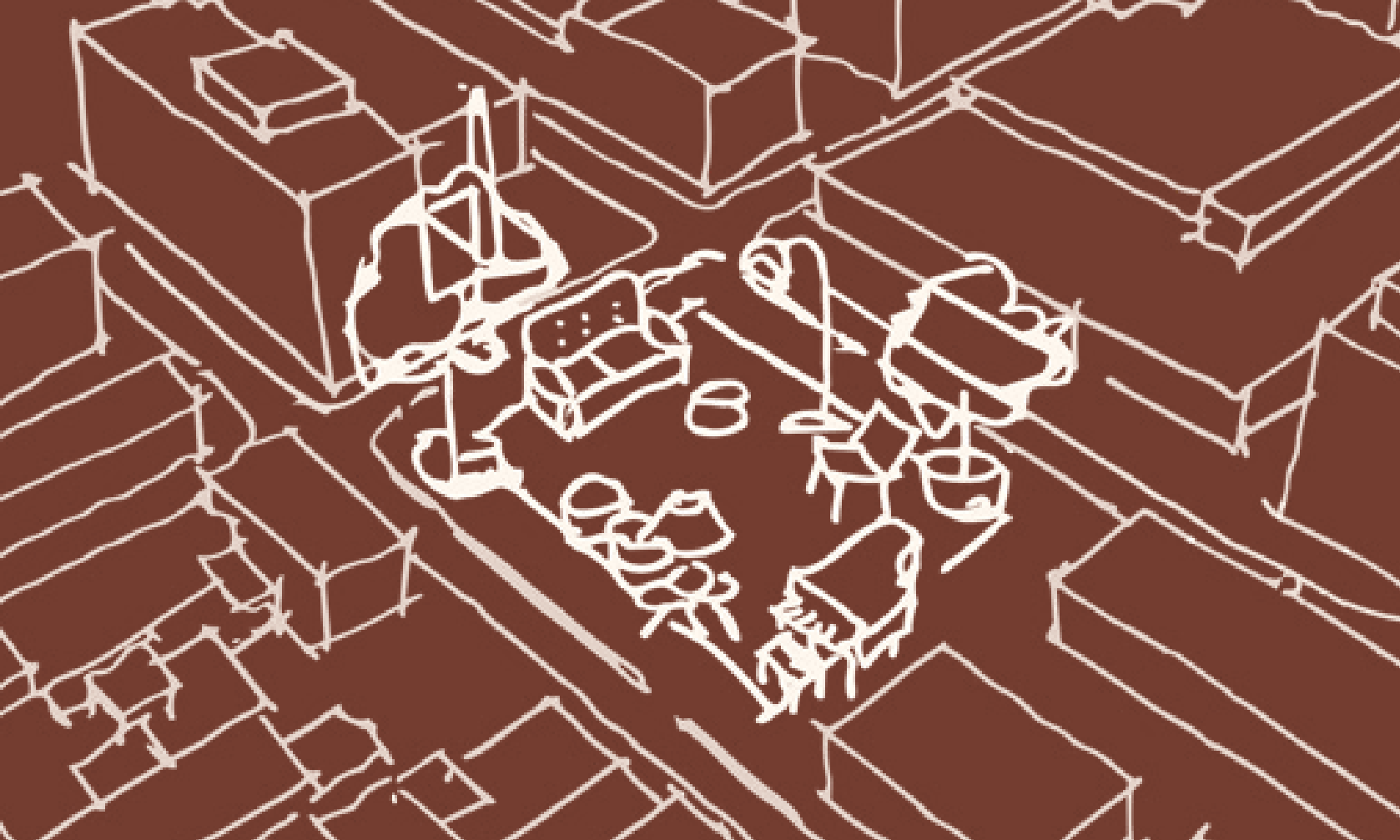


LIBERTY VILLAGE LIVING ROOM



A Former Parking Lot Becomes a Living Room for the Whole Neighborhood

The Liberty Village Living Room transforms a former parking lot into a shared public landscape shaped by community, ecology and heritage. The warmth and familiarity of home guide a park where everyday life unfolds among plants, gathering spaces and traces of the neighbourhood's past.

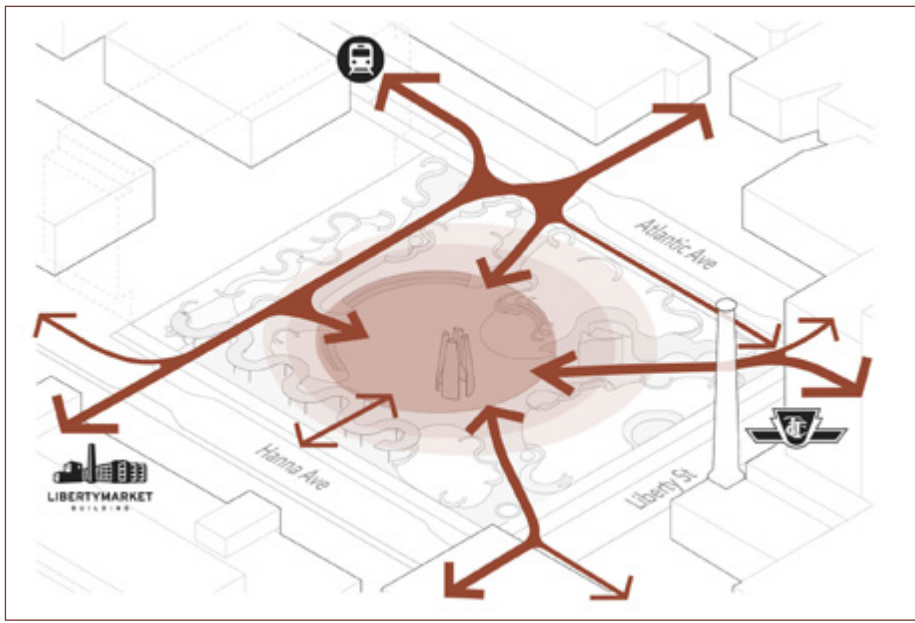
Community: Sofas, lamps, curtains, a hearth and a rug become playful landscape features, inviting everyday encounters, neighbourhood celebrations, informal play and quiet respite.

Ecology: The park provides “room for living” through biodiverse planting, immersive encounters with water and vegetation, and habitat for birds and pollinators. Shade, shelter, stormwater management and low-carbon strategies support a comfortable, resilient landscape through the seasons.

