PLACES BETWEEN SPACES

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ABSTRACT

The porch is a cultural trope serving as a significant threshold - not only as a space of transition to pass through, but also an invitation to a convivial occasion. Although linked to an idealized past, the social structures that accompany this archetypal form suggests a broader discussion of the types of spaces that support a community and build social value.

Places Between Spaces investigates the slightly bereft landscapes of St. Clair Avenue in Toronto, as places of opportunity for building social capital. Whether enveloped in for lease signs or awaiting redevelopment, there is a period when these spaces are left abandoned - stripped of material and human activity. How might these provisional spaces find a material expression?

Structured around three sites characteristic of St. Clair's urban context, the proposed interventions deliberately engage the temporal framework in which they operate. These three provisional installations are intended to provide a catalyst that engages with the public realm, providing both a shelter and destination to the community.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis started from my days on the front porch, and most importantly in I have always found an interest for this the neighbourhood of Corso-Italia. My neighbourhood and see the potential it has grandparents immigrated to Canada from as a place for a younger generation to reside Italy in 1958, and purchased their first home and occupy. However, the neighbourhood in Toronto - 273 Westmount Avenue. Their continues to hold a place in my mind as my street became their new village, as friends grandparent's first steps to establishing a life and family from their hometown moved into in Canada. the neighbourhood. As a child, I would spend summer days with my grandparents and particularly recall the routine of walking to St. Clair Avenue with my grandmother. Along our way we would make stops at the butcher shop, the grocery store, the bakery and the kitchenware store. Finally returning home, my grandmother would prepare lunch as I would either be playing with neighbouring children in the laneway or the front porch.

Outside of my home north of the city, my grandparent's home and neighbourhood was a space I experienced throughout my life, and continue to experience. I have seen the neighbourhood change over the years, and also have seen how my grandparent's quality of interaction have simultaneously changed with it. Besides family, and 1 or 2 neighbours visiting them, they are facing moments of isolation, however their front porch remains the space where they can ensure a visual and physical connection beyond their private home.

Fig. 1 - The Front Porch

STATEMENT OF INTENT

This project investigates the third place as spaces vital to the community's social, economic and programmatic capital. The closure of many of these spaces present themselves as prime real estate for future development. However, before the construction begins, there is a provisional period where these spaces are derelict - stripped of material and human activity.

How can these residual spaces play a role in the life of its residents, acting as a threshold between intersecting communities, and a threshold to the future, while providing a lasting legacy?

CHAPTER 1.0: THRESHOLD THEORY

To understand the porch as not only a space of transition, rather a place for hosting an occasion, it is important to recall on the historical context of the architectural element of the threshold.

This section presents the historical and contemporary context of the threshold as a theory of inquiry for this project.

1.1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The spatial qualities and conditions of Turner's interests in liminality stem from thresholds evident within architecture today van Gennep's model, however Turner refers are adopted from the theoretical idea of to Liminality as an intermediate state of being "in between" in which individuals *liminality* – a synonymous term to threshold, defined as an intermediate or transition are eliminated of their usual identity and social differences while on the verge of an between two states, regions or conditions.¹ Liminality first emerged in the early twentieth individual or social transformation.⁷ century within the writing of Arnold van Gennep's Les Rites des Passage (Rites of Today, the term threshold is used synonymous Passage).² Van Gennep explored the term to "liminality" and "in between", carrying a in the context of small-scaled ceremonious deeper reference to spatial and architectural qualities. Threshold is defined as, rituals in society, where the liminal or threshold realm is the space where an individual transitions from one status to another within The floor or ground at the bottom of a given society.³ He explains the ritual as a doorway, considered as the entrance three stages - separation from the old role to a building or room. (preliminal), a period of transition between roles (liminal), and then incorporation into 2 An end, boundary or point of the new role (post-liminal).⁴ transition.

It was not until the 1960s when the originally 3 French book was translated and published in the English-language, in which anthropologist It is evident that this understanding of the theory allows for an array of possible uses Victor Turner re-discovered the importance of liminality. Turner was concerned with that are not limited to Turner's spectrum. understanding cultures as dynamic and disorderly, and views society as a dynamic I am using the term threshold as a method/ and dialectic process, rather than a single tool for mediation between contrasting entity.⁵ He conceptualizes culture as being elements. This will be explored through the in a constant struggle between structure and threshold between individuals, between time, and between space. anti-structure.⁶

- A zone of passage.⁸

THE INHABITANT

The threshold as a moment of transition or tool for mediating contrasting spheres will be analyzed through the inhabitant. The inhabitant is the one who occupies, values and uses the threshold space. The inhabitant will be analyzed as an individual (resident and visitor), as a member of a social group (age, culture, economic class) and as an entire population. The threshold between the two is one that should be blurred, allowing them to produce a symbiotic relationship.

TIME

The threshold in the temporal dimension is in relation to events, periods and generations. Specifically, they will be analyzed in reference to the global, national and civic events, and the transition between generations.

SPACE

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The threshold in the spatial dimension will combine the influences of major institutions, of public and private, culture and economy, market, and place.⁹ This is my area of interest and investigation for the design project.

