lounge is a bright space that offers the potential of connection and interaction to the activities below through its characteristic transparency. It is lit by natural light from the diagonal skylight and from the platform. With the intention of being a place of pauses and thought, these characteristics can form a space of peace and meditation for both travellers and non-travellers.

Furthermore, the space offers views of the city to the southern direction (the platform).



Figure 122: Interior render of the mezzanine lounge towards the elevator core.

This render of the mezzanine lounge reinforces the fact that it is a bright space that offers views - the view of the city core is also possible from this vantage point of the lounge. From here, the skylight views are optimal. Being overhung the circulation one can engage in the activities and with the people walking below.

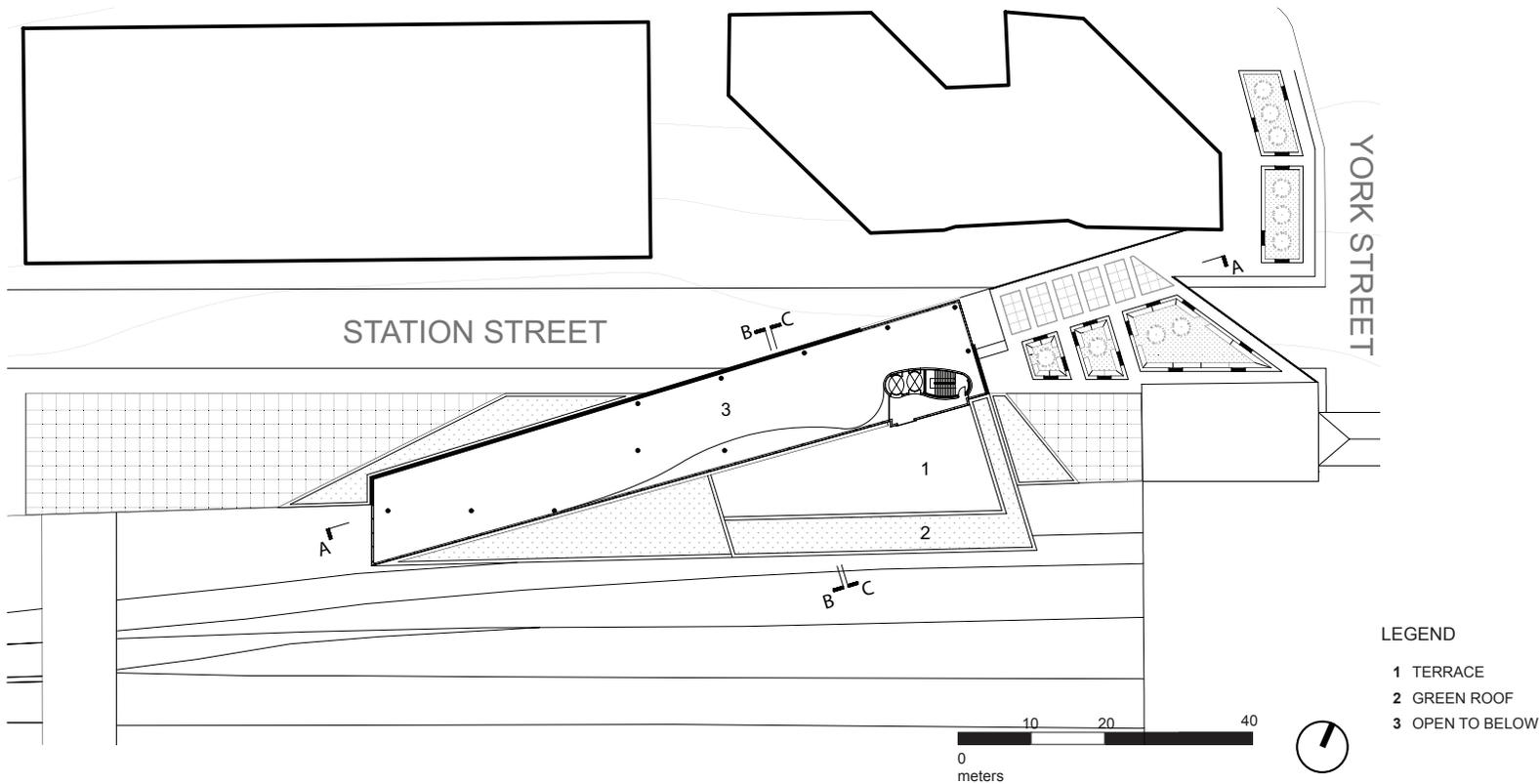


Figure 123: Terrace level roof-top floor plan.

For further experience of the city there is a roof terrace that provides optimal views of the southern side of Toronto and the CN Tower. Unfortunately lake Ontario cannot be viewed from this terrace as taller buildings block the views. However, this terrace can be used for social and public events, and can be a spot to view train activities; for example like the departing of the Union-Pearson Express train with someone one might have brought to the station to say farewell to. The green areas of the terrace are also accessible to the public.

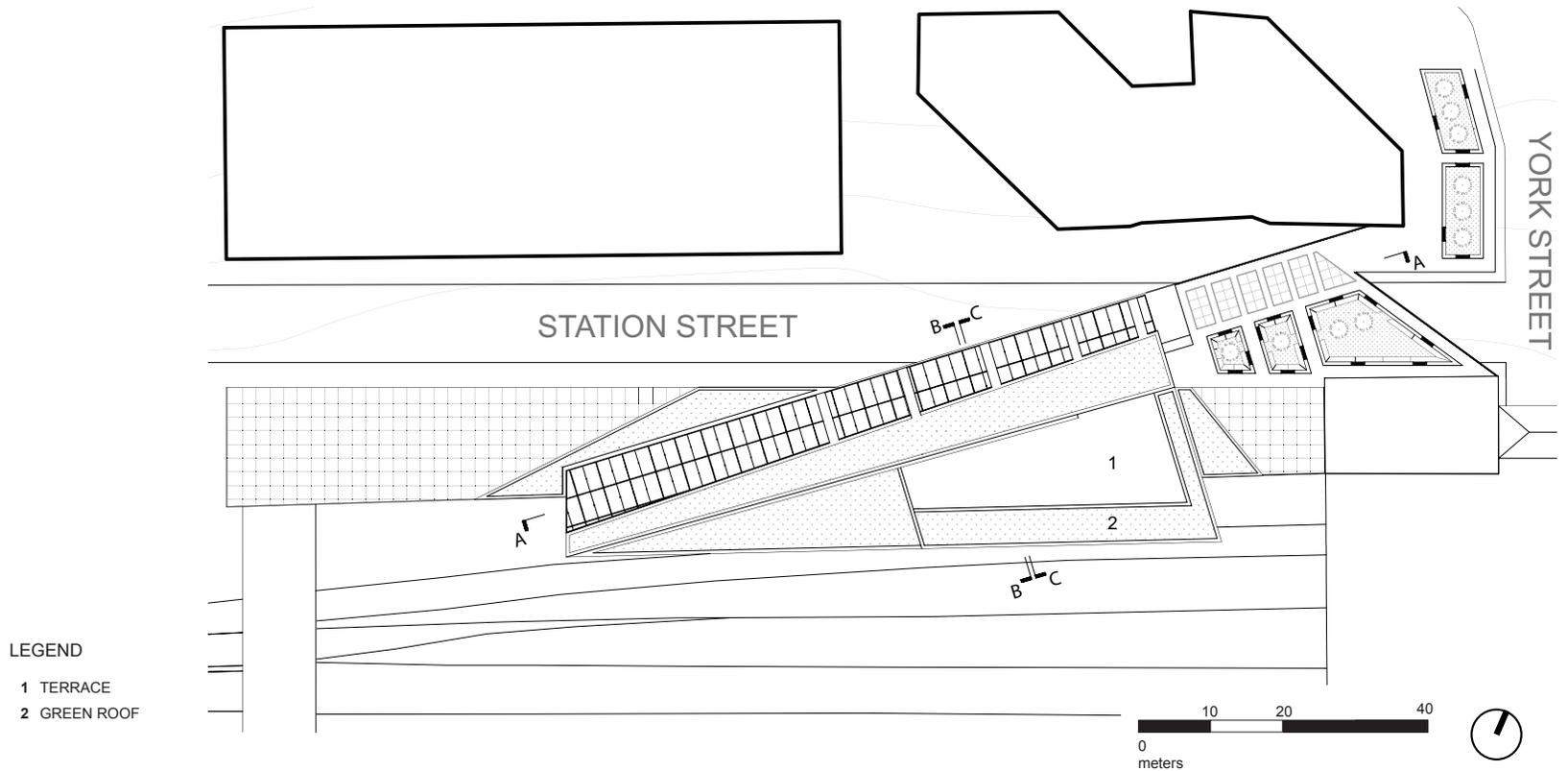


Figure 124: Roof plan of the station

The roof plan ties all the elements spoken of before that create the experience of arrival at this station - the glass skylight in the diagonal that emphasizes the journey to the city from platforms, the extension of the said diagonal through the design of the terrace as a guidance and orientation, and the opaque elements in the Skywalk that create the contrast for a heightened experience between the Skywalk and the station (Light versus dark).



Figure 125: Exterior render of the station from the bridge to the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

The south facing design of the station takes advantage of the sun for natural lighting through multiple glazed wall and clerestory windows. For glare protection a screen is mounted on the platform wall which does not obstruct views. The terrace level and its views are evident in this render (city core to the north-east, south city, and the CN Tower that is not shown in this render).

Concluding Reflection

It is evident that due to globalization the world is changing towards better living standards and conditions, ameliorating and enhancing life in many instances and contexts, like never before. Global interconnectivity both physical and virtual is unprecedented because of globalization where the world and its people is able to share ideas and information quickly and with great ease. Travel around the world has never been this high as it is seen in trends today – this globalization phenomenon is greater than the Golden Age of travel in the twentieth century. For the reason that ideas are becoming shared and spread throughout, many aspects of living are becoming “the same.” This includes but is not limited to living standards, fashion, design, urban planning, and architectural design. With this extensive connectivity the unique aspects of each place in the world is changing towards “the same” design ideas, principles, and materiality. What was once unique to a particular place, city, or region, now is replaced with design that can be found halfway cross the world in a different country. It could be said that places are becoming placeless, characterless, and uninteresting. Architecture and design are important aspect, especially architecture, which define a place as it represents dwelling in place, the people that dwell in it, and the values and aspirations that the people hold. Architecture has the power to influence how one feels in a place or space, how one perceives it, and the relationship between the built form and the individual experiencing it.

With travel on a continuous rising trend and the evolution of cities and places to the uniform and monotonous, the character and experience of place is in question especially for those that are foreign – the traveller. It can be noted in particularity that places of transition have become an architecture that is uninspired, purely functional, and utilitarian. As gateways and thresholds for destinations, places of transition, such as airports, train stations and bus terminals, are important places where their appreciation in contemporary times is a lacking. It is especially in this day and age when many people travel around the world, that train stations have the potential of becoming major transport nodes between city centers and periphery airports or other modes of transportation. In the past when mass transportation was new and exciting, these places of transition, airports and train stations, were monumental design

for cities as they represented greatness, innovation, prosperity, and growth. Being lively and social spaces, places of transition were centers of urban activity. However with this can be said for train stations as their usage has declined significantly over the last century and stations have been demolished, re-purposed, or not maintained and left for natural decay. Furthermore, many times, new contemporary design focuses on innovation of materials, structure, and modernity, however, forgetting about the traveller experience of the place of transition and the destination it represents as a gateway. Places of transition are the first contact with a destination for the traveller upon arrival and the last upon their departure from the destination. Avoiding kitsch, such places have the potential to introduce the traveller into their new place of dwelling. Furthermore, it is not only the traveller that arrives and departs from places of transition. Citizens of a destination arrive and depart at such places whether it is for actual travel or for welcoming or farewelling somebody. For the citizens, such places can be reminders and rediscoveries of their place of living, its values, its unique characteristics, and contexts.

Toronto Union-Pearson Express station at Toronto Union Station has been selected as the site of study and design for the many reasons mentioned previously. The current design has been completed recently however, it lacks the experience of arrival for the traveller or citizen, experience of place, and its overall design is isolated and functional. The station is disconnected from its surroundings in various means. It may seem that the station is hidden from the public urban eye, as it is located within the Skywalk and only visible from the trackside. Furthermore, it may seem hidden from the eye and people in its placement and engagement with the Skywalk – the station is a pocket with a small opening on the side of the Skywalk and it seems like it is an attachment to the Skywalk and to the city. With such design and location circumstances, arrival into Toronto from the train station or vice versa, arrival into the train station, is insignificant and like other numerous train stations, it is “invisible.” Moreover, it does not invite individuals and groups that are non-travellers to use the space and therefore the station lacks interaction with citizens, travellers, and the city. The current station is a

prototype for the station of the future by having all program in one space for interaction and due to the nature of the station and the frequent train activity.

The design component of this thesis addresses these issues and furthermore, attempts to create a unique experience of first contact with the destination and the station itself. The design of the new Union-Pearson express station desires to make the moment of arrival a spiritual sensation and procession to heighten this particular moment as it is significant in one's journey from one destination to another. It demonstrates how architecture of transition can create a meaningful experience of place and arrival at a destination. Given that this is site and place specific, in order to design a space that reflects a particular place, travel, and heightening the experience of it, the station or any place of transition needs to embrace the aspect of travel, its surrounding natural and built environments, and a multitude of contexts (historical, social, cultural, political, geographical).

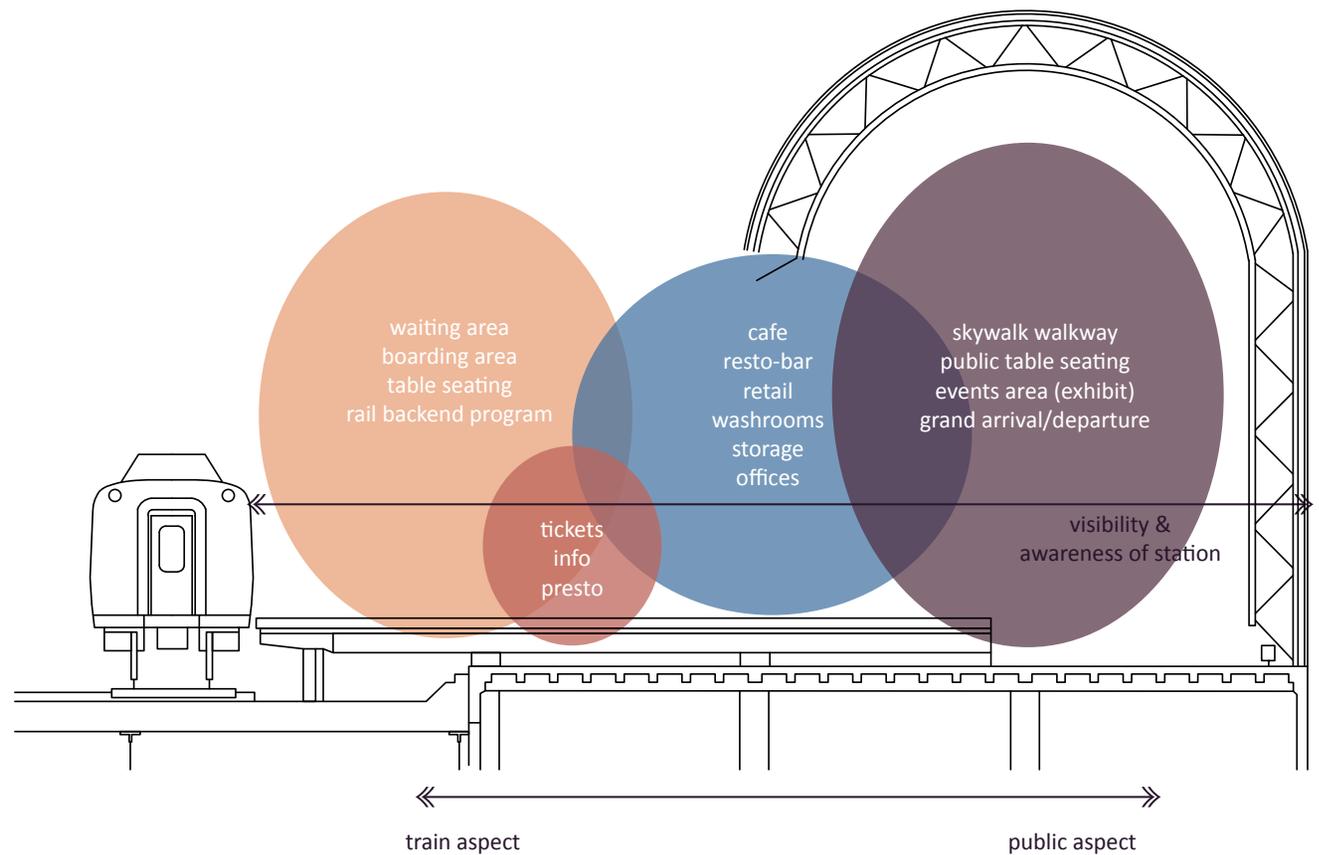
This project induces the physical and psychological senses to experience the station through use of light to create a meaningful and "spiritual" procession from that platform into the city. Through the identification of multiple thresholds on multiple axes of circulation, the design created significant moments of arrival at the station and vice versa, in Toronto. With a direct entrance into the city and key views that connected the two ends of the station, the diagonal path became the main procession path at the point where all axes of circulation meet. Subtle references to Toronto's geographical location through the curved slabs and colour choices create a unique space while informing one of Toronto's identities. The natural light and particularly framed city views add to creating identity as well. The station design proposal is designed in a manner that one has to pass through the station to get from one end of the Skywalk to the other. However this is not a negative aspect. This brings more people into the station to experience travel. Furthermore, the openness and transparency of the plan and program organization facilitates interaction of people with the station and with other people. Moreover, one can rediscover one's arrival in the station and what makes Toronto special

through the design elements and views from the diagonal pathway, even if they already live in the city for many years.

