

FINDING IDENTITY THROUGH DESIGN:

Re-Envisioning Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin, an Aboriginal Women's Shelter

by

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A practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of

The University of Manitoba

in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF INTERIOR DESIGN

Department of Interior Design

University of Manitoba

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The image shows the interior of a women's shelter. The ceiling is a complex, vaulted structure with dark, angular beams and a central circular light fixture. The walls are covered in a light-colored, textured material with a repeating pattern. Three horizontal windows are set into the walls, each featuring a decorative pattern of leaves and branches. The floor is a dark, solid color with a circular pattern in the center. The overall atmosphere is modern and functional.

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# ABSTRACT

Domestic violence is a pervasive social problem amongst Canada's Aboriginal population, occurring at a rate three times higher than the national average. Historical factors including colonization, residential schools, and loss of cultural identity have been identified as some of the root causes. Therefore, the need exists for a culturally appropriate shelter for women and children to escape abusive situations. This interior design practicum project responds to this need by proposing the design of an Aboriginal women's crisis shelter, Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. The focus of the design is to provide a culturally sensitive environment where residents feel safe and supported, thus promoting healing through reattachment to Aboriginal culture. The design is informed by an exploration of traditional Aboriginal architecture and gendered space; and by photo-elicitation interviews with staff members of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin, an Aboriginal women's shelter in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to begin by thanking my committee members: Dr. Shauna Mallory Hill, Dr. Susan Close, and Dr. Joseph Kaufert, from the University of Manitoba, Dr. Maureen Matthews from the Manitoba Museum, and Marie Lands, former Director of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. Your expertise, guidance and excellent feedback has been appreciated.

I would like to thank Marie and the shelter staff for agreeing to be part of this project and for graciously allowing me into the world of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. One of the best parts of this project has been getting to know the women who make Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin possible.

To my family and friends, I am grateful for your help and encouragement. This has been a long process and without you all, it would have been even longer.

Finally, I would like to thank my mom for her support during the many years of my education, especially the last one. As a project centered around female strength and perseverance, I would like to dedicate this practicum to my mother, who embodies these qualities.

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# PREFACE

Since its inception, my practicum has evolved into something far different from what I had originally envisioned; the result, however, is much closer to home. I initially considered a practicum topic whereby the design would be in a developing country. The instinct to base my practicum in a faraway place came from a lifelong interest in traveling, discovering new people, learning about different cultures and from an undergraduate degree in international development. Upon considering emergency relief shelters for victims of war as an initial topic, it was suggested to me that I might look into a different type of emergency relief shelter, a little closer to home. This suggestion, combined with my desire to explore a pertinent social issue led me to Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin, a local Aboriginal women's shelter, and to the idea of asking Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin to act as the client for my design project. My selection of this topic was, therefore, not based on any Aboriginal heritage of my own, but an interest in learning about Aboriginal culture, and the challenges of domestic violence within it.

Although the central issue of domestic violence is a somber topic, the tone of this project is that of optimism for the future of Aboriginal women in Canada. This project has made me aware of the inspiring work that many Aboriginal women are doing to improve their own lives and each other's. During my research, I came upon a Cree story about a supernatural woman who rode ahead of the tribe to set up camp so that no matter where camp was made, it always felt like home, familiar and safe. Over the course of my practicum, I have come to recognize that the extraordinary women who work at Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin carry out the same work as the mythologized supernatural woman. Since 1985, these women have created a safe place to go to, for their Aboriginal sisters in need.

As a cultural outsider with limited knowledge of Aboriginal people, I have tried to represent Aboriginal culture as accurately and respectfully as possible. By sharing this project with others, it is my hope that some of the learning and knowledge I have received will be passed on to increase others' awareness of Aboriginal culture.





# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

*1.1 Subject Matter of Inquiry: Purpose + Typology*

*1.2 Key Terms*

*1.3 Research Objectives*

*1.4 Project Benefits*

*1.5 Chapter Summaries*

## 1.1 SUBJECT MATTER OF INQUIRY: PURPOSE AND TYPOLOGY

Domestic violence remains a pervasive problem in Canadian society. In 2009, over one million Canadians reported being victimized physically or sexually by their partner or spouse within the previous five years (Manitoba's Multi-Year Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy, 2012). While both women and men experience domestic abuse, women are the victims of 80% of incidents of dating or spousal abuse reported to police (Manitoba's Multi-Year Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy, 2012). Aboriginal women are amongst the most high-risk populations for experiencing domestic violence in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2006). Aboriginal women are three times more likely to experience domestic violence than the non-Aboriginal population, and the abuse is often more severe (Statistics Canada, 2006).

In response to these elevated rates of domestic violence, Aboriginal activists have developed theories of violence that conceptualize the abuse as a social, rather than an individual, problem (Janovicek, 2007). Consequently, efforts to end violence in Aboriginal communities have focused on healing the family, while also identifying the vital need for services that appreciate the impact of colonization on Aboriginal women (Janovicek). The Native Women's Movement argues that in order to be effective, strategies designed to help Aboriginal women who have been abused must take into account social factors including the influence of historical disempowerment and its effect on Aboriginal women's lived experiences of violence (Janovicek).

Guided by the principal that connecting abused Aboriginal women with their cultural identity is the first step towards healing, my practicum project for the Master of Interior Design at the University of Manitoba is focused on the design of a crisis shelter for Aboriginal women and children. The design proposal is based on Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin, an existing Aboriginal crisis shelter in Winnipeg, Manitoba, which has agreed to act as the client for this design project (Figure 1.1.1).

Since opening its doors in 1987, Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin's mission has been "To support Aboriginal women and their children end family violence, by offering shelter during crisis and nurturing hope, change and empowerment for tomorrow" (Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin Inc., 2013). Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin, which means 'women helping women' in Cree, offers crisis line services, short-term housing, individual and group counseling and skill building activities, children's programs and follow-up services. The cliental of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin is highly diverse and includes women of Cree, Ojibway, Soto, Oji Cree, Métis and Inuit heritage. The mandate of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin

is to provide an environment in which Aboriginal women feel comfortable, and their specific cultural needs are accommodated (Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin Inc., 2013).

The aim of this practicum is to propose a design that supports the functional, cultural and spiritual needs of the residents and staff of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. The proposed design is located on a site in Winnipeg's South End. The site has been selected based on criteria specific to the needs of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. The design program of the proposed shelter is based on the services currently offered at the existing facility. The design proposal of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin has been informed by research and analysis undertaken to answer the question 'What is culturally appropriate Aboriginal interior design'. To answer this question, I have explored traditional Aboriginal architecture, gendered space, conducted photo-elicitation interviews with the staff members of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin, and examined the design of Aboriginal ceremonial robes.



Figure 1.1.1 - *Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin Logo*

## 1.2 KEY TERMS

**Aboriginal** - The term “Aboriginal” is used throughout this document. This term was selected for two reasons, 1) it is the most inclusive general term used in Canada today, and is preferable to “Indian” or “Native” in most conversations (Kesler, 2009) and, 2) “Aboriginal” was the term used by Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin’s director, Marie Lands, during numerous interviews discussing the shelter. It should be noted that some groups consider the term “Aboriginal” to refer only to First Nations people and not to Inuit or Métis people. In this document, the term “Aboriginal” is used when referring to women at Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin who are of First Nations, Métis and Inuit descent.

**Domestic Violence**- In this document, domestic violence is considered to be any form of abuse, mistreatment or neglect that an adult or child experiences from a family member, or from someone with whom they have an intimate relationship (Department of Justice, Government of Canada, 2013). Domestic violence is used interchangeably with “domestic abuse” and “intimate partner violence” in this document, as these are all terms used by Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin.

## 1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To investigate how Aboriginal cultural identity can be supported and respected by appropriate interior design.
2. To explore how knowledge of positive gendered space can inform the design of a women’s shelter in the twenty-first century.
3. To discover how the built environment can connect or reconnect individuals to their cultural heritage, traditions and sense of self-identity.

## 1.4 PROJECT BENEFITS

This practicum displays the benefits of partnering with a ‘real’ client in the local community. Working with Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin has given me a sense of responsibility towards the organization that reflects client-designer relationships in practice. The opportunity to interview staff members and access information about the shelter’s purpose, programming, and daily operations has made this practicum more realistic than if it had been based on a fictional client.

In addition to the valuable education I have gained from working with Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin, I hope the organization will in turn benefit from our collaboration. In the future, Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin hopes to operate out of a new building. Should this happen, this document could be a useful resource as it provides a design response to the challenges of their current facility.

Working on this practicum topic has increased my personal awareness of domestic violence in Manitoba, and of the need for safe transitional housing for women and children. By increasing people’s awareness of domestic violence, it is my hope that organizations such as Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin may benefit by receiving greater support and funding so that they may continue to provide a much needed service.

# 1.5 CHAPTER SUMMARIES

## CHAPTER 1 | Introduction

Chapter 1 of this practicum provides an overview of Aboriginal domestic violence in Manitoba, Canada. Aboriginal crisis shelter, Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin, is introduced as the client; a description of their program goals and services offered is included. Additionally, the chapter contains the research objectives I will address throughout this document and the benefits of this practicum to the field of interior design.

## CHAPTER 2 | Why Aboriginal Women's Shelters are Needed in Manitoba

The purpose of Chapter 2 is to familiarize the reader with the issue of Aboriginal domestic violence in Manitoba, Canada and with the client, Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. The first section of Chapter 2 discusses the major factors responsible for Aboriginal domestic violence and outlines the shelter services available to individuals seeking safety in Manitoba. The second section of this chapter is a profile of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. It examines the history of the organization, the services offered by the shelter and its goals.

## CHAPTER 3 | In Search of Culturally Appropriate Aboriginal Interior Design

The third chapter contains three sections. Each section has helped inform this project's concept of culturally appropriate Aboriginal interior design. The first section examines traditional Aboriginal architecture from the region of Manitoba, and asks how these structures and dwellings can inform contemporary Aboriginal design. The second section evaluates how well the current shelter functions based on a series of six photo-elicitation interviews with the staff at Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. The last section explores Aboriginal artistic expression by examining locally made ceremonial robes.

## CHAPTER 4 | Site

Chapter 4 provides information on the chosen building site for this practicum project. An analysis of the site's location, history, accessibility, secureness and cultural relevance, was carried out and demonstrates the site's appropriateness for Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. This is followed by a building analysis of the current interior conditions of the building. A building code analysis can be found in the appendix.

## CHAPTER 5 | Design

Chapter 5 includes the programming requirements for Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin and the proposed design of the shelter. User profiles for each user group are presented here, outlining what must be accommodated for in the design. The 'Program Outline' section for Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin lists the functions of the shelter and is accompanied by a table outlining the spatial requirements for each level of the shelter. The spatial organization of both floors of the shelter is also discussed. Finally, perspectives of key spaces in Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin with detailed descriptions of the spaces is included; justification for design decisions is provided.

## CHAPTER 6 | Conclusion

In the conclusion of this practicum document, I have provided a summary of the research and the processes that resulted in the final design. Also included are suggestions for further areas of study and potential ways to strengthen the design process when working with Aboriginal people.





# CHAPTER 2

## **WHY ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S SHELTERS ARE NEEDED IN MANITOBA**

### *2.0 Introduction*

### *2.1 Current Social Context: Aboriginal Domestic Violence in Manitoba*

#### *2.1.1 Root Causes of Aboriginal Domestic Violence*

#### *2.1.2 Current State of Shelters in Manitoba*

### *2.2 The Client: Ikwe-Widdjitiwin*

#### *2.2.1 Defining the Model*

#### *2.2.2 Services Offered*

#### *2.2.3 Program Goals*

### *2.3 Chapter Summary and Conclusion*

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

Aboriginal victims face obstacles that come with all small communities. There is a lack of privacy. Fear of further humiliation through community gossip and fear of ostracism and intimidation from supporters of the perpetrator may all be at work. Often, a victim is confronted with disbelief, anger, and family denial or betrayal. Secrecy is expected and enforced. There is, in effect, censorship against those who would report sexual assault or even other forms of violence. -Emma LaRocque, 1994

This excerpt from *Violence in Aboriginal Communities* draws attention to the range of emotions experienced by Aboriginal women who are being abused, and to the significant challenge of removing themselves and their children from an abusive environment. While escaping a violent, potentially life-threatening situation may seem the obvious solution, the decision to leave friends, family and community can be extremely difficult.

It is important for readers of this practicum project document to understand the context of why Aboriginal women's shelters are needed in Canadian society. This chapter examines Aboriginal domestic violence in Manitoba with a focus on three specific factors that are considered, by some, to be the root causes of this social issue. In reaction to high rates of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal domestic abuse, numerous women's shelters have opened in Manitoba in the past 30 years. An overview of the current state of emergency women's shelters in the province is discussed here. The chapter ends with a profile of this project's client, Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin, which outlines the organization's role in ending domestic violence for Aboriginal women and children.



## 2.1 CURRENT SOCIAL CONTEXT

The issue of Aboriginal domestic violence is significant as there are indications that violence has escalated dramatically within Aboriginal communities (LaRocque, 1994). As the province with the highest percentage of Aboriginal people in Canada, the issue of male violence against Aboriginal women is one of particular importance in Manitoba. This is in part reflected in Manitoba's high rate of domestic violence, which is nearly twice the national rate, according to data published by Stats Canada report: Measuring Violence Against Women (2006). Not only are Aboriginal women more likely to be victims of abuse compared to non-Aboriginal women, Aboriginal women are also more likely than non-Aboriginal women to report the most severe, and potentially life threatening cases of violence or sexual assault (54% of Aboriginal women, compared to 37% of non-Aboriginal women). In addition to physical abuse, Aboriginal women are also more likely to report other types of abuse such as verbal and financial (Statistics Canada, 2006).

While domestic violence affects all members within a family, the most affected victims are women and children. Women between the ages of 15-35 years old are most at risk of experiencing abuse, representing two thirds of all victims (Statistics Canada, 2006). Given the age of most victims, children are likely to be present in households where abuse is taking place.

In 2012, the provincial government prepared a document titled: the Multi-Year Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy. The document outlines new actions to support people who have been harmed by domestic violence, as well as methods for dealing with the perpetrators. It is too early to evaluate the document's impact on domestic violence in Manitoba.

## **2.1.1 ROOT CAUSES OF ABORIGINAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal People describes Aboriginal domestic abuse as having “invaded whole communities” (as cited in Bopp, Bopp, & Lane, 2003, p.8), in a way that cannot be explained as a problem of certain individuals or families. In arguing that domestic violence should be viewed as a wide-reaching generational problem as opposed to an individual issue, Marie Lands of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin explains “a lot of our people are trying to cope and survive, not only just from current abuse, but from a whole legacy...” (M. Lands, personal communication, November 7, 2012). The pattern of family violence experienced by Aboriginal people is similar to the violence that occurs in mainstream society, the causes of the violence, however, are different (Bopp, Bopp & Lane, 2003). Aboriginal domestic violence is rooted in a ‘complex web’ of Aboriginal community history and current dynamics (Bopp, Bopp, & Lane, 2003). While there are many possible reasons for domestic violence, this section focuses on three factors that are often cited as the primary causes of Aboriginal domestic violence: colonization, racism and sexism, and isolation. Basic knowledge of these factors is necessary in order to understand the experiences of women who seek safety at Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin, and furthermore to be able to anticipate their unique design needs.

### **1) Colonization**

Emma LaRocque, professor of Native Studies at the University of Manitoba, specializing in Native/White relations, describes colonization as, “a loss of lands, resources, and self-direction and to the severe disturbance of cultural ways and values” (1994, p.73). Colonization has impacted all Aboriginal people, however, women may have been most greatly affected (LaRocque, 1994). In pre-colonial times, the majority of Aboriginal cultures were matrilineal or semi-matrilineal and women held positions of honour and political power in their communities. European patrilineal culture was imposed on Aboriginal people through the process of colonization. Since Aboriginal women’s leadership roles were not recognized by colonialists, they were excluded from participating in government negotiations, effectively silencing their voices. By alienating women from the political process, the status of Aboriginal women steadily diminished over time (LaRocque, 1994).

### **2) Racism and Sexism**

Colonization and racism are joint issues. Racism has provided a “justification for the subjugation of Aboriginal peoples” (LaRocque, 1994, p.73). All Aboriginal people suffer the effects of racism; women, however, are further discriminated against for being female. Both racism and sexism are experienced by Aboriginal women, therefore both must be considered when discussing domestic violence. Over the course of history, many North American cultural myths and literature have presented a dehumanizing portrayal of Aboriginal women as ‘squaws’, a derogatory and outdated term for Aboriginal women. Gradually over time, this demeaning portrayal of Aboriginal women has increased their vulnerability to physical, verbal and sexual violence (LaRocque, 1994).

### **3) Isolation**

Through various government initiatives such as residential schools and the placement of Aboriginal children in non-Aboriginal homes during the 1960s, generations of Aboriginal children have been forced to live away from their families and home environments. This has caused many Aboriginal people to lose touch with their culture and with themselves. Feelings of isolation are further being experienced by Aboriginal people as an increasing number migrate to urban centres. The rapid changes associated with urban living and loss of traditional supports have compounded feelings of isolation and dislocation among Aboriginal people (Distasio, Sylvestre, & Mulligan, 2006).

## 2.1.2 CURRENT STATE OF SHELTERS IN MANITOBA

Before the Women's Movement of the 1970s made domestic abuse a political issue, there were few places women could go to escape violent home situations (Janovicek, 2007). In Canada, the first transitional houses for women opened in 1972, with one in Toronto and one in Vancouver. By 1980, the number of transitional houses for women had risen to 63 across the country. Despite the sharp increase in the number of shelters, many Canadian women still lived in communities with no access to shelter services (Janovicek, 2007).

As the number of shelters in Canada steadily grew throughout the 1980s, so too did the number of shelters in Manitoba. Founded in 1980, the Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters (MAWS) was created to help shelters across the province to work together, to provide shelter directors with support, and to stop competition between shelters for funding (Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters, 2011). Currently, MAWS' membership includes nine provincially funded women's shelters and several affiliate shelters that focus on family violence. Spread out across various communities, six of the shelters are clustered in the southern region of the province, while the three most northern shelters are located in Dauphin, The Pas and Thompson. Of the nine shelters that are members of MAWS, only one shelter has an Aboriginal affiliation: Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin (Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters, 2011).

Currently, 38.5% of the provincial Aboriginal population resides in Northern Manitoba, accounting for 62% of all Northerners (Service Canada, 2006) (Figure 2.1.2.1). Despite living in closer proximity to the Northern shelters, many Aboriginal women from Manitoba's Northern communities choose to travel to Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin in Winnipeg to seek refuge. According to shelter director Marie Lands, women choose to do so for a variety of reasons including Ikwe's cultural affiliation, privacy, a greater feeling of safety from being further away from their abusers, and to avoid politics which often exist in small communities (M. Lands, personal communication, November 7, 2012).

Despite numerous women's shelters in Manitoba, Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin plays a unique and vital role as the province's only Aboriginal women's shelter that provides culturally sensitive services; consequently their services are in high demand.



FIGURE 2.1.2.1  
*Tribal Council Regions of Manitoba*

## 2.2 CLIENT PROFILE: IKWE-WIDDJIITWIN

In the early 1980s, a group of women from the local Winnipeg Aboriginal community began to develop a proposal to establish the first shelter in Manitoba that would offer culturally relevant services for Aboriginal women experiencing domestic abuse. Guided by the support of elders, the shelter proposal encompassed the four traditional directions of empowerment: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual, to help women overcome domestic abuse (Klymchuk, 2007).

On January 1, 1987, Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin opened. The name selected for the shelter means “Women Helping One Another” in Cree. Today, Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin is the second largest shelter in the province of Manitoba. The shelter receives funding from Family Violence Prevention Program and Manitoba Services & Housing. The shelter provides safe accommodation, counseling and advocacy to approximately 700 women and 950 children annually. The majority (95%) of staff of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin are Aboriginal, and speak various dialects of Aboriginal languages and can offer cultural components of programming (Klymchuk, 2007).

**Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin Inc. (“women helping one another”), is known simply as “Ikwe” to many people.  
-Catherine Dunn, President of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin Inc.**

## 2.2.1 DEFINING THE MODEL

Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin is incorporated as a non-profit organization. Its operations are overseen by a board of directors, one executive director and a management team of three. Staff members include: one administrative staff, 19 resident support workers, two childcare workers, and two kitchen staff.

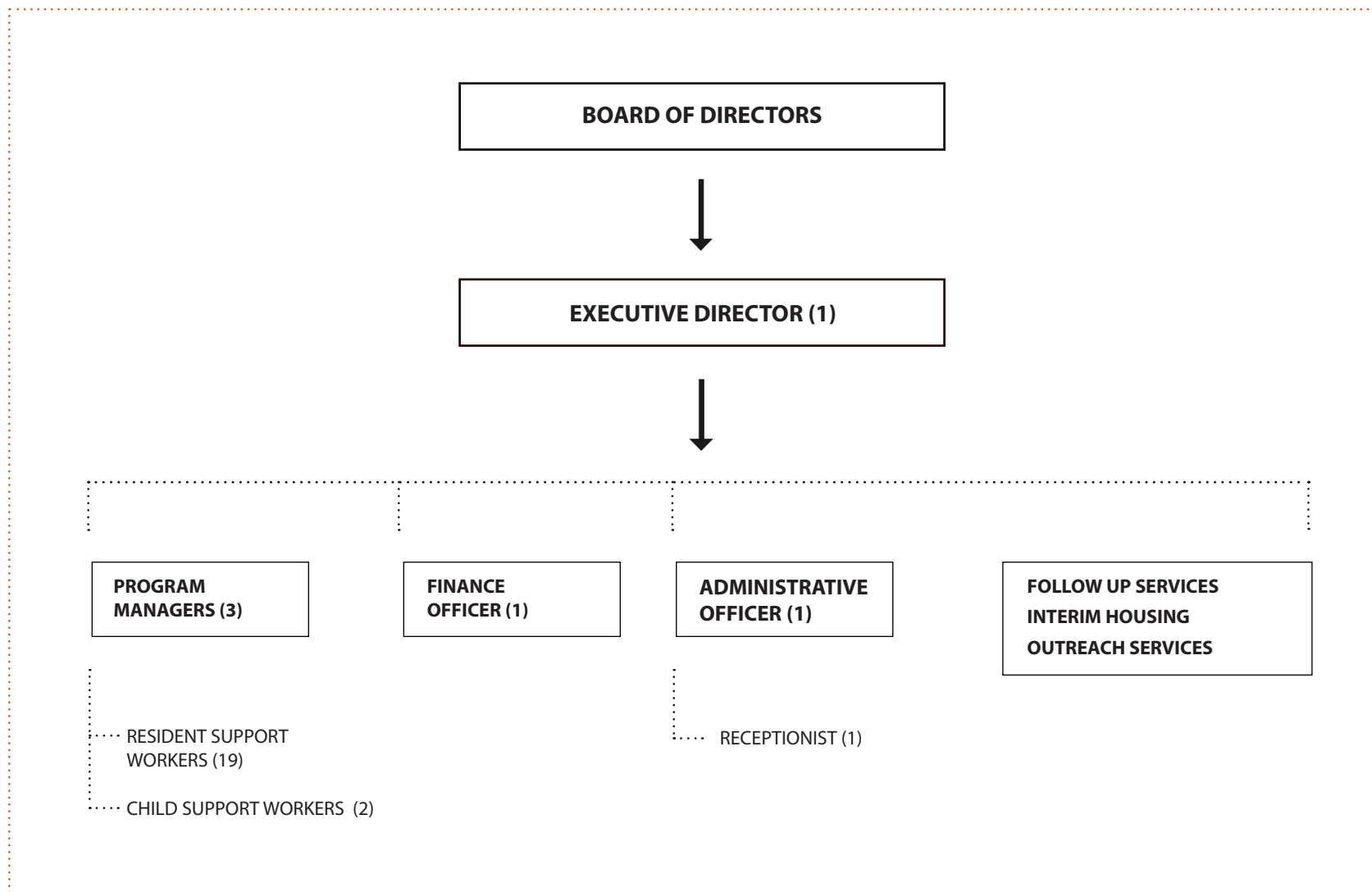


FIGURE 2.2.1.1  
Structure of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin

## **2.2.2 SERVICES OFFERED**

The following descriptions of the shelter programs are taken directly from documents prepared by Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. These documents serve as the mandate for deliverable services for each program.

### **Residential**

The residential service program is a short term, safe and supportive homelike environment for women and their children who have been victims of domestic abuse. Women participating in this program will receive a comprehensive intake and assessment and crisis intervention counseling within 24 hours of arriving at Ikwe. Individual counseling is provided for women for a minimum of 1 hour once a day. Women also have access to support groups (Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin Inc., 2013).

### **Follow Up Services**

Follow up services provide assistance to women who have participated in residential shelter programs. Follow up services ensure a continuum of support to women and children after the need for immediate crisis services has passed (Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin Inc.,2013).

### **Crisis/Information Line**

Crisis/Information Line Operation provides crisis intervention, counseling, information and referrals on a 24 hour basis, seven days a week to individuals who are experiencing or have experienced intimate partner abuse. Crisis/information line staff provide services through the local telephone service and deaf access line try/tad service. Appointments for on-site counseling can be made for women upon request.

Crisis/information line staff also provide public awareness, education and referrals to the general public (Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin Inc., 2013).

### **Interim Housing**

The Interim Housing Program provides apartment style living accommodations for up to one year for women and their children who have graduated from the crisis intervention programs. This program offers a safe and supportive environment for women and children while transitioning from crisis to independent living (Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin Inc., 2013). After consulting with several shelter staff, it became apparent they felt this program would be better suited in a separate facility, therefore Interim Housing Program will not be included in my final design.

## **Services Offered**

- A safe and home-like environment where women can receive the encouragement and advice necessary to assess their life situations and make decisions about their future such as whether or not to return to their partners or live separately.
- Urban orientation assistance to enable residents to adapt to a change in lifestyle and develop a community network to assist them in the long term.
- Support services including group and individual counseling, transportation, referral and advocacy to assist women in adjusting to single parenthood and regaining self-esteem and confidence.
- Childcare while women participate in counseling and pursue various self-help options
- Information and advice about available community resources that may help the family adapt and stabilize.
- Workshops on topics of interest such as financial planning, health care, etc.
- Social activities ranging from quilting to group therapy within and outside the shelter, to the Native family violence counseling services developed at the Ma-Mawi-Chi-Itata Centre.
- Follow-up assistance through home visits, telephone contacts and group activities to provide encouragement and social contact (Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin Inc.,1989).

## **2.2.3 PROGRAM GOALS**

1. To increase the physical safety of Aboriginal women and children who are in immediate danger due to abusive family situations.
2. To increase the ability of abused Aboriginal women to exercise their right to self-determination.
3. To develop holistic and comprehensive policies, programs, services, and delivery systems that will deal effectively with the complex social and racial problems involved in the abuse of Aboriginal women (Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin Inc., 1989).

## 2.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The objective of this chapter was to recognize the complex causes of Aboriginal domestic abuse as different from that of the non-Aboriginal population. The causes of Aboriginal domestic abuse are rooted in the historical experience of Aboriginal people including the effects of colonization, racism and sexism, and isolation. The chronic and systematic erosion of Aboriginal culture continues to be deeply damaging to Aboriginal men and women, and is linked to high rates of Aboriginal domestic violence.

While Aboriginal women turn to Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin for a safe place to escape abuse, they are not only the victims of domestic violence but also of racism, sexism and loss of culture. Understanding the causes of Aboriginal domestic violence is vital to supporting Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin's residents to heal not only the wounds of domestic abuse, but also those associated with the historical experience of Aboriginal people.

