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Extending The Physical Public Realm: The 'Third Place' As A Charged Interstitial Space

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EXTENDING THE PHYSICAL PUBLIC REALM:
THE 'THIRD PLACE' AS A CHARGED INTERSTITIAL SPACE

by

Nina Ispravnikova, B.Arch, Toronto, 2012

A thesis
presented to Ryerson University

in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Architecture
in the Program of
Master of Architecture

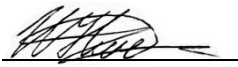
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Author's declaration

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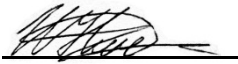
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Abstract

This thesis project defines the role of a ‘third place’ as an informal public space and an essential part of the urban landscape, as well as citizens’ daily lives. Such spaces help the urban growth to integrate with the lives of the people, allowing for our diverse community to come together and nourish new kinds of relationships that are rather hard to obtain in private or commercialized spaces. Our cities are increasingly deprived of such spaces due to changes in our urban planning structure. Culture of commerce has put a lot of pressure on urban areas replacing the program of present and potential public areas for private functions. With the introduction of online communication and creation of social networks most social encounters take place in cyberspace. These technologies allow for easy and constant virtual information exchanges eliminating the need for physical contact, therefore changing the patterns of social interaction. Aiming to bring us closer together, these technologies began to physically isolate our society even more. As members of our society enter into the virtual world of these technologies everywhere they go, they began to isolate themselves from others in the physical realm.

This thesis project aims to redefine the physical role of a ‘third place’ in the context of a modern society that has been affected by virtual communication technologies and increasing privatization of urban public spaces. A new form of a ‘third place’ will be designed to create a sense of place within a community, enhance and bring back the presence of people in the city, engage diverse social groups in physical activities and improve their social interaction.

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To My Family

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“Life without community has produced, for many, a life style consisting mainly of a home-to-work-and-back-again shuttle. Social well-being and psychological health depend upon community”

“Third places, are "anchors" of community life and facilitate and foster broader, more creative interaction”

Ray Oldenburg

1 Introduction

1.1 Third Place

Historically the most traditional social environments have been the home and the workplace, however with the social changes a new place for community within modern societies has been given importance, this has been defined as the place in-between — the *third place* — a term coined by Ray Oldenburg. The ‘Third Place’ is an informal public space that connects people to each other, allowing them to stop, meet others, relax and interact receiving meaningful social experiences and sense of empowerment before reengaging the world (Oldenburg, 1999). Contemporary examples of this are coffee shops, pubs, internet cafes, public libraries and other open, public and culturally specific locations. These spaces usually provide variety of programs, such as spaces for quiet reading, group gathering, performances and more. In his book “The Great Good Place”, Oldenburg argues that third places are important for civil society, democracy, civic engagement, and establishing feelings of a sense of place (Oldenburg, 1999).

This thesis will look at the third place as vital to current societal needs as a place that nourishes diversity of human contact by providing an informal gathering place for public to communicate and share information.

The main principle of a third places is to facilitate social interaction, therefore its physical design is highly important (Gooltz, 2007). A good third place is highly accessible, welcoming and comfortable. It must be designed to allow for regular casual encounters to take place, which

is an essential aspect of community building. The Third place creates a sense of place for the people outside of their normal environments of home and work, allowing them to engage in a multitude of activities and participate in the growth of the community, encouraging revitalization of urban areas and of public life (Oldenburg, 2001).

Ultimately the idea of a third place is not new, it stems from longstanding notion of a public space, a social space that is normally open and accessible to all. The earliest examples of this in the western society were town squares. They served as the commons for the people, a stage for cultural, social and political activities where no fees had to be paid for the entry. Such spaces have contributed to the development of democracy and a healthy community.

Following the end of WWII was the age of economic boom — expansion, the Golden Age of Capitalism that changed modern planning and contributed towards privatization of public space (Marglin and Schor, 1992). The invention of the car allowed for urban sprawl, large and rapid expansion of low-density developments spreading outwards from the city (Squires, 2002).

There was an introduction of Single-use zoning where commercial, residential, institutional and industrial areas were separated from one another (Squires, 2002). New residential areas, particularly the suburbs that grew drastically in the 1950's and 1960's were built without essential gathering places (Gooltz, 2007). These were large areas that consisted entirely of newly built residential developments completely segregated from other uses— particularly commercial— as a way to encourage car dependency (Squires, 2002). This cheap and fast construction with grand profit outweighed the focus on the quality of the community, and with it vanished the public spaces as the important anchors of a communal life. Many have replaced the vision of an ideal and well-functioning city by that of an ideal home (Gooltz, 2007). As Oldenburg notes:

"They proceed as though a house can substitute for a community if only it is spacious enough, entertaining enough, comfortable enough, splendid enough — and suitably isolated from that common horde that politicians still refer to as our 'fellow Americans' (Gooltz, 2007)".

Before the un-functional and segregated zoning, communities were of mixed use and had a variety of public spaces, showing the best examples of third places. These were locally owned shops, taverns and eateries, walking distance from most of the city dwellers. These places had the essential characters of a third place, they were welcoming, comfortable and easily accessible.

These were the anchors of the community, as they allowed for casual meetings between community members to take place within them.

Because of the change in the society driven by capitalism, mass consumption and competition for profits, third places and public spaces have been privatized and turned into quick service, fast customer turnover and high priced businesses only for commercial purposes (Gooltz, 2007). Such institutions are large chain business and shopping malls that do not meet the larger needs of the citizens. These spaces are increasingly privatized and competitive, they can also be uncomfortable and have bad-mannered customer service. There is pressure from overcrowding and being forced to buy product in order to be able to stay enough time for a given place to have any kind of positive effect. There still exist public third places in the form of municipal community centers, churches, libraries, however they have become outdated and uninteresting, therefore they are less frequently used. It is their architecture, location and function that do not appeal to the contemporary society. They have rigid schedules to maintain different groups of residents, therefore lack that essential character of a third place, the possibility of the casual “drop in” (Gooltz, 2007). Physical public interaction is on the decline as contemporary cities are heading towards social, economic, cultural and ethnic segregation (Real-time information service, 2012). John Chase writes,

“The importance of voluntary and obligatory participation in civic life has been usurped by the consciousness of the arbitrary nature of assigned cultural meanings and by the increasingly important role that consumption of goods and services plays in the formation of individual identity (Real-time information service, 2012)”.

Modern society has withdrawn from conventional public life, which used to give soul to the city centers and identity of the community. Oldenburg says that these settings for informal public life are essential for the health of the community members (Gooltz, 2007). With its disappearance there was a decline in social capital and growth of stress in intimate relationships. Oldenburg joins Sociologists who specialize in the family relationships, Robert Putnam and Margaret Mead, on their statement that “In the absence of an informal public life, people’s expectations toward work and family life have escalated beyond the capacity of those institutions to meet them (Gooltz, 2007)”.

With the loss of third places people are more isolated and it becomes harder for them to make acquaintances and develop friendships, as a result they may become psychologically unhappy and unhealthy.

1.2 Internet as a Virtual Third Place

Modern technology has provided us with a substitute to a physical third place. The modern third place has become virtual. The invention of the Internet —A Public worldwide computer network system — has allowed for a new way to interact and socialize with one another, a way that has never been seen or imagined before. This new way is the online communication and creation of social networks. The type of interaction has changed, it is no longer physical, and people do not have to be in the same place in order to interact. These technologies have become extensions of our lifestyles. We are able to talk, interact, and socialize with others through text and images. Its speed and ease of communication is what makes it the most appealing choice for the public.

A big limitation with virtual third place is lack of physical interaction. Only physical space can create a phenomenological experience and a sense of place. We cannot experience internet with our physical bodies, or all the 5 senses. Most of the public tends to socialize virtually on a daily basis rather than meeting in person, because there is no need. Internet gives the ability to transfer information at any given time and from any location. This causes social isolation that is based on physical contact. This rapid technology and way of communication will only continue to grow and improve; increasing the amount and types of computer communications, therefore physical third place might all together diminish. The Physical interaction is important as it provides us with a full phenomenological experience.

Ray Oldenburg's definition of a third place has not changed since its first origin 20 years ago. In 2011 interview, he says that virtual connections don't count as third place experiences as they lack important features and cannot be compared with what the physical third place can offer (Orsini, 2011). Communication technology has evolved to a level where present day people interact with screens as much as they interact with other people (Orsini, 2011). Oldenburg says that physical third places are necessary as they naturally allow for a mixed group of people with different mind-sets and political views to come together and share one space, discovering one another (Orsini, 2011). "The problem with so-called virtual third places is that you get like-minded people attracting each other", spoke Ray Oldenburg (2011) on virtual third places.

Oldenburg says that, even with the large growth of social networks, people are still searching for ways to come together and interact in physical spaces; however the problem is with

a high rate of mobility. As people move from one place to the next, it is essential for them to get to know their neighbor's in order to feel comfortable and a part of the community, but there are no public gathering places that allow for this.

Since urban sprawl the city's public life has been diminishing, with fewer third places, public gathering places and more of privatized and commercialized spaces. Physical social interaction that was lacking in our urban environments has been replaced by the virtual third place, technologies which allowed for interaction through computers. These technologies and applications have been successful and powerful, as they replaced the outdated, dull and uninteresting traditional physical forms of public third places. However they lack the full social experience, interaction that is not only visual but is also physical one, which contributes to a full phenomenological experience. It is healthier for a human being to talk to a friend in person than over the phone, both for intellectual and physical growth, eliminating feeling of isolation and leading to a happier life.

1.3 Proposal: A Physical Third Place Relevant to The Modern Society

I propose to bring back and enhance the presence of people in the city, the presence that have been diminishing since urban sprawl, to enhance public life outside of home and work and to bring back traditional, physical ways of social interaction that are missing in the virtual realm.

This will be achieved by redefining the role of a physical third place within the context of current society, one that has been impacted by the effects of capitalism (privatization and commercialization of public spaces) and reliance on virtual communication technologies as the main means of communication and social interaction.

A new design for a third place — public gathering place will be created relevant to the needs and interests of this elaborate (technology impacted) society. Going back to the essential qualities of a third place, the design will merge traditional with the new forms of interaction provided by the virtual computer technologies. These virtual and interactive technologies will be applied to the refined physical form of this third place and used to bring back interaction and physical activities between groups and individuals as well as encourage non-traditional ways of physical interaction between people and their environment for a more enhanced experience. These technologies will be used to make physical gathering places interesting and important once again by applying them to the physical third place, which will create a new dimension catering to the society that lives submerged into these new technologies.

This new third place will be inserted in an urban condition to analyze and study the impact and its relation with the surrounding context and neighborhood community. It will redefine the meaning of urban public space within a city neighborhood and highlight the importance of the presence of the community.

2 Problem Statement

2.1 Physical Social Interaction and Presence of People in the City

(Increase Social Interaction Outside of the Virtual Realm and Enhance the Presence of People in the City by Extending the Physical Public Realm)

This thesis design investigation project will reestablish the public presence of people in an urban environment by creating a physical third place that will enhance social interaction outside of the virtual realm through a range of physical activities. This third place will be dedicated for the public, it will be welcoming, highly accessible and interesting for everyone. Through a multifaceted program and variety of activities, it will cater to different age groups and encourage engagement of the whole community. The goal is to merge the new third place with the existing fabric of the neighborhood, enhancing public activities and encouraging social interaction.

2.1.1 Importance of the Physical Public Realm

The role of this physical third place is to become a new public realm with a specific social setting for the people of the neighborhood. The Public realm is different from a typical public space; these spaces are a part of a much larger public sphere and include city's streets, parks and plazas (Hampton, 2009). These are the places of encounters, unexpected and expected with both strangers and acquaintances (Hampton, 2009). There is a big difference between the public realm and all other public spaces, while public spaces separate people based on life-styles, specific values, opinions, gender and race, public realm is welcoming and open to all (Hampton, 2009). The majority of people within public realm are unfamiliar with each other, which creates a diversity of interests, behaviors and beliefs (Hampton, 2009). Public realm is a complete

opposite to many of the contemporary public spaces that have been privatized and it is open to people with common interests or social ties (Hampton, 2009).

As previously mentioned the new third place will possess the qualities of a public realm; however what must be taken into consideration is the fact that even though public realm is open and welcoming to all, it is also differentiated from third places which hold similar qualities but are created for people within specific neighborhoods or small towns. Ultimately, it is the civic quality that the public realm holds that will be inserted into the third place. The third place will be built primarily for the immediate community of the neighborhood, but it will also be open to all visitors from outside, made possible by its diverse program and design of the built form. The aim of this thesis is to define the new third place as part of the public realm. The Public realm is a natural and important component of a broader public sphere; it acts “as a setting for exposure to, and interaction among, people with diverse backgrounds, opinions, and values (Harvey, 2006).”

“Public sphere is an area in social life where individuals can come together to freely discuss and identify societal problems, and through that discussion influence political action. It is a discursive space in which individuals and groups congregate to discuss matters of mutual interest and, where possible, to reach a common judgment (Hauser, 1998, p. 86).”

“The public sphere can be seen as ‘a theater in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk’ and ‘a realm of social life in which public opinion can be formed’ (Fraser, 1990).”

A necessary component of information exchange is the placement of different entities in a single space. In the last two decades the components of public sphere have become privatized, drastically affecting people’s social networks. With this privatization people have become more home centered with social ties that focus on the home, with few strong ties and more loose networks (Hampton, 2009). Today the major components of public sphere besides the physical consist of the virtual, which is made up of: the internet, telephone, radio, film, mass media and television (Hampton, 2009). These are the places where people find their substitute to the traditional forms of public sphere.

“As people’s personal discussion networks have increasingly centered on the private realm – they have become more private, closed, and homogeneous – the forces of consumerism and corporate and state control have generated parallel consolidating effects on the mass media (Hampton, 2009, p.5)”.

Public realm provides exposure and access to messages and ideas that are divergent or absent from the networks of the private realm. Within the private realm this exposure is commonly primitive and brief, while exposure in the public realm can encourage anything from formal, informal or casual political discussion, providing a stimulating and challenging setting that is an important component of public deliberation (Hampton, 2009).

2.1.2 Effects of the Virtual Communication Technologies on the Physical Public Realm

Virtual communication technologies have provided changes to the structure of people's social networks and effects on the public realm. There has been a big impact on the use of public spaces with the use of mobile telephones and introduction of public internet (Wi-Fi). Although social interaction provided by the internet is more diverse than through mobile telephones both encourage isolation from those people present in the surrounding area.

The emergence of digital media has drastically changed the use of public spaces. It has removed public realm from everyday experiences. The electronic networks are overlaying traditional public spaces. The uses of mobile telephones and wireless media have been influencing the patterns of engagement with the public domain (Hampton, 2009). Mobile telephones have revolutionized how people can maintain their social networks, by allowing people to connect with one another anytime and anywhere (Wellman, 2001). Shown in the studies of mobile telephone users, only people with close and intimate relationships use this technology as a method of socializing (Ishii, 2006). Although the aim of this technology was set to connect and bring society closer together, it creates closed networks where only most familiar and most similar people who know each other from before socialize (Hampton, 2001).

The use of mobile telephones and wireless media has affected social interaction in urban public spaces. This virtual interaction has become dominant. Today, people choose to use their phones and computer devices to interact with those more familiar to them rather than making new connections with those less familiar, the strangers. An example of such behavior is often seen at the contemporary coffee shop, where people who come with their wireless media are

completely isolated from others around them, they socialize with those who are far from them instead of interacting with those close to them. This shows how the use of public spaces has changed into a location for these people to communicate using these wireless technologies rather than a place for new people to meet and socialize. This is an example of private functions that have intruded into the public realm.

The activities in which Wi-Fi users engage contribute to a larger public sphere outside of the environment or the space they occupy. The location of the Wi-Fi users is not important, they can be in different place and be engaged into that specific activity. There is no required specificity to the surroundings which they must be in. The activity that they engage with through their computers does not relate and is completely isolated from the real physical environment. This shows that there is a complete separation between the social networks that are virtual and the ones of the physical realm.

The aim of this thesis exploration is to develop such program and design that will encourage physical activity and physical social interaction despite the growing use of communication technologies and success of virtual social networks. It is to create a third place that will merge and bring together the users of these technologies together through physical activities of an abundant public space.

2.1.3 Presence of People in the City: with a Focus on Youth

With increasing privatization and commercialization of public spaces, personal and societal growth has been limited. It is important to bring back places that are open, welcoming, relatable and interesting to all, encourage a diverse public to come together and voluntarily interact, to grow as individuals and as a society. Each individual, whoever it may be, a child, teenager, adult or a senior plays an important role in the creation of a healthy community, therefore each one of these societal groups must feel welcome and must have a place just for them.

This thesis project will largely focus on youth and children, as they have been excluded the most from our society as commercialization and privatization of places began to spread. Children are the future of our society and our cities. Within the next few decades they will grow

into the group of people that will determine what will become of our society. What happens to them today will be the outcome of our cities in the future, therefore it is vital to focus on them and on how they are growing within our social order.

“The solution to adult problems tomorrow depends on large measure upon how our children grow up today,” Margaret Mead.

It is important to develop environments for children outside their home or school that will make them feel safe, secure, connected and valued in the society. The quality of the environment that the children grow up in will determine their quality of life, their social and emotional growth will come directly from the activities they engage in. Therefore the goal is to create programs and activities that encourage for positive social engagements of the youth.

After large shopping centers have replaced local establishments they began to exclude particular social groups — such as the youth — as a result of surrounding competing views on consumption, legitimate user status, concerns for security and community safety (Malone, 2001). Young people have been recognized as a threat to the order and management of these centers, mainly because they tend to hang out there (Malone, 2001). This segregation leaves youth to turn to their homes or find other places to be in, where they often engage in illegal and dangerous activities. Our city environments are unsafe, overcrowded and polluted, with little opportunity for children to have some recreation, to learn and to play (Malone, 2001).

“We are living in what many have called a ‘risk society’ (Beck, 1992). Because children are the most vulnerable to environmental and social degradation, in terms of both their likelihood of personal harm and the constraints these place on their capacity to reach their fullest potential, they are at greatest risk (Malone, 2001, p.6).”

It is the urban children in particular that are “trapped in landscapes of despair and social neglect (Malone, 2001, p.6).” Some of the factors which contribute to creating a hostile environment for the children are: poverty, vandalism, neighborhood and family conflicts, bullying in schools and police brutality, joined with restricted access to local resources (Malone, 2001). As a consequence of these possible risks, parents restrict their children of access to the outside environment and limit them to their homes (Malone, 2001). Children’s activities and play environments are limited to their home, friends’ houses and special commercial facilities (Malone, 2001). There is no longer a possibility for spontaneous and unregulated play for

children within their own neighborhoods. Presence of such activities is important for the children as it generates a sense of independence, identity and social competence, and limiting it only has negative results (Malone, 2001). Neighborhoods must be supportive of children's needs, otherwise they are forced to take risks (Malone, 2001). It is important to develop a sense of place for the youth within each neighborhood, a place that makes them feel at home, welcome and valued. "Ideally, towns and cities should be places where children and youth can socialize, observe and learn about how society functions and how they can contribute to the cultural fabric of their community (Malone, 2001, p.11)."

"UNESCO-funded project Children's Perception of Space (1972) showed that the best urban environments for young people should have the following attributes: a community with a strong social and physical identity; opportunities for engagement, for having a role in the community; and a city that served as an educational facility, a place to explore and learn about the world (Malone, 1998, p.22)."

"A good city is one in which children can grow and develop to the extent of their powers, where they can build their confidence and become actively engaged in the world, yet be autonomous and capable of managing their own affairs" - Kevin Lynch (1977) wrote after reviewing the findings of the project (Malone, 1998, p.22)."

Therefore, the new physical third place will have a large focus on the youth and children. Special program and activities will be introduced within the new urban form of the third place to bring back the presence of youth in the city and enhance social experiences for the benefit of their quality of life.

2.2 Design Intent for the Physical Third Place

This thesis project looks at the role of informal public space as an essential part of the urban landscape and citizen's daily life. It is through such spaces that the urban growth is integrated with the lives of the people, allowing for our diverse community to come together and nourish new kinds of relationships that are rather hard to obtain in private or commercialized spaces.

Our cities are increasingly deprived of such spaces due to changes to our urban planning structure. Culture of commerce has put big pressure on urban areas replacing the program of present and potential public areas for private functions. Although most of these private developments are made as gathering places for the public they are made for specific culture of people, portraying a certain image and forcing pre-determined actions. These public-private places tend to separate individuals into certain groups and therefore segregate our society.

Most of the social encounters are taking place cyberspace with introduction of online communication and creation of social networks. These technologies eliminated the need for physical interactions as with them communication can take place anytime, anywhere and two people don't even have to be in the same place. These technologies flourished based on their easy use that allows for fast communication with very little effort. Activities that were previously done in the physical public realm and public places could now be easily done virtually; therefore the need for physical interaction has declined. Aiming to bring us closer together, these technologies began to isolate our society even more, as people entered into this virtual world they began to use these technologies everywhere they go, isolating themselves from others in the physical realm.

The aim of this thesis project is to reestablish public presence and sense of place for people within a society of increasing privatization and reliance on communication technologies. To broaden the opportunities for physical interaction between diverse groups of people a new public social place — a modern third place — will be established. Through a diverse program of activities and an intricate urban form it will attract diverse groups of individuals, serving as both a destination point for informal gatherings, sharing of information, or a social hub where people can come alone, meet others, simply partake in people watching, engage and be captivated by the

activities. Stripped of the burdens of commercialization, this third place will be welcoming to all, looking at our society as a whole; it will appeal to all individuals, youth, adults and elderly. It will speak about the important role that each one of these social groups plays on the formation of a community, with a large focus on youth as they have been neglected the most and play an important factor for the future of our cities.

It is a challenge to create a physical third place within a society of virtual communication technologies since ability for social interaction is being delivered by means of the virtual networks. The question is what would make these individuals come to a physical third place if the virtual one has provided the same and even improved ways of information exchange. Therefore this third place will accommodate social experiences that cannot be provided in the virtual realm, at home or anywhere else. These social experiences will focus on the physical interface, creation of a sense of place and a full phenomenological experience. Engaging individuals in physical activities and movement, both in groups and alone will be a large aspect of the creation of this third place. Therefore the physical design of the space will be important, as it will define how the people will use the space. It will provide a variety of vibrant and exciting spaces, both indoors and outdoors, that can be used by variety of groups and individuals. The design will foster sharing, community building and integration of old and new residents in the neighborhood quicker and easier.

The way the virtual third place is structured is what society needs and wants, the physical must manifest the same qualities to be as appealing. It is the type of information exchange, that personal connection and interaction with the object, easy manipulation and customization that draws the society towards using virtual communication technologies. To attract people to the physical third place, I propose to create similar information exchange and close contact between the people and their physical environment through application of interactive technologies. This application of interactive technologies will create a responsive environment that will enhance user's experience of the physical space and the activity performed. This architecture will become a part of a dialogue, interacting through a direct relationship with its users and their activities. This causes the building and its form to have the same relationship to the user as communication technologies have to theirs. It is the direct and personal contact that allows the user to manipulate and communicate with the object. Application of these interactive technologies will bring back

the interest to the people in the physical third place, and prove that the physical can be as exciting as the virtual, as well as provide richer and more rewarding experiences. It is to say that, from now on all third and public places should have this virtual interactive aspect as they have become a big part of our lives and therefore need to be integrated into the physical world, which will make the physical more exciting and valuable.

3 Background Information

3.1 Public Places | Social Spaces

Public space serves as an extension of the building, it is any place where people can congregate and socialize. Good public spaces are highly accessible, welcoming and occupied by a number of people on a daily basis. It is places for frequent, informal conversations and social encounters between old and new friends. This thesis will look at several examples of public spaces: meeting places, urban squares, cultural buildings and social centers to understand how their characteristics and programmatic elements are essential to our communities.

3.1.1 Meeting Places

The collaboration of individuals sharing skills, resources and new ways of working together bring society into existence (Kronenburg, 2007). Therefore, perhaps the most important architectural spaces are the ones that establish meetings between individuals (Kronenburg, 2007). This thesis will look at a third place, a meeting place, as a required space where society can operate, develop and evolve. The importance of meeting places is emphasized as they have become the most universal architectural space; and can be found in every type of building, urban and rural environments. It is extremely hard to find one specific character for these places, they are much more successful if they are optimized for a range of different users, types and scale of activities; hence flexibility should become its main character. Earliest examples of meeting spaces were open-air spaces commonly adjacent to mobile or fixed dwelling (Kronenburg, 2007).

3.1.2 Urban Squares

Historically, meeting places have been adopted as locations of great significance and are often the most important spaces in a city (Kronenburg, 2007). These are public city squares and piazzas which have been used for great public events, as well as casual everyday activities of the same importance. Their openness allows for any type of activity to occur within the space. Additional furnishings are required to support some of these events, therefore over the centuries a range of mobile and temporary building types have been created, such as: market stalls, performance stages, seating, canteens and eating places (Kronenburg, 2007). City squares provide a visual relief from densely developed areas of our contemporary cities.

City squares have become the ultimate flexible spaces within the urban environment. Their open-endedness successfully serves changing needs of the society through time as they can easily adapt and transform to accommodate different types of events such as: carnivals, demonstrations, parades, concerts and festival. City squares are an important part of the city fabric serving towards development of the society, allowing for a limitless variety of activities. Its identity is that of important events of urban life showing town history and image in the memory of the user. Nick Corbett in his book *Revival of the Square* notes the important and complex role these spaces still fulfill:

“The city square can provide visual relief and recreational open space within a densely developed area, and can also serve to promote standards in public behavior. If people are to be aware of the complexity and variety of the society they are part of, and if they are to appreciate notions of civic identity and respect for others, there must be a place where they can occasionally see and experience a diverse cross section of that society... By simply standing in a lively public square, where different age groups and different members of society are gathered together, there is a shared experience that evokes a positive sense of participation (Rude, 2006).”

3.1.3 Cultural Buildings

Moving on to the closed spaces, buildings, just like open public squares, can be created to adapt and develop with the society, these are cultural buildings established specifically to bring to life the identity of the community (Kronenburg, 2007). It is in our contemporary time that the role of

cultural buildings is changing. Museums, once seen as repositories for precious objects, are now perceived as places of entertainment and interaction, as well as education and research (Kronenburg, 2007). Theatres and concert halls also serve a much wider range of interests. “These institutions have a role in generating income through tourism, and consequently have a responsibility for an impact that extends beyond their cultural role into urban regeneration (Kronenburg, 2007, p.69).”

All this suggests that the traditional use of buildings has changed, the needs of society have shifted and we have recognized that cultural institutions must now accommodate a much wider range of interests and activities to contribute to development of society.

3.1.4 Social Centers

“Many applications in entertainment embrace an educational component, whereby a new kind of kinesthetic learning is combined with entertainment experiences (Fox & Kemp, 2009, p.103).” Such applications enable users to utilize their bodies as well as their minds in collaborative ways.

Third places such as social centers or community centers provide a wide range of different activities for the community members, helping them to develop their interests. They are usually large buildings and thus can host activities of different scales from activist meetings, concerts, book sales, dance performances and art exhibitions. Public social centers provide their community with places to interact, thus serving a big part of community building. Besides providing functions such as bar, café or music venue that make people interact and socialize, they provide educational information through info shops, film nights and talks.

"Social centres are abandoned buildings - warehouses, factories, military forts, schools - that have been occupied by squatters and transformed into cultural and political hubs, explicitly free from both the market, and from state control... Though it may be hard to tell at first, the social centres aren't ghettos, they are windows — not only into another way to live, disengaged from the state, but also into a new politics of engagement. And yes, it's something that may be beautiful (Klein, 2001)."

3.2 Communication Technology and Mobile Society

Mobile technology has enabled self-sufficiency, which has increased nomadic tendencies (Fox & Kemp, 2009). Direct contact with our employers, customers and even friends has become less of a necessity and more of a luxury, as communication technology has allowed for possibilities of teleworking (Kronenburg, 2007). The need to continuously be in the same place to carry out work is no longer necessary, as we are beginning to realize that work can be done in different ways and in different places (Kronenburg, 2007). These teleworking products are becoming extensions of our everyday lifestyle. We have become dependent on them as they make our lives easier, safer and more gratifying.

This has resulted in changing the patterns of human interaction with the built environment. Architectural and urban space has lost its specificity as defined by a particular architectural description of programmatic needs. Technologically influenced social change, particularly social mobility is altering traditional building typologies, blending and interchanging different functions together.

“A universal type of space has developed, one designed around this mobile technological relationship that draws together formerly distinct typologies of education, administration, servicing, and certain aspects of production, communication, and entertainment (Brown, 2003).”

An example of such universal type space is a contemporary coffee shop, it brings a rebirth of nineteenth century “connect anywhere” culture where: “The café was a library, study, meeting place and an address, a place which blurred the distinction between being at home and being out-and-about (Wilson, 1996).” Contemporary coffee shop has blurred the boundaries between activities. The physical space of the shop is constantly altered in order to meet changing needs—furniture is moved, rearranged and added. Just like in the indigenous culture, we are becoming the builders and creators of our environment. The study of Kinetics can provide us with the dynamic forms to meet these society needs.

3.2.1 Contemporary Third Place — Coffee House

The idea of a third place has been popularized and described by several organizations as a free space for social interaction providing both commercial and non-commercial functions. The different terms for this concept are "community coffee house" and the "community living room", the previously mentioned universal space. It is a public space, a leisure facility for casual use and a community-oriented business development.

An increasing percentage of American workers choose to telecommute from the third place rather than traditional home or office environment. They find this space a happy medium, because being around other people eliminates the feeling of isolation, and increases productivity. There is also possibility of social interaction, if one chooses to engage in it. Again, this is all possible with the help of communication technology and the availability of public Wi-Fi has been the major enabler of this trend. More and more retail places are presenting these services in order to attract more customers. To encourage social interaction and break away from people constantly working by themselves in their own corner, Wi-Fi is temporary turned off and some owner's stage performances, music and book reading nights. These events occur to engage the audience and encourage social interaction. This is when different activities begin to blend within the same shared public space.

3.3 Virtual Third Place

3.3.1 Network Society, “Places And Flows” by Manuel Castell

The most important sociological theory on the effects of information age on our society is set out by Manuel Castell in *Rise of the Network Society* (Kluitenburg, 2006). In this theory he describes that following economic and social transformations in late industrial societies, the formation of communication and information technologies has strengthen the rise of flexible social network connections (Kluitenburg, 2006). Castell describes that the dominant form of our society is through a network, hence *Network Society*. As discussed in this thesis, social interaction is separated into two means, one that occurs through physical contact (in person) and the virtual (using digital communication technologies). Castell speaks about severe separation between these two realms, calling them ‘two opposing types of spatial logic, the logic of material places and locations (space of place) and the logic of intangible flows of information, communication, services and capital (space of flows) (Kluitenburg, 2006). These two logics can be applied to the conversation on the third place, the first logic of *material places and locations (space of place)* is the physical third place and the second logic of *intangible flows of information, communication, services and capital (space of flows)* is the virtual third place. Castell believes that there is a major irregularity between these two kinds of spaces in the way they inhabit our society (Kluitenburg, 2006). He states that,

“while the vast majority of the world’s inhabitants live, dwell and work in the space of places and locations, the dominant economic, political, social and ultimately also cultural functions are increasingly shifting to the places of flows, where they make possible location-free ahistorical network connections, international trends, power complexes and capital movements (Kluitenburg, 2006, p.9).”

This ultimately means that the *space of flows* indicates what happens in the real physical environment. The unfair part is that only a very small part of world population makes the decisions about the organization and use of new location-free spatial connections, which largely impacts and determines the living conditions of the rest of the world population where knowledge, experience and memory is localized (Kluitenburg, 2006). This shows that there is a

large gap between these two types of space, the physical locations and places, and the intangible space of information flows.

3.3.2 Electronic Pirate-Modernity by Ravi Sundaram

Access to television, internet and telephone is open to all. Hybrid space is never solely local, it is a global network where local and international networks are interweaving (Kluitenburg, 2006). Anyone can freely access the data within these networks, this is described as Electronic Pirate-Modernity by Ravi Sundaram.

“The Local is newly established as a micro-environment with a worldwide reach”, Saskia Sassen (Kluitenburg, 2006).

This universal access creates a negative effect on the physical urban spaces. Global social trends tend to generalize previously unique locations, they bring privatization and commercialization of spaces by holding programs and activities that are popular in the virtual networks, as well as economically and politically.

Electronic media manifests itself with the visual forms such as screens, projections and electronic tagging. These elements have rearranged and imposed on the public space, erasing the traditional public functions of open space by utilizing streets and building surfaces as a stage for screens and projections that display advertisements (Kluitenburg, 2006). Here public functions become blurred as these visual elements overpower the urban fabric with bright lights and large images.

3.4 Interactive Architecture

The application of Interactive technologies within this project is to redefine the relationship of a person with the built environment. It is to create a dialogue between the user and the object, to enhance the physical experience within the space and increase a level of attachment similar to what we have in our virtual communications. Use of interactive technologies will redefine the role of a physical third place within a technology-impacted society.

Interactive Architecture (IA) is not merely architecture that responds or adapts to changing circumstances, but it is based on the concept of bi-directional communication, which requires two active parties (Oosterhuis, 2007). It is about a similar communication, which naturally occurs between two people, “they both listen (input), think (process) and talk (output)”. However, Interactive architecture is not about communication between people. “IA is defined as the art of building relationships between built components and also as building relations between people and built components. IA is the art of building bi-directional relationships. All components are (IPO) devices: input, process, and output. There are passive and active IPO systems (Oosterhuis, 2007, p.4).” Application of interactive technologies to architecture creates a sense of awareness as they begin to enhance and extend our activities. Interactive technologies create a sense of place, control of space and attachment to space.

3.4.1 Early Theoretical Ideas

Interactive systems are useful, meaningful and necessary in order to make systems that interact and adapt to individual, social and environmental demands. Interactive architecture addresses dynamic, flexible, and constantly evolving activities. Interactive architecture changes the role of the people from users to participants. Usman Haque (2006) defined it as, "A truly interactive system is a multiple-loop system in which one enters into a conversation: a continual and constructive information exchange."

In 1970's and 1980's, in collaboration with a number of architects, a cybernetician Gordon Pask has developed a theory towards understanding of interactive architecture naming it “Conversation Theory” (Haque, 2006, p.14). It served as a basis for interactive architectural development at that time. In it Gordon Pask says that, "rather than an environment that strictly interprets our desires, an environment should allow users to take a bottom-up role in configuring their surroundings in a malleable way without specific goals"(Haque, 2006, p.14).

Expanding on Pask's earliest concepts, Charles Eastman introduced Adaptive-Conditional Architecture where spaces and participants become "complete feedback systems"; it is architecture that self-adjusts to fit the needs of its occupants (Haque, 2006). This architecture is designed with no one specific program but is living and evolving together with its occupant, making for a meaningful experience and increasing the useful life span of a building.

3.4.2 Phenomenological Experience from Interactive Architecture

“An interactive architectural environment can not only facilitate lifestyles and behaviors, but also influence them. Our psychological and sociological interpretations of space are influenced by many factors beyond the spatial confines or interpreted definition of space and include lighting, acoustics, and smell (Fox & Kemp, 2009, p.138).” This is the phenomenological aspect of architecture that focuses on the experience of the occupant.

The intention of this thesis project is to enhance the physical experience within a public space, by bringing movement into the physical, previously static environment. The phenomenological aspect of motion in architecture comes from the person experiencing the space, he is usually also in motion while moving through the space therefore his vantage point is dynamically changing within the physical space (Fox & Kemp, 2009). It is therefore important to create an experience out of the movement in the physical form.

Harsh Kabra spoke about this in his article Living Architecture and stated, “Imagine a design where all is in motion. The result is a moving image, the behavior of which becomes the responsibility of the designer; an architect much like a cinematographer, programs human experience of moving through the spaces he designs. Informing this preconceived kinetic

architecture are real people who transform these spaces into places, imbuing them with life and meaning (Kabra, 2006).”

An enhanced experience comes from a constant back and forth interaction. “As a building responds to our actions, we are confronted with a new level of awareness and choice (Fox & Kemp, 2009, p.138).” The inhabitants will only become engaged once the environment creates a dialogue with them, asking them to manipulate or direct its form (Fox & Kemp, 2009). The success in interactive and flexible design is in the user remaining in a constant evolving dialogue serving both his psychological and programmatic needs, continually redefining sense of place.

