

**FOOTHILLS COUNTRY HOSPICE:
DESIGN INQUIRY**

BY

Kimberly D. Unger

**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**

**OKOTOKS, ALBERTA
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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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MASTER OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

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Abstract

As a graduate student undertaking a degree in Landscape Architecture, the author required a research methodology that accommodated the multidisciplinary nature of landscape architectural practice in her research process. Employing a post-modern qualitative research design, this project strives to suspend our avoidance of the realities of death and dying and to open our minds to the value of garden in response to the needs of people in the hospice context. The site and its context are contemplated through multiple cultural texts and imagery. According to Husserl, any project designed to explain or control the natural world properly begins within the realm of one's own experience of the phenomenon under study. This helps to legitimize the subjective experience of the world as lived and experienced (Husserl, 1999).

One of the primary treatises of qualitative research is the rejection of the idea that researchers are separate from the phenomena they are studying, therefore, in this spirit, an autoethnographic technique is used throughout the document. Autoethnography is a form of narrative that seeks to bridge the gap between self and other, revealing personal experience, opening a space for dialogue.

The inquiry is grounded in an exploration of the design of a therapeutic hospice garden. The history of hospice, healing garden and death are explored in this context. A variety of garden forms is considered and their usefulness in the healing garden examined. This qualitative inquiry concludes with a visual exploration of landscape design elements for the Foothills Country Hospice.

Dedication

To Everyday Miracles:

They come in many forms, my family, my friends and of course my committee.
Without your support, this project and chapter of my life would not have seen its conclusion.

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Chapter One - Introduction

In 2002, two years into my Landscape Architecture education, I began to ponder the notion of landscape as healing. I explored the research and designs of professionals in the field of therapeutic landscape design. Life experiences combined with reflections upon those readings led me to investigate “hospice” and the benefits of the designed landscape in that context. My recent move to Alberta and my knowledge of the inception of the Foothills Country Hospice confirmed a research path. I began to characterize the design potential of the hospice and healing gardens as a ‘unique vernacular’, providing a home-like setting for those who live, work at, and visit the hospice. The primary function of this landscape is the facilitation of psychological and spiritual healing of these people. This research explores the many implications of the healing landscape; the relationship between outdoor space and people in the context of hospice. The meaning of choice in quality of life for the terminally ill and their loved ones is grounded in an exploration of the design of a therapeutic hospice garden.

Now, I am entering the final year of my graduate degree, a year that will place a defining mark on the remainder of my years. Receiving a university education has provided me with both considerable benefits and moments of considerable discomfort. In this final year of study, part of the discomfort rises from my struggle not only to ground this practicum in a distinct methodology but to determine why Landscape Architecture is important to me.

Why do I feel Landscape Architecture is important? I believe design projects are dynamic and hold a powerful potential, the potential for human thought to become manifest in such a way as to cause change in the world. Each design professional, in each design choice, is proposing a better world, one that intrinsically improves the human condition. Palermo (2001) argues that we have an ethical responsibility to the community, that our work has consequences for justice, peace and social and individual rights (p.189). “Each built work can be understood and evaluated as a manifestation of equity, access and distribution, supportive of particular rights and fairness”.

In this spirit, the development and design of the Foothills Country Hospice and Gardens offers people of the Foothills region the rights of dignity and enjoyment of life, along with the comforts implicit in a familiar landscape. Hospice is a significant option when choosing end-of-life care, the implications of this for the garden visitor have provided me with a meaningful design impetus. In keeping with the philosophy of a community defining itself by how it cares for its own most vulnerable members, the Foothills Country Hospice Society intends to provide a Hospice home for people in the neighboring communities without charging them for costs of care. Small daily charges for accommodation costs, such as meals and housekeeping may be considered if they cannot raise all the funds that are required. Annual operating costs are projected to be approximately \$1.1 million. Hospice care will be provided to individuals on the basis of bed availability and palliative need (Foothills Country Hospice).

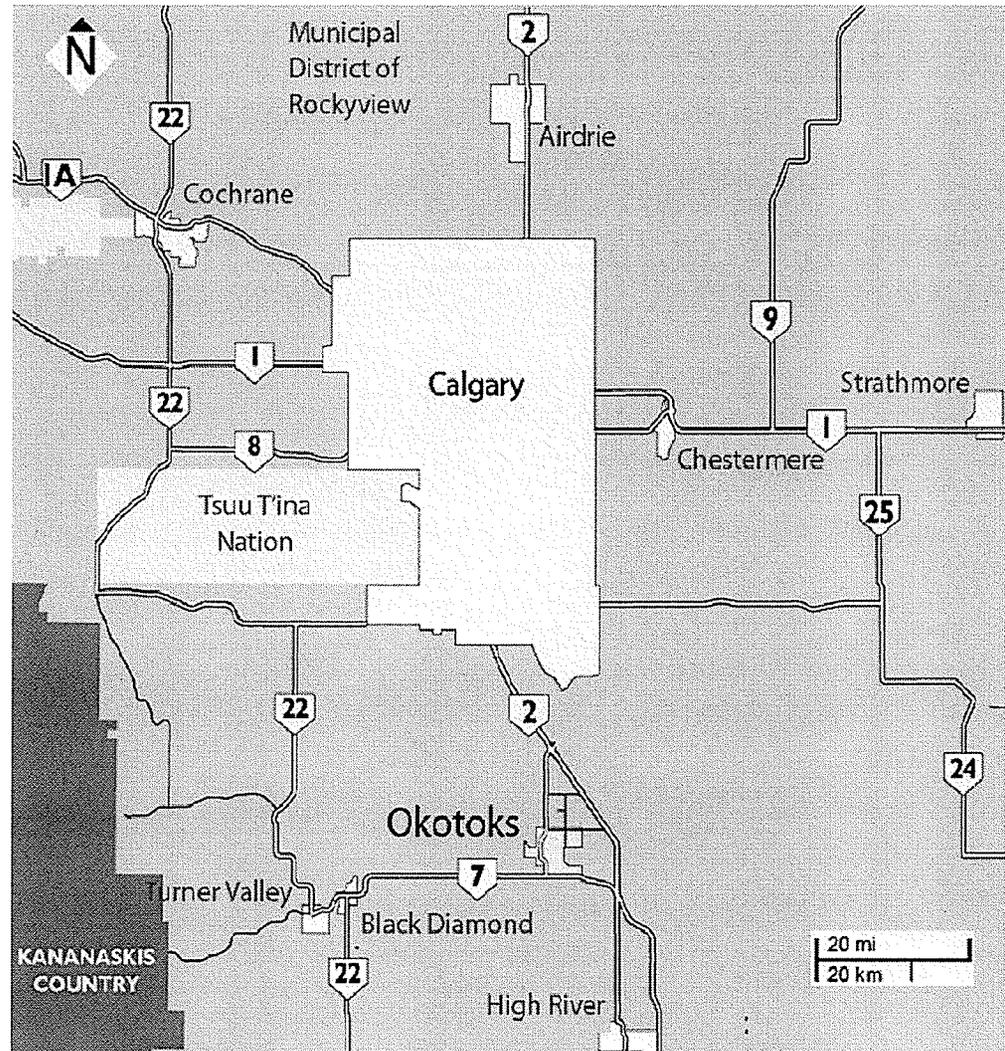


Figure 1

Landscape meaning may not be readily sensed by people at all times, but the world that we are surrounded by makes an impression on each of us, not only through the physical senses. Landscape can alter the way we see life and the significance of existence itself. Thus, landscape has a profound effect on our experience of the world around us whether we experience it consciously or subconsciously.

Landscape architecture has always stood in a privileged position in society, creating symbolic settings for cultural ritual and discourse. As the great mediator between nature and culture, Landscape Architecture has a profound role to play in the reconstitution of meaning and value in our relation with the Earth. The poetics of human dwelling, the very consciousness of humanity, might once again become the central focus of attention for landscape architectural theory. By its nature, this insight is primarily grounded in perception and cannot exist without a priori of the human body and its engagement in the world. Landscape architectural theory ought therefore to find its basis in the realm of perception and the phenomenological, the essential origins of existential meaning.

(Corner, 1995, p. 77)

The thoughtful designer makes countless, often unrecognized, decisions before arriving at a final product; each of these decisions impacting the outcome. Therefore, I believe the designs that we surround ourselves with make an impact on us, and, by extension, our perceptions have an impact on our culture and our environment.

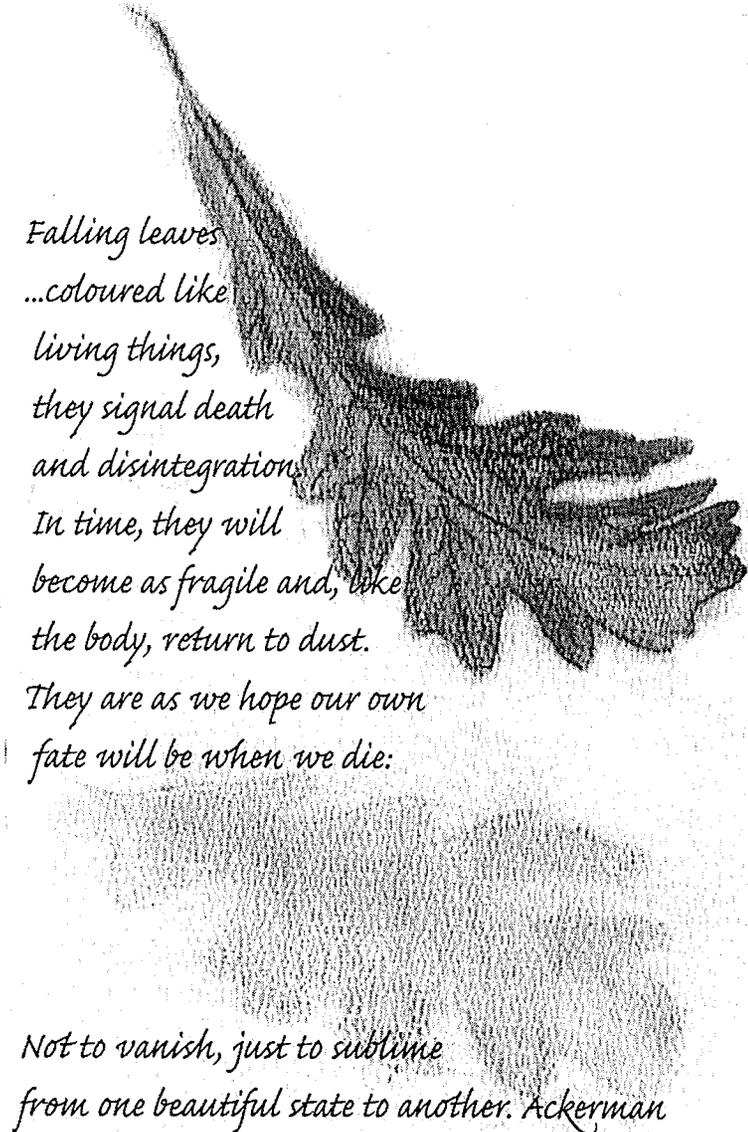
Although the hospice is a place to die, this inquiry is not so much about death as it is about how the setting of experience within garden and landscape assist us in living more fully. Therefore, it is essential that this research consider what it means to be human and is dying, or to be caring for one who is dying. What does it mean to work in a place where the goals of care are to provide comfort, where accepting death as a natural part of the human life cycle is paramount? How does a well-designed landscape support these very human circumstances? I will be considering hospice using a qualitative research framework; data collection and analysis are conducted from an interpretive perspective.

Researcher transparency is a requisite dimension in this type of investigation. I feel it is essential to examine my personal motivations and examine why this is an important point to consider in this design project. What are my perceptions of design in general, and more specifically, why do I feel Landscape Architecture is important? Design projects are dynamic and hold a powerful potential; the potential for human thought to become manifest in such a way as to cause change in the world. How does this definition affect my role as a researcher and designer? I believe that Landscape Architecture reflects the values of our culture. This includes my own values both as individual, and as designer with a particular cultural education. Designed landscapes are embedded with multiple social, material, spiritual, and environmental meanings - landscape is significant.

Though dying is similar to other milestones of life, it is one that feels most profound when experienced. Death can provide a vantage point, a position in time from where we see the experiences of our past, consider the realities of the present, and contemplate the largely unknown future, not only for the individual at the end of life but also for those caring for them. Although the hospice is a place to die, this inquiry is not so much about death as it is about living life as fully as possible. This research explores what it means to be human and dying or caring for one that is dying. The last days of a lifecycle mark a time of embraced living. Hospice is a unique environment, for the hospice not only provides shelter for those people in the end stages of life and for those caring for them, but also provides space for living, making room for life to go on during this highly emotional time. All of life's moments could be embraced as special, but perhaps, when death is in sight, the preciousness of these moments is felt most fervently. Hospice is not dependent on landscape to establish this special moment between two existences; in a populous city neighbourhood, any landscape may be an unwarranted land use. The familiar, and the idealized familiar, landscape with its attendant sensory richness and potential for healing will be used as motif to situate the local, rural, in a familiar landscape. Open prairie and gardens, treed enclaves set in open spaces will be the vernacular of this practicum.

Like leaves falling from trees, when death comes to our lives, either through the death of a loved one or when our own life is nearing the end, we are forced down an existential ridge. In our falling and our landing, we are called to consider the past, present, and future possibilities beyond the flesh. To the living, all occurrences that have come before, all that is now, and all that remains in the future, are situated in time. We are creatures of time.

The term horizon explains this concept from a philosophical position. According to Habermas (1990) our horizon is the totality of all that can be realized or thought about by an individual person at a given time in history and, in a particular culture (p. 161). My perspective includes the knowledge that we can design to provide elements of comfort and hope; a sense of the human place in the natural order especially when life is most painful.



*Falling leaves
...coloured like
living things,
they signal death
and disintegration.
In time, they will
become as fragile and, like
the body, return to dust.
They are as we hope our own
fate will be when we die:*

*Not to vanish, just to sublime
from one beautiful state to another. Ackerman*

Figure 2

In 2002, a Research Methods course I had enrolled in required the presentation of a research proposal. I chose to present on the topic of healing gardens in the Hospice context. After the presentation, my impulse to pursue the topic was set aside while other aspects of my education and life took my attention. Many things have changed since then; I now live and work in a different province closer to family and, hopefully to a future filled with potential. I never would have predicted that I would have the opportunity I have discovered here; to engage in a design project involving a hospice. The anticipated output of this project is the design of a healing garden for the Foothills Country Hospice located in the Alberta Municipality of Foothills.

Foothills Country Hospice is dedicated to providing compassionate, holistic care to persons with a terminal illness and the people they love. Hospice care will be offered to persons living primarily in Okotoks and the surrounding foothills area. The Society, its staff and volunteers will endeavor to build a reputation for professional, compassionate care for individuals regardless of their circumstances.

(Foothills Country Hospice Vision Statement 2006)

Landscape architecture can address the ethical. According to Gregory Palermo (2001), the built environment not only entails ethical origination, but has implications for justice as well. When facing inevitable death, people should have a choice in what type of environment they will die in. In the absence of a homelike setting, an undesired and unnecessarily bleak hospital death is often the case. Knowing the value of hospice, I believe that this option should be a basic human right. In examining these issues, and in designing from that knowledge, Landscape Architecture becomes meaningful and is representative of our social needs and values.

Meaningfulness and Preunderstanding ... Digging

What is my role as a researcher and what is the use of theory anyway? There is a variety of methodological approaches that this discourse can unravel itself upon; I have chosen to take a qualitative approach. Since the beginning of this endeavor, I have known that there would be a chasm to cross and a way to cross it. The process of getting from one side - the beginning of the project, to the other side - the end, is like constructing a bridge. Linking the beginning and the conclusion can be done in many different ways using a variety of different materials, each worthy of consideration. Many of my early attempts at building this bridge were foundational decisions, seeking to ground the work in a distinct methodology. I needed to work with a methodology that suited the project, and that was in alignment with my personal beliefs and social values. Many of the questions arising from design requirements for hospice users have been addressed by researchers in social sciences, most relying on technology or positivistic rationalism (Ulrich, 1984, Kaplan, 1998). While I read their findings, I sensed their results lacking in pathos for the intricacies of human emotion and spirit. Research processes can be richer than simply systems utilized to get from the beginning of this project to the end; a qualitative approach can allow a project to go beyond the realm of the predictable into the realm of uncharted possibilities.

With this work, I will not engage in, nor expound beliefs in, one truth or one true method. I will strive to create a work defined by exploration - a work committed to human experience; whose position does not presuppose the possible revelation of a one ultimate "Truth". Perhaps the entirety of this exploration is just that, an inquiry without a prescribed ending but rather one whose purpose is an evolution of thought, opinion, and perhaps even of practice. In many ways, this approach is like taking a journey without a map, a journey necessitating commitment, and a transparency towards self and situation.

I bring to this project a preunderstanding of the value of Hospice. The importance of hospice design arises from my own life experience, an experience that cannot be objectively set aside in this form of inquiry. Researchers are always involved

with the objects of their investigation; to dismiss this is to ignore an essential part of any project. According to Husserl (1999), any project designed to explain or control the natural world properly begins within the realm of one's own experience of the phenomenon under study. We examine our personal experiences and the experiences of others in order to understand the subjective experience of the world. Our perceptions are based on the subjective. Our opinions necessarily include our bias - that is what makes them ours, special, unique to us. In tandem, people of the same culture and similar backgrounds often share many opinions in common. My voice in this writing, drawing, and design work is part of a larger cultural complex; I am a product not only of my own experiences but also, of my culture's. Traditions are as important as our present and future expectations. The past is an essential reference point when contemplating the future and the present. To discard the past is to abandon what we have learnt as the past is what gives our lives perspective. The significance of this for researchers is that, unless we acknowledge our already meaning-endowed relationships within the topics of our research, we are deluded about grasping the essence of any phenomena. Understanding necessarily requires the engagement of one's biases (Denzin, 2000). My thoughts and experiences of living and dying inform the design process absolutely.

What perceives?

Consciousness is the result of our creative relationship with the world. A phenomenon is understood as a co-creation; an interaction between oneself and the phenomenon, one that brings past experience and understanding of an event or object to the present moment (Drew, 2001). How our consciousness orders the world may at first seem simple, but given increased attention, a greater complexity is revealed. We are natural. We are part of the world that surrounds us; like all other living things we are born, we live, and we die. We discover, or are told, when we are children that people die. The first experience of death is often the loss of a pet or a grandparent. All too often, these deaths are hidden from us. Adults want to spare children

the pain of death. Grandma passes on at the hospital. The family pet goes to the veterinary hospital to be put to sleep, and does not return. I have had to evolve beyond the memories of a child protected from the reality of death; to learn to confront the realities of death. Likewise, those charged with the responsibility of designing for death and dying have the responsibility of transcending the social taboos that obscure the subject.

The Everyday

In everyday experience, “living” is largely taken for granted. I have had the feeling in the past few years that time, and with it every day, is speeding up. In pondering this sensation, I recall a friend telling me that this is the result of not living in the moment, of getting consumed in the production of everyday life. Henri Lefebvre (1987) describes it as days following one after another and resembling one another, and yet - therein lies the contradiction at the heart of everydayness - everything changes. Some people cry out against this acceleration of time, others cry out against stagnation. He believes they are both right.

When I experienced the death of a loved one, I felt the sensation that time had actually come to a halt. It was like I had just dropped out of time, and the world kept going completely unaware of what had happened. I mentioned this sensation to a friend I was having a meal with; his father had died at home the previous year, and my partner had just died a few days before. He agreed, observing that he felt separated from the rest of the world. In much the same way, we were sitting on the inside looking out the window, at people walking by, carrying on with their lives. The world just passed by. I wonder why grief is like that?

One of the principles of hospice is that it tries to create a home-like environment, one where we could feel most at ease. A home-like environment is one where you have the freedom to go outside even for just a walk or to think. One of the most calming things I do outside is water my garden, even if it is only for a moment to pour water on a container plant. Who hasn't

walked outside and smelled spring air or sensed how the air changes before the arrival of a summer rain? A garden can become a separate world, one holding a breathtaking amount of experiential possibilities. One of the advantages of the rural location is that people have access not only to a garden but also to the forest and prairie surrounding the hospice.

According to Lefebvre the everyday is situated at an “intersection of the cyclical which we see in the cycles of day and night, the seasons and harvests, desire and fulfillment, and the linear, like the repetitive gestures of work and consumption” (1987, p. 3). I enjoy my everyday life the most when my attention is focused on the little things I enjoy, whether it is the comfort of my own bed or sitting on my back step with a cup of coffee in the summer looking at the garden. In the garden my thoughts are free to ponder, I wonder why the white roses are the most fragrant, perhaps it is because they lack the same visual stimulation so they decided to be the most aromatic? According to Diane Ackerman (1991) the senses do not just make sense of life in bold or subtle acts of clarity, they tear reality apart into vibrant morsels and reassemble themselves into a meaningful pattern.

The everyday can disappear in an instant. Can you imagine how it would feel five minutes after someone you loved had just died? I can only truly know how I did feel. The majority of my senses seemed to be numbed. I recall the moments immediately following his death, after the doctor was done, I had a need to get out of the house, to get away, I ran briefly into the backyard and stopped, the sky had a layer of cloud that was born on the horizon and stretched its arms out toward me, I was on an expanse of open prairie and the cloud was a calming blanket that held me in this world. That blanket of cloud was more meaningful than words can explain.

The anticipated output of this inquiry is the documentation and presentation of the design or phenomenological process and its discoveries. The practicum utilizes personal reflection, observation, and the investigation of cultural texts to explore understanding of death in culture and the potential role of the healing garden in this context.

The tools or methods used to access this understanding include; autoethnography, drawing, collage, photography, and painting. Additionally, this practicum explores elements of garden design and their application in the final design phase of this project. The culmination will be a site design for the Foothills Country Hospice in the rural municipality of Foothills, Alberta, and reflections on the processes leading up to its development including the significance of this project in the field of landscape architectural research.

Since western culture increasingly conceals death or warehouses the dying in dark corners, the intention of this work is *aletheiac*, to reveal the subtle changing truths contained in experiences of the dying and those caring for them, focusing on the importance of the garden in that context. Truth can be described as the act of unconcealment (*aletheia*), conversely (*lethia*) is the act of concealment (Caputo, 1987. p. 115). According to Levin (1997) seeing means:

Learning not to shut our eyes to that which we would rather not see. It means learning to look with a steady and calm gaze that does not willfully impose its images on what it beholds, but lets what is present and visible show itself from out of itself (p. 14).