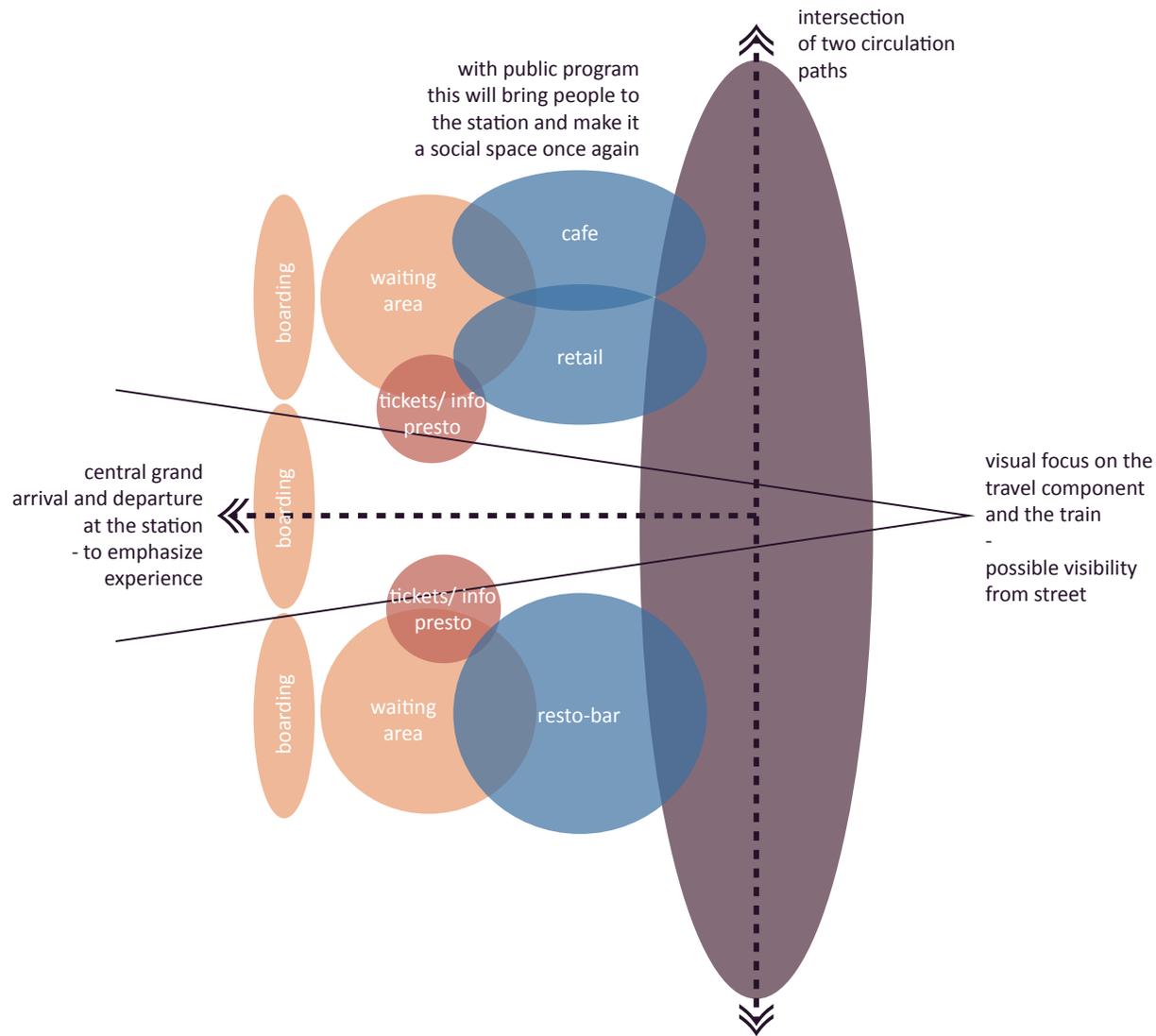
Places of transition have the potential to create excitement of travelling to and from places as they begin the mindset of adventure. Such significant gateways as these places of transition mentioned play a major role in how one experiences and perceives place. With unique experiences and design that is informative of place and orientation, and where the design breaks away from the globally shared design language, threshold architecture can create a significant beginning and end in the journey - the arrival or departure. It can become the celebration of travel or the one's "spiritual journey" and "finding oneself" in place.

APPENDIX A: DESIGN EXPLORATIONS

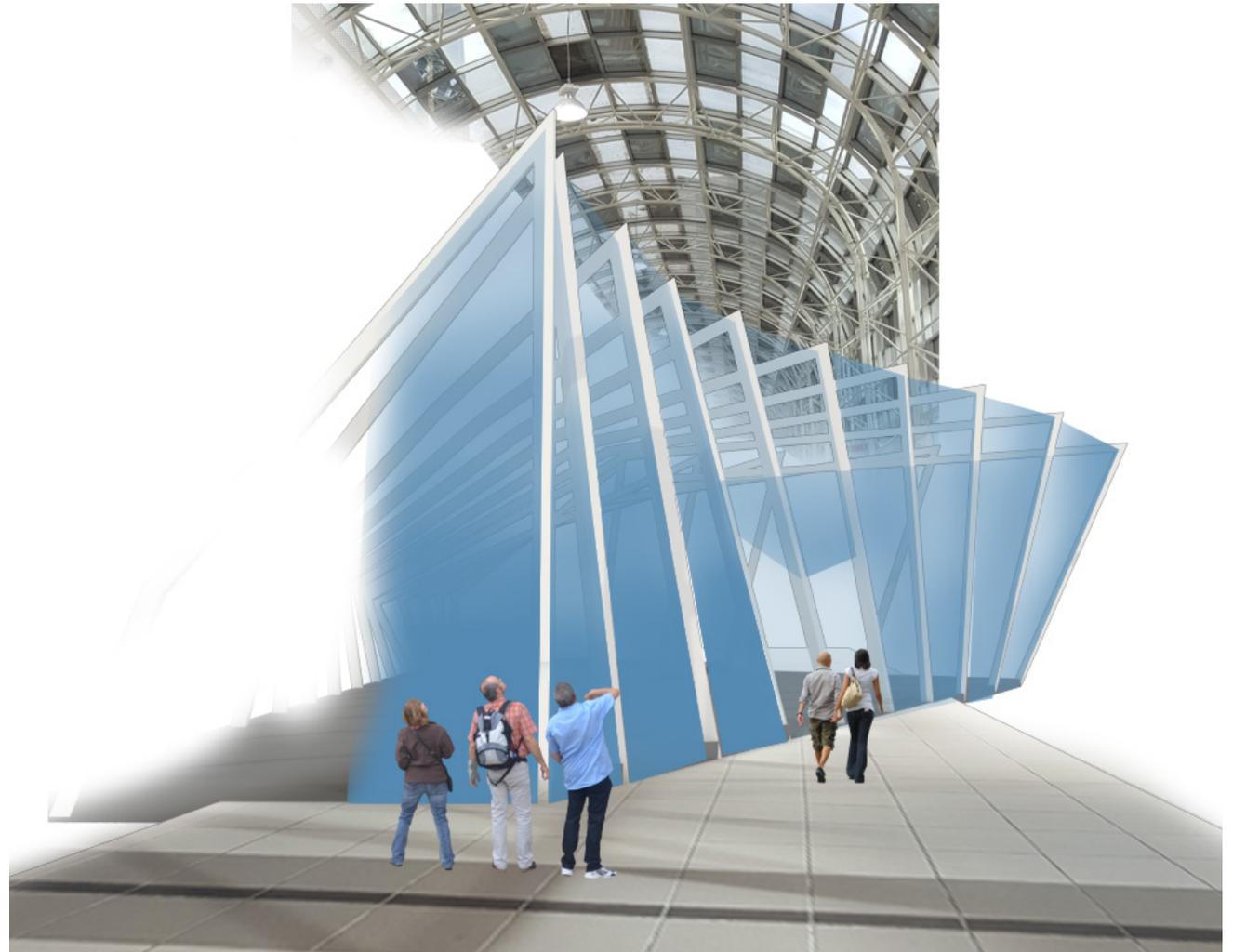
Source: Sandra Katarzyna Dorozynska



As the current station was examined, it was determined that it was disconnected from the Skywalk activities and the pedestrian movement. Through a section diagram of the two spaces, the station and the Skywalk, the program intentions were developed to merge the two spaces and create an experience of place and of the station for everyone who participates in the space. As well, with the merge of the two spaces, the aspect of the station presence in the public spaces was taking shape.

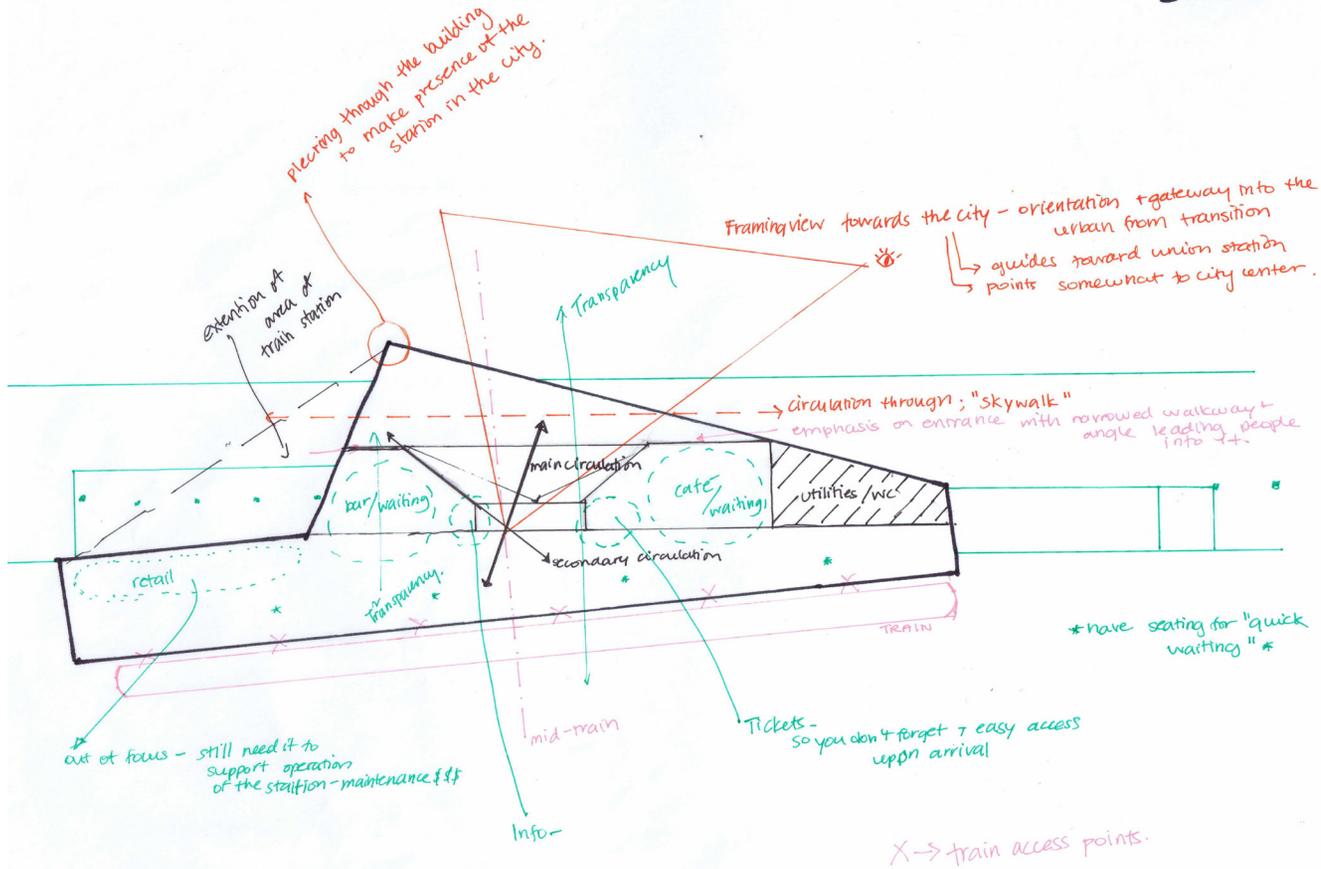


The program began to shape around the circulation of visitors and identifying where the major threshold conditions can occur. Having program accessible from the walkway has the potential to attract individuals and groups other than travellers. As well noticed on a site visit, some individuals, and especially groups, wait before boarding the train to the airport. Providing for the “wait,” the traveller can linger in the space and experience that aspect of travel. There is an approach to create a gradient of activities from arriving to boarding - from active to less active.