1.2 THE SUBURBAN THRESHOLD

The thresholds seen within the residential transforming it into an inhabited threshold street are visible across the property of a between architecture and city. Examples single-family home. In particular, the façades of these elements include the doorway, the portal, the portico, the peristyle and the arch. of the homes become the interior walls to the streetscape. They are composed of many The relationship one experiences between layers, tectonically and physiologically and interior and exterior and public and private are a representation of the inside and a device settings is not only through their physical that reacts to the outside. I am analyzing the movement of going inside, or walking façade as a threshold, a space associated through, but also through the act of staying, with two apparently contrasting and opposite living, and inhabiting a space.¹¹ Among worlds. the architectural elements listed by Teyssot creating an inhabited middle realm, the front The facade as a threshold separates the porch is one to further investigate.

interior from the exterior and becomes the point of transition between these realms, The front porch is a space that reconciles the domestic and urban world - an internal however its boundaries are not always clearly marked. Architectural theorist, Georges private environment with a public responding exterior. It is one of few spaces that Teyssot speaks to this concept as he states, encourages spontaneous encounters between These imaginary and tectonic lines create not neighbours and strangers. Porches are linked boundaries, but the space of the intermediate. to an idealized past, where technology was A figure both in space and in time, the not the primary means of communication, threshold, which is in the middle, is an interval rather face to face interaction formed the between things. A medium, in a way, that by core of communities. Yet, the porch embodies allowing entry, opens up the possibility of many practical considerations working in its favour, providing shelter and protection from being in-between.¹⁰ the elements.

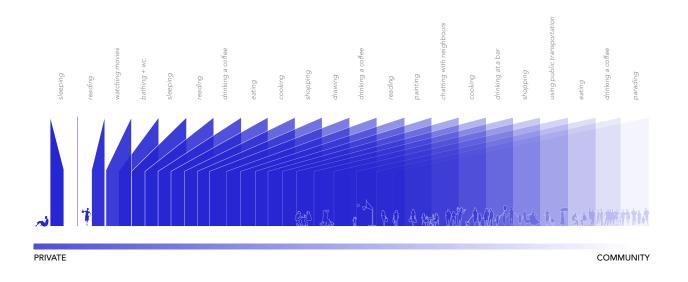
The opposing realms influence the threshold's conditions, geometry, and dimensions. Transforming from a two-dimensional vertical plane, into a three-dimensional inhabited space, the threshold begins to have depth. This space begins to host opportunities for encounters and exchanges between individuals. Teyssot argues that many architectural elements and spaces create the experience of the in-between/threshold,



The front porch is an unusually flexible domestic setting. It is the exception, a one can use it alone, however the presence of an individual will encourage neighbour or other family members. Sociability an mannerisms of the porch is varied betwee generation - children play games on the porch, adults read and have a drink, and the elderly simply observe the street. The porce seems to provide a desired solitude without isolation and social interaction without intrusion.¹² This element is part of an urbat landscape that influences or is influenced by the building and its inhabitants.

Fig. 2 - The Front Porches of Corso-Italia, Toronto

ole as	This project investigates a meaningful architectural type - the porch - that is pressured
nce	by contemporary realities.
urs	by contemporary realities.
nd	Is the porch able to reinvent itself in scale and
en	context, in order to be relevant today, and in
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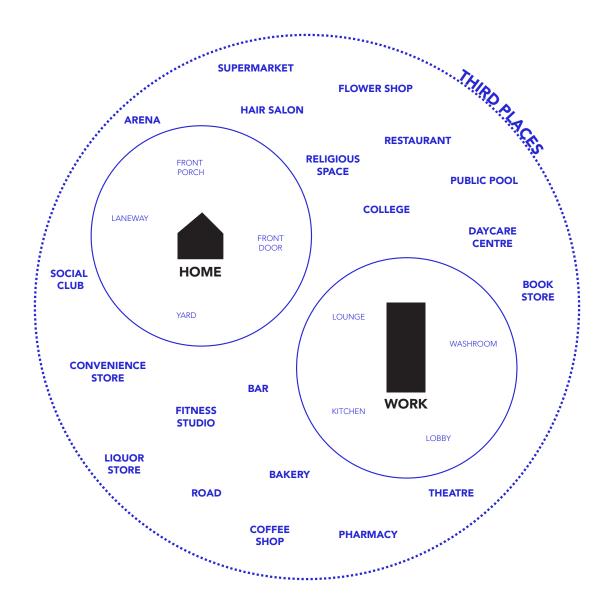
1.3 THE URBAN THRESHOLD

Thresholds exist at the urban scale between Gehl continues to describe the importance the built form and between the culture of its of this transition space as a space to foster inhabitants. The space between neighbourhood inhabitant engagement, jurisdictions and between buildings within the neighbourhood are the places of transition. If activity between buildings is missing, the Here is where the line demarcating one lower end of the contact scale also disappears. neighbourhood boundary from the next is The varied transitional forms between being seen in plan, however, it may be blurred when alone and being together have disappeared. The boundaries between isolation and contact at the street level. When looking closely at the buildings that compose the neighbourhood, become sharper – people are either alone or one experiences varying scales in building else with others on a relatively demanding and exacting level. Life between buildings offers form and typology. an opportunity to be with others in a relaxed and undemanding way.¹⁴ The threshold within the commercial corridor is prevalent, as public activity appear within the privately-owed spaces. In addition, the

transition between the commercial corridor into the residential street is seen through the transition of scale, typology, and use of space. This threshold between private and public spaces at the neighbourhood scale allows inhabitants to experience life between buildings. The experience of life between buildings is explained by Jan Gehl as,

