

RECLAIMING EVERYDAY SPACE:
VILLERAY, MONTRÉAL



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ABSTRACT

Anchored in the discourse of participation and social space, Reclaiming The Everyday Space is first and foremost about a place and the people that make it alive. Perhaps, to its inhabitants, the scale of a neighbourhood is the most understandable scale of the city – it is the stage of our everyday life. This thesis analyzes the neighbourhood of Villeray, in Montreal, and argues for a re-appropriation of the city by right of inhabitance. In a highly capitalist society where space equals capital, social space needs to be valued again and fought for. Villeray needs public space(s) where people will participate in political, social and spatial debates about their space, and regain ownership and agency over their neighbourhood.

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Note: Spatial data used to produce all site plans:

Données Ouvertes Ville De Montréal (Open Data) (Montreal: Ville de Montréal.)

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*Et finalement, à mon quartier Villeray et son beau monde. Vous donnez un
sens à Montréal, vous êtes Montréal!*

INTRODUCTION

A neighbourhood is perhaps to its inhabitants the most understandable scale of our cities — it is the stage of our everyday lives. However, individualism in our societies can’t seem to stop growing everyday and the culture of cooperation, sharing and gathering in communities is losing its importance in people’s lives. Not only is community as an inherent value endangered, but people seem to feel completely distanced from political issues that concern their space. As Kazuyo Sejima elegantly put it, “in an age in which people communicate through various media in non-physical spaces, it is the architect’s responsibility to make actual space for physical and direct communication between people.”¹

This thesis started out with a strong interest in the Ville-ray neighbourhood in Montreal as a place where a sense of community is still valued. Since this thesis deals with everyday places and social spaces, I wanted to introduce the topic with a personal note.

Villeray is meaningful to me. It is a place I call home and a place I truly love. While living there, I grew a fascination for daily scenes in the neighbourhood. Some of them pictured people gathering in odd places in laneways, front lawns and *dépanneurs*, hanging out on their balconies and talking to the neighbours across, or children biking and playing hockey in the alleyway. Others were characterized by the urban landscape with guerrilla gardening on sidewalks, clothes drying on clothes lines suspended above the alleyway, do-it-yourself (DIY) signs on corner streets and alleys, or even accessible private backyards to the community. All these beautiful, diverse and everyday manifestations took place on a backdrop of typical Montreal plex typologies

that are highly regulated by the Planning department. To me, the duality in the urban fabric between authority and rebellion is one that deserves to be studied, to the benefit of the inhabitants.

This thesis explores the dualities embedded in the spaces that compose the Ville-ray neighbourhood in Montreal and seeks to find ways to allow its inhabitants to regain agency towards their everyday social and public spaces.

How can participation of the inhabitants in their social and spatial spaces increase their agency and rights to the neighbourhood?

What kind of space would enable the inhabitants to preserve community life while participating in the politics relating to their neighbourhood?

Finally, how can we preserve, while expand and organize, the existing community participation in shaping the space that, by right of inhabitance, is theirs?

STATEMENT OF INTENT

This thesis explores ways to bring back agency and ownership to the residents of Villeray and to allow them to reappropriate their neighbourhood's everyday spaces.

How can urban policy changes empower and enable residents to participate in the economic, social, political and community life of the neighbourhood?

CHAPTER 01: THE STORY OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD

To begin, I would like to introduce Villeray as a lively and urban neighbourhood in Montreal, Québec. The neighbourhood is on the north-central part of the island of Montreal. Located in the larger borough of Villeray-Saint-Michel-Parc-Extension, it is the most central of the three neighbourhoods and its boundaries are the metropolitan highway to the north and the important Jean-Talon artery to the south. Officially, the western boundary is Saint-Dominique, but most of the residents consider it to actually be the railway on the West side of Jarry park. Finally, the eastern boundary is officially Garnier/Fabre street, but again residents consider the main boulevard, Iberville, to be the eastern boundary. This section will cover the historical background of the neighbourhood and its residents up until today by looking at how the neighbourhood was founded, how it evolved and how its residents participated in shaping what it is today.

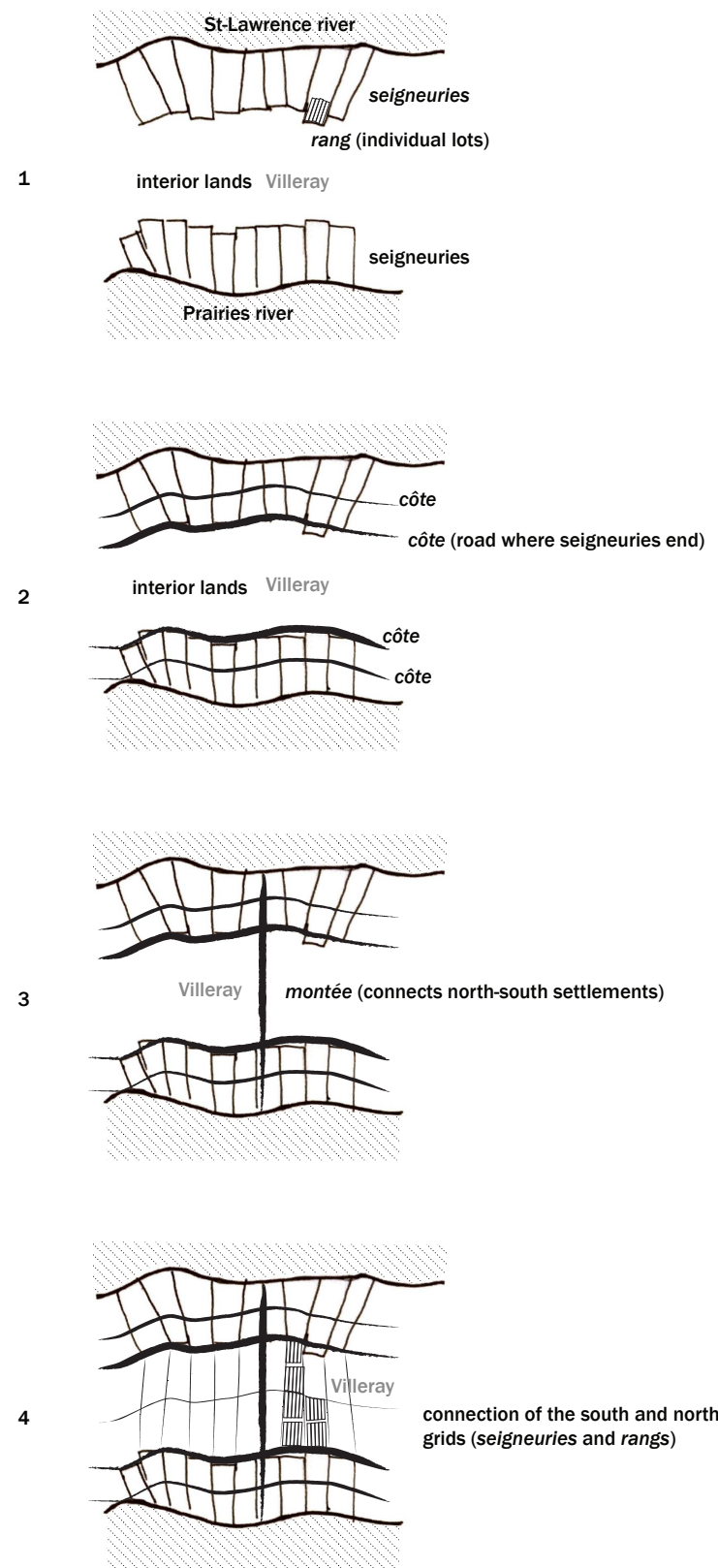


fig. 1 - Origin of the Montreal grid

1.1 THE PLACE

Let us start with the beginning and how Villeray came to exist as a Montreal neighbourhood. While the oldest settlements of Ville-Marie and Sault-Au-Récollet on the island of Montreal were established around 1642 and 1621, respectively, Villeray became a neighbourhood of the City of Montreal only in 1905. It is my intention to acknowledge that Montreal was and still is home to various populations of Indigenous and other peoples. This thesis discusses a neighbourhood in a city that is located on unceded Indigenous lands — it is concerned with the diversity of social spaces and its people. The Quebec population, especially on the island of Montreal was founded by a diversity of ethnicities and cultures.

Initially, in the 1870s, Villeray was almost entirely farmlands. Due to French colonization, the land was divided according to the French system of *seigneuries*. Essentially, the *seigneurs* (chosen by the King) would own a piece of land and let *habitants* cultivate their assigned lot in exchange for various forms of rent. The *seigneurie* is a long rectangular shape and is placed perpendicular to the waterway, to allow multiple *seigneuries* to have access to water, which in this case is the Saint-Laurent river to the south and the Prairies river to the north. The *seigneuries* are subdivided in smaller narrow lots called *rangs* or farms.² After the British conquest in 1759, the *township* system was the norm, but the *seigneurie* system was already established and persisted for a long time in Quebec.³ The *township* system can be witnessed in other provinces and in Quebec English rural towns. The main difference of the *township* (or county/*canton*) is the dimensions (equal on both sides) and square subdivided lots.⁴ The reason for looking at the origin of land division is to understand how this influenced

the division of the modern block and ultimately, individual lots we find today. The typical *rang* size was approximately 175m x 1750m. Today, in Villeray or other similar neighbourhoods like the Plateau Mont-Royal, a normal block is roughly 70m x 250m. By subdividing the *rang* in two rows of 6 blocks, one could build about 12 blocks (although it is not always exact) with mainly one-way streets along the long side, and two-ways on the short side. This structure is consistent with the old way of organizing roads to connect the *rangs* together. Long narrow roads between the long sides of the *rangs* were called “*montées*” and the roads where all short sides of the *rangs* were joining together were called “*côte*”⁵. We can see this heritage with the orientation of the street grid: narrow one-ways run North – South (perpendicular to the rivers) and larger axes (two-ways) run East – West.

The major Villeray farm owners of the 19th century were Jarry, Lalonde, Compte, Frigon and Stanley Bagg to name a few.⁶ Around 1870, a group comprised of a French contractor, a lawyer and an architect bought the Compte farm, a very large territory formed of multiple *rangs* and divided it into approximately 1200 lots.⁷ By respecting the existing rural paths (*montées* and *côtes*) as well as the road alignment from Ville-Marie, they predicted the annexation of the village of Villeray to Montreal. Along with the construction of row houses, they donated lots for the construction of institutional buildings. Later on, other landowners were influenced to subdivide their land in lots to either sell or build on.⁸ History reminds us that the city and the neighbourhood was built partly by private stakeholders.

As previously said, the blocks were presumably created with

the street grids by subdividing individual *rangs*. In Villeray, the block that would later be divided in smaller lots was divided in its interior by laneways at the very beginning in the planning of the town by the developers. The laneways first appeared in the allotment of big farms, in wealthy anglophone villages (McTavish farm which is today known as the Golden Square Mile, situated around McGill University). This laneway could be used for circulation and to access domestic workers quarters.⁹ In the context of a workers' neighbourhood like Villeray and the Plateau Mont-Royal, the laneway was a good solution to create a secondary access to the back of the row houses and was already successful in older neighbourhoods. Another important thing to note is that there is a hierarchy of the lots that follow the hierarchy of the streets. Important streets are wider, and the lots along them are wider and deeper.¹⁰ The laneways are either in the form of an "H" or only an "I" cutting through the lot. This urban model is really interesting because it was originally designed for density while allowing different private and public conditions, as Legault defines them:

(translated from French) "This urban model is also visible by the formal shape of the interior blocks. The integration of the laneways allows access to the back of the row houses and also dedicates a public front space and a domestic back space for the house."¹¹

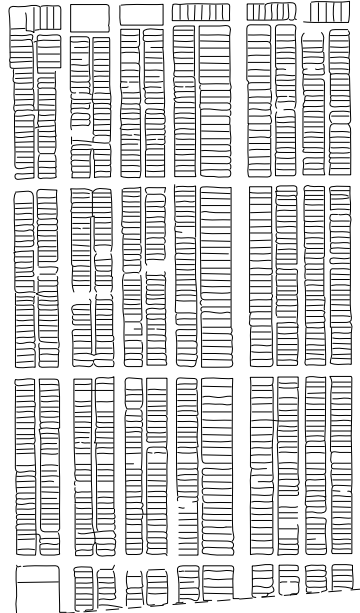


fig. 2 - allotment plan of former Compté farm

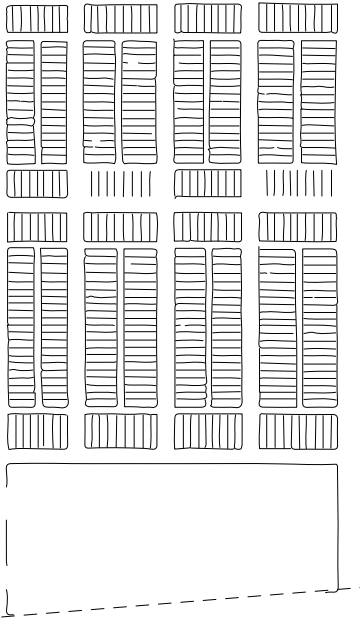


fig. 3 - allotment plan of former Logan farm

SEIGNEURIE (QUEBEC)
TOWNSHIP (WEST CANADA)
TOWNSHIP (WEST CANADA)

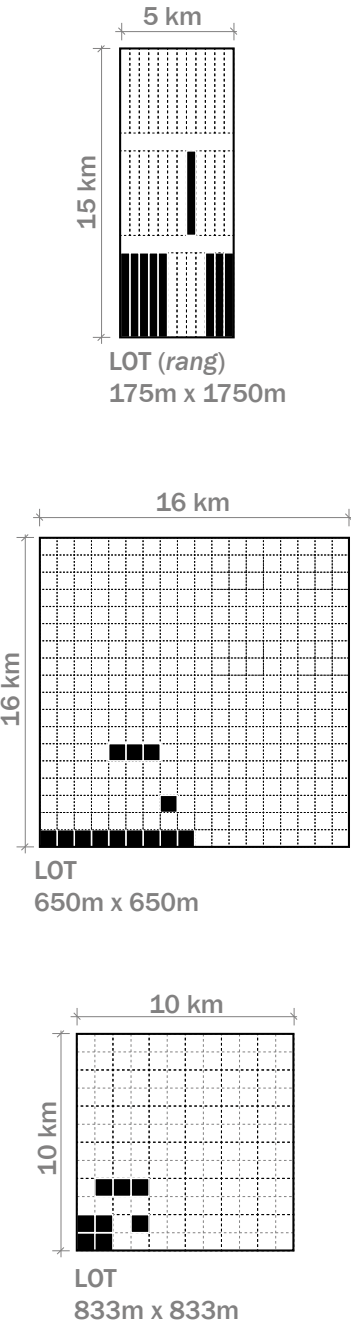


fig. 4 - different land division systems

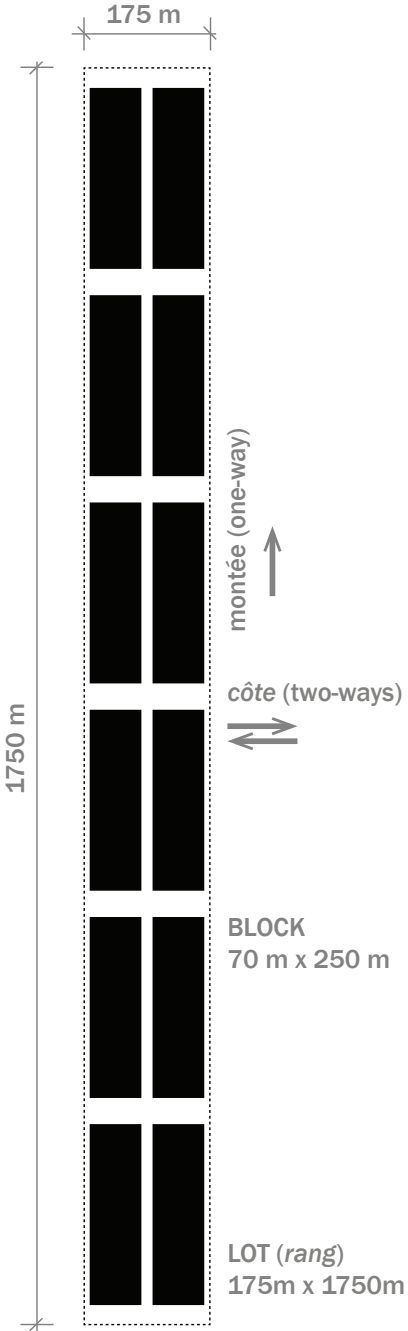


fig. 5 - subdivision of the rang



fig. 6 - Villeray, Photograph of the Parc des Rêves (angle of Gaspé and Guizot in the studied block), 1946.

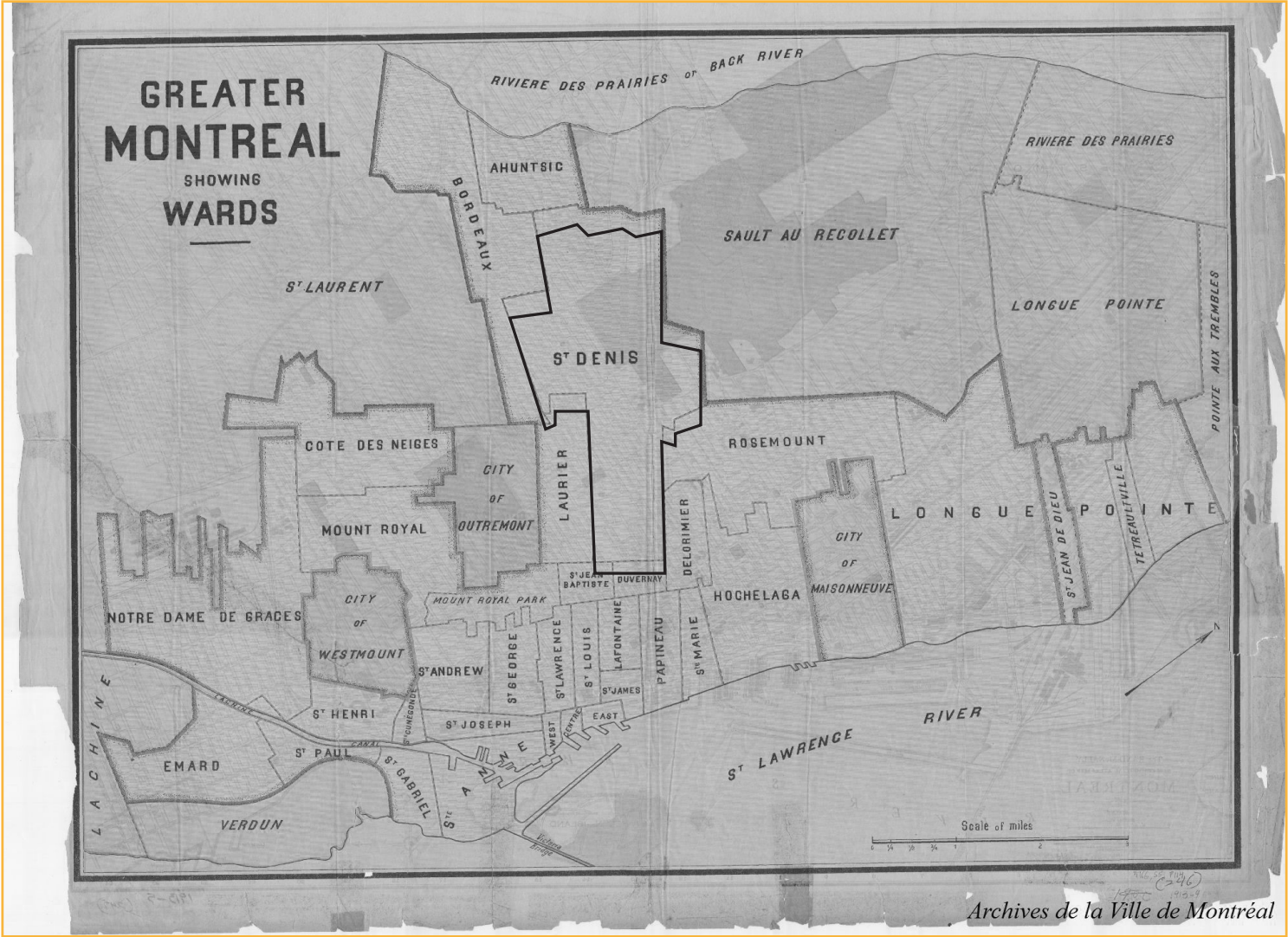


fig. 7 - map of the City of Montreal and its neighbourhoods, 1913 (after Villeray is annexed). Saint-Denis includes Villeray.