4 Literature Review

4.1 Sense of Place

The urban planning principles within the contemporary city have changed. With the pressure of cultural and economic forces urban space has increasingly become privatized, constructing landscapes that no longer establish a sense of place for their communities. This thesis is about creating a sense of place within an urban fabric that has been affected by new planning developments and effects of the virtual social realm.

4.1.1 Memory

Christian Norberg Schulz argues that there has been a loss of meaning in our physical environment, in our cities and our buildings following the end of Second World War due to the changes in the structures of human settlements (Schulz, 1979). “Lost is the settlement as a place in nature, lost are the urban foci as places for common living, lost is the building as a meaningful sub-place where man may simultaneously experience individuality and belonging (Schulz, 1979).”

Martin Heidegger describes that a sense of place is critical in determining between success and failure of an architectural development. In his essay “Building, Dwelling, Thinking” he talks about how human beings recognize and establish a sense of place, it is more than through the act of building that places are brought into existence (Heidegger, 1993). The essence of a place is supported by the act of building, a building does not need to be permanent to establish a place, movable and temporary objects and conditions can also establish a sense of place through simple acts such as rearranging the furniture in a room or even unpacking a suitcase (Heidegger, 1993).

Some cultures use flexible and ephemeral acts to achieve place making. An example of this is shown in Japanese landscapes, an instance where “place making is not associated with buildings, but is achieved by the act of ‘binding’ – encircling trees, rocks, even apparently empty places with rope, fabric and paper (Kronenburg, 2007, p.13).” The place is achieved by using movable and temporary artifacts and situations that can be equally significant as creation of permanent buildings (Kronenburg, 2007).

Sense of place and memory are closely connected to one-another. It is important to establish a sense of place within an architectural space in order for the human experience within that space to be memorable and meaningful. In the paper *Neuroscience and Architecture: Seeking Common Ground* it is described that both memory and sense of place prominently involve the same part of the brain — the hippocampus. “Our memory of events may depend upon a strong sense of place, and by extension, our sense of place may be influenced by the integrity of the memories formed there (Sternberg & Wilson, 2006).”

An important element in differentiating place from space is the ability for humans to interact. If the environment is interactive, a person will not just pass through, but stop and engage with it in some way increasing his feeling of belonging to that place. Our memory of the place is linked to our experience while in it. Sense of place can become stronger if there are landmarks or other architectural elements that establish connection between spaces. Having particular, distinct elements within the place will make the memory stronger.

Gunter Nitschke (1993) (German-born academic): “Place is the product of lived space and lived time.” This suggests that individuals require buildings that are responsive to their needs; thus buildings for any purpose would better suit us if they had a significant degree of adaptability, flexibility and capacity for change (Kronenburg, 2007). If occupants were to see that the environment they are in reconfigured itself to better fit their activity their sense of place would be significantly enhanced.

In his essay “Place and Placelessness” Edward Relph says that a unique quality of place is its ability to spatially focus human intention, experiences, and actions (Seamon & Sowers, 2008). He sees our understanding of space being related to the places we inhabit, the meaning of a place is derived from the spatial context.

"Christian Norberg-Schulz asserts that architecture interprets space and uncovers "the meanings potentially present in the given environment"; an uncovering that thereby reveals its genius loci, its spirit. Connection with this spirit is integral to the development of human identity and identification to our environment which is a temporal understanding of our being-dwelling in the world. Heidegger asserts that we must "ever learn to dwell" that since the parameters that define meaning-thinking-being are not fixed in definition, dwelling is in a constant state of change (Cullen, 2009)."

It is through engagement with the environment that users can establish a sense of place. One type of engagement is when the user has control of the space. A communication between users and the environment can generate emotional attachment, which in turn enhances the spatial experience (Fox & Kemp, 2009). Simple example of this is when the user is capable of manipulating the space, adjusting the physical geometry to create new types of connections and possibilities; this creation of a real time responsive environment redefines the role of architecture as an active participant in human activities (Fox & Kemp, 2009). Humans are more attached to those architectural spaces that have a "true communicative capability", interactivity can "sustain, replicate, or even enhance the aspects" of the place on an individual level (Fox & Kemp, 2009).

4.1.2 Architecture as Event

Architectural space is created out of the event that it is intended for. Juhani Pallasmaa speaks to the event of the architecture as a "a verb, an event. Rather than an object, architecture is a confrontation, interaction, and exchange (Pallasmaa, 2003)." In this sense architecture is a series of events that bring the occupant or user to an understanding of the built environment. Bernard Tschumi also spoke about architecture as an event and a spatial, social and cultural experience.

For him, event = people + activity + space = architecture (Tschumi, 1996).

"Architecture should be seen as an interaction of space and events instead of an object, as a human activity or open-ended text" – Bernard Tschumi, 1981.

4.1.3 Cross Programming

“If shock can no longer be produced by the succession and juxtaposition of facades and lobbies, maybe it can be produced by the juxtaposition of events that take place behind these facades in these spaces”– Bernard Tschumi.

One of Bernard Tschumi concepts deals with cross programming/juxtaposition of events. Here he speaks about the potential for buildings to be multifunctional in order to better address societal needs, “...in today's world where railway stations become museums and churches become nightclubs, a point is being made: the complete interchangeability of form and function, the loss of traditional, canonic cause-and-effect relationships as sanctified by modernism (Tschumi, 2003).”

“If architecture is both concept and experience, space and use, structure and superficial image -- non-hierarchically -- then architecture should cease to separate these categories and instead merge them into unprecedented combinations of programs and space (Tschumi, 2003).”

“Architecture is not about the conditions of design, but about the design of conditions that will dislocate the most traditional and regressive aspects of our society and simultaneously reorganize these elements in the most liberating way, where our experience becomes the experience of events organized and strategized through architecture. Strategy is a key word in architecture today. No more masterplans, no more locating in a fixed place, but a new heterotopia. This is what our cities must strive towards and what we architects must help them to achieve by intensifying the rich collision of events and spaces. Tokyo and New York only appear chaotic. Instead, they mark the appearance of a new urban structure, a new urbanity. Their confrontations and combinations of elements may provide us with the event, the shock, that I hope will make the architecture of our cities a turning point in culture and society (Tschumi, 2003)” – Bernard Tschumi.

5 Precedent Review

5.1 Third Place as a Port Of Entry

According to Ray Oldenburg, Third places are ports of entry for visitors (Oldenburg, 1999). The design of a true third place is open-ended, highly accessible and welcoming (Oldenburg, 1999). In a good third place the form of the building does not force the activity; it is rather the people that create the building form through their activity (Oldenburg, 1999).

This concept is illustrated best by Christopher Alexander in his book *A Pattern Language*. He studies how architecture can both dictate, and facilitate, our behaviors. His book explores the underlying code, or “pattern,” found in our environments. For example:

...Pattern 158 ("Open Stairs") argues for the building of several public outdoor staircases to each upper-story apartment or workplace not simply because they are aesthetically pleasing but because "...we are saying that a centralized entrance, which funnels everyone in a building through it, has in its nature the trappings of control; while the pattern of many open stairs, leading off the public streets, direct to private doors, has in its nature the fact of independence, free comings and goings (Christopher Alexander, *A Pattern Language*, p. 742)."

In this quote he stresses that architecture that has one centralized entrance into a building has an element of control and appears to trap the occupant inside or obstruct others from entering. To create a building that is welcoming and open to all, allowing for free coming and goings it must have a pattern of many entrances, a series of “open stairs” leading from the public streets. This will be the structure of a third place developed in this thesis. Several examples of buildings using these strategies have been closely studied in this thesis to derive the best possible arrangement and circulation for the new third place.

5.1.1 Public Squares as Ultimate Ports of Entry

Case study 1: Piccadilly Gardens | Manchester, England | Tadao Ando



Fig 5.1.1.1: View of the Piccadilly Gardens, located on the Manchester City Square

Public squares have been identified as the best examples of architectural spaces that have multiple entrances. These spaces serve as a relief and gathering area within densely populated urban developments. Their openness and accessibility determines how many people will use the space. Piccadilly Gardens is a public park within the center of Manchester city that can also be characterized as a square. This space is a great example of an outdoor public space due to its openness to the surrounding context and landscaping elements. It serves as an outdoor third place for the public as it allows for a diverse population to be in the same space. Its landscaping elements are strongly defined; however, the people are creators of their own activities within the space. Several linear paths are extended from the adjacent streets to pass through the park. These

paths serve as a quick means of passing through the site. There are also other elements which capture both youth and adults inside the park. The oval shape fountain, enclosed space on one of the sides and an abundant amount of green scape are the elements that make people want to stay in this space. There are plenty of spaces to sit: benches, steps along all the paths or simply the grass. This park is truly a port of entry for its visitors, its urban form allows for visitors to be able to come and go as they wish. The park has all of the elements that make people want to stay.



Fig 5.1.1.2: Path and Seating



Fig 5.1.8.3: Oval Shape Fountain and Path

There are some programmatic limitations when considering this square as a good public third place that provides a vast variety of spaces for different programmatic activities. The main limitation of the park is that it is made up of one continuous level and its vast openness does not provide a sense of enclosure, opposed to places within which intimate gatherings can occur. These are the spaces that provide a physical separation from others. To solve this, fully or partially enclosed spaces must be defined. This can be achieved with a simple change in the horizontal plane. A separate volume can be defined by lowering or raising a portion of the plane.

“Lowering a portion of the base plane isolates a field of space from a larger context. The vertical surfaces of the depression establish the boundaries of the field. These boundaries are not implied as in the case of an elevated plane, but visible edges that begin to form the wall of the space (Ching, 1996,p. 108)”.

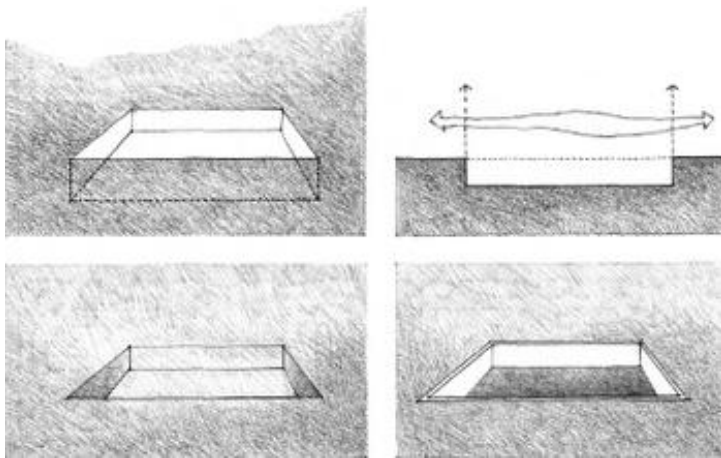


Fig 5.1.9.4: Depressed Base Plane

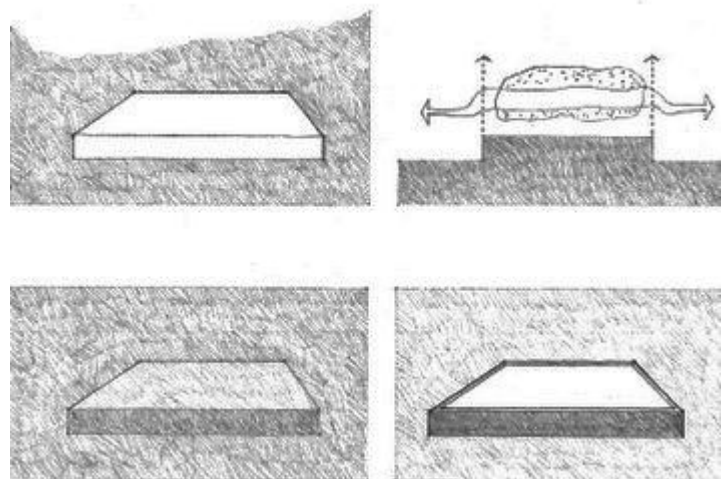


Fig 5.1.11.5: Elevated Base Plane

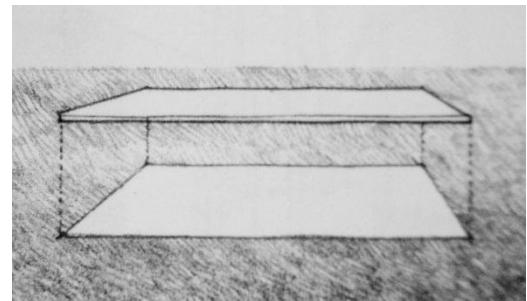
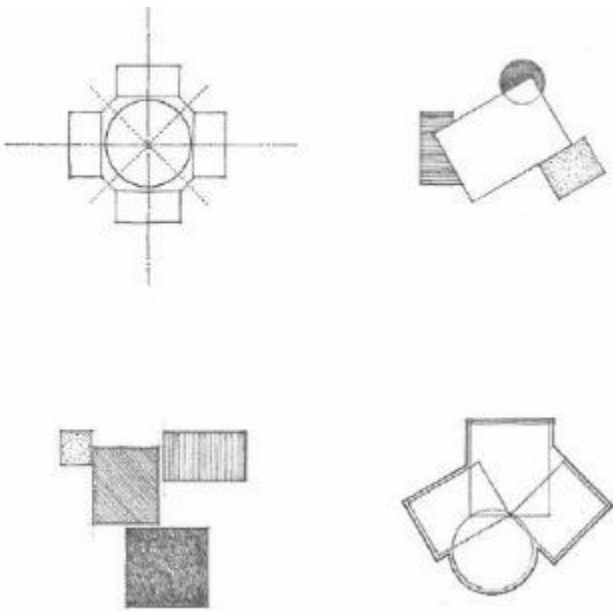


Fig 5.1.10.6: Overhead Plane

“The changes in level that occur along the edges of the elevated plane define the boundaries of its field and interrupt the flow of space across its surface (Ching, 1996, p. 102)”. A plane can also be raised high enough to create a separate overhead horizontal plane; this will define a volume of space between itself and the ground plane. All of the above strategies could have been applied in the design of the Piccadilly Gardens to provide a variety of spaces and seating surfaces, making the square a more interesting place which allows for additional uses.

5.2 Third Place as a Village | Self-Sustaining Cluster

A third place must capture people, and therefore must have all of the required elements to accommodate their needs; otherwise the people won't use the space and simply pass through to find other places which can accommodate them. This means that third places must be self-sustaining and able to provide the interests of a diverse population. Villages are built on this principle; they act as an organism containing a heart, lungs, kidney, arteries, etc. This means that each element within the village works together to form a complete whole. A clustered form of organization allows for the best proximity between spaces, and is flexible enough to incorporate forms of various shapes, sizes and orientations into its structure (Ching, 1996). Since each of the components of an organism varies in this manner, the appropriate strategy to form a self-sustaining third place will be to use a clustered form of spatial organization.



“Considering their flexibility, clustered organizations of forms may be organized in the following ways: they can be attached as appendages to a larger parent form or space, they can be related by proximity alone to articulate and express their volumes as individual entities, and they can interlock their volumes and merge into a single form having a variety of faces (Ching, 1996, p.66).”

Fig 5.2.1: Clustered Forms of Spatial Arrangement

To search for the essential elements that will form a new third place, several public spaces and buildings, incorporating the two strategies where a third place acts as a port of entry and a self-sustaining cluster, have been reviewed.

5.2.1

Case study 2: Barceló Market | Madrid, Spain | Nieto Sobejano Arquitectos



Fig 5.2.1.1: Plan View of Barcelo Market

Barcelo Market in Madrid is an example of a building that is also a port of entry for its visitors, mainly through its physical form and arrangement. Here, 6 rounded pentagons of different sizes are irregularly positioned to form a cluster. This cluster can be entered from 6 entry points, the gaps created between the pentagons. This building has a pattern of many entrances and the main circulation occurs between the elements in the central passage, which is connected to all components of the market. This type of circulation forces the users to wonder through the inner space to enter the buildings. Such strategy captures the people inside but also allows for easy exit.



Fig 5.2.1.2: Interior Central Passage



Fig 5.2.1.3: Barcelo Market in Context

Even though the market is highly accessible physically, the interior passage in the center of the complex is not visible from the outside; therefore the people may feel isolated from the city context and others outside. This is primarily due to the overhead covering over the path and close-fitting between the 6 pentagons. The physical form of a third place must be inviting; therefore it is important to allow for passers to view both its outdoor and indoor spaces from the exterior. Openings in the canopy and a more spread out arrangement would solve this issue. Also, an enlargement of the path in the most central location will create a shared space between the volumes, a heart for the market, an outdoor meeting space where occupants can meet before entering the buildings.

5.2.2

Case study 3: Australian Centre for The Moving Image (ACMI) | Melbourne, Australia | Bates Smart Architects



Fig 5.2.2.1: Australian Centre for the Moving Image in Context (ACMI)

Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI) is located at the Melbourne Federation Square. This composition of buildings is an example of a self-sustaining village. Each of the components of the complex visually and physically forms a complete whole. There is a pattern of several entrances throughout the breaks between the buildings showing that the complex is also a good example of a port of entry. It is clear from this example and in the case of Barcelo Market in Madrid that this is the best arrangement for a public space. It allows for easy accessibility from different access points. In the case of the ACMI there is a central space, the square which is the most essential part of the site. It is the heart of this village, where main circulation and activities occur.

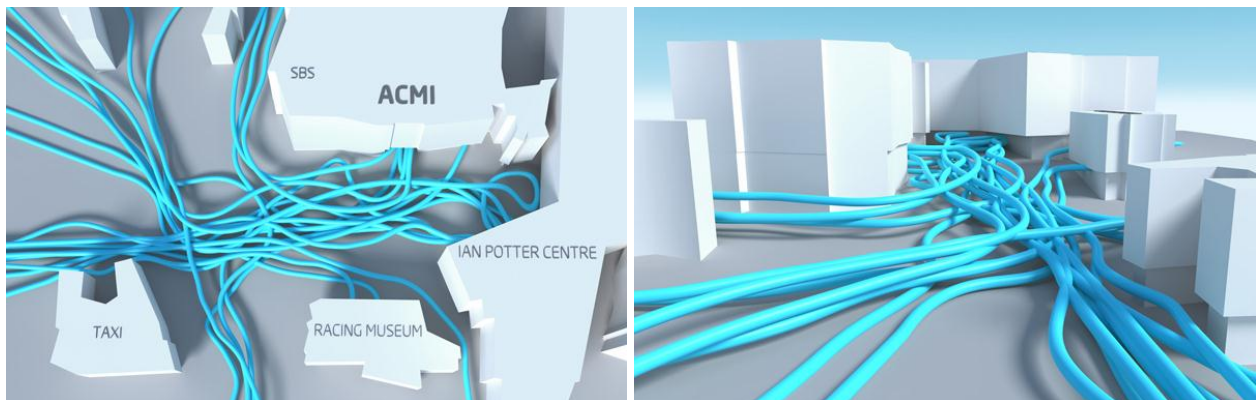


Fig 5.2.2.2: Outdoor Circulation Diagrams of ACMI



Fig 5.2.2.3: Top View of ACMI showing a Large Public Gathering



Fig 5.2.2.4: Night View of the Square

Similarly to the Piccadilly Gardens, the square of the ACMI does not provide a large variety of spaces. The square serves two functions; it is a space for large public gatherings and outdoor circulation between buildings. The issue with having a one continuous surface, as seen in this case, does not provide spaces for seating, which is required in third places to create comfortable environments. By manipulating, raising or lowering the planes these settings can be created.

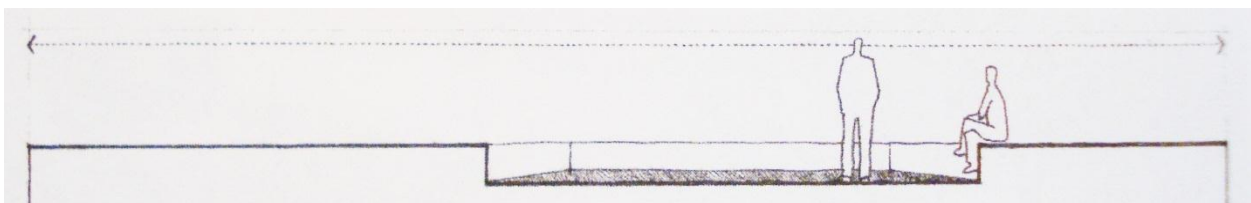


Fig 5.2.2.5: Depressing the Base Plane to Create Seating Surfaces

5.3 Applying the Qualities of the Virtual Realm to the Design of the Physical Third Place

The idea for the physical third place will borrow from the character of the virtual third place. The physical form, program and activities of the new will be derived from the qualities of the virtual realm. These qualities are: immateriality and flexibility, layering of information forming a complex system, as well as ease of accessibility and interactivity.

5.3.1 Immateriality



Fig 5.3.1.1: Tree-Hotel Project by Tham Videgard Hansson Arkitekter

The virtual realm seems to be physically absent from our environment, however it makes a big impact on our everyday life and the way we occupy physical urban space. Just like in the case of the Tree-Hotel project by Tham Videgard Hansson Arkitekter the virtual realm is invisible to our eyes however it is there, carrying and influencing our physical environment.

Here the Tree-Hotel is immaterial from the outside and complex within. From this arose the idea to create a third place that blends within its context, a building that becomes a part of its exterior surroundings, a program that blends within its landscape, becoming an extension of the street and hence the public realm.



Fig 5.3.1.2: Interior Views of the Tree-Hotel Project

A building that becomes a part of the urban landscape by blending within its context is an extension of the most engaged physical public realm, the street, park or plaza. A third place that does this is instantly perceived as a public social setting for a diverse population.



Fig 5.3.1.3: Maritime Youth Centre Project by PLOT

5.4 Third Place as a Building and a Landscape

5.4.1

Case study 4: Zamet Centre | Rijeka, Croatia | 3LHD Architects



Fig 5.4.1.1: View of the Zamet Centre from the Square Plaza

Zamet Centre by 3LHD Architects is an example of a building that is also a landscape. The center is fitted into the surrounding landscape, as the main architectural element of the building, the ribbon-like linear stripes, stretch over the site in a north-south direction (E-architect, 2009). People can walk on these linear elements to cross the site as well as enter the building from them as they become the roof structures to the sports facilities below. The centre is 16830 m² and holds a sports hall with max 2380 seats, local community offices, library, 13 retail and service spaces and a garage with 250 parking spaces (E-architect, 2009). The walkable surfaces of the linear stripes as well as the square plaza in front of the building become extensions of the outdoor public realm. These spaces serve to easily funnel people through the site and into the building. This is another example of a building that is a port of entry to its visitors, achieved by the physical design of turning a building into a landscape.

The way the linear stripes are designed specifies that the circulation is uninterrupted. There is no indication showing that spaces for stopover, resting or congregation are formed. As previously mentioned third places must capture people and keep them inside, in this case the exterior of this building does not have the ability to provide this. This is mainly because its striped roofs only serve as passageways. A simple solution to change this would be to add sitting surfaces; however this was not the intent of the architects.



Fig 5.4.1.2: The overall view of the Zamet Centre



Fig 5.4.1.3: View of the Linear Stripes from the Ground Floor

5.4.2

Case study 5: Maritime Youth Centre | Copenhagen, Denmark | PLOT

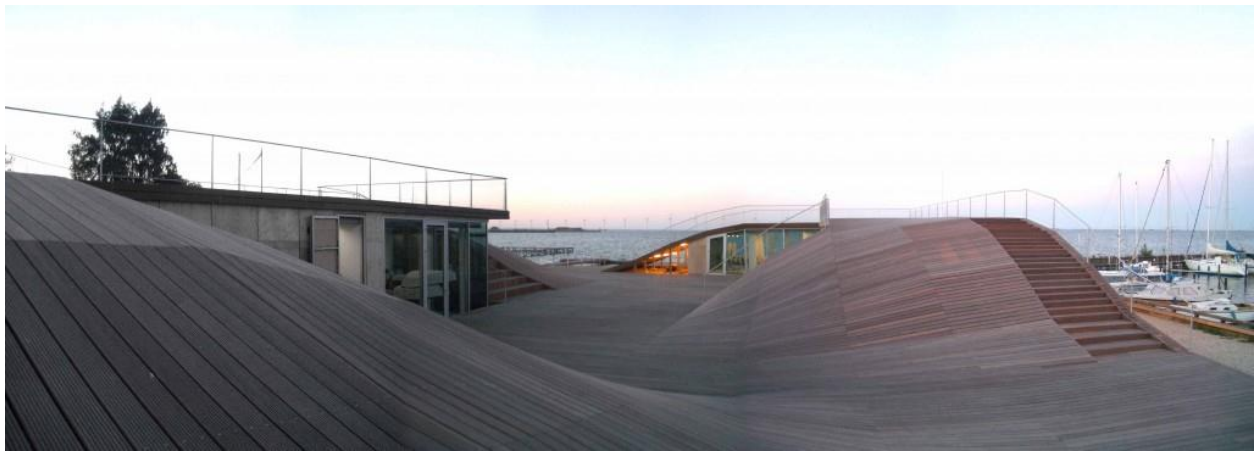


Fig 5.4.2.1: The Undulating Landscape of the Maritime Youth Centre

To solve a problem of a polluted soil, the site was covered by a wooden deck which has become a public landscape serving variety of social functions surrounded by water on all sides (Urbarama Atlas of Architecture, 2009). There were two primary users with conflicting interests that had to share the facilities: the youth center that wanted outdoor space for the children and the sailing club which required facilities to moor their boats (Urbarama Atlas of Architecture, 2009).

The building is a result of these two contradictory demands: the wooden deck is elevated at multiple points to provide for boat storage underneath, at the same time creating undulating landscape for the kids to play and run above (Urbarama Atlas of Architecture, 2009). This is a great example of how a building merges and serves to fulfill two very different functions by making a building also a landscape. The openness of this landscape to the surrounding context also makes this building a port of entry for the visitors, as it welcomes you from each of its sides.

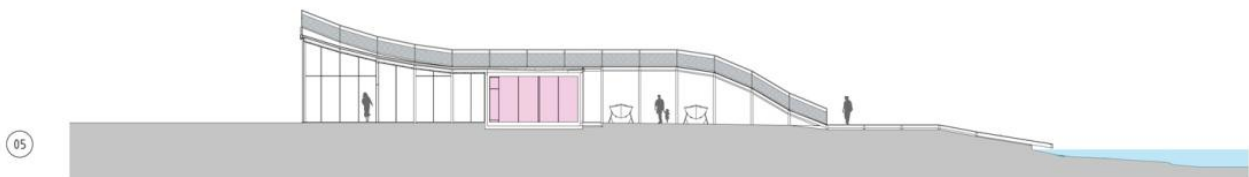


Fig 5.4.2.2: Section View Showing the Interior Space

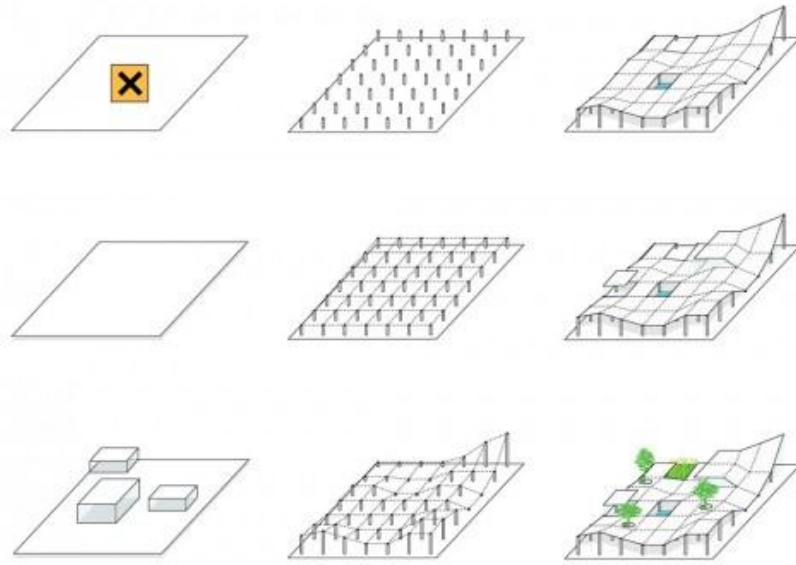


Fig 5.4.2.3: Diagrams Showing Formation of the Landscape

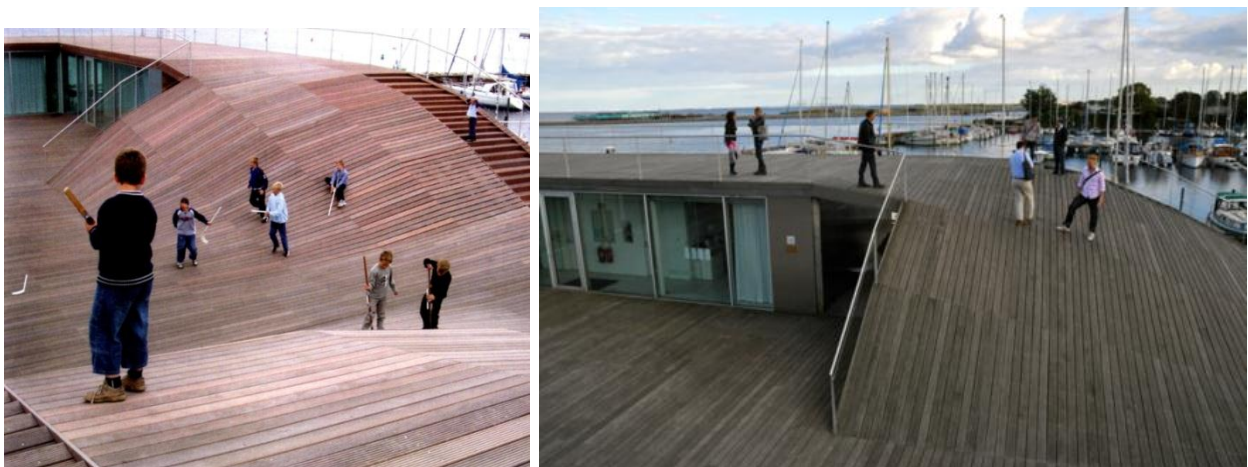


Fig 5.4.2.4: The Undulating Wooden Deck of the Centre

The landscape of the center provides a comfortable and warm environment due to its materiality. The wooden deck becomes a playful surface for the children and a lookout stage for all of its users. However, these surfaces can be dangerous during the winter months as the steep slopes can become walking hazards once covered by snow or ice. If the site was larger it could have allowed for a more gentle formation of these same slopes, though the overall character of the space would be altered, becoming less intimate and enclosed.

5.4.3

Case study 6: EWha Woman's University | Seoul, Korea | Dominique Perrault



Fig 5.4.3.1: The View of the Inner “Campus Valley” and the Above Landscape

The new EWha campus center creates a new topography for the surrounding landscape of the campus; the new addition is a sports strip with an inner “campus valley”, a new seam that slices through the topography revealing the interior of the campus (Dominique Perrault Architecture, 2008). The sports strip and the void space of the campus valley act as a new gateway for the campus, a hybrid public place that holds variety of activities on the different levels and sides of this topography (Dominique Perrault Architecture, 2008). The area serves as the heart of the campus, bringing university and city together. Animated by a flow of people all year round this landscape, that is a part of a building, is a special place for gathering, conducting classes or simply relaxing (Dominique Perrault Architecture, 2008). The new center weaves the new and old parts of the campus together by blurring the building with the landscape (Dominique Perrault Architecture, 2008). The grand linear avenue stretching through the campus leading towards the monumental stair are recalling les Champs Elysees or the Campidoglio in Rome (Dominique

Perrault Architecture, 2008). The new EWha center has two entry points on either side of the linear avenue, from which access to various departments is created. This space becomes the main node of the campus. This “campus valley” serves as a: forum for students to gather after class and discuss their views, a piazza with a cafeteria as a place to stop and relax, and outdoor theatre when the grand stair is transformed into a theatre, as well as a sculpture garden when the indoor gallery events spill outwards (Dominique Perrault Architecture, 2008). There is also an abundant amount of green scape above, as trees, flowers and grass cover the topography of the center resulting in an idyllic garden with spaces for sitting and relaxation. Even though the entry point here is controlled by the creation of a void that cuts through the site, the large scale of the site allows for a free flow of visitors. Similar to the Maritime Youth Centre the facilities are hidden below the rich landscape.



Fig 5.4.3.2: The New EWha University within Context



Fig 5.4.3.3: The “Campus Valley”

The grand scale of this project is appropriate to the site, as it creates an extraordinary, well defined space in the center of the campus. The openness of the spaces create similar limitations as in the previous case studies of this thesis report. Besides the grand stair that serves as an area for seating, the rest of the surfaces are absent of enclosures that can provide for more intimate or relaxed gatherings. The lower portion of the “campus valley” serves as a passageway with no areas for stop-over. The design of the valley is reminiscent of the boulevards in France.

5.4.4

Case study 7. New terminal for Stockholm | Stockholm, Sweden | C. F. Møller Architects

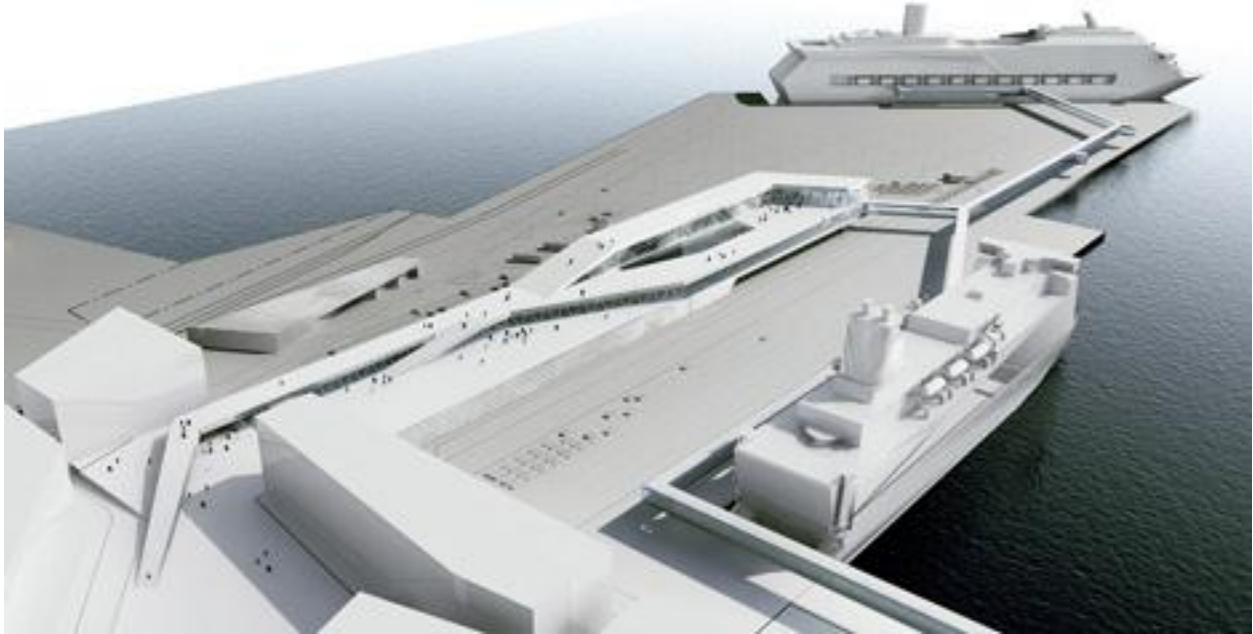


Fig 5.4.4.1: The Overall View of the Terminal

The new terminal for Stockholm is another example where the building becomes a landscape. This terminal becomes a linear element connecting the city to the port. Reminiscent of the previous character of the port the architecture recalls the large cranes and warehouse that used to occupy the site (Designboom, 2010). The shape of the building portrays a moving vessel with a façade that is covered with expanded mesh (Designboom, 2010). The main idea of this linear and elongated gesture of the terminal was to create a natural link between central Stockholm and the urban area with the terminal, allowing the city life to naturally flow into the area (Designboom, 2010).