Hence, this project strives to bring light and awareness to a subject that is too often avoided – death. Death can provide a vantage point, a position in time from where we see the experiences of our past, consider the realities of the present, and contemplate the largely unknown future. This scenario is not only valid for the individual at the end of life but brings to light the narrative of those caring for the dying as well. Spaces that witness the end of life need not be designed as a site to conceal the shameful failure of the human body, rather they may be re-imagined as places that hold a quiet celebration of natural processes. Surely there may be tumult, and raging against the dying of the light (Thomas, 1971, p. 128). But, because foaming rapids on a river warn of violence and hazard, we do not omit them from our charts, wishing them away. Thus, design has the potential to map the rapids and rivers' endings and beginnings that we have concealed from ourselves.

There is no place on earth where death cannot find us - even if we constantly twist our heads about in all directions as in a dubious and suspect land... If there were any way of sheltering from death's blows - I am not the man to recoil from it... But it is madness to think that you can succeed ... Men come and they go and they trot and they dance, and never a word about death. All well and good. Yet when death does come – to them, their wives, their children, their friends- catching them unawares and unprepared, then what storms of passion overwhelm them, what cries, what fury, what despair! ... To begin depriving death of its greatest advantage over us, let us adopt a way clean contrary to that common one; let us deprive death of its strangeness, let us frequent it, let us get used to it; let us have nothing more often in mind than death ... We do not know where death awaits us: so let us wait for it everywhere. To practise death is to practise freedom. A man who has learned how to die has unlearned how to be a slave.

(de Montaigne, 1991, p. 96)

When I am asked what I have chosen for my graduate project I tell people that I am designing a healing garden for a Hospice. There is usually a noticeable pause followed by the question, what is a hospice? My answer is usually short, “a hospice is a place where people go to die, people usually staying there for the last weeks and days preceding death”. People often look confused, not knowing what to say, as if I were the one dying. I find it strange but not surprising, I am personally aware of our society's aversion to death. I usually take the opportunity to explain further; hospice is an important option when considering where people can go when they cannot, or choose not, to die at home or in hospital. Hospice strives to provide a compassionate homelike environment. Unfortunately, many people are not aware of what hospice is, without knowledge we are incapable of making informed choices.

In order to understand the importance of gardens and outdoor space in a hospice setting an understanding of hospice is necessary. Most people arrive at a hospice after spending some amount of time in hospital during critical stages of their illness.

For some people being in hospital means being subjected to a lack of control, and choice, leading to acute feelings of isolation for the patient, their families and, friends (Marrone, 1998). It is largely impossible to consider something we are in rejection of; in designing for hospice it is necessary to consider death and dying.

I do not believe it is wrong to die in hospital, however, I adamantly believe it should be a matter of choice for the individual and family, one made after being well informed of all available options. Once in an acute care hospital the dying person confronts the culture of modern biotechnical medicine. That culture is oriented toward experimentation, invention, and progress in the war against disease (Stoddard, 1978). This culture is the scientific version of the religious doctrine of perfection (Marrone, 1998). The very biotechnical culture that has produced the triumphs of modern medicine often extends the suffering of the dying rather than easing their path toward inevitable death (Barnes & Cooper Marcus, 1999). When people enter a hospital they are largely subjected to the structures and processes that define that institution. Critical care is appropriate in acute situations, but when the end is inevitable, comfort and compassionate care should be a choice offered to individuals. I perceive death in much the same way I perceive birth, as a natural process, one that should not be subjected to a pathology-based system because this fundamentally puts us at risk of being treated as diseases or risk factors and not as whole human beings. The following two accounts indicate the differences in the focus of care between hospital and hospice.

What happened was a nightmare of depersonalized institutionalization, of rote management presumably related to science and based on the team approach of subdivision of work.... Different nurses wandered in and out of my mother's room each hour, each shift, each day, calling for additional help over a two-way radio.... They were trained as part of a team "covering the floor" rather than aiding a sick human being....Laboratory studies of blood and urine continued to be performed, fluids were given, oxygen was bubbled in, antibiotics were administered; the days went by but seemed to be years. The patient was seen occasionally by large groups of physicians making rounds, presumably learning the art of practicing medicine properly.... The chart was enlarged regularly with "progress notes". These hastily scrawled writings always dealt with laboratory data; never about the feelings of the patient or her family.... One report stated that occult blood had been found in the stool. Someone responded by writing in the chart that in view of this finding, sigmoidoscopic examination and a barium enema were indicated. I suggested to the author that his conditioned reflexive act was not warranted in the care of an unconscious 80-year old woman who wanted to die gracefully....

(Stoddard, 1978, p. 45)

The hospice environment is different, striving to provide a comforting environment, one where death and dying are realized and accepted as being a natural part of a lifetime.

"It was so strange," said a patient entering a London hospice recently, after being discharged from an ordinary hospital. In other places, she explained, "no one seemed to want to look at me". She was dying of cancer and to look at her might have meant to see, in a place where only successful cure was acceptable, that she was incapable of being cured. To look at her might have meant to see failure, and with it the terror of one's own inescapable death. To look at her, in fact, might have meant, to see her.

(Stoddard, 1978, p. 44)

If the dying person can be perceived first as a person, an individual accomplishing an important part of a full life cycle, then caregivers can concentrate upon giving what is really needed in the situation, providing surcease from the physical and emotional pain (Stoddard, 1978). A terminally ill person can experience the healing aspects of landscape allowing their final days or months to be more comfortable.

Gardens hold symbolic as well as literal meaning; their presence /absence in the course of history and today in modern healthcare centres seems to signify the values of the society they serve.

Healing does not necessarily reference a coming to perfect physical health or a return to a former state. According to the World Health Organization, the term healing is used to reference an increased state of being; one not limited to the physical body (Gigase, 1987). Healing is a term used in reference to the body, mind, and soul. This healing may occur at home, in hospice care or at a hospital. Healing is made increasingly possible in a well-designed environment, not only sensitive to the needs of the visitor but designed with those needs as the focus of the project. Landscape can support living and facilitate healing.

“We die badly in Canada because 85% of us will die in isolation. Physicians are not trained in addressing the care of the patient in a holistic way, they need to look beyond the biology of the disease to see and hear the person” (Robertson, 1997, p. 72). Today, when we experience the death of a loved one, the living often feel isolated; we live in a culture that has adopted a pattern of invisible death (Chidester, 1990). Despite the fact that we are bombarded with “made for television death”, we are still shocked into denial when we are confronted with the real thing. From ancient times to the present, we see that there are trends in where and how we are born and how we die. There was a time when death was visible. *Ars moriendi*; the art of dying, between 1100 and 1400 C.E. the ritualized steps of dying a visible death, were written in small manuals acting a reference for those dying. The manuals contained instructions on how to achieve a peaceful and graceful death (Marrone, 1998). Today, the percentage of deaths that occur within North American Hospitals and Nursing Homes has reached an unprecedented level. In the year 1900, twenty percent of people died in hospital. By 1949, the rate had risen to forty nine percent in 1998 and 1994 the rate rose to from sixty to eighty percent respectively (Marrone, 1998). Since the beginning of the establishment of community hospitals we have increasingly had the option to die in hospital: it is a definitive trend. With modern medical

technology, more people began to be born and die in hospital, at the same time medical care became increasing depersonalized and technological. "With the hospitalization of the dying, most families became less acquainted with death and less able to cope with it when it occurred" (Chidester, 1990, p. 25).

We seem to be obsessed with the representation of death in contemporary films, video games, and much music, yet at the same time, to be in denial of it. I recall the words in two songs I heard recently, one singer was serenading his lover to die with him; another singer was raving about a living dead girl. The death we are exposed to seems to make it less real, made for television death, without heartbreak, beyond reality. According to Williams (2000), the universal fact of death has remained a relatively tabooed subject in Western culture and has, therefore, all the power of a repressed content, seeking a channel of expression (in Marrone, 1990). Perhaps these expressions in pop culture are the result of our denial of our place in the natural order.

Natural order - when I use the term natural, I mean that we are part of the living/dying world that we occupy. By order, I do not mean that the old die first and the young age into their deaths, but that we are subject to the order of birth, life, and death. Children die, the young parents and siblings of these children can also die. At some point in our lifetimes, we are all forced to experience death. Children have to negotiate the reality of death and fit it into their current developmental scheme often bringing it up repeatedly in order to refit it into their current and changing level of development (through personal conversation). In a child's world, the loss of a pet can assume enormous emotional significance, when death comes to someone close it is even more devastating. Children are also forced to experience death though we would rather spare them.

The little girl stood in line with her mom; they were buying groceries. The child was about two and a half years old. She turned to the lady standing in line behind her and told her "My daddy died". The lady asked the little girl what she had just said, apparently she didn't hear her. The child repeated "My daddy died". The stranger responded looking at both the mother and daughter and stated "No he didn't" the Mom kindly responded "Yes, he did".

Tonight I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the lord my soul to keep,
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the lord my soul to keep.

As a child, I thought the best way to die would be in one's sleep and if that weren't an option then dying suddenly would have been my second choice (that is if we had a choice). Like many people my first exposure to death came in my childhood. It was early on a dark January morning and I walked into the warm barn escaping the harsh prairie wind. A prairie winter can be brutal for an animal. I was there to visit the kittens that had just been born. Most barns are not heated, the only source of heat in the barn were several Arabian horses. Large animals, like horses, throw off enough heat to warm an enclosed area like a barn in the winter months. The smell of a horse barn is the sweet smell of feed, tack and of the horses themselves; linking me to a wide variety of childhood memories; it remains a smell I love. Walking up to the first stall the horse had risen from her straw bedding, neighing in expectation of being released to the outdoors. I did not see the kittens at first, then I noticed in the centre of the stall, they were unmoving and lifeless; I also saw they were flat, rigid, and dead. The heat radiating from the horse drew them to death. I wonder if their death was sudden.

Often our first experiences with death arrive through the death of a family pet. When we consider death, we often think of the elderly or adults. Death touches the lives of people of all ages and lifestyles. Like countless other people, I have had the experience of losing loved ones. These experiences have influenced my life and the way I look at the world. Elizabeth Kübler-Ross was perhaps one of the most well known figures in palliative care research. She was a Swiss born psychiatrist who was appalled by the hospital treatment of patients who were dying. She published over twenty books on death and dying. Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross also proposed the now famous five stages of grief. She did not found the hospice movement,

but their adherents credit her with encouraging it. She states “death is not the ultimate human tragedy; depersonalization is” (Kübler-Ross, 1969). The last days of life can be viewed in much the same way we view other milestones of life. However, this milestone is the most painful. The process of dying can be seen as a rite of passage and a time of remembering, in which every moment is sacred. It is a time for looking toward the largely unknown future and reflecting upon the experiences we have lived. Hospice can offer, instead of mechanical resuscitation, a hospitable place in which the personal and spiritual growth of the individual can continue during the process of dying (Stoddard, 1978). The hospice landscape has the potential to support this highly emotional, often fragile physical, and potentially rewarding spiritual time. Perhaps, it is at this stage of life that our opinions define our living the most. Perhaps toward the end, there is no time for the contortions of understanding, maybe, at the end stages of life, it is no longer about questioning, but merely about experiencing as much time as we can with those we love. The comforts of home, a place with easy access to the outdoors and for those who cannot go outdoors, to open a window, feel the breeze, and smell the fresh air, to gaze out into the world beyond perhaps catching a view of the garden, Canadian Rockies or the sprawling fields nearby; to hear the birds singing and to hear people speaking. If one could not walk then they could be wheeled out to a garden and sit under the sun or stars - that should be their choice. When people die in hospice, they have the opportunity to say farewell to their loved ones and to process this natural part of the human life cycle.

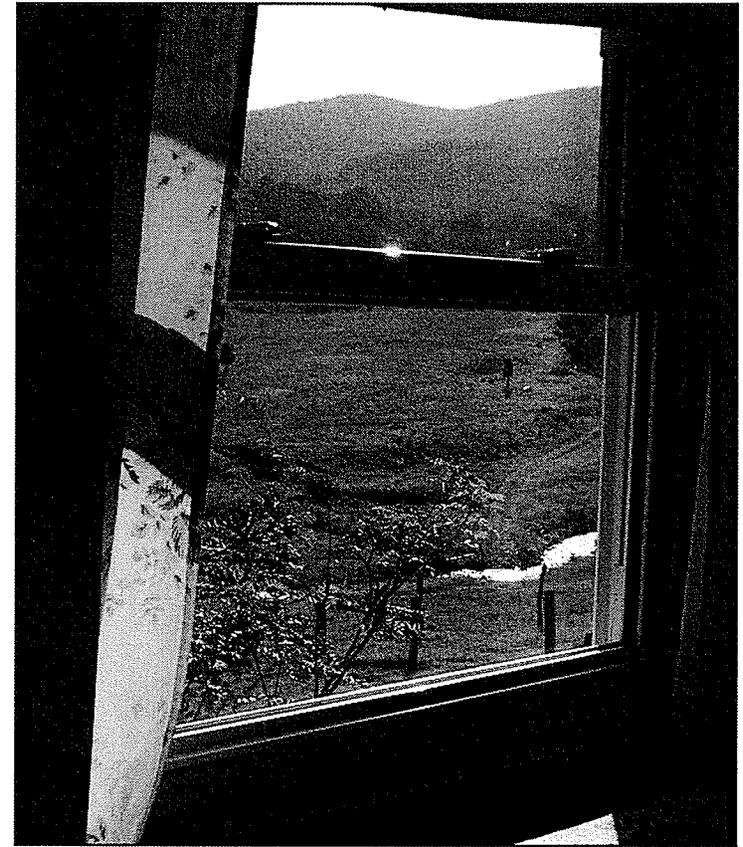


Figure 3

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Chapter Two - Methodology

Qualitative Research

When considering what form this research would take, both qualitative and quantitative research forms were deliberated on, along with a consideration of what the adoption of each approach would mean for the project. Like all research, this work began through the process of formulating questions. Inquiry itself comes into focus as the researcher chooses the best way to explore these questions. Throughout my readings, I found myself gravitating toward research that was non-statistical in nature, research that expressed the thoughts and feelings of others. I found that the human stories that explored “difficult to answer” questions, those without simple explanations, were most moving. These stories were uncovered both during formal investigations and through normative cultural experiences: in media, movies, and works of fiction. Once the topic was soundly engaged in my consciousness, I found evidence of it everywhere. Casual conversations with people made the project feel more genuine, rather than purely an academic exercise. I reviewed a variety of scientific factual data on the climate and history of the Foothills region. I am familiar with this type of research from my undergraduate degree, which focused on geography. Further investigations led to increased questioning of the nature of understanding and the methods we use to get answers. Tentatively at first, my readings turned to the realm of qualitative research. That investigation directed me to relevant readings in philosophy and spirituality, for example Albert Camus’s *The Myth of Sisyphus* and *The Plague*, Elizabeth Kübler-Ross’s *On Death And Dying*, and Jean-Paul Sartre’s *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*; these readings in turn informed my thinking on the topic of death, and dying, while my horizon of understanding expanded.

The qualitative researcher is *bricoleur*, or maker of quilts; using the aesthetic and material tools of their craft, they deploy whatever strategies, methods, and empirical materials suit the project. The choice of research practices depends on the questions that are asked. “The questions depend on their context and what is available in the context of what the researcher

can do in that setting” (Denzin, et. al., 2000, p. 4). As a quilt maker, the qualitative landscape architectural researcher considers a phenomenon to study. Thus, the personal interests of the researcher are the impetus for the beginning of the inquiry. When we consider the variety of perspectives, methodologies and methods used in qualitative research, we can see why it favours an interdisciplinary approach.

Qualitative inquiry is highly compatible with landscape architectural investigation. Landscape architecture deals with designing spaces for specific human activities and needs. As with qualitative research, landscape architecture frequently addresses complex social and cultural situations. Landscape architecture is a creative profession, concerned with analysis, planning, design, and management of the land at scales varying from whole regions to small individual sites. As in scales of landscape, qualitative research has the quality of moving from macrocosm to microcosm, from the individual to the collective cultural complex; qualitative inquiry shifts back and forth to gain insight from both perspectives. Additionally, landscape architects integrate and apply knowledge of ecology, sociocultural factors, economics, and aesthetics to create environments that are functional, innovative, sustainable, appropriate and attractive (University of Manitoba, 2007). We design for social and environmental conditions based upon how we perceive them as individuals, we conduct research to ascertain how others experience those conditions. As designers, we respond to these experiences by using the information to inform our design decisions.

My choice of qualitative research design is congruent with my beliefs and worldviews about life and landscape architecture. I believe that landscape architecture can address complex social conditions, such as where and how we die, in a creative and aesthetic way. Much qualitative research has been focused on healthcare issues in the post-positivist era; more recently qualitative research has developed into a multi-disciplinary research approach. “Qualitative research is at its best when applied toward the interpretivistic epistemologies, relativistic ontologies and naturalistic and interpretive methods, providing us views into the different ways we understand and interpret our lifeworlds” (Laverty, 2003, p. 26).

Through my research, I began to see that others share my thoughts and conclusions on death and dying; this became most evident during my reading on hospice and end of life issues both of which are getting an increasing amount of media attention. Crabtree and Miller (1992) suggest that the best way to determine if the choice of a particular qualitative research design is appropriate is to ask how the particular topic of interest is shared in the group or culture of interest.

This inquiry is both ontological and epistemological focusing on the nature or essence of experience, while questioning the foundations, limits and validity of what we know. The intersection of my lifeworld with this moment in our cultural history provides a challenge with respect to the paradigm shift that is now taking place in the practice of medicine and the re - establishment of the healing garden in that setting. Landscape architecture in its own evolution has benefited from examinations of qualitative research - it has perhaps always had an ear for narrative analysis, but is increasingly open to participatory inquiries and is increasingly democratic in the sense of giving more of a voice to the individual. It is in this vein of changing paradigms, metaphorically and in some cases literally, that this inquiry moves into uncharted realms. In qualitative research, a methodology is not a correct method to follow, but a creative approach to understanding, using whatever methods are responsive to particular questions and subject matter (Laverty, 2003). Adopting the role of a qualitative researcher demands a self aware and critical presence with an attention to detail, and a powerful use of the researcher's own mind and body in analysis and interpretation of the data (Denzin, et. al., 2000).

A Web of Complexity

Qualitative research is surrounded by a complex and interconnected family of terms, concepts, and assumptions. Qualitative research can adopt a variety of research strategies. Each strategy or methodology is unique while maintaining a commonality with the more general field of qualitative research. These research methodologies each have a focus of their own and it is through these lenses that the data are explored. "Qualitative research methodology encompasses the realms of phenomenology, hermeneutics, grounded theory, case study, ethnography, life history, historical method, action

and applied research, and clinical research” (Denzin, et. al., 2000, p. 2). Armed with these strategies, the researcher then focuses on the methods to be used to collect and analyze the material being captured. They include, but are not limited to, “hermeneutic and analytical modalities such as interviewing, observation, analysis of artifacts, case study, personal experience, introspection, life story and more generally, cultural records and cultural texts that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals’ lives” (p. 2).

Bridging the Gap between Self and Other

We can ascertain that one of the primary philosophies of qualitative research is that it rejects the idea that researchers are separate from the phenomenon they are studying. The researcher brings their lifeworld to the projects of their inquiry; and in so doing, becomes part of the material of the work itself, even if it is silent or bracketed. According to Husserl (1970), qualitative research is best understood as a way of emphasizing the centrality of perception for human experience. This experience is multi-dimensional and includes the experience of individual things and their contextual/perceptual fields, the embodied nature of perceiving consciousness, and the intersubjective nature of the world as it is perceived, especially our knowledge of other subjects, their actions and shared cultural structures. The lifeworld of the researcher forms part of the researcher’s reasoning in choosing the subject of study and later when methodology and strategies are embarked upon. To undertake an inquiry through a hermeneutical phenomenological “looking glass” is to abandon oneself to attaining knowledge without a predetermined structure.

Our understanding of how we interpret our world is intrinsically linked to a researcher’s quest for discovery. How we understand our world and our place in it is fundamental to understanding the perspective of others. It is through the act of writing the narrative that we access knowledge, writing is not an exercise in stasis, it is a method of discovery.

(Wall, 2006, p. 6).

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), qualitative research is postmodern and post-experimental; it is research that is described as a situated activity, locating the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible “All qualitative researchers are philosophers in that universal sense in which all human beings... are guided by highly abstract principles” (p. 3). These personal principles shape how the researcher sees and acts in the world.

This practicum explores the use of the personal voice, or autoethnography, in academic research and writing, and how qualitative theory in general seeks to represent research findings in a way that makes personal experiences accessible to others. In application, it grounds the complexity of obstacles to solution/design in a defensible and communicable way. According to Jones (2005), autoethnography works to hold self and culture together, albeit not in equilibrium or stasis. By relating personal experiences to the larger social context, “autoethnography writes a world in flux and movement” (Denzin, et. al., 2000, p. 764). Autoethnography is located within the postmodern theoretical and methodological framework and has developed in part as a response to the historically elite, quantitative realm of research that “slams the door shut on the personal identity, cultural situatedness, and context of the researcher, in an effort to eliminate bias from the research outcomes” (Wall, 2006, p. 5). Autoethnography is epistemological in that it questions our position in our quest to gain access to knowledge. It challenges the way we access truths when they are embedded in cultural beliefs or taboo, as is death in our culture presently.

Autoethnography challenges traditional writing conventions and easily adopts the use of the first person in place of generic impersonal referents (Wall, 2006). Muncey (2005) suggests the use of snapshots, artifacts/documents, metaphor, and psychological and literal journeys as techniques for reflecting on and conveying a ‘patchwork of feelings’, experiences, emotions, and behaviours that portray a more complete view of life (Wall, 2006, p. 10). Autoethnography is ‘high narrative.’ It strives to express the views of the individual in the greater cultural scene. In so doing, the grander motion of

autoethnography is that it becomes a bridge across the ever-widening gap between self and other in an increasingly impersonal postmodern era. Wall (2006) discusses the stagnant nature of a work when the researcher's voice is omitted from a text stating, "the writing is reduced to a mere summary and interpretation of the works of others, with nothing new added" (p. 3). I consider this in relation to my own writing. I wonder how others will view what I represent - will it be considered authentic and genuine or a prolapsed self-indulgence? Richardson (2000) states that "from a postmodern viewpoint having a partial, local, and/or historical knowledge is still knowing" (p. 2). Narrative researchers treat narrative, whether oral or written, as a distinct form of discourse its retrospective quality exposes patterns in our experiences and offers an understanding of our own and others' actions (Denzin, et. al., 2005). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005) the narrator does this by "explaining, entertaining, informing, defending, complaining, and confirming or challenging the status quo, while keeping in mind their audience" (p. 656).

