

**The Future-Proof Institution:
Adaptive Re-Use of the Abandoned St. Patrick's Alexandra into a
Community-Led Institution**

by

Jacob MacLeod Ragetli

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for the degree of Master of Architecture

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Dalhousie University is located in Mi'kmaq'i,
the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq.
We are all Treaty people.

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Abstract

Institutions that have singular programs (like schools providing Education) end up closing due to their inability to adapt to changes in their communities. One such institution is St. Patrick's Alexandra, a former K-9 school on Brunswick St. in the North End of Halifax, Nova Scotia. It has been left abandoned for 13 years because of disagreements about its future between the municipality, the developer who bought the property, and the school's community.

This thesis develops an alternative scenario where the property is entrusted to a non-profit community group instead of a developer. It will adapt to its changing community in order to maintain its valuable cultural and social role into the foreseeable future.

This will be accomplished through transformations of the building using adaptive re-use methods which will create permanent elements to support changes in use, and will celebrate the existing heritage and culture of the school and its community.

Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Thesis Question and Intentions

Can the institution of St. Patrick’s Alexandra be returned to its community as a permanent public good for future generations?

This is to be accomplished through transformations of the building using adaptive re-use methods which will create permanent elements to support changes in use, and will celebrate the existing heritage and culture of the school and its community.

The motivations for this thesis lie in the value of institutions as a public good—specifically St. Patrick’s Alexandra. Furthermore, the void that was left in the community when a public good like the school was closed and the heritage of the community were key motivations.



St. Patrick’s Alexandra school, Halifax, NS (2022)

Institutions as Public Good

Institutions can be seen as permanent services of public good free to anyone that would like to use them. How municipalities deal with change in their institutions reflects their aspirations for the city. This is because institutions like schools play a key role in creating healthy, cultured, and connected cities. They provide a way for people to develop relationships with each other who would otherwise never meet—and none do this as successfully as public schools.

Contemporary observers continue to see schools as means for civic engagement and community improvement—in the words of one author, as part of a “chain of changes” encompassing not only a variety of after-school activities but also extending to such areas as community policing and neighbourhood stabilization. (Stone et. al. 1999, 340)



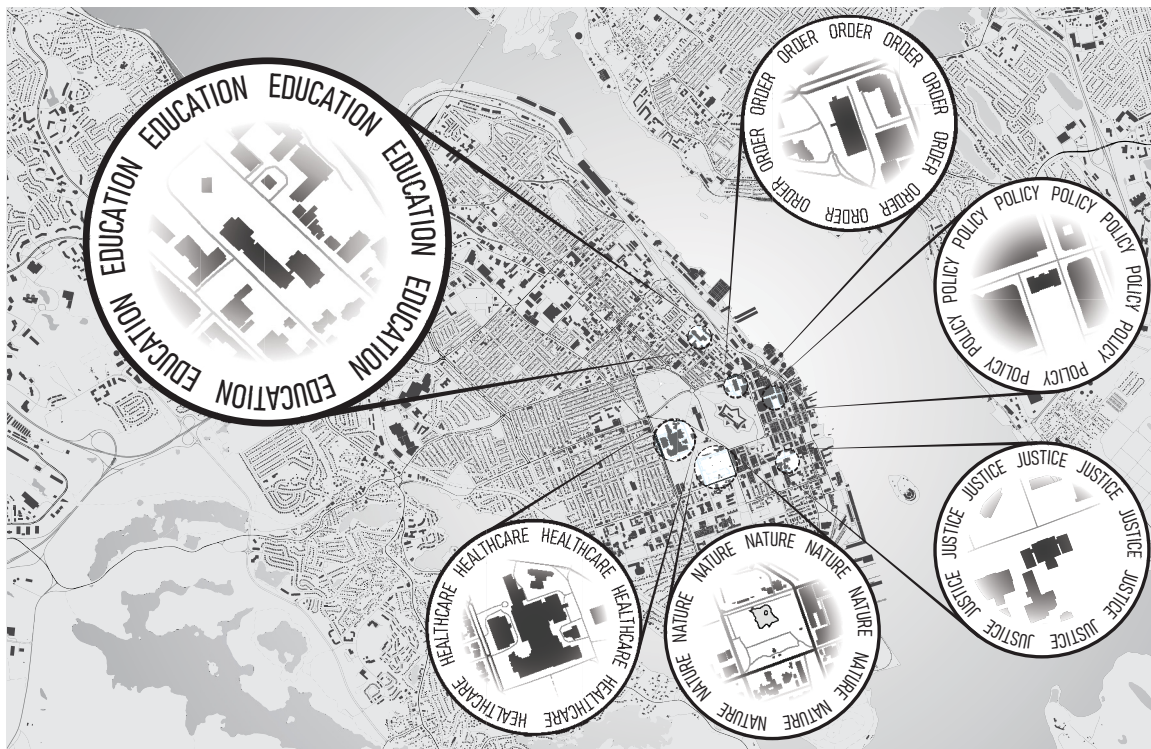
Bloomfield school, Halifax, NS (Bellefontaine n.d.)

Cities constantly change, and citizens should have a hand in how that change happens.

The Institution in Decline

Institutions were previously used to fill specific roles in a city. A school was to provide education, a hospital was for healthcare, a park was for nature. As Jane Jacobs reasons, “the idea of sorting out certain cultural or public functions and decontaminating their relationship with the workaday city dovetailed nicely with the Garden City teachings” (Jacobs 1961, 25). For certain overly regimented institutions, these singular roles led to a failure to adapt to their changing environments, and subsequent closure.

In Halifax, Nova Scotia, and throughout the rest of the country, schools have unfortunately not been considered institutions



Institutional roles: “vertical city” (Rhodes, 2007)

Depiction of the urban planning methods around institutions, and their roles being limited to one purpose.



St. Patrick's high school before demolition, Halifax, NS (Taplin n.d.)



Halifax Memorial Library, Halifax, NS (GeoKs 2019)

worth maintaining by many municipalities and school boards. In 2017 in Ontario, 121 schools were recommended to be closed, while 22 new schools were proposed to be built in regions where there were schools to be closed (School Closings 2017). This indicates a trend of consolidating smaller schools into larger off-site schools. City planning used to situate schools per community for ease of travel, and they developed strong relationships with their communities as a result. "Schools are a gathering place, an employer in the community, and are sometimes described as the heart of a community" (Fowler 2014, 8). Because of the nature of funding based on enrollment numbers, as soon as declining enrollment occurs through any number of reasons, closure is on the agenda. Enrollment numbers shift and change over time, and since 2015, enrolment has only grown across the HRM and in the St. Patrick's Alexandra area, whereas it was previously in decline (HRCE 2022). David Clandfield states in his essay on schools as community hubs,

The neo-liberal argument is that the demand for school space is down and surplus inventory should logically be discarded. School sites are just property, a disposable public asset, and a potential liability if they do not yield a return on their investment. By this logic, fewer school-children should mean fewer schools. Schools have no place in neighbourhoods too small to supply a large enough clientele to make them "viable." Market forces and market thinking trump democratic ideals for local communities. (Clandfield 2010, 5)

School boards have an unjust power to close schools that serve a wider public good than they might be considering. In a 2014 review of Nova Scotia school closure policy, public feedback described schools as "a focal point for the community and, in some cases, the last bastion of community identity in a province demonstrating a trend to urban and suburban living" (Fowler 2014, 3). Communities know what benefits neighbourhood schools give to them,

and see schools as symbols of their communities as can be seen through many community-led protests against school closures (like the ones for St. Patrick's Alexandra or Bloomfield in North-End Halifax).

“When you take a school out of a neighbourhood...when you take away what holds and binds people together, the community falls away,” said Reverend Rhonda Britton of [New Horizons] Baptist Church, addressing a crowd of 150 people who gathered at St. Patrick's-Alexandra school in December. “We will fight to keep our neighbourhood.” (Peters 2012)

If communities were given a stake in their schools through a physical presence, and a role in their operation and evolution like Bennett argues in his book, *The State of the System* (Bennett 2020), then schools would be able to contribute to a healthy, cultured and connected city by responding to their communities' needs appropriately.

The way city staff and board members in charge of Halifax schools handled St. Patrick's Alexandra closure put it in limbo. The sale to a developer under market value and without community consultation gave rise to serious ire from the community. They protested the school's closure, brought the city to court, and fought to keep the school as a public good. As a result, the developer was not allowed to build on it because the city would not allow them to. St. Patrick's Alexandra has been left abandoned for more than 10 years because of this conflict between its community, the city, and the developer. See the Appendix for a more detailed description of the events surrounding the closure of the school, and the various stakeholders' responses.

The limits placed on institutions must be broken to create the freedom to change according to the needs of their surrounding communities, and to maintain their place in society as a public good. Like Nord argues in *Caring*

Architecture, architecture is an on-going process of “holding together, or even coincidentally, not holding together” (Nord 2017, 11). When the practices that have held these institutional buildings together fall away, the architecture, and its accompanying impact on the people that have used it, falls away as well.

We aim to look beyond architecture and buildings as mere objects, and instead apply a relational spatial perspective, which positions architectural space as an actor and co-producer...In this task, we sympathise with Jacobs and Merriman’s (2011, 211-212) wish to “animate architecture such that it is understood not simply as an accomplishment (or artefact) of human doing, but as an on-going process of holding together and, inevitably or even coincidentally, not holding together”. Architecture is held together by practices embedded in space. (Nord 2017, 11)

In this case, the institution of St. Patrick’s Alexandra as a K-9 school has closed, so to rejuvenate its architecture and its role as an institution that benefits its community like the school used to, a new approach must be taken where community input is welcomed, diversity and change is anticipated and encouraged, and any new architecture is forward-thinking in order to sustain this public good in the near and long-term future.

Chapter 2: The Context of the Site

The Site

The site for this thesis is an abandoned school and its surrounding community in the North End of Halifax called St. Patrick's Alexandra, located between Brunswick St. and Maitland St.



Context plan:
Outline of the community and the building—St. Patrick's Alexandra.

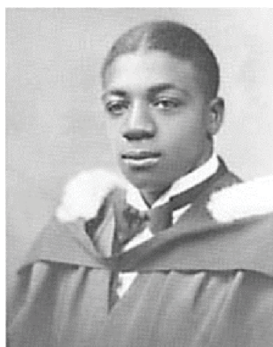
The community has isolating borders on its eastern side due to the military presence on the harbour and the MacDonald bridge. It is linked with the rest of the North End through the Commons, Gottingen and Agricola Streets.



Community plan:
Outline of the community and the building—St. Patrick's Alexandra.



New Horizons Baptist Church undergoing renovations and an addition (NHBC 2023)



Dr. Rev. William P. Oliver (BCC 2023)

Community Context

Community Culture

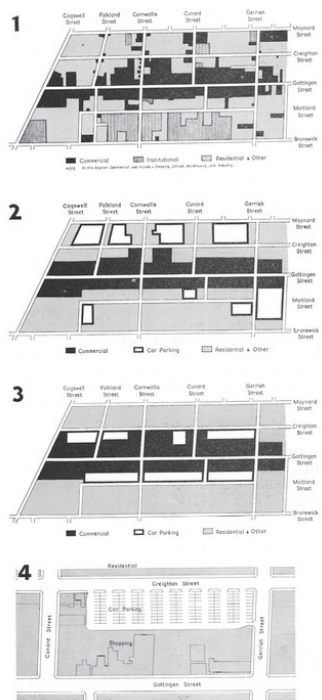
The area has had a strong Black community at least since the early 19th century. The New Horizons Baptist Church (NHBC), a designated Federal Historical site was founded in 1832 by Reverend Richard Preston, “the most influential figure in Nova Scotia’s Black community in the first half of the 19th century,” (Federal Heritage 2005). Preston was declared a person of national significance by the government of Canada in 2005 (BCC 2023). Subsequently, Rev. Dr. William P. Oliver pastored the NHBC, a founder of the N.S. Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, the Black United Front of Nova Scotia, and the Black Cultural Centre, along with many youth programs (BCC 2023). He received the Order of Canada in 1984 and was “deeply



Viola Desmond (Parks Canada Agency 2022)

involved in adult education as a means to both individual and community improvement” (OSGG 2023). His focus on education exists in spirit through the Black Educators Association, The Delmore Buddy Daye Learning Institute, and while it was operational the St. Patrick’s Alexandra school, as it pioneered Africentric learning in the city. Another prominent public figure in the community was Viola Desmond. Her Desmond School of Beauty was located at 167 Gottingen St. (DBDLI 2016), just North of the site. This site continues to be a focal point of the Black community in the area.

Historic Displacement, Racism



Stephenson urban plan for Gottingen St. community (Stephenson 1957)

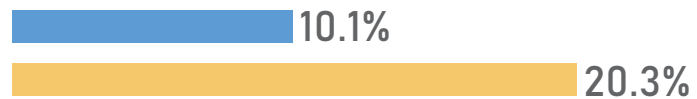
Uniacke Square, a government subsidized housing block, built in 1966 during a period of urban renewal by the city, housed many of the displaced members of the Africville community. Their removal from Africville was “a planned and widely sanctioned destruction, a clearance, a razing, of black space, of black people” (Nelson 2008, 5). These “urban renewal” projects were typified by the urban plan of Stephenson, whose goals were to destroy diversity and low-cost housing through clean slate zoning. The proposed uses of this zoning idea were parking lots, suburban-style shopping centre buildings and high-density residential buildings (Roth and Grant 2015).

Demographics

The demographics of the area illustrate a much higher than average population increase compared to the rest of Halifax. This is especially driven by international immigration. Smaller increases in Black and Indigenous residents than the Halifax average show these communities aren’t growing as quickly. However there are still about double

the proportions of visible minorities in the area compared to the rest of Halifax. The area also has strong growth in the youth population between the ages of 0 and 14 years of age which is reflected in the growing enrolment numbers in the nearby schools (HRCE 2022). This area has some of the lowest income population in the city with low-income people accounting for 23% of the population compared to 13.1% on average in Halifax. The population trends in this community suggests there will be increased needs for education, social and cultural spaces and events, and options for economic

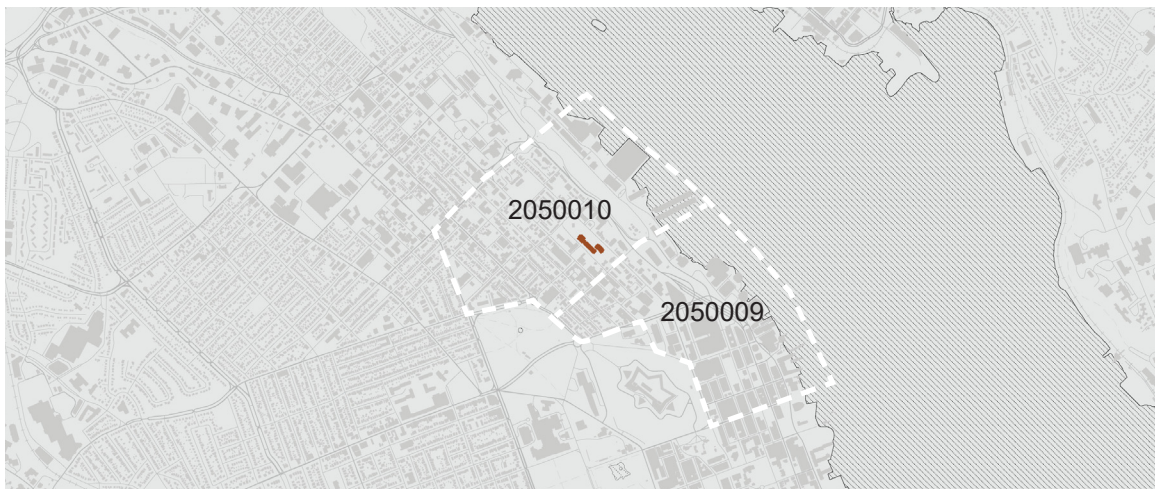
Population Growth Total



Population Growth Ages 0-14



Demographics of the community (yellow) in comparison to Halifax averages (blue) for 2016-2021.
For average of census tracts 2050010 and 2050009



Map of census tracts 2050010 and 2050009 which encompass the neighbourhood surrounding St. Patrick's Alexandra and other areas including from the harbour in the east to Robie St. excluding Citadel hill and the Commons, and Sackville St. to North St.

development which this thesis will attempt to address. See Appendix: Political Background for further statistics.

Loss of a Cultural Public Good

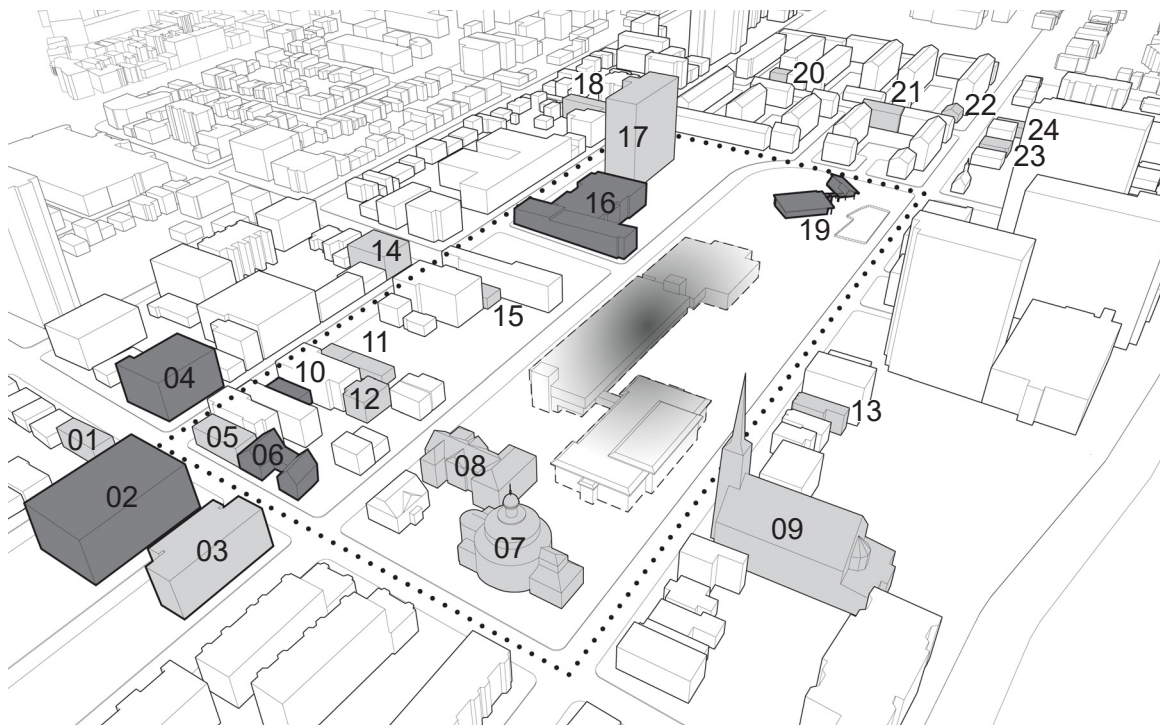
As one of the few remaining buildings of community importance still standing in the area, the school held social and cultural history for the community until its closure due to its after school and black history programs. The historical and cultural significance of the school is part of the reason why the community has been fighting to maintain this property as a cultural centre. It is seen as an opportunity for growth within the community, as a way of confirming their place in the city and fighting against the displacement that is occurring through gentrification. This thesis reaffirms the community's fight for belonging through its attention to the specific needs of the community.

