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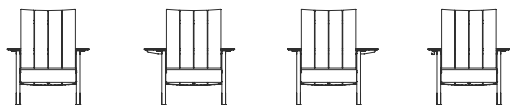
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PARC FRÉDÉRIC-BACK PARK, MONTREAL: SPHERICAL WELL CASINGS MARK THE VAST NETWORK THAT CAPTURES THE BIOGAS EMANATING FROM THE LANDFILL FOR CONVERSION INTO ELECTRICITY AT THE NEARBY POWER PLANT.

PHOTO ADRIEN WILLIAMS



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**COVER | COUVERTURE** A DRONE SHOT OF HIGH PARK AFTER ITS OPENING IN FALL 2020. THE PHOTO SHOWCASES THE STARK CONTRAST BETWEEN EXISTING CAR INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE SPACE THAT HAS BEEN CONVERTED FOR PEDESTRIAN AND SOCIAL USES.  
**PHOTO** ERIC GONZALEZ, BELTLINE NEIGHBOURHOODS ASSOCIATION (BNA)



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ST. BONIFACE WORK-YARD GARDEN: A SIMPLE RECIPE FOR A MOSS GARDEN: ROCKS TO CAPTURE AND DIRECT MOISTURE  
PHOTO EVAN TREMBLAY



## RENOVATIONS, ADAPTIVE RE-USE AND THE EVOLUTION OF OUTDOOR SPACES

GUEST EDITOR, CHRIS VERES

**I WAS SPEAKING** recently with a DTAH colleague about their experiences in the adaptive re-use of buildings. They mentioned that all landscape architecture projects are, in a way of thinking, adaptive re-uses of the land. At first, I was taken aback by the boldness of this claim, but eventually came to see the truth in it. When we undertake the design of any landscape, we are renovating and adapting the land by changing how it is used, how it looks and how it is perceived.

It is easier to understand this concept when applied to buildings; the proliferation of home improvement and make-over shows on television is a clear example of how people love to tinker with and update their living spaces. Sometimes, it is a superficial makeover or re-decoration with new materials; sometimes more “structural” changes are required to meet the needs of a household that is growing or shrinking. We are constantly tweaking things in an effort to make our spaces and, in turn, our lives, better. Rarely do we approach a home renovation project by trying to go back to what a house was when it was first built, because it was built for different times.

Shifting the lens back to landscape architecture, why should our approach be any different? If we are restoring the land, what are we restoring it to, and for whom? We are not making museums. Time moves on; we are no longer living in the 1800s or 1900s, or even the 2019s for that matter. Work and play continually evolve; what we need from our outdoor spaces evolves as well. How can we adapt the land in a way that embraces and acknowledges multiple layers of ideas and meanings that are present in a society, either co-existing at a certain point, or changing over time? How can our adaptive re-use of the land inform the ability to address not only the present, but also the future, and contribute to healthier ecologies and societies down the road? These challenges require new frameworks of theory and technical solutions in landscape architecture.

This issue of *LANDSCAPES / PAYSAGES* features practitioners from across the country who are adaptively re-using and renovating existing landscapes or fine tuning and improving existing communities, parks, gardens and streets to meet the needs of a changing urban landscape. The projects range from large-scale, visionary master plans to built projects; from pragmatic solutions for everyday use to provocative ideas meant to influence our future choices. These projects illustrate huge potential for designers to rethink the function of residual spaces in our cities, provide adaptive solutions to aging infrastructure, redefine our symbolic spaces, remediate a brownfield site, make better use of everyday found materials, or adapt our natural heritage areas to be more inviting and inclusive.

In putting together this edition, I met many stunningly intelligent people who are invested in the future, by conceiving it, researching it, designing it and building it. They see a bit further over the horizon line.

## RÉNOVATIONS, RÉUTILISATION ADAPTATIVE ET ÉVOLUTION DES AMÉNAGEMENTS PUBLICS

RÉDACTEUR INVITÉE, CHRIS VERES

**JE DISCUTAIS RÉCEMMENT** avec un collègue de DTAH de leur expertise en matière de réutilisation adaptative des bâtiments. Il me disait que tous les projets d'aménagement sont, d'une certaine façon, une réutilisation adaptative des lieux. Sur le coup, cette affirmation m'a quelque peu surprise, mais à bien y penser c'est ce que nous faisons dès la conception d'un aménagement. Nous rénovons ou adaptons un lieu en fonction d'une utilisation, nous en modifions l'apparence et la perception.

Appliqué aux bâtiments, le concept se comprend plus aisément. La multiplication des émissions télévisées sur la rénovation domiciliaire démontre bien notre penchant pour le bricolage et la modernisation de notre milieu de vie. Il s'agit parfois d'une simple rénovation en utilisant de nouveaux matériaux pour égayer le milieu de vie, mais parfois, des changements structurels sont nécessaires pour répondre aux besoins d'un ménage qui s'agrandit par exemple. Nous modifions constamment notre environnement guidé par une volonté d'améliorer notre qualité de vie. Un projet de rénovation reproduit rarement l'aménagement initial, car les besoins d'aujourd'hui ne sont pas ceux d'hier.

Sur le plan de l'architecture de paysage, pourquoi devrions-nous adopter une approche différente? Lorsque nous restaurons un lieu, quel en est l'objectif et pour qui le faisons-nous? Nous ne bâtissons pas des musées. Le temps progresse et nous ne sommes plus au 19e ou au 20e siècle, ni même en 2019 en cette matière. Le travail et les loisirs évoluent ainsi que nos attentes envers les aménagements publics. Comment adapter un lieu de manière à refléter la multitude des idées et des identités qui coexistent à un moment donné dans une société, ou qui évoluent au fil du temps? Comment la réutilisation adaptative peut-elle aborder les enjeux écologiques actuels et à venir, et ainsi contribuer à édifier une société plus saine? Ces défis exigent de nouveaux cadres théoriques et de nouvelles solutions techniques.

Ce numéro de *LANDSCAPES / PAYSAGES* présente des professionnels de partout au pays qui adaptent et réutilisent les aménagements ou qui peaufinent et améliorent le tissu urbain, les parcs, les jardins et les rues de façon à répondre à la nouvelle réalité urbaine en pleine mutation. Qu'il s'agisse de plans directeurs visionnaires à grande échelle ou de projets bâtis, ou encore de solutions pragmatiques pour un usage quotidien ou d'idées révolutionnaires destinées à influencer nos choix futurs. Ces projets illustrent l'énorme potentiel dont disposent les designers pour repenser la fonction d'espace résiduel de nos villes, trouver des solutions adaptées à des infrastructures vieillissantes, redéfinir nos espaces symboliques, réhabiliter des friches industrielles, faire un meilleur usage des matériaux usuels ou adapter les aires du patrimoine naturel de façon à les rendre plus accueillantes et inclusives.

En préparant ce numéro, j'ai rencontré de nombreux Canadiens de grande intelligence qui s'investissent dans l'avenir, en le concevant, l'analysant et le bâtissant. Leur vision s'étend au-delà de la ligne d'horizon.



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## OUR GUEST EDITOR | NOTRE RÉDACTEUR INVITÉ



### **CHRIS VERES**

Chris Veres, OALA, CSLA, CMLI, is a landscape architect and urban designer who has worked in the UK, Europe and Canada. His 15 years of professional experience spans all project stages from analysis and strategic planning through to design and implementation, in both public and private sectors and in conjunction with local communities. Chris joined DTAH in 2011 and became a Senior Associate in 2022. Before joining DTAH, Chris was involved in the competition-winning Leicester Square project, an adaptive reuse of one of London England's most beloved urban spaces that subsequently received the President's Award at the 2013 Landscape Institute Awards. When Chris isn't busy with landscape architecture, he is making music under the moniker "Finding Illinois."

## OUR WRITERS | NOS COLLABORATEURS



### **CHARLES THOMSEN**

Charles Thomsen, FCSLA, BFALA, MRP, is Professor Emeritus University of Manitoba Faculty of Architecture and a Board Member of International Peace Gardens (IPG). Charlie was born and raised in Chicago and prairie influences have shaped the way he views the world. After working as a landscape architect in Denver, San Francisco, Philadelphia and Germany, he and his family settled down in Winnipeg, where he taught in the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Manitoba, including stints as Head of the Landscape Architecture Department, Director of the Environmental Design Program and Associate Dean of the Faculty of Architecture. Charlie retired in 2007 after 33 years of teaching. He has been involved with the IPG since 1978, and a member of the IPG Board of Directors since 1992. As his wife says, Charlie eats, breathes and lives for the Peace Garden. His guiding principle is that design is an ongoing and creative process; the designer must learn to appreciate and respect the layers of history, both natural and cultural, that exist on each site.

### **MONICA GIESBRECHT**

Monica Giesbrecht, MALA, FCSLA, Principal HTFC Planning & Design and Lead Landscape Architect, IPG Project Team, is a principal with HTFC Planning & Design, one of the largest and most established landscape architecture and land use planning firms on the Canadian Prairies. A young immigrant to the Canadian Prairies, Monica's childhood experiences drove her to become a passionate advocate for inclusive design. Monica is known for developing design processes and public places that energize and welcome all through a deep connection to the land. Her ongoing investigation into the social, physical and psychological relationships between the environment and children, youth, immigrants, marginalized groups, and seniors, serves as a foundation for her progressive work on healthy communities, integrated recreation networks, livable campuses, democratic greenspaces, and culturally sensitive lands. When not working, Monica volunteers for Spark Winnipeg and the Winnipeg Arts Council. Monica has been connected to the Peace Gardens since she prepared National Historic Landscape Designation research for professor Charlie Thomsen during her graduate degree.



### **JASON JONES**

Jason Jones, BLA, BCSLA, AALA, CSLA, CPESC, ESCAC, is the founder of LARCH Landscape Architecture, based in beautiful Golden, BC, incorporated 2015. Jason specializes in design within the mountain environment and is passionate about barrier-free public space design, active transportation and community revitalization projects. In addition to his work with LARCH Landscape Architecture, Jason also serves as the Chair of the Golden Backcountry Recreation Access Committee (GBRAC) and is the Executive Director of the Golden + Area A Trail Alliance.



### JEAN-GABRIEL CHIASSON

Jean-Gabriel Chiasson, MUP, BA is a landscape/play designer for RockyView Play, a Calgary-based design studio where he currently works to introduce nature and alternative modes of play into various playscape projects in Western Canada. He is a member of the Beltline Neighbourhoods Association (BNA), a non-profit community organization that represents one of Calgary's most densely populated communities and has led place-making initiatives in a number of cities across Canada.

### LIZ WREFORD

Liz Wreford, AALA, MALA, OALA, SALA, CSLA, is the co-founder and principal landscape architect of PUBLIC CITY, a transdisciplinary architecture and landscape architecture firm based in Winnipeg. With projects across the country, her work contributes to public spaces that are expressive, engaging, accessible to all, and help to create a better sense of Canada's identity.



### SONJA VANGJELI

Sonja Vangjeli, MArch, MLA, OALA, CSLA, is a landscape architect and design project manager at Waterfront Toronto, where she oversees design and implementation of large-scale public realm projects that aim to integrate nature-based solutions with urban infrastructure. Interested in the potential of urban landscapes as vital ecological infrastructure she works on urban design strategies that balance development priorities with site identity, heritage conservation, and landscape performance. Sonja has international experience as a landscape designer with West 8 and Sasaki and as researcher with the Zofnass Program for Sustainable Infrastructure. She is an alumna of the Harvard University Graduate School of Design (MLA) and University of Waterloo School of Architecture (MArch) and leads the Toronto team of the International Landscape Collaborative (ILC).



### ERIC HENRY KLAVER

Eric Henry Klaver, BLA, OALA, BCSLA, CSLA, is a partner at PLANT Architect Inc., a former chair of the editorial board for OALA's *Ground Magazine* and a recorded electronic musician. Known for his thoughtful and sustainable landscape designs, Eric has led a range of projects from regional-scale gardens & urban plazas to larger-scale projects such as watersheds and ecosystems.

### MAYA MAHGOUN-DESAI

Maya Mahgoub-Desai, MArch, is the Chair of Environmental Design at OCAD University and the Senior Urban Designer for Moriyama Teshima Architects. In addition to working on projects focused on public health, public space and inclusive design pedagogies, Maya enjoys "la dérive" – wandering through cities – especially in her familial countries of Egypt and India and in her hometown of Montréal.



### PATRICIA LUSSIER

Patricia Lussier, AAPQ, CSLA, landscape architect, design principal and associate at Lemay, has more than 20 years of experience in the development of public spaces. Designing for both social and environmental engagement, Patricia brings a unique sensitivity that highlights special qualities within the spaces she creates. Her distinctive approach has led to many multidisciplinary projects, competitions and awards of excellence in urban design, landscape architecture and architecture.



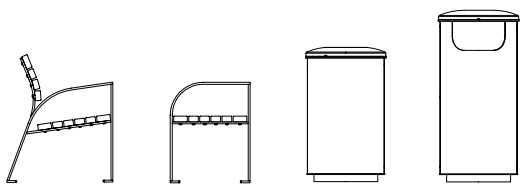
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# PROLOGUE

## 1/ RENOVATIONS AND ADAPTIVE RE-USE OF PUBLIC SQUARES

MARIE BURNS

**THERE ARE EVER-INCREASING** demands for public spaces in our cities, often within finite urban areas. The function and appreciation of the public realm has developed from its role within regeneration strategies and the re-invention of city images, to the creation of healthy cities that promote walking and cycling, demonstrating how urban areas can reduce their carbon footprints to create comfortable places to live. The devastating impact of COVID-19 has highlighted the inequalities and isolation of many communities through their inability to access public spaces.

Cities are complex, dynamic entities where history can leave indelible footprints, described by Italian architect Aldo Rossi as “giving permanence”, that persist within the urban form, explaining street patterns, building blocks or disconnections. Appreciating these architectural features,

including social and economic evolution, is necessary to understand the qualities of a place as they give meaning and complexity to a design. Urban areas are a series of neighbourhoods and spatial experiences unified by the public realm. It is its design quality that gives identity to a place, enables social cohesion and expression, all of which underpin a sense of well-being and belonging.

In my book *New Life in Public Squares* (RIBA 2020), I explored the re-assigning of land as new public realm to extend or repair a city's fabric and the renovation of existing public spaces to restore their relevance for society today. Through analysis of international case studies, the book investigates how design quality can be achieved. Fundamental to this process is an enabling environment, provided by a supportive client, a collaborative design team focused on the design and its delivery, realistic funding for construction and, critically, ongoing maintenance.

The development of a public realm masterplan enables the integration of a scheme within a city's existing hierarchy and sequence of spaces, creating connections, encouraging pedestrian movement and interaction. The case studies illustrate how

The Place Massena unified old and new Nice, it is an open and uncluttered square with bold black and white paving that is transformed at night through its raised illuminated artworks.

The renovation of London's Leicester Square re-established its historic qualities through a contemporary design approach to its paving and railings, and the inclusion of a white granite “ribbon” around the perimeter of the gardens. The ribbon references the white marble of the listed Shakespeare Statue and Fountain and provides a popular informal seating opportunity that activates the terraces to create a welcoming environment. The project's public realm masterplan established a new city quarter that extends the influence of the square beyond its immediate hinterland.

design can introduce a new sense of identity that is particular to that place, reflecting its history and context through the selection of new or re-used materials, the inclusion of relevant motifs, lighting and public art.

New and revitalised public spaces give the opportunity to reconfigure our cities, to provide a new sense of place, to link communities, to improve public health, and to create places where life can be enjoyed and celebrated.

**Marie Burns**, BA (Hons), Dip LA, MAUD, MPhil. CMLi, MCIHT, is a landscape architect, urban designer and transport planner. She co-founded Burns+Nice, an award-winning practice that focused on the transformation of the urban environment through public realm design. She is presently looking into the integration of new communities within existing neighbourhoods. Outside work she bakes sourdough loaves and fruit cakes.

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The Le Jardin de Lumière in Bordeaux, France, was part of a citywide masterplan associated with its tramway and port area regeneration. Its centrepiece is the Miroir d'eau, a spectacular water feature that, when still, mirrors the Place de la Bourse, while its mist sequence introduces an ephemeral dimension.