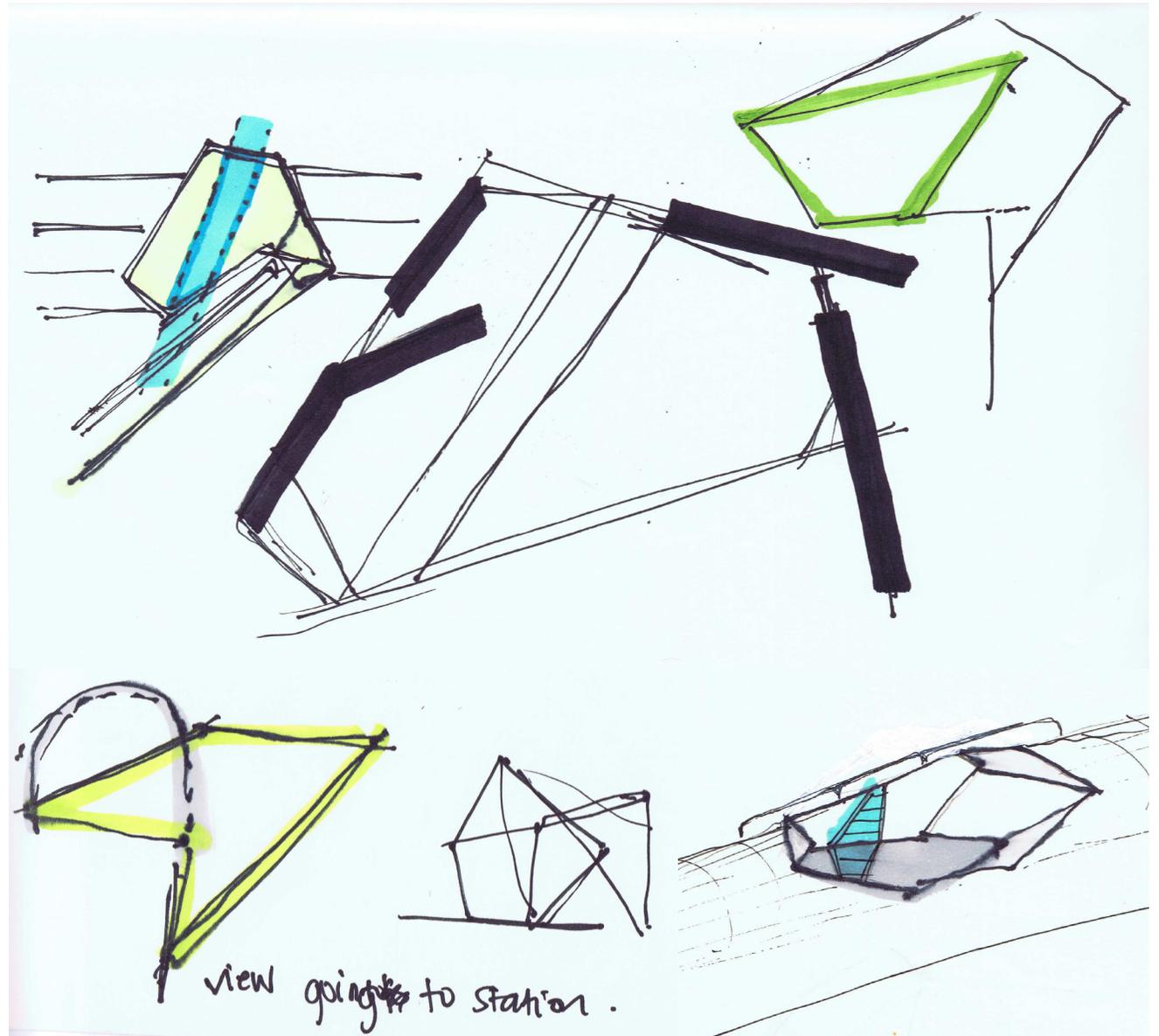


The first attempt at form making in the space was to create a sense of movement to symbolize the movement and dynamics of transportation (the train) and the movement of people (travelling). The form proceeded to extend beyond the Skywalk into the city and street below to create a presence for itself and the train aspect. As well, there was a desire to create an identity for the station and future of train travel through dynamic form and parametric design.

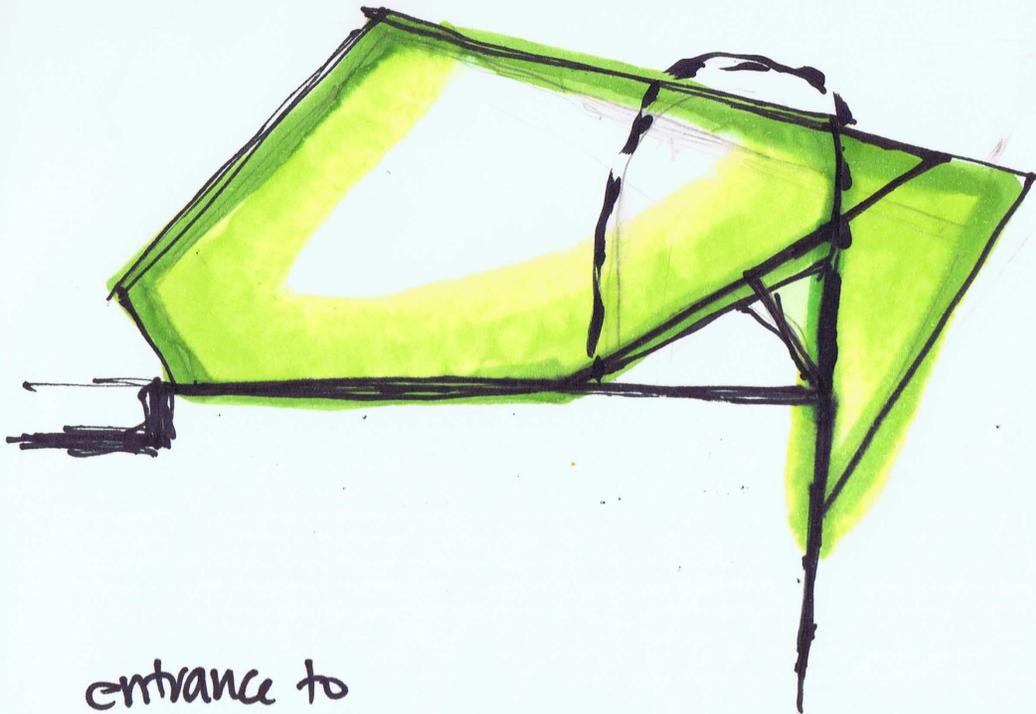
**FLOOR PLAN
SKETCH**



This plan sketch depicts the said intersection of two circulation paths and the spillage of the program into the Skywalk to attract more people. Furthermore, in the plan, there is an attempt to materialize an idea of framing a view of Toronto and natural lighting through key views of the city and transparency of building materials. Following the somewhat traditional inspirations, the plan aims to be more “central” to create a focus and importance of the arrival and departure of travellers and city dwellers.



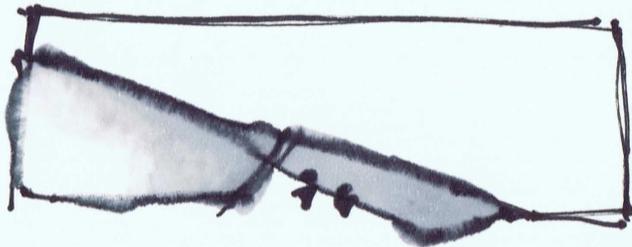
The top sketches are in plan view to identify and accentuate the entrance thresholds - 2 identified at this time. As well the bottom sketches begin the investigation of the form protruding through the Skywalk to identify the station within the city and "make a mark."



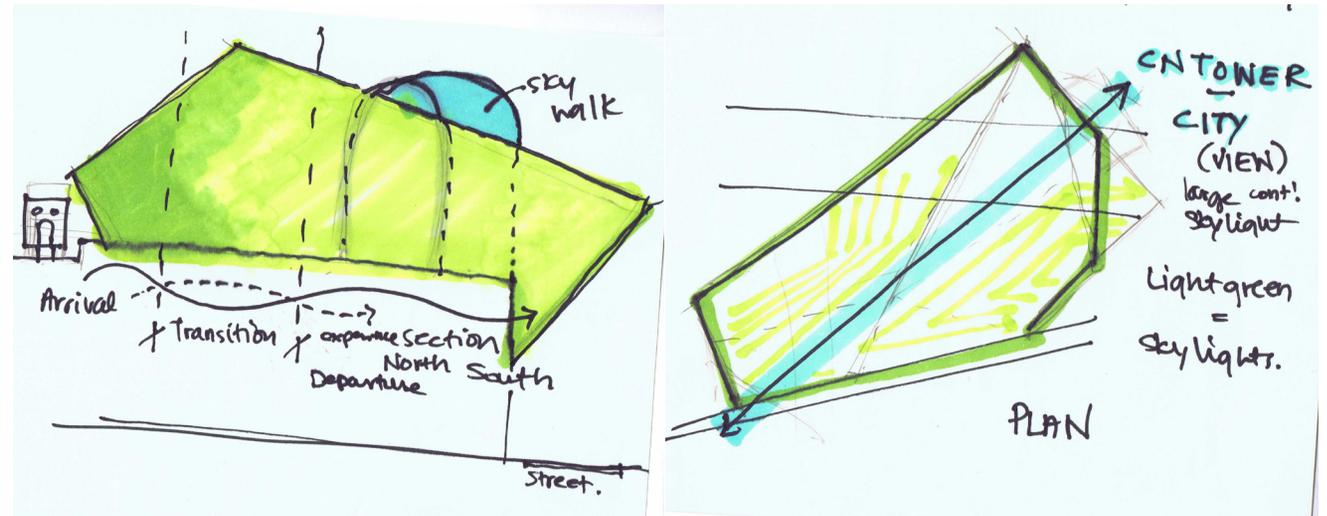
entrance to
station from skywalk
(both sides)

entrance to station from train.

entrance
condition



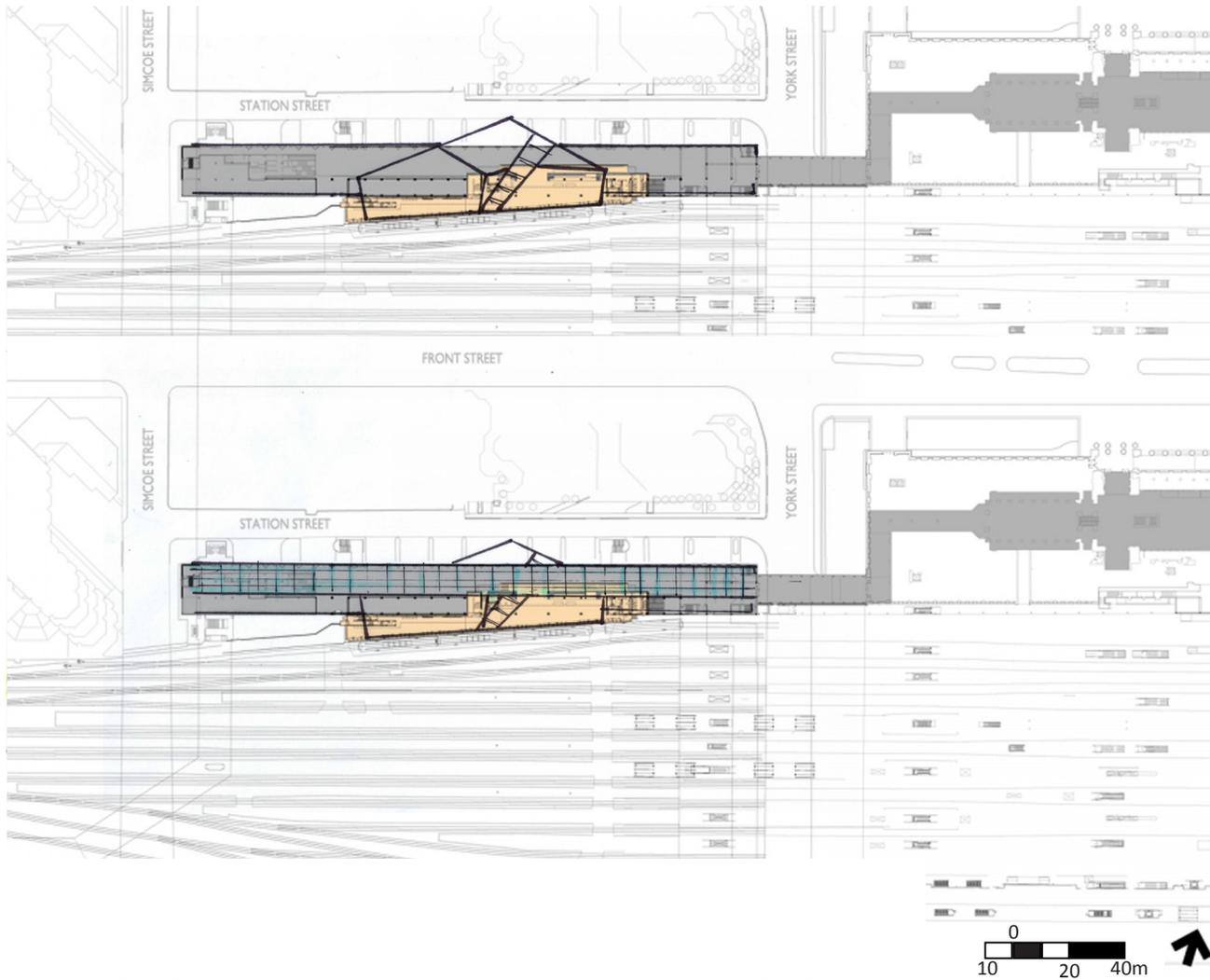
idea



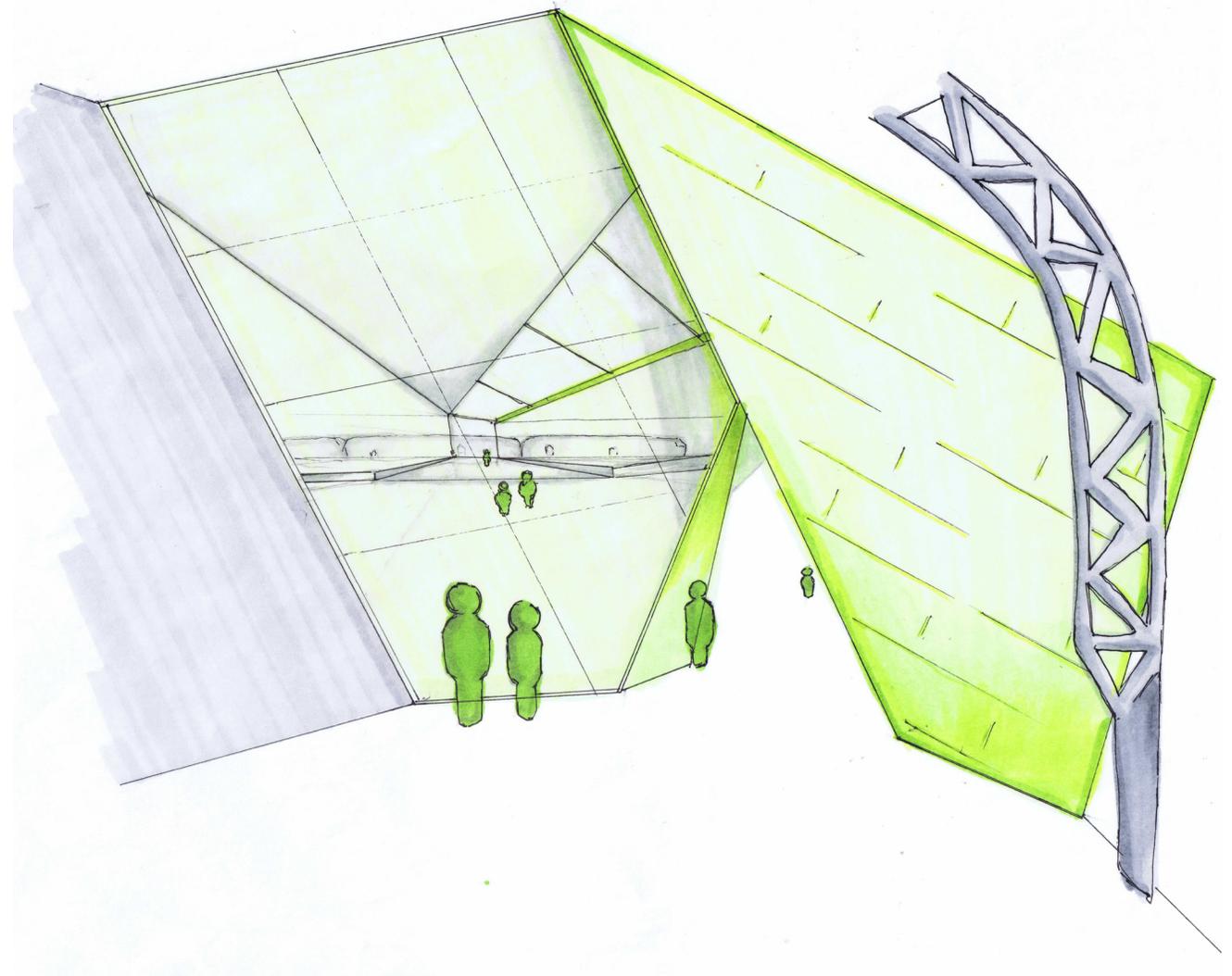
Within all the first sketches of ideas for this new train station in Toronto, the aspect of procession from platform to city became a highlight of the design. A connection between the CN Tower and the city core was also made at the two ends of the city was also identified and hence was acted upon to create a guiding skylight the introduces the individual into the city and brings the city into the station through this key design aspect. This skylight is the blue diagonal line and blue elements that are present in the plan, section, elevation, and perspective hand sketches.

