



ontario place

a place to stand? a place to grow? toronto, on.

thesis desiree valadares . university of guelph
master of landscape architecture 2013

A Biographical Approach to Landscape Research

Ontario Place:

A Place to Stand? A Place to Grow?

By Desirée Valadares

**A thesis presented to
The University of Guelph**

**In partial fulfillment of
requirements for the degree of
Master of Landscape Architecture**

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Guelph, Ontario, Canada**



(Toronto Port Authority Archives. Ontario Place Binder 37- 41)

ONTARIO PLACE: A Place to Stand? A Place to Grow? A Biographical Approach to Landscape Research

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Ontario Place in Toronto has a long legacy of unfulfilled plans, conflicting interests and missed opportunities. Its evolution is punctuated by myriad socio-cultural, political and economic shifts. Landscape biography, an empirical research strategy, is used to capture the diversity, complexity and the transformational character of this landmark site through archival research and oral histories over five phases of development. With origins in cultural geography and social anthropology, landscape biography is a compelling analytic tool to study the evolutionary dynamics of landscape change. Ontario Place is closely examined within the broader context of Toronto's post-industrial waterfront to highlight and explain contingent moments in this cultural landscape's historical trajectory. Findings reveal that Ontario Place, like waterfront itself, is the aftermath of political indifference and short-term expediency multiplied over several years. A road-map is created to visualize long-term evolutionary cause-and-effect relationships and a framework is developed to provide guidance for future transformations of this public asset based on historically grounded research.

Warm thanks are extended to every staff and faculty member in the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development (SEDRD) and the Landscape Architecture Department at the University of Guelph. You have been instrumental in shaping me into an informed, civically-engaged, and environmentally-conscious citizen and future landscape architect.

Thank-you to my advisory team: Nathan Perkins, for your relentless support and encouragement, your refreshing attitude, your sharp analysis and your zany antics but most of all, your broad knowledge of the wider world. Sean Kelly, thank-you for your calm, cool and collected demeanor, your focus, your wit and your realistic expectations for this one-year “non-conforming” project. To Al Lauzon for your insightful comments and suggestions, your interest in the topic and for chairing my defense.

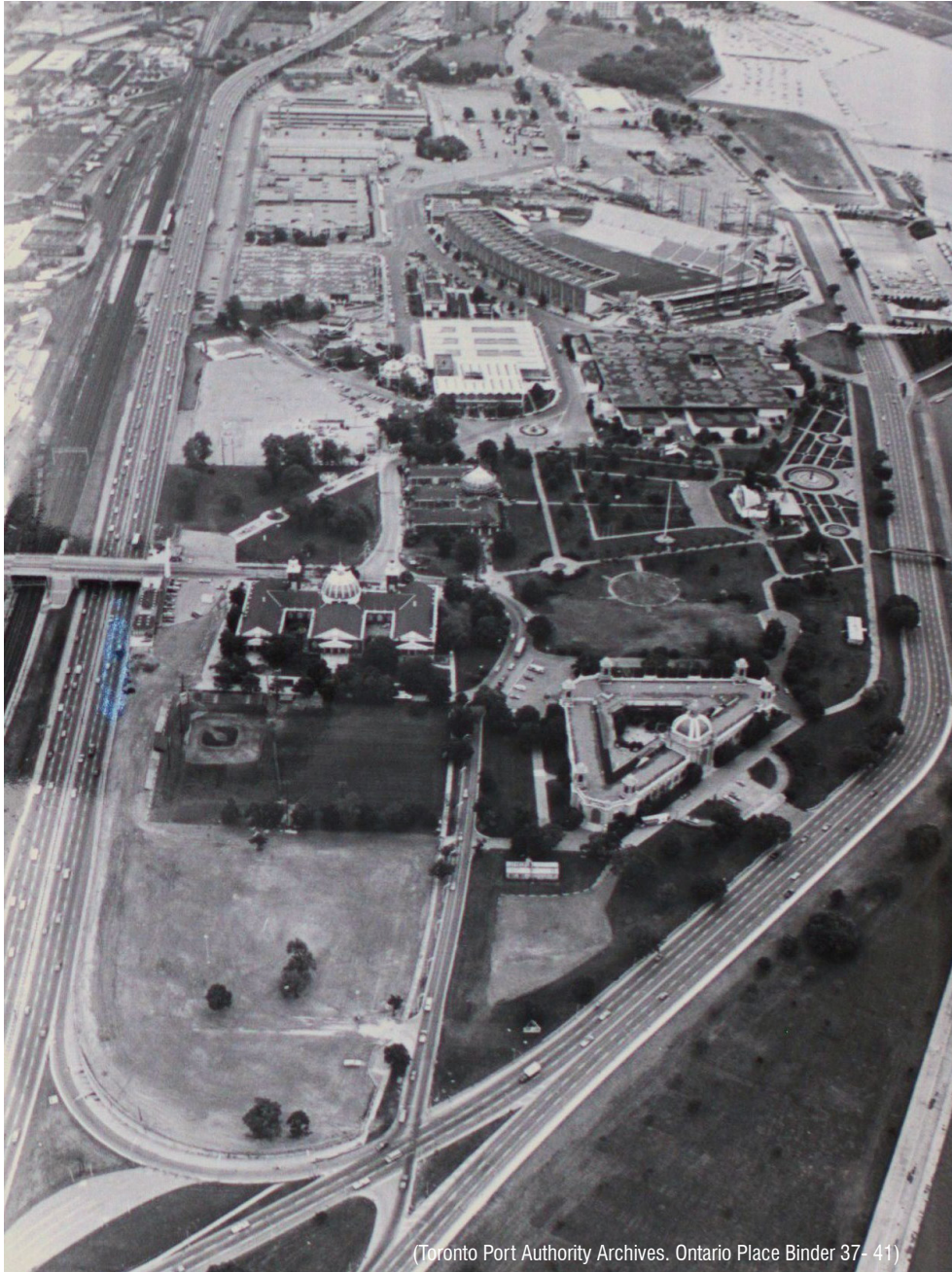
This thesis would have been a poorer product without the guidance and assistance of many archivists who work tirelessly to ensure the preservation, promotion and access of important research tools and documentary heritage. Thank-you to my interviewees for your openness, willingness and your trust and faith in my project and my process. Especially to Dr. Roy Merrens, Eric McMillan and my mom for your invaluable comments, guidance and editorial input along the way.

To my family, friends, colleagues and LA Class of 2013 - thank-you for sticking around!



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TRANSFORMATION

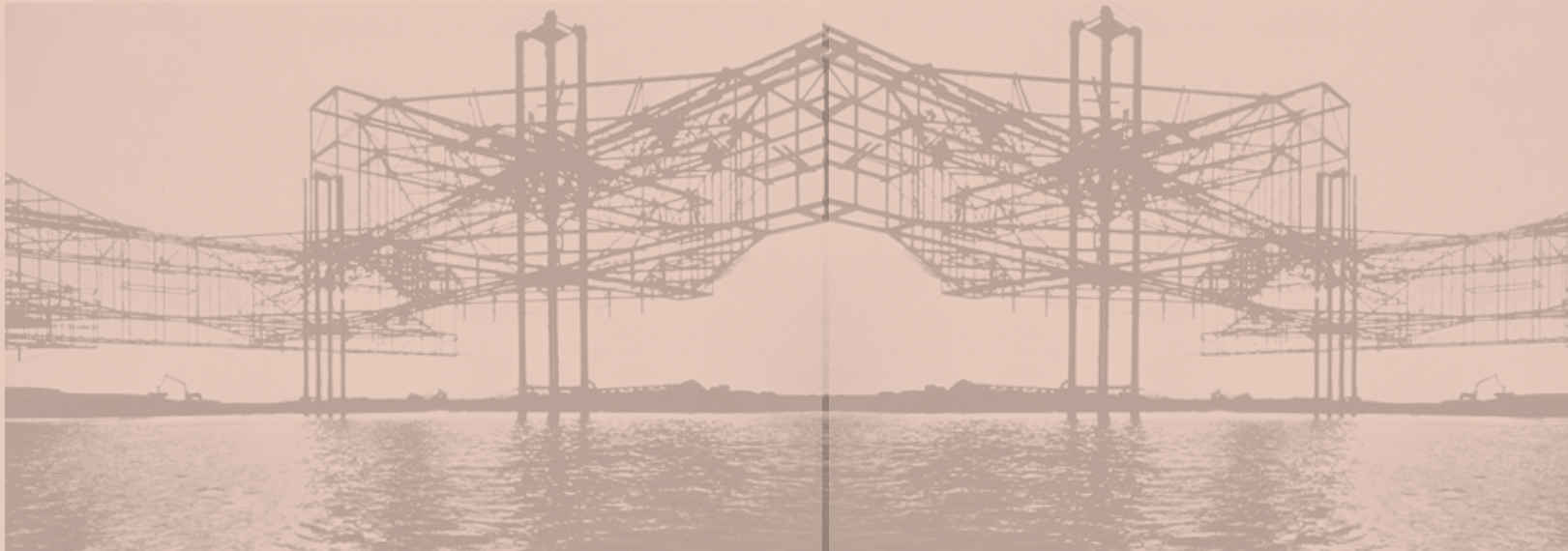
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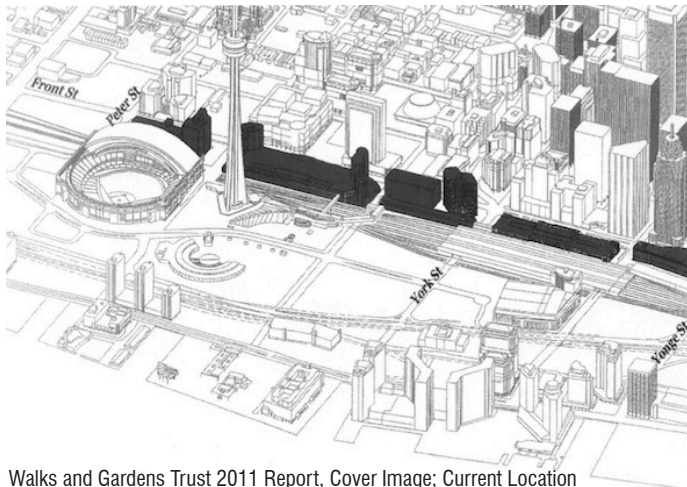
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Introduction

introduction



“History shows that the idea of a park along Toronto’s waterfront is as old as the City itself... but from the beginning the Walks and Gardens lands were vulnerable to encroachment”

Walks and Gardens Trust, 2011, p.4-5)



Walks and Gardens Trust 2011 Report, Cover Image; Current Location

In 1793, Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe decreed that 30 acres of the former Town of York’s waterfront be set aside “in perpetuity” for public walks and gardens. Borne out of Simcoe’s conservational desires, the Walks and Gardens Trust was established. Five public trustees were empowered by an Order-in-Council from Samuel Smith, Administrator of the Province of Upper Canada in 1818, “to hold...for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Town of York and for a Public Walk or Mall in front of the said town” (Walks and Gardens Working Group, 2011, 6). Sixteen years later, when York was renamed Toronto, the land was gradually sold off, sacrificed on the “altar of progress” and to supposedly farsighted provisions (Hume, 2013, 3). This public reserve now includes a significant portion of Union Station and its network of railway tracks, the Gardiner Expressway and over 1,200 hectares of lake fill. The large amount of lake fill obliterated the amphibious landscape of Ashbridge’s Bay. It was the product of a \$19 million proposal, conceived by the Toronto Harbour Commission’s (THC) chief engineer, Edward L. Cousins in 1912. It was presented and adopted as a “magnificent plan” and a “vision splendid” (Plummer, Torontoist, 2011).

The THC Waterfront Development Plan (1912) changed the character of Toronto’s waterfront by transforming the harbour’s extensive marshes into large amounts of hard-edged new land available for industrial and maritime activity. Massive tracts of land were produced by filling in the water’s edges to extend

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the city southward into Lake Ontario. Meanwhile, Simcoe's vision for a publicly accessible waterfront was all but forgotten and to this day, the City of Toronto has been in breach of the Walks and Gardens Trust (Roberts, 2012; Correspondence with Rollo Meyers, Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, 2013).

As industrial activity began to wane in the 1950s, there was an opportunity to revive Simcoe's dream of "public open space and enhanced accessibility" (Desfor and Roger, 2004,14; Desfor, Goldrick and Merrens, 1988, 22). But the opportunity was lost. Hampered by fragmented land ownership, electoral turnover, or short-term political thinking, the waterfront turned into a "joint-decision trap" (Eidleman, 2013, iii, 9). Fittingly, a young Kenneth Greenberg penned a cautionary tale for Toronto's Globe and Mail newspaper as early as 1969 entitled, "Will the Waterfront Become a Concrete Wasteland?"

Despite countless successive efforts to plan the central waterfront, writers on issues concerning Toronto's urban shoreline have often noted the public's claim to right of access has not always been protected (Gemmil, 1980, 22). The "deeply fractured" ownership structure of Toronto's waterfront had left a "terrain of availability" (Laidley, 2007; Greenberg, 1996). This was a conclusive factor against the implementation of a cohesive development plan and has resulted in Toronto becoming one of the last major waterfront cities to rede-



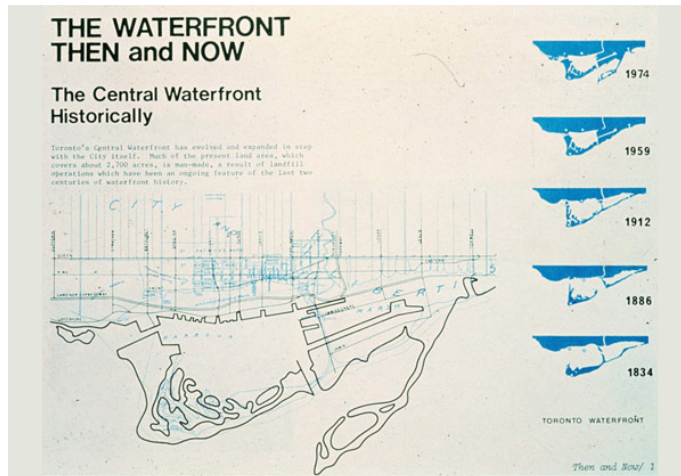
"Toronto Harbour Commission (THC) moved with relative speed to produce the 1912 plan which projected massive (industrial) land use development projects on the City's waterfront."

Role and Mandate of the THC, p.109



Arthur Beales. Toronto Port Authority Archives, PC 1/1/135.

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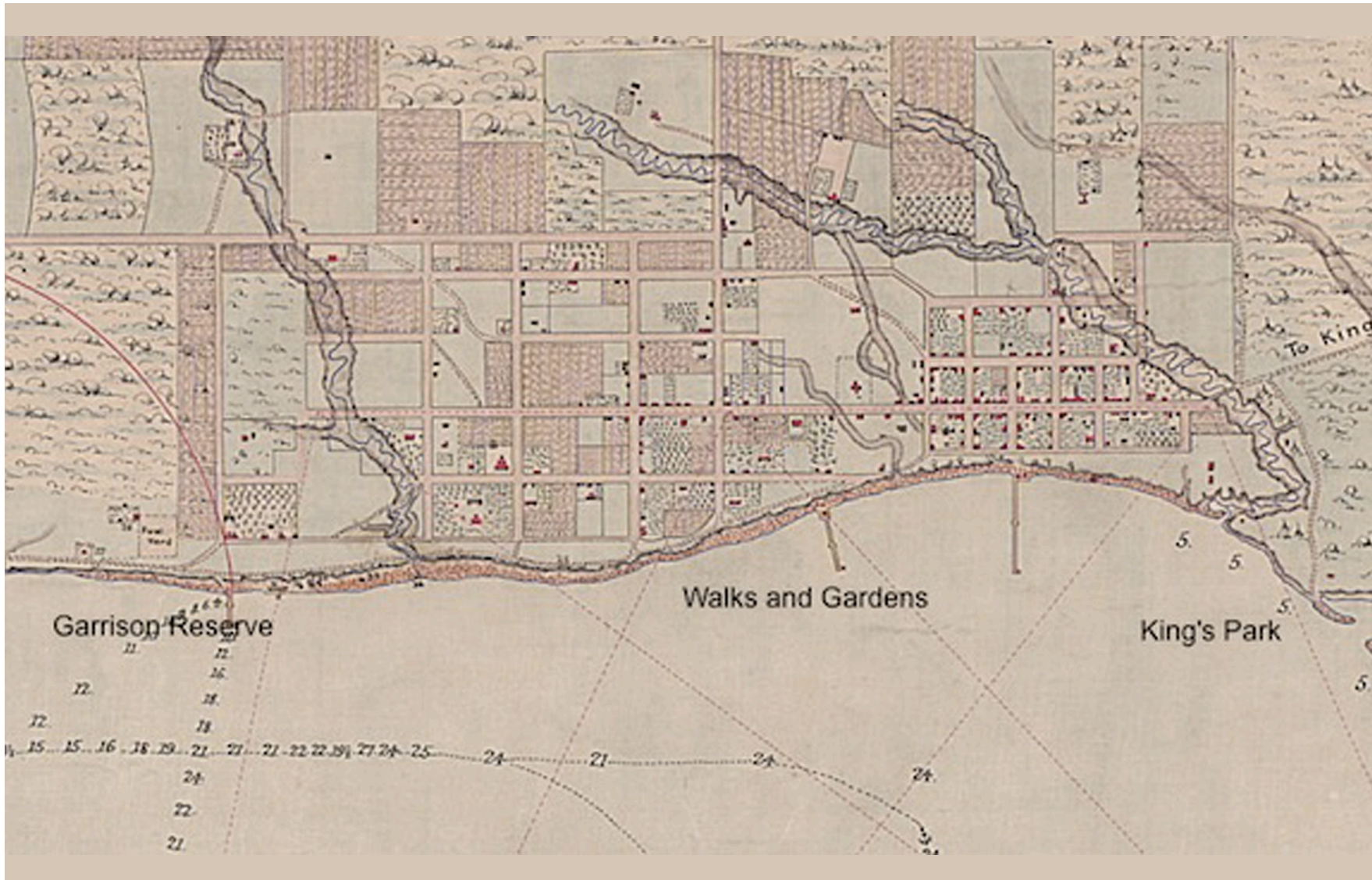


“Toronto represents a city alienated from its waterfront. Not only had the waterfront failed to become a civic resource, many residents had no idea where it was nor what was there.”

Greenberg & Merrens 1971

velop its harbour (Our Toronto Waterfront!, 2000). Currently Waterfront Toronto, the lead development corporation supported at federal, provincial and municipal levels, has taken major strides to revitalize 800 hectares along Lake Ontario. This ongoing transformation of industrial land into vital public amenity is the most extensive urban redevelopment project in North America and one of the largest waterfront revitalization initiatives in the world (Waterfront Toronto, 2012).

As we look to the future, it is important to remember that the lakefront is a portal to the past. *The Waterfront Culture and Heritage Infrastructure Plan* (2001) hails Toronto's waterfront as a cultural landscape that has created generations of shared experience and cultural memory (ERA Architects Inc. and Jeff Evenson, 2001, 5). Plagued by hurried and ill-considered processes, the waterfront also stands as a “monument to civic dysfunction” (Desfor and Laidley, 2011; Hume, 2007). Its landscape has been the object of a long tradition of grand plans for a publicly accessible waterfront, and an equally long tradition of such plans being sabotaged.

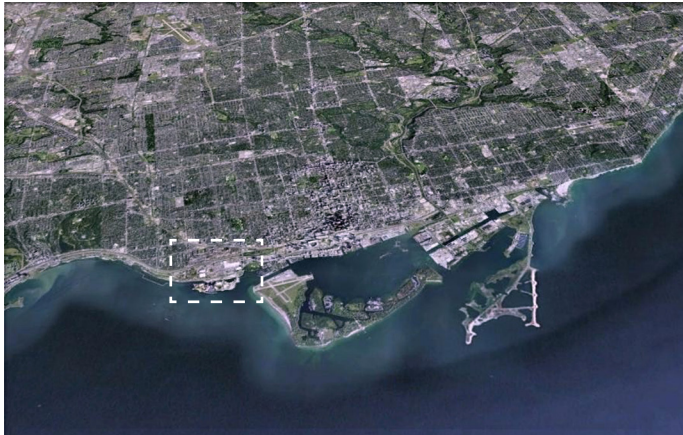


“How is it that a city whose birthright was a publicly accessible waterfront, legally free from development in perpetuity, has spent a good deal of the last two centuries trying to figure out how to reconnect itself to Lake Ontario?”

Osbaldeston, 2011

Walks and Gardens Trust, 1818 (Walks and Gardens Working Group. “Report on the Walks and Gardens Trust” October 2001); Bateman, Chris, BlogTO, March 12, 2012

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“It became apparent that there was a need in Ontario for something akin to a spiritual home, a touchstone of stability....In short, we wanted a place to re-affirm our identity as Ontarians and Canadians”

Premier John Robarts, Remarks at Ontario Place Countdown Reception, November 3, 1970



Aerials from Google Earth, 2013

The subject here is just one of such grand plans: Ontario Place.

Over forty years ago a team of engineers, architects, landscape architects and politicians unveiled a man-made island complex along Toronto's central waterfront. With it, they hoped for a place brimming with activity and vitality; 'a place to stand, a place to grow' and a place that demonstrated a new attitude to Toronto's lakefront (Robarts, 1970). At the opening ceremony on May 22, 1971, Premier Bill Davis hailed Ontario Place as a “stimulating and permanent symbol” and he dedicated this landmark site to the people of Ontario; past, present and future (Ontario Place: An Introduction, TVO, 1971).

This site is historically significant as the first instance in Toronto's waterfront history in which the “tremendous potential” of the waterfront for “renewal, recreation and tourism” (Hough Stansbury and Associates, 1970) was to be based on a major lake fill project. The cultural, leisure and entertainment features of Ontario Place itself were designed in the late 1960s by two of Canada's most notable architects: RAIC gold medalist Eberhard Zeidler (Craig, Zeidler and Strong Architects) and the late landscape architect Michael Hough (Hough Stansbury and Associates). Ontario Place was a feat of architectural engineering for its time and illustrates influences as diverse as Archigram, the Metabolists, Pop Art, Expo 67 in Montreal, Japanese and American modular designs and science-fiction motifs (Thompson, 1992, 153).

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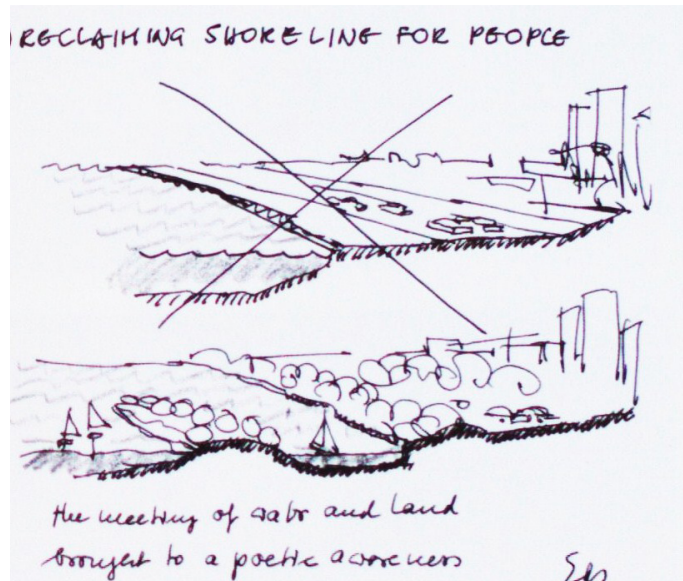
Ontario Place's unique landscape and futuristic architecture showcased not only civic pride and 1960s idealism, but also demonstrated a high degree of craftsmanship and technical achievement. Lake filling operations resulted in the construction of 96 acres of artificially constructed land and lagoons within and around which Zeidler's triodetic Cinesphere (the first permanent IMAX® film theatre in the world), a pavilion complex (featuring five architecturally unique, three-level Pods suspended high above the water), and the now demolished open-air theatre called the Forum (once the cultural centre of the park) formed a "singular cultural landscape" that expressed the avant-garde architectural ideas of the time (Heritage Canada Foundation 2012). As a product of leading-edge architectural thinking of its day, this site and its designers received many accolades. Most notably, Ontario Place was honoured by the Ontario Association of Architects 5th Year Award in recognition of the site's "historical and lasting architectural significance."

But Ontario Place was built to be more than merely the



Ontario Place Through The Years - Our History, Ontario Place Corporation; (Thomsen, 1992, p. 152-153)

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“Reclaiming the Shoreline for the People

**The meeting of water and land
brought to a poetic awareness.”**

Eberhard Zeidler, *Original Concepts for Ontario Place*,
1968 (Thomsen, 1992, p. 152-153)

symbol of a new age. Rather its design and construction were intended as means to create it by transforming Toronto’s shoreline into a “people friendly place” (Interview with Zeidler, February 2013). Over the years, however, it has stagnated and has become irrelevant and inaccessible to locals and visitors (ERA Architects and Evenson, 2001, 9; Denegri Bessai Studio, 2010). Amendments and alterations to the initial master plan have been incompatible with the original vision and “layers of visual clutter” obscure the initial clarity of concept and design of Ontario Place (Farrow Partnership, 2012). There has been no elaboration of, or even concession to Hough and Zeidler’s formal strategies or intentions for this prime waterfront site. It has been cited as an example of a facility that has lost its community vision.

To many, Ontario Place has become a monument to civic dysfunction; the aftermath of political indifference and short term expediency multiplied over several years. Its plight is not unique. It is part and parcel of a longer tradition of Toronto’s waterfront history- during which a series of hasty decisions and kneejerk reactions have thwarted efforts to “reclaim the shoreline for the people” (Interview with Zeidler, 2013).

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lake
ontario

silos

marina

cinesphere

pods

marina

froster's soak city

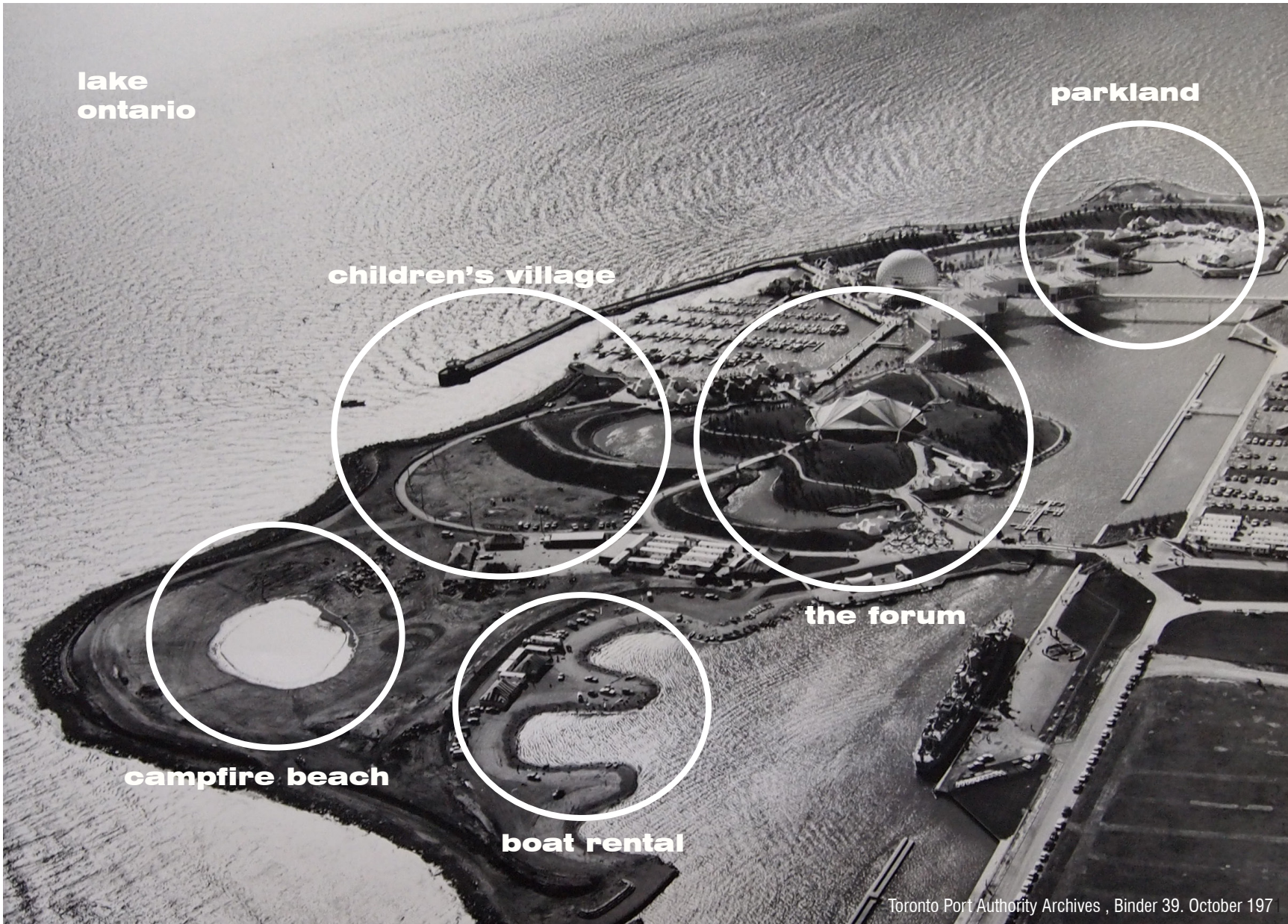
molson
amphitheatre

parking +
service area

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1.2 study site

2011



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1.2 study site

1970

introduction



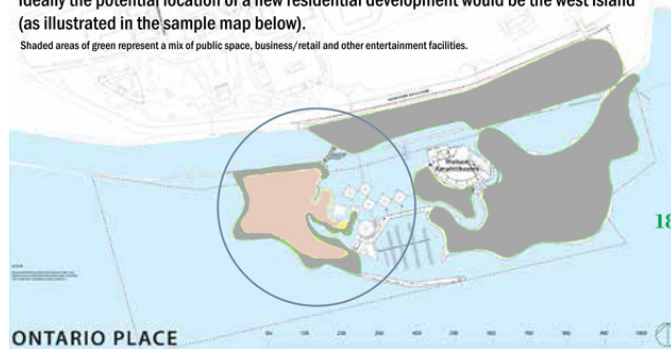
“Ontario Place will be a new public backyard for all Ontarians and will feature opportunities to live, work and play”

Critical to the success of a new live, work, play, discover area and the public realm are:
accessibility, interaction and sustainability.

Minister’s Advisory Panel on Ontario Place Revitalization, 2012, p. 7-9

10 to 15 per cent of the 155 acre property could be for residential development. Ideally the potential location of a new residential development would be the west island (as illustrated in the sample map below).

Shaded areas of green represent a mix of public space, business/retail and other entertainment facilities.



ONTARIO PLACE
Residential (10-15% of site) Public Space, Business, Retail and Entertainment
(Minister’s Advisory Panel on Ontario Place Revitalization, 2012, p. 7-9)

On February 1, 2012, the Government of Ontario announced that a large portion of the site would be closed, studied, and eventually revitalized to coincide with Canada’s 150th birthday celebrations in 2017 . Previously, Ontario’s Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Michael Chan, had stated that “Ontario Place has been a drain on the government treasury for many years... and was no longer sustainable” (CBC News, 2012). The closure of this landmark site has generated much media attention and public discussion as an advisory panel, led by John Tory (Former Progressive Conservative leader), released 18 recommendations for the future of Ontario Place on July 27, 2012.

The Minister’s Advisory Panel on Ontario Place Revitalization suggested residential units on the West Island of the site, with parkland, businesses and entertainment as features of the site to bring year-round use to it. The Report further envisioned Ontario Place as a “new public realm” that is accessible, open year round, flexible and that demonstrates environmental leadership and celebrates historical connections, but one that is also highly privatized. This is incompatible with the historical trajectory of Ontario Place and its original design intent as publicly accessible waterfront land.

Despite the many critics of Tory’s glossy 55-page report, the renewal of Ontario Place presents Toronto with an intriguing opportunity to trans-

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form 96 acres of public lakefront property (Medley, National Post, 2010). But in this process, it is essential to ask: What is Ontario Place? How do people understand it? What do we value? What physical elements can be improved to better reflect the core values and intentions for the site?

It also raises questions like: if Ontario Place was envisioned as a “stimulating and permanent symbol” of the work and achievement of Ontario, why does the Revitalization Report fail to make the restoration or repurposing of the site’s distinctive features and history a priority? (Nasmith, 2012). Why are appropriate (heritage impact) assessments not being conducted? (Interview with McClelland, 2012). If the original design intent for Ontario Place was to “reclaim the shoreline for the people,” why does privatization of this public asset loom large in the revitalization agenda? Leaving “the making of context” to the private sector has obvious negative consequences for public concerns (Greenberg, 1969), so why is Ontario Place “not handed over” to Waterfront Toronto, which has a proven track record of leadership, as well as a larger vision for the provision of public open space along Toronto’s central waterfront? (Hume, 2013).

In the wake of a major provincial revitalization agenda, it is crucial to “reinvest in the original vision” for Ontario Place (McClelland, ERA Architects in Annabel, National Post, 2012; Interview with McClelland, February 2013). To

“Ontario Place is Ontario.

It will show us and the world where we’ve been, where we are, and where we are going.”

An advertisement in the Nov. 10, 1970, edition of The Globe and Mail

WHAT IS ONTARIO PLACE?
How do WE understand it?

A public park?

An EXHIBITION?

Fairground?

URBAN PARK?

EVENT SPACE?

ENTERTAINMENT PARKLAND?

A significant cultural heritage landscape?

A PUBLIC ASSET

Theme park?

AN EXPO-TYPE SITE?

AMUSEMENT PARK.

PARKLAND

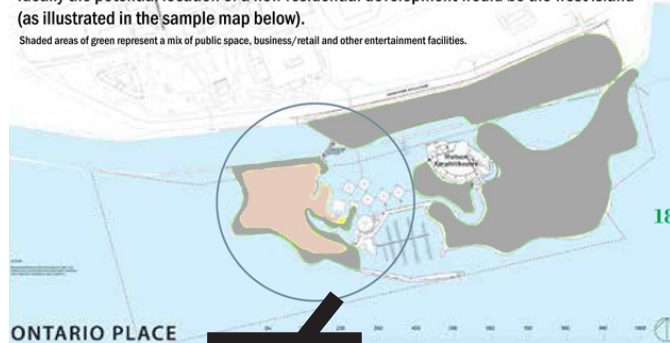
recreational / leisure
cultural.
entertainment.

Image by author, 2013

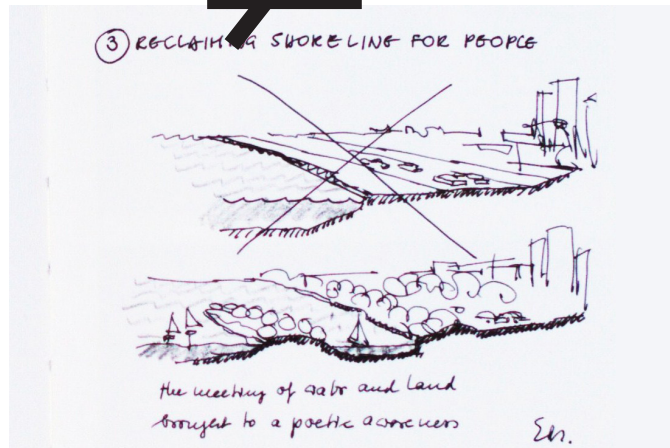
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10 to 15 per cent of the 155 acre property could be for residential development. Ideally the potential location of a new residential development would be the west island (as illustrated in the sample map below).

Shaded areas of green represent a mix of public space, business/retail and other entertainment facilities.



ONTARIO PLACE
Residential (10-15% of site) Public Space, Business, Retail and Entertainment



(Minister's Advisory Panel on Ontario Place Revitalization, 2012, p. 7-9;
Thompson, 1992, p. 152-153)

further such a goal, this thesis investigates how a dynamic view of landscape history can be made operational in future strategies for protection, management and development of this public asset and landmark site. Specifically, what lessons can be learned from the past? Which conceptual models or scientific methods can be used to understand long-term landscape evolution? How can this knowledge be integrated into an appropriate design framework?

Throughout this process it is important to remember that Ontario Place is a public asset and should be developed in the public good. This site has received surprisingly little scholarly attention and is deserving of a detailed, extensive, and interdisciplinary study. It is for this reason that this landmark site is the focus of this thesis.

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1.3 problem statement

introduction



c. 1960



c. 2002

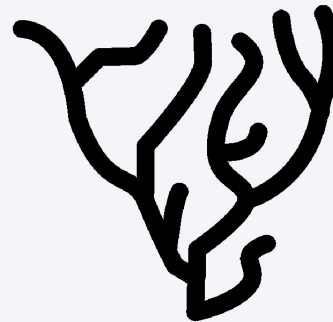


c. 2008

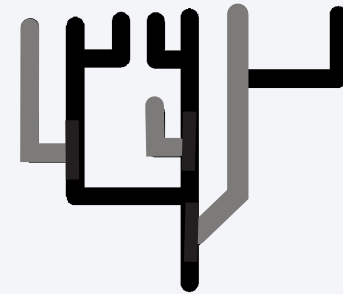
(City of Toronto Aerial Photos, 1960- 2009)

How has Ontario Place **EVOLVED**?

To borrow from **evolutionary biology**, what are periods of stasis and how can sudden shifts or punctuated change be explained?



**PHYLETIC
GRADUALISM?**



**PUNCTUATED
EQUILIBRIUM?**

How can this dynamic view of landscape history be made operational in future strategies for protection, management and development?

Specifically, what lessons can be learned from the past?

Which conceptual models or scientific methods can be used to understand long-term landscape evolution?

How can this knowledge be integrated into an appropriate framework or guidelines?

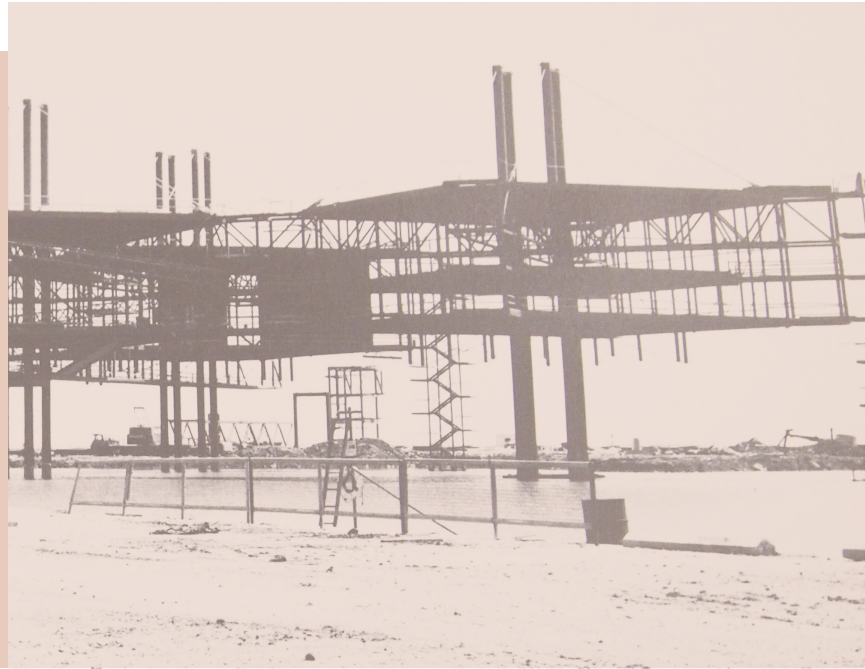
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Research Goal

The research goal of this study is to conduct a broad analysis of Ontario Place to better understand how the site evolved as a product of myriad socio-cultural, political and economic factors, using landscape biography as a primary method and punctuated equilibrium as metaphor.



Research Objectives

1. to address challenges and opportunities involved in revitalizing Toronto's post-industrial waterfront, by conducting a **literature review**,
2. to develop a **narrative history** and **hypothesis** of how Ontario Place evolved through archival sources and oral histories,
3. to formulate a **theory** to explain the genesis and evolution of the site, and
4. to compile a **framework** that highlights factors that should be considered in future development and revitalization of Ontario Place.



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1.4 goals + objectives



2010

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1.4 goals + objectives



1986

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1.4 goals + objectives

introduction

1.1 Background

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1.3 Problem Statement

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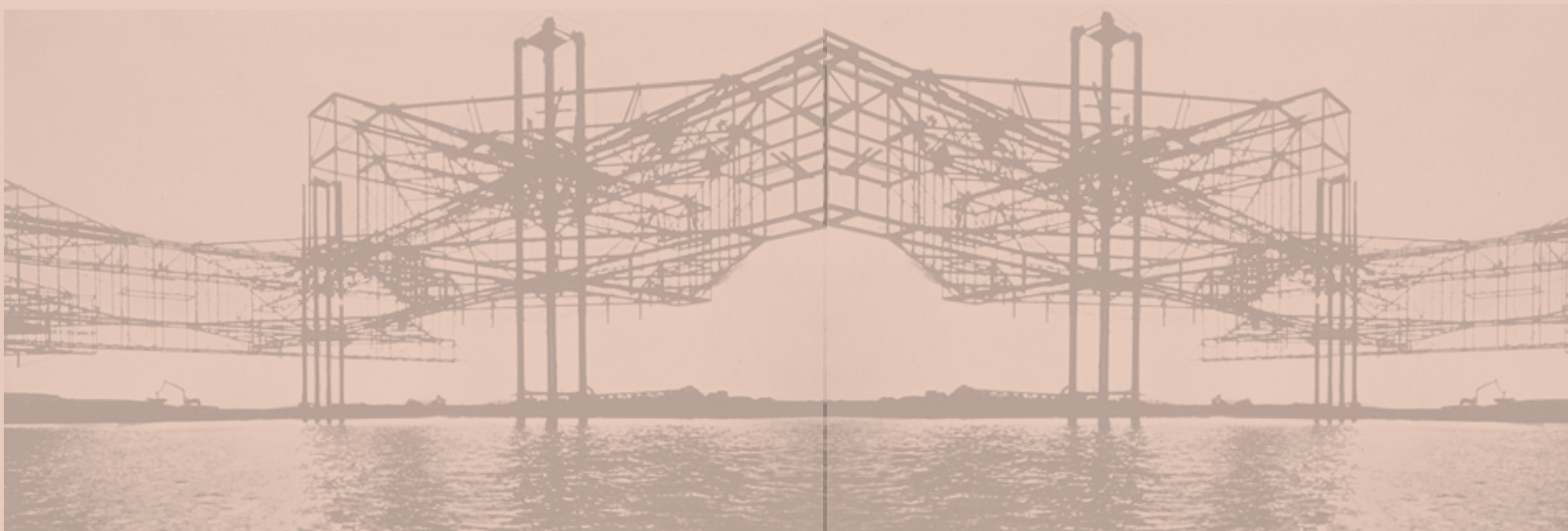
references

research design

2.1 Landscape Biography as Research Method

2.2 Research Framework

2.3 Methodology

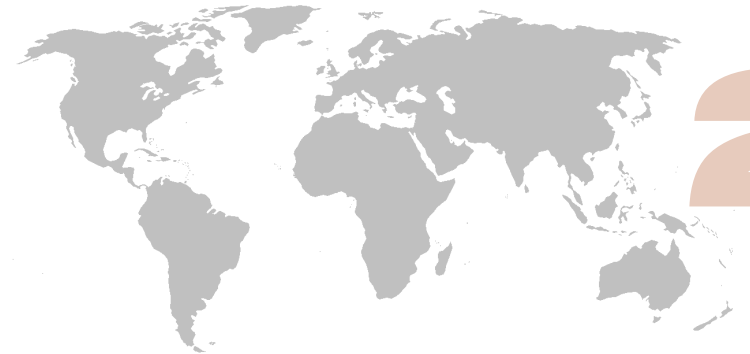


2
Landscape
Biography
as
Research
Method

research design

To understand the intentions of building Ontario Place and its evolutionary history, it was first necessary to study landscape as a complex social system. Landscape biography was chosen as a research method to compile a historiography of Ontario Place in order to identify, classify, map and assess distinct and recognizable development patterns by piecing together and making sense of traces of the past. This interdisciplinary approach utilized in-depth studies of landscape history and interviews with key informants to re-construct a long-term record of landscape development (Jones and Stenseke, 2009, 64). Distinctive of a geographical approach, four related characteristics of Ontario Place are addressed in this landscape biography:

This idea of studying the history and transformation of landscapes with the aid of a biography originates from human geography, specifically the humanistic school. Samuels (1979) suggested that landscape biography could focus attention on humans as actors and an important “landscape-shaping force” (van der Valk, 2010, 10). Samuels deliberately used the term ‘biography’ in a literal sense to align with his belief that landscapes cannot be conceptualized without taking into account the individuals that have shaped them over time. This was a reaction against viewing landscape as a passive by-product of anonymous socio-economic developments.



2

Distinctive of a geographical approach, four related characteristics of a site are often addressed in a landscape biography:

1. the interaction between physical structures in the surroundings and cultural values and behaviour in society

2. the reuse, reordering and reinterpretation of the traces of the past in the landscape

3. a focus on the way in which various societies have dealt with the site over time

4. cultural heritage as part of the environment in the experience of people

(van der Valk, 2010, 11).

research design

In this study of Ontario Place, the role of authorship and human agency in landscape transformations was emphasized. Samuels himself regarded landscapes as “expressions of authorship” (Roymans et al, 2009, 338-339) and argued that ideologies and cultural representations of place become the context for the evolution of landscape. It is for this reason that a biography of landscape requires historical knowledge of the role of individuals, their ideas and their actions (Samuels, 1979, 72; Roymans et al, 2009, 338).

Prior to Samuels, pioneering research in historical/cultural geography was conducted by Meitzen in Germany, Maitfield in England, Vidal de la Blache in France and Carl Sauer in the United States (Palang, 2011; Marcucci, 2000). The rise of a new cultural geography in the 1980s led to the study of landscape as “social construct” (Cosgrove, 1998). In the field of anthropology, Appadurai and Kopytoff argued in *The Cultural Biography of Things* (1986) that biographies can “make salient what otherwise might remain obscure” and may reveal how economic and social value vary through time (Kopytoff, 1986, 6, 67).

With origins in cultural geography and social anthropology, this interpretive strategy has become the preferred analytic tool for Dutch landscape researchers (Roymans et al, 2009, 19). Guided by the motto ‘preservation through development,’ the Belvedere Memorandum (1999) was launched to protect and enhance the cultural landscape of the Netherlands by making cultural identity a determining factor in future spatial design (Baas et al., 2011, 45; Kolen and Witte, 2004). Landscape biography became the central research method of a large research programme of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), *The Protection and Development of the Dutch Archaeological Historical Landscape* (2001-2007) in 2000. The programme was initiated by the Cultural Heritage Agency in co-operation with several Dutch universities (Jones and Stenseke, 2009, 50; Swaffield and Deming, 2011) and aimed to conduct a deep analysis of place to inform a Landschapsonwikkelingsplan (Landscape Development Plan) that respected the character of a landscape, its *genius loci*, in future developments (Roymans et al, 2009, 19; Bloemers et al, 2011) Over time, historical information

2

research design

for each region in this study was translated into a broadly accessible digital product and several publications to involve local residents and interest groups.

For example, a landscape biography on the Drentsche Aa region, a north-eastern part of the Netherlands, was conducted by a team of nine researchers (a physical geographer, a paleobotanist, three archaeologists, two historical geographers, a toponymist, a GIS specialist) and 40 local volunteers and 5 undergraduate students. The project included a basic inventory and digital recording of geological, archaeological and landscape values as they varied through time. These were broadly visualized on four scales: region, village landscape, terrain and place. The study of Drentsche Aa also included a timeline of scientific information and place-oriented, individual narratives (Jones and Stenseke, 2009, 50; Bloemers et al, 2011) to understand and explain the site from multiple viewpoints.

This landscape biography was based on the single premise that the *genius loci*, or spirit of a place, revealed many clues about how a place functions socially, ecologically, economically and politically and if carefully studied, this could inform future transformations and reinforce the tangible link between history, cultural values, and design.

2

research design

Characteristic of a geographical approach to landscape biography, this thesis aimed to better understand how Ontario Place evolved as a product of many socio-cultural, economic and political factors over 40 years. Due to the lack of accessible published material, data was collected primarily through archival research and through semi-structured interviews with the members of the original design team and key players in the site's history.

This landscape was traced as it evolved in five life stages or phases that roughly corresponded to a decade each. Plans, construction drawings, concept sketches, policy, newspaper articles, strategies and consultant reports, annual reports, photographs stored in public archives were reviewed and verified them against semi-structured 'elite' interviews or oral histories with interdisciplinary key players that corresponded to each phase. A narrative or a landscape biography of this site was developed and a hypothesis of how the site evolved was created. Periods of stasis and punctuated moments in its history, that were contingent on outside forces, be it political, economic, social, or cultural shifts, were identified in this iterative process.

Geographical approach to landscape biography

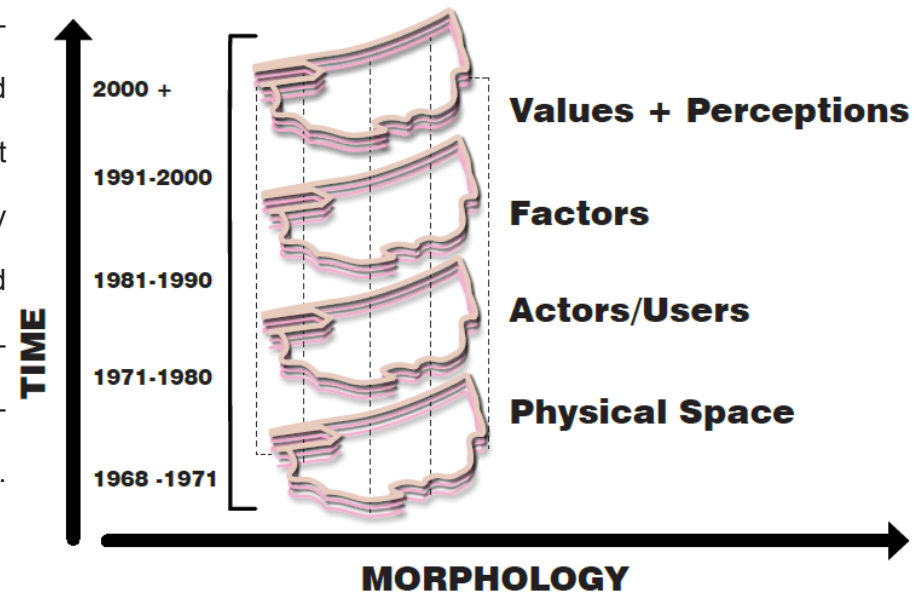
1. physical structures , cultural values + behaviour

2. reuse, re-ordering + reinterpretation

3. societies/ actors/participants/ users

4. cultural heritage

(van der Valk, 2010, 11).

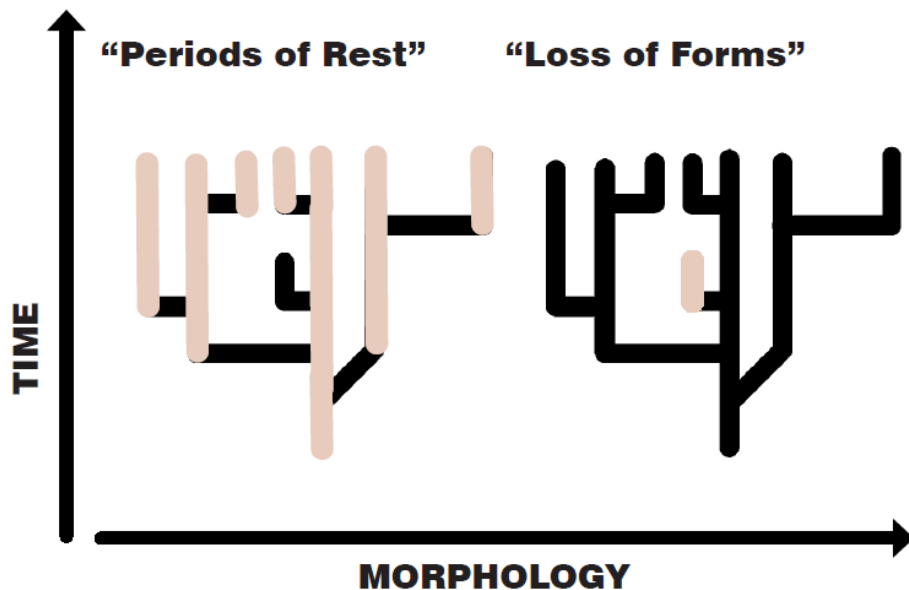
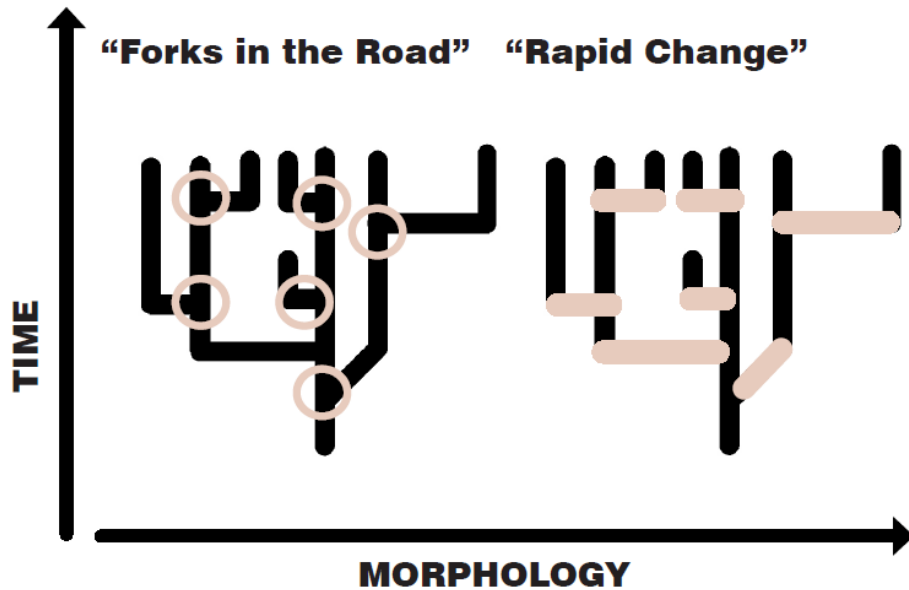


(Image by Author, 2013)

2

2.2 framework

research design



(Image by Author, 2013)

By taking a cue from evolutionary biology and the pioneering work of paleontologists Stephen Gould and Niles Eldredge (1970), the concept of punctuated equilibrium was applied to the landscape biography of Ontario Place to study the genesis and evolution of the site. It is widely held that studying the history of a person, an object or a site involves understanding the linkages between past and present. Punctuated equilibrium was an appropriate metaphor to map linkages (or branching patterns) in the Ontario Place's evolutionary history. Rapid, episodic events that triggered evolutionary change onsite and longer periods of stasis or equilibrium were isolated to understand the factors in the surrounding environment that triggered these events in the landscape's life cycle.

By identifying punctuated moments ("forks in the road") and subsequently the periods of rapid change and stasis or rest that followed, distinctive, recurring patterns in this landscape's forty-year history were observed. A comprehensive road-map was visualized to explain

2

2.2 framework

research design

long-term evolutionary cause-and-effect relationships. The fitness or adaptability of the landscape and the loss of forms in these phases was assessed and a resulting theory explaining how the site evolved over time was suggested. Finally, findings were applied to propose a design framework for revitalizing Ontario Place that is consistent to its original intent and evolutionary patterns.

It should be noted, that this study was designed to build on Gemmil's Discussion Paper No. 25: *Ontario Place: The Origins and Planning of an Urban Waterfront Park* (1980) which represents the first and only history of this site from 1969 to 1979. A multi-layered view of landscape as palimpsest, or series of complex and overlying layers, was adopted.

Overall, the landscape biography of Ontario Place assumed that an emplaced view of landscape development and of human history within a deeper framework would contribute to a richer understanding of the site and a greater legibility of landscape. The framework, informed by the landscape biography of Ontario Place, tested this research method's applications in action research and the possibility for creative future transformation of the site to be based on an understanding of the past.

2

research design

Focused Literature Review

The study began with a literature review on the emergence and key motivations of waterfront revitalization in post-industrial cities. The literature review focused on the treatment of public space along Toronto's waterfront and also created a comprehensive theoretical foundation of waterfront revitalization practices in Toronto. Most importantly, the literature review aimed to situate the study site of Ontario Place within the larger framework of the city's central waterfront. This included an investigation of:

- 1) the historic context for waterfront revitalization,
- 2) waterfront revitalization potential,
- 3) objectives for waterfront revitalization, and
- 4) current strategies and challenges in waterfront revitalization

Relevant and appropriate published materials were selected to establish a temporal context of Toronto's waterfront in the years leading up to the creation of Ontario Place. The review synthesized and evaluated themes, trends, and theories directly related to this thesis' research goal. Where appropriate, international waterfront revitalization cases and scholarship were cited. The literature review critically assessed academic books, journal articles, strategic reports, policies and historical accounts of Toronto's waterfront.

The review of literature also presented ample evidence that the historical evolution of Ontario Place has not been studied in its entirety, with the exception of Gemmil's (1980) Discussion Paper 25 which chronicled the origins and planning of the site from 1969-1979. This thesis aimed to fill this gap in the literature and to contribute a more substantial and comprehensive history of Ontario Place as a product of myriad social, political, economic and cultural factors.

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research design

Archival Research

The literature review was supplemented by an in-depth historical study of Ontario Place. Qualitative data was collected through documentary evidence and archives. Published and unpublished writings, discussion papers, lectures and graphic evidence including newspapers, site photographs, historical maps, architectural models, political plans, tender documents, construction drawings and alternate proposals for the site were reviewed from five institutions: Toronto Port Authority Archives, City of Toronto Archives, Archives of Ontario, Toronto Reference Library and the University of Guelph Archives.