1.2 THE PEOPLE

To interpret the spatial transformations of Villeray through history would be meaningless without understanding who inhabited the place. At the beginning of the 20th century, workers started to move to Villeray, not too far from the fortified Ville-Marie to live closer to their work in quarries. With the boom in construction in the city, there was a need for Greystone, which was present in many quarries in Villeray. Prior to 1905, , the village was already populated by stone masons who started to build small houses on farmlands.¹² Additionally, many workers were employed by the Canadian Pacific Railway that was inaugurated in 1886¹³. Before 1893, people would travel to the northern settlements of Sault-Au-Récollet through the Chemin Saint-Laurent (today's Saint-Laurent boulevard) from Ville-Marie and would stop at hotels in Villeray on the way.¹⁴ After 1893, the “Back River” electric tramway line¹⁵ running along Saint-Laurent would initiate the expansion of Montreal to the North. The village of Villeray quickly grew and community buildings including a church, a municipal room and a classroom were built by the small community of 800 people.¹⁶ In 1905, Villeray was annexed to the City of Montreal.¹⁷ Commercial streets like Saint-Laurent, Jean-Talon, Saint-Hubert and the Chemin de la Côte-Saint-Laurent (today's Crémazie boulevard and Metropolitan highway) were extended from the existing city grid.¹⁸ More and more people came to Villeray with their families because of the availability and affordability of the space. Few years later, the Montreal Street Railway company established its tramway garages and storing facilities, the Atelier d'Youville, on current Crémazie boulevard.¹⁹ The facility employed many workers and opened the way for manufacturing industries in the area, creating many jobs for the working class, who then established in Villeray. During the 1900s up until after World War II, there had been two

major construction booms. The first construction boom, which ended with the Great Depression of 1929 gifted the neighbourhood with typical Montreal *plexes*, or multi-storeys row houses. The second construction boom after World War II left us with veteran single-family houses, apartment buildings and semi-detached houses in the East.²⁰ The 19th and 20th century also saw the mass arrival of immigrants in the neighbourhood. Around 1880 and again after World War II, a lot of Italians arrived in Villeray and established themselves in today's famous Little Italy, just North of Jean-Talon. They were mainly workers in search of labour.²¹ Same happened with Greek, Portuguese and East European communities after the war, which lead to an explosion of the population. The majority of the population were workers, with revenue averages lower than the Montreal averages²². Additionally, after the 1970s, a large population of immigrants from Haiti, Central America, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Laos, Arab countries (Maghreb mainly) and Turkey arrived in the borough and contributed to its multiculturalism.²³

The history of Villeray shows that the neighbourhood was founded because of its worker class vocation and proximity. It also has been populated by a majority of workers in the past. Today, Villeray has a majority of tenants. In the last 2016 census, 73.7% of the residents of the neighbourhood were tenants²⁴, against 77% in 1986²⁵, which indicates that in more than 30 years, there was a rise of only 3.3% of owners. The neighbourhood is composed of 46% of people living alone and 54% of families. The majority of these families (54.1%) include children.²⁶

Finally, Villeray has developed strong community and social organizations since the 1970s. In 1961, 44% of the residents were workers. Tensions between landlords and tenants,

insalubrity, housing crises and other housing-related problems started to arise in the neighbourhood due to social inequalities, poverty and the state of the facilities which led to the creation of the Villeray Tenants' Association (ALV; *Association des Locataires de Villeray*). The association works to inform tenants on their rights and has participated to establish coop programs and social housing in the neighbourhood.²⁷ The ALV also organizes workshops, discussions and has been quite preoccupied by gentrification in the last few years. There is such a big range of social associations in Villeray working for residents' well-being that in the 1980s, 16 community groups gathered to form the Community Council Solidarity Villeray (*Conseil communautaire Solidarités Villeray*). The council's objective is to foster mutual aid to disadvantaged communities, to promote social justice and to help residents to participate in democratic life and to defend their social rights.²⁸

Lastly, the story of the place and the faces of Villeray brings to light the importance of democratic and community life for this neighbourhood. Today, the population of Villeray remains in majority composed of tenants. People living alone are numerous, as well as seniors, and we find a lot of families with children. They usually live in duplexes, triplexes, etc, which are a very space-efficient row housing typology. Villeray thus very densely built, with an urban density around 10 300 inhabitant/km², which is even higher than the density in the downtown area. Also, with revenues per households that are lower than the Montreal average, there is still today 20% of the population that live under the poverty line. Vulnerable groups like recent immigrants, single-parents and seniors already use many of the community services but these are still not visible enough. For families, couples and

other residents as well as vulnerable groups, the lack of community space, in such a densely built neighbourhood, is quite problematic.

In light of the population's past and present economic situation, and since the majority is formed by tenants, it is not surprising that major rent increases and other changes part of the gentrification process particularly affect the residents of Villeray. Ownership and agency are two important concepts that will be further discussed in subsequent sections of this thesis.

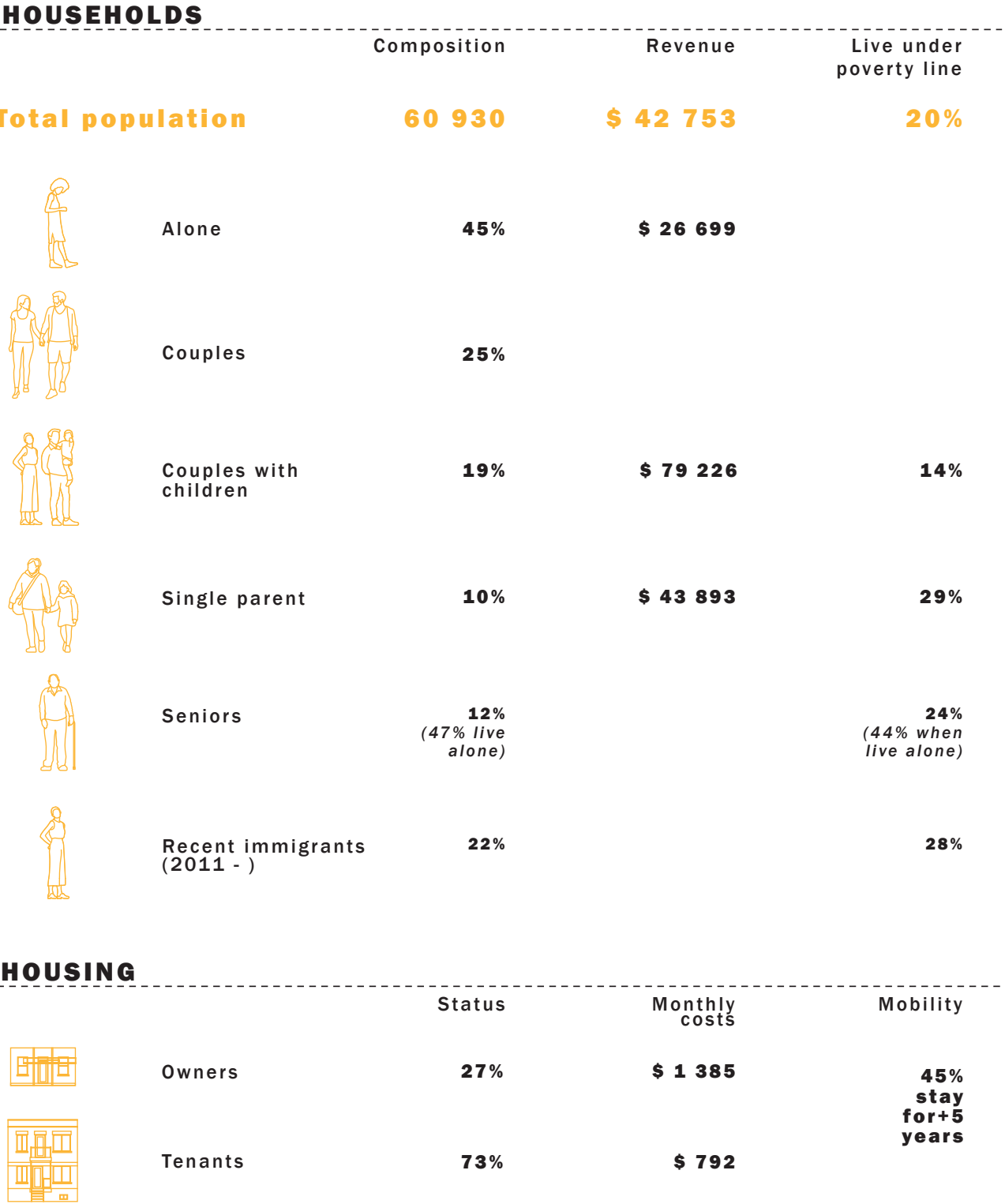
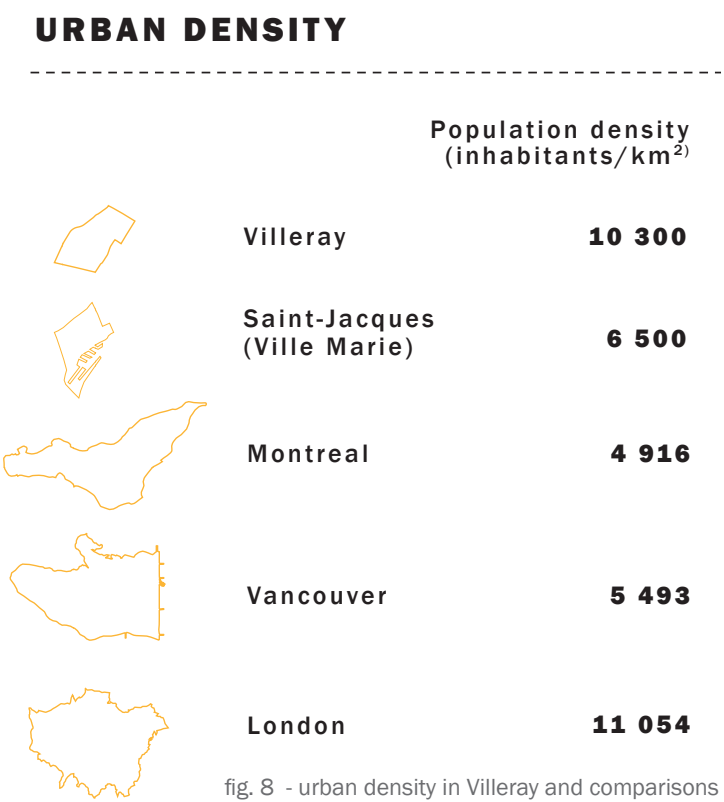


fig. 9 - statistical portrait of the residents of Villeray

VILLERAY URBAN SPACE

scale of spatial impact

scale of social impact
SOCIAL

scale of economic impact
ECONOMIC

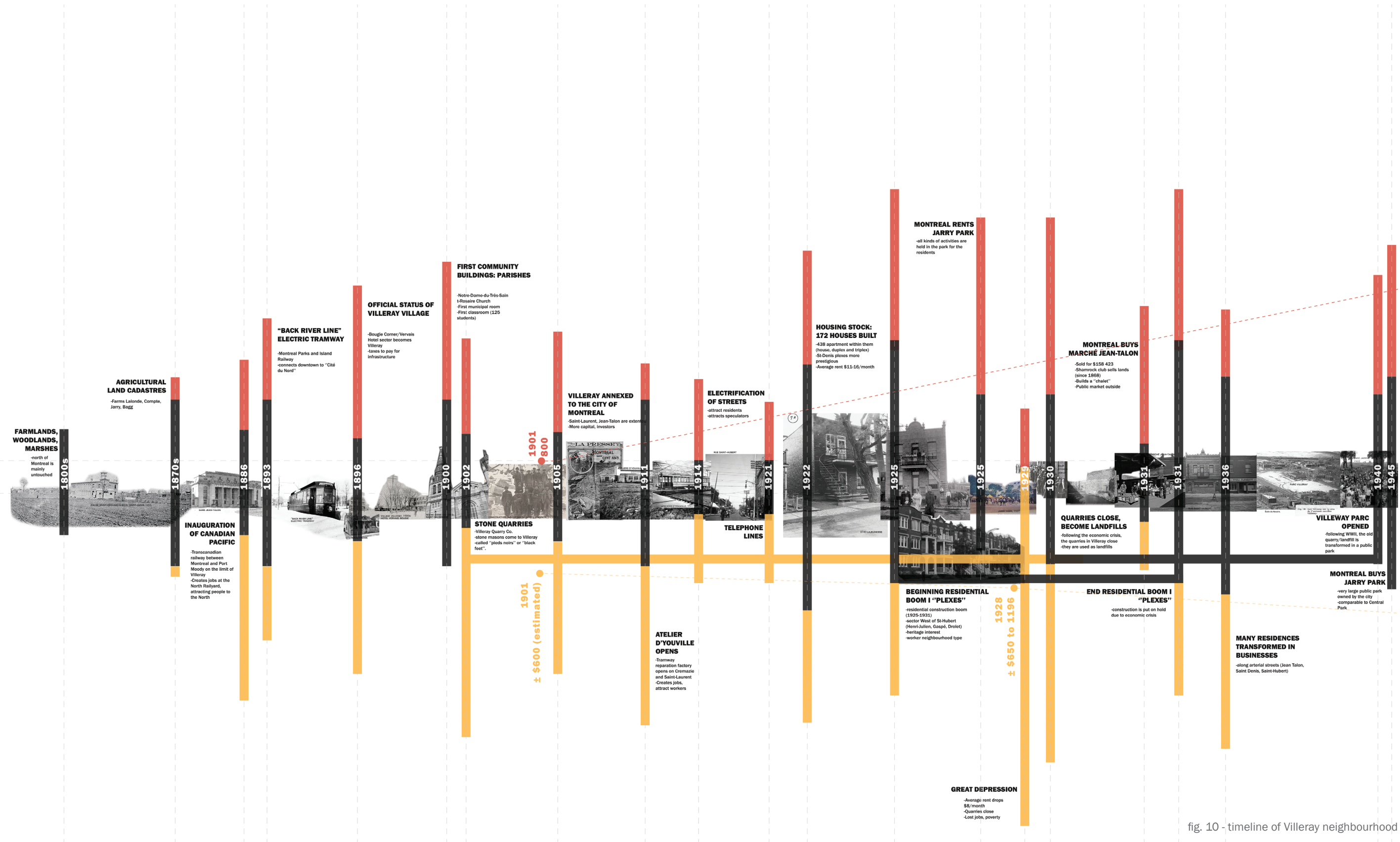


fig. 10 - timeline of Villeray neighbourhood

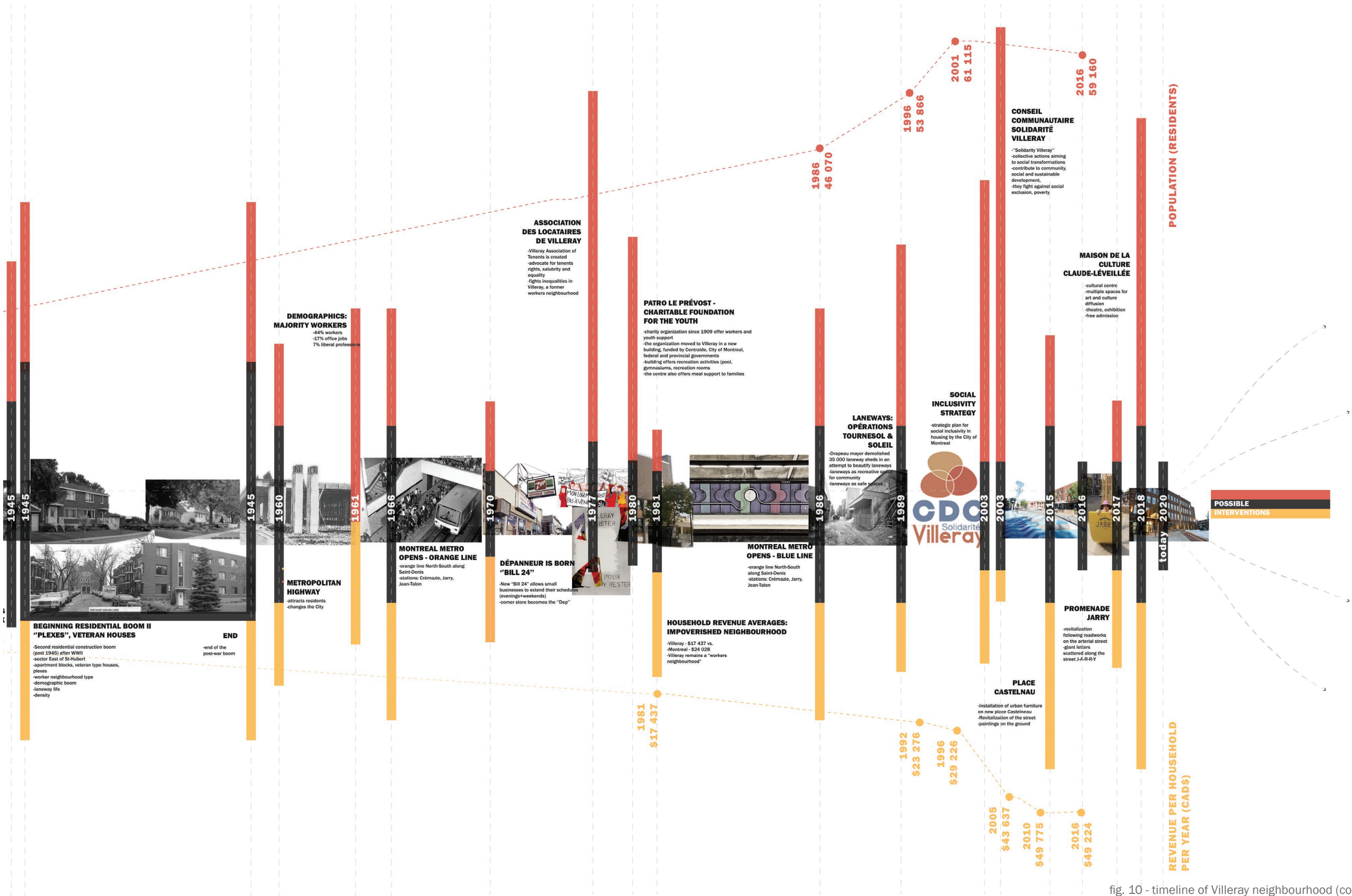


fig. 10 - timeline of Villeray neighbourhood (continued)

CHAPTER 02: THE SOCIAL SPACE

This thesis is framed around the social theory of space developed by Henri Lefebvre in *La Production de l'Espace, 1974 (The production of Space, translated in 1981)*, and many other written works by him on this topic. The spatial theory he develops is complex, academically rigorous and strongly related to philosophy and sociology. Naturally, my focus for this research will be the spatial aspects but I am extremely interested in the dimensions of this theory and with the Marxist approach to space and capitalism. With basic notions of Marxist sociology, Lefebvre's theory of social space is a fascinating lens through which to look at the social space of Villeray. This chapter will establish a framework to look at community and public space through the lens of social space and participation.

2.1 CAPITAL, SOCIAL AND ABSTRACT SPACE

The concept of social space is one that understands space within its temporal dimension. Space is usually understood as something static, but Lefebvre argues that space is actually the product of a specific society, with its own relations to the modes of production or in other words, to capitalism.²⁹ Lefebvre explains that social space is found in everyday spaces and is where the social activities are held:

“Everyone knows what is meant when we speak of a ‘room’ in an apartment, the ‘corner’ of the street, a ‘marketplace’, a shopping or cultural ‘centre’, a public ‘place’, and so on. These terms of everyday discourse serve to distinguish, but not to isolate, particular spaces, and in general to describe a social space. They correspond to a specific use of that space, and hence to a spatial practice that they express and constitute.”³⁰

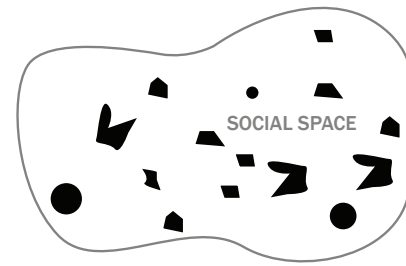
Lefebvre explains logically a concept that we all have encountered. Social space is produced by its society and society produced by it in return. It is a mediating process. History, politics, economy and society all produce a specific space.

To understand the complexity of social space, Louis Gaudreau (2013) draws parallels between Henri Lefebvre and Marx concepts of time, space and capital. To put it very simply, the main argument of Marx’s critique of capitalism is that labour and production have become an abstraction. In capitalist societies, alienated workers no longer consume the result of their labour directly. Capitalists produce goods to be exchanged for value and exploit workers for their labour. Labour and production are abstracted, they become

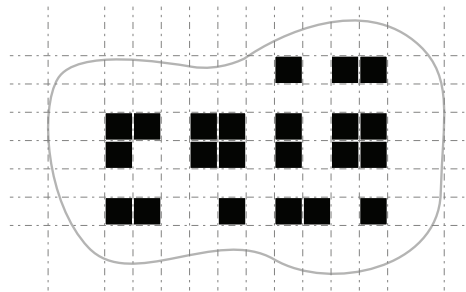
quantitative, they both operate on the basis of speculation and exchange value.³¹ We could be tempted to see the concept of production as a concrete one, but production and labour are abstracted by the insertion of the concept of capital, surplus (profit) and exchange value.³²

The same concept of abstraction is present in Lefebvre’s theory of space. Capitalism has a strong effect on space: it produces two dimensions of space. One is concrete, which he calls social space. This space is the “useful” value of the space, it is the product of social interactions, of everyday life, it is qualitative. The other contradictory dimension is the abstract space, the capitalist market value of space. It is space reduced from everything else, it is quantitative.³³ Basically, space, like capitalism, is not used strictly for social interactions and everyday needs, it is used to make profits.

