Let’s Head Inside: A Case for Internal Streets

by

Mark Drennon

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Architecture

at

Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
June 2023

Dalhousie University is located in Mi’kmaq’i,
the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi’kmaq.
We are all Treaty people.

Contents

Abstract

Our cities lack internal common space. Through a mix of programmatically dense external/ internal space and program, we can bring the public realm inward to achieve an internal street where social activities are protected from undesirable weather conditions, free from consumerist obligation and socioeconomic bias. By unifying inside and outside, everyone can move freely to find both respite and activity.

The thesis has been informed by the history of internal urban space, urban planning theory, case studies of notable precedents, and my own first-hand experience. This has led to a framework for the design of internal streets for the heart of our cities. This framework is tested with a site in Rochester, New York.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Michael Putman, and advisor, Sarah Bonnemaison, for their assistance with the completion of this thesis. I would also like to thank Catherine Venart and Niall Savage for their assistance early on in the project's development.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Hayes Galleria in London, United Kingdom

The Lure of the Inside

Public space is the common ground on which all members of the community can come together, with or without purpose: to find rest, casual socialization, or to meander free from the dominion of private ownership's influence. Common examples of public space are public parks, the historic squares of European cities, and public facilities like libraries. What we do have available to us in North America for public space is primarily exterior-oriented space. Internally our cities are private, with the few publicly accessible insides primarily consisting of a variety of shopping center types. Through news, travelling, and a plethora of architecture and design related social media feeds, I have recognized a severe lack of internal space in favor of a more restrictive and privatized sidewalk-venue model of development being the dominant order in the 21st century, leaving fewer internal spaces available to the public. Internal public space is a rare typology; a kind of living room where one can rest without consumerist obligation or being hurried along by security, as

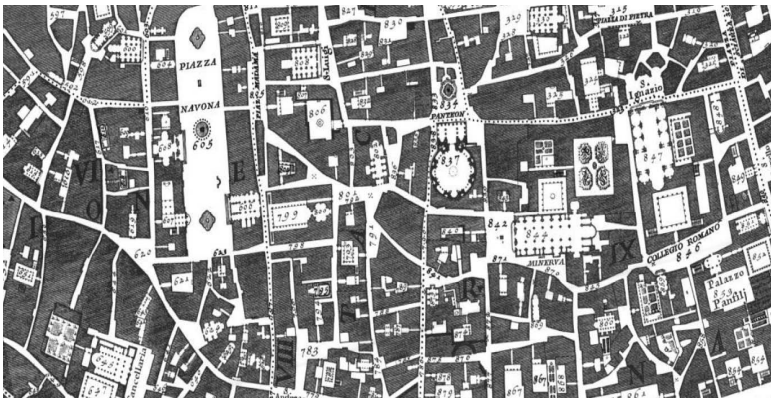
The interior of the Elephant & Castle shopping center in London, now demolished

is the case in shopping centers. The purpose of this thesis is to highlight the need, and to develop a set of principles, that create a framework of critical components toward the design of these internal public zones. The methods involve critical research, an analysis of case studies, and personal observations during travel.

We will begin by looking into the evolution of our dominant internal spaces: temples, markets, arcades, department stores, shopping malls, and institutional interiors.

Precedents will be analyzed using Nolli plans, which best lend themselves to showcasing the relationship between the street and public spaces. The Nolli plan was first developed by architect and planner Giambattista Nolli in 1748 (Huimin 2021, 540). The first Nolli map was of Rome, and its function was to showcase the publicly accessible areas and buildings in white, and private spaces in black. Architectural features such as columns were also shown in black as a visual indicator of which spaces were open courtyards and which were covered churches and basilicas (Huimin 2021, 540).

After an inventory and analysis of the internal spaces we have left available to the public, a list of spatial qualities and programmatic components are identified as being beneficial

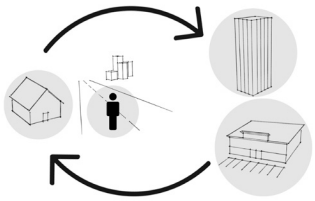


Nolli map of Rome produced by Giambattista Nolli in 1748. (Huimin 2021, 540)

which later work to form the foundation for the proposed design. Definitions of place and climate control need to be established for the scope of this project.

The internal volumes of the Barbican Center which feature a dense layering of cultural programs with plenty of people milling about the common areas working on laptops.

Why Go Inside?



A life of jumping from one private bubble to the next, barely interacting with the public realm. Even the dominant form of retail comes in the form of strip centers and big box stores where there is no incentive or opportunity to linger without purpose.

In North America, many live a life of moving between private bubbles. Our homes, our places of work and even our communities are planned around cars, which are mobile private bubbles that many use to get from one location to the next. With Covid-19 and working from home becoming more popular due to health and safety concerns, people have further receded away from the public realm, the in-between places becoming something to be passed through without direct engagement (Oldenburg 1989, 205). Those who do engage with them are subject to a variety of restrictive factors.

Weather

Our streets and public parks can be great places to find rest and respite in our free time. Parks with shaded trees and water fountains create microclimates sheltered from direct UV light and wind. Seating and food venues, both permanent and temporary, attract people with pleasant smells and

the prospect of an impulsive snack. In downtown Halifax, Nova Scotia, the old, disused public library is fronted by a green space used for demonstrations, and art exhibitions, and is frequented by food trucks and sausage vendors. A block away, Argyle Street is cut off from vehicular traffic as restaurants extend out into the street with their patios. Both of these examples are supported by the growing density of housing and proximity to universities and other post-secondary institutions, with high energy from early afternoon until the early hours of the morning. However, usage of these public places is not constant 365 days of the year. Halifax and Rochester, like many cities in the northern United States and Canada, are subjected to less than ideal winter conditions. Seasonal affective disorder occurs as a result of the loss of “summer-centric” public spaces. According to the United States National Institute of Mental Health, millions of people suffer from seasonal depression every year, with the likelihood increasing the farther north they live (NIMH 2022). Even desirable seasons have their dreary rainy days. In the summer, with global warming extremes, high heat warnings are becoming more common, yet we continue to design our winter cities with only perfect summer days in mind. An article written by a Dalhousie University faculty member highlights the marketing tactics used by developers who have hired architectural firms to push an idealized “summery” vision of their product (Parcell 2016). The vibrant streetscapes we do have lose their energy as most of the activity falls back into the warmth of the restaurants during the winter months. This does not end with paying patrons; street performers and people watchers will also disappear as a result.

Restrictive Interiors

A definition of the word “restrictive” is required for the context of this thesis. Certainly, even the public realm is not without restrictions. Our conduct as individuals in society is maintained by the laws of the land and social decency. Hatred, violence, and lascivious behavior are improper in both the public realm and the realm of public access. It is the specific obligations and regulatory practices imposed by private owners and exclusive organizations that disqualify a place from being truly public.

Spaces like restaurants, shopping centers, lobbies all have restrictions in place to dissuade those who do not or cannot adhere to their terms. Such terms include the price point of mandatory goods and services being sold, rules against loitering for periods longer than what is deemed appropriate by security forces on site, and even public expression and discourse.

Chapter 2: Internal Space, An Overview

It is important to take inventory of what we have available to us presently and understand the history of how these places came to be and their evolution. This helps us understand the timeline of their program and the narrative within our communities and our lives. History allows us to see beyond our past mistakes and find solutions for the future.

Sacred Buildings

Churches and temples are places steeped in ritual obligation and beliefs that are not universally shared within the context of our larger modern cities. Historically, they have also been a refuge for the poor and suffering, with some still offering this service to this day.

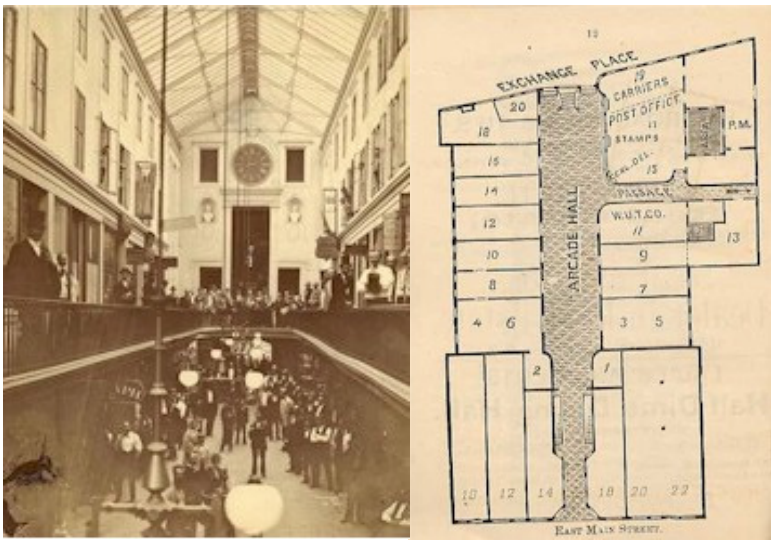
Religion is beginning to waver in North America. General Social Surveys conducted between 1972 and 2021 have shown a 24% decrease in US citizens affiliated with any kind of religion (GSS 1972-2021). Places of worship fall within the realm of restrictive. While welcoming to all, there is an obligation of respect to participate in the rituals and beliefs embodied within.

Arcades

First developed in France after the revolution in the late 1700s, these long, sunlit retail corridors bisected existing blocks. They were an act of both commerce and display for individual shops and their merchandise. Windows opened from the shop into the main corridor, featuring shelves on which goods were carefully displayed. These arcades had little street presence, but were woven into the existing

fabric of the city, becoming a type of street of their own with housing and workshops for the production of goods above the storefronts (Erben 2016, 26). Until the rise of the department store in the 1800s, they were a dominant type of internal common space, used as both a place to shop and a city block thoroughfare but also a destination.

North America had some examples of this type, one of which was located in Rochester, NY: The Reynolds Arcade, which was constructed in 1828 and demolished in 1932. The sunlit arcade featured shops facing inward on two levels and to the street. The building was mixed use and included a library and post office. The upper floors were hotel rooms whose windows opened into the arcade. It was a space supported by a diverse layering of programs used for demonstrations, mayoral inaugurations, and social occasions before being demolished in the 1930s for a building with a modest single story retail arcade on the bottom floor sharing the same name (Monroe County Library System 2021).



The inside of the Reynolds Arcade, 1977. The clock becomes a common embellishment for many of Rochester's city center retail spaces into the present (Rochester Library Website 2021).

The glass roof, a common motif of these early arcades, has become equally common in contemporary shopping centers, lobbies, arcades, and institutional buildings of all types.

Department Stores

Rising to popularity beginning with the opening of Bon Marche in 1850 France, department stores became “one stop shops” for cities all over the world as the concept spread. These large stores did relate to the street in a limited capacity, with large display windows on the main level featuring extravagant displays. The stores were much more than the large merchandising floors we know today, featuring restaurants, tea rooms, reading rooms, and bakeries. Programmatic offerings beyond those of just consumer goods and luxury commodities established the department store as an experiential destination for the public (Erben 2016, 31).

In the 1960s and 1970s, department store designs did away with the large display windows, shunning the exterior for a more internal orientation in the suburban shopping centers where they served as anchor stores. In North America, it was not uncommon for a city to feature its own privately owned department store chain. Rochester had three: Sibley’s, McCurdy’s and B. Forman Co. Through the late 1980s and 1990s these local chains fell victim to changing shopping habits and bankruptcy, and were absorbed by larger national chains, which themselves have fallen into smaller, more specialized retail types.

Shopping Malls

The history of contemporary indoor shopping centers begins in the 1950s with Austrian architect Victor Gruen. Escaping Nazi rule by coming to the United States, he made a name for himself by designing retail architecture. In the early 1950s, Gruen was contracted by the owners of the Dayton's department store chain to design an indoor shopping center in Edina, Minnesota. It was Gruen's goal that the climate controlled shopping center would achieve the same sense of place as the town squares of Vienna he remembered from his youth, becoming an internal town square (Lepik 2016, 43).

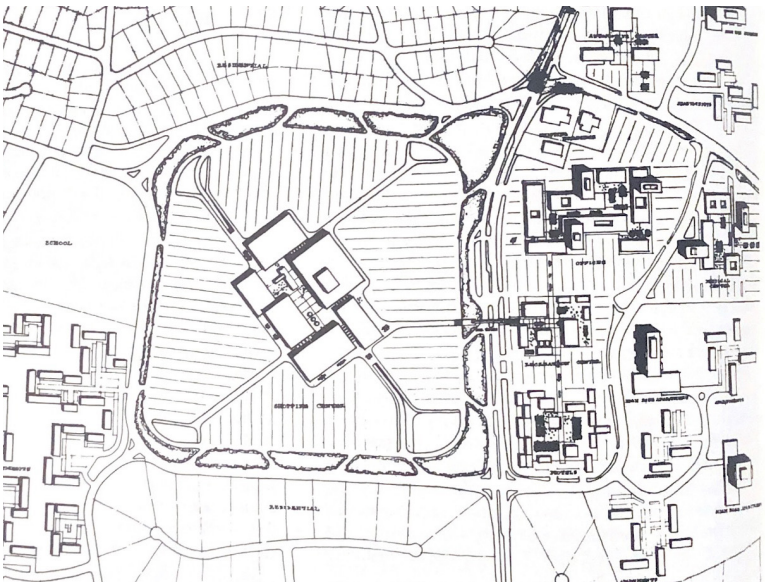
Opening in 1956, Southdale featured two department stores and 70 smaller tenants, located around a central atrium filled with plants, a fountain, a sidewalk style cafe with umbrellas, and a bird aviary. It had all the elements of a public garden inside, where shoppers were protected from the cold winter and rain all year (Lepik 2016, 44). Southdale's atrium set the precedent for indoor shopping centers all over the country and beyond, as the concept spread around the globe. The two-level rows of shops were separated by a space that was wide enough for shoppers on one floor to read the store names on the other. The crisscrossing escalators were central to the space: a display of movement, easy to navigate. All of Victor Gruen's shopping center projects had a portion of the budget allotted to artwork and sculpture (Gruen 1960, 153). He explains the reasoning behind this expenditure in his book:

The sculpture *Boys on Stilts* by Louise Kruger located in the planter of Southdale Center's atrium; 1956 Photo by Warren Reynolds. (Gruen 1960, 157)

> The developer is given the function of a supporter and encourager of the arts. The architect should urge him to accept this role as an extension of his civic responsibility. He can do so with the conviction that this further enrichment of the environment will contribute to the attracting power of the

> center, and because of it, to the business volume. (Gruen 1960, 153)

Gruen had envisioned Southdale, along with all of his shopping centers, as more than places to purchase luxury shoes and suits. He anticipated the shopping center as a fully functional community hub with housing, schools, medical centers, performing arts theaters, and hotels. All components feature continuous walking paths for pedestrians.