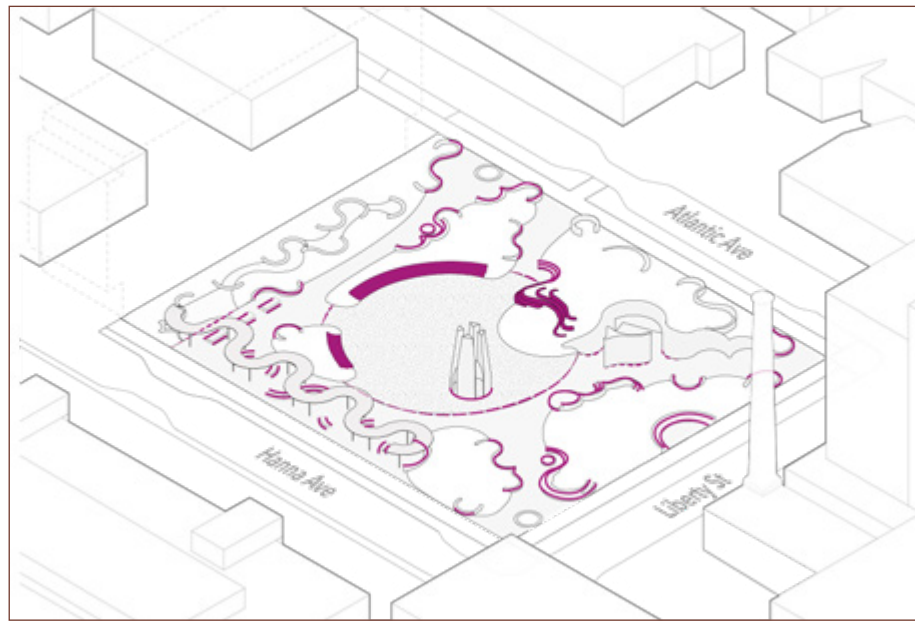
Heritage: Like a living room layered with heirlooms and memories, the park brings Liberty Village's industrial and ecological histories into daily experience. Reclaimed brick, wood and steel meet native planting, while references to carpet manufacturing and railway infrastructure give the shared space a distinctly local identity.



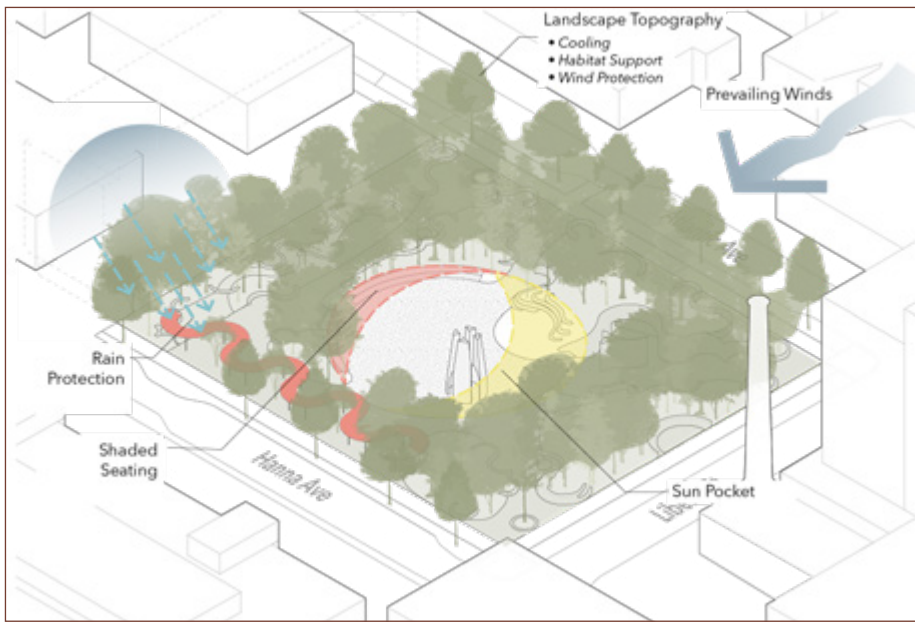
Design Principles



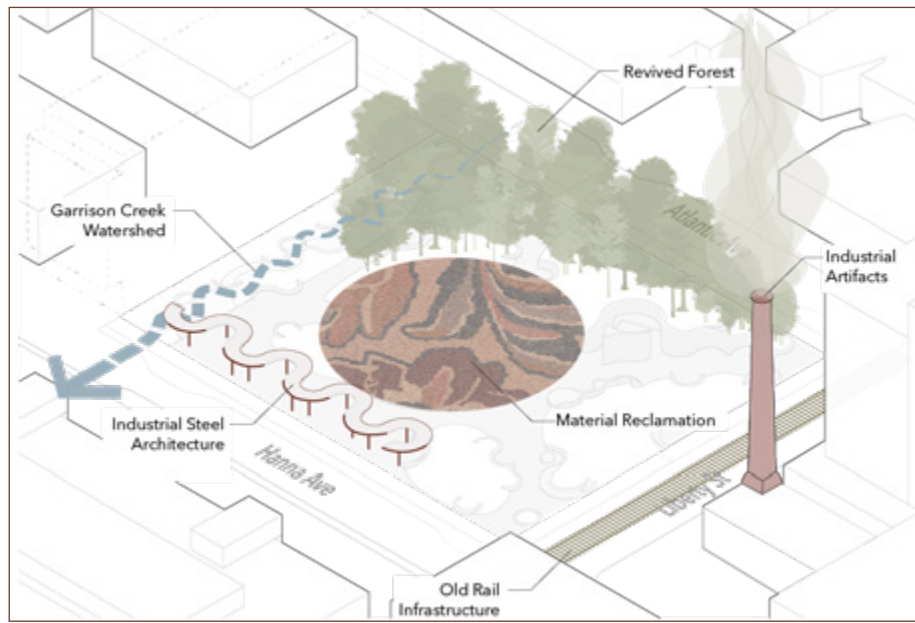
1 'HYPER SPACE'
How can the site be part of a walkable, pedestrian scaled Liberty Village providing connections and natural circulation to the lake, to transport, and to nature?



2 GOOD EDGES AS PLACES FOR PEOPLE
How can thresholds, gateways, and interfaces be used as points of transition and invitation, enhancing edges for socialization, enclosure, and event support?



3 MIGHTY FOREST
How can the site provide comfort and protection from the extremes of weather and allow the park to function through all seasons for years to come.



4 ANCIENT PAST, INDUSTRIAL TRACES
How can the design integrate the long histories of Liberty Village through restoration, reclamation, and education?

The Living Room's Historical Context

ANCIENT PASTS

15,000 YEARS AGO
Glacial recession creates precursor bodies of water like Lake Iroquois (a predecessor to Lake Ontario). Indigenous peoples start to live in the Toronto area following this ice age.

1300 CE
Indigenous tribes stewarded the land and its natural features, including Garrison Creek, populated with salmon, which was used as a hunting, gathering and fishing ground.

1600
Beginning of permanent colonization and widespread disease to indigenous communities by French colonists.

1700
"Dish with one Spoon" - The Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples extend historic peace treaty to include French settlers, to share resources peacefully and collectively.

1600
Prevalent fur trade through the Carrying Place Trail with colonial settlers leading to the Beaver Wars.

INDUSTRIAL TRACES

1793
Following the end of the American Revolution, Fort York was built as the first permanent British Garrison and was later destroyed in the Battle of York and rebuilt in 1815.

1879
First Toronto Industrial Exhibition (later renamed the CNE) a moment to celebrate industry.

1881
Industry taking off, with John Inglis and Company establishing facilities to manufacture heavy machinery boiler and mill equipment.

1850
Following the arrival of rail lines, the 1850s marked the beginning of industrial surge in Liberty Village.

1878
Garrison Creek had various clay deposits which allowed the central prison to run its own brick making department using clay from the creek.

1884
Due to the excess pollution from industry and inhabitation, Garrison Creek began to be buried, channelized and contained.

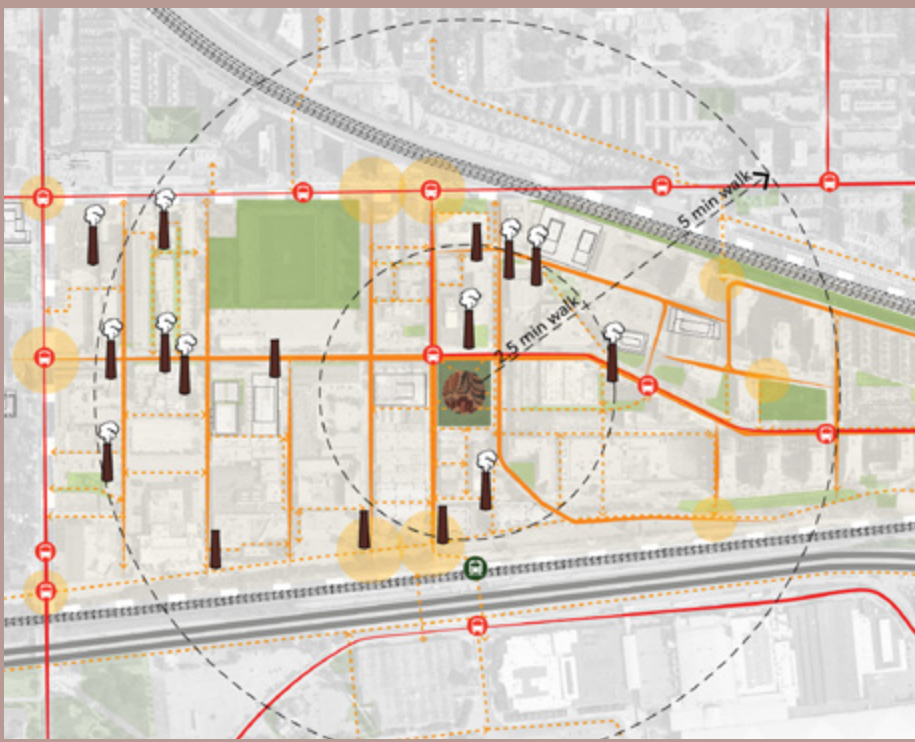
1787
Marked the influx of colonists into the area, post-American Revolution, and the Toronto Purchase (Treaty 13).

ECOLOGICAL FUTURES

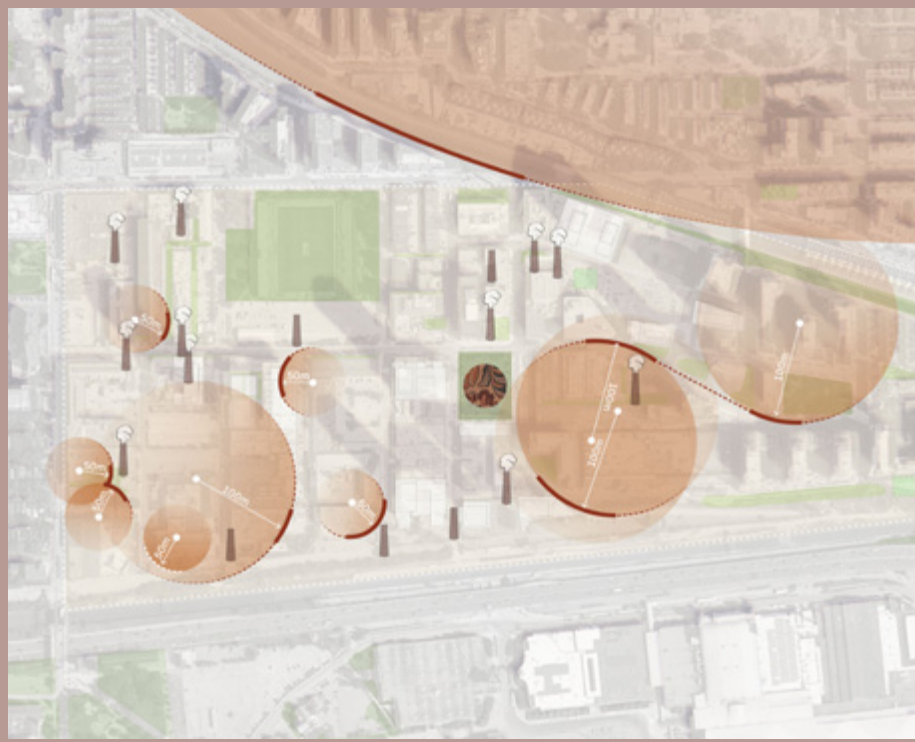
1970s - 1980s
De-industrialization and abandonment of many of Liberty Village's factories and warehouses. The area becomes a haven for artists.

The Liberty Village Living Room embraces the complex ecological, industrial, and layered history of the site through the formal expression and intentional material selections, resulting in a welcoming living space for all guests and friends: humans and non-humans alike.

Neighbourhood Patterns



Liberty Village's streets, laneways and pedestrian passages form a network shaped by its industrial past and ongoing growth. Large former factory blocks and rail corridors define the neighbourhood's structure, while mid-block connections provide finer routes between homes, workplaces, shops and public spaces. As the area becomes more densely populated, this network supports the daily movement of residents, workers and visitors.



Drawing from historical maps and archival photographs, the pattern of the Liberty Village Living Room is rooted in the geometries that have long defined the neighbourhood: The concentric circles, radii, and sweeping semi-circular forms echo the curved railway spurs that once branched from the main rail corridors and threaded through Liberty Village, shaping streets, property boundaries, and industrial building footprints as they connected factories directly to the rail network.

Throughout its history, Liberty Village has seen cycles of decay and rebirth that have meticulously shaped its landscapes, streets, alleys, and structures. As the area faces major densification, the *Liberty Village Living Room* must help weave a public realm that reflects the neighbourhood's eclectic character and strong ambition.



1
AREA RUG
A monumental brick rug, inspired by Liberty Village's carpet-manufacturing history, defines the park's central living room. Woven from reclaimed brick, its botanical pattern brings the garden underfoot, creating a shared surface for everyday gathering, play and neighbourhood celebrations.

2
HEARTH
The Hearth brings the intimacy of gathering around a fire into the park. Clustered stainless-steel tubes recall industrial stockpiles, while openings invite people inside to gather around a central firepit. Reflective surfaces catch fragments of trees, sky and movement.

3
CURTAIN TRELLIS
The Curtain draws back the park's edge like a window opening onto the street. Its looping, planted trellis frames views and filters sunlight, creating places to sit, eat and watch the neighbourhood beneath a canopy of trailing foliage.