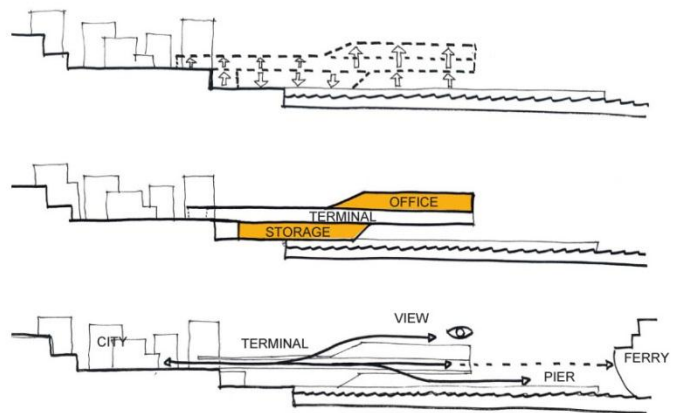


Fig 5.4.4.2: Sectional Diagrams of the Terminal

To connect to the urban zone the terminal was raised, creating an easy way for both pedestrians and vehicular traffic to access the terminal (Designboom, 2010). The roof of the terminal becomes an extensive landscape with “stairs, ramps, niches and cozy corners” with views of the city and the ferries, which make it inviting for both the passengers and the people of the city, these qualities make it a true public place (Designboom, 2010). The elongated rectilinear site has allowed for a formation of gentle slopes, a safely walkable landscape that serves as a year-round attraction for its visitors and the city.

The terminal becomes an extension of the street, almost a street in itself as it funnels people from point A to point B through its linear landscaping gestures connecting the ground with the levels of the terminal.



Fig 5.4.4.3: The Walkable Slopes of the Terminal

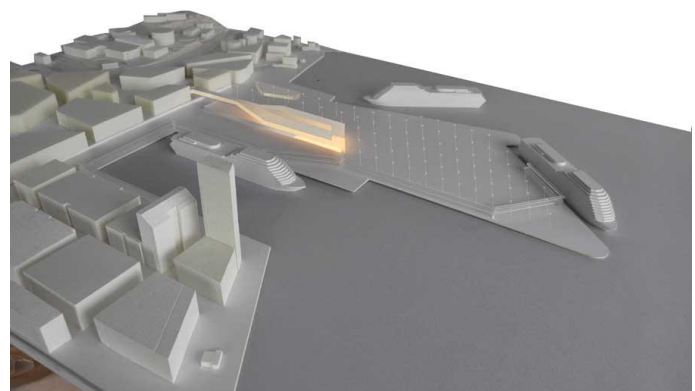


Fig 5.4.4.4: The Terminal within Context

5.4.5

Case study 8. Theresia Bastion / Timisoara, Romania / ARCHAEUS



Fig 5.4.5.1: The Theresia Bastion within Context

The project is an application of new urbanism within the context of heritage architecture. The new addition is a rehabilitation of the Theresia Bastion that was built between 1738-1738 (in Timisoara, Romania) and was the first of the nine Vauban Bastions which formed the defense system of Timisoara (Inqmind, 2012). The Bastion is qualified as a Class A Monument according to the National List of Monuments in Romania, therefore an important heritage building (Archdaily, 2012). The aim of the project was to find a new urban role for the inner court of the bastion as little activity has been invested in this space in the last twenty years (Archdaily, 2012). The central area of the city has been redeveloped with new functions (bank headquarters, the seat of the Chamber of Architects Timis, the Faculty of Fine Arts and Design, the Medicine Faculty) therefore the space inside the Theresia Bastion needed to be opened and

reinvented for the developing society (Michler, 2012). It has been transformed into a new urban space for cultural and socializing functions (Michler, 2012). This addition has been carefully inserted into the site to reassemble the image of the monument with the city's efforts of becoming a candidate for the European Cultural Capital title in 2020 (Archdaily, 2012). The new addition forms a series of contemporary volumes for cultural use while creating indoor spaces and utilizing unused attic as an exhibition space (Archdaily, 2012). Materials for the surfaces have been chosen carefully to create a contrast with the historical image of the bastion. The change in floor levels creates an intricate play of surfaces: ramps, stairs and green spaces become extensions of the buildings and its landscape. This landscape is highly animated, and includes a variety of gathering spaces for the people. Surfaces for seating indicate that individuals are invited into these ground, not to just pass through but to stay, hence the design of this bastion creates a good third place.



Fig 5.4.5.2: The Theresia Bastion Exterior Views

5.5 Animating Outdoor Public Spaces

5.5.1

Case study 9. The City Dune | Copenhagen, Denmark | SLA Landscape Architecture

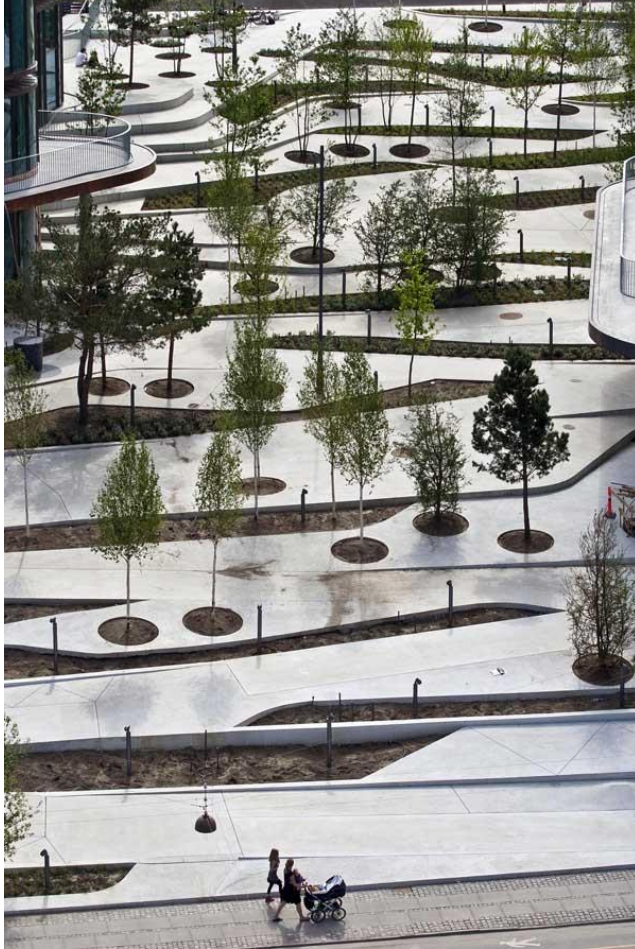


Fig 5.5.1.1: Zig-zag Paths of Dune City



Fig 5.5.1.2: The Office Towers of Dune City

The City Dune is a new urban space for Copenhagen designed by SLA Landscape Architecture firm. It is located between two buildings: SEB headquarters and another office building for rent, both of which were designed by Lundgaard and Tranberg.

The task for SLA was to create an urban space that would tie the headquarters together connecting them to the surrounding area, the harbor and the rest of Copenhagen city (e-architect, 2011). To achieve this connectivity between the buildings, SLA created a landscaped public space which “climbs via a zig-zag of paths to join the upper level urban park” (e-architect, 2011).

The patterns for the space were inspired by the office buildings. The architects were inspired by the curvilinear gestures that formed the interior spaces inside the buildings, particularly the edges of the atriums and stairs inside the main entrance. The architects simply extended these gestures through the curtain wall to form and define the urban space of the paths.



Fig 5.5.1.3: Entrance to the SEB Headquarters

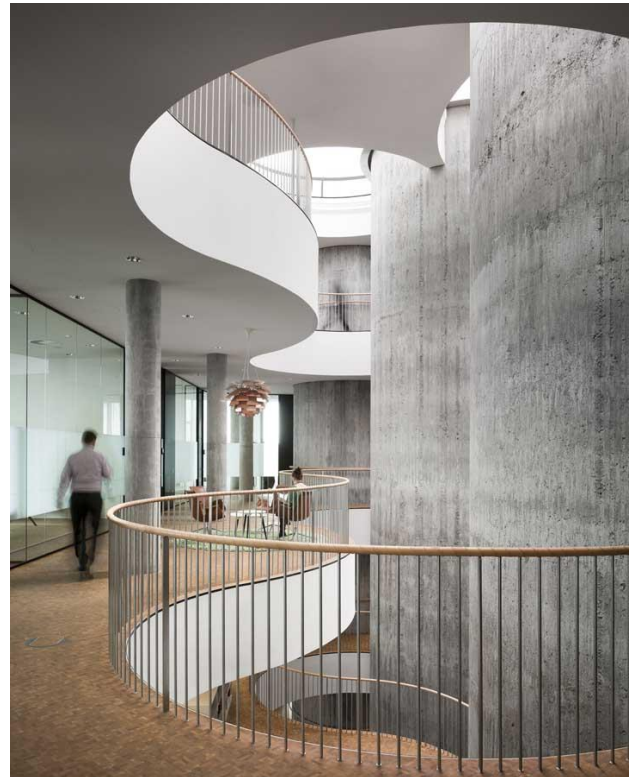


Fig 5.5.1.4: Atriums of the SEB Headquarters

An intricate urban space has been created with a variety of planes, shapes, levels that form countless sitting spaces, wandering paths and surfaces for skateboarders. This project is an example of how an open space can be transformed and animated into a lively and active public space with the use of simple landscaping techniques. This project is a good example of how a single design language can be carried throughout a large site to visually and physically create a continuous environment, connecting vertical and horizontal elements together.

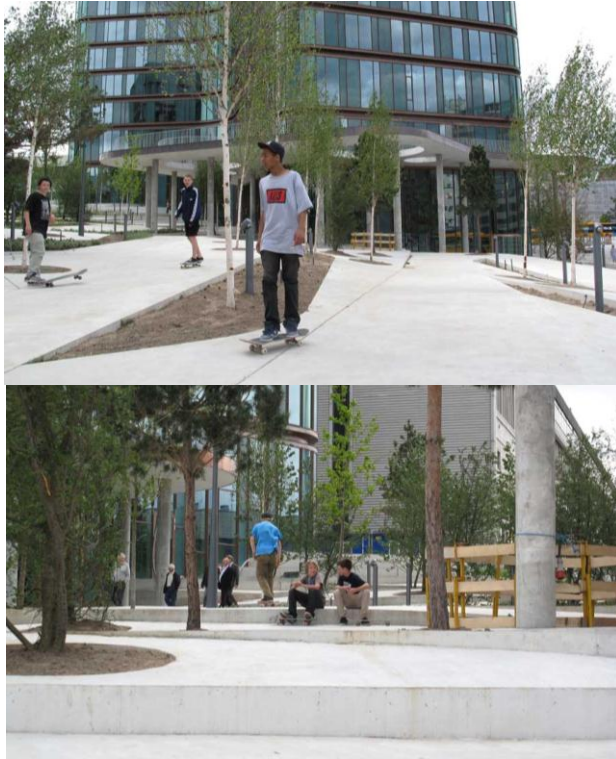


Fig 5.5.1.5: Skateboarding Surfaces



Fig 5.5.1.6: Outside Entrance to the SEB Headquarters

One of the physical design limitations is the enforced circulation within the plaza. As the paths extend one building to the next, this linear gesture is continued throughout the site. The site becomes consumed by a parallel arrangement of these paths, and therefore indicating a specific, single way of circulation. Therefore the raised surfaces, which create spaces for seating, become physical boundaries preventing perpendicular circulation through the site. The site becomes a landscaped maze of wandering paths.

5.5.2

Case study 10. Public Space for Events Forum de Negocios | Granada, Spain | Francisco J. del Corral & Federico Wulff



Fig 5.5.2.1: Night View of the Public Space for Events Forum de Negocios

“On the boundary of the urban city, next to the fertile low-land (Vega), just where urban geometries are replaced by rural ones, we propose a new landscape for events and celebrations placed close to an office building” – Francisco J.del Corral del Campo (David.K, 2009). The concept for this public space is based on the landscape of the lowlands whose crop fields are furrowed by irrigation channels (David.K, 2009). This public space is a “dynamic succession of spaces”; ramps, stairs and pathways that are formed with diverse shapes, materials and colours. Vegetation and water are the main elements which emphasize and shape the different spaces.

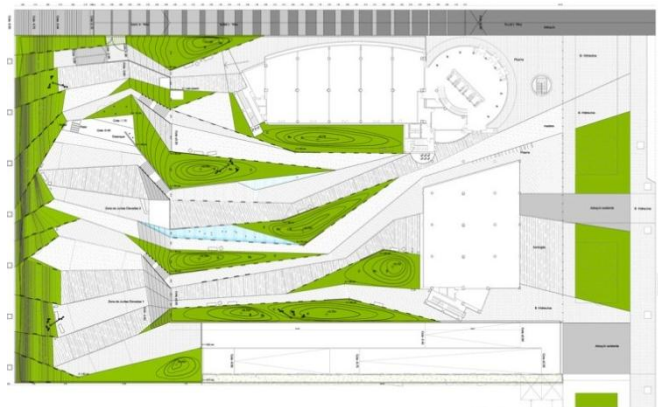


Fig 5.5.2.2: Plan View of the Channels

Francisco J.del Corral del Campo speaks about water as the main element:

“Its sound and presence modifies our feelings. It springs calmly some times, others its sonorous and rhythmic, it follows our steps on a water stair and propose our rest ending in a pond thanks to a channel guided by one of the designed strength lines (David.K, 2009).”

This project creates an exciting journey through the site by the use of its multifaceted landscape, vegetation, ponds and the sound of water as one travels through the space. A strong presence and a sense of place are created throughout this landscape. This project is similar to the Dune City, as it transforms a public space into an intricate landscape using changes in levels, surfaces and materials. However, what is missing in this project is surfaces to sit on, particularly benches, which can be achieved by manipulating the horizontal plane. This project tried to create these spaces with sloped planes, which are not as comfortable as straight surfaces.



Fig 5.5.2.3: Views within the Site

5.5.3

Case study 11. The High Line | New York, USA | Diller Scofidio + Renfro + James Corner



Fig 5.5.3.1: A Look at the High Line: Before and After Transformation



Fig 5.5.3.2: Map of the High Line

High Line is an outdoor public park built on a historic industrial railway corridor of the city which was active in the early twentieth century and then abandoned. The architects converted the structure and the railway tracks into a public park. The 1.45 mile-long elevated park includes over a dozen access points from the city streets (David, J. & Hammond, R., 2011).

A variety of landscaping elements: sundecks, water features, seating steps, benches, open lawns and viewing areas are located along the park attracting a large crowd (LaFarge, A. & Darke, R., 2012).

The paving system has been inspired by the wild seeded landscape that was left after the line was abandoned (David, J. & Hammond, R., 2011). This system encourages natural growth of vegetation which creates a ‘pathless’ landscape (Archdaily, 2009). The paving system is also integrated with the site furniture, as paved strips are raised to form benches.



Fig 5.5.3.3: The Landscape of the Highline, View from the Top

“Through a strategy of agri-tecture - part agriculture, part architecture – the High Line surface is digitized into discrete units of paving and planting which are assembled along the 1.5 miles into a variety of gradients from 100% paving to 100% soft, richly vegetated biotopes,” explained DS + Renfro (Archdaily, 2009).

This free and undefined environment serves as another transportation route through the city, with plenty of public gathering places which include seating spaces for recreation and relaxation.



Fig 5.5.3.4: The Landscape of the Highline, Showing Seating and Gathering Areas

One of the disadvantages of the High line is the lack or too small of an amount of covered or partially enclosed spaces. Without such spaces the park only serves as a big summer attraction while lacking in use in the cold winter months. The enclosed spaces are found only below the elevated railway, leaving the elevated path to be completely open.

5.5.4

Case study 12. Simcoe WaveDeck | Toronto, Canada | West 8 + DTAH



Fig 5.5.4.1: The Undulating Forms of Simcoe Wave Deck

Simcoe Wave Deck is a part of the Toronto Waterfront redevelopment projects. Here a wooden wave deck has been constructed along the water's edge to represent the contours of Lake Ontario's shoreline and to reclaim the space as an active public space (Goodfellow, M. & Goodfellow, P., 2010). The undulating forms of the deck create variety of seating and walking spaces compelling people to stop and use the space.



Fig 5.5.4.2: Simcoe Wave Deck

Similar to the High Line, the Simcoe Wave Deck is an excellent summer attraction. In the winter months, however, ice and cold winds coming from the lake make it less desirable. The issue here is that the deck is designed as a simple horizontal element, without sheltered portions.

5.5.5

Case study 13. The Blue Carpet / Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, England / Thomas Heatherwick



Fig 5.5.5.1: The Blue Carpet Art Installation

A square in front of the Laing Art Gallery has been covered by a skin of blue paving slabs. Designed as a public art piece, the Blue Carpet becomes an urban design feature. To appear as if the tiles are a fabric that is laid over the area, the slabs curve upwards when the skin reaches the building and where street furniture elements punch through. In several spaces tiles are lifted in strips to form benches. Parts of these strips feature sunken glass topped-boxes that hold coloured lights. This project instantly transforms an ordinary space into a colourful urban passageway with a strong sense of place. This is an example of a subtle adjustment to the physical environment of an outdoor urban square. The singular benches indicate that the space is not created for large gatherings, but rather as places of stops and rest for a single individual. A good third place must provide places for variety of gathering where both individuals and groups of all sizes can feel welcomed. Therefore this project is not an outdoor third place, but an art piece, a small intervention and a place.

5.6 Public Interactive Installations

In addition to landscaping elements, interactive objects and installations can also animate a public space. An example of this is seen in the installation of fountains at the Toronto's Dundas Square, which has transformed an ordinary public space into a playful and exciting environment.



Fig 5.6.1: Fountains at the Dundas Square



Fig 5.6.2: FUNtain Installation Art Piece at the Science Centre

A part of the new Teluscape landscape marking the entrance to the Ontario Science Center is an interactive musical fountain installation and an art piece, FUNtain. This installation has created a place where both kids and adults can stay for hours interacting with the object, making sound and creating music by using small torrents of water as a water piano with nothing more but hands.

With each visit to these interactive installations new experiences emerge. These types of objects have become important to the construction of a successful public space and a modern landscape. They can easily attract and gather all groups of people by providing an exciting activity.



Fig 5.6.3: The Kidney Bean at the Millennium Park in Chicago



Fig 5.6.3: The Crown Fountain at the Millennium Park in Chicago

Another example of how interactive public installations can create an effective public space is seen with the Crown Fountain and Kidney Bean at the Millennium Park in Chicago. Both projects have become the landmarks of the city, attracting large crowds of tourists and city residents.

5.7 Interactive Technologies and Art

The application of Interactive technologies within this project will be to redefine the physical relationship of a person with the built environment, enhance the physical experience within the space, and create a dialogue with the object. Interactive technologies create a sense of attachment to the space, due to the ability of people to manipulate, change and play with these objects. Just like with virtual communication technologies these interactive objects allow us to be the creators and directly influence the output.

These installations involve the spectator to achieve a purpose, such as letting the observer walk in, on and around them, while others ask the observer to become the artist and/or a part of the installation (Paul, 2003). Interactive technologies feature computers and sensors that respond to motion, heat and other types of inputs that their makers programmed them to respond to (Paul). Some works allow the audience to participate and influence the course of the performance through a hypertext environment that accepts textual and visual input from outside (Paul). This is an electronic text that is displayed on the screen on the electronic device, which allows the reader an immediate access upon contact either by simply touching the creen, mouse click or with key press sequence (Rizk, Streitz & André, 1991). Hypertext may contain other presentational devices apart from text, such as tables and images (Rizk, Streitz & André). Hypertext defines the structure of the World Wide Web (West's Encyclopedia of American Law, 2009) and has become a flexible and easy-to-use format for information sharing over the internet (Rizk, Streitz & André).

Interactive installations become art pieces in the physical environment. Unlike traditional form of art where the interaction of the spectator is merely a mental event, the interactivity with these installations allows for an experience that is far beyond the psychological activity, achieved through various types of navigation, assembly and contribution to an artwork (Paul C, 2003).

The application of these technologies in a physical third place will address the contemporary needs of our society that is consumed by telecommunication. These installations will alter the physical world making it as exciting as the virtual.



Fig 5.7.1: Ada-Intelligent Room by Paul F.M.J. Verschure

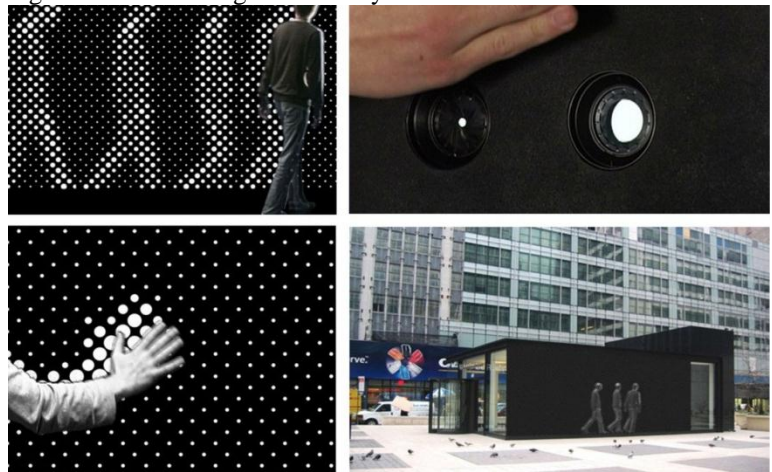


Fig 5.7.2: Aperture Interactive Display by Gunnar Green and Fred Eyl



Fig 5.7.3: Interactive Surface by Sensacell Inc

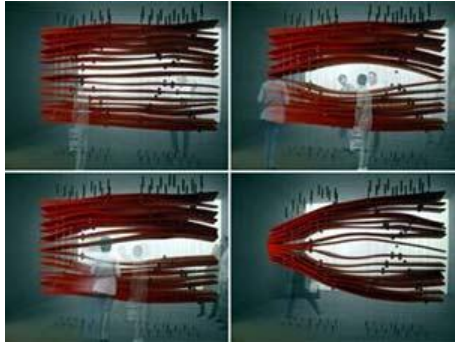


Fig 5.7.4: Party Wall by nArchitects

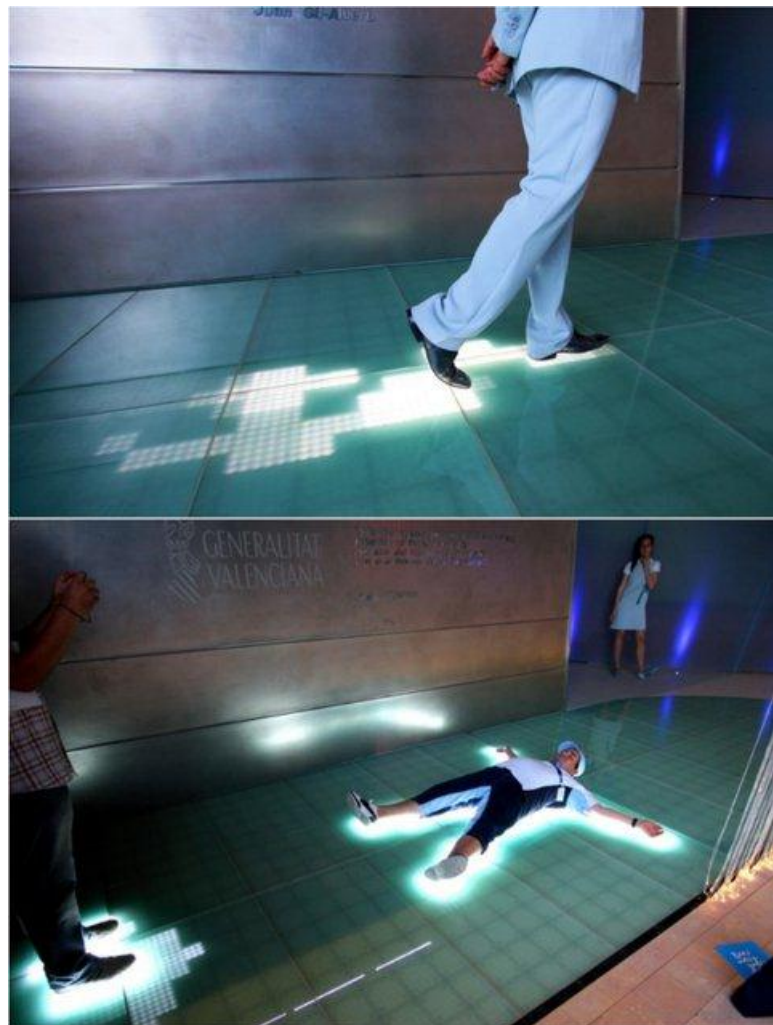


Fig 5.7.5: Interactive Floor by Sensacell Inc, Leo Fernekes & Joakim Hannerz



Fig 5.7.6: Kids immerse themselves in PlayMotion! Interactive Wall Experience at WIRED NextFest 2006 (PRWEB, 2007)

WIRED NextFest is an Education Day that inspires 9,000 students to pursue careers in math, science and technology when building their futures. It provides a glimpse into more than 150 future technologies in entertainment, sustainability, healthcare, transportation and more (PRWEB, 2007). Here interactive technologies are used to educate children, as they create a playful experience making learning easier and more fun.

Children and teens are the largest group in our society that has been affected by communication technologies; they are consumed by them in everyday life, at home, outside and in school environment. Therefore as a means to make their education stimulating and to grab their full attention interactive technologies are used as a solution, a new medium of teaching.

5.8 Precedent Review Summary

In order to derive an appropriate form for the new physical ‘third place’ for the contemporary society, varieties of projects have been studied. After an in depth analysis of the qualities of a good ‘third place’, three primary design concepts have been established.

The first one identifies the Third Place as a Port of Entry, a public place that is highly accessible due to a specific arrangement of its physical form. The second concept speaks of a Third Place as a Village, identifying it as a Self-Sustaining Cluster of programmatic activities. The third concept deals with the immaterial quality of the virtual realm, and its application to the physical realm, where a Third Place is a Building and a Landscape. These projects have been analyzed to design the larger frame of the project, creating a continuous architectural language. Following this, the next step was to animate the indoor and outdoor space in order to engage people in the space. To achieve this goal several public spaces have been studied, to see how simple landscaping techniques can engage the space.

Apart from the design of the physical architecture that will form the spaces, outdoor public installations have been identified as creators of constant activity in public spaces. These interactive installations allow for a deeper experience and connection to the physical environment, foster contact and social interaction.

6 Design Project

6.1 Introduction

For the purpose of this thesis exploration a multidimensional site has been chosen to analyze all of the elements (previously mentioned in the introduction of this thesis) that have contributed to the elimination of third places in our city fabric. The first aspect of this consists of the urban sprawl post WWII, with the effects of single-use zoning on planning developments causing elimination of public spaces in the city, which have been replaced by privatized and commercialized spaces and large shopping malls. The second major factor is introduction of virtual communication technologies that have replaced the need for physical interaction, as the virtual provided exciting, fast and easy ways to socialize.



Fig 6.1.1: The Shops at Don Mills Physical Model

6.1.1 Context: Don Mills Planned Community, a Garden City

Don Mills Planned Community has been chosen for this thesis investigation because it has been created around a central third place for the community but with time it has been redeveloped and has lost its presence. It is important to bring back the initial character of the community, therefore a new 'third place' will be created to improve the condition of the community and merge the old with the new development. Don Mills was the first planned community in Canada designed between



Fig 6.1.1.1: Aerial View of the Don Mills Community

1952 and 1965 and influenced by Ebenezer Howard's Garden City concept (Slightham,1999). It is a self-sustaining mixed-use neighborhood in the North York district of Toronto with proportionate areas of residences, retail and commercial institutional facilities which are surrounded by greenbelts and parks (Slightham). Within this community priority is given to people over industry and cars. The neighborhood is divided into 4 quadrants with a central mixed use space. Within that mixed space a regional shopping center has served as a third place for the community (Slightham). Don Mills community has become the model for many post-war suburban developments in Toronto and other residential neighborhoods.

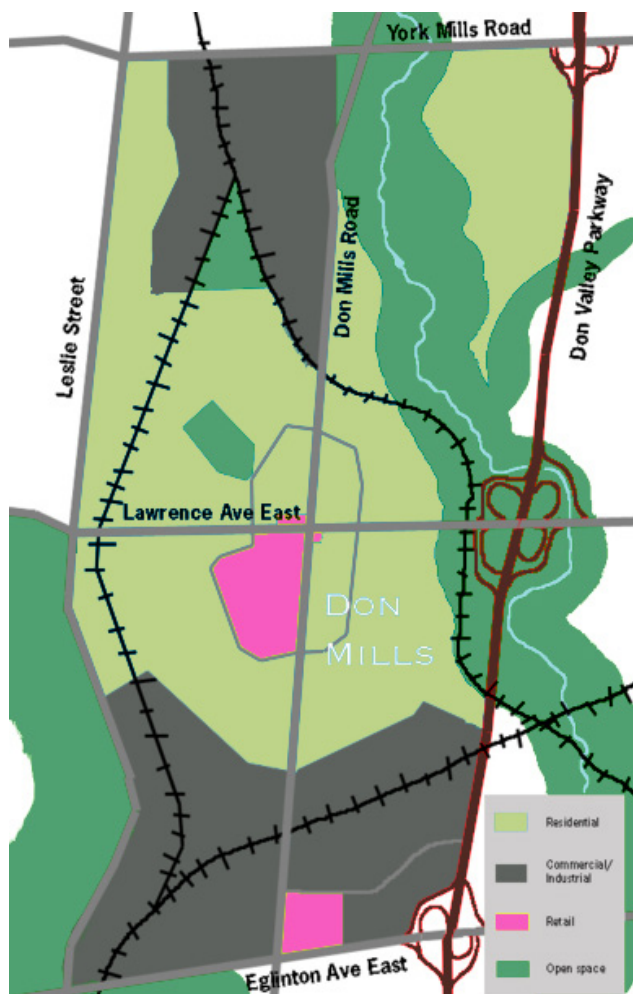


Fig 6.1.1.2: Don Mills Community Map

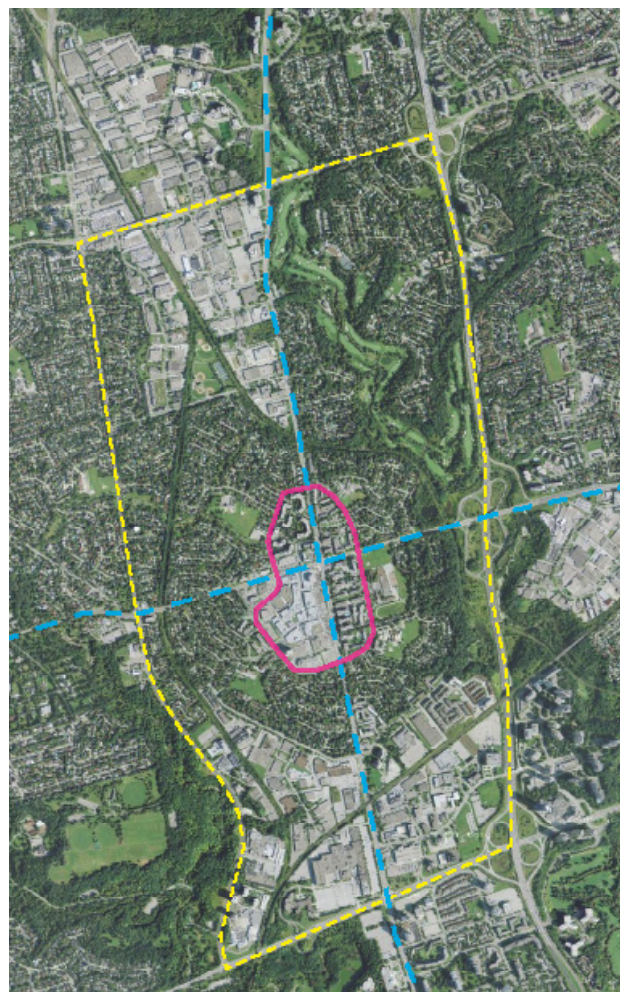


Fig 6.1.1.3: Google Map of Don Mills Community

6.1.1.1 Ebenezer Howard's Garden City Concept

Devised by Ebenezer Howard as a method of urban planning in 1889 for making celestial Cities in England's green and pleasant land (Howard, 1902). The Garden City concept speaks about fusing the ideas of garden and city to create a practical proposal (Turner, 1995). Howard (1946) dreamed of:

“...so laying out a Garden City that, as it grows, the free gifts of Nature – fresh air, sunlight, breathing room and playing room – shall be still retained in all needed abundance, and by so employing the resources of modern science that Art may supplement nature, and life may become an abiding joy and delight (Turner, 1995, p.81).”

Within a garden the man is in harmony with nature, he is in a safe and beautiful place. Stemming from this, a garden city should also have these qualities, represented by urban advantages of clean streets, good pay and access to education and culture (Turner, 1995). The garden city was a self-sufficient community with proportionate areas of residences, industry and agriculture so that people could live, work, play and grow food in the same area. Once the city reached its full population another garden city would be developed nearby with the same facilities. Howard envisioned a cluster of several garden cities as satellites of one large central city (Howard, 1902). These cities were not a town or a country but a combination of the two. Howard saw this as the best solution of an urban development as he focused on creating better working conditions for the working class providing them with an alternative other than a farm or crowded, unhealthy cities of the time (Howard, 1902). This idea was illustrated with the Three Magnets metaphorical diagram.

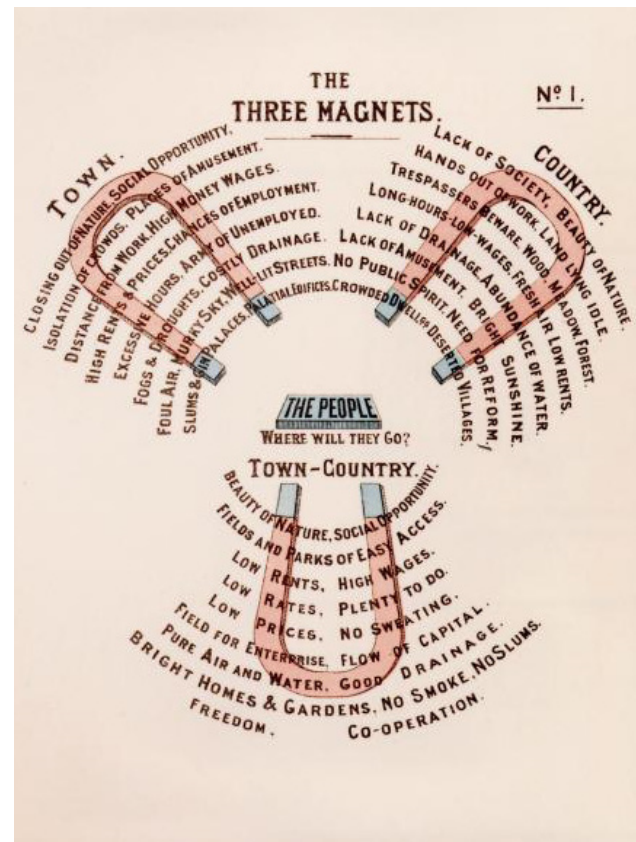
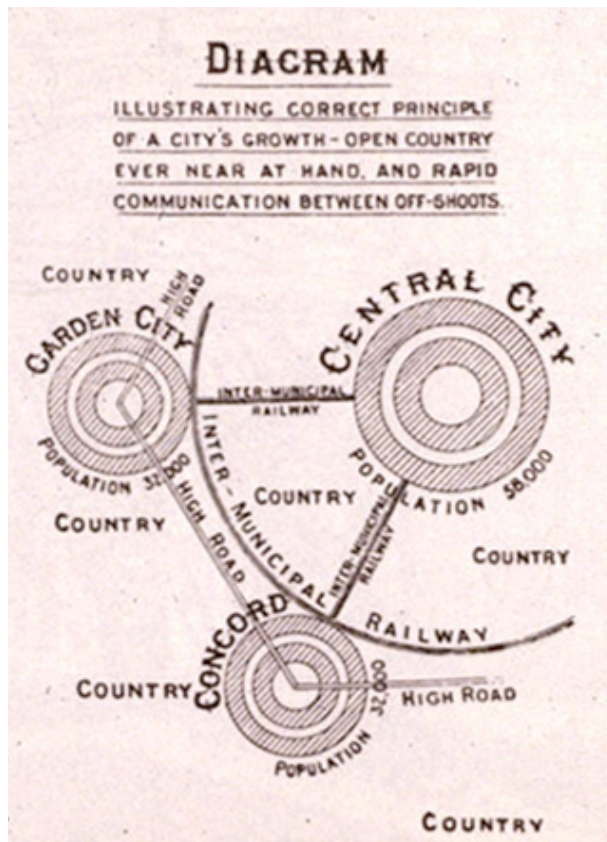


Fig 6.1.1.1.1: Ebenezer Howard's Garden City Diagram Fig 6.1.1.1.2: Ebenezer Howard's Three Magnets Diagram

6.1.2 Location: Central Mixed Use Space (The Shops at Don Mills)

Located within the central mixed use space, the original Don Mills indoor mall was the third place for the local community. It was within a walking distance to nearby high school and residences, and served as a meeting place, a space for relaxation and relief for adults, elderly and students during their lunch hours. It was the core of the community and soon became a regional center drawing people from North York, East York and Scarborough (Don Mills Friends, 2006).