Since the issues women are working through while at Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin are specific to the experience of being an Aboriginal woman, it is important for programming and services to reflect their unique needs and have spaces that can accommodate Aboriginal healing practices.

Given the high level of cultural diversity within the province of Manitoba, it is difficult for general women's shelters to provide programs, resources, and practices that meet the unique needs of Aboriginal women. Thus, there is an obvious need for a shelter that understands the unique context and causes of violence towards Aboriginal women, with specific services to match. For this reason, the idea behind a culturally specific shelter is not about privileging one group over another, it is about identifying an acute need and responding to it appropriately and effectively.





# CHAPTER 3

## IN SEARCH OF CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE DESIGN

### *3.0 Introduction*

### *3.1 Traditional Aboriginal Architecture in Manitoba*

#### *3.1.1 Traditional Wigwam*

#### *3.1.2 Conical Wigwam*

#### *3.1.3 Spiritual Enclosures*

#### *3.1.4 Building Materials*

#### *3.1.5 Summary*

### *3.2 Rethinking Gendered Space*

#### *3.2.1 Women as Makers of Space*

#### *3.2.2 Segregated Space*

#### *3.2.3 Summary*

### *3.3 Client Engagement: Photo-Elicitation Interviews*

#### *3.3.1 Methodology*

##### *3.3.1.1 Ethnographic Method*

##### *3.3.1.2 Photograph Collection*

##### *3.3.1.3 Ethics Process and Approval*

##### *3.3.1.4 Modifications in Research Design*

##### *3.3.1.5 Limitations of the Method*

##### *3.3.1.6 Interviewee Profile*

#### *3.3.2 Data Analysis*

#### *3.3.3 Results*

### *3.4 Abstracting Art into Design*

#### *3.4.1 Cultural Robes*

#### *3.4.2 Healing Dance Abstraction*

### *3.5 Chapter Summary and Conclusion*

### 3.0 INTRODUCTION

As stated in the Introduction, the main objective of this practicum project is to propose a culturally appropriate response to the design of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. The intention of the response is to go beyond simply referencing Aboriginal culture, by reflecting the identity of Manitoba's Aboriginal people, both past and present, in the design. This chapter is broken into four sections; each section contributes to the project's concept of culturally appropriate Aboriginal interior design.

The first section examines traditional Aboriginal architecture from the region of Manitoba, and asks what can be learnt from these structures and dwellings and how can they inform contemporary Aboriginal design. Topics explored include dwelling typologies, material use, and gendered use of space. This section draws from the works of Irving Hallowell and Peter Nabokov.

The second section further explores traditional Aboriginal architecture with a focus on gendered space; evidence of the way in which traditional Aboriginal architecture created segregated space is provided. Drawing from the writings of David Mandelbaum and Daphne Spain, this response argues that gendered space was used to create harmony and balance between Aboriginal men and women.

The third section evaluates the efficacy of the current shelter in meeting the needs of staff and residents based on photo-elicitation interviews with six Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin staff members. The aim of the staff based approach was to measure the functionality of the current space and discover design issues that might otherwise go unaddressed in the design process.

The final section explores Aboriginal artistic expression by examining ceremonial robes, locally crafted by Aboriginal women. Observations of the robes' colours, materials and textures have informed the selection of material finishes for the design of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. The intended outcome of this chapter is to arrive at an understanding of Aboriginal interior design that has been informed by the synthesis of ideas from all four above-mentioned sections. These ideas serve as the foundation on which the design of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin is based.

## 3.1 TRADITIONAL ABORIGINAL ARCHITECTURE

One of the challenges of discussing and analyzing Aboriginal architecture is the breadth of architecture that has existed across geographic regions and over time (Nabokov, 1989). Thus, one geographic area made up of Little Grand Rapids (Mb.), Pauingassi (Mb.) and Poplar Hill (Ont.) was chosen for the analysis, with a specific focus on the time period of 1930-1940.

The time and location was chosen based on cultural anthropologist Irving Hallowell's rich body of photographs from this region. During the 1930s, Hallowell made repeated summer fieldwork visits to several Ojibwa communities in Manitoba and Ontario. Over the course of these visits, Hallowell produced a collection of photographs that document the people and the way they lived (Brown, 2010).

Hallowell's photographs display a remarkably broad range of architecture, given the close proximity of the three communities. Three typologies stood out as being most heavily documented in Hallowell's collection: the wigwam, the conical wigwam, and the spiritual enclosure. These three typologies have been further researched, and are explored in the following section.

### 3.1.1 TRADITIONAL WIGWAM

Mid-eighteenth century chronicler Samuel Hopkins described seeing an Algonquin structure that "takes flexible poles and stick them in the ground, round such a space as they intend for the size of the house" (Nabokov, 1989, p. 56). Hopkins's description is that of a wigwam, a one or two bedroom family house of rounded or oblong floor plan. This style of dwelling was not unique to the region or time of Hopkins writing; similar architectural examples can be found in a number of Hallowell's photographs (Figure 3.1.1.1, Figure 3.1.1.2). The photographs capture several stages in the construction process of a wigwam. After a sapling frame of bent uprights was lashed together, horizontal pieces or stringers were tied in tiers to strengthen the frame and support the outer covering. To finish these dwellings, the outer frame would have been covered in either bark or an animal hide (Nabokov, 1989). According to Nabokov, it was not uncommon for mobile tribes to leave the naked wigwam frames standing at familiar camp sites and transport only the rolled up coverings with them as they travelled (Nabokov, 1989).

The domed wigwam form continues to exist in modern Aboriginal communities, largely due to the continuation of the sweat lodge tradition. Although sweat bathing is performed in a range of building types today, most traditional rituals take place within a small, bent sapling frame that is tightly enclosed with quilts or tarps to prevent steam from escaping (Nabokov, 1989).



**Figure 3.1.1.1**  
*Waginogan Framework*  
Photograph by S. Boggs



**Figure 3.1.1.2**  
*Working on Waginogan Framework*  
Photograph by S. Boggs



### 3.1.2 CONICAL WIGWAM

While visually similar to a tipi, the cone shaped dwellings that appear in Hallowell's photographs are actually a variation of the domed wigwam (Figure 3.1.2.1). This style of dwelling was common amongst mobile tribes of the Northern Atlantic and across the Subarctic. A simple, yet sturdy, structure, the conical wigwam was framed with straight yellow spruce, cedar or fir poles and encased in bark rolls sewn together from smaller birch bark flats (Nabokov, 1989). As depicted in Hallowell's photographs, it was the women's role to prepare the birch bark that would become the wind and rain resistant wigwam cover (Figure 3.1.2.2). During the cold winter season, the warmth of conical wigwams could be increased by adding moss in between the layers of birch bark (Nabokov, 1989). A variation of the conical wigwam appears in Hallowell's photographs from Poplar Hill, Ontario in which the wigwam is covered in a thick layer of moss (Figure 3.1.2.3). The moss acts as an alternative type of insulation and suggests that the dwelling was intended as a permanent structure. Another variation, this time as a result of western influence, was the addition of a wood stove and chimney to heat the dwelling, as opposed to the traditional open fire.

Entering the conical wigwam is through a single entrance opening that might be covered with panels of animal hide to keep cold air from entering. When the door cover was tied down securely and two sticks crossed in front of it, it was "locked" (Laubin & Laubin, 1957). According to Laubin and Laubin, it was customary in some communities for a girl to receive her admirer at the entryway to her family's dwelling. The girl would stand in the slanting doorway with her feet firmly inside but from the knees up she was outside. Consequently, a girl could talk with her admirers while being chaperoned by older women, unseen inside the dwelling (Laubin & Laubin, 1957). The slanting entryways, common to wigwams and tipis, create a natural threshold or 'in between' transition space (Figure 3.1.2.4).

*Clockwise from top right:*

Figure 3.1.2.1 - *The Keeper Dwelling*, Photograph by S. Boggs

Figure 3.1.2.2 - *Joseph Crow and Family*, Photograph by I. Hallowell

Figure 3.1.2.3 - *Ojibwa Dwelling*, Photograph by I. Hallowell

Figure 3.1.2.4 - *Ojibwa Child, Dwelling*, Photograph by I. Hallowell

### 3.1.3 SPIRITUAL ENCLOSURES

Aside from dwellings, spiritual enclosures were the most represented architectural statements in Hallowell's photographs, located in both Pauingassi (Mb) and Poplar Hill (Ont.) (Figure 3.1.3.1, Figure 3.1.3.2). These structures, and variations of them, were built to accommodate certain religious ceremonies. The structures were constructed much the same way as the traditional wigwam, but with extended length, spiritual enclosures could be up to 100 feet long (Nabokov, 1989). These structures were referred to as enclosures because they were left uncovered. While the enclosure creates a physical boundary between the space inside and the space outside of the structure, the permeable walls of the enclosure do not provide protection from the natural elements. This feature makes the spiritual enclosures unique amongst Aboriginal architecture as most other examples are designed to be highly functional and efficient.

Common to all three types of architecture discussed are the simple, geometric plan designs: round or oval in shape. The advantage of geometric shapes is increased structural strength. In elevation, various angles and carefully crafted arcs are employed, adding visual interest to the overall structure.

### 3.1.4 BUILDING MATERIALS

Although dwellings were important and meaningful to Aboriginal people, they were not typically thought of as permanent structures. The investment in materials and labor was low as both were available locally (Nabokov, 1989). Aboriginal people built their structures from the raw materials that surrounded them. Timber, saplings, bark, reed, fiber from grass, brush, hide, sinew and bone were just some of the commonly used materials. After a year or so of use, tipi covers would begin to tear, or develop burn spots. If they were too tattered to repair, the leather would be recycled for other uses and a new tipi would be made (Laubin & Laubin, 1957).

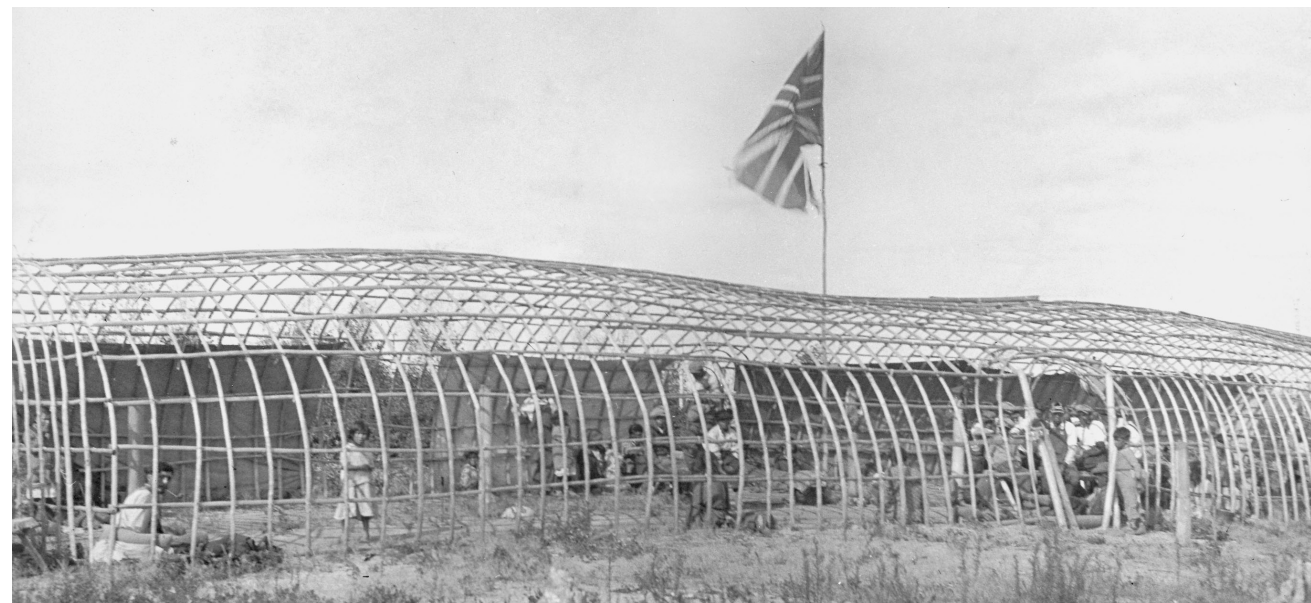
Traditional Aboriginal building technology was often improvisational and practical in nature. This allowed for structures to be adapted easily based on the weather conditions and materials available (Nabokov, 1989). When the buffalo population decreased and hides became scarce, other types of animal hides were used. The arrival of Europeans in North America accelerated the rate of change to architectural features. Europeans brought with them new ideas, some of which were adopted. New materials became available or were forced upon communities (Nabokov,

1989). This evolution is clearly visible in Hallowell's photograph collection, which captures the changes taking place such as the introduction of log houses, the adaptation of traditional architecture to make dwellings more permanent to suit a new, less mobile lifestyle, and the incorporation of devices such as wood stoves made of Western metal materials.

In contrast to traditional Aboriginal architecture, modern mainstream architecture makes use of globalized materials, specialized labor, and a large up-front investment of time, labor, and money that is not available to most people. It is meant to be very permanent. These contrasting approaches to building mean that finding an Aboriginal response to a mainstream building process is still a challenge (Rickard & Lynch, 2005).

**Figure 3.1.3.1**  
*Wabano Pavilion.*  
Photograph by I. Hallowell

**Figure 3.1.3.2**  
*Pavilion used in Namawin's drum dance.*  
Photograph by I. Hallowell.



### 3.1.5 SUMMARY

Consideration of the values, thinking, planning and spiritual senses of the architecture and the people who created it has been useful in becoming familiar with traditional Aboriginal architecture in what is now the region of Manitoba. While the people and architecture in Hallowell's photographs represent the Ojibwa people, what was learnt from this analysis has value and application beyond this single community of people.

The reinterpretation of several key concepts of Aboriginal architecture, previously discussed, can be observed in the final design of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. The concept of threshold as in-between space when entering a tipi has been explored in the context of a contemporary entrance to Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. The vestibule has been designed as a space that is neither outside, nor inside, but rather a transitional space that reflects the significant changes to the lives of abused women upon entering the shelter.

Natural materials were recognized in this section as an important element of traditional Aboriginal architecture. This helped direct the careful consideration of materials for Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin towards selections such as birch bark, cedar, and locally sourced stone. Selecting fabric made from natural fibers has also been a priority.

The concept of boundary, as seen in the photographs of the spiritual enclosures, was useful in the design of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin when considering ways in which to divide or separate space. A woven wood and bark partition wall in the reception space of the final design was inspired by the spiritual enclosure, as a method of separating space without doing so physically with a conventional wall. These features have been reinterpreted rather than replicated to reflect the present time and current needs of the Aboriginal women who use the shelter.

While the previously noted design features have been inspired by aspects of traditional Aboriginal architecture of the Ojibwa people, the reinterpretation and high level of abstraction is such that no feature in the final design should be exclusive to a single community of Aboriginal people. This has been done with the intention of being inclusive and welcoming to all Aboriginal women seeking shelter at Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin.

## 3.2 RETHINKING GENDERED SPACE

Gendered space refers to a physical or virtual space associated with a particular gender (Colomina, 1996). Much of the writing on gendered space has traditionally been critical of these environments for reinforcing sex-role stereotypes and for being oppressive to women. This perspective is rooted in the belief that gendered spaces “separate women from knowledge used by men to produce and reproduce power and privilege” (Spain, 2002, p. 3). While history holds many examples of gender segregated spaces associated with women’s lower status, exceptions to this pattern exist (Spain, 2002). In *Gendered Spaces*, Spain finds evidence of women living in societies with spatially segregated quarters that have a relatively high status. An example of this can be found in the Navajo of North America, where women hold positions of power, and the one-room Navajo Hogan is symbolically differentiated by gender (Spain, 2002). In this example, segregated space is not associated with women’s lower status. Instead, it represents an ideology of duality and complementarity between the sexes.

This section examines the evidence of segregated space in the traditional Aboriginal architecture from the region that is now Manitoba. The analysis of gendered space focuses on two central motifs: firstly, how women were primarily responsible for making and maintaining space, and secondly, the way in which gender determined how spaces were used and by whom. I argue from a revisionist point of view that the division of space between Aboriginal women and men, was not a means of achieving dominance or sub ordinance, but rather about duality and gender complementarity, as with the Navajo. In other words, gendered space was a way of creating harmony and balance between the genders by recognizing the unique needs of both women and men.

Throughout this analysis of gendered space in selected examples from traditional Aboriginal architecture, I turn my attention to a relatively new type of gendered space: shelters for abused aboriginal women and children. Such shelters are gendered space by necessity, in order to provide women with the feeling of safety. Guided by my research of Aboriginal gendered space, I consider the ways in which the traditional division of space relates to, and informs, the design of a contemporary aboriginal gendered space in Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin.

### 3.2.1 WOMEN AS MAKERS OF SPACE

The division of labor amongst the Cree was simultaneously spatial and gendered (Chagny, 1998). Men were generally in charge of hunting which could take them away from the campsite for days, or weeks at a time. Women were responsible for cooking, child care and, of particular interest to this practicum, the task of selecting the camp site and constructing, erecting and maintaining the tipis. The women's role in the construction of dwellings has contributed to the designation of some kinds of traditional aboriginal architecture, such as tipis and wigwams, as gendered space.

Cree women's responsibility in selecting the site and organizing the camp meant that women played a significant role in the production of space and its organization. A Cree story tells the tale of a supernatural woman who traveled ahead of the hunters to set up camp. Like the Inuit and Pawnee, the Cree recreated that "same place" each time by carefully observing rules of domestic etiquette such as the arrangement of dwellings and organization within dwellings (Nabokov, 1989). By repeating the spatial arrangements of the dwellings each time a campsite was established, a new and unknown place became a familiar and comforting environment in as little time as it took the women to set up camp.

The task of erecting tipis was generally performed by women and their daughters (Mandelbaum, 1979). According to Mandelbaum, only older women were permitted to build tipis. If a family needed a new tipi, the woman with her mother, sisters and daughters would find hides and give them to an older woman who would measure them, cut them and sew them together. Compensation for the woman's effort would have traditionally been food, but today is money (Chagny, 1998). When the canvas was finished, the group of women would set up the poles and punch the holes into the top of the tent. Tipi poles would be lashed together and hoisted up, the total number of poles depended on the size of the tipi. The woman who erected the tipi would be considered the owner and held full control over it. In addition to being responsible for the construction of the tipis, women also made most of the furniture found in the dwelling and determined its arrangement (Laubin & Laubin, 1957).

From the macro level of campsite organization to the micro level of furniture arrangement, aboriginal women were engaged in every aspect of place making. In this role, women were recognized as productive members of the tribe and valued members of their community. Now, as traditional aboriginal architecture has been replaced with the construction of

European-style houses, often directed by the Department of Indian Affairs, women have been excluded from their traditional role in the design and building process of dwellings" (Chagny, 1998, p.1). At the onset of this practicum in 2012, one of the first tasks carried out was to involve Aboriginal women in the design process of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. This was crucial, not only to gain important insight into the needs and values of the shelter's residents, but also to promote Aboriginal women to reconnecting with their traditional role as the creators of space.



### 3.2.2 SEGREGATED SPACE

Traditional aboriginal architecture can be considered gendered space not only for how it was made, but also for the way it was used. Gender played a significant role in how space was divided in both communal and single units (Chagny, 1998). In their writing on tipi etiquette, Laubin and Laubin (1957) discuss the rules and rituals that determined the way aboriginal men and women shared space. Rules such as: who does what, how people move in the dwelling, who speaks to whom, and which gender occupies which space, helped establish organization within the dwellings and harmony amongst those living in these spaces.

Within a Cree, single family tipi, one can imagine a line running from the entrance through to the rear of the space to understand the spatial differentiation which occurred in the dwelling (Chagny, 1998). Upon entering the tipi, men moved to the right, and the women to the left (Laubin & Laubin, 1957). Generally, men sat on the north side of the tipi and the women sat on the south side. Sleeping arrangements were determined by sex, family, marital status and age (Nabokov, 1989). Typically, married couples slept in the center opposite the entrance door, their dependents sleeping beside them in order of increasing age. This allocation of space had to be respected due to the limited space of the tipi, which allowed for only restricted movement of its occupants (Chagny, 1998).

Everything in a tipi, both people and belongings, had its proper place. Women's belongings, food and household articles were stored on the south side of the tipi (Laubin & Laubin, 1957). Hunting and trapping items, such as axes, fishing lines and shovels, which were stored inside the tent were located on the same side as the men. Similarly, select parts of small game animals were kept on the women's side of the tent, whereas pieces of larger game were located on the side of the men (Chagny, 1998).

The Cree, similar to many other Aboriginal groups, believed in the enhanced spiritual powers of a woman during her menstrual cycle. It was believed that a woman's blood could destroy the power of a man's hunting weapons (Chagny, 1998). As such, it was extremely important for women to avoid stepping over a man's outstretched legs when moving through the dwelling so as not to bring bad luck to the next hunt (Chagny, 1998).

A high degree of organization was essential to be able to accommodate several people and their belongings in a tipi, while also being able to pack up at short notice. In addition to this, rules of how space was used were effective in establishing role relationships, and providing privacy within spaces that would be considered very small by current North American standards (Nabokov, 1989).

### 3.2.3 SUMMARY

Today, Aboriginal women's shelters are required to meet the specific needs of contemporary Aboriginal women, in the same way that gendered space reflected the unique needs of both men and women in traditional Aboriginal architecture. Several design considerations for Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin have been made based on the gendered aspect of traditional Aboriginal space. This section emphasizes the significant role woman played in the creation of space in traditional culture, and the need to allow Aboriginal women to continue to do so in a current times.

The design process of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin involved interviewing the female staff of the shelter. By allowing Aboriginal women to have a voice in the design process, the final design of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin is a gendered space based on process undertaken to arrive at it.

Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin has been designed to offer residents numerous opportunities to manipulate their interior space, allowing them to retain some control over the design of their living environment, despite not being in their own home. This is most notable in the communal bedroom of the shelter. Beds have been designed to be easily moved and can be arranged in various configurations based on the preference of the residents. Movable stretched fabric curtains can also be manipulated and allows residents to achieve their desired personal level of privacy.

Another way gendered space has been incorporated into the design is by emphasizing the kitchen and dining area as places of learning, interaction, sharing and of cultural significant to the traditional practices of Aboriginal women. This will be done by making the kitchen spacious and centrally located.

The following chart summarizes the key concepts and design implications of Section 3.1 - Traditional Aboriginal Architecture, and Section 3.2- Rethinking Gendered Space.

# DESIGN IMPLICATIONS

CONCEPT	SUMMARY	DESIGN IMPLICATIONS
THRESHOLD	Threshold as neither inside nor outside, but rather a space of the in between	-Emphasize the importance of entrances and exits, while exploring the possibilities of in between spaces created by them.
BOUNDARIES	Penetrable boundaries	-Explore non-traditional ways to create boundaries.
GEOMETRIC PLAN DESIGN	Geometric plan design	-Play with arcs + angles in elevation to create architectural interest.
NATURAL CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS	The use of naturally occurring materials for all traditional construction.	-Use natural, renewable, local materials.
WOMEN AS MAKERS OF SPACE	Historical role of Aboriginal women as responsible for construction and maintenance of dwellings.	-Consult and involve Aboriginal women as much as possible throughout the design process of Ikwe 2013. -Design flexible space that women can arrange themselves.

Figure 3.2.3.1  
Design Implications Chart

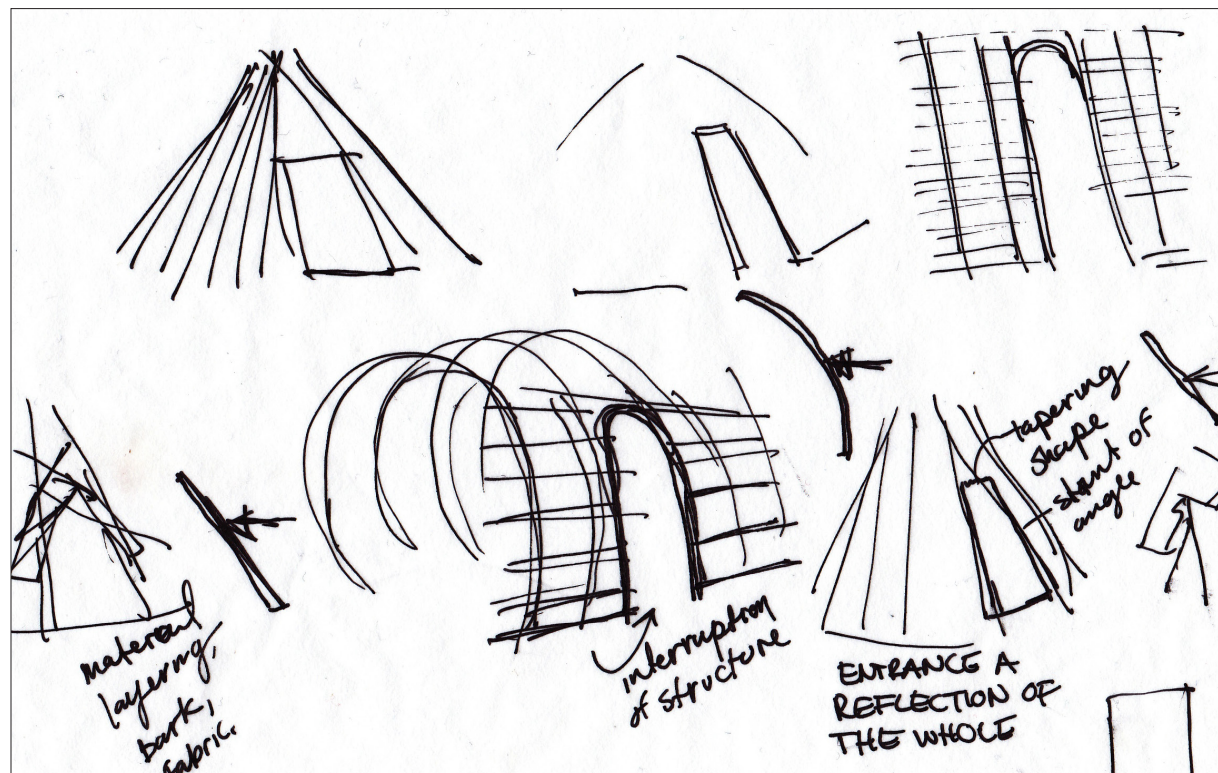


Figure 3.2.3.2  
Design Explorations

### 3.3 CLIENT ENGAGEMENT: PHOTO-ELICITATION INTERVIEWS

The built environment of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin Shelter is equally important to both the residents and the staff members. Residents require an environment that allows them to feel safe, to reflect and to make choices about their future. For staff to be able to support the residents by performing their jobs as well as possible, they require a built environment that enables them to do so. With the permission of the shelter, interviews were carried out with staff members of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin to understand their experience of their current building. Specifically, the purpose of conducting photo-elicitation interviews was 1) to analyze how well the present design environment supports the needs of the current residents and staff, and 2) to involve and give a voice to Aboriginal women throughout the design process.