These sketches also explore the idea of creating a grand entrance to the station. Two walls are folded over to create a threshold moment that envelopes the individual. From a large open space like the Skywalk, one passes through a tighter space, the threshold, into another larger and open space, of the station. This idea hopes to reinforce the idea of presence and moments of arriving and departing the station.

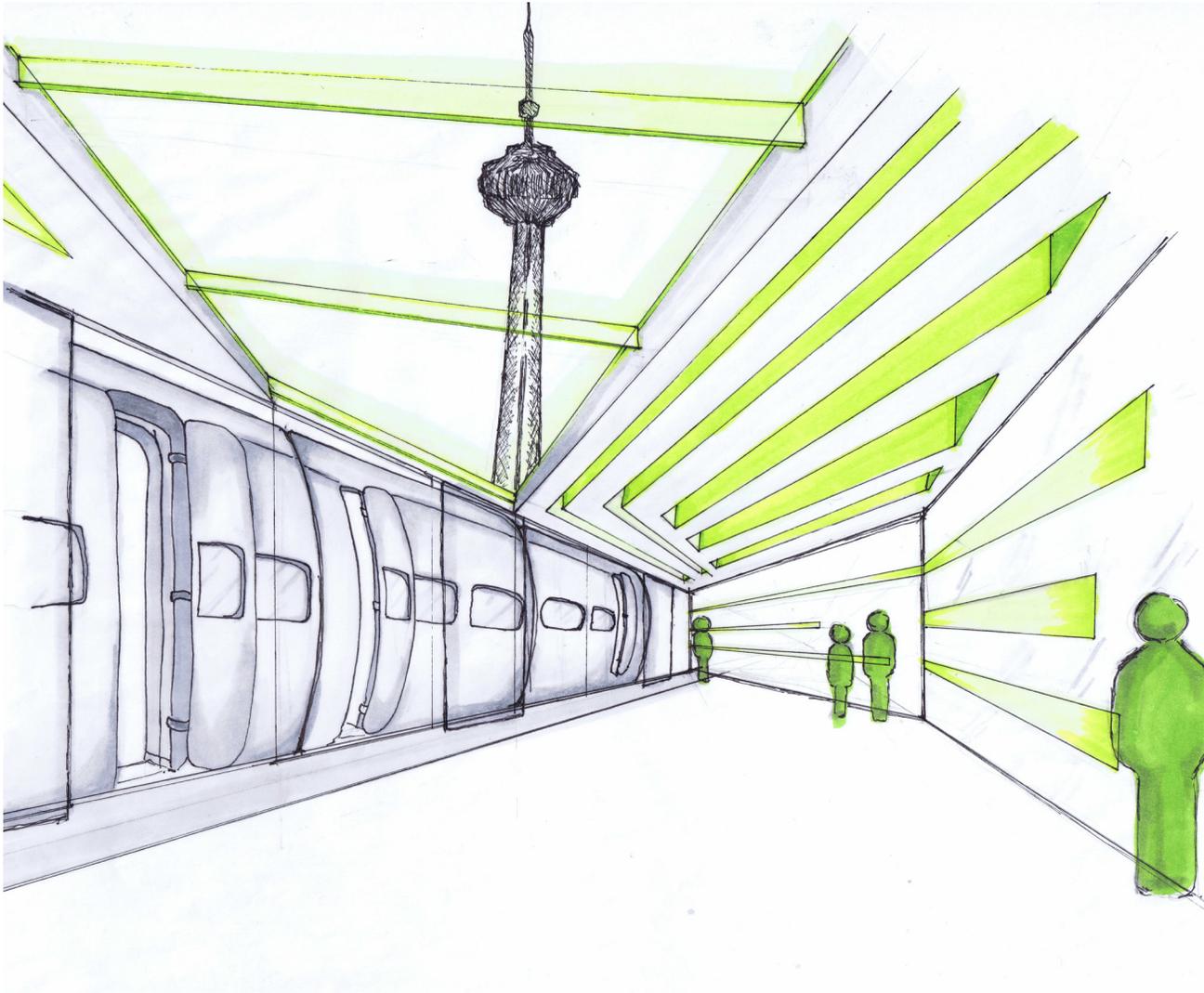
The form is developed into a crystal volume that pierces the existing Skywalk that with its angles, walls, and corners, it guides the traveller into the city in addition to the suggested skylight design component.



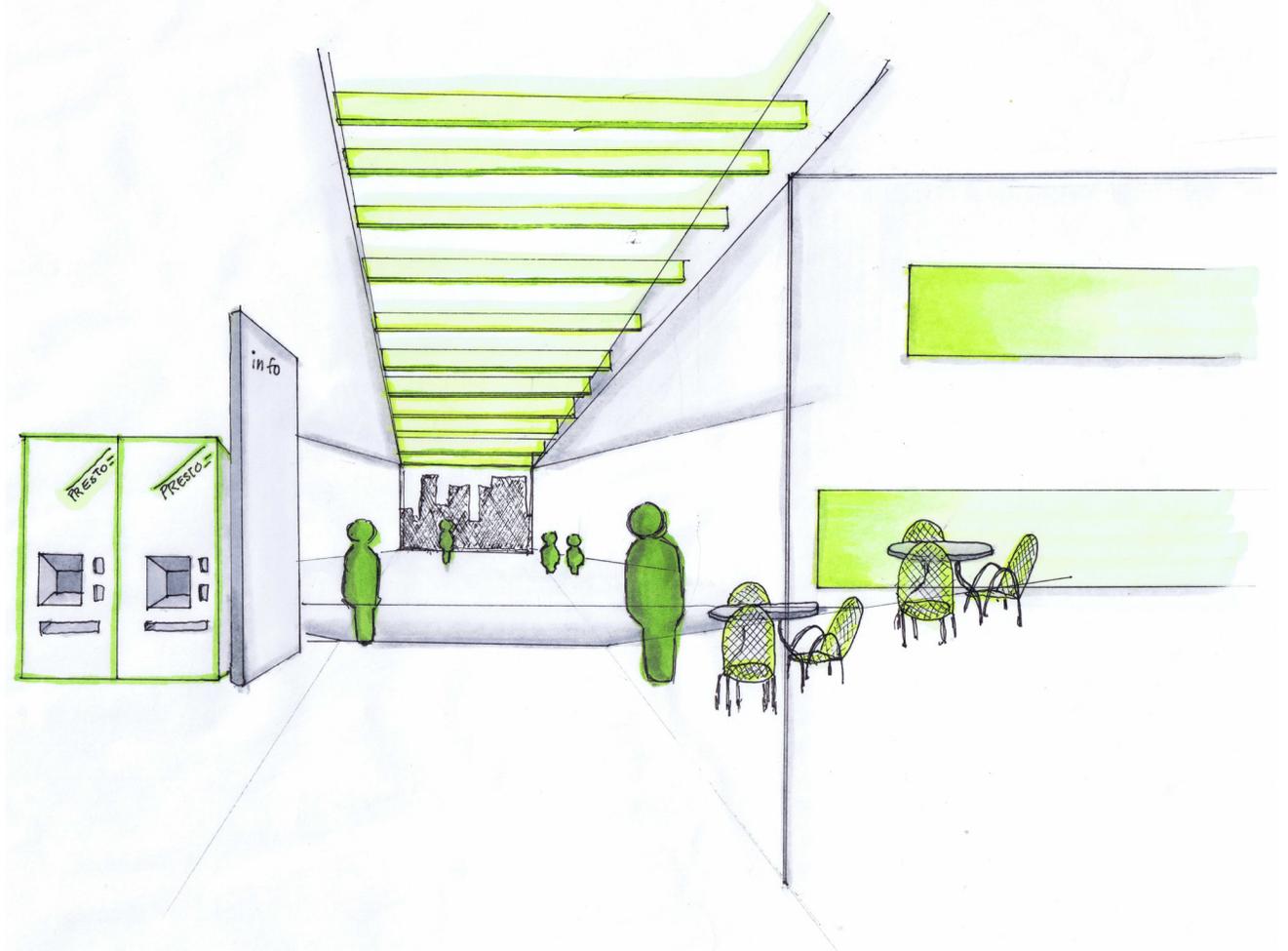
These sketches explore the notions of how much the structure should pierce through the Skywalk and what volumetric condition would be appropriate. The top sketch is showing the whole new design piercing through and creating a bold statement of its presence and identity in the city, while the bottom sketch is more modest however still making its mark in the urban fabric. Furthermore, the bottom design sketch does not fully create the effect that the top design sketch does - it is more hidden.



This sketch is the moment of arrival at the station from Union Station in the Skywalk. There is transparency of materials to create an immediate connection to the travel and train component of this place. One can view the train, the platforms, and the activities within the station before entering the station. This is contrasted with an opaque wall for emphasis. The walls overlap to create an intense gateway threshold.

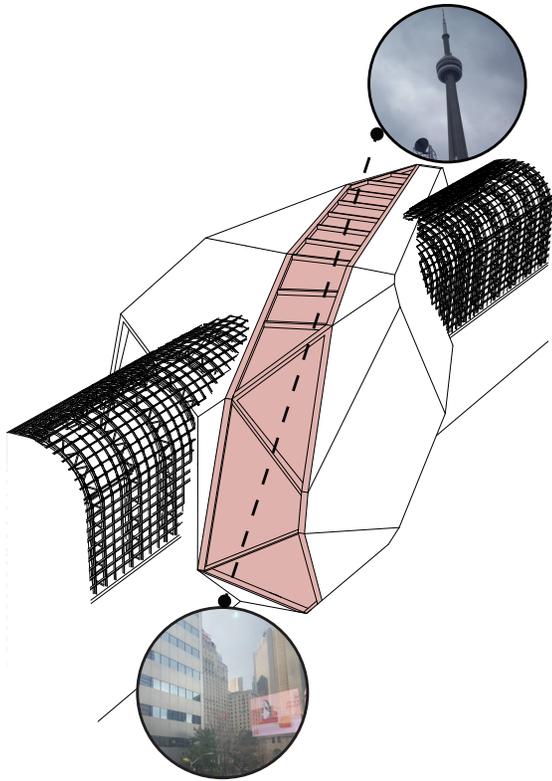


This sketch is of the platform moment. The skylight is the first and last part of Toronto one sees - it is a landmark and a guide for orientation. The skylight guides the traveller into the platform area as well as the directional skylights and markings on the wall. Natural light as well create a place specific ambiance and creates special experiences of the place through its variation throughout the day and night.

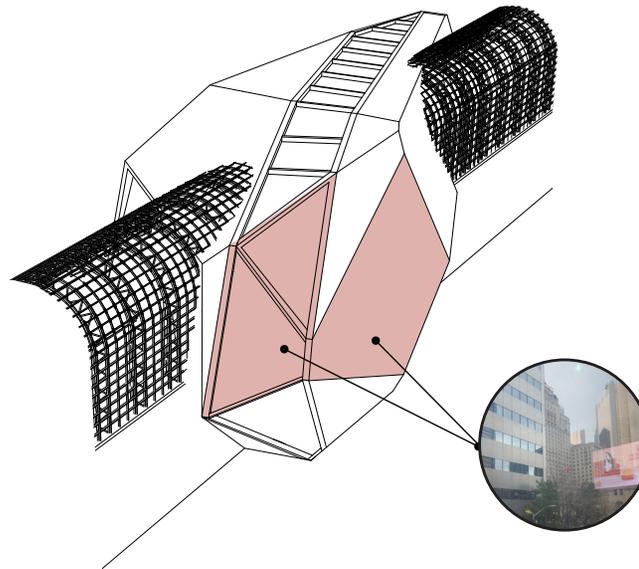


This sketch puts an emphasis on the skylight as a point of guidance and orientation. As well the skylight terminates with a view to the city, that introduces the traveller to the new destination and begins the experience of the city. The sketch also depicts the transparency of materiality to create visual connections and consciousness of place for both the traveller as well as the non-traveller.

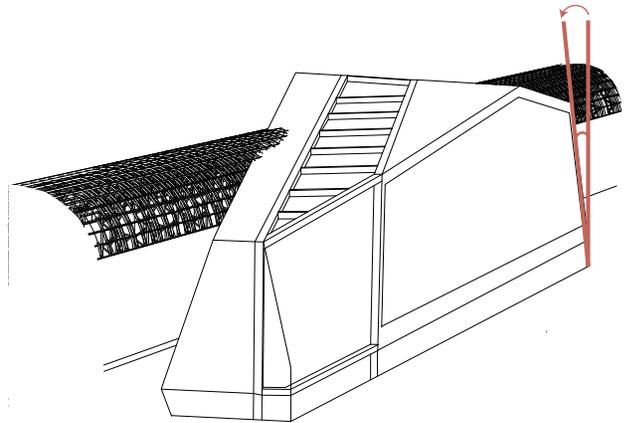
The following diagrams illustrate the key moves in the beginning stages of design development that were pursued to heighten the moment of arrival for all participants of the station.



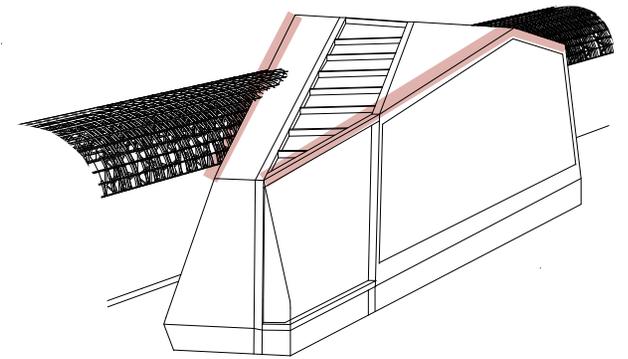
This diagram shows the connection of the two opposite views, the landmark CN Tower and the city core, that are connected by the skylight.