Fig 6.1.2.1: Aerial View of the Central Mixed Use Space of the Don Mills Planned Community

Don Mills Centre was located on a 44-acre (178,000 m²) commercial site at the southwest corner of Don Mills Road and Lawrence Avenue East. Even though the mall was occupied by 98 commercial stores it appeared fully public, it was welcoming, and all members of the community felt at home. There were no pressures of a certain lifestyle, as the center provided laid back and relaxed environment. The food court served as a local meeting place for the community, where members could come and stay for hours. The location soon began to interest higher enterprises and the mall was closed and demolished in the summer of 2006 for redevelopment of the whole site and creation of a new outdoor center called Shops at Don Mills (Don Mills Friends).



Fig 6.1.2.2: Aerial View of the Don Mills Center

The site of original mall was redeveloped into Shops at Don Mills – a lifestyle center: a shopping center surrounded by condos and office spaces. The original intent was to create a phased redevelopment, with portions of the original mall open to the community while new construction was taking place, however this plan changed and the whole mall was demolished at once (Marshall, 2009). In place of the mall an urban village, outdoor shopping center containing 100 retailers and services opened on April 22, 2009. This was a high end outdoor mall with leisure, shopping and dining amenities oriented towards upscale owners. The centre is portraying a certain lifestyle and is oriented towards one social group, the elite, rich, young professionals and adults. “Lifestyle centers are sometimes depicted as occupying the upscale end of the spectrum of commercial development, at the opposite end of the outlet mall, which typically caters to a wider range of income with bargain prices (Bhatnagar, 2005).”



Fig 6.1.2.3: View of the Shops at Don Mills at Night



Fig 6.1.2.4: The Shops at Don Mills Advertisement

Other than the program, the urban form of the mall also speaks about a clear alienation from the neighborhood; the mall is secluded and not welcoming, as storefronts face away from the neighborhood creating a network of private internal streets with a small public square in the center (Marshall, 2009). There is a lack of covered outdoor space for the community, as the inner streets of the new center are vehicular and occupied by parking lots. Contextually and programmatically the mall does not fit in the location and does not wish to be integrated with the neighborhood. There are 72 retail stores with a total floor space of 47,550 square meters (Marshall). “The mall owner, developer Cadillac Fairview, decided to redevelop the site in 2003 to be more unique to attract more up-scale retailers and shoppers, without a main anchor tenant (Marshall).”



Fig 6.1.2.5: Physical Model of the Shops at Don Mills

The intensification of the site consisted of using center lands for new residential buildings and construction of parking garages to replace the large surface parking lot. The new development went against the Central Don Mills Secondary Plan which aimed to maintain original character of the area, and not exceed the 8 stories height limit for the buildings. The problem with the new Don Mills development is that it represents uncontrolled growth and no consideration and care for the previous residents (Don Mills Friends, 2006). In the development of the area, no thought has been given to the effects of this intensification on the local community. The center is highly privatized and is oriented towards specific social groups of high class retailers; it is out-of-place in this neighborhood, as it does not fulfill the needs of the local community and regions around. The community needs a place that will welcome all, youth, adults and elderly and allow for informal and relaxed gatherings, it needs a third place. The shops is a complete opposite of a third place as it lacks in the informal indoor and outdoor public spaces, spaces that are welcoming to people of all age groups, different income levels, lifestyles and interests. Even though the original mall also functioned as a commercial space, it has served the immediate community by providing them with a relaxed environment.

The character of the old community must not be forgotten; the area of the original shopping center was created using the concept of the garden city, where the center of the development served as a third place for the local community. To maintain the Don Mills community as a successful development the original character of the center must be retained, therefore this thesis will look at a creation of a third place adjacent to the new Shops, to restore a sense of place for the old community as well as to integrate the new one in.



Fig 6.1.2.6: Computer Model of the Shops at Don Mills

6.2 Selection and Analysis of the Site

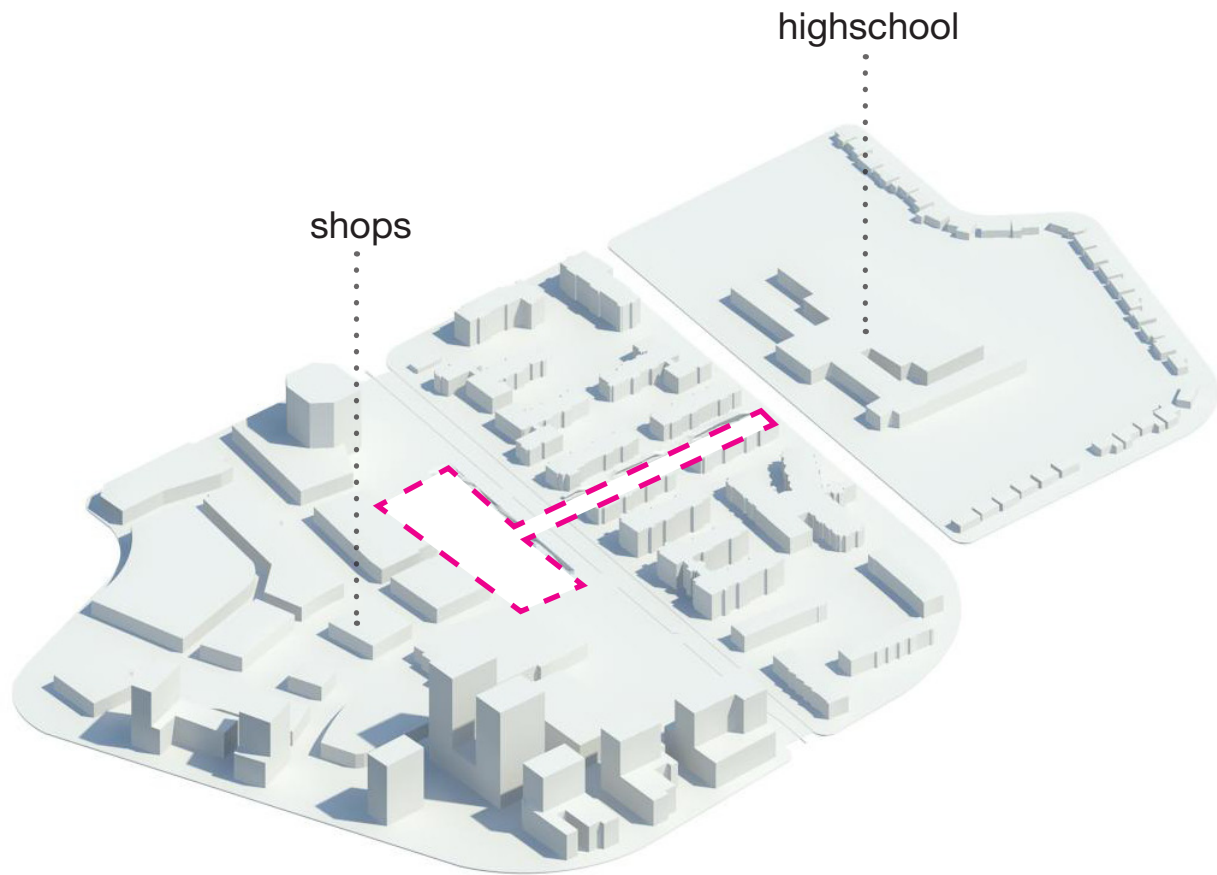
The chosen site is situated between two urban conditions, a residential neighborhood with a nearby high school and the newly built Don Mills shopping center. In between the two conditions runs a major circulation road - Don Mills. The site is currently a parking lot but will be transformed into a third place that will serve both the old and new community, joining them together. A series of indoor and outdoor public gathering places will be created catering to all income and age groups, with a focus on teens and families from the nearby high school and residences, as they are the main group who currently don't have their own place in the community life. Due to the centrality of this location within the context, the third place will be highly visible and accessible.



Fig 6.2.1: The Shops at Don Mills (highlighted in red), Don Mills High School (highlighted in yellow)



Fig 6.2.2: The Chosen Site, a Parking Lot (highlighted in yellow)



home **first place** residences

work **second place** don mills high school
retail shops
offices

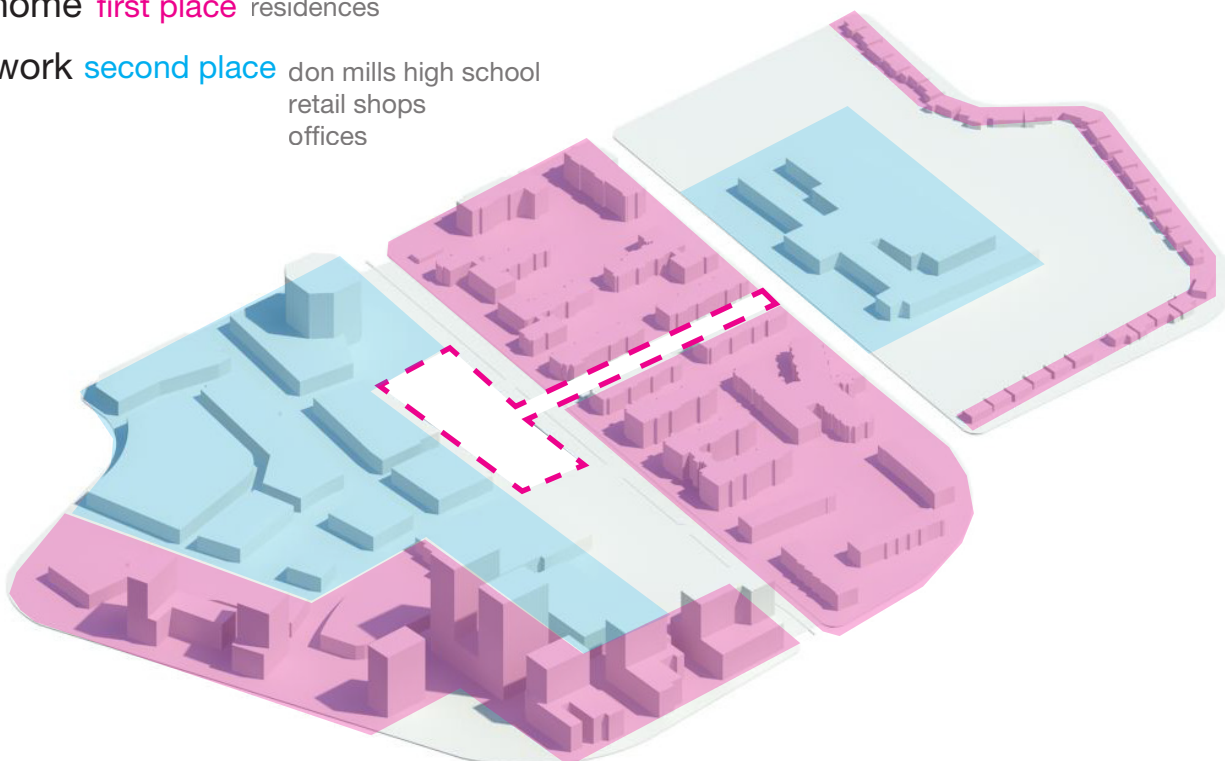


Fig 6.2.3: Site Analysis Diagrams



Fig 6.2.4: Street Perspective



Fig 6.2.5: Aerial View of the Site

6.3 Design Principles

The goal of this thesis project is to develop a design proposal of a third place to fit a specific contextual condition. Therefore it is important to understand how the new third place will relate to the context it is placed in and vice versa. The new third place will adapt to the elements of the site similar to the tree house that is invisible within the forest. Applying the concept of Building as Landscape, the new third place will blend within the urban landscape, becoming an extension of the street and hence the public realm. To create a welcoming and highly accessible environment, the establishment of a free movement of people through the site is critical. A series of entrance points will be provided with internal paths that continue through the site forming indoor and outdoor gathering places.

To blend with the context and to partially remove the third place from the surrounding hectic environment, the program of the complex will be half-submerged in the ground. The form for the new third place will be reminiscent of the Shops at Don Mills - urban village concept. Throughout the site, buildings will be spread apart to create park and gathering spaces in between. This arrangement will create privacy, block road noise and generate safe and relaxing environment, spaces for relief. There will be a series of gathering spaces throughout the site serving both as a retreat from the street and as a functional space. Several building surfaces and roofs will become an extension of these outdoor spaces, serving as viewing platforms.

With the transformation of the original shopping center (that served the community as a third place) to the high end retail mall with leisure, the community requires new spaces for teens, families and elderly. This thesis will focus on creating a sense of place for these individuals with the focus on teens as they are the main group in our society who has been segregated the most since increased privatization of public spaces.

The main groups of people who are in need of a third place are the children and families from the immediate residential neighborhood and high school across the Don Mills road. To safely invite these individuals into the third place a connection will be established; a linear park will

stretch from the Don Mills high school, continue in between the residences with an underground path below Don Mills road to connect to the new third place on the other side. The landscape of the park will create outdoor gathering spaces for the community or simply paths which will lead them to the new third place.

This third place will become the outdoor living room for the community, with variety of spaces designed for different types of interactions and groupings within one space. This environment will be flexible, creating choices for people whether they wish to stop, participate and interact or simply people watch. A third place is not just one thing; it is the ideal setting for groups to

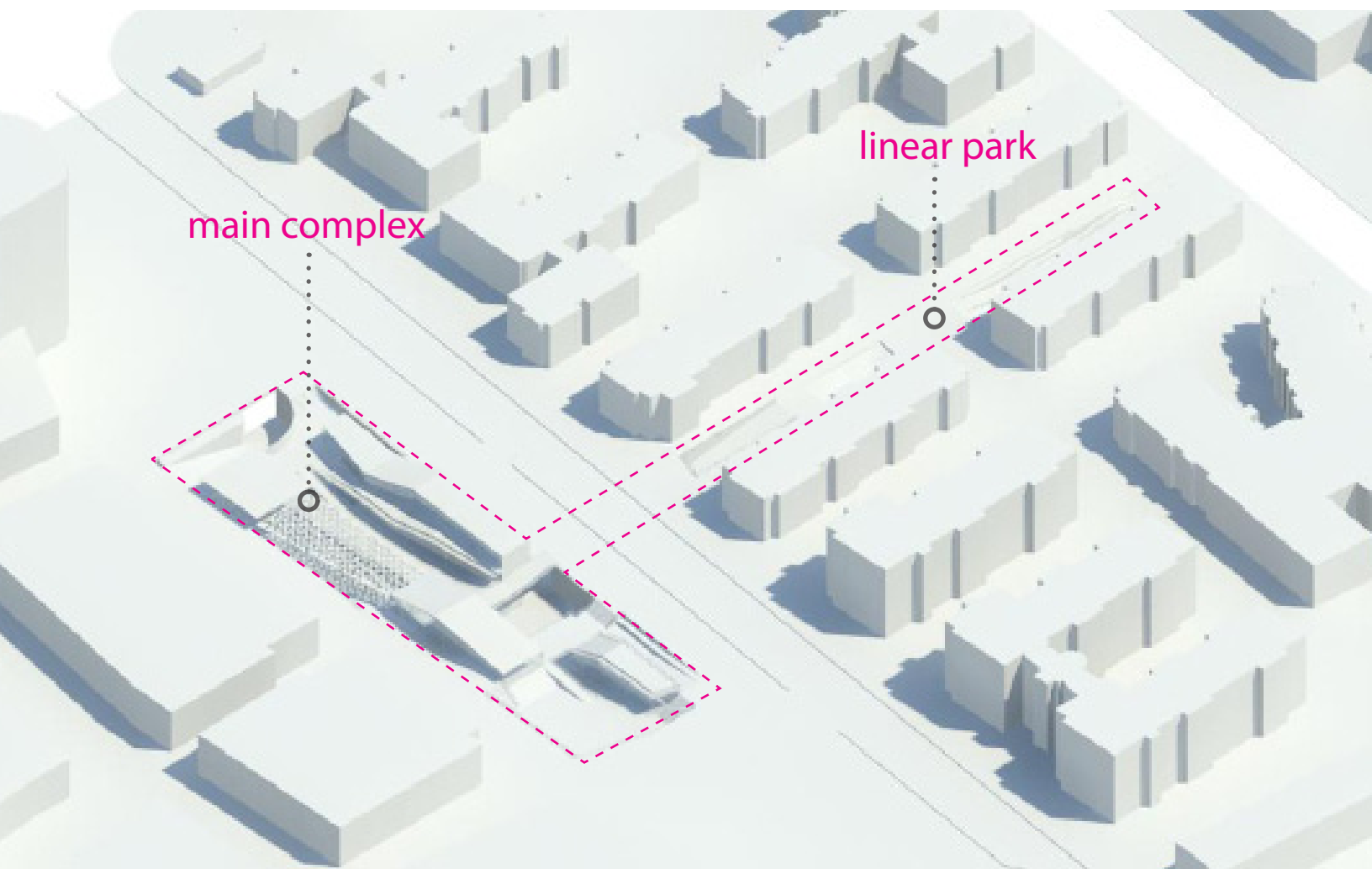


Fig 6.3.1: 3D Perspective of the Site

6.4 Users and Program

To relate to the diversity of the contemporary society the third place will create a sense of place for each social group, it will provide variety of spaces, both multifunctional and open ended, so that new and changing activities can occur in them.

Teens

A multifunctional space for teens will be designed with winter and summer activities. A year round playground zone, a skate park or fountain in the summer, and ice skating ring in the winter. A truly multipurpose space where variety of activities and sports can occur. The teens will also have an indoor space, a controlled music room/auditorium where they can come and interact using their technologies.

Adults, Families & Teens

The complex will have a multipurpose theatre for the community. A function space, which will be open for community or private events, generating income for the third place. A café, open to the public, serving as a retreat space for all users. Also, the third place will have a resource center with computers and other technologies.

Interactive | Play Zone

The Interactive | Play Zone will serve as a buffer, unifying link of the overall third place, a place where each individuals will come together and be engrossed by new technologies. This zone will be infused by interactive technologies. It will be the most flexible space: always changing, bringing new technologies and activities, it is the central most important space in this contemporary third place therefore all activities will radiate and evolve around it. Through application of interactive technologies, the space will be continually transforming, forming interest for people to come back again to have new experiences. The sense of place is enhances as the users develop a connection with the physical environment. Constant change, activity and participation will create a more

lively community. This space becomes the main destination point for the third place, as it provides those activities that cannot be experienced in any other environment or through communication technologies (in the virtual third place). Here, interaction between people and the interactive object will be physical. Variety of interactive technologies will be installed to engage the space in different ways; creating a play with surfaces, walls and floors. These objects will encourage youth (the most affected group by the virtual technologies) to engage in physical interactions.

Linear Park

Linear Park will use the same landscaping language as seen in the third place. The park will be slightly lowered down to enclose the spaces causing no disturbance to the neighborhood. A series of seating and gathering places will be created for the community as they wonder through the park down into the third place.

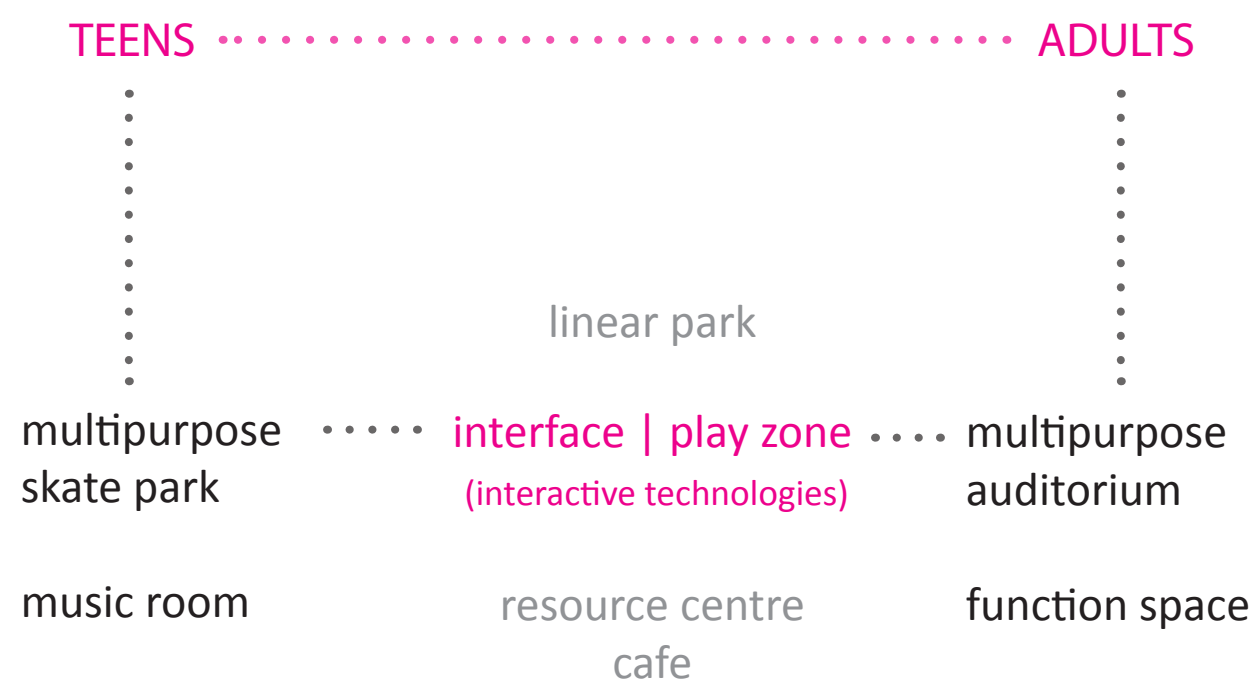


Fig 6.4.1: Program and User Relationship Diagram

6.4.1 Parti | Relationship Diagram of the Program

Third place is the central node of the community. People must be directed to this space, captured by and kept in it. Contemporary third place must address and interest the fast pace society (that moves from point A to B). Therefore, it is not a threshold: it is not about passing through the site but staying in, all of the activities will create a self-containing cluster with a central most important space (the Interactive Zone).

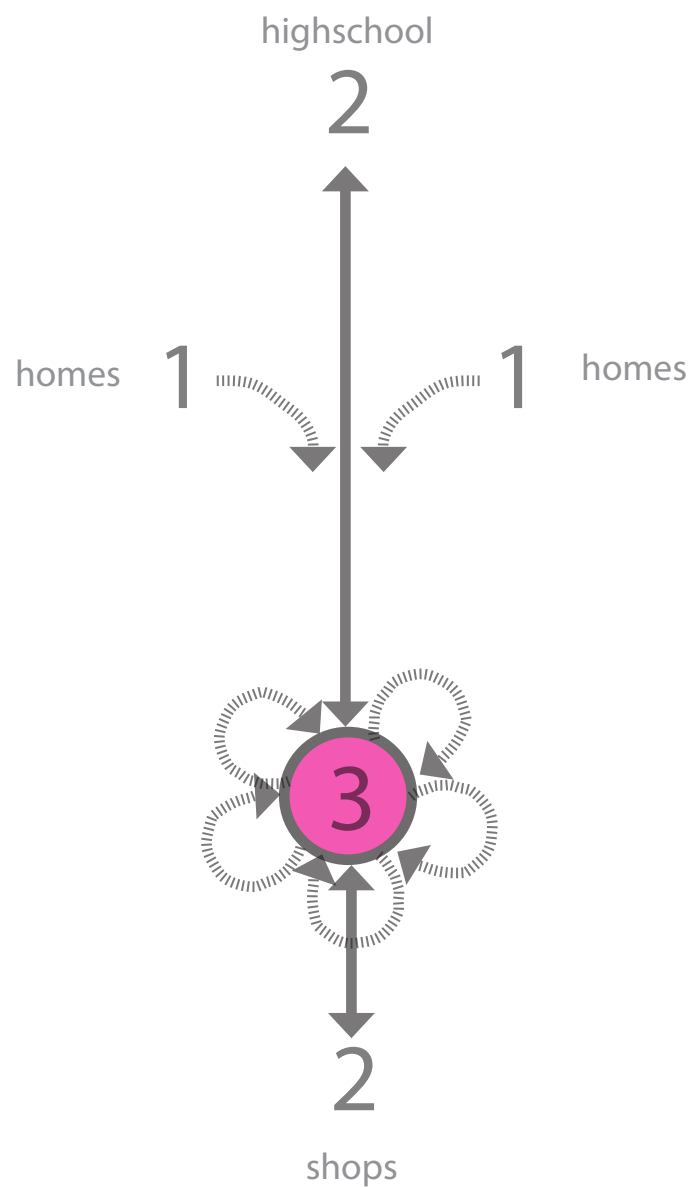


Fig 6.4.1.1: Parti Diagram

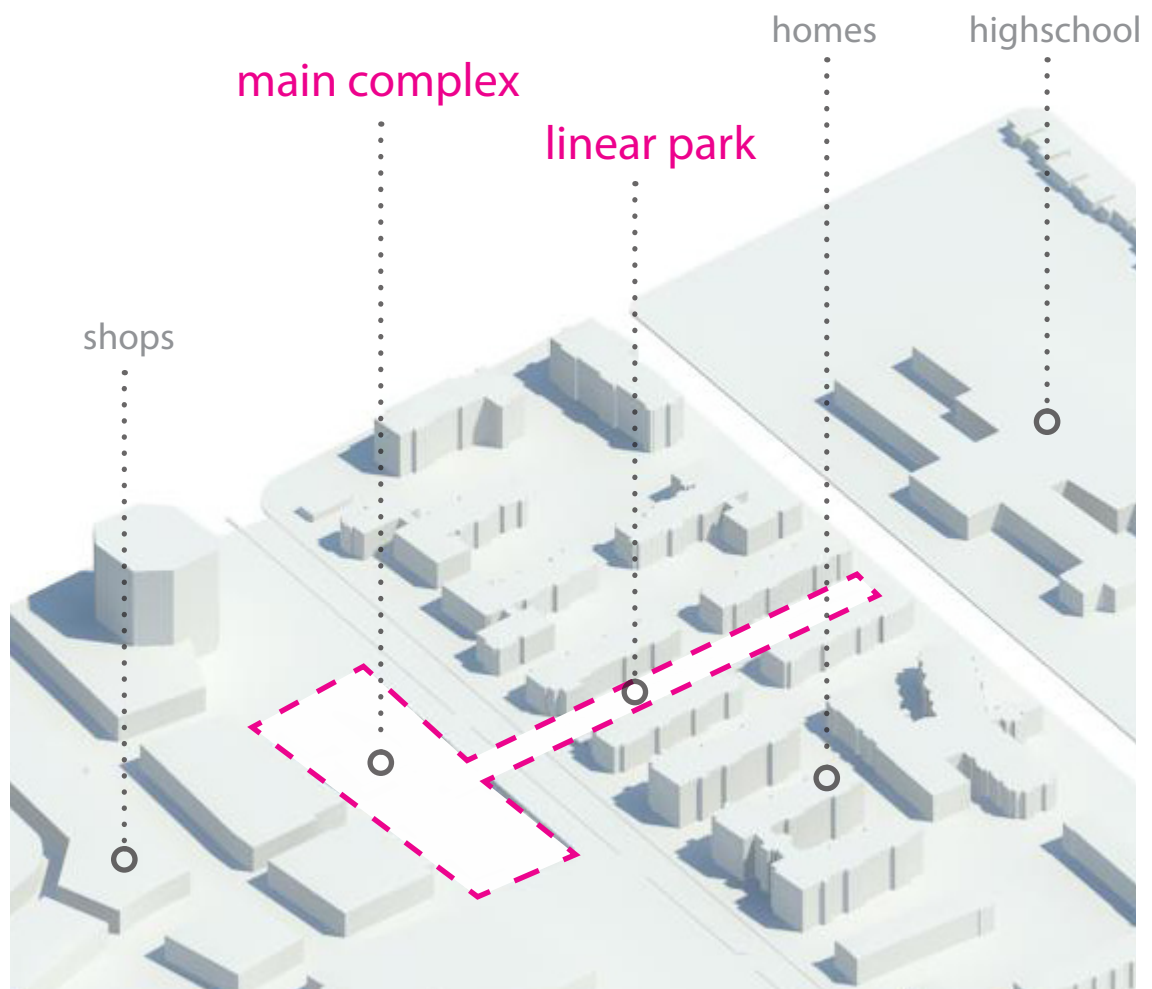


Fig 6.4.1.2: Diagram of the Context

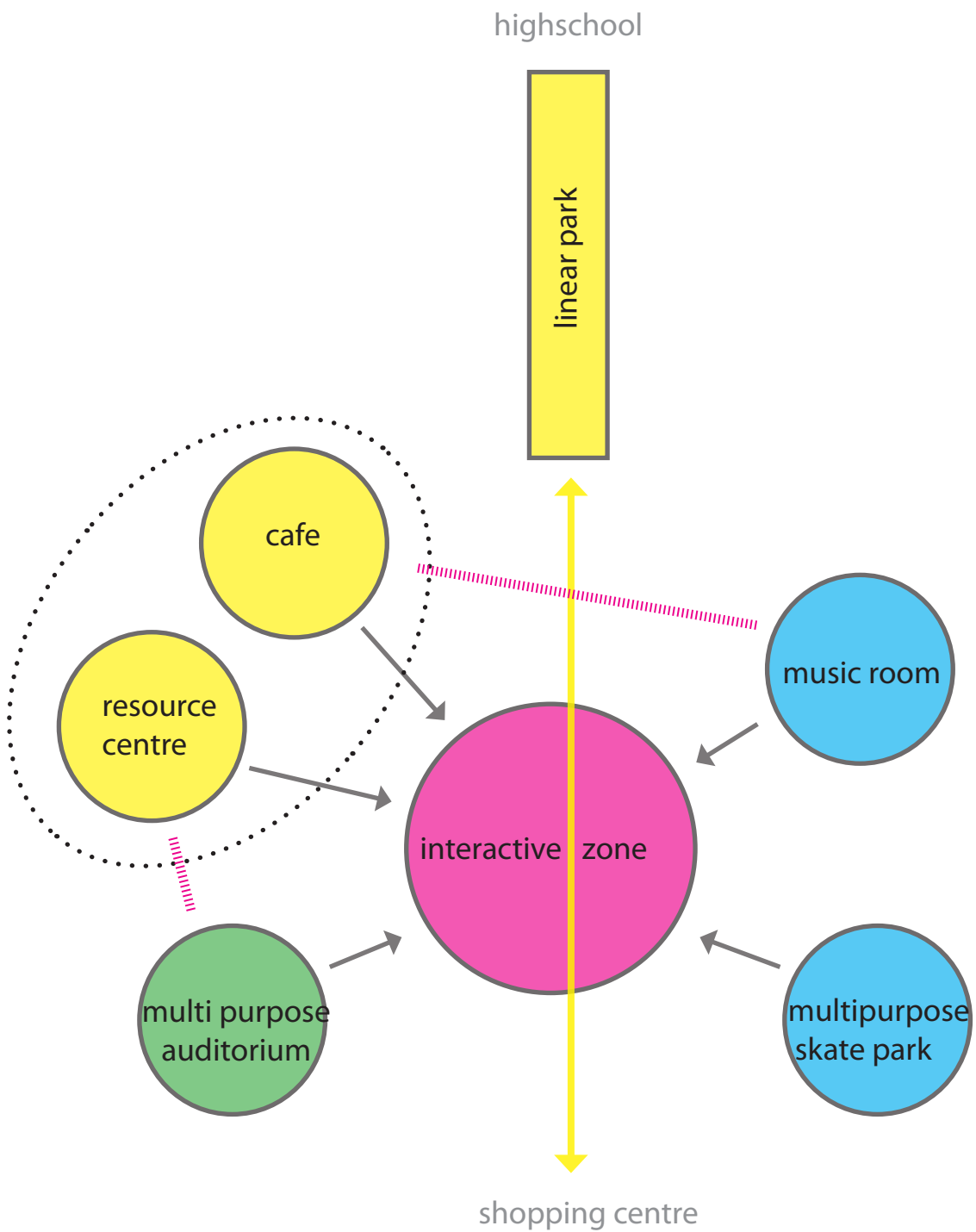
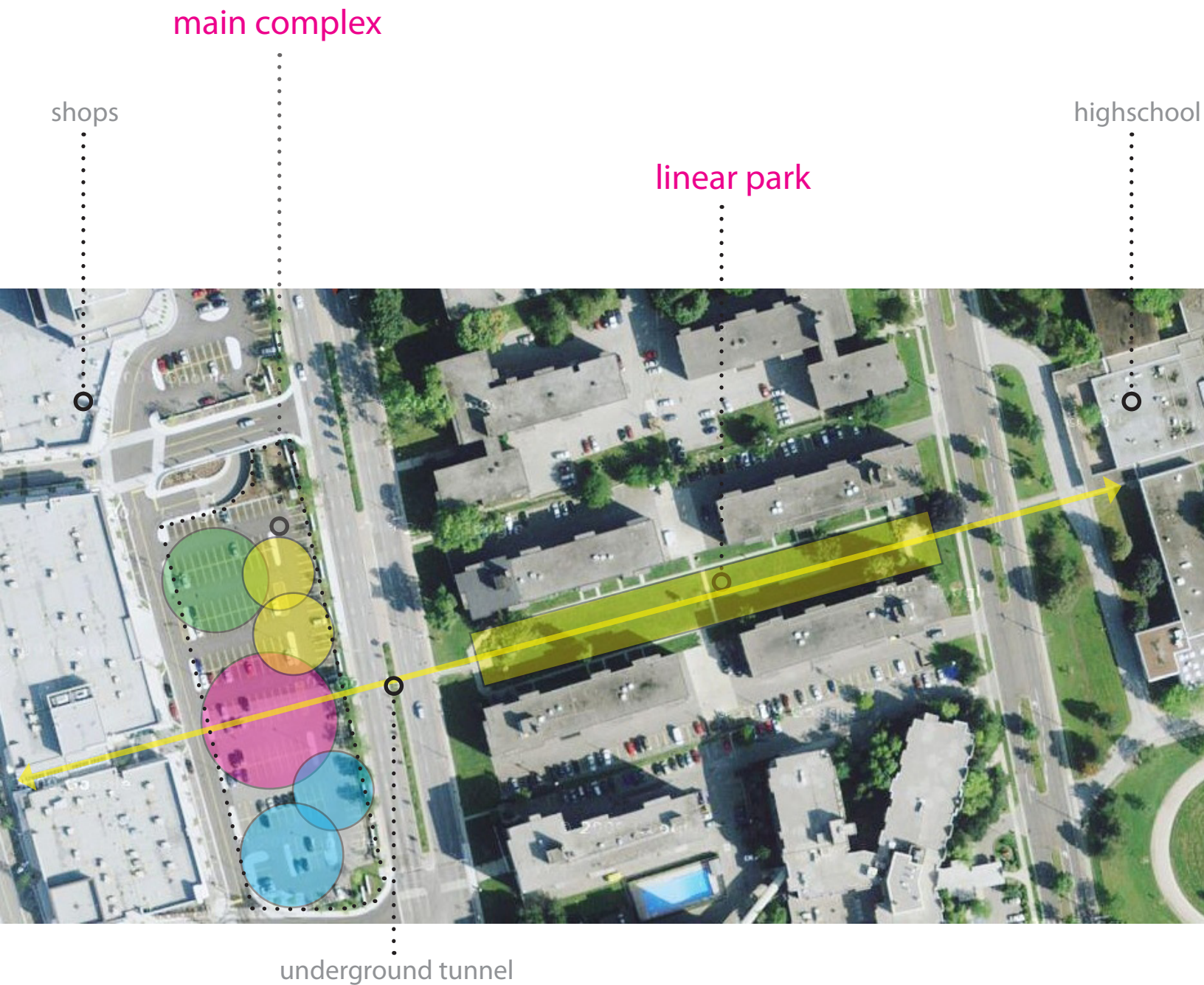


Fig 6.4.1.3: Spatial Relationship Diagram of the Program



A linear axis will stretch from the linear park through the site, passing the main central space of the third place (the interactive zone) and extending towards the shops. The arrangement of spaces is generated so that activities and programs are radiated around the main interactive zone. Ramps provide for an easy accessibility and a full connection between levels.