... not merely pedestrian traffic or recreational or social activities...[rather it] comprises the entire spectrum of activities, which combine to make communal spaces in cities and residential areas meaningful and attractive.¹³

Fig. 3 - Gradient of Private to Community Spaces



1.4 THE THIRD PLACE

The third place is a concept written by urban sociologist Ray Oldenburg. He identifies the first place as the home, the second place as the workplace, and the third places as anchors of community life.¹⁵ Third places are typically characterized as privately owned spaces such as cafes, pubs, local stores, bookshops, to name a few. These are the public places on neutral ground, which facilitate and foster broader, more creative interaction between individuals of various communities.¹⁶

The third places become places where social needs can be satisfied, it is here where one can meet friends, colleagues, neighbours and even strangers, ultimately fulfilling one's desires for relaxation, social contact, entertainment and leisure.17

One assertion of my project speaks to how the street and the sidewalk are also third places, albeit in a provisional way.

Fig. 4 - The Third Place Concept

CHAPTER 2.0: THE STORY OF ST. CLAIR

The city is best understood by its inhabitants, as its buildings are the performative stage of everyday life. This section presents St. Clair Avenue, both a primary commercial and transportation corridor in the City of Toronto, and the area of interest for this project.

Located just north of the city's downtown core, this street is 17km, and bisects 12 of the city's neighbourhood, in addition to having a TTC streetcar right of way. St. Clair Avenue and its communities are formed and constantly reforming, to the values of social interaction between neighbours and the cultures and traditions of past and present inhabitants. To best understand this corridor, is to understand its inhabitants and how it came to be.



2.1 THE BUILT FORM

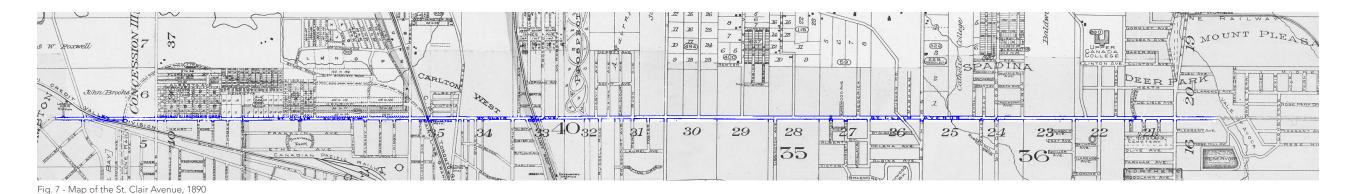
To understand the composition of the street The end of the nineteenth century saw the as a place, means to understand the story of beginning of land development in the area, with the first plan published in 1884. Large land its history. Formerly known as Earlscourt, the earliest documentation of St. Clair Avenue, holdings continued to be subdivided, and due known at the time as the part of the Town of to its unpopular location, land was affordable York, dates to the early nineteenth century. to immigrants. This emerged the development At this time land was dedicated to agriculture of this area of the city into DIY cottages and and for providing materials for construction, cabins meant as a temporary shelter until they as people traversed along dirt roads. By could afford a properly constructed house. 1820, the Town of York was growing quickly and expanding north-ward, as newcomers In the early 20th century, the area began began to travel along primitive early roads to prosper as an industrial and suburban like Davenport, to settle beyond the town's neighbourhood. The new communities of limits.¹⁸ Growth and development of the area Earlscourt and Oakwood began to form along was influenced by the physical geography, St. Clair Avenue, and in 1909, the community of composed of a lower flat plain, and upper Earlscourt annexed into the City of Toronto.²¹ rolling hills, divided by a steep hill.¹⁹ The This community's annexation created drastic area's early residents, primarily immigrants improvements to civic services and amenities, from Britain and Ireland, specifically the Bull and the forever goodbye to "Shacktown". The family, who had immigrated from Ireland and arrangement of land and the dimensions of were the first family to settle within the area. the lots lent themselves to specific uses. The By the 1830s and 1840s social spaces such as smaller plots of land adjacent to the smaller side a church, school and hotel were established in streets were suggestive of private, residential the area. Simultaneously, a small farming and use, and the wider and deeper lots fronting gardening community of landowners and farm St. Clair Avenue, were suggestive of a more labourers continued, as other resources in the public, institutional use. Land development district developed.²⁰ By the 1860s the region's companies advertised property in the area as, sand, gravel and clay were furnishing building materials for the growing cities. The expansion just the right sort of place for a man with a of Toronto lead to developed transportation family to bring up his children. Children, as and communication systems, especially well as grown people, thrive better on the air that sweeps fresh and free over the meadows railways that supplemented the local roads.

just the right sort of place for a man with a family to bring up his children. Children, as well as grown people, thrive better on the air that sweeps fresh and free over the meadows and woods of the country ... Freedom from contamination and vice that is inevitable in the more densely populated city helps them to grow up to be useful and high-standing citizens.²²

