Reconstructing Relationships Within the Urban Park

By

Peter William Siry

A Practicum
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of

Master of Landscape Architecture

Department of Landscape Architecture
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba

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BY

PETER WILLIAM SIRY

A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the degree

of

MASTER OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

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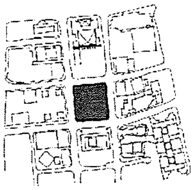
reconstructing relationships within the urban park



Sir Winston Churchill Square

Edmonton Alberta

prepared by:
peter william siry
department of landscape architecture
faculty of graduate studies
university of manitoba

prepared for:
alan tate - chair
marcella eaton
douglas carlyle

08.16.01

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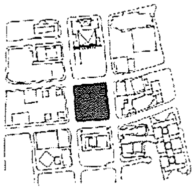

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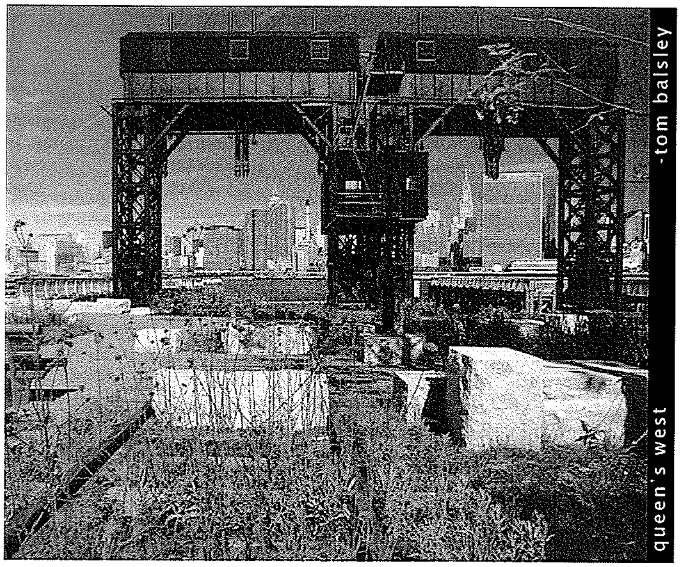
1.0 Introduction

The role of ecology in cities is at the root of much of landscape architectural discourse today. Whether this discourse revolves around the contrasting characteristics of nature and urbanity, art and science, or ecology and infrastructure, the argument derives from variations in the way people view, understand, depict, alter, and speak of the natural environment of which we are a part.

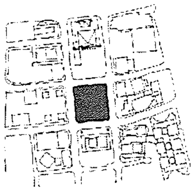
The scope of this research deals with two processes that are central to the work of landscape architecture: creativity and ecology. The work also addresses urban fragmentation, or the inability to see the urban environment as part of an encompassing whole of mutually interdependent systems. This fragmentation, created, to some degree, through the estrangement of culture from nature, supports a legacy of juxtaposition of ecology against the city, where the urban landscape can be either interpreted as isolated or appropriated from the city depending on perception. This dualistic relationship results in many (mis)conceptions about the profession of landscape architecture by both the creator (designer) and the user (public).(Corner, Olin, Johnson: Ecological Planning & Design, 1997)

Faced with an ever-increasing awareness of local and global environmental decline, current instrumentalist[1] approaches toward ecology in landscape architectural design and planning have altered the perceptions and definitions of “ecology”, “nature”, “landscape”, and “environment” to such a point that they are considered separate from, and external to, culture. Despite the acknowledgement of our growing isolation and detachment from nature, a large portion of today’s public open spaces and urban parks have been, and continue to be, based on 18th and 19th century artistic and romantic ideologies.[2] Ideologies that not only promote human domination over nature but also neglect contemporary social and cultural advancements and problems. Furthermore, the urban condition today is one in which architecture, landscape, and infrastructure are not understood as part of a unified order or cohesive plan.


-tom balsley

queen's west

As world cultures become more dependent on technology to make “a more perfect world”, the traditional connections of place and identity are decaying into remnants of images and experiences. With increasingly nomadic lifestyles, “The individual is no longer part of a culture” … “Instead we are members of the urban caste, left to sort for ourselves

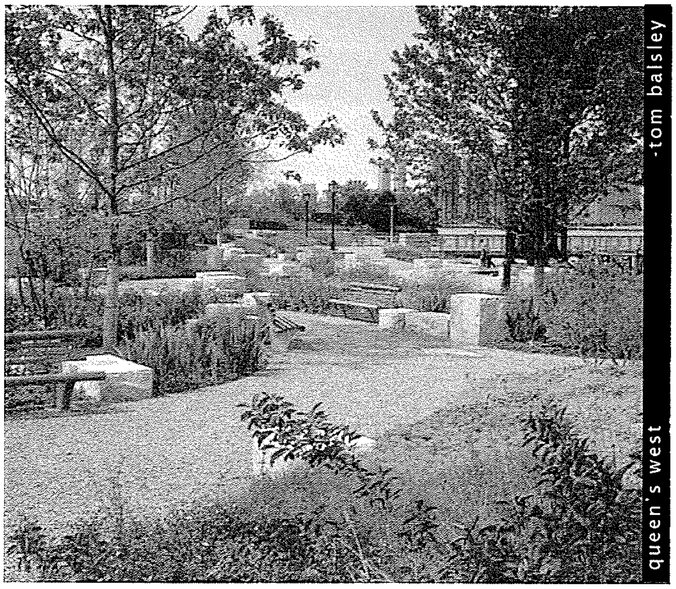


our experience, identity, and the messages of the city."[3] Our patterns of behavior are similar, but the similarities of experiences do not converge to create common values as they did in pre-automobile, traditional cities.

With technology not only being perceived and welcomed as having overtaken (or attempting to control) nature as the prevailing determining mark of our cities, ecological systems in urban areas have become extremely vulnerable through human efforts to survive without them, or in spite of them. With so much reliance and energy spent on technological advancement, technology has become a type of artificial nature that can be analyzed in ecological terms. More accurately, our technological culture is one ecology, in which nature and technology intentionally mesh.

With the advancement and proliferation of information technologies, the world and its problems have touched the home, private relationships and thoughts. This instantaneous information can affect the individual in even guarded moments of privacy through radio, television, video, and the Internet. As technology continues to blur the distinction between the private and public domain, it has been suggested that "...societies should explore how intimacy of a different type can become possible in public spaces."[4] An intimacy that allows the rethinking of public spaces not only in terms of it's spatial concerns, but also in terms of it's social instrumentality. Potential artistic, ecological and cultural issues are also central to creating truly meaningful and socially inclusive spaces.

Left as remnants after the rapid growth of suburbia, and the "mallification" of the landscape, downtown cores continue to illustrate a decline or disappearance of a meaningful "civic life". One of the critical issues for the 21st century will be the revitalizing of our cities, including the rehabilitation of their degraded natural environments and public spaces. As cultures continue to evolve and become more homogeneous, there is a need for the creation of spaces that are more expressive and symbolic of both the cultural and social structures that shape the urban environment. These places would not only reflect a connection between who we are and where we are in relation to the rest of the world, but instill a sense of pride and history back into the heart of the city that both culture and technology have blurred. Designs for new parks and urban spaces play an important role in the reinstallation of these themes by not only functioning as instruments for the exploration of philosophical and social questions, but by allowing society to engage in collective acts. "Parks, after all, are where we go to attain relief from modern pressures - not to encounter them."[5]



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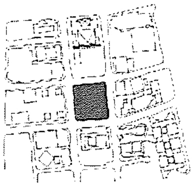
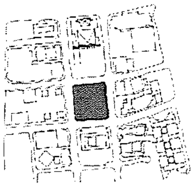
Ultimately, it is the intention of this practicum to not only examine and trace how the emergence of differing beliefs, customs, and technological advances within a society (western Canadian) have served to separate ecology from culture, but to propose one solution that illustrates a reconciliation of these systems. Through an acquired understanding of how these developing factors have served to displace traditional values and have also altered the perception and definition of public urban place making, a truly representative and appropriate model of future urban spaces can be produced. In such a model, urban spaces would be able to facilitate the exploration of how art, ecology, history and landscape architecture might be combined. Urban spaces could produce alternative relationships between people, place, material, and earth. Urban spaces are necessary "to create relationships between incomplete things and events, to give structure to isolated phenomena in a world which is fragmented, discontinuous, and incomplete."[6] In addition, it is important to acknowledge how differing forms of technology can be employed in conjunction with ecology to produce and enhance other ways of seeing and making the world, in which opposing thoughts will complement one another in a mutual process.

In this exploration, it will not only be valuable to address current discourse on public urban spaces, but also beneficial to acknowledge the evolution and role of the urban park. This evolution will both outline the changing perceptions of urban spaces and also allow for the evaluation of precedent in the creation of (future) contemporary spaces. It is intended that through the creation of more meaningful urban places, designs which are neither "empty vessels", nor "deterministic compositions" can provoke an awareness of the relationships between culture, art, geography, ecology, and technology. The solution to this lack of awareness will ultimately lessen the degree of estrangement between culture and ecology, and between creativity and technology.



"It is time to employ one of the greatest human talents, the ability to manipulate the environment, to transform an environment that has become hostile to life itself into a humane habitat which sustains life and nurtures growth, both personal and collective."

Anne Spirn, 1984. The Granite Garden



2.0 Methodology

In attempting to interpret and suggest what the form and expression of a contemporary park might be, it is important to understand the evolution of the park, and also what events and changes in our lives have led to the removal of both nature and creativity from culture.

The role public parks and open spaces play will be established through the identification of both the historic and current factors that have influenced the attitudes, perceptions and beliefs of both the designers and the users of parks. To complement this understanding, the study of parks will encompass the current discourse and identify emerging park typologies with the ultimate goal of expanding and supporting the decision - making process as it relates to the final design solution of this proposal.

The following sections outline considerations of significance in fostering the polarization between culture and nature, and serves as a basis for this research.

3.0 Literature Review

3.1 Critical Factors

THE CHANGING PROFESSION OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

In art, the earliest landscapes were viewed through a window, bordered by a frame, and thus removed from the land. The whole history of western painting since the Renaissance has been marked by this analogy to the window and the frame. Our recent "vision" of the landscape, which has been essentially dependent on the painting, is still based on the concept of the window, and landscapes as objects. One of the essential functions of art was to schematize our glance, to give it a representative form of nature, varying according to the time period and the culture, which determines our aesthetic judgement. The art of the landscape architect can be considered an application of these themes.

In the past decade, the profession of landscape architecture has been on a roller coaster of perception. "Since 1900, the landscape paradigms of the North American City have been ones of juxtaposition of ecology against the city, isolation of landscape from the city, and appropriation of landscape within the city."[7] In the 1930's, one of the biggest shifts in landscape practice occurred when the profession embraced modernism. During this time we saw advocates such as Garret Eckbo emulating the reductive, formal planning of modern architecture and civic infrastructure. The modernist's "abstracted, purified philosophy of design reduced the landscape to a set of descriptive artistic norms."[8] The works of the 1950's and 1960's provided a landscape architecture of service and delivery of efficient, reductive spaces that appealed to the aesthetic of the rational and conservative, but not the emotional. During the 1970's, the profession embraced the environmental movement, which is thought to be the start of a shift within the profession from one of tradition to one of invention.

James Corner has suggested, "But, for better or for worse, what landscape architects do is not science. Landscape architecture remains an art, and we are left today retracing our steps, seeking still to find our traditions when the world demands that we find invention."[9]

THE DIVERSIFICATION OF EDUCATION

A key result of this cultural estrangement, to some extent, has been the establishment of ecology as a central part of landscape architectural education and practice. It was during this period that ecology not only changed the profession but displaced some of landscape architecture's more traditional aspects. "In recent years the shift to more 'ecologically' sound study has been evidenced in a shift from visual art, design theory, and history, to those of natural sciences, environmental management, and ecological restoration."[10] This ideological change supports the ambiguous and estranged identity of the profession and prompts the question, "Is it art or science?" The use of ecology as a rational instrument not only externalizes the problem, it also promotes human domina-

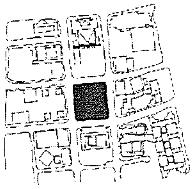
tion over the non-human world. Furthermore, much of what is taught about ecological process disregards technology as part of a larger system in which culture and nature are both important and integrated.

Commenting on the installation of ecological values into the education of the profession, James Corner (1997) chooses not to dismiss the benefits of these values, but feels concern for the loss of traditional values, especially landscape architecture's importance as a visual art, and more fundamentally as a "cultural project".

The subsequent polarization of art from science, of planning from design and theory from practice has led to what some call "the prosaic and often trivial nature of much of contemporary built work."[11] In contemporary works, those that have chosen to exclude ecological ideas have proven to be "conservative and productive of environments more like entertainment landscapes than significant places for dwelling." On the other hand, those works that base design on ecological processes are often based on the popular conception of ecological design as reconstructing "native" environments. This is a conception that is not only "founded upon illusory and contradictory ideas about a non-cultural "nature", but also displays a remarkable non-ecological intolerance of alternative viewpoints and processes of transmutation (terms such as foreign and exotic betray an exclusivity and privileging of natives)."[12] It has been suggested that landscape architects "look less to ecology for techniques of description and prescription (and even less for its apparent legitimizing of images of 'naturalness') and more for its ideational, representational, and material implications with respect to cultural process and evolution."[13] In attempting to foster the ecological idea within culture, landscape architecture should not focus on the external environment alone, but address cultural interests and ideas - offering new concepts about the nature of public space and new solutions to inherent problems.

CULTURE

Looking to the past, our cultural need for domestication of the environment is a powerful motivation in defining what we value in the city around us. Since the Renaissance, engineering has evolved as the applied science of clean environments, and has fought to cleanse the city of grime, filth, disease and death. As a result of engineering bringing rigorous, repeatable solutions to sanitation, transportation, and drainage in a quest to improve public health and safety, we tend to visualize cities analytically, as networks and layers of interconnected parts and systems. "The widespread faith in the capacity of technology to make a more perfect world in the future first arose during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the rise of capitalist economies inspired many Enlightenment intellectuals to assume that people could master nature."[14] "Such internalization has led to Western and particularly American culture finding a measure of beauty in the resulting urban landscape."[15] Just as we value a clean home, we value a clean city.

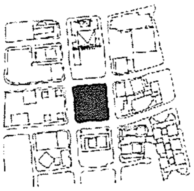


These principles of mastery and beauty are not only born from the emergence of engineering, but of the Romantic Movement which was characteristic of the Renaissance. “As science and engineering found the means to organize and cleanse the city, architecture and landscape gardening found ways to objectify, compose, and romanticize it.”[16] It was during the time of the Renaissance that the English garden became the objectified reality of the landscape painting. “Lancelot Brown did for the landscape what Rembrandt did for the person, giving us a model of nature made both heroic and domesticated.”[17]

Mark Johnson (1997) from his article “Ecology and the Urban Aesthetic”, states, that the form of the American City is derived from our need to protect health and safety, combined with our desire to domesticate the land. With the displacing of natural systems by technology and the replacing of native landscapes with “romantic imagery”, Johnson raises two questions: “Will our attempt to bring ecology into the city be blocked by an aesthetic heritage that we have created? And, are the English garden and the Fredrick Law Olmsted designs the most appropriate landscapes today?”

Landscape architecture’s tendency to conceive and present the landscape as object - whether aesthetically, ecologically, or instrumentally has at the same time led to further devaluation of the environment in cultural terms. The principles of technology and ecology have been projected as opposite modes of thought and as two diverging/converging reference points.

Today we know that neither nature nor cities are in harmony, that is, in a static state of equilibrium. Both natural and social structures exist in a complex dynamic process, which may involve changes form one stable state to another, from a steady stable state to a cyclical stable state to a more chaotic stable state. Cities are unstable eco-systems far from equilibrium. Further establishing the dualism between culture and nature, is the nature of the “contemporary city” today. Mark Johnson states, “…the economics of access have turned the economies of real estate upside down, what we once knew as the country is now becoming urban, and, interestingly, what we once knew as city is now becoming suburban.”[18] We are currently experiencing a shift in the North American landscape from agriculture to a universal domestication, where people leaving the city are bringing the domestic, romantic landscape with them. People returning to the city are demanding a return to the city beautiful, where beauty, access, and security are equal to the suburb they are leaving. “There is no City Beautiful in sight for the twenty-first century because currently there is no way to achieve consensus on the definition of the city, the role that the city should play in our lives, or what elements would make it beautiful.”[19] The complexity of our current situation is that each person receives and judges the environment in his or her own way, most of us equipped with little understanding of how our position relates to any other. Each individual uses the city in a completely unique way, sharing the structure but not the particulars of their experience with others. The similarity of experiences does not converge to create common values, therefore we do



not share our experiences, but only the relationships between them.

The absence of historical time and the occurrence of a new culture have eliminated public participation in the defining of projects. One of the fundamental tasks of reshaping the city is to focus on the human experience of one's home places; to recognize the existence and the latent potential of natural, social and cultural environments to enrich urban places.

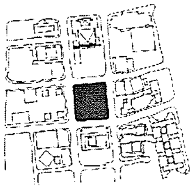
"By the year 2025 the number of cities with over four million people will be about 135, which will represent a quarter of the worlds population and include cities of 20-30 million inhabitants."
(David Goode, Green Cities 1990, pg.2)

OUR URBAN ECOLOGY

Ecology is most commonly understood as a branch of biology dealing with and providing a scientific account of natural processes and the interrelationships between organisms and their environments. German zoologist Ernst Haechel first introduced the term ecology in 1873. He described its etymological sources in the Greek oikos-house or household economy - and logos - knowledge. By this definition, ecology is the knowledge of the house, or household economy. From the initial use of the term, ecology has been a thinking or understanding of and about domestic space. Exactly what is considered to be the "space" is where ecology begins to separate into many definitions and ideologies. For some, this single space can be as broadly defined as the earth, in which "the home planet has become a minimal conceptual unit of occupancy for the whole human family".[20]

In attempting to understand urban ecology, it is argued that it is important to think of terms like ecology and creativity as not being fixed or rigid realities, but as active, dynamic, and complex agents of change that act both together and apart within a diversely interacting whole. These elements of change - ecology and creativity - while being the primary constructs of landscape architecture, have each received increasing attention in recent times. But they also have an ambiguous and underestimated relationship to each another with respect to the evolution of culture. "Landscape architecture has drawn more from objectivist and instrumental models of ecology, while design creativity has all too frequently been reduced to dimensions of environmental problem solving (know-how) and aesthetic appearance (scenery)."[21]

The subsequent estrangement of culture from nature is also heightened by cultural interpretations, languages and rituals that define and describe the terms that comprise the "ecological idea". The idea of ecology has diversified to such a point that it can no longer be used with absolute and universal clarity. James Corner notes, "the lesson of ecology has been to show how all life upon the planet is so deeply bound into dynamic, complex, and indeterminate networks of relationships, to speak of nature as a linear mechanism, as if it were a great machine that can be either intrinsically or extrinsically controlled and repaired, is simply erroneous and reductive". This view, which places emphasis on temporal and interactive processes, is further



reinforced by recent scientific findings of nonlinearity, complexity, and chaos dynamics.

As a social construction, ecology can initiate, inform, and lend legitimacy to particular viewpoints. It constructs "ideas" in the imagination of its advocates; it conjures up particular ways of seeing and relating to nature from the rational to the mystical or religious.

Within the cultural urban environment, it has been demonstrated that two distinct natures exist. "The first "nature" refers to the concept of nature, the cultural construct that enables a people to speak of and understand the natural world, and which is bound into ecological language. The second "nature" refers to the amorphous and unmediated flux that is the "actual" cosmos, that which always escapes or exceeds human understanding." It has further been argued that the profession has not yet been able to foster the ecological idea of nature within the cultural imagination, due to current instrumentalist (or problem solving) approaches towards ecology in landscape architectural design and planning. In contemporary approaches, ecology, nature, and the environment are the primary focuses of attention, separate and external to culture. Current instrumentalist approaches to landscape architecture have failed to recognize, acknowledge and embrace the true essence of today's multivariate "culture". A culture that is defined as more than the behavioral or statistical characteristics of a human group, but as a dynamic entity constructed from the vocabularies, attitudes, beliefs, customs, social forms, and material characteristics of a particular society.

As a byproduct of the estrangement of ecology from culture, we can see two dominant streams of ecological practices emerging within landscape architecture. The first practice is that of the conservationist/resourcist, which supports the view that further ecological information and knowledge will enable progressive kinds of management and control of ecosystems. The second practice is restorative, which supports the view that ecological knowledge may be used to heal and reconstruct natural systems. In the conservationist/resourcist view of ecology, the landscape is composed of various resources that have particular value to people, such as forestry, mining, agriculture, built development, recreation, and tourism/scenery. This view locates balances between human needs and natural life through the quantification of economic, ecological, and social values. Ian McHarg (1969), who provided criteria for evaluating the "fit" between proposed land uses and environmental systems, developed the most popular technique for such an evaluation of land suitability. The problem with this practice is its ability to reduce the living world to ingredients that could be measured and graphed, promoting an analytic and detached instrumentality that facilitates human control over an objectified and inert nature. Environmentalist Neil Evernden writes "the use of ecology in resourcist planning is simply the means by which people may achieve the maximum utilization of the earth as raw material to support one species".[22]

The second ecological approach to landscape architecture is restorative.

Within restorative ecology, the emphasis is on the "acquisition of technical knowledge" and skill with respect to the physical reconstruction of landscapes. The central belief is that refinement of more ecologically sensitive techniques will minimize damage to local and regional habitats. "Ecology is employed by the restorationist to provide a scientific account of natural cycles and flows of energy thereby explaining networks of interdependencies." Corner argues, "that there is little room for cultural, social, and programmatic innovation in restorative work, the primary focus is the natural world and the techniques used to recreate it".[23] Corner supports his argument by noting that restoration is essentially an ideological project, which is derived from a particular cultural idea of nature and therefore can never escape its inherent cultural status. "Restorationists are often unaware of the ease with which romantic ideals of 'nativeness' can degenerate into exclusionary and 'purist' nationalistic attitudes."

In both conservationist/resourcist and restorative practices, ecology remains removed from culture. In each case, only the symptoms of ecological distress are dealt with, while the social structures that underlie dualism, alienation, domination, and estrangement are ignored and unchanged. In response to the failings of these conventional practices, other more radical ecological approaches have emerged. Of the various "radical ecologies"[24], the one that appears to be of particular interest for landscape architecture is social ecology, an area of study that focuses not on nature, but on the sphere of culture. Social ecologists believe that the greatest human potential for cultural reformation lies within the power of the human imagination and creativity. Some social ecologists call for a new kind of social "vision", a "new animism" in which human societies would see the world with new eyes, with wonderment, respect, and reverence. "Moreover, social ecologists see their project as having an evolutionary and moral imperative. They believe that humanity has developed evolutionarily, as nature rendered self-conscious, and as nature reflecting upon itself."

The present ecological awareness, which is largely a product of media promotions, consumerism and research, has a very short history. Current discourse on the subject weaves ecology and technology in transformative flux. It not only searches for an ecologically sustainable architecture; it proposes a catalytic fusion between ecology and technology, intentionally producing a hybrid condition. In this sense, ecology embraces the complexity of our social ecology, the ecology of the artificial environment that we live and design in. It encompasses all ecologies that are at once natural and of human creation. "Our current social expectations and environmental quandary make us search for ecological applications of new technologies to solve even greater and more troublesome environmental questions."[25]

A major psychological barrier to this fusion has been the notion that a new building, placed on a site, is the "big event" and seemingly dominant to everything else by virtue of its own internalized, aesthetic (visual and experiential) motivations. The building is thus seen as a sculptural artifact. "The design is predicated on the notion that context is an annoying imposition to be tokenly acknowledged or completely ignored." Yet, even those works considered "contextual" architecture can sometimes be assumed to be nothing more than structures in which decorative or formal motifs of surrounding buildings are tacked on to the new artifact, or where a landscape architect is asked to embellish and blur the adjacencies with potted trees. These more superficial gestures are the polar opposite of being inspired by the models of the "integrated systems" found in nature.

"The problem of establishing natural elements in the hostile urban environment of the city centre has produced a landscape whose creation, maintenance and survival depends not on natural determinants, but on technology and high energy inputs." (Michael Hough, City Form and Natural Process, 1984)

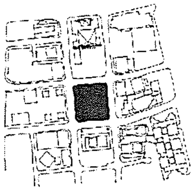
Cultural language

Human beings are able to construct "reality" through verbal and visual language. At different times, this has enabled them to relate to the same phenomena in significantly dissimilar ways. In examining the impact of language, it is thought that we have lost our ability to comprehend and reflect upon notions of nature - in other words to "acknowledge the otherness" of nature. "People are caught, then, in this place between recognizing themselves as part of nature and being separate from it." Not only does language ground and orient a culture; it also facilitates moral reflection upon human existence and the existence of a larger encompassing whole.

Difficulty arises when the original (signified) disappears behind "excessively habitual" meaningless language, denying the fullness of what is signified to present itself fully as "other". "We live in a world where all of creation is apparently becoming less wild and more domesticated, possessed, inert, and drained of all that prompts wonderment and reflection."[26] The contemporary denial of a larger encompassing system in which we are a part is of consequence for biological evolution as well as for the "development of human consciousness and moral reflection".[27] In Corner's opinion, this decaying of signifier and signified translates into the deadening of poetic metaphor, and a failure to recognize that metaphor and image are not secondary representations of a deeper, external truth, but are fundamental to a cultural reality and the capabilities of inventing truth. In order to discover aspects of the unknown within what is already familiar it is thought that one must get behind the veneer of language. "The emancipation of both culture and human imagination depends first on the ability to 'unsay' the world, and secondly, on the ability to image it differently so that wonder might be brought into appearance".[28] Not only have we lost our ability to perceive nature as part of a cultural orchestration, we have lost our ability to communicate about it.

Landscape Architecture as an Evolving Art

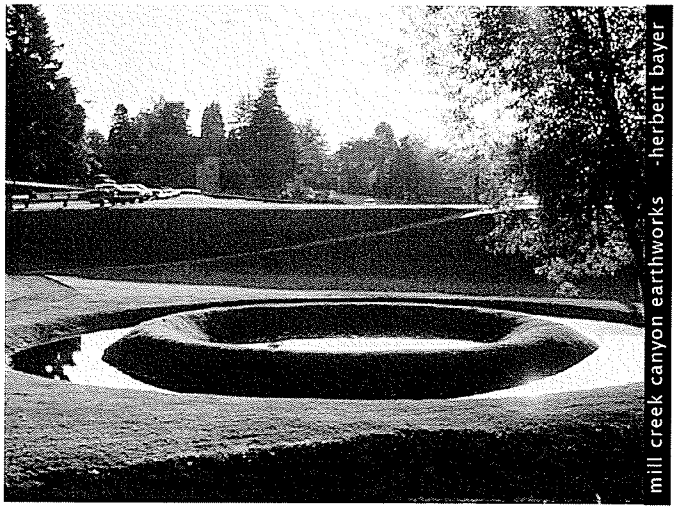
Since prehistoric times, humankind in many cultures of the world has had a dynamic relationship with the earth as a



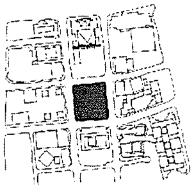
living, nurturing body, a sacred source of vitality. The landscape itself has often been at the heart of our quest to make sense of existence - from the Earth mysteries of the Celts to the modern concept of Gaia. Images and materials of the Earth have always been used to make "sense" of life. For the aboriginal peoples of North America, the landscape has been drawn into a complex system of interconnecting social and religious beliefs. In the Shinto beliefs of Japan, rocks, trees, rivers and other aspects of the natural world have been seen as deeply invested with spirit life, as a way to account for the "otherness" of natural phenomena.

In the latter part of the 20th century, landscape architecture and architecture illustrated an increasing appreciation of the "arts" in an attempt to foster the potential relationship between ecology, creativity, and society. The visual and performing arts, having transformed dramatically in response to culture, found new ways of representing the environment. In the early 20th century, art was elevated from "a stimulating and empty vessel" to an "inherently valueless plane", in which art had become a closed circle, a self-referencing code available only to those artists who could interpret it. By the early 1960's a counter-movement attempted to restore the meaning and emotional content that modernism had taken away. In the 1960's there was an attempt to redefine art through art, and a desire to escape from the traditional classifications constructed by modernism. During this period, many artists worked with natural materials, often fascinated by their evolution and their organic decomposition. To better observe this process, the artist became almost a laboratory assistant engaging in artistic experiences. The art that was produced through this exploration became a discourse on the lack of reality in art, and instead of posing the question "What is art?" the artists began to question "When is there art?" In seeking to find new parameters that allow a definition of what art is, the artists turned away from the modernist defined museums and galleries as the art space par excellence, and began to create art in situ.

reclamation project -robert morris

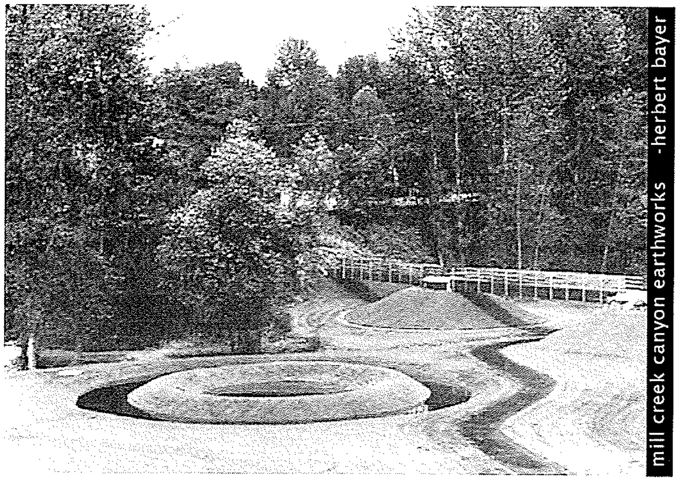


mill creek canyon earthworks -herbert bayer



In the 1960's the term Earthworks, credited to Robert Smithson, began describing the work of these artists. Although the artists of this time refused to belong to anything resembling a movement or even an artistic tendency, their works have also been "classified" as examples of Process Art, Environmental Art, Ecological Art, Total Art and Land Art. The number of artists concerned with this issue is vast, and at varying levels, defines contemporary sculpture. "The phenomenon of Land Art is the result of the intercrossing trajectories of a diverse group of artists (Smithson, De Maria, Heizer and Christo) who all belong to the same intellectual generation, and who have had their first exhibitions at the end of the 1960's."[29]

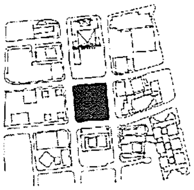
During the 1960s and 1970s, the Earthworks of Robert Smithson (Spiral Jetty 1970, Spiral Hill/Broken Circle 1971) and Michael Heizer (Double Negative 1969) were key examples of art acting as a precedent for landscape architecture, in which landscape was mannered to represent sculpture. It was through these works that the door to seeing the land as a material that is available for a freer manipulation, one that is independent from modernist theory, design tradition, or function had been opened. As a result of modernism, another movement emerged attempting to address the idea of contemporary culture. This movement became involved in the idea of art as performance, where artists chose not to become makers of artifacts, but chose to objectify and devalue the artifacts of art. "They believed that the value of art is in its ability to transfer the intentions and concepts of the artist into the experience and aesthetic of the audience."[30] "With this release from the objective reality, art can provide each viewer a pure individual experience that is personal, emotional and different from and unobtainable by anyone else."[31]



mill creek canyon earthworks -herbert bayer

Likewise, Surrealist artists sought to find correspondences between natural life and human life through the workings of the psyche and the imagination. One of the key procedures in Surrealist transformation was "the exploitation of the fortuitous meeting of two distant realities on an inappropriate plane…".[32] The Surrealist's work has been described as being "uncanny in that their oddness, their strange and bewildering quality, prompts both wonder and imaginative recognition,they evoke relationship".[33] Comparing the ideologies of the Surrealist artist to that of landscape architecture and the estrangement of ecology from culture, James Corner remarks, "Bewilderment is simply a prerequisite for another form of seeing; it is an unsettled appearance that allows for the double presence of human and other".[34]

As in art, the works of contemporary landscape architects have more frequently

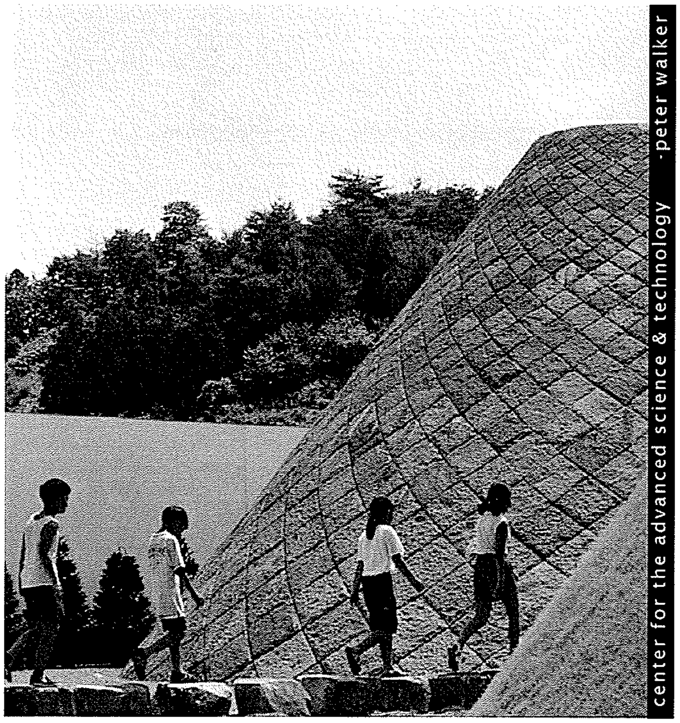


begun to seek grounding and to illustrate an awareness of the ecological, prehistorical, technological and emotional. Through these realizations, projects have tended to become more about the personal and less about the analytical. As designers look to create environments that restore a sense of place and meaning to individual experience, they attempt to create an unfamiliar reality that causes them to compare their attitudes towards nature with the alternative landscapes they are experiencing. A recent example of this exploration is found in the designs of Peter Walker in both Harima Science Garden City and in The Centre for the Advanced Science and Technology in Hyogo Japan, completed in 1993. While designing the city with the environmental and technical concerns the project required, Walker also considered the project an opportunity for an artistic dialogue. “The vision they shared was that of an original response to the land and to culture, both historical and contemporary. The forward looking scientific work” … “along with the focus on recreational offerings, suggested a confluence of ideas and technology.”[35]

Certainly no art form will “save the earth”. However, the arts can mirror society and its behavior, deliver strong social and political messages, influence popular views, and become a metaphorical messenger for a philosophical direction or a consensual ideology. It is through these consenting directions that the degree of estrangement between culture and creativity can be diminished, and a more sound understanding and definition of our place within the world can be explored.