Victor Gruen's vision of the area surrounding the shopping center, from Shoppingtown USA. (Gruen 1960, 106)

His vision, although containing all components of the traditional urban center, was missing the rest of the community. It was focused on itself. Movement to and from the surrounding community could only be achieved comfortably with an automobile, as the interconnected complexes were separated from the fabric of their context by expanses of parking and major roadways, with either internal or external courts at their cores, similar to earlier open air shopping centers. It was a city within a city, but also isolated from it and where its population dwelled.

An evocative illustration of a completely pedestrianized downtown core. We now understand that such schemes divide the city. The large highway system shown would have caused social and economic division. Many cities, including Rochester have now removed their city center highway infrastructure to establish continuity between core and its surrounding neighbourhoods. (Gruen 1960, 272)

Shopping centers constructed in the 1970s and 1980s included venues like video game arcades to engage youth. The mall became a popular after-school hangout for teenagers looking to get out of the house and claim some independence. This began the cultural phenomenon of the “mall rat” as depicted by pop culture into the 1980s and into the early 21st century (Lange 2022, 169). However, with the youth came behaviour issues and reports of petty crime, prompting an intensification of security and the implementation of curfews (Lange 2022, 170).

Internal Pedestrian Networks

The modern, climate-controlled shopping center made its move to the heart of the city for the first time in Rochester, New York. Midtown Plaza, a collaboration between both McCurdy’s Department Store and B. Forman’s, opened to the public in 1962 (Lange 2022, 81). Midtown, like many city center renewal projects it inspired, had some virtues over suburban shopping malls. Gruen wanted to avoid surface parking lots, so a three-level parking garage was included below the mall (which still exists today), so one could enter the mall right off the street, whereas most suburban malls are separated from their context by surface parking. The complex incorporated the existing department stores into its design rather than demolishing them. Midtown also tied into its surrounding neighbors directly with climate controlled bridges over the street. This network was shattered with Midtown’s demolition in 2008. Similar networks exist in cities all over North America. In Montreal, Place Ville Marie, designed by architect I.M. Pei, formed the beginnings of a now expansive system across the city linked by both pedestrian tunnels and subway networks. Cities in climates with temperature extremes like Toronto and Montreal in

The labyrinthine terrazzo and travertine shopping concourse of the Toronto Dominion Center, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, 1964. It served as the genesis of Toronto's extensive PATH network.

Canada, and Houston, Texas feature internal pedestrian networks as a way to escape the hot summer heat. These downtown networks always tend to serve Monday-to-Friday daytime crowds, featuring food courts and kiosks centered around a large seating area with tables. The food court is a staple of contemporary shopping centers, both urban and suburban.

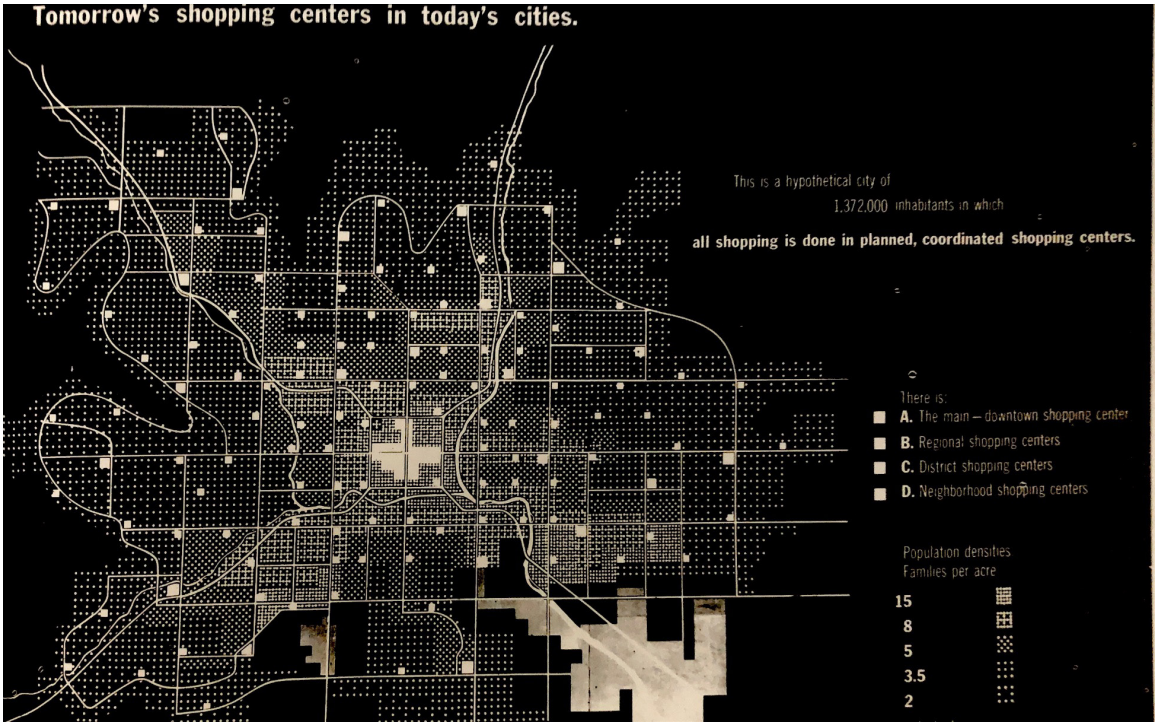
Dead Malls

The suburban indoor mall did not live up to Gruen's expectations. These types of developments never expanded beyond the simple purpose of shopping. The diverse array of programs he planned for were never implemented, and the shopping mall typically remained a complex isolated from its community by the surrounding parking.

It was Victor Gruen's vision that suburban communities would feature multiple indoor town squares of varying sizes. However, he underestimated the competitive forces of the retail landscape and the unique community-specific conditions that would see most indoor shopping centers in North America close. Market saturation, led to too many shopping centers, with smaller and older shopping malls losing their business to newer, larger ones. Online shopping trends with home delivery escalated during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in the closure of public spaces to avoid the spread of the virus.

With the socioeconomic downturn of the surrounding neighbourhoods, the ideal demographics targeted by mall management declined. Reputations of criminal activity can also be a community specific factor that will drive business away. The indoor shopping center originally was intended is to be a public space; however, these properties are under

private ownership. The owners and property managers have a brand, with an ideal demographic they aim to attract, and they enforce restrictions on the public to adhere to that branding. This results in a conflict of interest between management and the indoor shopping center as a concept (Lange 2022, 142). When the public is offered a place to occupy with the right components, they will occupy it in very dynamic, sometimes unpredictable ways. If this type of occupation and casual social interaction is in conflict with the interests and vision of the property owner, a balancing act of restriction and access ensues, creating tension with the community (Lange 2022, 166).



Victor Gruen's prediction for a city of over 1.3 million people. A hierarchical mix of shopping centers is distributed throughout the various suburban neighbourhoods surrounding a large pedestrianized core. (Gruen 1960, 273)

There is now a preference for big box retail centers, which are non-places designed for a shopper to drive to, purchase their goods, and return to their private homes or places of work (Lange 2022, 187). Strip malls and big box retail centers

offer no rest, respite, or publicly accessible common space beyond restaurants (where the purchase of food and drink is necessary to stay) and retail shops which are designed to keep the public reduced to the impersonal role of “customer”, moving through and out (Oldenburg 1989, 205). The core of the strip mall is its parking lot, a place for cars, not people. A common redevelopment solution is to convert indoor shopping centers into parking lot oriented strip centers and faux main streets with roads open to vehicular traffic linking back into the fabric of the surrounding community. Another method is to re-green the shopping center property into a park or wetland, dictated by the state of the land and natural patterns that existed before development (Erben 2016, 221-224).

The dead mall phenomenon is not without its following. A sub-genre of urban explorers and retail historians focuses on the legacy of shopping malls, travelling, researching, and documenting the remains of these once active places within the community. Aesthetically, shopping centers are tied heavily to the time in which they were constructed and are often heavily altered to stay relevant and competitive. They embody a consumerist mindset and hyper-consumption, an “out with the old and in with the new” ethos. This makes the failing shopping centers that have fallen behind aesthetically evocative of bygone decades.

Liminal Space - Non-places

Liminal space is programmatically vacant and austere, the leftover ‘other’ space and transitional areas we have available to us. An example is the in-betweens of pedestrian networks lacking retail, installations, or identifiers. In his essay *Junk Space,* Rem Koolhaas describes liminal

spaces as the leftovers of capitalism. Liminal spaces are additive amalgams of mismatched architectural features, materials, and scales. “An infinite Jacuzzi with thousands of your friends” is one of many metaphors Koolhaas uses to describe such locations (Koolhaas 2006). We pass through them without so much as a thought, and as a result, they blur together within our minds, to the point of false spatial recognition brought on by shared material palettes, lighting fixtures, or the commonly used models of push bar hardware of a door from one’s childhood school.

The “backrooms” are an evocation of this phenomenon, acting as the setting for creepy online fiction and video games, depicted as beige corridors, utility tunnels, vacant shopping centers, and interior tiled swimming pool labyrinths, a possible reference to Koolhaas’s “junk space”.

Interiors, once aesthetically unique, are now abandoned or altered to the point that their identifying features have been removed (“whitewashing” is the slang term used by urban explorers within the dead mall community to describe it), and can devolve into the realm of the liminal. A programmatic shift away from occupancy to that of transience - the removal of seating, landmarks, or notable tenants - can also be a catalyst.

Precedents

Examples of successful internal spaces are few and far between. Public libraries and winter gardens are some examples that should be examined and drawn upon.

Public Libraries

Owned and publicly funded by the communities in which they exist, North American public libraries are a resource

available without membership or obligation. Open to the general public, they have expanded programmatically from just books and reading rooms to include day programs, community meeting rooms and food venues.

Completed in 2014 by Schmidt Hammer Lassen Architects, with the collaboration of FBM Architects, the Halifax Central Library is a demonstration of a publicly accessible internal urban space. Externally, it is fronted by a plaza set back from the street, offering a variety of seating arrangements and types. Before entering the threshold of the main doors, the building creates shelter with an overhang and seating. The interior is just as complex, with seating for groups, individuals (with and without tables to work at), meeting rooms, and two food venues on both the bottom and top floors. A theater space at the back is designed with a large stage area that is programmatically flexible for a variety of presentations, classes, and activities. Anyone suffering from homelessness is encouraged to seek respite within the library during the colder months.

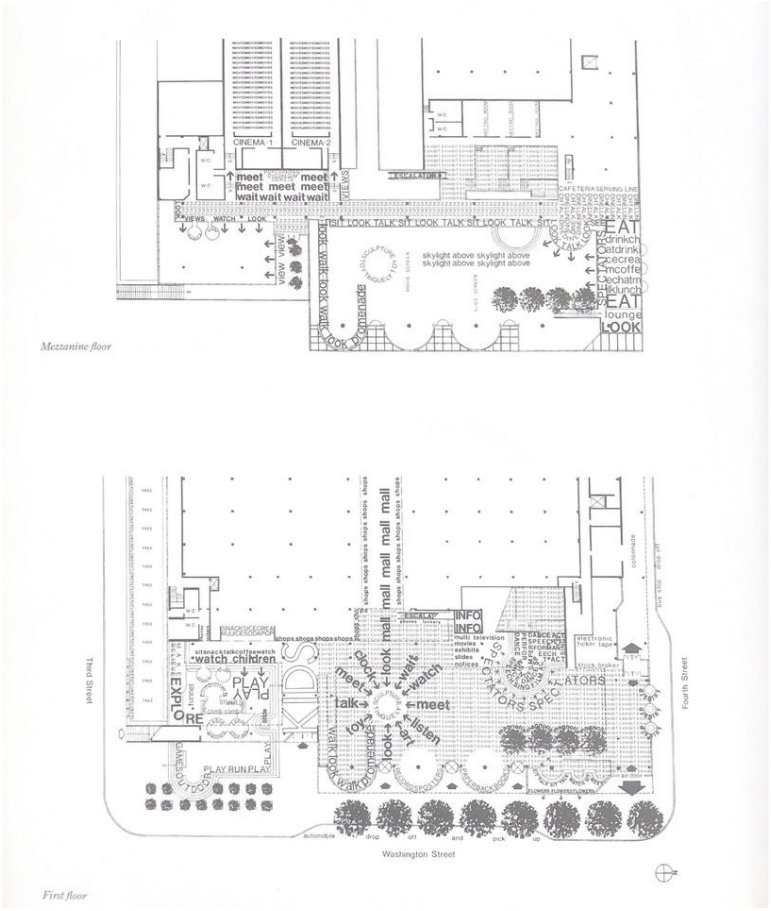
Winter Gardens

Winter gardens are large, light filled spaces featuring trees, plants and seating, with conditions being regulated all year round. Completed in 1993, the Bausch & Lomb building in downtown Rochester included a Winter Garden featuring a small cafe kiosk and the company’s collection of artifacts, including a segment of the Berlin wall. The space, normally open to the public, can also be rented out for weddings and events.