ST. CLAIR AVENUE OVER THE YEARS



Fig. 6 - Map of the St. Clair Avenue, 1884



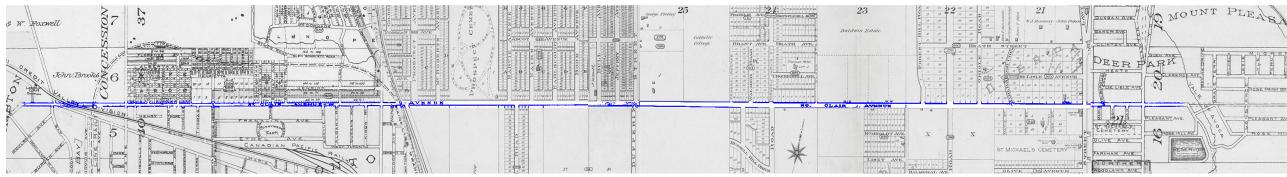


Fig. 8 - Map of the St. Clair Avenue, 1913

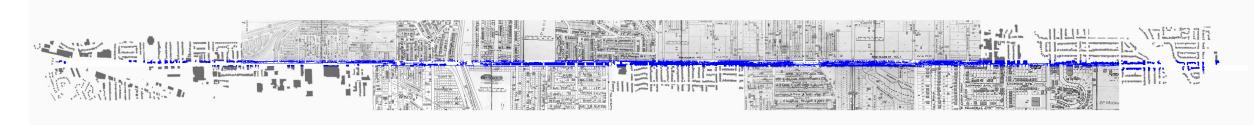
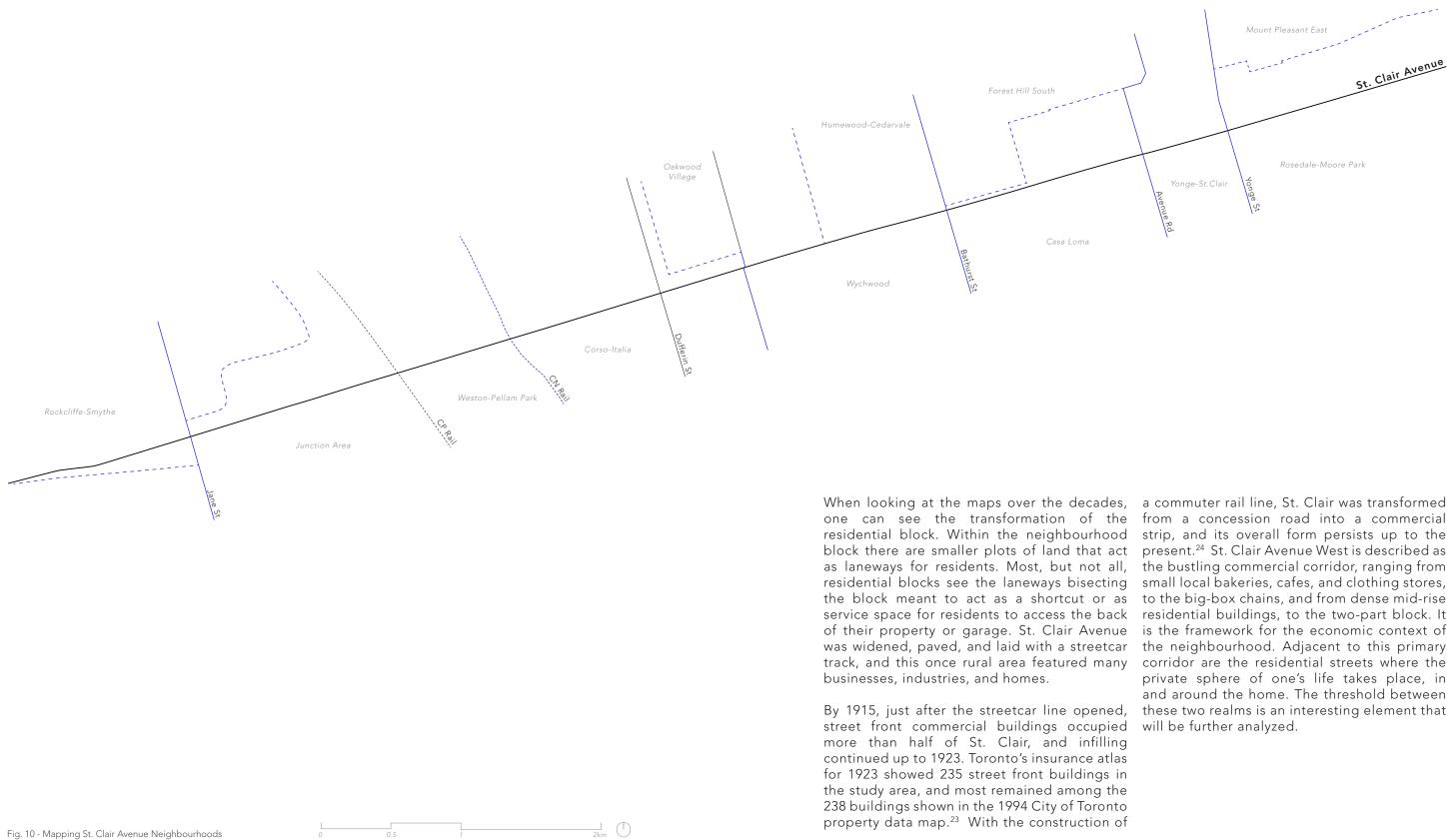


