

# **CONTINUING THE JOURNEY:**

A FUNERAL HOME FOR  
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF SASKATCHEWAN

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## Abstract

The focus of this practicum project is to provide a culturally relevant, as well as mentally, emotionally, and spiritually supportive, funeral home for the Indigenous community in Saskatoon and surrounding area. The current Westwood Funeral Home at 1402 20th St. West in Treaty 6 Territory and owned by the Saskatoon Funeral Home, was updated in order to improve the services offered to their Indigenous patrons. Drawing on key principles of Indigenous worldviews regarding the natural environment and experience, the proposed design is a result of the investigation of three main theoretical frameworks: traditional Indigenous worldviews, nature centred design, and sensory perception involving multisensory design.



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To my family, especially my mom and dad, thank you for your never-ending encouragement and guidance throughout the entirety of my university career.

Lastly I would like to dedicate this practicum to my grandmother as her journey continues on.

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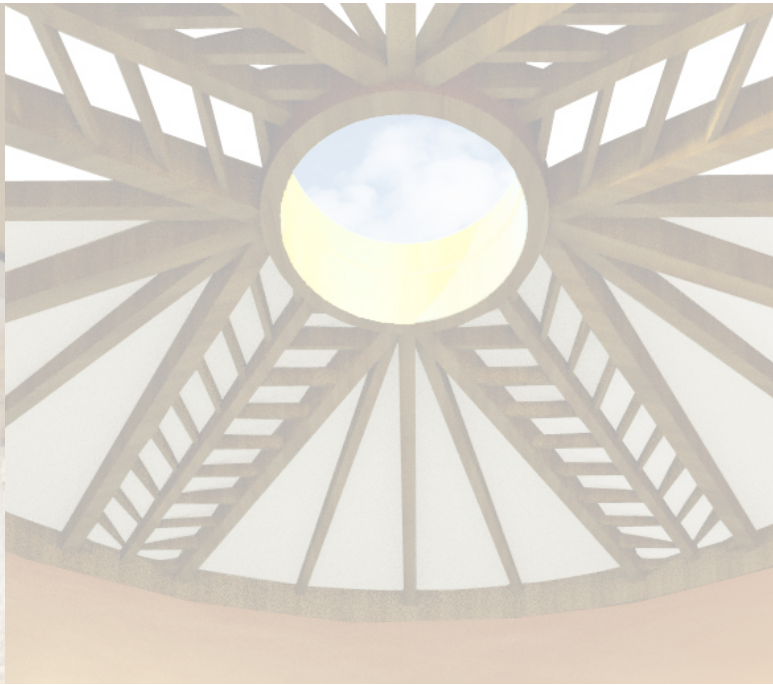
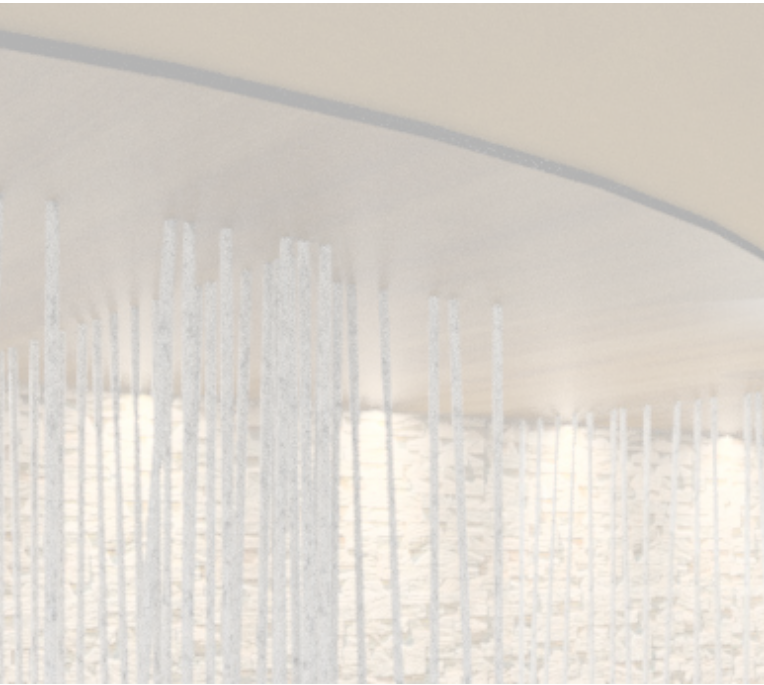
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# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Project Description
- 1.2 Research Questions
- 1.3 Key Terms
- 1.4 Limitations and Project Benefits



## 1.1 Project Description

This practicum project, “Continuing the Journey: A Funeral Home for Indigenous Peoples of Saskatchewan” explores the application of Indigenous worldviews, nature centred design, and experiential sensory awareness to inform the design of a hypothetical Indigenous funerary space. Based on the research of these distinct frameworks, the goal of the facility is to support positive and meaningful connections and experiences between the built environment, nature, body, mind and spirit for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. The renovation of an existing funeral home for this project provides a practical and realistic opportunity to adapt a non-Indigenous space to better suit the needs of the Indigenous community. The current owners of the project building, the Saskatoon Funeral Home, will be used as the hypothetical client for this practicum.

One certainty that is shared amongst all humans regardless of gender, age, culture, beliefs, and race is the inevitability of death. As a termination of physical life for all living organisms, death is constantly present around us. We are exposed to it through various forms of media, connections amongst friends and family, and every year with the transition

to winter. Throughout the world vast differences exist in perceptions, approaches and reactions to death, as well as the awareness of one's own mortality. When faced dealing with the death of others, numerous physical and emotional responses are provoked. In many cases this produces the desire to honour and remember the deceased through different funerary practices. This may include holding and participating in traditional, non-traditional, and religious practices and ceremonies, as well as partaking in other significant acts in accordance to the deceased's beliefs and cultural background. Funerary practices allow those who knew the deceased an opportunity to come together to commemorate their life.

Funeral ceremonies often take place in places of worship, funeral homes, and other public facilities such as a community hall. Funeral homes have become a popular choice due to their ability to arrange secular, religious and sometimes other spiritual ceremonies by request in one building. Other types of services offered can include completing necessary paperwork such as permits and obituaries, making arrangements for transportation and burial, as well as planning the service. Utilizing the services of a funeral home can relieve

the stress of planning and organizing such an important event, whether it is through advanced planning or on short notice.

In Canada, the diversity of our population creates a unique situation in regards to the wealth of cultural practices when it comes to dealing with death. The establishment of facilities dedicated to these and other culturally significant activities are vital to the preservation and continuation of cultural practices significant to all people, particularly the Indigenous peoples of Canada. The mistreatment and subsequent loss of culture within the Indigenous community all across the country was and still remains a prominent and ongoing issue. Residential schools run by the Canadian Government and churches starting in the 1800s were set in place to “civilize” Indigenous peoples by separating children from their families for long spans of time to remove them from their Indigenous culture so that they could be integrated into a Euro-Canadian and Christian lifestyle (Hanson, 2009). While the majority closed in the mid-1970s, the last of the schools were still operating until the late 1990s (Government of Canada, 2015). Since the final closure, the Government of Canada released a formal apology on June 11, 2008

acknowledging the mistreatment and damage, asking “for forgiveness from the Aboriginal peoples of this country for failing them so profoundly” (Government of Canada, 2015). The effects of the residential schools have left generations unable to connect to and pass on their Indigenous culture. In addition, many people experienced physical and emotional trauma while in the system. By designing a culturally relevant interior environment that promotes Indigenous culture, I hope that this practicum project can be a positive contribution in the healing and reclamation of Indigenous identity.

The facility will be dedicated to serving the growing urban Indigenous populations in Saskatoon as well as the surrounding rural areas. A socio-demographic study conducted in 2001 of the Aboriginal population in Saskatoon found that 19,015 out of 196,811 residents self-identified as Aboriginal (Anderson, 2005, pp. 8,59). Aboriginal populations are increasing at twice the rate of the general population, and in 2001 had already doubled within the past 10 years (Anderson, 2005, p. 60). Within Saskatoon’s urban Aboriginal population the study revealed a great diversity in religions and beliefs ranging from Roman Catholic (37.8%), various

Protestant groups (21.9%), other Christian affiliations (5.7%), and those who considered themselves non-religious (29.6%) (Anderson, 2005, p. 57). Those who identified with Aboriginal spirituality or 'pagan' religion only made up 4.9% of the population, coming in at just over 900 people (Anderson, 2005, p. 59). It should be noted however that neither Aboriginal spirituality nor 'pagan' religion was defined in the study. The diversity of beliefs within the Indigenous population means the spiritual needs of the funeral home user are extraordinarily vast. For this reason, the intended client of this practicum project are Indigenous peoples who still maintain varying levels of Aboriginal (Indigenous) spirituality, traditional beliefs and practices and may also hold additional affiliations with other religions in their lives.

Although many funeral homes within the city host Indigenous funerals, they must adapt their westernized style and layout of space to accommodate the best they can. Traditional Indigenous funerary practices can involve wakes that may last continuously for days, as well as the preparation of food and hosting of a feast. People may need to burn sacred fires, smudge, and perform pipe ceremonies. Indigenous funerary

spaces must not only have the capacity for these activities, they must also be designed with an understanding of traditional and spiritual knowledge, identity, importance of place, and respect for Mother Earth so that they may all be integrated into aspects of the building. By placing these influences into the design of the facility, future generations will have a dedicated space to learn about and carry on a traditional journey through life within an urban context.

The Westwood Funeral Chapel located in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan has been selected as the site for this practicum project due to its location in a predominantly Indigenous populated neighborhood. The existing funeral home currently offers services for all cultural backgrounds, including Indigenous peoples. However, the space does not currently reflect the surrounding Indigenous community in the layout and design. The transition of the building into an Indigenous funeral home will provide a practical understanding of how to renovate a westernized funeral home to reflect the cultural identity and needs of its existing and future Indigenous users. Indigenous worldviews will form the fundamental foundation for the design of the funeral home and provide knowledge

of the physical and spiritual needs of its patrons. The design will also reflect an exploration into theoretical frameworks pertaining to nature centred design and sensory perception. Investigation into nature centred design will study two restorative environmental design components concentrating on reducing and eliminating negative stresses on the natural environment through conscious design of the building, as well as promoting positive and healthy relationships between people and nature through the built environment. Literature regarding sensory perception, or more specifically multisensory design will inform the ways sensory elements in a space can influence conscious and subconscious perceptions and experiences which are important considerations when inhabiting spaces dealing with life and death. Similarities and connections between nature centred design and sensory perceptions in relation to Indigenous worldviews will be discussed in the document. Together these three frameworks will form the basis of the design concentrated on maintaining an Indigenous focus on enriching the mind and body, while upholding respect for Mother Earth.

## 1.2 Research Questions

The following questions have been developed to guide the study of the theoretical frameworks, which will be used to determine the final design:

**In what ways can interior design support and contribute to culturally relevant and appropriate Indigenous design?**

**How can nature centred interior design be used in conjunction with Indigenous worldviews to promote positive relations between users, the built environment, and the natural environment?**

**In what ways can sensory based design be used to enhance and provoke the conscious and subconscious and what types of perceptions and experiences can be produced?**



## 1.3 Key Terms

### **First Nations**

The term “First Nations” is now commonly used in place of Status and non-Status “Indians”, and refers to one of the diverse groups of Indigenous peoples who first inhabited Canada (Government of Canada, 2014). “First Nation” has no legal definition, unlike the term “Indian”, and does not include Métis or Inuit peoples (The University of British Columbia, 2009). Since this term is not as inclusive as Indigenous, its use within the document is limited to when it is referenced by the literature and sources.

### **Indigenous**

Indigenous, as outlined by the University of Manitoba’s Indigenous Student Centre, is used to refer to the original inhabitants of Canada that include First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples (Celeste McKay Consulting, 2015). The term Aboriginal also shares the same meaning as Indigenous and is more commonly used in Canada, however the use of

Indigenous is becoming more prevalent due to its “positive associations with self-determination and human rights” (Celeste McKay Consulting, 2015). The United Nations recommends identifying, rather than defining Indigenous peoples. The following points are used by the United Nations as a present day understanding of the term Indigenous (United Nations, ND):

- Self-identification as indigenous peoples at the individual level and accepted by the community as their member.
- Historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies.
- Strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources.
- Distinct social, economic or political systems.
- Distinct language, culture and beliefs.
- Form non-dominant groups of society.
- Resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities.

For the purpose of this practicum project, references of Indigenous culture and peoples are in connection to the facility's primary user group comprised of Nêhiyawak or Plains Cree peoples of Saskatchewan. However, the term Indigenous in this practicum will still reference all Indigenous peoples of Canada including other First Nations groups of Saskatchewan including Sauteaux, Nakota, Dakota, Sioux and Dene peoples (Stonechild, 2006) who will be welcomed to use the funeral facility.

## 1.4 Limitations and Project Benefits

Although I do not identify as a member of the Indigenous population that I am designing for in this practicum project, my goal as a designer is to be adaptable and open to satisfying the requirements of all clients. Having been raised without Indigenous traditional knowledge, I do not have a personal understanding and familiarity of Indigenous traditions and ways of life. However, throughout my public high school education in Saskatchewan and post-secondary studies at both the University of Saskatchewan and University of Manitoba, I have become acquainted with Indigenous culture and issues. As a child I attended pow wows, and as an adult I have frequented public Indigenous events in both Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Although my experiences have been limited, my motivation for pursuing an Indigenous based practicum project is to form an understanding of the unique practices, protocols, and worldviews that contribute to the creation of significant, functional, and respectful Indigenous based interior environments. With Indigenous populations in Saskatchewan steadily increasing, the demand for Indigenous based services and spaces is heightened, along with the need

for interior designers to fulfill the design requirements. This practicum project has given me the opportunity to go beyond the comfort of my own experiences and familiarity to create a space based upon the distinctive and significant spiritual and cultural needs of others. In the future I hope to further my knowledge and experiences so that I may be able to contribute to the Indigenous community within my practice, and be better able to incorporate the needs of every client with empathy and a willingness to learn.

Through this practicum document I hope to provide the Indigenous community and the field of Interior Design a viable resource not only for the design of a culturally specific funeral home, but also an interior environment that embodies Indigenous worldviews, the importance of sensory experience within the mind and body, and encourages respect for the natural world. It is my hope that the owners of the practicum site, who have previously shown interest in the findings of this project, will find it informative and beneficial in the future of their facilities and services.

# 2 Theoretical Frameworks

2.1 Indigenous Worldviews

2.2 Nature Centred Design

2.3 Sensory Perception

## 2.1 Indigenous Worldviews

### 2.1.1 Introduction

A worldview is identified as the perception of one's relationship to the world and the formation of meanings, beliefs, and values held within it. Developed over an individual's lifetime, worldviews influence all aspects of our psychological being and help us navigate through the complexities of life by understanding and constructing meanings within the world around us. Worldviews become dominant in a society when they are held by the majority of the population. This is established by their continual reinforcement within the culture of that population (Olsen et. al 1992, cited in Hart, 2007, p.20). Dr. Michael Hart suggests that even within a widely held worldview there are often "discrepancies and inconsistencies between beliefs and values within the worldview" (Hart, *Indigenous Worldviews, Knowledge, and Research: The Development of an Indigenous Research Paradigm*, 2010, p. 2). When discussing Indigenous worldviews it is important to note that while Indigenous peoples of Canada may possess worldviews that share common views and beliefs, differences and variations can still

exist even amongst individuals belonging to the same group. There is no singular worldview held by all Indigenous peoples due to their immense diversity. As Andrea Hinch-Bourns explains, “the teachings we receive during our lifetime may be the same, but how we find meaning in those teachings varies according to our individual understandings, and worldviews” (Hinch-Bourns, 2013, p. 35).

Hart highlights McKenzie and Morrissette’s idea that Indigenous worldviews originated from their intimate relationship with nature (McKenzie and Morrissette 2003, cited in Hart, 2010, p.2). As described by Andrea Hinch-Bourns, “ceremonies, songs, stories, prayers, and our natural laws are formed from our relationship with the land” (Hinch-Bourns, 2013, p. 21). The focus on the importance of nature is also presented in Leanne Simpson’s list of seven principles of Indigenous worldviews (Simpson, 2000, cited in Hart, 2007, p. 30):

1. Knowledge is holistic, cyclic, and dependent upon relationships and connections to living and non-living beings and entities.
2. There are many truths and these truths are dependent upon individual experiences.
3. Everything is alive.



4. All things are equal.
5. The land is sacred.
6. The relationship between people and the spiritual world is important.
7. Human beings are the least important beings in the world.

These principles are an example of the types of views that may be held within the Indigenous population. While this is just one set of principles, Hart acknowledges that the breadth of Indigenous worldviews “highlight a strong focus on people and entities coming together to help and support one another in their relationship” (Hart, 2010, p.3). This is evident in the Indigenous values and principles in which Hart (2007) presents as components of Indigenous worldviews. These may also vary between individuals and groups but generally share common key qualities. Collective values include respect, sharing, honesty, and caring that build towards strengthening the relationships between oneself, the community and the physical and spiritual world (Hart, Cree Ways of Helping: An Indigenist Research Project (Doctoral Thesis), 2007, p. 31). Indigenous principles reflect the importance of building and maintaining relationships through actions “guided by moral

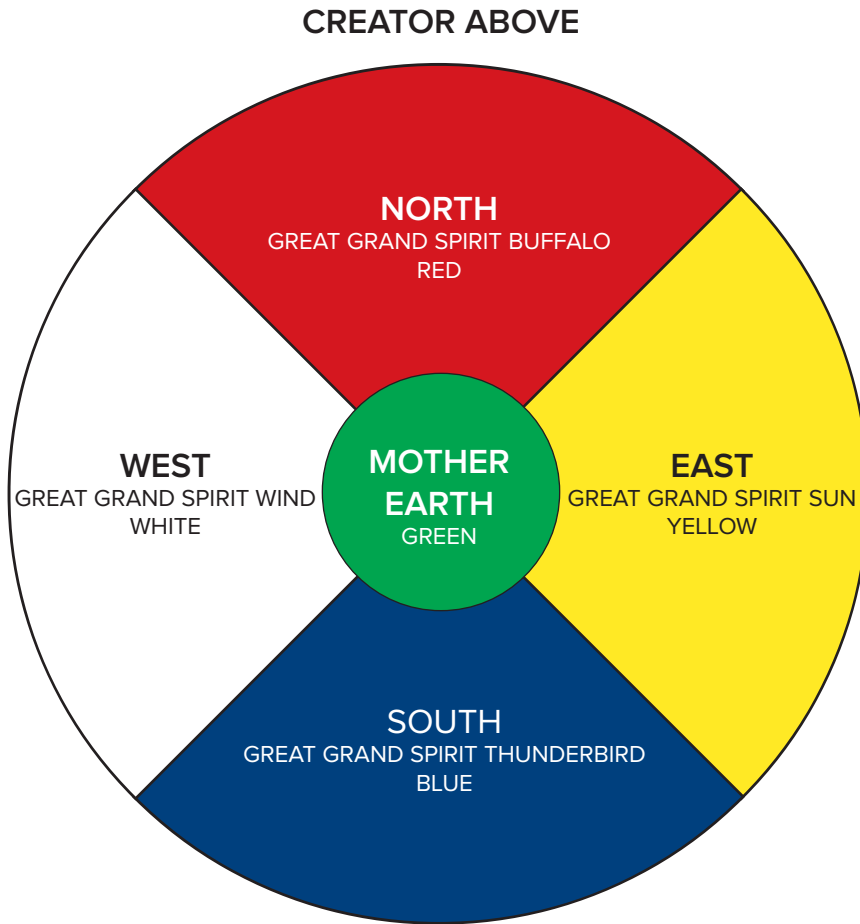
principles embedded within spiritual constructs” that promote stability, harmony, and balance within the community (Rice 2005, cited in Hart, 2007, p. 31). The various components of Indigenous worldviews are regarded as traditional knowledge and passed down through generations by ceremonies, storytelling, medicine, songs, dance, and art. Elders are members of the Indigenous community that are the keepers of this traditional knowledge. Their position in the community is not based on age or gender but rather on their way of life and experiences that are based in Indigenous traditional values, practices, beliefs, and spirituality. Elders are teachers and role models for their community. They impart wisdom, provide counselling, and conduct traditional ceremonies and practices such as smudging, prayers, and sweats (Council on Aboriginal Initiatives, 2012).

The focus of this chapter is to explore Indigenous worldviews held by Indigenous peoples in Saskatchewan, with an emphasis on Plains Cree peoples who continue to incorporate traditional ways in their life. Traditional worldviews regarding the physical, spiritual, and symbolic concepts of life and death will be used to inform the key design elements of the

facility. Although the design of the space may only provide a small contribution to the prevention of a much larger obstacle in the loss of important knowledge and traditional ways of life, providing a space that honours and supports Indigenous traditions and culture may help fulfill physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the users and community.

### **2.1.2 The Medicine Wheel**

Central for many who hold traditional Indigenous beliefs and traditions is the sacred circle. The circle represents a continuous cycle for all things created, with no beginning or end. The size of circle can be very small to infinite and is only limited by our own thought or circumstance (Rutledge & Robinson, 1992, p. 21). While each living thing is placed at the centre of their own circle, all circles are interconnected relying on their relationships to one another to maintain a balanced and unbroken larger all-encompassing circle. The sacred circle can take on several forms depending on an individual or group's beliefs, including being “danced, drawn, smoked, sat, prayed, and spoken” (Sanderson, 2010, p. 39). It is often represented through the use of the medicine wheel. The information provided on the sacred circle, medicine wheel and their



**FIGURE 1:** Medicine Wheel. Adapted from Culture Brings Meaning to Adult Learning: A Medicine Wheel Approach to Program Planning Figure 1: Plains and Parkland Cree Medicine Wheel by Joan Sanderson.

accompanying teachings in this practicum do not represent the teachings of all Indigenous peoples. In Joan Sanderson's research work with traditional Plains and Parkland Cree Elders, the Elders consulted in her work explain that while varying aspects of the wheel can be different amongst those belonging to the same group and even amongst family members, "we are to understand, however, that all these interpretations are to be respected and honoured" (Sanderson, 2010, p. 39).

The medicine wheel is a powerful visual symbol that holds great significance communicating the connected and interconnected, as well as related and interrelated relationships of all things on this earth and within the spiritual world (Waldram, 1997, p. 85). As Campbell (cited in Waldram, 1997, p. 85) explains, it is used to symbolize creation, the universe, and the "outer and inner realities of things possessed by human beings". For some Plains Cree peoples it represents "the Creator, the Great Mystery, the Great Spirit that is above and within all natural forms and forces of the universe" (Fiddler and Sanderson 1990, cited in Sanderson, 2010, p.39). The Plains and Parkland Cree medicine wheel described in Sanderson's research contains six cardinal directions including

North, South, East and West, as well as the Creator above the circle and Mother Earth below, creating a three-dimensional sphere (Sanderson, 2010, p. 40). While the medicine wheel is comprised of what appears to be distinct divisions, Sanderson explains that these divisions are in fact not independent of one another. Instead, they are “honoured as important and essential aspects of the whole experience”, where engagement with one portion of the circle always connects you to the entire circle (Sanderson, 2010, p. 52). The white outer circle of the medicine wheel represents the Creator, regarded as “the primal force from which originated all that exists” (Cuthand 1990, cited in Sanderson, 2010, p. 410). The Creator is always the first to be prayed to, such as in ceremonies like the pipe ceremony where the pipe is held towards the sky and the Creator (Sanderson, 2010, p. 41). One’s relationship to the Creator connects them to all other people and non-living aspects of the world. Within the Creator’s circle lies an inner circle of green which symbolizes Mother Earth, a “Mother to all that lives”, and through which we become relatives to all forms of life including plants and animals (Sanderson, 2010, p. 41).

For Plains Cree peoples the importance and sacredness of the number four is represented by the four equal quadrants of the medicine wheel and their accompanying themes of four (Sanderson, 2010, p. 40). Themes within the quadrants include the four directions: North, South, East, and West, often referred to as “doors”. They are used as a foundation in which other aspects are situated. The directions are also associated with Great Grand Spirits which include the Great Grand Spirit Sun (yellow), Great Grand Spirit Thunderbird (blue), Great Grand Spirit Wind (white), and Great Grand Spirit Buffalo (red) (Sanderson, 2010, p. 42). Elements of Mother Earth such as the four seasons: spring, summer, fall, and winter, as well as the four elements: fire, water, wind, and earth also correspond to each of the four directions (PATHS, 2011, p. 9). Birth, adolescence, adulthood, and Elder are included within the wheel and parallel the four seasons and passing of the earth around the sun (PATHS, 2011, p. 9). Four conditions of humanness: spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental can also be represented, along with the four races of the world (PATHS, 2011, p. 9). Animals, plants, and rocks may also be placed within specific quadrants depending on individual preference (Rutledge & Robinson, 1992, p. 23).

The incorporation of the natural world in the medicine wheel can be used as a teaching tool to allow for a better understanding of the desired human qualities by using examples found in nature that embody these traits. Drawing from these connections can provide direction in life and allow for one “to look deeply into the nature of the gift that they seek to acquire, emulating that gift or quality and making it a part of themselves” (Waldram, 1997, p. 85). Prayers and offerings can be directed to each of the four directions and Great Grand Spirits based on the personal qualities and values sought by the individual and received as gifts (Sanderson, 2010, p. 44). These gifts however, may not come immediately and require dedication and great effort to receive them (Sanderson, 2010, p. 41). Sanderson notes that while there aspects of the medicine wheel such as symbols that are common amongst the Plains Cree peoples, “there is also an emphasis on each individual finding their own deep meaning and interpretation” (Sanderson, 2010, p. 41).

The integration of the medicine wheel in a spiritual place such as a funeral home can provide support and guidance for people in mourning. Visual and physical representations



of the medicine wheel such as a circular shaped room offer reminders of the teachings connected to the journey through life and death. Design encapsulating the medicine wheel, the significance of the number four, cycles, transitions, personal values and qualities, as well as an incorporation of elements from the natural world may help to both physically and mentally support the users of the funeral home. This can help to bring balance, guidance, and clarity to an important event in one's life. Design influenced by traditional ways of teaching also reinforces the continuation of Indigenous identity so that generations may continue to learn, practice, and pass on traditional knowledge.

### **2.1.3 Journey From Life to Death**

Life, death, and time are observed in Indigenous worldviews as cyclical and recurring in fashion, rather than a linear perception of time and events found amongst other cultures. Following the same path as the sun and changes of the seasons, the journey of life has no definitive beginning or end. The understanding that death is natural and inevitable is formed early on in life through the teachings of the medicine wheel. Phases within the natural world

parallel to corresponding stages of life. Each passing of the season, setting and rising of the sun, and stages in life are all representative of life and death. For example, the death of winter signifies the birth of spring, and the death of childhood brings the birth of adolescence. Acceptance and understanding of the path of life is developed through the experiences of 'death' multiple times during a person's lifetime.

Death is not filled with loss and fear for those who will and have departed, as they are seen to be continuing on their soul's journey. In Indigenous languages there is no word for "goodbye" (First Nations University, 2006). It is not necessary as it is expected that the deceased will join their ancestors and eventually be reunited with those they have left behind. It is believed that a person's body and Spirit is given to them by the Creator. While the body is destined to expire and return to the earth, the Spirit remains eternal and journeys to the next stage. Beginning at birth, the Creator sets a date for them to die (Hampton, et al., 2010, p. 9). As explained by Linda Jaine and Louise Halfe, "one who finds honor in the circle of birth, infancy, childhood, youth maturity and old age, can also find honor in death" (Jaine & Halfe, 1989, p. 11). Alcohol, drugs, and

suicide can interfere with achieving a ‘natural’ death, upsetting the balance of life and preventing them from experiencing a “good death”. For some, a good death involves a “spiritual journey of ‘coming home’ to one’s origins and one’s people” through the ability to be with one’s family and community in an environment which allows them to carry out their cultural traditions (Coward & Stajduhar, 2012, p. 233). Death related traditions vary amongst groups and individuals, therefore the rituals and ceremonies described do not necessarily apply to all Indigenous peoples. In Mary Hampton’s research on end-of-life care for Indigenous people with information provided from Saskatchewan Elders, she notes that “although subjective experiences of grief may be similar among various cultural groups, ceremonies and traditional protocols for the expression of grief clearly differ” (Hampton, et al., 2010, p. 7). Some Indigenous peoples may practice a combination of traditional ways with other religions. The following provides a base of knowledge useful in understanding the culturally distinct ways death is perceived, incorporated, and experienced through accompanying traditional Indigenous ceremonies and practices.

The passing of a person is a spiritual experience for both the deceased and those associated with the person. In some cases prior to and during a passing there may be no mourning, crying, or screaming amongst those left behind, as doing so can negatively affect and prevent the soul of the deceased from completing their journey (Elder Betty McKenna, First Nations University, 2006). Others believe that crying helps in the healing process, although it is advised not to cry during the night when the fourth sun has set, as this helps release the Spirit from the physical world (Jaine & Halfe, 1989, p. 11). Ceremonies may be carried out prior to a person's passing in order to prepare them for the journey ahead and bring family and community together. Certain practices associated prior to and after death involve the smudging of the room and body of person who has or is about to pass. Smudging is used for purification and plays a significant role in many Indigenous ceremonies. To smudge, one may burn natural materials such as sage, sweet grass, cedar, or a combination of the three. The smoke is fanned using hands or other means such as a feather. The use of different burning materials is based upon the different spiritual properties of the plants. Cedar for example, can be used during mourning as it discourages negative feelings and spirits (Rutledge

& Robinson, 1992, p. 74). Smudging also plays an important role during wakes held for the deceased as the building and body are smudged in preparation for the ceremonies and prayers, such as the pipe ceremony.

A wake may be held days after the death spanning throughout all hours of the day lasting up to four nights and three days leading up to the funeral service. During this time the body is constantly accompanied by friends and family members as they come together sharing memories of the deceased, songs and prayers (Jaine & Halfe, 1989, p. 11). The preparation and consuming of food is an important aspect of the bereavement process bringing people together within the community, as well as with Spirits with whom the feast is shared with (Jaine & Halfe, 1989, p. 11). In traditional Cree practices meals are prepared by women during the wake, and a feast may be held afterwards following the burial (Jaine & Halfe, 1989, p. 11). Mourning may continue for a year after a person's death and include the gathering of the deceased's personal belongings to be given away on the first anniversary of their death when another feast is held (Hinch-Bourns, 2013, p. 36).

Limitations and obstacles may exist for Indigenous peoples when the spatial environment is not suited for carrying out certain cultural and spiritual traditions. In some cases, the involvement of others and the ability to practice ceremonies or carry out traditional practices may be hindered due to discrepancies with non-Indigenous policies and regulations. Circumstances like this may be found in spaces such as hospitals which can regulate the number of visitors in a room making it difficult for large groups and family to be with a person who is ill or about to pass. In other cases, the ability to smudge or hold pipe ceremonies in buildings may be prohibited due to open fire and smoke.