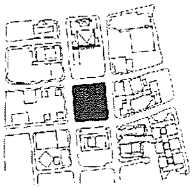
Simplification Through Technology

center for the advanced science & technology -peter walker



center for the advanced science & technology -peter walker

The application of technology has separated millions of people from the natural world by distancing them from basic resources. Electricity travels to us,



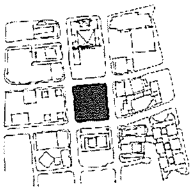
food comes to us dressed and wrapped, and the Internet puts us in touch with news and people all over the world. Such separation has made it difficult for some people to appreciate the influence of nature on their lives.

Much like language, traditional units of measurement were derived from the interrelationship of labor, body, site and earth. Measure was a by-product of and related to the everyday world and the infinite and invisible dimensions of the universe. The tracking of the planets and the rhythm of the seasons symbolized an ideal relationship between the activities of people on earth while acknowledging a supreme and universal order. Traditional measure also developed through the relationship of the human body to physical activities and materials. In medieval Ukraine, “farmers would speak of a day of field, referring to the area of land that they could physically sow or harvest in one day”.[36] Similarly, in France, an “arpent” represented the area a farmer could plow in one day using two oxen.

Traditional units of measure were therefore the results of a physical negotiation with the land, the elements, and the variables of a given situation. A place a “stone’s throw away” was not equal to one that was within “shouting distance”. The sources of traditional measures were the concrete experiences of everyday life. These measures all dealt with the specific as they signified the value of a particular quantity along with a situational quality. This practical and place-specific nature of traditional measure, meant that the traditional world was generally conceived of as an organic whole, which led to an interactive unity with life. Such measures also made coherent the relationships between people, place, activity, morality and beauty.

During the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century, the developments by Galileo, Bacon, Newton, and Descartes changed the way in which humans thought about and related to their surroundings and the earth. With the advances of science and technology, there was a desire to be overly specific and overly simplistic. Furthermore the enlightenment philosophers severed or abstracted the world from a particular subject in order to analyze it for empirical study. The various parts of “reality” were objectified and rendered neutral as subjects were no longer qualified by their relation to a specific subject, place, or situation. Consequently, measurement developed into an autonomous practice, related not to the organic whole, but to things as solitary and inert objects. “This splitting of the objective to the subjective established, for the first time, a detached distance between the human and phenomenal worlds, enabling humankind the ability to assume a position of supremacy and mastery over nature”.[37] This need eventually led to measurement becoming less and less connected to experiential and culturally situated origins.

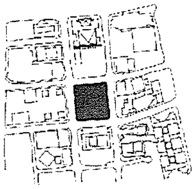
“The meter, which was originally devised in France in 1799 as a unit equal to 1/40,000,000 of the earth’s meridian,”[38] changed from its original standard measure. From 1889 to 1960, a single bar of platinum and iridium alloy was kept in a Paris assay office as an internationally binding standard for the metre. More



recently, to reduce the tolerance of inaccuracy, the meter has since been defined as "a length equal to 1,650,763.37 wave lengths of the orange light emitted by the Krypton atom of mass 86 vacuo".[39]

Although this type of detached measurement is different from the qualitative, concrete, and symbolic types of traditional measures, it is these autonomous forms of measure that have produced much of the American landscape of the past two centuries and continue to govern cultural reasoning and decision making today. Questions of survey, inventory, number, size, scale, spacing and interval continue to surface in the present-day planning and design of land. It has also been argued that the modern production of environments by engineering and landscape-architectural professions is becoming increasingly standardized due to the capacity of computers to store and manipulate all of the "determinant variables" and "prototypical solutions" for a given problem. For the most part, the world today is spaced and organized according to a set of standardized specifications and rules of thumb that are organized as building codes. This method of planning and construction has become so engrained in current society that the thought of building anything less would be considered irresponsible with respect to the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

The result of this convention is an ever-increasing homogeneity and standardization of the built environment. Every place, regardless of special characteristics and qualitative determinants, begins to look and feel alike.



3.2 Public Spaces

THE ROLE OF PARKS

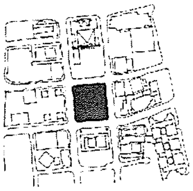
While social critics have criticized the decline, if not the disappearance of a meaningful civic life, the ‘mallification’ of cities and suburbs has stimulated the development of commercial, fun-orientated spaces. One effect of this situation has many people nostalgically longing for the past, while asking questions about what we may expect and create in the future. Many (Karasov, Muschamp, Warner, 1993) argue that we must rethink designs for future public spaces, not only in terms of a given site’s spatial concerns, but also in terms of its social instrumentality.

In the middle of the 19th century, “all American cities with more than fifty thousand inhabitants experienced a severe environmental crisis that involved overcrowding and disease”.[40] One positive response to this predominant environmental condition was to transform the design elements of the English aristocratic estate into a municipal park, providing a sanctuary for the general public. Most American parks have been perceived through this 19th century Olmstedian model of a pastoral landscape set within an urban context - a model still followed by some designers.

Much of what comprises the discussion of parks today deals with an ambiguity as to what a park is and what the future park will and should be. In the 18th century, people were amazed at what they discovered both through their travels and in nature, and the park much like art and literature became a collection of wonders of the world. In the 19th century, the park (eg. Parc des Buttes Chaumont in Paris or Central Park in New York) represented an escape from polluted and dense cities, which, like a monster, “consumed” its citizens. During the 20th century, the modernist movement, which created a new ideology, “conquered” the problems facing 19th century cities. The split between the modern movement and design tradition left behind the problem of the ‘modern’ green, which was full of intention, but perhaps lacked a collective consensus on meaning. This lack of meaning, and the search for a new expression reflecting our time, is one of the many issues surrounding the discussions of parks today.

Currently, the discourse surrounding the meaning and creation of new urban parks has been divided into two ideologies in which most, if not all, questions and issues of park design can be referenced. Are the traditional 18th and 19th century images of a green oasis within the city an appropriate expression for the modern urban setting? Or, should parks take on a new role, a role reflective of our contemporary cities and fragmented culture and urban life? Advocates of each approach agree that “the urban park may provide the most readily available site for reconfiguring the relationship between nature and culture.”[41]

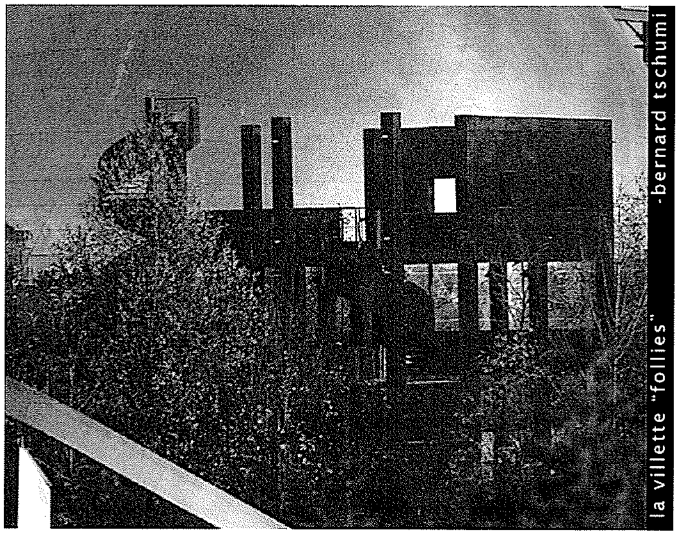
Park designs, by default, are central to the way in which a culture views itself or its relationship with nature. As amalgamations of natural systems and artificialities, education and recreation, parks are capable of adapting to the challenges that individuals and communi-



ties face as they act and react within the world. Parks may be viewed as a threshold of entry into many ideas and issues of our time. This does not necessarily mean interpreting ecology and the inclusion of landscape as isolated green sanctuaries amidst hostile surroundings. Rather the urban park today can be a source of fulfillment, as well as a rich and influential reservoir of imagery for artists, and (landscape) architects. Parks and open spaces are a very complex medium to influence, and are subject to the constant multiple changes of daily, seasonal and maturing cycles. Furthermore, complicated by sound, odor, temperature and precipitation, parks are one of few built manifestations that reflect the complexities of combining human life and natural forces.

The 19th century Olmstedian model of a green oasis for the enjoyment of the citizen is still an influential precedent today. Bernard Huet considers traditional parks still fitting for our times, and suggests that parks represent "a nostalgic longing for Arcadia that justifies an autonomous position in the city".[42] The advocates of traditional design, such as Huet, see modern green space as having no shape, form or dimension and describe modern urban green space as the result of the destruction of the city by modern, functionalist urbanization. They feel modern, urban green spaces are nothing more than meaningless residual space. Contradictory opinions point to the gardens of the 18th and 19th century that had no specific function except to give meaning, they were intended to provide a space where people could reflect on their individual and collective views of nature. It is this meaning that Huet calls the most important lesson that can be taken from the 18th and 19th century parks and gardens. "We cannot build Arcadia, but we have to give people places where they can have a real nostalgia for where they are coming from: paradise, the original garden."[43]

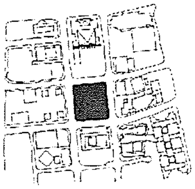
Of recent park designs, Huet suggests that Parc de la Villette in Paris by Bernard Tschumi is possibly the "most horrible". La Villette in his opinion was designed with the idea of filling it up with many things for everybody, which corresponds perfectly with a world based on consumption. The 40 follies, which were intended for particular functions - mainly consumerism - are the result of the misconception that people have to do something. "They have to drink coffee, they have to walk, they have to play, in short they have to be cultivated. We are afraid of emptiness. Afraid of the void, of an empty and beautiful space."[44]



la villette "follies" -bernard tschumi

Although every designer has an understanding of the importance of tradition, most designers deal with tradition in completely different ways. A question regarding the relevance of the traditional park model has been, whether history can offer solutions to new problems. Designers who believe this to be true, find themselves negotiating history in two different ways: by literal copying or by understanding the principles and reinterpreting them. It is through this reinterpretation that the existing tools of the profession of landscape architecture can be used to solve the new pictorial, situational and programmatic problems of today. Furthermore, the advocates of traditional park design claim that designs that appear as new and experimental, at first glance, are really no more than contemporary interpretations of something old.

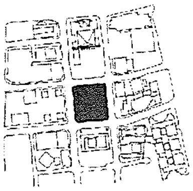
Two ways in which landscape architects have reinterpreted history are through the use of deconstruction and decomposition. Deconstruction implies an attitude, an architectural idea that is not a product of its time but which existed earlier. "Deconstruction denotes a breaking down of the established architectural order, of the hierarchical relation between the technical and aesthetic requirements, for the benefit of poetic expressiveness."[45] Deconstruction therefore does not deny existing values, but turns them upside down, so that the relations and borders become redefined. A second manner of transformation is decomposition. Decomposition is the process whereby the active compositional elements are freed from their existing context, allowing them to be applied in a new manner. Therefore it is through these methods of reinterpretation that traditionalists can find signs of history in modern design initiatives.



Although the benefits of drawing inspiration and precedent from the past are seen as very valuable to the identity of landscape architecture, present and popular thinking points in a similar but different direction. "Such parks (18th and 19th century) are fine individually and hardly need to be done away with. But, overall, parks have failed to keep up with increasingly complex cultural needs".[46] Although current thinking on parks suggests that customary models for park design are no longer adequate, it is agreed upon that the reinstitution and reestablishment of meaning is one of the most important criteria when creating future parks. The need for meaning is supported through the belief that there are crucial ecological, educational, and artistic roles that parks could and should be playing.

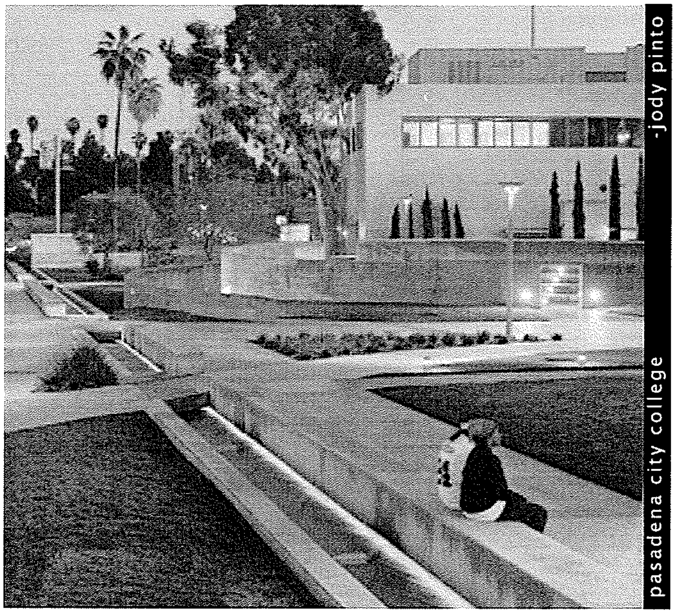
Adriaan Geuze (1993) gives two reasons why we need to change the ideology of the park, or create a new approach to solving the problems of our time. First, he argues, creating green spaces in the city has become a stereotype. He explains this as a logical historical development: the miraculous private park of the 18th century, that has become a necessity in the 19th century, has become an anomaly in the 20th and 21st centuries. "Green has become a kind of habit. And it has also become a cliché of its own." … "There is absolutely no need for parks any more, because they have solved all the 19th century problems and a new type of city has been created. This should lead to a new definition of the park."[47]

Secondly, there are new orders and opportunities within the modern city. Geuze believes there is even a new kind of peo-

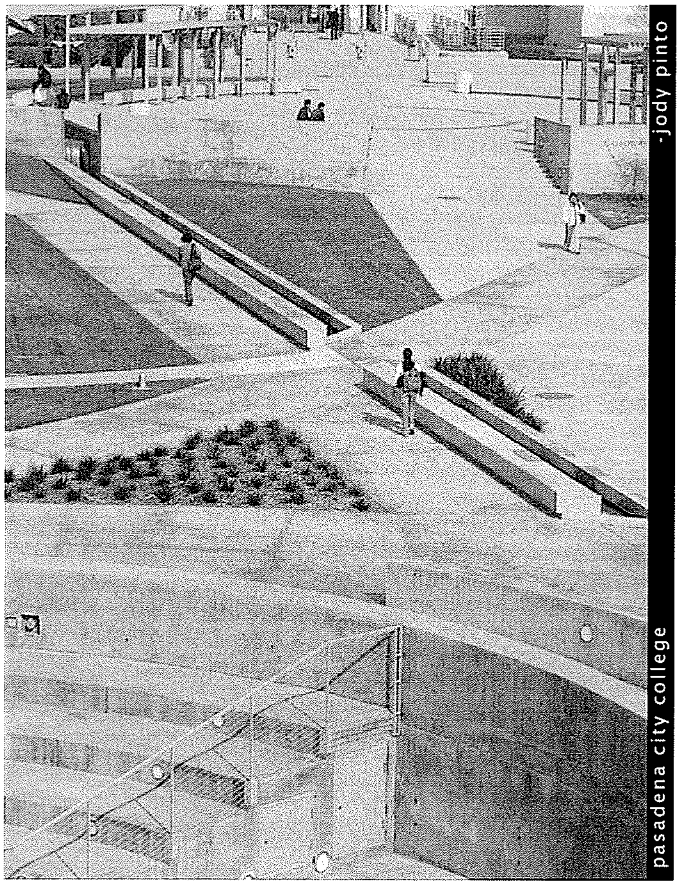


ple, compared to the previous century. “People are happy, have self-respect and have appropriated democracy.”[48] Modern civilization no longer needs to travel in order to collect new impressions. If you want wilderness you watch television, or join a safari. The park is no longer an escape and the new city creates its own escape. It is believed that at this time, there is no need to make a new environment that is adapted to mankind, because humankind can assimilate into most environments. Believing in the intelligence and adaptability of present day mankind, Geuze suggests that there is a need to provoke people, and to create surrealistic and anarchic environments, and even subversive cities and green areas.

The idea of people appropriating urban spaces in new ways has become very evident in recent years. Currently, the city provides some people with spontaneity and, in a sense, a new type of freedom to explore and push the boundaries between what is perceived and what is determined. Like stages, parks can take on many forms where urban life can be played out and observed. There is an interaction between what has been designed and the creativity of the user to alter the original intention. Though the typology of the park can still be recognized, the boundaries between park and square, between park and boulevard and between park and recreational area are becoming blurred. “City nomadic society is conscious enough to territorialize areas with new meanings.” Therefore the definition of the park becomes harder to identify, the beach, the mall, the street and parking lot, and the campus can all be defined as types of contemporary parks. Unless we choose to define the park as being in deliberate contrast to “everyday city life” - an escape, an alternative.



pasadena city college -jody pinto



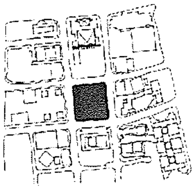
pasadena city college -jody pinto

-jody pinto

pasadena city college

Landscape Park Duisburg Nord in Germany's Ruhr River Valley challenges the traditional understanding of what a park is or could be. Created out of several miles of abandoned blast furnaces, railroad tracks, and slag heaps along the route of the canalized Emscher River, the park examines and creates a new relationship between nature and culture. The park is described as "a fusion of ecological thinking with an enthusiasm for technological decay". The result creates a relationship where both nature and post-industrial sites are increasingly becoming two different sets of processes.

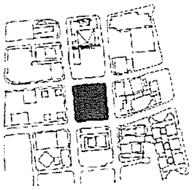
"In such a future program, park design and construction would move away from the beautiful pasture, sports facility, and picnic tables of today toward the creation of areas that would always be in the process of construction and reconstruction."[49] The success of the park relies on the landscape architect's efforts in providing the right tools for a multitude of potential users.



THE TRADITIONAL SQUARE

"The existence of some form of public life is a prerequisite to the development of public spaces."[50] The public spaces created by societies serve as a mirror for the public and private values of a society. Examples include the Greek agora, the Roman forum, the New England Common, and the contemporary plaza. Throughout history, communities have developed public spaces that support their needs - whether these are markets, places for sacred celebration or grounds for demanding personal and political rights.

The word 'square' brings to mind social, traditional and philosophical considerations. The historical meaning of the term seems at times to embody a collective cultural heritage, which can be traced from the Greek word "agora", gradually on through the Roman, medieval, Renaissance and baroque periods. While the evidence of a market place can be traced back to Mesopotamian cities of 2000 B.C., the major forerunners of the public spaces known today occurred in the cities of Ancient Greece and Rome. The acropolis, "a fortified area containing the temple precinct, served as the nucleus for early Greek towns".[51] As Greek civilization



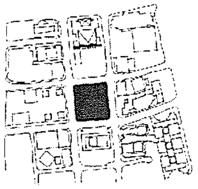
developed, the Agora (the secular market and meeting place) assumed an increasing role, the most significant being a hub of daily communication and formal and informal assembly. Similarly, the cities of the Roman Empire were centred on the forum. The Roman forum which combined the functions of the Greek acropolis and agora, constituted a “whole-precinct, incorporating enclosed, semi-enclosed, and open spaces for commerce, religious congregation, political assembly, athletics and informal meetings”.[52]

Between the 5th and 10th centuries A.D., European cities ceased to play a significant role as centres of production and trade and, after the fall of the Roman Empire, a shift occurred with people leaving the cities of Europe for more defensible locations in the country. Around the end of the 10th century the two most fortified settlements, the castle and the abbey, began growing in dominance. Over time both the abbey and the castle extended their walls to enclose the growing settlements and provided the necessary security for the revival of the marketplace. This re-emergence of the marketplace, in turn, encouraged the growth of new towns. In the developing and growing cities of the middle ages, “the Cathedral was the central institution, and marketplaces could often be found in an adjacent space”.[53] However, as medieval cities expanded, efficient central marketplaces became increasingly decentralized. And similar to urban conditions today, “without a strong and inclusive central heart, a city tends to become a collection of interests isolated from one another. It falters at producing something greater, socially, culturally and economically, than the sum of its separated parts”.[54]

In addition to market squares, a number of medieval European cities contained civic squares, or piazzas adjacent to their town halls. By the middle of the 15th century “the idea of a piazza expressing civic dignity and therefore unsuitable for commercial activities had clearly crystallized”.[55] During the Renaissance, squares (like Covent Garden and St. James’s Square in London) became a private feature for personal reflection.

In all cases, the shape and appearance of these squares and plazas simultaneously represented, constituted and enhanced the daily lives of citizens. The traditional square had a dependent function, defined in the process of its creation, as the servant of a building (the church square, the civic space annexed to the town hall) or else identified as having a specific purpose or use (a market for trade). Irrespective of the use, the true “civic” space embodied what is considered “civic” in character, belonging to everyone and yet to nobody in particular.

Historically, the design of the open space, the architecture of the buildings, the provisions made for use and the general adornment were and remain clearly understandable without being seen as nostalgic, trivializing, or overly picturesque. Yet the square expressively captured the life, times and civil circumstances of the population, as well as reminding the citizens - should any reminder have been necessary - of who they were and what was expected of them. Town halls and churches, as in Europe, fronted these commons and squares and,



together with markets, became natural meeting grounds for the populace. "The Campo was more than public, more than a matter of access or of the right of expression and display. It produced an aura, it recalled the finer moments from the past, and provided palpable guidance about what form of public behavior was not only acceptable, but preferred."[56]

In a sense the square was a measure of society, a comparative measuring device in which to judge a city's/nation's achievements, triumphs, and prosperity. This idea of a measuring device is further discussed by James Corner in "Taking Measures Across The American Landscape" (1996). In this work Corner relates to measure as being intrinsic to the design, habitation, and representation of land. It underlies the variety of ways land is traversed and negotiated; it enables the spacing, marking, delineation, and occupation of a given terrain; and it reflects the values and judgements of the society that lives on the land.

THE CONTEMPORARY SQUARE

The contemporary square rarely has a single specific function, nor does it necessarily depend on an individual building or monument. Instead, contemporary squares tend to have "multiple personalities" based on the functions and programs that periodically inhabit them. However, similar to its traditional counterpart, the purpose of the square is still to constitute a place for meeting, coming together, celebration, and attraction. The once historic place where communities gathered for collective functions (religious, commercial, political) is slowly being replaced by spaces where single individuals act. The 'heart' of the city, instead of forming the core of a design program, has remained merely a cultural reference. As people have moved to the suburbs, their way of living and the use of public space has changed.

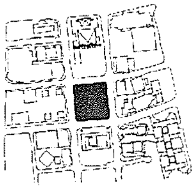
The square as a meeting place today has many competitors. Currently shopping centres, stadiums, and large multi-purpose centres (convention centres) are the spaces where the various collective functions and their activities have been moved, competing and replacing Downtown as a setting for communal life.

Since the 1960's, some historic squares have been abandoned, often asphalted over and transformed into car parks, or engulfed by the surrounding structures. Recently, however, there has been a growing awareness of the importance of urban open space, and this has led to the progressive closing-off of many historic squares to vehicular traffic and a return to their original pedestrian uses. This tendency has been illustrated in both Europe where efforts have been made to reconstruct squares destroyed by the last world war and North America. Thus, during the last twenty years, there have been numerous pedestrian schemes, with subsequent projects for the adaptation of paving and preparation of "ornamental works". In North America, since World War II, due to the demands of different subgroups emerging in society, there has been a proliferation of public space types to meet the needs of an increasingly stratified and specialized public life. "Older parks, playgrounds, and public squares, allowed to deteriorate in the latter part of this century, are now

being renewed and revived in many cities."[57] Farmers markets are increasingly popular and street vending and performing are subtly returning to the streets, with outdoor cafes becoming enormously popular once again.

It is also important to distinguish between different types of squares, and the related efforts involved in their creation and evolution over time, and the features that define the typology. Aside from its encompassing civic and social demands, the first condition for a place today to qualify as a "square" is pedestrianization: having access, thoroughfare and a use restricted to people on foot. This universal concept of the square can be reinforced through the simple fact that "there has been no need to restore of repave any square or 'campo', in Venice".[58] If one looks back to the Medieval and Renaissance plazas, especially those of Italy (eg. Piazza Ducale, Vigevano), the one characteristic that persisted was the unity that was created by the construction that closed off the forum from the outside.

In discussions of squares today, a distinction can be made between two primary types of squares, the traditional or historic and the modern or contemporary. There are certain specific elements that distinguish the contemporary square from the historic one. The creation of modern or contemporary squares, "is predominantly the result of the redesigning of deteriorating spaces, primarily in the suburbs".[59] Considering that suburban areas constitute much of what makes up the contemporary city, this fact is not surprising. Other than in new towns, the squares created in the suburbs are similar if not identical throughout the westernized world. Although the appearance and functions of squares was bound to change over time, suburban squares in North America are hard to distinguish, devoid of identity, and are more suitable as car parks than as spaces conceived for people.



3.3 Summary

It is apparent from the current literature and discourse that there is no common definition and understanding of human society's role within nature. Furthermore, it has been illustrated that the perception of nature and what constitutes ecology within the urban environment has been altered to the point that traditional values and typologies are being questioned as to their relevance in today's world. What has been illustrated here is that there is a recurrent need to address the relationship between culture and nature, and to rethink this relationship or the places where this relationship manifests itself. Likewise, landscape architects need to adopt, or even create, an aesthetic that evokes the interaction of nature and built form to reveal and interpret urban life.

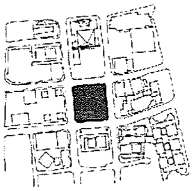
With regard to the creation and alteration of urban places such as parks, many factors should be addressed, particularly the societal and creative perceptions of measure (numerical or historical) and ecology (as a system of mutually interdependent parts which includes technology).

Measure

In an age of precision and advanced technological resources, people are at once closer to and more estranged from the earth and from one another. On the one hand, standard and universal measures - each mathematically precise beyond any perceivable tolerance - have fostered global cooperation and mutual understanding. And, on the other hand, both the uniqueness and similarities of things and places are objectified through modern measures promoting forms of homogeneity. "We must also rethink parks in terms of how they do or do not respond to the increasing homogeneity of our environment" … "Today's suburban children - who represent the majority of children in North America - experience nearly the identical landscapes."[60]

In an attempt to lessen this separation between person and place, it is important within the field of landscape architecture to understand that quantities, limits, spacings and tolerances are always situated within a social, moral, and aesthetic framework. "To gauge and space the world is not only to reflect upon the nature of human existence on earth but also to construct a relationship among people, community, and environment."[61] As designers it is therefore important to find provocative ideas for aesthetically rich places by drawing inspiration from the surrounding landscape, the historical landscape, the local geography or even the marking of celestial events. Through this uncovering of the 'genius of place', a park or urban space will have the impetus to evolve over time into a 'place of stature' building upon layers of meanings and demonstrating qualities that are to be understood/interpreted and not forgotten.

It is suggested that the challenge for the designer, therefore, is not to embrace one position (either modern or traditional measure) over the other, but rather to find the balance between the two. These two conditions can be more appropriately described as the calculative, standardized and objective versus



the sensual, poetic and subjective. Planning and decision making therefore becomes an outcome of informed experience and a "feeling out" of the given situations. Decisions which are based on informed judgements about what is "correct" for a given situation tend to result in solutions and applications becoming more about best approximations and less about absolute certainties. As such, the solutions are derived from a culturally grounded form of accuracy, a qualitative judgement that is not based on the techno-mathematical. The importance of measure, traditional or modern, is its metaphorical properties that allow it to span and join across distance and time. In this light, "landscape and nature would shed their status as objects, and as things possessed by measure, and emerge as active agents in the unfolding of life and in the relating of one to an-other."[62]

ECOLOGY

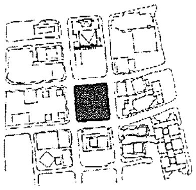
Outlined in the research regarding nature and ecology, two clear polarities can be distinguished. One has been described as a "constructed nature" (Corner 1997). Here, humans place themselves in a culturally dominant position over nature, and subsequently, shape nature according to their own conception of what is natural. The other polarity is "nature as vessel" in which nature cannot be controlled in its development. Within these definitions, two important aspects of society's relationship with nature constantly reccur: nature as something to be consumed and nature as poetry.

