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**A HOME WITHIN THE CITY:
TRANSITIONAL HOUSING FOR HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS IN
TORONTO**

by
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Dedicated to Orlando, Lucia and Ana.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the idea of home for the homeless individual who has made the decision to seek assistance for issues of addiction or mental illness and wants to transition to permanent housing in the future through place-making. This thesis examines how home can be reinterpreted to provide the homeless individual with a place where they can focus on themselves while providing them with access to programmes and resources. Working within the Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood in Toronto, transitional housing and services are strategically integrated into the existing urban fabric to provide individuals with the opportunity to achieve their goals while promoting community, equality and respect.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Thanks to Jamie for your time, help and insight. To Michelle for your time and knowledge.

To the men and women who call the streets of Toronto home.

INTRODUCTION

Thesis Question

How can the idea of home be interpreted in the Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood in Toronto to meet the needs of homeless individuals suffering from mental illness and addiction during the transitional period of time between living on the street and moving into permanent housing?

AREA OF STUDY

Thesis Topic

This thesis examines the transitional period of time that a homeless individual experiences between living on the street and moving into permanent housing through place making. Focusing on individuals who have made the choice to transition from life on the street and are seeking help with issues of mental illness or addiction, housing and various services will be integrated to provide homeless individuals with the support they need to stabilize their life so they have the opportunity to successfully transition from life on the street to permanent housing in the future.

The integration of transitional housing and services is explored within an existing urban fabric of the neighbourhood. In this scenario: Toronto's Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood is the case study. The research explores propositions that interpret the idea of home as an extension of the existing urban fabric and how home can be developed to utilize existing unused or empty spaces as new habitats by recognizing and reconsidering the nature of these existing spaces, the relationship of these spaces to existing programme in the neighbourhood and by understanding qualities of spaces that support interactions both at the neighbourhood scale and the human scale. Rather than providing housing and services all within one building which can result in the sense of confinement and isolation, transitional housing and services is explored through strategic fragmentation and integrated into the Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood, all within walking distance, so that it reinforces the idea that the homeless have choices and can be active participants.

Allies and Inspiring Work

My work in place making, programme and how architecture can provide inspiring, healthy and supportive environments for those who are under privileged is inspired by a number of precedents.

The work of Levitt Goodman Architects shows how one can design spaces that can support community to provide a nurturing environment. In the work of Samuel Mockbee's Rural Studio and Donald MacDonald the use of simple and reused materials illustrates how shelter can be creatively designed to provide individuals with a place of their own. People Assisting the Homeless (PATH) illustrates that although housing is important during the transitional time period, many services are also needed to allow individuals to successfully transition to permanent housing in the future.

Strachan House

Strachan House, designed by Levitt Goodman Architects, is a renovated warehouse that was transformed to provide transitional housing for homeless individuals. Aimed to provide low-demand, high support housing for individuals who have no where to live. The building is organized into houses with porch areas, shared kitchens and bathrooms. Each floor has four houses that are linked by a public corridor which opens out into informal common gathering areas. A Town Hall is centrally located and provides a place where residents can gather.¹ Strachan House is a self-governing community. The residents elect a mayor or mayoress, who along with staff members, set the rules and chair the weekly Town Hall meetings.² By electing a mayor or mayoress, residents are given a voice that provides the opportunity to ensure that the individuals changing needs are met.

Unprogrammed areas, nooks and crannies similar to those found throughout the city are designed into the building so that individuals can feel comfortable inhabiting the building as they do the street. These spaces allow residents to progressively grow towards the end goal of permanent housing in a nurturing sense of community that is within a safe context.³



Floor detail. Photograph of Strachan House (1997). From Levitt Goodman Architects [website]. (2009).



Trellis detail. Photograph of Strachan House (1997). From Levitt Goodman Architects [website]. (2009).



Town Hall. Photograph of Strachan House (1997). From Levitt Goodman Architects [website]. (2009).



Resident room. Photograph of Strachan House (1997). From Levitt Goodman Architects [website]. (2009).

Samuel Mockbee and Rural Studio

EVERYONE, RICH OR POOR, deserves a shelter for the soul. ⁴

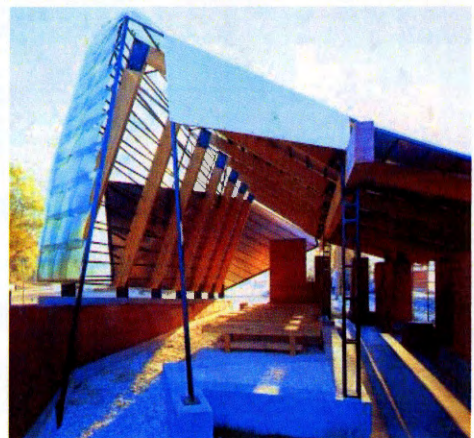
The work of Samuel Mockbee and the Rural Studio provides a great example of how innovative design and construction through the use of reused, recycled and low cost materials can create powerful and meaningful architecture. The studio brings to light social issues and creates an architecture of decency. Rural studio is about being decent and trying to provide a decent community for all citizens.⁵ Mockbee believed that architects should take the lead in procuring social and environmental change.⁶



Front porch of Harris residence. Photograph of Harris Butterfly House (1996-1997). *Rural Studio, Samuel Mockbee and an Architecture of Decency*, 32.



Re-use of waste material: car plates. Photograph of Cardboard Pod by Timothy Hursley, Alabama (2001). *Rural Studio, Samuel Mockbee and an Architecture of Decency*, 83.

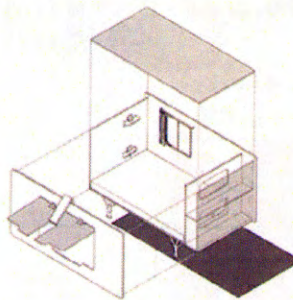


Re-use of waste material: car windshields. Photograph of Mason's Bend Community Centre by Timothy Hursley, Alabama (2000). *Rural Studio, Samuel Mockbee and an Architecture of Decency*, 54.

City Sleeper

The city sleeper was designed by architect Donald MacDonald for a group of homeless men who inhabited a parking lot. The self-contained sleeping module was designed to provide homeless individuals with shelter while supporting the idea that every individual has the right to a home. Constructed of plywood and waterproofed, the sleeper is supported off the ground on car jacks. The doorway lifts to allow occupants to sit facing out while still providing them with protection. A sliding glass window with an insect screen and vents allows for ventilation.⁷

The City Sleeper's simple construction with materials that are easily accessible demonstrates how spaces can be created within an urban environment to meet the basic need of shelter for homeless individuals.



Axonometric view of City Sleeper. From Donald MacDonald Architects [website]. (2009).



Photograph of man standing in front of City Sleeper. Photograph from Donald MacDonald Architects [website]. (2009).

People Assisting the Homeless (PATH)

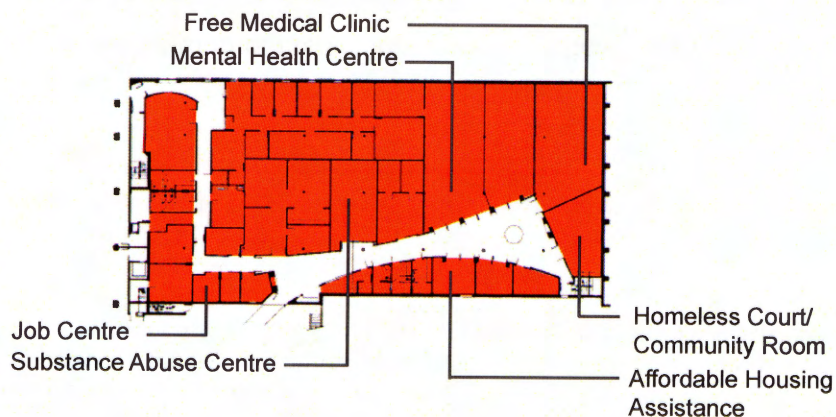
PATH uses the shopping mall model as a means of providing services to the homeless. Social services are consolidated under one roof to help homeless individuals to return to independent living.⁸

PATH demonstrates how housing is not enough to help individuals transition from life on the street. Services such as a substance abuse centre, job centre, medical clinic, affordable housing assistance, community room and mental health center are also required to help individuals stabilize their lives.

The open concept plans allow individuals to look into spaces and see others receiving assistance. This allows the individual to observe before becoming a participant, reinforcing the notion that the homeless have choices.⁹



PATH building facade. Photograph from People Assisting the Homeless [website]. (2009).



PATH ground floor plan illustrating floor space dedicated to services. Plan from *Designing for the Homeless: Architecture that Works*, 123.

Understanding Institutionalization and De-institutionalization

Mental Illness and Institutionalization

Michel Foucault examines the history of madness in the book *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* during the classical age. Using original documents, mental illness, folly and unreason are examined as they would have existed in that time.¹⁰ Looking at how society has dealt with individuals suffering with issues of mental illness, Foucault is able to portray the interaction between society and individuals with issues of mental illness.

In the serene world of mental illness, modern man no longer communicates with the madman: on one hand, the man of reason delegates the physician to madness, thereby authorizing a relation only through the abstract universality of disease; on the other, the man of madness communicates with society only by the intermediary of an equally abstract reason which is order, physical and moral constraint, the anonymous pressure of the group, the requirements of conformity.¹¹

Going back to eighteenth century Europe, individuals with issues of mental illness were confined and segregated from the larger community which they were a part of. Institutions brought upon confinement. Confinement brought upon a power of segregation and provided a new home for madness.¹² The act of confinement, as a result, betrays a form of conscience which suggests only shame.¹³

The creation of the asylum to confine individuals with mental illness not only demonstrates the power of confinement but also the power of fear.

Fear appears as an essential presence in the asylum. Already an ancient figure, no doubt, if we think of the terrors of confinement. But these terrors surrounded madness from the outside, marking the boundary of reason and unreason, and enjoying a double power: over the violence of fury in order to contain it, and over reason itself to hold it at a distance; such fear was entirely on the surface.¹⁴

Homelessness and Institutionalization

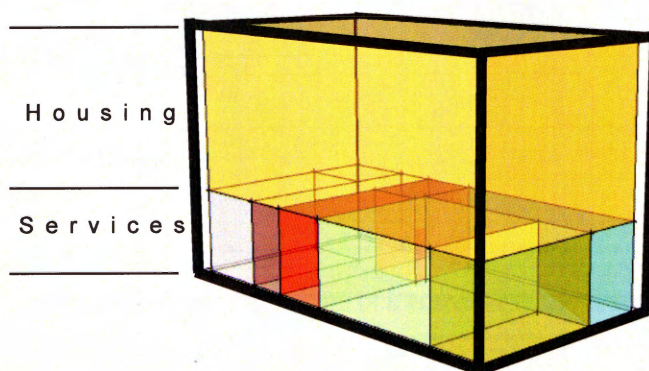
In the last hundred years, homeless individuals have had shelters, beds, single room occupancy hostels (SRO's) or the streets as options for accommodations.¹⁵ The experience of living in a shelter often strips the individual of dignity. Institutionalization inculcates a resistance to acceptable social behaviour. As a result, the homeless individual either avoids shelters or once entering the shelter creates psychological walls in the absence of real ones in order to achieve some personal privacy.¹⁶ Often shelters are a secondary-use structure that were originally a large open space meant for assemblies. The notion of "warehousing the poor" therefore becomes more of a reality than a metaphor.¹⁷ Institutional, impersonal or threatening facilities often intensify the anxieties of homeless individuals who may be entering the facility for the first time. As a result, homeless individuals are more likely to simply turn around and leave.¹⁸

De-institutionalization

During the 1960s the release of pent-up pressures in institutions resulted in the 'de-institution' movement. De-Institution refers to the move away from large scale institutional based care to small scale community based facilities. Overcrowded and custodial institutions were viewed as failing to provide adequate care, treatment and as having deplorable physical conditions. A libertarian philosophy began to infiltrate the practice of social welfare. This philosophy was made up of two convictions. The first, that prolonged institutionalization did more harm than good. The second, that it was an abuse of the civil rights of those that were subjected to it. The most success was reported in the field of mental health care where programs designed to maintain patients in their homes showed the inappropriateness of a policy of universal hospitalization.¹⁹

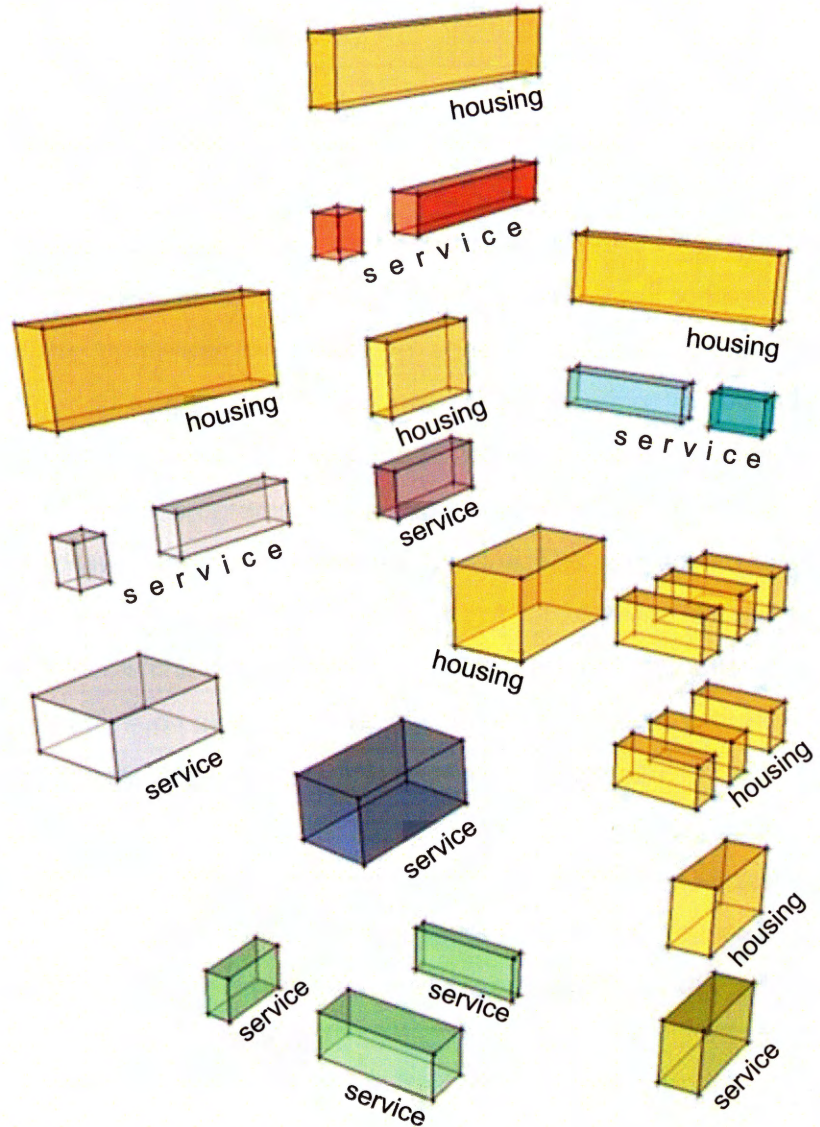
Homelessness and De-institutionalization

Unlike, institutional facilities that project images of confinement and fear or institutional facilities that provide numerous services under one roof which can seem impersonal, this thesis will provide a de-institutionalized model of transitional housing and services all within walking distance in the Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood in Toronto. Transitional housing and services will be strategically fragmented and integrated within the existing neighbourhood to respond to existing programmes and services found within the neighbourhood. The various services and resources will allow individuals to achieve their personal goal(s) thus providing them with the opportunity to transition from the street to permanent housing in the future. By integrating transitional housing and services into the existing neighbourhood a feeling of isolation is not enforced but rather a connection with the existing neighbourhood is fostered. This connection to the neighbourhood will provide individuals with the opportunity to be active participants in their community while allowing individuals to maintain a sense of dignity.



Institutional model diagram

The institutional model provides housing and services all within one building. This can foster feelings of isolation, confinement and fear.



De-institutional model

The de-institutional model provides a means of fragmenting the diverse programme that includes both transitional housing and services so that it can be strategically integrated into a neighbourhood. Strategic integration will aid in fostering a connection between the homeless individual and the existing community thus reducing the feeling of isolation that can result from institutionalization.

Understanding Homelessness in the City of Toronto

Political Context

In the past, senior levels of government funded a social safety net that responded to the changing social and economic needs of the homeless by providing adequate levels of support that included social assistance and social housing. In the past 20 years, however, this has changed as funding cuts have weakened these critical programs. Since 1993, actions at the federal level have withdrawn funding to new social housing. This was soon followed by cuts by the Provincial government in 1995. Provincial decisions to reduce psychiatric beds without adding enough community based supports such as supportive housing has compounded the stress of individuals with mental health and/or addiction issues.²⁰

The number of homeless individuals in Toronto has increased as a result of provincial downloading, federal devolution, the cancellation of social housing construction, welfare cuts, rent control changes and the sale of existing social housing.²¹

Homelessness in the City of Toronto

Walking through the streets of Toronto, one encounters homeless individuals who make the streets of Toronto and its various corners their home. These individuals can be seen sleeping on benches, on the city's sidewalks and in the spaces in between architecture. These spaces that are often neglected, ignored and unused are transformed into a "home".

There is usually no single or simple reason for an individual to become homeless. Homelessness is often the final stage in a lifelong series of crises and missed opportunities. It is an accumulation of gradual disengagement from institutions and supportive relationships.²²

It is a long road to the street, just as it is a long road off the street.²³

Some homeless individuals require more than an adequate income and an affordable home to be able to stabilize their lives. Individuals with issues of mental health or addictions often require transitional or supportive housing. The type and level of support required by homeless individuals varies with each individual. For some it may require meal preparation, help with housekeeping, banking, life skills, referrals, medical care, counselling, employment assistance and/or drop-in programs.²⁴

Health and Homelessness

People who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness have more health problems than the general population. Their situation is made worse by poor hygiene, poor nutrition and a higher risk of experiencing trauma or violence on the street. Homeless individuals are also more likely to face problems receiving health and mental health services. Traditional means of addressing health problems do not always work for homeless individuals who are at greater risk of having their identification such as their health cards being lost or stolen.²⁵

Studies suggest that at least 30 percent of an estimated 20,000 homeless individuals in Toronto have serious mental health problems. Another report which surveyed 300 single individuals using the Toronto hostel system suggested approximately 66 percent

of the homeless population had been diagnosed with mental illness at some point in their life. The same study showed that alcohol and substance abuse afflicted about two-third of Toronto's homeless population.²⁶

Transitional Housing in Toronto

Two key funding initiatives have helped create new transitional and supportive housing units in Toronto: The Federal Supportive Housing Communities Partnership Initiatives (SCPI), and the provincial Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's (MOHLTC) homelessness initiative.²⁷

There are various types of transitional housing projects that are located throughout the City of Toronto. These transitional housing projects provide a home for individuals who are at different stages in their lives. While some of these transitional housing projects are gender specific others promote the harm reduction approach which allows the consumption of alcohol and use of drugs.

