



# Queen's Park North Revitalization

Phase 3 Engagement – Setting the Direction

Public Meeting

March 5, 2026

# Meet the Project Team

## City of Toronto

### **Paul Farish**

Director  
Parks Planning and Strategic Initiatives

### **David O'Hara**

Manager  
Park Design

### **Shannon Lawrence (Project lead)**

Senior Project Manager  
Park Design

### **Alex Deighan (Governance lead)**

Manager  
Client and Business Services

### **Joanna Delos Reyes (Engagement lead)**

Senior Public Consultation Coordinator  
Community Engagement

### **Anne Fisher**

Manager  
Heritage Preservation Services

## Consultant Team

### **Third Party Public**

Public Engagement

### **Trophic Design**

Indigenous Engagement

### **Janet Rosenberg & Studio**

Landscape Architecture

#### **Trophic Design**

Indigenous Design Lead

#### **ERA**

Cultural Heritage

#### **Cohen & Master**

Arborists

#### **Dougan Ecology**

Ecologists

#### **Belleville Placemaking**

Placemaking Specialists

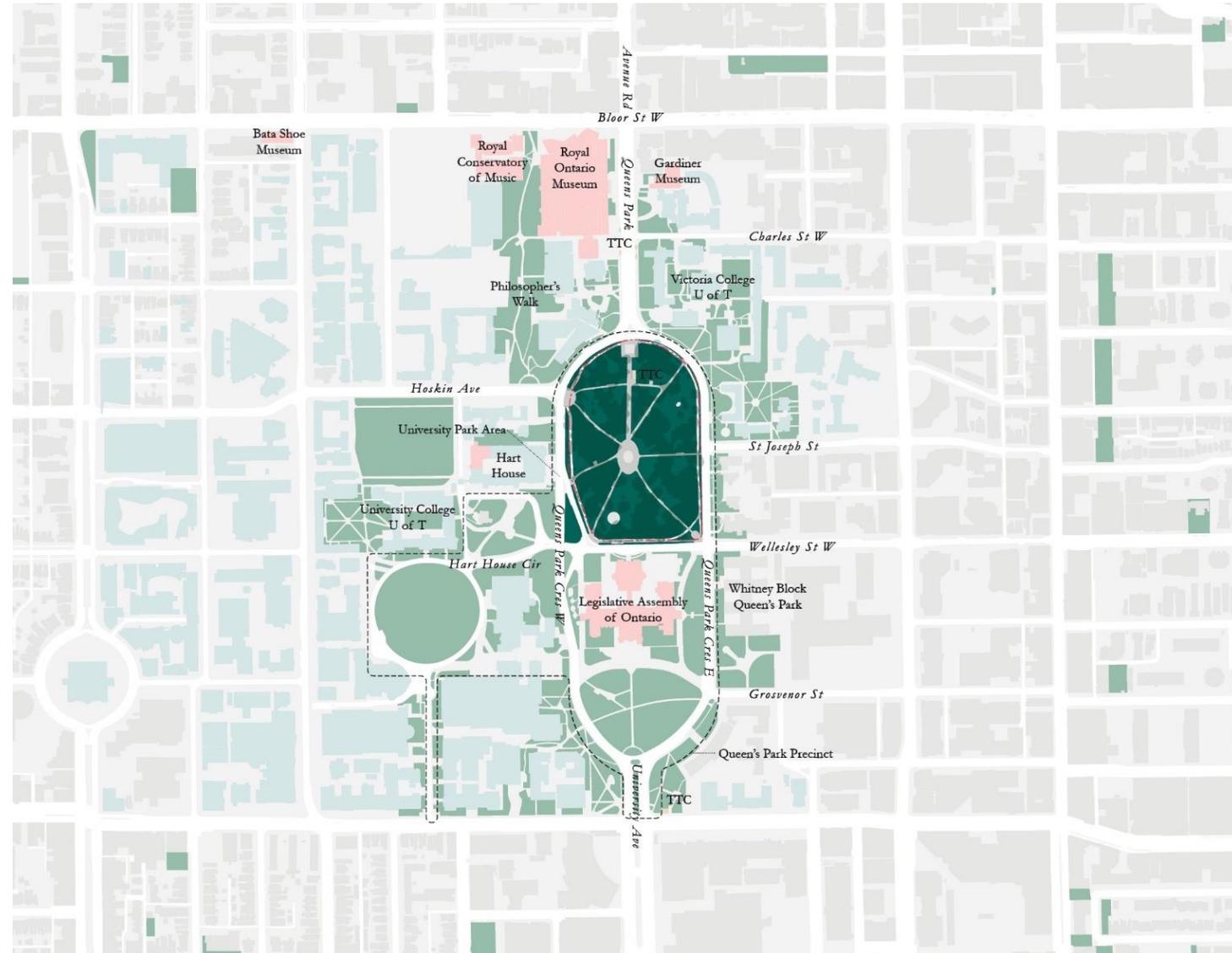
## **Donor Representatives**

# Project Background

# About the Project

In 2024, the City was approached by the Weston family with an offer to donate \$50 million to improve the park, plus additional funding for long-term maintenance and programming.

In response to City Council direction regarding the donation, City staff are advancing to a project comprising:



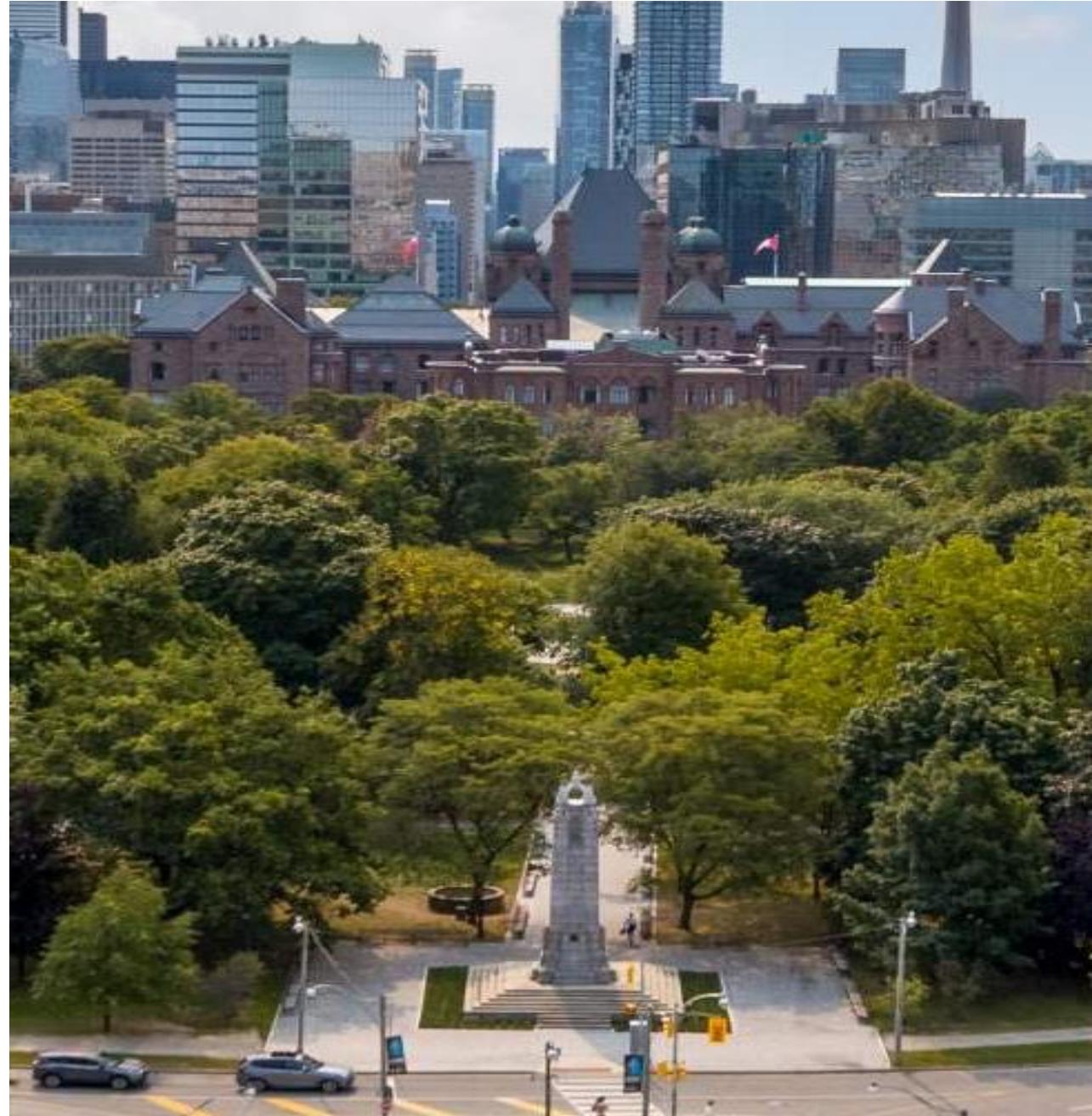
# Council Direction - March (2025-CC28.1)

Negotiate and sign a donation agreement with the Weston Foundations to undertake a **first phase of community engagement and preliminary design** that will inform the scope of the larger donation acceptance agreement, and the staff report directed in Part 2.

**Status:** COMPLETE

Report back to Council in Fall 2025 with project implementation update and recommend terms of phase two donation acceptance agreement to fund the final design and delivery of park enhancements and provide funding support for ongoing programming and maintenance.

**Status:** Underway – reporting **March 10 2026**



# Project Timeline

(Mar – Jun 2025)

## Setting the Stage

Inventory & analysis, Pre-Engagement

March 25, 2025  
Council Direction – CC28.1

March 10, 2026  
Staff Report at Executive Committee

March 11, 2026  
Design Review Panel

March 25, 2026  
Staff report at City Council  
• donation acceptance agreement  
• tri-party management and funding agreement

(Q2 2026)

## Design Development

Detailed design development

(Q4 2026+)

## Construction



## Community Design Process

Phase 1  
(Jul – Sep 2025)

### Towards a Vision

Develop a vision & guiding principles, identify opportunities

Phase 2  
(Oct – Dec 2025)

### Exploring Design Options

Develop and seek feedback on design options

Phase 3  
(Mar – Apr 2026)

### Setting the Direction

Present and receive feedback on the preferred plan

**WE ARE HERE**

(Q3 2026)

## Construction Docs, Tender & Award

Prepare working drawings & specs, issues tender & award contract

# Queen's Park North

**Designation, conditions, City policies & strategies supporting this project**

# Designation & Conditions

Queen's Park North is a 5.2 hectare park, located north of the Ontario Legislature and was officially opened in 1860 as Canada's first municipal park, named in honour of Queen Victoria.

Recognized in the Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan Public Life Study (2018) as a high-potential location for investment.

Designated as a City Park through the Parkland Strategy (2019)

## Assets currently available in the park:

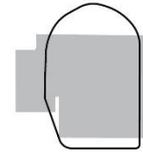
- Tree canopy and urban green space
- Picnic tables / benches
- Bottle filling station
- Walking paths
- Recreation perimeter path
- Public art
- TTC entrance (Museum Station, opened in 2024)



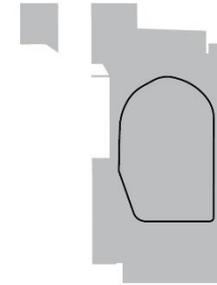
**Queen's Park North**  
13 acres



**The Grange**  
5 acres



**Allan Gardens**  
13 acres



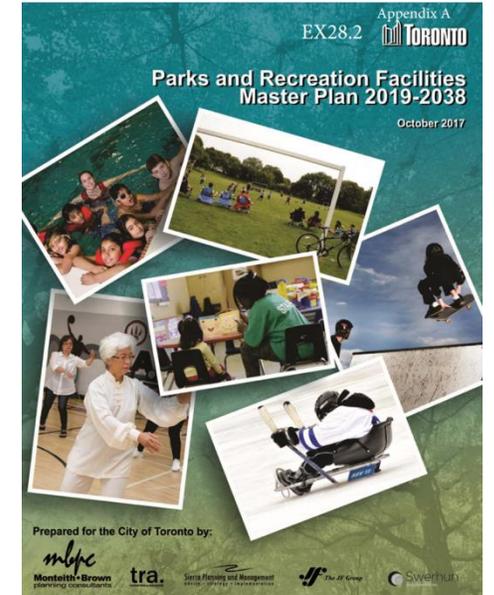
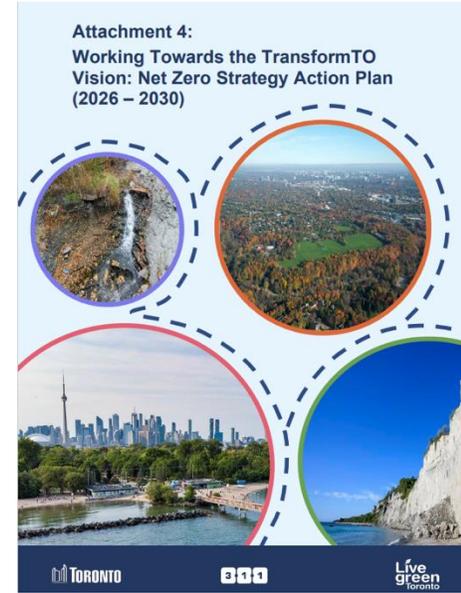
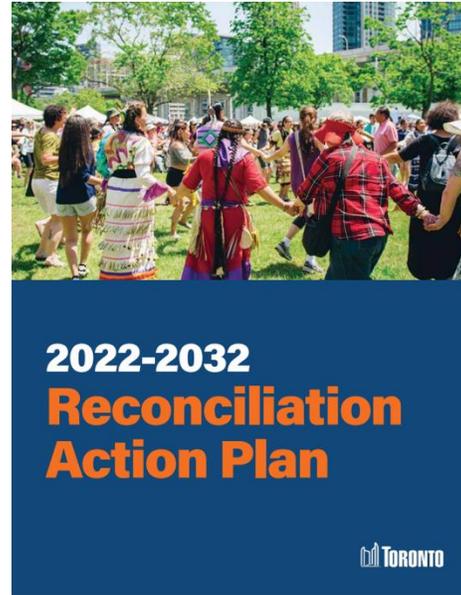
**Trinity Bellwoods**  
36 acres



**High Park**  
350 acres

# City Policies & Strategies

The project is informed by City policies, programs, and strategies to ensure the project reflects the City's planning framework and future vision for Toronto's parks system and the downtown core.



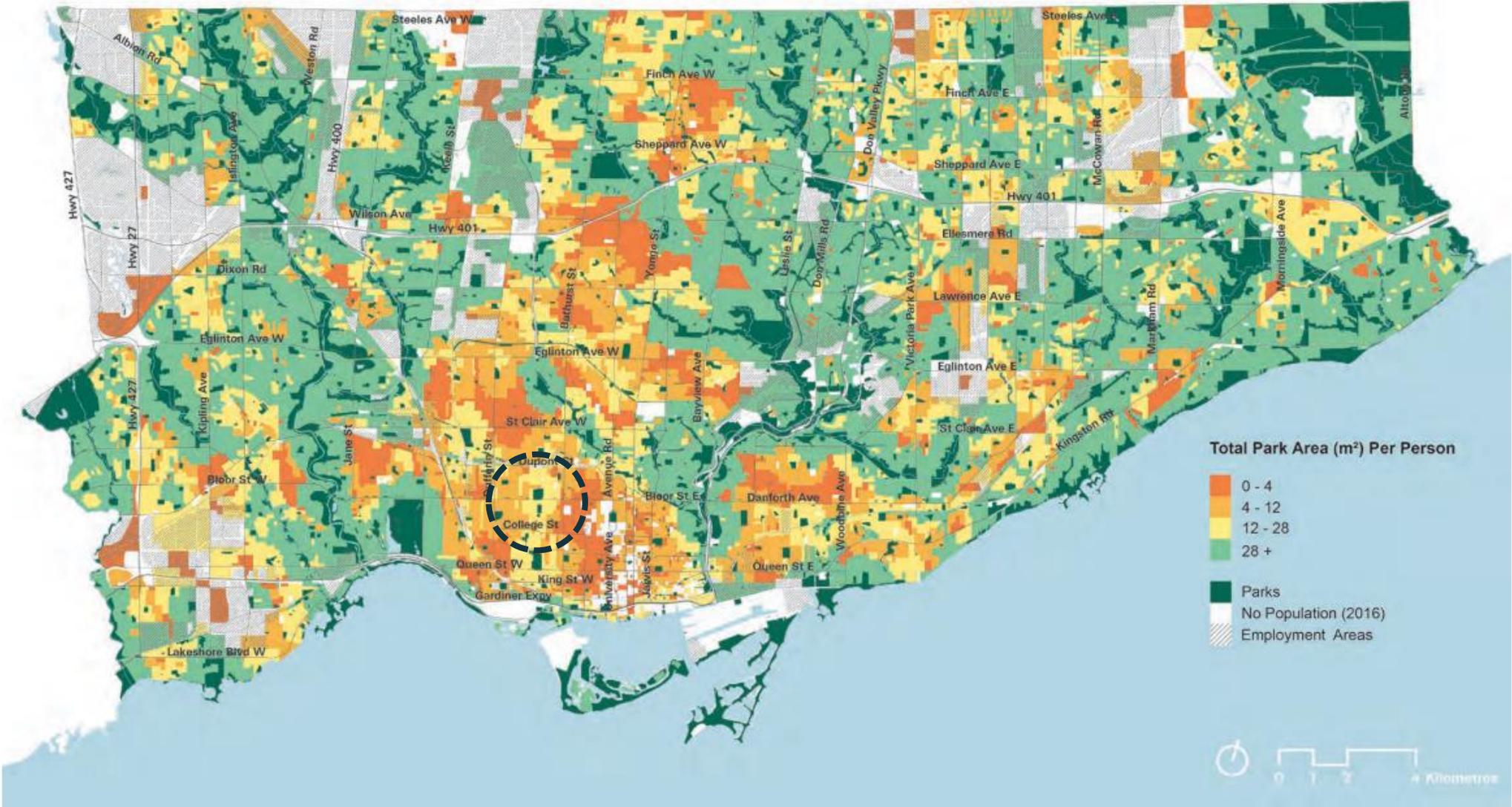
## TOcore: Planning Downtown



The [University Avenue Cultural Heritage Landscape Study](#) is now complete and was presented to the [Toronto Preservation Board](#), along with [reference materials](#), at its December 10, 2025 meeting.

# Impact of Growth

Figure 08: Toronto Parkland Provision (2016)



# Planning for Growth

Parks and Recreation has a number of important considerations for ensuring high-quality parks:

- Prominence and Visibility
- Identity and Character
- User Experience
- Physical Characteristics and Thermal Comfort

In Queen's Park North **creating a high value park means** accommodating overlapping experiences and uses. The project team has identified this as a balance between protecting the trees and character of the park through **park** softscape improvements while adding amenities at the **heart** of the park, offering more opportunities for varied uses, improved visitor experiences and educational programming.

## PROMINENCE & VISIBILITY



Parks need to be located and designated to ensure they are prominent, and visible features of the public realm to support safety, security, accessibility, and livability of the city.

## IDENTITY & CHARACTER



Parks need to be situated and designed to take advantage of character-defining elements and features that contribute to creating a sense of place.

## USER EXPERIENCE



Parks need to be designed to both attract a wide range of users, and to entice people to stay and linger by providing a range of activities and seating options, reinforcing views, supporting vegetation and tree growth, and providing inclusive spaces that contribute to comfort and social interaction.

## PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS & THERMAL COMFORT



Parks need to be designed to provide visual interest, be safe and secure, and support a range of passive and active programming and activity. Their design and size should enable a range of year-round programming, maximize sunlight exposure, provide ample shade, and be safe and accessible for people of all ages and abilities.

# Objective

## Vision Statement:

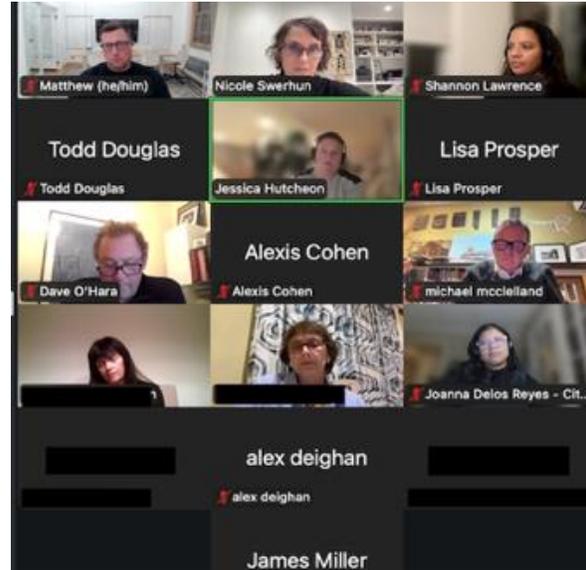
An extraordinary place for people and nature throughout the seasons, that respects the **existing trees and heritage** of Queen's Park North, fosters a **welcoming environment, and showcases excellence in design, ecological stewardship, education, animation and collaborative governance.**

# Guiding Principles

1. Protect and enhance the trees
2. ***Respect the cultural and natural heritage of Queen's Park North.***
3. Enhance the visitor experience and animate the park year-round through improved amenities and modest programming
4. Incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing and being.
5. Implement ecological and sustainable practices that restore the land, support plant and animal life, and enhance and expand ecological health and biodiversity.
6. Maintain Queen's Park as a public space and a place for respite and civic life, welcoming to all.
7. Strengthen relationships between public space and institutional and community partners.