Fig. 9 - Map of St. Clair Avenue, 1945

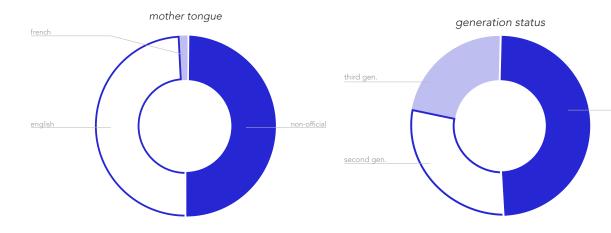


the bustling commercial corridor, ranging from private sphere of one's life takes place, in and around the home. The threshold between

2.2 THE INHABITANTS

immigration. Between 1950 and 1960, about 90,000 Italian settled in Toronto, replenishing established Italian enclaves, while simultaneously pouring over its boundaries.²⁸ The St. Clair and Dufferin area is one of these re-established enclaves in which settlement transformed the neighbourhood. In 1950, the Italian population was the area's second largest ethnic group, and by 1960, 42% of is that in 1963, an Italian café located along St. Clair Avenue was home to the first outdoor patio approved the City of Toronto.³⁰ By 1980, Business Improvement Area.³¹ This BIA would

The establishment of the built form along St. Following WWII, a widespread shortage of Clair Avenue would not be possible without labour made Canada receptive to Italian recognizing the individuals who built and inhabit the space. The inhabitants of this community have a direct influence on the activities happening on the commercial and residential streets, and the space between them. Dating back to the 1830s, the Bull family, who immigrated from Ireland, were the first family to settle within this area.²⁵ The area's early the neighbourhood was of Italian origin.²⁹ land inhabitants were primarily immigrant Spaces along the corridor became tailored families of Irish, English and Scottish origins, to this new generation, from the 1960s-1980s giving way to the first large settlement's name organizations and businesses extended of "Little Britain". However, the Canadian- services to the local Italian community. The born population gradually outnumbered the first businesses that catered this group of immigrants. By the end of the 19th century, inhabitants were food and service shops, and the Methodist and Anglican Protestant soon followed by clothing boutiques, specialty denominations dominated the area.²⁶ The shops, and outdoor cafes. An interesting fact beginning of WWI affected the population demographics as many men were sent to war, while the area saw more newcomers of Italian and Jewish descent. Land was advertised St. Clair Avenue between Dufferin Street and through an appeal to safety: "there are open Lansdowne Avenue had been transformed fields where children can roam and play in into one of the most successful commercial safety, and where they can work out their strips in the city, establishing this segment as a boundless spirits without harm or mischief."27 Thus, following the war, the area saw a boom later be one of the six Business Improvement of social space and resident population, as the Areas located along St. Clair Avenue. presence of more families brought the need for spaces like theatres, parks, skating rinks and swimming pools.







first gen.

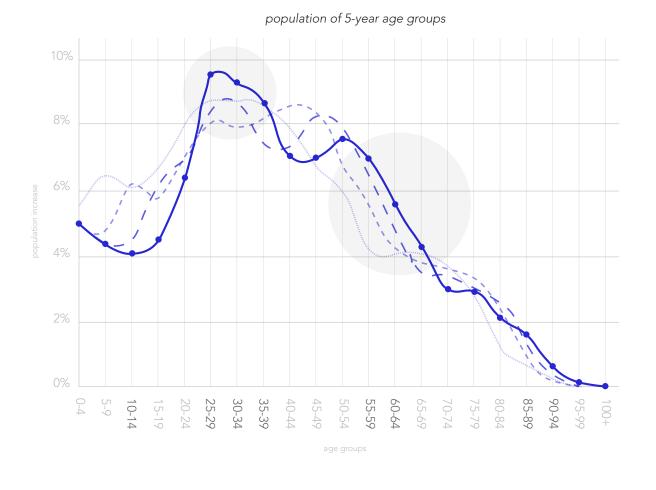


Fig. 13 - Population of 5-Year Age Group Graph: Rise in 25-39 yr age group and 55-65 yr age group

By the 1980s, Italian immigration declined, The dynamic community of St. Clair Avenue is children of first-generation immigrants began a constant developing cycle, most evident in to achieve higher education, and professional the last 10 years. The 25-39-year-old age group occupations.³² Although Italians were still has been steadily increasing, currently at its the area's single largest ethnic group in 1991 highest thus far in 2016, while the 55-70 year holding 26% of the local population, other old age group is continuously increasing as well.³⁵ Couples with children make up 30.1% of ethnic groups such as the Portuguese (20%), Spanish (4%), and Anglo-Canadians of British households, while seniors living alone make up origin (8%) resettled in the area.³³ Over the 17.8% of households in the area.³⁶ The increase last 30 years, the neighbourhood continued in the younger population, including young to be an immigrant receptive area. In 2016, families, alludes to a contemporary attraction 47% of the neighbourhood was made up to the neighbourhood. Simultaneously, the of first-generation immigrants, while the population of individuals approaching 65 remaining were of second and third generation and older is at a steady increase, especially immigrants.³⁴ those living alone. This information assists me with narrowing the focus of the project, as it is important to think of those who built the neighbourhood of the past, the individuals who currently inhabit the space, and looking ahead at who will claim this area 'home' next.

Perhaps these generations of inhabitants can engage and interact with one another in a productive manner?