The four characteristics of a geographical approach to a landscape biography (See Section 2.1) acted as a guideline for data collection and information was organized in five distinct periods: i) 1961-1971, ii) 1971-1980, iii) 1981- 1990, iv) 1991-2000 and v) 2001- present day. Prior to reviewing primary source material in the archives, secondary sources and published works were studied to gain a basic familiarity with the site. Fonds, series, files and items of interest were identified using online searchable databases or through contact with an archivist. The site's evolution was studied chronologically and required items, that corresponded to the time period of study, were pre-ordered or requested. Working hypotheses' were developed during this stage to formulate a theory of how Ontario Place evolved using punctuated equilibrium as a metaphor. Significant transformations in each period were recorded both, chronologically and thematically.

2

research design

Oral Histories

Gaps and inconsistencies in the archival research were rectified through semi-structured interviews with key players in Ontario Place's history and future redevelopment. Participants or "elite interviewees" were selected based on their involvement in distinct periods of the site's history. Interdisciplinarity, an essential component of the landscape biography approach, was ensured through interviews with a range of professionals in diverse specializations. These included writers, historians, political scientists, restoration ecologists, historical geographers and other members of the architecture and design community. It should be noted that it was not possible to study a whole set of disciplines due to focused selection criteria for this one-year thesis project. Semi-structured elite interviews were conducted in February 2013 in person and over the telephone. Personal correspondence via e-mail or follow-up telephone conversations were conducted on an as-needed basis. Full biographies of each participant are included in the Appendix.

Discussion centered on the economic, social, and cultural context that has resulted in the present form of Ontario Place as well as design considerations for the revitalization efforts. Supplementary materials including site maps (1971, 1986, 1991, 2011) and the Ontario Place Corporation's "Ontario Place Through the Years" publication were utilized to facilitate the discussion. Also available for reference purposes were the *Harbour City Report* (1970), the *Minister's Advisory Panel on Ontario Place Revitalization Report* (2012), and *Bold Concept: A Conceptual Plan for the Development of the City of Toronto Waterfront* (1968).

Permission to conduct the interviews was granted through the University of Guelph's Research Ethics Board and all interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. Information obtained from interviews was used not only to confirm what had already been established from archival research but also to reconstruct past events and gather information about the underlying context. Interview transcripts were then analyzed through open-coding to find distinct concepts and categories in the data. Subsequently, sub categories and variables were identified and mapped through NVIVO 10 software.

2

research design

Public Events + Meetings

Several relevant public events were attended between August 2012 and March 2013 in Toronto. These included:

- 1) the “Ontario Place: Your Place” exhibition at Urban Space Gallery (August- September 2012)
- 2) the Toronto Society of Architects’ “Ontario Place Forum with John Tory” (October 2012)
- 3) Julian Smith’s lecture “Exploring Cultural Landscapes,” Centre for City Ecology (November 2012)
- 4) Town Hall “Rethinking Ontario Place” organized by the Martin Prosperity Institute (MPI), the Design Industry Advisory Committee (DIAC), and the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) (February 2013)
- 5) Job Shadow (through the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario’s NextGen) at the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Sport: Heritage and Cultural Planning Division (February 2013)
- 6) The Chief Planner Roundtable with Jennifer Keesmaat (Live Streaming through Rogers TV) “Our Urban Fabric: Designing and Creating Public Places” (February 2013)
- 7) Jason Prior “Planning the Big Event- Toronto 2015 Pan Am/Para-Pan Am Games” (February 2013)
- 8) Ken Greenberg. “More Urban and Green: Cities Hold the Key.” University of Guelph, OALA Speaker Series (March 2013).

Existing Conditions (Site Analysis + Inventory)

A combination of Google Earth, Google Street View, Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and were utilized to assess the existing conditions on site (due to its closure). Direct observation methods were used to survey the surrounding neighborhoods and areas which included Exhibition Place, Liberty Village, Parkdale, Roncesvalles and West Queen West. This approach of direct observation and computer generated imagery of the surrounding context was validated through City of Toronto 2011 and 2006 Census Information, Toronto Social Atlas Data and City of Toronto Ward Profiles available through the City of Toronto website. In addition, strategic reports for the City of Toronto, relevant festival and event route maps, *Ontario Place Annual Reports* (2000-2011) and the *Minister’s Advisory Panel on Ontario Place Revitalization Report* (2012) were also reviewed.

2

research design

To summarize, landscape biography is used in this thesis to:

1) expose the **historical layeredness** of landscape,

2) to create a platform that encourages **diverse groups** into a dialogue,

3) to involve people other than historians to translate the results of a **dialogue** into **actual practice**,

4) to present **stories and themes** exposing unexpected 'layers,'

5) to lend **depth, nuances** or **alternative stories** to other widely-held views,

6) to produce **alternative histories**, and perhaps even **unwanted or unpopular accounts** of the past; and

7) to consider the **social and historical values** inherent in the landscape to study **further possibilities** for landscape development.

(Roymans, et al, 2009, 18-19)

2

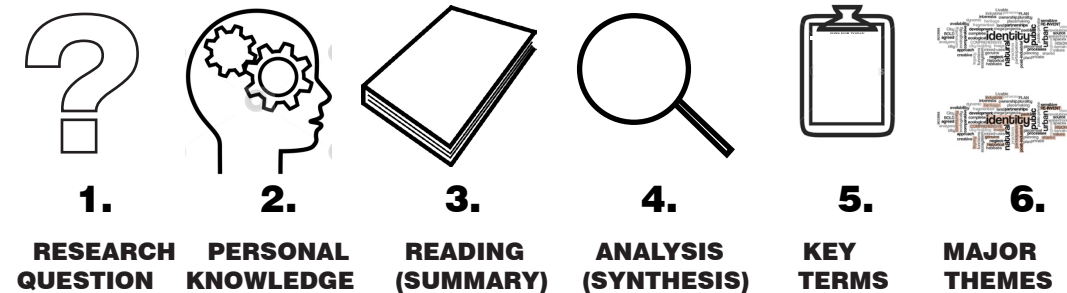
2.3 methods summary



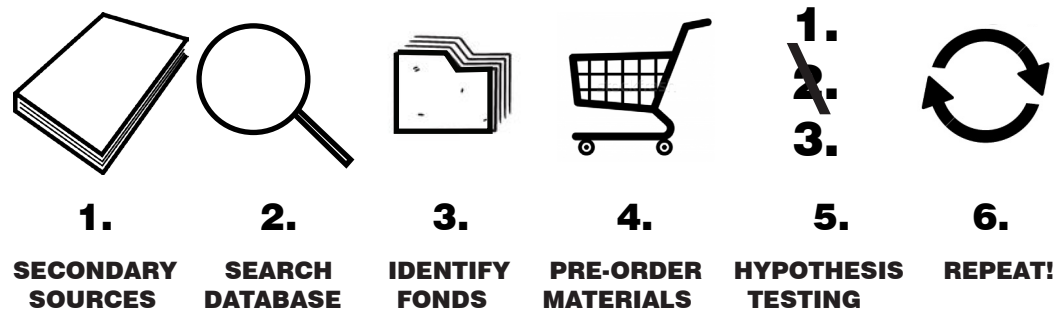
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research design

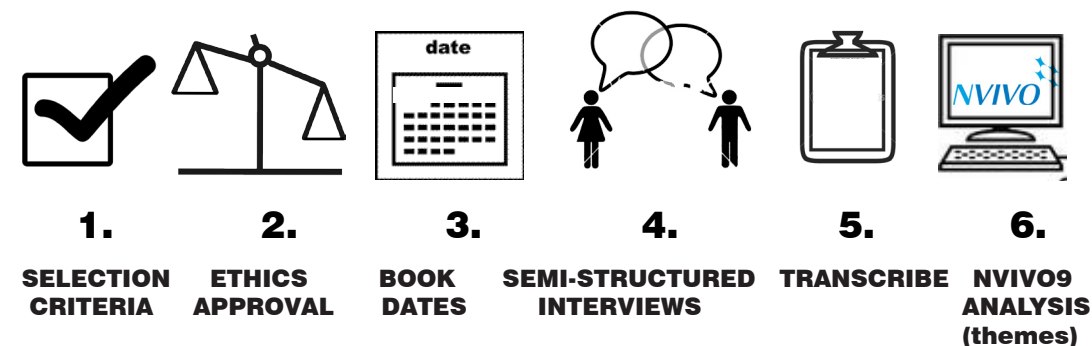
Literature Review Process:



Archival Research Process:



Oral Histories Process:



Research Participants:

1. planning + origins (1961 - 71)

- i. **Dr. Roy Merrens (Historical Geographer)**
- ii. **Eberhard Zeidler (Original Architect)**
- iii. **Mark Osbaldeston (Author- *Unbuilt Toronto*)**
- iv. **Dr. Gabriel Eidelman (Political Scientist)**

2. early years (1971 - 80)

- i. **Eric McMillan (Children's Village Designer)**

3. transformations + additions (1981 - 90)

- i. **Eriks Eglite (Ontario Place Corporation)**
- ii. **Gail Lamb (Architect for Ontario North Now)**

4. theming + attractions (1991 - 2000)

- i. **Jim Melvin (CNEA Honorary President)**
- ii. **Ken Greenberg (Urbanist/ Architect)**
- iii. **Irina Polo (Landscape Architect)**

5. expansions + future directions (2000+)

- i. **Rick Portiss Restoration Ecologist (TRCA)**
- ii. **Forrec Ltd. (Themed Entertainment Design)**
- iii. **Michael McClelland (ERA Architects Inc.)**
- iv. **Eriks Eglite (Ontario Place Corporation)**

2

2.3 methods summary

research design

2.1 Landscape Biography as Research Strategy

Baas, Henk, Groenewoudt, and Edwin Raap. "The Dutch Approach: The Public Participation and the Role of NGOs and Authorities in the Protection, Management and Development of Cultural Landscapes in the Netherlands" in Jones, Michael and Stenseke, Dr. Marie (2009). *The European Landscape Convention. Challenges of Participation*. Springer Science + Business Media B. V. See Bass et al. Chapter 3: 'The Dutch Approach: Public Participation and the Role of Local Authorities in the Protection, Management and Development of Cultural Landscapes in the Netherlands.' p 45- 66 [Available] http://vkc.library.uu.nl/vkc/archaeology/SiteCollection-Documents/Cursus%20Archeologie%20en%20Utrecht/European_Landscape_Convention_-_the_Dutch_Approach.pdf (Accessed: February 2013).

Bloemers, Tom , Henk, Kars; van der Valk, Arnold (2011). *The Cultural Landscape and Heritage Paradox: Protection and Development of the Dutch Archaeological-historical Landscape and Its European Dimension*. Amsterdam University Press, Netherlands

Cosgrove, Denis. "Prospect, perspective and the evolution of the landscape idea" *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series, Vol. 10, No. 1 (1985), pp. 45-62 Published by: Blackwell Publishing on behalf of The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers). 4 May 1984

Jones, Michael and Stenseke, Dr. Marie (2009). *The European Landscape Convention. Challenges of Participation*. Springer Science + Business Media B. V. See Bass et al. Chapter 3: 'The Dutch Approach: Public Participation and the Role of Local Authorities in the Protection, Management and Development of Cultural Landscapes in the Netherlands.' p 45- 66 [Available] http://vkc.library.uu.nl/vkc/archaeology/SiteCollection-Documents/Cursus%20Archeologie%20en%20Utrecht/European_Landscape_Convention_-_the_Dutch_Approach.pdf (Accessed: February 2013).

Kolen, Jan, Witte, Matthijs (2004): " A biographical approach to regions and its value for spatial planning", in: W. van der Knaap & A van der Valk (Eds) *Multiple Landscape, Merging Past and Present*, pp. 125-147

Kopytoff, Igor (1986). "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process" in Appadurai, Arjun. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspectives* [Available] http://www.english.upenn.edu/~cavitch/pdf-library/Kopytoff_CulturalBiography.pdf (Accessed: February 2013).

Marcucci, Daniel (2000), in *Landscape History as a Planning Tool*. *Journal: Landscape and Urban Planning - Landscape Urban Plan* , vol. 49, nlo. 1, pp. 67-81, 2000

Palang, Hannes; Spek, Theo; Stenseke, Marie. "Digging in the Past: New Conceptual Models in Landscape History and their Relevance in Peri-Urban Landscapes" *Landscape and Urban Planning Journal*. Volume 100, Issue 4, 30 April 2011, p. 344- 346.

Roymans, Nico; Gerritsen, Fokke; Van der Heijden, Cor; Bosma, Koos; Kolen, Jan (2009) *Landscape Biography as Research Strategy: The Case of the South Netherlands Project*. *Landscape Research*, Volume 34, Number 3, June 2009 , pp. 337-359(23). Routledge, part of the Taylor & Francis Group

Samuels, M., 'The Biography of Landscape: Cause and Culpability', in D. Meinig, ed., *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1979, p. 51-88.

Swaffield and Deming (2011). *Landscape Architectural Research: Inquiry, Strategy, Design*. Wiley; 1 edition.

van der Valk, Arnold (2010) *Planning the past. Lessons to be learned from 'Protecting and Developing the Dutch Archaeological-Historical. Insights and Prospects of Archaeological-Historical Landscape Studies* [Available] http://sl.life.ku.dk/English/outreach_publications/Conferences/Pathways/publikations_and_abstracts/~media/SI/Resultater_Outreach_Publications/Kurser_konferencer/Pathway/dokumenter/BBO%2003_1_references.aspx (Accessed: February 2013)

2.2 Research Framework

Gemmil, Arlene. 1981. Discussion Paper No. 25, *Ontario Place: The Origins and Planning of an Urban Waterfront Park*. 1981 Discussion Paper. (York University, Department of Geography, Toronto.)

2

literature review

3.0 Overview

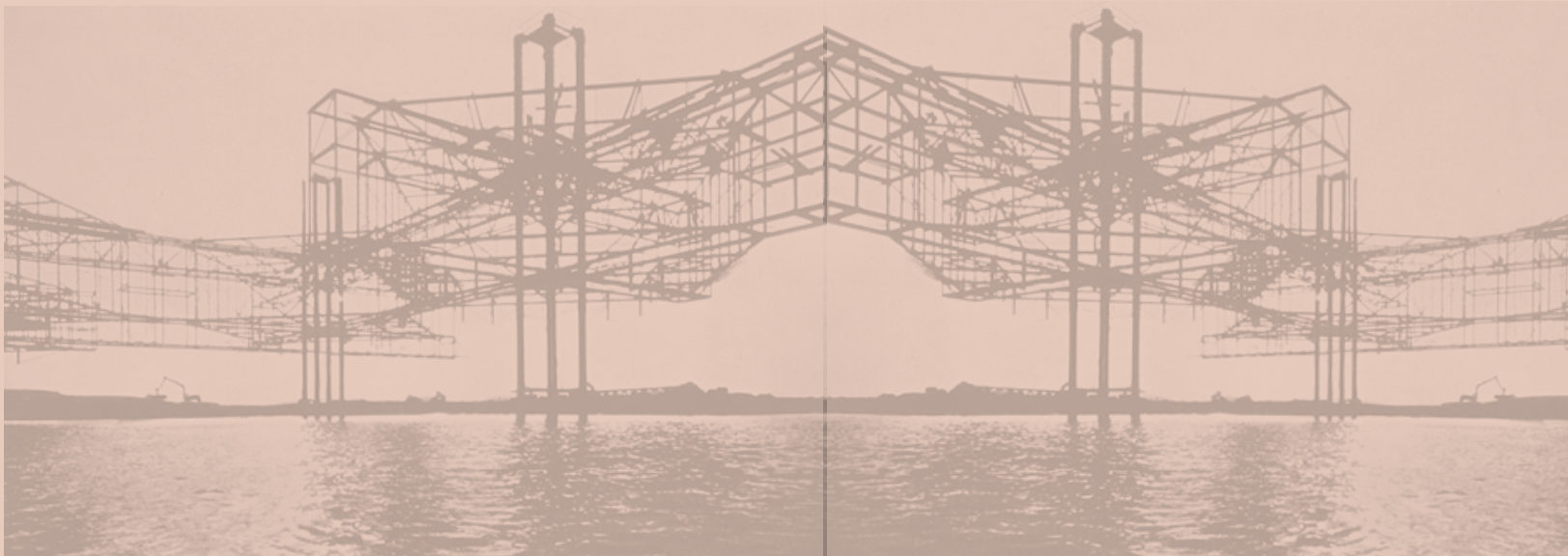
3.1 Historic Context for Waterfront Revitalization

3.2 Waterfront Revitalization Potential

3.3 Objectives for Waterfront Revitalization

3.4 Current Strategies + Challenges

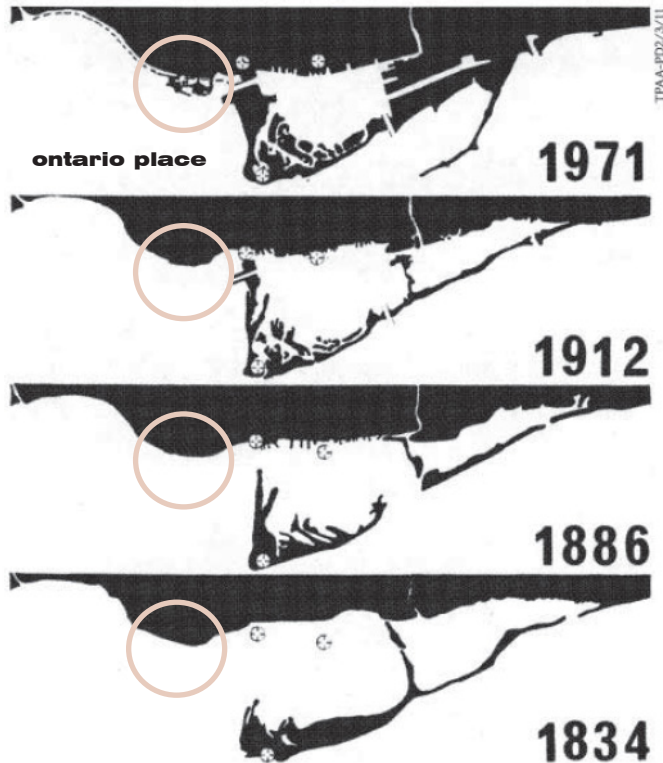
3.5 Summary



literature review

“Waterfronts are the abandoned doorstep, the original land-sea interface zone which now emerges as a spatial and functional vacuum, bereft of its traditional *raison d’être*, and perceived as a zone of decay and potential conflict”

Hoyle et al, *Revitalizing the waterfront: International dimensions of dockland redevelopment* (1988)



In the last several decades, many post-industrial cities attempted to respond to shifts in economic structure and market preferences through interventions in the physical realm (Seiber, 1991). The ‘post-industrial city’ (Daniel Bell, 1959) is characterized by a service-based economy, an occupational structure that favours professional and highly skilled workers, a restructuring of the traditional land-use pattern and a new ideology of livability (Ley, 1980). The political response to the rapid social and economic changes of the 1960s and early 1970s was the development of the concept of a ‘Livable City’ and it is this notion of livability that is being expressed in the planning for public access to the waterfront. (Hardwick, 1994; Mills, 1991; Tweedale, 1988; Florida, 2002).

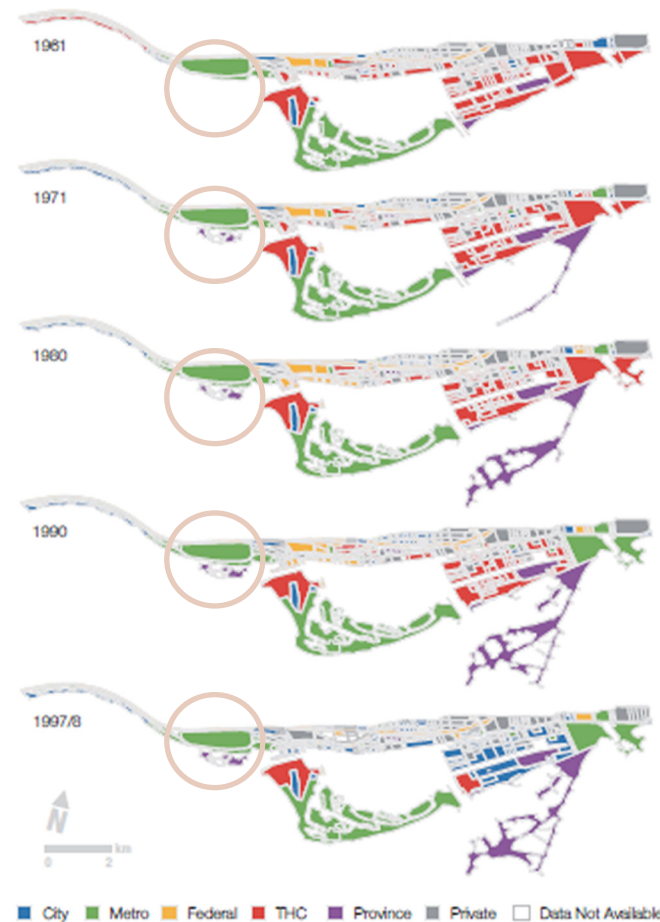
In Toronto, planning for a publicly accessible waterfront has been the dream of numerous visionaries. Despite countless successive efforts, writers on issues concerning Toronto’s urban shoreline have often noted the public’s claim to right of access has not always been protected (Gemmil, 1980, 22). These efforts to forge a regional and local waterfront identity, with equal consideration for public space and access, took place on several fronts. But, “waterfront hopes [had] a history of being dashed” as pointed out in Merrens and Lemon’s 1987 article in the *Globe and Mail* newspaper. The scholars argued that this reflected the city’s failure to take “full advantage of its most precious topographical asset” by making it a “people place” (Merrens and Lemon, *Globe and Mail*, May 15, 1987).

3

literature review

This “shoreline of broken dreams” was once (and in some cases still is) the object of a number of contentious issues such as conflict over governance and ownership; the fate of residual industrial activity; the problem of soil contamination; and disputes involving automobile-centric planning (Desfor and Laidley, 2011). To illustrate this, no less than 81 percent of all land in the central waterfront was owned by one public body between 1961-1998 (Eidelman, 2013, iii). Coordinating among a “patchwork” of agencies, corporations and authorities for an agreed vision and comprehensive management plan for Toronto’s waterfront proved difficult, if not impossible. The Our Waterfront Toronto! Report (2000) also cited a gridlock among the city, provincial and federal governments as the chief cause of “restricted options” and “impeded development” for several years.

Ontario Place was envisioned as a unique approach to lake-filling that would depart from the pattern of the first 120 years of Toronto’s waterfront history, during which large tracts of newly created land were handed over to private interests. Created with the purpose of “reclaiming the shoreline for the people,” through lake-filling, the site is an anomaly in historical terms (Gemmil, 1980, 22). Although initially intended as a catalyst to spur waterfront redevelopment in the late 1960s, the Crown-owned parkland “has since lost its shine” (McLean, Toronto Star, February 2012). Following in the long tradition of Toronto’s waterfront history, Ontario Place lacked a long-term vision that fully grasped and



Geographic Distribution of Land Ownership, Central Waterfront, 1961-1998

“From 1961-1998, no less than 81% of all land in the central waterfront was owned by one government body. Title to these lands, however, was dispersed across a patchwork of public agencies, corporations, and authorities.”

Eidelman, 2013, p. 121- 122

3

3.0 overview

literature review



Toronto's Central Waterfront Precincts:

(1) Exhibition Place/Ontario Place, Fort York/Bathurst-Strachan (2) Central Bayfront/Harbourfront (3) East Bayfront (4) West Don Lands (5) Port Lands

embraced the broad benefit of a high quality publicly accessible waterfront.

This literature review provides a broader perspective for Ontario Place within Toronto's central waterfront and offers insight into topics like the historic context, the potential, the objectives as well as current strategies and challenges in waterfront revitalization.

3

literature review

The concept of public access to waterfronts in western societies has its roots in Roman law through what was called the Public Trust Doctrine. Under this doctrine, the “seashore” was considered a logical extension of the sea and consequently public: “By law of nature, these things are common to humankind- the air, running water, sea and consequently the shore of the sea” (Roman law: The Institute of Justinian, in Smallwood 1993). In North America, the doctrine was not ignored but it lost representation over time (Navarro, 2000; Smallwood, 1993).

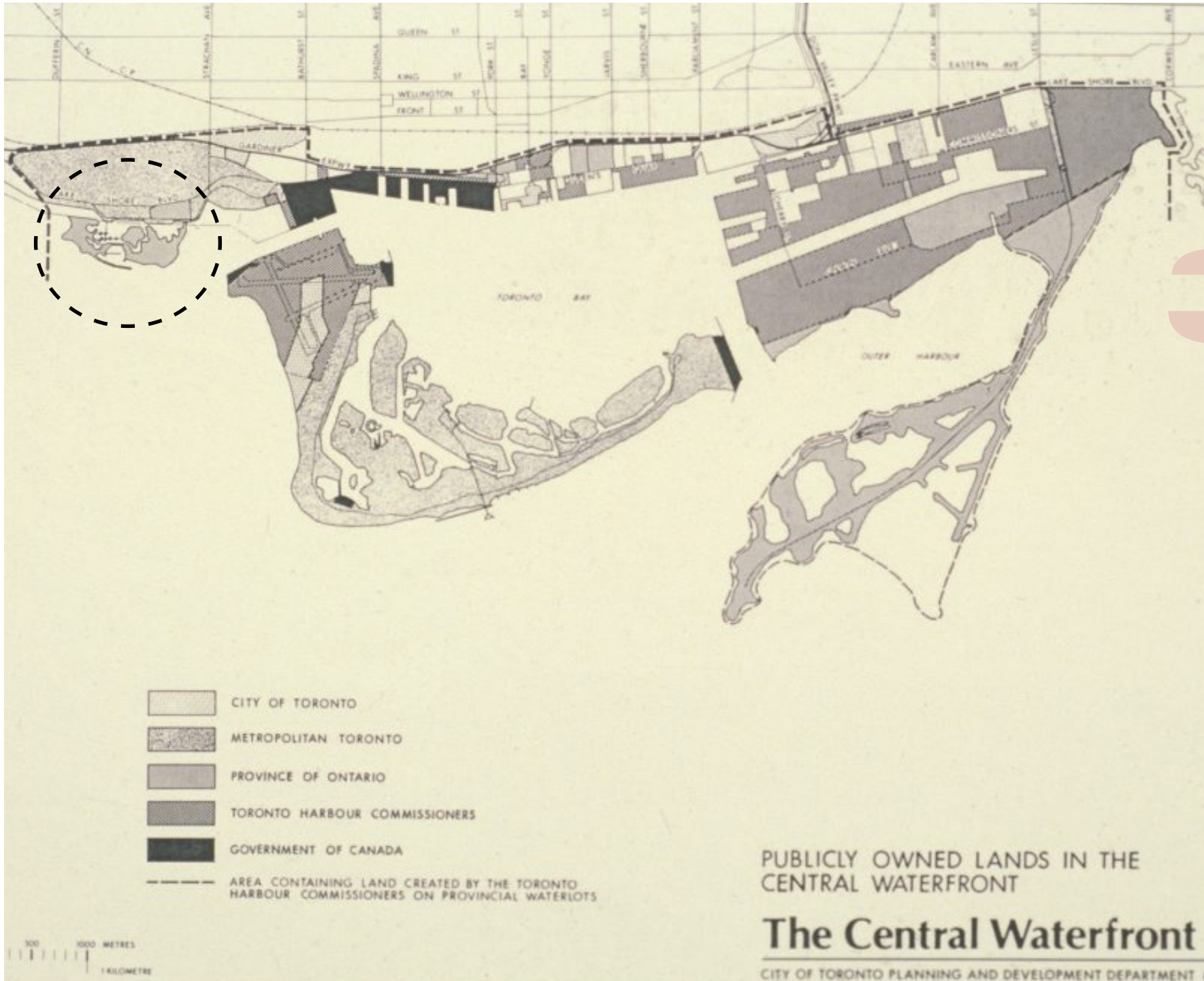
When Toronto finally joined the global waterfront revitalization movement in the late twentieth century, it seemed to (unknowingly) revive the utilitarian principles of the ancient Public Trust Doctrine in addition to the forgotten ideals of Lt. Gov. John Graves Simcoe and the Walks and Gardens Trust (See Chapter 1.1). The city’s formal commitment to revitalization of its waterfront was relatively late compared to its sister cities, who “inevitably were its competitors” (Our Toronto Waterfront! Report, 2000). Previously, revitalization efforts had been made in the late 20th century with the creation of, the subject of this study, Ontario Place (1968) and Harbourfront Centre (1972). Both sites were sought to re-establish the waterfront as a more public, people friendly place.

The formal decision to revitalize Toronto’s “long-neglected waterfront” in November 1999 (28 years after the opening of Ontario Place), involved then Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, Ontario Premier Mike Harris and Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman. They announced their tripartite support for a bold, new vision for a publicly accessible 46 km stretch of the city’s lakeshore (Leherer & Laidley, 2009). This was initiated as part of the city’s bid to host the 2008 Summer Olympics and according to one city columnist in the City Archives’ unmarked news clippings, waterfront redevelopment and the Olympics were inextricably linked. The Olympic Games was needed to kick start our city by providing much needed public access to Toronto’s waterfront.

On a global scale, however, waterfront revitalization occurred simultaneously with national efforts for environmental cleanup.

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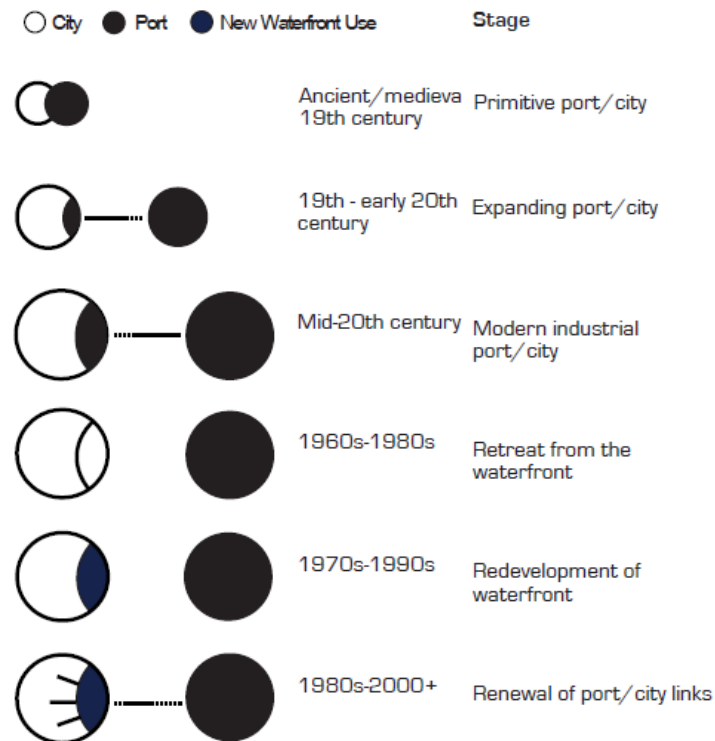
3.1 historic context



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3.1 historic context

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Hoyle's historical model for port-city development. (Vallega 1993, 25)

During the Industrial Revolution, the waterfront was the powerhouse of the economy but, the rapid decline of traditional industry stimulated the abandonment of ports all over the world

The renewal of port-city links and waterfront redevelopment projects have only recently become a priority.

(Moughtin, 2003; Millspaugh, 2001).

Stretches of degraded, neglected, derelict and often-contaminated spaces remained along many waterfronts due to their former use as sites of industrial operations (Hoyle et al, 1988). In the United States, cities like Baltimore, Boston and New York paved the way in the 1970s and 1980s. The United Kingdom followed suit in the 1980s with major city ports, namely London, Liverpool and Bristol. Other significant waterfront projects were initiated in Cardiff, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Hull, Manchester, Newcastle, Portsmouth, Southampton and Swansea. Barcelona, Amsterdam and Berlin led the wave of waterfront redevelopment in continental Europe in the 1980s while Asia and Australia began rejuvenating their historic harbours with Singapore and Sydney leading the way (Tunbridge, 1993; Gordon, 1997; Millspaugh 2001; Marshall, 2001; Desfor, Laidley, Stevens 2010).

Rinio Bruttomesso, Director of the International Center for Cities on Water and a lead scholar in the discourse of waterfront revitalization, published several collections of waterfront case studies. He defines waterfront revitalization as a “genuine urban revolution” (Bruttomesso 2003, 10). The existing literature on the subject is extensive and spans fields such as geography, environmental sciences, urban planning, and politics from as early as the 1950s. Scholarship on waterfront revitalization proliferated in the mid 1980s as successful waterfront developments started to emerge (Donofrio, 2007).

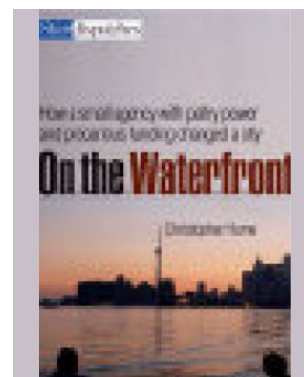
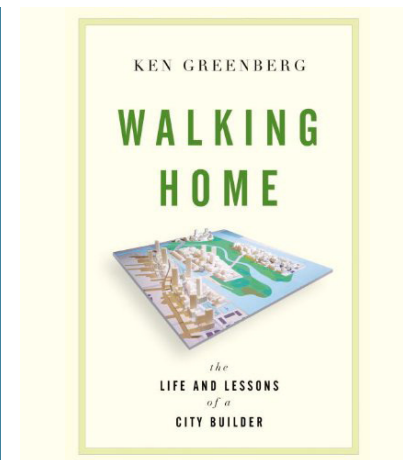
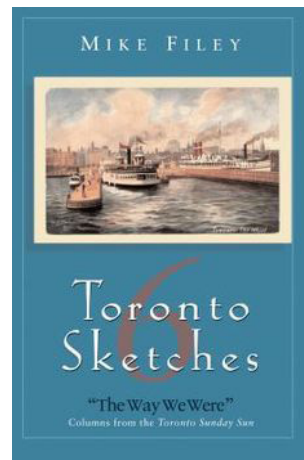
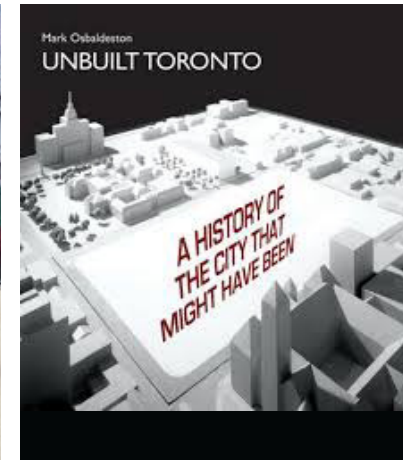
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3.1 historic context

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Researchers like Van der Knaap and Pinder (1992), Jauhianien (1995), Breen and Rigby (1996, 1997), Marshall (2001) and the Urban Land Institute (2004) have written extensively on the topic, chronicling global accounts of planning policy, development strategy, land use, best practices and partnership through case studies and comparative analyses. Notable writers on issues concerning Toronto's waterfront, include academics like Roy Merrens, Gene Desfor, Jennifer Laidley, Ken Greenberg and Gabriel Eidelman; local writers and journalists like Mike Filey, Mark Osbaldeston; and Toronto Star architecture critic Christopher Hume who identify opportunities, challenges and stories unique to this city and its shoreline.

From the range of published literature and sources consulted, it is evident that Toronto's waterfront history mirrors that of many other post-industrial cities. The current wave of development is also not entirely unlike strategies in cities that have transformed their abandoned waterfronts into "thriving areas attracting global capital" (Lehrer and Laidley, 2009).



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3.1 historic context

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The recent gradual transformation of Toronto's post-industrial waterfront into a thriving "new blue edge" can largely be attributed to Waterfront Toronto. This tripartite agency created in 2000 and supported by three levels of government, is transforming parts of Toronto's central waterfront area to "allow it to live up to its remarkable potential" through a "bold new look" and "unified design" (Waterfront Toronto, 2013). Christopher Hume, architecture critic and writer for the Toronto Star newspaper, holds Waterfront Toronto in high esteem. In his e-book, *On the Waterfront* (2013), he described this relatively new corporation as "ambitious," "unabashedly civic" and "insistent on change" (2013, 35).

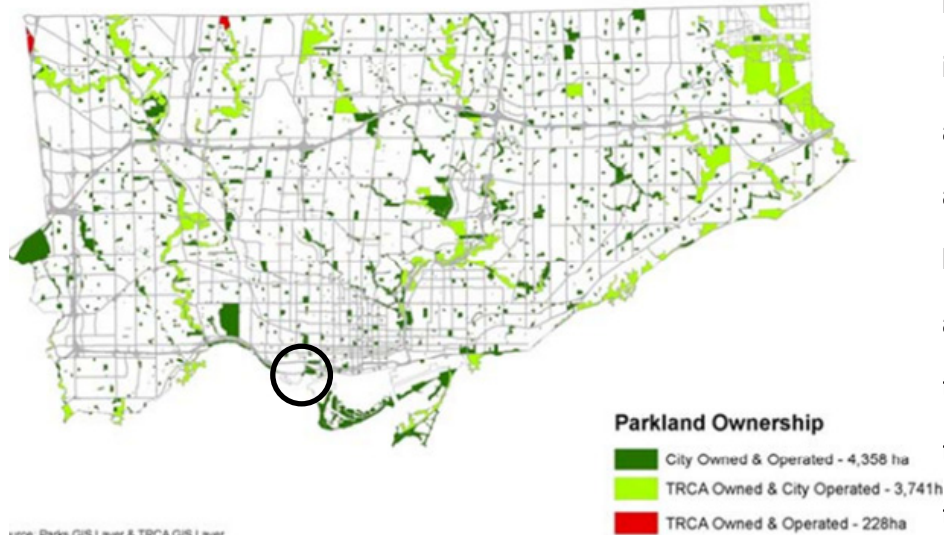
Under the leadership of Waterfront Toronto, the central waterfront has undergone vast, visible improvements. Despite these triumphs, the Project for Public Spaces (PPS), a nonprofit planning, design and educational organization, still cautions that "development led by private investment" could threaten the provision of public space along the waterfront (PPS, *Hall of Shame*, 2013). In the case of the latest iteration of Ontario Place, leaving development to the private sector alone risks repeating several disastrous experiences in Toronto's waterfront history (Desfor and Laidley, *Toronto Star*, 2011).

According to researchers Ute Lehrer and Jennifer Laidley, early revitalization schemes for Toronto's waterfront, could be branded as "mega-projects," in a tradition closely associated with "encouraging major capital investment" (Lehrer & Laidley, 2009). However, unlike the earlier mega-projects, Toronto's recent waterfront efforts, initiated by Waterfront Toronto, exemplify a new kind of mega-project with more focus on public benefits such as "accessibility, sustainability, and the fostering of creativity and diversity" (Lehrer & Laidley, 2009). Hoyle et al. (1988), Breen and Rigby (1996) and Bruttomesso (2001) are in agreement that place making and innovative design strategies that promote accessibility and sustainability are important considerations for re-imagining post-industrial waterfronts. The re-acquiring of "strategically obsolete" or abandoned zones is an opportunity to re-launch the image of the city on both a national and international scale and there is immense potential for waterfronts to act as a vehicle for cities to reinvent themselves in a new way to enhance public open space (Bruttomesso, 2001; Donofrio, 2007).

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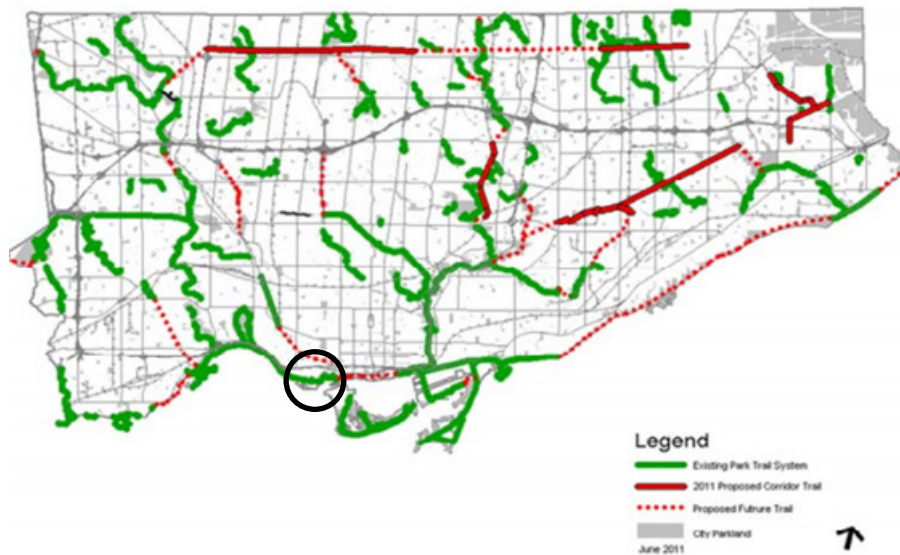
literature review

Map of Toronto Owned & Operated and TRCA Owned & Operated Parkland



Source: Parks GIS Layer & TRCA GIS Layer
October 2011

City Parkland Multi-Use Trail System



June 2011

Toronto's history with public open space, specifically parkland, is also of relevance in this discussion. As previously mentioned in the introductory chapter, Lt. Gov. Simcoe's vision for parkland along a publicly accessible waterfront, enshrined in the Walks and Gardens legislation, has long been overlooked. One member from a team of local historians who unearthed the Walks and Gardens details in 2002, likend it to discovering a forgotten deed in grandpa's attic. In a Toronto Star article that traced the history of the city's park plan, Rollo Meyers of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, is quoted: "we had a terrific parks endowment and we let it slip" (Doolittle, Toronto Star, 2007).

Interestingly, Ontario Place's location between Ashbridge's Bay Park in the City's east end to Marilyn Bell Park in the west, "falls right in the middle" of Waterfront Toronto's mandate (Hume, Toronto Star, 2012). This Crown-owned site is currently not within the official mandate of Waterfront Toronto, (nor was it ever part of the designated Walks and Gardens Trust lands) and though a significant portion of Ontario Place is envisioned as parkland, there is obvious potential for the entire site to act as a "connective tissue" in a "network of public spaces" along Toronto's waterfront and within the city (Stratford, Chief Planner Roundtable, 2013).

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3.2 potential

literature review

Analyses of waterfront revitalization in post-industrial cities have been made from different perspectives, including those of geographers, physical planners, practitioners and critical theorists (Smith and Garcia Ferrari, 2012, 19). Using such analyses, authors have identified objectives common to most waterfront revitalization projects. Many scholars contend that this process can be illustrated from “San Francisco to Sydney, from Southampton to Singapore” and though each case is unique, “the underlying principles remain largely the same” (Hoyle 1993, 333). Accordingly, Bruttomesso (2001) identifies three main objectives observed in revitalization processes. These include 1) plurality of functions, 2) mixed uses; and 3) the co-operation of public and private functions, spaces and actors to overcome a waterfront’s fragmented and complex structure of jurisdictional involvement. If these objectives are accomplished it seems that the development of “complete communities” and dynamic, accessible waterfront environments is indeed possible.

Millspaugh (2001) too, highlights the need for common objectives and shared values in public-private partnerships and asserts that land use must be agreed upon by both sectors. Smith and Garcia Ferrari (2012) cite successful cases that involved all levels of stakeholders in the nine North Sea gateway cities that took part in the European Union funded *Waterfront Communities Project*. Each city (Edinburgh, Gothenburg, Schiedam, Hamburg, Gateshead-Newcastle, Oslo, Aalborg, Odense and Kingston upon Hull) developed an appropriate framework with clear objectives, a delivery mechanism, phasing, marketing strategies and outcomes to achieve economic and social balance. This, they argue, is integral since most waterfront revitalization developments take “decades to perform” and demand “immense” financial investment (Craig-Smith, and Fagence 1995; Gordon, 1997). The *Waterfront Communities Project*, involved working relationships between each city’s government and one or more local academic partners to develop a research model. The results or “key learning points,” from the nine North Sea cities, are listed and are important considerations that should be addressed simultaneously in all regeneration efforts.

As observed in the North Sea cities, waterfront revitalization moves in tandem with economic and social develop-

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The Waterfront Communities Project North Sea Cities Key Learning Points:

1. The quality of urban vision influences

2. Moving from vision to sophisticated strategy is essential

3. Leadership in public planning

4. Organizational innovation

5. Achieving social integration through participation

6. Public investment in transport and infrastructure

7. Land ownership can be a critical factor

8. Urban design is paradigm of urban complexity

9. Learning through action research approaches

(Waterfront Communities Project, “The Cool Sea,” 2007)

ment and the most successful waterfront projects involve an empowered development corporation to unlock jurisdictional gridlock, financial investment, political champions, participation on all levels (including engaged citizens) and innovative partnerships (Smith and Garcia Ferrari, 2012). But above all else, the time has to be right.

Take the case of two “abruptly abandoned” plans for Toronto’s central waterfront. Both proposed plans had clear objectives and provided a glimpse of the vast potential of an alternate civic destiny for Toronto’s post-industrial waterfront. However both came to nothing because of what one scholar, Dr. Gabriel Eidelman, refers to as a “joint-decision trap.” (Eidelman, 2013, iii, 9). Regardless, both plans contribute to a fuller understanding of the origins of Ontario Place although they are rarely discussed in the current revitalization discourse. For this reason, the underlying principles and objectives in each will be closely examined. They include:

1. 1968 *Bold Concept for the Redevelopment of the Toronto Waterfront*, produced by Chief Engineer, Jack Jones of a federal agency, the Toronto Harbour Commissioners (THC)
2. 1970 *Harbour City Report* released by the Government of Ontario Department of Trade and Development.

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3.3 objectives

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1. 1968 Bold Concept for the Redevelopment of the Toronto Waterfront, produced by Chief Engineer, Jack Jones of a federal agency, the Toronto Harbour Commissioners (THC)

The unfulfilled *Bold Concept* (1968) was officially published in January 1968, months prior to the origins and planning of Ontario Place. Like its predecessor, the THC 1912 plan, the *Bold Concept* was “ambitious” and “grandiose” (Desfor, Goldrick, Merrens, 1989, 490) and it projected “massive land use development projects” on the City’s waterfront (Role and Mandate of THC, 109). This 1968 revitalization plan was once a component of the *Waterfront Plan for the Metropolitan Area* (1967) and attempted to improve the image of the city by providing for future needs through enhanced accessibility and services and facilities that would encourage “economical and efficient growth” (Jones, 1968, 2). Yet, surprisingly few know of the existence of the *Bold Concept* since it was never subject to serious public discussion or scrutiny.

Produced by Jack Jones, the THC Chief Engineer, the plan’s goal was to present “Toronto as a unique prize” through “imaginative land use planning” (Jones, 1968, 23; 36). As a man of “great passion for the land and the water... the ports and harbours” (Obituary, January 2004), Jones believed that “limited and disjointed development” along Toronto’s post-industrial waterfront would occur without a comprehensive plan. His *Bold Concept* focused on three elements: an outer harbour, a new airport and the introduction of a ‘critical

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“Because of barely tapped geological assets, Toronto today is in an enviable position to conceive and implement such a plan”

Bold Concept, 1968, 2



mass' through a residential development called Harbour City. Additional lake filling was proposed, at the present day site of Ontario Place, to create Harbour City, accommodating 50,000 people. This residential development was envisioned amidst “new waterfront parkland and protected waters for sporting and recreational activities” (Jones, 1968, 6). This, according to Chief Engineer Jones, was an opportunity “seldom available to most cities” (Jones, 1968, 6). Jones believed that the creation of a “special community” along Toronto’s waterfront had the potential to become a “a place to remember. a place to visit” and a “source of identity and pride to its residents and Toronto” (1968, 23).

According to Osbaldeston, author of *Unbuilt Toronto*, the 1968 THC plan initially arose from an opportunity to redevelop the Toronto Island Airport, which was “outdated” and “could not be expanded” due to its location (2008, 54; Interview with Osbaldeston, February 2013). Eidelman cited monetary gains as the main impetus for the Bold Concept. “It was the Harbour Commission’s ticket to financial security,” he said (Eidelman, 2013, 50; Interview with Eidelman, February 2013). This was also identified by waterfront scholars Desfor, Goldrick and Merrens who singled out Harbour City as the “economic keystone” of the plan (Jones, 491, 1988).

An opinion piece in the Toronto Star, “The Waterfront’s Sad History of Errors,” by Desfor and Laidley (2011), revealed that the sale of public lands in 1912 did not solve the THC’s fiscal problems. Rather “one-time only revenues” did little to overcome their \$33 million debt (Desfor and Laidley, To-

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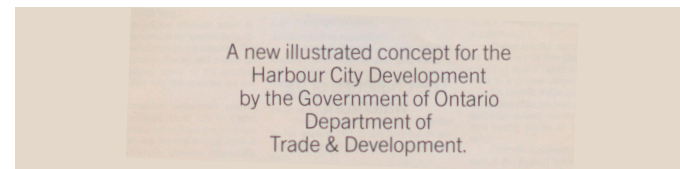
ronto Star, 2011). The *Bold Concept* and the creation of Harbour City was to be based on the same premise. Jones' report stated that the cost of the proposed process of land reclamation through lake filling was "economically viable" and the financial return on the newly created was projected "upwards of \$40 million- an enormous value" (Jones, 1968, 2).

Despite initial positive reactions, the *Bold Concept* was "hotly disputed" (Desfor, Goldrick and Merrens, 1988, 490). It failed to take flight as components of the plan were "extremely contentious" and involved the relocation of the Toronto Island Airport (Desfor, 1993, 173). Once provincial lawyers made a surprising discovery regarding land ownership, Jack Jones' 1968 plan was quickly dissolved.

2. 1970 Harbour City Report released by the Government of Ontario Department of Trade and Development under Ontario Trade Minister Stanley Randall;

The 1968 plan came to nothing for a number of reasons. Particularly, problematic was the discovery that the province owned most of the land where the Federal Harbour Commission intended to build Harbour City (Osbaldeston, 2008, 55). This was a relatively new finding at the time and one that arose from the Province's own plans to create an extension for the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE) - the extension later named Ontario Place.

According to Eidelman, lawyers from the provincial Attorney General's



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3.3 objectives

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“Harbour City is probably the most important advance in planning for cities that has been made in this century”

Jane Jacobs, 1970



office discovered two important critical details. One, the province owned the land and water lots “to move ahead” with the construction of an extension for the CNE and two, most importantly, the province “also held a strong ownership claim over lands proposed for the construction of Harbour City” (Eidelman, 2013, 50; Interview with Eidelman, February 2013). Based on this revelation in 1969, the Harbour Commission’s authority over the waterfront was “openly challenged...for the first time in over fifty years” (Eidelman, 2013, 51). This would be one of those punctuated moments in the evolution of place which changed the trajectory of all that followed.

As a result, the province continued with their plans to extend the CNE through lake filling to create an island complex and a provincial showcase called ‘Ontario Place.’ The provincial government, under Ontario Trade Minister Stanley Randall, also took on Jack Jones’ Harbour City as “his own project” (Osbaldeston, 2008, 55). Osbaldeston describes the second iteration of Harbour City (1970) as “a top down” planning scheme led by a team of high profile designers and architects who worked in secrecy for about a year. The team included local activist, Jane Jacobs, and the architect of Ontario Place, Eberhard Zeidler, who in a recent interview, remained fuzzy on the details of this plan’s origins in the *Bold Concept*. Instead, Mr. Zeidler insisted his design for a “city on the water” was inspired by great European cities such as Venice and Amsterdam. Jane Jacobs’ ideas were to be tested at Harbour City and

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3.3 objectives

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there was to be no “strict zoning” of uses in this mixed-use, low density development (Jacobs, Jane, 1970). A TVO interview from 1970 features a young Zeidler proudly displaying his model for Harbour City, showing further details presented in the Harbour City Report.

When revealed at a press conference on May 20, 1970, Harbour City appeared to be a “proposal without a constituency” (Interview with Osbaldeston, February 2013). No one cared enough to fight for it once the driving force, Stanley Randall, was voted out of cabinet. The public was outraged for a number of reasons including the lack of consultation, traffic, pollution and the resort to lake filling. Many organized a ‘Sink Harbour City’ campaign, reported in news articles in the Toronto Star from May 1970 onward.

Then in 1971, Premier Bill Davis assumed leadership of the provincial Tories and “killed the idea.” In an interview decades later, Eidelman asked him why and Davis mentioned that “it wasn’t his baby. It wasn’t his project. He didn’t feel personally invested. He wanted to show that he was moving in a different direction.” (Doolittle, Toronto Star, 2011). On March 3, 1972 Harbour City was declared “certainly dead” (Interview with Osbaldeston, February 2013).



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3.3 objectives

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The aborted 1968 *Bold Concept* plan and the 1970 *Harbour City Report* reveal that waterfront revitalization, like other urban redevelopment, occurs within historically contingent ensembles of socio-economic and political mechanisms. Desfor and Laidley identified “jurisdictional gridlock” and “developer-driven, un coordinated development” along Toronto’s waterfront as “mistakes of the past” (Toronto Star, 2011). In the decade ahead, Hume warns of the province’s refusal to hand over the waterfront sites that it owns (like Ontario Place) to Waterfront Toronto (Hume, 2013, 44). He further argues that the “Portland’s episode” is proof of “how little” politicians and developers understand the broader implications of waterfront revitalization, and most notably the provision of publicly accessible space (Hume, 2013, 47). Like Hume’s opinions, the literature on waterfront revitalization also warns against revitalization with the exclusion of the interests of the local working-class residents, insufficient attention to ecological concerns; the demolition of heritage structures and limited public involvement in decision-making (Breen and Rigby, 1994).

Arguably, Waterfront Toronto has been active in creating momentum since its formation in 2000, through a “carefully coordinated collaborative process” with the public (Blackett, Spacing Toronto, 2011). Historically, this need for a consensus of support from community members through public participation in planning emerged initially as a demand and later as a practice as part of the reaction to, and critique of, post-World War II top-down rational planning (Smith and Ferreira, 2012, 96). Waterfront Toronto regards consultation as a “legitimate part of the decision-making process” (Waterfront Toronto, Public Consultation and Participation Strategy) to maintain transparency and engage the broader community and they have become “unusually adept at outreach” (Greenberg in Hume, 2013, 48). This corporation’s efforts to address and involve the needs of Toronto citizens’ by improving quality, livability and a vision for social development, maintenance of services, facilities and public spaces is an exemplary element of several successful global waterfront projects (Alema-

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ny , 2006; Millspaugh, 1993; Hall and Pfeifer, 2000) and this should be considered in the revitalization efforts of Ontario Place.

This brings into question the role of public history and a larger fundamental issue in Toronto that stories are not told or valued. How do residents connect with their public spaces? In a talk entitled, “The Art of History,” *Spacing Toronto*’s senior editor and author of *Stroll*, Shawn Micallef, argues that we have a long history and a “kind-of awesome one,” that we do not know about, perhaps because we are not very good at telling it. “Is our city just a place of condos, shopping malls, strip malls and highways and an ahistorical mayor?” he asked (Walrus TV, 2012). This sentiment was echoed in a 2006 publication by Andrew Hurley, *Narrating the Urban Waterfront: The Role of Public History in Community Revitalization*, which advocated for the strategic use of public history in waterfront revitalization processes “to anchor people in the flow of time” and expose linkages between the past and present (Hurley, 2006). For after all, “only when associated with stories and imbued with meaning do yesterday’s material remains acquire the capacity to articulate shared values and vision” (Hurley, 2006).

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landscape biography

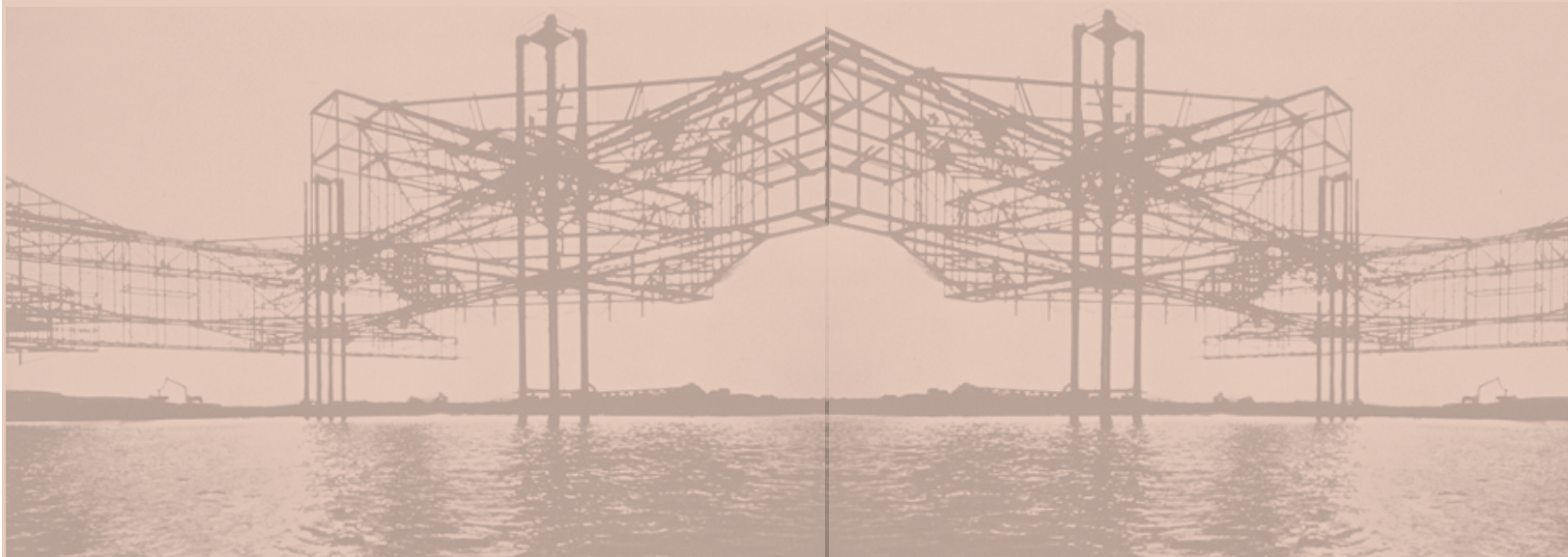
4.1 Origins + Planning (1968-1971)

4.2 The Early Years (1971-1980)

4.3 Transformations + Additions (1980-1990)

4.4 Theming + Attractions (1990- 2000)

4.5 Ecological + Cultural Programming (2001+)



www.4w.com



Toronto Port Authority Archives, September 29th, 1969

4.1 origins + planning (1968-1971)

landscape biography

Political and Economic Context

Conceived, in architect Eberhard Zeidler's own words, as serene "urban parkland" rather than "a hyperactive amusement park" (Interview with Zeidler, February 2013), Ontario Place was to provide the backdrop for "healthy social interaction and shared experiences" as well as refuge along Toronto's lakeshore (Medley, National Post, 2010). The growing prosperity of Toronto and the "bustling optimism" for Ontario's future were not reflected in the city's post-industrial shoreline which, at the time, was desolate, inaccessible and uninviting - "a no man's land" (Gemmil, 1980, 30, 3; 3; Interview with Zeidler, February 2013).