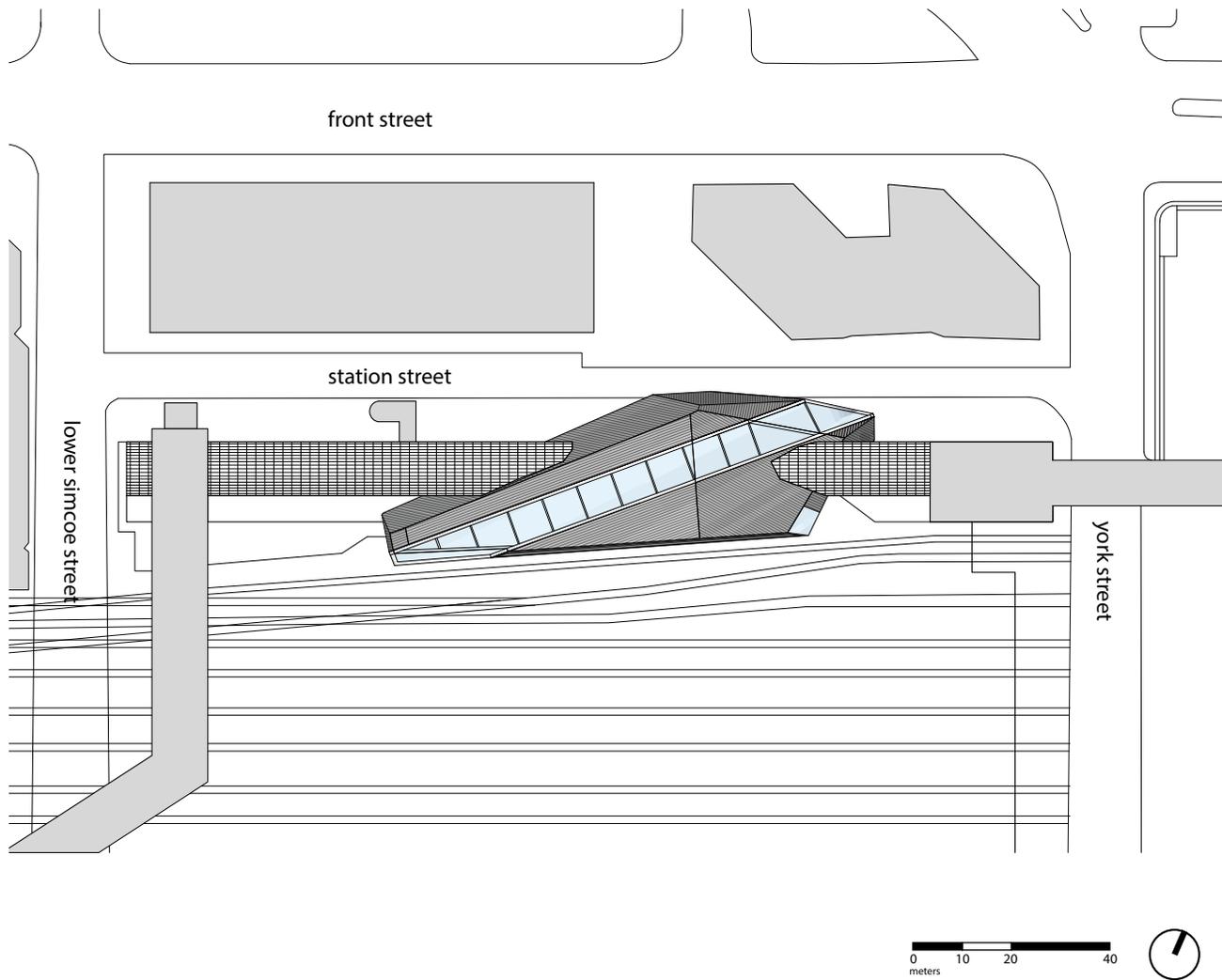
There are two possible moments of framing the view of the city as it is limited due to existing built structures that obstruct the view partially.



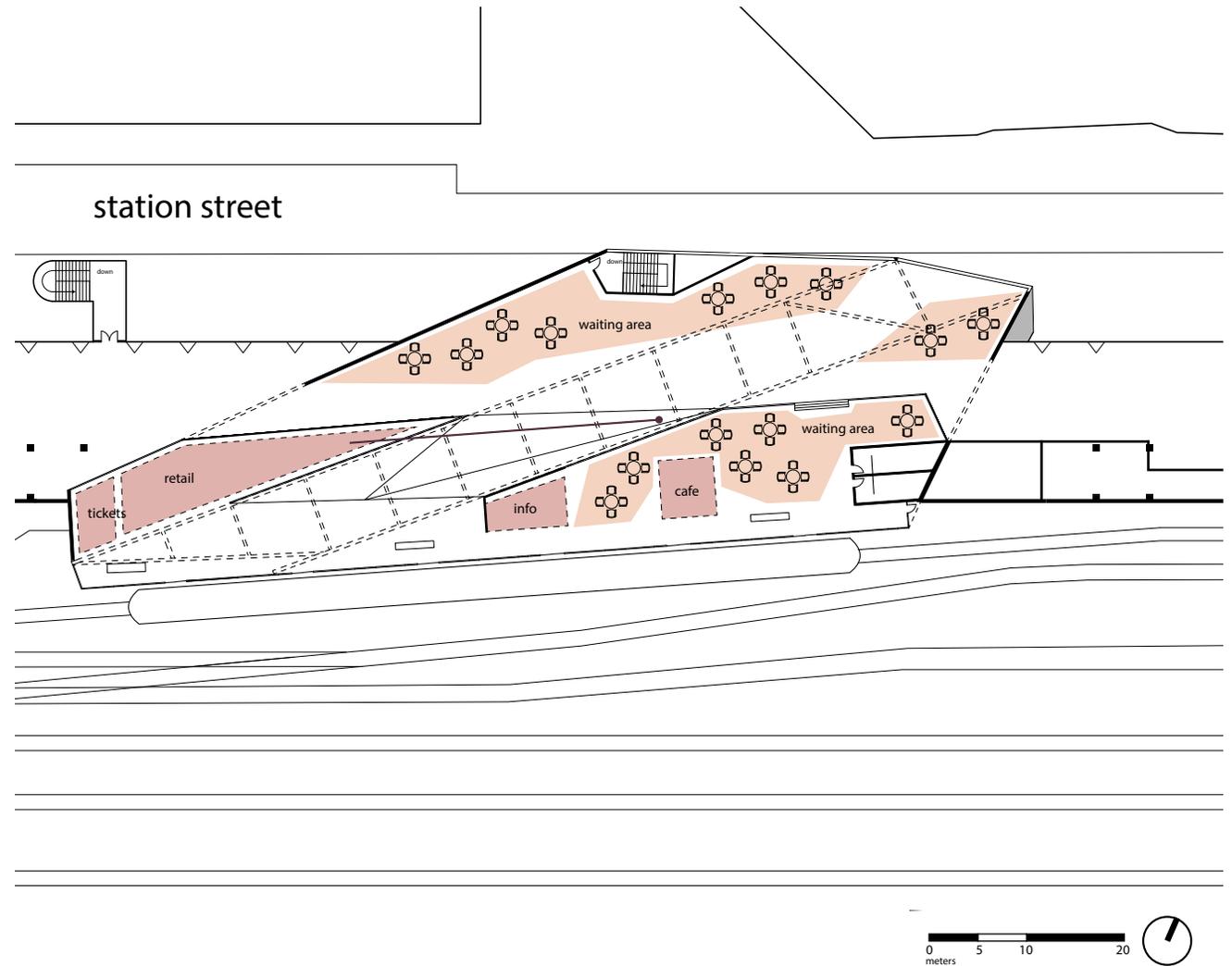
The tilted angle of this wall is to create a welcoming and “opening” for experience into the city. It is also further emphasizing the movement of people, movement of the train, and travel.



The form has peak points that signify the potential peak experiences at the station. One is at the threshold between city and station while the other is at the train - platform threshold.



From previous form piercing explorations, this final form does not full pierce the skywalk, but at the same time it is not modest as seen through this roof plan drawing. The very much emphasized skylight is at an angle that will connect and create said view and connection optimally. Also with the piercing aspect, one must pass through the station in order to continue on the Skywalk to the Metro Toronto Convention Centre hence bringing in other people.



The floor plan is organized in a way for people to interact and have a visual connection with the city and the passing pedestrian circulation. There is more space for waiting as well as for social meetings to occur within the station as it is extended into the path way of the Skywalk. Transparency is kept throughout the station and centrality as mentioned before is evident through space layout and circulation paths created.





These renderings depict the first attempts at creating a space for the experience of place and arrival in Toronto. It is perceived as a large and open space that allows for visual and aural connections to the activities of the station in order to expand the audience of the station to non-travellers.

The ramp amplifies the experience at arriving at the waiting and boarding area (train area) in addition to the slight elevation change in the floor levels to demarcate the station from the Skywalk walkway within the station.

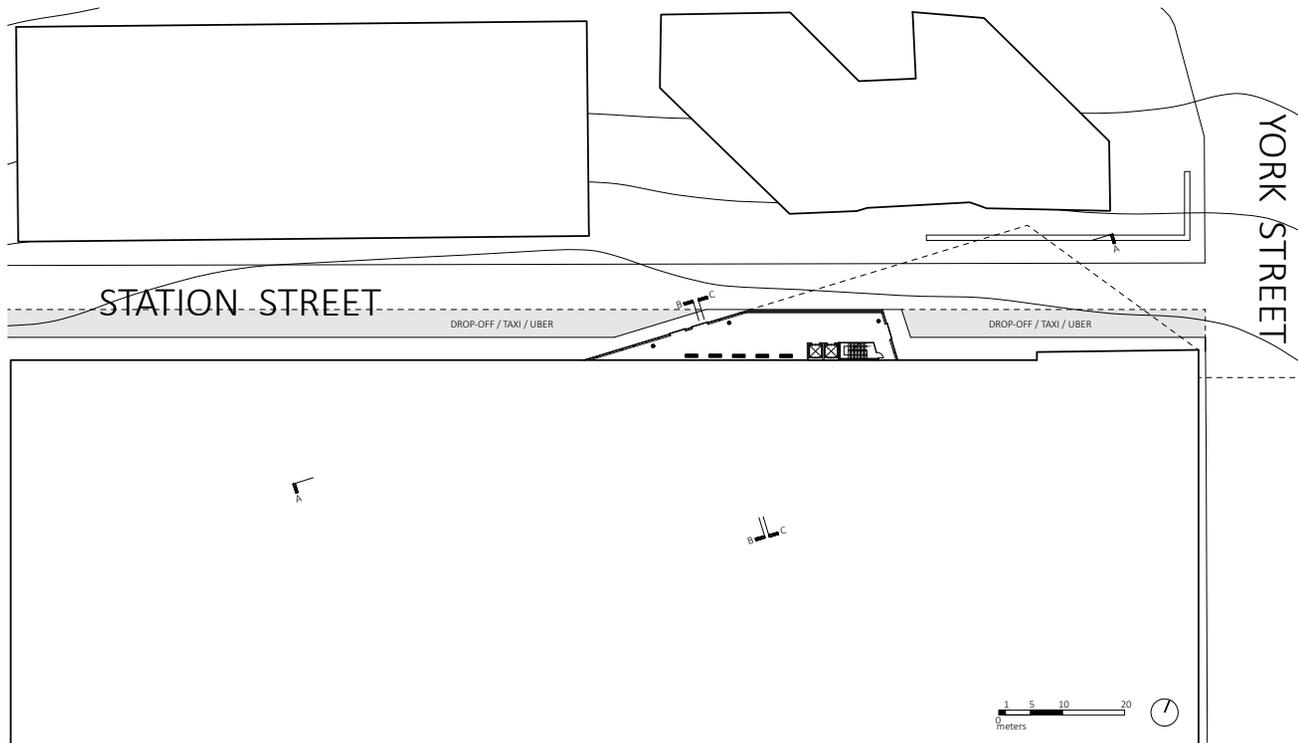
The said experience of the skylight and the CN Tower as a guide and orientation is also represented in one of the renders. People know Toronto for the CN Tower, it is a large part of its identity and orientation (for direction) within the city as it is the tallest and most visible structure in the Toronto skyline.



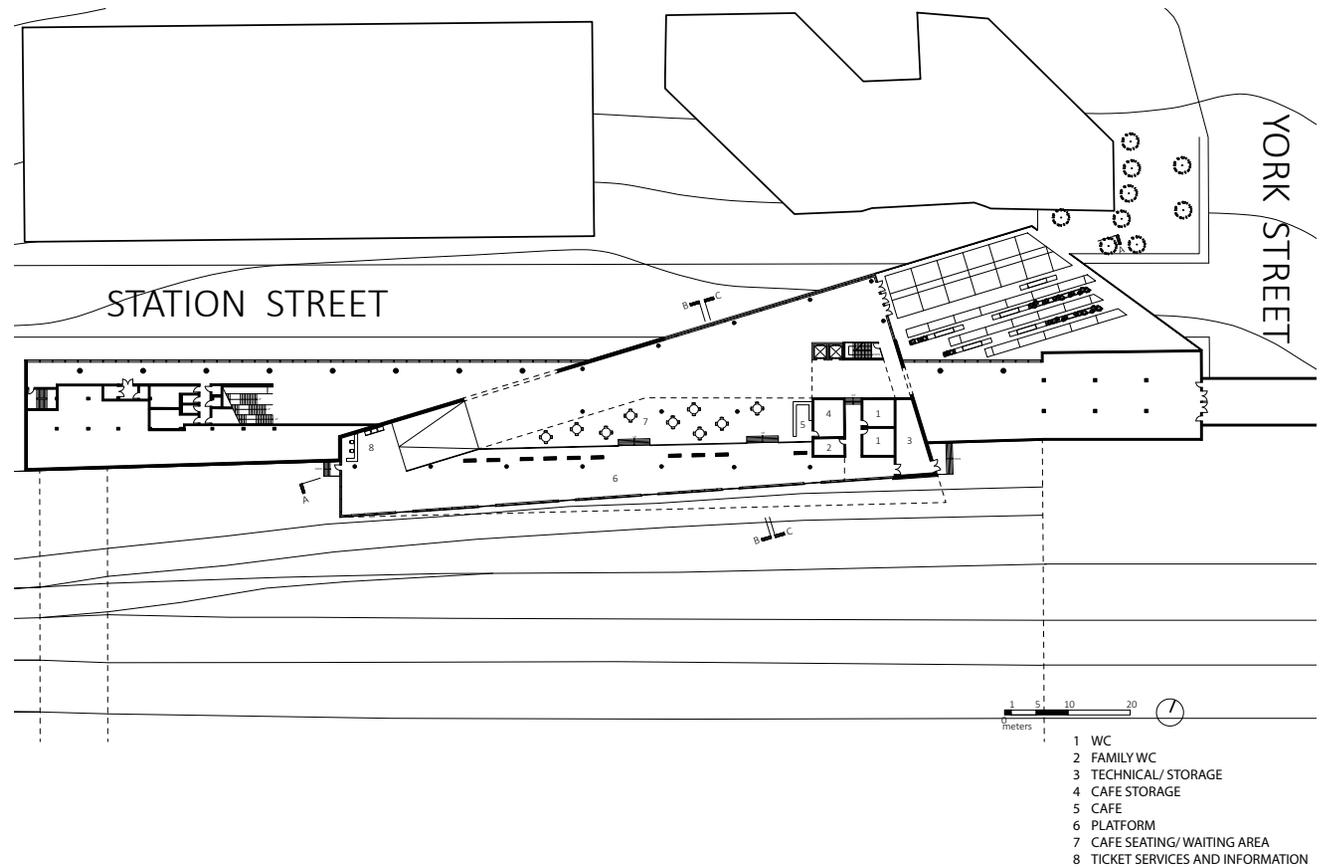


Further development of the design saw the station create its presence in the city/ street realm. Identifying that there is no direct connection of the station to the street, the developed design proposed to create another two new thresholds - one at street level and one via a terrace to the building opposite to the station which also had a small green space that connected to Front Street. This later became the new main entrance into the city and station upon arrival. With its improved skylight continuously a guide aspect of the design, the glazed components frame key moments in the city skyline visible from this location. The aspect of light not only as a guide, but also as a component to the “spiritual” experience of the station was also experimented with.

Furthermore, the Skywalk was redesigned as well to create that desired contrast between two building conditions and furthermore between the old Union Station and the new Union-Pearson Express Station.