Researchers as narrators develop meaning out of, and find a sense of order in, the material they study. They develop their own voice(s) as they construct others' voices and realities. "They narrate results in ways that are both enabled and constrained by the social resources and circumstances inherent to their disciplines, culture, historical moments as they write or perform their work for particular audiences" (Denzin, et. al., 2005, p 656). Landscape architects write, draw, and present their results to communicate to others. A practicum/thesis presentation is essentially a performance of the work communicated visually and verbally to the audience - the practicum, when it is complete - can be viewed. The built landscape is the experience of that work made manifest in a physical context.

Hermeneutics/Phenomenology

This practicum is based on hermeneutic and phenomenological philosophical premises. These interpretive practices are informing my selection of methods, data collection, and analysis. These methods include direct observation, analysis of artifacts, documents and records, and personal reflection. Throughout the body of the document, I will study cultural texts and analyze their content through narrative and semiotic strategies. Polkinghorne (1983) supported the use of the term methodology rather than method to describe the use of phenomenological and hermeneutic phenomenological traditions. The research, though guided by the methodologies, is not committed to following a linear path of inquiry but an inquisitive exploration of situation, other and self (Denzin, et. al., 2005). Qualitative research in the hermeneutical paradigm sets forth on the journey toward understanding aware that the structure is not predetermined, and that the conclusion may be in the formulation of yet another question. Hence the “hermeneutical circle of inquiry” (Moules, 2002, p. 26). Within this inquiry different garden forms are explored and their value in a healing garden context considered. Prior to exploring the site the writing of LaDell (2000) came to the forefront “It does not matter how you appreciate nature or landscape, so long as it is engaged” (p. 43). The site inventory and analysis section adopts an autoethnographic approach and concludes in a series of collages revealing the future hospice setting from both cultural and biophysical perspectives. Using vivid description and imagery the reader is provided with a view of the site and its context. With transparency the descriptions of the important elements of the study are connected, data, site, setting, and researcher combine to provide a comprehensible image of the work. Qualitative research involves the “researcher as instrument”, wherein the researchers use of self is a primary tool for data collection (Denzin, et. al., 2000, p. 42).

The term “phenomenology” addresses what it is like to experience the significance of objects, events, the flow of time, the self, and others, as these things arise and are experienced in our “life-world” (Smith, 2005). The assumption behind

phenomenology is that there is an essence to shared experience. Qualitative research historically comes from the social sciences and requires a researcher to enter into an individual's lifeworld and use the self to interpret the experience (Husserl, 1970).

Hermeneutics is considered a reflective inquiry concerned with "our entire understanding of the world and thus... all the various forms in which this understanding manifests itself" (Gadamer, 1989, p. 18). Defining hermeneutics can be problematic as Hermes has "the character of complication, multiplicity, lies, jokes, irreverence, and disdain for rules; however, he is the master of creativity and invention. He has the capacity to see things anew and his power is change, prediction and the solving of puzzles" (Moules, 2002, p. 3). Hermeneutics is a branch of philosophy that deals with interpretive practices, and how we communicate. It is about questioning the nature of human life and existence (Forester, 1992). Following these notions, this practicum is concerned with embodied experiences and the existential nature of living.

I have often wondered as a student if the intent of academic inquiry is the pursuit of truth. I find solace in the description of truth as given by Gadamer (1989) who describes "truth" as the event of meaning. To state that we uncover truth in understanding, simply means that we have found a meaningful account that corresponds to authentic experience. Truth is the event of meaning, rather than the result of objectivity or repetition.

To say that we uncover truth in understanding simply means that we have found a meaningful account that corresponds to experience. Truth is a living event. Truth is changing, never stagnant; truth is expansive and ripe with possibilities. The truth is what allows the conversation to go on, recognizing that understanding is not a solo undertaking for it always occurs with others. Truth is not a judgment about worth; it is always being worked out and one truth is not intended to reprimand all others, but to show the eventfulness of a topic. It occurs in keeping something open, in not thinking that something is known, for when we think we already know; we stop paying attention to what comes to meet us. The sign of something being true is not that something is repeatable, but that it lasts, lingers, and even changes.

(Gadamer, 1989, p. 120)

We could adopt a rigid set of rules or site planning guidelines to return predictable results, but to remain open to infinitely changing requirements and situations we can turn to the flexibility and transparency of qualitative research to give unpredictable, innovative solutions to our ever-changing world. In landscape architecture, the designer is inextricable from the design project; our work is a direct reflection of our choices in both design process and product.

Aristotle tells us that a person who attempts to make every decision by appealing to some antecedent general principle, kept firm and inflexible for the situation, is like an architect who tried to use a straight ruler on the intricate curves of a fluted column. . . . Good deliberation accommodates itself to what it finds, responsively and with respect for complexity. It does not assume that the form of the rule governs appearances; it allows the appearances to govern themselves and to be normative for the correctness of the rule.

(Kessels & Korthagen, 1995, p. 350, re. Nichomachean Ethics, Bk 6)

The landscape architect assembles whatever methodologies, methods, and empirical materials s/he determines to be most appropriate. Landscape architectural qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. Turning the world into a series of “representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to self as a way to interpret the meaning people bring to the phenomena being considered”, because of this diversity there is frequently a commitment to using more than one interpretive practice in any study (Denzin, et. al., 2000, p. 4).

Sometimes the most poignant qualities of site come not from what is actually there, but from what is connected to it, through time and space, by our recollections and hopes. The vision, and even more powerful the scent, of a blossom may remind us of a moment in our past and let us store up future memories or form links with poems or paintings that hold meaning for us.

(Moore, et. al. 1993, p. 10)

“Crystallization incorporates the use of other disciplines such as art, sociology, history, dance, and anthropology, to inform our research processes and broaden our understanding of method and substance” (Denzin, et. al. 2000, p. 392). As I contemplate my work, I am conscious that it is easy to be caught in the rivers of our everyday unchallenged truths; we may live comfortably in mundanity until life throws us into the rapids in a fury of the unexpected.

Cultural Semiotics

Cultural semiotics has broadened the meanings of the terms “text”, “language”, and “reading” to include almost everything perceived as part of a sign-relationship. Boris Upinski has noted that from the point of view of cultural semiotics, “language understood in a broad semiotic sense rather than a narrow linguistic sense determines perception of both real and possible facts in the corresponding historical-cultural complex” (in Orr, 1996, p. 813). To put this differently, a cultural text is derived from experiencing phenomena including film, music, art, and books; these things become text after they have been interpreted. Each individual interprets differently and it is through our interpretations that we see and understand culture. The way we use language itself is fraught with difficulty as words have multiple meanings, hence the narrator can never be sure of how the other will perceive them or how they will decipher the narration at all. The practicum acknowledges the variable nature of language. “Hermeneutics is about attentiveness to language, recognizing that language has forgetfulness to it; it is completely forgetful of itself” (Gadamer, 1989, p. 62).

Design can be a holistic practice, one considering both the larger whole, and the individual striving for an understanding of that relationship. This research inquiry is looks at relationships, between people their culture and society and how individuals reference them and their self in the given situation of hospice.

Practical philosophy, then, certainly is 'science': a knowledge of the universal that as such is teachable ... What separates it fundamentally from technical expertise is that it expressly asks the question of the good too – for example, about the best way of life ... It does not merely master an ability, like technical expertise, whose task is set by an outside authority ... No learned and mastered technique can spare us the task of deliberation and decision.

(Gadamer, 1989, p. 327–8)

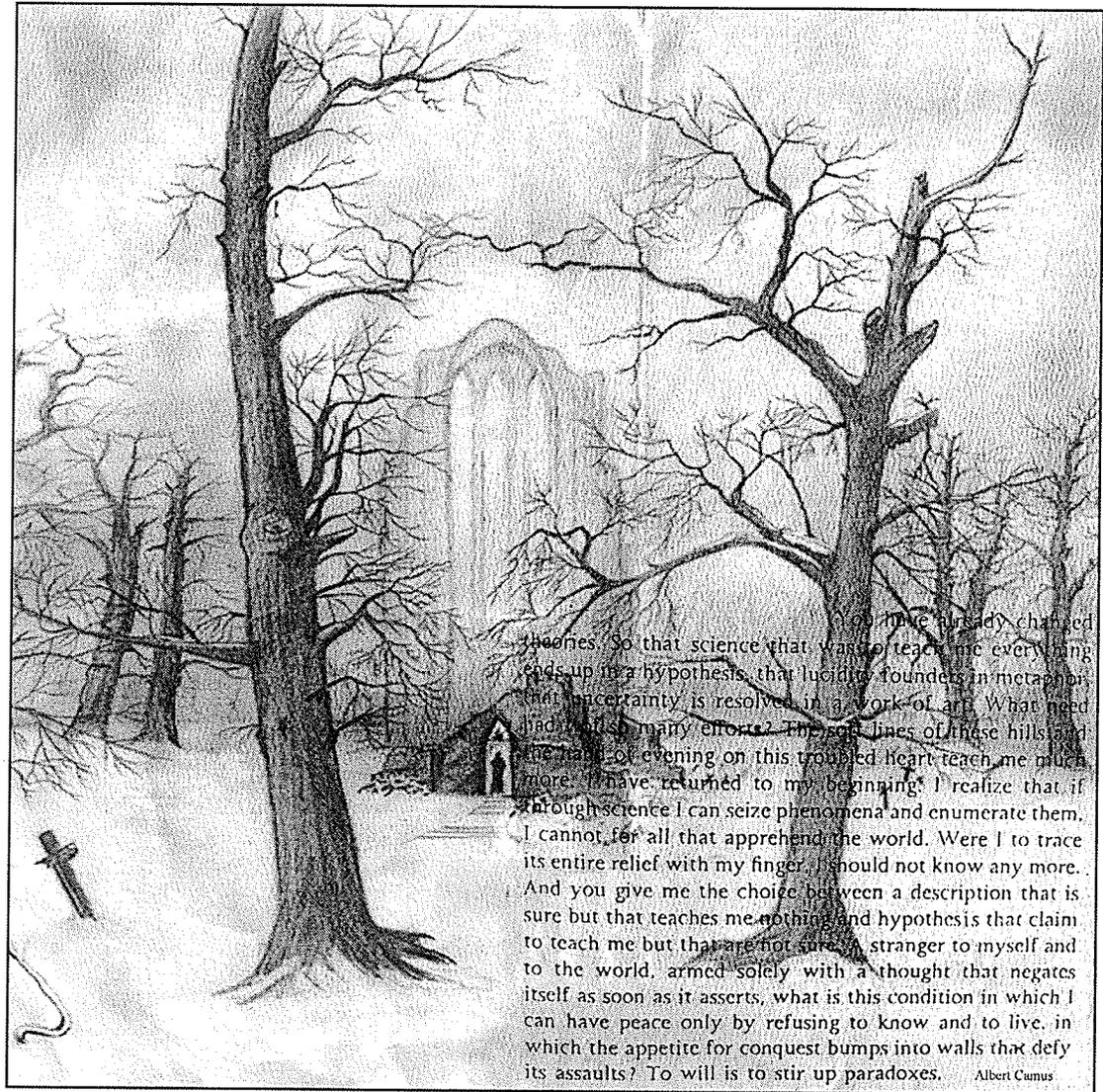


Figure 4

Chapter Three - Introduction to Site Analysis

The site is located in a rural setting 0.8 kilometres north of Okotoks. The 3.4 hectare parcel is surrounded by country residential and agriculture land uses.

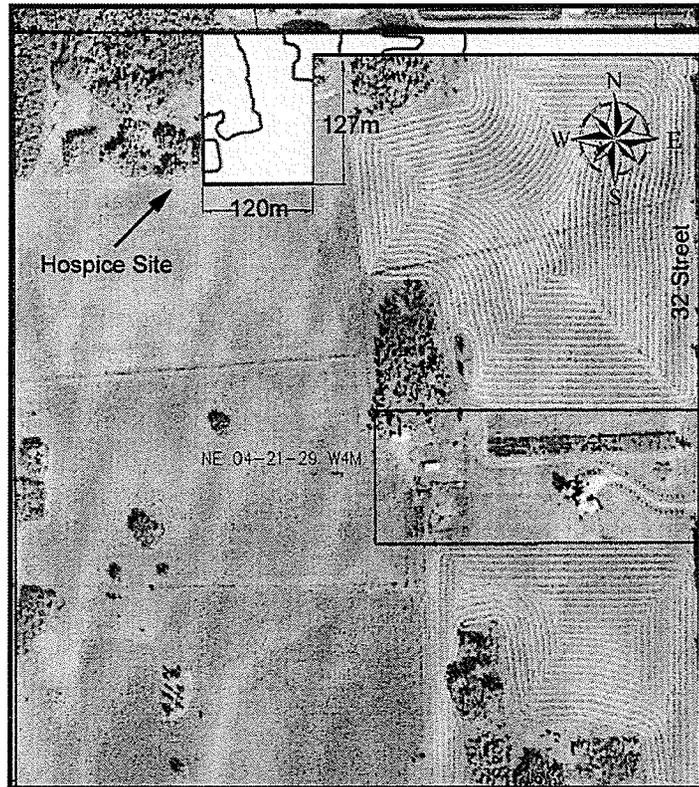


Figure 5

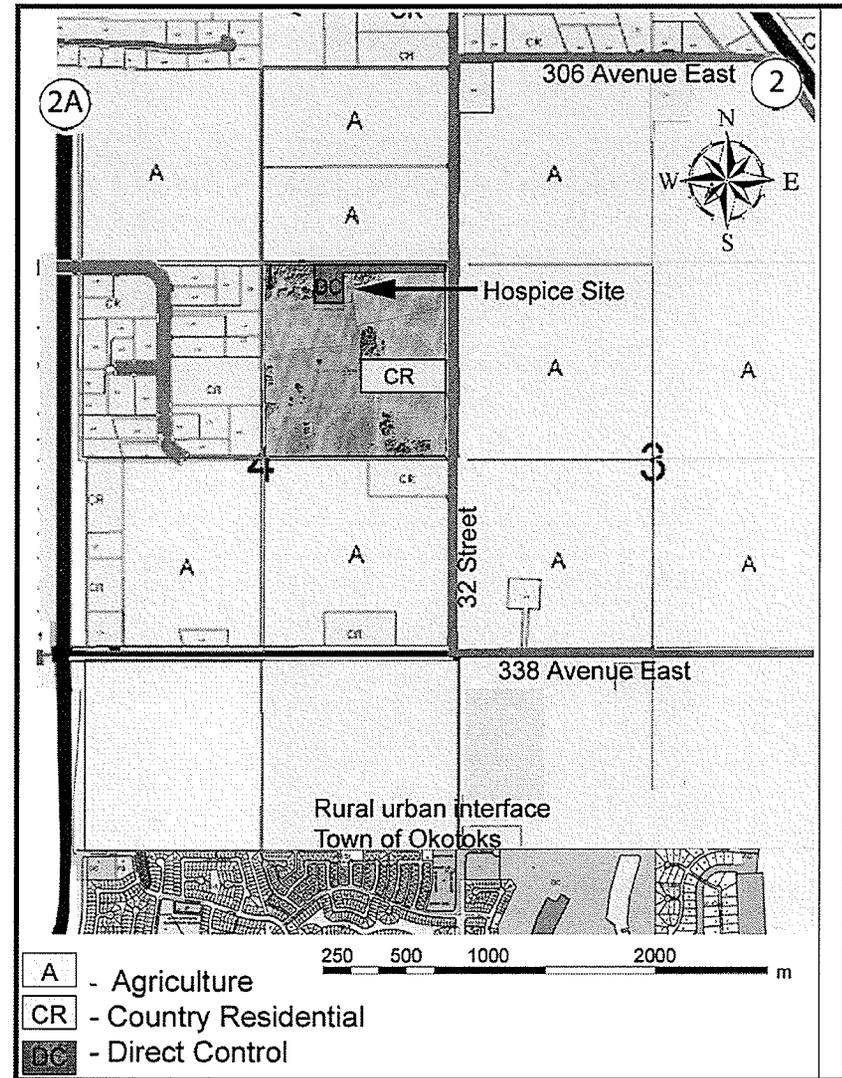


Figure 6

Facts about Okotoks

Distances from Okotoks

To Calgary City Limits - 18 km
To Calgary International Airport - 64 km
To Edmonton - 328 km
To the U.S. Border - 287 km

Elevation: 1053 metres

Growth Rate

One of Canada's fastest growing communities, averaging over 6% per annum growth over the last decade. The 1998 Municipal Development Plan (MDP) established growth targets linked to infrastructure development; the anticipated population at "build-out" will be approximately 30,000 people.

Employment Base

Agriculture, education, construction, transport, trade, commercial business, professional services, retail, home-based businesses and municipal government.

Demographics

- 70% of the population under age 45 (75% - 2001). 41% of the population under age 25. 5.7% of the population retired.
- Median age (2001) - 32.3 – 5 years younger than Canadian average, 2.7 years younger than Alberta average.
- Average number of people per household - 2.78.
- Internet access at home – 79% households.
- Unemployment rate - 1.3%.
- Home-based workforce - 7.4%.
- 58% of workforce has trade certificate/diploma, college, or university degree.
- 35% of the workforce works in Okotoks; 48% commute to Calgary (remainder - alternative work arrangements).

(Town of Okotoks Fact file, 2007)

Vegetation inventory, site location, and area

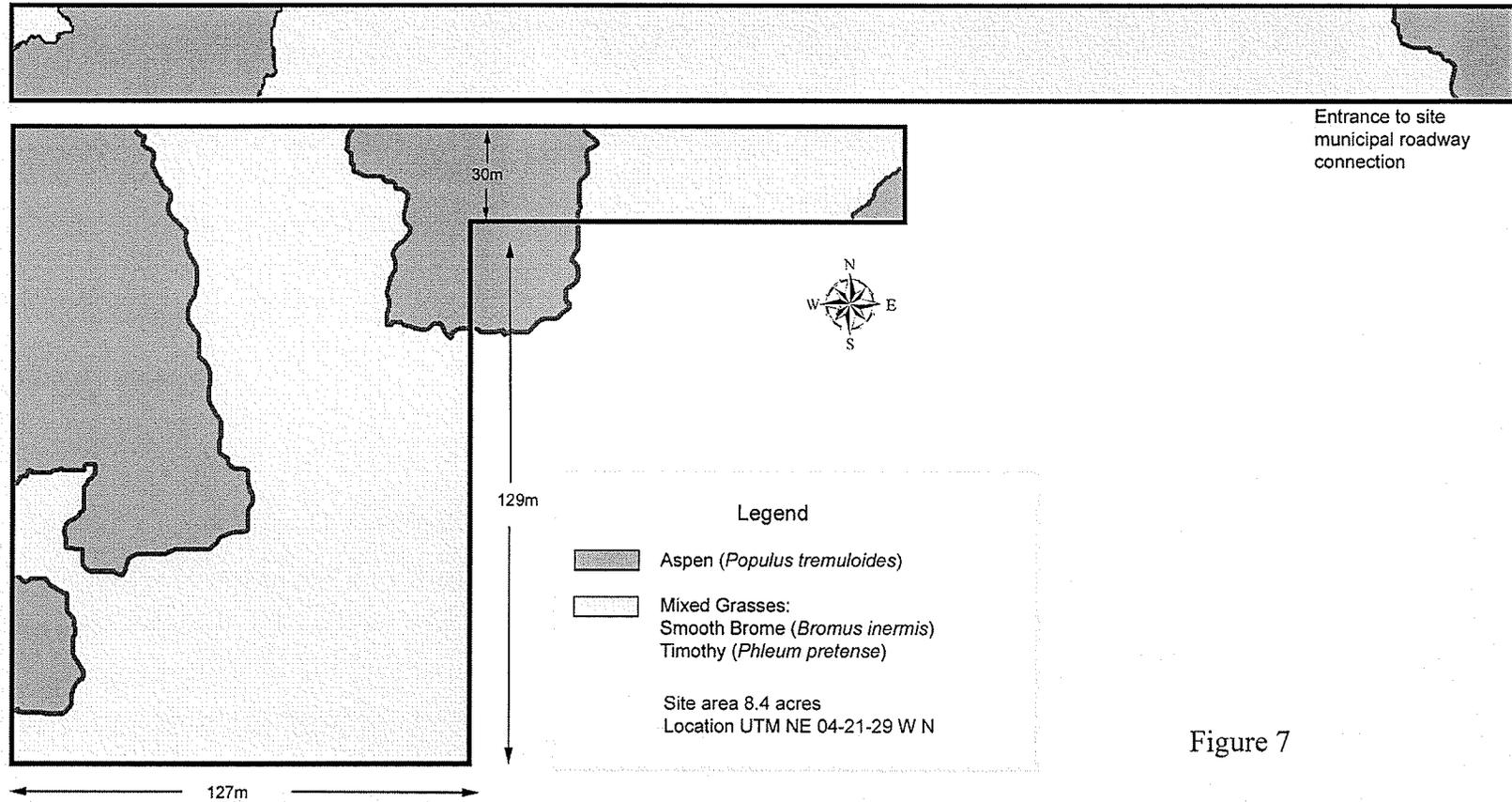


Figure 7

Views, existing topography, and shelter from winds

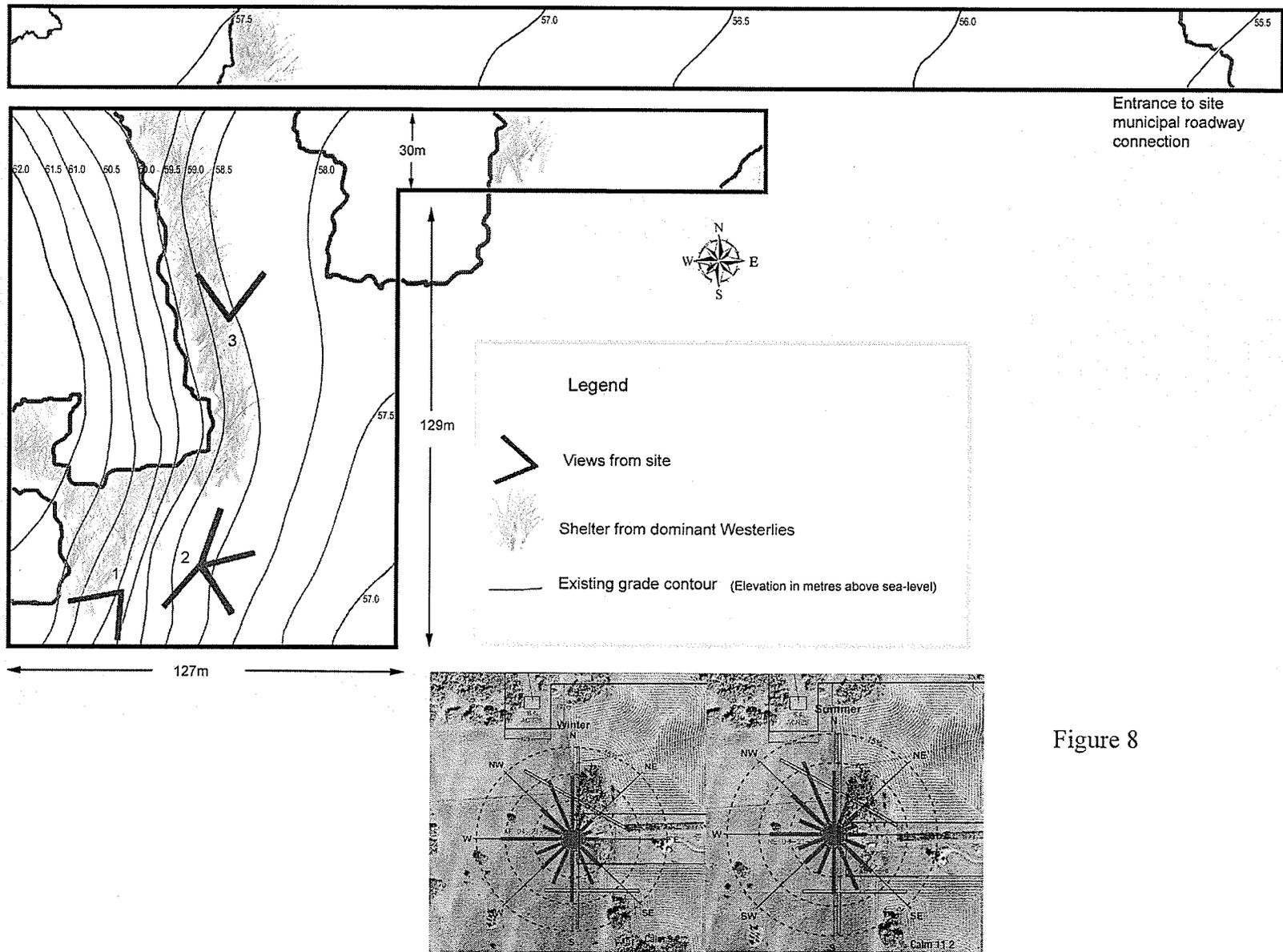


Figure 8

According to the Oxford Dictionary (1971), creation is a production of the human intelligence, especially of the imagination. A holistic design approach necessarily includes imagination. It is possible that the standard survey analysis and design approach and its apparent logic and achievable objectivity in the progression from site to design lacks inspiration.