Architect Cesar Pelli was responsible for programming a variety of interior spaces, winter gardens, and internal

commons that contain dramatic glass ceilings similar to those of 19th-century arcades.

In Columbus, Indiana, Pelli, in collaboration with Victor Gruen, designed The Commons, a true public indoor town square run and funded by the city, subsidized by the Miller family, who spearheaded the project. Completed in 1974, the two story space featured the dynamic sculptural installation *Chaos I* by artist Jean Tinguely as a centerpiece, with a playground for children, space for a food venue, greenery, and seating. The idea of The Commons was to fit the role of the town square, with a large 15-foot wide pivoting air door that could remain open to allow freedom of movement to and from the street. The Commons was located on the corner of a two block wide complex that included a shopping arcade anchored by a Sears and a two screen theater (Lange 2022, 147). Throughout its history, it had been host to numerous events, including an International Pritzker Prize ceremony, concerts, and school proms. The Commons was supposed to be self supporting financially with the restaurants and plans for food kiosks, a kind of food court, but these failed to cover the maintenance costs, contributing to the redevelopment of the space into a more traditional public facility constructed using the existing superstructure. The Commons complex closed in 2008. Having been popular with the community, the playground was maintained as part of the new program, and the mall, which was privately run, closed and was partially demolished to restore the street and reverse the superblock (Lange 2022, 147). The exterior of the Commons was a reflective brown tinted glass to protect the space from solar gain. The inside offered views outward, but only at night, and through the air door could one see what was happening within (Frampton 1981).



A plan of the Commons, illustrating program and activity on both the ground floor and mezzanine of the glassed in square. Image by Cesar Pelli for Gruen Associates (Frampton 1981)

The Winter Garden in Niagara Falls opened in 1977, a glass and steel structure on concrete pilings built over what was once a street, eventually attached to an urban shopping center in the early 1980s (Frampton 1981). The interior space featured tropical plants and water fountains, and entry was free of charge to the public. The Winter Garden closed in 2003 due to poor maintenance and prohibitive heating costs for the city, as the glass used in its construction was single pane and did little to insulate the space in the colder months. Pelli's winter gardens filled the role of the arcade, a place to pass through, but also a destination with positive haptic experiences for those seeking respite, stages for

rituals and events, and a focus on light, all within a sheltered environment. They are not dead end spaces. They are not free from commercial influences, with food venues and adjacencies to traditional shopping centers in both cases, but the influences of control are looser than those of a space devoted to commerce.

Chapter 3: Place Making, A Gesture to the Public

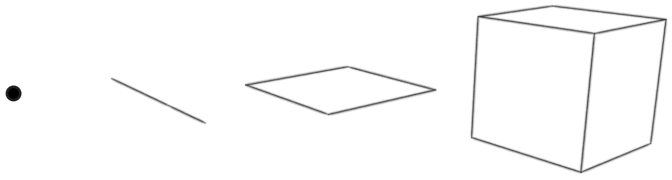
The Characteristics of Place

The Oxford online dictionary simply defines “place” as a point or position in space (Oxford Dictionary 2022). What architects are interested in is the sense of place: a sense that is shared by the community for a particular location as a result of various physical characteristics that give rise to a collective experiential identity or memory.

Jarring Thresholds

Charles Moore describes places as having a definitive edge, a rejection of the expanse (Moore 2001, 137). The genesis of architectural design begins with the point, which becomes the line, the plane, and then it achieves volume.

- We have a single point in space, as Oxford defines it.
- The line is a division, one side or the other.
- Plane establishes the z axis, above and below.
- Volume brings about the concepts of interior and exterior.

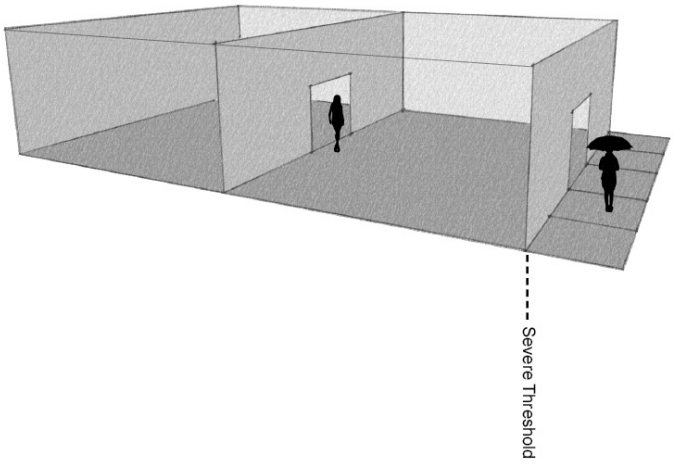


These four base paradigms of threshold can layer into complex systematic ways of defining place, or be used individually. Suddenly, seemingly separate realms amalgamate into interrelated wholes.

These take form as physical places adorned with a centerpiece or sculpture, bordered by buildings, defined by

a wall, or having change in elevation, be it above or below grade.

Critical to this thesis is the difference between exterior and interior. Outside, we are subjected to particular elements: temperature, precipitation, light, wind, smog, and noise. I will define “interior” as the regulation and/or protection from multiple of these forces on one side of the four aforementioned paradigms of threshold.



Jarring thresholds from the internal to the external require one to re-outfit in a manner dependent on the weather conditions they would be subject to. Cities with internal continuities allow for ease of movement to many locations with little preparation.

The craggy labyrinthine retail arcade within the Stars of Ivry Sur Seine. The arcade is open 24-7, resulting in informal occupation of a small homeless population.

Third Places

Third places are defined as the destinations a member of the community frequents for leisure and activity besides their personal residence or place of work. In his book *The Great Good Place,* Ray Oldenburg lists the criteria that must be met for a third place to exist.

The third place is inclusive, regardless of race, social status, or age. Indoor shopping malls, our current dominant type of internal space, fall short of this requirement. Mall management restricts who occupies the space and how

they can conduct themselves. These restrictions can be both direct and indirect. An example of a direct intervention is the security guard ushering the homeless off premises and enforcing curfews on teen patrons. Indirect means of control are the type and price points of the retailers within the property.

Like the Halifax Central Library, or the shopping arcade of Ivry Sur Seine, there needs to be unrestricted access as a gesture to the public, not just those who have money to spend. Oldenburg describes the Third Place as a “Social Leveler”, with all classes coming together, from the owners down to the workers and the homeless (Oldenburg 1989, 25).

There have been cases of public demonstrations being allowed by court order, as the shopping center was considered to be the only space available for public discourse within certain states. In her book, *Meet Me by the Fountain: An Inside History of the Mall*, Alexandra Lange explores the case of *New Jersey Coalition Against War in the Middle East v. JMB Realty Corp*, where it was ruled that the company,(which owned 10 shopping centers in New Jersey at the time) needed to provide the bare minimum for public discourse as the internal space of their properties was functionally, the only option available in which the public could come together on a regular basis (Lange 2022, 145). In *Antidotes to Sprawl, in Sprawl and Public Space: Redressing the Mall,* Kevin Mattson identifies the need for people to come together in public spaces as critical to maintaining a healthy civil society (Mattson 2002, 45).

Private businesses, like cafes and bars, have only taken up the reins of accommodating discourse when the government

steps in to ban or regulate public gatherings, as in the case of Nazi Germany (Oldenburg 1989, 67). These private businesses were not the trendy new cafes we see popping up in the 21st century. They were older establishments where people felt safe to gather and exchange ideas. This leads to the next requirement of the third place: public characters are familiar faces who frequent a place, who everyone trusts, such as a street busker, the proprietor of a business or their handful of regulars. In non-places, strip malls and airports, everyone is a transient stranger, passing through once their task is complete, with no time to converse with each other on multiple occasions or during repeat visits. It is through repeated socialization in a familiar setting that gives rise to the public character materializes (Oldenburg 1989).

Events are the next characteristic of the third place. Entertainment and rituals solidify a place in the public consciousness through experiences and memory. Concerts, acts of public discourse, and spontaneous spectacles being filmed for social media are examples.

In 2021, the Mic Mac Mall in the Halifax Regional Municipality brought back a unique ritual to their shopping center after its absence for over a decade. Woody the Talking Christmas Tree, a large fake tree display with an animatronic face, was a Christmas tradition at the shopping center for decades before its discontinuation in 2006 due to maintenance costs. An awakening ritual begins the season, involving children loudly urging the tree to awaken. A performer inside the display speaks to eager children via microphone until Christmas. Such displays, especially in shopping centers, are such a rarity that the ceremony quickly went viral across social media. Adults who remember visiting Woody the Talking Christmas Tree as children now return with

children of their own. Waking Woody represents a type of intergenerational ritual that cements a place in our collective memory.

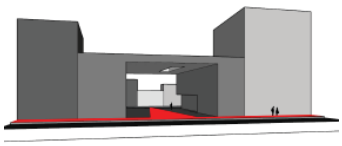
Shelter is the next characteristic of the third place: places to seek respite, rest and shelter from both the natural and man-made elements outlined earlier in this chapter. There must be places to sit, and amenities, including toilets, accessible to the public, without the obligation to purchase any goods or services connected to the space.

Oldenburg's last characteristic of a third place is that it cannot be designed; it is through the type of occupation and consistent social interaction over time that the third place becomes functional (Oldenburg 1989, 203).

William Whyte

In his book, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*, William Whyte examines the successful characteristics and design elements he has observed in both interior and exterior publicly accessible spaces in an urban context.

Sight Lines



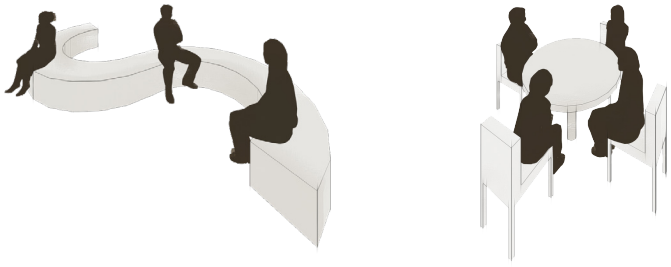
Public spaces should have a visual connection with the street and through to the other side of the space.

Public space should be seen from the street. Spaces designed with convoluted plans or drastic differences in elevation above or below the street, sunken courtyards, and elevated plazas with no visual connection with major pedestrian routes are less used and can leave users with a feeling of seclusion and uneasiness. This seclusion can also provide the opportunity for elicit or antisocial activity (Whyte 2001, 24, 58). Spaces should be easy to navigate with simple plans, easy to enter and exit, and should not turn their backs to the street with blank walls (Whyte 2001, 81,83).

Seating

In his 1980 film of the same name, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*, Whyte studies prominent urban plazas in New York City, noting how certain spaces are occupied by people watchers and lunch goers. One of Whyte's best known quotes is: "People tend to sit most where there are places to sit" (Whyte 1980). Whyte's observation is not absolute. He elaborates in his book on what types of seating are most successful.

A variety of seating types are required to help activate a space. Individual and group seating, both static and movable, allow groups to pull tables and chairs together. Individual seating should not be located in wide open areas to keep those who occupy it from feeling exposed. Low walls that are wide enough to occupy and free from obstructions, including railings and jagged surfaces, should be implemented. Types of walls which are occupied most often are wider and can border the space or be a part of water features or landscaping, and planters act as static seating (Whyte 2001, 34).



A variety of seating, both static and dynamic, works best, such as snaking wall encouraging both social interaction and social seclusion, depending on the direction an occupant faces - and variable arrangements like cafe tables and chairs which are not fixed in place.

Transitional Spaces

Semi-outdoor spaces providing limited protection and shelter can be used as effective transitions to and from a public space, in addition to being occupied themselves. These transitional spaces can be defined by overhangs and canopies (Whyte 2001, 46).

Food and Beverage

Consumption and enjoyment of food can be a social event among friends and family, or a solitary activity for those who want to see and be seen. Food venues draw people in with their scent and activity. This occupation by diners and socializers attracts yet more people to enter the space, bolstering its attraction. Whyte puts it succinctly: “Food attracts people who attract more people” (Whyte 2001, 52).

Retail

Retail can be beneficial for energizing a space with activity. Large shopping centers often have one or many sizable anchor tenants to bring in business, along with smaller name brand stores. Smaller urban spaces can benefit from numerous smaller units geared towards entrepreneurs or staple tenants like bodegas and gyms (Whyte 2001, 76-77).

Amenities

Public space should offer amenities to the public for sanitation, with no restriction or obligation to access them. Public toilets are one example (Whyte 2001, 77). In a post pandemic world, dedicated handwashing sinks in open common areas should be implemented to reduce the potential spread of illness.

Flourishes

Flipping through old books on shopping center design strategies, a different way of occupying the mall can be seen, with planters, fountains, sculptures along with people conversing and people watching. In the early days of enclosed shopping centers, these garden courts were perceived as a type of public space, and the public occupied them as such.

Whyte encourages the use of centerpieces like water features, sculpture, and public art, be it colorful or featuring a degree of interactivity in the form of moving parts, something to pass through, or double as a place to sit. Such flourishes can add a splash of contrast to clean lines and rigidity, or in the case of water fountains, create a soundscape that drowns out the noise of the city and establishes a tranquil microclimate people are drawn to out of curiosity or familiarity (Whyte 2001, 96).

Flourishes create experiences within the public realm. Over time, rituals of meeting and interaction develop, memories are created, the community assigns an informal mythos to the object or feature and the flourish becomes an integral part of that place's identity and the community as a whole.