As mentioned before, the new design proposes its presence directly onto street level via a vestibule with vertical circulation to the station - accessibility as a direct entrance and exit to the city is made possible through vertical circulation from the main station floor. As well there is access for drop-off and pick-up as this was a lacking characteristic in the current existing station design.

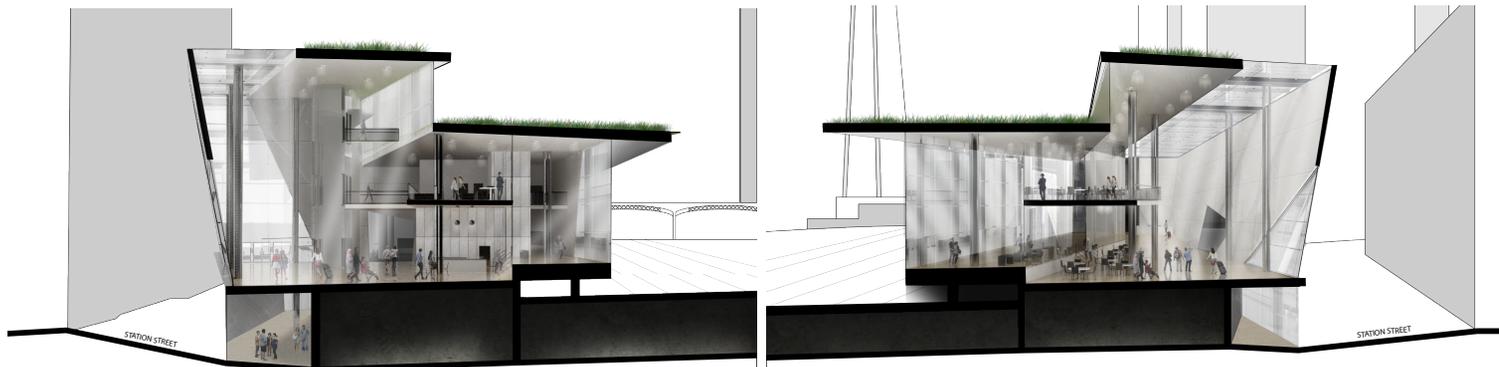


The next iteration of the design plays on the movement of people - arrival and departure - and hence the circulation axes were studied and applied as a key feature for the design expression. The new station layout in plan emphasizes the direct arrival into the city through the diagonal path that is further highlighted by the skylight above (first axis of circulation). Furthermore, there is also the other axis of circulation, the Skywalk, that is also evident. The third axis of circulation is the vertical of the elevator and stair core extending from ground level to the terrace level.

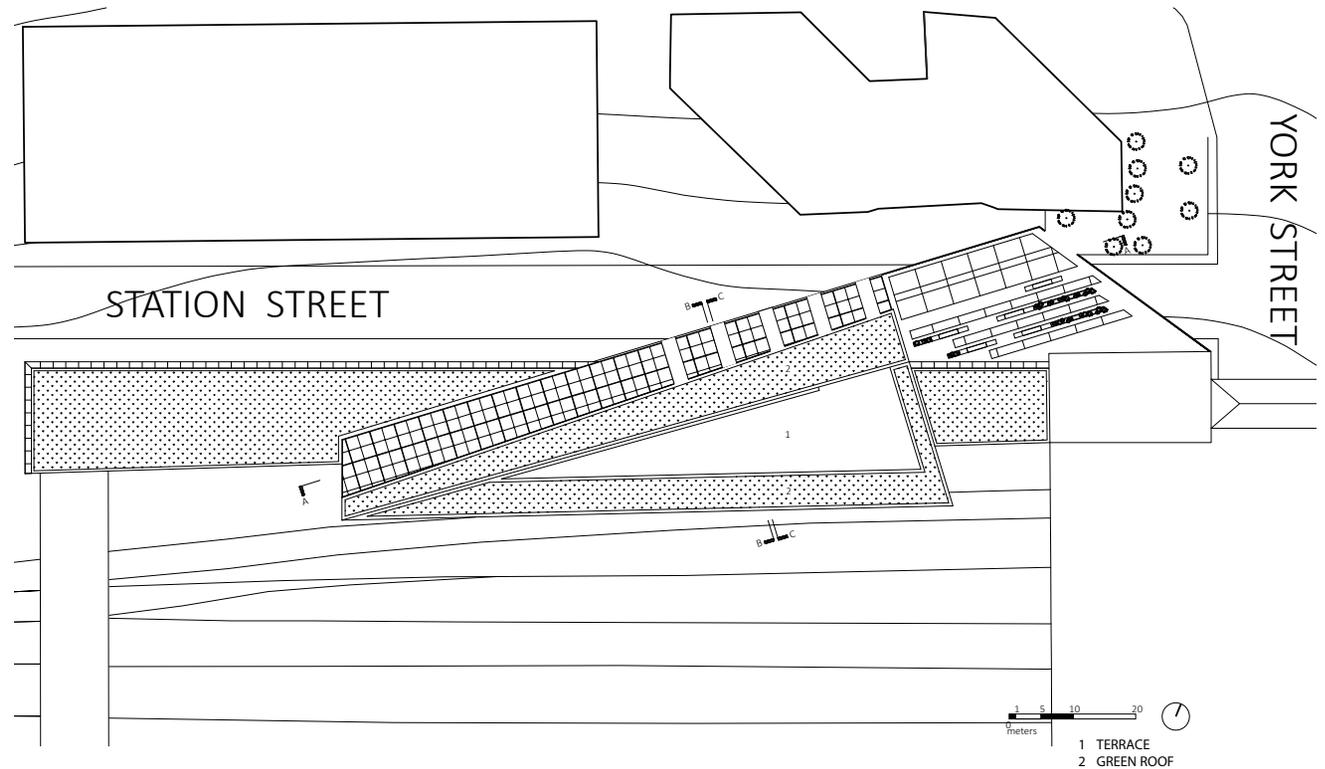
The program is open to create open accessibility and interaction for all individuals participating.



5 10 20 40
0
meters

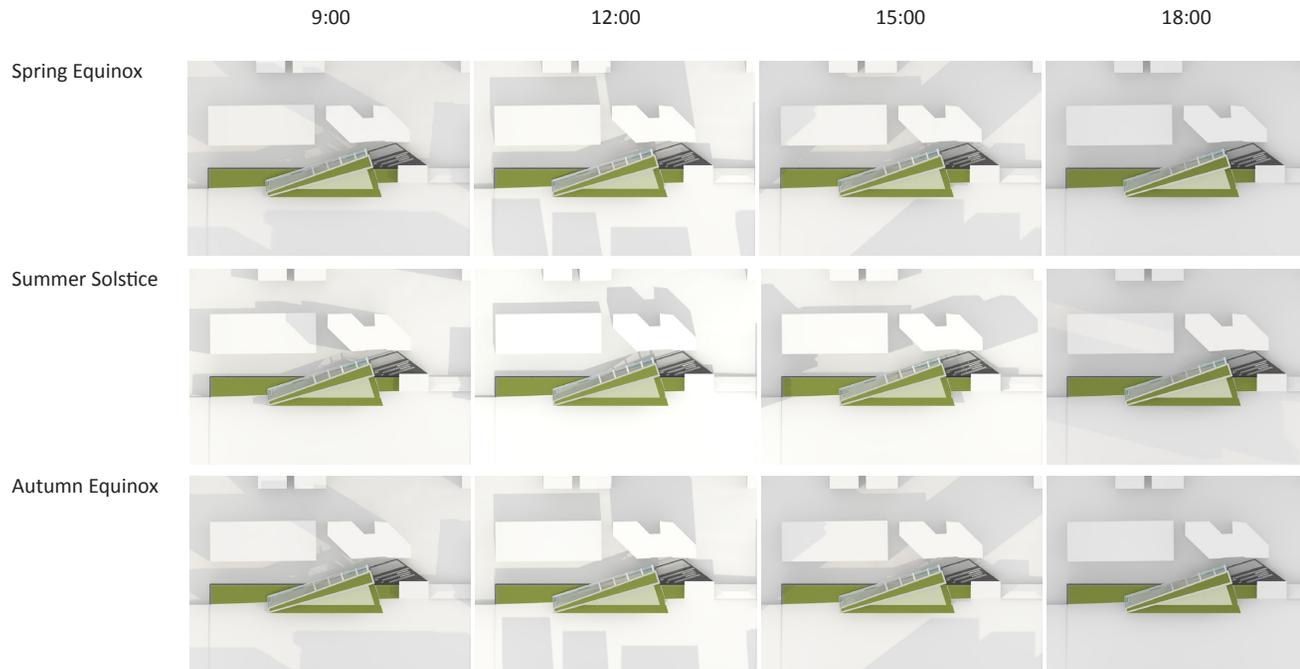


5 10 20 40
0
meters



An accessible green terrace was added as a dimension for public interaction with the station as well as the city and train aspect of travel. The terrace faces the tracks exposing trains and their activity for viewing. As well one can enjoy the view of the southern city skyline which includes the CN Tower.

There is a possibility for public events to occur here. Additionally, it was discussed that this terrace would be used by non-travellers (majority of users) as many travellers will most likely board the train upon immediate arrival at the station or after a short period of time after arriving and lingering/ waiting since the trains depart in regular short intervals.



A sun path/ sun light study was done to determine the design and landscaping of the station terrace that bridges over Station Street. The study encompasses three seasons that the terrace would see and be more used - Spring, Summer, and Autumn.

As seen in the study, the site, especially the terrace, does get partial sun exposure, however, it receives a lot of shade from the station as well as the Skywalk buildings. Most sun activity is evident in the summer months during peak hours of the day. For this reason, there is no immediate need for sun shading devices such as umbrellas, massive overhangs, or vegetation (like big shrubs and trees).





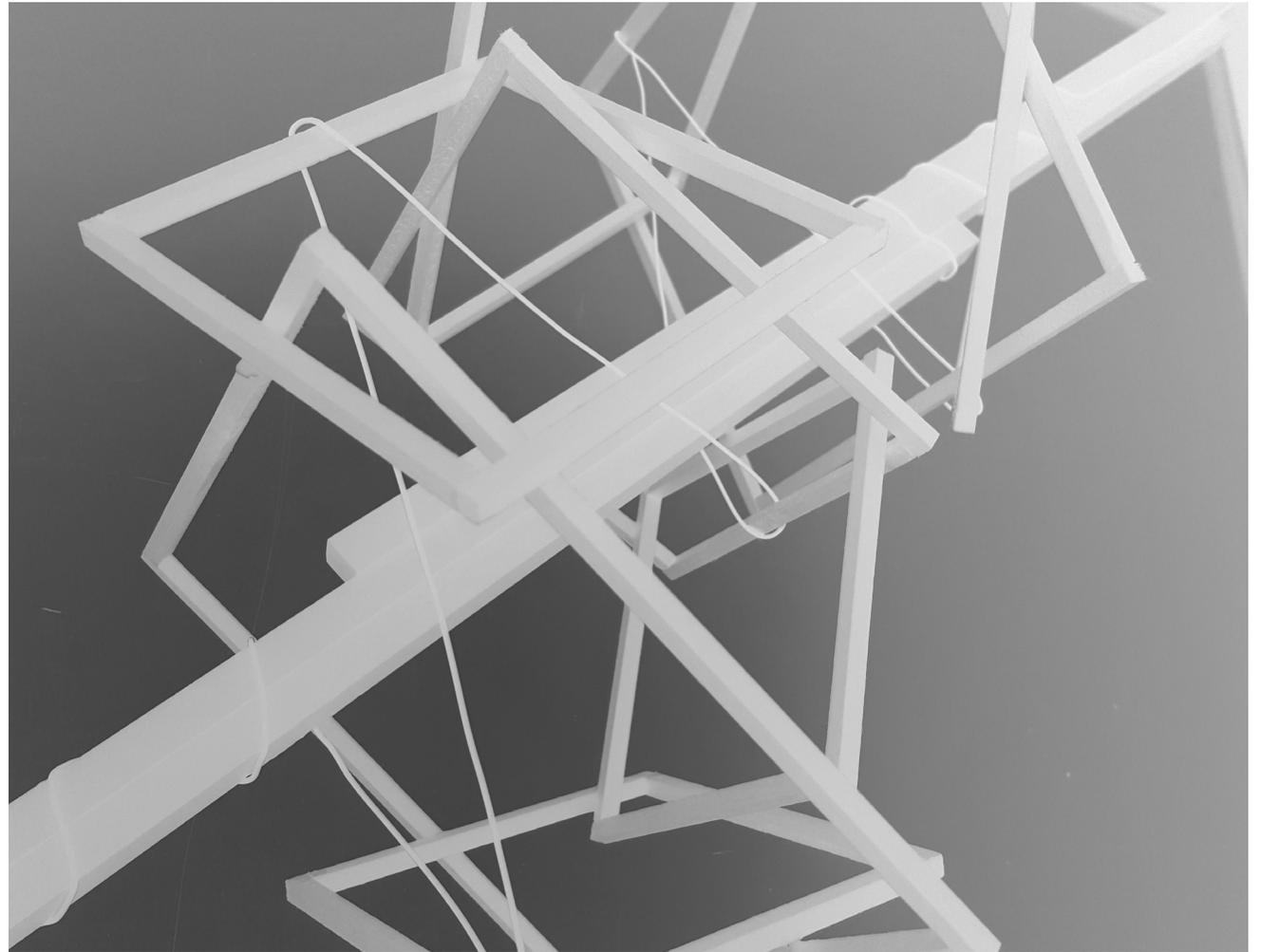


The south facing façades of the station were designed to provide views towards the city for travellers and individuals waiting on the platform or in the mezzanine lounge. A screen was applied as a measure to reduce solar glare.

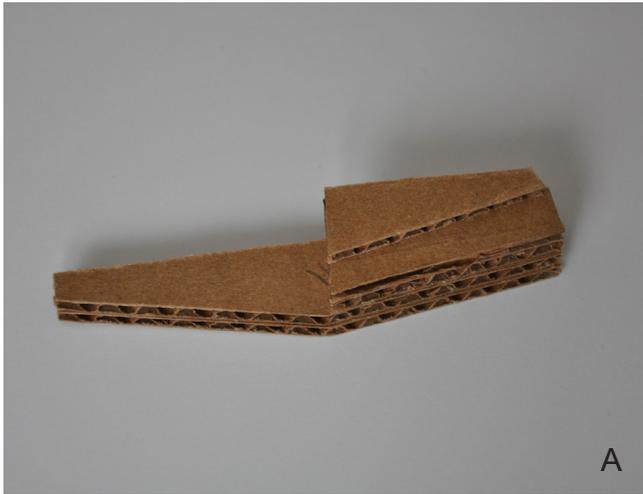
The entire design uses angles for walls, screens, and glazing to create a focus on the movement character of the station - a dynamic within the static. As well the direction of these angles in the façades directed one to their destination - the city core or Pearson International Airport.