LaDell (2000) speaks about learning to be comfortable with our intuitions and subconscious, that we can become more creative by opening up to

our memories, listening to our feelings, searching with our soul. In the design of a hospice landscape, the selection of elements for their relationship to one another is an important consideration. It is also a journey involving the opening of the heart to the reality of death and the comfort that landscape can offer in this context. In the standard survey and analysis process creativity, passion, and imagination can easily be forgotten as we move from one step to the next (p.42). The site can be fully explored by experiencing it with the senses, emotions, and spirit. The visual aspects of landscape represent only part of the larger sensory complex that we use to access our environment. Although sight is our predominant sense, a garden is a sensory delight encapsulating all of the senses.

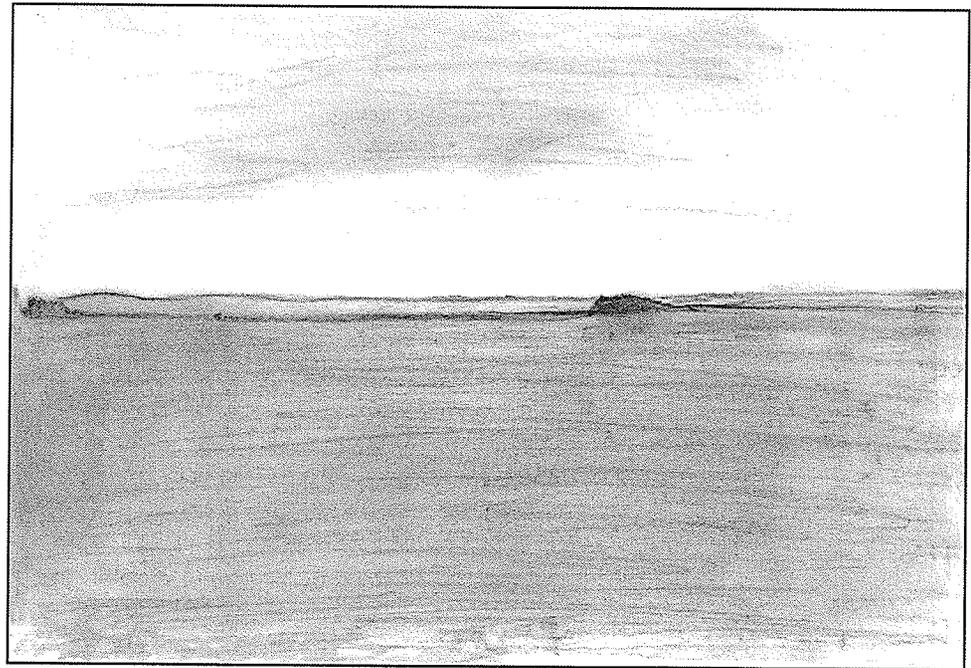


Figure 9

Living Nature:

The way of love is not
a subtle argument.
The door there
is devastation.
Birds make great sky circles
Of their freedom.
How do they learn it?
They fall, and in their falling,
they're given wings.

Jelaluddin Rumi

I lay in my bed at night with the window
slightly open thinking about this project when I
realize it is 2 a.m. I recoil at the thought of having
to awaken in the morning. I hear a sound from far away, approaching steadily. It is the geese. I feel the beating of their
wings against the power of the earth, and in that moment, feel I am part of something grander. I long for the feeling to stay
but it departs with the geese. The passing of the geese tell me there are more than the rules of gravity, the rules of the Earth.
I return to my reality. According to Chief Seattle, "Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within
it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect" (in Nerburn, K. and
Mengelkoch, L., 1991).

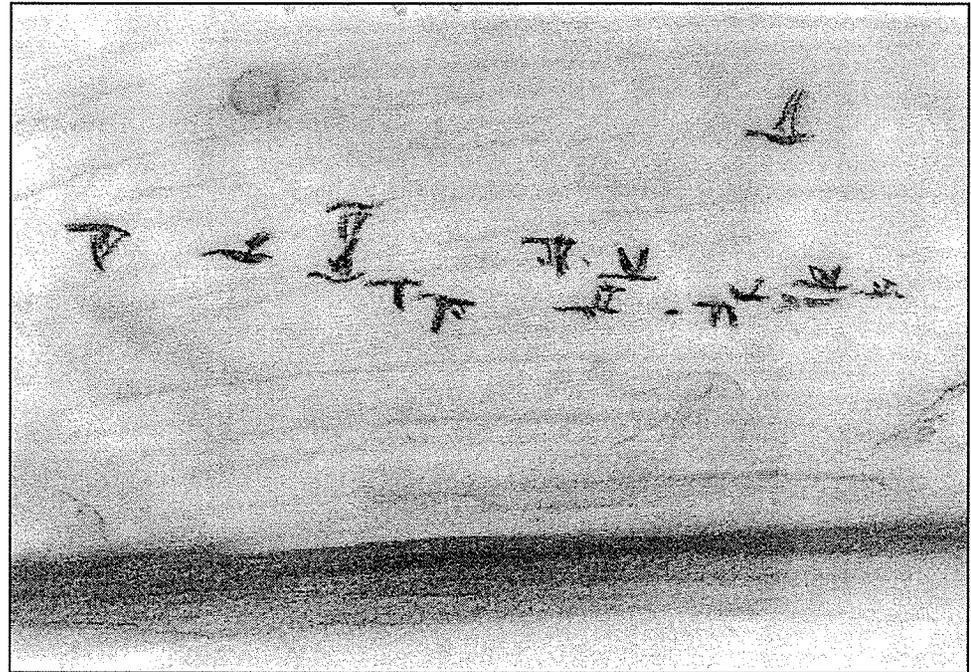


Figure 10

I sit on the prairie, I gaze out toward the mountains. The wind blows. I am part of this landscape. The aspen leaves move like silver coins swayed by the effortless song of the wind. The site silently waits for the change.

As I cross the expanse that leads to the site; I think about potential, I think about the cycle of life. Each time I visit the site I have had a different experience. My first site visit was in the winter of 2005. I was introduced to the site by one of the people who are donating the land to the society. What a gift! Eight acres of beautiful foothills landscape. I watch her dog bounding through the flattened grass. My presence, however subtly, has changed the site but I think the site has changed me more, perhaps not permanently, but changed me nonetheless. On site visits I have seen a variety of wildlife: deer, coyote, and eagles. Animals and insects are like the details of outdoor experience acting as punctuation marks in our larger experience.



Figure 11



Figure 12

The Earth and Its Processes:

I step onto the grass and regard how rugged a plant must be to thrive in this soil; I understand the symbiotic relationship between the grass and the soil between weather and climate. The soil's structure and moisture levels are maintained, in part, by the plants growing upon it. The soil here is classified as shallow medium textured, water laid sediments, often with exposures of medium textured till (Government of Alberta). I bend over and pick up a rock, this rock is a nearly flawless sphere, and the size and shape are reminiscent of a quail's egg. The only edge on this rock is the one between my skin and its surface, its form fits well in the palm of my hand, holding it gives me a feeling of completeness. As I embrace this rock, I feel I am privy to its secret journey of pressure and persistence. This small rock causes me to think about how our experiences shape us, and like the rock pushed along by water, bumping against other rocks, the hardships we face in life change us, our edges can wear away, we are transformed.



Figure 13

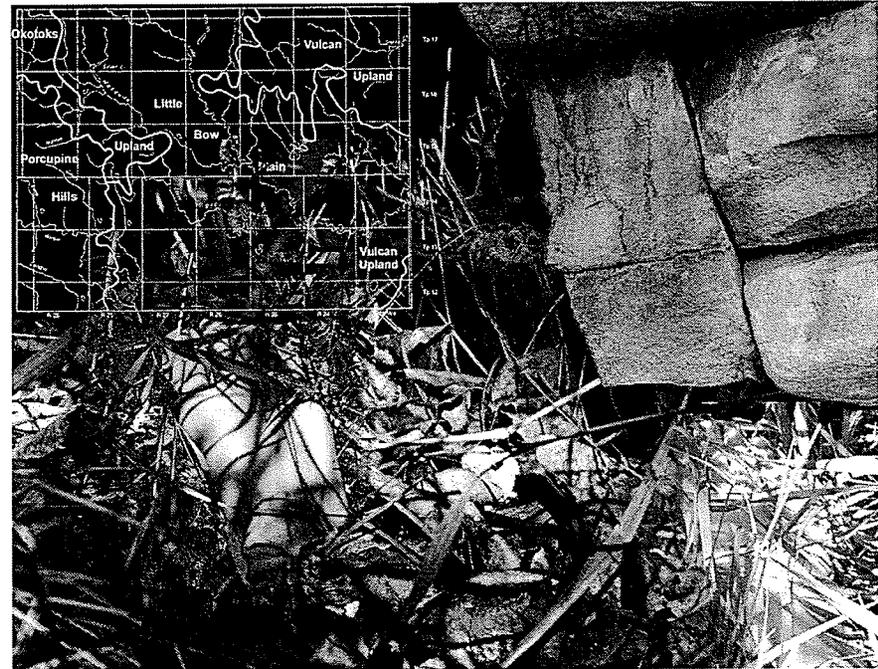


Figure 14

Climate and Weather:

For the moment, the site is warm and breezy. I learnt during my undergraduate degree in geography that the mountains and the predominant Westerly winds are responsible for the ephemeral nature of the weather here. There is a local saying, “If you don’t like the weather, just wait 10 minutes, it will change”. I have been a resident in the area for three years, this saying is accurate. The weather is highly changeable no matter the season; the weather in Calgary, only 18 kilometres away, can be quite different than the weather at the Hospice site. The “Okotoks Hole”, as it is described by Canada’s Civil Air Navigation Service, is an anomalous and puzzling area of clearing within 15 kilometres of Okotoks, frequently observed when Calgary and Springbank are immersed in stratus (NAV Canada, 2003). As a cloud slowly passes in front of the sun, I become conscious of how suddenly the breeze feels cold. Southern Alberta tends toward dryness, though the foothills region receives the most rainfall. Summers are filled with endless days of sunshine and evenings that always seem cool enough that a jacket is needed.



Figure 15



Figure 16

Winters here are long and cold, but it is unusual to have prolonged cold snaps below -16 C. Thirty Chinook days feels like one month less of winter. It is not unusual to see people riding their bikes in December. These winds are produced by warm air funneling through the Rockies (Environment Canada, 2003). This gives people a break from the cold but it also causes the garden lover's palette to be more limited than in Edmonton or even in Winnipeg.

People - as social beings:

“The people are nicer here, don't you think? People we don't know smile and say hello” These were my father's words to me when I had first moved here. Okotoks has a small town quality, despite the six percent per year, growth rate. Moreover, according to a recent municipal survey “Small Town Feel” was rated as one of the most important community aspects. The hospice is being built, in part, so people of the region can stay in an area that they are familiar with and feel comfortable in.

On my quest for site history, I visited the town's museum and archives, Heritage House. I looked at a number of photos and came across a few of interest but none spoke to me in the way that the 1916 photo of Mary Daggett did. A woman long gone surrounded by her 'pets' with her humble home, covered in Virginia Creeper, in the background. In those days the garden meant survival and it was the women that tended to it and to a multitude of other chores. The photo reminds me of how people used to live in a closer relationship with the environment. The connection of the pioneers to the land is easily understood in the context of their dependence upon it. We may not experience it the same way the pioneers did but we are still connected to each other and to nature. I believe that how

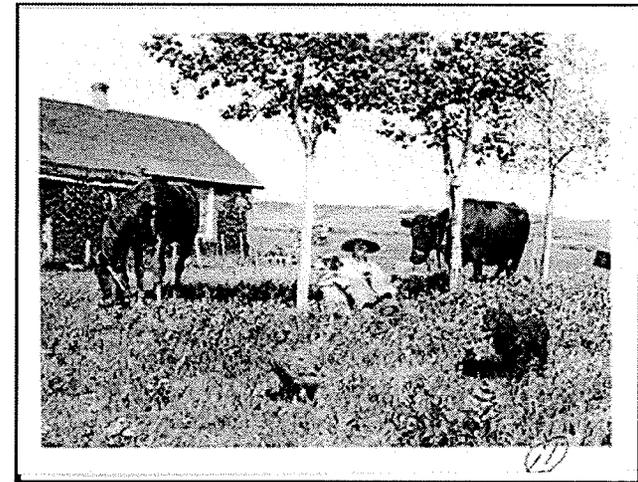


Figure 17

we treat one another and the environment is an indicator of the humanity and progress of our society.

Living on the harsh frontier always close to life and death resulted in people being aware that they are a part of a natural cycle. The pioneers were dependent upon each other and the elements for the functioning of life. Perhaps we are not so different today; but we can live in denial of this connection if we choose, because we can. Today we turn up the furnace if we are cold and when we are hungry and need to be clothed, we go to the store, and most of us, don't keep animals to eat.

Time: change

One of the predominant processes occurring adjacent to the site is farming. Patients and their families will be familiar with the seasonal activities, smells, colours and rural soundscape related to cycles of cultivation and harvest.

I sit by an incidental pond at the edge of the disturbed farmland. The air is pregnant with moisture and decomposition. Nearby a copse of aspen logs pokes through, half-hidden under years of fallen grass disguising the decomposing remnants of yesterday. Insects buzz and



Figure 18

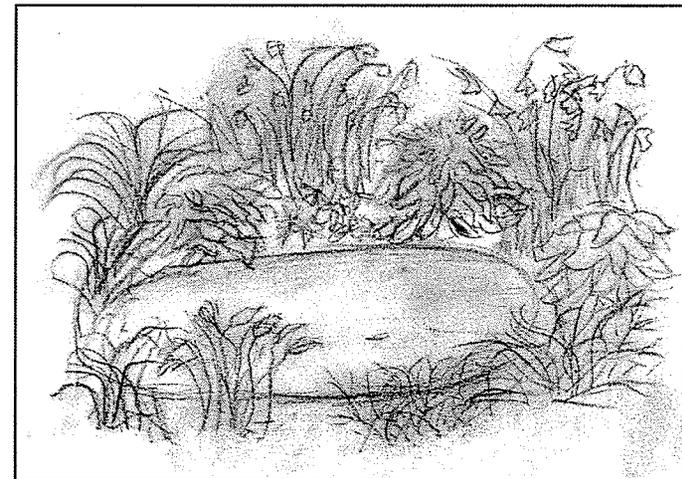


Figure 19

rustle about those remnants giving life to the future.

The gently rolling hills to the west remind me of life itself; the undulations of time, life's moments recollected in the form of the foothills and mountains beyond. The mountains trace a gentle line against the horizon, but up close they are raw, thrust up by enormous volcanic forces - they act as a visual reminder of how abruptly everything can change. The mountains are testaments to the existence of the miraculous/divine, as real for the hospice to be as they were for Dante in his work *The Divine Comedy*.

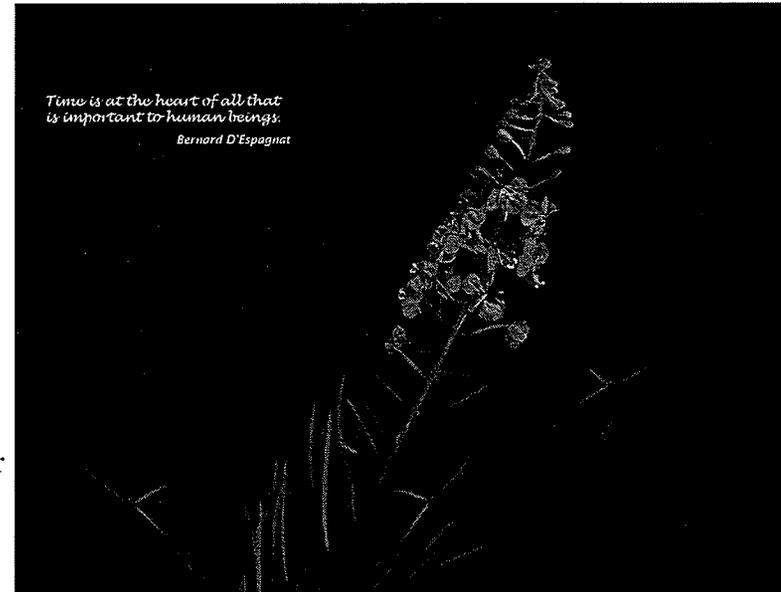


Figure 20

Considering the site and its existing conditions there are a variety of design constraints that must be considered. One of the dominant site conditions is the change in grade from the western high point of the site decreasing to the east. This constraint provides a design opportunity for retaining walls and water features and shelter from the dominant westerlies that can be quite cold in the winter months and at night. The existing Aspen provide shelter from the winds and act to provide both visual and auditory interest on site. Therefore, the existing trees should be considered a valuable and enhancement is recommended. The change in grade directly adjacent to the proposed building location makes wheelchair accessibility difficult at the north entrance. The only way to accommodate access here would be to remove the aspen stand at that location for more aggressive site stripping and grading. The cold winters and frequent Chinooks require plant material to be either native or chinook tolerant. Heated outdoor areas would extend the time one could comfortably spend outdoors.

The Beginnings of a Garden

Design', v.t.&i. Set (thing) apart for person; destine (person, thing) for a service ; contrive, plan; purpose, intend,(~s an attack ,to do, doing or that—thing or person to be or do something) whence ~edly (-zin-) adv. : make preliminary sketch of (picture) ; draw plan of (building etc. to be executed by others); be a designer ; conceive mental plan for, construct the groundwork or plot of, (book or work of art)...

Concise Oxford Dictionary, 2004



Figure 21

The following is an excerpt from The Ottawa Citizen article *Hospice Option: How could a dying person have no worries?* Wednesday, April 27, 2005

Barbara O'Connor stands by the back windows of the Hospice at May Court, in Old Ottawa South, and says the view here can be more valuable, some days, than anything a doctor prescribes. We look outside the window, where the ice has started to melt from the Rideau River and the snow is disappearing from the gardens. A family of ducks quacks its way up to the window, then decamps beneath a large maple tree. "Families often comment on the grounds," says Ms. O'Connor. "It is a great place to reflect, a great place to see the beauty that surrounds us every day. I know it has helped many people, just being able to walk around our grounds." That is the heart of the story, no matter how pressing money seems most days. And it was what I was thinking the day I walked down the hallway of La Maison Mathieu-Froment-Savoie and met Guy Boisvert. The former Hull police officer has the sort of story that scares people: perfect health, not even a cold in years, and then one day he collapses in the police station and starts to have convulsions. Rushed to the hospital, doctors discover a brain tumour. Two major operations later, he is forced to retire. Now 54, he was admitted to the hospice five weeks ago. I asked him what he thought about the place. "It's great," he said. "The food is wonderful. The people are wonderful. If I was at home, my wife would be getting no rest, and I would be worried about her every day. Now, I have no worries."

The answer surprised me. How could a dying person have no worries?

When I leave, I shake his hand and am surprised again, this time by the strength of his grasp. Outside his room I tell a nurse about it, and ask whether a dying person can be so strong. Has there been some sort of mistake? She answers no, there has been no mistake. Guy Boisvert is dying. His strength will start to fade day by day, probably starting later that week.

"How much time does he have?" I ask. "No more than two weeks," she says. It ended up being less than two weeks. By the time I saw Mr. Boisvert only two days later, the steely grip of his arm was already gone.

He was a cop for 30 years, a strong, gregarious man who was initially embarrassed about collapsing at work -- he had no idea, at that time, what it heralded -- and he was embarrassed again when he could no longer shake my hand. Within a week of our first meeting, he was in a coma. Guy Boisvert finally passed away, days later, on the morning of March 5. "He hated being helpless," said his wife, Pirry, 42. She tended to her husband for five years, the last year when he was living in a hospital bed set up in their dining room. She was his nurse. She knows quite well how proud and independent he was. She was there every day after he slipped into a coma as well. There were nights that she will never forget, talking to her husband, his two sons from his first marriage there as well, along with friends and more relatives and police officers who knew Guy and still couldn't believe it was happening to him, everyone able to come, the doors of the hospice open, as they always are, until he was gone. "I cannot thank (Maison) Mathieu-Froment-Savoie enough for all their help," Mrs. Boisvert said.

