



Narrative

Liberty Nature Park draws its inspiration from an enduring resident of Liberty Village: the chimney swift.

For generations, chimney swifts have nested and gathered among the neighbourhood's brick industrial buildings, becoming silent witnesses to Liberty Village's many transformations. Long before factories and rail corridors arrived, this landscape was part of a larger ecological system of forests, wetlands, streams, migratory routes, and Indigenous movement networks. As the landscape evolved through industrialization and urbanization, the chimney swift remained, adapting alongside the city while maintaining its annual migration patterns across continents.

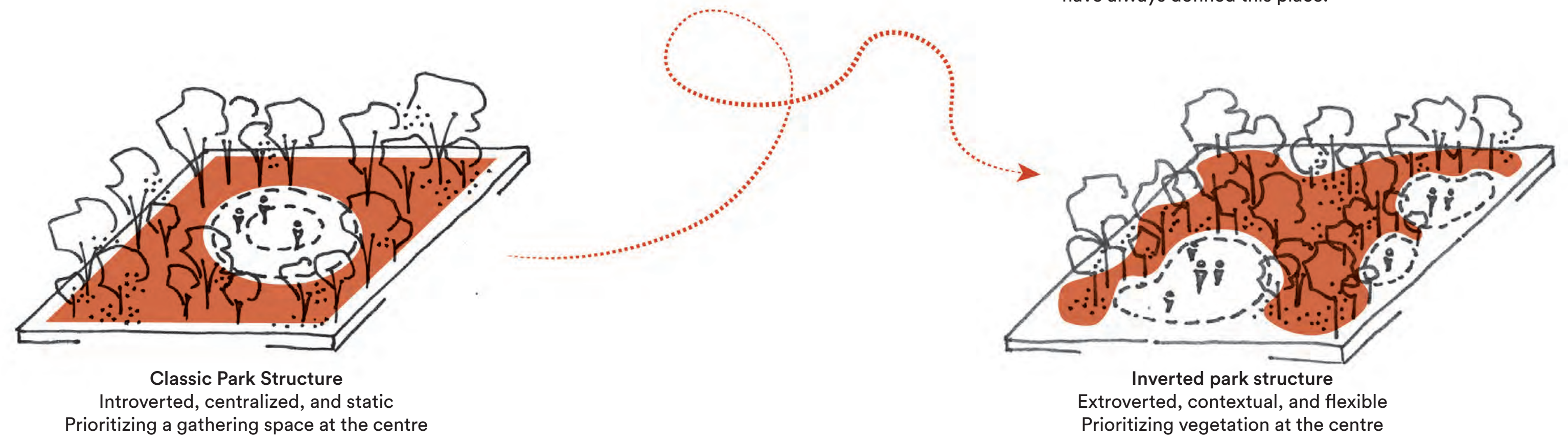
The chimney swift becomes both symbol and guide.

Like Liberty Village itself, the swift embodies resilience, adaptation, movement, and continuity. Its journey links past and present, ecology and culture, arrival and departure. Most importantly, it reminds us that this place has always existed within larger systems of movement, connecting land, water, people, and wildlife. Our concept seeks to reveal these hidden connections.

Rather than imposing an entirely new identity on the site, Liberty Nature Park proposes to carve back layers of the urban fabric and expose traces of the ecological systems and natural narratives that have always existed beneath. The design reveals a hidden nature quality that has

been obscured but never lost, creating renewed connections between the sky above, the earth below, and the human experiences that exist in-between. The chimney swift becomes the heritage connector throughout the design. Its presence links Indigenous histories of movement, the industrial evolution of Liberty Village, contemporary urban life, and future ecological regeneration. Through the swift, the park becomes a living expression of continuity.

The result is Liberty Nature Park: a place where humans, animals, water, plants, culture, and community coexist within a shared landscape. The park becomes the next chapter in Liberty Village's story, continuing and expanding the relationships between nature and culture that have always defined this place.



Vision

Introduce a New Nature Experience

Liberty Nature Park will be the green heart of Liberty Village.

More than a neighbourhood park, it challenges conventional expectations about what an urban park can become. Rather than organizing the site around a large paved gathering space surrounded by areas of planting, Liberty Nature Park reverses this formula. Here, nature occupies the centre. People move around, through, and into it.

This ambitious ordering transforms the park into something greater than the sum of its parts. The landscape becomes a living, breathing ecological system that continually evolves and surprises.