Although the relationship between the "constructed" urban ecology and aesthetics within the urban environment is of a divorced nature, the differences in beliefs of the advocates of these opposing principles are important in the creation of what may be a purposeful composition. As the world becomes more dependent on cultural development, we now have the opportunity and availability of resources to redirect the urge to purify the urban landscape, and create "open-ended" solutions that are encoded with meaning and that can be interpreted by everyone. Through the avoidance of stylistic traps, the built form should be an expression of the personal relationships between the people who create design and the people who will use it.

"The open-ended landscape must be encoded with the patterns and symbols of human use, it must include the obvious and the familiar, the startling and the unexpected."[63] In order to re-institute the marriage of culture and nature, it is suggested that the designs of the new millennium should neither be an "empty vessel" nor a "deterministic composition". The designs must embody multiple meanings and sufficient substance to connect with and stimulate reaction, which would allow for the interpretation and adaptation of a future we cannot predetermine. Nature then becomes the means of telling a cultural story.

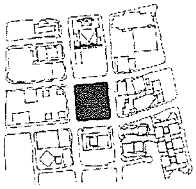
Landscape architects and planners must therefore learn to understand how the "metaphorical characteristics" of ecology can inform and construct particular realities that may help in fostering the idea of nature as a meaningful system more firmly within culture. "Truly ecological landscape architecture might be less about the construction of finished and complete works, and more about the design of processes, strategies, agencies and scaffoldings, that might enable a diversity of relationships to create, emerge, network, interconnect, and differentiate."[64]

Mark Johnson notes that with changes in our culture, designers now have the opportunity to change the content of their work to include materials that express the natural landscape of a region rather than to replicate typologies borrowed from elsewhere. Through these practices, he feels the creation of an aesthetic that communicates the value of ecological process will develop, leading to a revision in public taste. "In North American culture there is a tendency for things that look 'natural' in the city to be regarded as either leftover, underutilized, or unsightly." Johnson feels that for a culture to see the value of ecology within the city, landscape architects should not seek solutions that deny aesthetics for ecology, or appropriate the appearance of the natural to communicate a false sense of ecological actuality. Instead, he suggests the urban landscape does not need to look "ecological" to communicate ecological values to people, but instead designs should be considerate of natural processes. "The essence of the city can be of an inculturated ecology of person, place, and environment, where ecology functions with a restorative power, with the interface of nature and built form revealing their mutual interdependence." The exposing of this interdependence may leave society with not only a more enriching environment, but with cues that allow a more meaningful understanding of its place within a larger system, the urban ecology.



In order for landscape to become the "ethos of the city", it must be expressed as native, domestic, and created. The values of personal experience, the reinstallation of nature into culture and vice versa, and a re-conceptualization of the urban aesthetic can act as prerequisites to achieving it. "The voices of nature must speak through design as a code to bind our experience with value, not a return to nature, not romantic mimicry, and not visual art."[65] The preconceptions of the designer should not filter out the reality of ecological process and cultural change, but include the cultural disorder and the "accidents" that can inform the public of the substance of the human condition and the significance of natural process. "Landscapes that trick, emancipate, and elude - put simply, landscapes that function as actants, as continual transformations and encounters that actively resist closure and representation."[66] James Corner in his refusal of landscapes that are preoccupied with ameliorative, stylistic, or pictorial concerns believes the answers lie within the powers of both natural and cultural agencies.

4.0 Application



It is important to establish design criteria that facilitate the development of urban space that is appropriate for the 21st century. For the design proposal to demonstrate the principles proposed in this practicum, it should illustrate an understanding and sensitivity to the aesthetic and creative possibilities of its context and location. It must also draw inspiration from the populace and from the social variables that give it form and enable it to become a place with meaning. Within this context meaning forms the basis for the interpretation and understanding of the site as a logical extension and integral part of the urban environment.

In attempting to achieve a "fitting" solution that is appropriate to both the site and its context, the framework must also apply to city council's specific long-term objectives for the area. While addressing a "suitable fit" in terms of relevance to the city, the historical significance of the site should also be addressed. "According to Latz one can deal with historical precedents in two different ways: by literal copying or by understanding the principle and reinterpreting it."[67] In deconstructionism, the uncovering of ideas and traditions which are no longer a product of their time serve to add new (unfamiliar/revisited) layers of meaning. These layers link the past and present to a projected path into the future where continuous transformations of existing knowledge are established.

4.1 Urban Conditions

IMPORTANCE OF SITE (SPECIFIC TO RESEARCH)

This exploration is relevant to Edmonton's cultural urban condition, and the future of it's Downtown as an important typology in the ordering and orientation of the city. As there is no longer a compelling need for a central space, a dominant centre or an axis to provide orientation, many downtown's in North America have now become specialized, and in some circumstances hardly recognizable. Downtown's are now only one of many possible choices of location in the expanded city. They continue to face heavy competition from suburban malls and megastrips for producing and sustaining new commercial growth. As a result, the experiences of the city and its form are no longer a matter of distance from the centre or other landmarks. Instead, people tend to live in one area, shop in another, work in another, and recreate in several. To compete effectively in today's changing marketplace, Downtown Edmonton must establish itself as a thriving commercial and residential centre with unique and desirable assets that foster and reinforce cultural needs and aspirations.

Although the application of the research would be applicable in many cities, Sir Winston Churchill Square in Edmonton, Alberta was selected for a number of reasons. The site, much like the theories set out in the methodology, has evolved from a series of cultural interpretations and definitions. These ideologies are for

the most part misunderstood, and not in following with contemporary changes and philosophies. The site's metaphorical quality has positioned it as the municipal counterpart to the grounds of the Provincial Legislature. It has long been seen as capturing and conveying the life, times and civic circumstances of the population of Edmonton, Alberta. The square has acted, in a romantic and historical sense, as a physical reminder to citizens of what type of public behavior was not only acceptable, but also preferred. The site is perceived by Edmontonian's as the centre of the city, the Downtown core and the Arts District. This suggests that it is an important part of a larger hierarchy. As the centre of the Arts District, and surrounded by the largest concentration of arts-related structures in the city, it is argued that the square should be representative of its context. The desire for a representative identity allows for a rich palette of flexibility and exploration into the themes that underlie this study. In summary, the site is positioned at a crossroads where culture, technology, ecology, and the arts meet and intertwine, providing an ideal location for the re-grounding and reinterpretation of values within the contemporary city.

a place for people ·swcs 1960's

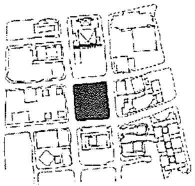
"From its earliest days, Downtown's character has been shaped by the course of our history."[68]

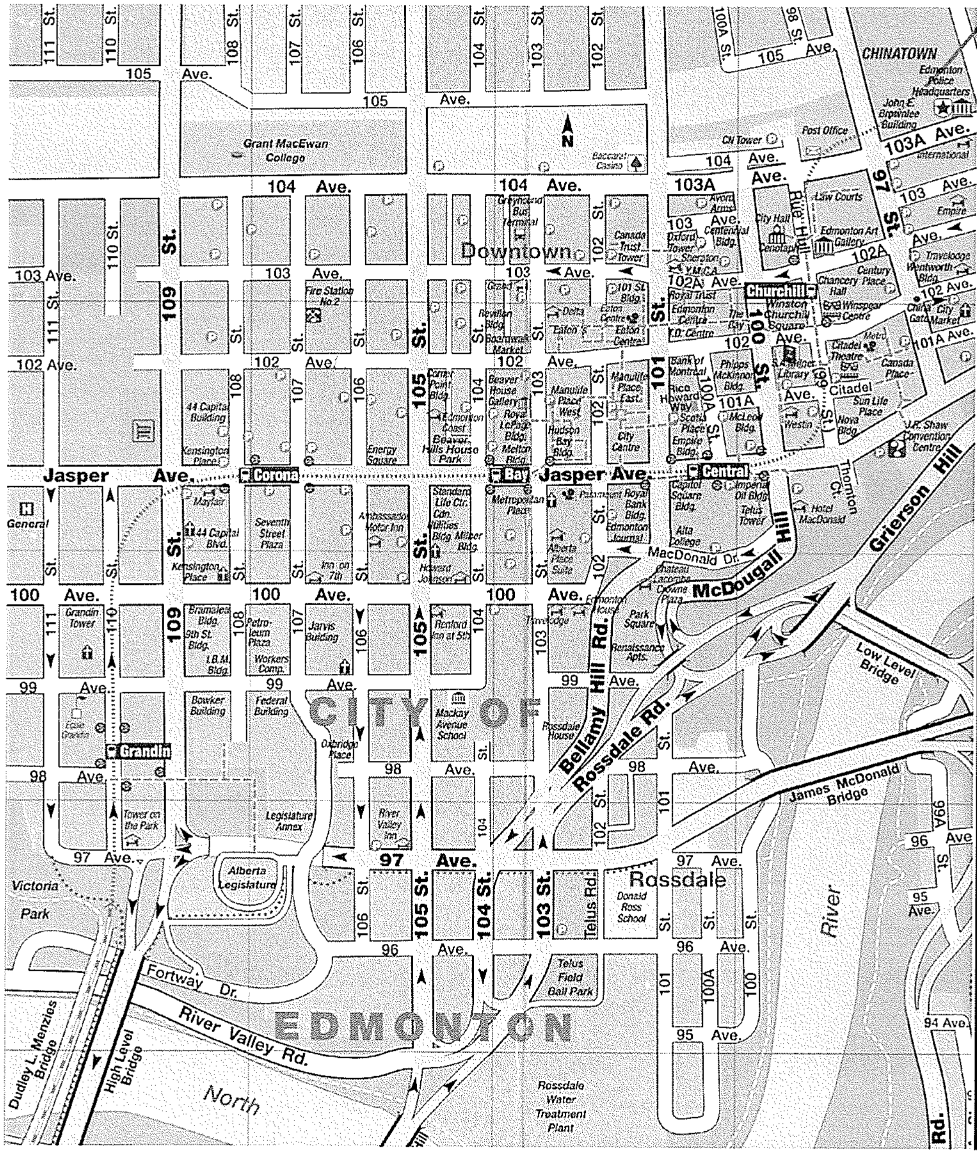
Downtown Context and History

The City of Edmonton grew from the original trading post, Fort Augustus, which was established in 1795. The town centred on 97th Street and Jasper Avenue until the Hudson's Bay Reserve was subdivided in 1881. Edmonton was incorporated as a city in 1904, and became the capital of the then new province of Alberta in 1905.

Between 1900 and 1914 the Downtown area was consolidated. McKay Avenue School was built in 1902, the Post Office in 1907 and Edmonton's largest office building of the time, the Tegler Building, in 1911. In 1913, the McLeod Building, Civic Block (now the site of the new concert hall) and the Hotel McDonald joined the Downtown community. By 1914, the major land boom that Edmonton had been experiencing collapsed. Many properties reverted back to the City after the economic collapse in 1914, which helped the City Council's vision of a civic centre (Churchill Square) between 97th and 101st Streets become a reality.

There was little development in the downtown between 1914 and the late 1930s. Boundaries of the central business district were established by the Canadian National Railways (CNR) to the north, the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) line to the west, and steep riverbanks of the North Saskatchewan River to the south. The discovery of oil to the north of Edmonton in 1947 sparked a major land boom, and a number of commercial properties were developed in the downtown area. Development expanded to both the south and the west, with the northern and eastern portions of the downtown left less developed, as parking lots and aging structures.




CHINATOWN
Edmonton Police Headquarters
John E. Brownlee Building
Grant MacEwan College
N
Baccarat Casino
CN Tower
Post Office
105 Ave.
104 Ave.
103A Ave.
103 Ave.
102A Ave.
102 Ave.
101A Ave.
Jasper Ave.
100 Ave.
99 Ave.
98 Ave.
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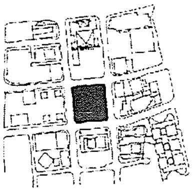
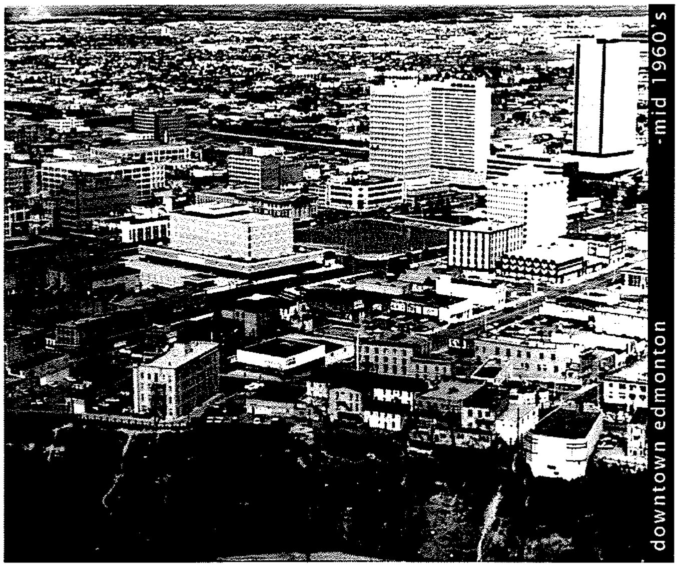
98 St.
97 St.
Downtown
Law Courts
City Hall
Cenotaph
Edmonton Art Gallery
Rue Hull
Churchill
Winston Churchill Square
Greyhound Bus Terminal
Canada Trust Tower
Oxford Tower
Sheraton
YMCA
Chancery Place
Century Place
Royal Trust
Edmonton Centre
The Bay
TD Centre
Eaton Centre
Eaton's
Delta
Citadel Theatre
Citadel
Canada Place
Stanley A. Milner Library
Winspear Centre
China Gate
City Market
Bank of Montreal
Phipps McKinnon Bldg.
McLeod Bldg.
Rice Howard Way
Scotia Place
Empire Bldg.
Westin
Sun Life Place
Nova Bldg.
Manulife Place
City Centre
Hudson Bay Bldg.
Shaw Conference Centre
Fire Station No. 2
44 Capital Building
Kensington Place
Energy Square
Beaver Hills House Park
Corona
Bay
Central
General
Mayfair
Seventh Street Plaza
Ambassador Motor Inn
Standard Life Ctr.
Metropolitan Place
Alberta Place Suite
Capitol Square Bldg.
Imperial Oil Bldg.
Telus Tower
Hotel MacDonald
Alta College
MacDonald Dr.
McDougall Hill
Grierson Hill
Thornton Ct.
Chateau Lacombe
Crowne Plaza
Park Square
Renaissance Apts.
Grandin Tower
Bramalea Bldg.
Petroleum Plaza
Jarvis Building
Workers Comp.
Federal Building
Bowker Building
Mackay Avenue School
Rossdale House
Oxbridge Place
Grandin
Tower on the Park
Legislature Annex
River Valley Inn
Alberta Legislature
CITY OF
EDMONTON
Bellamy Hill Rd.
Rossdale Rd.
Rossdale
Donald Ross School
Telus Rd.
Telus Field Ball Park
Low Level Bridge
James McDonald Bridge
Victoria Park
Fortway Dr.
River Valley Rd.
North
River
Rossdale Water Treatment Plant
High Level Bridge
Dudley L. Menzies Bridge
99A St.
Rd.

downtown edmonton -context



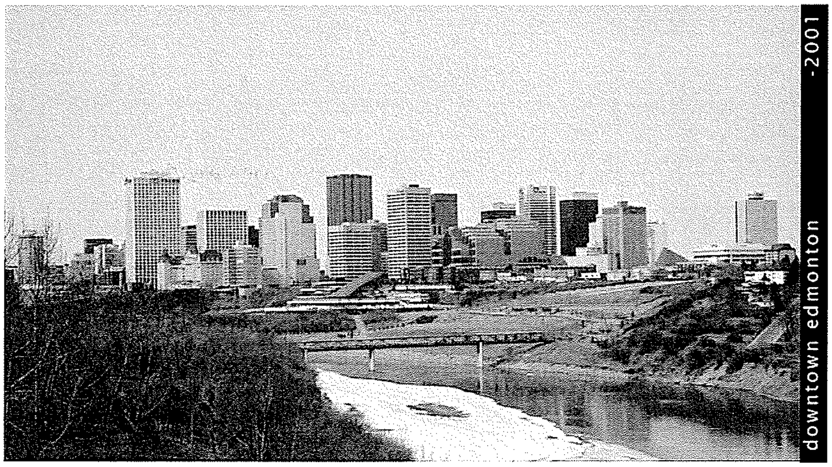


downtown edmonton -mid 1960's

Currently, Downtown Edmonton is the financial and administrative centre of the metropolitan Edmonton region. With a metropolitan population of over 840,000 in 1998, Edmonton ranks as the fifth largest city in Canada (after Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver and Calgary). Following slow economic growth, massive investment in northern Alberta was announced during the late 1990's in the oil sands, petrochemical, mining and forestry industries. With this development, Edmonton is anticipated to be the focal point for consequent resource-related investment, producing a positive and lasting effect on the local economy.

Much more than a concentration of heritage and high-rise buildings, Edmonton's downtown is the part of the city that most characteristically reflects the past while embodying the spirit of the future. It is within the downtown that the strengths and weaknesses of a city are seen, and the beliefs and values of Edmontonians as a community are expressed. Downtown is the City of Edmonton's most important economic asset.

By the late 1970's, on the heels of quick economic growth as a result of continued oil exploration, Edmonton's downtown had been transformed into a major business district. This growth was exhibited through the completion of the first Light Rail Transit (LRT) system in North America, record housing and other construction starts and high employment levels. The boom was expected to continue indefinitely. This was not the case.
It came to a sudden halt in 1982. Since that time downtown development has been sporadic. While this period of slow growth has been difficult for a majority of business and property owners in the downtown, it can be seen as a blessing for the long-term qualitative development of the area. It has given the city time to acquire land, and to establish guidelines and objectives for it's development.



downtown edmonton -2001

It:

Is the cultural heart of Edmonton with such facilities as the Citadel Theatre, Edmonton Art Gallery, Stanley A. Milner Library and Francis Winspear Centre for music;

Is the seat of the Alberta Legislature and location of a concentration of city, provincial and federal government offices;

Is the hub of northern Alberta's hospitality and tourism industry, with a diversity of restaurants, hotels, entertainment facilities, and Edmonton's Convention Centre;

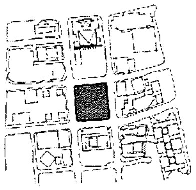
Has a concentration of educational resources and institutions; and

Is Alberta's Judicial Centre.
(Capital City Downtown Plan)

Edmonton, is a self-proclaimed "Festival City". It hosts an increasing number of festivals throughout the year. The majority of these festivals and special events are focused in the Downtown core over the summer months. In 2000, approximately 1.6 million people came to Downtown Edmonton to attend the following 14 major events, 9 of which took place in or around Sir Winston Churchill Square.

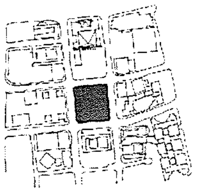
FESTIVAL	DATES (2000)	ATTENDANCE
First night festival*	Dec.31-Jan.1	43,727
The works*	Jun.23-Jul.5	250,000
Jazz city	Jun.23-Jul.2	131,000
Street performers festival*	Jul.7-Jul.16	182,525
Canada day celebrations*	Jul.1	52,500
Klondike Days Parade*	Jul.20	150,000
Klondike Days Festival*	Jul.20-Jul.29	776,125
Santa Claus Parade		18,000
Light up Downtown*		10,000
Family Day Festival*		30,000
Beat Beethoven Road Race	Jul.23	2,500
A Taste of Edmonton*	Jul.25-Jul.29	n/a
Heritage days Festival		
	Total	1,671,377

*denotes festivals taking place at Churchill Square



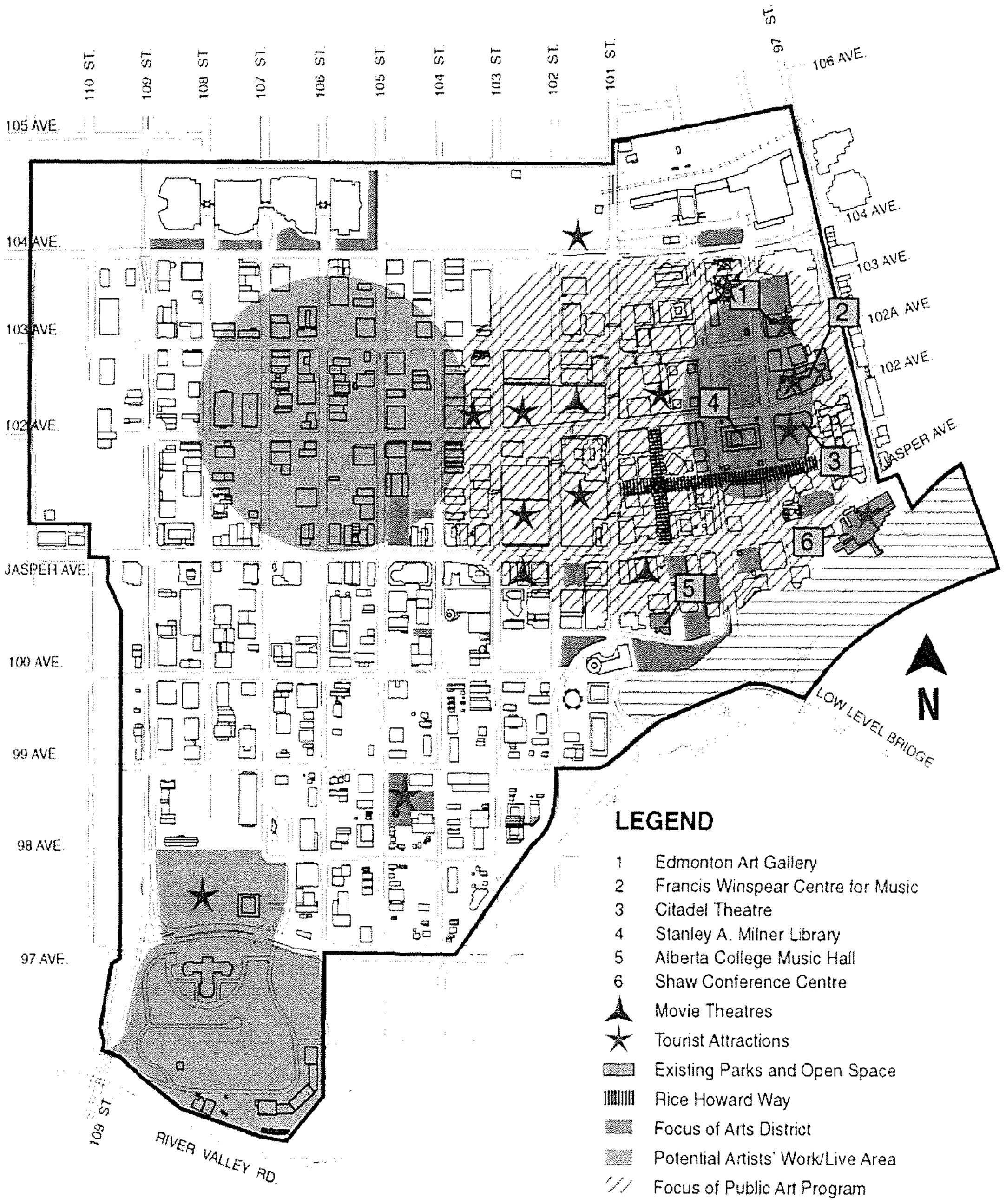
Edmonton has also played host to many other international and national events. In 1978 Edmonton hosted the Commonwealth Games and in 1984 it hosted The Universiade Games. Edmonton was the first North American city to host the IAAF Track and Field Summer Games - the eighth, in 2001. The 2001 Track and Field Games were of some significance to this study, as Sir Winston Churchill Square was designated as the site of various presentations and ceremonies. The City of Edmonton also anticipates utilizing Sir Winston Churchill Square in its centennial celebrations in 2004, and in its provincial capital centennial celebrations in 2005.

In 1997, Downtown Edmonton was divided into five neighborhood districts each possessing unique characteristics. These districts represent the diversity, history, geography, land use and demographics of the downtown. They are the Commercial/Cultural Core, the Warehouse District, Jasper Avenue West, McKay Avenue Area and the Capital City Precinct. Sir Winston Churchill Square is within the Commercial/Cultural Core and is seen as the municipal complement to the provincial legislature grounds. Having been recently named the "Arts District", the area immediately surrounding Sir Winston Churchill Square is being nurtured as the cultural hub of downtown Edmonton. This area combines a concentration of high-density commercial uses and cultural facilities. The commercial/cultural core is home to the Edmonton Art Gallery, the Francis Winspear Centre of Performing Arts, the Stanley A. Milner Public Library, the



Citadel Theatre, the Eaton's and Edmonton Centre shopping facilities, and the Shaw Conference Centre. It is also the home of City Hall and the majority of municipal offices. All but one of downtown's office towers of 25 storeys or greater are located within this area.

Along with the 'centering' of office towers and commercial spaces enclosing Churchill Square, Downtown produced more housing starts in 1999-2000 than any other district in the City of Edmonton. These starts are, in part, a response to both the growing demand for senior's housing and evidence of prosperity together with a growing trend for living downtown in the post-industrial city. In 1997 with the hopes of increasing the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104 AVE.
103 AVE.
102A AVE.
102 AVE.
JASPER AVE.
100 AVE.
99 AVE.
98 AVE.
97 AVE.
109 ST.
RIVER VALLEY RD.
LOW LEVEL BRIDGE
N
1
2
3
4
5
6
LEGEND
1 Edmonton Art Gallery
2 Francis Winspear Centre for Music
3 Citadel Theatre
4 Stanley A. Milner Library
5 Alberta College Music Hall
6 Shaw Conference Centre
Movie Theatres
Tourist Attractions
Existing Parks and Open Space
Rice Howard Way
Focus of Arts District
Potential Artists' Work/Live Area
Focus of Public Art Program

Downtown population from 6,300 to 10,000 over the following ten years, the City of Edmonton implemented a 3-year “Downtown Housing Reinvestment Program”. The program provided a financial incentive of $4,500 for each housing unit built within the Downtown Plan Boundary. The population of the downtown in 2000 was estimated at 8,000.

On April 30, 1997, the Downtown Edmonton Planning Group, a part of the Planning Services Branch within the city’s Planning and Development Department, completed and had approved the “Capital City Downtown Plan” also referred to as “Area Redevelopment Plan Bylaw 1140”. The plan set out to establish the policy direction to guide Downtown development and outlines 80 initiatives to be implemented during the period between 1997 and the city’s centennial celebration in 2005. The new “Downtown Plan” recognizes the importance of the area’s economic contribution to the rest of the city.

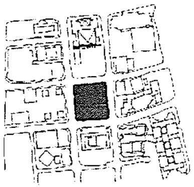
In particular, the Downtown is Edmonton’s:

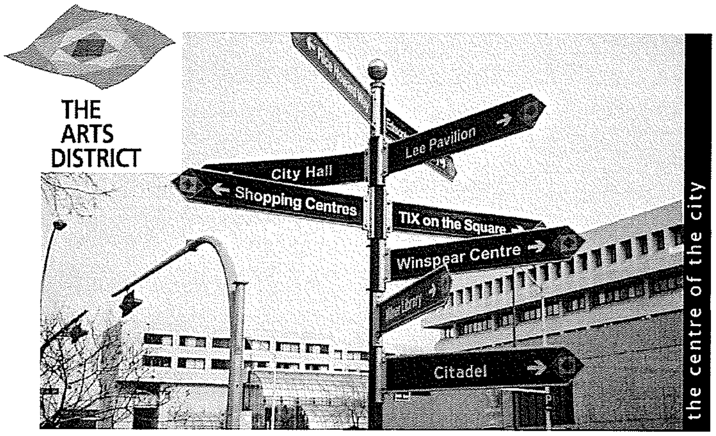
Most valuable piece of land - $2.2 billion in real estate value.

Highest concentration of people - an estimated 8,000 residents, 50,000 employees and 2,200 businesses.

Major generator of taxes - covering less than 1% of the city’s land area, in 1999 alone Downtown generated $62 million in business, property and school taxes.

Section 3 of the Downtown Plan is dedicated strictly to the Arts, Culture and Entertainment sectors of the area. The objective “is to reinforce and expand the Downtown’s role as a regional, national, and international centre for the development and enjoyment of the arts, culture, and other forms of entertainment.” (Capital City Downtown Plan)





Of the Policies listed in Section 3, Policy 3.1 sets out to “establish an Arts District centred on Sir Winston Churchill Square and adjacent properties”. The plan goes on to describe a desire to increase the animation of sidewalks and open spaces through the use of sidewalk cafes, open air markets, and year-round programmed events. (Policy 9.27)

The Downtown Plan proposes a five-point strategy to support and build the arts, cultural and entertainment sector:

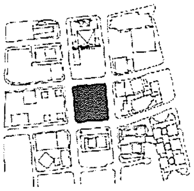
Intensify the use of existing arts and cultural facilities, and encourage the development of complementary activities.

Encourage the public and private sector to purchase and display art throughout the Downtown.

Provide financial and programming support for arts and cultural facilities, organizations and events.

Strengthen the marketing of Downtown attractions and events.

Encourage the artists and art groups to find offices, studios and living accommodation in the Downtown.



D.1.2 The roles of Churchill Square will be clarified and the Square integrated with its surrounding streets and buildings to enhance its status as the neighborhood focus and a site of city-wide importance. (Capital City Downtown Plan)

IMPORTANCE OF SITE (SPECIFIC TO CONTEXT)

From its inception in late 1964, Sir Winston Churchill Square has provoked debate and criticism (see Appendix A: Chronology). Over the years, the Square has seen little change, with the majority of development having taken place on the periphery or the façades around the Square. With the inception of the "Arts District" theme and recent redevelopment in the surrounding area, the Square now stands as the remaining piece to be developed in the hopes of unifying the Arts District.

The Square is noticeably a significant space for two simple reasons. First it is a welcome open space of trees and grass dramatically set in a clearing of an urban "forest" of high-rise buildings. Second it is clearly the symbolic centre of the city and the municipal complement to the Provincial Legislature Grounds. The Square is unique and hosts those events which have the greatest civic importance.

"These disparate elements - trees, grass, building, and path - arranged onto a section of land like pieces of assorted board games, fulfill their individual functions but symbolize how they no longer add up to a meaningful design."[69]

SITE AND SITE ANALYSIS

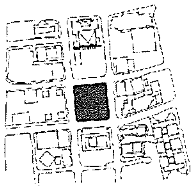
It can be argued that the Square is a success in terms of its ability as a "space" to accommodate festivals and large gatherings. But, any open space in the heart of the downtown (eg. parking lot or mown field) could also claim that to be true. To make a "space" successful only requires three basic elements - a space, a function and a population with a desire to attend. On the other hand, to look at the Square as an important public "place" and as a destination in its own, it has not reached its full potential. There are two interrelated problems that must be addressed in attempting to create a more meaningful place. The first deals with the Square itself; the other deals with the location of the Square.