Although there are a variety of transitional housing projects throughout the city of Toronto, it is important to note that more needs to be done. There are still many individuals living on the city's streets. In 2003, the advocacy group, Toronto Coalition Against Homelessness estimated that there were 25,000 to 50,000 people in Toronto that were either homeless or underhoused. It is estimated that 5,000 of these individuals live on the streets.²⁸

**christie
ossington
neighbourhood
centre**

A homeless shelter and transitional housing for Toronto's men in need. Offers emergency night bunk-bed accommodations for up to 45 men. Transitional housing includes 20 - 1 bedroom apartments.²⁹

evangel hall

Hybrid of single room occupancy residence and social service hub. Includes 84 units of transitional housing. Includes drop-in centre, cafeteria and social services.³⁰

camh

Focus is to help individual's affected by addictions and mental illness.³¹

**strachan
house**

Provides low demand and high support housing for homeless individual's. Building provides four houses with shared kitchens, bathrooms and gathering spaces.³²

**fort york
apartments
+
transitional
housing**

Intended to accommodate men who are in stable enough position where they can transition into more permanent and sustainable living arrangements.³³



dundas street
queen street

regent park

Canada's oldest social housing project. The majority of families in Regent Park are classified as low-income.³⁴

moss park

Housing and shelters for some of Toronto's homeless can be found in this neighbourhood.

tent city

Took shape in 1998 when a group of squatters erected housing on the former site of an iron foundry in Toronto's port lands. In September 2002, squatters were forced off the Tent City site and a fence was erected to prevent future squatters.³⁵

savard's

Savard's is a hostel designed to house women with a long history of homelessness. Containing 30 beds, it is designed to offer a high tolerance, low demand environment.³⁶

Areal map illustrating transitional and social housing projects in Toronto. Aerial map from Bing Maps [website], (2009).

Visible and Hidden Homelessness

A visibly homeless individual is characterized as an individual who is seen carrying bags, backpacks, garbage bags, suitcases, shopping carts and/or sleeping bags throughout the city. This also includes individuals sleeping on the street or in public spaces and individuals holding signage indicating they are homeless and requesting assistance or money.³⁷

Hidden homelessness is a survival strategy for many homeless individuals in the city. This is especially true since February 2005, when the city of Toronto adopted more restrictive measures, that eliminated homeless people from public squares, city parks and under bridges. This has forced many of the city's homeless into the urban infrastructure where they remain unidentified.³⁸

Place Making in Toronto's Public Spaces

Within the City of Toronto, public space and the spaces in between architecture are transformed into a "home" by visibly homeless individuals. The following drawings provide a few scenarios of how spaces in the city are inhabited by the visibly homeless.



P A R K

It is early morning.

I escape into the park from the noise and busyness of the city streets.

With a newspaper in hand, I sit on a bench beneath the canopy of a tree.

I leaf through the pages catching up on the news.

Casually, I look up and watch as people walk through the park.

I imagine where they are headed and what it is they do.

It's noon.

The sun is high now and I lay down to rest on the bench.

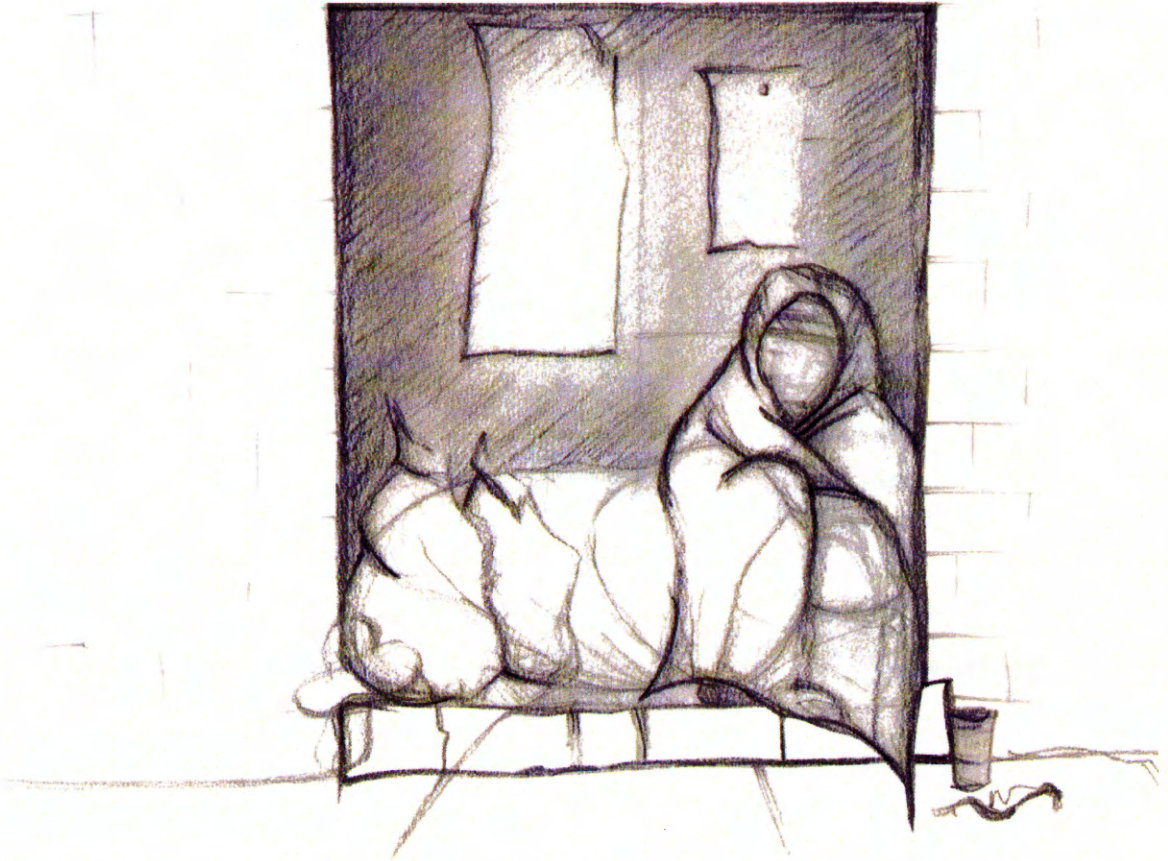
I close my eyes and dream.

I awake to the sound of children laughing.

It must be after 3 now.

School is out.

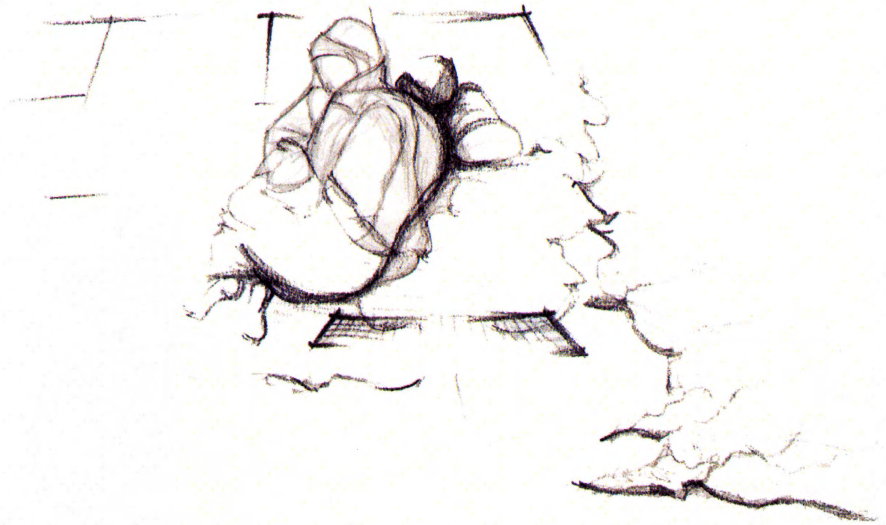
In the distance I watch as children gather at the baseball diamond.



N I C H E

It is mid afternoon.
I have been walking through the city since morning.
Tired I take comfort in an abandoned niche along the street.
I sit there with all my belongings in two garbage bags.
I rest.

It is night now.
The sun has set.
I grab my blanket and curl up in the niche.
This will be my home for the night.
I close my eyes.



S I D E W A L K

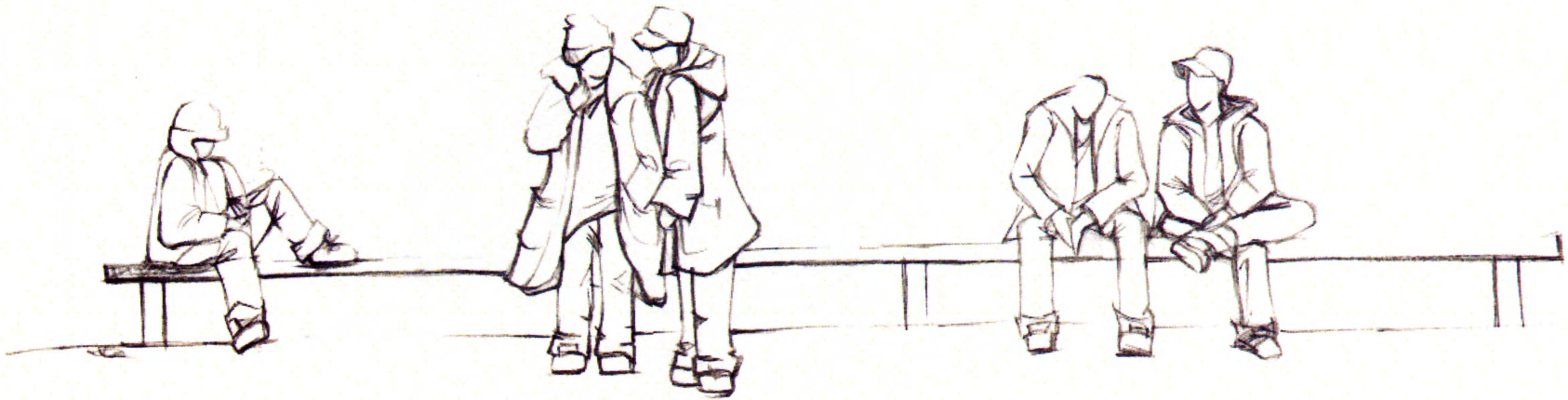
It's - 40°C on an early winter's morning.
I am curled up on the cold hard sidewalk.
I seek warmth from the hot air rising from one of the many grates along
the city's sidewalks
Wrapped in a blanket I lie sleeping, my bare feet touching the frozen
surface.

It is now mid afternoon.
I awake.
The streets are now busy with activity and I sit up.
I watch as people continue to walk past me.
The hot air continues to rise and provide me with warmth on a cold
winter's day.



S T R E E T

It is mid afternoon.
I rest with my back against the newspaper stand.
I watch as people walk past me.
I try to get their attention.
I ask for some change.
They continue to walk.
They don't even look.
Some smile.
Others say "sorry".



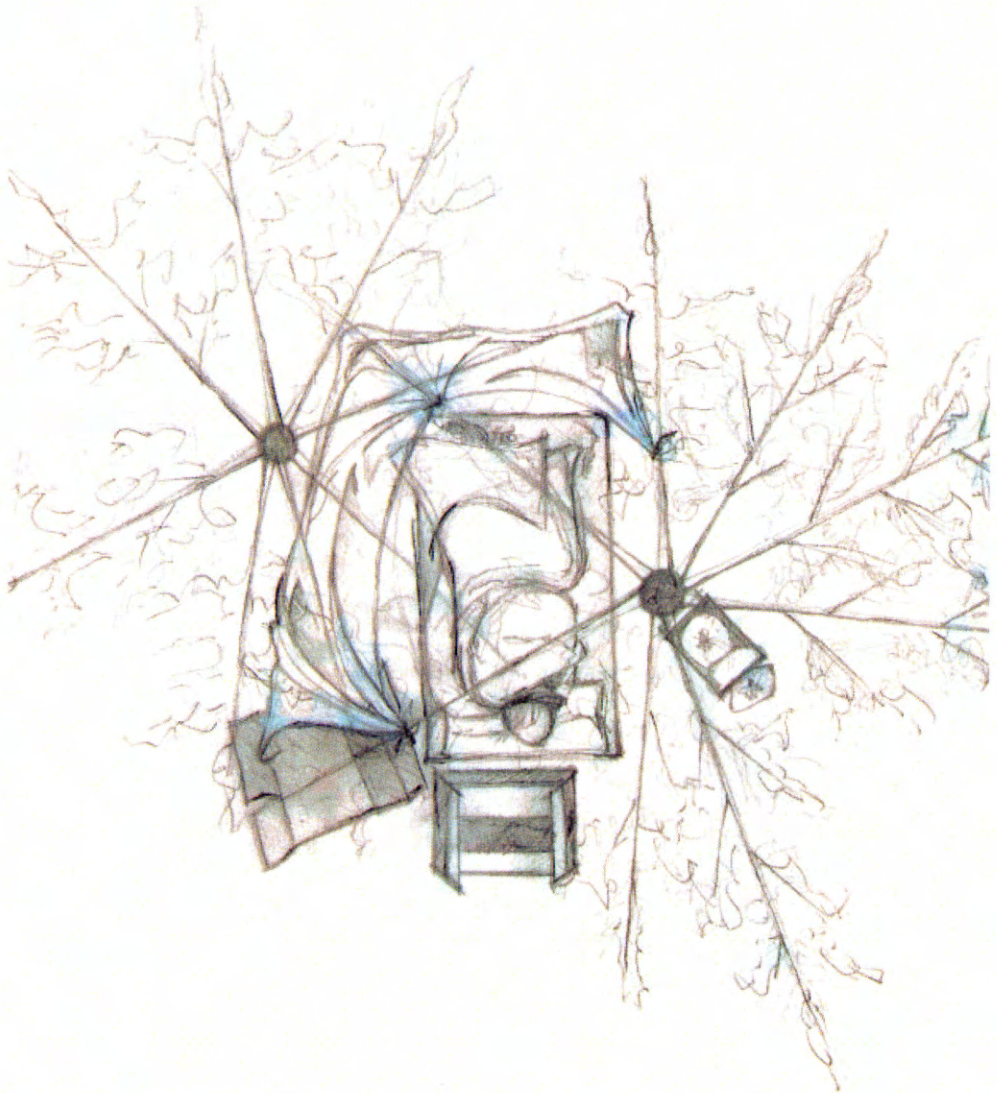
C O M M U N I T Y

One bench.

In the midst of the noise and busyness of the city people gather on the bench.

Here they sit. They talk. They think. They watch.

They are part of and form a community.



H O M E

In Trinity Bellwoods Park
Beneath the canopy of an evergreen
With a few materials on hand
A resting place is created



E N T R A N C E

Two cardboard boxes mark the entrance of a home



S L E E P

A blanket is tied to the branches of an evergreen tree
Shielded by the wind by a blanket
I rest beneath the canopy of an evergreen

Understanding the Thesis Site

Trinity Bellwoods Neighbourhood

Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood in Toronto is an energetic and creative neighbourhood that provides many resources that are both supportive and nurturing within a mixed use residential community. Transitional housing for individuals seeking help and support for issues of mental illness and addiction will benefit from the existing programs and spaces that exist within this neighbourhood.

History

In the early 1800s, Trinity Bellwoods was a one hundred acre Park Lot named 'Gore Vale'. The lower half of Gore Vale became the grounds of Trinity College, which the present neighbourhood is named after. Trinity College was built in 1852, on the site where Trinity Bellwoods Park is now situated. By the 1950s, the neighbourhood fell into decline and the Trinity College buildings were demolished. Trinity College relocated and joined the University of Toronto. The entrance gates to Trinity College are still present and mark the entrance at Queen Street West and Strachan Avenue. The gates serve as a reminder of the once present institution. The present day neighbourhood started to take shape in the 1880s.³⁹

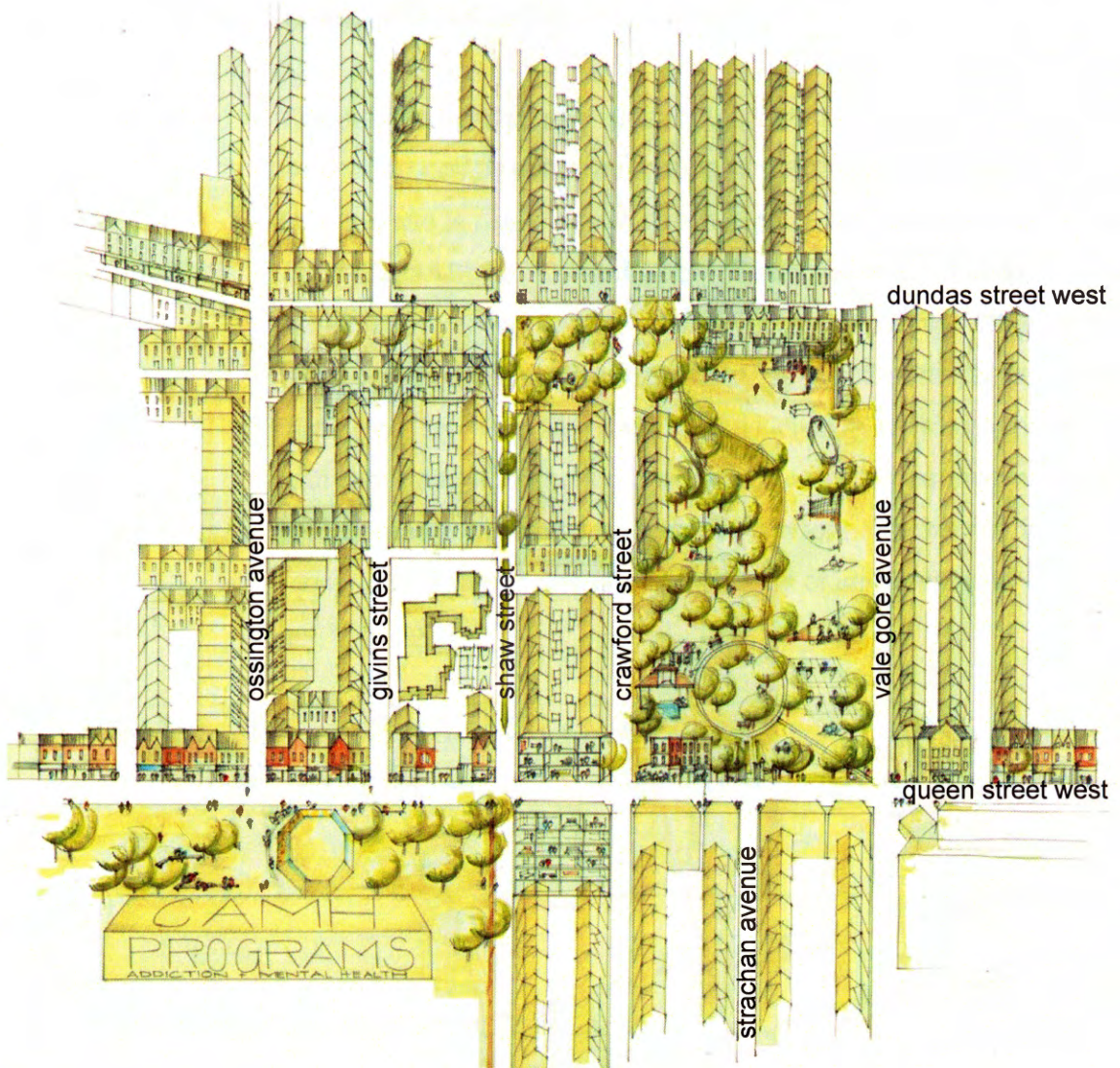
Trinity Bellwoods Park

The focal point of this inner-city neighbourhood is Trinity Bellwoods Park. Trinity Bellwoods Park features paved and winding walking paths that are surrounded by greenery. People in the park, walk or

jog along the paths as they cut from one part of the neighbourhood to the other. Numerous benches located throughout the park provide a place for individuals to gather and/or rest. The park's facilities include a children's playground, a wading pool, sports fields, a baseball diamond and four tennis courts. There is also an artificial ice rink. Trinity Community Recreation Centre located on Crawford Street provides additional recreational space that includes an indoor pool.