4
MEGA SOFA BENCH
Generous curved seating gives the living room a place to settle. Following the planted berms, the Sofa wraps the clearing and faces The Rug, inviting people to meet friends, rest beneath the trees and watch the shared life of the park.

5
BEAN BAG
A grassy landform offers a softer, more informal place to lounge. Like a bean bag, it invites people to find their own comfortable position: sitting together, leaning back or stretching out beneath the trees at the edge of the living room.

6
FLOOR LAMP
The Floor Lamp keeps the living room welcoming after dark. A tall, slender light casts a broad pool of illumination across The Rug, giving evening conversation, informal play and neighbourhood gatherings a shared centre.

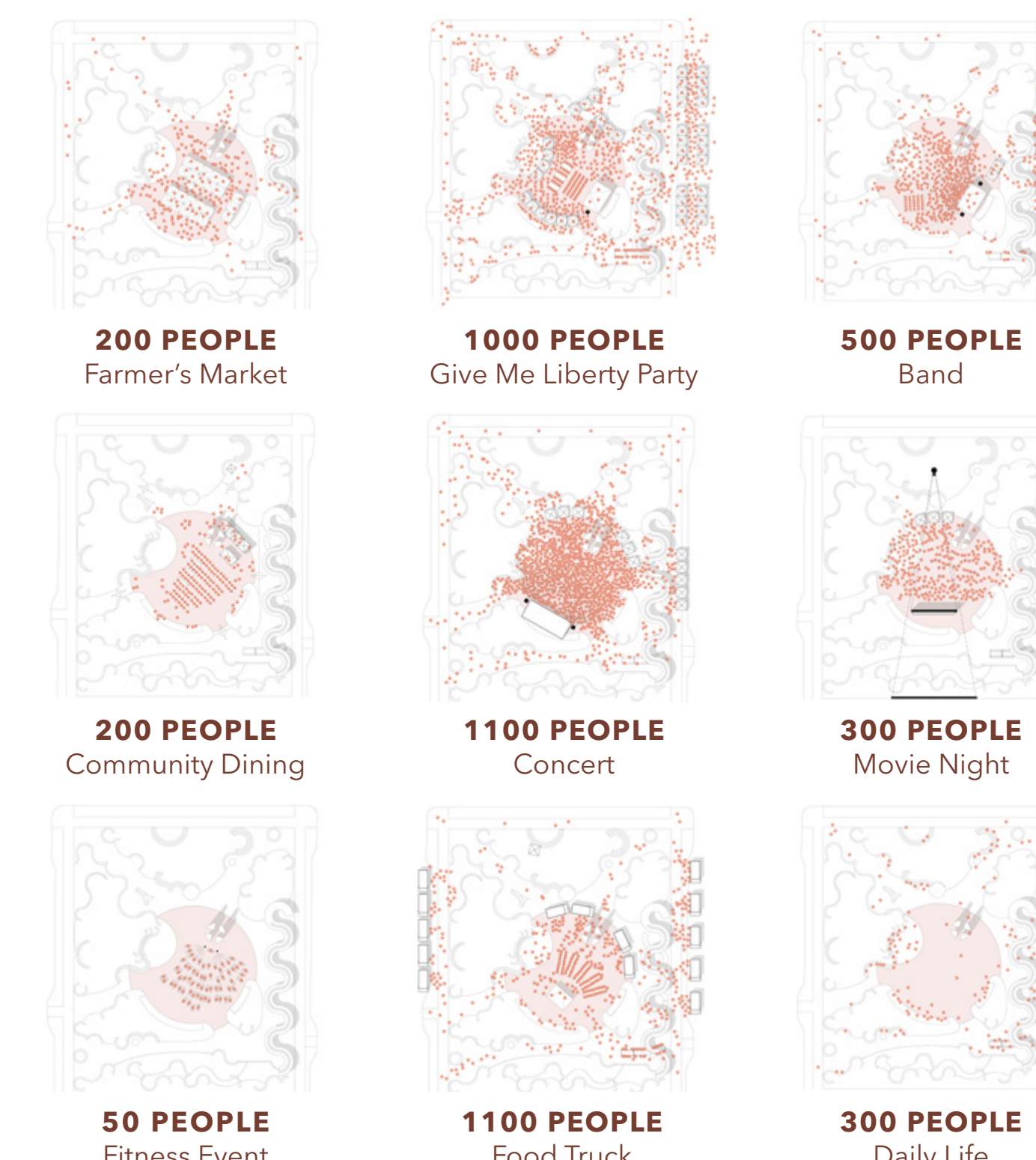
7
SCREEN
The Screen brings the domestic ritual of watching something together into public space. A projection surface on the building's facade faces The Rug, creating an outdoor setting for film nights, artists' projections and community gatherings.



An Oversized Rug that Brings People Together

The central open space (the Rug) is designed for flexible multi-purpose uses of the park, a hard surface that provides flexibility, resiliency, and robust uses for up to 1200 people. The design also allows for temporary closures of Hanna Street for major events and activities that might exceed 1200 people, and provide a stronger connection to the Liberty Market frontage.

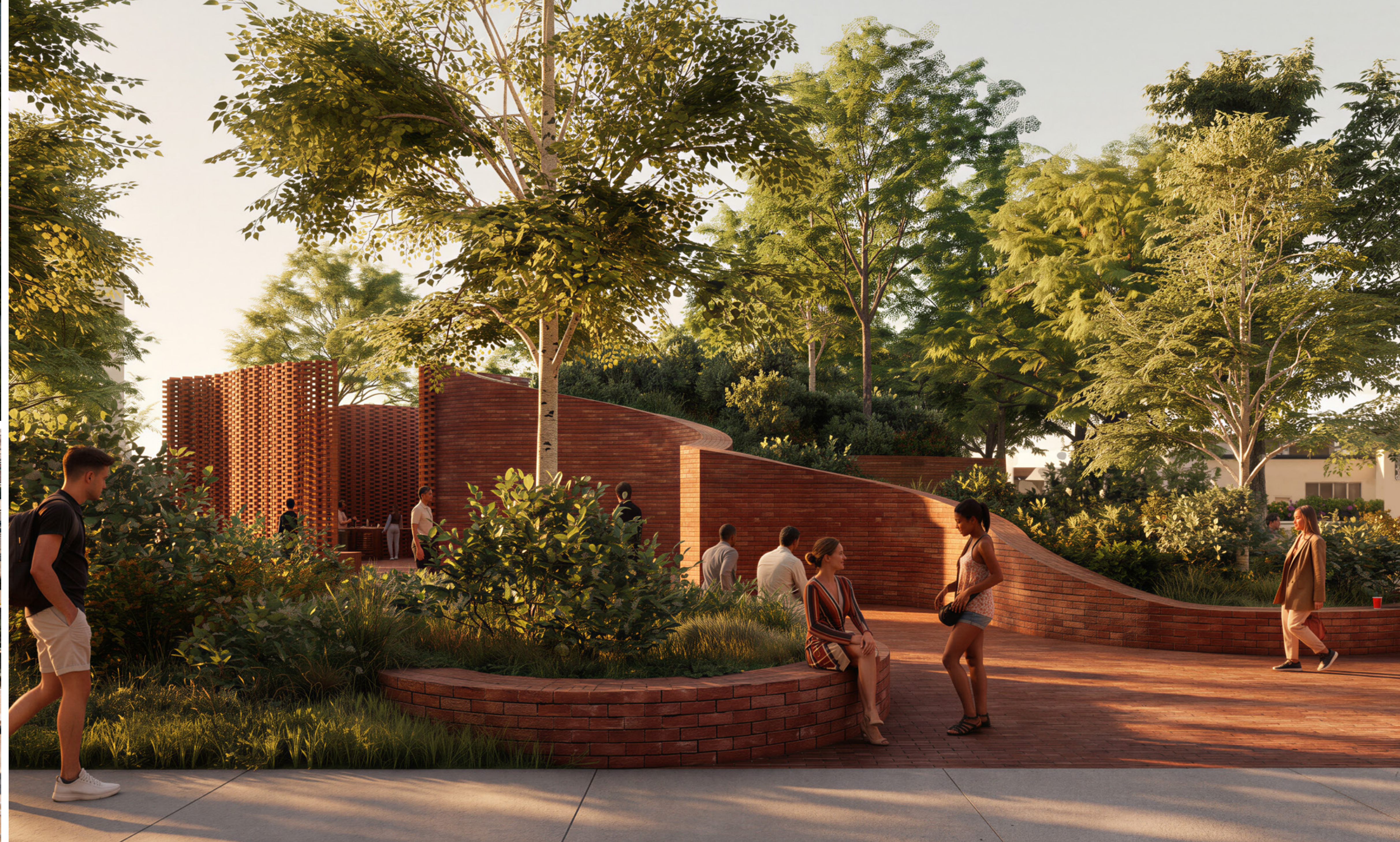
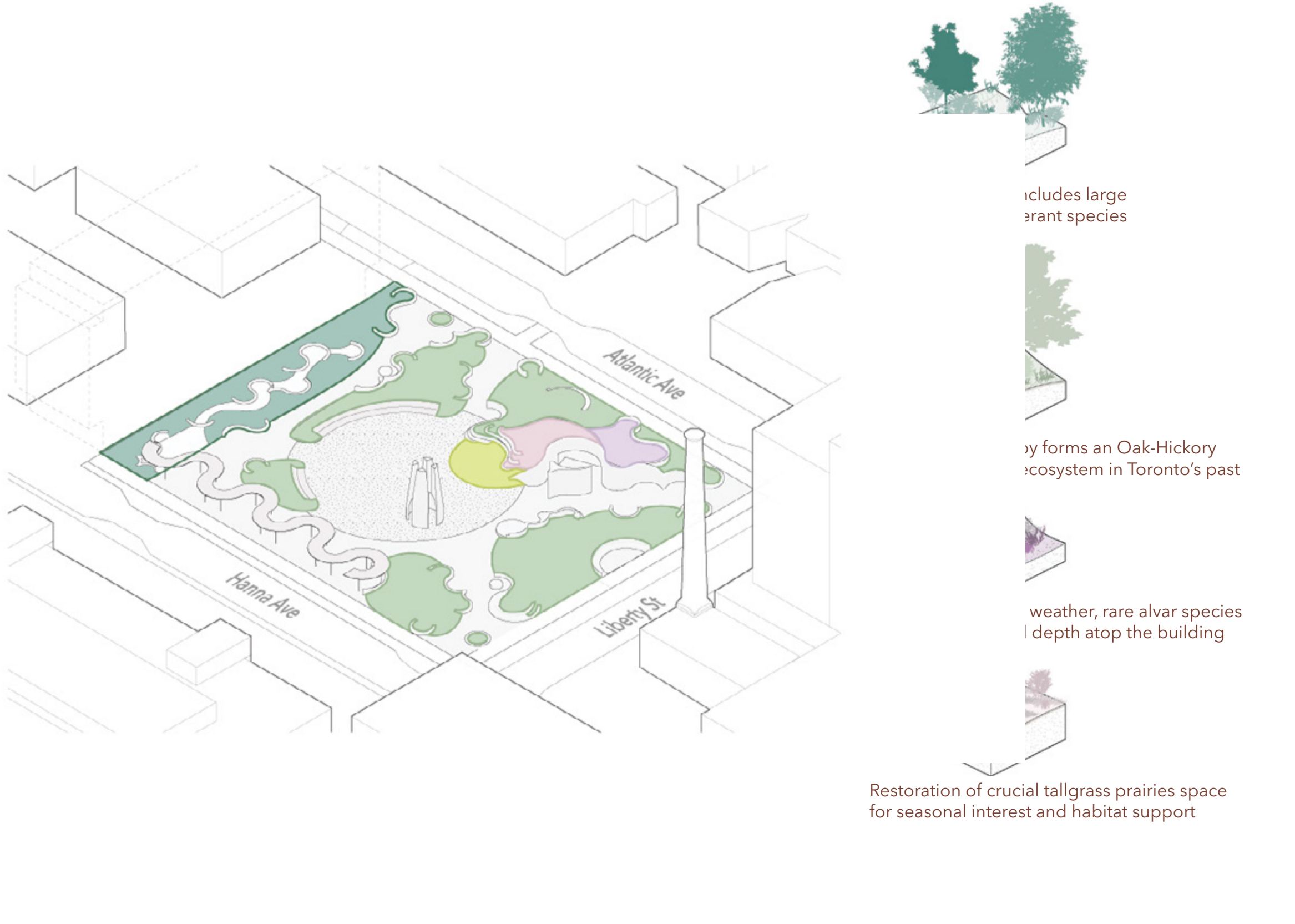
Adaptable layouts accommodate everyday activities alongside organized events, from fitness classes, farmers' markets and outdoor movies to live music, food truck gatherings and neighbourhood festivals. Movable seating, temporary stages and vendor arrangements allow the park to shift between intimate gatherings and larger celebrations, while planted edges offer quieter places to sit and watch a distinctly local identity.





Ecological Planting

Moving beyond traditional, manicured, and ecologically sterile, our team proposes to incorporate the dense, multi-layered structure of ecological planting. This 'rough and refined' language creates a new expression of public space that lightens the heaviness of history while acknowledging an Indigenous past and ecological history largely erased from the site.



A Living Room Within the Woodland

The park provides upwards of 40% of the site as green space, providing topographic enclosure of immersive naturalized forest at the edge between street and park. Entrances into the park are through a canopy of green, providing a sense of threshold, a shady overhead canopy.

The proposed oak hickory forest provides acoustic protection from the surrounding streets, shade from hot summer sun, and visual separation from future surrounding towers.

Foot traffic and plantings are both supported but not in the same space. From structural soils to leaf litter, plants are given the supports they need to thrive. Foot traffic is directed to the various pathways and central 'rug'.