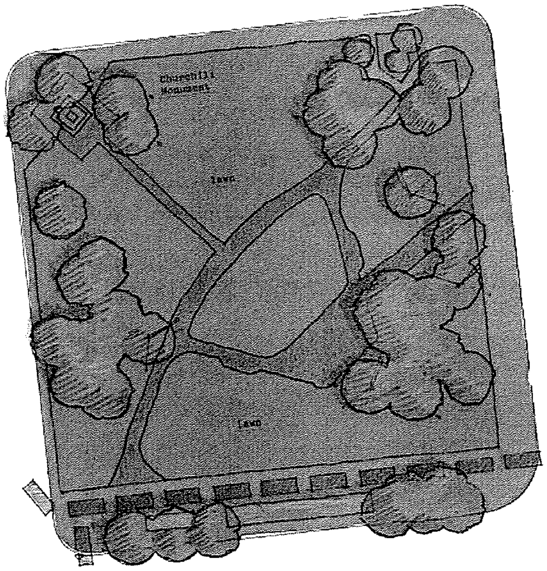
The creation of the square has been a relatively recent event. Its progression from buildings to rubbled clearing, to greensward, to treed square has occurred within the last 40 years. Each year still sees improvements in its use, image and spatial enclosure. But, it has not yet achieved the distinction that it is capable of. It still has the air of a temporary space. This is no surprise, since its form is the result of many "temporary" additions and tree plantings, to allow successive City Councils to deliberate as to how it should be developed. (see appendix-A for a chronology of site development)

This indecision has, however, produced some positive results. The Square has become a gentle and pastoral place, giving people the opportunity to stroll or sit on grass and among trees in summer, and providing visual relief at all times of the season. Just as importantly, the citizens of Edmonton have been given time to find uses for the park spontaneously, - many of these uses can now be incorporated into a mature design.

The second problem facing the Square stems from years of social and cultural change. “Changes that have taken place in American lifestyles have transformed public activities into private ones, which have reduced street use in existing neighborhoods and all but obliterated the street in many new developments. Some of these important daily activities that once had a less private reference are shopping, entertainment, incidental conversation, trips to school and the traditional promenade.”[70] Simply, the Square fails as a primary use attraction for the downtown core. The immediate area surrounding the Square lacks functional diversity, and there is therefore little variation between users and their schedules. Other than the many festivals that occupy the Square, it stands as a very visible reminder of the after hours stagnation of what is intended to be downtown Edmonton’s Arts District.

The objective of this study is to create a landscape of possible multiple meanings, and sufficient substance, to connect with the individual; to stimulate reactions, and to facilitate interpretations of the systems that “intertwine” to form the urban fabric. It is intended that the square should flood its boundaries beyond the legal descriptions of its edges and become a larger, more encompassing part of the Arts District. The unification of the area would allow for an almost infinite range of programmatic events, combinations and improvisations. Most importantly, the square needs to become a stand-alone place, or primary use attraction and not merely a reflection of the transitory events that occupy it. Churchill Square should embody the past, present and future, much like the traditional square, and supply the visitors of the cultural core with a substance that underlies and informs their experiences.





Site Specifics

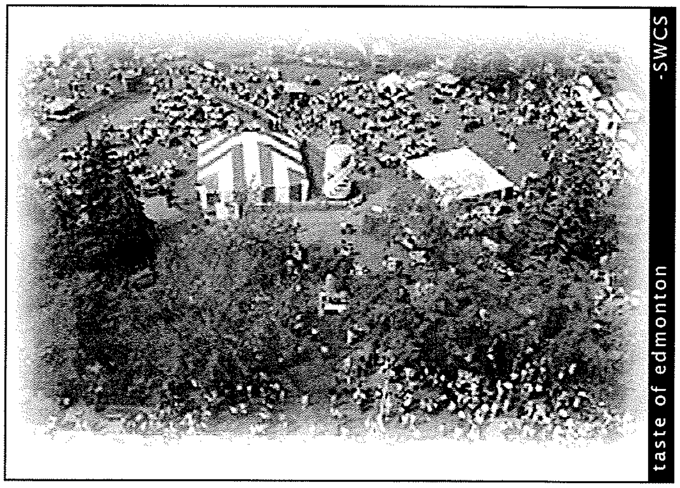
Sir Winston Churchill Square is approximately 2.10 acres or 8,500 m2 (91,747 ft2). The existing vegetation consists primarily of Elm (Ulmus americana, Ulmus americana x ‘Brandon’) and Spruce (Picea glauca, Picea pungens). The site contains access to the underground LRT station via an underground “tunnel” located at the Southwest corner. Formal seating is limited to wooden benches and portable picnic tables. Pedestrian-scaled lighting exists only along the east portion of the perimeter (which is of the same style used for city hall) with the remainder being lit by adjacent overhead street

lighting. The paving consists entirely of concrete paving stones (blocks), with the remainder consisting of mown lawn. The 5-meter bronze sculpture of Sir Winston Churchill (erected in 1989) is located on the Northwest corner of the Square obscured by trees.

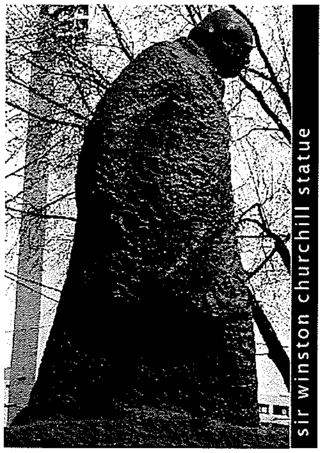
> *"...a place where people linger after work. Where seniors gather. Where families meet. Where artists live and work. Where five diverse neighborhoods provide so much life and activity that people come to Downtown, just to be Downtown."*[71]

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Many of the festivals that occur within the Arts District require extensive food services, exhibition venues and staging areas. The result of this programming is exceptionally heavy foot traffic. One of the difficulties that the Edmonton Parks and Recreation Department have encountered is the need to replace all or most the sod after each major festival event. This is a problem for the city in monetary terms, and also results in the Square appearing to be comprised of soil and mud for most of the tourism and festival seasons. In order to keep repetitive maintenance of the Square to a minimum, it would be advantageous to allocate hard surfaced areas for such events to take place. Most temporary food outlets and exhibition structures should be concentrated along the edges of the Square (99th Street and 102nd Avenue). For special events, 99th Street, 102nd Avenue and 102nd A Avenue could be closed to traffic on a temporary basis. These closures would allow more area for "pedestrian activities" and larger crowds. They now also allow for the use of various stages in the Arts District at the same time without conflict.



taste of edmonton -SWCS



sir winston churchill statue

VEHICULAR MOVEMENT

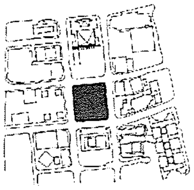
Edmonton's Downtown area is relatively accessible and efficient by comparison with many other cities in North America. Undoubtedly future growth will create extra demand on the city's major traffic arteries. Within this project only minor changes to the capacity of the roads in the area will be effected. 99th Street will be affected the most. Furthermore, the City of Edmonton Transportation Department suggests that permanent closure of 103rd Avenue for the length of the square would not adversely affect traffic or transit flow. The proposed road closure would aid the successful linking of the Square to the City Hall, unifying the two.

99TH STREET

Situated on what was the original 1882 river lot settlements of Edmonton, 99th Street stands in contrast to the surrounding north-south axial grid of the downtown. The orientation of 99th Street and its minimal usage by vehicular traffic, make it a key area that should be addressed as a linkage to and from the Square.

The buildings located along the length of 99th Street house the more prominent cultural centres in Edmonton. These include; the Edmonton Art Gallery, the Citadel Theatre, the Francis Winspear Centre and "Tickets on the Square". It is also important that 99th street be used as a link south to the North Saskatchewan River, the Heritage Trail, The Edmonton Convention Centre and Canada Place. With redevelopment 99th Street will also act as another artery in the Rice - Howard Way corridor (refer to plan), thereby making the Arts District accessible to pedestrians.

99th Street would benefit in narrowing in width to allow for greater pedestrian activity while retaining four traffic lanes. It is intended that the proposed plan invite each of these cultural facilities to become more involved with the street life of the area. By extending the territory of each facility (eg. allowing the Art Gallery to place exhibits on a temporarily closed street or on the adjacent sidewalk) it is hoped that 99th Street would become a more interesting and more active part of the Arts District. Culturally, 99th Street will allow for various historical and interpretive opportunities.

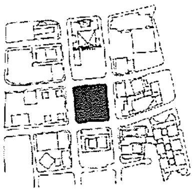


Currently, the advantages of further limiting traffic on 99th Street are outweighed by the problems that this would create. In particular, the location of parkade entries off 99th Street to the Sun Life Building, Canada Place, the Citadel Theatre and City Hall preclude it from ultimately becoming a totally pedestrian street.

PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT

Pedestrian movement within the Arts District occurs on two planes - at grade on sidewalks and road surfaces, and below grade on an underground pedway system. (see plan)

Casual walking takes place throughout the year predominantly in good weather. Attracting and designing for casual walkers generally means creating points of interest, seating, and a place to eat lunch in the sun. Perhaps the greatest need in terms of the utility of Churchill Square and the festivals it caters to, are places to sit. In addition to some fixed seating, generous moveable outdoor seating, which can be adjusted as required to seat individuals, couples, or larger gatherings - should be provided. "The big asset is movability. Chairs enlarge choice: to move into the sun, out of it, to make room for groups, or move away from them."[72] William H. Whyte, an observer of public space, suggests that there is an inescapable ritual of sitting down. As the sitter takes a chair, they shift it - if only a few inches - and in doing so exert their territoriality, making the space more their own. Where it



has been implemented loose seating in public spaces has been successful. The loose chairs effectively animate the space giving it a more inviting character.(ie. Yorkville Park, Toronto, Ontario, Canada)

DIRECTED PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT

The liveliness of the site is dependent on its ability to attract people. Pedestrians are generally interested in the fastest route to their destination. Existing patterns of travel can now be easily discerned from the worn portions of the lawn. Relating new pathways to the existing desire lines will help to ensure constant movement and activity through the site - and not just on the periphery where it is currently found. Provisions must be made for relatively efficient routes both at grade and at other levels, for use during unpleasant weather.

At grade, various hard surfacing materials will be proposed. These should recognize pedestrian desire lines through Churchill Square and the Arts District as well as reinforcing the strong North-South spatial organization, focusing on City Hall.

99th street -2001

CONNECTIONS WITH SURROUNDING AREAS

Connections with surrounding areas that merit special attention are as follows:

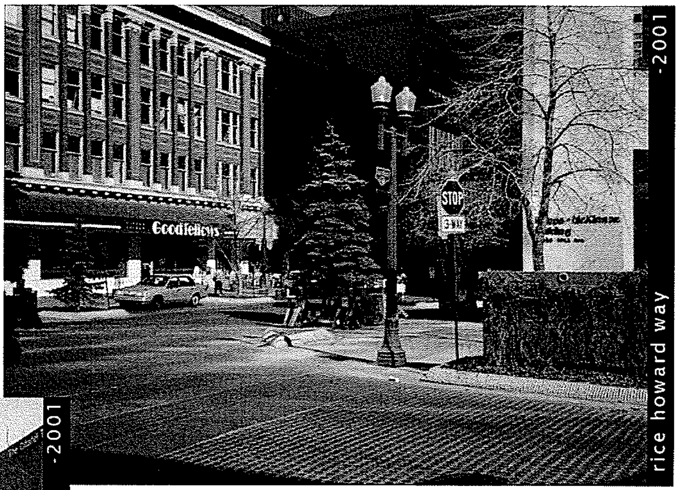
1. Connection from the river valley to the Arts District through greenery. Ideally a strong image of greenery would extend from the Capital City Park, north past City Hall to 103rdA Avenue. (refer to plan)

2. Extension and uninterrupted connection of Edmonton Centre Shopping Plaza to Churchill Square, with continuous and unified link to Churchill LRT station.

3. Pedestrian linkage from the Convention Centre and the MacDonald Hotel to the Arts District, encouraging visitors to explore this part of the city.

4. Pedestrian connection with Rice Howard Way (which is already well developed).

5. Connection to the Court House Plaza both above and below 99th Street.

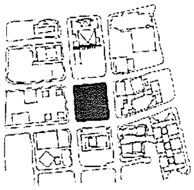


rice howard way -2001

MICROCLIMATE

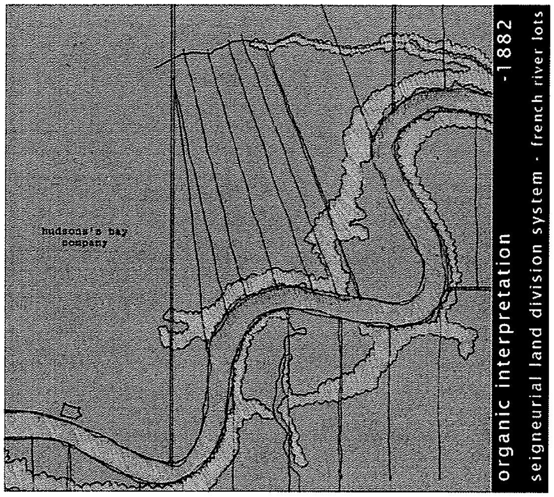
While it is only natural that summer brings out the desire to use the park, Edmonton's extended winter season and northern location point to the need for winter use and nighttime effect. With City Hall currently providing a venue for ice skating, the park should be used to showcase the other cultural and social possibilities that exist in a "livable winter city". The proposal should take advantage of the winter events that currently take place in the Square and expand upon the facilities and programmatic requirements creating a more inhabitable place throughout the winter.

The proposal should be designed to respond to three microclimatic conditions: sun exposure, protection from prevailing winter winds, and exposure to summer breezes.



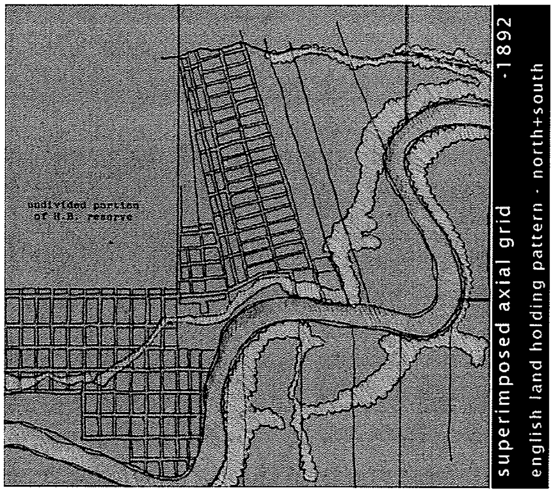
5.0 Proposal

5.1 FINAL DESIGN



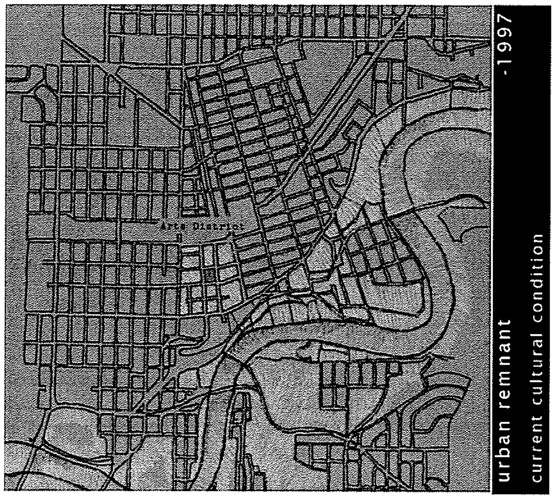
organic interpretation -1882

seigneurial land division system · french river lots



superimposed axial grid -1892

english land holding pattern · north+south



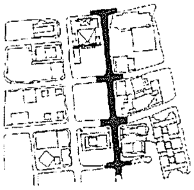
urban remnant -1997

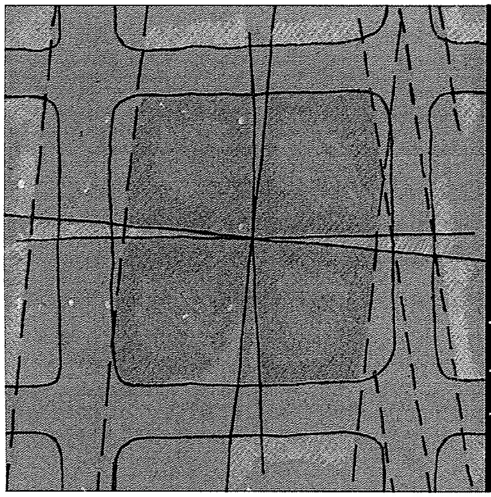
current cultural condition

The area of the city, in which the site is located, is divided into two distinct organizational systems or patterns. The first system is the remnant "organic"[73] system of the French River lots established in this region prior to the 1880's. The second system is the more recognizable Jeffersonian or English land holding pattern aligned on a north-south axial grid, established in this territory by the Hudson's Bay Reserve during the 1890's.

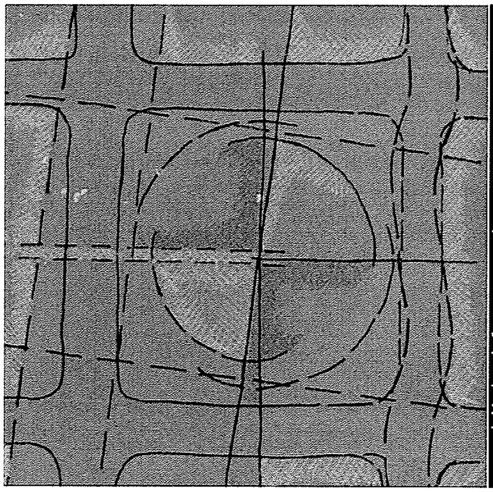
The identification of these two dominant systems is influential to the direction of this proposal as Sir Winston Churchill Square (SWCS) is situated directly upon or within the area where these systems converge and combine. And, in some respects the Square form can be seen as a byproduct and/or remnant of the alignments and patterns that these systems create. The site, positioned at a crossroads where culture, history and society combine, provides an ideal location for the re-grounding and reinterpretation of values within the city of Edmonton. Furthermore, the location of the site provides an interesting testing ground for the theories already discussed within this practicum.

The open clearing of the Square within the downtown is a very positive characteristic, providing distinctiveness to the Arts District. This characteristic can be reinforced by treating the Arts District as an "Urban Room", in which the square is centred. Focusing on the systems that touch on the Square, the "Room"

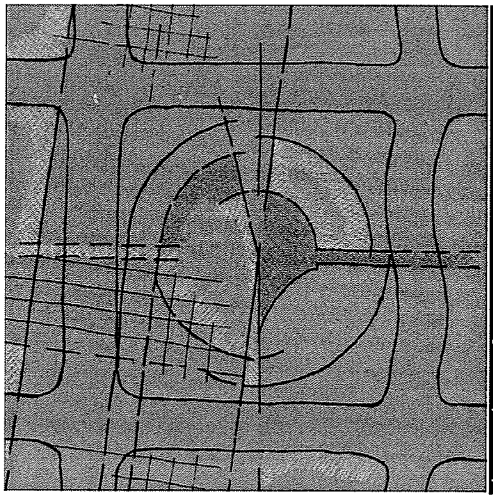




organizational cues
projected grids



established framework
deliniation of space



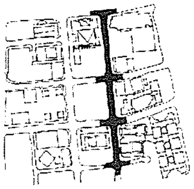
byproduct of systems
creation of subset vocabulary

will be broadly divided into two major areas - the first representing the natural systems or the “organic”, and the second representing the engineered or the “technological”. These two areas and the conditions they represent can be more appropriately described as the sensual, poetic and subjective versus the calculative, standardized and objective.

For the purposes of this proposal, the two broad divisions of the site will be further divided into three subcategories. The 99th Street Promenade or the “natural” component, 100th Street or the “technical” component, and Sir Winston Churchill Square or the “meeting ground” where a balance between the two primary systems is coordinated.

THE 99TH STREET PROMENADE

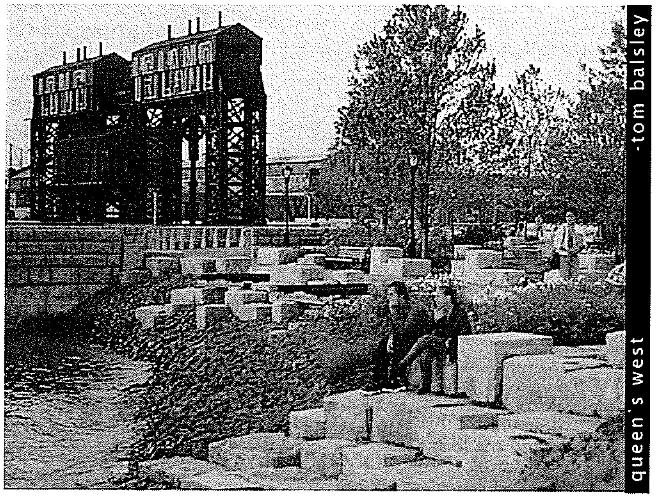
Situated on what was once the original 1882 river lot settlements of Edmonton, 99th Street stands in contrast to the surrounding north-south axial grids of the Downtown. It is intended that this portion of the design convey the ideology that culture and nature are two mutually interdependent systems within a larger encompassing whole. As part of the proposal for 99th Street, technology in terms of products, conventions, and exacting measures will be lessened to allow nature and the built form the ability to reveal their mutual interdependence. Intended to be a source of urbanistic fulfillment, the natural appearance of the 99th Street Promenade will function with restorative power, supplying the users of the Arts District with the materials and cues to stimulate and engage thoughts regarding the role of nature in the city.



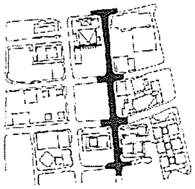
99th Street will take on a natural, “organic form”, symbolic of the manner in which property in the area was originally demarked and divided. Accentuating this more naturalistic division of the land, 99th Street will weave itself through the length of the Arts District establishing its own vocabulary unique to the area. A pallette of materials, qualities and experiences will be established, formalizing its role as the primary pedestrian corridor and gateway into the Arts District. This corridor will give prominence and draw attention to the area as it bisects streets and avenues that pass through Downtown. Linking the North Saskatchewan River Valley to the Downtown core, 99th Street will also serve to unify the majority of arts-related facilities within the district.

When entering the Arts District via 99th Street, it should become clear to both driver and pedestrian that the area they have entered is a special and unique space. The road and adjacent sidewalks are laid out in a gentle undulating rhythm that is reminiscent Olmstedian rolling paths and carriageways. The undulating series of S-curves in the road has its advantages when attempting to create a stimulating environment for pedestrians, vehicles and the community. Along with narrowing sight lines, curves slow down cars, and cause drivers to use their brakes. The resulting effect is a slower more tranquil environment that vehicles and pedestrians must share. The reduction of the roadway width to approximately 14.5 meters (from the existing 17 meters) would result in the loss of a loading/parking lane, but would provide for extra sidewalk and gathering area while facilitating historical interpretive areas, and extra street trees. The undulations or “bulging” that is created, promotes the surrounding businesses and cultural facilities to spill-out (ie. outdoor patios, cafes, performances, and art exhibits) onto the street engaging and supporting the life of the area. Temporary closures of 99th Street will allow for the street to be used as a “linear park” from Jasper Avenue to 103rd A Avenue. This expansion will aid in the programming and organization of large events such as the Taste of Edmonton, the Street Performers Festival, and the First Night Festival, relieving congestion and utilizing more of the Arts District.

One of the most effective ways of creating a unique and unified area is to demark it with a change in paving materials: first a threshold and then a pallette of finishes within the area - roads, sidewalks, and paving - which is different from the surrounding pedestrian surfaces. Although the materials chosen for all three areas of the district will vary, they should work together as a unified whole, complementing and contrasting each other while extending from edge to edge of the District.

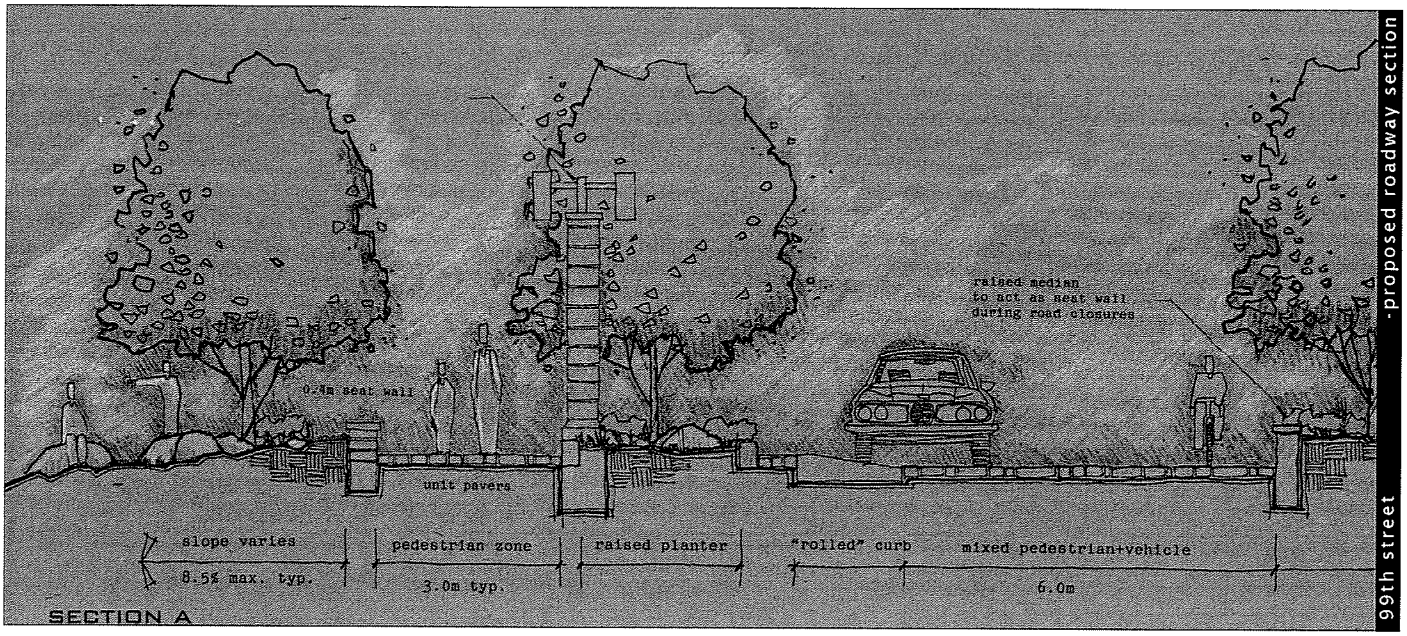


queen's west -tom balsley



Along the 99th Street promenade, the sidewalk and road surfaces draw inspiration from a natural pallette of indigenous materials (stone and vegetation) allowing users to become familiar with the geology of the region. The proposed paving will stretch across both sidewalks and the roadway creating one continuous entity. The only separation between pedestrian and vehicle will be decided by one detail, the placement of the curb. The curb specified for this portion of the design will be a "roll-style" curb more representative of a small swale or gutter. The unobtrusiveness of this element will aid in creating an imagery of one continuous linear urban parkway scaled to the pedestrian. In the locations where definition is required between vehicle and pedestrian, bollards will be used. Keeping the materials consistent, the bollards will be produced using large slabs of fractured and tooled indigenous rock, (ie. granite, limestone or sandstone) which will also act as informal seating and gathering areas. Other materials used within this portion of the design emphasize the subtle imperfections of also being hand tooled. Precast concrete unit pavers, platforms, stairs, seat walls and podium pieces should all resemble the irregularities of hand quarried materials, installed in a random yet organized and engaging fashion. In further attempts to re-scale 99th Street to the pedestrian, "bulbing" of the sidewalk at crosswalk locations moves the line of the curb further into the street. This "bulbing" creates a more generous location in which to navigate the street, as it widens the sidewalk and reduces the distance which pedestrians must cross.

The vegetation along 99th Street will be comprised mainly of plants which are native to Alberta, and are commonly found on the north slope of the North Saskatchewan River Valley.



99th street -proposed roadway section

99TH STREET PLANT LIST

Indigenous to north slope North Saskatchewan River

CONIFEROUS + DECIDUOUS TREES

Balsam Poplar (Populus balsamifera)
European Columnar Aspen (Populus tremula)
Trembling Aspen (Populus tremuloides)
Colorado Spruce (Picea pungens)
White Spruce (Picea glauca)

DECIDUOUS SHRUBS

Red osier dogwood (cornus stolonifera)
Silverberry (Elaeagnus commutata)
Prickly rose (Prunus acicularis)

GRASSES

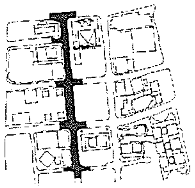
Western wheatgrass (Agropyron smithii)
Blue grama (Boutelous gracillis)
June grass (Koeleria macrantha)

GROUND COVERS

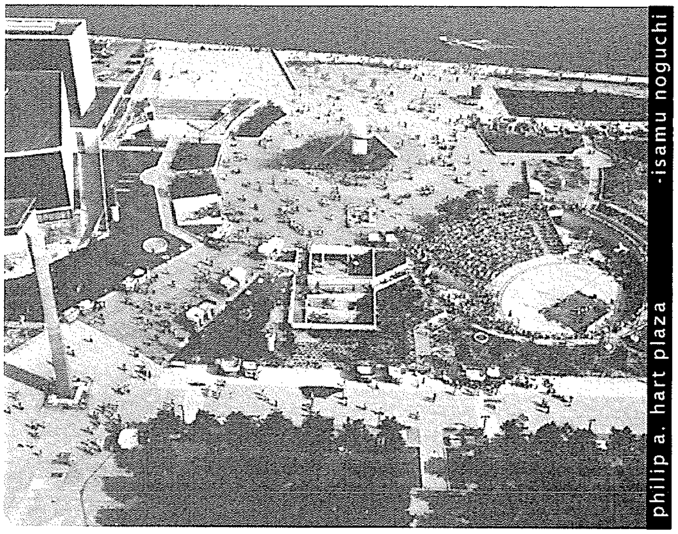
Arctic Phlox (Phlox borealis)
Oregon-Boxwood (Paxistima myrsinites)
Bishops goutweed (Aegopodium podagraria)
Kinnikinik (Arctostaphylos uva-ursi)

100TH STREET

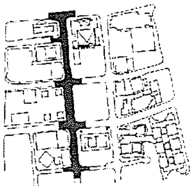
100th Street is seen as the opposing counterpart to the 99th Street Promenade. Within this area of the design, culture and technology embrace one another, accentuating the notion of the clean, sophisticated modern city of the 21st century. Skewed slightly from the North-South axis of the city, 100th Street, with its clean lines, wide vehicular lanes, and strong linear focus on the CN Building, is the epitome of the organized modern city. Nature as object is held as subservient to the architecture, and is used strictly as a tool for ornament. It is the intention and underlying theme for this portion of the proposal that "nature in the city", is an ideology that has outlasted its time. In the context of Edmonton, and the proximity of its downtown to the river valley, it can be argued that there is already an abundance of accessible nature, and it too is under exposed. Therefore, the addition of vegetation within the urban environment, more specifically the Arts District is no more than a romantic futile attempt at appeasing the ecological concerns of the 21st century.



The proposal for 100th Street is intended to explore the notion of the park as an extension of the built form of which it is a part. Utilizing the surrounding context in order to draw inspiration, the Square will attempt to make connections which give structure to a form that is seen incomplete and discontinuous. Ultimately, the intention is to discern a level of beauty in the resulting built form of the site and its context, which can be culturally accepted and appreciated.