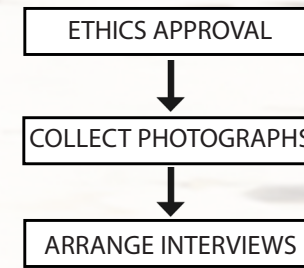
### 3.3.1 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.3.1.1 Ethnographic Method

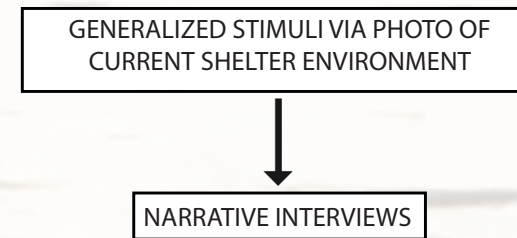
All data was gathered using an ethnographic interview technique known as photo-elicitation. During a photo-elicitation study, interviewees are presented with photographs in order to elicit their point of view, which in this case, is about the interior shelter environment. As an inductive research method, photo-elicitation builds generalizations through eliciting unstructured narrative and developing coding frameworks to facilitate thematic analysis and identify primary themes. These generalizations provided feedback on the current residents' experience of space and its impact on use and programs at Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin (Pavrides & Cranz, 2012).

Photo-elicitation was chosen as the method of inquiry since it was an occupant-led approach rather than a structured interview that would require the researcher to formulate specific questions that would limit the range of responses and limit participants' capacity to identify key issues. This capacity for flexibility and open-endedness is particularly relevant when the client and designer come from different cultural backgrounds and have different experiences. Occupant-led approaches require the designer to listen first to the issues raised or comment that was made, and respond with questions asking respondents to elaborate on or clarify their responses (Figure 3.3.1.1.1).

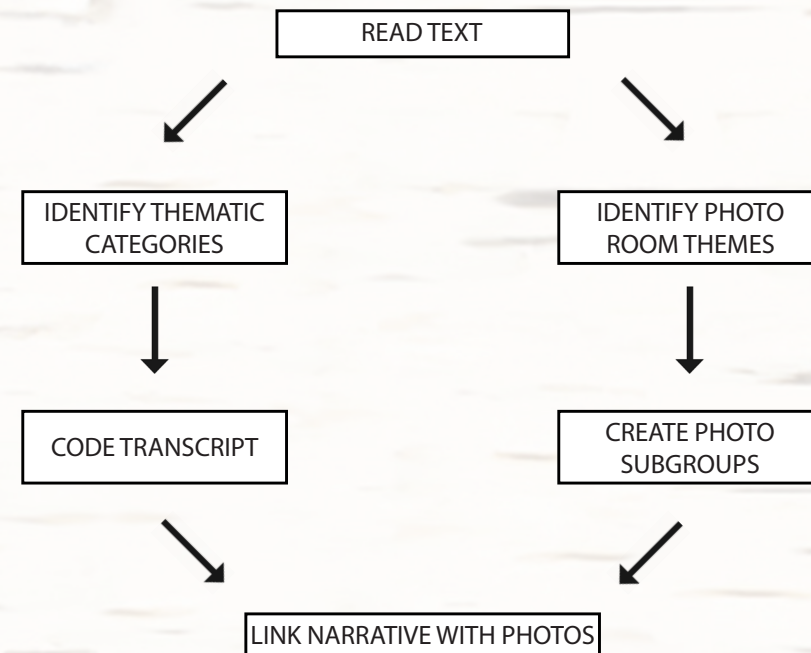
#### Phase 1- Study Set-up



#### Phase 2- Narrative Interviews



#### Phase 3- Data Analysis



#### Phase 4- Results



FIGURE 3.1.1.1.1  
*Photo-Elicitation Process*

Figure 3.3.1.2.1 (Images 1-10)  
Sample of Interior Photographs  
of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin  
Images by Author



### 3.3.1.2 Photograph Collection

Early on in the investigative process, I visited Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin Shelter to take photographs of the interior spaces that I would be using in the interviews. I was taken on a guided tour of the shelter and given permission to photograph whatever I felt was relevant. A sample of 120 photographs were taken, from which a subsample of 20 photographs were selected (Figure 3.3.1.2.1, Images 1-10). The selection criteria for the photographs were:

- 1) Photographs must depict spaces familiar to staff and clients through everyday use.
- 2) Photographs must represent a range of spaces throughout the shelter.
- 3) Photographs cannot contain items of personal identification of the residents or staff.

### 3.3.1.3 Ethics Process and Approval

Prior to conducting the interviews, approval was obtained from the University of Manitoba Joint Faculty Ethics Board. Following approval, a cover letter explaining the purpose and process of the study was emailed to the staff members of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin Shelter. In this letter, staff were informed of the measures that would be taken to ensure that all recordings of their interviews would remain confidential. Participants were also made aware that it may be possible for co-workers to identify the participants, despite not using their names in the practicum document, due to the small number of staff at Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin.

See Appendix C for a copy of the ethics protocol submission form and the participant consent form.

### 3.3.1.4 Modifications in Research Design

While arranging and carrying out the interviews, several small changes were made to this process to accommodate unanticipated circumstances. The first of these changes was in how participants were informed about the research recruitment. The original intention had been for staff to be recruited through distribution of a letter, emailed to all potential informants requesting their participation. The letter requested that they express interest in participation via reply email. This was to be followed up by the investigator, who would confirm a time and place. As it turned out, email was not a good way to generate interest in this study amongst staff, and I received few responses from staff to my initial email. I therefore chose a secondary protocol and arranged the interviews through informal networks.

The second change that was made to the interview process was in the recording method. My intent had been to audio record all the interviews, however, during the first interview I conducted, the interviewee requested to not be audio recorded. To accommodate this request, I took notes by hand. After completing the first interview, I evaluated that taking notes by hand had worked well and that the change in process had put the interviewee at ease. I therefore chose to continue with this recording method for the remaining interviews. The hand written notes from the interviews are clear and complete, and I do not feel that the quality of the information gathered from the interviews was compromised by the change in the method of recording the interviews.

### 3.3.1.5 Limitations of the Method

The only significant limitation of photo-elicitation interviews encountered in this study was the length of time they required. Due to the busy schedules of some interviewees, some of the interviews needed to be cut short. Also, some staff were too busy to be interviewed. This limited the overall number of interviews conducted, which in turn could have produced a bias amongst my sample. In addition to the length of time required to conduct the interviews was the time consuming process of analyzing the data. The time required to analyze the data was another factor which limited the number of interviews carried out. While this method of research could be valuable to interior designers, the length of time which it requires makes it an impractical option for most designers in practice.

### 3.3.1.6 Interviewee Profile

A total of six interviews were conducted. The staff members who were interviewed represented a range of worker roles within the shelter. The interviews lasted between 25 minutes to an hour. Interviewees were shown the 20 photographs, one at a time, and could select what aspects of the photograph were important for discussion. If interviewees needed prompting, they were asked general questions about the photographs such as, “what takes place here?”, and “how could this place be made better.” The interviews were carried out over a one month period from July 26, 2012 to August 25, 2012 (Figure 3.3.1.6.1).



Figure 3.3.1.6.1  
*Staff Interviews*  
Image by Author

### 3.3.2 DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis of the data was done in two parts, the first part was to group photographs into sub groups according to the types of spaces they represented, and the second part was to analyze the comments and identify cross cutting themes.

#### Part 1

The photographs were analyzed to identify unifying themes amongst the spaces in the photographs. This was done in order to create sub groups of photographs from the sample group. Several themes were identified: cultural spaces, safety/security, symbolic space, contemplative space, utilitarian space and sharing space. Of these themes, the ones which best represented the current spaces in Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin were cultural, safety and utility. The purpose of creating thematic subgroups was to allow for a more manageable comparison of the photographs. Rather than comparing the photographs individually, the subgroups allow for comparisons of broader themes to take place.

#### Part 2

Following a full transcription of the six interviews, each conversation was carefully analyzed and compared in order to identify themes coded in all the other interviews. Out of this thematic analysis, the dominant themes of discussion in the interviews were:

- 1) **Functionality:** how well one perceives a space to function for its intended use.
- 2) **Spatial adjacency:** the adjacency of two spaces and whether that adjacency works well or what a preferred adjacency might be.
- 3) **Emotional response:** the emotional response evoked by a space.
- 4) **Theory:** comments that related a feature of the interior design to something with a broad social significance.



### 3.3.3 RESULTS

The analysis of the interview data has uncovered both the successes and limitations of the Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin built environment. The interviews yielded information regarding the types of programming the shelter would like to be able to offer its residents, but cannot due to restrictions of the built environment. In addition to this, the interviews generated many insights that will be discussed in this document. It also identifies other issues and questions that would require additional research involving interviews to explore themes in greater depth. The following results of interviews with the staff of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin contribute to the knowledge and awareness of design strategies for shelter environments, gendered space and cultural design. The following results are presented by sub groups beginning with CULTURE, followed by SAFETY, and lastly, UTILITY.

Figure 3.3.3.1  
Healing Room  
Image by Author

Figure 3.3.3.2  
Grandmothers' Room  
Image by Author



### **CULTURE: Healing Room, Grandmothers' Room, Entrance Space**

The photographs in this subgroup were chosen for all depicting culturally meaningful space. A variety of cultural activities occur in both the healing room and the grandmothers' room. Special attention has been given to decorate these spaces with items and art that reference Aboriginal heritage.

#### **CULTURE + EMOTIONAL RESPONSE**

Of all the photographs presented to the interviewees, the interior spaces which received the most numerous and strongest comments were from spaces most closely tied to the Aboriginal culture: Image #1-the healing room (Figure 3.3.3.1) and Image #3- the grandmothers' room (Figure 3.3.3.2). The majority of interviewees' comments were positive about the spaces, using words such as love, peaceful, non judgmental and safe to

describe them. There were also comments suggesting that the existing spaces did not evoke the kind of emotional response the title might suggest, and were described as "not being warm" or "not inviting enough". One interviewee said, "The space has a feeling of enclosure, this contradicts the desired environmental feeling of letting go." Based on the number of comments for these two images, it appears that the interviewees placed a greater importance on these spaces because of the rooms' cultural affiliation. "Comfort comes from the decor and its tie to Aboriginal culture," one interviewee said of the photograph of the grandmothers' room. Based on the comments, it is clear that evoking an emotional response that accurately reflects the spirit of that culture was important to all interviewees.



FIGURE 3.3.3.3  
*Entrance Flooring Design*  
*Image by Author*

#### CULTURE + THEORY

The culture subgroup also elicited quite a few comments that related to the thematic category of theory. These comments generally spoke of how these spaces should reflect Aboriginal identity and speak to how Aboriginal culture fits in with the broader Canadian culture. One interviewee stated that the windows in the healing room were reminiscent of those used in “church-like spaces”, which they thought was an inappropriate reference for a room dedicated to Aboriginal spirituality and healing. It was suggested that a preferable alternative could be large windows in the shape of an Aboriginal cultural symbol such as a feather wrapping around the exterior walls of the space. “There are vast spiritual teachings in the Aboriginal culture. The healing room must be able to give the opportunity for multiple beliefs to be expressed.”

The entrance space, and in particular, the flooring design in it, generated some insightful comments. The flooring design in question is a

large geometric shaped colorful design, and is located opposite the main entrance door to the shelter (Figure 3.3.3.3). Several of the interviewees commented that they had never noticed the floor design or they thought it was an arbitrary design. Several interviewees had no comments to make about it. One interviewee, however, described how the flooring pattern was reminiscent of the circle of life, and of violence; the circle and square spoke of trying to fit everything in; the circle also a reminder of how everything comes full circle in life.

The image evoked a wide range of comments that speak to how differently people can experience culture in the built environment. The interpretations of the flooring design reveals the challenges in trying to predict the way people interact with their surroundings and the meaning they may or may not attribute features of their built environment. This may be especially true of cultural design.

Figure 3.3.3.4  
Healing Room Fire Exit  
Image by Author

Figure 3.3.3.5  
Shelter Main Entrance  
Image by Author



### **SAFETY: Entrance, Lobby, Outdoor Play Area, Classroom**

The safety of the residents and staff is a primary concern of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. Safety has been selected as a subgroup as a reflection of the number of spaces in Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin that are required to deal directly with security issues. These spaces include: the entrance, the lobby, the exit door in the healing room and the outdoor play area. In these spaces, the need for safety has heavily influenced their look and feel.

#### **SAFETY + FUNCTIONALITY**

Based on the comments from interviewees, it was apparent that staff were conscious of security devices in their everyday environment. One interviewee described the lobby as having a very 'locked in' look. "The exit door is a reminder of the business like space Ikwe shelter is, also a reminder of the building's former use as a Manitoba public housing apartment complex." Another interviewee expressed the need to strike a balance between providing adequate security, and a welcoming atmosphere. It was suggested that if some technology upgrades were carried out, the security devices could be made less visible than is currently the case.

Two of the photographs shown to the interviewees featured doors prominently: the fire exit door in the healing room (Figure 3.3.3.4) and the main shelter entrance onto the lobby (Figure 3.3.3.5). These images provoked some revealing comments and attitudes about the treatment of entrances and

exits in a shelter environment. One interviewee said that the exterior door in the healing room was a reminder of what those inside the shelter need to be protected from, a similar comment was how the door speaks to controlling the safety of residents and staff. The comments were similar about the door to the lobby, but with the addition of comments about the great significance this entrance may have for some women entering the shelter for the first time. As one interviewee put it (rephrase), "passing through the threshold of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin is the day you made a big decision and took a big step in your life, it is a beginning as well as an end." These comments illustrate the importance of the design of entrances and exit spaces to the final design.

Another important and highly visible security element in the shelter are the metal bars on all the ground floor windows. When shown a photograph of the bars, the interviewees had a variety of reactions. Some interviewees said that the bars gave them a feeling of security and added protection. Others argued that they had the opposite effect, seeing the bars reminded them of the security risks posed to the shelter, while also drawing attention to the building to all those passing by the building on the street. "Bars are very institutional feeling and can conjure up bad feelings if women have spent time in jail," explained one interviewee.



FIGURE 3.3.3.6  
*Outdoor Play Structure*  
Image by Author

#### SAFETY + OUTDOOR AREA

In terms of functionality, the outdoor play structure received a large number of similarly negative comments, all agreed that the play-structure was unsafe for children (Figure 3.3.3.6). These comments were based on two separate concerns: 1) physical safety of children playing on the structure 2) the security of children being seen over the surrounding fence while playing on some of the higher parts of the structure. Some suggestions for an improved outdoor recreational space included more green space and activity space for children to play basketball and skateboard. The desire for a covered area for outdoor barbecues was also mentioned by multiple interviewees.

**“Kids can sometimes be seen from above the fence when they climb on the structure, this is a security risk.”**  
*- staff member of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin*

Figure 3.3.3.7  
Dining Room  
Image by Author

Figure 3.3.3.8  
Bedroom  
Image by Author



### **UTILITY: Kitchen, Dining Room, Bedrooms**

This subgroup is made up of photographs of spaces in the shelter that are highly utilitarian. These spaces are where residents spend most of their time in the shelter. Based on interviewees' comments, these spaces generally met the basic functional needs of the residents, however, there is little regard for atmosphere or aesthetics in the spaces. While all of the spaces function on a basic level, interviewees repeatedly expressed their wish that these space could be used for programming beyond what they are currently used for.

#### **UTILITY + EMOTION**

A repeated comment by interviewees about these spaces was that they lacked warmth and did not feel inviting. When shown the photograph of the long staircase, one interviewee said, "This photo reminds me of the smell of strong cleaners, like those used in large, institutional settings." Another interviewee expressed frustration with the same staircase, saying that although it was unsightly, there was nothing that could be done to it to make it look any better.

#### **UTILITY + KITCHEN**

The kitchen and dining space currently has a small kitchen in the corner that is visually blocked off from the dining space (Figure 3.3.3.7). This set up is not ideal since the cook cannot see when residents enter the

dining space. The kitchen is also too small and unsafe to have residents and their children join in with food preparation. Some of the suggestions for an improved kitchen space were for it to have a more inviting atmosphere and for there to be flexible table seating arrangements and meal times. "I would like to see 'come and go meals' between 4:30-6:00. This would make for a less rigid schedule for the women, and allow them more control while at Ikwe". Cooking lessons could be offered to residents in an expanded kitchen space. "Women open up far more while doing an activity than they do in clinical sessions. Cooking sessions would be used to learn to create food and also be therapeutic", explained one interviewee.

#### **UTILITY + BEDROOMS**

Interviewees were open when discussing what they felt were the shortcomings of the current sleeping spaces and made many suggestions for ways they believe the spaces could be improved. The goal of these spaces, one interviewee explained, was to try and make these rooms as close to the comfort of home as possible. Generally, interviewees felt that the spaces were too small, empty and impersonal (Figure 3.3.3.8). Some of the suggestions were for a variety of size bedrooms. Large rooms are needed for families and for single women preferring to be in a room with several other women. Single rooms should also be available for women who want a quiet space for reflection. Some of the interviewees felt that all the bedrooms should have attached washrooms, televisions and ways to personalize their space.

“The design of the bedrooms, as well as the furniture in it, must be carefully considered to ensure a client cannot use it to hurt herself.”

*- staff member of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin*

## 3.4 ABSTRACTING ART INTO DESIGN

### 3.4.1 CULTURAL ROBES

Many of the ceremonies performed by Aboriginal communities in Manitoba are carried out wearing particular clothing, fitting of the ceremony. These highly detailed and skillfully crafted garments are rich with information about the people and the culture who made them. In an effort to better understand some of the aesthetic sensibilities of the local Aboriginal culture, I examined photographs of four ceremonial robes that are currently part of the University of Winnipeg's anthropology collection (Figure 3.4.1.1- Images 1-12).

The robes were hand crafted in approximately 1915 by Aboriginal women in the Upper Berens River region of Manitoba and were intended to be worn by women as they performed ceremonies and attended social dances. The robes were in use through the 1940s (M. Matthews, personal communication, October 4, 2013). A variety of colours, both bright and pale can be observed across the four robes. This suggests that the use of colours was not restricted to a select few and that the creators of the robes favored colourful, high contrast looks. A wide range of materials were used to sew the robes. The makers of the robes appear to have made use of whatever materials or objects were available to them, bits of felt, wool, plaid fabric, and ribbon in various colours were sewn together or layered on top of the other. This highly textured, colourful aesthetic of the robes was useful in directing the material selections for Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin towards culturally informed choices based on my observations.





FIGURE 3.4.1.1 (Images 1-12)  
Upper Berens River Ceremonial Robes  
Retrieved from the Wawezhi'onan, Pauingassi Collection, University of Winnipeg

### 3.4.2 HEALING DANCE ABSTRACTION

Women's jingle dress dancing is an important Aboriginal cultural tradition that began on the Whitefish Bay First Nation in Northwestern Ontario, and has since spread to Aboriginal communities across Canada and the United States. The very act of dancing in the jingle dress constitutes a prayer for healing that only women can perform, underscoring Aboriginal women as the caretakers of the family (The Great Spirit Circle Trail, 2013). As a place of healing and renewal for women, Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin has a natural connection with this dance tradition.

As a way of honoring the healing dance and its spiritual power, a conceptual exploration of dance, movement and fabric was carried out. This was done by photographing the movement of fabric put in motion by a dancer. The images draw attentions to the light and shadows and flows and folds of the moving fabric (Figure 3.4.2.1- Images 1-6). The photographs were then abstracted through drawing and digital mediums to arrive at a final visual expression of the healing dance (Figure 3.4.2.2 - Images 1-6). The abstraction pattern was applied to the design of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin as a flooring pattern. The pattern, flowing throughout all the spaces on the first floor of the shelter, serves as a symbol of healing and Aboriginal cultural traditions. The continuous flow of the dance pattern connects spaces on multiple levels.

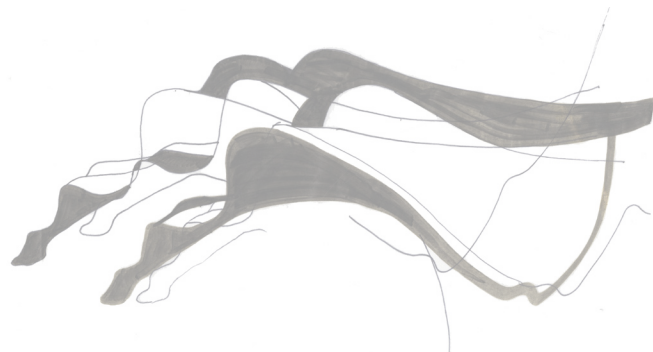
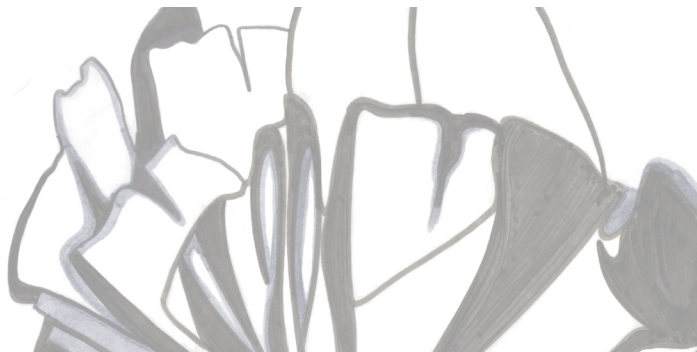
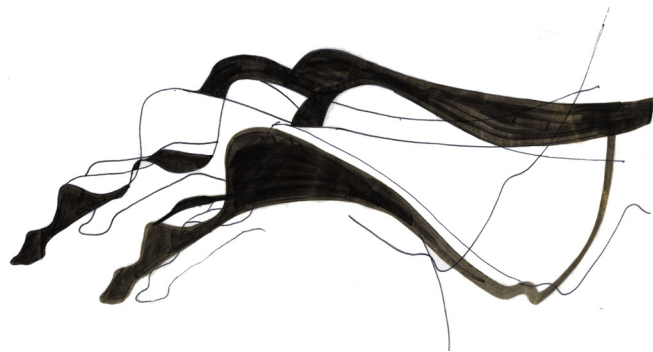
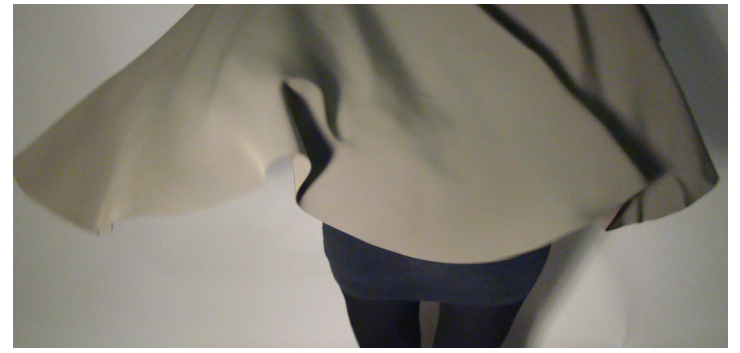
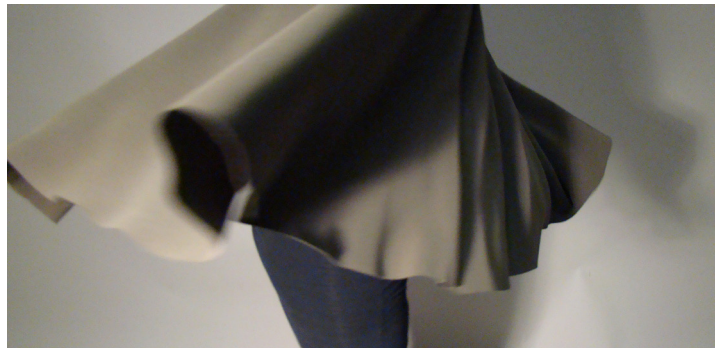


FIGURE 3.4.2.1  
*Images 1-6*  
*Dance Robe Movement*

FIGURE 3.4.2.2  
*Images 1-6*  
*Dance Robe Abstraction*

### 3.5 CHAPTER CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

The four types of investigations covered in this chapter have contributed to different facets of the design and inquiry process. These facets include the combination of functional considerations, aesthetic sensibilities and symbolic spirituality. The inclusion of each investigation has contributed to this project's concept of culturally appropriate Aboriginal interior design, and has informed the final design.

The exploration of traditional types of Aboriginal architecture recognized the rich architectural history of Aboriginal people. While this history is often reduced to the most iconic forms such as the tipi for the Plains Cree or the igloo for the Inuit, there is in reality a broad range of types of architecture as illustrated through the photographs of Irving Hallowell. Examining the gendered use of space in Aboriginal architecture was useful in understanding the role of women in the creation of architecture, and the traditional cultural value of women in the culture. Knowledge of traditional Aboriginal architecture and gendered space is important, not so it can be replicated in contemporary design, but to inspire and inform design such as Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. The incorporation of select elements of traditional Aboriginal architecture in Ikwe- Widdjiitiwin was not only constructive to developing an architectural language, it also supports cultural ways, and serves as a symbolic reminder of Aboriginal identity.

Photo-elicitation interviews were a valuable method of inquiry for conducting cross cultural research and helped develop a better understanding of how well Ikwe- Widdjiitiwin shelter functions from the perspective of someone who works or lives there. The majority of the findings related to the functional and programmatic use of the current building. The interviews also revealed the great importance of cultural spaces to the staff and the strong desire for the shelter to be as home like as possible and to avoid institutional design. These findings were particularly constructive during the schematic design phase of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin.

The examination of photographs of Upper Berens River women's ceremonial robes revealed some of the aesthetic sensibilities that were admired by the Cree people from this region. The abstraction of the healing dance added Aboriginal spiritual significant to the design of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. The cultural connection of the flooring pattern to the healing dance is intended to be subtle, yet spiritually meaningful for those who chose for it to be.





# CHAPTER 4

## SITE

*4.0 Introduction*

*4.1 Site Analysis*

*4.1.1 Site Selection Criteria*

*4.1.2 Location, History and Context*

*4.1.3 Access and Perceived Safety*

*4.1.4 Landscape and Cultural Connectedness*

*4.2 Building Analysis*

*4.2.1 Building History*

*4.2.2 Exterior*

*4.2.3 Interior*

*4.3 Chapter Summary and Conclusion*

## 4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes and analyzes the proposed region, site and building for Ikwe-Widdjiitwin. Site selection was based on a number of different criteria to ensure the site and building could support Aboriginal programming and required safety concerns of the shelter. The selected site is 90 River Road, located in the city of Winnipeg district of St. Vital. Measuring 90 feet wide by 353 feet deep, the site is populated by many mature trees and backs onto the Red River. The building on the site was designed by and built for the family of local Métis architect, Etienne Gaboury in 1967.