APPENDIX B: MODEL PHOTOS

Source: Sandra Katarzyna Dorozynska



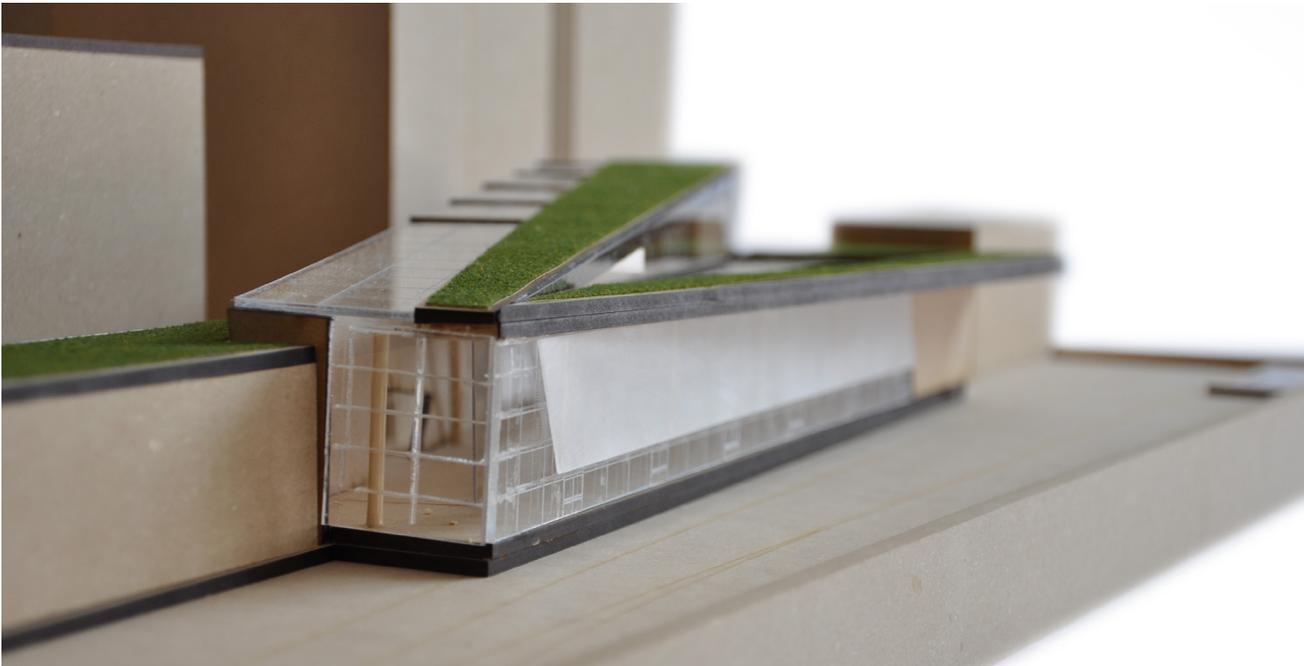
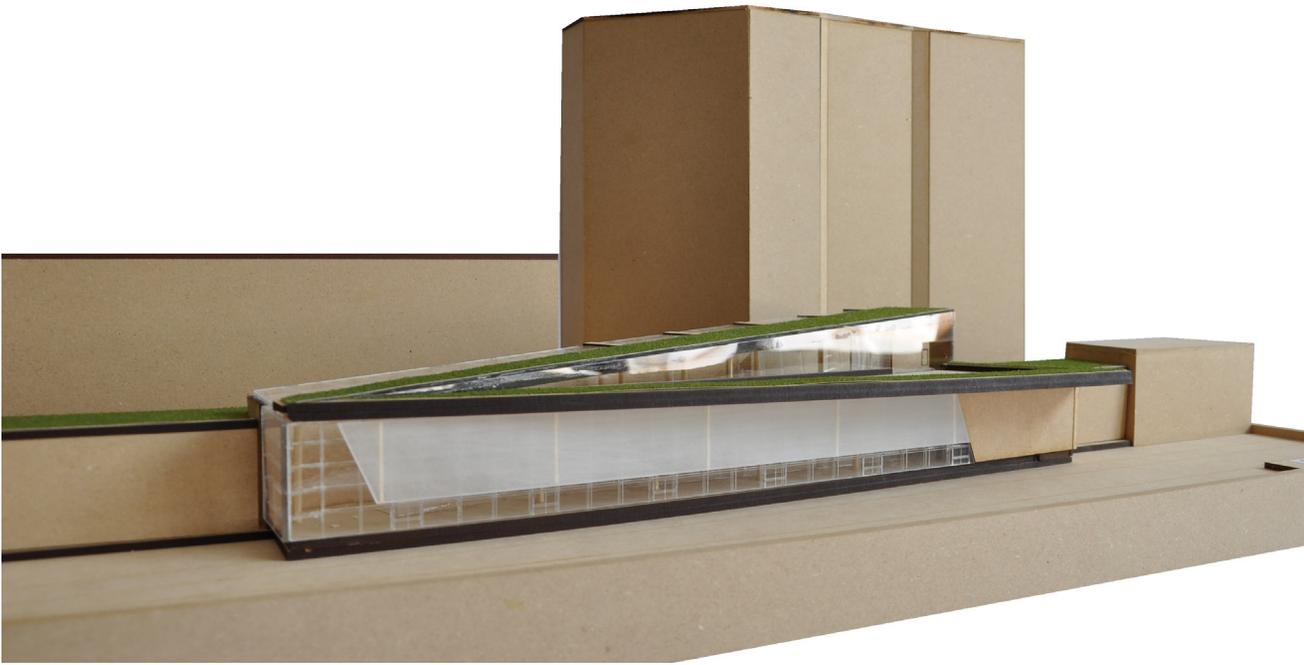
This model is an abstract representation through a model on how experience of arrival, departure and of place occurs. The horizontal members represent the rail while the three dimensional frame structure represents the train station. The wire - the individual - wraps around the various elements from travelling the rail to arriving and experiencing the station upon arrival and departure. This element shows the significance of experience and how this plays on perception of the place on the traveller and non-traveller that go through the station and arrive or depart from it.



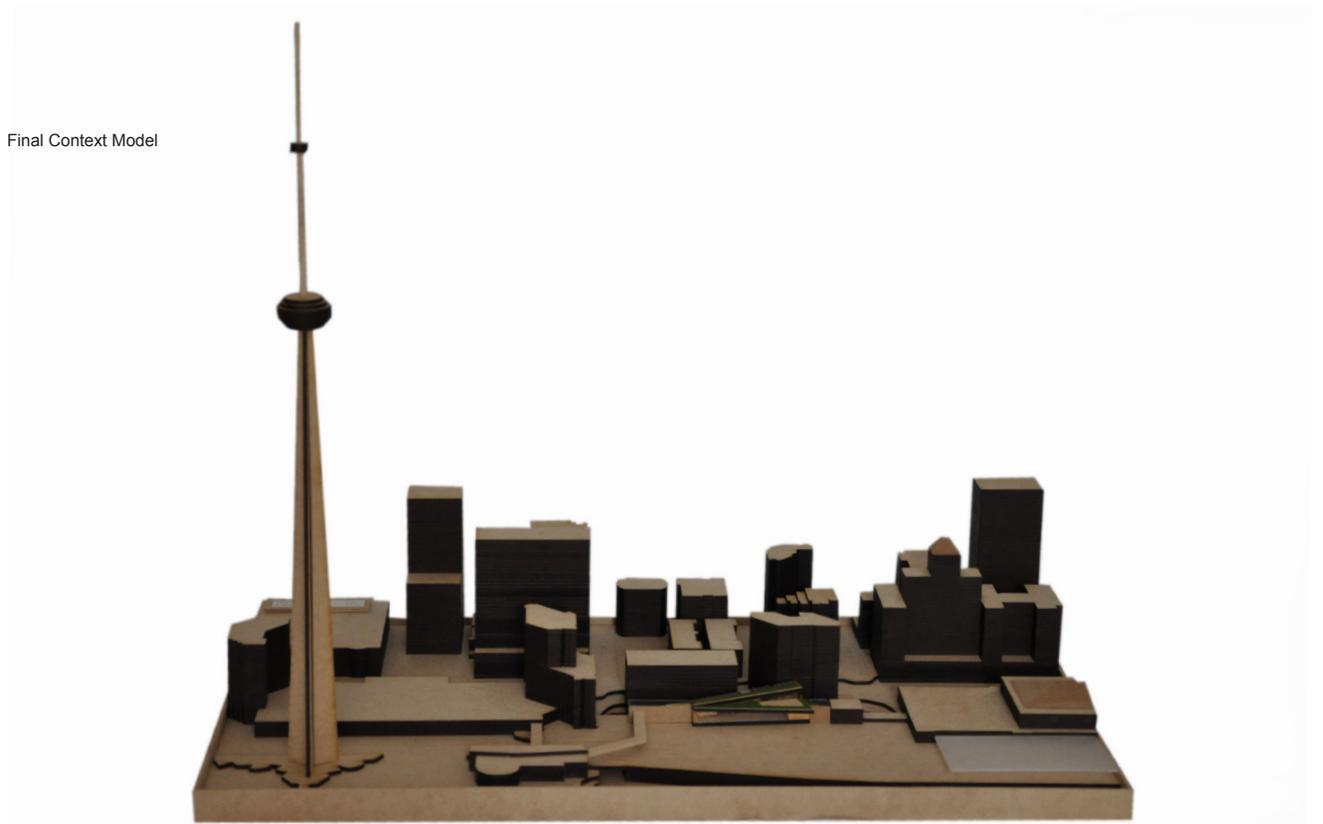
A study of the form for the first iteration of the design for the Union-Pearson Express station. The intention was to create a volume of spaces with the introduction of movement in the form and volumes to represent the movement of trains, movement of people, and the aspect of travel - through cantilevers and rotation of those cantilevers. By model D, the volumes were arranged in such a way that motion of the station building was evident when viewed. The slabs were to be indicators of movement and designation of the floor levels; the reason was to create specific program for specific floor levels to promote movement within the station.

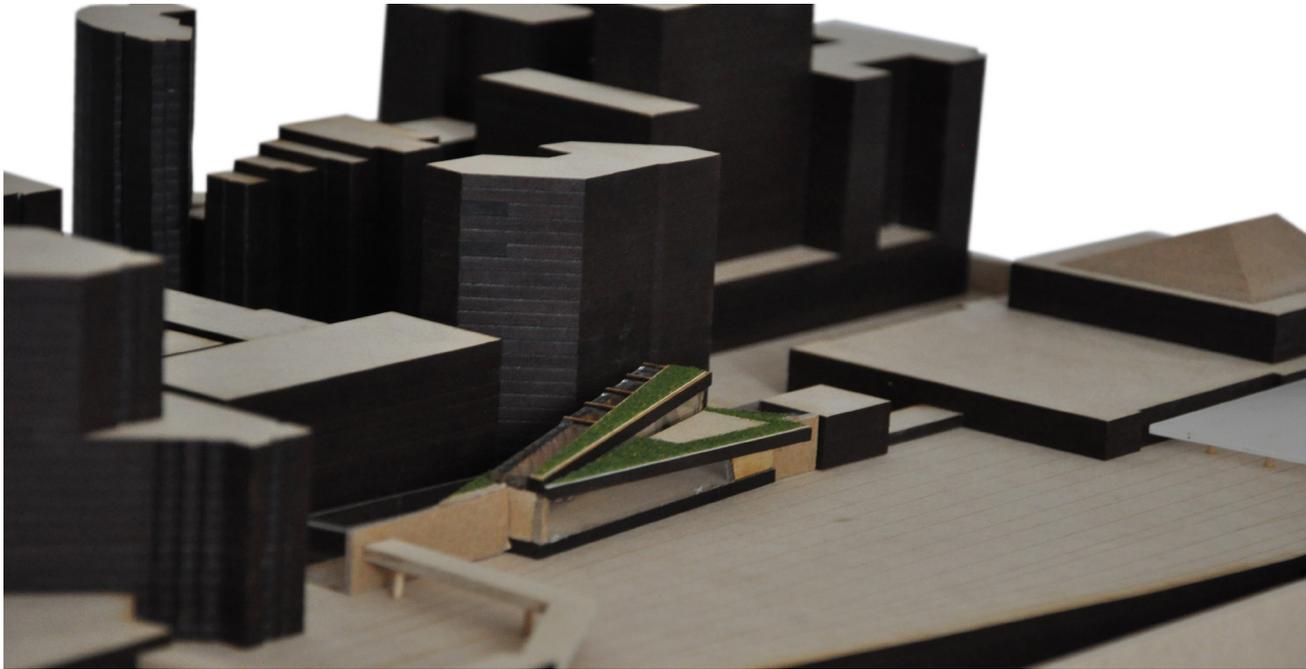
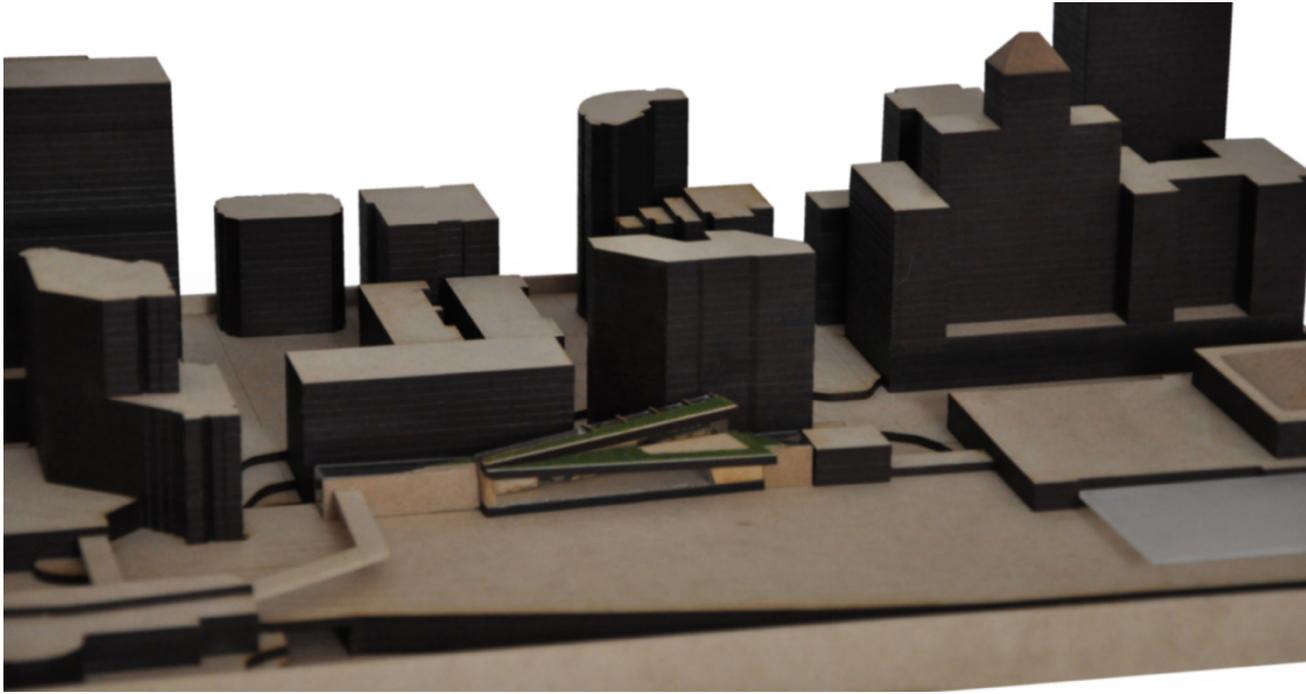
Mileston III site model for the design.