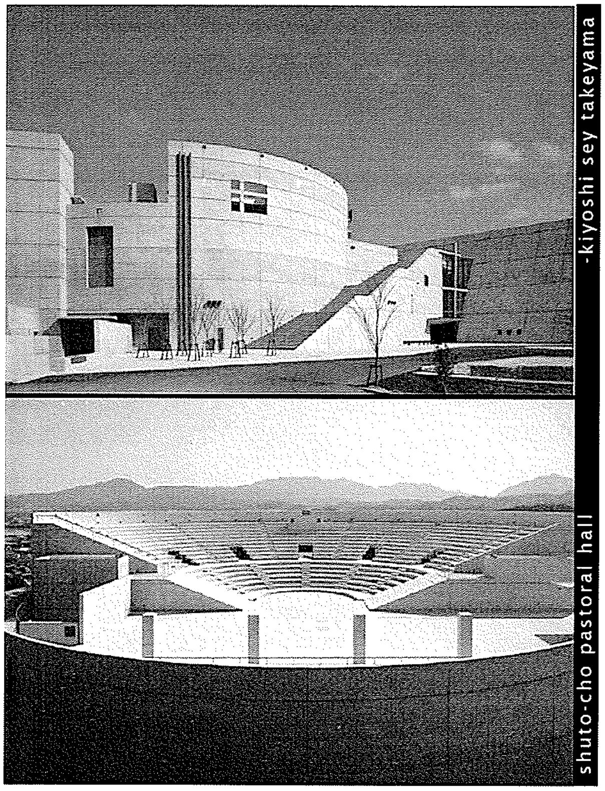

philip a. hart plaza ·isamu noguchi

Currently 100th Street, when compared to the other roadways adjacent to the Square, has a greater amount of traffic per day than the other 3 roadways combined. As a linkage from the south, 100th Street is responsible for a large portion of the congestion in the Downtown area during rush hour. It is for these reasons, and to complement the design, that 100th Street will remain largely intact.

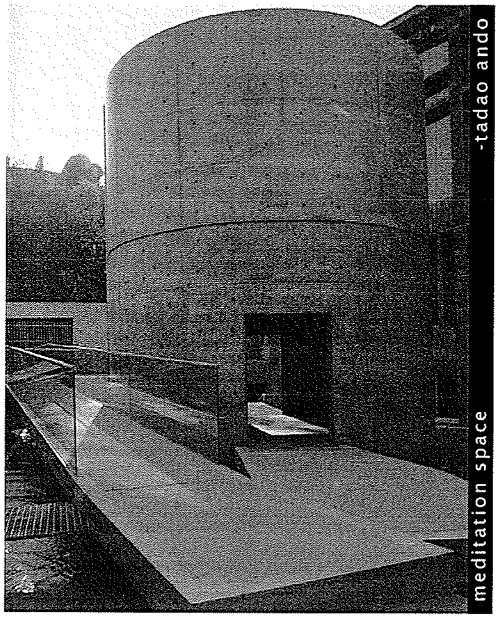


Much like 99th Street, when entering the Arts District via 100th Street, it is intended that both the vehicle and the pedestrian are aware that they are entering a unique place. Bringing attention to the dominant north-south grid of Edmonton, 100th Street will be used to illustrate the impact of the built form and the patterns that it creates. By allowing the existing North-South grid that occurs west of the site to force itself into the area, a new framework, which can be exploited and built upon, will be established. Furthermore, by introducing the North-South grid into the District, it allows items of importance (ie. monuments and sculptural elements) to take on new meaning as they become shifted to align or contradict either the North-South or the existing grid of the Square. Either way, the installment of the North-South grid will serve as a powerful reminder of the overriding systems that occur in the city.

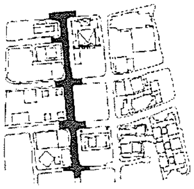
Reinforcing the pattern of the city, a geometric grid will be superimposed upon the sidewalks and crosswalks of the street. Grid lines will be cut, not "tooled" into concrete, leaving both a clean line and edge. This grid will be further delineated using "banding" of coloured and dyed concrete, and where applicable, complemented with the texture of sandblasting. Creating interest through the uniformity and simplicity of both line and pattern, the street will contrast with the remainder of the existing downtown streets. Like the work of Tadao Ando and Kiyoshi Sey Takeyama, the detailing of 100th Street would both amplify and make inviting the basic "nature" of materials such as concrete. It is intended that the materials used along 100th Street be a "step up" and a refined form of the traditional cast-in-place concrete sidewalk and curb, subtly polished and honed with exacting precision.

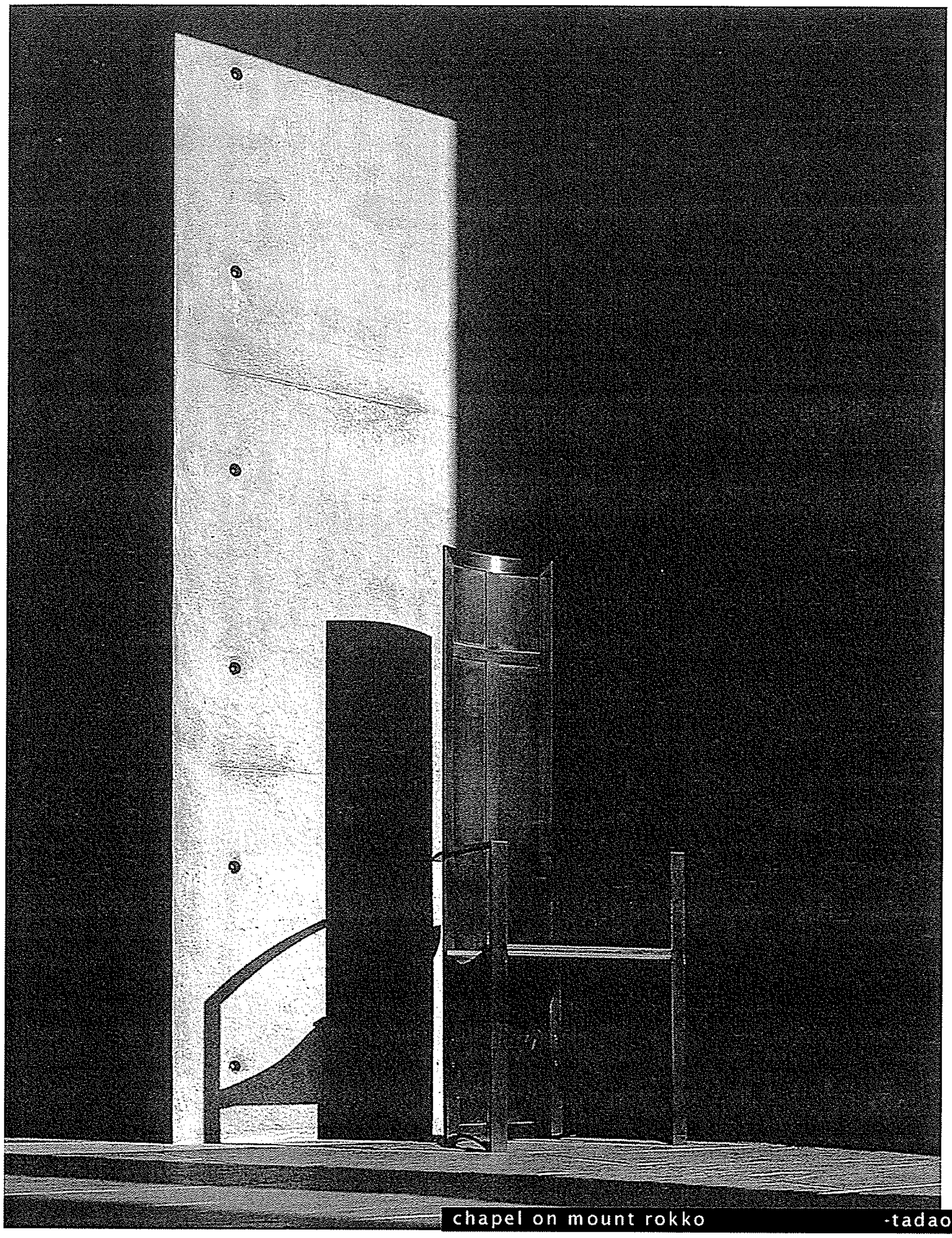


shuto-cho pastoral hall -kiyoshi sey takeyama

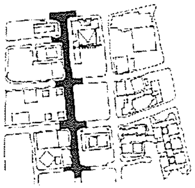


meditation space -tadao ando





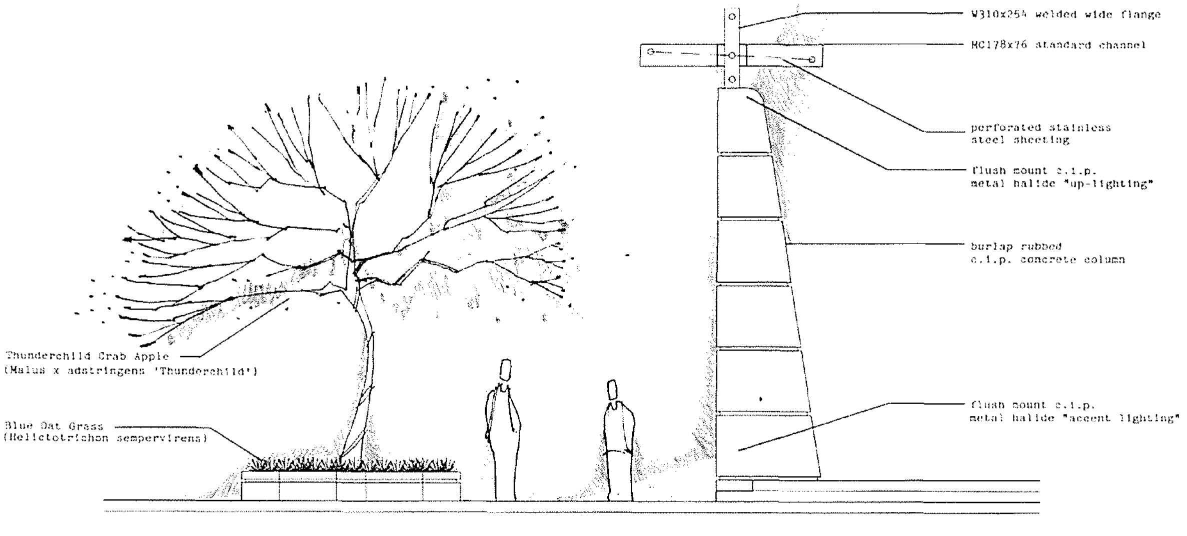
chapel on mount rokko -tadao ando



Further developing the theme of the juxtaposed North-South grid on the Arts District, it is proposed that the grid begin to strip away portions of existing buildings. As seen on the altered façade of the Edmonton Centre Shopping Plaza, the realignment at street level not only reinforces the North-South axial grid but allows the opportunity to further develop the street front creating connections between people and the built environment.

With 100th Street being a primary connection south across the river, the area directly in front of Edmonton Centre has developed into a hub of transit activity. As a result the "carved-out" space in front of Edmonton Centre has been adopted as a transit stop. As this space is not enclosed, the pedestrians benefit very little from the cantilevered roof and benches that are here. It is proposed that, through the realignment of the façade, a more engaging and active space would be created. The shelter, which would be in constant use, would bring life back to the blank and dreary façade that is currently occupying this corner. The continuous glazing which would run from floor to ceiling reacts like a transparent box creating a visible and secured shelter that is visible throughout the day and night. Inside, the Shelter would supplement the street life by allowing for possible vendors (ie. magazine rack or refreshment stand). The Shelter would also be tied into the "techno" theme by supplying interactive digital LED displays, providing information such as bus schedules, city maps, tourist information, and Arts District events. The shelter providing street level entry to the pedway and the lower level of Edmonton Centre will eliminate the need for the obtrusively placed LRT entrance currently found on the southwest corner of the Square.

A trellis which creates visual interest and impact along an elevated horizontal plane has also been proposed along the East Side of 100th Street. The trellis is intended to carry the lines of the surrounding structures in the Square, and will add a series of vertical elements, providing a sense of scale to the site. Creating a sense of definition along the West Side of the Square, the trellis will


W310x254 welded wide flange
MC178x76 standard channel
perforated stainless steel sheeting
flush mount c.i.p. metal halide "up-lighting"
burlap rubbed c.i.p. concrete column
flush mount c.i.p. metal halide "accent lighting"
Thunderchild Crab Apple (Malus x adstringens 'Thunderchild')
Blue Oat Grass (Helictotrichon sempervirens)

typical section · 100th street trellis detail also act as a guiding device leading people into the heart of the square, and the Arts District. As an important part of the Square's infrastructure, the trellis will also act as scaffolding which lighting (both permanent and temporary), audiovisual equipment, staging and other elements can be added providing endless programmatic possibilities.

promenade plantee -atelier parisien d'urbanisme

All vegetation in this portion of the design will also be aligned to the superimposed North-South axis. The vegetation will strictly be comprised of ornamental varieties that are suited for the urban environment, and are intended to add colour and vibrancy offsetting the subtle tones of the hard materials used in the paving and surfacing.

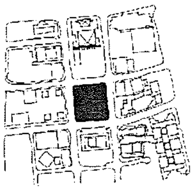
100th Street Plant List

Ornamental and decorative planting

Deciduous Trees
Thunderchild Crab Apple
(Malus x adstringens 'Thunderchild')

Deciduous Shrubs
Boxwood hedge
(Buxus microphylla var. Koreana)

Ornamental grasses
Blue Oat Grass
(Helictotrichon sempervirena)

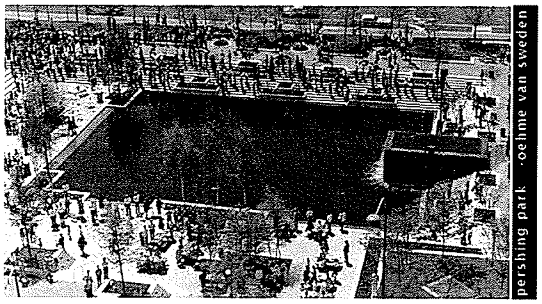


Sir Winston Churchill Square

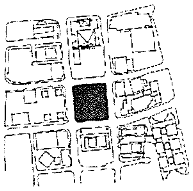
As a "meeting ground" for the two systems - nature (99th Street) and technology (100th Street) - the Squre becomes a model of the future park that is held in a state of static equilibrium. Balancing both systems, the Square acts like a selective or semi-permeable membrane allowing the two systems the ability to flow through it.

Subjected to many cultural and social factors, including economics and politics, the Square has evolved as a product of its environment. Debated for over 60 years, the Square has missed many opportunities not only to become a more significant part of the downtown, but also to become a unifying agent in the development of Edmonton's Downtown and Arts District. Believed to be the metaphorical "heart" of the city, the Square can be more easily described as an "island". Separated from pedestrians by roads, pedways, and shopping plazas, the Square lives only when events "wash up on its shores".

Within this proposal, one of the most important issues surrounding the Square's redesign will be its renewed connection to the pedestrian and it's reinstitution as a vibrant part of the community.

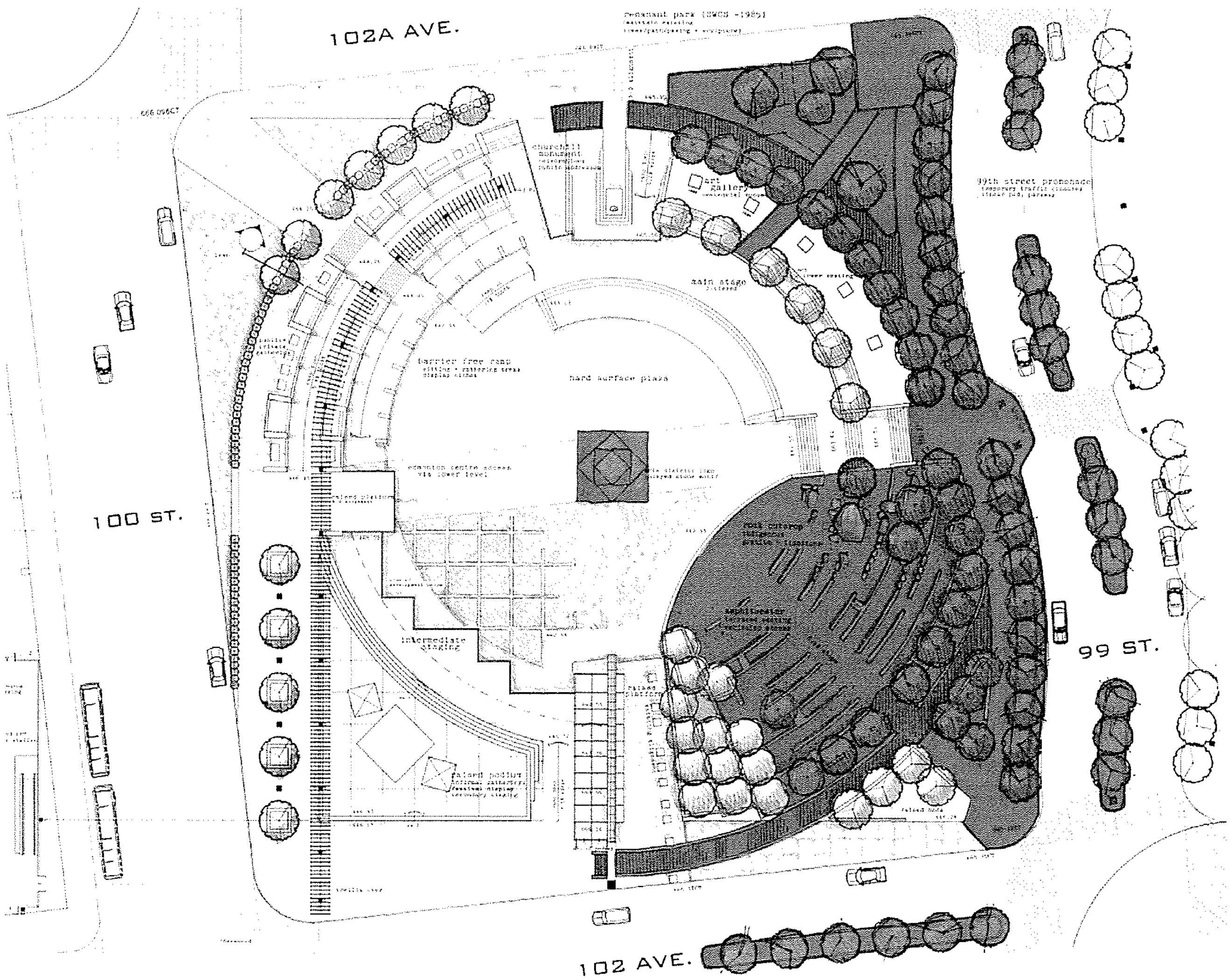


pershing park -oehme van sweden



Commenting on the importance of sightlines, William Whyte attributes the success of a site with the pedestrian's ability to see it. SWCS is a case in which the lowering of its surface aids in its transformation into a heavily used space. Differing from the examples of failed lowered or sunken spaces offered by Whyte, the Square differs as it does not rely only on one level (the lower level) to support its activity. Much like Rockefeller Plaza in New York, the Square proposes a series of levels and tiers that engage the surrounding context at areas with the highest pedestrian traffic, the street and the pedway. As a result of the Square's connection to both the lower level of the Edmonton Centre Shopping Plaza and the LRT station, there is a variety of destinations and desire lines that will ensure a constant level of activity on both planes

By lowering the Square to match the lower levels of the shopping centre the LRT station and the underground pedway system (-13'-0" or -3.96m), it begins to "tap" into an unused source of pedestrians. To date, the pedway system linking the LRT and Edmonton Centre has been very suc-

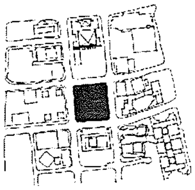

102A AVE.
100 ST.
99 ST.
102 AVE.
churchill monument
art gallery
99th street promenade
main stage
barrier free ramp
hard surface plaza
edmonton centre access via lower level
raised platform
intermediate staging
raised podium
amphitheater
raised platform

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL SQUARE -PROPOSAL

cessful and is in constant use, but once underground, the pedestrians ability to deviate off of the path becomes very limited and in this case detrimental to the vitality of the Square.

Based primarily on two horizontal planes (el. 662.55 + el. 666.10), the Square is extruded upwards to varying elevations creating a series of secondary and tertiary stages. These stages not only penetrate and link the surrounding pedestrian corridors to the Square but also allow for a wide variety of programming and impromptu occurrences. A key benefit from the lowering of the centre portion of the Square is the creation of concentrated street level "pockets" of activity along its periphery. These pockets although of a generous area give the illusion of a greater sense of activity and enthusiasm to both the pedestrian and the vehicular traffic that move through the arts district. An example of these concentrated "pockets" is the creation of three "lookout" platforms, which occur on the east, south and west sides of the Square. These platforms which are aligned either on the north-south axis or the existing axis of the square serve to engage the pedestrian at street level. More importantly the platforms provide views into the Square not only for the purposes of people/performance watching, but allow the pedestrian to orientate and familiarize themselves with the services, and points of entry and departure provided on the lower level.

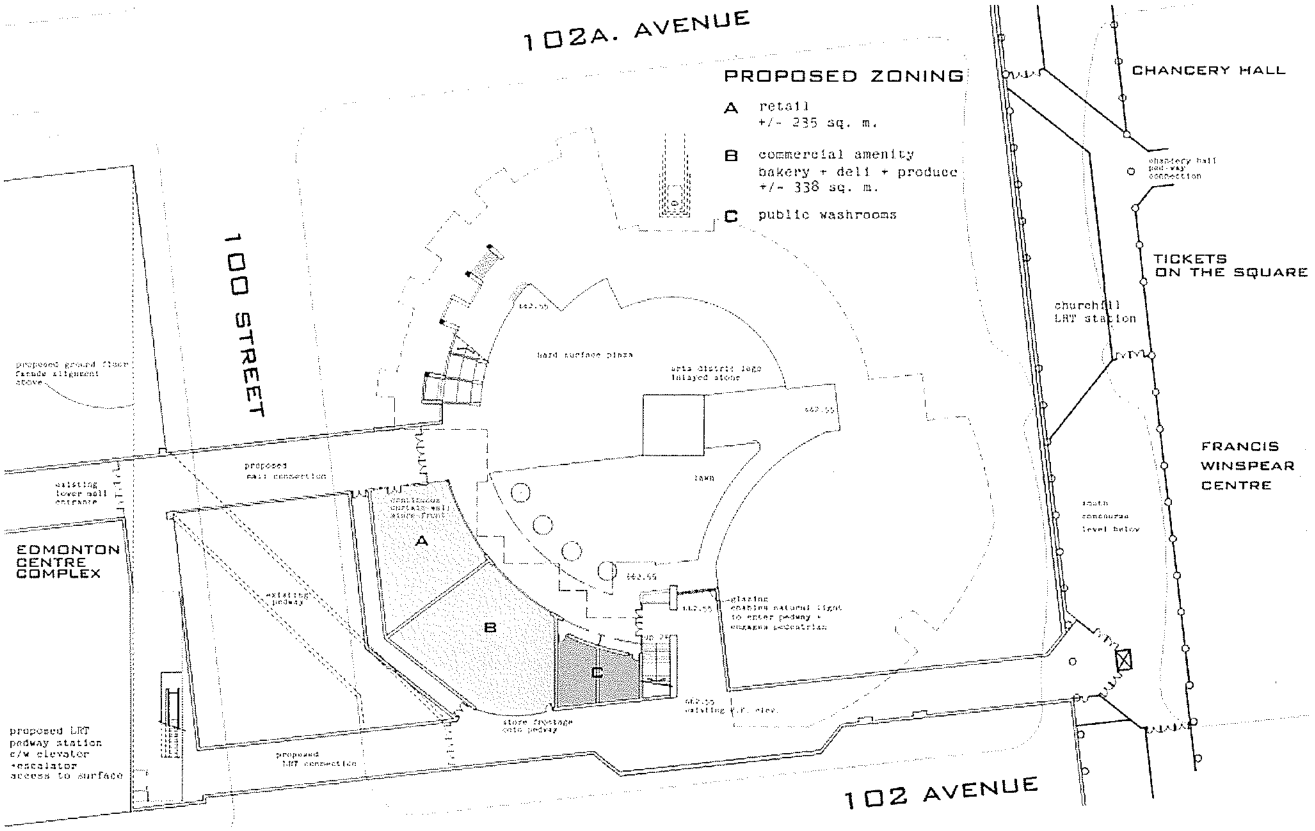
As one of the "pockets" of activity along the periphery of the Square, the Sir Winston Churchill Monument is of significant importance. The proposed relocation and realignment of the monument would situate it on the centre-line of the Square and along the north-south axis.



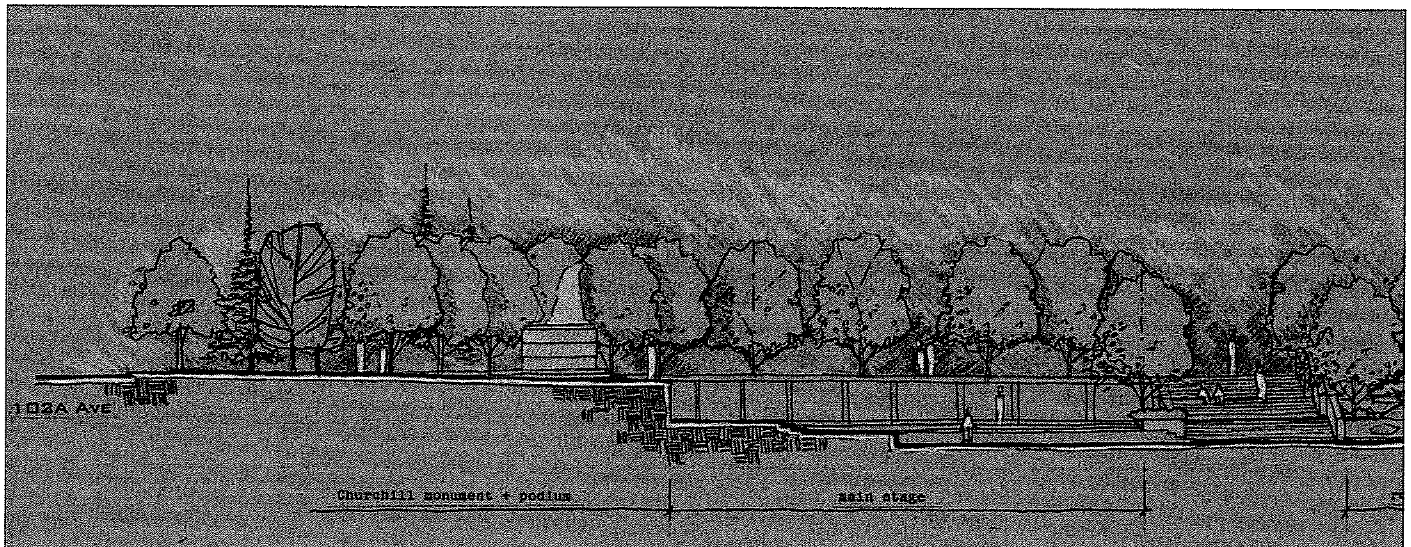
The monument would not only stand in contrast to the monumental backdrop and alignment of City Hall to the north, but provide a much-needed formal space for public addresses, presentations, award ceremonies, and celebrations.

The Square further "connects" with the surrounding activity by allowing the adjacent Edmonton Centre Shopping Plaza the ability to extend into a small pocket of activity at the lower level elevation. Adopting the terminology used by commercial developers, the Square can be compared to that of a large-scale department store, or as an anchor attraction for the Edmonton Centre Shopping plaza. It is intended that through the proposed extension of the mall into the Square, a new more attractive destination and experience will be provided, not only to the patrons of the mall, but pedestrians in general.

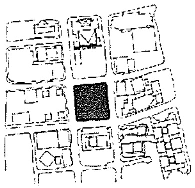
The lease spaces illustrated within the lower level of the proposal provide many valuable functions for the longevity and success of the Square. The proposed mixed-use of the development will provide not only a constant source of activity, but will also act as a destination, promoting the mingling and lingering of pedestrians within the space. In regards to safety, the buzz of activity and the illumination of the proposed storefronts would provide a sense of security to those that choose to use the park during both early morning and in the evening. In addition to the proposed lease spaces, the lower development also provides much needed public washrooms and amenities.


102A. AVENUE
PROPOSED ZONING
A retail
+/- 235 sq. m.
B commercial amenity
bakery + deli + produce
+/- 338 sq. m.
C public washrooms
CHANCERY HALL
chancery hall ped-way connection
TICKETS ON THE SQUARE
churchill LRT station
FRANCIS WINSPEAR CENTRE
south concourse level below
100 STREET
proposed ground floor facade alignment above
hard surface plaza
arts district logo inlayed stone
662.55
lawn
proposed mall connection
existing lower mall entrance
continuous curtain wall store front
A
B
C
EDMONTON CENTRE COMPLEX
existing pedway
glazing enables natural light to enter pedway + engages pedestrian
up 24
662.55 existing F.F. elev.
store frontage onto pedway
proposed LRT pedway station c/w elevator +escalator access to surface
proposed LRT connection
102 AVENUE

LOWER LEVEL DEVELOPMENT potential commercial + retail


102A AVE
Churchill monument + podium
main stage

SECTION - NORTH + SOUTH

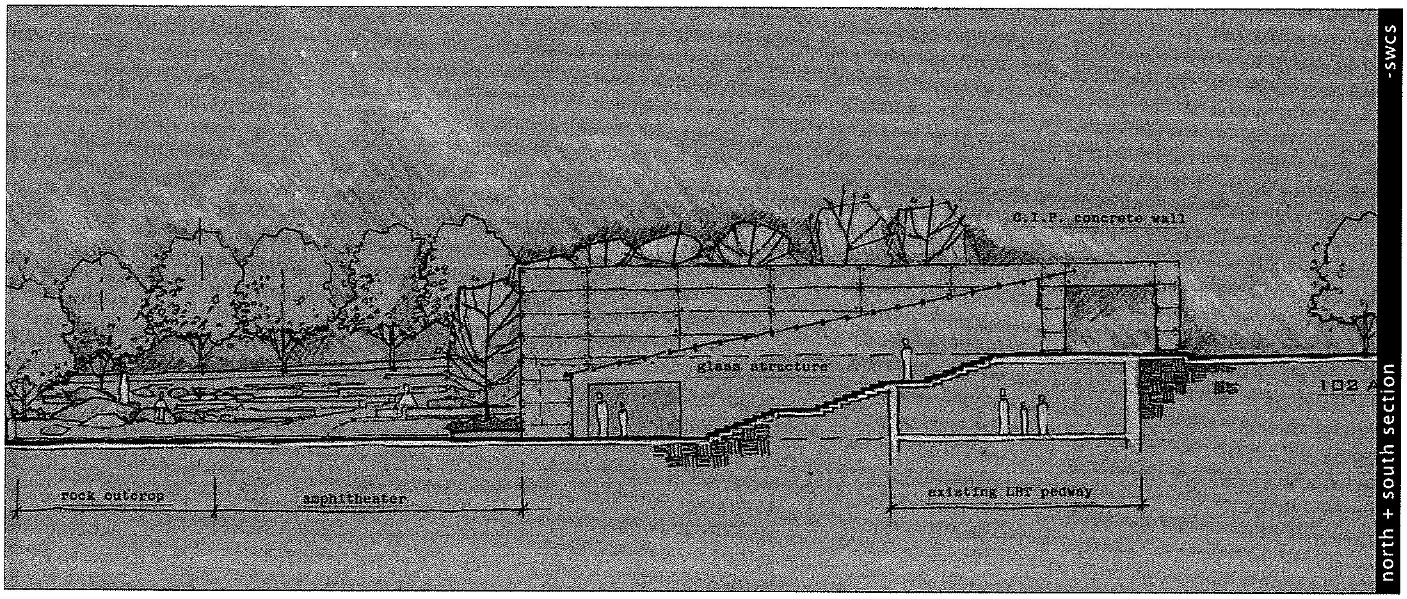


Linking the lower commercial lease spaces to street level, the northwest portion of the Square is comprised of a 4.5m wide barrier free (20:1) ramp system, and It is intended that it be a part of the formal expression created along 100th street. The generous dimensions and the location of the ramp allow it to become the primary means of moving large festival crowds through the vertical transitions of the space. In addition to accommodating pedestrians, it is intended that the ramp would also be able to provide access for service and emergency vehicles to the lower level of the Square.