## 4.1 SITE ANALYSIS

### 4.1.1 SITE SELECTION CRITERIA

The following is a list of site selection criteria for Ikwe-Widdjiitwin:

- 1) Access to major public transit corridors
- 2) Located in a safe neighborhood
- 3) Green space for children to play
- 4) Located on or near the river
- 5) Located in a residential or retail zone
- 6) Should not be located directly on a major vehicular route
- 7) Space for a sweat lodge, mature trees
- 8) Opportunities for both public and private spaces



FIGURE 4.0.1  
90 River Road- Site Plan  
Drawing by E. Gaboury

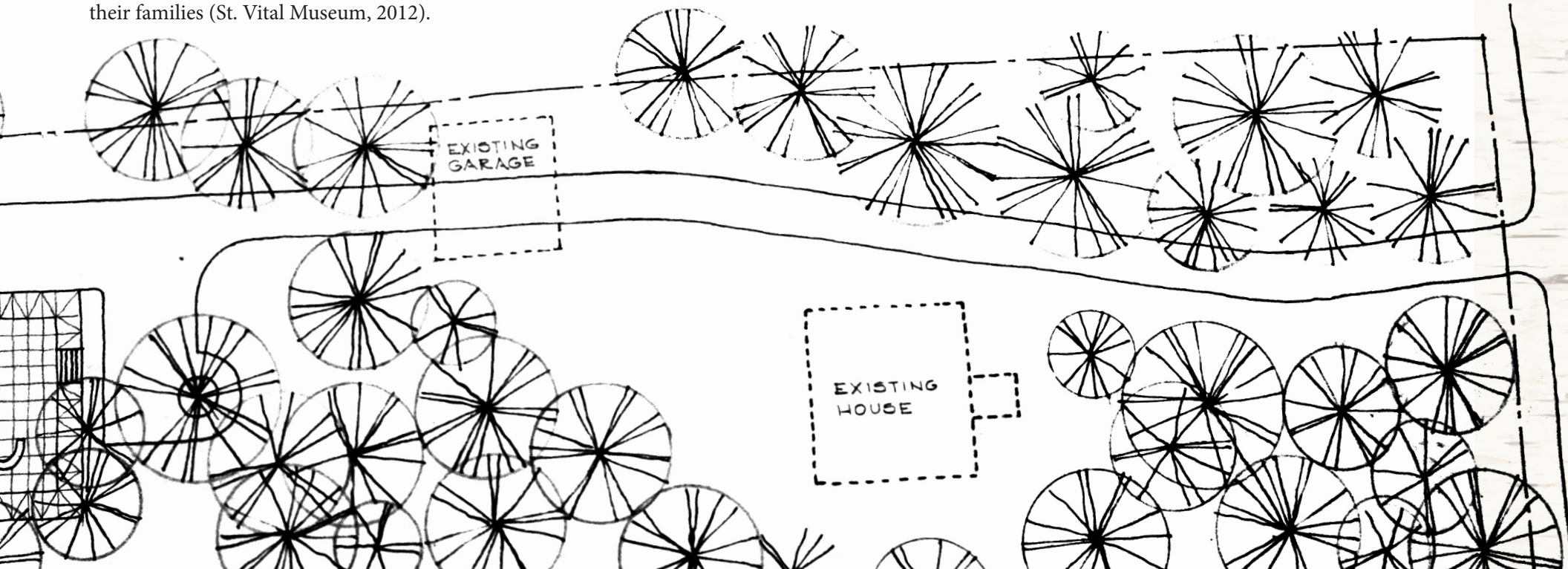


#### 4.1.2 LOCATION, HISTORY AND CONTEXT

Winnipeg is an appropriate geographic location for Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin as there is a significant need for Aboriginal shelter services in Manitoba's largest urban center. While many of the shelter's residents are from Winnipeg, some travel significant distances from all over the province to seek refuge at Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. Traveling to Winnipeg is often desirable for residents who often feel safer being further away from their abusers. Another reason residents may travel to Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin is if they have physical disabilities which their regional shelters cannot accommodate.

As stated in the introduction, 90 River Road is situated in the south-central city district of St. Vital. St. Vital is bounded on the north by Carrière Avenue, on the south by the northern limit of the Rural Municipality of Ritchot, on the west by the Red River and on the east by the Seine River. As of 2006, the population of St. Vital was 62,605. The district is primarily residential and has never had significant industrial or commercial enterprises aside from retail stores. Its attractions are St. Vital Park, St. Vital Shopping Centre and the Louis Riel House National Historic Site (St. Vital Museum, 2012). Riel House is where the Métis leader and 'Father of Manitoba', grew up and spent time with his wife and children. The house is one of St. Vital's most important landmarks, and up until 2012, was open to the public as a museum (St. Vital Museum, 2012).

The origins of St. Vital can be traced back to the 1820s when the first permanent homes were built, only ten years after the original party of Selkirk Settlers landed in the Red River region. The Selkirk Settlers were buffalo hunters who came to what is now St. Vital from the Pembina region with their families (St. Vital Museum, 2012).



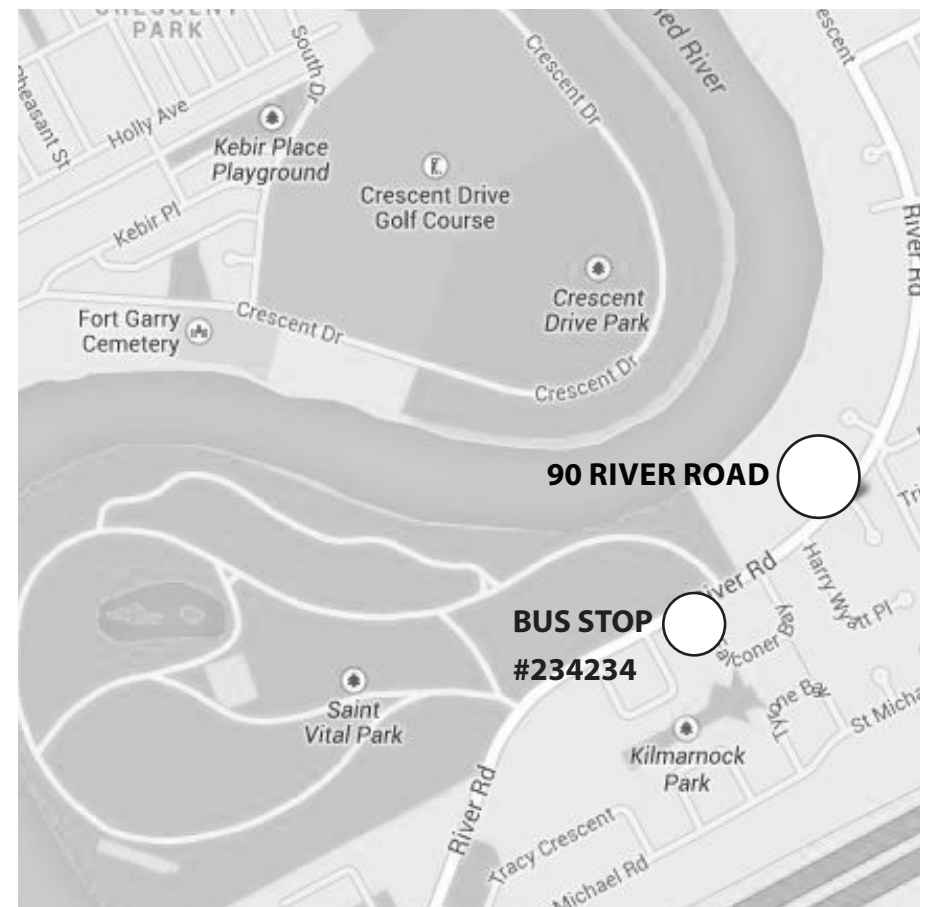
### 4.1.3 ACCESS AND PERCEIVED SAFETY

Vehicular access and public transportation are both necessities for the operation of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. 90 River Road is accessible from two major thoroughways: Bishop Grandin Boulevard and St. Mary's Road, providing easy access to the site for vehicles and public transportation. Vehicular traffic along River Road is light, and almost entirely residential. A small parking lot has been added to the 90 River Road site to provide parking for four vehicles for staff, residents or guests of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. Unrestricted street parking is available for staff and residents as well.

Access to nearby public transportation is required by residents and staff of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. While residents are encouraged to stay in the safety of the shelter as much as possible during the length of their stay at Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin, many residents need to take public transportation to access Manitoba Family Services and Housing, and the Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) office. Public transportation is also used by many staff members to get to Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin daily. The closest Winnipeg transit bus stop is located at the corner of River Road + Falconer (#234234). This bus stop is less than 150 feet from 90 River Road.

Ensuring the safety of residents and staff is the greatest priority of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. 90 River Road was selected as a site that meets the security requirements for the shelter and will allow residents and staff to feel safe and relaxed in the shelter. According to Winnipeg Crime Stats, St. Vital has a relatively low crime rate with most of the crimes committed being relatively minor (Winnipeg Crimestat, 2012). Residents and staff will feel safe walking to the nearby bus stop, which is not the case in Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin's existing location. Another safety advantage of this site is that the building is set back on the lot, and not visually accessible from River Road. This adds to the privacy of the shelter and further helps conceal its location. Mature trees on the property add to the overall privacy and security of the site.

FIGURE 4.1.3.1  
Transportation



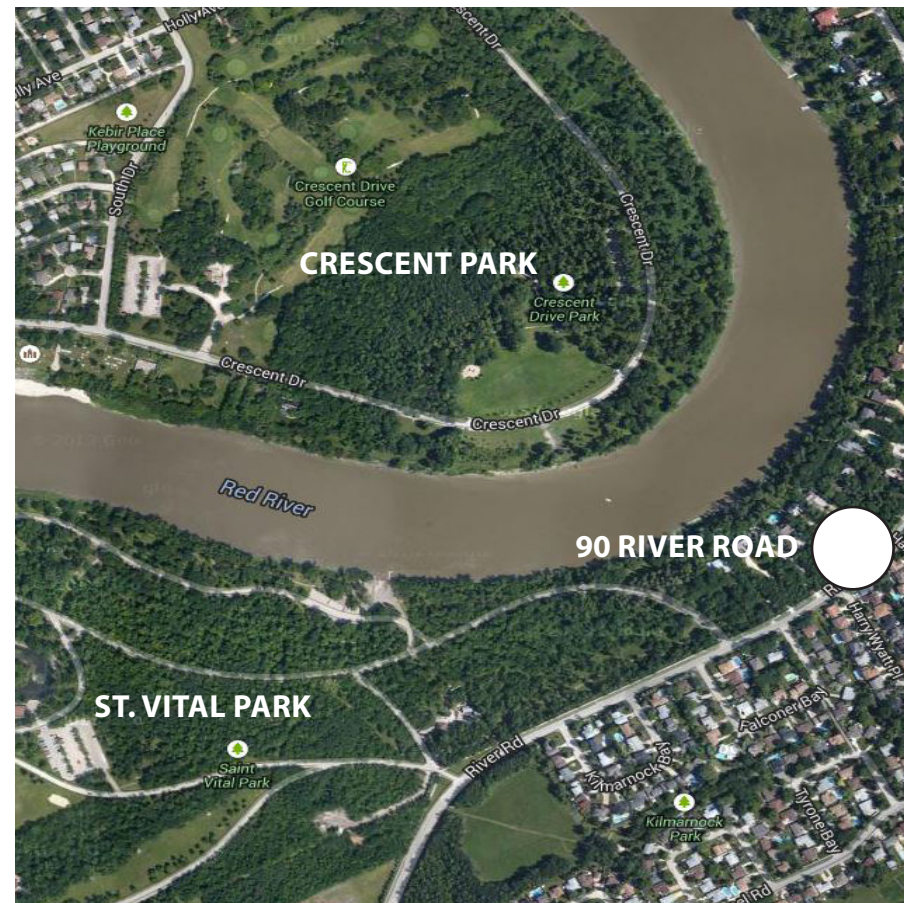
#### 4.1.4 LANDSCAPE AND CULTURAL CONNECTEDNESS

90 River Road site features elements of the natural prairie landscape: open spaces, mature trees and moving water. The lot is for the most part flat and grass covered, gradually sloping down towards the river. Over 75, mostly deciduous, mature trees cover the site. A long driveway connects the building to River Road. The distance between River Road and the building ensures that vehicular traffic will not be audible from the shelter.

It is important for Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin to be located on a river site in order to support cultural programming. Residents and staff will be able to easily access the river, something that is required during some Aboriginal ceremonies. The site will offer residents and staff safety during ceremonies as they will no longer have to go off site to perform them. The privacy and mature trees of the site also makes it a desirable location for a sweat lodge.

90 River Road is located in close proximity to green spaces in the community. St. Vital Park is within a short walking distance from the site. Amenities of St. Vital Park include: fitness trails, picnic shelters, winter pond skating, toboggan slides, children's play structure and BBQ pits. Crescent Park is located directly across the river from the site.

FIGURE 4.1.4.1  
Green Spaces



## 4.2 BUILDING ANALYSIS

### 4.2.1 BUILDING HISTORY

Since its construction in 1967, 90 River Road has had an enduring presence in the St. Vital neighborhood. As homes surrounding it have been built and rebuilt, the appearance of 90 River Road has changed little since its construction. Designed by local Métis architect Etienne Gaboury, the 3,808 sq. ft. residence was intended to be a home for his young family. During his career, Gaboury produced some of Winnipeg's most iconic architecture. His work is known for its artistry, connection with nature and spiritual qualities (Gaboury, 2005). These same qualities can be observed in design elements of 90 River Road.

90 River Road has changed ownership several times, however, it has always remained a private residence. In 2012, 90 River Road was put up for sale for an asking price of Price: \$1,200,000, it sold later that year (Lewys, 2011).

### 4.2.2 EXTERIOR

The exterior of the building plays with right angles in both the horizontal and vertical axis, including overhangs, square corners, and 45° roofs lines. These elements give the multilevel design a visually interesting and contemporary appearance. The conscious use of overhangs with respect to the building's many windows allows for a natural light filled interior. The exterior finish of the building is done almost entirely in cedar shakes. The building's wood finish connects it with the natural landscape of the lot. The exterior of the building has been well maintained with few changes to the original design or character of the building. The most significant modification to this building has been the addition of a permanent covered patio connected to the walk out basement (Lewys, 2011).

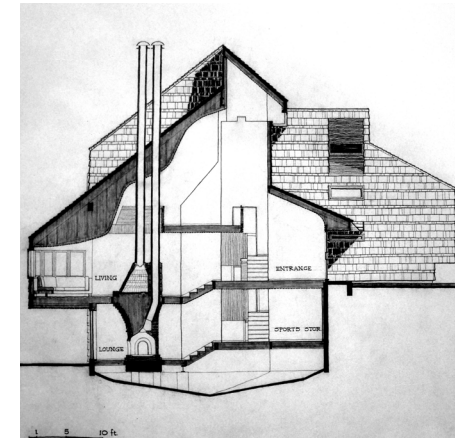
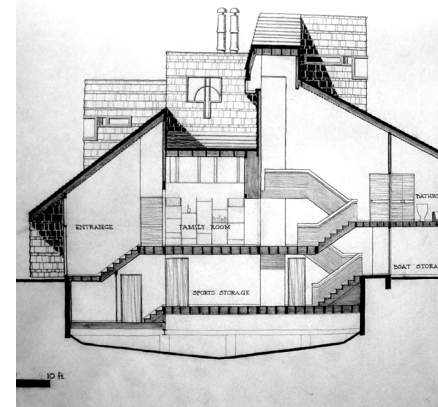
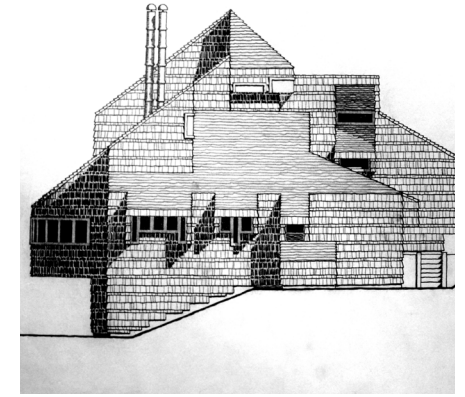
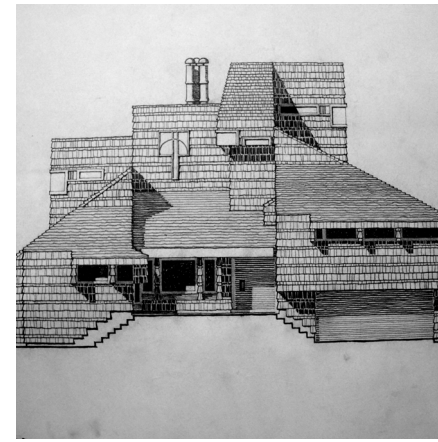


FIGURE 4.2.1.1  
Images 1-2  
Exterior Elevations, 90 River Road  
Drawings by E. Gaboury

FIGURE 4.2.1.2  
Images 1-2  
Building Sections, 90 River Road  
Drawings by E. Gaboury

FIGURE 4.2.1.3  
Original Plan Drawing of Floor 1  
90 River Road  
Drawing by E. Gaboury

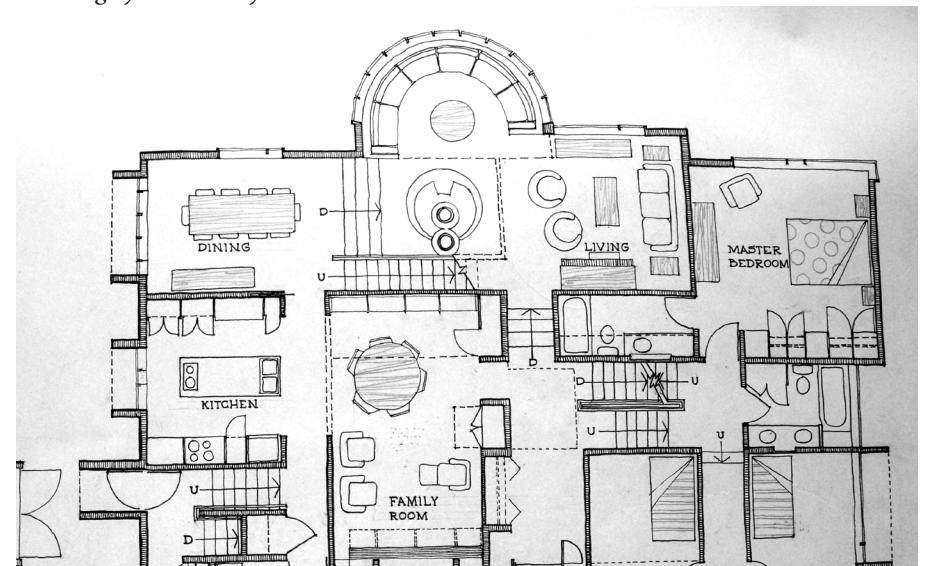




FIGURE 4.2.2.1  
Images 1-4  
*90 River Road Exterior*

### 4.2.3 INTERIOR

90 River road was designed as a 5 bedroom, 3.5 bathroom multi-level home. The use of multiple levels allows for the separation of space without using walls to divide the flow of the interior.

The interior of the building has been well maintained and contains many of the original finishes. The use of natural material finishes is carried from the exterior through to the interior of the building. The ceiling of the main space is lined with original wooden slats. Two original custom circular brick and stone fireplaces remain in good condition and remain important features of both the upper and lower levels. Of all the spaces in the residence, the kitchen area has had the most number of renovations and replacement to the original finishes (Lewys, 2011).

90 River Road was designed to allow a lot of natural light into the interior spaces. High ceilings, carefully placed windows, and light coloured interior finishes maximize natural light (Gaboury, 2005).

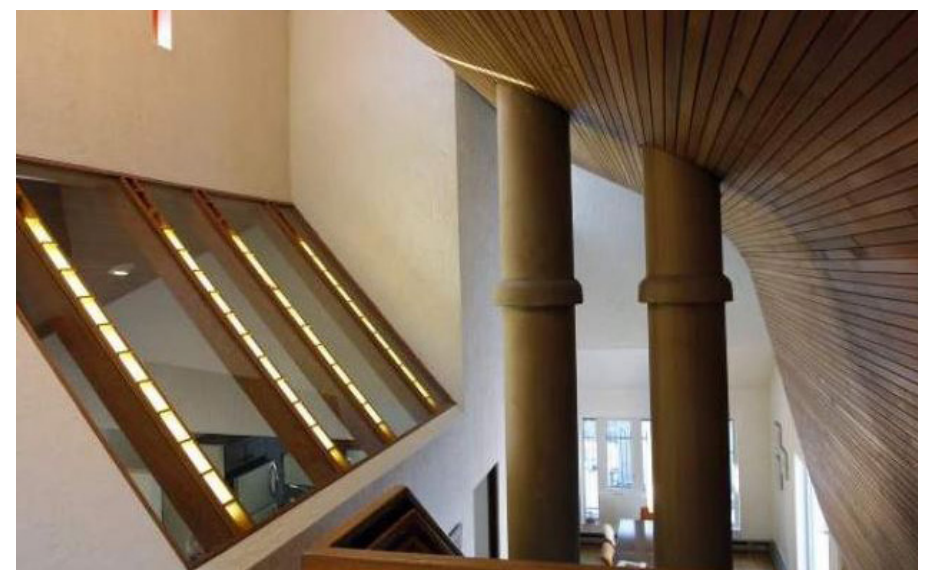


FIGURE 4.2.3.1  
*Images 1-3*  
*Interior Photographs of 90 River Road*  
*Photographs by K. Gigliotti*

## 4.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

90 River Road is an appropriate site for the design proposal for Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. The safe and quiet neighborhood of St. Vital will allow residents to feel secure while staying at the shelter. Public and vehicular transportation of the site has been considered and meets the needs of the staff and residents. The site's large lot, mature trees and access to the river provide residents and staff with an important connection to nature.

The existing building is in good condition. The large lot size of 90 River Road allows room for an addition to be added to the existing building in order to accommodate the design program of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin.





# CHAPTER 5

## DESIGN

*5.0 Introduction*

*5.1 User Profiles:*

*5.1.1 Primary Users: Clients + Children*

*5.1.2 Secondary Users: Staff*

*5.1.3 Tertiary Users: Community Visitors*

*5.2 Spatial Requirements*

*5.2.1 Introduction + Occupancy Classification*

*5.2.2 Program Outline*

*5.2.3 Level Descriptions*

*5.2.4 List of Spaces*

*5.3 Spatial Organization*

*5.4 Design Overview*

*5.5. Design Elements*

*5.5.1 Exterior*

*5.5.2 Entry*

*5.5.3 Floor Plan 1*

*5.5.4 Reception Area*

*5.5.5 Kitchen + Patio*

*5.5.6 Dining Area*

*5.5.7 Creative Room*

*5.5.8 Fireplace*

*5.5.9 Boardroom*

*5.5.10 Floor Plan 2*

*5.5.11 Bedroom*

*5.5.12 Materials and Finishes (1)*

*5.5.13 Healing Space*

*5.5.14 Materials and Finishes (2)*

*5.5.15 Furniture Selections*

## 5.0 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 is comprised of the design program of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin and the final design proposal. The design program section of this chapter begins with a description of the primary, secondary, and tertiary user groups. Profiles for each user group have been created. These outline the values, the social needs, the psychological needs, the sensory needs, the cultural needs and the physical needs of those who will be inhabiting the shelter.

The major functions and organizational structure of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin have already been outlined in Chapter 2 of this document. This chapter builds on Chapter 2, describing the functional and spatial requirements of the interior of the shelter, informed by the needs of the user groups and interviews with shelter staff.

The final design proposal section of this chapter includes a discussion of the ways in which research and investigations have shaped the design concept of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin, and by descriptions and images of all the key elements of the design.

## 5.1.1 PRIMARY USER PROFILE: RESIDENTS

The primary focus of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin is to provide all its residents, safety away from sexual, physical and emotional abuse. Residents come from all across the province of Manitoba to use Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin's services.

The ages of residents range from 18-65 years, with the average age being 30. For the majority of the residents, it is their first time accessing Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin's services. As there are 20 single beds in the proposed shelter crisis program, this is the maximum number of residents (including children) there will ever be in the shelter.

As an Aboriginal women's shelter, most of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin's residents are of Cree, Ojibway, Métis, Soto, and Oji Cree heritage, however, all women, regardless of their cultural heritage are welcome. Residents often speak a variety of Aboriginal languages that reflect the diverse regions of the province that they call home. Staff are able to speak several Aboriginal languages; this helps facilitate communication with residents.

For the protection of the residents, it is the intention of the program at Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin that residents spend the majority of their time in the shelter. On occasion, some residents may need to leave the shelter for short periods of time for appointments. During their 28 days at the shelter, residents have a semi-structured schedule that includes daily counseling sessions and group sessions. School age children attend classes during the afternoons Monday to Friday. Childcare services are available for children of residents to be looked after while their mothers are either occupied or out of the shelter (Ikwe Interview, Nov. 7, 2012).

### VALUES

- Freedom for residents to choose their own path of healing.
- Relationship building between residents, staff and the wider community.
- Access to a secure urban environment, where residents do not fear for their safety.
- Creating an atmosphere of equality amongst residents, support staff and community visitors.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS

- Hopeful: An uplifting space that encourages strength and courage.
- Inviting: Residents should instantly feel drawn in and comfortable in the shelter entrance.
- Safety/ Security: Users should experience a general feeling of safety while being in the shelter.

### SENSORY NEEDS

- Sight: Outdoors views of trees, the river, an abundance of natural light.
- Touch: A variety of textures: warm and comforting, with an emphasis on natural materials.
- Sound: space that encourage sharing, talking, laughing; other spaces that ensure acoustic privacy and support quiet reflection.
- Smell: fresh air, well-ventilated spaces that support smudging practices. No trace scents of strong cleaning product.
- Taste: fresh air, nutritious food and culturally traditional food on occasion.

### CULTURAL NEEDS

- Design that supports the practice of smudging
- Outdoor space for sweat lodge ceremonies
- Place for large sharing circles
- The use of materials which are reminiscent of the natural world, and the prairie landscape.

### PHYSICAL NEEDS

- Access to food, beverage, sleeping accommodations, washrooms and transportation/parking.
- Accessible to residents with a range of physical abilities.
- A welcoming entrance.

## 5.1.2 SECONDARY USERS: STAFF

The staff of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin play a vital role in the operation of the shelter, and account for the secondary users. All staff members of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin are women, and the majority are of Aboriginal heritage. Staff members all have a thorough understanding of family violence and understand the experience of coming into a shelter felt by the residents. The shelter's preference is that staff members have a background in social work, however, many do not. Staff members at Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin fulfill a range of roles. Staff roles at Ikwe include: residence support workers, management staff, child support workers, cook, and a receptionist (Ikwe Interview, 2012). For a detailed description of the structure of the organization and the various roles of staff, refer to section 2.2.2.

### VALUES

- Access to a secure urban environment, where staff do not fear for their safety.
- Respect: Every staff and resident should be treated with the dignity and respect accorded to all people.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS

- Functional: fully support all required tasks with ability to adapt to future needs.
- Comfortable: variety of options for sitting, evaluating/grading, and collaborating with residents and students.
- Hopeful: An uplifting space that encourages strength and courage.
- Supportive: Staff should feel supported by colleagues.

### SENSORY NEEDS

- Sight: Outdoor views of trees, the river, an abundance of natural light, good task lighting for staff who perform desk work.
- Touch: A variety of textures: warm and comforting, with an emphasis on natural materials.
- Sound: space that encourage sharing, talking, laughing; quiet work and meeting spaces.
- Smell: fresh air, well-ventilated spaces that support smudging practices. No trace scents of strong cleaning product.
- Taste: nutritious food and culturally traditional food on occasion.

### CULTURAL NEEDS

- Space for staff to prepare potluck meals
- Design that supports the practice of smudging
- Outdoor space and building for sweat lodge ceremonies
- Place for large sharing circles
- The use of materials which are reminiscent of the natural world, and the prairie landscape.

### PHYSICAL NEEDS

- Access to washrooms, transportation and parking.
- Ability to adjust and personalize work space.
- Furniture that is comfortable and ergonomic.

## 5.1.3 TERTIARY USERS: COMMUNITY VISITORS

Tertiary users of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin are all persons that have access to the shelter on an irregular basis such as elders, nurses, program instructors, psychiatrists, psychologists, lawyers and part time workers. These users must arrange an appointment with the office before their visit in order to be granted entrance to the shelter. Their access in the facility is limited as to respect the privacy and comfort of all residents.