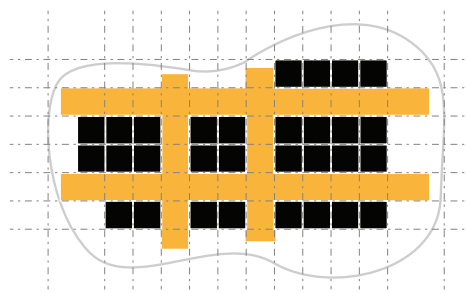
1 DOMINATION
of the social space



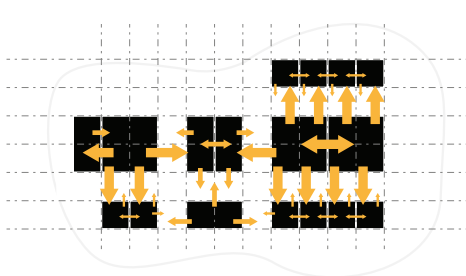
2 HOMOGENISATION
of the social space



3 FRAGMENTATION
of the social space



4 HIERARCHY
of the social space



5 DOMINATION
of the abstract space

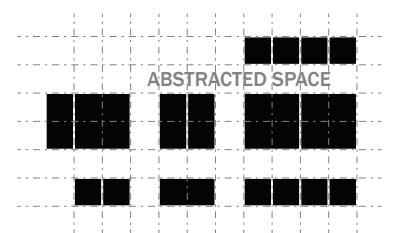


fig. 11 - transformation of social to abstract space

2.2 THE DUALITY OF SOCIAL AND ABSTRACT SPACE

Social and abstract space are consistently in conflict. Space is a contested space itself. In the increasingly commodified city and the growth of production, the abstract space modifies space to facilitate the reproduction of capital.³⁴ The phenomenon has the effect of overpowering social space. This happens in three steps, as summarized by Gaudreau:

1. Homogenization, where the space is standardized, divided in measurable units;
2. Fragmentation, where the space is regularized, highly organized, areas are distinguished and zoning regulations are put in place;
3. Hierarchy, where new power relationships are created between spaces, and ultimately people.³⁵

This duality between abstract and social space is recognizable in Villeray. The very concept of typologies participates to organize the building stock into something that can be compared to each other. Only by looking at the façades, we recognize abstracted elements put in place: the typical Montreal plex typologies, the consistent (and encouraged) use of brick and the height limitations (1 to 2, 2 to 3 and 3 to 6 storeys for different residential and commercial zones)³⁶. These abstractions are not new, they have been there since the allotment of the land at the beginning of the 20th century and continue to invade all dimensions of the space. The interesting thing is the duality between social and abstract observed in Montreal, or how they are always in competition. People alter the typologies in thousands of ways to make them unique. The back façade, seen from the laneways, are not as regulated — an orchestrated chaos

prevails. In the street, guerrilla gardening is practiced, and laneways are beautified with furniture, art and adapted for children to play and community to meet.

Finally, I would add that the current issue around gentrification could be understood partly under the Lefebvrian lens of capitalist space.

What has become clear in this research is that first, the culture in Villeray is favourable to individual and collective expression through micro-scale design interventions and individual/collective appropriation of their space (façades, back façades, sidewalks, laneways). Secondly, the history of the neighbourhood as one of community, working class and inequalities is embedded in the social space. One of the problems that the neighbourhood is facing today is a difficulty to deal with gentrification and especially with the rise of rents and the slow transformation of the neighbourhood in a very desirable area which attracts capital and investment opportunities. The vacancy rate in Villeray in 2018 was 0.5% (1.9% in Greater Montreal), which indicate how desirable the neighbourhood is, but also how alarming the rate is in the context of a housing crisis. To put it simpler than the phenomenon is, gentrification could be explained as a phenomenon that displaces workers communities from typical residential worker neighbourhoods when these are recognized for their historical and capital market-value by speculators. Usually, the neighbourhoods are slowly being occupied by artist and student communities and finally rehabilitated by middle-class homebuyers and developers. The issue of gentrification is taken very seriously especially by the Villeray Tenants Association (ALV) and there has been many activities, workshops, guided tours and publications

by the group to increase awareness about this issue.

But what if the problem had part of its roots in the abstraction system of the space, which allows capital to be easily reproduced? If it does, then it makes sense to propose an intervention that brings back social space in the neighbourhood. Surely, we live in an era of domination of abstract space and capital but there is one important thing we ought not to forget. Abstract space is also dependent on concrete (social) space, just like capital is intrinsically dependent on

labour. Hence, space is contested, contradictory and source of conflict, which rebalances its power relations.³⁷

As it will be discussed in the next chapter, this project aims to look at these issues of gentrification and abstraction of space by capital to combine them with compatible discourse around participation and re-appropriation of the neighbourhood.

In the meantime, a closer look to Villeray's social space teaches us that it is organized within private and public spheres but that the boundaries between are very blurred.

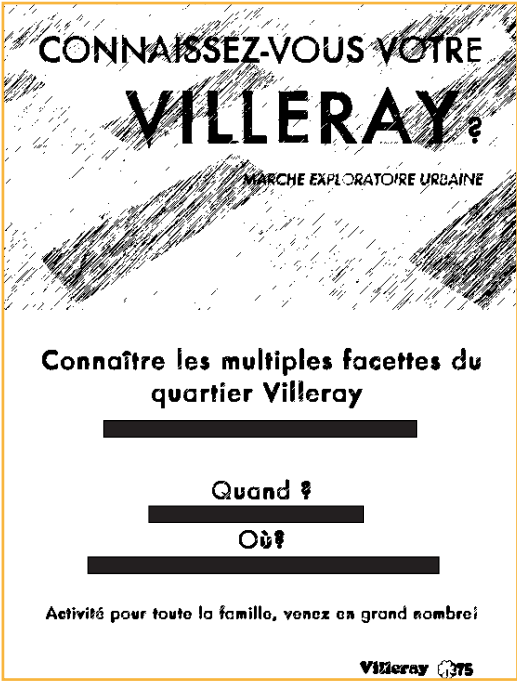


fig. 12 - Poster, (Translated) "Know the many faces of the Villeray neighbourhood", Commented itinerary on Castelnau street, When? Saturday August 26th at 11am, Where? Corner Castelnau and Saint-Denis, Activity for the whole family, come in great numbers!"



fig. 13 - puppet show, (Translated): "ON SALE. 514-VERY PRICEY"



fig. 14 - gathering and speech for the event



fig. 15 - Villeray zoning map, 1:3 000



fig. 16 - abstracted residential typologies, plans and elevations

TYPICAL ELEVATION

SINGLE-FAMILY
shoebox



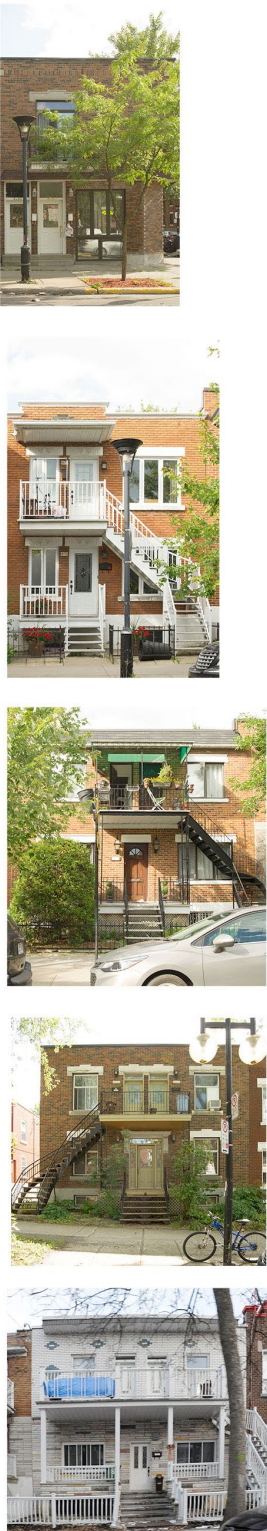
on 2-storeys



2-PLEX



3-PLEX
on 2-storeys



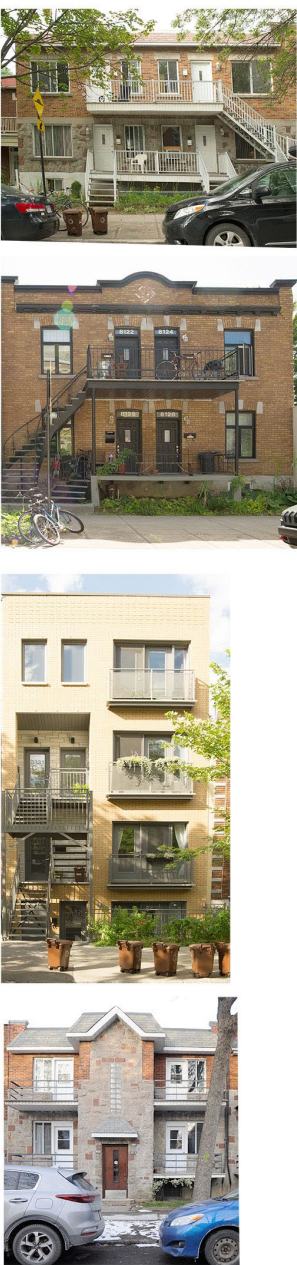
on 3-storeys



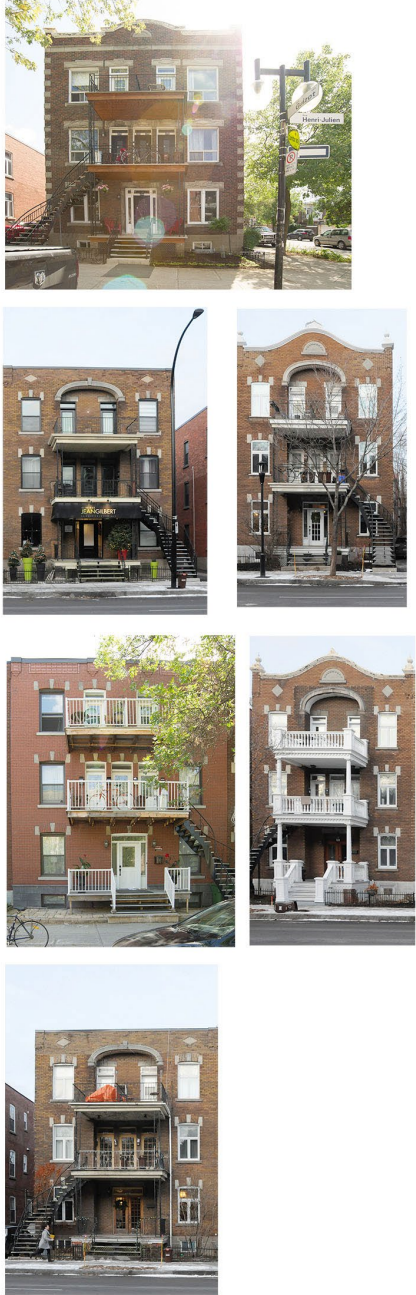
interior stairs



4-PLEX



5-PLEX



APARTMENT



fig. 17 - residential typologies photo-collage

2.3 PUBLIC, PRIVATE AND COMMUNITY SPACE

As Micheal Brill discusses it in *Mistaking Community Life for Public Life*, there are many differences between public and community spaces and those are very important to understand when designing. Community life is very different than public life — community is sociability with like-minded people while public life is sociability with strangers.³⁸ To differentiate those two conditions allows to see a gradation of private life to public life, with community usually somewhere in the middle. Because of the typology of the residences and their proximity to each other, very interesting conditions of private, public and community life are at play. From access to the street, sidewalk, exterior staircase, balcony, interior apartment to the back balcony, service staircase, backyard and finally laneway, there is a strong gradation between extremely public to extremely

private, and then to community space that operates in a very short period. This closer look at the somewhat blurred boundaries in Villeray provides us with more options to design within the highly curated social space.

As a way to identify future intervention sites and to reflect on the possible ways to intervene in the public sphere in a creative way, I started to categorize everyday spaces according to their privateness, publicness, accessibility and non-accessibility. The classification revealed itself really useful to identify different degrees of publicness within ordinary spaces. As we discuss micro-urban experiments in the next chapter, it will be interesting to keep in mind how these appear in all spheres of private-public-community spaces and to ask how participation could be geared to all these types of space.

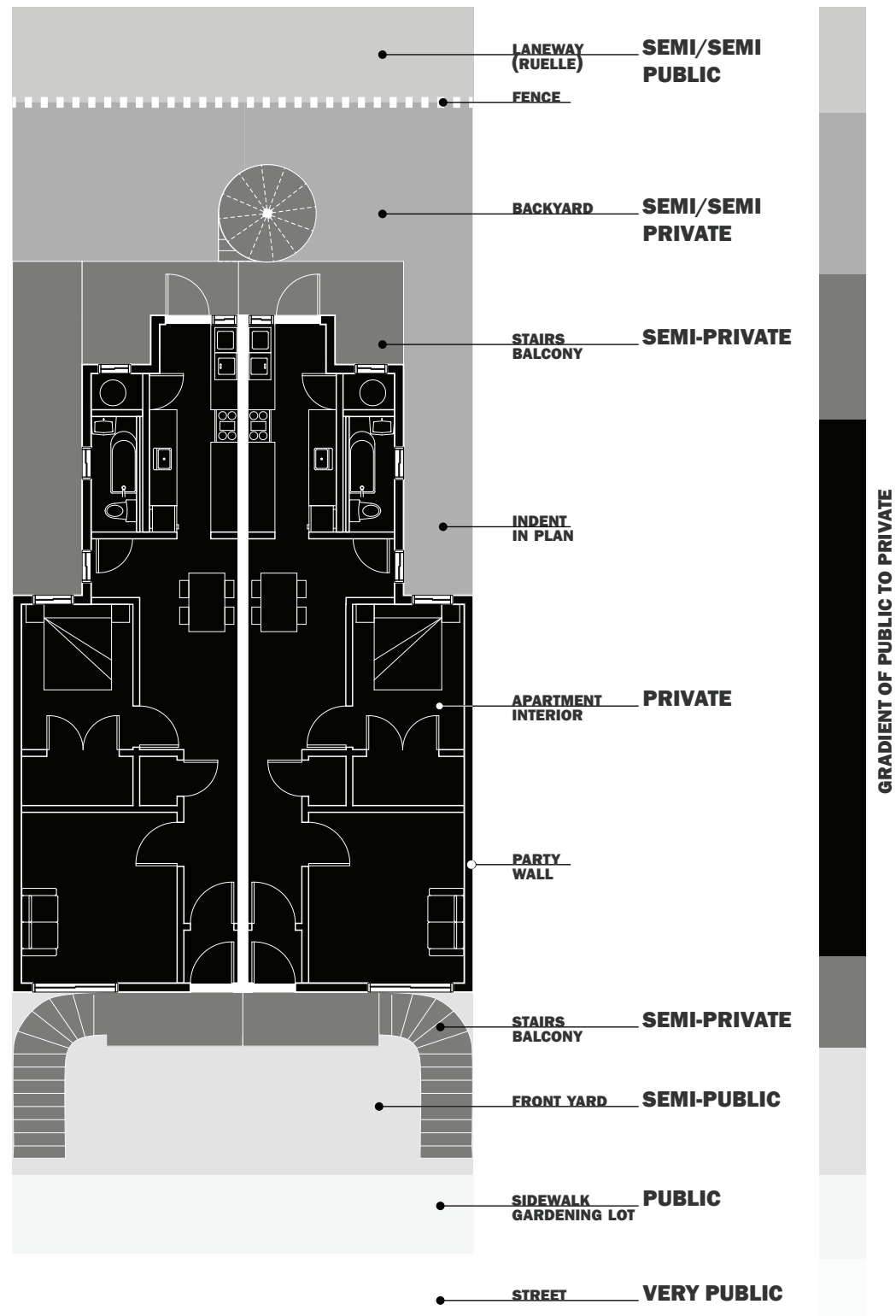


fig. 18 - public/private gradient from street to laneway

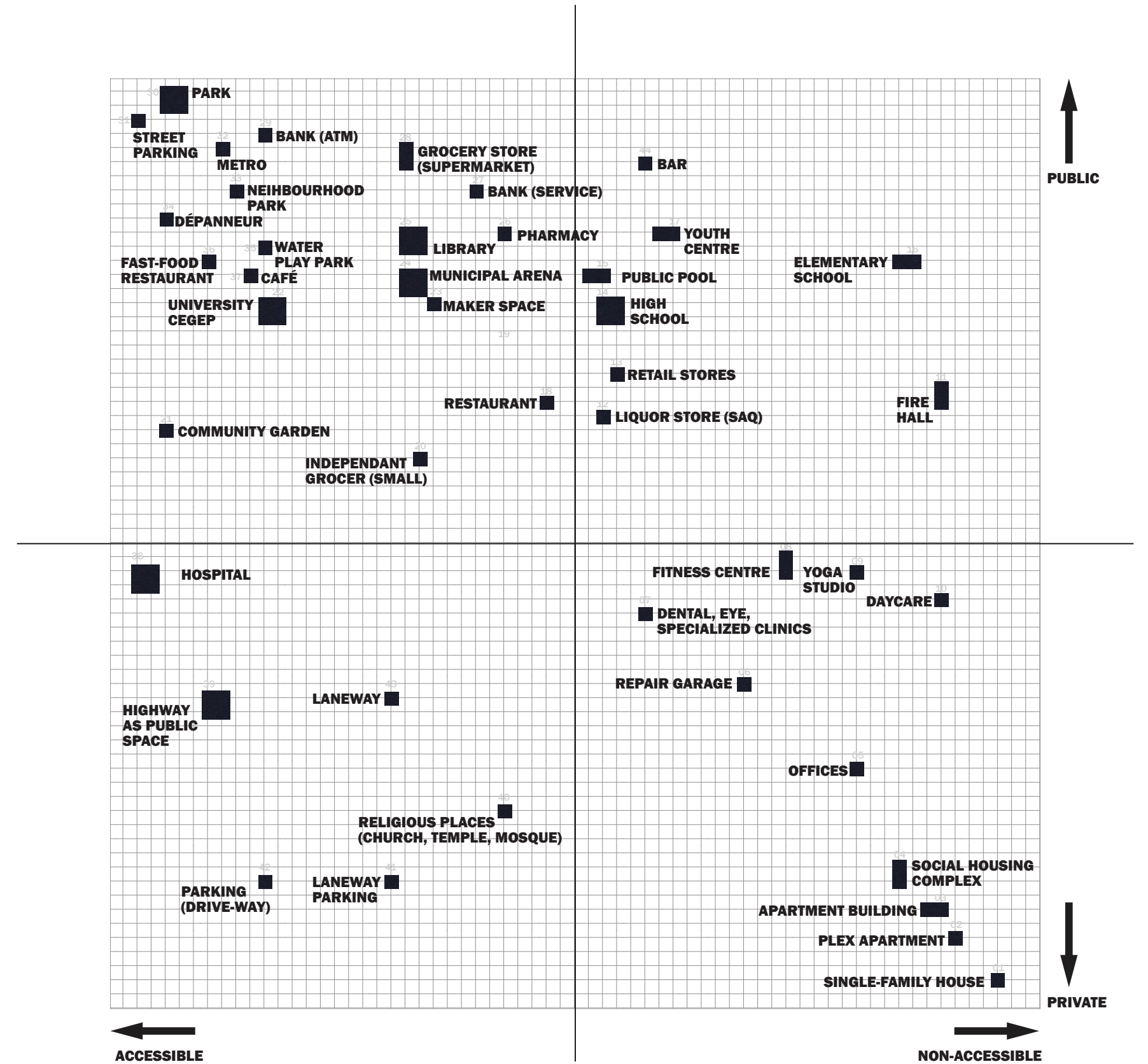


fig. 19 - everyday places matrix: a classification of spaces of interaction

CHAPTER 03: APPROPRIATING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

The main reason why Villeray was chosen as a site of study is because I observed many urban micro-interventions that seemed to make this neighbourhood special. I am very interested in how inhabitants of the neighbourhood developed practices that were sometimes individual or organized amongst the community. These practices included guerrilla and community gardening, street art, occupation of the laneways, street free lending libraries, “Slow” traffic signs made by the residents, shared toys and furniture in parks and more. These practices first appeared to me as a reflection of a strong local community cooperation, but this research led me to ask myself if these practices could also be actions from the residents to assert their right to the city. In this chapter, I will introduce the concepts of “right to the city”, micro-urban practices also called “do-it-yourself (DIY) and participation in a larger sense. I will then apply the framework to Villeray and introduce the design intervention(s) proposal.

3.1 AGENCY OVER URBAN SPACE

The discourse around micro-urban practices and do-it-yourself (DIY) urbanism brought a lot of interesting elements concerning everyday practices and micro-political acts. Essentially, this discourse explores how micro-urbanism, in a way, allows inhabitants to regain their right to the city. To me, the appropriation of the urban everyday in Villeray was special and led to wanting to know more about it. According to Kurt Yveson (2013), the key dynamics of DIY urbanism are, amongst others, to establish a defamiliarization or refamiliarization of the city, a decommodification (use instead of market value), and alternative economies. In addition, other dualities are at play: temporary to permanent, public to private, collective to individual, legal to illegal and old to new.³⁹ We can see these concepts at play in DIY urbanism practices when walking in Villeray. Just as an example, laneways are exceptional spaces to witness decommodification and alternative economies with DIY furniture, recycled materials to make signs, decorations, play installations and more. On the one hand, we can explain this motivation to appropriate everyday spaces by the inhabitants to improve the use of the spaces and the playfulness of the shared community space. Since the majority the population are tenants and a big portion are families, there is advantage to make use of relatively private-community spaces like the laneway for recreation. In that sense, some may say that the interventions have nothing to do with politics. I would argue that to some extent, these interventions on the everyday spaces are highly political since they represent an appropriation of the city space and a declaration of the equal right of each inhabitant to occupy it.

“Lefebvre’s notion that the ‘right to the city’ is founded on an urban politics of inhabitation is

suggestive of how a democratic urban politics might emerge from appropriations of the city. In other words, one way in which the practices of DIY urbanism might begin to construct a democratic politics of the city is through the declaration of a right to (appropriate the) city based on nothing more than their shared inhabitation of the city.”⁴⁰

Yveson’s conclusion of the article stipulates that to give birth to a more democratic society, small-scale experiments must be politicized, coordinated and collectively organized in such ways that disagreements and conflicts can be staged and challenge the authority.⁴¹ In the case of Villeray, the small-scale experiments represent the beginnings of a more organized democratic activity, and the design portion of this thesis shall propose to take them to the next level, with the concept of participation in mind.