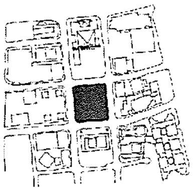
Throughout its length, the vertical faces of the ramp system have been undulated and delineated to accommodate both public and private gatherings. While it was important to facilitate the need for public congregation, important sight lines and views of both the main stage and the Churchill Monument were also addressed. This vertical articulation is further enhanced through the ramp's integration with the trellis system introduced earlier in the 100th Street proposal. The trellis which follows the arc of the ramp would provide a unique experience of light and shadow as both sunlight and artificial light diffuse through the perforated stainless steel inserts of the overhead canopy.

The vertical faces of both the trellis and ramp system create not only informal seating and gathering spaces, but they also provide shelter from prevailing winter winds while acting as passive solar hot spots, focusing, storing and radiating solar energy back towards the pedestrian. It was also intended that the seating and gathering pockets along the length of the ramp would also be used as podium areas in which temporary art installations could be displayed (ie. annual ice sculpture competition).

The northeast corner of the Square, due to its proximity and visual connection to the Edmonton Art Gallery has been proposed as a historic remnant. It is intended that this portion of the Square be kept as a living archive and a reminder of the past ideologies and



north + south section -swcs



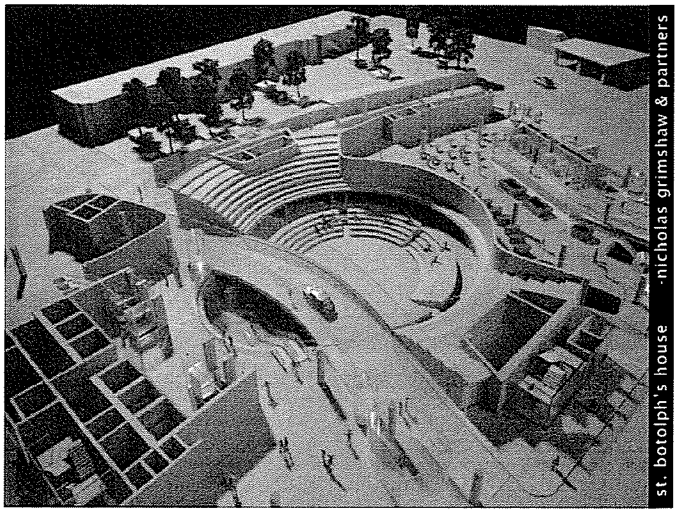
struggles that lent to the Squares initial development, its use and its character. Within this portion of the Square, all paving materials, artwork, vegetation and charachter will be preserved.

Directly south of the remnant park, and at a slightly lower elevation (-1.5M), is the main staging area. It is intended that the staging be large enough to support the festivals and events which currently take place within the Square, plus be flexible enough in its size, orientation, and appearance to attract new ceremonies and events (ie. weddings, graduations, concerts and plays). It is proposed that the stage is to be of a 2 - tiered nature, allowing for the programmatic flexibility that festivals and other large outdoor events require. Furthermore, the use of steps between the tiers allows the stage to become an informal gathering area, where casual lunch dwellers perch and turn their attention and focus on the centre of the Square, where everyday life becomes part of the performance.

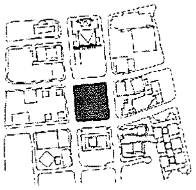
The southwest corner of the Square metaphorically supports the proposed 99th Street promenade. The gently rolling slope (8.5%) provides an informal descent into the lower portion of the Square. As the notion of nature collapses into the bottom of the Square, the earth is mannered much like that of an amphitheater where rock out-crops of indigenous granite and limestone are revealed. These out-crops serve to not only introduce parts of the local geology to the users of the Square, but act as informal seating and play structures. Much like that of the barrier free ramping system to the northwest, the amphitheater is seen as one of the primary means of moving pedestrians through the Square. Holding approximately 800 people the amphitheater becomes an integral part of the Square during both casual use, and large functions.

Overall the redevelopment of Sir Winston Churchill Square provides the programmatic flexibility required for a site of it's importance, size and use. The Square also succeeds in providing pedestrians with generous amounts of room for circulation and movement through the variety of experiences and spaces created.

pioneer courthouse square



st. botolph's house ·nicholas grimshaw & partners



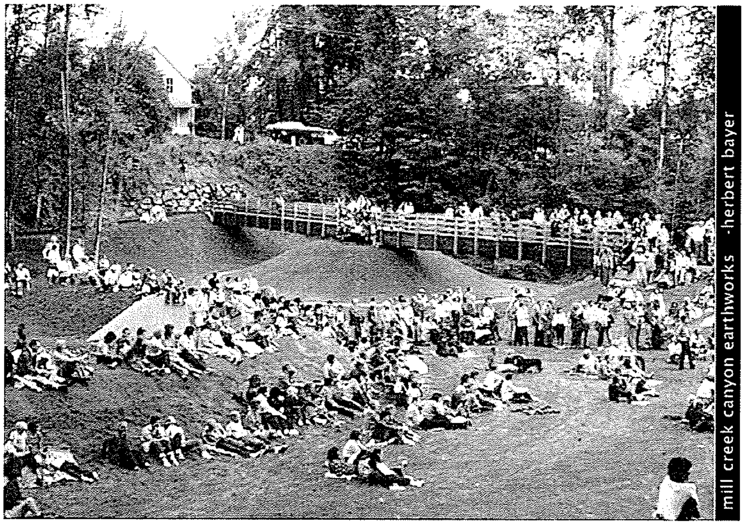
5.2 Conclusion

Sir Winston Churchill Square is a park that weaves together layers of culture, nature and technology into a system that is not only complementary to the way we live in an urban environment, but also to the way we might think our lifestyles should be. No matter which ideology we chose to embrace - a) or b) - the park creates a dialogue that is free from being an "empty vessel". These proposals are designed to engage the user in a meaningful and socially inclusive space. It is believed that the proposals illustrates how potential artistic, ecological, technological and cultural issues may be addressed and combined to form a new level of understanding and appreciation for urban spaces, and how we chose to view and interact with them.

Furthermore, it is suggested that this research and proposal illustrate the importance of landscape architecture as a visual art and, more fundamentally, as a "cultural project".

"We shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings shape us."

(Sir Winston Churchill)



mill creek canyon earthworks -herbert bayer

6.0 Appendix A: Chronology

Sir Winston Churchill square 1912-present

1912. The City of Edmonton commissions the Minneapolis planning firm of Morrell and Nicholls to develop a plan for the area surrounding the square. The plan, a particularly grandiose scheme, called for majestic Greco-Romanesque buildings. The total proposed cost for acquiring the necessary land was $3.0 million. The plan was subsequently voted against.

1924. The first acquisitions in the block occur when the city purchases the north halves of lots 55 and 56, and all of lot 60. Acquisitions continue through the twenties, thirties, forties and fifties, and the city leases out any existing buildings, eventually demolishing them.

1930's. City acquires portions of land that later comprise Churchill Square through unpaid taxes, and after the Second World War found themselves overwhelmed with proposals and plans.

1933. The first comprehensive "Zoning Bylaw" was passed and an "Official Town Plan" was adopted with specific designated areas for the Civic Centre.

1947. As a response to Ottawa's proposed new federal building in Edmonton, the Burgess, and the Dewar plans were introduced. Both plans included the development of open-space and provided for, among other things, a civic auditorium and arts centre.

1950. The Detweiler plan introduced. L.E. Detweiler of New York based First New Amsterdam Corp. proposed that the city lease the area between 99th street and 100th streets and 101a and 104th avenues to the company in return for a 99 year lease. The company in return would finance, design, build, and operate a unique and modern complex which was to combine beauty, art and music with other essentials for living, shopping and business. A more detailed examination of the plans revealed the proposed construction of an auditorium and theatre complex, and children's nursery, a market, and radio and television studios.

1950. City Council approves the Detweiler plan in principle, but when put before the ratepayers, the plan was voted against.

????. City hall is constructed and due to the political dream of a grand "civic plan" no permanent building were allowed in the area, resulting in a jumble of parking lots and temporary structures.

1961. Council pays Webb and Knapp (Canada) Ltd. $100,000 to plan the area. The plan included "a fine civic park" and an 11,000-seat coliseum.

1962. Council approves the Webb and Knapp plan in principle, then decides to adopt a plan called the Civic Centre Development Plan, which was apparently a revised Webb and Knapp plan (a legal but unethical action).

May 5, 1964. The last lot in the block, lot 49 is purchased. The block is now wholly-owned by the City but is leased out and the former Pay'n'Save Drugstore houses the market while the new Market Square and Centennial Library are being built.

Late 1964. City council approves the demolition of the Drugstore to commence the conversion of the block to the long-proposed memorial park.

March 3, 1965. City Council officially names the proposed park "Sir Winston Chuchill Square" after Britain's World War II Prime Minister.

1965. Council endorses the $1.1 million Justice Plan for the square.

Oct. 26, 1965. Council approves in principle a $1,133,806 plan to re-develop/design the park, prepared by architect Clive Justice of Vancouver. Plan calls for amphitheater, two pools, waterfall, pedestrian tunnels, the Post Office tower, and trees. Council decides to temporarily seed it to grass until construction of library and other buildings is complete, sees work starting on park in two-three years.

Jan. 27, 1966. Maxwell Cummings and Sons of Montreal announce a $7,000,000 underground shopping plaza on square, to be built by Westbury Holdings Ltd. The proposal includes the development of a shopping mall, skating rink, and two theatres-all underground. They agree to commission Vermot Landscape Architect Daniel Kiley to design remainder of square for $1,500,000 as condition for lease.

Dec. 16, 1966. City Council in a special session unanimously approved a sixty-year lease that will allow Westbury Holdings Ltd. to begin construction within a year. Plans and specifications are to be presented by April 1, 1967, with final construction documents to come before city by Sept. 1, 1967.

PROJECT STALLS

Aug. 4, 1966. Chamber says it has run into problems with post office tower relocation. Planning Department has reservations about aesthetics of putting clock on square, and Cummmings' development might make relocation difficult, spokesman says.

Dec. 9, 1966. The replot on Sir Winston Churchill Square is completed and the new certificate of title legally describes it as Block D in plan 4390 N.Y. containing 2.10 acres (91,476 square feet or 8,422.35 square meters).

April 18, 1967. In taking his first look at the site, Landscape Architect Dan Kiley envisions Churchill Square not as a formal square, but a more usable space where people can see, be seen and participate.

May 20, 1967. City approves Preliminary Park plan designed by Daniel Kiley, recommending only minor technical alterations. Excavation for the shopping centre below the park is slated for September 1, 1967.

August 24, 1967. Westbury Holdings Ltd. indicates that plans will be delayed five weeks until mid-October due to the negotiating of leases with proposed major tenants. The site has remained muddy and untidy since its inception, with Council agreeing not to sod site until construction has been completed.

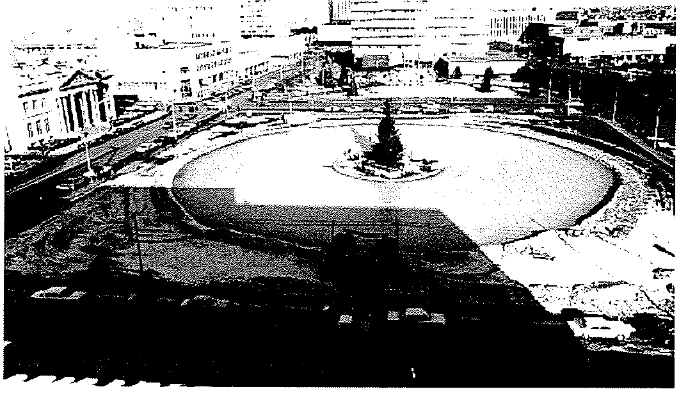
Sept. 26, 1967. Mayor Vincent Dantzer and the city threaten to terminate the agreement, and decide to "push" the developers, Westbury Holdings Ltd. stating they will not tolerate any unnecessary delay of the proposed shopping complex.

October 18, 1967. Despite warnings of difficulties from Parks Superintendent John Janzen, Mayor Vincent Dantzer announces that unless "real reasons" why there should not be a rink, there will be skating in the park this winter.

Winter 1967-68. City floods part of square as skating rink. Among early skaters is Lt. Gov. Grant MacEwan. Rink becomes annual tradition.

Nov. 11, 1967. Talks with Landscape Architect Daniel Kiley continue although original agreement between the City and Westbury Holdings Ltd. had expired leaving some city officials disenchanted with the slow progress of the project.

Dec. 7, 1967. Mayor Dantzer announces that the city will begin to look for other developers if Westbury Holdings did not submit specific plans by January 1968.



Dec. 7, 1967. Local Promoter J.M. Morie of Morie promotions Ltd. proposes his “village on the square” concept to City Hall, stating the effect would be similar to New York’s Rockefeller Centre.

Jan. 17, 1968. Westbury asks city for extension until mid-summer to bring in proposal, quoting money shortage and design problems as reasons.

Jan 22, 1968. Mayor Vince Dantzer throws underground square development open to anyone interested in making a bid. There are no responses.

April 25, 1968. Parks and recreation begins sodding square at cost of $8,000.

June 26, 1969. Mayor Ivor Dent says beautification of park should be temporary “so as not to prevent future underground commercial development,” which he believed wouldn’t hinder proper construction of park.

EXPERT HIRED

Sept. 22, 1969. Council considers commissioners’ report, agrees to the appointment of Craig Johnson, Faculty of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning, Utah University, to prepare a current park report and design by early 1970.

Feb. 5, 1970. Five-year parks capital budget presented to council provides for $1,110,000 over three years to be spent on square. Department requests $50,000 for 1970, $840,000 for 1971 and $220,000 in 1972. City Parks Superintendent John Janzen has suggested that the park be made “a Downtown oasis for all ages.”

Feb. 7, 1970. Public works commissioner Dudley Menzie tells budget meeting Woodwards department store “or someone else” may wish to lease underground rights of square for parking on shopping plaza.

March 23, 1970. Mr. Johnson’s partner, Verne Budge, flies from Logan, Utah to present their report to council. It proposes the square be made into plaza that can become skating rink, with a trickling water fountain in the centre and an amphitheater at the North end. Council refuses to hear the presentation.

March 24, 1970. Mr. Budge report is heard by Mayor Dent commission board and department heads. Cost: $820,000.

MONEY SHORTAGE

May 11, 1970. Ald. Kathleen McCallum unsuccessfully moves to have design implemented as soon as possible. Fellow aldermen cite money shortage as main reason for non-support. Budge-Johnson plan referred to commissioners for report on when development might be possible.

May 14, 1970. Budget cuts by council delete all but $10,000 from square development.

May 25, 1970. Commissioners recommend that Budge-Johnson plan be shelved indefinitely “in view of the fact that there is a likelihood of proposals for underground development.”

June 1, 1970. Parks and Recreation Department begins re-sodding centre of square, damaged by three winters of use as skating rink. The $2,000 cost is taken out of the $10,000 budgeted for interim improvements. There are still no firm indications from any developers that may want the underground rights to the block sized area.

June 9, 1970. Parks and Recreation Superintendent John Janzen begins debate with city on proposed allocation of$20,000 for interim park beautification program.

June 12, 1970. A petition supporting shade trees in Sir Winston Churchill Square is organized by 10 legal secretaries and gathers 150 signatures in first 2 days.

June 12, 1970. Ald. Ken Newman takes an unusual step in asking for leave without notice to present to city council a motion asking for $20,000 worth of landscape planting and treatments following the citizen advisory committees trees recommendation sent “as a matter of urgency” to the city clerks office.

June 24, 1970. Temporary development of Churchill Square approved with total estimated cost of $19,950. The plan which is to be implemented in late August calls for 46 American Elm trees (to be selected from boulevards around the city) and 8 Colorado Spruce at a cost $150.00 each (to be selected from the Parks and Recreation Department nursery). Approximate completion date is Sept. 16, 1970.

June 27, 1970. A plan prepared by City Parks and Recreation Department is to be presented to Public Works Commissioner D. Menzies by end of the week.

August 19, 1970. Five trees are planted as the first of a comprehensive planting program to be completed by mid-September.

October 1, 1975. City Commissioners reject proposal by Edmonton Centre Ltd. to cover the one block area of Churchill Square with a 90-foot-high glass structure, feeling it was too much of a commercial exploitation of a park.

October 30, 1982. Public Affairs Commissioner Sig Dietze orders a halt to the flooding of Churchill square skating rink after Ald. Percy Wickman served notice that at the Dec. 14 meeting he would ask the $50,000 project be scrubbed this winter. Estimated cost of the rink is $30,000 complete with heated trailer, lights and music, with $25,000 for spring-clean up and $7,000 for sod.

May 1, 1983. City Council rejects proposed Churchill Square name change by local members of the Edmonton May Day committee. The local labor group proposed the placement of a plaque in Churchill Square honoring Peter Keferiuk, a depression era labor leader.

Aug. 24, 1983. The City issues an open invitation to all interested Landscape Architects, Urban Planners/Designers, Architects and interdisciplinary firms to submit letters of interest in the redesign of Churchill Square. Of which, one firm will be selected through a five phase process to prepare a conceptual master plan.

November 7, 1983. “Lunchbreak” a sculpture by Seward Johnson Jr. is installed on the northeast corner of Churchill Square.

February 27, 1984. Edmonton’s Parks and Recreation Department invites local consulting firms, Butler, Krebs and Associates, Cunningham du Toit, Douglas Cardinal Architect, Gene Dub Architect and MTB Consultants to issue proposals in the form of a report to be evaluated by an evaluation team. The team will review all proposals and select one firm for the project. That firm will work with the team in the summer to implement the plan through phasing and costing. Final phase of project to commence in late 1984, with actual revitalization occurring in the spring of 1985.

April 27, 1984. Doug Macy, an internationally known Landscape Architect and urban designer announces that the Landscape Architectural firm of Cunningham du Toit was the unanimous choice of the six-member selection committee for the revitalization design of Churchill Square. The estimated $3.9 million proposal is expected to begin in the spring of 1985.

May 30, 1985. City Council approves $210,000 restoration. Work will include the replacement of winter killed trees, re-grading and re-sodding, the movement and repair to paving stone walkway and entrances, and overhead wiring replaced underground.

April 20 1989. The Churchill Statue and Oxford Scholarship Foundation announces that a 5 metre bronze statue of Sir Winston Churchill, designed by sculptor Oscar Nemon shortly before his death, will be erected on the 25th anniversary of The Rt. Hon. Sir Winston Churchill Society at a cost $250,000.

Sept. 17 1989. $10 million Edmonton Civic Precinct Conceptual Plan is prepared by architect Gene Dub, local politicians and bureaucrats.

March 18, 1996. The Edmonton Downtown Development Corporation (EDDC) announces the hiring of three consultants (Toronto based Nancy Hushion, Edmonton consultant Bill Arnold, and Landscape Architect Doug Carlyle) to develop a concept for a Downtown Arts District. The plan, based on an American model, will be the first of its kind in a Canadian city.

August 22, 1999. In an article published by the Edmonton Journal, Architect Gene Dub, asks for submissions from the public for ideas to "enhance" Churchill Square.

City Hall Construction
Francis A. Winspeare Centre Construction
December, 2000. Stanley A Milner Library Renovations

Winspear Centre

francis a. winspeare centre -2000

Note:
All information gathered for the chronology of Sir Winston Churchill Square and related Downtown information has been compiled through information supplied by the City of Edmonton Archives.

7.0 Appendix B: Program

OVERALL OBJECTIVES FOR CHURCHILL SQUARE

Should have distinct character-reinforced by design elements.

Should read as a stand-alone place and attraction

Pedestrian and vehicular edges should be marked by a 'threshold'

The Arts District has 4 separate but linked and mutually interdependent components:

1.Sir Winston Churchill Square

CONTEXT

An urban 'room'

Strong sense of public ownership and pride

An important focal point for the City

A place used for relaxation and celebration

The future will see increasing density of development centred on the Square; more casual users; more events, activities; more people

OBJECTIVES

Greater definition of the edge
Create sense of entry

Improved services to the public - both casual user and event participant

Improved services to the event organizers

TYPOLOGY OF EVENTS

Multiple focus entertainment, various sizes; 5-100 at each point

Mass celebration event (usually single focus) - e.g. Sports victory gathering; 2,000 to 30,000

Future events

ACTIVITIES

Casual, relaxation uses

Timing: daily, weekly, annually

Number of occupants of the Square varies with the weather and season

Normal mid summer crowds with no special events - 1-50; at lunch 50-100

Normal individual and small group activities

Coffee, lunching, sunning, watching the crowds/pedestrians

Service needs

Reading, writing, photography

Water, food, washrooms, seating, tables
Special events

LIST OF EVENTS

First night festival

The works

Jazz city

Street performers festival

Canada day celebrations

Klondike Days Parade

A Taste of Edmonton

Santa Claus Parade

Light up Downtown

Family Day Festival

Beat Beethoven Road Race

Portable stage vs. fixed stage

2. 99th Street

CONTEXT

Road uses - loading, transit, parking on Street, crosswalk

Not a high traffic road

SERVICE NEEDS

Crowds need:

Water, food, washrooms, seating, tables, telephones

Shelter during inclement weather

Easy access to transportation and parking

Event organizers/performers need:

Marshalling space; storage space for food, drink, gear; parking; office

Communications; meeting space; shelter during inclement weather

A way to enclose paid admittance area from rest of Square

Easy connections to service hookups, power, water, sewer, phone, gas

---

OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Vehicle access, event support enclosures

Crowd impact on sod

Continuity of pedestrian traffic

MAINTENANCE

Sod maintenance, watering/drainage

DESIGN CRITERIA

High flexibility - must meet needs of all activities

Easy access - must meet the needs of the handicapped

Security: day - night, during events

Serve crowds from the edge

Educational/public information displays, promotions

Outdoor static displays, manned booths, promotional activiites

---

SERVICE NEEDS

Individuals and crowds need:
Water, food, washrooms, seating, tables

Shelter during inclement weather

Public transportation

Series of small public spaces
Law Courts

Art Gallery

Citadel

Library Open Spaces

Rice Howard Way

Lack of cohesion, visual

OBJECTIVES

Threshold elements

Service for street commercial activities
Service for the public

Allow street closures for events, ceremonies

Activities

Parade route

Transit route, stop, link to LRT

Loading, pick up passengers

Pedestrian traffic, above/below grade

Street vendors - goods

'Buskers' & other entertainers

Art in public spaces
Public Presentations, Ceremonies

Public Gatherings, rallies, demonstrations

Public Visits, Royal visits

MAINTENANCE

Sod maintenance, watering/drainage

Maintaining fixtures and equipment

DESIGN CRITERIA

Serve individuals and crowds

8.0 Additional Sources & References

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E. The City of Edmonton, Planning Services Branch. Al. K. Cameron, Senior Architectural Technologist. Urban Design Group.

F. University of Toronto, CadLab. Urban Design Precedents.

9.0 Notes

[1] The belief that ecological based problems are best solved through objectivist mechanical and prescriptive methods, further reducing and devaluing the connection between person and place. This separation places people outside the ecosystems of which they are a part and reinforces a land ethic of either control or ownership instead of partnership and interrelationship.

[2] The illusions, imagery and pre-romantic astonishment of the natural world captured and recorded in the books, paintings and early parks and gardens of the 18th century. The capturing and interpreting of this imagery of nature became the achetypical City Park and recognized as the "green oasis in the city". (Huet, Geuze. Modern Park Design, 1993)

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[24] Radical Ecology is often associated with a counter cultural movement and it includes deep ecology, ecofeminism and social ecology, among others. It pushes social and ecological systems toward new patterns of production, reproduction, and consciousness that will improve the quality of human life and the natural environment. It challenges those aspects of the political and economic order that prevent the fulfillment of basic human needs. It offers theories that explain the social causes of environmental problems and alternative ways to resolve them. It supports social movements for removing the causes of environmental deterioration and raising the quality of life for people of every race, class, and sex. (Carlos Lizarraga-Celaya, Departmento de Física, Universidad de Sonora,2001)

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An arpent is a measurement and has nothing to do with the condition of land. An arpent is about 192 feet in length but is also used to specify a quantity of land such as an acre.

10.0 Photo Credits

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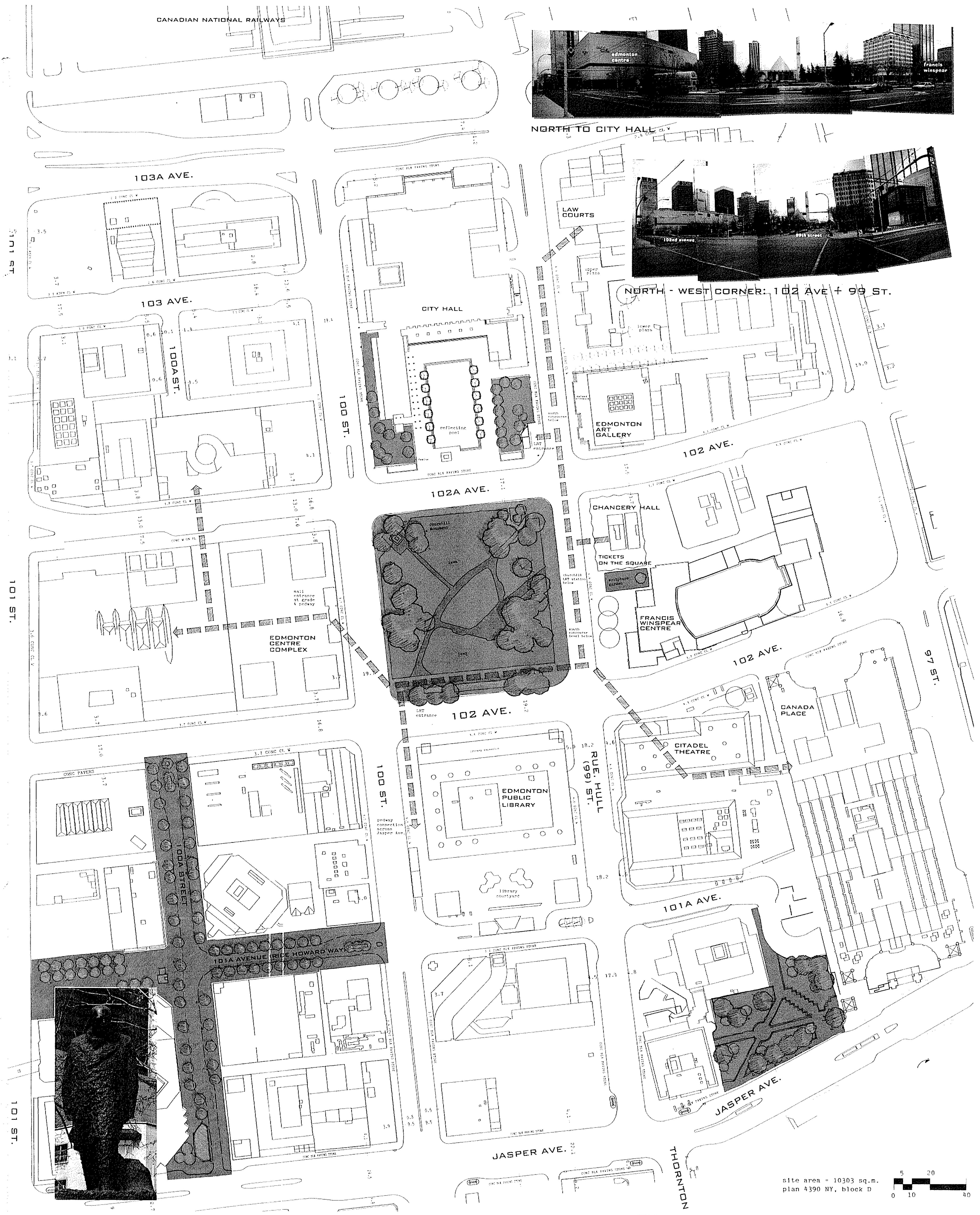
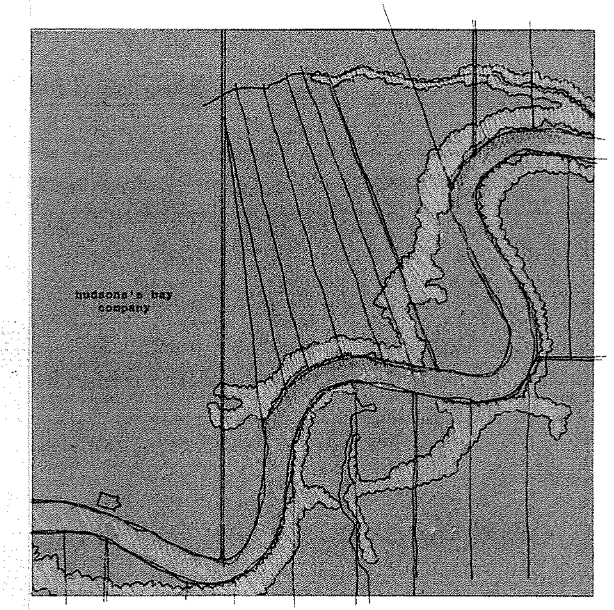