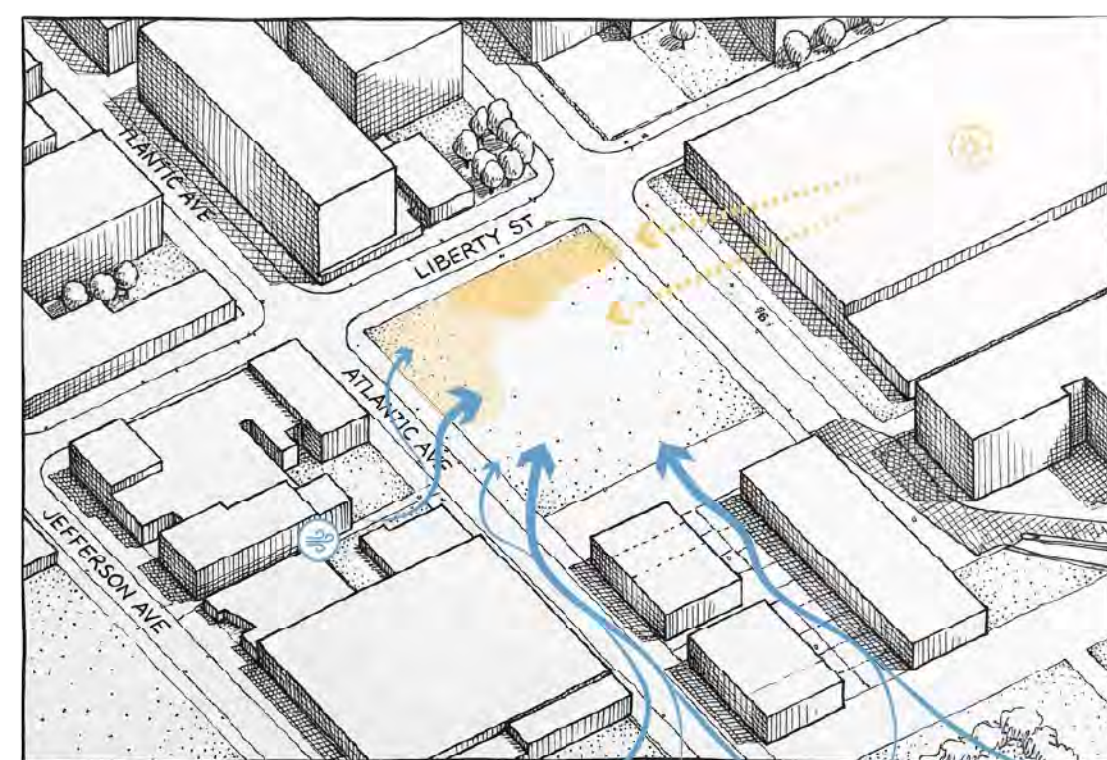
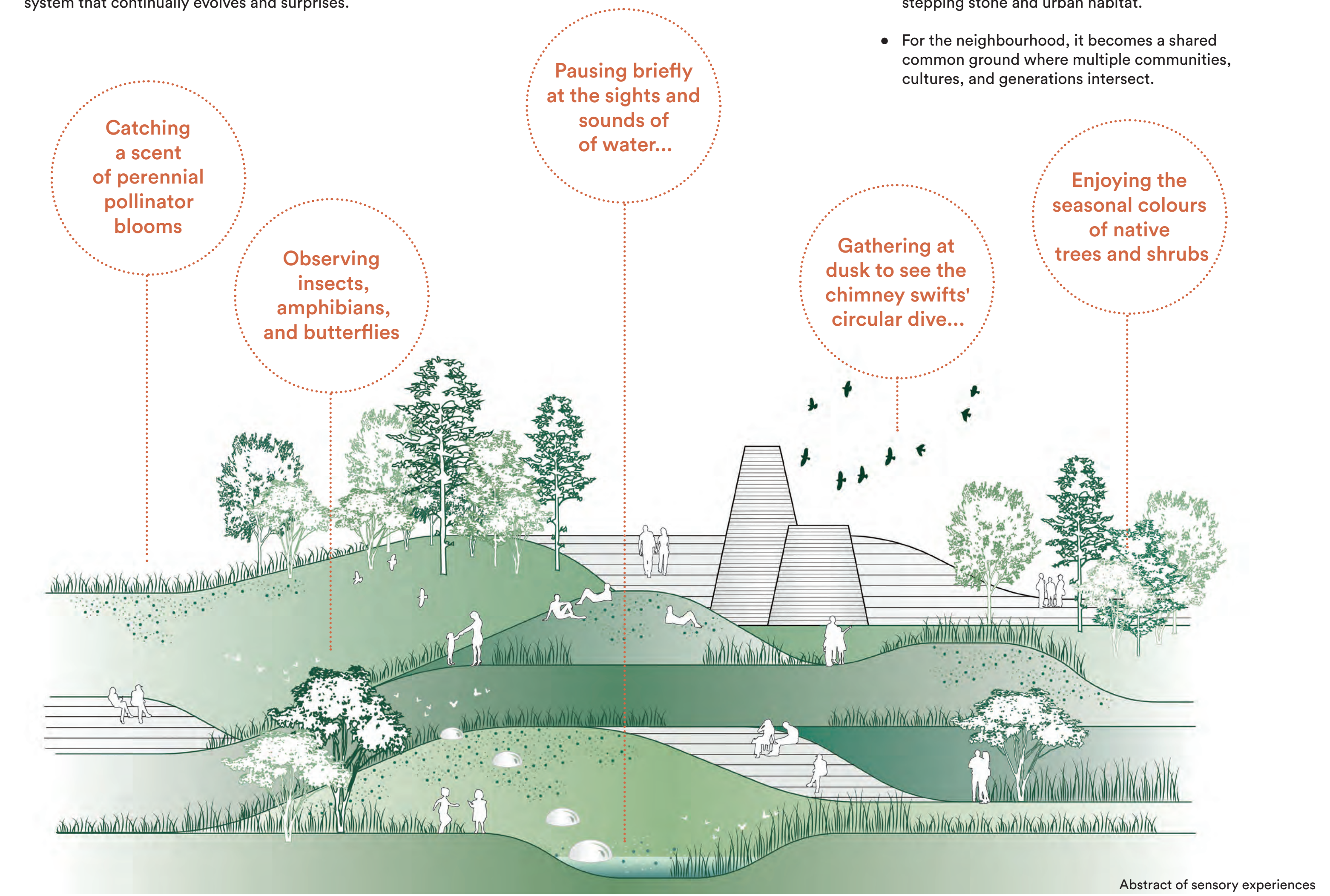
Maintain Liberty Village's Distinct Identity

Liberty Nature Park reflects Liberty Village's identity as a place of adaptation, movement, and continual reinvention. Inspired by the neighbourhood's layered ecological, Indigenous, and industrial histories, the design draws on the symbolism of the chimney swift, expressed through migration-themed public art and chimney-inspired pavilion forms. Stone, wood, and weathered steel reference both natural and industrial heritage, while planting, landforms, and boardwalks reconnect visitors to the wetlands and waterways that once defined the site, creating a landscape that is deeply rooted in place and oriented toward the future.