Focus	Key Concepts	Description of Key Features	Design Considerations
Medicine Wheel	The number 4, balance, interconnectedness and interrelatedness.	A visual diagram embodying interconnectedness and interrelatedness of all things in physical/spiritual world. Used as a teaching tool to provide purpose and understanding to the spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental well-being of self.	Integrate into the design and spatial layout key concepts identified in the medicine wheel that promote balance, well-being, and reflect teachings. The number 4 and its significance will be considered throughout the entire design.
“Good death”	Traditions and ceremonies; family and community; origin.	Ability to perform traditional ceremonies as required for the deceased by family and friends. Be in presence of kin and community in environment that is safe and comfortable.	Design spaces that safely accommodate practices such as smudging and other activities involving music, feasting, and large groups. Reflect in design inclusion of Indigenous identity.

**TABLE 1:** Design Considerations Based on Indigenous Worldviews

### **2.1.4 Summary**

Increasing numbers in urban Indigenous populations can mean that many people moving to and living within a Westernized city setting are experiencing difficulty maintaining a traditional way of life. Ways in which these stresses can help to be alleviated is through the establishment of spaces and services dedicated to the continuation of a traditional way of life guided by Indigenous worldviews. They are formed based on beliefs, values, and principles. Indigenous worldviews share similarities across Canada such as respect for all living and non-living things on the earth. This reverence helps to keep balance in their relationships with the physical world, spiritual world, and with each other. The medicine wheel is a visual tool used to communicate how everything within one's being is connected, including with the physical natural world and the spiritual world. It is a knowledge tool that helps one stay on the good path by learning and committing oneself to the traditional ways. It helps to navigate through life and prepares one for death. A "good death" is when a person's spiritual, physical, and mental wellbeing is supported by the continuation of traditional wisdom and



practices in a supportive environment (Coward & Stajduhar, 2012, p. 233). The ceremonial practices that accompany death include wakes that may last for several days, the practice of smudging, and the preparation of food for a feast. These all require a space that is designed to effectively and efficiently accommodate these traditions. Many conventional funeral homes do not have the necessary amenities, leaving limited options for the urban Indigenous community. By incorporating the medicine wheel and its teaching into the basis of the design, and providing the necessary services and space needed for traditional funerary practices, the facility will ensure that the beliefs, values, and identity of the Indigenous community will not be lost. Other beliefs and faiths such as Christianity will also be considered in the design so that it may be inclusive and accommodating. The funeral home will also serve to educate and inform non-indigenous visitors, as well as provide a welcoming, and familiar space for those travelling from rural Indigenous communities.

## 2.2 Nature Centred Design

### 2.2.1 Introduction

Once solely dependent on the environment for our food, shelter, and other essential aspects of daily life, the relationship between humans and nature has shifted over time due to changes in technology, economics, and attitudes. Architecture of the past incorporated local materials present in nature and were constructed in response and respect to the surrounding environment. Present day connections with nature have been lost or damaged by ongoing unsustainable practices. The study of environmental health focuses on factors within the natural world and built environment that could possibly impact human health. This includes “all the physical, chemical, and biological factors external to a person, and all related factors impacting behaviours” (World Health Organization, 2015). Negative environmental influences on our health and the earth often occur when constructing and maintaining our buildings and can result in damaging impacts. These include the extensive consumption and depletion of non-renewable resources for energy and materials, the polluting of our atmosphere and bodies of water, poor waste

management, and loss of the natural world. Due to this, human health and wellbeing can be negatively affected. For some Indigenous peoples, a healthy supportive environment is represented by individual circles. Each living and non-living aspect of the world has their own circle. When one circle breaks it affects everything connected to it, and those circles become broken as well. The consequences of our negligence can be represented as a series of interconnected broken circles.

In an effort to prevent further damage and to restore the connections between humans and nature, the practice of restorative environmental design has become a prevailing movement in recent architecture and design. Focusing on both environmental and human health and well-being, restorative environmental design is comprised of theories and practices that pertain to understanding and maintaining healthy relationships between humans and the earth and ways in which to reduce and prevent negative impacts to the natural world. Despite growing popularity in current design practices, many of the values within restorative environmental design's concepts have always been present and continue to remain central to Indigenous peoples. The following framework will

examine restorative environmental design and its associated practices of low environmental impact design and positive environmental impact design, including biophilic design and its different design dimensions. The applicability and parallels between these practices and Indigenous beliefs will be explored to inform the design of the facility and the ways it can encourage a supportive and healthy environment for both humans and nature.

### **2.2.2 Restorative Environmental Design**

The practice of restorative environmental design is intended to promote a healthy and balanced relationship between humans and nature in our built environments (Kellert, *Building For Life*, 2005, p. 93). It is comprised of two main components: low environmental impact design and positive environmental impact design, which work collectively to satisfy the goals of restorative environmental design. The focus of low environmental impact design is to decrease damage to the natural systems and resources of the earth caused by the construction, operation, and maintenance of the built environment. Areas of impact include the elimination and minimization of waste production and

pollution, integration of renewable or energy efficient systems, healthy indoor environments, and the conservation of natural habitats and wildlife (Kellert, *Building For Life*, 2005, p. 93). When looking at ways in which buildings use resources, Van der Ryn describes looking at the building as a layered system containing site, structure, services, skin, and stuff (Ryn, 2013, p. 60). As you move through the layers, each of their life cycles and metabolic rates become increasingly shorter requiring the use of more resources over a briefer span of time. Site possesses the slowest metabolism, while stuff' such as furnishings are most frequently replaced (Ryn, 2013, p. 60). A loss in the life span of each system can be due to factors such as changes in technology and culture, environmental and weather impacts, as well as geotechnical and ecosystem effects such as flooding and earthquakes (Ryn, 2013, p. 60).

The formation of building and maintenance standards such the U.S Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) System helps to provide standards that comply with the goals of low environmental impact design. Four levels of accreditation ranging from certified to platinum can be achieved depending on the amount of points earned

in categories such as indoor air quality, energy efficiency, and materials. Programs such as this provide a comprehensive approach to understanding the impact that construction, operation, and maintenance can have on the environment, in addition to the impact of the users of the building. Employing environmentally responsible standards can benefit occupants through increased physical and emotional health and productivity. In addition, positive experiences may help increase the knowledge and understanding of sustainable design practices among occupants, motivating them to maintain and seek out other sustainable efforts. When a building provides an enriching and positive human connection with nature, this ensures that the technical functions of its design are continually maintained and sustained over time (Kellert, *Building For Life*, 2005, p. 94).

Connections are established between humans and the natural environment through the use of positive environmental impact design, more commonly known as biophilic design. Biophilic design aims to foster our long-standing affinity for the natural environment (biophilia) by positive interactions and strengthening of the relationship through the design of the built environment and landscapes (Kellert, *Building For*

Life, 2005, p. 96). Biophilia is thought to have evolved much the same as behavioural responses, where responses leading to increased reproduction and survival were continued and passed on to future generations (Kahn, Severson, & Ruckert, 2009, p. 38). Kahn, Severson and Ruckert state that “according to proponents of biophilia: (a) Biophilia has been adaptive in our evolutionary history, (b) biophilia is still today woven into the architecture of the human mind, and (c) the human species cannot achieve its full measure of sensibility and meaning apart from nature” (Kahn, Severson, & Ruckert, 2009, p. 38). The application of biophilia in the design of the built environment is achieved through the incorporation of organic and vernacular biophilic design dimensions, as well as their numerous accompanying elements and attributes. Each plays a specific role in stimulating positive physical and psychological responses and experiences gained from the merging of the natural and man-made world. Studies on the effects of biophilic design have found positive correlations between the exposure of nature and human health and well-being (Kellert, Heerwagen, & Mador, *Biophilic Design*, 2008, p. 4). Results include “better health, reduced stress, improved

emotional well-being, enhanced productivity, and increased problem solving and creativity.” (Kellert, *Building For Life*, 2005, p. 125). When low environmental impact design and biophilic design are utilized in conjunction with one another, they are able to fulfill restorative environmental design’s goals of minimizing and eliminating damage to the natural world, strengthening positive relationships between humans and nature, and improving human physical, psychological, and spiritual health (Kellert, *Building For Life*, 2005, p. 5). A balanced sustainable approach in design is only met when all objectives are successfully implemented and achieved.

In addition to restorative environmental design, Van der Ryn’s work on ecological design shares similar objectives in reducing negative environmental impacts and fostering people’s connections to nature. Described by Van der Ryn, it is “integrating the design of human systems and natural systems for the benefit of humans and the living world” (Ryn, 2013, p. 8). Listed below are five principles of ecological design (Sim Van der Ryn and Stuart Cowan 1996, cited in Ryn, 2013, p. 53):

1. The best design solutions start with paying attention to the unique qualities of site and place.
2. Trace the direct and indirect costs to living systems



- of a designed project.
3. Mimic nature’s processes so your designs fit nature. This almost always requires adding specialists—ecologists, biologists, and others with special knowledge of natural systems, to the design team, as well as users themselves.
  4. Honor every voice in the design process—especially those who will live and work in your building.
  5. Make nature visible through design, which will transform both designer and users.

When these principals of ecological design are used in conjunction with restorative environmental design, it may provide a more comprehensive nature and human-centred approach for designers.

### **2.2.3 Biophilic Design Dimensions**

#### Organic Design

Organic biophilic design is comprised of three practices that directly, indirectly, or symbolically reflect and promote positive experiences of nature in the built environment and landscapes.

Direct design is identified as the opportunity within the design of a building to immediately experience nature through “relatively unstructured contact with self-sustaining features of the natural environment such as daylight, plants, animals,

natural habitats, and ecosystems” (Kellert, Heerwagen, & Mador, *Biophilic Design*, 2008, p. 5). Many of these features are incorporated into a building’s systems, functions, and features. Common applications include natural ventilation, daylighting, water features, green roofs, and views to the outside. A study conducted on the presence of workplace greenery through window views and direct physical access found that occupants experienced decreased stress levels as well as an increase in positive attitudes (Lottrup, Grahn, & Stigsdotter, 2012). Buildings that employ direct design influence the quality of its occupant’s physical and mental well-being (Kellert, *Building For Life*, 2005, p. 136).

An indirect experience in biophilic design requires the intervention of humans to maintain, manage, and manipulate natural elements, as well as processes such as aging, weathering, and climate within a space (Kellert, *Building For Life*, 2005, p. 143). The preference for natural materials comes from the inadequacy of man-made materials. Natural materials can provoke positive psychological and physiological responses in the body. A study conducted in Japan revealed that when participants were shown hinoki (wood) wall panels, an

emotional and natural impression was triggered and those who “liked” the wall panels had a decrease in blood pressure while those who “disliked” the panels registered no difference in blood pressure (Sakuragawa, Miyazaki, Kaneko, & Makita, 2005, p. 136). White steel wall panels were also presented to the participants. Results showed an “unhealthy and closed impression”, increase in the sense of depression, as well as an increase in blood pressure from respondents who “disliked” the panels (Sakuragawa, Miyazaki, Kaneko, & Makita, 2005, p. 136). Man-made materials created to imitate natural materials can also lack the “subtle qualities” such as “the grain of wood, the weathering of stone, or the sensory experience of once-living materials” (Kellert, *Building For Life*, 2005, p. 146). The unique qualities of natural materials represent their evolution over time to adapt and endure the pressures of environmental influences, a process similar to our past people’s own experiences of adapting to environmental changes and pressures over time and generations. Such adaptations in nature present themselves through processes such as weathering and aging, such as the erosion of materials such as stone and wood, and the growth of vegetation. These materials provide a tangible presence of time.

Indirect connections may also be formed through three pairs of complimentary design elements: prospect and refuge, enticement and peril, and order and complexity. As outlined by Grant Hildebrand, they “reflect the inherent human affinity for nature often encountered in highly evocative buildings” (Kellert, *Building For Life*, 2005, p. 147). The success of these design elements is in their ability to elicit human primordial responses found in our attraction to nature and “stimulate imagination and problem solving within safe environments, a condition instrumental for human evolution and development” (Kellert, *Building For Life*, 2005, p. 150). For this project, prospect and refuge will be examined to inform the design. The concept of prospect is derived from our “discernment of distant objects, a human tendency that has contributed evolutionary to our ability to locate food, water, safety, and security” (Kellert, *Building For Life*, 2005, p. 147). Ways in which prospect can be integrated into design is by offering unobstructed and open views, light and brightness, and feelings of spaciousness (Kellert, *Building For Life*, 2005, p. 147). This prevents feelings of confinement and can promote a feeling that one is in charge of the space (Caan, 2011, p.

64). Hildebrand's idea of refuge however, addresses our innate need for shelter and protection by providing intimacy, safety, and comfort (Kellert, *Building For Life*, 2005, p. 148). This is in stark contrast to prospect as views are reduced, darkness is favoured over light, spaces become constricted, and control is significantly reduced. Although very different, prospect and refuge "can occur contiguously, however, and must, because we need them both and we need them together" (Abercrombie, 1990, cited in Caan, 2011, p. 64). As Caan explains "the human quest for survival is aided both physically and aesthetically by the nature of contrast in our physical environment" (Caan, 2011, p. 64). Through mindful integration of prospect and refuge, many variations can exist in the types of spaces provided offering a range of wide range of stimulations, responses, and experiences.

Lastly, the symbolic experience of nature in the built environment requires the absence of actual nature used within the design. In its place, nature is represented through a variety of obvious, subtle, and obscure visual methods that communicate to our conscious and subconscious. This is achieved by means of ornamentation, decoration, images,

shapes, and forms informed by nature to stimulate positive connections between people and the natural world (Kellert, *Building For Life*, 2005, p. 150). Successful symbolic attributes include “textures, curvilinear forms, rounded and spherical surfaces, movements, and plasticity typically encountered in nature” (Kellert, *Building For Life*, 2005, p. 159). Structural elements such as columns, arches, walls, and ceilings, as well as fabrics, furniture, and countless other features of a space can be used to convey the symbolic experience of nature. However, the use of superficial and decorative embellishments should be avoided. As Kellert suggests, symbolic design should be incorporated into the important aspects of a building such as its context and structure (Kellert, *Building For Life*, 2005, p. 136). Even when the incorporation of nature is not easily perceptible it has the ability to “exert a powerful hold on human emotion and imagination” (Kellert, *Building For Life*, 2005, p. 154).

Focus	Key Concepts	Description of Key Features	Design Considerations
Direct Design	Immediate experience of nature.	Natural ventilation, daylighting, plants, animals, water, views to outside.	Create healthy and sustainable environment that benefits occupants and surrounding environment through use of appropriate systems such as natural ventilation and controllable daylighting; and design features such as plants, water, and views to the outside utilizing the natural environment.
Indirect Design	Nature requiring human intervention to sustain; human affinity for nature.	Care for plants and animal, man-made water features; prospect and refuge.	Incorporate living elements. Focus on design elements of prospect and refuge to create space that offers views, sense of safety, comfort, and intimacy.
Symbolic Design	Absence of actual nature, interaction with representations.	Obvious and obscure images, shapes, forms embodied in nature.	Integrate elements informed by nature that is relevant and significant to Indigenous culture and local environment.

**TABLE 2:** Design Considerations Based on Biophilic Organic Design

## Vernacular Design

The second biophilic design dimension is vernacular or place-based design. Vernacular design is characterized by “the tailoring of the built environment to the particular physical and cultural places where people live and work” (Kellert, *Building For Life*, 2005, p. 165). Rather than relying exclusively on designing with nature, vernacular design promotes and supports the unique identity and culture of an area and its inhabitants. In regions where cultural traditions and knowledge are quickly vanishing, the incorporation of place-based design provides sustained ownership and a revitalization of the distinctive cultural qualities of a community. A connection to place may be especially important to those who feel physically displaced from locations they have left behind and changes to their surroundings, and those who feel displaced mentally and spiritually within their culture and identity.

When a building does not reflect the surrounding environmental and social qualities, it can create disconnect in the way a space is perceived, utilized, and treated by the people who inhabit the area. Vernacular design can result in a physical built environment that honours the relationship between



place and the people who inhabit its surrounding land. This increases the chance of the building being recognized as a valued component within the community. As Kellert suggests, vernacular design is essential in ensuring that spaces are respected and maintained over long periods of time when there is a sense of responsibility and pride connected to the place where they occur (Kellert, *Building For Life*, 2005, p. 165). In terms of communities in which revitalization efforts are taking place, consideration of the local area ensures a renewal and preservation of existing qualities, long-term traditions and way of life for those who live and work there.

Vernacular design is comprised of four main design elements. These include designing in relation to: ecology of place, culture and history, culture and ecology; and designing to avoid placelessness (Kellert, *Building For Life*, 2005, p. 166). For this practicum, designing in relation to culture and history is especially relevant to the design development of a culturally distinctive funeral home for the Indigenous community. By focusing on an area's historical and cultural presence, these design considerations acknowledge and contribute to the existing distinctive qualities of the surrounding area. As

outlined by Kellert, several main features essential to this design element include: “regular, repeated events; familiar, valued surroundings; characteristic artifacts and designs; distinctive narrative and storytelling traditions; predictable customs and norms; and a feeling of community and shared relationship” (Kellert, *Building For Life*, 2005, p. 168). Each of these features plays a prominent role in Indigenous culture and are represented by the cyclical recurring notion of time and cycles; sacredness of the land and natural world; designs derived from traditional craftsmanship and arts, architecture, and music; oral traditions; traditional funerary and ceremonial practices; and the importance of community. Incorporating these distinctive cultural and historical qualities honours tradition and supports greater emotional and intellectual attachment. It also promotes a feeling of belonging between the people, the built environment, and the place they are both connected to. This forms the foundation of what is referred to as “spirit of place”. Spirit of place reflects the importance of the bond between geographical surroundings and its inhabitants by becoming “integral to their individual and collective identities, metaphorically transforming inanimate

matter into something that feels lifelike and often sustains life” (Kellert, Heerwagen, & Mador, *Biophilic Design*, 2008, p. 6). When a feeling of spirit is established in the built environment, the relationship between people and place is heightened physically, mentally, and spiritually. This bond is strengthened when these qualities are shared amongst the community, instilling shared feelings of pride and identity contributing to the feeling of a stable and healthy environment. As Kellert states, spirit of place “can help restore to our surroundings a sense of sacredness and honoring of people, place, and diverse traditions.” (Kellert, *Building For Life*, 2005, p. 169). This respect for nature, people, and place is a key value embodied within Indigenous culture.

Focus	Key Concepts	Description of Key Features	Design Considerations
Designing in relation to Culture and History	Design reflects consideration and incorporation of cultural and historic attributes.	Regular, repeated events; familiar, valued surroundings; characteristic artifacts and designs; distinctive narrative and storytelling traditions; predictable customs and norms; and a feeling of community and shared relationship (Kellert, Building For Life, 2005).	Develop design to incorporate key Indigenous cultural and historic qualities such as notion of time/events, oral traditions and storytelling, arts, music, design, spiritual/ceremonial practices, reverence for land/nature/community.
Spirit of Place	People's connections to place foster feelings of safety, comfort and increased sense of identity.	Formation of distinctive styles; sense of community through reinforced traditions and practices; physical, mental, spiritual benefits.	Incorporation and support of local landscape, Indigenous social practices, design and architecture to connect Indigenous peoples to place, sense of identity, and well-being in the design.

**TABLE 3:** Design Considerations Based on Biophilic Vernacular Design

### 2.2.4 Summary

First Nations peoples of Canada have long relied on the natural world, known as Mother Earth, to provide the resources necessary to sustain physical, social, cultural and economic traditional ways of life (Assembly of First Nations, March 2008). Traditional methods of survival are dependent on Mother Earth's gifts of natural resources to physically support human life. This includes water, food, and materials for shelter, clothes, tools, and art. Her gifts however, encompass more than the provision of natural resources. She provides a spiritual and moral foundation, encompassing "the basis of who we are as 'real human beings'" that include our languages, cultures, knowledge and wisdom to know how to conduct ourselves in a good way" (Assembly of First Nations, 2015). Respect for Mother Earth is guided by the commitment to take care of her and all her gifts, as well as a spiritual connection which instills values of reverence, humility and reciprocity (Assembly of First Nations, 2015). One of the ways in which respect is expressed is through the conscientious consumption of natural resources by only taking what is needed. This ensures nothing is wasted and the resources are

not excessively depleted. Since all living and non-living beings and elements of the world are connected, over consumption and carelessness can create a negative chain of events causing a greater disruption to the natural world. The health of the planet is not only compromised, but the relationships between humans, nature, and the built environment are put at risk. Spaces that employ sustainable practices and promote positive experiences of nature, whether consciously or subconsciously, help to improve the health and well-being of the occupants. This encourages the continuation of nature based strategies and respect for Mother Earth. On a local scale, design that addresses the environmental, social, cultural, and historic qualities of its surroundings connects and creates ownership and emotional attachment between the space, its users, and community. This may be reflected in a deeper and more meaningful spiritual connection by honouring past traditions and history, reinforcing the deep-rooted identity of an area. Using environmental design considerations to inform the design of the built environment, the diverse nature-based concepts can be used to support traditional ways of life, beliefs, and well-being within the Indigenous community.

## 2.3 Sensory Perception

### 2.3.1 Introduction

The experience of a space is influenced on a psychological, physical and, at times, on a spiritual level. Using a field of philosophy called phenomenology, we can better understand the built environment's impact on how we experience architecture and design within the human consciousness. Phenomenology is defined as the study of phenomena, as experienced from a subjective or first person point of view and involves, “the appearance of things, or things as they appear in our experience, or the ways we experience things, thus the meanings things have in our experience” (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2015). From these experiences, we are also able to gain from our surroundings “a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experience” (van Manen, quoted in Baptist, 2010, 32). Shashi Caan suggests that the phenomenological approach to design should “start from the inside and work outward to incorporate all of the qualities of experience” (Caan, 2011, p. 38). Perception, thought, memory, imagination, emotion, and desire are all types of experiences studied within the realm of phenomenology

(Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2015). Perception is awareness activated through our senses of sight, sound, taste, smell, hearing, and touch. When applied to the built environment, one must be able to perceive through both inward and outward perceptions in order to gain an overall understanding of a space (Weinthal, 2011, p. 24). Inward perceptions are registered through internal senses such as sight, smell, and hearing while outward perceptions involve physical connections to the body such as touch. In addition to sensory triggers, perceptions are formed through components such as colour, form, meaning, emotion, and reaction (Hesselgren, 1975, p. 7).

Finnish architect and academic Juhani Pallasmaa's pivotal work in the human phenomenological experience of architecture has greatly contributed to the knowledge of experiential and multisensory design through his study of sensory perception. According to Pallasmaa all our senses stem from our tactile sense, meaning every sensory experience we have, even sight, is experienced as a way of touching (Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 10). The tactile nature of our senses allows for the personal union of self with that of our experience of the world. However, when one sense is favoured within design and architecture, such as the rise of vision



centred design in recent history, a physical and psychological distancing between body and space occurs. This chapter explores the union between the built environment and the integration of our core senses within the design to generate experiences that impact our human consciousness. Additionally, primary sensory experiences relevant to Indigenous culture will be discussed and integrated into the design considerations for the facility.

### **2.3.2 Multisensory Design**

#### Vision

Current reliance on technology and society's preference for instant gratification has resulted in the dependence on our sense of vision, followed by hearing, to influence the way the world is presented to us. The dominance of our ocular sense has caused an imbalance amongst our other sensory organs by neglecting to stimulate the entirety of the body. This affects areas such as design, fueling what Pallasmaa refers to as, "the inhumanity of contemporary architecture and cities" (Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 17). The increase of vision centred design has encouraged architecture that alienates and suppresses our other sensory systems. As Pallasmaa describes, reliance on images and sight have turned the buildings we occupy into "image products detached from

existential depth and sincerity” (Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 30). By overlooking the body’s other primary senses such as taste, smell, and touch, the environments we construct can perpetuate feelings of detachment, isolation, and exteriority (Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 19). As Caan explains, our senses are “all contributors to our comfort and well-being and reach elements of our psyche and memory that cannot be reached by purely visual sensations” (Caan, 2011, p. 51). Since Canadians spend close to 90% of their time indoors (Health Canada, 2013), the spaces we inhabit can adversely affect our physical and psychological well-being.

Walter J. Ong suggests that the rise of vision may be attributed to our transition from an oral culture to that of a written one, where the change from sound to a visual space occurred, and situational thinking turned to abstract thought (as cited in Pallasmaa, 2005, p.24). With this shift, the ways our body and mind connect with a visually dominated world has separated us from meaningfully experiencing, relating, and connecting to everything around us. As elements of humanness continue to disappear from design, the spaces we inhabit fail to keep their “connection with the language and wisdom of the body” (Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 31). This disconnection is physically manifested in the construction of forms

and chosen materiality of structures, allowing them to exist as “repulsively flat, sharp-edged, immaterial and unreal” (Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 31). The use of reflective glass in particular is emphasized by Pallasmaa as a way for buildings to reflect the viewer’s gaze back to them “unaffected and unmoved”, perpetuating feelings of alienation (Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 31). This distancing creates a barrier preventing the outside from viewing in, disengaging the outer world from the inner space. Rejection of multisensory design in favour of isolating and alienating experiences creates an absence of personal connection to a space. This separation between body and environment may manifest itself in a lack of reverence for the space, affecting the longevity of its relevance and use.

### Hearing

For cultures based in oral traditions, such as the Indigenous peoples of Canada, sound presents itself as more than a sensory experience. Sound is integral to culture due to its key presence in ceremonies and rituals, social practices such as oral teachings, and creative and social expressions like songs, drumming, and dance. These practices connect the spiritual and physical worlds together across communities, time, and space to strengthen and maintain beliefs, traditions, and identity. Housing such significant auditory

activities with an interior environment requires an understanding of the way sound and hearing can be used to promote positive effects on the occupant's experience. Previous discussions of the use of sight, which Pallasmaa describes as "the sense of the solitary observer", promotes an immediate and direct sensory experience which in turn creates a design that isolates (Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 50). Hearing on the other hand, has the ability to connect space, body and mind by creating a sense of unity. However, this is often perceived within our subconscious as a background experience (Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 50). In today's built environments the union of space and body has been lost by ways of absorbing and masking, such as filling spaces with artificial sounds or music (Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 51). Denying the natural rhythms and echoes of a space supports buildings lacking authenticity and life. Sound has the ability to provoke imagination, awareness, remembrance, and thoughts of our own existence and being in the world. Elements such as materiality, form, and life within a space all impact the way sound is formed. Even when experienced without the ability to see, reverberations influenced by elements of the interior allow the mind to form spatial impressions of its physical properties such as the boundaries of space and scale (Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 51).

Silence in the interior doesn't always indicate a void in the sensory experience of an interior, rather it can provoke just as strong of a response as the presence of sound. Tranquility, as described by Pallasmaa, is "the most essential auditory experience created by architecture" (Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 51). The dominant nature of silence allows the mind to focus. It reveals the presence of time, both past and present, while igniting memory and heightening the awareness of our existence when experienced through matter, space, and light of architecture (Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 51). By providing a calm and quiet atmosphere, funeral homes offer patrons a space to silence all external noise and distractions, centering their body and mind.

## Smell

In addition to the role sound plays within Indigenous culture, smell is a prominent feature in many ceremonies and traditional practices. The smudging of dried plant material such as sage and sweet grass, and the use of a ceremonial pipe produces an aromatic and distinctive smoke. During feasts the preparation of food fills the air with the smell of cooking. Studies suggest that olfaction, or the act of smelling, is closely connected to emotion and memory. This is due to the placement of the olfactory bulb in

the brain located in direct relation to the amygdala, a distinct set of neurons linked to emotions, and the hippocampus associated with memory (Fields, 2012). In connection to the built environment, Pallasmaa states that smell is frequently the most persistent memory one has of a space, allowing us to “unknowingly re-enter a space completely forgotten by the retinal memory” (Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 54). When a distinctive smell of a particular place is experienced out of context, it can transport the individual back to a detailed memory of the physical details, experiences, and events that occurred there. Research conducted on the recollection of memory in adults have found that visual and verbal cues result in the majority of memories originating from their teen and young adulthood years, while smells provoked specific memories from childhood (Fields, 2012). Memories triggered by smell were also noted to be more emotional and vivid (Fields, 2012). In the case of funerals, young children in attendance may be experiencing the passing of a loved one for the first time. The environment this poignant event takes place in may become an important component within their memory, and the memories associated with the smells they experience in that space may last a lifetime. Memories may also be ignited for adults, bringing them back to

past spaces and events, strengthening their current connection to their culture by memories of the past. Smells produced during ceremonies, such as smoke, should be permitted in accordance with the building codes so that human health and safety is maintained and traditional practices are not compromised.

### Touch

Physical connection is established through our sense of touch. It plays an important role early on in life as it is the first sense developed while the fetus is in the womb. Touch is an outward perception that predominantly utilizes the largest organ of the body, our skin. Embedded in our skin are receptors and nerve endings which enable us to detect sensations produced by temperature, pressure, movement, and pain (Paterson, 2007, p. 1). When we experience forms of matter around us, our skin senses the texture, weight, density and temperature of the objects we come into contact with (Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 56). In his writing on our tactile sense, Pallasmaa identifies touch's connection to time and ritual through examples such as the wear of a door handle. Smoothed and worn down by the physical contact of people over many years, the door handle connects the interaction of our own touch to the past and gives us an opportunity to “shake

the hands of countless generations” (Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 56). The wear on a building reveals the physical actions of others over a period of time creating a tangible way to unite ourselves with those who connected with the space before us. The passing of time is also measured by natural forces that also contribute to the alteration of a building’s physical qualities. Pallasmaa uses the example of a stone polished smooth by the force of water. The process of waves passing over the stone over a long period of time creates a pleasing sensation for the skin when touched. The physical changes to the stone “expresses the slow process of its formation”, and embodies time turned into a physical form (Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 58). The gradual wear on materials and objects within an interior environment communicates a way to tangibly measure the passing of time through touch.



Focus	Key Concepts	Description of Key Features	Design Considerations
Sound and Hearing	Psychological responses in relation to memory, awareness, imagination, existentialism.	Personal inner connection between space and user influenced by absence and presence of sound.	Consider scale, form, materiality, acoustic treatments, and the user to create, shape and encourage sound.
Tranquility	Silence focusing the mind on awareness of own being/existence, remembrance, and time.	Silence manifested in matter, space, and light.	Create intimate silent areas of tranquility for reflection, remembrance, and stimulate presence of past and present through use of materiality, spatial planning, form, and light.
Smell	Provokes memory and emotion; lasting memory of a space; often strongly formed in childhood.	Prominent memory trigger of past experiences and psychological responses which may only be activated by the sense of smell.	Acknowledge and embrace the presence of smells created during ceremonies/practices, while satisfying building code requirements, such as proper indoor air quality.
Touch	Perceive through skin; time and connection to past made tangible through materiality and objects.	Levels of interaction between the built environment, human contact and nature shape and reshape the experience.	Choose materials that reveal presence of time and contact. Consider impact of textures, weight, density and temperature.