## 2/ MORPHOSIS OF ST. ANDREW'S [PLAY]GROUND

JAMES ROCHE + ELNAZ SANATI

**ST. ANDREW'S PLAYGROUND** opened in 1908 as Toronto's first downtown playground at the corner of Brant and Adelaide Streets. Initially conceived as an extension of St. Andrew's Market and designed as a utilitarian space of function and routine, it is now a neglected urban space for the neighbourhood with a diverse range of users.

Over the past 100 years, all vestiges of the market building and the historic playground have disappeared. The site has been transformed over several decades, it has been altered, reprogrammed and transformed, responding to changes and the needs of the adjacent context. One constant element through all this change has been the site's interwoven tree canopy, including Maples, Elms and Honey Locusts, that has continued to capture the wonder and imagination of those who visit the park. Thanks to a progressive succession planting strategy, the ever-present and filtered canopy has provided continuity in the space, ensuring an overarching structure (literally and figuratively) for any design intervention. The resilient planting strategy includes urban tolerant tree species with pollinator understorey species.

The new ground plane at St. Andrew's Playground is defined with multiple layers of overlaid programs, and varied spaces



2

to anticipate and accommodate change, changes that are an inevitable part of our cities, their inhabitants and their ecologies. What had started as a conservative playground with one primary use, is now an inclusive playful landscape and surface that is flexible and accommodates open ended activities without the feeling of emptiness.

Tracing the memory of market stalls that once existed in the park, catenary lights illuminate the canopy of mature trees blurring the dramatic layers of the site. Strategic heritage signage, raised seating platform, lounge chairs, communal tables and chairs creates a welcoming and human centred public space. St. Andrews is re-imagined, reconnected to its historic past, and redefined as a dynamic central community space.

**James Roche**, OALA, APALA, BCSLA, FCSLA, is an award-winning landscape architect with over 20 years of public realm experience, encompassing urban parks, plazas, waterfronts, campus master plans, revitalization developments, streetscapes and transportation-related urban design. James is currently DTAH's Partner-in-Charge of the Toronto Island Master Plan and Brampton Riverwalk.

**Elnaz Sanati**, OALA, CSLA, LEED SITES AP, is a DTAH Associate and a landscape architect with over a decade of experience in North America and the Middle East. Elnaz is an innovative and critical thinker with a particular interest in the aesthetics and creative communication of landscape architecture. She is currently leading several large-scale urban park projects, including the St Andrews Playground Park improvements and St. James Town West Park in Toronto.

**1** ANALYSIS DIAGRAM: TREE CANOPY AND LINKS  
**2** DRONE SHOT OF ST. ANDREW'S PLAYGROUND AND CENTRAL PLAZA UNDER CONSTRUCTION  
**3** COMPLETED PLAYGROUND

IMAGES DTAH



3



# 3/ ONE PERSON'S JUNK ...

EVAN TREMBLAY

**PILES OF JUNK** are enigmatically beautiful. Made up of objects with some murky, undetermined future, they record the history of a site through the years in acquired textures. To work with a pile of junk, to mine it for forms and solutions, is to intimately engage with that history. The respectful redeployment of one such pile, in a yard in the North St. Boniface neighborhood of Winnipeg, to address issues of soil quality, poor drainage and privacy, resulted in a series of sculpted forms by my design-build firm, Atelier 617.



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These forms, which we might call “reliquaries of decay,” are arranged so that they frame and separate two paved areas, to be used for the client’s construction projects: this is a “work-yard,” rather than a garden. Over the years, these reliquaries will become anchors for new piles of junk, which, rather than being relegated to a corner, can be appreciated as a reflection of how the client uses his space.

**1** NEW USES FOR OLD TEXTURES: SALVAGED AND REFINISHED LUMBER DRAWS THE EYE INTO COMPLEX SPACES **2** COMPACTED CLAY SOIL AND A VARIETY OF ROCK/PAVER TYPES PROVIDE A MEDLEY OF MOSS HABITAT **3** RAISED PLATFORM OVER FORMER GARAGE SET OUT FOR COMPANY WHEN NOT IN USE AS WORKSPACE  
PHOTOS EVAN TREMBLAY



1

Broken sidewalk stones, laid out in a rectangle and stacked in dry courses form a rectangular bench of indeterminate purpose, separating the two paved areas at different grades. Surmounted by an old, rusted boilerplate, it might be an altar, with a “reredos” comprised of *Sorbaria sorbifolia*. The broken nature of the sidewalk stones preclude a perfect fit, and thus the altar-bench serves as a home for insects in the resulting gaps.

Old lumber ties (that were once the walls of raised garden beds) have been broken apart, and sculptural forms have been created by removing the rotted sections. The timbers become floating, irregular verticals in a privacy screen. Raised to eye height, they allow for a contemplation of decay and the beauty of old wood. *Andropogon gerardii*, planted at the base of the screen, mark the low point of the yard, where stormwater will be directed. Below the screen is a spine of crumbling patio stones set at an angle in the ground so that runoff will, over time, deepen the crumpled valley around the perimeter of the spine.

A hulking, low table of these same reclaimed stones sits on a bed of compacted gravel, its flat top the stage for a ritual designed to draw attention to the flow of time in the yard. Mosses, rescued from a nearby parking lot slated to be torn up for condos, was transplanted here and watered to help in establishment, the spores running down to colonize the furrows of the stones and the harsh gravel landscape below. Installed throughout the yard and positioned so that in rain their spores will be transported across

the porous surfaces of an eclectic collection of rocks and broken bricks, this moss will also become a vegetated surface better suited to compacted clay soil than a grass lawn.

Growing outwards from the sculpted reliquaries, Manitoba-quarried flagstone serves as a unifying visual and structural element on the ground plain. Elemental, durable and ultimately re-usable, it enters into the metabolic tectonics of the site as a noble addition to some future collection of castoffs, allowing the cycle of renewal to begin once more. **LP**

***Evan Tremblay**, B.Env.D, M.L.Arch., is a Métis artist and landscape designer, born and practicing in Winnipeg, MB. His work focuses on a holistic exploration of Indigenous dwelling-in-the-land as design practice, building on research of land art as engine of spiritual growth. In his spare time, he practices flow arts and researches techniques for creating interactive art installations.*



3



 Randall Sharp	 Adrienne Brown	 Peter Briggs	 Christine Abe	 Vincent Asselin
 Faye Langmaid	 <b>CLAUDE CORMIER + ASSOCIÉS</b>	 Eha Naylor	 <b>EDA</b> Planning + Urban Design	 Cathy Sears



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*Sh*

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# Extraordinary for Landscape Architects

Product: **Cliffhanger Top Seats**, Nashville (USA)

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Streetlife uses simple but elegant modular building blocks with long lifespans, and choose materials sourced fairly and responsibly to minimise the impact on the environment. Our design team develops smart solutions to improve the longevity of the products. A key aspect includes the recyclability of components and raw materials throughout the chain. All these conscious design decisions make a significant contribution to the high quality and sustainable use of Streetlife products.



Bowie Bridge



Mobile Green Isle  
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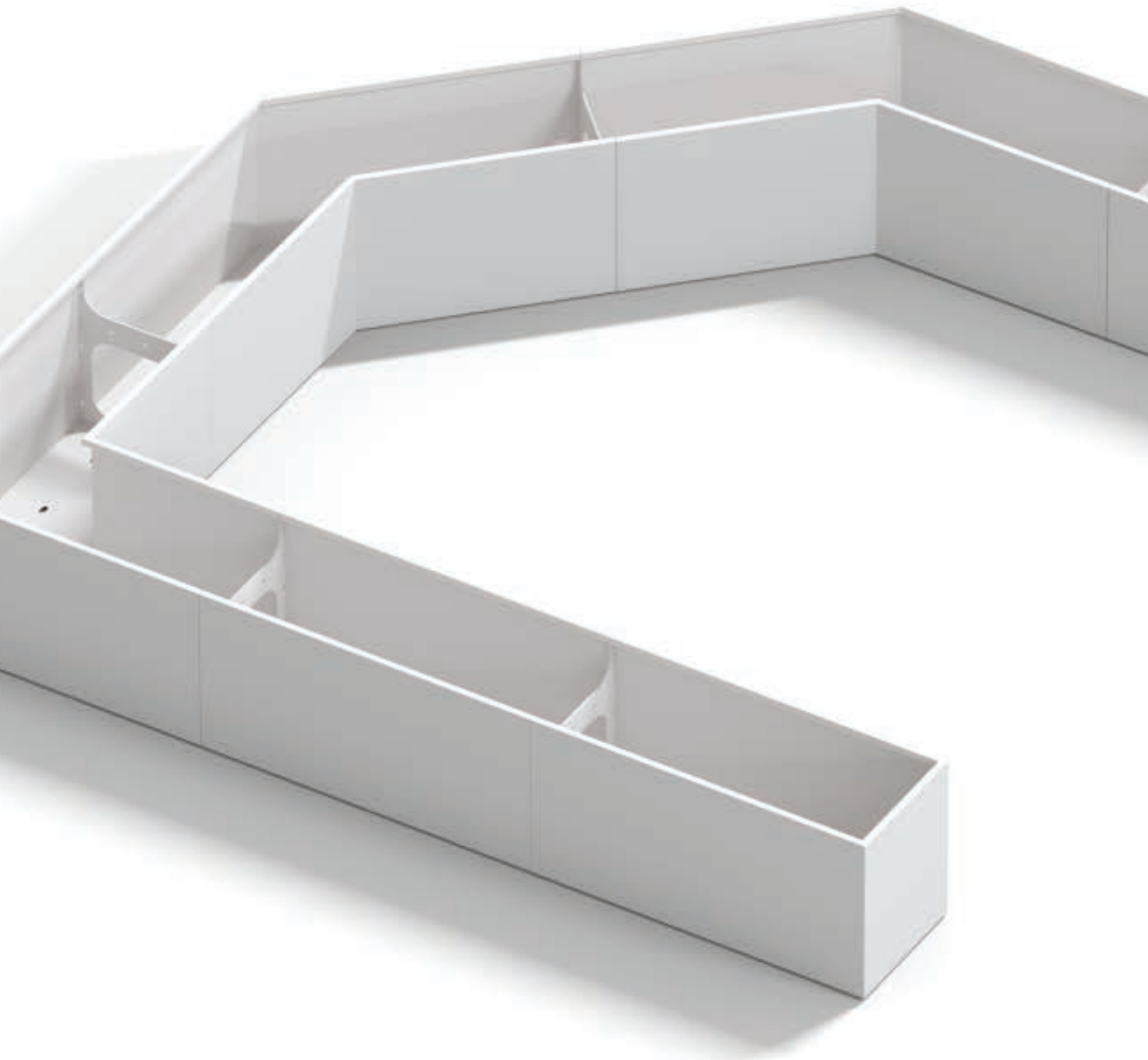
Solid Industry Picnic Set



Drifter Bench with USB Charger  
Lava Grey (recyclate) TWIN



Green Circular Bench



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JASON JONES

# THE GOLDEN ADAPTIVE-INCLUSIVE TRAIL

## FR\_LP+ LE SENTIER ADAPTÉ ET INCLUSIF DE GOLDEN

Les sentiers ne sont plus que de simple corridor de transport. Ils incarnent un mode de vie, une passion, une évasion, une sensation forte et une destination. Jamais la demande pour des sentiers récréatifs de qualité n'aura été aussi forte.

**AS THE SUN** filters through the canopy on a crisp spring morning, the forest floor is awakening after a deep winter cover in Golden, British Columbia. Signs of new growth and renewal are all around. I am acutely aware of the terrain beneath my feet, existing vegetation communities, wet areas and surrounding grades, while keeping a watchful eye and ear for signs

**1** KIMBERLY JOINES (KOOTENAY ADAPTIVE SPORTS ASSOCIATION) WEAVES HER ADAPTIVE MOUNTAIN BIKE THROUGH THE ASPEN TREES IN GOLDEN, BC  
PHOTOS CLAIRE DRIBBLE

of large furry forest dwellers. I walk beside Brady Starr of Starr Trail Solutions as we discuss micro adjustments to the final alignment of the future Golden Adaptive-Inclusive trail. Which side of a mature Douglas Fir tree will the trail go around? Does this wet area need a culvert or an armored rock crossing? How do we create a unique and memorable trail experience that makes people want to come back to ride the trail again and again?

Trails have become so much more than a transportation corridor. They have become a way of life, a passion, an escape, a stress reliever, a thrill and a destination. There has never been a higher demand for a diversity of high-quality recreation trail experiences. With this demand comes many environmental, social and economic challenges. The Province of British Columbia undertakes a rigorous process for the development of any new recreation

infrastructure including engagement with First Nations, referrals from a broad range of stakeholders (forestry, mining, environmental stewardship, recreation sectors) and subject matter experts. It requires a multi-faceted skillset to analyze the unique characteristics of the landscape, to see its inherent qualities and to create a trail design that respects and responds to the surroundings, minimizes the environmental footprint and meets project specific goals. My background as a landscape architect, erosion and sediment control practitioner, and lifetime trail enthusiast has prepared me well to undertake the planning and design of a relatively new type of trail, for which the design guidelines are still being developed and tested.

## Adaptive Mountain Biking

For those not familiar with Adaptive Mountain Biking (aMTB), it encompasses





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a broad range of riders who cannot ride a standard mountain bike and require adapted equipment and trails designed specifically to suit their physical, intellectual, neurological and sensory abilities (*Kootenay Adaptive Sport Association, 2020*). Adaptive mountain bikes vary in design but are typically three- and four-wheeled recumbent or kneeling hand cycles, bucket style bikes and electric-assist versions. Adaptive mountain bike trails require modifications from the established International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) and Whistler Trail Standards in that:

- Adaptive mountain bikes accelerate slower, decelerate faster, are wider, longer and heavier than two-wheeled bikes;
- Some models require the rider to take their hand(s) off the handlebars to pedal with the hand cranks. As such, an aMTB rider cannot easily pedal while navigating a turn, and requires appropriate (trail specific) entry speed to corners, berms and features to allow enough momentum to carry the bike through;
- Sight lines for adaptive riders are approximately 1.0m (3 ft) above the tread surface. This requires consideration in trail sections of significant undulation, high vegetation and intersections; and

2 CHAD JASSMAN (LEFT),  
JASON JONES (RIGHT) 3 GOLDEN  
ADAPTIVE-INCLUSIVE TRAIL NETWORK  
PHOTOS 2 CLAIRE DRIBBLE 3 GOOGLE EARTH

- Adaptive mountain bikes are primarily 3-wheeled in nature, and prone to tipping when off camber at low speeds. aMTB riders are strapped into their equipment, so any tipping of the bike will also tip the rider, which can be dangerous.

(*Kootenay Adaptive Sport Association – Adaptive Trail Guidelines 2020*).

### Golden Adaptive-Inclusive Trail

The design criteria for the Golden Adaptive-Inclusive trail development project was to create a completely new 3.9km adaptive stacked loop trail system including one directional green (lowest level of difficulty) climbing trail, a green descending trail, and a blue (medium level of difficulty) descending trail. This loop would tie into the broader existing mountain bike trail network managed by the Golden Cycling Club. At first, there was some hesitation regarding the amount of use this type of trail might receive, the maintenance required and questions of whether or not it would be enjoyable for able-bodied riders. The intention was to create an Adaptive-Inclusive trail loop that would appeal to a broad range of recreationalists of all ages and ability levels.

Having personally survived a near fatal mountain bike crash, I have also experienced how life can change in a moment. I recognize that I am extremely fortunate to have recovered to full health with minimal impact to my day-to-day life. Through this experience, I have gained a tremendous respect for those who have suffered catastrophic injuries and have found the strength to adapt and live their lives in meaningful ways. I also gained an appreciation for the accessibility challenges that present themselves when your physical or mental ability becomes compromised on a temporary or permanent basis. My experiences have shaped my design approach and fuelled a passion for barrier-free and inclusive design without compromising on quality, innovation or experience.