DIY URBAN INTERVENTIONS

Participation and activism are an important part of Villeray, and only by walking the streets and lanes, one can notice their effect on the urban landscape.

The many encounters of urban DIY interventions (“do it yourself”) in the neighbourhood address the common practice of appropriating the space for the individual and collective needs of the residents. It also speaks to the lack of community space.

Residents lacking private backyards appropriate other spaces to socialize, revitalize and participate in the community life.

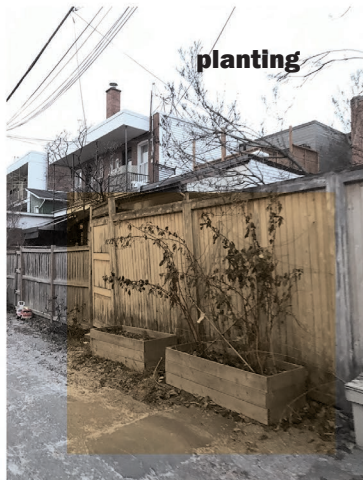
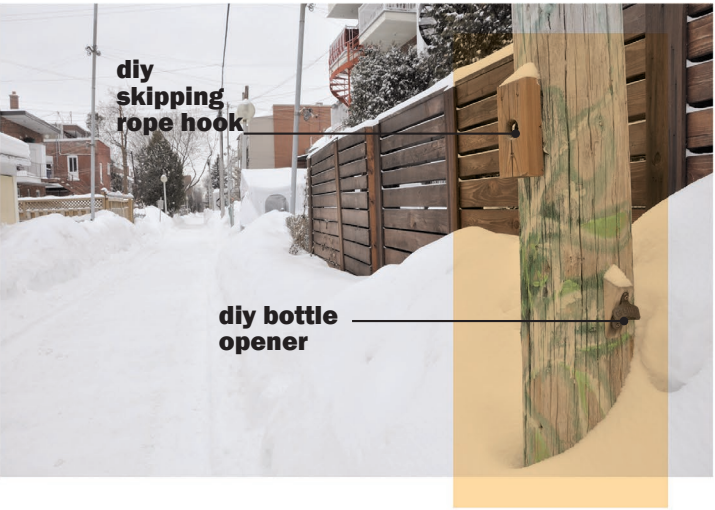
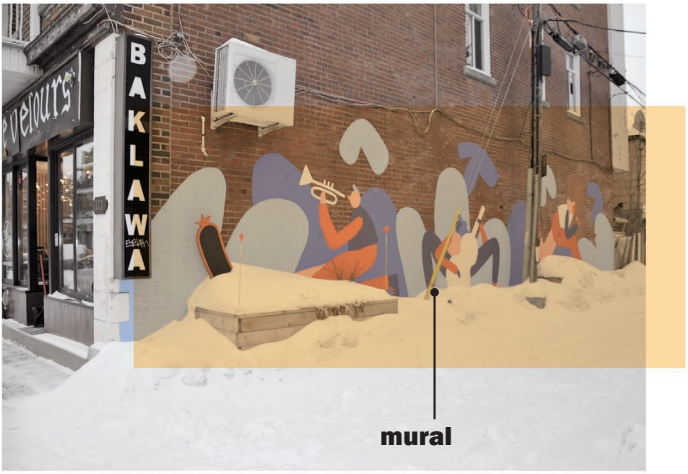


fig. 20 - Laneways in Villeray, DIY and other elements annotated, photo-collage

3.2 PARTICIPATION AND ACTIVISM

Participation is a concept that is now used a lot in practice and is usually described as a consultation process with the concerned populations in public projects. However, the current discourse on participation offers way more divergent views on the matter. One of the major issues discussed by architect and academic Markus Miessen relates to the obsession of consensus and the general romantic perception towards the notion of participation.⁴² Miessen proposes a model of participation that is not based on consensus built on the idea that participation is naturally conflictual.⁴³ When people assemble, discuss and participate, conflicts arise and to always aim for an ideal consensus is not realistic and does not provide productive solutions, according to the author. Other discussions on consensus saw the consensus-building process as a challenge indeed, but the response to the process was, to my understanding, not very productive. For example, one of the solutions was to improve communication as well as planners/design facilitator responsibility towards a more just process.⁴⁴

I am really interested in Markus Miessen's discourse because it identifies the paradox of participation and accept the possibility of a non-consensual process and outcome which I think is more grounded in reality. The other interesting thing about his discourse is how it also concerns the use of the space and its architecture, not only the design process. In *The Nightmare of Participation (Crossbench Praxis as a Mode of Criticality)*, 2010, Miessen proposes to change the model of participation to make it a political act:

“I will put forward a concept of participation as a way to enter politics (forcing oneself into the existing power relations) instead of a ‘politically motivated model of pseudo-participation’ (a proposition to let others contribute

to the decision-making process), which is habitually stirred by the craving for political legitimization.”⁴⁵

By looking at participation as a political act, we can tie Miessen's participation concept with the idea of everyday spaces, the production of space and inherent right to the city based on inhabitation. What Miessen is proposing is an opening towards other fields, with other social and spatial practices that make up people's lives and that produce space. Essentially, to abandon the model of single authorship that characterize the architecture field today and that is applied to participation as well by opening its boundaries.⁴⁶

To combine all these concepts brings me to propose an intervention that would possibly invite a third party to stage a confrontation with the authority (the City, and the ever-ruling capitalist market), perhaps a social organization. This third party would act as the uninvited, critical, outsider agent, or as Miessen calls it, “the crossbench practitioner”.⁴⁷ The reason for that would be to assure that the political action is visible, as Yveson recommended⁴⁸, and to organize the DIY isolated experiments into a clear, political action. The interventions will attempt to achieve three things:

1. Provide a safe-space for conflict, a stage for micro-political actions, participation in spatial construct and reclaiming the right to the Villeray neighbourhood.
2. Re-appropriate the neighbourhood's everyday social space;
3. Provide public and community space in the neighbourhood that reconcile social and abstract space.

COMMUNITY GROUPS

Villeray has a long history of social activism since its creation. Today, there are 23 community non-profit groups that act only in Villeray and advocate on behalf of the residents for social justice, access to affordable housing, food aid, poverty and community development amongst others.

Community groups are at the heart of social development

and community life in Villeray, and yet they are usually the most under-funded sector.

This map shows where the community groups are located, how scattered through the neighbourhood they are and most importantly, how a major community hub at the Lajeunesse Centre, has shut down as of 2020.

COMMUNITY GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS IN VILLERAY (NON-PROFIT)

1 LAJEUNESSE COMMUNITY CENTRE (property of School Board) *closes in 2020 ASSOCIATION DES LOCATAIRES DE VILLERAY (ALV) Villeray's tenants association. Advocates for tenants' rights and access to affordable, social and adequate housing. CRÉATION ETC. Neighbourhood life for impoverished youth, performance arts day camp, homework support, etc. CENTRE DES ÂÎNÉS DE VILLERAY Villeray seniors' centre with a variety of activities for seniors. CENTRE DE LOISIRS COMMUNAUTAIRES LAJEUNESSE Community and recreation centre with a variety of activities for Villeray residents. TANDEM VSP Urban Security and crime prevention in VSP borough. ESPACE FAMILLE VILLERAY Villeray Family Zone, offers activities for families. ASSOCIATION DES PERSONNES ÂGÉES VIETNAMIENNES Association for Vietnamese seniors.	2 733 SAINT-DENIS (property of FQS) CAAP MONTRÉAL Centre for assistance, complaint support and information relating to health and social services. SCOUTS DU CANADA Fondation Québécoise Scout du Canada (FQS) Scout group 52.	3 80 CASTELNAU (property of Church) ORTHODOX SCOUTS Saint Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church.	4 7245 CLARK (property of Renaissance Inc.) SIMO Service d'intégration au marché du travail par Objectif. Integration to the workforce for immigrants RVP Paternity valorization organization.	5 911 JEAN-TALON (property of SHDM) MOUVEMENT SANTÉ MENTALE QUÉBEC Mental health movement, advocates for mental well-being. PREMIÈRE RESSOURCE (AIDE AU PARENTS) Free professional consulting (phone service) for parents relating to parent-children relations.	6 7355 CHRISTOPHE-COLOMB (property of City of Montreal) PATRO LE PRÉVOST Neighbourhood life community organization. Provides an environment that foster mutual aid, participation in leisure activities and community action. Offers activities like sports, recreation, education, emergency food assistance, etc.	7 7500 CHATEAUBRIAND (property of ACEF Montreal) ACEF NORD Household economic cooperatives, home economics, income, housing and consumption. The organization helps individuals and families with budgeting and consumers rights.	8 660 VILLERAY (property of City of Montreal) MAISON DE QUARTIER VILLERAY Neighbourhood "house" (community centre) that works to improve the residents' quality of life. Activities like collective kitchen, soup kitchen and reduced grocery products.	CDC SOLIDARITÉ VILLERAY Solidarity Villeray brings many social stakeholders in the neighbourhood with neighbourhood round tables. Improve quality of life, addressing health, education, urban planning, environmental, community and social organizations in Villeray.	9 8043 SAINT-HUBERT (private property) CDFIA Centre for women (immigrant and natives), advocates for disadvantaged women, offers intercultural activities, workshops, legal activities, etc.	10 8043 SAINT-HUBERT (property of MGPV Inc.) MAISON DES GRANDS-PARENTS DE VILLERAY Villeray Grandparents organization develops intergenerational ties between seniors and young people.	11 205-211 JARRY (property of Solidarité Jarry coop.) EMPLOI-JEUNESSE Youth Employment organization that help youth to integrate the workforce and maintain employment.	LA JARNIGOINE Free accessible literacy services for Villeray's residents. Advocates for equal access to education.	PACTE DE RUE Streetwork and prevention for youth at risk of homelessness, prostitution violence and drug abuse.	12 1982 TILLEMONT (private property) CDC VILLERAY EST Branch of CDC Solidarité Villeray in the most Eastern part of the neighbourhood. In partnership with the neighbouring borough (Rosemont-Petite-Patrie).
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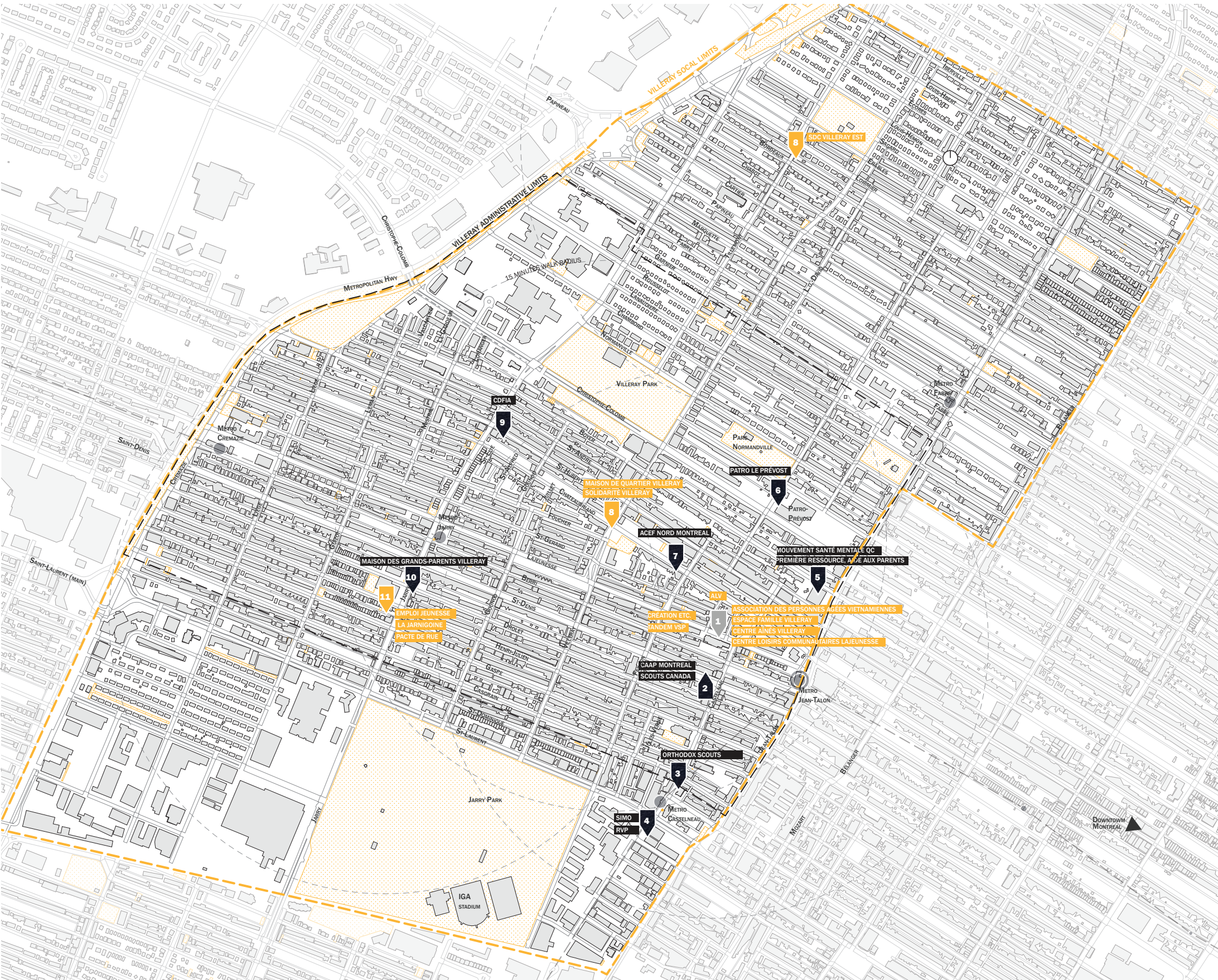


fig. 21 - Villeray neighbourhood community groups, map and list 1:3 000

3.3 INTERVENTION PROPOSAL

I am proposing two scales of intervention: an urban intervention and an architectural one that will produce public and community space for the residents to appropriate the neighbourhood again. More than isolated DIY projects in the neighbourhood, I propose to organize, through architecture, a democratic and social space to affirm the right to the neighbourhood inherent to every inhabitant of Villeray. Participation will be key to this project. First, the urban intervention will take the form of a policy shift that will empower Villeray residents (home owners directly and tenants indirectly) through community groups. The architectural intervention, which will take the form of a citizen house, will allow residents to take part in the decisions concerning the spatial, social and economic aspects of the neighbourhood.

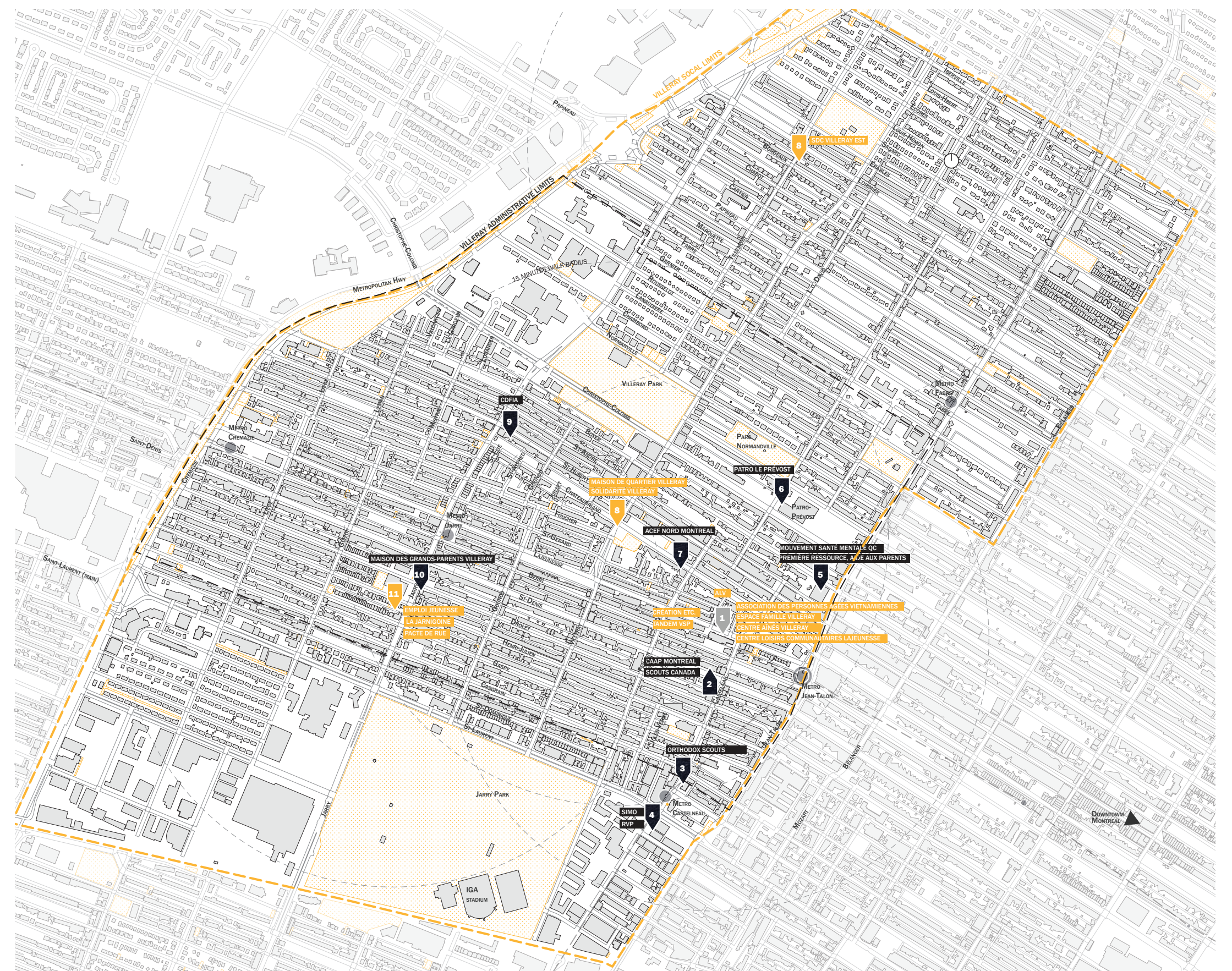
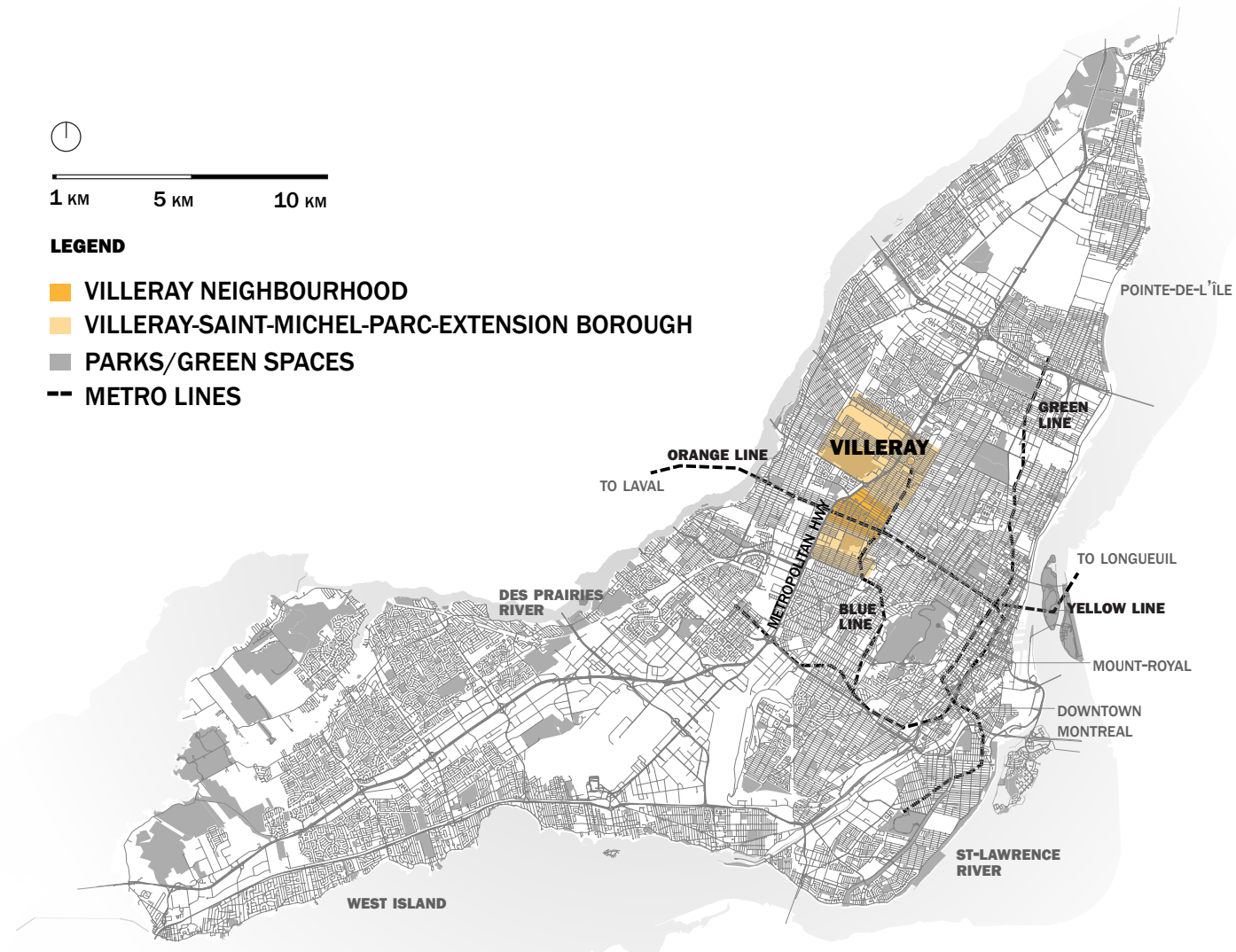