### **TERTIARY USER ACTIVITIES:**

---

- Providing counseling services
- Scheduling appointments with residents
- Providing medical services to residents
- Providing instructional classes/presentations
- Repairs to the facility

## 5.2 SPATIAL REQUIREMENTS

### 5.2.1 INTRODUCTION + OCCUPANCY CLASSIFICATION

The major functions and organizational structure of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin are outlined in Chapter 2 of this document. The program which describes the physical organization of space and spatial requirements is outlined and described in the following section (Figure 5.2.1.1).

### 5.2.2 PROGRAM OUTLINE

Unburdened by the physical restraints of the existing shelter facility or by financial considerations, the design program of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin responds directly to the shelter's primary goal: to provide women and children with safety and to address their needs so that they may become empowered individuals.

The objectives of the design program for Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin are as follows:

- To help develop healthy individual coping strategies
- To connect healing and culture
- To enhance social and community supports for residents as well and Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin as an organization
- To provide nourishment and care to clients
- To provide access to counseling services for residents
- To provide an environment that encourages communication between the various users
- To provide an environment that allows for uninterrupted reflection and contemplation
- Give residents the opportunity to have happy and meaningful lives

The program for the facility accommodates 50 users at any given time. The users of the space include 20 residents (women and children), 5 management staff, 1 administrative staff, 19 resident support workers, 2 childcare workers, and 2 kitchen staff.

The shelter facility includes a reception area, Intake counseling office, cooking facilities, a dining area, various multi use spaces for socializing, relaxing and learning, a craft room, a recreation room for games and movie watching, laundry facilities, a quiet room, a variety of sleeping accommodations, office space and a healing room.

The program spaces are divided into seven levels. The functions of each level are outlined in Figure 5.2.4.1.

OCCUPANCY	USERS
The building is 2 floors. An addition has been added to the existing building. A 1000 sq. ft. new building (Healing Space) has been designed to accommodate the program.	20 residents 5 management staff 1 administrative staff 19 resident support workers 2 childcare workers 2 kitchen staff.
<b>Group A (Division 2):</b> Assembly occupancies not elsewhere classified in Group A <b>Group C (Division -):</b> Residential occupancies <b>Group D (Division -):</b> Business and personal services occupancies	Total Users: 49 at any given time + visitors

Figure 5.2.1.1  
*Summary of Occupancy Classification and Users*

## 5.2.3 LEVEL DESCRIPTIONS

### LEVEL 1 | Administration

This level supports the business management needs of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin and includes three management offices, the executive director's office, a break out meeting space, and the boardroom. This level is accessible to both residents and visitors, and separated by glazing to ensure that acoustic privacy in the offices area is maintained. The break out area has seating and a kitchenette where management and staff can make a cup of coffee and hold informal meetings. The four offices are separated by glazing to ensure acoustic privacy during confidential phone conversations while still remaining visually, allowing natural light throughout.

### LEVEL 2 | Living Area

The second level is where social support is most evident and acts as a hub where residents come together to share information and laughter. Residents are encouraged to spend time on the second floor in order to take part in the various learning programs and activities.

This level includes the reception area, the grandmother's room, accessible washroom, fireplace gather space, and the kitchen.

### LEVEL 3 | Dining Room

Level three houses the shelter's dining area, and offers residents a variety of seating options. In this space, residents take all their meals at flexible dining times. The level is connected visually to the kitchen level and separated by three risers.

### LEVEL 4 | Children's Area

This level recognizes the importance of children in the Aboriginal culture. Included on this level is the childcare center, the classroom and two washrooms. Both of these spaces provide a safe environment for children to explore, to learn and to have fun.

### LEVEL 5 | RSW Offices

Level five houses the offices of the Resident Support Workers (RSW). RSW staff operate in a single large office space where they are provided with desks, task chairs, computers, file storage, and telephones. A separate office space is used for private counseling with residents. The RSW office is located in close proximity to level six- Resident's Area, so they may offer residents assistance should they need it.

### LEVEL 6 | Resident's Area

This level serves the personal requirements needed by residents for everyday living. These services include: laundry facilities, washrooms, computer access, a kitchenette area, and bedrooms. Additional spaces include a large multipurpose space for families to interact, watch television and play games. There is also a quiet room on this level to give residents a calm place to relax and reflect.

The resident sleeping area is located at the most northern part of the floor 2- making it the most private place on the level. Residents have the option of three bedrooms. The first two rooms sleep 4-6 women and are intended for families that would prefer to sleep together in a room. The third and largest bedroom is located at in the rounded end of the building.

### Healing Space

The Healing Space is a separate building from that of the main shelter and is comprised of the circular healing room and an outer room which houses the healing rooms supporting functions: the entrance, coat storage, a kitchenette, an accessible washroom and a change room. The healing space will be used for cultural activities, ceremonies and for gatherings of various types which require a large open space.

## 5.2.4 LIST OF SPACES

Figure 5.2.4.1  
List of Spaces

SPACE	QUANTITY	SQ. FT. (EA)	TOTAL SQ. FT.	ACTIVITIES	F,F, & E	SPATIAL CONCEPT
<b>LEVEL 1 ADMINISTRATION</b>						
MANAGEMENT OFFICES	4	67 -110 SQ.FT.	315 SQ.FT.	PAPERWORK COMPUTER TASKS COMMUNICATION	DESK TASK CHAIR COMPUTER TELEPHONE	EFFICIENT ACOUSTIC PRIVACY COMFORTABLE
BREAK OUT MEETING AREA	1	160 SQ.FT.	160 SQ.FT.	SMALL GROUP MEETINGS PLACE TO EAT LUNCH OR HAVE COFFEE	TABLE NON-FIXED CHAIRS COFFEE STATION STORAGE	CASUAL COMFORTABLE
BOARDROOM	1	224 SQ.FT.	224 SQ.FT.	MEETINGS PRESENTATIONS COMMUNICATION	TELEVISION TABLE, COMFORTABLE CHAIRS A/V EQUIPMENT	WELCOMING VISUAL CONNECTIONS WITH REST OF LEVEL
<b>LEVEL 2+3 LIVING</b>						
VESTIBULE	1	63 SQ.FT.	63 SQ.FT.	ENTRY/EXIT WAITING	VIDEO SURVEILLANCE EQUIPMENT	PEACEFUL VISUAL CONNECTION WITH OUTSIDE
RECEPTION AREA	1	396 SQ.FT.	396 SQ.FT.	GREET WAITING	WELCOME DESK COMPUTER TELEPHONE SOFT SEATING TABLES	WELCOMING COMFORTABLE PRIVACY FROM REST OF SHELTER
GRANDMOTHERS' ROOM	1	104 SQ.FT.	104 SQ.FT.	INTAKE ASSESSMENT WAITING COUNSELLING	COMFORTABLE CHAIRS SMALL TABLES	CALM COMFORTABLE QUIET
WASHROOM	1	75 SQ.FT.	75 SQ.FT.	PERSONAL HYGENE	SINK TOILET BABY CHANGE TABLE	CLEAN
KITCHEN AREA	1	342 SQ.FT.	342 SQ.FT.	FOOD PREPARATION COOKING LESSONS SOCIALIZING	DISHWASHER LRG. REFRIGERATOR (2X) COMMERCIAL OVEN BAR STOOL SEATING CABINETRY ADDITIONAL FOOD STORAGE	RELAXED INFORMAL PARTICIPATORY HOMELIKE
PATIO	1	315 SQ.FT.	315 SQ.FT.	BARBECUING GARDENING SOCIALIZING	CABINETRY BARBECUE TABLE TOP BAR STOOLS	CONNECTION TO NATURE CASUAL
DINING AREA	1	365 SQ.FT.	365 SQ.FT.	EATING SOCIALIZING GATHERING	NON-FIXED TABLES NON-FIXED SEATING STORAGE FOR EXTRA CHAIRS, HIGH CHAIRS	COMFORTABLE HOMELIKE UPLIFTING
FIREPLACE AREA	1	132 SQ.FT.	132 SQ.FT.	GATHERING SMUDGES	FIREPLACE	OPEN SPIRITUAL
CREATIVE ROOM	1	114 SQ.FT.	114 SQ.FT.	CRAFTING SOCIALIZING	LOUNG SEATING CABINET STORAGE TABLE SURFACES	RELAXING COMFORTABLE
<b>LEVEL 4 CHILDREN'S AREA</b>						
CLASSROOM	1	420 SQ.FT.	420 SQ.FT.	LEARNING CRAFTING COMPUTING PLAYING	COMPUTER STATIONS (2X) NON-FIXED TABLE + CHAIRS WHITE BOARDS KITCHENETTE CHILDREN'S W/C	IMAGINATIVE PLAYFUL BRIGHT
CHILD CARE ROOM		250 SQ.FT.	250 SQ.FT.	PLAY NAP CRAFTS	NON-FIXED TABLE + CHAIRS TOY STORGE CHILDREN'S W/C	IMAGINATIVE PLAYFUL BRIGHT



SPACE	QUANTITY	SQ. FT. (EA)	TOTAL SQ. FT.	ACTIVITIES	F,F, & E	SPATIAL CONCEPT
<b>LEVEL 5 RSW OFFICES</b>						
RESIDENT SUPPORT WORKERS OFFICE	1	272 SQ.FT.	272SQ.FT.	PAPERWORK COMPUTER TASKS CRISIS LINE COMMUNICATION	DESK COMPUTER TASK CHAIR TELEPHONE	SECURE CONFIDENTIAL PRODUCTIVE
COUNSELLING OFFICE	1	96 SQ.FT.	96 SQ.FT.	ONE ON ONE COUNSELLING	COMFORTABLE SEATING DESK	NON-INTIMIDATING COMFORTABLE
<b>LEVEL 6 RESIDENT'S AREA</b>						
RECREATION ROOM	1	702 SQ.FT.	702 SQ.FT.	SOCIALIZING GAMES SNACK PREPARATION PLAY	KITCHENETTE NON FIXED TABLES NON FIXED CHAIRS NON-FIXED SOFT SEATING TELEVISION PLAY AREA	FRIENDLY HOMELIKE COMFORTABLE
COMFORT ROOM	1	143 SQ.FT.	143 SQ.FT.	SPIRITUAL CARE CONTEMPLATION REST	RECLINING CHAIRS	RELAXING INTIMATE SAFE
LAUNDRY ROOM	1	150 SQ.FT.	150 SQ.FT.	WASHING DRYING IRONING FOLDING	COMMERCIAL WASHING + DRYING MACHINES COUNTER SPACE BED LINEN STORAGE	CLEAN COMFORTABLE
MEDIUM BEDROOM	2	263 SQ.FT.	526 SQ.FT.	SLEEPING RELAXATION CONVERSATION	BED CLOTHING STORAGE LOCKED STORAGE READING LAMPS	HOMELIKE RELAXING PRIVATE
LARGE BEDROOM	1	630 SQ.FT.	630 SQ.FT.	SLEEPING RELAXATION CONVERSATION	BED CLOTHING STORAGE LOCKED STORAGE READING LAMPS	HOMELIKE RELAXING SUPPORTIVE
WATER CLOSET	3	80 SQ.FT. 255 SQ.FT.	335 SQ.FT.	PERSONAL HYGENE	SINK LAVATORY MIRROR BATH SHOWER BABY CHANGE TABLE	CLEAN COMFORTABLE
<b>HEALING SPACE</b>						
HEALING ROOM	1	575 SQ.FT.	575 SQ.FT.	CULTURAL CEREMONIES TRAINING SESSIONS GROUP ACTIVITIES	SOFT SEATING	OPEN PEACEFUL SPIRITUAL
ENTRANCE AREA	1	175 SQ.FT.	175 SQ.FT.	ENTER REMOVE OUTERWEAR	SEATING COAT STORAGE	WELCOMING
KITCHENETTE	1	80 SQ.FT.	80 SQ.FT.	PREPARE SNACKS SERVE CATERED MEALS	CABINENTRY	CLEAN
WASHROOM	1	80 SQ.FT.	80 SQ.FT.	PERSONAL HYGENE	SINK TOILET MIRROR	
CHANGE ROOM	1	90 SQ.FT.	90 SQ.FT.	CHANGE INTO CEREMONIAL ROBES	BENCHES MIRROR STORAGE	COMFORTABLE

## 5.3 SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

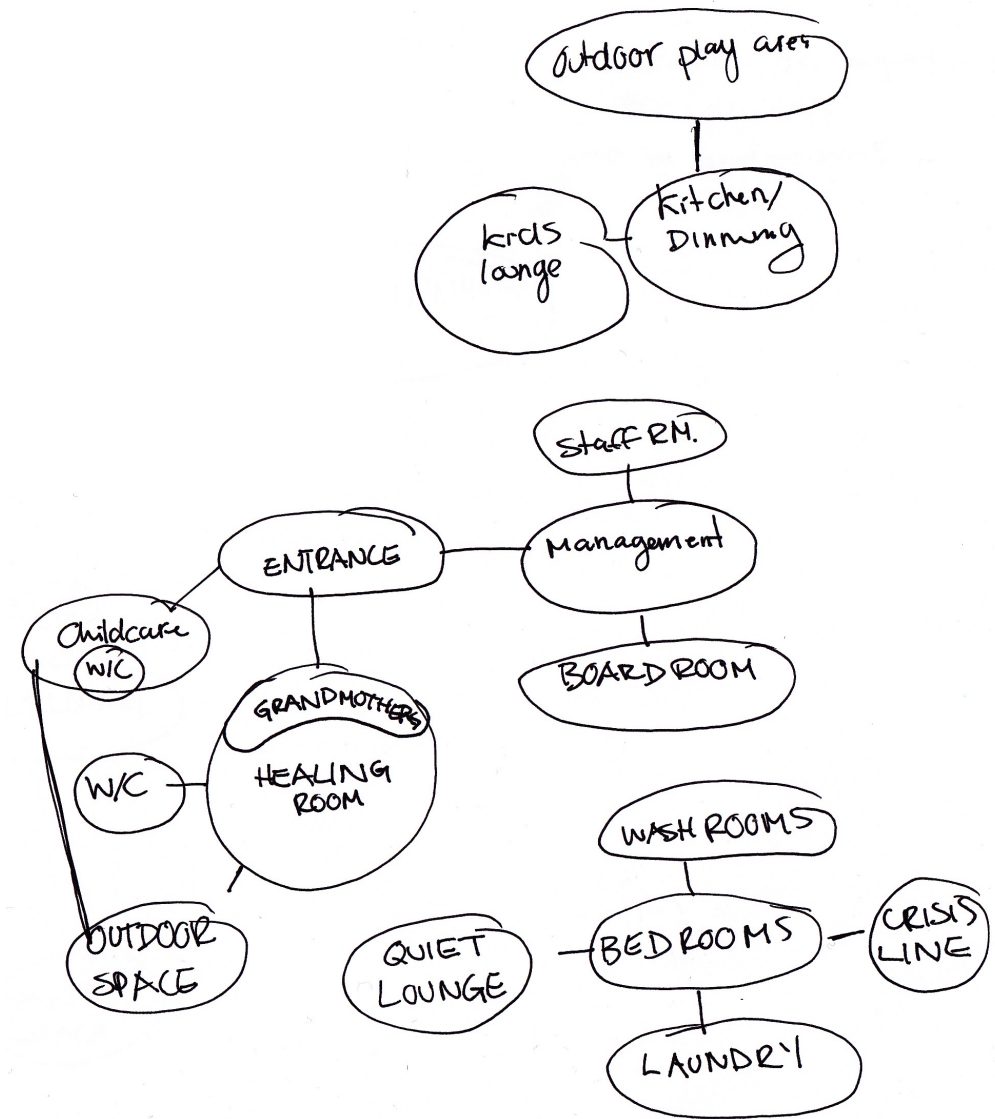
The spatial arrangements of the proposed design are based primarily on information given by staff of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin during the photo-elicitation interviews. Much of the discussion during the six interviews pertained to desirable and undesirable adjacencies. The adjacencies that interviewees were most concerned about were achieving an appropriate balance between public and private spaces within the shelter; and the arrangement of entrances and exits.

### 1- Enter/Exit Sequence

When entering or exiting the shelter, residents are required to fulfill a series of steps to preserve the organization and security of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. If a resident must leave the shelter for an appointment, she must first obtain documentation from the RSW office, this is then given to the childcare workers, who will look after her children while she is out. She must then give the receptionist further documentation prior to leaving. As such, it is important for these spaces to be arranged in a linear sequence, so as to ease the process of entering and exiting the shelter for residents. The spaces were arranged beginning with the RSW office on level 5, followed by childcare on level 4, from where women can proceed to the reception on level 2, and exit through the front door.

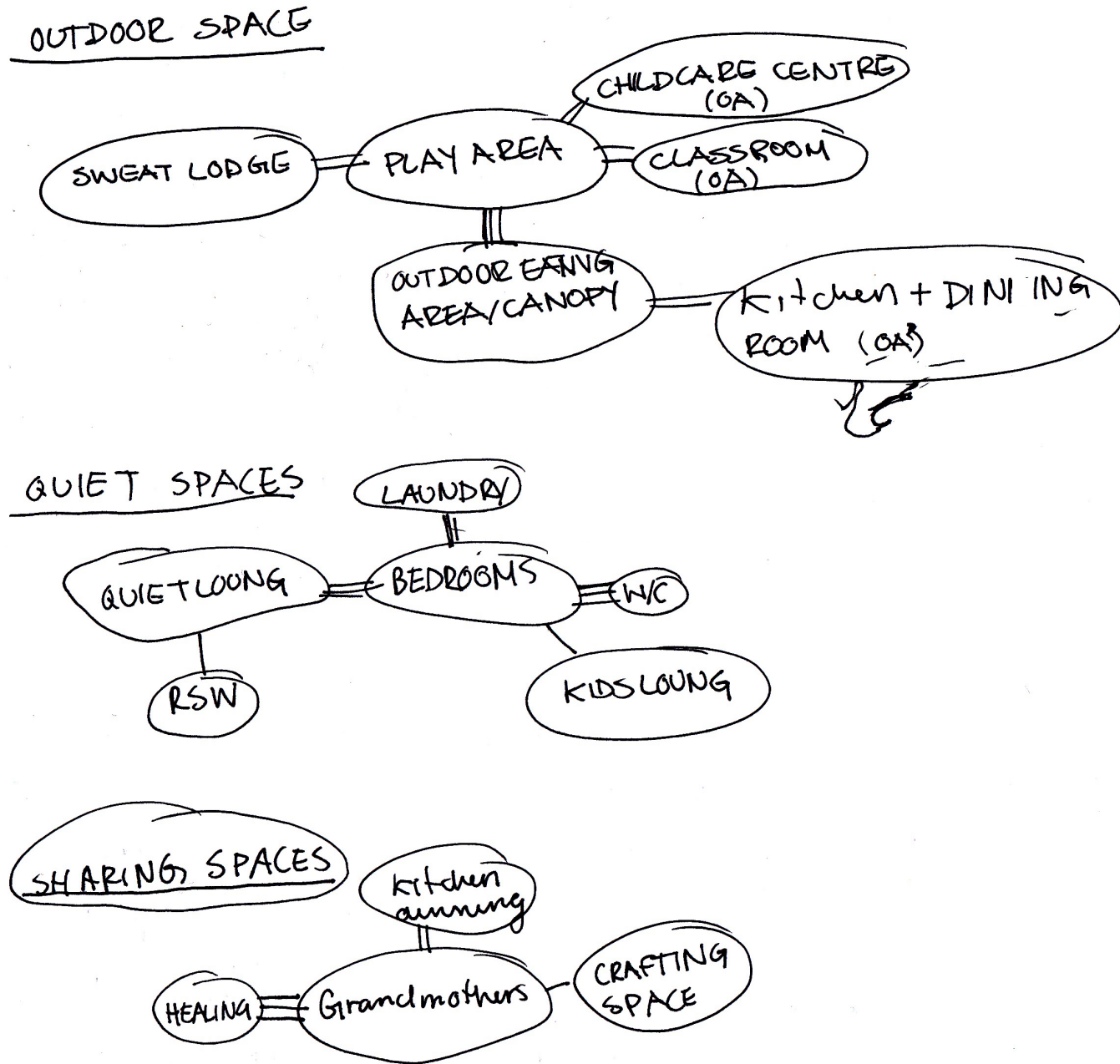
### 2- Public vs. Private Spaces

During the interviews, it became evident that a balance between the more public space and private spaces was important to the harmony of all those living and working in the shelter. The public spaces can be understood as those which may receive outside guests, such as the administration area, or which are intended to be the most interactive such as the kitchen, the dining room and lounge space. These functions have been arranged on the main level. The private spaces are the most home like in the shelter, with the bedrooms being the most private. These spaces are on level 6, to ensure residents the greatest amount of privacy. Moving closer to the core of the building, spaces become gradually less private.



# PROCESS WORK

Figure 5.3.1  
Space Planning



## 5.4 DESIGN OVERVIEW

The design demonstrates how the 90 River Road residence was adapted to become an Aboriginal women's Shelter, Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. The site is located on the Red River in a residential neighborhood in the city of Winnipeg district of St. Vital. The design provides residents and staff with the necessary spaces to eat, sleep, counsel, work and relax. An addition has been added to the North side of the former residence in order to accommodate all the required spaces of the shelter. A new building which houses the healing room, has been designed to support the cultural activities of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. This building sits in front of the existing building on the site.

The emphasis on natural light and views of nature of the original design of the building continues to be important in the design of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. Connection between the site and the building is achieved through the use of large windows and design features which act to integrate the indoor and outdoor spaces. The exterior cedar shingle finish of the building has been preserved, and few changes have been made to the building's unique roof line in order to maintain its original character.

The objective of the design is to support the functional, cultural and spiritual needs of Aboriginal residents and staff of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. An exploration of traditional Aboriginal architecture and gendered space, photo-elicitation interviews with the staff members of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin and examined of the art of Aboriginal ceremonial robes has informed the design of the new shelter.

RED RIVER

# SITE PLAN- 90 RIVER ROAD

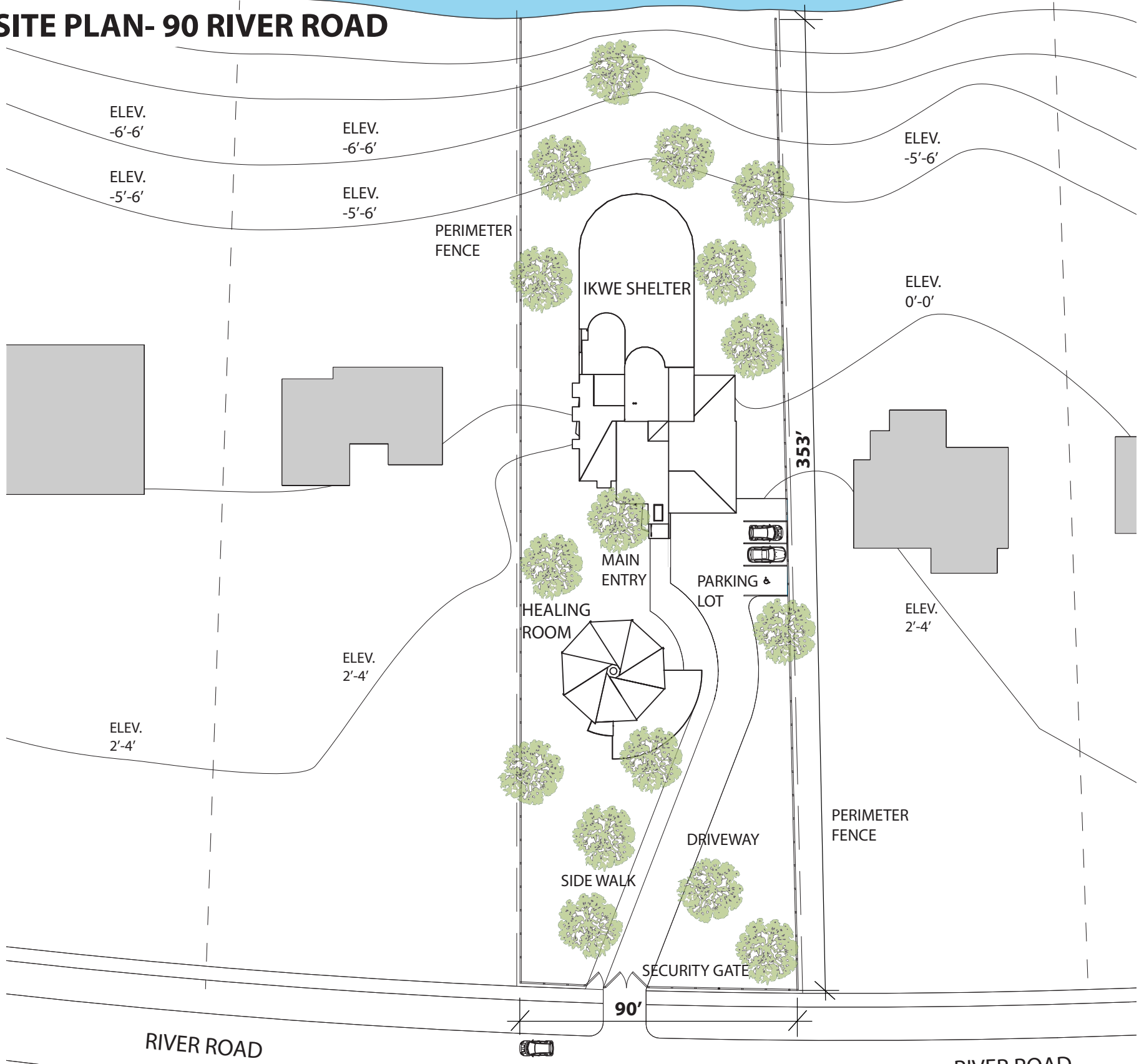


Figure 5.4.1  
Site Plan  
90 River Road



HARDY BAY

HARRY WATT PLACE

RIVER ROAD

RIVER ROAD

## 5.5 DESIGN ELEMENTS

### 5.5.1 EXTERIOR

The curved driveway and sidewalk connect River Road to the healing room, seen here on the left and to the shelter on the right. A parking lot for four vehicles is located near the shelter's main entrance. The approach has been designed to be fully accessible to people with physical disabilities.



Figure 5.5.1.1  
*Exterior Perspective*

## 5.5.2 ENTRY

When approaching the main entrance to the shelter, visitors will observe a wood and bark woven wall extending from the shelter's stoop through the vestibule and into the reception space.

To gain access to the shelter, one must use the intercom button to have the exterior door unlocked by the receptionist. Upon entering the natural light filled interior space of the vestibule, the exterior door must close before the door to the reception space can open. This security feature helps ensure the safety of the shelter.





Figure 5.5.2.1  
*Perspective of Main Entry*

## 5.5.3 FLOOR PLAN 1

The first floor houses the public and professional functions of Ikwe. These areas include the reception area, administration offices, cooking and eating spaces. The first floor is divided into three levels.

\*Please refer to Figure 5.5.3.1 for section cuts.