The *Alamo* sculpture in New York City is a perfect example of a successful flourish. Produced by artist Tony Rosenthal in 1967, the eight-foot cube embellishes the Plaza at Astor Place at the intersection of Lafayette Street and 8th Street. The notable feature of the cube is that it can be rotated at the point at which it is supported (Takac 2021). At 1800 pounds, it requires a small group of people to spin, often bringing strangers together to achieve the effect. Representing the intersection of three Indigenous nations that once existed at

the location, the cube has developed its own informal mythos during its decades-long history. In 2013, a hoax video which gained notoriety featured a 37 year old man who claimed to live inside the sculpture. A 1:1 scale mock-up of the cube's interior adapted into a tiny home featured shelving, power generated by a bicycle pedal, and a chemical toilet. The Cube allegedly being spun resulted in moments of discord as objects rolled off shelves (Dave 2013). Objects and installations of curiosity, such as the centerpiece sculpture of a public space, develop a meaning beyond their original intention over time, cementing a place within the public consciousness.

The original fountain of the Plymouth Meeting Mall, designed by Victor Gruen in 1966, was a non-commercial element, but it, along with planters and greenery, activated the space in a way that drew in people to just sit and people watch, converse and meet. (Darlow 1972)

The Gospel of Jane Jacobs

Internal space is often vilified by urban planners for removing people from the street. Living in New York City, Jane Jacobs observed the humble interactions on her small street of local businesses, with occupied stoops and private residences watching from above.

Her analysis of our cities' internal spaces was based on the indoor pedestrian network: the private realm with restrictive public access that took people off the street and into a separate realm with no intermixing. In Jacobs' well known book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities,* the shopping center she refers to is not even one centered on any kind of social space, but merely a strip center with shops facing the parking lot (Jacobs 2011, 48). She was correct in criticizing the mono-programmatic mindset of the strip center, as indoor shopping malls like Gruen's Southdale Center, completed a few years after her book was originally published, suffered from the same flaw of single use. However, the extremes of private and public, for Jane Jacobs, were extremes of inside and outside, sheltered or exposed (Jacobs 1954, 35). The flaw of consumer obligation is as strong as ever.

There are some virtues to Jane Jacobs' theories, such as mixed use neighbourhoods that feature a programmatic mix that ensures the area's occupation throughout the day. Communities that combine shopping, business, work, entertainment and housing ensure what Jacobs refers to as "eyes on the street". No area is ever completely abandoned at any point of the day as people move from their homes to their place of work, engage with the public realm for shopping and entertainment, and then return home again. This continuous occupation discourages illicit behaviour, which would be quickly noticed and reported by concerned residents (Jacobs 1954, 42, 63).

New Development Trends

We are experiencing a building boom of apartments and condominiums at the core of our cities. Typical is a mid-rise

building with a two to three-story podium with retail facing outward. The lobbies are often cramped and restricted to the public. Landscaping, if any, is a novelty with no function in mind, aside from cutting a corner or dressing up the sidewalk. These buildings do not relate to each other in any meaningful physical way, nor do they share any type of continuity beyond that of the sidewalk.

The Unmaking of Space: Turning Buildings Inside-Out

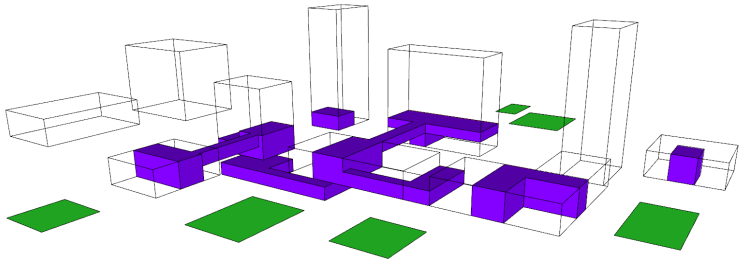
As indoor shopping centers disappear, a variety of reclamation and redevelopment schemes are coming into play to make use of the land, which I have touched on in Chapter 2. Downtown, we see once semi-private interiors being restricted from public access. In the case of Rochester, New York, the internal pedestrian network linking numerous office, retail, and public buildings has been divided into three sections with the demolition of Midtown Plaza. It is a plan to get people out onto the street, offering them exposure to the elements and little else.

The Shift from Office to Housing

A shift from working in person to working at home is taking place as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The gradual rezoning of commercial downtowns to mixed use is also taking place as more people move to urban centers. Purpose built office buildings are now being converted into rental apartments and condos in cities across North America. What were once business districts, which emptied in the evening after all the office workers made their way home are now becoming mixed use areas of business, office, retail and housing.

Ubiquitous Arrival

Building on the threshold conditions I have established, we can consider a building as any combination of edge conditions, planes, or interlocking volumes. we can also simplify it as one internal volume. To enter any exterior door is to arrive at the singular volume.

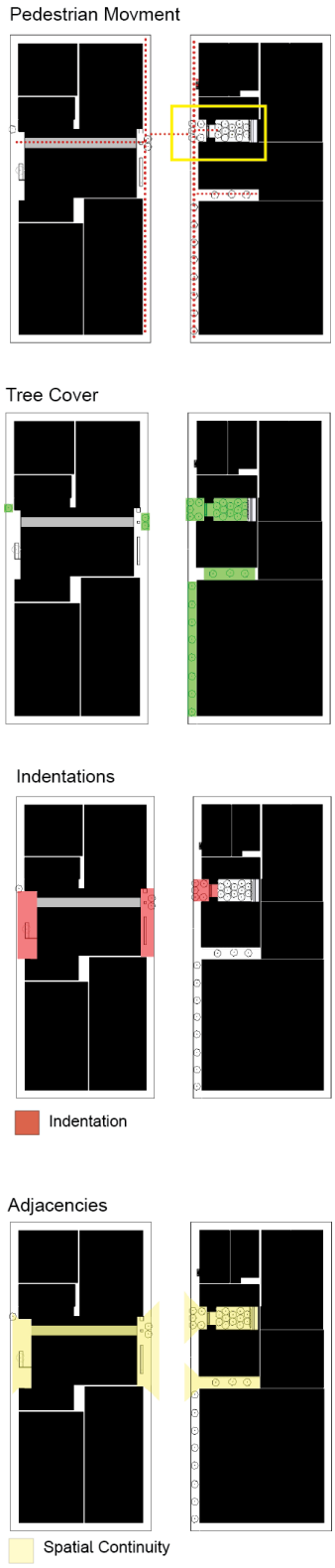


To enter one building on an internal pedestrian network is to enter all others that share its internal continuity.

Critical to the success of these networks - as noted by William Whyte - are ease of entry and sight lines with the street. Routes up or down into these pedestrian networks should be easy to understand and visualize before entering. Stairs and/or elevators should be prominently placed areas rather than around corners and down corridors (Whyte 2001, 80). Whyte critiques the disconnect of underground networks from above ground landmarks and navigational routes (Whyte 2001, 83), but this can be remedied by establishing landmarks within the networks themselves as waypoints, establishing a separate navigational logic. Modes of ascent and descent into the networks become the points at which the exterior and interior touch and require visual clarity, but the navigation on one side does not require visual continuity with the other,

In the case of two buildings connected through an internal environment, they can both can be considered a singular volume. To enter any exterior door, that jarring threshold

from the unregulated exterior to the controlled interior is to arrive to the singular volume of all connected buildings. Programmatic layering can occur through these connections. This continuity of space expands as more buildings and internal volumes are added to the network.



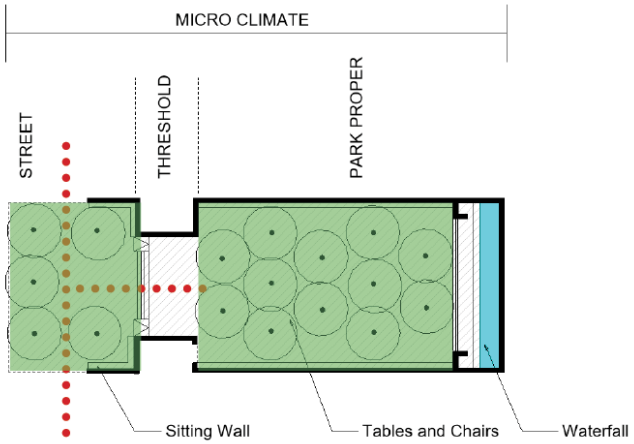
Nolli plan study of Paley Park, highlighting various spatial relationships and qualities..

Chapter 4: Case Studies

To explore the concepts presented in Chapter 3, four case studies varying in degrees of enclosure and size will be examined to identify successful principles that can be worked into the design.

Paley Park

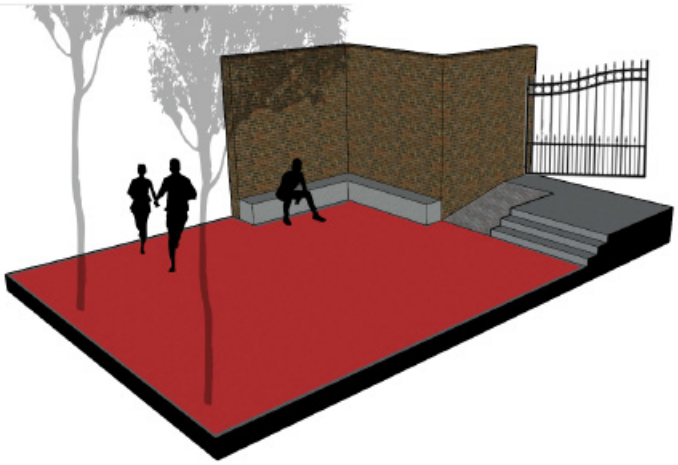
Paley Park in NYC, designed by Robert Zion in 1967, is a “pocket park concept” as an extension of the street. The park can be divided into three zones. Adjacent to the sidewalk, the indented entry area before the gates features ledges for seating that are commonly occupied regardless of whether the main gates are open or closed. The threshold features a four-step change in elevation from the street. The change in elevation is not so high that the park becomes a hidden passage or lacks a visual connection to the sidewalk. A person passing by can still see the back of the park. Within the two volumes are a cafe and the hydraulics for the waterfall.



Plan diagram of Paley Park. The shade of the trees extends over the sidewalk.

The park proper, described as an interstitial space by Saskia de Wit in their book *Hidden Landscapes,* is defined

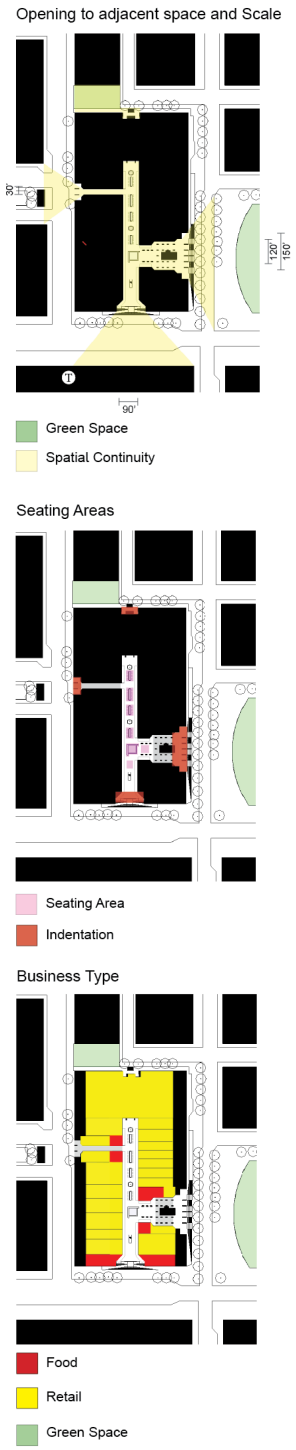
by adjacent buildings (Wit 2018, 296). Paley Park features non-fixed tables and chairs designed by Harry Bertoia, is bordered by ivy covered walls, and features a large waterfall at the back of the space, which is an embellishment, an acoustic dampener to the surrounding noise of the city, and a means of cooling the space. Honey locust trees, are regularly spaced through the park proper and directly outside the gate to shade the portion of sidewalk in front of the park. This placement of trees creates a microclimate, a type of enclosure that extends out onto the sidewalk, so that even someone simply passing by enters and then exits the park's microclimate as they pass under the shade of the honey locust trees.



The park's entry shaded by the honey locus trees and offering the public a place to sit, even when the gate is closed.

The park's seating and tables double as the seating for the café, which has no dedicated seating area of its own. Adjacent to the park is an internal, through-block public concourse featuring both a hotel and offices above, and flanked by two restaurants on the opposite end. South of Paley Park is another space shaded by trees and featuring a waterfall with a café at its end.

Brunswick Centre



Nolli plan studies of the Brunswick Centre highlighting various spatial relationships and programs.

Moving up in scale and across the ocean is the Brunswick Centre, completed in 1972 and designed by Patrick Hodgkinson.

The Brunswick Centre is a continuation of the street, an open air arcade. A smaller sheltered passage branches off to a small block with the entry to an underground gym. To the north, a larger space partially covered by the residential flats above and featuring the entry pavilion to the Renoir cinema opens wide to the Brunswick Centre gardens across the street, making the large block a permeable thoroughfare, as well as a destination in itself.

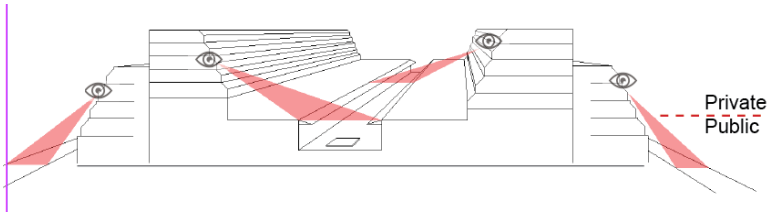
The center arcade leading up to the grocery store anchor is an exterior space but features canopies along the shops to shield from the sun and precipitation. The space also features an ensemble of water features designed by artist Susanna Heron. Note the ability to sit on the fountain, which also has small extensions at two corners that create two 90 degree angles and a moment of potential social interaction.