Since discovering that the province owned the lands proposed in the 1968 Toronto Harbour Commission *Bold Concept* plan (See Chapter 3.3), Stanley Randall, the Minister of the Ontario Department of Trade and Development and Jim Ramsay, Director of Special Projects and Planning Branch were assigned to the creation of a new government complex called "Ontario Pavilion" - subsequently known as Ontario Showplace and later as Ontario Place (Gemmil, 1980, 9-10, 20). Stanley Randall, the Ontario Minister of Trade and Development, was described as "the hard-headed businessman" and the "super salesman" of the Robarts government (Shields, The Toronto Telegram, 1971). Both men, Randall and Ramsay, were instrumental in the early history of this massive public investment and conversations between the two are featured in early records discussing the potential of a new government showplace.

Eyebrows were raised in some quarters, as a tight, two-year construction schedule was set, with a completion date of May 24, 1971. Correspondence with the Toronto Harbour Commissioners on March 14, 1969, retrieved from the Toronto Port Authority Archives, warns of Randall's "suspicions" of a possible construction strike "within the next months." Randall stressed in his letters that it was "absolutely imperative" that land fill operations for Ontario Place begin "as quickly as possible" (Port Authority Archives, THC Records, 1611 P4E). Financed entirely by the Province and built over 24 months, this government showcase replaced the Government of Ontario building at the C.N.E, the site of the Canadian National Exhibition (Ontario Place

4

context

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Corporation, Request for Information, 2010, 3; Interview with Eriks Eglite, February 2013). It is significant to note that the province had played only a minimal part in waterfront planning and development for Toronto, prior to the creation of Ontario Place.

At the time (1968), John Robarts and the Progressive Conservative party had formed the provincial government for a quarter of a century. Robarts took office in 1961 as the Baby Boomers was arriving in the workforce. According to Feature Writer for the Toronto Star, Jim Coyle, “Ontario’s Golden Age was at hand” (Toronto Star, February 2012). Coincidentally, the governing Progressive Conservatives had to hold an election in 1970. This was a motivating factor for the creation of Ontario Place and the Progressive Conservatives, who were uncertain about their hold over the Metro Toronto region, were eager for “a display of benevolence” (Gemmil, 1980, 20).

Fortuitously sited at a west-central location in Toronto, Ontario Place was to create new jobs and during its construction in 1970, Robarts boasted of the 3,000 new jobs that it had already generated (Gemmil, 1980, 20; 22). The economic context at the time was already particularly favourable as the provincial government was “flush with tax revenues” and generally “economically buoyant.” (Gemmil, 1980, 26). A steady population growth and competitive labour market projections contributed to a “free handed approach” to government spending (Gemmil, 1980, 28). Managing mostly “head-spinning expansion” was then Prime Minister Robarts main concern (Coyle, Toronto Star, 2012).

The Ontario Special Projects and Planning Branch of the Department of Trade and Development certainly had high hopes for the creation of this new government complex. Even prior to its opening in 1971, Prime Minister Robarts declared Ontario Place as “the forerunner of the city of tomorrow” (Filey, 1992, 77) while a promotional brochure from 1969 branded this new waterfront site as “a mirror to show you yourself. Your heritage. Your land. Your work. Your creativ-

landscape biography

ity. And your tomorrow” (City of Toronto Archives, Cite FONDS). For the Progressive Conservatives, Ontario Place would (1) be a much needed upgrade and expansion of the C.N.E grounds, originally created in 1879, (2) be the impetus for other development along the Toronto’s shoreline (Gemmil, 1980, 7) and above all else, (3) secure their spot in the upcoming election.

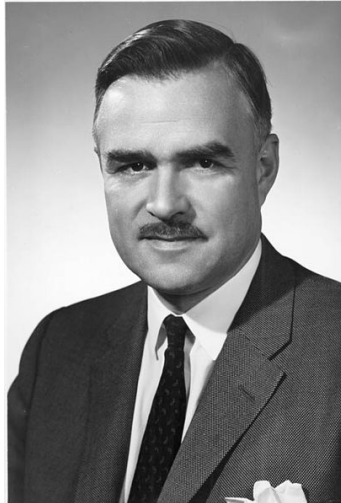
Local writer Mike Filey, suggested an alternate perspective, that Ontario Place actually materialized as a result of Toronto’s failed bid to host the 1976 Summer Olympic Games, which was eventually awarded to Montreal (Filey, 1998, 76). Previously, the City of Toronto had attempted to host the Games in 1960 and 1964. The bids failed every year - “so badly,” according to a news article from 2008 by Vidya Kauri in the National Post, “that Toronto did not get anywhere close to ranking among the IOC’s final batch of candidates” (Kauri, National Post, 2008). Toronto’s bids were often criticized as “too lavish” in the absence of a long-term waterfront vision.

Regardless, the design and construction of Ontario Place is certainly atypical. Its creation was the product of strong government leadership, coincidence and “some luck” (Interview with Eb Zeidler, February 2013). The site is “anomalous” as a waterfront project and “anachronistic” in terms of its planning (Gemmil, 1980, 50-51). The subsequent sections detail the origins and planning of this historically significant waterfront site while identifying punctuated moments in this landscape’s evolution.

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landscape biography

1968



★ THE TORONTO STAR Friday, December 15, 1989 A5

OBITUARY

Stanley Randall pitched Ontario to world



Stanley Randall was a driving force behind Ontario Place and the man who gave the province the slogan: "Is There Any Place You'd Rather Be?"

"I'm no politician. I'm a businessman," said Ontario's minister of trade and development in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Mr. Randall died Wednesday in St. Michael's Hospital. He was 81.

He started his career selling washing machines and while pitching the province to the world he took time out to promote a new made-in-Ontario mousetrap.

His motto was: "You must go out and sell."

And his philosophy was, "a foot in the door is worth two on the desk."

He always had a quip, such as "Progress is like a wheelbarrow. It doesn't go anywhere unless you push."

Or, "the man who is looking for a helping hand can usually find one — at the end of his arm."

Mr. Randall was an outspoken opponent of any kind of economic nationalists.

His accomplishments as a cabinet minister included an increase in Ontario exports, and the development of Ontario Place, the Ontario Development Corp. and the Ontario Housing Corp.

He also was responsible for the development of Sheridan Park Research Community.

He greatly expanded the activities of his department into international markets and his Eedee awards programs for the fashion and furniture industries did much to help them expand.

Before entering politics, he spent 35 years in the appliance industry.

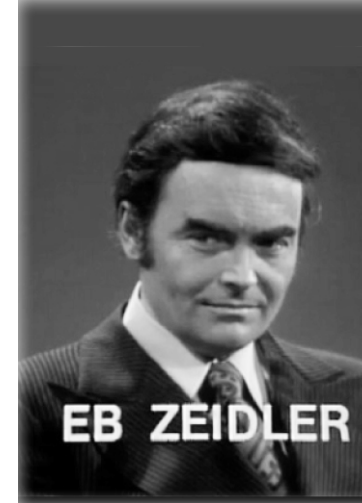
Born in Toronto, he joined the Easy Washing Machine Co. Ltd. in 1928 as a junior clerk. He got a Bachelor of Arts degree at a night school and, 21 years after joining the company, he became president.

A Progressive Conservative, he was first elected as an MPP in the riding of Don Mills in 1963 and retired in 1971.

He leaves his wife Peggy; daughters Joan Randall and Patti Armstrong; and grandchildren Wendy, Michael and Kerri.

Visitation is on Sunday from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. in the Humphrey Funeral Home/A.W. Miles Chapel on Bayview Ave.

A service was to be held at 2:30 p.m. Monday in St. John's Anglican Church, York Mills.



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THE GLOBE AND MAIL, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1989 D7

Stanley John Randall

Minister was instrumental in Ontario Place project

The Globe and Mail

Stanley John Randall, a former Ontario cabinet minister, died Wednesday at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto. He was 81.

As minister of trade and development in the Progressive Conservative government of John Robarts from 1964 to 1971, Mr. Randall was instrumental in the development of Ontario Place and Sheridan Research Centre.

He also introduced legislation establishing a "home-ownership made easy" program to aid Ontario house buyers.

Mr. Randall was first elected to the Ontario Legislature for the riding of Don Mills in the 1963 provincial election, and was appointed minister of development in 1964. After re-election in 1967, he be-

came minister of trade and development in 1968.

A businessman by profession, he was a past president and chief executive officer of General Steelwares, and was a director of Crown Trust Co. when it was seized by the Ontario government in 1983.

He was a member of the 32nd Freemasons, the Jesters and was a Shriner.

Mr. Randall leaves his wife, Peggy, daughters Joan Randall and Patti Armstrong, and three grandchildren, Wendy, Michael and Kerri.

A Masonic service will be held Sunday evening, and a funeral service on Monday at 2:30 p.m. at St. John's York Mills Cemetery. A Jesters' service will be held immediately before the funeral.



Ontario Trade and Development Minister Allan Grossman and Premier Bill Davis taking in one of the final previews of Ontario Place. Photo by David Davies, the Telegram, May 21, 1971.

context

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Initial Plans: C.N.E Extension

Project Planning Associates Ltd. of Toronto, who were previously involved in the master planning of the Expo '67 World Fair in Montreal, were initially hired by the Canadian National Exhibition (C.N.E) to imagine an “advanced and sophisticated extension” of their grounds. This firm’s work in April 1968 details the very first master plan studies for the extension of the C.N.E (University of Guelph Archives; Macklin L. Hancock/Project Planning Associates Ltd. Collection). The design brief suggested the need for a “comprehensive view of the site [C.N.E]” and the need to “update and re-assess the total area.” This firm’s 1968 master plan addressed “the careful integration” of the expansion of the existing C.N.E site (University of Guelph Archives; Macklin L. Hancock/Project Planning Associates Ltd. Collection).

The design response was a proposal for enhanced pedestrian movement, commercial facilities, landscape and open space. This firm’s vision for the extension of the C.N.E featured a series of “off-shore islands and facilities” to allow more intensive use of the waterfront (University of Guelph Archives; Macklin L. Hancock/Project Planning Associates Ltd. Collection). These facilities included the addition of two pavilions, an indoor and outdoor swimming pool, an aquarium and the extension of other buildings to link the C.N.E. grounds with the lake front. Project Planning Associates Ltd. anticipated the demolition of eight buildings on site (Globe and Mail, 1971) and the firm’s preliminary site analysis featured five alternative concept drawings, a model and a phasing plan for their April 1968 master plan studies.

Gemmil speculates that this architectural firm probably conducted the first feasibility studies of floating buildings (Gemmil, 1980, 11). At the time, there had been a “plethora of studies” by the C.N.E, the Harbour Commission, Metro and the city but, according to Jim Ramsay, Director of Special Projects and Planning Branch, “nothing ever got done” (Gemmil, 1980, 11). Project Planning Associates Ltd. were replaced only five months later, in September 1968, by Toronto-based architectural firm Craig, Zeidler & Strong even though they had initially received approval from the C.N.E Board of Directors.

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initial plans

landscape biography

Previous employees of Project Planning and Associates Ltd. speculate two possible reasons for “being dropped.” One, the client (the C.N.E) may not have been happy with the firm’s work or two, the scope of work changed and the client needed an architect. At the time (1968), Project Planning Associates Ltd. had a separate architectural firm, Hancock Little Calvert, but this firm was not large, nor experienced enough to undertake the job of designing and constructing the proposed facilities (Personal correspondence with Bradley Johnson, January 2013).

In September 1968, Jim Ramsay hired Toronto-based architectural firm Craig, Zeidler & Strong who replaced Project Planning and Associates Ltd. Zeidler’s first conceptual designs centered on three major concepts: (1) the creation of exhibition buildings-the Ontario Pavilion, (2) the creation of urban parkland and (3) reclaiming the shoreline for the people. Zeidler proposed suspending five exhibition pods from pylons and cited precedents as the Eiffel tower and futuristic forms of oil rigs as inspiration for his pavilion complex. Man made islands were created to protect and anchor this pavilion complex, which was set symbolically into Lake Ontario. The islands themselves were to serve as “urban parkland” and landform and vegetation were designed to buffer the south-west prevailing winds and wave action of Lake Ontario. The architecture and landscape, “the meeting of land and water” were intended as public space for the people (Thompson, 1992, 154).

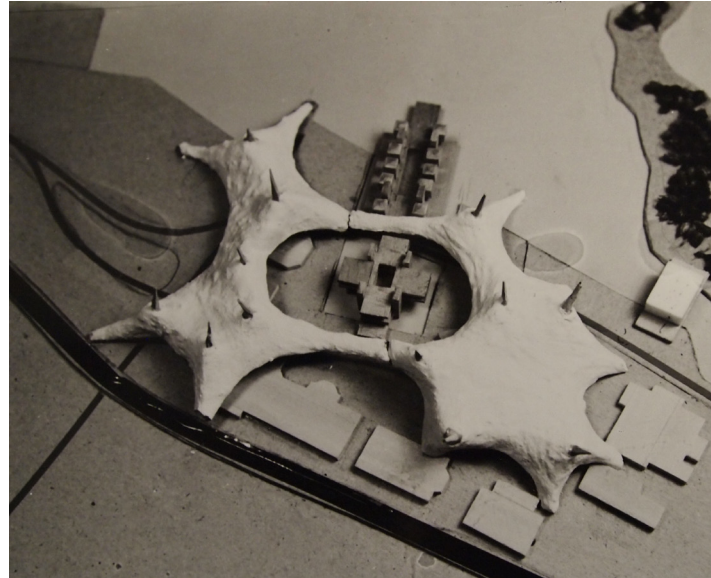
Now, over four decades after its conception in 1968, Zeidler claimed to have never seen the Project Planning Ltd. plans for the extension of the C.N.E nor does he admit to extensive consultation with the C.N.E Board of Directors in the initial design stages for Ontario Place (Interview with Zeidler, 2013). Though correspondence between the Province and the Toronto Harbour Commissioners, the architects and the landscape architects was extensive, there appeared to be little archival evidence to believe that consultation occurred between Metro, the City of Toronto and ironically, the Canadian National Exhibition Board of Directors. A 1971 Globe and Mail article, “Will Ontario Place be a Cuckoo in the Nest?” confirmed that Stanley Randall had admitted to a lack of correspondence with local authorities. Despite this minor yet important detail, architects Craig, Zeidler and Strong reported directly to Jim Ramsay and Stanley Randall from December 1968 onward and the design, planning and even construction of this new government complex moved full steam ahead.

4

initial plans

landscape biography

1968



University of Guelph Archives; Macklin L. Hancock/Project Planning Associates Ltd. Collection

cne exhibition park
conceptual plan-b

Project
Planning
Associates
Limited

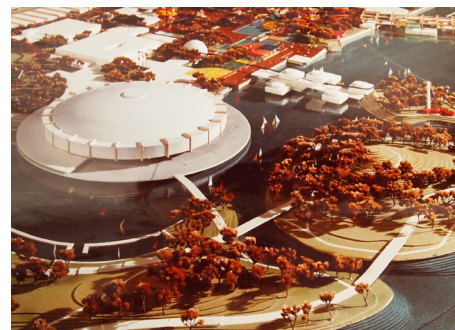
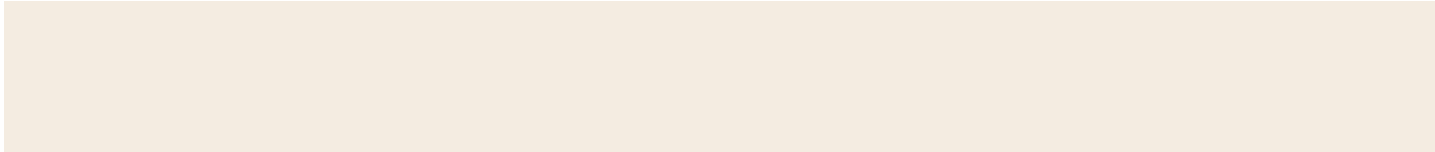
April 1968

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initial plans

landscape biography

1968



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initial plans

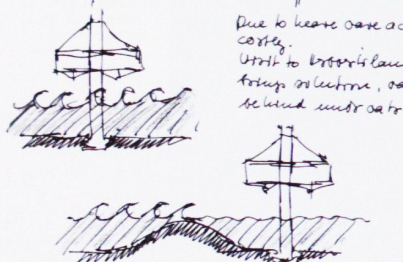
Project
Planning
Associates
Limited

April 1968

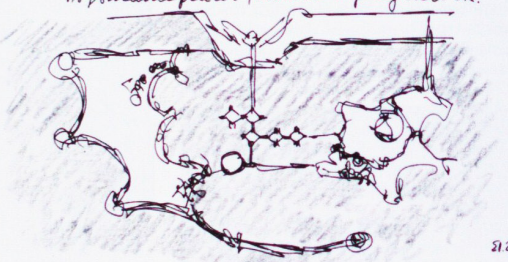
First Conceptual Designs (Zeidler, Craig and Strong Architects)

Restige Concepts for Ontario Place 68

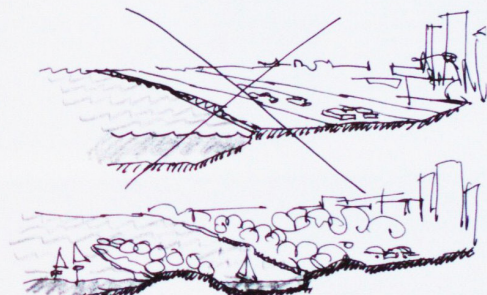
① CREATION OF EXHIBITION BUILDING.
 To suspend 5 exhibition pods from pylons set symbolically into Lake Ontario.
 Precedents- Eiffel tower- Oil rig.
 Due to wave action - too costly.
 Utiti to tropical land (Bahamas) for sun, shelter, waves calm behind under water island.



② CREATION OF URBAN PARK LAND.
 The idea of wave protection through land fill leads to the addition of ISLANDS that can be used as urban Parks with villages for shops and restaurants, Canals, Performance places, Children's play areas etc.



③ RECLAIMING SHORELINE FOR PEOPLE
 The meeting of water and land brought to a poetic awareness



1. Creation of Exhibition Buildings

To suspend five exhibition pods from pylons set symbolically into Lake Ontario.
 Precedents- Eiffel tower- Oil rig.
 Due to wave action - too costly.
 (Bahamas: artificial reef)

2. Creation of Urban Parkland

The idea of wave protection through land fill leads to the addition of ISLANDS that can be used as urban Parks with villages for shops and restaurants. Canals, performance spaces, children's play areas etc.

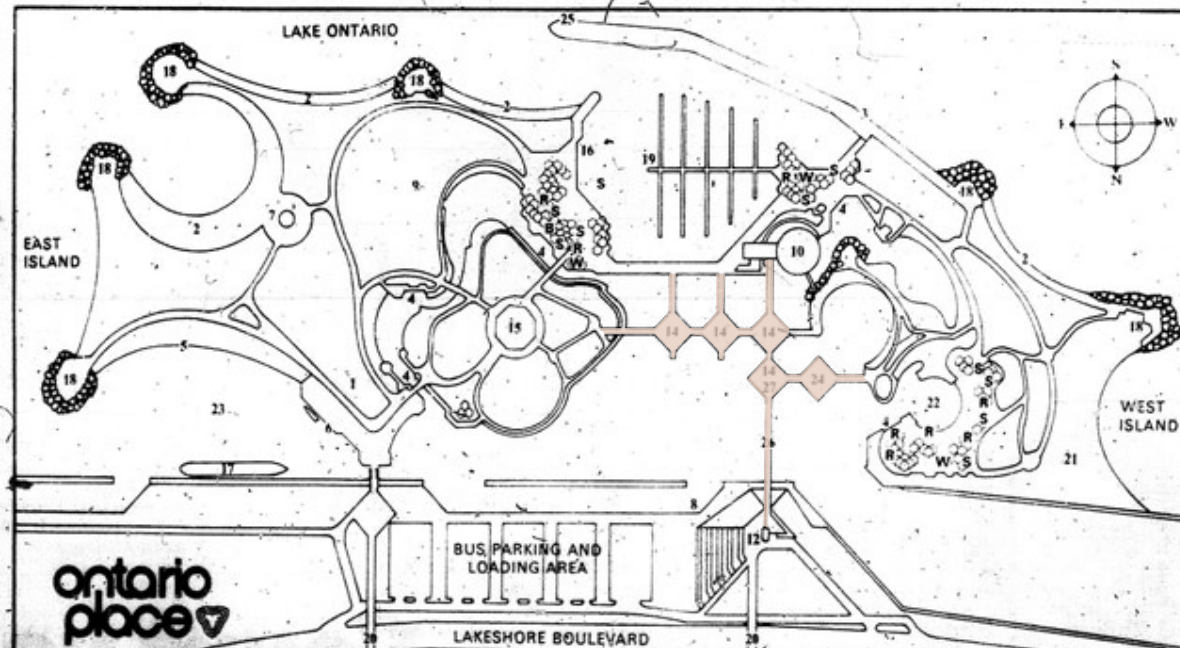
3. Reclaiming the lakeshore for the people

Reclaiming the lakeshore for the people. The meeting of water and land brought to a poetic awareness.

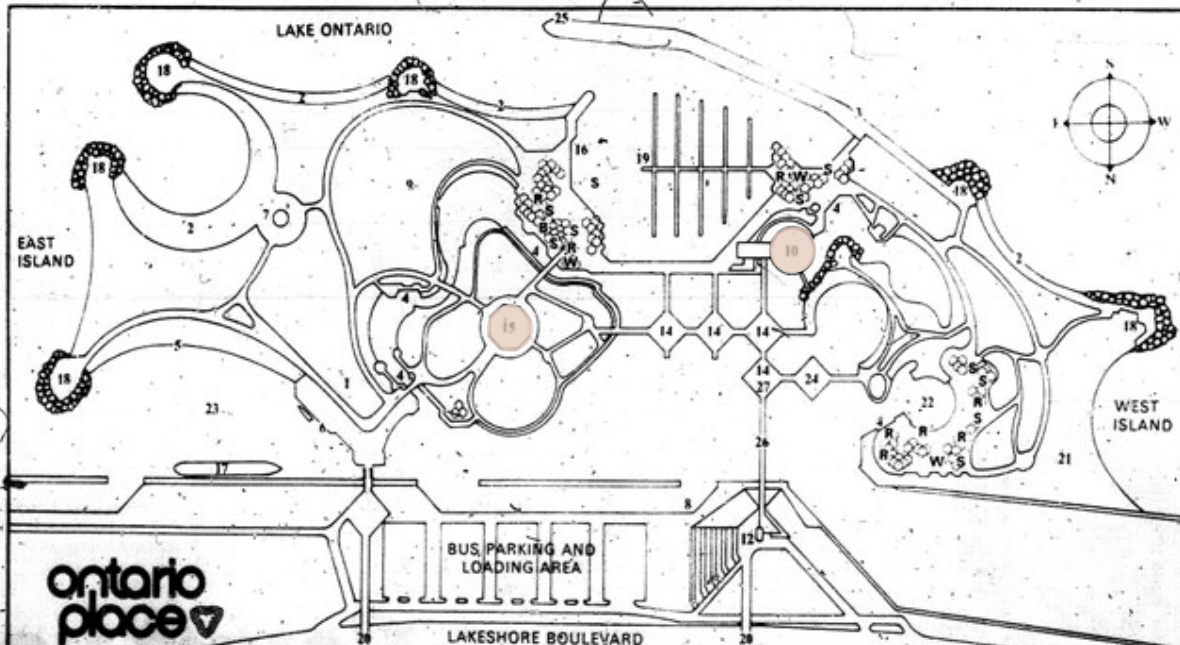
Thompson, p. 152-153

landscape biography

1968



PODS/ PAVILLION COMPLEX



FORUM + CINESPHERE

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exhibition buildings

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Exhibition Buildings: Design and Planning

A first stated objective for the creation of Ontario Place, along Toronto's western shoreline, was to rejuvenate the C.N.E (Gemmil, 1980, 7). When initially approached, "out of nowhere" by Special Projects Minister Jim Ramsay, architect Eberhard Zeidler advised him that his plan to refurbish and redo the existing Ontario Building as an exhibition pavilion on C.N.E grounds was "crazy!" Zeidler instead proposed that a new government complex be "built from scratch" and "plunked into the lake" (Interview with Mr. Zeidler, February 2013).

"Intrigued by the possibilities," Ramsay hired on Toronto-based Eberhard Zeidler and his team (Craig, Zeidler and Strong Architects) in September 1968. Their original instruction was to design an exhibition hall called the Ontario Pavilion (Gemmil, 1980, 11). In the design process, Zeidler began to think of the characteristics of iconic exhibition buildings like the Crystal Palace in London, the Eiffel Tower in Paris and Fuller's Dome at Expo '67 in Montreal. "What made these exciting to our imagination? What was it that led us not to forget them?" he wondered (Thompson, 1992, 154; Interview with Mr. Zeidler, February 2013).

He discovered that these world famous exhibition buildings had one thing in common. All expressed "the technological possibilities of their day." These exhibition halls, he argued, "were crystallized in a form that finally became an expression of their time" (Thompson, 1992, 154). Zeidler's final design for the Ontario Pavilion featured five futuristic steel-and-glass pods perched on stilts hovering 110 feet over Lake Ontario connected by modular ramps and bridges. Each 8,000 sq feet pod was designed using the province's principle steel manufacturers, for maximum flexibility and easy reproduction so the cluster of five "could theoretically grow in number endlessly" (Urban Space Gallery, 2012). The design for the pods were an iconic symbol and a "jaunty mix of nautical and high-tech design motifs" (Moffat, Toronto Modern, 2010).

Zeidler intended the Pods to accommodate nearly any use that might inhabit them. Provincial bureaucrats, on the other hand,

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exhibition buildings

landscape biography

believed educational exhibits were an integral part to the idea of the Ontario Pavilion. In satisfying their demands, arrangements were made for an arrival pod, a restaurant pod, and three exhibition pods. With commanding views over Lake Ontario, Zeidler declared his pavilion complex as a “public space for all Ontarians” (Ontario Place Magazine, 1971; Interview with Zeidler, February 2013). Upon entry, visitors were to be greeted by a Welcome Wall which featured a “giant electroluminescent mosaic information screen...the largest of its kind anywhere” that provided general real-time information about the site including date, time, daily activities, temperature and crowd conditions (Ontario Place Magazine, 1971). The restaurant pod featured four star restaurants, comfortable lounges and banquet and meeting facilities equipped with a dramatic views of the city through the walls of glass and the pavilion roof deck.

Initially, the exhibition pods were to contain three multimedia displays (with four main themes: Genesis, Explosion, Ontario Style and Challenges) exploring the past, present and future of Ontario. The advance publicity of the exhibition promised the experience and feel of the “Ontario personality, its hard work and integrity” (Gemmil, 1980, 8, 13). A dazzling experience employing the latest in technology in “sound, colour, motion and innovation” (Public Advertising Booklet, 1970), the exhibition recounted the natural and human history of the province from the beginning of life on earth to the post-WWII economic boom to anticipated challenges, including the degradation of the environment (Urban Space Gallery, 2012). The Pods were to be imbued with a sense of pride in Ontario’s history and traditions.

According to Gemmil, the design for some of the exhibition buildings at Ontario Place were derived from Expo ‘67 (1981, 12). The concept of the Cinesphere and Forum are attributed to Jim Ramsay and though designed by architect Eb Zeidler, both structures were intended to provide a “wide range” and a “fantastic diversity” of entertainment at Ontario Place (Gemmil, 1980, 12). The Cinesphere, a spherical triodetic dome modeled after the likes of Buckminster Fuller, was projected to seat a thousand patrons and was to include “an extra large circular screen twice” as big as the city’s largest, the McLaughlin Planetarium (Bradburn, Torontoist, 2010). The Cinesphere was home to the first permanently-installed IMAX projector in the world and was

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exhibition buildings

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an “undisputed success” on opening day. Dave Callaghan, hired to screen the opening-day film at the Cinesphere’s on May 22, 1971, described the massive IMAX projector as a “Saturn 5 moon rocket without the nose cone” (Bradburn, Torontoist, 2010). A second attraction called the Forum, an outdoor amphitheatre, was set in a basin created by four hills. It provided ample seating for approximately 2,500 people while the grassy hills were designed to comfortably accommodate crowds upwards of 8,000.

Exhibition Buildings: Engineering + Construction

Despite their sophisticated designs, the construction of the tridetic Cinesphere and the Forum at Ontario Place involved far fewer complications thanks to Gord Dowdell of Dowdell Pal Engineers, dubbed the “whiz kid structural engineer” for the operation (Personal correspondence with McMillan, February 2013). But, when preparing a building cost estimate for his design of the Ontario Pavilion, Zeidler discovered that engineering just five of the elevated Pods against the harsh waves and the strong winds of Lake Ontario would cost 80% of the project’s budget. “It just wouldn’t work!” But as fate would have it, Zeidler, embarked on a family vacation in the Bahamas, where he coincidentally observed the wave-breaking action of the barrier reefs (Urban Space Gallery, 2012). “How the hell is that possible?” Zeidler candidly recounted his “ah-ha moment” and his initial ideas for submerged artificial reefs to anchor his pavilion complex (Interview with Zeidler, February 2013).

These however, were deemed too unsafe for boats. Toronto Harbour Commissioner Chief Engineer, Jack Jones, provided an alternate solution that involved “lifting them up above the water as visible islands” (Interview with Zeidler, 2013). Extensive correspondence between Jim Ramsay and Jack Jones from March 14, 1969, onward revealed plans to construct an artificial reef of three sunken ships for breakwater protection and land-fill to act as the foundation of the pods. This reduced the cost of engineering the Pods from \$9 million to just \$900,000 (Toronto Port Authority Archives- 161 P-4-E).

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exhibition buildings

landscape biography

Eventually, the Province agreed that this landfill should be an extension of the exhibition buildings itself. Working together with the Special Projects & Planning Branch of the Department of Trade & Development, the architects, the Toronto Harbour Commission and landscape architects Hough Stansbury and Associates were carefully orchestrated by Stanley Randall and Jim Ramsay to produce a basic programme that met the recreational and promotional objectives of the site. This initial phase, comprising of a master plan for creating new islands from land fill was completed as early as Christmas 1968 (Hough Stansbury and Associates, 1970).

4

exhibition buildings



Stanley Randall unveiling the first model of the Ontario Pavilion at a press conference circa March 10 1969 (Source: the Toronto Star, March 11, 1969)

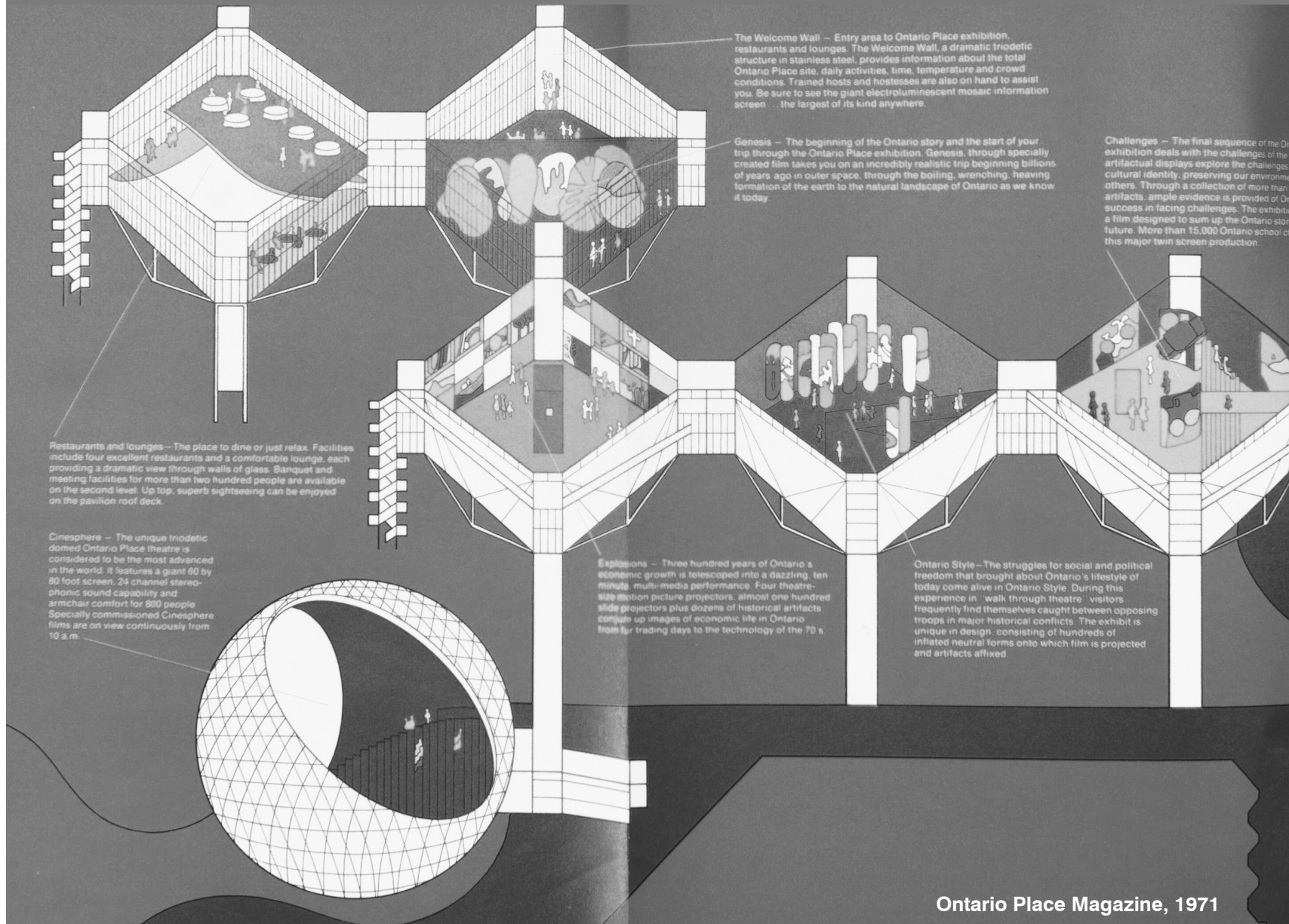
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exhibition buildings

landscape biography

1969

The intended function and features of the Ontario Pavillion designed by Craig, Zeidler & Strong Architects 1971



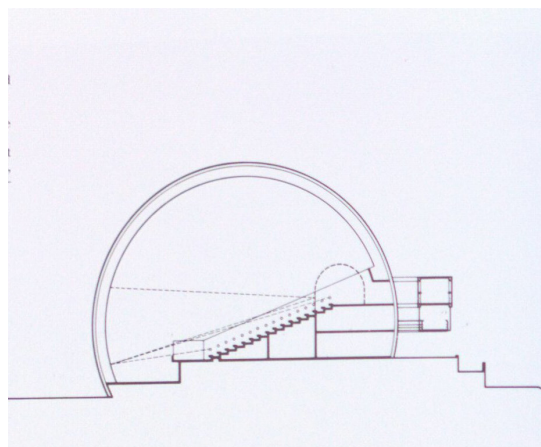
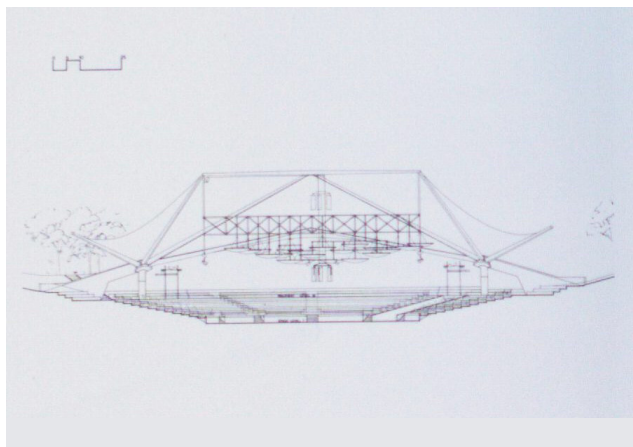
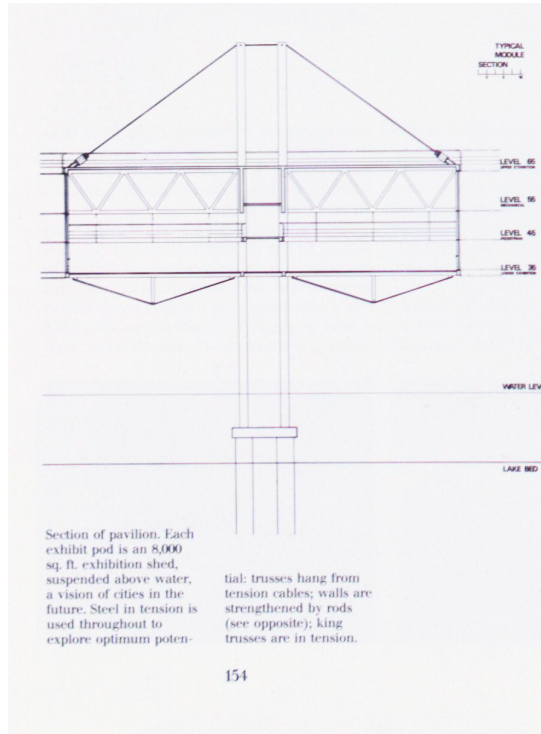
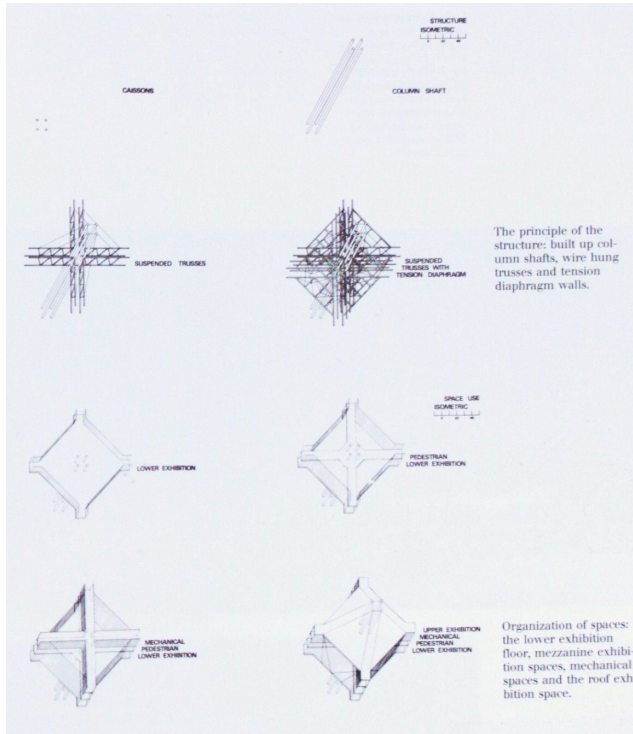
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exhibition buildings

landscape biography

1969

Craig Zeidler & Strong Architects



Province of Ontario
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
 T. R. Hilliard, Deputy Minister

CRAIG, ZEIDLER & STRONG
 Associate Architects



W. HARDY CRAIG
 & ASSOCIATES LIMITED
 CONSULTING ENGINEERS
 2175 VICTORIA PARK AVE
 SCARBOROUGH 734, ONTARIO
 1755 LASALLE BLVD.
 SUDBURY - ONTARIO



ONTARIO PAVILION

68077c 5.6.4

Exhibition Park Toronto

Drawing Title
**ELECTRICAL SITE PLAN
 AND LEGEND**

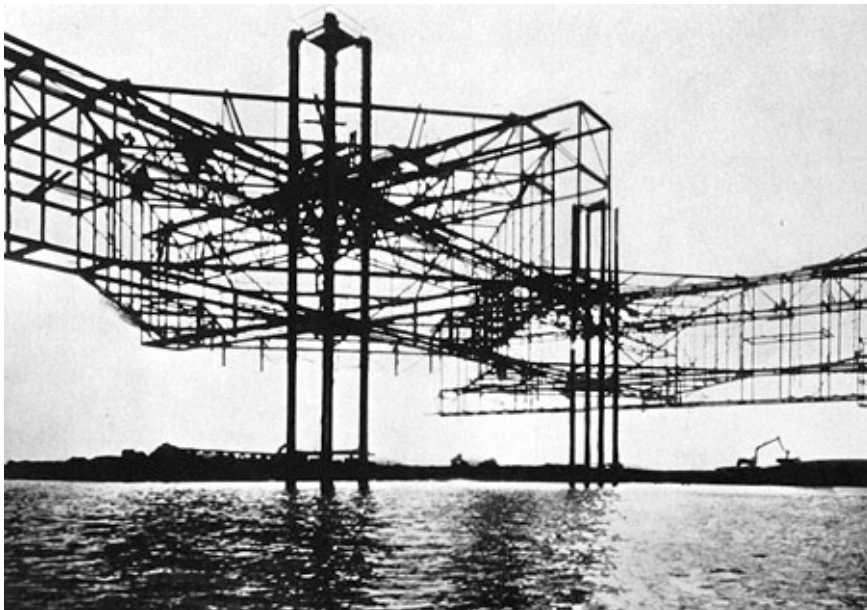
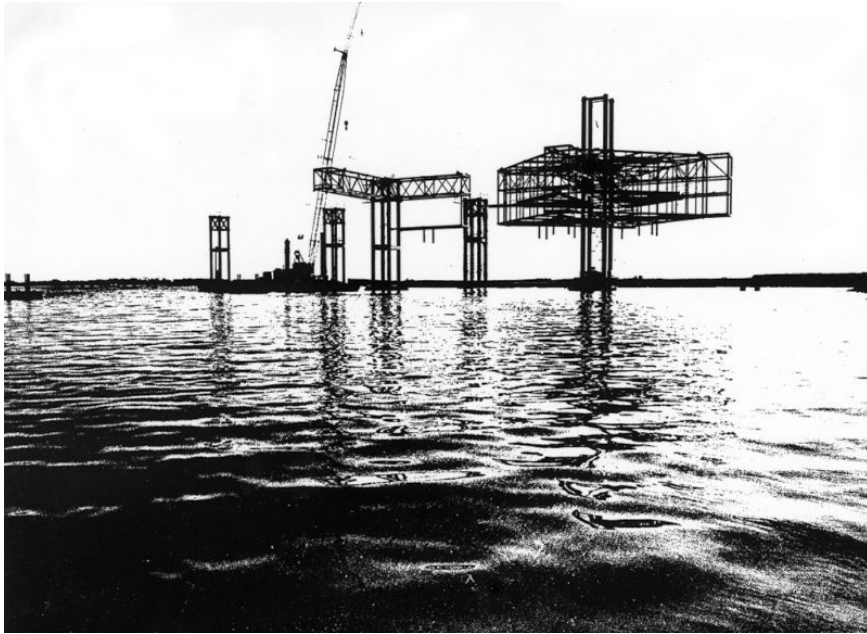
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exhibition buildings

landscape biography

1969



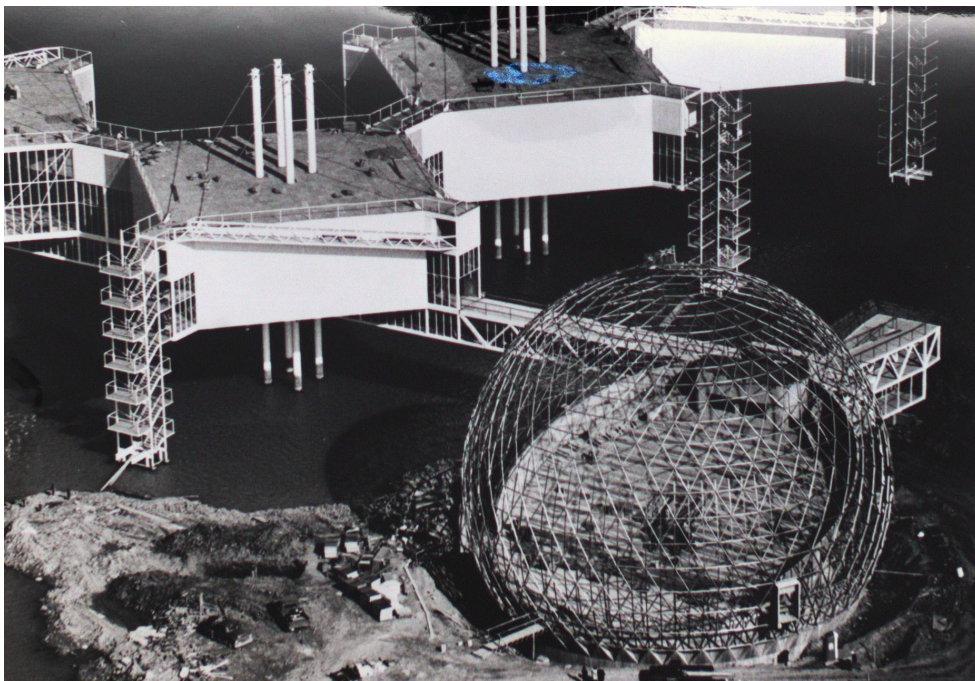
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exhibition buildings

Construction of the Pods (Pavillion Complex) and Cinesphere, 1970 (City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 200, Series 1465, File 332)

landscape biography

1970



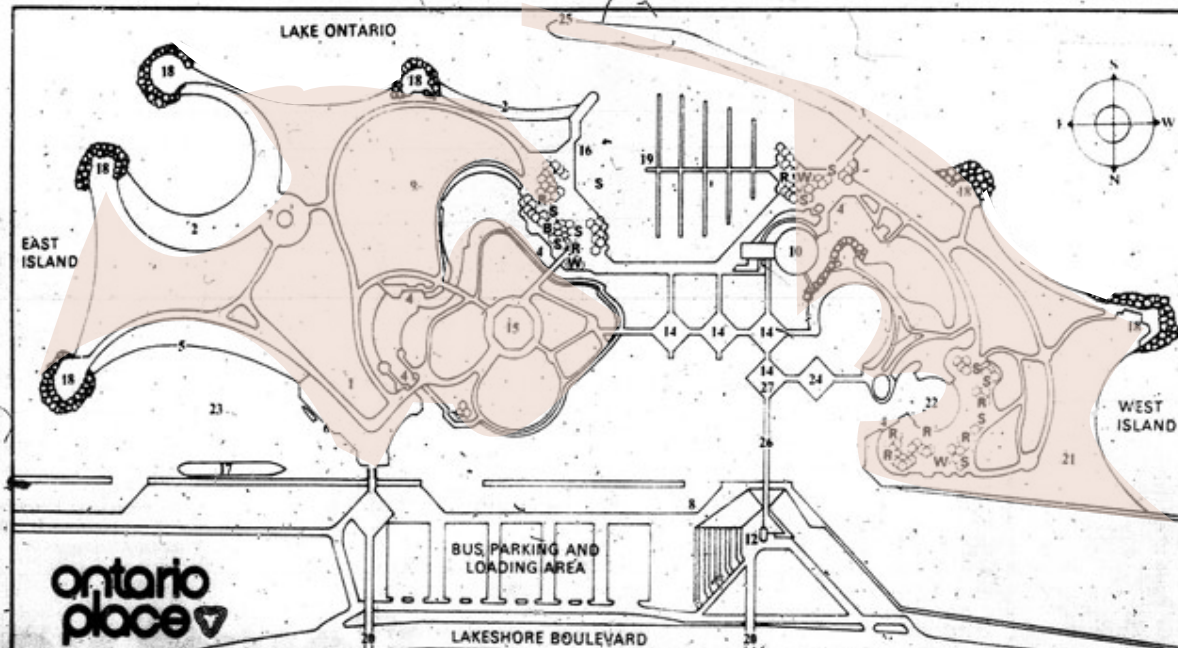
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exhibition buildings

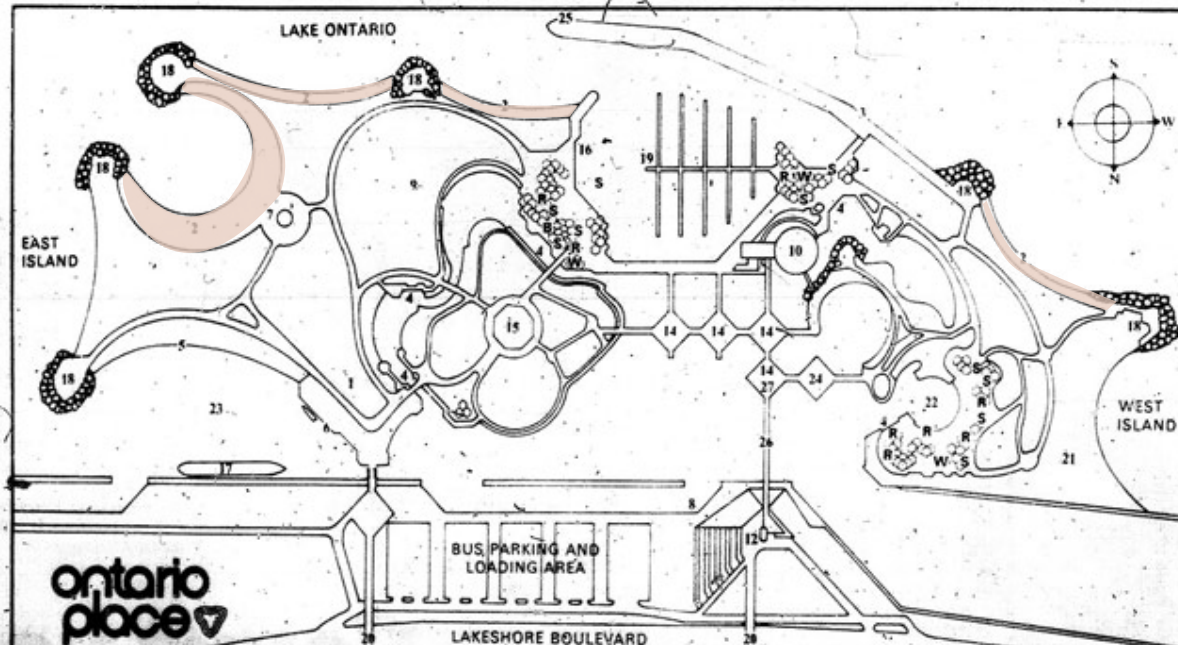
Ontario Place under construction, 1970. (City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 200, Series 1465, File 332)

landscape biography

1969



URBAN PARKLAND



BEACHES + LOOK OUT POINTS

4

urban parkland

landscape biography

Urban Parkland: Design and Planning

The challenge of creating urban parkland from landfill in the waters of Lake Ontario involved numerous physical and environmental considerations. The construction of this new offshore park however, avoided most problems that waterfront development projects usually encounter like time consuming environmental assessments, zoning restrictions and changes, or the relocation of existing businesses and homes (Gemmil, 1980, 16-17, 18). Despite these circumstances, landscape architects Hough, Stansbury and Associates identified a new set of rather challenging road-blocks:

Physical Factors

1. The pavilion had to be adequately protected from the wave action of Lake Ontario.
2. Lake Ontario had little value as a recreational resource as it was and required quiet water protected from wind and wave for land based activities.
3. Land based activities needed protection from the main force of the south west prevailing winds.
4. Lake Ontario had an average fluctuation in water level of 2.5 feet to 3 feet over the year. The design of edges had to respond to these criteria.
5. The islands would most likely be expanded in the future to allow connections with Harbour City and the Metropolitan Toronto waterfront.

Social and Recreational Factors

1. An imaginative programme had to be devised to attract people during the summer months and also throughout the year.
2. The island development had to pay for itself. Facilities had to be revenue producing.
3. Maximum range of activities was necessary.

(Hough Stansbury and Associates, 1970, p 3).

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urban parkland

landscape biography

Architect Eberhard Zeidler fondly recalled how the late landscape architect, Michael Hough, (Hough Stansbury and Associates) joined the Ontario Place design team in 1969, as they were struggling with the problem of how to design the islands that would connect their lake pavilion to the C.N.E grounds. The concept was to create an urban park which, despite its density, would seem natural,” recounted Zeidler and “Michael fulfilled this admirably” (Davis, Toronto Life Magazine, 1997). According to Zeidler:

“The result was islands and planting which looked as if God had been the landscape genius. From no one place could you see everything at once. One had to walk and explore. As you walked, you encountered different activities, and on the west shoreline there was simply quiet and solitude. The original Forum was nestled between trees to dovetail with the seating areas and the banks surrounding it, to create a wonderful ambience for evening concerts”

(Davis, Toronto Life Magazine, 1997).

Hough, Stansbury and Associates were also responsible for investigating optimum conditions for protection against the strong prevailing south-west winds blowing off the lake and the consequent wave action on a “totally created landscape” (Hough, 1989, 55). Controlling these elements was also critical to the stability of land fill that made up the islands and the “viability of recreation” in an exposed island environment (Hough, 1989, 55). According to Hough, “water, land and edge” were vital to this sense of orientation to the lake (Hough, 1989; Polo, 1999, 61) and the three island forms of Ontario Place were therefore a response to these requirements. The West Islands took the brunt of prevailing south-west winds. A heavily armored sea wall, constructed from three sunken lake freighters, and a series of armored points with connecting beaches protected the marina and interior edges from wave erosion. A continuous raised landform and a dense coniferous planting buffer parallel to south-west winds sheltered water and land activities and provided essential winter protection.

As a result, two contrasting physical environments were created at Ontario Place; a windward side facing the main body of the lake

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urban parkland

landscape biography

and a sheltered side that exploits quiet bays, canals and waterways and a wind-free landscape for social and recreational activities (Hough, 1989, 55). These landforms were tested in a 1/30 inch scale model at low speed in the eight foot University of Toronto's wind tunnel through a smoke visualization technique and a fine particle distribution technique. The landforms underwent several iterations.

The Hough Stansbury & Associates project records for Ontario Place housed at the Archives of Ontario contain the initial master plan study for the site in addition to a wave action study, island configuration, social and recreational considerations, marina facilities, retail clusters, landscaping for the Ontario Pavilion and children's area. Stansbury's design for a 1973 water play area designed by Eric McMillan is also included. (Interestingly, no transportation or connectivity studies are to be found!) These archival records reveal that the island landscape of Ontario Place was originally designed as a complex network of wooded areas with "varied sequence of vistas" and ponds carved into the land to increase water frontage and "seamlessly fuse architecture, art, nature and city" (Urban Space Gallery, 2012; Gemmil, 1980, 16). The guiding principle, like the Pods, was flexibility, so that changing demands of the site and its users could be fulfilled over the years to give new life to Toronto's waterfront (Thompson, 1992, 155).

Almost 30,000 trees, shrubs and plants were planted so the island would gradually evolve into an "untended woodland" (Urban Space Gallery, 2012; Gemmil, 1980, 6). It was no accident that the planting palette consisted primarily of native species in broad groups that corresponded to the various plant associations found in the Ontario landscape. The arrangement of vegetation onsite responded primarily to factors such as climatic environment, horticultural requirements and aesthetics (Hough Stansbury and Associates, 1970, 8). The West Island has associations of softwood, including poplar, willow, birch species and pine; the East Island has associations of hardwoods and some softwoods including maple, oak, and ash associations, spruce and cedar.

Evergreen trees including pine in the west and spruce in the East Island, combined with tough wind resistant materi-

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landscape biography

al including poplar, aspen and willow were planted in relation to major landforms. Cedar, hawthorne, oak and maple were planted around the forum hills and a sugar maple grove in the Children's Village. Grasses, flowering shrubs and plants with brilliant fall colours were planted along main pedestrian walks and sitting areas (Hough Stansbury and Associates, 1970, 8).

Three and a half miles of pathways and half a mile of graded, contoured beaches connected the site's East and West Islands and the Villages (Gemmil, 1980, 6). Rumor has it that Michael Hough overlaid a scale model of the University of Toronto's "excellent walking paths" onto the Ontario Place plans to check for appropriate walking distances to ensure the "correct placement" of comfortable rest areas and pathways. The location and form of exterior edges, beaches and armored points along the pathways were determined by marine engineering requirements, and developed in collaboration with the Toronto Harbour Commission (Hough Stansbury and Associates, 1970, 8).

Out of this "Spartan landscape," rose Zeidler's Pods, the Cinesphere and Forum in addition to a number of lookout points and promenades that dotted the Harbour Villages, the West Island and the East Island. The Villages, in particular, were intended to appear "like a rock formation jutting out of the land" (Urban Space Gallery, 2012). Zeidler emphasized that both, landform and structure were designed to "give an illusion of dimensionless space, exploiting technology to shape the society of tomorrow." (Whiteson, 159, 1983).