"Without the hospice, I don't know what it would have been like those last few days. I would not have had all that time with my husband, I know that." I asked her how much such a thing might be worth, that time together at the end of one's life.

"You cannot put a price on it," she said. "Those are memories I will have forever. And thanks to the hospice, many of those memories are now good" (Corbett 2005).

When I engage in creative endeavors, I am often caught between what seems to be a logical sequential pattern of thinking and a struggle to find a more creative and occasionally, random/abstract process. My creative endeavors never develop into a product I like until I let go of thinking there is a one right answer. In this spirit, according to Vince Healy (1986) the issues facing Hospice users are too complex for the institution's design to satisfy every need that might arise.

Various garden types may be used to accommodate the different needs of each visitor to the garden. In their book, *Healing Gardens*, Clare Cooper Marcus and Marni Barnes (1999) made a study of outdoor spaces in hospital settings noting that these types may explain which elements allow for the garden as a whole, to provide for each user's needs. These elements are: landscaped grounds, landscaped setback, front porch, entry garden, courtyard, plaza, roof garden, roof terrace, healing garden, meditation garden, viewing garden, viewing/walk-in garden, tucked-away garden, borrowed



Figure 22

landscape, nature trails and nature preserves, and atrium garden.

Each garden's size , location, climate, and budget is going to be different (Healy, 1986, p. 18). There has come to be an increasing abundance of scientific research correlating what people have already experienced and felt to be true, the effect of nature, and the garden on healing. One of the most familiar studies indicated that Alpha brain wave activity is higher for individuals watching vegetated scenes, indicating more relaxed, wakeful responses than for those watching non-vegetated scenes (Ulrich, 1981). According to Rachel and Stephen Kaplan (1998) nature has intrinsic qualities that provide restoration to individuals suffering from mental fatigue.



Figure 23

The benefits of the hospice garden are seen in its ability to facilitate a sense of rejuvenation; restoring a person's emotional, mental, and spiritual energy. The feeling that something is right within us can make it possible to face other difficult aspects of living, particularly when one is under a great deal of emotional stress. This rejuvenating experience is a perhaps best explained by Frederick Law Olmsted (1865) when he described nature's effect on us, stating that "nature employs the mind without fatigue and yet exercises it; tranquilizes it and yet enlivens it; and thus, through the influence of the mind over the body, gives the effect of refreshing rest and reinvigoration to the whole system" (in Ulrich and Parsons, 1992, p. 95). Gardens that are lush with plants are beneficial, gardens that rely on abstract art and hard surfaces as the central design scenario may actually harm patients (Thompson, 1998, p. 54).



Figure 24

“I think it’s imperative, if one is dealing with very stressed, emotionally upset people, to be unambiguously positive in the garden context” (Thompson, 1998, p. 55). When asked how a designer would be unambiguously positive Cooper Marcus answered, “plants and plenty of them”. According to Clare Cooper Marcus, Landscape Architecture and other design professions almost have a requirement that, to be good, work should be stylistically



Figure 25

innovative and challenging. Projects that win awards are typically those that catch the collective eye of a group of jurors; gardens that aid the healing process may require design subtleties that are not visually

When considering nature and the garden in the hospice setting it is important to note that each user of the landscape may come to it with different requirements, therefore it is crucial that the landscape provide for as many uses as possible.

Some people actually turn away from 'nature' and gardens at the end of life because they find so much 'living' is difficult to deal with or saying 'goodbye' to such beauty is one more small degree of 'grief' they have to deal with (Von Bommel, personal communication, 2005). The garden should be designed to provide many choices. Those who yearn for a simple setting would benefit more from a landscape setting without a lot of sounds and patterns, one where

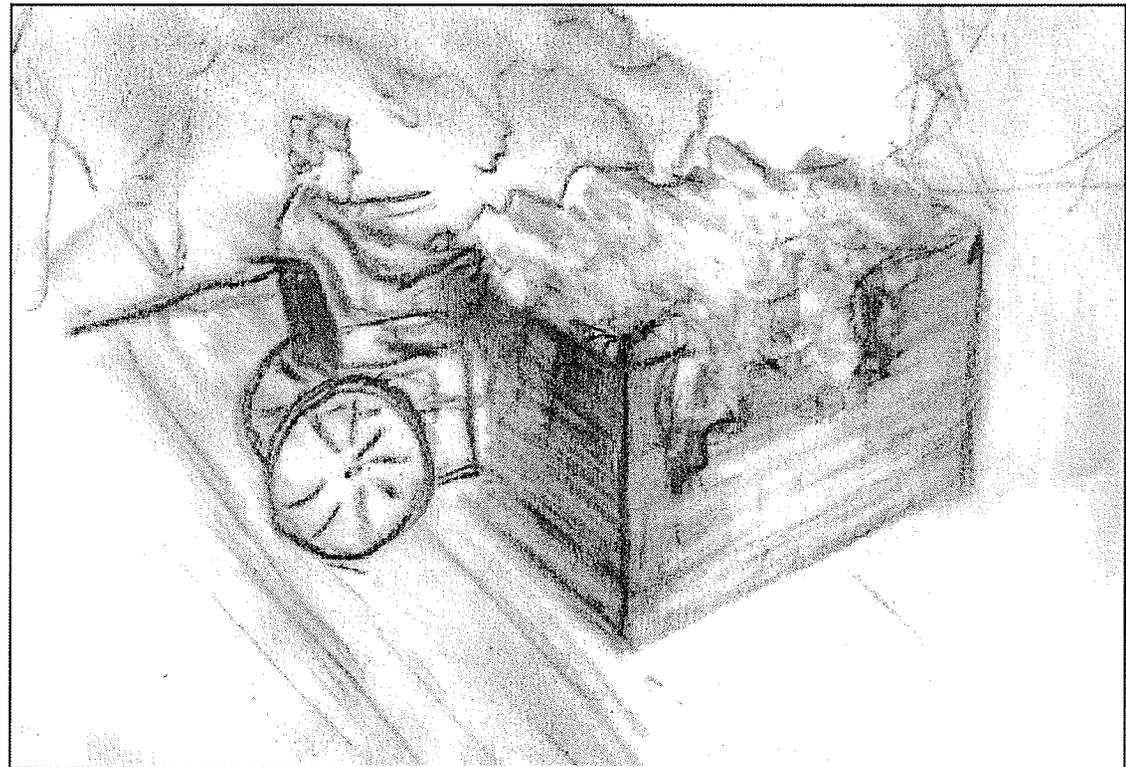


Figure 26

they can go to think rather than to see or listen nature.

Some people need to spend more time with family and friends and a landscaped setting where there is sufficient room for many people to gather for special events or just for a visit is important. This is especially true for certain cultures where the number of visitors is very important and comforting (Von Bommel, personal communication, 2005). The needs of this group will coincide with other residents' need for a small private space.

Many people who are not ill believe that people who are need to be excluded from the neighbourhood sights, sounds, and activities. It is important to remember that for many people the activities within a neighbourhood are exactly what they need in order to feel part of the living community until they die rather than being secluded from it (Von Bommel, personal communication, 2005). Studies have shown that for some people this need is great and seclusion from society can result in a condition referred to as social death (Chidester, 1990). Seclusion can actually increase a persons sense of needing to die so as not to be a bother to anyone. Therefore, depending on the location of the hospice, it is important to have part of it, when possible, within the active community around it. Depending on the length of time

a person would be staying at the hospice, some of the residents will want to walk or be wheeled around the property, some people may want to watch the world go by from a front porch.

When healthcare staff were asked what the most important features the therapeutic garden would have for their patients, socialization was the most important, followed in equal place by leisure, recreation and psychological rehabilitation (Cooper- Marcus & Barnes, 1999). They further state that by labeling



Figure 27

a garden as a “healing” garden, “the garden should have therapeutic or beneficial effects on the great majority of its users.” (Cooper Marcus & Barnes, 1999, p. 30). Realizing that whatever I design should address as many of the garden visitors needs as possible. I also realize that there is no way to account for every possible scenario. What factors would encourage a user to remain in a therapeutic garden? Staff responded: enclosed seating areas and pleasant views. Patients responded: pleasant views from garden and ward, the ability to observe seasonal changes in plant material, watching birds, and fish.



Figure 29

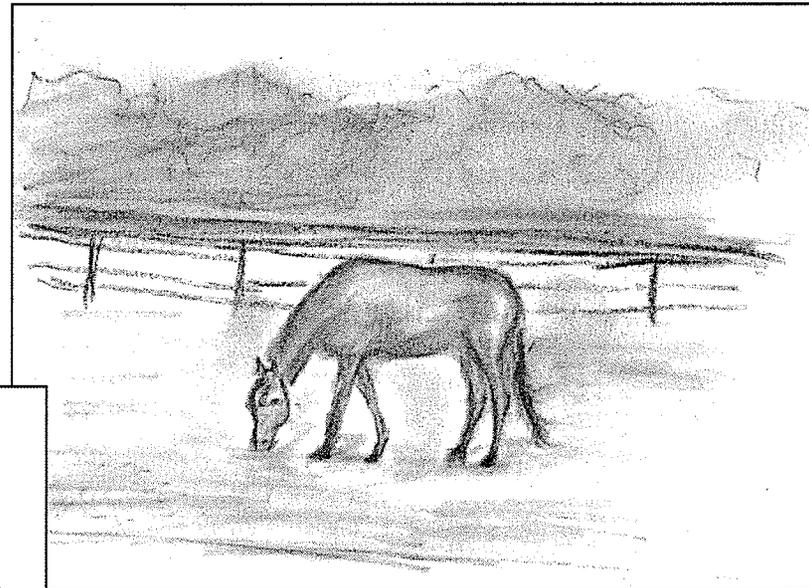


Figure 28

It's conceivable "a garden could win an ASLA award and not only not cure anybody, but actually make a significant proportion of the patients sicker than if they had no garden at all" (Thompson, 2000, p. 54). According to environmental psychologist Roger Ulrich, a garden "should contain prominent amounts of real nature, content such as green vegetation, flowers, and water." There is no way to predict every possible scenario that will occur in the garden setting (Thompson, 2000, p. 55).

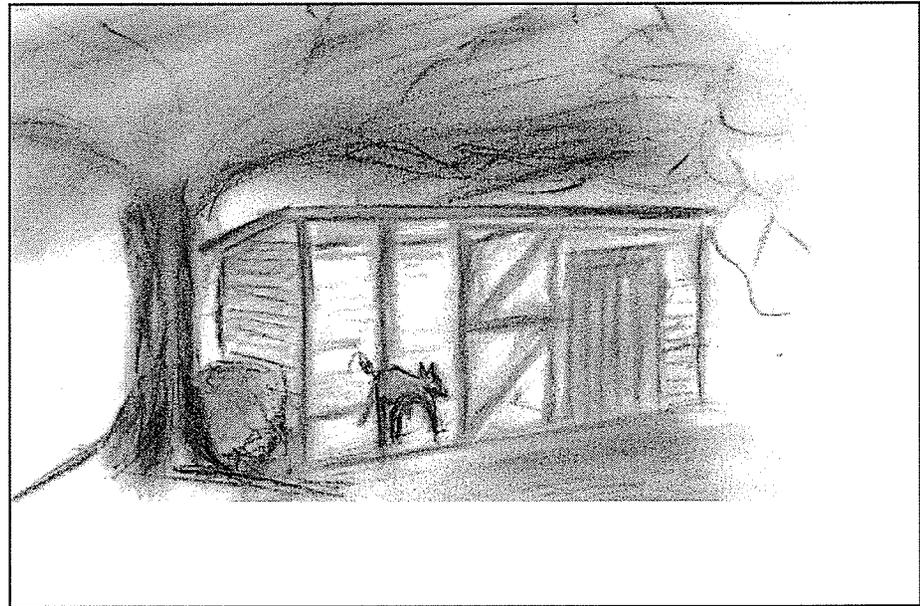


Figure 30



Figure 31

I also realize there is no one perfect or true response to a design problem. Julia Cameron, (1992) author of *The Artist's Way*, writes in her bestselling book that the pursuit of perfection is an empty and troublesome endeavour for a person focusing on creative pursuits. I allow myself to experiment freely with the design possibilities knowing that they may or may not become part of the final product but they are part of the process.

The Door

The door swings open.

You look in. It's dark in there. Most likely spiders,

Nothing you want. You feel scared.

The door swings closed.

The full moon shines. It's full of delicious juice.

You buy a purse. The dance is nice.

The door opens and swings closed so quickly you don't notice.

The sun comes out. You have swift breakfasts with your husband, who is still thin.

You wash the dishes. You love your children.

You read a book. You go to the movies. It rains moderately.

The door swings open.

You look in. Why does this keep happening now? Is there a secret?

The door swings closed.

The snow falls. You clear the walk while breathing heavily.

It's not as easy as once. Your children telephone, sometimes.

The roof needs fixing; You keep yourself busy. The spring arrives.

The door swings open.

It's dark in there with many steps going down.

But what is that shining? Is it water?

The door swings closed.

The dog has died. This happened before.

You got another. Not this time though.

Where is your husband?

You gave up the garden. It became too much.

At night there are blankets. Nevertheless you are wakeful.

The door swings open.

Oh God of hinges, God of long voyages, You have kept faith.

It's dark in there. You confined yourself to the darkness.

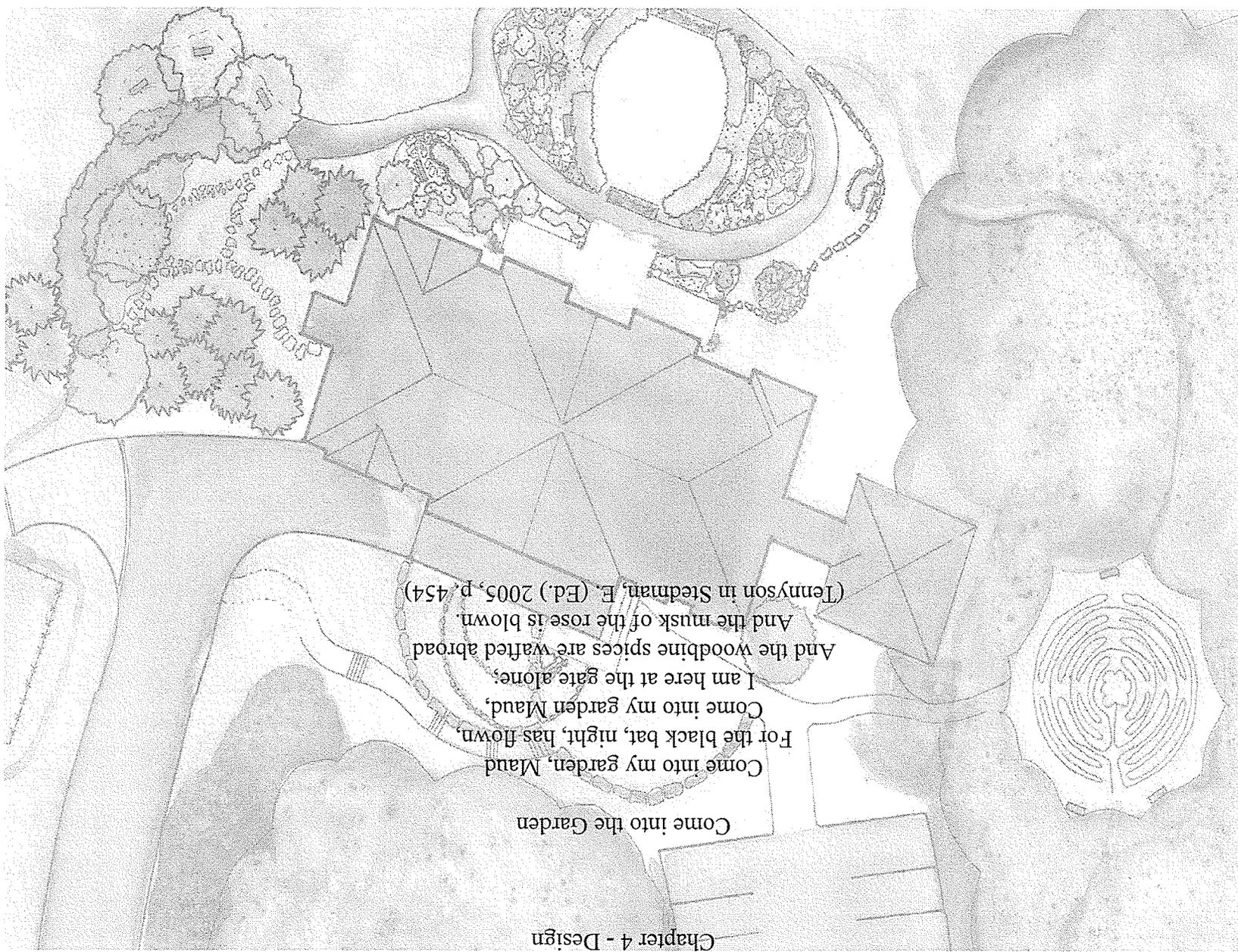
You step in.

The door swings closed.

(Margaret Atwood, 2007)



Figure 32



Come into the Garden
Come into my garden, Maud
For the black bat, night, has flown,
Come into my garden Maud,
I am here at the gate alone;
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad
And the musk of the rose is blown.
(Tennyson in Stedman, E. (Ed.) 2005, p.454)

Design Intervention

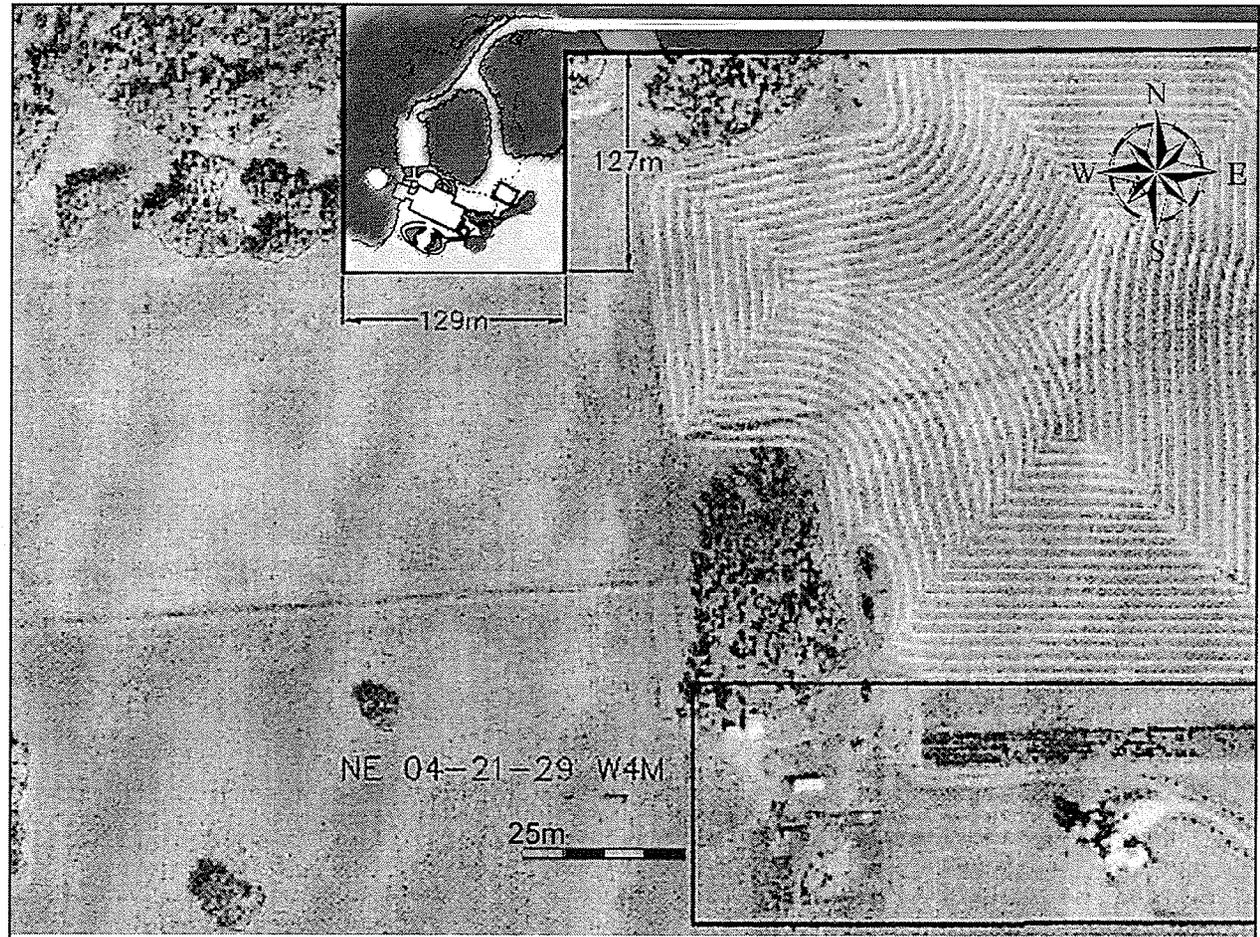


Figure 33

Table of Landscape Elements

PRIMARY PATHWAYS				
<i>LOCATION</i>	<i>FORM</i>	<i>DIMENSIONS</i>	<i>MATERIALITY</i>	<i>ASSOCIATED FEATURES</i>
South Garden	Elliptical	2.5m Wide	Smooth Stamped Concrete	Waterfall Retaining Walls Seating
Terrace Garden	Semi-circular	2m Wide	Poured Concrete Exposed Aggregate River Rock Risers	Seating Front Porch Large Block Sandstone Retaining Walls Terraced Gardens
SECONDARY PATHWAY				
Throughout site	Winding	400m x 2m	Stabilized Crushed Sandstone	Forest Labyrinth Screaming Space Animal Boarding Area
SOUTH GARDEN				
	Ellipse	25m x 12.5m	Trees, Shrubs and Perennials. Hedges. Smooth Stamped Concrete and Arbours. See page 63 for complete list of species	Public Gathering Space Semi-Private Space

Figure 34

<i>LOCATION</i>	<i>FORM</i>	<i>DIMENSIONS</i>	<i>MATERIALITY</i>	<i>ASSOCIATED FEATURES</i>
ENTRANCE GARDEN	Circle Section		Arbour, Stamped Concrete Path, <i>Acer ginnala</i> , <i>Clematis macropetala</i> , <i>Rosa woodsii</i> . See page 68 for complete list of species.	Seating
STAFF GARDEN	Semi - Circular	10m x 10m	Benches, Sandstone Pavers, <i>Prunus maackii</i> , <i>Syringa vulgaris</i> 'Charles Joy', <i>Pinus sylvestris</i> . See page 71 for complete list of species.	Manicured Lawn, Seating
SCREAMING SPACE	Long and Narrow	4m x 15	Cedar Bench, Crushed Sandstone Pathway, <i>Malus 'Thunderchild'</i> , <i>Picea glauca</i> , <i>Pinus sylvestris</i> , <i>Populus tremuloides</i> , <i>Prunus maackii</i> , <i>Prunus virginiana melanocarpa</i>	Retreat Space for all Hospice Users
RETAINING WALL AT CULVERT	Crowned Roadway	400mm culvert Slope of ditch 3%	Single wall corrugated culvert Sandstone boulders ~ 750mm x 400mm	Entrance <i>Cornus alba</i> , <i>Elaeagnus commutata</i>
PARKING	Aisle	18 standard 2.5m x 6m stalls 2 handicapped 2.5m x 4m stalls	Asphalt	Adjacent To Entrance Garden
APPROACH SIGNAGE	Monument	1m x .5m	Solar Panel, for Lighting	Adjacent to 32 nd Street at Entrance

Figure 35

SITE GRADING AND DRAINAGE
High Point West Low Point East at 32 nd Street
High point 62.5m at west edge of site. Low point at Eastern boundary of site 55.5m adjacent to municipal ditch.
The site drains from west to east and has a change in elevation of 6.5m over 390m. Ponding occurs at low points within the Aspen forest stand. During heavy rain events runoff from the field is diverted to the municipal ditch. Positive drainage is existing in the natural topography of the land from west to east.