Housing

In addition to Trinity Bellwoods Park, this neighbourhood also features Victorian houses, built largely between 1880 and 1905. They are small to medium in size, and are typical of the Victorian period of architecture found in Toronto's downtown neighbourhoods.⁴⁰ Many of the houses in this neighbourhood either front or back onto Trinity Bellwoods Park. This neighbourhood also contains 19th century warehouses that have been converted into lofts. The artist live/work studios located on Crawford Street are an example of a converted warehouse. This residential neighbourhood along with nearby resources such as the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) provides an environment where I have explored the integration of transitional housing.

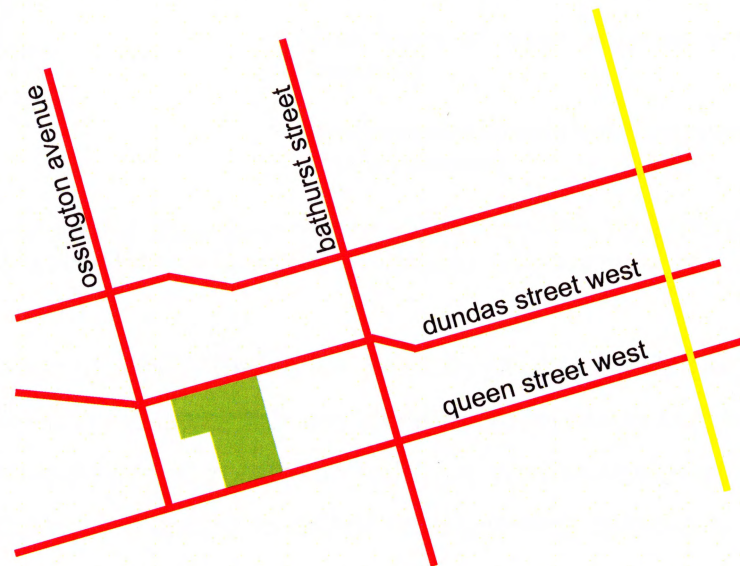


Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood aerial drawing: Illustrates the relationship of the recreational green spaces of the park to the housing that surrounds the park.

Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood is a mixed use neighbourhood. The wide range of public and private spaces provides numerous opportunities for individuals to take advantage of. The recreational activities of the park provides a place to play or relax. While the commercial spaces along Queen Street West provides individuals with access to everyday necessities. As a result, numerous individuals can be found moving through the neighbourhood. A vibrant and energetic neighbourhood is created as a result of the mixed use character.

Transportation in Neighbourhood

The movement of people is easily facilitated in the Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood by public transportation. Public transportation to and from the site is made possible with regular public street car service along Queen Street, Dundas Street, Ossington Avenue and Bathurst Street. The street car service provides access to subway services that help connect this neighbourhood to the many other neighbourhoods in the city. This is beneficial as it allows individuals to maintain contact with other neighbourhoods. Additional services and programs can also be easily accessed and can be brought into the site to aid in meeting the various and changing needs of individuals.

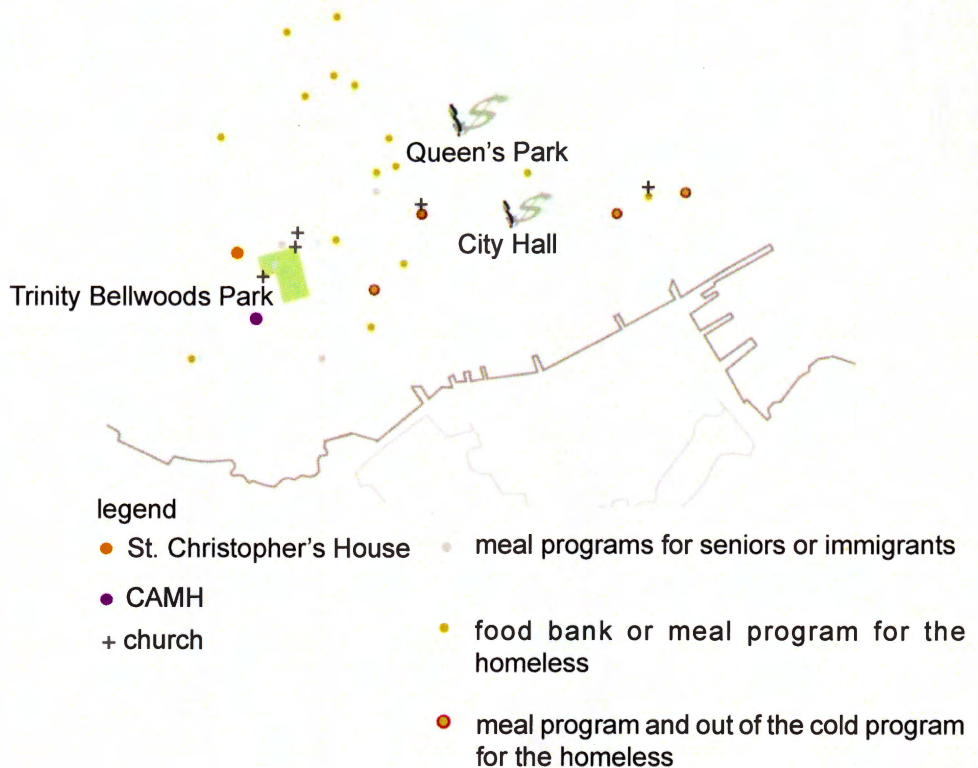


legend

- Trinity Bellwoods Park
- street car line
- subway line

Site transportation diagram: Illustrating streetcar and subway connections.

Trinity Bellwoods Neighbourhood Resources



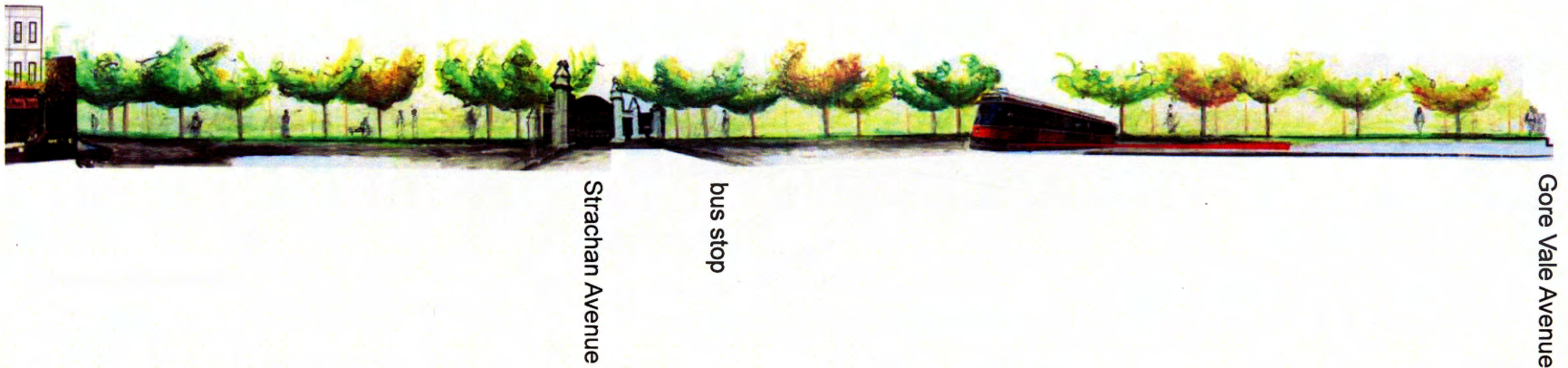
Resource drawing: Illustrates programs and services within Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood that are beneficial to homeless individuals.

Located in the Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood is a wide range of services and resources that are beneficial to homeless individuals who are transitioning from life on the street. Within walking distance, individuals have access to CAMH for counselling services to deal with issues of addiction and mental illness. St. Christopher's House, located on Dundas Street West and Ossington Avenue, also within walking distance provides less advantaged individuals with access to employment preparation programs, adult literacy programs, internet access and computer tutoring and violence against women programs.⁴¹ Spiritual guidance is also available to individuals through the churches located within a short walking distance. Within the larger neighbourhood, there are numerous food banks that provide homeless individuals with access to food, warm meals and drop-in programs.



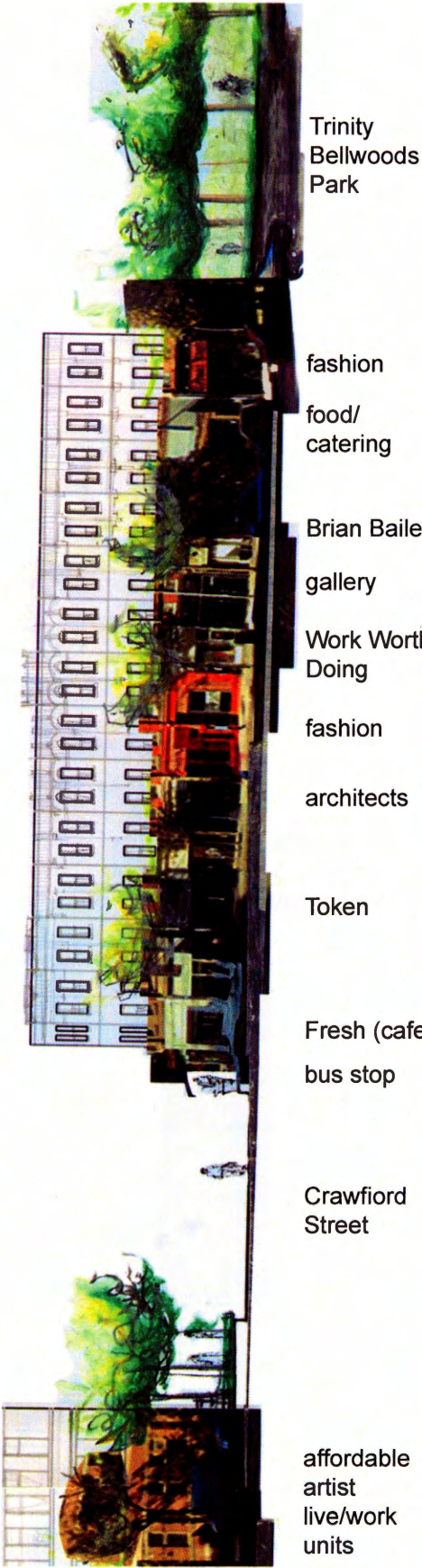
Queen Street West North Elevation (Ossington Avenue to Gore Vale Avenue)

Along this section of Queen Street West, located in the Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood, there is a wide variety of spaces, services and resources for individuals to enjoy and that provide a source for basic needs.



Trinity Bellwoods Park

The park's lush greenery can be seen from Queen Street West. Public transportation provides service along Queen Street allowing access to and from the neighbourhood. The gates to Trinity College still remain providing an entrance into Trinity Bellwoods Park at Strachan Avenue.



Trinity Bellwoods Park

fashion
food/
catering

Brian Bailey
gallery
Work Worth
Doing

fashion
architects

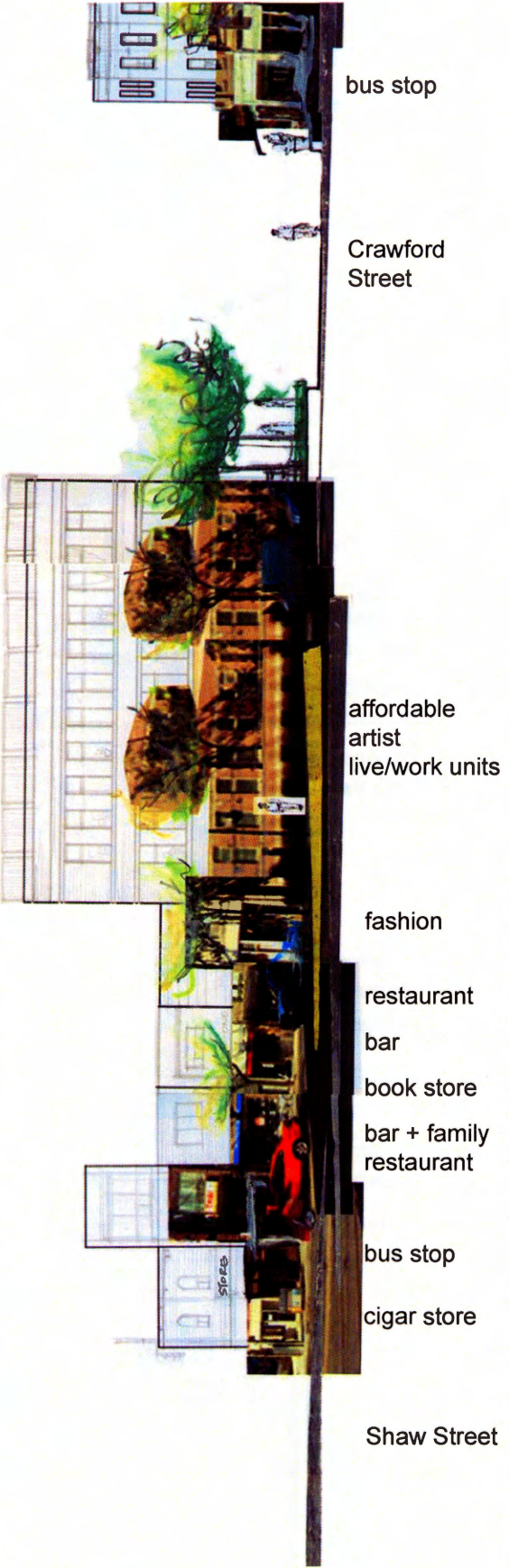
Token

Fresh (cafe)
bus stop

Crawford
Street

affordable
artist
live/work
units

Queen Street West North Elevation - Crawford Street to Trinity Bellwoods Park



bus stop

Crawford
Street

affordable
artist
live/work units

fashion

restaurant

bar

book store

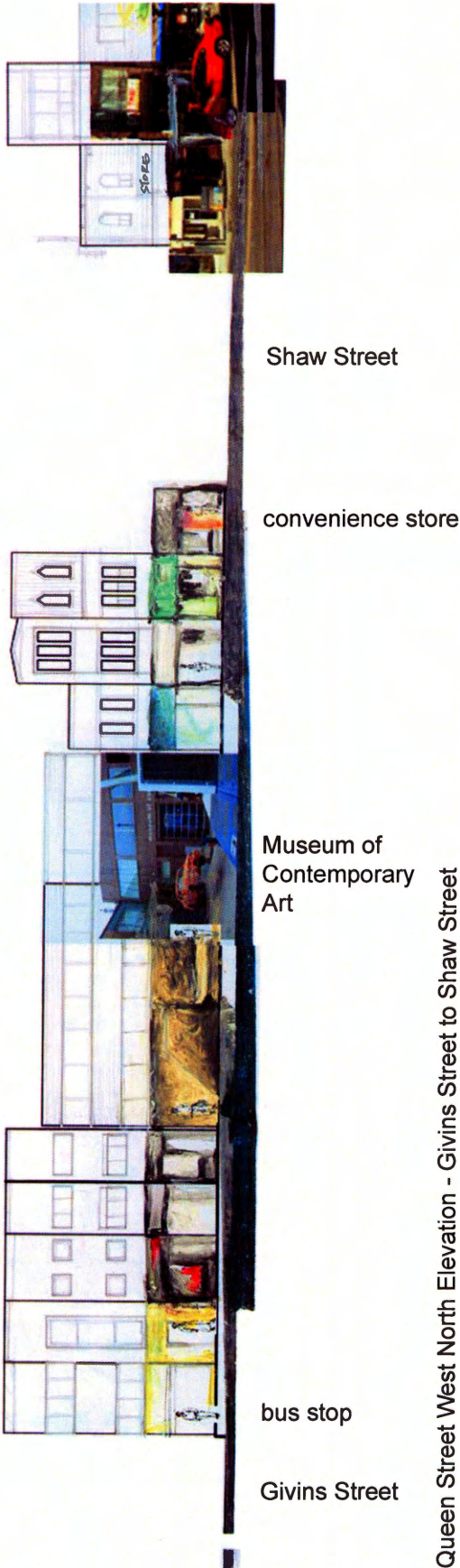
bar + family
restaurant

bus stop

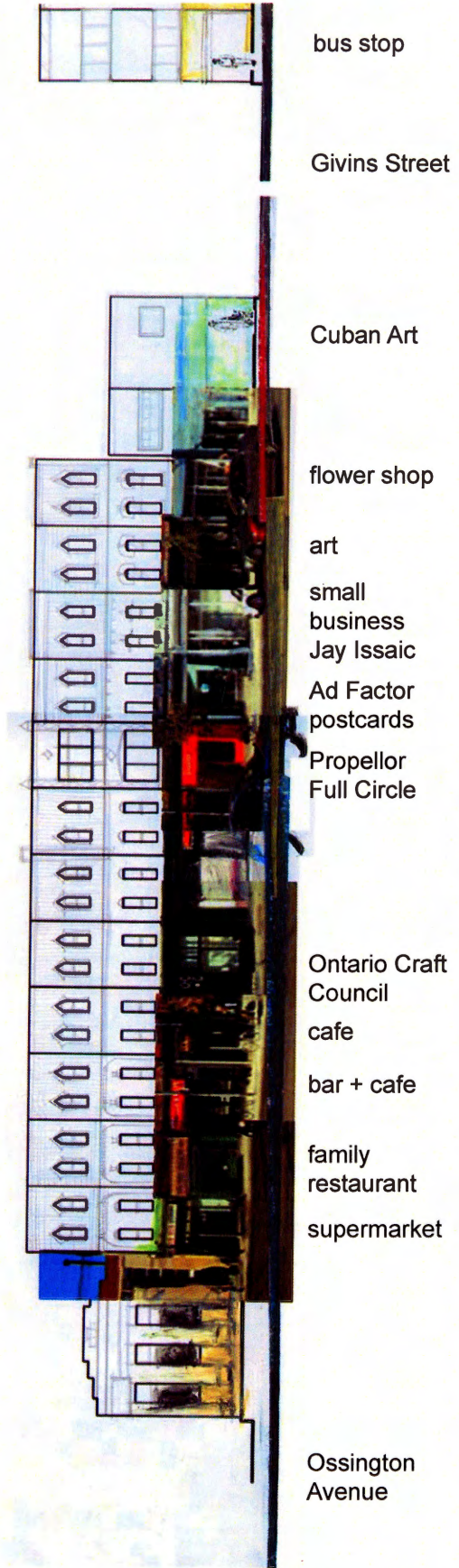
cigar store

Shaw Street

Queen Street West North Elevation - Shaw Street to Crawford Street



Queen Street West North Elevation - Givins Street to Shaw Street



Queen Street West North Elevation - Ossington Avenue to Givins Street



Queen Street West South Elevation

The south side of Queen Street West is home to the Centre of Addiction and Mental Health. The facility is surrounded by greenery that provides an outdoor living space for those using the facility.



bus stop

Queen Street West South Elevation - Entrance to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

This section of Queen Street is often busy with individuals who use this space to converse with each other. Benches found in this location provide a place where individuals can sit and spend some time talking to each other or just people watching.