We approached the trail planning and design for these trails in a completely collaborative way, combining the skillsets of a landscape architect and trail designer (LARCH Landscape Architecture) with



The adaptive-inclusive trails have become some of the most well-travelled trails within the recreation network in Golden.



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a professional trail builder (Starr Trail Solutions). Our team also integrated with the Kootenay Adaptive Sport Association (KASA), adaptive athlete Kimberly Joines, and local adaptive rider Blair Jones to provide feedback on the proposed trail alignments and to fine-tune trail features, while ensuring we achieved the intended targets for rider safety, trail speed, flow and the critical “fun factor”. Their input directly contributed to a higher quality final product than would have otherwise been possible. Riding and spending time with Kimberly and Blair was deeply inspiring and expanded our understanding of what is possible on an adaptive mountain bike and challenged us to apply our learnings directly through the trail design and construction process.

When designing the directional uptrack, now known as “Arm Pumper,” the intent was to create a rolling beginner/intermediate climbing trail that undulates with the surrounding topography and weaves sinuously through the existing trees. The user experience varies from travelling through dense Cedar, Hemlock, and Douglas Fir trail sections to open mature Aspen stands that become a brilliant gold backdrop in the fall. Strategically placed pull-off areas allow for safe passing and rest stops throughout the trail. Upon reaching the junction, trail users have the option to continue gaining elevation on the Twisted Sister Trail

(non-adaptive singletrack) or to descend on either the green or blue Adaptive-Inclusive trails. A series of sweeping berms let the rider become fully immersed and focused on the trail ahead, followed by several cascades of constructed rollers, jumps and more berms. The Blue Adaptive-Inclusive Trail has a particularly strong finish as we were able to create a half-pipe like effect that weaves back and forth utilizing the existing rolling topography.

#### Adaptive Trails Well Used By All

The Golden Adaptive-Inclusive trails opened to the public in late July 2020. The measure of success for the Golden Adaptive-Inclusive trails is evident through the elated smiles and contagious laughter of everyone who has just ridden the trails for the first time. The adaptive-inclusive trails have become some of the most well-travelled trails within the recreation network in Golden. In addition to being utilized by many adaptive riders, the nature of these adaptive-inclusive trails provides an excellent entry- to mid-level

trail experience for young, beginner and elderly riders. Advanced riders also report thoroughly enjoying the adaptive trails, despite their initial expectation of the trails to be less challenging. The adaptive-inclusive loops have also become popular with trail runners and have seen high use during the winter months for fat biking, snow shoeing and dog walking.

The Kootenays are known to be a welcoming and inclusive place. With the forward thinking and dedication of mountain communities and organizations like the Kootenay Adaptive Sport Association, there are now adaptive trails in many communities throughout the East and West Kootenays, forming an adaptive trail regional network that is becoming an international destination for athletes with disabilities. These universal trails remove barriers to participation and allow people of all ages and abilities to be active and challenge themselves, while enjoying our exceptional trails throughout British Columbia. **LP**

**PROJECT TEAM** | CLIENTS GOLDEN CYCLING CLUB (JONATHAN SIMPSON, JAMES ACTON), COLUMBIA SHUSWAP REGIONAL DISTRICT (RYAN NITCHIE), TOWN OF GOLDEN (JORDAN PETROVICS) | **APPROVING BODY** RECREATION SITES AND TRAILS B.C., THE MINISTRY OF FORESTS, LANDS, NATURAL RESOURCE OPERATIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT | **PROJECT TEAM** LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT, TRAIL DESIGNER: JASON JONES, LARCH LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | **TRAIL DESIGNER, PROFESSIONAL TRAIL BUILDER** BRADY STARR, STARR TRAIL SOLUTIONS | **INPUT FROM** KOOTENAY ADAPTIVE SPORT ASSOCIATION (KASA) (MIKE RIEDIGER – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, KIMBERLY JOINES – ADAPTIVE RIDER, BLAIR JONES – ADAPTIVE RIDER) | **PHOTOGRAPHER** CLAIRE DIBBLE



1

CHARLES THOMSEN + MONICA GIESBRECHT

# A LANDSCAPE FOR PEACE – TIMELESS OR TIMELY

## THE EVOLUTION OF A LIVING CULTURAL LANDSCAPE AT THE INTERNATIONAL PEACE GARDENS

>FR\_LP+ UN PAYSAGE POUR LA PAIX – INTEMPOREL OU OPPORTUN  
L'évolution d'un paysage culturel vivant au Jardin international de la paix

*The International Peace Gardens are located on Treaty No. 2 Territory, the home of the Chippewa, Dakota, Ojibway peoples and the traditional summer grounds of the Red River Métis.*

### DESIGNED LANDSCAPES ARE

invariably underpinned by human aspirations and ideals. What happens when a fundamental human idea such as “Peace”, and a place devoted to the contemplation and advancement of this idea, evolves and changes over time? Can a living cultural landscape with a rich history adapt to celebrate historic ideas and thoughts, while remaining relevant to current and future generations?

In the fall of 2020, facing increased cultural and economic conflict, the COVID-19 pandemic, extreme climate events and worldwide cultural divisions, the International Peace Garden (IPG) between Boissevain, Manitoba, and Dunseith, North Dakota, secured matching funding from Canada and the United States to contemplate the future of the gardens in this ever-changing reality.

The IPG is rooted in the ideals of peace expressed by Dr. Henry Moore in 1928. In the calm following WWI, people around the globe believed that a peaceful coexistence between nations was a worthwhile and achievable ideal. Moore, a Canadian

1 WALKING ON THE BORDER THROUGH THE NATURALIZED WETLANDS AND GRASSLANDS OF THE WEST CASCADES 2 TURTLE MOUNTAIN NATURE PLAY PARK BEAVER CREEK PLAY AREA  
IMAGES 1, 2 HTFC PLANNING & DESIGN RENDERING 2021



**The core beliefs and mission of an organization are the foundation of meaningful and inspiring places defined by landscape form.**

horticulturalist affiliated with London's Kew Gardens, envisioned the creation of one of the largest and most beautiful gardens in the world, spanning the globe's longest undefended border along the 49th Parallel that separates Canada from the United States. A site was selected near the geographic centre of the continent, suggesting the centering notion of peace and gathering. The ambitious concept celebrated peace by including plants native to each country, with greenhouses and conservatories, individual gardens of different styles and purposes, a school for horticultural education and training and even a radio station to broadcast messages of peace.

Hugh Vincent Feehan, a landscape architect from Minneapolis, developed the first plan for the IPG in 1933. In keeping with Moore's wishes, this plan proposed a formal, symmetrical, mile (1.6km) long east-west garden along the border axis, inspired by the Beaux Arts and City Beautiful design movement, bisected at the mid-point by a shorter north-south axis garden. Stretching west from the Customs Offices on Highways 10 (Manitoba) and 3 (North

Dakota), the gardens would terminate with a Peace Tower at the far west end.

The depression delayed development, and in 1939, Walter F. Clarke, a U.S. National Park Service landscape architect, refined Feehan's original plan, adding a formal

pond at the centre of the site and several new structures. Limited resources and the advent of WWII delayed construction of this plan until the early 1950s. Slow progress saw a number of features proposed by well-meaning board members and local interest groups, built to various styles and standards over the ensuing 20 years. These well-intentioned developments contributed to a disjointed layout, lacking coherence or connection to the original theme of peace.

By the 1980s, it was evident that a new plan was required to restore clarity to the Gardens and a new IPG planning committee updated the master plan by 1992. This plan maintained and celebrated the international boundary as the principle organizing element, with spatial development along the axis organized from east to west to reflect the sequence of national and prairie settlement. A series of cross axes were introduced to express both shared and contrasting approaches to peace between the US and Canada. A garden that moved along the central axis from



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formal geometries to curvilinear shapes inspired by nature was envisioned as a means of exploring relationships between humans and the land. The disciplined formal geometry of the east gardens, and the more sinuous geometry of the west gardens flowed into the central, organic cloverleaf pond. The formal design characterized by the east half remained a clear expression of colonial “control” over nature, while the informal west half of the garden introduced a growing respect for nature and the surrounding landscape of the Turtle Mountains.

Over the last two decades, more special interest projects (9-11 Memorial Garden, Global Peace Stones, donated public art, etc.) with limited design review have been accommodated throughout the IPG. These unplanned installations, aging infrastructure and changing times have led the IPG leadership, and the two countries who support the gardens, to

again renew consideration of the purpose and future of the gardens.

Our collaborative planning team, led by landscape architects, with Indigenous knowledge keepers, architects, engineers, cross-border gardens champions, gardens staff, board members and volunteers came together to contemplate a new path forward. We worked to find ways the gardens could embody shifting attitudes towards diversity, inclusion, land stewardship, sustainability and the modern meaning of peace. We also explored what was *missing* from the gardens discourse on peace. The team asked hard questions about the colonial roots of the gardens, the relevance and sustainability of all the various garden amenities, and the value of maintaining, refurbishing or repurposing various iconic features.

Emerging as programming ideas for the future were the development of a nature playground, Indigenous storytelling places, public art from a wider variety of cultures, the life-giving power of water, native prairie restoration and local reforestation.

The intense, interactive process of discussion, research and introspection led the group to focus on three key goals. First, to become *Rooted in the Turtle Mountains* by going beyond geo-political boundaries to reconnect with the land and reintegrate sustainable local ecologies throughout the gardens. Second, to *Create Common Ground* and ensure that diverse cultures are welcomed into an interwoven path to peace with a special focus on the voices of Indigenous and marginalized groups. Third, to *Meditate on the Construct of Peace* using the design and history of the gardens to underpin a layered unfurling of our past, present and future.

The result of this groundwork was to focus on three projects as the first steps in redeveloping the Peace Gardens into a challenging, educational and inspiring destination. The refurbishment and reconfiguration of the Border Gardens, the expansion of the Vitko Visitors Centre and Conservatory, and the creation of the Turtle Mountain Nature Play Park will begin the process of bringing connection, forgiveness, reconciliation and peace into the lives of



garden visitors. Each project sensitively and progressively balances garden history with new programs, amenities and technologies.

The most iconic part of the Peace Gardens, the Border Gardens, symbolically erase a section of the Canada/USA border, connecting two allied geopolitical entities through landscape while revealing the idea that for the First Peoples of North America this border did not and does not exist. The main organizing element of the Border Gardens is a water channel with expansive vistas created by over four metres of elevation change from east and west down to the central reflecting pool. Terraces, ponds and gardens that narrow, expand and weave along the border line accentuate the fluid connections between these countries.

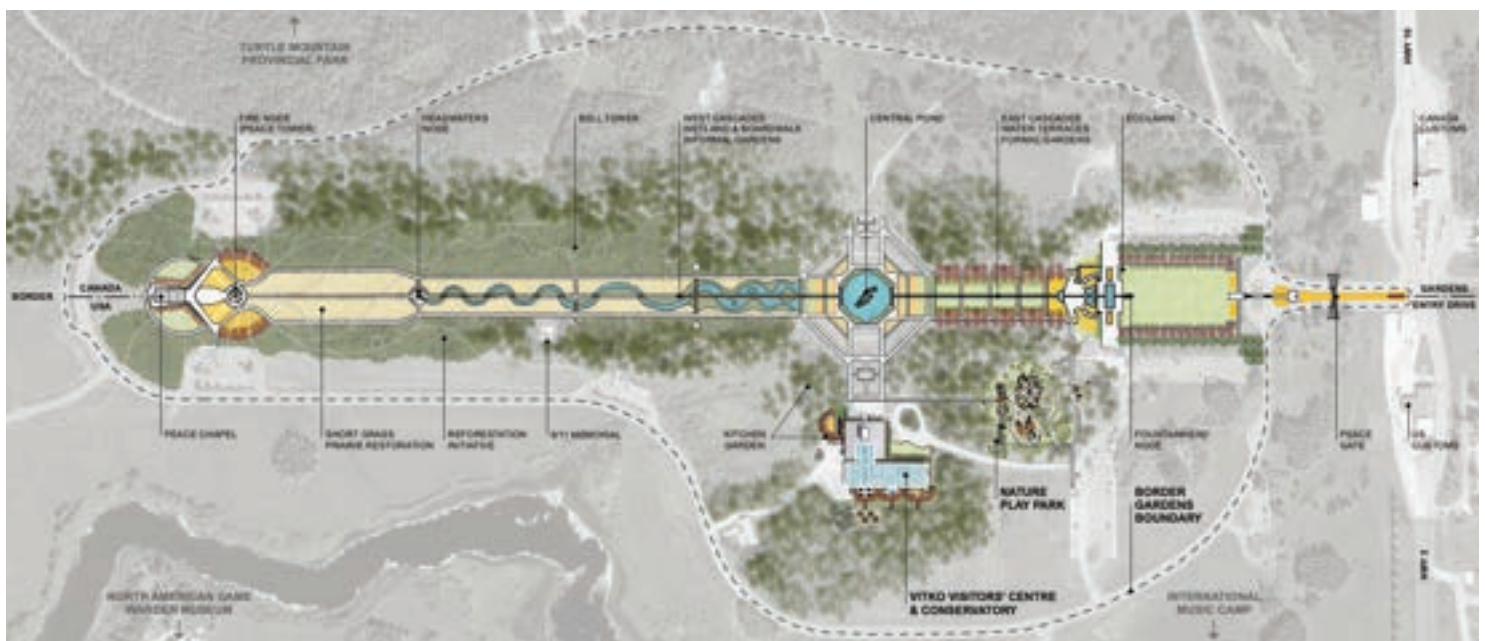
Revitalization begins with reimagining the formal east garden water terraces as places for people to intimately connect with water. A new mirrored fountain gate at the east end of the gardens, surrounded by a clover eco-lawn for large ceremonies, creates a starting point to the garden experience, literally and figuratively reflecting on the history of the site.

Retaining the formal geometry, refurbished channels, terraces and pools will be accompanied by new seat walls, pathways, bridges, lawns, native and adaptive perennial gardens that bring visitors in direct contact with the water.

The west garden renovations amplify the intent of the 1992 master plan. Reimagined as a river ecosystem emanating from an artesian spring, the naturalized water feature will meander and widen as it flows into a miniature delta at the central reflecting pool, flowing across a border edged by shelves of native wetlands and surrounded by shortgrass prairie meadows. In both the east and west areas, the water channel will be reconstructed to reduce water usage and increase efficiency, while a pathway and boardwalk lying directly over the border allows visitors to travel along this invisible seam in the west gardens. The central reflecting pool will be enhanced by water stairs, floating wetland islands, and a large sculpture of migrating Canada Geese taking flight across the continent. The enhancements will allow the central pool to be used as a skating rink in the winter, while improved lighting will create a festival of colour throughout the gardens during this important prairie season associated with

**According to local First Nations legends, The Turtle Mountains area where the gardens are located have been a special summer gathering place for the peaceful discussion and resolution of conflicts and differences for thousands of years. This landscape is an ancient peace brokering ground. It has deep credibility and purpose as a cross-cultural meeting place. Despite shifting cultures, faiths and politics across this land, this special place already supports and embodies the ideals of peace the creation of an International Peace Garden strives to celebrate and spread to all.**

*—Indigenous Advisory Circle Story*





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rest and regeneration within the annual cycle of life.

Over time, a prairie meadow in the western gardens will extend further to a new fire node and refurbished peace chapel, surrounded by wildflower gardens and paths dispersing in all directions. Formal treed allées flanking the gardens will be enhanced by succession plantings of red maple (*Acer rubrum*) and Ohio buckeye (*Aesculus glabra*), while surrounding forest buffers will be reinforced by a multi-year native reforestation project.

The Vitko Visitors Centre and Conservatory expansion enhances the Peace Gardens' indoor gathering spaces, gift shop, restaurant, educational areas and succulent garden, making them

**6** HEADWATERS NODE **7** VITKO CONSERVATORY EXPANSION EVENING **8** TURTLE MOUNTAIN NATURE PLAY PARK TURTLE HILL PLAY AREA  
**IMAGES 6,8** HTFC PLANNING & DESIGN RENDERING 2021 **7** JLG ARCHITECTS & HTFC PLANNING & DESIGN RENDERING 2021

more accessible and facilitating year-round use. Using passive technologies and geothermal heating to operate in the most energy efficient and sustainable manner possible, the building will include an exhibition on the gardens' history and a farm-to-table restaurant with outdoor kitchen and garden patio. The renovation will increase rental event capacity and improve educational tour potential.