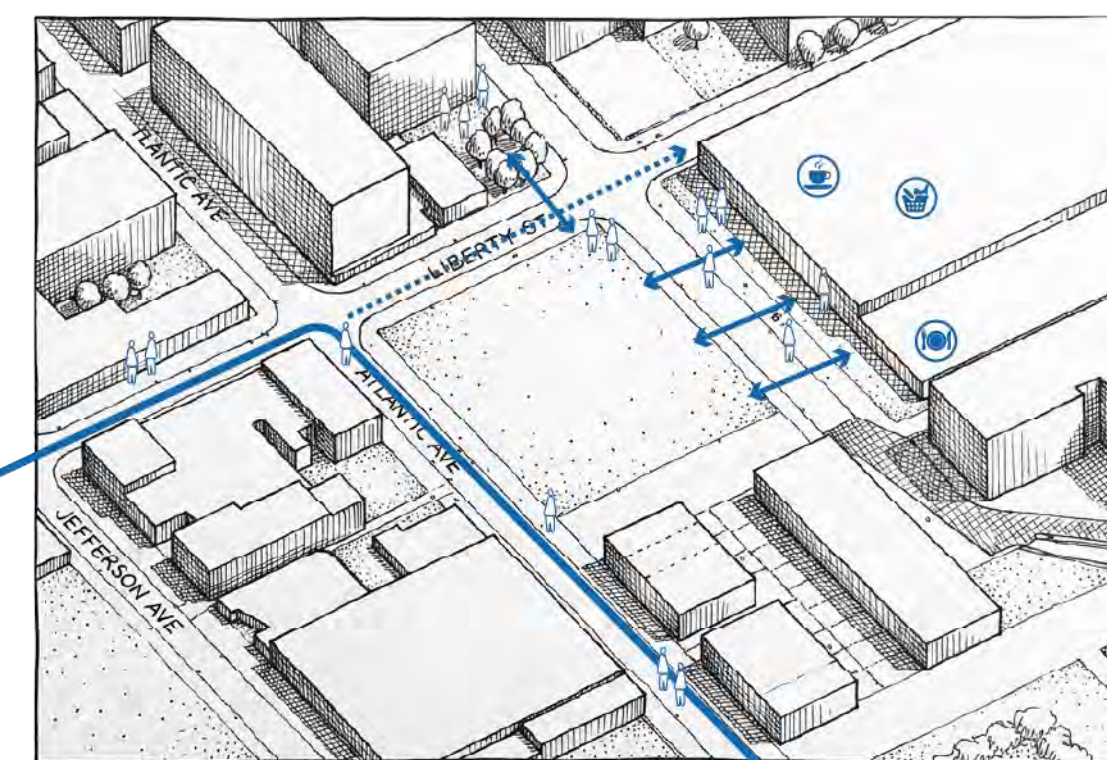
Create an Important Link

Just as migratory species rely upon connected networks of habitat, Liberty Nature Park serves as an important urban and ecological connector. The site exists at the intersection of movement corridors that continue to evolve through transit investment, intensification, active transportation, and neighbourhood growth. Liberty Nature Park becomes a waypoint within these larger systems.

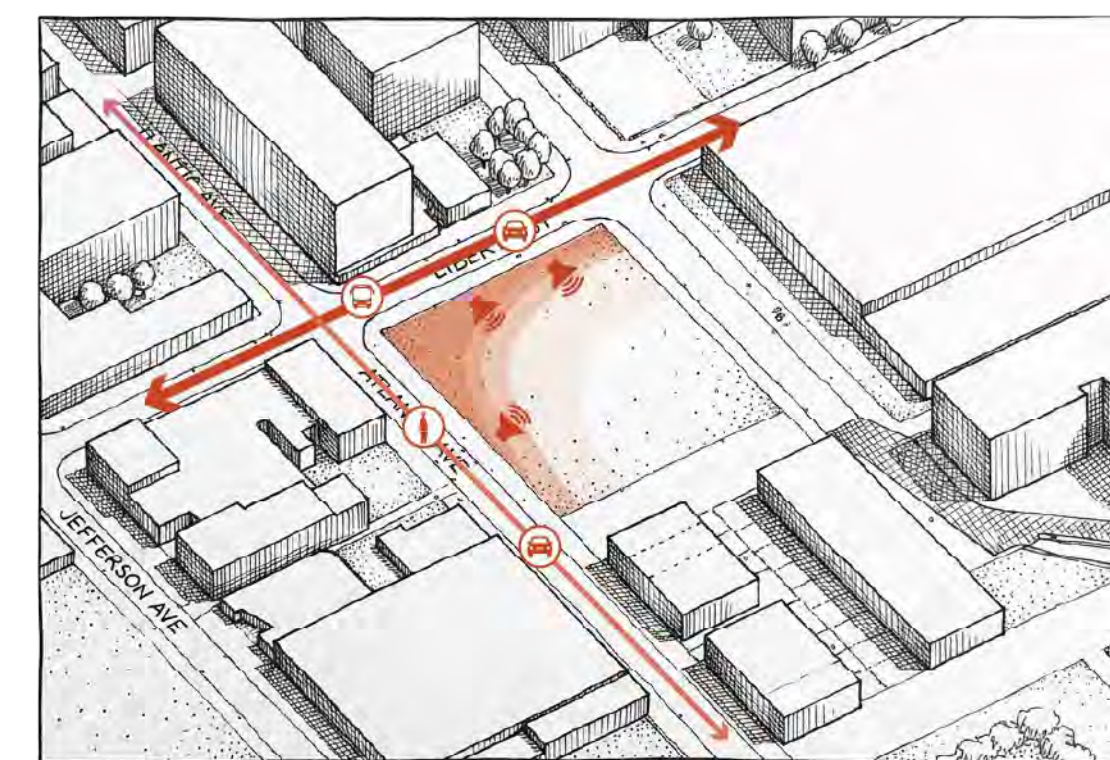
- For people, it provides a place of rest, gathering, reflection, and social life within the daily rhythms of Liberty Village.
- For wildlife, it functions as an ecological stepping stone and urban habitat.
- For the neighbourhood, it becomes a shared common ground where multiple communities, cultures, and generations intersect.