Oak-Hickory woodland areas, inspired by the Miyawaki Method, will offer shade for park users for years to come. Seating is placed alongside with wooded areas and in various configurations to provide shade at various times of day.

Vegetated spaces counter urban heat island effects, creating more comfortable microclimates during hot summer months. The trees selected are deciduous and will thus provide solar access during the colder months.



LIBERTY VILLAGE LIVING ROOM

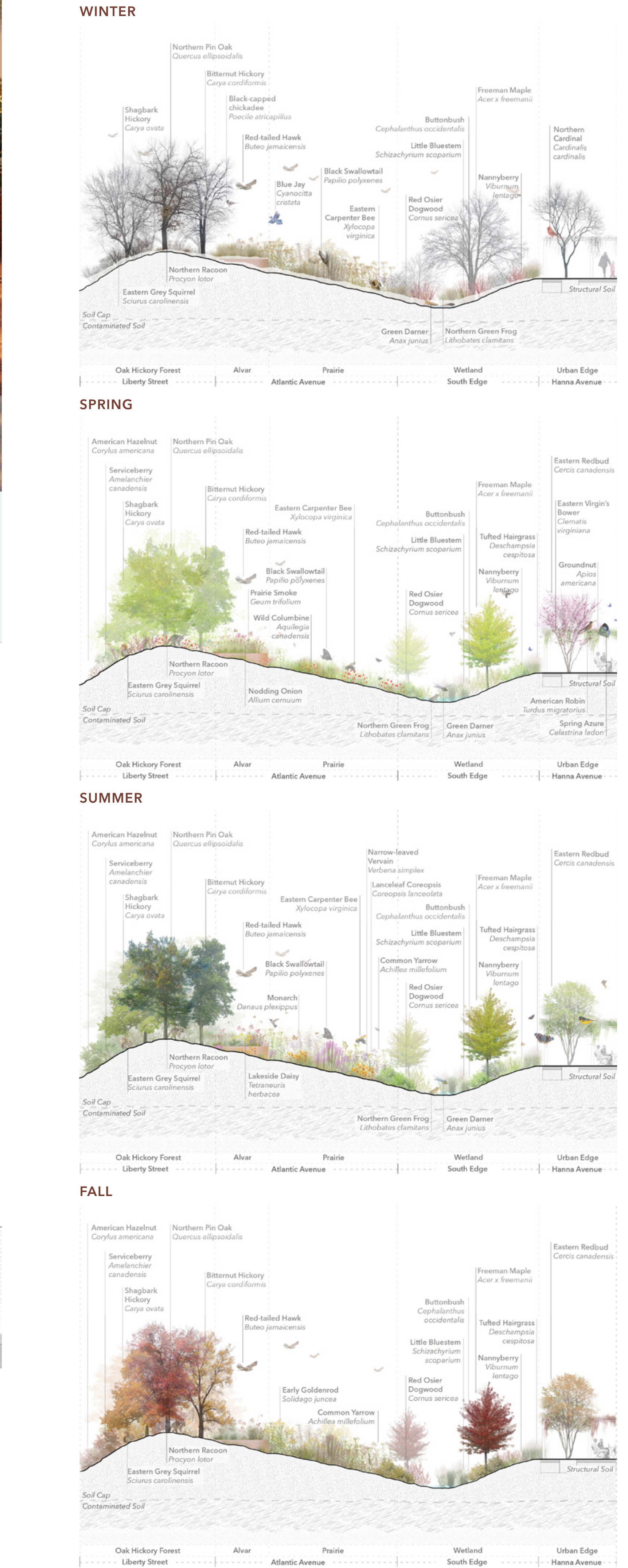
N-S SITE SECTION AT AREA RUG 1:100

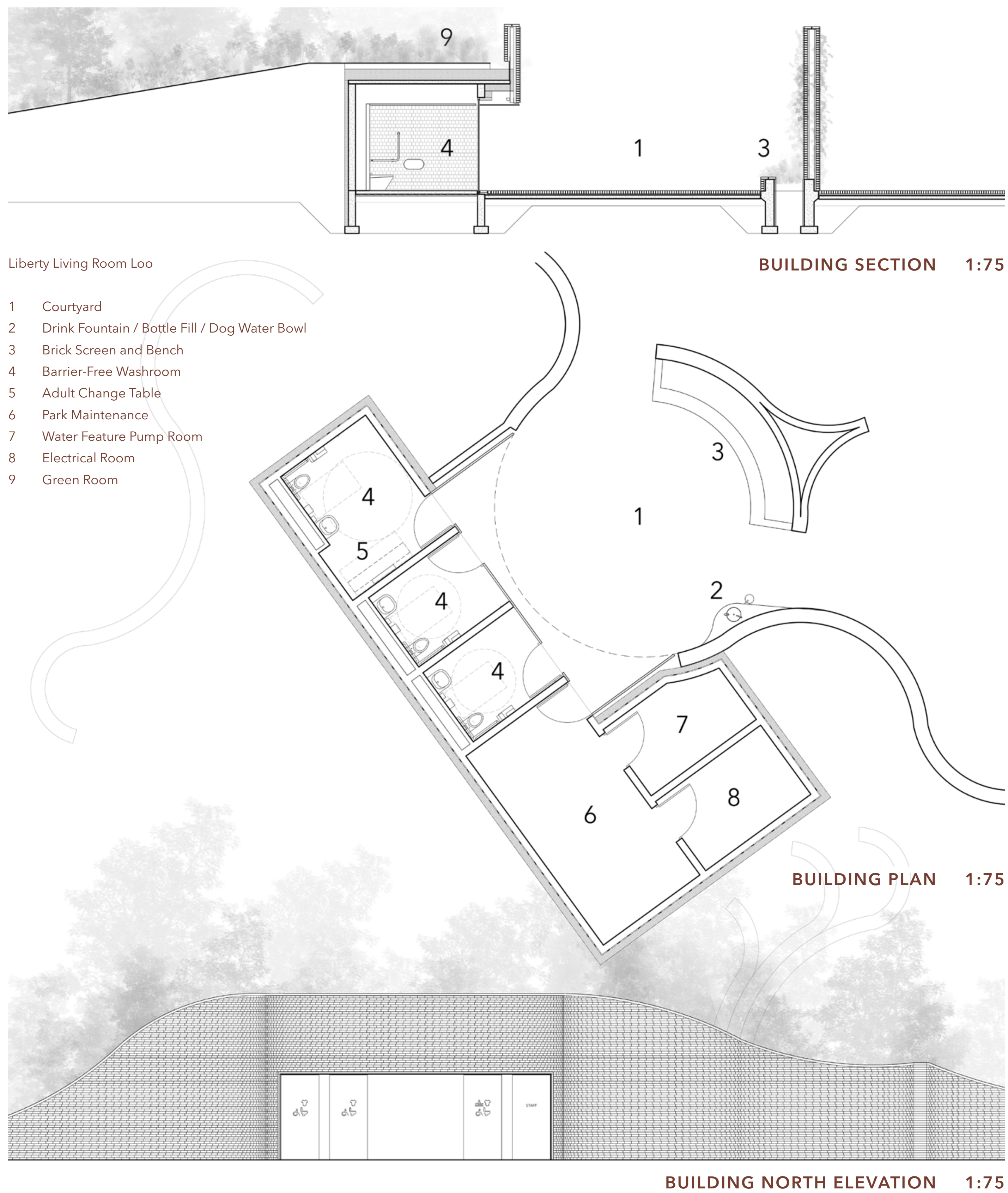


ATLANTIC AVE.

LIBERTY VILLAGE LIVING ROOM

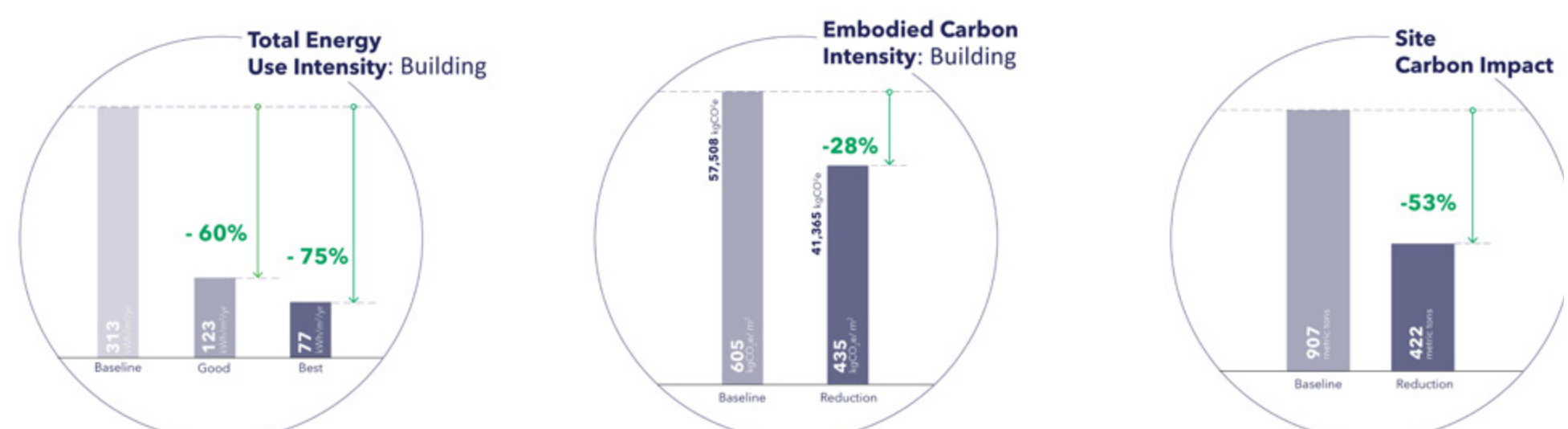
E-W SITE SECTION AT WASHROOM BUILDING 1:100





Sustainability

Our proposal conforms to TransformTO's zero emission target, can achieve zero emissions and zero carbon under the Toronto Green Standards and the Canada Green Building Council's ZCB Standard and demonstrates a 53% reduction of embodied carbon for the Climate Positive Challenge.



TOTAL ENERGY USE INTENSITY: BUILDING

The washroom and park maintenance building is an all-electric facility with an ultra-high-performance insulated and air tight envelope. Protected by the surrounding landscape berm, it's indoor environment is controlled with heat pumps and a heat recovery ventilation system that require significantly reduced energy demand.

TOTAL EMBODIED CARBON INTENSITY: BUILDING

Public washrooms and park service spaces are accessed via brick enclosed courtyard. The building is otherwise buried under the plants and trees of the park, eliminating the need for cladding and protecting the waterproofing membrane from sun exposure and extending its serviceable life. Minimizing new materials, detailing for durability and specifying low carbon options in what is used will reduce the building's carbon footprint over its lifetime significantly.

SITE CARBON IMPACT

We reduced the park's carbon footprint by reusing materials on site and sourcing new ones locally, with reclaimed Toronto brick making the biggest impact. Durable, low-maintenance systems that use minimal water, energy and resources will help the park thrive and eventually give back more than it takes. Celebrated as features, these choices will give the Liberty Living Room its distinct character.

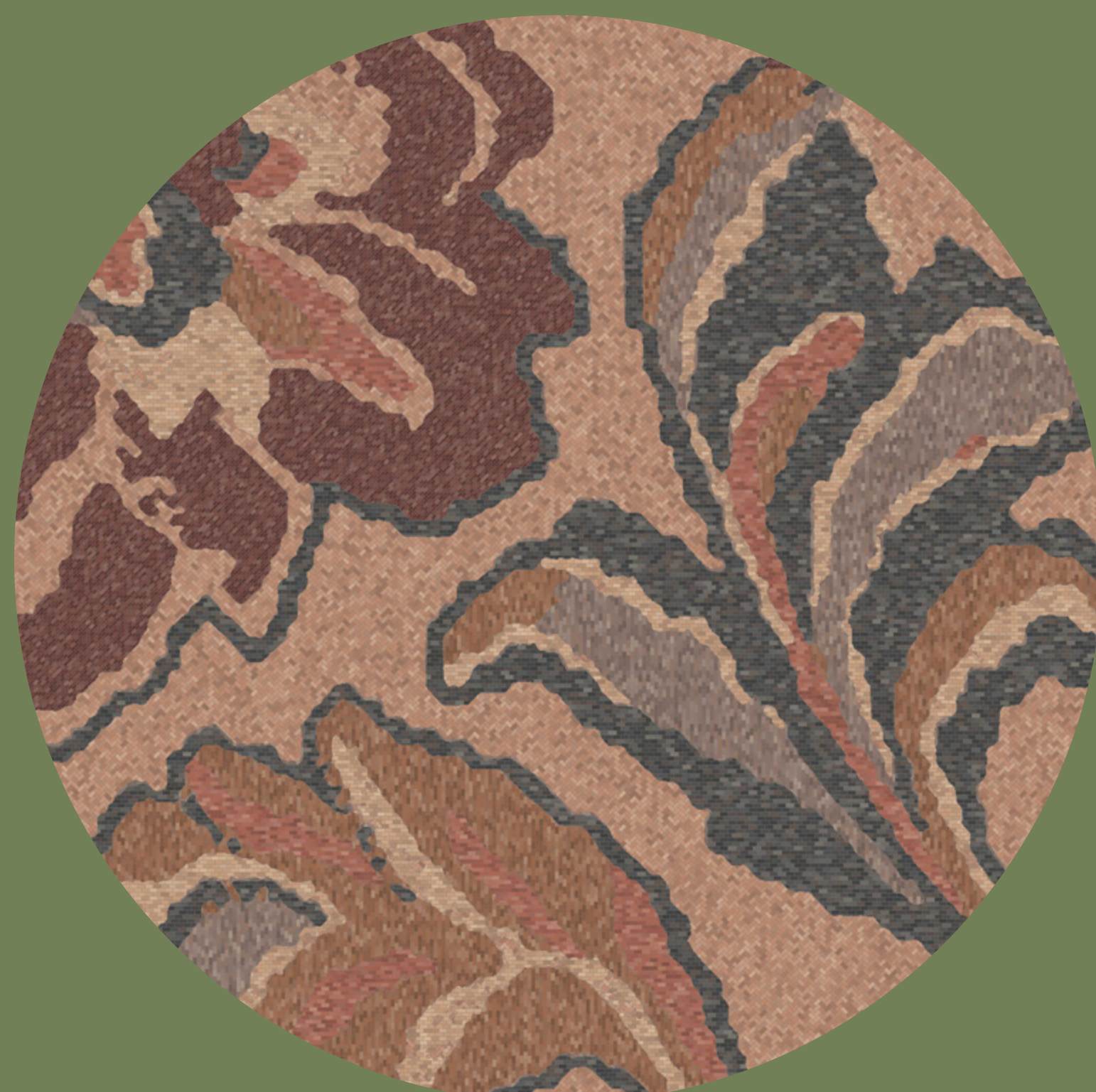
The Rug

A monumental brick rug, inspired by Liberty Village's carpet-manufacturing history, defines the park's central living room. Its design takes inspiration from carpet designer and artist Athelstan Kimberlee's Hand-Painted Quadtych for Sarouk Carpet Design, dated April 8, 1941, with provenance from the Toronto Carpet Manufacturing Company. Created across four sheets in gouache, pencil and ink, the original work connects the park to the artistry behind the neighbourhood's industrial production.

At the Liberty Village Living Room, this tradition of floral ornament is reinterpreted in a circular field of reclaimed brick, translating a surface intended for the home into shared ground outdoors. Oversized blossoms suggest the open flowers of climbing prairie rose, while lobed foliage echoes the surrounding oaks. These visual connections bring the planted berms into the pattern underfoot, at a scale large enough to walk within.

From a distance, broad areas of colour establish the composition. As you approach and step onto The Rug, these forms resolve into thousands of individual bricks. Changes in the color, direction and bond of the brickwork articulate petals, leaves and the spaces between them, giving each part of the pattern its own rhythm. Worn edges, textured faces and subtle differences in colour give the surface the character of something already lived with.

As you move among the enlarged botanical forms, ornament becomes part of the everyday experience of crossing the park. The familiar act of laying a rug becomes a public invitation to settle in, gather and make a place together.



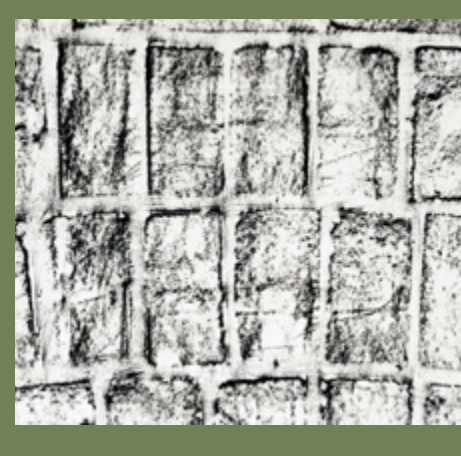
Proposed Rug for the Liberty Village Living Room



The Toronto Carpet Factory Mural in Liberty Village, by William Lazos



Athelstan Kimberlee's Hand-Painted Quadtych for Sarouk Carpet Design



Site Research: Brick Rubbing Charcoal on Paper

The Hearth

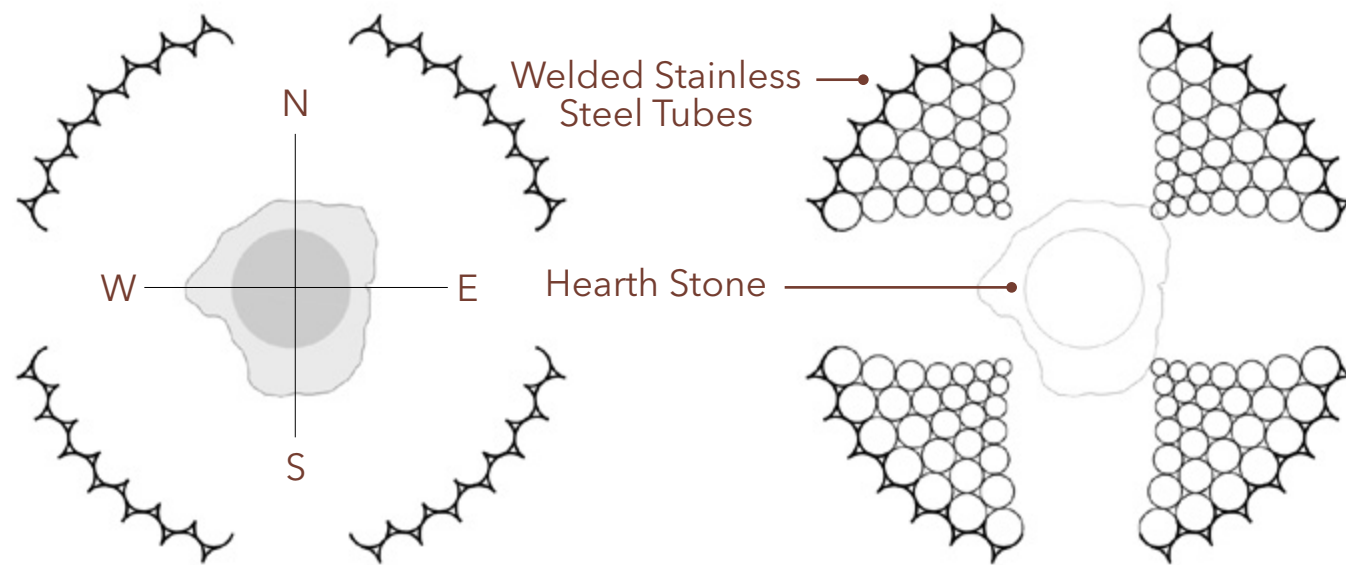
The Hearth brings the domestic tradition of gathering around a fire into the park's shared living room. Its form transforms industrial tube stockpiles into an inhabitable sculpture. Polished steel reflects fragments of trees, sky and movement, resolving into individual hollow tubes as you approach. Openings along the cardinal axes invite you inside while framing views across the park.

Entering The Hearth shifts the experience from viewing a sculpture to occupying it. Steel rises around you, while openings frame the surrounding park. A firepit carved into an Ontario-sourced granite boulder draws people together around its warmth, its rough exterior contrasting with a smooth rim within reach.

Torch-treated steel carries bands of bronze, amber and violet across the lower tubes. Fire becomes part of both the making and the experience of The Hearth, leaving its trace even when the firepit is unlit.



ELEVATION 1:75 SECTION 1:75



FLOOR PLAN 1:75 ROOF PLAN 1:75