The new Turtle Mountain Nature Play Park, nestled in a cottonwood/aspen grove south of the formal gardens, creates a playful link to the adjacent Visitor Centre. The nature-focused play area will allow visitors to explore the geological, natural and cultural history of the region through the habitats of various animals who call this area home. Carved from existing landform and forest, and inspired by local Indigenous legends, the park includes a central "turtle" climbing hill; a rugged "wolf" zone punctuated by limestone climbing cliffs and howling tubes; a dynamic sandy "beaver/muskrat"

**Ongoing renovation and revitalization of special places like the IPG must recognize and respond to the dynamic forces of the past, contemporary events of the present and hidden histories yet untold.**



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creek complete with a dam, lodge, mudbank, weir, canoe, and reed grass delta; and a quieter “eagle” play zone, including an elevated nest platform and large-scale eggs. A teaching circle with a fire pit acts as a central gathering space where local elders will share stories of the Turtle Mountains with school groups and visitors. Replanting includes native and medicinal aspen forest understory species for harvesting and use in arts and crafts projects at the visitor centre.

Cultural landscapes are living landscapes that continually evolve. Designing and managing these places is a fluid process that carefully considers the layers of history on significant sites. Ongoing renovation and revitalization of special places like the IPG must recognize and respond to the dynamic forces of the past, contemporary events of the present and hidden histories yet untold. As Tim Chapman (IPG CEO) remarked at the groundbreaking ceremonies for the

new Nature Play Park and Conservatory Expansion in the summer of 2021:

“As we look out over this beautiful vista along the 49th parallel, we see breathtaking displays from this year’s theme: “Building for the Future”. The large, colorful, geometric patterns are a nod to the building blocks and construction underway to set the Garden up for a more sustainable future in the heart of our continent, the heart of Turtle Island. The new developments will serve the general public, research institutions and most importantly,

the youth of the Peace Garden State, the Province of Manitoba and our Tribal and First Nations Partners. By enhancing our year-round offerings, The International Peace Garden is working to create meaningful, lasting programming advocating for peace through themes of conservation, recreation and cooperation.”

Landscape architects must strive to be sensitive translators of the interwoven stories and ideals that create a true sense of authenticity and belonging in our landscapes. **LP**

**2020 MASTER PLAN AND REVITALIZATION PROJECTS TEAM** IPG BOARD AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE | IPG BUILDINGS AND HORTICULTURE STAFF | **PROJECT MANAGERS** COLLIER'S PROJECT LEADERS MANITOBA | **GENERAL CONTRACTORS** BOCKSTAEL CONSTRUCTION, MANITOBA; CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERS, NORTH DAKOTA | **PRIME CONSULTANT** LM ARCHITECTURAL GROUP, MANITOBA | **LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS AND LAND USE PLANNERS** HTFC PLANNING & DESIGN, MANITOBA | **CONSERVATORY ARCHITECTURE** JLG ARCHITECTS, NORTH DAKOTA | **ASSOCIATED ENGINEERS** S/M/E/C SERVICES, NORTH DAKOTA | **STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS** CROSIER KILGOUR MANITOBA | **ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS** SMS INC., MANITOBA | **CIVIL ENGINEERS** SISION BLACKBURN INC., MANITOBA



JEAN-GABRIEL CHIASSEON + LIZ WREFORD

# CALGARY'S HIGH PARK: MAKING THE MOST OF RESIDUAL SPACES IN OUR CITIES

FR\_LP+ HIGH PARK DE CALGARY :  
VALORISER LES ESPACES  
RÉSIDUELS DE NOS VILLES

High Park ... est un nouvel espace public emblématique situé dans le quartier Beltline. Le projet consistait à réaménager le toit d'un garage de six étages afin de remédier au manque d'espace public disponible dans le centre-ville.

**IN SEPTEMBER 2021**, the Beltline Neighbourhoods Association (BNA) inaugurated the second of three phases for High Park ([www.beltlineyyc.ca/highparkyyc](http://www.beltlineyyc.ca/highparkyyc)), an adaptive re-use project that successfully converted an underused, multi-level parkade into one of Downtown Calgary's largest public spaces. High Park, designed by landscape architect Public City and supported by the Calgary Parking Authority, is a new signature public space located in the Beltline – one of Calgary's densest urban communities and home to 25,000 residents – that re-imagines a rooftop parking lot six floors above street level as a way to remedy a lack of available public space in the inner city. Designed

**1** HIGH PARK'S BRAND NEW PERFORMANCE SPACE DOUBLING AS A FREESTANDING SHADE FOR THE COMFORT OF ITS VISITORS **2** A SHOT OF HIGH PARK AT DUSK SHOWCASING THE WARM LIGHTING OF THE SPACE AND ITS ADAPTABILITY TO NIGHT TIME USE **3** HIGH PARK HAS NOW BECOME A PART OF THE CALGARY SKYLINE, FEATURING OTHER ICONIC BUILDINGS LIKE THE CALGARY TOWER AND THE NEW TELUS SKY BY BJARKE INGEL'S GROUP (BIG)  
**PHOTOS 1** BELTLINE NEIGHBOURHOODS ASSOCIATION (BNA) **2** PUBLIC CITY ARCHITECTURE



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and implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic to meet the needs of a changing urban landscape, the space provides much needed additional public space in the community.

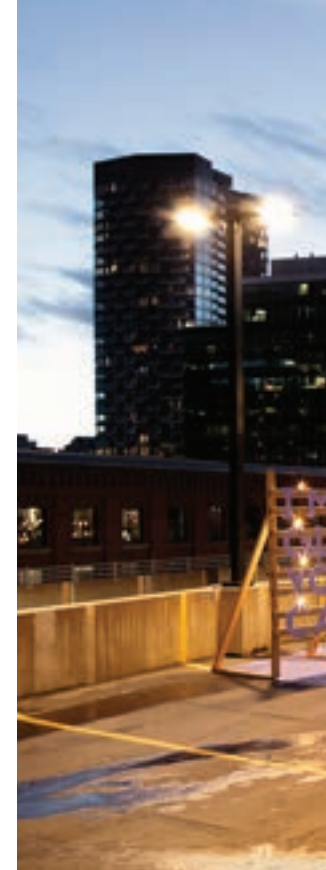
Since the initial October 2020 installation of High Park and its subsequent expansion the following summer, we have been observing and recording how people are using the space through on-site engagement and social media. Despite programming opportunities being limited due to COVID-19, many creative uses for the space have been observed, including

leisure walks (for humans and dogs), active play (e.g., biking, skating, scooting and running), picnics, yoga classes, birthday parties and weekend bicycle trip meet-ups. Couples have gotten married at High Park, fitness clubs have held regular weekly training, and music festivals have adapted their events for smaller, more socially distanced audiences in the space.

## The Re-Use Movement in North America

The term *adaptive re-use* is often thought of in the context of architectural rehabilitation or for the conversion of

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**These projects exemplify a larger movement within the landscape architecture and city-building professions to re-think the function of residual spaces in our cities ...**

interior spaces, but it is increasingly applied to the public realm as a way to reprogram the function of outdoor spaces and to clarify what it means for space to be made “public”. Since the start of the pandemic, adaptive re-use has entered the spotlight as municipalities across the country have relaxed street-use permitting requirements and other public-use regulations to facilitate the reclaiming of space typically reserved for cars. For commercial corridors, such as Calgary’s 17th Avenue and Kensington Road, the City has reallocated car space to pedestrians and cyclists without fundamentally altering the built form of the streetscape.

While these changes may seem temporary, the incremental annexation of residual

space on a city-wide scale can cause citizens and city councillors alike to pay closer attention to the potential of underused assets in our communities. In the same month that we inaugurated the second phase of High Park, Jardin Éthel – a project with a similar mission to re-appropriate vacant space and promote healthy urban living in Montreal’s Verdun community – was voted into the city’s first “participatory budget” pilot. More than 20,000 citizens recognized the value of reactivating existing infrastructure in their community and approved an investment to create a permanent staircase connecting the adjacent Rue Wellington to the upper levels of the parkade. The temporary and relatively low-cost activation paved the

way for greater community attachment to the parkade and consequently led to a more significant public investment in the project.

Other, perhaps more recognized, landscape architecture projects have implemented much more significant levels of investment in their adaptive re-use of existing structures. The High Park project draws inspiration from many other such initiatives across both Canada and North America, including established projects such as New York’s High Line and Chicago’s 606, as well as forthcoming developments, including the LA River Master Plan. These projects exemplify a larger movement within the landscape architecture and city-building professions to re-think the function of residual spaces in our cities, and to provide adaptive solutions to aging infrastructure.



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### The Design

As a design-build project with a limited budget and short timeline, High Park is an example of a new kind of landscape architecture that almost instantly inserts a vibrant park into existing urban infrastructure in a surprising and delightful way.

Phase I of High Park, also designed by Public City, was an “engagement hub”, that initiated conversations about how structures for cars and trucks can creatively serve the community. QR codes were placed throughout the park to allow visitors to share their ideas for what the park could be and to contribute to the conversation.

For Phase I, a 200-foot (approx. 60m) long wooden boardwalk was installed to run east-west across the length of the 90,000 ft<sup>2</sup> (8361.2736m<sup>2</sup>) site, connecting a series of

parklets that now occupy the former stalls of the parking lot. Each colour-themed parklet is framed by a sign panel with a positive phrase designed to be shared, photographed and used as inspiration for activities to bring people together, both physically and virtually. Areas of reclaimed artificial turf run alongside the boardwalk and larger turf areas provide space for more active uses and events. Painted arrows invite people (not cars!) to circulate around the park. Each parklet contains a single picnic table, painted in dynamic, eye-catching colours to draw in park visitors. Adapting to public health regulations, the traditional picnic table

was re-designed to allow for gathering with sufficient physical distance.

The design of Phase II of High Park responded to the feedback Public City and the Beltline Neighbourhoods Association received during Phase I. Installed in September 2021, this phase includes a stage/shade structure that can be used for small concerts and events. Active elements requested by the community such as a seesaw, swinging benches, a ping pong table, a “corn hole” game and a long jump pit, as well as additional seating and lounging spaces, were also key features of Phase II. Each element is designed to be the size of

**4** HIGH PARK HELD A GRAFFITI JAM WITH RENOWNED LOCAL ARTISTS AS PART OF THE BELTLINE URBAN MURALS PROJECT (BUMP) 2021 FESTIVAL **5** FROM A TOP-DOWN PERSPECTIVE, HIGH PARK CONTRASTS THE USE OF SPACE FOR CARS WITH THE POSSIBILITIES OF A SPACE FOR PEOPLE **6** THE PARK'S LOWER DECK IS EASILY ADAPTED TO HOST LOCAL EVENTS SUCH AS MUSIC FESTIVALS, ARTS & CULTURAL EVENTS AS WELL AS FITNESS CLASSES FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS  
PHOTOS 3,5 ERIC GONZALEZ 4,6 BOREAL PRODUCTIONS



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one parking stall so that, in the event that the parking structure needs to be used for vehicles again in the future, the pieces can be reassembled in on-street parking spaces throughout the neighbourhood.

Elements for both phases were fabricated remotely to limit the install time on site to about four days per phase. To date, 20 murals have also been added to the parkade, in collaboration with the Beltline Urban Murals Project (BUMP) Festival, visible from both the street and from atop the parkade. The murals begin to break up the heavy, grey concrete with an engaging and delightful tapestry.

### Aging Infrastructure

High Park is designed to layer multiple uses where single-use typology is the norm. Common multi-level parking structures are essentially single-use buildings that occupy a large part of our major cities without

much diversity. As these buildings age and their use begins to decline, they provoke a conversation about what we can do with our aging infrastructure and how we can re-frame its role in urban neighbourhoods. The intention with High Park was to shake visitors free of everything they know about parking lots and the generic use-specific designation of urban land. It is a provocation to consider the prescriptive authority of designated land planning borne out of “less-is-more” or “form-follows-function” thinking applied to urban planning over the last century. At High Park, *more is more* and *form follows pleasure*.

### A Forum for Public Engagement

Engagement is baked into the multi-phase strategy of the project. High Park Phase I was installed in early October 2020 and was immediately embraced by both the Beltline community and Calgarians at large. Along with on-site engagement and social media interactions, two engagement surveys were completed by visitors and the general public as part of Phase I. The first round of engagement was designed to obtain general feedback about High Park and other potential unconventional park spaces in the Beltline. The second phase of engagement

asked the public for direct input about park elements that visitors would like to see included in Phase II, which was then used to develop the design concept for Phase II of High Park. The final proposal was presented in March 2021 and successfully implemented over the following months. This feedback loop will be followed into the third phase of the project and allows the space to become iterative, adapting each phase to the needs of community members as they continue to use the space.

### The Value of Temporary Programming

The dynamic nature of more ephemeral landscape and public space design projects encourages citizens to pay closer attention to the function of public space in their neighbourhoods. The constant change of urban furnishings and seasonal installation of patios can give a sense of novelty that has the potential to attract more users to a space. While having a low financial cost, these temporary conversions are also advantageous in their low environmental costs, and can allow both municipalities and community groups to pilot the activation of a space prior to committing to a larger, riskier investment in a new public plaza or park. This is one of the ultimate goals of High Park: to shift perspectives on the existing built form of our cities so that we can leverage that infrastructure and provide a platform for users of a space to determine its function.

### Moving Forward Together

At High Park we can now greet each other and share our stories in little parklets situated high up in the air, and we can celebrate being together while apart during these tumultuous times. What was once only a concrete structure on our streetscape with no space for people has now become a gathering place and outdoor gallery for public art. There are still opportunities for growth in the space and, together with our collaborative team of public- and private-sector stakeholders, we will ensure High Park YYC continues to be a valuable public space for Calgary in the future. **LP**



**PROJECT TEAM** | CLIENT BELTLINE NEIGHBOURHOODS ASSOCIATION (BNA) | **MUNICIPAL PARTNERS** CALGARY PARKING AUTHORITY (CPA) | **PROJECT MANAGERS** PETER OLIVER, JEAN-GABRIEL CHIASSON, LIZ WREFORD, TAMARA MARAJH | **GENERAL CONTRACTORS** WOOD ANCHOR, YRK YPK  
**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS** PUBLIC CITY | **ENGINEERS** READ JONES CHRISTOFFERSEN (RJC)



PATRICIA LUSSIER

# LA PLACE DES MONTRÉALAISES : FAIRE PLACE À LA FEMME DANS L'ESPACE PUBLIC

## METTRE L'HUMAIN AU PREMIER PLAN ET FAIRE PLACE AUX FEMMES DANS L'ESPACE PUBLIC

FR\_LP+ PLACE DES  
MONTRÉALAISES: MAKING PLACE  
FOR WOMEN IN PUBLIC SPACES

A look at how urban space can put the human element front and centre and how it encourages us to reflect on the role of women in the city's evolution.