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)

Located within Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood is the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). CAMH is located on the site of the first permanent mental health facility in Upper Canada. The Provincial Lunatic Asylum was officially opened on this site in January 26, 1850. Throughout the years, there have been numerous name changes that have included the Toronto Lunatic Asylum, the Provincial Lunatic Asylum, "999 Queen Street" and the Queen Street Mental Health Centre. The site was a Provincial Psychiatric Hospital operated by the Government of Ontario until 1998 when the Provincial Psychiatric Hospitals began to be transformed into Public Hospitals.⁴²

CAMH was created in 1997. Today, CAMH is Canada's leading Addiction and Mental Health teaching and research hospital that is fully affiliated with the University of Toronto. One of CAMH's focuses is to help individuals affected by addiction and mental illness by applying the latest in scientific advances, through integrated and compassionate clinical practice, health promotion, education and research.⁴³

Within the CAMH facility, individuals suffering from problems of mental illness and addiction are able to receive help. A wide range of clinical programs, support and rehabilitation services are provided that meet the diverse needs of individuals. The various services available to individuals include: assessment, brief early intervention, continuing care and family support.⁴⁴ This supportive resource will be a valuable asset to the location of this thesis. It will provide a place where individuals seeking help for issues of mental illness and addictions can access help.

SITE STRATEGY

Design Guidelines for Introducing Transitional Housing and Services into Trinity Bellwoods Neighbourhood

How to Locate

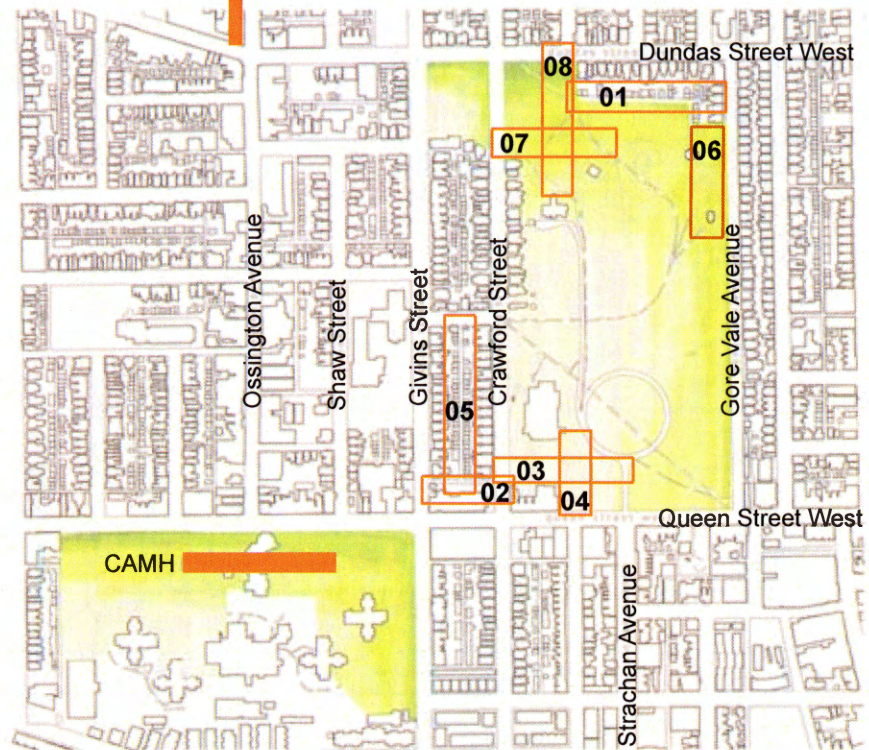
1. Must be within close proximity to Trinity Bellwoods Park.
2. Must be within walking distance to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) and St. Christopher's House to take advantage of existing programs and services.
3. Must maintain close proximity to Queen Street West in order to use Queen Street's energy and creativity to feed, support and nourish newly introduced program and spaces.
4. Must maintain appropriate distance to sensitive neighbourhood areas such as schools and children's playgrounds.

Design

1. Must be an extension of the urban fabric.
Located in an evolving and changing neighbourhood, the design must work with and respond to the existing urban fabric.
2. Fill (Missing Tooth) Strategy
To utilize unused, neglected or empty spaces in between the existing urban fabric, transforming these spaces into healthy and livable spaces.
3. Must not jeopardize or relocate other individual's existing housing or living spaces.
4. Must be sensitive to existing living and neighbourhood spaces. Should not compromise day lighting to existing housing/ living spaces or destroy active green spaces.

Site Locations within Trinity Bellwoods Neighbourhood

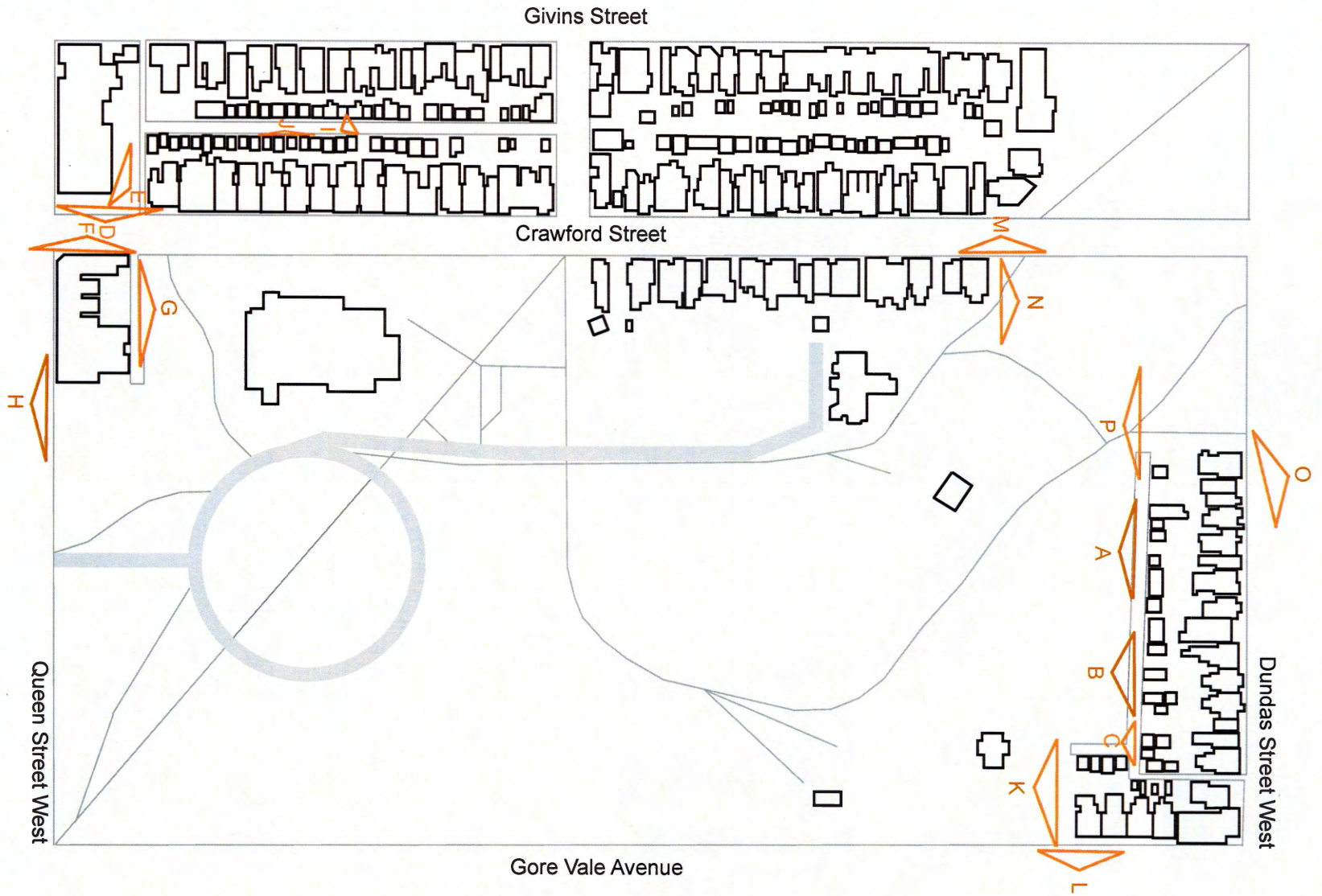
St. Christopher's House



Eight selected sites within Trinity Bellwoods Park

Based on the guidelines for introducing transitional housing and services into the Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood, eight site locations have been selected (see above). Within these eight locations, programme will be weaved into the existing fabric to meet the needs of the homeless individual transitioning from life on the street. It is important to note that all sites maintain a close proximity to Trinity Bellwoods Park and are within a short walking distance to each other and to existing neighbourhood resources that include CAMH and St. Christopher's House.

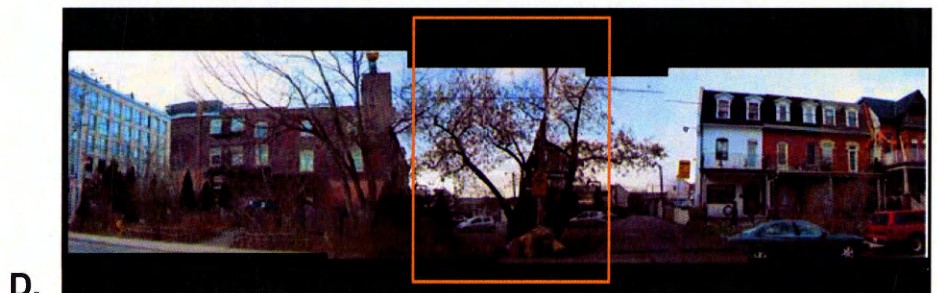
Site Images and Character





Site 1: Laneway Condition

Within Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood are a series of laneways. Along these laneways, garages provide a place where individuals can store their cars. In a city where public transportation is easily accessible and where some individuals do not have their own means of transportation, the garage provides an unique opportunity to explore the integration of transitional housing into what can sometimes be an empty urban structure. Housing in laneways is not uncommon in Toronto. In this case, the structure of the garage provides a shell where the insertion and integration of transitional housing is explored.





E.

Site 2: Artistic Live/Work Condition

This site provides an opportunity to integrate transitional housing adjacent to live/work studios for artists. This will allow previously homeless individuals and artists to work along side each other thus fostering a sense of community.



F.



G.

Site 3: Crawford Street + Park Condition

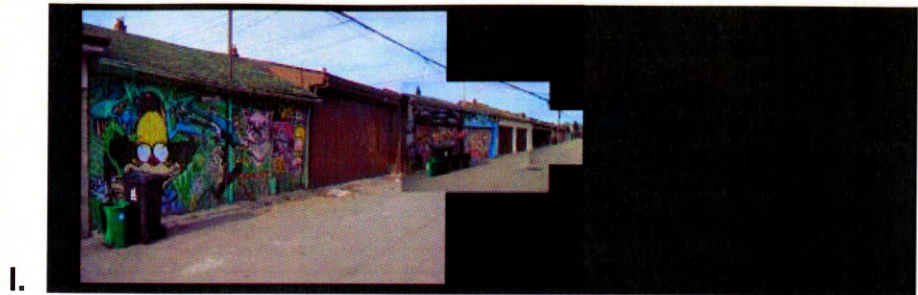
This site is located north of an existing cafe and retail spaces with housing above and south of the Trinity Bellwoods Community Centre. This site provides direct access to Trinity Bellwoods Park.



H.

Site 4: Queen Street West Condition

Queen Street West is a prominent, vibrant and energetic street. This site provides an opportunity to explore the integration of programme so that it has a visible and prominent presence within the larger community.



Site 5: Laneway Condition

Similar to site 1, this laneway condition also provides the unique opportunity to explore the integration of transitional housing into an existing laneway structure.



Site 6: Residential Street Condition (Gore Vale Avenue)

This location features a small area with benches for individuals to sit and gather. This site provides an opportunity to explore how home can be integrated and strengthen this existing public space.

M.



N.



Site 7: Residential Street Condition (Crawford Street)

This site was selected because of its location adjacent to existing housing and Trinity Bellwoods Park. This site provides the opportunity to explore the integration of transitional housing between the public and private sphere.

O.



P.



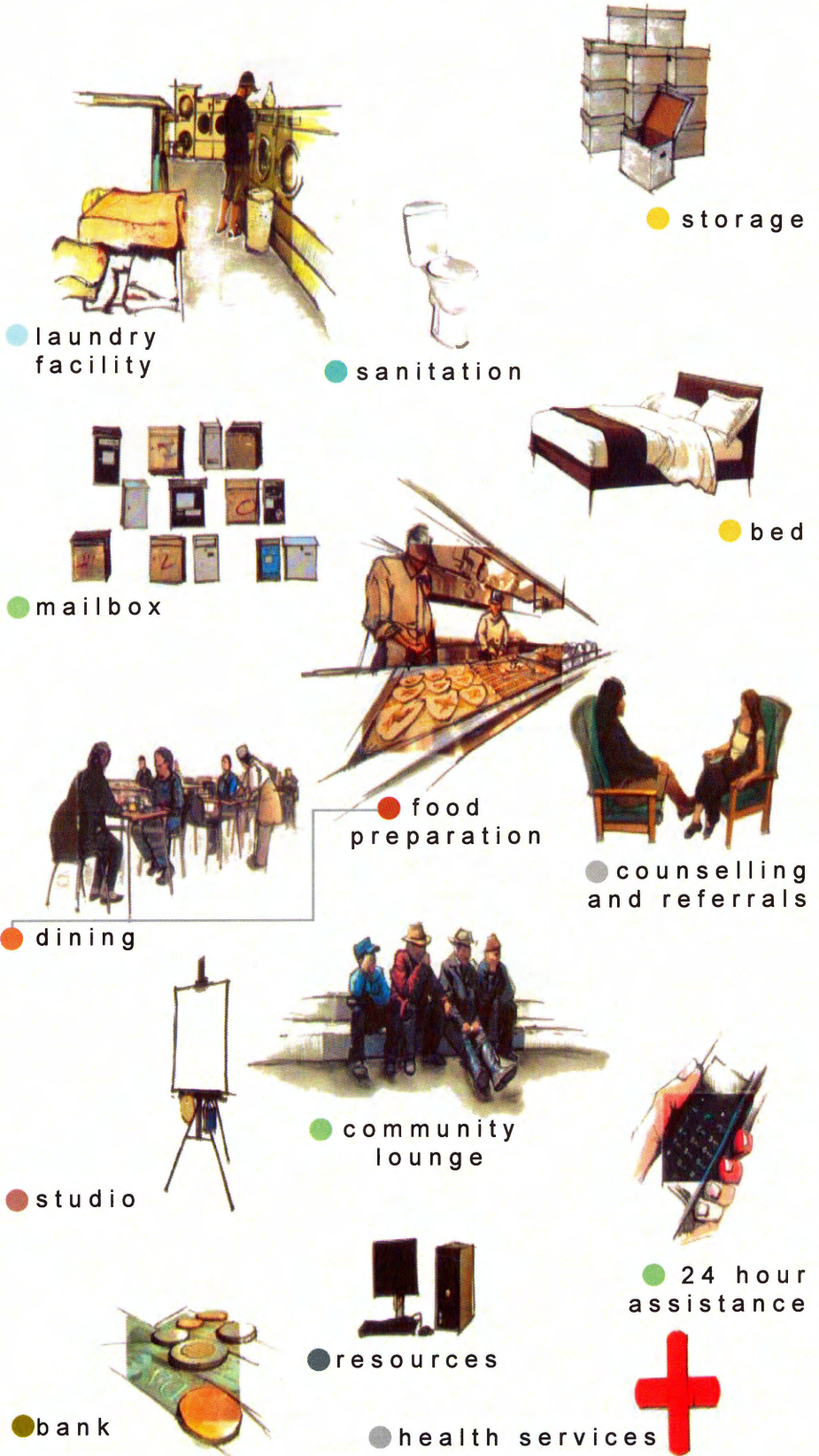
Site 8: Dundas Street West Condition

Dundas Street West is a busy and prominent street in this neighbourhood. This site has access to public transportation and is surrounded by residential neighbourhoods.

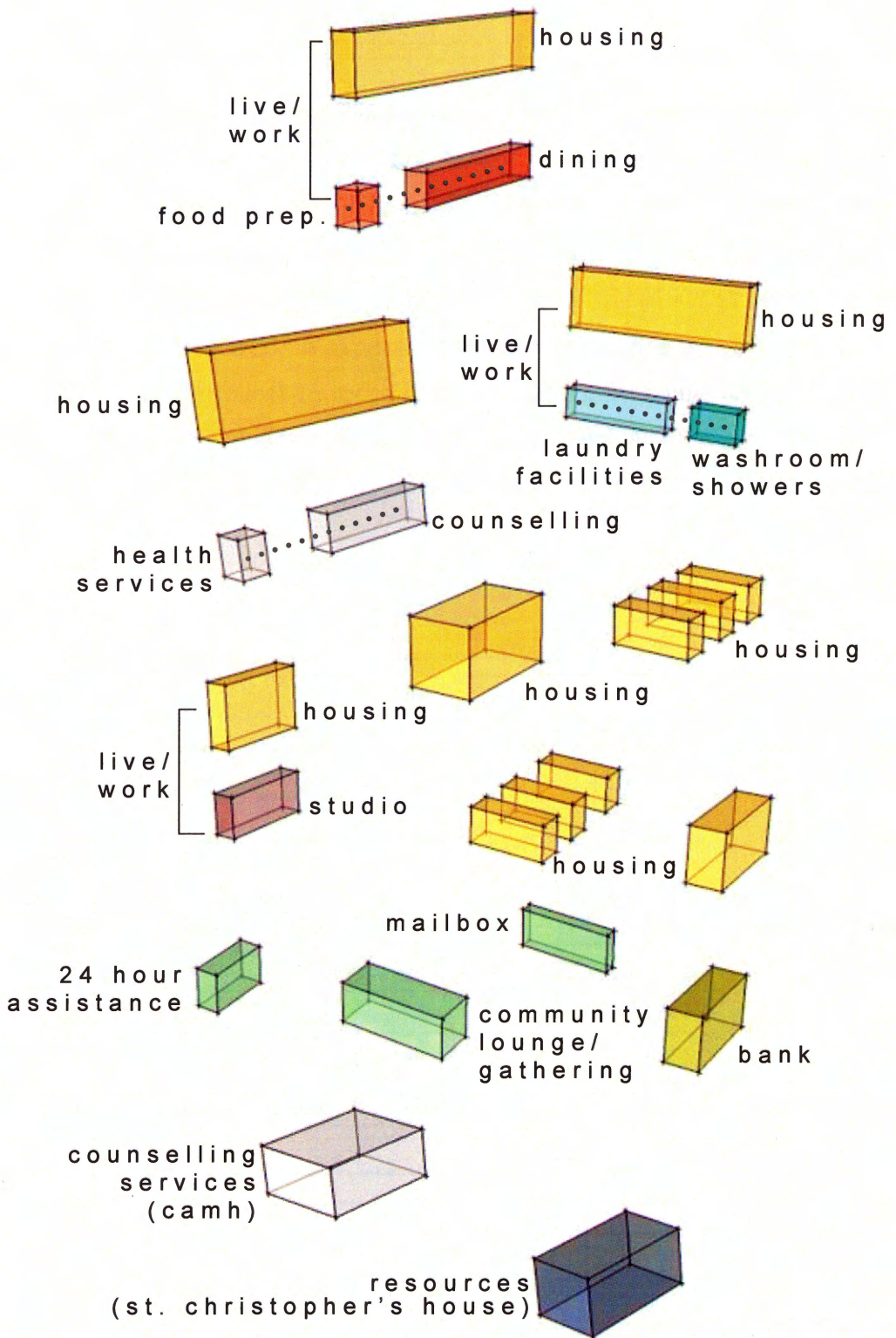
PROGRAMME STRATEGY

When transitioning from life on the street, a homeless individual requires more than housing. Various services are required to meet the diverse needs of individuals so that they have the opportunity to transition from life on the street. The Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood currently provides counselling for addiction and mental health issues at CAMH. St. Christopher's House provides employment preparation, literacy services and access to computers/internet. These services are beneficial but they are not enough. Additional services such as food preparation space, dining space, bank services, mailbox service, laundry facilities, storage space, studio space, a community lounge/gathering space and 24 hour assistance are also needed to meet the needs of homeless individuals as they transition.

Food preparation and dining space will provide individuals with the opportunity to learn about nutrition and how to prepare healthy meals. Laundry facilities will provide a place for individuals to clean their clothes. Health services provides assistance and information about available health services as well as the replacement of lost or stolen health cards. Mailboxes will provide individuals with an address and a means to having access to services. A bank will provide individuals with a place to cash cheques and the opportunity to start a personal savings account. Studio space allows individuals to explore their creative skills and to develop or gain new skills. A community lounge/gathering space provides a communal space where individuals can gather, voice their opinions, raise their concerns and a place where they can establish rules and make decisions for their community thus ensuring that their changing needs are being met. This space also has the potential to hold workshops that the community may find beneficial. Twenty four hour assistance gives individuals within the community access to help when it is needed. Administration offices and access to permanent housing information is also located here.



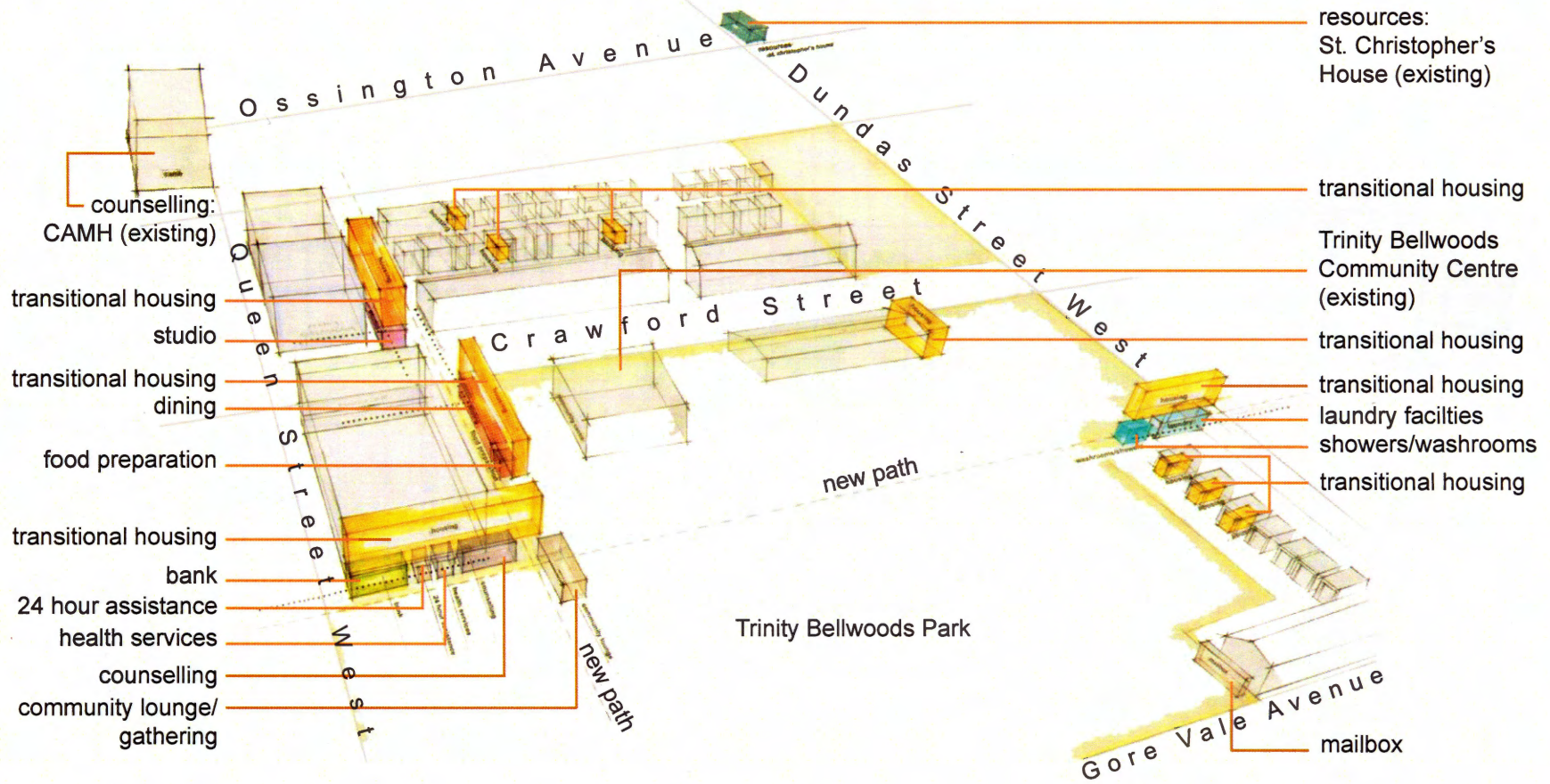
Programme drawing: Illustrates the various programme spaces that will be integrated into the Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood.



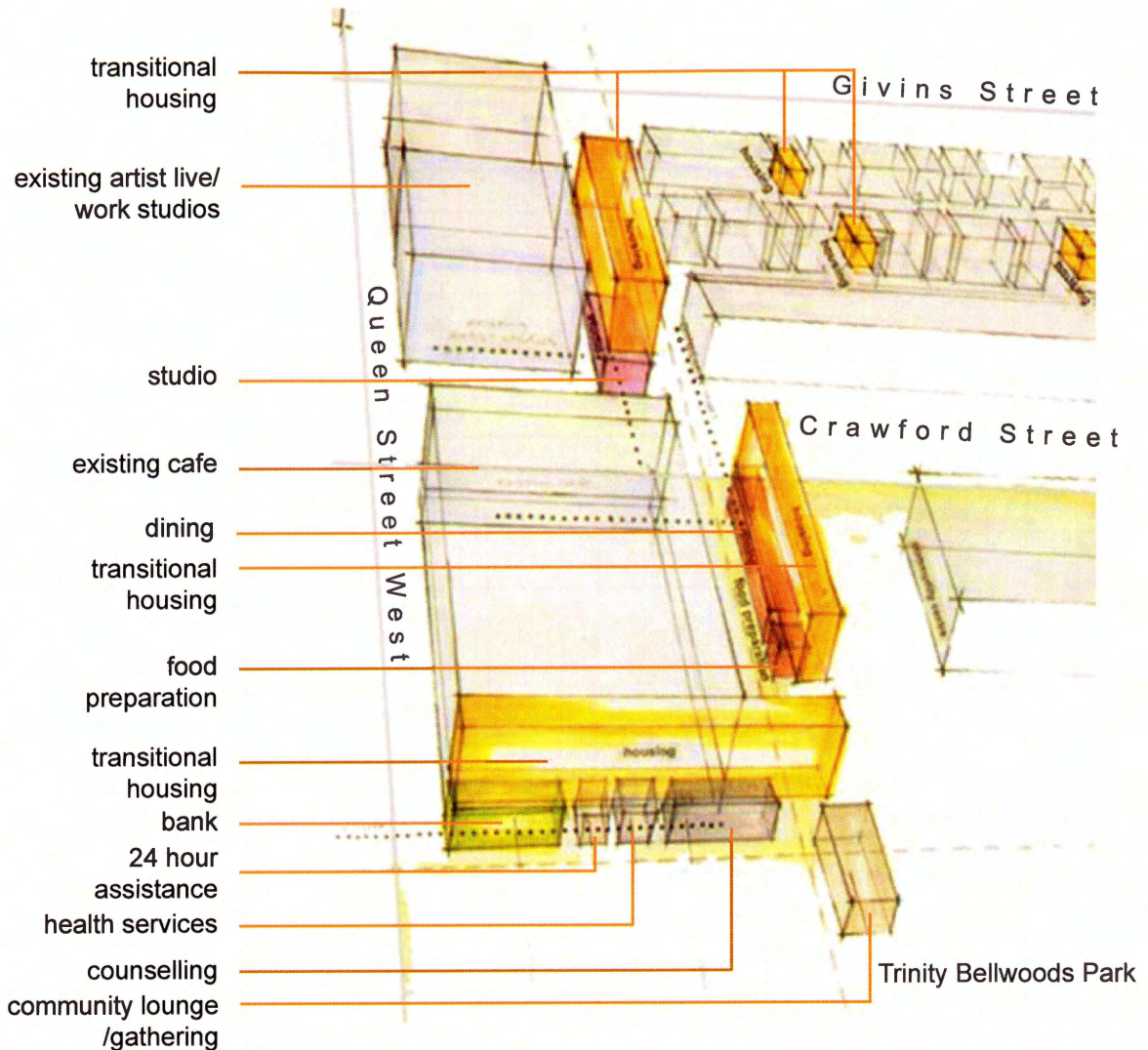
Fragmented programme diagram: Illustrates the fragmentation of programme (housing and services) to be strategically integrated into Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood. Diagram also illustrates the potential for a live/work relationship between housing and some of the services to be provided.

Programme Integration into Trinity Bellwoods Neighbourhood

The programme will be strategically integrated into the Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood so that it reduces the sense of isolation and builds upon and fosters a relationship with the programs that currently exist within the neighbourhood. Propositions that interpret the idea of home will be explored as an extension of the existing housing fabric and will also be explored in spaces that utilize existing unused or empty spaces by recognizing and reconsidering the nature of these existing spaces. Services will be strategically located to support interaction both at the neighbourhood scale and the human scale.

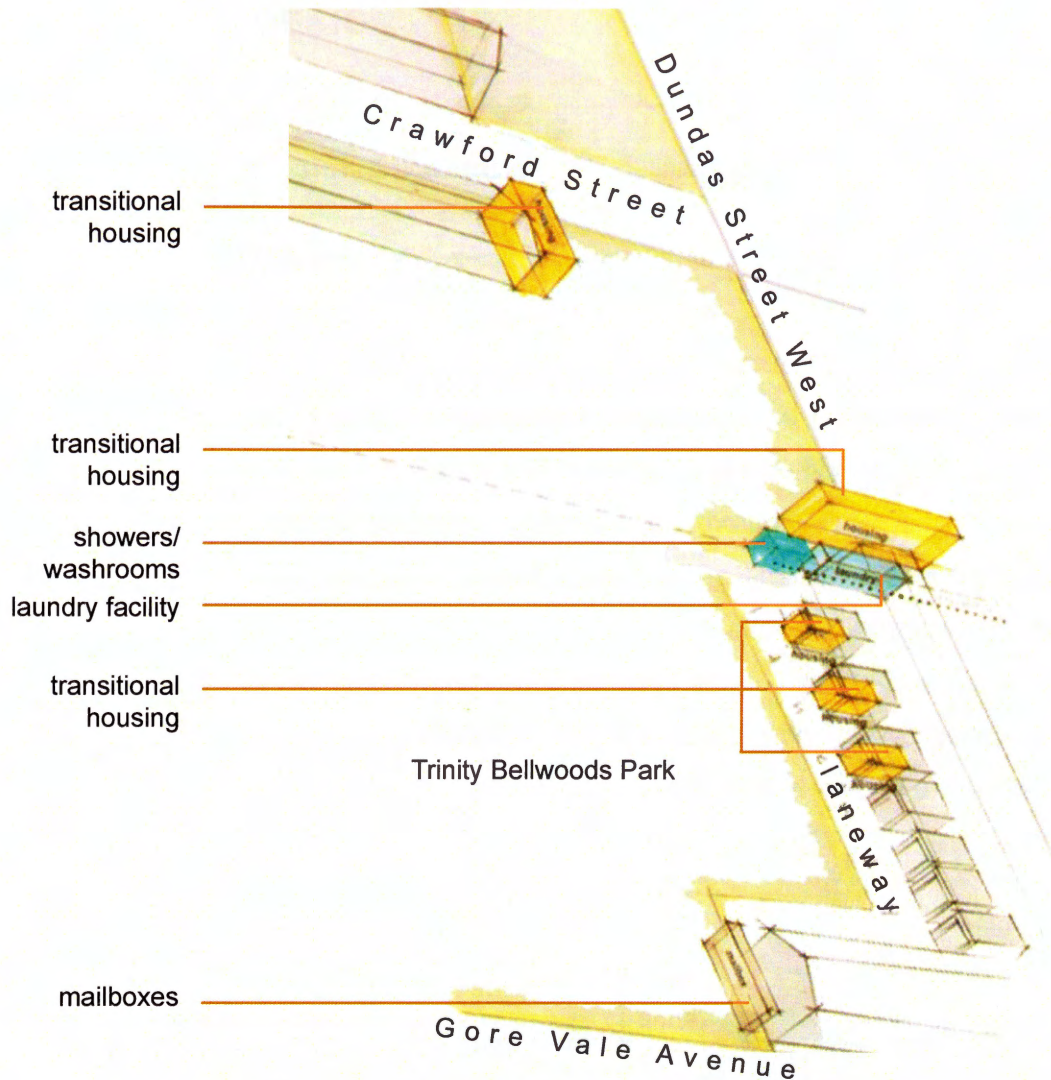


Programme strategically integrated into the Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood.



Programme strategically integrated into the Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood along Queen Street West.

The bank, health services, and 24 hour assistance are located along Queen Street West, an energetic and prominent street, to assert their presence in the neighbourhood. Dining space is located along Crawford Street to create a relationship with the existing dining spaces in the community which also provides the opportunity for dining to extend to the outdoors. Studio space adjacent to existing artist live/work studios fosters a relationship with local artists. Transitional housing is integrated and explored both in the laneway garages and above service spaces.



Programme strategically integrated into the Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood along Dundas Street West.

Laundry facilities, showers/washrooms and transitional housing are located along Dundas Street West to take advantage of the street presence. Transitional housing is integrated adjacent to existing housing fabric along Crawford Street so that individuals are not isolated but rather are part of existing housing community. Mailboxes will provide an address for individuals and will extend the existing housing fabric along Gore Vale Avenue into the park where an existing seating area is currently located. Transitional housing is explored within the laneway garages that front onto the north end of Trinity Bellwoods Park.

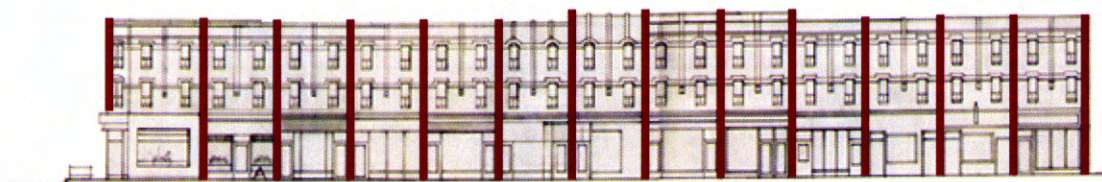
DESIGN

Design Strategy

Integration through a Kit of Parts

The integration of transitional housing and services for the homeless into the Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood is explored through the use of a kit of parts that is made up of a combination of architectural features and site elements found throughout the Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood. The kit of parts will be used to weave the programme into the neighbourhood to create a stronger relationship between transitional housing and services for the homeless and the existing urban fabric. The kit of parts is made up of party walls, garages, street and pathways, front porches, benches and natural elements.

Party Walls



Drawing of party walls along Queen Street West

Party walls are present along Queen Street West. The rhythm of the party walls is explored as a way of extending and building onto the existing urban fabric. Party walls provide a scenario in which transitional housing and services for the homeless can be explored within.

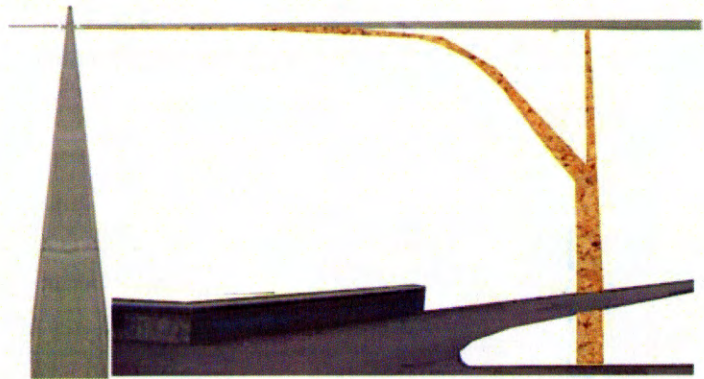
Garages



Photograph of garages along laneway (Site No.5)

Garages provide an unique opportunity to explore the insertion and integration of home. The garage door opening provides an insertion point to explore the integration of transitional housing. The existing opening provides flexibility that allows housing to be inserted when it is needed and removed when the individual has found permanent housing without altering or compromising the existing structure.

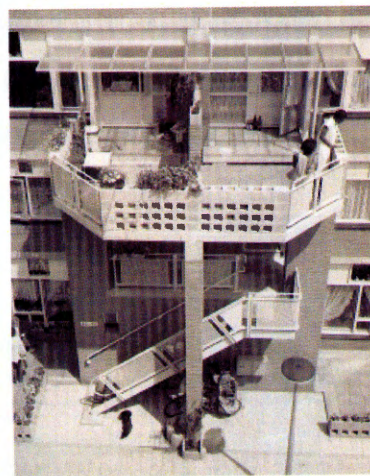
Street and Pathways



Drawing of pathways within Trinity Bellwoods Park

Streets and pathways allow individuals to move throughout the Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood with ease. Whether paths are concrete sidewalks, asphalt walkways, gravel or dirt, paths make up an important part of the neighbourhood. The integration of existing pathways and the introduction of new pathways strengthens a sense of community and helps connect programme spaces together.