# Engagement Update

# Engagement Activities (October – December 2025)



# What We Heard

Key Theme	What we heard	How it shaped the design & Process
Overall change	There was a range of perspectives on the amount of proposed change. Perspectives ranged from people wanting no change, people interested in change under specific conditions and others offering full support of proposed changes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The design aims to balance overlapping uses and experiences.</li> <li>Food and beverage offerings have been appropriately scaled; the kiosk concept has been removed. The café will continue to be scoped through analysis and engagement outcome.</li> <li>Planting ratios have been refined to include more lawn and the planting palette has been simplified.</li> <li>Ongoing analysis due diligence and engagement outcomes will inform final decisions on concept design.</li> </ul>
Cultural and Natural Heritage	Cultural and natural heritage was not strongly reflected through the project vision, principles or analysis presented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A guiding principle related to cultural heritage has been added to shape current and future considerations for Queen's Park North.</li> <li>A draft Statement of Cultural Significance has been developed by ERA and City staff are reviewing, the draft SoS will continue to be refined through the current phase of engagement and work between City Heritage staff and ERA.</li> <li>Where required, a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) may be needed to assess impacts of the proposed development changes to the existing heritage fabric. Completing these HIAs can provide guidelines on how to appropriately integrate future ideas.</li> </ul>
Trees	The importance of the tree canopy is the top priority for all park users. Trees play a significant role in shaping the park's character and experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project team has assembled the analysis and research completed by JRS, this will be shared through engagement to demonstrate how trees have provided the background to design thinking.</li> <li>Ongoing work underway to develop servicing strategies that have minimal impact on trees.</li> </ul>
Ecology and Planting	Strong support for increased planting as a tree protection and sustainability practice. Maintaining a balanced lawn ratio is critical to the experience in the park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ratio of the lawn has been balanced based on feedback heard through the last round of engagement with careful attention paid to areas that the public identified as cherished spaces for rest and relaxation.</li> <li>Increase tree planting has been included in the updated concept plans.</li> </ul>
Number of proposed new structures in the park	Responses were mixed on the number of proposed structures in the park; washrooms received a high degree of support. The café was welcomed by some and rejected by others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The kiosk has been removed from the concept based on feedback received through the last round of engagement.</li> <li>The washroom and café building(s) continue to be developed and refined to balance the interests and needs of diverse park users.</li> <li>More analysis has been developed around the workshop concept, and the project team will be seeking feedback to understand how/if the concept would add value and community benefit.</li> </ul>
Lighting	New lighting needs to reflect the range of human and animal park users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A preliminary strategy is included in the update and will be further refined through phase 3 engagement analysis.</li> </ul>

# Opportunity

# Donation Key Terms

- **Donation Size** - Up to \$50 million for revitalization
- **Design Oversight** – City will oversee design finalization in consultation with donor
- **Capital Delivery** – City will take carriage of revitalization work in the park
- **Tri-Party Maintenance Operations and Funding Agreement** – a new shared operating model for the park
- **Lease** – City to secure any required changes from University
- **Donor Recognition** – any recognition to be approved by GM Parks and Rec in line with typical parks donor recognition



# High Level Overview of Enhanced Shared Stewardship Structure

- A new shared model for delivering on the vision and principles of the park
- Significant funding from the Donor for ongoing care
- Enhanced maintenance funding, including:
  - UofT to perform enhanced maintenance and capital repair/works on revitalized park elements
  - A dedicated Executive Director role
  - Appropriately scaled programming within the park
- Establishes a:
  - Indigenous Leadership and Stewardship Circle
  - Steering Committee (City, University, Donor, ED)
  - Executive Director role
  - Park Advisory Board

# What does this donation and new model mean for the Park?

- Improved park assets, natural areas, and supports for existing and new experiences
- A maintenance, operations, and programming model built specifically for Queen's Park North, grounded in the vision and principles
- An executive director providing additional eyes on the park, and coordinating activity with a level of intentionality not existing today
- Purpose built forums for community, neighbour, and indigenous input into the parks use and operations
- More money and resources for taking care of this park than exists today

# Shared Stewardship Model - Draft Framework

TBC - Indigenous Leadership and Stewardship Circle (scope TBC based on ongoing engagement)

## Steering Committee (City, UofT, Donor, ED)

- Hiring and oversight of ED
- \*Oversight of maintenance and operations and capital reserve budgets
- Approval of funding for programming partners
- Oversight of any third-parties (e.g. Café operations)
- Fostering collaboration to ensure ongoing performance by all parties of their obligations under the agreement

*\*Steering Committee may establish working committees, tables or other forums to promote effective coordination and delivery of the maintenance and operations of the park*

## Executive Director – QPN

- Acts as the Park lead and provides strategic leadership and direction, including long-term planning, performance management, and continuous improvements
- Advances and realizes the vision and principles
- Visitor Experience
- Central point of contact for community and stakeholders
- Central point of coordination and integration of all park activity, including ongoing operations and programming
- Maintains calendar of events

*ED office and administrative support provided by University of Toronto*

## QPN- Advisory Board (community, indigenous representation, legislative assembly, institutional partners, ED, City, University, others TBD)

- An ongoing community, neighbour, expert, indigenous voice at the table – ensuring process for ongoing input and conversation.
- Vision and leadership for the park
- Support and advise executive director
- Advise on:
  - Programming principles, guidelines, and opportunities
  - Interpretation materials
  - Visitor experience
  - Park performance measures
  - Subject Matter Expertise to compliment City/University teams
- Champion park initiatives
- Forum for discussion on ideas as well as potential areas of concern

*Detailed Terms of Reference still under development.*

# Steering Committee – Key Responsibilities

## City of Toronto

- Oversight of allowable activities in the park, and application of applicable bylaws and laws
- \*Ongoing delivery of core municipal services (e.g. tree care, snow clearing, solid waste, bylaw, 311, etc.)
- Representing and protecting public interest
- Owner of park assets

## University of Toronto

- \*Operations and maintenance of capital improvements and revitalized park elements (e.g. Tree Walk; Café; Garden; restored green spaces)
- Administrative support for Executive Director, Queen's Park North (hired by the Board)
- Representing University of Toronto interest as maintenance and operations partner

## Weston Foundation

- Funding capital improvements
- Funding ongoing operations and maintenance costs for the University
- Funding programming
- Representing ongoing funding partner

\*Detailed maintenance schedules and will be negotiated and established following the completion of park design.

# **What does this donation and new model mean for the Park?**

The proposed model sets the park up for long term success – it will allow the vision and principles to be realized not just immediately following investment, but for the long term.

# Next Steps

# Testing, analysis, and refinement

Phase 2 Engagement (October – December 2025) revealed both excitement and questions relating to many of the concepts presented. Through the engagement process the City heard that the public wanted to understand the primary analysis supporting tree protection and cultural and natural heritage that formed the basis for early design concepts. The project team has worked to package early testing and analysis with new layers of analysis that has led to the refined concepts that will be presented tonight. The concept design is subject to further engagement, testing, analysis, and refinement.

Due diligence work currently underway:

- Technical coordination with University of Toronto and City divisions  
(Heritage Planning, Urban Forestry, Parks, EDC, Urban Design, TTC, Transportation Services)
- Tree Impact Analysis
- Urban Forestry Management Plan
- Statement of Cultural Significance
- Food & Beverage feasibility/business case study to further inform the café proposal

# Next Steps

## Engagement Activities:

- Discussion Guide: March 5
- Meeting with Neighbouring Institutions: March 4
- Online Survey: March 5 – April 2
- First Submission City's Design Review Panel: March 11
- Focus Group Meetings
  - 2SLGBTQ+: March 12
  - Resident Associations: March 17
  - Parks, Trees and Nature: March 23
  - Heritage: March 24
- Meetings with First Nations and Local Indigenous community members: late March - April

## Council:

- Staff Report - March 3
- Executive Committee - March 10
- City Council - March 25

## Next Steps

**Visit the project website to  
take the survey & sign up  
for updates!**

Survey available now until April 2



<https://www.toronto.ca/QueensParkNorth>

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Senior Project Manager

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**So, how did we do? Scan the QR code and take a quick survey to share feedback on today's event:**

<https://ca.mar.medallia.com/QPN3>



# Queen's Park North

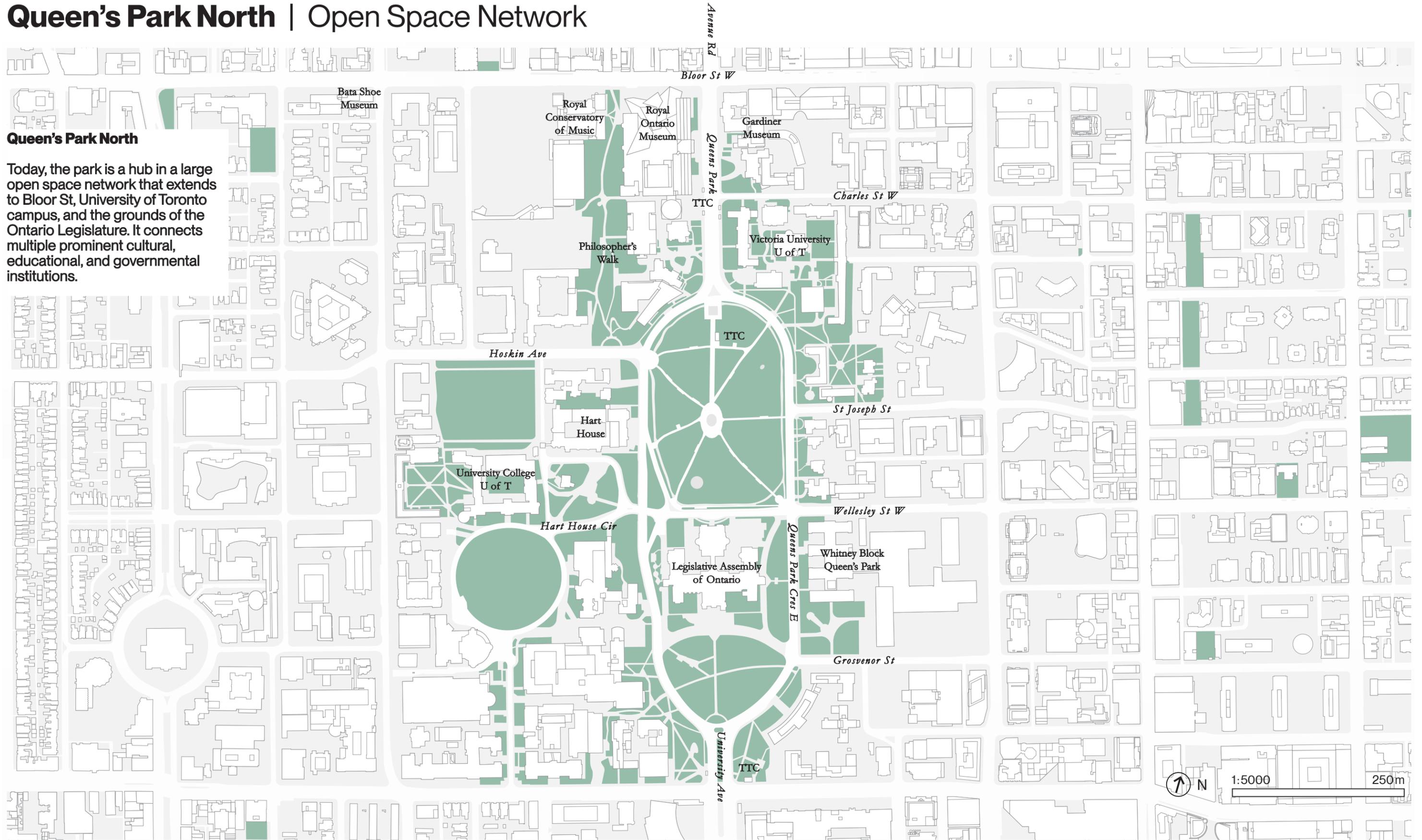
Phase 3 Design Presentation  
2026-03-05

Janet  
Rosenberg  
& Studio

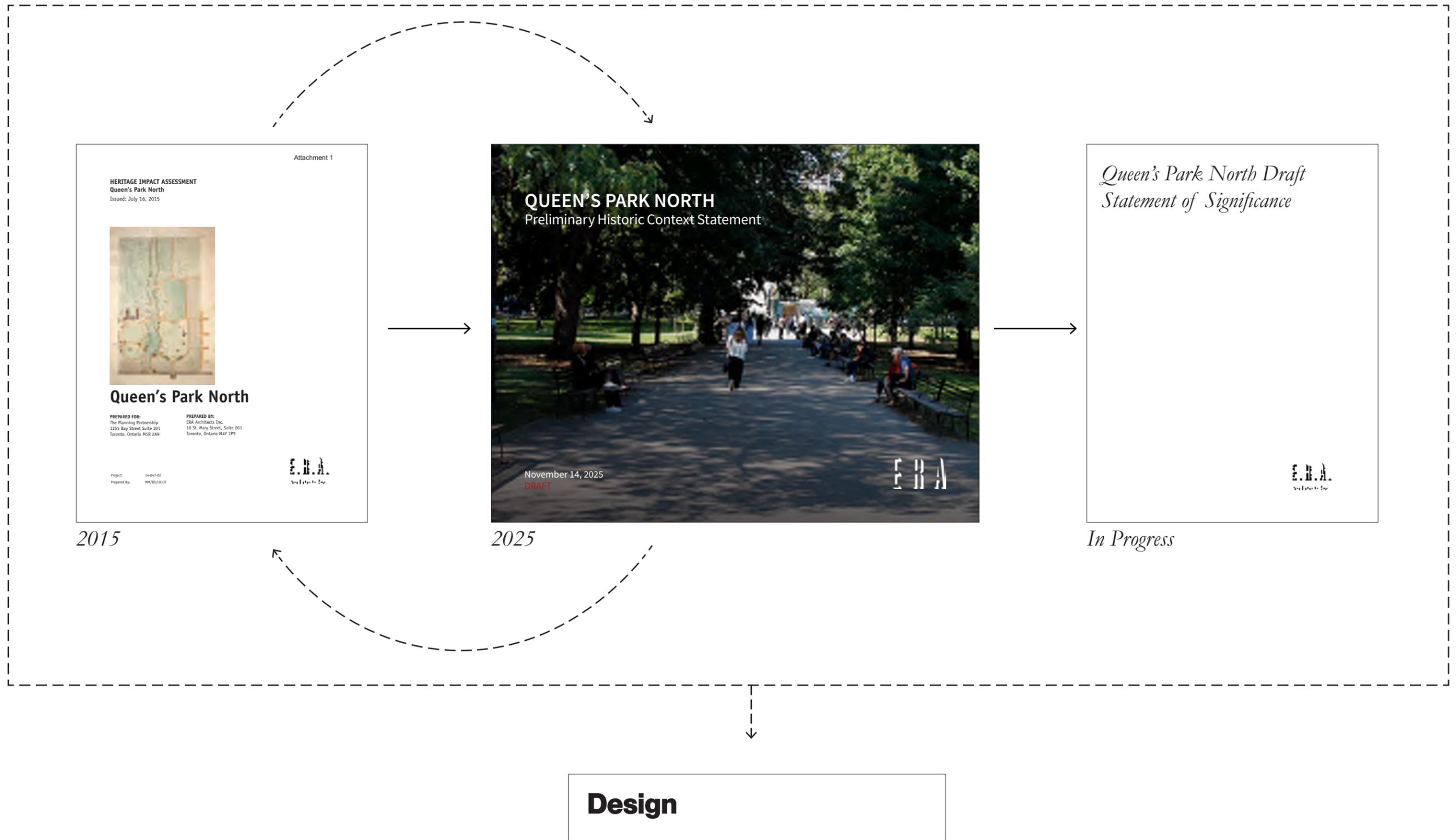
# Queen's Park North | Open Space Network

## Queen's Park North

Today, the park is a hub in a large open space network that extends to Bloor St, University of Toronto campus, and the grounds of the Ontario Legislature. It connects multiple prominent cultural, educational, and governmental institutions.



# Cultural Heritage | Research and Feedback





## PEOPLE

Queen's Park North is a people's park; it is a public place in nature where people connect, gather, and spend time.

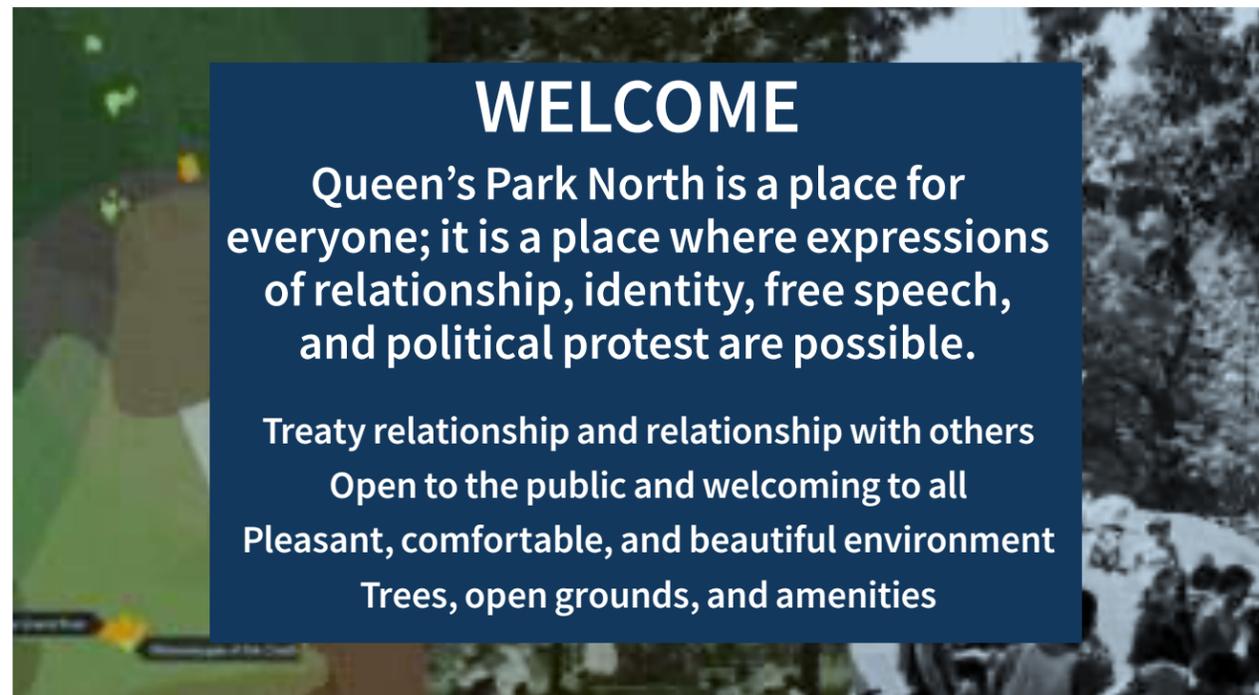
- Democratic space
- Free speech — public expression of community, identity, and ideas
- Place of gathering and connecting



## NATURE

Queen's Park North is a place for trees that nourish all inhabitants; it is a delicate ecosystem sustaining relationships between human and non-human beings.

- Indigenous relationship to lands
- Kinship and renewal
- Public park — access to green space
- Nature — a place of respite, wellbeing, and habitat



## WELCOME

Queen's Park North is a place for everyone; it is a place where expressions of relationship, identity, free speech, and political protest are possible.

- Treaty relationship and relationship with others
- Open to the public and welcoming to all
- Pleasant, comfortable, and beautiful environment
- Trees, open grounds, and amenities



## GOVERNANCE

Queen's Park North is a place of governance and stewardship; it is a place of respect, responsibility, and reciprocity where human and ecological layers can co-exist.

- Indigenous land and Treaty rights
- Responsible governance and stewardship — Baldwin Act and Yellowhead Wampum Belt
- Care for land and community
- Backyard of Legislature

Four overlapping and interrelated themes have emerged. These themes are rooted in the sustained physical patterns and patterns of use associated with this place and represent the complex and interconnected histories, identities, and meanings of Queen's Park North for different communities.

# Cultural Heritage | People



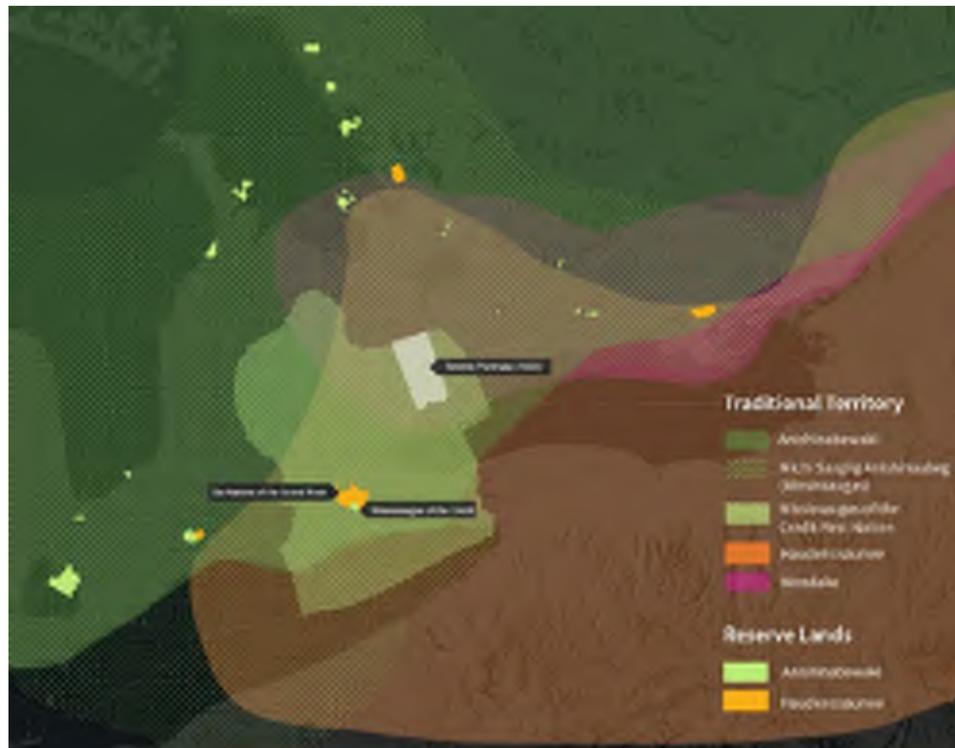
5. Sugar Camp engraving by J. C. McRae. The Mississaugas of the Credit: Historical Territory, Resource and Land Use. p.12. 2018. Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (<https://mncfn.ca/>).



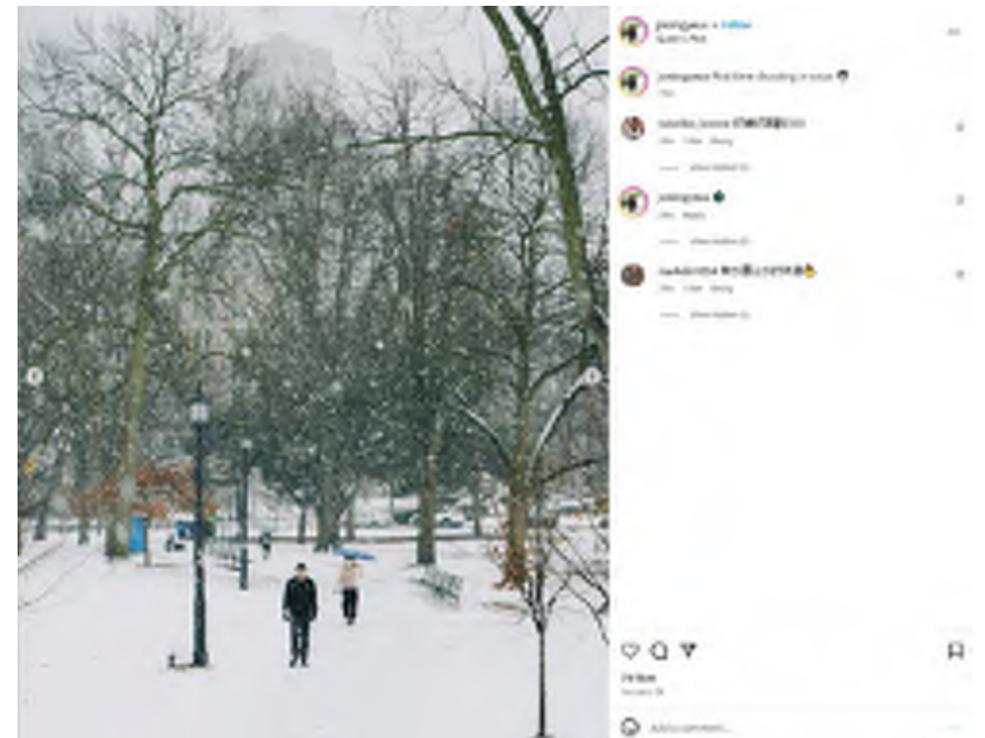
23. 1923 Queen's Park memorial. 1923. Memorial Project (<https://15thbattalioncef.ca>).



33. Queen's Park North as a gathering space for the Queer community in the 1970s. 1978. Queer Catharsis (<https://onthebookshelves.com>).



34. 1970 Earth Day Vigil in Queen's Park. 1970. Toronto Public Library, Toronto Star Archive, TSPA\_0011670F.