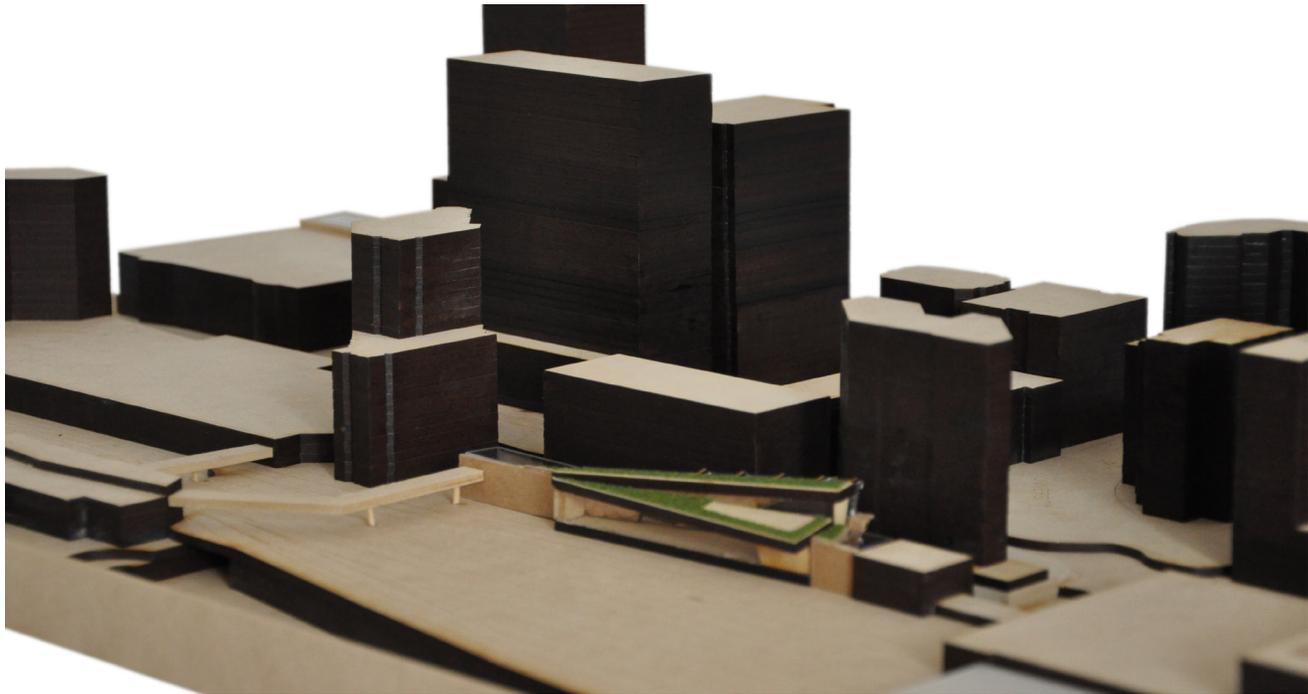




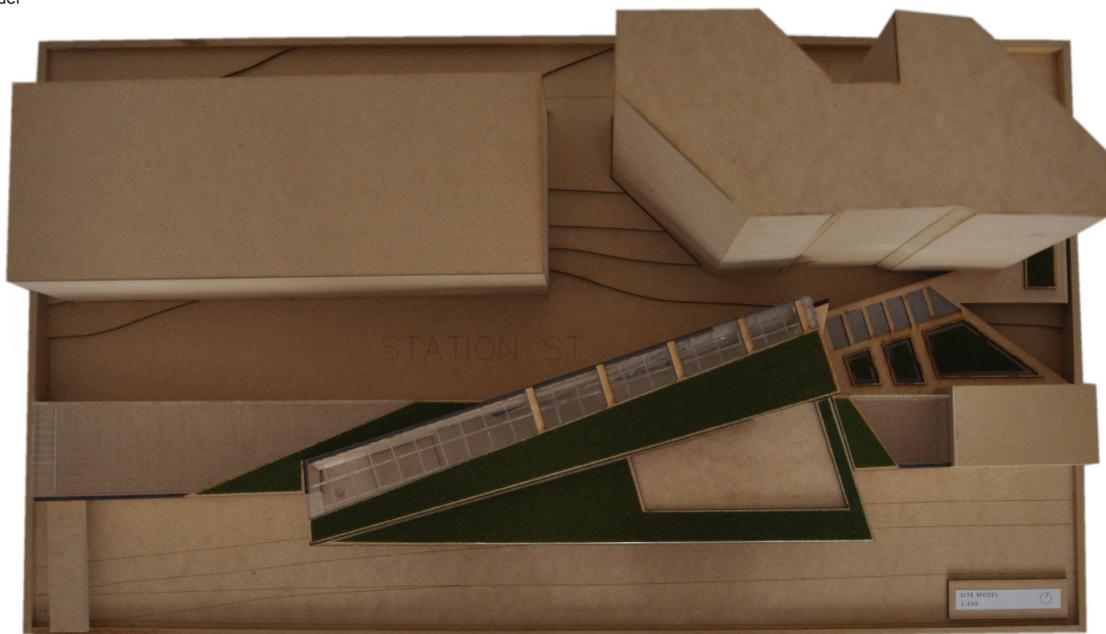
Final Context Model

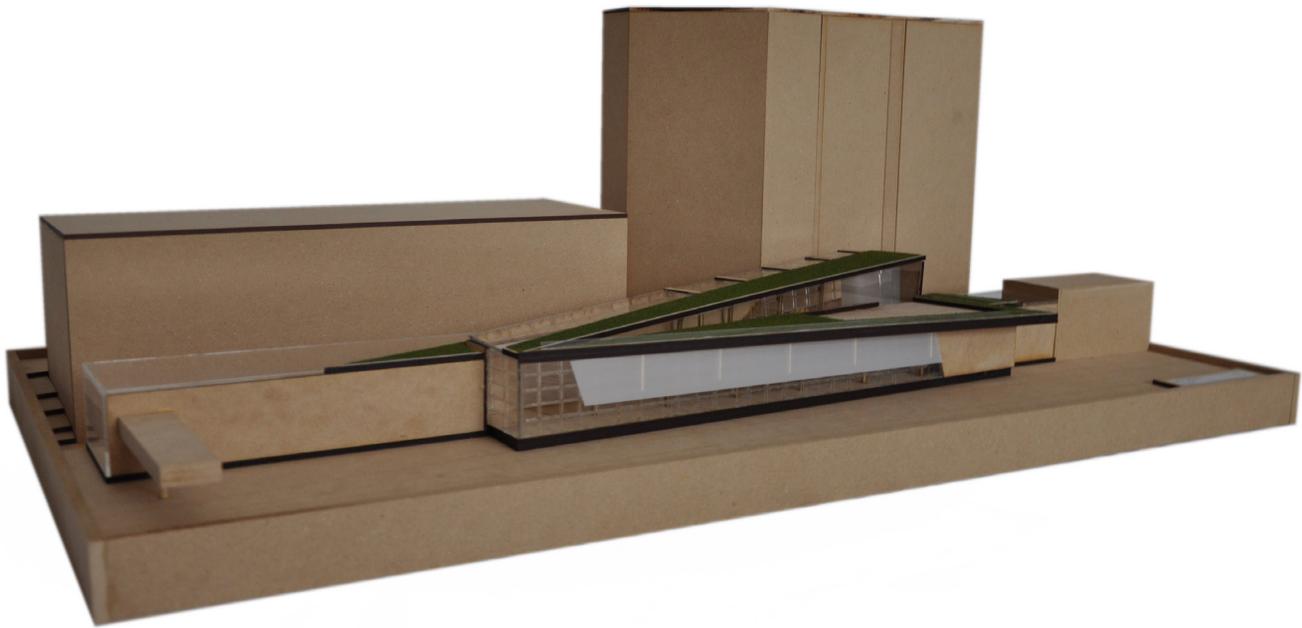


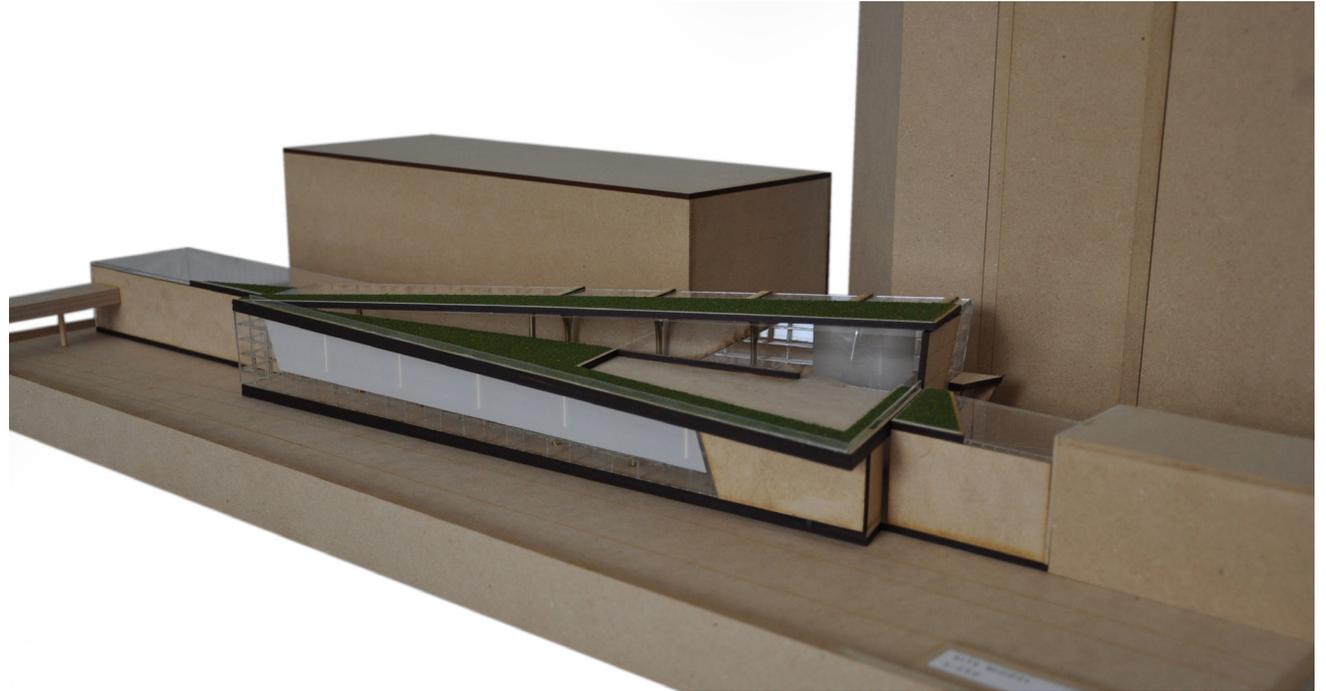




Final Site Model



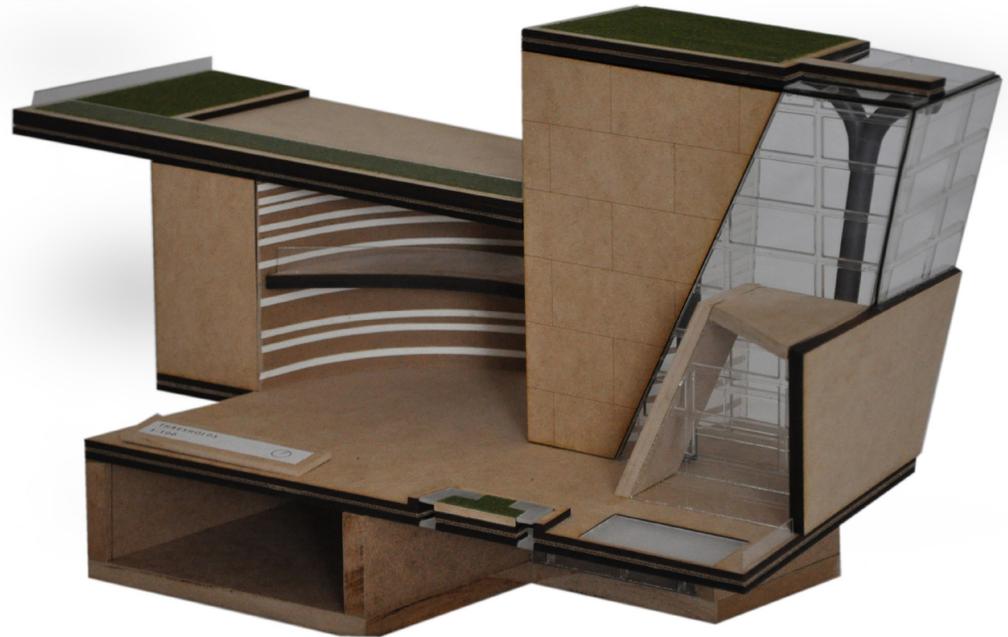




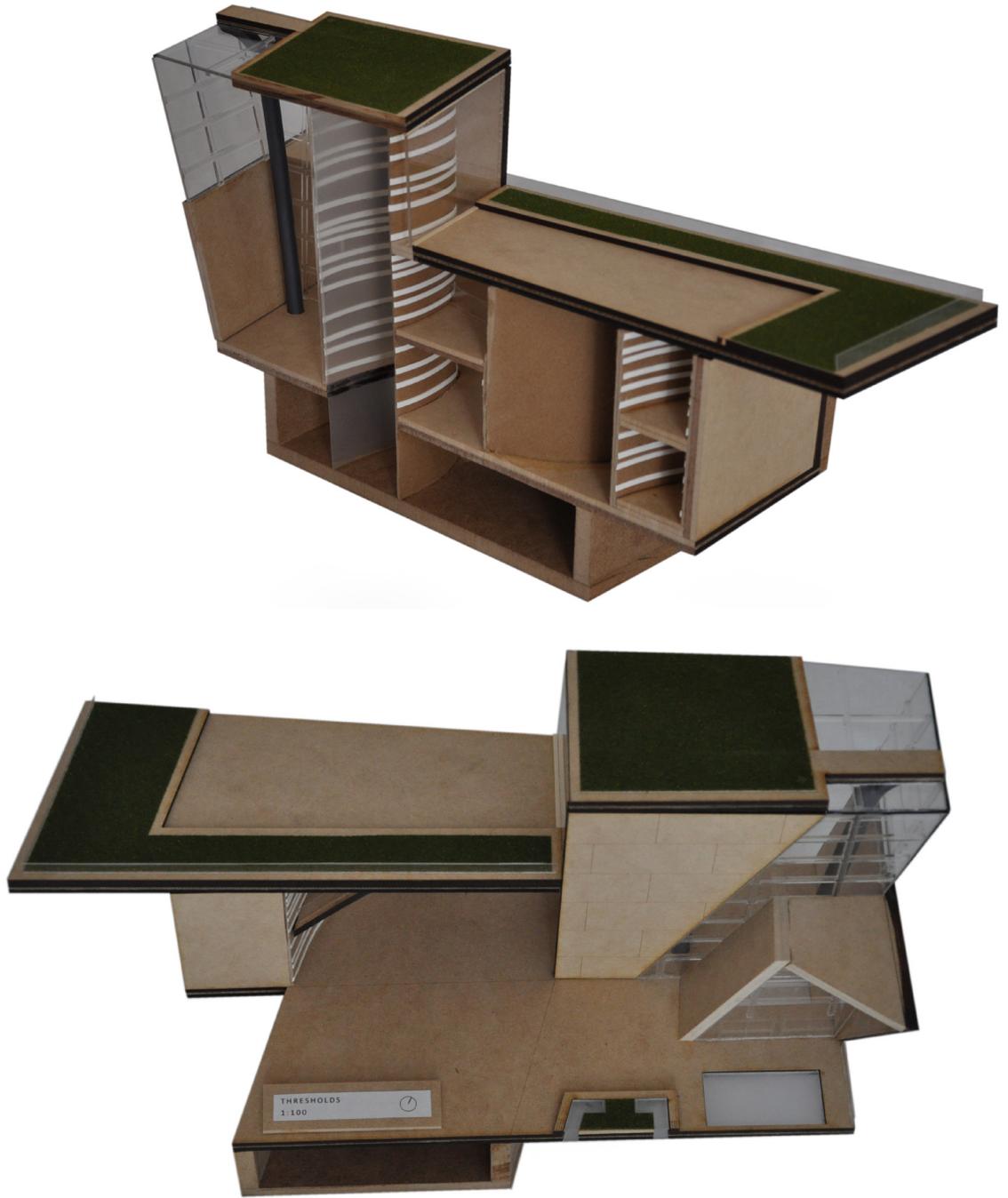




Final Detail Model - Thresholds







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