fig. 24 - residential lots in Villaray, map

1:3 000

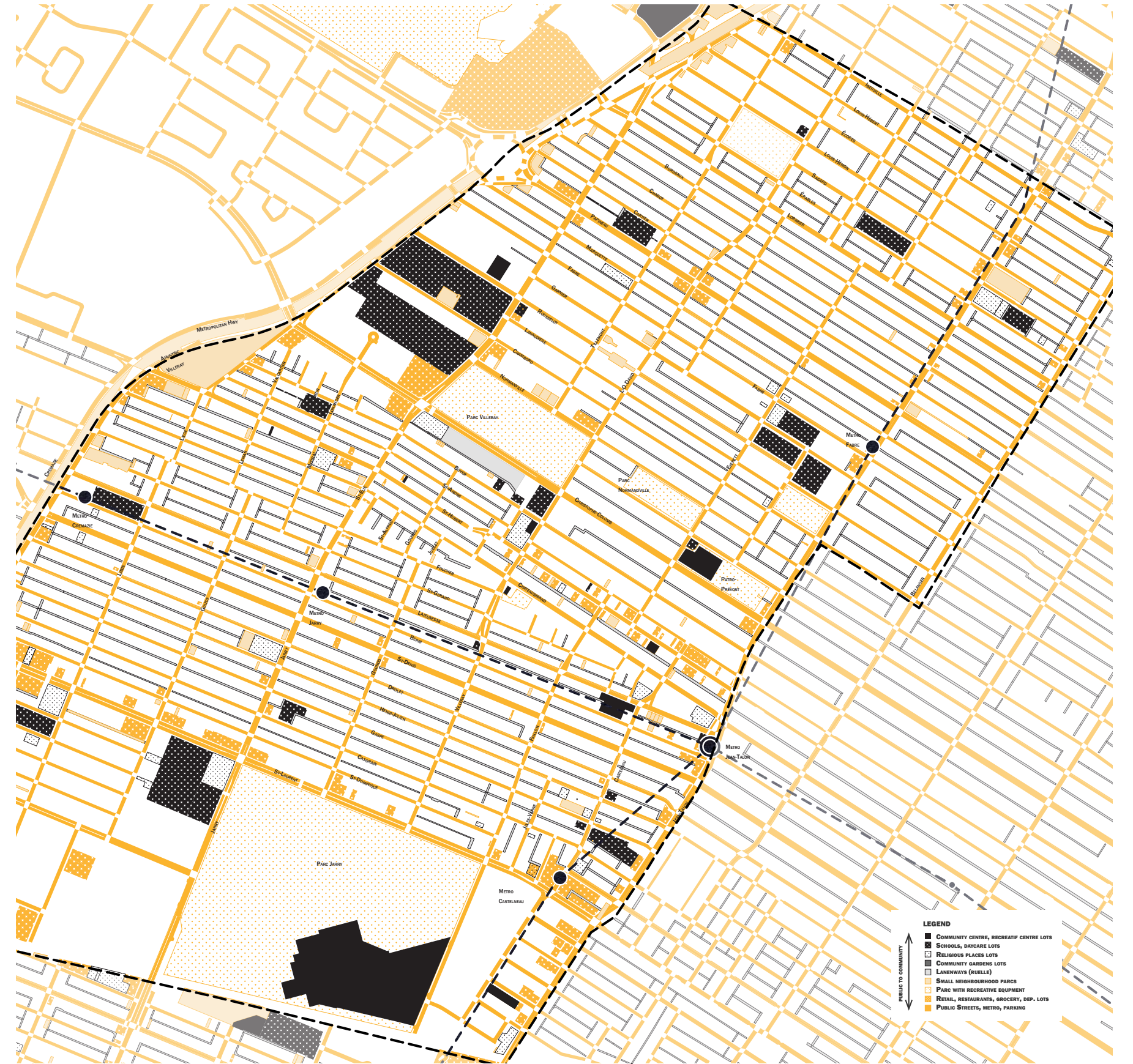


fig. 25 - community and public lots in Villaray, map

1:3 000

3.4 PRECEDENTS

The following section presents precedents that helped to inform the research, and will also help to inform the design. The precedents sometimes take the form of architecture, landscape architecture or urbanism.

Some of the precedents were built, some of them remain ideas.

European Kunsthalle Spaces of Production Studio Miessen - 2007⁴⁹

Spaces of Production is a study project that was realized by Studios Miessen as a research project to explore the spatial potential of cultural institutions like the European Kunsthalle in Cologne. The European Kunsthalle is a cultural and art institution which typically does not have a permanent space and is independent from governments. The vision of a space that would act as a democratic forum and that would curate art in the urban and public space evolved from the Josef-Haubrich-Forum, founded in 1967 and demolished in 2002.⁵⁰ With the intention to critically discuss the practices of curating and “to actively participate in the discussions of transformation of public space, social bonds and political agency as part of the conditions and practices of a newly founded Kunsthalle”⁵¹, the European Kunsthalle in Cologne was founded.

Studio Miessen studied the unstable and stable models for the Kunsthalle and merged the two models in an improved one: the “*Corps Exquisite – kombiniertes Modell*” (combined model).

The unstable model explored the temporality of the spaces, its homelessness and its anchoring in the urban space. As part of the analysis, an extensive inventory of everyday places in downtown Cologne was conducted, and places were categorized according to the publicness or privateness, as well as the degree of accessibility. I attempted in my thesis to conduct a similar investigation. Then, spaces were selected in the city of Cologne to be hosts for exhibitions.

The stable model explored limitations with the unstable

model, and the possibility to remodel space in time within the limits of the lot to adapt programs.

Finally, the *Corps Exquisite* combined model introduced a time-based component to the new European Kunsthalle building, which would have a growing framework to leave room for future programs. This approach goes back to an idea of participation, which is embedded in the architecture. “Corps Exquisite combines the principle of accumulation with the idea of an ever-changing authorship of the extensions. Growth is the curatorial principle.”⁵²

This precedent is an incredible one in its use of participation as a concept of design, not just as a part of the design process. The concepts of stability and instability remind me of urban micro-experiments that are organized, in this case in the context of an art institution. I think this project could be a powerful precedent in the very different context of creating public spaces in a neighbourhood.

Granby Four Streets Assemble Studio - 2013⁵³

The project is located in Granby, a neighbourhood in Liverpool, UK. The demolition of Granby's all but four Victorian Terraces streets during past decades of poor planning left the community with empty and crumbling homes. To reclaim their streets, some residents started DIY actions like clearing, painting and planting on the streets and in 2011, the Granby Four Streets CLT community partnership was created. The objective of the collective land ownership program was to fix the houses and use them for affordable housing.

In a collaboration with Granby Four Streets CLT and Steinbeck Studios, Assemble presented an incremental project to refurbish house and other public spaces in Granby. The collective worked with the community, and proposed a

vision that embraced the DIY character of the place. Ten houses were built up to now and a ceramic workshop, all with the public involvement.⁵⁴

This project is interesting in the context of my project, because it also deals with a neighbourhood and revitalization. Although highly celebrated, the project was also critiqued. The reality of the creation of an ideal social space might not be entirely possible. Even in an attempt to create Lefebvrian social space, the project unintentionally created “abstract space” according to Matthew Thompson. Granby Four Street project participated in the production of abstract space — “a ‘spectacle’ of media-friendly arts-led regeneration, inserting Granby into global circuits of cultural consumption.”⁵⁵

Broadway Estate Community Garden Tilbury muf architecture/art – 2005⁵

This project is a community garden/park in Tilbury, UK. The park was first planned with the residents of an underprivileged housing estate in Essex. After encountering horse dung on site and talking to resident, muf discovered that the park was used for the semi-legal practice of grazing ponies. Nowhere in the brief the it had been mentioned that the land was used that way. Muf then started to look at contested space and at how to make the Tilbury park truly public.⁵⁷

In parallel to the construction of the park, a local history project was run by muf with children from the community. In addition to collecting photographs, stories and mapping them into a new archive, children fabricated horses' costumes to re-enact the stories they heard. Posters were displayed in the town, in bus stops. Truly, the ponies were representing an alternative way to appropriate the public space that was outside the conventional.⁵⁸

As for the design of the space, clusters of hills break down the park in different zones, which include a dressage arena for horses, gardens and indigenous plantings, granite steps for encounters, a large lawn that could be used for football but not identified, play area for children under 5 and

individual play alcoves. The use of typological qualities of the park, which are ambiguous in a way but still there, work to keep the cultural memory that is embedded in the place.⁵⁹

This project is simple and elegant, and most importantly, the concept of participation is embedded not only by the cultural research on horses but also by the undetermined, flexible spaces within the park.

CHAPTER 04: THE DESIGN PROJECT

The following section presents the design project, established in the neighbourhood of Villeray, to respond to the initial thesis statement. This thesis is dependent on its site, and inversely, its site is dependent on the research.

The need to reappropriate the neighbourhood by its residents has been translated in this design project by a general policy shift. Then, the policy shift has been tested out and

an architectural intervention, la *Maison Citoyenne*, is an example of how the policy shift could benefit the residents.

This following section will propose two scales of intervention, in two parts. Part 1, Policy Changes: Density Transfers and Community Stakeholders will propose an urban policy, and Part 2, *La Maison Citoyenne*, will propose a community building.

4.1 POLICY CHANGES: DENSITY TRANSFERS AND COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

The urban policy shift proposed aims to create a circular mechanism that will bring back property ownership to the residents of Villeray while reinvesting the economic benefits to generate social capital.

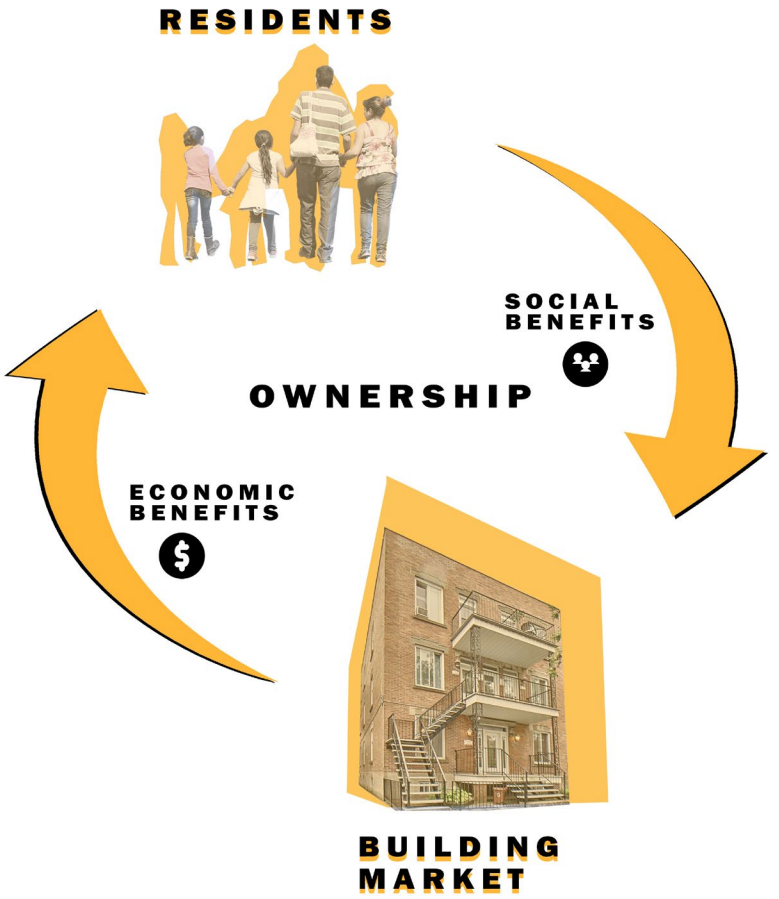


fig.26 - ownership benefits, collage-diagram

Community groups become, in this scenario, agents of liaison between the neighbourhood owners and big buyers through the sale of air space rights.

The black blocks illustrate potential air space rights that would be sold via community groups. The yellow blocks represent new constructions that make use of the purchased air rights to increase their density allowance.

LEGEND

- AIR SPACE - rights sold**
 - preservation of the neighbourhood scale and fabric
 - lesser need for owners to sell
 - better maintenance of properties by individual owners hence better living conditions for tenants
 - the sale allows a residual profit for community
- NEW BUILDING - density trans-**
 - urban densification for growing population
 - allows a smaller selection of taller new projects
 - attractive policies for all parties (seller, broker, buyer)
 - opportunities for big scale affordable/social housing projects
- NEW CITIZEN HOUSE - funded by**
 - citizen house is the tangible benefits of the policy to all residents
 - urban policy geared to benefit the residents first
 - policy allows initial funding
 - participation of the community stakeholder in the property market of the neighbourhood

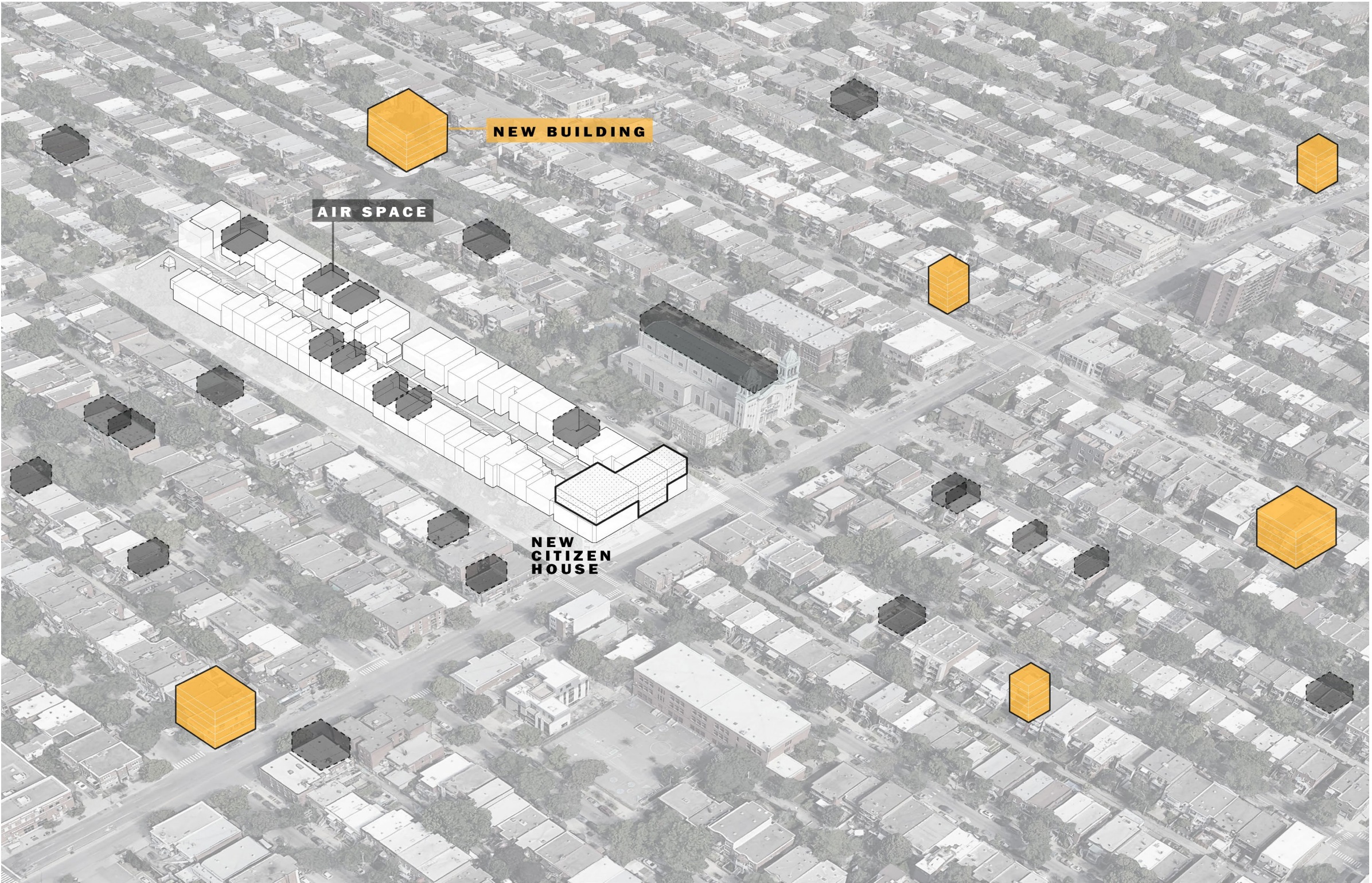


fig.27 - density transfer mechanism, collage-diagram

The capitalization of air space rights for the transfer of density allows owners to maintain their rental properties; community groups to generate funding; and big buyer to build higher.

This policy could help protect the existing small-scale typologies of the neighbourhood and preserve the existing fabric. When selling their air space rights, owners would have to inject sums into their properties to maintain them and offer better living conditions for tenants.

Profits generated by the capitalization of air space rights will be directly reinvested within the bounds of the neighbourhood to serve the residents.

First, as a funding strategy for a Citizens House to offer services, and second, as a real estate investment in the neighbourhood.

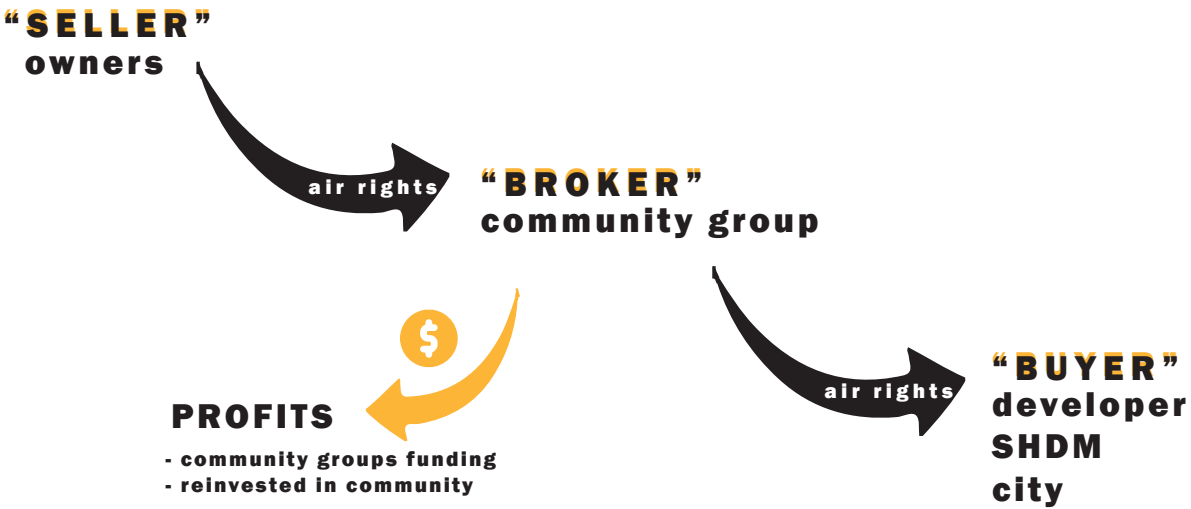


fig.28 - density transfer mechanism for stakeholders, diagram

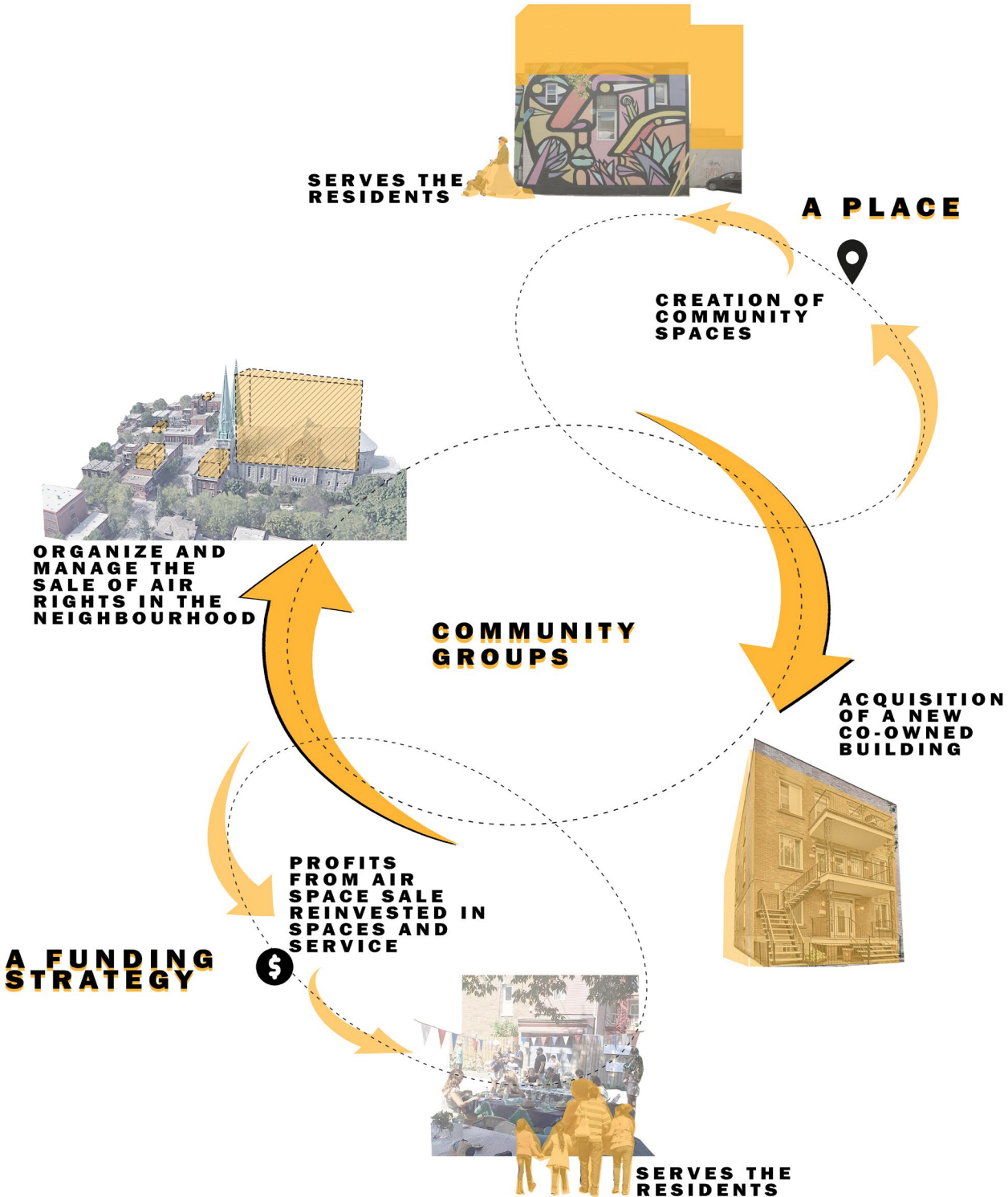


fig.29 - density transfer mechanism for community stakeholders, collage-diagram

The community groups and therefore the residents will collectively reclaim many properties over time in the neighbourhood.