Fig 6.4.1.4: Aerial View of the Site with Program

6.5 Guiding Design Concept: The Interstitial Space



Fig 6.5.1: Rolex Learning Centre by SANAA

What changes the character of a physical space from immaterial to material is the activity that occupies that space, the event of architecture. Therefore the most important space is one that is charged with the activity, it is the space in between, the interstitial space.

An interstitial space or interstice is an empty space or gap between spaces full of structure or matter (Babylon, Free Online Dictionary).

This thesis will work with the interstitial space, the empty space, the cavity, with the aim to create a Third Place that becomes a continuous space of actions and events. The activities will define the physical form of the space. With the aim to visually and physically connect the users of each area of the complex and to create a continuous flow of movement through the site the interstitial spaces will be designed as connected open spaces. This openness and continuous form will foster contact and interaction, and stimulate formation of new activities. The design of this third place will become topography of layers with continuous sectional and planar changes to incorporate all programmatic requirements into one fluid space, and therefore connect the occupants.

The site is interstitial; it is located between two very different urban conditions, the commercial to one side and residential to the other. It is a gap in between two social groups, a space that will be charged with activities to connect the two together. The Linear Park is also an interstitial space, currently an unused void between the residential buildings which will be transformed into a gathering place with the new landscaping. A third place in itself is interstitial; it is a place between home and work that one can freely visit.

“The essence of architecture (physical or virtual) is the “space between” people and how it is organized” – Stephan Doesinger (Doesinger, 2008, p.47).

“Instead of letting his imagination work with structural forms, with the solids of a building, the architect can work with the empty space — the cavity — between the solids, and consider the forming of that space as the real meaning of architecture” - Steen Eiler Rasmussen (Rasmussen, 1959, p. 45-46).

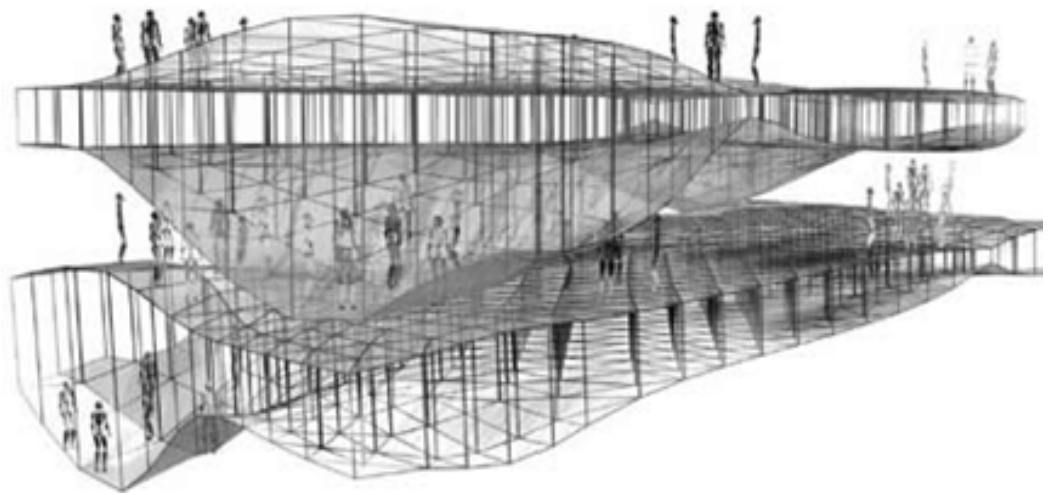


Fig 6.5.2: 3D Model Illustrating Formation of Interstitial Spaces

6.5.1

Casestudy 14: The Interstitial Park Project

Similarly to this thesis, the site for the Interstitial Park project is located between two urban conditions, defined by a major elevation change (Netrivet, 2010). The resulting form is a topography that connects these two levels together with sectional and planar changes. “The project was envisioned as a series of ruled surfaces that were controlled by the manipulation of regulating lines in order to yield a topography that incorporated all of the programmatic requirements into a fluid surface” (Netrivet, 2010).

The first phase of this project was to use a grid to develop a singular surface that would allow these sectional changes. To derive the interior and exterior volumes several techniques were tested. “Tests included the creation of topography from the surface, the pixelization of the surface, and the development of sectional stratification from the surface” (Netrivet, 2010). “Rather than creating a surface and then dividing it sectionally through a series of regulating lines, the project became about the manipulation of regulating lines in order to produce a ruled surface” (Netrivet, 2010).

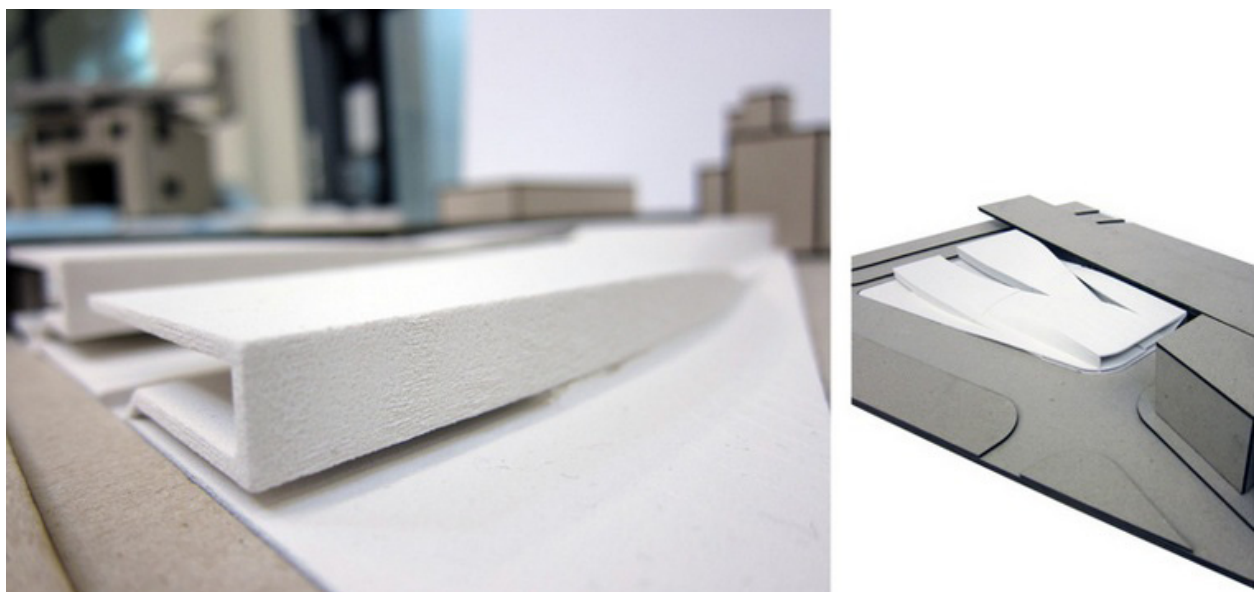


Fig 6.5.1.1: A Physical Model of the Interstitial Park Project

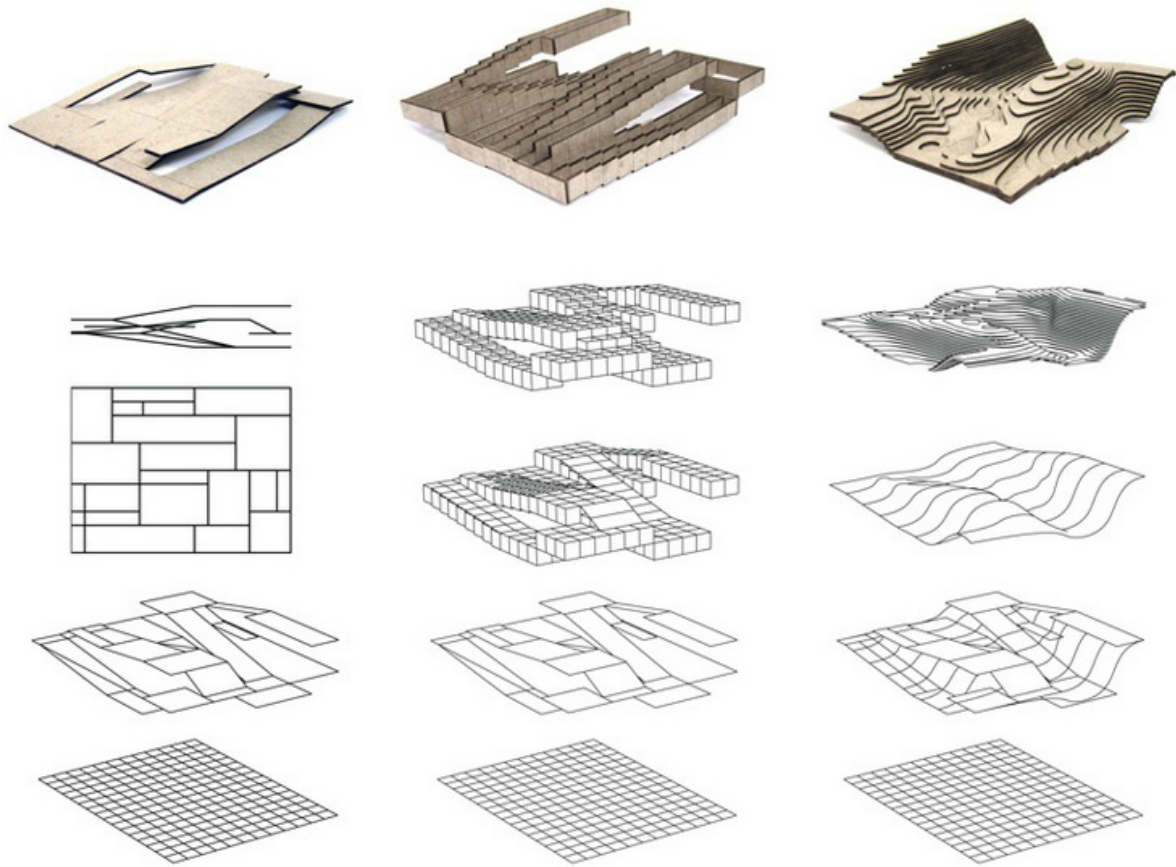


Fig 6.5.1.2: Diagrams Showing the Formation of the Landscape

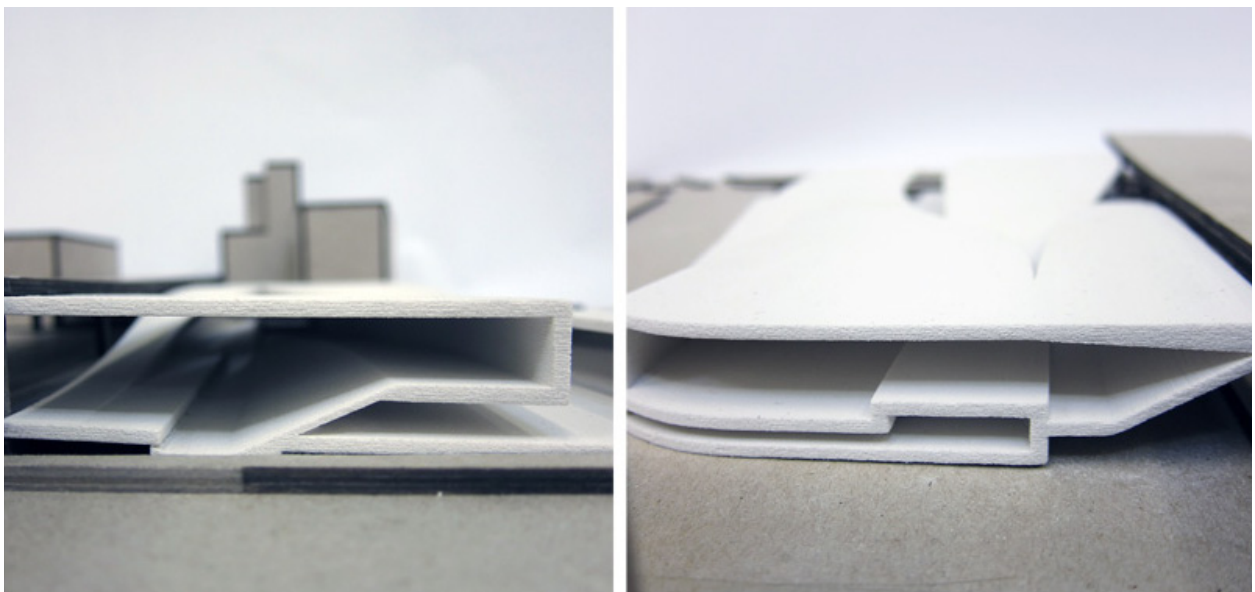


Fig 6.5.1.3: The Interior Spaces of the Interstitial Park Project

6.5.2

Casestudy 15: Teruel-zilla | Teruel, Spain | Mi5 Arquitectos, and PKMN Architectures

Teruel-zilla is a half-submerged culture and leisure center in the middle of a public square in Teruel, Spain. The site is located in the center of the Domingo Gascon Square in the World Heritage town and was previously occupied by a redundant market hall. The visible portion of the building is a landscaped roof that allows passers to walk over it, and if they wish they can also steps down the ramps and enter the building. Underground are three floors with a series of multipurpose spaces, “including an auditorium that can also be used as a cinema or lecture hall, a large exhibition space that can also host events, a sports hall, a tourist information center, a restaurant and bar” (Dezeen, 2012).

This building was chosen as a case study due to the similar site conditions, design principles and programmatic requirements. Just like the chosen location for this thesis, this building is sandwiched between two boundaries, and located on a rectilinear site. The way the building is designed allows it to easily blend and merge with the context, and this is one of the aims for the new third place at Don Mills. This building incorporates all of the three principles discussed in this thesis, where a third place is a Port of Entry, a Self-Sustaining Cluster and a Building that becomes a Landscape. Therefore the study of this project was appropriate for this thesis design investigation. The activity of the center is located within an interstitial space, a void space that has been carved out of the solid ground. Here the organization of spaces is more important than the exterior structural form. The architects worked with the true interstitial spaces, the voids of the architecture, to create a unifying composition.

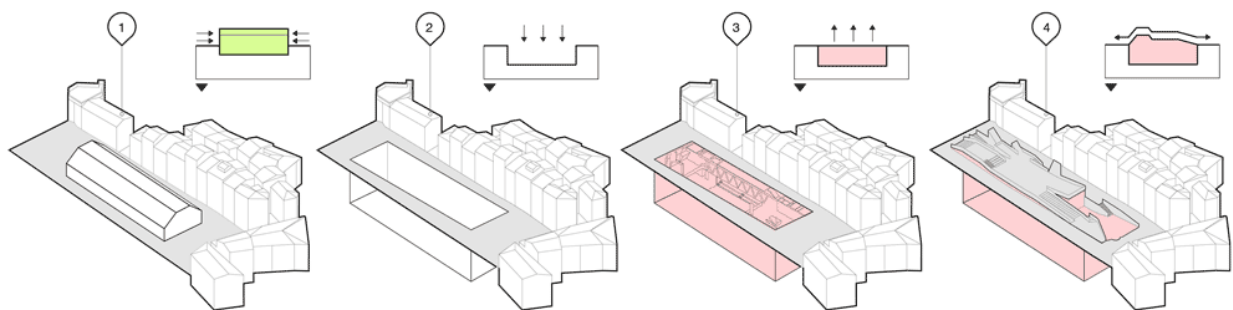


Fig 6.5.2.1: Form Development of the Teruel-zilla Project



Fig 6.5.2.2: Teruel-zilla Project

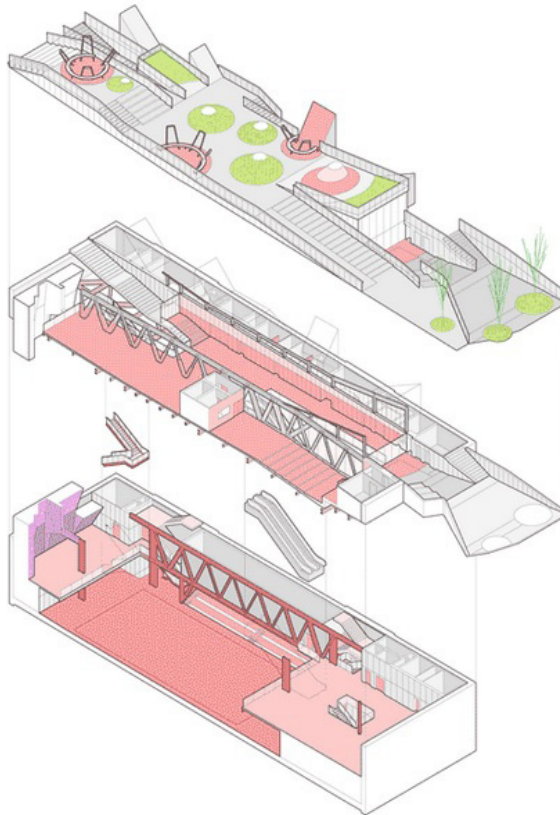


Fig 6.5.2.3: Sectional Axonometric Diagram

6.5.3

Casestudy 16: Seattle Olympic Sculpture Park | Seattle, USA | Weiss Manfredi

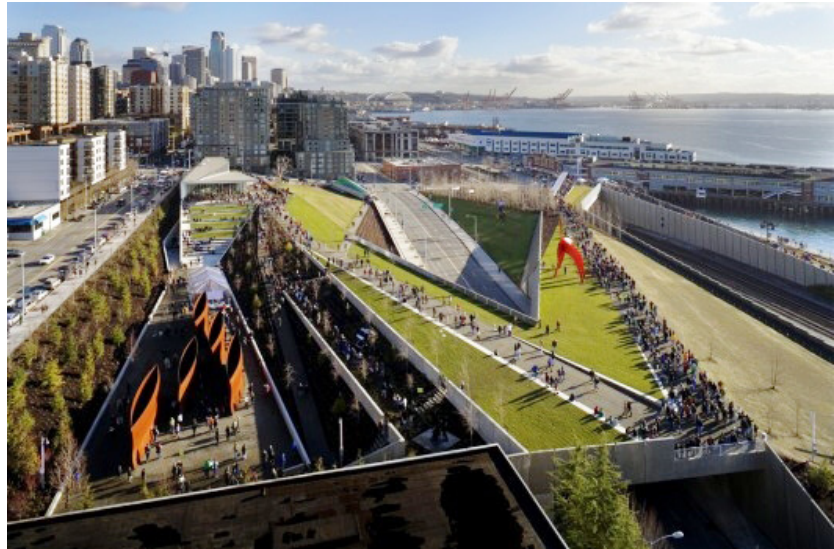


Fig 6.5.3.1: Seattle Olympic Sculpture Park Overall View

The project was envisioned as a “new urban model for a sculpture park” (Arch Daily, 2012). Located on one of the last undeveloped waterfront properties in Seattle, an industrial brownfield site that is sliced by train tracks and an arterial road. The project becomes a layering of slopes and ramps over the site and existing infrastructure, a dynamic link that creates access to the waterfront. This varied topography defines a new experiential journey providing settings for sculptures of multiple scales.

“The design connects three separate sites with an uninterrupted Z-shaped “green” platform, descending forty feet from the city to the water, capitalizing on views of the skyline and Elliott Bay, and rising over existing infrastructure to reconnect the urban core to the revitalized waterfront,” (Arch Daily, 2012).

This project is provided as an appropriate design solution to establishing a continuous form that links together spaces that are located on different levels. As this thesis will derive a design for a building that will blend and submerge half of its program below ground, the approach of the Seattle Olympic Park was investigated and some elements were applied to the new design of a Third Place.

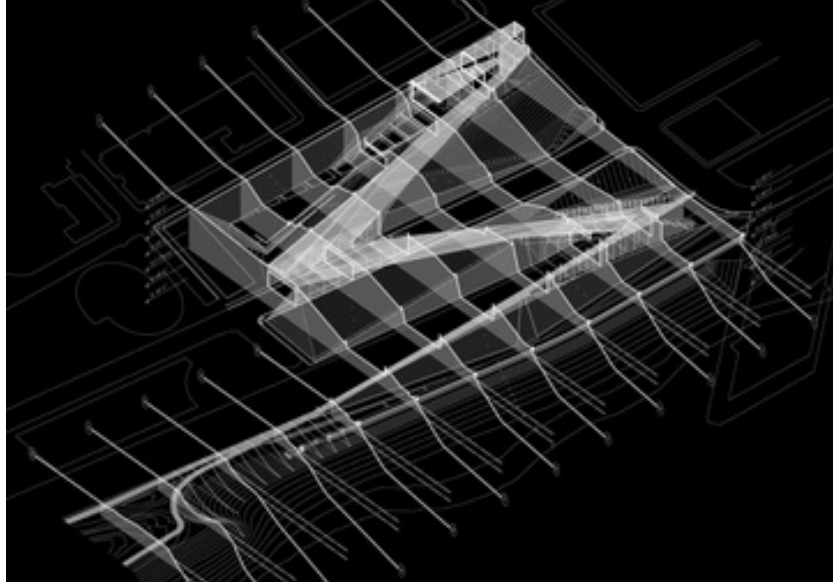


Fig 6.5.3.2: Diagram of the Park

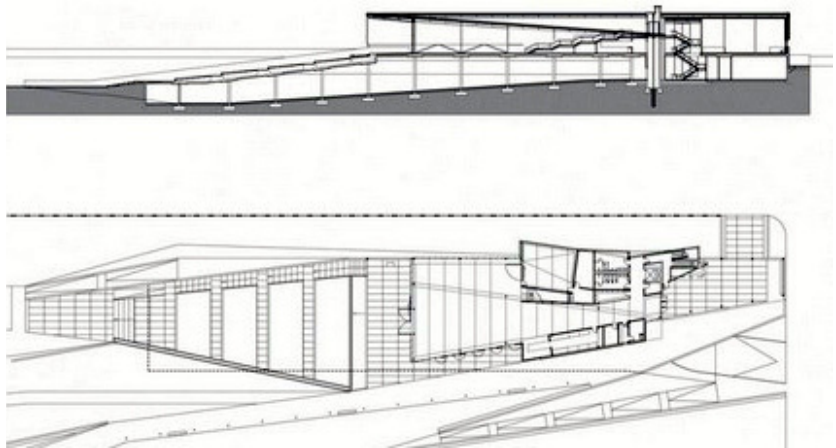


Fig 6.5.3.3: Section and Plan View



Fig 6.5.3.4: Portion of the Seattle Olympic Sculpture Park

6.6 Design

6.6.1 3D Perspectives of the Third Place Complex

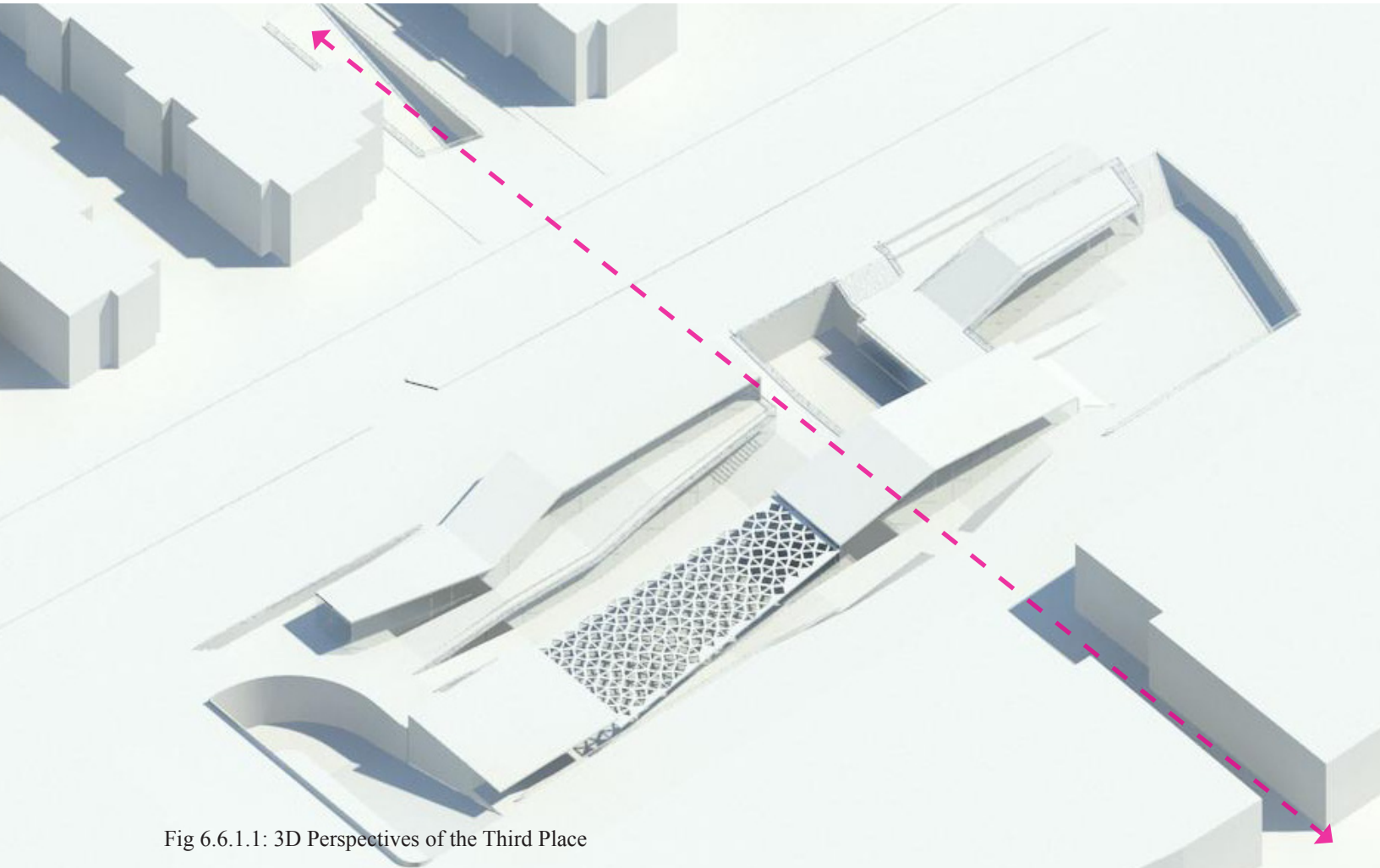
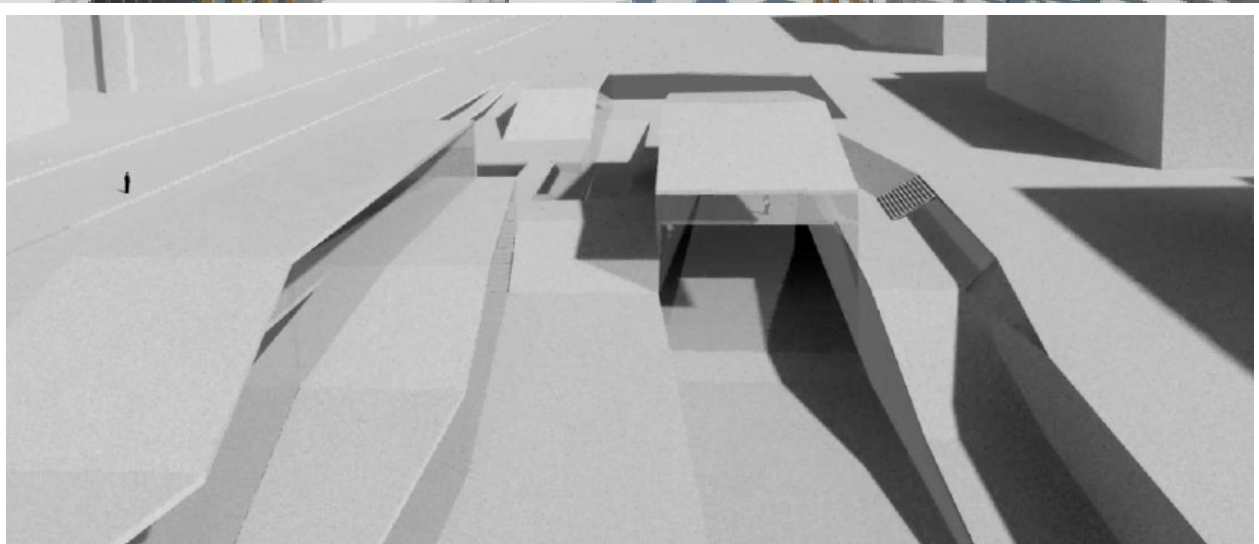
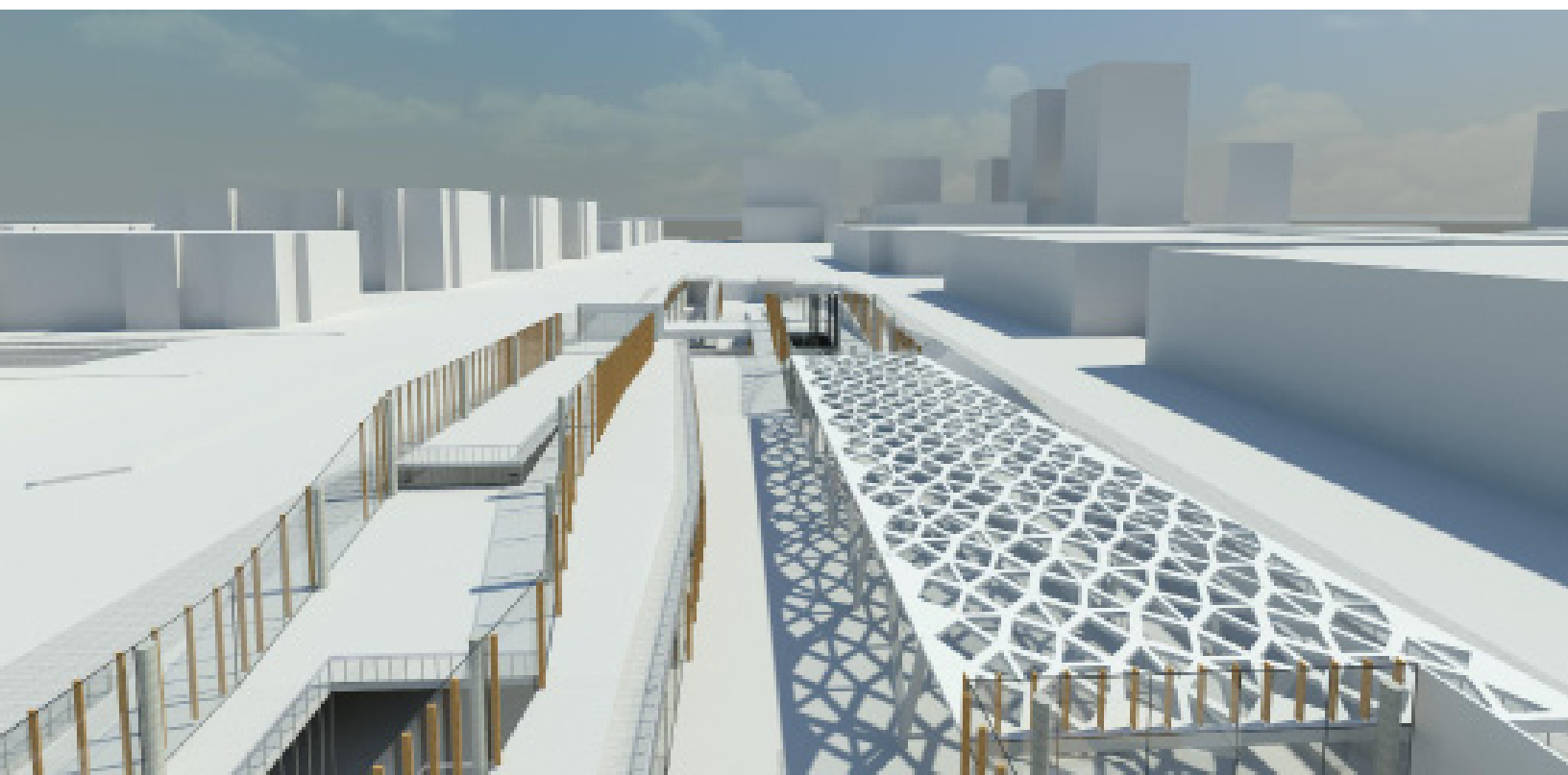
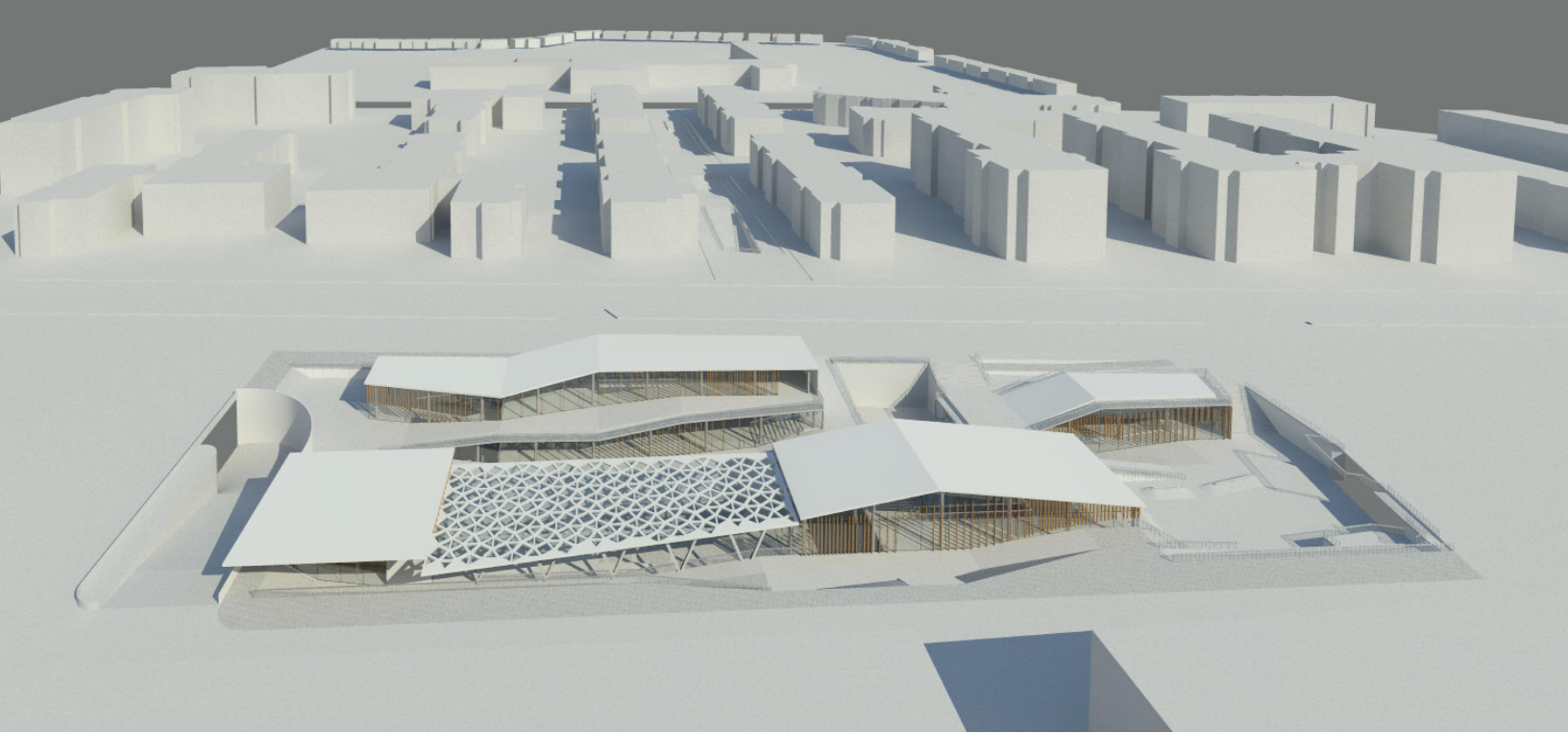
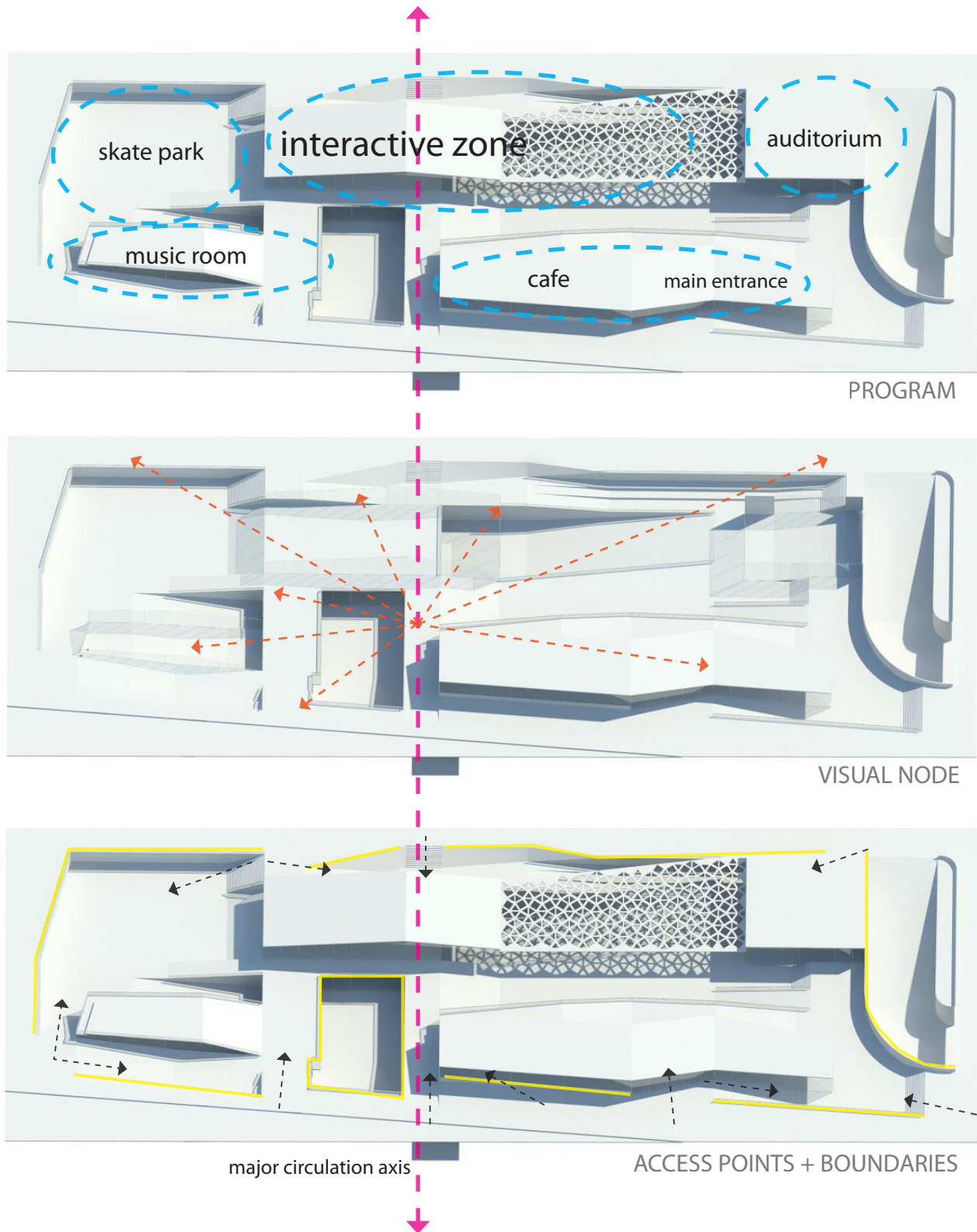


Fig 6.6.1.1: 3D Perspectives of the Third Place

This Third Place reinvents the architecture and physical form of a standard community center, with the aim to invite more people and connect the users of its facilities. Using the concept of an Interstitial Space, this Third Place becomes a continuous space of action and events. It is a highly accessible layered topography of diverse program spaces that become an extension of the Don Mills road. The space in between is the most important central passage of the third place, with gathering and seating spaces, connecting the different clusters of the center into a single unifying complex. This third place is highly accessible as series of entrances have been introduced from each side of the complex. There is a focus is on accessibility and connectivity, transparency and layering of program to create continuous interstitial spaces occupied by constantly evolving and changing activities.