**TABLE 4:** Design Considerations Based on Multisensory Design

### **2.3.3 Summary**

The built environment is a medium that can be designed to activate conscious and subconscious perceptions through our core sensory organs. These perceptions inform us of the physical space we occupy, of both past and present time, of our identity, as well as heightening our existential awareness. In emotionally charged situations and locations such as funeral homes where the human existential condition is at the forefront of our consciousness, the spaces we inhabit during these times greatly affect our perceptions. Various sensory elements within a space may either help to strengthen internal responses or negatively affect them. Stimulation of the senses is achieved by integrating form, space, materiality, light, texture, colour, as well as and natural and man-made internal and external forces into the design. Designers have a responsibility to ensure balance amongst all the senses in order to avoid prolonging architecture and design based solely for the eye. Reliance on vision as a primary means to experience the world around us flattens it into images that are quickly read and abandoned for the next visual stimulus. Disregarding the tactile nature of the entirety of the body reduces interaction,

allowing us to only touch with our eye. Experiences such as these produce feelings of isolation, detachment, and rejection from our surrounding environments. Understanding, identifying, and consciously integrating multisensory design promotes positive perceptions and improves the bond between body, mind, and space. Results such as these are especially desirable when designing a highly emotional, personal, and spiritual facility.

# 3 Precedents

3.1 Iskotew Healing Lodge

3.2 Interfaith Spiritual Centre

3.3 Thunderbird House

### 3.1 Iskotew Healing Lodge

Iskotew Healing Lodge provides employees of Health Canada and the Canadian government, regardless of faith and nationality, a space for cultural awareness and understanding of the Indigenous peoples of Canada (Health Canada, 2013). Designed by Canadian Indigenous architect Douglas Cardinal in 2002, the healing lodge is located in Ottawa, Ontario inside the lower level of the Brooke Claxton Building. Services offered include access to Elders, Indigenous teachings, counselling, and workshops. The lodge is also open to the community free of charge. These programs are enhanced by the materiality and architecture of the interior space, such as the main structural form originating from traditional longhouses (Douglas Cardinal Architect Inc., 2011). Cardinal's design of the lodge embodies his commitment to incorporating sustainable and holistic design inspired by nature (Douglas Cardinal Architect Inc., 2011). The rich colours and use of natural materials such as cedar, cork, animal hides, and copper effectively provide an impression of nature within the space despite its location in the basement and the shortage of views to the outside. Nature is also integrated into the design through the sound of water. A fountain creates a peaceful and calm environment, instilling

a sense of spirit within the space and its occupants (Douglas Cardinal Architect Inc., 2011). Curvilinear and organic forms found throughout the interior spaces speak to the significance of these forms within Indigenous culture and expresses Cardinal's holistic approach to architecture.

As a precedent for my design considerations, the Iskotew Healing Lodge is a space for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to come together regardless of their faith and culture to learn, practice and develop an understanding of the traditions of the Indigenous peoples. The thoughtful design of the interior is reminiscent of the past through the incorporation and present day reinterpretation of the traditional longhouse form. Its use creates an educational experience of both past and present Indigenous culture. The inclusion of nature through materiality, forms, and the provoking of the senses speaks to the strong relationship Indigenous peoples have with the environment. This inclusion can also be meaningful to non-Indigenous groups or individuals who also find a connection to nature. The harmony of the materiality and forms of the space creates a welcoming atmosphere where the traditions and guidance of Indigenous peoples is experienced not only through the programs offered but within the interior environment as well.

Precedent Element	Precedent Features	Design Considerations
Culturally Derived Form	Longhouse form used to provide historical reference, teaching tool, provide Indigenous inclusion within design.	Apply relevant Indigenous forms that are significant in order to provide culturally relevant interior spaces. Draw from spiritual connections and forms to strengthen ceremonies and rituals and create supportive space.
Materiality	Natural materials include wood, animal hides and copper used to create a balanced and harmonious atmosphere, creates sense of warmth.	Select natural materials appropriate to the location of the site, are responsibly sourced and sustainable, and hold significance to Indigenous spirituality especially around death and healing.
Sensory: Auditory	Water fountain provides soothing background sound promoting a sense of spirit, nature, and tranquility within users.	Consider the effect of sound on a user's spiritual and physical experience within an interior environment where death and funerary practices are present.

**TABLE 5:** Design Considerations Derived from the Iskotew Healing Lodge

NATURE. SOUND. TEACHING. ACCEPTANCE.



FIGURE 2: Interior View of Iskotew Healing Lodge



FIGURE 3: Interior View of Iskotew Healing Lodge





**FIGURE 4:** Interior View of Iskotew Healing Lodge



## 3.2 Interfaith Spiritual Centre

Located in Boston Massachusetts, Northeastern University's Interfaith Spiritual Center is an example of a multi-faith space designed specifically to meet the diverse religious and spiritual needs of its student and member body. The Sacred Space, or main area, is used for individual and group worship, meetings, and special events. Users have access to spiritual advisors from a diverse range of faiths. The flexibility of the Sacred Space is achieved by not specifically conforming to any one spiritual or religious faith resulting in a neutral design. While neutral may have bland connotations, it is not an ambiguous or static environment. To achieve this, Office d'A architects designed the space with, "a beauty of surface and atmosphere that is remarkable and transcends religious boundaries rather than ignoring them" (Richardson, 2004, p. 74). Flexibility in the design allows users the ability to control different aspects of the space according to their needs. Three domed metal ceilings positioned over the main space act as rotating shutters allowing varying degrees of light to enter from above and be focused and directed in a variety of ways. This personalisation allows the user to maximize the potential

**FIGURE 5:** Interior View of Interfaith Spiritual Centre

of the space for their spiritual use. Frosted glass windows on the outer edges produce an ethereal diffused glow. These windows are accentuated by bands of soft blues and greens penetrating the richness and warmth of the polished wood and metal. The linearity of the main space is softened by the curved forms of the domed ceiling and the variation of shapes created by the overlapping shutters in a circular fashion.

Providing a balanced spiritual and religious atmosphere, this precedent is significant to my research as it does not favour any one faith within its design. Neutrality allows all users the opportunity to interpret and shape the space in a way that is comfortable and accommodates their specific needs. Physical qualities from this precedent include the power of light in its presence and absence to dramatically alter the atmosphere of the Sacred Space. In combination with natural materials and colours, the light plays upon the textures of the shiny metal ceilings, polished floors, and woven rugs, and animates the coloured panels of frosted glass. Although my proposed funeral home is intended for a specific cultural group, the design should be adaptable so that it resonates with all occupants as a warm and welcoming space for everyone.

Precedent Element	Precedent Features	Design Considerations
Personalisation	Adaptable space with no fixed elements. Shuttered ceiling controls amount of natural sunlight. Personalization enhances user’s relationship to interior environment through its adaptability to satisfy the user’s needs.	Consider key elements needed by the user to be adaptable and controllable.
Sensory	Variations in light provide different levels of sensory interaction with space. Transforms and animates the ambience, materiality, and spirituality within the interior.	Consider the effect of light (natural and artificial) in terms of spiritual significance in order to elevate the impact of the space upon the user both mentally and physically. Consider the influence of light on materiality through its ability to animate or remain static.

**TABLE 6:** Design Considerations Derived from the Interfaith Spiritual Centre

PERSONALISATION. MULTI-FAITH. LIGHT.



**FIGURE 6:** Interior View of Interfaith Spiritual Centre

**FIGURE 7 (RIGHT):** Interior View of Interfaith Spiritual Centre







### 3.3 Thunderbird House

The third precedent is a multi-use building that facilitates the continuation and accessibility of Indigenous spirituality and culture within a community. The Thunderbird House was designed by Canadian Indigenous architect Douglas Cardinal and opened in March 2000 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Situated at the corner of Main Street and Higgins Avenue, the surrounding North Main area is known for its economic and social decline within the past decades. However revitalization and redevelopment projects such as the Thunderbird House and Neechi Commons have contributed to reviving the area. The site the building is located on is called Neeginan, which translates in Cree to “our place”. Neeginan includes a park landscaped with native plants and trees to increase and strengthen the community’s connection to nature within an urban setting (Point Douglas Community Resource Network, n.d). A sweat lodge is also located on the same property.

By incorporating Indigenous design elements derived from traditional ideas, the architecture of the building stands out amongst the urban landscape of Main Street as a “... powerful visual reminder for the entire community of Winnipeg, acknowledging

**FIGURE 8:** Thunderbird House Ceiling Detail

symbolically the Indigenous Community as an integral part of Winnipeg's urban fabric" (City of Winnipeg, 2000). Using the spiritual principles of the medicine wheel, the building is circular in form with a striking copper roof symbolizing the outstretched and protective wings of an eagle (City of Winnipeg, 2000). The building structure below the eagle represents a turtle, which can be seen when viewed from above. The centre of the building houses the main ceremonial space incorporating elements of nature important to Indigenous culture and spirituality such as a natural earth fire pit, open-air design, natural light from a large central skylight, and the use of wood. Lining the exterior of the ceremonial space are office spaces, a meeting room and kitchen. A number of spiritual and cultural programs are provided including counselling, healing, and workshops. The central space is available for special functions including weddings and funerals. Other important design elements incorporated throughout the building include the number four repeated in elements such as the four entrances. The use of the number four symbolizes the four directions, four winds, and the four races represented by the colours white, red, black and yellow. In addition, the seven First Nations Cultures of Manitoba are represented in seven ceiling to wall panels.

Located in an inner city neighborhood similar to my proposed site, Thunderbird House demonstrates the ability of architecture to symbolize the spiritual and cultural commitment of the community to its people. The deliberate use of forms and symbolism important to Indigenous peoples creates not only a successful multi-functional space but utilizes the architecture and interior elements as a form of teaching. Design considerations invoking nature are not only found within the materiality such as the exposed timber structure. The incorporation of an open-air room allows a direct relationship allowing the building to “open to the sky and the earth” (Point Douglas Community Resource Network, n.d). As a prominent fixture on Main Street, Thunderbird House is an example of a space that welcomes people from all beliefs and walks of life. It is “a place of spirituality, love, forgiveness and healing”, allowing for the development of strong relationships and support amongst the community (Point Douglas Community Resource Network, n.d). ). This precedent is an example of Indigenous culture successfully reflected within the design considerations of the building through spatiality, form, and materiality.

Precedent Element	Precedent Features	Design Considerations
Connection to Community	Street presence reflects Indigenous culture and strengthens identity within community through recognizable and memorable architecture through use of circular building form, bold materiality, and large thunderbird shaped roof.	Consider social and visual impact of the exterior design on the community. Form, materiality, and symbolism will be considered in the strengthening of identity and connection to the community.
Nature	Natural earth fire pit in centre of main space in addition to open air design brings elements of the outside world into the interior. Open air increases sensory connections such as sight, smells, and sounds to natural world. Use of natural materials such as wood.	Consider the impact and effect of natural inclusions to the interior. Any opening to the outside must be carefully considered due to weather, noise from the street, and air quality. Consider scale of inclusion and benefits to the user.
Symbolic Design Elements	Various spiritual and traditional connections to the number four are represented in various design elements such as the four doors and use of colour. The medicine wheel is reflected in the circular shape of the space. Enter in the East door.	Examine research completed regarding Indigenous Worldviews and establish important spiritual and traditional elements which can be applied to the design. Consider subtle and direct forms of incorporation.

**TABLE 7:** Design Considerations Derived from the Thunderbird House

# NATURE. SPIRITUALITY. TRADITION.



**FIGURE 9:** Exterior View of Thunderbird House  
**FIGURE 10:** Interior View of Thunderbird House

# 4 Site and Building Analysis

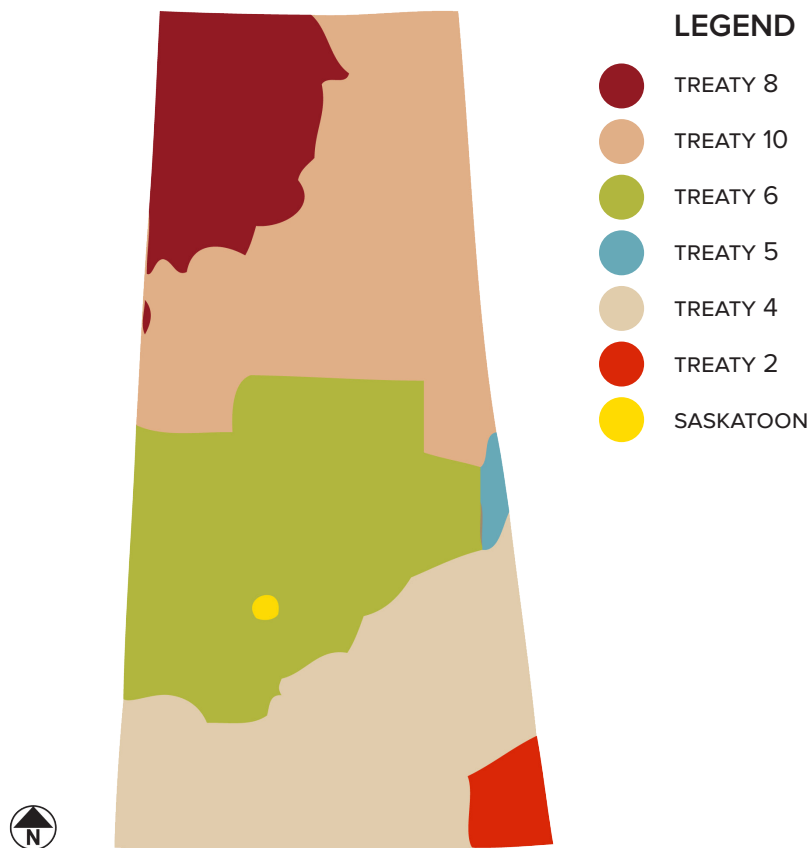
4.1 Site Selection and Analysis

4.2 Building Analysis

## 4.1 Site Selection and Analysis

In choosing a site for the location of my proposed Indigenous funeral home, I wanted a location within a region that I am familiar with and that has a significant predominant Indigenous population. Located in the prairie province of Saskatchewan, the city of Saskatoon has been chosen as the setting for my proposed design. Situated on the banks of the South Saskatchewan River, the area of Saskatoon has been inhabited by Indigenous populations for approximately 6000 years (City of Saskatoon, 2012). Saskatoon is located in Treaty 6 territory. It was signed in 1876 and extends into Alberta. There are around thirty Treaty 6 First Nations groups in Saskatchewan. The name “Saskatoon” originates from the Cree word “mis-sask-quah-toomina”, an indigenous berry found growing in the area (City of Saskatoon, 2012). With a population of around 222,189, Saskatoon is the largest city within the province of 1,033,381 people (Statistics Canada, 2012). Indigenous groups such as the Cree, Dene, Ojibway, Dakota, Sioux and Metis make up 9.8% of the city’s population (Statistics Canada, 2013). According to Statistics Canada, by 2031 the prairie provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan will

have the largest proportion of Indigenous populations in the country (Statistics Canada, 2011). My proposed design aims to help facilitate the growing needs of the increasing Indigenous urban population while respecting their place within the history of the area.



**FIGURE 11:** Treaty Territories of Saskatchewan



Following the selection of a region for my proposed facility, the following criteria was used to guide the selection of a suitable site and building:

- 1) Location in a neighborhood with a strong Indigenous presence.
- 2) Adaptive reuse of an existing building; aid in any revitalization efforts which might be occurring in the community.
- 3) Easily accessible to pedestrians, cyclists, public transportation and other vehicular transportation.
- 4) Opportunity for building expansion and/or increased landscaping.
- 5) Opportunity to create a positive Indigenous presence in the urban landscape through the visual presence on street.

Based on the above criteria, the project site of 1402 20th Street West was chosen. The site is located on one of the major business streets running through the heart of Saskatoon's west side neighborhoods of Riversdale and Pleasant Hill. These neighborhoods were preferred for the location of the site as they have a significant Indigenous presence and population. Once regarded as low-income neighborhoods with high levels of crime, these communities have recently seen a revitalization in the both the business districts and residential areas and are now regarded as up and coming neighborhoods. The

practicum site itself is situated on the portion of 20th Street West running through the Pleasant Hill community. Originally settled as a village in the late 1800's prior to merging with Saskatoon in 1906, Pleasant Hill joins Riversdale as one of the oldest neighborhoods in the city. The lingering presence of small town charm can still be felt in its many locally owned businesses and historic buildings.

The area surrounding the site is a mixture of residential, commercial and community and health services lining both sides of the street. Directly across the street is a newly constructed four-storey low-income housing initiative. To the west of the site there is a single storey early learning centre,

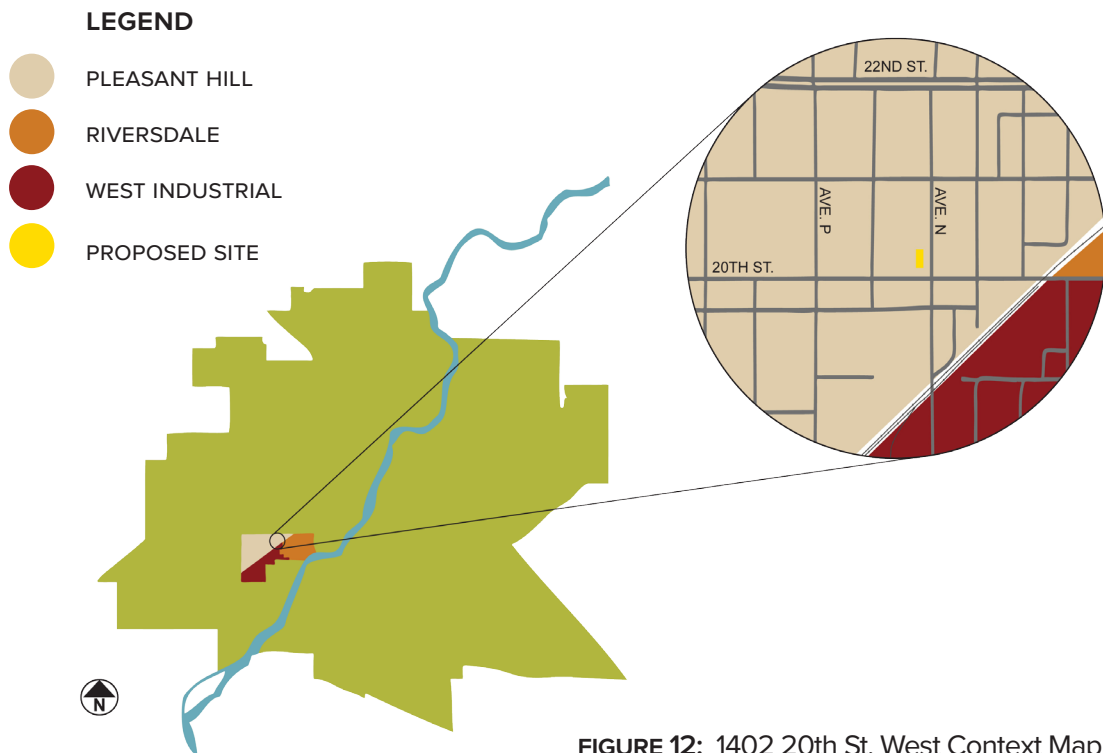


FIGURE 12: 1402 20th St. West Context Map

while the east side of the property is located on the corner of the block. Residential buildings in the surrounding area include single-family dwellings and multi-family units ranging from three to eight storeys high. St. Paul’s Hospital is located two blocks from the site. The hospital serves both Saskatoon and Saskatchewan’s Northern populations offering Palliative Care and Spiritual Care services (St. Paul’s Hospital, n.d). Also located in close proximity to the site are several churches, halls, medical clinics, an elementary school, senior residences, gas station, banks, convenience and drug stores, florist, bakery and a small local grocer.



**FIGURE 13:** Surrounding Building Density and Use Map for 1402 20th St. West

## Demographics

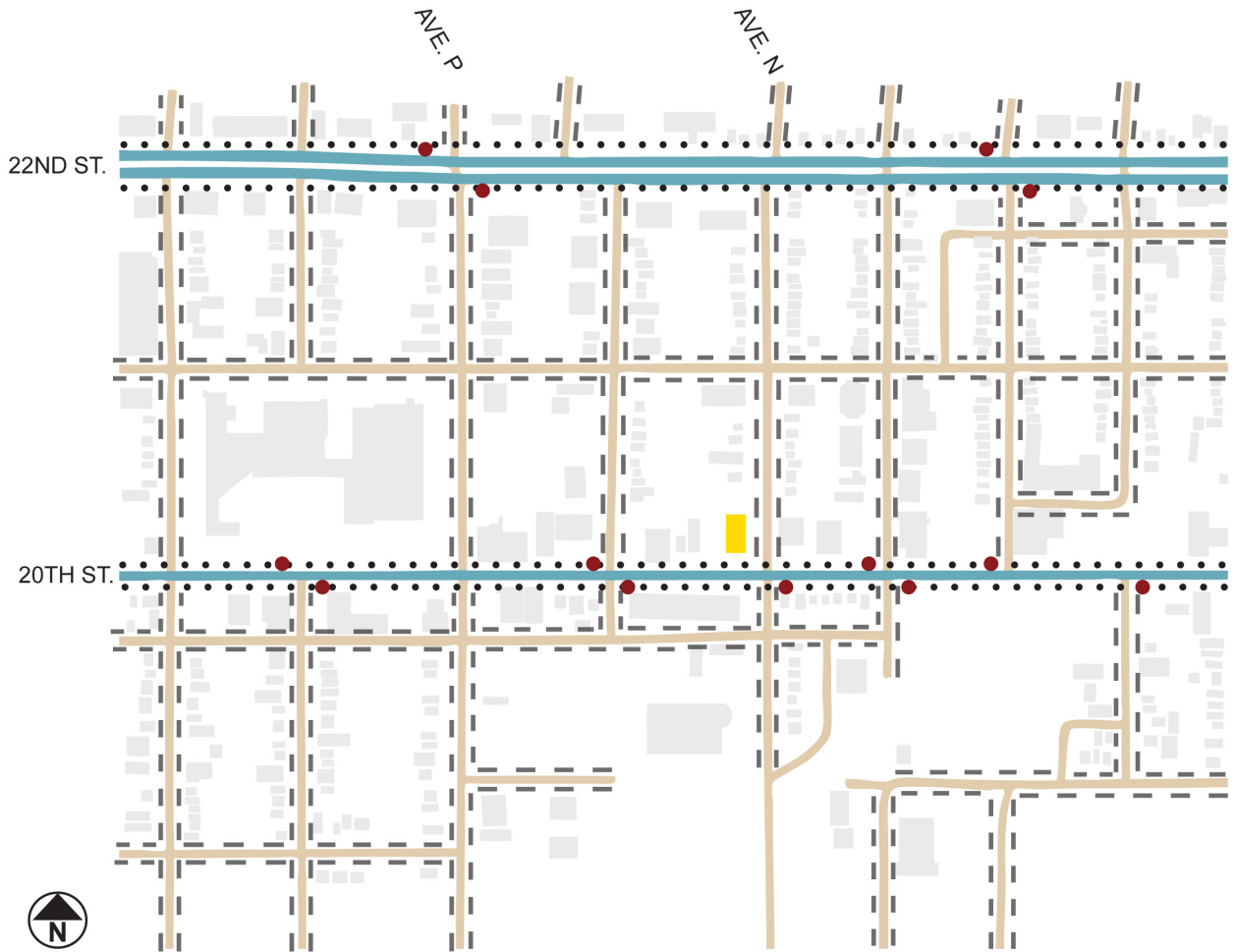
A study by Statistics Canada in 2001 revealed that 26% of the population of Pleasant Hill and Riversdale were unemployed while 63% were considered to be part of low-income families (Statistics Canada, 2008). However, approximately only 7% of the population were without High School diplomas at that time, while 59% had obtained a University degree (Statistics Canada, 2008). Considered to be a culturally diverse neighborhood, the overall population of Pleasant Hill in 2001 was comprised of 3% recent immigrants, 14% visible minorities and 48% identifying themselves as Aboriginal (Statistics Canada, 2008).

## Perceived Safety







According to Statistics Canada, in 2007 Pleasant Hill and Riversdale were considered to be in the top three neighborhoods for highest crime rates in Saskatoon. Their studies concluded that nearly one-quarter of the city's violent incidents occurred within these two neighborhoods (Statistics Canada, 2008). Due to these statistics, the area is regularly patrolled by the police. Due to the site's location within what is deemed to be a "rougher" area of Saskatoon, its position along a major thoroughfare for both pedestrian and traffic increases visibility and safety. The site is also easily viewable from the multi-storey residences located across the street and east and west of the property.

## Transportation and Circulation

The site is easily accessible by pedestrians, bicycles, vehicular transportation and public transit. The surrounding area supports high volumes of pedestrian and vehicular traffic along 20th Street. The intersecting avenues and parallel streets are a mixture of medium and low density vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Parking is available on 20th Street as well as the side street adjacent to the site. The site also offers an onsite parking lot for patron's vehicles. Two buses service 20th Street with stops within a block of the proposed building and travel to the City Centre transit terminal located five minutes in the downtown core. Nearby to the terminal is the Saskatchewan Transit Company bus depot. A short walk two blocks north of 20th Street is 22nd Street West, another main thoroughfare with access to additional transit routes. The airport is located fifteen minutes north of the site.



**LEGEND**

-  PRIMARY VEHICULAR PATH
-  SECONDARY VEHICULAR PATH
-  PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN PATH
-  SECONDARY PEDESTRIAN PATH
-  BUS STOPS
-  PROPOSED SITE

**FIGURE 14:** Surrounding Transportation and Circulation Map for 1402 20th St. West

## Vegetation

The limited green space on the site includes a small portion of lawn and single spruce tree on the south side in front of the main doors and ramp. Four elm trees line the east side of the building and are located on city property. In addition, portions of sidewalk along 20th Street and accompanying side streets are lined with mature elm trees. The majority of vegetation can be found in surrounding residential yards and some commercial property. Nearby green spaces include Steve Patola Park, Grace Adam Metawewinhk Park and a children's park located adjacent to St. Mary's School.





FIGURE 15: Surrounding Vegetation Map for 1402 20th St. West

## 4.1.1 Site Opportunities and Constraints

### Opportunities:

- Established Indigenous presence in surrounding amenities and residences.
- Location on main thoroughfare makes it easily accessible by various types of transit.
- High visibility from street and surrounding buildings increase perception of safety.
- Site has available space for expansion.
- On-site and street parking.
- Variety of commercial amenities nearby such as food, pharmacy, and gas.
- Close proximity to St. Paul's Hospital two blocks from site, and other health services.
- Mixture of commercial use on main thoroughfares and quieter residential use on side streets.
- Mature trees lining streets and nearby access to green space.

**FIGURE 16:** Site Context North West



Constraints:

- Noise generated from vehicular traffic, particular emergency vehicles due to its location on major street and close proximity to the hospital.
- Lack of green space on site.
- Loitering.
- Sense of safety decreased at night.

FIGURE 17: Site Context North East



A photograph of a modern brick building for Westwood Funeral & Cremation Services. The building features a prominent red horizontal band above the entrance and a black metal railing on the porch. The sky is clear blue, and the foreground is a grassy area with fallen leaves.

**WESTWOOD**  
FUNERAL & CREMATION SERVICES

## 4.2 Building Analysis

The building for my proposed Indigenous Funeral Home is currently the Westwood Funeral Chapel. Designed in 1963 by B. T. Arling and Associates, it was modelled after a funeral home owned by a competitor in the funeral industry, the Saskatoon Funeral Home that was established in 1910. In 1988 the Westwood was purchased by the Saskatoon Funeral Home and has become an integral addition to the range of services that they offer to Saskatoon and the surrounding area (Saskatoon Funeral Home, n.d). Currently, it is the only funeral home located west of downtown and offers traditional funeral services in addition to accommodating special requests based on individual situations (Saskatoon Funeral Home, n.d). The style of building is common to 1960's modernist architecture with a flat roof, simple forms, and distinctive vertical and horizontal lines. Although well-maintained, the building has not undergone major interior updates. The construction is concrete block, as seen within the interior. Coloured glazing within the walls and exterior doors brings light and energy into many areas of the main floor, such as the chapel, while still providing privacy.

**FIGURE 18:** Exterior View of 1402 20th St. West

Two levels in addition to a basement form the original 11,014 square feet of the building. The main floor currently contains the chapel, viewing and family rooms, a meeting room, offices, washrooms, casket lift, and a garage located at the rear of the building. The basement is separated into two spaces, one for the public and other for the staff. The public space contains the display room with caskets and other funeral items while the staff-only area includes a lunchroom, washroom, storage, and a body preparation room which is now used for storage. Situated at the back of the building the second level includes two suites currently being rented out, however previously these were used as residences for funeral staff. The building's position within the slope on the property allows for the doors at the rear of the building to be fully accessible while those in the front on the same level are only accessible by stairs and ramp. A sheltered driveway is located on the east side, with a parking lot surrounding the north and west portions of the property.

The modernist style of the exterior allows the building to have a modest presence on the street due to its prominent horizontal linear elements. As well, the front of the building is only

**FIGURE 19 (TOP LEFT):** 1402 20th St. West. Main Floor Foyer and Stair

**FIGURE 20 (TOP RIGHT):** 1402 20th St. West. First Floor Chapel East Wall

**FIGURE 21 (BOTTOM LEFT):** 1402 20th St. West. Stairwell Light Study

**FIGURE 22 (BOTTOM RIGHT):** 1402 20th St. West. Wall Detail



one level, while the middle and back of the building rise two storeys high. These design features make the building appear to have a more grounded connection to the street level and landscape. The interior of the building is also very linear with long hallways accentuated by the linear repetition of the concrete block walls and rectangular shaped spaces. The space where funerals are held has long wooden pews, with beams of wood on the ceiling and some walls clad in vertical wood panelling. The stained glass windows on the East wall stand long and narrow, while the west wall windows extend almost the entire length of the bottom portion of the room. The design of the Westwood Funeral Chapel relies heavily on linear qualities and enclosed spaces, however

Basement: 3,526 sq. ft.

Main Floor: 3,796 sq. ft.

Second Floor: 2,080 sq. ft.

Garage: 1,612 sq. ft.

**Total: 11,014 sq. ft.**

First Nations designs often take on organic, open and curvilinear shapes, based on the importance of the circle and inspired by nature. While the existing intimacy of the building to human scale and its relationship to its surrounding landscape is very desirable and should be

maintained, a balance needs to be achieved connecting the current long linear elements to less rigid nature inspired and curvilinear forms.

**FIGURE 23 (TOP):** Exterior Panoramic View of 1402 20th St. West

**FIGURE 24 (CENTRE LEFT):** Exterior View of 402 20th St. West

**FIGURE 25 (CENTRE RIGHT):** Exterior View of 402 20th St. West

**FIGURE 26 (BOTTOM LEFT):** 1402 20th St. West. Exterior Wall Detail

**FIGURE 27 (BOTTOM RIGHT):** 1402 20th St. West. Parking Lot





## 4.2.1 Building Opportunities and Constraints

### Opportunities:

- Existing and proposed occupancy use is the same.
- All entrances to the building are accessible, some accessed by existing ramp.
- Room for expansion.
- Front and East façade is brick, an attractive, durable, and natural material.
- Coloured glass windows in both the walls and doors animate the space with light and colour.
- Existing natural materials such as wooden doors.
- Existing spaces large enough to accommodate substantial proposed spaces such as ceremonial space, kitchen, and dining.