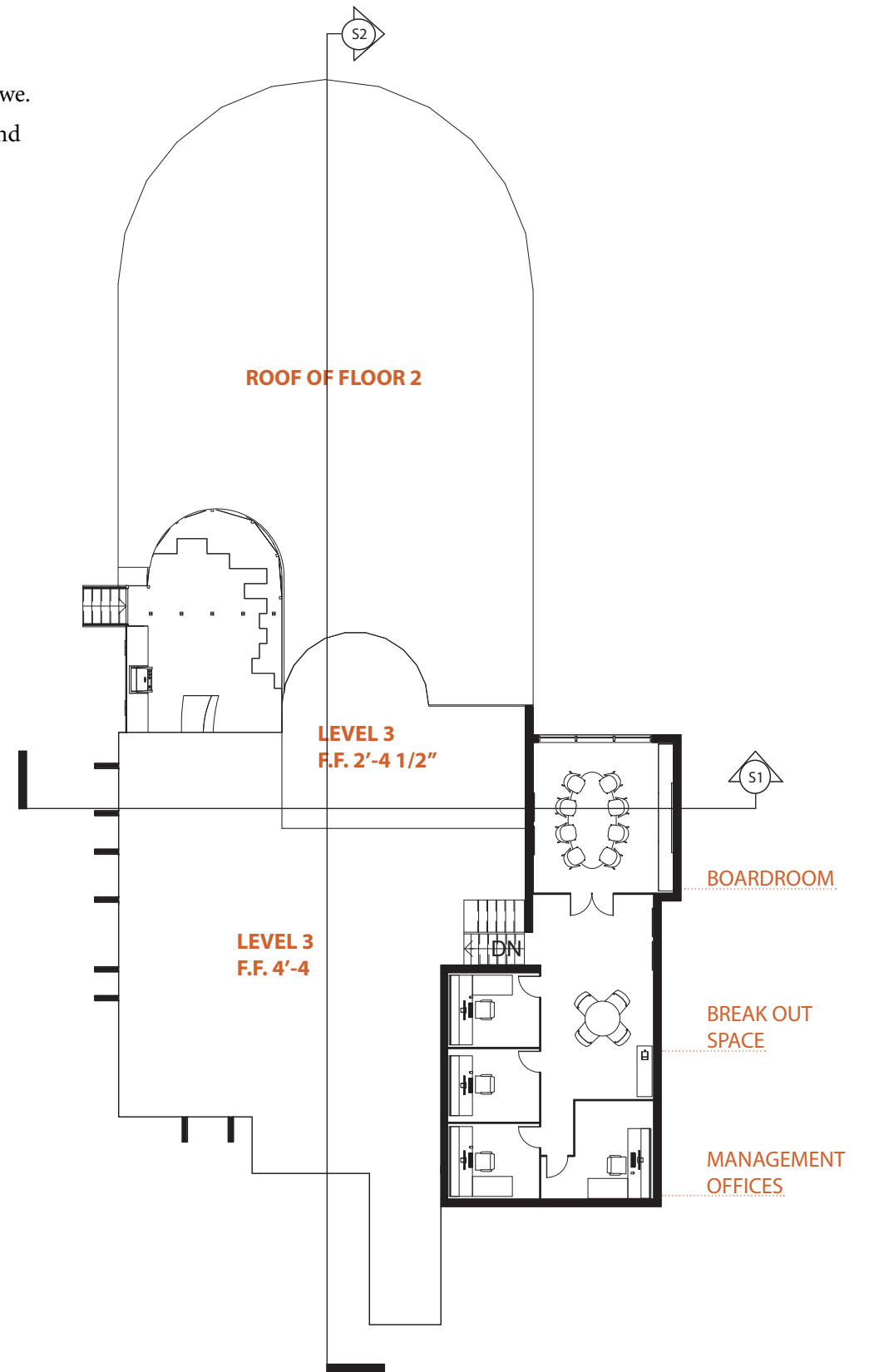


Figure 5.5.3.1  
Plan Drawing of Floor 1, Level 1  
Scale:  $3/32'' = 1'-0''$

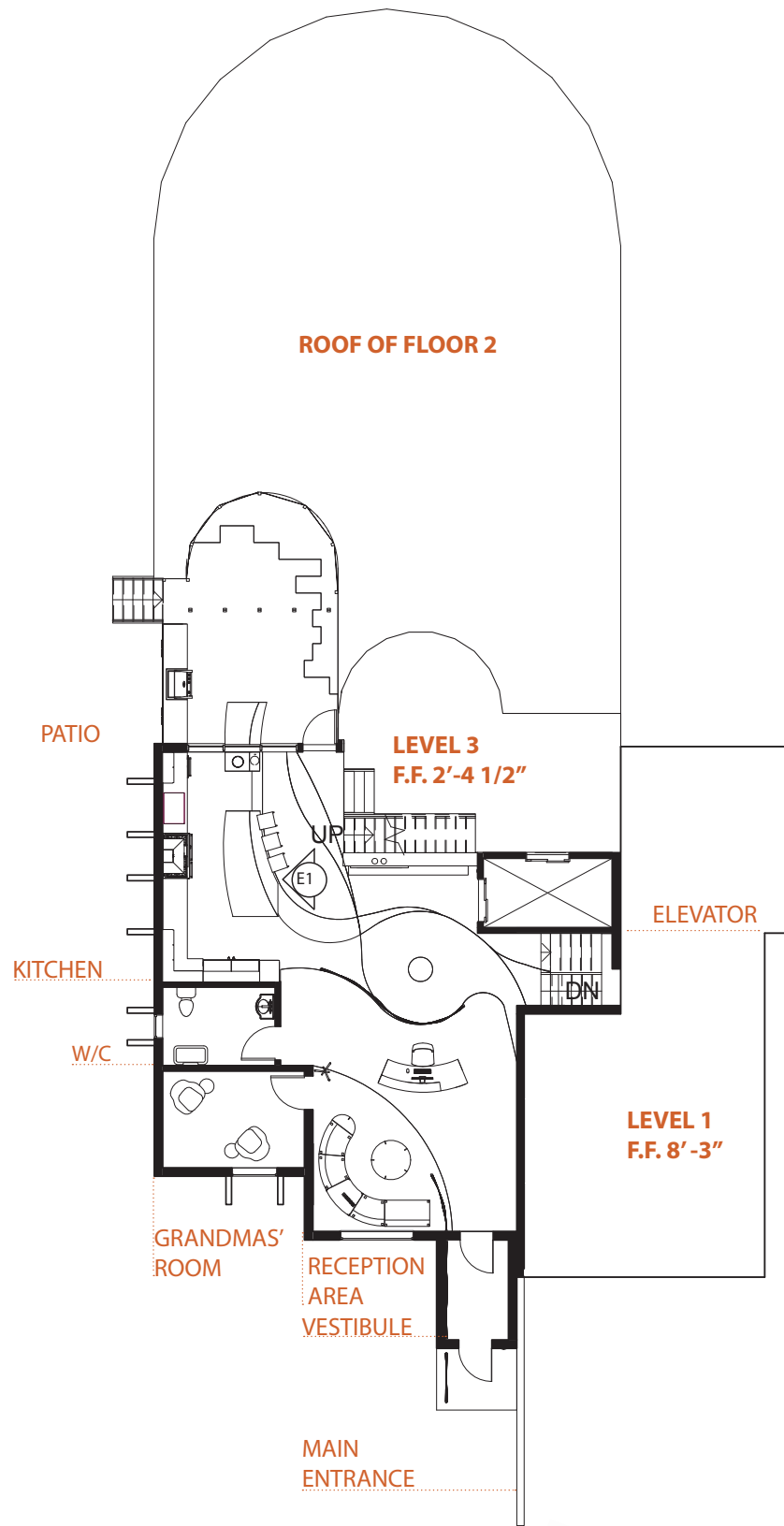


Figure 5.5.3.2  
 Plan Drawing of Floor 1, Level 2  
 Scale: 3/32"=1'-0"

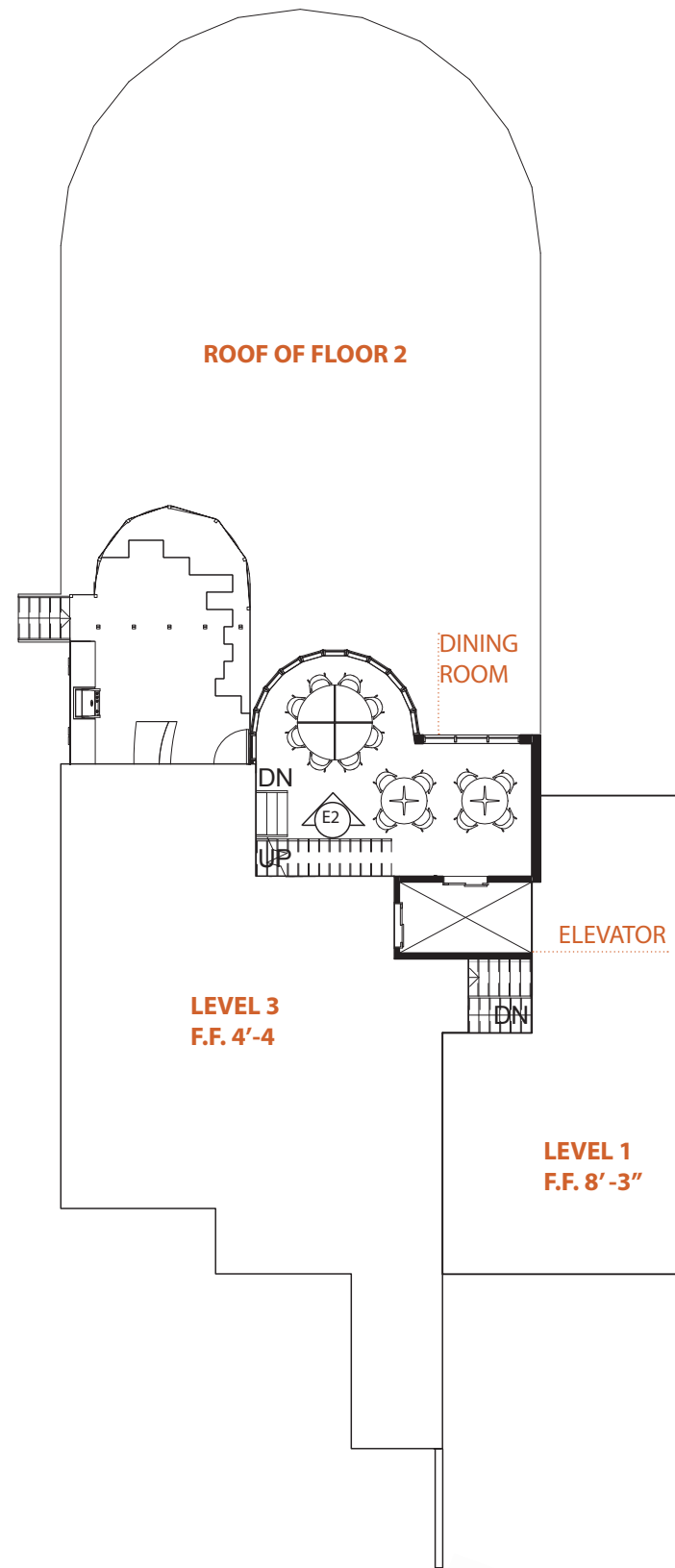


Figure 5.5.3.3  
 Plan Drawing of Floor 1, Level 3  
 Scale: 3/32"=1'-0"



## 5.5.4 RECEPTION AREA

### VESTIBULE

With views to both the outside and to the inside of the shelter, the vestibule becomes a peaceful place of the in between. It is a space that is neither inside nor outside like many of the entrances in traditional Aboriginal architecture. The vestibule is a place to pause, a place for new residents to think about the decision they have made to leave the life they have known outside and to contemplate the new chapter that will begin in their lives the moment they step through the door into the shelter.

### RECEPTION DESK

Upon entering the shelter from the vestibule, residents and guests will be greeted by the receptionist at the welcome desk. The woven wall behind the desk visually separates the reception space from the rest of the shelter. This allows potentially traumatized women privacy as they enter the shelter for the first time.



Figure 5.5.4.1  
*Perspective of Vestibule*



Figure 5.5.4.2  
*Perspective of Reception Desk*

## **WAITING AREA**

A comfortable sitting area gives new residents a place to relax, while they wait to be brought into the adjacent 'In Take room' for an assessment. The sitting area is shared by residents, children, elders and professionals. In consideration of children, soft carpet flooring and durable table surface material on which they can play has been selected. Due to the range of people occupying this space, the atmosphere is both warm and welcoming, while also being professional. Art work by Aboriginal artist Christi Belcourt is featured on the west wall of the sitting area.



Figure 5.5.4.3  
*Perspective of Waiting Area*

## 5.5.5 KITCHEN + PATIO

The kitchen and patio area is one of the main spaces in the shelter where women can gather, learn and interact with one another. In this space two kitchen staff prepare three meals a day, seven days a week for residents.

A stand-alone self-serve food station at the north end of the kitchen allows residents to help themselves to a warm bowl of soup or stew anytime during the day. This function mirrors the Aboriginal tradition of having food ready to offer visitors or family at all times.

Bar stools around the large island encourage socializing and are a place where women can sit with a cup of coffee. Women are encouraged to assist the cook or to take part in evening cooking lesson where residents learn to prepare basic meals and traditional dishes. Group cooking lessons not only teach practical skills, they also function as an informal counseling session, where women may feel more comfortable opening up than they would in an office atmosphere.

The outdoor patio area has been designed as a continuation of the kitchen, both visually and functionally. Connection between the interior kitchen and the exterior patio is achieved by extending the kitchen counter top and island through to the patio, and with ceiling-height glazing on the North wall of the kitchen. The primary function of the patio is as an outdoor cooking station, and includes a barbecue, countertop surfaces and space for food storage. Residents can acquire basic barbecuing skills by assisting the cooks in meal preparation. A small vegetable and herb garden lines the perimeter of the patio. Women can participate in gardening, and enjoy preparing meals made from fresh produce. Beyond the functions of cooking and gardening, the patio is a place of relaxation, where women can step outside for fresh air and a break from the activity of the shelter. Residents and staff can sit at the table while enjoying a view of the Red River. The patio is covered by an awning, providing protection from the weather and privacy from neighboring properties.





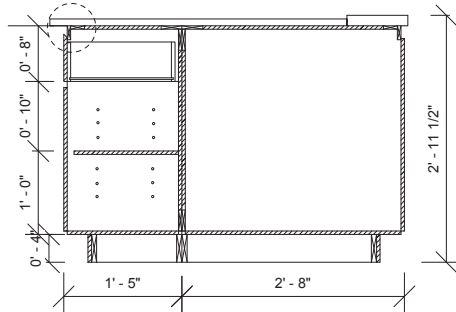
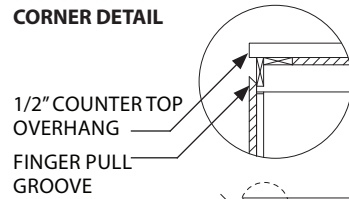
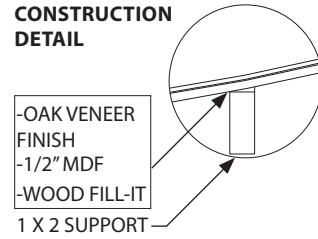
Figure 5.5.5.1  
*Perspective of Kitchen + Patio*



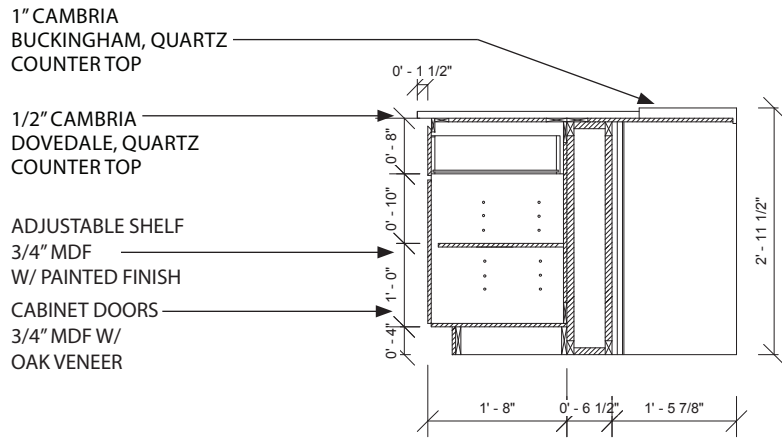
Figure 5.5.5.2 - *Elevation 1: Kitchen + Patio*  
Scale: 3/16"=1'-0"

# KITCHEN ISLAND- DETAIL DRAWING

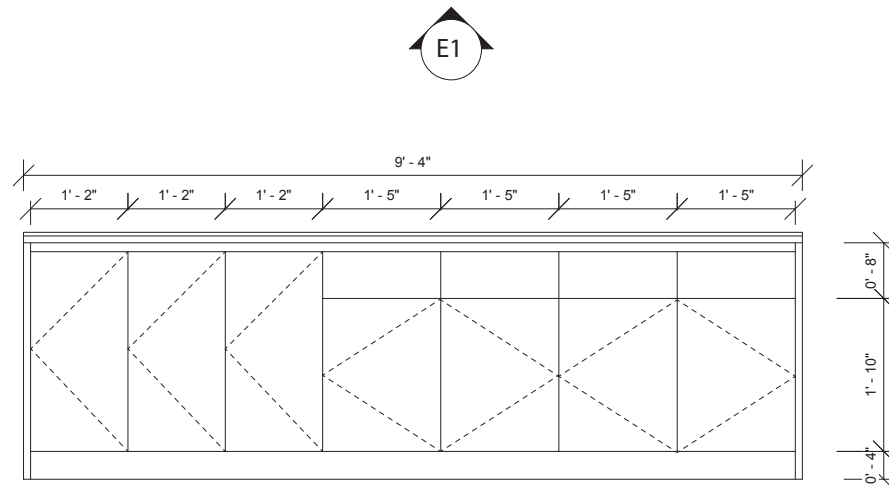
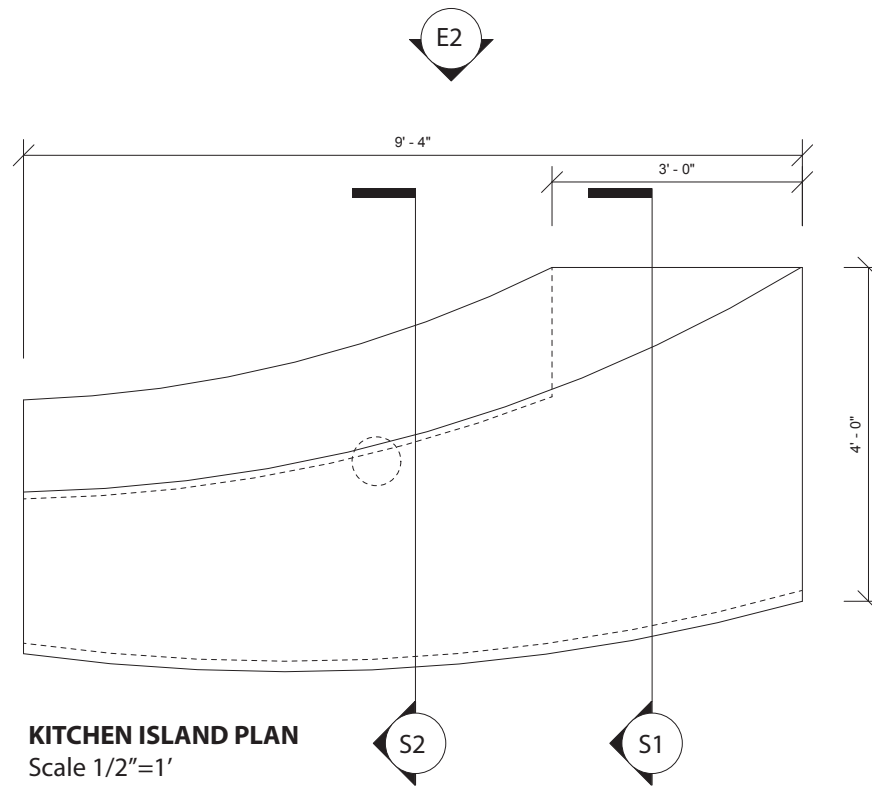
Figure 5.5.5.3 - Kitchen Island Detail



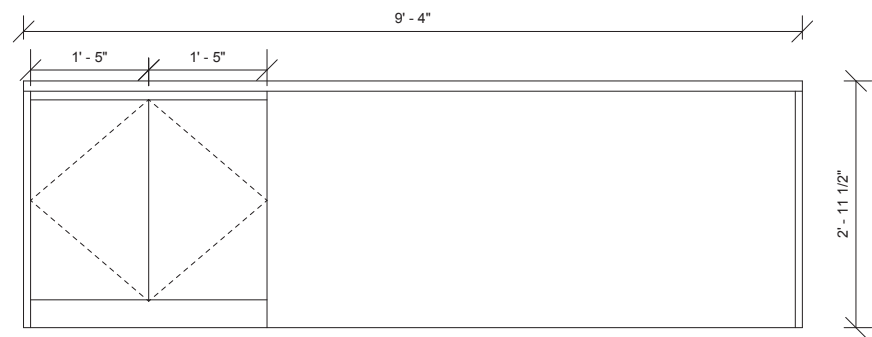
**SECTION 1: Scale 1/2"=1'**



**SECTION 2: Scale 1/2"=1'**



**ELEVATION 1: Scale 1/2"=1'**



**ELEVATION 2: Scale 1/2"=1'**



## 5.5.6 DINING SPACE

Located adjacent to the kitchen, residents share their meals together in the dining room space, under the high, curving wood slat ceiling (Figure 5.5.6.2). It is a place to gather and converse in a warm and cheerful atmosphere with a view out to the Red River. Residents of Ikwe-Widdjitiwin have a flexible dining schedule and may take their meals anytime they choose within the allotted times. This allows residents to choose when they eat and with whom. In the dining area, several types of seating and tables are provided in order to accommodate a variety of needs and comfort levels. Bar stools are located around the kitchen island for residents having a casual breakfast or engaging in conversation while someone is cooking. A large circular table is available for those choosing to sit in a group setting (Figure 5.5.6.3). Smaller, round tables are available for those preferring a quieter, more intimate setting. High chairs for infants and toddlers are kept in cabinets storage located beneath the stairs. All selected chairs and tables are commercial products of high durability. Seating upholstery is of high quality and of antimicrobial stain resistant material.



Figure 5.5.6.1- *Elevation 2: Dining Room*  
Scale: 3/16"=1'-0"



Figure 5.5.6.2  
*Perspective of Dining Room*





Figure 5.5.6.3  
*Perspective of Dining Room*

## 5.5.7 CREATIVE ROOM

The creative room is a space for crafting, learning and socializing and is located from the staircase off the kitchen. The low, curving ceiling, soft furniture and carpet flooring creates a comfortable space that can accommodate up to six women at a time. Longstanding Aboriginal craft traditions such as needle point, beading, and sewing can be done at any time in this space. Residents can choose to participate in instructional crafting lessons led by shelter staff and elders. As mentioned with cooking lessons, the relaxing atmosphere of engaging in an activity can encourage women to feel more comfortable opening up and talking, giving the activity of crafting an added therapeutic value.



Figure 5.5.7.1  
*Perspective of Creative Room*

## 5.5.8 FIREPLACE AREA

The large, tyndall stone fireplace is located directly below the roof's highest elevation. Residents may also sit on the fireplace's extended ledge and gather around the fire in chairs stored in the closet beneath the stairs. Tempered glass ensures the fireplace will not be a safety hazard to residents.

The circular stone flooring detail in front of the fireplace marks the center of the building, and can be used as a place to gather and perform ceremonies or smudges.

Also visible in this perspective is the elevator which ensures that Ikwe is fully accessible to all women regardless of their physical abilities.





Figure 5.5.8.1  
*Perspective of Fireplace Area*

## 5.5.9 BOARDROOM

The boardroom is located at the north end of the administrative level and looks out onto the Red River. It is separated from the rest of the level by glazing, ensuring acoustic privacy during the monthly meetings the board gathers for. Meeting material can be projected on the television screen on the east wall, storage cabinets below house tech equipment and meeting material. As board members gather around the oval shaped table, all members are in each other's view. The rounded form helps establish a non-hierarchical atmosphere. The paintings featured in this space were created by local Aboriginal artist K.C. Adams.



Figure 5.5.9.1  
*Perspective of Boardroom*

## 5.5.10 FLOOR PLAN 2

The second floor houses the more private functions of the shelter. These areas include spaces for children, the resident support workers offices and spaces for residents to relax, socialize and sleep. The second floor is divided into three levels as was the first floor.

**Floor 2, Level 4** - The highest level recognizes the importance of children in Aboriginal culture and houses the classroom and childcare room.

**Floor 2, Level 5** - Descending the stairs, one arrives at the next level where the offices of the Resident Support Workers are located.

**Floor 2, Level 6** - The lowest level of the second floor serves the personal requirements of the residents everyday living. These services includes a recreation room with a kitchenette, a quiet room, laundry and washroom facilities, and sleeping accommodations for residents and their children. The sleeping accommodations include two medium size bedrooms and one large bedroom.

\*Please refer to Figure 5.5.3.1 for section cuts.