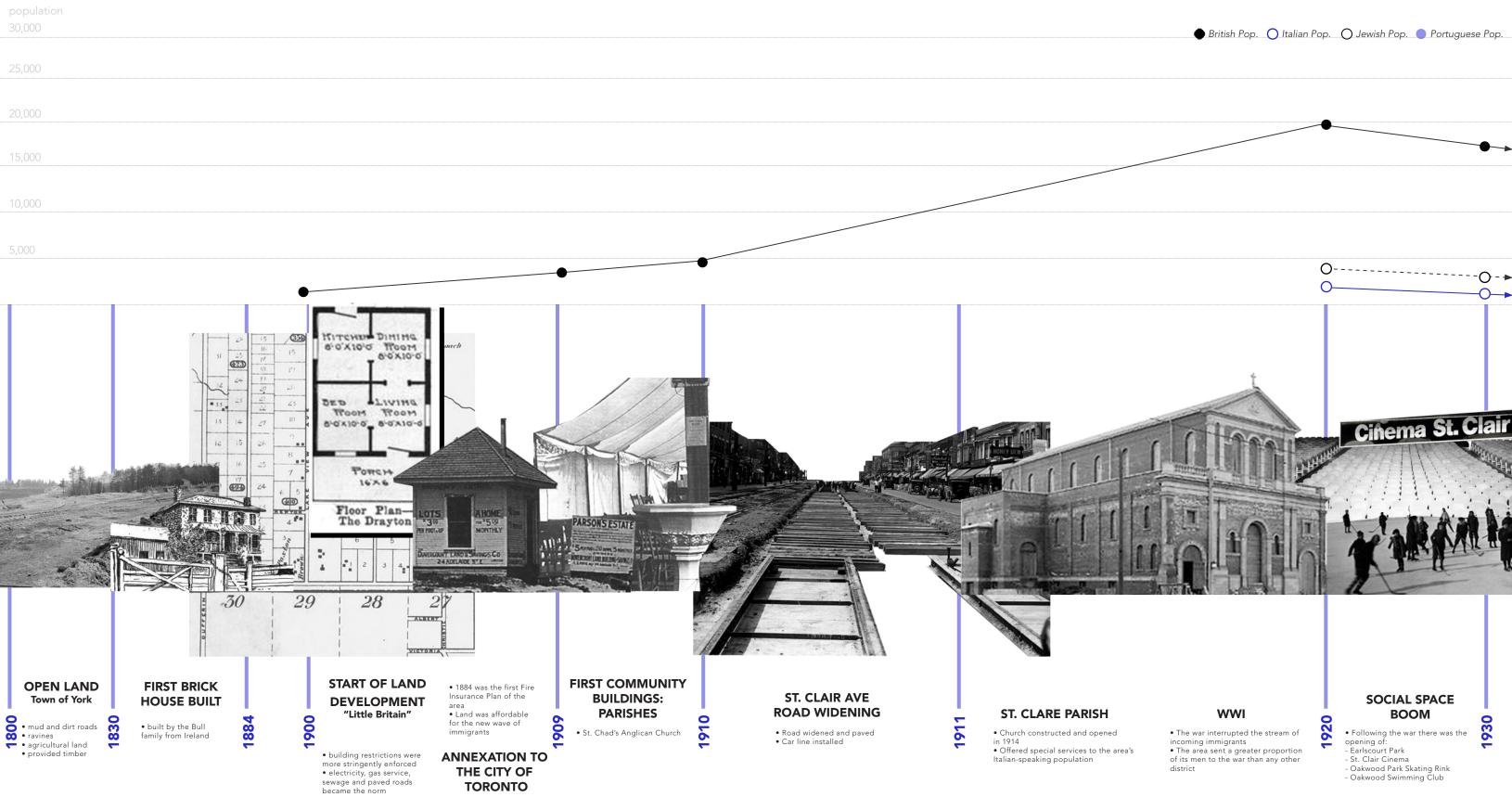
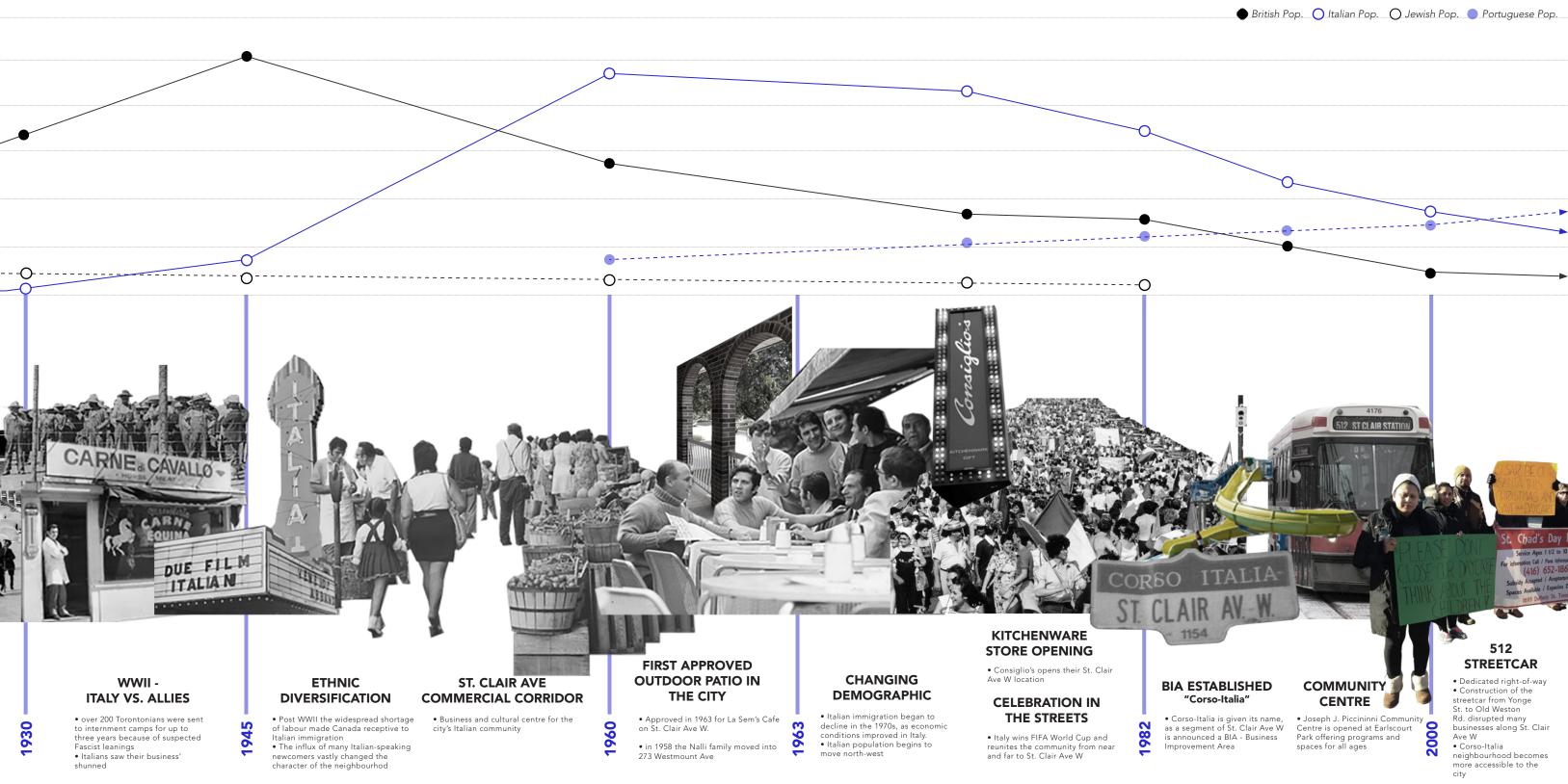