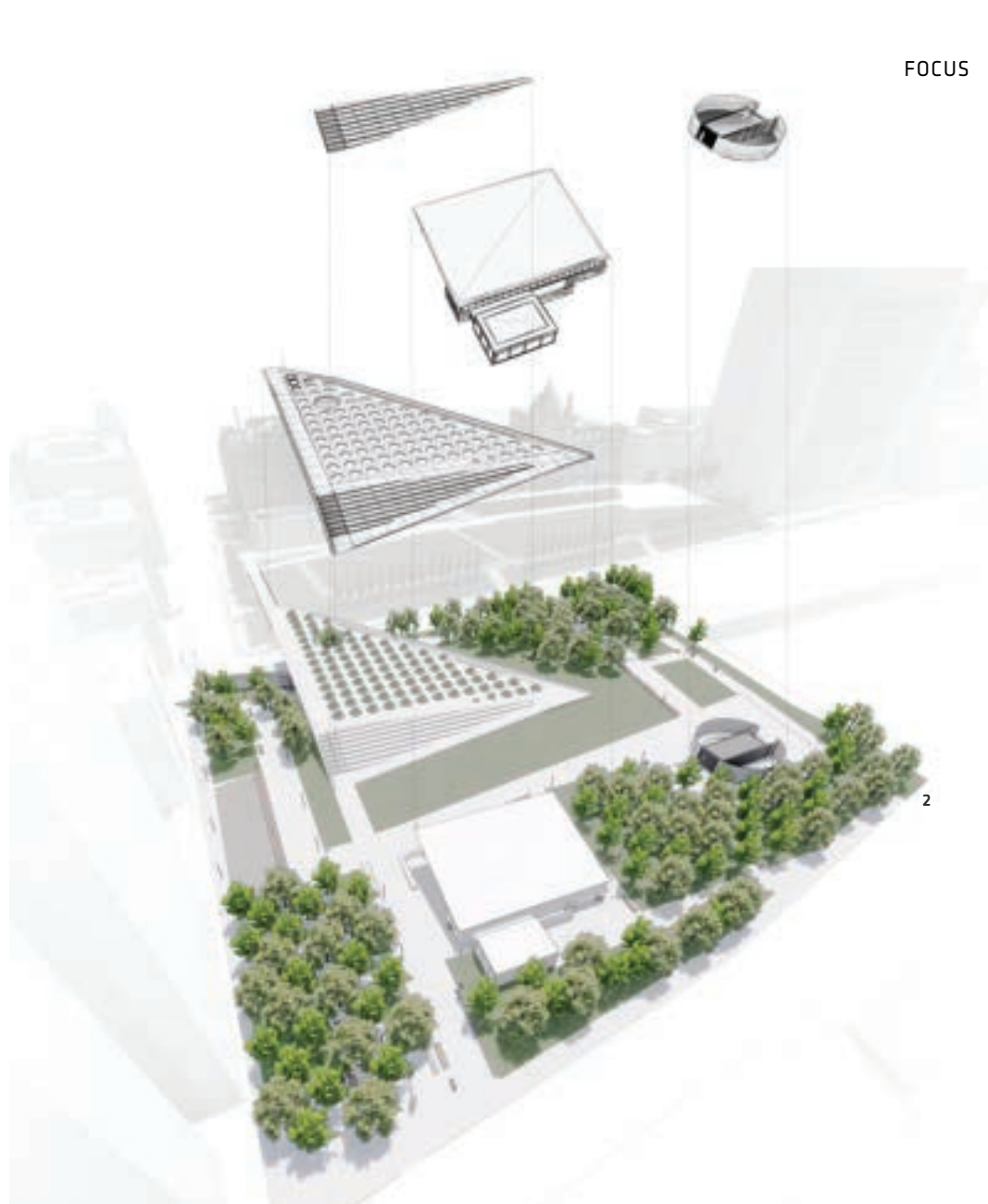
L'article propose un portrait de la future place des Montréalaises sous l'angle d'un changement de paradigme : comment l'espace urbain peut ramener l'humain au premier plan et comment il peut susciter la réflexion sur la place de femme dans l'évolution de la ville.

**UNE NOUVELLE DESTINATION** de marque viendra s'inscrire dans le paysage montréalais en 2024. En développement depuis 2017, la place des Montréalaises fusionne architecture, art et architecture de paysage pour rendre hommage à des femmes ayant marqué et façonné la ville. La direction conceptuelle que j'assure avec mon collègue Andrew King de Lemay, en

codirection avec l'artiste Angela Silver et avec la collaboration de nos partenaires SNC Lavalin et ELEMA, donnera lieu à un espace situé au cœur d'un des secteurs les plus prestigieux de la métropole. La nouvelle place retisse physiquement et spirituellement les liens entre la ville ancienne et la ville contemporaine, de même qu'entre le passé, le présent et le

PHOTOS TOUTES LES PHOTOS  
LEMAY + ANGELA SILVER





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futur. Une nouvelle histoire inspirante, au pouvoir de transmission évocateur, s'impose dans le paysage tout en ramenant le site à l'échelle humaine. Un pré fleuri, réel bouquet de fleurs géant offert aux femmes, se dépose et recouvre une cicatrice béante générée par l'ouverture d'une autoroute au flux incessant de voitures, témoin d'une époque révolue.

Point de repère flottant au-dessus de l'autoroute Ville-Marie, entre la nouvelle ville et la ville fondatrice, le projet de la place des Montréalaises joue un rôle important dans la réconciliation de ce territoire symbolique et disloqué par les grands ouvrages de transport ayant marqué l'évolution du secteur. La place des Montréalaises redonne paix et tranquillité à la ville et au quartier. Ce nouvel espace offre résilience, biodiversité et animation dans un cadre de découverte emblématique. Une succession dynamique de moments soigneusement conçus projette la célébration de la femme dans un narratif

paysager, architectural et artistique. Une série d'objets emblématiques positionnés soigneusement favorisent la création d'espaces aimants, des espaces qui attirent, séduisent et touchent. Ces lieux conviviaux constitués d'espaces ouverts, d'espaces boisés, de zones de rencontre, de repos et de recueils ramènent l'humain au premier plan et suscitent la réflexion sur la place de la femme dans l'évolution de la ville.

### Une conception imprégnée d'histoire

Issue d'un concours international d'architecture de paysage pluridisciplinaire en 2017, la place des Montréalaises émerge grâce une succession de couches historiques représentant la force, l'acharnement et la volonté d'esprits libres et revendicateurs de femmes, de bâtisseuses et de victimes. Les éléments de compositions se succèdent et s'assemblent dans un dialogue inclusif et inspirant. Un miroir majestueux, un emmarchement grandiose et un pré fleuri composé de 21

plantes représentant chacune des femmes célébrées constituent une succession d'espaces intimes permettant de placer la femme au cœur de l'espace public.

*Les dénominations toponymiques reflètent la richesse de notre héritage culturel, patrimonial et urbain au fil du temps, et permettent de faire rayonner les grandes personnalités qui ont marqué l'histoire des Montréalais.*

—Toponym'Elles, 2016

*Sur les quelque 6000 toponymes de la ville, les hommes dominent présentement le panorama toponymique avec plus de 50 % des dénominations. Les femmes ne représentent pour le moment que 6 %. Le reste des toponymes est composé de noms de familles et d'appellations neutres, et ce, pour 6 grandes villes du Québec (Gatineau, Laval, Lévis, Longueuil, Montréal, Québec et Saguenay).*

—La toponymie québécoise au féminin

Un pré fleuri, réel bouquet de fleurs géant offert aux femmes, se dépose et recouvre une cicatrice béante générée par l'ouverture d'une autoroute au flux incessant de voitures, témoin d'une époque révolue.

S'inscrivant dans la continuité de l'initiative de la Ville de Montréal pour une plus grande reconnaissance des femmes par la création de lieux, la Place des Montréalaises est conçue pour incarner son objectif : créer une place publique qui rend hommage à toutes les femmes. Dans un geste poétique et unificateur, les femmes ayant façonné la place des Montréalaises prennent vie dans l'espace afin de créer un réel changement de paradigme.

La requalification du site de la place des Montréalaises ne se limite pas à la revitalisation d'un secteur stérile voué à l'automobile. Elle ajoute une couche de transformation supplémentaire sur un site ayant connu de multiples transformations à travers le temps. Son évolution est ici racontée par 21 femmes aux vies complètement différentes et éclectiques allant de la fondation de la ville, au droit de vote des femmes, à la physique nucléaire et même à l'accès des femmes au hockey. Dans ces 21 noms choisis par le Conseil des Montréalaises, nous trouvons une rupture dans la tradition des sculptures de bronze, et un lieu qui incarne l'égalité et l'inclusion.

Ainsi, l'évocation de *Jeanne Mance* (1606-1673) marque le début de l'histoire du lieu. Cofondatrice de Montréal en



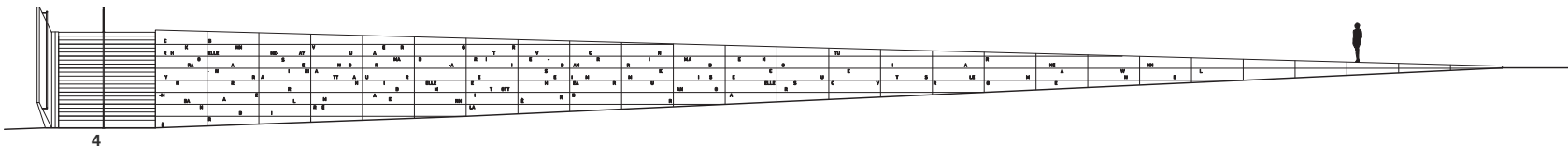
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1642, elle est encore aujourd'hui un emblème de force et de bienveillance. Situé à la frange nord des anciennes fortifications du Vieux-Montréal, le site autrefois constitué de prairies bucoliques foulées par les Iroquois, l'emplacement de la place des Montréalaises se voit rapidement transformé avec l'évolution des faubourgs du Vieux-Montréal. Le ruisseau Saint-Martin est alors partiellement canalisé à l'emplacement de la place des Montréalaises. Durant cette période, *Marie-Josèphe-Angélique* (1710-1734) s'inscrit aussi dans l'histoire en tant qu'esclave et symbole de la résistance des Noirs et de la liberté. Un espace d'introspection lui est dédié afin de célébrer sa vie et son combat.

C'est seulement à partir du début du XIXe siècle que la ville extra-muros s'organise. Une multitude de vastes projets d'embellissement et d'assainissement se succèdent alors créant une multiplication de couches successives de renouveau.

Avec la démolition des fortifications, on voit apparaître en 1813 les premiers aménagements du champ de Mars sur le site que nous connaissons aujourd'hui. Le rythme de développement de la ville prend alors son envol.

Dans les années 1850, le site de la place des Montréalaises est couvert de bâtiments marquant l'effervescence de la période industrielle. Tandis que le tissu urbain et les constructions du secteur connaissent une densification importante, se succèdent alors de multiples combats de femmes déterminées à se créer une place dans la collectivité majoritairement dominée par l'homme. Ainsi, Harriet Brooks (1876 – 1933) devient la première physicienne nucléaire canadienne, Idola Saint-Jean (1880 – 1945) milite pour le droit de vote des femmes, Ida Roth Steinberg (1885-1945) fonde les supermarchés Steinberg tandis que Agnès Vautier (1896-1976) triomphe dans la première ligue de hockey féminine.



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## La place des Montréalaises redonne paix et tranquillité à la ville et au quartier. Ce nouvel espace offre résilience, biodiversité et animation dans un cadre de découverte emblématique.

Avec la période de l'entre-deux-guerres, la popularité croissante de l'automobile commence à transformer le paysage urbain. Le champ de Mars est alors transformé en stationnement dès 1930. Au début des années 1960, le quadrilatère du site tel que nous le connaissons aujourd'hui prend forme. Durant ces années, *Jessie Maxwell Smith (1920-2000)*, une éducatrice, contribue à l'accès à l'éducation pour la communauté noire.

L'arrivée du métro en 1966 insufflé un renouveau contemporain dans un secteur en requalification et constitue, encore aujourd'hui, une station emblématique

de la ville. *Marcelle Ferron (1924-2001)*, artiste peintre, inaugure en 1968 son œuvre lumineuse de la verrière de la station de métro Champ-de-Mars. Puis, en 1973, à proximité du site est érigé la tour de Radio-Canada où *Myra Cree (1937-2005)*, autochtone d'origine mohawk, devient la première femme à occuper le poste de chef d'antenne.

Malgré la discontinuité paysagère générée par l'autoroute Ville-Marie dès 1970, la proximité des grandes institutions publiques comme l'hôtel de ville, le palais de justice et la cour municipale contribuent néanmoins à préserver l'attrait du secteur.

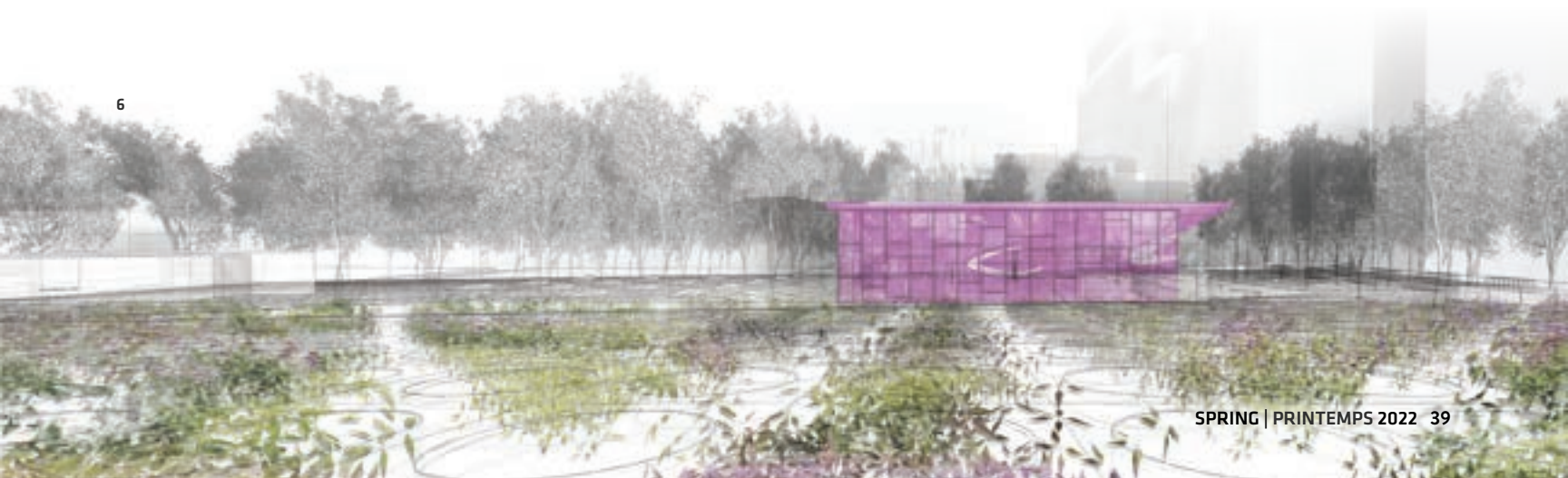
La présence de la cité administrative permet ainsi de générer une planification mettant de l'avant l'aspect noble de ses bâtiments institutionnels composant le front de l'arrondissement historique du Vieux-Montréal.

À la fin des années 1980, la ville entière se fige sous l'effet d'une onde de choc émanant du versant nord du Mont-Royal. Un drame assombrit la ville et marque à jamais l'histoire de Montréal de façon tragique. En 1989, le Féminicide de l'École polytechnique de Montréal inscrit dans la mémoire collective le souvenir des 14 femmes victimes de cette tuerie. La place des Montréalaises leur réserve une place de choix pour mettre en évidence notre devoir de mémoire.

Peu de temps après, du début des années 1990 à aujourd'hui, le secteur hérite d'une multitude de grands projets fédérateurs marquant le paysage actuel du site. En plus de l'aménagement de la nouvelle esplanade du champ de Mars sur l'ancien stationnement dans le cadre des festivités marquant le 350<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de Montréal, l'arrivée du nouveau CHUM et son centre de recherche (CR-CHUM), la restauration et revitalisation de la cité administrative incluant la projection Cité mémoire, qui vient animer le mur aveugle du palais de justice et la place Vauquelin, qui profite d'un réaménagement complet, et le site de la place des Montréalaises.

Depuis la réalisation des projets du Quartier international et du Palais des congrès en lien avec le début du recouvrement de l'autoroute Ville-Marie,

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un chapelet d'espaces verts ravive le secteur depuis le pont Jacques-Cartier jusqu'au square Victoria. S'ajoutant à la transformation actuelle du square Viger, la place des Montréalaises participe à cette revitalisation contemporaine.