The street can provide a place of social contact, a communal living room that supports dialogue between local residents. This was achieved in Herman Hertzberger's project Haarlemmer Houttuinen Housing in Amsterdam, Netherlands. In this housing project, Hertzberger transforms the concept of public and private into differentiated spheres of responsibility, using the dwelling units as construction material to form the street. As a result, the houses and the street are spatially and programmatically interdependent.⁴⁵



Haarlemmer Houttuinen Housing in Amsterdam, Netherlands. Herman Hertzberger, *Lessons for Student in Architecture*, 103.

Front Porches



Photograph of front porches located within Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood.

Front porches provide a space between the private and public sphere where individuals can sit, gather and watch as neighbours and visitors pass by.

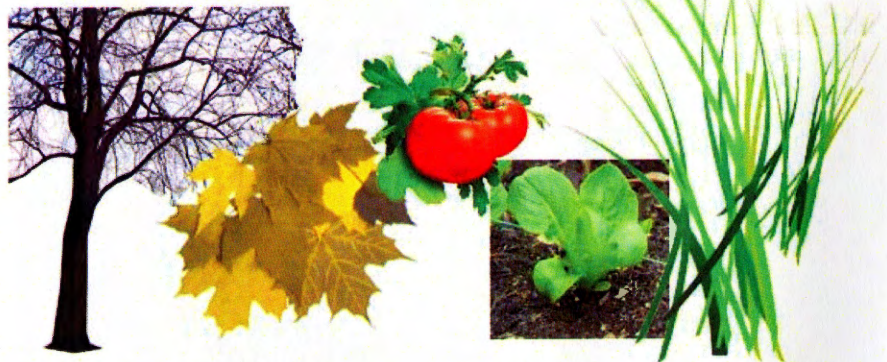
Benches



Photograph of benches found in Trinity Bellwoods Park.

Benches can be found throughout the Trinity Bellwoods Park. Benches provide a place to sit, rest and a place where spontaneous conversation can occur thus strengthening a sense of community.

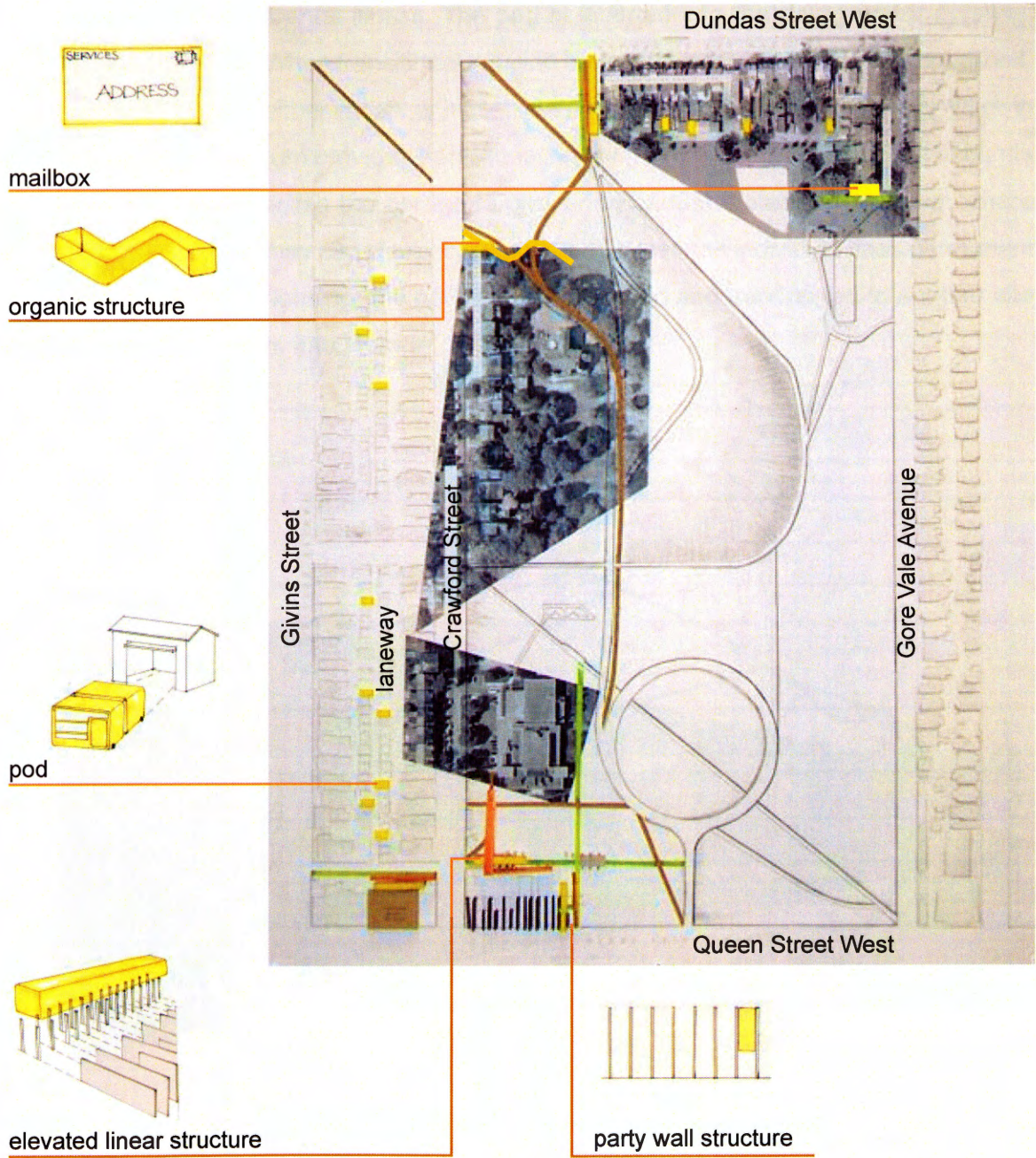
Natural Elements



Collage of natural elements

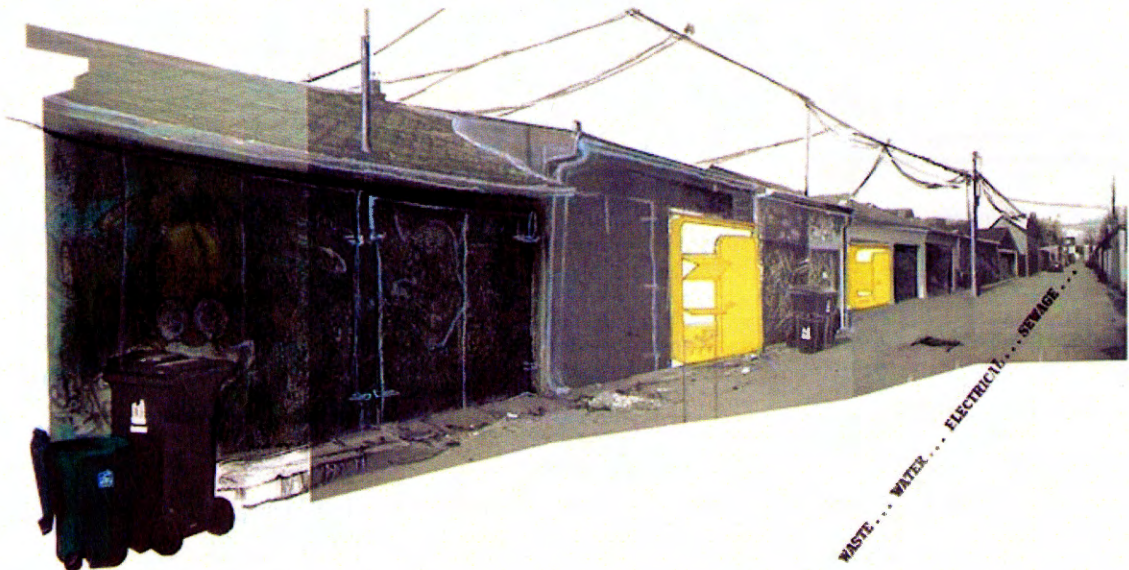
Trinity Bellwoods Park consists of lush greenery. Trees, grass and flowers provide individuals with a connection to nature. Weaving existing natural elements into and through programme spaces and the introduction of herbs and vegetable gardens in dining and food preparation spaces strengthens the relationship between the built form and the existing natural environment

Design Interventions

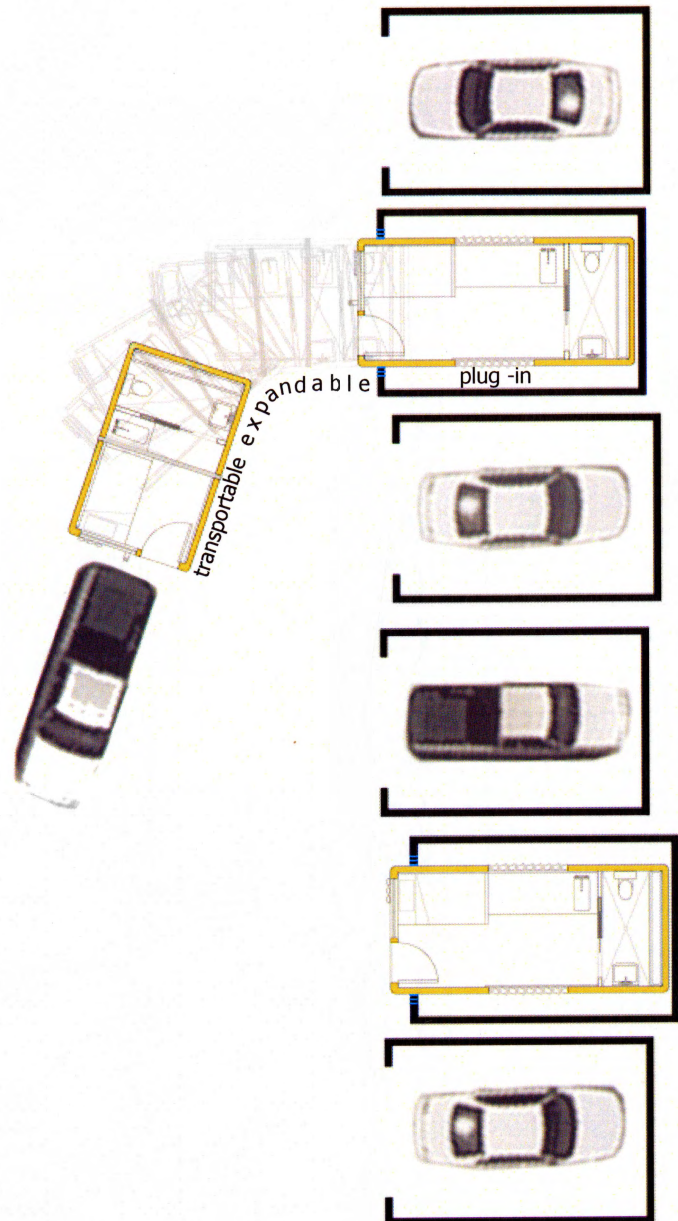


The Pod

An expandable pod is designed to be easily transported throughout the Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood to provide transitional housing for homeless individuals seeking help for issues of addiction and mental illness. The pod is inserted into the garage door opening. When transitional housing is needed, garages in the neighbourhood, either vacant or leased out are leased to the housing agency which in turn provides transitional housing to those in need. The unit expands within the garage to give an individual a place of their own where they can sleep, cook and bath. When the individual finds permanent housing, the pod is easily removed and transported to another site or into storage.

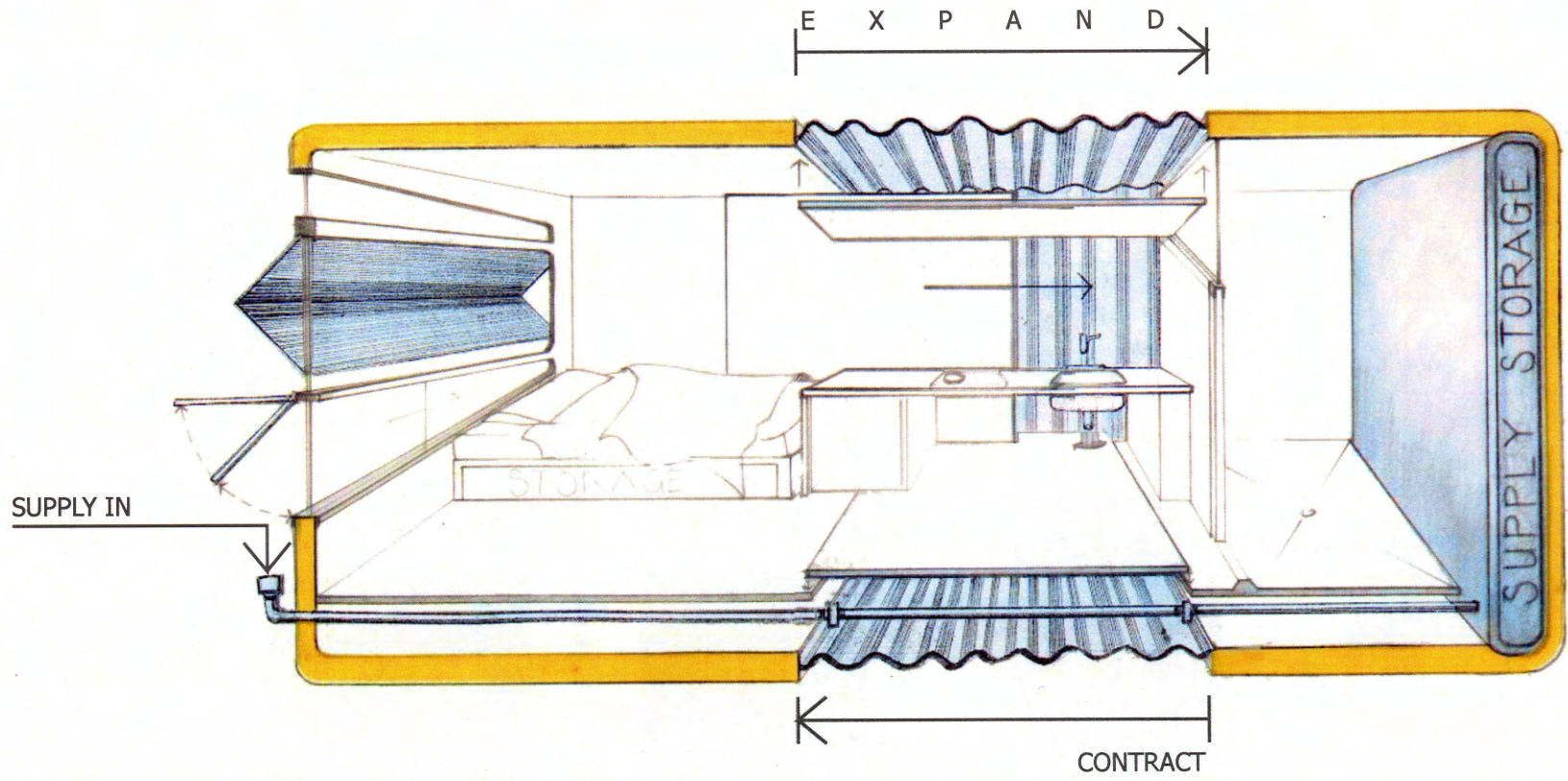


Drawing of pod in laneway (site no. 5). The garage door remains open and provides an overhang for the front door. The pod projects from the face of the existing garage structure, asserting its presence in the neighbourhood. Adjustable window screens make up a large part of the pod's facade to allow light and air into the unit when desired by the inhabitant.

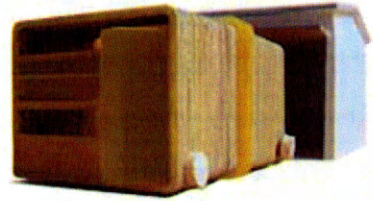


Plan of pod in laneway garage.

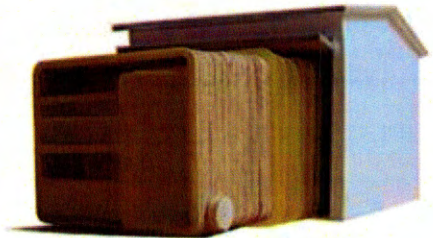
The pod is designed on wheels to allow the pod to be easily transported throughout the Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood. The pod remains stationary once in the garage and rests on the wheels, protecting the pod from the cold, uneven or wet ground conditions. The gap between the pod and the garage door opening is filled in with a flexible and breathable membrane. Once inside the garage, the pod expands to allow for more livable space inside.



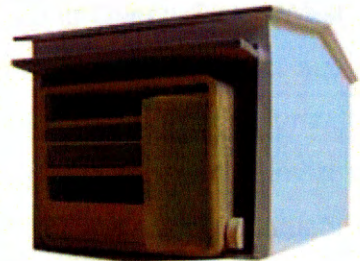
Section of pod illustrates adjustable window screens, living, resting, kitchen and washroom spaces.



Pod contracted



Expansion of pod



Pod inserted into laneway garage



Pod elevation

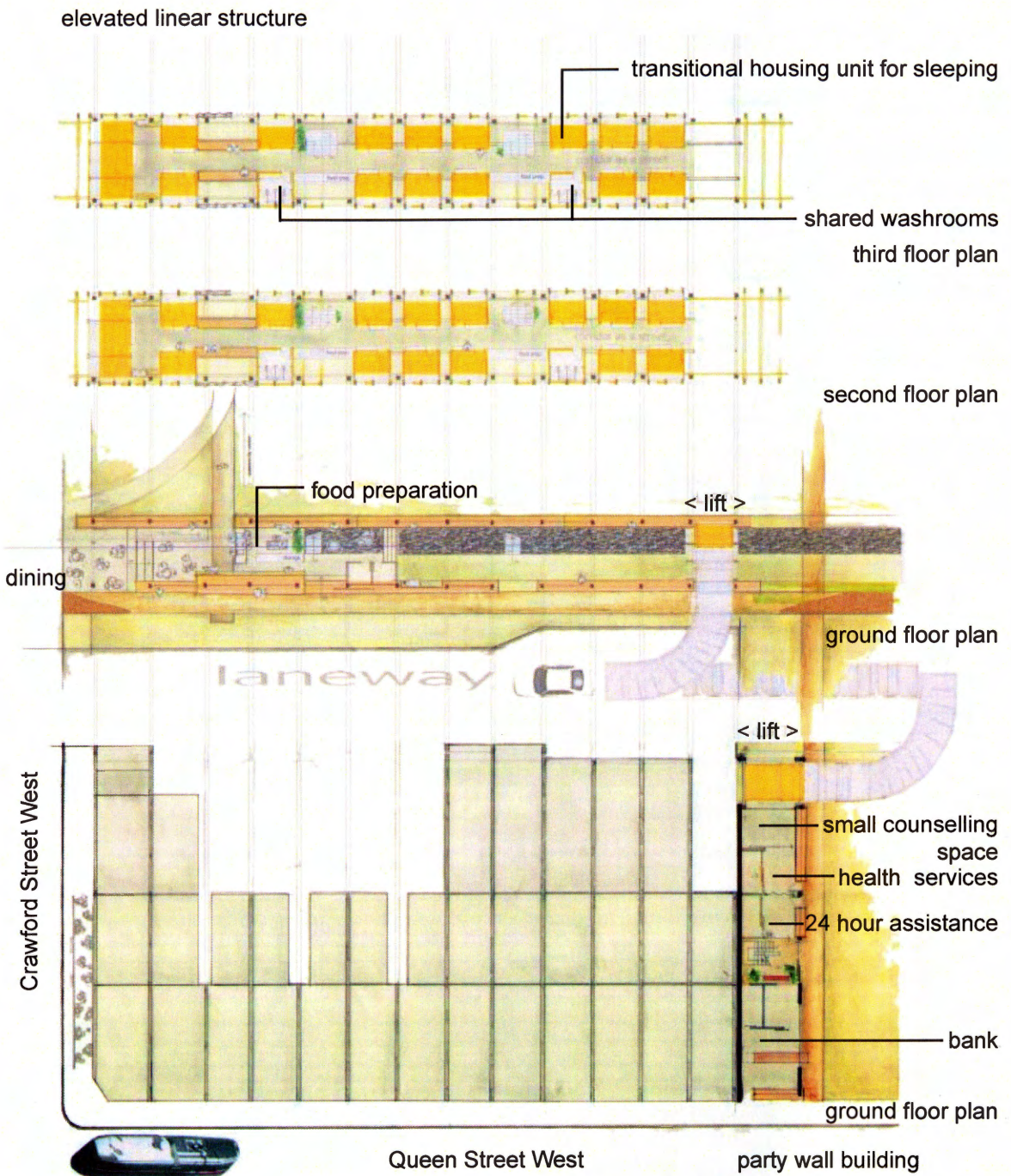
Pod model photos illustrate expansion and movement of pod into a typical laneway garage.

Elevated Linear Structure

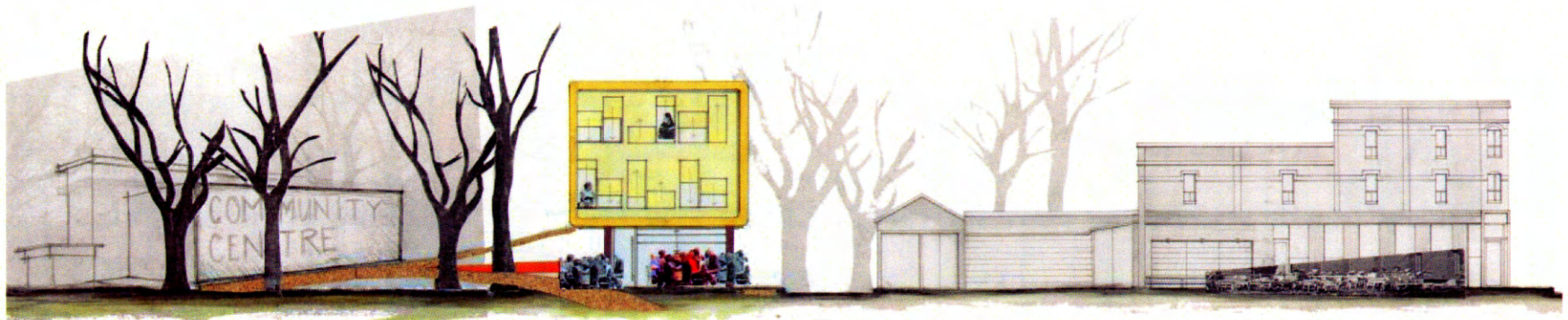
This structure is based on the rhythm of the existing party walls along Queen Street West. The rhythm of the party walls is extended northward to establish the rhythm of columns that support a linear frame which in turn supports the pod that provides transitional housing. An open concept plan at ground level exposes the dining and food preparation space to the larger community. Pathways and natural elements are designed to extend into the structure to encourage the movement of people into the structure to foster a connection between the building and the larger community.

Party Wall Structure

The rhythm of the party walls along Queen Street West is explored to extend the existing urban fabric along Queen Street West. The extension of the party walls provides a structure that supports transitional housing. Services are explored at ground level, continuing the pattern of services along the street level. Similar to the neighbouring buildings that provide housing on the second and third floor, transitional housing is explored on the second and third floor.



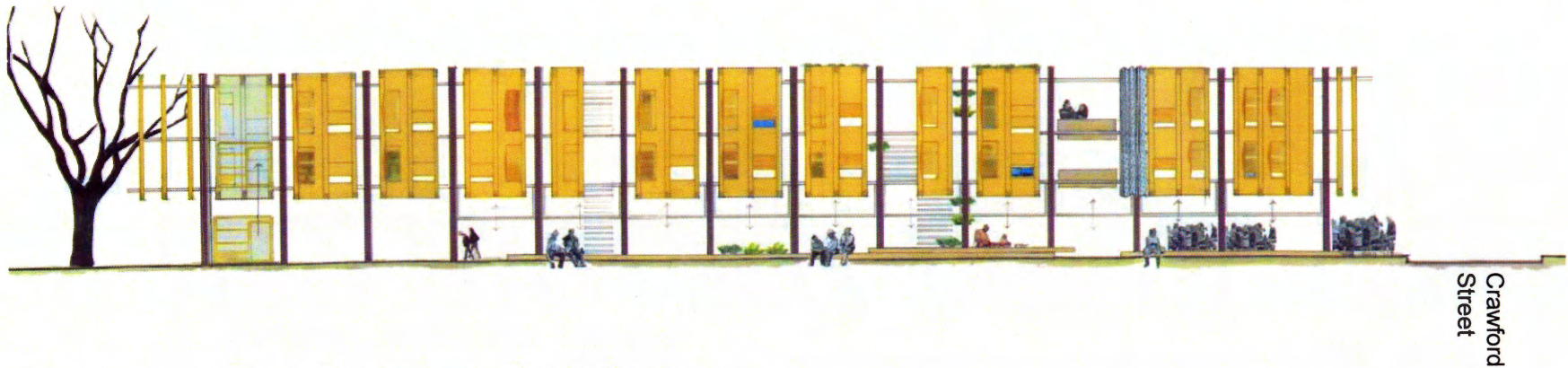
Plan of elevated linear structure and party wall structure. A kit of parts, including party walls, natural elements and new pathways, is incorporated into the design of both structures to foster a connection between the structures and the existing urban fabric.



laneway

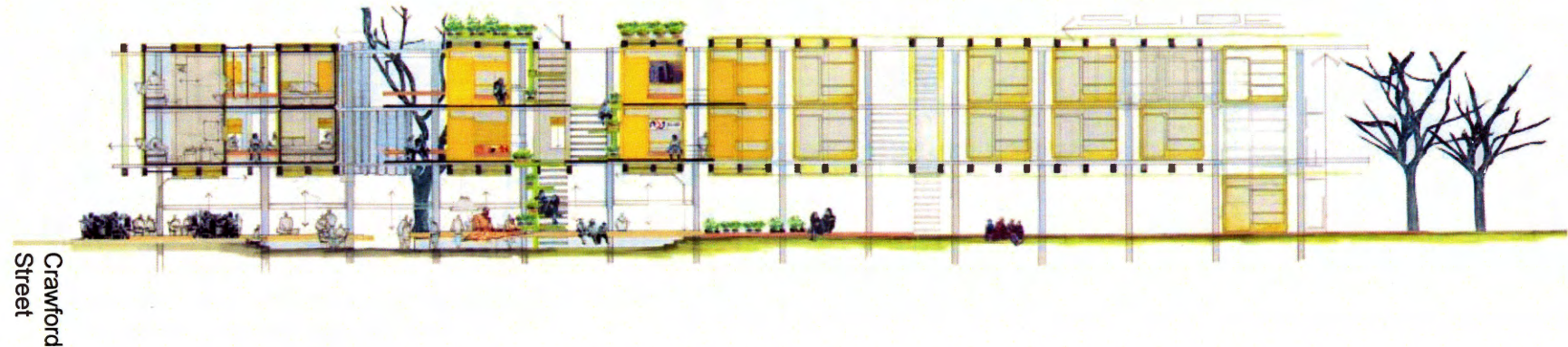
Elevated linear structure elevation along Crawford Street.

Operable windows and doors allow activities on the ground floor to move from the indoors to the outdoors. Existing and new pathways link the building to the existing community spaces.



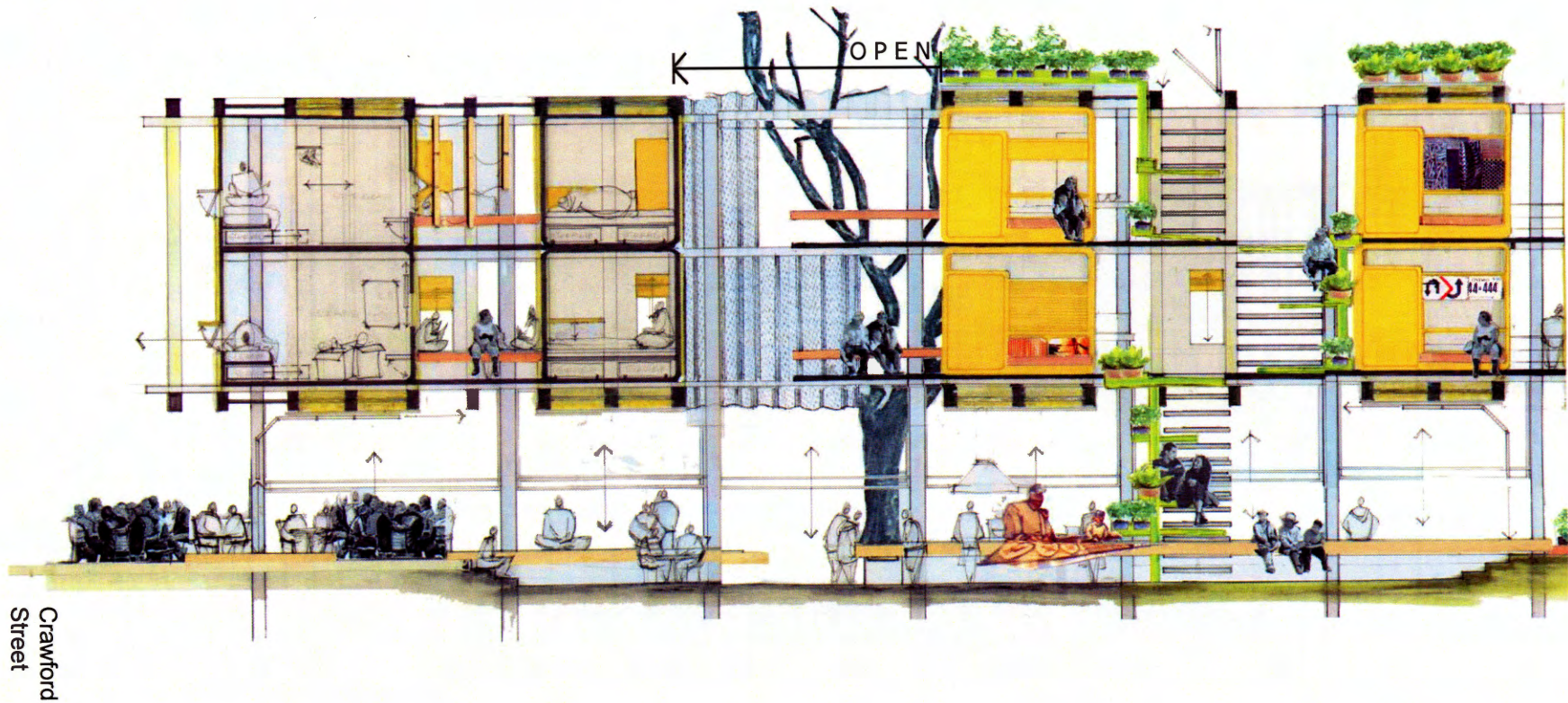
Elevated linear structure elevation along Trinity Bellwoods Park.

Open concept ground floor allows activities to remain visible to the larger community. Elevated above the ground and supported by the column structure are transitional housing units for sleeping. Each unit has two adjustable window screens that are operated by the inhabitants, making the facade as dynamic as the individuals living inside.



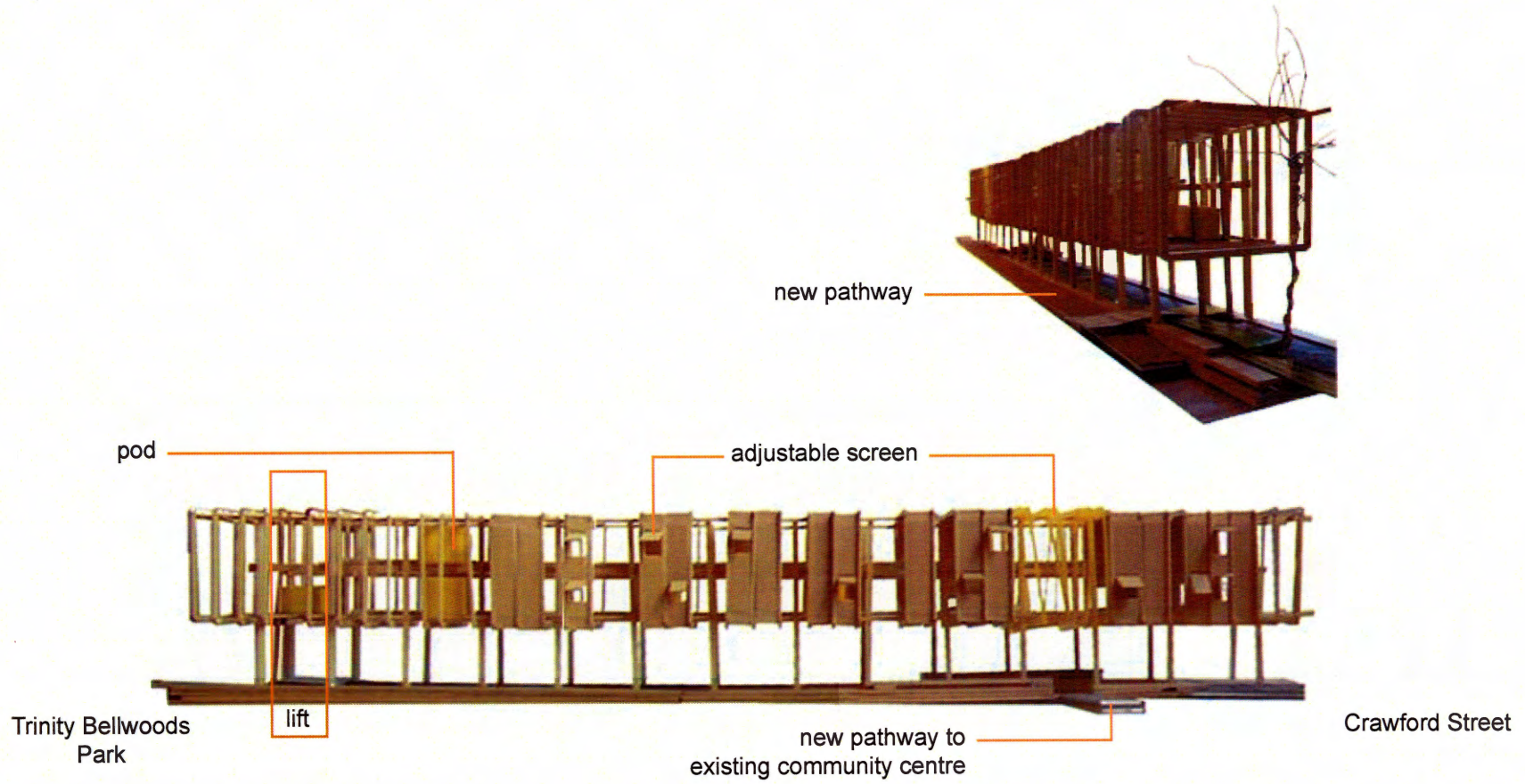
Section of elevated linear structure.

Section illustrates the activities and quality of spaces within the structure. Natural elements are designed to continue beneath the building, transforming into herb and vegetable planters that are incorporated into the circulation space and terminate on the roof, creating a vegetable garden. This provides individuals with the opportunity to grow, care for, cook and give back to their community.

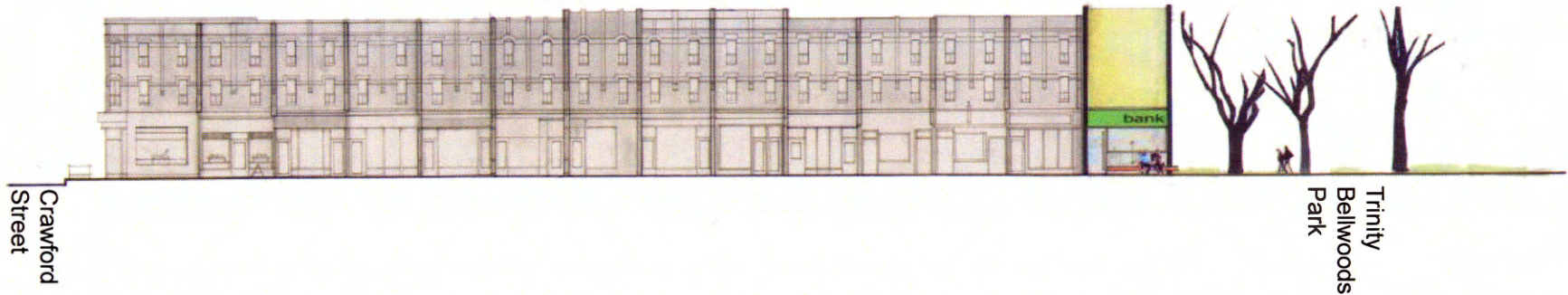


Partial section of elevated linear structure.

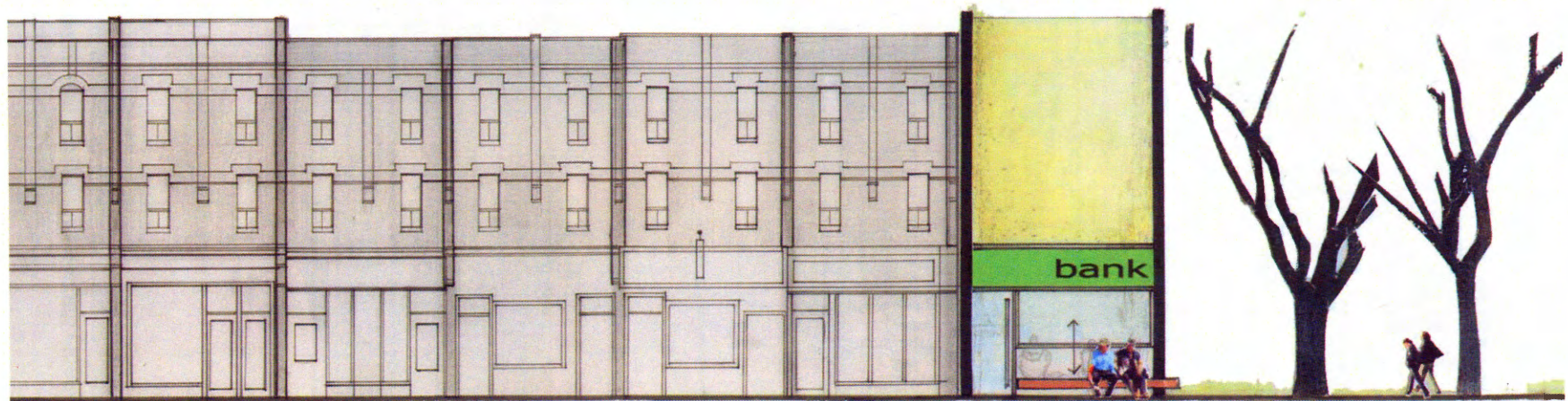
Section illustrates the relationship between communal spaces located on ground level and private sleeping spaces above. The pod's sleeping half is inserted between columns, where the expanding membrane attaches to the building's skin. The adjustable window screens are located in each sleeping space and allow an individual to control light and air within their own personal space. The corridor becomes a public street. Adjustable screens have the potential to be customized by the inhabitants along the corridor. These screens operated by the inhabitant animate the corridor. Benches attached to the pod along the corridor provide a place to sit, rest and converse, similar to the front porches found throughout the existing Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood.