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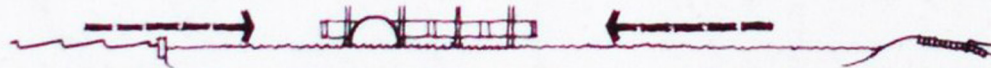
urban parkland

landscape biography

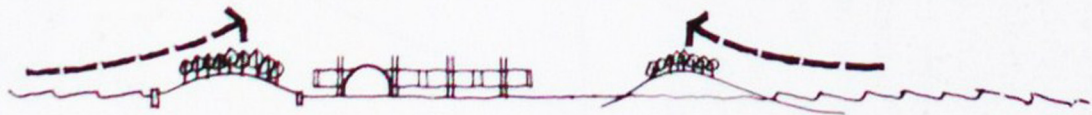
1969



Land and water. Climatic influences on the island concept, Ontario Place Pavilion subject to wind and wave action. Costly construction in exposed waters. No usable water or land for recreation activities



Wave energy absorbed and redirected by edge. Pavilion remains exposed to wind. Usable water surface only partly calmed and remains inaccessible



Landform moderates and redirects wind. Pavilion sheltered yet strongly water oriented

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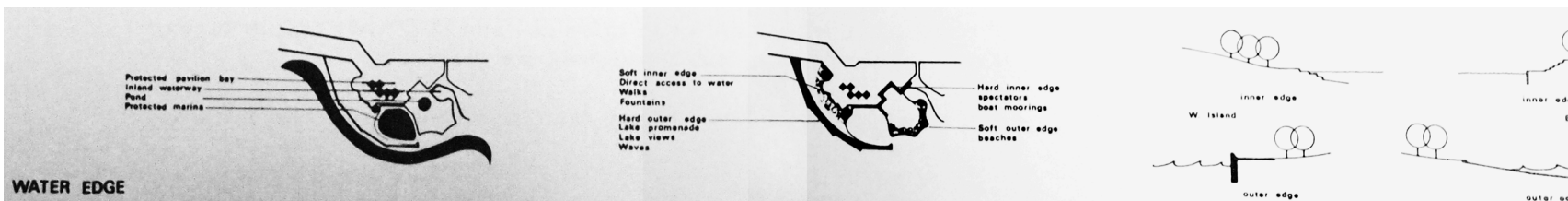
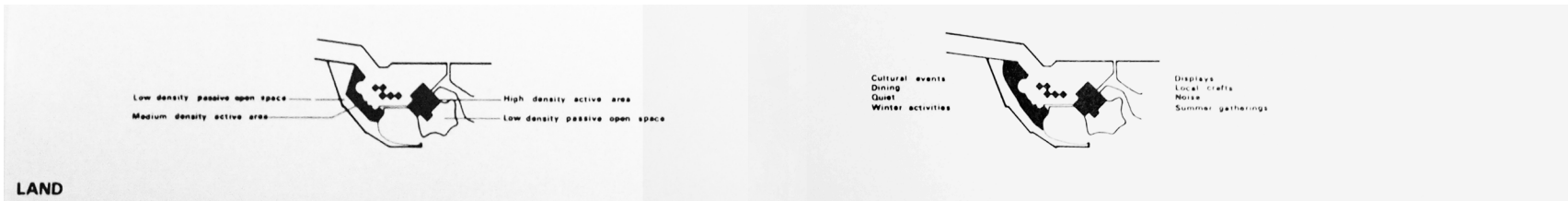
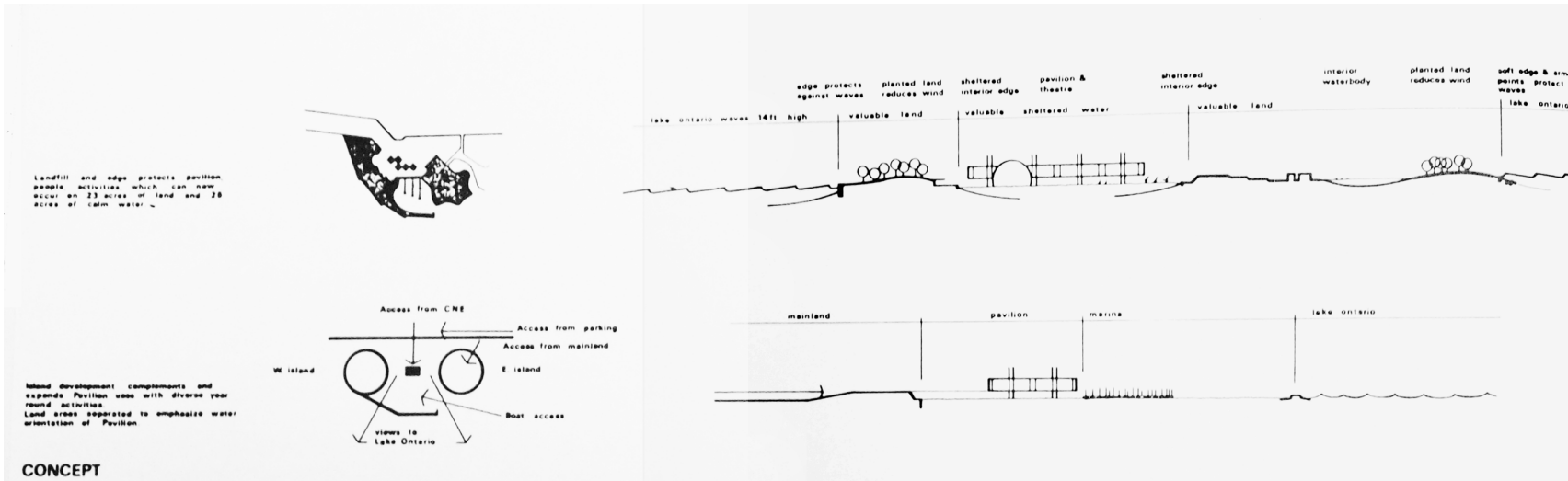
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landscape biography

1969

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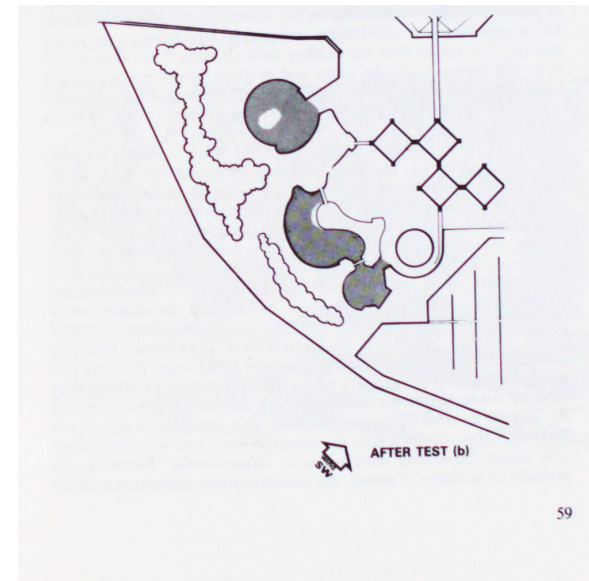
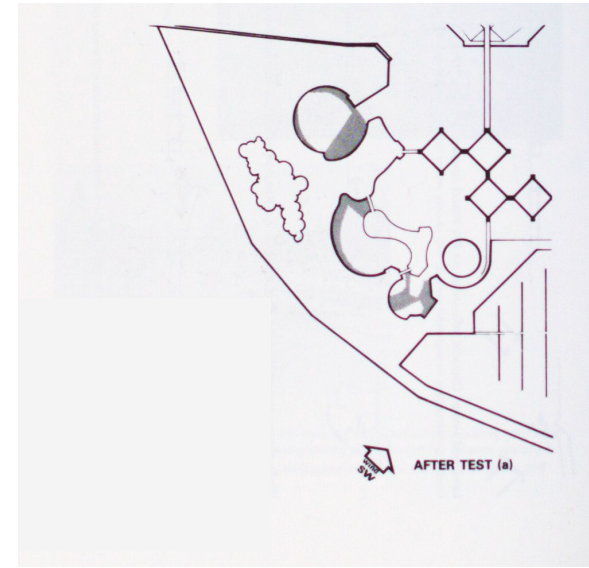
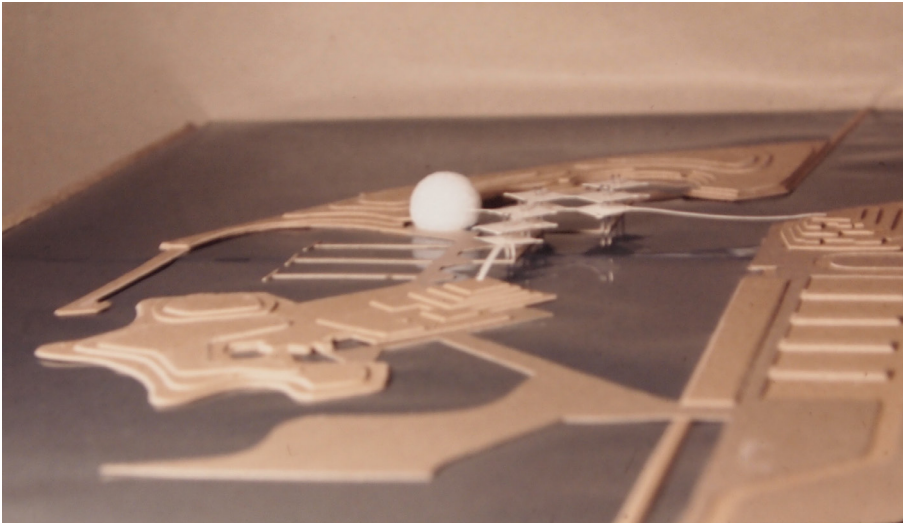
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Hough Stansbury and Associates, Ontario Place- The First Step in the Renewal of Toronto's Waterfront 1970

landscape biography

1969



Michael Hough. City Form and Natural Process: Towards a New Urban Vernacular. P. 58-59

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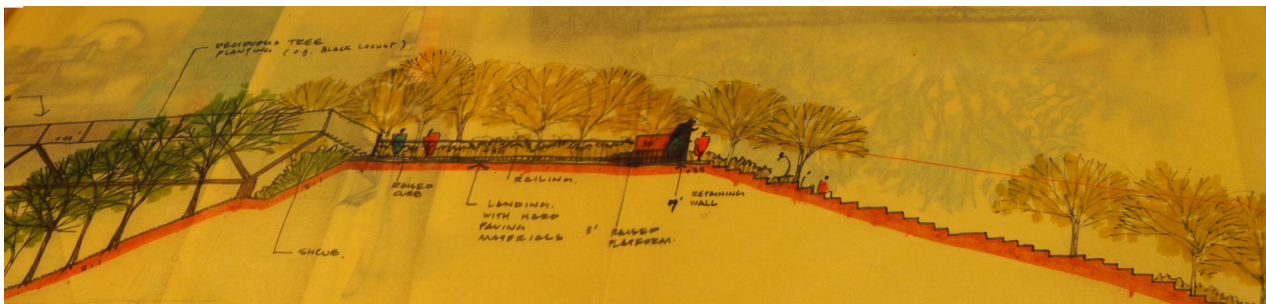
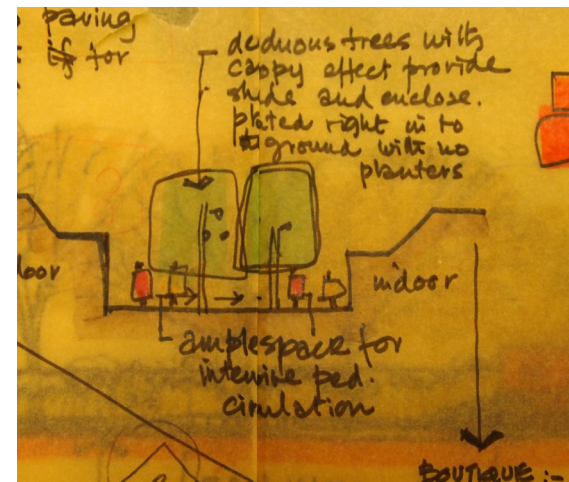
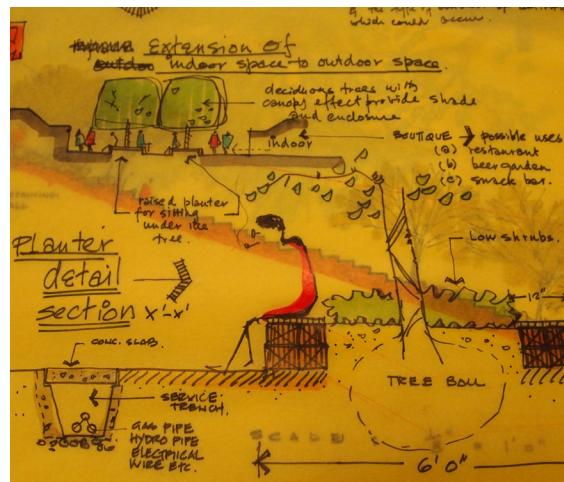
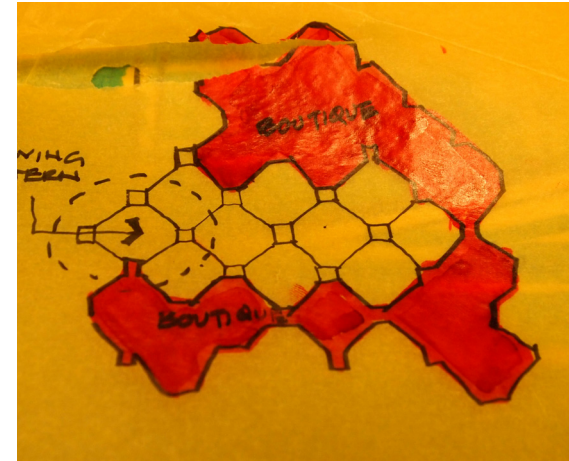
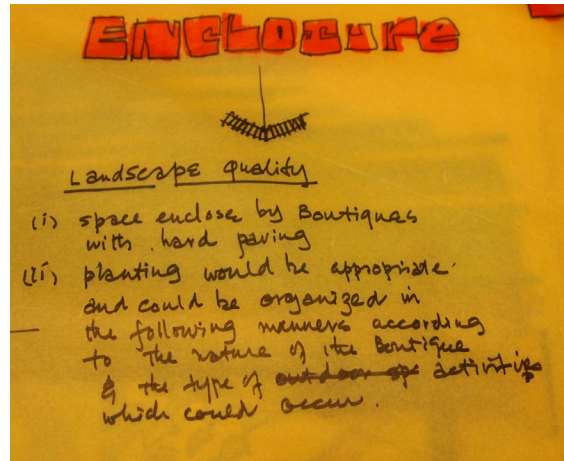
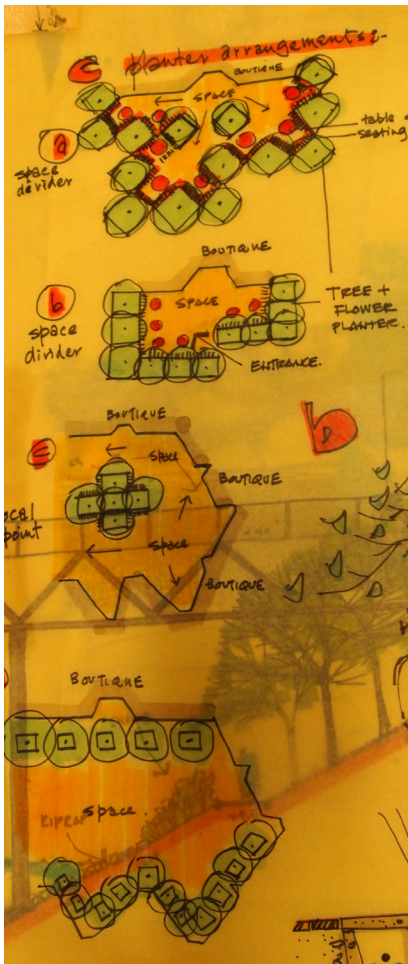
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landscape biography

1969

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urban parkland



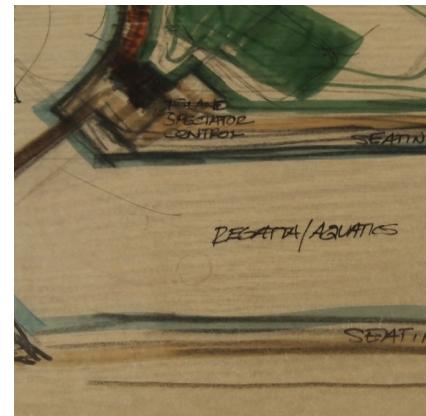
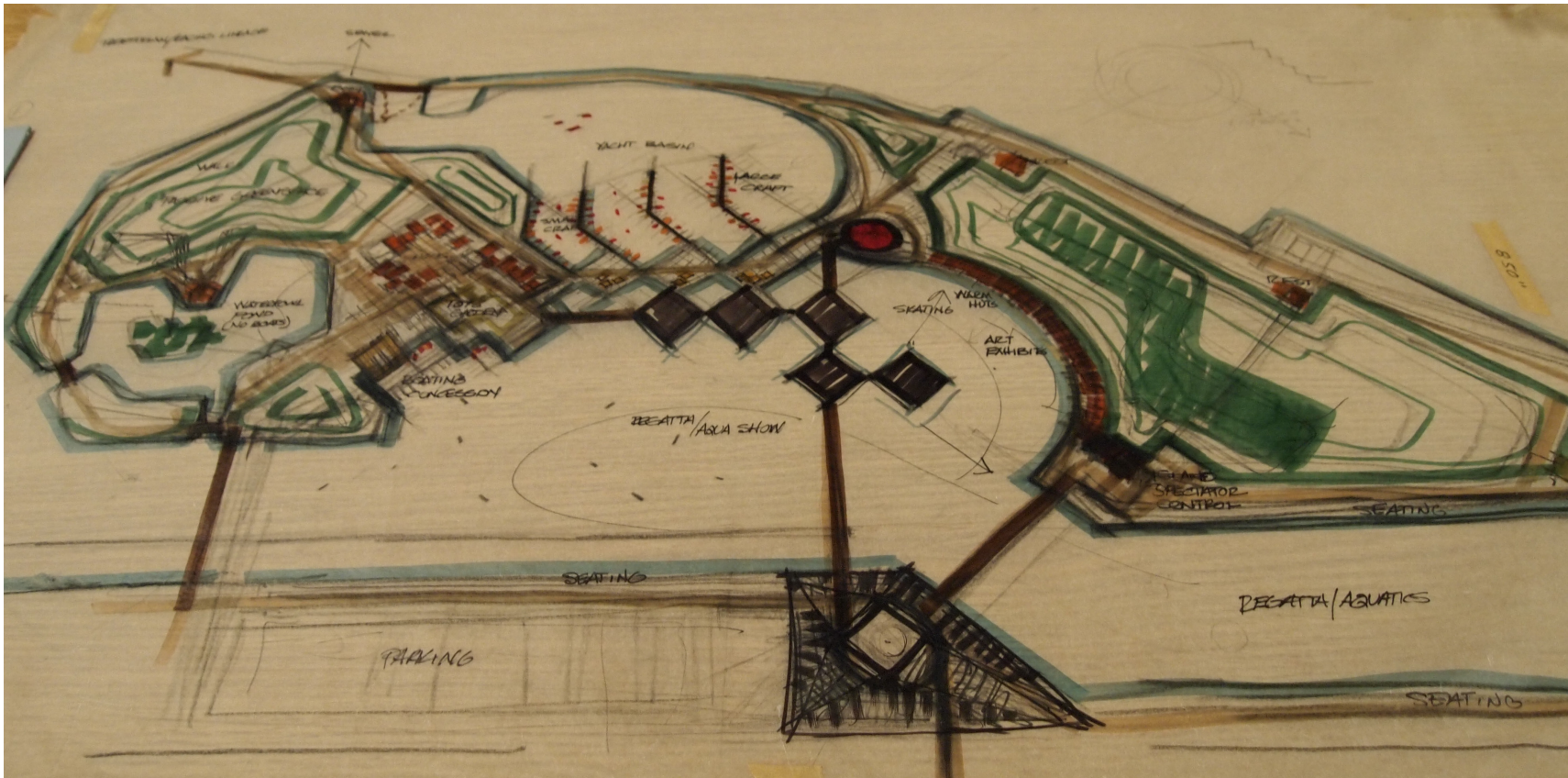
Michael Hough Fonds. Planting and Paving Concept Plan (Archives of Ontario)

landscape biography

1969

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urban parkland



Michael Hough Fonds. Intended Functions (Archives of Ontario)

landscape biography

Urban Parkland: Engineering + Construction

One of the first steps in the construction of Ontario Place was the sinking of three lake freighters (the S.S. Douglas Houghton, the Victorious and the Howard L. Shaw) in 1969, laden down with concrete and boulders, to form a seawall along the south rim (Gemmil, 1980, 16). Records revealed that the Province of Ontario purchased the three vessels for \$145, 000 together with equipment, tackle, stores, bunkers and everything else onboard these ships on April 22, 1969. Delivery was made by Upper Lakes Shipping Ltd. at noon on an undisclosed date in May 1969. These vessels and their contents were intended to provide a “portion of a breakwater” for the new Ontario Pavilion (Toronto Port Authority Archives, THC Records Department, CODE 1969). Zeidler fondly recalled taking his then six-year-old son to watch the three ships gurgling down into the depths of Lake Ontario (Interview with Zeidler, February 2013). “It was incredible,” he remembered. This quarter-mile long seawall was then paved over “with a concrete deck and parapet wall” and used as a promenade area and a lookout point (Ontario Place Fact Sheet, 1972; Toronto Port Authority Archives THC Records Dept, 1970). It was considered an innovative solution to the breakwater problem and an idea incorrectly attributed to Zeidler and Randall for several years. Correspondence between Jim Ramsay and THC Chief Engineer Jack Jones specify the Toronto Harbour Commission’s role as agents of the Government of Ontario in the procurement of these vessels and Jones was the man behind this idea.

By opening day in May 1971, 2.5 million cubic yards (514 acres) of fill from Metro Toronto excavations was used to create three islands covering 96 acres. Though previously assumed to be excavations from the Bloor Subway line (Filey, 1998, 76), archival records indicated that the clean fill was obtained from several construction projects in Toronto as stated in the Sources of Fill Survey conducted by Jack Jones in December 1969 (Toronto Port Authority Archives, THC Records RG- 3-3, Box 240). This included Commerce Court, Simpson Sears Limited, Toronto Sheraton Hotel, Hospital for Sick Children and the Y1 Section of the Yonge Street Subway to name a few (Toronto Port Authority Archives, THC Records RG- 3-3, Box 240).

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urban parkland

landscape biography

Dumping occurred year-round, and sometimes around the clock, to meet the province's projected opening date (Gemmil, 1980, 16). Material was primarily clay which when compact, by overburdening, became impervious material with little or no settlement, or drainage characteristics (Hough Stansbury & Associates, 1970). No land existed on the spot before March 17, 1969 when fill operations began and an estimated labour force of over 3,000 were employed in shaping, constructing and completing Ontario Place. Since March 17, 1969, an estimated 1, 460, 500 man hours were put in on the project (Ontario Place Fact Sheet, p.3). During the initial land fill phase, Zeidler recalled a "rather interesting" incident with six Metro Toronto police cruisers on site. "We didn't even have a building permit!" claimed Zeidler, "they [Stanley Randall and Jim Ramsay] were the senior authority on the project and so a permit wasn't needed" (Interview with Zeidler, February 2013). It had been previously speculated that plans for Ontario Place were not subject to full legislative scrutiny and debate.

This is further confirmed in a 1971 Globe and Mail article which recounts two specific incidents involving Metro and the Province. The first occurred only a few days since fill operations began. Work was stopped by a "Metro order" when police halted trucks taking fill to the site since they were driving in "the wrong way" on a one-way street thereby violating a Metro heavy-load bylaw (Globe and Mail, 1971). It was assumed, by the Province, that Metro had agreed to "informally wave" enforcement for landfill operations though then Metro Chairman, William Allen claimed that Mr. Randall never did have permission to dump fill (Globe and Mail, 1971). A second incident in September 1971 resulted in concern among Metro officials when they discovered that the Province had already begun work on the bridges over Lakeshore Boulevard to connect the C.N.E to Ontario Place, without consulting them. Albert Campbell, Metro Chairman in 1970, thought that there was no reason to fuss. "When somebody is doing something for you, you don't get mixed up in technicalities," he is quoted as saying (Globe and Mail, 1971). This situation would be very different today as the City of Toronto would not allow such a development within their jurisdiction "without having a voice in it" (Gemmil, 1980, 24). While Ontario Place was clearly a creation of the provincial government, it was most certainly not produced by "normal" or standard government procedures.

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landscape biography

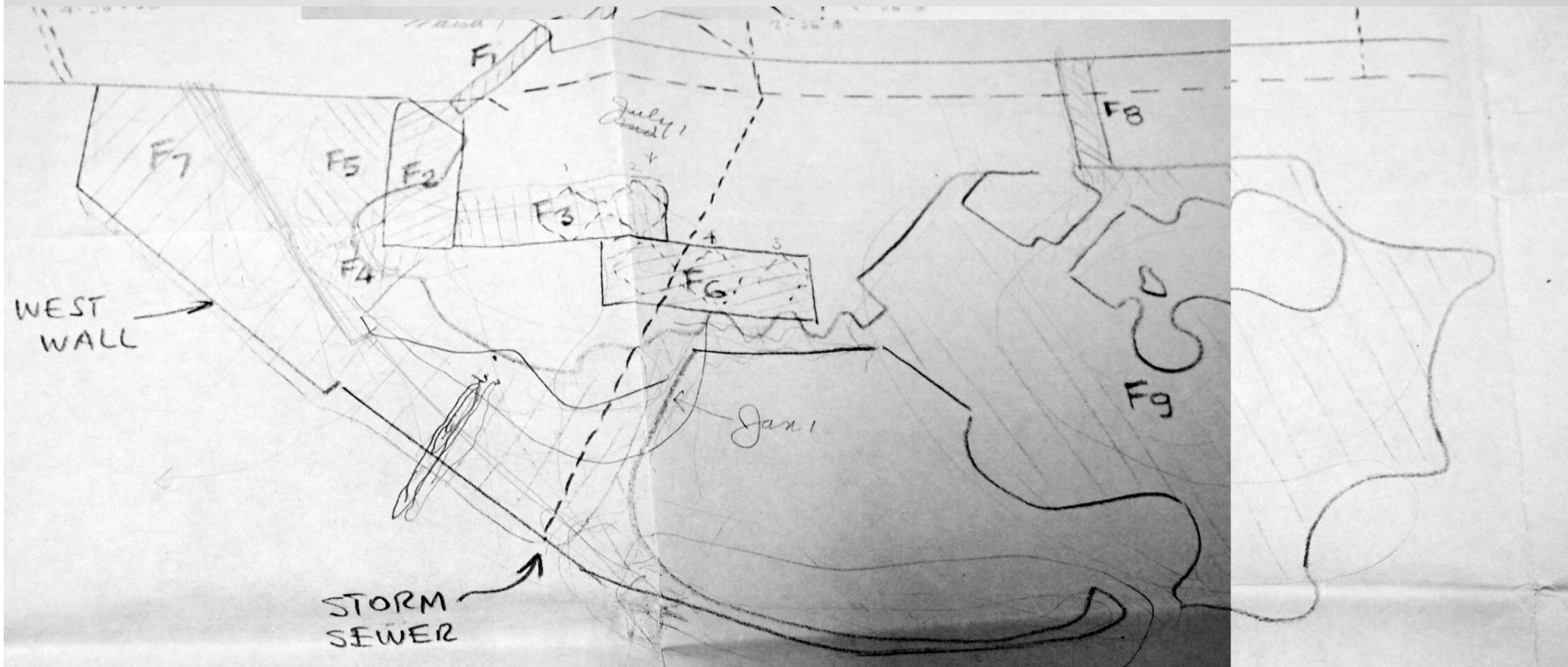
1969

PRELIMINARY

T.H.C. ENG. DEPT.

JAN. 10, 1969

NOTE • EXTRA FILL CAN BE BROUGHT IN BY HOPPER DREDGE AT RATE OF
200,000 CU. YDE./MONTH @ ABOUT 75¢ CU. YD. (1,200,000 cu yds)
LEAVING 11 FT. OF WATER OVER THE PLACED DREDGED MATERIAL
• DREDGE AVAILABLE IN 6 MONTHS.



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urban parkland

landscape biography

1969

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urban parkland

SOURCE OF FILL SURVEY Report No. 11

Item	Project	Location	Excavator	Yardage	Balance
9	Simpson Sears Limited	Mutual & Jarvis Sts.	Acton Excavating & Cont.Co.Ltd.	115,000	3,000
10	Toronto Sheraton Hotel	Civic Square	" " " "	250,000	170,000
11	Commerce Court	King & Bay Streets	Acton Excavating & Cont.Co.Ltd.	500,000	100,000
26	Hospital for Sick Children	University & Elm St.	Sugar Excavating Ltd. 2nd Phase	15,000	10,000
34	Travelers Insurance Co.	400 University Avenue	Rumble Contracting Limited	37,500	5,000
43	Y 1 Section Yonge St. Subway	Eglinton & Yonge	Dineen Construction Limited	33,000	28,000
<u>Future Work</u>					
3	Office & Apartment Building	S.E. Corner Bloor & Bay		1st Phase 181,000	181,000
3	Office & Apartment Building	S.E. Corner Bloor & Bay		2nd Phase 100,000	100,000
5	Holiday Inn	Chesnut Street		80,000	80,000
6	Mt. Sinai Hospital	University Avenue	Sugar Excavating Ltd.	120,000	120,000
13	Apartment Building	Church & Isabella Sts.		2nd Phase 35,000	35,000
18	Apartment Hotel	Gerrard & Mutual		8,500	8,500
35	Hyatt House Hotel	Avenue Rd & Cumberland St.		50,000	50,000
36	RCMP Division Headquarters	Dundas & Jarvis Sts.	Arjay Excavating Ltd.	17,000	17,000
40	Apartment Building	Gerrard St. E. Jarvis		65,000	65,000
41	Y2 Section Yonge Street Subway	1000' N Eglinton Ave to Lawrence Avenue	Acton Excavating & Cont. Ltd.	75,000	75,000
42	Metro Centre - CN & CP	Front & John Sts.		93,000	93,000
44	Blake Street School	Blake & Boulton Ave.		8,000	8,000
45	Interceptor Sewer	Gerrard St (Victoria to Woodfield & Lakeshore)	S.McNally & Son	80,000	80,000
ESTIMATED TOTAL AVAILABLE					1,228,500
(Ontario Place) Placed to Date Dec. 31, 1969					1,006,573
MINUTE					2,235,073
Estimated 600,000 c.y. available between January 1/70					
Of this amount 85% is estimated to go to "Ontario Pla					

SUBMITTED 6/2/70
 MINUTE 25.717
W. Pelvin
 SECRETARY

January 8, 1970
 J. Shackleton

Sources of Fill, Jack Jones, Port Authority Archives

landscape biography

1969



Landfill Operations to construct Ontario Place, 1969.

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urban parkland

landscape biography

1969



Aerial Views: Phases of Ontario Place barrier island construction and landfill operations 1969-1970.

(Thomsen, 1992, p. 152-153)

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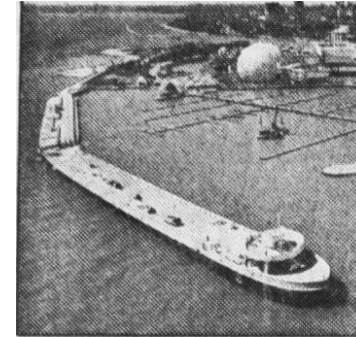
urban parkland

landscape biography

1969



(Thomsen, 1992, p. 152-153)



Sailor's old ship

Q Three lake boats were submerged to form a breakwater at Ontario Place. Which one of the three is the Victorious? I was a wheelsman on the Victorious.

A The three retired lake freighters were scuttled during construction of Ontario Place to create a 400-metre (quarter-mile) seawall on the Lake Ontario side. This was designed to protect the south marina and to guard against erosion.

Walking west to east along the seawall, they are the Howard L. Shaw, the Victorious and the Douglas Houghton, shown in photo taken during construction in May, 1971. The provincial playground along Lake Shore Blvd. W. opens for the season May 16.

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urban parkland

landscape biography

Reclaiming the Shoreline for the People: Public Access to the Waterfront

A community of 60,000 people, Harbour City, was to have been built in the water around the new Ontario Place site through further lake filling, creating an integral residential and recreational complex. This moment, had it come to pass, would have changed the trajectory of Ontario Place entirely. Planning for this lakeside community was developed in secret by Craig, Zeidler and Strong Architects, in consultation with several high profile urban thinkers, architects and activists including Jane Jacobs, Hans Blumenfeld, Murry V. Jones and Associates, Woods Gordon Management Consultants, Marshall Macklin Monaghan Consultants and John Maryon & Partners. The *Harbour City Report* (1970) was commissioned for the Province of Ontario, Department of Trade and Development, Special Projects and Planning Division as construction for Ontario Place continued (*Harbour City Report*, 1970). It had been speculated that this development was an opportunity to test Jane Jacob's principles in her book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. She lauded Harbour City as "probably the most important advance in planning for cities that has been made this century" (City of Toronto Archives - Remarks by Jacobs, 1970). The goals of the *Harbour City Report* (1970) were threefold:

1. Can the Toronto waterfront site contribute to a better urban life for this city?
2. Can housing be built and sold for a price within the reach of many families presently unable to buy a new home?
3. Is it financially feasible to develop a community?

(Remarks by Zeidler, Craig and Strong Architects, Presentation, 1970)

Zeidler stressed the notion of an "active leisure place" by "bringing water back into the life of the city" (Interview with Zeidler, February 2013). *The Harbour City Report* (1970) stated that a "water-site" would add a "new dimension" to Toronto's urban environment through an "easy and economical expansion" using additional land fill (*Harbour City Report*, 1970, 2). A high density (100-120 people per acre), low-rise development was planned for Harbour City and provisions were made to feature some low cost housing subsidized by Ontario Housing Corporation through profits derived from commercial and high-income housing (Harbour City

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landscape biography

Report, 1970, 2). Zeidler also stressed that Ontario Place should centre on a larger form – Harbour City. “The concept is to find an architectural democracy,” he stated in a 1971 TVO Interview, “..in Harbour City, each individual can fit what he wants. We can build the densities we need without destroying our human life” (TVO Interview, 1971). Essentially, Harbour City was intended to:

1. be a balanced residential community, spanning a wide range of household sizes, incomes and ages.
2. build recreation into everyday living - with an outdoor yard or garden terrace for most dwellings plus the canals for boating and skating etc.
3. be a vital, year-round residential district and at the same time will supplement and extend the recreational facilities of the Toronto Islands and lakefront.

(*Harbour City Report*, 1970, 2; Remarks by Craig, Zeidler, and Strong Architects, Presentation, 1970)

The purpose of the *Harbour City Report* (1970) was to graphically illustrate the development of conceptual plans for this proposed residential district. Unbeknownst to many, including Eb Zeidler, Harbour City was originally conceived by Toronto Harbour Commissioner’s Chief Engineer, Jack Jones. It was part of a much larger dream for Toronto’s waterfront explained in the Bold Concept for the Redevelopment of Toronto’s Waterfront plan (1968) (See Chapter 3.3). Former Toronto Harbour Commissioner and historical geographer, Dr. Roy Merrens elaborated on the very origins of this plan. “The Bold Concept is an old story,” Merrens says, “a story where many waterfront hopes and plans have come to nothing. But it is still valid... and in some case it is still going on!” (Interview with Merrens, February 2013). The question of public access to and the use of the waterfront versus private, commercial uses was indeed an issue throughout Toronto’s waterfront history (O’Mara, 1976, 57; Jones, 1968). Merrens carefully recounted the years when industry and railways bought or took over large tracts of the waterfront, essentially privatizing lands that were once envisioned as parkland. The Board of the Toronto Harbour Commissioners were created, in part, to break the railway companies’ domination of the waterfront (O’Mara, 36, 1976). Jack Jones’ Bold Concept was just another proposal that “came to nothing.” With a large operat-

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landscape biography

ing deficit and a “shaky outlook on port growth” (Eidelman, 2013, 50), the federal Toronto Harbour Commissioners “dreamt up” Harbour City as an “economic keystone” of a larger more profitable vision for Toronto’s post-industrial waterfront (Desfor, Goldrick and Merrens, 1988, 491; Interview with Merrens 2013). With this plan, the Toronto Harbour Commissioners’ thinking was “straight-forward.” They believed that public uses produced little revenue and so the sale of the land would provide greater economic and “purely commercial” benefits (Interview with Merrens, Eidelman, Osbaldeston, February 2013). Though the Bold Concept (1968) remained unfulfilled, a portion of the plan called Harbour City, was resurrected by the Province of Ontario under Stanley Randall. As in the case with Ontario Place, the city had little say in the matter.

Local writer, James Lorimer, made this point clear in an article for the Globe and Mail newspaper in 1970, “Does Harbour City fail to Cater to Civic Needs?” He argued:

“This is the heart of the contradiction that exists in the Harbour City proposal. Radical, experimental, innovative architecture and planning are being proposed, but the structure which is to implement this plan is exactly the opposite. Although the scheme is described as a great benefit to the city, control over the project is to be taken out of the hands of the city government, taken even farther than it otherwise would be beyond the reach of the citizens”

(Lorimer Globe and Mail, 1970).

Despite a citizen’s organized “Sink Harbour City” campaign, an independent poll conducted for the Government of Ontario revealed that 70% of those polled felt Harbour City was a good or excellent idea. 29% felt that it improved the waterfront appearance and 27% of those surveyed felt that it was an aid to the housing shortage in Toronto. Many also cited an improvement to the city as a whole and the creation of jobs as positive benefits. The same study found that 28% of adults polled would like to live in Harbour City. Their prime reasons were: 1. Its location - 47% 2. Its general “good place to live” environment - 20% 3. That it will be “modern” and “exciting” - 21% (City Archives, Harbour City Report Brief, 1970).

4

landscape biography

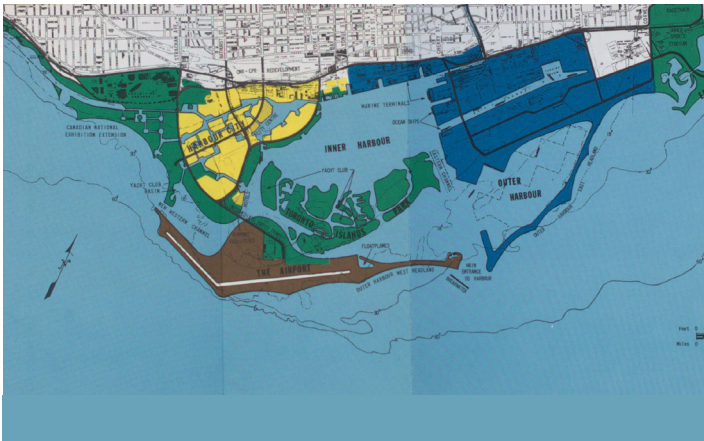
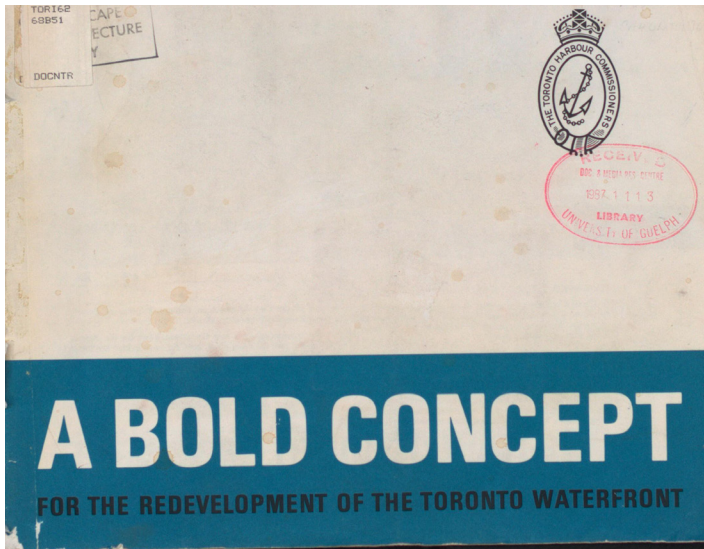
Though the *Bold Concept* (1968) and *Harbour City Report* (1970) were intended to “reclaim the shoreline for the people,” both were dismissed for a variety of reasons (see Chapter 3). These punctuated moments in Ontario Place’s history, had they come to pass, could have changed the trajectory of Toronto’s waterfront and further illuminated one scholar’s notion of the waterfront as “joint decision-trap” (Eidelman, 2013, iii). Zeidler’s detailed vision for Harbour City, including its housing typologies, circulation patterns, density studies and climactic considerations warrants a further, more detailed study in light of the 2012 revitalization agenda for Ontario Place which recommends the addition of residential units on Ontario Place’s West Island itself.

Landscape architect Michael Hough’s microclimatic studies for Ontario Place from 1969-1970, particularly the vulnerability of the West Island to prevailing south-west winds and lake action, should be reviewed if residential development is to be seriously considered for this location on site. Records and interviews clearly reveal that Ontario Place was initially designed as urban parkland. Though the idea of residential development is tied to Ontario Place’s pre-history, is it an appropriate solution for the future? Is Ontario Place’s existing infrastructure is capable of supporting an entire community as envisioned in the 2012 *Minister’s Advisory Panel on Ontario Place Revitalization Report* (Interview with Melvin, February 2013). And as historian James Lorimer noted in 1971 during the Harbour City discourse, it is crucial to re-assess potential benefits of the proposed residential development on Ontario Place for the City of Toronto at large. If expected benefits do indeed exist for the City, why is this project taken “out of the hands” of local government and other governing bodies like Waterfront Toronto?

This a punctuated moment that is trying to happen. If it comes to pass, it would forever change the trajectory of the site’s land use and perhaps alter the very intent of Ontario Place as a public space for all people.

landscape biography

1968



genesis of the plan

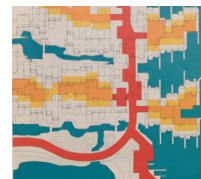
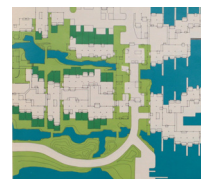
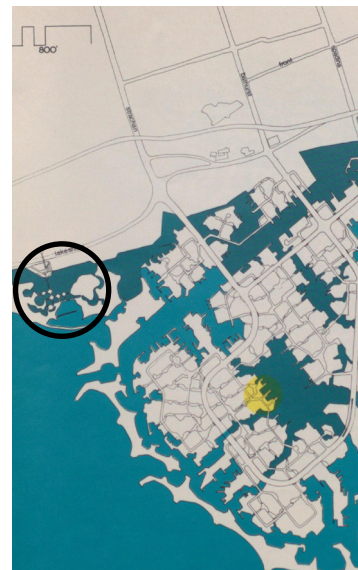
A Bold Concept for the Redevelopment of the Toronto Waterfront, Jack Jones, PEng of the Toronto Harbour Commission. 1968

4

reclaiming shoreline

landscape biography

1970



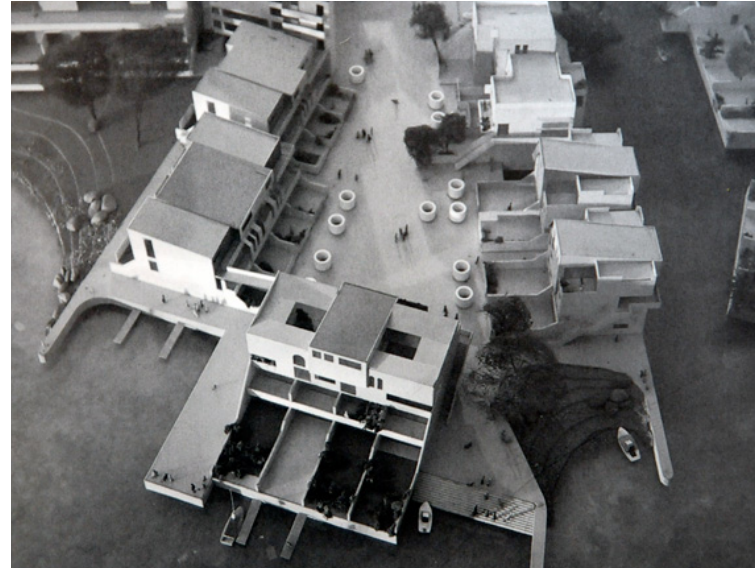
4

reclaiming shoreline

(Harbour City Report, 1970)

landscape biography

1970



4

reclaiming shoreline

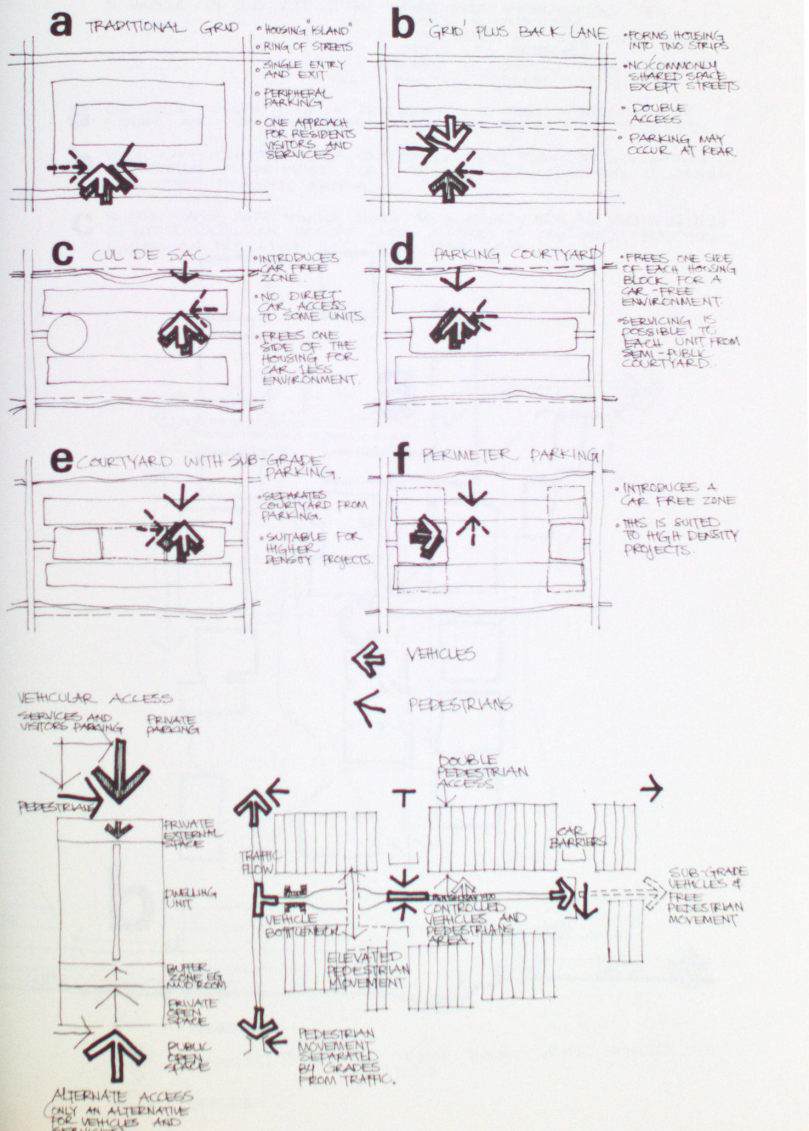
Project: Harbour City, 1970

Client: Government of Ontario – Department of Trade and Development

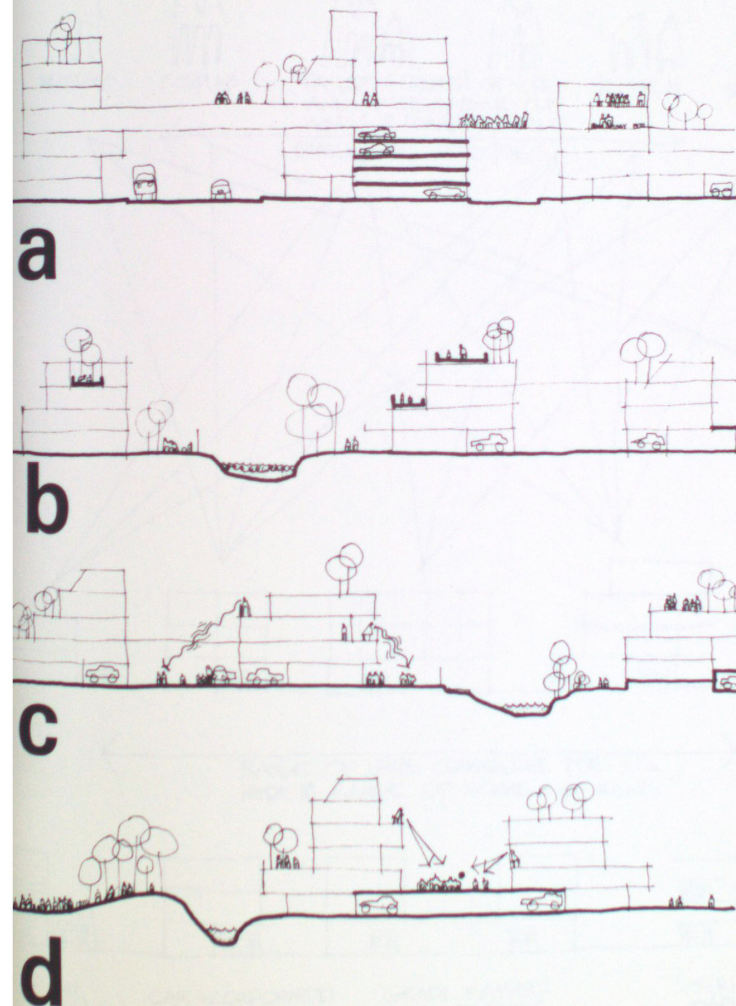
Authors: Craig, Zeidler and Strong Architects, in consultation with Jane Jacobs / Hans Blumenfeld / Murray V. Jones & Associates / Woods Gordon

Management Consultants / Marshall, Macklin, Monaghan / John Maryon and Partners.

housing groups, street pattern and parking



public and private open space



landscape biography

1970

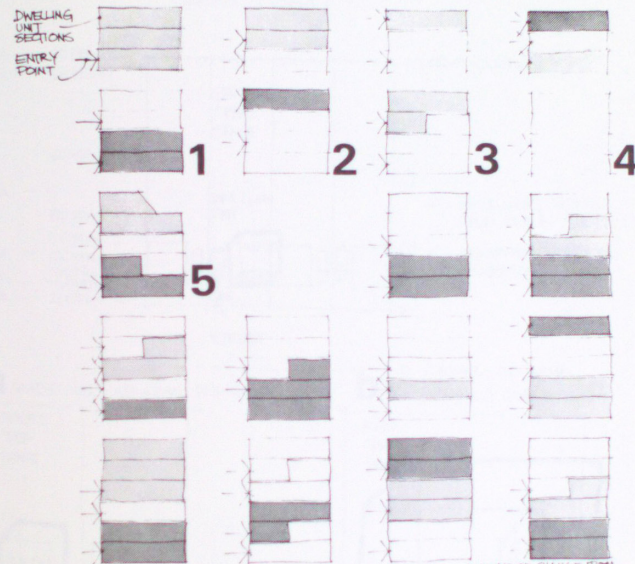
housing densities

HOUSING TYPE	DENSITY FFA DVA	DESCRIPTION	COMMENT
SINGLE DETACHED UNIT	3-12 1-4 15-24 5-8	LARGE HOUSE PLUS LARGE PRIVATE GARDEN	SUITABLE FOR AFFLUENT AND ELDERLY, AND VERY LARGE FAMILIES; ALSO WEALTHY COMMUTERS.
COURTYARD DWELLING UNIT	30-36 10-12 63-90 21-20	AMPLE DWELLING SPACE WITH SMALLER GARDENS OR LARGE PATIOS OR TERRACES.	AVERAGE HOUSE TYPE FOR MANY NEW TOWNS IN ENGLAND EG HARLOW, CRAWLEY AND STEVENAGE.
TOWNHOUSE SEMI-DETACHED UNIT	51-60 17-20 63-90 21-30	SEMI-DETACHED HOUSES WITH AMPLE GARDEN OR LARGE TERRACES, SPLIT OFF POINT FOR CARS TO BE GARAGED COMPLETELY, IN HIGHER DENSITIES CARS MUST BE UNDER OTHER BUILDINGS OR GROUND RISE OVER SUB-GRADE PARKING, (SPLIT LEVEL).	20 DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE IS MAXIMUM UK HAS RECOMMENDED FOR HIGH DENSITY INCREASE TO ACHIEVE LAND ECONOMICALLY. EXAMPLE OF THIS DENSITY IS CUMBERWOLD (20 DU/ACRE) AND UPPER UNITS ARE UNSUITED TO ELDERLY PEOPLE SUITED TO PEOPLE OF ALL INCOME GROUPS. USED BY MANY PRESENTLY FOR VARIOUS PERIODS OF D.U. HABITATION EG COUPLE, LARGE FAMILY OR FRATERNITY.
ROW OR TERRACED HOUSING	93-120 31-40	AVERAGE UNIT WOULD HAVE THREE TO FIVE BEDROOMS AND THIS EASILY CHANGED INTO A HOUSE AND FLAT OR SHOP.	STANDARDS PREPARED IN UK RECOMMEND 100 DPA IS A MAXIMUM FOR FAMILIES WITH VERY SMALL CHILDREN. 140 DPA IS MAXIMUM RECOMMENDATION FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT.
DOUBLE STACKED DOUBLE STOREY UNITS	121-140 41-47	CARS ON GRADE AND IN STRUCTURES UNDER NORMAL CONDITIONS THIS IS MAXIMUM DENSITY REACHED BEFORE HIGH RISE BEGINS.	SUITABLE FOR ALL INCOME GROUPS AND CATERES ADEQUATELY TO BOTH FAMILY AND NON-FAMILY RESIDENTS. UNITS ALL TO HAVE A PRIVATE OPEN SPACE (EITHER GARDEN OR TERRACE) AS WELL AS CONVENIENT ACCESS TO BOTH WATER AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACE.
MULTIPLE DWELLING UNITS	144-250 48-83	FOR HIGH DENSITY LOW RISE DEVELOPMENTS THIS IS PROBABLY THE MAXIMUM FOR PRESERVATION OF AMENITIES, FOR EXAMPLE OPEN SPACE AND CAR PARKING NEEDS.	UPPER LIMIT OF DENSITIES
HIGH RISE	250 PLUS 85 PLUS	HIGH RISE OF SOME FORM (OVER 9 FLOORS) BECOMES NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE FLOOR AREA RATIO (WHICH TOWNS COVERS) TO REACH HIGHEST DENSITIES. LIMITED OPEN SPACE (NORM IS OFFEN 150-200%) WITH PARKING BY AND UNDERNEATH.	MULTIPLE DWELLING UNIT HIGH RISE DWELLING UNIT

housing: comparisons

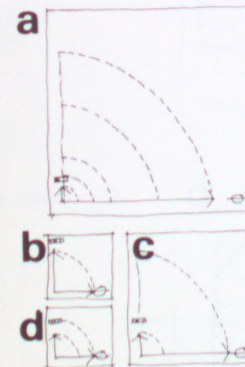
COMPARATIVE FLEXIBILITY AND CHANGE

HOUSING UNITS SECTIONS REPRESENTED SCHEMATICALLY BELOW CAN BE ARRANGED IN A MULTITUDE OF WAYS. SOME OF THESE ARE INDICATED. THE NUMBER OF UNITS AND STOREYS CAN BE ALTERED AT DIFFERENT TIMES.



COMPARATIVE RESIDENTIAL SPACE REQUIRED FOR 5,000 PEOPLE

← WALKING DISTANCE
 ■ PRIVATE VEHICLE
 ⊕ PUBLIC TRANSIT STOP



EXAMPLE OF CHANGE FROM ILLUSTRATION ABOVE 5 - 1ST PHASE - 0 TO 5 YEARS, TWO FAMILIES OCCUPY DOUBLE STACKED DWELLING - 6 TO 15 YEARS, ONE FAMILY GROUP AND BEGINS TO 5 UNITS AS STUDIO - 15 TO 20 YEARS, CHILDREN LEAVE FAMILY AND STUDIO THEN 6X BRANDS - 25 TO 30 YEARS, FRATERNITY TYPE GROUP KINGS IN - 35 TO 40 YEARS, GROUND LEVEL BECOMES A SHOP AND ADDITION IS ADDED TO ROOF.