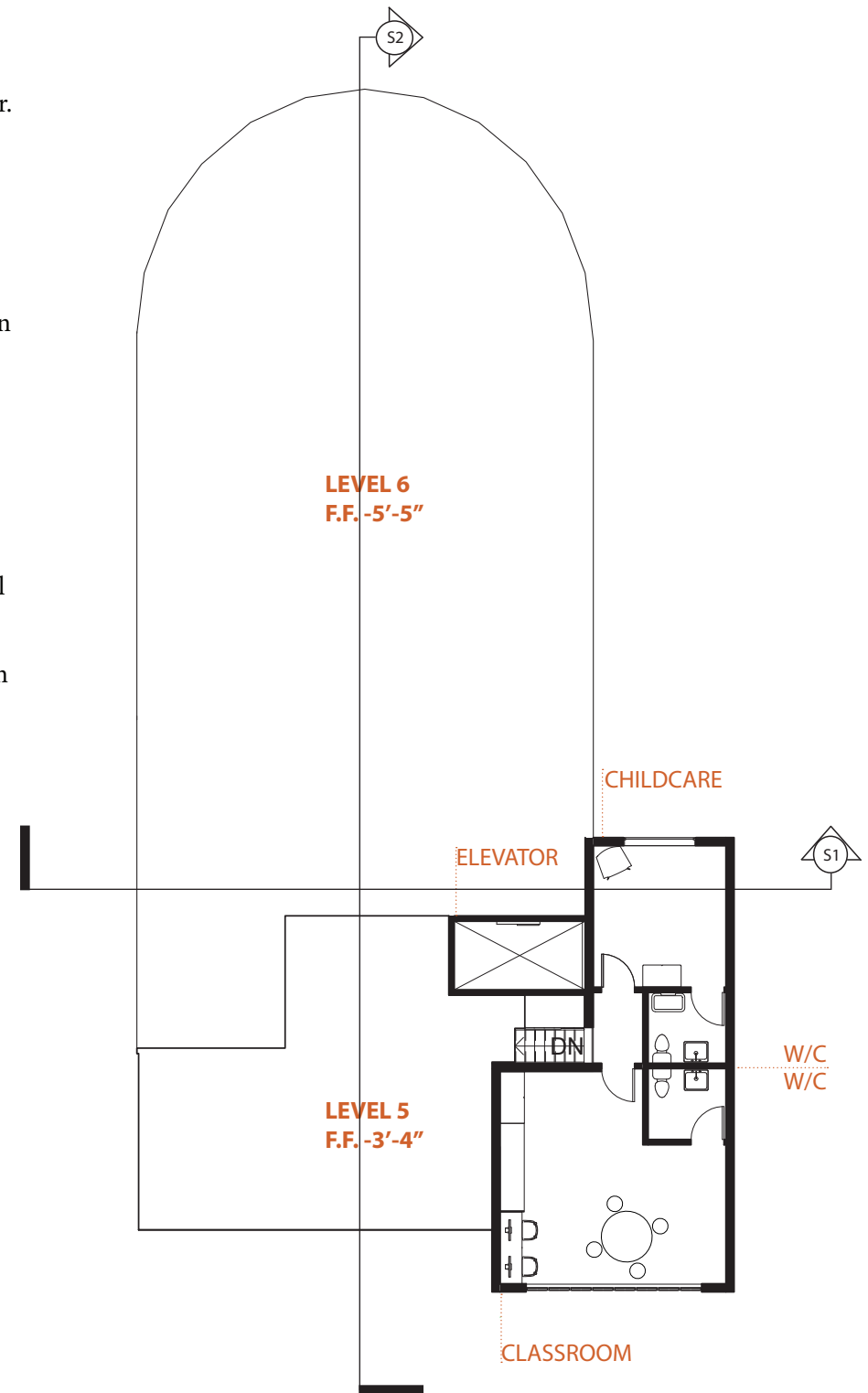


Figure 5.5.10.1  
Plan Drawing of Floor 2, Level 4  
Scale: 1/16"=1'-0"



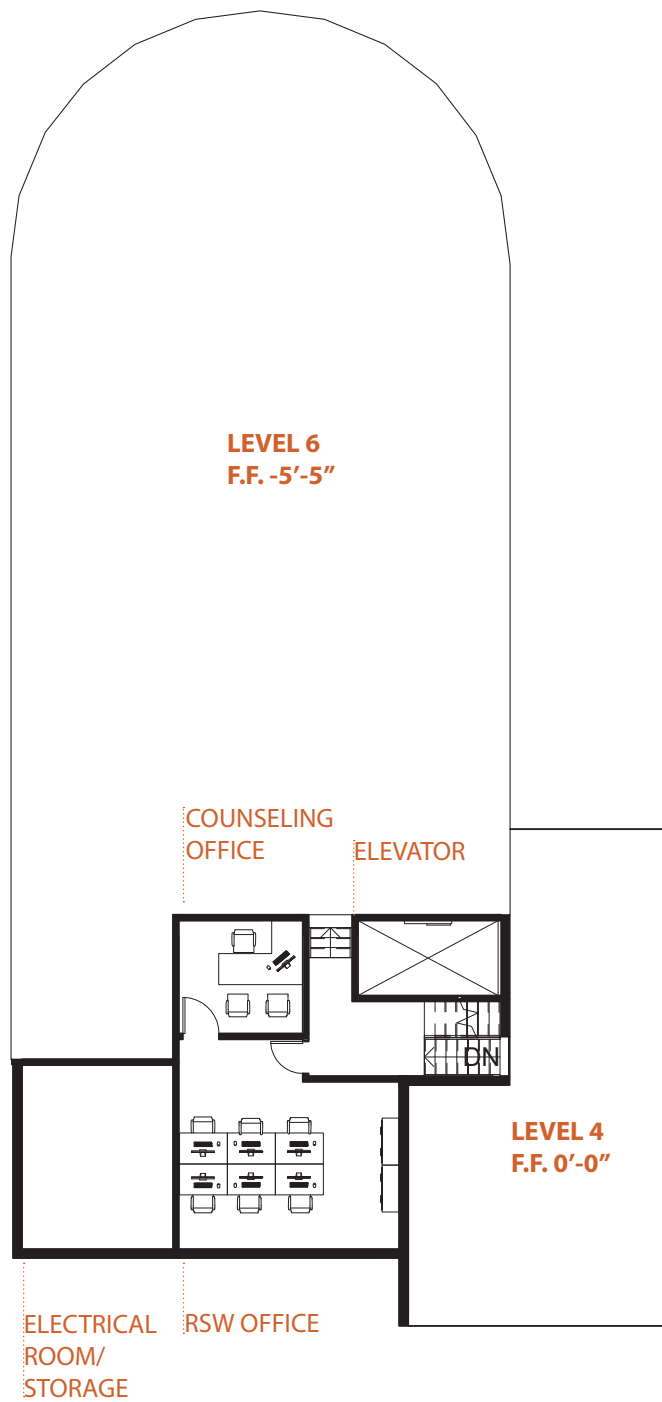


Figure 5.5.10.2  
Plan Drawing of Floor 2, Level 5  
Scale: 1/16"=1'-0"

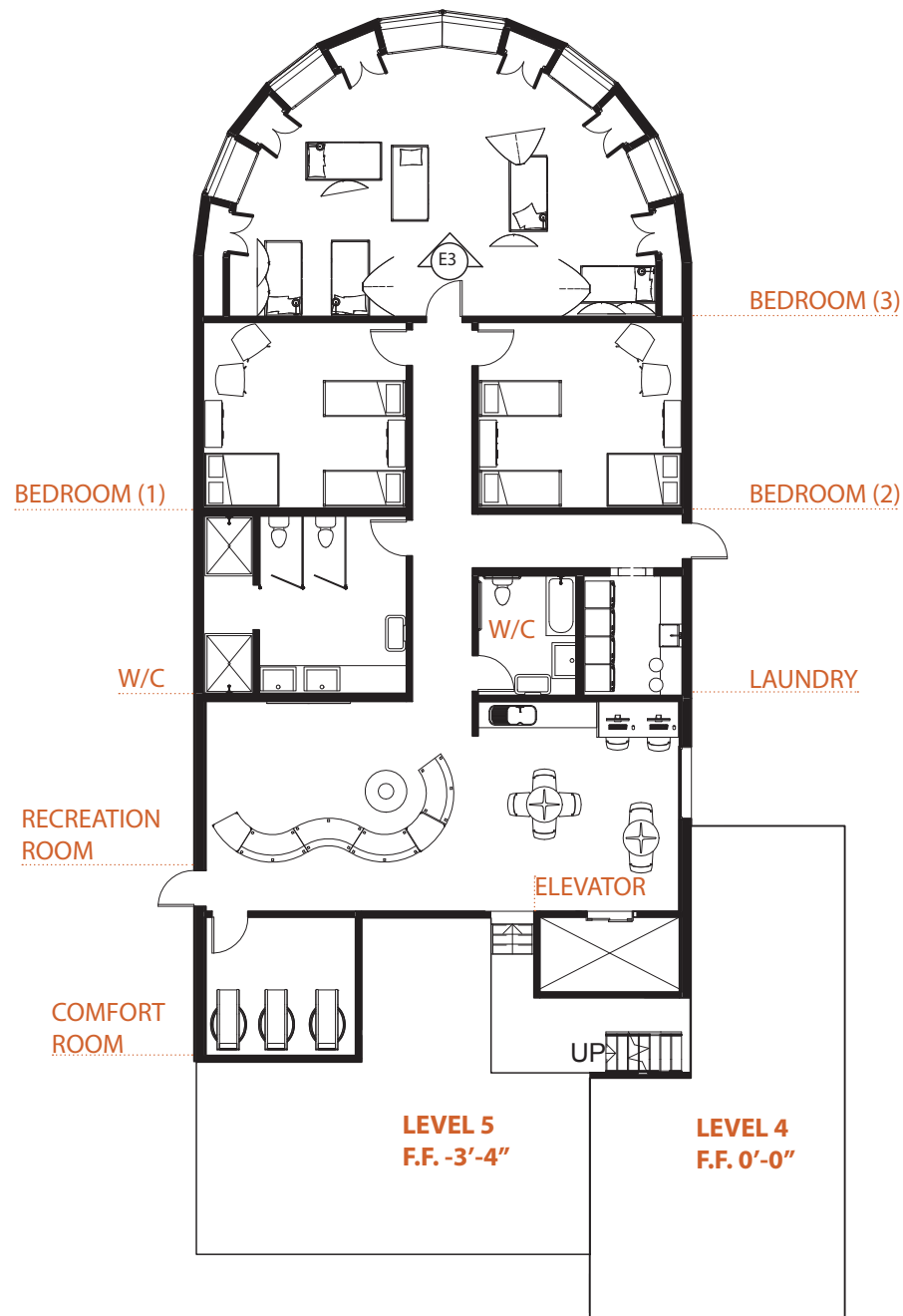


Figure 5.5.10.3  
Plan Drawing of Floor 2, Level 6  
Scale: 1/16"=1'-0"



## 5.5.11 BEDROOM

The large bedroom can accommodate the sleeping and storage needs of ten women and/or children. This space aims to be both flexible and inclusive by combining a communal style of shared space with privacy creating elements.

The design concept of the bedroom is based on my research of gendered space and on a communal use of space that is not uncommon outside of Western culture where family members of multiple generations to live together in close proximity. The closeness amongst residents created by this design encourages interaction and bonding between them in the spirit of women helping women.



Figure 5.5.11.1  
*Perspective of Bedroom*

# BEDROOM

The capacity to create privacy and to customize one's space is highly important and achieved through the use of furniture. Each bed is designed with a padded frame that wraps around three sides of the bed, creating a warm, protective interior space and providing visual and acoustic privacy from other residents. The beds have been designed to be easily moved and can be arranged in various configurations based on the preference of the residents. Additionally, movable, stretched fabric curtains act to partition the room and add another level of privacy. The curtains can be manipulated, allowing residents to create privacy where they require it.

Window seats line the rounded exterior wall of the room and act as designated spaces of calm and quiet. Sitting in these seats, residents will be able to sit quietly and relax while enjoying a view of nature.

Adjacent to the windows seats are vertical storage closets for resident's belongings. Each resident will be designated a closet with locked access to hang their clothes and store their belongings while at Ikwe-Widdjiitwin.

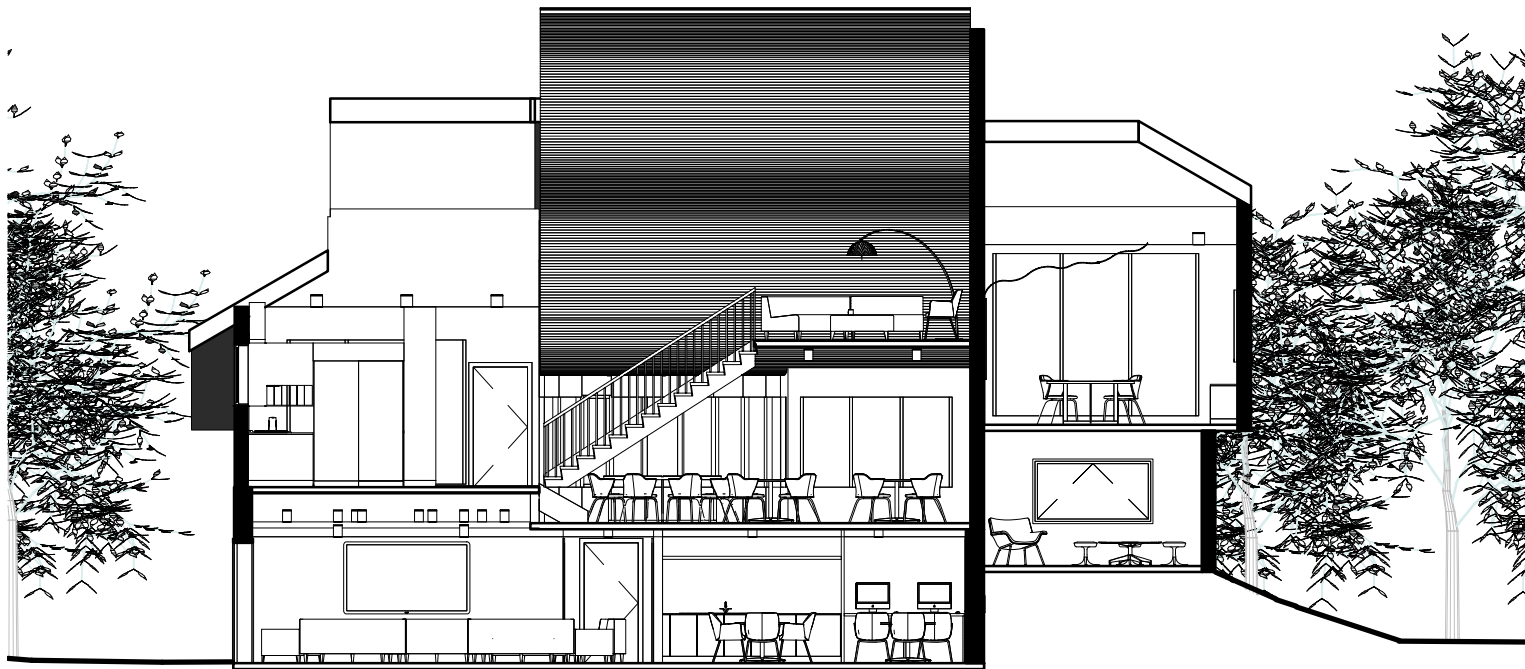


Figure 5.5.11.2 - Elevation 3: Bedroom  
Scale: 3/16"=1'-0"





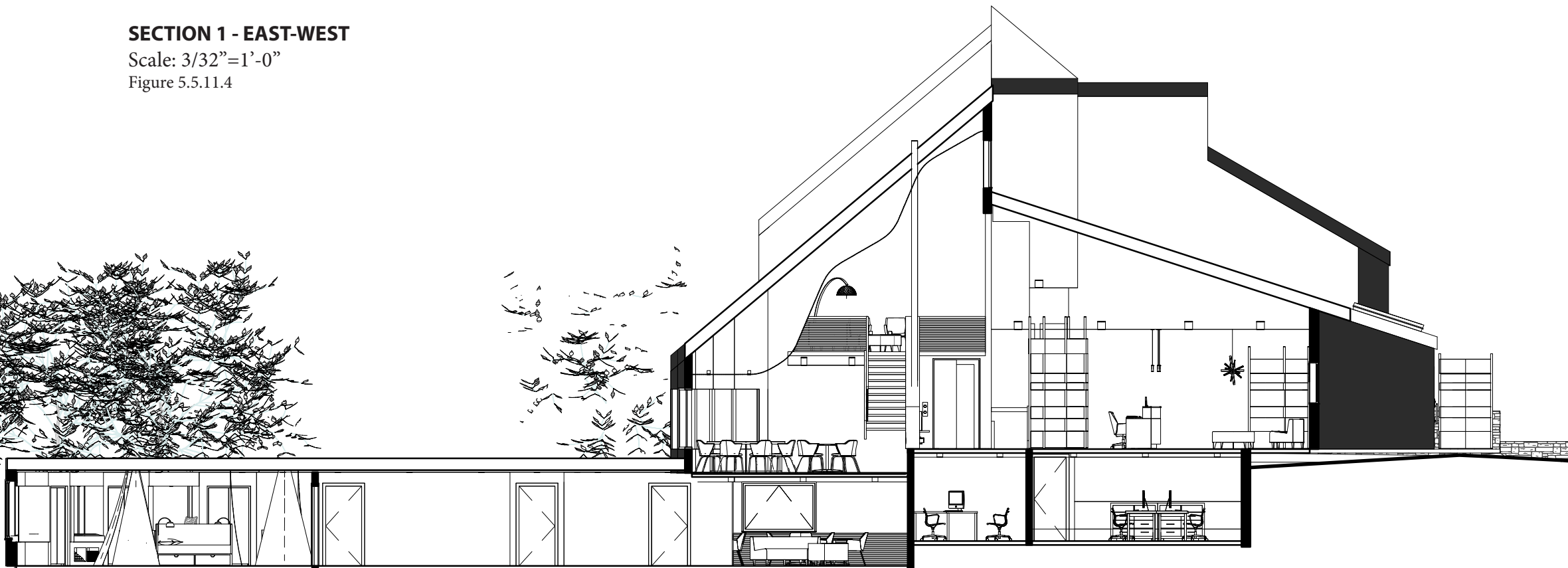
Figure 5.5.11.3  
Perspective of Bedroom



**SECTION 1 - EAST-WEST**

Scale:  $3/32'' = 1'-0''$

Figure 5.5.11.4



**SECTION 2 - NORTH-SOUTH**

Scale:  $3/32'' = 1'-0''$

Figure 5.5.11.5



## 5.5.12 MATERIALS AND FINISHES (1)

Figure 5.5.12.1  
Material Selections

1- CAMBRIA  
BUCKINGHAM, QUARTZ  
(COUNTER TOP)

2- CAMBRIA  
DOVEDALE, QUARTZ  
(COUNTER TOP)

3- GILLIS QUARRIES  
TYNDALL STONE  
(FLOORING)

4- DOVE DOWN  
GLASS TYPE: OPAQUE  
(BACKSLASH)

5- PILKINGTON  
GLASS, UNCOATED, BRONZE  
(RAILING)

6- BRUSHED SILVER (HARDWARE)

7- JOHNSONITE  
GREY HAZE, 24  
(FLOORING)

8- INTERFACE  
MENAGERIE 26Z  
(CARPET)

9- ARMSTRONG  
MAPLE, DURANGO  
(FLOORING)

10- ARMSTRONG  
MAPLE, NATURAL  
(FLOORING)

11- MAHARAM  
CLOAK  
005 PLASTER  
(WALL COVERING)

12- MAHARAM  
DIVINA MELANGE BY KVADRAT  
260  
(UPHOLSTERY)

13- MAHARAM  
HALLINGDAL BY KVADRAT  
674  
(UPHOLSTERY)

14- MAHARAM  
HALLINGDAL BY KVADRAT  
563  
(UPHOLSTERY)

15- MAHARAM  
WAFER  
008 CRAVE  
(UPHOLSTERY)

16-CUSTOM  
BIRCH BARK PATTERN  
(WALL COVERING)

17- CUSTOM  
FUR SEATING  
(UPHOLSTERY)

18- LEATHER  
COLOUR- BROWN

19- MAHARAM  
EXAGGERATED PLAID BY PAUL SMITH  
002 BRAE  
(UPHOLSTERY)

20- SCHUMACHER  
A-TWITTER  
SUMMER  
(WALL COVERING)

21- MAHARAM  
TRANSPARENT STRIPE  
001 UNIQUE  
(WALL COVERING)

## 5.5.13 HEALING SPACE

The healing space is the most important cultural component of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. In this space ceremonies and talking circles take place. The activities occurring in this room remind residents of their Aboriginal heritage and reconnect women to their cultural identity.

The healing space is a 1000 square foot building. Housed in this building is the entrance space, a kitchenette area, an accessible washroom, a ceremonial change room in which the building mechanical components are located and the healing space.

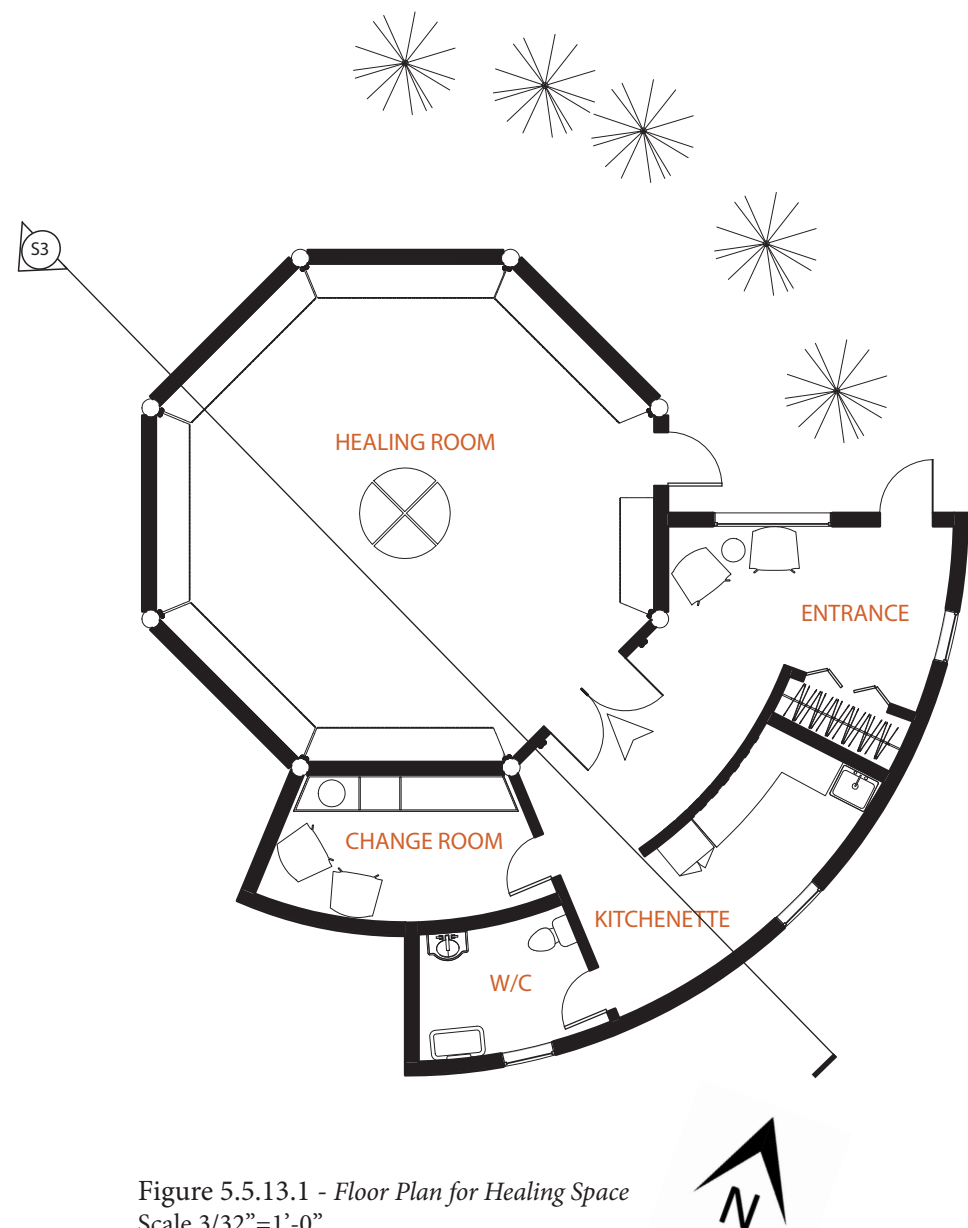


Figure 5.5.13.1 - Floor Plan for Healing Space  
Scale 3/32"=1'-0"



Figure 5.5.13.2  
Exterior Perspective  
of Healing Space

## HEALING SPACE ENTRANCE

A large photograph of a Berens River ceremonial robe hangs opposite the entrance to the Healing Room. The robe depicts healing colours that have been used to inform the colour selection throughout the building. An arrow, made from tyndall stone set into the wood floor points to the centre of the healing room. One enters the healing room from the set of glazed doors that have been oriented east, as was tradition to orient the entrance of tipis towards the rising sun.



Figure 5.5.13.3  
*Perspective of Entrance to Healing Room*

## HEALING ROOM

The large, circular space is a place of emotional and spiritual healing. The atmosphere in the healing room is calm with a sense of openness. The circular form of the room represents balance and harmony, symbolic of the medicine wheel where no one is more prominent than another, all are equal and there is no beginning or end. Seating, lining the perimeter of the room provides comfortable places for women and children to sit. Clerestory windows and a skylight ensure both an abundance of natural light and privacy from outside. The views of the sky combined with natural materials, cedar posts, tyndall stone flooring, and birch bark wall covering establish a strong connection with nature. Proper ventilation to accommodate smudges has been accounted for in the healing room. In addition to the healing activity functions of the space, the room will be used as a multipurpose space for activities such as community gatherings and educational sessions.





Figure 5.5.13.4  
*Perspective of Healing Room*



**SECTION 3 - EAST-WEST**

Scale: 3/32"=1'-0"

Figure 5.5.13.5

## 5.5.14 MATERIALS AND FINISHES



1- ARMSTRONG  
MAPLE, NATURAL  
(FLOORING)

2- ARMSTRONG  
MAPLE, DURANGO  
(FLOORING)

3- GILLIS QUARRIES  
TYNDALL STONE  
(FLOORING)

4- CUSTOM  
FUR SEATING  
(UPHOLSTERY)

5- LEATHER- BROWN  
(UPHOLSTERY)

6- MAHARAM  
CLOAK  
005 PLASTER  
(WALL COVERING)

7-MAHARAM  
DISPERSE  
013 MIDNIGHT  
(UPHOLSTERY)

8-CUSTOM  
BIRCH BARK PATTERN  
(WALL COVERING)

9- SCHUMACHER  
ZEN BAMBOO  
HYACINTH  
(WALL COVERING)

Figure 5.5.14.1- Healing Space- Material Selections

## 5.5.15 FURNITURE SELECTIONS



Figure 5.5.15.1- *Furniture Selections*

1- Circa Tables- Wedge (Coalesse)  
17% Recyclable / 76% Recycled Content

2- Switch Stool (Coalesse)  
Counter or bar height  
88% Recyclable / 13% Recycled Content

3- Circa Modular Seating (Coalesse)  
Straight and wedge seating  
Freestanding, ganging, and end-of-run tables  
25% Recyclable / 1% Recycled Content  
Content: 100% Post-Consumer  
Recycled Polyres  
Finish: PFOA-Free Stain Resistant

4- Circa Tables- Circular (Coalesse)  
Freestanding and end-of-run tables  
17% Recyclable / 76% Recycled Content

5- Capa Chair (Coalesse)  
Stakable to 5 high  
23.4% Recyclable / 91% Recycled Content

6- Coaltrane Light





# CHAPTER 6

## CONCLUSION

*6.1 Summary*

*6.2 Reflections*

*6.2.1 Strengths*

*6.2.2 Challenges*

*6.3 Further Study*

## 6.1 SUMMARY

The first research objective of this practicum project was to investigate how Aboriginal cultural identity can be supported and respected by appropriate interior design. This objective was informed by researching traditional Aboriginal architecture and gendered space from the region of Manitoba, from interviews with staff members of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin, and by exploring the aesthetic qualities of Aboriginal ceremonial robes. The synthesis of these three investigations formed the project's vision of culturally appropriate Aboriginal interior design.

The second research objective was to explore how knowledge of positive gendered space can inform the design of a women's shelter in the twenty-first century. Research into positive gendered space revealed the importance of giving women control over their built environment. This was considered in the final design by incorporating the voices of Aboriginal women into the design process by way of photo-elicitation interviews. Additionally, spaces were designed to allow residents to personalize their bedroom space to reflect their unique needs and preferences, and instill a sense of control over their own path of healing.

The third research objective was to discover how the built environment can connect, or reconnect individuals to their cultural heritage, traditions and sense of self-identity. Background research, interviews and conversations with Aboriginal women revealed the types of spaces and functions that are necessary to give Aboriginal women the opportunity to take part in cultural activities should they chose to. These design accommodations included spaces for cultural activities, spaces for smudging, spaces that can accommodate adaptations for future needs, and spaces for teaching. The use of symbols was also important to serve as a reminder of Aboriginal culture. The aim of Ikwe is to allow women to select their own path of healing. Should that involve reconnecting with their culture, the design of the facility of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin is equipped to meet their needs.



## 6.2 REFLECTIONS

As previously discussed, the main objective of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin was to design a space that meaningfully reflected Aboriginal culture, a space that acknowledged the traditional past, while simultaneously meeting the needs of contemporary Aboriginal women. I sought to go beyond a superficial interpretation of Aboriginal culture, in which finishes and symbols can be heavily relied upon; instead, I attempted to represent and incorporate aspects of Aboriginal identity throughout the design process in an authentic and organic way. Most importantly, I wanted to avoid a kitsch expression of Aboriginal culture in the design of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin.

Throughout the course of this project, I conducted interviews, held meetings, and had informal conversations with Aboriginal women. During these conversations, some women gave examples of Aboriginal design which they had experienced and enjoyed. Some of the spaces they identified could be described as Aboriginal themed spaces, with overt displays of key symbols and patterns, but lacking in authentic elements of the Aboriginal culture. Thus, it seemed that there was inconsistency between some of the women's perceptions of good Aboriginal design, and what I had come to consider as culturally appropriate, good Aboriginal interior design. While many theories may be surmised to explain this disconnect, upon much reflection I have drawn several conclusions.