6.6.2 Descriptions of The Main Design Elements



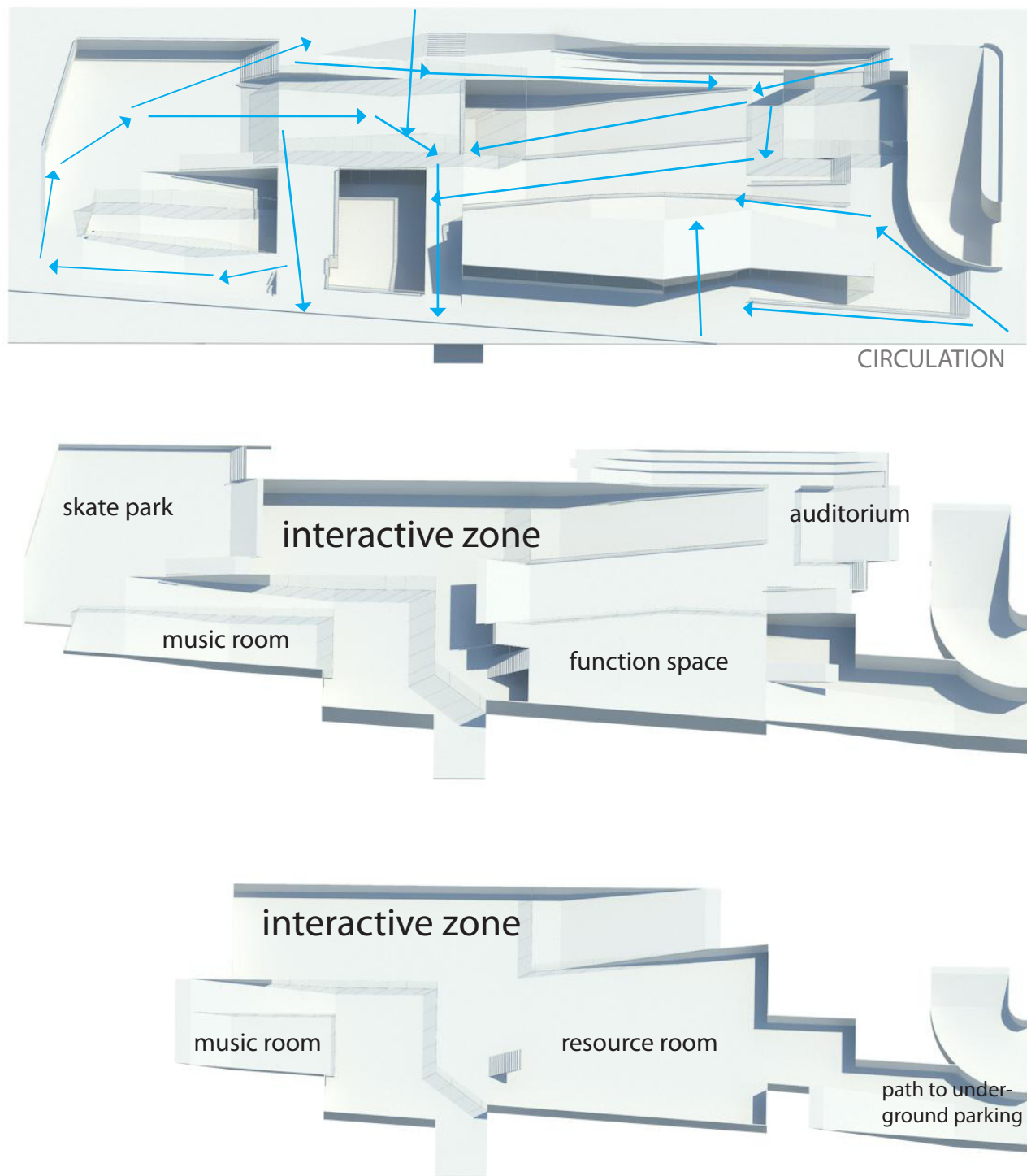
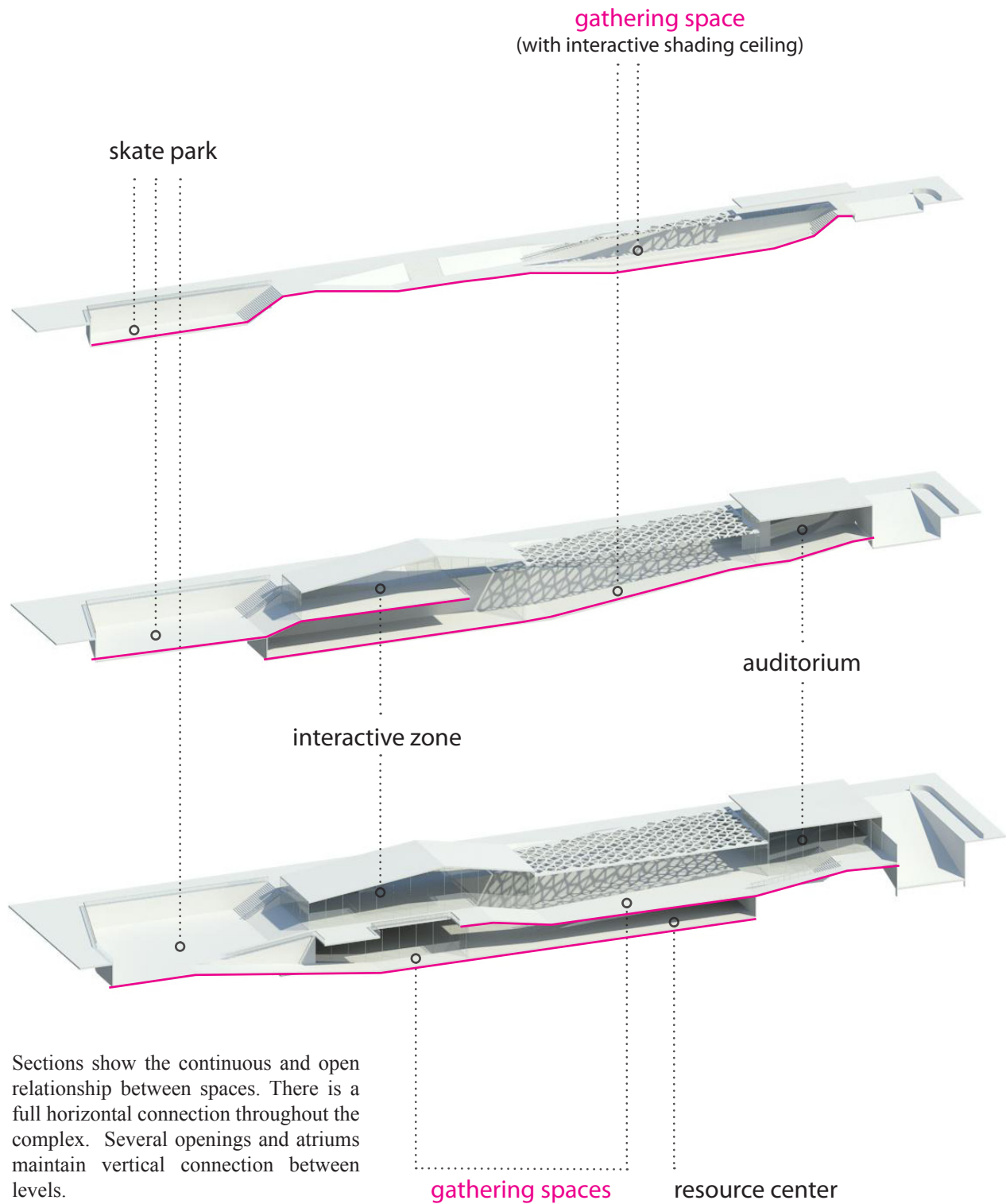


Fig 6.6.2.1: Program, Visual Node and Access Points + Boundaries, Circulation Diagrams

6.6.3 Main Complex: Axonometric Sectional Perspectives with Program

6.6.3.1 Longitudinal Sections



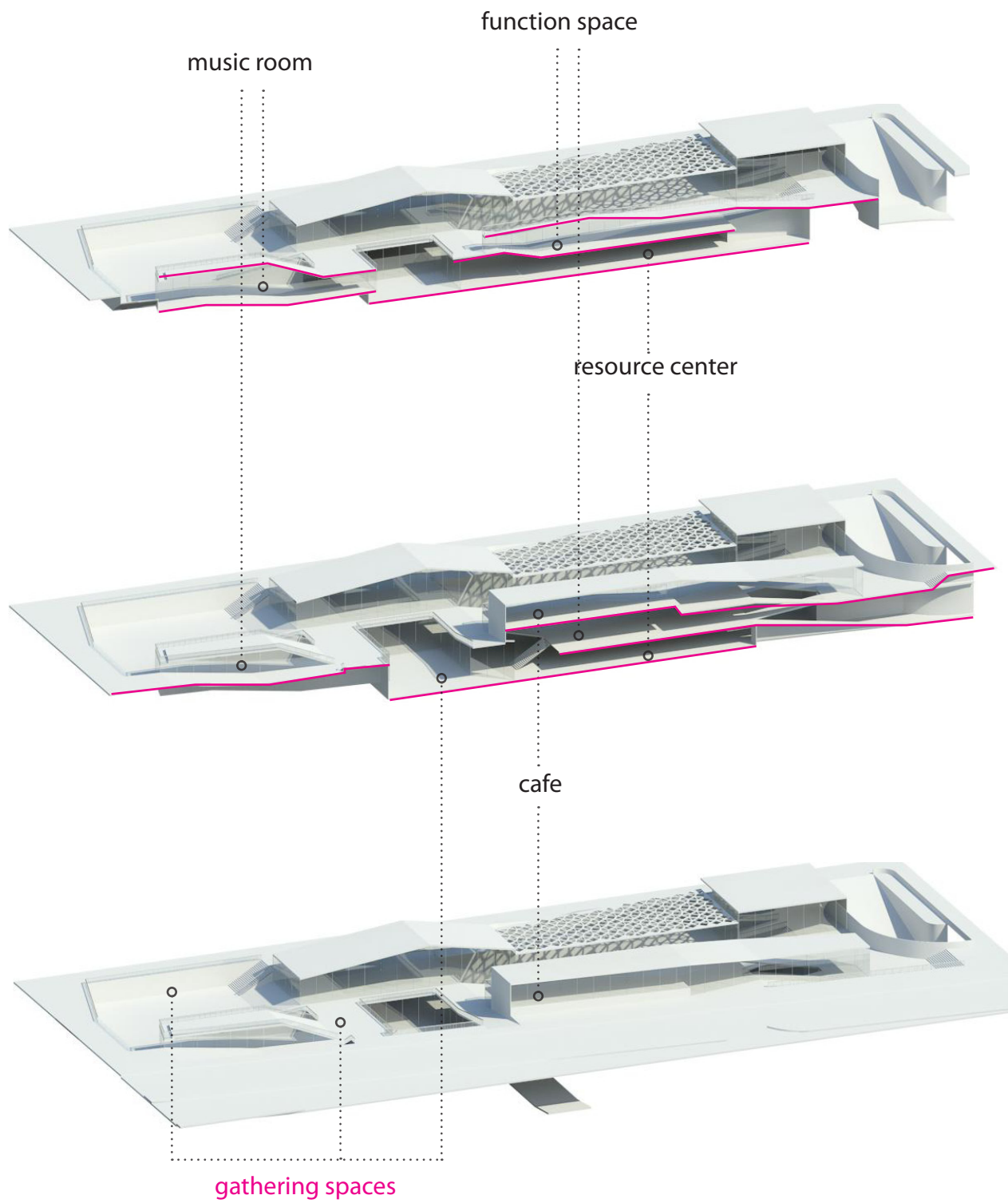


Fig 6.6.3.1.1: Longitudinal Sections through the Main Third Place Complex

6.6.3.2 Transverse Sections

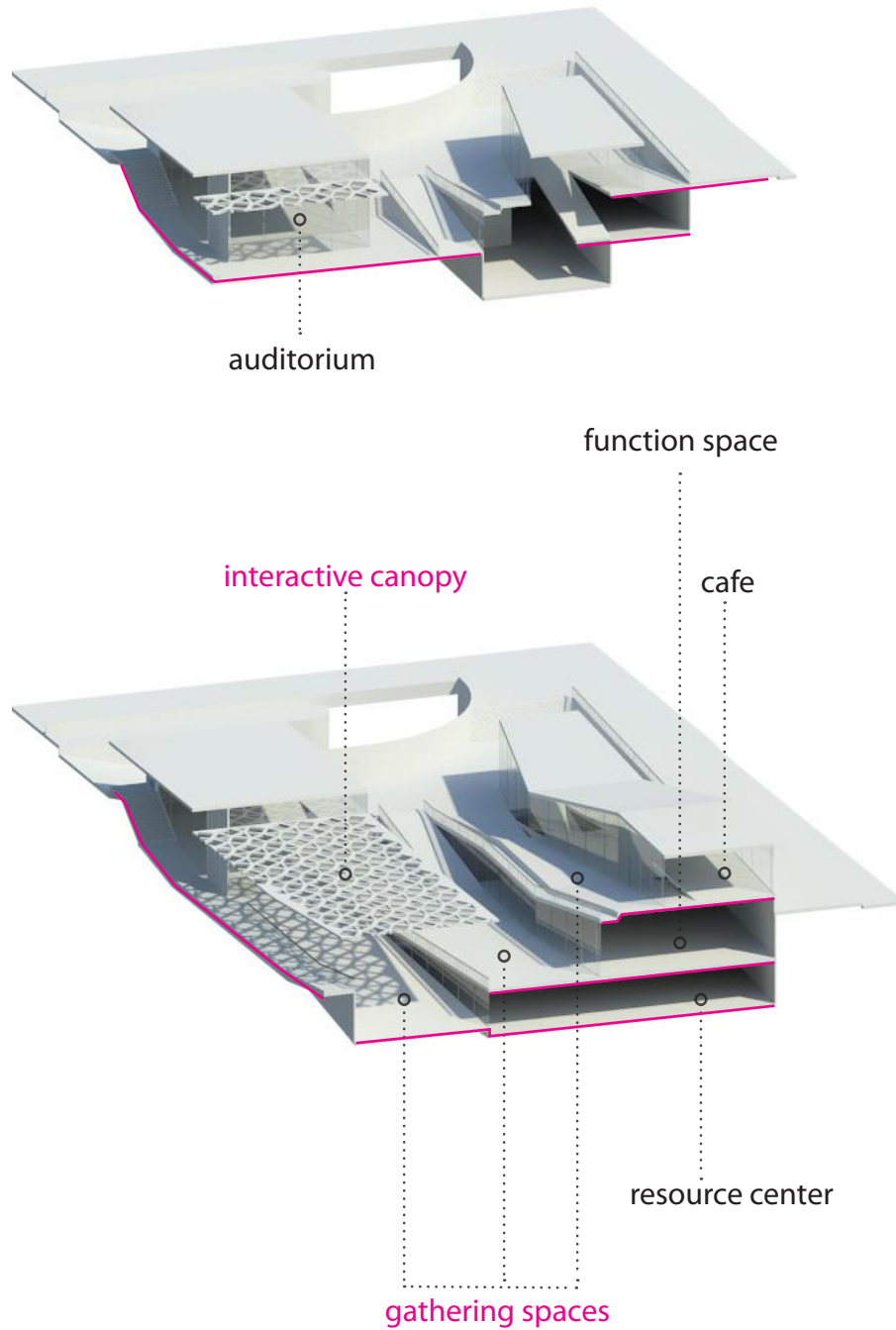
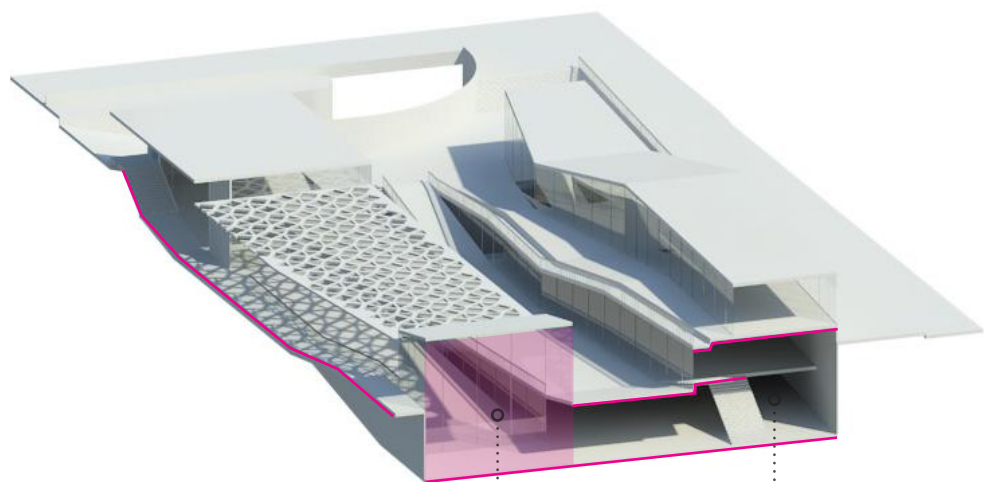
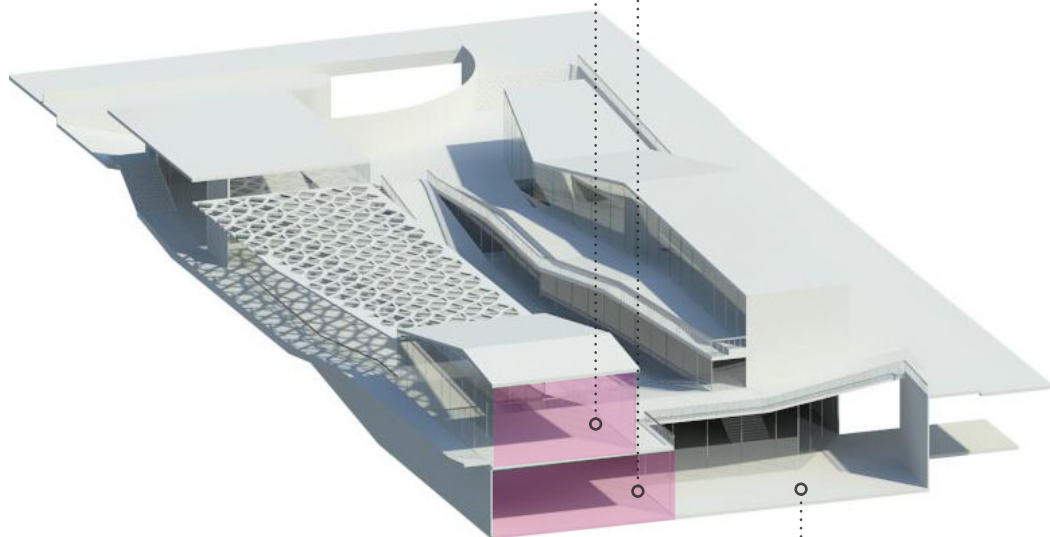


Fig 6.6.3.2.1: Transverse Sections through the Main Third Place Complex

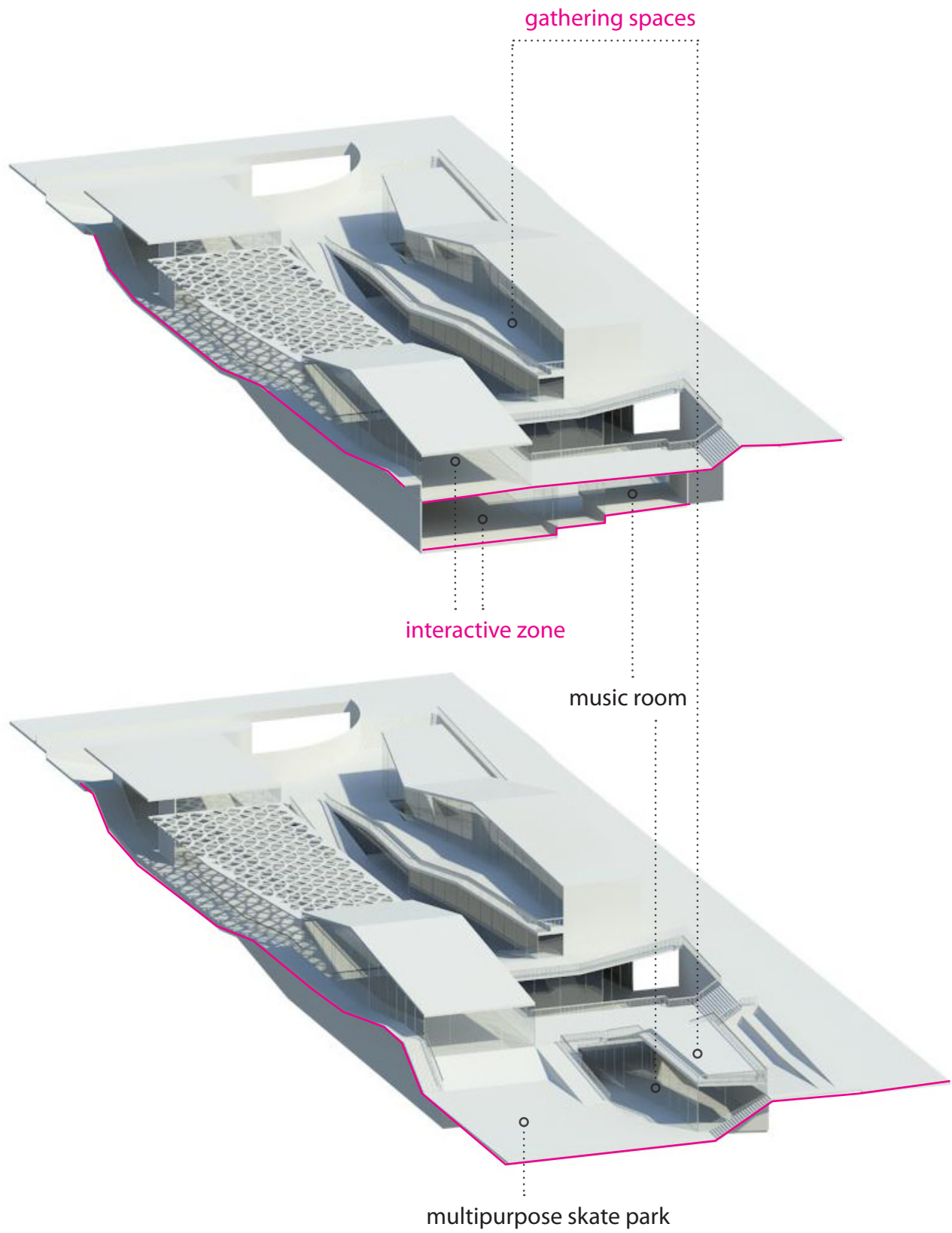


interactive zone

resource center



gathering space



6.6.4 Linear Park: Axonometric Sectional Perspectives with Program

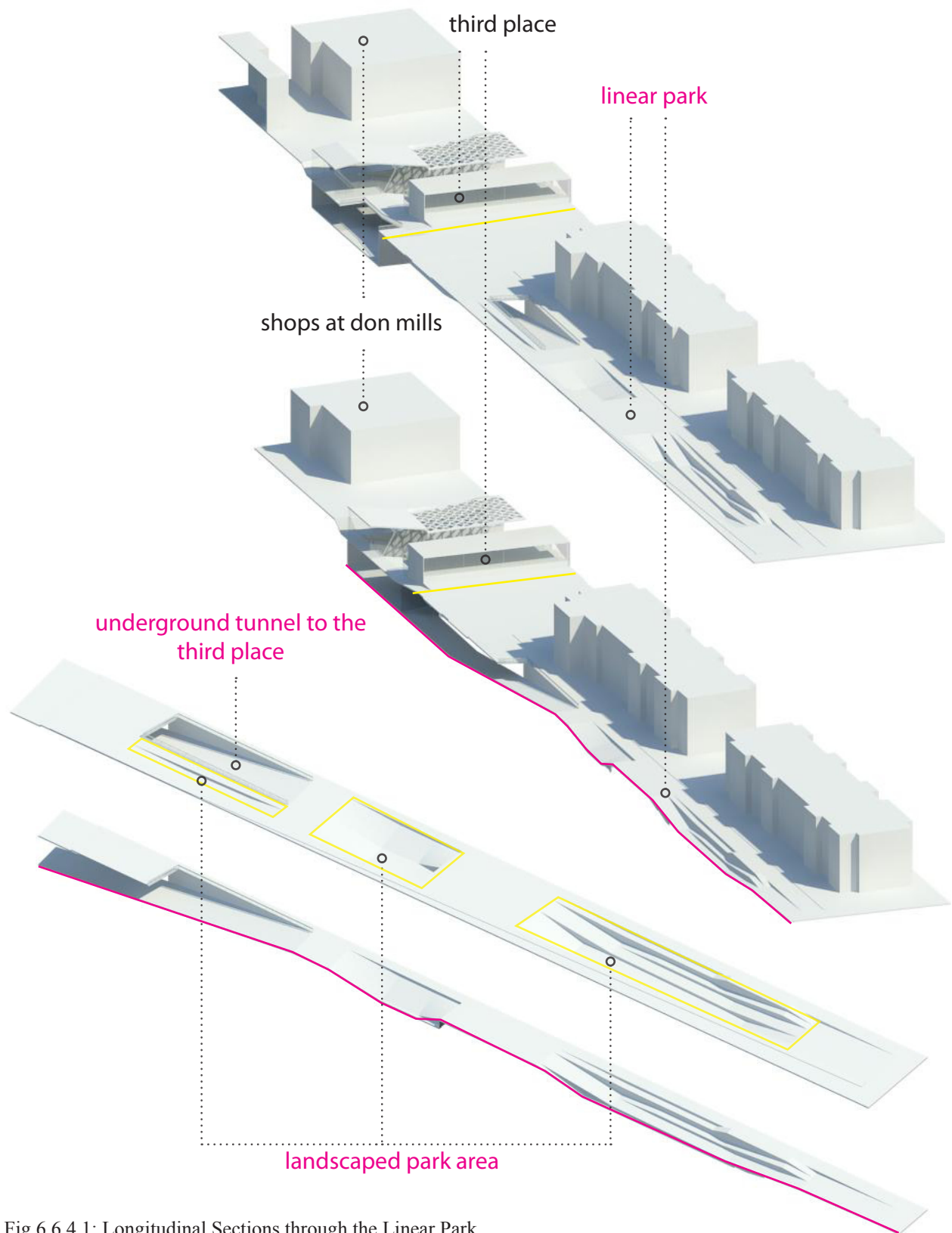


Fig 6.6.4.1: Longitudinal Sections through the Linear Park

6.6.5 Renderings and Axonometric Diagrams of Design Features



Fig 6.6.5.1: Linear Park and an Elevation of the Third Place



Fig 6.6.5.2: Main Circulation Axes (Interstitial Gathering Spaces) of the Third Place



Fig 6.6.5.3: Main Outdoor Interstitial Space





Fig 6.6.5.4: Interactive Canopy During the Day



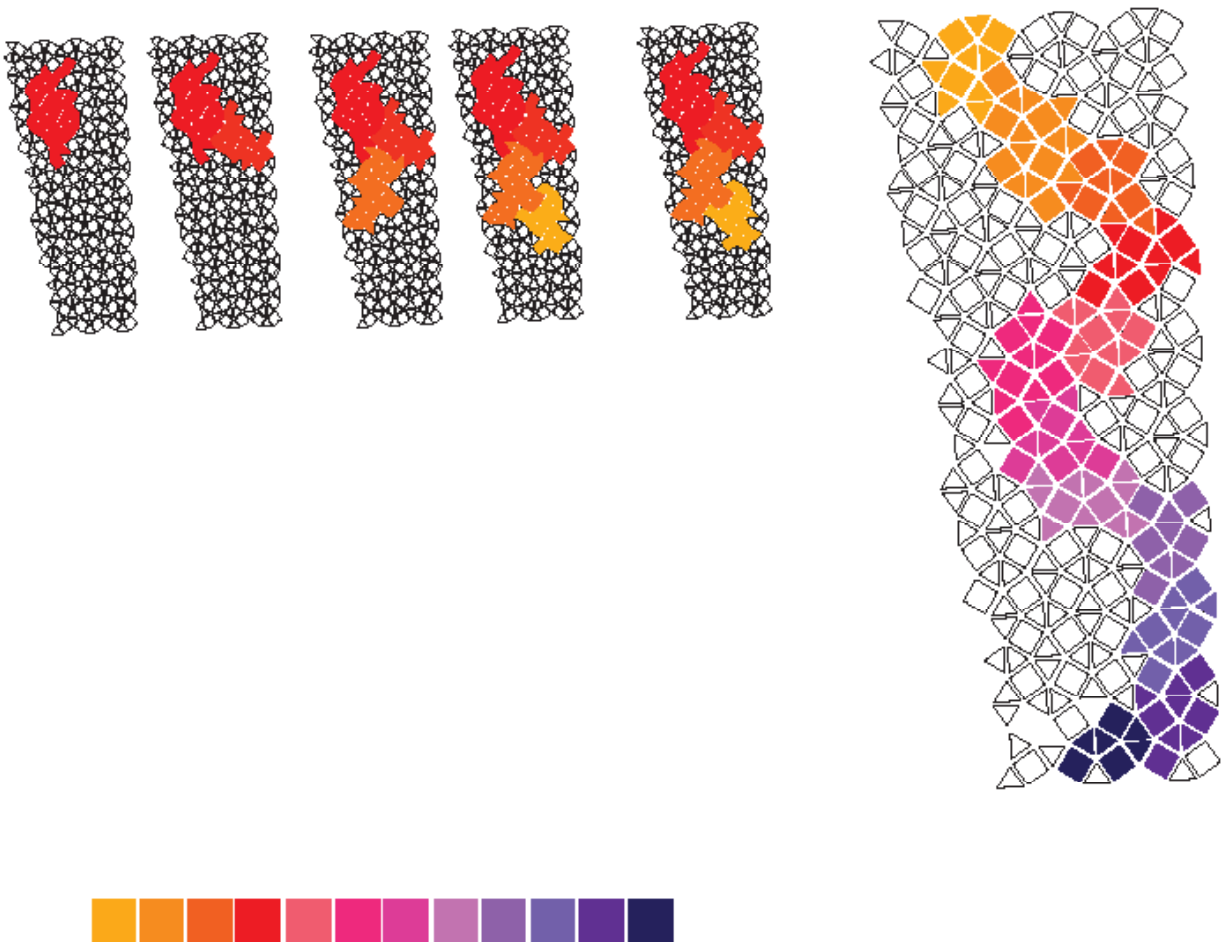


Fig 6.6.5.5: Illustrations of the Interactive Canopy

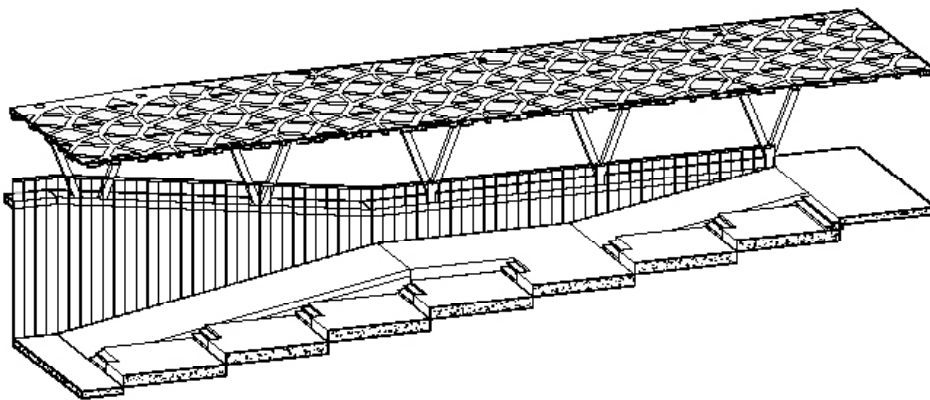


Fig 6.6.5.6: Section through the Interactive Canopy

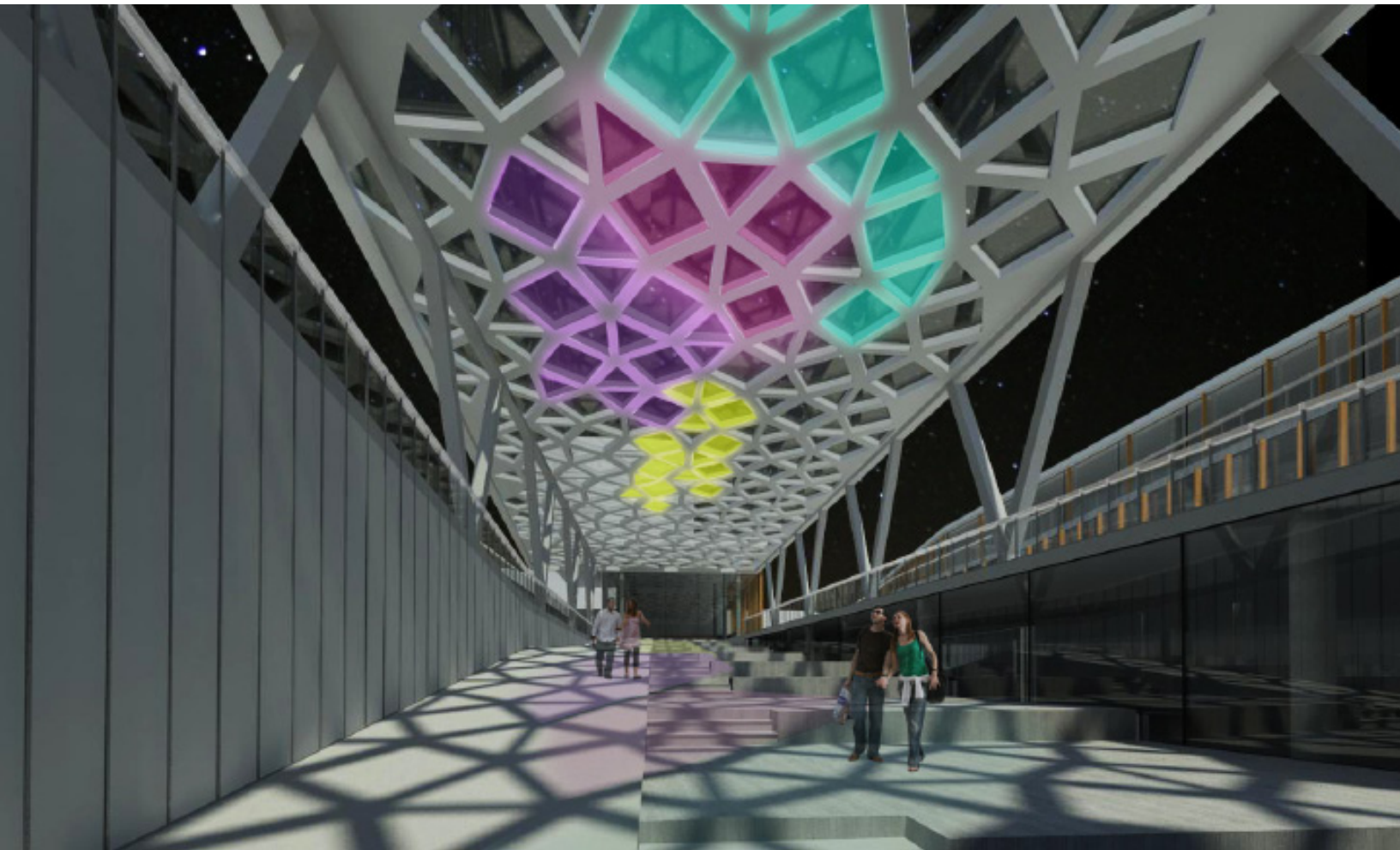


Fig 6.6.5.7: Interactive Canopy at Night

The Canopy will serve as a shading structure for one of the main gathering places between auditorium and interactive zone, it will be transformed at night, becoming an interactive ceiling.