The central water feature of the Brunswick Centre, featuring moments that encourage casual social interactions.

While mostly retail, the center features food venues at its core and at many of the entryways (this is no coincidence, as food brings people in). The seating extends beyond the

restaurant to common areas that are visible from the street. As William Whyte described: food attracts people, who attract more people (Whyte 2001, 52). Seating of various types lines the central axis of the development, along with a series of complementary water features.

The complex features terraced housing which overlooks both the streets along its long axis and the central arcade. Again, Jane Jacobs' eyes on the street concept is at play here, as most of the complex is never truly empty and is watched by the community.

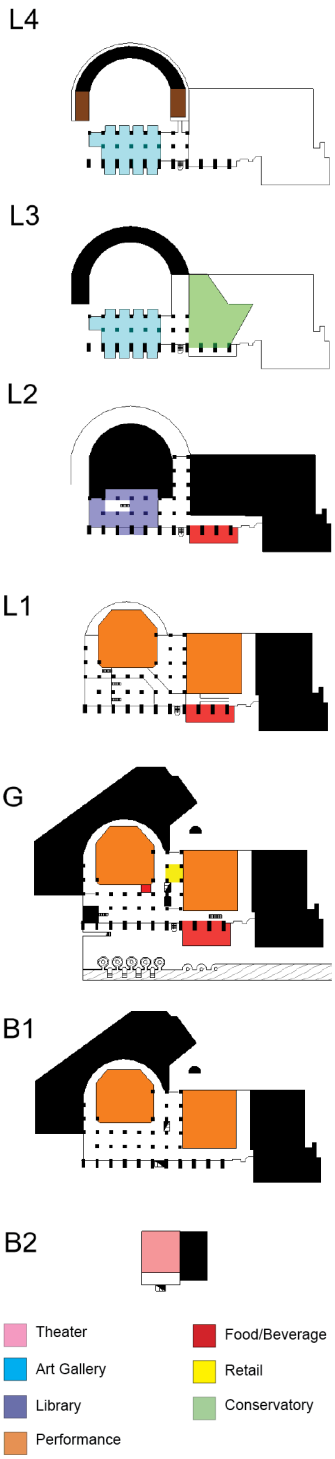


The terraced housing of the Brunswick Centre overlooks both the central arcade and the streets on either side.

The Barbican Centre

The Barbican Estate is an ambitious housing project by architects Skidmore Owings and Merrill, completed in 1982 after 11 years of construction.

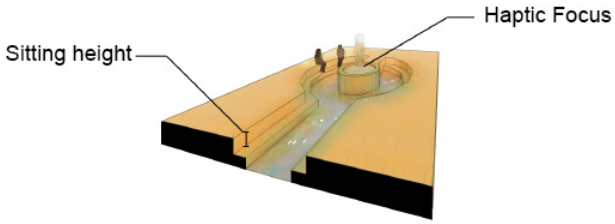
The Barbican features a cultural center, multiple housing types, courtyards and gardens, and pedestrian bridges that branch out to the surrounding cityscape, schools, and other educational facilities. The Barbican Center features a dense programmatic layering, ensuring almost constant occupation. Entered from multiple levels within the estate and from the street, the center contains performing arts theaters, a library, an art museum, multiple food venues, a cinema and a small gift shop. The Cultural Center is also topped with a tropical arboretum created by wrapping a glass enclosure around the theater's fly tower.



The dense programmatic mix of the Barbican center which supports the vitality of the complex's common areas.

Critical to the research is what happens within the center's common areas between venues and to the immediate exterior of the Barbican Center, such as couches, tables, and benches occupied without any obligation to patronize the various cultural venues within the Center. This casual occupation is bolstered by the programmatic layering. This central space can also be booked for private functions and set up with cocktail tables and food stations.

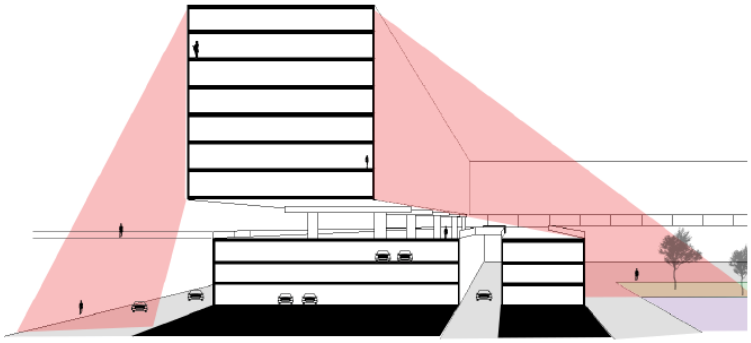
To the immediate exterior of the Barbican Center, serviced by four sets of doors, is an exterior plaza with multiple water features, stepped acts of subtraction from the plaza floor, which all feed into the pond at the core of the Estate. In these stepped fountains, one can sit, socialize, or just watch the water. This exterior plaza's occupation is also supported by the complex's main restaurant venue, which juts out from the side of the complex into the exterior plaza.



The water features in the Barbican's central plaza double as conversation pits.

The Barbican Estate, being mixed use with housing overlooking its internal common areas and the surrounding streets, ensures much of the complex's inner common spaces are never out of view of residents, but entering the estate can be problematic and would not meet William Whyte's ease of entry and sight line criteria. Often, its edges are defined by sheer blank walls that separate the estate's plazas and walkways from the streets surrounding it. Many

entry points require one to enter a building opposite the Barbican and cross back over the street into the complex.



The Barbican does not relate well to the street. Bare walls meet pedestrians with no visual continuity with the inner spaces of the estate.

Midtown Plaza

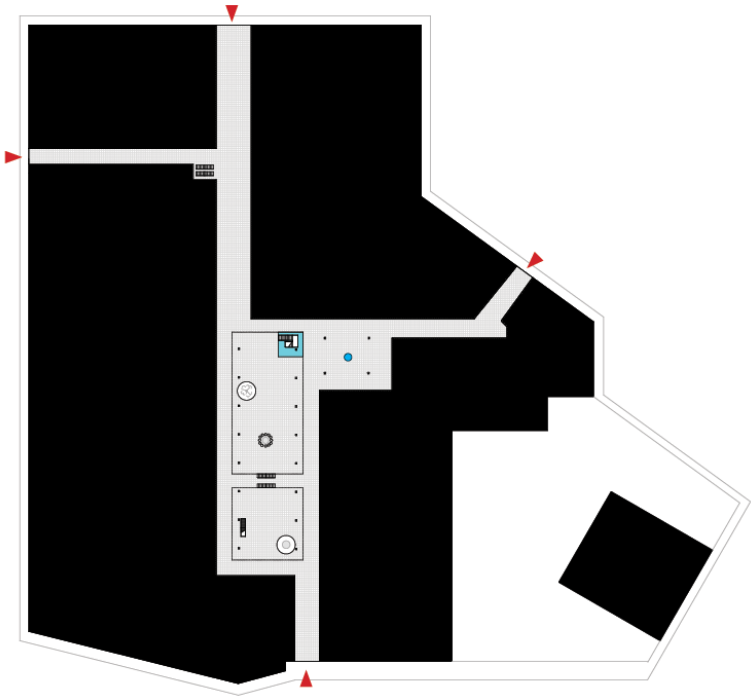
As mentioned in Chapter 2, Midtown Plaza in Rochester, New York, designed by Victor Gruen, was the first example of a modern shopping center implemented in an urban location. Parking was put underground and out of sight, and the entrances to Midtown were directly off the city sidewalk.

Although it was primarily a shopping center, care was taken in the design. Clerestories captured the morning sun. The escalators of the main atrium were not off to the side, but within the columns of the main atrium, albeit off-center, to allow the space to be used for various events. A cafe was situated just off to the side of the atrium with a smaller fountain in its center and featured Harry Bertoia designed chairs like Paley Park, completed five years later.

Midtown was also embellished with sculptures and fountains, with more being added over the years. The Clock of Nations served as the complex's centerpiece, an animated installation with moving animatronic characters representing

different countries. These flourishes and embellishments are a result of Gruen's push for his spaces to host local art, which was intended to culturally enrich the public.

The complex was not without its flaws. The main atrium, the focal point of the complex, did not feature visual continuity with the street, as it could only be accessed by passing through arcades. The complex was also retail and commercial focused, with no housing, so that critical mixed use element was not present, to allow continuous occupancy.



None of the arcades used to access Midtown's atrium are aligned with each other, rendering it almost a hidden feature.

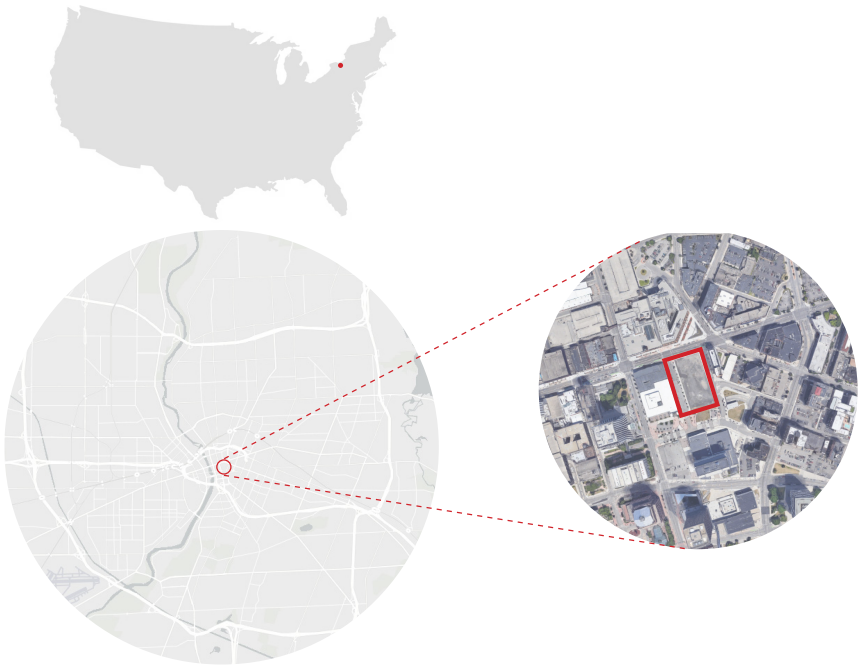
Chapter 5: Design

Site

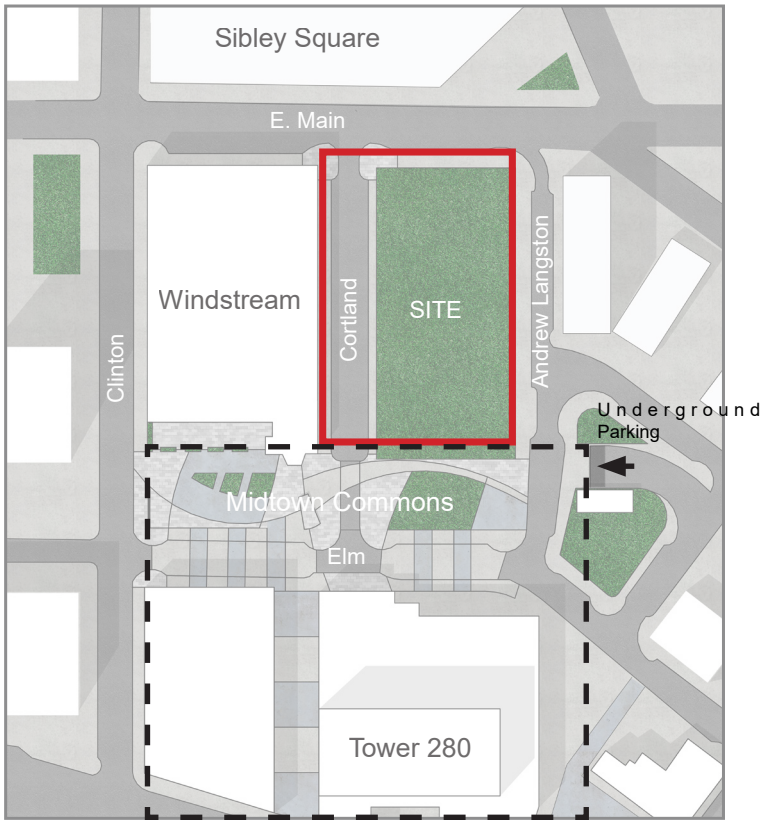
The site is Parcel 5 in the middle of downtown Rochester. Once the Midtown superblock, the complex was mostly demolished in 2008. The office tower was retained and converted into mixed use, and the three level underground parking garage with it. The site is adjacent to office towers which have been converted into housing with limited retail at the ground level. Across the street is Sibley Square. Once the Sibley's flagship department store, it has been converted into housing with a five story atrium at its center now featuring a food hall filled with entrepreneurial start-ups.

The Sibley Square food hall named the Mercantile on Main taken 2022.

Other notable buildings downtown include the Public and Central Library 3 blocks away from Parcel 5, which was at one time accessed internally from Midtown. Adjacent from Sibley Square is the central bus terminal for Rochester's public transit service. Also located a few blocks to the southeast is the Strong Museum of Play, a toy museum featuring a mix of vintage toy exhibits and interactive displays. Adjacent to the museum is a playground open to the public, which emphasizes Strong museum's philosophy of urban play.



The site is located in Rochester, New York, at the heart of Monroe County.



The site, referred to by the city as Parcel 5, will also include Cortland Street. It is adjacent to the Windstream office building and Tower 280, which is mixed use. Both share the Midtown parking garage outlined with a dash. Across the street is Sibley Square, also mixed use with an internal atrium. The south end of the design will open onto the existing Midtown Commons and Elm Street.