### Un espace commémoratif et un lieu de rassemblement

Le projet ramène l'échelle humaine au cœur des préoccupations afin d'assurer la sécurité, le confort et l'expérience des usagers sur un site dominé par la voiture, la vitesse, le bruit et la stérilité. Deux quartiers importants de la métropole se rencontrent grâce à un pré fleuri surplombant la tranchée de l'autoroute Ville-Marie présente depuis la fin des années 1960. Celui-ci devient un bouquet de fleurs verdoyant ramenant résilience, lenteur et calme. En plus d'honorer la mémoire de 21 femmes qui occupent une place importante dans l'évolution de Montréal, ce pré fleuri permet de donner une nouvelle vie à un secteur important de la ville en offrant un nouvel espace adapté aux piétons et aux déplacements actifs. En effet, l'époque où le béton était synonyme de progrès et où les villes favorisaient l'utilisation de la voiture étant révolue, la nouvelle place permettra aux citoyens et aux visiteurs d'arpenter un îlot de fraîcheur situé à proximité de lieux hautement symboliques comme la place

Vauquelin, l'hôtel de ville et le CHUM, de même que la station de métro du Champ-de-Mars et sa célèbre verrière qui est l'œuvre de Marcelle Ferron.

Le concept pour la place des Montréalaises se démarque par la prédominance des femmes à l'honneur à travers chacun des éléments de composition. Un miroir hommage relance le reflet du visiteur et engage à la réflexion. Cette œuvre circulaire arbore noblement le nom de chacune des femmes à l'honneur. Les lettres perforées dans l'acier inoxydable offrent un spectacle qui rend hommage aux bâtisseuses du côté sud de l'anneau, tandis que le côté nord expose le nom des victimes dans un devoir de mémoire soulignant dans un geste puissant le féminicide de la tuerie de l'école Polytechnique. En vis-à-vis, au cœur du pré fleuri, un emmarchement grandiose arbore les lettres pêle-mêle de chacun des noms des femmes célébrées. Dans un geste inclusif, ce champ de lettres réfléchissantes incrustées dans le béton devient la matière première où puiser pour créer de nouveaux noms à célébrer. Un triangle de dialogue s'établit entre le miroir, la place Marie-Josèphe Angélique, l'emmarchement, le pré fleuri et la verrière de Marcelle Ferron pour faire place aux femmes dans cet espace

public. Le portrait d'ensemble est complété par la présence de 21 variétés de plantes qui composent le pré fleuri, offrant une floraison en constante évolution à l'image des femmes ayant marqué l'histoire de Montréal.

En plus d'assurer la pérennité du lieu grâce à une approche originale de verdissement radical, misant notamment sur des méthodes de plantation inusitées comme le jumelage et la création de communautés végétales, la réutilisation de l'espace contribue à édifier une société plus saine et plus inclusive. Conçue en collaboration avec la Ville, la place des Montréalaises s'inscrit dans un chapelet de projets visant à recouvrir l'autoroute et à changer la vocation de ce secteur de la ville. Il en résultera un espace intime, accessible et évocateur du legs de 21 Montréalaises.

Le changement de paradigme que génère la place des Montréalaises contribue à ramener un équilibre dans le quartier, à



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sécuriser les déambulations et à réparer la cicatrice entre la nouvelle ville et l'ancienne ville. Elle entame également une ère d'inclusion et d'égalité pour tous en proposant un récit d'égalité ethnique, raciale, de classe sociale et de sexe. En tant que femme, ce projet déterminant appelle à la transmission de la culture, la transmission des connaissances et de justice réparatrice. La position de la place se vit sur 5 paliers d'appréciation différents, soit : comme une destination internationale, comme un belvédère avec vue sur la ville, comme un moment

manquant à l'échelle de son insertion urbaine sur le site immédiat, comme une expérience tactile des éléments de composition qui deviennent une découverte sensorielle et, finalement, comme un hommage spirituel aux femmes de Montréal. **LP**

« À plus grande échelle, lorsque vous êtes au milieu, vous voyez la nouvelle et l'ancienne ville, vous voyez la sculpture et les vitraux, les escaliers, et cela forme différents niveaux d'appréciation et de reconnaissance. »

**PROJECT TEAM | PROJECT** IN CONSORTIUM WITH LEMAY + ANGELA SILVER + SNC LAVALIN | **TRANSDISCIPLINARY ARCHITECT, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT, AND ARTIST TEAM, PROJECT DESIGNERS** ANDREW KING, FRAIC, PRIX DE ROME; PATRICIA LUSSIER, AAPQ, OALA; JEFFREY MA; JEAN-PHILIPPE DI MARCO; VIRGINIE ROY-MAZOYER; ALEXIS LÉGARÉ; MARIYA ATANASOVA; JASPER SILVER KING; THEODORE OYAMA; JETH OWEN GUERRERO; FRANÇOIS MÉNARD; ARNAUD VILLARD; ERIC ST-PIERRE; RENÉ PERREAULT | **PUBLIC MEMORY AND HOMAGE STRATEGIES** ANGELA SILVER; JASPER SILVER-KING; HANNAH SILVER KING | **PROJECT MANAGERS** LUCIE ST-PIERRE; BENOÎT GAUDET | **KEY CONSULTANTS** **STRUCTURAL, CIVIL, MECHANICAL, ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS** SNC LAVALIN | **STRUCTURAL ENGINEER** ELEMA | **LIGHTING** OMBRAGE | **CLIENT** CITY OF MONTREAL, LE SERVICE DES GRANDS PARCS, DU MONT-ROYAL ET DES SPORTS, DIVISION AMÉNAGEMENT DES ESPACES PUBLICS ET RÉALISATIONS JASMIN CORBEIL, CHEF DE DIVISION; CLAUDIA VILLENEUVE, CHEFE D'ÉQUIPE; VALÉRIE TREMBLAY-GRAVEL, ARCHITECTE PAYSAGISTE; ANNE-JULIE LAPENSÉE, ARCHITECTE PAYSAGISTE; MARIE-CLAUDE SÉGUIN, CHEFE D'ÉQUIPE (2018-2019); SUZANNE ROCHON, ARCHITECTE PAYSAGISTE (2018-2019)



SONJA VANGJELI

# CONSTRUCTED ECOLOGY

## THE DON RIVER MOUTH NATURALIZATION & PORT LANDS FLOOD PROTECTION

FR\_LP+ ÉCOLOGIE BÂTIE  
NATURALISATION DE  
L'EMBOUCHURE DE LA RIVIÈRE  
DON ET PROTECTION CONTRE LES  
INONDATIONS DE PORT LANDS

Le projet est souvent présenté comme la « renaturalisation » de l'embouchure de la rivière Don. Toutefois, il ne s'agit pas d'une restauration des écosystèmes naturels, mais plutôt de la création d'un nouvel écosystème, fruit d'une collaboration entre scientifiques, ingénieurs et bâtisseurs guidés par la vision d'architectes paysagistes.

**THE OUTLET OF** the Don River into Toronto's inner harbour is the site of one of the largest river revitalization projects in North America [Fig.1]. Though the project is often identified as the “re-naturalization of the Don River Mouth”, it is not a landscape restoration project of a prior natural condition, but rather a creatively constructed ecology. It is the result of cooperation among scientists, engineers and builders, guided by the vision of landscape architects. The resulting design is a physical manifestation of the collaborative process of remaking landscapes – the integration of a landscape vision, future programs, site and constructability constraints, hydrological and ecological functions and the multiple layers of the site's histories. The Port Lands Flood Protection Project (PLFP), will create a new naturalized outlet for the channelized river on underused, post-industrial brownfield lands, creating a 30-hectare park system of diverse riverine habitats and landscapes. The project will in turn flood-protect 240 hectares of land around the park system, opening it to redevelopment as a new, sustainable community.

### Historical Evolution

Toronto was founded at the confluence of a river and a Great Lake in 1790 as the Town of York. The river's prominence has shifted from the city's center at its founding, to the periphery during the industrial age, and is now back at the heart of its vision for the future. From a healthy ecosystem that supported biodiversity and Indigenous communities, the river was transformed into a productive landscape that fuelled the growth of a new colonial city, yielding to an industrial wasteland that threatened public health. Fears of disease and flood risks forced the city to intervene with a series of large infrastructural transformations, channelizing the Don into a predictable “sanitary waterway” for industry and transportation [Fig.2]. Unfortunately, in addition to the industry, the outward growth of the city increased sewer discharges into the river, polluting its lower reaches to the point that an environmental group called Pollution Probe held a symbolic funeral announcing the death of the Don River in 1969.



Toward the end of the 20th century, opinions shifted to view the Don as a valuable landscape asset worth restoring and preserving for a rapidly growing and densifying metropolis. In the 1980s, strong community advocacy to reintegrate the valley with the city and revitalize its ecology led to decades of new planning and design work, now coming to realization with the PLFP project.

### The Lower Don Re-Naturalization

In 1991, the Task Force to Bring Back the Don, guided by the environmental design firm Hough Stansbury Woodland (HSW), worked on a restoration strategy for the Lower Don River to create minor meanders within the existing channel and gradually re-create a delta and marsh where the river meets the lake. The vision was based on the idea of the river valley as an interconnected “natural” and “human” system that would require ongoing intervention over an extended period of time to “return the river to a state of health” and re-create a sense of place. HSW’s vision established the idea of a naturalized river mouth bordered by parks, which was integrated into larger plans to redevelop the waterfront in the 2001 Central Waterfront Secondary Plan.

### Port Lands Flood Protection (PLFP) Design

The concept was further refined through a series of Environmental Assessments led by Waterfront Toronto and The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), culminating in an international design competition in 2007, won by landscape architecture firm Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (MVVA) with The Port Lands Estuary Proposal. The scheme proposed to create a new naturalized outlet from where the channelized river meets the

Keating Channel at 90 degrees, south through a spillway into the Shipping Channel, and curving west to Polson Slip and into the inner harbour. By adding two natural outlets to the existing Keating Channel outlet, the design provides a resilient approach to stormwater flood management, giving stormwater three different routes to reach the harbour, slowing it down with naturalized

meandering river banks, and designing the river valley to accept a variety of water levels and stormwater flows. Everything under the top of bank line is designed to be flooded up to the regulatory 100-year storm whereas the programmed and passive parks are all sited above the top of bank where they will be safe from flooding [Fig.3]. Learning from observed ecological systems in local conservation areas, the landscape architects designed the river park not only as flood protection infrastructure but as natural habitat



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**1** AERIAL PHOTO OF THE PLFP SITE UNDER CONSTRUCTION SHOWING RIVER VALLEY TOPOGRAPHY AND INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GROWING CITY SKYLINE **2** CHANNELIZED RIVER AND INDUSTRIAL POLLUTING LAND USES IN THE PORT LANDS, CIRCA 1930 **3** THE FUTURE DON RIVER MOUTH UNDER BASE FLOW AND REGULATORY STORM CONDITIONS **4** PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENT AROUND LARGE SCALE MODEL OF THE PLFP PROJECT, FEB 2018  
**PHOTOS** 1 STEPHANIE BRACONNIER, COURTESY OF WATERFRONT TORONTO 2 CITY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES 3 MICHAEL VAN VALKENBURGH ASSOCIATES 4 WATERFRONT TORONTO





5

**“Landscape literacy is a cultural practice that entails both understanding the world and transforming it. It should be a cornerstone of community development and of urban planning and design.”**

—Anne Whiston Spirn, *Landscape Literacy and Design for Ecological Democracy*, 2017.

for aquatic and terrestrial species, with accessible walkways for people to be able to be in close contact with wetlands and wildlife. Following a decade of design, politics, due diligence studies, and public consultation [Fig. 4] which further refined the river’s meandering form and the parks’ programming, the proposal is currently under construction, with completion scheduled for 2024. The Don’s reciprocal relationship with the city continues to evolve as this transformation unfolds, returning it to the center of the city’s future aspirations.

#### PLFP Construction

In order to build a naturalized riverine landscape on a post-industrial site, several challenges needed to be addressed: controlling the flow of pollutants

underground to prevent them from reaching the river and/or lake; minimizing the export and disposal of contaminated soil offsite; ensuring the river valley could sustain variable flood conditions without getting washed out by storms; and figuring out a way to construct such a massive excavation incrementally while keeping the lake and river from flooding it during construction. Layered over these constraints was the aspiration to build an iconic park and destination that would attract the whole region to the waterfront, providing a variety of programs, experiences and opportunities to engage with natural habitats, wildlife and views of the city skyline. Collaboration by the large, multi-disciplinary team yielded creative, ecological, and engineering solutions that intertwine to produce a truly hybrid technological and natural landscape that will puzzle future archeologists [Fig. 5].

Other fascinating aspects of the project are the hidden subterranean constructs that will not be visible when the finished product is complete. Deep concrete cutoff walls and membranes under landforms keep polluted soils and groundwater from migrating into the river. Crib walls of logs and boulders

covered in lifts of fabric encapsulated soil reinforce the riverbanks [Fig. 6]. Precisely sized river stones used for backfill create perfectly scaled and varied habitat for aquatic species. As the site was excavated, deeper layers of soil were exposed to the warmth of the sun, causing dormant bulrush seeds to germinate [Fig. 7]. These young plants were transplanted to a lagoon in Tommy Thompson Park on the nearby Leslie Spit, acting as a nursery to propagate the old native plants for relocation to the Port Lands when the time comes to establish a wetland in that area.



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**5** RIVER BANK CONSTRUCTION WITH CRIB WALL OF ANCHORED LOGS, BACKFILLED WITH RIVER STONE AND SAND **6** BACKFILLED CRIB WALL OF ANCHORED LOGS WITH VIEW OF NEW BRIDGE AND ATLAS CRANE **7** DORMANT NATIVE BULRUSH SEEDS GERMINATED IN NEWLY EXPOSED SOIL **8** EXCAVATED ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS OF 19TH CENTURY FISHERMAN’S BREAKWATER ALONG WITH 20TH CENTURY INDUSTRIAL SILOS (BACKGROUND) AND FUTURE FLOOD PROTECTION INFRASTRUCTURE UNDER CONSTRUCTION (FOREGROUND) **9** PHOTOGRAPHERS ON SITE DOCUMENTING THE CONSTRUCTION PROCESS  
**PHOTOS 5, 6** SONJA VANGJELI **7, 8, 9** VID INGELVICS AND RYAN WALKER



There are also many industrial relics located on site to be preserved and integrated: heritage buildings along the Keating Channel and Villiers Street; the Atlas Crane; the Fire Hall; and the Bascule Bridge [Fig.1]. The design incorporates the heritage structures into its framework as landmarks of local specificity that ground the place in its history, revealing layers of the past simultaneously with its present and future. Additional archeological discoveries were unearthed, such as the Fisherman's Breakwater, that accentuate the layered history of the site. Seeing the 19th century breakwater concurrently with industrial artifacts of the 20th century along with traces of the emerging future landscape makes visible the palimpsest of continuing adaptive reuse of land [Fig.8].

Commissioned by Waterfront Toronto, photographers Vid Ingelviks and Ryan Walker have been documenting the construction process and the stories of this site's daily transformations from the beginning, while aerial photography and drone video capture the massive scale of the undertaking from the air. Photos and videos are uploaded on the project website <https://portlandsto.ca> and a multi-year temporary exhibit of billboards along Villiers Street as part of Toronto's Contact Photography Festival show the site's transformation and broadcast it to a broader audience that cannot see what is happening behind the construction fence.

### Moving Forward

The Don River valley has been remade many times, guided by aspirations from different eras of the City's evolution. Undoubtedly, it will someday be remade again in the image and values of some future society. Although it will never again be the original natural landscape it once was, the constructed nature that is currently in progress has certainly been designed with complexity and sophisticated knowledge of layered ecological systems. As the Don River's meanders, topography and planted riverbanks start to take shape, the image of a natural river valley is gradually emerging; the future vision seems within grasp.