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS
NORTH TO CITY HALL
edmonton centre
francis winspear
NORTH - WEST CORNER: 102 AVE + 99 ST.
102nd avenue
99th street
103A AVE.
103 AVE.
101 ST.
100A ST.
100 ST.
LAW COURTS
CITY HALL
reflecting pool
EDMONTON ART GALLERY
102 AVE.
102A AVE.
CHANCERY HALL
TICKETS ON THE SQUARE
FRANCIS WINSPEAR CENTRE
EDMONTON CENTRE COMPLEX
mall entrance at grade & pedway
102 AVE.
CANADA PLACE
97 ST.
LRT entrance
EDMONTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
library courtyard
pedway connection across Jasper Ave
RUE. HULL (99) ST.
CITADEL THEATRE
100A STREET
101A AVENUE (RICE HOWARD WAY)
101A AVE.
JASPER AVE.
JASPER AVE.
THORNTON
site area = 10303 sq.m.
plan 4390 NY, block D
5
20
0
10
40

reconstructing relationships within the urban park

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL SQUARE

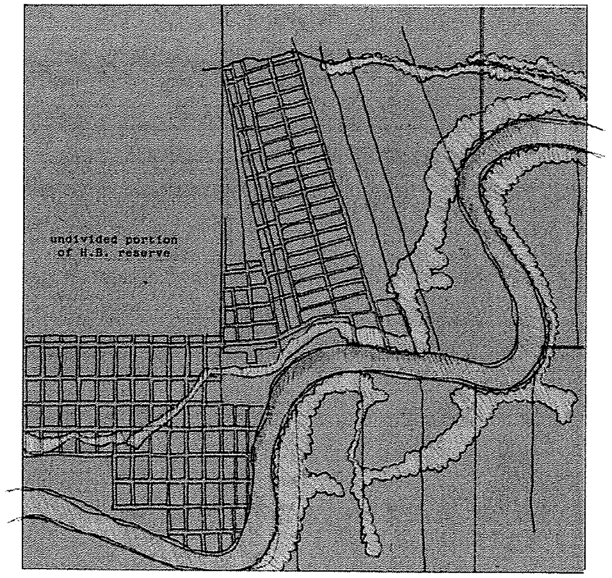
Edmonton Alberta Canada

EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS



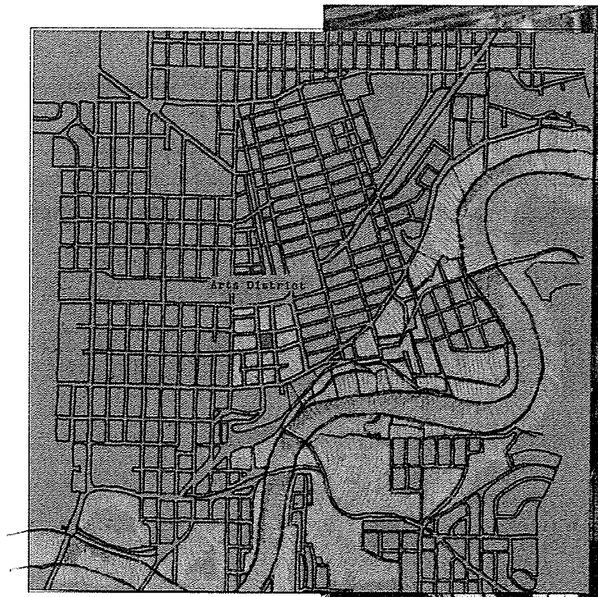
A. ORGANIC INTERPRETATION

Seigneurial Land Division System - French River Lots
1882 - Settlement of Edmonton
Northwest Territories
Department of the Interior
Dominion lands Office, Ottawa



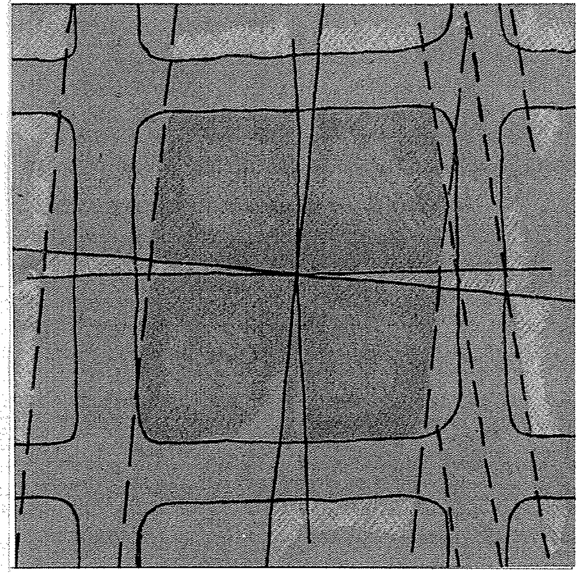
B.SUPERIMPOSED AXIAL GRID

English Land Holding Pattern - North+South alignment
1892 - Town of Edmonton
Northwest Territories
James McDonald
Real Estate and Insurance Agency



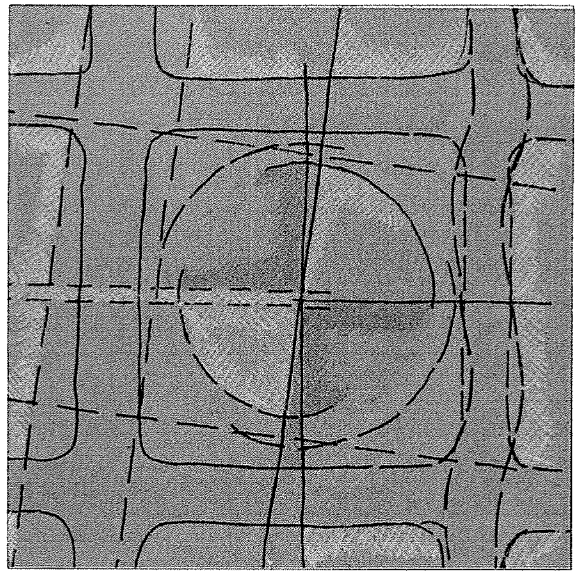
C.URBAN REMNANT

Seigneurial Land Division System - French River Lots
1997 - City of Edmonton
Alberta
Department of Transport



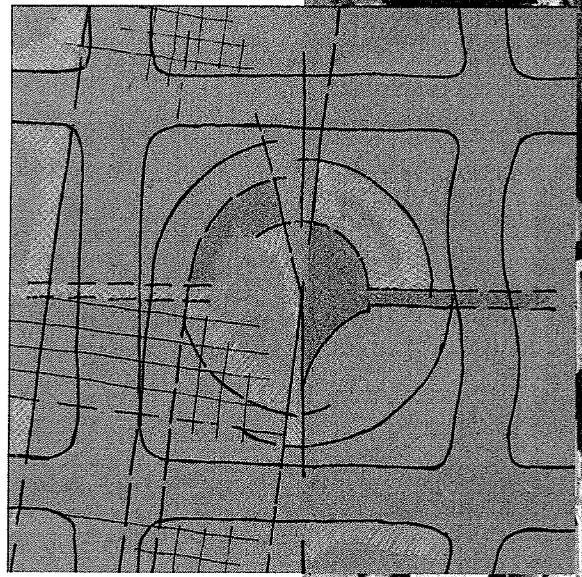
1.ORGANIZATIONAL CUES

projected grids
isolated phenomena
interdependant systems



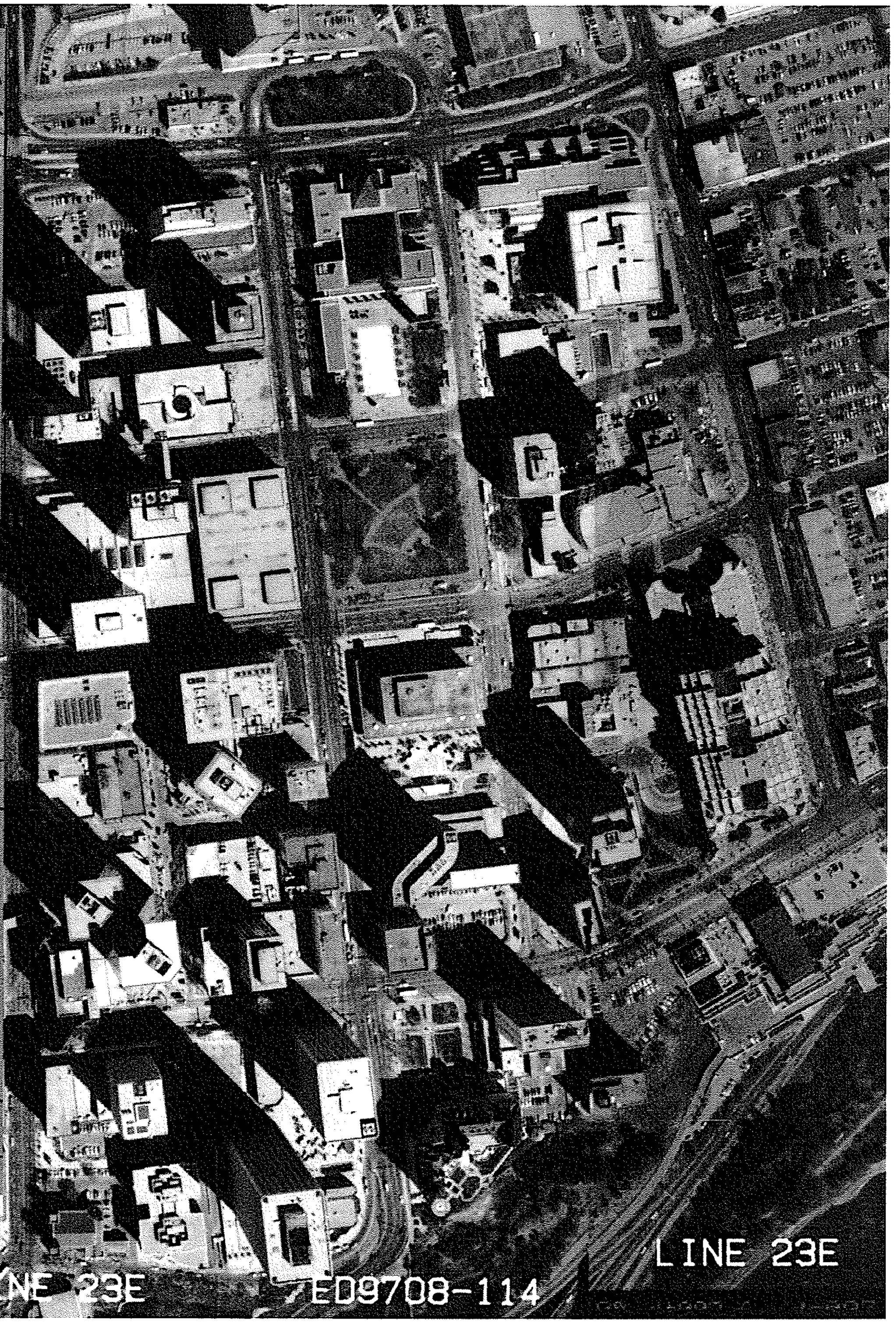
2. ESTABLISHED FRAMEWORK

deliniation of space
connecting tissue



3. BYPRODUCT OF SYSTEMS

creation of subset vocabulary
unique to location



DOWNTOWN EDMONTON

1997 - aerial photography
City of Edmonton
Planning and Transportation

reconstructing relationships within the urban park

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL SQUARE

Edmonton Alberta Canada

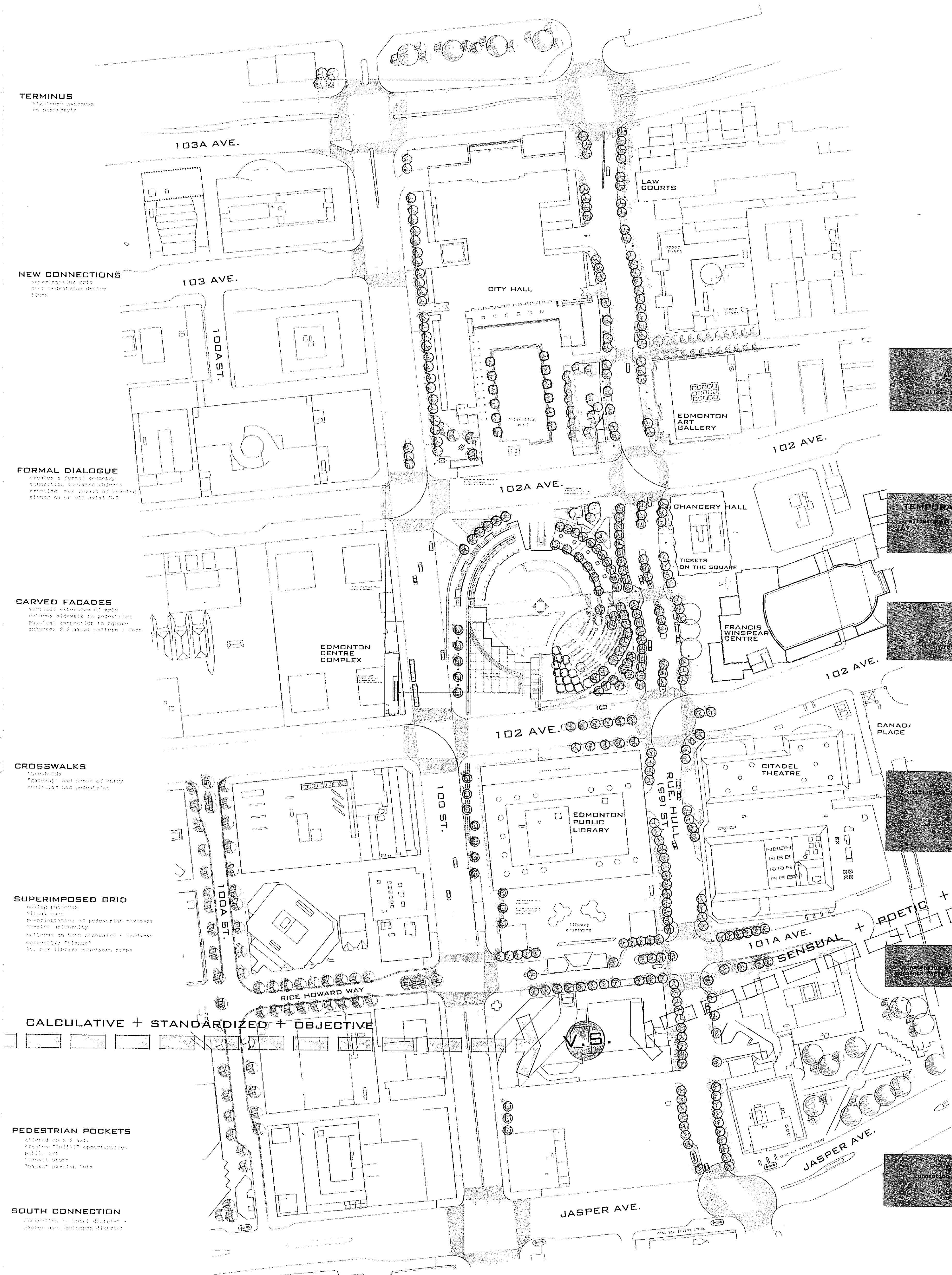
[illegible]
Peter [illegible]
Department of Landscape Architecture
Faculty of Graduate Studies

advisors:
J.Tate
Dr.R.Lister
[illegible]

final practicum presentation [illegible]

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

scale:


103A AVE.
103 AVE.
100A ST.
LAW COURTS
upper plaza
lower plaza
CITY HALL
reflecting pool
EDMONTON ART GALLERY
102 AVE.
102A AVE.
CHANCERY HALL
TICKETS ON THE SQUARE
FRANCIS WINSPEAR CENTRE
EDMONTON CENTRE COMPLEX
102 AVE.
CANADA PLACE
CITADEL THEATRE
100 ST.
RUE. HULL (99) ST.
EDMONTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
library courtyard
100A ST.
101A AVE.
SENSUAL + POETIC + SUBJECTIVE
RICE HOWARD WAY
CALCULATIVE + STANDARDIZED + OBJECTIVE
V.S.
JASPER AVE.
JASPER AVE.

TERMINUS
heightened awareness
to passerby's

NEW CONNECTIONS
superimposing grid
over pedestrian desire
lines

FORMAL DIALOGUE
creates a formal geometry
connecting isolated objects
creating new levels of meaning
either on or off axial N-S

CARVED FACADES
vertical extension of grid
returns sidewalk to pedestrian
physical connection to square
enhances N-S axial pattern + form

CROSSWALKS
thresholds
"gateway" and sense of entry
vehicular and pedestrian

SUPERIMPOSED GRID
paving patterns
visual cues
re-orientation of pedestrian movement
creates uniformity
patterns on both sidewalks + roadways
connective "tissue"
ie. new library courtyard steps

PEDESTRIAN POCKETS
aligned on N-S axis
creates "infill" opportunities
public art
transit stops
"masks" parking lots

SOUTH CONNECTION
connection to hotel district +
Jasper ave. business district

SIDEWALK BULBING
increases pedestrian zones
allows "spill-over" of functions
art displays
patios + cafes
allows facilities to adopt + maintain
frontages

TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURES
linear parkway
allows greater programmatic functionality
festivals
parades
sporting events

STREET CURVES
alters sightlines
slowing traffic
narrowed street width
creates intrest +
reinforces "natural" connection

ARTS DISTRICT
unifies all important cultural facilities
along 99th street

art gallery
francis winspear
citadel theatre
convention centre
library
tickets on the square

RICE HOWARD WAY
extension of R.H.W. pedestrianized theme
connects "arts district" with the pedestrian

SOUTH CONNECTION
connection to North Saskatchewan River
shaw conference centre
heritage trail
louis mckinney park

MASTER PLAN - EDMONTON ARTS DISTRICT
scale =1:500

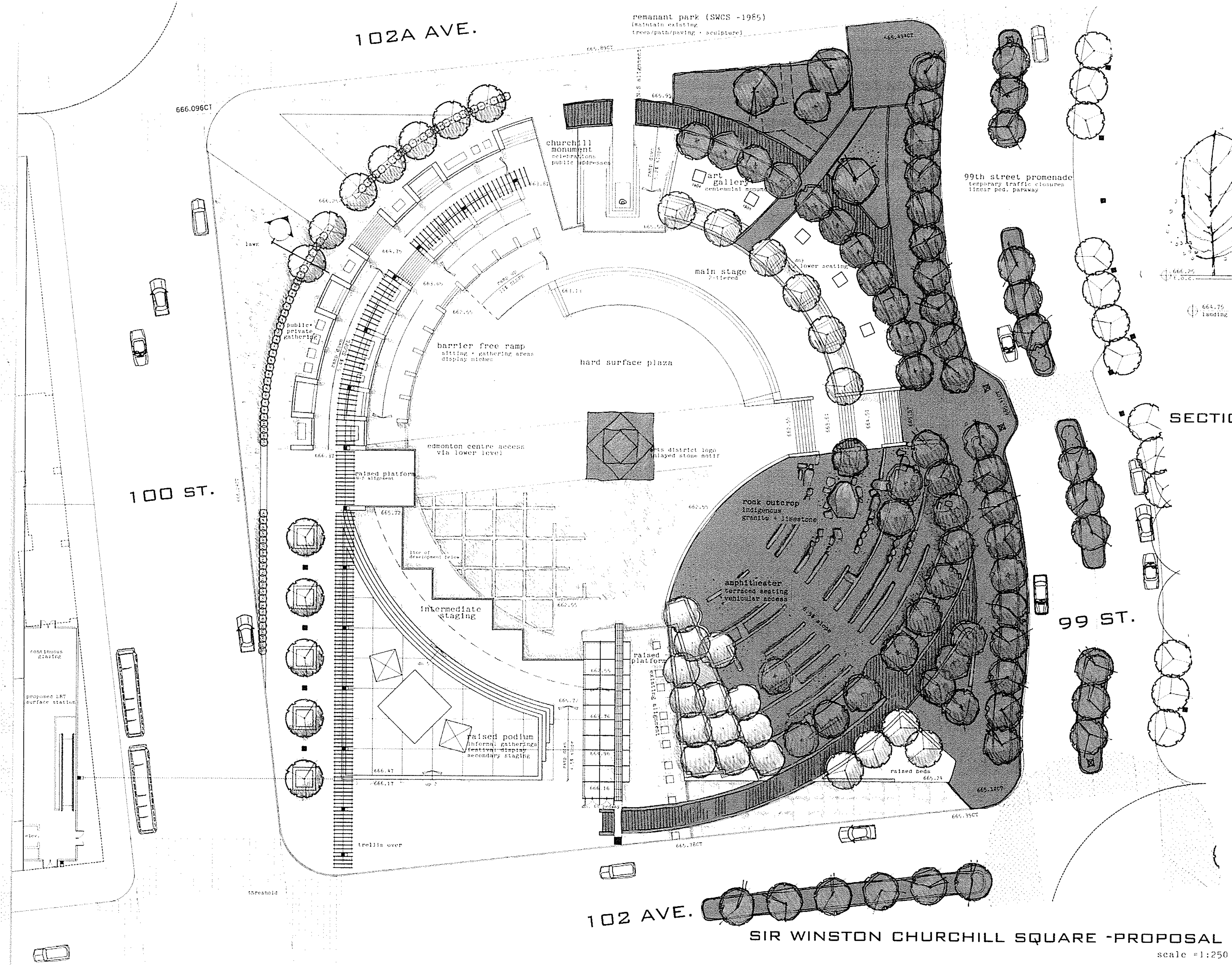
5 20
0 10 40

reconstructing relationships within the urban park

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL SQUARE

Edmonton Alberta Canada

PROPOSED - MASTER PLAN

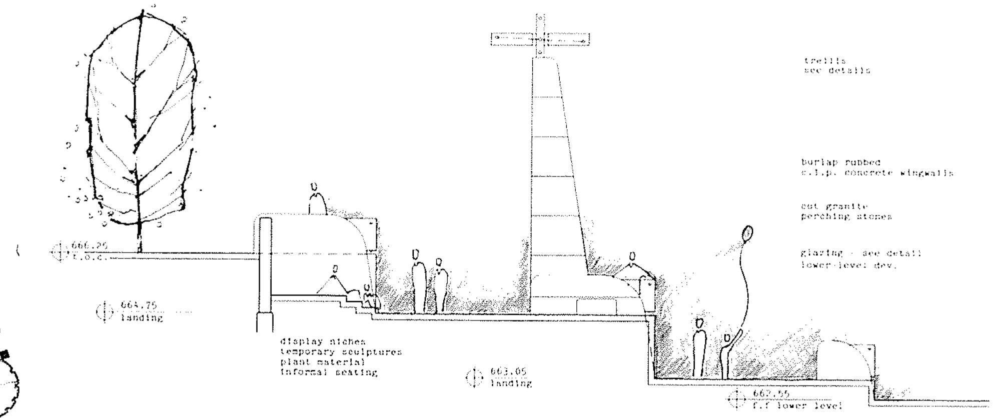

102A AVE.
remanant park (SWCS -1985)
maintain existing trees/path/paving + sculpture
666.096CT
churchill monument
celebrations
public addresses
art gallery
centennial monument
99th street promenade
temporary traffic closures
linear ped. parkway
lawn
public-private gathering
main stage
2-tiered
lower seating
barrier free ramp
sitting + gathering areas
display niches
hard surface plaza
edmonton centre access via lower level
arts district logo inlayed stone motif
100 ST.
raised platform
rock outcrop
indigenous granite + limestone
amphitheater
terraced seating
vehicular access
intermediate staging
raised platform
raised podium
informal gatherings
festival display
secondary staging
raised beds
99 ST.
continuous glazing
proposed LRT surface station
trellis over
threshold
102 AVE.

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL SQUARE -PROPOSAL

scale =1:250

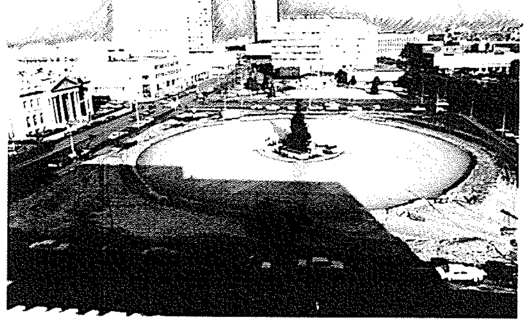
5 20

0 10 40


trellis
see details
burlap rubbed
c.i.p. concrete wingwalls
cut granite
perching stones
glazing - see detail
lower level dev.
666.25
t.o.c.
664.75
landing
display niches
temporary sculptures
plant material
informal seating
663.05
landing
662.55
f.f lower level

SECTION A - RAMP

scale =1:80



SWCS - SKATING RINK

mid 1960's

city of edmonton archives

reconstructing relationships within the urban park

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL SQUARE

Edmonton Alberta Canada

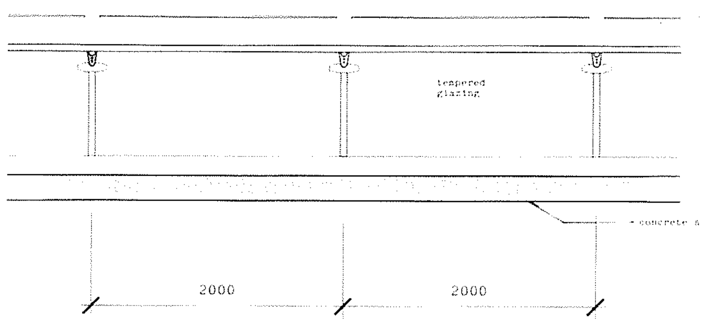
credits
[illegible]
Department of Landscape Architecture
Faculty of Graduate Studies

advisors
A.Tate
[illegible]
[illegible]

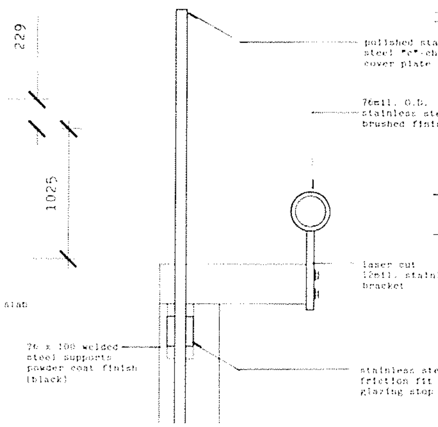
final practicum presentation [illegible]

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL SQUARE

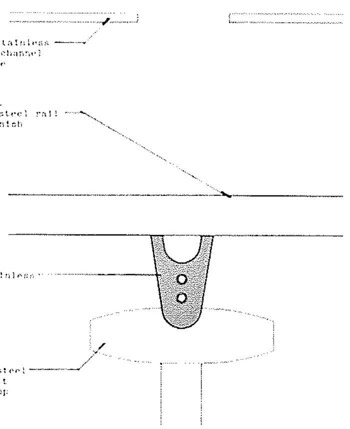
scale


tempered glazing
concrete slab
2000
2000

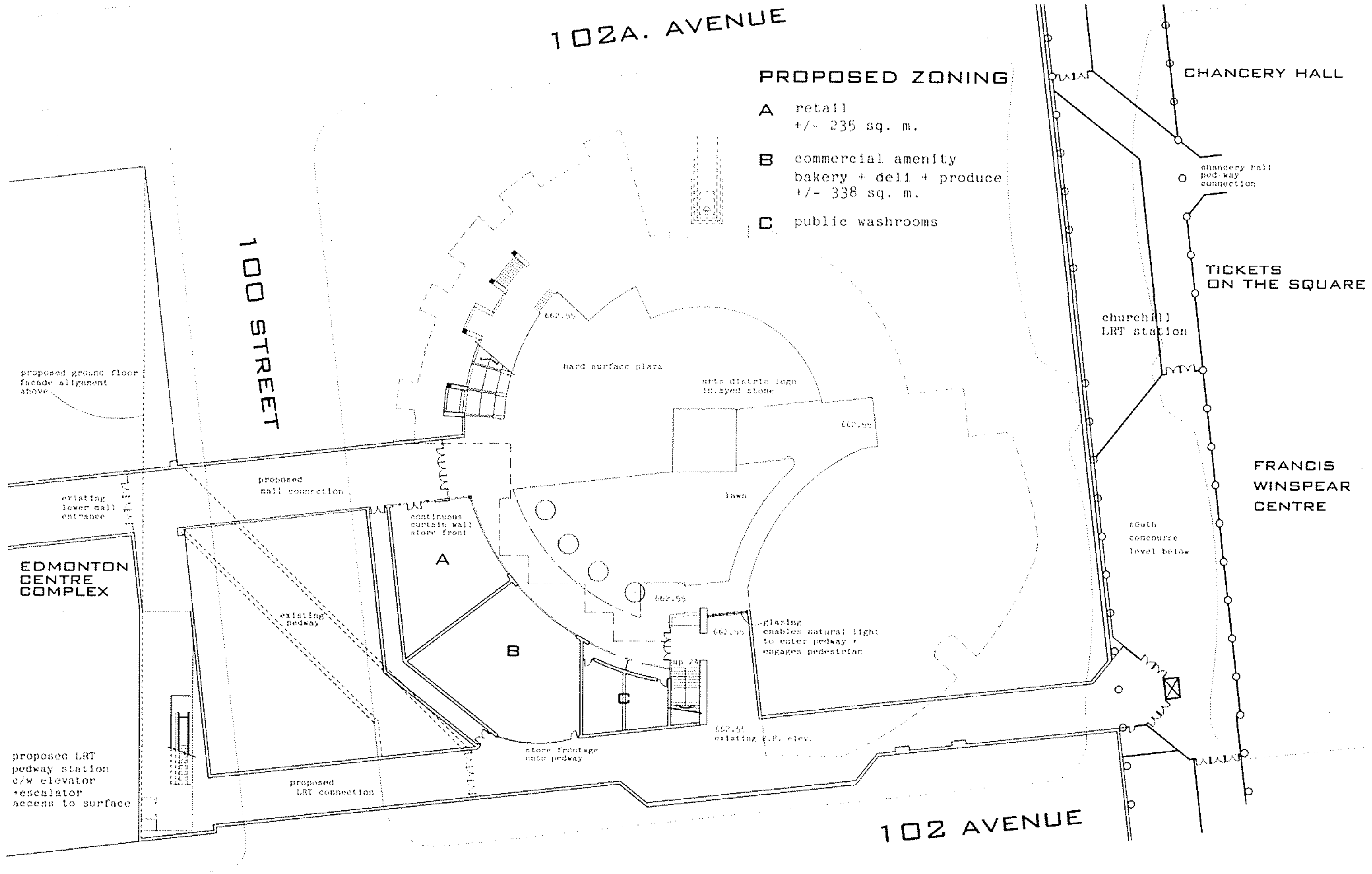
DETAIL - GLASS HANDRAIL(typ.)
scale = 1:25


229
1025
polished stainless steel "c"-channel cover plate
76mil. O.D. stainless steel rail brushed finish
laser cut 12mil. stainless bracket
76 x 100 welded steel supports powder coat finish (black)
stainless steel friction fit glazing stop