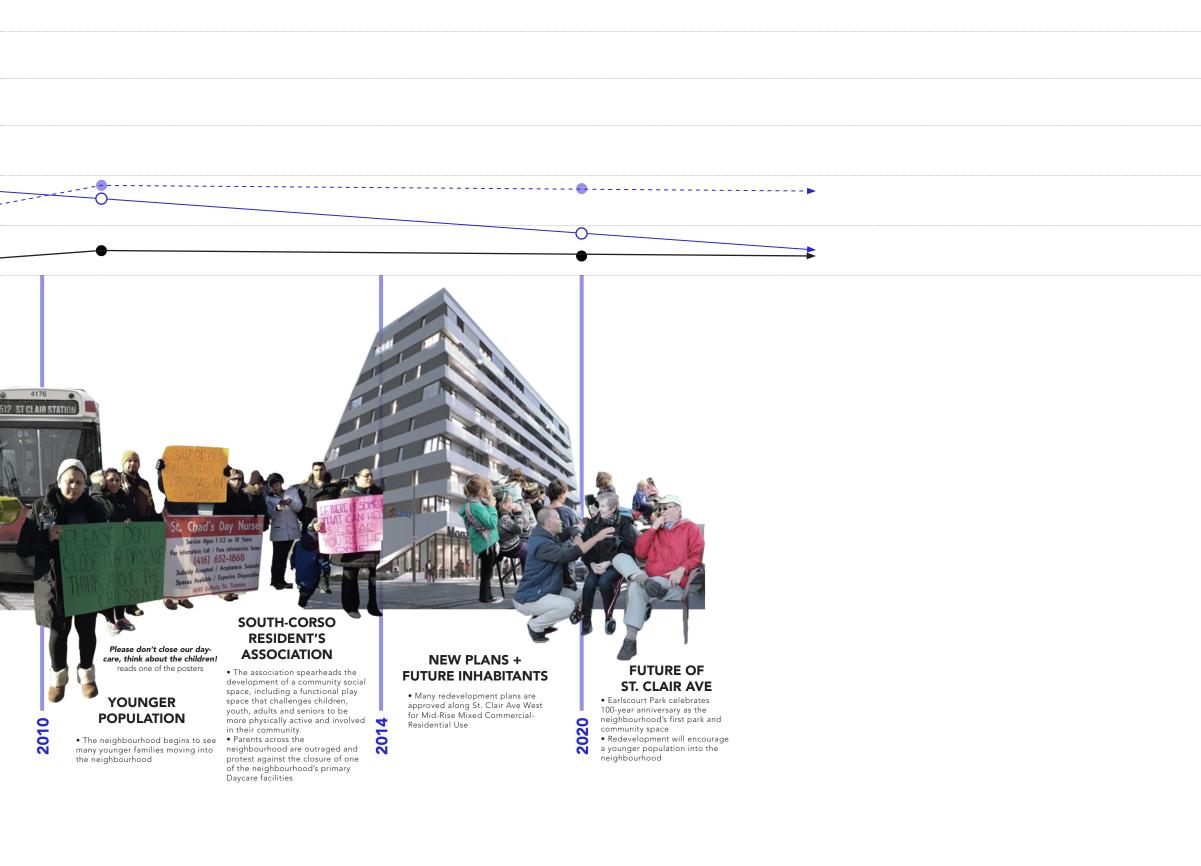
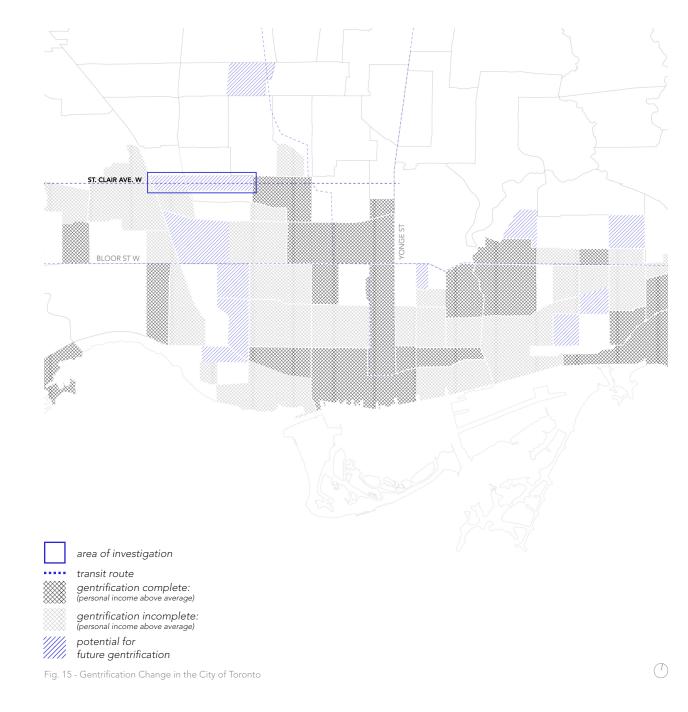


