



CIVIC SPACE: SOHO

Design Brief

December 2017



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Intent of the Design Brief

This design brief is intended to provide a framework for the detail design of *Civic Space: SoHo* in the SoHo neighbourhood of London. *Civic Space: SoHo* is a public space that is central to the redevelopment of the former Old Victoria Hospital lands. This document advises a general design directive for the public space that is informed by municipal planning strategies, community input, and historical context, culminating in a design concept.

The design concept is intended to connect the SoHo community's historical legacy, vibrant present, and healthy future. Presented in this document is a design rationale that is intended to convey the principles and elements that are possible in this space. The use of precedents communicate buildable solutions related to elements, materials, programing, safety, and maintenance.

Timeline

	○	2015-2017	The hospital buildings are demolished leaving the WMCH, the Health Services Building, and the Colborne Building left standing for adaptive reuse
2014	○		
Secondary Plan completed			
	○	2011	Community Improvement Plan completed
1974	○		
A new location for the hospital is planned and significant building ceases			
	○	1970s	Much of the landscape and gardens at one time considered integral are reduced or paved for parking
1969-1971	○		
Both Jack Chambers and Greg Curnoe depict Victoria Hospital in paint			
	○	1959	An extension to the back of the WMCH is built
1954-1955	○		
New "Y-Wing " added to the North Wing			
	○	1951	The first use of the Cobalt-60 Beam Therapy, WMCH
1949	○		
North America's first kidney dialysis machine developed			
	○	1939-1941	The North Wing built, monolithic in structure while more sophisticated in technology and scientific investigation
1922	○		
War Memorial Children's Hospital built			
	○	1917 and later	The north side of South Street began to be developed for hospital expansion, multiple buildings built at similar scales and relationship to the street
1899	○		
Victoria Hospital opened			
	○	1875-1915	Hospital construction continues in "pavilion-style", South St. to Thames River
1875	○		
London General Hospital opened			
	○	1866	Lands for a new hospital purchased by the City of London
Mid to late 1800s	○		
What is now the SoHo neighbourhood is populated by labourers, skilled workers, with some livestock; many residents are escaped slaves			

1.2 Site History

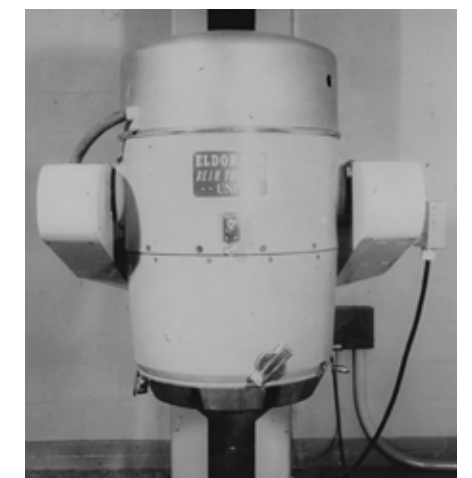
Civic Space: SoHo is sited at the corner of South Street and Colborne Street in front of the former War Memorial Children's Hospital (WMCH), built in 1922 with funds raised through local community groups to serve as an active memorial to those who died in WW1. The former hospital building serves as a backdrop, edge, and vista to the space and defines it through its historical character and along with the Colborne Building to the south are two of the remaining three buildings left related to the former Old Victoria Hospital complex. Both the WMCH and the Colborne Building serve as physical memories of the cultural legacy of London's medical and health facility history.

Significant to the WMCH's history is the co-development and first use of the Cobalt Bomb (also known as the Cobalt-60 Beam Therapy unit) in 1951 that ushered in a post-war use for radiation as a treatment for cancer. The Cobalt Bomb provided a controlled and calibrated way to beam radiation at deep-seated tumours. Its simple and reliable design revolutionized the treatment of cancer, treating 7 million people. The Cobalt Bomb is still used today in some cases around the world.

See: "Cultural Heritage Assessment: Buildings in the South Street Hospital Complex," Nancy Z. Tausky, 2011



WMCH, circa 1922.



"Cobalt Bomb"

Secondary Plan Objectives (Relevance to *Civic Space: SoHo* in Bold)

Objective	Action
Distinct Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate new development with existing Enhance recreation opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Places” and activities “South Street Promenade” Communicate legacy (medical facility)
Planning Principles/Urban Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-faceted approached (streetscapes, existing buildings, etc.) Pedestrian-oriented <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development High-quality streetscapes Protect character
Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Sense of place” inclusive of existing cultural landscape Public art that recognises cultural legacy
Natural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Thames Valley Corridor” natural heritage Integrate “natural” features within neighbourhood
Housing Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a mix of housing options Compact development Accommodate all ages
Safe, Efficient Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide connectivity and accessibility Focus on walking, cycling Streetscape elements that enhance walkability
Environmental Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green space as a design feature Drought/salt tolerant plants Enhance/maintain tree canopy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use recycled/reclaimed materials Retain/utilize stormwater
Financial Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish goals of public realm early on in redevelopment