FOR "a" - TRADITIONAL PLANNING (LOW DENSITY) - TIME (AVERAGE) TO WALK TO CAR IS ABOUT 1/2 MINUTE
 " PUBLIC TRANSIT STOP = 15 MINUTES
 " CAR = 5 MINUTES

FOR "b" - CONCENTRATED AREA (HIGH DENSITY) - TIME
 " PUBLIC TRANSIT STOP = 5 MINUTES
 " CAR = 3 MINUTES

FOR "c" - MEDIUM DENSITY PLANNING AREA - TIME
 " PUBLIC TRANSIT STOP = 3 MINUTES
 " CAR = 3 MINUTES

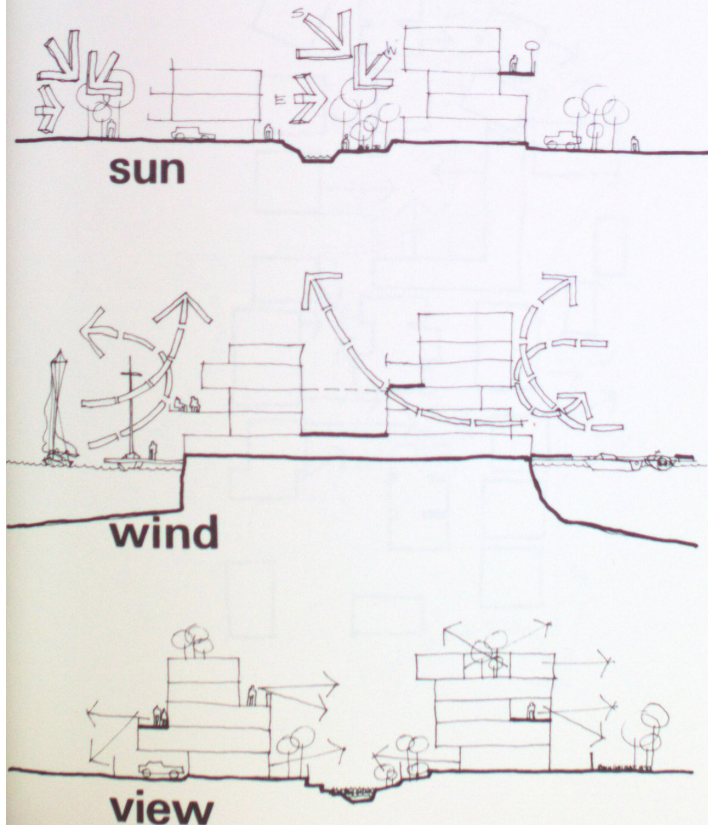
FOR "d" - HIGH DENSITY PLANNING AREA (HIGH DENSITY) - TIME
 " PUBLIC TRANSIT STOP = 3 MINUTES
 " CAR = 3 MINUTES

4

reclaiming shoreline

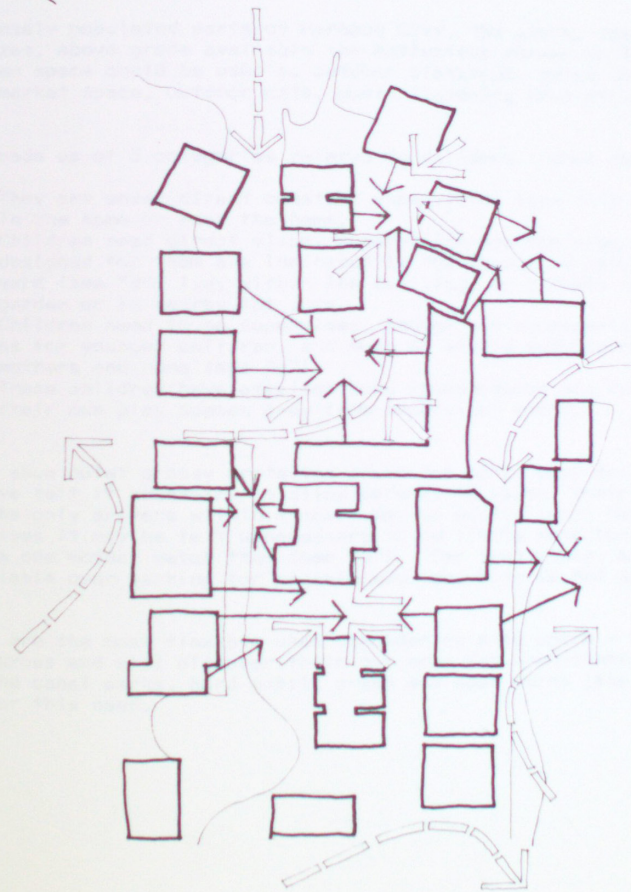
climate and orientation

- * BLOCKS ARE ARRANGED TO PERMIT PENETRATION OF BOTH SUMMER AND WINTER SUN; INTO COURTYARDS ESPECIALLY.
- * BLOCKS ARE ANGLED TOWARDS THE SOUTH-EAST AND NORTH-WEST DIRECTIONS SO THAT NO-ONE HAS TO FACE DIRECTLY INTO MORNING OR EVENING GLARE.
- * BLOCKS ARE STEPPED SO AS TO ALLOW AS MANY LEVELS AS POSSIBLE TO RECEIVE DIRECT SUNLIGHT.
- * BLOCKS ARE SET TO REFLECT WINTER WINDS (WHICH PREDOMINATE FROM THE WEST) BUT ALLOW SUMMER BREEZES TO FLOW EASILY (ALL DIRECTIONS).
- * BLOCKS POSITIONED TO PERMIT MAXIMUM NUMBER OF UNITS TO VIEW COURTYARDS, CANALS, AND MAJOR FACILITIES.



climate and orientation

- sun
- wind
- view



landscape biography

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landscape biography

Reclaiming the Shoreline for the people

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City Archives, Harbour City Report Brief, 1970)*

4

references

landscape biography

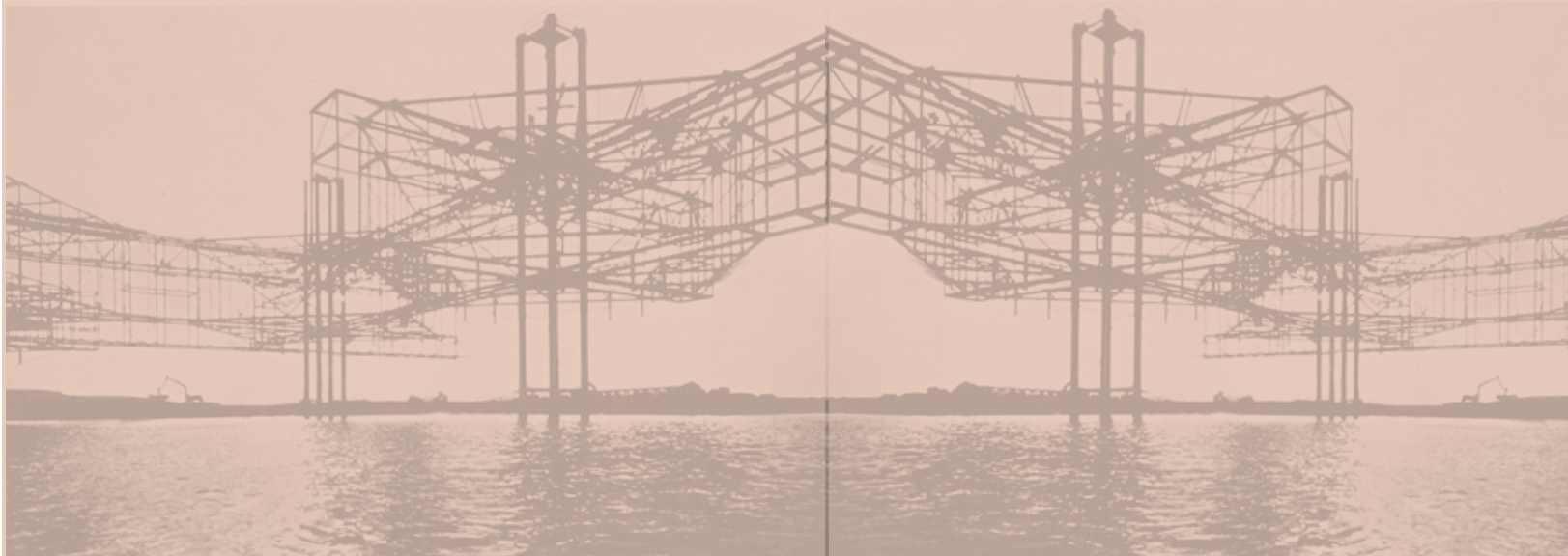
4.1 Origins + Planning (1968-1971)

4.2 The Early Years (1971-1980)

4.3 Transformations + Additions (1980-1990)

4.4 Theming + Attractions (1990- 2000)

4.5 Ecological + Cultural Programming (2001+)





(Toronto Port Authority Archives, June 17th 1972)

4.2 the early years (1971-1980)

landscape biography

Political and Economic Context

The alternate history of Ontario Place involving a large residential component, as proposed in Bold Concept (1968) and Harbour City (1970), were a far away thought as Premier William (Bill) Davis opened this urban public park to great fanfare, two days ahead of the original deadline, on May 22, 1971. Unlike the temporary exhibitions associated with Montreal's Expo '67, Ontario Place was Toronto's "permanent seasonal playground" (Greenberg, 1996, 202). At the opening ceremonies, Davis declared the site "a stimulating and permanent symbol of the works and achievement of the people of Ontario." He further remarked that Ontario Place represented "every inch" of the province including the "soul and spirit" of the many communities, cultures and traditions that comprised Ontario at the time (TVO Video, 1971).

Just as Harbour City had its critics, Ontario Place's Expo-like premise was also met with skepticism. One source in the City Archives' assorted, unmarked news clippings alluded to a Globe and Mail article whose author complained that "the Ontario government seem[ed] to have surrendered completely to narcissism as it gaze[d] at the modern outline of Ontario Place." Another article by Entertainment Editor Ron Shields in the Toronto Telegram, on the eve of this site's opening asked: "Is Ontario Place really anything more than a fancy adult playground? A concrete-and-steel Coney Island with cultural pretensions? With an inflated \$20 million price tag?" (Shields, The Toronto Telegram, 1971). Yet another article called Ontario Place a "Queen's Park show" and asked, "Is it the right thing in the right place at the right time, and has adequate care been taken to ensure its smooth integration with other activities in that area?"

Reviews were certainly mixed for many reasons. Ontario Place itself emerged through a rather informal procedure (See Chapter 4.1) that a Toronto Telegram writer described as "flying by the seat of your pants" (Shields, The Toronto Telegram, 1971). Led by the Prime Minister Robarts, Ontario Place was christened by his successor Premier Bill Davis. This 18th Premier of Ontario was self-described as a "private, modest man who gets things done" (TVO Video, 1983). He was sworn in as Premier on March 1, 1971, just two months before the inaugural ceremonies of Ontario Place and remained in office until 1985. Premier Davis, who succeeded "the management man" (Prime Minister Robarts), proved to be a "right-wing progressive" (White, 1985, 294) and his regime offered a governing style that

4

context

landscape biography

was more “decisive,” “pragmatic,” “cautious” and “rather bland” (Hoy, 1985, 221). While Robarts gave his Ministers free reign, Davis maintained a stronger “central rule” (Gemmil, 1980, 22). It was under his rule that the controversial Spadina Expressway was cancelled on July 3, 1971 and the Harbour City proposal abandoned soon after in 1972. In an interview with Bill Davis in December 2010, Eidelman confirms that Davis had other priorities he wished to pursue during his reign, “and the waterfront was not one of them” (Eidelman, 2013, 70).

The early 1970s in Ontario were characterized by a continued economic expansion and rapid population growth. The provincial government spent more money on health and education. In the mid-1970s, economic growth was slowed by a recession. Gemmil notes that a large influence in the Davis government of the 1970s was Treasurer Darcy McKeough. His political philosophy favoured “re-privatization” the withdrawal of government from functions in which the private sector was thought to be more efficient (Gemmil, 1980, 22). For many years, this was tied to the “remarkable durability” of the Progressive Conservative party, in office continually from 1943 to 1985 under a succession of leaders -but even after the 1985 PC collapse, the standard model endured.

During this decade, many changes took place on a municipal level as well. In November 1972, Toronto elected a new mayor and a more consultative management style and civic participation ensued. Toronto’s annual Canadian National Exhibition (C.N.E) continued as per tradition for three weeks in August during Ontario Place’s inaugural season. According to Jim Melvin, Honorary C.N.E.A President, there had been a thirty-nine year agreement with Ontario Place for a “shared gate” since its first year of operation in 1971. Crossover bridges at the Centre and West Entrance provide a direct connection between both sites and facilitated travel during the three week period (roughly August 20 to September 6) of the Canadian National Exhibition. Melvin remarked that there “was great symbiosis” and a “communal relationship” between the two facilities in its early years as both sites were “culturally different” (Interview with Jim Melvin, February 2013). It is interesting that though Ontario Place was intended to revitalize the C.N.E, there was no publicity or attendance studies regarding the potential of expected or actual benefits on the C.N.E after Ontario Place’s inaugural year or in years to follow.

4

context

landscape biography

1971



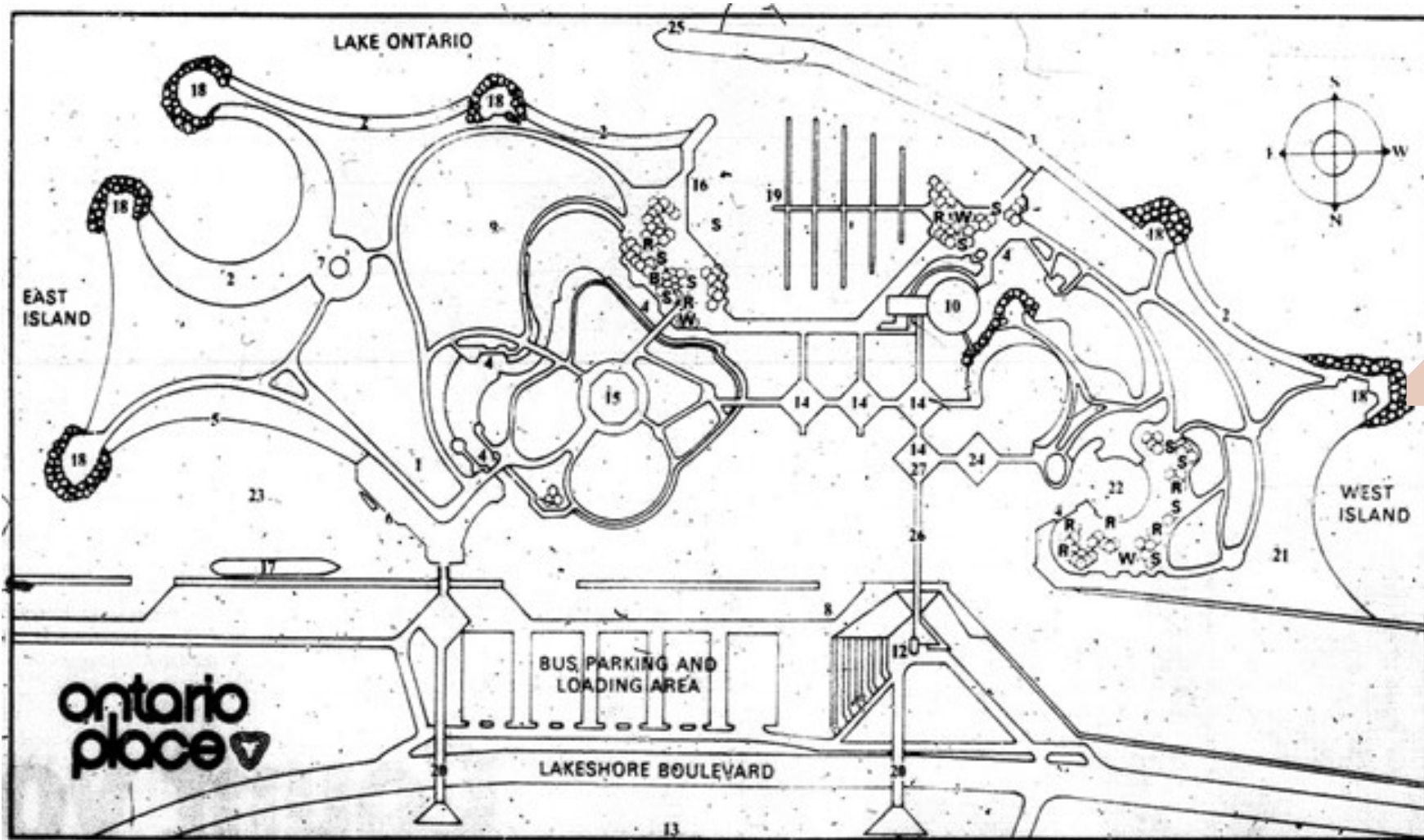
Opening Ceremonies with Bill Davis, Ontario Place. May 22, 1971

4

context

landscape biography

1971



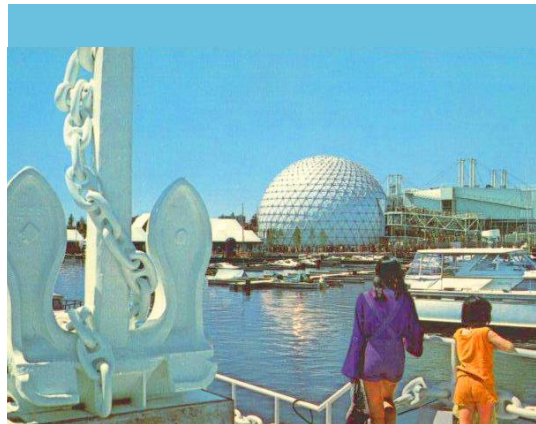
Alphabetical list of attractions at Ontario Place: 1. Administration, 2. Beaches, 3. Boardwalk, 4. Boat Landing, 5. Boat Rental, 6. Brigantine, 7. Campfire Beach, 8. Canal Boat Tours Dock, 9. Children's Village, 10. Cinesphere Theatre, 11. East Island Entrance/Drawbridge, 12. Entrance Plaza, 13. Exhibition Park/Parking, 14. Exhibition Pods, 15. Forum, 16. Harbor Boat Tour Docks,

17. HMCS Haida, 18. Lookout Points, 19. Marina, 20. Pedestrian overpass, 21. Picnic Area, 22. Reflecting pool, 23. Regatta basin, 24. Restaurant and Banquet Pod, 25. Sea Wall/Observation Ring, 26. Walkway to exhibits and Cinesphere, 27. Welcome Wall, W-Washrooms, R-Restaurants, S-Snackbars, B-Boutiques.

The site map shows the original configuration of Ontario Place and the recreational facilities available in 1971 as designed by Craig, Zeidler & Strong Architects and Hough, Stansbury and Associates and landfill operations by the Toronto Harbour Commission (The Telegram, May 21, 1971.)

landscape biography

1971



The girls of Ontario Place

There's a lot to see at Ontario Place, and some of the most things do the job for the dramatic public. Three of them are shown here modeling their different uniforms. From left to right they are: Catherine Whelan, a member of the Ontario Place Band; and Barbara Hamilton, a member of the Ontario Place Band.



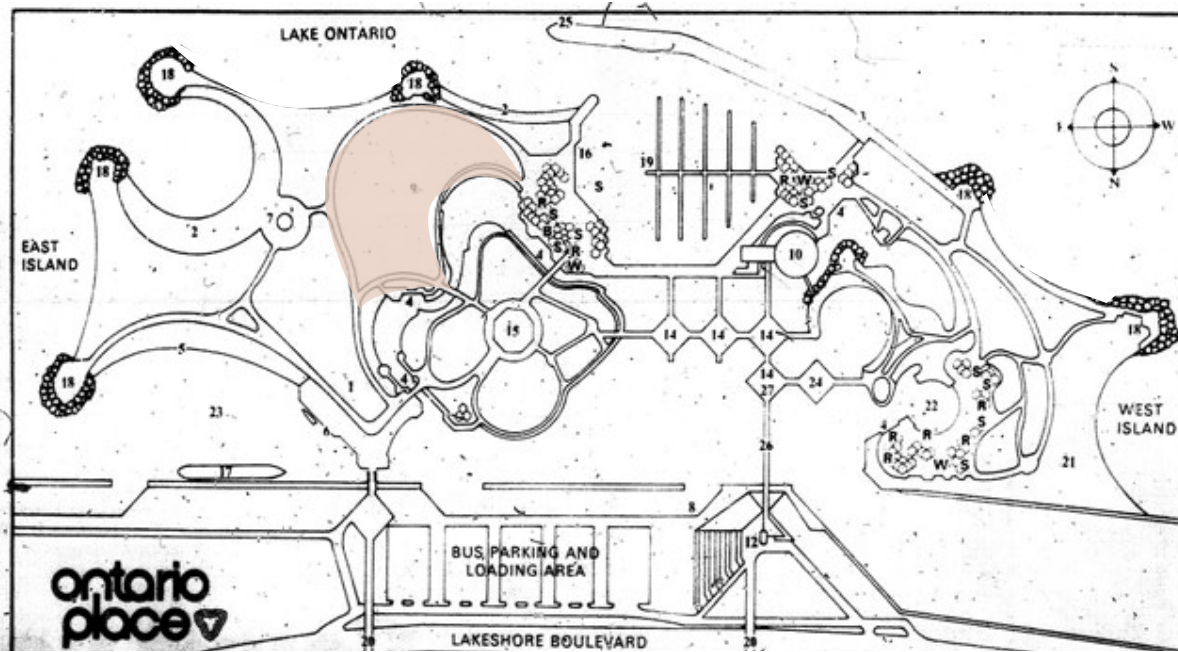
4

context

Inaugural Year. Ontario Place. May 22, 1971

landscape biography

1972



CHILDREN'S VILLAGE, 1972

4

children's village

landscape biography

Creation of the Children's Village

According to news reports from the City Archives, only 300 people queued up on Ontario Place's first day to experience the new \$23 million, 96 acre park despite near perfect weather. Though initially unsettling, this lower than anticipated attendance ballooned to 2.5 million people in the Ontario Place's inaugural season; "an attendance record it would never meet again" (Ontario Place: Our History).

Admission rates in the park's first season, from May until October 1971, were \$1 for adults and \$.50 for children. and among the popular elements were the Cinesphere (which screened four films on "larger than life" 60 x 80 foot screens) and the outdoor amphitheatre called Forum (which held a string of concerts by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra among others and featured a revolving stage added in 1974). Ironically, the pavilion complex or the Pods, which represented a major investment and intended as the focal point for Ontario Place, "provided a disappointing return" as only 24% of attendees went inside the Pods in the first year of operation (RFI, Baldwin & Franklin Architects with Len Rydall and Eric McMillan, 2010). Zeidler noted that it was "strange" that the exhibition became "the sideline" (Interview with Zeidler, 2013; Toronto Star, 1997). Perhaps among the biggest attractions at Ontario Place during its inaugural year, one cheeky reporter noted, was the prospect of drinking a beer outside (Toronto Star, 1997).

Presented as a "work in progress," Ontario Place was to be ever-changing" and "have something for everyone" (City Archives, Ontario Place Brochure, 1971). The site's features in its first decade were described in a Toronto Guidebook (1974):

If it looks like a scaled-down version of Expo 67, it may be because many of the same brilliant designers worked on both. Like Expo, Ontario Place is built in, and over, the water on about 96 acres of land on three man-made islands. Like Expo, it's an attempt to glorify Ontario's past, present and future by building a park-like amusement centre around a series of indoor films, displays and exhibitions. It's great fun: a far better experience, really, than the overcrowded tackiness of the Canadian National Exhibition. It contains 10 restaurants, three licensed lounges,

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children's village

landscape biography

nine snack bars, a film theatre with the world's largest indoor curved movie screen....a floating museum that used to be a World War II destroyer, acres of rolling parkland, an outdoor concert hall, a marina and a pavilion consisting of five steel-and-glass "pods" 40 feet above the water, which contain the reception area and some of the restaurants.

(Toronto Guidebook: Key Publishers, 1974)

Perhaps a cure for Toronto's Expo-envy, Ontario Place was Toronto's answer to Montreal's Expo 67. And like Montreal's Expo, Ontario Place was not overwhelmingly supported or particularly well received. As the first season drew to a close in October 1971, the Globe and Mail conducted an informal survey with Ontario Place staff and visitors. One of the "mistakes" was Ontario Place's lack of child appeal (Dreams of North America). Many visitors and employees reported that the site needed "jazzing up" with "rides and amusement things" (City Archives, Assorted News Clippings) In the long run, this view gained traction and began initially with the creation of the Children's Village. Due to cost overruns in 1971, the original design for the original Children's Village (1969) by Michael Hough was never built. When asked why so many of Ontario Place's original designs, now preserved in the Archives of Ontario vaults, were not executed, original architect Eb Zeidler simply sighed (Interview with Zeidler, February 2013). During his role as an informal personal consultant in subsequent years, Zeidler was witness to many changes. Simply put:

"Ever so often in government, a new minister comes in! And whenever they want to do something new, they want to call all kinds of architects to make suggestions. Too many get involved and mess it up. And that's the case with Ontario Place. You see it was treated more like an Expo-type site rather than a public park."

(Interview with Zeidler, February 2013).

The site, owned by the Crown in Right of Ontario was administered as an agency of the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Culture called the Ontario Place Corporation. Zeidler lamented that the Corporation "did not stick to the plan" and called it the

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children's village

landscape biography

1969



Michael Hough Fonds. Children's Village Layout Plan 1969 (Archives of Ontario)

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children's village

landscape biography

“worst of both worlds situation,” because the park did not resolve the cultural versus commercial identity for itself (Gemmil, 1980, 19). Interestingly, most of the capital costs of Ontario Place after 1972 seem to have arisen because of the new emphasis placed upon creating an amusement park. (Gemmil, 1980, 29)

Like Zeidler, British-born play designer Eric McMillan, speculated that the original design for the Children’s Village was one of the “wish list projects” that did not get realized in its first year possibly due to cost over runs and possibly because creative energies were being directed elsewhere (Personal correspondence with McMillan, 2013). He pointed to the unfulfilled Harbour City plan, of which Ontario Place was to be the corner stone. What prompted the development of the Children’s Village was that Ontario Place offered no attractions designed for children for the first year of its operation. The news heading into Ontario Place’s second season was discouraging: a \$2.2 million loss. As a result, admissions were raised by 50 per cent (from \$1 to \$1.50 for adults, from 50 cents to 75 cents for students) and new facilities were planned (Toronto Modern). Globe and Mail surveys from 1971 showed this lack of child appeal and Zeidler was given the responsibility of developing a concept to integrate a play facility into the East Island of Ontario Place. James Ramsay then got a “second opinion” from Expo’67 play designer, Eric McMillan. After reviewing Zeidler’s proposal for a children’s play area, McMillan simply responded that it was “boring.” There was certainly much room for improvement. (Personal correspondence with Mr. McMillan, February 2013).

Eric McMillan recounted Jim Ramsay’s personal invitation to present concepts of “what he would do.” In two weeks, McMillan returned with what he thought to be a more suitable concept for a children’s play area. Ramsay approved. McMillan and his assistant David Lloyed were placed in charge of the design for the Children’s Village at Ontario Place. “This is going to make you famous!” McMillan remembers Ramsay saying. Sure enough, the Children’s Village was hailed as ground-

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children’s village

landscape biography

breaking for its time and the publicity catapulted Eric McMillan to international stardom as an expert on child's play. Strangely enough, none of his plans or studies for the Children's Village are preserved in public archives though it can be speculated that they are housed within the Ontario Place Corporation's collection. Also interesting, that he had never seen Michael Hough's original plan though the Zeidler, Craig and Strong architecture office was engaged in McMillan's designs for a land play area.

Regardless, "it was an amazing lucky break" for McMillan. Seven months and \$700,000 later, the Children's Village opening at Ontario Place in 1972 proved to be an "amazing success" as attendance leapt by over 500,000 people during that season. McMillan regarded it as Ontario Place's "top attraction" and one of the site's most memorable features in its early years (Urban Space Gallery, 2012; Dreams of North America, Ontario Place: Our History). Perhaps most telling of its success was a Toronto Guidebook (Key Publishers, 1974) description of McMillan's Children's Village at Ontario Place as:

"Two acres of wonderfully imaginative fun and games, under a spiky, orange-vinyl canopy on the East Island, where kids from 4 to 14 can wade through the Foam Swamp, punch their way through the punching-bag forest, climb rope ladders to a tree house, and dunk each other in 15 or more different water games. After that, they step into a giant kid-dryer, shaped like a bird. About 5,000 children a day visit the playground, and all of them want to come back the next day."

(Key Publishers, 1974)

This revolutionary interactive play environment had a very different character than Ontario Place's later child-oriented attractions (Urban Space Gallery, 2012). Eric McMillan and David Lloyd's designs consisted of open-ended play equipment and featured concepts like ball crawl, tube crawl, net climb and birdie glides. The idea was to inspire activity and McMillan noted that, "a child needs play areas he can affect directly with his senses and curiosity." According to the British-born designer, "to a child,

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children's village

landscape biography

1972



Children's Village



Snake Tube Crawl

Eric McMillan, Children's Village, 1972. Dreams for North America)



Punch Bag Forest

4

children's village

landscape biography

play and learning are the same process” (Beals, People Magazine, 1979). McMillan revealed that some of the play elements at Ontario Place were inspired by a play attraction in the former German pavilion at Montréal’s *Man and his World*, while other designs were the product of minds “that had no real idea if it would work or not (Personal Correspondence with McMillan, February 2013). McMillan noted that the children proved them wrong by using the play elements in ways they had never intended. “It was a process that inspired new play concepts” (Personal Correspondence with McMillan, February 2013). Another benefit was that the original play structure itself required relatively little maintenance, staff supervision (aside from a nearby First Aid tent), or electricity. Most of the equipment could be stored away allowing the Village to double as space for events such as trade shows on an as needed basis (Urban Space Gallery, 2012). McMillan was appointed Chief Designer at Ontario Place for the Children’s Village in 1973 and proceeded to fix and service play elements “broken not by malice but by the joy of play” (Personal Correspondence with McMillan, February 2013).

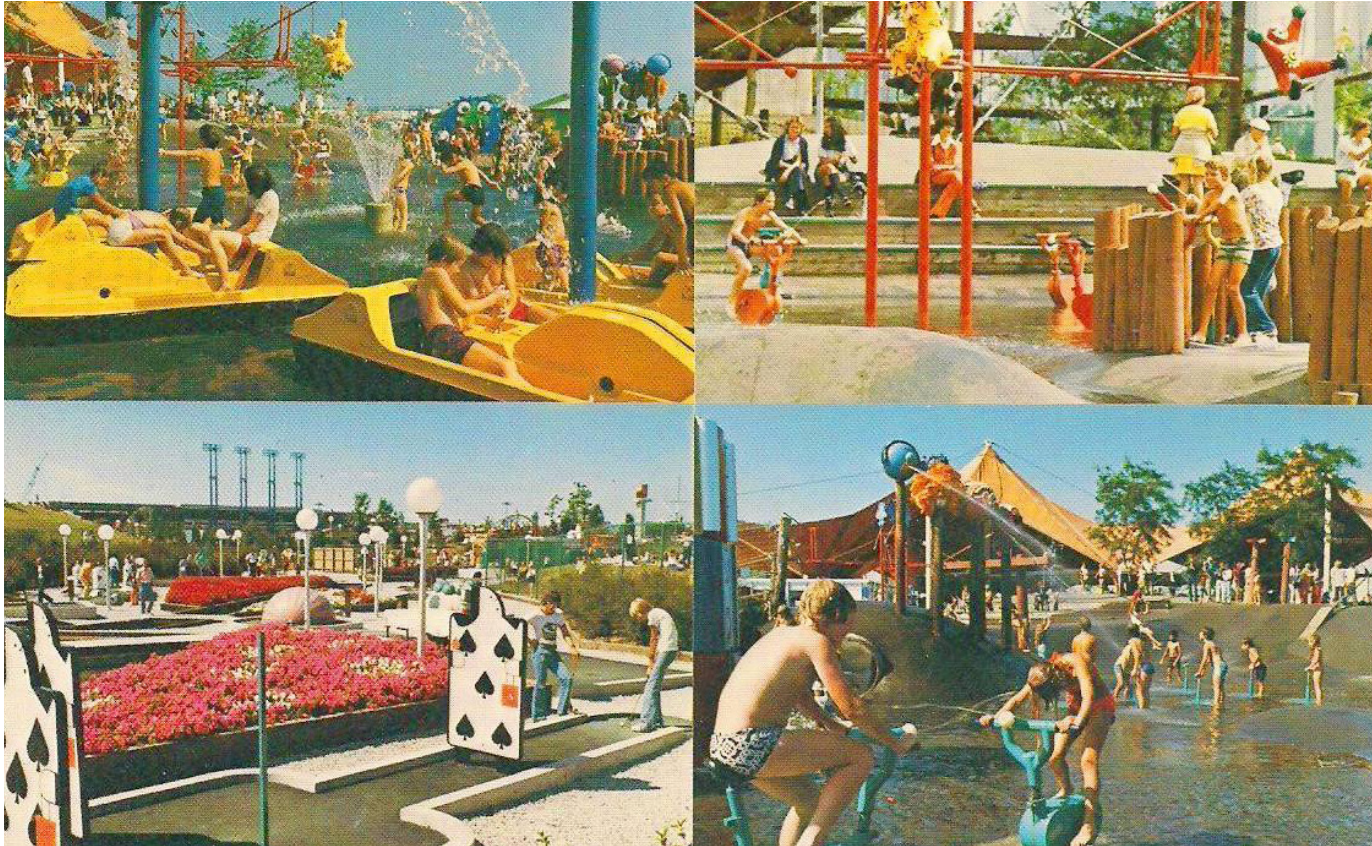
After the original Children’s Village opening and its subsequent success, it was easy to persuade the Ontario Place management to let McMillan build his design for a water play area. Jim Stansbury of the original team Hough Stansbury and Associates worked on the landscape design for this addition. The water play area opened in 1973, like the Children’s Village was an immediate success and according to McMillan, it also started a worldwide revolution in water play. Water was the element of play and equipment featured dams, fountains, rivers, bicycle cannons, taps, water cannon towers, spray bridges, hand pumps, tap tunnels and a giant child dryer (Dreams for North America). McMillan stated that the creation of a water play element “dramatically increased attendance” and received “more media attention than the initial opening of Ontario Place” (Dreams for North America). McMillan concluded that Ontario Place was a “dream job” and when it opened it was designed by the world’s finest talents. Unfortunately, he admitted, that no one in a position of power “saw its potential.” He accredited Eb Zeidler as being the “genius conductor” who made the original plan for Ontario Place unique. “His taste was impeccable,” he claimed and

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children’s village

landscape biography

1972

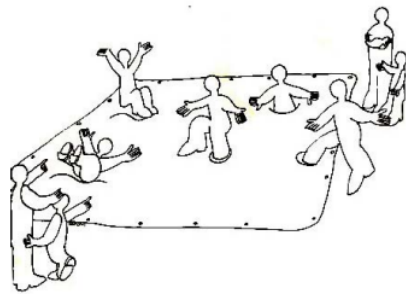


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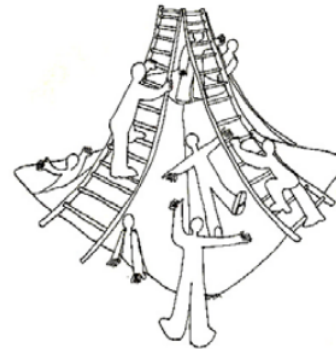
wet play areas



Hand Over Water



Foam Swamp



King of the Mountain

landscape biography

with a hint of remorse he added, “how cruel to see so much potential die!” (Personal Correspondence with McMillan, 2013)

The Children’s Village and the Water Play area changed the entire character of Ontario Place during its early years. These were punctuated moments in the site’s history that introduced new forms, while still contributing to Zeidler and Hough’s original vision and intent for the site as a public park. These punctuated moments gave way to subsequent 1978 additions: Canada’s first water slide which “pushed development right to the water’s edge” (Ontario Place: Our History). Today, there are no traces of McMillan’s Children’s Village and the Water Play area as they were eventually replaced by newer attractions and rides. And though McMillan fondly recalled his involvement at Ontario Place in the early 1970s, he has publicly decried the Ontario Place administration (or the “mad management”) at the time and described his experience as an exercise in “circumnavigating the swamp of political quagmire” which eventually caused him to resign (Hannay, Globe and Mail, 2012).

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children’s village

It's open at
Ontario Place

WATERSLIDE

Canada's wettest, wildest
new ride.



Right beside
Children's Village.

Schussplash! Fun for all the family.

Bring your bathing suit and take a run on the newest attraction at Ontario Place. You board your special mat at the top of Waterslide's mini-mountain. Then you schuss down 370 feet of twisting water to an exciting splashdown at

the finish. There's nothing like it. Waterslide is open from 10:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. daily. And it's just \$2.00 for a full half hour of fun. So bring your bathing suit. Bring your friends. Bring your family. And take a run on the wild side.



A Crown Corporation of the Government of Ontario, Ministry of Industry and Tourism, Honourable John R. Rhodes, Minister.



landscape biography

Political and Economic Context

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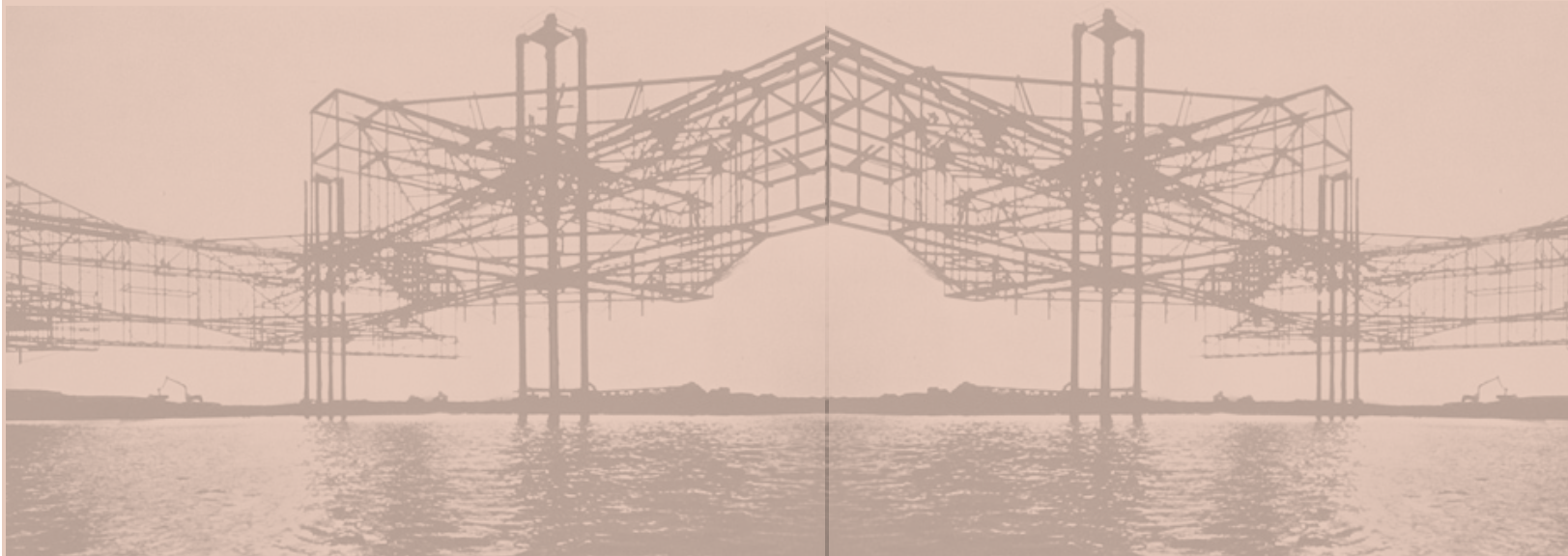
4.1 Origins + Planning (1968-1971)

4.2 The Early Years (1971-1980)

4.3 Transformations + Additions (1980-1990)

4.4 Theming + Attractions (1990- 2000)

4.5 Ecological + Cultural Programming (2001+)





(Toronto Port Authority Archives)

4.3 transformations + additions (1980-1990)

landscape biography

Political and Economic Context

According to the Ontario Place Corporation's Our History, the early '80s marked a time when the park had established itself as the "premiere waterfront destination" for a day out with the family (Ontario Place: Our History). At the time, Ontario Place was still "culturally different" from the grounds of the C.N.E (Interview with Jim Melvin, February 2013). Though great in the Bill Davis era (1971-1984), the public park began to lose its shine during the latter part of the 1980s. According to CNEA President Jim Melvin, "the celebration was not reinvented." Instead of reinventing the celebration, they "reinvented the land-use" (Interview with Melvin, February 2013).

Possibly due to increasing competition from American-style, mega sized theme parks like Canada's Wonderland which opened in 1981, Ontario Place began its own massive transformation of both, the site's West and East Islands whilst revamping the exhibitions housed in the Pods. These included: "bumper boats; a waterslide; Future Pod, an exciting showcase of the latest in high technology developments; and Ontario North Now, Northern Ontario's theme pavilion" (Ontario Traveler's Encyclopedia, 1980s edition)

In an effort to boost "sagging" attendance, the Province gave Ontario Place \$10.8 million in 1984 for "major renovations" to entice an additional 200,000 visitors the following season (Murray, Globe and Mail, 1984). At the time, attendance was 2.2 million, down from the average 2.4 million and according to Murray Campbell of the Globe and Mail, "well behind the peak attendance of 2.8 million" (Murray, Globe and Mail, 1984). In an Opinion Piece in the Globe and Mail, Virginia Cooper, Ontario Place's then General Manager, "set the record straight" by noting that two largest categories of "free" admission to Ontario Place were seniors (60,000) and CNE visitors (650,000) who "enjoy both parks on a single ticket" (Cooper, Globe and Mail, 1988). Then Tourism Minister Rueben Baetz also defended Ontario Place and claimed that it "was never designed to make money" (Murray, Globe and

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landscape biography

Mail, 1984). It was a public park, after all! But he noted the recent success of a simulated river rapids ride at Canada's Wonderland in boosting attendance (Murray, Globe and Mail, 1984) It was hoped that a similar attraction at Ontario Place would do the same. After a five-year plan to revitalize the park, the landscape saw the addition of only phase one: the Wilderness Adventure Ride.

Despite these efforts, Ontario Place was still struggling to remain relevant. Patricia Starr, "the feisty and enthusiastic" new chairwoman for Ontario Place Corporation from 1986-1989 created controversy as she pleaded guilty to one charge of fraud. To make matters worse, attendance plunged 14% during the 1986-87 season and Ontario Place lost \$891, 246, despite provincial grants of a combined \$4.1 million (Carey, Toronto Star, 1988). Strangely enough, Ontario Place froze its attendance fees (\$6 for adults, \$3 for seniors and \$2 for children) as a "thank-you to people who supported [Ontario Place]," stated then chairwoman Patti Starr (Kenna, Toronto Star, 1988,).

The "crown jewel of the waterfront," was only 17 years old at the time and pressure was mounting to develop a plan to improve the site's "sagging fortunes" before the opening of the SkyDome in 1989, when the "loss of Blue Jay and Argo fans at the C.N.E next door would sink attendance even further" (Carey, Toronto Star, 1988). Then Ontario Tourism Minister, Hugh O'Neil, expressed his concern and felt the only way forward was for Ontario Place to become "self sustaining" (Watson, Toronto Star, 1987). A "high powered think tank" of community leaders (including police commission chairman Clare Westcott, developer Angelo Del Zotto, SkyDome chief Charles Magwood, philanthropist Murray Koffler, architect Eberhard Zeidler and Metro roads commissioner Sam Cass) were assembled by chairwoman Patti Starr in 1987 to develop a "\$800,000 long-range" strategic plan for Ontario Place. Though never made public, noteworthy suggestions, conceived as early as the late 1980s, included the need for an "adequate transportation plan" that linked Ontario Place to surrounding cultural attractions including Exhibition Place, the Skydome, and Harbourfront Centre. Another suggestion involved the addition of "a major new drawing card" or short-term, temporary

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landscape biography

event or attraction that involved the community and complemented more permanent features of the site. Further suggestions included opportunities for Ontario Place to become a year-round attraction by developing more programs in the spring and fall to expand the season at an affordable price. And finally, a recommendation to eliminate “all competition” with the adjoining Exhibition Place by offering co-operative programs, joint ventures, compatible redevelopment and parking was suggested (Carey, Toronto Star, 1988).

Perhaps the last recommendation spurred an investigation of other uses for Ontario Place and the adjoining Exhibition Place. Or maybe, Ontario Place’s \$4.3 million debt prompted some to take action (Kennedy, Toronto Star, 2012). In one instance, Metro Chairman Alan Tonks and Toronto Mayor Art Eggleton addressed the International Bureau des Expositions (BIE) in 1989 and were confident that Toronto’s lakefront site encompassing Exhibition Place (previously C.N.E) and Ontario Place could “easily” compete with Hannover in West Germany as a potential Expo 2000 venue (Byers and James, Toronto Star, 1989). After all, the central mandate for the creation of Ontario Place was the construction of exhibition buildings: the Pods, Cinesphere and Forum. “It already had the Expo look” (Byers and James, Toronto Star, 1989). In their 1989 article, “Showdown looms for Expo bid,” Byers and James also acknowledged that the bid was largely a “private sector-affair” and that then-Premier David Peterson was downright “frosty” about backing the proposal. Eventually, Premier Peterson announced his support and called Toronto the “ideal city” to host the fair. A large boost in tourism dollars (estimated at \$3.3 billion) and \$1. 2 billion into Ontario’s tax coffers was anticipated Byers and James, Toronto Star, 1989). With a bid that was described as “spectacular,” the city embraced its waterfront and Ontario Place’s identity and function as a waterfront exhibition venue. Together with Exhibition Place, both sites were slated to host one of the largest expositions in history. But, Toronto lost the bid for Expo 2000 by just one vote! Plans to amalgamate the two facilities, owned by two separate levels of government, were put on the backburner indefinitely.

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context

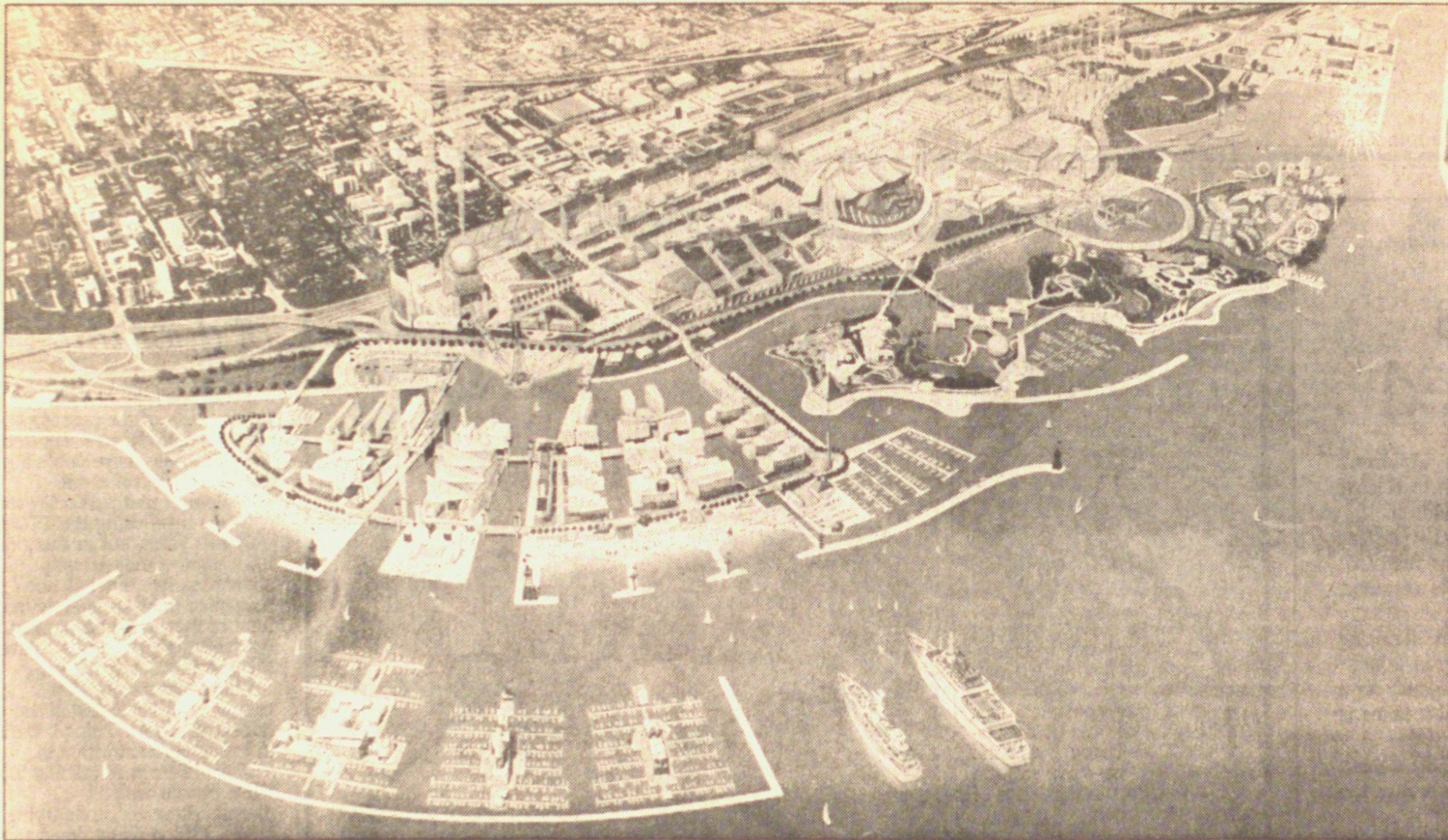
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1989

Dec 13/89

THE TORONTO ST

INSIGHT



BOLD PLAN: Artist's conception of Expo 2000 site on Toronto waterfront encompassing Ontario Place and Exhibition Place.

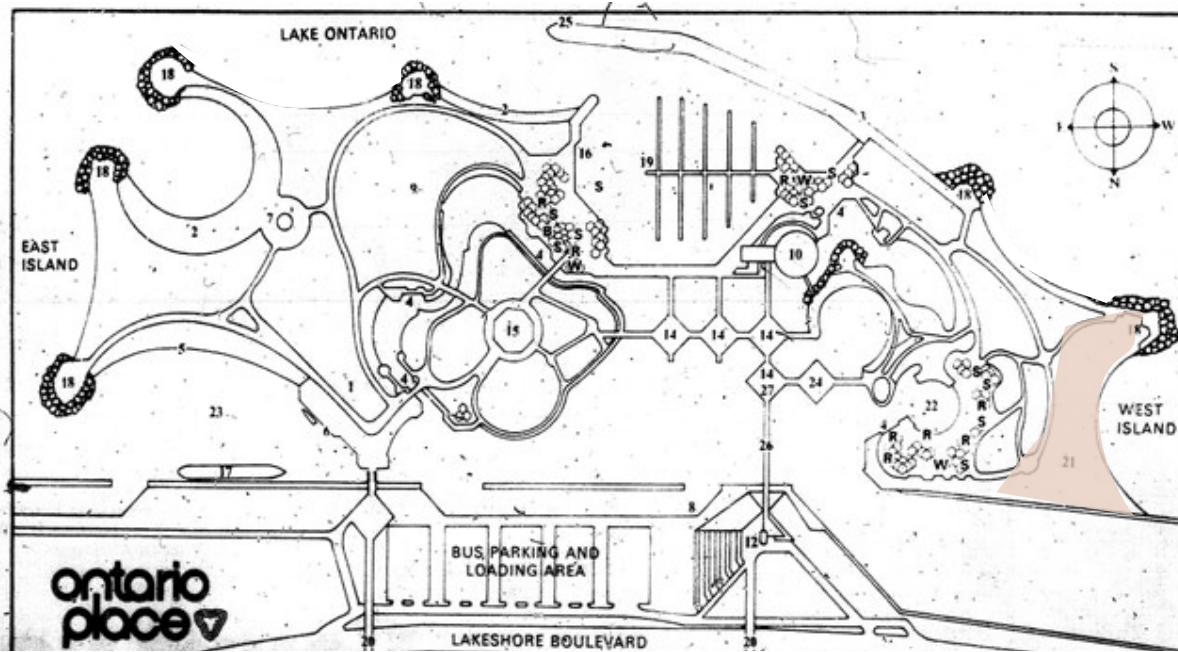
Showdown looms for Expo bid

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context

landscape biography

1980



ONTARIO NORTH NOW, 1980

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west island

landscape biography

Transformation of West Island: Ontario North Now

During the 1980s, Ontario Place and Exhibition Place developed independently of each other though “better co-operation” between both facilities was fostered. This was casually discussed by Ralph Lean, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Exhibition Place, during Ontario Place chairwoman Patti Starr’s reign from 1986-1989 (Carey, Toronto Star, 1988). Gradual massive transformation initiative took place on Ontario Place’s West Island from the early 1980s up until 1988. A Toronto Star article from 1987 by Paul Watson revealed Ontario Place staff’s intentions to transform the site’s west end into “an attraction modeled after Disney World’s Epcot Centre in Florida” (Watson, Toronto Star, 1987). This vision contradicted the sentiments of the original park designers, Zeidler and Hough.

This large transformation began initially with a \$1.1 million construction called Ontario North Now led by a London, Ontario advertising agency. Ontario North Now was slated to open on August 13, 1980 and would feature “eight silo-shaped pavilions” linked with enclosed bridges and a dome-shaped building that simulated “the northern lights, forests, wood products, rock formations, mining and industry and a waterfall” (Globe and Mail, Inside Metro 1980). Despite the failure of the original exhibits in the Pods, officials did not give up on showcasing and exhibiting aspects of Ontario. This ambitious display of “seven hulking concrete silos” to highlight Northern Ontario was hoped to “open southern eyes to the character and indigenous beauty of the north” (Toronto Star, 1980). Perhaps, this was also an opportunity to rid Ontario Place of its Toronto-centric look and feel and make the site more inclusive and inviting to other patrons from across Ontario. Maybe, this was also a return to the original trajectory of Ontario Place as a provincially mandated exhibition ground.

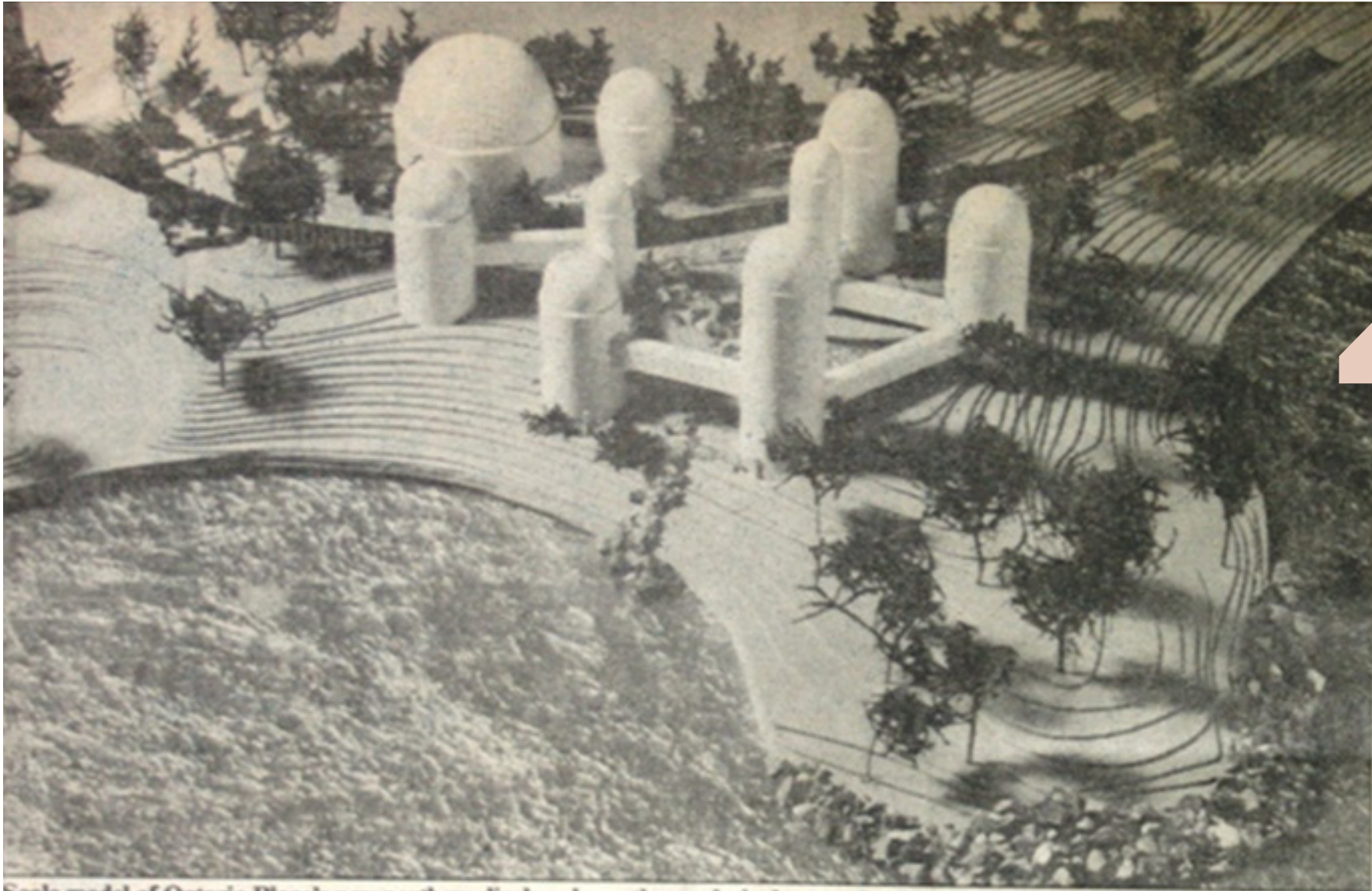
To further this goal, a London-based marketing company, Totalmarketing Inc., was commissioned by Leo Bernier, of the Ontario Ministry of Northern Affairs while Architect Gail Lamb and landscape architect David Cram of London developed the working model for these “mini pavilions” (News Clipping, Brantford Expositor, 1980). According to architect Gail Lamb, the design process was “one of those

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west island

landscape biography

1980



Scale model of Ontario Place's new northern display shows the geodesic dome and eight concrete silos.

Northern Ontario's coming south -- to sit in lake

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west island

landscape biography

interesting happenings!” (Personal correspondence with Mrs. Lamb, February 2013). She indicated that the original concept involved a network of passages made from metal culverts and towers but roofing these forms proved challenging (and were also rather unsightly!). As a result, she was called in to aid in the design for these exhibits which eventually evolved into concrete silos with connecting passages. Though Lamb acknowledged the challenges in designing this exhibit she regarded it as an “artistically rewarding project” and at the time, was eager to draw public attention to Northern Ontario through her design (Personal correspondence with Mrs. Lamb, February 2013)..

Similarly, Iroquois Falls Mayor Aurele Gervais was excited about the prospect of “showing off” the north and hoped that the content might persuade more professionals to relocate to Northern Ontario. In January 1980 she was interviewed by Don Dutton of the Toronto Star who wrote an article entitled, “Northern Ontario’s Coming South to Sit in the Lake.” In her interview, Mayor Gervais looked forward to a depiction of Northern Ontario’s “variety of attractions and the natural resourcefulness of its people” which she hoped were well highlighted in the new exhibit and carried further in coming years as on-site development continued (Toronto Star, 1980).

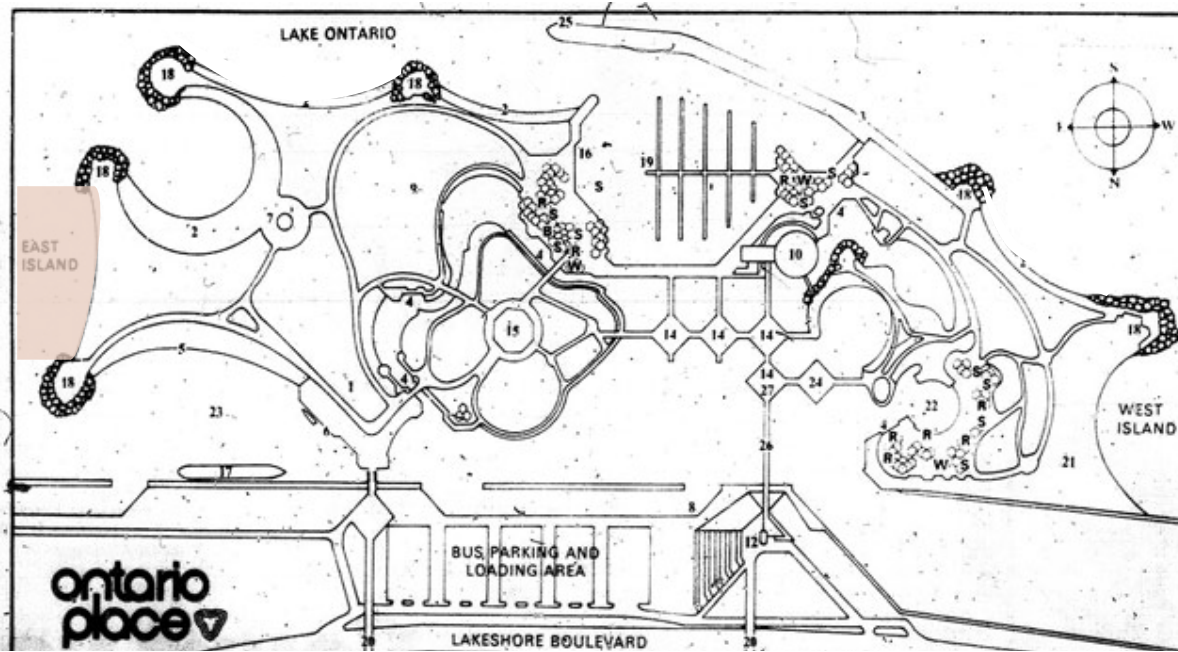
Though intended to give urbanites “a taste” of the Ontario northland, the subsequent theming of the West Island (the Ontario North Now pavilions, the Wilderness Adventure Ride and the Waterfall showplace) were rated “all the way from boring to dismal features” (Carey, Toronto Star, 1988). Zeidler, the original architect of Ontario Place decried this gradual construction on the West Island that consumed over three-quarters of open parkland designed by landscape architect Michael Hough. In a 2010 interview with the National Post he stated “There was no need for these silos to be on Ontario Place... We felt that if you have areas of entertainment, there should be a part that is relaxing. There should be some major green spaces. But all those spaces got filled up” (Medley, National Post, 2010).

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west island

landscape biography

1983



EAST ISLAND EXPANSION, 1983

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west island

landscape biography

East Island Addition: They Paved Paradise and Put Up A Parking Lot

According to Zeidler, “spaces got filled up on the East Island too” (Interview with Zeidler, February 2013). Correspondence for a proposed extension to the eastern shoreline of Ontario Place was heavily documented in Toronto Harbour Commission records, housed at the Port Authority Archives. Erosion problems on the eastern shoreline due to severe winter conditions were cited. “We are now in danger of losing a portion of our parking lot,” stated then General Manager of Ontario Place Virginia Cooper in a letter to the General Manager of the Port of Toronto on March 11, 1986. A year prior, a letter dated September 4, 1985 stated that an extension of the East Island shoreline would “solve the erosion situation” and at the same time “allow for additional parking in the area” (Toronto Port Authority Archives, T.H.C Records Department, 1611- P4E- September 1985). Interestingly, records reveal that correspondence for the design of this additional landfill project can be traced back to as early as 1978. A severe storm on January 26, 1978 resulted in extensive damage to the breakwater ships and the West Island. THC Chief Engineer Jack Jones briefly discussed erosion issues on the east shoreline in a letter with then Director General of Ontario Place, Mr. Maxwell.

This 1983 *East Island Shore Protection Project* followed Ministry protocol as incoming trucked material was “inspected and assessed by the Ministry of Environment” while Ontario Place Corporation obtained all “necessary requisite approvals” (Toronto Port Authority Archives, T.H.C Records, 1611 P4E 1983). Once again it appeared however, that the City of Toronto was not consulted in this discussion.

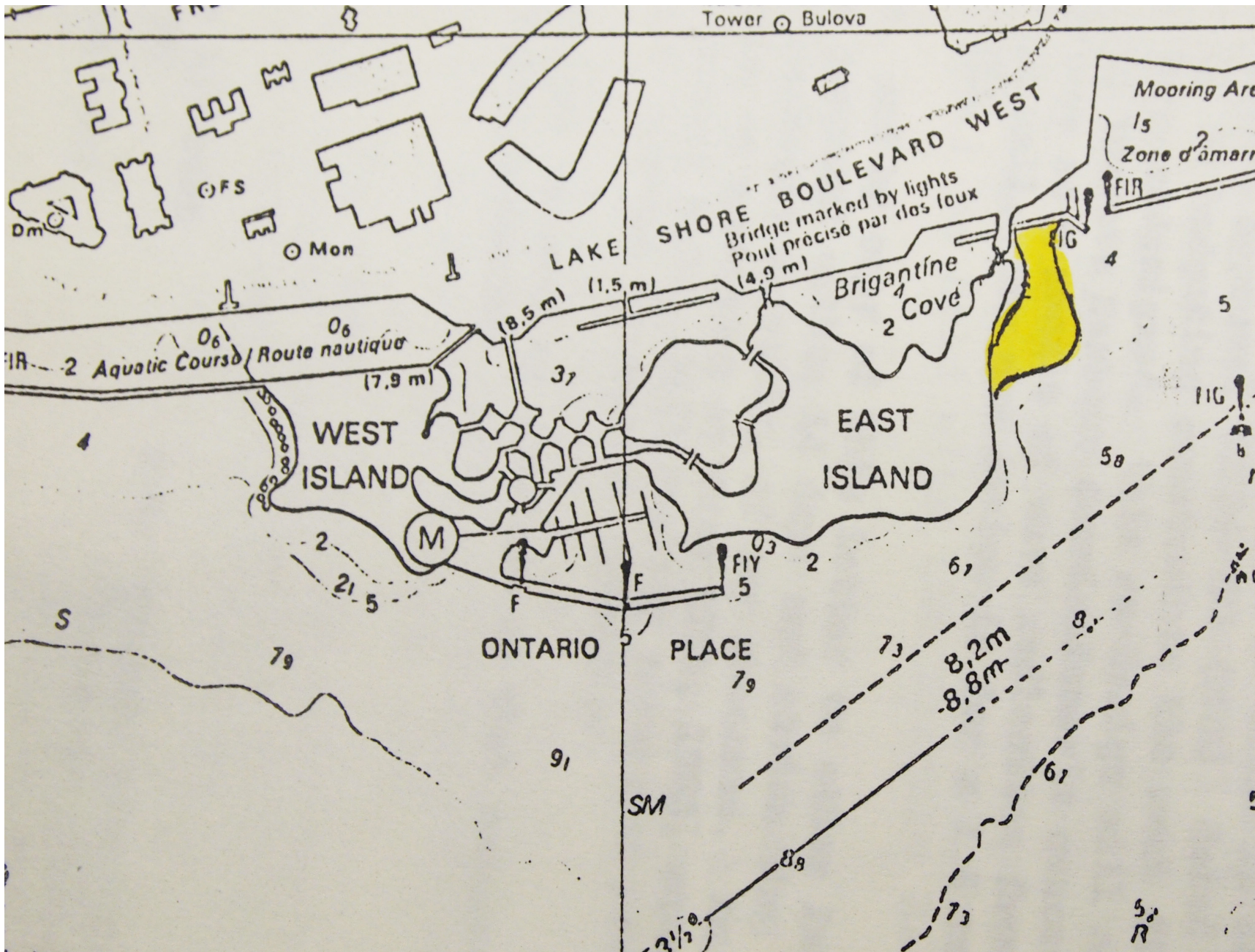
Drawings created by the Engineering Department of the Toronto Harbour Commission reveal two alternative construction techniques for the East Island extension involving sheet metal piling or reinforced concrete slabs. Filling commenced from the south as indicated in plan A/S1 and a reinforced retaining wall was created in front of the fill face to act as “wave break” and

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east island

landscape biography

1983



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east island

landscape biography

“limit wave caused erosion” (Toronto Port Authority Archives, T.H.C Records, 1611 P4E September 1982). Consulting structural engineers Dowdell, Pal and Associates Ltd and Stevenson Hluchan Associates Ltd. as well as representatives from the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Natural Resources and Ontario Place Corporation were included in discussions. Original landscape architects Hough Stansbury and Associates and the City of Toronto failed to appear in any of the meeting minutes or correspondence documentation. Though erosion prevention strategies for the East Island of Ontario Place seemed logical, the creation of a third parking lot onsite, tied with efforts to re-engineer an eroding shoreline, is a bit confusing.

Regardless, records (Toronto Harbour Commissioners Records at the Port Authority Archives) indicate numerous documented incidents of shoreline weathering and erosion in the early years of the site’s history. Based on this track record, is Ontario Place suitable for habitation and all-year round use when previously envisioned as a seasonal exhibition venue and public park? Have microclimatic conditions changed since Michael Hough’s original design for the site? And is existing infrastructure able to shield and protect inhabitants during winter months? What efforts will be made in the revitalization process to understand the physical attributes of the shoreline? How much will the infrastructure upgrade cost? Finally, what substantiated shoreline restoration techniques should be implemented at Ontario Place to provide accessibility, regenerate habitats and reduce the risk of shoreline hazards?

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east island

landscape biography

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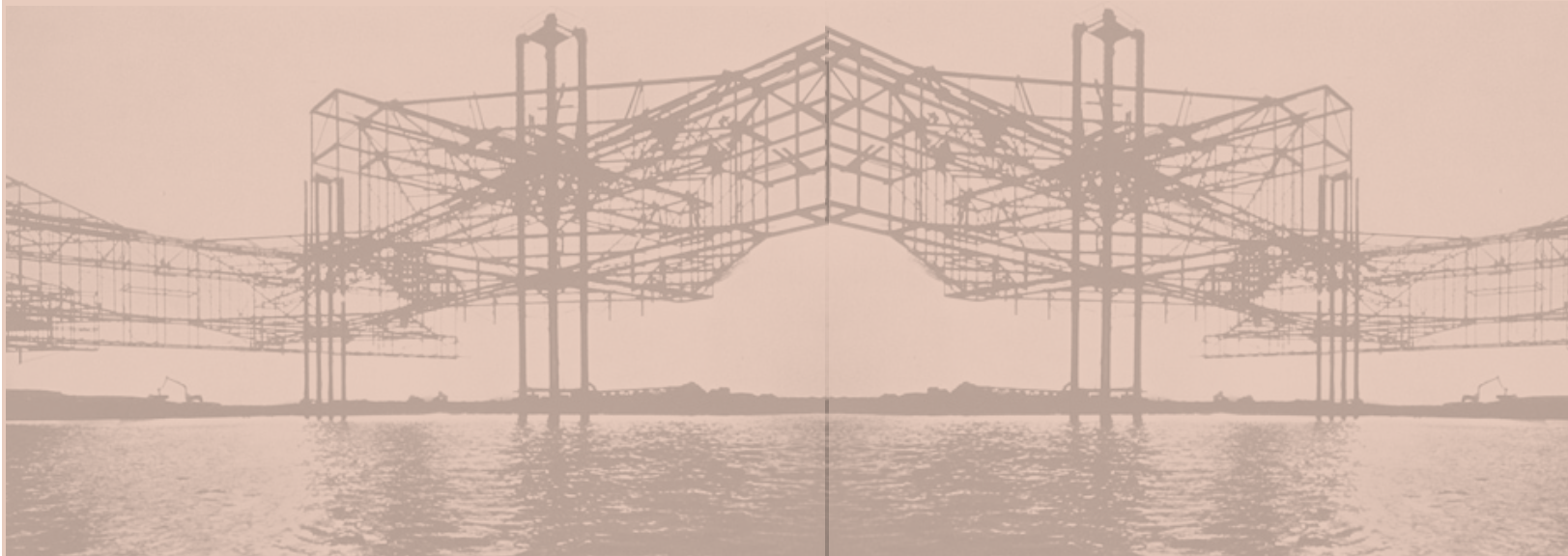
4.1 Origins + Planning (1968-1971)

4.2 The Early Years (1971-1980)

4.3 Transformations + Additions (1980-1990)

4.4 Theming + Attractions (1990- 2000)

4.5 Ecological + Cultural Programming (2001+)





4.4 theming + attractions (1990-2000)

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Political + Economic Context

In the 1990s, the whole idea of Ontario Place shifted dramatically. So much so, that news articles and Ontario Place officials from this decade often referred to this site as “a waterfront amusement park,” “an amusement centre,” “a water park” and “an entertainment destination.” Perhaps this was tied to the increased provisions of water play facilities on the West Island that included attractions like the Hydrofuge (1993), Rush River Raft Ride (1994), Pink Twister and Purple Pipeline (1997) and the Aquajet Racers (1998). The original Children’s Village, designed by Eric McMillan, previously occupied the West Island, but was gradually replaced by newer facilities that became more and more “Disney-esque” (Interview with Melvin, February 2013).

In spite of efforts to transform this aging public park and exhibition venue, Theresa Boyle of the Toronto Star reported in her 1999 article (“Ontario Place Slumps to its Worst-ever Year; Queen’s Park fears that ‘white elephant’ will seek a bail-out,”) that attendance was at an all-time (“a ten-year”) low that summer. She further reported that Ontario Place officials blamed declining numbers on a “city-wide tourism slump,” citing the statistics from Tourism Toronto, which showed that leisure tourism fell by 13 per cent from 1996 to 1998 (Boyle, Toronto Star, 1999). Jim Ginou, chairman of the park’s Board of Directors stated that 1999 was a “status-quo year” where they did not do much “other than change some of the restaurants” (Boyle, Toronto Star, 1999) while interim Ontario Place manager, Lee Allison Howe promised a turnaround in 2000 and a “major new exhibit” (Canadian Press NewsWire, 1999).

Ironically, the original exhibition in Ziedler’s Pods, once intended as center-piece for Ontario Place, were dismantled and Trillium restaurant operations ceased. This made way for the private event rental facility called the Atlantis Complex (1994). Similarly, funding was pulled for the Ontario North Now exhibit in 1992 which had received “mixed reactions” and a “lack of interest on the part of northern municipalities” over the course of its ten year operation (McDougall, Northern Ontario Business, 1990). Bob Gray, president

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context

landscape biography

of the Federation of Northern Municipalities felt that “as a marketing tool, it [had] probably served its usefulness” and admitted that the money to operate Ontario North Now could be saved and used for “more effective methods” and “practical schemes” of northern Ontario promotion (McDougall, Northern Ontario Business, 1990). Over time, the abandoned silos that once housed the Ontario North Now exhibit were retrofitted with newer technological attractions. The idea and provisions for Ontario Place to function as an exhibition ground became extinct.

Instead, pioneers of interactive entertainment, Sim-Ex Iwerks (then Sim-Ex) of Toronto, were hired to transform two existing silos and to install a futuristic motion simulator attraction called SeaTrek® (1994). Current Sim-Ex Iwerks officials stated that this simulator was housed in one of the silos originally used as an aboriginal exhibition of native artifacts (Personal Correspondence with David Needham, February 2013). SeaTrek® was a technologically advanced, “trilling underwater adventure” that combined multi-media, animatronics, video programs and large format special effects film with an electric motion simulator. Two silos were painted and themed to look like a “deep sea submarine base” and provided customers with a “sonar pre-show” as they queued up for this 30-seat, seven-and-a-half-minute simulator ride. Visitors exited “the experience” through a SeaTrek® Boutique, built especially for this ride. This “turn-key attraction,” was designed and installed in its entirety by SimEx who provided the interior theming, the monitors, the simulators, the pre-show and the animatron (Morse, date 141).

Similar efforts to adaptively reuse the Pods took place with the addition of rotating exhibits and attractions like the Baseball Hall of Fame, the Lego Creative Place Centre (1990) and the Nintendo Power Pod (1992). Private partnerships also expanded and like Sim-Ex Iwerks, another Toronto-based firm, Forrec Ltd. was recruited. An emerging global leader in the planning and design of themed entertainment environments, Forrec Ltd. first worked for Ontario Place in 1984 on the Wild Wilderness Riv-

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landscape biography

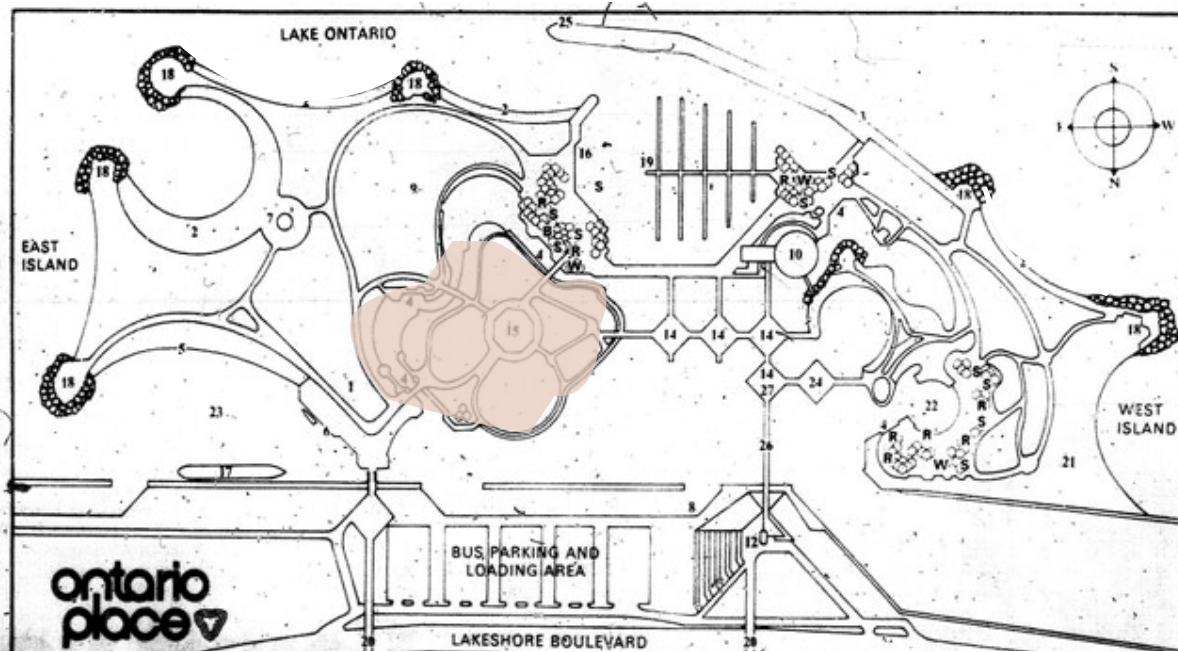
er Ride and since then had worked on numerous projects and studies ranging from small scale planning endeavours to specific attraction studies for site's grounds. Their major criticism was that "Ontario Place had always been addressed in pieces, but never as a whole, integrated development" (Interview with Linda Hung and James Anderson, Forrec Ltd., February 2013). According to them, Ontario Place had a "dual purpose," one that evolved from an urban waterfront park with passive use to one with more entertainment and leisure use (Interview with Linda Hung and James Anderson, Forrec Ltd., February 2013). What was lacking at this time, however, were thorough attendance studies to assess and monitor visitor experience on-site and to determine the effectiveness and return on investment of these attractions as they were introduced on Ontario Place grounds.

New ticket models including the free admission program (1991-1996), pay-as-you-go attractions (1993) and Play All Day Passes (1997) further characterized Ontario Place as a theme park business rather than its originally intended use as publicly accessible urban parkland. Annual budget reports fluctuated but revealed overall that these ventures increased private partnerships and boosted revenues primarily during Ontario Place general manager, Max Beck's tenure from 1990 until 2000. Previously, chairwoman Patricia Starr met accusations of the misuse of charitable funds and though she resigned, she was "partly vindicated" in a 1989 auditor's report that revealed she had "trimmed the deficit" to \$2.2 million from \$4.3 million. According to Susan Walker of the Toronto Star, "Ontario Place owes its survival to its re-invention as a downtown entertainment destination" (Walker, Toronto Star, 1996).

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landscape biography

1995



THE FORUM, 1983

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the forum

landscape biography

The Loss of Forms - The Forum

Perhaps the “biggest and most controversial” construction project at Ontario Place was the Molson Canadian Amphitheatre in the winter of 1994/95 (Ontario Place Through the Years: Our History). “Can we no longer afford a little intimacy?” inquired Toronto Star architecture critic Christopher Hume in August 1994, just a month before demolition of the Forum, scheduled a mere week after Labour Day. A proposed amphitheatre would house twice as many visitors (16,000 as compared to 8,000) and featured a “much-needed expanded roof” at a cost of \$14.5 million (Hume, Toronto Star, 1994).

According to Ontario Place Marketing and Entertainment officials, the Forum was “quaint” and “not big enough” for a growing market of concert-goers who craved a heightened experience (Hume, Toronto Star, 1994). “We’re looking for a fairly significant attendance increase,” stated one Ontario Place official while another chimed in, “we’re looking for opportunities to work with the private sector” (Hume, Toronto Star, 1994). According to Adele Freeman, writer for The Globe and Mail, MCA Concerts Canada, a joint venture between American based MCA International and Molson Breweries, “struck a deal” with Ontario Place as early as 1992 (Freeman, The Globe and Mail, 1995). “Renovations” to the Forum were to be completed by architectural firm, Dunlop Farrow and MCA promised that this “would not cost taxpayers a would not cost taxpayers a cent” (Freeman, The Globe and Mail, 1995).

Nevertheless, a public outcry ensued. Local activist Jane Jacobs, writer Lisa Rochon and a group of architects and environmentalists founded the Friends of the Forum to express their strong opposition of the proposed state-of-the art facility. Interestingly, the province was once seeking a heritage designation for the Forum designed by Eb Zeidler as it was internationally regarded for its “roof design and intimate setting in an urban park” (Bill and Papp, Toronto Star, 1994; Star Phone Poll, 1994). When plans for renovations came to light in 1992, the Toronto Historical Board sought to list the structure. The Province supported the idea

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the forum

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but, a city council committee turned it down after the Ontario Place Corporation opposed it (Bill and Papp, Toronto Star, 1994).

Even (the now late) Michael Hough, original landscape architect for Ontario Place, publicly argued that destroying the existing Forum and its surrounding trees was comparable to “cutting the heart out of a body” (Bill and Papp, Toronto Star, 1994). “It will eliminate what’s there and completely change the environment of Ontario Place,” he continued (Bill and Papp, Toronto Star, 1994). The hillside areas surrounding the Forum were to be expanded to hold 9,000 spectators and increase the number of people who could attend a performance (Kitchener- Waterloo Record, 1992). Anne Swarbrick, then Ontario Minister of Culture, Tourism and Recreation, defended the proposed plans as “environmentally friendly” despite the clear cutting of 250 mature trees and the lack of an environmental assessment to study the implications of the addition of this large facility. She among others assured extensive consultation with Ministry of Natural Resources to plant “native stock” and to create a “variety of habitat for fishstock” (Hume, Toronto Star, 1994; Bill and Papp, Toronto Star, 1994).

Zeidler issued a reminder that Ontario Place “should be looked at as a park and as an extension of the park belt that runs through the city” (Interview with Zeidler, 2013; Hume, Toronto Star, 1994) The whole idea of Ontario Place, after all, was to “open up” and reclaim the shoreline for the people. In a last attempt, Zeidler proposed an alternative and suggested this massive facility be located on the East Island at the lagoon where it could be “better hidden away” and “do minimal damage to the site” (Hume, Toronto Star, 1994). But, demolition and reconstruction continued as planned.

“It was involving and intimate - a casual place for beautiful things to happen. The idea of meditation on the surrounding hills was part of the fundamental purpose of it - that’s gone. All that has disappeared in favour of highly controlled, large-scale performances,” reflected landscape architect Hough post-demolition (Freeman, The Globe and Mail, 1995). He cautioned that there should be a way of integrating new objectives with something “that’s become a pretty important piece of heritage in the

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city” (Freeman, The Globe and Mail, 1995). Architecture critic Hume candidly discussed that the amphitheatre was not an appropriate facility for a site conceived as an urban park on the shore of Lake Ontario and though it may have made economic sense, little was done to preserve the original vision or character of the landscape or the architecture (Hume, Toronto Star, 1994).

Now, Zeidler laments that Ontario Place has suffered from excessive programming which led to the “activation of every square inch” (Interview with Zeidler, February 2012). He still admits the final “death blow” was the addition of the amphitheatre and painfully recalls how he and Lisa Ronchon (Founder of Friends of the Forum) collected over 12,000 signatures and presented them to Parliament (Interview with Zeidler, February 2012). Met with a resounding “everything will be fine,” Zeidler and the Friends have watched how this facility has split the “place in two” and “ruined the landscape and circulation” (Interview with Zeidler, February 2012). Like Zeidler, Jim Melvin the Honorary CNEA President, calls the addition of the amphitheatre the “death knell of Ontario Place.” It stopped the original flow which was once through the Pods and across the hilly landscape of the Forum. “Once the amphitheatre came along,” said Melvin “there was no exit.” (Interview with Melvin, February 2013). “It is totally the wrong thing. It is one-level entertainment for one type of people and that is fine but, not suitable for this site” (Interview with Zeidler, February 2012). Adele Freeman of the Globe and Mail, observed, that “so rare was the glimpse of water at this new venue and so pervasive the use of cement that one can’t help thinking they paved paradise to put up a parking lot” (Freeman, Globe and Mail, 1995).

The Molson Canadian Amphitheatre opened in 1995 to a sold-out crowd of 16,000 to the tunes of singer Bryan Adams (Howell, Toronto Star, 1995). Rave reviews of the “new high tech” facility garnered attention from RPM magazine who voted the amphitheatre as the Best New Concert Venue which featured direct truck-to-stage equipment loading, tour bus space, reception areas, rehearsal rooms and dressing rooms with waterfront balconies - that artists could even fish from! (Howell, Toronto Star, 1995). This was a far cry from the “humble intents” when this waterfront park first opened in 1971 (Ontario Place: Our History; Howell, Toronto Star, 1995).

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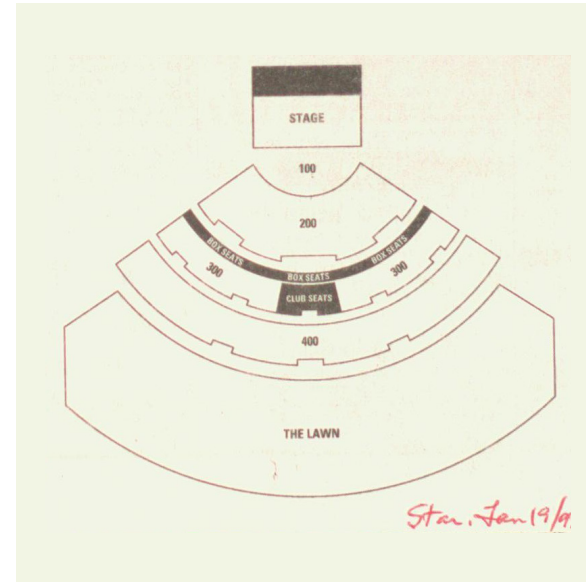
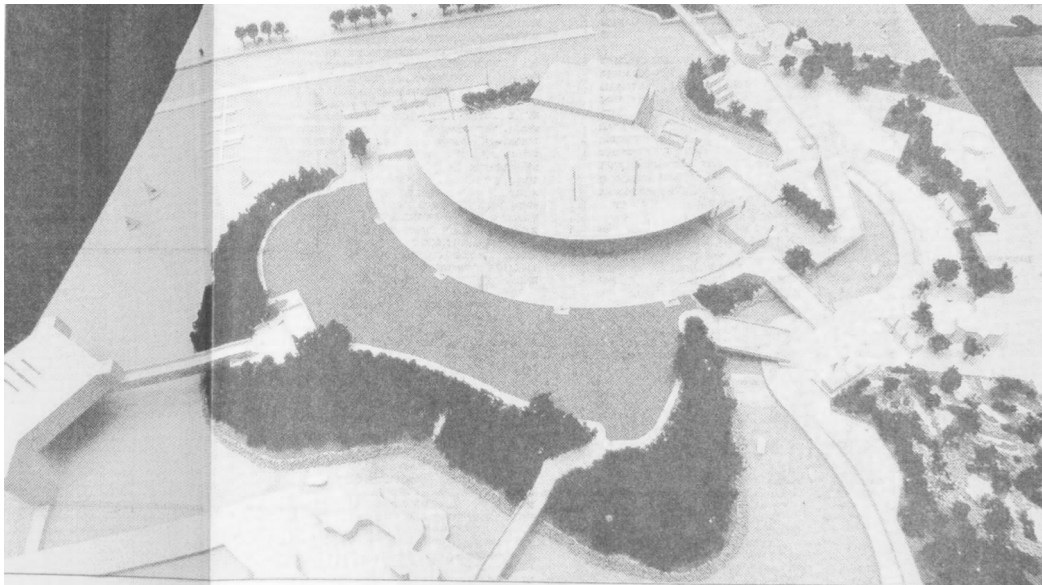
the forum

landscape biography

1995

F2 THE TORONTO STAR Saturday, August 13, 1994

Can we no longer afford a little intimacy?



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the forum

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Integration for Exhibition Place and Ontario Place

Perhaps most relevant in recent discussions is the merger between two facilities located adjacent to each other and essentially mandated to operate in a similar way. Previously in February 1995, provincial facilitator Dale Martin, approached the directors of the two sites with a “single-management proposal” to merge the Metro-owned Exhibition Place and the provincially-owned Ontario Place (Swainson, Toronto Star, 1995). Integration between the two sites arose initially during Toronto’s failed bid for Expo 2000 where the amalgamation plan was only discussed and never seriously acted upon. The idea was resurrected once again in 1991, by ex-City Mayor and “waterfront czar” David Crombie (Moloney, Toronto Star, 1998).

The “ambitious merger deal” in 1995, proposed by Dale Martin, promised to be more proactive and would involve a full investigation and public sector money to bring both facilities “under a single management umbrella” within just six months (Swainson, Toronto Star, 1995). This was an attempt to revive Ontario Place’s function as an exhibition venue but several consultations and over three years later, Paul Moloney of the Toronto Star reported in 1998 that “the marriage of Exhibition Place and Ontario Place” was off over a dispute in funding (Moloney, Toronto Star, 1998). Councillor Brian Ashton (Scarborough Bluffs), an Exhibition Place board member cited the need for a “prenuptial agreement” and “dowry” prior to “merging with the white elephant” (Moloney, Toronto Star, 1998). Councillor Joe Pantalone (Trinity-Niagara) who served as Chair of Exhibition Place and former deputy mayor (2003-2010) argued for several demands in merger talks: “more money from Queen’s Park,” a new board of “half-city, half-provincial appointees” who met in public and who had “strict control over new planning developments” (Moloney, Toronto Star, 1998). Jim Melvin, Honorary President of the Canadian National Exhibition and Exhibition Place Board Member cited political infighting, land ownership and debt inheritance as chief factors against merging the two lands (Interview with Jim Melvin, February 2013). He also recounted once

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“symbiotic relationship” between both sites had evolved over time into a competitive one (Interview with Jim Melvin, February 2013). This competitive nature between both institutions was acknowledged previously, as early as 1988, in an Ontario Place-led report (Carey, Toronto Star, 1988)..

In merger considerations, an unmentioned fact in local news reports was Ontario Place’s suitability and adaptability as a potential fair ground to host the annual Canadian National Exhibition, held every year in Toronto since 1879. According to Melvin, Ontario Place had “no welcoming aspect to it,” “no open space” to program fair activities and “being funneled through the site through long bridges” would not be ideal. “This was a major disadvantage to the grounds,” cited Melvin, “but then again, it was never designed to be a fair ground!” (Interview with Melvin, February 2013).

It seemed though, the private sector had other ideas in mind in merger talks. Their visions for the transformation of both sites were revealed in November 1996 . Bruce Agra Foods Inc., a division of “drug giant” Apotex Inc., proposed “a \$200 million futuristic Disney-style theme park,” with a casino and entertainment features (Swanson, Toronto Star, May 1996; Walker, Toronto Star, 1996). The other two finalists Sportcom 2000 Developments Ltd. and Bregman and Hamann/Marshall Macklin Monaghan proposed a year-round multi use sports arena and a residential town centre development, respectively (Swanson, Toronto Star, May 1996).

None came to pass except for one proposal from the private sector that kept “popping up.” Ripley’s Entertainment, had been discussing the possibility of constructing a “state-of-the-art” \$80 million aquarium on Ontario Place grounds in 1997 that would be at the “forefront of a total transformation of Toronto’s waterfront” and one step closer to making the lakefront a “year-round entertainment location” (Frenc, Toronto Star, 2005; Swainson, Toronto Star, 1997, Daily Commercial News and Construction Record, 1997). This ongoing effort to boost tourism would become characteristic of a greater provincial vision during the 2000s and yet another punctuated moment in the trajectory of Ontario Place’s evolution.

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1997

THE TORONTO STAR Friday, June 27, 1997

GREATER TORONTO

ONE, Ontario Place plan single year-round facility

Star Oct 8/97.
A happy marriage

THE TORONTO STAR Sunday, September 28, 1997 A5

Waterfront parks
merger is approved

Ontario Place 'nicely' passed test of time *Aug 2/97*

THE TORONTO STAR Wednesday, September 24, 1997 B3

Ex, Ontario Place
close to merger

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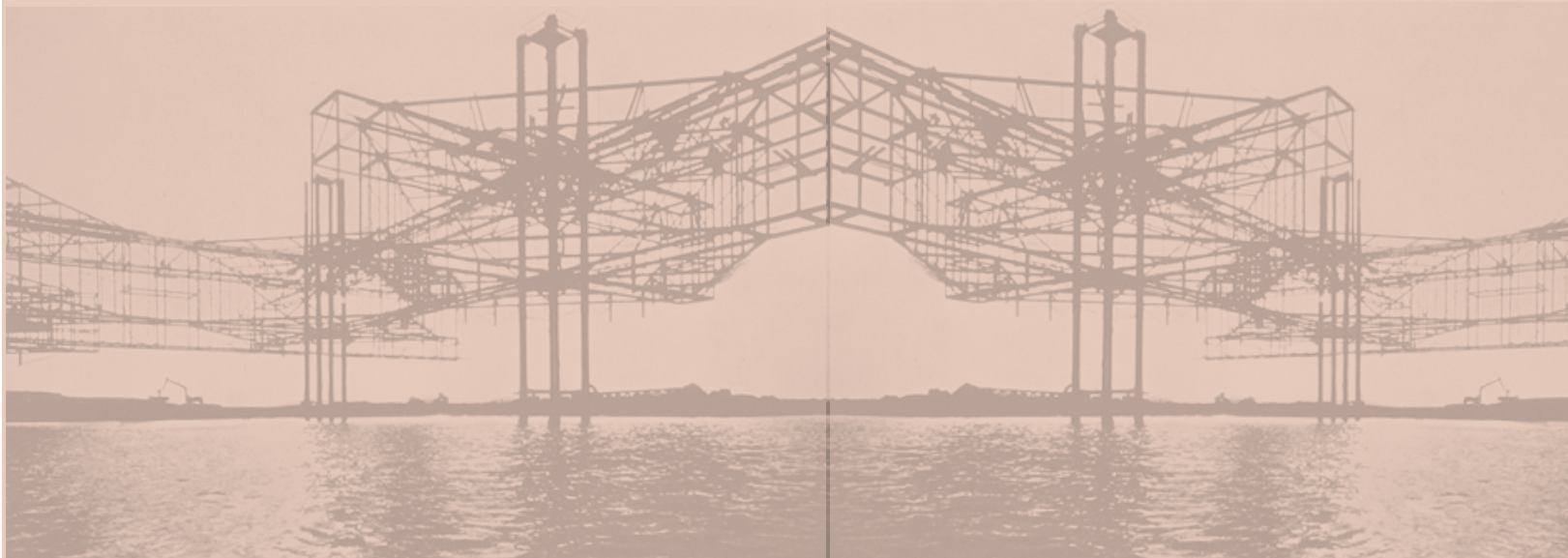
4.1 Origins + Planning (1968-1971)

4.2 The Early Years (1971-1980)

4.3 Transformations + Additions (1980-1990)

4.4 Theming + Attractions (1990- 2000)

4.5 Ecological + Cultural Programming (2001+)





4.5 ecological + cultural programming (2000+)

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Political and Economic Context

“Every jewel needs some polishing from time to time,” then Tourism Minister Cam Jackson declared, in 2000, as the province announced a \$2.8 million provincial infusion for capital improvements at Ontario Place (Boyle, Toronto Star, 2000). As part of the Provincial Budget, the Ontario government established the first standalone Ministry of Tourism (in June 1999) and announced an extra \$50 million for tourism marketing over the next four years, in addition to an existing \$120 million commitment (Boyle, Toronto Star, 2000). “Our provincial tourism agencies and attractions are important gateway destinations that draw tourists to regions across Ontario,” said Minister Jackson. By investing in the renewal of these facilities, Jackson asserted, “we are building a stronger future for tourism in Ontario” and a “world-class, must-see travel destination” (Canada NewsWire, 2000; Daily Commercial News and Construction Record, 2000)

However, a decline in travel following the September 11, 2001 attacks, the SARS outbreaks in 2003, and hydro blackout in 2003 posed major challenges for Ontario’s tourism industry. New strategies, a series of reports and recovery initiatives characterized the early to mid-2000s and eventually led to the Government of Ontario issued report, *Discovering Ontario: A Report on the Future of Tourism* (2009). It was the result of the comprehensive Ontario Tourism Competitiveness Study led by Finance Minister Greg Sorbara and his sixteen person study team over two years at a cost of \$4 million. Released in February 2009, this “road-map” highlighted 20 recommendations for a ten year plan to boost Ontario’s tourism industry. (Popplewell, Toronto Star, 2009) Then Tourism Minister, Monique Smith, said it was one part of a much-needed cultural renaissance for the province and Premier Dalton McGuinty called the Sorbara report “a good foundation on which we can build.”

The report itself included some specific recommendations for Ontario Place, which had been identified among the top five Ontario public products that have “additional potential to increase their tourism product offerings and economic activity.” Oth-

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ers listed were the Niagara Parks Commission, major convention centres, the Royal Ontario Museum and Art Gallery of Ontario (Ontario Tourism Product Assessment Research Study). The 2009 Sorbara Report acknowledged the “\$18 million in park refurbishments since 1999” but advised that Ontario Place should offer “free access to the public to the grounds” in addition to ticketed admissions to select entertainment areas (Tracogna, Toronto Star, 2009; 54-55, 2009). Other suggestions included previously explored ideas like integration with Exhibition Place, better transportation including bicycle and walking trails, year-round use, a new vision and a long-term master plan in addition to celebrations for cultural festivals and events (*Discover Ontario*, 2009). The report urged the revitalization of Ontario Place to be completed for Canada’s 150th birthday celebrations in 2017 “as much as Montreal’s Ile Notre-Dame was during Canada’s centennial celebrations and Expo ‘67” (Popplewell, Toronto Star, 2009).

Thirty-eight years later, and Toronto was still looking to Montreal for inspiration.

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landscape biography

Integration: Third Time's the Charm?

Several recommendations from the 2009 Sorbara report were incorporated over the next two years until Ontario Place's provincially mandated closure in February 2012. During the 2011 season and in their "dire time," the provincial government opened Ontario Place's gates "for free" (Interview with Jim Melvin, February 2013). This announcement, was made against the backdrop of the Discovering Ontario report which recommended the park, marking its 40th anniversary, stop charging for admission to its grounds (Alamenciak, Globe and Mail, 2011). No "concrete studies" had been conducted about visitor's travel patterns through the sites during the three weeks of the CNE - "one had no idea if the mass majority of visitors were going south to Ontario Place or north to the CNE," cited Jim Melvin, Honorary CNEA President (Interview with Jim Melvin, February 2013). For this reason and for the first time in thirty nine years, the shared gate between the Canadian National Exhibition and Ontario Place was removed.

This was indeed a step back and contrary to the previous 2004 merger efforts, led by former Toronto Mayor, David Crombie who pointed out that, "clearly, they [Ontario Place and Exhibition Place] belong together, in one form or another" (Urquhart, Toronto Star, 2004). The two sites competed against each other, often "acting as rivals rather than partners" and "scrapped over everything from concerts to aquariums" (Urquhart, Toronto Star, 2004). But when combined, the total 109 hectares of prime waterfront land, could have had "tremendous potential" as a recreation and entertainment district "rather than a switch to housing and residential" (Urquhart, Toronto Star, 2004). This sentiment was echoed by then Deputy Mayor Joe Pantalone and chair of Exhibition Place, as well as then Tourism Minister Jim Bradley.

Like in 1997, integration between the two sites in 2004 did not come to pass. Ken Greenberg, noted architect and urban designer, completed an extensive study with the Planning Partnership in December 2005 for Crombie, looking at the potential of integrating

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integration

landscape biography

Ontario Place and Exhibition Place into a “consolidated Lakefront Park” (Interview with Greenberg, February 2013). Seventy stakeholders representing organizations and sectors with a direct interest and an extensive website survey were involved in this study (Greenberg, Toronto Star, 2010). Greenberg acknowledged that there were “similar pressures” to upgrade infrastructure, attractions and accessibility on both sites that could be best met by “combining forces” to create a “single new, unified entity.” The team proposed that this could be developed through a strong public framework, clear and realistic financial expectations, and through rich and varied mixed year-round activities (Interview with Greenberg, February 2013; Report?!) Unique features of the integration study included six “early win” projects (soccer stadium, western beaches watercourse, restoration of Princes’ Gates, Princes’ Boulevard Expansion, Martin Goodman Trail extension and a Dufferin Street Extension) in addition to several ecological features like the addition of naturalized islands, softened shorelines, a “green arm” to better link the two sites and parking below grade. Like Greenberg, Melvin cited political infighting - “the politics were not right yet” and noted that perhaps the biggest liability for not merging the two sites yet again in 2004, was that the city did not want to inherit Ontario Place’s \$5-6 million liability (Interview with Greenberg and Melvin, February 2013).

This integration idea was further revived in July 2011, in a report issued by KPMG which recommended merging the two waterfront sites “as a cost-cutting measure to trim Toronto’s \$774 million budget deficit in 2012” (Li, Toronto Star, 2011). Now, Tory’s 2012 Revitalization Study for Ontario Place posits the physical merger between the two sites as an integral step forward achieved through joint master planning, transportation planning and shared access.

4

integration

landscape biography

2005



4

integration

2005 Integration Study. Greenberg and Planning Partnership. (Interview with Greenberg, February 2013).

landscape biography

Cultural Programming and Environmental Awareness

During the 2000s, renovations to improve and enhance existing facilities at Ontario Place were underway at all levels. This included the construction of new elevator to access the Pods and the rotating exhibits and event facilities contained within them. A brand new south beach volleyball complex was introduced in addition to renovations and re-branding of a newly heated East Island water park (Soak City) and theming of West Island children's play area (Go Zone). Free live concerts featuring Canadian artists, Third Eye Blind, Sloan, Platinum Blonde and Andy Kim were held at Ontario Place's new Echo Beach on the East Island.

Perhaps most notable was Ontario Place's celebration of cultural events and festivals to cater to Toronto's growing multicultural demographic and visitor base. Then Ontario Tourism Minister Jim Bradley, opened the Rogers Chinese Lantern Festival, a 65-night festival at Ontario Place. It was the world's largest lantern festival outside of Asia and featured the most "awe-inspiring" display of Chinese culture, tradition and craftsmanship "ever to be seen in the Western hemisphere" (Canada NewsWire, 2000). Celebrated ever summer and fall between 2006-2008, this festival expanded the park's regular programming. Cultural festival celebrations became popular during this decade with the establishment of 'Heritage Days' at Ontario Place and similar celebrations at competing institutions like Canada's Wonderland and Harbourfront Centre. In 2009, the Event Tent in Market Square was taken down and replaced with Heritage Square to provide guests with an "optimal area" to enjoy and celebrate special events and cultural festivals (Ontario Place: Our History).

Environmental initiatives and awareness also featured heavily in Ontario Place's programming during the 2000s. This corresponded to a larger trend in environmental awareness and sustainability (Interview with Eriks Eglite, February 2013). Environmentally-themed films like Ecozone (2006) were screened on site to educate and inspire visitors (Ontario Place: Our His-

4

cultural + ecological



landscape biography

tory) as ongoing site initiatives like the installation of low flush toilets, waste diversion programs, native tree planting, the provision of walking and biking trails, water conservation and fish habitat reconstruction were aimed at reducing Ontario Place's environmental footprint (The Making Ontario Place Greener fact sheet).

Two of such initiatives included the (1) Toronto Waterfront Aquatic Habitat Restoration Strategy (2003) which led to the creation of aquatic habitat and spawning grounds at Ontario Place (2006) to “maximize the potential ecological integrity of the Toronto waterfront” and (2) the extension of the Martin Goodman Trail (2009) to provide a more “direct and user-friendly bike route” (Ontario Place: Our History). The former was led by restoration ecologist, Rick Portiss of the and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and the latter by landscape architect Janet Rosenberg of Toronto. “There is a huge biological and ecological potential for Ontario Place to increase its biodiversity,” asserted TRCA's Rick Portiss, “it is an important site along an equally important shoreline” (Interview with Portiss, February 2013).

Their 2006 efforts were part of a longer term strategic plan that has since been abandoned. The TRCA vision, as Portiss explains, was to improve habitat conditions for warm water game fish (largemouth bass and yellow perch) while restricting carp access. Another notable feature of the plan was improving water quality through the introduction of bulrushes, cattails, boulders and gravel substrates which could also provide shelter and forage for fish and other wildlife, and to help stabilize the shoreline of Ontario Place. Finally, TRCA efforts were also targeted at reducing the overproduction of submergent plant species and most importantly, providing shoreline access. The latter was perhaps addressed in the 1.3 km extension of the Martin Goodman Trail (2009) which acts as a “critical link’ in the 56 kilometer Martin Goodman Trail spanning Toronto's central waterfront and provides an alternate route during large scale events or during the event-based closure of Lakeshore Boulevard..

4

cultural + ecological

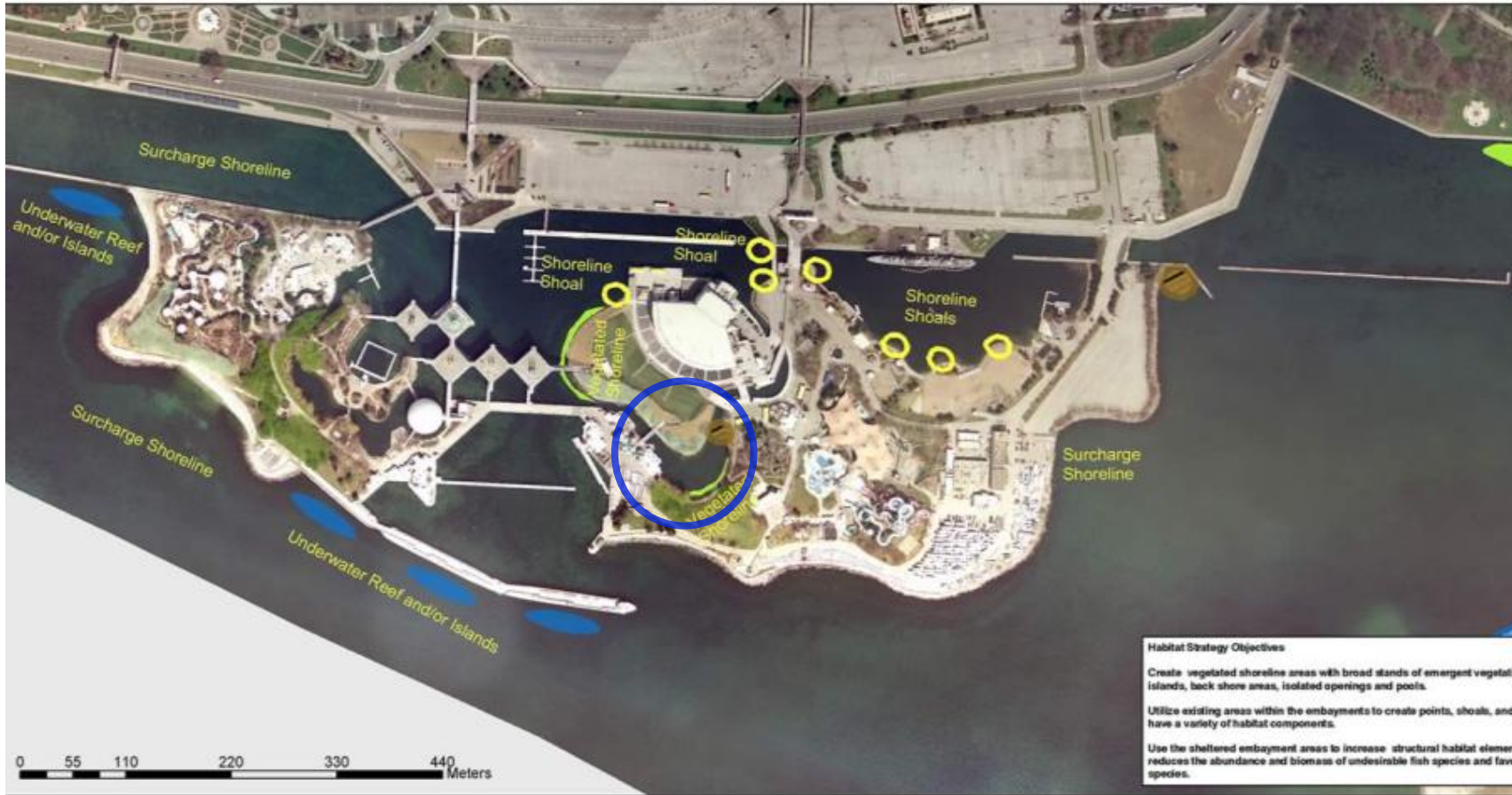
landscape biography

2006



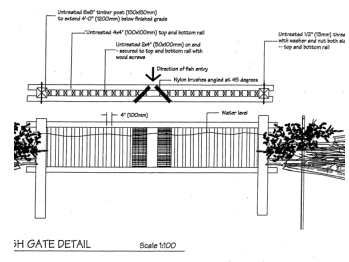
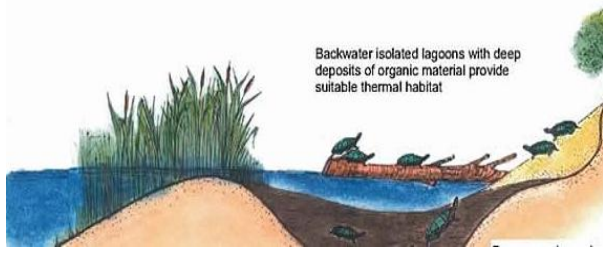
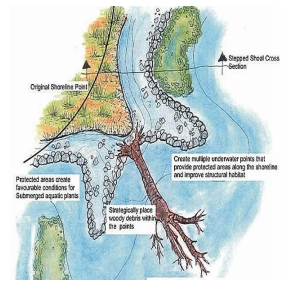
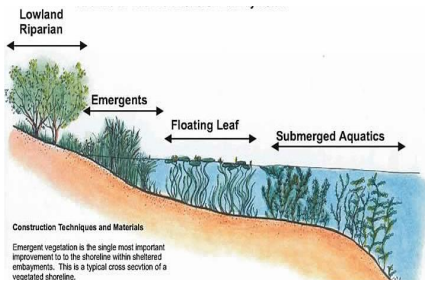
Toronto Waterfront Aquatic Restoration Strategy

Ontario Place



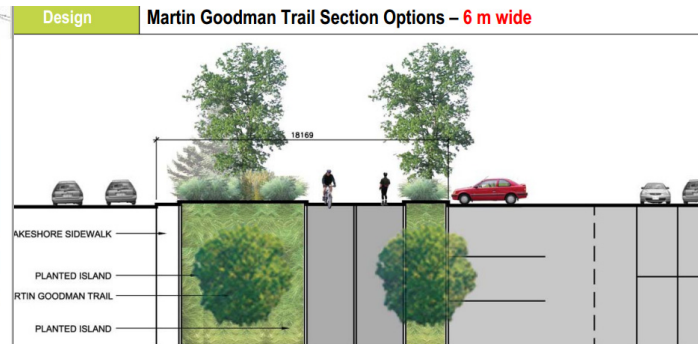
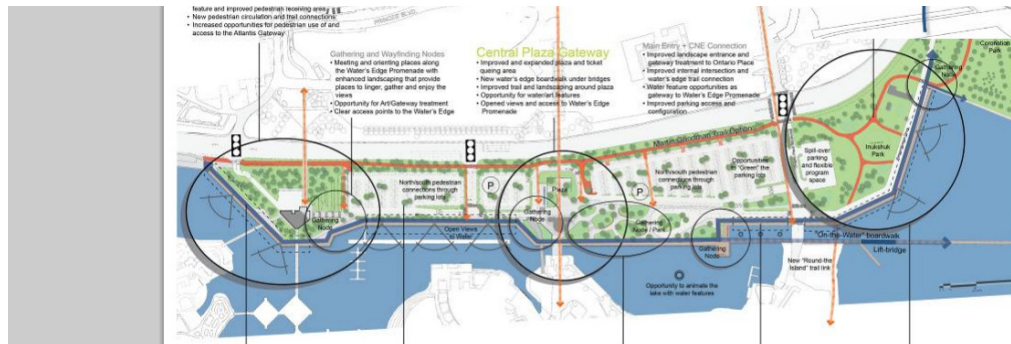
Habitat Strategy Objectives

- Create vegetated shoreline areas with broad stands of emergent vegetation, islands, back shore areas, isolated openings and pools.
- Utilize existing areas within the embayments to create points, shoals, and have a variety of habitat components.
- Use the sheltered embayment areas to increase structural habitat element reduces the abundance and biomass of undesirable fish species and favo species.



4

aquatic habitat



Martin Goodman Trail Extension 2009, Janet Rosenberg Associates

landscape biography

Despite these efforts, Ontario Place was still a “fading icon” on the waterfront. Attendance figures drop to about 1 million visitors, a new low in 2009. Soon after in 2010, the Ontario Place Corporation issued a Request for Information (RFI) to obtain ideas that considered opportunities for partnerships, environmental leadership, and integration with the city’s urban fabric to make the site a jewel along the waterfront and an internationally recognized destination. “It’s very early. But this is exciting,” said Tim Casey, then general manager of Ontario Place. “2011 will be our 40th anniversary. It definitely needs a revitalization, that’s no surprise. It’s a blank slate, we’re open to just about anything. Right now we’re just asking for the vision to turn Ontario Place into what it once was: A real jewel on the lake” (Poisson, Toronto Star, 2010).

Thirty-five RFI responses from “folks with global entertainment destination and development experience” in addition to over 1,200 citizen ideas poured in. The then-new general manager, John Tevlin, reported expectations that the list be reduced to three ideas for public consultation (Lu, Toronto Star, 2011). Greenberg’s 2010 article, “Combining the CNE and Ontario Place: Urban renewal on the lake” reminded the public about each site’s roles and historical identity and provided a set of “do’s and don’ts” (Greenberg, Toronto Star, 2010; Interview with Greenberg, February 2013). None of the submissions ended up being privy to public eyes (with the exception of Eric McMillan, Forrec Ltd. and the TRCA proposal which were reviewed during this study).

Eriks Eglite, the current transitioning general manager of Ontario Place, acknowledged this ongoing tension of the Ontario Place Act’s mandate and its location on the waterfront. He recalls the objectives of the Corporation:

- (a) to operate Ontario Place as a provincial exhibit and recreational centre;
- (b) to develop projects and programs designed to provide the people of Ontario with a greater appreciation of the Province and its accomplishments and potential, and to provide talented artists in the Province with the opportunity to exhibit their works and their abilities;

4

landscape biography

- (c) to develop special programs from time to time considered to be worthwhile to enhance the image of the Province and to co-ordinate activities with the Canadian National Exhibition at times when that exhibition is in operation; and
- (d) to do such other things as the Minister may require from time to time and to advise the Minister on projects and programs of general advantage to the Province

(R.S.O. 1990, c. O.34, s. 8; Interview with Eglite, 2013).

With the “allure of fresh paint,” Eglite describes Ontario Place’s evolution intrinsically tied to the generating revenues and debt-reduction. One of the problems over time, he acknowledges as both, a landscape architect and a businessman, is the a lack of a strong and consistent master plan for Ontario Place. Though Zeidler and Hough laid out the “guiding document,” every successive general manager and Board of Directors for Ontario Place “took liberties with it” and ended up with a product that lacks “the original finesse and design quality” (Interview with Eglite, 2013). Though newly appointed, Eglite acknowledges that most of the additions to Ontario Place over the years have been “large masses. “The “voids or residual spaces” or public amenity has slowly been diminished. Where is the public space? As for moving forward, the 2012 Revitalization Agenda for the site came as shock to many Ontario Place officials and employees who were surprised by the Province’s decision to shut this location that was on track “ to operate at a break-even point by 2015” (Hepburn, Toronto Star, 2012).

Though this landscape and landmark site may have evolved from hurried and ill-considered processes, its revitalization is contingent on a clear understanding of its history and the forces that have shaped it as well as its ability to meet the demands of present day society.