FIGURE 28: 1402 20th St. West. First Floor Chapel

FIGURE 29: 1402 20th St. West. Basement Sales Area



### Constraints:

- 1960's modernist architecture does not reflect Indigenous design qualities.
- Existing finishes, features, and finishes may not reflect the desired design outcome such as the coloured glass windows, concrete block walls, and carpeting.
- Lack of natural light due to no windows located on the west wall, while windows existing on the east wall are coloured and opaque and windows on the north are often closed by blinds.
- Basement is only accessible by stairs, will need accessible washrooms and elevator.
- Retain sufficient parking space in the case of expansion.
- Building is not accessible to public; building is locked with buzzer system.

**FIGURE 30:** 1402 20th St. West. Basement Body Preparation Room

**FIGURE 31:** 1402 20th St. West. First Floor Family Room



# 5 Design

## Programming

5.1 Human Factors Analysis

5.2 Functional and Aesthetic Requirements

## 5.1 Human Factors Analysis

### 5.1.1 Client Profile

The proposed client of the Indigenous Funeral Home is the Saskatoon Funeral Home, which has provided service in Saskatoon since 1910. The Saskatoon Funeral home is the current owner of the Westwood Funeral Chapel, the proposed site for this practicum. At their funeral homes located in Saskatoon and North Battleford, the Saskatoon Funeral Home ensures that everyone has the ability to mourn in their own way whether it involves religion, spirituality, culture, or other traditions that provide meaning and comfort (Saskatoon Funeral Home, n.d, p. 5). Dedication to providing affordable yet high-quality service that reflects the cultural traditions of the surrounding community and accommodating the needs of their clients is presently addressed at the Westwood Funeral Chapel. However, in order to meet the growing needs of the Indigenous population of Saskatoon and surrounding area, the Saskatoon Funeral Home requires an updated space which appropriately reflects Indigenous culture not only through the services offered, but through its design.

## **5.1.2 User Profile**

### **Primary Users**

The primary users of the Indigenous Funeral home will be the staff employed at the facility. Core staff members include the funeral director, administrative staff, support staff, and a sales associate. Various duties include consultations with clients, preparation of the various logistics and components of funeral services and related events, perform assorted duties during funerary events, process paperwork, and oversee sales and marketing. These staff members will occupy and utilize the space for the majority of the time as the funeral home will be open every day, with someone on staff at all times of the day. Spaces required for these users include private offices that are easily accessible to clients, a meeting space, storage areas, a sales and display area, as well as a private staff retreat room. The requirements of this user group is based on their ability to carry out important organizational tasks while working with clients who may be in a highly charged emotional state or under pressure from time constraints. Due to these factors the spaces the staff occupy should be well organized with sufficient storage, and be private yet calm, comfortable and hospitable

for them and their clients to ensure an efficient, healthy and positive work environment. The funeral home will also work with an Elder who will be provided a fully-equipped residence located on the second floor in the north side of the building. They will also be supplied with a personal office so that they may have a place to meet with patrons. They will be on hand to provide traditional knowledge, and to assist and conduct the funerary procedures and ceremonies.

### Secondary Users

The secondary users of the space are the clients and patrons of the funeral home. Though this group may use the facility infrequently and for shorter periods of time, their needs are just as valuable to the outcome of the design as those of the staff. The demographics of this user group is largely made up of members of the Indigenous community, ranging in all ages, and comprised of local residents within Saskatoon and surrounding urban and rural areas within Saskatchewan and out of province. Clients and patrons of the facility require services such as pre-planning and the immediate planning of funeral services and ceremonies, consultation with Elders, accessing resources, as well as attending wakes and post service activities such as feasts

and gatherings. Physical spaces to accommodate the needs of this user group include a large and flexible ceremonial space, multipurpose room, meeting room, private retreat room, kitchen, and a library and resource centre. Psychological requirements involve the need for privacy, comfort and support during consultations, services, ceremonies, and personal moments such as accessing resources, meeting with an elder, or taking a moment for reflection. Private spaces should not be isolated and hidden within the layout of the building however, rather they should be easily accessible, comfortable, and welcoming to all. Equality achieved through universal design will allow all members of the community to safely and conveniently access and utilize the building through means such as universally designed washrooms, ramps, and elevators. The cultural needs of the Indigenous community are central to the spatial and aesthetic design of the spaces and should respectfully reflect cultural traditions and values. Ceremonies involving smudging shall be accommodated in specially designed and designated spaces in accordance with the building code. The natural world is a significant component in Indigenous culture and will be integrated in various manners such as views, materiality, spatiality, and form which will also contribute to the necessary sensory needs of the users.



## Tertiary Users

Tertiary users such as delivery personnel, couriers, mail deliverers, and maintenance staff occupy the funeral home on a less frequent basis and for briefer periods of time. These individuals require access to non-public entrances, administrative offices, and storage areas. Deliveries regarding the transport of bodies will need privacy away from public view and access. Requirements for these users include privacy, uncluttered access points and passage areas, and be universally accessible.

**TABLE 8:** User Profile

User	Type	Approx. Age	Activities	Frequency / Duration of Activities
Funeral Director	Primary	30-60	Oversee funeral rites of the deceased, plan services/ceremonies, arrange transportation of deceased, schedule elders, and other ceremony officiators, paperwork	Available every day, duration of each activity varied
Administrative Staff	Primary	20-60	Perform organizational duties and interact with clients in person and over telephone	Available every day, duration of activities relatively consistent day to day
Sales Associate	Primary	20-60	Assist clients with planning and the purchasing of funerary items such as caskets  Maintain and merchandise the sales and display area and work with distributors	Available every day, duration of activities dependent on demand of clients

Psychological Needs	Sensory Needs	Cultural Needs	Physical and Special Needs
<p>Privacy in office and spaces for client consultation</p> <p>Efficiency in organization, layout, and ability to adapt to growing needs</p> <p>Comfortable, professional and positive work setting</p>	<p>Views to the outside, and/or connection to surrounding spaces</p> <p>Peaceful and quiet work environment; areas that foster discussion and interaction</p> <p>Materials that are pleasing to the touch and eye, use of natural materials</p> <p>Ventilation</p>	<p>Spatial planning to reflect Indigenous social and traditional principles</p> <p>Respectfully integrate cultural traditions and values within design</p> <p>Incorporate importance of nature in culture through views, materiality, spatiality, and form</p>	<p>Universal design: washrooms, elevator, entrances, ramps</p> <p>Access to parking</p> <p>Access to washrooms and retreat space</p>
<p>Privacy in office and spaces for client consultation</p> <p>Efficiency in organization, layout, and ability to adapt to growing needs</p> <p>Comfortable, professional and positive work setting</p>	<p>Views to the outside, and/or connection to surrounding spaces</p> <p>Peaceful and quiet work environment; areas that foster discussion and interaction</p> <p>Materials that are pleasing to the touch and eye, use of natural materials.</p> <p>Ventilation</p>	<p>Spatial planning to reflect Indigenous social and traditional principles</p> <p>Respectfully integrate cultural traditions and values within design</p> <p>Incorporate importance of nature in culture through views, materiality, spatiality, and form</p>	<p>Universal design: washrooms, elevator, entrances, ramps</p> <p>Access to parking</p> <p>Access to washrooms and retreat space</p>
<p>Private yet welcoming space to consult and exhibit</p>	<p>Views to the outside, and/or connection to surrounding spaces</p> <p>Peaceful and quiet work environment; areas that foster discussion and interaction</p>	<p>Spatial planning to reflect Indigenous social and traditional principles</p> <p>Respectfully integrate cultural traditions and values within design</p>	<p>Universal design: washrooms, elevator, entrances, ramps</p> <p>Access to parking</p>

User	Type	Approx. Age	Activities	Frequency / Duration of Activities
Support Staff	Primary	20-60	Assist with office work, attend and perform minor duties during funerary services, ceremonies and events. Transport bodies	Available every day, duration of activities de Available during services and gatherings Hours based on length of services and gathering (ex. 24hr wake). pendent on demand of clients
Elder	Primary	No Age Definition	Participate in funeral services, traditional ceremonies and related events such as wakes. Impart traditional knowledge and guidance to clients and patrons  Lives in provided residence attached to the funeral home	Irregular schedule, dependant on appointments, wakes, and services held per week

Psychological Needs	Sensory Needs	Cultural Needs	Physical and Special Needs
<p>Spacious, efficiency in organization, layout, and ability to adapt to growing needs</p> <p>Comfortable, professional and positive work setting</p>	<p>Materials that are pleasing to the touch and eye, use of natural materials</p> <p>Ventilation</p>	<p>Incorporate importance of nature in culture through views, materiality, spatiality, and form</p>	<p>Access to washrooms and retreat space</p>
<p>Comfortable, professional and positive work setting</p> <p>Efficiency in organization, layout, and ability to adapt to growing needs</p>	<p>Views to the outside, and/or connection to surrounding spaces</p> <p>Peaceful and quiet work environment; areas that foster discussion and interaction</p> <p>Materials that are pleasing to the touch and eye, use of natural materials</p> <p>Ventilation</p>	<p>Spatial planning to reflect Indigenous social and traditional principles</p> <p>Respectfully integrate cultural traditions and values within design</p> <p>Incorporate importance of nature in culture through views, materiality, spatiality, and form</p>	<p>Universal design: washrooms, elevator, entrances, ramps</p> <p>Access to parking</p> <p>Access to washrooms and retreat space</p>
<p>Privacy in office for client appointments</p> <p>Privacy in residence</p> <p>Efficiency in organization, layout, and ability to adapt to growing needs</p> <p>Comfortable, calm, and accommodating living and work environment</p>	<p>Views to the outside, another connection to nature, and/or connection to surrounding spaces</p> <p>Peaceful and quiet work environment; areas that foster discussion and interaction</p> <p>Materials that are pleasing to the touch and eye, use of natural materials</p> <p>Ventilation</p>	<p>Spatial planning to reflect Indigenous social and traditional principles</p> <p>Respectfully integrate cultural traditions and values within design</p> <p>Areas to support smudging</p> <p>Incorporate importance of nature in culture through views, materiality, spatiality, and form</p>	<p>Universal design: washrooms, elevator, entrances, ramps</p> <p>Access to parking</p> <p>Access to washrooms</p> <p>Interior access to funeral home</p> <p>Wayfinding</p>

User	Type	Approx. Age	Activities	Frequency / Duration of Activities
Clientele/ Patrons (Primarily Indigenous Community)	Secondary	0-100	Obtain services such as pre-planning and immediate planning of funerals, meet with Elders, access death-related resources, and attend funeral services, ceremonies and events such as wakes and feasts	Short term dependency on space frequency based on pre-planning, planning or participation in service or gathering  Duration based on length of appointment, service, gathering, 24hr wake
Religious Minister or Civil Celebrant	Secondary	25-80	Participate in funeral services, traditional ceremonies and related events such as wakes	Irregular schedule, dependant on appointments, wakes, and services held per week

Psychological Needs	Sensory Needs	Cultural Needs	Physical and Special Needs
<p>Welcoming space that is relaxed, supportive, and accommodating</p> <p>Various levels of privacy for personal, small group, and larger gatherings</p> <p>Efficiency in organization, layout, and ability to adapt to growing needs</p>	<p>Views to the outside, or another connection to nature, and/or connection to surrounding spaces</p> <p>Quiet areas for reflection, and spaces for talking, sharing, and music</p> <p>Well-ventilated spaces used for food preparation, eating, and smudging</p> <p>Materials that are pleasing to the touch and eye, use of natural materials</p> <p>Spaces that elevate the experience of consuming traditional and non-traditional foods</p>	<p>Spatial planning to reflect Indigenous social and traditional principles</p> <p>Respectfully integrate cultural traditions and values within design</p> <p>Areas to support smudging</p> <p>Incorporate importance of nature in culture through views, materiality, spatiality, and form</p>	<p>Universal design: washrooms, elevator, entrances, ramps</p> <p>Access to parking</p> <p>Access to washrooms</p> <p>Wayfinding</p>
<p>Efficiency in organization, layout, and ability to adapt to growing needs</p> <p>Comfortable, calm, and accommodating environment</p>	<p>Views to the outside or another connection to nature</p> <p>Materials that are pleasing to the touch and eye, use of natural materials</p> <p>Ventilation</p>	<p>Incorporate importance of nature in culture through views, materiality, spatiality, and form</p>	<p>Universal design: washrooms, elevator, entrances, ramps</p> <p>Access to parking</p> <p>Access to washrooms</p> <p>Wayfinding</p>

User	Type	Approx. Age	Activities	Frequency / Duration of Activities
Maintenance Staff	Tertiary	20-60	Duties include upkeep, grounds keeping and cleaning of the facility	Required after services, gatherings, bi-weekly cleaning duties and upkeep  Hours based on when space not in use
Deliverers	Tertiary	20-60	Various types of deliveries such as mail, couriers, sales merchandise, supplies, and body transport	Dependant on number services per week  Approx. every 2-3 days/less than 1 hour



Psychological Needs	Sensory Needs	Cultural Needs	Physical and Special Needs
<p>Efficiency in organization, layout, and ability to adapt to growing needs</p> <p>Comfortable, calm, and accommodating environment</p>	<p>Materials that are pleasing to the touch and eye, use of natural materials</p> <p>Ventilation</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Universal design: washrooms, elevator, entrances, ramps</p> <p>Access to parking</p> <p>Access to washrooms and retreat space</p> <p>Wayfinding</p>
<p>Private entrance</p> <p>Comfortable, calm, and accommodating environment</p> <p>Uncluttered and spacious loading, passage and entry ways</p>	<p>Materials that are pleasing to the touch and eye, use of natural materials</p> <p>Ventilation</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Universal design: washrooms, elevator, entrances, ramps</p> <p>Access to parking</p> <p>Access to washrooms</p> <p>Wayfinding</p>

## 5.2 Functional and Aesthetic Requirements

**TABLE 9:** Use / Furniture + Fixtures + Equipment / Material + Maintenance / Atmosphere

Space	Quantity	SQ. FT. (EA)	Total SQ. FT.	Use/Activities
Multipurpose Room	1	630	630	For use during wakes, informal gatherings and eating, may act as additional space for overflow if service space is full
Sales/Display Area	1	241	241	Display space for items such as caskets, urns, remembrance products and other funeral related items
Meeting Room	1	145	145	Space allocated for appointments, and impromptu meetings such as consultations regarding pre-planning and planning funerals Use for staff meetings

Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment	Special Colour, Material Requirements, Maintenance Issues	Desired Atmosphere, Spatial Character, Visual Concept
<p>Non-fixed dining seating                      Non-fixed dining tables                      Soft seating                      Sink and counter space with storage                      A/V equipment</p>	<p>Durable, easily cleanable hard surfaces and seating                      Resilient flooring                      Warm tones, use of natural materials</p>	<p>Spacious and open with several options of seating and table arrangements                      Reflect cultural traditions in design elements                      Connection to natural environment</p>
<p>Adjustable overhead lighting system                      Display systems, and shelving</p>	<p>Durable display pieces and shelving                      Resilient commercial carpet tile                      Warm tones, use of natural materials</p>	<p>Spacious and uncluttered                      Professional yet relaxed, comfortable and private atmosphere                      Reflect culture in materiality, form, and design                      Connection to natural environment</p>
<p>Table                      Chairs                      Storage cabinets</p>	<p>Easily cleanable and durable hard surfaces                      Soft, comfortable fabrics                      Resilient commercial carpet tile                      Warm tones, use of natural materials</p>	<p>Atmosphere to be comforting, peaceful, and private                      Easily accessible from a main entrance</p>

Space	Quantity	SQ. FT. (EA)	Total SQ. FT.	Use/Activities
Library/ Resource Centre	1	174	174	Dedicated space for accessing funeral and cultural resource materials for clientele
Body Storage	1	372	372	Space to hold bodies before and after services and ceremonies
Public Wash- rooms	6	43-253	610	Personal hygiene space for staff and patrons
Staff Offices	4	136-209	661	Accommodate organizational and administrative tasks Meet with clientele

Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment	Special Colour, Material Requirements, Maintenance Issues	Desired Atmosphere, Spatial Character, Visual Concept
Soft seating Table Task light Bookshelves Computer desk Computer Printer	Easily cleanable and durable hard surfaces Soft, comfortable fabrics Warm tones, use of natural materials Acoustic treatments	Private, quiet, and comfortable Connection to natural environment Reflect culture in materiality, form, and design
Storage Mortuary refrigerator	Easily cleanable and durable hard surfaces Well-lit	Very private
Sink Toilet Mirror Storage Baby Change Table	Easily cleanable and durable hard surfaces Well-lit	Universally accessible Private Clearly defined wayfinding to access it
Desks Chairs (office and guest) Cabinets and document storage systems Computers Printer Photocopier Telephone Task lighting	Easily cleanable and durable hard surfaces Resilient commercial carpet tile Warm tones, use of natural materials such as wooden casework	Organized and uncluttered with several options for paperwork storage Private yet easily accessible and welcoming to clientele Views to outside, and/or connection to surrounding spaces

Space	Quantity	SQ. FT. (EA)	Total SQ. FT.	Use/Activities
Elder's Office	1	219	219	Personal space for Elder use, such as private meetings with public
Service/ Ceremonial Space	1	1604	1604	<p>Hold funeral services and funerary events such as wakes and memorials</p> <p>Reconfigure to more angular shape to increase seating space</p> <p>Accommodate Indigenous cultural practices and other religions associated with funerary ceremonies</p>

<b>Furniture, Fixtures &amp; Equipment</b>	<b>Special Colour, Material Requirements, Maintenance Issues</b>	<b>Desired Atmosphere, Spatial Character, Visual Concept</b>
<p>Soft Seating</p> <p>Sacred medicine storage</p> <p>Sink</p>	<p>Easily cleanable and durable hard surfaces</p> <p>Ventilation for smudging</p> <p>Warm tones, use of natural materials such as wooden casework</p>	<p>Private and comfortable,</p> <p>Easily accessible</p> <p>Connection to natural environment</p> <p>Reflect culture in materiality, form, and design</p> <p>Views to outside</p>
<p>Non-fixed seating</p> <p>Casket stand</p> <p>Audio system</p> <p>Adjustable lighting system</p> <p>Various forms of ventilation</p> <p>Curtain track system to enclose circular space, provide acoustic treatment</p>	<p>Indigenous symbolism to be represented throughout the design such as the use of the Medicine Wheel and the importance of four: quadrants, colours (red, yellow, white and black), and the directions</p> <p>Seating to be comfortable, durable, and easy to maintain</p> <p>Tables durable and easily cleaned</p> <p>Finishes to withstand smoke produced during ceremonies</p>	<p>Physical and spiritual connection created to the outside environment through sensory perception and biophilic design elements</p> <p>Use of natural materials reflecting local area</p> <p>Subtle and direct reflections of cultural traditions and design elements</p> <p>Spatial arrangement in circular form, open, and spacious</p> <p>Easily accessible, welcoming, and comfortable to everyone regardless of culture and religion</p>

Space	Quantity	SQ. FT. (EA)	Total SQ. FT.	Use/Activities
Kitchen	1	348	348	Intended use for families and friends of deceased to prepare food for feasts and gatherings associated with the funeral
Seating Area	1	428	428	Seating and gathering area between entrance, kitchen and ceremony space
Storage	3	70-407	619	Various storage areas for office supplies, cleaning supplies, garden tools , outside furniture, chairs, and tables



Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment	Special Colour, Material Requirements, Maintenance Issues	Desired Atmosphere, Spatial Character, Visual Concept
Refrigerator Stove Range Microwave Dishwasher Sink Counter space Utensil and cookware storage Dish, cutlery, glassware storage Seating Tables	Easily cleanable hard surfaces, such as countertops and resilient floors Durable and easily cleanable equipment Use of natural materials Well-lit task areas	Close connection to ceremony space Spacious, uncluttered, with ample counter space and storage Less commercialized, more home-like feeling with materiality selection Small dining/socializing area
Non-fixed soft seating Wall-fixed bench, standalone benches Side tables	Seating to be comfortable, durable, and easy to maintain Tables durable and easily cleaned Warm tones, use of natural materials	Subtle and direct reflections of cultural traditions and design elements Physical and spiritual connection created to the outside environment through sensory perception and biophilic design elements Semi-private yet easily accessible and welcoming to clientele Views to the outside
Storage cabinets Shelving	Durable storage systems Resilient flooring Well-lit	Organized and uncluttered

Space	Quantity	SQ. FT. (EA)	Total SQ. FT.	Use/Activities
Garage	1	1612	1612	House limousine and hearse Automotive supply storage Outdoor maintenance equipment
Staff Retreat	1	392	392	Space for staff breaks, including preparation of food, relaxation, and impromptu meetings
Elder's Residence	1	1131	1131	Personal residence for Elder
Rooftop Garden	1	1477	1477	Natural retreat space for gathering and reflection Winter storage space

Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment	Special Colour, Material Requirements, Maintenance Issues	Desired Atmosphere, Spatial Character, Visual Concept
<p>Shelving Storage Workbench</p>	<p>Resilient flooring Well lit-task areas</p>	<p>Private and accessible by staff only</p>
<p>Soft and Hard Seating Table Counter space Microwave Refrigerator Dish, utensil, cutlery, glassware storage Personal belonging storage</p>	<p>Durable, easily cleanable hard surfaces and seating Soft, comfortable fabrics Natural materials</p>	<p>Relaxed, comfortable atmosphere Private and accessible by staff only Views to outside or connection to natural environment</p>
<p>Fully equipped kitchen Full equipped bathroom Laundry room Storage shelving Furniture will be supplied by resident</p>	<p>Durable, easily cleanable hard surfaces Warm tones, use of natural materials Well-lit</p>	<p>Private, quiet, and comfortable Access to outside as well as interior access to funeral home Views to outside Reflect cultural traditions in design elements</p>
<p>Outdoor non-fixed seating Outdoor tables Plant pots Gazebo structure</p>	<p>Easily cleanable, durable, and weather resistant fabrics and materials Use of natural materials</p>	<p>Reflect culture in materiality, form, and design Natural elements incorporated to provide peaceful atmosphere Use of native Saskatchewan plants and plants used for ceremonial purposes</p>

### 5.2.1 Spatial Adjacencies

	MAIN STAIRS	ELEVATOR	LIBRARY	MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM	SALES/DISPLAY AREA	STORAGE	MEETING ROOM	WASHROOMS	BACK STAIRS	BODY STORAGE	CASKET LIFT
MAIN STAIRS											
ELEVATOR	Direct Adjacency										
LIBRARY	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency									
MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency								
SALES/DISPLAY AREA	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency							
STORAGE	Inappropriate Adjacency	Inappropriate Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency						
MEETING ROOM	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Inappropriate Adjacency					
WASHROOMS	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency				
BACK STAIRS	Inappropriate Adjacency	Inappropriate Adjacency	Inappropriate Adjacency	Inappropriate Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Inappropriate Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency			
BODY STORAGE	Inappropriate Adjacency	Inappropriate Adjacency	Inappropriate Adjacency	Inappropriate Adjacency	Inappropriate Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Inappropriate Adjacency	Inappropriate Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency		
CASKET LIFT	Inappropriate Adjacency	Inappropriate Adjacency	Inappropriate Adjacency	Inappropriate Adjacency	Inappropriate Adjacency	Inappropriate Adjacency	Inappropriate Adjacency	Inappropriate Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	

DIRECT ADJACENCY
  PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY
  INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY

TABLE 10: Basement Adjacency Matrix

	SOUTH ENTRY	CEREMONIAL SPACE	STORAGE	KITCHEN	SITTING AREA	WASHROOM	GARAGE	NORTH EAST ENTRY	MAIN STAIRS	BACK STAIRS	ELEVATOR	CASKET LIFT	WEST ENTRY
SOUTH ENTRY													
CEREMONIAL SPACE	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY												
STORAGE	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY											
KITCHEN	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	DIRECT ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY										
SITTING AREA	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	DIRECT ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	DIRECT ADJACENCY									
WASHROOM	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY								
GARAGE	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY							
NORTH EAST ENTRY	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY						
MAIN STAIRS	DIRECT ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY					
BACK STAIRS	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	DIRECT ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY				
ELEVATOR	DIRECT ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	DIRECT ADJACENCY	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY			
CASKET LIFT	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY	DIRECT ADJACENCY	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY	DIRECT ADJACENCY	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY		
WEST ENTRY	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY	INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY	

DIRECT ADJACENCY
  PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY
  INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY

TABLE 11: First Floor Adjacency Matrix

	ELEVATOR	STAFF OFFICES	ELDER'S OFFICE	RETREAT ROOM	STAFF RETREAT	ELDER'S RESIDENCE	BACK STAIRS	ROOFTOP STAIRS	WASHROOMS
ELEVATOR	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency
STAFF OFFICES	Peripheral Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency
ELDER'S OFFICE	Peripheral Adjacency	Inappropriate Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency
RETREAT ROOM	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Inappropriate Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency
STAFF RETREAT	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Inappropriate Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency
ELDER'S RESIDENCE	Peripheral Adjacency	Inappropriate Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Inappropriate Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency
BACK STAIRS	Inappropriate Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Inappropriate Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency
ROOFTOP STAIRS	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Inappropriate Adjacency	Direct Adjacency	Direct Adjacency
WASHROOMS	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Inappropriate Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Peripheral Adjacency	Direct Adjacency

DIRECT ADJACENCY
  PERIPHERAL ADJACENCY
  INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY

**TABLE 12:** Second Floor Adjacency Matrix

	ELEVATOR	ROOFTOP STAIRS	STORAGE	GARDEN
ELEVATOR	PERIPHERALADJACENCY	PERIPHERALADJACENCY	PERIPHERALADJACENCY	PERIPHERALADJACENCY
ROOFTOP STAIRS	PERIPHERALADJACENCY	PERIPHERALADJACENCY	PERIPHERALADJACENCY	PERIPHERALADJACENCY
STORAGE	PERIPHERALADJACENCY	PERIPHERALADJACENCY	PERIPHERALADJACENCY	PERIPHERALADJACENCY
GARDEN	DIRECT ADJACENCY	DIRECT ADJACENCY	DIRECT ADJACENCY	PERIPHERALADJACENCY