The ceiling surface of the canopy is installed with digital light sensors which turn on when people pass underneath it. This canopy becomes an interactive object, allowing both teens and adults to play with its lights. It is an extension of the Interactive Zone to an outdoor environment.



Fig 6.6.5.8: Central Portion of the Third Place



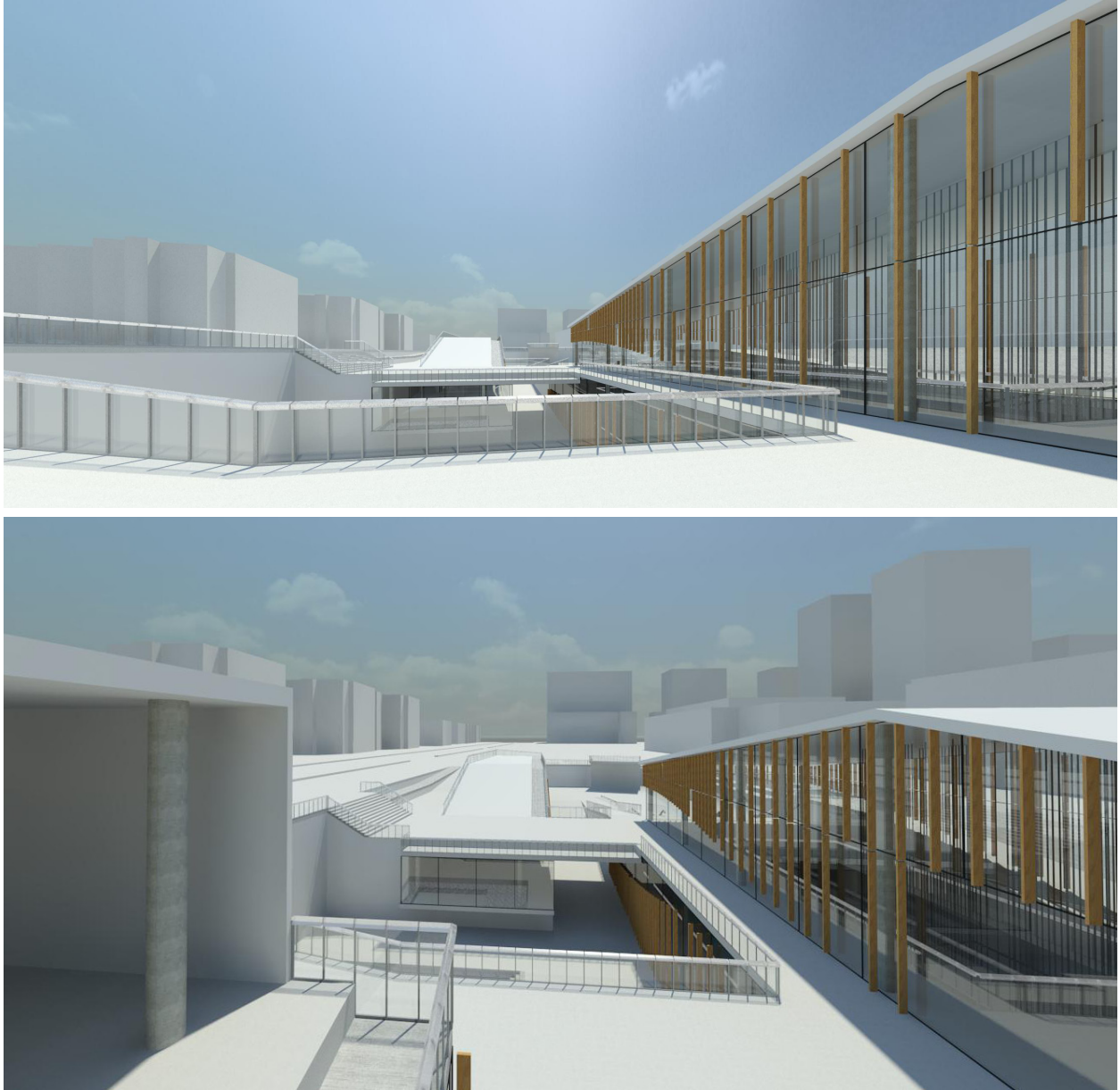


Fig 6.6.5.9: Views Towards the Music Room and Skate Park

Throughout the Third Place a series of linear seating spaces are created with a simple stepping technique of the horizontal plane. These have become one of the main design features of the Third Place, created as resting areas and lookout platforms to the levels below.

Fig 6.6.5.10: View of the Central Gathering Place



Fig 6.6.5.11: View of the Gathering Space Above the Music Room

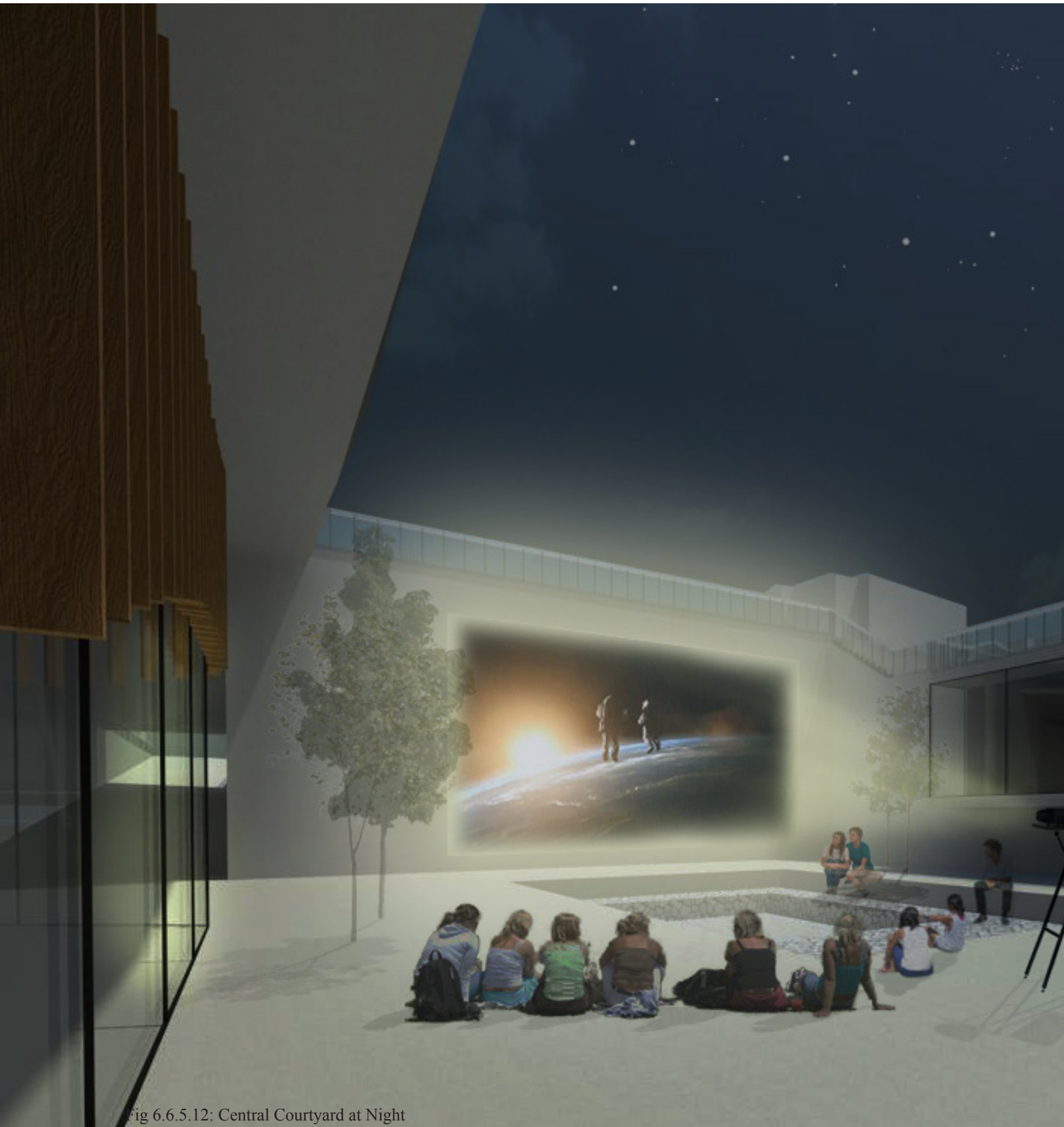


Fig 6.6.5.12: Central Courtyard at Night



Interactive Zone is the main central space of the complex, the heart of this village, which connects all of the programmed spaces together. Slicing through this zone is the main central axis stretching from the Linear Park. This zone was designed as a large and open, flexible space of multiple levels. The aim of this flexibility is to allow for a transformation over time, as well as addition of new activities and installations.

Fig 6.6.5.13: Perspective View of the Interactive Zone



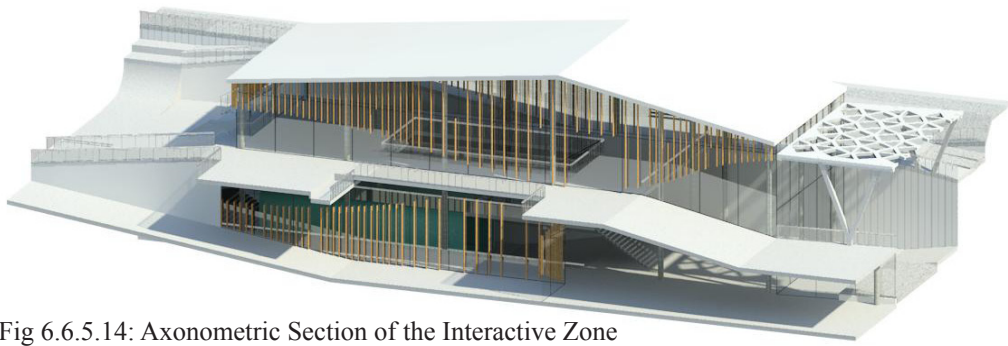


Fig 6.6.5.14: Axonometric Section of the Interactive Zone



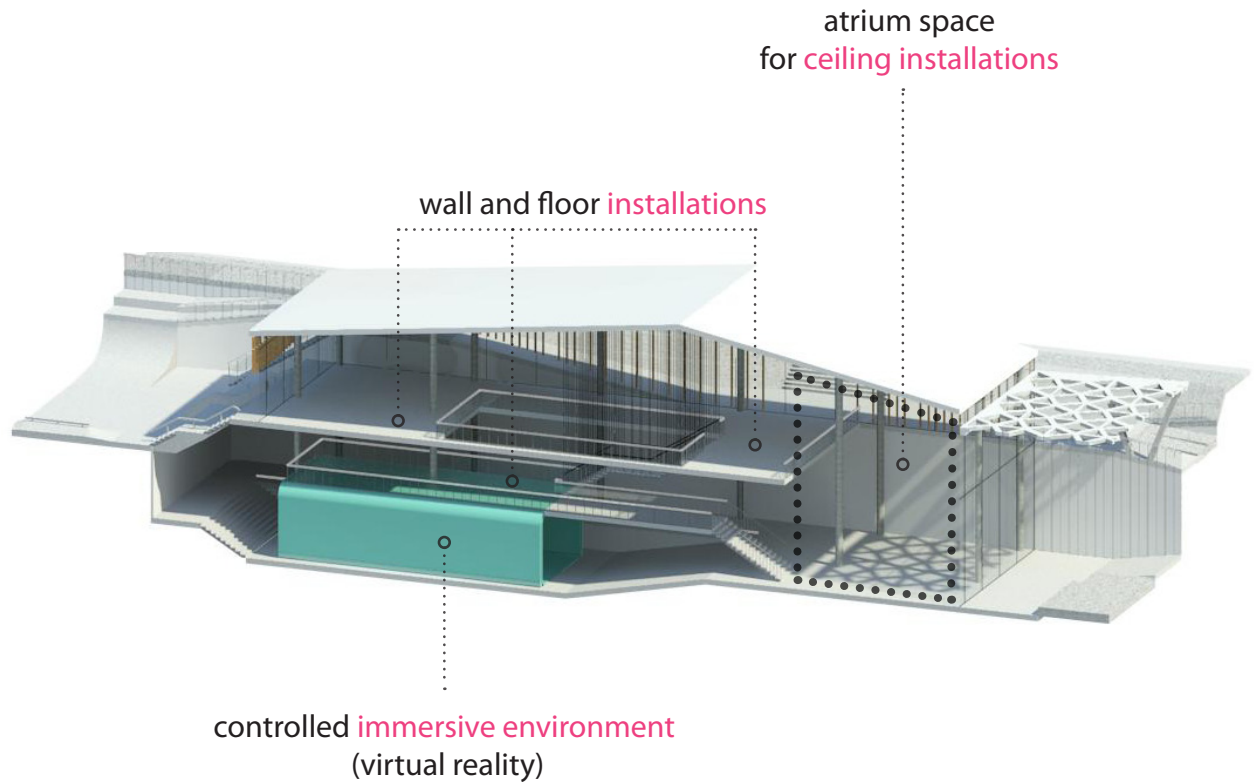


Fig 6.6.5.15: Sectional Axonometric Diagram of the Interactive Zone

The walls, floors and ceilings inside the Interactive Zone become canvases for digital projections. Throughout its lifetime the space will continue to transform, as new installations and imagery will occupy the space. The aim is to create an exciting and vibrant environment that will make people want to come back to have a new experience.

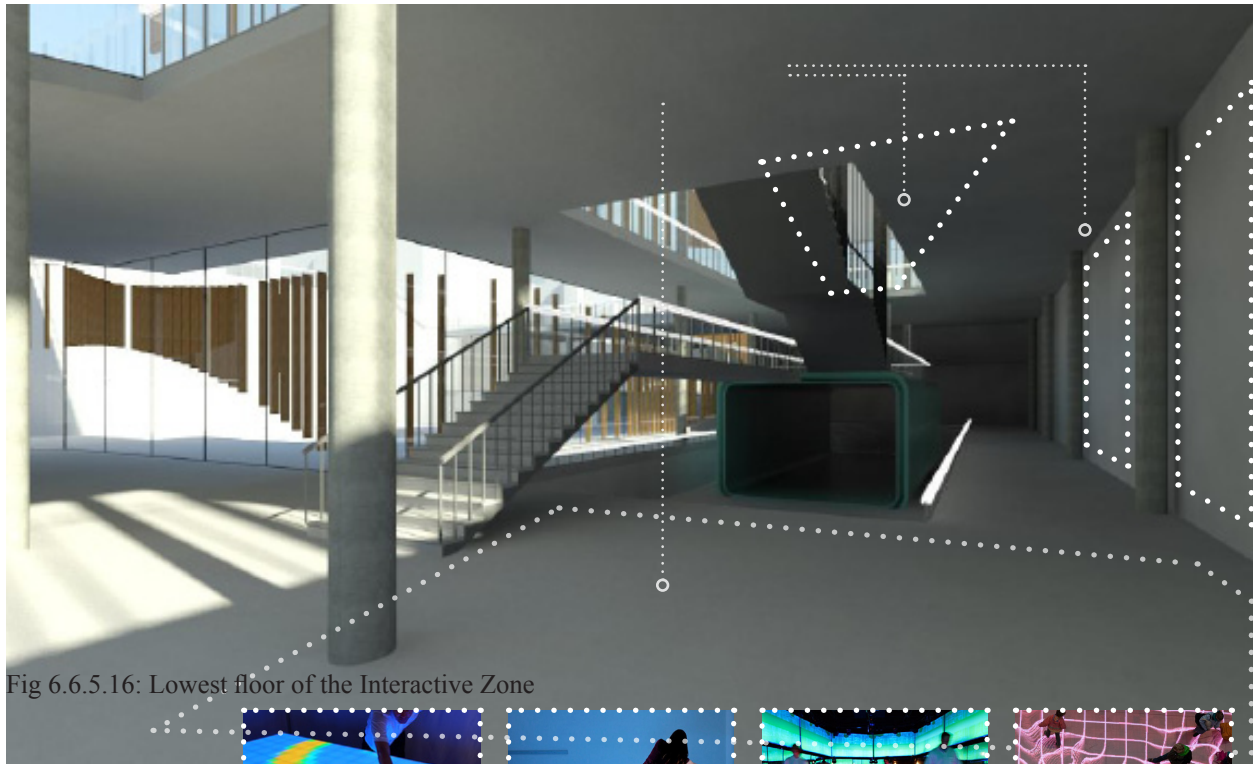


Fig 6.6.5.16: Lowest floor of the Interactive Zone

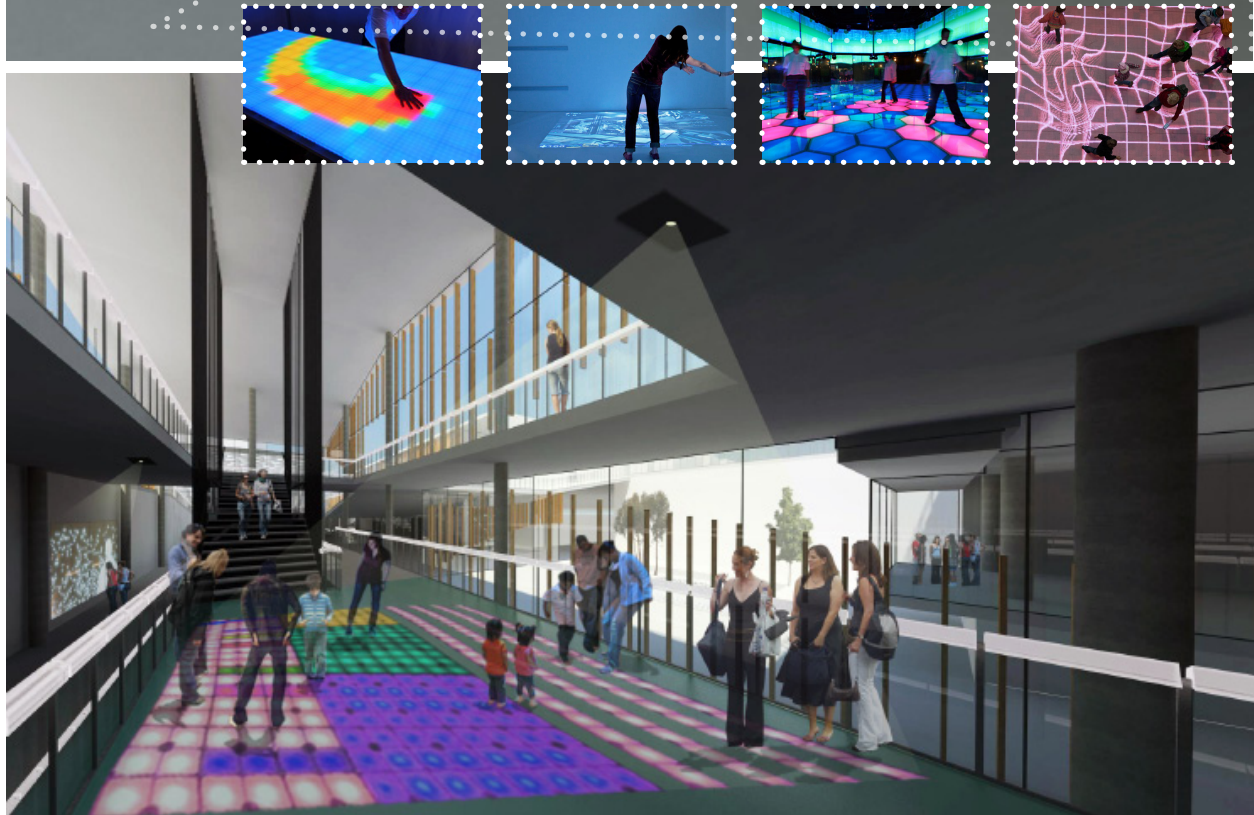


Fig 6.6.5.17: Interactive Floor Space above the Controlled Immersive Environment Volume



Fig 6.6.5.18: Controlled Immersive Environment Volume



Controlled Immersive Environment

This is an installation that provides an artificial total environment through the use of interactive technologies. It provides a sensation of total immersion in virtual reality. A volume, within which, images, sounds and shapes are projected to create a specific environment. The walls will move and slightly change their shape to enhance the experience. A new environment is created each time of visit. This space allows for a complete disconnection from the exterior physical space.



Fig 6.6.5.19: Perspective View of the Controlled Immersive Environment



Fig 6.6.5.20: Views of the Circulation Axis Adjacent to the Music Room

surfaces for projections and wall installations

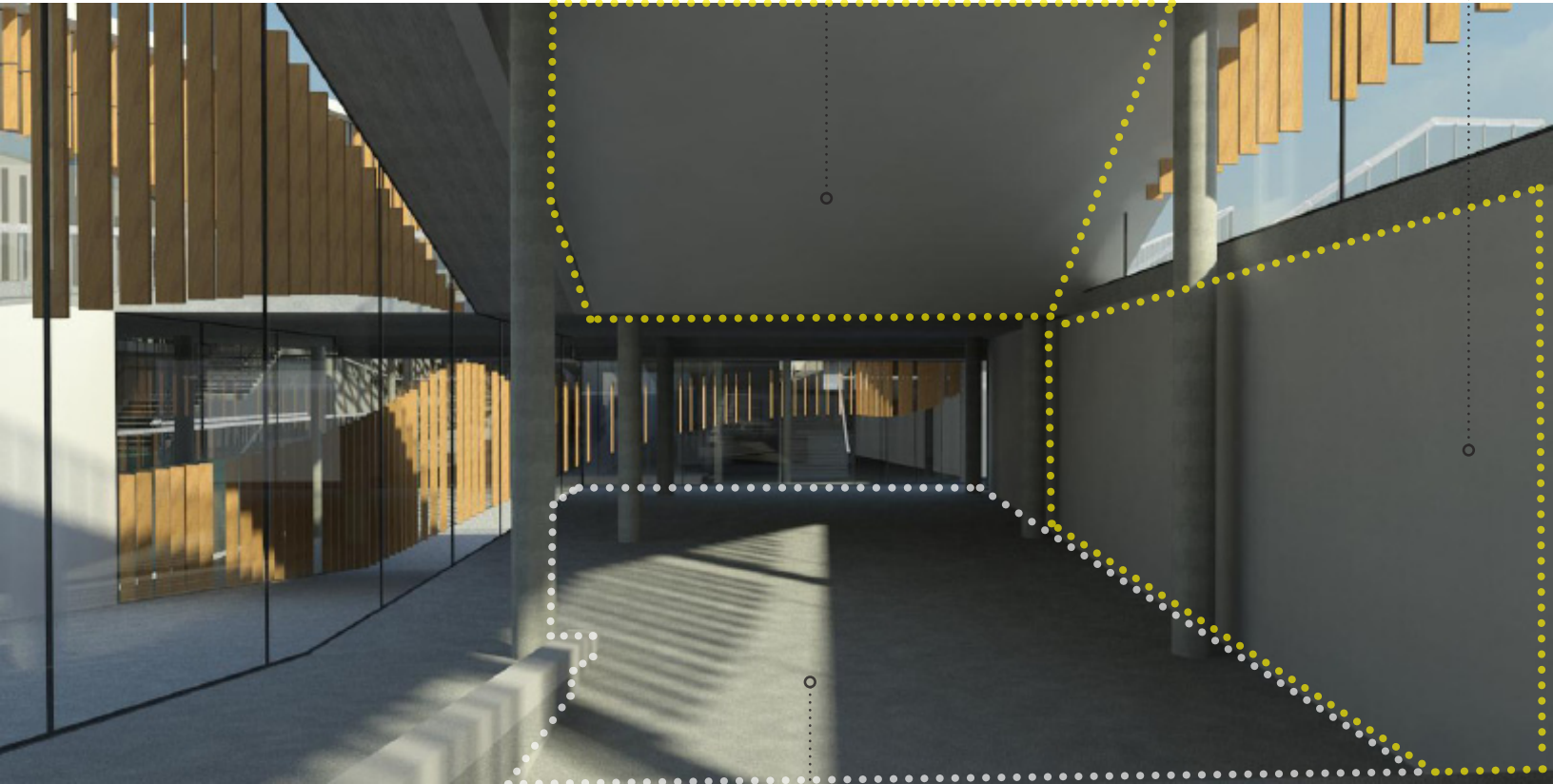


Fig 6.6.5.21: Music Room

area for seating

The Music Room uses similar design principles as the Interactive Zone, here the walls, floors and ceilings can also become the canvases for digital projections driven by the teens themselves. Teenagers can come into this space, and using their technologies project games, movies, and videos on the surfaces, creating a theatre environment that is entirely personal and private.

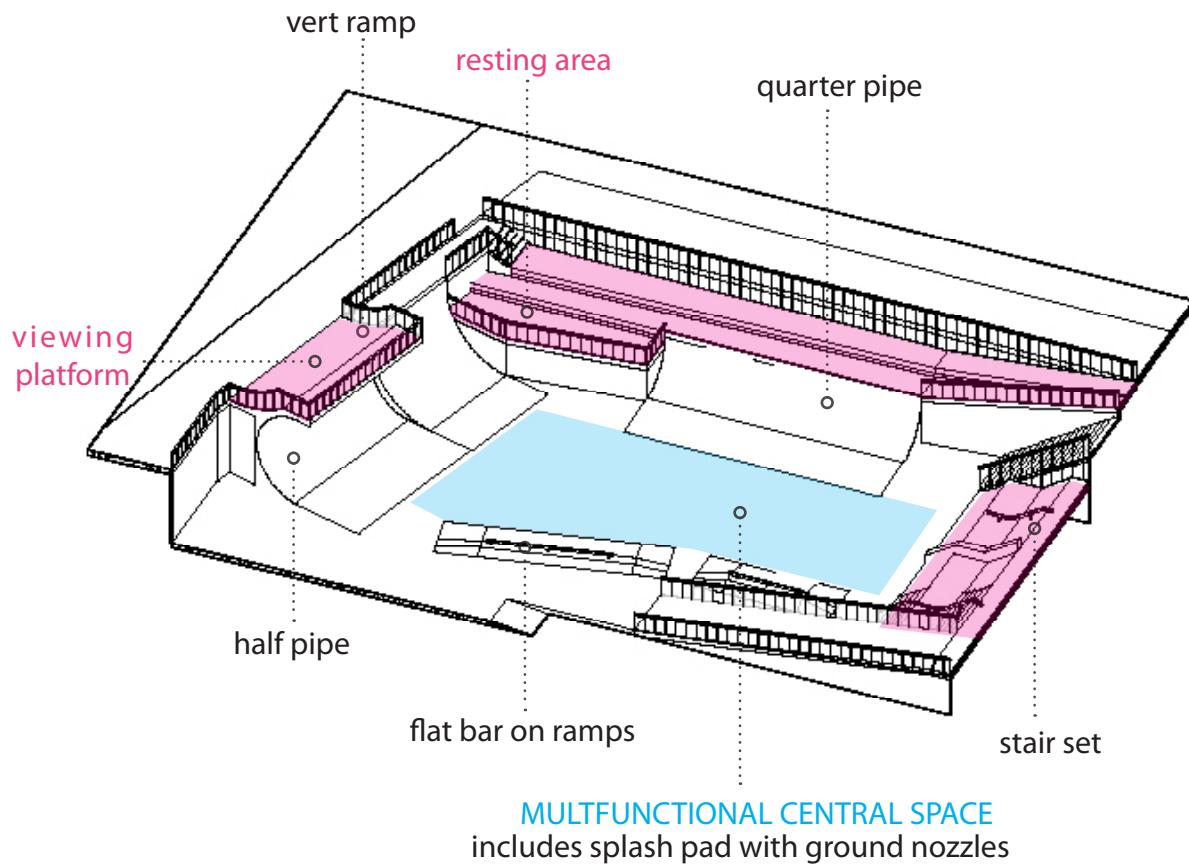


Fig 6.6.5.22: Diagram of the Skate Park Features



Fig 6.6.5.23: Skate Park with Highlighted Multipurpose Zone



Fig 6.6.5.25: Many Activities of the Skate Park:
Street Hockey, Fountain, Ice Skating Arena, etc.