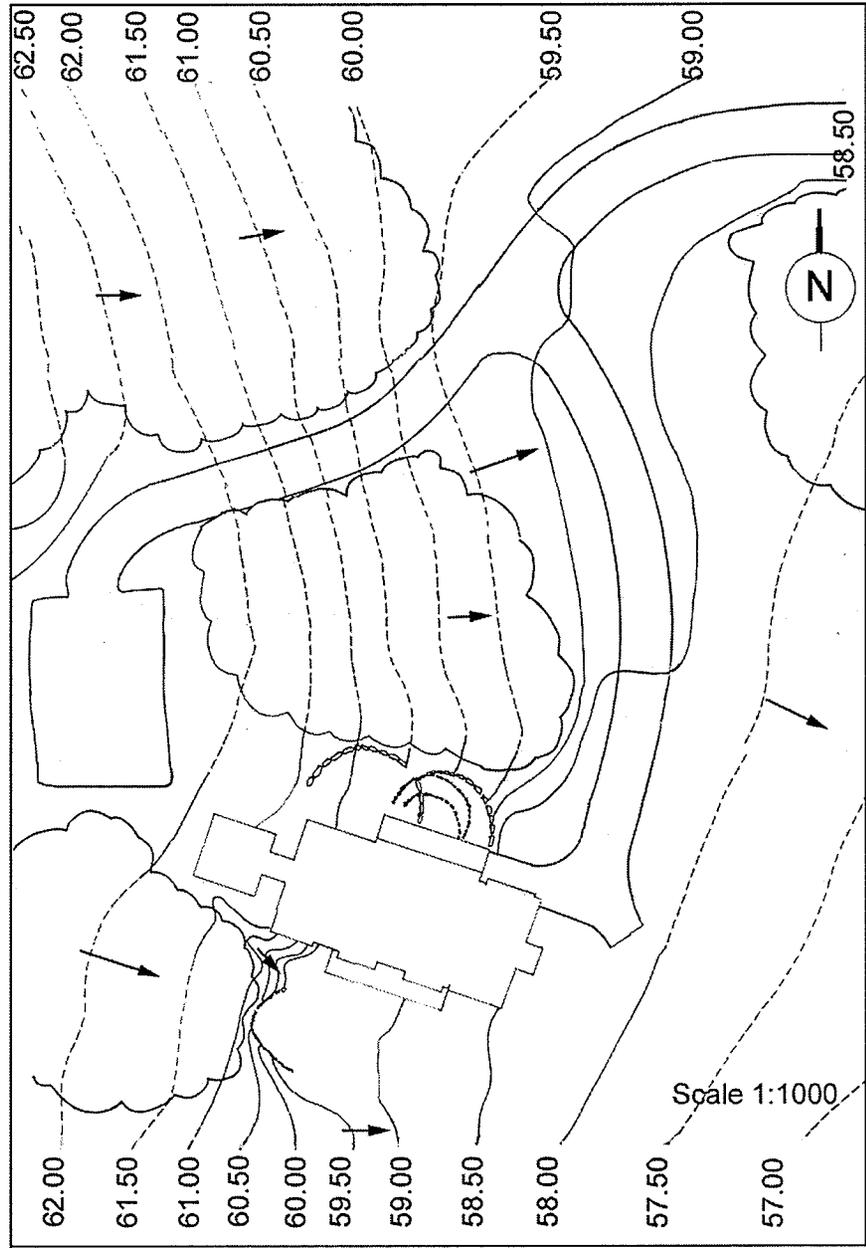


Figure 36

Design Considerations	
Familiar Landscape	Familiar materials have been used extensively on the site. Sandstone retaining walls and crushed sandstone pathways incorporate materials that are widely used in Okotoks and surrounding areas. Plantings have incorporated both native species that are found in the Foothills region, and hybrid species that are common in the residential garden setting. Textures commonly experienced in the Foothills are replicated in the grassland planting at the southern edge of the site. This provides a visual frame on the horizon and the Foothills beyond. The rear garden is planted with intensely coloured species. Red and purple blooms provide a harmony of complimentary colour combinations. The site furnishings are domestic in scale with moveable furniture, this helps to make the grounds feel residential and not institutional.
Garden Use	The garden provides the user with opportunities for both quiet contemplation and active participation. Seating in the south garden is provided in places of activity and in areas where solitude is desired. The choice in engaging with others or withdrawing to a semi-private area is available. Garden design incorporates spaces that can accommodate both large gatherings and private or solitary use. Benches and moveable seating are both available.
Placement of Seating	Seating engages views and provides a sense of security. When placed where the user can have their back toward a wall or the trunk of a tree a sense of shelter is provided.
Senses	Areas that are stimulating and areas that are designed to be restful to the senses are incorporated.
Staff Retreat	A separate retreat space for staff members is provided.
Extend the Season	Areas of the garden that take advantage of existing microclimate are incorporated. Designing additional areas, in which shelter from the wind and exposure to the sun are calculated, will provide the user with greater opportunity to spend time outdoors comfortably.
Walkways	Considering that many of the garden visitors will have greatly varying degrees of mobility the choice to go for a brief walk or being wheeled around in a wheelchair is available. The walkways are designed to accommodate wheelchairs and gurneys.
All Ages	Design accommodates people of all ages. Children will spend time at the hospice. Activities such as watching fish, birds or playing on a swing can interest both children and adults.

Figure 37

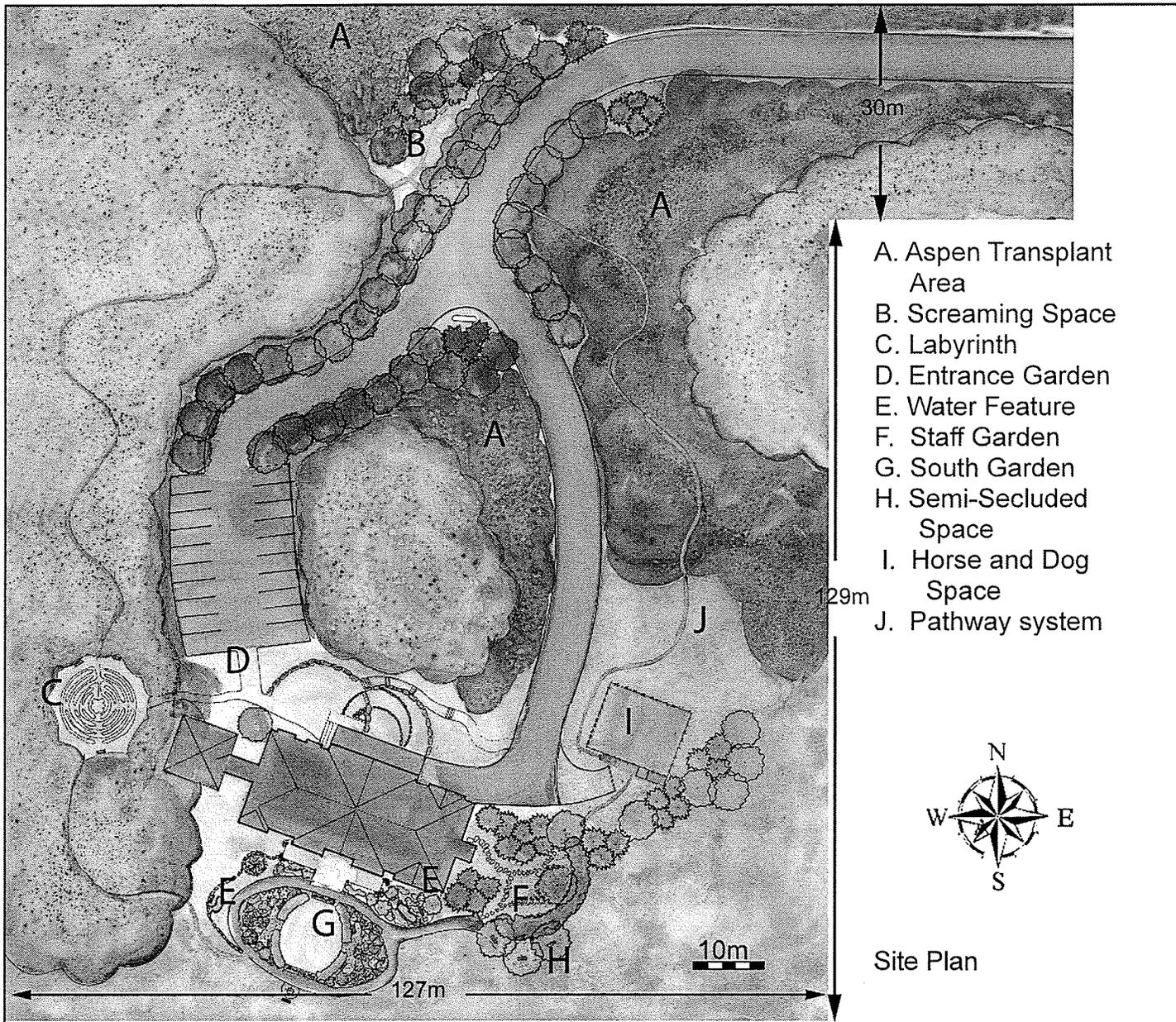
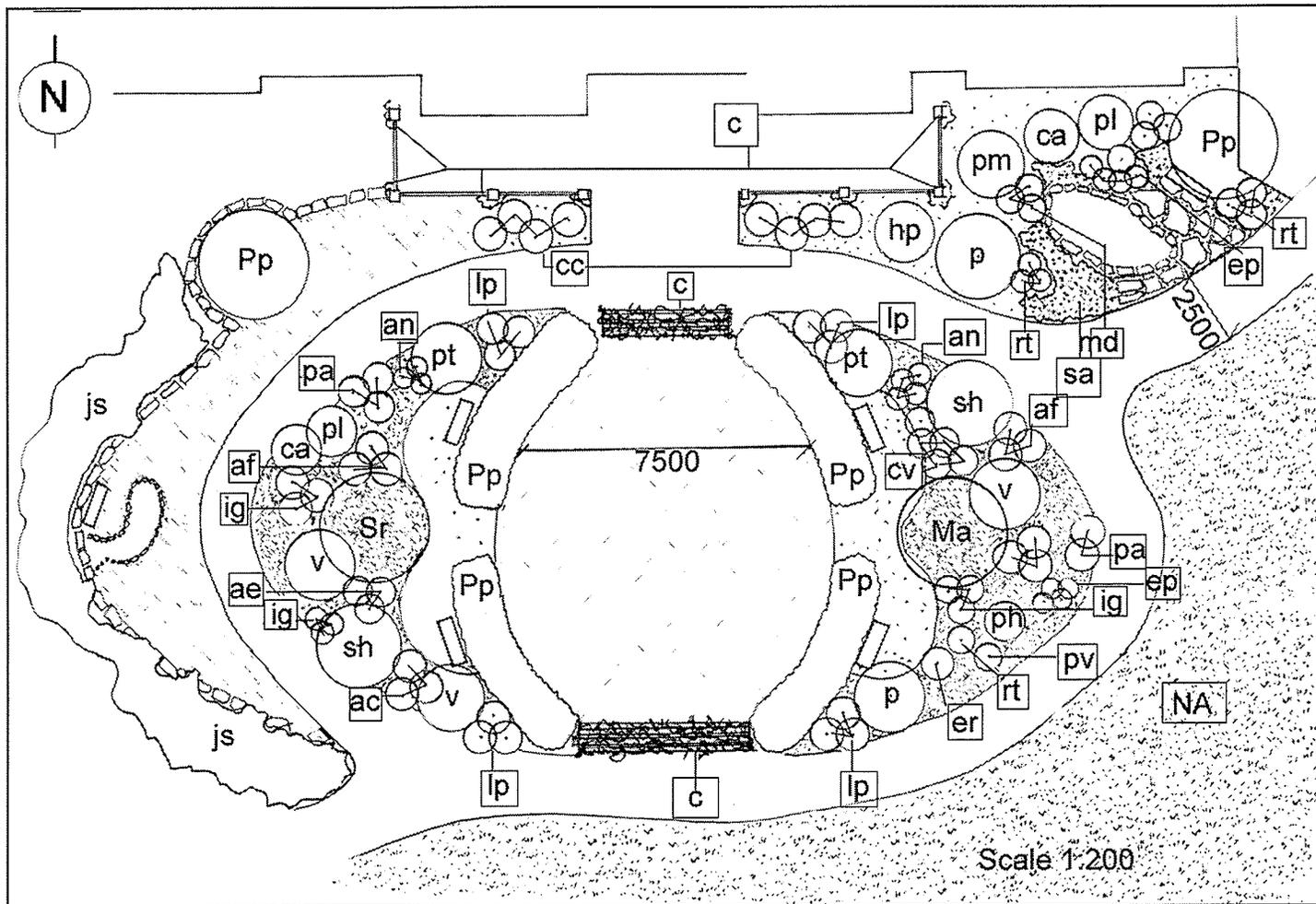


Figure 38



South Garden Planting Plan

Figure 39

The South Garden

The South Garden is the main garden. This viewing/walk-in garden has a direct southern exposure. The central courtyard can be used for large functions like fundraising or other social gatherings and semi-private functions such as living funerals. The Spruce, *Picea pungens*, hedge acts as a windbreak and increases the sense of intimacy in the garden. It is configured to provide the user with the choice to be in direct sun or, on the opposite side of the garden, be in the shade. The stamped concrete pathway is an appropriate size for a short walk or be wheeled around the garden. A bench is placed against the retaining wall featuring a view to the pond, the garden and the panoramic view of the skyline, opening to the south and east while giving the seated the feeling that they are in a semi-enclosed space.

Species List for South Garden

Symbol	Botanical Name	Common Name
af	<i>Achillea filipendulina</i>	Fernleaf Yarrow
an	<i>Aconitum napellus</i>	Monkshood
ac	<i>Allium caeruleum</i>	Blue Globe Onion
cv	<i>Catananche caerulea</i>	Cupids Dart
cc	<i>Chrysanthemum coccineum</i>	Painted Daisy
ca	<i>Cornus albus</i> 'Siberica'	Siberian Coral Dogwood
er	<i>Echinops ritro</i>	Small Globe Thistle
hp	<i>Hydrangea paniculata</i> 'Grandiflora'	Pee Gee Hydrangea
ig	<i>Iris germanica</i> 'Sapphire Hills'	Bearded Iris
ja	<i>Juniperus sabina</i> 'Calgary Carpet'	Calgary Carpet Juniper
L	<i>Lupinus</i> "Camelot Red"	Lupin
Ma	<i>Malus x 'Almey'</i>	Almey Rosybloom Crabapple
Md	<i>Monarda didyma</i> 'Panorama Red'	Bee Balm
ph	<i>Paeonia lactiflora</i>	Double Peony
rt	<i>Perevskia atriplicifolia</i>	Russian Sage
pl	<i>Philadelphus lewissii</i> 'Waterton'	Waterton Mockorange
p	<i>Philadelphus x</i>	Mock Orange
Pp	<i>Picea pungens</i>	Colorado Blue Spruce
pt	<i>Prunus pennsylvanica</i>	Pin Cherry
pm	<i>Prunus triloba</i> 'multipla'	Double Flowering Plum
md	<i>Silene acaulis</i>	Moss Champion
sr	<i>Syringa reticulata</i>	Japanese Tree Lilac
sh	<i>Syringa x hyacinthiflora</i> 'Sister Justina'	Hyacinth Flowered Lilac
v	<i>Viburnum trilobum</i>	American Highbush Cranberry
NA	Naturalized Area	
	<i>Agropyron subsecundum</i>	AEC Hillcrest Awned Wheatgrass
	<i>Bromus ciliatus</i>	Fringed Bromegrass
	<i>Dechampsia caespitosa</i>	Nortran Tufted Hairgrass
	<i>Elymus innovatus</i>	Hairy Wildrye
	<i>Elymus lanceolatus</i> ssp. <i>Lanceolatus</i>	Elbee Northern Wheatgrass
	<i>Poa palustris</i>	Fowl Bluegrass
	<i>Trisetum spicatum</i>	ARC Sentinel Spike Trisetum

Figure 40

The Spruce hedges act as walls separating the courtyard from the adjacent gardens, to the east and west. These are crescent shaped fragrant gardens and semi-private spaces. One can walk through one of these gardens from the centre space nearby, yet feel a sense of privacy while enjoying the sights, smells and sounds of the garden. The South Garden is located directly adjacent to the veranda to allow for ease of viewing. There are overhead heaters installed in the veranda so the space is comfortable in inclement weather. This garden features a variety of trees, shrubs, and perennials, detailed list on page 62. Annuals will be used sparingly and close to the veranda to make maintenance and planting convenient for those that may wish to make a personal addition to the garden.

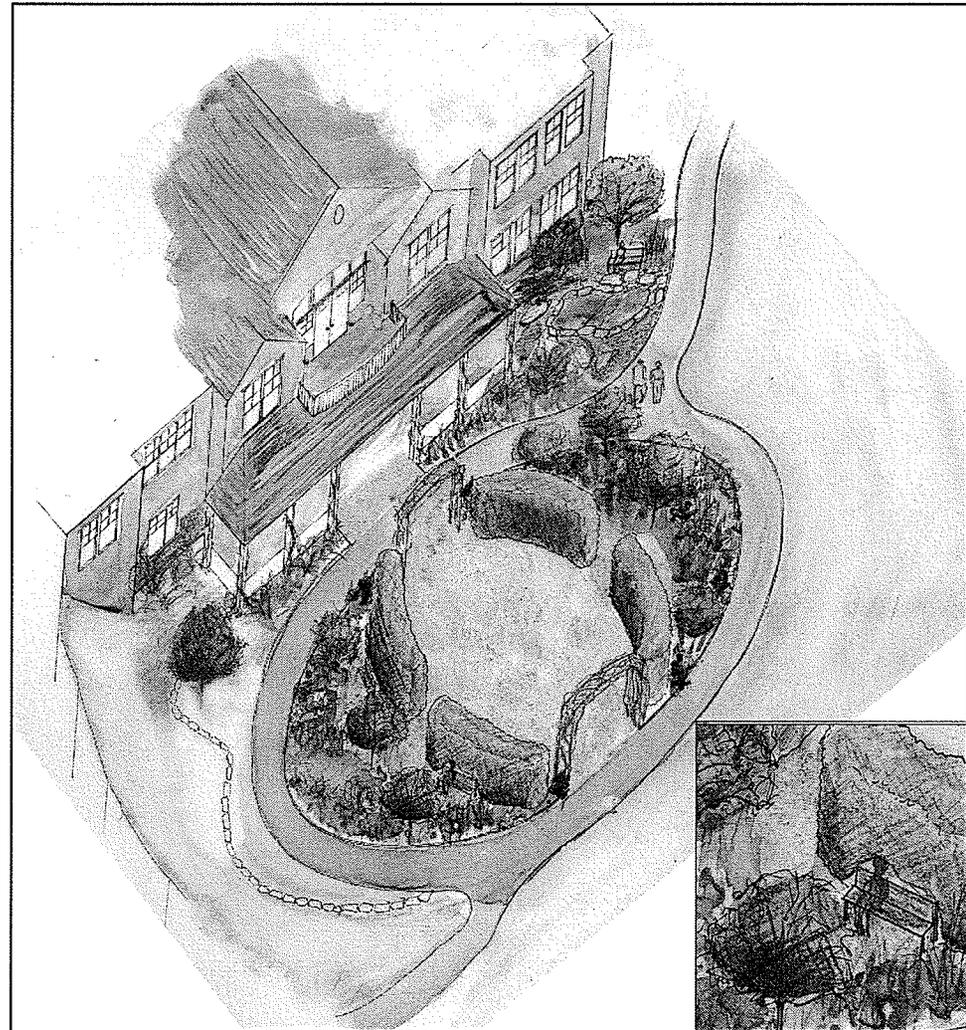


Figure 41



Figure 42

A small pocket garden with a pond set beneath a patient window allows a visitor to feel close to the patient and still take a break outside. It features a bird feeder. The principle species in this garden are Dogwood, *Cornus alba*, Double Flowering Plum, *Prunus triloba* 'Multipla,' Bee Balm, *Monarda didyma*, Mock Orange, *Philadelphus x*, and Russian Sage, *Perevskia atriplicifolia*. A bench is located to provide the user with a relaxing view to the pond, the edge of the main garden and to the prairie beyond.