Landscape and urban design practices such as the Port Lands Flood Protection



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project are at their roots adaptive reuse of land; they are our contributions to *nature*. The skills of adapting land to our needs in the context of changing climatic conditions are essential to defining our *culture* and to sustaining future human livelihoods in response to growing environmental challenges. To survive and thrive in the unpredictable future that awaits we must become intimately acquainted, as our ancestors were, with the ecological properties of land - not as commodity to be owned and developed, but as living complex system to be understood and creatively adapted to our needs, without undermining the needs of other species. The extent to which *traditional ecological knowledge* and *landscape literacy* are broadly integrated into our culture will determine how we adapt to the challenges ahead, and what kind of *nature* we will leave behind for future societies. **LP**



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**RYAN WALKER** is a lens-based artist, whose work explores land and identity with a keen interest in individuals and communities who model alternative ways of living with, and off the land. Ryan received his MFA in Documentary Media at Ryerson University in 2013. His work has been exhibited in Canada, Netherlands, Italy, Russia, Australia and the U.S. Various works have appeared in *The Globe & Mail*, and magazines such as *Der Spiegel* (Germany) and *D Repubblica* (Italy), *enRoute*, *Report on Business* and *PDN Emerging*. He is also an educator in the BFA Photography Programs at Ryerson University and Sheridan College.

**VID INGELEVICIS** is a visual artist, writer, independent curator and educator. His artwork and curatorial projects have been shown across Canada, US, Europe and Australia. His writing has appeared in *Canadian Art*, *CV Photo*, *Prefix Photo* and elsewhere. Currently, he holds the position of Associate Professor at Ryerson University's School of Image Arts and teaches in graduate and undergraduate programs.

**PROJECT TEAM | LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE + PROJECT LEAD** MICHAEL VAN VALKENBURGH ASSOCIATES, INC., LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS (MVVA) | **ENVIRONMENTAL AND GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEERING** JACOBS EARTHWORK | **RIVER GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEERING** GEOSYNTEC | **HYDROLOGIC DESIGN** LIMNOTECH | **MARINE AND COASTAL ENGINEERING** GEI CONSULTANTS | **ECOLOGY** INTER-FLUVE | **WETLAND AND MEADOW** DOUGAN AND ASSOCIATES | **SOIL SCIENCE** OLSSON ASSOCIATES | **IRRIGATION** HINES | **HERITAGE ARCHITECTURE** ERA ARCHITECTS | **CIVIL ENGINEERING** WSP | **LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS (ROADS)** DTAH | **BRIDGE ARCHITECTS** GRIMSHAW | **BRIDGE ENGINEERS** ENTUITIVE | **STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING** RJC | **ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING** SMITH + ANDERSEN | **LIGHTING** DOMINGO GONZALEZ ASSOCIATES | **WAYFINDING AND SIGNAGE** ENTRO | **PROJECT MANAGEMENT** WATERFRONT TORONTO AND COLLIERS

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KAMILA GRIGO

# UPCYCLED: AN URBAN LANDFILL TURNED CIRCULAR ECONOMY PROTOTYPE





2

## FR\_LP+ SURCYCLAGE : UN SITE D'ENFOUISSEMENT TRANSFORMÉ EN PROTOTYPE D'ÉCONOMIE CIRCULAIRE

De la planification aux devis, le parc Frédéric-Back démontre que la circularité peut être intégrée dans la conception des espaces verts urbains.

**FOR NEARLY THREE** decades, landscape architects have had a hand in transforming a Montreal landfill and former limestone quarry into a municipal park and circular economy prototype. From planning to specifications, Frédéric-Back Park is proof that circularity can be incorporated into the design of urban green spaces.

**1** PREFABRICATED CONCRETE BASES CONTAINING RECYCLED GLASS POWDER SUPPORT THE BIOGAS WELL CASINGS THAT DOT THE MOWED-GRASS ZONES ACROSS THE PARK **2** THE RESULT OF AGILE COLLABORATION ACROSS VARIOUS CITY OF MONTREAL DEPARTMENTS TO SOURCE, PROCESS, ASSEMBLE AND MAINTAIN WOOD LOST TO THE EMERALD ASH BORER INFESTATION, ASH SEAT TOPPERS ARE USED ON CONCRETE OR GABION BENCHES  
**PHOTOS 1** ADRIEN WILLIAMS **2** LEMAY

With an area of 153 hectares, Frédéric-Back Park makes up the majority of the 192-hectare Saint-Michel Environmental Complex (CESM), a massive site that includes a recycling centre, a composting area, a leachate treatment centre, a tree nursery and an energy plant that converts the biogas produced by the landfill into electricity. Located a mere seven kilometres as the crow flies from downtown, the CESM also contains an educational and interpretive centre, Cirque du Soleil buildings, a soccer stadium, an indoor skatepark and a few large-scale retail outlets. Fenced off until relatively recently from the residential neighbourhood in which it is embedded, this storied, multi-functional landscape is undergoing a wondrous process of appropriation by residents and visitors from further afield. Frédéric-Back Park is now the backdrop to a dizzying array of activity: jogging, cycling, art viewing, pop-up music events, partying, photo shoots, dance lessons, picnicking, HIIT classes, dog walking, field sports, stargazing, filming videos and interviews, slacklining, group running, cross-

country skiing, skateboarding and, of course, relaxing and taking in the surreal landscape.

## History

It took an incredible effort to turn a site that did not necessarily have the vocation of green space into a public park, says Marie Claude Massicotte, landscape architect and former head of several departments at the City of Montreal's Service des grands parcs. Massicotte, who worked on the CESM project in various capacities over two decades, notes that the precursor to any notion of converting the site into a park came in the 1980s via the Saint-Michel neighbourhood associations who were advocating simply for a stop to the quarrying and landfilling that had been occurring concurrently since the 1960s.

As a quarry with a cement factory, the site had been integral to the growth of Saint-Michel due to the employment it generated, but as the various industrial and landfilling activities intensified, the noise, pollution and vermin – to say nothing of the occasional blasting accident – became intolerable. Residents began claiming the

right to a better quality of life. Massicotte credits the municipality for being receptive to their plea and for recognizing the potential of the site to provide much-needed green space in this underserved community.

The City of Montreal purchased the site in 1984, launched the recycling centre in 1988 and zoned the site for park use by the early 1990s. Even this simplified timeline illustrates that converting an industrial site into a municipal park was not an overnight affair, due in part to the nascency of environmental regulations and rehabilitation guidelines of the day. The Service des grands parcs eventually proceeded with a site assessment, an exercise that Massicotte says proved helpful on several fronts. This “state of affairs” document compiled the environmental guidelines and standards that would need to be met. It also analyzed the environmental and engineering challenges of capping the landfill and managing biogas production, thereby providing a clearer understanding of the site as a basis from which to launch the master planning process.



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The site assessment illustrated a stark estimate: to meet the required volume of the topsoil layer of the final cover, soil would need to be trucked in day and night for five years from an area several times the size of the landfill itself. This led to the realization that the rehabilitation of the landfill could not be detrimental to another site – after decades of exploitation, a sustainable approach that took advantage of the recycling and composting facilities at the CESM should be explored.

### Master Plan

Armed with the site assessment, the Service des grands parcs hired Hargreaves Associates to propose a schematic park design for the area directly over the landfill. The brief collaboration led to the Landfill Park Development Plan issued in 1997, which outlined the design objectives for the central portion of the site and which was incorporated into the master plan for the whole CESM site, also published that year. The CESM Master Plan embodies the vision of the CESM and is essentially the document that prescribes that an innovative and sustainable approach be taken to the development of the site. The CESM Master Plan is an evolving document that has been updated over the past two decades in response to technical, ecological or programming issues while maintaining its guiding principles. It aims no less than to create a major technological facility embedded within a green space dedicated to the environment, culture, recreation and sport. Three out of five of the CESM's mission statements relate to research, innovation and experimentation, and it follows that a circular approach underpins the work of landscape architects who have been implementing the master plan in phases since the landfill was capped.

Coupled with the CESM's ambitious vision is the pragmatic aspect of building a public park over a massive landfill, a challenge that Louis-Charles Pilon, landscape

**3** WAYFINDING PILLAR IN PREFABRICATED CONCRETE THAT CONTAINS RECYCLED GLASS POWDER. PREFABRICATION AFFORDS CONTROL OVER THE PRODUCTION PROCESS, AND THE CONCRETE TAKES WELL TO VARIOUS FINISHES AND SURFACE TREATMENTS **4** OVERALL PLAN  
**PHOTO 3** ADRIEN WILLIAMS **IMAGE 4** CITY OF MONTREAL; ANNOTATIONS, LJP



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architect and team lead at the Service des grands parcs, says inherently pushes the boundaries of design and programming toward big gestures and exceptional experiences. Pilon, part of a group of landscape architects dedicated to Frédéric-Back Park, borrows a metaphor from the adjacent Cirque du Soleil to describe the role of landscape architect on a landfill project as one of tightrope walker.

His team is responsible for a range of tasks including planning, design, construction administration, setting and maintaining standards for reclaimed materials, R&D, budget review, adhering to City of Montreal safety and quality standards, and coordination with geotechnical engineers, agronomists, external landscape architects, stakeholder groups and other City of Montreal departments that contribute to the implementation of the CESM Master Plan and to the operation of the park. Pilon notes that circular economy principles are a mantra in his office, and the sheer size of Frédéric-Back Park forces the team to think strategically about the implications of material selection. For instance, stone-filled gabion is used as a design element for retaining walls or amphitheatre seating as a nod to the site's past, and it is an economical, less carbon-





heavy option that tolerates the subsoil movement of the landfill below.

### Circular Economy Principles In Action

Technical constraints are radically palpable at Frédéric-Back Park, and they guide site design toward only the most essential, pinpoint interventions, the epitome of which are the spherical biogas well casings. Over 200 of these human-sized spheres are multiplied over the landscape and, in a contemporary twist on the folly, they perform a vital function: they protect the wells that capture the biogas produced by the landfill while allowing for frequent monitoring and safety inspections.

The spheres are the key element that allows for public occupation of the site, transforming it from rehabilitated landfill to public park. They were co-designed by Lemay and Morelli Designers in close collaboration with the Service des grands parcs as part of Lemay's mandate for wayfinding, lighting and site furniture. It is this focus on co-creation that Lucie St-Pierre, senior partner at Lemay and project lead, says was central to the project's success. Working with landscape architects on the client side helped the Lemay consultant team push design and technical boundaries, and the Frédéric-

Back Park project has increased the profile of landscape architects as prime consultant.

The highly Instagrammable spheres may steal the show, but other elements quietly demonstrate the feasibility of applying circular economy principles in the design and construction of site furniture in urban parks. Lemay's design guidelines express the spirit of innovation set out in the CESM Master Plan and recommend the use of recycled materials. In that vein, the cement mixture in the prefabricated concrete wayfinding pillars and the concrete pads for the biogas well casings is specified to include 20% recycled glass powder. Carlos Santibanez, landscape architect and contract administrator at Lemay, notes that the process of testing, submittal reviews and quality control for this more sustainable concrete was similar to that for concrete made with a conventional cement mix. The concrete is performing as expected and works well with the environmentally friendly anti-graffiti coating used on the elements in Lemay's scope, and the firm has specified this mixture in subsequent projects.

Even the effects of the emerald ash borer infestation have presented an opportunity to apply circularity to the production of site furniture at Frédéric-Back Park. Pilon

explains that wood from ash trees felled due to the infestation is reclaimed for use as seat toppers for gabion or concrete benches. The Service des grands parcs coordinates the collection and processing of the wood, with final assembly and finishing occurring at municipal workshops. Pilon says it is necessary to oil the wood once a year to maintain its colour and to prevent splintering, and while the durability does not match that of lpe, the seat toppers can eventually be recycled into mulch because no toxic materials are used in their production.

The landscape of Frédéric-Back Park is woven into Montreal's physical and cultural fabric. As an industrial site, it produced the stone and concrete from which the city core was built. As a landfill, it amassed the refuse of Montreal's daily life. Today, it redefines the building blocks of the urban park. **LP**

**KAMILA GRIGO**, OALA, CSLA, is a landscape architect who writes about landscape architecture projects as a method of design research. Her research interests include methodologies in the production of landscape architecture, experiential aesthetics, and cultural and ecological productivity.



ERIC HENRY KLAVER + MAYA MAHGOUB-DESAI

# FROM NEGATIVE SPACE TO POSITIVE PLACE



2

FR\_LP+ DE L'ESPACE NÉGATIF  
À UN ENDROIT POSITIF

1 RUELLES DE SAINT-JACQUES 2 LE MANGE-TROTTOIR, RUE DE CASTELNAU EST, VILLERAY, MONTREAL, QC 3 LE MANGE-TROTTOIR  
PHOTOS 1 ÉCO-QUARTIER SAINT-JACQUES 2 MAYA MAHGOUB-DESAI 3 LUNA CALMETTE-RATELLE POUR LE MANGE-TROTTOIR



1

**ONE OF THE** cause-and-effect dilemmas about cities is whether urban form shapes culture, or whether culture shapes urban form. In adaptive reuse projects, the two are absolutely entangled. Assuming an inextricable link between culture and urban form, what drives redevelopment and regeneration? Who is responsible for initiating an adaptive reuse project and how is it sustained? In the evolution of the City of Montréal, it would be challenging to find a better example of this conundrum than two similar, yet very different initiatives: *Les Ruelles Vertes* and *Le Mange-Trottoir*.

## Service Lanes As Greenspace

*Les Ruelles Vertes* (literally, “Green Lanes”) is a city-wide initiative across the boroughs of Montréal designed to adapt laneways for community use and as new greenspace. Initially used as service lanes to deliver coal and provide access to horse stables behind homes, Montréal laneways became cluttered with ramshackle sheds and developed into access roads to insular car garages. In the 1980s, Mayor Jean Drapeau initiated *Operation Tournesol*, a project to clear alleyways of sheds and structures that

were deemed as fire hazards and isolated the alleys from homes, which had the unwanted result of making them attractive for crime. *Éco-quartier* at the time (now city registered neighbourhood ecological groups) asked the question: Why couldn't these newly liberated spaces be used in more positive ways for the community?

Starting in 1995, the first *Ruelles Vertes* emerged in the Plateau Mont-Royal area. The intent was to have a friendly place where neighbours could meet and children could safely play while increasing green space and reducing the heat-island effect by replacing pavement with planting. With financing from the city, what followed was successful enough to increase and spread into 15 of Montréal's 19 boroughs.

Eve Lortie-Fournier, General Director of *Regroupement des Éco-Quartier (REQ)*, expresses that the greening is essentially secondary to the program's real success, “Fundamentally, I think the great success [of the *Ruelles Vertes*] is the heart and the knot formed between citizens, and the greening [of the alleyways] isn't the only









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reason to come together. This is also why we see each of the alleys being colourfully personalized by the residents and the local resident committees. There are some more focused on culture, so we have alleys that are in tribute to certain painters or in tribute to a theatre that is near their alley, so there is always this kind of personalization and distinct colour from one alleyway to the other, depending on the residential committee."

Implementing *Ruelles Vertes* covers a broad scope of scale and expression, including large-scale murals on building and garage elevations, the delineation of games on the pavement, crevice gardens constructed along the centre of the lane, and fully removed asphalt replaced with planted meadows and winding garden paths. A proposal even exists to install a geothermal field under a laneway to provide heat to the adjacent houses.

**4** RUELLES VERTES DE SAINTE-MARIE **5** RUELLES DE SAINT-JACQUES **6** LE MANGE-TROTTOIR **7** RUELLES VERTES DE ST-MICHEL / FRANÇOIS-PERRAULT  
**PHOTOS 4** ÉCO-QUARTIER SAINTE-MARIE **5** ÉCO-QUARTIER SAINT-JACQUES **6** LUNA CALMETTE-RATELLE POUR LE MANGE-TROTTOIR **7** ÉCO-QUARTIER ST-MICHEL / FRANÇOIS-PERRAULT

More recently, some boroughs have taken over the development of the alleyways from the *Éco-quartier*, hiring landscape architects to work with the local neighbourhoods. This is an advantage in Lortie-Fournier's opinion, as landscape architects can bring their own diverse experience into the collective vision. Though she stresses that, "yes, you can have designers, architects and landscape architects involved, but it is really important to design with the residents, because they are the ones who live there, and it must correspond with their needs."