My first conclusion is that it is significant for Aboriginal people to have their own culturally appropriate space. While the examples of design given by the women may have not been excellent examples from an interior design perspective, they were highly valued spaces because they distinctly represented Aboriginal culture. The design helped create a sense of community and belonging for the Aboriginal people through the use of space.

My second conclusion is that the residential school generation is still searching for their identity. Years of chronic, systematic erosion of culture has left many Aboriginal people disconnected from their heritage, and uncertain about how to honor their traditional culture while living untraditional, modern lifestyles. A recurrent theme in my interviews was the deep desire of Aboriginal people to reclaim their culture, but uncertainty about how to do so. I believe the Aboriginal culture is slowly beginning to heal, and the identity of Aboriginal people is strengthening. As this continues, I hope we will see a greater number of Aboriginal design projects that more accurately represent Aboriginal culture, past and present.

### 6.2.1 STRENGTHS

Working on this project with a real client, Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin, gave me the guidance and support to design an Aboriginal women's shelter with a high degree of realism. The staff of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin were generous with their time and knowledge, teaching me both about the shelter as an organization, and the lived experiences of Aboriginal women. Getting to know the staff and some of the residents on my visits to the shelter gave me a greater understanding of the user groups I was designing for.

A second strength of the project was being able to conduct interviews with the staff members of Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin. The interviews were effective in giving Aboriginal women a voice in the design process, which contributed invaluable information to the project. Photo-elicitation proved a valuable method of inquiry for cross-cultural research; presenting the interviewees with photographs prompted discussion and revealed valuable information that would likely not have been learnt from a structured interview designed by a cultural outsider.

### 6.2.2 CHALLENGES

This project presented me with the challenge of trying to understand and design for a group of people from a cultural background different to my own. Over the course of this project, I have tried to become informed about the traditions and culture of Manitoba's Aboriginal people. Throughout this learning process, I have observed a fluidness in Aboriginal culture which makes it fascinating and dynamic, but also challenging to learn about as an outsider. Customs and traditions can be adapted, and change quite freely. I have also found the element of spirituality in Aboriginal culture to be something that cannot be accurately explained in writing. In my experience, the best way to learn about Aboriginal culture is through conversations with Aboriginal people, and by experiencing Aboriginal traditions when possible.

While I stated earlier that one of the strengths of this project was working with a real client, it was also one of the challenges. During the design process, the client, guided me in the design, and based on the strength of this relationship with Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin, there were some restrictions in the final outcome. Working within an existing program limited the types of spaces I could design, and in some cases, the direction taken in the design.

Another challenge of this design project were the constraints imposed by the existing building; in particular the multi-level nature of the original architecture. Working with the existing levels limited the openness of the space, and the size of some spaces. The multiple levels provided further challenges with regard to programming and the accessibility of the shelter. The two door elevator allows physically disabled residents to access all of the vitals spaces of Ikwe-Widdjiitwin.

## 6.3 FURTHER STUDY

To determine the success of this design in improving the healing experience of Aboriginal women seeking shelter at Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin, residents and staff would have to be consulted. Since the proposed design is not being built, residents and staff at the existing Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin facility could be asked for feedback on the final design drawings.

In reflection, this project could have benefitted from research into women's shelters as a design typology. This could have either been part of the literature review or as a section on design precedents. Having done so would have allowed me to identify elements common to shelter design that may have been missed in my own design.

As an interior design practicum, the final design focused primarily on the interior spaces of the shelter. Interviews with staff, however, yielded many design ideas for outdoor elements, such as a children's play structure, a covered outdoor eating area, and a sweat lodge. While the suggestions from staff have been acknowledged in Chapter 3, the scope of this practicum does not include an in depth exploration of the outdoor landscape or any additional buildings or structures. With more time and working in collaboration with a landscape architect, the next step in this project would be to develop the outdoor space as an important cultural component to complement the interior design of the shelter and healing room.



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# APPENDIX

**APPENDIX A- Building Code Analysis**

**APPENDIX B- Lighting Plans**

**APPENDIX C- Ethics Review**

# APPENDIX A- BUILDING CODE ANALYSIS

The National Building Code of Canada 2010 was used to ensure that designs presented in Chapter 5 would meet the building bylaws of Canada and would provide safety to all users of *Ikwe*.

## PART 3: Fire Protection, Occupant Safety and Accessibility

### SECTION 3.1. GENERAL

#### 3.1.2.1. Classification of Buildings

*Ikwe* is an emergency shelter facility that includes residences for users as well as gathering areas, kitchen areas and personal services. Thus, according to the table 3.1.2.1., the housing facility has been classified as the following:

Group A (Division 2): Assembly occupancies not elsewhere classified in Group A

Group C (Division -): Residential occupancies

Group D (Division -): Business and personal services occupancies

#### 3.1.3. Multiple Occupancy Requirements

According to Table 3.1.3.1., the minimum fire-resistance rating of fire separations between the adjoining major occupancies in *Ikwe* are all 1 hour.

#### 3.1.17. Occupant Load

Based on Table 3.1.17.1., the occupant loads per floor are as follows:

##### 1st floor

Assembly uses: 28

Residential uses: 20

Residential uses: 20

Business and personal services uses: 8

Other uses: 4

Total: 80

##### 2nd floor

Assembly uses: 43

Business and personal services uses: 10

Other uses: 4

Total: 57

##### Healing Room

Assembly uses: 60

Other uses: 2

Total: 62

### SECTION 3.2. BUILDING FIRE SAFETY

#### 3.2.1. General

*Ikwe* consists of 2 storeys and faces 1 street

#### 3.2.2.6. Multiple Major Occupancies

"... in a building containing more than one major occupancy, the requirements of this Subsection for the most restricted major occupancy contained shall apply to the whole building" (NBC 2010, 3-35 Division B).

### **3.2.2.10. Streets**

South side of *Ikwe* faces River Avenue, therefore the building is considered to face one street.

### **3.2.2.53. Group C, up to 3 Storeys, Sprinklered**

Based on Sentences 3.2.2.53.(1), 3.2.2.53.(2), and 3.2.2.53.(3) *Ikwe* is summarized as follows:

Construction: Combustible

Floor Assemblies: Fire separations with a fire-resistance rating not less than 45 mins

Load bearing wall, columns and arches: Fire-resistance rating of 1 hour

In buildings in which there is no dwelling unit above another dwelling unit, the fire resistance rating for the floor assemblies entirely within the dwelling unit is waived.

Sprinklered: Yes

### **3.2.4. Fire Alarm and Detection Systems**

#### **3.2.4.1. Determination of Requirement for a Fire Alarm System**

*Ikwe* requires a fire alarm system since it is installed with an automatic sprinkler system.

#### **3.2.7.3. Emergency Lighting**

“Emergency lighting shall be provided to an average level of illumination not less than 10 lx at floor or tread level in

- a) exits,
- b) principle routes providing access to exit in open floor areas and in service rooms,
- c) corridors used by the public,
- f) corridors serving classrooms,
- j) floor areas or parts thereof of daycare centres where persons are cared for, and food preparation areas in commercial kitchens” (NBC, 2010, 3-92 Division B).

#### **3.2.8.4. Sprinklers**

*Ikwe* contains an interconnected floor space therefore it must be sprinklered throughout.

#### **3.2.8.5. Vestibules**

The staircase adjacent to the interconnected floor space should be protected by vestibules. Consideration of this should be made in the final design of *Ikwe*.

## **Section 3.3. Safety within Floor Areas**

### **3.3.1. All Floor Areas**

#### **3.3.1.1. Separation of Suites**

Each suite shall be separated from adjoining suites by a fire separation having a fire-resistance rating not less than 1 hour.

#### **3.3.1.4. Public Corridor Separations**

No fire-resistance rating is required for a fire separation between a public corridor and the remainder of the storey since each storey is sprinklered throughout

#### **3.3.1.5. Egress Doorways**

*Ikwe* has minimum of 2 egress doorways in all rooms and suites with the exception given for dwelling units.

#### **3.3.1.9. Corridors**

1) Minimum width of a public corridor is 1100mm wide. Most of the corridors in *Ikwe* are 5ft wide (1524mm).

#### **3.3.1.22. Common Laundry Rooms**

The fire separation is not required to have a fire-resistance rating since floor area in which the laundry room is located is sprinklered throughout.

### **3.3.4. Residential Occupancy**

#### **3.3.4.2. Fire Separations**

1) "... suites of residential occupancy must be separated from each other and the remainder of the building by a fire separation having a fire-resisting rating not less than 1 hour" (NBC, 2010, 3-113 Division B).

3) Conforming to the Sentence 3.3.4.2.(3)(a & b), floor assemblies within a dwelling unit need not be constructed as fire separations.

#### **3.3.4.3. Storage Rooms**

Sprinklers must be installed in a storage room along with a separation from the remainder of the building by a fire separation having a fire-resistance rating not less than 1 hour.

## **Section 3.4. Exits**

### **3.4.2. Number and Location of Exits from Floor Areas**

#### **3.4.2.1. Minimum Number of Exits**

Every floor area intended for occupancy shall be served by at least 2 exits.

#### **3.4.4. Fire Separation of Exits**

Every exit must be separated from the remainder of the building by a fire separation having fire-resistance rating of 1 hour.

#### **3.4.5. Exit Signs**

Every exit door that conform to section 3.4.5.1.(1), must have an exit sign placed over or adjacent to each exit.

## **Section 3.7. Health Requirements**

### **3.7.2.2. Water Closets**

*Ikwe* provides male and female water closets in accordance to the Table 3.7.2.2.A. and Table 3.7.2.2.B.

The number of water closets required for childcare centre/classroom conform to Sentence 3.7.2.2.(7).

## **Section 3.8. Barrier-Free Design**

### **3.8.1.3. Barrier-Free Path of Travel**




All *Ikwe's* interior and exterior walking surfaces are designed to be barrier-free.

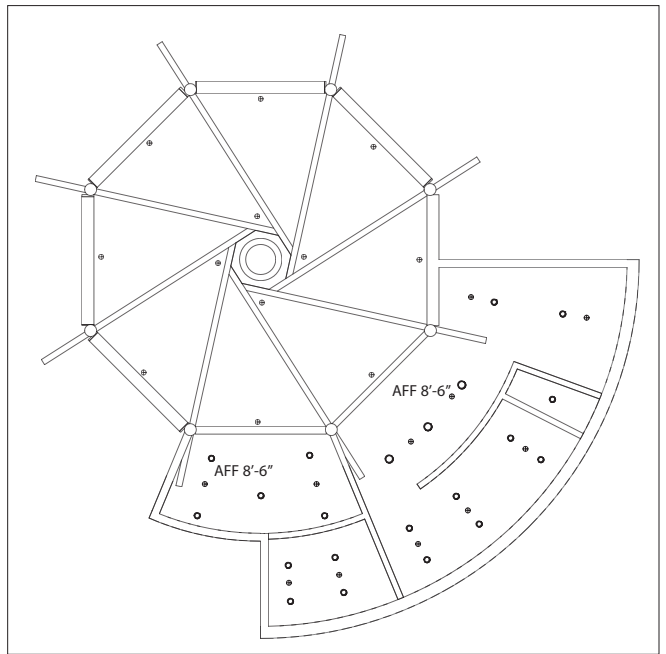
### **3.8.2.3. Washrooms Required to be Barrier-Free**

Each floor consists of a minimum of 1 barrier-free washroom.

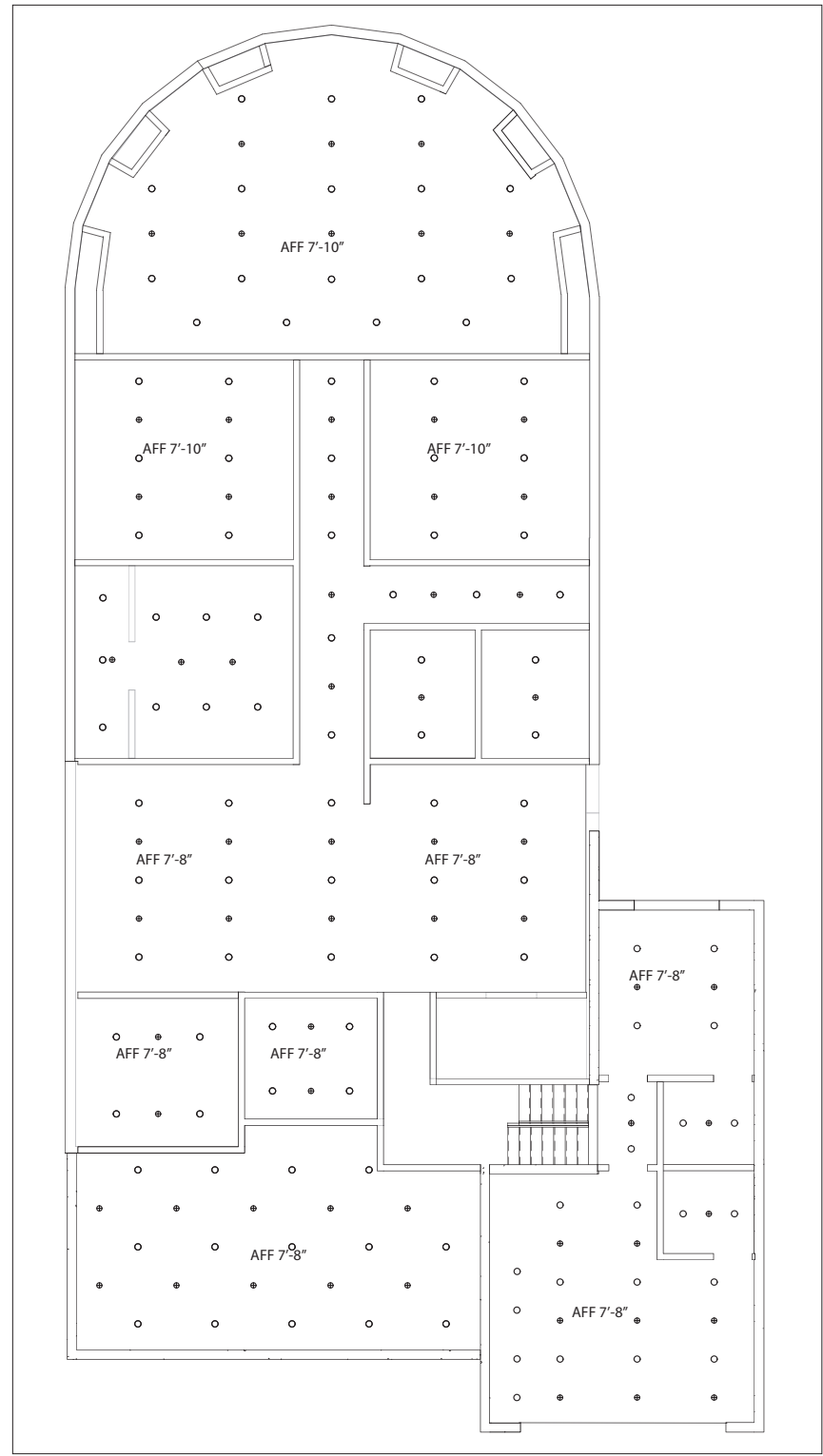
# APPENDIX B- REFLECTED CEILING PLAN

**LEGEND**

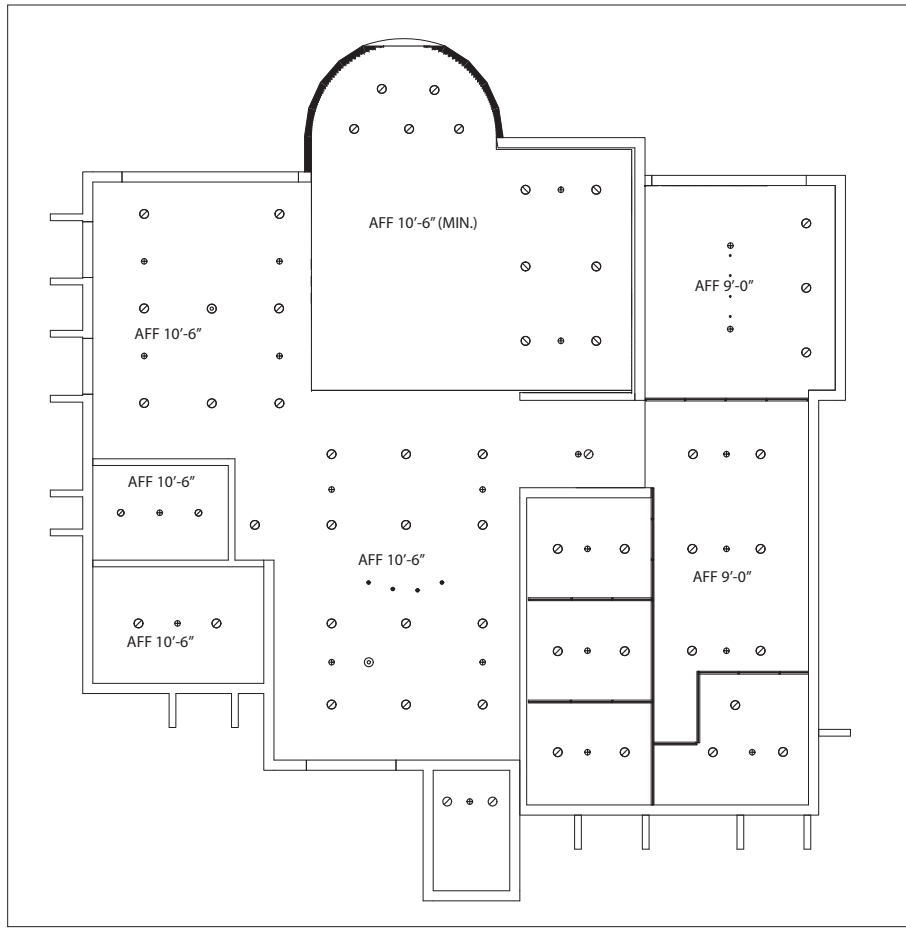
 SPRINKLER
  RECESSED FLUORESCENT LIGHT FIXTURE
  SUSPENDED FLUORESCENT LIGHT FIXTURE



REFLECTED CEILING PLAN- *Healing Room*  
Scale: 3/16"=1'-0"



REFLECTED CEILING PLAN- *Floor 2, Shelter.*  
Scale: 3/16"=1'-0"



REFLECTED CEILING PLAN- *Floor 1, Shelter.*  
Scale: 3/16"=1'-0"

# APPENDIX C- ETHICS REVIEW

## ETHICS PROTOCOL SUBMISSION FORM

**Ethics Protocol Submission Form**  
**Required Information about the Research Protocol**  
Jennifer Norrie (7643005)  
Department of Interior Design, Faculty of Architecture

### 1. Summary of Project:

My Masters of Interior Design practicum project will look at the design of an emergency women's shelter in Winnipeg intended specifically for aboriginal women. I am very interested in designing an environment that promotes safety and healing by employing culturally appropriate design. Part of my practicum will involve a case study of Ikwe Widdjiitiwin Shelter.

It is my intention to interview six shelter staff workers, with the ultimate objective to gain greater insight into the current design of Ikwe Shelter from the perspective of its inhabitants. This insight will be used to inform my decision-making for a proposed future design of Ikwe Widdjiitiwin Shelter.

Interviews with shelter staff workers will be carried out using photo-elicitation, an ethnographic interview technique that relies on photographs taken of the interior to elicit responses from the interviewees (Cranz and Pavlides 2012, 299). The photos shown to the interviewee will be of familiar interior spaces of Ikwe Widdjiitiwin Shelter. The aim is to collect feedback on the inhabitant's experiences, and potentially discover design issues that would otherwise go unaddressed in the design process.

### Interview Procedures:

Participants will be interviewed individually in a private office in Ikwe Widdjiitiwin Shelter. Each participant will be shown 15 photographs one at a time, in the same order. Interviewees will be given a chance to review each photograph and to respond to general questions such as: "What takes place here?", "How does this place make you feel?", "In what way is this a good place?", "How would you change this place to make it a better place for what takes place here?". This technique allows for the interviewee to select what aspects of the photograph are important for discussion (Cranz and Pavlides 2012, 300).

The duration of the interview will be determined by how long the interviewees choose to discuss the photographs. Each interview will be recorded using an audio recording device.

### 2. Research Instruments:

The research instruments will include a set of 15 photographs of the interior space of Ikwe Widdjiitiwin Shelter for participants to review. These photographs will represent a range of interior spaces that people either working or living in the shelter may encounter on a daily basis and will include photographs of private, semi-private and private spaces. If a photograph is of an individual's room, for example, there will be no personal items visible that may identify the occupant or otherwise compromise their privacy. The photographs have yet to be taken. They will be exclusively of the interior space of the shelter, they will not be people in any of the photographs.

At the consent of participants, an audio record will be made of the interviews. I will record the interviews directly to my laptop.

### 3. Participants:

The participants in my interviews will all be members of the Ikwe Widdjiitiwin Shelter staff. Shelter director, Marie Lands, has agreed to assist me in the interviewee selection process. An ideal set of participants would include those who have worked at the shelter for long enough to be personally familiar with the interior shelter environment, have access to a variety of or all spaces in the shelter, and be represent a range of staff roles, for example: office, staff, custodial staff, food preparing staff, crisis line staff.

I will contact staff members selected by Ms. Lands and ask if they would be willing to participate in interview. At this point, they will be given full information of what will be required of them. If they choose to decline, I will contact other staff as recommended by Marie until I have the consent of six participants.

I do not anticipate there to be any characteristics of the participants that would make them especially vulnerable or require extra precautions.

### 4. Informed Consent:

Written consent will be obtained from all participants. The consent form contains all the information they will need to make an informed choice as to whether they wish to participate or not (see "Consent Form" example provided in Appendix A). No confidential records will be consulted. This research will not involve any participants who are not able to give legal consent on their own.

### 5. Deception:

No form of deception will be employed in this research.

### 6. Feedback/Debriefing:

Participants will be asked if they wish to be given a summary of the results. I will provide this summary to participants via email or if they prefer in person to the shelter no later than two weeks after the last interview is carried out. I will also be giving Ikwe Widdjiitiwin Shelter a copy of my final practicum document as a token of my appreciation for their help and cooperation through the process. The consent form also gives participants information about the summary they will receive.

**7. Risks and Benefits:**

There are no risks to participants. Ikwe Widdjiitiwin Shelter is aiming to have a new building in the next five years. Participants will benefit from knowing that their participation in providing documented feedback on their current shelter may potentially help to inform a future design.

**8. Anonymity or Confidentiality:**

The data collected will be audio recordings of the interviewee giving their descriptions and recalling their experiences of various interior spaces in Ikwe Shelter. Each interview will be given a number for differentiation only. Interviewees will be identified as “staff person of” or “staff of Ikwe Widdjiitiwin Shelter” and will not, in any way, be identified individually. Chances of being personally identified are extremely low as Ikwe Widdjiitiwin Shelter does not publicly release the name of their staff. Audio recordings of the interviews will be stored on my personal computer which is always in my possession or in a secure place. I plan to complete this practicum in the fall of 2012, recordings will be destroyed immediately following.

**9. Compensation:**

There will be no financial compensation for the interview participations. Interviews will take place during working hours, therefore participating in the interview should not require any additional time or money on the part of participants.

**10. Dissemination:**

Once complete, my Masters of Interior Design Practicum document, which will include generalized results of my case study and photo-elicitation interviews, will be publicly available on-line through M Space and the University of Manitoba library. A small number copies of my practicum project will also be printed. I may also present the results of my Practicum in future academic conferences (i.e. poster, session, seminar).

Cranz, G. and E. Pavlides (2012). Ethnographic Methods in Support of Architectural Practice. In S. Mallory-Hill, W. Preiser, and C. Watson (Eds.), *Enhancing Building Performance* (pp. 299-311). United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell

# PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM



UNIVERSITY  
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## PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Project Title: Rethinking the Design of Women's Shelters:  
A Case Study of Ikwe Widdjiitiwin Shelter

### Why have you been invited to participate?

You are being asked to participate in a study to evaluate how well Ikwe Widdjiitiwin Shelter functions from the perspective of someone who works or lives there. This study will gather feedback from the inhabitants in order to apply this knowledge to a future design proposal for Ikwe Widdjiitiwin Shelter.

The information in this letter is intended to help you understand exactly what we are asking of you so that you can decide whether or not you want to participate in this study. Please read this consent form carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. Please take whatever time you want before reaching a decision Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and a decision not to participate will not in any way be used against you.

### Why is the study being done?

My name is Jennifer Norrie. I am a master's student from the Department of Interior Design at the University of Manitoba. As you will be aware, violence against women is a major social issue in Canada today which means women's shelters play an essential role in the local community. As a designer, I am interested in the design of women's shelters and specifically those with cultural affiliations. For these reasons my thesis design project, called a "Practicum", is to propose a new design for the Ikwe Widdjiitiwin Shelter. This means that I will be gathering information on the current building in order to get feedback on what aspects could be improved to make a better interior environment for all who use this space. I will then be applying this knowledge to my own design proposal.

### What will you be asked to do?

I am looking for interested staff members to participate in an interview. This interview is done one-on-one with me, and would take place in a private space at Ikwe Widdjiitiwin Shelter. It will take approximately one hour.

Over the course of the interview, you will be asked to review 20 photographs taken of various spaces in Ikwe Widdjiitiwin Shelter and be asked to comment on them about their own experiences of the space. Each interview will be recorded using an audio recording device. Recordings of the interview will be kept private and destroyed in the fall of 2012. If you choose to participate in this interview, a copy of this letter of consent, signed by you, will

be given to you at the time of the interview for their own retention. In my final practicum document, the group of interviewees will be identified as "staff members of Ikwe Widdjiitiwin Shelter". No one will be identified individually.

### Potential harms / inconveniences / benefits

As a participant, you will be provided with access to a summary of the results via email or a hard copy can be delivered to the shelter no later than two weeks after the last interview is carried out. I will also be giving Ikwe Widdjiitiwin Shelter a hard cover copy of my final practicum document as a token of my appreciation for their help and cooperation through the process.

### Privacy and confidentiality

All audio recordings will be stored on a secure laptop computer. All audio recordings will be destroyed upon the completion of this practicum project, with the projected date to be fall 2012. All information gathered will be confidential. Unless required by law, no information that might directly or indirectly reveal your identity will be released or published without your specific consent to the disclosure. Your employer will not be given access to the individual responses. Information will only be based on group average data. Due to the small number of staff at Ikwe Widdjiitiwin Shelter, participants should be aware that it may be possible for other co-workers to identify the participants despite not using their names in the practicum document.

### You have the right to change your mind

Your participation is entirely voluntary. Should you decide to participate in this research, you always have the right to end your participation **at any time** and for any reason by asking the interviewer to end the session. You may also withdraw from the study following the interview at any point up to September 1st, 2012.

### Who to contact if you have any further concerns or questions?

Should you have any concerns or questions please contact Jennifer Norrie at 952-6118.

### Ethics review

This study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Manitoba Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board. The University of Manitoba may look at the research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way. Any complaints or concerns about the ethics of this study may be directed to Margaret Bowman, Coordinator of the REB at 474-7122 or [margaret\\_bowman@umanitoba.ca](mailto:margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca)

### How to participate

If you agree to participate in this survey, please sign below:

Participant Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

If you agree to be audio-recorded during this survey, please sign below:

Participant Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM





