Finding Peace and Reconciliation: Healing and Public Identity for the Black Nova Scotian Community in Halifax

by

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This is dedicated to the Black people who have fought to give life to Black people that look like me, that have fought to give me the opportunity to be here giving you this.

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Abstract

Nova Scotia has a rich history that outlines the journey and contribution of the Black community from the founding of the province and, certainly, the country of Canada. And yet the Black community in Nova Scotia has been done a large injustice and currently face large public erasure from the pressures of gentrification.

This thesis examines the role of architecture in community healing and public identity for the Black community in Nova Scotia by using forms of memorials and the creation of space. In the instance of this thesis, focusing on memorials and spaces - such as a community art center, simple infrastructure and monuments - seeks to create a safe space to heal the trauma from the past. By finding a way to heal through architecture, this thesis seeks to contribute to the creation of a concrete, public inclusive identity for Black Nova Scotians within Halifax and, certainly, Nova Scotia.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my family, my dad, my mom, my sister and brother for pushing me to be better and to not give up and to fight for my right to speak up and be myself. You all have been there for every moment but low and high, thank you very much.

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And finally I would like to thank Vanessa, gracias por todo el cariño y apoyo que me brinda constantemente.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Outside Looking In

I am not from the Black communities in Halifax, I am not from Nova Scotia and I am not even Canadian. Yet, like every other Black person that enters the systemic racism of North American society, I have been informally thrust into the category of Black Nova Scotian. As such I have had to learn and understand the lives of Black people within this context and embrace it. With my being and studying of the Black culture, I have come to understand how patterns are formed, unearthing a rich culture, as well as pulling together threads of a fragmented and marginalized history.

To Be Black In Canada

To be Black in Canada means that ultimately you have to question your presence and how you occupy space that is predominantly white. Canada has generally tried to differentiate itself from the United States in the way that it has dealt with its treatment of Black people within space, but they bear striking similarities. Some of these similarities include informally segregated educational systems and covertly discriminatory planning practices.

The Black Nova Scotian

This is most clear when looking at the history of Nova Scotia, especially Black Nova Scotia. To be a Black Nova Scotian is to know your history in fragments, with instances or sections of history remaining foggy. Disputes around the province occur to this day around the seizure of land and claims for reparations (Campbell 2020).

As someone coming into this system, finding out about what has been lost or stolen, has motivated me to retrace and piece together the hidden and forgotten Black Nova Scotian stories and to ask if architecture can help to heal the wounds and traumas that have arisen from these acts of neglect or deliberate erasure through planning and policy. It is important to state that architecture practices are not always active, sometimes passive neglect (as in gentrification) are just as damaging.

Thesis Question

Black Nova Scotia has a rich history that is still unfolding. This rich history has unfortunately been intentionally deleted and to this day is still being erased. This has lead to unidentified traumas, and a loss of public identity and recognition within the Nova Scotian urban fabric.

The thesis explores Black Nova Scotian's erasure, how this has caused a public censoring of identity, trauma and inhibited a cultural understanding of Black Nova Scotians: people who worked to create the homes and spaces non-Black Haligonians now occupy with out recognition of the stories that came before.

The thesis tries to explore how – through architecture - public identity can be restored to begin a process of healing. Or, in other words, how can the architecture of memorials, monuments and public spaces, facilitate the creation of a new public identity and healing for the Black community in Nova Scotia?

A group of men in front of a barn at Guysborough (Buckley 1895)

Chapter 2: Background

History Of Black Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia has a rich history that outlines the journey and contribution of the Black community from the founding of the province to the country of Canada itself. In Eastern Canada, the first recorded information of a Black person dates back to 1605 (Mensah 2002, 44). The arrival and movement of Black people in Nova Scotia is marked by five distinct moments: 1) the arrival of slavery and emancipated people; 2) the arrival of Black loyalist into Eastern Canada; 3) the flight of Black people to Sierra Leone; 4) the introduction of the Maroons; and, lastly, 5) the arrival of runaway enslaved people from the American South.

Enslaved People

Canada has a troubling legacy of slavery: a history that the country has tried to black out. It is not surprising, then, that the larger Black experience, by association, has, likewise, suffered a similar erasure. Although not formally law, exploitation of Black labour through slavery played a crucial role in the foundation of Canada.

In Nova Scotia the practice of slavery was short lived but it has still left its mark. It lasted from 1686 to 1808. It only lasted this long because with the expansion of formal governance in Canada this informal practice it failed to pass in to law (Mensah 2002, 44; Pachai & Bishop 2006, 8). The debate around enfranchising slavery centered on the fact that Canada did not want to be compared to the new American states. But in provinces like Quebec, slavery continued to be widely practiced even after it had stopped in other provinces like Nova Scotia.

A shackled slave prays for justice and freedom. (Dahaynesblog n.d)

Over 500 Black people came to Nova Scotia during this period of slavery practice: most as agricultural workers and labour workers. These numbers increased during the American Revolution with the Black people arriving as the servants and labourers of white Loyalists (Mensah 2002, 46).

Black Loyalist

Richard Pierpoint, United Empire Loyalist; Art work by Malcolm Jones (Canadian War Museum 2015)

The introduction and arrival of Black Loyalist into Atlantic Canada was marked by over 3,000 Black emancipated people entering Eastern Canada with the promise of freedom in exchange for working the British against the American colonies (Mensah 2002, 46). These new Black arrivals were known as Black Loyalists. Most came to settle in Nova Scotia, which became a Black Loyalist base in Canada. Black Loyalists came not because they supported the British, but because the British promised freedom. As such, they were thought of as unequal. The belief of the Black Loyalists was that with their freedom they could fight to abolish slavery in North America (Mensah 2002, 46; Pachai & Bishop 2006,10).

Around Nova Scotia Black Loyalists settled in places such as the Annapolis Valley, the Halifax area, Shelburne, and Guysborough (Mensah 2002, 46). These places were opened to Black Loyalists after much resistance from the white Loyalists who believed that the Black Loyalists didn't deserve land: contradicting the promise made when the emancipated Black people offered support.

Shelburne was the principal port for the early Black settlers because of its proximity to Eastern American settlements like New York and Boston (Pachai & Bishop 2006, 10).

Around the late 1700s Black settlers also started arriving in Birchtown and Annapolis County (Brinley Town).

Not all settled towns survived. This was because white Loyalists were disproportionally given more land than the Black Loyalists and most times "if a white family wished to have a Black family's land they could take it without compensating its owner" (Mensah 2002, 46).

As a result, a lot of communities were so impoverished that they eventually failed. There was rampant discrimination and Black settlers were purposefully tortured, so much so that many eventually left their settlements and headed to other territories, such as Sierra Leone (Pachai & Bishop 2006, 10; Mensah 2002, 46).

Journey to Sierra Leone

Black settlers around the late 1700s faced large discrimination and direct racism that endangered their lives. The white Loyalists, who the Black Loyalists helped were not as keen to look at their Black counterparts as equal. Offering the Black settlers as ransom for British soldiers or even recapturing freed slaves to bring them back to plantations (Mensah 2002, 47).

These practices were so rampant that in 1791 an emancipated Black man Thomas Peters, risked a journey to London to file a formal complaint about the injustices faced by Black people in Nova Scotia. He came back with some help from a Sierra Leone Company run by two philanthropists. Over 1,200 literate, religious and politically opinionated Black people moved from Nova Scotia to Freetown Sierra Leone (Mensah 2002, 47).

A Maroon Soldier (Pachai & Bishop 2006, 14)

The Maroons

Four years after the departure to Sierra Leone, about 550 Maroons – outlawed freedom fighters from Jamaica - arrived in Nova Scotia (Mensah 2002, 48).

They were fighting the British colonialists for their independence, and with the way they fought the colonialists, they were revered and feared. As such the British, in a false pretence, asked for a truce, only to later break it and exile the Maroons. Over 550 Maroons men, women and children made their way to Canada. They arrived in Nova Scotia, settling in the areas now known as Africville and Preston, including the surrounding areas of those two communities.

The Maroons were initially able to settle and make a life for themselves and were initially welcomed. The city looked at them as assets, employing them as military men because of their "fighting spirit" (Grant 1973, 260). They were important in building of the foundation of the Citadel Hill fortress.

But some Maroons, facing the same discrimination they found in Jamaica and not wanting to stoop to the level of slaves after fighting for their freedom, set sail for Sierra Leone (Pachai & Bishop 2006, 13; Mensah 2002, 48; Grant 1973, 261).

Runaway Slaves

Illustration of Runaway Enslaved people (History Thing 2020)

The next wave of Black populations into Nova Scotia was from the United States in 1815 (Mensah 2002, 48-49). A large amount of Black people arrived running away from slavery and seeking freedom. Some Black people were lured into Canada in exchange for land and settlement.

The arrival of a Black man
by the name Matthiew Da Costa
(or Matthieu da Costa) in Nova Scotia
in 1606 has generally been considered
the root of Black history in Canada

1749

The first Africans to make Halifax their home arrived with Edward Cornwallis, the first English governor of Nova Scotia, who founded colonial Halifax. It is not known if these persons were free or enslaved. What is known is that they provided their labour, skills, and talents in helping to found and settle Halifax.

1750-1777

1776 – 1783

The Halifax Black population was augmented between 1776 and 1783 with the arrival of the Black Loyalists. Of the 40,000 that came to Eastern Canada at least 3,500 were freed slaves, known as Black Loyalists, who had served the British during the war. About 1500 enslaved people arrived also with White Loyalists brought their enslaved property with them, who numbered approximately 1,500.

1776-1783

1796-1800

1796

The Maroons arrived in Halifax in July of 1796 because of British betrayal. The Maroons were free Africans who lived in the interior and mountainous regions of Jamaica. Living in such places as Preston, Boydville, Beech Hill (Beechville), and Spryfield, the Maroons filled a colonial labour niche left vacant by the departure of the Black Loyalists. The Jamaicans built roads and highways, worked on the third iteration of the Citadel fortress, and also helped to build Province House, the home of the governor.

1814

In the Chesapeake and Coastal Georgia regions, thousands of Africans fled the farms and plantations of their owners and joined the British. Peace between the belligerents was signed in December of 1814. As a result, the British Navy transported thousands of former enslaved African Americans who had sided with them. Some went to Bermuda, Trinidad, Jamaica, but the vast majority of them, some two thousand, came to Nova Scotia, in particular Halifax and its environs.

1814-1816

1880-1930

HISTORIC RECORDS

1752

As colonial settlement took root in Halifax, there began an active commerce in the buying and selling of enslaved Blacks between Halifax, New England sites, and New York, and between Halifax and the West Indies. By 1752, merchant and slavetrader were trading enslaved Africans from the West Indies to Halifax. The Planter dispensation in Nova Scotian history also led to increased migration of Black slaves to Halifax.

1792

Some Blacks experienced near re-enslavement; others were actually kidnapped by Whites and sold into slavery in the West Indies and the American South. By and large, British promises were not fulfilled. Instead of living a life of broken promises, these Black Loyalists chose instead to go to Sierra Leone, West Africa. On 16 January 1792, led by Thomas Peters and John Clarkson, close to 1200 Black Loyalists left Halifax Harbour on 15 ships and sailed away from that city, and from Canada, for a better life in Africa.

1800

In 1800, unhappy with life in Nova Scotia, the majority of the Maroon community left Halifax and, like their Loyalist predecessors, sailed for Freetown, Sierra Leone. The Maroons have left a legacy of pride, determination, and spiritual strength for Black Halifax. The Colley family of Preston is one Halifax-area Black families with Maroon roots.

1950 – Present

In the past 60 years, Black Halifax witnessed the arrival and settlement of hundreds of Africans from such places as the Sudan (both political entities), Egypt, the Congo, Sierra Leone, South Africa, the Gambia, Nigeria, Ghana, Zambia, Uganda, and other countries on the African continent. The Mutale family is one of the prominent African families that have made Halifax home. Migratory streams from the Caribbean and the United States have continued.

This image shows a graphical depiction of the history of Black Nova Scotians.

About 3,600 Black American enslaved people came to Canada. Although some freed Black people ventured into New Brunswick (Pachai & Bishop 2006, 16), the arrival of Black people around this time saw them spreading to areas in Nova Scotia like what is today called Beechville, Hammond Plain, Preston and Halifax.Within Halifax settlement in an area later called Africville was, where a new story and legacy took root.

Africville

The journey the Black Nova Scotians take towards gaining their freedom and identity is paved with danger, discrimination, malice and even death. But I choose to see the beauty in all of it. How these people fought through slavery, racism and discrimination to create a new life for themselves, in knowing that you can always create light. One can also see the strength and resilience of a community to strive for greatness.

The Black community came over the years and settled in several areas in and outside of Nova Scotia. In the Halifax Regional Municipality, Black people came to settle in Beechville, Hammonds Plans, Lucasville, Cobequid Road, Halifax, Dartmouth, Lake Loon, Cherry Brook, North Preston and East Preston. Places like Preston and Hammond plains had a large number of Black people but an interesting observation, shows that the Black communities always settle on a reoccurring sites; Africville and the city of Halifax.

Most Black Haligonian generally settled in the North End of Halifax, around Maynard and Creighton Streets (Erickson 2004, 128). They even spread down to Gottingen and Cornwallis Street, owning properties in these areas, so it is not a surprise to find fragments of their heritage and impacts

PERCENTAGE OF BLACK POPULATION AND DISTRIBUTION
FROM THE 1700s - 1900s

OTHERS

DIGBY

SHELBOURNE

HALIFAX

1700s - 1800s

%
50   40   15   5

OTHERS

DIGBY

HALIFAX

PRESTON

1800s - 1900s

%
65   30   10   5
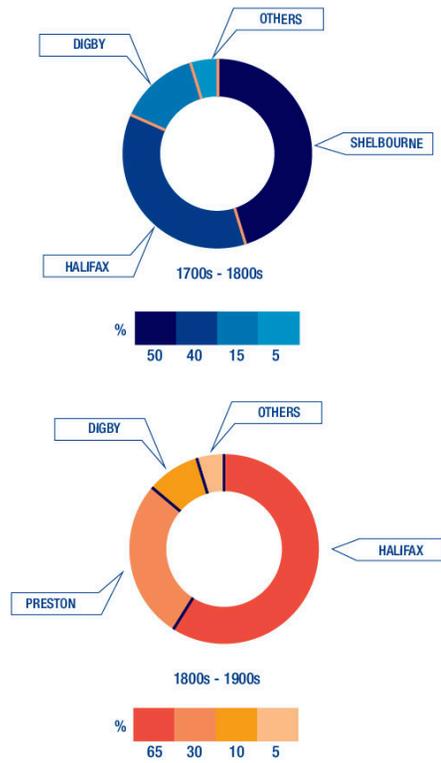
*Data presented is based on readings and mapping observations.

The graph does not show the number of people
that felt to Freetown, Sierra Leone.

SYDNEY

GUYSBOROUGH

BRINDLEY TOWN
DIGBY

AFRICVILLE
PRESTON

SHELBURNE

REFUGEE GOING
TO TRINIDAD

MAROONS GOING
TO SIERRA LEONE

BLACK LOYALIST GOING
TO SIERRA LEONE

BLACK LOYALIST COMING
TO NOVA SCOTIA FROM NY

MAROONS COMING TO AFRICVILLE
FROM JAMAICA

IMMIGRANTS ARRIVING IN
NOVA SCOTIA

EXODUS OF BLACK PEOPLE FROM
NOVA SCOTIA

GENERAL MOVEMENT AFTER SETTLEMENT
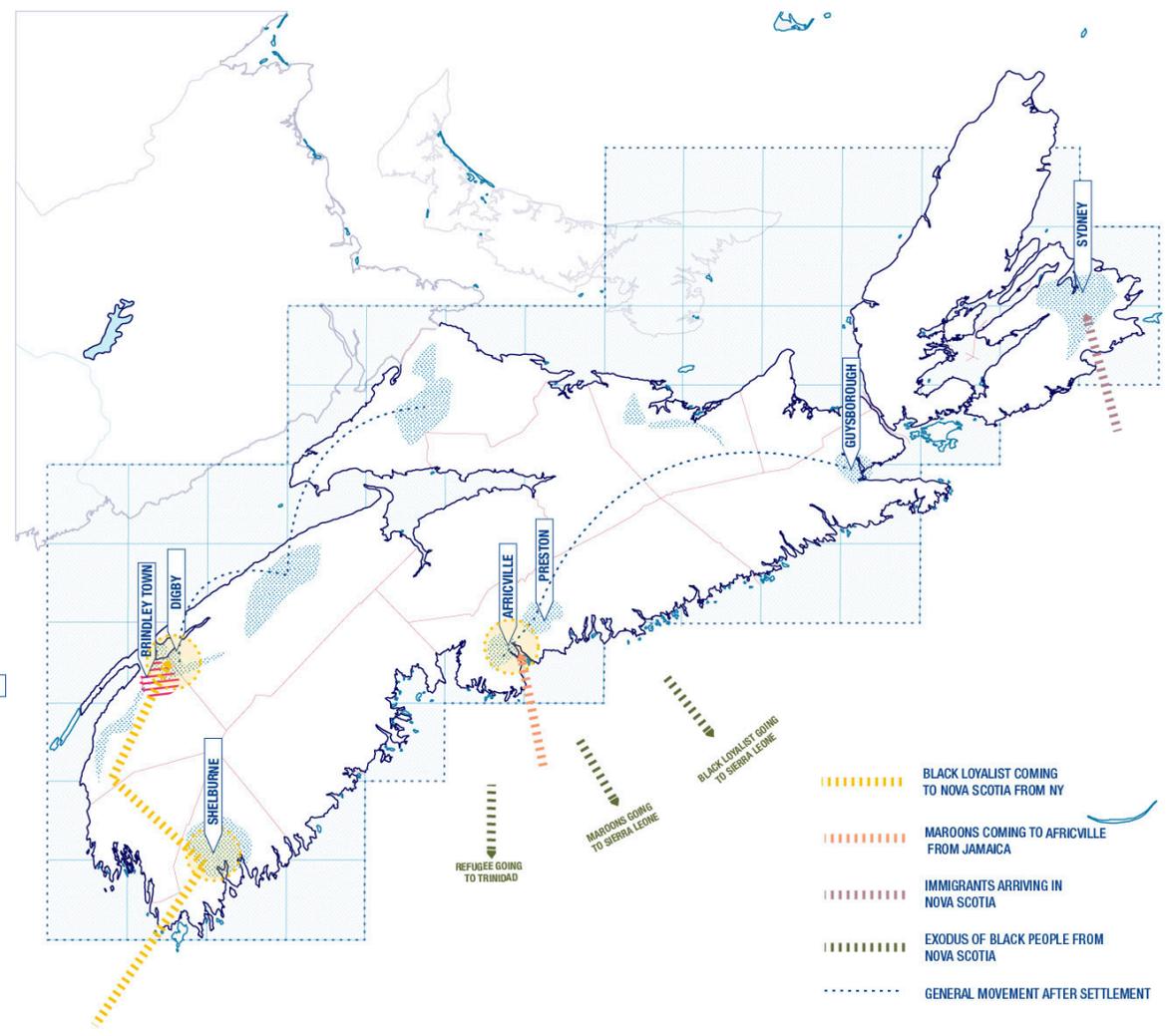
This map shows the distribution of Black people as they arrived over time from the 1700s to 1900s and present. 3 major entry points were, Birchville or Shelburne, Annapolis county and Halifax. From these points, the Black population has spread over time to area we know now such as Preston, New Glasgow, Guysborough, Cape Breton and beyond Nova Scotia. (Data from BCC 2020)

10
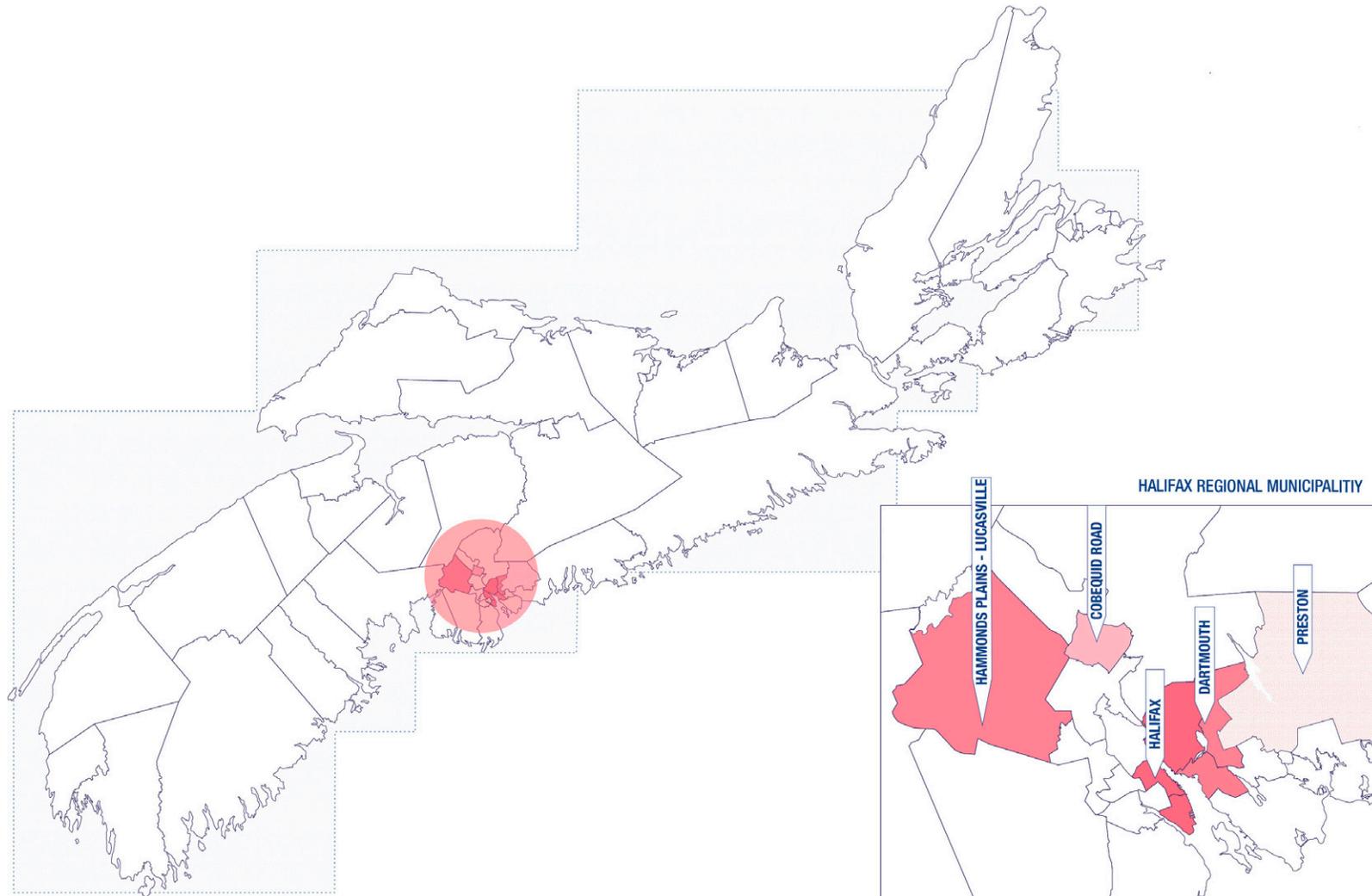
This map shows the distribution of Black people within the Halifax Regional Municipality. In the HRM, Black people came to settle in Beechville, Hammonds Plans, Africville, Lucasville, Cobequid Road, Halifax, Dartmouth, Lake Loon, Cherry Brook, North Preston and East Preston (Data from National Museum n.d)

of their community in the North End today, an important fact to note.

In the case of Africville, no one really knows when Africville itself was established but the community is dated back to the 1840s when one of the founding family, the Brown family, purchased property on the land. As mentioned previously, as Black people arrived, be it enslaved, Loyalist, Maroons or Runaway enslaved peoples, they found themselves heading to the North End of Halifax. Africville itself began on three 5 acre lots at the tip of the Halifax peninsula along the Bedford Basin. Africville generally did not grow past the original 15 acres. The reasons for the lack of growth in Africville as the rest of the city expanded, is that the community was encroached upon through racist planning practices and the type of discrimination that had been going on from the earliest recording of Black people in Nova Scotia.

What makes Africville unique is it shows clear physical evidence of the type of discrimination and oppression that Black Nova Scotians faced. The strategic placement of an Infectious Disease Hospital, a prison, a coal handling facility, a slaughterhouse and a refuse dump (Erickson 2004, 130) caused a lot of problems for the community, such as water contamination and the lack of access to fundamental human necessities, such as racist planning practices and discrimination that had been going on from the earliest recording of Black people in Nova Scotia. The texts certainly touch on it but don't talk much about it, but it does show a pattern taken to blackout the racial history of Black people in Canada.

For the purpose of this thesis, I am interested in the way Africville's legacy and memories have been purposely

Children picking blueberries, Africville, 1965 (Brooks 1965b)

Matilda Newman in her grocery store, 1965; Photograph by Ted Grant (Grant 1965)

The Seaview Baptist Church with houses in the background, 1965 (Halifax Municipal Archives)

erased, and how architecture can serve as a corrective to this erasure. This interest in the legacy of Black people in Halifax specifically is also relevant to the legacy of Black people in Canada more generally. Using Africville and Halifax's North End as a case study, I will be exploring how Canada uses racialized systems to oppress, discriminate and bully People of Colour (POC) and how, in the case of Black Nova Scotians, public identity can be recreated, after being erased. In order to do so one has to look into the idea of memories and how they hold power.

Memory and Memorials

Memory in a way acts as a marker for global culture, especially in urban studies, public art, landscape design and most certainly architecture. There is an innate need to preserve memory almost as a way to fight the natural

This Image show the issue of water contamination that plagued the community of Africville, 1965; (Brooks 1965a)

processes of forgetting (Bonder 2009, 62) (Doss 2012, 11). This usually takes the form of memorials or monuments.

Memorials act as a representation to bring stories to the present (Murphy and Ricks 2019, 314). When it comes to tragedy and healing, a memorial's purpose is to recall the past and provide conditions for new responses in the future (Murphy and Ricks 2019, 315). They help us reconsider traumatic events and rethink and re-actualize the past (Bonder 2009, 63).

Memorials serve to preserve the memory of events or individuals. And they also serve as warnings or reminders regarding future events.

In the case of the Black community of Nova Scotia, their history describes a journey that spans several decades, and includes stories of resourcefulness, strength, the ability to
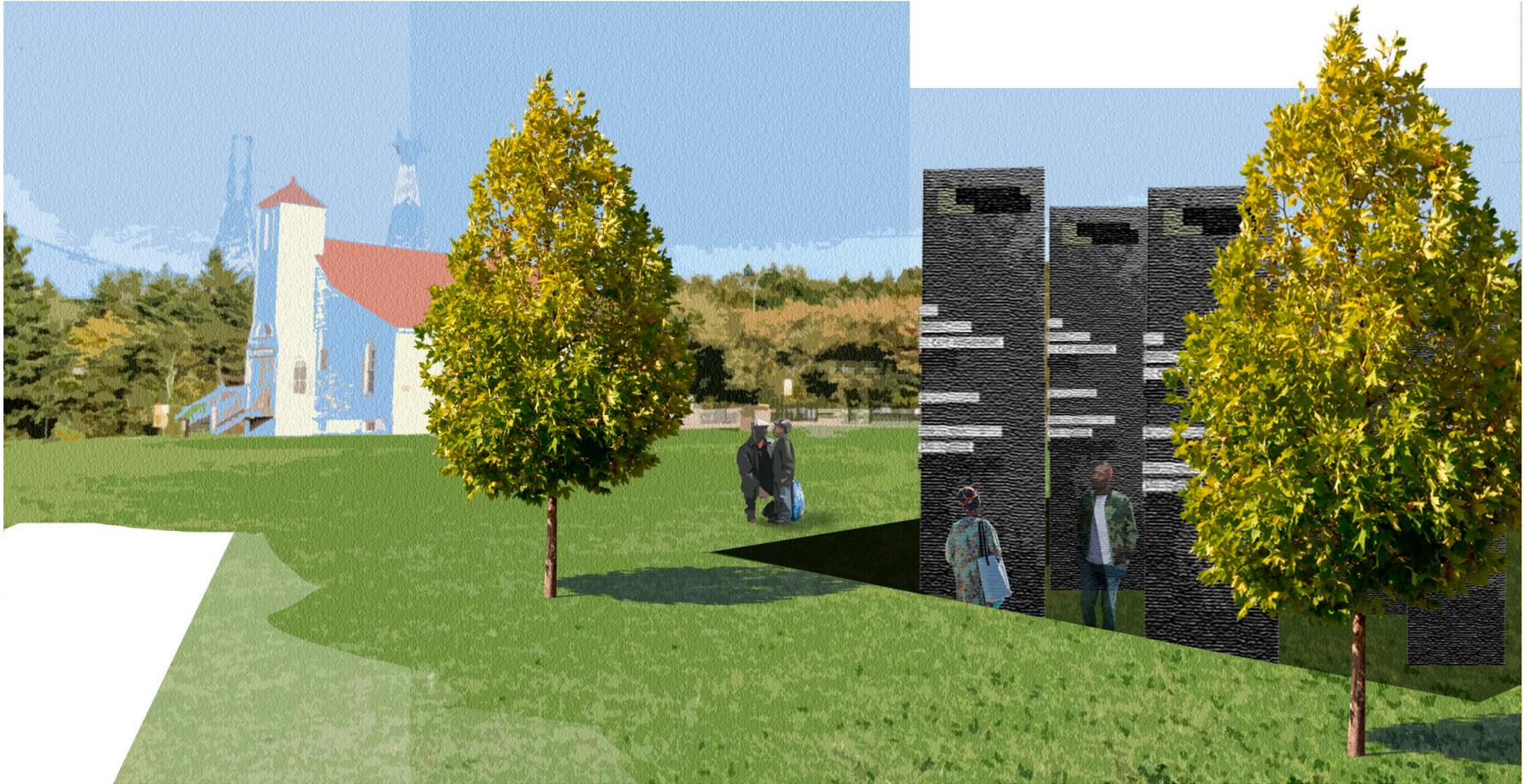
This image shows the concept of how a memorial can be presented on Africville land.

CANADIAN NATIONAL VIMY MEMORIAL
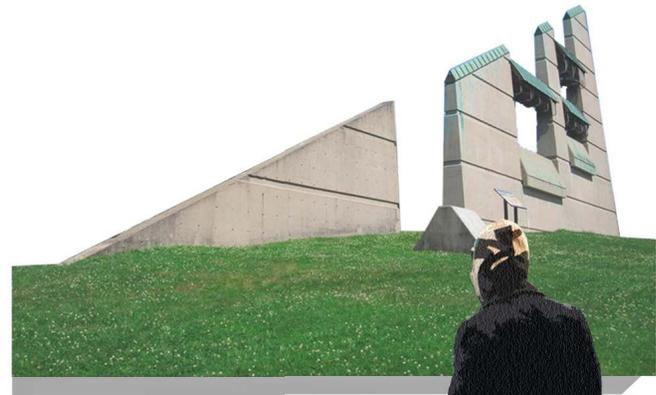
FORT NEEDHAM MEMORIAL

This image depicts the way we idolize events that occur in or lives such as an explosion or wars that happened. This is done in an effort to remember.

create power and peace when given nothing. This history unfortunately has been intentionally silenced, erased or not marked as existing.

The evidence of Black erasure that memorials can provide offers an opportunity to retrace the steps of the Black people of Nova Scotia and by doing so, rework the public fabric of Nova Scotia to rebuild the identity of Black people within it. By reworking and bringing back Black public identity, this thesis hypothesizes that there can be a semblance of healing for them.

Public Identity

Memorials provide a presence of public identity. The power of public identity allows one to be seen and recognized and to make a claim that one matters. The memories that we have that tie us to places and time, can be activated to create an experience of life. Craig Wilkins states:

> When social structures give the lie to what a society says it believes, then architecture gets used a tool in the management of conflict. (Wilkins 2007, 97)

He refers to the idea that architecture often is used as a tool to perpetuate discriminative actions against certain groups. But his statement also insinuates that architecture can be used to facilitate positive growth within conflict, and resolve issues within a society. Public identity can manifest itself in the form of physical constructions in public space. To occupy space and to create space means to create identity because space itself contributes to a sense of identity. For the Black Nova Scotian, there are multiple memories tied to space that make Nova Scotia what it is today. These memories come in the form of spaces occupied such as the Derby, The Lobster Trap Club and the New Horizon Baptist Church

(formerly known as Cornwallis Baptist Church). These form for the Black Nova Scotian a public identity within a society.

Africville itself embodies cherished memories of strength, resilience, independence, and peace for Black Nova Scotian. Descendants of the community share memories of growing up there, such as women starting businesses. These memories are also connected to the larger history of Halifax. Africville's men – some of whom were Jamaican Maroons - helped in building the Citadel Hill fortress. Likewise, the people of Africville were directly affected by the Halifax explosion, and they also helped greatly in getting aid for survivors and rebuilding the city afterwards (Erickson 2004, 132). These types of rich memories were erased decades later and continue to be erased through gentrification. In light of this, these stories create rich memories within the Black community but outside of this community, even within the city of Halifax, little is known about these stories.

Despite this, this thesis contends, the city of Halifax today, including Africville, has the potential to be a center of peace and rehabilitation for Black identity.
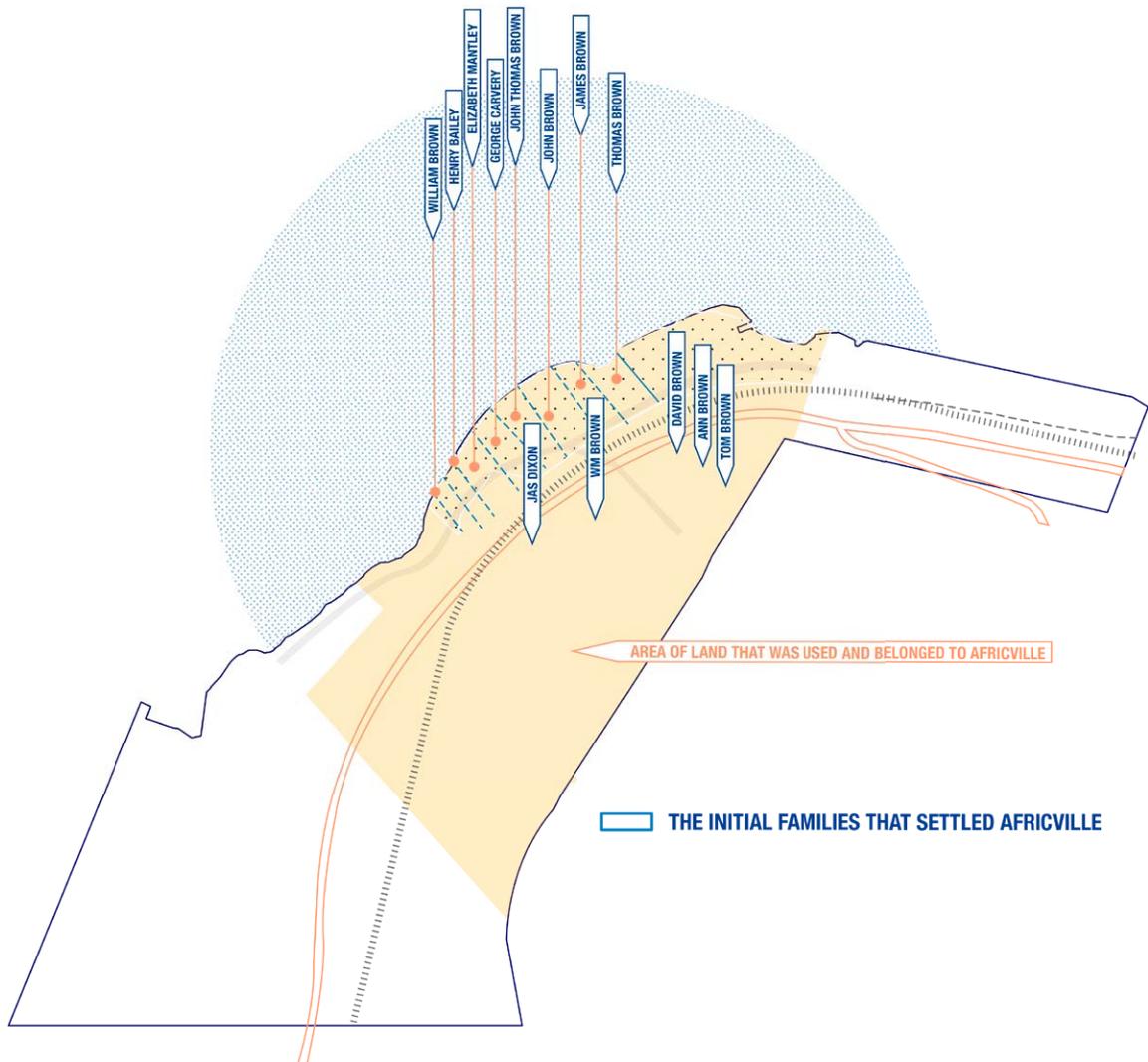
Map shows the founding families of Africville (Base from HMA 1916 102-4A.5.3; HMA 1962, P500/46)
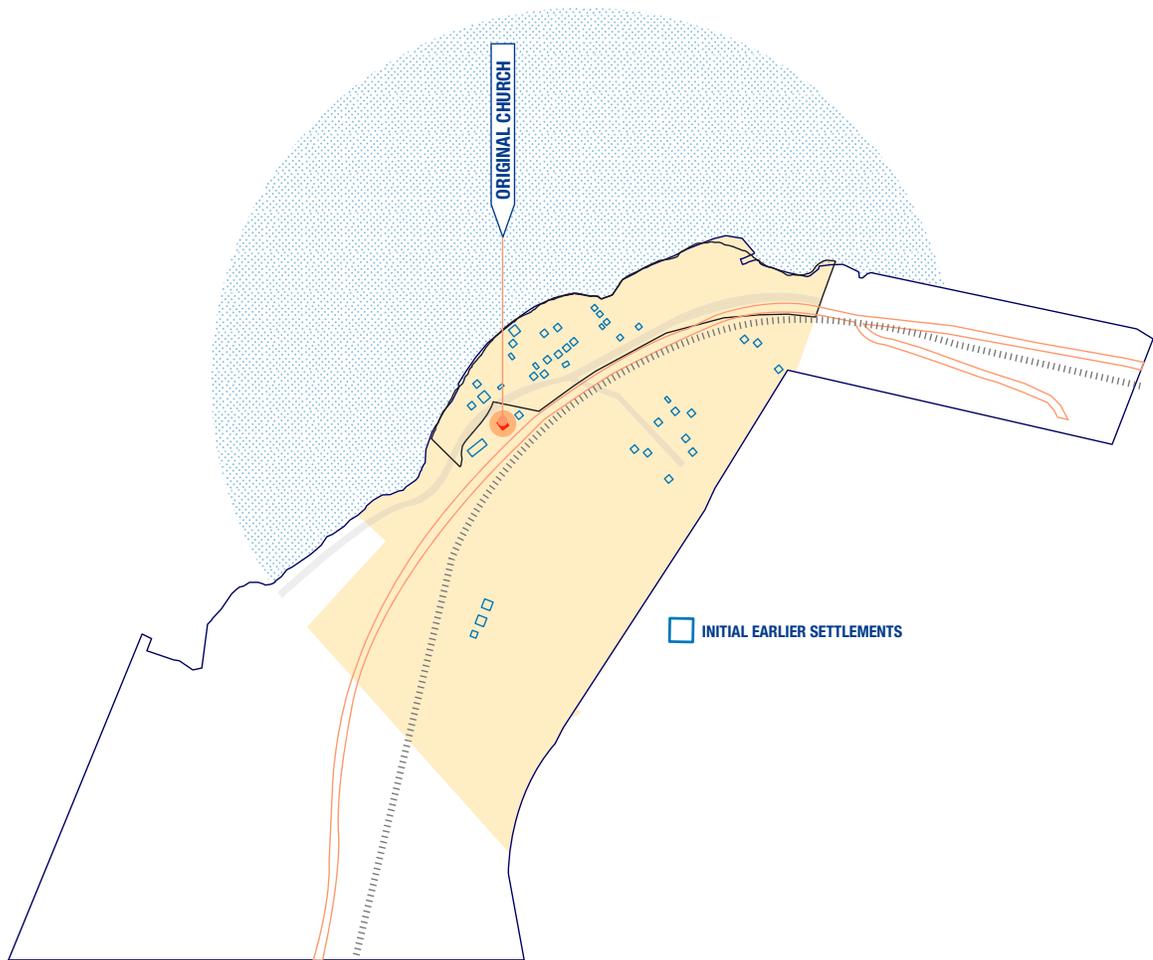
Map showing the original settlement distribution (Base from HMA 1916 102-4A.5.3; HMA 1962, P500/46)

ORIGINAL CHURCH

EXISTING SETTLEMENT
ADDITION SETTLEMENT
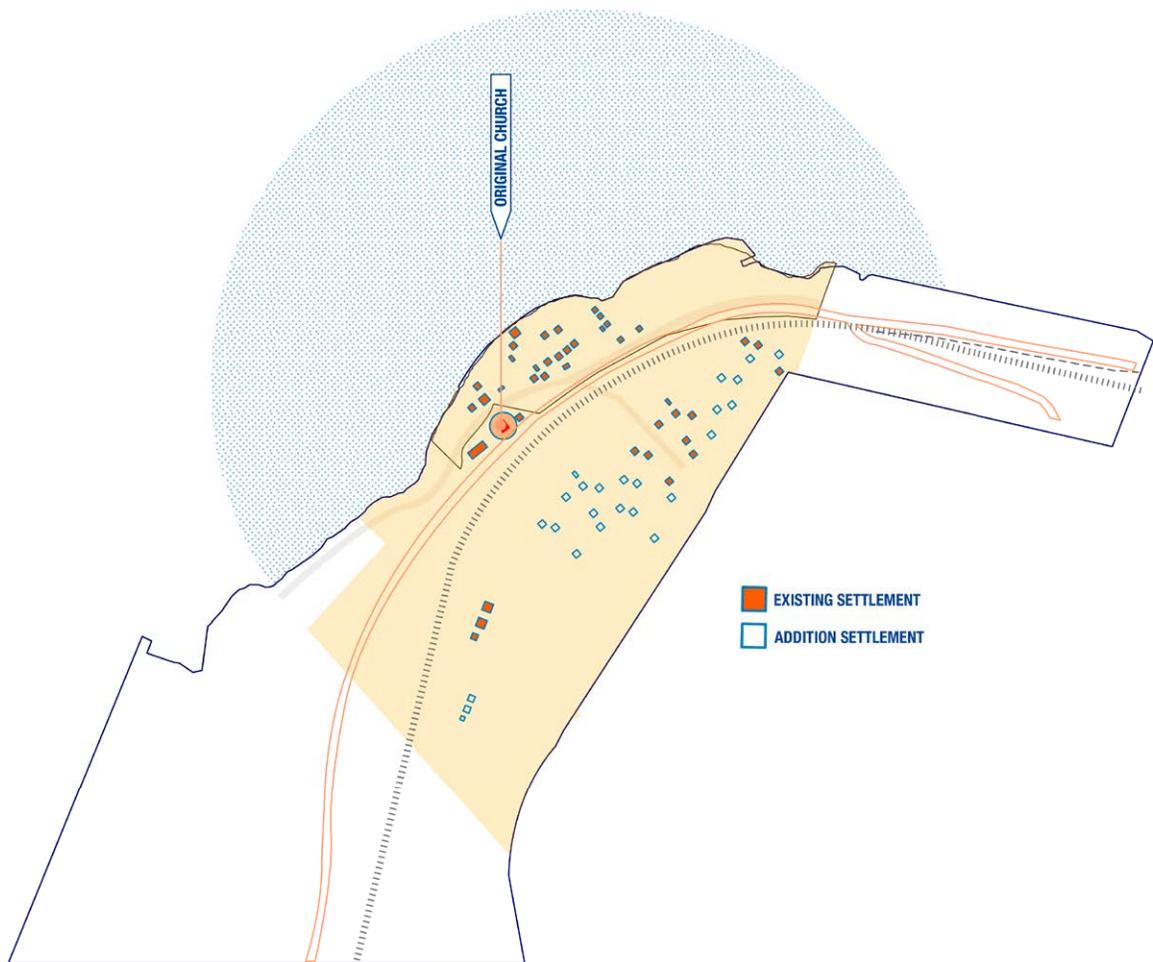
Map showing the settlement growth over time (Base from HMA 1916 102-4A.5.3; HMA 1962, P500/46)

Chapter 3: Methodology

The main aim of this architectural thesis is to facilitate a reclamation of lost agency in the Black Nova Scotian community and to rebuild physical erasures of Black identity in the city of Halifax. The thesis seeks to do this through re-examining the design of public space and tactically reframing it at different levels with the Black Nova Scotian community in mind. The methodologies used to inform the aims of the thesis are current schools of thought in the Black architectural community: Hip-hop Architecture and Ethical Re-development.

Hip-hop Architecture: Revising Architecture Theories

Hip-hop Architecture comes out of a need to find an Countervailing architecture theory to white Eurocentric architectural discourse. The term "Hip-hop architecture" was coined in the early 2000s by a group of Cornell University students - Craig Wilkins, Sekou Cooke, James Garrett Jr., Amanda Williams, Nate Johnson and Nate Williams - and explores the movement of Black people in their communities, the influence of Hip-Hop Culture in urban communities, and how these manifest in the foundation of spaces they create and inhabit (Walsh 2019). Hip-Hop Architecture breaks down the existing fabric and symbolic traits that make up the urban community, adding something new and remixing it together to create a new form (Walsh 2019). The theory of Hip-hop Architecture confronts the current built environment and critiques our view of it to consider Black narratives.

Characteristics of Hip-hop Architecture include aspects of Afrofuturism; decoding graffiti to create colour patterns;
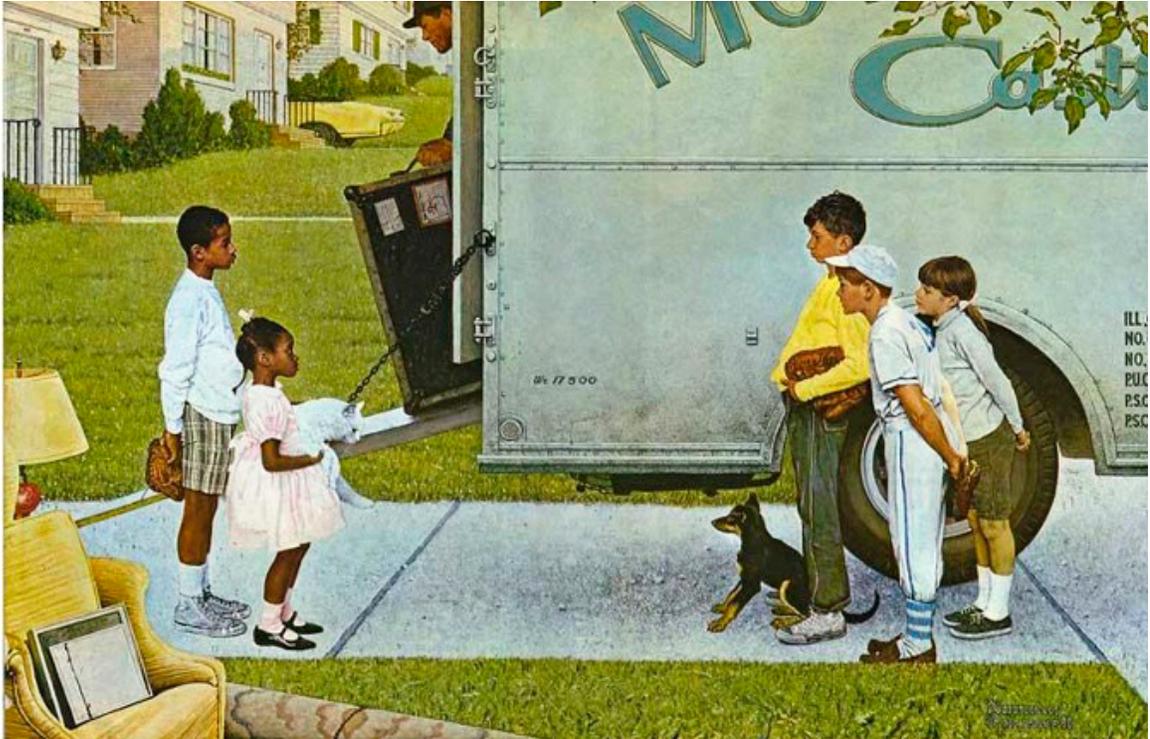
New Kids in the Neighborhood - Negro in the Suburbs (Rockwell 1967).

Lagos Makoko Canal (Jeyifous 2015).
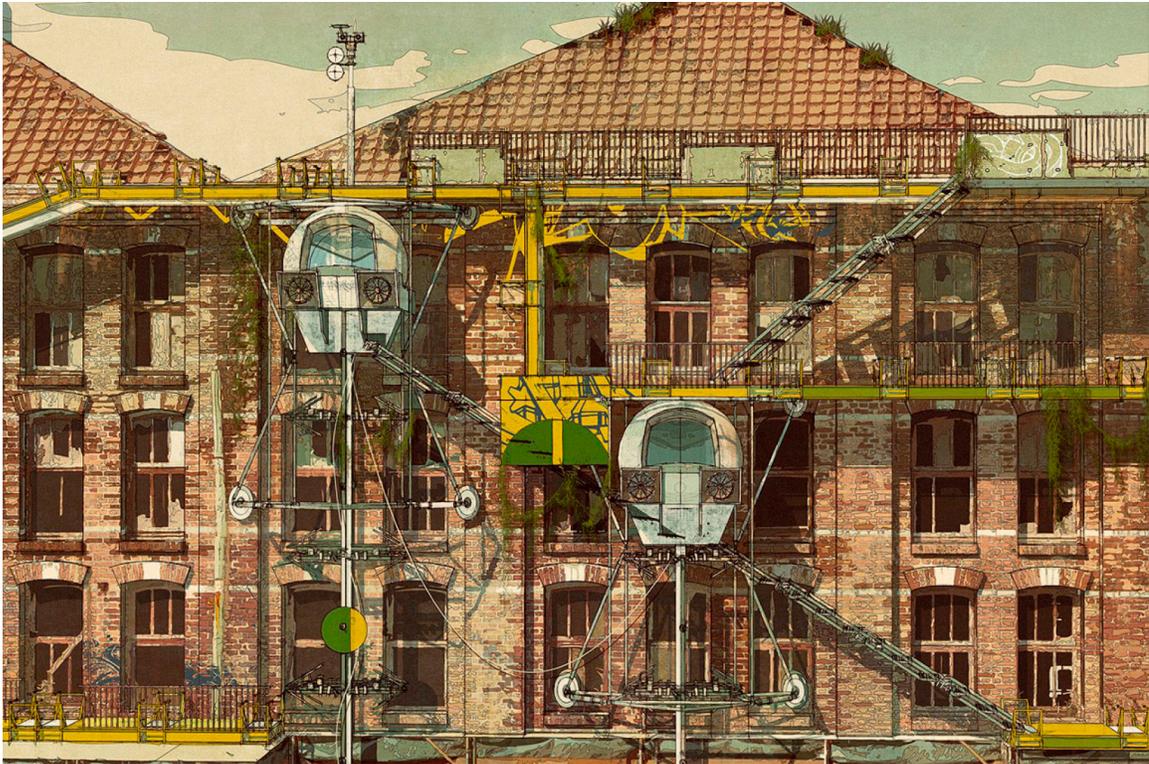
Surface armature: The Watchtowers (Jeyifous 2011).

and creating alternative forms from regular vernacular architecture.

Ultimately, the aim of the critique and confrontation of space through the lens of Hip-hop, is to help us understand space space as something created by social interactions in order increase social equity and justice (Wilkins 2007, 202).

In the case of this thesis, Hip-hop Architecture manifests itself through different scales. On a community scale, it manifests itself by offering a new form and vernacular to a community. It offers a form that is not a perfect fit. This is a good thing, contradicting the stagnancy of public space in Halifax created by buildings that conform uniformly to the urban grid.

On the building scale, Hip-hop Architecture offers an alternate perspective on approaches to design and construction detailing. An example would be highlighting street arts such as graffiti and tagging as a form of expression and neo-patina on a building space; both inside and outside

Within a building space, Hip-hop Architecture plays a major role in utilizing left over spaces and occupying them, making multifunctional circulation spaces for use at all times and re-appropriating spaces for artistic and historic displays.

Ethical Re-development: Reviving a Neighbor-hood

Ethical Re-development acts as a secondary methodology to complement Hip-hop architecture. "Ethical Re-development" came from the design movement of Theaster Gates, an artist from Chicago and his ecosystem of diverse group of artists, community leaders and thought thinkers, their approach to tackling community issues by creating programs and reusing spaces that have been left to waste. Ethical Re-development can be defined as "Shifting the value system from a conventional financial and development practices to conscientious interventions in the urban context" (Place Lab 2007).

Ethical Re-Development sets out nine principles a designer or impact maker can take as guidelines to create cohesive and inclusive designs for communities that have been under-served. The nine principles are:

1) Repurpose + Re-propose: the concept of possibility and transgression; taking into consideration what is around; making an effort to use what is at-hand but in material

and manpower; involving the people especially within the community you aim to build for.

2) Engaged Participation: this principle implores designers to invite the community to be involved in the process by authentically asking for help. Ethical Re-Development proposes there be a plan of engagement framework that questions who does the work and with and for whom.

3) Pedagogical Moments: allowing for a learning and teaching moment to occur in all aspects of work, focusing on creating ways that the work could be instructive.

4) The Indeterminate: this asks one to drop their predetermined ideas of where design could go and instead allow the work itself to offer solutions. In the process of

Stony Island Arts Bank, Chicago, Illinois (Harris 2015)

doing that, allowing for unknowns, and asking questions of what is truly needed to be solved.

5) Design: everyone deserves good design regardless of social standing. Good design fires people up, getting them to re-invest in a place. Aesthetics can be a force to bring in people and it can also provide a sense of value, importance and respect for the character of a community.

6) Place over Time: this is about creating anchor point for the served community. A feeling of belonging and public identity matters in the long-term plan of a place. In return, that place can act as an investment and contribute to the quality of experience the people from these communities have.

7) Stack, Leverage + Access: over time, a building becomes more than just a space, it becomes wealth and equity, for generations to come. It also acts as a place holder, community representation and public identifier. As a building becomes a signifier, it also gives leverage for expansion to other communities with a blueprint.

8) Constellations: in all of that, ensuring that designers surround themselves with a diverse team that has complementary skills that will be able to advance the work. This ensures that the foundation that has been created will live on and persevere,

9) Platforms: a platform acts as a mechanism to propel work forward, striving to build up the community and raise their voices to be heard.

In this thesis the nine principles of Ethical Re-Development are integrated with Hip-Hop Architecture to create a cohesive methodology for tackling public identity in the Black Nova Scotian community. The data collected to create a design

Interior of Stony Island Arts Bank prior to renovation (Rogers n.d.)
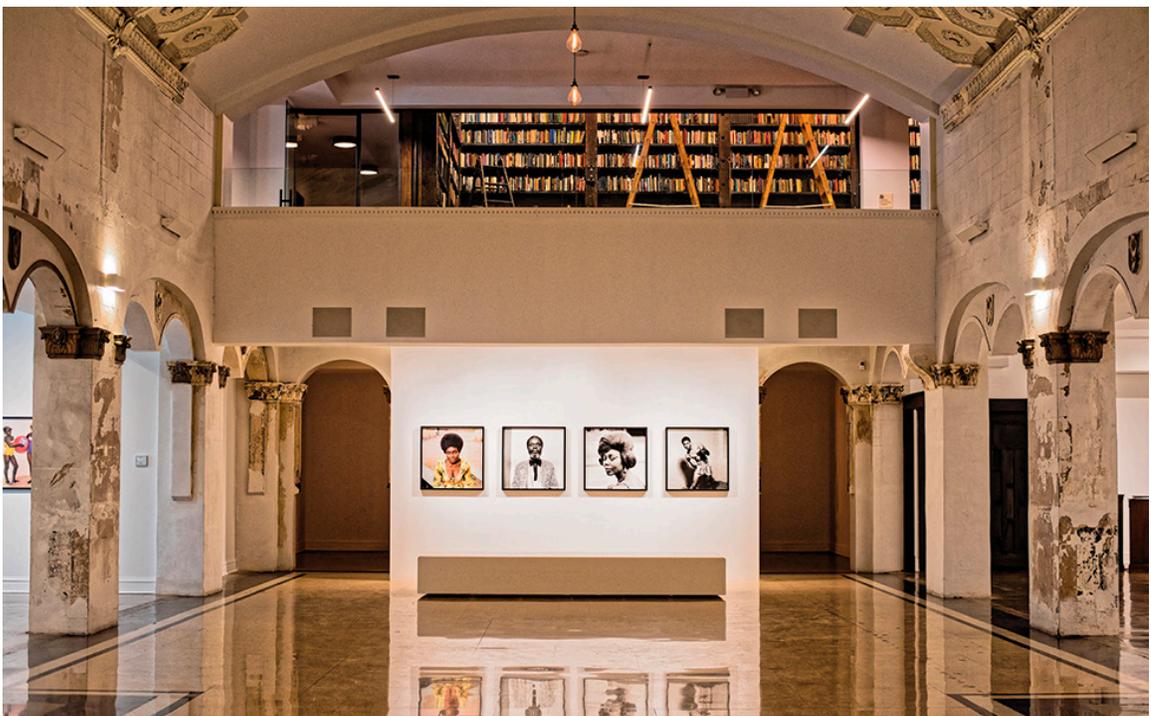
Interior of Stony Island Arts Bank after to renovation (Macdonald n.d.)

strategy follows the methodology described above and allows for new methodology to emerge.

Data Collection

For the project to be a success, gathering the right information from the community matters. The first steps were to collect historical data about the Black community that was publicly available: specifically data about Africville and the Black community within Halifax. With Africville, the data collected included maps that had original plots of land of the founding families. This list includes the surnames Carvery, Brown, Dixon, Bailey and Mantley. The data observed from the Africville site, presented some findings mainly that since the clearance of Africville, there is a highway that divides the Africville land thus creating a land form, Creating Africville Upper and Lower. The data collection also revealed a clear fact that Africville is blocked off from the rest of Halifax proper and that is a problem that needs to be solved.

Looking broader at Halifax core, it was important to understand the full scope of the Black history within Halifax proper.

After looking at the archived data, a participant-observation approach was adopted. This included going to a march for reparations for Africville which was led by Eddie Carvery (one of the older descendants of Africville), a member of the Grant family, and some indigenous elders.

During the march, the elders and leaders shared stories of life growing up in Africville and the extent that the land had stretched until being forcibly bulldozed. It was helpful to hear first-hand stories of what the area was like before.

AFRICVILLE
Majority of black people settled here

MULGRAVE PARK
After the Evacuation of Africville, the residence migrated/ were put in the housing complexes such as Mulgrave Park and Uniacke Square. Some others moved out of the area completely.

BRUNSWICK STREET
Brunswick street was also an important street for the Black community in North End Halifax. There were some families living in the area.

MAYNARD & CREIGHTON STREET
Aside from from Africville black people resided in areas such as Maynard and Creighton Street

UNIACKE SQUARE

ST. PATRICK'S - ALEXANDRA SCHOOL

NEW HORIZON CHURCH

THE LOBSTER TRAP CLUB

DERBY LOUNGE/ BAR

CITADEL

WATER FRONT MARKET
Large number of Black and Indigenous people from Preston, Hammond Plain, Africville and other places to sell, handcrafted goods like baskets or fruit produce like blueberries.

PIER 21

This illustration depicts the distribution of Black communities across Halifax and places of interest and gathering for the Black community. (Base map from HRM 2020a, 2020c)

The focus of the study in Halifax was to understand the distribution of Black communities around the city.

Using the data collected from studying the black communities in Halifax, archival maps and eye witness recount, I created a map that reveals historic neighbourhoods, the areas that dislocated residences of Africville came to reside in, and general places that the Black communities tended to go to, gather at and educate themselves. The data collected from literature and audio accounts revealed some social problems that needed to be addressed such as forceful land erasure and occupation, planning practices that contribute to gentrification or city negligence that lead to poor infrastructure development. A premise of this thesis, supported by the theories of hip-hop architecture and ethical redevelopment, is that these social problems were related, in part, to a lack of identity fostered by continued erasure and displacement of the black community.

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redevelopment, is that these social problems were related, in part, to a lack of identity fostered by continued erasure and displacement of the Black community.

Design Strategy

The data collection revealed challenges and opportunities. There were clear cases shown that neglect and deliberate actions taken to wipe the identities of Black communities with the city, caused generational harm and damage that still continues.

Among the numerous challenges two emerged of particular relevance to this thesis, and the question of how architecture can facilitate community identity and healing:

Challenge 1: Africville is isolated from the rest of Halifax and it's memory is being forgotten. How can it be brought back into view and celebrated?

This is important because the strategic isolation of Africville causes the area to be far away from infrastructure, resources are difficult to access via path or public transport, and it is peripheral to the civic imagination. Africville also lacks a way to memorialize its descendants and lacks presence on the ground currently to show that it belongs to the descendants of the community that once lived there.

Challlenge 2: There is a severe lack of Public Identity of the Black community within Halifax. How does one address that?

A part of the North end of Halifax used to be predominantly Black communities from North Street to Cogswell Street and from Maynard Street to Brunswick Street. There are still sprinkles of communities here and there but for the most part, their presences barely exists. This is due to

gentrification and planning practices that continually push Black people out of historically Black communities.

These two challenges encompass several other nuanced conditions that as a whole make up a complex spatial condition. With these challenges come opportunities. There are opportunities to establish a sense of belonging, re-establish lost public presence and identity, and potentially create a form of healing. In order to approach the design process in a manner that is both respectful of the people it is intended to serve and adhere to about the theoretical basis for the thesis, three strategies are laid out to tackle these challenges. These three strategies are:

Strategy 1: Reconnecting the Africville Lands back together and improve Africville's access to the rest of Halifax.

The community of Africville and its descendants have had to grapple with physical and systematic erasure. Due to rampant planning racism, the community of Africville was removed. What came in its place was a destruction of the land: dividing the land by highway infrastructure and reconstituting the divided land as parks. In more recent times, the descendants of the land have managed to get some sort of apology and a replica of the church that stood on ground acting as a museum for the people Africville. But there have been no true reparations, and the land is still separated by highway and rail infrastructure. This strategy is to create a bridge that connects the divided land which in turn connects to existing trails that lead to access to public transport, and a safer connection to the North End Halifax.

Strategy 2: Establish a Section of the North End of Halifax as a Historic Black District.

The North End of Halifax from North Street to Cogswell Street and Maynard Street to Brunswick Street has been historically known as an area that Black communities within Halifax lived in, outside of Africville. Presently, the presence of their identity and its historical markers is quickly getting erased through various means, including gentrification. This proposed strategy seeks to re-designate the zone into a historic Black district. Doing this will allow the area to be recognized as historically Black and allow the communities that are impacted by this to be able to take pride knowing they are remembered.

Strategy 3: Create a presence within the district to re-establish public identity and a safe space for the Black community.

Establishing the district is important, but what is equally important is ensuring that the a public presence is established within the district to create a new form of visible identity. Creating a presence with, also means creating a safe space for Black people to come and heal, educate themselves, have a record of their history or simply to find a place to meet.

Most of the thesis design will focus on strategy 3, what a space like that would look like. The decision to make a public space for the Black community which will be referred to as the Art House, offers a canvas and opportunity to really hammer home the point of re-creating a public identity for the community. It also addresses the question of what the role of architectures is in facilitating community healing and public identity.
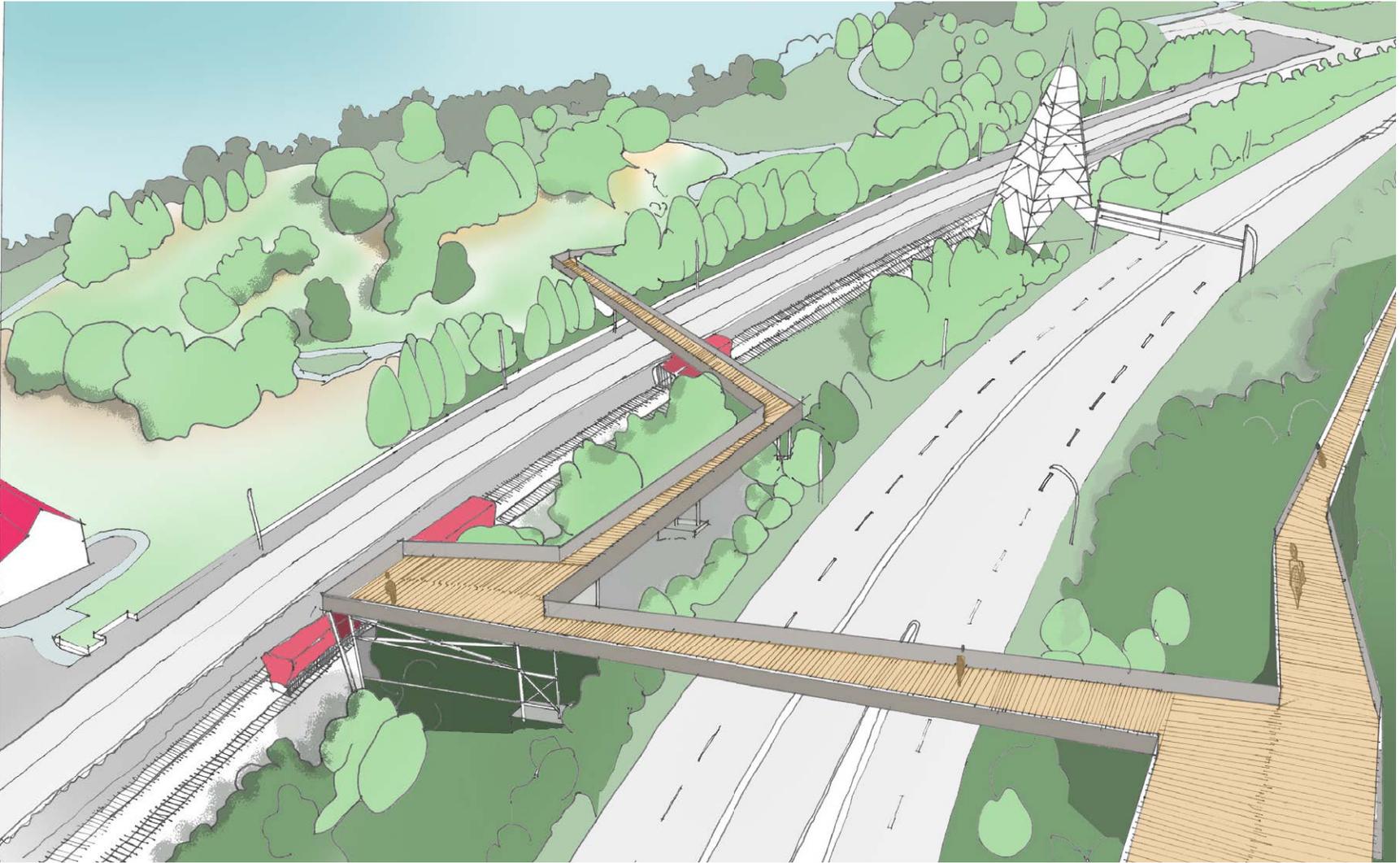
Bridge concept showing the reconnection between Africville Lower and Africville Upper

Another bridge concept showing the reconnection between Africville Lower and Africville Upper
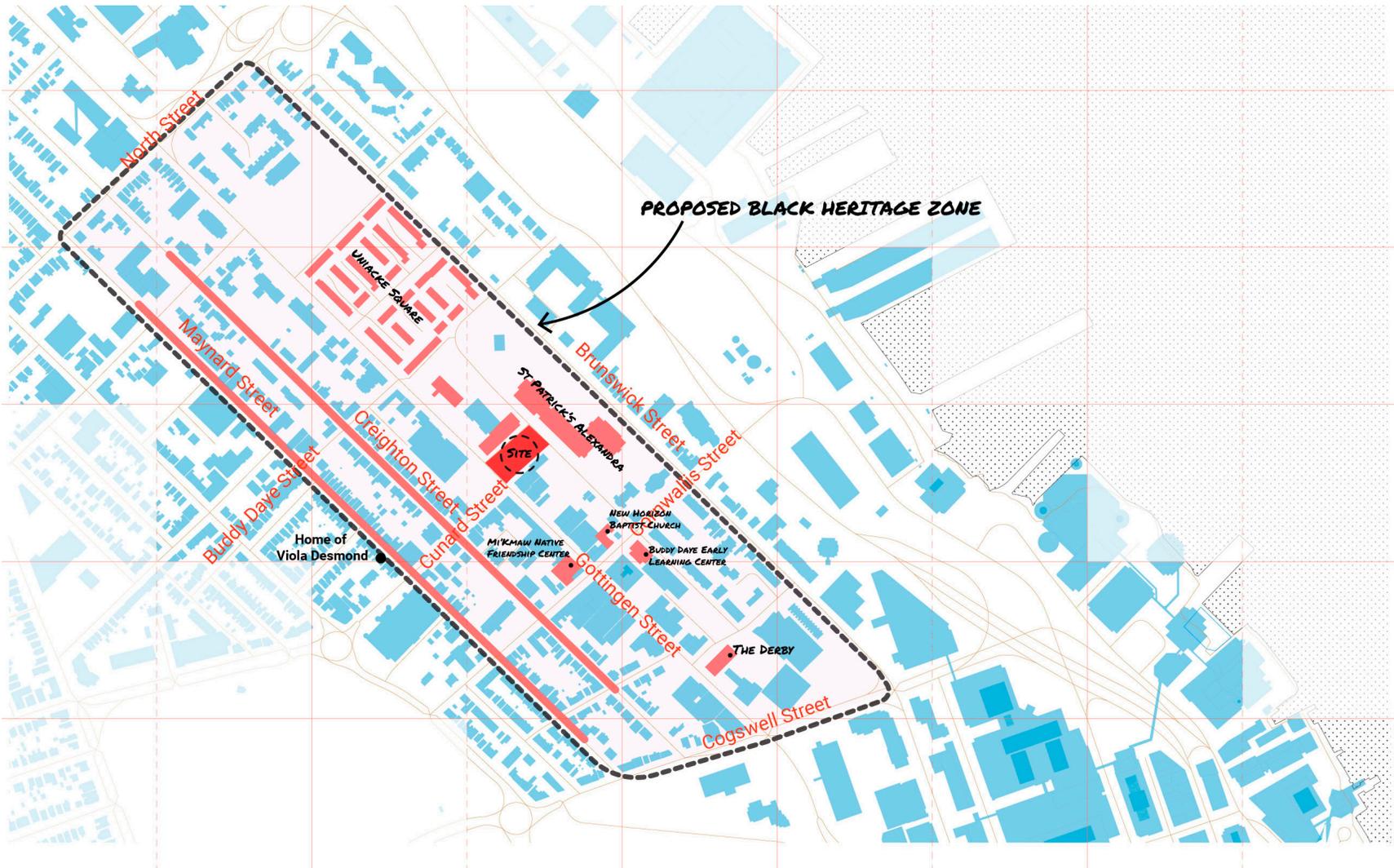
Black Historic District map showing the border of the zone and also where the site fall in. (Base map from HRM 2020a, 2020c)
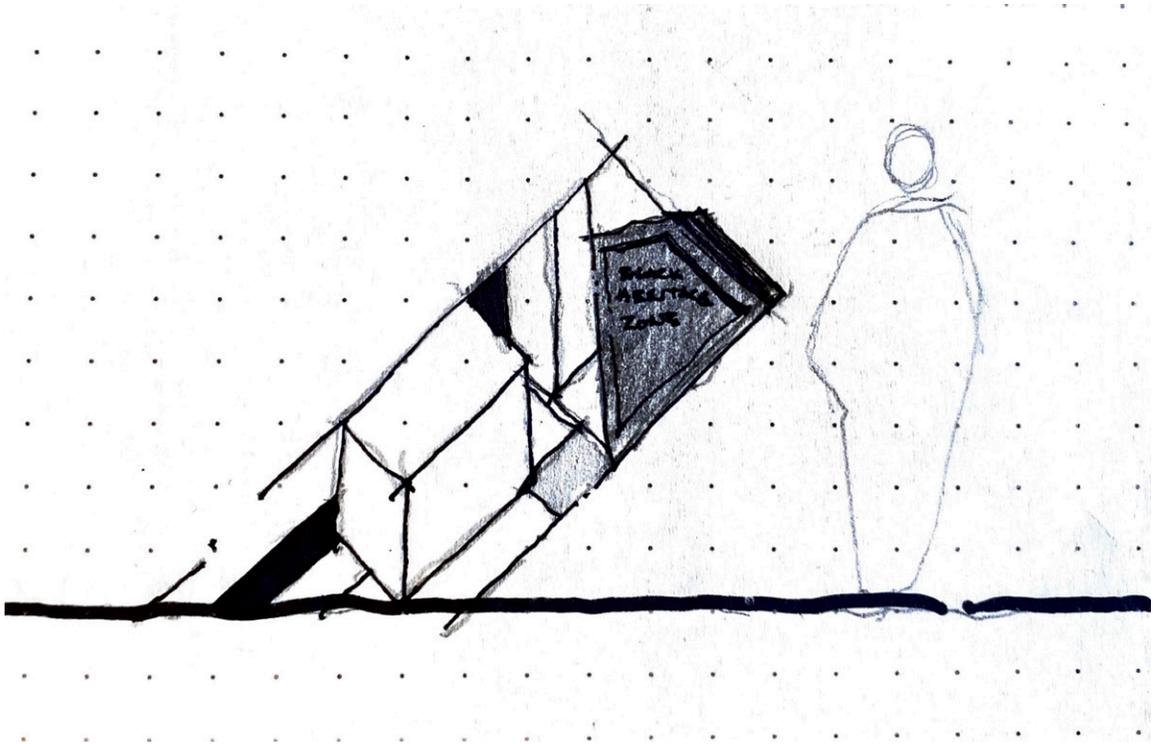
Concept of city monuments to indicated the Black Historic District borders.

Other concepts showing alternative monument ideas for the Black Historic District.
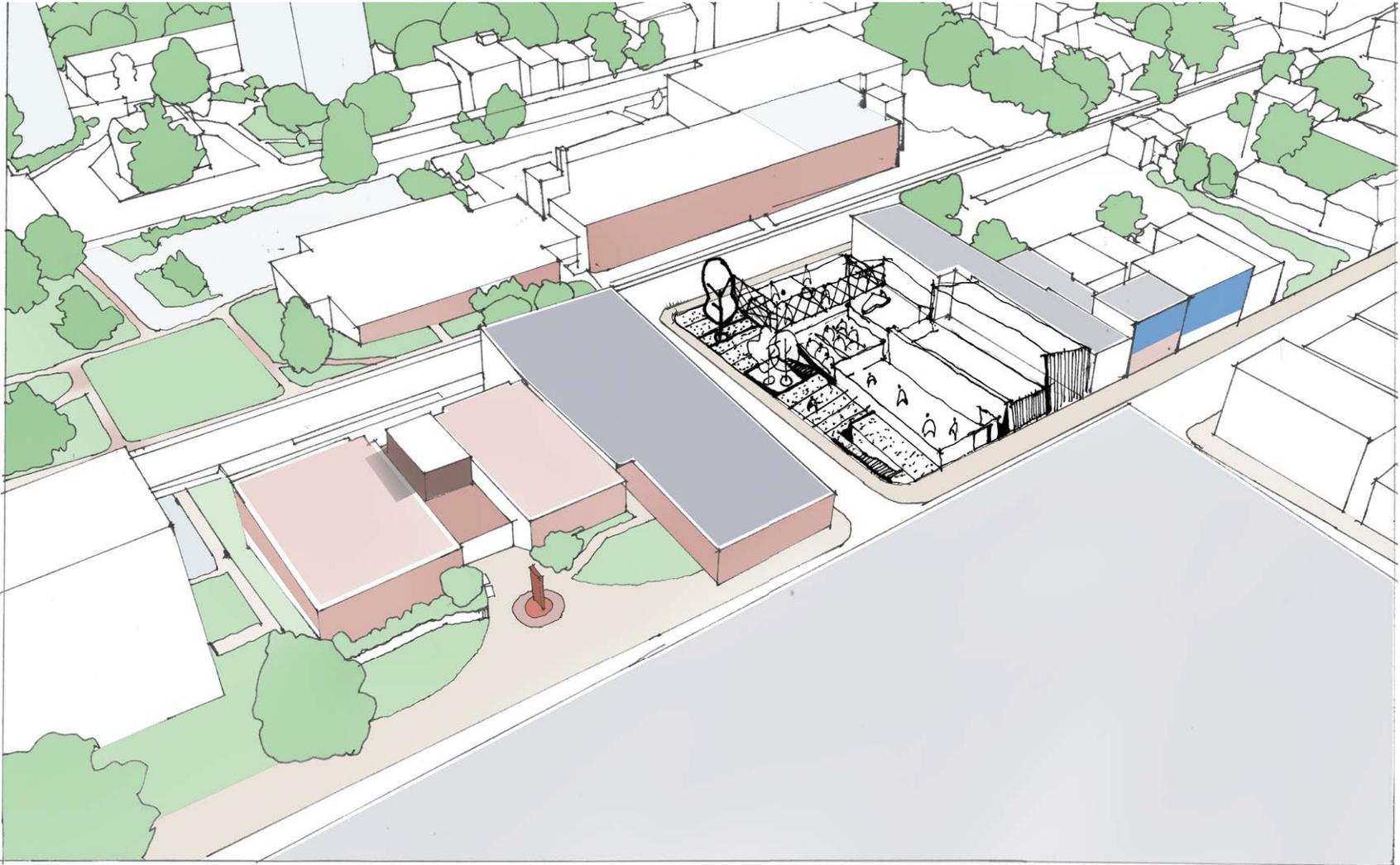
Concept sketch of Strategy 3: a physical presence within urban space to create public Identity.

Chapter 4: Outcomes

The thesis outcomes focus on strategy 3: Create a presence within the district to re-establish public identity and a safe space for the Black community. The decision to make a public space for the Black community which I will be referring to as the Art House, offers a canvas and opportunity to answer the question of what architecture's role would be in facilitating community healing and public identity

Initial concepts of the building took different forms. Majority of the first forms looked at the façade and trying to make a design statement. The second focused on how to infuse moments that captured ways to display memory.

Guiding Principles

The four guiding principles which directed the design process were born out of working with the data collected using the lens Hip-hop architecture and Ethical Re-development. The four principles were:

1. Create a sense of space and presence.

    • Novel to Community

    • Not the same as its neighbours

2. Embrace the unusual

    • Use of graffiti for design inspiration

    • Tagging wall and use of tagging to complement the

      building

3. Create spaces that have mutlifunctional use.

    • Good use of circulation.

Initial interior stairs concept
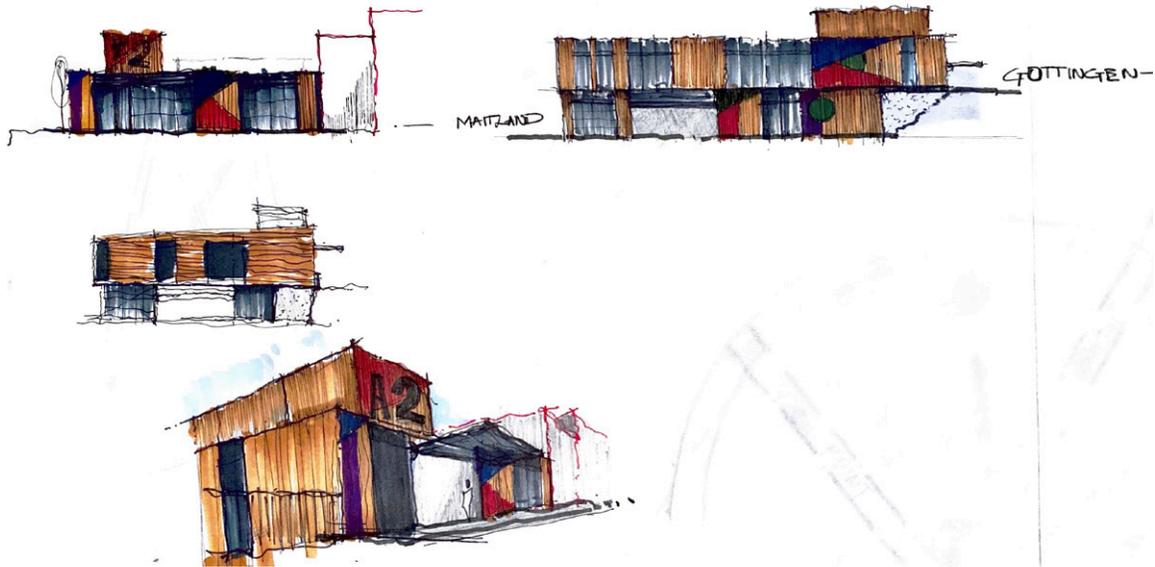
Initial concept of early building façade.

> • Use of left over space
>
> • Appropriation of space for art

4. Ensure lasting spaces that can evolve over time.

> • Integrate a system that gives back to the community
>
>   over time through program.
>
> • Engage community members and leaders in
>
>   design process.

These guiding principles reveal themselves through the site selection, the design choices and the intended program.

Site

As mentioned in the previous chapter the focus of the design aspect of the thesis will be strategy 3 a space that
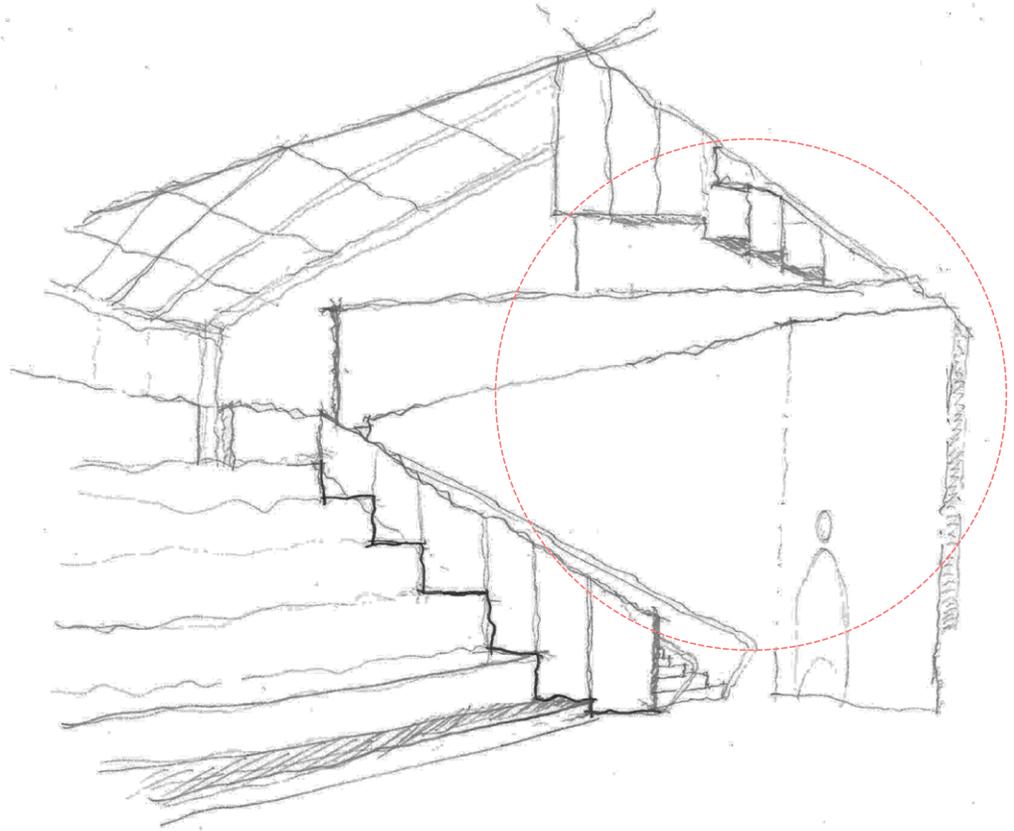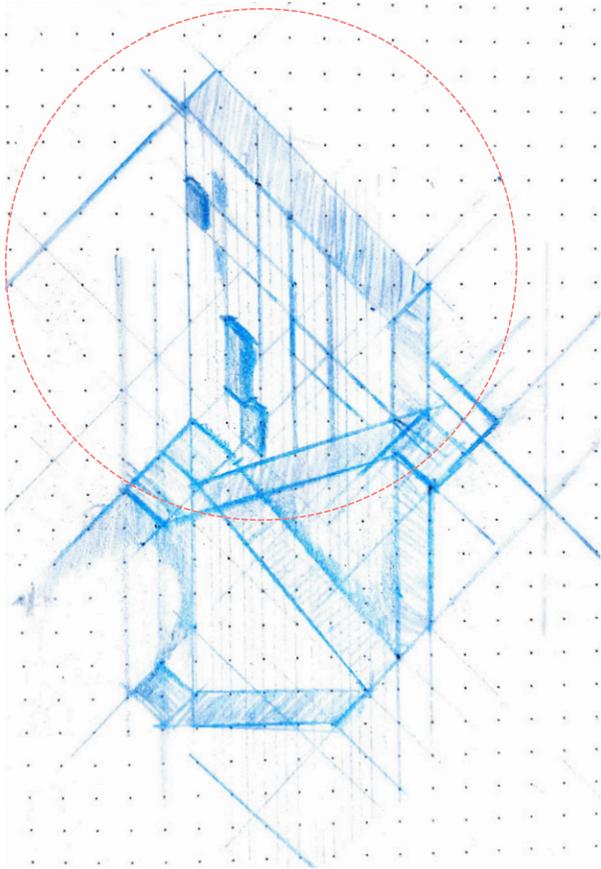
Concept designs highlighting areas that could be living memorials.

can become a public presence, called the Art House. The site for the Art House was selected due to the surrounding urban spaces and their importance to the Black community. The site is an open lot beside the Dalhousie Legal Aid Service building on Gottingen Street. Transportation around the site is varied. There are several public buses that go through Gottingen Street. There is a mix of vehicular and pedestrian traffic on Gottingen Street, Prince William Street and Maitland Street.

The site also sits at the center of several locations that play an important role for the Black community within Halifax. The site sits in close proximity with St Patrick's Alexandra School, Uniacke Square, Halifax North Library and the YMCA work Center: places that Black People frequent and have an ongoing presence in.

The following maps explore the site and the urban conditions that are close to or influence the site.

Schematics

The site also plays an important role when selecting programs for the design. Using the principles as a guide, it was important to speak to community members and to also incorporate taking on a community adviser to advise on programs that would be important base on experience and what would be needed. Through repeated conversations and design reviews with the community adviser, the final program pieces and their adjacencies gradually developed and formalized. In the end this facilitated the creation of a robust and cohesive program that directly served real community needs.

Legend:

- Major Bus Passage
- Directions of public Transit
- Regular vehicular Traffic
- Transit Hub
- Open Space
- Green Space
- Site
- Historic Commerical/ Entertainment district

SITE

Corridord Street

N
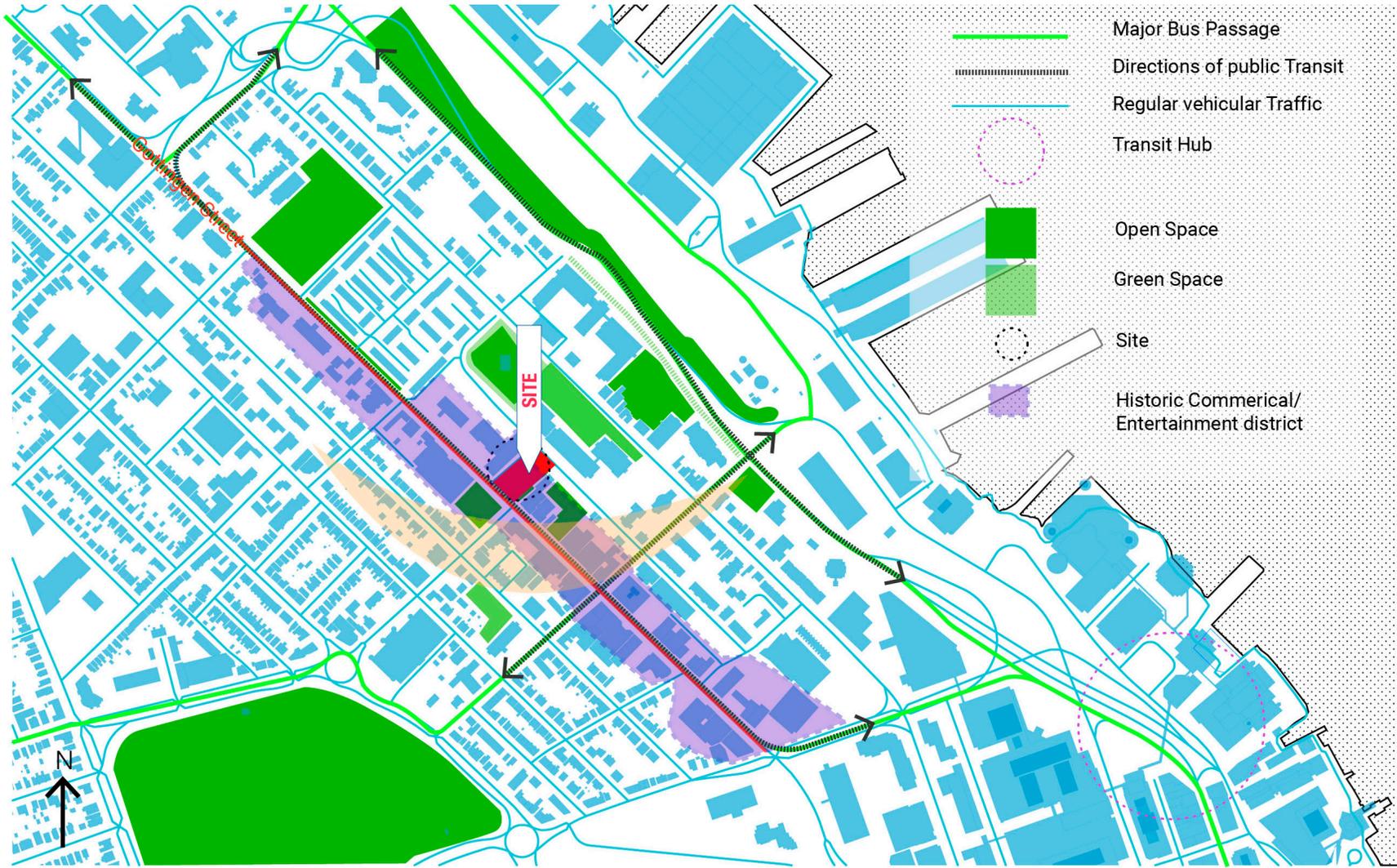
Overall site analysis of the area around the site. The site is within the black district zone from North Street to Cogswell Street. ((Base map from HRM 2020a, 2020c)

44

SITE

Major Bus Passage
Directions of public Transit
Regular vehicular Traffic
Transit Hub

N

This map illustrates the major modes of transportation, public transportation routes and general roads around the site area. Public Transportation is frequent enough with lines that connect to both Dartmouth and Bedford or downtown Halifax if need be. (Base map from HRM 2020c)

Gottingen Street

SITE

Historic Commerical/
Entertainment district

N
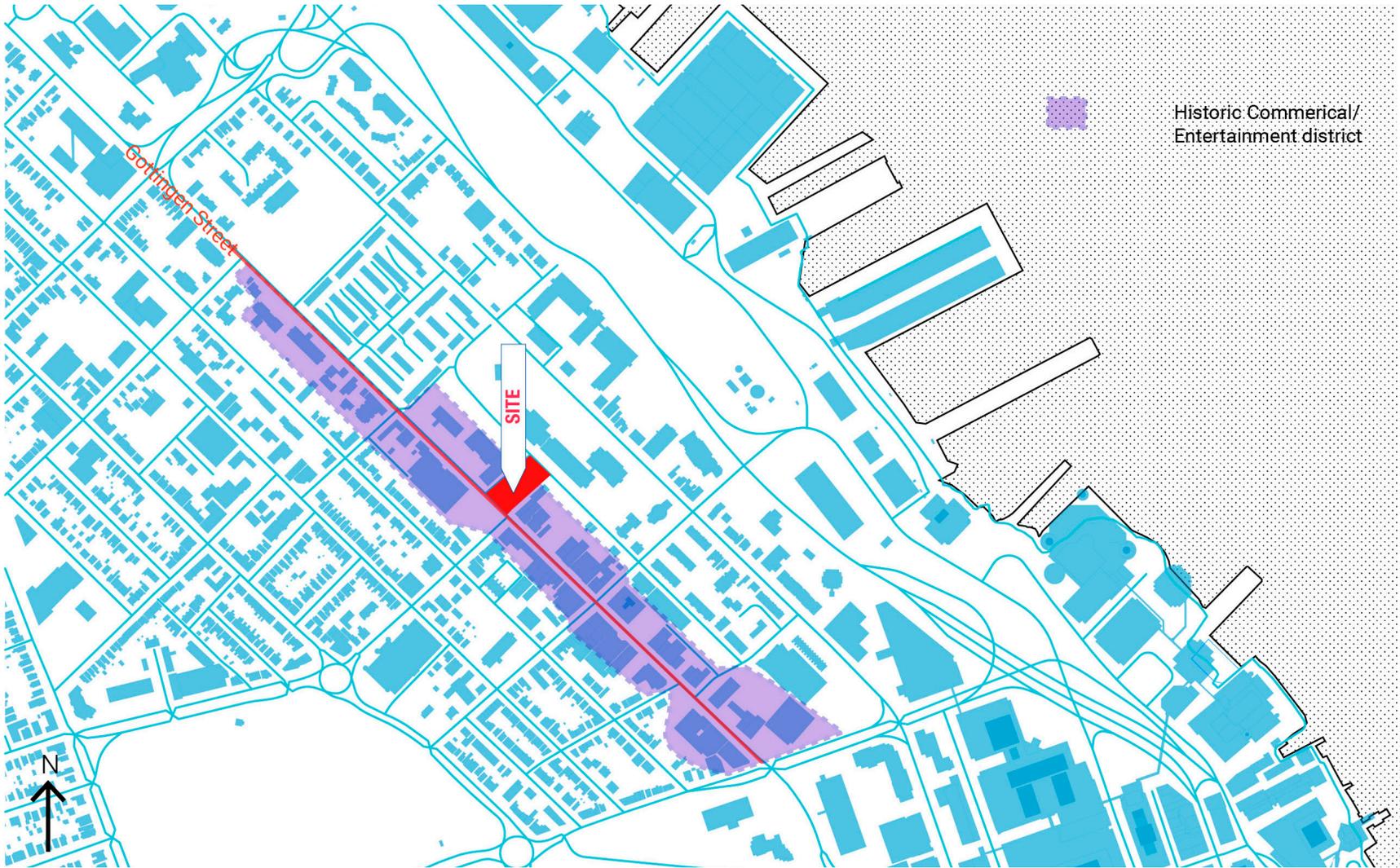
Map depicting historic commercial district. (Base map from HRM 2020a, 2020c)

Map showing places of interest to the Black community in proximity to the site. (Base map from HRM 2020a, 2020c)

Gottingen Street East Evelevation
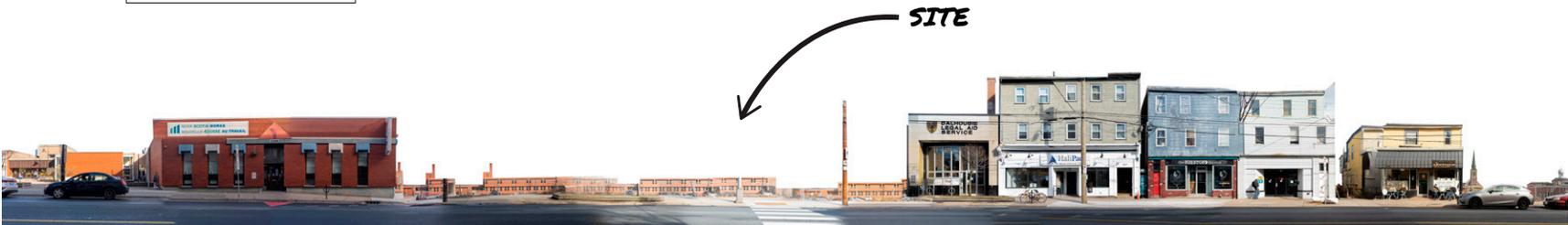
SITE

Elevation showing the current buildings of interest next to the site. At the street elevation of what is currently there, there is a mix of both older vernacular to new brick or concrete work that try to make a presence but feel more institutional than belongs. There is also clear evidence of gentrification and rapid redevelopment occurring as seen on the Gottingen west elevation.
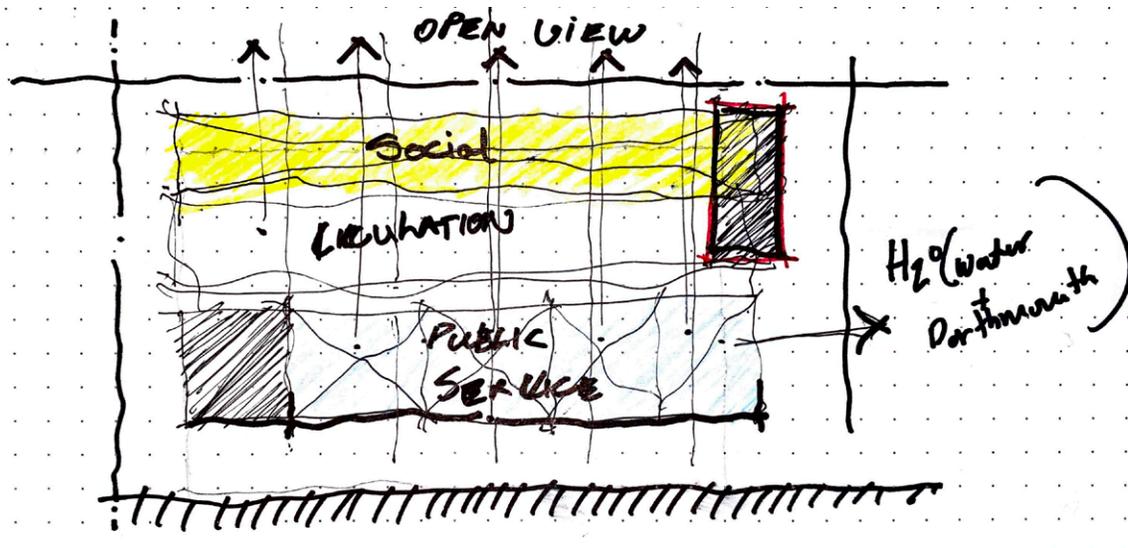
Initial Concept schematics plan considering environment.

The programs all connect to each other and are not just singular highlights, but also complement each other to create a multifunctional space. Some programs even integrate themselves into one another.

Initial schematic designs tried to place programs together that the community adviser suggested should be directly connected: such as the kitchen, café and multipurpose hall. But in order to create a space that had good circulation, moments for archival display, and also show multifunctionality, further developing of the program required separating functions in section across multiple levels. This separation of levels made the connecting zone of vertical circulation particularly important in continuing to pull together important pieces of program.

Public

Semi - Public

Private

- - - - - **In-Direct Connection**

——— **Direct Connection**
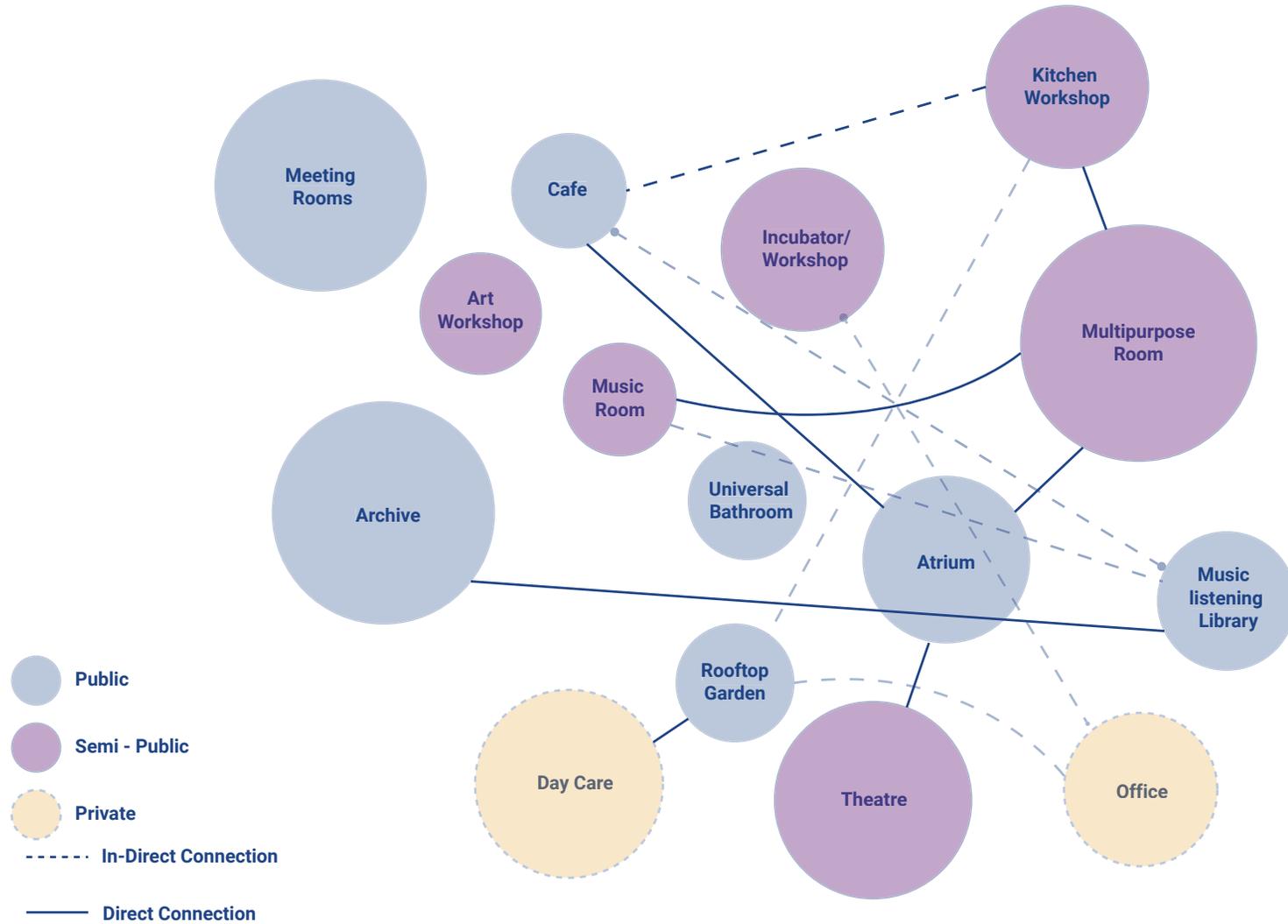
Program diagram displaying the programs and links. The programs all connect to each other and not just highlight but also complement themselves to create a multifunctional space. Some programs can integrate themselves into each other.
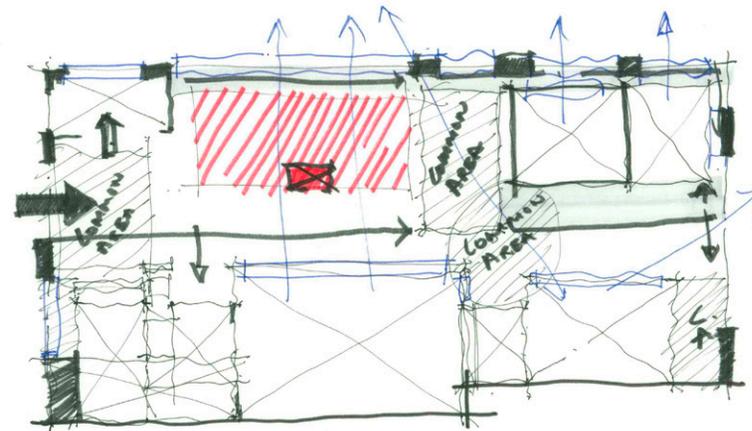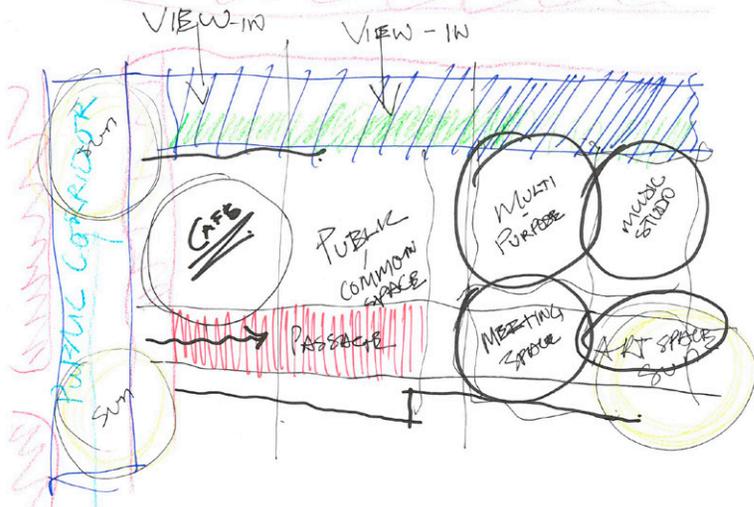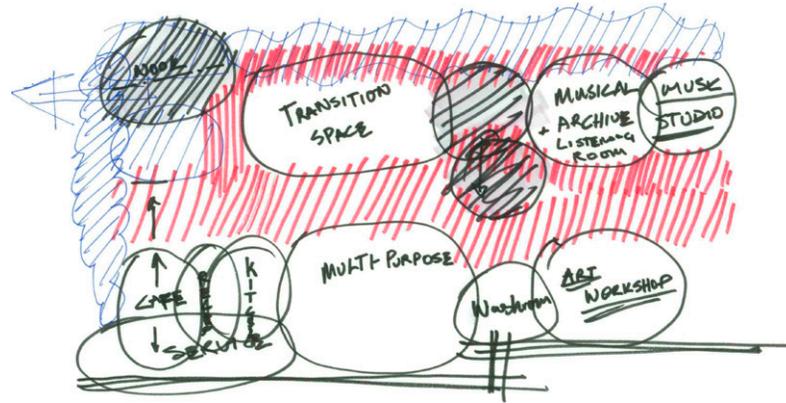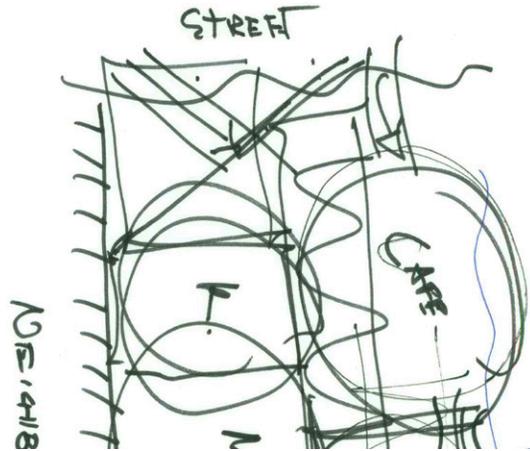
Schematic and process drawing showing programmed space.

MUSIC
LISTENING
ROOM

CAFE

WOODSHOP — MECHANICAL
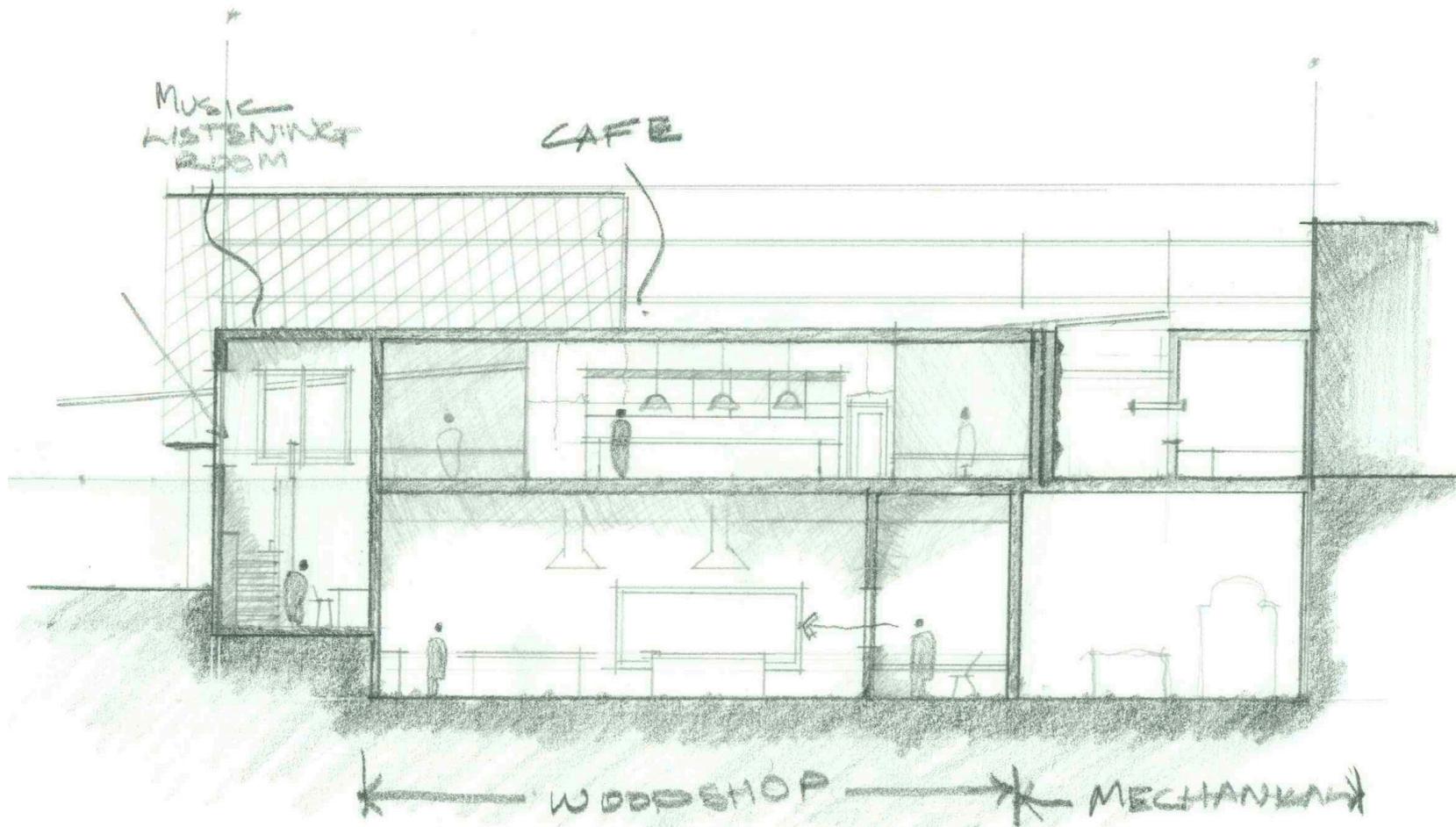
These initial sections become building blocks: establishing important relationships for further development and evolution.
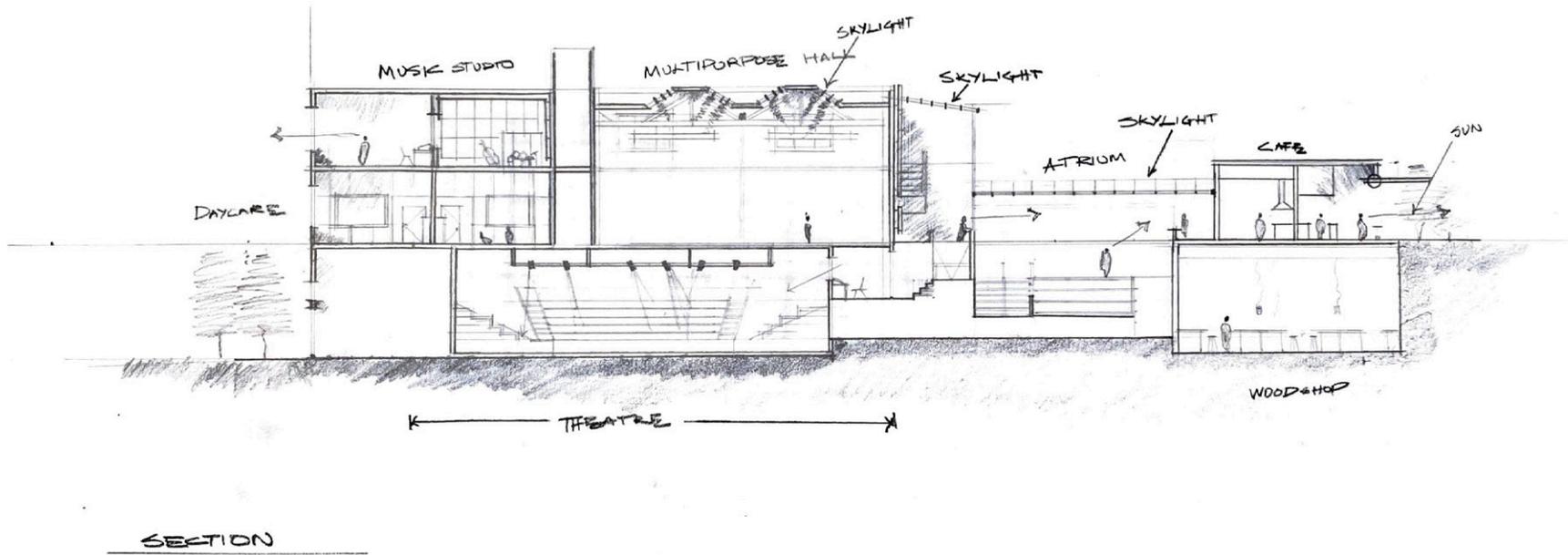
Concept look at Strategy 3, developing multiple, overlapping physical presences within the site to create an overall public Identity.

Design Proposal

As previously stated, the building is situated on Gottingen Street with its main entrance situated at that street.

Before entering, you are introduced to the façade that employs the use of both a large tagging wall and also mesh facades that allow for different ways to highlight the community, events happening in the building and also artworks. This mesh and tagging occur around the building itself as shown by elevations 1, 2 and 3.

This highlights the first two principles which are creating a sense of space and presence and embracing the unusual. The façades play a role in introducing you to something new and what is to come but also make the building stand out. Looking at the render of the building from Cunard (Render 1) and from Gottingen Street (Render 2) you can get a sense of how that will appear from the street view.
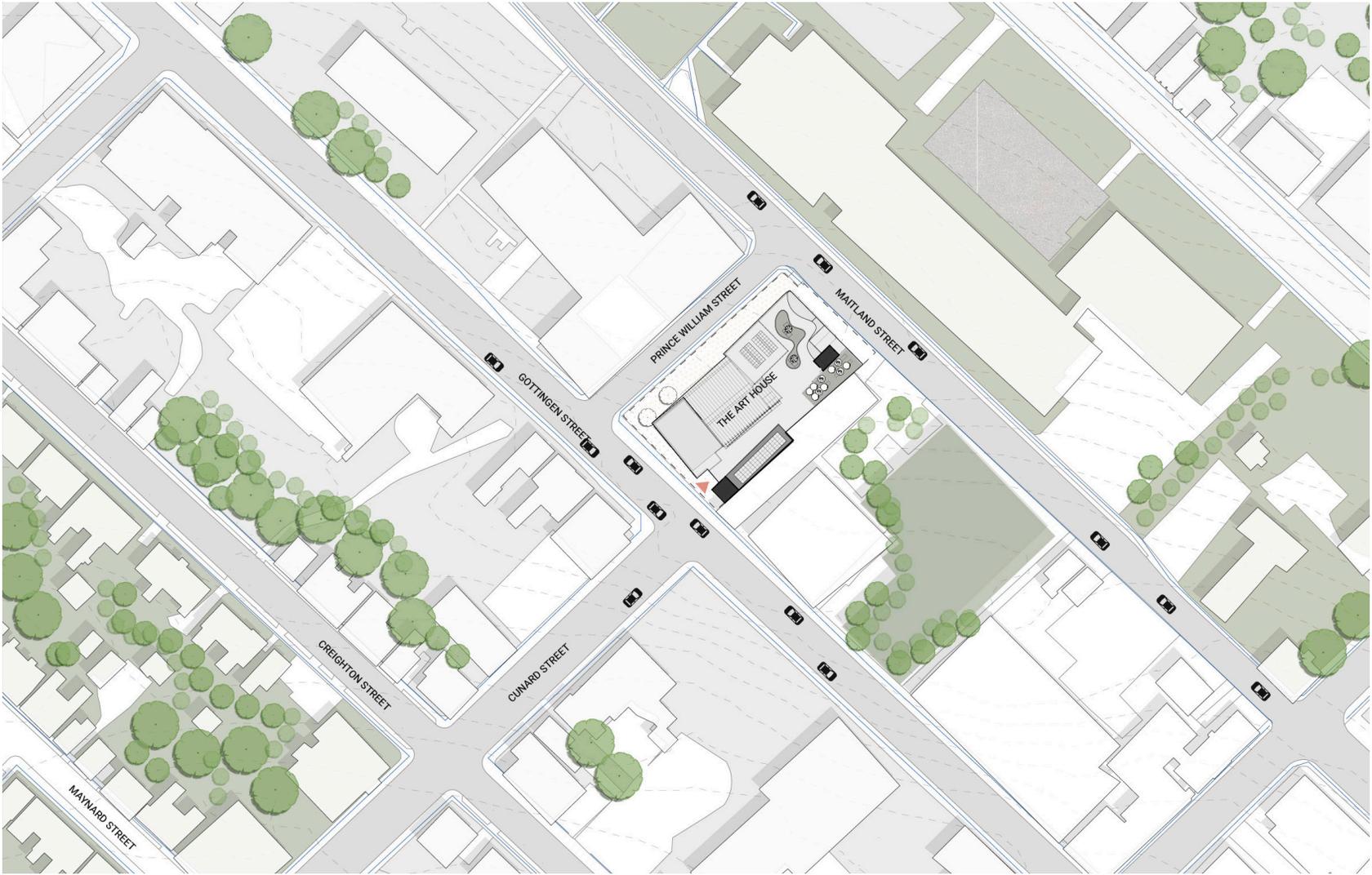
Site plan displaying the building with the city surrounding (Base map from HRM 2020a, 2020b, 2020c)
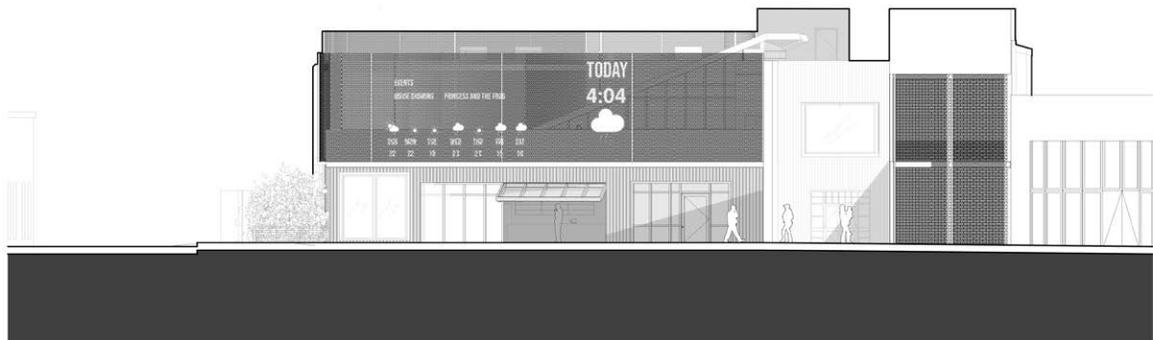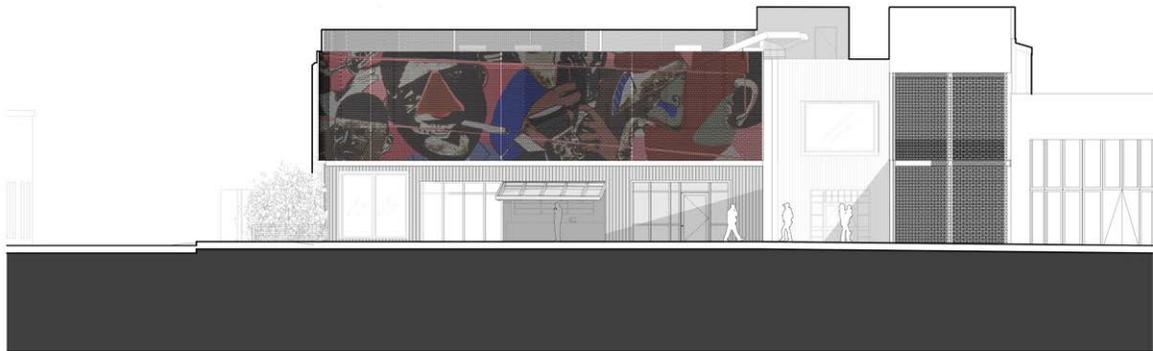
Elevation 1: Facade Typology; Different forms of displaying on mesh showing how tagging and graffiti can be incorporated into a building's facade design. Elevation on Gottingen Street
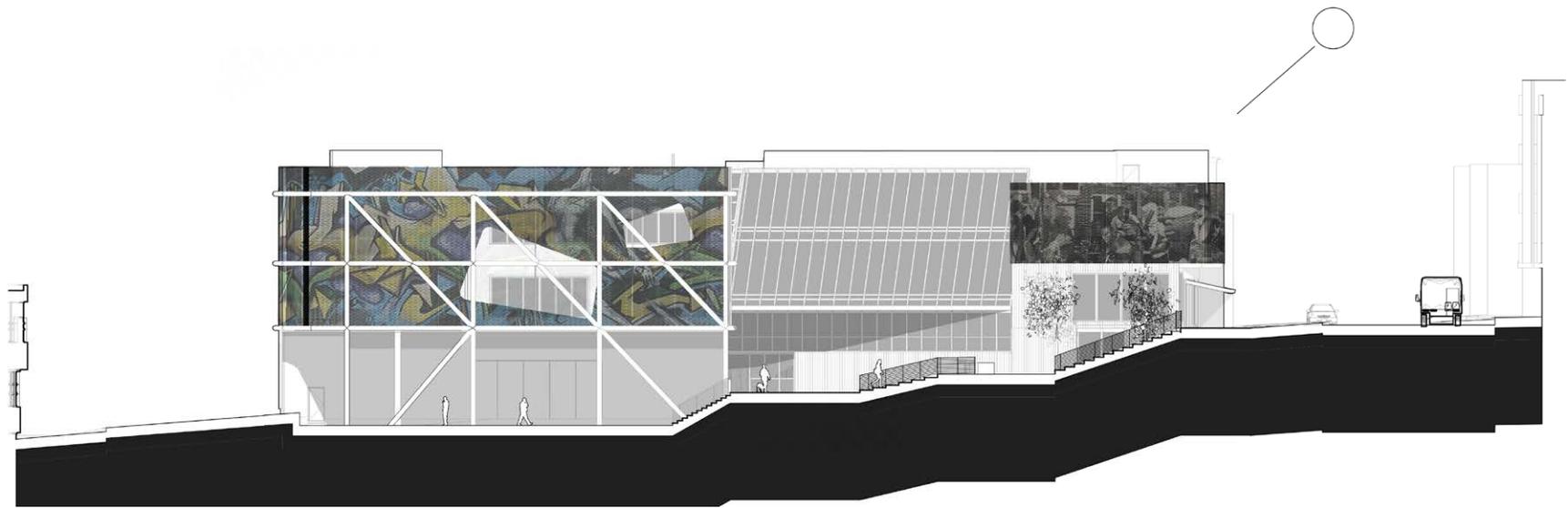
Elevation 2: Prince Williams Street elevation showing how tagging and graffiti can be incorporated into a building's facade design
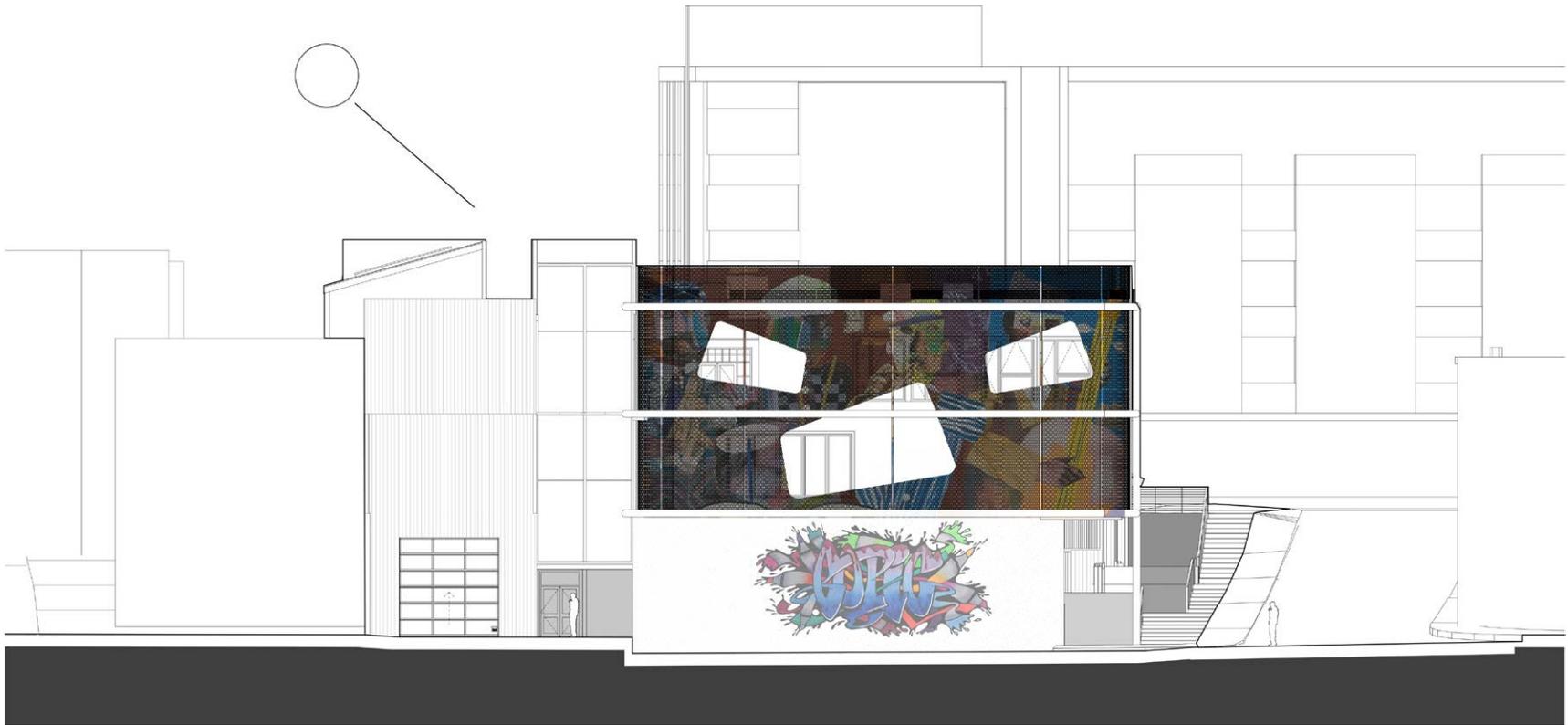
Elevation 3: Maitland Street elevation, showing how tagging and graffiti can be incorporated into a building's facade design

Render 1: Render view from Cunard Street looking at the Art House. Render shows how the building creates a unique presence on Gottingen Street

Render 2: Render view from Gottingen Street looking at the Art House

As you enter the building, you embark on a journey through archival walls that tell a history of Black Halifax, but also creates a presence for today's Black communities in Halifax. Render 3 shows the way archival history can be displayed and presented. The building is meant to be a place of peace and uplifting. The programs play a huge role in doing so.

On the main floor, you are welcomed by an art workshop for classes, café for visiting vendors from the community, a kitchen workshop connected to a multi purpose hall and music studio. The kitchen workshop and music studios are connected to the multi purpose hall, this allows for multifunctionality to occur from the kitchen offering catering services and to the studio offering music for events in the hall.

There are spaces to meet in official rooms but also unofficial spaces. It is important to highlight the way there are always opportunities for learning moments and relearning, like the art workshop or the music listening nook or room. Section 1 shows how the music listening room interacts with the outdoors.

On the Second floor, arriving, you are greeted by an archival hall. This acts as a climax to the historic experienced. This space offers information about the Black community from archived storage that would not have been previously able to be displayed. Render 4 further highlights how the archival walls and display works on different levels. There is always a line of sight to this historical marker and a chance for learning and identity formation.

The second floor is home to the more semi- to fully- private programs. The office and incubation spaces are here and
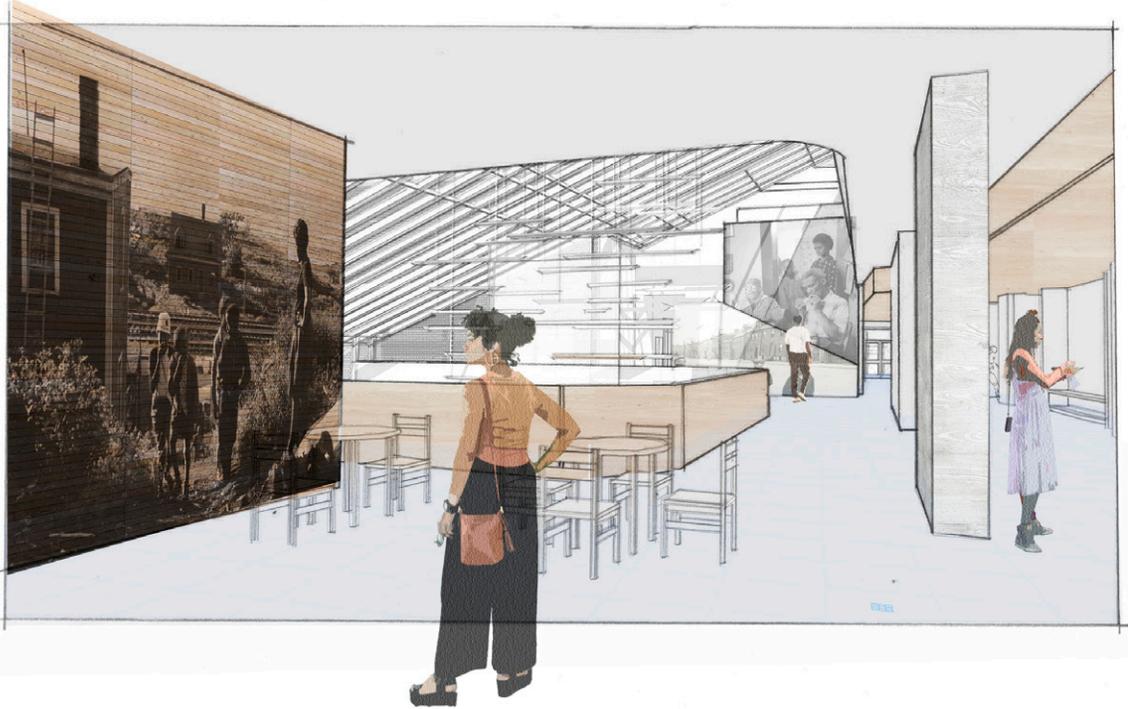
Render 3: Render view showing how art or archival history can be dispayed on the walls and surfaces of the Art House
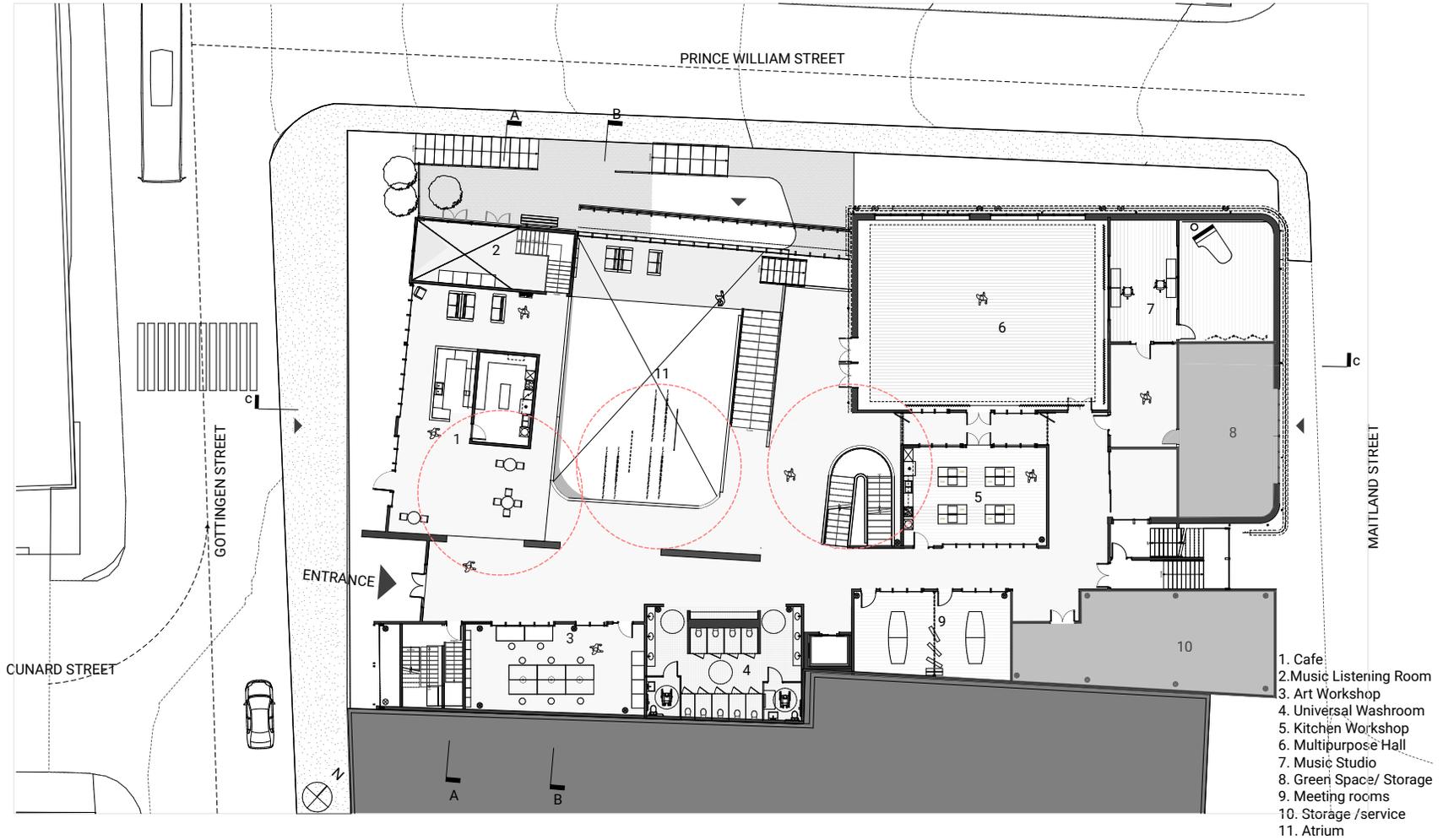
PRINCE WILLIAM STREET

GOTTINGEN STREET

CUNARD STREET

MAITLAND STREET

ENTRANCE

A   B

2

11

6

7

1

8

c

c

5

3

4

9

10

A   B

1. Cafe
2. Music Listening Room
3. Art Workshop
4. Universal Washroom
5. Kitchen Workshop
6. Multipurpose Hall
7. Music Studio
8. Green Space/ Storage
9. Meeting rooms
10. Storage /service
11. Atrium

Main Floor Plan

Interactions between the
outside and inside through
the music listening room.
Potential for extending the
music experience outside.
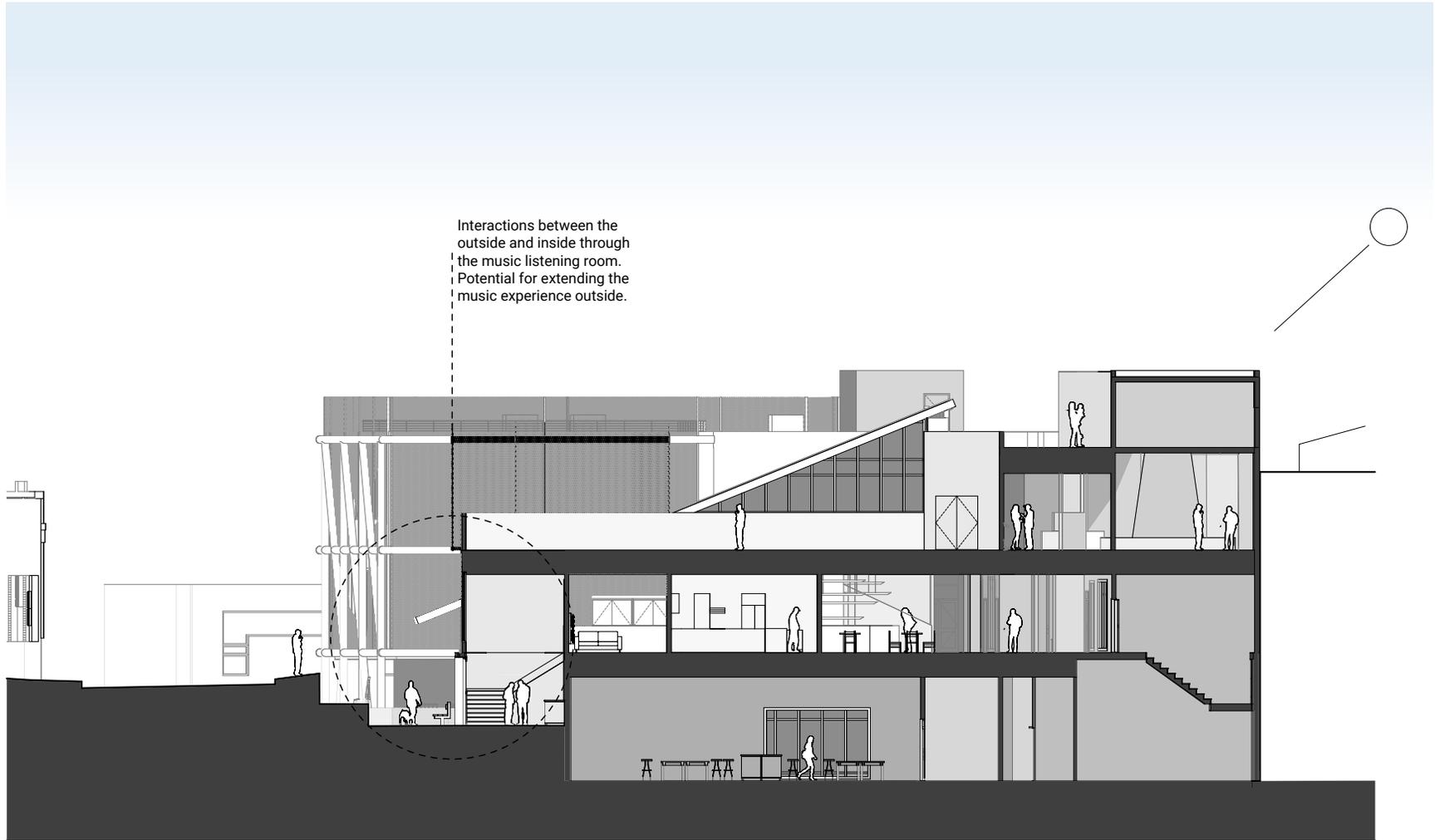
Section 1: Section 1 highlights interactions between the outside and inside through the use of doors that can be open if need be at time when it is needed.

work in tandem with each other, sharing meeting and administrative space.

It also offers a private space for a daycare that needs to be away from the public.

Section 2 highlights moments where views of archival memories are housed and how space is used as a source of museum-like storage, to spaces for interactions and performance.

This section also shows the direct link of spaces interacting, open circulations, interactions with the outdoors and indoors, and a multilevel display archival history, including multilevel interconnectedness

On the other side of the floor is where the futsal court lies. This offers opportunities for recreational activities and a way for the daycare to extend its space for play.

It is important to highlight the roof top plan which offers a space for a roof top garden for the community and an area for learning. The daycare has direct access to the garden. But the aim of this program was to offer close sources of fresh produce for the kitchen and the café.

On the lower floor or basement floor, you come down to this open floor atrium that offers a space that is both grand and an area for interaction, exhibition and display.

Next to the atrium is a small woodshop. Skills like carpentry and woodwork have been recorded as part of the Black community's history. They were exceptionally skilled in the craft. The addition of this woodshop teaches younger generations these skills but also offers a way to learn a new skill that can lead to other future avenues.
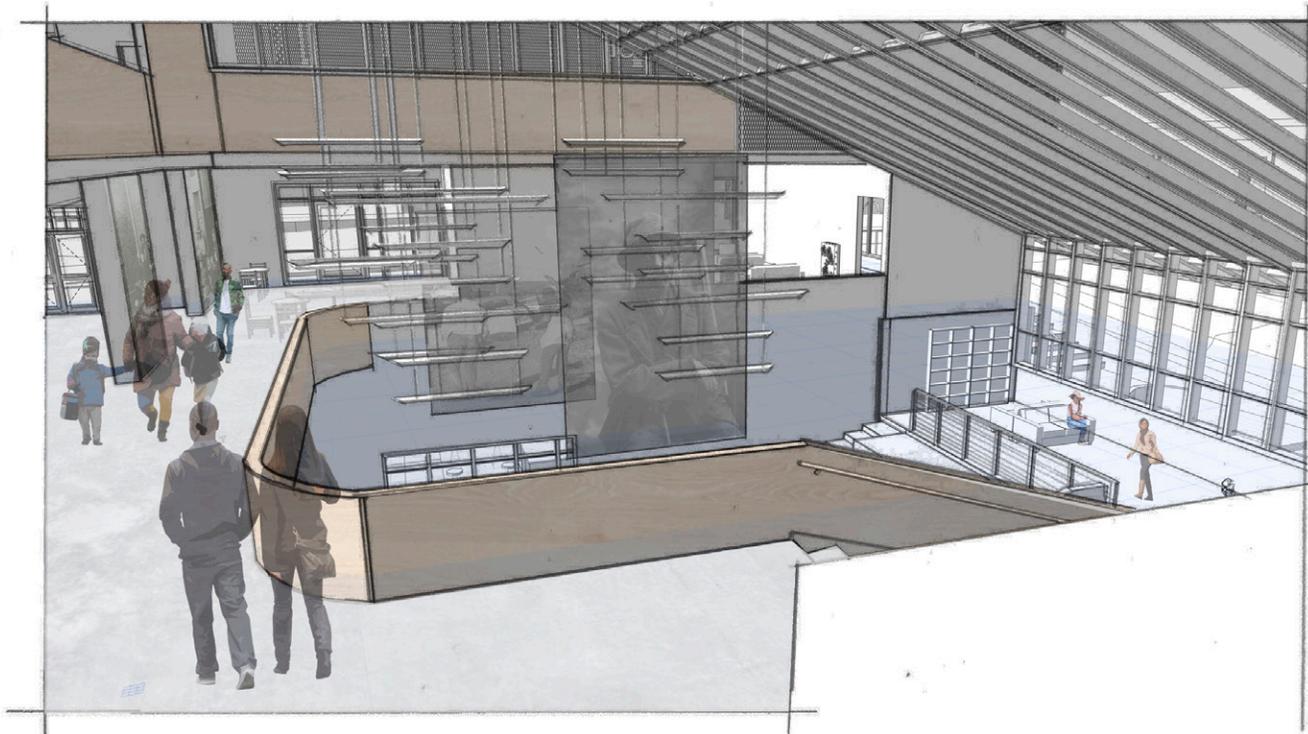
Render 4: Render view showing the multilevel aspect of creating archival and memorial interactions and space.

A   B

C

6

C

3

4

C

B

2

1

5

A   B

N

Second Floor Plan

1. Archive Hall
2. Office
3. incubator Space
4. Daycare
5. Daycare Office and Kitchen
6. Rooftop Futsall Field

At different points, there are opportunities for interactions for the outside, extending space to the outside.

The atrium walls offers ways to present archival memories and artifacts.

Hanging banners that have historic information and hanging installations

The archival hall acts a full display of archival information. one can come here to find out more about their history

Section 2: This section shows areas and opportunity for memorial archives and artifact storage
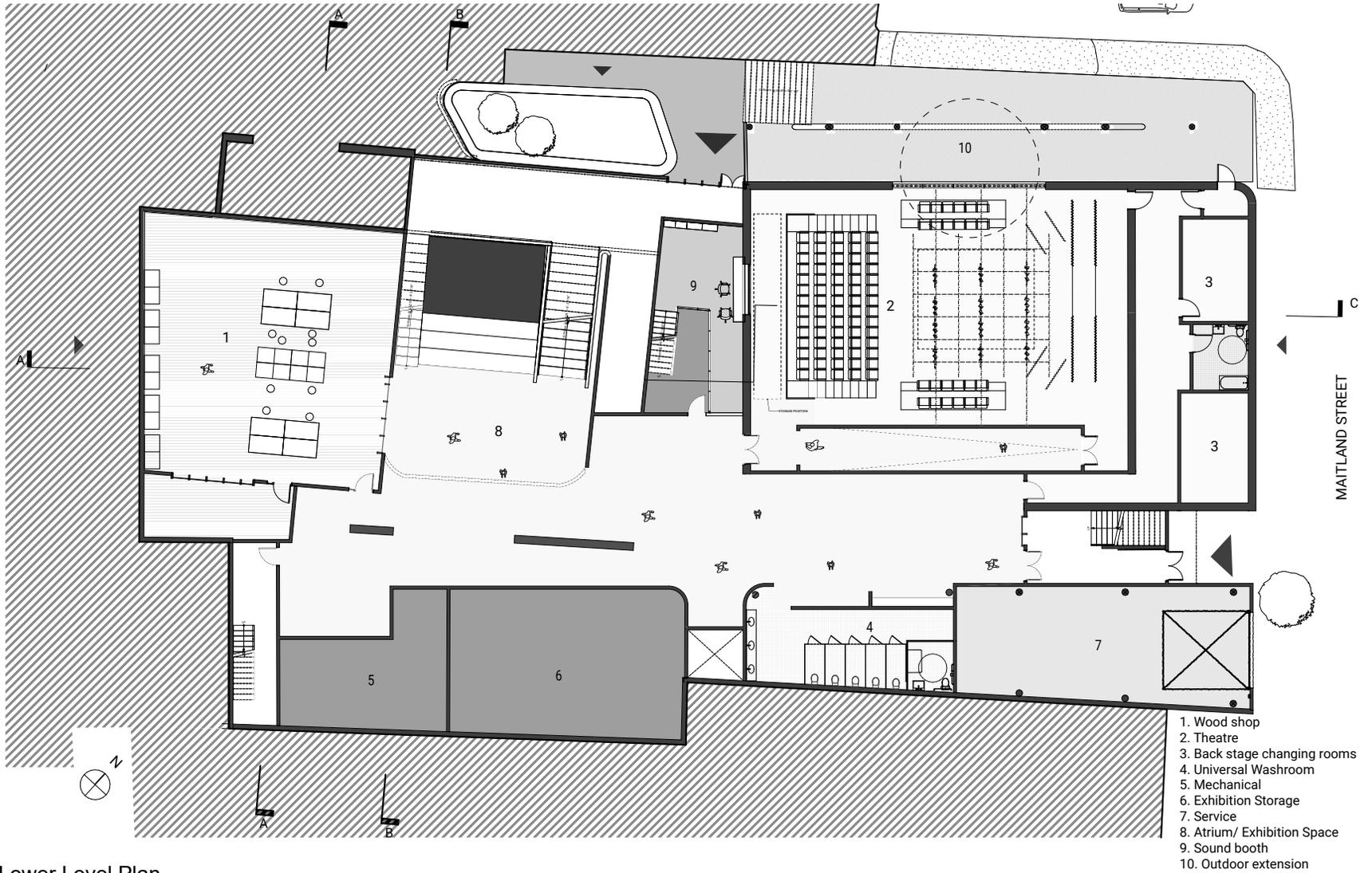
A   B

C

C

1

1. Roof top Garden

N

A   B

Roof Top Plan

Lower Level Plan

MAITLAND STREET

1. Wood shop
2. Theatre
3. Back stage changing rooms
4. Universal Washroom
5. Mechanical
6. Exhibition Storage
7. Service
8. Atrium/ Exhibition Space
9. Sound booth
10. Outdoor extension

On the other side is a theatre. This program was to allow the Black community a space to practice and perform their work. The theatre space has a multifunctional ability to act as a stage theatre, with rearrangeable seating, a cinema hall to play movies created by Black creators and a party spaces that has access to an outdoor court made accessible through its walls that can open to prince William Street.

Remix

The aim of this thesis was to find a way to understand how architecture can facilitate community healing and public identity. This building gives an answer to the question. The building embodies the 4 guiding principles; creating a sense of space through its unique design, embracing the unusual by allowing and implementing the use of street art as décor, creating spaces that have multifunctional use through the building's modularity in its programs, the way the indoor extends to the outdoors, the use of walls, banners, installations and rooms to highlight history and using left over spaces for both meeting and art installation. And finally ensuring lasting spaces that can evolve over time. By involving community input and a community adviser, a robust programming system was made; programs that teach history and skills and offer a safe destination for the Black community.

Plan 1: This first-floor plan shows the programs in their discrete locations: The highlighted cafe, kitchen workshop, multipurpose hall and music studio are anchor programs, but have porous boundaries that can change with time and occasion.
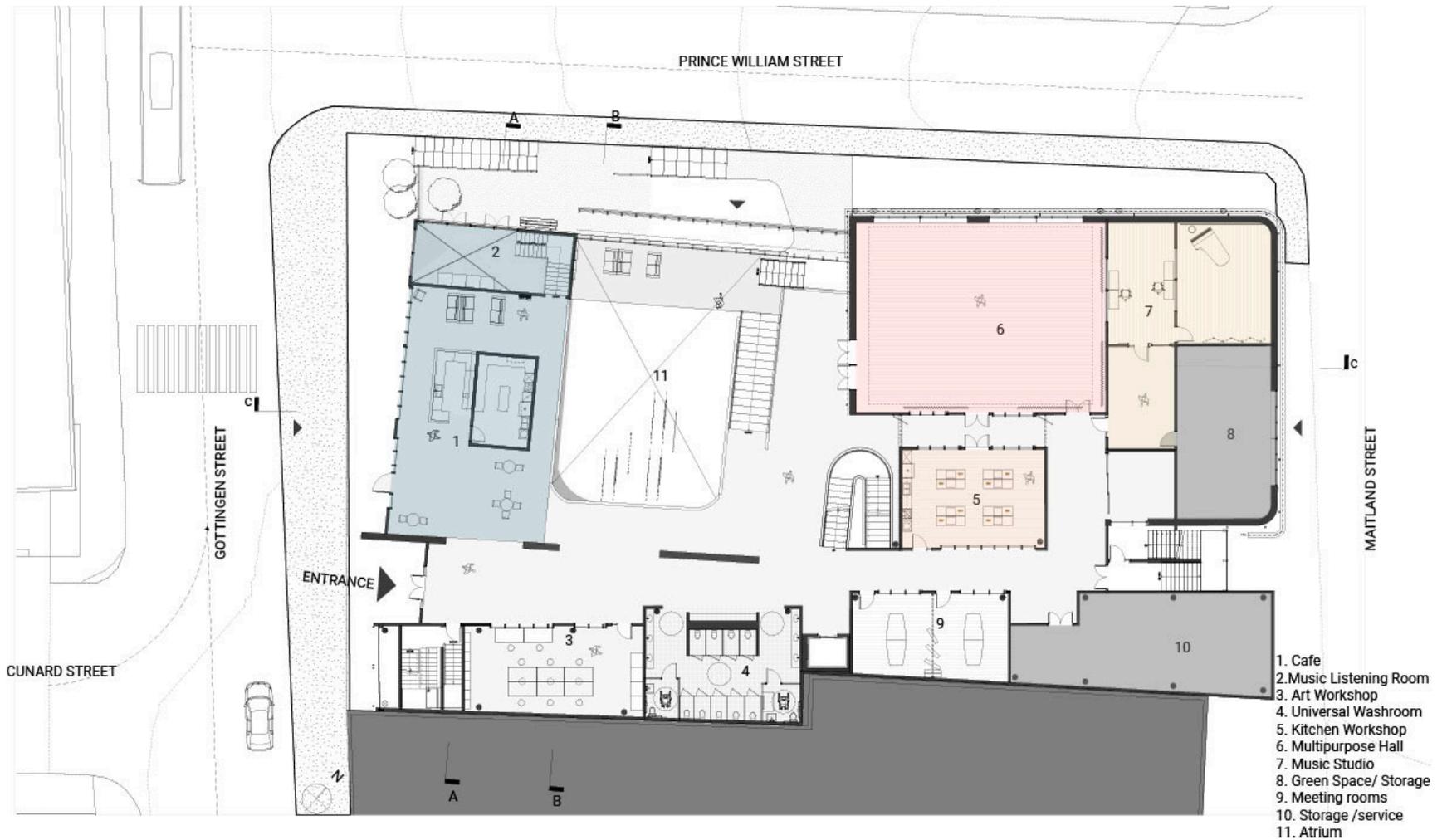
Plan 1: This plan show the programs at regular times. the cafe, kitchen workshop, multipurpose hall and music studio are highlighted because of their importance, they can change with time and occasion.

PRINCE WILLIAM STREET

GOTTINGEN STREET

CUNARD STREET

MAITLAND STREET

ENTRANCE

1. Cafe
2. Music Listening Room
3. Art Workshop
4. Universal Washroom
5. Kitchen Workshop
6. Multipurpose Hall
7. Music Studio
8. Green Space/ Storage
9. Meeting rooms
10. Storage /service
11. Atrium
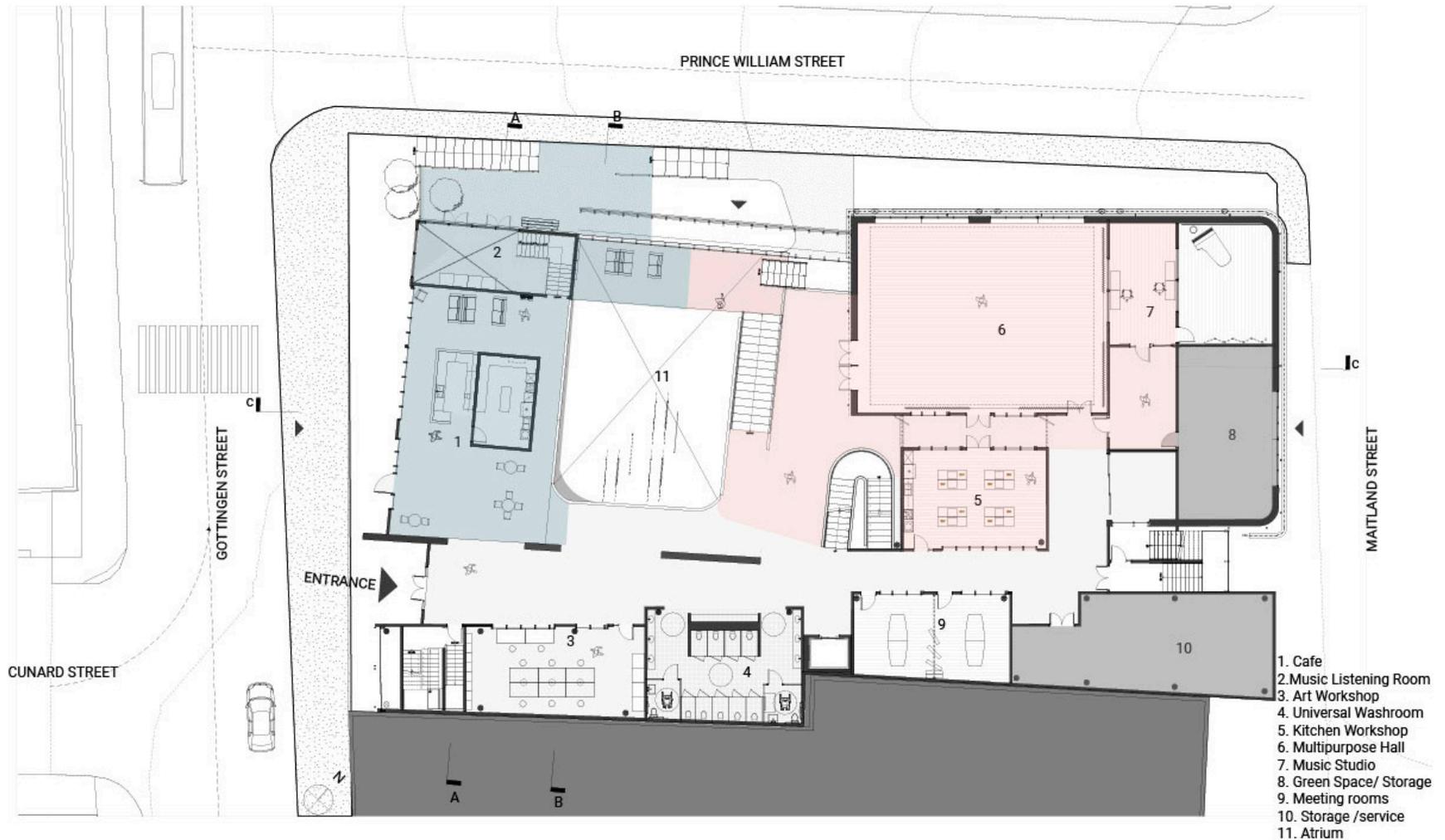
Plan 1.2: This plan shows the programs when time changes or occasion is different. The cafe expands outdoors during summer month or expand towards the atrium. The multipurpose hall, kitchen workshop and music studio become one, providing catering and entertainment and defining a new space.
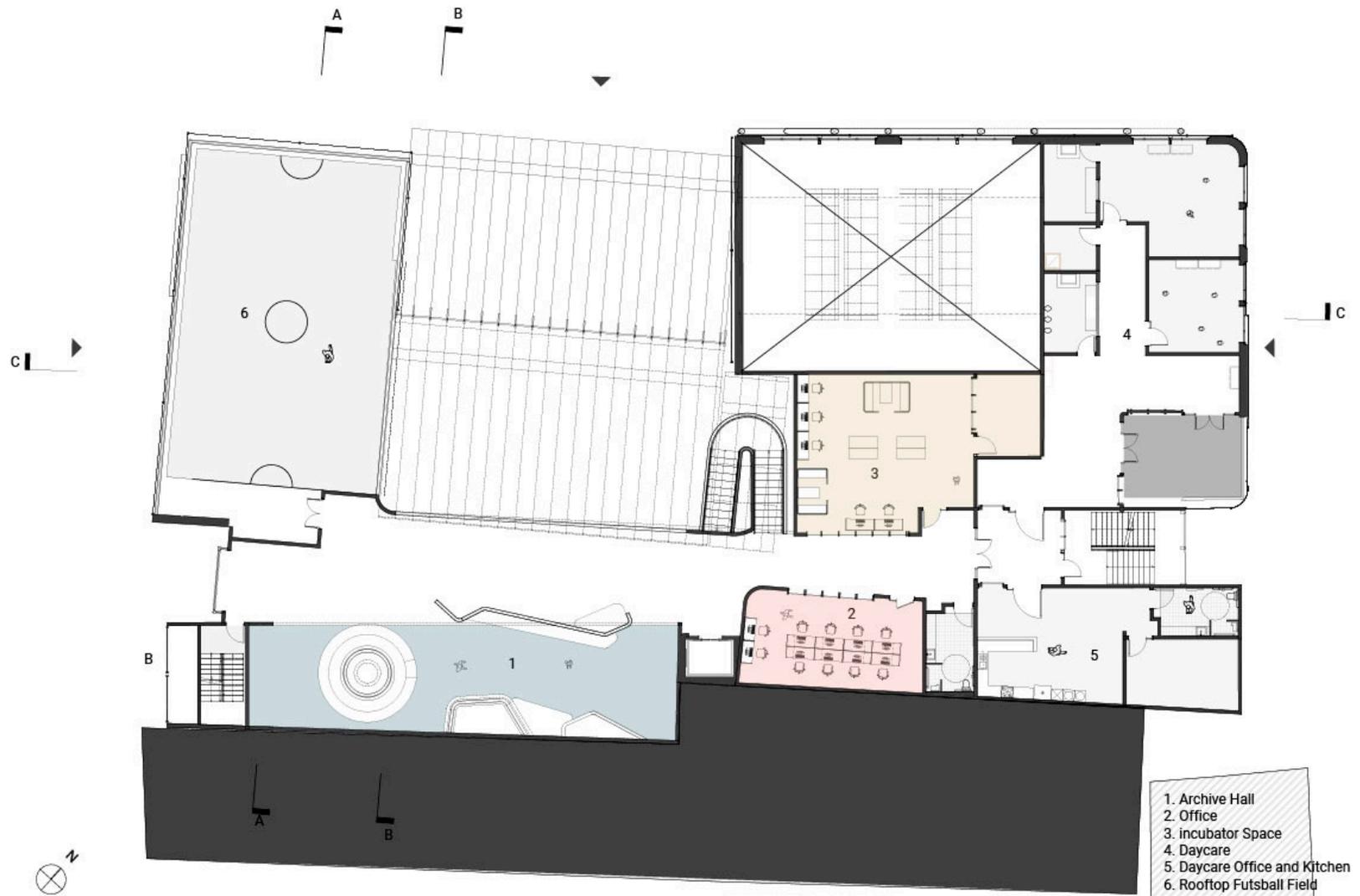
Plan 2: This second-floor plan shows the anchoring of programs in discrete zones.

1. Archive Hall
2. Office
3. incubator Space
4. Daycare
5. Daycare Office and Kitchen
6. Rooftop Futsball Field
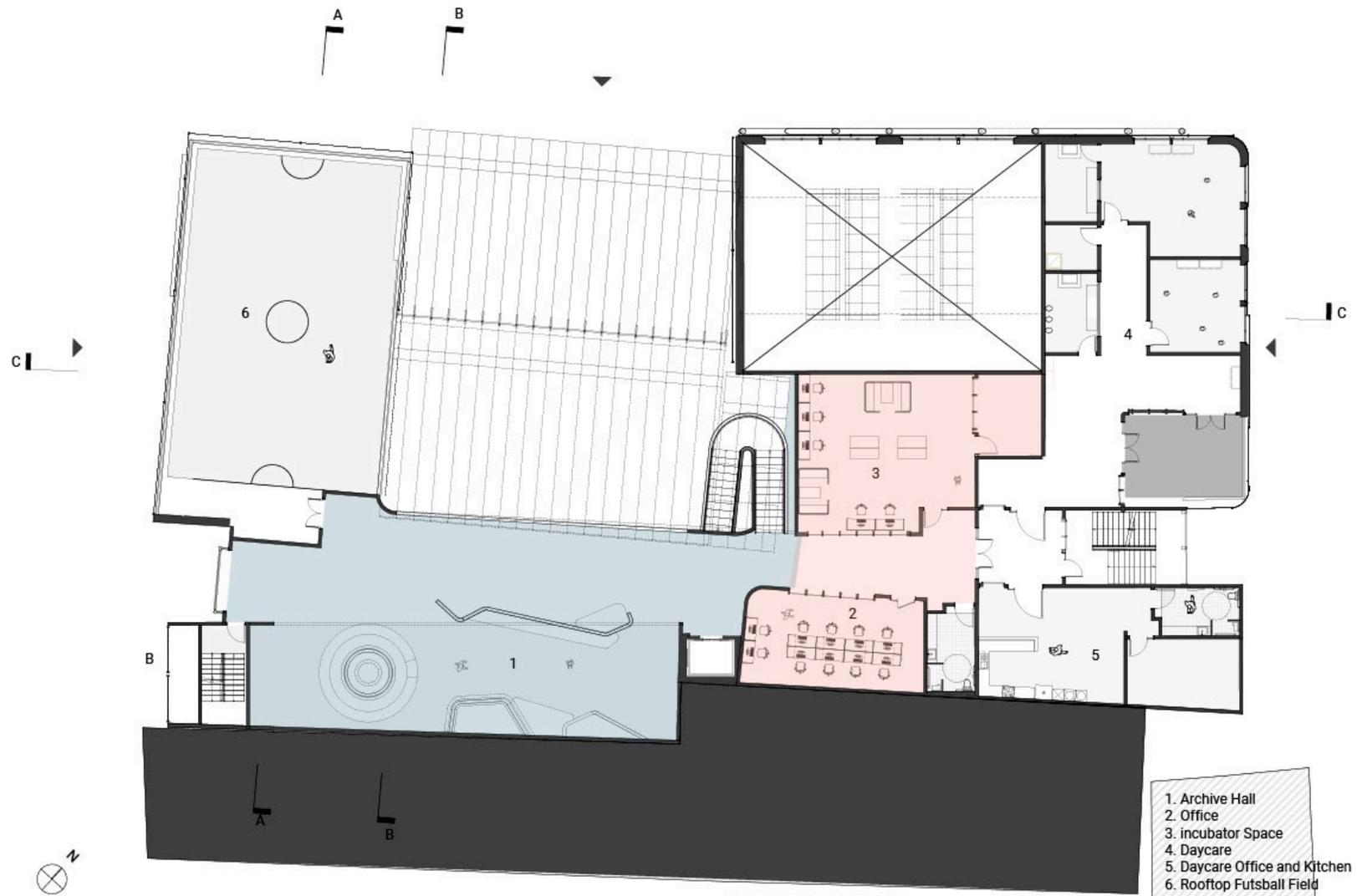
Plan 2.1: This second-floor plan shows how the programs expand and work together. The archival hall expands towards both ends of the second floor. The Incubator space and office work in tandem with each other.

1. Archive Hall
2. Office
3. incubator Space
4. Daycare
5. Daycare Office and Kitchen
6. Rooftop Futsball Field
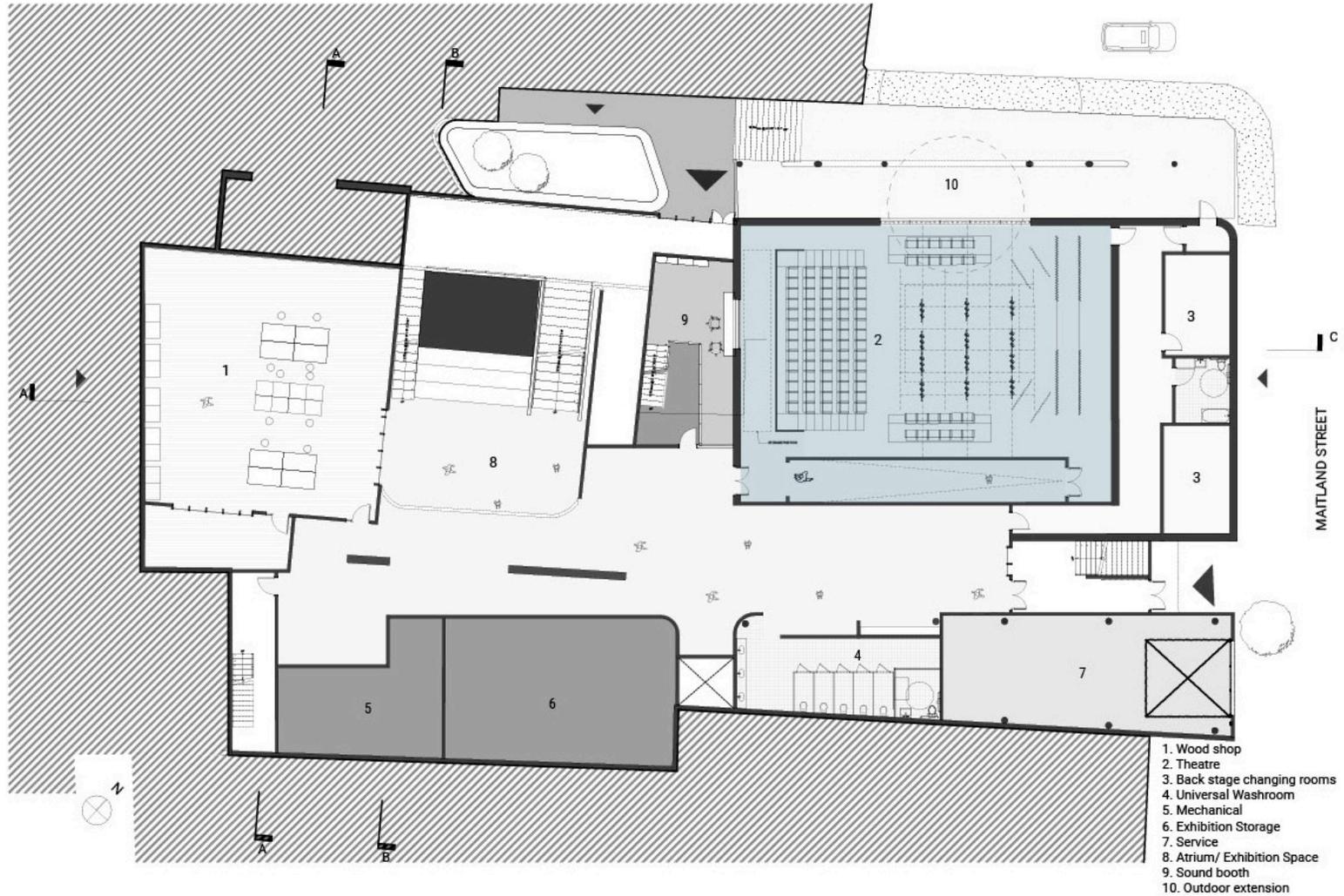
Plan 3: This plan shown shows the theatre as contained by its program walls.

1. Wood shop
2. Theatre
3. Back stage changing rooms
4. Universal Washroom
5. Mechanical
6. Exhibition Storage
7. Service
8. Atrium/ Exhibition Space
9. Sound booth
10. Outdoor extension

MAITLAND STREET

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1. Wood shop
2. Theatre
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9. Sound booth
10. Outdoor extension

Plan 3.1: The plan shown, shows how the theatre's program can expand outside of its walls. The theatre space can be used as a gathering space that has access to the outdoors at Prince William Street during a summer month. It can also expand towards the atrium and carry its program into the central atrium.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

To recap, the aim of this thesis was to find a way to understand how architecture can facilitate community healing and public identity. This building gives an answer to the question. To erase history is to erase life. At the beginning of this thesis, the aim was to set out and define a way to truly reclaim what was lost for the Black Nova Scotian community. The Black community of Nova Scotia has a painful and beautiful history that, frankly, Canada has tried to hide. The design idea is not a solve-it-all for the issue of identity erasure; the ambition is to make strategies and decisions that are not quick fixes but an embodiment of belonging and a place that the Black community can come to know as theirs and see as a beacon of hope. The design shown is one way to tackle the issue that the thesis highlights. The aim is that the guiding principles can be brought to other community projects and used to build a better, lasting space for the Black communities around us.

The hope is that through the design thesis, a blueprint can be created to show how putting an under-served community first, allows the community to feel like they belong.

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