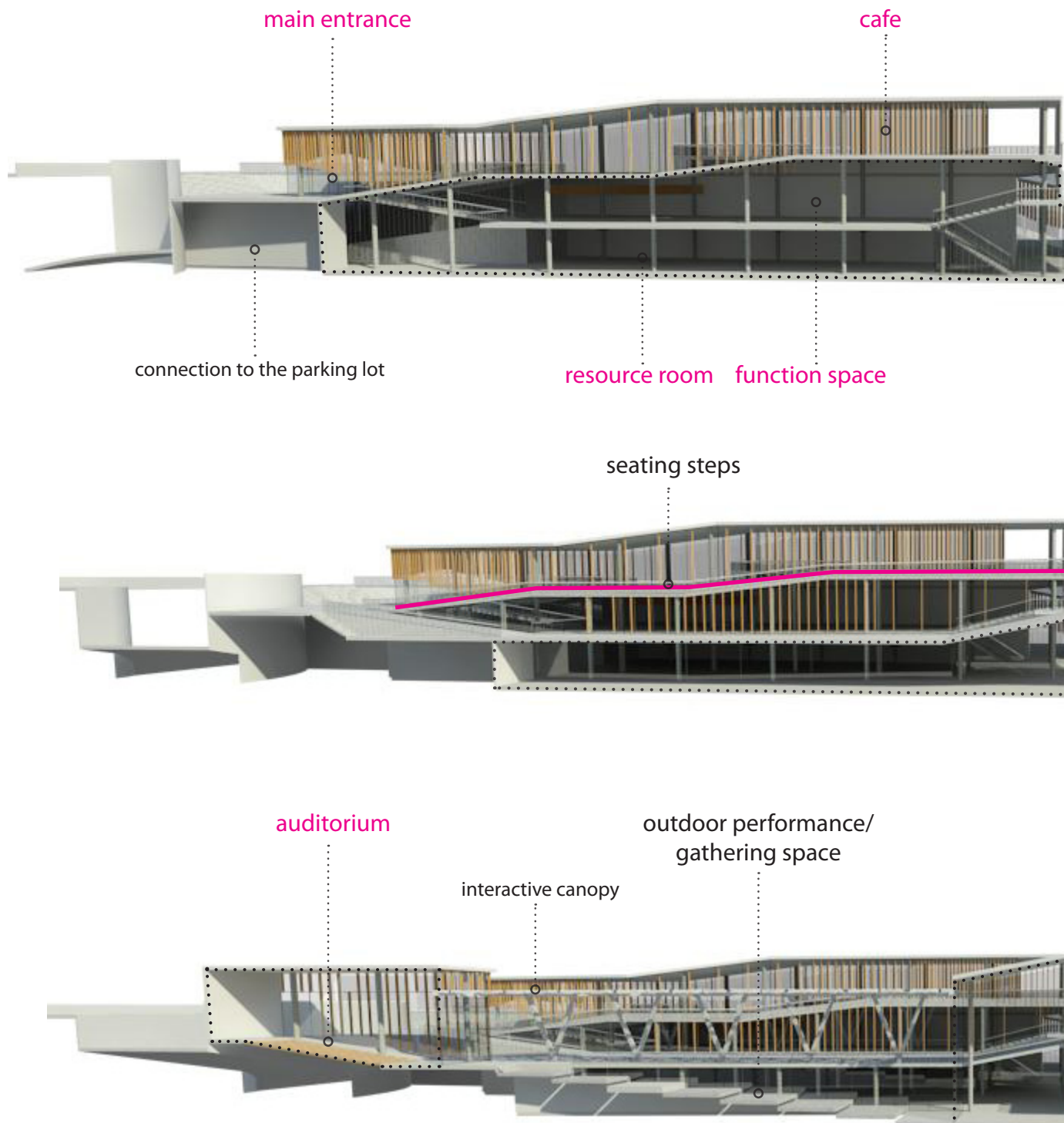


Fig 6.6.5.26: Sectional Perspectives of the Third Place

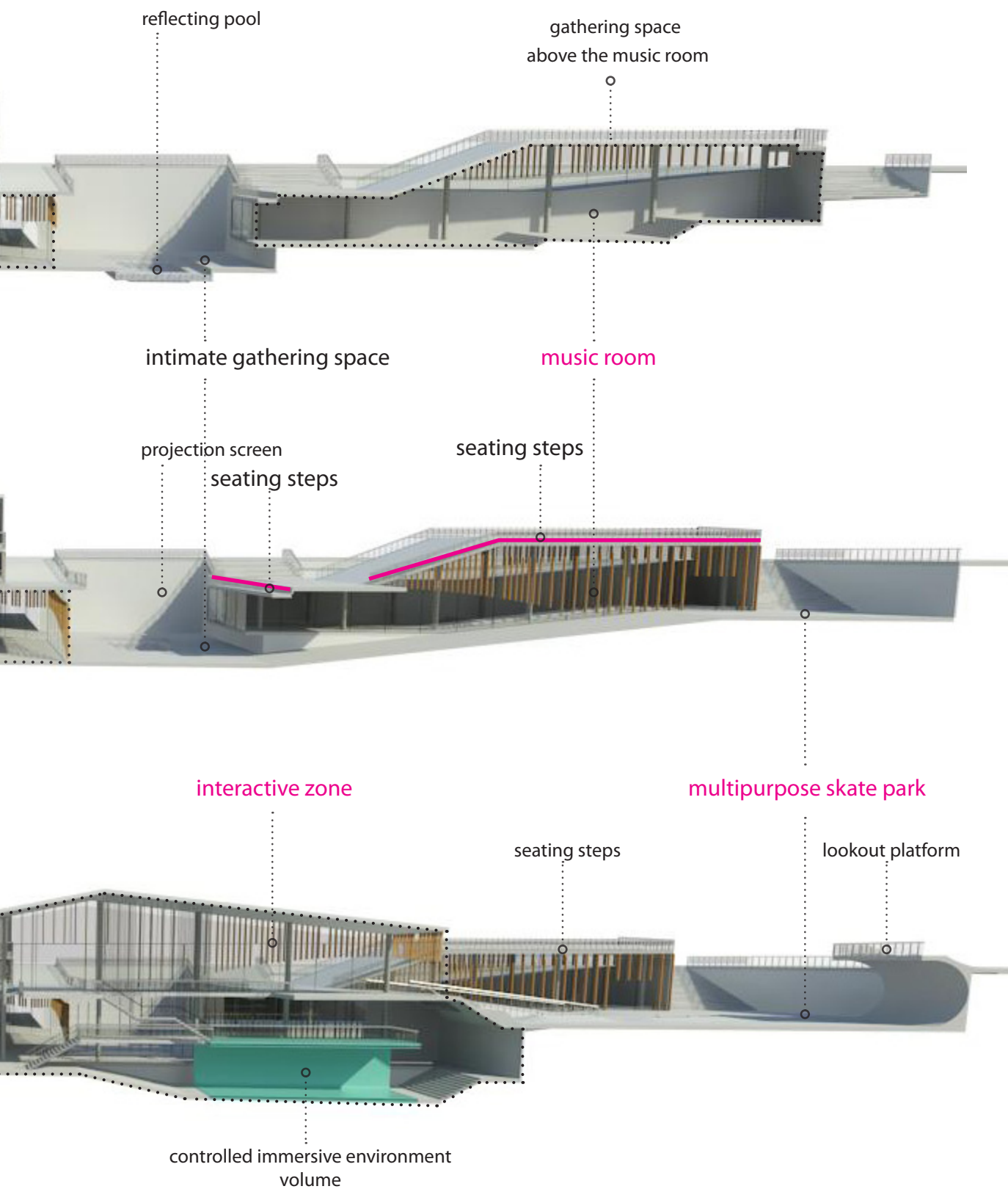
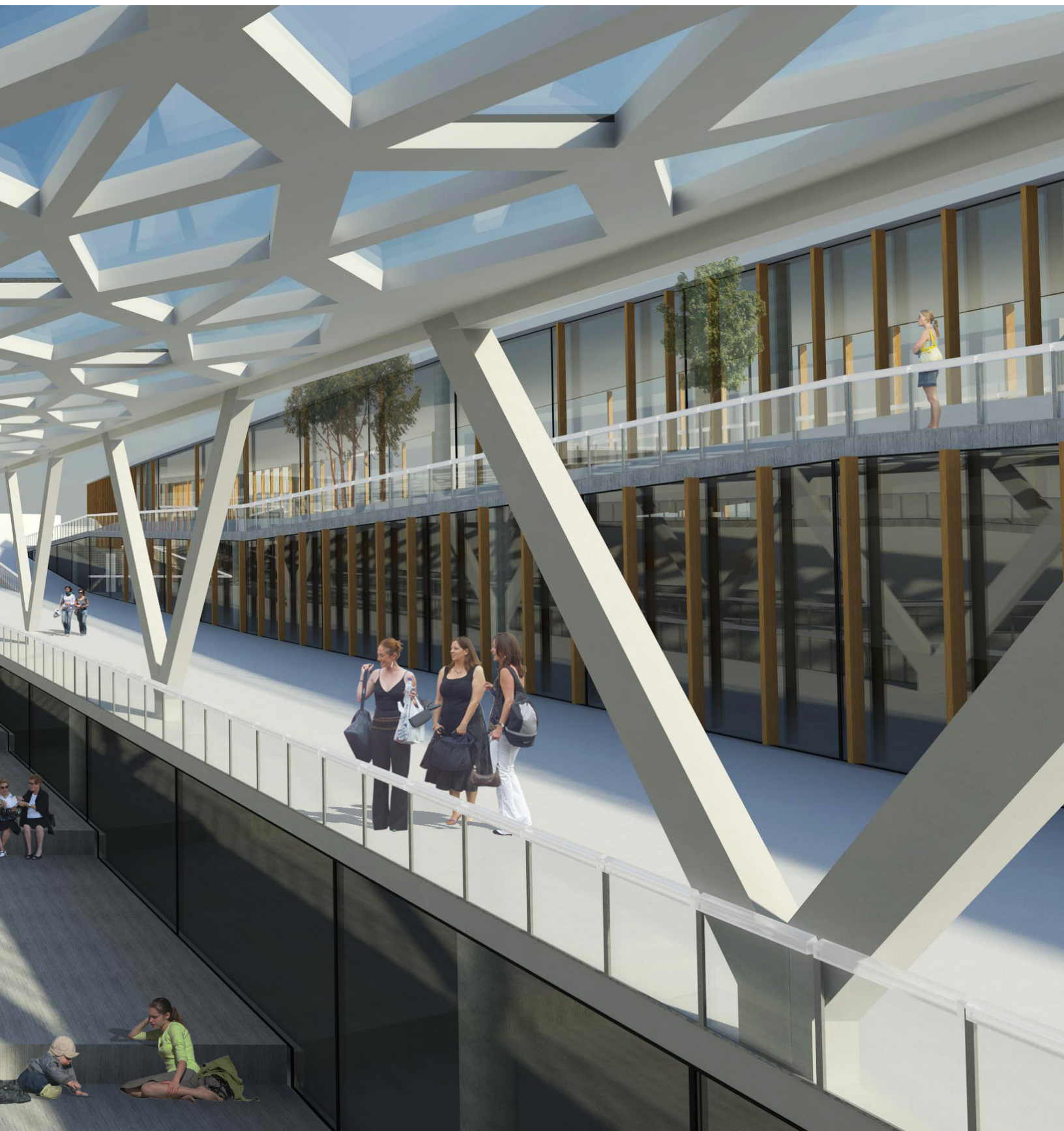
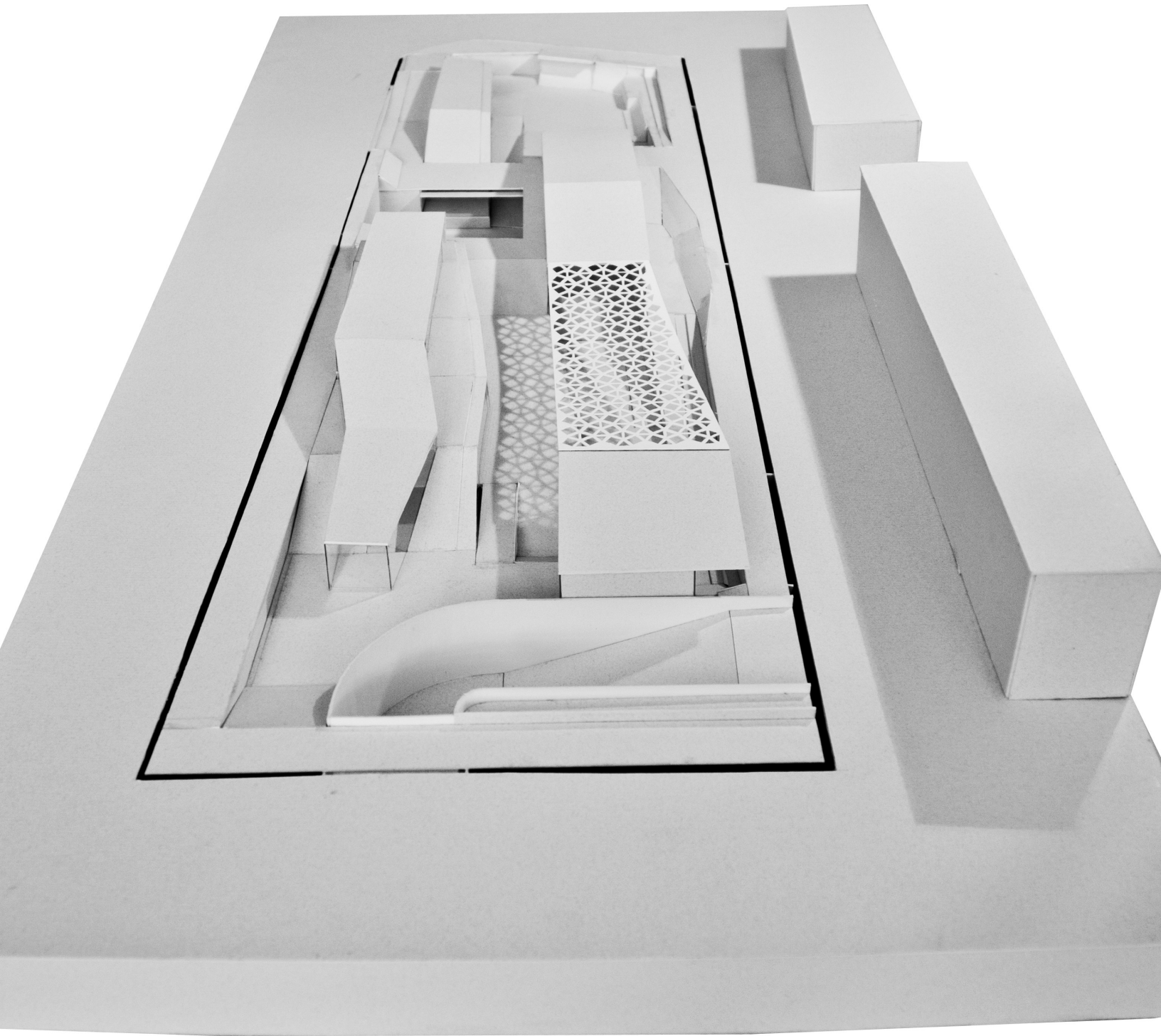


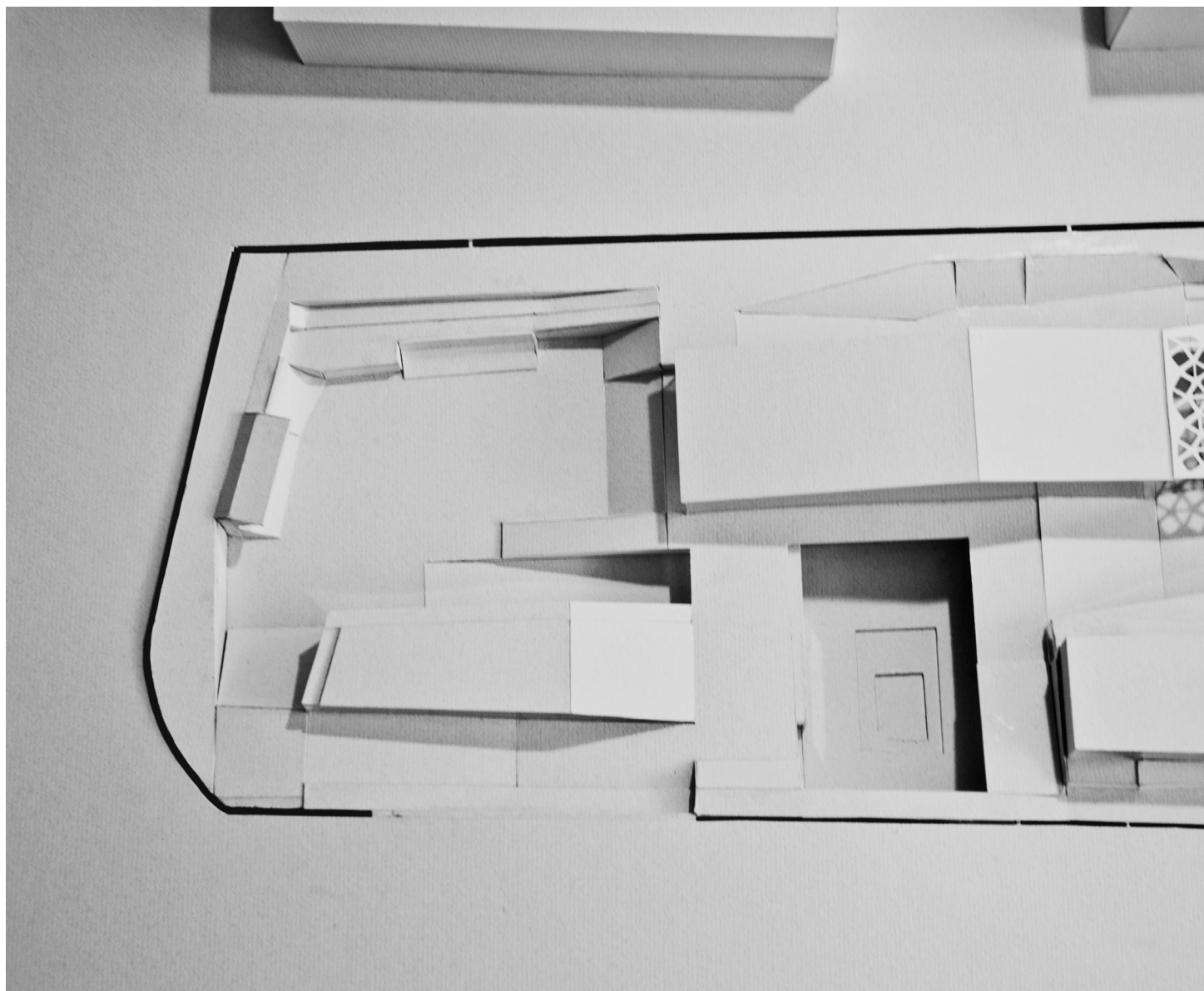


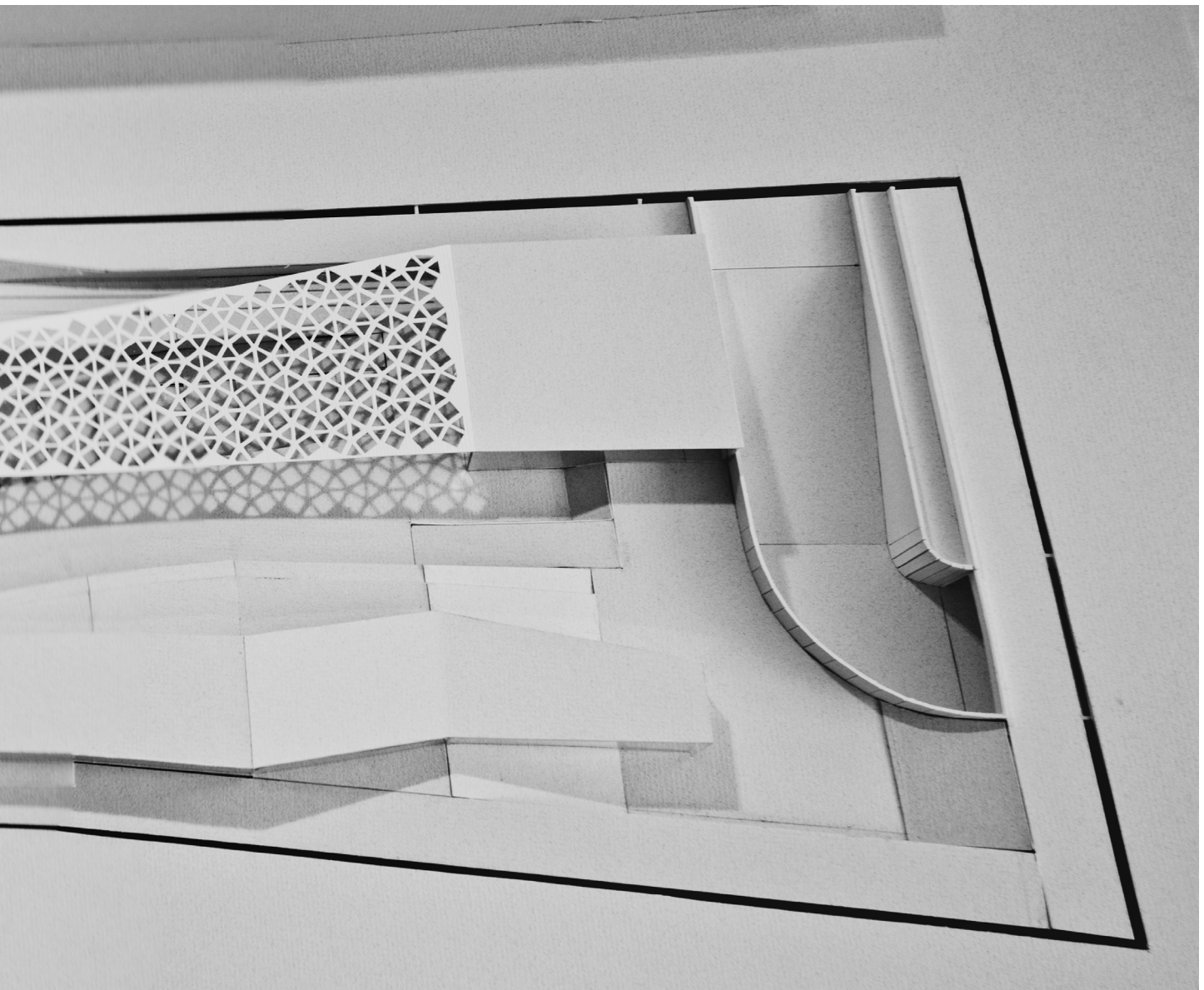
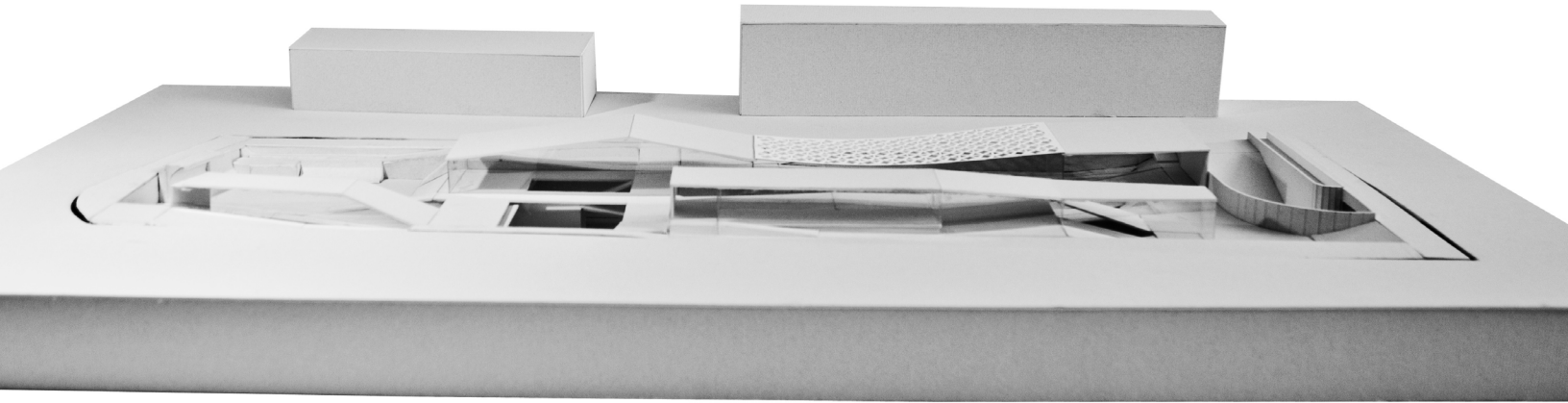
Fig 6.6.5.27: The Interstitial Spaces forming the Third Place

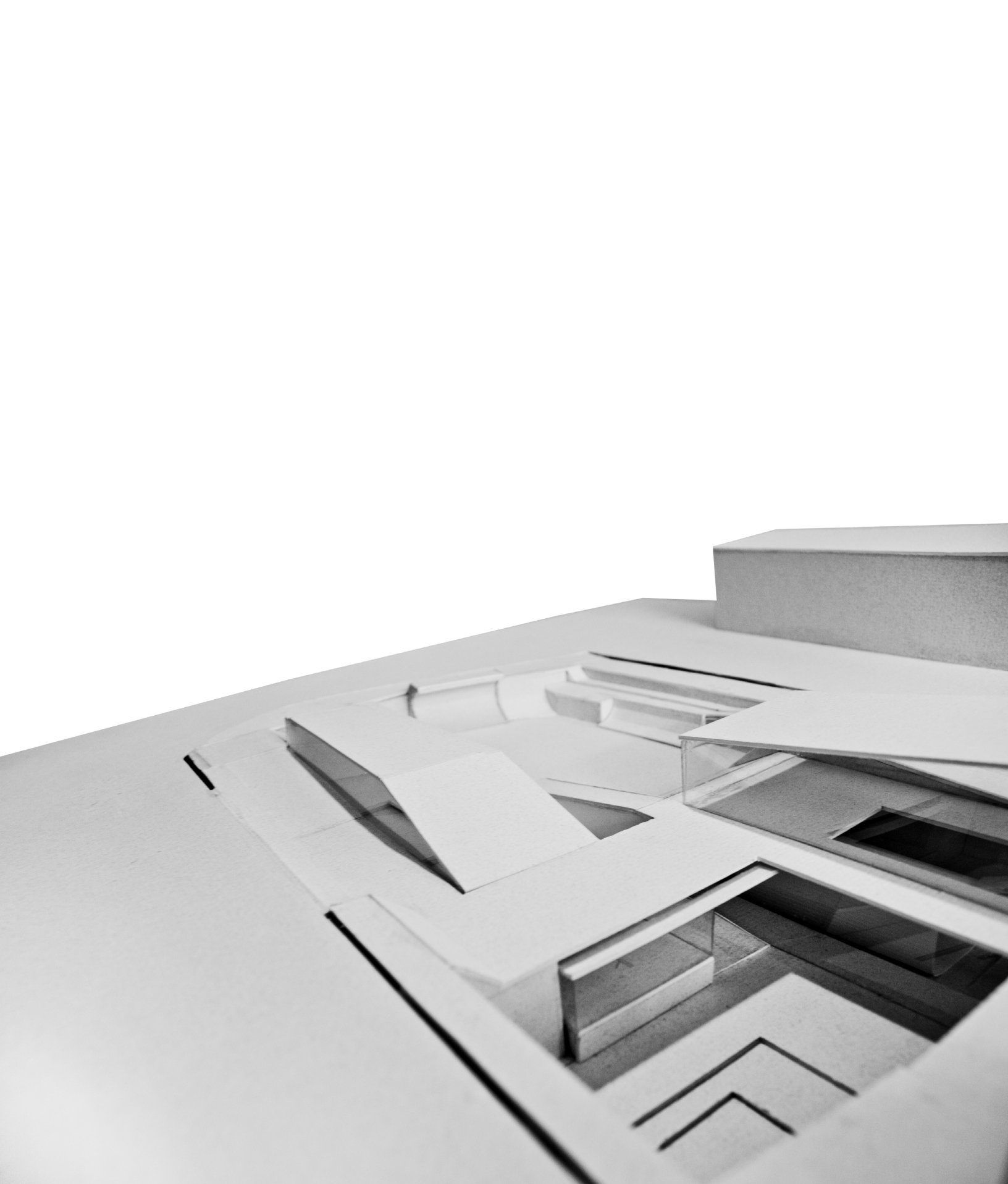


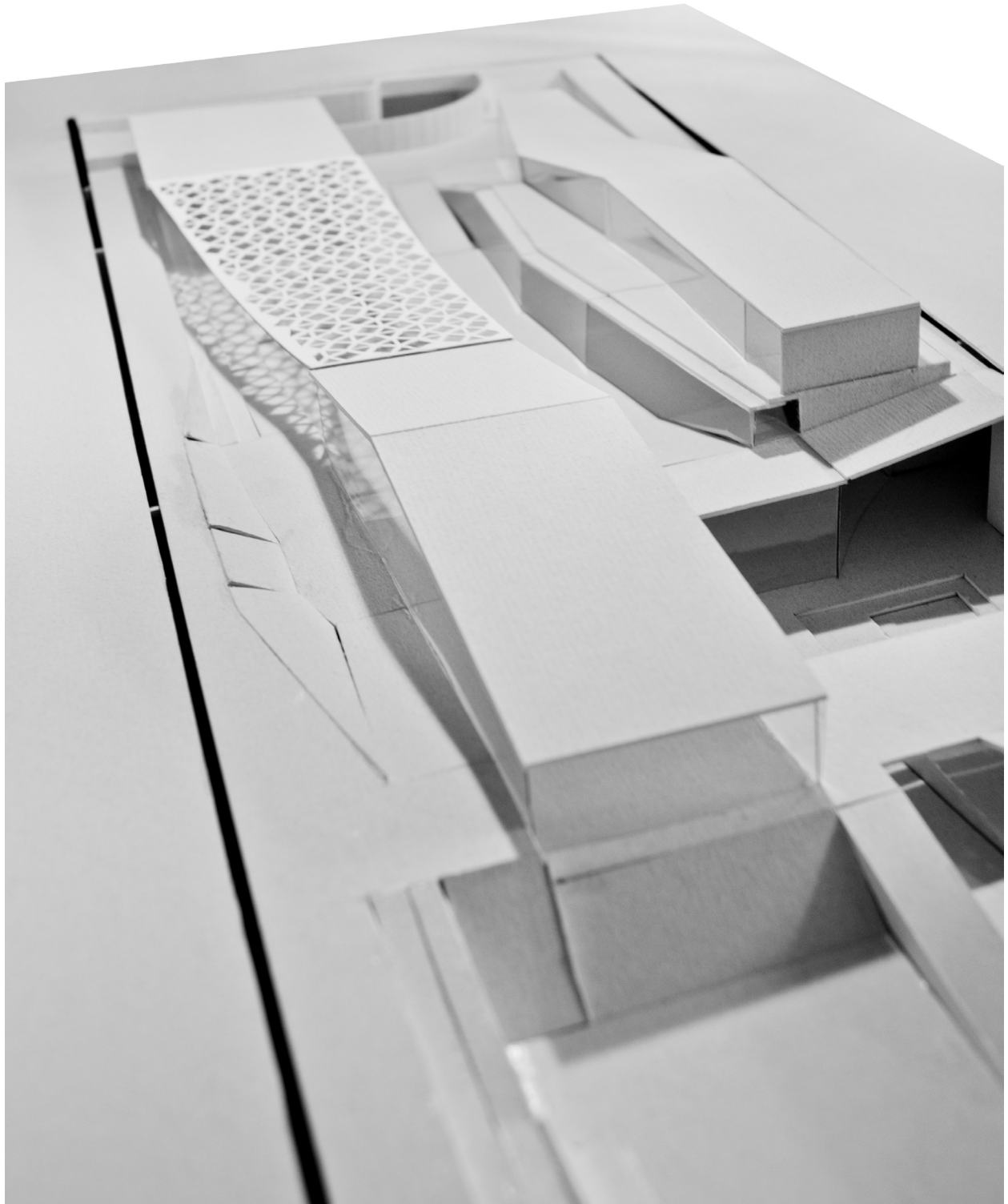
6.7 Photographs of The Physical Model











7 Conclusions

This Third Place challenges the current methods of social interaction – the use of the virtual communication technologies, which have eliminated the need for physical contact. Furthermore, this thesis project attempts to redesign the outdated versions of standard community centers by changing their character and design. With the aim to attempt to connect the virtual and physical worlds closer, an element of virtual reality has been introduced, a constantly changing and transforming physical space, the interactive zone. This thesis establishes a new definition for a physical Third Place that applies to the contemporary fast paced and technologically advanced society.

There are two primary objectives for this thesis project. First, it is to enhance public presence of people in the city by creating a new informal public gathering place. Second, is to bring back and encourage physical interaction among society that has been largely affected by virtual communication technologies.

7.1 A new Definition for the Physical Third Place and Speculation on its Future

The ‘Third Place’ has been identified as a place we wish to visit as we travel from work to home and back. These are informal public gathering spaces that provide for meaningful social experiences and diversity of human contact, joining the members of communities together in one space. The research carried out in this thesis project has suggested that without these spaces our society is unhealthy, and feels isolated from the outside world. Apart from the personal growth that these institutions provide, they also provide political agenda, creating a space for the people where they can congregate, to communicate and share information, therefore participating in the growth and development of our cities.

The notion of a Third Place stems from the idea of a public space, a social space that is normally open and accessible to all. Therefore the physical form of the Third Place plays a large role, outcome of which will decide whether the people will actually use the space. This thesis aims to rethink the traditional forms of third places that have been present in our society, such as community and meeting centers. They have become outdated, and are no longer seen as desirable locations by many city dwellers, and in particular the avid users of the virtual communication technologies.

Communication technologies have provided us with a substitute to a physical third place, giving the ability to transfer information at any given time and from any location. A large portion of our social interactions have been transferred to the virtual world, however these experiences cannot be compared to the physical ones, and are less meaningful and rewarding. With the aim to bring back traditional forms of physical interaction, which are highly important to forming a complete social experience; this project investigates several design technique and application of interactive technologies, to create a unique design, which fosters constantly evolving activities and enhances social contact.

A new physical form for the Third Place is highly accessible and welcoming, it is a public gathering space that relates to all members of our society. A secession of a series of social spaces is created, spaces that are flexible, open-ended and multifunctional, providing seasonal application. Each member of the community, whether it is a teen or an adult, feels welcomed here. They can appropriate each of the spaces for their own use, borrowing the space for a certain period of time to carry out their own programs and activities.

What has been discovered is a new architectural form for a third place, one that merges building with public space. Applying the concept of an interstitial space; this Third Place becomes a place in between, a building that becomes a landscape, an extension of the street, a part of one of the most engaged social environments of the physical public realm.

Third Places should not be seen as static objects, but as informal gathering places that allow for constant change and evolution of activities. What has been created is an architectural frame that will guide the users, leaving the appropriation of the space to their own imagination.

The design of this Third Place can become a model for future community centers, created and maintained by the Municipal Governments, built in various sizes and locations throughout our cities. Adoption of this flexibility and open ended design, combined with an introduction of a new social gathering space that is filled with emerging interactive technologies, will bring back physical forms of interaction, keeping our society engaged and creating longer life spans for social, public buildings.

8 Appendices

8.1 Sources of Figures

E-Architect. *Manchester Piccadilly gardens: Image*. Retrieved from

http://www.e-architect.co.uk/manchester/piccadilly_gardens.htm

Fig 5.1.1.1: View of the Piccadilly Gardens, located on the Manchester City Square

Fig 5.1.1.2: Path and Seating

Fig 5.1.2.3: Oval Shape Fountain and Path

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Fig 5.1.3.4: Depressed Base Plane

Fig 5.1.4.5: Elevated Base Plane

Fig 5.1.5.6: Overhead Plane

Fig 5.2.1: Clustered Forms of Spatial Arrangement

Fig 5.2.2.5: Depressing the Base Plane to Create Seating Surfaces

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Fig 5.2.1.1: Plan View of Barcelo Market

Fig 5.2.1.2: Interior Central Passage

Fig 5.2.1.3: Barcelo Market in Context

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<http://www.batesmart.com.au/projects/mixed-use/federation-square-melbourne>

Fig 5.2.2.1: Australian Centre for the Moving Image in Context (ACMI)

Fig 5.2.2.3: Top View of ACMI showing a Large Public Gathering

Fig 5.2.2.4: Night View of the Square

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Fig 5.2.2.2: Outdoor Circulation Diagrams of ACMI

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Fig 5.3.1.1: Tree-Hotel Project by Tham Videgard Hansson Arkitekter

Fig 5.3.1.2: Interior Views of the Tree-Hotel Project

Fig 5.3.1.3: Maritime Youth Centre Project by PLOT

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Fig 5.4.1.1: View of the Zamet Centre from the Square Plaza

Fig 5.4.1.2: The overall view of the Zamet Centre

Fig 5.4.1.3: View of the Linear Stripes from the Ground Floor

- Urbarama Atlas of Architecture. (2009) *Maritime Youth Centre*. Retrieved from <http://en.urbarama.com/project/maritime-youth-centre>
 Fig 5.4.2.1: The Undulating Landscape of the Maritime Youth Centre
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8.3 Glossary

Communication Technology Information and communications technology or information technology (IT).

Unified communications and the integration of telecommunications (telephone lines and wireless signals), computers as well as necessary enterprise software, middleware, storage, and audio-visual systems, which enable users to access, store, transmit, and manipulate information.

Cyberspace The electronic medium of computer networks, in which online communication takes place.

Immateriality An object that is visually absent.

Immersive environment This is an installation that provides an artificial total environment through the use of interactive technologies. It provides a sensation of total immersion in virtual reality.

Interactive Art Installation A form of art that involves the spectator in a way that allows the art to achieve its purpose. Some interactive art installations achieve this by letting the observer or visitor "walk" in, on, and around them; some others ask the artist to become part of the artwork.

Interstitial Space An interstitial space or interstice is an empty space or gap between spaces full of structure or matter.

The space in between, the empty space, the cavity of architecture.

Mobile Society Society that uses wireless communication technologies.

Online communication Computer-mediated communication.

Physical Something that exists in the physical world.

Place A space that is defined by objects or architectural boundaries, infused by activities.

Port of Entry A building that is highly accessible and welcoming, having multiple access point.

Private Space that is not available for public use. Public spaces that are private have restrictions on how and when to use them.

Privatization Is the process of transferring ownership of a business, enterprise, agency, public service or public property from the public sector (a government) to the private sector, either to a business that operate for a profit or to a non-profit organization.

Public Space that is available for public use.

Public Space Public space serves as an extension of the building, it is any place where people can congregate and socialize. Good public spaces are highly accessible, welcoming and occupied by a number of people on a daily basis. It is places for frequent, informal conversations and social encounters between old and new friends.

Public Sphere Public sphere is an area in social life where individuals can come together to freely discuss and identify societal problems, and through that discussion influence political action. It is a discursive space in which individuals and groups congregate to discuss matters of mutual interest and, where possible, to reach a common judgment.

Public Realm The Public realm is different from a typical public space; these spaces are a part of a much larger public sphere and include city's streets, parks and plazas.

The Public realm is a natural and important component of a broader public sphere; it acts "as a setting for exposure to, and interaction among, people with diverse backgrounds, opinions, and values.

Self-Sustaining Cluster A clustered form of spatial organization, which allows for the best proximity between spaces, and is flexible enough to incorporate forms of various shapes, sizes and orientations into its structure.

Similar to a Village that acts as a complete organism containing a heart, lungs, kidney, arteries, etc., the Self-Sustaining Cluster has all of the required elements to sustain it.

Social Network A social structure made up of a set of actors (such as individuals or organizations) and the dyadic ties between these actors.

Social Space The physical or virtual space such as a social center, online social media, or other gathering place where people gather and interact. Some social spaces such as town squares or parks are public places; others such as pubs, websites or shopping malls are privately owned and regulated.

Space The boundless, three-dimensional extent in which objects and events occur and have relative position and direction.

Third Place An informal public space that connects people to each other, allowing them to stop, meet others, relax and interact receiving meaningful social experiences and sense of empowerment before reengaging the world.

Coffee shops, pubs, internet cafes, public libraries and other open, public and culturally specific locations.

Third places are ports of entry for visitors. The design of a true third place is open-ended, highly accessible and welcoming.

An extension of the street. A building that is also a landscape, the third place is a continuous space of actions and events, constantly changing and evolving.

Village A clustered human settlement or a community.

Virtual Computer-simulated environment that is immaterial. It does not physically exist, but influenced our physical world.

Virtual Third Place Online Social Networks, which work as virtual public spaces, providing similar functions as a physical public space but allowing for a quick and easy interaction between people in any location.

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