 DIRECT ADJACENCY     PERIPHERALADJACENCY     INAPPROPRIATE ADJACENCY

TABLE 13: Third Floor/Rooftop Adjacency Matrix

### 5.2.3 Spatial Organization

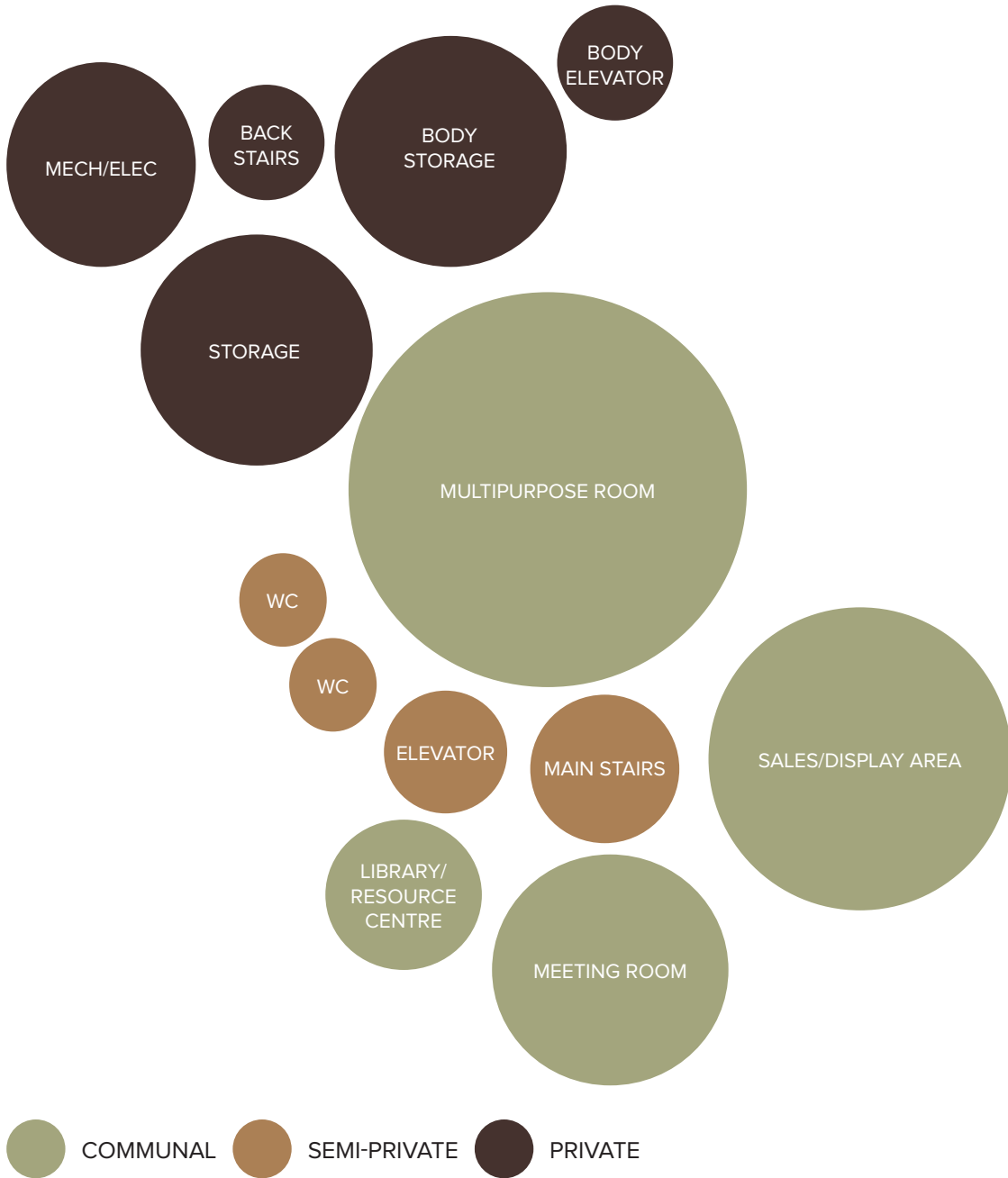


FIGURE 32: Basement Zoning Diagram



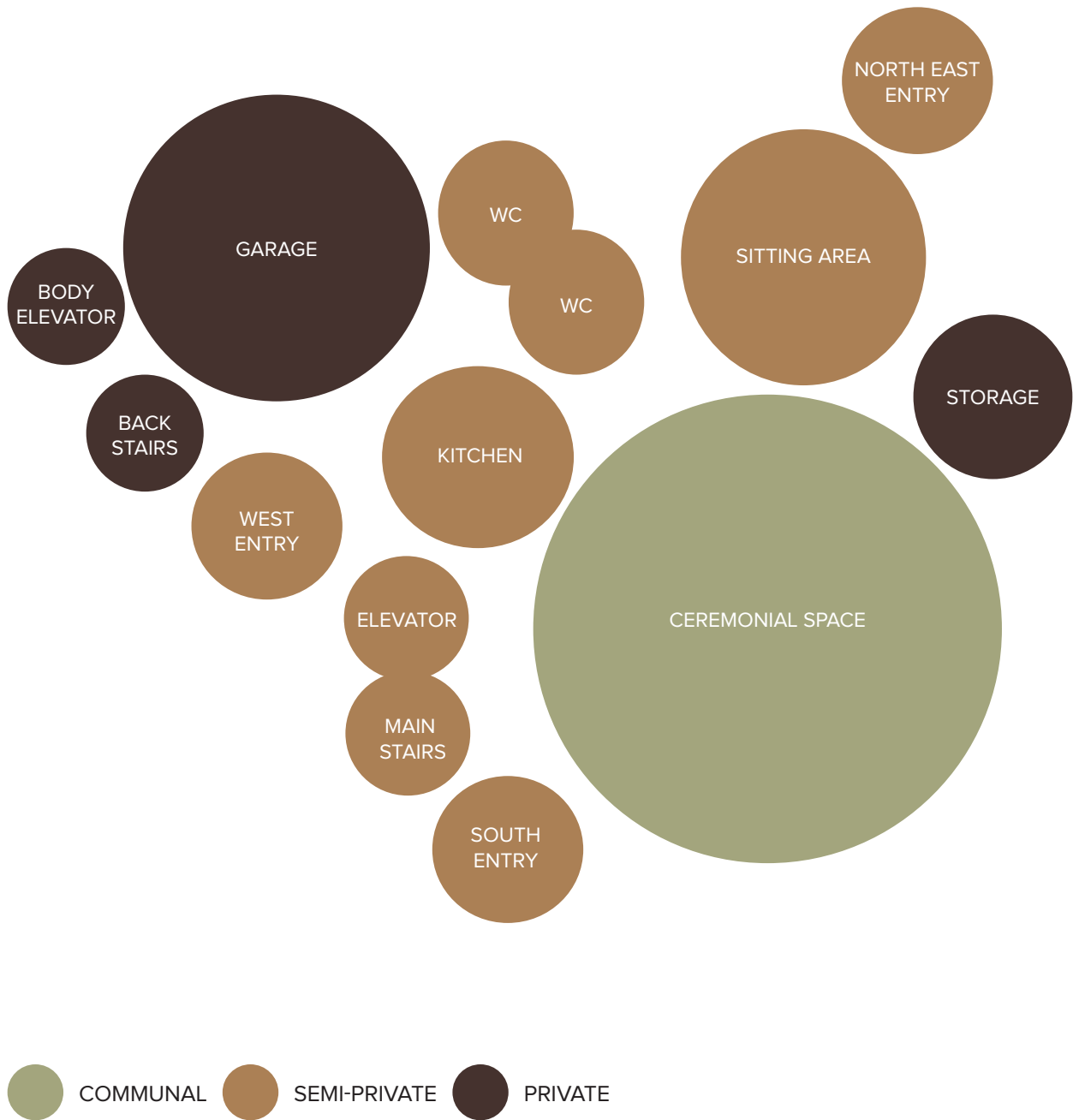
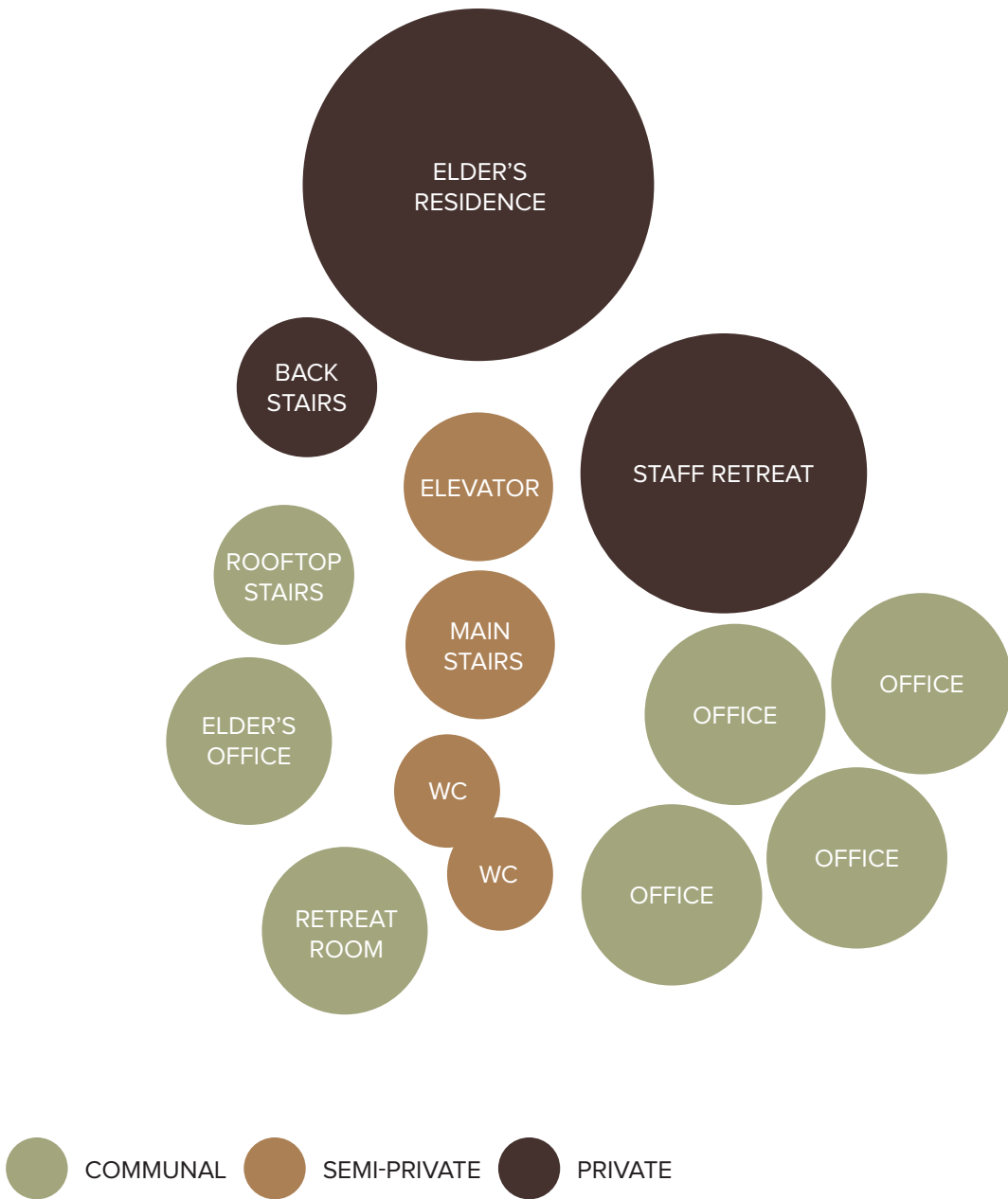


FIGURE 33: First Floor Zoning Diagram



**FIGURE 34:** Second Floor Zoning Diagram



● COMMUNAL   ● SEMI-PRIVATE   ● PRIVATE

FIGURE 35: Third Floor/Rooftop Zoning Diagram

# 6 Design Proposal

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Interior Development

6.3 Exterior Development

6.4 Reflected Ceiling Plans

6.5 Materials, Furniture and Fixtures

## 6.1 Introduction

The following chapter describes the proposed redesign of the Westwood Funeral Home into an Indigenous funeral home. The design is a result of the union of information gained from the examination of the theoretical frameworks, precedents, existing building and site, and design programming. Using the theoretical frameworks as the basis for the design, emphasis was placed on finding commonalities and harmony to achieve a cohesive design solution.

Using the theoretical framework on Indigenous worldviews, consideration of the Indigenous users provided the principal foundation and set of space and relationship requirements for the design of the funeral home. When spaces within urban areas are dedicated to serving the Indigenous community they can help to maintain traditional ways of life, strengthen community relationships, and preserve Indigenous identity. As described in Indigenous worldviews, a “good death” is when one’s spiritual journey is fulfilled in an environment that allows them to be with their family, community, and accommodates their cultural traditions (Coward & Stajduhar, 2012, p. 233). In order to provide a fully

supportive facility, the spaces and services in the Indigenous funeral home have been carefully designed, by considering the types of practices, ceremonies, and beliefs associated with death and the spiritual journey. Unlike conventional funeral homes, the Indigenous funeral home includes access to interaction with a resident Elder for consultation, guidance, and to perform spiritual and sacred ceremonies. A variety of areas in the building are provided for the Elder's use and ceremonial practices such as smudging and pipe ceremonies are accommodated. Wakes, funerals, and feasts will occur in the large ceremony space and smaller multipurpose room. This offers the opportunity for two events to occur simultaneously, and an option for overflow space for very large gatherings. The inclusion of the kitchen, adjacent to the main ceremony space alleviates the stress of preparing food beforehand and provides patrons a comfortable space to work together and socialize during the bereavement process. Access to outdoor space on the rooftop enhances the diversity of areas available for use. The gardens in this space will provide some of the plants used in ceremonies and can be used for teaching purposes or for quiet contemplation.

Design elements were also informed by Indigenous worldviews, specifically those relating to the medicine wheel and its key concepts. Circular forms have been incorporated into the physical structures of the spaces used for spiritual and sacred ceremonial purposes. The medicine wheel has been integrated into the floor of these spaces using metals associated with the colours of the four directions. Smaller circular details include lighting fixtures, tables, and metal push plates found on doors throughout building. The repetition of four, or groups of four have been applied to elements such as windows, the number of chairs around a table, and the curtains and doors of the ceremony space. The presence of circular forms and the number four acts as a constant reminder both consciously and subconsciously of the importance of the medicine wheel in many Indigenous people's lives. When used as a repetitive design element, the medicine wheel can provide support and guidance to the patrons of the funeral home by offering reminders of traditional teachings through its physical presence within the building.

The proposed design also features design considerations pertaining to the health and support of the building in relation to the user's well-being and the natural environment. Due to

the positive correlations between biophilic design on human health and well-being, several design dimensions have been incorporated throughout the building in obvious and obscure forms of nature, both decorative and practical. An effort was made to acknowledge a sense and spirit of place within these inclusions of nature by focusing on the local environment familiar and important to Indigenous peoples. Plants native to Saskatchewan and other locally sourced materials were chosen to reflect the prairie landscape. In addition, the layout of the funeral home has been designed to reflect the spacious and expansive feeling of the prairies of the southern portion of the province. Open areas with minimal furniture, recessed lighting and large circulation spaces help to create an open atmosphere. The health of the natural environment was also taken into account in the final design. Materials were selected based on their sustainable properties such as recycled content, production, lifespan, and disposal. The addition of the green roof benefits not only the local environment, but also the maintenance and lifespan of the building itself. The local community and funeral home users can also benefit from the educational purposes the green roof provides by bringing sustainable practices into their lives and neighborhood.



The psychological well-being of the funeral home user was also taken into consideration through the ways the interior environment can stimulate conscious and subconscious perceptions. The perceptions one experiences surrounding a death can be very significant during the mourning process and bring about our own sense of mortality. In multisensory design, smell and hearing are key senses which provoke psychological responses in relation to memory, emotion, awareness, time, imagination, and our own existence. It was important in the design to encourage and embrace positive experiences of sound and smell in order to create both new and support previous psychological responses and perceptions. Although small in detail, the significance of the sense of touch in relation to time both past and present is addressed many ways, for example through the brass push plates featured on many doors in the funeral home. Interaction is formed between the users and the building through the act of continual pushing of the door. Overtime, this contact becomes visible as a patina develops on the brass. That wear records the passing of time of those who have passed through the doors previously, adding another level of interaction between present users of the funeral home and those in the past.

## 6.2 Interior Development



FIGURE 36: Section 1

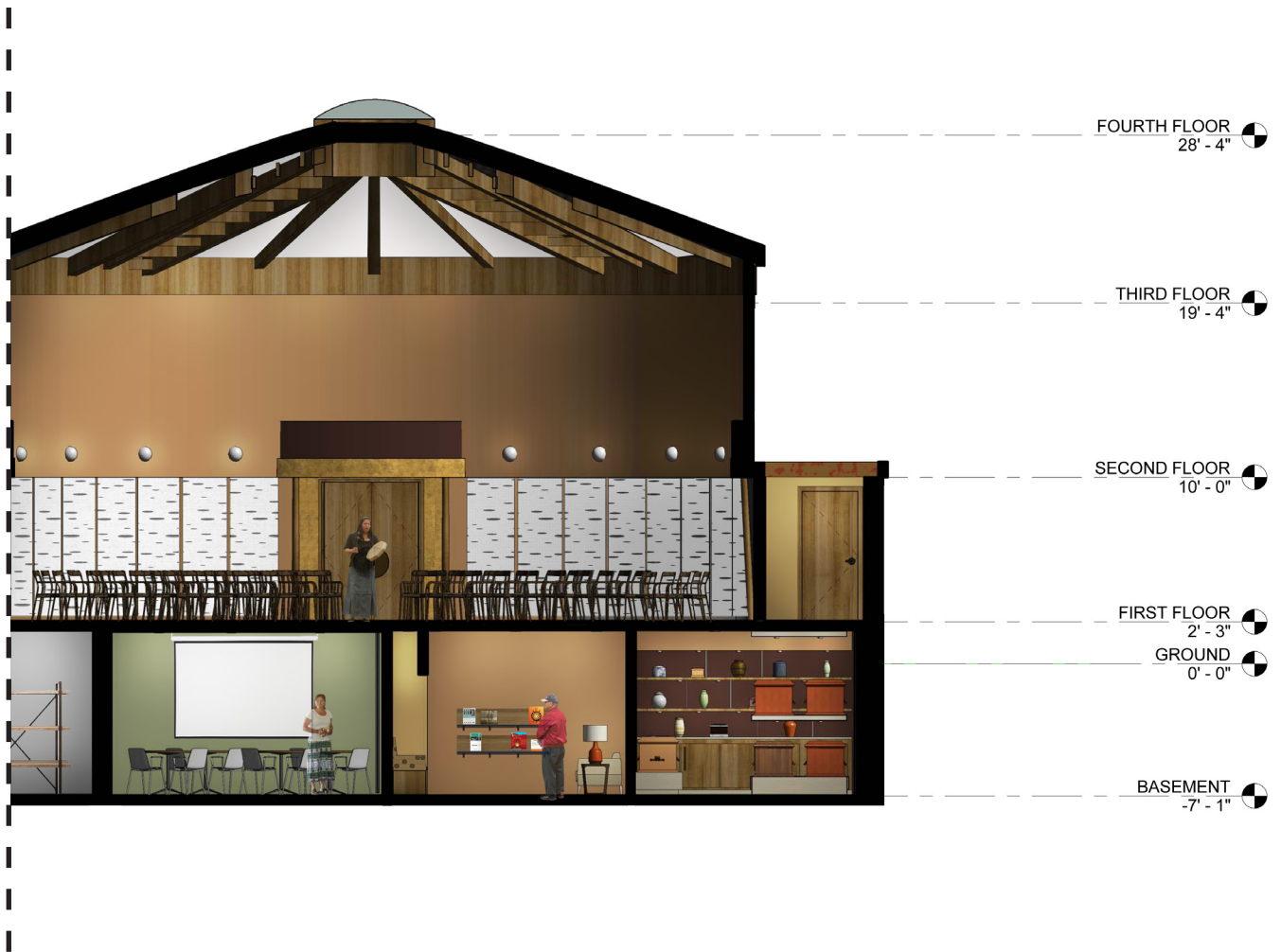




FIGURE 37: Section 2

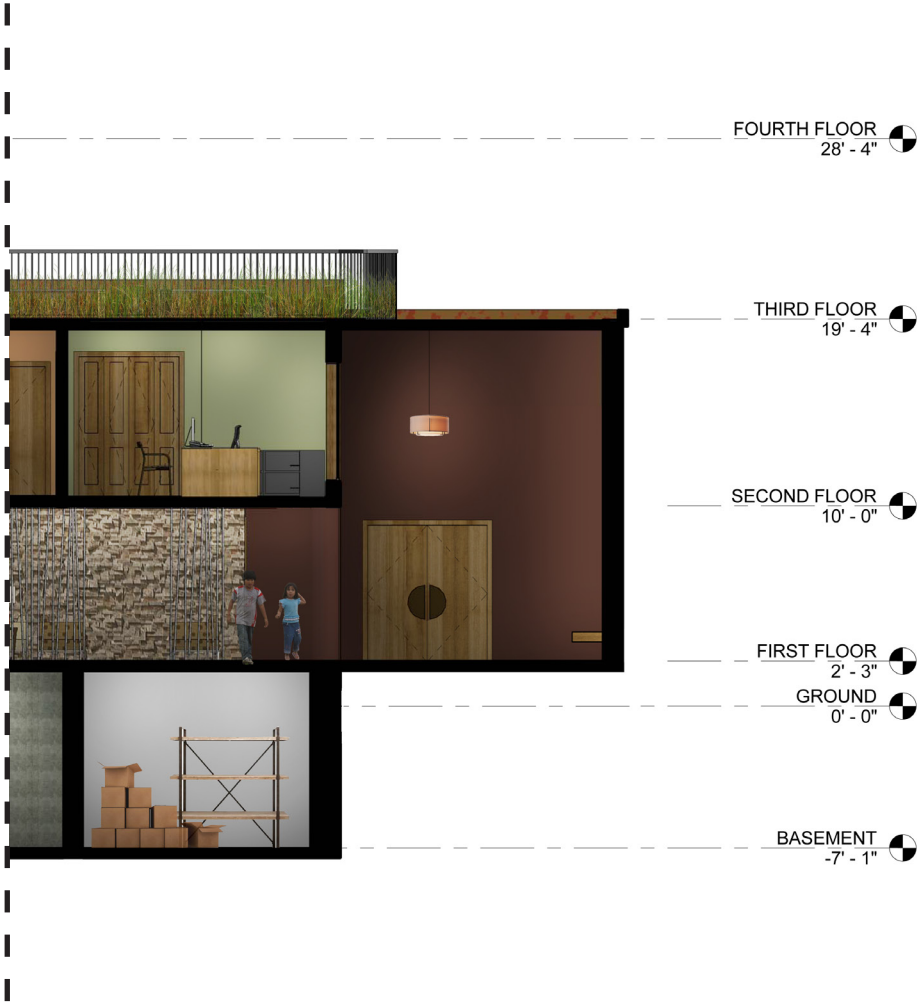




FIGURE 38: Basement. Not to Scale.

### **6.2.1 Basement**

The basement level of the funeral home houses a mixture of private and public spaces for patron use as well as private staff areas. Public access through the south main staircase and elevator direct patrons into a circulation path leading to the multipurpose room, washrooms, meeting room, casket and sales display, and the library resource centre. The north section of the basement contains a private staff only area where the casket lift, body storage, mechanical and electrical room, and large storage area are located. This area is also accessible by stairs directly beside the casket lift. A set of double doors from the main public area of the basement ensures easy transport of furniture and display items to and from the storage area. The body storage room is equipped with two side opening morgue coolers with the capacity to hold two bodies each. While the funeral home will not provide embalming services at this location, bodies can be temporarily stored and final preparations made before the funerary services. The north wall of that room is filled with cabinets for storage and counter space with a stainless steel sink. The room is spacious enough to comfortably accommodate transport

carts and a workspace table. Finishes include stainless steel equipment, a protective fibreglass reinforced panel wall-covering that is both chemical and stain resistant, and non-slip resilient rubber flooring that is durable and easy to sanitize.

The largest space in the public area of the basement is the multipurpose room used for wakes, visitations and informal gatherings. The room can also be used as an overflow space when the main floor ceremony space is at full capacity, with a ceiling mounted projector, speakers and large drop-down screen to allow guests to see and hear the funeral proceedings in the above ceremony space. A counter located on the south wall features a sink space and cabinets for light food preparation and service. A pass through window allows food to be brought into the space without disturbance. The window may also be opened when less privacy is needed. This design consideration connects the activities of the multipurpose room to the other areas of the basement using the senses of smell and sound. Smells produced from food and the smoke from ceremonies as well as sounds from prayer, drumming and singing may invoke feelings of belonging and familiarity amongst those not directly in the multipurpose





FIGURE 39: Multipurpose Room

room. The inclusion of the window creates a stronger connection between the public spaces of the basement. A large felt birch bark can be pulled along a track to soften and conceal the sink area when it is not in use and provides acoustic absorption for the room.

Soft seating options from the Steelcase Coalesse Coupe Mobile collection feature casters for easy transport and arranging. Steelcase Coalesse Enea Lottus dining chairs and folding tables can be easily set up in this room depending on the needs of the users. A wall of tall thin interior windows on the west wall mimic



a line of trees. Each window is covered in a partially opaque vinyl film to bring in light and movement from the hall while still providing privacy. The use of the calming green sage wall colour in combination with the warmth of the cabinetry, interior windows, birch back curtains, and wood elements such as the large reclaimed wood feature wall echoes the nature inspired designs featured in the rest of the funeral home. The result is a textural and visually interesting as well as inviting space that feels comfortable and light even without views to the outside.

**FIGURE 40:** Multipurpose Room South Elevation



The meeting room for staff meetings, appointments, and consultations with patrons such as the planning of funeral events is directly across from the multipurpose room. A curved wall features a set of four windows facing the stairs to the basement. Once again, these are covered in a window film for additional light while maintaining a degree of privacy. In the centre of the space, a large round wooden table accommodates up to eight chairs. Overhead, a drum shaped lighting fixture nods to the importance of the drum used in many spiritual and sacred ceremonial and spiritual practices. Cabinets are provided for storage of documents and other materials necessary for planning funerals. High performance carpet tile provides comfort to the users and provides sound absorption.

A small library and resource centre contains supportive literature regarding death and dying, funerals, and Indigenous based material. Books and pamphlets are displayed on wall mounted shelving. Small recessed reading nooks with soft seating provide a degree of privacy from the rest of the space. A desk with two computers and a printer gives patrons additional access to online resources.

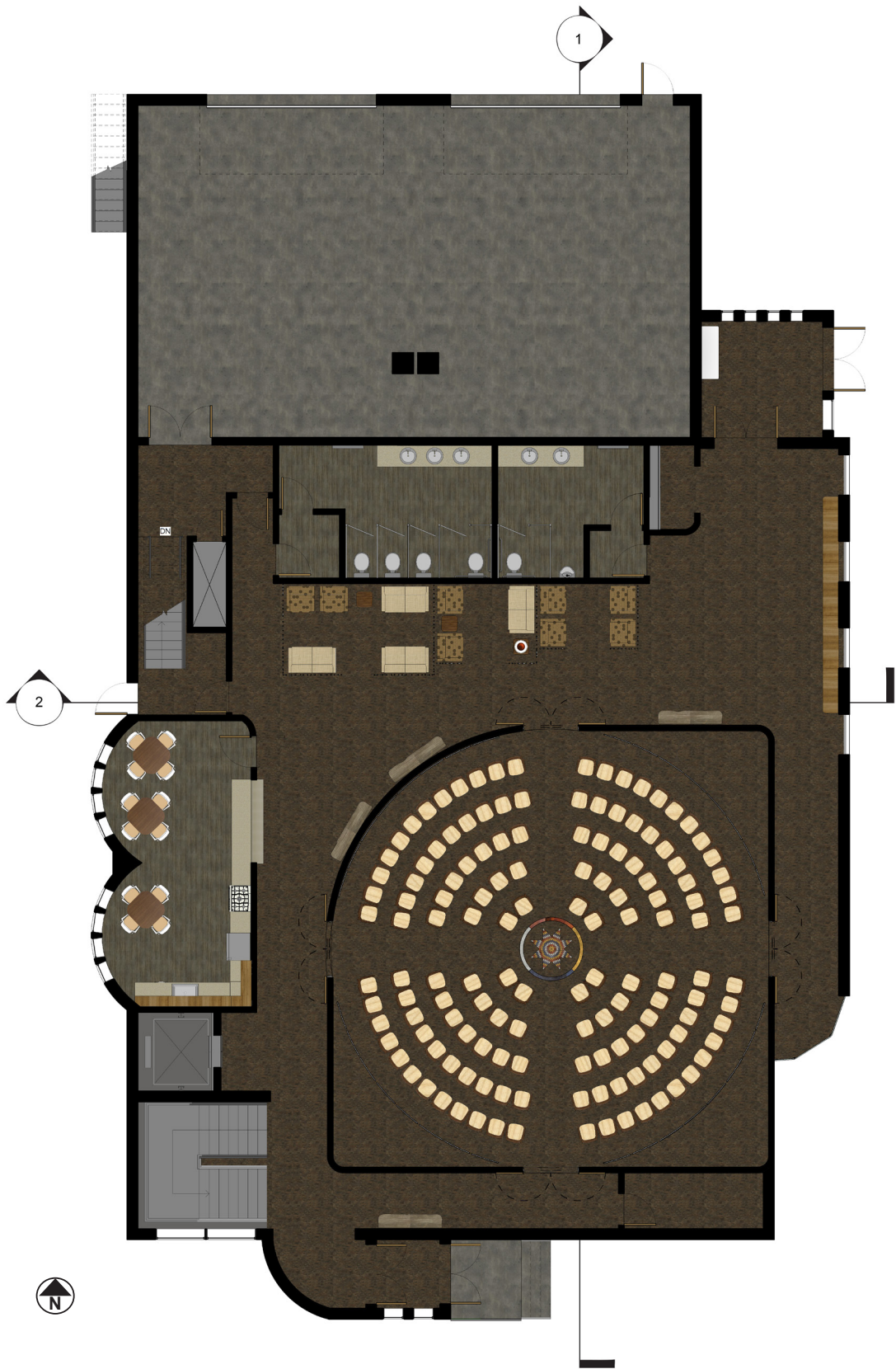


FIGURE 41: Meeting Room West Elevation



**FIGURE 42:** Casket Display and Sales

Directly to the east of the meeting room is the casket display and sales room. These two spaces are in close proximity to one another to maximize ease of access, as well as maintain a degree of privacy between the viewing of funeral related items such as caskets and urns, and the discussing and finalization of funeral options. In order to offer a significant number of options available in a small space, only one full-sized casket is on display. The remainder of the samples are displayed as casket ends. This method provides an idea of the style and interior of the casket without compromising space. Casket ends are stacked above one another on wall-based shelves made of Saskatchewan sourced sandstone to take advantage of the available wall space. Sandstone is also used as a plinth for the full-sized casket. A large wood storage unit spans the width of the east wall. Urns are placed on the softly illuminated shelving, with storage space for additional appropriate sales items.





### 6.2.2 Main Floor

Two main entrances located on the south and north east sides of the building provide access from the onsite parking lot and the street. Both of these entrances are positioned with their doors facing east in the direction the sun rises, an important Indigenous design feature used in both historic structures such as tipis and present day Indigenous spaces such as the Thunderbird House. An emergency exit is located on the west side of the building and exits directly into the adjacent parking lot.

The north east entrance has a spacious foyer and a coat room nearby. A comfortable seating area directly beyond this is divided into two distinct areas for patrons to socialize, or take a moment for themselves while they wait before, after, or in between funerary proceedings. This space was designed to incorporate the concepts of prospect and refuge found in indirect biophilic design theory. The long wooden wall based bench seating along the east wall is located in an elongated two storey hall illuminated by floor to ceiling windows with opaque-to-sheer curtains. The height of the space and the flood of natural light highlights the openness and views to both the outside and to a second seating area. In contrast, the

**FIGURE 43:** First Floor. Not to scale..

adjacent second seating area offers a more intimate setting using indirect design principles of refuge to offer feelings of intimacy, safety and comfort. To achieve this, the original height of the ceiling was preserved to create an immediate spatial change from the expansive hall on the east wall. This more intimate space features three soft seating areas that are sectioned off by floor length steel rods wrapped in vinyl. The spacing of rods resembles a line of birch trees commonly found within the forests of Saskatchewan. The spacing and thickness of these dividers allow for relatively unobstructed views from the seating area, while at the same time providing a sense of concealment and privacy. A feature wall of reclaimed distressed split wooden slats and the use of the wood ceiling clearly define the boundaries of this area. The contrast between prospect and refuge strengthens our primordial responses in connection to the spaces we prefer to inhabit, creating a desired space that appeals to the users.

**FIGURE 44:** Seating Area East Elevation





FIGURE 45: Seating Area



FIGURE 46: Kitchen

The west portion of the main floor houses the kitchen. Unlike many conventional funeral homes, it has been provided for the patron's convenience to prepare and temporarily store food. It is located in close proximity to the ceremonial space where the majority of the events will be occur, and near the elevator for transport to the lower level multipurpose room. The preparation and consuming of food, as well as the accompanying social aspect is an important component in traditional Indigenous funerary practices. Long spans of solid surface countertops allow numerous individuals a comfortable and hygienic space to work. Tables and chairs provide additional options for food prep and socializing. A large opening over the countertop connects the kitchen to the main floor through the sensory perceptions of vision, hearing, and smell. The activities and socializing within the kitchen, seating areas, and circulation can be easily viewed and heard through this opening. This creates a direct visual and auditory relationship between these spaces. The opening also allows the smell of food to fill the main floor of the funeral home provoking responses such as memory and emotion. Two groups of four windows line the west side of the kitchen. To

increase privacy in the funeral home as well as take advantage of natural light, a window film is applied on the glass. The transparent outlines of leaves from the trembling aspen tree on the semi-opaque film provides partial visibility without forcing a full view of the parking lot. The natural pigment inspired wall colours of ochre and berries, abundance of wood cabinetry and shelving, ceramic wood-look flooring, and brass accents bring the warmth of natural elements to the space. Rather than the sterility of a commercial kitchen, the kitchen resembles one might find within a home. This helps to provide a sense of comfort, reassurance, and familiarity to the users.

Entering from the front of the building through the south entrance on 20th St. west, the space opens up into a forked circulation path. To the right is a small waiting area and path of entry to the ceremony space through its north door. Stairs on the left to the basement features the original built in planters from the existing space. An elevator has been installed in order to provide universal access to all floors.

The existing garage at the north end of the building has room for both a limousine and hearse. Entry to the garage is in the north-west corner away from the public spaces. The direct proximity to the casket lift ensures privacy for the transport of the deceased.

The centre of the main floor is dedicated to the large ceremony space designed for both traditional Indigenous funeral ceremonies and wakes, as well as other funerary services associated with additional beliefs and faiths. Four doorways oriented in the four cardinal directions are all accessible from the interior of the building and provide a choice of doorway for access and exit. Each of the four Great Grand Spirits are represented by metal door frames in the colours associated with each Spirit and direction. An inlaid metal ring in the centre of the floor also reinforces the importance of four directions. The centre of this circle features an inlaid metal eight pointed star derived from Indigenous star blankets, also using the colours of the four directions. Star blankets are given away as gifts, or used to mark life events such as births, marriages, and deaths (Sagkeeng Child and Family Services, 2013). They are complex in design and require great patience and skill to sew. This metal star is also intricate and skillfully fashioned.



FIGURE 47: Ceremony Space

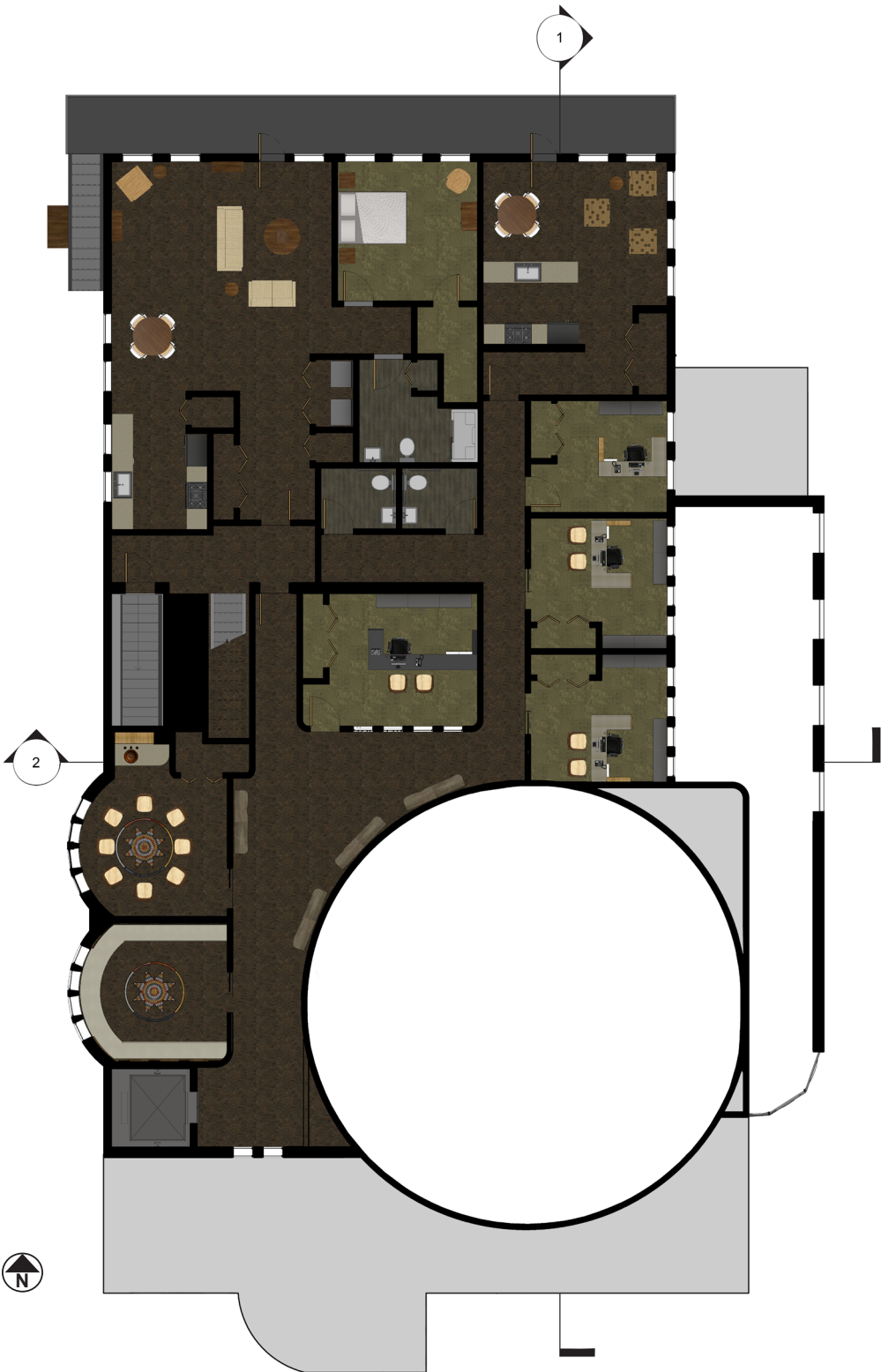


Flexibility in the ceremony space allows for the three cornered space to become fully circular in form. Large felt curtain panels on the perimeter can be pulled along a curved track to conceal the corners. The panels can be moved against the walls on an additional track when a cornered room or more space is needed. These panels feature a birch bark pattern with cut-outs to create visual depth, as well as help to absorb sound due to their materiality. Above the space, a domed ceiling accentuated by wood beams is divided into four equal quadrants to reflect the form of the medicine wheel. The linear forms help to emphasize the expansive height of the space and draw the eye up to the centre where a glass domed skylight supplies natural light. At night, concealed lighting along the beams create a soft glow that can be increased or decreased in intensity with dimming controls.

Non-fixed seating options in the ceremony space are provided by Herman Miller Branca chairs. Chosen for their ability to stack and be easily stored, the chair is inspired by tree branches and constructed from a single piece of wood (Herman Miller, 2016). The arms on the chair provide both comfort and ease getting in and out, making it a sensible

option for all ages. The chairs can be arranged in both circular and linear configurations to accommodate the type of funeral or funerary event taking place. The Story table from Bernhardt Designs will be used when there are events in the ceremony space that require table seating. This table has been chosen for its latch mechanism which allows the table top to be folded easily and nest together, requiring less room for storage.

**FIGURE 48:** Ceremony Space



### **6.2.3 Second Floor**

The second floor of the funeral home houses the majority of staff spaces such as offices, staff retreat room, and the Elder's office and residence. The retreat room provided for patrons who wish to have a place for private reflection, prayer, or hold intimate small group gatherings is located on the west wall near the elevator. Designed to feel like a rounded space, soft bench seating with additional cushions lines the perimeter of the room in a semi-circular form. The centre of the floor features an inlaid metal star blanket pattern, similar to the one found in the ceremony space and using the colours of the four directions. Directly overhead, an illuminated dropped circular ceiling is divided into four quadrants, once again reflecting the four directions and medicine wheel. Smoke produced while smudging during prayers is drawn out of the room to the outside by a ventilation system located behind the dropped ceiling. Four windows on the west side of the room provide natural light into the space. Privacy is maintained and views to the parking lot below are veiled by a semi-transparent covering in a trembling aspen leaf motif. The materials in this room reflect the peacefulness and comfort of nature through the warm red rust tones, earthy vinyl tile flooring, smooth texture of fieldstones on the walls, and richness of wood.



FIGURE 49: Retreat Room

Directly adjacent to the quiet room is the Elder's office for the funeral home's resident Elder. Similar to the retreat room, this space also features a semi-transparent window film, a central star blanket pattern in the floor, as well as a dropped circular ceiling feature with hidden ventilation for smudging. Herman Miller Branca chairs can be easily arranged as needed or stored in the closet. A small kitchenette has been included for the Elder's use with secure cabinets for sacred medicine and space for items such as teapots and cups. It features a handmade stoneware pottery sink in deep rust and gold tones that is both functional and a beautiful art piece. Covered in smooth fieldstone, the base of the wall is protected from the movement of chairs. The soft green paint is inspired by sage, a sacred plant used for medicinal purposes as well as in prayers and ceremonies.

Located in the north west portion of the second floor near the Elder's office is the Elder's residence. The main entrance is located off of a private hall used mainly by staff. A second entrance can be accessed off the north side balcony. The residence features several storage areas, a fully equipped kitchen, dining and living room, bedroom with walk-in closet, personal washroom, as well as in-suite laundry. Spans of windows on the north and west sides of the residence provide natural lighting.



FIGURE 50: Elder's Office

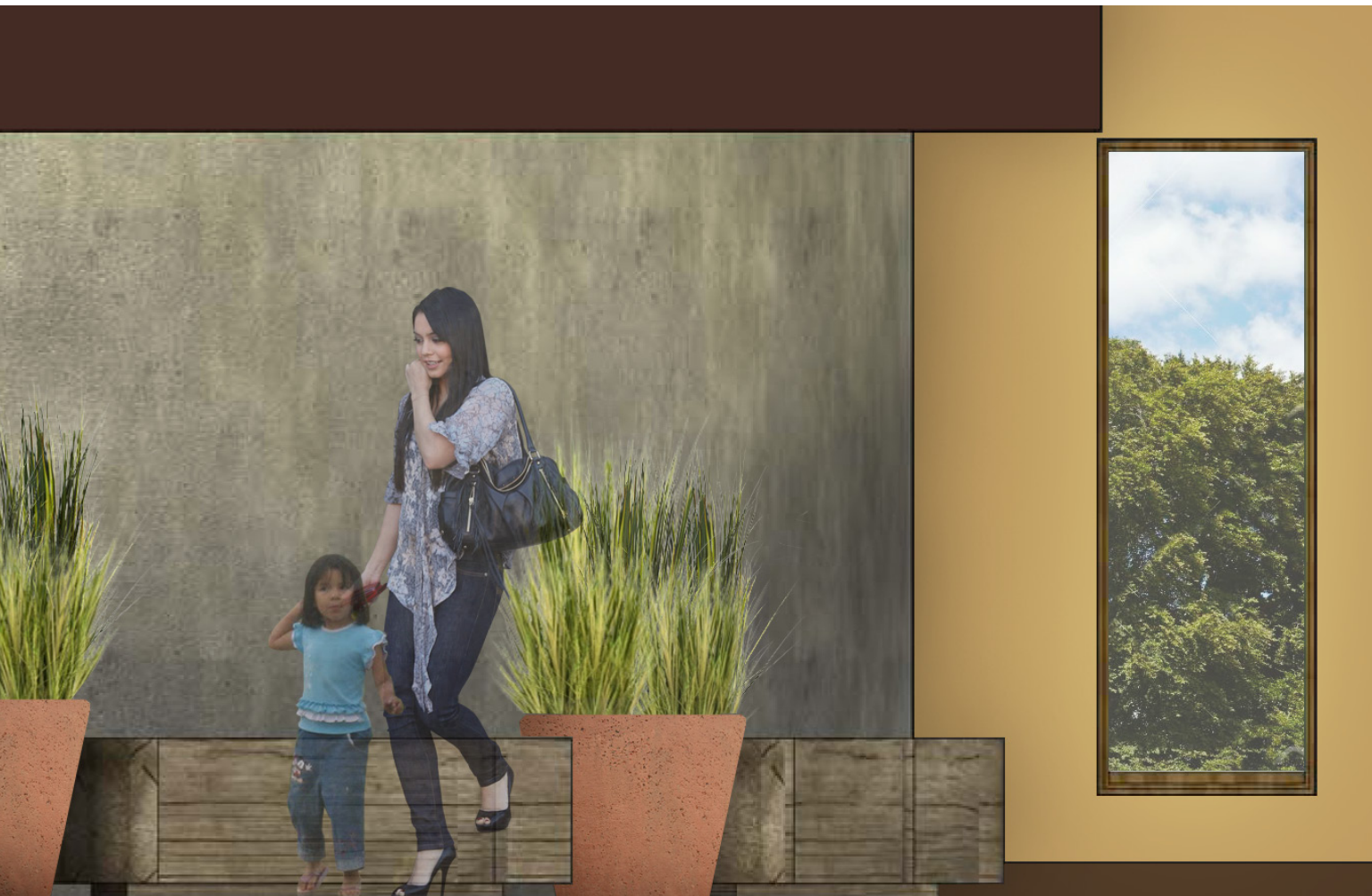
Four offices are provided for the funeral director, administrative staff, sales associate, and support staff. Located in the centre of the building they are accessible by elevator and by the more private back staircase located near the Elder's residence. The circulation path to the offices includes a second floor seating area with raw edge wooden benches placed against the

**FIGURE 51:** Seating Area South Elevation





curved outer wall of the ceremony space. This is a space for staff members to meet or patrons to sit and take a moment while they wait to go into the offices or retreat room. Above the benches and highlighting the large expanse of wall is a light well, streaming natural light into the space.



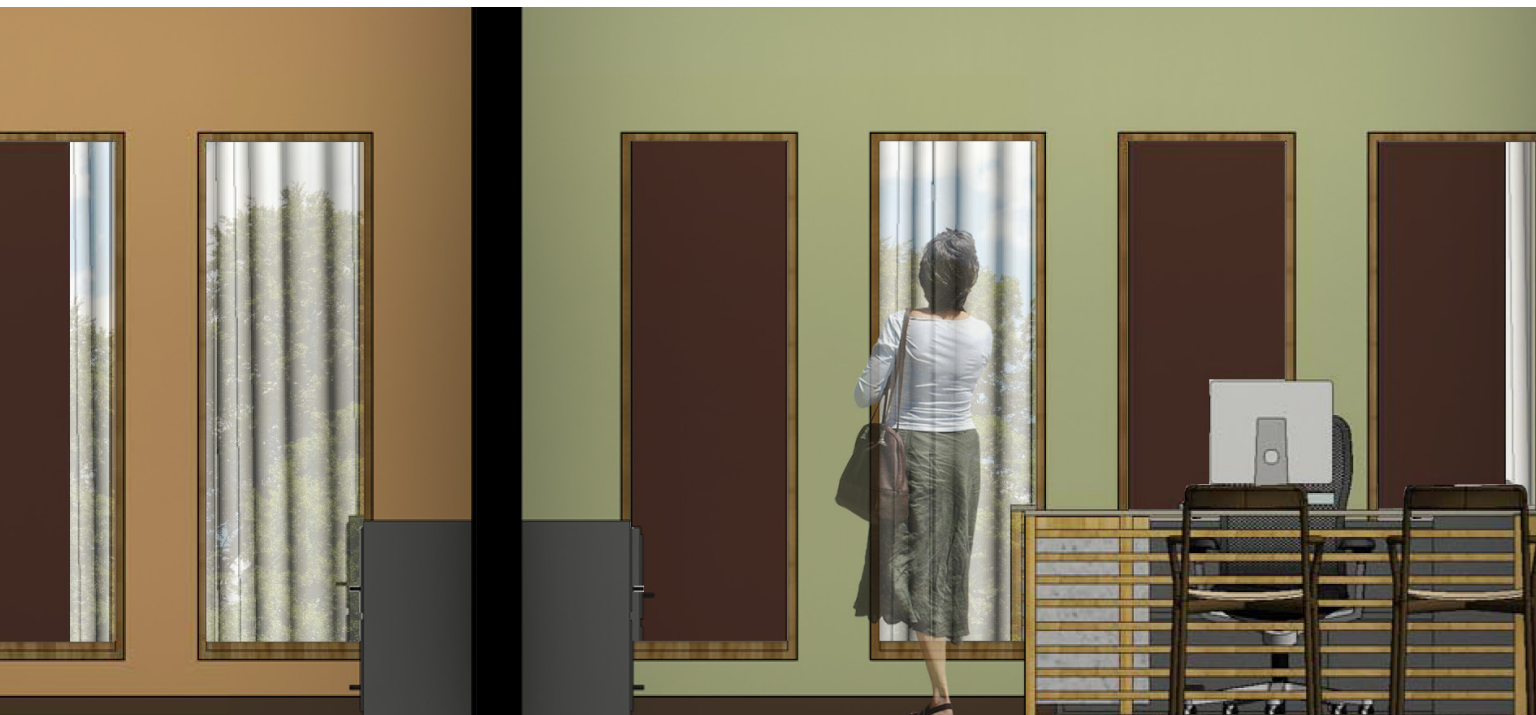
Each office features several storage options such as a closet for both personal and office items, as well as freestanding storage cabinets and cabinets located under the desks. Three offices can accommodate meetings with clientele. To provide options, one office has views to the outside, and two offices have been designed to view down below into the main floor bench seating area. The funeral director's office windows face into the second floor circulation and seating space. In order to have both privacy and maintain connection to these surrounding spaces, these three offices have four windows featuring SPD-Smart glass technology. Smart glass allows the users of the space to control the transparency of the glass with the flip of a switch to increase or decrease privacy. This is

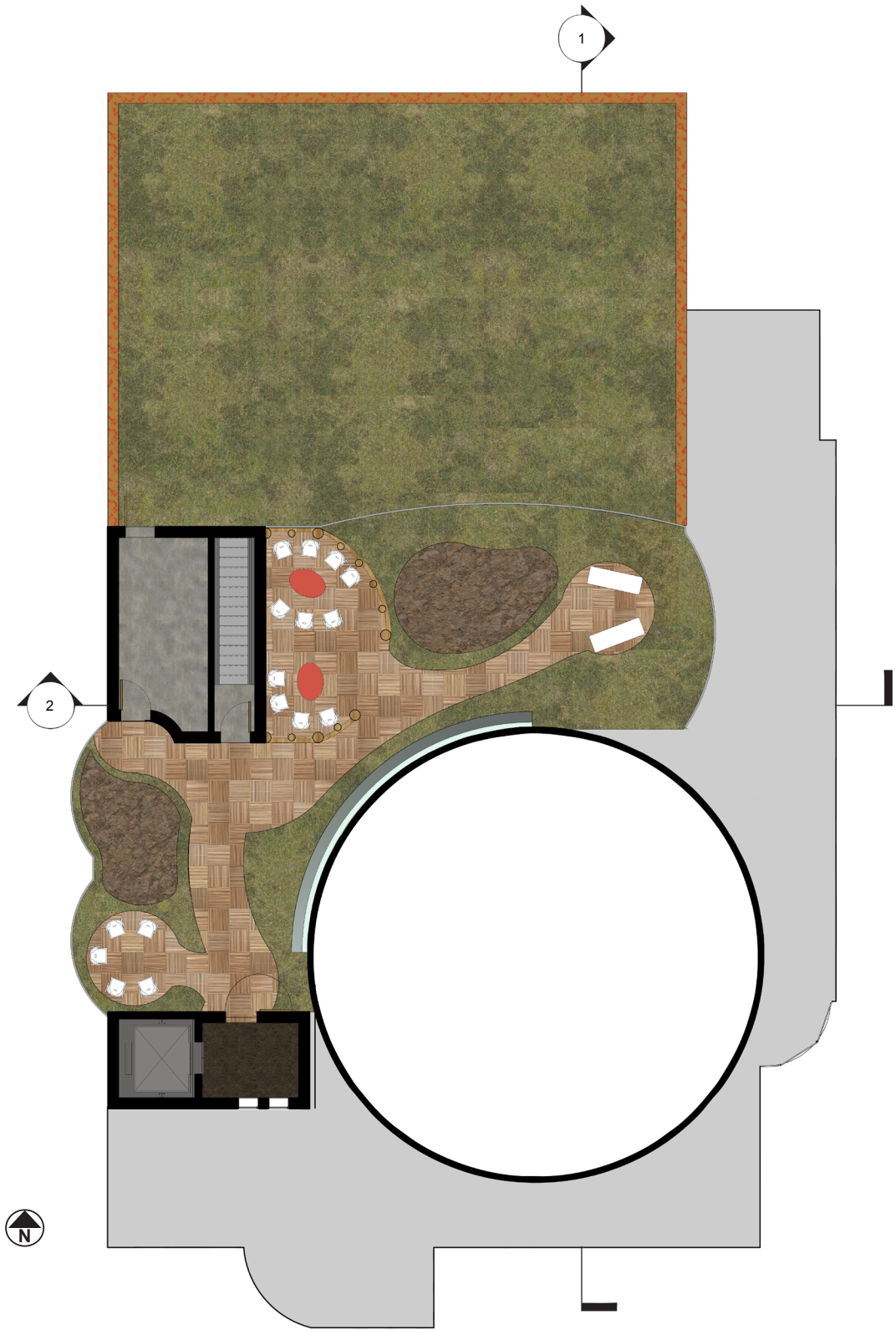


done by applying electrical voltage through a film, rearranging millions of microscopic particles allowing light to pass through (Research Frontiers, 2015). When there is no electrical voltage the particles absorb the light and the glass becomes opaque. Resilient commercial carpet tile used in each of the offices features a mixture of three different flora inspired styles to achieve a diverse pattern and aid in sound absorption.

In close proximity to the offices are two washrooms and separate staff retreat room. This retreat is equipped with a full kitchen for personal meal preparation, as well as a table and chairs for dining and impromptu meetings. Soft seating encourages relaxation, with views to the outside and balcony access.

**FIGURE 52:** Staff Offices East Elevation





### 6.2.4 Third Floor/Rooftop

An outdoor space on the rooftop of the funeral home has been created for both staff and patron use. The rooftop garden provides an open-air area for small gatherings and personal contemplation and relaxation. It is accessible by elevator or the rear north west staircase located on the second floor. The outdoor space features a semicircular covered wooden gazebo. Weather resistant seating from the Herman Miller Air-Chair collection and Knoll Studio Maya Lin Stone coffee tables have been placed throughout the rooftop space. A storage area is on the west side of the stairs and is used for winter storage of the outdoor seating, gardening tools and related supplies. While nearly the entire roof of the funeral home is covered in a green roof, only a fenced portion is open for patrons and staff use. Plants native to Saskatchewan such as pasture sage, prairie junegrass, blue grama, Ewer's stonecrop, and rosy pussytoes are planted throughout the green roof, chosen for their resilience and ability to survive Saskatchewan's harsh climate. Circular garden areas within the accessible outdoor space are filled with plants that are important to many Indigenous peoples. These include plants

**FIGURE 53:** Third Floor/Rooftop. Not to scale.

such as sage, sweetgrass, rudbeckia, and artemisia. These gardens can help to provide some of the sacred medicines used within the ceremonies at the funeral home. Paths of wood decking run throughout the green roof and break off to form circular platforms for additional seating areas using Bernhardt Design Pause benches.



The purpose of the green roof is to not only strengthen the relationship between nature and people, but promote a sustainable and beneficial relationship between the building and the natural environment. Green roofs provide many benefits for both the building and environment. They aid in reducing heat island effects caused by the overabundance of solid surfaces such as concrete, reduce the energy needed to heat and cool the building by better regulating the internal temperature, collect rainwater runoff, improve the lifespan of the roofing membrane, increase sound insulation, improve air quality and create habitats for wildlife (Oberndorfer, et al., 2007, p. 823). The green roof will also help in educating the staff, patrons, and surrounding community about the advantages of incorporating sustainable efforts in the built environment.

**FIGURE 54:** Rooftop Garden

### 6.3 Exterior Development

The exterior design of the funeral home has retained most of the original rectilinear shape of the existing building. While the inclusion of the large rounded ceremony space rises above the single story level on the south end of the building, the set back of the multistory levels keep the building from overpowering the entrance on 20th St. West. The red brick façade of the existing

**FIGURE 55:** Front Exterior





building is also repeated on some of the additions. The exterior wall of the ceremony space and addition of the long hallway and seating area on the east side of the building are clad in limestone mined in Saskatchewan. Copper flashing used around the perimeter of the roof areas will reveal the passing of time as the gradual development of a patina occurs.

**FIGURE 56:** Rear Exterior





FIGURE 57: South Exterior Elevation



FIGURE 58: West Exterior Elevation

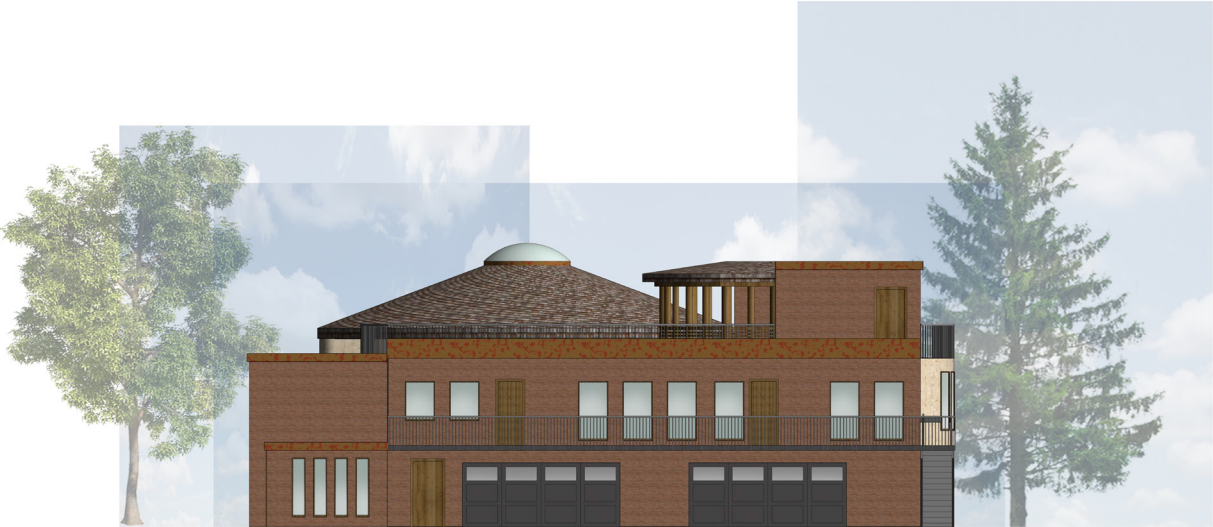
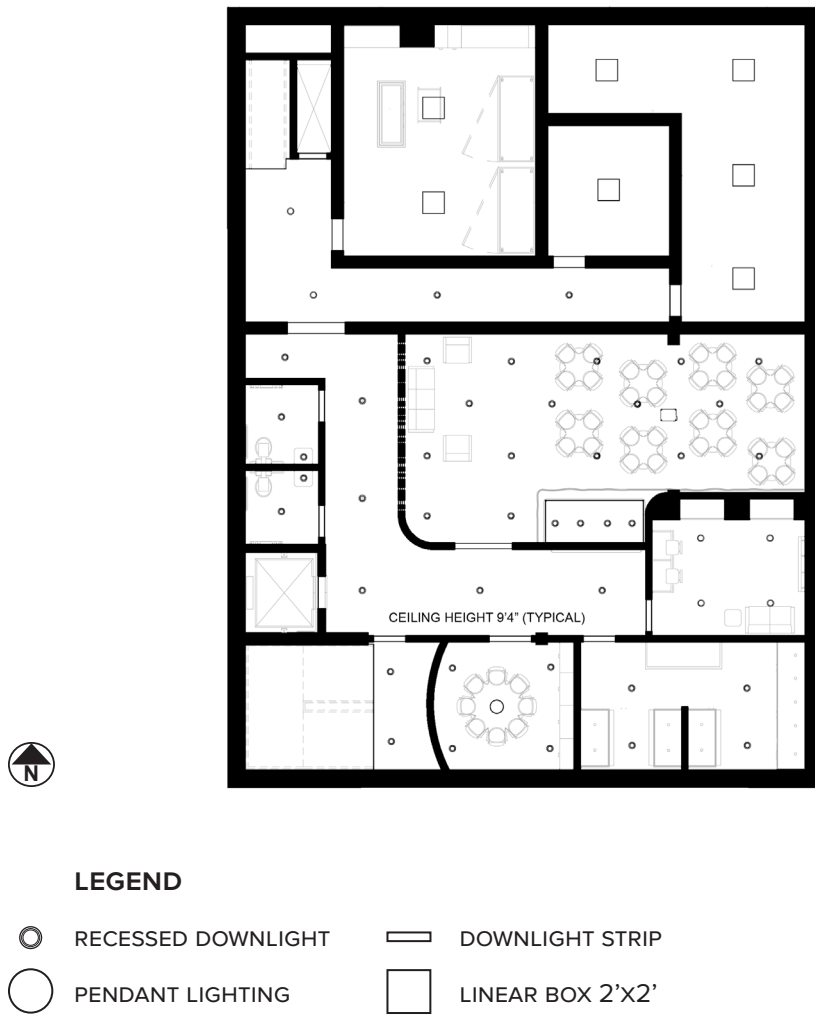


FIGURE 59: North Exterior Elevation

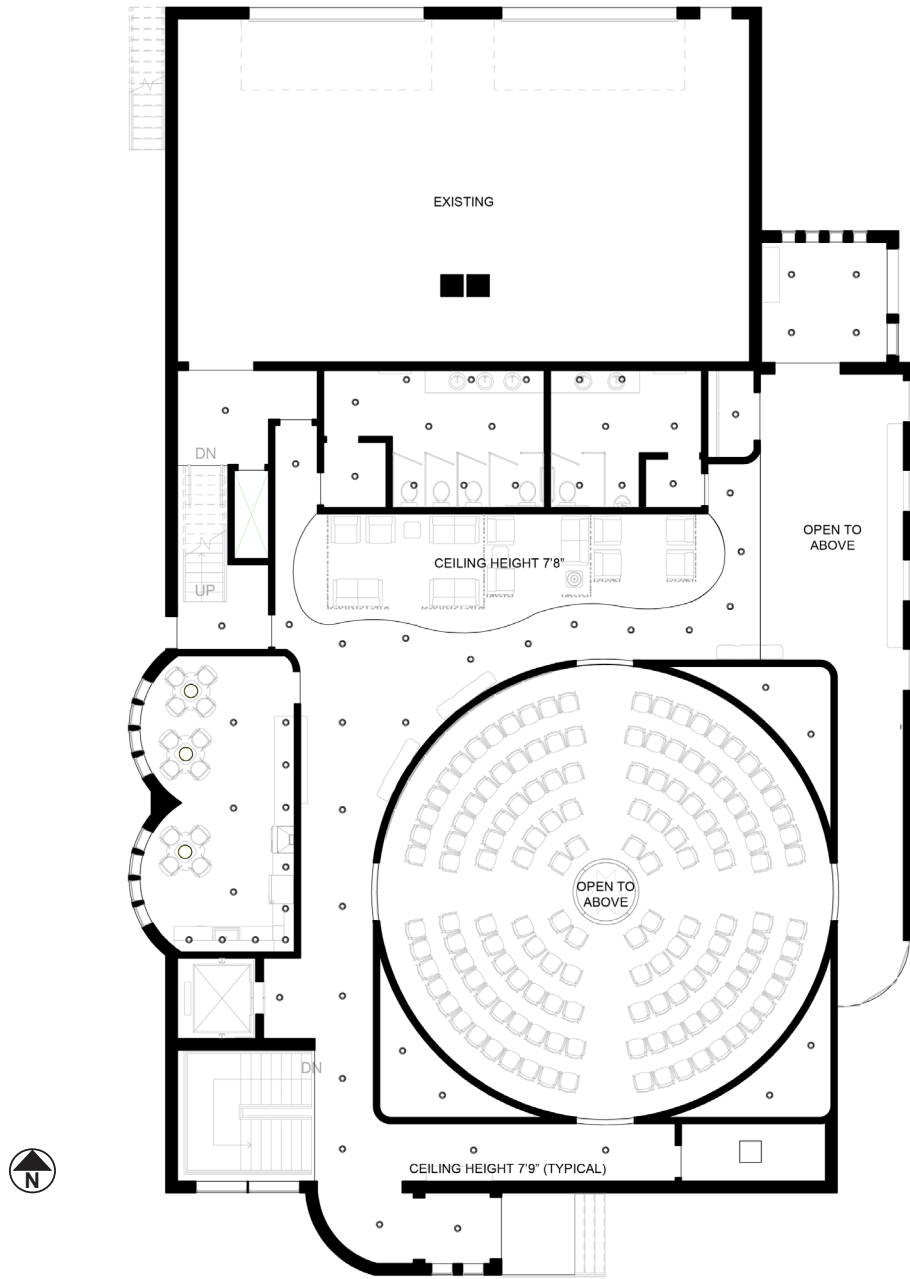


FIGURE 60: East Exterior Elevation

## 6.4 Reflected Ceiling Plans



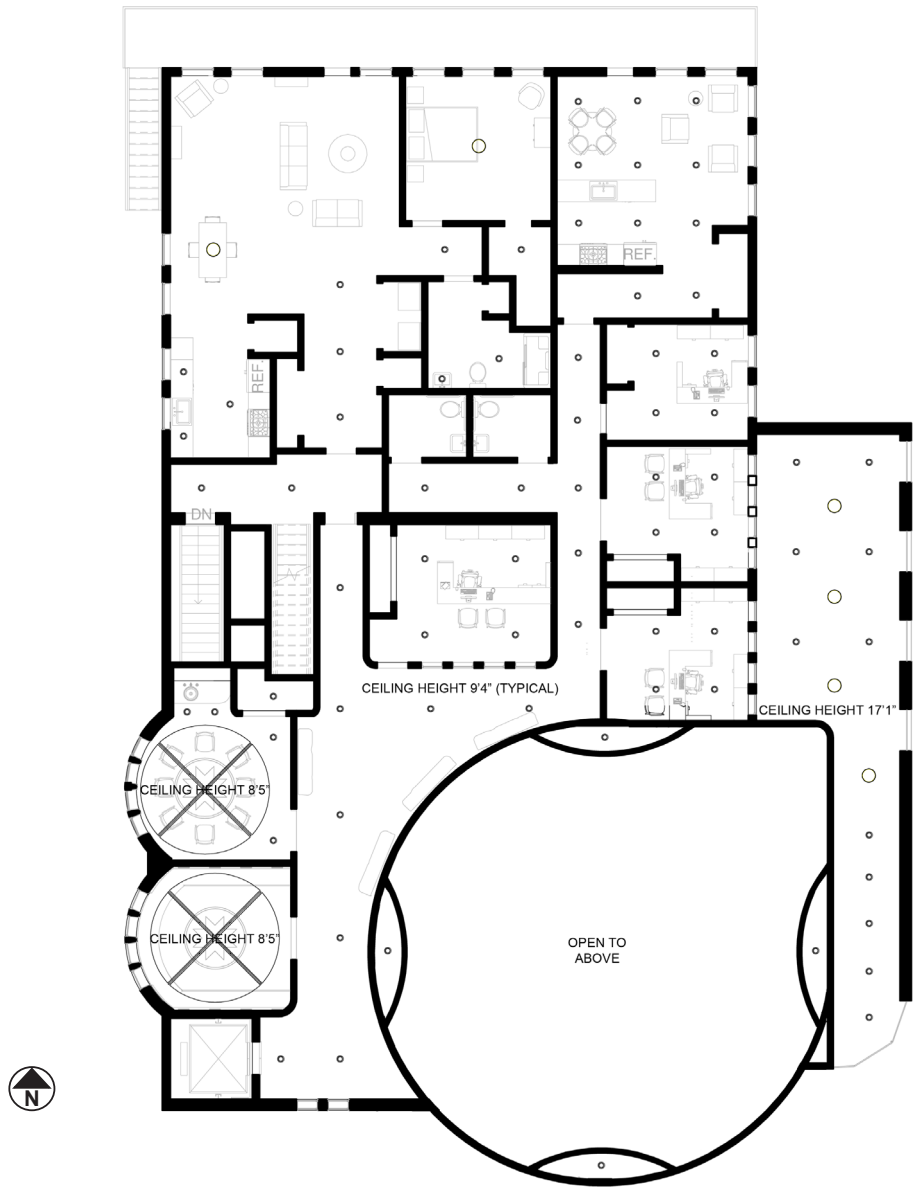
**FIGURE 61:** Basement Reflected Ceiling Plan. Not to scale.







**LEGEND**

- |   |                    |   |                  |
|---|--------------------|---|------------------|
| ○ | RECESSED DOWNLIGHT | ▬ | DOWNLIGHT STRIP  |
| ○ | PENDANT LIGHTING   | □ | LINEAR BOX 2'X2' |

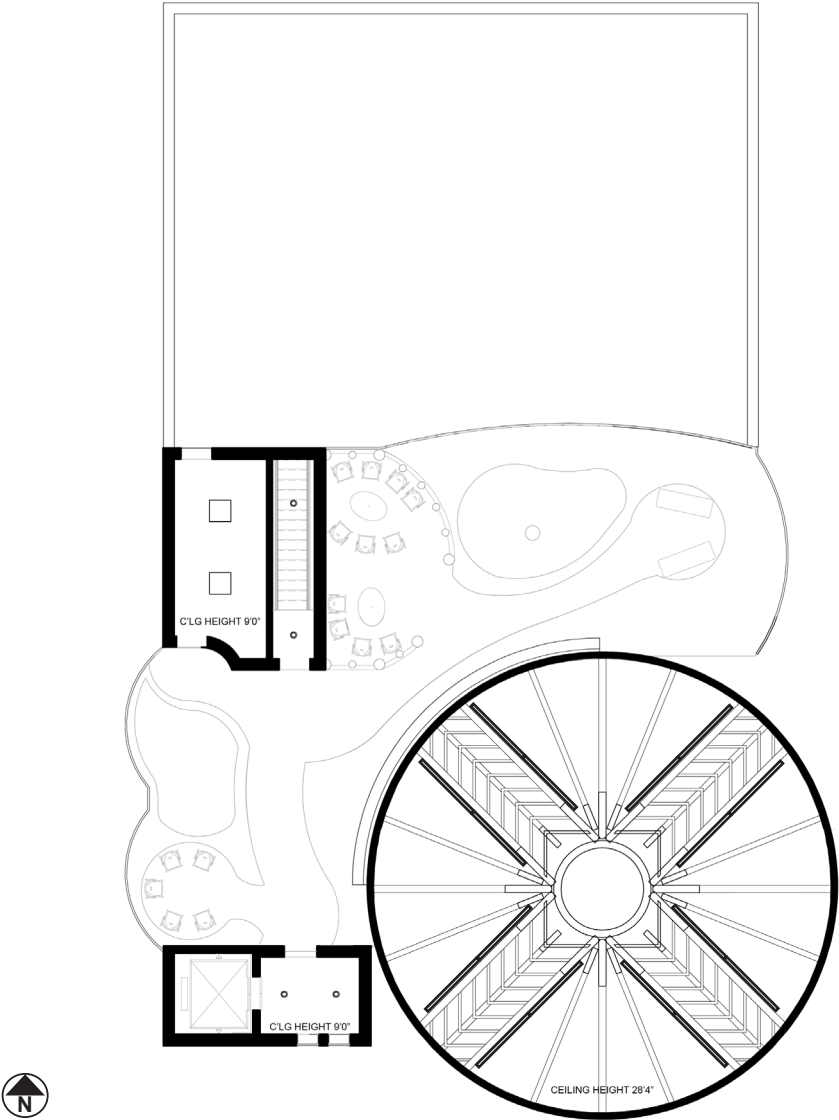
**FIGURE 62:** First Floor Reflected Ceiling Plan. Not to Scale.



**LEGEND**

- |                                                                                     |                    |                                                                                     |                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
|  | RECESSED DOWNLIGHT |  | DOWNLIGHT STRIP  |
|  | PENDANT LIGHTING   |  | LINEAR BOX 2'X2' |

**FIGURE 63:** Second Floor Reflected Ceiling Plan. Not to scale.

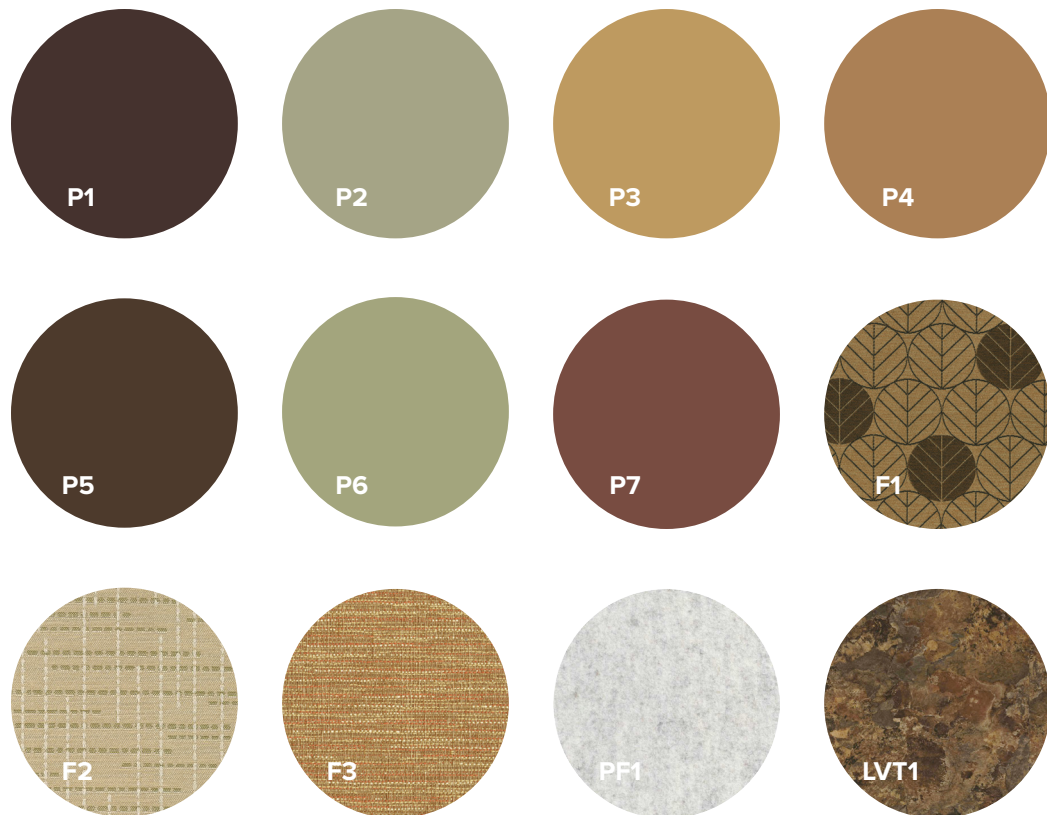


**LEGEND**

- RECESSED DOWNLIGHT
- PENDANT LIGHTING
- ▭ DOWNLIGHT STRIP
- ▭ LINEAR BOX 2'X2'

**FIGURE 64:** Third Floor Reflected Ceiling Plan. Not to scale.

## 6.5 Materials, Furniture and Fixtures



- P1** BEHR Divine Wine PPU1-2
- P2** BEHR Dusty Olive PPU8-20
- P3** BEHR Glazed Ginger PPU3-13
- P4** BEHR Glazed Pot PPU3-15
- P5** BEHR Oxblood PPU2-20
- P6** BEHR Cricket PPU9-22
- P7** BEHR Royal Liqueur PPU2-19

- F1** Design Tex: Round Leaves  
3560-102 Birch
- F2** Design Tex: Saugatuck 3284-103 Sand

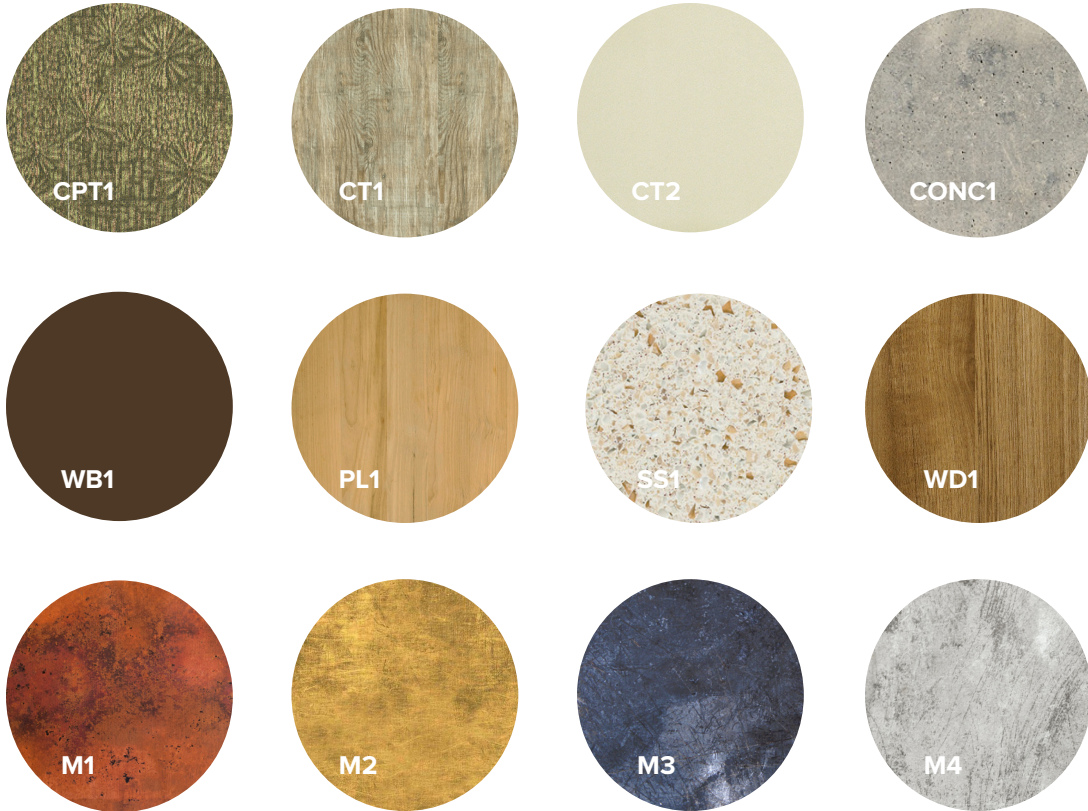
- F3** Design Tex: Tumbleweed 2845-  
701 Sunset

- PF1** Filzfelt Wool Design Felt: 150  
Weiß 5mm

- LVT1** Armstrong Luxury Vinyl Tile  
Natural Creations Earth Cuts:  
TP513 Kashmir Madras

**FIGURE 65:** Material Selection





**CPT1** Patcraft Carpet Tile Life + Style Collection: Urban Garden 10395: Topiary 00360, Prose 10396: Topiary 00360, Leaflet 10397: Topiary 00360

**CT1** Monocibec Ceramic Tile Echo Series: Fiemme Natural 6 x 40 (in)  
**CT2** Crossville Ceramic Tile Savoy: Sea Mist Matte VS133 3 x 6 (in)

**CONC1** Concrete

**WB1** Johnsonite Rubber Wall Base: 76 Cinnamon

**PL1** Roseburg Duramine: 392 Rusticwood

**SS1** LG Hausys HI-MACS Galaxy: Saturn T003

**WD1** Birch w/ Penofin Verde Stain: Ash

**M1** Copper

**M2** Brass

**M3** Steel

**M4** Aluminum



FIGURE 66: Furniture Selection



I



J



K



L



M

- A Steelcase Coalesse Enea Lottus Side Chair with Loop Arm
- B Steelcase Coalesse Enea Lottus Table Standard
- C Elk Lighting Modern Drum Light 19063/5
- D Steelcase Coalesse Coupe Mobile Lounge Chair
- E Bernhardt Design Story Multipurpose Table
- F Herman Miller Branca Chair
- G Bernhardt Design Pause Bench
- H Steelcase Coalesse Visalia Seating Single Seat
- I Steelcase Coalesse Visalia Seating Lounge
- J Bernhardt Design Area Square Occasional Table
- K Hubbardton Forge Lighting Exos Iron Pendant Light
- L Knoll Studio Maya Lin Stone Coffee Table
- M Herman Miller Air-Chair w/ Arms

The natural environment provided the basis of inspiration for the materials selected. Drawing cues from natural elements found in Saskatchewan, the palette is comprised of earthy and plant based shades as well as materials featuring nature based patterns and textures. Despite being a funeral home where the presence of death is constantly at the forefront, the warm tones and energy from touches of the natural world create an atmosphere that is more comfortable and optimistic for both patrons and staff. The paint colours were chosen to reflect colours naturally derived from the local environment. These include wild fruits such as Saskatoon berries and chokecherries, clay soil, iron ore, and plants sacred in Indigenous traditions such as sage and sweet grass.

The majority of flooring in the funeral home is an Armstrong luxury vinyl tile flooring. It is used in areas such as the basement level, ceremony space, main circulation routes, retreat room, and Elder's room. Durable, abrasion resistant, easily maintained, and suitable for high traffic areas, this flooring is excellent for spaces that are prone to demanding use. In terms of sustainability and health for the occupants, this vinyl flooring emits low VOCs and damaged tiles can be individually

replaced reducing the need to repair the entire floor (Armstrong, 2014). The design of the flooring resembles the random textures and colour variations found in certain types of stone. Comprised of earthy browns and greys, the neutrality of colour and the movement of the design creates a natural foundation for the rest of the materials and furniture. In other areas such as the kitchen and washrooms, the ceramic floor tile with the textural feel and look of aged wood is used to differentiate the spaces from the main areas. This flooring is made up of 40% recycled content (Ceramic Tileworks, ND). Staff offices, the meeting room, and the library resource centre all feature a high performance carpet tile by Patcraft to soften the room for the comfort of the occupants and provide sound absorption for better privacy. In addition to the designs of the carpet resembling vegetation such as flowers and leaves, the carpet is a sustainable option as it is cradle to cradle certified (Patcraft, ND).

The minimalist character of the furniture styles found throughout the funeral home was chosen to be a backdrop for the different stories, colours, patterns and textures of each event. The preference for rounded edges and organic forms reinforces the inclusion of nature centred design. Chairs such the Herman

Miller Branca chair have been specifically inspired by natural forms such as tree branches, while the Maya Lin coffee table resembles a simple stone. Soft seating located in the multipurpose room, library, and main floor sitting area is upholstered in Design Tex fabric chosen for its high levels of recycled content. The designs on the fabric range from a more playful tree inspired pattern to ones that are more subdued and compliment with the soft colours of the spaces. Drawing from the vastness of the Saskatchewan landscape, that furniture compliments the interior forms and space. The building spaces will become animated and the sensory experience will be completed by the users and their songs, drums, food, and textiles such as star blankets and other ceremonial items that they will bring to personalize the space.

Saskatchewan sourced birch wood is used throughout the funeral home on surfaces such as the ceremony space ceiling, main floor sitting area seating and long bench, the doors and many other elements. A 100% sustainable and low VOC wood stain made of sustainable plant based ingredients from Penofin Verde is applied to warm the colour of the birch.

Brass details such as cabinetry handles and door push plates are found throughout the entirety of the building. The brass will

develop a patina when exposed to oxygen and oils from hands. Overtime the interaction with these brass elements will be revealed, creating a tangible presence of time and connections between the past and present users of the space. That patina will start to blend into the colours of the materials around it in a subtle pattern of shades and texture.

Recessed downlights have been chosen for many of the lighting fixtures throughout the funeral home. Recessed lighting will preserve the illusion of height in spaces, such as on the first floor where the available ceiling height is modest, while still providing ample light. Inspired by the Saskatchewan landscape, the linearity and unbrokenness of the horizon line and sky can be achieved in the ceiling plane. Pendant lights have been chosen for other areas of the funeral home such as the two storey high seating area on the main floor, and over tables in the kitchen and meeting room. Two styles of pendant lights feature simple circular shades inspired by drums. The Elk Lighting modern drum light resembles an Indigenous drum made of the animal skin stretched tightly over the form while the Hubbardton forge light features two nested shades. Down lighting strips are used to highlight key ceiling elements of the funeral home such as the dropped down circular ceilings in the retreat room and elder's office, and the wooden beams of the ceremony room.

# 7 Conclusion



In the early stages of this practicum project, I felt it necessary to go beyond the design of a conventional funeral home by looking at the needs of the surrounding community in order to determine a relatively unfamiliar design typology in interior design. Saskatoon's growing Indigenous population has provided a realistic motive in pursuing the increase of services and spaces dedicated to the preservation and support of Indigenous culture. I was able to find an example of an existing Indigenous funeral home located in Winnipeg. This facility is equipped to accommodate funerary customs such as traditional 24 hour wakes and the preparation of food. However the materiality, form, and overall design of the space does not appear to reflect the cultural diversity of the Indigenous patron. Using the Westwood Funeral Home as my project site, I was able to design a facility in hopes of better serving the community already using the services of the pre-existing funeral home. Although I have expanded on the existing building and added additional types of rooms, the funeral home gave me the opportunity to look at the building as a renovation project, rather than an adaptive reuse. This type of scenario has provided a glimpse into the realities of

having a client who wishes to improve their existing facility to suit the growing and changing expectations of their patrons.

As a person not belonging to the Indigenous community, I experienced many apprehensions over the course of this practicum project. Since I could not find many similar types of spaces, I questioned if an Indigenous funeral home was even necessary. Through my research on the emotional and physical damage to generations of Indigenous peoples forced to attend residential schools, I was made aware of the importance of having spaces dedicated to the continuation and preservation of Indigenous identity and culture. Having a facility designed to provide the option for one to carry out traditions, ceremonies, and other faith based practices in a safe and comfortable environment is hopefully a step forward in the healing and reclamation of Indigenous identity.

In determining the user of the funeral home I was faced with many options regarding different groups of Indigenous peoples, not only in their cultural diversity, but also in their diversity of religions and faiths. The range of needs of the user group is vast, yet in order to provide a space that was respectful and accommodating I was also concerned that

I would be over-generalizing the Indigenous community. I have lived in Saskatoon and Winnipeg, both with significant Indigenous populations, studied past Indigenous peoples during my undergrad, attended many Indigenous events, and visited Indigenous facilities. However, these experiences and my knowledge of Indigenous culture does not put me in a place to inform the Indigenous community as to what they need in the design of a funeral home. To strengthen and further my studies of Indigenous worldviews, consulting Indigenous groups within the local area would provide a more accurate understanding of the needs of the community. I can only hope that through my research and design that elements of this practicum may be potentially used as a suggestion or stepping point for future Indigenous based design. Ideas for further areas of study may expand upon the need for culturally relevant spaces and services in the urban context for Indigenous peoples. Future topics stemming from this practicum project may include examining the types of services offered or required for Indigenous peoples prior to death. This could include focusing on Indigenous perspectives regarding palliative or hospice care in hospitals or other establishments

to determine the design of a supportive environment for Indigenous peoples who may not have access to their homes and communities while in care.

The examination of the precedents proved useful in demonstrating the effectiveness of the design considerations established by the theoretical frameworks. Iskotew Healing Lodge and Thunderbird House highlighted the importance of culturally derived forms to produce relevant interiors to connect to the Indigenous community. Forms such as the circle informed the shape of the ceremony space, as well as wall and ceiling elements in the meeting room, kitchen, retreat room, and Elder's office. The medicine wheel and star blanket pattern are also featured in many of the floors of the spaces where ceremonies and traditional practices take place. Not only are these inclusions in the building symbolic, but they may also be used in teachings. The deliberate selection of natural materials found in these two precedents also reflected their local environments and their importance in Indigenous culture. Drawing from the local Saskatchewan landscape the design includes birch wood, sandstone, colours derived from plants and soils, and elements such as the rods reminiscent of birch

trees, birch pattern curtains and expansive and uncluttered spaces. Sage used in sacred ceremonies is translated in the paint colours and ceramic wall tile.

Since this space is intended to be a comfortable and welcoming facility for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, the Interfaith Spiritual Centre provided design considerations based on personalization of the space regardless of the culture or faith of the user. This was applied in the decision to make the ceremony space partially circular in form with three corners. Using a curtain track system it can be easily transformed into a fully circular room. This is intended for traditional Indigenous funerary practices. When the curtains are pulled alongside the corner walls the space becomes more angular and the non-fixed seating can be arranged in a linear configuration to accommodate other faiths and beliefs.

As posed in Chapter 1, the research questions used to direct my theoretical framework will now be revisited.

In what ways can interior design support and contribute to culturally relevant and appropriate Indigenous design?.

Using various research methods to determine the functional, emotional, spiritual, and cultural needs of the intended user allows interior designers to provide a comprehensive design that is both culturally relevant and appropriate. Culturally relevant design is achieved when the identity of the community one is designing for has been considered throughout the entirety of the design. When a designer does not belong to the cultural group they are designing for it is in their best interests to consciously put aside their own preferences in design elements (such as materiality, form, and colour) which may provoke unwanted perceptions and meanings. Cultural relevance in design is attained when it is informed by qualities distinct to the cultural group such as the beliefs they hold, their ways of life, symbols, past and present structures, art, music, and geographical location. When interior design respects and supports the qualities of a cultural group, the design can promote a

greater sense of ownership and emotional attachment between the users and space.

For this practicum the portion of the theoretical framework regarding worldviews of Indigenous peoples of Canada, and more specifically those living in Saskatchewan, was used to inform the development of Indigenous based design. Research gathered on the physical, spiritual, and symbolic concepts of life and death within the worldviews provided an understanding into the essential requirements needed within the project in order to connect to the Indigenous community. This included spaces not typical of a funeral home such as a kitchen for patrons to prepare their own food for wakes and feasts, as well as large flexible spaces for the consuming of food, and rooms designed to accommodate smudging and pipe ceremonies. Drawing on key elements within Indigenous worldviews such as the sacred circle and medicine wheel provided opportunities for symbolic incorporation in the building on both a large and small scale. Areas used for ceremonial purposes including the ceremony space for funerals and wakes, as well as the retreat room and Elder's room have all been designed to feature circular

elements as well as the central star blanket pattern in their floors using the colours of the four directions orients the user. The reverence for Mother Earth in many worldviews is also apparent throughout the funeral home through the use of both naturally derived materials and materials, forms, and colours reflecting the local vegetation and landscape.

How can nature centred interior design be used in conjunction with Indigenous worldviews to promote positive relations between users, the built environment, and the natural environment?

As explored in the theoretical framework, many Indigenous people’s strong relationship to nature is evident in the worldviews they hold. Through the identification of significant aspects of the natural world, nature centered design can be used to heighten these connections despite being in an interior environment. Inspiration can be drawn from local materials, sacred plants, and other aspects of the surrounding landscape unique and significant to Indigenous peoples. When applied as biophilic design dimensions they can contribute to positive physical, emotional, and spiritual experiences and




associations. Elements featuring direct design in the funeral home include the use of living plants found in the second floor seating area and rooftop garden. Views to the outside have been also been increased from the original design of the building. Design elements linked to prospect and refuge in indirect design informed the design of the contrast between the main floor seating areas. Other areas of the funeral also feature a mixture of intimate, smaller scale spaces such as the retreat room and open spacious areas like the ceremony room. Symbolic design is reflected in the use of the tree line dividers, tree like shape of the multipurpose windows, locally inspired natural pigments, and furniture such as the branch-like Herman Miller Branca chair featured in the ceremony space.

Sustainability and respect for the earth is another component in nature centred design and shares common goals found within many Indigenous worldviews. Responsible use and sourcing of resources can lessen the impact of construction and maintenance on the natural environment. Materials selected for this project have been chosen based on their company's dedication to sustainable practices and applicability in achieving credits towards LEED certification.

The addition of the green roof is not only for the benefit of the users of the funeral home, but the building itself and surrounding area. Incorporating sustainable practices helps to maintain positive interconnected relationships amongst all aspects of the living and non-living world.

Other key design concepts of nature centred design such as creating a spirit of place encourages a sense of community and embraces the local culture. This strengthens the connection between the user, building, and local landscape by increasing sense of identity in both individuals and the community. It can also promote feelings such as comfort and safety. Drawing from the local landscape and ensuring areas designed for social practices were thoughtfully and practically considered within the funeral home created a distinctive quality intended to reflect the spirit of place.



In what ways can sensory based design be used to enhance and provoke the conscious and subconscious and what types of perceptions and experiences can be produced?

When designing with the intention of implementing sensory based design, awareness of all the aspects that make

up a space such as materiality, form, voids, texture, and light must be thoroughly considered individually and as a whole. Each of these components, whether large or small, have the ability to influence the types and quality of conscious and subconscious experiences within the space. The presence of sound in a space provokes responses in relation to memory, awareness, existentialism, and imagination. The majority of public areas in the funeral home have been designed to embrace and not suppress sounds produced by its occupants such as talking, singing, and drumming. This allows for a more communal atmosphere focusing on unity amongst the inhabitants and with the building. The presence of silence in the interior environment creates a more focused awareness of self, existence, time, and encourages remembrance. The retreat room is a space where one can find solitude in a peaceful, quiet place for contemplation or prayer. The rounded design of the room and lowered ceiling gives the impression of an intimate retreat from the rest of the funeral home. The experience of smells have the ability to transport one back in time to a memory or emotion. Food is an important component in Indigenous funerary events. Therefore the spaces which

house the production and consuming of food have been designed to allow these smells to permeate to nearby areas in the funeral home. The experience of smelling becomes a shared experience. Lastly, act of touching can connect the body to the passing of time by revealing the past through objects and materials we come into contact with such as metals like brass which develop a patina over time. The perceptions and experiences produced from multisensory design can be individualized or experienced collectively amongst many people. They may bring back the past, focus us in the present, and have us look towards the future. They can also help in establishing or solidifying ones' identity.

Upon reflection, the final design of the Indigenous funeral home did satisfy many of the design considerations posed in the theoretical frameworks and precedent analysis. I feel I was able to respectfully integrate key Indigenous concepts, both obviously and subtly, into the spatial forms and design elements without venturing into over-generalizations. The final outcome of the design supports the preservation and the strengthening of Indigenous identity while still providing an accommodating space for additional religious beliefs and practices. In the early stages of the design development I chose to take into consideration our innate affinity for the natural environment and focus heavily on nature centered design. By doing this, the final design of the funeral home can appeal to and become a meaningful and respected space for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples who need and want to find connections to nature. Incorporating and integrating many types of sensory perception into the design was challenging. Due to our present day onslaught of experiences based solely on our sense of vision, it was thought provoking to work throughout the project to place a higher importance on sound, smell, and touch, rather than the visual elements alone.

I would like to delve more into the ways I can integrate the passing of time and connections to the past such as using certain materials, or designing new pieces of furniture, that subtly wear away to create new forms as they change. Investigations further into the subtle ways that materials and shapes can work together and against each other to affect sound would also prove useful, especially in the final form of the ceremony room in order to be able to create different acoustic capabilities in the space.

In conclusion of this practicum project, the experience of researching, writing, and designing the Indigenous funeral home has given me insight into the importance of connecting and thoroughly expanding on all the various components that translate into completion of this document. Starting from the proposal to the final design, this experience has given me a greater confidence in the skills I have obtained during the completion of my Master's degree. It has also pushed myself to look beyond the comforts of pursuing a topic I am familiar with, to delve into worldviews diverse from my own. The resulting product is a funeral home dedicated to serving

the Indigenous community using theories of design to unite the physical structure, body, mind, spirituality, and natural environment so that a healthy and supportive environment for both humans and Mother Earth may be achieved.