Buildings will serve for community activities, social housing and could also be rented to small local businesses, as part of a subsidized program, or eventually given back to residents in co-ownership for example.

LEGEND

MAJOR COMMUNITY HUB

COMMUNITY GROUPS POTENTIAL CO-OWNED BUILDINGS



fig.30 - growth of collective ownership over time, collage-diagram

4.2 LA MAISON CITOYENNE

The citizen house, *La maison citoyenne*, is a space set out to generate a collective identity and to support and bring the community together by collaging the existing and the new.

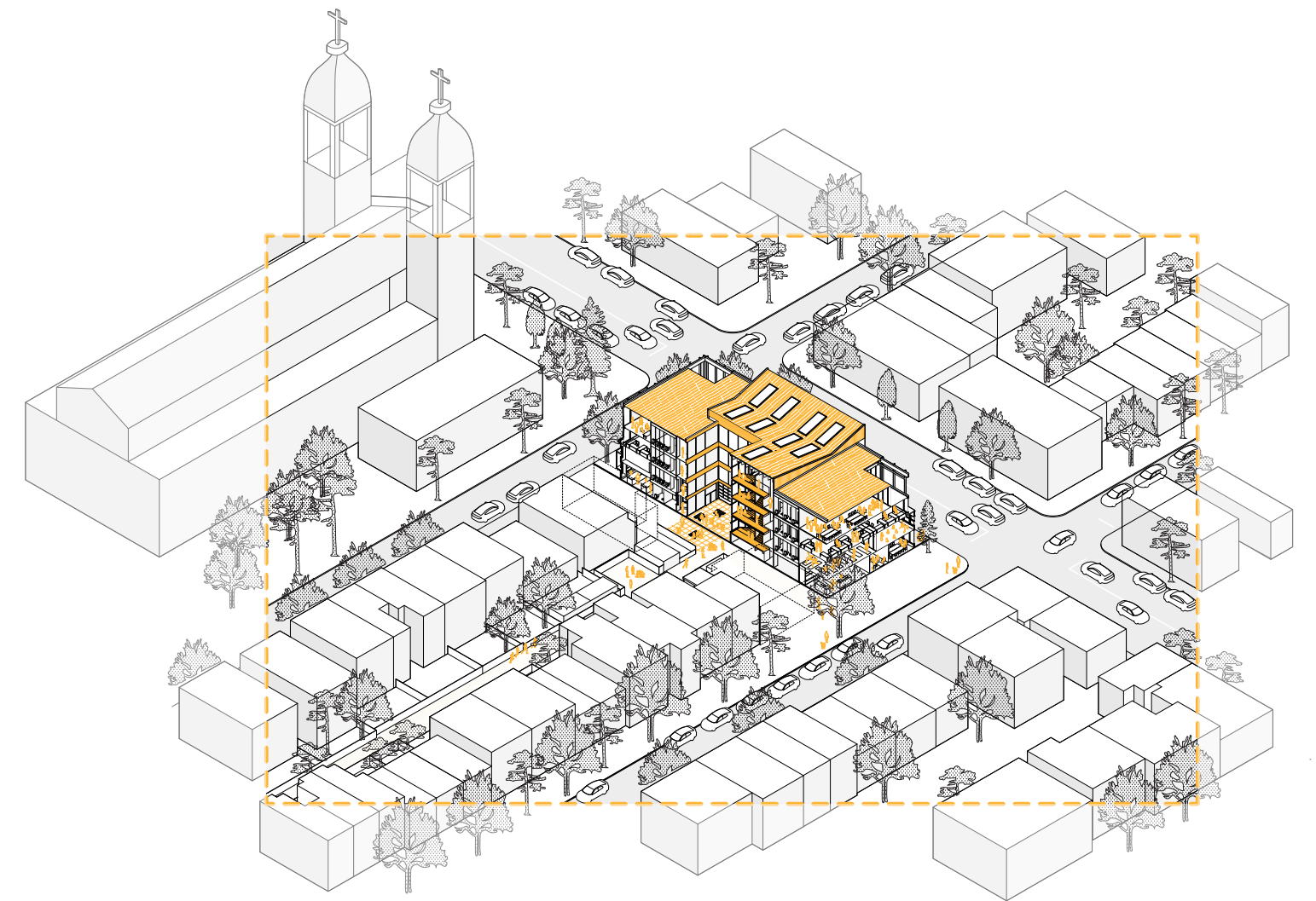


fig.31 - axonometric view of the project within the neighbourhood



THE SITE

Three main community hubs have been identified in the neighbourhood as potential expansion sites, and the West site has been chosen as a case study of the new citizen house typology.

The second site is the 660 Villeray, which is an old City building lent to various community groups. The heritage institutional building would be another interesting site to investigate. This building could be renovated while keeping its original façades, and additional storeys could be considered.

The third site is the 1982 Tillemont, which is actually only a commercial space rented to the SDC Solidarité Villera y Est. This space is well located in the eastern part of Villera y, but adjacent building would have to be acquired

by community groups for this site to be a viable option.

Since the Citizen House is first and foremost a place for residents to get services and different aids, proximity is crucial. Multiple citizen houses would serve residents within a 10-20 minutes walking distance. This project proposes that multiple citizen houses would be implemented over time, and this is only one example. The scale of these possible interventions is also flexible - some will result in buildings, others could result in pocket parks or small community places.

The West Site, which is the site of the proposed intervention, is comprised of four existing buildings. One of them is already a community owned coop, and the three others are residential and commercial properties that would be acquired by the community groups.

LEGEND

- EXISTING BUILDING OF INTERVENTION
- EXISTING BUILDINGS
- LANEWAY SHEDS
- TREE CANOPY
- PRIVATE BACKYARDS (FENCE)
- PROPERTY LOTS

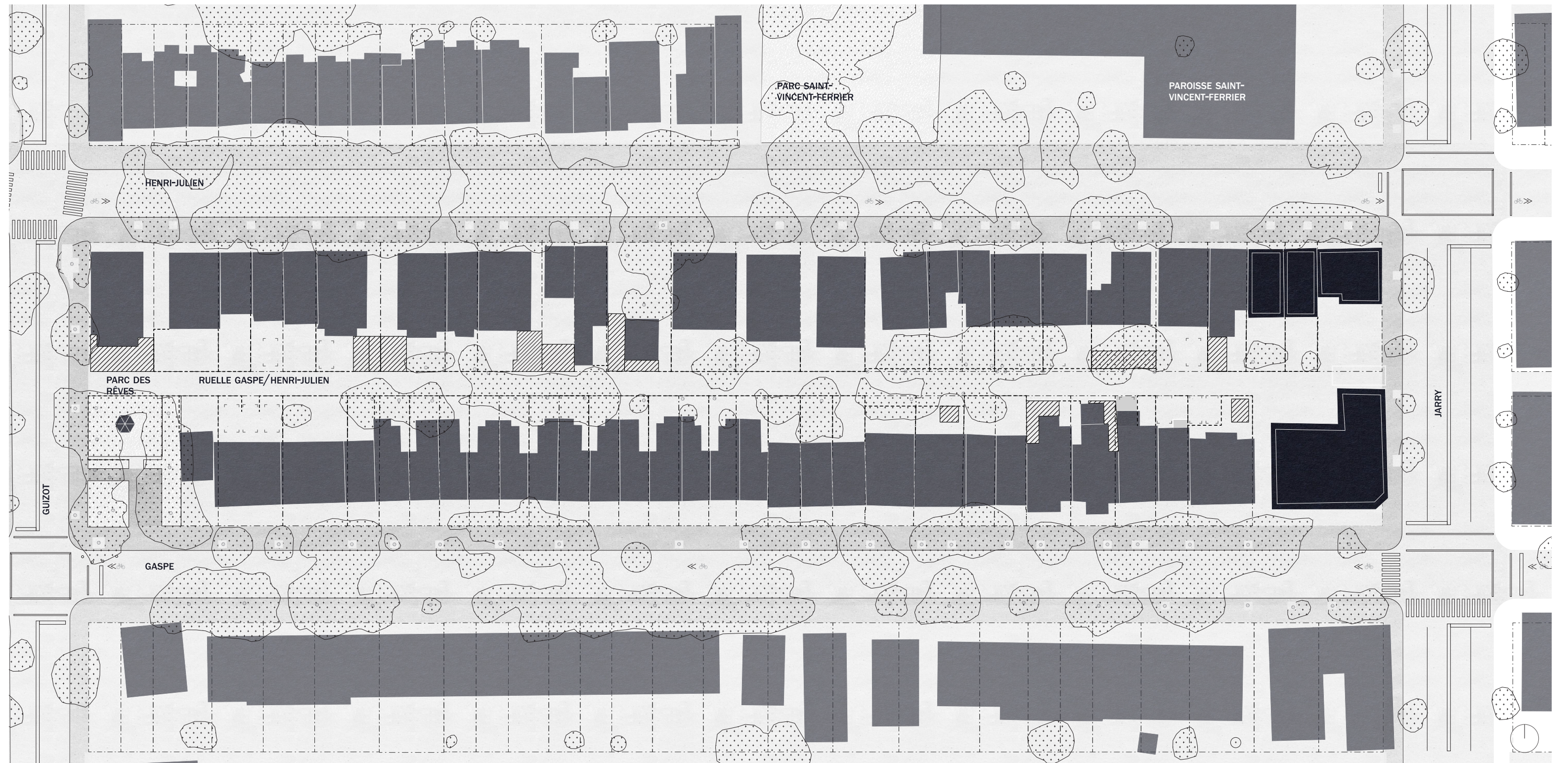


fig. 33 - existing block site plan

1:1 000

The existing building façades will be preserved in an attempt to allow the marriage of the existing and the new.

The car parkings allow for the occupation of some vacant land by the new building. Other main modifications to the existing are the complete repurposing of the interior spaces and the addition of 2 new storeys.

The different façades, on the street or in the laneway, that will shape the new *Maison citoyenne* are a reflection of the eclectic nature of the neighbourhood's townscape.

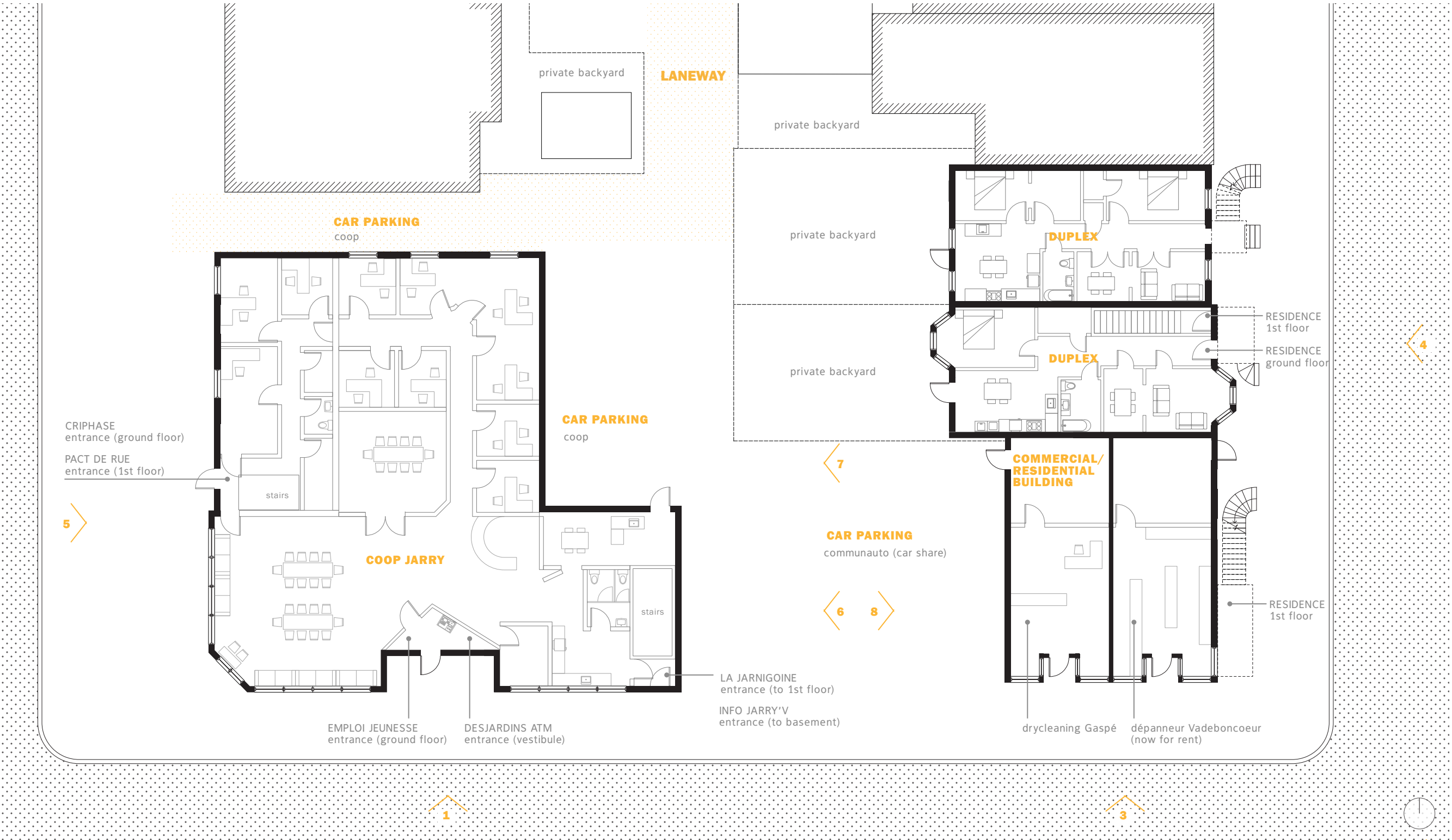


fig. 34 - existing building ground floor and site plan 1:200



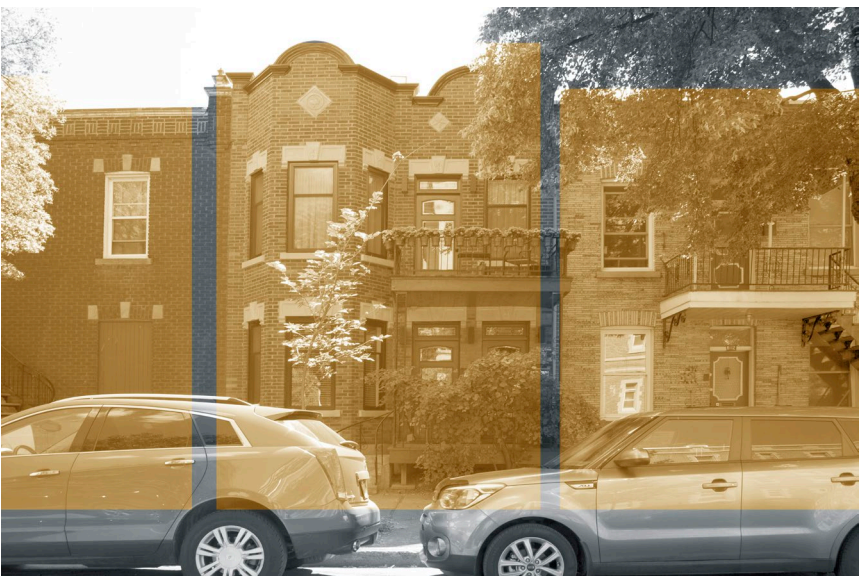
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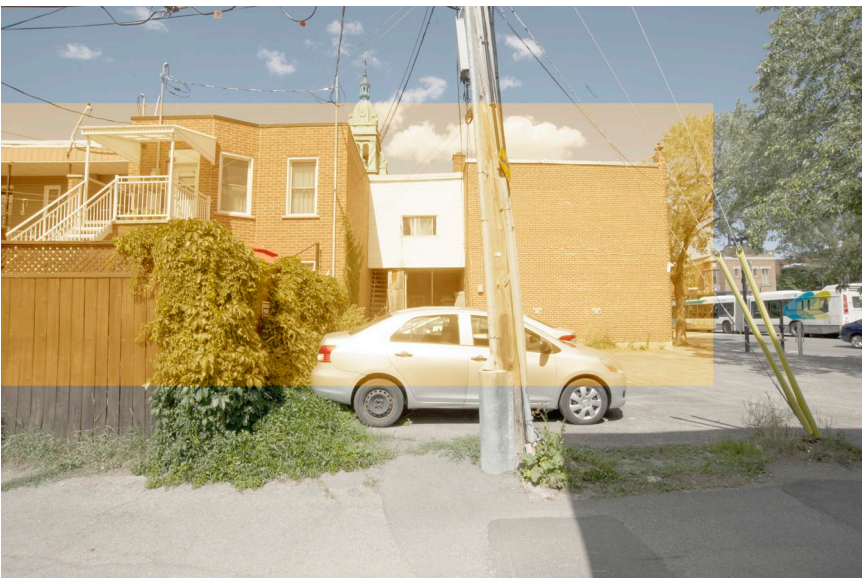
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7



8

fig. 35 - photo series of the existing project site



fig. 36 - Laneway Henri-Julien/Gaspé at Guizot and Jarry, elements annotated, photo-collage

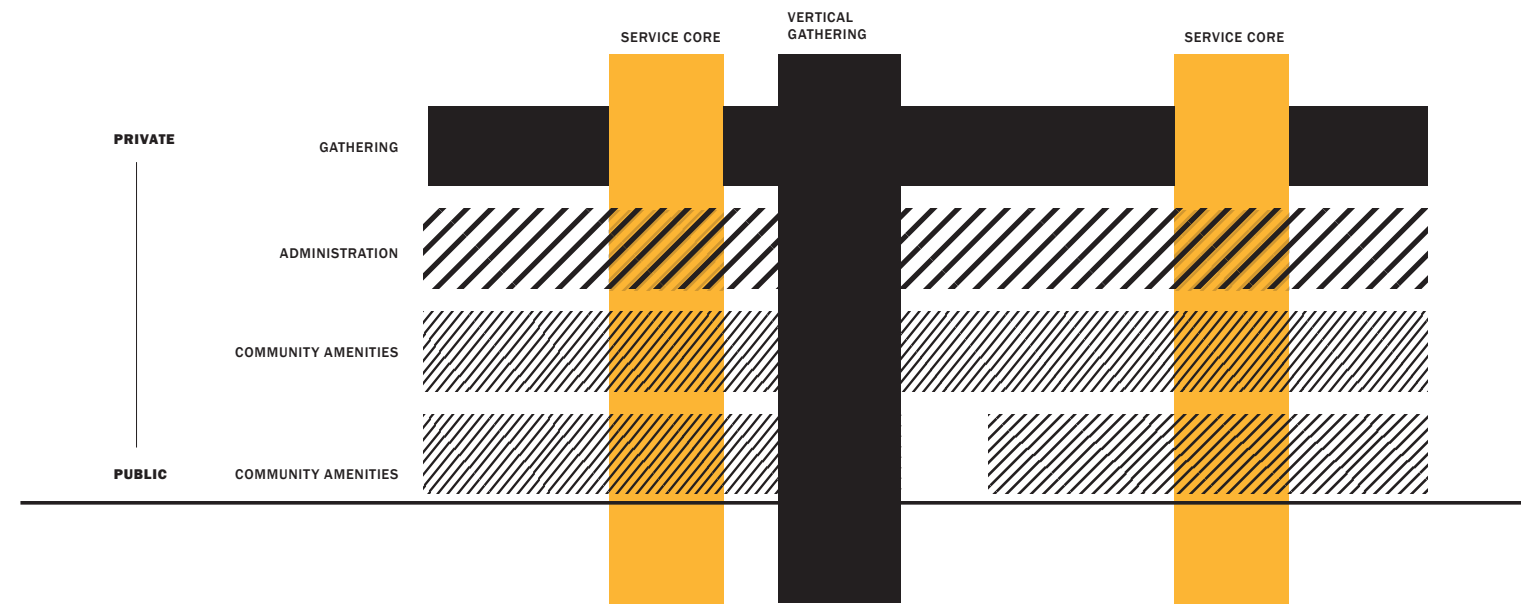


fig. 37 - massing strategy diagram

THE PROGRAM

The program caters to existing and new social activities and aims to amplify the sense of community.