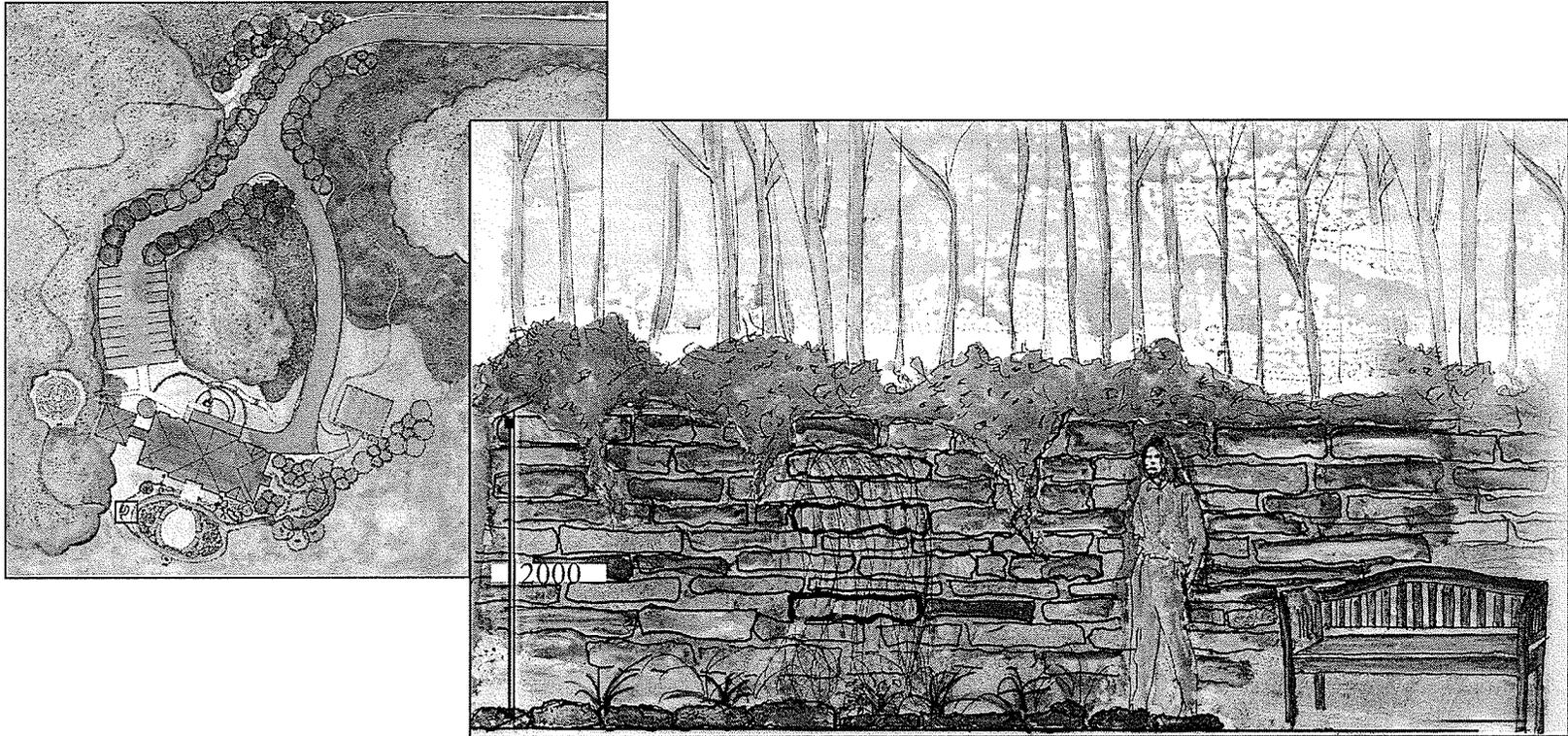


Figure 43

Set to the far western edge of this garden is a sandstone retaining wall with a water feature. This space can be used for relaxation and contemplation. The sound of the water masks sounds that may be coming from other parts of the garden. The pond at the base holds fish. This would be a likely place for children to find entertainment or fascination and a sense of escape from the adult(s) they are with while still being close enough to the building that their caregivers can see them. The water feature incorporates both a moving water and a still pond. The principle planting on the retaining wall is Calgary Carpet Juniper, *Juniperus sabina*. “The sound of water in the garden can expedite patients and loved ones in completing “unfinished business” by adding the needed blanket of privacy” (Healy, 1986, p. 20).

Entrance Garden and Terrace Garden Planting Plan

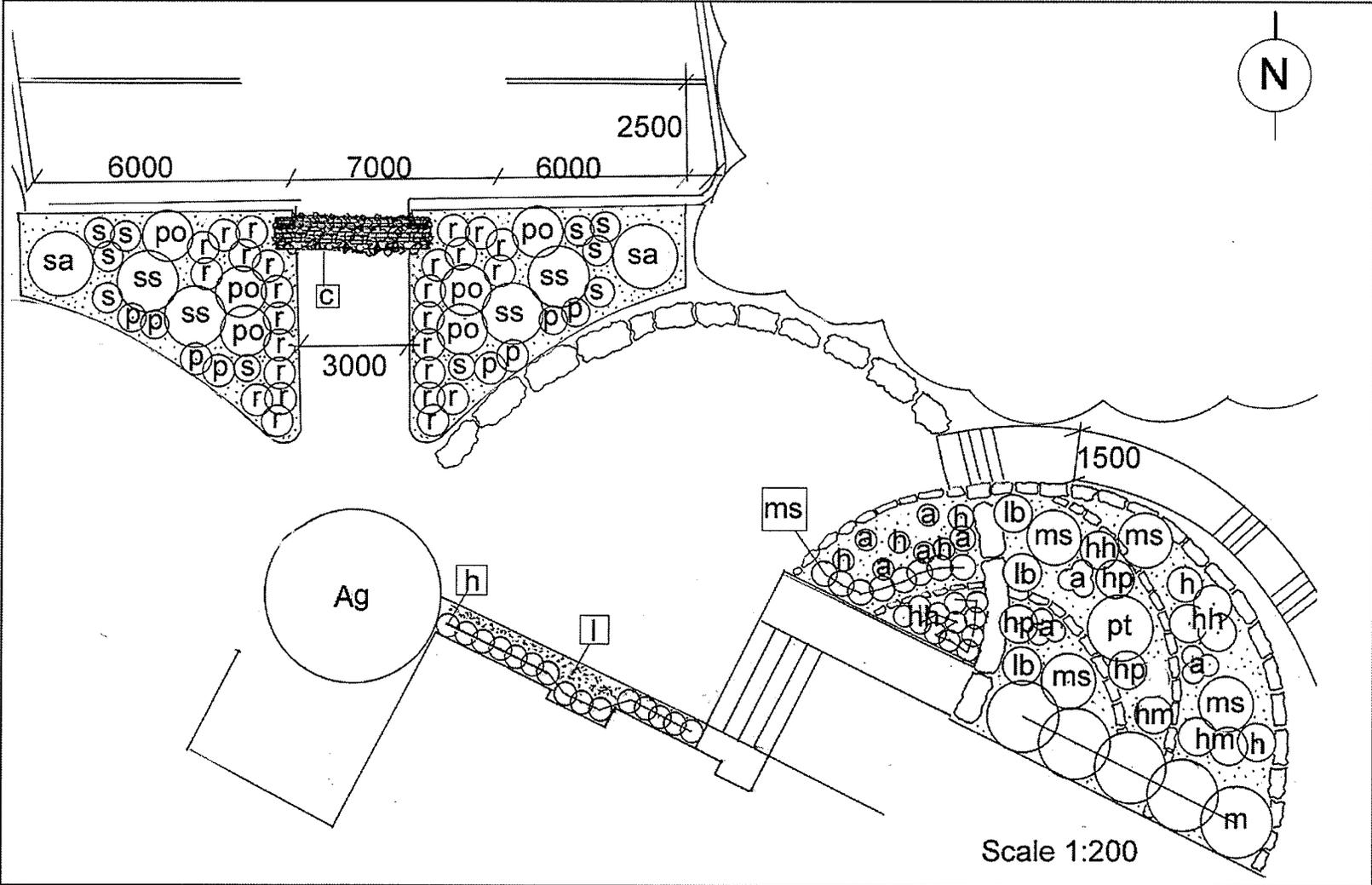


Figure 44

Principle Species for Entrance Garden and Terrace Garden

Symbol	Botanical Name	Common Name	Type	Quantity
Ag	<i>Acer ginnala</i>	Amur Maple	80mm	1
a	<i>Aquilegia</i>	Columbine	1 Gallon	5
c	<i>Clematis macropetala</i>	Clematis Big Petal	1 Gallon	4
h	<i>Hosta 'Francee'</i>	Hosta	1Gallon	20
hh	<i>Hemerocallis x hybrida 'Hyperion'</i>	Daylily	1 Gallon	16
hp	<i>Hydrangea paniculata 'Grandiflora'</i>	Pee Gee Hydrangea	1 Gallon	3
l	<i>Lamium maculatum 'Beacon Silver'</i>	Lamium	1 Gallon	12
lb	<i>Lonicera x brownie 'Dropmore Scarlet Trumpet'</i>	Dropmore Honeysuckle	1 Gallon	3
ms	<i>Matteuccia stuthiopteris</i>	Fern	1 Gallon	12
po	<i>Physocarpus opulifolius 'Diablo'</i>	Diablo Ninebark	1 Gallon	6
p	<i>Potentilla fruticosa 'Pink Beauty'</i>	Pink Beauty Potentilla	1 Gallon	8
pt	<i>Prunus tomentosa</i>	Nanking Cherry	1 Gallon	1
r	<i>Rosa woodsii</i>	Rose	1 Gallon	28
s	<i>Salix brachycarpa</i>	Blue Fox Willow	1 Gallon	10
sa	<i>Sheperdia argentea</i>	Buffaloberry	1 Gallon	2
ss	<i>Sorbaria sorbifolia</i>	Ashleaf Spirea	1 Gallon	4
m	<i>Syringa meyeri</i>	Meyer Lilac	1 Gallon	5

Figure 45

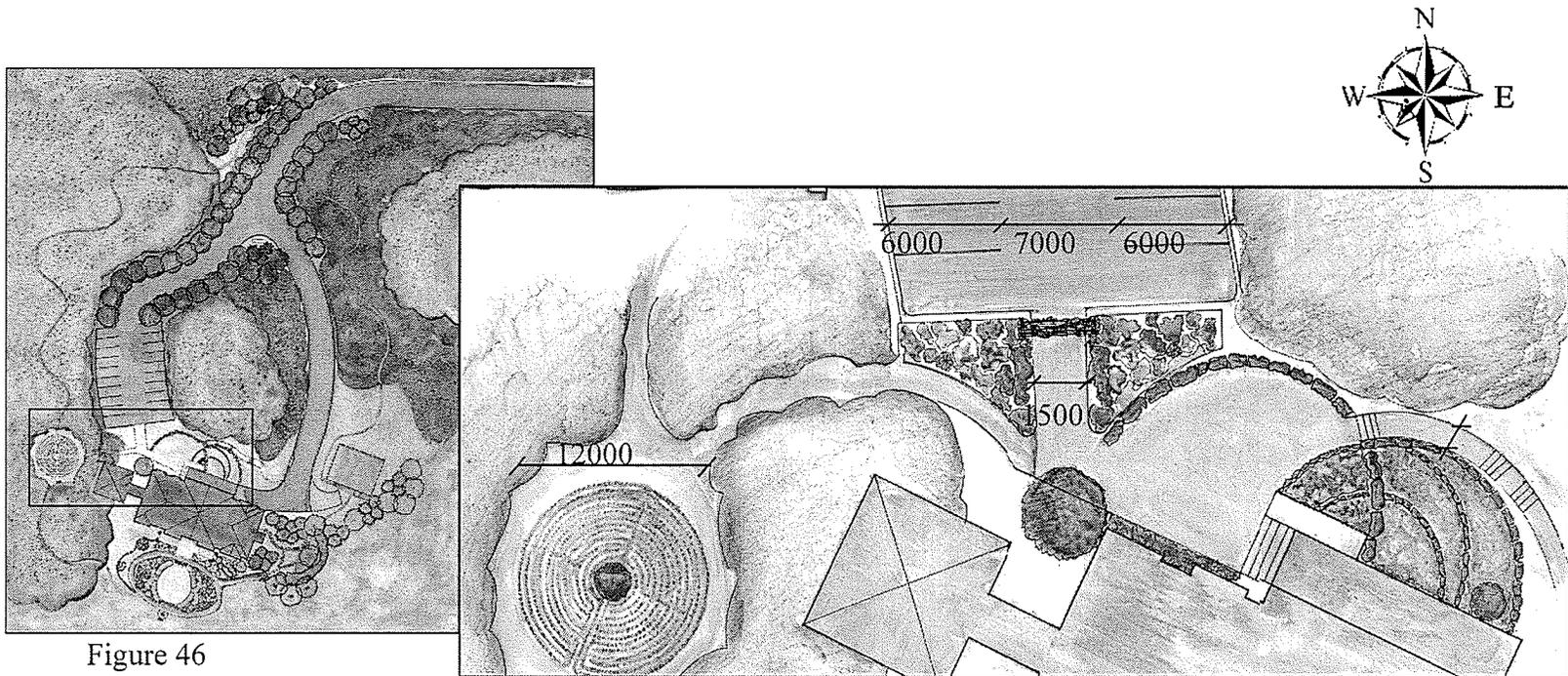


Figure 46

Arriving at the hospice parking lot, the threshold to the entrance is marked by a Clematis covered arbour. The principle plantings at the entrance garden are native Roses, *Rosa woodsii*, Blue Fox Willow, *Salix brachycarpa* and Big Petal Clematis, *Clematis macropetala*, on the arbour. These elements act as a threshold feature when moving from the parking lot to the front entrance. The parking lot is designed to City of Calgary specifications providing ample room for maneuvering in the lot and a parking stall size that people are accustomed to using in this area. These guidelines are required for development permit application approval. The end of this earth toned stamped concrete pathway is marked by a large Amur Maple, *Acer ginnala*. This species was chosen for its familiar leaf form, fall colour and the distinctive seedpods. From the tree, one can turn east and proceed to the entrance of the building or turn west and go to the Aspen forest, stop at the labyrinth, or continue walking the informal pathway system. The portion of pathway that leads to the labyrinth is crushed sandstone, both materials allow for wheelchair access. The difference in paving materials serves to differentiate the main entrance of the hospice from the secondary pathway system.

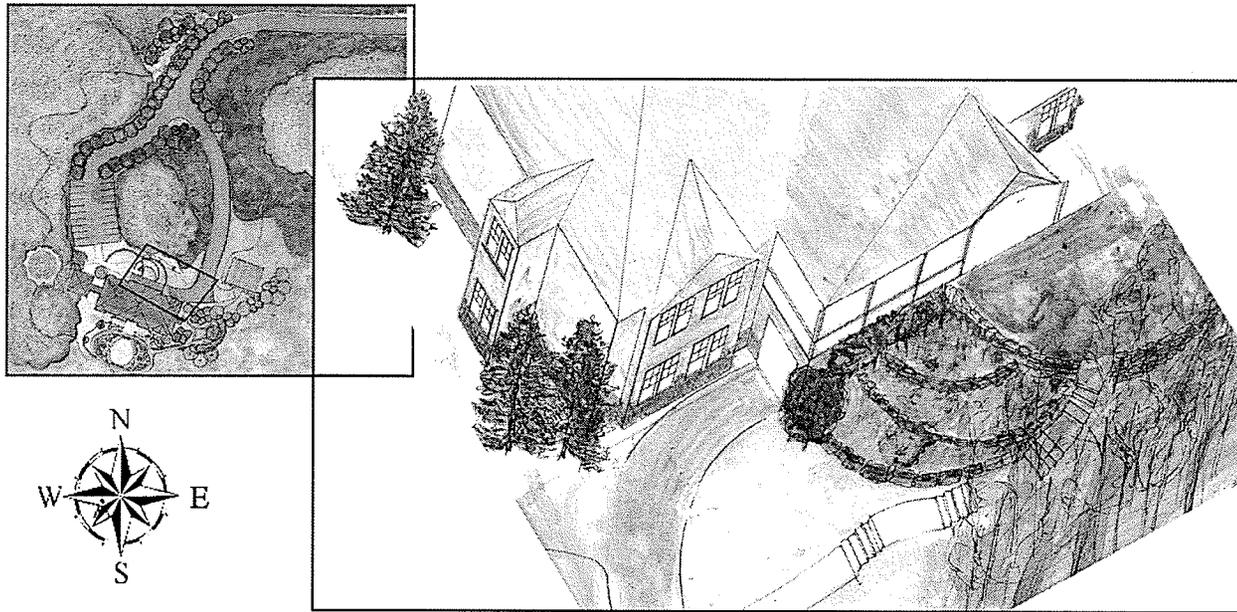
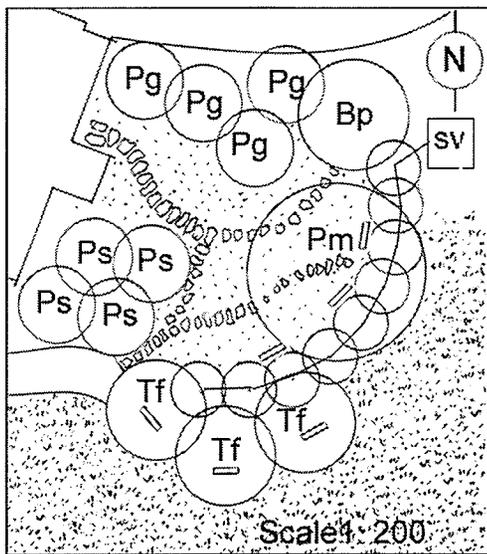


Figure 47

The front patio area features a terraced garden that accommodates the steeply sloping site. The stairs are designed to offer access to the east side of the site. Due to the gradient, a wheelchair accessible ramp could not be provided at the front of the building. The rear garden in contrast does not require a ramp, as this is where the walkout basement is located. For those using a wheelchair, direct access to eastern portion of the site is gained via the interior elevator at the doorway located at the east side of the building. The upper terrace is paved with earth toned stamped concrete. The plantings at this portion of the garden are species that favour full or partial shade. Principle species planted at the foundation are Hosta, *Hosta spp.* and Lamium, *Aquilegia*. This portion of the site is sheltered from the north wind by the Aspen stand that is directly adjacent to these gardens. The principle plantings on the terrace garden are Fern, *Matteuccia stuthiopteris*, and Lilac, *Syringa meyeri*. The patio features containers plants and moveable furniture. This area of the site is north facing, the sunlight here is in the morning and later in the evenings making it an excellent retreat space from the midday summer sun.

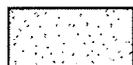


Symbol	Botanical Name	Common Name	Type	Size	Quantity
Bp	<i>Betula Pendula</i>	European White Birch	B & B	80 mm	1
Pg	<i>Picea glauca</i>	White Spruce	B & B	80 mm	4
Ps	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	Scots Pine	B & B	80 mm	4
Pm	<i>Prunus maackii</i>	Amur Cherry	B & B	80 mm	1
sv	<i>Syringa vulgaris</i> 'Charles Joy	Lilac		1 Gallon	9
Tv	<i>Tilia flavescens</i> 'Dropmore'	Dropmore Linden	B & B	80 mm	3

Legend



Naturalized Area



Mown Grass Nursery Grown Sod

naturalized area: Install Native Grass Seed Mix at 30kg/Ha

Botanical Name	Common Name	Percent of Seed Mix
<i>Agropyron subsecundum</i>	AEC Hillcrest Awned Wheatgrass	15%
<i>Bromus ciliatus</i>	Fringed Bromegrass	18%
<i>Dechampsia caespitosa</i>	Nortran Tufted Hairgrass	15%
<i>Elymus innovatus</i>	Hairy Wildrye	15%
<i>Elymus lanceolatus ssp. Lanceolatus</i>	Elbee Northern Wheatgrass	10%
<i>Poa palustris</i>	Fowl Bluegrass	15%
<i>Trisetum spicatum</i>	ARC Sentinel Spike Trisetum	12%

Staff Garden and Species List

Figure 48

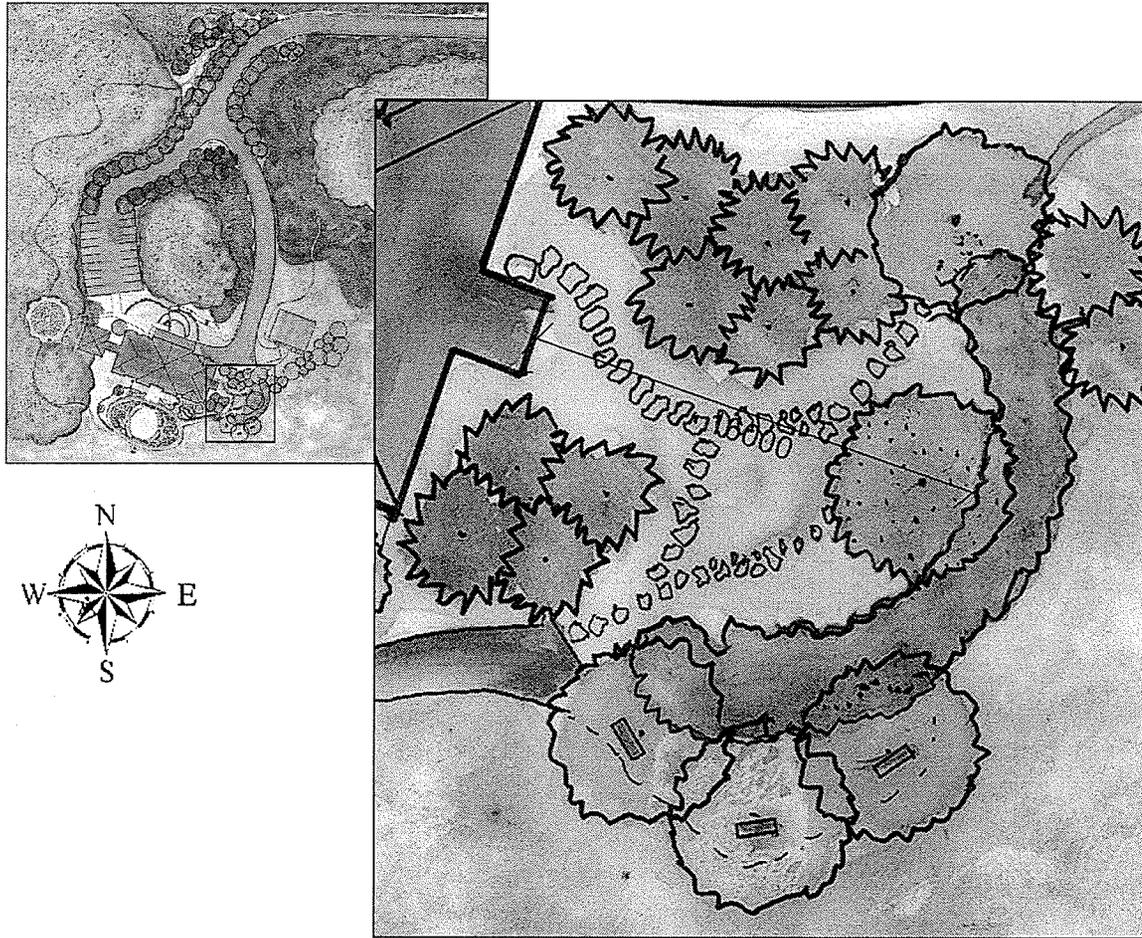


Figure 49

The staff garden is located at the southeastern portion of the site. This enclosed area can be accessed from the building and via the pathway system, which connects the north and south edges of the garden. The semi-circular Lilac hedge, *Syringa vulgaris* 'Charles Joy', and White Spruce, *Picea glauca*, plantings separate this space from the more active areas of the site. Natural sandstone pavers are set at grade. Benches are conveniently located to offer choices in viewing both on the inside of the staff garden, and on the south side of the hedge.