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# 9 Appendices

**9.1** Construction Drawings

**9.2** Reflected Ceiling Plans

**9.3** Design Detail

**9.4** Building Code Analysis

## 9.1 Construction Drawings

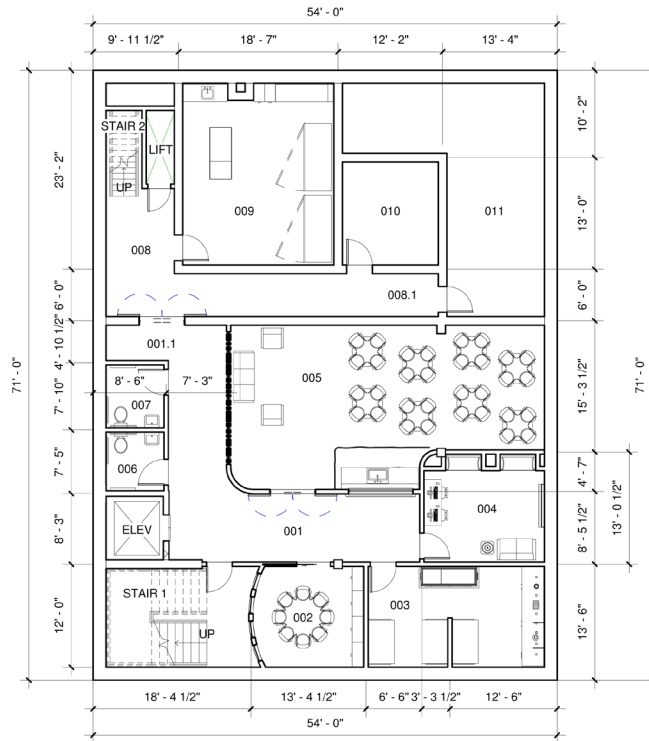


FIGURE 67: Basement. Not to scale.

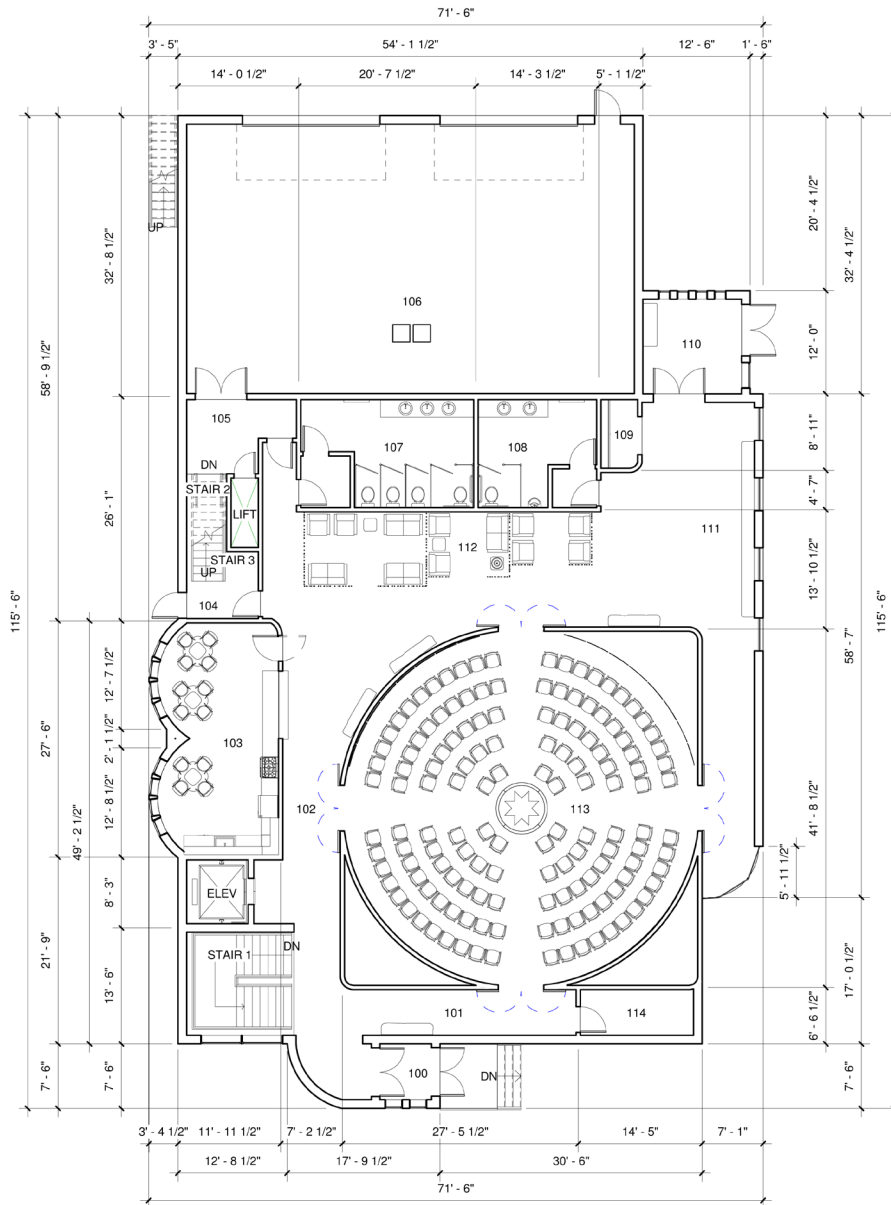


FIGURE 68: First Floor. Not to scale.

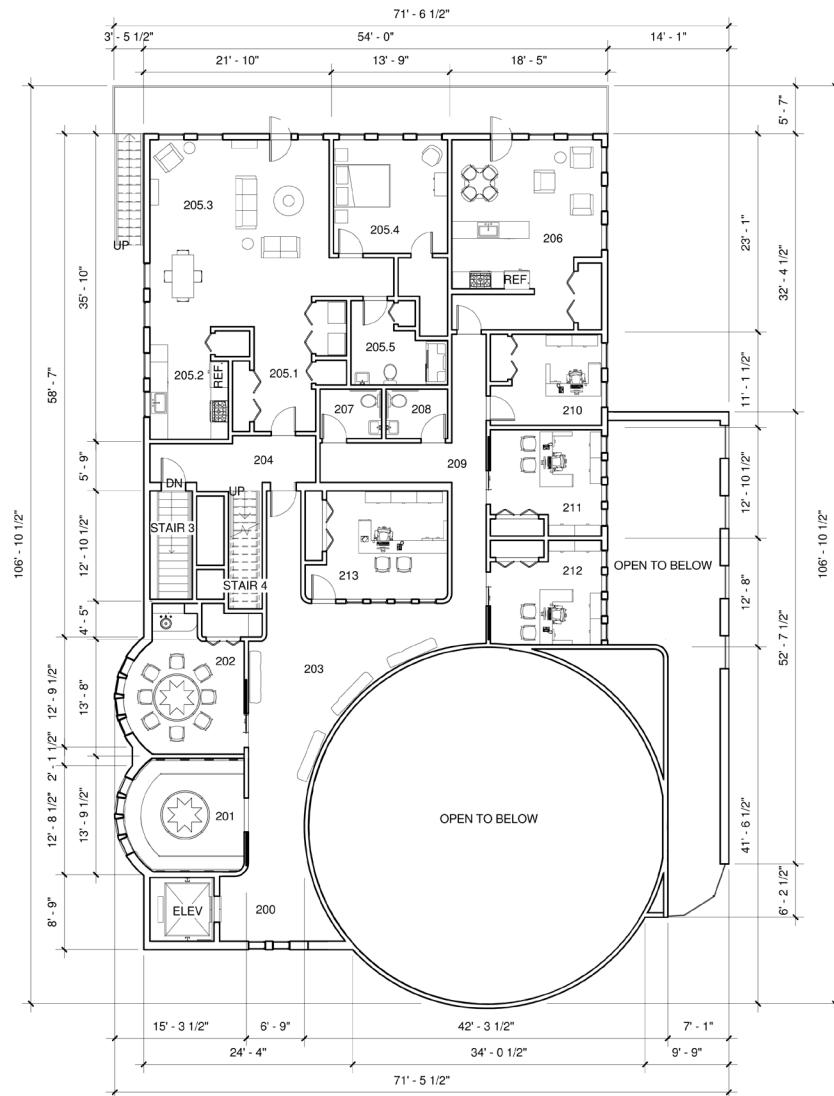


FIGURE 69: Second Floor. Not to scale.

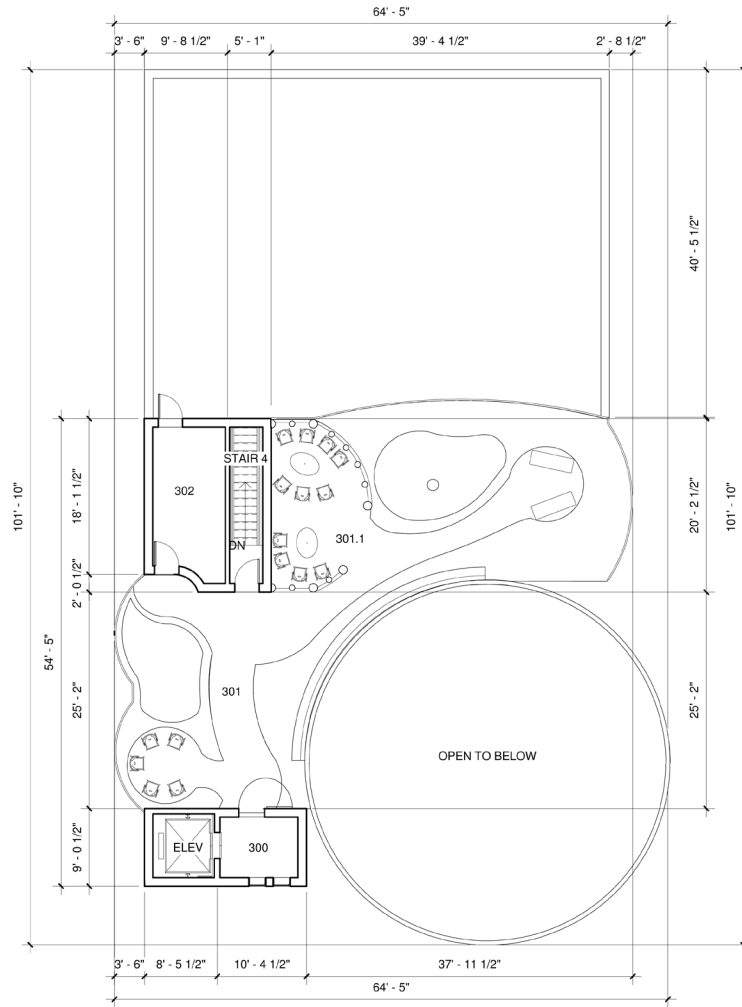


FIGURE 70: Third Floor/Rooftop. Not to scale.

### 9.3 Design Detail

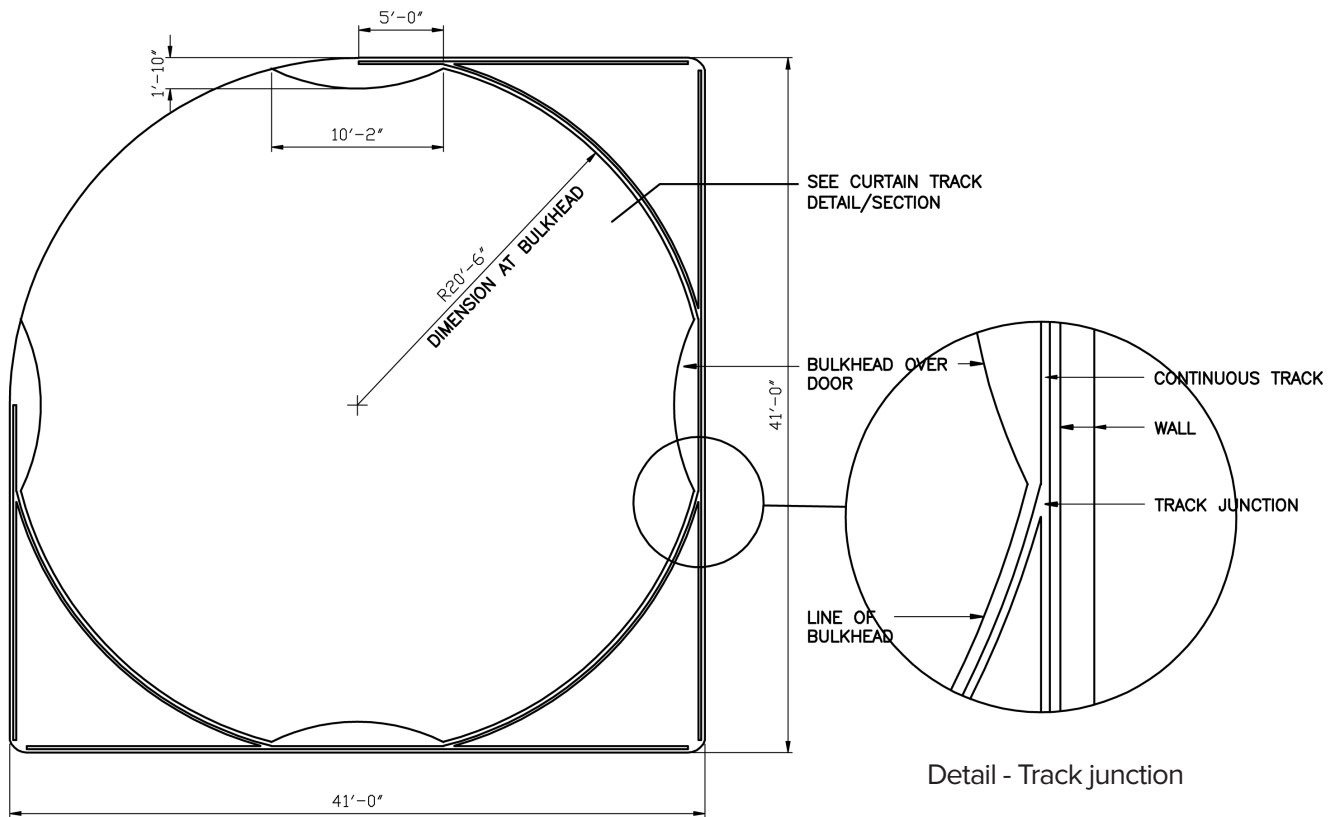


FIGURE 71: Reflected Ceiling Plan Curtain Track. Not to scale.

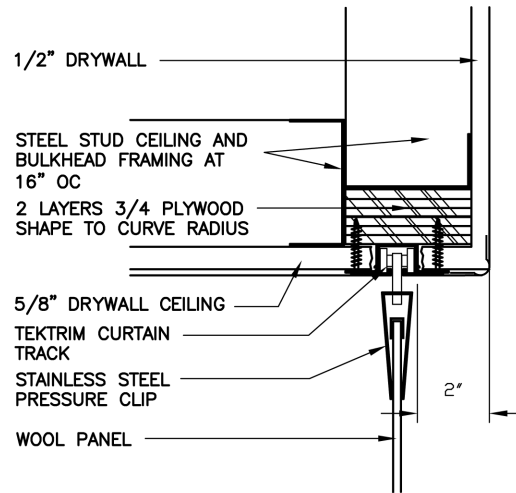
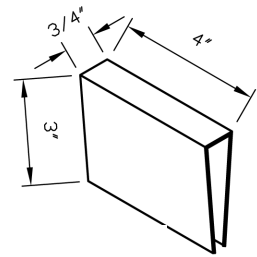


FIGURE 72: Curtain Track Detail/Secion. Not to scale.



Stainless Steel Pressure Clip

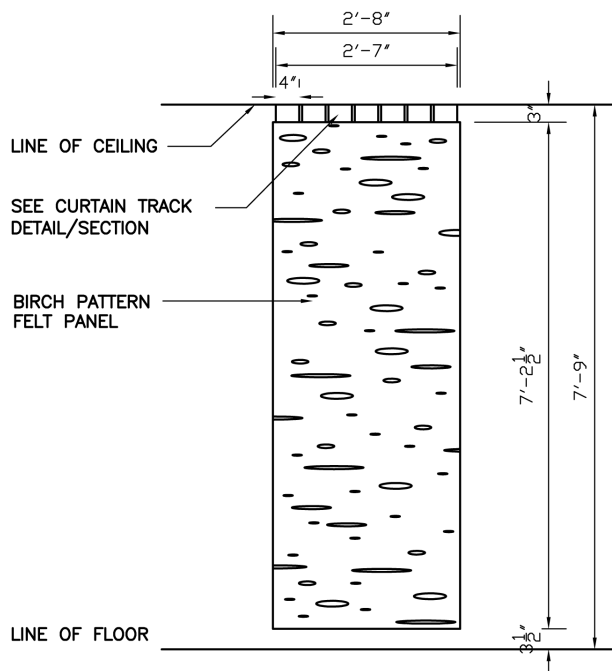


FIGURE 73: Curtain Elevation. Not to scale.



## 9.4 Building Code Analysis

The following code review requirements have been excerpted from the National Building Code of Canada (2010) and incorporated into the design of this practicum project to meet life safety and occupancy standards.

### **PART 3 FIRE PROTECTION, OCCUPANT SAFETY AND ACCESSIBILITY**

#### **SECTION 3.1 GENERAL**

##### 3.1.2.1. Classification of Buildings, Table 3.1.2.1 Major Occupancy Classification

Group A Division 2 – Assembly occupancy not elsewhere classified in Group A

Group C – Residential occupancies

Group F Division 3 – Low-hazard industrial occupancy

##### 3.1.3. Multiple Occupancy Requirements

##### 3.1.3.1. Separation of Major Occupancies, Table 3.1.3.1 Major Occupancy Fire Separation

Minimum fire resistance rating of fire separation:

A-2 to C: 1 hour

A-2 to F3: 1 hour

C to F3: 1 hour

### 3.1.17. Occupant Load

#### 3.1.17.1. Occupant Load Determination

Determines the number of people able to occupy a floor. This is calculated based on Table 3.1.17.1.

Occupant Load Calculations based on design:

Basement A2 – 56 people

Main Floor Storage Garage F3 – 4 people

Main Floor Assembly Space A2 – 210 people

Second Floor A2 – 26 people

Second Floor C – 2 people

## SECTION 3.2 BUILDING FIRE SAFETY

### 3.2.2. Building Size and Construction Relative to Occupancy

#### 3.2.2.4. Buildings with Multiple Major Occupancies

The funeral home contains more than one major occupancy classified in more than one Group or Division, therefore the requirements regarding building size and construction relative to its major occupancies (A2, C, and F3), will be applied according to Articles 3.2.2.5. to 3.2.2.8.

#### 3.2.2.5. Applicable Building Height and Area

The building height and building area of the entire building shall be used in determining the fire safety requirements in relation to each of its major occupancies.

### 3.2.2.7. Superimposed Major Occupancies

Since one major occupancy is located above another major occupancy, the lower major occupancy shall be used to determine the requirements of the fire-resistance rating of the floor assembly between the major occupancies.

### 3.2.2.10. Streets

The east side of the funeral home faces Avenue N North, and the South side of the building faces 20Th St. West, with not less than 50% of the building perimeter located within 15 m of the streets. Therefore, the funeral home is considered to face 2 streets.

### 3.2.2.11. Exterior Balconies

An exterior balcony shall be constructed in accordance with the type of construction required by Articles 3.2.2.20 to 3.2.2.88, as applicable to the occupancy classification of the building.

### 3.2.2.13. Occupancy on Roof

The portion of the roof that supports an occupancy shall be constructed in conformance with the fire separation requirements of Articles 3.2.2.20 to 3.2.2.88 for floor assemblies and not the fire-resistance rating for roof assemblies.

### 3.2.2.14. Roof-Top Enclosures

A roof-top enclosure for a stairwell shall be constructed in accordance with the type of

construction required by Articles 3.2.2.20 to 3.2.2.88. It does not need to have a fire-resistance rating or be constructed as a fire separation.

3.2.2.26. Group A, Division 2, up to 2 Storeys, Increased Area, Sprinklered

The building is classified as Group A, Division 2, is sprinklered throughout, is no more than 2 storeys in building heights, and has a building area no more than 2 400 m<sup>2</sup>. Therefore it is permitted to be of combustible construction or noncombustible construction used singly or in combination. The floor assemblies shall be fire separations made of combustible construction and have a fire-resistance rating not less than 45 min. Assemblies required to have a fire-resistance and are supported by loadbearing walls, columns and arches will have a fire-resistance rating not less than 45 min or be of noncombustible construction.

3.2.2.53. Group C, up to 3 Storeys, Sprinklered

The building is also classified as Group C, sprinklered throughout, is not more than 3 storeys in building height and does not have a building area more than 2 700 m<sup>2</sup>. Therefore the construction and floor assembly fire-resistance rating remain as described in 3.2.2.26. However, loadbearing walls, columns, and arches shall have a fire-resistance rating not less than that required for the supported assembly. Since there is no dwelling unit above another dwelling unit, the fire-resistance rating for floor assemblies entirely within the dwelling unit are waived.

### 3.2.2.84. Group F, Division 3, up to 2 Storeys, Sprinklered

The building is also classified as Group F, Division 3, sprinklered throughout, not more than 3 storeys in building height and does not have a building area more than 2 700 m<sup>2</sup>. The building is permitted to be of combustible construction or noncombustible construction used singly or in combination. Floor assemblies shall be fire separations and if made of combustible construction shall have a fire-resistance rating not less than 45 min. An assembly require to have a fire-resistance rating and supported by loadbearing walls, columns, and arches shall have a fire-resistance rating not less than 45 min or be of noncombustible construction.

### 3.2.3. Spatial Separation and Exposure Protection

#### 3.2.3.1. Limiting Distance and Area of Unprotected Openings

Based on Table 3.2.3.1.D., the unprotected opening limits for a building that is sprinklered throughout:

East Elevation: Limiting distance 10 m, allows 100% unprotected openings.

South Elevation: Limiting distance over 10 m, allows 100% unprotected openings.

West Elevation: Limiting distance over 10 m, allows 100% unprotected openings.

North Elevation:

- Main Floor Limiting distance 4.25 m, exposed

building face area 39 m sq allows 64% unprotected openings. Actual 50.5%.

Second Floor Limiting distance 5.92 m, exposed building face area 46.9 m sq allows 82% unprotected openings. Actual 33%.

### 3.2.4. Fire Alarm and Detection Systems

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

Buildings with automatic sprinkler systems shall have a fire alarm system installed.

#### 3.2.4.2. Continuity of Fire Alarm System

If a building contains more than one major occupancy and a fire alarm system is required, a single system shall serve all occupancies.

#### 3.2.4.3. Types of Fire Alarm Systems

The fire alarm system must be a single or 2-stage system.

#### 3.2.4.8. Signals to Fire Department

Since the building has an assembly occupancy with an occupant load more than 300 people, a single stage fire alarm notifying the fire department shall be installed.

#### 3.2.4.11. Fire Detectors

Floor areas that are sprinklered are not required to have fire detectors.

#### 3.2.4.12. Smoke Detectors

Since fire alarms are installed in the building,

smoke detectors are required in each exit stair shaft other than those serving only a Group A, Division 4 occupancy or an open storage garage, and elevator machine rooms.

#### 3.2.3.21. Smoke Alarms

The dwelling unit shall have a smoke alarms conforming to CAN/ULC-S531, “Smoke Alarms,” installed. On the second storey where the dwelling unit containing a sleeping room is located, a smoke alarm shall be installed the sleeping room, and in a location between the sleeping room and the remainder of the storey.

### 3.2.7. Lighting and Emergency Power Systems

#### 3.2.7.1. Minimum Lighting Requirements

An exit, a public corridor, or a corridor providing access to exit for the public shall be equipped to provide illumination to an average level not less than 50 lx at floor or tread level and at angles and intersections at changes or levels where there are stairs or ramps.

#### 3.2.7.3. Emergency Lighting

Emergency lighting shall be provided to an average level of illumination not less than 10 lx at floor or tread level in exits, principal routes providing access to exit in open floor areas and in service rooms, corridors used by the public, public corridors, and floor areas or parts thereof where the public may congregate such as in Group A2 occupancies having an occupant load of 60 or more.

## SECTION 3.3. SAFETY WITHIN FLOOR AREAS

### 3.3.1. All Floor Areas

#### 3.3.1.1. Separation of Suites

Other than business and personal services occupancies, each suite shall be separated from adjoining suites by a fire separation having a fire-resistance rating not less than 1 h.

#### 3.3.1.3. Means of Egress

Since part of the roof is intended for occupancy, means of egress shall be provided from the roof as well as every podium, terrace, platform or contained space. A rooftop enclosure shall be provided with an access to exit that leads to an exit on the storey immediately below the roof.

#### 3.3.1.5. Egress Doorways

Every room or suite in the building intended for an occupant load more than 60 and except for the dwelling unit, shall have a minimum of 2 egress doorways as required by Article 3.3.1.3. They shall be placed at a distance from one another equal to or greater than one third of the maximum overall diagonal dimension of the area to be served, measured as the shortest distance that smoke would have to travel between the nearest egress doors.

#### 3.3.1.6. Travel Distance

Refer to 3.4.2.5. Location of Exits

#### 3.3.1.9. Corridors



The minimum width of a public corridor is 1 100 mm. The minimum unobstructed width of a corridor used by the public or a corridor serving classrooms or patients' sleeping rooms shall be 1 100 mm. Dead end corridors other than those entirely within a suite, is permitted provided it is not more than 6 m long.

#### 3.3.1.11. Door Swing

A door that opens into a corridor or other facility providing access to exit from a suite or room not located within a suite shall swing on a vertical axis. A door providing access to exit from a room or suite with an intended occupant load more than 60 shall swing in the direction of travel to the exit. Every door that divides a corridor that is not wholly contained within a suite shall swing on a vertical axis in the direction of travel to the exit.

#### 3.3.1.13. Doors and Door Hardware

A door providing access to exit shall be readily openable and operable by one hand with door release hardware installed not more than 1 200 mm above the finished floor. The door shall be openable with not more than one releasing operation.

### 3.3.2. Assembly Occupancy

#### 3.3.2.3. Non-fixed Seating

Non-fixed seating shall conform to the NFC.

#### 3.3.2.7. Doors

A room or suite with an assembly occupancy containing an occupant load more than 100 people with a door equipped with a latching mechanism will be equipped with a latch release device to allow the door to swing wide open in the direction of travel to the exit.

#### 3.3.2.8. Fixed Bench-Type Seats without Arms

Fixed bench-type seats without arms will be assumed to provide 450 mm seat width per person.

### SECTION 3.4. EXITS

#### 3.4.2. Number and Location of Exits from Floor Area

##### 3.4.1.2. Separation of Exits

If more than one exit is required from a floor area, each exit shall be separate from every other exit leading from that floor area.

##### 3.4.2.1. Minimum Number of Exits

Every floor area intended for occupancy shall be served by at least 2 exits. Exits are not required directly from rooftop enclosures that are provided with access to exits.

##### 3.4.2.3. Distance between Exit

Except as provided in Sentence (2), the least distance between 2 exits from a floor area shall be:

One half the maximum diagonal dimension of the floor area, but need not be more than 9 m for a floor area having a public corridor, or one

half the maximum diagonal dimension of the floor area, but not less than 9 m for all other floor areas.

The minimum distance between exits referred to directly above shall be the shortest distance that smoke would have to travel between exits, assuming that the smoke will not penetrate an intervening fire separation.

#### 3.4.2.4. Travel Distance

The building code defines travel distance as the distance from any point in the floor area to an exit measure along the path of travel to the exit. The travel distance from a suite or a room not within a suite is permitted to be measured from an egress door of the suite or room to the nearest exit provided the suite or room is separated from the remainder of the floor area by a fire separation, in a floor area that is sprinklered throughout, and the egress door opens onto a corridor used by the public

#### 3.4.2.5. Location of Exits

Since the building is sprinklered throughout and does not contain a high-hazard industrial occupancy, if more than one exit is required from a floor area, the exits shall be located so that the travel distance to at least one exit shall be not more than 45 m. Exits shall be located and arranged so that they are clearly visible or their locations are clearly indicated and they are accessible at all times.

### 3.4.2.6. Principal Entrances

At least one door at every principal entrance to a building providing access from the exterior at ground level shall be designed in accordance with the requirements for exits.

### 3.4.3. Width and Height of Exits

#### 3.4.3.2. Exit Width

The minimum aggregate required width of exits serving floor areas intended for assembly occupancies, residential occupancies and industrial occupancies shall be determined by multiplying the occupant load of the area served by 8 mm per person for a stair consisting of steps, whose rise is not more than 180 mm and whose run is not less than 280 mm.

The minimum widths of exits for Groups A, C, and F required minimum width not less than 1100 mm for exit corridors and passageways, 1100 mm for ramps, 900 mm for stairs and 800 mm for doorways.

### 3.4.4. Fire Separation of Exits

#### 3.4.4.1. Fire-Resistance Rating of Exit Separations

Every exit shall be separated from the remainder of the building by a fire separation having a fire-resistance rating not less than that required by Subsection 3.2.2., but not less than 45 min for, the floor assembly above the storey.

#### 3.4.4.2. Exits through Lobbies

Not more than one exit from a floor area is permitted to lead through a lobby, provided clauses a) to e).

#### 3.4.5. Exit Signs

##### 3.4.5.1. Exit Signs

The funeral home has an occupation load of more than 150 people, therefore an exit sign shall be placed over or adjacent to every exit door.

#### 3.7.2. Plumbing Facilities

##### 3.7.2.2. Water Closets

Water closets shall be provided for each sex as found in Table 3.7.2.2.A Water Closets for an Assembly Occupancy. Urinals are permitted to be substituted for two thirds of the number of water closets required.

Number of persons of each sex: 126-150

Minimum number of water closets: Male 3,  
Female 6

##### 3.7.2.3. Lavatories

At least one lavatory shall be provided in a room containing one or 2 water closets or urinals, and at least one additional lavatory shall be provided for each additional 2 water closets or urinals.

## SECTION 3.8. BARRIER-FREE DESIGN

### 3.8.1. General

#### 3.8.1.2. Entrances

Not less than 50% of the pedestrian entrances of a building referred to in sentence 3.8.1.1.(1) shall be barrier-free and shall lead from the outdoors at sidewalk level. At a barrier-free entrance that includes more than one door-way, only one of the doorways is required to be designed in accordance with the requirements of Article 3.8.3.3.

### 3.8.2. Occupancy Requirements

#### 3.8.2.1. Areas Requiring a Barrier-Free Path of Travel

A barrier-free path of travel from the entrances required by 3.8.1.2. above shall be provided throughout the entrance storey and within all other normally occupied floor areas served by a passenger elevator, escalator, inclined moving walk, or other platform-equipped passenger-elevating device.

#### 3.8.2.2. Access to Parking Areas

A barrier-free path of travel is required between exterior parking area and a barrier-free entrance.

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

A washroom in a storey to which a barrier-free path of travel is required in accordance with Article 3.8.2.1., shall be barrier-free in accordance with the appropriate requirements in Articles 3.8.3.8. to 3.8.3.12.

### 3.8.3. Design Standards

#### 3.8.3.3. Doorways and Door

Every doorway that is located in a barrier-free path of travel shall have a clear width not less than 800 mm when the door is in the open position. Every door that provides a barrier-free path of travel through an entrance, including the interior doors of a vestibule, shall be equipped with a power door operator that allows persons to activate the opening of the door from either side of an entrance serving a building of Group A.