Comfort analysis
Northeastern corner has most sun, while the dominant winds are coming from the south and southwest.



Main flows and connections
Pedestrian flows are focused on Atlantic Avenue and Liberty Street, while important connections are found towards the East and North.



Current activity
Liberty Street holds the main traffic activities with cars, buses, and other vehicles, while Atlantic Avenue holds the secondary flow.

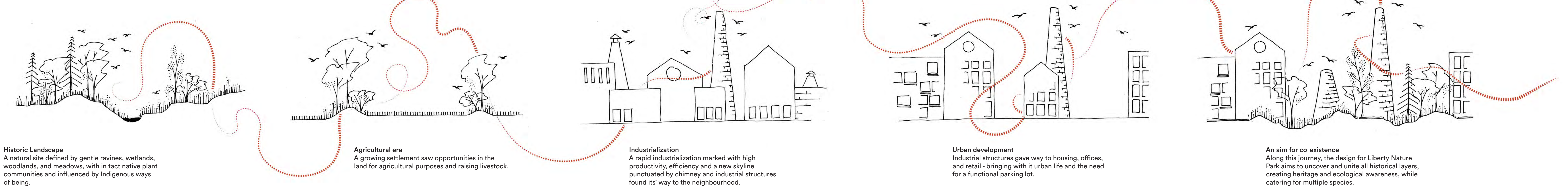
Site Analysis
The 34 Hanna Avenue site is surrounded by several external factors - all which guide the design and programming of the future park.

Dominant winds from the south and southwest, the sunny northeastern corner, pedestrian flows, and vehicle activity all inform the distribution of the park's functions, from active spaces to quiet pockets, and density to openness.

To accommodate the varied program requirements, the park design takes these contextual relations into consideration and the park edges become critical to accommodating varied uses of space.

Contextual Programming
Placing the more active spaces towards the northeast, shielding the inner core with dense vegetation, benefiting from the pedestrian flows and guiding visitors in from the East. All resulting in the design and layout of Liberty Nature Park.

Site Timeline
The sketched timeline below takes us through the different eras of Liberty Village, visualizing the historic layers hidden underneath today's pavement - discovering the ever presence of the chimney swift.



Historic Landscape
A natural site defined by gentle ravines, wetlands, woodlands, and meadows, with in tact native plant communities and influenced by Indigenous ways of being.

Agricultural era
A growing settlement saw opportunities in the land for agricultural purposes and raising livestock.

Industrialization
A rapid industrialization marked with high productivity, efficiency and a new skyline punctuated by chimney and industrial structures found its way to the neighbourhood.

Urban development
Industrial structures gave way to housing, offices, and retail - bringing with it urban life and the need for a functional parking lot.

An aim for co-existence
Along this journey, the design for Liberty Nature Park aims to uncover and unite all historical layers, creating heritage and ecological awareness, while catering for multiple species.

Throughout the year, changing seasons continually redefine how the park is experienced. Just as the chimney swift returns each year to familiar places altered by time and season, visitors will discover an evolving landscape that rewards repeated visits. The park becomes a reflection of Liberty Village itself: diverse, adaptive, layered, and continually evolving. A place where the story of the city and the story of nature once again intersect.



Under the Great Heart
Strolling on the boardwalk path reveals the
public network. Dense areas of trees and shrubs
are interspersed with open meadow and a lush
woodland, that has the capacity to absorb seasonal
flooding and daily stormwater.



Swifts diving into the chimneys at dusk



The powerful up-stream salmon run

Between Sky and Water

Public Art

Between Sky and Water gives sculptural form to the movements that connect Liberty Nature Park to a much larger living world. At the centre of the park, a gathering of Chimney Swifts sweeps through the air. Their flight bends, spirals and dives. As the flock descends toward the landscape, their wings pull in towards their bodies, birds become fish, and sky flows into water. The vertical form touches down and releases a stream of abstracted fish that continues across the ground, swimming metaphorically upstream through the park's low lying stormwater landscape. In this metamorphosis, one state flows into another.

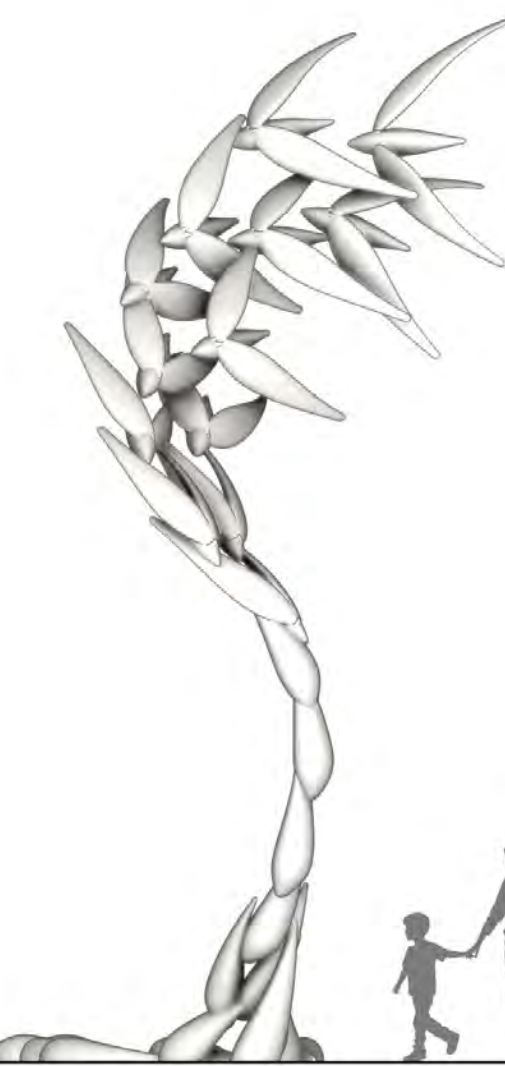
The transformation connects two remarkable ecological journeys of this place.