1.3 Planning Framework

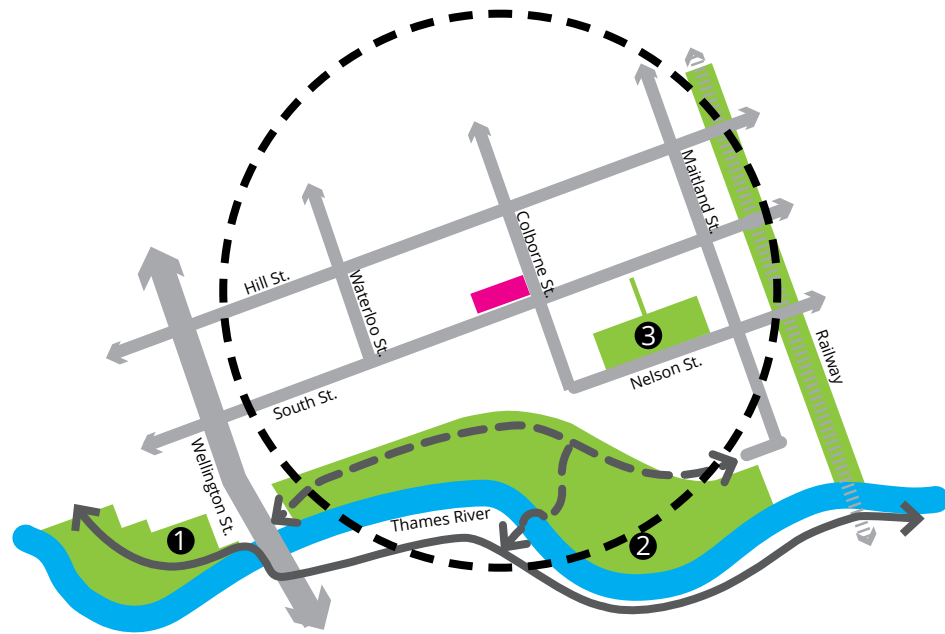
Civic Space: SoHo fits into multiple planning documents including the London Plan, Community Improvement Plan (2011), and Secondary Plan (2014). The Secondary Plan directs land use towards a new mixed-use community on the former Old Victoria Hospital lands. It is the most relevant to *Civic Space: SoHo* as it provides clear objectives for the public realm and adjacent development.

The Secondary Plan outlines the requirement of an urban plaza to anchor the proposed development, stating it should be designed to “function as a neighbourhood gathering area, support mixed-use within the adjacent buildings and incorporate design elements that reference and reflect the cultural heritage of the neighbourhood” (p40). Furthermore, ***Civic Space: SoHo* should be: inclusive and accessible; reflect the local heritage; flexible with programming; a destination; bold in concept and in form; welcoming and inviting; a point of pride; a place for relaxed gathering; and a rest area for those travelling on the Thames Valley Parkway.**

Adjacent to *Civic Space: SoHo* and significant to the land use plan for SoHo are the South Street Promenade and the Four Corners (see maps on page 4). The South Street Promenade will be a tree-lined boulevard supporting mix-use highrises and midrises, providing a connection from the SoHo neighbourhood to Wellington Street. The Four Corners are intended to be the central focus of the neighbourhood and the gateway to the Thames Valley Corridor. As these are intended to be important neighbourhood urban design elements strong experiential and functional connections should be made to them from *Civic Space: SoHo*.

See: “The London Plan (www.thelondonplan.ca/),” 2016; “The Secondary Plan: Old Victoria Hospital Lands,” 2014; “The Community Improvement Plan: Roadmap SoHo,” 2011

Parks Map



Civic Space: SoHo



Thames Valley Parkway

Existing
Proposed
Potential Bridge



5 Minute Walk



Existing Parks

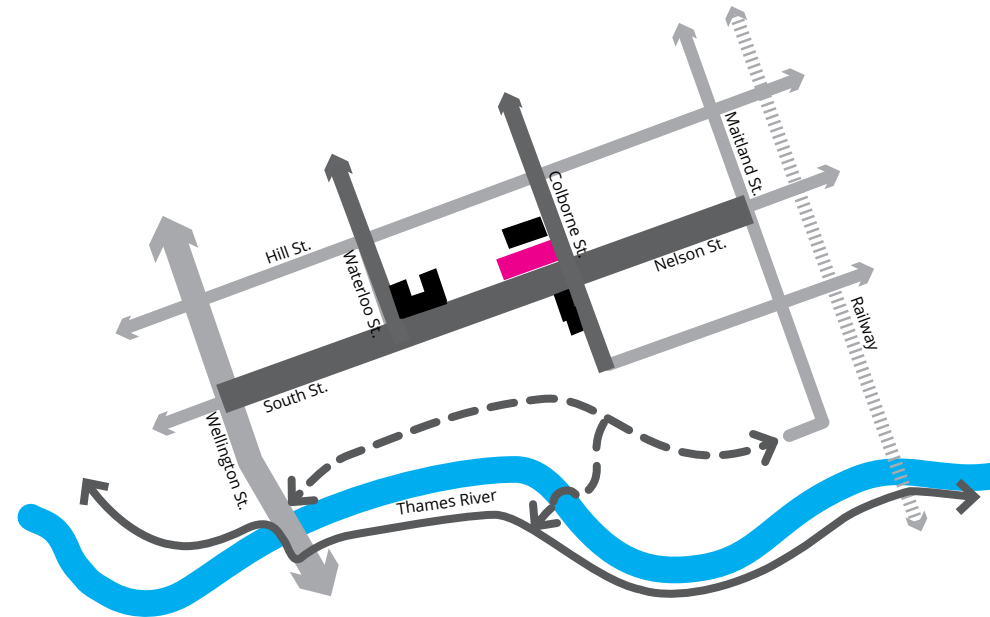
Richard B. Harrison Park
Wellington Valley Park
Meredith Park