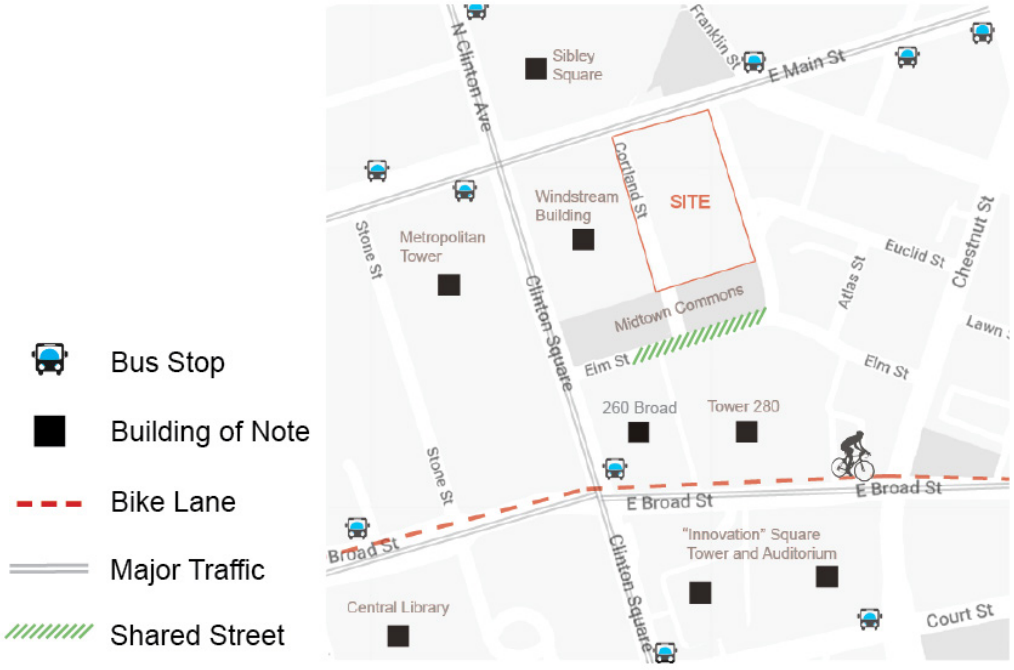
Overview of the History of the Site

Midtown Plaza was unique in that the architect became the manager upon its completion. Gilbert McCurdy, owner of McCurdy's Department Store Co., hired supervising architect Angelo Chairella, who worked with Gruen to manage Midtown upon its completion and opening (Lange 2022, 81). Old photographs exist of school proms, tennis tournaments, and other events not normally associated with shopping malls. These scenes are very similar to Cesar Pelli's Commons in Columbus. These events taking place within Midtown's atrium have left a legacy, with it being remembered as Rochester's city square despite the private nature of the complex.

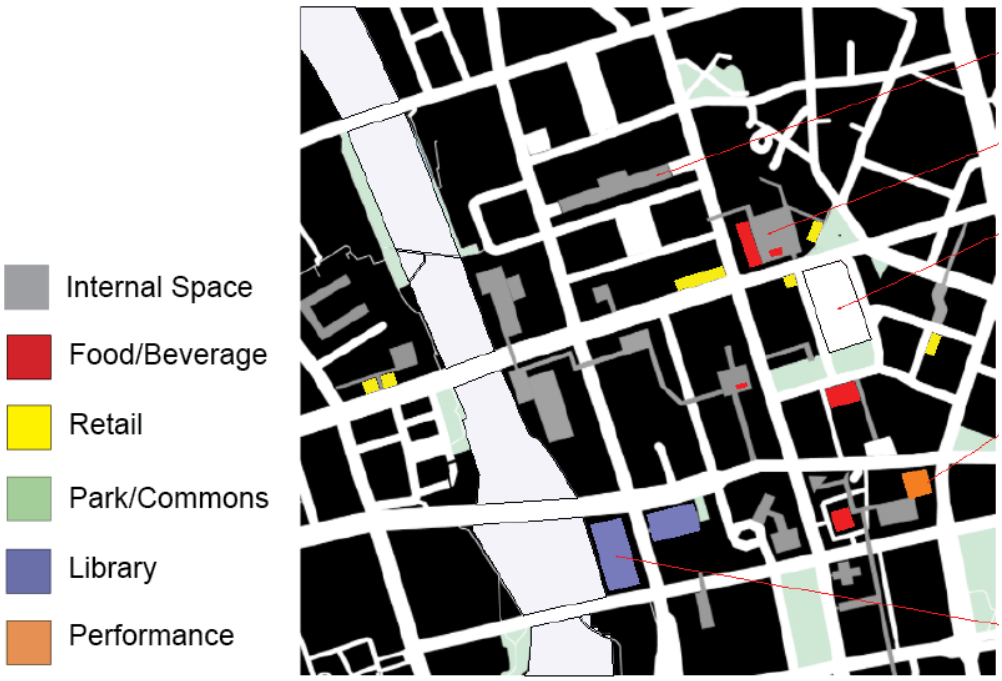
Parcel 5, as it is now known, has recently begun to create its own identity through concerts and outdoor markets. The project will take into consideration these new uses of the site and accommodate their continued existence.

Place Making First

The priority for the space will be for the public to occupy it without any programmatically imposed obligation. It will be a place to sit, meet, people watch, or do nothing if one wishes, supported by private business, and through ubiquitous arrival programmatic layering with Sibley Square's food hall, along with a connection to the existing Midtown Garage and the buildings in which it services. The design should also include bookable community rooms and a cultural venue to accommodate concerts, along with public amenities.

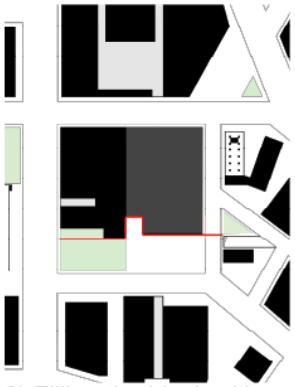


A transportation analysis of downtown Rochester to making note of major traffic routes, bike lanes and transit stops.

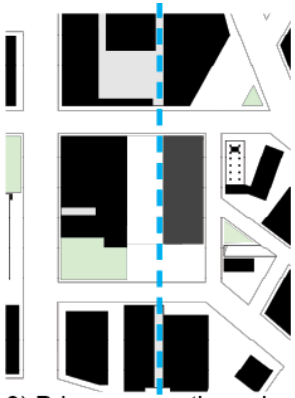


A programmatic analysis of downtown Rochester to make note of what exists and what is missing.

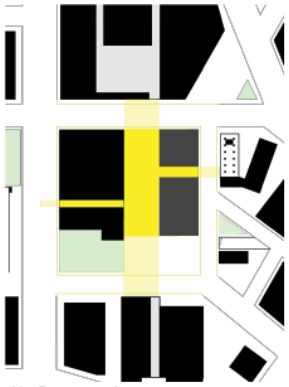
1) Existing Site and adjacencies of internal and external spaces.



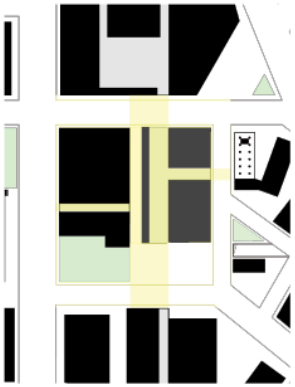
2) Filling the block with consideration of existing parking infrastructure.



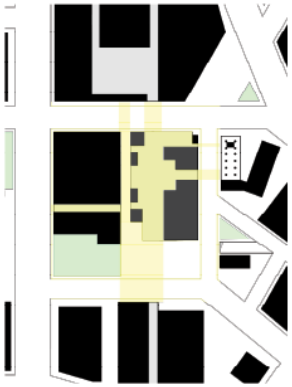
3) Primary pass-through aligned with existing passages



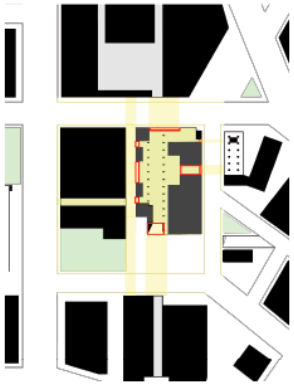
4) Secondary pass-throughs



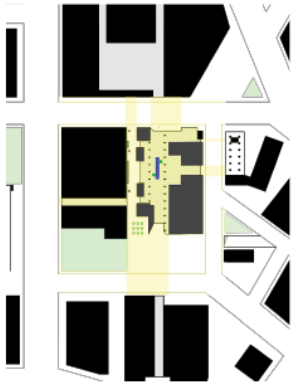
5) Split between internal and external to respond to Rochester City Center Master Plan



6) Subtraction and addition to accommodate varied programs.



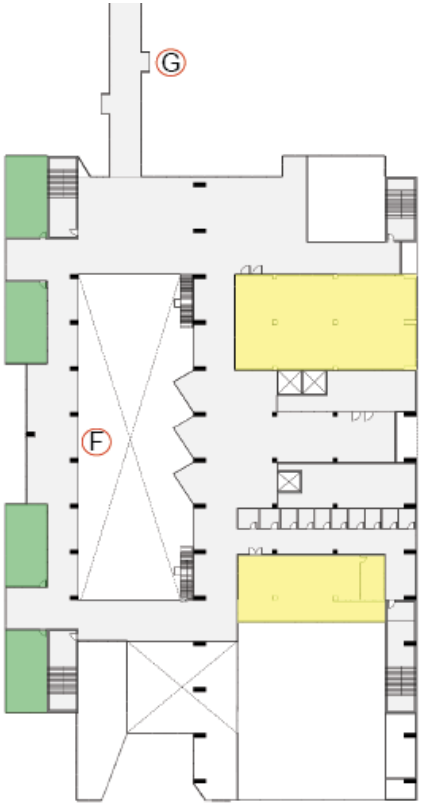
7) Creation of indentations and seating areas. Structural grid.



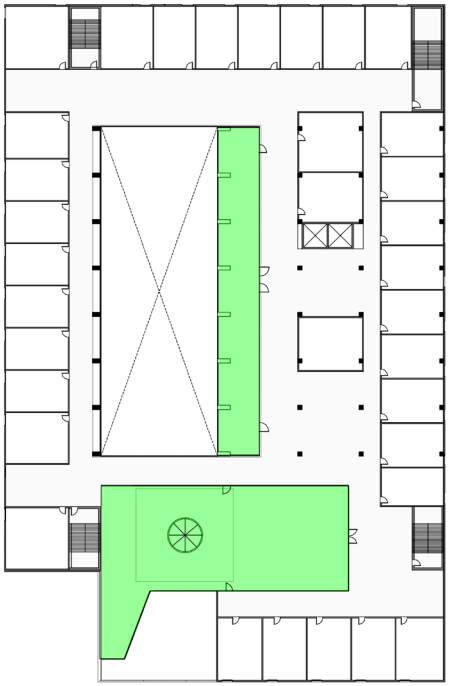
8) Addition of flourishes and plantings.

Subtraction is used to hollow out the site and create the internal street corresponding with existing conditions, program, thoroughfares and guidelines set by the Rochester City Center Plan.

First Floor



Second Floor



Third Floor

Food/Beverage
Retail
Garden
Event Space
Community Room
Theater

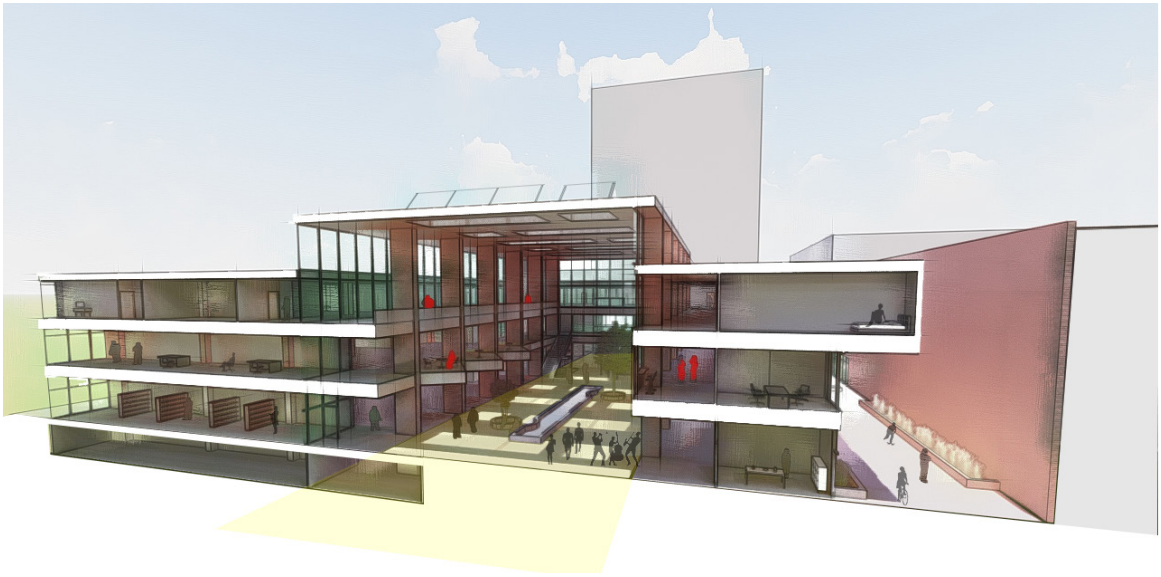
A) Entry to exterior passage
B) Indented entry
C) Fountain
D) Pivoting air doors
E) Grid of planters
F) Screen detail
G) Pedway

Floor plans showing program and notable features.

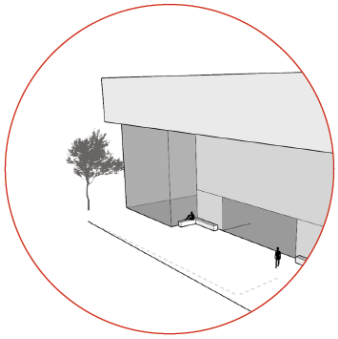
Space

Internal Street

The three story internal street is the core of the design, from which everything is accessed. Both the first and second floors are public. The internal street doubles as an extension of the external street and a destination in itself.



Cut section of the internal street, facing south



Indentations and low walls

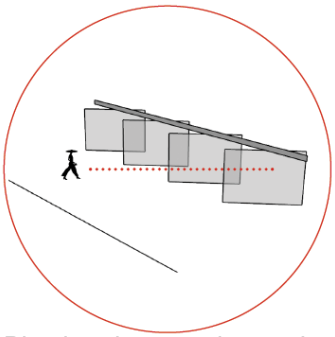
All entries into the internal street are indentations extending the sidewalk inward and shaded with a cantilevered third floor creating transitional spaces, a partially sheltered transition between inside and out (Whyte 2001, 46). Major entries to the north and south include low walls to sit on.

Screen that doubles as a table

The central internal street features various forms of seating, both static and movable. A wood screen along the west side of the mezzanine adds texture and doubles as a surface to sit and work on. A central three-tiered fountain is both an embellishment and a place to sit. To the south, the internal street extends farther towards Elm Street to allow extra space for events, not unlike those that took place in the shopping center preceding it, adding the option for summer

restricted markets to have a place to set up in the cold winter months.

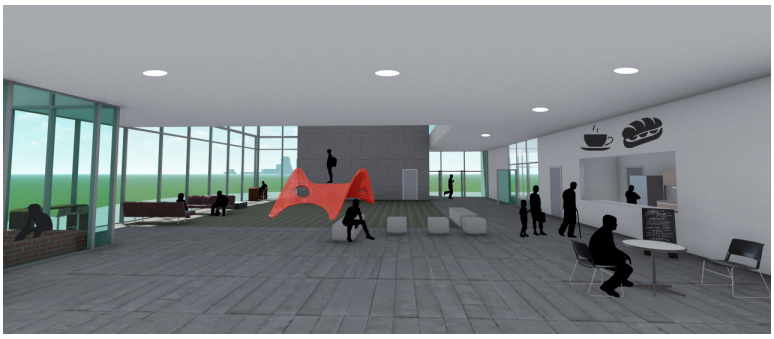
Hand washing stations are located at major entry points, and public washrooms will be featured on both public levels. Two sets of stairs located near the water fountain will allow the public to move up to the mezzanine or down to the parking level with an internal connection to the adjacent Windstream building.



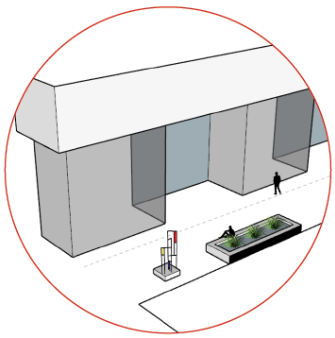
Pivoting doors at the north, south and west entries.

Pivoting glass doors can remain open in warmer months or remain closed in colder months with small hinge doors at their sides to serve as main entry points. A hierarchy of scale with a 1:3 ratio establishes the atrium as the dominant space with swing doors, opening onto the exterior passage, East Main, and the Midtown Commons.

On the corner of East Main and Andrew Langston Way, an internal play area is located with strong visual continuity to the street. The playground energizes the corner, along with the cafe and seating.



Pivoting doors at the north, south and west entries



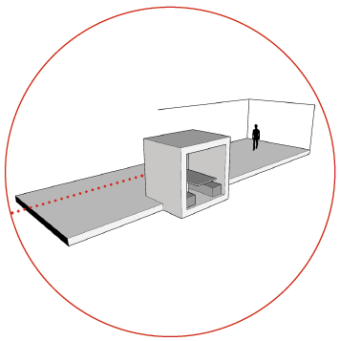
Entry to exterior passage

Exterior Passage

As outlined in Rochester's City Center Master Plan, superblocks are to be avoided (Rochester Bureau of Planning and Zoning 2014, 35). An exterior passage with entries to the small retail spaces will run parallel to the main

atrium, partially sheltered by an overhang and featuring sculptural embellishments, landscaping, and low walls to sit on. The passage will ensure the block is always traversable if the internal street is ever closed. A new entryway into the adjacent Windstream building will be opened into the external passage where no entry doors currently exist on the east side of the office building. A grid of planters obscures the entry to the exterior passage and visually prioritizes the south entry to the internal street.

Exterior passage facing north



Pedway diagram showing the extruded seating area

Pedway and seating areas.

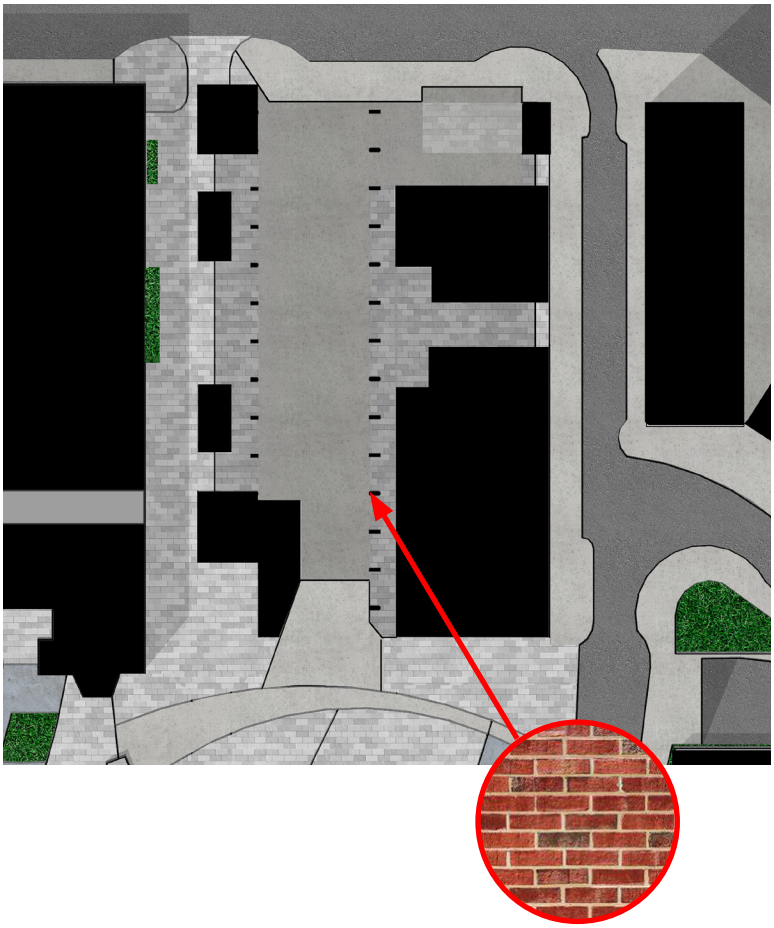
Pedway

The inclusion of the pedway crossing over to the Sibley atrium and food hall is not an act of addition, but rather a restoration of the pedway connection that had once existed at this location between the competing Sibley Co. and McCurdy's department stores. The pedway's purpose is to layer the internal and external continuities of the street and the internal volume of the design. This is not to take people off the street, but to provide them with options. Small volumes extending from the pedway featuring places to sit will turn it into a place to occupy in addition to a place of passage.

Material

Existing ground materials, pavers, and concrete are carried through to the interior street as a material continuity in order

to signify the extension of the public street into the interior. The existing brick facades of the adjacent Sibley Square and Windstream building are echoed by the brick clad columns and the low walls of the water fountain in order to respond to the context. Exterior overhangs and soffits consist of white materials to prevent the indented transitional areas and partially sheltered external areas from being perceived as dark or gloomy.



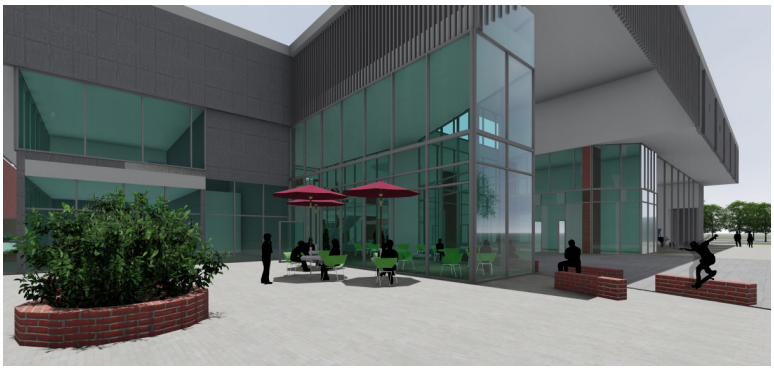
The material palette of the design's surrounding context is carried throughout the central internal street.

Program

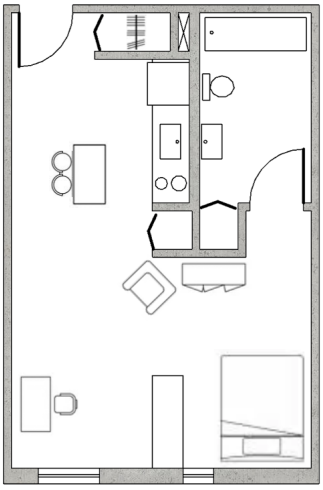
Food

Food is a critical component, as outlined by Lang and Whyte, and featured in all the previously explored case studies (Lange 2022)(Whyte 1980). A food venue is located at the

corner of the site, with a strong visual connection to the street. It does not feature a dedicated seating area, rather, the common areas of the internal street take on the role of the seating area. Another cafe space is located at the south entry, with the option to establish outdoor seating facing the Midtown Commons.



The food venue located at the south entryway with exterior seating.



Plan for one of the units

Housing

Housing is provided to ensure continuous activity at the site, with eyes and ears on the street. The residential units overlook all four sides of the building. Glassed in interior corridors of the residential floor overlook the atrium. A mezzanine accessed from the residential corridor opens up directly into the atrium. All units are studio apartments to increase their affordability.

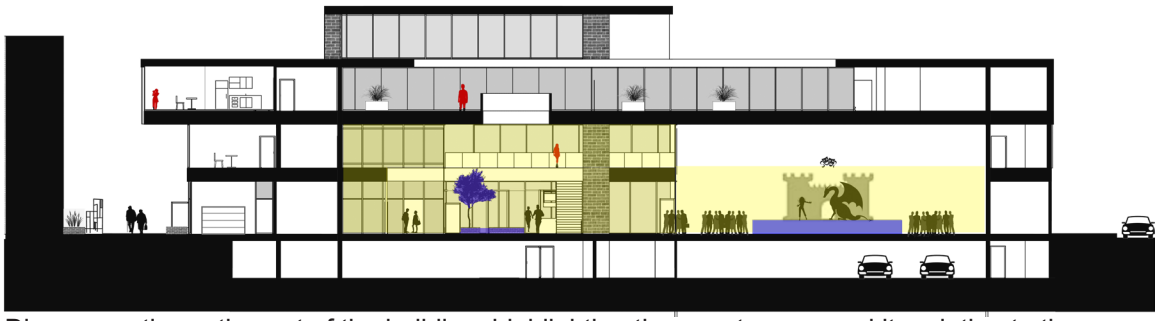
Retail

Sharing the virtues of early shopping center design, but none of the restrictions and obligations, some retail will still be included. Located on the main floor to be seen by passersby, there are four small retail spaces with doors to both the interior atrium and exterior passage, along with a larger space opening to both the atrium and Andrew Langston Way. The goal is to enrich both the internal space,

and the external street, with neither turning its back on the other.

Event Space

To preserve and expand Parcel 5's function as an event venue, a performing arts theater will be located on the south side of the building, with the option of opening onto the Midtown Commons in warmer months and into the internal street all year round. The ability to close off Elm Street and the space allotted by the adjacent Tower 280's podium setback will allow for large crowds. The space is double height to accommodate a variety of functions and events.



Diagrammatic section cut of the building, highlighting the event space and its relation to the internal street. The focal points of the stage and the fountain are highlighted in blue.

Lounge

Internet access is something we often take for granted, as many of us walk around with smart phones in our pockets. A computer lounge on the second floor overlooking both the street and the internal playground offers computer access to members of the public who are not fortunate enough to own a smartphone or have internet access from home. This type of computer access can be managed in partnership with the nearby Public Library, incorporating their services into the design.