Community Need

The local circumstances of any school are constantly changing, and we need to be open to the idea of schools themselves changing to adapt to their communities' needs if we want to ensure they remain as integral pieces in city culture and community cohesion. The school failed as an institution and as a public good because it couldn't adapt to the changing needs of the community.

The area around the school contains a variety of community organizations and services (as seen in the diagram on the following page) that contribute to the wellbeing of community members and signal the high level of services required. The Richard Preston Centre for Excellence, the North End Community Health Centre and the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre (MNFC) all had previously expressed

- 01 – Black Educators Association
- 02 – North End Community Health Centre, NS Community Serv.
- 03 – Buddy Daye Learning Institute,
Black Business Initiative Society
- 04 – Kjiptuk Community College,
Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre
- 05 – Direction 180 Opioid Treatment Centre
- 06 – New Horizons Baptist Church,
Richard Preston Centre For Excellence
- 07 – St. George's Church
- 08 – Saint George's Youthnet Organization
- 09 – St. Patrick's Church
- 10 – Mi'kmaw Child Development Centre
- 11 – Radstorm - Non-Profit Event + Art Space,
Love Nova Scotia Youth Centre
- 12 – Tiny Lab For Early Learning Daycare, Centre For Art Tapes
- 13 – The Youth Project
- 14 – The Rebuilding - Affordable Housing
- 15 – Bus Stop Theatre Co-op
- 16 – YMCA/ Work Centre, Halifax North Memorial Public Library
- 17 – Ahern Manor Affordable NSPHA Housing
- 18 – Metro Non-Profit Housing Support Centre
- 19 – Hope Blooms
- 20 – North End Parent Resource Centre
- 21 – Salvation Army Community Centre
- 22 – Halifax Housing Help - Homeless Service
- 23 – Adsum House - Women's Shelter
- 24 – Hope Cottage - Social Services



Community analysis: neighbouring community and social service buildings
The disappearance of a major community building in the “public square” of the neighbourhood.



New Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre.
Rendering by Fathom Studio (Fathom Studio 2023)

interest in relocating their programs to a new home in the school. This was as part of a proposal that was put together by the North Central Community council (of which they were a part). However the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre will no longer need space in the project because they are getting a new building designed to accommodate their growing needs in a location down the street from the site.

Mi'kmaw Community

There have been Mi'kmaw people living here for 11,000 years, and the effects of colonial Europeans, especially the English starting in 1749 with Cornwallis's settlement displaced the indigenous people from their sacred land of Kjipuktuk (McDonald 2017). The recent trend of the urban population of Indigenous increasing generally in Halifax at 6% over 5 years, but decreasing in the area of St. Patrick's points towards the displacement of the current population and gentrification. Although the MNFC will not be located in the project, it will still serve the indigenous community in other aspects of its program.

The disappearance of the school as a major community building in the heart of this neighbourhood has likely contributed to the emergence of a community garden and social enterprise called Hope Blooms. Members of the public, and specifically youth, can go to learn about growing food and cooking, and simply have a shared experience with others in the community in a welcoming space. Contributions to the project as a social enterprise are even rewarded through post-secondary scholarships in some instances. Connecting physically to Hope Blooms is not a priority, but similar programs such as community urban farming, markets, food co-ops and community kitchens will

enhance each other across the site, and create a destination for urban farming and a food hub in the city to address the lack of food security in the area.

Major Voices Involved with St. Patrick's Alexandra

To develop the program for this thesis project, the major voices that have a say in the future of the site were researched. These voices are the developer (JONO Developments), the City of Halifax, and the community of St. Patrick's Alexandra themselves.

The Developer

JONO Developments made a public presentation in November 2020 during public engagement sessions for the new Centre Plan outlining their proposal for the St. Patrick's Alexandra property. They proposed to fully develop the site



Voices diagram: Developer

with two 25-storey apartment buildings, an 8-storey midrise, and a community space.

City of Halifax

The City of Halifax developed specific requirements for the site



Voices diagram: City of Halifax

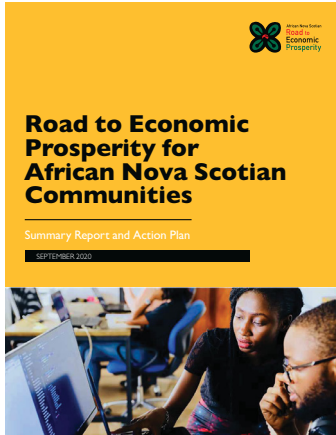
through the Centre Plan. These include mid-rise developments, the celebration of the culture and heritage of the community, affordable housing, community space, and a grocery store.

Community Responses to Multiple Engagements, and Independent Reports (REP ANS)

The community has expressed their desires for the site through multiple community engagement sessions. Listing: artist studios and classes, business spaces, a food bank or grocery store, affordable housing, and educational services.



Voices diagram: St. Patrick's Alexandra community



Road to Economic Prosperity for African Nova Scotian Communities (REPAC 2020)

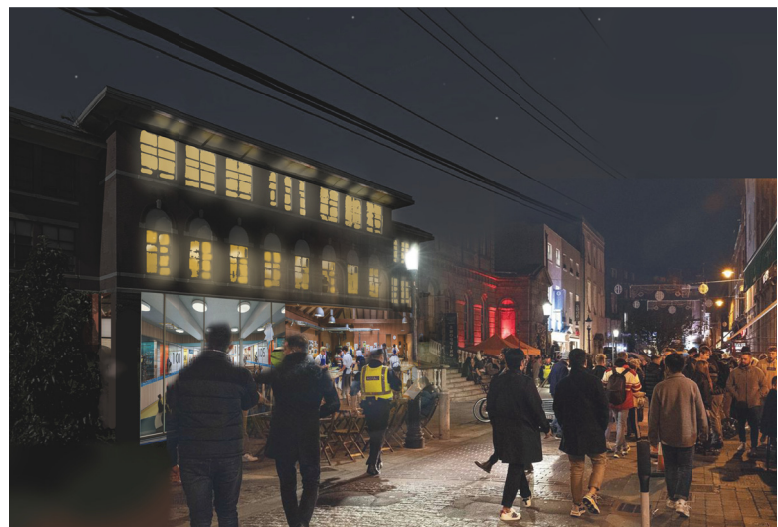
Along with the community engagement sessions, the program will aim to improve economic prosperity in ANS communities through The Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan which identifies “strategic priorities, objectives, and actions to drive growth and prosperity in ANS and Mi’kmaq communities in alignment with actions identified within the Halifax Growth Plan 2016-2021” (REPAC 2020. HRM 2020).

Through the Road to Economic Prosperity for African Nova Scotian Communities, three strategic priorities are:

- Build Unity and Capacity Among African Nova Scotians.
- Establish Land Ownership, Develop Infrastructure and Attract Investment.
- Increase Participation in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship

(REPAC 2020. HRM 2020)

These priorities will help inform the program of the building, and provide focus for the future evolutions of the project.



Wish image: activating the urban space
 Depiction of a lively street and animated buildings contributing to a safe and enjoyable urban space.



Cobb(Brunswick) building
(Google Maps 2021)



Ground floor classroom -
Brunswick building (HRM)



Multi-purpose room -
Brunswick building (HRM)



Service spaces - Brunswick
building (CEU 2014)

The Existing School Buildings

The construction of the current buildings are analyzed to determine what steps are required to adapt them to new uses. There are typical spaces in the school, such as the gymnasium, classrooms, multi-purpose rooms, and service spaces that will be considered for new uses, or evolutions of their current uses.

(1919) A. Cobb St. Patrick's Alexandra Boys School

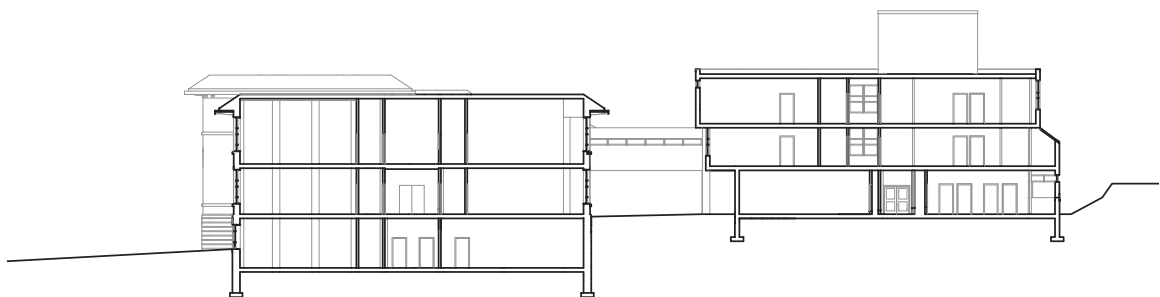
Structure

The archive drawings of the Brunswick St. building designed by Andrew Cobb in 1919 show a concrete structure with load-bearing exterior masonry walls. The interior walls are typically pyrobar, which is a gypsum block product. The original exterior entrance to the auditorium/play room has been demolished, but the remainder of the building remains in a similar state to its original design.

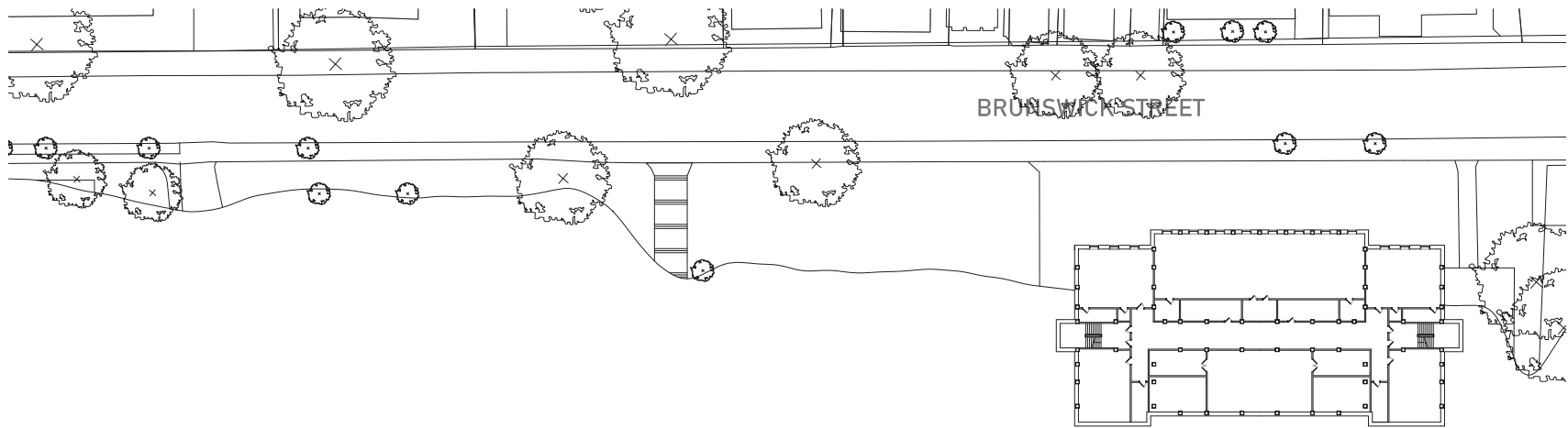
The original design of the building accommodates adaptive re-use because of its open column-free spaces, and substantial concrete structural members.

Spaces

The typical rooms in the Cobb building are classrooms and the multi-purpose spaces which were originally used as an

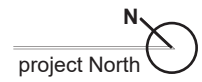


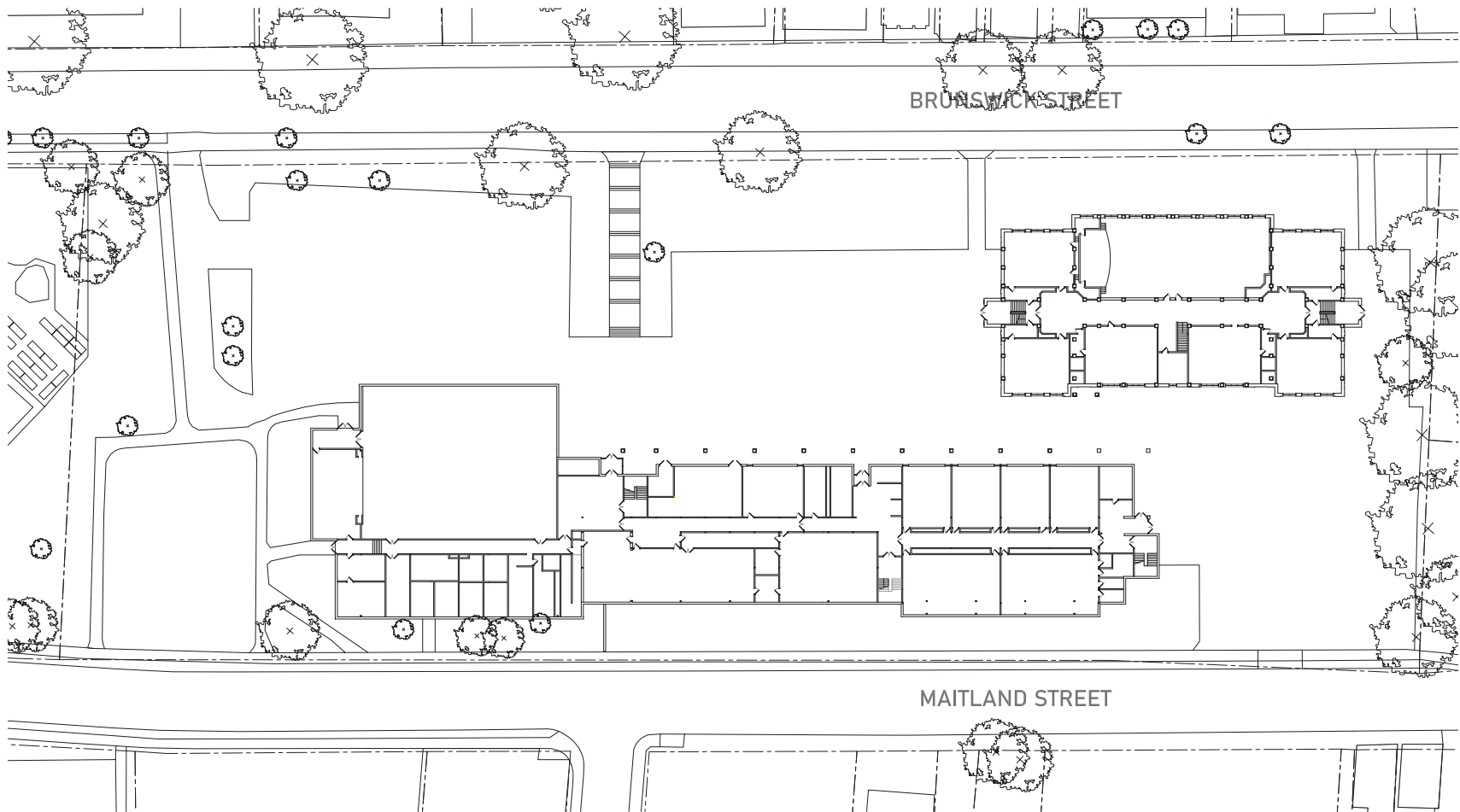
Existing buildings: cross section



Existing buildings: Level 0 (ground floor of Brunswick St. building)

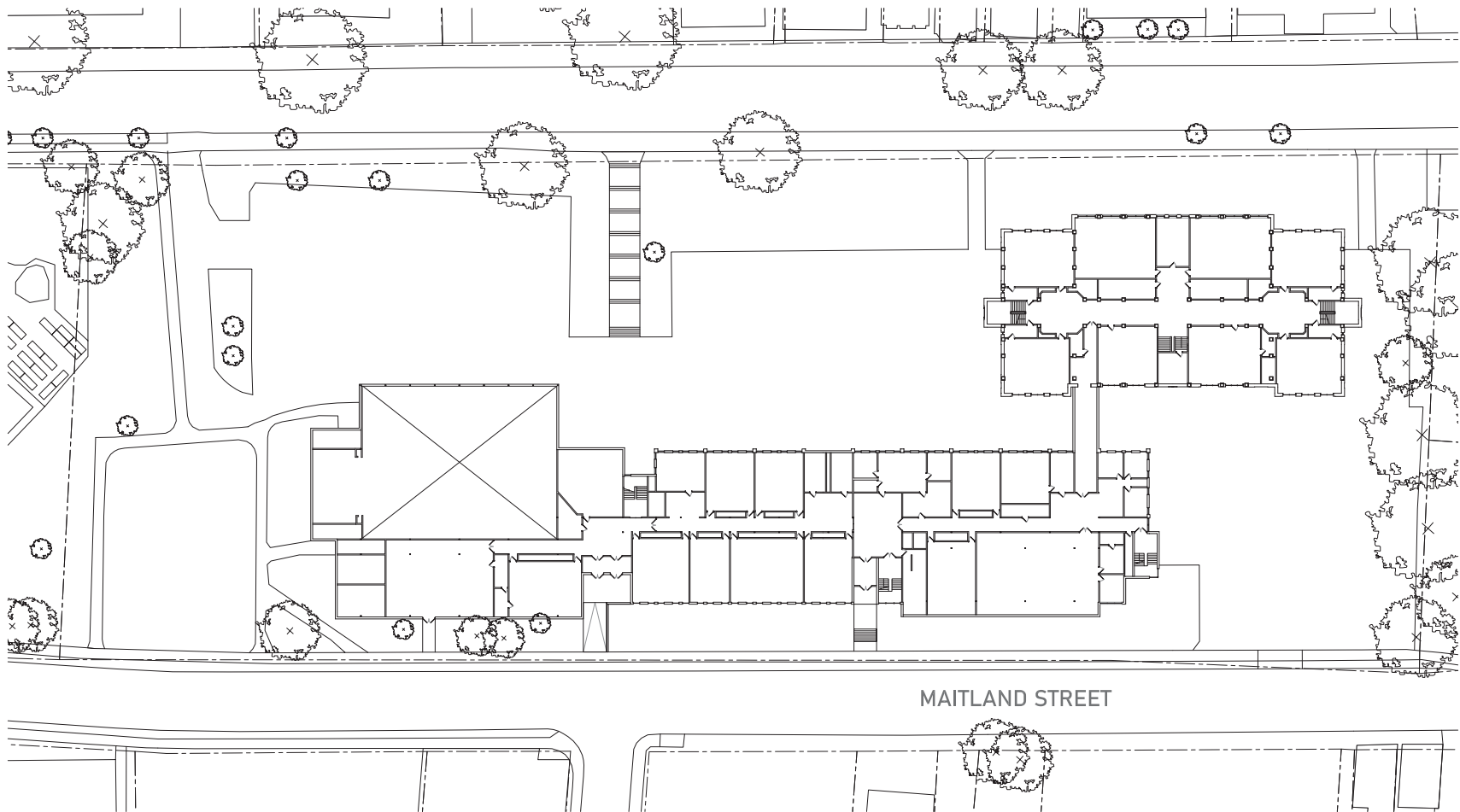
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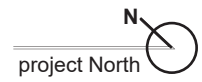
Existing buildings: Level 1 (ground floor of Maitland St. building)

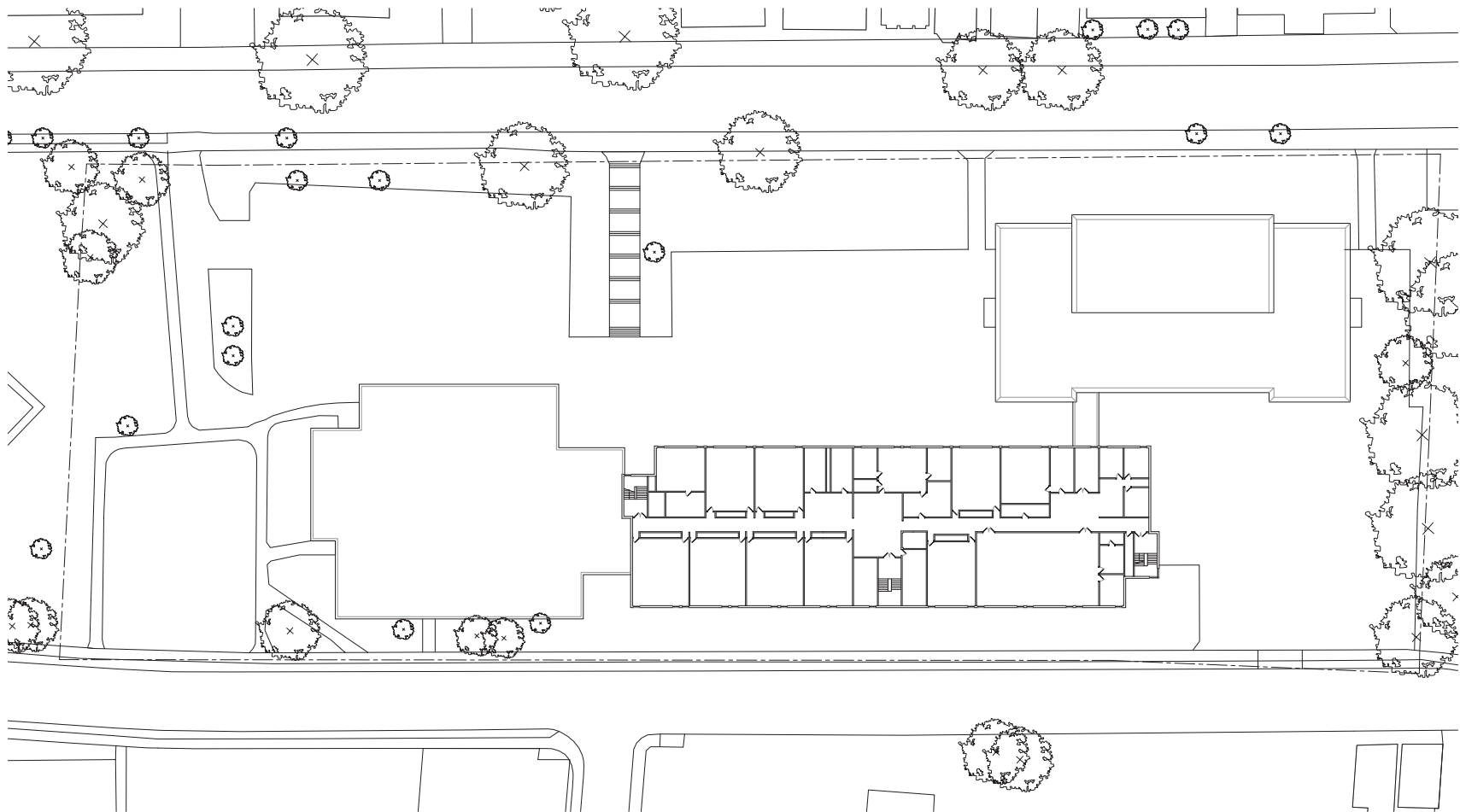




Existing buildings: Level 2

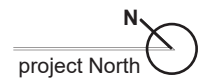
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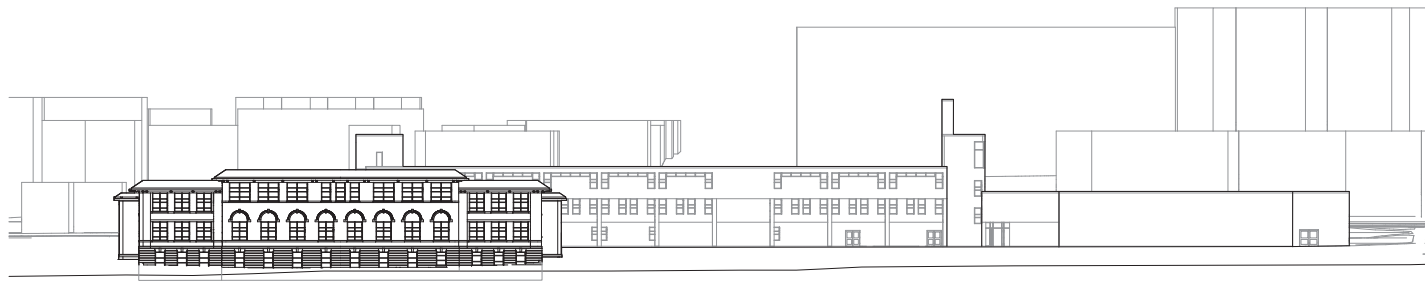
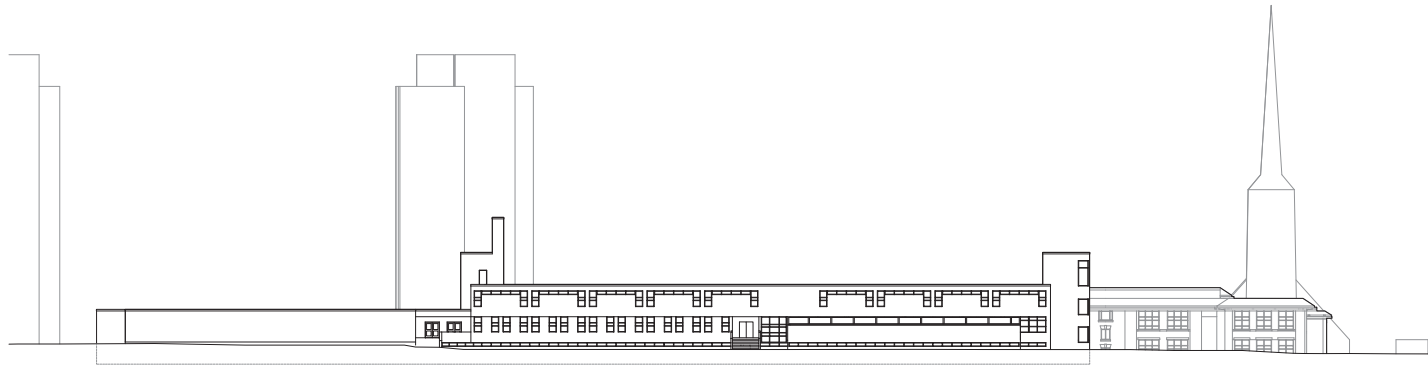




Existing buildings: Level 3

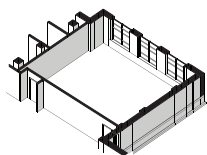
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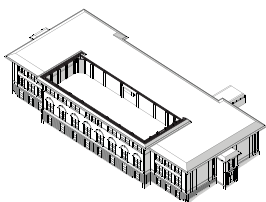


Existing buildings: West elevation (above) and East elevation (below)

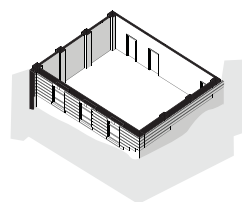
40 15 5 0



Classroom, Brunswick building



Multi-purpose room, Brunswick building

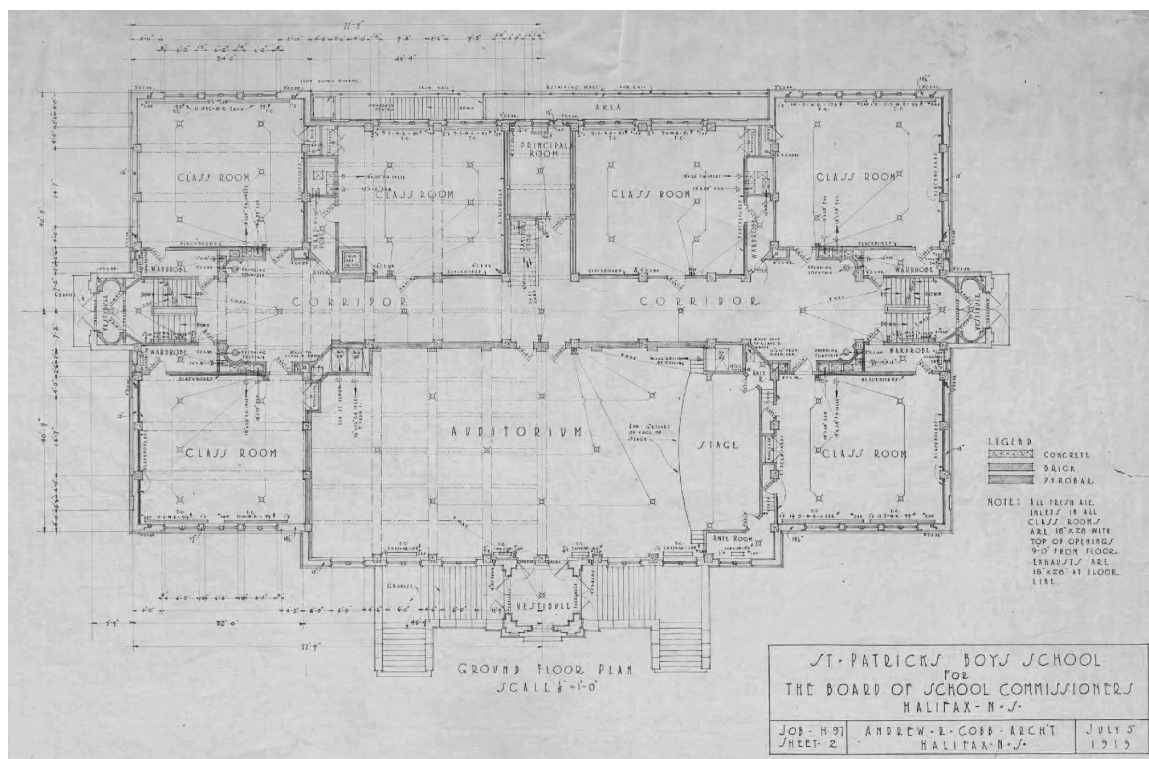


Other space, Brunswick building

auditorium (ground floor) and a "play-room" (basement). High ceilings in the classrooms (at approximately 3.4 metres) and large windows create welcoming spaces for most uses. The multi-purpose rooms are likewise expansive spaces with 4-5 metre ceilings. Large gatherings of people would be welcome in these spaces. Exiting is accommodated by the existing enclosed stairs at either end of the building.

Materials

The solid structure of the exterior and interior walls means only surface repairs are needed for these spaces to be occupied again. If insulation is desired, a breathable insulative material such as hemp blocks could be used on the interior to raise the energy efficiency of the building. The brickwork on the exterior of the Cobb building will need re-pointing and minor repairs due to a lack of maintenance. The



St. Patrick's Alexandra boys school: ground floor plan (Cobb 1919)

roof of the Cobb building is in need of complete replacement. Floor materials appear to be either solid surface, terrazzo or tile, these can be left in place or spot repaired as necessary. Mechanical systems are integrated into the plenum spaces throughout the building plan, and exposed ceilings throughout allow easy conversion for mechanical, electrical and other systems.

Services

Unlike the Maitland building, the mechanical system will be replaced but doesn't necessarily require as unique a system. The shaft spaces and mechanical rooms provide ample space for adaptations. Capacity for exhausting from the ground floor spaces will be provided for cooking uses.

(1970) St. Patrick's Alexandra Maitland St. Addition

Structure

The structure of the Addition on Maitland St. (Maitland building) is steel post and beam construction with steel deck and concrete topping, and concrete masonry unit interior walls. The grid is approximately 7.5m x 10 m, but is offset between the East and West elevations, overlapping in the corridors. The typical bay houses a single classroom or other miscellaneous space. In the gymnasium there are open web steel joists to span the width of the space.



Ground floor woodshop - Maitland St. building (HRM 2014)



Gymnasium - Maitland St. building (HRM 2014)

Spaces

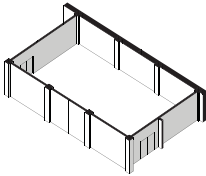
There are three typical spaces in the Maitland building: ground floor shops, typical classrooms, and larger double bay spaces used for the library or multi-purpose spaces. In addition to these spaces there are mechanical rooms and the gymnasium.



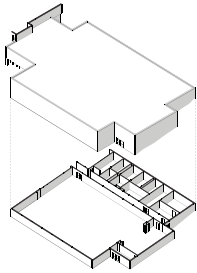
Upper floor typical classroom - Maitland building (HRM 2014)



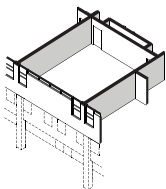
Library - Maitland building (HRM 2014)



Multi-purpose room, Maitland building



Gymnasium, Maitland building



Classroom, Maitland building

Materials

Exterior material is brick veneer facade with punched opening glazing systems. The typical interior finishes are painted CMU walls, acoustic drop ceilings, and solid surface floors.

Services

During the building assessments made by the city (HRM 2011), the mechanical systems were noted to be in need of replacement, so these systems have the opportunity to be improved. A dedicated system will be added for the South portion of the building, before the Prince William St. entrance, and for the North portion with the gymnasium. This will allow these two buildings to be separated and to act separately. The new mechanical system will comprise of radiant in-floor heating so the internal layouts can change and the heating system does not have to. The cooling system for the building will rely on both natural ventilation through the skin, but also ducting through the central corridors, with offshoots into each space, sized for maximum occupancy. New mechanical equipment will be required and housed in an accessible location for servicing.

The electrical services will run in the central corridor, similar to the cooling system for ease of access.

Potable, and hot water connections will occur at each bay, providing options for potential adaptations of the interior layouts. Shared washrooms in the existing building will be updated and additional facilities added to accommodate maximum occupancy.



Exterior photograph of
Maitland building

Skin

The skins of both buildings are similar in that they are both brick facades. This material is one of the most long-lasting materials, so if it is maintained properly, it should last almost as long as the structure of the buildings. The glazing that intersperses the brick facades will need replacing more frequently, and if new openings are created, the existing brick should be either kept in storage for repairs, or re-used somewhere else on site either whole or as an aggregate.

The roof of the Brunswick building can be a simple roof membrane and ballast roof, or other cost-effective solution as with additions, the roof will need to be torn up. Likewise with the Maitland building, future additions will eliminate the need for a roof, and so an easily recyclable or disposable roof will be used. Where the roof is not seen to be changing in the short term, a green roof will help extend the life expectancy of the roof.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The objective for this thesis is to create a vibrant, community-led institution that is a future-proof public good which:

- Supports the educational, economic, social and cultural needs of the community.
- Provides a permanent and reliable space for the community.
- Offers the ability to change at low cost to its users.

By listening to the community's needs and being informed by the recommendations of the REPANSC, I have produced a manifesto for the program of the building. The community are the end-users of the building, so looking specifically at their needs and desires for the project will ensure it is successful.

The manifesto develops programs with intentions to work towards the social, cultural, economic, and educational outcomes for the project. These evolved from the three basic functions of learning, living and sharing. Further to these functions, the program is categorized into permanent and transient types. Permanent types are those that will remain in place for the duration of the project, or until they become obsolete. The transient types are those will change through time, just as the needs of the community change.

The systems, architecture, and program create a permanent structure where the transient program can be supported. These temporary programs will take the form of artist studios, workshops, start-up spaces, education spaces, and other less stable uses. These opportunities will allow the community to re-invest in the school, turning it from decay into an evolving, healthy, and living project.

SHARING

LEARNING

LIVING

INITIAL PROJECT

Initial project program will address most of the needs of the community through multi-purpose spaces. Transformations are allowed and encouraged to happen in these spaces, signalling what the needs of the community are.

STRUCTURE, SERVICES	PROVIDING PERMANENT INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE LONG-TERM VISION OF THE PROJECT
COMMUNITY SPACES	CONSOLIDATING THE NEHC AND RICHARD P CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE UNDER ONE ROOF, TO SOLIDIFY PERMANENCY TOWARDS COMMUNITY.
RENOVATIONS TO EXISTING	ALLOWS USABILITY OF MOST OF THE BUILDING FOR TEMPORARY OR SEMI-PERMANENT USE
HOUSING	SPACES FOR LIVING ARE PROVIDED TO RESPOND TO THE IMMEDIATE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY. TRANSFORMATIONS BETWEEN STUDIO/OFFICE/HOUSING ARE POSSIBLE.
WORKSHOPS, ART STUDIOS, START-UP SPACES	INITIAL CHEAPER SPACES FOR SIMPLE OFFICE USE, STORAGE, FABRIC, PAINTING, MACHINE-LESS CREATING

EXPANSIONS

Additions develop new spaces or existing ones from the initial project into expanded services/programs to improve the scope of the project.

EVENT SPACE	THE GATHERING SPACE THAT ALLOWS FOR COMMUNITY EVENTS TO OCCUR IN BEAUTIFUL CELEBRATORY SPACE SUCH AS WEDDINGS, CONFERENCES, MARKETS, PROTESTS, ETC.
EDUCATION CENTRE	PROVIDES EXTENSIVE TRAINING CLASSROOMS, OFFICES, MENTORING/TUTORING SPACES TO AMPLIFY THE EXISTING SPACES USED FOR GROWTH/TRAINING PURPOSES.
WORKSHOPS, ART STUDIOS, START-UP SPACES	EQUIPMENT FOR MORE EXPENSIVE WORKSHOPS (KILNS, HEAVY MACHINERY FOR METAL/WOODWORKING, BREWING EQUIPMENT)
COMMUNITY/TRAINING KITCHEN	TRAINING KITCHEN FOR EDUCATIONAL USE, WORKING WITH FARMING SERVICES/MARKET TO INCREASE FOOD SECURITY
DAYCARE/CHILDCARE SERVICES	LINKED WITH THE EDUCATION CENTRE TO PROVIDE FOR THE INCREASED YOUTH IN THE AREA

DEVELOPING PERMANENCE

These programs develop a sense of permanence for the project on the site by developing the interior and exterior to create a generational public good.

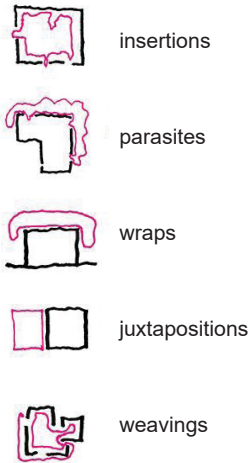
LANDSCAPING	USING THE SITE TO ITS FULL POTENTIAL AS A PRODUCTIVE LANDSCAPE(PLOTS,COMMUNITY OVEN), WHILE GIVING PLAZA SPACE FOR PUBLIC/MUSIC/MARKET EVENTS/ART.
FARMING SERVICES	COMPOSTING FACILITIES FOR THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE, FOOD STORAGE, FOOD "STORE"
ADDITIONS TO EXISTING SPACES	ANY EXTENSIONS/RENOVATIONS/ADDITIONS TO EXISTING SPACES, SUCH AS SOMEONE ADDING A MEZZANINE INTO THEIR OFFICE SPACE.
GALLERY	A DEDICATED GALLERY SPACE FOR THE VARIOUS CULTURAL, ARTISTIC PROJECTS THAT ARE MADE IN THE COMMUNITY, AND IN THE PROJECT.

TRANSIENT

- COMMUNITY SPACES
- WORKSHOPS, ART STUDIOS, START-UP SPACES
- EDUCATION CENTRE
- COMMUNITY/TRAINING KITCHEN
- DAYCARE/CHILDCARE SERVICES
- ADDITIONS TO EXISTING SPACES

PERMANENT

- STRUCTURE, SERVICES
- RENOVATIONS TO EXISTING
- HOUSING
- EVENT SPACE
- LANDSCAPING
- FARMING SERVICES
- GALLERY



Adaptive re-use types
(Bollack 2013)

Adaptive Re-Use Strategies to Maintain and Celebrate the History and Culture of the Community

The spaces in the project will take the form of certain types of adaptive re-use interventions, such as parasites, or juxtapositions. These adaptive re-use interventions have been derived from the series done by Françoise Bollack in her book *Old Buildings, New Forms* (Bollack 2013). They are divided into five categories: insertions, parasites, wraps, juxtapositions, and weavings. Of these categories, parasites, juxtapositions, and weavings will be used.

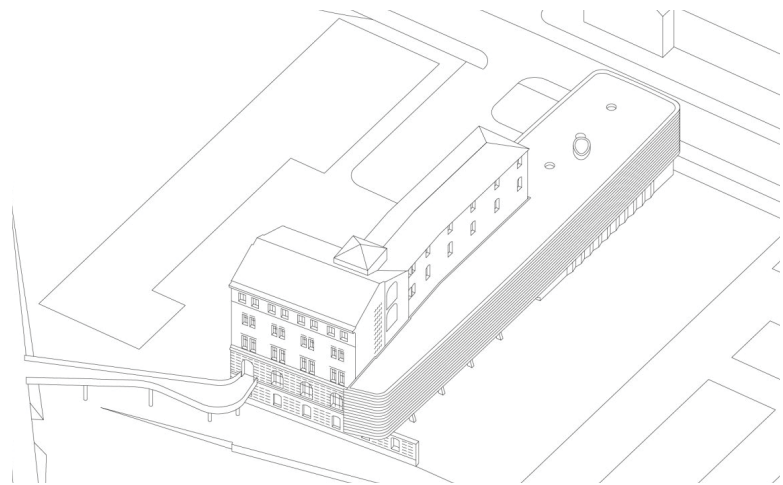
Parasites

“The new piece attaches itself to the side or to the top of the original building and becomes one with it as it depends on the original building for key functions: structural support, access, ready-made integration in an existing historical and cultural fabric, and an existing infrastructure” (Bollack 2013, 23).

A parasitic case study from the book is the Fire and Police Station by Sauerbruch Hutton Architects. This project is



Fire and Police Station
(Sauerbruch Hutton 2023)

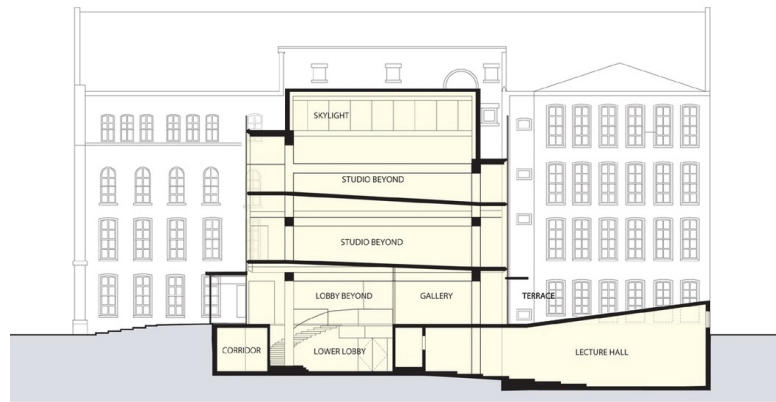


Fire and Police Station axonometric (Sauerbruch Hutton 2023)

architecturally juxtaposed and also a parasite in that the original building is mostly hidden from view upon approach by a new and colourful facade, but is reliant on the existing building for structure and access.



Higgins Hall (Holl 2023)



Higgins Hall cross section (Holl 2023)

Juxtapositions

The new stands apart from the original allowing it autonomy although functionally connected. Distinct styles, materials, or structure contribute to an aloofness which adds to the value of each.

Higgins Hall is an example of a juxtaposition which provides a connection between two older structures. It is also a replacement of a demolished extension. Materially juxtaposed, yet connected literally to the existing, it touches the ground and offers a new method of entry and approach to the project, highlighting the varying floor levels through its facade.

Weavings

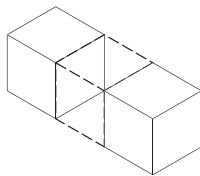
Weavings are typically additions that entail complex moving in and out of the older building—usually seams are not readily apparent. Editing of the existing spaces and weaving



Temporary Contemporary MOCA (Street-Porter1983)



Temporary Contemporary MOCA (Street-Porter 1983)



Subtraction adaptive re-use type

in of new elements creates a total image of the new project where the is no distinction, akin to knitted fabric.

The Temporary Contemporary by Frank Gehry threads the line between fading into the background and overlapping the existing like the weaving of fabrics. Spaces feel natural and material choices are toned down to the quality of the older structure so that no distinction is discernable.

Subtraction

This thesis project will employ another type of intervention which is called “subtraction”. This is simply a cut into the older structure to reveal new possibilities for the project, or “Formal Subtraction” as described by the architect Eric Fisher (Fisher 2016, 11). It can reveal the essence of the building such as opening up workshop spaces to their surroundings, giving them enhanced abilities to function.

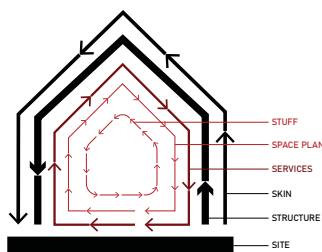
Through the design phases of the project, the adaptive re-use intervention types and case studies are referenced to reinforce the effects of each type in the design.



“Naked Architecture: Addition through Subtraction” lecture (Fisher 2016)

A significant portion of the work undertaken in the project is adaptive re-use in nature. These interventions will happen in stages as needed and will depend on the program type and spaces available for use. Like Sally Stone discusses in her book, *UnDoing Buildings: Adaptive Re-Use and Cultural Memory* (Stone 2019), architectural adaptation is like a palimpsest, and the memory of the past is preserved into the future due to the existence of the past. It is the intention of the project to capture the cultural and social memories of the place in the project through adaptive re-use, rather than demolition and new construction.

The materials that are salvageable during the adaptations to the existing structures will be used in other parts of the project, or kept in a storage area for future use. This is especially important to limit the carbon footprint of the new additions to the project. Clay bricks rank highly on embodied carbon factor (Jones 2019) so re-using them is a high priority.



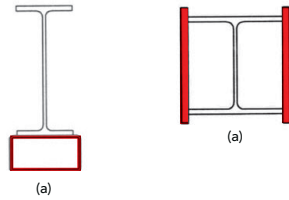
Adapted shearing layers of change, from Stewart Brand's *How Buildings Learn* (Brand 1994)

Permanency vs. Transiency of Program and Architectural Elements for Change

Layers of Change

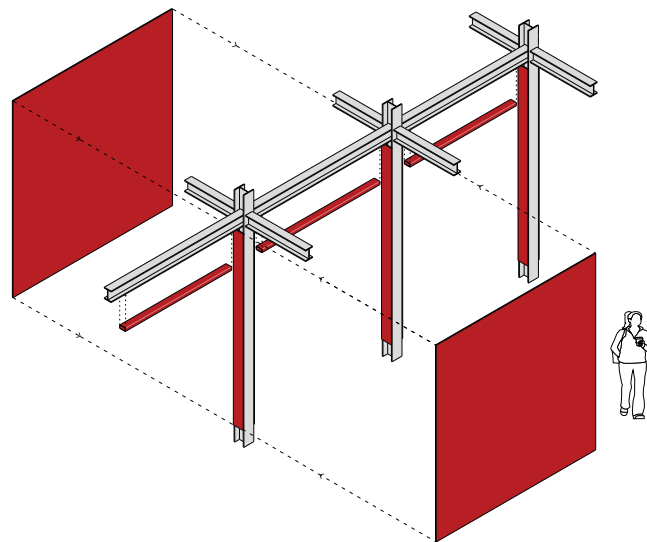
A building is made up of separate layers that change independently from one another according to Stewart Brand's *How Buildings Learn* (Brand 1994). The things that stay around the longest are the site and the structure. These need to be replaced very infrequently during the lifespan of the building as seen in the diagram to the left. Many of the other layers are more interdependent on each other such as space plans and services, so they will get changed every 5-10 years. In order to create the desired ability of this project to change over time to accommodate

the needs of the community, the structure, the skin, and the services will need to accommodate as much change as possible. To limit the upfront costs associated with change, future-proofing these layers will allow more fluid adaptations of the building.



Ideal method and placement of welded HSS beam and steel plate re-inforcements to existing beams and columns (Schwinger 2007)

By adding additional structural members to the existing columns and beams, additional loading capacity is achieved and will allow future adaptations. Dependent on initial design parameters, these structural additions will allow for significant architectural additions (Schwinger 2007). This



Structural re-inforcement diagram
New structural additions (red) and existing members (grey)

structural adaptation enhances the existing grid of the school to amplify the opportunities for change and multi-purpose uses that can occur in the building. The skin is already made up of long lasting materials, so only occasional maintenance is required to ensure their longevity. As mentioned in the analysis of the existing school spaces, the services will

employ radiant heating to minimize changes, connections per structural bay, and be designed for maximum occupancy.

Building Organizational Structure to Ensure Reliable Permanent Space

The way the project is managed is nearly as important to the long-term success of the project as the material choices or any architectural features because of the impact poor management and capitalism can wreak on good intentions. Therefore I am proposing this site is run through a Community Land Trust.

A community land trust (CLT) is a community-based non-profit organization that owns land and puts it to use for community benefit. They own and manage this land outside the real estate market by holding and stewarding land and other public assets on behalf of community in perpetuity, thereby limiting inflationary pressures and related cost increases. Community land trusts may be used to address issues of housing affordability, gentrification, social equity, food security, inclusion, resource conservation, and more. (White 2022)

A community non-profit will be created to run the building and manage the residential co-op units, perform maintenance, renovations etc. The offices for this organizational body will be a permanent program in the building. This is where leasing retail spaces or workshops is agreed upon, and events are scheduled in the event spaces.

Chapter 4: Design

Site: Urban Engagement, Programming Process and Case Studies

Urban Analysis

The development of the site needs to be considered from a larger urban planning view, as it encompasses such a large area. The streets and city elements around the site pose a couple of obstacles to healthy cities and spaces as referenced in Jane Jacobs' *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Jacobs 1967): border vacuums, long blocks, and singular primary uses. There are also site specific possibilities for pedestrian-friendly design as described in Jan Gehl's writing (Gehl 2011) that will be considered during the design.

- Long Blocks
- - - Vacuum Borders
- Commercial Buildings
- × Bus Stops



Community plan: urban analysis

Border vacuums, commercial area, long blocks, key buildings, bus stops

The first issue is the isolating border of Barrington St. and the military facilities to the East of the site. These “borders in cities usually make destructive neighbors” (Jacobs 1967, 257), and to combat these effects the easiest solution would be to increase the density of residential housing along it, or create a reason to cross it, neither of which the site has any ability to deal with.

The second issue is the isolation of commercial use to Gottingen Street. This isolation hasn’t necessarily been an issue in the past. The street used to be a popular destination for shopping in the city until urban renewal projects destroyed the diversity in the area, and many retailers such as grocery and department stores left. The street is artificially re-emerging through gentrification as a popular shopping and restaurant destination for “hip” Haligonians (Roth and Grant 2015). However, by creating a multi-use building on Maitland and Brunswick St. where mostly residential uses abound, more user groups will be around those streets during the day when most residents would otherwise be at school or work. This will promote economic opportunities in and around the site and create safer streets.

The third issue is the long blocks that occur between Brunswick St. and Gottingen St. To create a new connection between Brunswick St. and Prince William St. an adaptive re-use subtraction in the Maitland St. building will be implemented. This will encourage a safer and a more diverse selection of building opportunities (Jacobs 1961, 180). Where deliberate cuts are not possible, reinforcement of the existing pedestrian routes promote crossing.



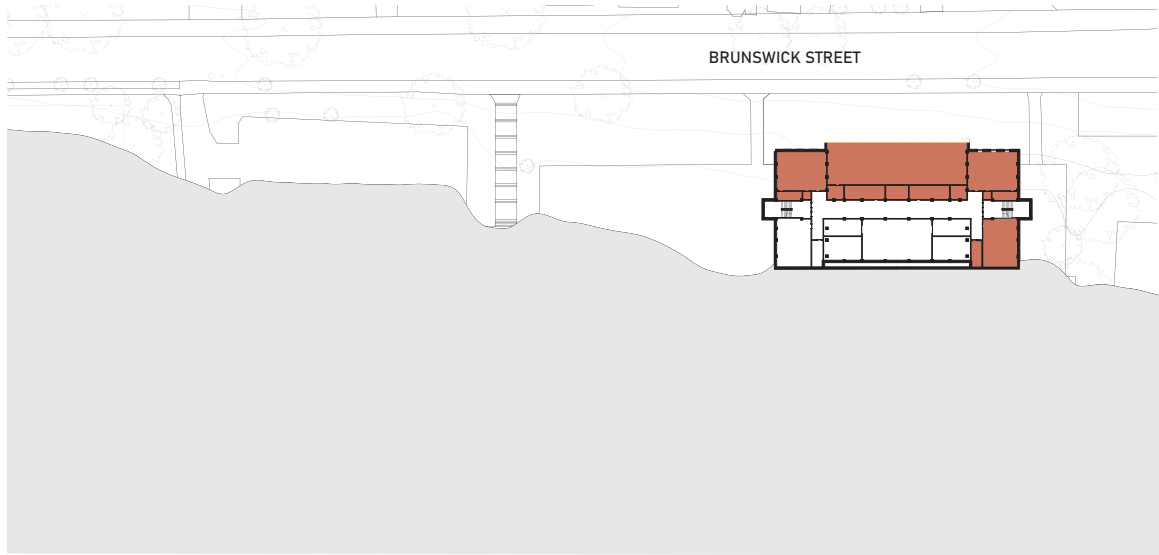
Life Between Buildings
(Gehl 2011)

The site is surrounded by a multitude of public transit bus stops which contribute to the ability of the public to access the site.

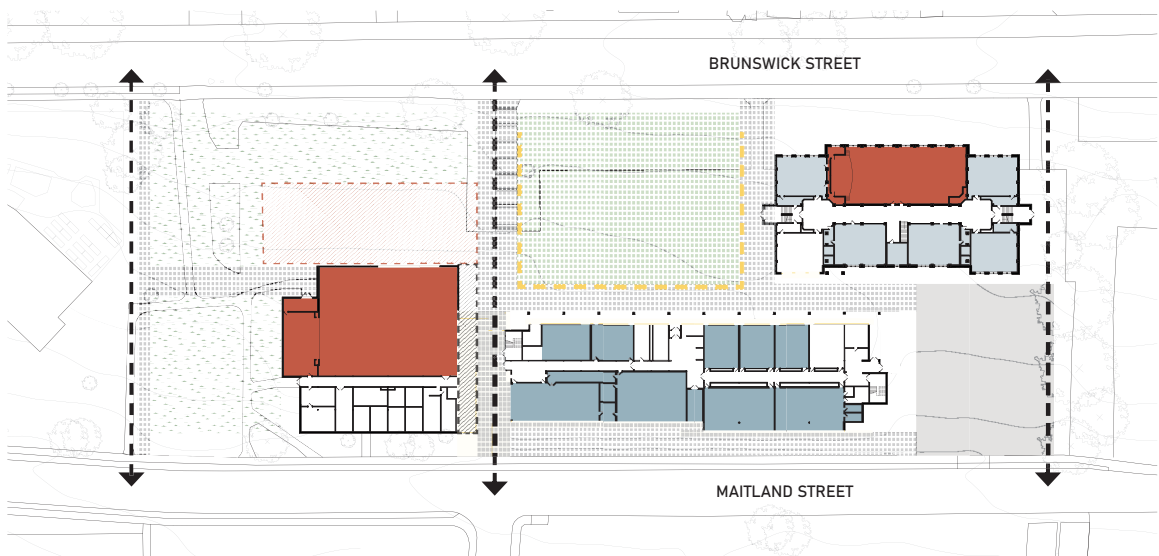
To create a pedestrian oriented design, as the various community engagement sessions have recommended, the project follows guidelines set out by Jan Gehl in his book, *Life Between Buildings* (Gehl 2011). A couple key factors in good pedestrian-oriented design are: strong edge effects (creating standing and sitting spaces around the perimeter of open spaces or buildings), primary and secondary seating options, climate oriented materials, soft edges (simple transitions), and proper lighting. Because of the nature of the site, where open spaces almost entirely surround the two school buildings, it is imperative that the public spaces if they are to be used to their full potential be designed with these guidelines. Key among them are the soft edges of the building and the strong edge effects of the plazas. Like Jane Jacobs is known for, creating “eyes on the street” is also imperative to increasing the success of the streets adjacent to the site, as they are currently eyeless. Not only is the school abandoned, but Maitland St. is mostly filled with parking lots, and only a few houses face the street, so improving it is a high priority.

Process Plans: Existing Site and Buildings with Proposed Program Uses and Urban Strategies

The following plans show my intentions for the development of the site using the existing building plans as a background. They show how the proposed programs derived from the community’s needs are integrated into the various spaces in the existing schools. Solutions to some of the urban issues that were noted previously are indicated. The shades of



Process plans: Level 0 (Brunswick building ground floor)



Process plans: Level 1 (Maitland building ground floor)

PROGRAM LEGEND

- RECREATIONAL/EVENT SPACE
- FOOD SERVICES
- HEALTHCARE CENTRE
- RESIDENCES
- COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION
- WORKSHOP/COMMERCIAL SPACE
- EDUCATION CENTRE

- DEFINED SPACES
- FLEXIBLE SPACES

TOPOGRAPHY LEGEND

- PATHWAY AND HARDSCAPE
- PUBLIC PLAZA
- ARABLE LANDSCAPE

URBAN STRATEGY LEGEND

- CUT/CONNECT BUILDING FACES TO STREETS/PLAZAS
- IMPROVE/CREATE PEDESTRIAN ROUTES

Process plans: existing site and buildings with proposed program uses and urban strategies

red indicate uses that are considered permanent, and the shades of blue indicate uses that are considered transient.

Level 0 and Level 1

Food Services are proposed to be weaved into the ground floor of the Brunswick Building, and the facade is subtracted to promote connections between the building and the public space of the street.

Education Centre use is proposed on the second floor of the Brunswick building, and a multi-use event space is maintained in the existing auditorium space. Entrances on this level will be created to allow access to the new lobby space that is going to open to the interior of the Brunswick building through the subtraction of some interior partition walls.

Workshop/Commercial Space is proposed on the ground floor of the Maitland building to take advantage of the existing uses as workshops, and other light-industrial uses. The structural bay sizes which can accommodate these types of use, as well as the loading opportunities further contribute to the ability of these spaces to accommodate workshop and commercial use through weaving. The facades of this building are subtracted to open up connections to the adjacent public spaces and create a welcoming pedestrian experience.

The existing gymnasium will be maintained in its current state, weaving in minimal interventions to create natural lighting and a future connection to the proposed market hall juxtaposition on the eastern face of the space.

A new public plaza is proposed in the courtyard space in between the existing buildings to host public gatherings.

Strong edges will be implemented through landscaping. Soft edges between the Maitland building and the plaza are created through the subtraction of the opaque facade, and a textured building face.

Arable land is proposed to wrap the North-Eastern sides of the Market Hall addition to connect to Hope Blooms. This will allow Hope Blooms to collaborate with the project to combat food insecurity issues in the area.

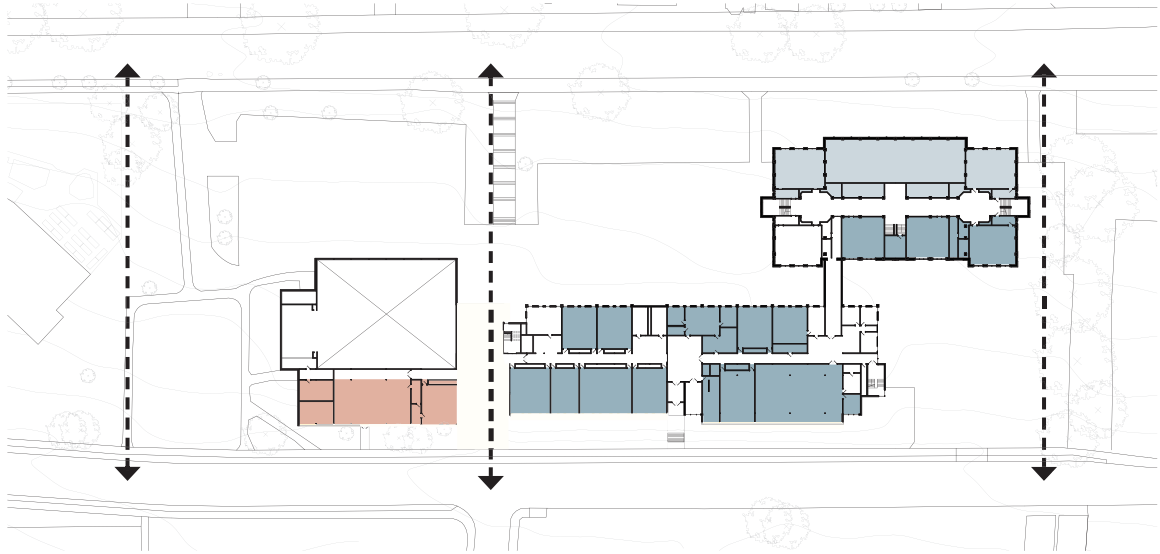
Subtractions through the Maitland building will line up with Prince William St. to create a new accessible pedestrian route to Brunswick St. This will also create new entrances to either side into the North and South portions of the Maitland building. Further improvements to the existing pedestrian routes through the site will encourage traffic across the site.

Level 2 and Level 3

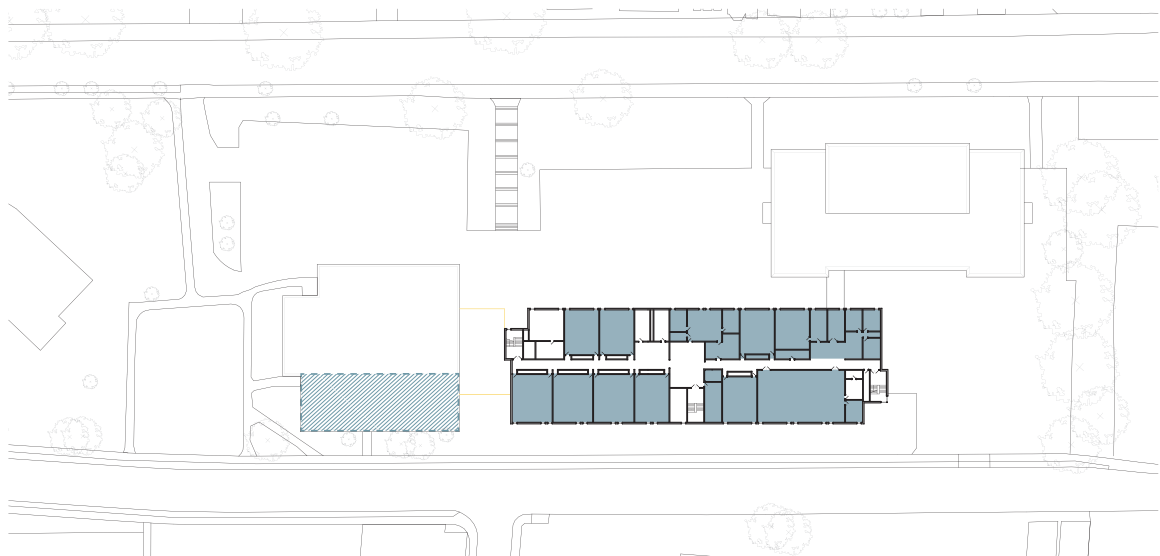
Education will continue to the final floor of the Brunswick building, along with some workshop/commercial spaces. These are connected to the Maitland building through the existing bridge to the more commercial workshop spaces in the Maitland building. Connections to Maitland Street are create through pedestrian bridges and walkways along the subtracted building face to allow retail opportunities and public interaction.

The ground floor of the North portion of the Maitland building is a space for the North End Community Health Centre which had previously expressed interest in relocating into the school.

On the third level other community organizations will occupy a parasitic addition on the roof of the health centre with new stair cores and elevators.



Process plans: Level 2






Process plans: Level 3



PROGRAM LEGEND

	RECREATIONAL/EVENT SPACE	}	DEFINED SPACES
	FOOD SERVICES		
	HEALTHCARE CENTRE		
	RESIDENCES	}	FLEXIBLE SPACES
	COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION		
	WORKSHOP/COMMERCIAL SPACE		
	EDUCATION CENTRE		

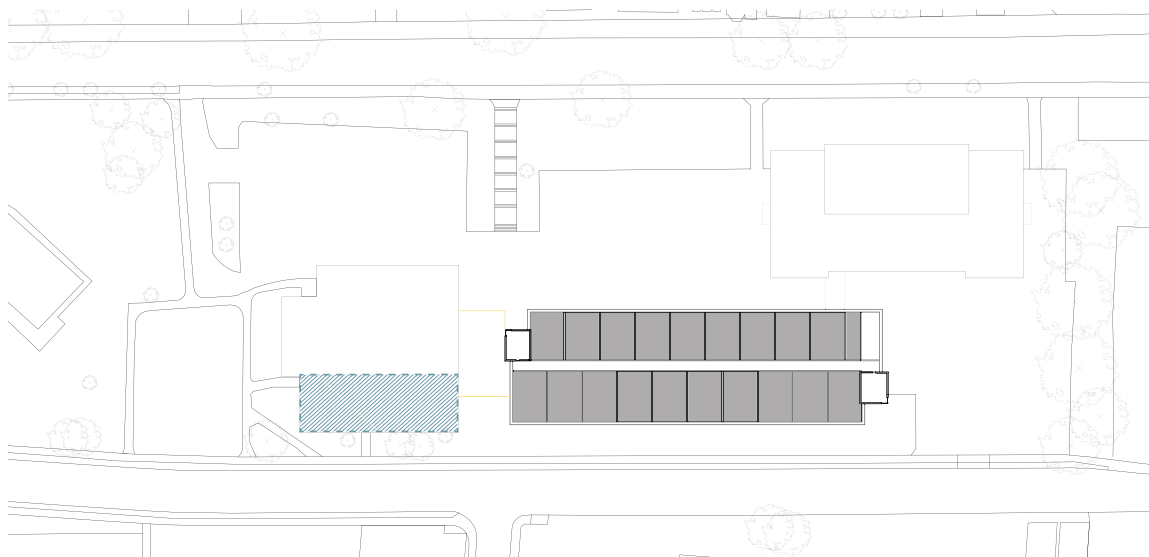
TOPOGRAPHY LEGEND

	PATHWAY AND HARDSCAPE
	PUBLIC PLAZA
	ARABLE LANDSCAPE

URBAN STRATEGY LEGEND

	CUT/CONNECT BUILDING FACES TO STREETS/PLAZAS
	IMPROVE/CREATE PEDESTRIAN ROUTES

Process plans: existing site and buildings with proposed program uses and urban strategies



Process plans: Level 4

PROGRAM LEGEND

- RECREATIONAL/EVENT SPACE
- FOOD SERVICES
- HEALTHCARE CENTRE
- RESIDENCES
- COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION
- WORKSHOP/COMMERCIAL SPACE
- EDUCATION CENTRE

- DEFINED SPACES
- FLEXIBLE SPACES

TOPOGRAPHY LEGEND

- PATHWAY AND HARDSCAPE
- PUBLIC PLAZA
- ARABLE LANDSCAPE

URBAN STRATEGY LEGEND

- CUT/CONNECT BUILDING FACES TO STREETS/PLAZAS
- IMPROVE/CREATE PEDESTRIAN ROUTES

Process plans: existing site and buildings with proposed program uses and urban strategies

Level 4 and Above

On the fourth level of the Maitland building a new parasitic addition is proposed to host the residences for the project. These will offer rentable space to the artists and other workers in the building as well as for families and other community members.

The community organizations will continue on this level above the health centre on the North portion of the Maitland building.

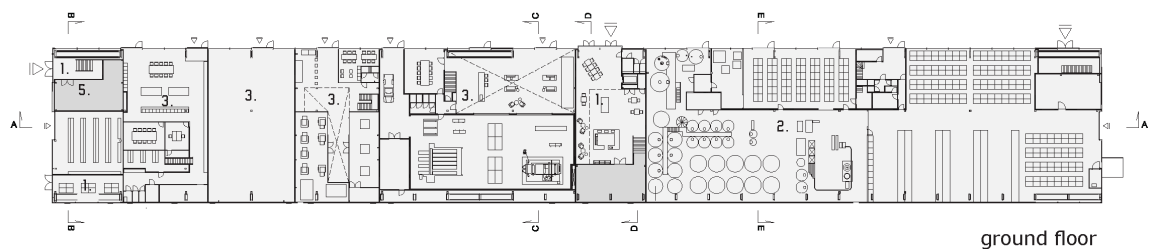
Case Studies

Werkspoor Factory Utrecht



Werkspoor Factory lobby
(Poelstra 2019)

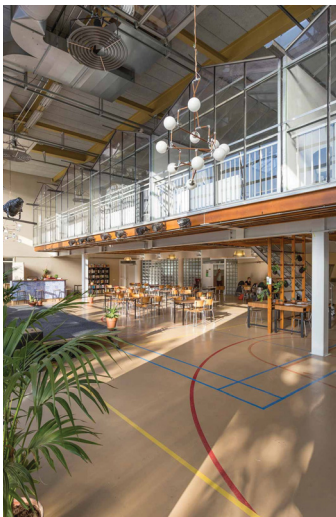
With regards to material, programming and facade design, the Werkspoor Factory Utrecht project by Zecc Architecten in the Netherlands shows an example of adaptive re-use of a “weaving” type. The insertion of programming into a steel superstructure holds similarities to the way the Maitland building’s structure works with potential programming. The facade is also a brick facade, with new openings created for activating the street and aligned with the older grid of the windows. This mirrors the way the West facade of the Maitland building will be treated. The plan shows multiple units accessing a public street, allowing retail and startup opportunities



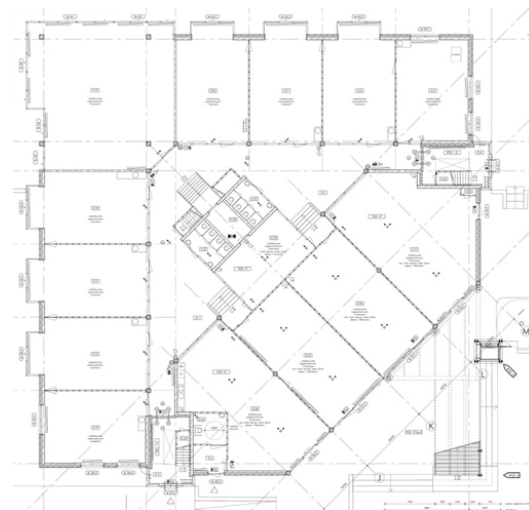
Werkspoor Factory ground floor plan and front facade photo (Poelstra 2019)

Ru Pare Community

This project in Slotervaart, Amsterdam by BETA is a community centre that acts as a living room for its community, inviting members to participate in a new social experiment. As an adaptation of a school with similar programming such as artist, small businesses and social organizations, and organizational intentions to this thesis project, the character of the exterior garden and community input are inspirational elements.



Ru Pare community gym
(Faasse and Kramer 2017)



Ru Pare community ground floor plan and exterior (Faasse and Kramer 2017)

Architecture

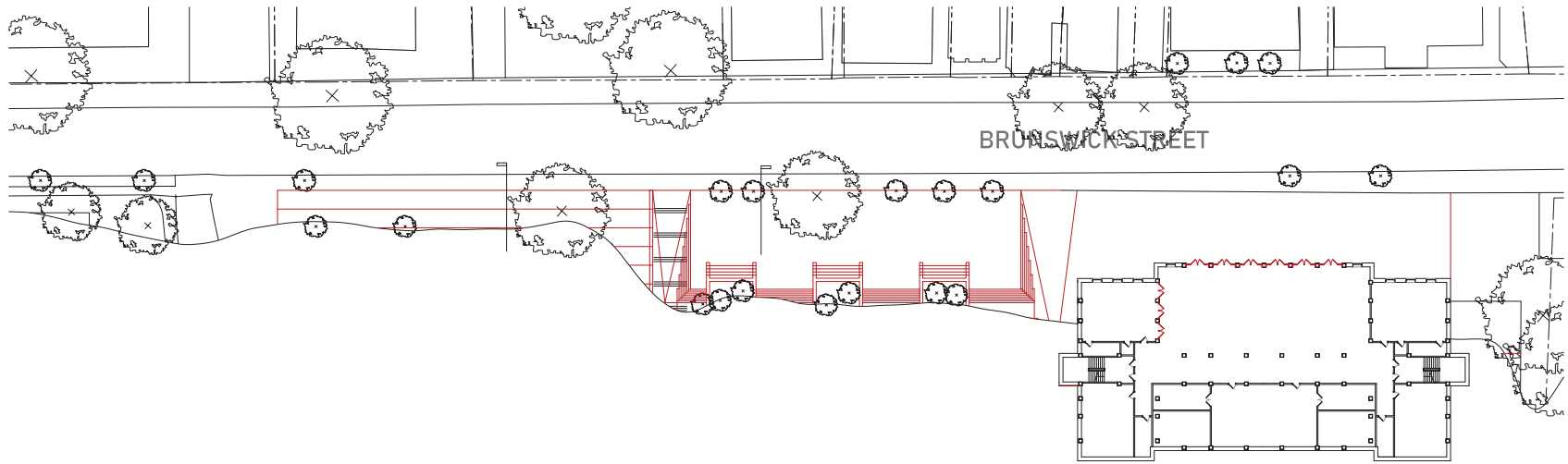
Food Hub, Kitchen and Education Centre

The food services program contains a food hall, community kitchen and food storage spaces. These programs will occur in the Brunswick building ground floor. The food hub involves a food hall where community members are free to eat fresh food that has been cooked in the community kitchen. The urban farm adjacent to these spaces will have storage for food and gardening equipment on this level. This space also serves dual purpose as a training facility for cooking. The education uses take spaces on the upper levels of the Brunswick building. They provide extensive training facilities for youth and adults looking for tutoring or other educational needs. The multi-purpose spaces in the Brunswick building provide ample space for larger classes or lectures to be held there.

Artist Studios Workshops, Gymnasium, Market Hall, and Plaza

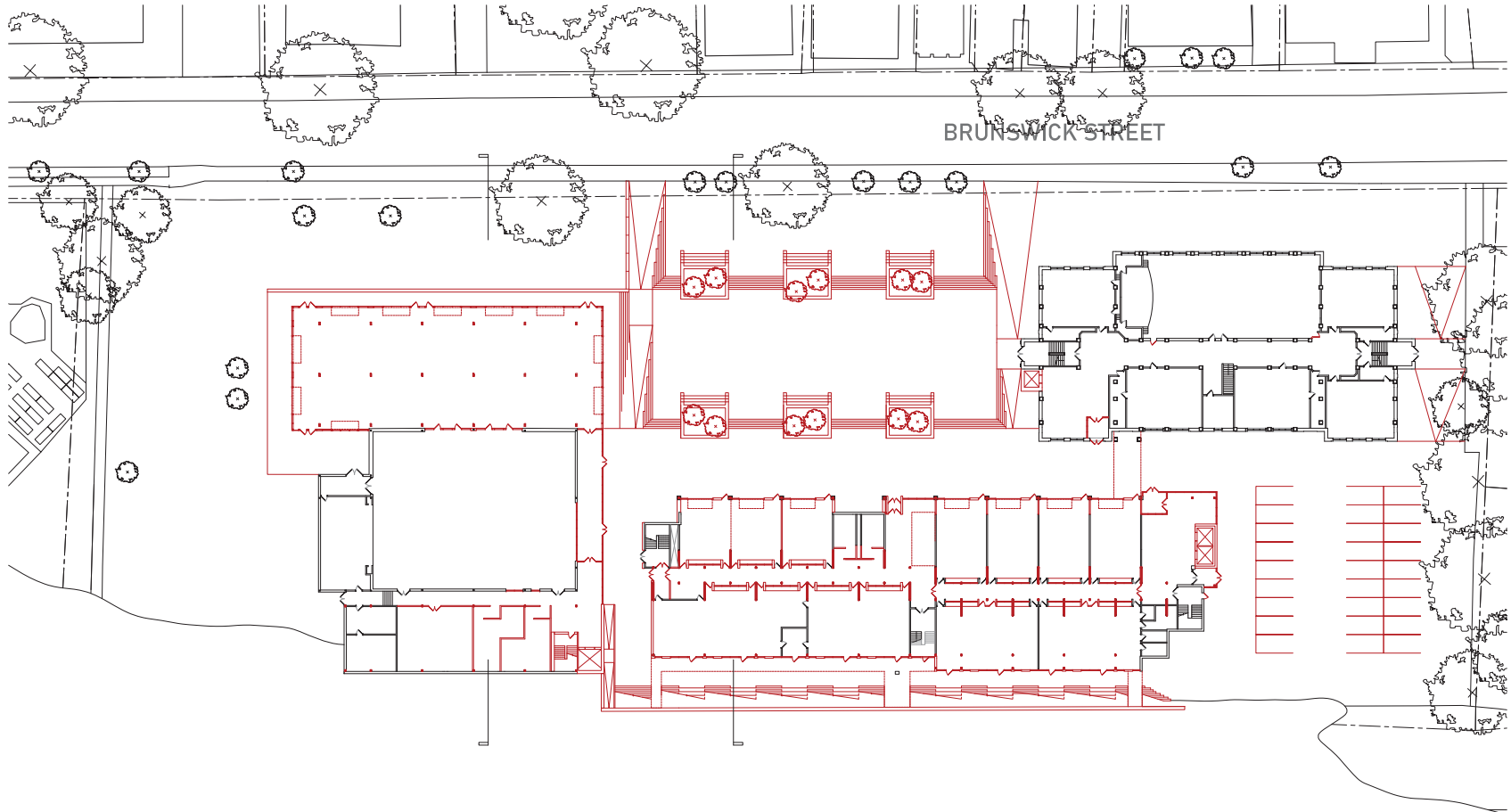
The structural additions to the Maitland building build upon the existing flexibility to offer multi-purpose use of the typical spaces. The column and beam steel structure opens up opportunities for expansion between adjacent interior spaces through the removal of interior partitions.

Garage doors and entry points occur along the plaza side of the ground floor of the Maitland building providing access for loading to the workshop spaces, while allowing after-hours access for individual units if desired. This allows independence from the overall building, and expands possible use cases. These spaces continue up to the 3rd floor with connections on the second floor to Maitland St.

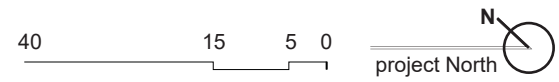


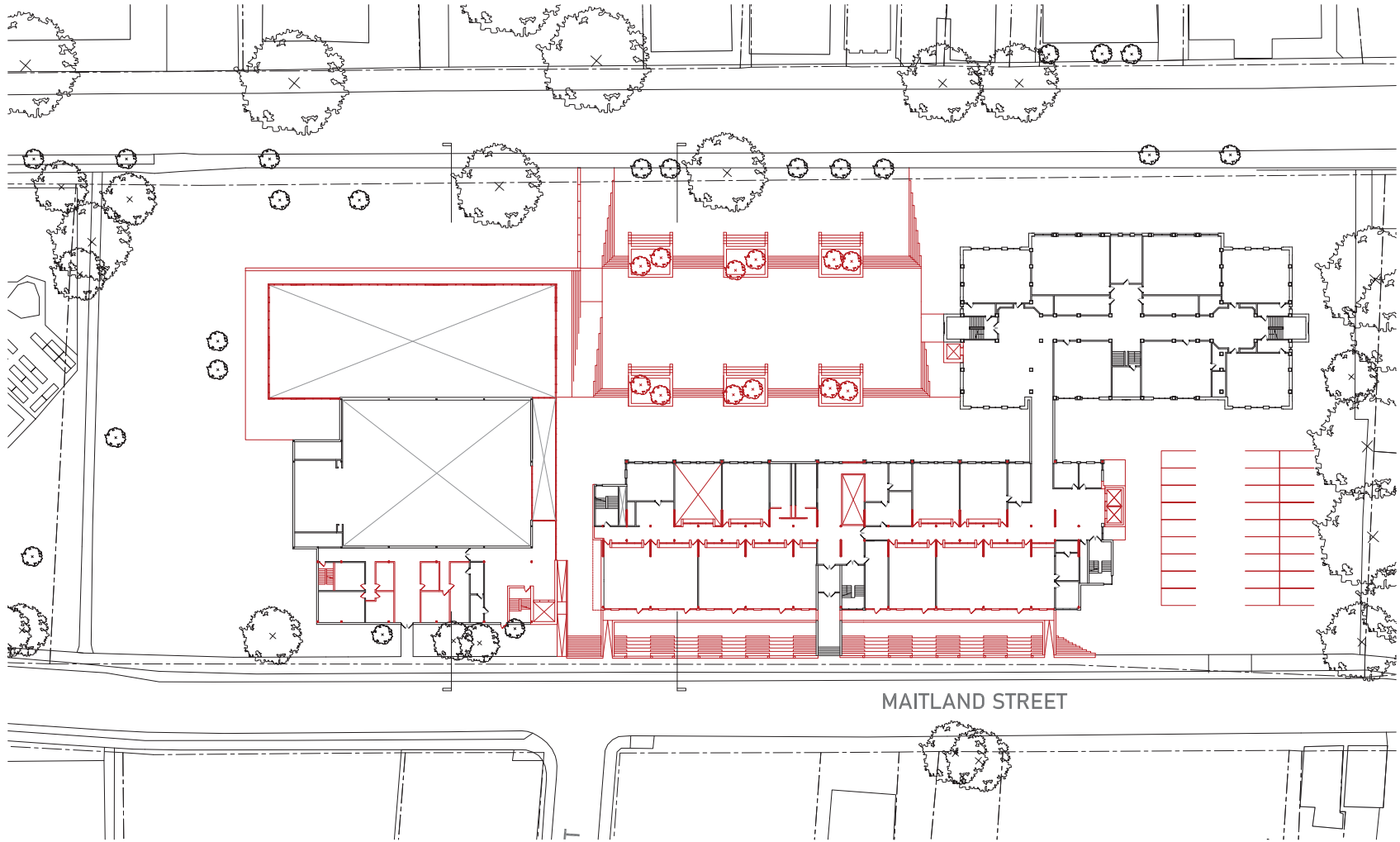
Floor plan: Level 0





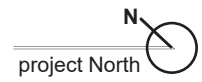
Floor plan: Level 1

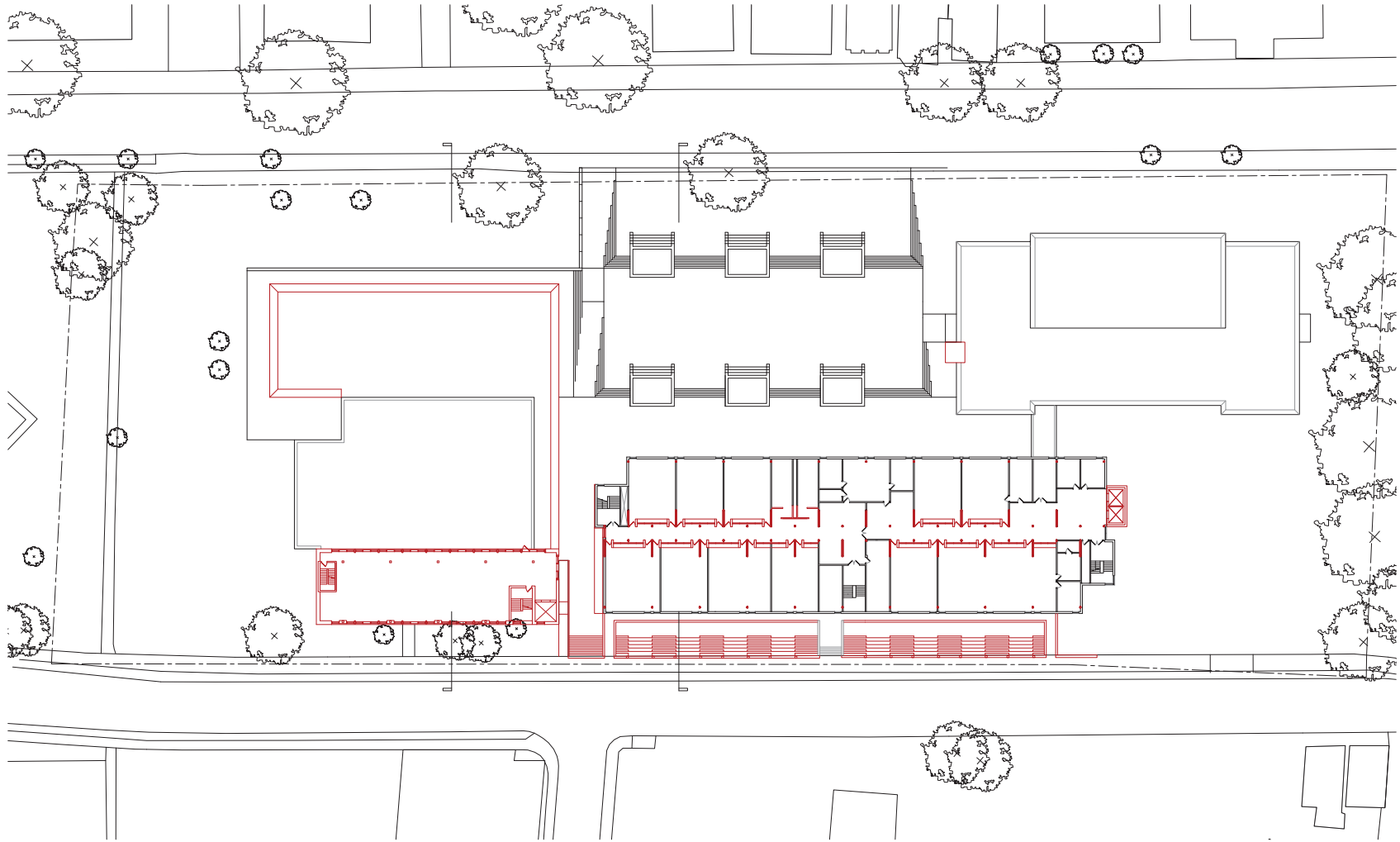




Floor plan: Level 2

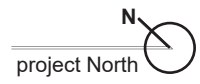
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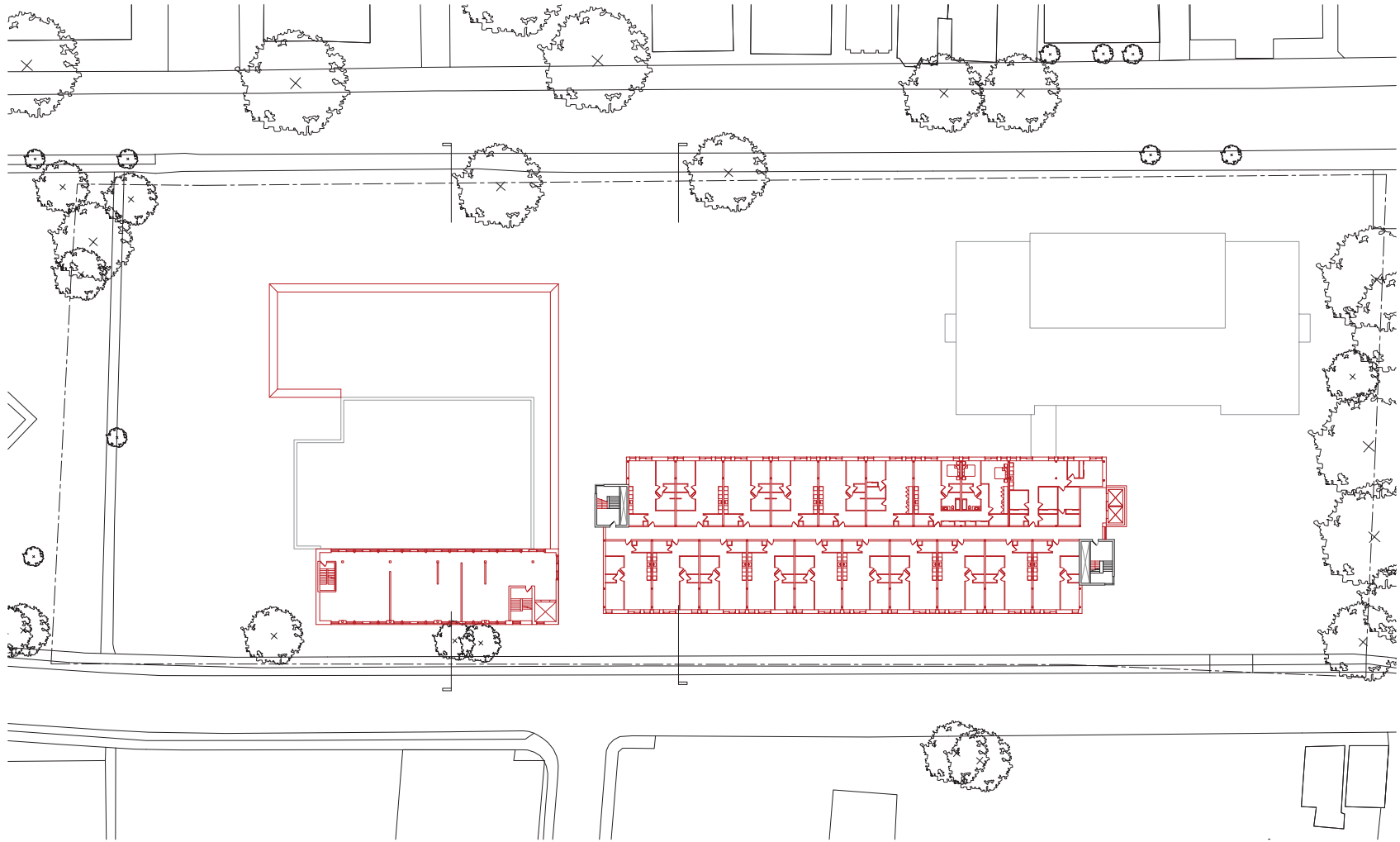




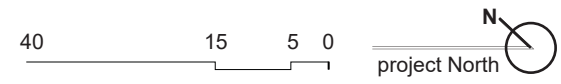
Floorplan: Level 3, roof of Brunswick building

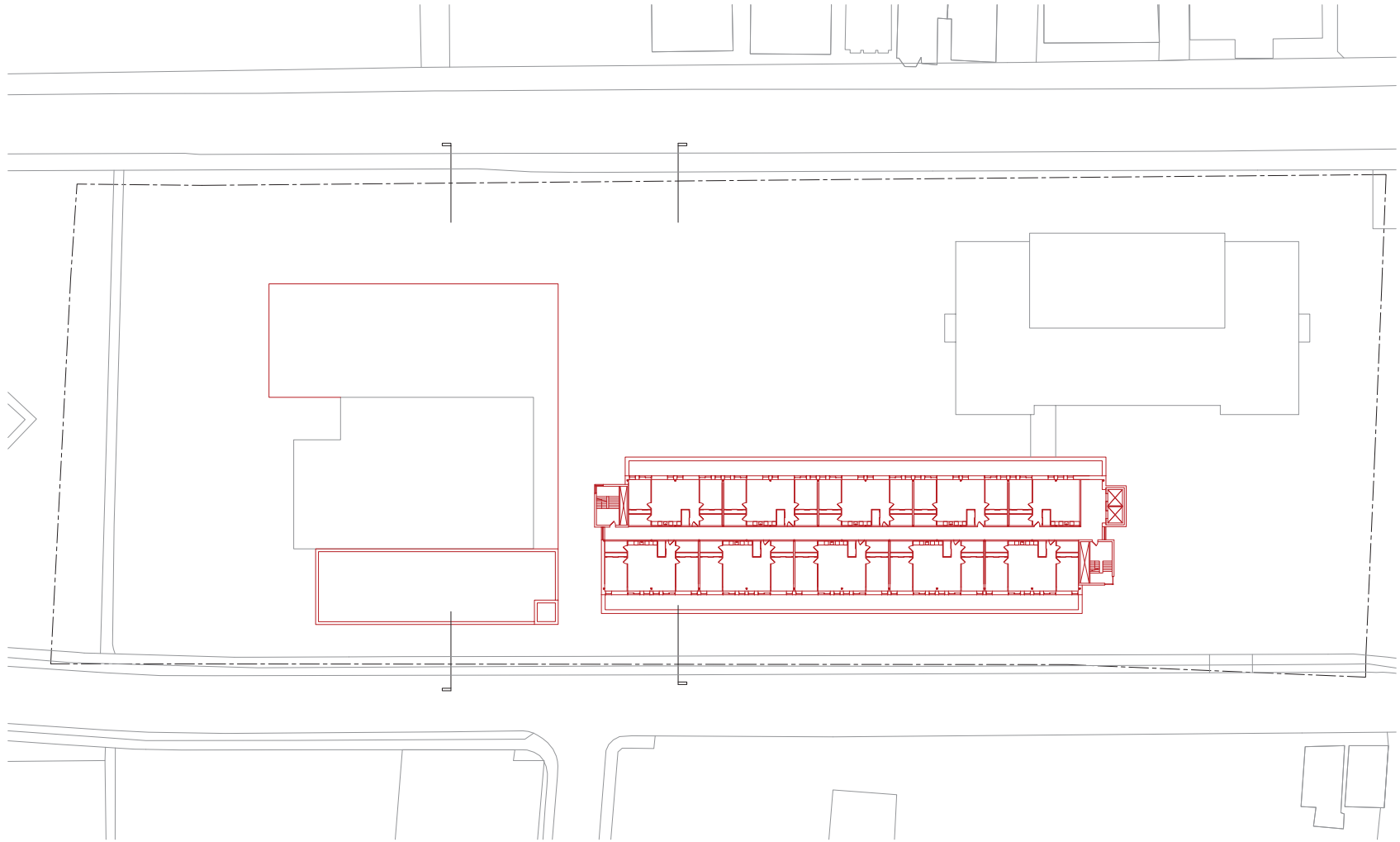
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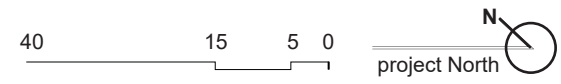


Floor plan: Level 4





Floor plan: Level 7



This level is connected up to Maitland Street through a series of public staircases, tiered seating and ramps for accessible access. The main access point to the building is the lobby to the South of the building which also provides access to the residential units above. The North-West corner of the Brunswick building provides access to this level of the building with a new lobby space.

The public plaza provides accessible routes through the site, primary and secondary seating through the planters and steps lining the square. The edges are enhanced through the planters, and existing trees along Brunswick Street. Soft edges are provided through simple transitions between interior and exterior spaces.

The market hall is attached to the East face of the existing gymnasium to combine event uses to one location, and offer a connection to Hope Blooms and the urban farming that will occur surrounding the North and East of the hall. This venue provides a juxtaposed type of adaptive re-use for the project in order to create a vibrant and engaging perception of the new use of the site.

Health Centre and Community Organizations

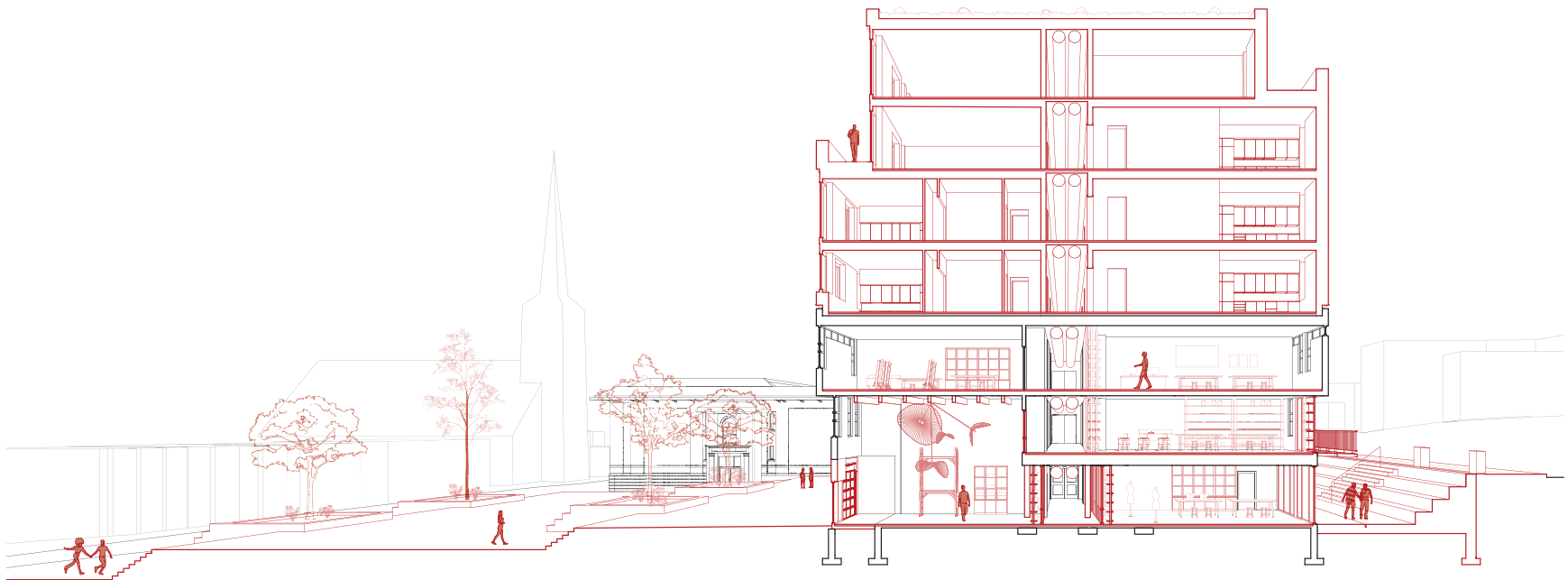
The North portion of the Maitland building holds the new North End Community Health Centre on the ground floor for ease of access to the public. This is accomplished through opening the existing facade through subtractions, and creating a new entry point along that elevation. Additional community organizations are able to expand into the upper levels of this building through a new parasitic addition.

Section: Artist Studios, Workshops and Residences

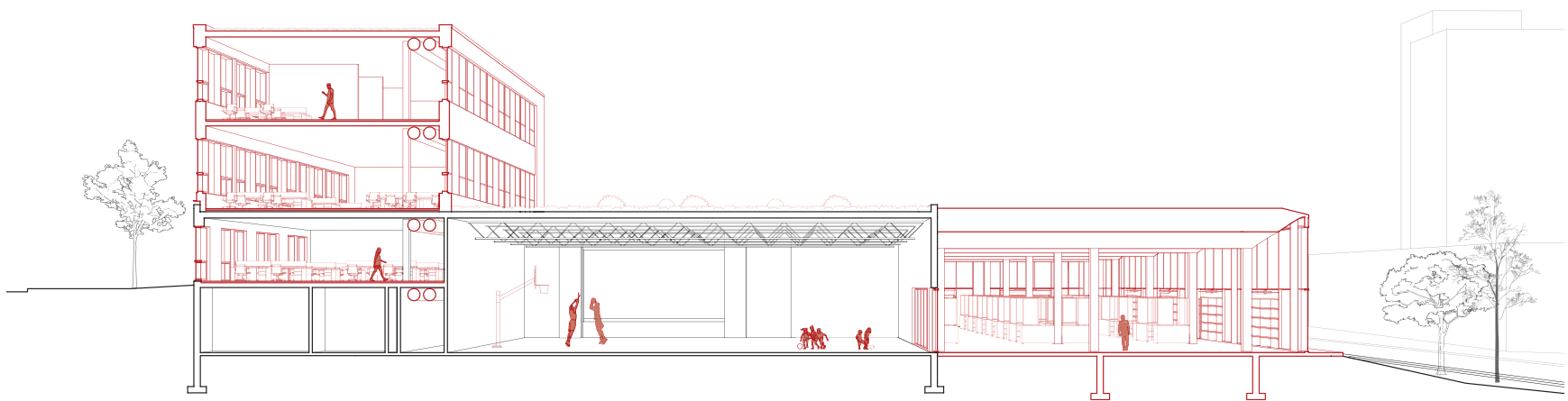
The artist studios and residences share a relationship of users, whereby a portion of the units available in the project will be reserved for the use of artists that are using the studios on the lower levels. A diversity of uses can occur on the lower levels, but maintaining a secure amount of housing for the community means there will be a stable base of users for the facilities in the project, and ensure a reliable source of revenue, albeit the units will be affordable, as the community is generally lower-income than the rest of Halifax. The section through the workshops demonstrate the variety of uses that might occur through time in these typical spaces. A painter's studio faces the public plaza above a sculpture/installation studio on the ground floor. A ceramic studio, fashion studio and start-up space occupy spaces on the Maitland Street face of the building. By walking down the halls, or in front of the glazing on the ground floor, a sort of gallery is made available to passersby of the cultural goings-on in the site, while contributing to the social interactions of the community.

Section: Event Space Market and Public Plaza

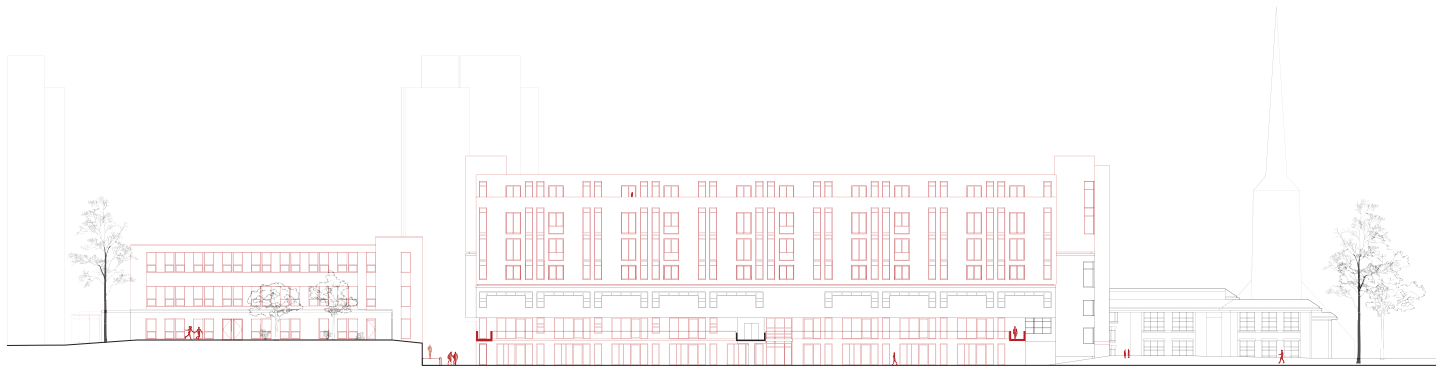
The gymnasium will be usable as a multi-purpose event space suited for large gatherings, and can develop into a theatre or other purpose as the community evolves. The public plaza adjacent to the gym serves as a place for outdoor events such as farmers markets, protests, concerts, or art installations. This space has glazing to enclose the space for a more formal market, wedding venue, or conference. It also has operable overhead doors along the perimeter of the space to allow seamless connection to the exterior space surrounding the building.



Building section: artist workshops and residences



Building section: event space, community organization offices, market and plaza



West building elevation of Maitland st. additions



Material Strategies

Exterior

The brick facades on both school buildings already provide a basis for the long-term function of the skin as a permanent fixture of the building that allow the interior programs to shift and change over time. The brick will be maintained throughout the lifetime of the project to ensure its longevity.

Any brick facades that must be demolished will have their bricks re-used elsewhere in the project. As can be seen in the rendering of the market interior, brick has been used as a flooring material. In the rendering of the Maitland St. elevation, bricks are re-used in the wall panels to match the existing facades.

The new additions will use long-lasting materials as their exterior rainscreens, such a stone facade on the residential parasitic addition on the roof of the South portion of the Maitland building. The community organization addition on the North portion of the Maitland building will use a zinc metal panel system which also has a long lifespan.

Roofs will be green roof systems to increase the lifespan of the roof assembly, and to offset urban heat island and runoff issues.

Interior

The new interior partitions in the project are paneled sections that can be disconnected from the ceilings and floors to be moved to another location. Existing openings such as doorways and locker spaces are re-used as gallery spaces through the weaving-in of glass panels. This allows the corridors to become impromptu gallery spaces.



Rendering of West facade of Maitland building
Artist studios



Rendering of interior of Maitland building
Sculpture studio

Renderings

The public square demonstrates the pedestrian-friendly design and relationship between various new juxtaposed, weaved, and parasitic adaptive re-use types. This will be a new social and cultural space for the community to celebrate or protest within.

The interior of the market shows how a juxtaposed structure and facade treatment can create a vibrant and engaging public space. The ceiling is proposed to be painted by a community artist in a vibrant manner to amplify the juxtaposition of the space with the existing building.

The West Facade of Maitland Street show the transparency of the facade, with entry points in each structural bay allowing retail opportunities and public interactions. This demonstrates the ability of the building to attract interest into the cultural working of the project, making a cultural, social and economic impact in the community.

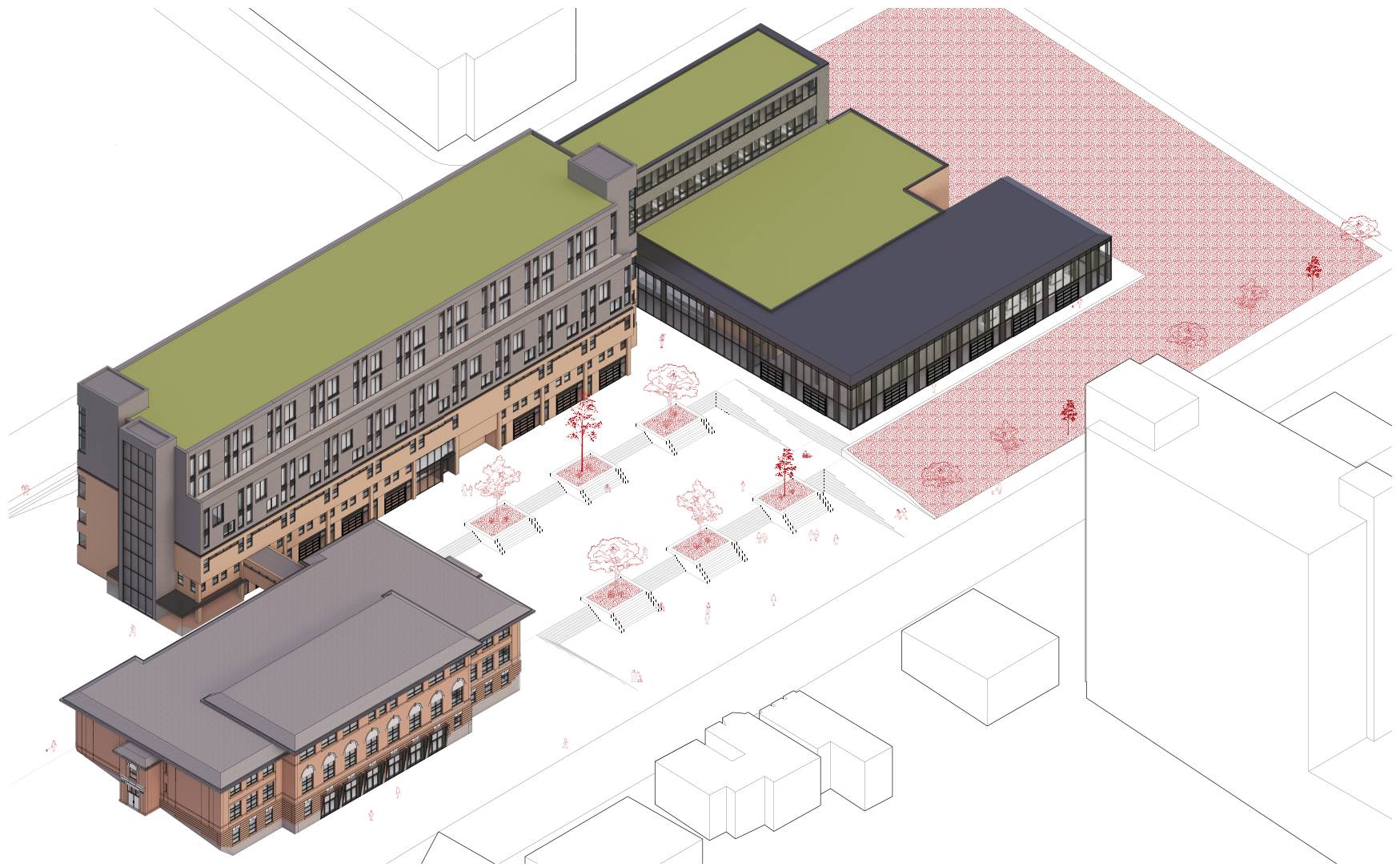
The interior of the Maitland building rendering demonstrates how materials are kept or exposed through a new double-height studio space. The perspective is of a person walking down the corridor on the second floor of the building looking down into an installation sculpture studio.



Rendering of overall project
Market, residences, workshops, and offices beyond



Rendering of market interior



Axonometric

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The combination of systems, architecture, and organizational structure run by the community future-proof this new type of institution for the public benefit of current and future generations. The program of the building is centered around the theme of displaying art as a means of creating social and environmental memory of the place. It is also concerned with the welfare of the community, so the education centre, food hub, residences, and start-up spaces improve the lives of the users. The transformations that the site and school will undergo through time—the impact of the project, and its ability to allow the various programs to thrive or experiment and fade away, but overall to adapt to the changing needs of the community in an immediately responsive manner, will be the success of the project.

This thesis attempts to reverse the declining role of the institution in the city. It transforms the traditional institution of St. Patrick's Alexandra into a new type of community space that will perform a similar role to the one it used to. It will bring people together to promote a healthy, connected community, and improve their cultural, social, educational, and economic outcomes. The project will provide the ability to adapt itself to future generations of this community in whatever way their needs change.

Further opportunities for this thesis could arise through advancing talks with the community and the city of Halifax to push for a similar community-focused project for this site. Development of the “future-proof” adaptations will produce many further studies on material, structural, and other elements.

Appendix: Political Background

Theoretical Work

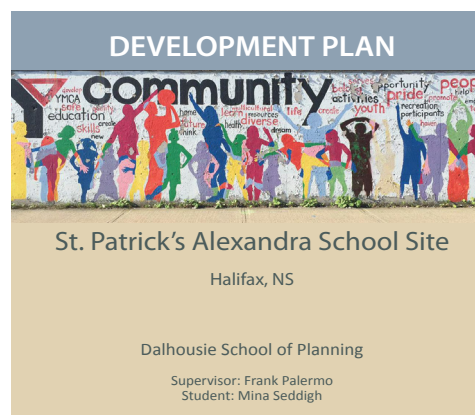
There have been a series of students who have investigated St. Patrick's Alexandra through architecture thesis projects at Dalhousie; Michael Christian, Matthew MacKay-Lyons, Brent Schmidt and Isioma Onweazu Mafiana in the community. Along with these architectural theses, Mina Seddigh completed an Urban Planning report about this site in collaboration with Cities and Environment Unit and three community organizations: The Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre, the Richard Preston Centre for Excellence and the North-End Community Health Centre.

The continued concern with this site demonstrates the needs of the community are apparent to the general public, and elicit strong reactions from any who pay attention.

Master of architecture theses on St. Patrick's Alexandra and/or its surrounding community (Christian 2014) (MacKay-Lyons 2019) (Mafiana 2021) (Schmidt 2016)

History of the Site

The Cobb Building on Brunswick Street was built in 1920 and the newest addition was made in 1970. In 2010 the school was closed and the following year, it was sold to



Development plan for St. Patrick's Alexandra (Seddigh 2015)

Original St. Patrick's Alexandra Cobb building is constructed and school
New Maitland St. building extension

1920
1970



2009

School is closed permanently by the school board and
School is sold to Jono, a developer.

2011



2015



2021

Site timeline: history of changes to St. Patrick's Alexandra
Outline of what major events happened during the school's lifetime. (Google Maps 2009, 2015, 2021)



The Coast logo (The Coast 2023)

a developer under circumstances that the community felt gave little respect to their wishes. Policy indicated that community user groups should be given priority of use, and the property was sold under market value to the developer (Prentiss 2011) creating anger and distrust towards the city's handling of the situation. The community groups took the issue to court (MacAdam 2012) for these two points but because the City rescinded the Procedure relating to how they were supposed to dispose of school properties, the property was able to be sold to the developer. The property has since remained vacant, while its community has fought for it to be used for a community centre—neither the city nor the developer have made any progress developing the site.

Municipal Failings

Even before the process the city began in 2011 to dispose of the school, their mindset has been in the wrong place, as described by Tim Bousquet in an article in the Halifax Examiner.



Halifax Examiner logo (Halifax Examiner 2014)

RFP No. 11-039, Sale of Surplus Schools - 3 -

December 13, 2011

Criteria	Max Score
Understanding the Intent and Objectives	30
Qualifications and Experience	25
Proponent's Financial Capability	25
Financial Offer	20
Total	100

The development opportunity yielded submissions from six proponents; three for profit and three non profit.

	Proponent Name	Profit or Non Profit	Use	Overall Score
1a	Jono Developments Ltd. Option A	Profit	Residential/Affordable Housing/Community Space	88
1b	Jono Developments Ltd. Option B	Profit	Residential/Affordable Housing/Community Space	89
2	United Gulf Developments	Profit	Residential/Community Space	72
3	Mythos Developments	Profit	Residential	68
4	North End Health Centre	Non Profit	Community Space	63
5	Micmac Native Friendship Centre	Non Profit	Community Space	44
6	Richard Preston Centre for Excellence	Non Profit	Community Space	20

Halifax city council report 10.1.9. on St. Patrick's Alexandra request for proposals (Halifax Regional Municipality 2011)

HALIFAX P.O. Box 1740
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 9M5 Canada

Item No. 11.1.3
Halifax Regional Council
May 13, 2014

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original signed by _____
Richard Burt, Chief Administrative Officer

Original signed by _____
Mike Labrecque, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: April 7, 2014

SUBJECT: St. Patrick's Alexandra Site - 2277 Mainland Street, Halifax

ORIGIN:
October 30, 2012 Minutes of Regional Council

On Motion Passed and Passed:

1. Halifax Regional Council repeal the current practice of selling surplus school properties passed as policy on January 31, 2012.
2. Adopt by resolution a process to dispose of the surplus school property known as St. Patrick's Alexandra Halifax, as outlined in Appendix "A" and that the process be used for the disposal of this property in consultation of the Grant Decision with an amendment to allow for community public consultation prior to the initiation of a process requesting proposal submissions from non-profit groups so that the local community has the opportunity to discuss and comment on options for the property, with reasons from the public consultation being included in the staff report to Council.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY:
The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Part III, Sections 61 and 63, for sale or lease of municipal property.

Reason of Municipality regarding property:
61 (1) The Municipality may
62 (1) If all property or interest therein is no longer required for the purposes of the Municipality.

Halifax city council report
11.1.3. on St. Patrick's
Alexandra (HRM 2014)

The St. Patrick's–Alexandra saga began in 2011, when the city used common practice rather than written policy to dispose of the school property. The common practice was to solicit proposals from non-profit groups in direct competition with for-profit developers for the substantial property in the city's rapidly gentrifying north end. Fully 45 points out of 100 were awarded based on financial capability and financial offer—putting cash-strapped non-profits at a competitive disadvantage. (Bousquet 2014)

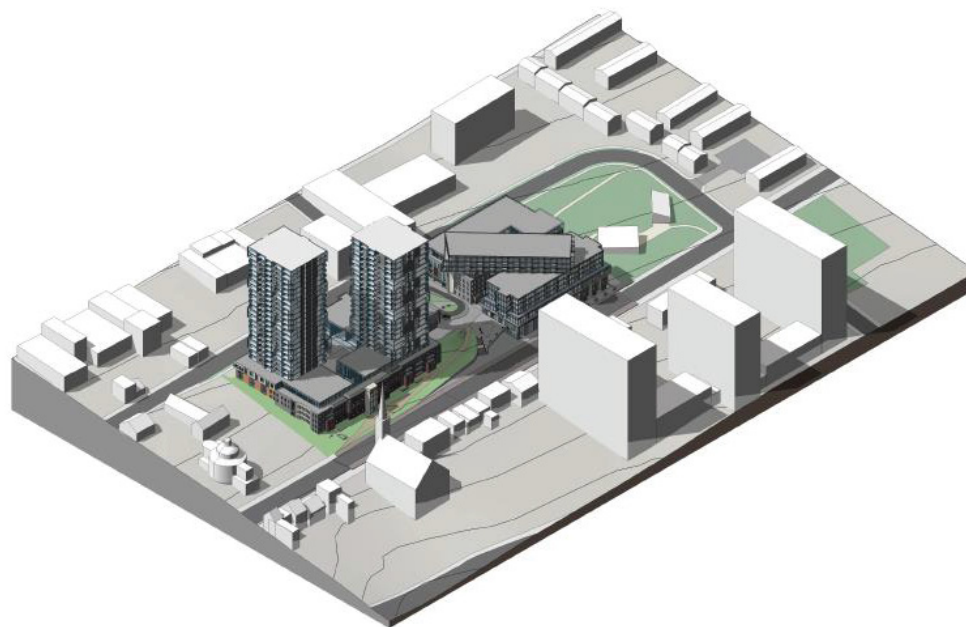
The table previous illustrates the scoring metrics and the final results of the proposals for the school. The issues underlying the sale of the property are derived from a lack of vision, and a focus on the financial impacts rather than the social and cultural impacts of the site. The criteria in the RFP is focused on turning the property into a commercial business and gives little to no weight to the benefits that non-profit uses could have brought to the project, the community and the city such as described by Seddigh's plan (Seddigh 2015).

Community Response

Through the multiple years of community lobbying there have been efforts from the city to placate the community through surveys about their thoughts on what occurred and what should happen with the site. The City Council report in 2014 (HRM 2014) lists the community proposal and a long-form survey of resident's wants for the school such as artist studios and classes, a daycare, business spaces, a food bank or grocery store, affordable housing, and education services.

Developer Intent

JONO Developments made a public presentation in November 2020 during public engagement sessions for the new Centre Plan outlining their proposal for the St. Patrick's Alexandra property. They proposed changing the zoning



JONO Developments development proposal - site axonometric
Requires changes to Centre Plan



JONO Developments
rendering with ONE (Shape
Your City 2020)

designation from HR-1 to either HR-2, or to CEN-2 in order to achieve their desired density on the site. This means two 25 storey towers with a 3-5 storey podium, and an 8 storey mid-rise with a 5-6 storey podium.

There are no specific program details, however there is mention of start-up spaces, a resolution for the community's food desert, and cultural opportunities.

Municipal Strategy

This back and forth has resulted in the most important planning legislation that has affected the site to date, which is the new Halifax Centre Plan. It includes the "What We Heard Report 2021" in Package B that outlines the process through which the Package B was created, and uses the St. Patrick's Alexandra site as a testing ground for engagement, as city council had specifically requested staff "explore changing the designation for PID:00148643 (St. Patrick's Alexandra) from HR-1 to HR-2" (HRM 2021a).



Halifax Centre Plan
community engagement
(HRM 2021a)

This effectively means the density of the site would be significantly heightened, from low-rise to tall mid-rise. For example, under HR-1 zoning the maximum height would be 14 metres, or 4 storeys, whereas under HR-2 zoning, the maximum height would be 38 metres, or 12 storeys.

In October 2021 the “Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy” is released and it identifies the St. Patrick’s Alexandra site as a “Special Area, to recognize the historic prominence and significance of the former school site in the Mi’Kmaq First Nations, African Nova Scotian, and Halifax’s North End communities” (HRM 2021b). A summary of the consultations with the community are listed:

- Celebrating the physical and cultural identity, and commemorating the history of the Mi’Kmaq First Nations and African Nova Scotian communities in the North End of Halifax;
- Designing for diverse communities in background, abilities, age, interests, households, and income;
- Integrating and connecting the site into the fabric of the surrounding community, both physically and through programming by valuing public spaces and pedestrian-oriented design for the site;
- Providing a range of housing options and services, including affordable housing, food security, and multi-use community and amenity spaces;
- Including a community space that addresses the economic, cultural, and educational needs of the diverse communities in the North End of Halifax;
- Developing a mid-rise scale building with a mix of residential, commercial, and community uses; and
- Preserving the heritage value of the existing building.



Halifax Secondary Planning
Strategy (HRM 2021b)

Decisively, the strategy requires development follow the HR-1 land-use by-law, except:

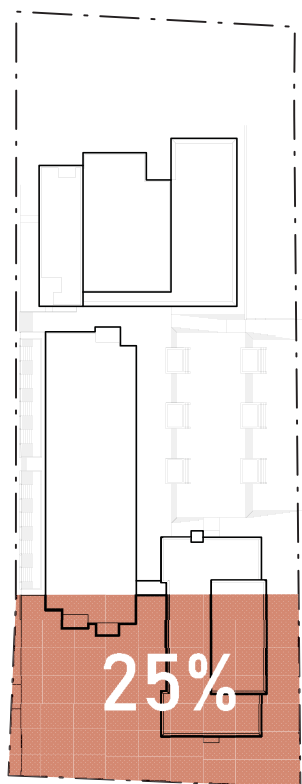
Council may consider a development agreement to permit a mixed-use development that is limited to a maximum of 23 metres in height on a maximum of 25% of the site consisting of residential, commercial, and community facility uses set out

in the HR-1 zone and additional uses of a grocery store use, a minor spectator venue use, and a fitness centre use. (HRM 2021b)

The city’s initial position on the value of the school and the site for the city has changed from one of disinterest and financial motivation, to one of the most considered and community-oriented approaches to development on the Halifax peninsula through the continual and exhaustive lobbying from community groups and the general public.

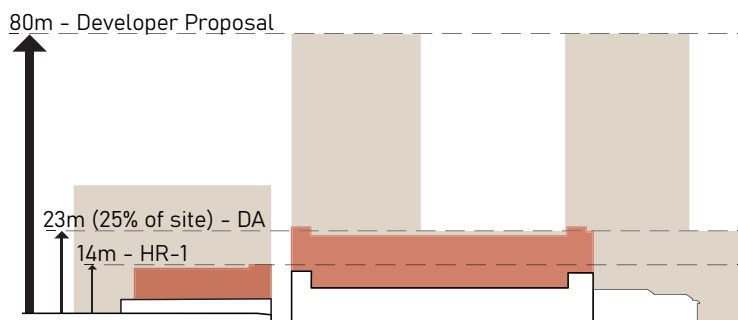
The designation as a Special Area demonstrates the attention the city has for this site.

This special area exempts the former school site from development agreement policies for large lots and registered heritage properties. The site may be developed as-of-right or under a site-specific development agreement policy that recognizes the historic significance of the site to Mi’kmaq First Nations, African Nova Scotian and North End communities. (Shape Your City 2021)



Halifax Secondary Planning Strategy development agreement area: 25% of total site area allowed as grocery, spectator or fitness uses.

This wording and the position of the city run directly counter to how the current owners of the property, JONO Developments wants to develop the site. Their proposal shows an approximate 200% return on investment assuming 850 sf average unit size and assumed market rate rental with assumed amounts of units. The proposed design towers over the adjacent community garden and residences and goes against many of the city and community’s desires.



Halifax Centre Plan height maximums: 14m under HR-1 zoning, 23m for 25% of the site under the Special Area zoning, and the developer’s proposed 80m height

Growth Rates - Rental Income / Expenses	3.00% / 3.00%	PRO FORMA			Untrended	Trended	Sale	
Effective Rent - PSF / Per Unit	2.17 / 1,847	Effective Gross Revenue	24,707,171	27,572,137	28,395,778			
General Vacancy & Credit Loss	6.00%	- Operating Expenses	(3,233,692)	(3,646,495)	(3,755,784)			
Operating Expense Ratio	13.09%	Net Operating Income	21,473,479	23,925,642	24,639,994			
Breakeven Occupancy (Untrended)	39.00%	- Capital Expenditures	(245,000)	(277,128)	(285,442)			
Reversion Net Proceeds (After Selling Costs)	462,293,222	Cash Flow from Operation:	21,228,479	23,648,514	24,354,552			
Construction Loan Payoff	(128,214,336)	Cap Rate	4.75%	5.18%	5.25%			
Equity Proceeds from Sale	334,078,886	Valuation	452,073,234	462,248,543	469,333,220			
		% of Total Project Cost	229.2%	234.3%	237.9%			
		Valuation/Unit	410,976	420,226	426,667			
SOURCES		USES		%	/Buildable SF	/Unit	Amount	
Construction Loan	65.0%	116,558	128,214,336	Land Costs	1.8%	20.60	3,277	3,605,000
Mezzanine Loan	0.0%	-	-	Hard Costs	84.9%	957.00	152,250	167,475,000
[Limited Partner Name]	33.2%	59,624	65,586,563	Soft Costs	9.6%	108.63	17,281	19,009,590
[General Partner Name]	1.7%	3,138	3,451,924	Carry Costs	3.6%	40.93	6,512	7,163,233
Total Sources	100.0%	179,321	197,252,823	Total Uses	100.0%	1,127.16	179,321	197,252,823

ProForma calculation using A.CRE model (A.CRE) based on assumptions of JONO Developments proposal (Shape Your City 2021)

St. Patrick's Community				Halifax					
		2016	2021	% change	% change difference to Halifax	Relative Population or amount to Halifax 2021	2016	2021	% change
Population	a*	5036	6019	19.5%	9%	1.7%	316701	348634	10.1%
	b*	2357	2875	22.0%	12%	0.8%			
	total	7393	8894	20.3%	10%	2.6%			
Age (0-14)	a	515	725	40.8%	31%	-2.4%	45685	50190	9.9%
	b	110	140	27.3%	17%	-9.5%			
	total	625	865	38.4%	29%	-4.7%			
Income (\$)	a	\$ 23,844	\$ 32,000	34.2%	17%	-22.3%	35199	41200	17.0%
	b	\$ 33,680	\$ 40,800	21.1%	4%	-1.0%			
	average	\$ 28,762	\$ 36,400	26.6%	10%	-11.7%			
Low-Income (%)	a	36.7	28.7	-21.8%	-2%	119.1%	16.3	13.1	-19.6%
	b	22.2	16.4	-26.1%	-6%	25.2%			
	average	29.45	22.55	-23.4%	-4%	72.1%			
Indigenous	a	415	400	-3.6%	-10%	3.1%	11780	12505	6.2%
	b	115	55	-52.2%	-58%	-1.7%			
	total	530	455	-14.2%	-20%	1.5%			
Immigrant, 1+2 gen	a	1600	2585	61.6%	26%	13.6%	75520	102310	35.5%
	b	1010	1495	48.0%	13%	22.7%			
	total	2610	4080	56.3%	21%	16.5%			
Unemployment rate (%)	a	11.7	16.4	40.2%	-21%	37.8%	7.4	11.9	60.8%
	b	6	14.1	135.0%	74%	18.5%			
	average	8.85	15.25	72.3%	12%	28.2%			
Black	a	765	885	15.7%	-27%	9.6%	12395	17655	42.4%
	b	100	150	50.0%	8%	0.2%			
	total	865	1035	19.7%	-23%	6.6%			
Visible Minority	a	1450	2265	56.2%	-8%	18.2%	41290	67805	64.2%
	b	705	1180	67.4%	3%	21.6%			
	total	2155	3445	59.9%	-4%	19.3%			

* a and b indicate census tracts as noted below
a: 2050010
b: 2050009

Demographics of the community in comparison to Halifax averages for census tracts 2050010 and 2050009

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