Linear Park (Planned)



Cultural Heritage Map



Civic Space: SoHo



Thames Valley Parkway

Existing
Proposed
Potential Bridge



Cultural Heritage Landmarks

Health Services Building
War Memorial Children's Hospital
Colborne Building



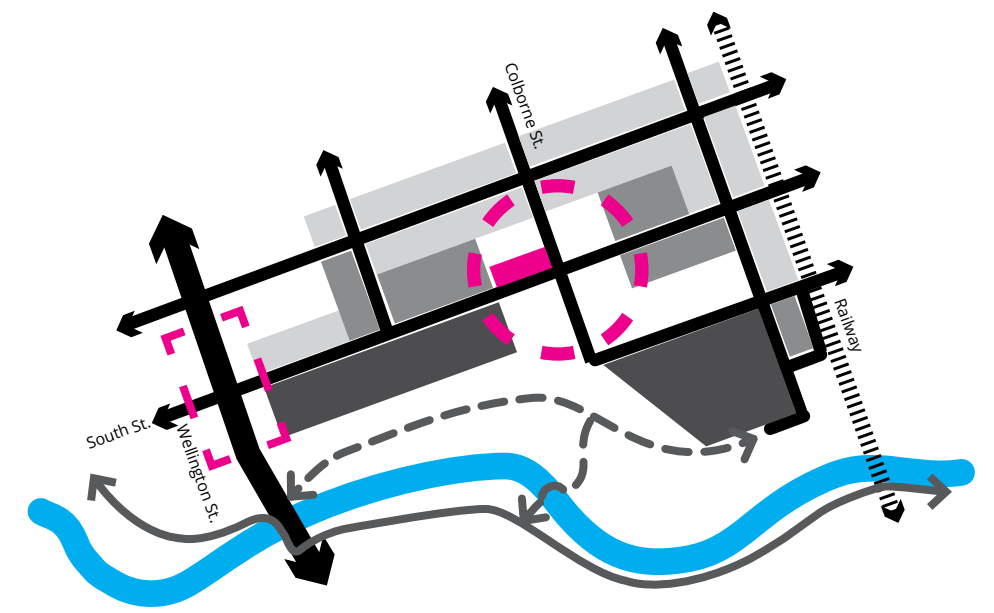
South Street Promenade



Green Street (Planned)



Building Height Map



Civic Space: SoHo



Built Form (Planned)

Low-rise
Mid-rise
High-rise



Four Corners



Transit-oriented Mainstreet Corridor



2.0 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



2.1 First Meeting

March, 2017, The London Roundhouse

Attendees of the first open house were presented with four design concepts for the civic space and asked to rank them as well as provide general comments on what elements of the designs were important to them. The design concepts were also posted for feedback on the Get Involved London website. 59 people attended and 28 surveys were completed.

Several takeaways, or themes, from the public meeting can be defined: the site's history is important; the presence of trees are important; the accommodation of a market, performances, and other temporary events is important; quiet areas are desired; relatable public art is appropriate; maintaining open views to the WMCH are important; and a mix of lawn or softscape to balance hardscape is important. Some participants raised concerns about the the scale of the site and the timing of the construction.

2.2 Second Meeting

June, 2017, Goodwill Industries

At this meeting one refined concept that incorporated feedback from the first meeting was presented. More than 40 people attended the meeting, 10 paper surveys and 36 online surveys were completed. 1 letter was received.

Most of the feedback confirmed that the space be used as a place for events, markets, and social gathering. Ways to incorporate, represent, and relay the site's medical legacy and heighten the WMCH's integrated use as a war memorial were design elements that were well received. Confirming support for the overall design concept additional themes generated from the meeting include the desire for green space, incorporating uses for all ages, incorporating comfortable seating, and connections to the planned adjacent developments. Considerations for a public washroom, parking, and winter uses were also suggested.