Chimney Swifts migrate across continents and have adapted to the chimneys and industrial structures of neighbourhoods such as Liberty Village for nesting and communal roosting. Their spectacular circling and funnel-like descent into chimneys is one of the species' most distinctive collective behaviours. The Chimney Swift is currently classified as Threatened in Ontario.

In the waters below, salmon undertake another extraordinary journey: leaving Lake Ontario each fall and moving upstream through tributaries such as the Humber River and Don River to spawn.

Within this artwork, these separate migrations become one continuous movement: from sky to earth, from earth to water, and through water upstream.

This movement extends the central idea of Liberty Nature Park. The park is conceived as an urban waypoint within interconnected systems of human and ecological movement, a place where nature occupies the centre and visitors move around, through and into an immersive landscape of forest, meadow, wetland, stormwater and habitat. Rather than sitting apart from this landscape, the artwork emerges from within its ecological heart. It becomes another experiential layer in the park's discovery landscape, encountered gradually along the winding boardwalk and revealed between planting, topography, water and sky.



7.7m

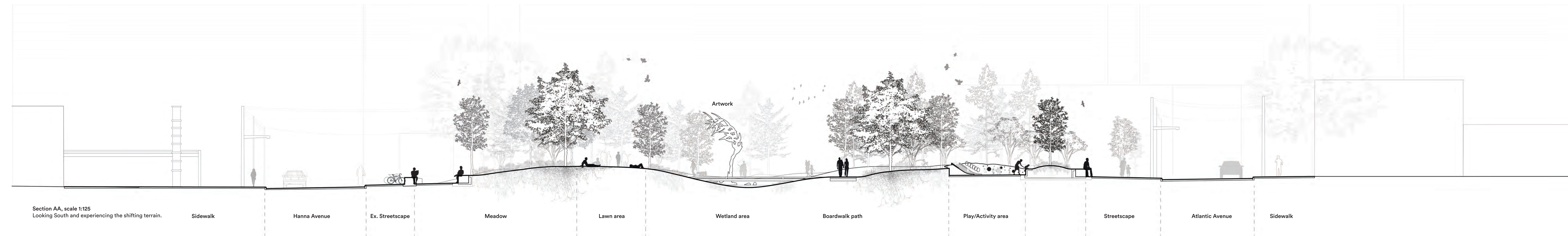
Elevation



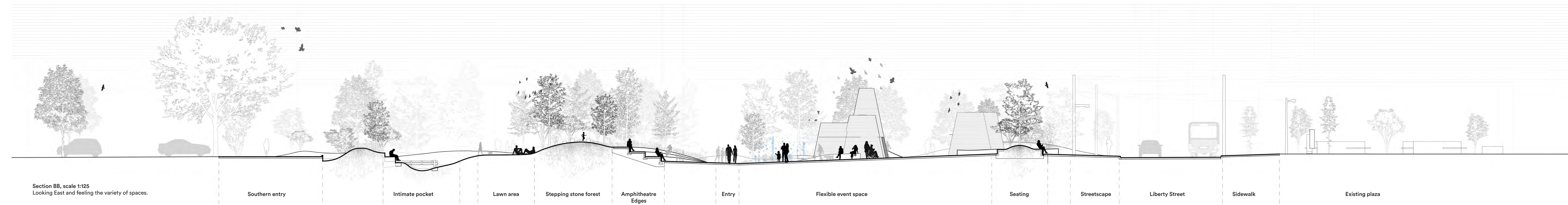
The chimney swifts and salmon are symbols of movement and migration, and a translator of eras past.



Polished stainless steel reflects the natural surroundings



Section AA, scale 1:125
Looking South and experiencing the shifting terrain.



Section BB, scale 1:125
Looking East and feeling the variety of spaces.