It is important to note that the program is derived from the current community activities and additional needs put forward by citizens during the 2018 Villeray Social Forum. That forum was organized by a major community group, the SDC Solidarité Villeray, who is the major community actor to mediate conversations between different community groups in the neighbourhood.

I met with the SDC Solidarité Villeray as well as Info Jarry'v and Emploi Jeunesse to discuss their needs for a new community space.

As for the vertical organization of the program, it sets up a degree of hierarchy between highly public and private uses within the building. Mainly public uses are located on the ground and first floors, like the bar café, commercial spaces, collective kitchen, wood working workshop, fitness rooms and various workspaces.

More private uses, like the community groups administration spaces and the gathering/event spaces are located on the second and top floors.



fig.38 - program hierarchy diagram



fig. 39 - view of the *Maison Citoyenne* from across the street

THE BUILDING

The idea of collaging the existing and the new is especially visible on the façade.

The strategy was that the new additions contrast with the existing buildings, while the interior reads as one.

THE GROUND FLOOR

The ground floor is oriented around an intimate courtyard accessible from the lane and from the high street. If coming from Jarry, the visitor first makes its way under a street canopy occupying the public space, through a passage between buildings to arrive in the courtyard.

Its dual role as a gathering and circulation space is the first encounter of the visitor with the intimate collective space.

As the visitor enters the building from the courtyard, they can find its interior extension, the main hall.

From that orientation hall, visitors can then reach highly public community spaces like activity rooms, a wood working workshop, and a collective kitchen.

Local businesses like a bar café, a subsidized grocery store and a local business are also located on the ground floor and accessible from Jarry. They are part of the building while also remaining independent.

- PROGRAM
- 1

passage
- 2

courtyard
- 3

welcoming area
- 4

half landing
- 5

street entry
- 6

desjardins ATM
- 7

activities room
- 8

workshop
- 9

exit stair 2
- 10

games room
- 11

bar/cafe
- 12

cafe kitchen
- 13

subsidized grocery store
- 14

local business subsidized rent
- 15

industrial kitchen
- 16

exit stair 2

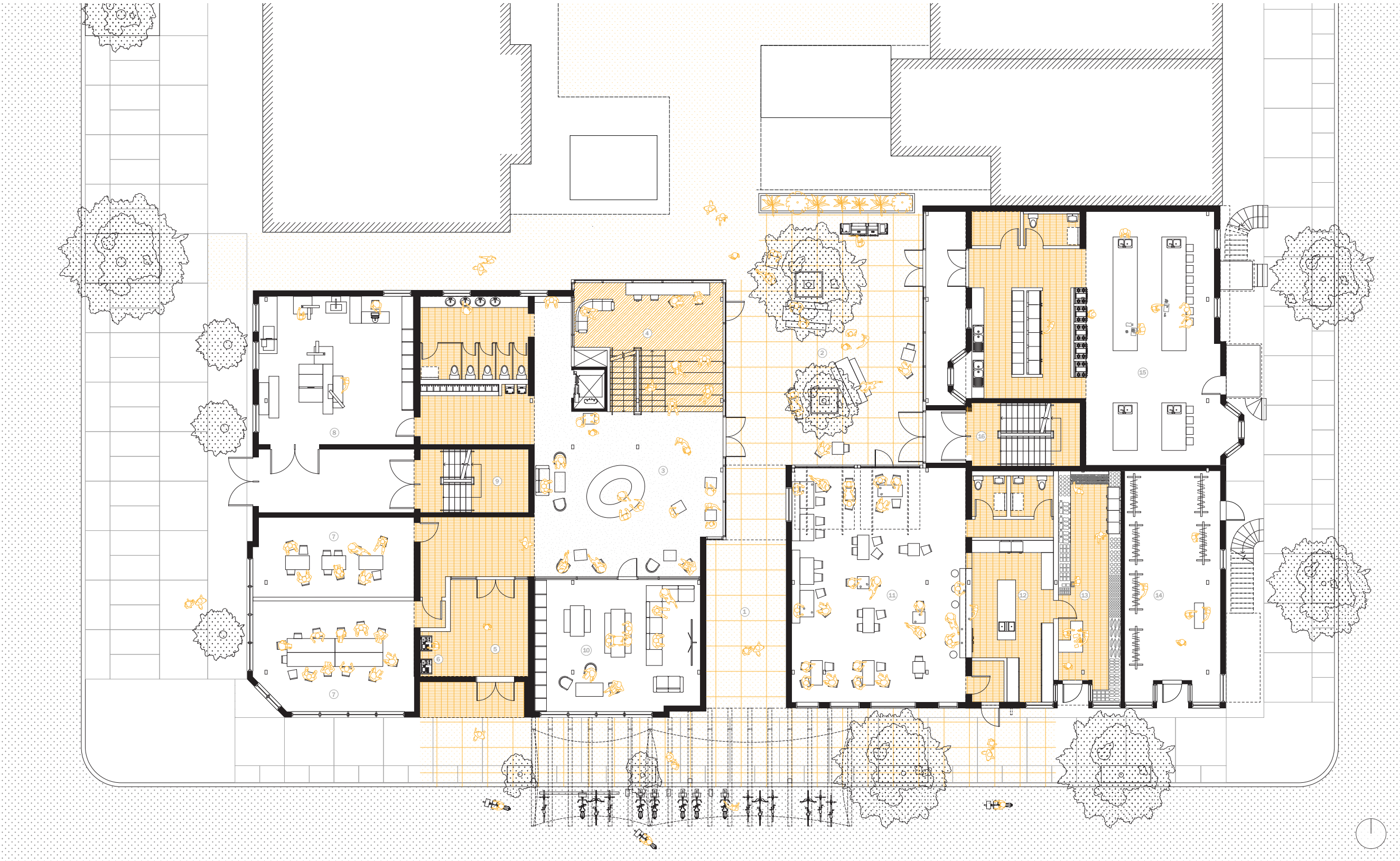


fig. 40 - ground floor plan

1:200



fig. 41 - transverse West section, courtyard 1:300

Visible on the courtyard section, the canopy, passage and courtyard areas double as collective gathering spaces.

The enfilade created by those spaces gradually leads the visitors from a highly public to a private exterior space.

The courtyard would be the hearth of the citizen's house, where block parties, family activities or casual gatherings would be held. It could also perform as a meeting place for events happening elsewhere in the neighbourhood, seasonal activities happening in the laneway like ice staking in the winter or scavenger hunts in the summer.



fig. 42 - longitudinal North section, service cores 1:300





fig. 44 - view of the passage leading to the courtyard from Jarry street



fig. 45 - view of the courtyard from the lane



fig. 46 - view of the service core area in the collective kitchen

Finally, the two service cores, seen in the longitudinal section, condense all the functions and services that are not necessarily part of the program.

The core walls are vertically continuous throughout the building and serve all programmatic spaces.

They are made of brick, contrasting with the lighter steel structure and reminiscent of the diversity of the brick material found in Villeray. They appear as load-bearing walls, and in fact, hide structural elements that make the long

spans on the higher floors possible.

Their lower, dropped ceilings and continuous brick floors allow to feel the transition between the spaces that are served, and the serving spaces. Located in the cores are for the most part washrooms, storage spaces, coat rooms and exit stairs.

On the left, a view of the kitchen service area, where the brick core walls incorporate the storage and appliances can be observed.

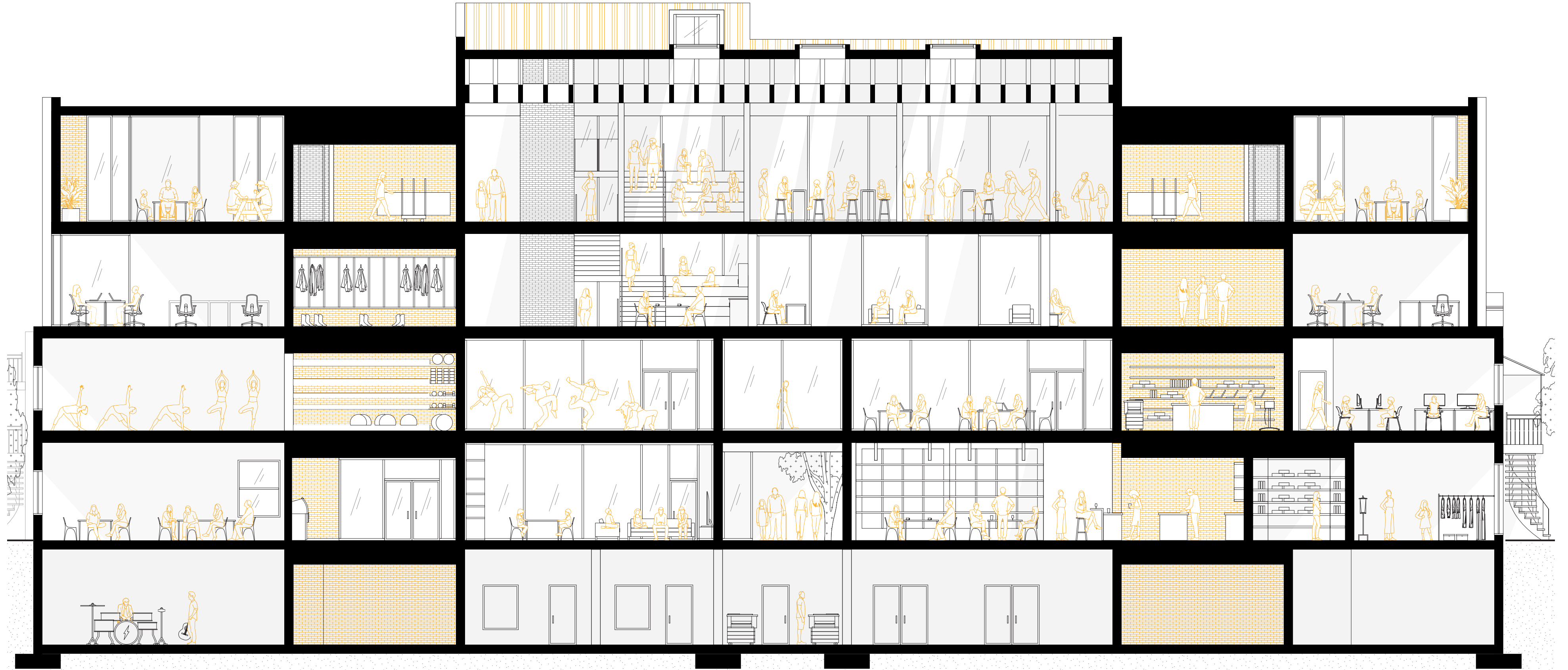


fig. 47 - longitudinal North section, service cores

1:100

THE FIRST FLOOR

The visitor finds its way through the main staircase, and first stops on the half landing before reaching the first floor.

This half landing, where one stops, interacts, sits or looks outside represents another grain of collective space, and is continued in the main hall wrapping around the courtyard.

The U-shape circulation around the courtyard really takes form here. It becomes a meeting place for residents before or after they take part in their activities, or simply a casual space to hang out.

PROGRAM

- 17 fitness room
- 18 equipment room
- 19 change rooms
- 20 coworking space
- 21 printing/technologies
- 22 media studio
- 23 large meeting room
- 24 casual meeting room
- 25 main corridor



fig. 48 - first floor plan

1:200

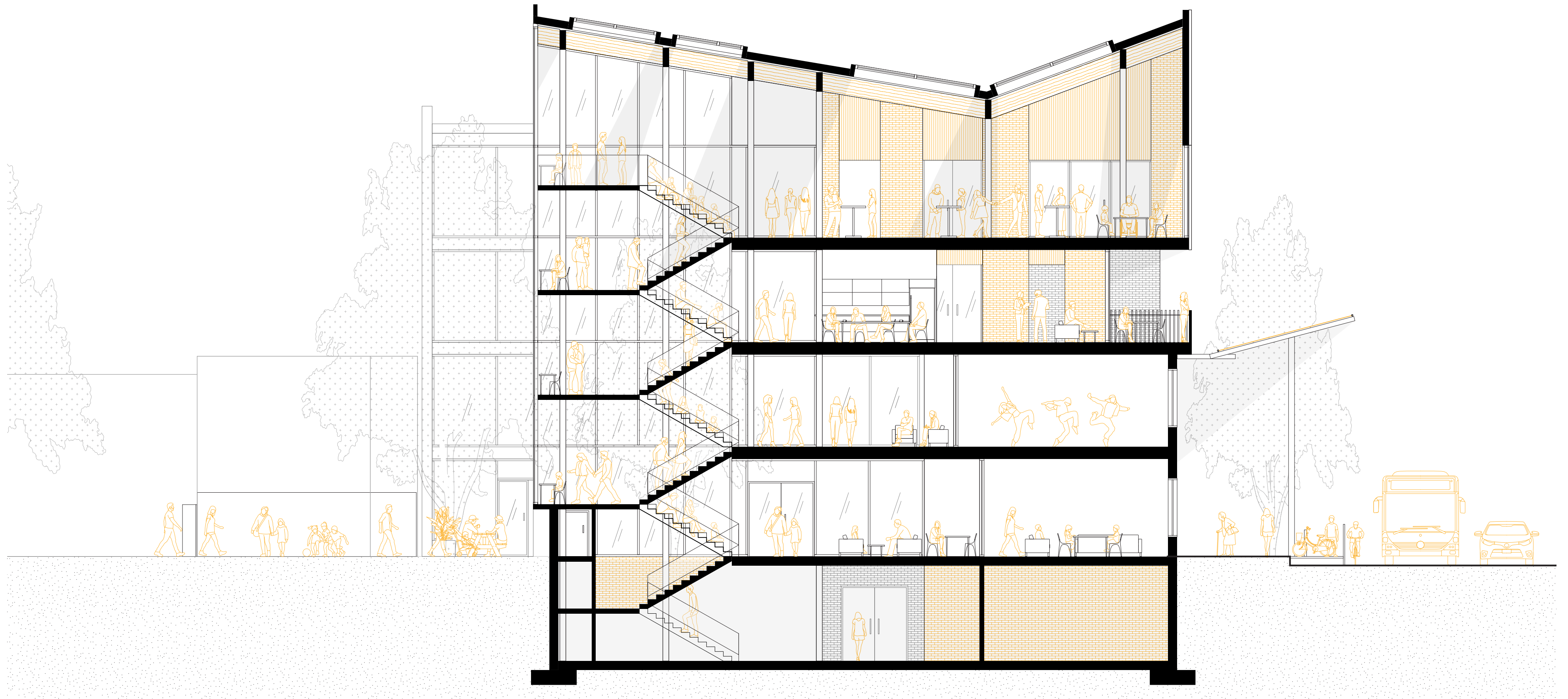




fig. 50 - view of the half landing, stairs, sitting space and laneway

The section and the half landing view show how the half-landings double as circulation and collective spaces. They are resting points and allow to experience the building at a much slower pace.

The half landing becomes a social place, not only a transition one. It also offers incredible views of the everyday life that is happening outside the building and in the laneway. The viewpoints, that are repeated between each floor, work within the logic of the social ecology of the building. They observe the laneway, while they are observed by the laneway pedestrians, who can understand what is happening inside the building. During winter and summer months, different everyday

activities take place in the laneway - circulation, children playing, neighbours socializing, etc. Some other activities will also be organized by *la Maison Citoyenne*: an ice skating strip in the winter and art and play installations in the summer. All these activities will be visible from the landings, which connect the building with the everyday space of the laneway.

Finally, the half-landings are part of a larger system within the staircase that includes the vertical circulation stairs as well as the bleachers. The bleachers can be used for casual sitting, but also for activities that require an audience. The main staircase is then activated as a main social space, rather than being a simple circulation tool.

THE SECOND FLOOR

The new second floor addition allows for a true open plan for community administration spaces.

The central main hall combines more flexible, common spaces while the areas off the sides are dedicated to community administration and collaboration.

The main hall extends onto a balcony, offering an outdoor collective experience on this upper floor.

- PROGRAM
- 26 open office space (for community groups)
 - 27 individual meeting/call room
 - 28 balcony
 - 29 coat room
 - 30 storage



fig. 51 - second floor plan 1:200



fig. 52 - view of the second floor main hall, meeting rooms and balcony

In this view, the main hall, more flexible and communal, connects with the small meeting rooms on the left, and the entrance to the open office at the back.

This floor offers an opportunity for community groups to have a dedicated and quality workspace. With an open office configuration, community groups, which are typically composed of a small number of people per group, can have access to many amenities while occupying a small number of desks. The office spaces are protected by access doors, so the main hall can be used by all users while the administration spaces are reserved for community staff. Small individual meeting rooms, accessible from the main hall, can be used for individual meetings/

counselling sessions with members of the community or simply by staff for sensitive calls, or team meetings. The two large meeting rooms, located on the first floor, can also be used by community groups for larger meetings. The idea is to share the community amenities to all residents, not only community groups staff, but to also allow them to have dedicated working spaces.

Finally, the balcony works within the same social and organizational logic than the courtyard, half landings and main halls. It is another grain of collective space. It is a more private exterior space than the courtyard for example and offers a memorable everyday experience for the users.

THE TOP FLOOR

Lastly, on the third and top floor, the main staircase and the main hall merge together into the central gathering space to achieve an open and flexible room.

On either side of the service cores, the visitor will find secondary gathering rooms that can be independent or merged to the central gathering area. South terraces also act as transitional and unifying spaces between the three gathering rooms, and offer an opportunity for outdoor viewing platforms. They offer great views of the neighbourhood, and interior activities happening in the secondary gathering spaces can spill outside.

PROGRAM

- 31 storage
- 32 s-w terrace
- 33 gathering
- 34 coat room
- 35 main gathering
- 36 s-e terrace



fig. 53 - third floor plan

1:200



fig. 54 - view of the main gathering space during an improv event at night

The gathering spaces, comprising three distinct gathering rooms or one can also host a variety of cultural and community events to reinforce, support and celebrate the diversity of the residents.

In this night view of the central space, casual improv and theatre activities are taking place, illustrating only one example of how residents will inhabit the space. The flexible configuration of this floor makes it easier for the community to use the building for multiple occasions. One of the problems observed with the current community

spaces in the neighbourhood (for example the now closed Lajeunesse Centre) is that the buildings are usually old schools and don't offer a lot of flexibility in their interior layouts. Typically, old schools were organized into a series of classrooms, with a gymnasium-type space. Larger events would then be held in gymnasiums, but these spaces do not offer a memorable experience of the community space. They are usually only used out of necessity.

The new gathering space at La Maison Citoyenne recognizes the value in community life and offers a quality space as a backdrop for it.



fig. 55 - view of the main gathering space in the afternoon

The main strategy used to create a memorable environment for the community is the distinct structure and light conditions found in the central gathering space. It reinforces the hierarchy of the program and underlines the importance of the space as a private yet social one.

Being on the top floor, the gathering space has the opportunity to let light enter from the roof. With a contrasting exposed wood roof structure, the visitor will be surprised

by the light and warmth of the gathering space. The wood screen, which also lets light from the south side (and Jarry street) in a peculiar way will create a unique atmosphere in that room. Over time, this space could be referred to as the “*la salle en bois*” (the wood room) since it is distinctly made of wood in the inside and outside.

This space will come to be the reference for community life and should be made special for its deserving users.

ACTIVITIES

Finally, the axonometric view of the building informs us about the activities that are held in the building.

Following the vertical hierarchy of highly public to private space, *la Maison Citoyenne* nonetheless contains a highly community-oriented program.

On every floor, the service cores contain washrooms and storage. The U-shape circulation around the courtyard is also visible on this drawing.

The ground floor is animated by highly public and accessible activities, like activity rooms, a woodworking workshop, a collective kitchen, the bar café and businesses. A video games and board games room is also available to the neighbourhood's kids and teenagers. Those rooms are open to all, although some rules and schedules apply.

On the first floor, fitness classes are taking place; a yoga class and dance activities are shown in the drawing. An AA meeting, or a *comité ruelle verte* meeting (green laneway committee) is also taking place on the East side's casual meeting room. A coworking space and a media-lab with access to computers, printers and other state-of-the-art technology equipment are also accessible every day of the week.

On the second floor, multiple community groups share an open office workspace, with a lot of glazing and natural lighting. They collaborate on social and urban issues that affect the neighbourhood.

Finally, on the top floor, an information/workshop session on a future social housing project in the neighbourhood is taking place. Participants are discussing and having lunch. In the East room, a community lunch is organized by the *Maison des Grands-Parents de Villeray*, (Villeray Grand-Parents House) to connect seniors and children through activities.