SECTION
scale = 1:4



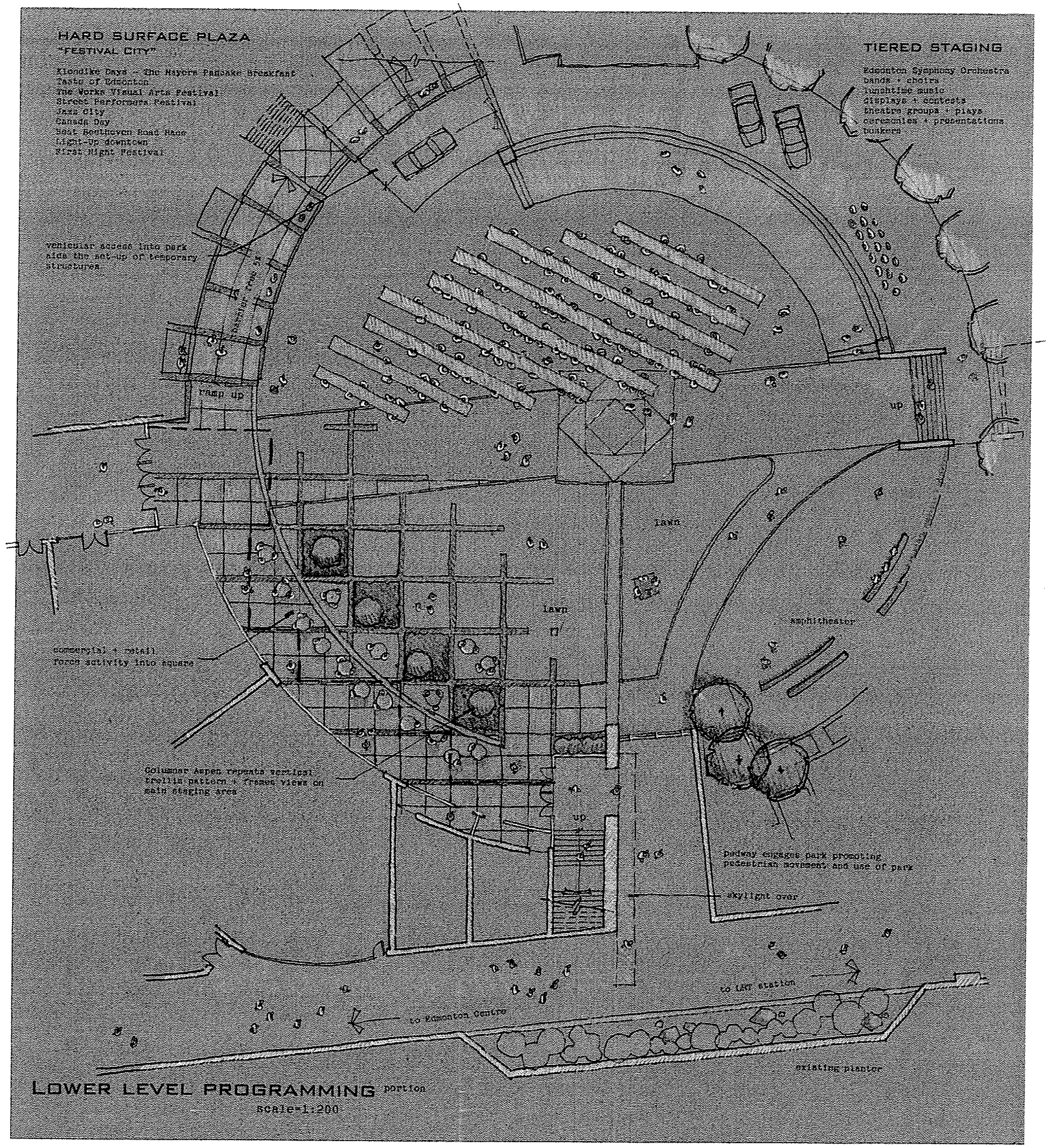
DETAIL
scale = 1:4


102A. AVENUE
100 STREET
CHANCERY HALL
chancery hall ped way connection
TICKETS ON THE SQUARE
churchill LRT station
FRANCIS WINSPEAR CENTRE
south concourse level below
EDMONTON CENTRE COMPLEX
proposed ground floor facade alignment above
existing lower mall entrance
proposed mall connection
continuous curtain wall store front
hard surface plaza
arts district logo inlayed stone
lawn
662.55
existing pedway
A
B
C
up 24
glazing enables natural light to enter pedway + engages pedestrian
existing V.P. elev.
store frontage onto pedway
proposed LRT connection
proposed LRT pedway station c/w elevator +escalator access to surface
102 AVENUE

PROPOSED ZONING

- **A** retail
+/- 235 sq. m.
- **B** commercial amenity
bakery + deli + produce
+/- 338 sq. m.
- **C** public washrooms

LOWER LEVEL DEVELOPMENT potential commercial + retail
scale = 1:400



HARD SURFACE PLAZA
"FESTIVAL CITY"

Klondike Days - The Mayors Pancake Breakfast
Taste of Edmonton
The Works Visual Arts Festival
Street Performers Festival
Jazz City
Canada Day
Host Beethoven Road Race
Light-Up downtown
First Night Festival

TIERED STAGING

Edmonton Symphony Orchestra
bands + choirs
lunchtime music
displays + contests
theatre groups + plays
ceremonies + presentations
buskers

vehicular access into park aids the set-up of temporary structures

commercial + retail force activity into square

Columnar Aspen repeats vertical trellis pattern + frames views on main staging area

pedway engages park promoting pedestrian movement and use of park

ramp up
lawn
lawn
up
up
amphitheater
skylight over
to LRT station
to Edmonton Centre
existing planter

LOWER LEVEL PROGRAMMING portion
scale=1:200

reconstructing relationships within the urban park

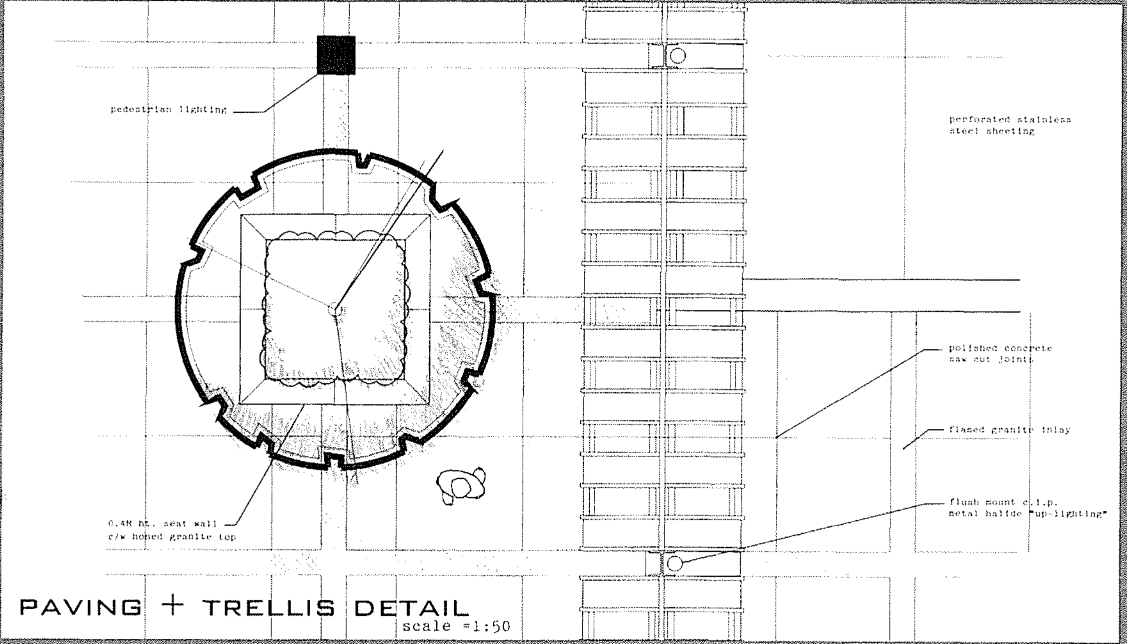
SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL SQUARE

Edmonton Alberta Canada

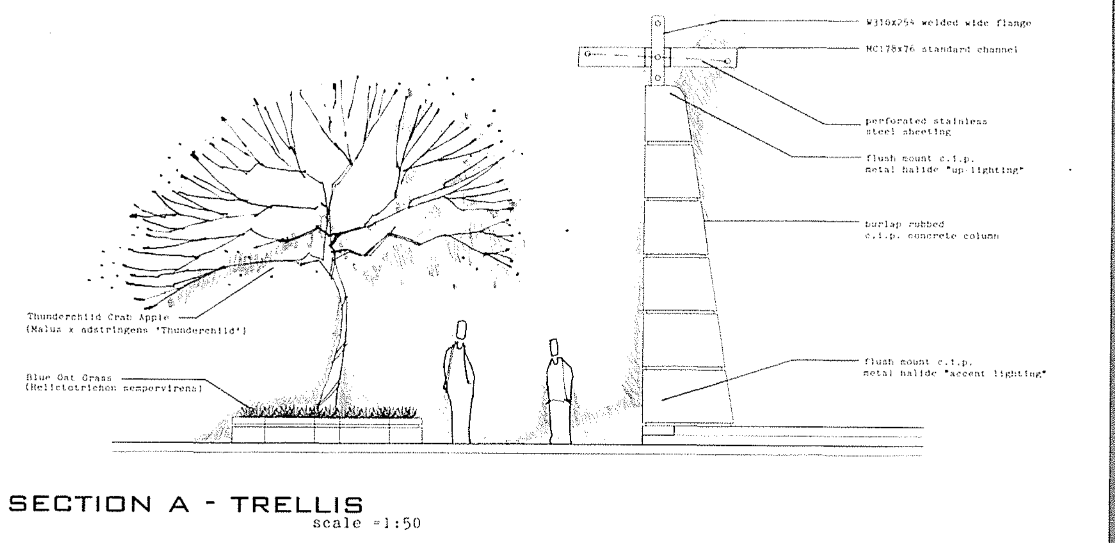
[illegible]
Peter [illegible]
Department of Landscape Architecture
Faculty of Graduate Studies
advisors:
A.Tate
Dr.M.Eaton
[illegible]
final practicum presentation [illegible]

PROPOSED - LOWER LEVEL DEV.

scale:


pedestrian lighting
perforated stainless steel sheeting
polished concrete saw cut joints
flamed granite inlay
flush mount c.i.p. metal halide "up-lighting"
0.4M ht. seat wall c/w honed granite top

PAVING + TRELLIS DETAIL
scale =1:50


W310x254 welded wide flange
MC178x76 standard channel
perforated stainless steel sheeting
flush mount c.i.p. metal halide "up-lighting"
burlap rubbed c.i.p. concrete column
flush mount c.i.p. metal halide "accent lighting"
Thunderchild Crab Apple (Malus x adstringens 'Thunderchild')
Blue Oat Grass (Helictotrichon sempervirens)

SECTION A - TRELLIS
scale =1:50

CALCULATIVE + STANDARDIZED + OBJECTIVE

1 PAVING PATTERNS + ALIGNMENT
enhances axial N-S grid
refined polised surfaces
pushes pedestrian through park not around

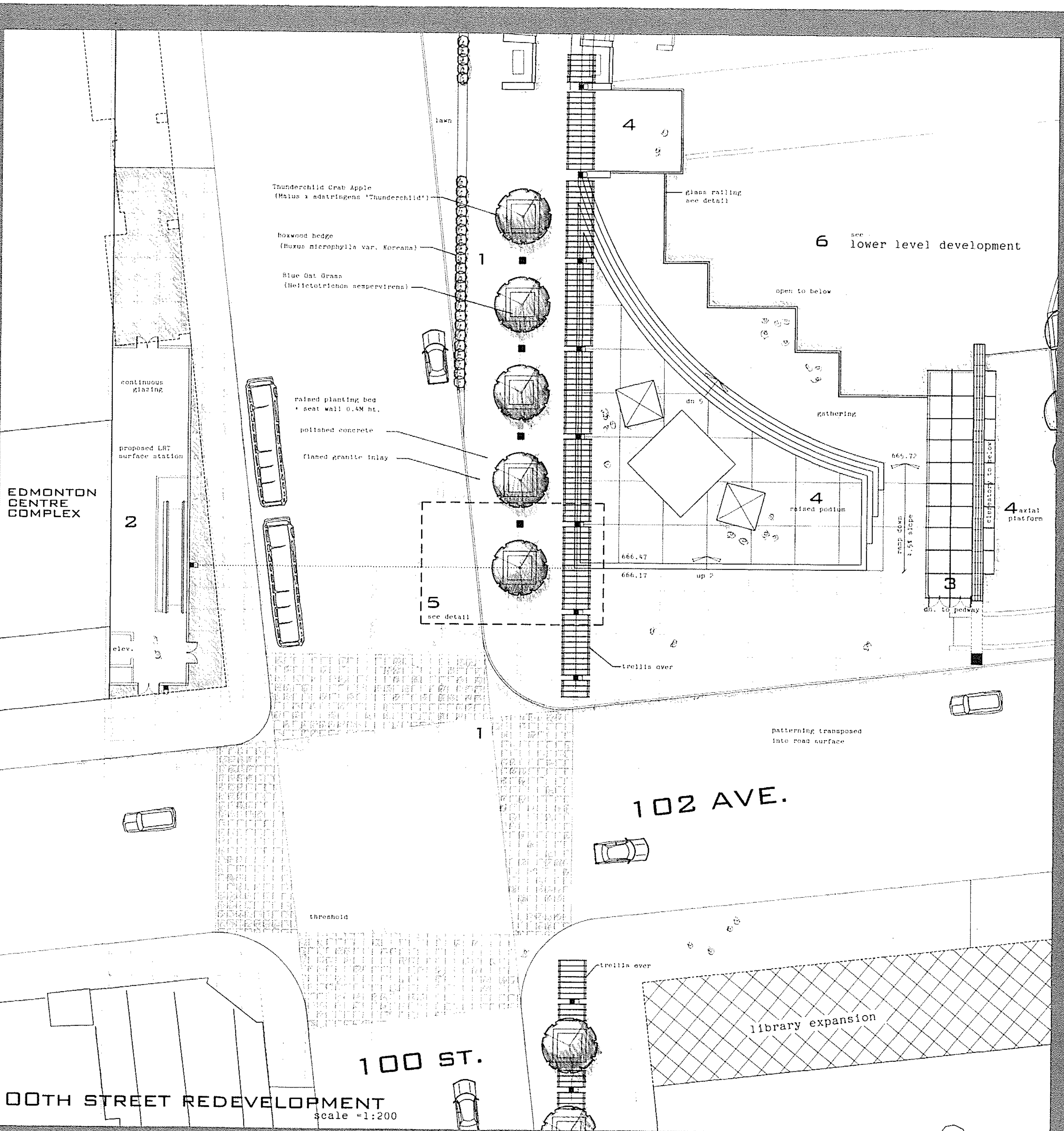
2 CARVED FACADES
relates grid to vertical face
returns sidewalk to pedestrian
creates infill opportunities
transit + ammenities + public art

3 CENTRAL STAIR
connection to lower development + pedway
transparent structure engages activity

4 RAISED PODIUMS + PLATFORMS
allows for diversity in staging + programming
informal seating - people watching below
creates concentrated pockets of activity @ periphery
public art display + festival setup

5 VERTICAL EXTENSION
vertical element (trellis) extends building facades into square creating scale
act as infrastructure allowing for scaffolding that allows for audio visual equipment + theatrical set-up

6 LOWER DEVELOPMENT
ties pedway traffic to square - extension of shopping


EDMONTON CENTRE COMPLEX
2
continuous glazing
proposed LRT surface station
elev.
lawn
Thunderchild Crab Apple (Malus x adstringens 'Thunderchild')
Boxwood hedge (Buxus microphylla var. Koreana)
1
Blue Oat Grass (Helictotrichon sempervirens)
raised planting bed + seat wall 0.4M ht.
polished concrete
flamed granite inlay
5 see detail
trellis over
4
glass railing see detail
6 see lower level development
open to below
gathering
dn 5
4 raised podium
666.72
ramp down 4.5% slope
666.47
666.17
up 2
elevator to below
4 axial platform
3
dn. to pedway
patterning transposed into road surface
1
102 AVE.
threshold
trellis over
library expansion
100 ST.

100TH STREET REDEVELOPMENT
scale =1:200

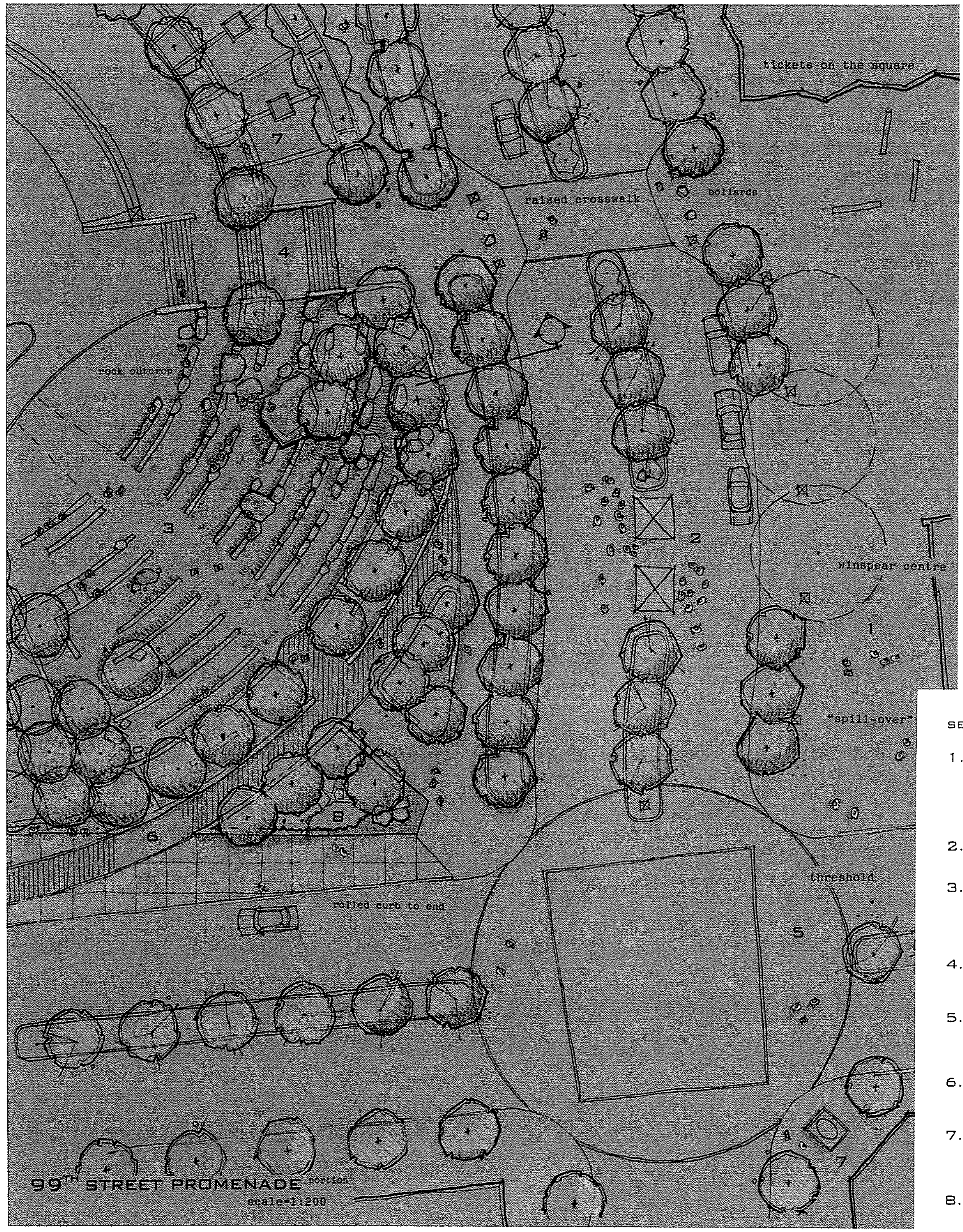
SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL SQUARE
Edmonton Alberta Canada

6506510
Peter William Siry
Department of Landscape Architecture
Faculty of Graduate Studies

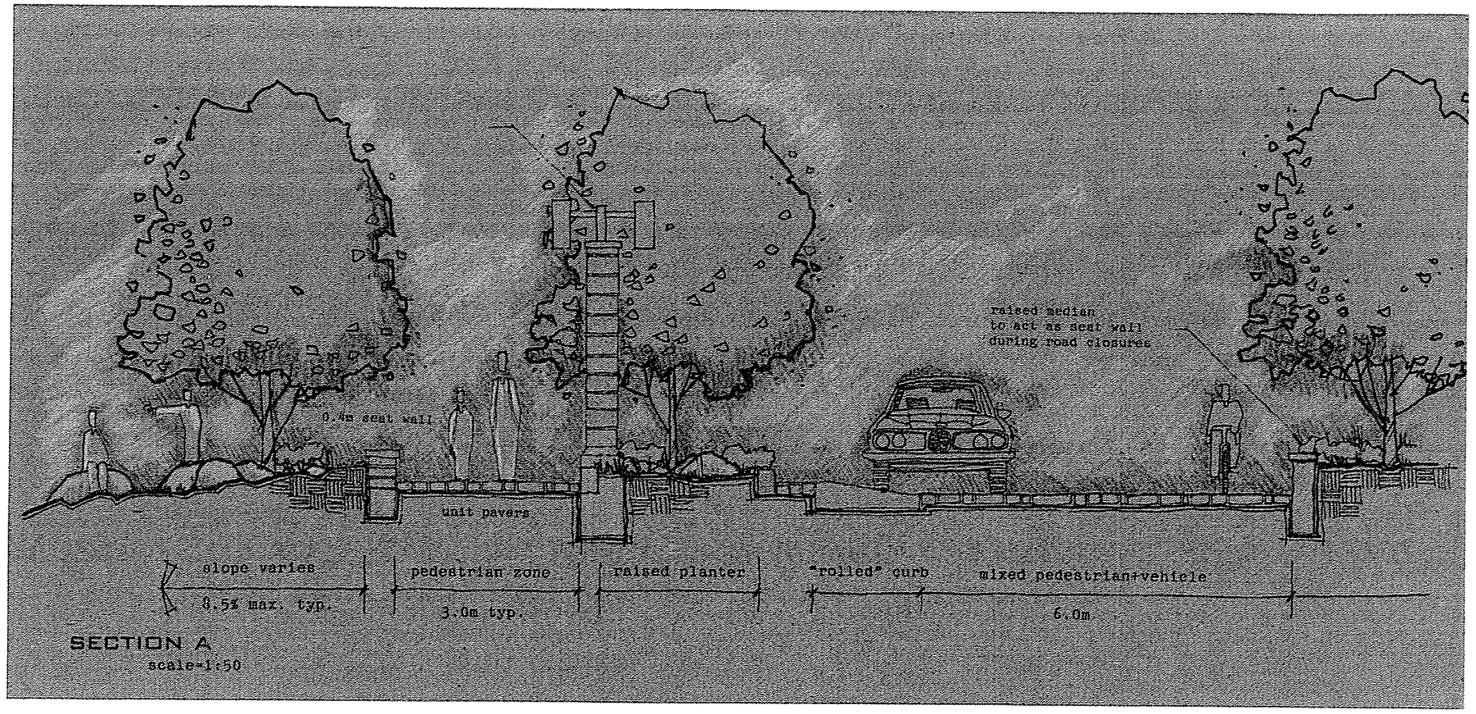
advisors:
A.Tate
Dr.M.Eaton
D.Carlyle

final practicum presentation 08.16.01

100th STREET REDEVELOPMENT


tickets on the square
raised crosswalk
bollards
rock outcrop
winspear centre
"spill-over"
threshold
rolled curb to end
1
2
3
4
5
6
7

99TH STREET PROMENADE portion
scale=1:200


raised median
to act as seat wall
during road closures
0.4m seat wall
unit pavers
slope varies
8.5% max. typ.
pedestrian zone
3.0m typ.
raised planter
"rolled" curb
mixed pedestrian+vehicle
6.0m

SECTION A
scale=1:50

SENSUAL+POETIC+SUBJECTIVE

1. STREET "BULBING"
   crosswalks – narrows street
   increased pedestrianization
   sidewalks – allows congregation
   "spill-over" of adjacent functions
   public art – monuments

2. MEDIAN SPACING
   allows greater programmatic
   flexibility for festivals + events

3. AMPHITHEATER
   informal procession into lower-level
   "stadium seating"
   rock outcrop

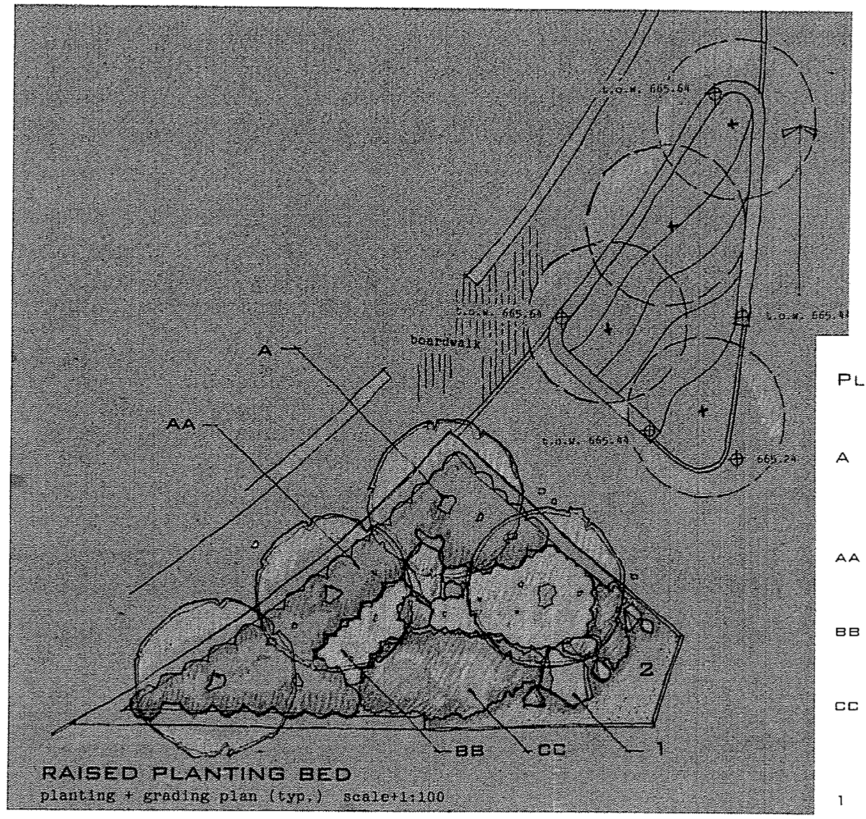
4. GRAND STAIRS
   axial connection to Edmonton-Centre

5. PAVING PATTERNS
   uniform palette of indigenous
   materials – hand honed
   rough cut irregular

6. BRIDGING
   connection between
   systems+experiences

7. PUBLIC ART
   civic+provincial centennial
   celebrations
   Joe Shoctor memorial

8. PLANTING BEDS
   metaphorical connection to river
   indigenous planting to coordinate
   with south river bank


t.o.w. 665.64
t.o.w. 665.64
t.o.w. 665.44
t.o.w. 665.44
665.24
boardwalk
A
AA
BB
CC
1
2

RAISED PLANTING BED
planting + grading plan (typ.) scale=1:100

PLANT SCHEDULE
*indigenous to south slope
North Saskatchewan River

A CONIFEROUS+DECIDUOUS TREES
Balsam Poplar *(populus balsamifera)*
European Columnar Aspen (Populus tremula)
Trembling Aspen (Populus tremuloides)
Colorado Spruce *(Picea pungens)*
White Spruce *(Picea glauca)*

AA DECIDUOUS SHRUBS
Red osier dogwood *(Cornus stolonifera)*
Silverberry *(Elaeagnus commutata)*
Prickly rose *(Prunus acicularis)*

BB GRASSES
Western wheatgrass *(Agropyron smithii)*
Blue grama *(Bouteloua gracilis)*
June grass *(Koeleria macrantha)*

CC GROUND COVERS
Arctic Phlox *(Phlox borealis)*
Oregon-Boxwood *(Paxistima myrsinites)*
Bishops goutweed *(Aegopodium podagraria)*
Kinnikinik *(Arctostaphylos uva-ursi)*

1 LIMESTONE BOULDERS
bollards and perching stones

2 LIMESTONE MULCH
local 2" Ø minus

reconstructing relationships within the urban park

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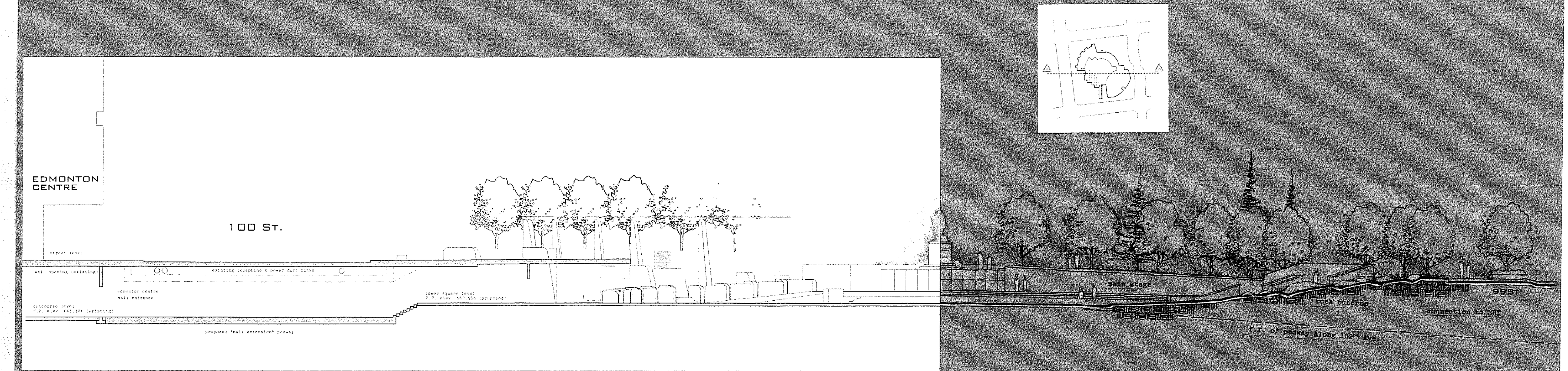
Edmonton Alberta Canada

[illegible]
Peter William [illegible]
Department of Landscape Architecture
Faculty of Graduate Studies
advisors:
J.Tate
Dr.[illegible]
[illegible]
final practicum presentation 08.16.01

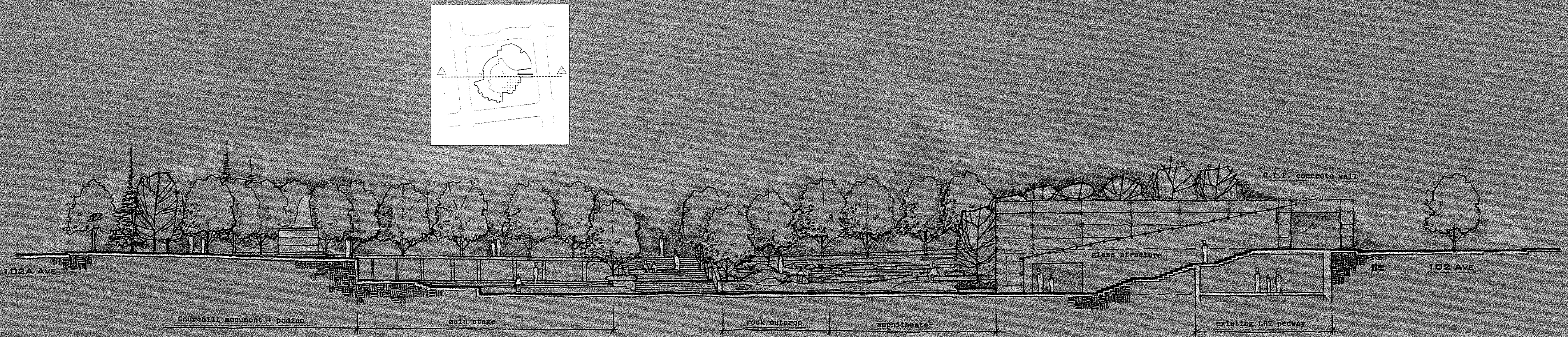
99th STREET PROMENADE

scale:


EDMONTON CENTRE
100 ST.
street level
wall opening (existing)
existing telephone & power duct banks
edmonton centre
mall entrance
concourse level
F.F. elev. 661.396 (existing)
lower square level
F.F. elev. 667.556 (proposed)
proposed "mall extension" pedway
main stage
rock outcrop
99ST.
connection to LRT
f.f. of pedway along 102nd Ave.

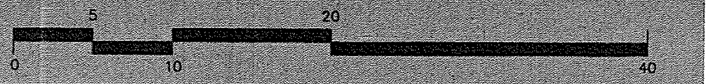
SECTION - WEST + EAST

scale =1: 150


C.I.P. concrete wall
glass structure
102A AVE.
102 AVE.
Churchill monument + podium
main stage
rock outcrop
amphitheater
existing LRT pedway

SECTION - NORTH + SOUTH

scale =1: 150



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Edmonton Alberta Canada

[illegible]
Peter William Siry
Department of Landscape Architecture
Faculty of Graduate Studies

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SECTIONS

scale: