Space in Between:
Toward Places of Collaboration and Coexistence in Saskatoon

by

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

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Abstract

The ongoing process of reconciliation demands continuous efforts from architects and the field of architecture to reckon with the legacies of settler colonialism within built environments. Through an exploration of the multicultural confluence of people in contemporary Saskatoon, this thesis situates urban reserves as both abstract boundaries on land and potential supportive space for transformative place-making. It proposes to blur boundaries by collectivizing urban spaces for public use rekindling connections between Saskatoon's downtown to the South Saskatchewan River and prairie land.

Architects can help create collaborative spaces that blur boundaries within the built environment and encourage meaningful dialogue with communities. By drawing from the experiences of both Indigenous and settler architects, this thesis builds a preliminary set of tools to foster creative relationships between people and the land they inhabit. It emphasizes learning from treaties and working collaboratively to create reciprocal environments, recognizing the daily commitment to being treaty people.

Acknowledgements

I am profoundly thankful for the immense support and guidance of my supervisor Émélie Desrochers-Turgeon, and my advisor Brian Lilley. Their depth and insight on the many intertwined issues, and how to represent and explore them through my own thesis process. I am also thankful for the many voices from friends and mentors offering a community of support as well.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Reconciliation between settlers and Indigenous communities is an ongoing process, a challenge that architects, and the field of architecture must continue to address within their relationships to human and non-human communities and built environments. To be able to consider reconciliation, one must reckon with the settler colonial history of Canada, “a new colonial society [built] on the expropriated land base” (Wolfe 2006, 388).

Such displacement and appropriation of land defines an organizational principle of society that is hard to shake off, since “invasion is a structure not an event” (Wolfe 2006, 2).

The enduring legacies of settler-colonialism have deeply influenced our society’s approaches to land, city planning, decision-making and built environments.

People and Plains

First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples are the original Indigenous peoples of the land now known as Canada. They have largely occupied regions south of the Arctic for time immemorial. The Indigenous peoples of the Great Plains of North America lived on the land, moving with the seasons and the bison herds, gathering food, and using the resources of the natural world through balanced and reciprocal relationships.

Generations of Indigenous peoples have lived in the Saskatoon region for thousands of years.

> Before the bridges and buildings of our contemporary cityscapes, this land was a traditional gathering place, connecting many travelling routes for the Cree, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Métis, Dene, and Nakota Sioux peoples (Discover Saskatoon n.d.).

Archeological discoveries at Wanuskewin Heritage Park just north of the city, along the river, “has been a sacred site and gathering place for more that 6,400 years” (Wanuskewin n.d.). In more recent history, the Plains Cree have been the most prevalent Indigenous people in the Saskatoon region, but other First Nations cultures are also present including the Saulteaux or Plains Ojibwe, Dakota and the Nakoda or Assiniboine. Other First Nations peoples in Saskatchewan include the Dene, Swampy Cree and Woodland Cree located in northern Saskatchewan, as well as a Lakota First Nation in southern Saskatchewan.

For generations now, these groups have struggled against colonial processes of land accumulation and forceful displacement, with communities working tirelessly to preserve and protect their culture, language, and traditions, despite the growth of settler communities and extractive regimes.

The city of Saskatoon has grown to be the largest metropolitan area in Saskatchewan and is now home to 347,000 people. The city’s population is the agglomeration of communities of people from various ethnic backgrounds, including Indigenous peoples from Cree, Saulteaux, Dene, Dakota, Nakota, Innuit, and Métis communities, as well as settlers from Europe, South Asia, China, Africa, the Philippines, and many others. Saskatoon currently has the fifth largest Indigenous-identity population among CMAs by size but is one of the largest proportionate number of Indigenous residents making up “9.1% of the total city population” (Anderson n.d.).

The federal government designated several pieces of land as ‘urban reserves’ at the request various Indigenous

groups such as the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation (1988), Yellow Quill First Nation (2014), and others. These urban reserves provide opportunities for Indigenous peoples to strengthen their communities and assert their sovereignty in the urban center of Saskatoon, partnering with the city and surrounding communities to provide better services.

As featured on the City of Saskatoon website, “[b]efore an urban Reserve is created, the City of Saskatoon and the First Nation sign agreements that cover commitments to work together, municipal services, fees for services, and compatible standards for development” (City of Saskatoon 2019). This kind of commitment serves as a reminder of the collaborative agreement that Saskatoon promises to uphold in those sovereign spaces.

Research Question

In exploring the multicultural confluence of people in contemporary Saskatoon, the delineation of urban reserves can be seen as both an abstract boundary on land and potential supportive spaces for transformative place-making. These reserves are collective, sovereign and self-directed places that embody the multi-layered relationships within and between communities, addressing various shared needs.

This thesis proposes to imagine urban environments that reinforce collective, self-directed places that embody the multi-layered relationships within and between communities. This thesis explores what would a design approach based on reciprocity between architects, land and community could look like. Through visual representation, it probes the potential of heterotopic communities to define dedicated spaces for encounters, active participation into the urban community, while also reinforcing an interdependent network of neighbors. It asks: how can design tools and place-making deepen mutual understanding and strengthen relationships among people and the land, fostering reciprocal partnerships?

Architects and settlers, as treaty people, have a responsibility to respect and honor the purpose of the Treaties. These agreements should guide how we co-exist on these lands.

Positionality Statement

The work of decolonization should not be placed solely on Indigenous peoples. It is the responsibility of those who have benefited from the colonial system, including the powers that established it and the settlers who benefited from it (Powys White 2018). Reckoning with this legacy means to collectively work to create more equitable and respectful spaces, rather than continue imposing and reinforcing rigid colonial-minded structures.

I am a cis white man navigating the duality of fitting into Canada's colonial structure while being an outsider due to growing up in poverty and hiding from homophobia. My upbringing exposed me to the harsh realities of social class, surrounded by homophobia, racism, and classism. Canadian writer and sociologist Himani Bannerji writes on the contradictions of nationalism and the idea of belonging in Canada, that

> if we problematize the notion of "Canada" through the introjection of the idea of belonging, we are left with the paradox of both belonging and non-belonging simultaneously (Bannerji 2000, 65).

Recognizing my privileges as a settler, I understand the importance of accountability. We are responsible for reconciliation and honoring the land and treaties from which we have benefited but not fulfilled. My life experiences, including previous jobs, volunteering, and advocacy group memberships, shape my commitment to these responsibilities. Those experience have highlighted the importance of collaboration and ally-ship. As noted by Bannerji,

> [t]he possibilities for constructing a radically different Canada emerge only from those who have been "othered" as the insider- outsiders of the nation. It is their standpoints which, oppositionally politicized, can take us beyond the confines of

> gender and race and enable us to challenge class through a critical and liberating vision. In their lives, politics, and work, the “others” hold the possibility of being able to expose the hollowness of the liberal state and to provide us with an understanding of both the refined and crude constructions of “white power” behind “Canada’s” national imaginary. They serve to remind us of the Canada that could exist (Bannerji 2000, 81).

In that sense, liberatory politics can only emerge from bottom-up coalitions with those who have been “othered.” Influenced by Canadian socialism and evolving towards social anarchism, my worldview embraces a live-and-let-live philosophy, likely influenced from the stories and experiences I’ve had growing up in this context.

Additionally, my architectural education in Kjipuktuk, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi’kmaq People, was partially shaped by knowledge keepers of this land. I am indebted to Mi’kmaq elders for teachings on Two-Eyed Seeing. Two eyed seeing, or Etuaptmumk, is an idea brought together by Albert and Dr Murdena Marshall to vision a path forward settler and Indigenous knowledge working together with nature as a path forward, and moving away from the imbalanced scars and structures of colonialism and one-sided imposition. This thesis aligns with many other voices including Douglas Cardinal, and his “World Views” philosophy that are explored in this thesis.

In past talks Albert Marshall has described Etuaptmumk - Two-Eyed Seeing as learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledges and ways of knowing, and learning to use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all.

Based on this background, the context of my perspective, and with the many voices referenced in this thesis, I have come to the position that architects, and the profession of architecture, are inherently responsible for reconciling their methodology from within the colonial structure of the profession, and have a role in sharing their specific, and general, knowledge with the communities and shared spaces of which they are a part. Architects can be facilitators of creativity, planting seeds of creative spaces for future collaboration in our shared and overlapping communities, spaces that support the Indigenous voices that go unheard in colonial cities. This thesis posits that architecture and space are inherently political. Any architectural project involving Indigenous people should be designed in collaboration with Indigenous communities. Therefore, this thesis explores architectural design strategies of coexistence and allyship that prioritize community voices.

Thesis Structure/Boundaries

Decolonization is not a burden for Indigenous peoples alone. It is the responsibility of those who benefited from colonial systems, including settlers and the institutions in power. Collaborative efforts are essential to create equitable and respectful spaces, moving away from imposing rigid colonial structures.

This process is inherently political, as it focuses on the very fabric of the people and land that have to power to shape social spaces in colonial boundaries. And while the process outlined in this thesis proposes an ongoing dialogue of restoring the reciprocal relationships between people and land; it is dependant on that dialogue continuing, with both willing speakers and listeners, many communities,

and representatives, still struggle to listen. Therefore it is key to both support voices of protest when Indigenous communities speak, while also facilitating the principles for anti-colonial work in architecture that recognize the colonial roots of architectural structures, emphasizing collaborative design within communities, and fostering relationships. Architecture should be guided by the purpose of treaties, focusing on coexistence and collaboration within our built environment.

The objective of this thesis is not to replicate a community-led outcome but to underscore an architect's responsibility to their communities. It aims to compile a toolkit and assemble existing knowledge on architectural collective processes, which can be shared and adapted by community members. This approach facilitates shaping their collective futures through transparent and open partnerships, which are fundamental to reciprocal communities.

Divided into five sections, this thesis begins by establishing the context to facilitate the groundwork of the thesis process. The first chapter, "Unmaking Colonial Boundaries," provides an overview of the history, relationships, and boundaries that define and limit the communities of contemporary Saskatoon, and Canada to a larger extent. It explores how blurring these rigid structures can open our built environment to reciprocal relationships of coexistence. The second chapter, "Architecture Beyond Boundaries," brings together perspectives from Indigenous and settler architects working in Indigenous contexts to highlight their approaches and relationships with communities and the land. The common theme from each perspective underscores the essential role of collaboration in architecture. Next, "Community Architectural Conversations" delves deeper into the

principles and practices of community-oriented design, examining various strategies and tools for collaborating with communities to ensure their needs, perspectives, and visions drive the design process. Following this, “Boundaries, Design Beyond Liminality” focuses on specific design strategies and tools that are crucial for blurring the boundaries that often block or discourage reciprocal relationships in the built environment. Finally, in “Place-making: Design Speculations of Collaboration and Coexistence,” the insights and perspectives from the previous chapters are brought together to reflect on and re-explore the relationships that build community space. This section is not intended to present a definitive solution but to further discussions in the ongoing process of designing within our shared relationships to the river, land, and communities. It aims to plant the seeds of collaboration and coexistence in the public places of Saskatoon.

Chapter 2: Unmaking Colonial Boundaries

Prior to contact, Saskatoon was home primarily to the Cree and Saulteaux (Plains Ojibwe) nations since time immemorial. Other Indigenous groups, such as the Assiniboine, Dakota (Sioux), and Métis, also inhabited the region and interacted with the land and each other (Office of the Treaty Commissioner 1992). These groups had complex kinship systems and rich cultural traditions deeply connected to the land. They relied on fishing and hunting for sustenance, and their land tenure systems reflected a deep respect for the environment and communal use of resources, underscoring the importance of the land in their societies. For the purpose of this thesis, which is not a study of Indigenous peoples but rather an examination of downtown Saskatoon as a site of settler-Indigenous relations, this following section contextualizes the history and agreements that shape what is currently known as Saskatoon.

Crown-Indigenous Relations

The Dominion Land Survey (DLS), initiated in 1871, was a monumental project by the newly formed Canadian government (1867) to systematically survey and divide the western Canadian territories, facilitating western settlement and development (Yarhi and Regehr 2006). This surveying took place before many treaties with Indigenous peoples were signed, effectively preempting agreements and treaties with these communities. The DLS divided the land into a uniform grid system of townships and sections still visible today, prioritizing the interests of colonial powers and settlers while disregarding the traditional land use and rights

of Indigenous peoples, which led to significant conflicts and displacement. From the second of five articles on Treaty Land Entitlements (TLE) in Saskatchewan, it is stated that the goal of the treaties was “to maintain a co-operative co-existence with protections for both sides” (Office of the Treaty Commissioner 1992).

Figure 2.1 The numbered Treaties of Canada (Canada’s History n.d.).

Treaties 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 were critical in shaping Saskatchewan's relationship with Indigenous peoples, significantly influenced by Dominion interests. Treaty 6, signed between 1876 and 1877 with various First Nations bands and the Crown represented by government officials was marred by bad faith negotiations and 'convenient' misunderstandings. The founding of Saskatoon in 1883, based discussions and negotiation between John Lake and Chief Whitecap was a slight improvement to the typical founding of a colonial city. Even the names of Saskatchewan and Saskatoon are based on borrowing, misinterpreting, and reclaiming Indigenous terms:

> ᒥᓵᐢᑲᐧᑐᒥᓇᐦᐠ (Misâskwatôminahk) means "where the saskatoon berry shrubs grow" (a general place).
>
> ᓵᐢᑲᐧᑑᐣ (Saskatoon) refers to the place itself.
>
> ᒦᓂᓯᕽ (Ministikwan) translates to "the berry," signifying the place named after the berry (Nehiyaw Masinahikan Online Cree Dictionary n.d.).

However, it is hard to claim that negotiations were equitable while one side faced coercion from genocide. And many other Indigenous community members were not included in the discussions, and continued to face marginalization and segregation through the reserves system, the displacement to road allowance housing, and continual ploughing over of land. Throughout most of its history marked by broken

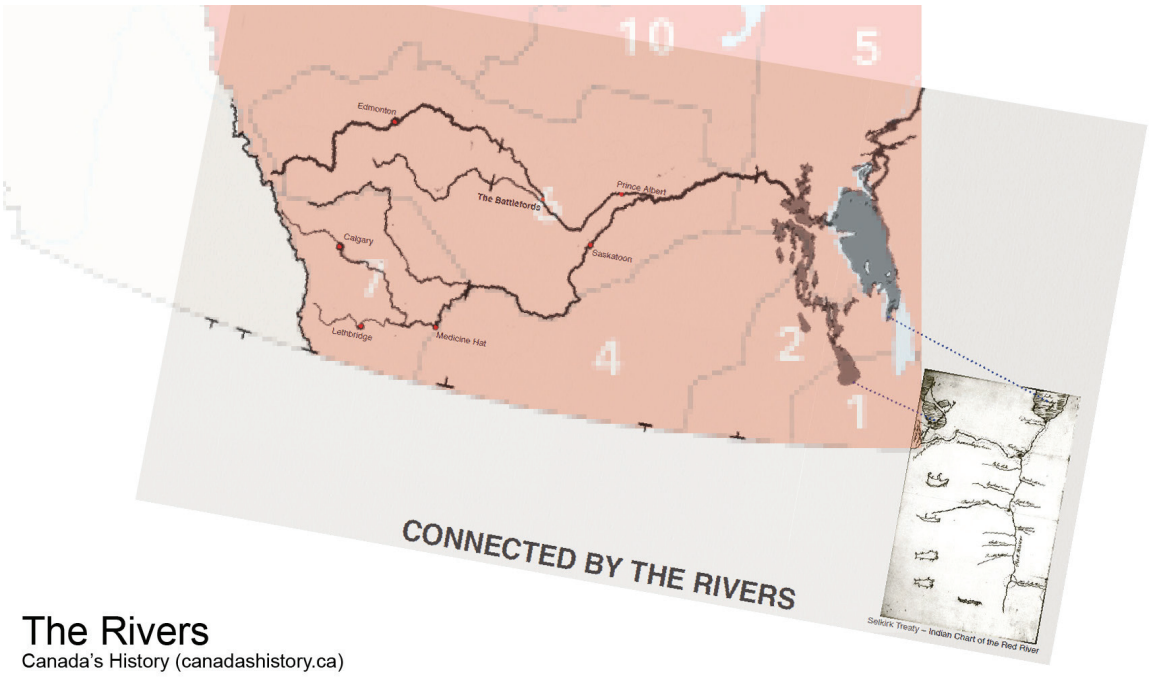


Figure 2.2 Treaties tracing rivers of the Prairies (Canada's History n.d.).

promises, the city has struggled with the concepts of partnership and reciprocity.

The 1885 Rebellion of the Métis, led by Louis Riel, marked a flashpoint, escalating from protest to resistance due to unfulfilled treaty promises and the neglect of unaccounted-for people. Resources were withheld and stricter boundaries imposed, including the decimation of the bison. As a result, other Indigenous nations were targeted by the Canadian Government regardless of if they had allied with the Métis Rebellion or not, and violation of the treaty took the form of withholding resources, and imposing more strict boundaries.

In 1930, with the National Resource Transfer Agreement (NRTA), the federal government gave additional power to the provinces over the exploitation of land, without consulting

Indigenous communities; this interfered with Treaty rights, and treated land as a mere commodity.

In 1979, Saskatchewan's government enacted the Meewasin Valley Authority Act to preserve the cultural and natural resources of the South Saskatchewan River Valley, in the vicinity of Saskatoon (see Figure 2.3). For over four decades, efforts have been dedicated to stewarding throughout the Meewasin Valley Authority, located on Treaty Six Territory and the homeland of the Métis.

Figure 2.3 Parks Canada & the Saskatoon Regional Partners & Communities (Parks Canada 2022).

Today, the land stewarded by the Meewasin Valley Authority extends approximately 75 kilometres along the South Saskatchewan River, passing through and overlapping the City of Saskatoon and the Rural Municipality of Corman Park. This valley comprises 60 percent rural lands and 40 percent urban areas, covering more than 67 square kilometres of diverse landscapes. Figure 2.3 displays the extent of the territory covered by the Meewasin Valley Authority Act, with landscapes categorized as natural assets in green, enhanced assets in light blue, agricultural lands in yellow, and built environments in red.

Since 2021, Parks Canada has been partnering with First Nation and Métis leaders and organizations to develop a network of national urban parks in major Canadian cities such as Saskatoon. These parks aim to conserve nature, connect Canadians with the environment, and promote reconciliation (Parks Canada 2022). Each park will have a unique governance model based on local conditions, with the Saskatoon region potentially using an evolved form of the Meewasin Valley Authority model.

In the context of downtown Saskatoon, the establishment of the first urban reserve in 1988 marked the beginning of addressing these historical issues formally. The 1992 Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) processes, although varied between Saskatchewan and Manitoba, signified a step towards rectifying past injustices and fostering more equitable land agreements.

Urban centers are often overlooked as spaces of decolonization. Blomley argues that

> the creation of the colonial city led not only to the dispossession of Indigenous people, but also to their continued erasure from city space (Blomley 2004, 109).

As he acknowledges the invisibilization of Indigeneity in urban centre, he adds:

> while dispossession is complete, displacement is not. Physically, symbolically, and politically, the city is often still a native place (Blomley 2004, 109).

The landscape, marked by abstract plots and boundaries continually reasserted through policing and markers, suggests that architects should advocate against their entrenchment. Integrating Indigenous voices, knowledge, and context into urban development can challenge these enforced boundaries and foster more inclusive and respectful spaces. Recognizing that “displacement is not complete” highlights the ongoing presence and rights of Indigenous peoples in urban areas, urging a rethinking of property and space that honors their enduring connection to the land.

Urban Reserves

Urban reserves are a concept that evolved out of Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) framework agreement in Saskatchewan, to reconcile the unfulfilled promises of 128 acres that each Indigenous person was entitled to in the original Treaties.

The TLE proposed: “Unfettered by previous restrictions that they could only acquire Crown land, Bands can now buy land at market value, on a willing-buyer/willing seller basis-whether it’s private land, Crown land, or urban land. This allows each band to decide how to use land as an economic investment for the future. In addition, the interest on the trust principal and any money remaining after shortfall acres are acquired can be used for Band development” (Office of the Treaty Commissioner 1992).

This agreement was a further iteration on both the 1976 Saskatchewan Formula, which had catalysed the discussion of fulfilling the promises and spirit of the Treaties, and the establishment of the first Urban Reserve in 1988. However, although new reserve land became unfettered in location, the concept of a reserve is still bound to the concept of property, isolated within colonial boundaries.

Asimakaniseekan Askiy, the first urban reserve in Canada, established through negotiations between Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, the Federal Government, Saskatoon, and Saskatchewan, highlights the importance of municipal partnerships with First Nations. When discussing the success of urban reserves, Indigenous planning and policy expert Ginger Gosnell-Myers argues that

> municipalities need to partner with First Nations […] to ensure that sewage and water can be accommodated, and that urban reserves can have community centres, schools, fire stations, and community-based services. They need to start building those relationships early on […] so that they can come out with a win-win situation (City of Saskatoon 2019).

Any discussion about public infrastructures and the development of cities raises intricate questions about development, cultural assimilation, self-determination, and sovereignty. The development of urban reserves through “Epiconic” multi-community planning aims to address these issues. The term “Epiconic,” meaning extending beyond the ordinary to create distinctive brilliance, suggests an innovative approach to planning (SREDA n.d.). For instance, the Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority, SREDA, and Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Call to Action #92 could be part of such a partnership, aiming for transformative community planning (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2021).

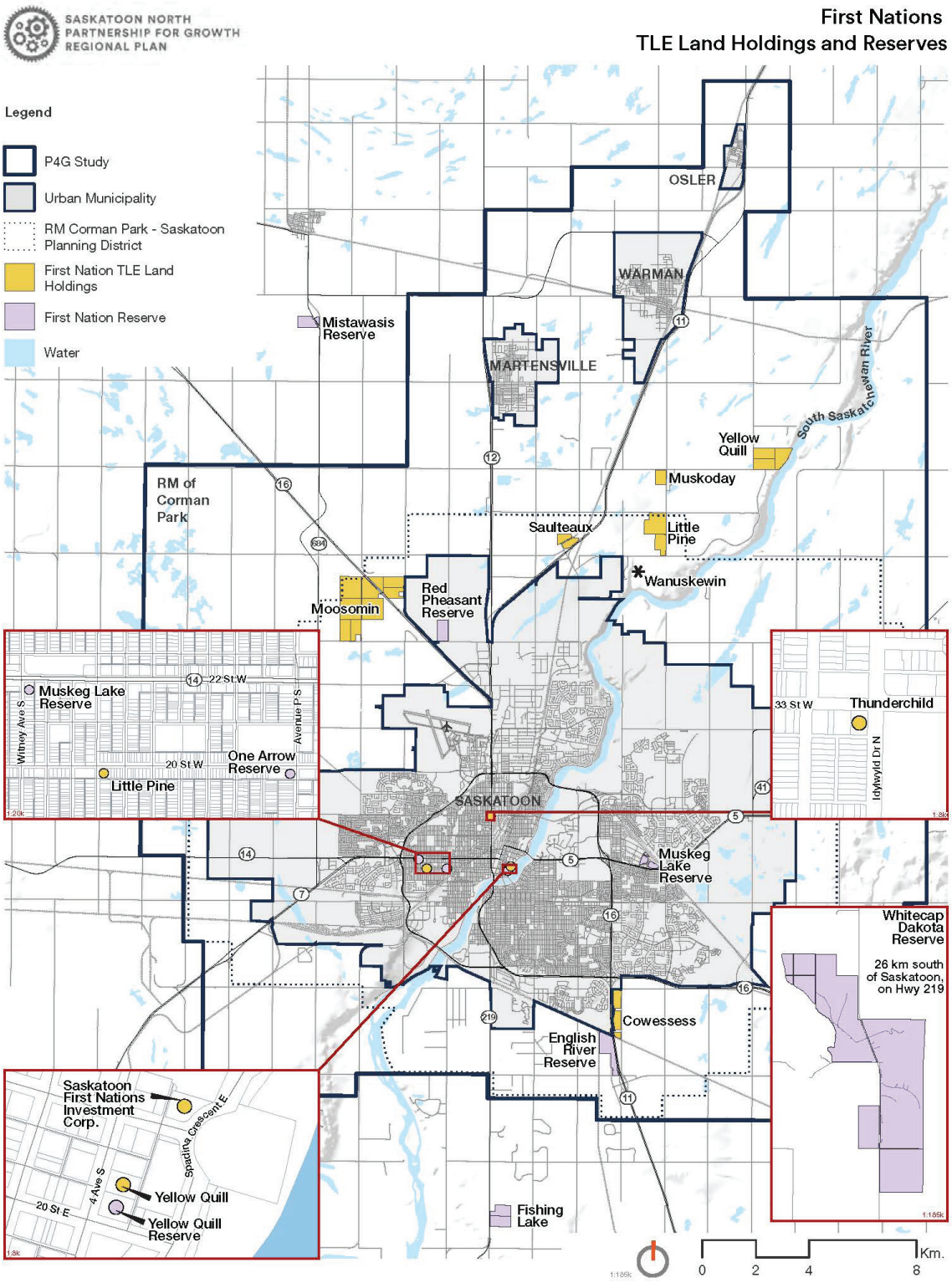


Figure 2.4 First Nation TLE Land Holdings and Reserves in the Saskatoon region (Saskatoon North Partnership for Growth n.d.).

As political economy of Indigenous-settler relations research Julie Tomiak writes:

> It is through the discourse of economic development that older discursive frames that have posited Indigenous peoples as incompatible with urbanism are re-worked. The settler state is now positing new urban reserves as modernizing agents that legitimize a delegated form of First Nation authority and land management in cities—First Nations as investors and entrepreneurs, not as sovereign rights-and title-holders (Tomiak 2017, 940).

Given the historical marginalization of reserves to the periphery, furthering the invisibilization of Indigenous presence, urban reserves have the potential to make Indigenous sovereignty more visible. Tomiak explains best the latent promise of Indigenous presence and sovereignty in cities:

> new urban reserves contribute to decolonization and transformative place-making based on First Nations' assertions of sovereignty and self-determination in various ways, including by making visible, politicizing, and reclaiming cities as Indigenous places. Contesting the settler city and its "multi-layered materiality and memory" (Matunga 2013:9) is crucially important, because, as the primary site and beneficiary of material and discursive settler investment, the city is at the heart of settler colonialism and neoliberalized capitalism in Canada (Tomiak 2017, 940).

With many communities continuing to plan urban reserves, a shift beyond basic economic development is already starting to happen, with ideas building more well-rounded and interdependent communities within and beside neighboring communities.

The Ongoing Blurring of Boundaries

Determining the appropriate approach to urban reserves is not for any one individual to decide; it is a decision for each community and nation to make independently, exercising their sovereignty. According to Canada's 2016 census, over 27,000 people in Saskatoon identified as Indigenous, representing 11.3 percent of the total population. This included 12,225 Métis and 14,430 First Nations individuals (Statistics Canada 2016). Saskatoon has been a multicultural gathering place for thousands of years,

> [b]efore the bridges and buildings of our contemporary cityscape, this land was a traditional travelling route and meeting ground for the Cree, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Métis, Dene, and Nakota Sioux peoples (Discover Saskatoon n.d.).

Nowadays, many communities travel to Saskatoon to form new relationships, maintain trust, and strengthen understanding before inviting respectful outsiders into the more intimate spaces of their community. This method emphasizes the importance of sovereignty, independence, and humanity in fostering connections and growth.

The potential of urban reserves as spaces for self-determination, coexistence, and partnership motivates this thesis project to engage with, amplify, and expand the presence and boundaries of Saskatoon's urban reserves. By exploring how these reserves can become sites for collaboration and mutual growth, the project aims to highlight their role in fostering community ties and addressing issues of cultural and spatial assimilation, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and equitable urban landscape.

Building relationships inherent in Treaties and Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) is an ongoing commitment, not a one-time solution. In Saskatoon, the leadership of Muskeg Lake Cree

Nation has met with city leaders every Christmas break for 33 years to share food, tell stories, and strengthen connections. Harry Lafond, a leader from Muskeg Lake, played a key role in creating the first urban reserve in Canada:

> We sit at the table and we share food, and we tell stories and we strengthen. […] It's absolutely necessary […] It's not an accidental thing. If you're going to live with each other, it's like a good marriage: you have to keep talking, you have to keep building and strengthening that connection (CBC News 2022).

This commitment reflects the idea that transformation in our relationships with each other and the land is crucial for broader political changes. There is a need to reintegrate

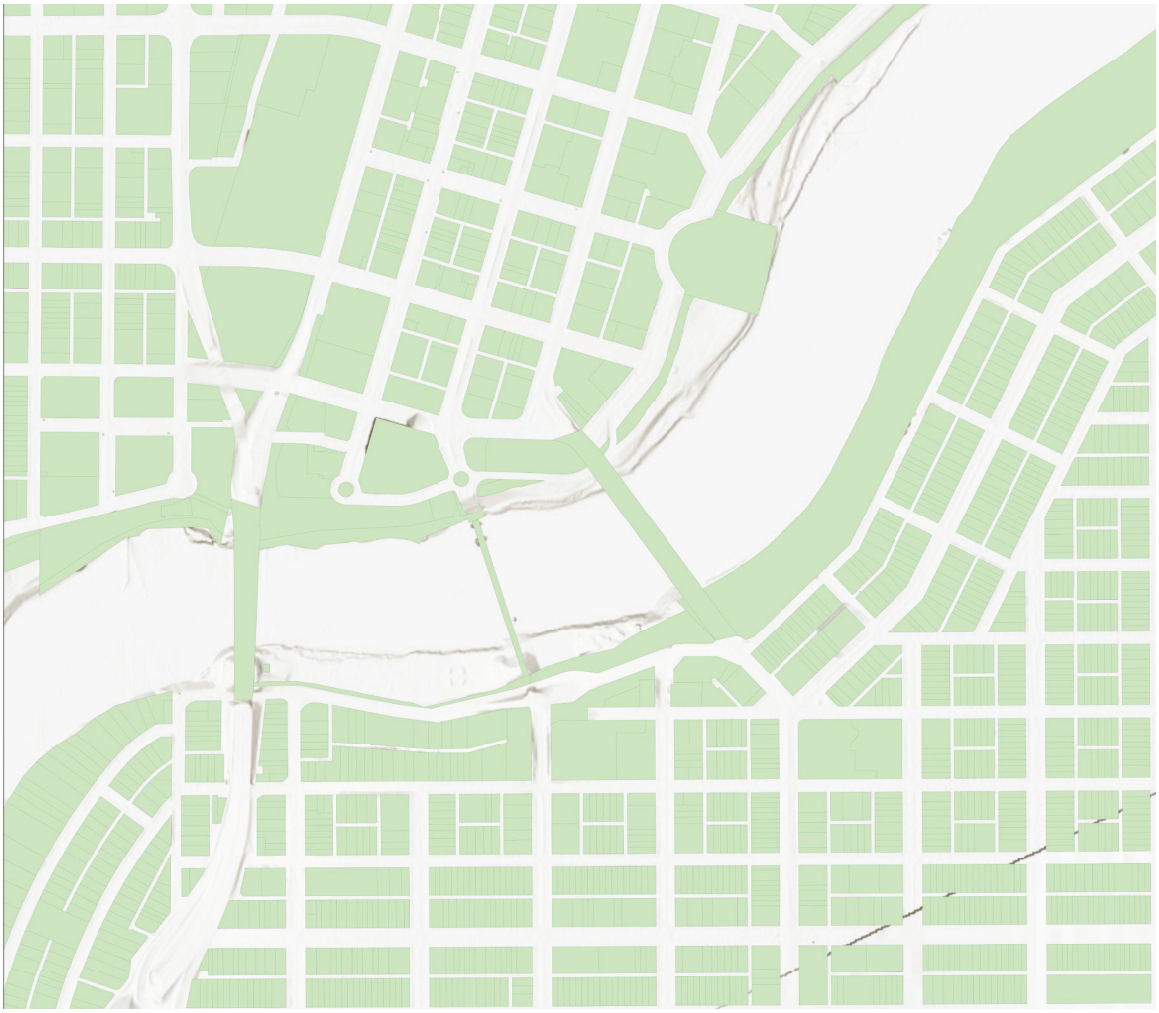


Figure 2.5 Abstracted Property Layered Over Landscape.

traditional understandings into our modern lives, recognizing those who resisted colonial property logics.

> …considering 'the kinds of transformation of the self and our relations with one another are a precondition for wider and political transformations.' There is no need to think of novel ways of interacting with land and with each other. Rather, …, there is a need to pull back into our modern lives the ways and understandings that people have been denied personhood for not succumbing to the colonial logics of property (Amrov, Betasamosake Simpson 2023, 73).

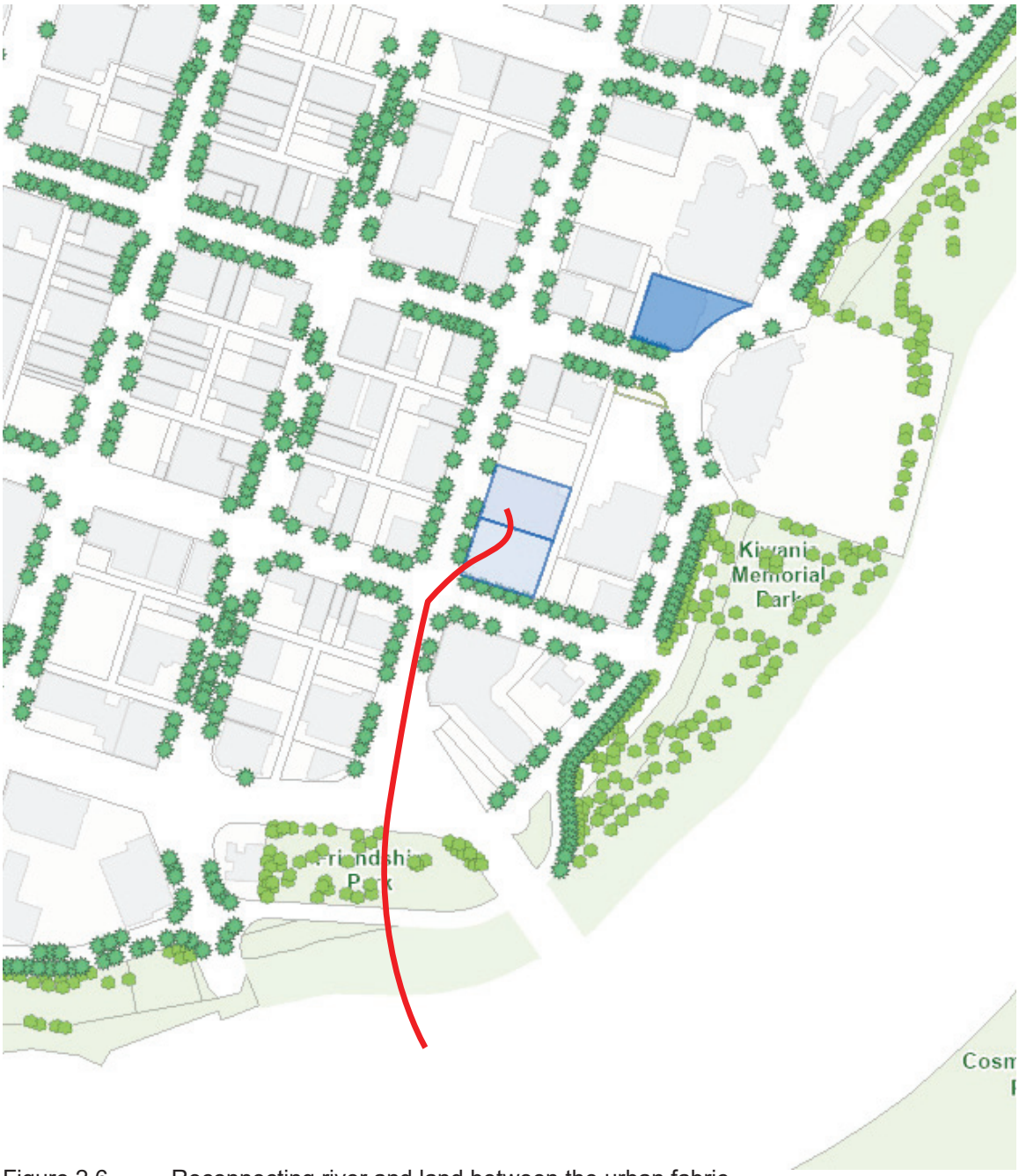
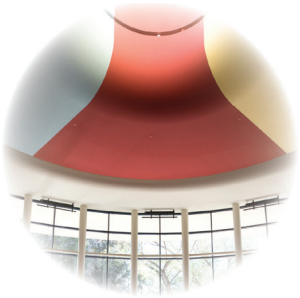


Figure 2.6 Reconnecting river and land between the urban fabric.

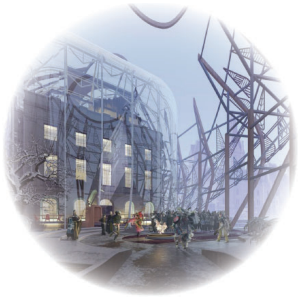
Chapter 3: Architecture Beyond Boundaries

This thesis recognizes the profound impact of Indigenous architects whose remarkable contributions have significantly enriched the field of architecture. This includes the exceptional work of individuals such as Douglas Cardinal, Wanda Dela Costa, David Fortin, Jason Surkan, Brad Pickard, Sam Lock, and Charles Olfert. The subsequent section delves into crucial insights derived from the diverse practices of Indigenous architects, offering valuable lessons for professionals within the building industry. While these insights are drawn from Indigenous architects rooted in various regions, and their projects vary in program and community focus, it is important to note that there are numerous additional insights warranting thorough attention and study within the rich practices of Indigenous architects. In this context, my aim is to curate a select few insights that can help reorient architectural practices within the settler colonial context of Saskatoon.

This chapter highlights four different buildings; the Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre in Saskatoon by Douglas Cardinal; the Wanuskewin Heritage Museum in Saskatoon by aodbt architecture; the Muscowpetung Powwow Arbour in Qu'Appelle Valley reserve by Oxbow Architecture; and the Indigenous Peoples Space in Ottawa designed by Smoke Architecture, David Fortin and Wanda Dalla Costa. Each project, through their centering of Indigenous worldviews, provide cues to strategies at envisioning what reconciliation and reciprocity can look like at the scale of architecture, which informed this thesis.



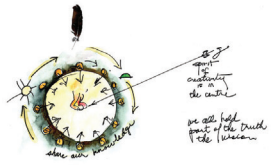
Gordon Oakes Redbear Student Center
Douglas Cardinal



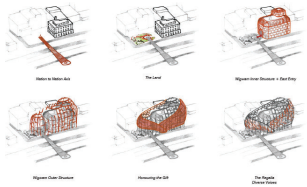
Indiginous Peoples' Space
Eladia Smoke, Wanda Dalla Costa, Winnie Ptawanakwat, David Fortin

Stories from the River
Oxbow Architecture + Jason Surkan

Wannuskewin Heritage Centre
aodbt architecture + interior design



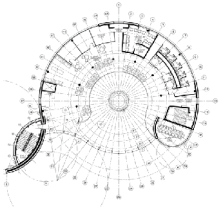
"Ultimately, it is not the architect that creates the buildings, but the client; it is their vision, their financing, and their social commitment that organically grows a built environment that reflects their projected identity. The architect gives shape to and coordinates the intricacies of the clients' visions for a building" *Douglas Cardinal*



"Our team is deliberately diverse and carefully structured for a collaborative design process." *The Project Team*

"The pavilion intended to create an eddy of calm from the flow of pedestrian traffic at River Landing, giving passers by the opportunity to rest and reflect on the river" *Oxbow*

"As the realization has occurred that, traditionally, civic and institutional spaces have not been designed for Indigenous Peoples, we feel a responsibility to extend engagements and design solutions that reflect First Nation/Metis culture into the broader project sphere so all people can be represented and feel welcome in all of our buildings." *aodbt*



Built space that supports collaboration at the heart.

Strengthening ongoing relationships, and growing together.

Building relationships and understanding to bring to future collaboration.

Strengthening ongoing relationships, and growing together.

Centering of Community | Layering Relationships | Movement Forward | Reciprocal Collaboration

Figure 3.1 Collaborative Perspectives on Indigenous Architecture.

Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre, Saskatoon

Douglas Cardinal is a Canadian architect known for his flowing organic forms and use of natural materials. Born in 1934, he is of Métis and Blackfoot heritage, which profoundly influences his architectural philosophy. Cardinal's work is characterized by a deep respect for nature and Indigenous cultures, integrating traditional knowledge with modern architectural practices. His work can be described:

> buildings employ landscape and geological imagery as metaphors [rather than the typical] architectural practice where architects are obsessed with the use of history, both ancient and modern (Malnar and Vodvarka 2013, 106).

Douglas Cardinal represents a watershed moment in Indigenous representation in Canadian architectural history with the 1989 design of the Museum of Civilization (now Canadian Museum of History) in Ottawa. Trudeau appointed Cardinal to reflect Canada's commitment to celebrating its multicultural heritage and promoting understanding between different cultural groups.

Cardinal's work is known for featuring flowing, curvilinear shapes that mimic the natural environment. He draws inspiration from the landscapes and forms found in nature, creating buildings that seem to emerge from their surroundings rather than impose upon them. When discussing the role of the architect within the community that solicitates them, he writes:

> Ultimately, it is not the architect that creates the buildings, but the client; it is their vision, their financing, and their social commitment that organically grows a built environment that reflects their projected identity. The architect gives shape to and coordinates the intricacies of the clients' visions for a building (Cardinal 2021).

The Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Center, designed by Douglas Cardinal and completed in 2016, was commissioned by the University of Saskatchewan in response to the increasing enrollment of Indigenous students. The center aims to provide essential amenities and resources while fostering cultural understanding. It houses the Aboriginal Students Centre, Indigenous Student Council, and Native Studies Department, all centered around a ceremonial and social gathering space. The circular design of the building symbolizes healing, knowledge, and equality, reflecting Indigenous values and worldviews (Cardinal 2021).

Figure 3.2 Creativity and gathering at the centre, with visual connection to nature (Cardinal 2021).

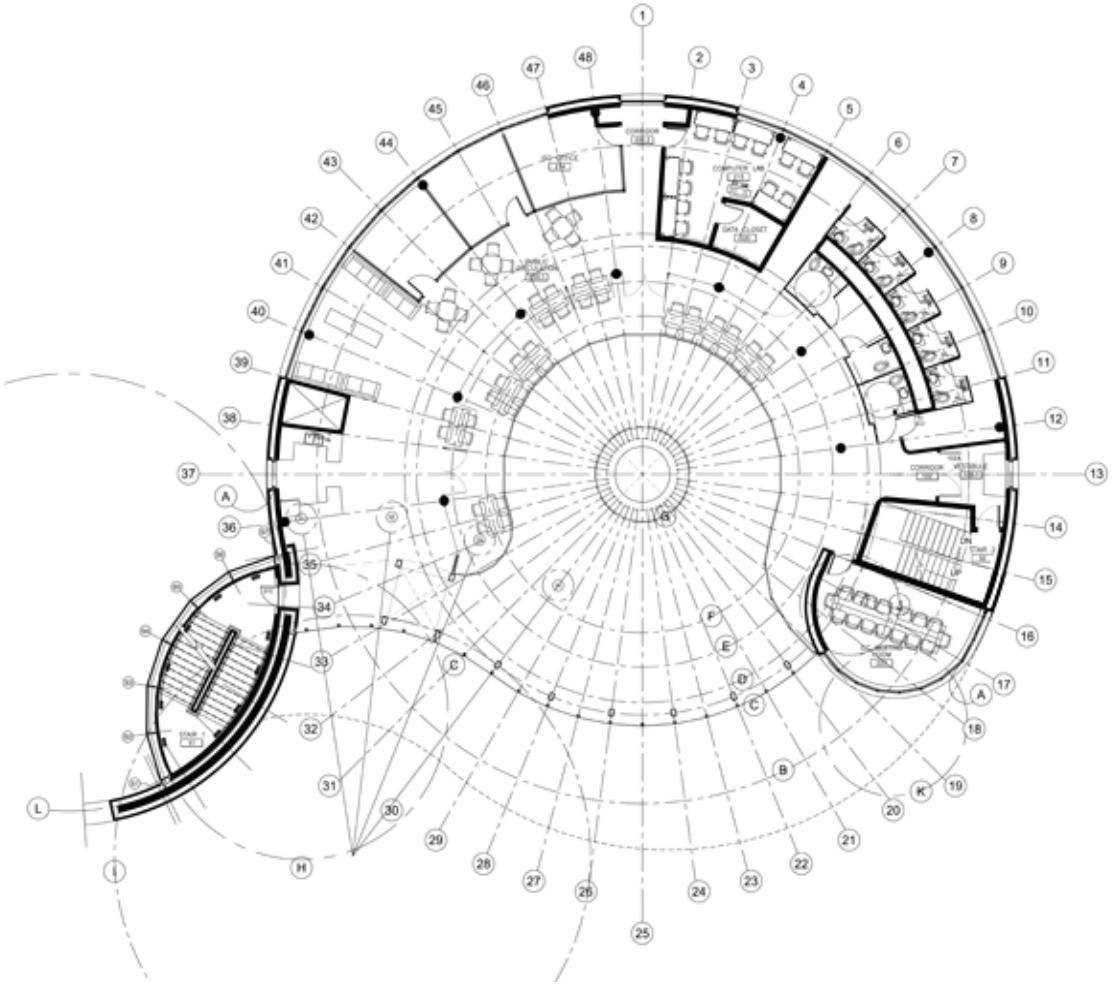


Figure 3.3 Building radiating from central gathering and learning space (Cardinal 2021).

The building serves as the cornerstone for all Indigenous ceremonies on the university campus. The central gathering space, which forms both the symbolic and systemic core of the building's layout, anchors each department to it. This design functions as a reminder to Indigenous people of their cultural foundations and introduces non-Indigenous people to these worldviews.

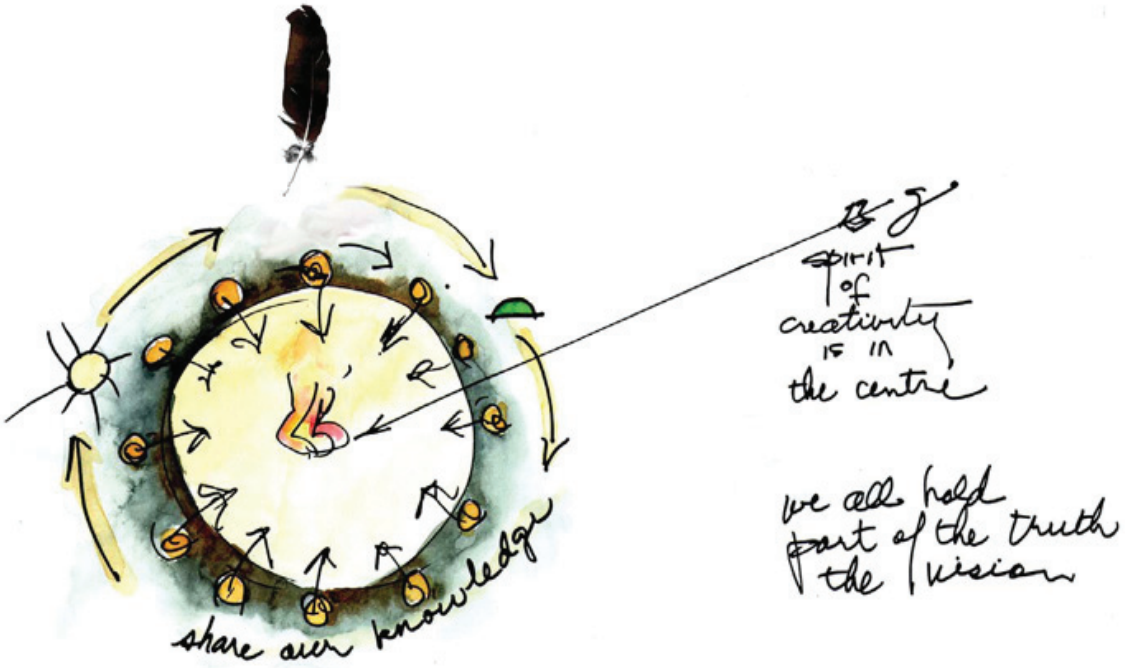


Figure 3.4 Creativity. (Cardinal 2021)

A significant local project by Cardinal is the Rossignol Elementary Community School is situated in the Métis community of Ile-a-la-Crosse (Sakitawak in Michif) along the historic Churchill River system in Northern Saskatchewan completed in the 1960s. The school's design is noteworthy not only for its formal and material expression but also for its inclusive design process. Cardinal's approach involved extensive participation from students, parents, and school faculty throughout the planning stages, ensuring the school's responsiveness to local needs. Commenting on Cardinal's "centroidal" spatial approach, Malnar and Vodvarka write:

> Teachers and students prefer the sense of community engendered by points of visual focus, and appreciate an architectural scheme different from both existing school and reserve conventions." Cardinal also structured the bid packages to allow a degree of local, nonskilled construction by altering specifications, drawings, and construction management (Malnar and Vodvarka 2013, 106).

Figure 3.5 World Views (Cardinal 2021)

Wanuskewin Heritage Museum and Park, Saskatoon

The architectural firm aodbt – architecture + interior design, based in Saskatoon and established in 1985, comprises a team of 48 architects, interior designers, technologists, and construction contract administrators. The firm situates its role:

> As the realization has occurred that, traditionally, civic and institutional spaces have not been designed for Indigenous Peoples, we feel a responsibility to extend engagements and design solutions that reflect First Nation/Metis culture into the broader project sphere so all people can be represented and feel welcome in all of our buildings" (aodbt n.d.).

Wanuskewin Heritage Park is located on the western ridge of the Opimihaw Creek Valley, a historic buffalo jump. Completed in 2016, this design integrates with the land to reflect the vision of Plains First Nation Elders, combining historical elements with modern design. The original 1992 building included an exhibit hall, gathering space, and a restaurant, symbolizing the buffalo. In 2013, the park expanded to include modern exhibits, education space, and a gallery for First Nations arts. The firm followed a process of:

> Community engagement, particularly with Elders, was crucial in creating spaces for reflection, storytelling, and cultural activities. The return of the bison herd in 2020 highlighted the land's historical significance, reinforcing the park's educational mission (aodbt n.d.).

Figure 3.6 Wanuskewin nestled between landscapes (aodbt n.d.).

Figure 3.7 Reconnecting to historic land use, paths, and stories (aodbt n.d.).

The initial project of Wanuskewin Heritage Park, completed in 1992, includes an indoor lecture theatre, exhibit hall, ceremonial gathering space, restaurant, and meeting rooms. The building's design symbolized the head and body of the buffalo, a significant food source and sacred animal for the Plains First Nation people. The exterior was clad in a weather-resistant cedar product to endure the elements over the years, with curtain walls to make the building feel as open as possible to the surrounding landscape (aodbt n.d.).

However, collaboration can be messy and the preliminary design did not seamlessly lead to a finished product:

> when the First Nations representatives were presented with the concept, there was profound silence until Henry Beaudry of the Mosquito First Nation and a Second World War veteran, quipped that it looked like a bunker. They wanted something circular, like a tipi. The message was not lost on architect Charles Olfert and his colleagues, who came up with a new building concept with four cardinal points that provided a striking profile when observed from any direction (Weiser 2021).

Embracing collaboration and reciprocity creates opportunities for learning about each other, and create a more open and insightful built environment.

In 2013, aodbt was re-engaged for the next phase of Wanuskewin's development. Additional space for modern exhibits, education, and enhanced gathering spaces were identified as necessary. In consultation with elders, the community leaders highlighted a growing First Nations arts community, leading to the development of a dedicated gallery space. The new black box gallery was designed to resemble a baby bison, maintaining the original northern plains style with cedar cladding. Community engagement was extensive, involving stakeholders and Elders in the planning process, ensuring the design respected traditional elements and provided functionality for staff (aodbt n.d.).

From Stories along the River to Muscowpetung Powwow Arbour, Saskatoon and Qu'Appelle Valley Reserve

Oxbow is a diverse multidisciplinary studio, building collaborative relationships with communities and institutions, building knowledge and expertise in architecture, planning and landscape design in the context of the prairies. Believing "that a collective perspective is key to the success of every project" (Oxbow n.d.). This approach informs their smaller interventions in public space and larger community-led gathering spaces. For both of these projects, Oxbow also collaborated with other architects, working with Jason Surukan on Stories from the River, and with Richard Kroeker on the Muscowpetung Powwow Arbour.

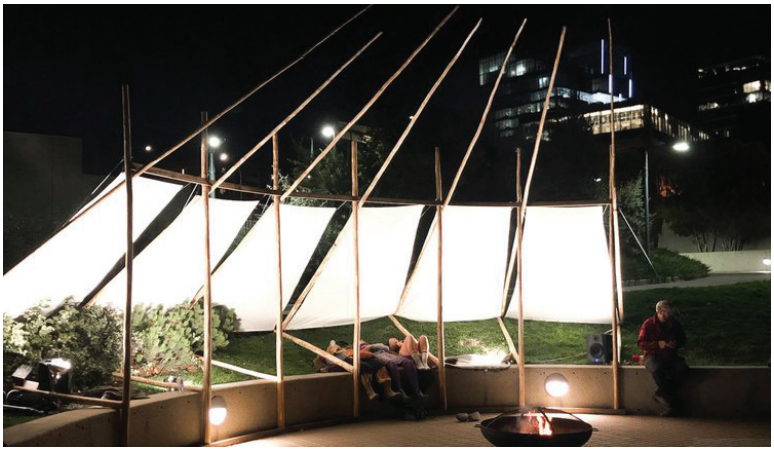


Figure 3.8 Engaging in Stories along the river; collaboration with Oxbow and Jason Surukan (Oxbow n.d.).

The pavilion creates space for storytelling and gathering, within the public space of the river shore. Assembled by hand from familiar material to welcome community involvement in its creation. The Oxbow website describes the project as:

> a temporary storytelling pavilion situated on the bank of the South Saskatchewan River. The structure, informed by traditional Métis ways of making, served as a quiet setting to listen to stories of the river. The pavilion intended to create an eddy of calm from the flow of pedestrian traffic at River Landing, giving passers by the opportunity to rest and reflect on the river; its importance to our community, its history and its future (Oxbow n.d.).

This approach to collaboration as an ongoing process that, not only spans the entire architectural process of a project, but carries forward into future projects. It builds the trust in the reciprocal relationship between community and architect to further encourage communities to voice their wants, needs, and visions for places in community space. Though collaborating with, listening to, community voices, Oxbow's design could bring together the intentions and vision for the project.

> Its purpose is to strengthen traditions, celebrate culture and encourage community members to pass along knowledge to future generations. The building design was established with community and band leadership consultation, most notably with local indigenous leader and knowledge keeper, Jeff Cappo. Community engagement was critical to the refinement of the arbour's function, size and the development of a unifying design intention that ties all aspects of the structural design and architectural expression (Oxbow n.d.).

This relationship of collaboration not only influenced the schematic planning of the project, but continued through to the detail level, and approach of the structural system. The firm proposed to implement "a circular geometry to balance the loads, reinforcing the importance of the circle in indigenous culture" (Oxbow n.d.).

Figure 3.9 Celebrating culture and collaboration (Oxbow n.d.).

Figure 3.10 The structure of community celebration (Oxbow n.d.).

The Muscowpetung Powwow Arbour pavilion not only reconnects to, but reinforces the concurrent and co-existing relationships between people, land, and material of the prairies.

> The First Nations of the Great Plains built using lightweight material components as efficiently as possible. The arbour uses local timber and a system of cables that works like the stored energy of a drawn bow-string and the tensioning elements of drum heads. The lightweight system of spanning components avoids bending moments, and allows for on-site assembly by the local community (Oxbow n.d.).

The Indigenous Peoples Space, Ottawa

The Indigenous Peoples space combines the former site of the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa and an adjacent bank, connecting the space in between. The project team brought together David Fortin, Wanda Dalla Costa, Eladia Smoke, and Elder Winnie Pitawanakwat, collaborating to build the vision of the project.

> Our team has Métis, Anishinaabe, Plains Cree, and Inuit representatives, with voices from youths to Elders. Our team is deliberately diverse and carefully structured for a collaborative design process. The process is just as important as the final project; this is how we build a rich understanding of place, embody Indigenous heritage, and welcome visitors from the local community and abroad (Fortin et al. 2019).

Through the iterations and discussions of this process of collaboration, common forms and goals were devised by the designer so that the building could that speak to both local Indigenous communities and visitors from abroad.

Figure 3.11 Bringing perspectives together through iteration (Fortin et al. 2019).

This site, in what we now call Ottawa, is on the traditional, unceded territories of the Algonquin Nation. A collaboration between the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and the Métis National Council, partnered with the project team to develop a model to inspire the long-term vision for the Indigenous Peoples Space.

> The future building will effectively represent First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation peoples' cultures and histories in such a way that Indigenous governments, institutions and organizations can conduct Nation to Nation business and further our self determination. We welcome you to join us by sharing your thoughts and ideas for building the future (Fortin et al. 2019).

The project team developed the key design drivers of the project, focusing on the relationships: the nation to nation relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canada, the sacred relationship to the land, the Wigwam inner structure that shelters the existing buildings, the Wigwam outer structure that defines a new east-facing entry that opens new beginnings, honouring the gift of unity, and the bring together of diverse voices and regalia that represent and welcome Indigenous peoples from across Canada.

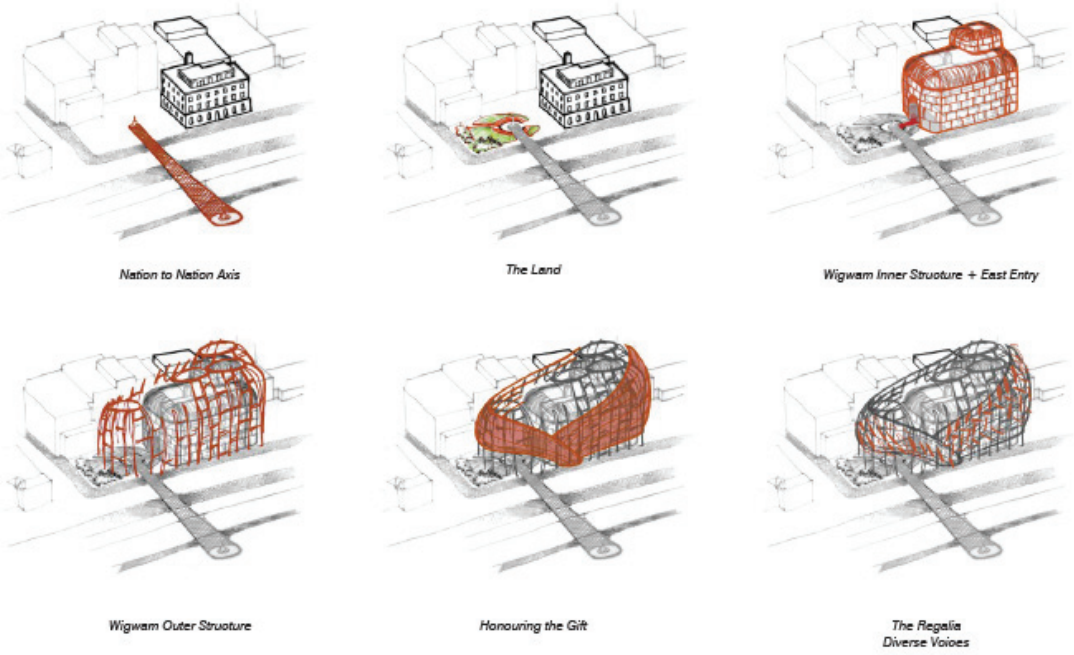


Figure 3.12 Layering relationships of connection and façade. (Fortin et al. 2019).

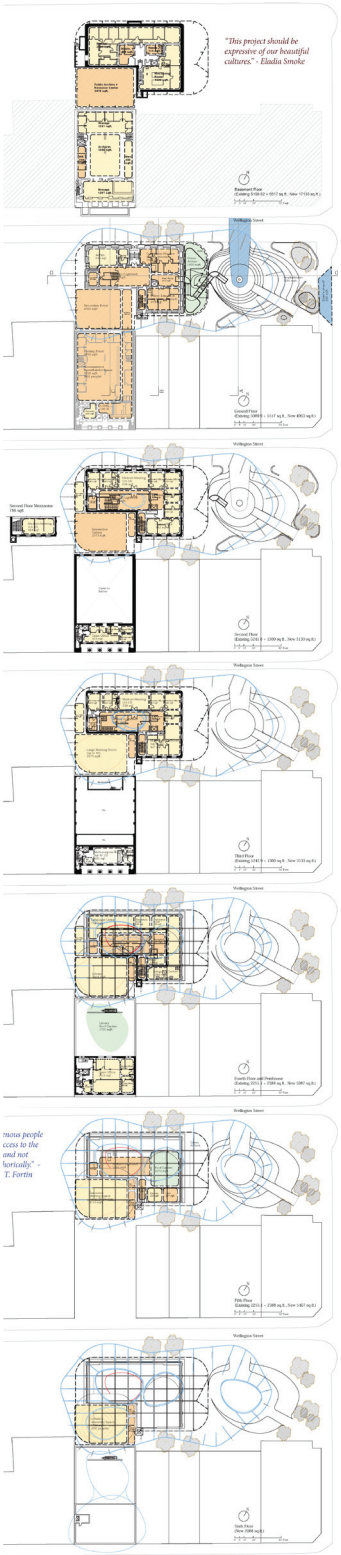


Figure 3.13 Blurring existing and new spaces; interior and exterior. (Fortin et al. 2019).

The project was informed by the voices of Indigenous architects and Algonquin communities:

> As Indigenous architects, we recognize the potential narrative of this historic site, and its challenges. This is a vision of Indigenous values, honouring our Elders and the Algonquin Peoples. We design by listening and working collaboratively toward an expression that celebrates Indigenous presence (Fortin et al. 2019).

Urban space is Indigenous space, and also treaty space. Not only does it highlight the complex history of our built space and relationship to the land, the Indigenous Peoples Space also builds up new relationships, on a nation to nation scale, through continual equal/equitable partnerships based on reciprocity. It is a lesson that is vital to the complex existence of all treaty people, including architects, in Canada.

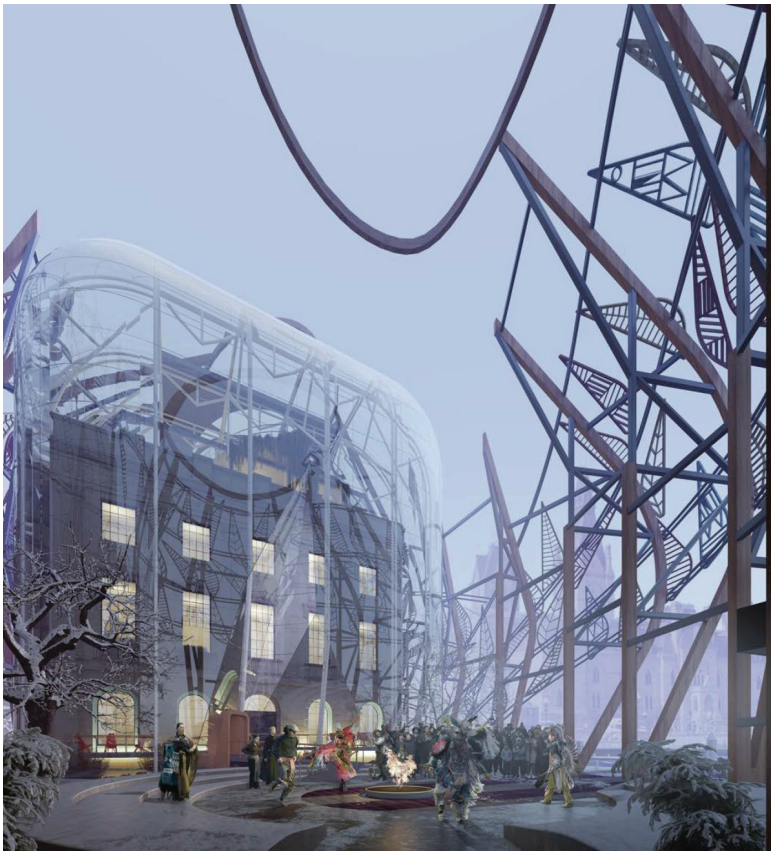


Figure 3.14 Indigenous Space in the heart of Ottawa (Fortin et al. 2019).

Chapter 4: Community Architectural Conversations

The concept of Reconciliation has been more prominently subject to public conversation with the worldwide rise of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC), which is typically a formal body established by a government or organization to investigate and address past human rights abuses, particularly in the context of conflict or repression. The primary goal of a TRC is to promote healing, justice, and reconciliation in societies that have experienced widespread trauma and division. TRCs typically involve gathering testimonies from victims and perpetrators, conducting investigations, documenting findings, and making recommendations for reparations, institutional reforms, and measures to prevent future abuses. The most famous TRC is perhaps the one established in South Africa after the end of apartheid which was officially launched in 1995 and operated until 1998.

In the context of Canada, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established in 2008 as part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. It operated from 2008 to 2015 and was tasked with documenting the history and lasting impacts of the Indian residential school system on Indigenous peoples in Canada, as well as promoting reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians. Published in 2015, a final report includes calls to action aimed at addressing the legacy of residential schools and advancing reconciliation efforts (Truth and Reconciliation Commission 2021).

Figure 4.1 Tools of Collaboration in Architecture.

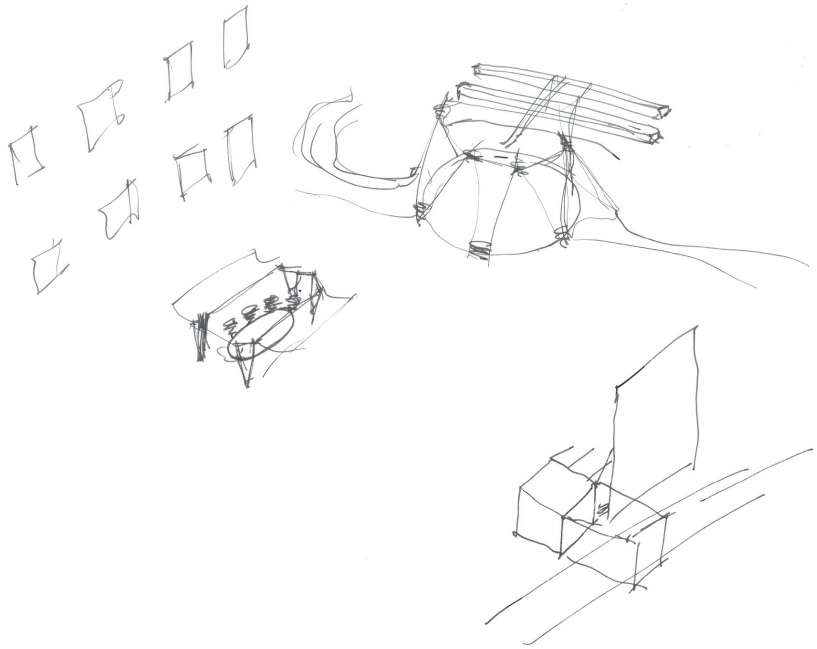


Figure 4.2 Places of Collaboration in Community.

To this effect, this fourth chapter delves into the principles and practices of community-oriented design, emphasizing the importance of inclusive consultations. It examines various strategies and tools for effectively engaging with communities to ensure their needs and perspectives are integrated into the design process. This chapter aims to highlight best practices and provide a comprehensive toolkit for architects and designers to foster genuine collaboration and create spaces that reflect and serve the communities they inhabit.

Participatory Design

Reconciliation is an inherently participatory, and an ongoing process. Architecture, the role of the architect bears a responsibility to extend this process to our shared and built environment.

Public interest design methods can act as the base of this participatory methodology. While a Master's thesis is constrained by time limits and measures of success on the outcomes of a design, this thesis instead acts as a foundation to consider alternative tools and strategies for architects engaged in their communities. This thesis not only asks what architects can bring to the table, but also how can they bring their expertise to enable a continuous, respectful, relational and reciprocal participatory design. Historically, the architecture profession too rarely fostered spaces for shared visions of the community and given agency and power back to community members, and instead imposed designs and decisions from afar. For this reason, this thesis envisions tools that are approachable, portable, and encourage collaboration, from incipient cognitive mapping to needs identification and this, at every stage of

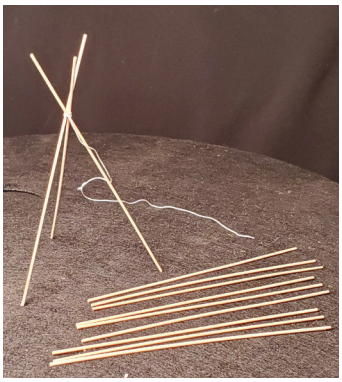


Figure 4.4 Pre-scaled 1:50 Model Material that can be brought into community.

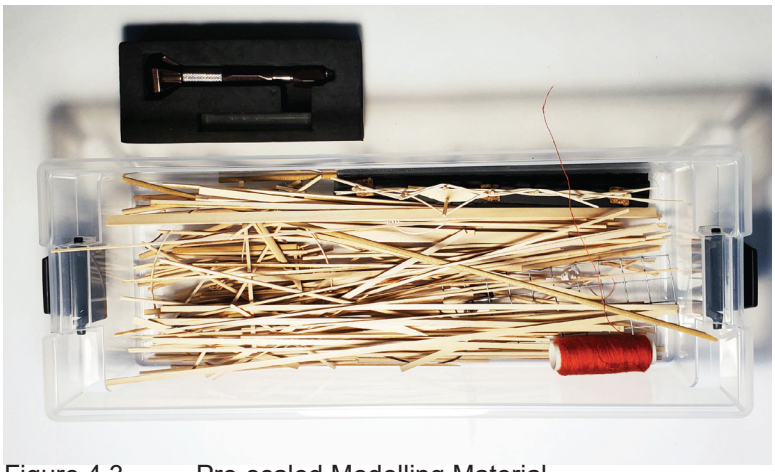


Figure 4.3 Pre-scaled Modelling Material.

the design process. These approachable and portable tools can be simple sketch paper with markers and pens, scaled maps and plans, wooden pieces, pre-scaled and ranging from 1:200 for general organization and planning, to 1:50 for exploring material and assembly as small models and coloured paper cut to scalable sizes, but can be developed further into a kit of parts to assemble and re-assemble and test ideas with communities.

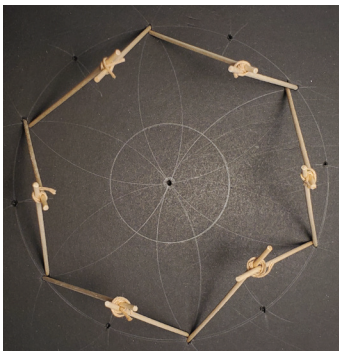


Figure 4.5 Using no glue, keeps models adaptable and open for input.

This thesis methodology and approach is less focused on what clear outcomes are, and more on what ideas, conversations, decisions, and opportunities they enable within a community. Setting the role of an architect as enabler, translator, and collaborator, who shares their knowledge with communities to work towards community goals, this methodology proposes to put the tools of the architects at the service of communities. Thus, the final ‘project’ that this thesis presents is a series of options and iterations, testing ideas, materials, representations, and how they can foster participatory design in communities at the scale of the design table and at the scale of the neighbourhood.

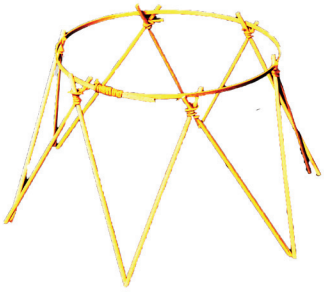


Figure 4.6 Community can shape the vision of built space.

Design and Community

Working for Indigenous communities requires moving beyond abstract legal framings such as “client” or “user” and instead engaging with people directly.

> The definition of programming in the landscape is not simply a delineation of space but a reduction of possibility (Fortin and Blackwell 2022, 188).

Figure 4.7 Workable Base for modelling.

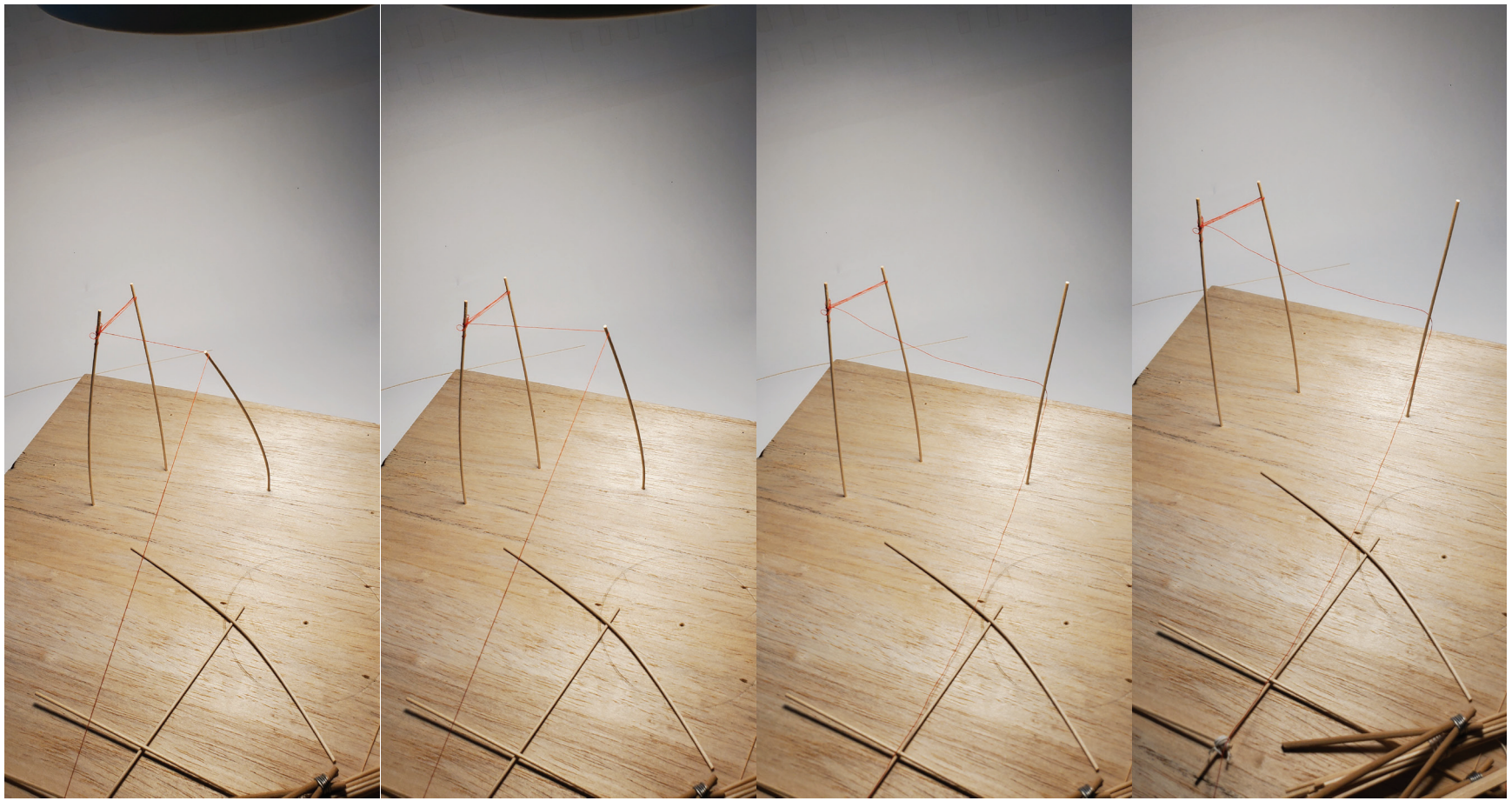
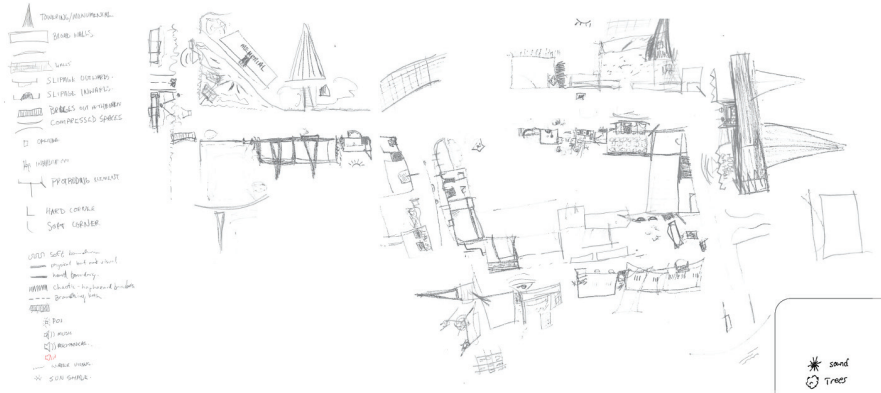
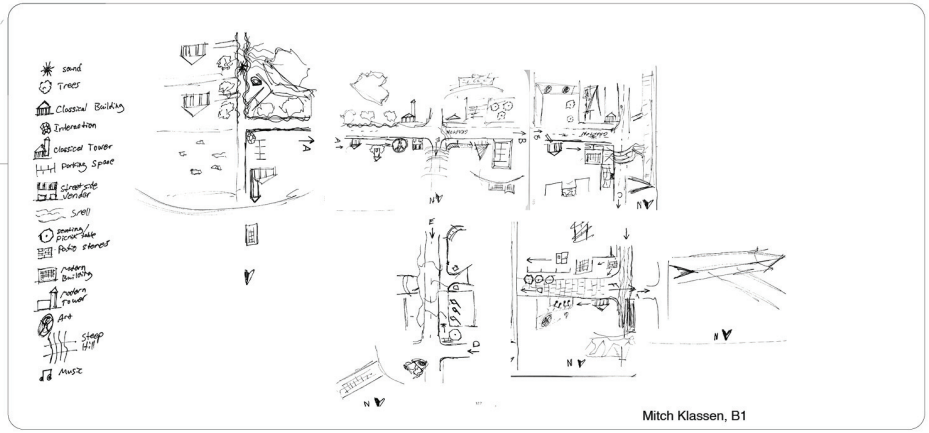


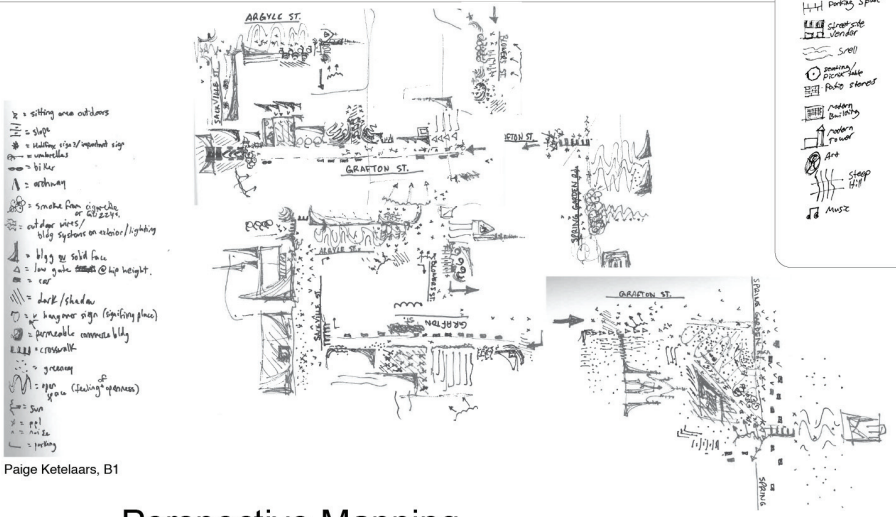
Figure 4.8 Weaving and intertwining flexible connections that open opportunities for iteration, play, and collaboration with new perspectives.



Branden Schick, M5



Mitch Klassen, B1



Paige Ketelaars, B1

Perspective Mapping

Collaborative B1-M5 Charette

Figure 4.9 Perspective Mapping Design Charette with B1 students.

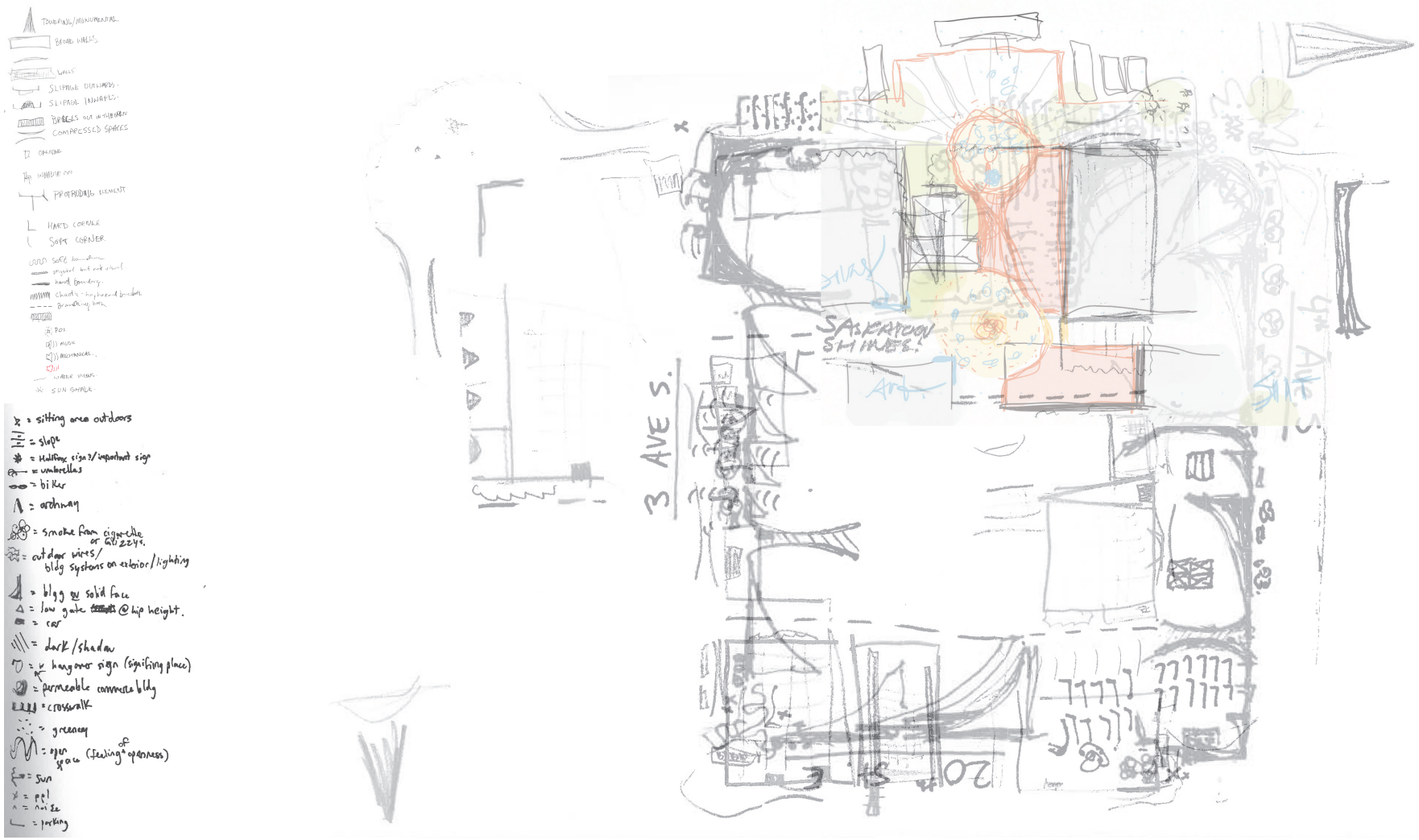


Figure 4.10 Overlapping the Perspective Mapping Charette with B1 students.

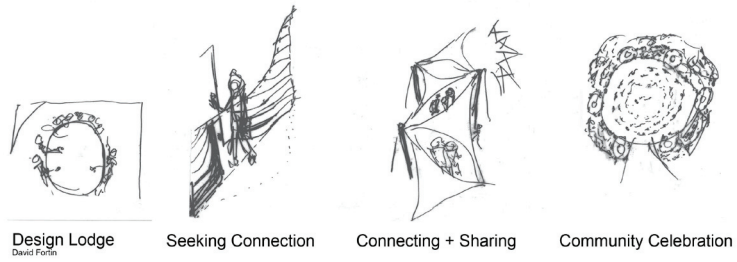


Figure 4.11 Building Reciprocal Relationships.

It emphasizes the importance of considering human beings' capacities and the landscape's plural potentials. Architect Scott Kempt's approach includes fast drawing and visual recording to facilitate collective thinking. He emphasizes that while small design elements like colored squares are part of the collective design process, they should not limit community input. His method involves working with communities in all aspects of design, focusing on the building's spirit and functionality. An example of this approach is illustrated on figure 4.12.

A more formalized approach is the SEED (Social Economic Environmental Design) methodology. It is a structured yet flexible approach to community engagement that includes community engagement and preliminary outreach, identifying critical issues, goal defining, research, benchmarking, performance measures, timeline, documentation, and reflection. This scaffold ensures that the design process adapts to the community's needs and facilitates a meaningful, collaborative approach.

To develop architecture in collaboration with the community, an architect must engage in a two-way dialogue, translating ideas through open communication. This involves designing structures that not only meet functional requirements but also reflect the community's vision of how the building should

Figure 4.12 Community Participation in Drawing with Scott Kemp (Lee 2020).

look, feel, and embody its spirit. This process aligns with the design principles advocated by Douglas Cardinal and David Fortin, emphasizing the importance of understanding and integrating community perspectives into architectural practice.

Thinking about the objects and models, as design tools rather than polished products, I explored approaches to modelling that encourages and facilitates participation. I propose strategies that weave together an assembly from a kit of pre-scaled model materials and a material negotiation that connects the models without glue, encouraging the idea that they are unfinished and open to evolve through further discussion and adapt to include future perspectives.

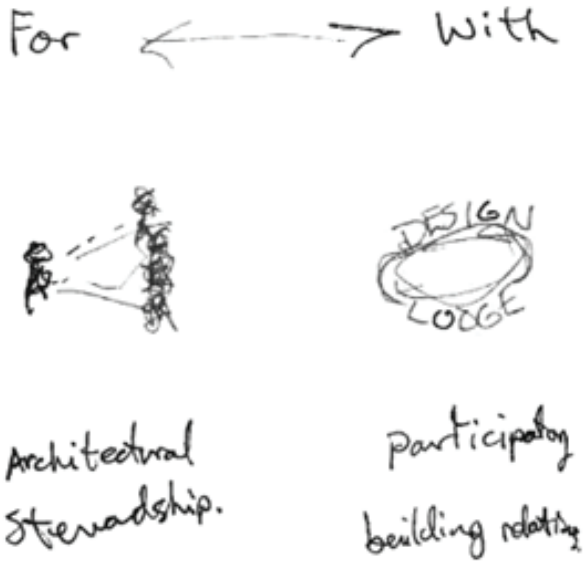


Figure 4.13 Range of engagement with community.

Community engagement should be viewed as a flexible approach that adapts to the specific needs and timelines of projects. When architects partner with communities, it is crucial to bring open ears to listen and share their own knowledge and experience, rather than imposing as experts. Material approaches must vary based on community needs, accommodating diverse groups and environments. Examples like the Muscowpetung and Wanuskewin projects illustrate the range of possibilities when considering different communities, approaches, and programs, ensuring that buildings relate to their surroundings and welcome all.

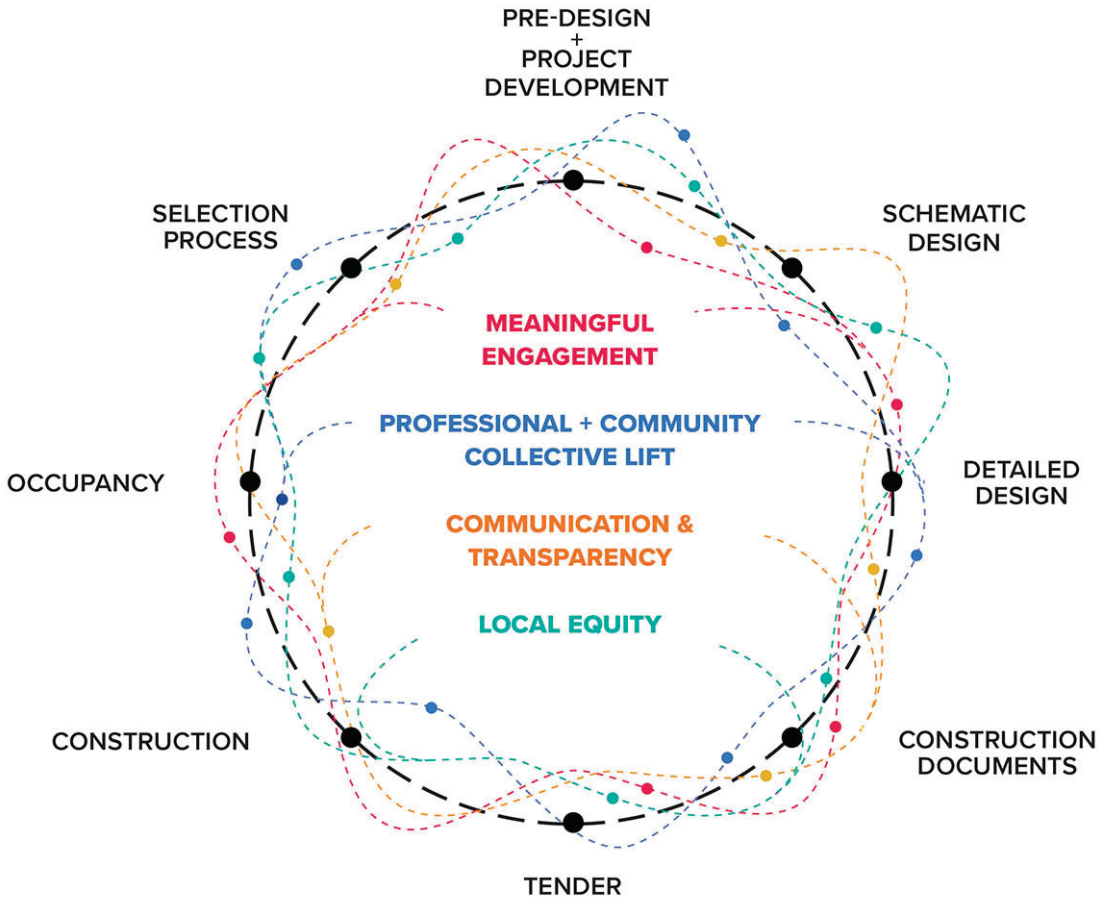


Figure 4.11 Developing professional responsibility and awareness when working with Indigenous communities (Lam et al. 2022).

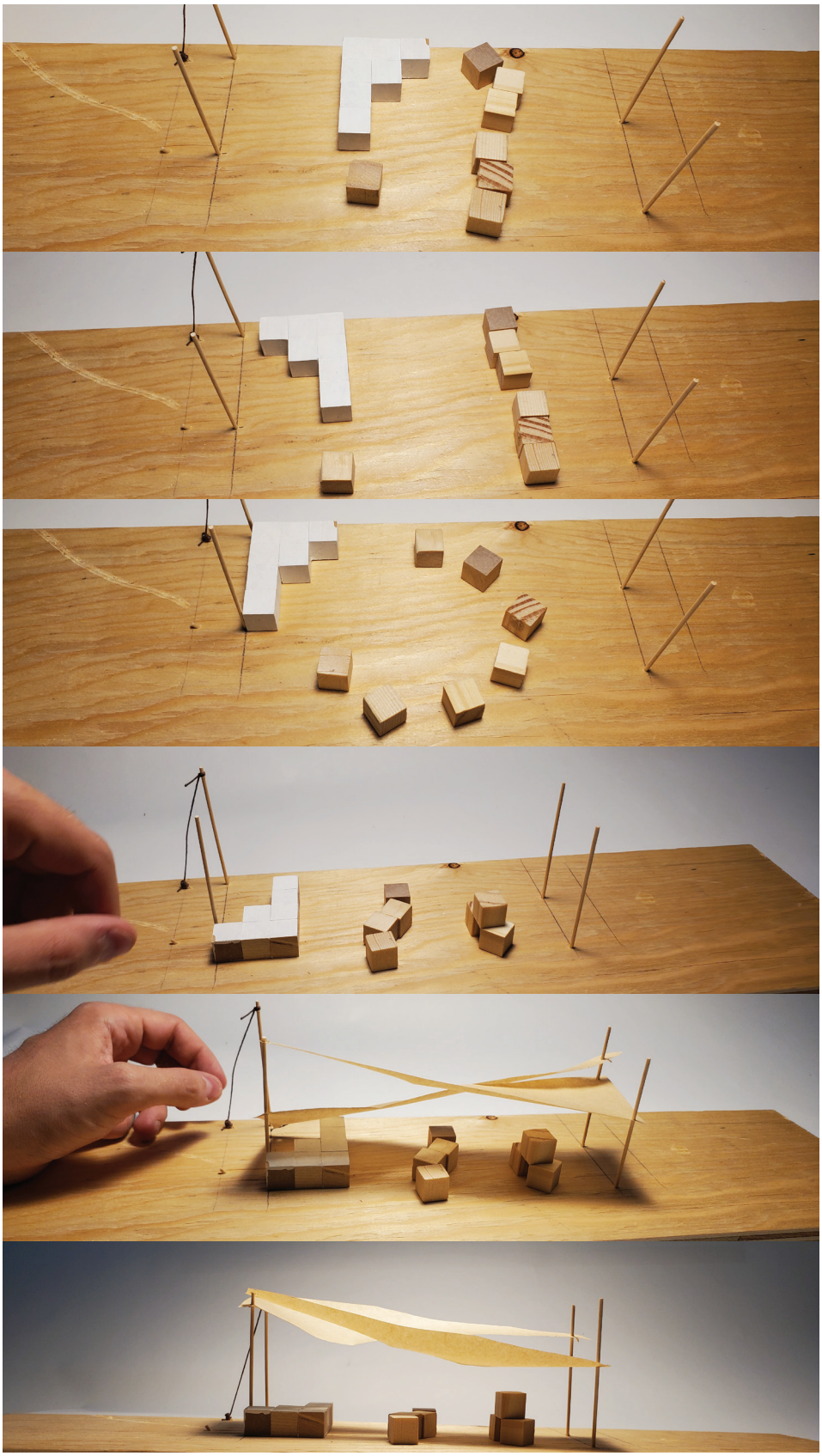


Figure 4.14 Adaptable Iterations of the Market Space.

Chapter 5: Boundaries, Design Beyond Liminality

Boundaries, both constructed barriers and abstract lines, are often imposed onto place as a tool of colonialism that disconnect people and place. They serve administration and control, property regimes, land commodification and as a result damage relationships, and dispossess communities. Simple acts such as walking across or planting on these lands are radical transgressions of colonial boundaries, which can reignite relationships and start to redefine boundaries as places. These actions initiate conversations that can foster spaces encouraging reciprocity among people, without generalizing or undermining their independence. This chapter explores how design can subvert and transgress colonial boundaries.

Blurring Boundaries

Numerous post-colonial scholars have dispelled the terra nullius narrative that when European colonist arrived in Canada, land was empty and used by no one, or the still common rhetoric of land being unproductive. Theorizing on the idea of urban constellations, Andrea Kahn argued “no site is ever empty,” (2005, 292). She adds that:

> At once a concept and a process, urban constellations blur the line between context and site by demarcating site interactions across multiple fields of urban operation (Burns and Kahn 2005, 294).

No boundary is fully defined; and when they are bluntly imposed, boundaries divide, isolate, oversimplify, and abstract reality.

Figure 5.1 Abstraction of Property

Figure 5.2 Movement disconnected from abstracts

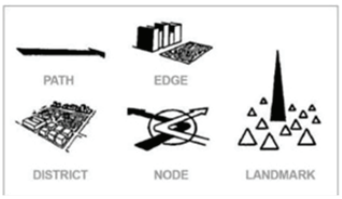


Figure 5.3 Cognitive Symbols (Lynch 1960)

Boundaries influence the understanding and perception of land as abstract commodifications of space, taking physical form only when reinforced by the built environment.

Boundaries are defined by the community or people using the space, but they shift perceptions based on who is interacting with them, either expanding horizons or constricting existence within the community, by either reinforcing imposed aberrations or by connecting and creating spaces.

Sites are full of both material and social connections, contested political histories, building up the overlapping and interwoven relationship with and understanding of place that any architectural project exists, and are another voice in the discussion of collaborative design.

In rigid built environments that interrupt relationships between land and people,

> [u]sers are not expected to give anything back to the landscape; putting trash in a receptacle is perhaps the most that is expected of them (Fortin and Blackwell 2022, 189).

Disconnected from the ongoing cycles and relationships of landscape, creating a planar boundary from these reciprocal

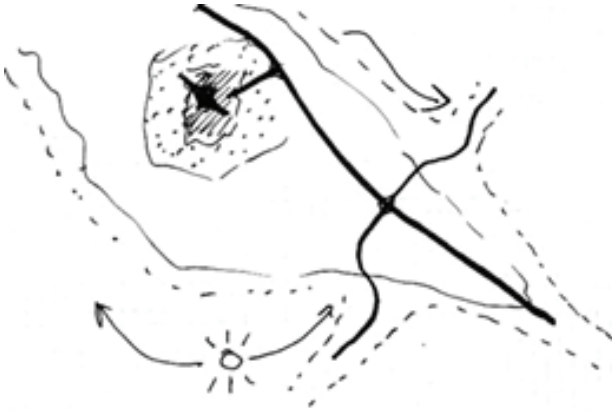


Figure 5.4 Layered Boundaries beyond Site

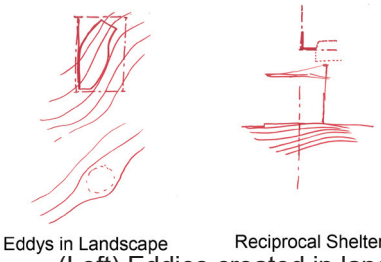


Figure 5.5 (Left) Eddies created in landscape for gathering, (right) Reciprocal relationships of shelter.

relationships, the current approach to design of built environments remains focused on abstractions rather than giving a voice to the land and its inhabitants. It is important to highlight the the human and non-human communities that make up the fluid, overlapping spaces of the river valley in Saskatoon. In contrast with dividing boundaries, the reciprocal

> landscape is impossible in the language of use. 'Rather than exchange and reciprocity being thought of as closing a loop, conceptually, the driver of reciprocity is to extend the relationship beyond a two-dimensional circle to that of an eternal spiral of reciprocity. The parties collectively push the boundaries of reciprocity together, forever.' Dara Kelly, relationship-based economies (Fortin and Blackwell 2022, 189).

Our shared spaces should be inherently reciprocal.

Façade and Function

Figure 5.6 Weaving walls start discussions around boundary.

The uses of symbolism and functionalism in architecture manifest in different ways, with symbolism often serving public purposes and functionalism acting as the backbone or underlying structure. By incorporating various elements that overlap, layer, and open, architects create different porosities and relationships that respond to and integrate spaces both within and outside structures. Facades play a crucial role in this dynamic, affording both privacy and openness, and establishing connections with the community, the program within the building, and the surrounding neighborhoods and city.

Figure 5.7 Heterotopic between-spaces formed by reciprocal relationships.

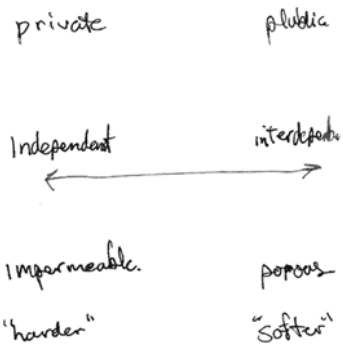


Figure 5.8 Spectrum of relationships in built space.

Lastly, Kevin Lynch remind us of the crucial role between place, meaning and memory, he argues for

> an environment which is not simply well organized, but poetic and symbolic as well… By appearing as a remarkable and well-knit place, the city could provide a ground for the clustering and organization of these meanings and associations. Such a sense of place in itself enhances every human activity that occurs there and encourages the deposit of a memory trace (Lynch 1960, 119).

Between Land, Material, and People

Figure 5.9 is an 'epistemic object' exercise that explores the flow between the material from the land to the built environment branching out as a tangent of the natural cycles. It evokes opening up, or reconnecting the public spaces of Saskatoon's grid to the landscape of the river.

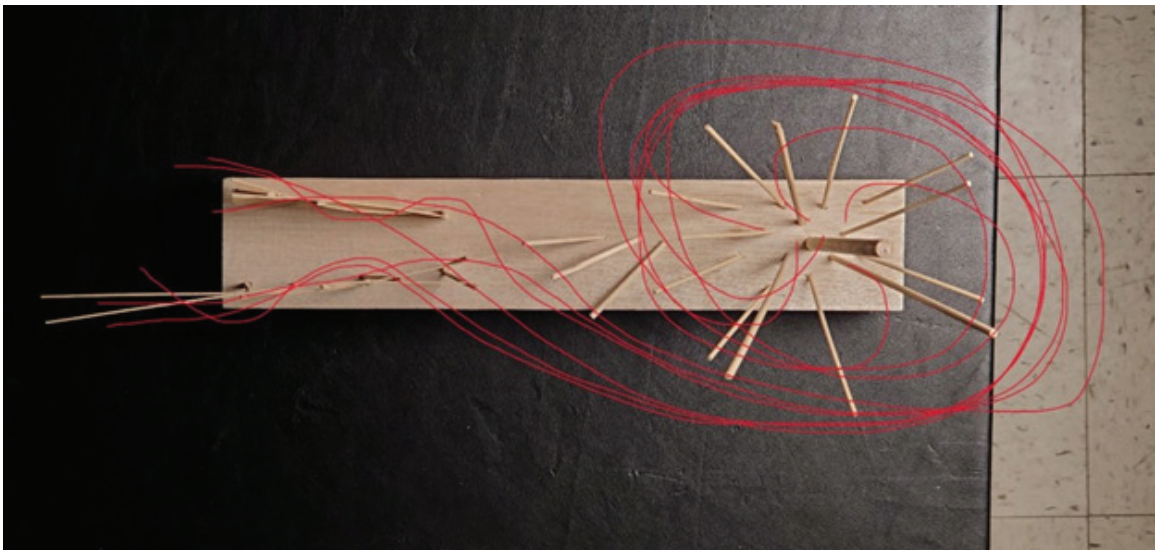


Figure 5.9 Entanglements of Landscape, material, and people in a shared process.

Figure 5.10 Leaning on each other to meet our shared need.

Spaces that connect in-between

Spaces within boundaries include private areas within public ones and spaces that ebb and grow based on community events and actions. These spaces support collaboration while also accommodating independent and sovereign areas. Flexible affordance allow spaces to change, shifting in response to activity, time, or season. The Nordic Embassy in Berlin serves as a case study for how sovereign nations can collaborate on shared interests. In the plan shown in Figure 5.11, each nation has dedicated private spaces that circle around to create shared areas in between, with common security and support spaces.

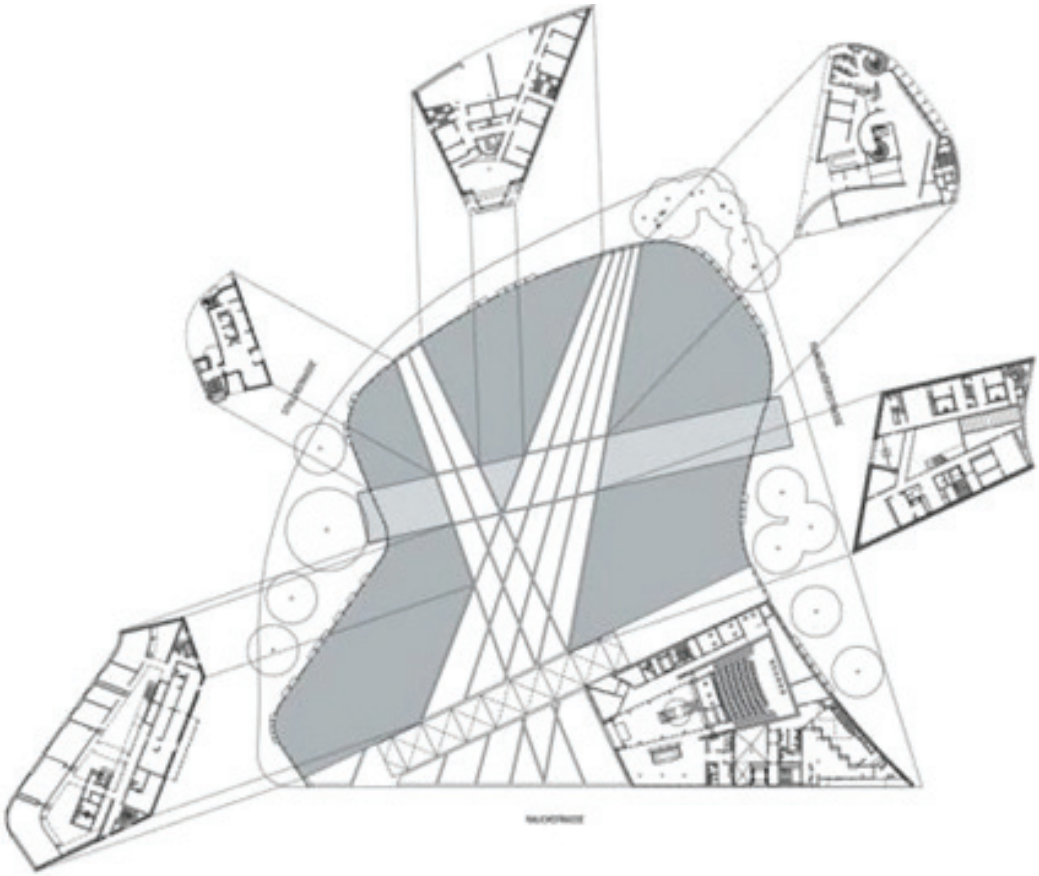


Figure 5.11 Plan of Nordic Embassy, Berlin (Berger and Parkkinen 2020).

Figure 5.12 Aerial Photo of Nordic Embassy, Berlin (Berger and Parkkinen 2020).

Figure 6.1
Blurring bench and wall.

Chapter 6: Place-Making; Designing for Collaboration and Coexistence

The designs in this thesis focus on three interconnected sites that rebuild connections between the river, land, and built environment, starting from the ebbing and ever-changing river's edge. The water's edge in Cree language presents some of the depth of complexity and relationship to the landscape. Many Cree words referencing the shore through movement, moving along, moving into, moving through, moving towards and, moving away from:

ᑯᐢᐸᒧᐤ (kospamow) trail leaves the water's edge to go inland. (Nehiyaw Masinahikan Online Cree Dictionary n.d.).

Reconnecting River and Living Land

Blurring the boundary between river and land, through incremental eddy's in the flow can shift the direction of the path, fostering gathering and connection.

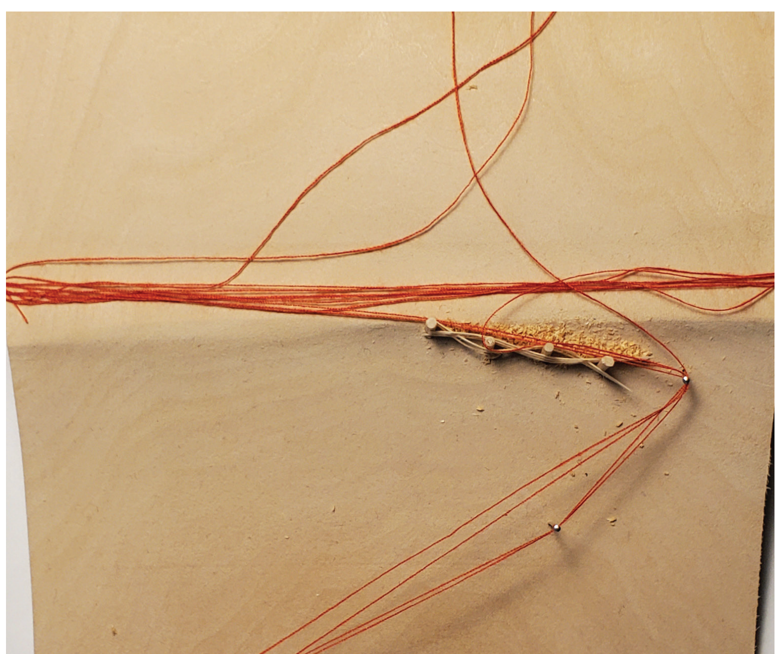


Figure 6.2 Kospamow, flow from river to land.

Figure 6.3 Eddy's in the current building up sediment and supporting material in a continual cycle.

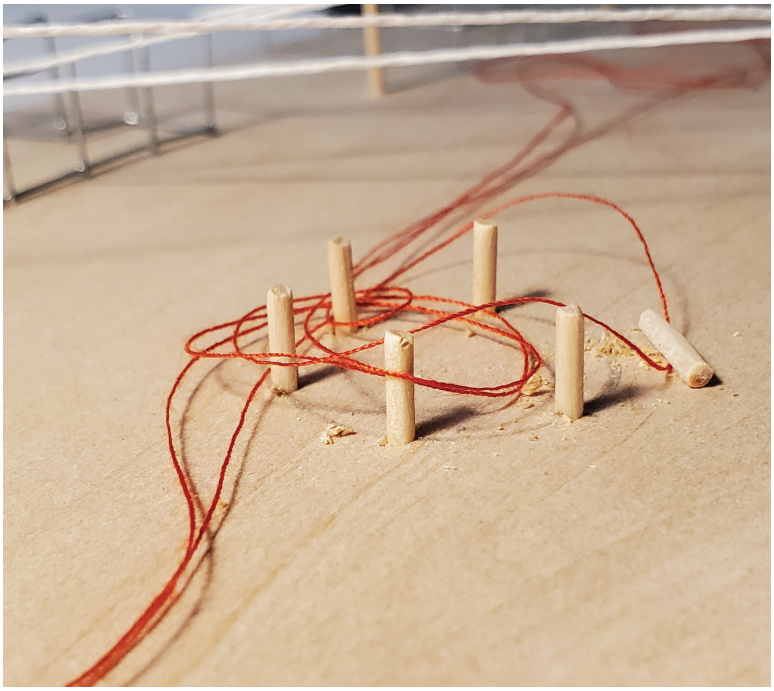


Figure 6.4 Community building events building moments of connection, intertwining to build stories and storytelling space.

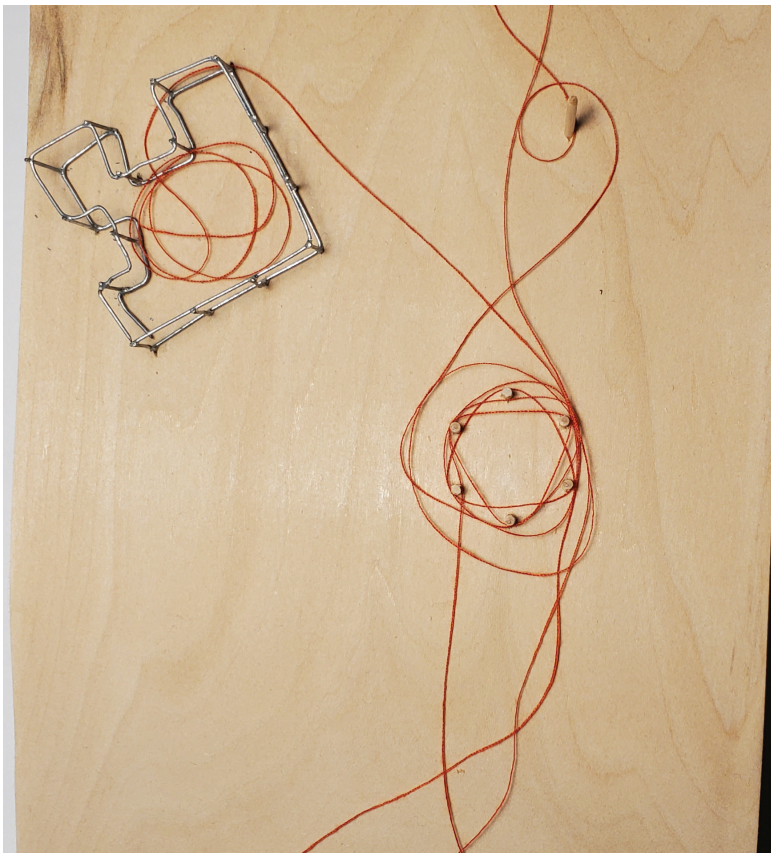


Figure 6.5 Further connections and relationship building with neighbors.

Opening the City to the Land

Building community together involves sowing the seeds to support community needs and continuing to grow and redefine relationships to land in public spaces. It starts with the groundwork to repair the land and our relationships with it, while also embarking on a path that cultivates collaborative spaces through ongoing participatory processes.

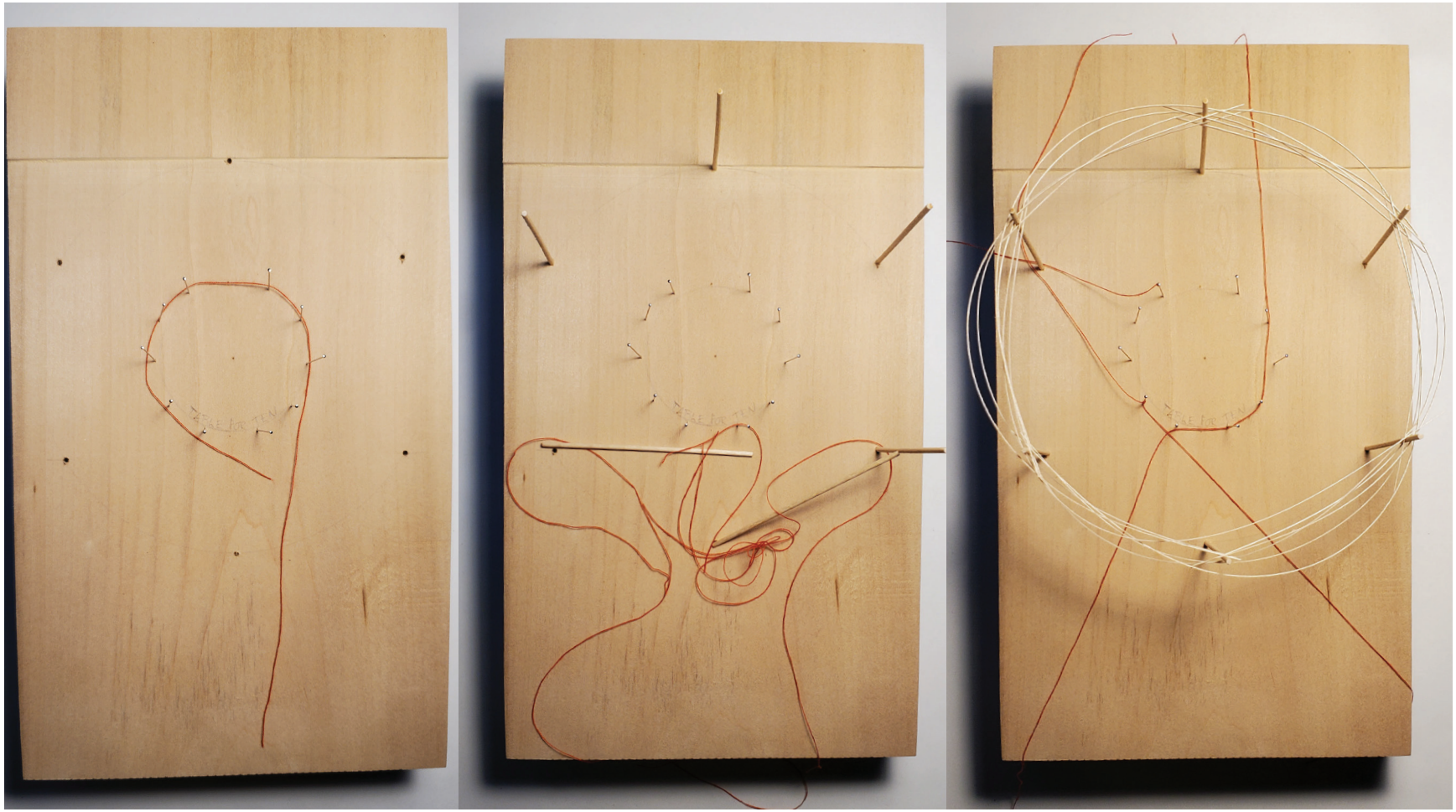


Figure 6.6 Building around the table creating space for further creation.

Figure 6.7 Kospamow: Leaving the River's Edge.

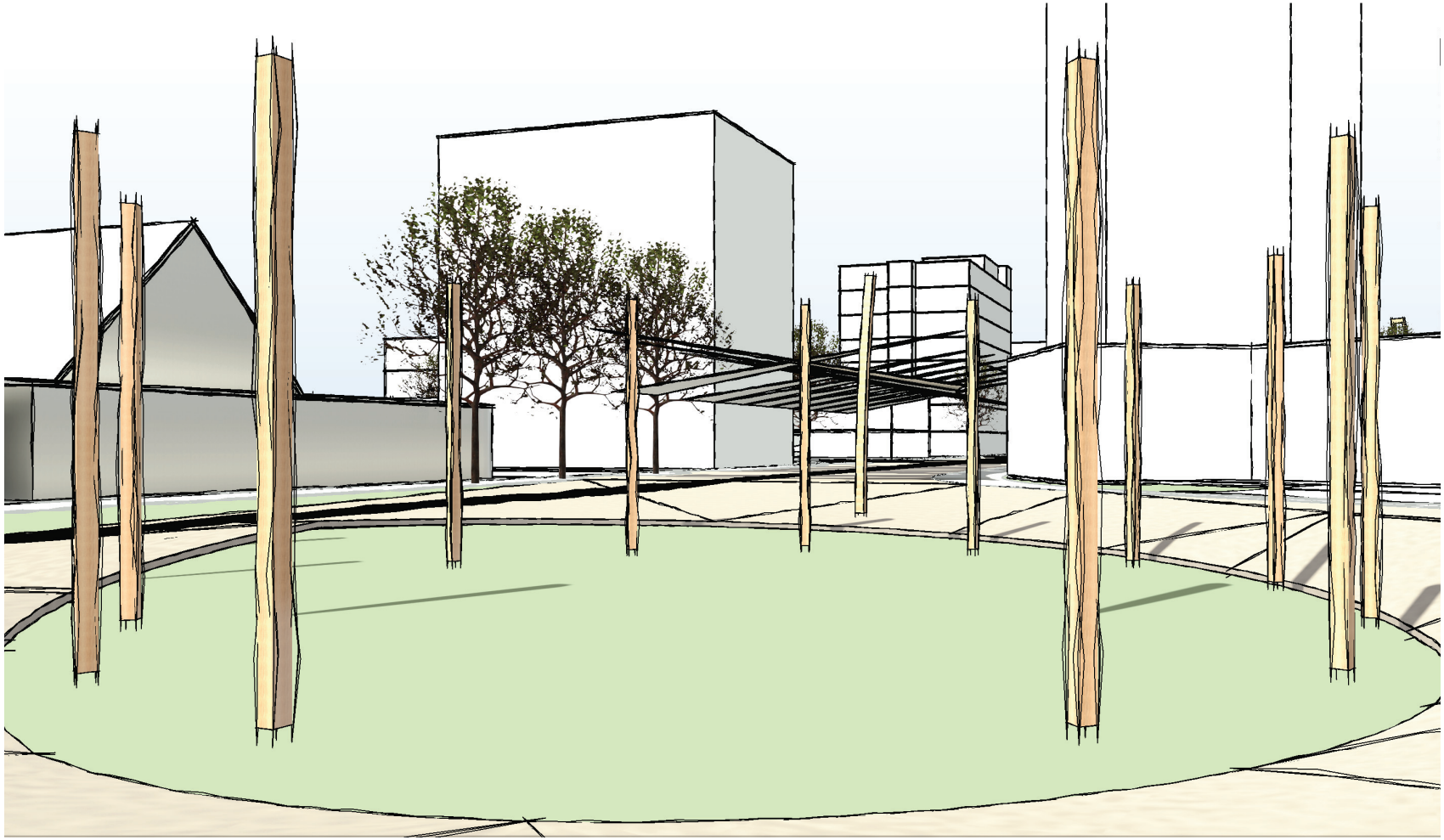


Figure 6.8 Reclaiming public space to gather, share, and reconnect to land and community.

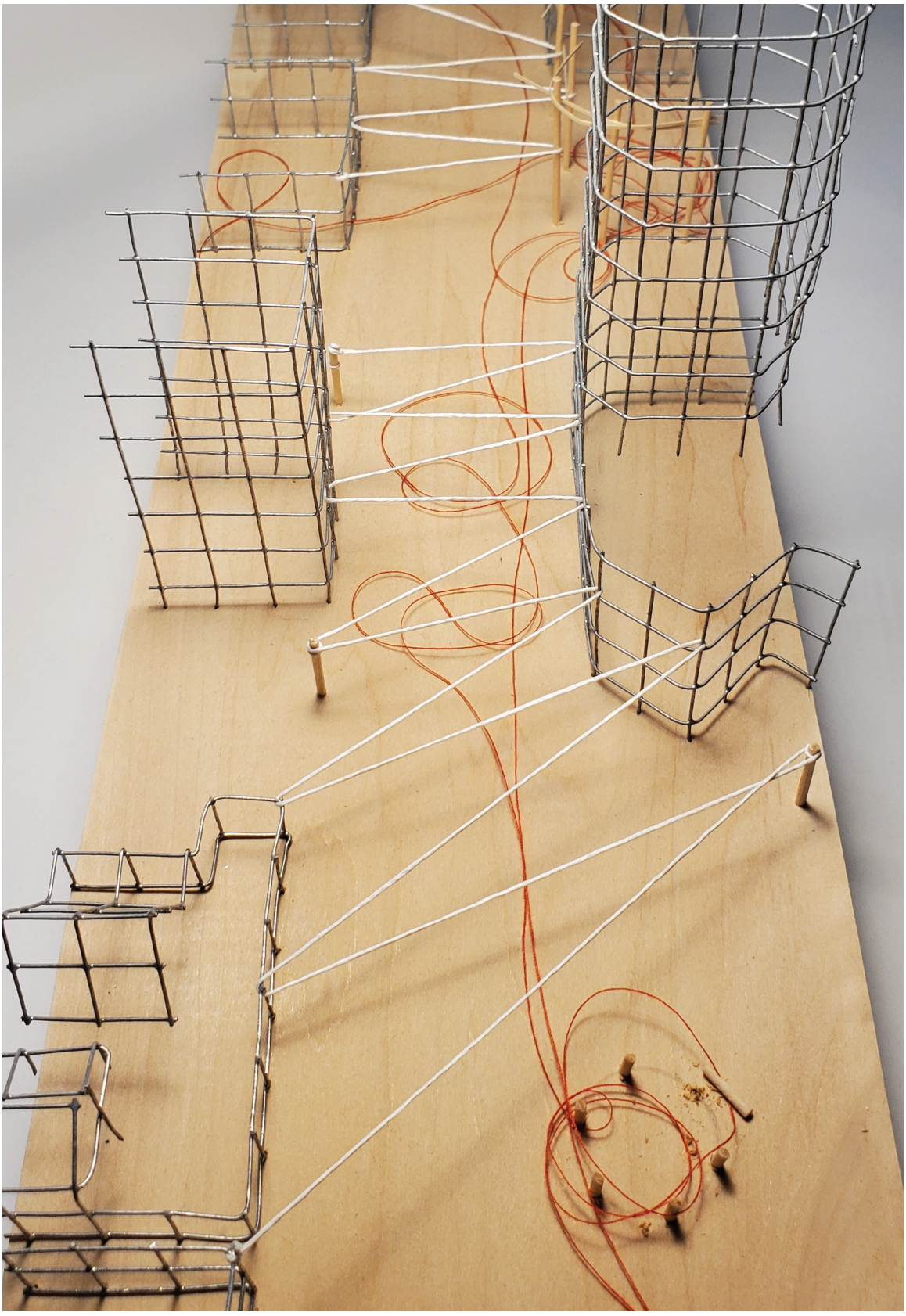


Figure 6.9 Paths from the river gathering and weaving into the urban grids.

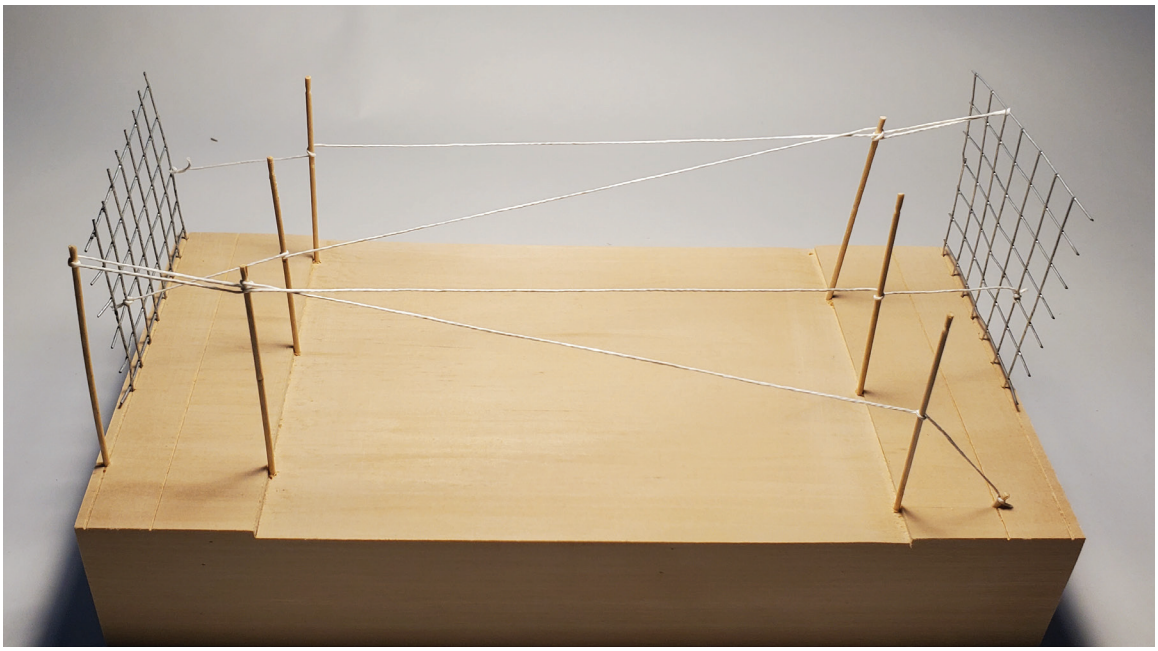
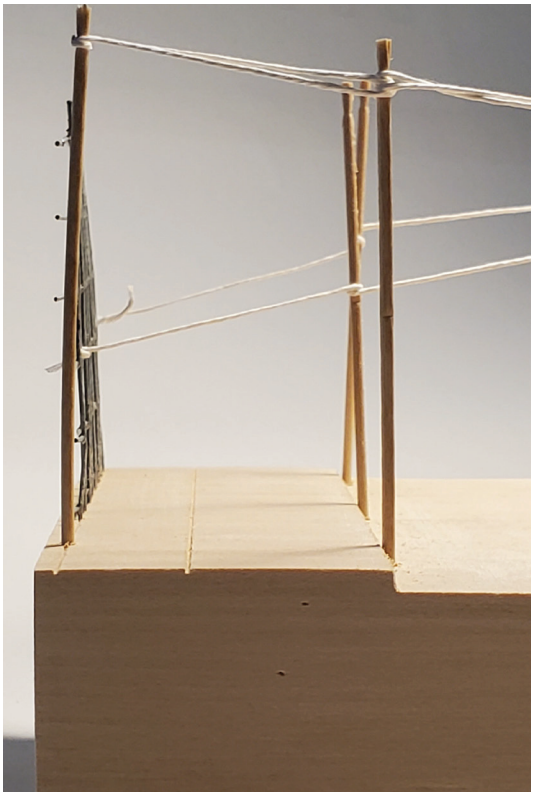


Figure 6.10 Collaborating in the structure of shelter over public space.



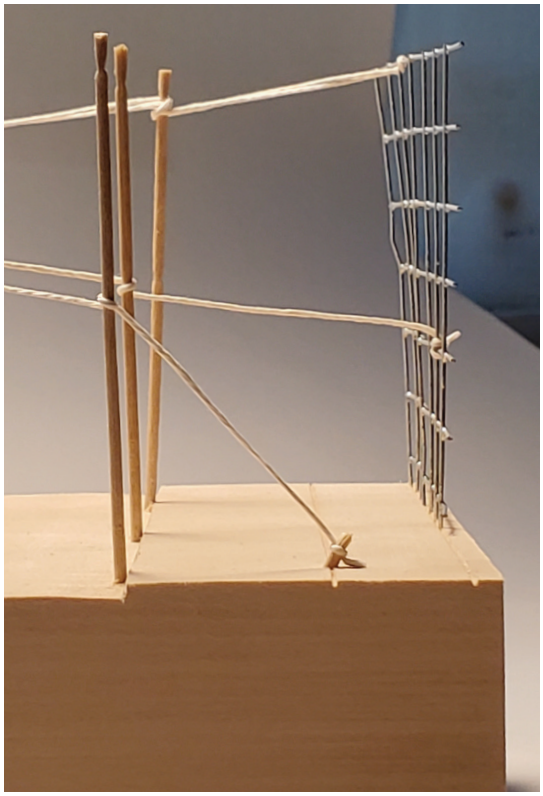


Figure 6.11 / 6.12 Negotiating supports with neighbors and the boulevard space.

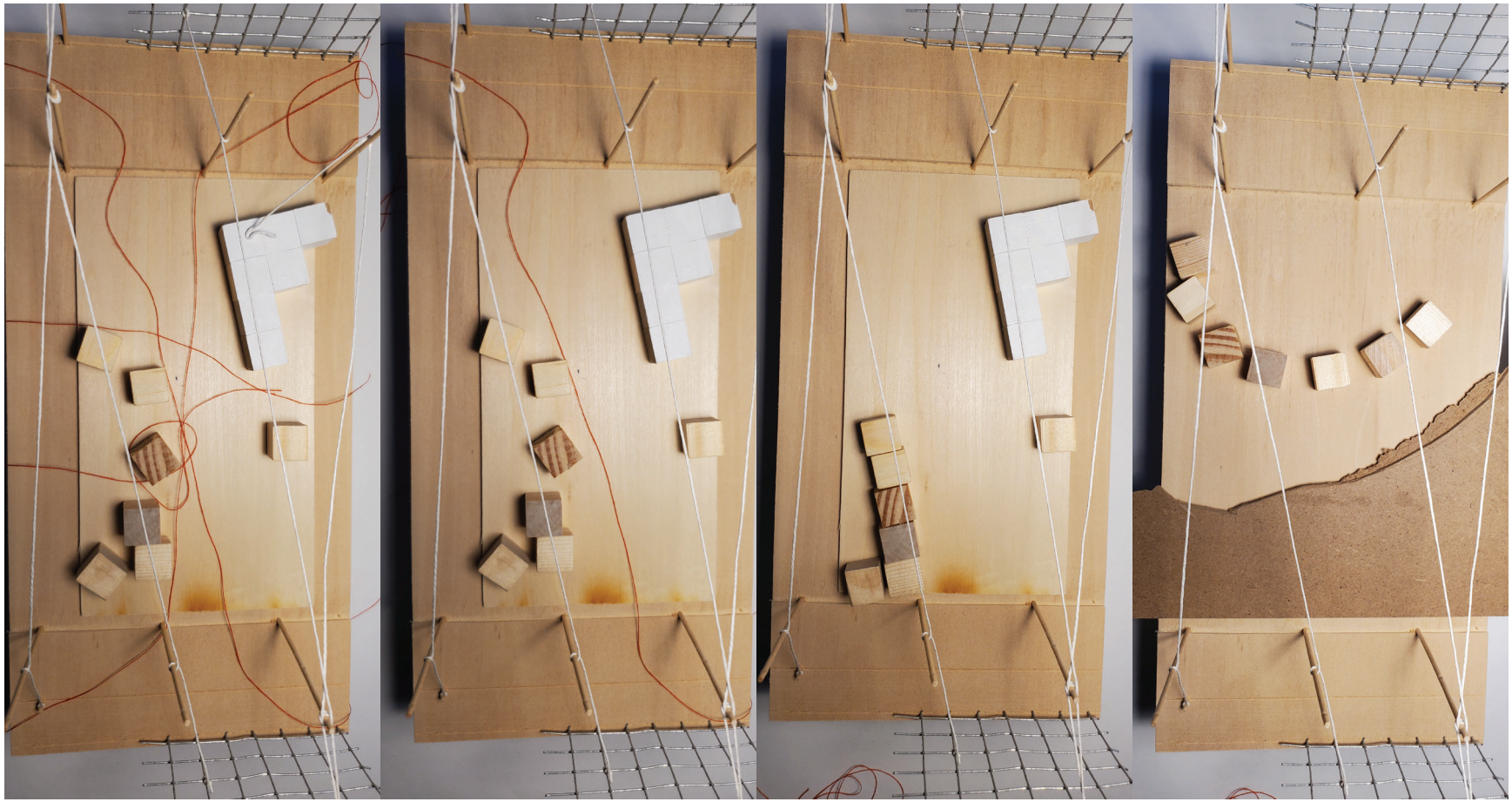


Figure 6.13 Unfixed models explore the flexibility of public space, open for iteration and reinterpretation.

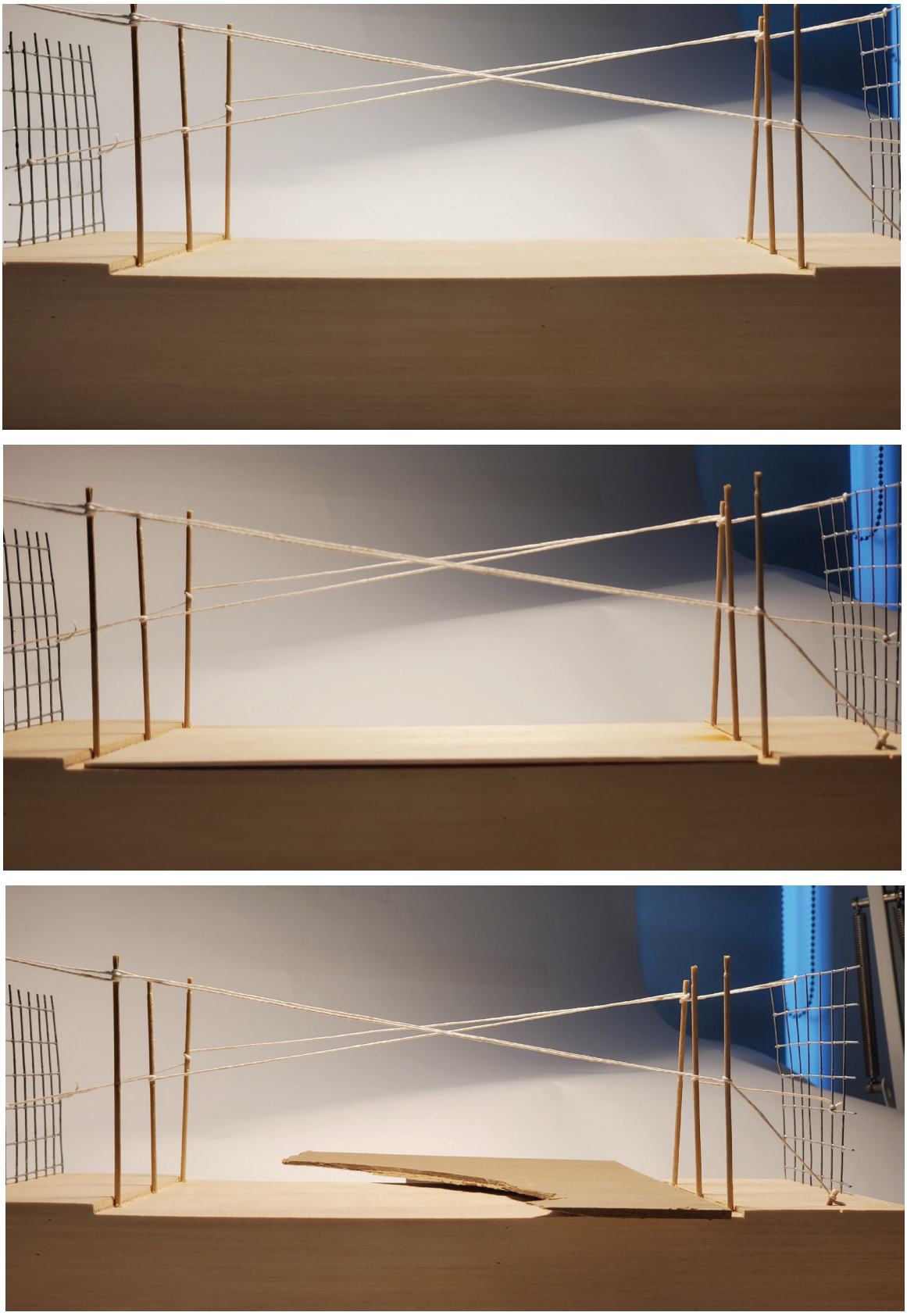


Figure 6.14 Exploring relationships with land in public space.

Figure 6.15 Looking across boundaries to future relationships.

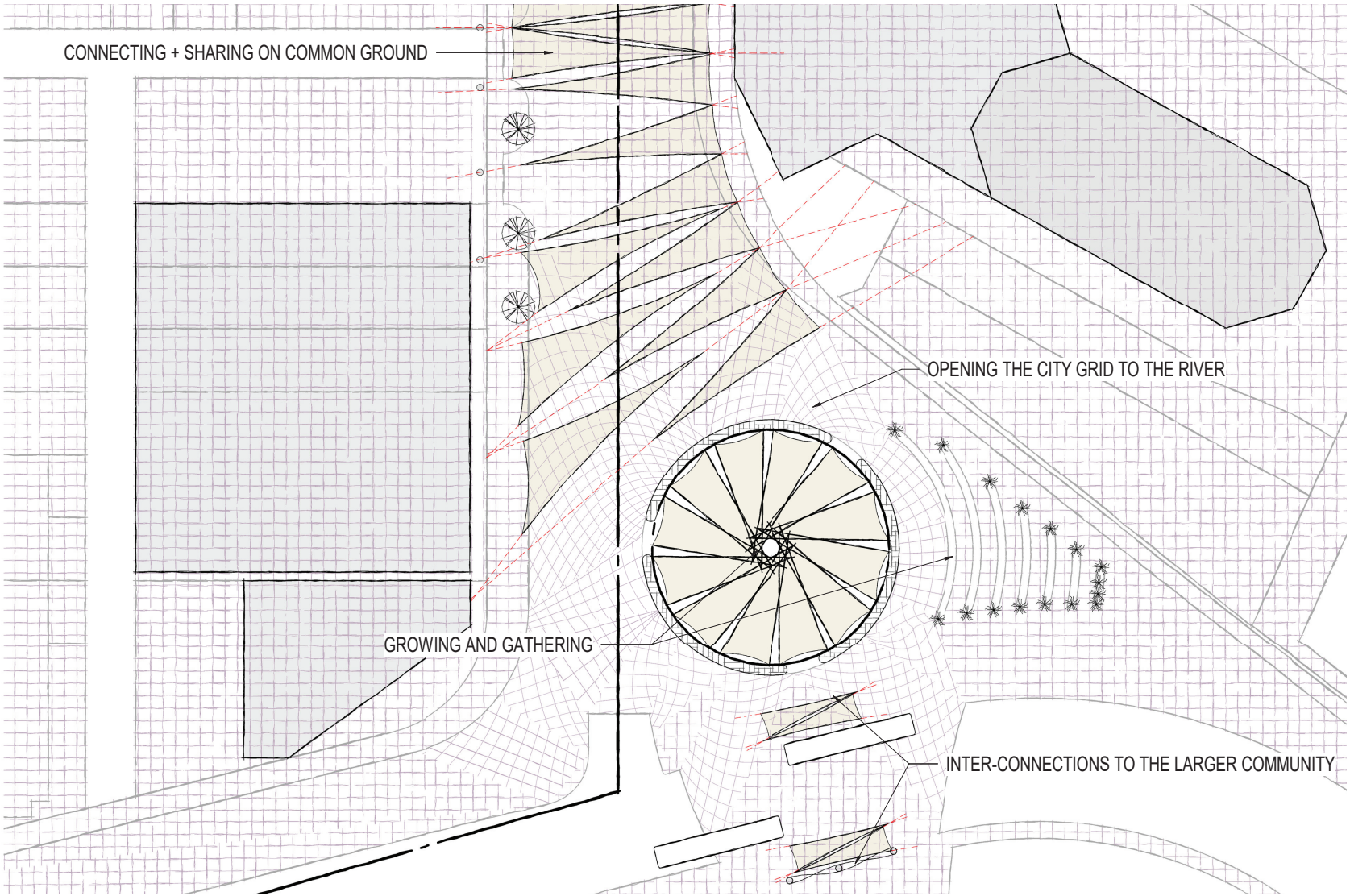


Figure 6.16 Opening the City to the Land.

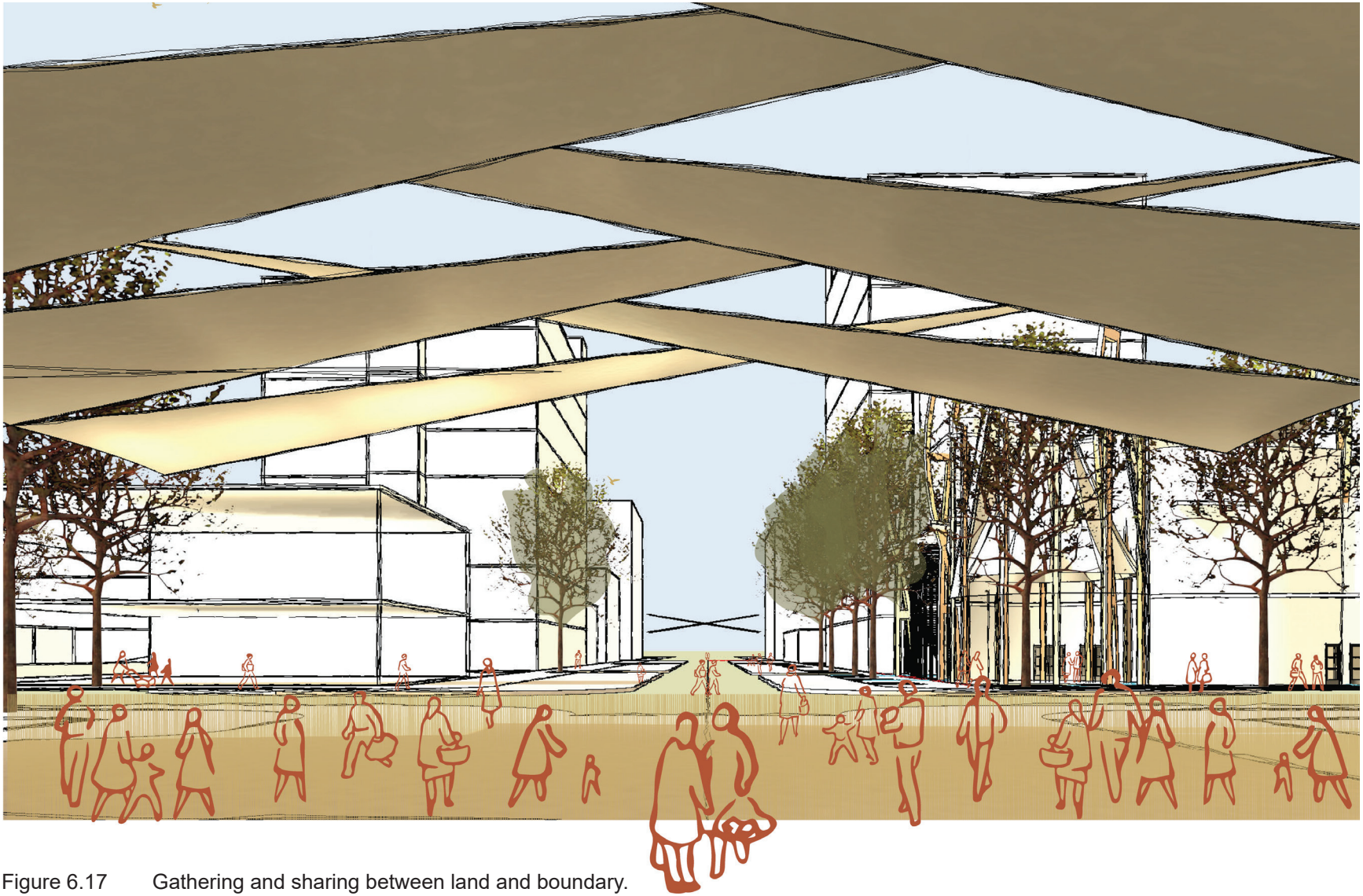


Figure 6.17 Gathering and sharing between land and boundary.

Continuing to Collaborate

Building new layers in land and community involves taking time to celebrate new relationships and creating blurred layers of space and land. This approach fosters future collaborations and builds reciprocity within the community. By reflecting on collective futures and blurring the boundaries of our built spaces, we can create pockets for gathering and facilitate negotiation between facades.

Figure 6.18 New perspectives of our built environment.

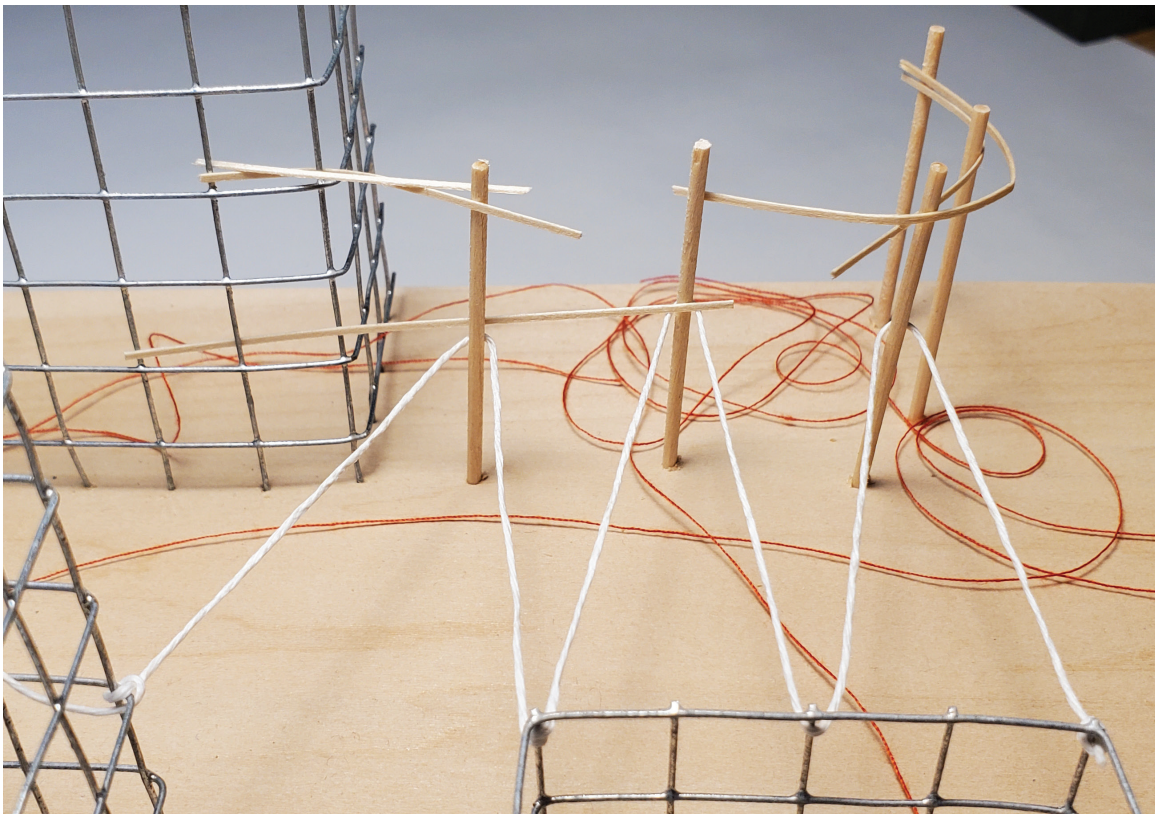


Figure 6.19 Weaving with neighbors.

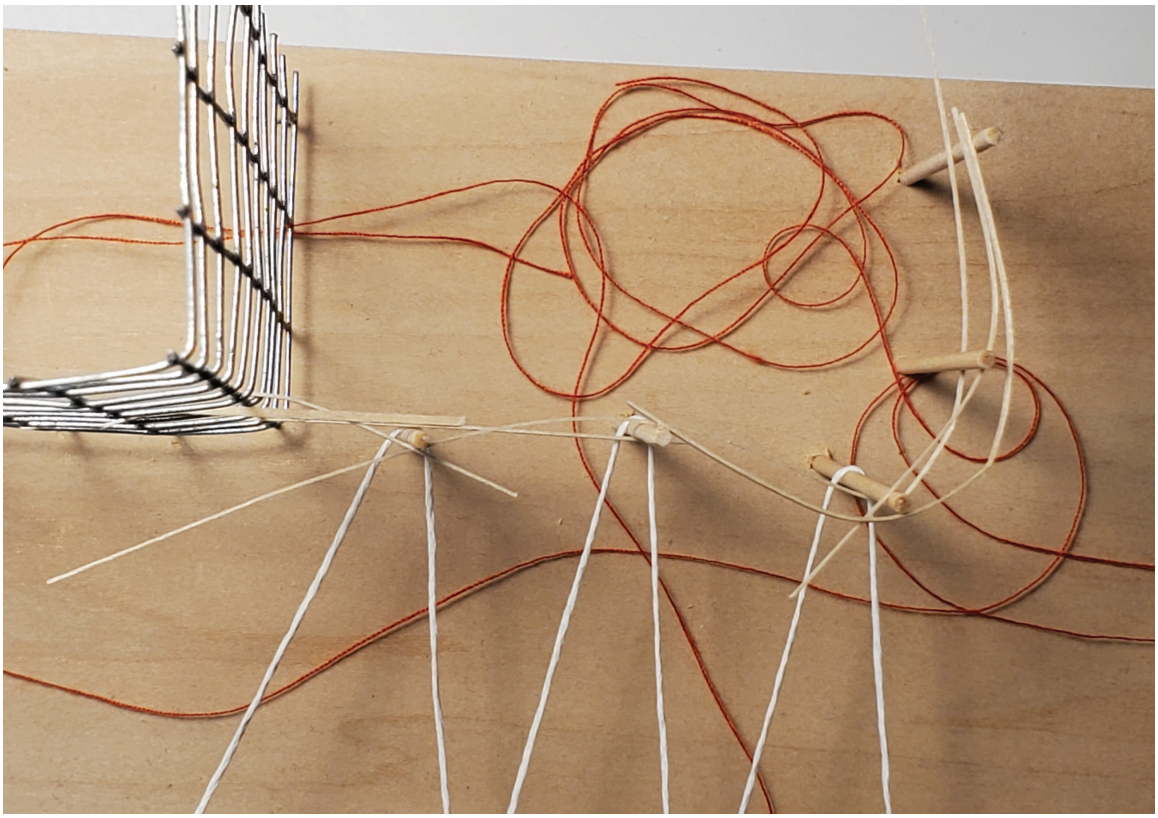


Figure 6.20 Blurred pockets of connection, focusing on a common center.

Figure 6.21 Continuous threads connecting.

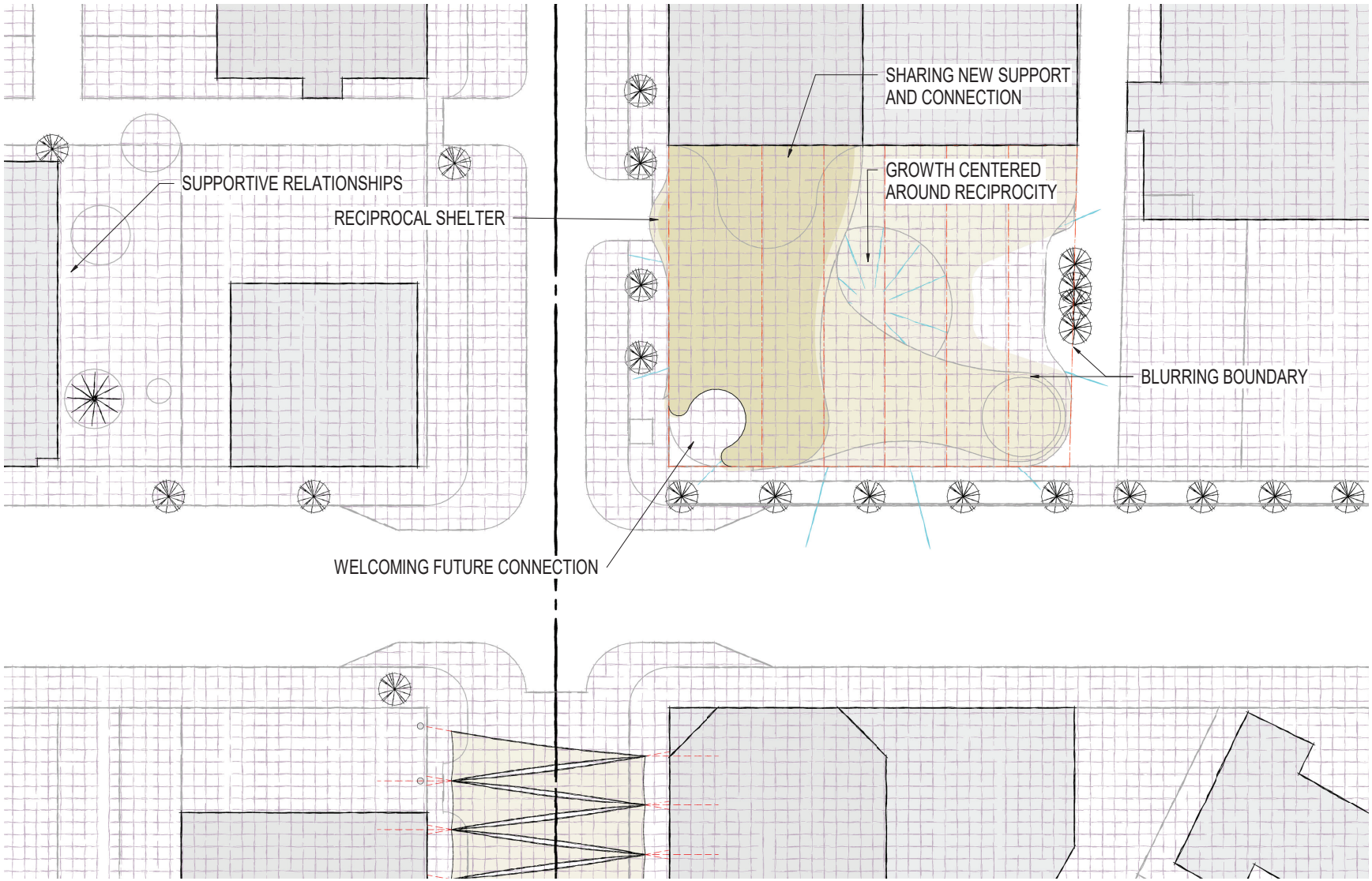


Figure 6.22 Building New Layers in Land and Community.

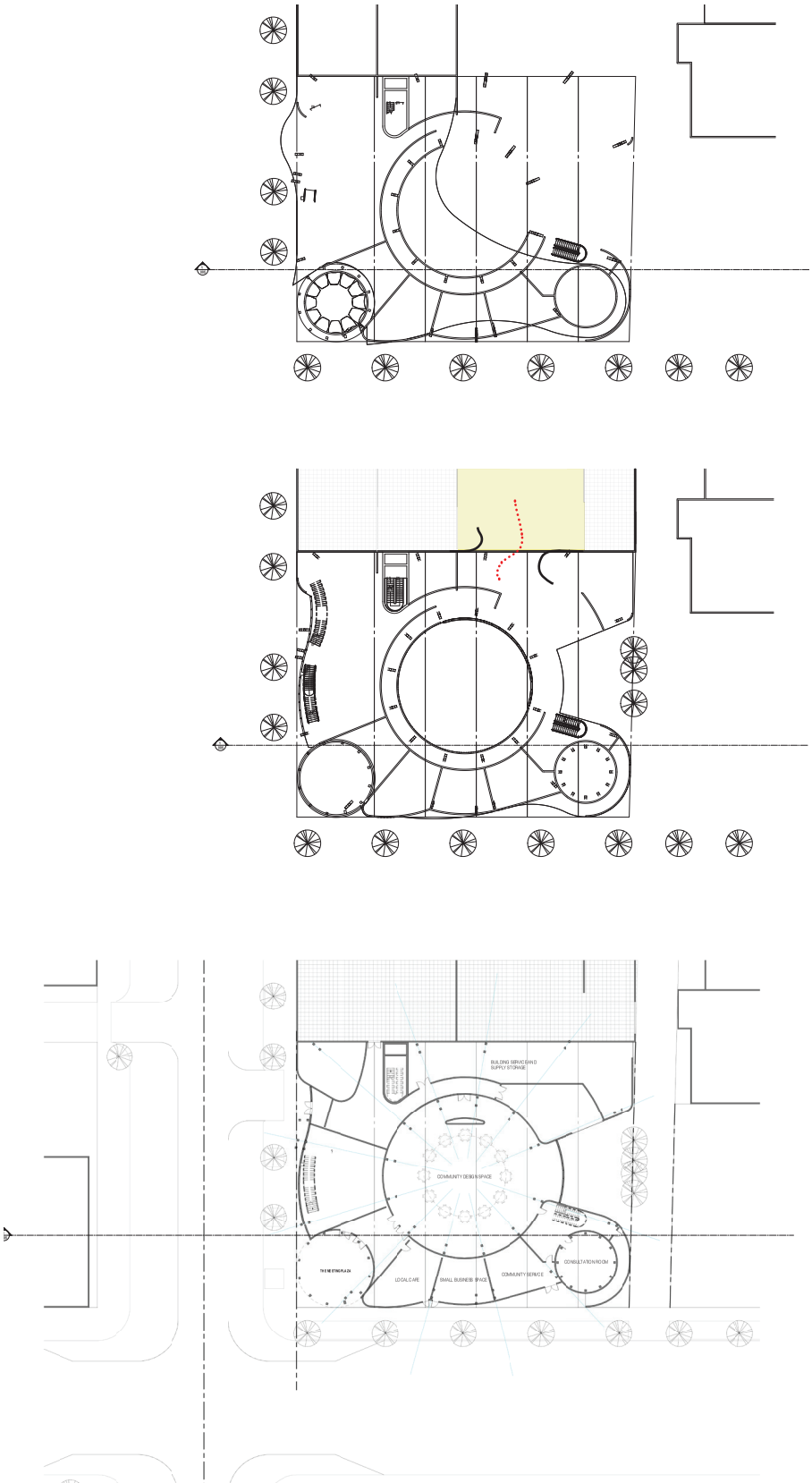


Figure 6.23 Design from public to private spaces, unfinished and open to further iteration and negotiation with new shared spaces between buildings.

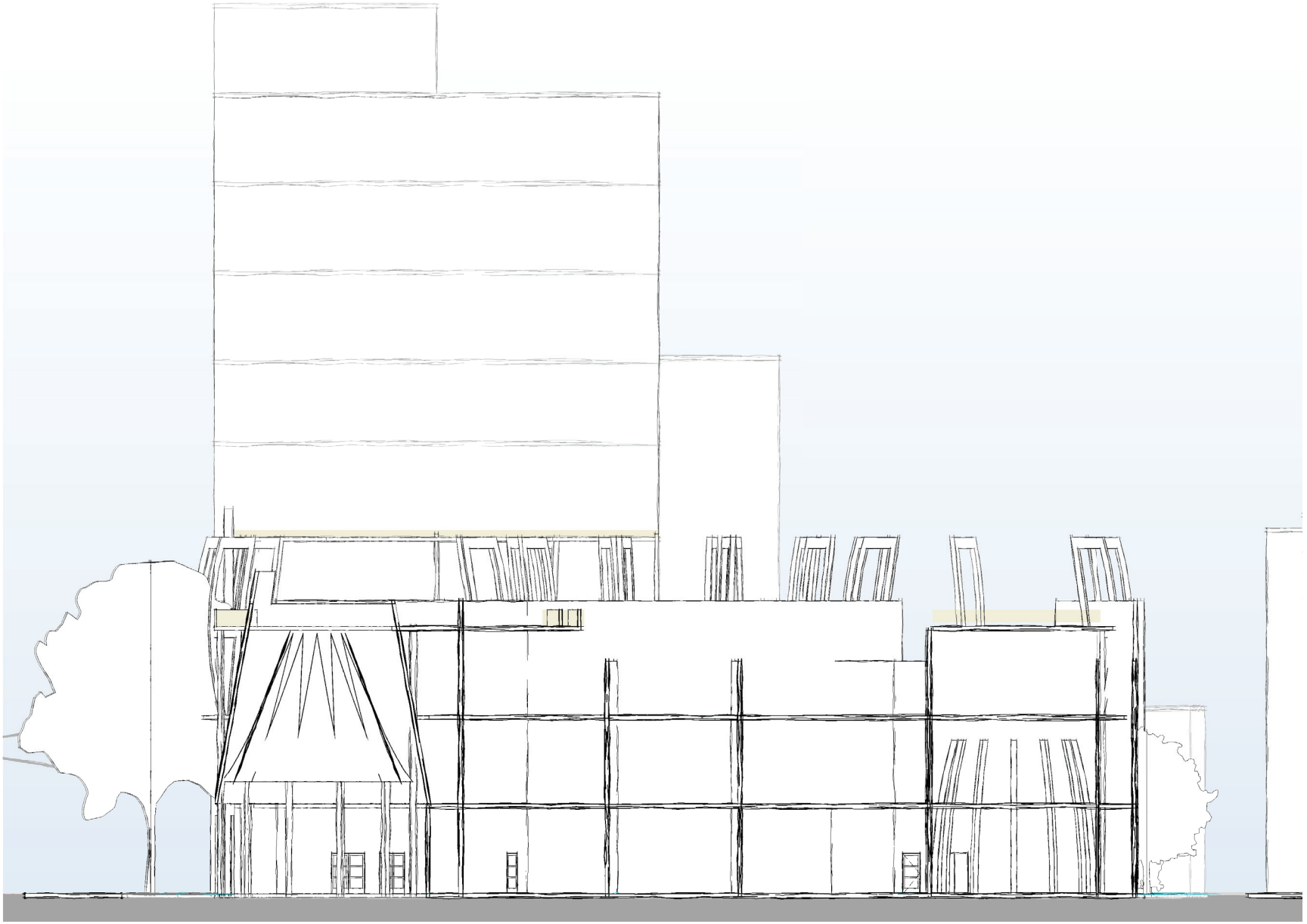


Figure 6.24 Scaffolding blurring boundaries to city.

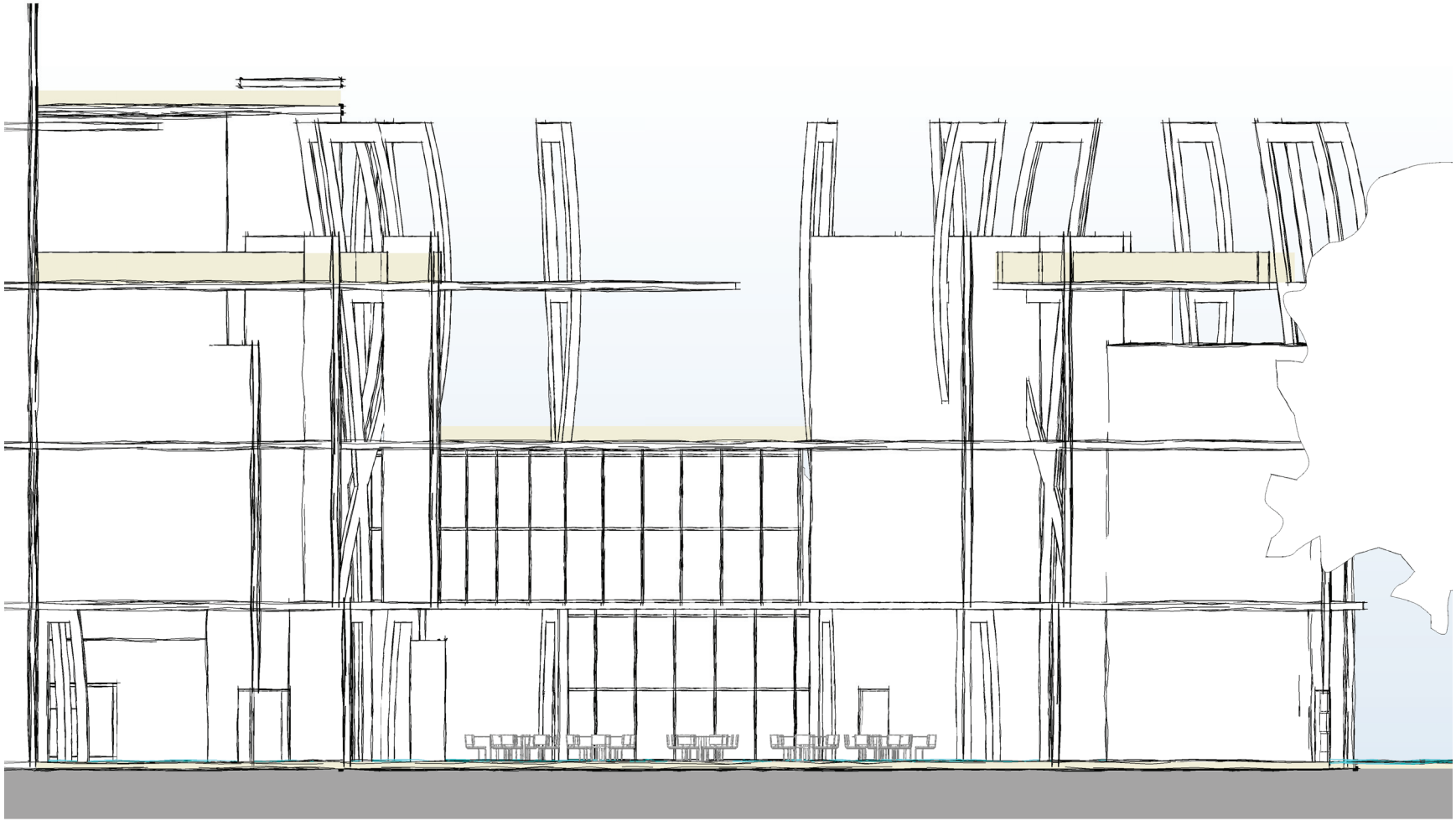


Figure 6.25 Scaffolding blurring boundaries between public and private spaces, leaving buffer pockets that flex to community direction.

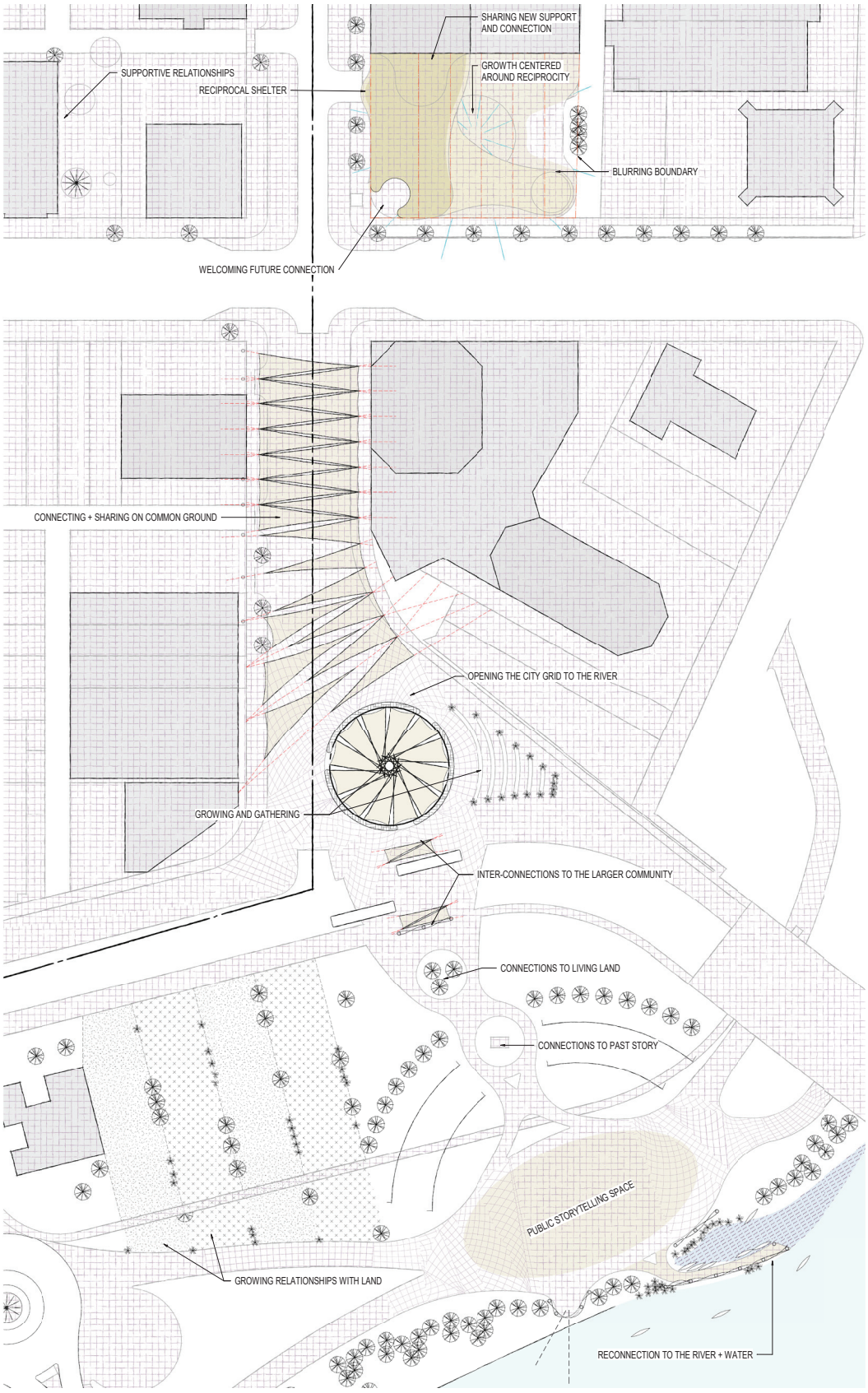


Figure 6.26 Reflecting on the path to be taken.

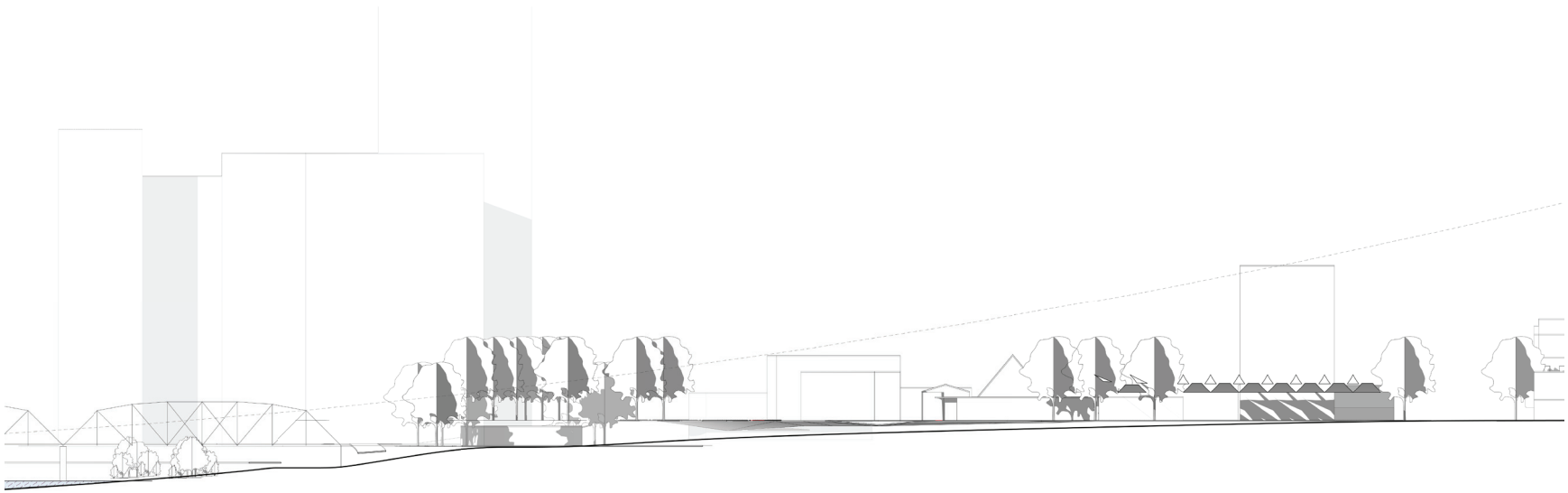


Figure 6.27 The open relationship between river, land, and city.

Figure 6.28 Blurring of Boundaries looking back to the River.

Figure 6.29 Blurring the boundaries of the Built Environment.

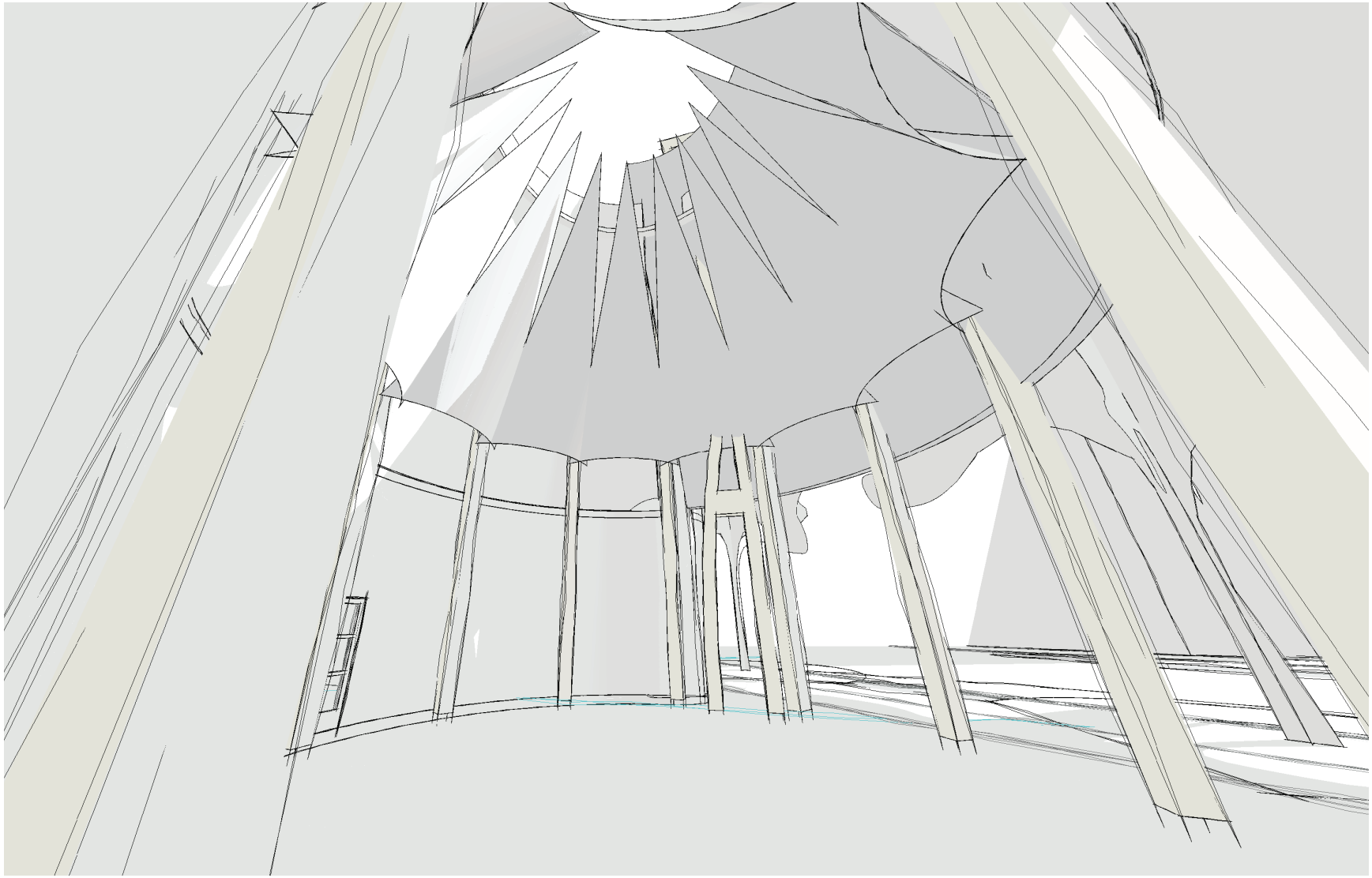


Figure 6.30 Meeting in the boundary.

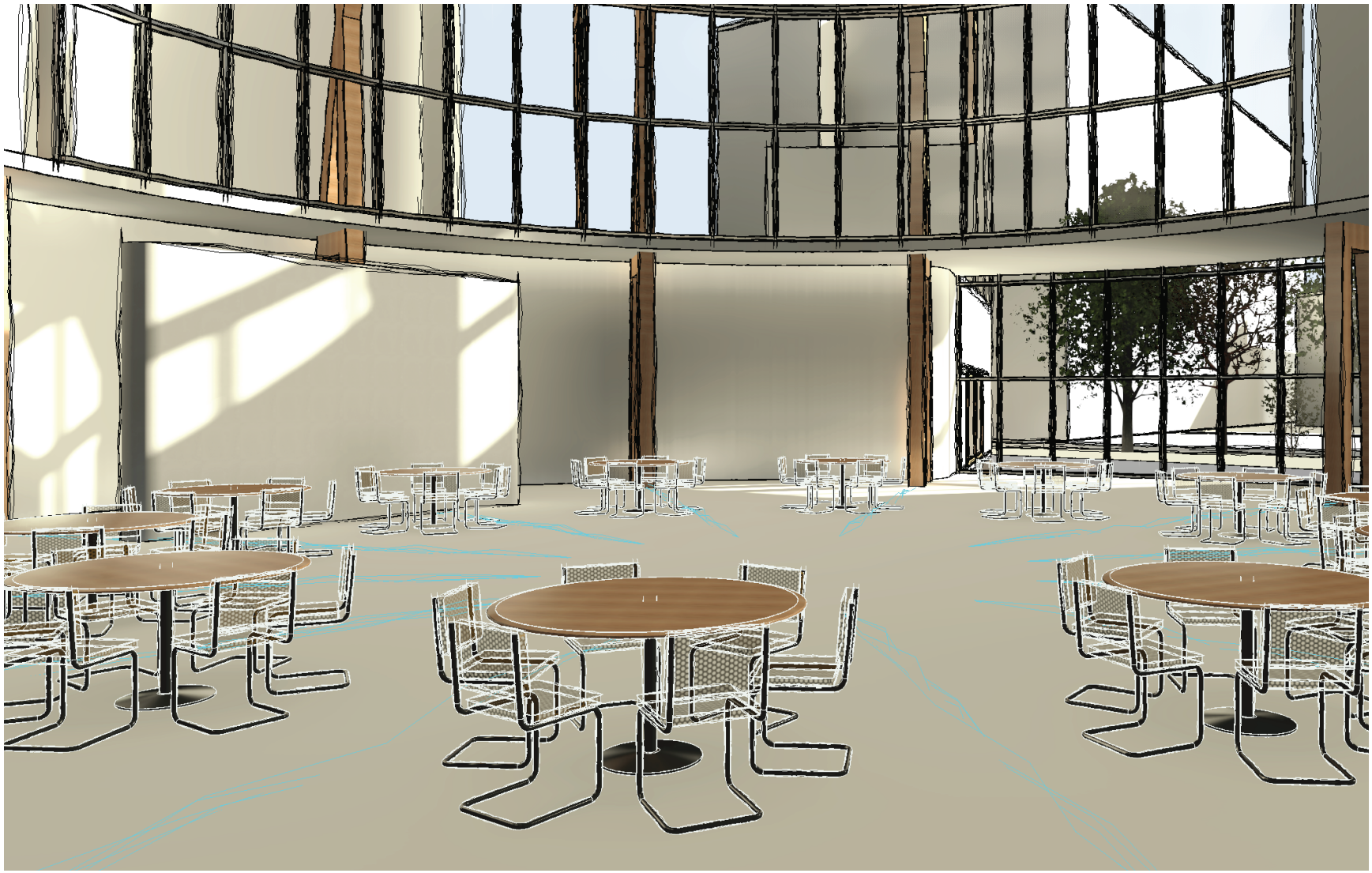


Figure 6.30 Collaborative Community space at the center of coexistence.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The damages from ignorance and mal intent that colonialism has caused over many lifetimes is not something that can be solved by a simple architectural thesis, nor can it be solved in the few months of an institutional schedule. The healing from our currently imbalanced reality relies on changing minds and changing communities of settlers, of whom many are continuing to push the cogs of colonialism, to build the reciprocal relationships and connections that were ignored and unfulfilled. This work is multi-layered and cannot be solved, it has no abstract finalized solution, it instead relies on the continual renewals of support and relationships that continue to prevail.

There are significant limitations in the discipline of architecture, stemming from the isolation of institutions, and the profession's limited voices and perspectives. Consequently, current master's-level theses are inherently isolated, often seen as tools to demonstrate existing knowledge and capability. However, this thesis is intended as a guidepost for myself and for other settler architects. It serves as a reminder of our shared responsibilities to the land we inhabit, and the communities we help to shape.

The on-going-ness of the work and intentions of this thesis are not to propose a finite solution, but as a more general guide and reminder of the responsibilities of settlers, and especially the profession of architecture, have to decolonizing our built environment, and to continue building relationships based on reciprocity, respect and the intentions of the treaties, to heal the connections between land and community and the scars of colonialism that separate them.

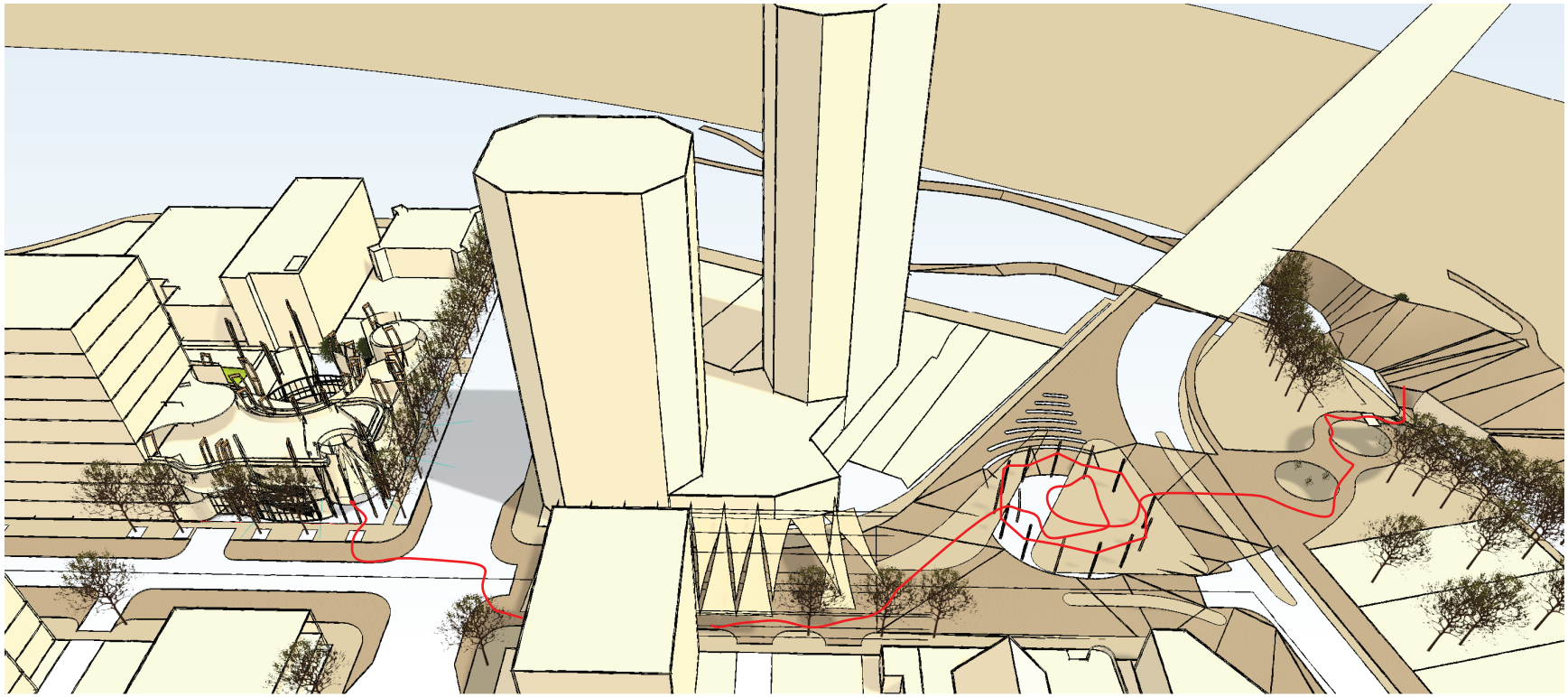


Figure 7.1 An on-going, and never-finished process.

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