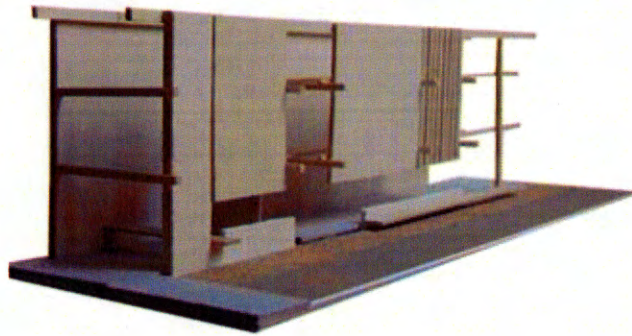
Model photos of elevated linear structure.



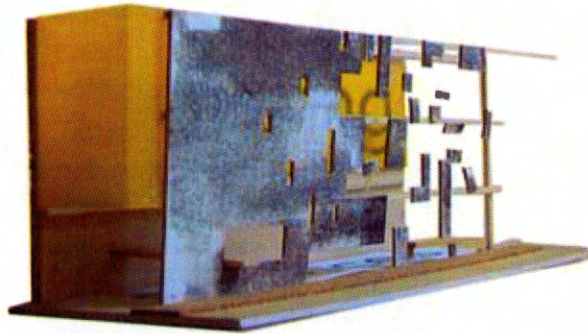
Queen Street West elevation illustrates the connection of the party wall structure to the existing urban fabric. Building onto the existing urban fabric, this new structure provides services and transitional housing. A bank at street level provides an important service for those transitioning from life on the street.



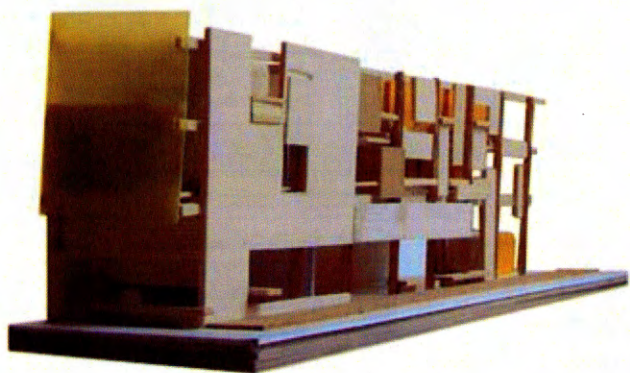
Party wall structure elevation. The bank elevation was designed with the user in mind. The building is designed to bring attention to the issues surrounding those that are homeless rather than hiding or disguising the issues. The bank elevation incorporates a bench along Queen Street West to provide a place where individuals can sit, converse and watch passersby. Adjustable windows allow the indoors and outdoors to become one.



Elevation study no. 1

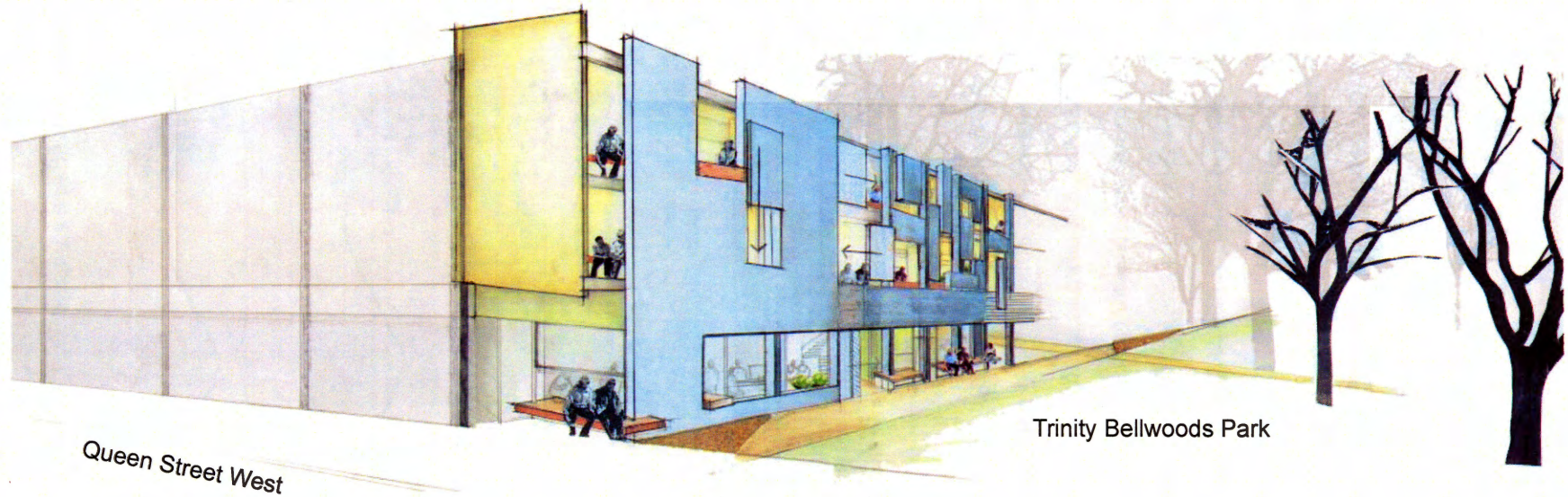


Elevation study no. 2



Elevation study no. 3

Model photos of party wall structure.
Photos show the party wall along Trinity Bellwoods Park explored through fragmentation. The party wall remains solid along Queen Street West and is fragmented as it extends into the park.

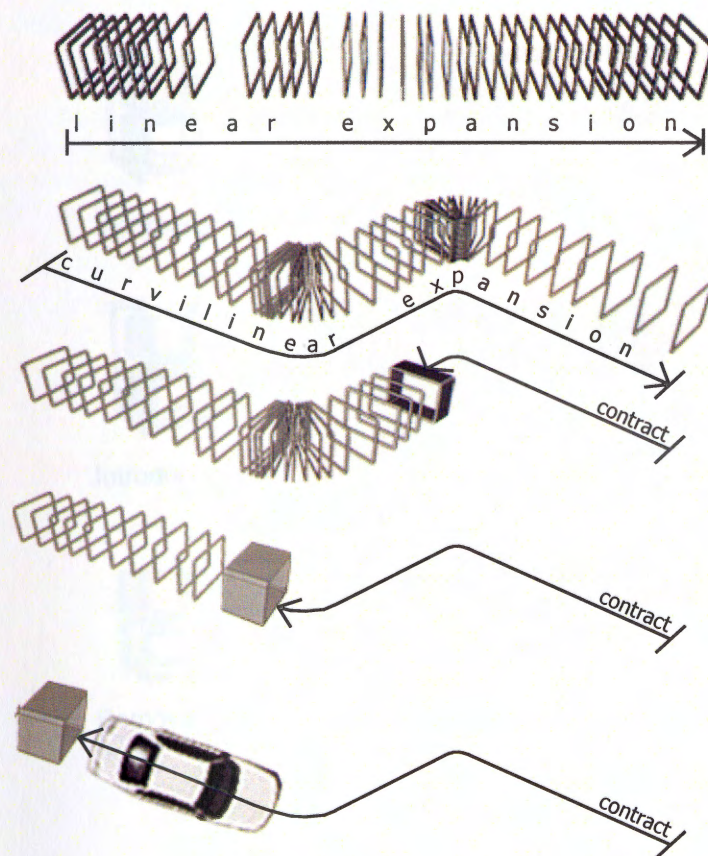


Party wall structure elevation along Queen Street West and Trinity Bellwoods Park.

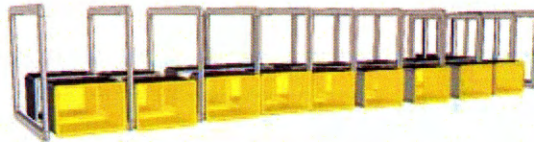
The Trinity Bellwoods Park facade is explored using fragmentation of the party wall. Fragmentation allows the activities within the building to be exposed to the larger community. A new pathway along the building links Queen Street West to the park and to the elevated linear structure. Services are provided along this path. The wall is also fragmented with the integration of moveable screens that further expose interior activities. Along the openings of the facade, places are provided for sitting, gathering and conversing.

Organic Structure

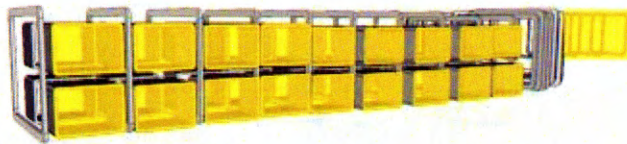
The organic structure is designed as a variation of the elevated linear structure. The linear rhythm of the party walls is explored as a frame that can expand and contract in an organic manner. By expanding in an organic manner, the structure is explored to engage existing pathways. Within the frame, the pod can be inserted and supported to meet the need for transitional housing. As the need for transitional housing grows, the frame structure expands and the pods are transported to the site to meet the need. As individuals move on to permanent housing, the organic structure contracts, the pods are transported to another site or stored and the site is returned back to the community with minimal disturbance.



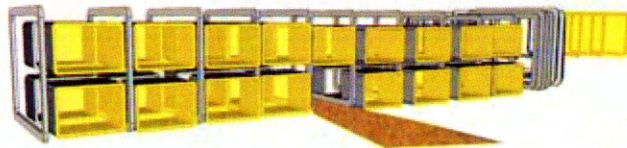
Concept drawing of organic structure.



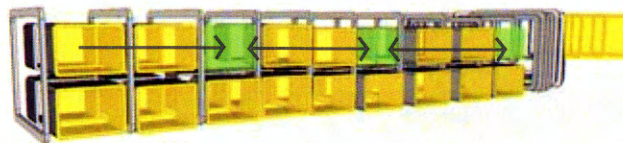
Single row of transitional housing



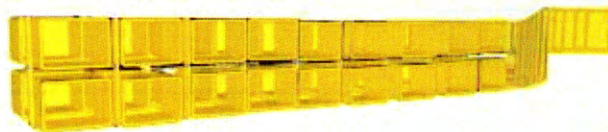
Stacked transitional housing



Incorporating existing pathways

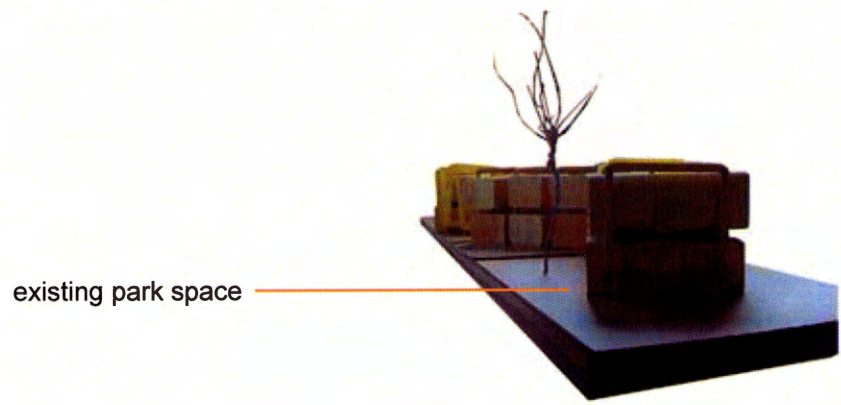
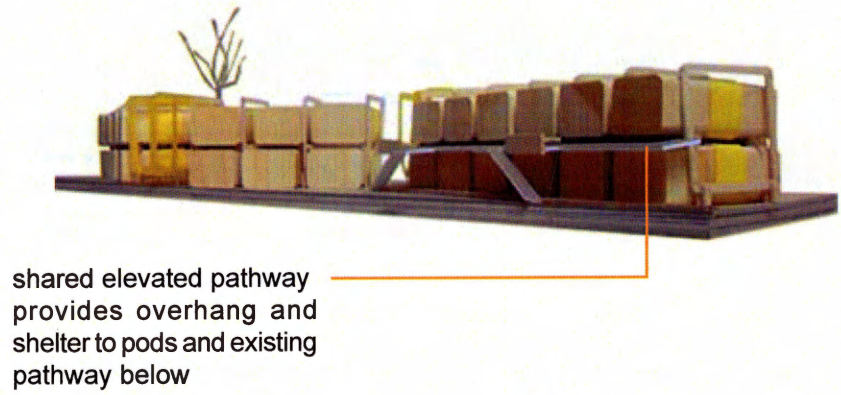
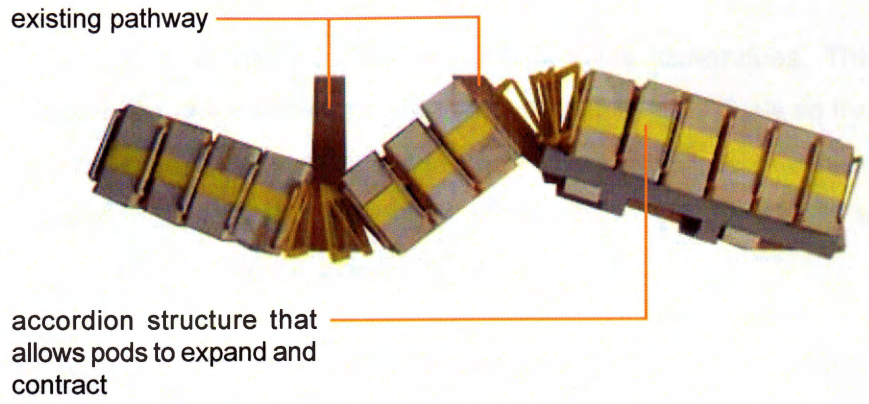


Introducing shared green space



Removal of frame

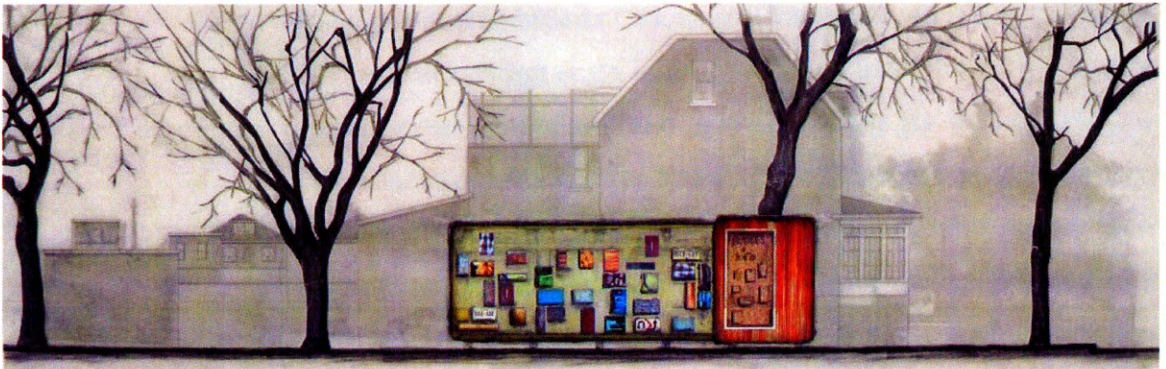
Drawing of organic structure illustrates how the pods can be inserted into the frame.



Model photos of organic structure.

Mailbox

An address provides individuals with access to services. This intervention, the mailbox, provides an address to individuals so that they are able to retrieve and access information about services they need in order to stabilize their life so they have the opportunity to transition to permanent housing in the future.



Drawing of mailbox elevation

The mailbox is designed to allow individuals the opportunity to customize their own mailbox. By allowing for customization, each mailbox becomes as unique as the individual to whom it belongs.

SUMMARY

This thesis focuses on investigating new ways to interpret the idea of home for homeless individuals with issues of addiction and mental illness within the Trinity Bellwoods neighbourhood of Toronto. Recognizing that housing is not enough and that services are required during the transitional period in order to successfully transition into permanent housing in the future, an urban strategy at the neighbourhood scale is proposed that uses the de-institutional approach to understand and provide options for those seeking to transition from life on the street. Homelessness is a large-scale problem that is occurring throughout the city and needs to be addressed. I do not aspire to solve the problem, which will take many years and many creative responses. As a student of architecture, however, it is my responsibility to use my knowledge and creativity to explore what home could be through built form.

Potential for Personal Further Study

Further investigation can be explored in the various ways that housing and services such as water, electricity, sewage and heat can be connected and supported, whether it is to be tied to the city's grid or to use off-the-grid technologies.

There is also potential to work with individuals who are transitioning from life on the street, to get feedback and discuss their personal interpretation of home.

NOTES

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3. Ibid.
4. Timothy Hursley and Andrea Oppenheimer Dean, *Proceed and Be Bold: Rural Studio After Samuel Mockbee* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005), 7.
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6. Ibid., 7.
7. Donald MacDonald Architects, "City Sleepers for the Homeless," http://www.donaldmacdonaldarchitects.com/bldg_image/in_design/sleeper/sleeper.html (accessed 15, February 2009)
8. Sam Davis, *Designing for the Homeless: Architecture that Works* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 121.
9. Ibid., 124.
10. Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), v, vi.
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12. Ibid., 45-46.

13. Ibid., 67.
14. Ibid., 245.
15. Davis, *Designing for the Homeless*, 23.
16. Ibid., 27.
17. Ibid., 25.
18. Ibid., 81.
19. Michael J. Dear and Jennifer R. Wolch, *Landscape of Despair: From deinstitutionalization to homelessness* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 16.
20. City of Toronto, "The Toronto Report Card on Housing and Homelessness 2003," <http://www.toronto.ca/homelessness/pdf/reportcard2003.pdf> (accessed 20 August 2008), 3.
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22. Dear and Wolch, *Landscape of Despair*, 175.
23. Bridgman, *StreetCities*, 191.
24. City of Toronto, "The Toronto Report Card on Housing and Homelessness 2003", 47.
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27. City of Toronto, "The Toronto Report Card on Housing and Homelessness 2003", 47.
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32. Bridgman, *StreetCities*, 106, 140-141.
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34. City of Toronto, "Regent Park (72) Social Profile #3 - Neighbourhood Households and Income", <http://www.toronto.ca/demographics/pdf3/cpa72.pdf> (accessed 3 October 2008).
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38. *Ibid.*, 98-99.

39. David Dunkelman, *Your Guide to Toronto Neighbourhoods* (Toronto: Maple Tree Publishing Inc., 1999), 40.
40. *Ibid.*, 41.
41. St. Christopher's House, "Programs for Adults," <http://www.stchrishouse.org> (accessed 15 February 2009).
42. Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, <http://www.camh.net> (accessed 7 Oct. 2008).
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44. *Ibid.*
45. Herman Hertzberger, *Lessons for Students in Architecture* (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1991), 100.

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