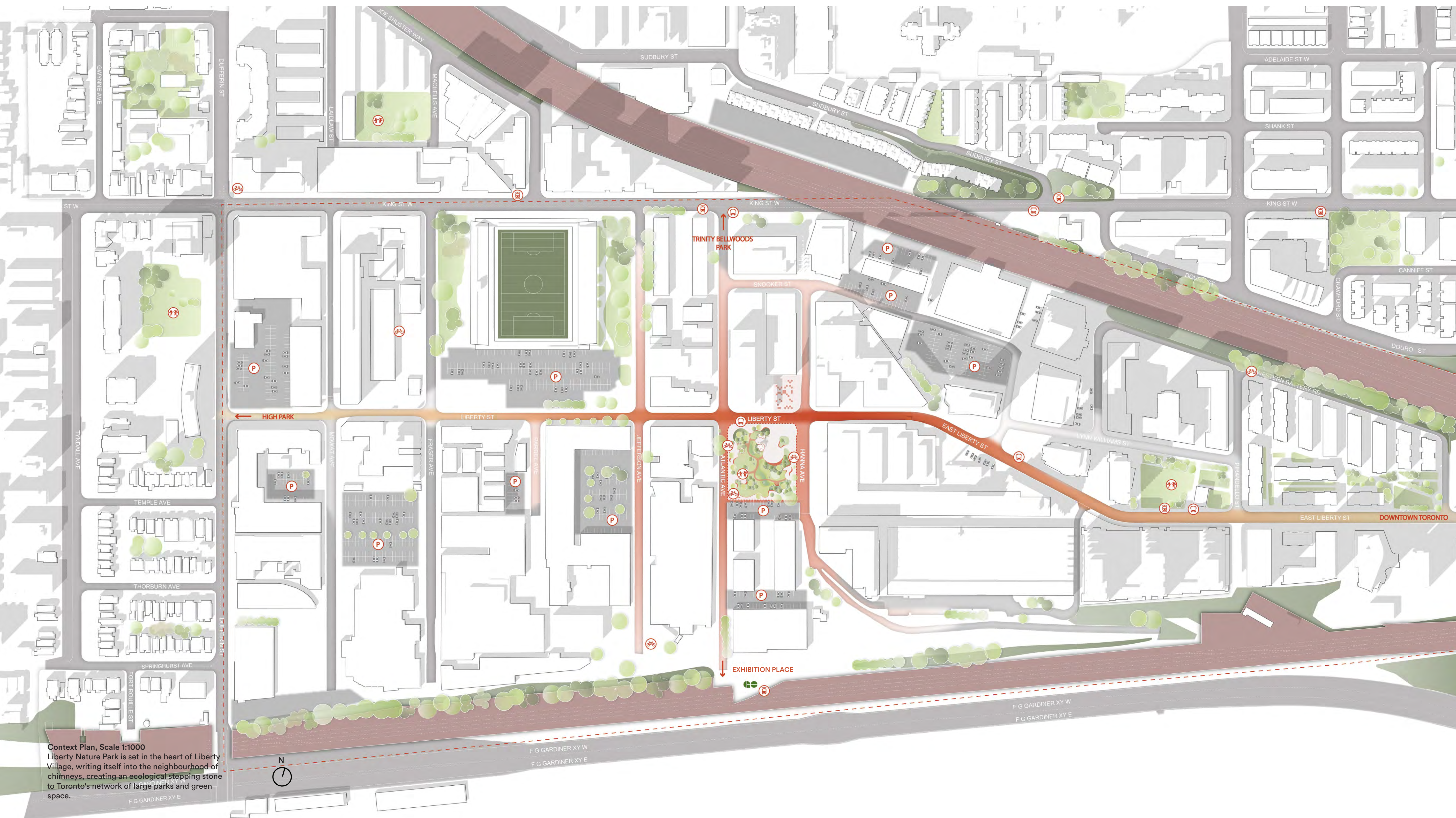
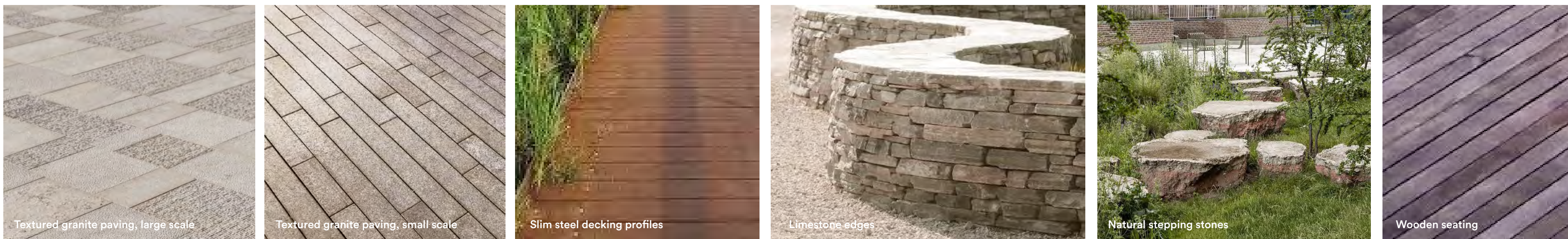
Flexible Event Space
Arriving from the northeastern corner, a view of the flexible event space opens up, revealing the amphitheatre seating and architectural washroom pavilions, bringing a breeze from the water mist before guiding you into the green heart.

Material Palette

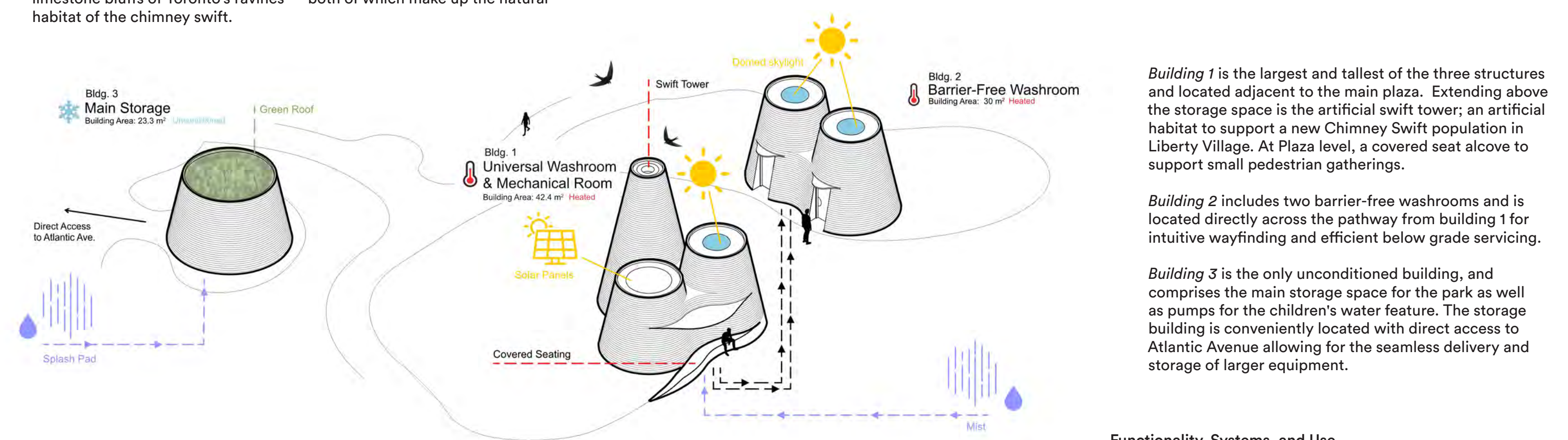
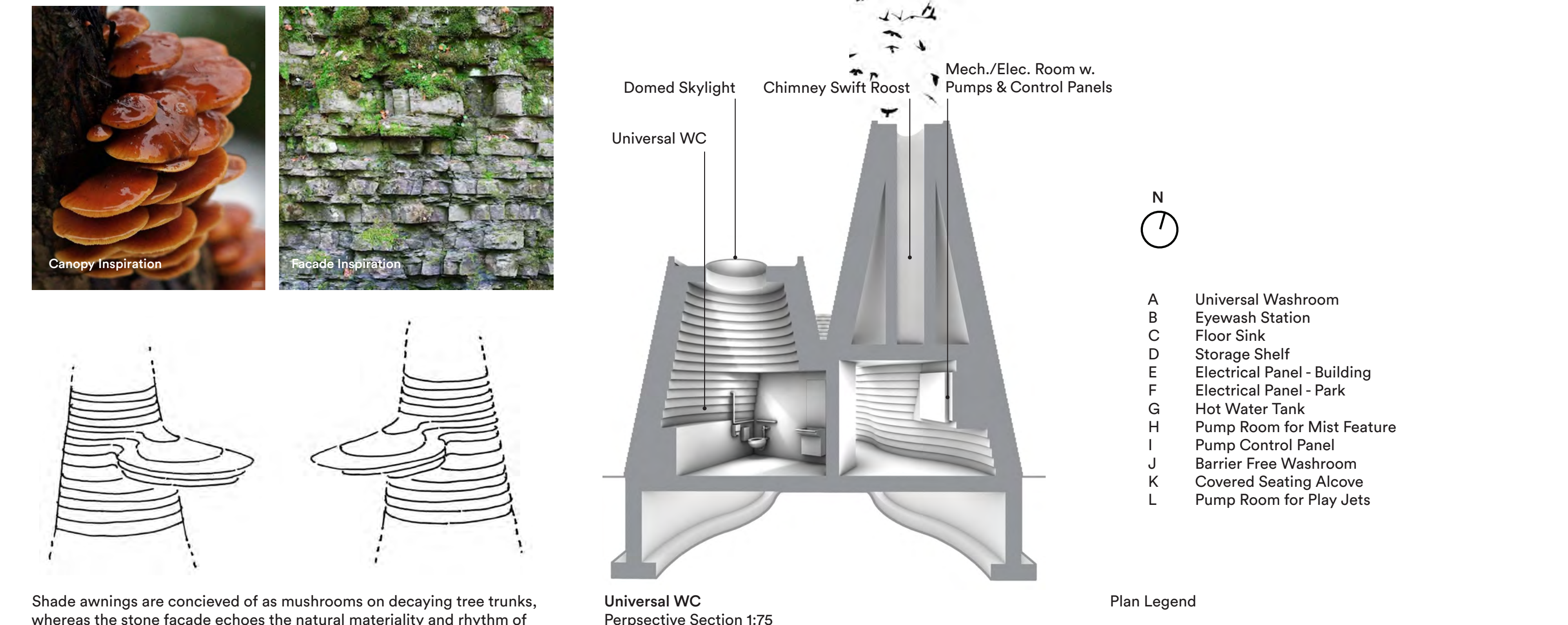
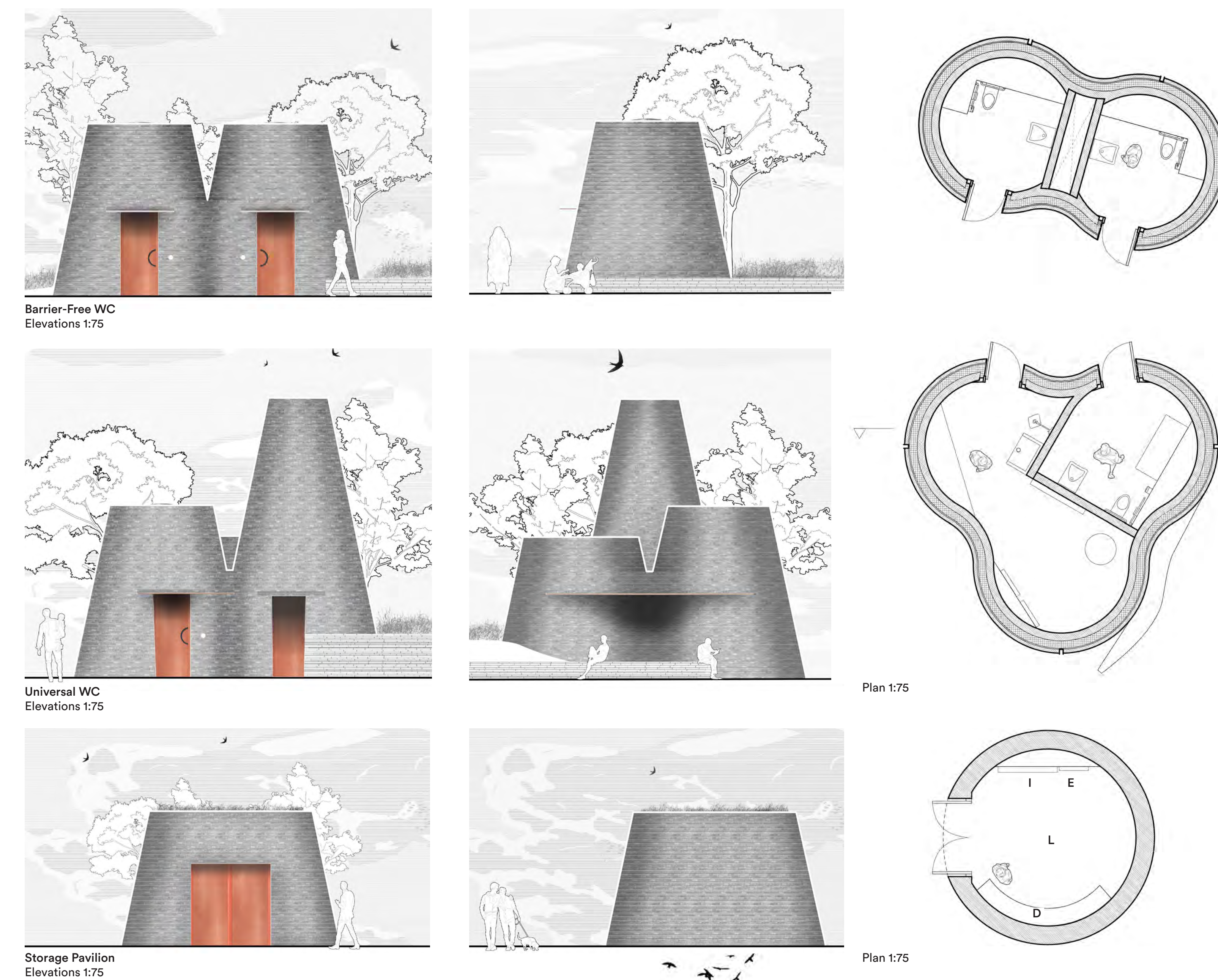
Nature and Industry