3.0 DESIGN CONCEPT



3.1 Rationale

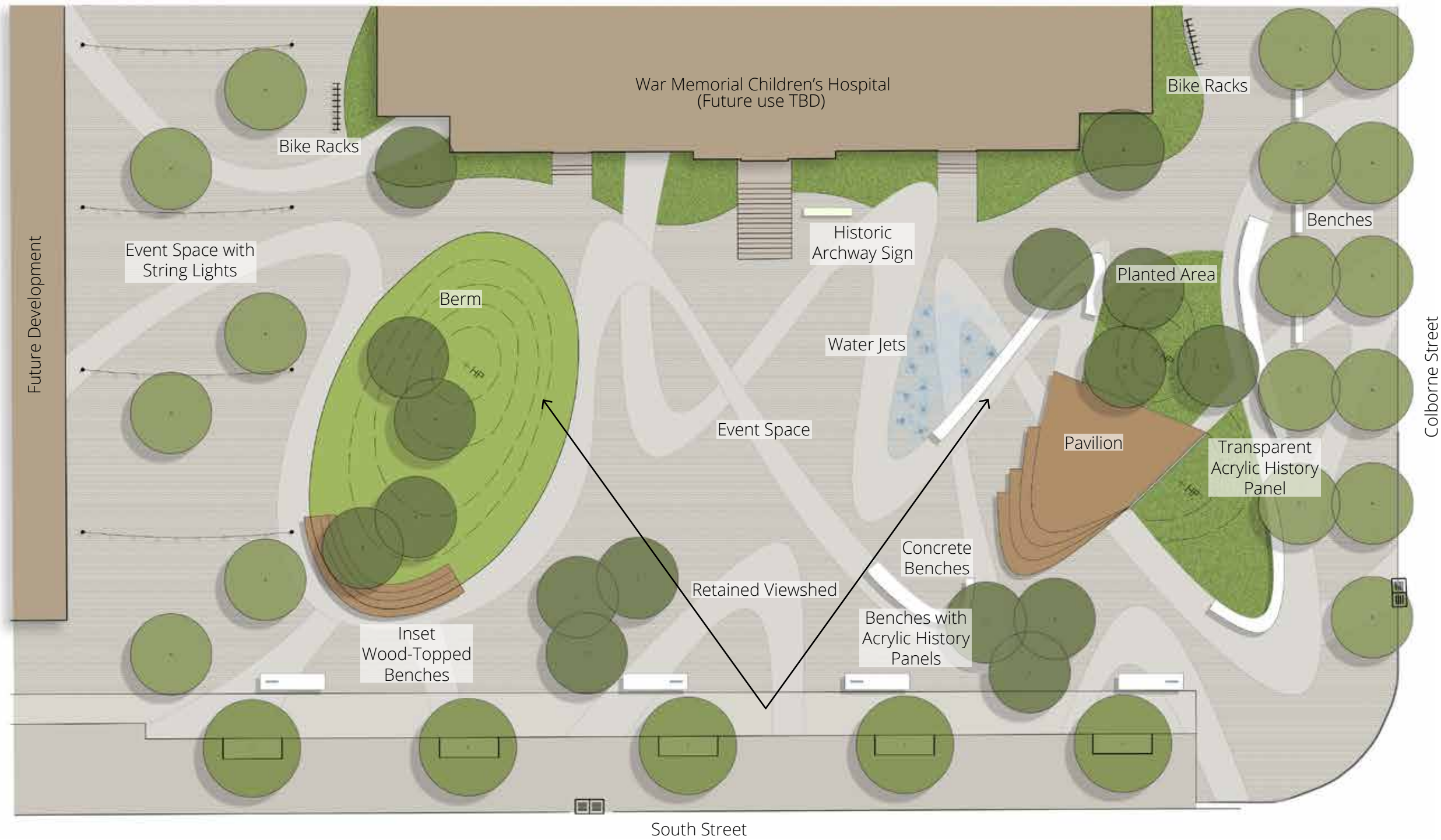
The design rationale for *Civic Space: SoHo* responds to its contextual cultural history, the City of London's planning framework, and community feedback generated from two public meetings. This information was synthesized to establish a design that can support an accessible and flexible program that serves the SoHo neighbourhood as well as London as a whole.

The pattern on the ground plane (see the concept plan on page 7) reference the gamma rays associated with the Cobalt Bomb that was first used at the WMCH, a significant event in the evolution of medical science. The pattern adds experiential interest while acting as the primary organizing device for the materials and elements that support the program.

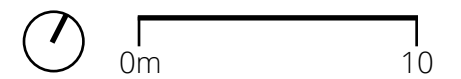
A turfgrass berm creates a soft division between two distinct programmable event spaces. It provides topographical interest that allows more green space for lounging, gathering, and event-watching. The berm is balanced on the opposite side of the event space by a stage, pavilion, and planted area. When not programmed this part of the space provides a more intimate gathering and seating area. Water jets present a further articulation of space while adding a chance for recreational play. The water jets can be turned off when not desired, opening up space for other uses. The water from the jets is collected immediately leaving no standing water.

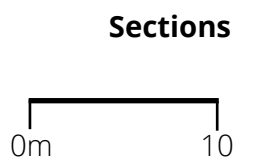
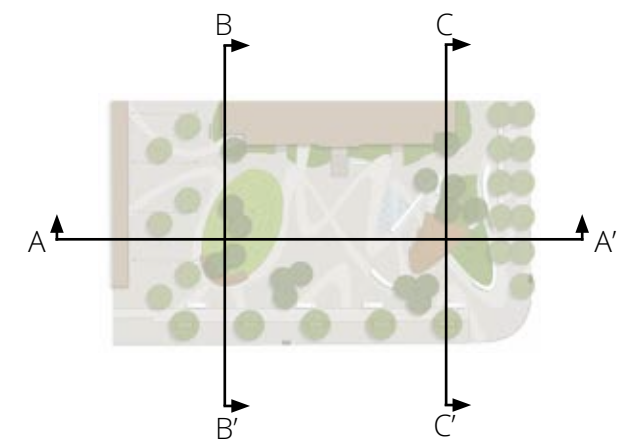
Materially and functionally *Civic Space: SoHo* should connect the WMCH and the proposed development to each other and to the Four Corners. This can be achieved with paving patterns continuing from building edge to curb and allowing streetscape activities to blend and mix with activities in the square.