The second floor computer lounge

Water fountain and planter

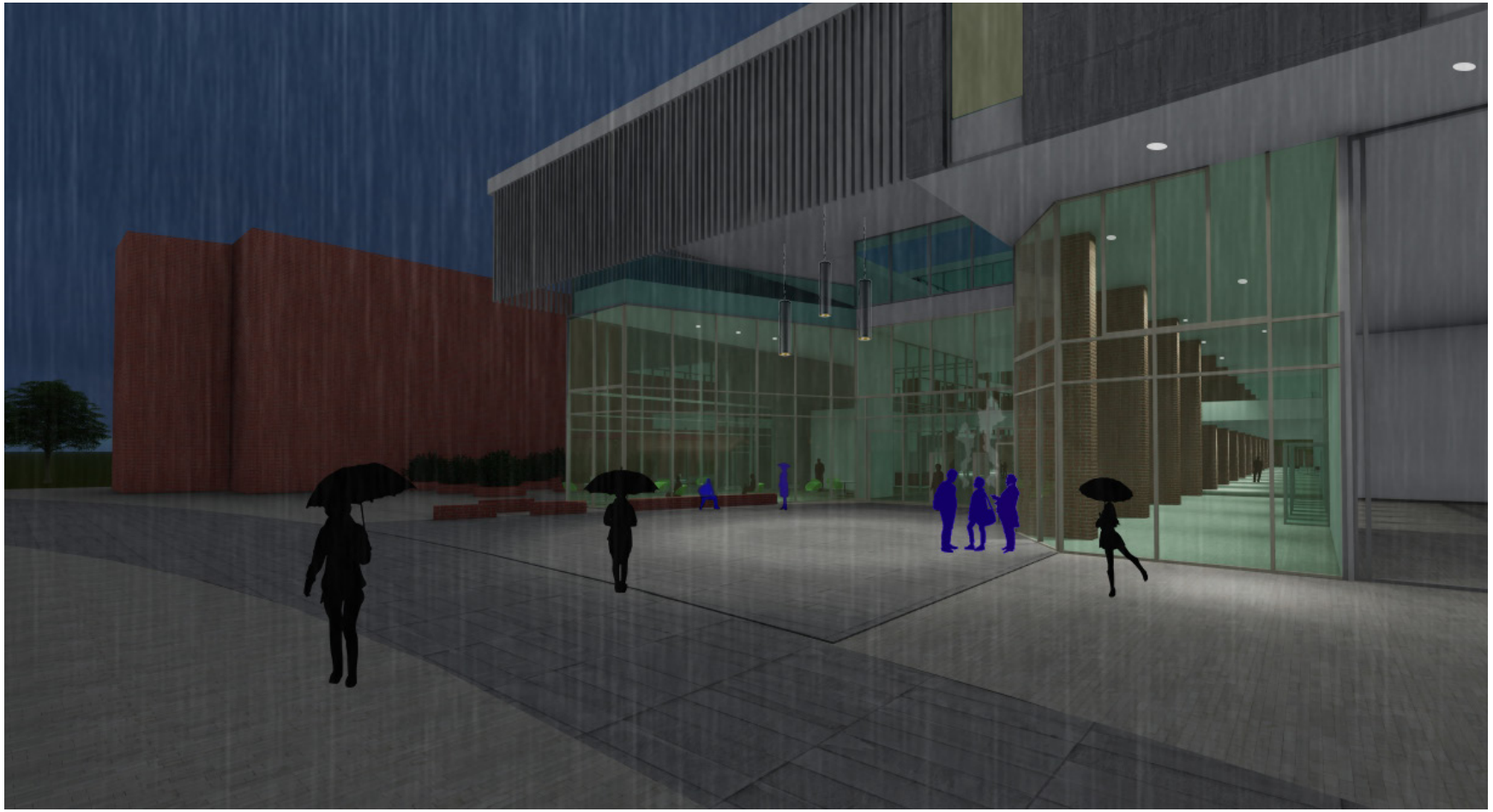
Flourish

The centerpiece of the internal street is the water fountain, featuring low walls at sitting height and planters with trees that correspond with the indentations of the fountain to create potential moments of socialization. The fountain has three levels, with the two waterfalls evoking the nearby Genesee River's upper and lower falls.

This section diagram highlights the internal street through the length of the design, showcasing the dynamics of space and program: food venues, the playground, fountain and trees, seating areas and the residential overhangs of the main entryways at either end.

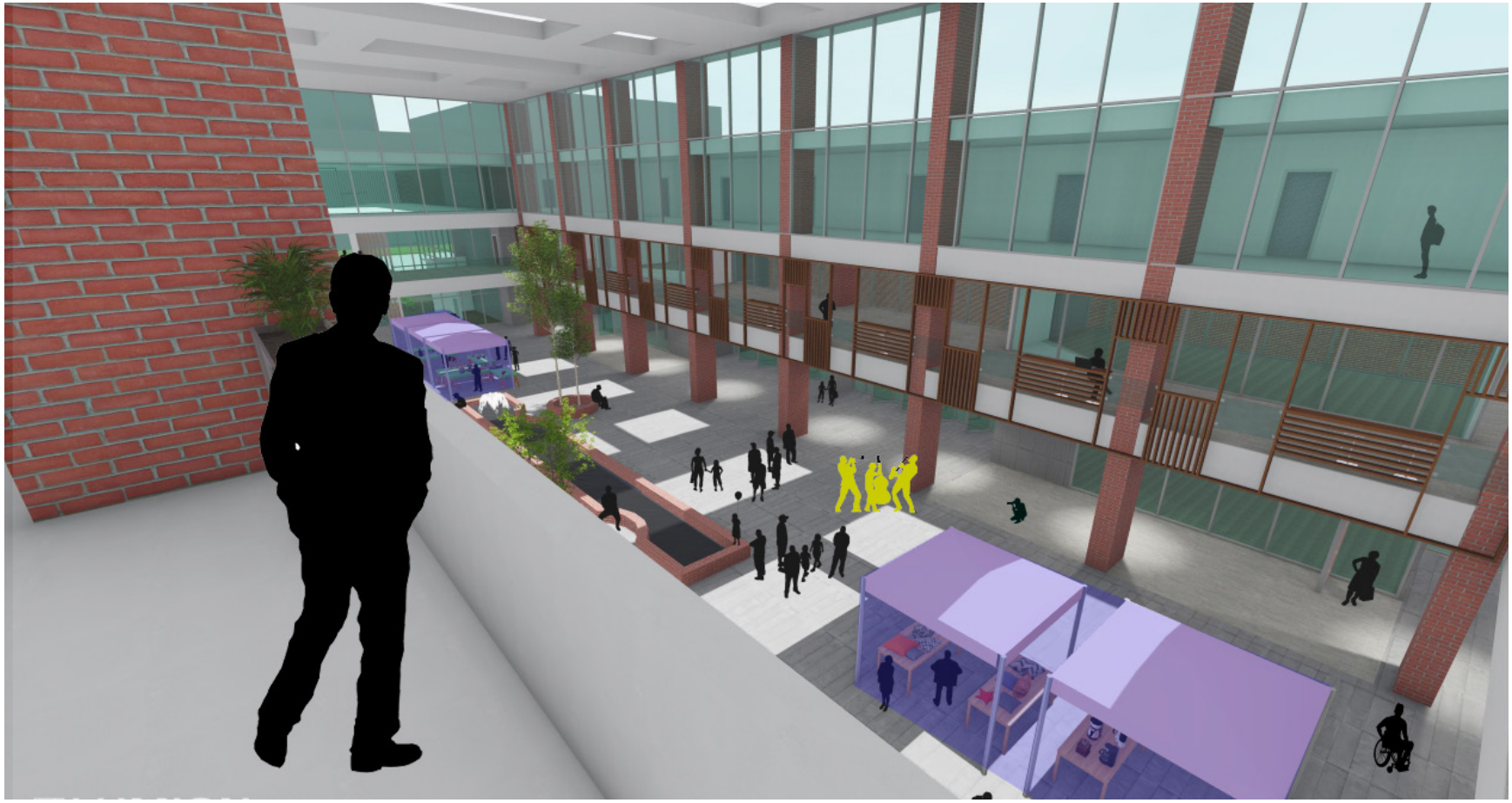
The south entryway, with the main flow of pedestrian traffic highlighted in yellow. The fountain walls, the angled, jutting extensions of the mezzanine, and the screened-in seating areas offer a variety of potential occupations, from semi-private to exposed.

The south entryway, with the main flow of pedestrian traffic highlighted in yellow. The indented transitional space features low sitting walls that are angled with the facade as a visual cue to direct pedestrians inward.



The south entryway on a rainy night. Under the cantilever roof, people find a moment of rest sitting on the low walls, and a group of smokers comes together to indulge their habit.

The internal street, with the main flow of pedestrian traffic highlighted in yellow, the market and fountain as focal points in blue, and observers in red. Markets currently take place on Parcel 5 when the weather is permits, so the internal street is designed with space to accommodate that function.



The private third-level mezzanine, with a direct connection to the internal street. The residential corridors have a visual connection but are separated by glass as a noise buffer from the internal street.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Process

A framework has been established with steps that can be taken to replicate this type of mixed-use internal public space in any urban center.

Place-making theory was researched to understand what is needed to create a successful place from the perspective of architects and urban planners, and what pitfalls can lead to non-places or “junk space” as Rem Koolhaas described it (Koolhaas 2006). By examining the various case studies, successful patterns emerged that can be implemented in ways that correspond to different sites.

An inventory of space and programs is needed to understand what the site and its surrounding context have to offer. Questions should be asked, such as what exists, what is missing, and the adjacencies of the site, such as traffic routes, transit routes, and any existing exterior public space or interior networks. The site analysis should be used to program the design with what is missing or what needs to be bolstered. Housing is a critical component of the internal common, with the internal street functions as a connection to all programs.

Designing an internal street is an act of subtraction, carving out space for the internal common areas that engage the street visually and feature indented transitional moments between the exterior and interior.

Flourishes such as fountains, greenery, sculptures, and interactive displays need to be included. Permanent centerpieces draw attention to the space and foster the

development of rituals and patterns, which establish a place within the public consciousness.

Using our Voice

Architects are place-makers. With a synthesis of theory, an analysis of existing successes, and an understanding of the site and community, we can best serve the people by designing places that are functional, engaging, and civic.

As Victor Gruen stated in his writings, it is up to the architect to advocate for public usage and a recognition of the casual and unexpected socialization that comes with operating a space with public access.

Public place-making should come first, supported by a dense programmatic layering that ensures occupancy at all times of the day by locals and visitors. Tenets of good indoor civic design include visual and material continuity, places to occupy without any financial obligation or restriction, and flourishes for people to engage with and create a memorable experience which cements that place into the public consciousness.

References

Darlow, Clive. 1972. *Enclosed Shopping Centres*. London: Architectural Press.

Dave. 2013. “Man in a Cube”. Video. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzxQUrPRb9Q.

Erben, Dietrich. 2016. “Conspicuous Architecture: The Shopping Arcade, The Department Store, and Consumer Culture.” *World of Malls: Architectures of Consumption*, edited by Andres Lepik and Vera Simone Bader, 26-33. Berlin: Hatje Cantz.

Fontenot, Anthony. 2021. *Non-Design: Architecture, Liberalism and the Market.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Frampton, Kenneth, Yukio Futagawa, and Cesar Pelli/Gruen Associates. 1981. *Global Architecture: The Commons and Courthouse Center, Indiana, 1971-74: Pacific Design Center, Los Angeles, California, 1972-76: Rainbow Mall and Winter Garden, Niagara Falls, New York, 1975-77*. Tokyo: A.D.A. Edita.

General Social Survey. 1972-2021. GSS survey on Religious Preference 1972-2021. University of Chicago. https://gssdataexplorer.norc.org/variables/287/vshow.

Gruen, Victor, and Larry Smith. 1960. *Shopping Towns USA: The Planning of Shopping Centers*. New York: Reinhold.

Harris, George H. 1885. First floor diagram of the Reynolds Arcade. *Illustrated Guide to Reynolds Arcade*. Rochester Public Library. https://www.libraryweb.org/rochimag/architecture/LostRochester/Reynolds/Reynolds.htm.

Jacobs, Jane. 2011. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Modern Library.

Ji, Huimin, and Wowo Ding. 2021. “Mapping Urban Public Spaces Based On The Nolli Map Method”. *Frontiers of Architectural Research* 10, no. 3: 540-554.

Koolhaas, Rem. 2006. *Junk Space*. Macerata, Italy: Quodlibet Publishing.

Lange, Alexandria. 2022. *Meet Me by the Fountain: An Inside History of the Mall*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing USA.

Lepik, Andres, and Vera Simone Bader. 2016. *World of Malls: Architectures of Consumption*. Edited by Andres Lepik and Vera Simone Bader. Berlin: Hatje Cantz.

Mattson, Kevin. 2002. *Sprawl and Public Space: Redressing the Mall National Endowment for the Arts*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.

Monroe County (NY) Library System. 2021. “The Reynolds Arcade.” Rochester, NY. https://www.libraryweb.org/rochimag/architecture/LostRochester/Reynolds/Reynolds.htm.

Moore, Charles Willard, and Kevin P. Keim. 2001. *You Have to Pay for the Public Life*: *Selected Essays of Charles W. Moore*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

NIMH (National Institute of Mental Health). 2022. Seasonal Affective Disorder. https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/seasonal-affective-disorder.

Oldenburg, Ray. 1989. *The Great Good Place: Cafés, Coffee Shops, Community Centers, Beauty Parlors, General Stores, Bars, Hangouts, and How They Get You through the Day*. New York: Paragon House.

Oxford Dictionary. 2022. https://oed.com.

Parcell, Steve. 2016. “Tricks of the Trade”. Willow Tree Group, Halifax. https://willowtree-halifax.wordpress.com/tricks-of-the-trade/.

RPL Local History Division. 1877. Image of the Reynolds Arcade in 1877. Rochester Public Library. https://www.libraryweb.org/rochimag/architecture/LostRochester/Reynolds/Reynolds.htm.

Rochester Bureau of Planning and Zoning. 2014. *The Living City: A Center City Master Plan for Rochester, New York.* https://www.cityofrochester.gov/CenterCity/.

Schubert, Dirk, and Uwe Altrock. 2014. *Contemporary Perspectives on Jane Jacobs: Reassessing the Impacts of an Urban Visionary*. Surrey, England: Ashgate.

Takac, Balasz. 2021. “The History of Alamo, aka Astor Place Cube in NYC.” *Widewalls*. https://www.widewalls.ch/magazine/astor-place-cube-ny.

Tulumello, S. 2015. “From “Spaces of Fear” to “Fearscapes””: Mapping for Reframing Theories About the Spatialization of Fear in Urban Space. *Space and Culture* 18, no. 3: 257–272. https://doi.org/10.1177/1206331215579716.

Whyte, William H., Jr. 1980. *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*. Washington, D.C.: Conservation Foundation.

Whyte, William Hollingsworth. 2001. *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*. New York: Project for Public Spaces.

Wit, Saskia de. 2018. *Hidden Landscapes: the Metropolitan Garden as a Multi-Sensory Expression of Place*. Amsterdam: Architectura & Natura.