Liberty Nature Park's material palette is rooted in ecology, industrial heritage, and a strong connection to place. The landscape itself becomes the primary material expression, with planting, soil, water, and habitat creating an immersive, seasonally dynamic environment. Stone serves as the park's foundational architectural material, used for paving, edges, retaining elements, and seating

to organize movement and support gathering. Wood is integrated into seating surfaces to add warmth and comfort. Weathering steel is applied selectively within the boardwalk and pavilion awnings, referencing Liberty Village's industrial character while providing contemporary contrast. Together, these durable, natural materials create a park identity that is authentic, resilient, and deeply grounded in its local context.



Context Plan, Scale 1:1000
Liberty Nature Park is set in the heart of Liberty Village, writing itself into the neighbourhood of chimneys, creating an ecological stepping stone to Toronto's network of large parks and green space.



Washroom & Park Pavilions
Connecting to the Industrial Area

The washroom buildings function as both essential infrastructure and civic landmarks. Inspired by the vertical forms of the industrial chimneys that once defined Liberty Village and the aerial movements of the chimney swifts, the buildings rise from the landscape as a series of sculptural cylindrical stone volumes. These distinctive architectural elements establish a highly visible identity for the park from surrounding streets while also performing ecological and functional roles.

Following the spirit of movement and journey, the program is decentralized over 3 slight pavilions of various diameters and heights rather than one combined large building. Doing so enables each pavilion with greater agility in coalescing with nature and landscape.

The pavilions become contemporary interpretations of swift habitat structures while simultaneously housing mechanical systems, embracing natural light, and serving as landmark features visible from surrounding towers and streets.

At ground level, the building anchors community life by integrating seating, shelter, gathering spaces, and opportunities for informal occupation. Rather than functioning as an isolated utility building, the rising structures become part of the landscape itself – Architecture, nature, and public life weave into a single experience. The buildings act as both beacon and destination, helping draw visitors into the park while reinforcing the broader narrative of migration, movement, and ecological coexistence.

Materials, Structure and Sustainability

Informed by indigenous thoughts towards nature and how to decolonize a 19th century industrial site, as well as the goal to provide low carbon and net zero architecture, the cylindrical volumes of each pavilion are clad in Ontario limestone masonry units. These masonry units will be sized to match the Ontario Size Modular Brick, the standard dimension found across Liberty Village; this stone masonry reinterprets the architectural legacy of industrial brick buildings while using a local and low embodied material.

The structure of each building is also composed of larger load bearing stone masonry; a significantly more adaptable and sustainable material than concrete or steel. Since stone is a highly resilient, cleanable, and durable material, these structural walls also double as interior finishes. This minimizes construction sequencing and waste, while maintaining a cohesive aesthetic on the interior and exterior.

Additionally, the thermal mass of the structural stone minimizes the cooling and heating load of the pavilions supporting net zero operations.

Outside of these innovations the design assumes a standard rainscreen wall assembly composed of a structural stone framework with R-36 insulation and finished with exterior stone masonry. The roof framing is constructed of douglas fir dimensional lumber which is also a low carbon material, it features R-60 rigid insulation. The slab on grade features R-15 rigid insulation throughout, supporting a comfortable and efficient building envelope.

The design proposes highly durable and easily cleanable polished concrete floors, stainless steel washroom fixtures and wall panels at the squared-off areas of the otherwise cylindrical washrooms. The buildings are electrically heated without the use of natural gas, and feature passive cooling strategies through the stack effect. Each private washroom has its own skylight creating a dramatic experience while minimizing the need for artificial light during the days. Above the mechanical room is the tallest tower within the pavilion, and is designed as an artificial habitat to support a new Chimney Swift population in Liberty Village.