#### Food & Pavement

At the opposite end of the spectrum in scale, location, and initiative is the *Mange-Trottoir*, a one-of-a-kind street corner vegetable garden and a clever pun on food and pavement! While both *Ruelles Vertes* and *Mange-Trottoir* deeply engage community, the latter is a project whose location is intentionally small and particular to place, and is driven and funded by the local community, instead of the city. Now entering almost 10 years of existence, the *Mange-Trottoir's* bench, "Le Mange-Livres"

(Little Free Library) and raised planters overflowing with vegetables and flowers, occupy a corner bump-out in Montréal's Villeray at the corner of de Castelnau Street East and Drolet Street.

"It started with a gutsy resident who lived in the neighbourhood and had seen that the city was making these spaces to slow traffic down," explains Krystal V. Morin, a co-founder of the group. "Before they could lay out the usual plan of perennials, this resident approached the local councilor in a café." One social media post later, and the idea took flight. The local *Éco-Quartier* offered a room for an initial meeting and a small group (except for the originator, who had fallen ill) united around the budding project. While one member offered professional horticultural advice, others dealt with the bureaucracy. "We were perhaps 12 to 14 residents and very tightknit, but, because I had time, the impromptu role of foreman for the project, I played a bit the role of the landscape designer, planner etc., as the city didn't give any real means, giving us very vague guidelines."

The circular economy of local supply and reuse was key. The group mustered all the local support they could get: a nearby dry cleaner installed a hose bib as a way of providing water to the gardens, the city provided a load of compost to enrich the soil, and Montréal-based chocolate shops offered them cocoa husks for use as mulch, which, after applying to the garden, had the unexpected and delightful effect of "making the garden smell like chocolate for a few days."

The initiative is strongly community-oriented in its goals, as well as its operation. The independence offered by the project being driven and financed by the community, not the city, was and continues to be important to the group. The budget each year is approximately \$1,000, and money is raised by raffling gift certificates donated by local merchants and selling homemade products like soap or cookies.

"The fundraising team was super-efficient," explains Ariane Gratton-Jacob. Approaching business owners each year satisfies their budgetary needs and their independence. "This year, we had 20 prizes to be drawn, there was \$2,000 in gift certificates," Krystal adds. "This financial independence gives the group some independence from the city. We always



wanted to be self-sufficient.” This financial independence allows the group some latitude in having to follow city guidelines, and perhaps to be a bit respectfully rebellious.

Although the city is now pleased with the project, it doesn't mean they were immune to complaints. “I'm not going to get into the details but there were many, many, many battles, many times,” says Krystel. “At first, there were a number of times [the city] called and said they were going to dismantle it... the lawyers, the meetings at the city, directives from public health. I'm not saying we paved the way for this kind of thing, but when we came along there was only the *Jardin des mal-aimés*, which is a small vegetable garden in Rosemont and the *Mange-Trottoir*.”

What this project strongly has in common with *Les Ruelles Vertes* is the way in which it has brought, and continues to bring, the community together to create a shared sense of place. “I made friends in the neighbourhood,” says Ariane. “We did not know each other, we became friends.”

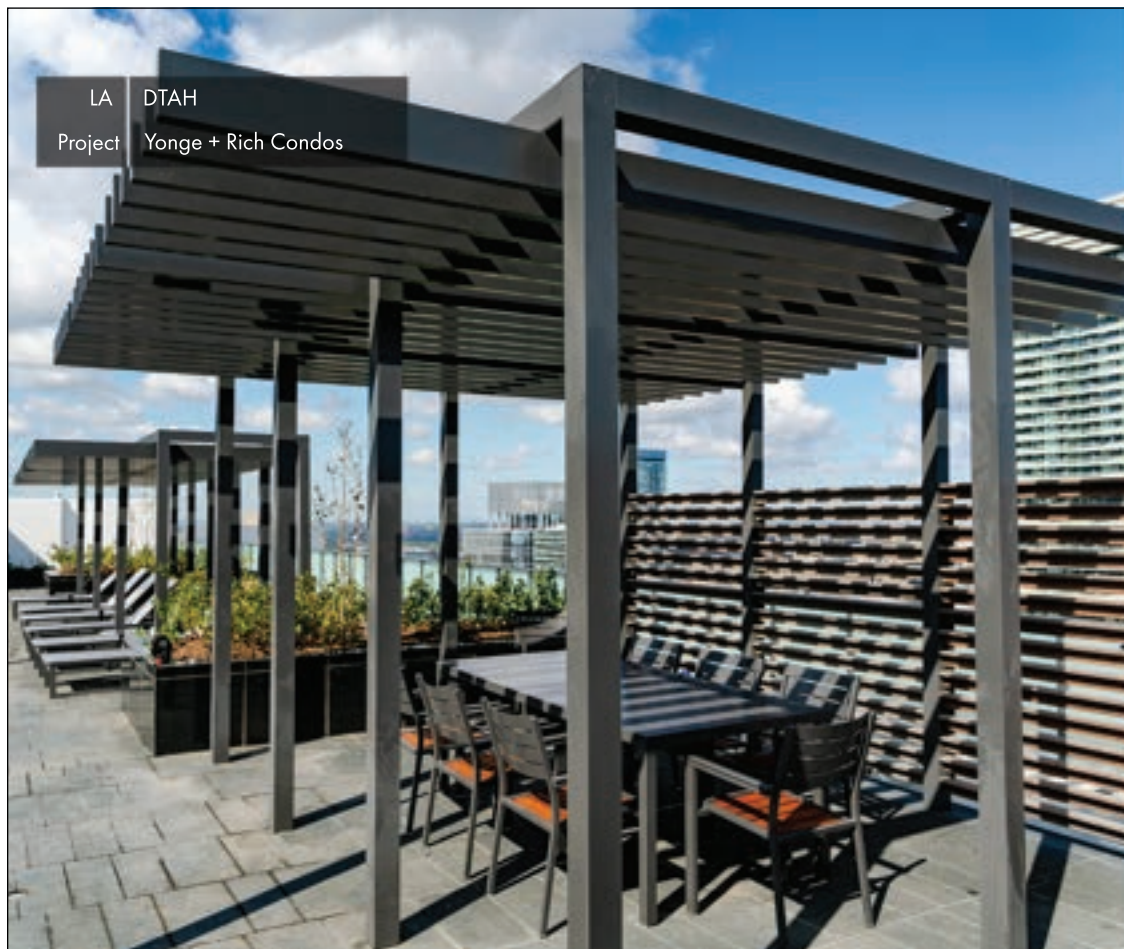
In addition, for both projects, the challenge is sustaining the momentum over time. In reference to the *Ruelles Vertes*, Eve Lortie-Fournier explains, “It is our reality that in Montréal, the majority of people are not owners, they are tenants. There is a lot of transience among the people involved in the committees. There is always the challenge of keeping an active committee.” For the *Mange-Trottoir*, the work has been lightened by people sharing their skills such as in finance or horticulture. Luna Calmette-Ratelle, who joined the *Mange-Trottoir* four years ago and is part of the managing team, is now studying landscape architecture.

The *Ruelles Vertes* initiative and the *Mange-Trottoir* project recognize that beautiful ideas, diverse skills and talents, and the ability to work as a community to create and maintain a shared space exists within our neighbourhoods. These small yet powerful interventions demonstrate that spaces long rejected or overlooked by the city can become rich, vibrant community hubs and productive pieces

of landscape, and offer opportunities to slowly start to compensate for the inequity in access to meaningful open space experienced by many Canadians.

Perhaps it is not about creating a new typology of green space that is designed into our city masterplans, but more about creating opportunities and clear, inclusive mechanisms within city planning to allow for community members and groups to bring their own unique conceptions of public space to fruition.

“[*Le Mange-Trottoir*] demonstrates that respect for, and the sustainability of, a community project is possible in the city. The proof is that the project is still running after eight years, we are still independent of the city, we are still mobilized, still functional. The garden is in good condition,” Ariane says, adding, “It is possible that a garden is respected by the citizens, is not vandalized, it is possible. If I had to sum it up in one sentence, it would be: It is possible!” **LP**



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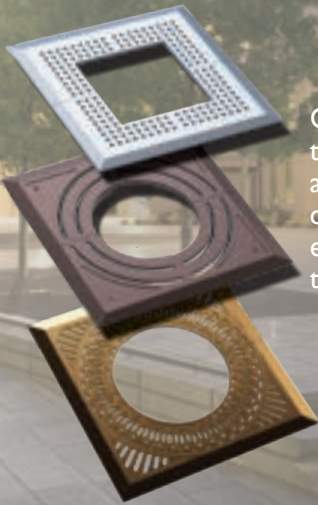
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## PARKS OF THE 21ST CENTURY: REINVENTED LANDSCAPES, RECLAIMED TERRITORIES

Victoria Newhouse and Alex Pisha  
Rizzoli, 2021  
ISBN - 978-0-8478-7062-2

# PARKS AS GOOD DEEDS

## HOW LANDSCAPE URBANISM HAS LED TO THE RENEWAL OF INDUSTRIAL LANDSCAPES WORLDWIDE

REVIEWED BY TIMOTHY EDWARDS

**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE HAS** come a long way since Ian McHarg published *Design with Nature* in 1969. As climate change becomes our new reality, and as the COVID-19 pandemic shows us the importance of outdoor public space, writers Victoria Newhouse and Alex Pisha have taken stock of our profession's increasing leadership in urban renewal projects. *Parks of the 21st Century: Reinvented Landscapes, Reclaimed Territories* is a catalogue of public spaces built upon former infrastructure, both approachable for the interested layperson and detailed enough to be a useful reference for practitioners. Placing these projects in the intellectual lineage of McHarg and Charles Waldheim, the authors have effectively taken stock of how landscape urbanism has advanced and manifested in built projects.

The book organizes 46 projects from North America, Europe and China into nine categories, each examining a different angle on the theme. The first section examines repurposed former **railways**, huge swathes of which have been made obsolete by the expansion of road systems over the last hundred years. While this type of park was widely popularized by the High Line (James Corner Field Operations, New York, 2011), Newhouse and Pisha examine three other unique takes on elevated parks.

The second section, **highway caps**, examines the phenomenon of building parks over roads, serving to unite sections of cities, which had been harshly divided by fast moving traffic, for both pedestrians and wildlife. Projects in this section include Klyde Warren Park (OJB, Dallas, 2012), a 5.2-acre deck park built over a freeway that unites uptown with downtown.

**Airports**, the third section, examines projects built on large sites that have been flattened and cleared to allow for airplane traffic and control. One site profiled, Nansen Park (Bjørbeek & Lindheim, Oslo, 2008), is Norway's largest industrial renewal project. The landscape architects used soils on site, as well as composted sewer sludge, to bring vegetation back to the area, and created a varied and dramatic community landscape for a new subdivision.

1 HINGE PARK 2 FRESHKILLS AERIAL FIELD OPERATIONS  
3 CULTURE OF WATER ECOLOGY PARK, SHUIISHI, CHINA  
PHOTOS 1 PWL PARTNERSHIP LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS INC.  
2 JAMES CORNER FIELD OPERATIONS 3 SHUANG PAN





1

The fourth and fifth sections, on **waterside industry**, examine both individual parks and park systems that have renewed and made functional the degraded waterfronts of many global cities. Projects in these categories include: Hinge Park (PWL Partnership, Vancouver, 2010), which turned a section of the city built on industrial fill into a public park and terraced wetland that filters water and vivifies the process for residents; and Brooklyn Bridge Park (Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, Brooklyn, NY, 2005), which renewed a series of abandoned piers to make a waterfront park system that's reactive to both its urban setting, shielding visitors from the sound of traffic, and its ecological setting, tested by the devastating floods that came with Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

The authors examined parks built on former sites of **inland industry** in the book's sixth section. This includes projects such as Cultuurpark Westergasfabriek (Gustafson Porter + Bowman, Amsterdam, 2006), which took an Industrial Revolution-era former factory site on the edge of Amsterdam and changed it into a dynamic park, both referencing the former infrastructure and rebuilding ecologies.



3



2

In the seventh section, **quarries**, the authors present particularly interesting case studies of parks built on former quarries. The practice of quarrying drastically changes the landscape, leaving a literal hole, replete with ecological damage and aesthetic destitution. Projects such as the Quarry Garden (THUPDI and Tsinghua University, Shanghai, 2010) exemplify the opportunities at these sites for dramatic new landscapes, with this particular project becoming a centerpiece to the Chenshan Botanical Garden. The project reconstructed native ecology in the pit and centred visitors around a deep pool at its deepest points, with staircases and passages that shuttle pedestrians to different areas of the botanical gardens.

The eighth section, **strongholds**, presents an interesting take on the book's overall theme. While most of us think of "reclaiming territory" in the context of post-industrial sites, humanity's war-ridden past presents us with historic sites that could be reimagined for public, non-military usage. Profiled projects include Parc Dräi Eechelen (Michel Desvigne Paysagiste, Luxembourg, 2009), which uses careful and minimalistic intervention to build a park on a site that itself bears the history of 300 years of military engineering.

The final chapter looks to the **future**, highlighting projects both yet-to-be-built or in early phases, such as Freshkills Park (James Corner Field Operations, New York, ongoing). This project has turned one of the world's largest landfills, now shut down and capped, into the site of several ecological pilot projects. The masterplan allows for passive recreation and trail systems while laying the foundations for successive landscape regeneration on a huge scale.

This book documents landscape architecture as public good, and sets the high water mark with a breadth of impressive projects. While nowhere near comprehensive, and sometimes a bit arbitrary in its characterization, the authors' excitement for these developments is infectious, the writing engaging, and the supporting graphics are stunning. It's the sort of book that reminds landscape architects of what they can achieve while challenging them to push the envelope further. **LP**





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RYAN WAKSHINSKI

## WHAT'S NEXT?

RYAN WAKSHINSKI

**NOTHING IS PERMANENT.** Every molecule on earth is constantly vibrating, changing. Everything that arises falls away. This too shall pass. Buildings, landscapes, feelings, people.

It has been a rough few months of change for my family. My mom, suffering with Alzheimer's, was admitted to a personal care home in September. On the same day, after a year of chemotherapy for a rare bone cancer, my father-in-law was diagnosed with terminal Leukemia. "Stuff got real," quickly.

"Gido," as his grandchildren called him, passed away one month after the doctor gave him that month, in a bizarre coincidence the same day his oldest son turned 50. We miss him dearly. My mom continues to decline, rambling incoherently to people we do not know or see, but fortunately still her cheerful self. Dementia is a horrible disease to bear witness, and even now is slowly claiming my mother-in-law. My wife and I worry about whether or not we will get it ourselves someday, and what that will mean for our daughter. And there will be nothing we can do to stop the change.

I work in government. Politicians rise and fall, voted in, voted out, trying to leave their stamp and create a legacy in this impermanent world, in the four-year blocks they are afforded each election. Constantly striving for "efficiencies," they change department names and reporting structures, moving jobs and people around in the name of "improvement." I should be used to it.

In my 12 years with Manitoba Parks, this impermanence has never affected me as directly as it has the last few months. My direct supervisor, another landscape architect, was moved into a Central Services department that is responsible for design and development projects for all departments across the province. In just over a decade, we functioned very well together and completed some amazing projects. We "worked," and she was the best boss I have had in my career. Why mess with a good thing? Politics, I suppose.

So now I am adrift. A designer cannot work in a vacuum, but that is where it feels like I have arrived. There is no one in the next cubicle with similar training to bounce ideas off, to

get feedback on a conceptual approach or to discuss paving details. A design studio of one.

But who cares? Maybe you have heard the aphorism, "The smallest pain in my little finger is more meaningful to me than the suffering of the entire world." In reality, the little, day-to-day struggles of individuals, including this privileged, white male, are irrelevant to the vastness of our universe. Really, what is the big deal? I just need to get on with it. By the time you read this, it will be months later, and everything will probably be different. Like many of the projects discussed in this issue, you cannot live in the past. Adapt to the new reality, good or bad, and move forward, and if you work at it, work really hard, most likely you will ultimately arrive at something better. **LP**

---

**Ryan Wakshinski** is a landscape architect from Winnipeg, MB where he has worked for Manitoba Parks since 2009. He is part of a team responsible for a multi-million dollar annual capital project program, including all facets of design, development and construction of park facilities. He was recently appointed Chair of the L/P Editorial Board. [ryan.wakshinski@gov.mb.ca](mailto:ryan.wakshinski@gov.mb.ca)





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