History interpretation panels are distributed around the site that artfully relate the cultural history of the neighbourhood and the Old Victoria Hospital complex.



Concept Plan







View from the corner of South Street and Colborne Street looking west.

Perspectives

Looking south at a nighttime event in the proposed event space between the berm and the future development.



Looking towards the WMCH building with interpretive history panel and salvaged archway.





Looking north-east across the berm towards WMCH and the pavilion.



Looking south from Colborne Street showing the more intimate seating area and entrance to the space.

4.0 DIRECTIONS FOR DETAIL DESIGN

4.1 Elements and Materials

4.1.1 Hardscape

- Changes in the colour of surface materials (poured concrete, unit pavers, etc.) provide interest on the ground and from above
- Paving patterns provide a dynamic memorable experience
- A historical narrative can be reflected in the patterns of the hardscape
- Meaningful placemaking, through referencing history in paving patterns, can create a better understanding of the site and its past, leading to greater attachment for users
- Paving patterns can delineate space usage and programmatic areas, for gathering, events, circulation, rest and play



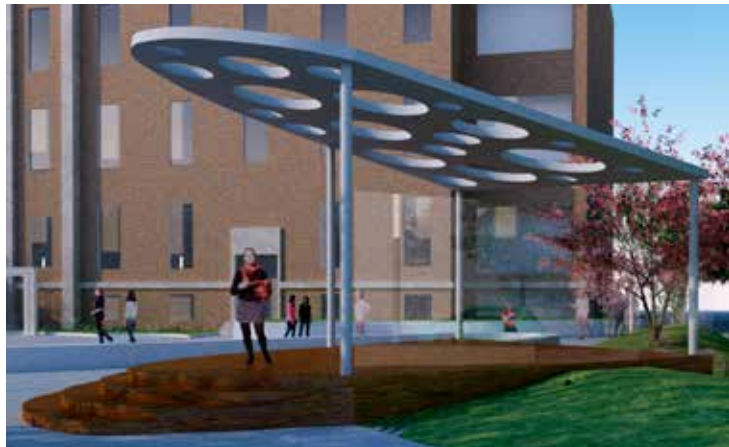
4.1.2 Seating and Furnishings

- Precast concrete seating relates to the form of the design, allowing it to follow the organic pattern found in the hardscaping
- Linear seating provides resting space for many people, while creating distinctions between program
- Concrete ray pattern can rise up from the ground plane to create seating elements
- Finishing options include skate deterrents, wood cladding, as well as various concrete finishes
- Seating colour can be distinct from the paving pattern, for a visually stimulating contrast
- Some seating should include armrests to be more accessible



4.1.3 Pavilion

- Pavilion should be simple in form so as to not compete visually with the WMCH
- Roof of pavilion can be porous or enclosed
- Pavilion should accommodate small unplanned gatherings or planned events
- The pavilion should allow for the integration of a translucent panel facing the intersection of South Street and Colborne Street (See: History Panels)
- The pavilion may be supported by steel posts and should have an open steel or wood roof (for CPTED considerations)
- It may be considered having the ability to cover the roof temporarily as events require



4.1.4 Berm

- The berm creates topographical interest on the site
- The berm can be used as gathering space for both active and passive use
- The berm should accommodate seating for stage performances
- Greater inclination to sit on a berm, compared to a flat lawn, as it provides a more expansive view of the site and its surroundings
- Safe play for children is promoted by the turf berm
- Provides a place for rest and relaxation under the shade of the trees
- The elevation change of a berm increases the area of turf, providing more gathering space for users, and more absorbant softscape for drainage
- Elevation of berm should adhere to CPTED standards for sightlines



4.1.5 Lighting

- Lighting should consist of in-ground and pole lighting
- Lighting should refrain from being overly ornamented to blend with both the contemporary and historic architectural context
- String lights should be used in the west event area next to proposed development
- Lighting should be energy efficient and outfitted with the latest technology while providing for a safe environment



4.1.6 History Panel

- Acrylic or laminated glass history panels allow for a transparent illustration of events and people significant to the cultural history of the WMCH, the South Street Hospital, or the neighbourhood
- Provide a visual and engaging way to relate history
- Both collage and text may be utilized on the archway, bench, and pavilion panels



4.1.7 Water Feature

- Animation of space is achieved through water movement, and the users the water attracts
- The plaza takes on a different character when the water jets are in action
- The surrounding hardscape is able to saturate without flooding, providing no standing water
- Adjacent seating to the water feature, allows parents and children to convene in the same area of the site
- Visitors can sit near the water for a cooling effect during warmer months
- Water jets sit flush in the site's surface, allowing the area to be open to other programmatic uses when the jets are off
- Lighting can be paired with water movement, bringing users to the site at night in a safe environment



4.1.8 Planting

- Identify view corridors where trees and planting are not appropriate
- Trees should be native to the Carolinian Zone and must be tolerant of urban conditions, i.e.: salt, pollution, non-native trees may be used if conditions require it
- Perennial plants and ornamental grasses should be native to south-western Ontario and should be tolerant of drought and urban conditions, non-native plants may be used if conditions require it
- Trees are intended to provide solice from the summer sun around the berm and near the pavilion, along the street they are intended to provide shade and serve as an edge while maintaining clear sightlines into and out of the square; species selection should favour large shade trees
- Trees planted within plaza paving should be planted in soil cells with irrigation





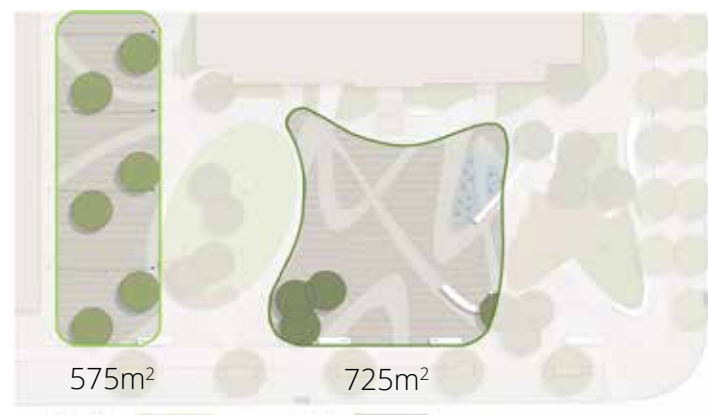
Green Space



History Interpretation



Space Usage

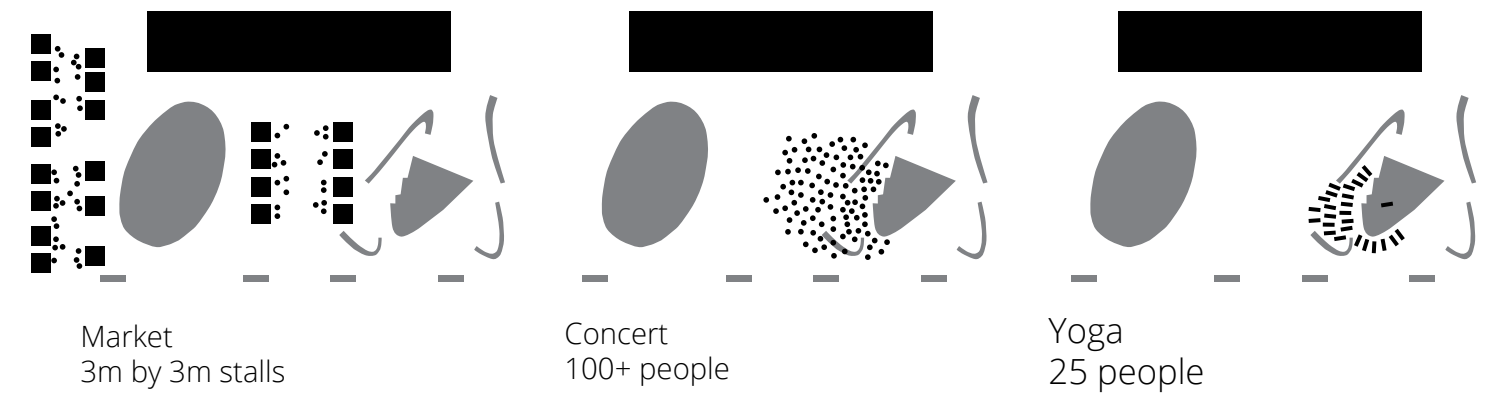


Event Space

4.2 Programming and Event Layout

- The site should accommodate reflections on and interpretations of the history of the area
- The site should facilitate, with space and infrastructure, programming such as markets, small concerts, and other community gatherings
- The site should provide opportunities for all ages and abilities
- The site should allow for some intimate gathering and gathering sheltered from the sun
- Consideration should be given to the management and delivery of programming through discussion with the appropriate City of London divisions

Examples of Program Possibilities



4.3 Safety and Social Issues

Current social issues observed in some of London's downtown parks may result in the perception of an unsafe environment. Illegal activities, addiction and homelessness issues, and the domination of a space by a single group of users can deter the use of the park by the rest of the general public. The lack of ownership of a public space with low natural surveillance can also contribute to a rise in these issues.

The design of *Civic Space: SoHo* should be accommodating to a diverse group of people. To attract a diverse range of users the design should promote an open program, activated edges and connections, and open sightlines. CPTED principles should be considered through the detailed design phase, with special attention to limiting the presence of potential hiding spots.

4.4 Maintenance

The maintenance of a public space is important to its life cycle with impacts on long-term cost, environmental sustainability, and sense of place. *Civic Space: SoHo* should be a higher-order public space and should be designed to accommodate a maintenance regime to match.

Hardscape materials, interpretive signage and site furniture proposed in the design of the new Civic Space should be low maintenance, easy to clean and/or able to handle power-washing on a regular basis. The design should allow for the accumulation of snow clearing excess without disrupting the safe pedestrian flow, user experience, or programmed events.

Plant material should be drought-tolerant and require minimum to no pruning. Proposed perennial plants and shrubs should adhere to a low-maintenance regime. Ornamental grasses should be chosen with the intent that they are mowed once per year. The design should allow for trees and gardens to be watered through drip irrigation.

Based on the maintenance regime and proposed event programming a storage area should be provided for related items.

5.0 CONCLUSION



5.1 Summary

The Secondary Plan outlines the requirement of an urban plaza to anchor the development, stating it should be designed to “function as a neighbourhood gathering area, support the mixed-uses within the adjacent buildings and incorporate design elements that reference and reflect the cultural heritage of the neighbourhood” (p40).

The design rationale for *Civic Space: SoHo* responds to its contextual cultural history, the City of London’s planning framework, and community feedback. These were synthesized to establish a design that supports an accessible and flexible program that serves the SoHo neighbourhood as well as London as a whole. The design intends to be a safe and inclusive space, welcoming to those who live in the SoHo neighbourhood and to those who may visit.

The primary intent of *Civic Space: SoHo* is to be a catalyst for community gathering while telling of the site’s unique past.

Material Appendix

Scenario A

Plaza paving with Unilock Copthorne (Basalt colour) option, ray detail in poured concrete.



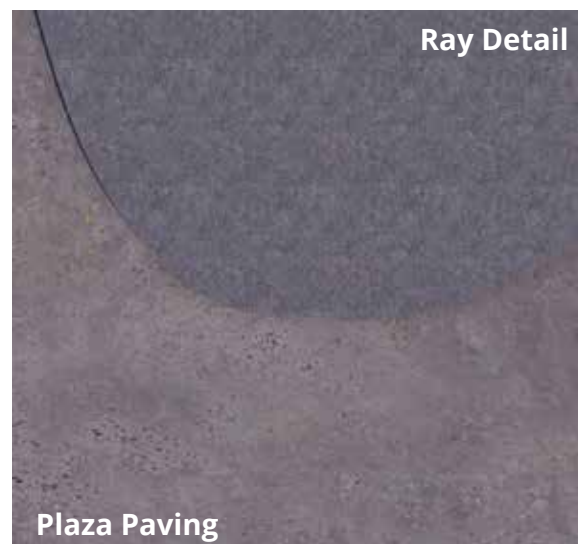
Scenario B

Plaza paving in poured concrete, ray detail with Unilock Copthorne (Basalt colour) option.



Scenario C

Plaza paving and ray detail in poured concrete, one toned darker than the other.



A.1 Hardscape

Site paving should provide a subtle contrast between the plaza paving and the “gamma ray” accent pattern. This can be achieved through using light and dark tones of coloured poured concrete or concrete pavers and poured concrete.

Paving patterns shown as examples only.

Benches



Victor Stanley



Victor Stanley



Maglin Site Furniture



Maglin Site Furniture

A.2 Seating and Furnishings

Site furnishings should be sensitive to the area's historic character. Furnishings should be a contemporary take on historical forms or details. Furnishings may be of a contemporary form if necessary. In this case the furnishing should blend into its context.

Site furniture shown as examples only.