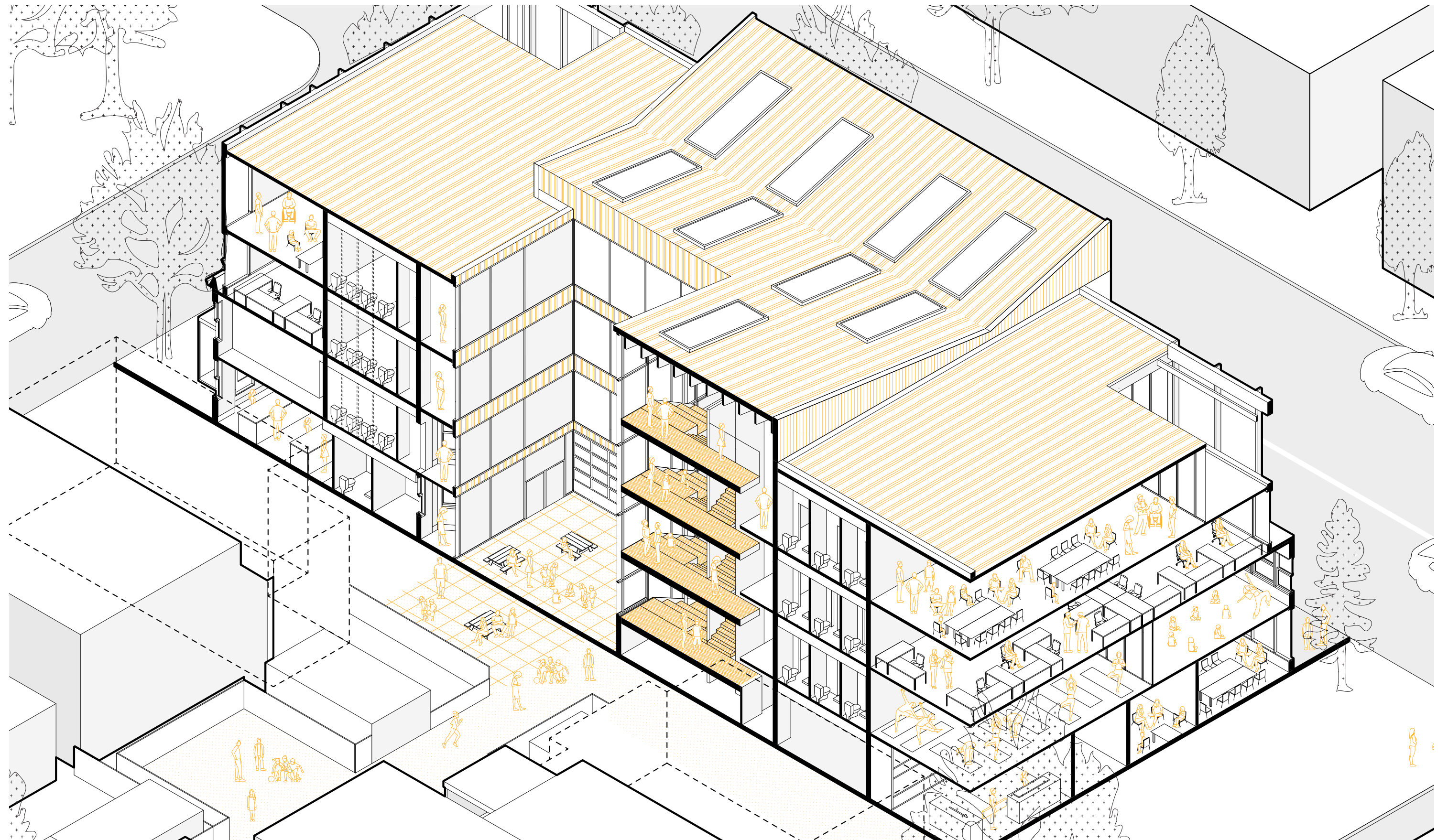


fig. 56 - axonometric view of the building's activities

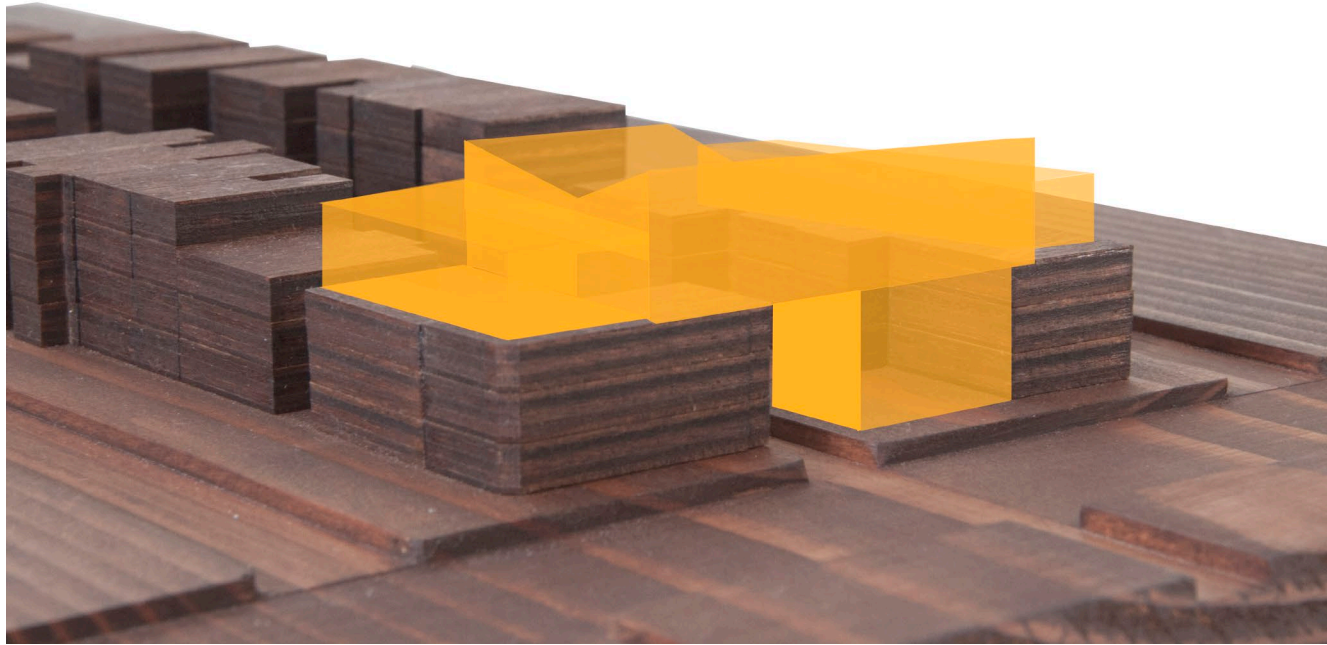


fig. 57 - view of the project's corner site, site model and massing 1:500, photograph



fig. 58 - view of the project's façade, site model and massing 1:500, photograph

PHYSICAL MODELS

This last section compiles photos of the different physical models produced for this project. Two models were realized; the first one is a site model, to experiment with massing, and the second one is a working model, to experiment with façade designs and interior layouts.



fig. 59 - top view of the site model 1:500, photograph

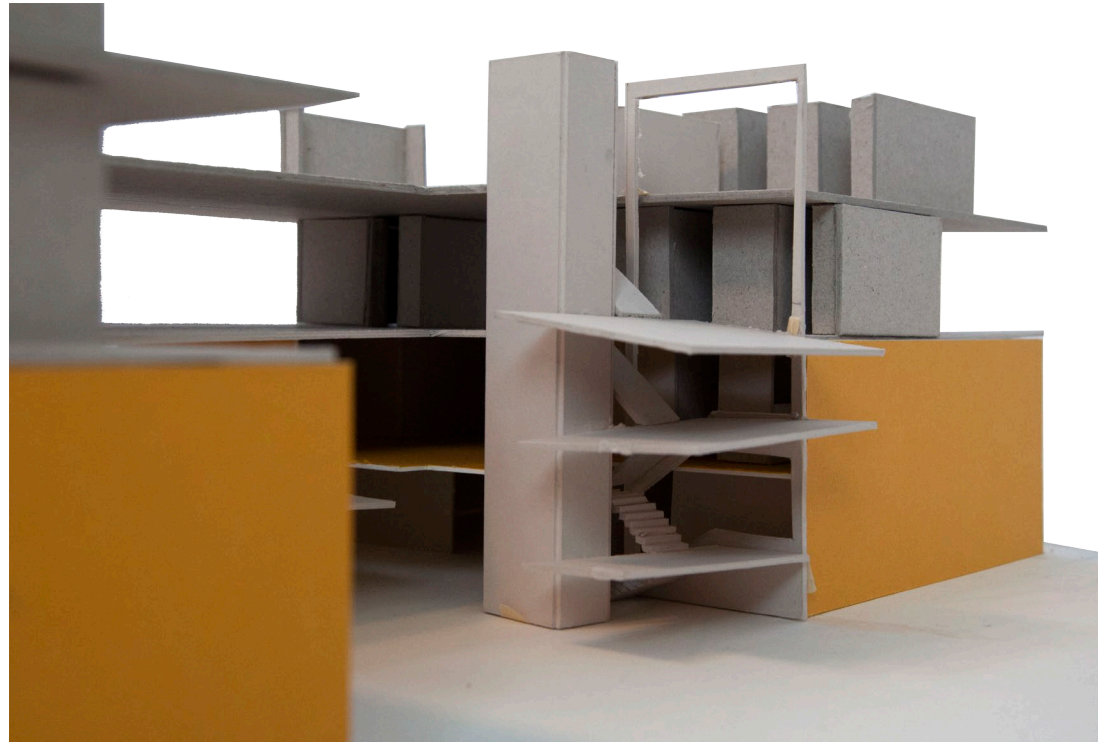


fig. 60 - view of the stairs, working model 1:50, photograph

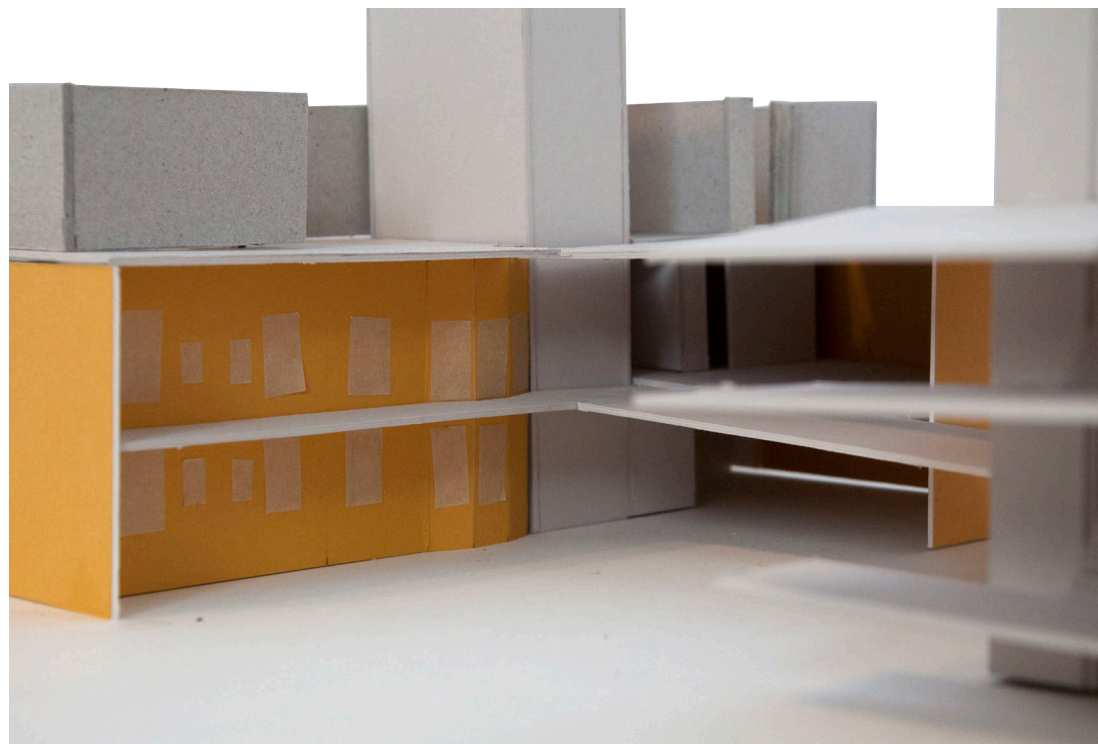


fig. 61 - view of the courtyard and façades, working model 1:50, photograph



fig. 62 - top view of the working model 1:50, photograph

CONCLUSION

In the end, I believe that providing a community place that offer more than recreational activities would allow residents to participate in the neighbourhood life in a variety of ways. To me, **participation is a direct way to reappropriate the neighbourhood**. By participating first in activities with the neighbourhood community, residents can adapt the community offer to their lives. They then have an entry point from where they can participate in larger discussions about the neighbourhood. It is not enough to urge residents to express themselves on urban and social issues if they don't have a safe space and a local social circle to do so. The neighbourhood should provide a space where residents are brought together.

Additionally, policy shifts like the density transfer strategy or others, could be a starting point in the battle against the harmful consequences of gentrification, like the exclusion of native residents. Gentrification is inevitable, but it is possible to slow it down and regulate urban and economic practices to empower the community instead of the highest bidder. With more progressive and socialist

measures, governments and cities will need to give priority to the collective well-being of its inhabitants rather than to the individual monopoly of private companies. Developers are certainly not going to disappear from the real-estate market of the neighbourhood, but urban policy changes should restrict some of their inequitable actions, which will define the urban landscape of tomorrow.

With regulations, gentrification could be somehow controlled or slowed down. Residents' ownership, as well as heritage urban fabric could then be encouraged and preserved. With a little help from policy makers, the density transfer strategy will incrementally increase opportunity for local ownership and businesses and, over time, could help regulate the market.

Finally, La Maison Citoyenne would be an opportunity to offer a safe space for citizens' participation in the community, social and economic life of the neighbourhood with a strategy that is truly adapted to the eclectic and dense nature of Villeray.

NOTES

¹ Kazuyo Sejima, “Face to Face,” Hunch: Berlage Institute Report, no. 6/7 (2003): no. 6/7. **quoted in** Markus Miessen, *The Nightmare of Participation* (Crossbench Praxis as a Mode of Criticality) (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2010), 62.

² Jacques Mathieu, “Seigneurial System,” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, August 25, 2013, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/seigneurial-system>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Alan Rayburn, “Township,” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, February 7, 2006, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/township>.

⁵ Michèle Benoit and Roger Gratton, *Pignon Sur Rue: Les Quartiers de Montréal* (Montréal: Guérin, 1991), 252.

⁶ Ibid., 252–53.

⁷ Réjean Legault, “« Architecture et Forme Urbaine : L'exemple Du Triplex à Montréal de 1870 à 1914 »,” *Revue d'histoire urbaine* 18, 18, no. 1 (1989): 4, <http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1017820ar>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 4–6.

⁹ Mario Robert, “Chronique Montréalité No 14 – Brève Histoire Des Ruelles de Montréal,” *Archives Montreal*, accessed December 11, 2019, <http://archivesdemontreal.com/2014/10/06/chronique-montrealite-no-15-breve-histoire-des-ruelles-de-montreal/>.

¹⁰ Legault, “« Architecture et Forme Urbaine : L'exemple Du Triplex à Montréal de 1870 à 1914 »,” 5–10.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² “Villeray, de la campagne à la ville,” *Arrondissement*, 2011, <https://www.arrondissement.com/tout-get-document/u1155-villeray-campagne-ville>.

¹³ Benoit and Gratton, *Pignon Sur Rue: Les Quartiers de Montréal*, 254.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ “Histoire des tramways - Les Tramways Electriques,” *Société de transport de Montréal*, accessed December 11, 2019, <http://www.stm.info/fr/a-propos/decouvrez-la-STM-et-son-histoire/histoire/histoire-des-tramways>.

¹⁶ Arrondissement, “Villeray, de la campagne à la ville.”

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Benoit and Gratton, *Pignon Sur Rue: Les Quartiers de Montréal*, 254.

²⁰ Celine Topp, “Évaluation Du Patrimoine Urbain Arrondissement de Villeray — Saint-Michel —Parc-Extension,” *Service de La Mise En Valeur Du Territoire et Du Patrimoine*, Direction Du Développement Urbain, Division Du Patrimoine et de La Toponymie (Montreal: Ville de Montréal, 2005), 25–28.

²¹ Héritage-Montréal, “Montréal en quartiers,” *Mémorable Montreal*, accessed December 14, 2019, <http://www.memorablemontreal.com/accessibleQA/histoire.php?quartier=4>.

²² Montreal-en-Statistiques, “Profil Des Districts Électoraux de l’arrondissement de Villeray-Saint-Michel-Parc-Extension,” *Direction de l’urbanisme Service de La Mise En Valeur Du Territoire Ville de Montréal* (Montreal: Montréal en Statistiques, November 2017), 9, http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/MTL_STATS_FR/MEDIA/DOCUMENTS/VILLERAY%96SAINT-MICHEL%96PARC-EXTENSION_2017.PDF.

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²⁴ Montreal-en-Statistiques, “Profil Des Districts Électoraux de l’arrondissement de Villeray-Saint-Michel-Parc-Extension,” 7.

²⁵ André Lavallée, “Plan d’urbanisme - Plan Directeur de l’arrondissement Villeray/Saint-Michel/Parc-Extension,” *Bureau Du Plan d’urbanisme* (Montreal: Ville de Montreal, 1992), 5.

²⁶ Montreal-en-Statistiques, “Profil Des Districts Électoraux de l’arrondissement de Villeray-Saint-Michel-Parc-Extension,” 8.

²⁷ “Historique,” *Association des locataires de villeray*, accessed December 15, 2019, <http://locatairesdevilleray.com/a-propos/historique/>.

²⁸ “Villeray: de 1940 à aujourd’hui,” *Arrondissement*, 2011, <https://www.arrondissement.com/tout-get-document/u1165-villeray-1940-aujourd>.

²⁹ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, OX, UK; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell, 1991), 26.

³⁰ Ibid., 16.

³¹ Louis Gaudreau, “Space, Time, and the Theory of Capital in Henri Lefebvre and Marx (Espace, Temps et Théorie Du Capital Chez Henri Lefebvre et Marx),” *Cahiers de recherche sociologique* 55, 55, no. Automne 2013 (2013): 160, <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1027685ar>.

³² Ibid., 161.

³³ Ibid., 162.

³⁴ Ibid., 163.

³⁵ Ibid., 163–64.

³⁶ Direction-de-l’Urbanisme, “Arrondissement Villeray –Saint-Michel –Parc-Extension,” *City document*, ed. Ville de Montreal, *Ville de Montréal* (Montreal: Ville de Montréal, June 2005), 31, http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?_pageid=2761,3096629&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL.

³⁷ Gaudreau, “Space, Time, and the Theory of Capital in Henri Lefebvre and Marx (Espace, Temps et Théorie Du Capital Chez Henri Lefebvre et Marx),” 171.

³⁸ Micheal Brill, “Mistaking Community Life for Public Life,” *Places* 14, 14, no. 2 (2001): 50, <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/5d67x283>.

³⁹ Kurt Iveson, “Cities within the City: Do-It-Yourself and the Right to the City,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37, 37, no. 3 (May 2013): 943, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12053>.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 946.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Markus Miessen and Kenny Cupers, “Participation and/or Criticality? Thoughts on an Architectural Practice for Urban Change.,” *Thresholds*, no. 40 (2012): 106, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/avery/docview/1112338607/AF4FB97839F408BPQ/1?accountid=14656>.

⁴³ Markus Miessen, “The Violence of Participation: Spatial Practices Beyond Models of Consensus,” *Filip*, no. 7 (2008): no. 7, <https://fillip.ca/content/the-violence-of-participation>.

⁴⁴ Tim Richardson and Stephen Connelly, *Reinventing Public Participation: Planning in the Age of Consensus*, ed. Peter Blundell-Jones, Doina Petrescu, and Jeremy Till, *Architecture and Participation* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 77 –104.

⁴⁵ Miessen, *The Nightmare of Participation* (Crossbench Praxis as a Mode of Criticality), 304.

⁴⁶ Markus Miessen and Kenny Cupers, “Participation and/or Criticality? Thoughts on an Architectural Practice for Urban Change.,” 111.

⁴⁷ Markus Miessen, *The Nightmare of Participation* (Crossbench Praxis as a Mode of Criticality), 22.

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⁵⁰ Vanessa Joan-Muller and Astrid Wege, “Kunsthalle: A Model for the Future,” *Oncurating*, no. 21 (December 2013): 60, https://www.on-curating.org/files/oc/dateiverwaltung/issue-21/PDF_to_Download/ONCURATING_Issue21_A4.pdf.
⁵¹ Ibid.
⁵² Nikolaus Hirsch et al., “Spaces of Production In European Kunsthalle 2005 2006 2007,” 60.
⁵³ Assemble Studio, “Granby Four Streets,” Assemble, 2013, <https://assemblestudio.co.uk>.
⁵⁴ Ibid.
⁵⁵ Matthew Thompson, “LIFE in a ZOO: Henri Lefebvre and the (Social) Production of (Abstract) Space in Liverpool,” *City* 21, 21, no. 2 (2017): 124, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2017.1353327>.
⁵⁶ “Broadway Estate Community Garden Tilbury,” Muf Architecture/Art, 2005, <http://muf.co.uk/portfolio/tilbury/>.
⁵⁷ Muf et al., *Rights of Common: Ownership, Participation, Risk* (New York: Rootledge, 2012), 212–13.
⁵⁸ Ibid., 214.
⁵⁹ Kieran Long, “Muf | Icon 022,” *Icon Magazine*, April 2005, <https://www.iconeye.com/component/k2/item/2640-muf-%7C-icon-022-%7C-april-2005>.

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