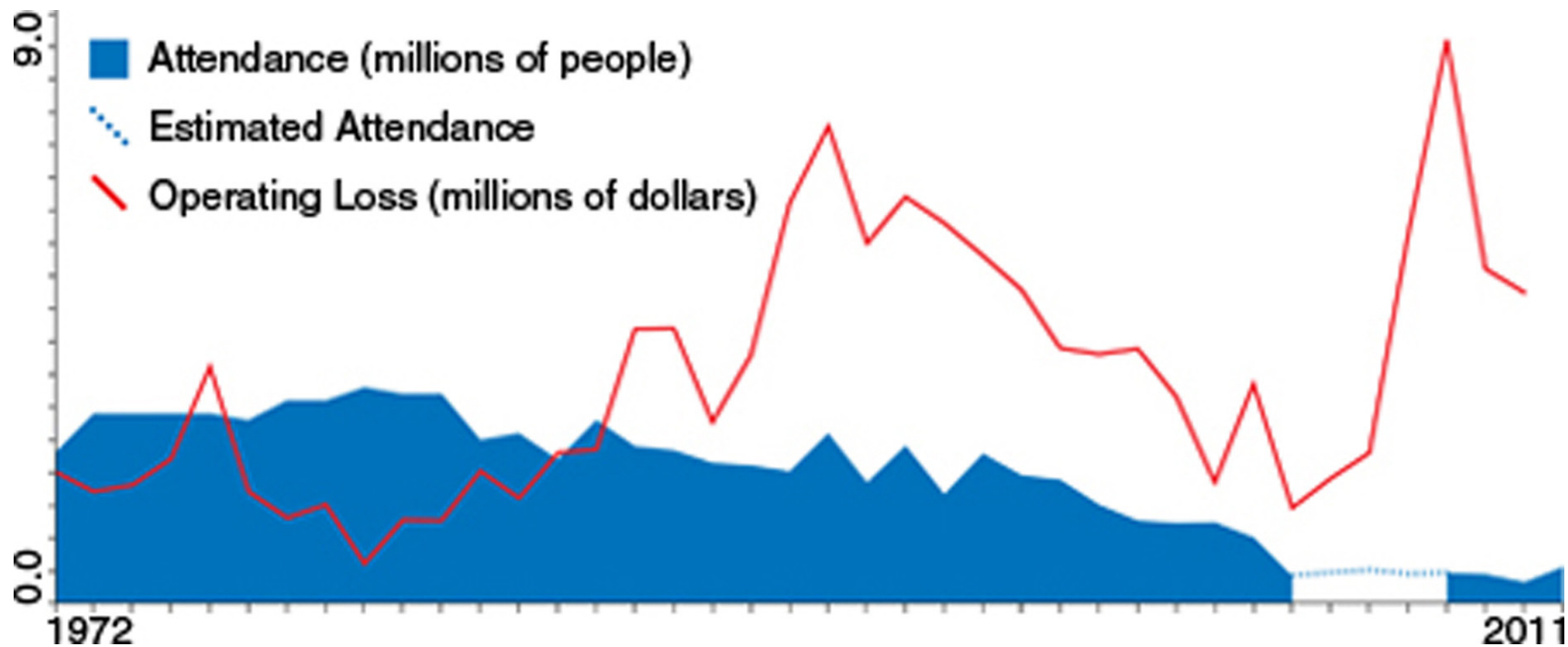
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cultural + ecological

THE LONG GOODBYE:

WHAT HAPPENED TO ONTARIO PLACE?

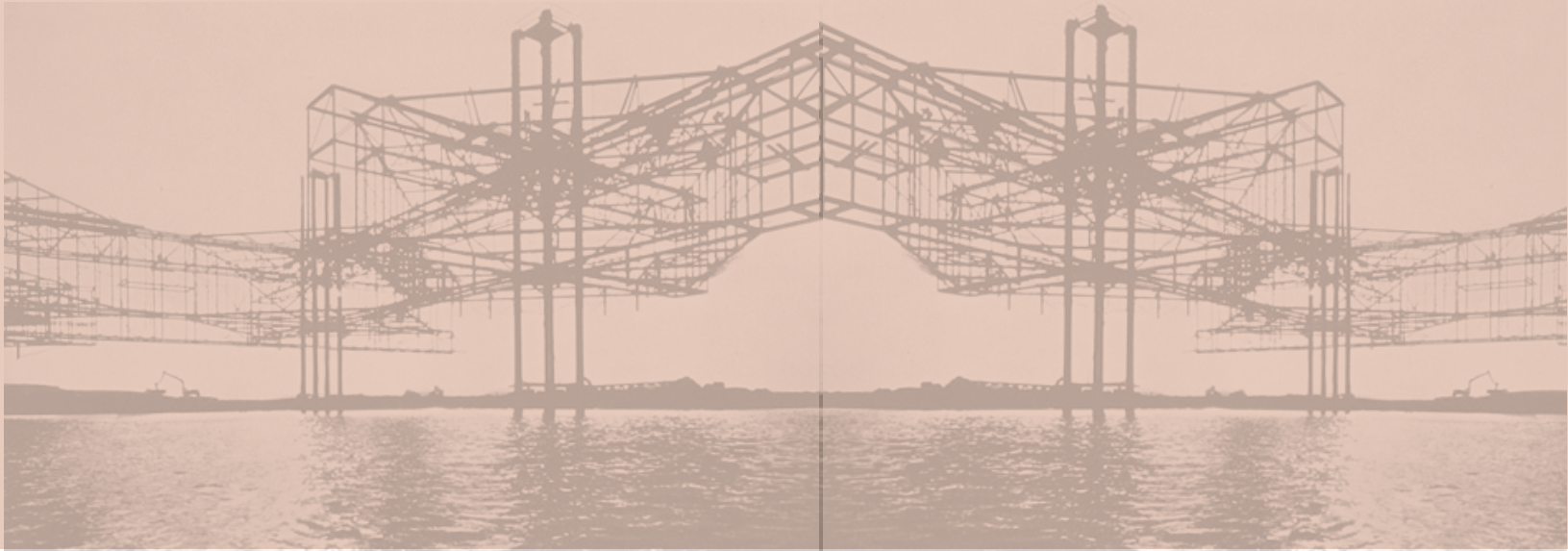
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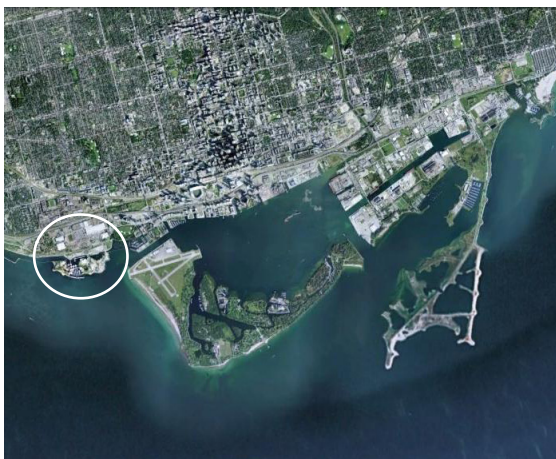


existing conditions

5.1 Site Analysis

5.2 Site Views



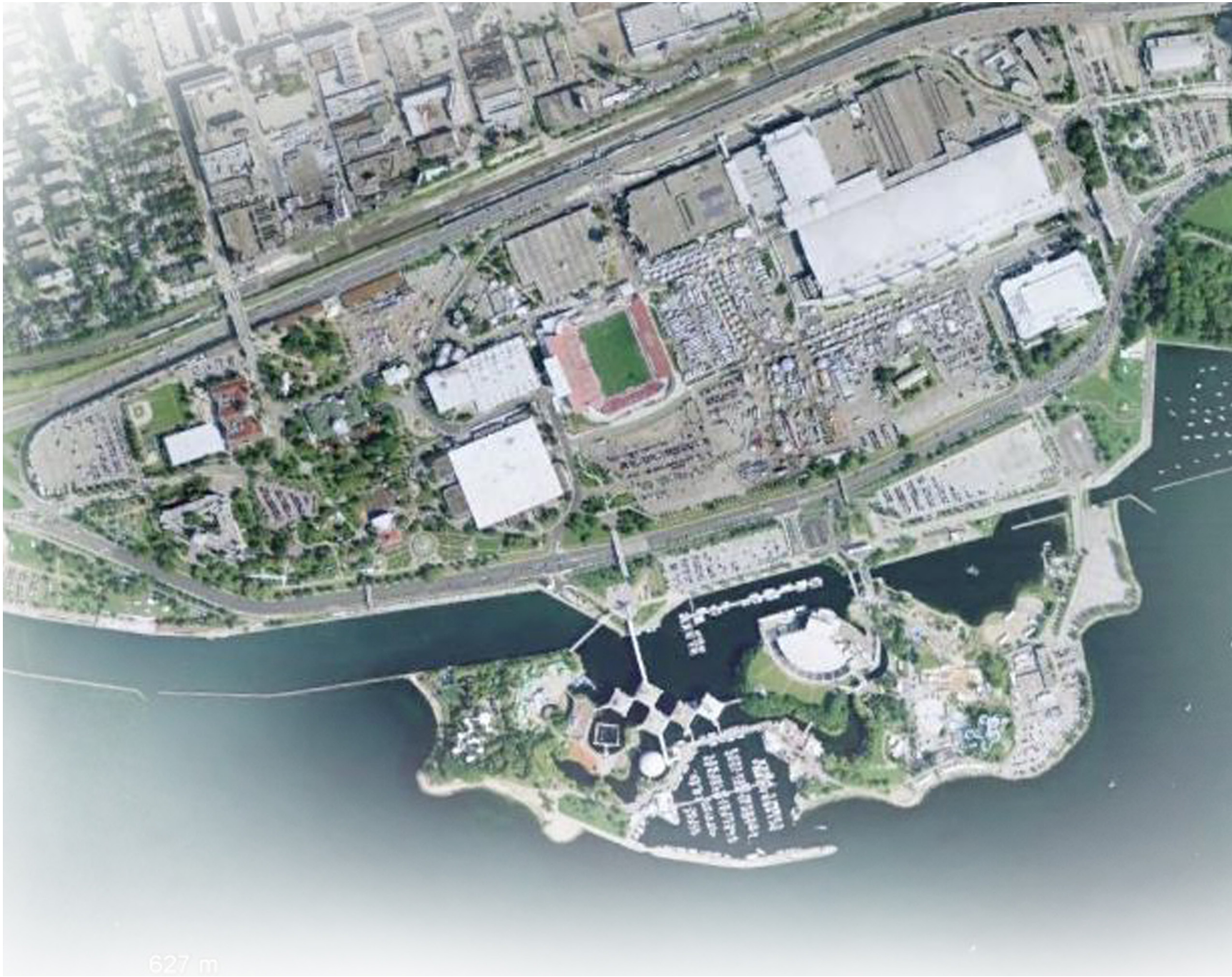


toronto's central waterfront

43.6290° N, 79.4150° W

5

5.1 context



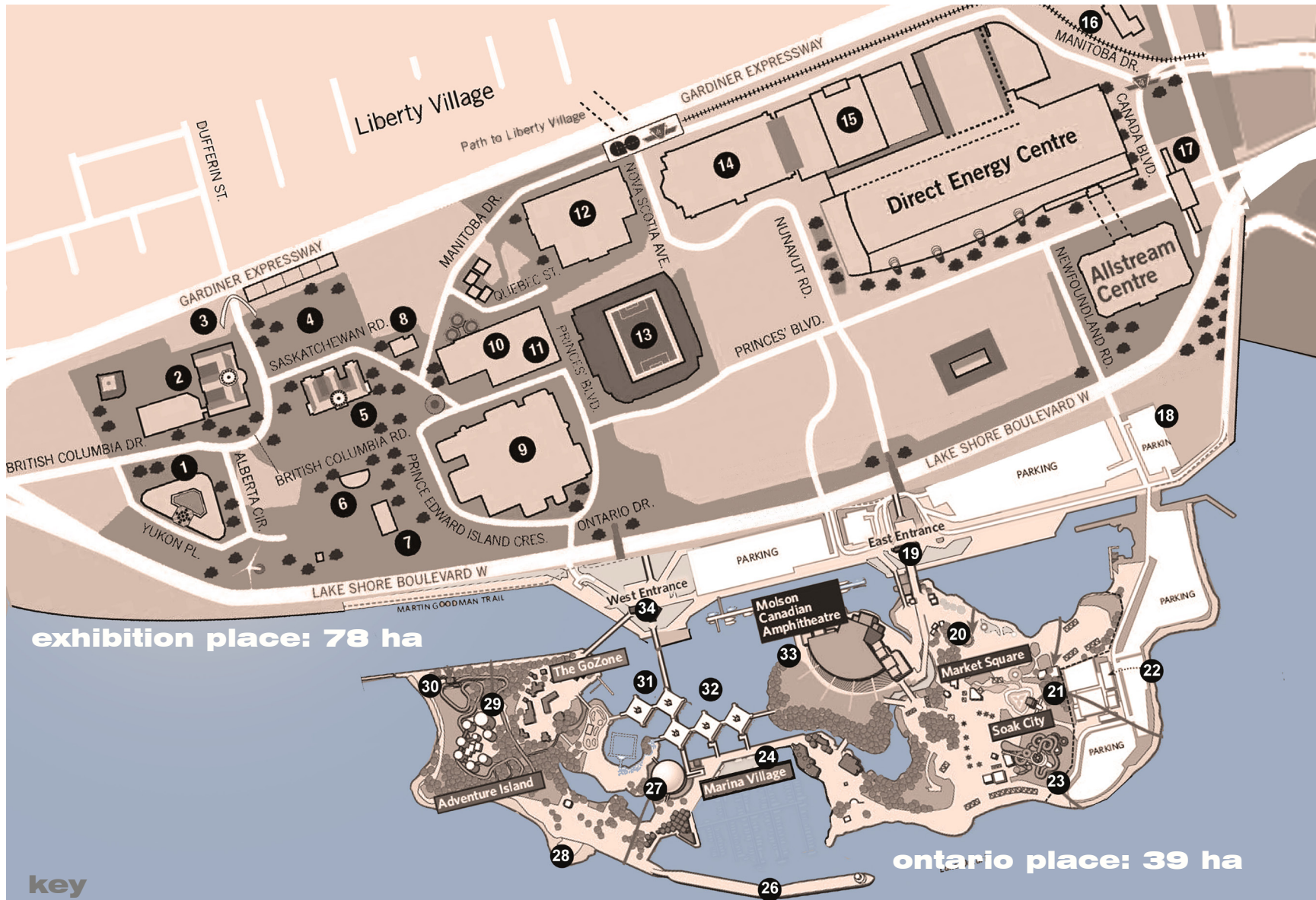
627 m

ontario place + exhibition place

43.6290° N, 79.4150° W

5

aerial view



exhibition place: 78 ha

ontario place: 39 ha

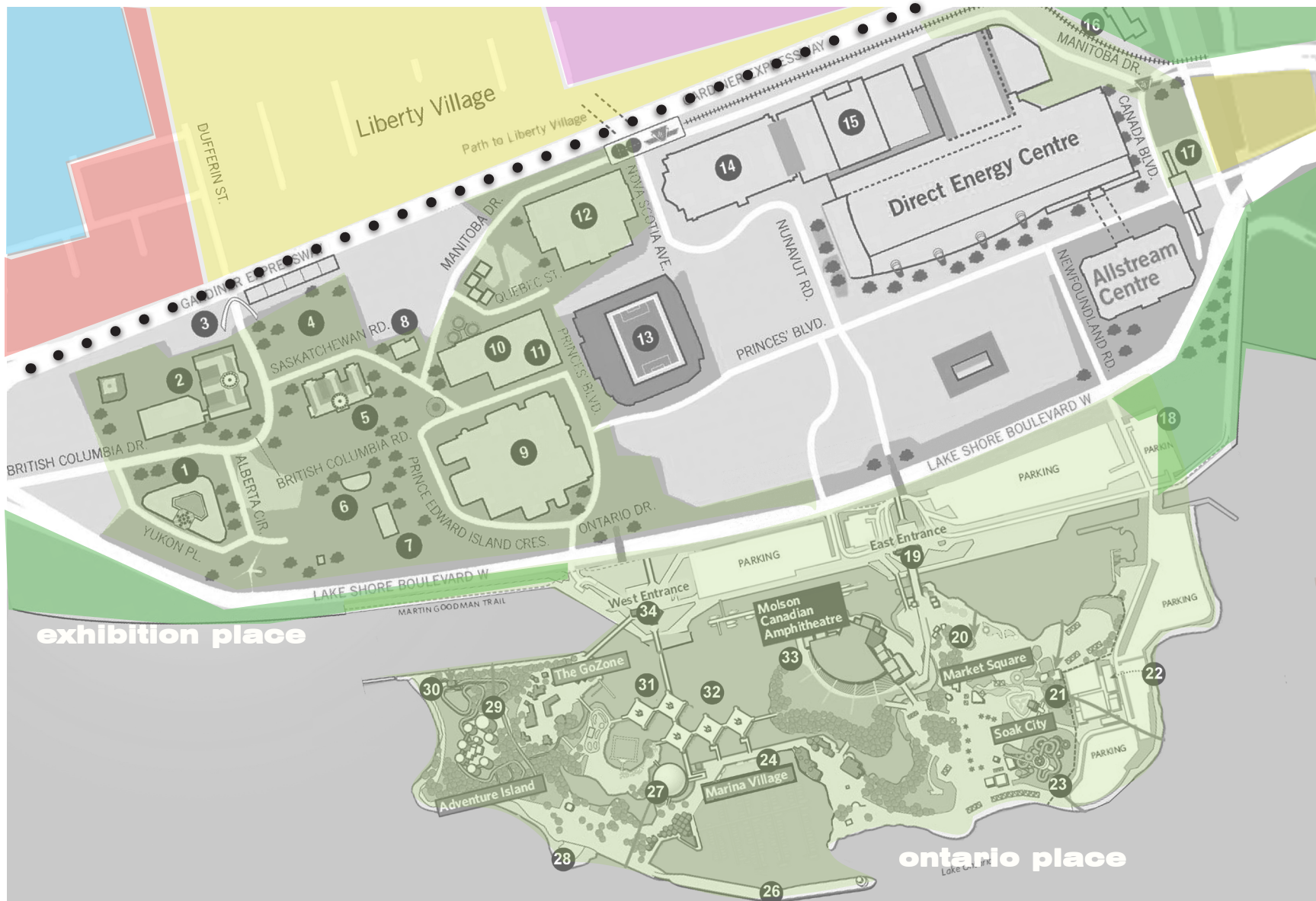
key

- | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Liberty Grand | 8. Press Building | 15. Rioch Coliseum | 22. Maintenance Buildings | 29. F/X Theatre |
| 2. Medieval Times | 9. Better Living Centre | 16. General Services | 23. Parking | 30. Adventure Island |
| 3. Dufferin Gates | 10. Queen Elizabeth Theatre | 17. Princes' Gates | 24. Marine Village | 31. Atlantis Pavillions |
| 4. Centennial Park | 11. Queen Elizabeth Hall | 18. Parking | 25. Go Zone | 32. Pods |
| 5. Muzik | 12. Food Building | 19. East Entrance | 26. Promenade | 33. Molson Amphitheatre |
| 6. Bandshell Park | 13. BMO Field | 20. Market Square | 27. Cinesphere | 34. West Entrance |
| 7. Gossip Restaurant | 14. Horse Palace | 21. Soak City | 28. National Helicopters | |



5

ownership



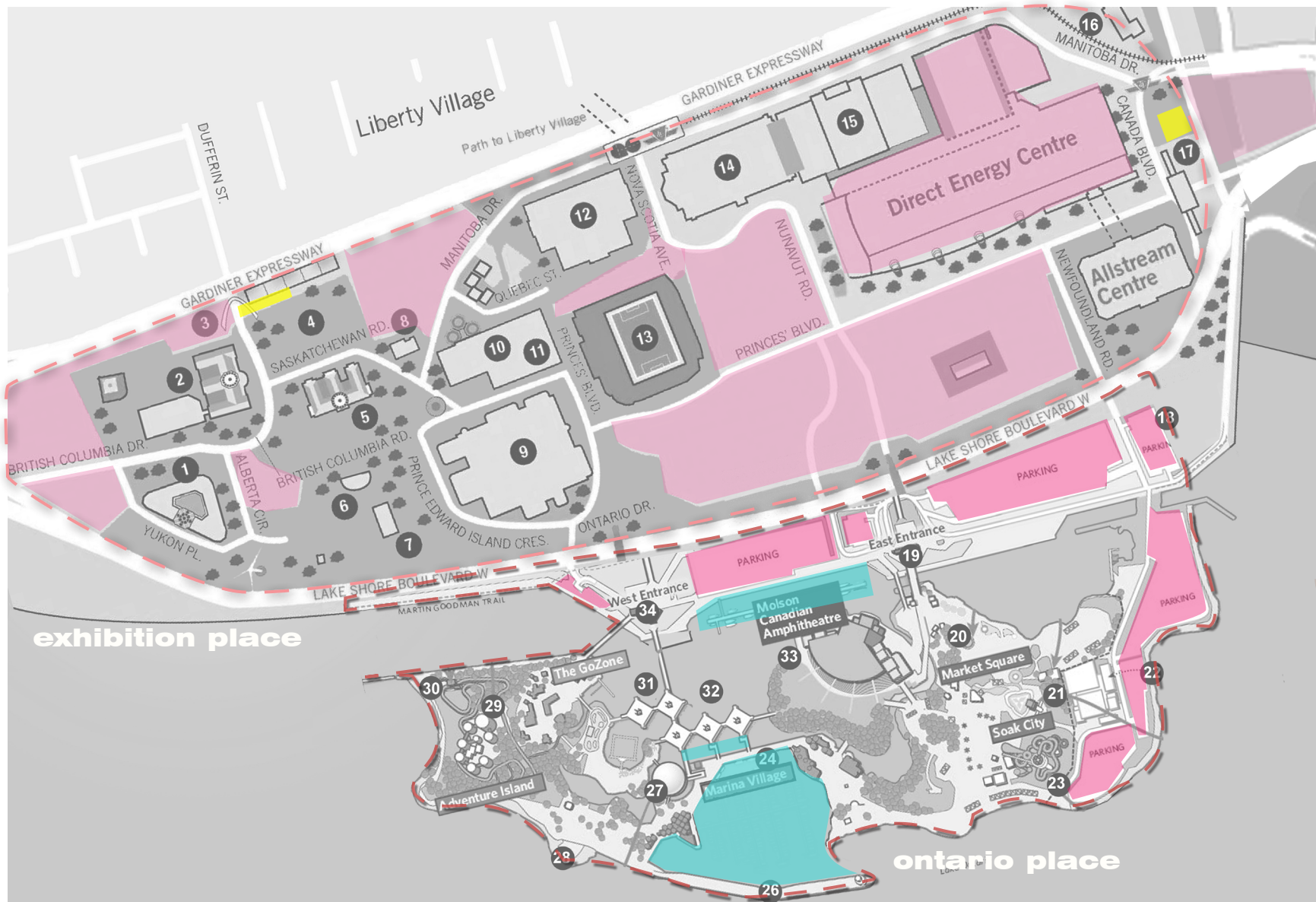
exhibition place

ontario place

- Neighbourhoods
 - Apartment Neighbourhoods
 - Mixed Use
 - Employment/Institutional Areas
 - Natural Areas
 - Parks/Other
 - Regeneration Area (CNE)
 - Utility Areas
- Land Use

5

land use



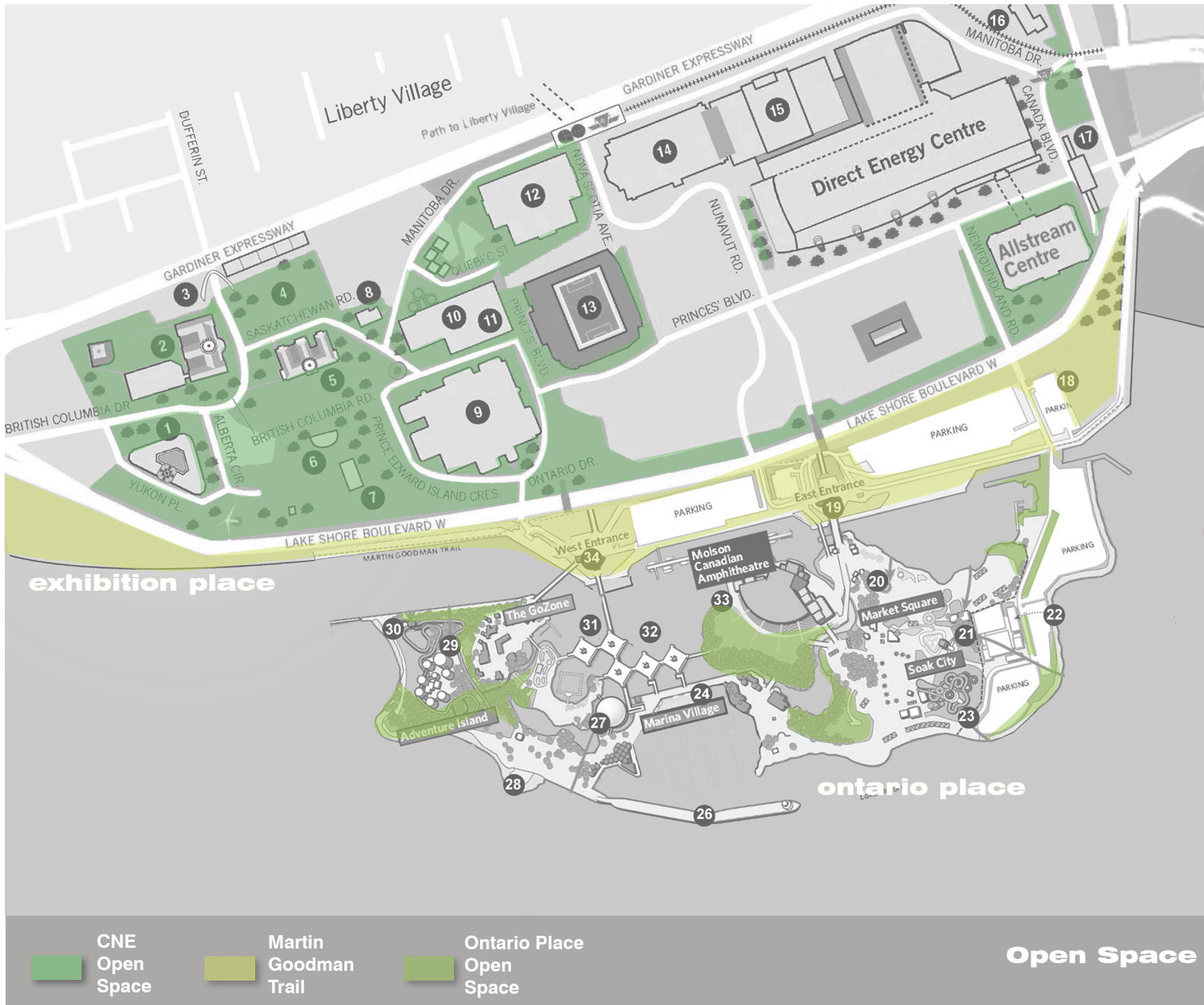
exhibition place

ontario place

<p>C.N.E Parking (\$20-25)</p>	<p>Ontario Place Parking (\$20/spot)</p>	<p>Ontario Place Marinas (240 slips)</p>	<p>Bicycle Parking</p>	<p>Parking + Marinas</p>
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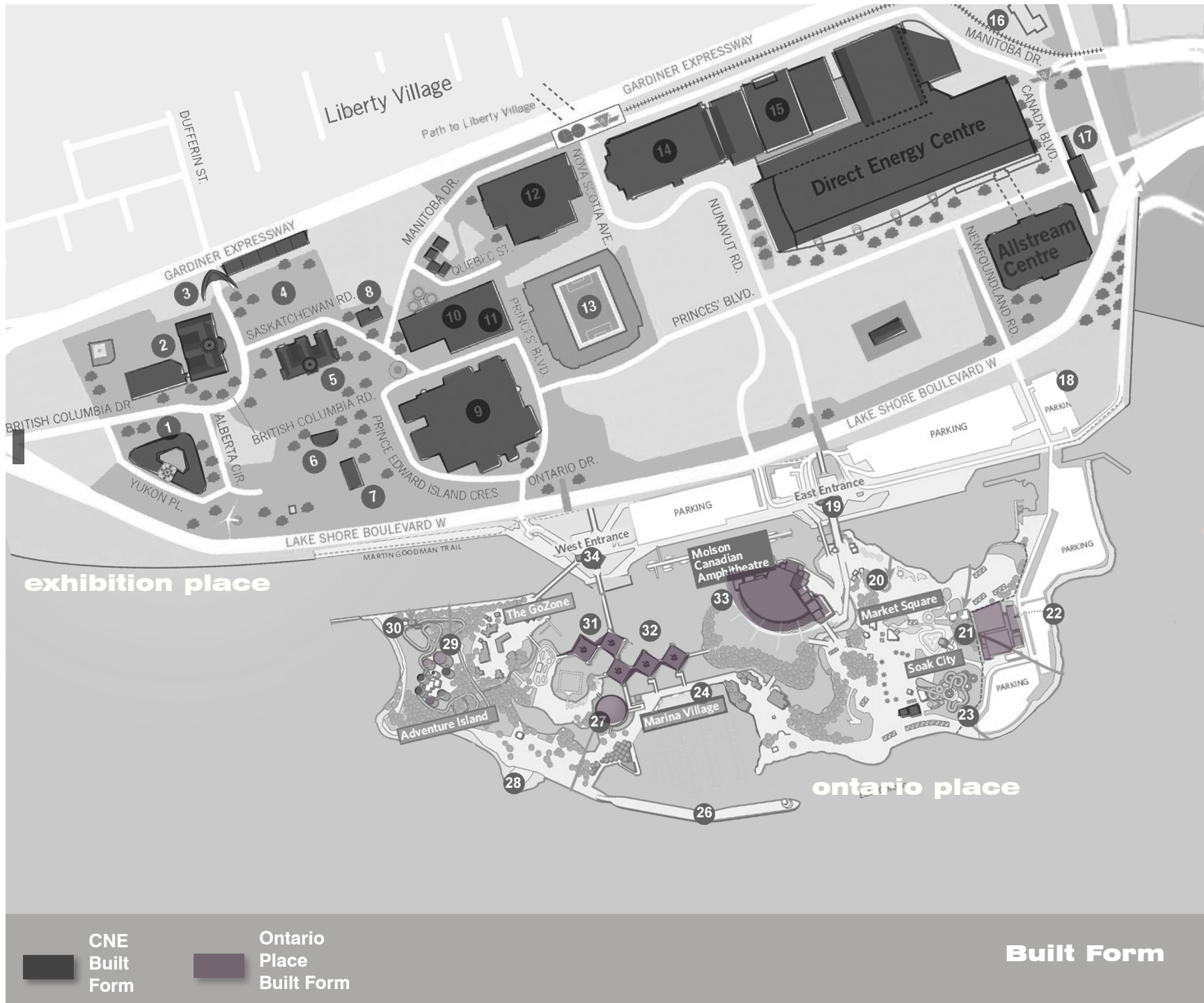
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parking



5

open space



5

built form



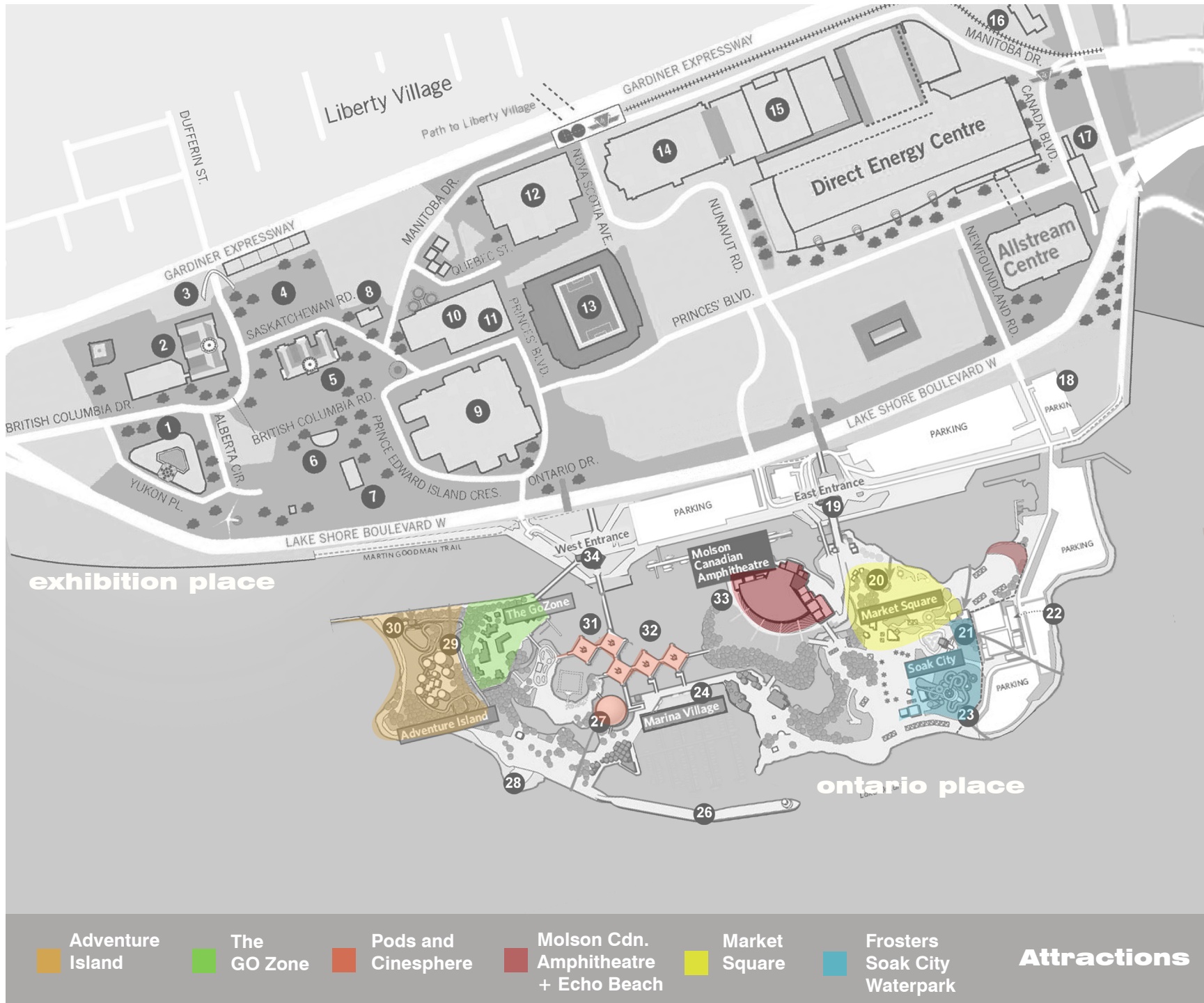
exhibition place

ontario place

- Built Form
 - Historic Gateway
 - National Historic Sites of Canada
 - Ontario Heritage Act
 - Toronto Historical Board Inventory
 - DCOMOMO International Selection
- Heritage**

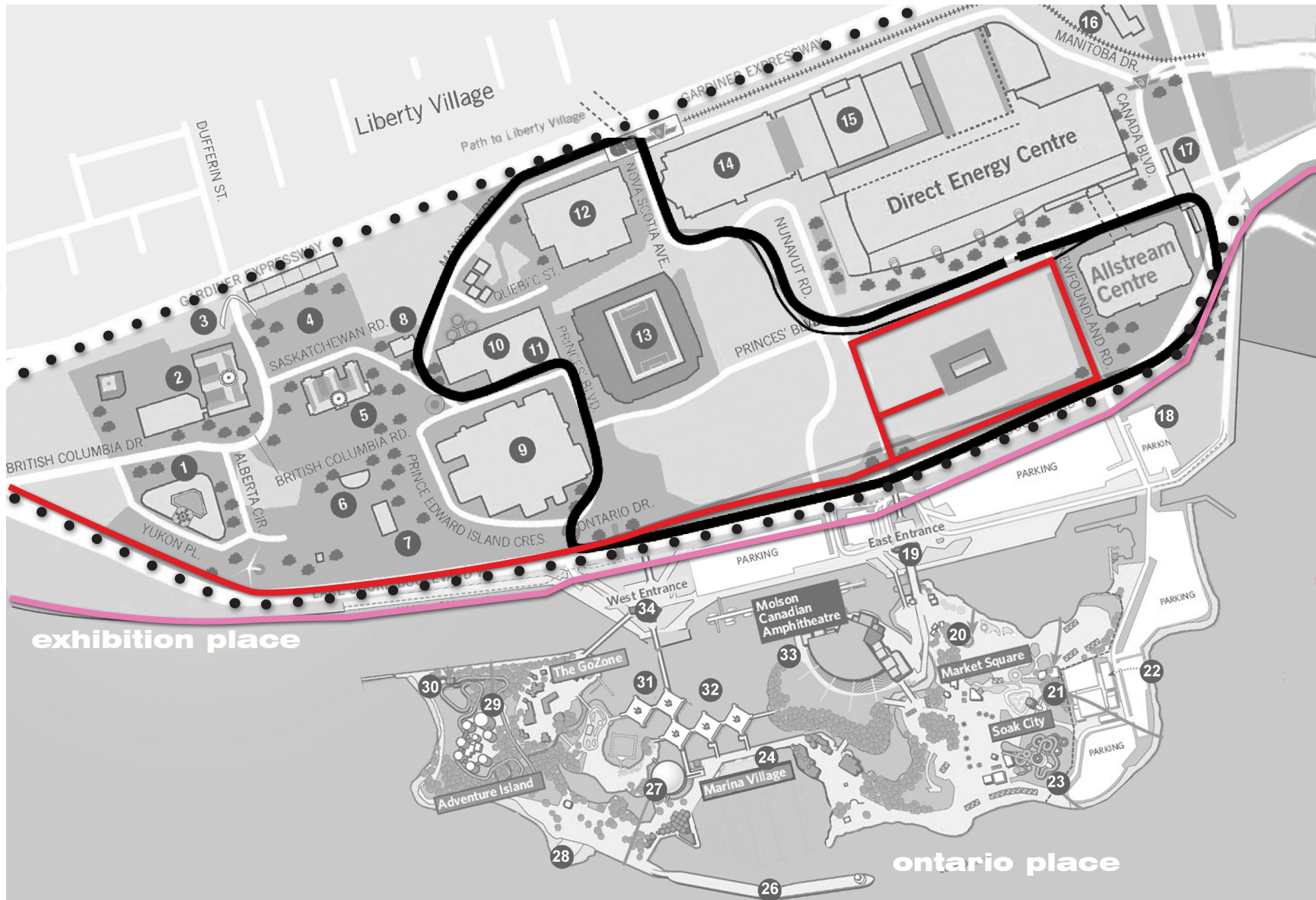
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heritage



5

attractions



exhibition place

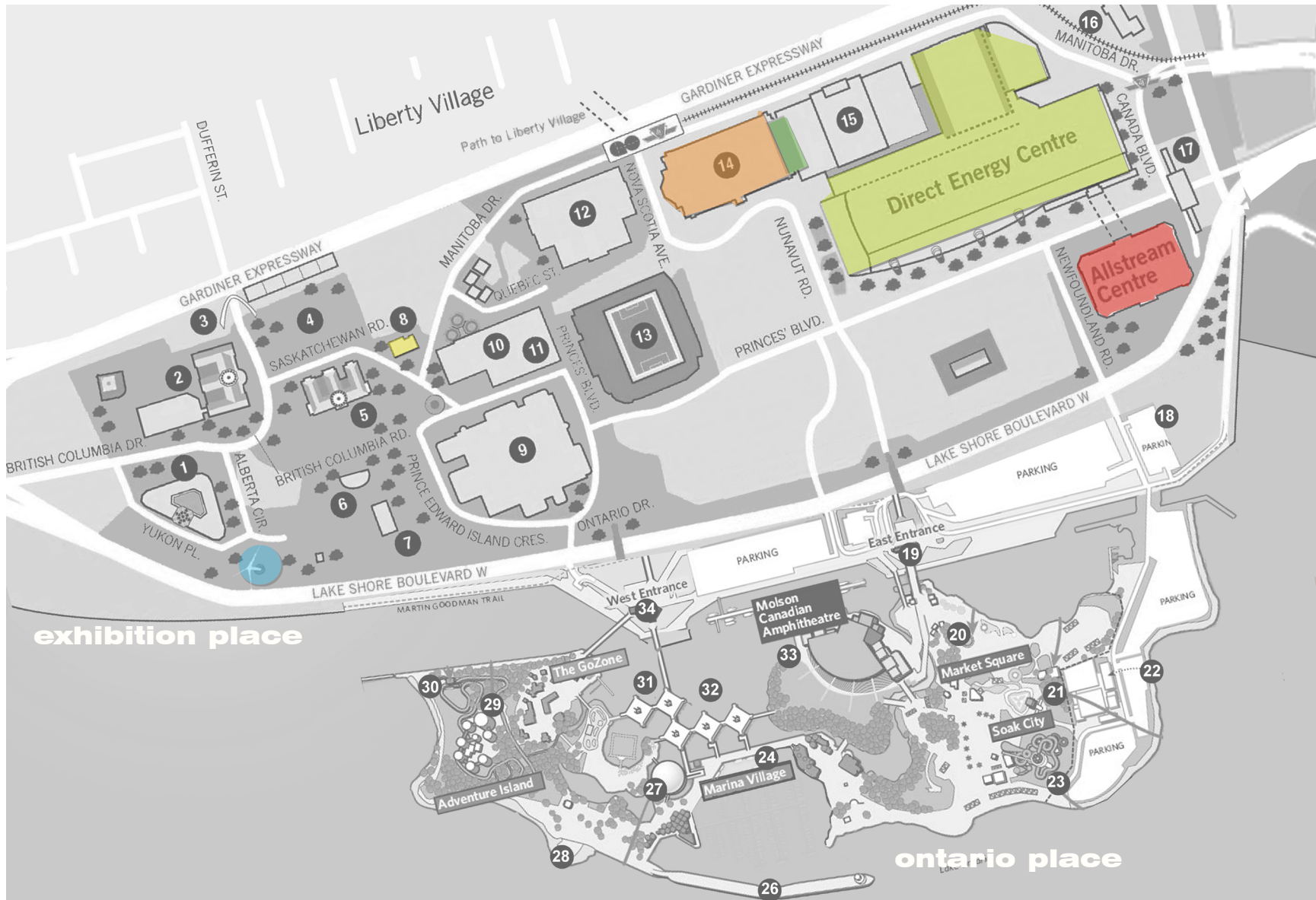
ontario place

- Honda Indy Toronto Route (July)
- Scotiabank Caribbean Festival Route (August)
- CNE / Air Show (August-September)
- Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon Route (October)

Events

5

annual events



exhibition place

ontario place

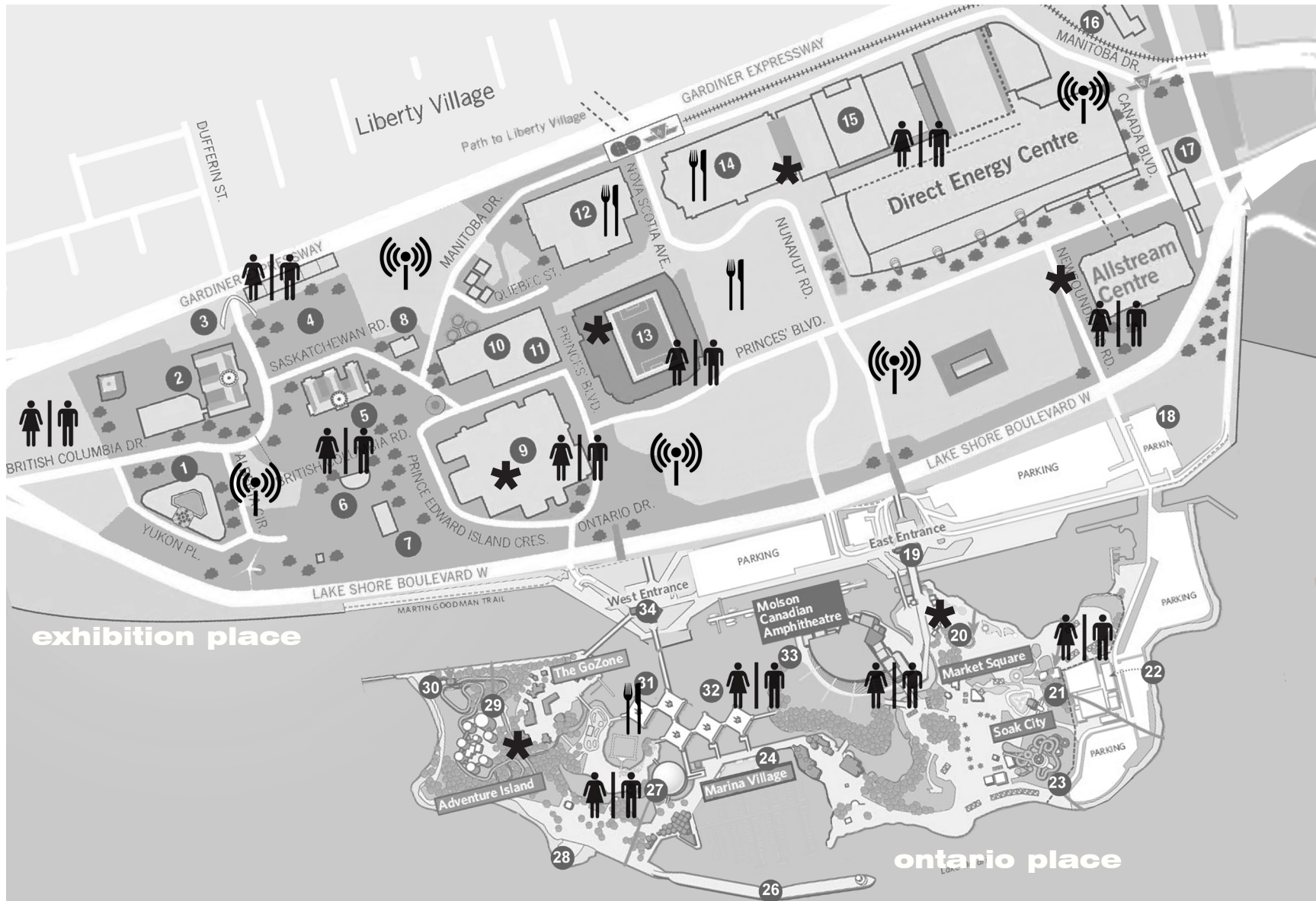
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|---|---|---|--|---|---|--------------------------|
| ■ LEED Silver Building | ■ TREC's Wind Turbine | ■ Direct Energy Centre | ■ Geothermal Plant: Press Building | ■ Green Roof Pilot Projects | ■ Photovoltaic Plant: Horse's Place | Green Initiatives |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|--------------------------|

5 green initiative



- Protected Fish Habitat (with TRCA, 2006)
- Froster Soak City (filters, treats and reuses water)
- Enwave Deep Lake Water Cooling
- Invasive plants replaced with natives/perennials

Green Initiatives



exhibition place

ontario place



Food and Beverage



Retail



Washrooms

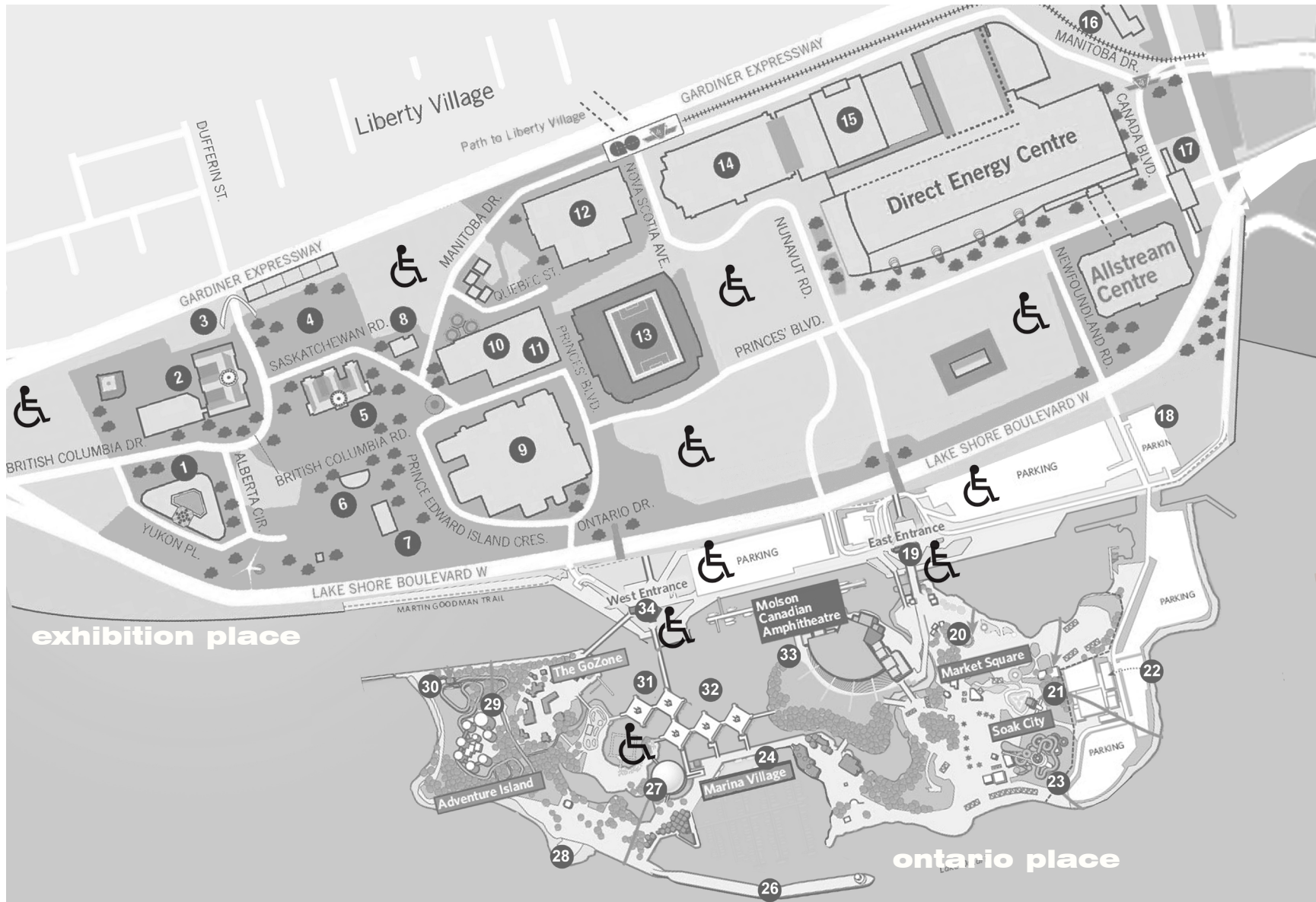


WiFi

Services + Amenities

5

services



exhibition place

ontario place

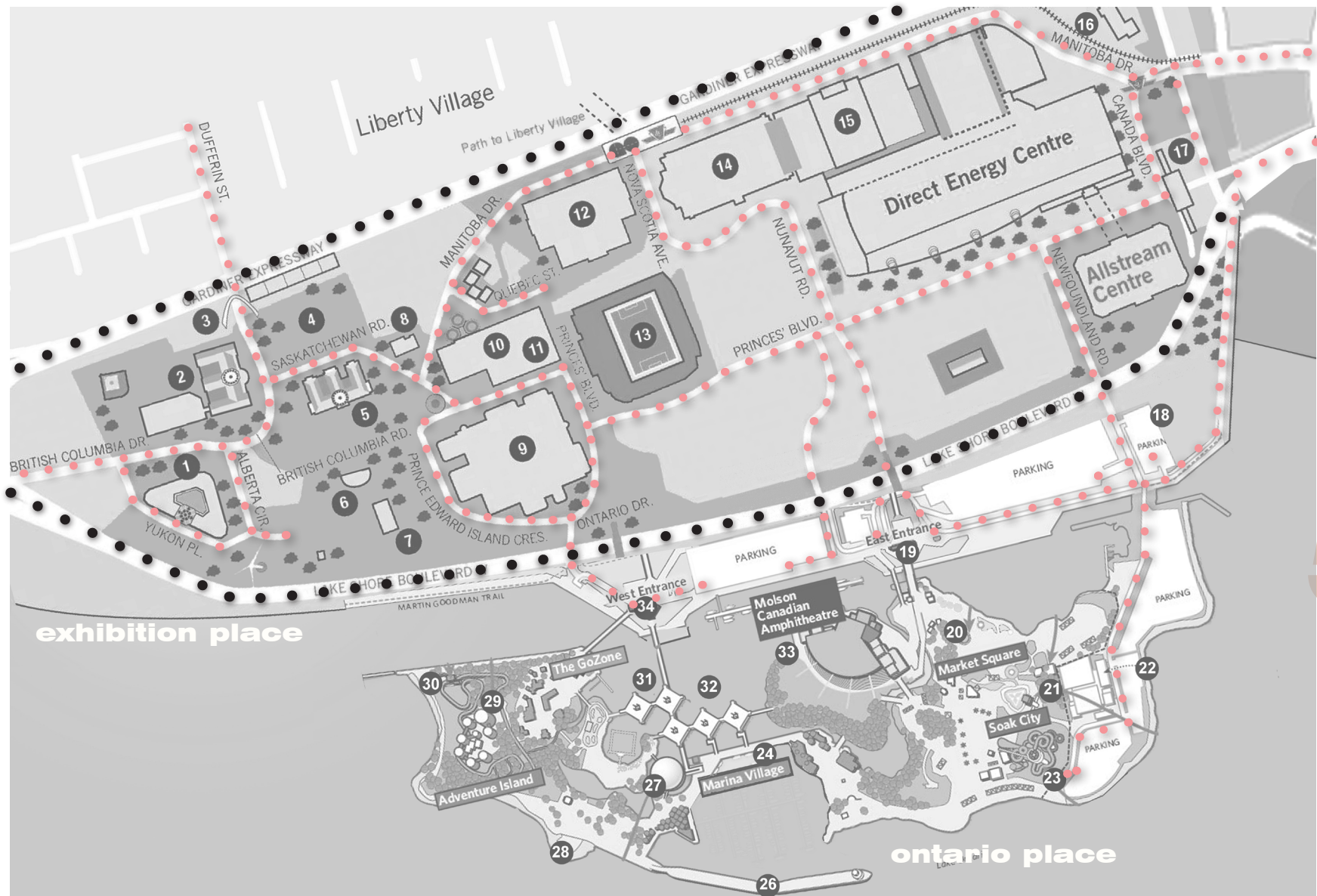


Disabled Access

Accessibility

5

accessibility



exhibition place

ontario place

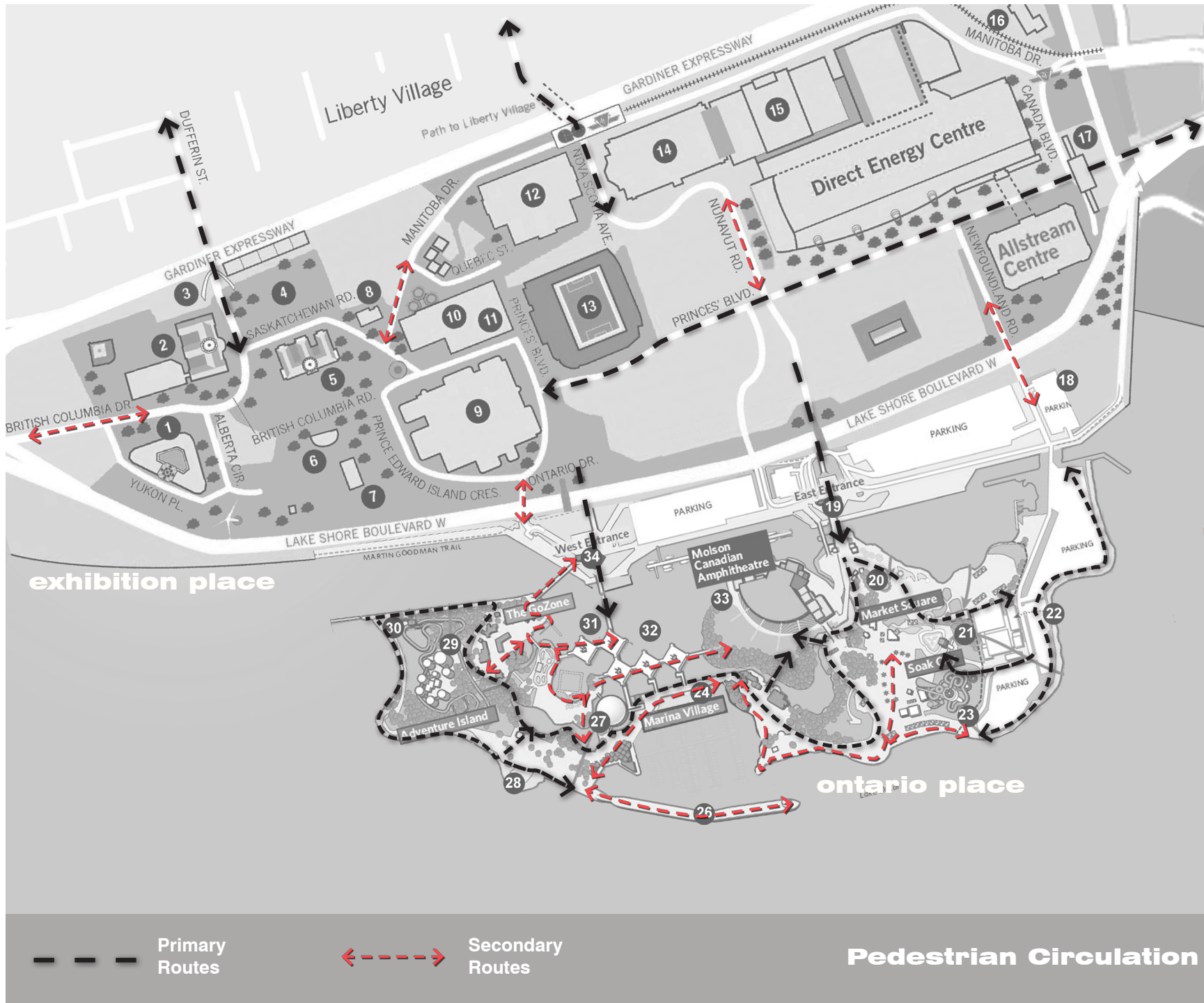
● ● ● ● ● Major Routes
(Lakeshore Boulevard +
Gardiner Expressway)

● ● ● ● ● Internal Site
Circulation

Vehicular Circulation

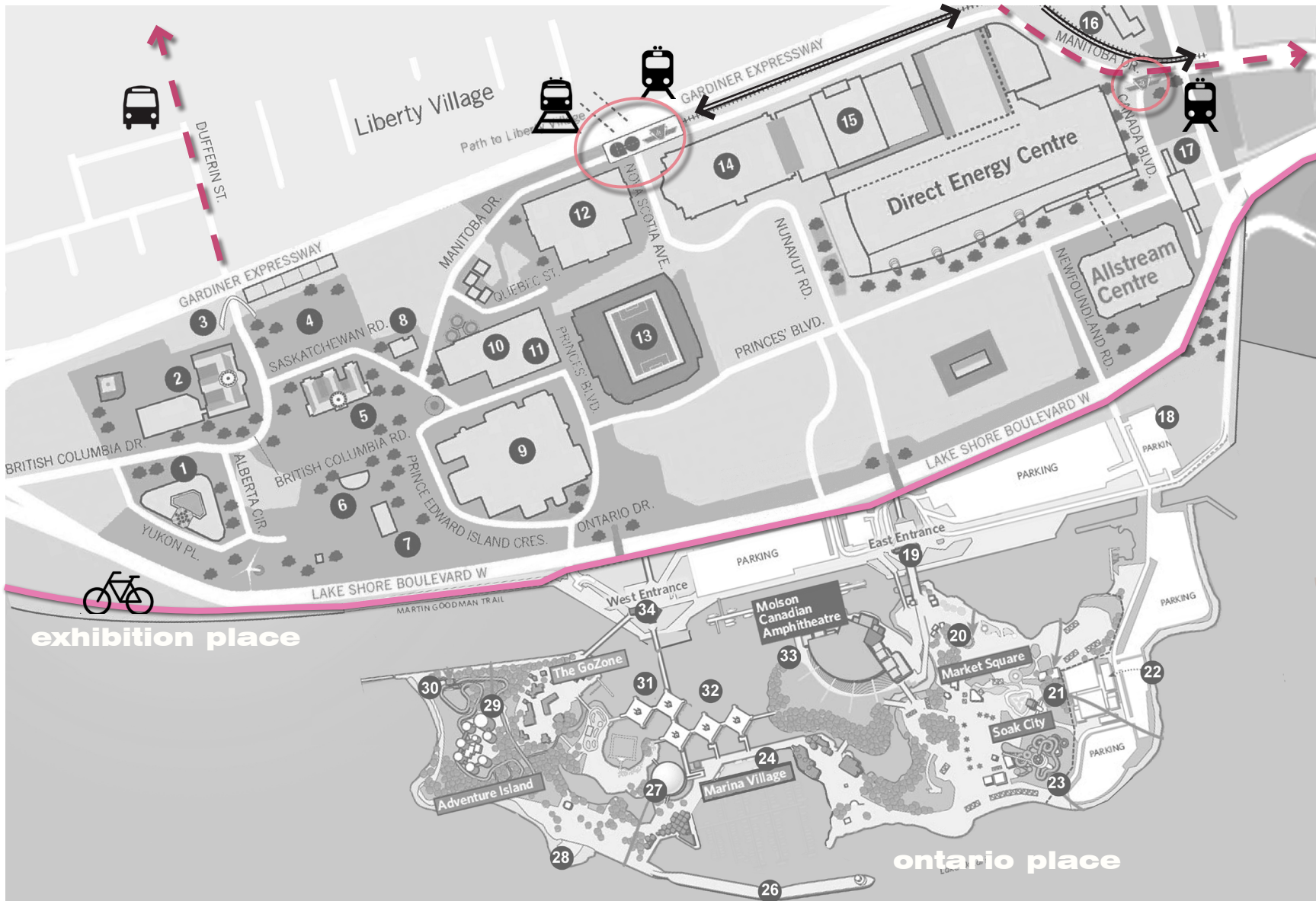
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circulation



5

circulation



exhibition place

ontario place



Martin Goodman Trail



TTC: Dufferin Bus #29



TTC: Streetcar



GO Train

Cycling + Transit

5

circulation

site analysis



CONTEXT

Located immediately offshore from Exhibition Place, Ontario Place is linked by two pedestrian bridges over a busy transport corridor - the Lakeshore Boulevard. The two sites are located approximately 4.0 km from the downtown core.

LAND USE: SURROUNDING NEIGHBOURHOODS

Former industrial and commercial lands to the north of Ontario Place have evolved into vibrant residential communities- Liberty Village, Parkdale, West Queen West and Trinity Niagara. The Billy Bishop Toronto Island Airport and the Toronto Islands lie immediately adjacent to Ontario Place.

TRANSPORT CORRIDORS

East-west access is permitted from the Queen Elizabeth, Gardiner Expressways and the Lakeshore Boulevard while north south access is via Bathurst and Dufferin Streets. A newly created 1.3 km stretch of the Martin Goodman trail runs parallel to Lake Shore Boulevard through Ontario Place. Ontario Place is underserved by public transit.

PARKING + OPEN SPACE

Aboveground parking spaces on both sites represent over 70% of the total land area and this results in a significant lack of public open space. Ontario Place and Exhibition Place lack a strong visual connection between the two parcels of land. The site is interrupted by poorly configured parking lots that are often unconnected.

5

summary

site analysis



BUILT FORM

Built forms at Exhibition Place can be attributed to many eras. Ontario Place's architecture and landscape is characteristic of a 1960s modern, Expo architectural style.

HERITAGE

Five buildings in Exhibition Place (the Fire Hall/Police Station, Government Building, Horticulture Building, Music Building and Press Building), all designed by George Gouinlock, were designated a National Historic Site of Canada in 1988. In addition, eight buildings and structures are designated buildings and monuments under the Ontario Heritage Act. Ontario Place exists today without any statutory protection.

EVENTS, FESTIVALS + ATTRACTIONS

The two sites are host to a number of events, festivals and permanent attractions primarily during the summer. Both sites are often vacant during the fall, winter and spring months. Ontario Place is rarely used in festival or parade routes. Year-round use for both sites is a major priority.

GREEN INITIATIVES

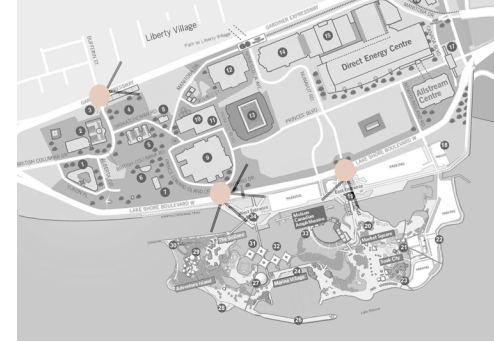
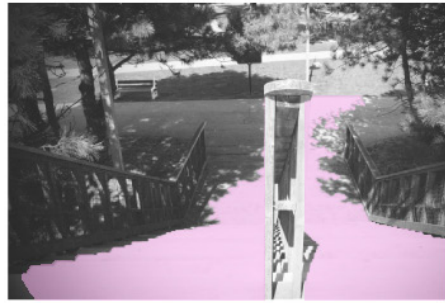
Exhibition Place is currently engaged in a number of green initiatives on site to explore alternative energy production methods and waste reduction. Prior to a provincially mandated closure in 2012, Ontario Place Corporation had been working toward reducing an existing carbon footprint by recycling and reducing our energy consumption. Notable initiatives include native planting and creation of fish habitat (Fact Sheet: Making Ontario Place Greener).



5

5.2 site views

Context



Ontario Place is sited alongside a busy transportation corridor with east-west access from both the Queen Elizabeth/Gardiner Expressways and Lakeshore Boulevard. North-south access is via Bathurst and Dufferin Streets. Despite its roadway connections, Ontario Place is underserved by public transit by way of the Bathurst and Harbourfront LRT/street car services and Exhibition GO Transit station.

The ground-level six lane Lakeshore Boulevard and the railroad lines immediately adjacent to the Toronto shoreline form a physical barrier for pedestrians. It is interesting to note that in building Ontario Place an equally strong, less tangible, objective to rejuvenating the CNE was to bridge the highway barrier that separates the CNE from the water in order to bring the public into intimate contact with the lake and generate enthusiasm for reclaiming more of the lakefront.

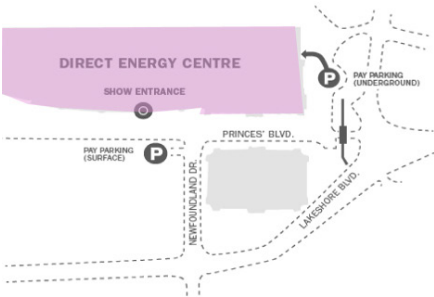
A newly created 1.3 km stretch of the Martin Goodman trail (2009) runs parallel to Lake Shore Boulevard through Ontario Place and was created in 2009 to improve Ontario Place's access and parking while maintaining the site's ability to engage large scaled events, and provide alternate routes during the event-based closures of Lakeshore Blvd. The adjacent Billy Bishop Toronto Island Airport, opened in 1939 is operated by the Toronto Port Authority and serves both, recreational and commercial users (approximately 1.6 million passengers).

L-R: Gardiner Expressway from Dufferin St. Bridge, CNE Bridge, Lakeshore Boulevard from CNE Bridge, Martin Goodman Trail, West Entrance to Ontario Place

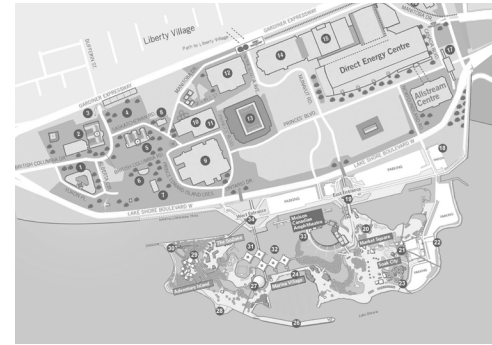
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5.2 site views

Transport Corridors



L-R: Bandshell Park, Gore Park, Stanley Barracks, Aboveground and underground Parking (Direct Energy), Ontario Place parking and green space



Ontario Place and Exhibition Place lack a strong visual connection between the two parcels of land. The site is interrupted by poorly configured parking lots that are often unconnected. The largest of these is a 6.7 hectare lot located in the central area of Exhibition Place. It serves not only as visitor parking for tradeshow, fairs and conferences but also for a variety of uses during the CNE and Honda Indy. Underground parking is available beneath the Direct Energy Centre.

The parking lots at Ontario Place are located on the eastern portion of the site and between the West, Central and East Gateways. Ontario Place's role as a provincial park made provision for ample parking a mandatory requirement (Gemil, 1980, 18). Aboveground parking spaces on both sites represent over 70% of the total land area and this predominance of parking results in a significant lack of open spaces.

Exhibition Place's Bandshell Park, Gore Park, Stanley Barracks and Centennial Square provide venues for public assembly. Both sites would benefit from wayfinding nodes and gathering places that provide opportunities to meet, to linger and to enjoy views. Shaded pedestrian areas, publicly accessible green space and buffer zones would provide a visual link between the eastern and western edges of the site and enhance the connection between both sites.

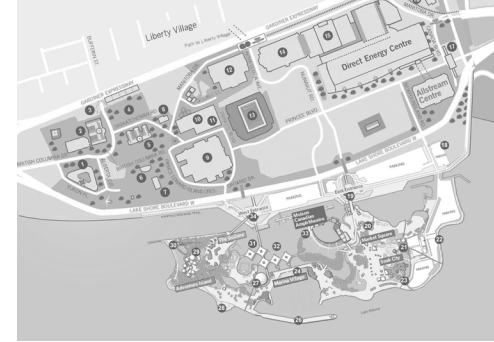
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5.2 site views

Parking + Open Space



L-R: CNE Historic Plaque, Dufferin Gates, Princes' Gates, Horticulture Building, Bandshell Park, Shrine Peace Memorial, Fort Rouille



Five buildings located in Exhibition Place (the Fire Hall/ Police Station, Government Building, Horticulture Building, Music Building and Press Building), all designed by George Gouinlock, were designated a National Historic Site of Canada in 1988.

In addition, nine are designated heritage buildings and monuments under the Ontario Heritage Act. They include:

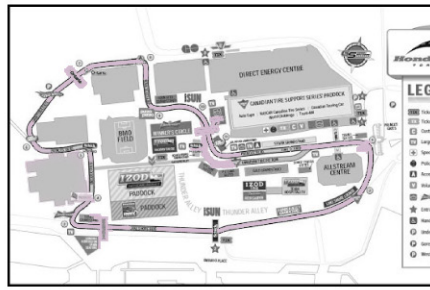
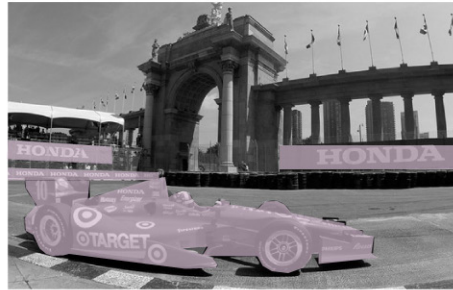
- 1) Arts, Crafts & Hobbies Building / Medieval Times (By-Law #459-93),
- 2) Automotive Building / Allstream Centre (By-Law #392-2009),
- 3) Coliseum Complex (By-Law #1996-0254)
- 4) Horse Palace (By-Law #821-88),
- 5) Music Building / Toronto Fashion Incubator (By-Law #443-85),
- 6) Ontario Government Building / Liberty Grand (By-Law #541-86),
- 7) Princes' Gates (By-Law #445-87),
- 8) Scadding Cabin (By-Law #540-86),
- 9) Stanley Barracks (By-Law #188-1999)

Thirteen are listed on the Heritage Toronto Inventory:

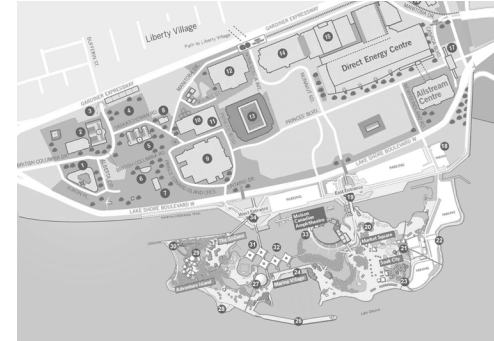
- 1) Bailey Bridge
 - 2) Bandshell
 - 3) Better Living Centre
 - 4) Carillon
 - 5) Dufferin Gate
 - 6) Fire Hall
 - 7) Food Building
 - 8) Fort Rouille
 - 9) Horticultural Building
 - 10) Press Building
 - 11) Princess Margaret Fountain
 - 12) Queen Elizabeth Building
 - 13) Shrine Peace Monument.
- Despite the architectural significance Ontario Place and its designation on the DOCOMOMO International Selection for of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement (Heritage Canada), it received no statutory protection in Canada.

5

5.2 site views



L-R: Canadian National Exhibition, Honda Indy, Froster's Soak City, Molson Amphitheatre, Echo Beach, Canada Day Fireworks



The Allstream Centre at Exhibition Place hosts conference centre, designed for meetings, conventions and galas. Larger events are housed at the Direct Energy Centre which features 1 million sq feet of space for trade shows, consumer shows and conventions with exhibits. The Better Living Centre (200,000 square feet) and the Queen Elizabeth Hall (63,000 square feet) often hosts consumer shows, community events and festivals.

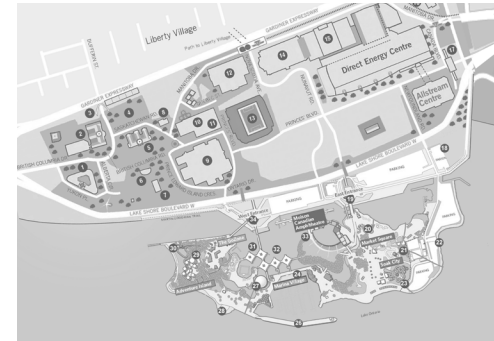
Exhibition Place also accommodates massive, one-off annual events like the Honda Indy Toronto (July), Scotiabank Caribbean Festival (August), Canadian National Exhibition (August- September) and the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon (October).

At Ontario Place, the marina, Molson Canadian Amphitheatre and Echo Beach, Atlantis Pavilion and parking lots remained open through 2012. Previously, this site was ideal for taking in special summer events including fireworks celebrations, Caribana and CNE's Canadian International Air Show. Ontario Place also played host to the largest lantern festival outside Asia, the Rogers Chinese Lantern Festival in October 2006- 2008. In past years, the Festival of Fire, a four night pyrotechnic event held in July, attracted two million spectators. Year-round use for both sites is a major priority.

5

5.2 site views

Events, Festivals+ Attractions



The Canadian National Exhibition is the first Fair in North America and the first large-scale event on the continent to receive EcoLogo certification, one of North America's largest and most respected environmental standard and certification.



Exhibition Place also stands as one of the more visible examples of the site's commitment to reduce emissions and waste. This has been formalized in the 2004 Development concept Plan and the 2009 Strategy called Exhibition Place GREENSmart program. The program lays the groundwork for Exhibition Place to serve as a model for other organizations to operate successfully while being environmentally friendly (Exhibition Place, 2012).



The LEED Silver Allstream Centre, TREC's Wind Turbine, the recycling and composting program, LED streetlights and light retrofits, the photovoltaic plant, the pilot green roof, the Geothermal Plant installed in the Press Building and Direct Energy Centre are the products of this environmental strategy.

L-R: LEED Silver (Allstream Centre), TREC's Wind Turbine, Recycling, Photovoltaic Plant, Pilot Green Roof, Froster Soak City, Fish Habitat, Direct Energy Centre

Ontario Place Corporations had been working toward reducing an existing carbon footprint by recycling and reducing our energy consumption. Notable initiatives include native planting and creation of fish habitat (Fact Sheet: Making Ontario Place Greener).

5

5.2 site views

Green Initiatives

Population (2006 Census of Canada)

Liberty Village 2, 250

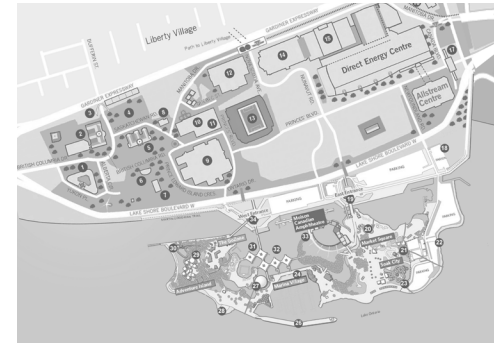
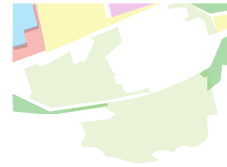
Parkdale 50,640

West Queen West 49,845

Trinity Niagara 68,060



(Minister's Advisory Panel on Ontario Place Revitalization, 2012, p. 9)



The Minister's Advisory Panel on Ontario Place Revitalization, 2012, cites that the surrounding neighbourhoods around Ontario Place have changed drastically since 1971. Liberty Village and Parkdale have increased their population by more than 50% since 2006 and over 155% since 1996 (2012, p.9) due to piecemeal revitalization efforts of industrial lands in the 1970s. According to the Liberty Village BIA Liberty Village is now a centre of entrepreneurship and creativity and known for its "work / play / live" environment and interesting architectural character. 2, 250 Torontonians call Liberty Village home.

Parkdale Village has experienced transition a few times in its 134 years and today is home to a working-class neighbourhood, with a mix of low and high income residents, as well as new immigrants, artists and young professionals. 50,640 people reside in this 5 square kilometer site. The report also cites that this growing population in the immediate area is underserved by leisure and recreation options. There are also opportunities to appeal to an increasingly multicultural taste and visible minorities.

According to Ken Greenberg, there is an immense opportunity to look outward from the combined site to the remarkable changes surrounding it in Liberty Village, around Fort York and western beaches and "make connections."

Surrounding Neighbourhoods

life-cycle analysis

6.1 Landscape Biography Analysis

6.2 Anatomy of an Evolutionary Road Map

Phase 1: 1968- 1971

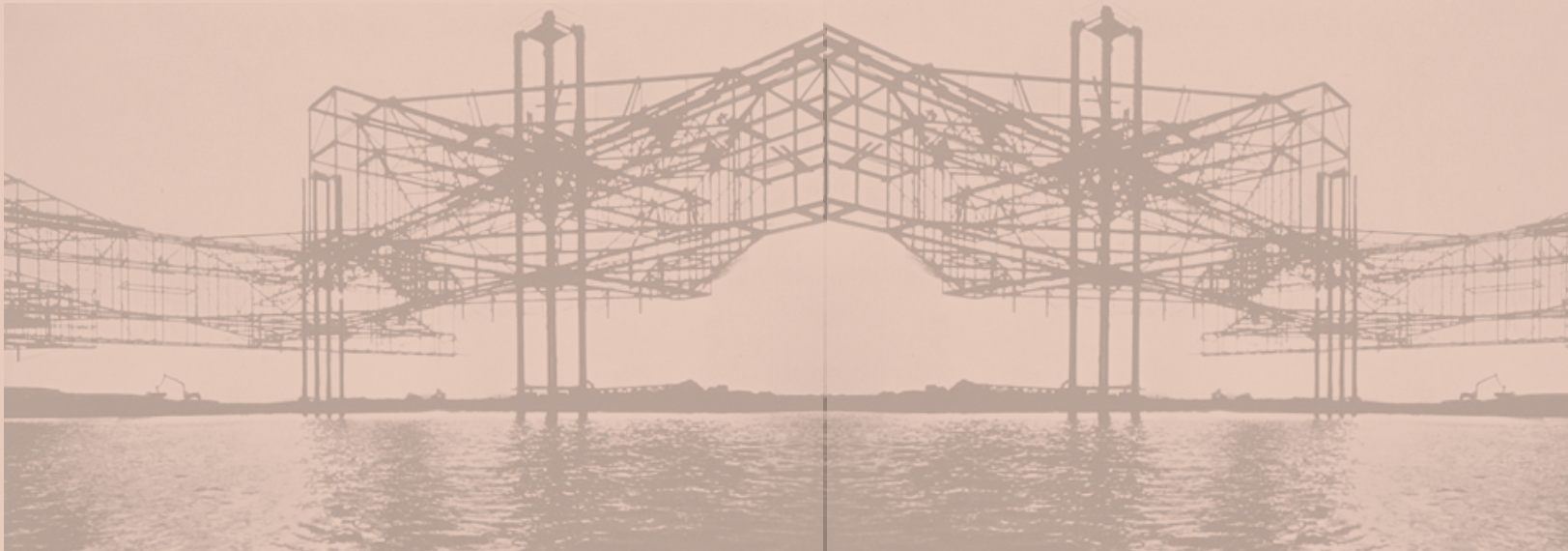
Phase 2: 1971-1980

Phase 3: 1980-1990

Phase 4: 1990-2000

Phase 5: 2000-2012

6.3 Summary

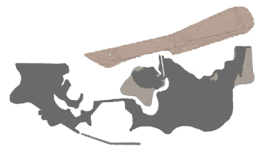


www.600iffwiv.com



Image by author; Ontario Place: Then and Now. 2012)

ontario place is located along toronto's central waterfront



it was envisioned as a **catalyst** for revitalizing the city's industrial waterfront

1969 construction began



1.5M labour hours



total cost of **\$29M**

1971 public opening



2.3 million visitors in the first year

96

acres of lakefront property

architectural features:



artificial islands



pavillion complex



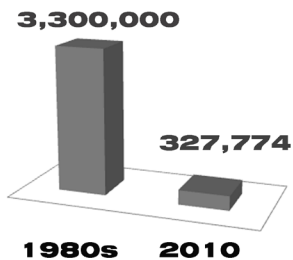
cinesphere

architects:

hough stansbury & associates

craig, zeidler & strong architects

constraints:



declining attendance



poor connectivity

Canada's Wonderland attracted

10X

more visitors in 2010.

competitors

liberty village
parkdale

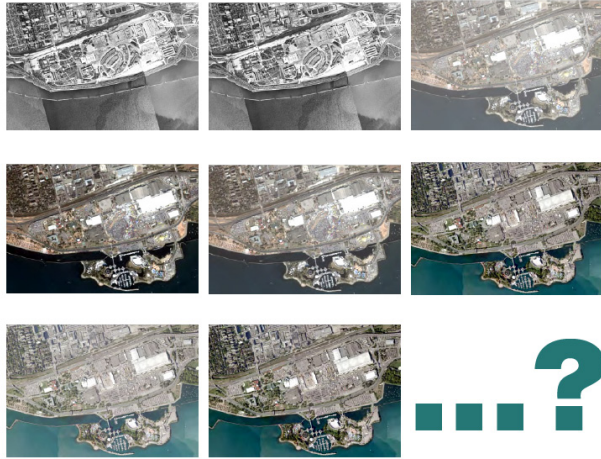
27
median age in 1971

roncesvalles

41
median age in 2012

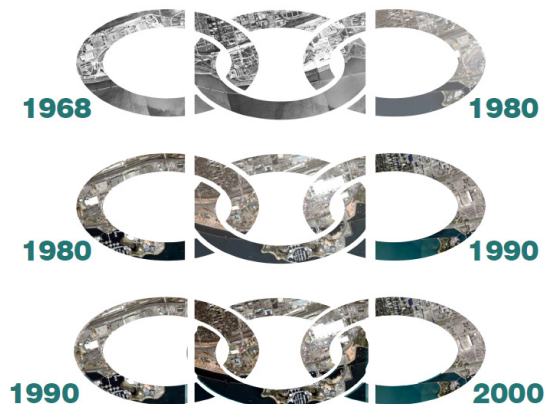
changing visitor base

life-cycle analysis



Why study history, if our goal is to design the future?

Perhaps, best answered by philosopher George Santayana who said, that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."



A significant roadblock in this thesis was defining Ontario Place. By tracing this landscape's evolution; its historical trajectory and its existing context, it is evident that the site had a long history of multiple uses and a record re-inventing itself. During its very origins (1968-1971), Ontario Place had strong associations with residential development as proposals like the 1968 Bold Concept and 1970 Harbour City Report were put forth. Though mandated as a recreation and exhibition grounds by the Ontario Place Corporation Act (1991), this landscape functioned as passive parkland in its early years (1971-1980) and an exhibition venue during subsequent years of transformation and addition (1980-1990) of elements on site. In the 1990s, the whole idea of Ontario Place shifted dramatically as theming and attractions morphed this landscape into an amusement park (1990-2000). The following decade, (2000-2012) saw focused efforts to brand this site as an ecologically and culturally significant waterfront tourist destination.

The vestiges of this historically significant cultural landscape are characterized by the loss of forms and the dilution of the site's original character. Punctuated moments in the site's historical trajectory were amplified through dramatic and often sweeping changes in this landscape. This in turn, triggered larger issues. The gravitational pull of Ontario Place as a waterfront destination slowly diminished for residents and visitors alike. Without a clear direction, Ontario Place risks repeating the mistakes of its past and drifting further into mediocrity.

life-cycle analysis

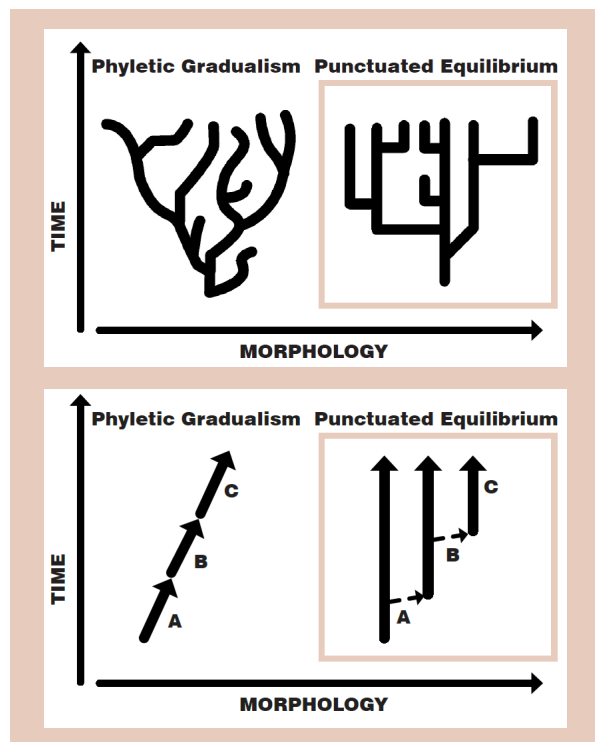
“The old Ontario Place is gone - along with the 1970s, 80s and 90s. That cannot be recreated.

What can and should be created is a site that embodies the same planning ideals, principles and goals that informed the design and operation of the original Ontario Place. In a way that resonates with today’s youth, changing society demographics and modern technology.”

Ian McLellan, first Director of Ontario Place (1971-74)

From the outset, employing a product lifecycle perspective (a “cradle to grave” approach) revealed that the majority of impacts or punctuated moments occurred in life-cycle phases outside of direct control. The character of landscape development and change was influenced by historical, geographical and social circumstances and conditions, as well as by collective and individual activity. The historical imprint of Ontario Place is the culmination of years of intense relations between various factors, making it impossible to study one without the other.

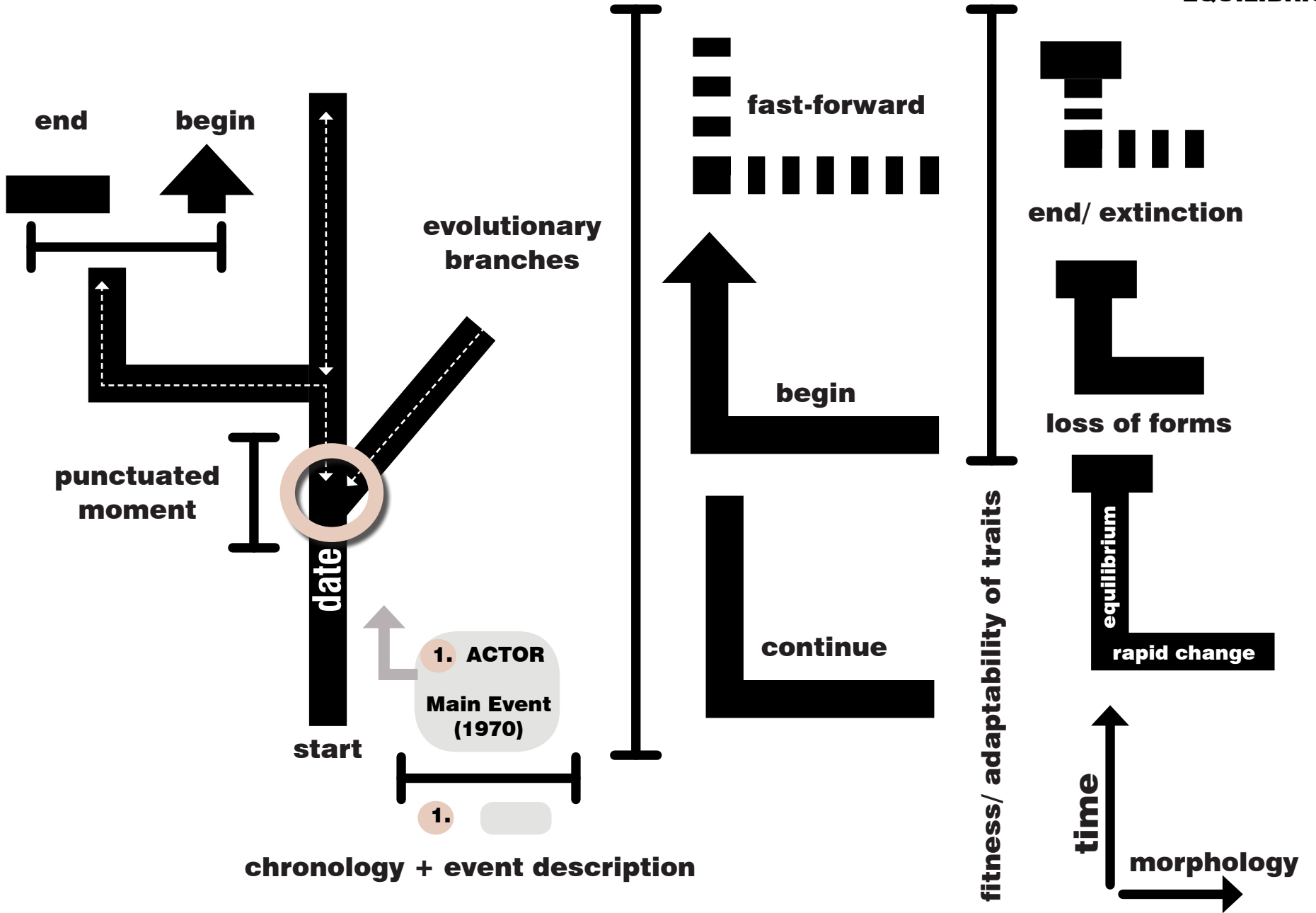
New paths of landscape development or new landscape trajectories were observed in compiling the landscape biography of Ontario Place, with the aid of a punctuated equilibrium metaphor. This evolutionary biological model, when applied to the study of landscape history, revealed the often elusive interplay of historically contingent ensembles which contributed to Ontario Place’s transformational history contributing to a richer and fuller understanding of this landscape’s evolution. This metaphor also helped to clarify the stop/start nature of the process of landscape transformation and the unpredictability of the end point. In the context of landscape formation, five distinct phases were distinguished and interventions in the landscape during these phases were visualized through a series of evolutionary road-maps.



KEY: Anatomy of an Evolutionary Road-Map



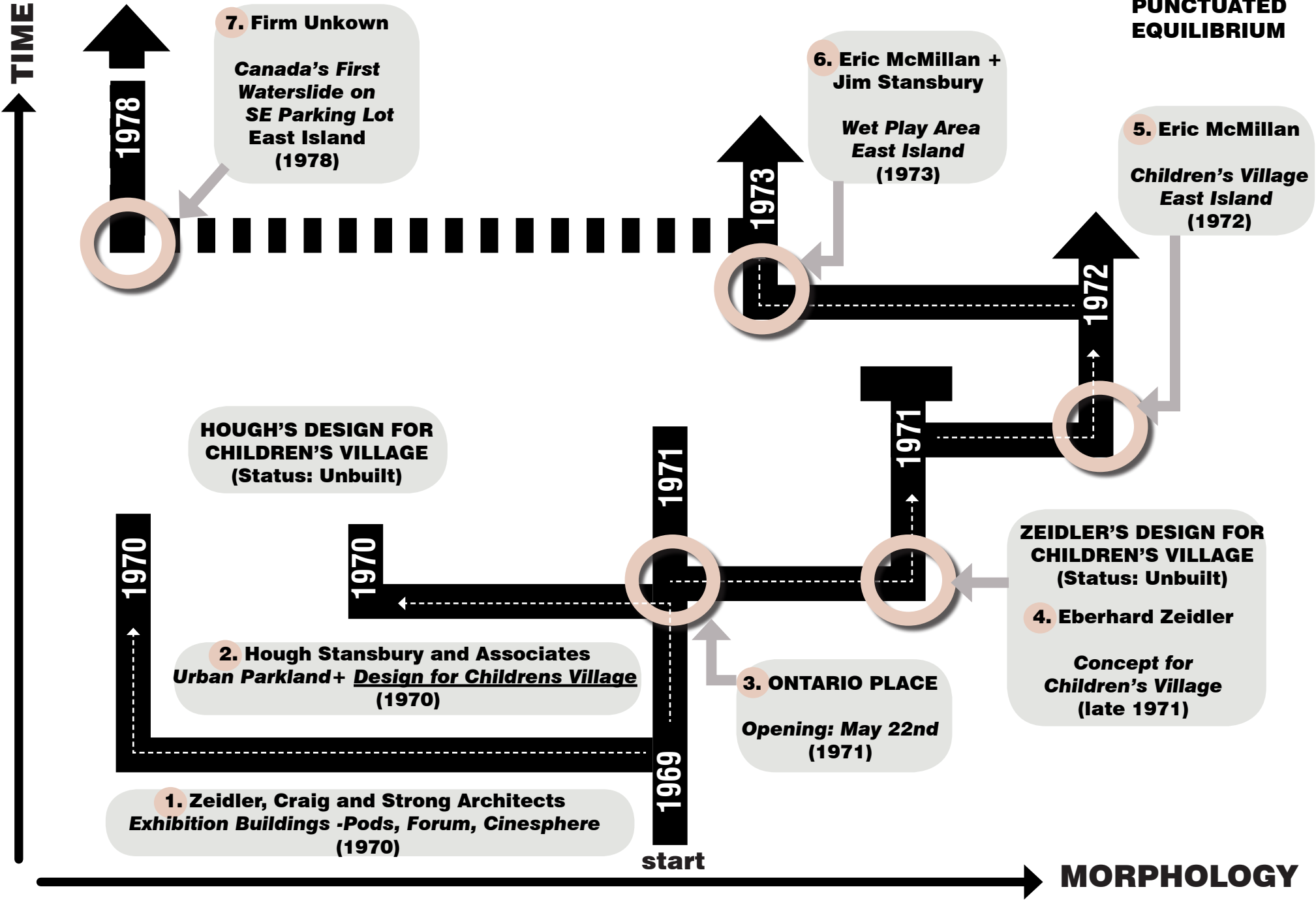
**PUNCTUATED
EQUILIBRIUM**



Phase 2: ONTARIO PLACE: public park (1971-80)



PUNCTUATED EQUILIBRIUM



Phase 4: ONTARIO PLACE: amusement park (1990-2000)

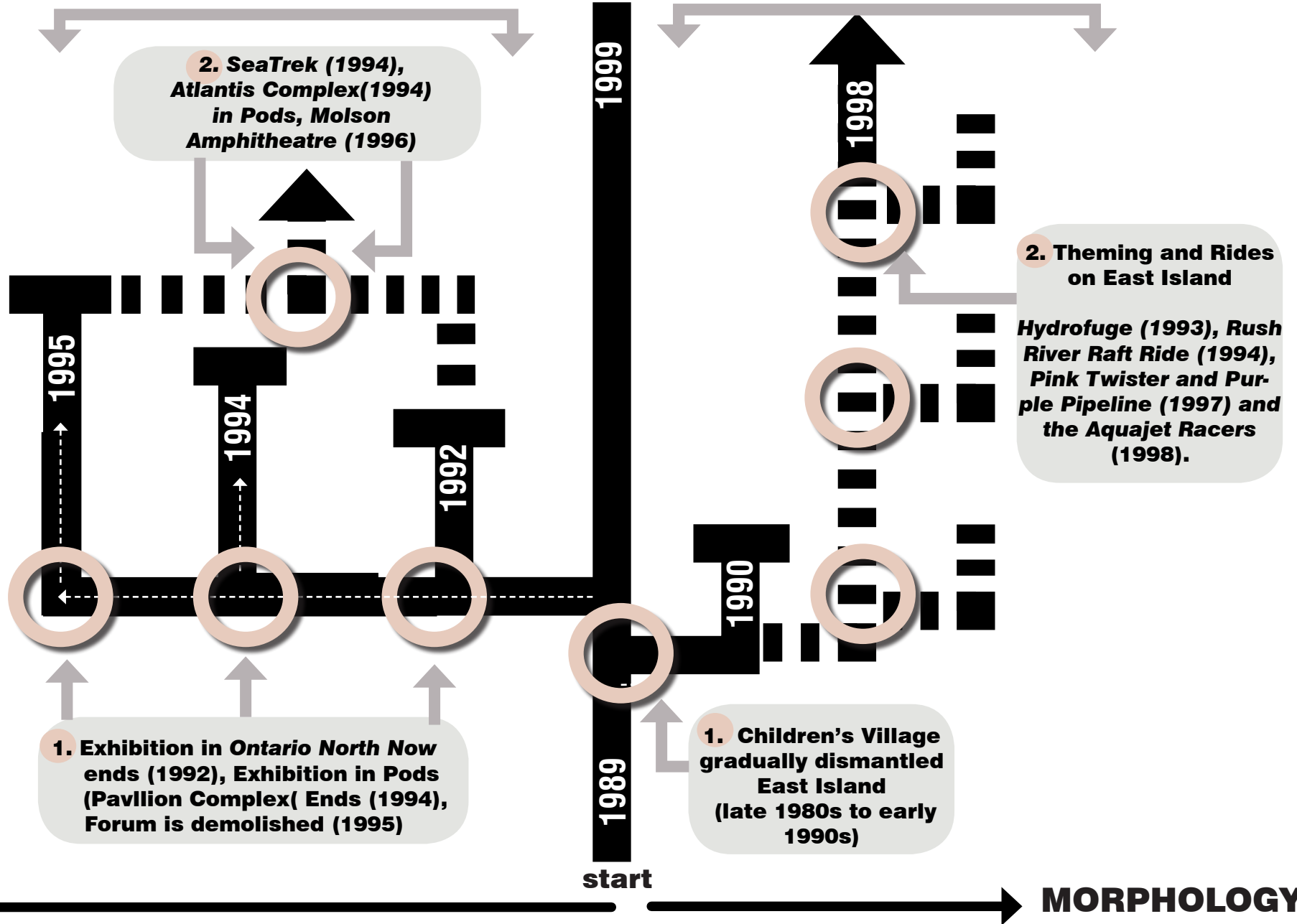


**PUNCTUATED
EQUILIBRIUM**

TIME

The Loss of Original Forms

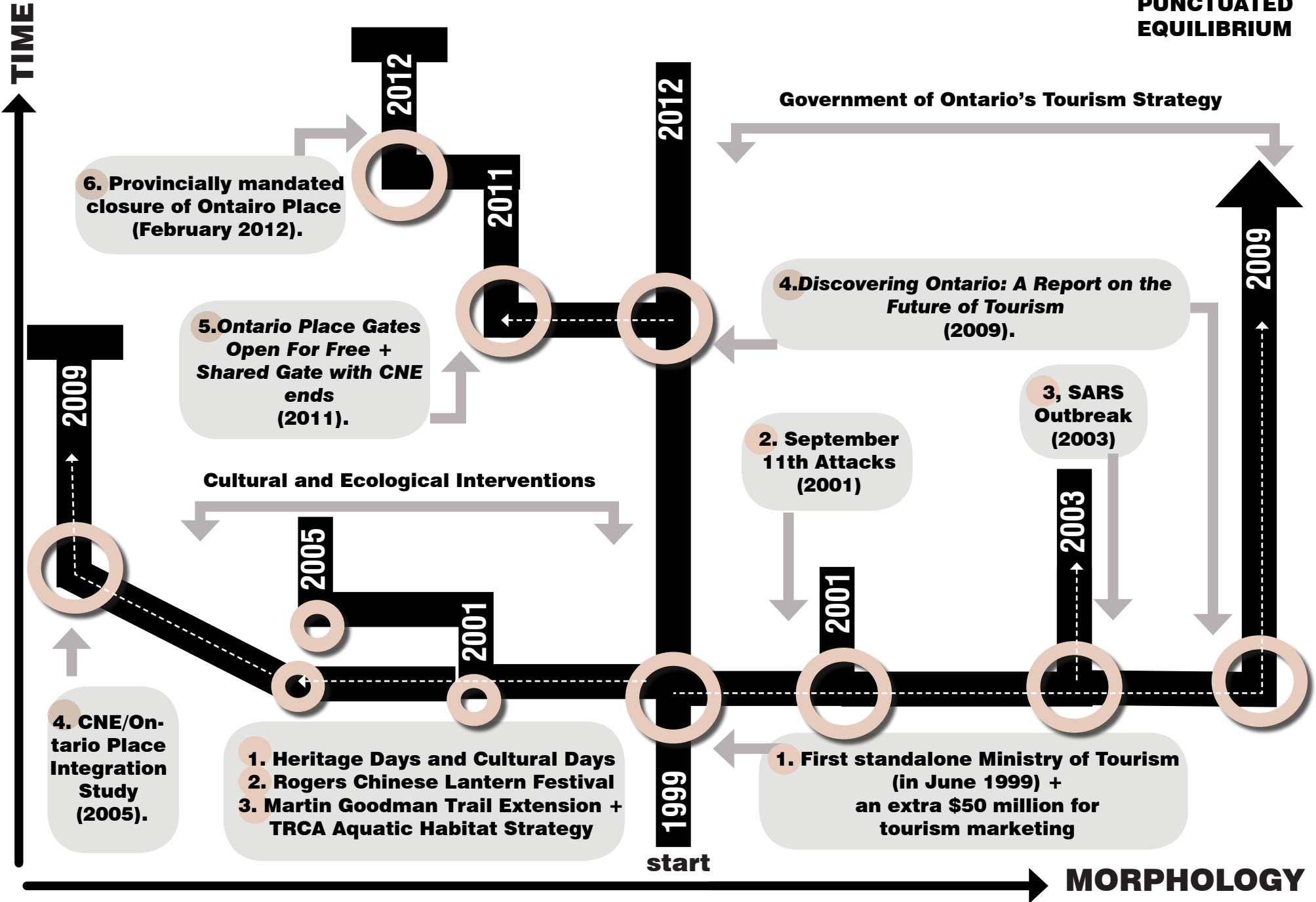
**Master Plan Alterations
(Theming + Attractions)**



Phase 5: ONTARIO PLACE: tourist destination (2000-12)



**PUNCTUATED
EQUILIBRIUM**



life-cycle analysis



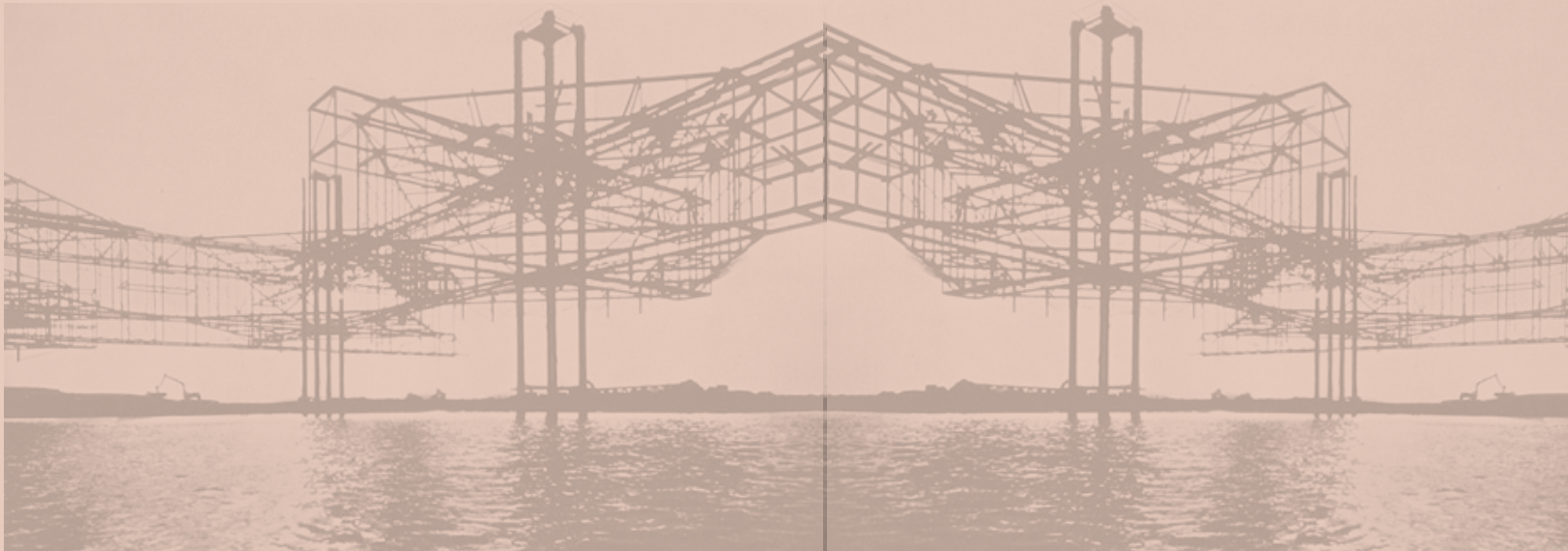
6

6.3 summary

framework + discussion

7.1 Framework

7.2 Limitations + Future Study



ontario
place 

DEDICATED TO THE PEOPLE OF ONTARIO
PAST - PRESENT - FUTURE

OPENED MAY 22, 1971

BY

THE HONOURABLE WILLIAM G. DAVIS, Q.C.,
PRIME MINISTER OF ONTARIO

AND

THE HONOURABLE ALLAN GROSSMAN,
MINISTER OF TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

THE HONOURABLE JAMES A. C. AULD,
MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS

PROJECT STARTED - MARCH 17, 1969 OFFICIALLY OPENED - MAY 22, 1971

framework + discussion

7.1 Framework

The idea of building a utopian park far removed from the city's downtown core without an adequate transportation connection probably doomed Ontario Place as a socially integrated park. Over time, the site had been reduced to a volumetric typology of underutilized forms and programmed spaces whose functions were strictly regulated and their uses predetermined. The un-programmed "in-between" spaces slowly diminished and with it the modernist egalitarian values and social aims on which the original master plan for Ontario Place was based. The way in which Ontario Place evolved indicates an imbalance between the distinctly defined sectors of the original plan and the subsequent piecemeal transformations on this waterfront site.

Punctuated equilibrium was a valuable metaphor in this study as it provided a means to map Ontario Place's transformational history which did not have any implied evolutionary track or specific linear coherence. The evolution of this landscape simply responded to existing conditions at the time. Could this metaphor help to predict future planning? A resounding yes, since the 'existing conditions' that Ontario Place experienced for four decades have some distinct similarities. If designers involved in the revitalization process for Ontario Place, study and analyze its genius loci and its historical evolution in order to comprehensively understand how the site functioned socially, ecologically, economically and politically over time then perhaps there is a greater likelihood of creating a design that respects and enhances all of these relationships. Furthermore, these designs should reflect flexibility and adaptability to accommodate future evolution of this landscape as conditions change in often unpredictable ways. The revitalization of this landmark site should therefore reinforce the tangible link between history, cultural values, and future spatial transformation.

Ontario Place is currently at a cross-roads, a punctuated moment, and to move forward, this site requires a clear vision and a clearer understanding of its history and the forces that have shaped it. The following is a broad frame-

framework + discussion

work that highlights four factors that should be considered in future development and revitalization of Ontario Place.

1. Conduct a Cultural Heritage Landscape Assessment, a Heritage Impact Assessment and Cultural Management Plan for Ontario Place to Identify and Define Key Areas of Character

It is troubling that the provincial mandate for the revitalization of Ontario Place failed to include a heritage impact assessment and a cultural management plan. These documents would explicitly identify and define key areas of designed landscape character, significant built heritage and significant cultural heritage landscape components of this crown-owned land to establish parameters for its revitalization.

Despite its undesignated status, the province has a responsibility to conserve significant elements in this landscape and should use a certain protocol toward conservation. According to heritage architect Michael McClelland from E.R.A Architects Inc., there needs to be some kind of investment and respect for the works of architect Eberhard Zeidler and landscape architect Michael Hough. “Conservation needs to be a part of the broader conversation” (Interview with McClelland, February 2013).

2. Recognize Ontario Place as a Continuing Evolving Cultural Heritage Landscape

Though currently undesignated, Ontario Place, fulfills the criteria in Regulation 9/06 Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest in the Ontario Heritage Act. As specified in the Provincial Policy Statement, 2005:

S. 2.5.1 Significant built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes will be conserved.

Ontario Place is a significant cultural heritage landscape that can be further classified as a one that has “evolved” to “reflect the physical, biological, and cultural character of our everyday lives, [and] function plays a significant role” (Birnbaum, 1994, p. 2). The site is a continuing evolving landscape which “exhibits significant material evidence of its evolution” (UNESCO World Heritage Com-

framework + discussion

mittee; Parks Canada, 1994; and Ontario Heritage Foundation, 2001; Ontario Heritage Toolkit) and should be treated as a whole rather than the sum of its parts. This poses a challenge in a conservation process but could be a rather interesting undertaking that could affect/advance cultural heritage policy for the study and protection of modern landscapes, which has been largely neglected.

3. Develop an Education and an Interpretation Strategy: “Making Post-War Landscapes Visible”

In this province, cultural landscape policy for modern (post-war) landscapes is outlined in both, the Provincial Policy Statement and the Ontario Heritage Act. But according to McClelland (2004), there is a loophole in the legislation regarding the protection of provincially owned heritage properties which results in the exclusion of protection of modern cultural resources on site (McClelland, 2004, 3). Many modern, provincially owned post-war landscapes, like Ontario Place, are undesignated (with the exception of Sasaki’s Queen Park Complex in 2000). Furthermore, little accessible published information exists for these modern landscapes and Ontario Place, in particular, has received hardly any scholarly attention. The opportunity to disseminate information on the historical evolution of the site to a broad public base could encourage people to a) understand this site’s historical significance b) be interested c) appreciate and respect it and d) make efforts to protect or preserve portions of the site, adopting it as a valuable element in their community.

4. Establish a Long-Term Master-Plan that Ensures Public Space and Access along Toronto’s Waterfront and Meaningful Co-operative (not Competitive) Partnership with Exhibition Place

Based on Toronto’s “sad history of waterfront errors,” the provision for an accessible lakefront is vital. Ontario Place was intended to reclaim the shoreline for the people and should remain a public asset. The sale of publicly held land in Toron-

framework + discussion

to has led to an “undesirable urban landscape” (Desfor and Laidley, Toronto Star 2011) and the revitalization of Ontario Place should be put into “competent hands” like Waterfront Toronto instead of the provincial agency, Infrastructure Ontario known for working with the private sector (Hume’s remarks at Rethinking Ontario Place Town Hall, 2013; Opinion Piece, Toronto Star, 2012). As Ken Greenberg warned in his 1969 article, “Will Toronto’s Waterfront Become a Concrete Wasteland?” leaving “the making of context” to the private sector has many obvious consequences (Greenberg, Globe and Mail, 1969).

Secondly, the revitalization of this landmark site should not move at “lightning speed,” as suggested by the Minister of Culture, Tourism and Sport. This is a major irreversible decision that requires broad consultation and public discussion. It requires a shared vision, an integrated strategy, strong leadership, ongoing investment and participation on all levels.

If Exhibition Place and Ontario Place are to be jointly developed, the subsequent long-term master plan for both sites should honor and enhance the historical integrity of the sites. The future of both sites should not be compromised by repeating mistakes of the past. A waterfront casino in the proposed integrated Exhibition Place- Ontario Place location is not an appropriate solution. Casinos, as described by Waterfront Toronto CEO John Campbell in 2012, are “land-consumptive, low-density, and inwardly-oriented.” This is in direct conflict with Ontario Place’s origin intent, its historical evolutionary trajectory and it will undermine the value and character of both sites as public space for all people.

framework + discussion

7.2 Discussion

Limitations: Although this study was carefully prepared, there were some unavoidable limitations that should be acknowledged.

Archival Research

As a descriptive research method, archival research did not provide control of how the subject was studied or information collected. Informal processes and considerations that preceded decision-making were not often available in public documents. Furthermore, the archival data was at times incorrectly catalogued, rarely digitized and often included major omissions and bias. Sometimes, a searchable database was not available and resulted in relying on the archivist to locate the necessary material. A significant limitation was the inability to access the private archives of the Ontario Place Corporation because this may have provided further insight into insider site-specific details and decisions. To that note, information on Ontario Place was scattered across several archives in Toronto, and in some instances even as far as Guelph. Canadian newspaper article databases like Alt-PressWatch, Canadian Newsstand and CBCA, available through the University of Guelph Library, contained news articles from 1970 onward in their online repositories. Select clippings from prior to 1970 were accessed in news paper clippings from the City of Toronto Archives and in some cases, the study's participant's private collection of news paper articles and waterfront history from the years leading up to the creation of Ontario Place. Though efforts were undertaken to triangulate the data, the above factors could present a misleading account of the events in question.

Oral History/ Semi Structured 'Elite' Interviews:

Fourteen semi structured interviews followed an open and informal interview style and were largely dependent on the participants' memory and bias of events in question. The live face-to-face process facilitated exploratory probing and in depth discussions, but also required the building of a rapport with the participant. In some cases, leading questions, preconceived ideas and checks or probes, on the researcher's part, could have affected the validity of this study. E-mail exchanges,

framework + discussion

telephone conversations and follow up correspondence was catalogued and included in this study, upon permission. Finally, the sudden passing of landscape architect Michael Hough just days prior to the scheduled interview date, was a major limitation.

Direct observation method limited by closure.

Due to the site's closure in February 2012, some portions of Ontario Place were not accessible to the public.

Future Research

This thesis would have greatly benefitted from the combined use of remote sensing, Geographic Information System (GIS) and landscape modeling techniques to provide a geographical context for the data and to create an elaborate record of site-specific bio-physical information as Ontario Place evolved over time. This geo-spatial data could be used to identify and record signature features in the landscape and to quantitatively model geology, vegetation and erosion processes over time to determine the capability and suitability of this landscape for any future proposed use.

Secondly, access to consultant reports on Ontario Place was restricted. Though possibly obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, these could provide invaluable insight into this changing landscape. Furthermore, access to the Ontario Place Corporation archives could have provided added benefit for assembling a history of the organization, their vision and mandate. A future study on Ontario Place should involve this.

Third, comparable waterfront study sites like Notre-Dame and Sainte-Hélène islands (Expo, Montreal) should be considered and University of Montreal's Dr. Nicole Valois, "Étude patrimoniale sur les témoins matériels de l'exposition universelle et internationale de Montréal de 1967 sur l'île Sainte-Hélène," would be an appropriate starting point.

Finally, this study warrants a further investigation of cultural landscape policy in Canada, specifically addressing the challenges of conserving modern landscapes by developing stronger legislation and financial incentives to identify, study, conserve and promote this aspect of the built environment as viable cultural heritage landscapes in an evolving context.

framework + discussion

7.1 Framework

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