Chairs and Tables



Maglin Site Furniture



Victor Stanley



Victor Stanley

Garbage Receptacles



Victor Stanley



Canaan Site Furnishings



Maglin Site Furniture

Bike Racks



Victor Stanley



Maglin Site Furniture

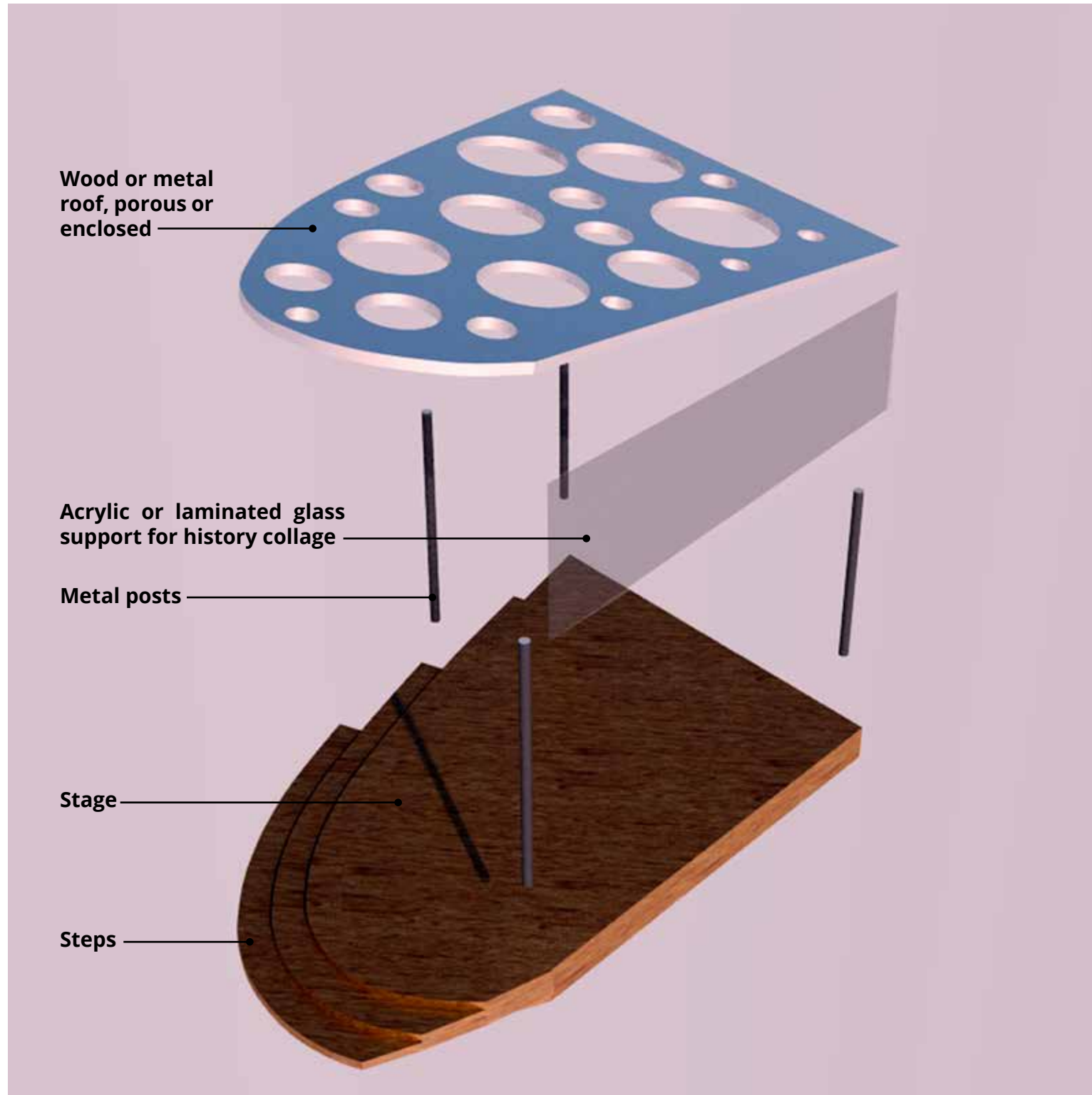


Canaan Site Furnishings

Tree Grate



Toronto Fabricating and MFG Co.



A.3 Pavilion

The pavilion sits on top of a raised platform with metal posts supporting a porous or enclosed roof structure made of wood or metal. The structure should be large enough to accommodate small groups and programmed events. The pavilion should not impede on views to the WMCH building from the corner of South Street and Colborne Street. In addition to supporting the roof the support posts to the south east should support the history collage. The collage should be visible from the corner of South Street and Colborne Street. An accessible ramp or route should provide access to the stage.

Pole Lighting

RAB Design



Flood Lighting

RAB Design



A.4 Lighting

Lighting should consist of in-ground uplighting and pole lighting, and may include directed flood lighting. Uplighting may be used to define the location of an element (i.e.: seating) or to enhance the space's aesthetic (i.e: lighting trees, buildings, water jets). Pole lighting should give a general cast for security purposes and conform to the City of London's standards on light pollution. Flood lights may be targeted at specific zones of the site for further illumination.

Light fixtures shown as examples only.

Uplighting

RAB Design



String Lighting

Sival Lighting



Native Tree Species

Botanical Name	Common Name
<i>Acer saccharum</i>	Sugar Maple
<i>Acer saccharinum</i>	Silver Maple
<i>Acer rubrum</i>	Red Maple
<i>Acer Freemanii</i>	Freeman's Maple
<i>Quercus rubra</i>	Red Oak
<i>Amelanchier canadensis</i>	Canadian Serviceberry
<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	Common Hackberry
<i>Betula alleghaniensis</i>	Yellow Birch
<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	Tulip Tree

Ornamental Grass Species

Botanical Name	Common Name
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	Little Bluestem
<i>Sporobolus cryptandrus</i>	Prairie Dropseed
<i>Elymus hystrix</i>	Bottlebrush grass
<i>Elymus canadensis</i>	Canada Wild Rye

Perennial Species

Botanical Name	Common Name
<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Orange Milkweed
<i>Coreopsis lanceolata</i>	Sand Coreopsis
<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	Eastern Purple Coneflower
<i>Geum triflorum</i>	Prairie Smoke
<i>Liatris spicata</i>	Dense Blazing Star
<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	Wild Bergamot
<i>Penstemon digitalis</i>	White Beardtongue
<i>Penstemon hirsutus</i>	Hairy Beardtongue
<i>Physostegia virginiana</i>	Obedient Plant
<i>Ratibida pinnata</i>	Greyheaded Coneflower
<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i> var. <i>pulcherrima</i>	Blackeyed Susan
<i>Spiraea alba</i>	Northern Meadowsweet

A.5 Planting

Where possible plants should be native the Carolinian Zone. If necessary non-native plants may be used that are tolerant of drought and urban conditions. Non-native plants should not be invasive.