# Cultural Heritage | Nature



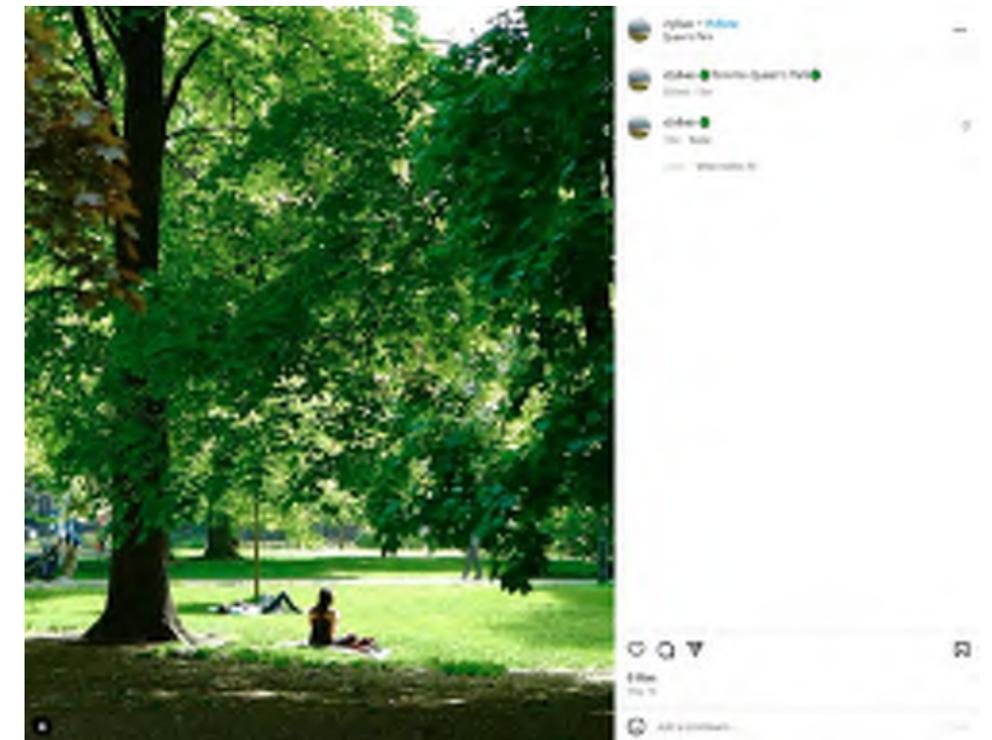
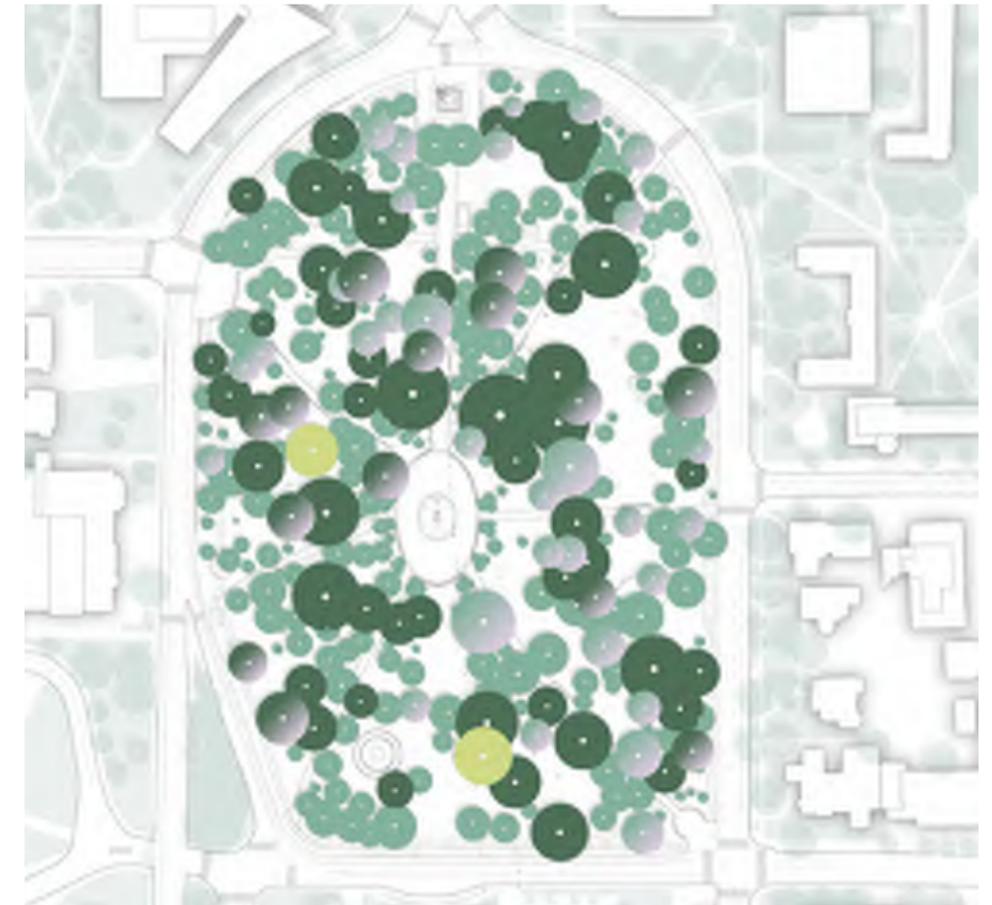
A



B



22. Members of the public enjoy the grounds of Queen's Park. 1906. Toronto Reference Library. Baldwin Collection of Canadiana. PC\_856.



# Cultural Heritage | Governance



30. Equestrian Statue of King Edward VII. 2024. ERA Architects.



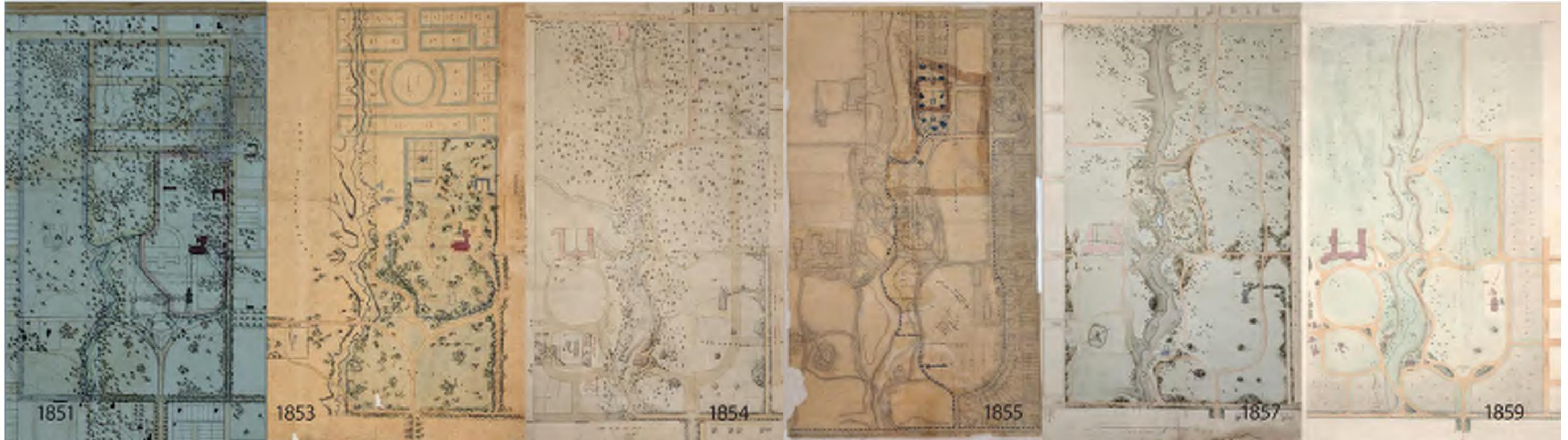
32. Members of the public using parkland as grounds for protest. 1998. Toronto Public Library, Toronto Star Archive, TSPA\_0012353F.



24. 1905 Queen's Park and University Grounds. 1905. University of Toronto Archives.



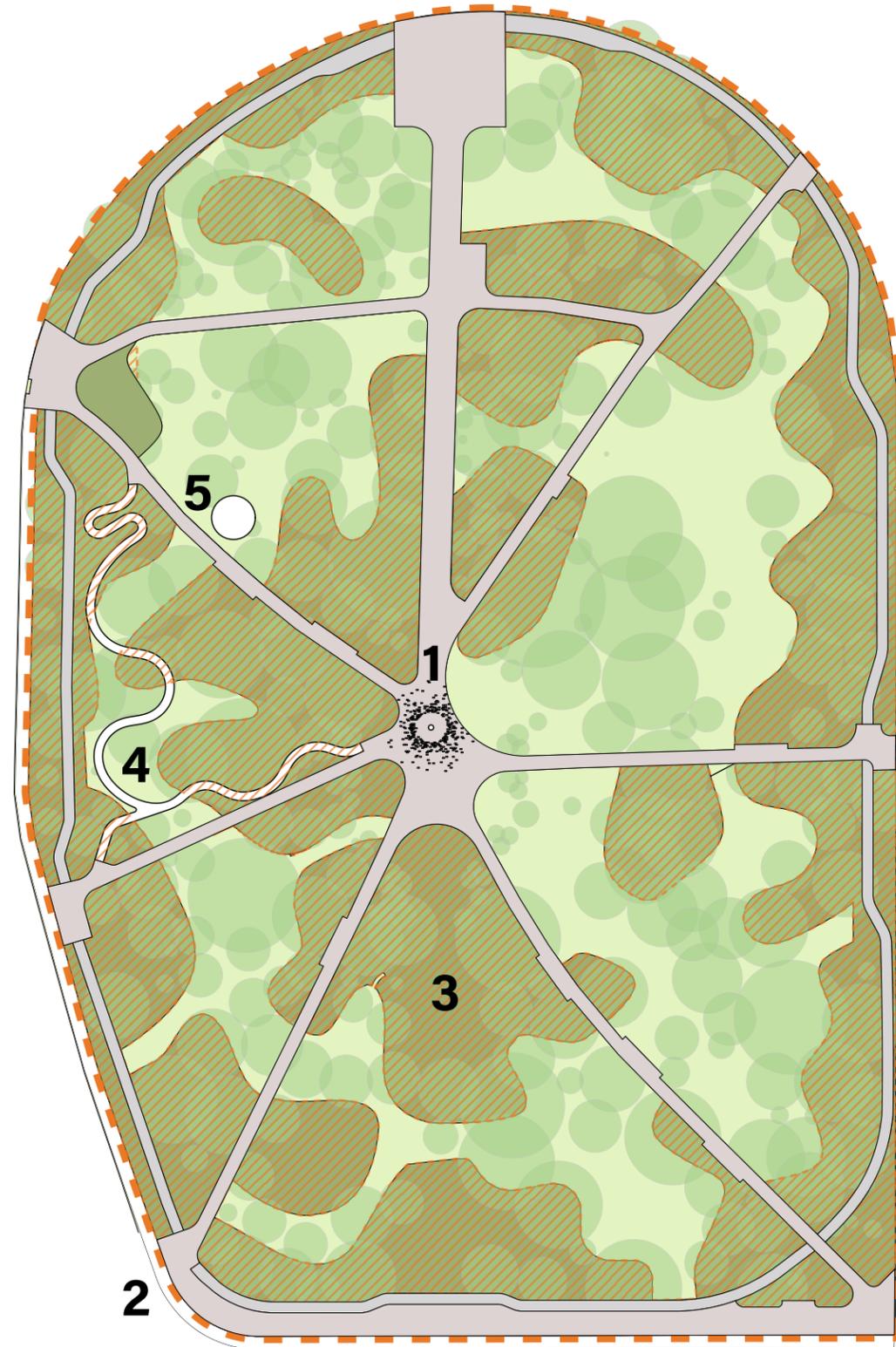
# Cultural Heritage | Welcome



14. 'City of Toronto' Lithograph by William Nathaniel Wesbroom, C.1886. Toronto Public Library. Published by Toronto Lithographing Company.







## 1 Ceremonial Council Fire

In addition to the site being reconceptualized as a modern form of a Council Fire Gathering Site, a fire pit that will be bookable and governed by protocol will be centrally located in the Heart. It will be a place for Indigenous Community to come together, hold council, make decisions, celebrate, and mourn. For the majority of the time, it will have a covering designed by a local Indigenous artist/s.

## 2 Indigenous Led Governance Framework

Part of the proposed refurbishment of Queen's Park North includes a Governance Framework that is currently under development. A Specific Indigenous Leadership and Stewardship Circle is being proposed.

## 3 Forest Restoration Zones

Ecological reciprocity is central to local Indigenous value systems. The protection and enhancement of the existing elder trees on site reflects a commitment to non-human relatives that make up local ecologies. Understory plantings of native and culturally-significant species as well as allowing for natural cycles of decay, actively builds healthy relationships between plants, insects, birds, mammals, soil, and water.

## 4 Tree Walk Signage

The Elevated Tree Walk on the Park's West side will include labels in local Indigenous languages and speak to the significance of particular species Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Wendake groups.

## 5 Land Based Learning Workshop

An innovative workshop where land-based learning and stewardship could take place in partnership with local institutions like UofT, The ROM, Royal Conservatory, and The Gardener Museum. This would allow programs like The Earthkeepers Employment and Training Program to be renewed at Queens Park.

# Design Approach | Queen's Park Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow



pre 1860



c. 1934



c. 2010



c. 2019



future

- ***Can we link ecology, stewardship, investment, and program together to care for these trees for the next 100+ years?***
- ***Can we create flexible and inclusive space that is welcoming to all?***
- ***Can there be spaces to support community and culture, taking pressure off the trees?***
- ***Can we reflect the relationships between people and place that shaped the park today?***
- ***Can we create a truly democratic space?***
- ***Can we create a space for meaningful dialogue?***

# Today | From Above



# Concept Plan | From Above



# Concept Plan | Below the Canopy



# Concept Plan | Refinements since the last time we met

Feedback from Phase 2 included suggested refinements to the scheme, as well as requests for more detail.

Key refinements and additional details are summarized at right.

The concept has been refined based on comments from the public engagement process, consultation with experts, input from relevant City Divisions and other key stakeholders, and continued research.

## Refinements you'll see today

Increase lawn area

Simplify understory planting

Increase tree planting

Reduce the number of structures

Protect new plantings

Enhance connections to the park

## Additional detail you'll see today

Water Feature

Workshop Program and Form

Cafe Feasibility

Tree Walk Feasibility

Lighting Concepts

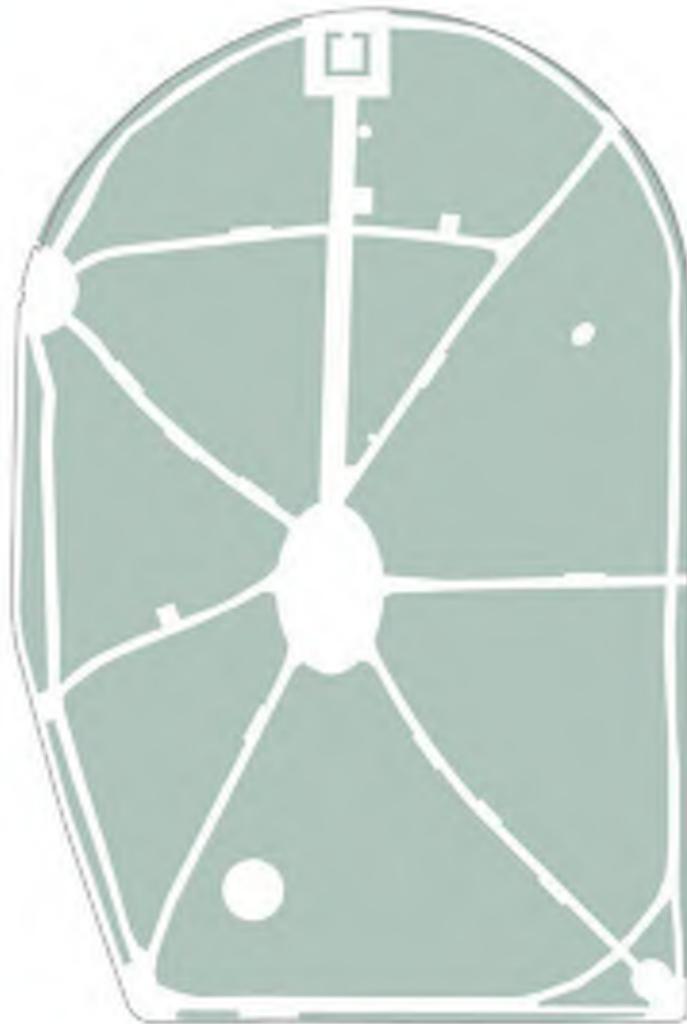
Seating Typologies

King Edward VII Recontextualization

Council fire

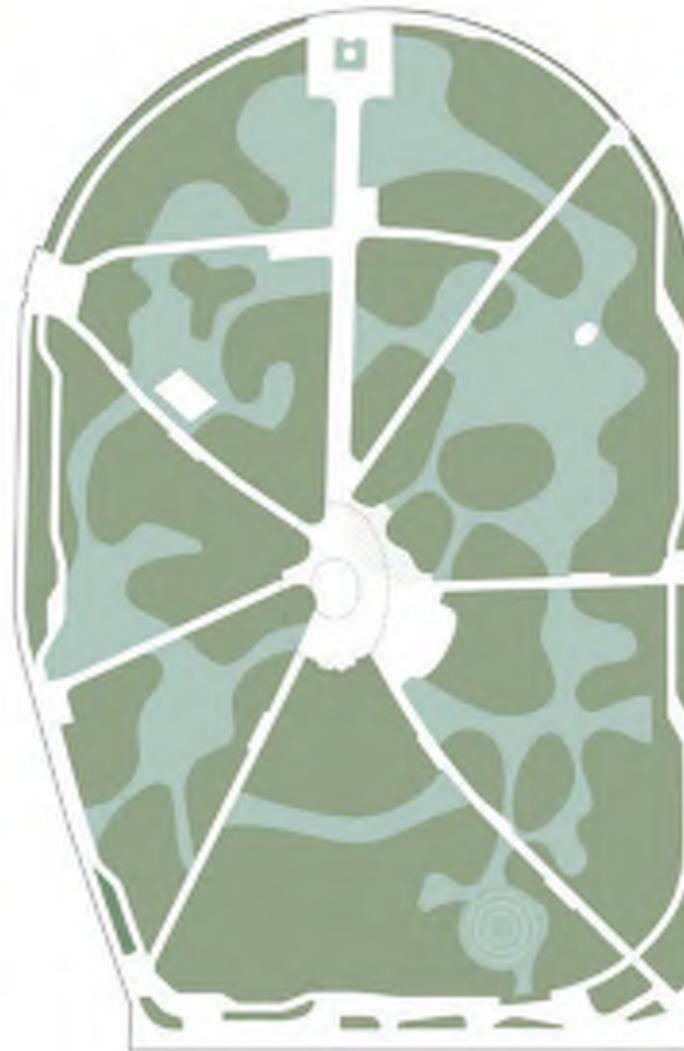
Commemorative garden

# Concept Plan | Softscape Analysis



Existing

total softscape	88%
■ lawn	88%
meadow/understory	0%



Proposed Phase 2

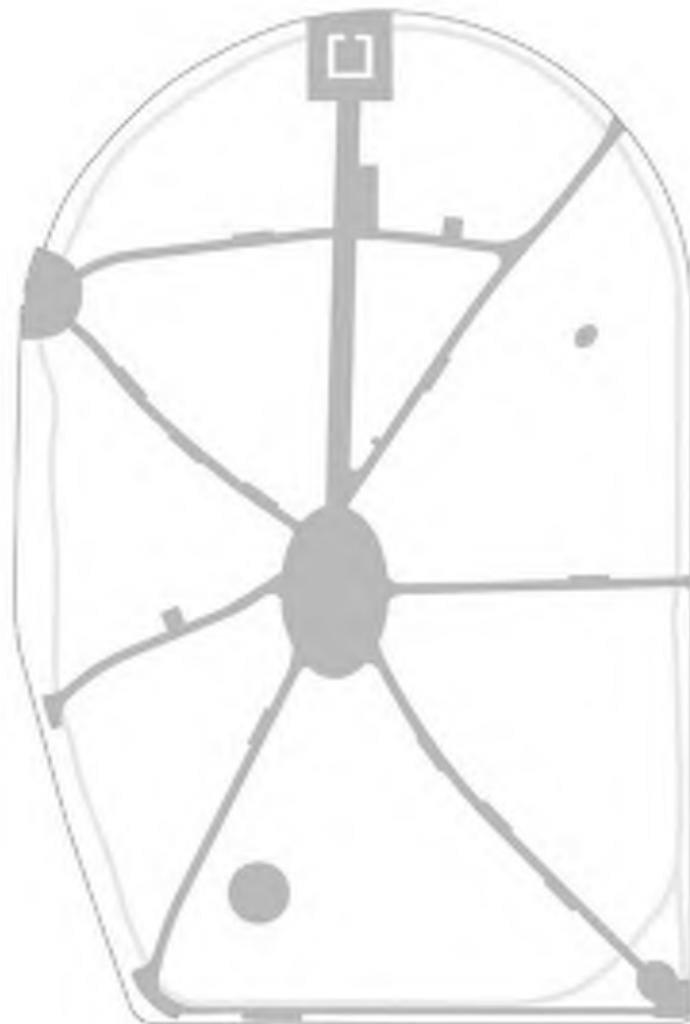
total softscape	89%
■ lawn	25%
■ meadow/understory	56%



Proposed Phase 3

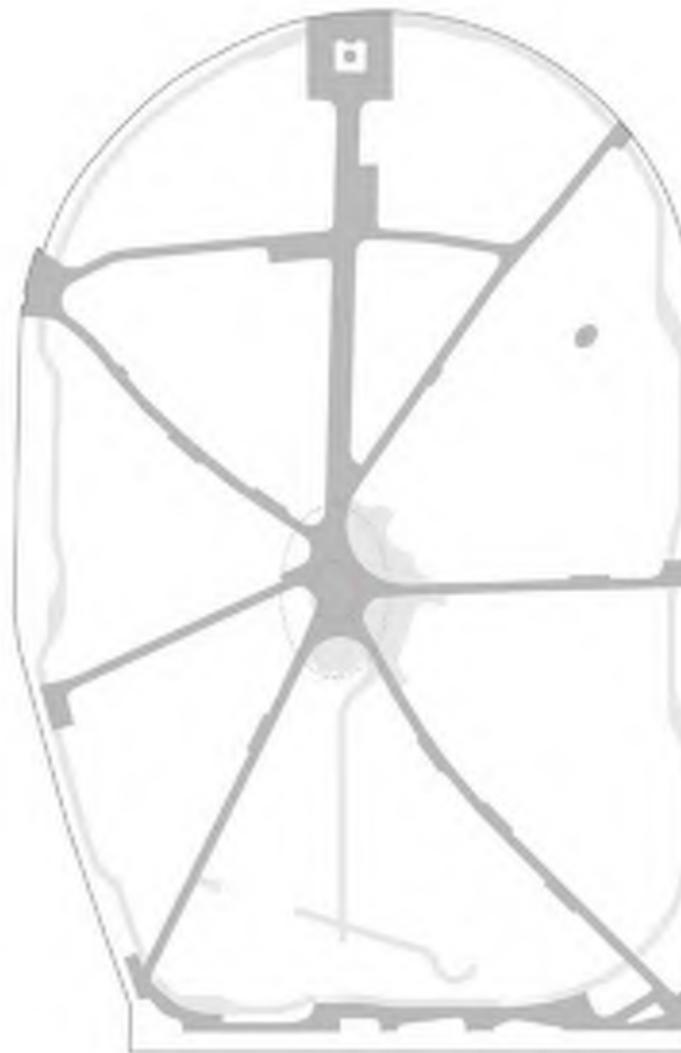
total softscape	86%
■ lawn	41%
■ meadow/understory	41%
■ commemorative garden	3%
■ enhanced planting	1%

# Concept Plan | Hardscape Analysis



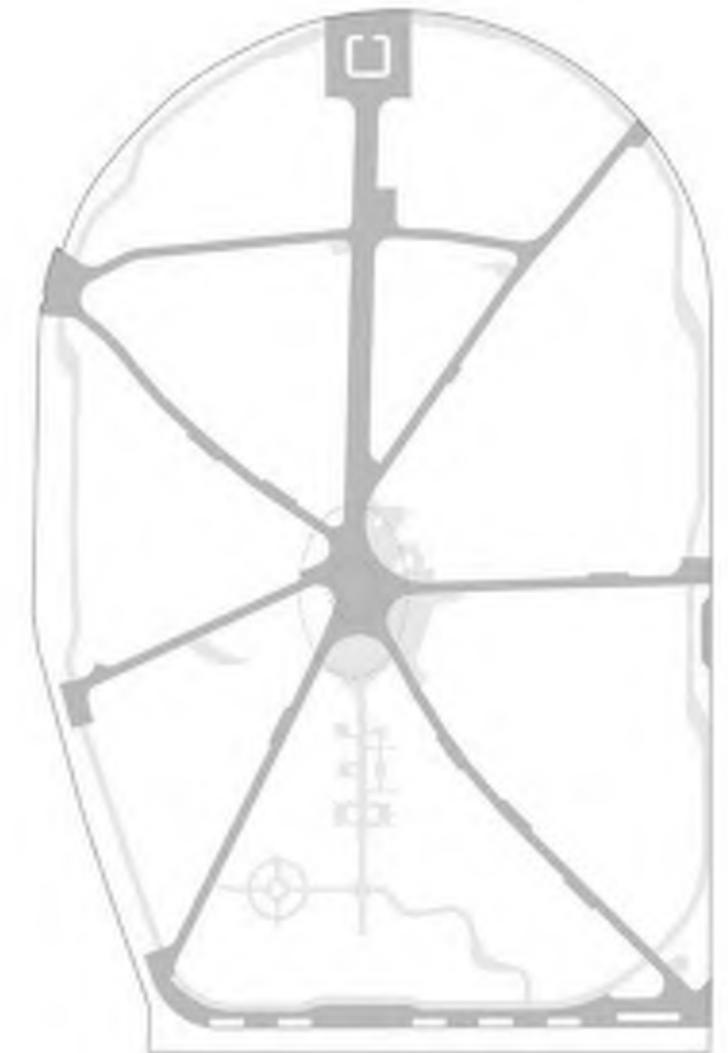
Existing

■	hardscape	12%
■	permeable	5%



Proposed Phase 2

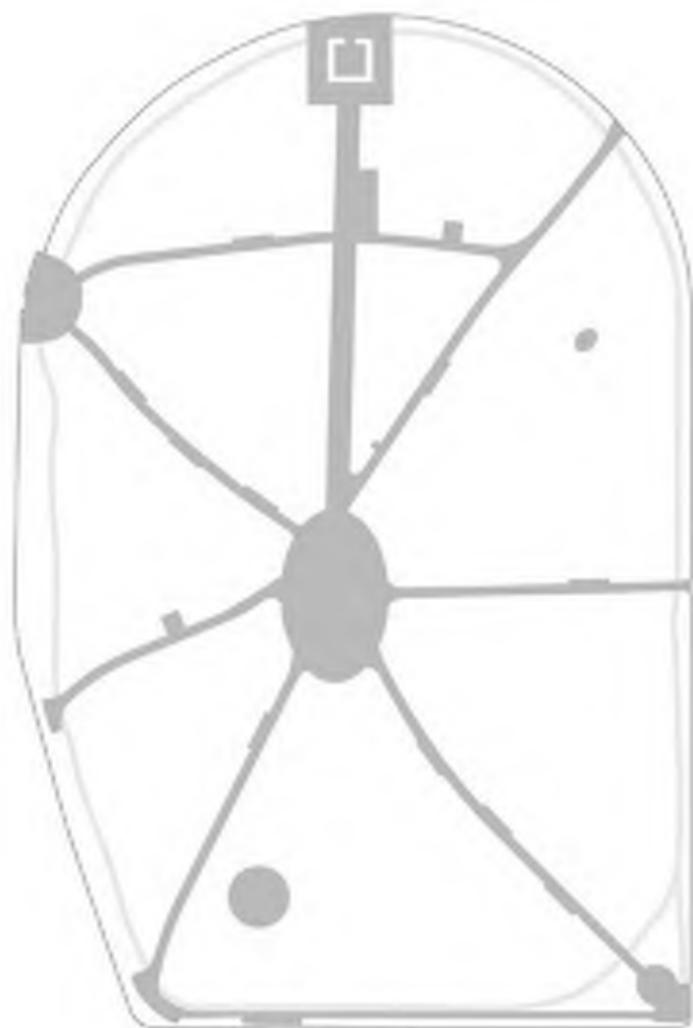
■	hardscape	12%
■	permeable	6%



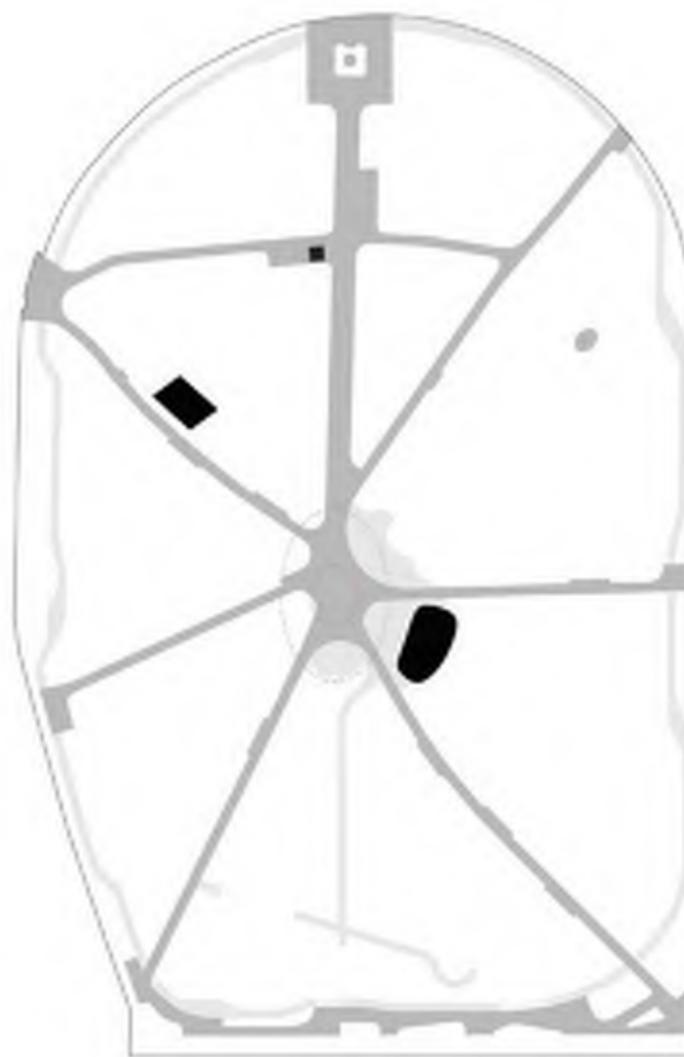
Proposed Phase 3

■	hardscape	13%
■	permeable	7%

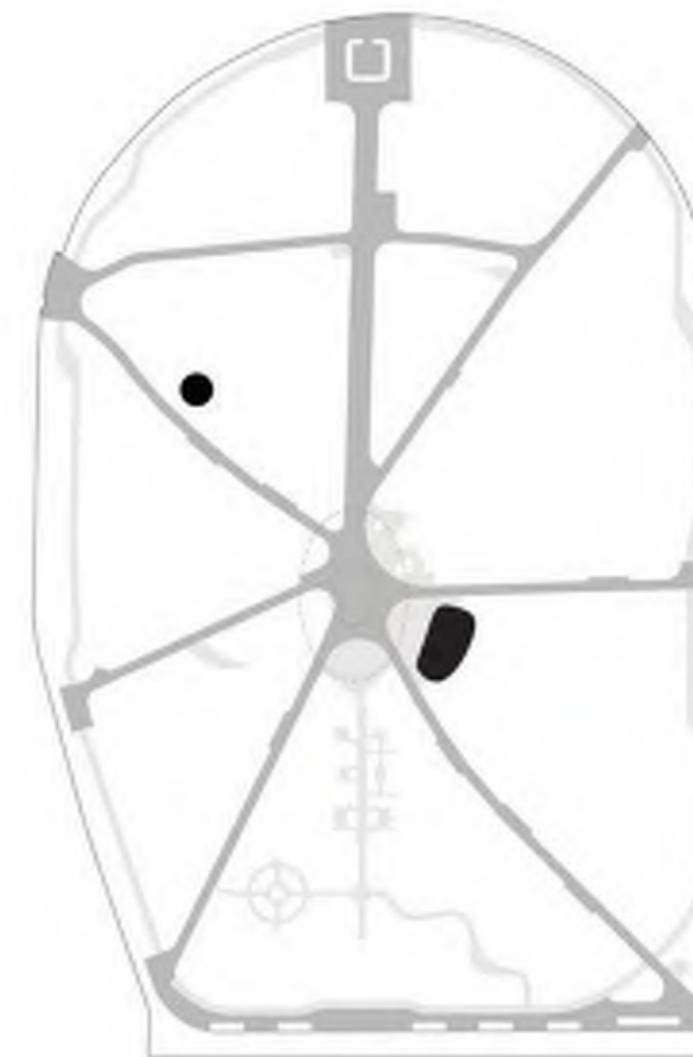
# Concept Plan | Structure Analysis



Existing structures 0

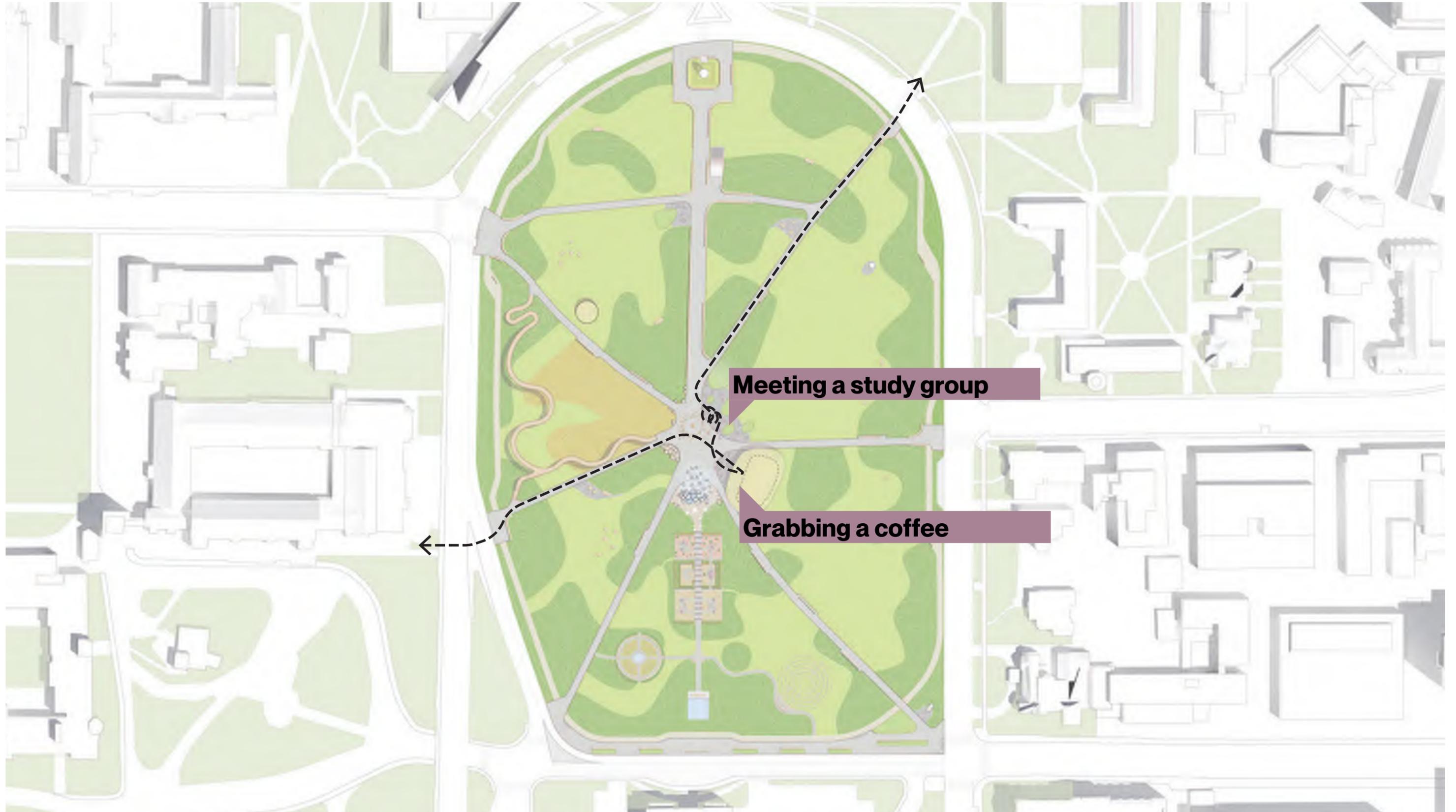


Proposed Phase 2 structures 3



Proposed Phase 3 structures 2

# A Visit to Queen's Park | Student



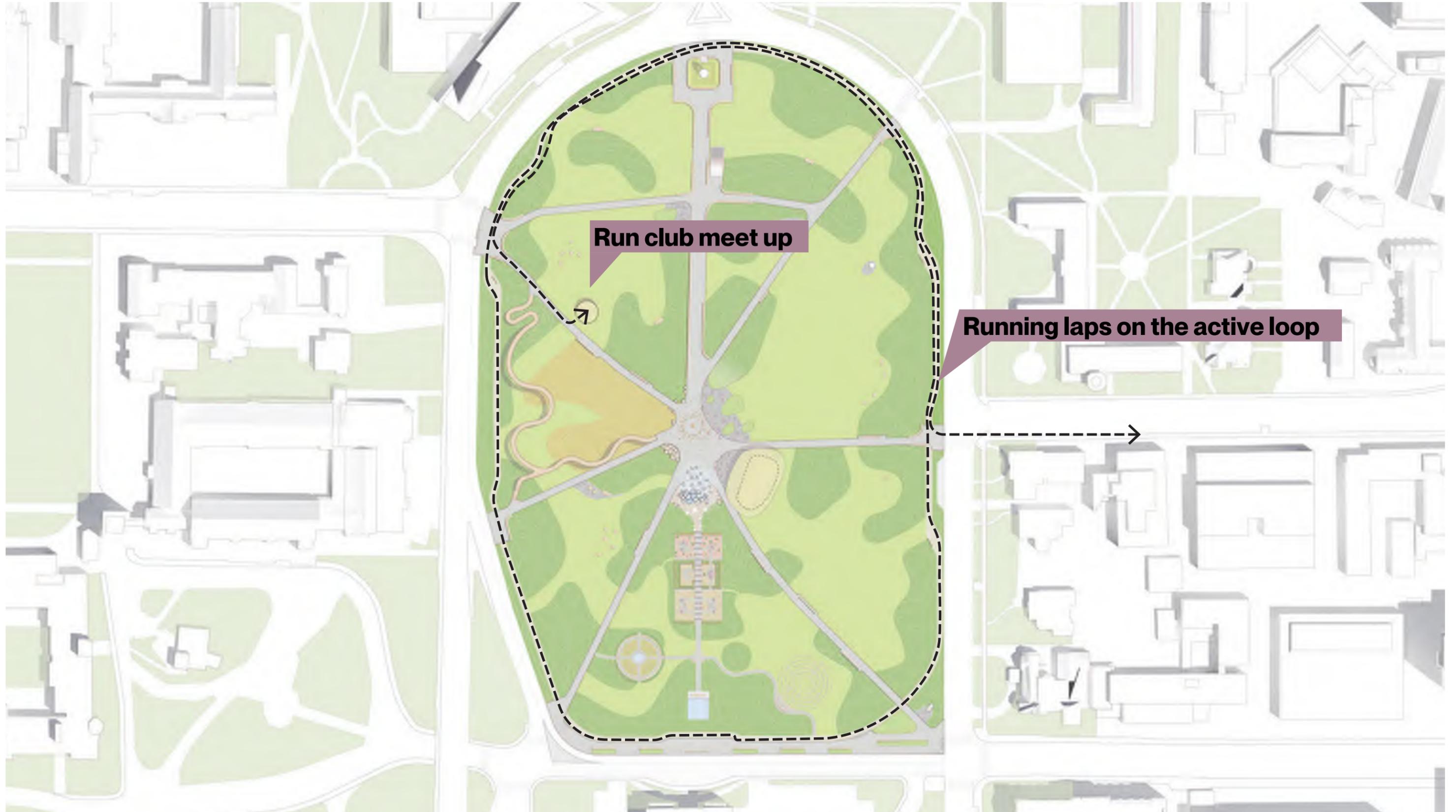
# A Visit to Queen's Park | Family



# A Visit to Queen's Park | Tourist



# A Visit to Queen's Park | Runner



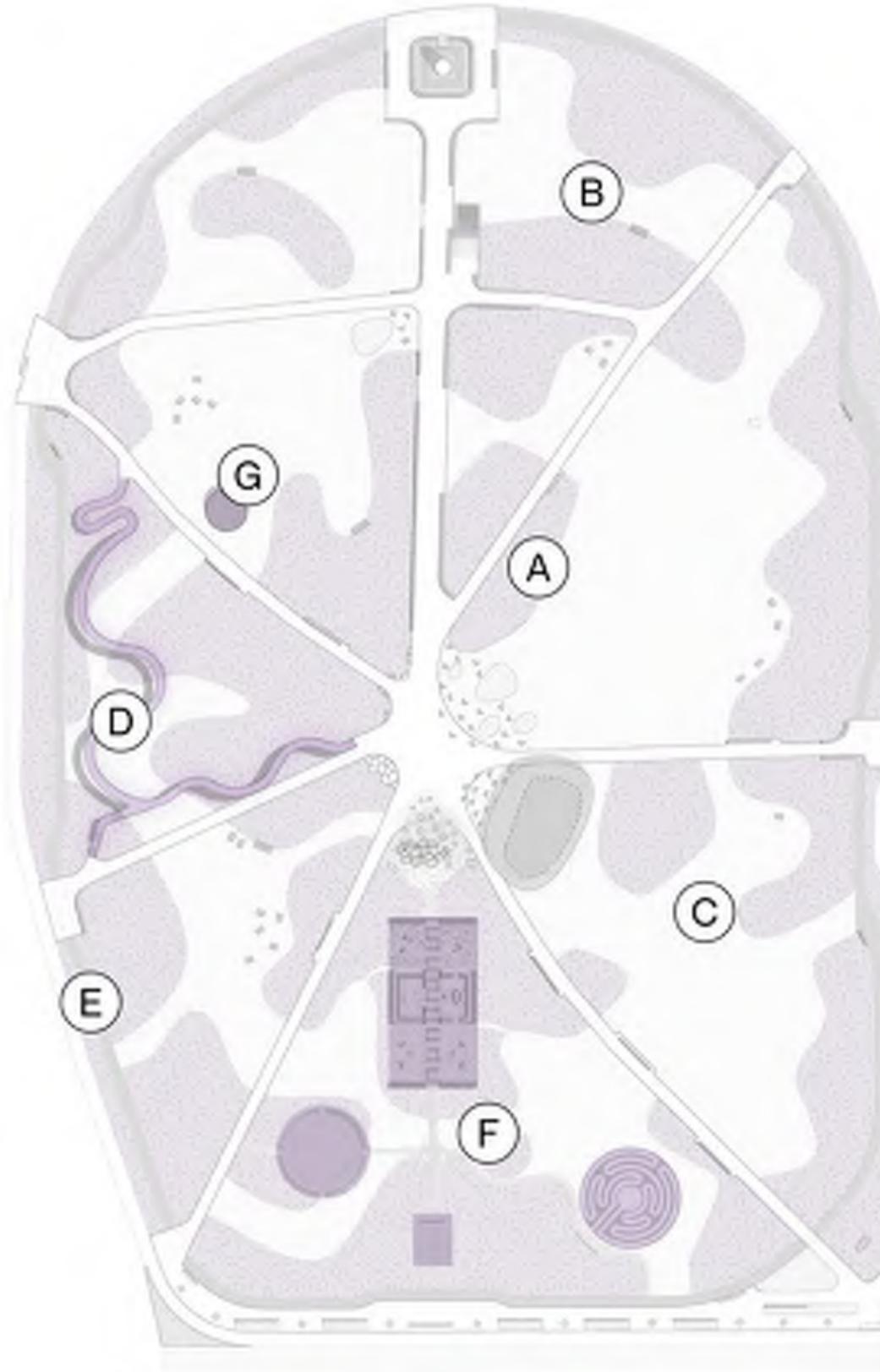
## A Visit to Queen's Park | A place for everyone



**These stories are just examples of how people might experience a revitalized Queen's Park North. We invite you to imagine you're own trip through the park.**



# The Park



## The Park Chapter

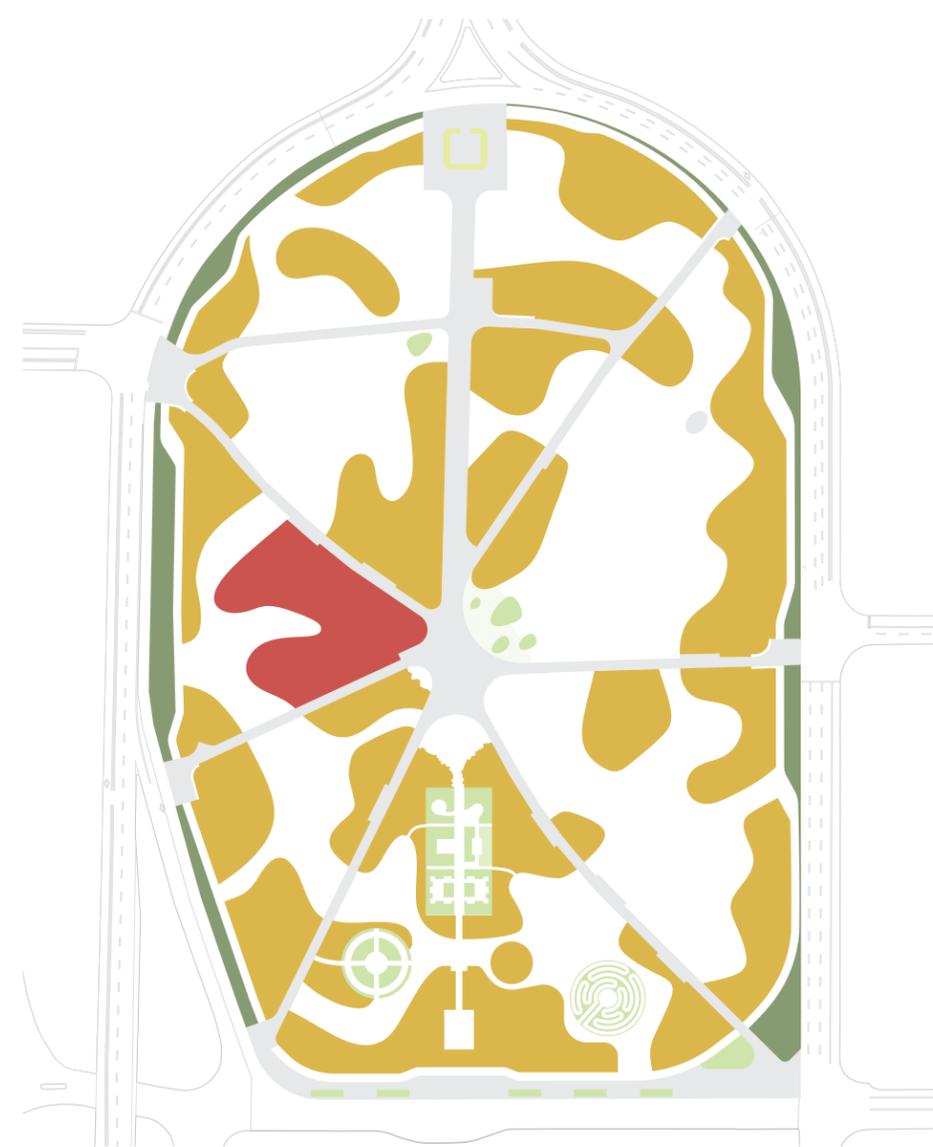
- A** Restoration Planting Concept
- B** Planting Communities
- C** Experiencing the understory
- D** Tree Walk
- E** Active Loop
- F** Commemorative Garden
- G** The Workshop

# Understory | Planting Communities Phase 2 vs Phase 3



Plant Communities Phase 2

- White Oak Savanna
- Food Forest
- Carolinian Forest Reference System
- Forest Edge
- Garden
- Lawn



Plant Communities Phase 3

- Savanna / Meadow
- Learning Forest
- Forest Edge
- Garden / Special Planting
- Lawn

## Plant Communities

The planting strategy has been simplified, and more lawn has been maintained.

## Understory | Largest Red Oak in the Lawn



### **The Largest Tree in the Park**

Looking south towards the largest tree in the park, a Red Oak. Today, this significant tree exists in struggling turf.

## Understory | Largest Red Oak in the Lawn



### The Largest Tree in the Park

Large areas of lawn are maintained, and special tree care methods are used around the sensitive root zone.

The device attached to the tree is temporary, part of a scientific investigation of the health of the tree, and how much structure remains.

# Understory | Understory Protection Measures



**Seating Boulders**

At moments, stone seating provides a place to sit within the new planting.



**Permanent Toe Rail**

A custom metal toe rail for permanent installations.



**Temporary Fences**

A custom temporary fence in wood.

# Tree Walk | A view looking north

## Tree Walk

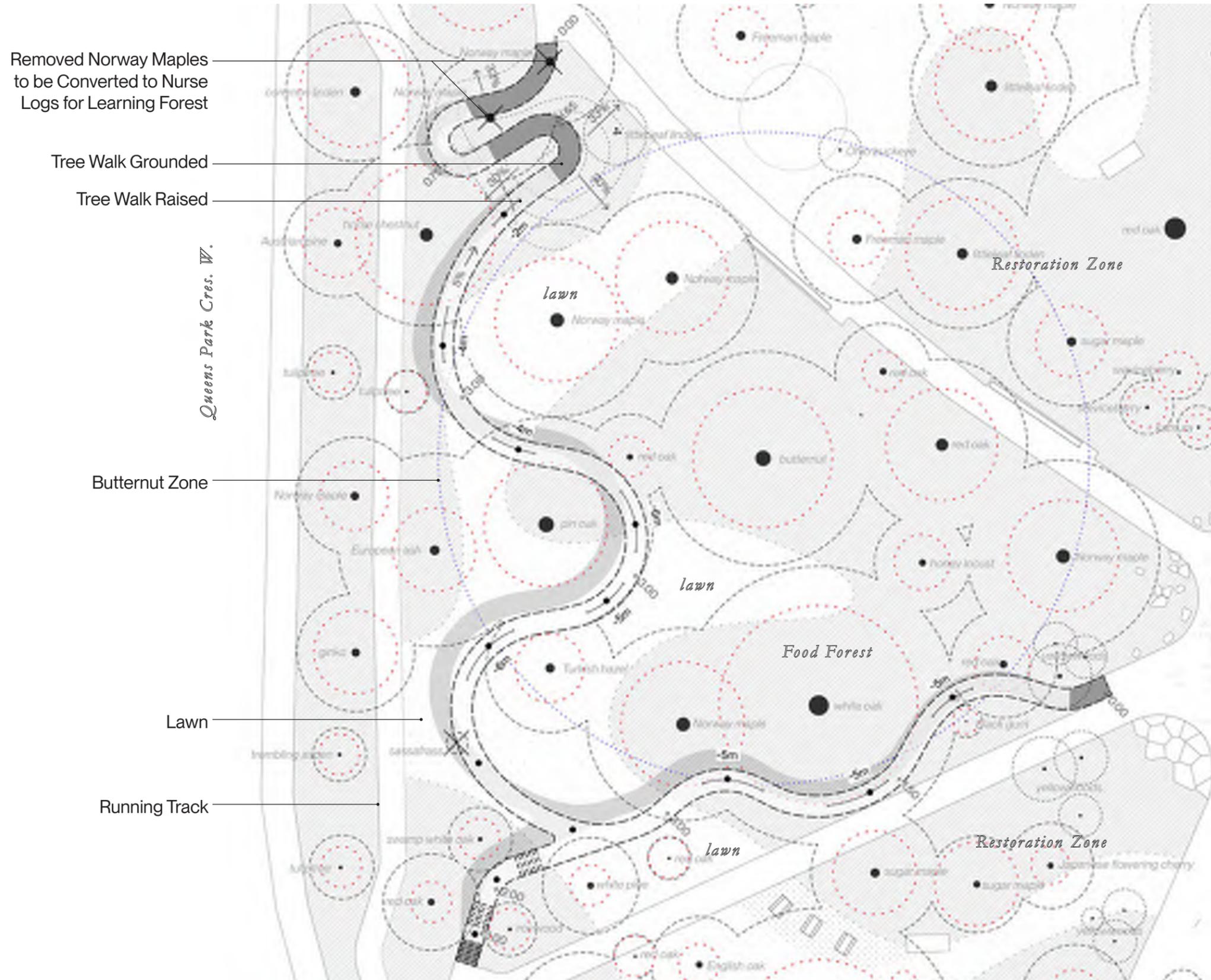
The Tree Walk is envisioned as accessible journey from end to end, rising with accessible slopes of 5% or less. Visitors will walk above the delicate understory that has been introduced to protect a particularly special stand of mature native trees.

Park visitors will be able to walk underneath in a meandering lawn that skirts the food forest. A temporary or permanent low fence will delineate the understory zone.

Winter operations are an important consideration. The team is looking at how to keep the feature safe and accessible all year round.



# Tree Walk | Impact diagram



Removed Norway Maples  
to be Converted to Nurse  
Logs for Learning Forest

Tree Walk Grounded

Tree Walk Raised

Queens Park Cres. W.

Butternut Zone

Lawn

Running Track

## Tree Walk Tree Impact

The team is studying how the structure and path can meander within the existing trees without impacting Tree Protection Zones.

The northern entrance could have an earthwork berm that would support the path switchbacks and reduce confined spaces below. Two existing Norway Maples would be impacted, becoming nurse logs for the Learning Forest.

Structural spans will depend on detailed design, but the illustrated range has been discussed with a structural engineer.

Air spading by a certified Arborist will occur in advance of helical pile installation to confirm no major root injuries will occur.

- tree for transplant
- removed tree
- tree protection zone (TPZ)
- Tree Walk Grounded
- understory
- support column

⊙ N  10m

# Commemorative Garden | Garden Plan



## Commemorative Garden

Hilary Weston was Lieutenant Governor of Ontario from 1997 to 2002. From the window of her office in the Legislature building, she admired the natural beauty of Queen's Park. Mrs Weston has long been an admirer and advocate for Canadian gardens and parks, writing books on the variety and beauty of the Canadian landscape. In her public service role, she was known for her support of women and volunteers, her progressive outlook and generous spirit.

Her warmth, elegance, and imaginative character will be reflected in the welcoming and unique experience of the Commemorative Garden in Queens Park North; a place for exploration, respite and enjoyment for all.

## Commemorative Garden | A View From The Rose Garden



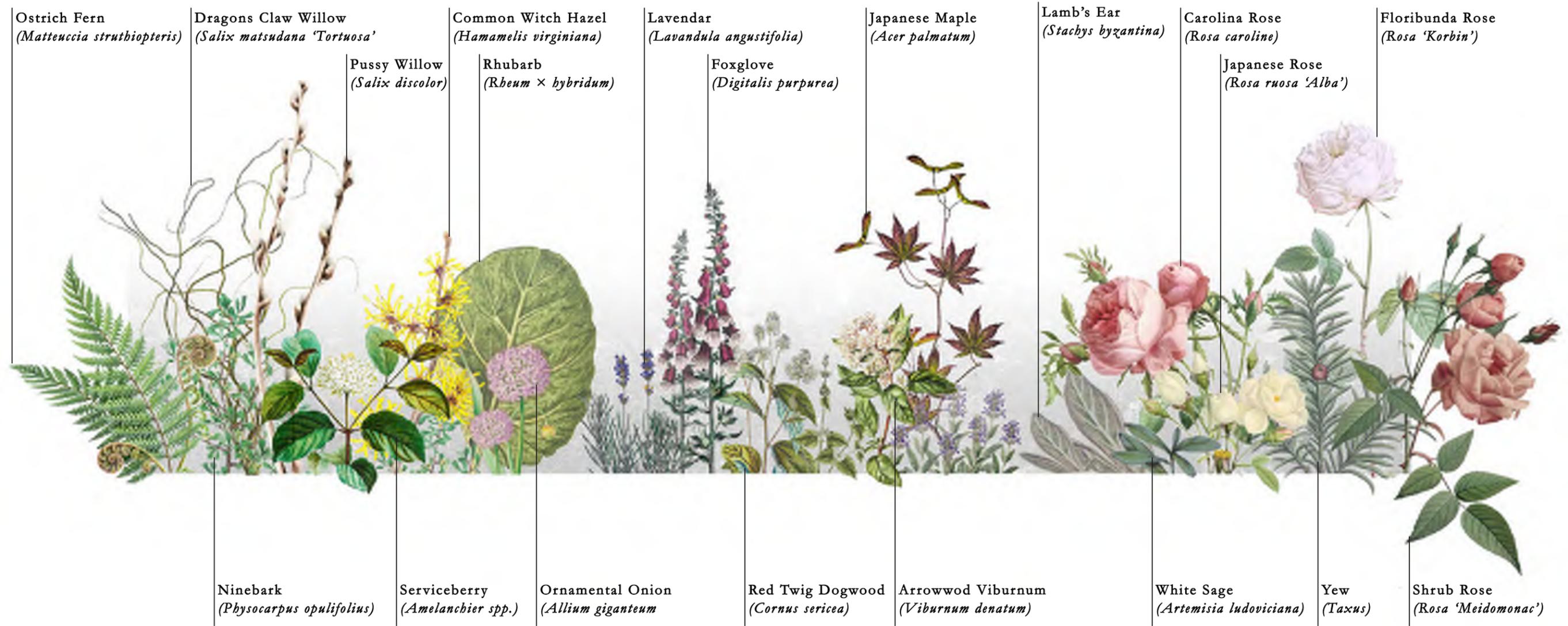
### Rose Garden

This garden is inspired by Mrs. Weston's interest in literacy and her belief in the transformative power of words and scholarship, along with her love of roses. Spaces are provided for quiet contemplation, reading and learning.

It is a garden of focus and return, where repetition and order encourage attention and reflection.

Roses are the primary plant experience, soft and muted colours, supported by companion planting of blues such as lavender & nepeta.

# Commemorative Garden | Planting



Demonstration planting palette of keystone species for discussion, not intended to be an exhaustive list.

# Commemorative Garden | Garden Spaces

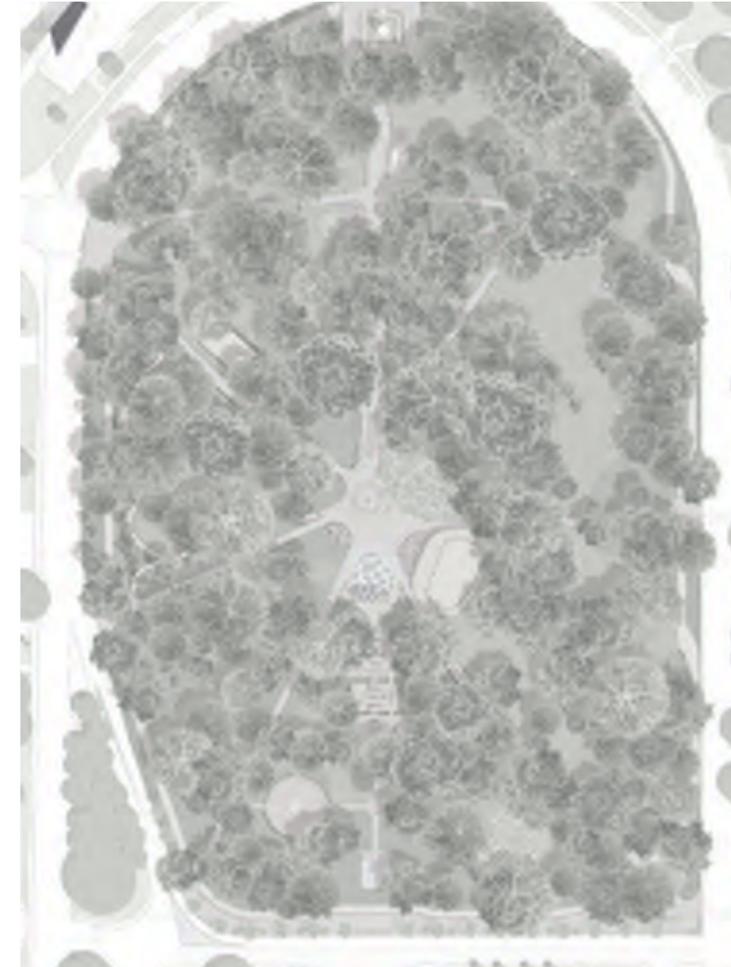
1957



1959



Proposed Plan



## The Fountain

The remains of a fountain designed by J. Austin Floyd occupy the parks southwest quadrant. Opened in 1957, this fountain was conceived as an active civic space and a notable example of modern design, integrating water, concrete, seating and circulation to support public use and gathering.

While its former design significance is acknowledged, the fountain is no longer operational and has not been for some time. Today the configuration wouldn't meet City code. The nature of the basin's design presents no barrier to entry in its current form and without meaningful design changes the basin would be considered as a wading pool necessitating treatment to health standards, and potentially things like a life guard, showers, and either a fenced enclosure or the ability to drain it outside of supervised hours.



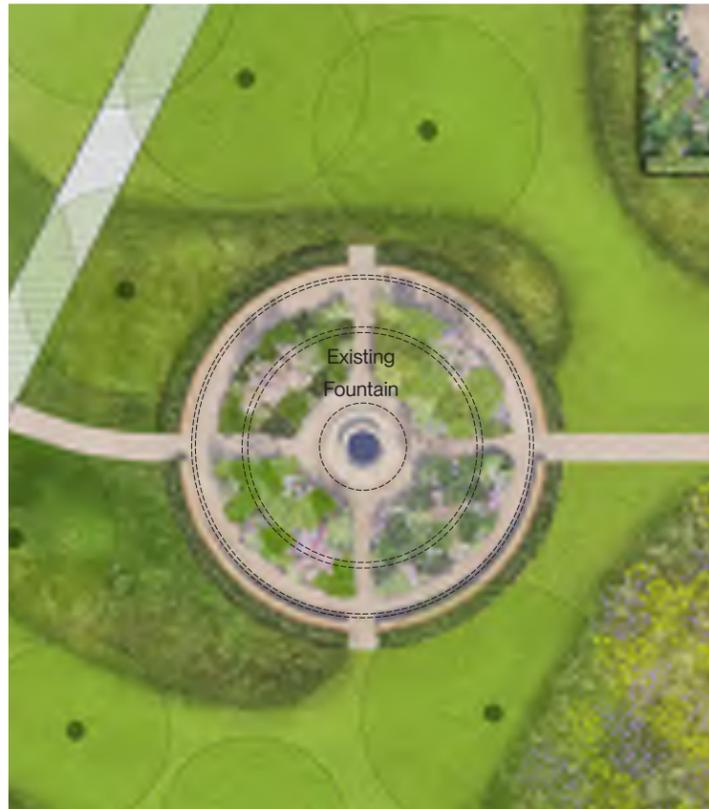
Sketch of the proposed fountain at Queen's Park North (1957).



The fountain today (2024).



Precedent image conveys character and scale of the reimagined fountain.



Rendered plan - the fountain is reimagined in the same location as the original J. Austin Floyd fountain.



The vision reintroduces seating and planting surrounding the fountain.

## The Fountain Reimagined

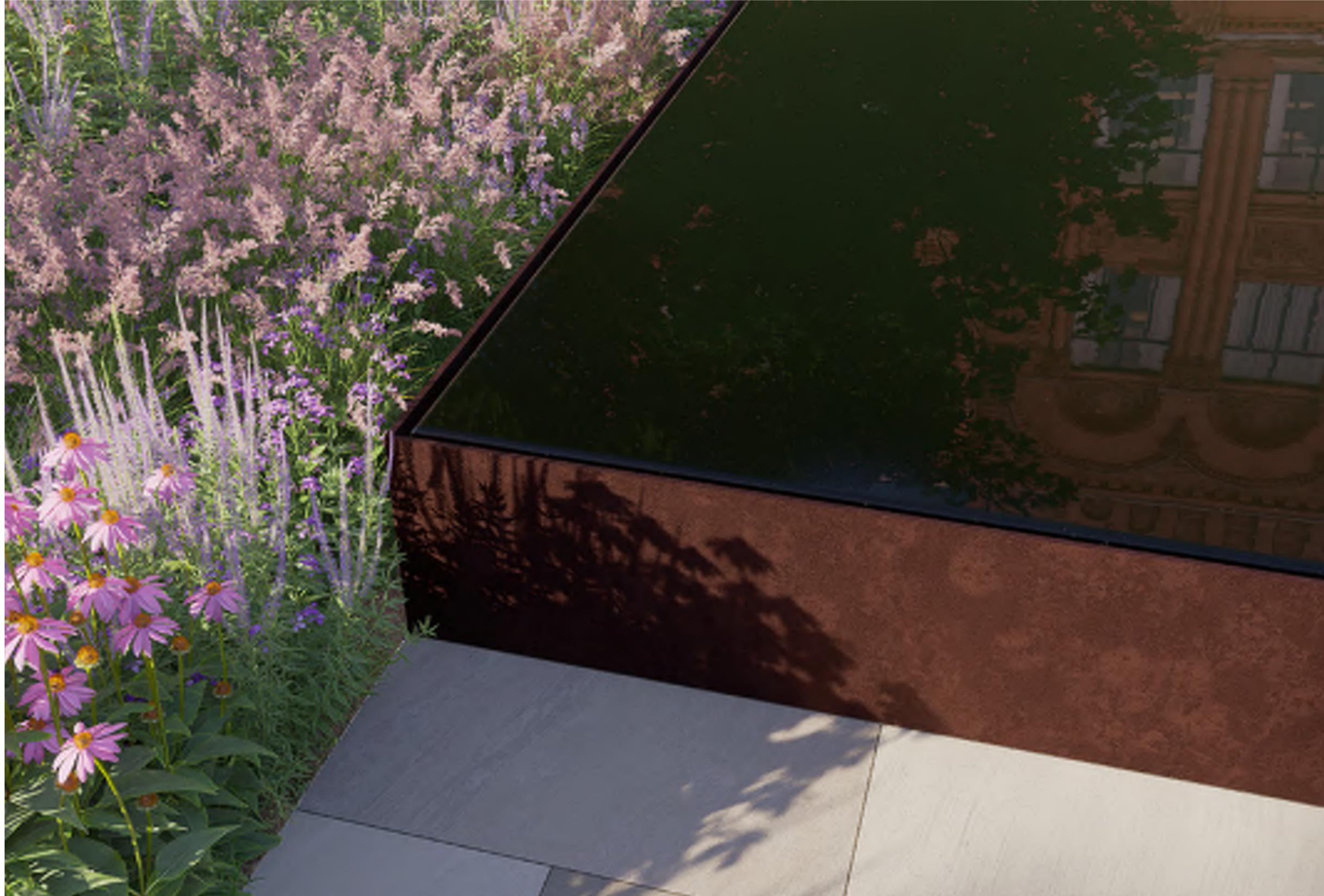
The concept plan reimagines a fountain on the exact location of the existing one, maintaining its historic siting and role within the park. Designed with contemporary materials and integrated with planting, comfortable seating and accessible pathways, this new fountain aligns closely to the original design intent of J. Austin Floyd

# Commemorative Garden | Garden Spaces



## Reflecting Pool

Visitors are invited to a contemplative space in front of the Legislature's North facade.



## Reflecting Pool

A quiet moment in the south of the park. The legislature is reflected in a thin layer of water over polished black granite.

# Workshop | What is it and why a workshop in Queen's Park?

## Workshop structure precedents



**Example of a workshop building:**  
*Workshop Darmstadt, Germany by Atelier Bow-Wow*

The structure was created as a summer school project by 60 international students, architects, and artists. The space is used for daily meals, talks, creative projects and symposiums.

## Workshop programming precedents



Gardiner Museum workshops



Allan Gardens Horti(cultural) program



group learning, discussion, and making

## What is a Workshop?

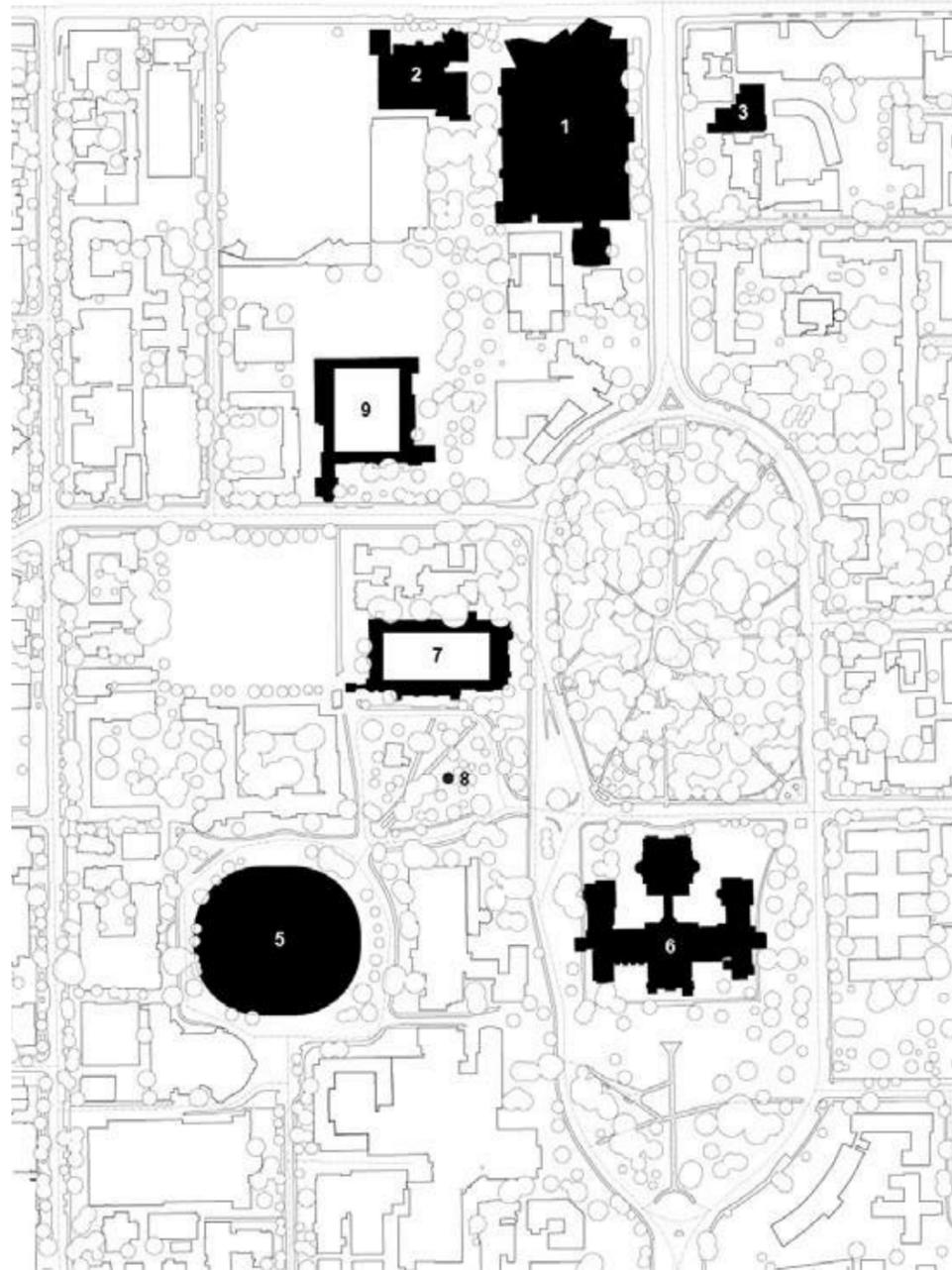
The Workshop structure in Queen's Park is proposed as a small, lightweight and sensitively sited, building that offers flexibility for multiple community, educational and ecological uses throughout the year. Uses could include horticultural workshops, indigenous-led activities, art talks, space for students to learn about ecology, summer camps, park volunteer meetings or running club warm-up space. It will be open for pre-arranged activities facilitated by the ROM, the Gardiner Museum, University of Toronto, Royal Conservatory of Music and other neighbouring institutions, volunteers and community groups, catering to all ages and abilities.

## Why a Workshop?

Community spaces in parks create vibrant hubs for social interaction, education and foster community engagement. A physical shelter could allow users to explore the park in greater depth and spend more time in the park setting, particularly in inclement weather. The uses of the Workshop can adapt over time, as users find meaningful new ways of interacting with the natural beauty of the park. The inclusion of structures for leisure and education was part of the Picturesque Landscape, which Queen's Park was modelled after.

# Workshop | Where would it be located?

## Site plan with cultural institutions



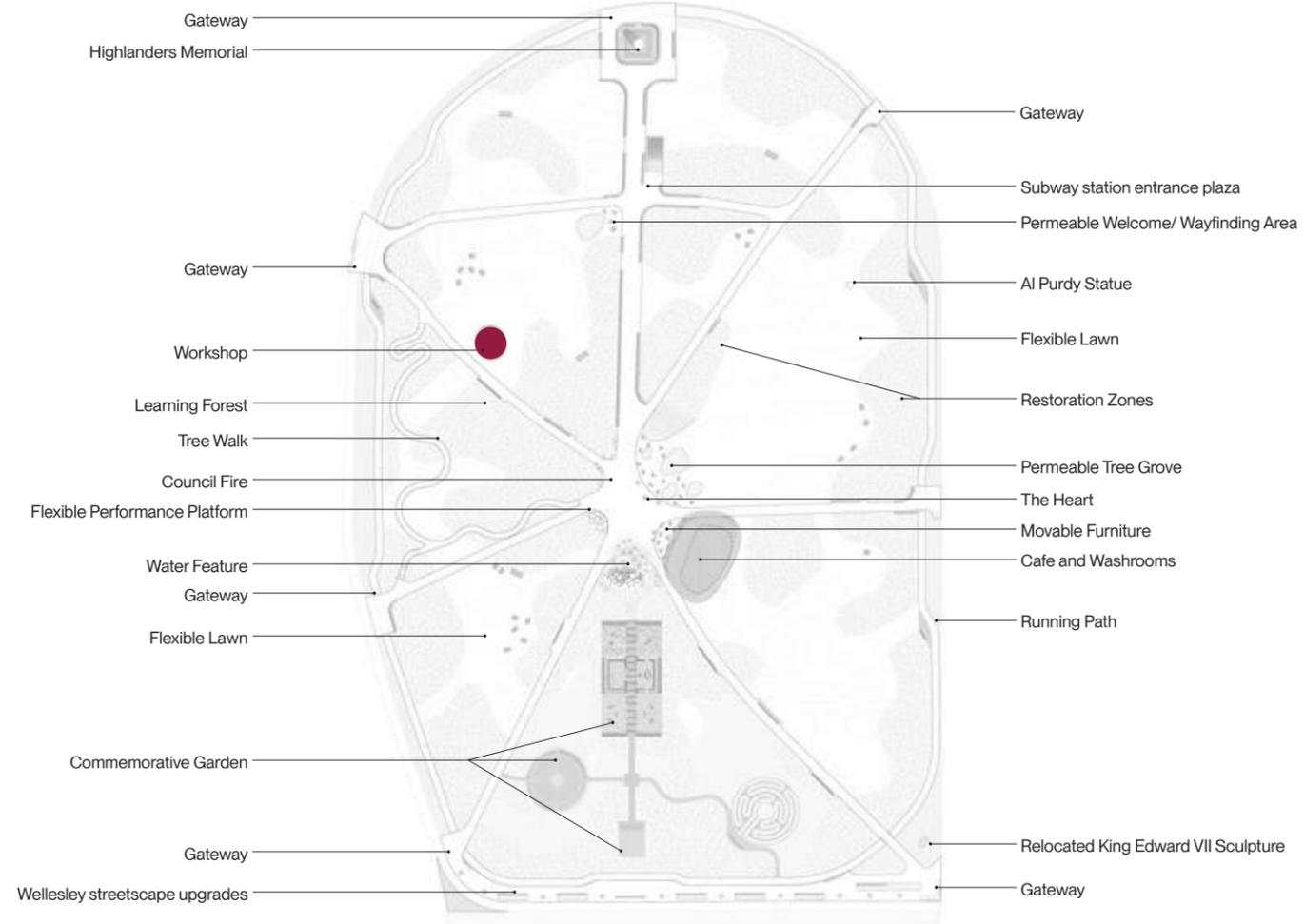
### Invested Cultural and Educational Institutions

1. Royal Ontario Museum( ROM)
2. Gardiner Museum
3. The Royal Conservatory of Music
4. John H. Daniels School of Architecture, Landscape and Design

### Other Cultural and institutional Buildings

5. King's Circle
6. Ontario Legislative Building
7. Hart House
8. Ziibiing
9. The University of Trinity College

## Queen's Park North site plan



## Size & location

The proposed site and light weight construction methods have been chosen to minimize the impact to the existing trees and the environment. The site is in an open glade, adjacent to an existing path on the western side of the park, closest to the cultural institutions. The Workshop will be sized to accommodate approximately 20-30 seated or 80 standing, with adequate storage for pack-and play, seating and work surfaces, for multiple uses.

To fully understand the potential of the workshop, we have collaborated with **JA architecture** to conduct a feasibility analysis. They are being challenged to investigate, lightweight, sustainable building typologies, research into uses, leading to a more detailed brief for a functional structure with a minimal footprint.

## JA Architecture

JA Architecture Studio is an Emerging Multidisciplinary Practice based in Toronto, led by Iranian-Canadian architect Nima Javidi and landscape designer Behnaz Assadi. JA combines the rootedness of a local architecture firm with the broad interests of an international design studio. The duo also has a strong affiliation with academia teaching at both the Cooper Union in NY, Harvard Graduate School of Design and the Daniels School of Architecture Landscape and Design at the University of Toronto.



# Workshop | How would it be used and by whom?

Program 'test fits' based on a 100 square metre footprint

**Royal Ontario Museum**  
*"As an extension to the museum"*  
 Workshops | Educational programs | Art projects

**Gardiner Museum**  
*"As an classroom"*  
 Outdoor clay-making workshops | Public & community engagement | Artist in residence

**Royal Conservatory of Music**  
*"As an Performance Room"*  
 Small ensemble rehearsals | Student recitals | Pubic talks

**University of Toronto**  
*"As an Informal Studio Space"*  
 Land-based learning | Education & stewardship

**Neighbouring Communities**  
*"As an community hub"*  
 Running club meet up | Yoga classes | Tourism days

**Indigenous Groups**  
*"As a flexible gathering space"*  
 Place for Ceremony | Indigenous-led programming

**Feasibility study research**

JRS and JA Architecture conducted a series of interviews with cultural partners to understand how they might use a structure in the park.

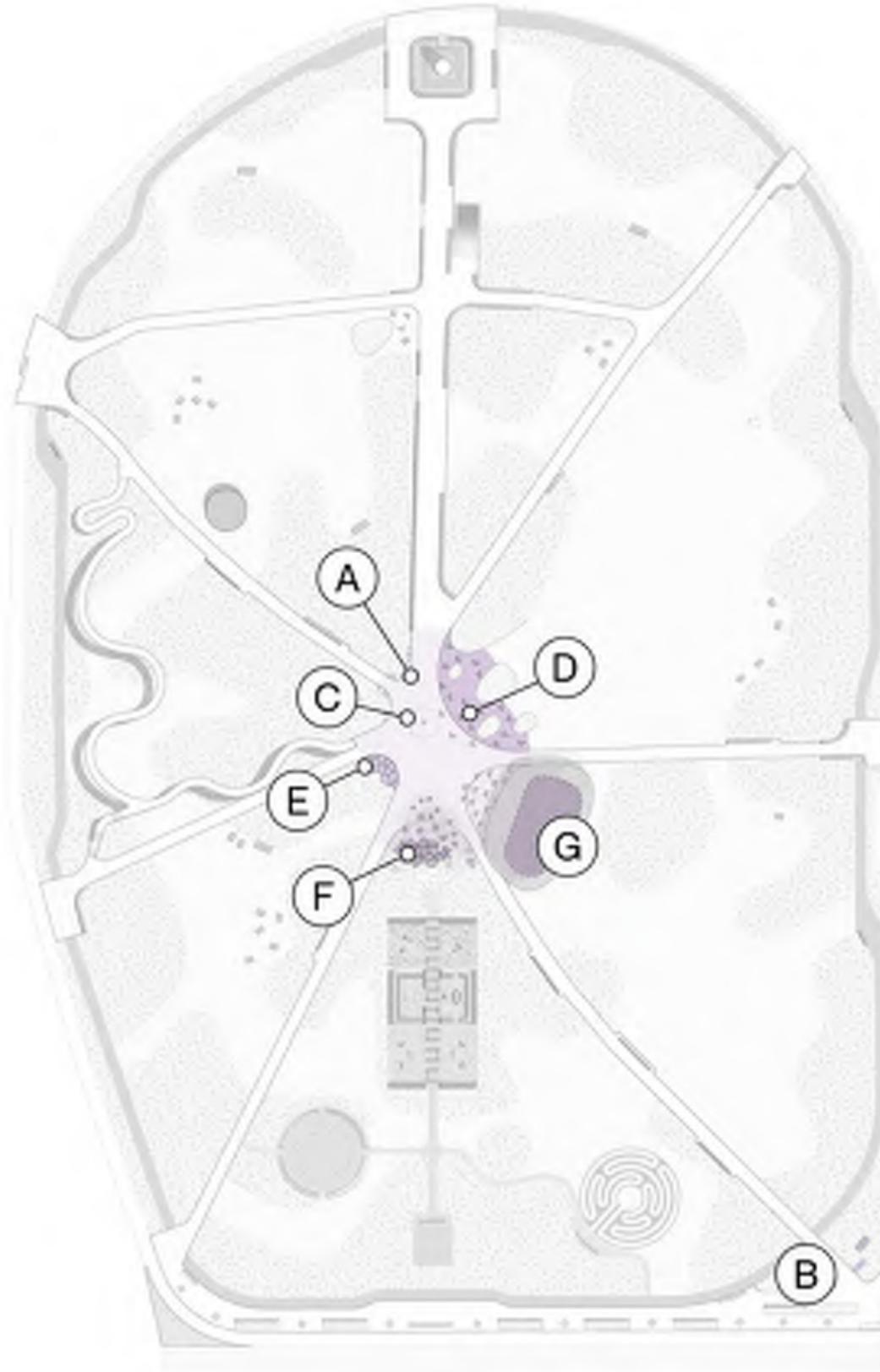
Local institutions, including the University of Toronto expressed strong support and interest for a Workshop type structure within Queen's Park, extending their educational programs into the park year-round.

The feasibility also included study of local presidents, including Allan Gardens. The Children's Conservatory at Allan Gardens, demonstrates how a modest physical structure, when paired with consistent programming and partnerships, can support year-round civic, educational, and cultural use without becoming a high-maintenance building.

**Implications for Workshop Feasibility**

A workshop structure at Queen's Park North is feasible only within clearly defined limits. These include minimal ground disturbance, protection of tree root zones, reversibility of construction, and alignment with Indigenous placekeeping principles. The workshop must function as a civic and educational amenity rather than a permanent building object, reinforcing Queen's Park North's long-standing role as a shared public landscape.

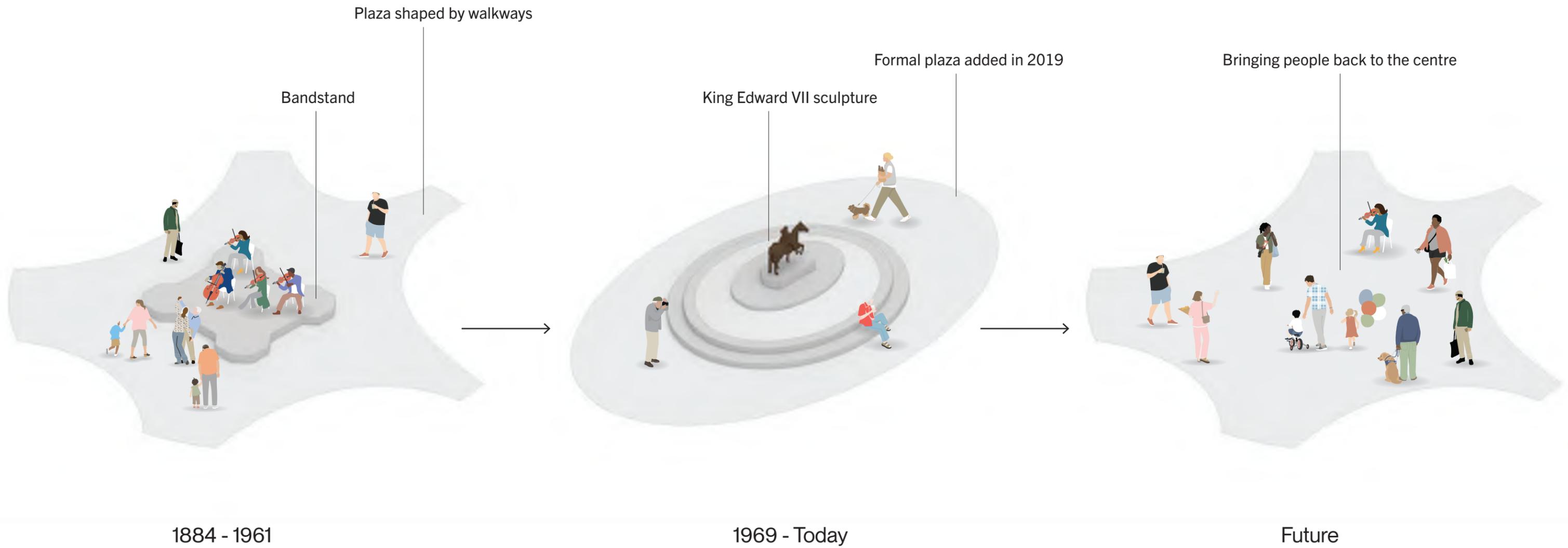
# The Heart



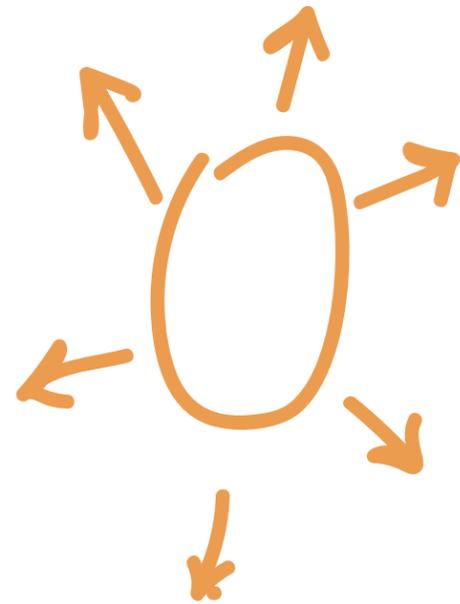
## The Heart Chapter

- A Making Space for People
- B King Edward VII Sculpture Recontextualization
- C Council Fire
- D The Grove
- E Programming Scale
- F Interactive Water Feature
- G Washroom / Cafe

# The Heart | Making Space for People



# The Heart | Reorienting the Heart

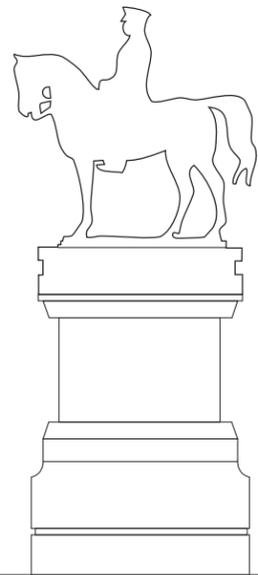


**Separation**

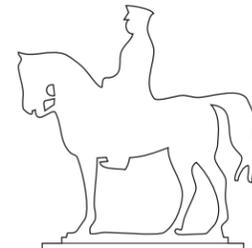


**Dialogue**

# King Edward VII Sculpture | Timeline



1922



1972



2026

# King Edward VII Sculpture | Timeline

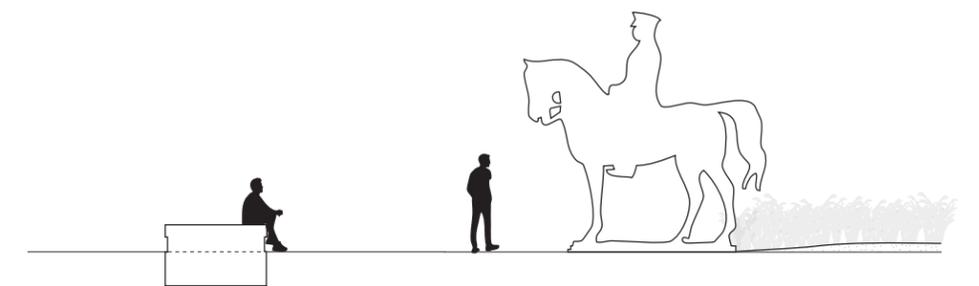


## King Edward VII Sculpture Recontextualization

This strategy has been developed in discussions with Indigenous and heritage specialists. Heritage documentation and accompanying narrative will be developed for submission to the appropriate City departments.

The sculpture is being moved from the centre of the park to make space for people, relocated to the southeast corner of the park. It will become a key feature of the Wellesely and Queen's Park Crescent East gateway. The relocation allows the setting of the sculpture to be reconsidered, bringing the horse and plinth down to grade where the public can closely interact with it. This move celebrates parallels with this new configuration and the intentions of the original donor and public sentiment.

The proposed setting is free from subgrade utilities and avoids encroachment into existing tree protection zones. Further details of the installation will be developed during detailed design.



Future

# The Heart | A View of the Heart Looking South



## **The Heart**

The sculpture occupies its dominant position in the centre of the park.

# The Heart | A View of the Heart Looking South



## The Heart

By moving the sculpture from its dominant position in the middle of the heart, we open up the space for people.

Here, several programs overlap, building on the energy park users bring. The café and washrooms are located in an area without existing mature trees, the smaller yellowwoods could be transplanted elsewhere on site. There's spaces for sitting, a place for a musician to set up, maybe a student from the RCM. An interactive water feature that could invite kids to climb and play.

In winter, there will be a focus on temporary programming like games, lighting, and events



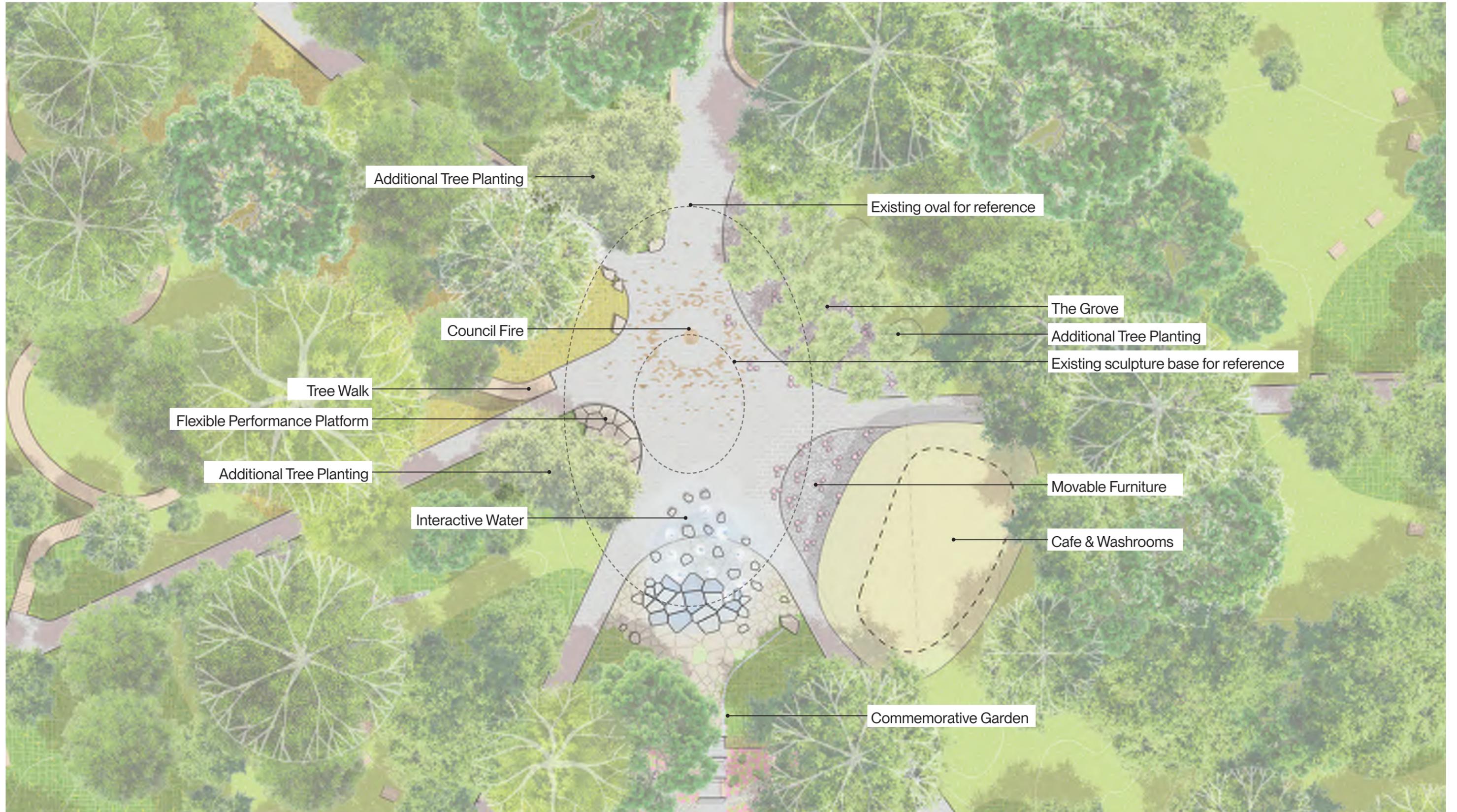
## The Heart - Council Fire Configuration

Queen's Park North holds deep meaning. It's long been a civic space—a place of protest, dialogue, and democratic expression. Its proximity to the Ontario Legislature, the University of Toronto, and the ROM has made it a powerful site where the public has historically come to speak truth to power.

The team has researched Council Fire sites—Indigenous governance spaces that centre fire not just as symbol, but as practice. Council Fires were and are places for seasonal gathering, community decision-making, and ceremony. The fire supports not only discussions on governance, but also kinship, responsibility, and collective wellbeing.

This concept is not a sacred fire site—but a practical and cultural element that allows space for ceremony, community dialogue, and political presence in an Indigenous framework. It supports cultural protocols and ways of being that are relational, respectful, and fluid. The furnishings are movable. The fire appears when needed and disappears when not—honouring the daily life of the park and making space without imposing.

# The Heart | A View From Above



# The Grove | A View From The Grove



## The Grove

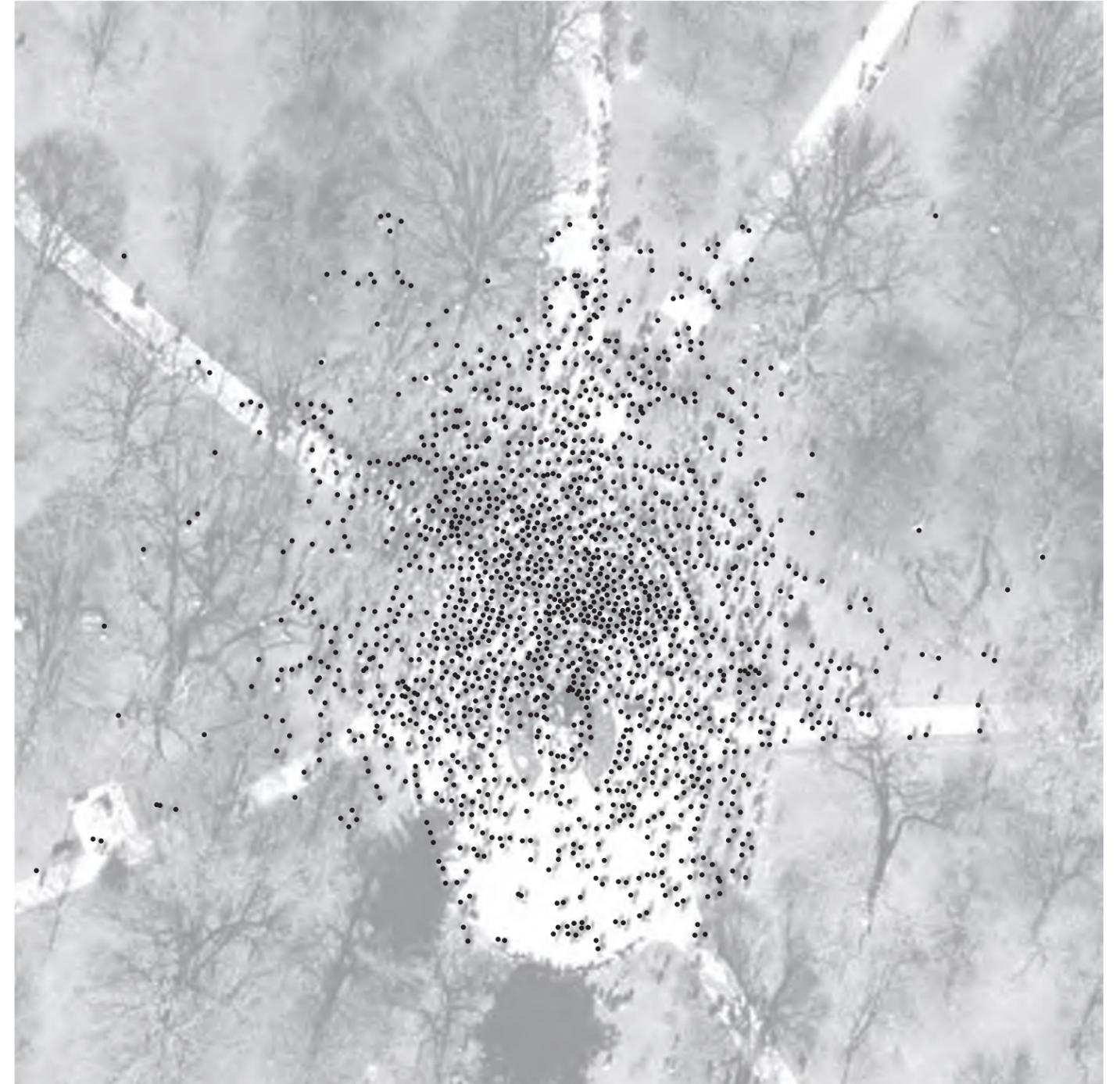
The permeable granular meets the lawn, allowing visitors to flow freely to and from the heart. New trees provide shade in the summer months.

# Programming | Designing to better accommodate existing uses



## Demonstrations

At times, the park hosts demonstrations, protests, and other forms of civic engagement. The design team studied these patterns of use with a consideration that these events are expected to continue in this important site, and there may be ways of alleviating the pressure on the softscape by making allowances.



## Large Demonstration

1570 people  
2512m<sup>2</sup>  
0.63m<sup>2</sup>/person

# Programming | Typical Day

## Typical Day

The Heart is where visitors gravitate towards, and naturally congregate. Its important that this area remains flexible for various types of activities as well as time of day and seasonal variations.



# Programming | Flexible Performance

## Flexible Performance

A seatwall height platform could host a small musical performance or informal lecture. The design team studied gathering sizes and spatial considerations to ensure circulation through the heart remains open.

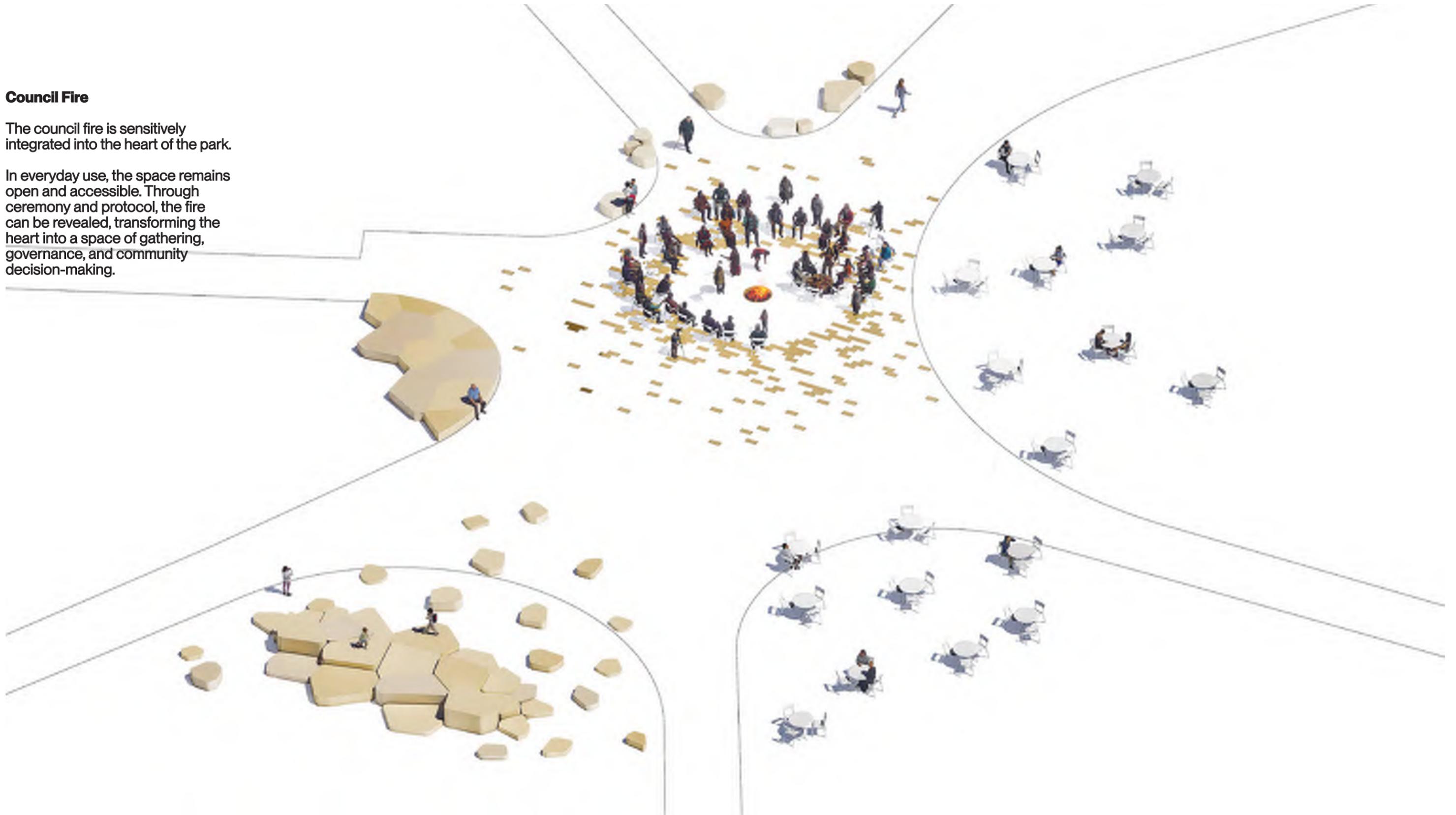


# Programming | Council Fire

## Council Fire

The council fire is sensitively integrated into the heart of the park.

In everyday use, the space remains open and accessible. Through ceremony and protocol, the fire can be revealed, transforming the heart into a space of gathering, governance, and community decision-making.



## Water Feature | A View of the Interactive Water Feature



### Interactive Water Feature

A new interactive water feature at the south edge of the heart will include water in thin layers, jets, and fog. The animation of the water could respond to use patterns, creating the most active water when families are present, and a calming experience during other times of day.

In Ontario, there is a geological feature where limestone of the agricultural belt meets granite of the Canadian Shield creating a dramatic line. This place where the bedrock meets has special significance in Indigenous story telling, and creates unique natural features like the islands of Georgian Bay.

Limestone and granite are robust materials suitable for the outdoor environment, and one of the more carbon positive material choices, especially when sourced locally.

## Water Feature | A View of the Interactive Water Feature



### Interactive Water Feature

A water recirculation system would collect and treat the water. The infrastructure to be located below grade.

In winter, an ice formation system could animate the feature in the coldest months.

## Café + Washroom | A View of the Heart in Winter



### Cafe and Washroom Amenities

A building (or buildings) will provide food and beverage options for park users, as well as publicly accessible washrooms. Located adjacent to the heart, the amenity exists to serve the park, animating the space and creating a more welcoming atmosphere.

The structure is envisioned as being built to the highest standards of sustainability. Focused on timber and other low carbon building methods, the cafe will offer outdoor areas for seasonal comfort throughout the year. The site is away from existing mature trees, and provides opportunity for a basement where necessary park infrastructure can be accommodated below grade without reducing park space.

The architecture of the structure is currently being explored, and the team is actively studying potential operations models that provide the amenity and space to serve the park in an economically sustainable manner.

### ***Can the Café + Washroom building:***

- Provide accessible washrooms robust enough for the public realm
- Provide a reason for park visitors to extend their stay and enhance the overall experience
- Locate near where people naturally gather, and where amenities were historically located
- Avoid impacting existing mature trees
- Adhere to the highest standards of sustainability
- Prioritize mass timber for structural elements
- Minimize service connections (e.g. no gas or storm sewer connections)
- Incorporate infrastructure/storage/flexible spaces to support park operations and other programming
- Support Indigenous Governance and Ceremony Protocols
- Become an all-season destination that provides a welcoming atmosphere in all types of weather
- Learn from the City's experience with F&B in parks to find an operator model that benefits the park
- Showcase Canadian design excellence

# Café + Washroom | Architect

## About Shim-Sutcliffe Architects

Shim-Sutcliffe Architects is one of Canada's leading architectural design studios, recognized nationally and internationally for their innovative work. Principals Brigitte Shim and A. Howard Sutcliffe formed Shim-Sutcliffe Architects in 1994, committed to design excellence. Their practice explores the integration and interrelated scales of architecture, landscape, furniture and fittings. Shim-Sutcliffe Architects have built projects in Canada, the United States, Europe and Asia, focusing on placemaking.

To-date, Shim-Sutcliffe Architects have received sixteen Governor General's Medals and Awards in Architecture from the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC), along with many other professional accolades for their portfolio. In 2013, Brigitte Shim and A. Howard Sutcliffe received a rare joint appointment to the Order of Canada "for their contributions as architects designing sophisticated structures that represent the best of Canadian design to the world." Brigitte Shim and A. Howard Sutcliffe were awarded the 2021 RAIC Gold Medal for "their tireless commitment to advocacy, teaching and mentoring," and "whose commitment to craft, tectonics, site and ecology will have a lasting impact on Canadian architecture."

## Notable Clients

- Cultural and Religious Groups including The Corkin Gallery, The Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto, Congregation Bet Ha'am, Wong Dai Sin Temple, The Mnjikaning Fish Fence Circle Group.
- Government and Institutions including Massey College in the University of Toronto, The Art Gallery of Ontario.
- Private Sector including The Ace Hotel Toronto, Alterra Developments, Kingsett Capital.

## Notable Honours And Awards

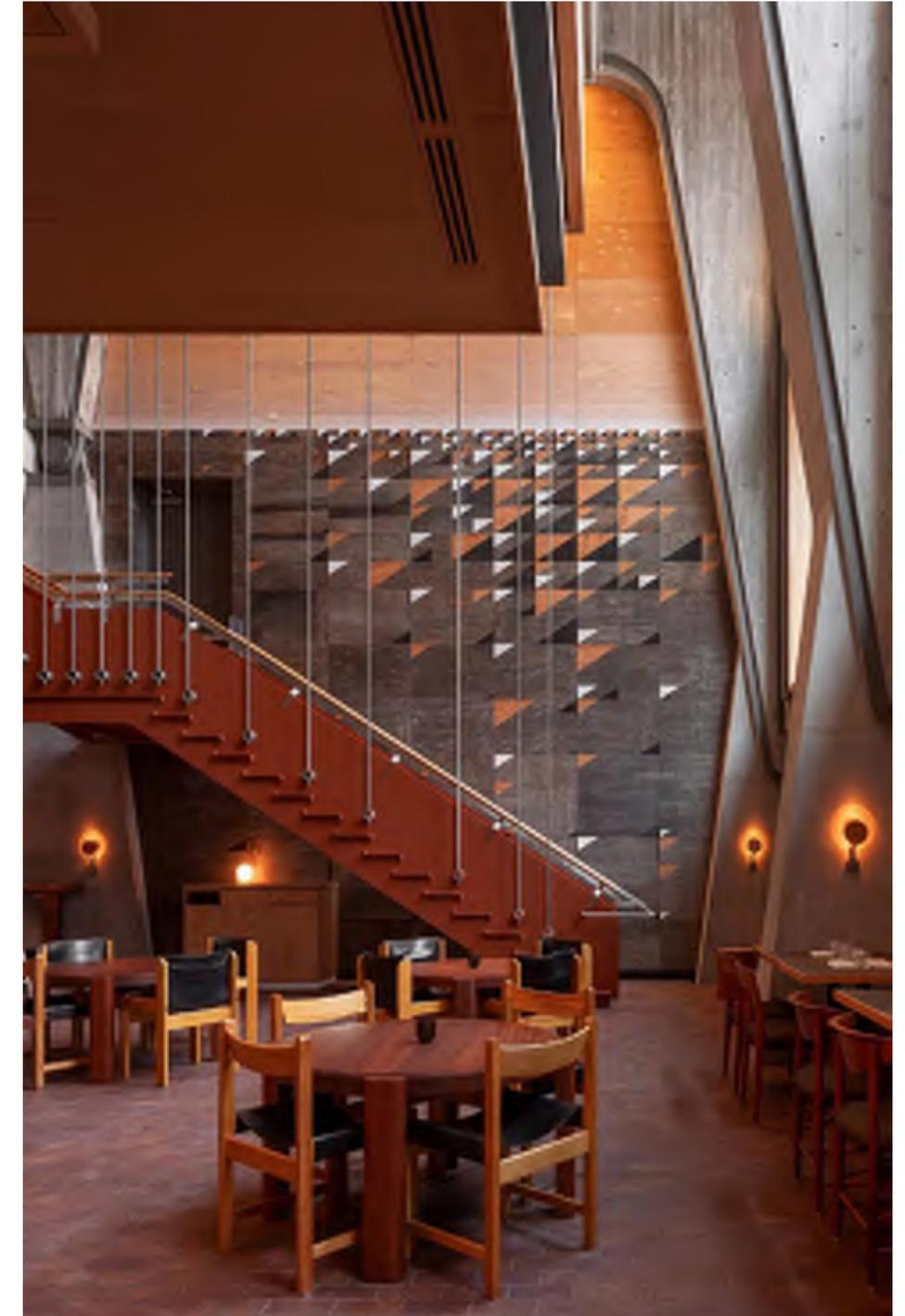
- *2021 RAIC Gold Medal.* The Royal Architectural Institute of Canada. Ottawa, Canada. (Brigitte Shim and A. Howard Sutcliffe.)
- *Members of the Order of Canada.* Appointed in 2013 by His Excellency the Right Honorable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada. Ottawa, Canada. (Brigitte Shim and A. Howard Sutcliffe.)
- *1992-2022 Governor General's Medals and Awards in Architecture.* The Royal Architectural Institute of Canada. Ottawa, Canada. (Various projects – Shim-Sutcliffe Architects.)



Ravine Guest House. Photo by Raimund Koch.

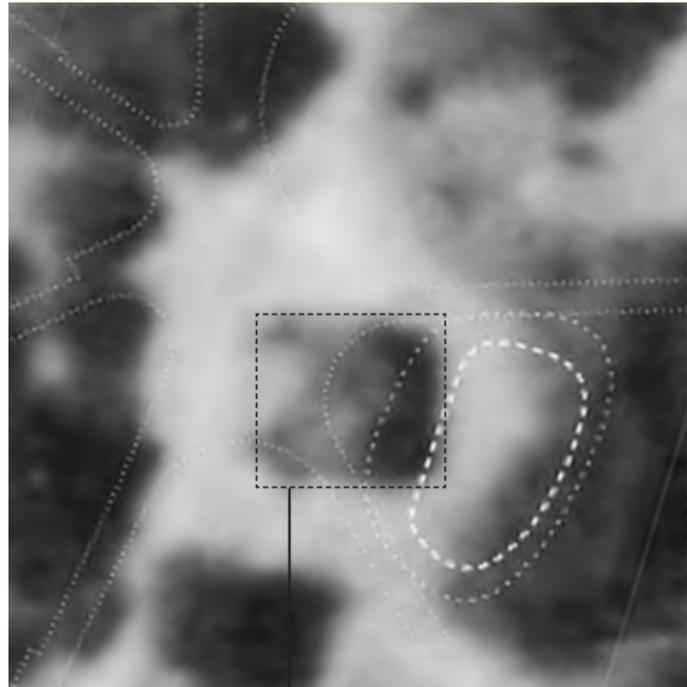


Wong Dai Sin Temple. Photo by James Dow.



Ace Hotel Toronto. Photo by Scott Norsworthy.

# Café + Washroom | Site Considerations



1939

The bandstand and washrooms were previously located in the centre of the park



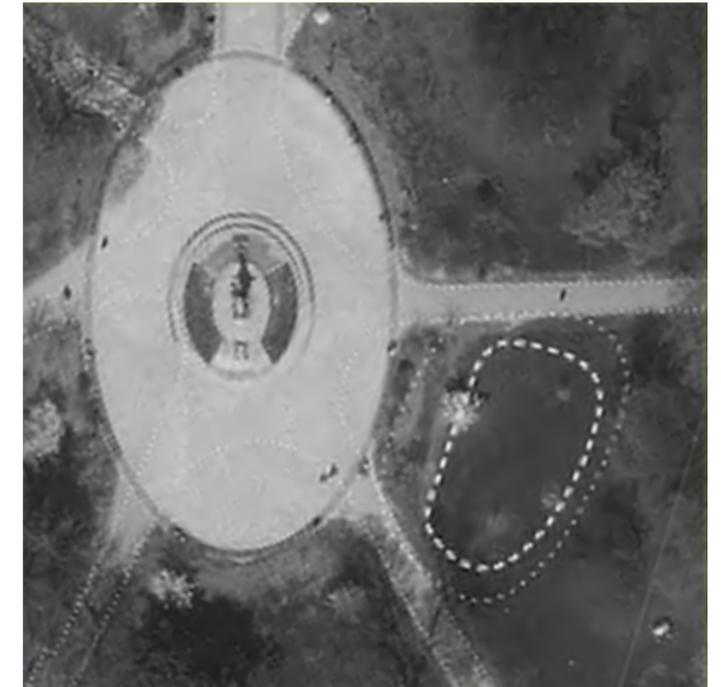
2014

In 2014, the sculptures base had a larger footprint, expanding the pavement further than what is present today



2023

In 2023 attempts were made to support the large oak tree in poor health, which decayed and was removed between 2023 and 2024.

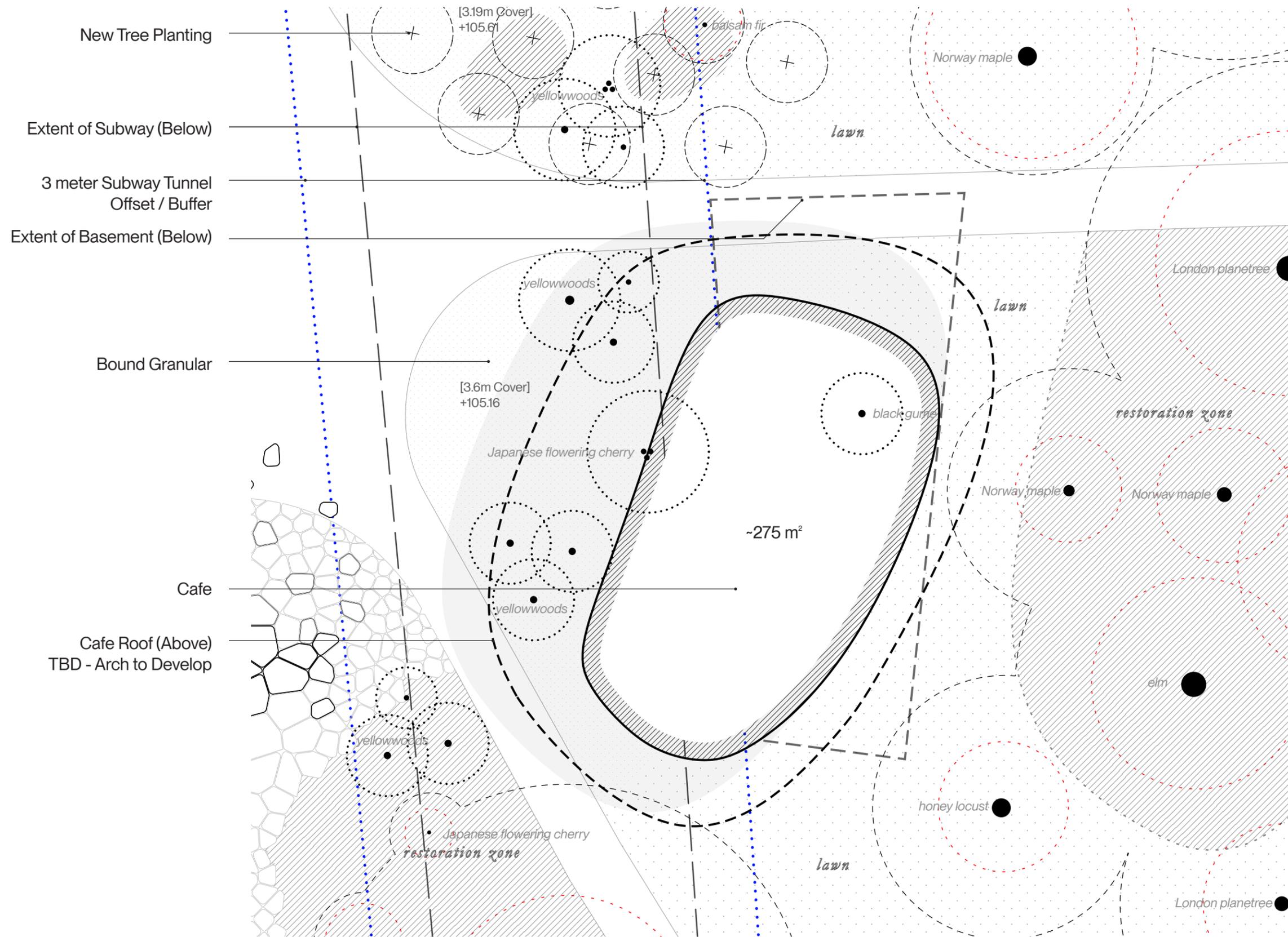


2024

The cafe's selected site is a space with a long history of amenity and minimal root activity.



# Café + Washroom | Tree Impact Diagram



## Cafe and Washroom Tree Impact

The site selected for the Cafe and Washroom is southeast of the heart. Historically, this area was once part of an irregular shaped plaza that existed for decades until being reconfigured in 2019. This zone is without any existing mature trees.

The subway tunnel runs north to south, just east of the centre of the park. The tunnel shell is approximately 3.6m below grade at this moment and the TTC typically requires any construction maintain a minimum 3m buffer in all directions. Care has been taken to locate the building and potential basement extends beyond this offset.

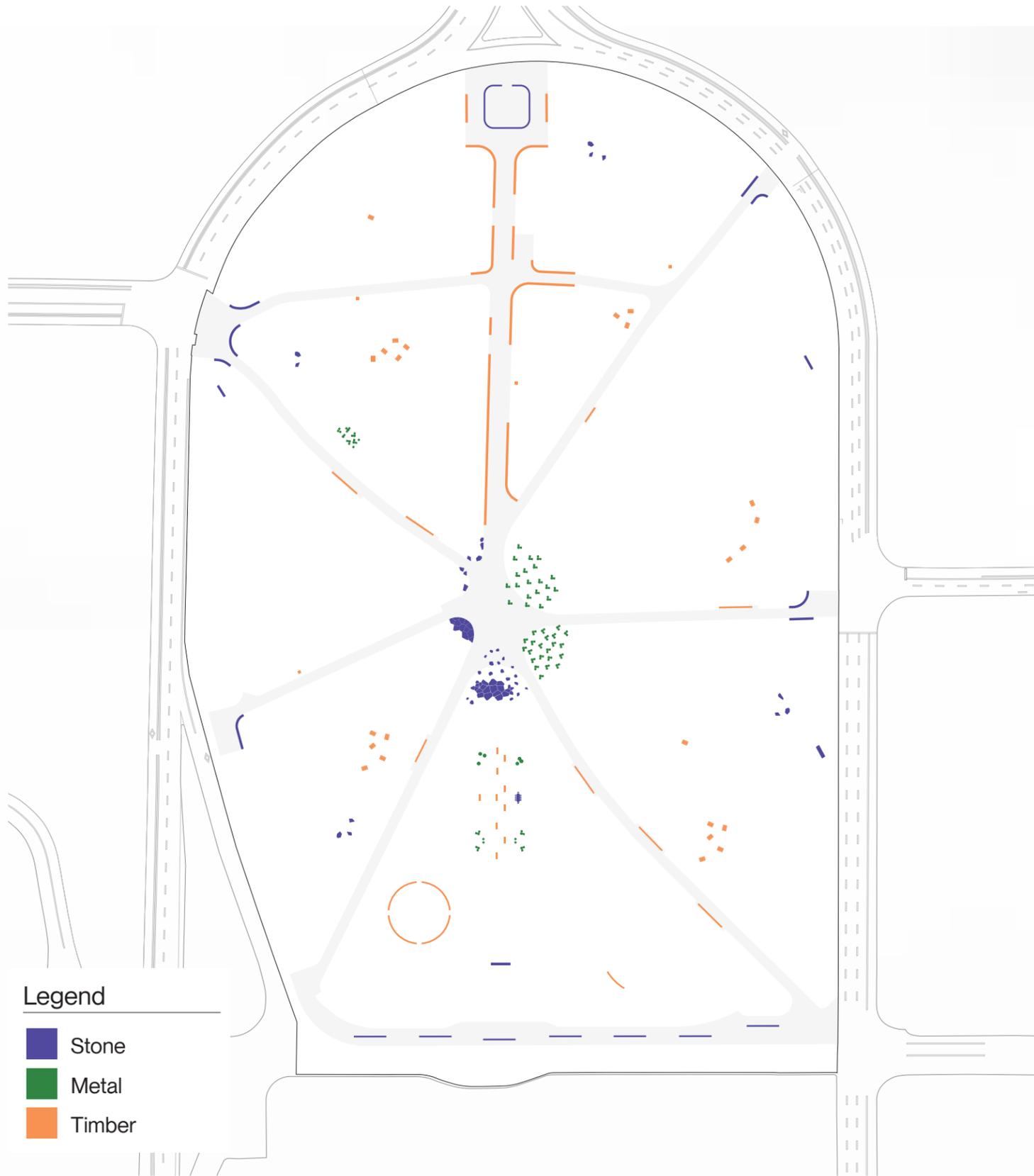
A handful of young trees planted in 2019 are candidates for transplanting elsewhere.

-  tree for transplant
-  proposed tree
-  tree with TPZ
-  3m Subway Tunnel Buffer
-  understory

1:200  
 N  10m

# Continued Design Development

# Concept Plan | Seating Typologies



Stone



Metal



Timber



Images are provided as examples of design intent only

# Concept Plan | Lighting Zone Plan

## Lighting Strategy

The team will be developing a lighting plan in consultation with specialized lighting designers.

As a general strategy, the new lighting strategy aims to reduce the overall amount of light, focusing it where its needed on paths and plazas, and reducing light spill into the softscape areas.. Special feature lighting could be included on new elements, with a focus on safety and subtly.

There is potential to explore a timed strategy where levels could respond to use patterns, reducing levels at certain times of night.



Legend

- Formal Lighting
- Path Lighting
- Heart Lighting
- Feature Lighting

# Concept Plan | Draft Interpretive Plan Components

## 48th Highlanders of Canada Regimental Monument

## Land relations, Ecology and Placekeeping

- Stories of relationality with land, culture, and care for the future
- Placekeeping to support Indigenous representation, cultural programming, and long-term presence in this public space

## Land Based Learning Workshop

- Learning and stewardship opportunities with local institutions
- Renewed supportive workshops and programming
- Opportunities for Land based pedagogy and indigenous stewardship programs

## Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being

- Plant species translations
- Culturally significant plant species and companion planting
- Concepts of relationships to land and animals

## Commemorative Garden

- Celebrates the life and accomplishments of the late Hon. Hilary M. Weston
- Garden experiences inspired her legacy, including her service as Lieutenant Governor of Ontario

## Reimagined Austin Floyd Fountain

- New fountain to pay homage to the original design intent of landscape architect J. Austin Floyd's foundation on this site



## Ecological Restoration Zone Platforms

- Education about the science, and stewardship of successive ecology
- Ecological reciprocity is central to local indigenous value systems

## Al Purdy Statue

## Council Fire

- Council Fire sites as places of governance, kinship, and stewardship
- Honouring this tradition as living governance
- Fire's place in ceremony and resistance
- Wampums and Traditional Governance (Pre-colonial history)

## Tree Education

- Didactic elements illustrating species and tree science

## Gathering

- A public, democratic, and symbolic space for memorials, storytelling, demonstration, gathering, and for voicing ideas and opinions about local, provincial, and national concerns
- Reflections on the 2SLGBTQIA+ heritage

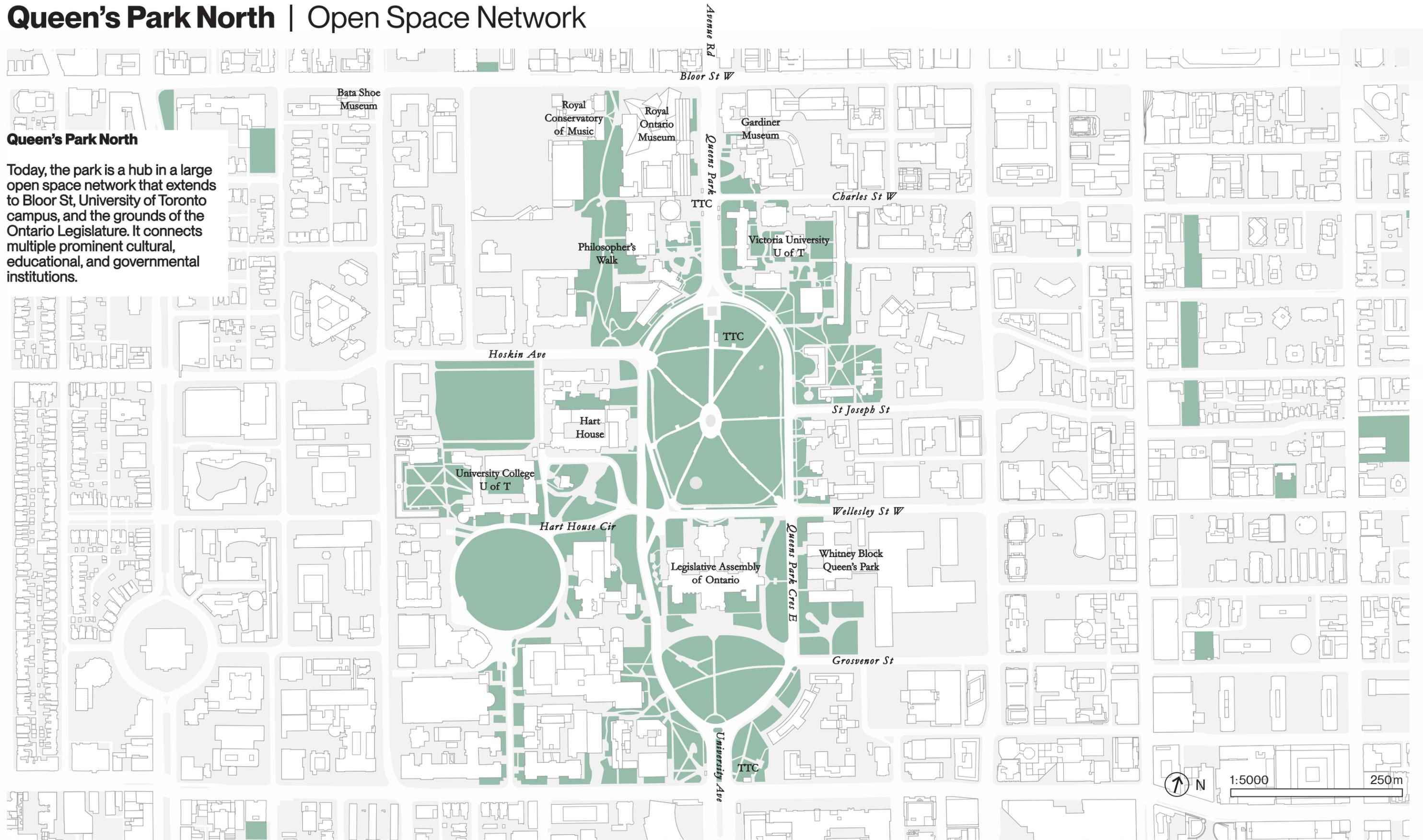
## Recontextualized King Edward VII Sculpture

- Park namesake and opening timeline
- Stories of original installation in India, donation to Toronto, and public donation for plinth
- Reconsidering the prominence of colonial figures
- History of Indigenous Crown Relations

# Queen's Park North | Open Space Network

## Queen's Park North

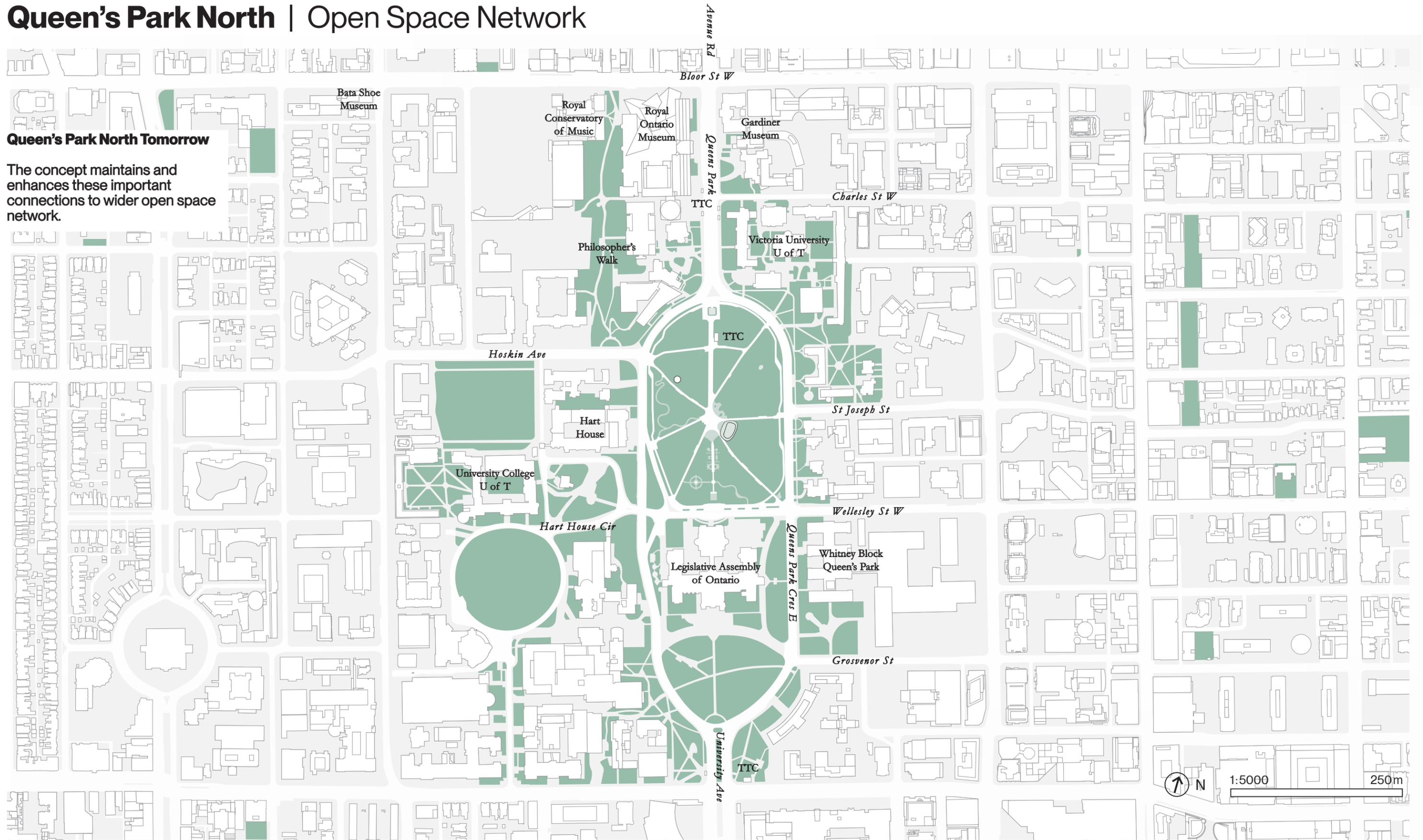
Today, the park is a hub in a large open space network that extends to Bloor St, University of Toronto campus, and the grounds of the Ontario Legislature. It connects multiple prominent cultural, educational, and governmental institutions.



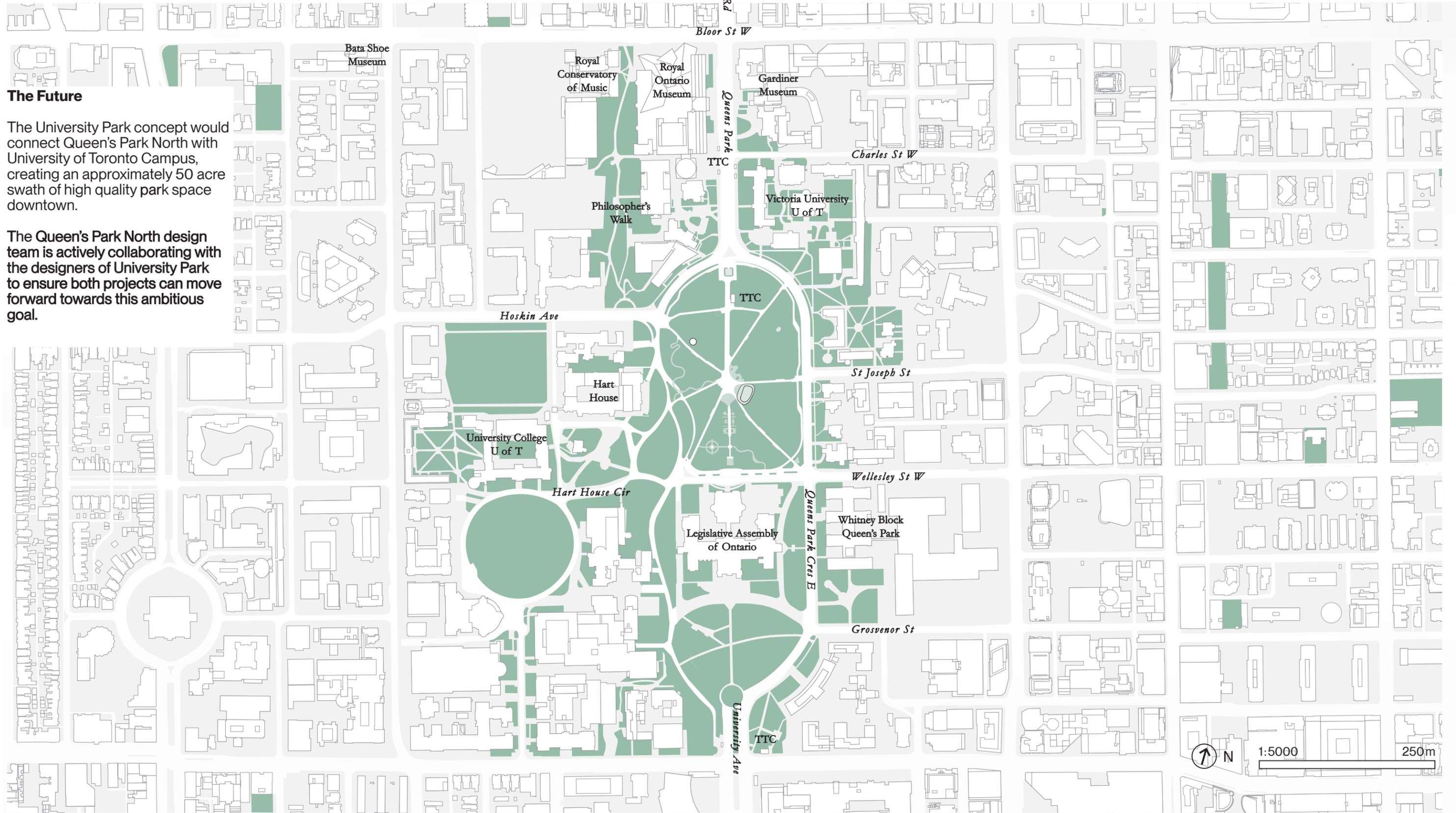
# Queen's Park North | Open Space Network

## Queen's Park North Tomorrow

The concept maintains and enhances these important connections to wider open space network.



# Queen's Park North | Open Space Network



## The Future

The University Park concept would connect Queen's Park North with University of Toronto Campus, creating an approximately 50 acre swath of high quality park space downtown.

The Queen's Park North design team is actively collaborating with the designers of University Park to ensure both projects can move forward towards this ambitious goal.

# Summary

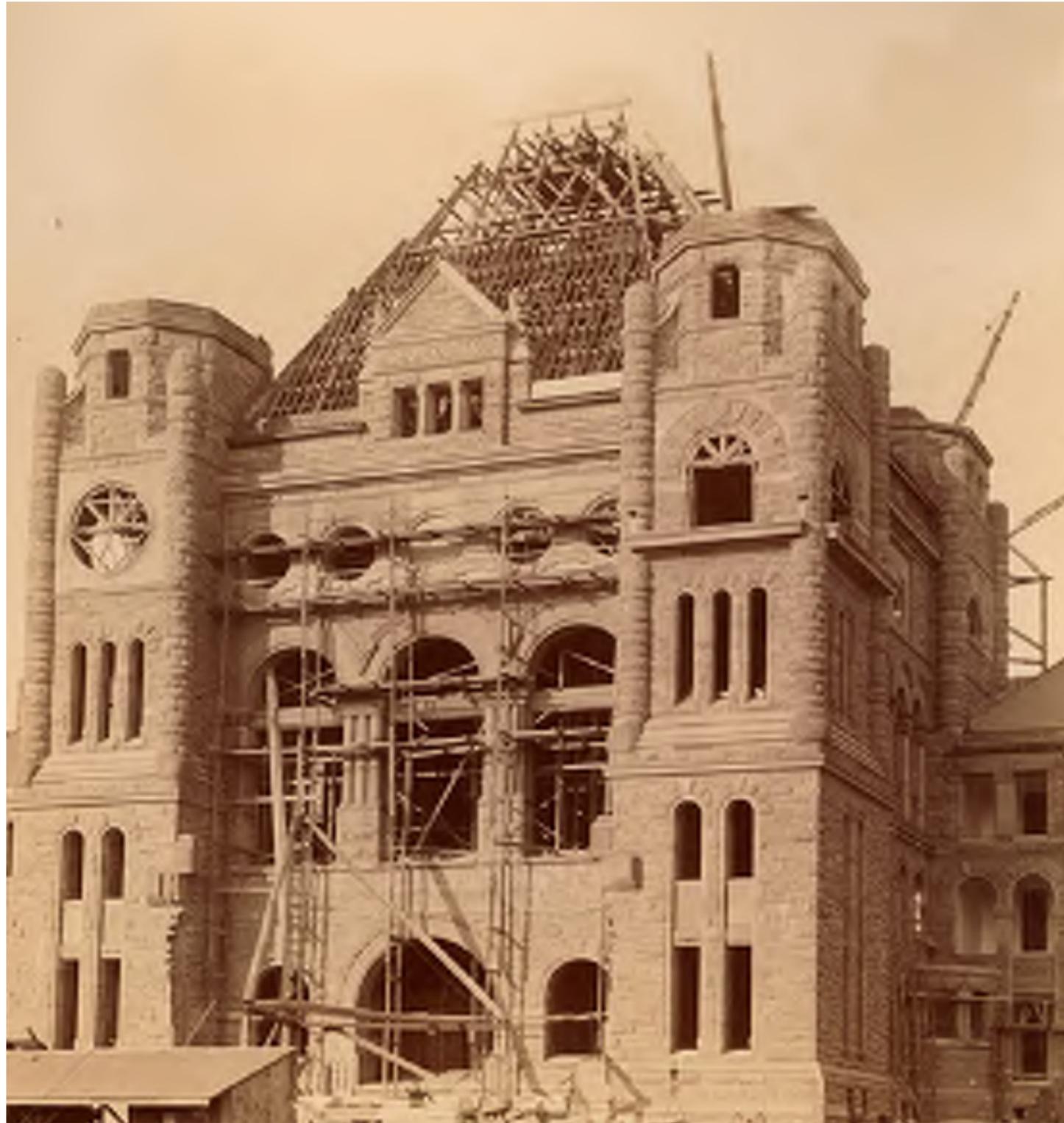
## Summary | People



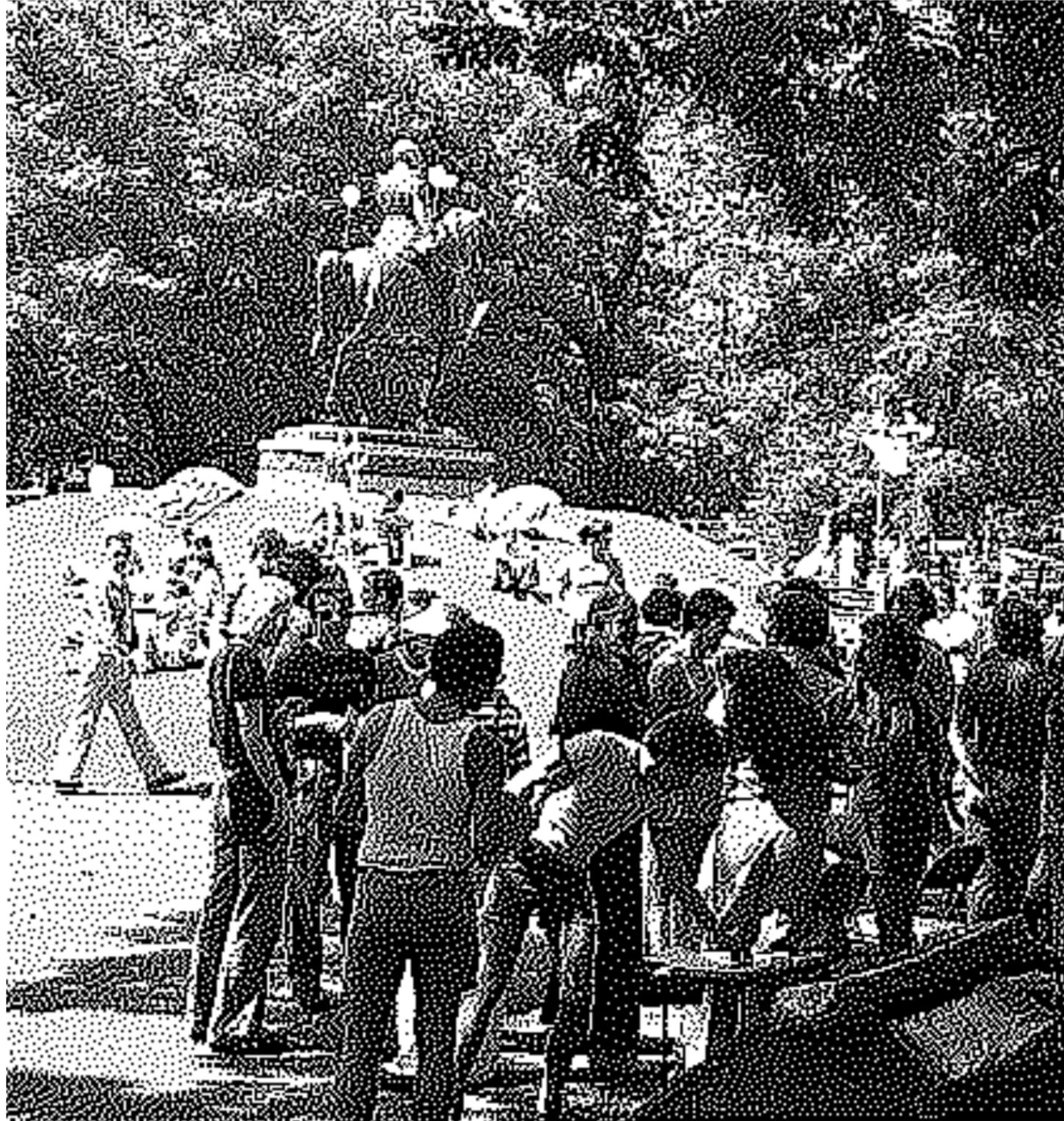
The design concept ensures Queen's Park North remains a people's park; a public place in nature where people connect, gather, and spend time.



The design concept ensures Queen's Park North remains a place for trees that nourish all inhabitants; a delicate ecosystem sustaining relationships between human and non-human beings.



The design concept ensures Queen's Park North remains a place of governance and stewardship; a place of respect, responsibility, and reciprocity where human and ecological layers can co-exist.



The design concept ensures Queen's Park North is a place for everyone; a place where expressions of relationship, identity, free speech, and political protest are possible.

# Thank You