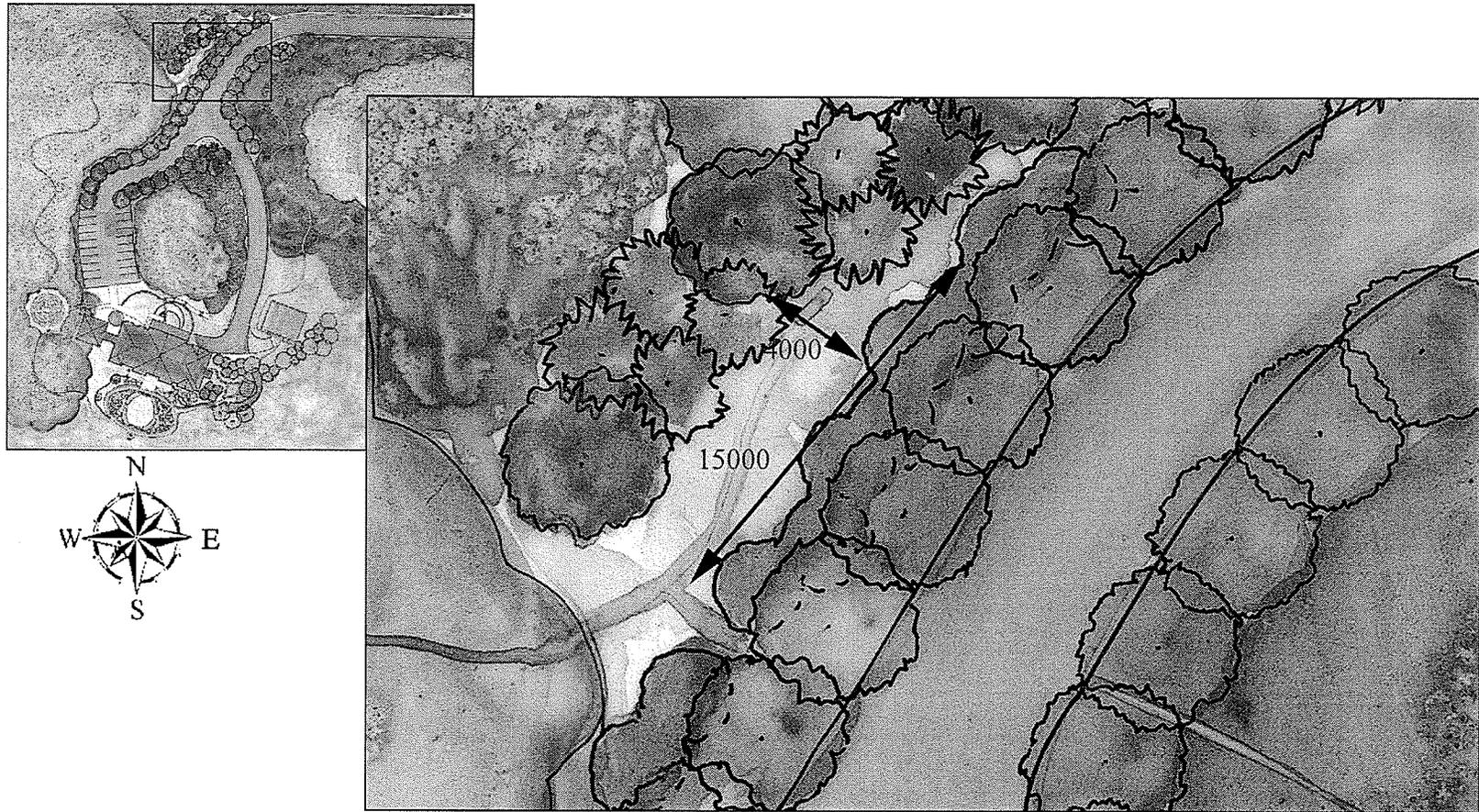


Figure 50

The Screaming Space is located at the northernmost edge of the site. As the name suggests this space has been situated here to provide isolation for those who are seeking privacy to scream, cry or just be alone. The plant material here is Thunderchild Crab Apple, *Malus* 'Thunderchild', Chokecherry, *Prunus Virginiana Melanocarpa*, and Scots Pine, *Pinus sylvestris*. These plants are chosen to provide a variety of colour and texture. This plant material also provides shelter from the wind and screening from the rest of the site providing the user with an opportunity to be alone or rest after walking here.

Screaming Space Planting Plan and Species List

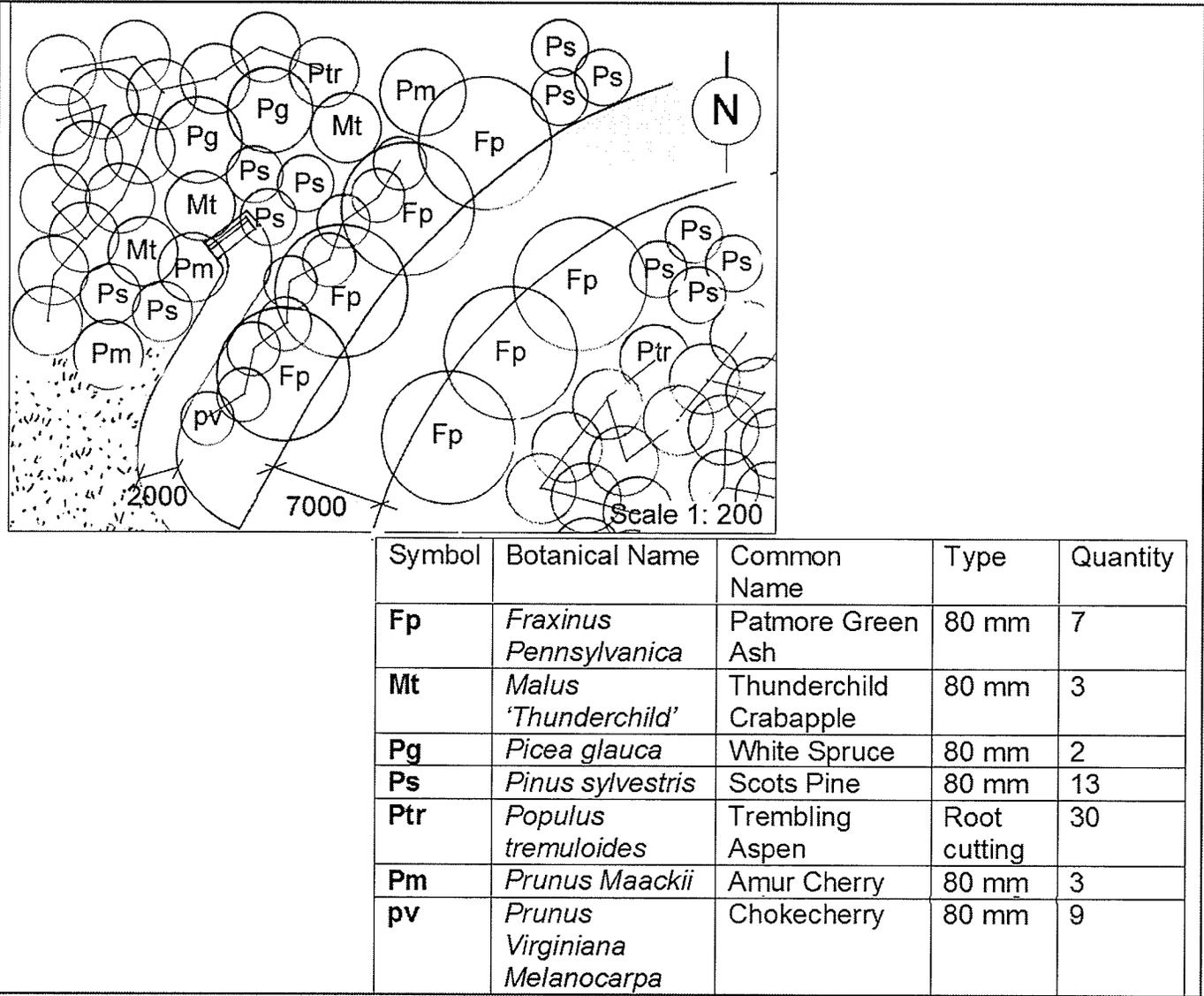


Figure 51



Figure 52

The site is designed to accommodate horses and dogs. The corral is large enough that grazing is convenient. The manure can be left in place or used, when mature, in the garden. The turning radius of the loading zone easily receives a horse trailer or a fire truck. This portion of the turf is reinforced to allow for both grass and the weight of a vehicle without damaging the turf. Plantings here are native species, including Balsam Fir, *Abies balsamea*, Whitebark Pine, *Pinus bungeana*, and Balsam Poplar, *Populus balsamifera*. These species were chosen not only for their beauty, but also for their ability to provide shade, resistance to disease, and ease of maintenance.

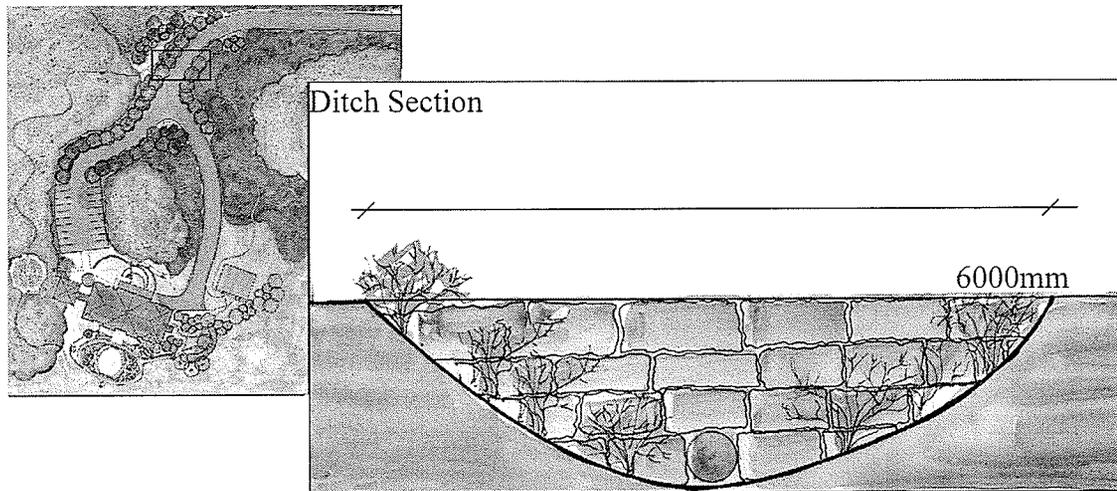


Figure 53

The hospice building is approximately 580m from the sounds of 32nd Street traffic. Decorative sandstone retaining walls detail the culvert buried beneath the road. This sandstone wall visually and physically reinforces the connection to the municipal roadway. One is located at the municipal roadway connection and one at mid - driveway. Sandstone is used throughout the site. It has a golden colour that is visually warm and familiar to hospice users. A large portion of the sandstone is extracted as a byproduct of local excavation processes such as basement and roadway development. Sandstone building materials are used locally in both residential and municipal settings. Familiarity is important in hospice design. According to Elizabeth Kübler-Ross “the hospice patient and visitor are likely to feel more at ease when the facility building and grounds retain as much reference as possible to domestic scale, layout, and ambiance” (Cooper Marcus, 1999, p. 534). The base of the retaining walls are planted with Dogwood, *Cornus alba*, and Potentilla, *Potentilla fruticosa* ‘Pink Beauty’, giving this area colour and texture. This informal planting appears as if no gardener had a hand in planting them. It also serves to stabilize the slope where it would be inconvenient to maintain turf due to the steepness of the slope.

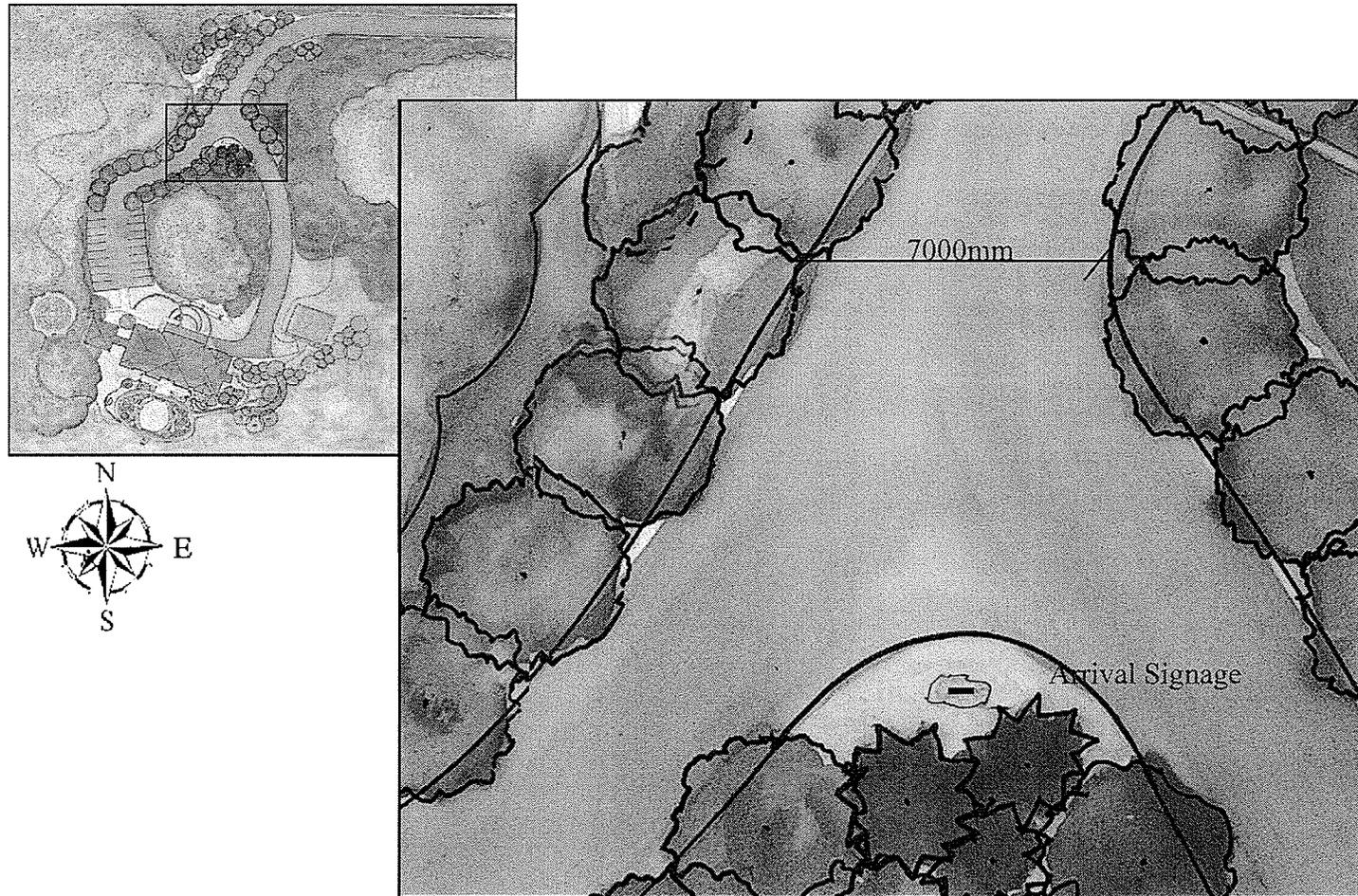


Figure 54

The arrival signage is located at the road junction: it is installed on a large sandstone boulder. The driveway leads to the maintenance access, and to the parking lot. The turn to the west ends at the parking lot. The turn to the east is for maintenance access and the pet boarding area. The principle species that provide a backdrop for the signage are Scots Pine, *Pinus sylvestris*, White Spruce, *Picea glauca*, and Schubert Chokecherry, *Prunus Virginiana* 'Schubert'.

Stories based on Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's Stages of Grief (1969)

The following three fictional stories are written from the perspective of the three types of Hospice garden visitors. This was written to give different perspectives on how some of the places in the garden could be used.

The Loved One: Denial.

The sky is overcast, it is gloomy. Making our way down the smooth silence of the long driveway, we see the bright expanse of canola stretched out across the horizon. Our view is momentarily punctuated by a stand of Aspen, which passes quickly. I think I caught a glimpse of the hospice building.

This can't be happening.

We arrive at the parking area, as I push her toward the building I'm glad it's paved and not gravel. This place of ending!

There is still time for a miracle.

This can't be happening.

We pass a threshold, we are almost there, we keep moving along. The pungent odour of roses consumes me. Memories: of being back at home laughing at our dog frolicking in our garden chasing butterflies. We're happy, we're laughing.

This can't be happening.

The tree at the end of this path urges me onward. Arriving at the tree, I see the path to the right leads to the forest, the surface slightly different than this one. I look to the left and see the ramp and stairs, we're here.

This can't be happening.

The Person Dying – Acceptance.

We are sitting on the veranda warmed by the heaters above. They are all here, almost all of them. They call it a living funeral. I'm so glad to see them, they're talking, hugging, the children are laughing as they play on the swings and run around the garden. Some people are crying.

Its alright, I'm ready, I'm glad they're here.

I want to join them in the courtyard. It shouldn't be too windy, the hedges help keep the wind out. My friend takes me to the courtyard. There are so many people. I can't concentrate; he wants to talk, we move around to the other side of the hedge.

This is better, quieter but I still feel close to everyone. I smell something, it smells like plums. I realize it's the tall purple flowers to my right. My friend reaches out to hold my hand and tells me, the smell is from the Iris. I'm exhausted... and fall asleep.

Later that night the window is slightly open, I awaken in my room to the sound of the geese flying overhead. I recall the moments in the garden this afternoon, the garden, just beyond the window. In my room, I can smell the fresh cut Iris close by on my nightstand. I can't see them but I know they are there on my bedside table, I can smell them. He must have cut one for me. I'm so tired.

Everything will be alright.

I'm ready.

Caregiver: Depression.

Dawn is breaking, after a long and tiring night. It's too much today, I need a break. Am I making a difference?

I'm drained.

I need to get outside. As I'm leaving out the side door the smell of pine strikes my nose, the freshness is striking, it's so great to get out here. I'm so sad, he hardly had any visitors. I'm drained. Did I make a difference?

The grass is wet with morning dew, I'm glad for the paving stones. My feet will stay dry. I move to the corner where it feels like being at the edge of a forest clearing. It's peaceful here. I rest watching the birds fly to and from the feeder.

Did I make a difference?

I decide to walk out to the labyrinth. I can go back in and take the elevator but I don't want to, I don't want to go back in yet.

I move around the edge of the garden - its beauty is so refreshing. As I walk up the small hill, my breathing quickens slightly.

Now I'm walking through the Aspen. I find myself in the Labyrinth clearing. I decide to walk into it, just to see. I pause at the opening then begin. My breathing becomes regular and my thoughts wander back to Jim. I don't feel as depressed now. I continue walking. It's so peaceful here. I see the tree and bench at the centre; I am almost at the middle though it is hard to tell. I continue my walk focusing on my movement upon this path. I reach the centre and feel aware of my own emotions, they overcome me, I cry. I am sad but I feel I know he did not die alone, I was there, and I do make a difference.

Loved One: Anger/ Blaming.

I'm going for a walk. I have to get out of this place, I'm going crazy.

Why is this happening? There is no justice in the world. This just isn't fair. I hate you God, I hate this world and I hate this place. It's your own fault too, if you would have taken better care of yourself this never would have happened. I should have done more. I have to get out of this place. I'm going outside. I run down the path in the woods.

I hate this, I have to get away.

I run past the labyrinth and keep going.

I hate this, I have to get away.

I see a clearing ahead, I enter it.

I am away.

I scream, the scream of all my anger and frustration. There is no one around to hear me.

I feel better and succumb to the reality of what is happening.

I sit in this place and calm myself.

I slowly walk back to the building.

Chapter Five - Conclusion

The moon will wax, the moon will wane.
The mist and cloud will turn to rain,
The rain to mist and cloud again,
Tomorrow be today.

from Keramos (Longfellow, 1886, p. 222)

The research process has contributed to a broadening of my understanding of death and dying and the role of the garden in that context. I have a greater understanding of why we avoid sensitive issues like death. It seems we avoid the topic to spare the other from their pain, other times it seems we avoid the topic to spare ourselves from our own pain. I hope that this work sheds light on a topic that is often darkened under the guises of social sympathy. The autoethnographic method has been used in an attempt to draw the reader into this work, to feel in some way what it may be like to experience the emotional, human side of the hospice environment. One fact of life is that death is universal. We will all die, all the natural world dies.

The goal in developing a hospice garden is to help people face and cope with death and dying. In many ways, this garden acts as a sanctuary in a time set outside of the everyday. When people are forced to confront the harshest of realities, the environment they are surrounded by should offer choices. By designing a landscape that supports the complex of emotions surrounding this highly emotional time, the garden lends its comfort, stimulation and its secret spaces to those that choose to enter. At the beginning of this process, I had assumed that the end would be definitive and conclusive, it is not. Crystallization provides us with a deepened complex, thoroughly partial, understanding of the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know (Denzin, 2005, p. 522). It is my hope that this work will cause other designers to truly embrace the situations that they design for, because ultimately design is about creating spaces for human experience. If we do not strive to understand

these experiences, we cannot adequately design for them. Without seeing the circumstances that require support, the places we are designing are at risk of being stagnant.

I will never know how this work will affect the reader or, how the experience of the hospice landscape will affect the garden visitor. My thoughts are in alignment with Camus when he speaks of the nature of his knowledge, “This heart within me I can feel, and I judge that it exists. This world I can touch, and I likewise judge that it exists, there ends all my knowledge, and the rest is construction” (Camus, 1955, p. 14).

Profound life experiences punctuate the horizons of our understanding, defining our very perception of life itself. I believe these experiences should be surrounded by the beauty of a garden.

Memories of That Week

Your strength, courage
Your pain
The clearness of your beautiful blue-
Gray eyes
Your hand held in mine-
You hold me so tight
I know that you will
Never give up, never let me go
For me
For you
Love so real
And when it is all over...
I see us holding hands
With all the life in
This world
We are running with all the
Strength of life
Through a beautiful field of flowers
Laughter, Health, Life.

Barbs journal entry, after husband died of AIDS,
10-8-93
(Lather & Smithies, 1997, p. 156)



Figure 55

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