Fig. 14 - St. Clair Avenue's Timeline





British Pop.	🔿 Italian Pop.	O Jewish Pop.	Portuguese Pop	Э.
	-			



2.3 THE FUTURE OF THEIR SPACES

Not only do the current demographics display The moving in of a younger generation alludes a changing population along St. Clair Avenue, to neighbourhood change soon, however this rather the changing urban landscape of the change should not only consider a capital gain. corridor is a representation of the community's Rather, the benefits for the community, and future. The TTC streetcar improvements a future where more social space is needed. have a dedicated right-of-way that took Perhaps there could be a future where the younger generation of children and young place from 2005-2009 was the start of this changing commercial corridor.³⁷ Establishing a adults could actively participate and engage convenient transportation route for goods and with the elderly, forming mutually symbiotic people to move across the city meant that the relationships, through the exchange of land value would increase, and densification knowledge. of the corridor would be in its future. As expected, the gentrification occurring in most neighbourhoods across the corridor not only decreases the availability of affordable property but causes friction between groups in communities where there are few places and activities that draw people together from different socio-economic, ethnocultural groups and generation.³⁸ Today, Corso-Italia and Wychwood neighbourhoods sit in a middle realm between neighbourhoods as a 'gap' where gentrification, specifically densification, and closure of small local businesses is on the brink of taking over.

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835 ST. CLAIR AVE W: 2011

835 ST. CLAIR AVE W: 2021

Understanding the trend of the market along St. Clair is key. A common sight today is that 2-storey buildings are rezoned and redeveloped as 8-storey mid-rises, with retail at grade and residential units above, ultimately eradicating St. Clair's third places.

The Built Context



Left to Right:

Fig. 17 - 1924: St. Clair Ave and Oakwood Ave, Streetcar opening inauguration. Fig. 18 - 1982: St. Clair Ave and Dufferin St, Celebrations for 1982 World Cup Finals

Fig. 19 - 2019: St. Clair Ave and Arlington Ave, Salsa on St. Clair Festival

2.4 ST. CLAIR AS A THRESHOLD

Henri Lefebvre's text, The Right to the City managing shared commercial space, and it (1968) is a call to action to reclaim the city as a turned out to be a significant historical move, co-created space.³⁹ He explains this space as inspiring the BIDs in the U.S.⁴⁴ Within the BIA a place for life to become detached from the boundaries, and beyond the neighbourhoods' effects that commodification and capitalism boundaries, abstract spaces are prevalent have over social interaction and the rise of and compose the street. There are minimal spatial inequalities worldwide.⁴⁰ Ultimately, areas of transition along the street between The Right to the City is best understood abstract and social space, rather social space in the terms of how inhabitants use urban begins to appear within an unlikely location, spaces, rather than the market value of the that being the small businesses. Besides space. Lefebvre's writing in The Production providing essential goods and services to the of Space (1974) begins to explain his previous residents, small businesses of the BIA provide concepts through a spatial dimension, that social space in neighbourhoods like these being abstract and social space. Abstract that lack accessible community spaces.45 space is explained as the space meant for Although small businesses are not a substitute for a community centre, people begin to not the production of exchange value, and Social space is produced and reproduced space only consume economic goods or services according to the use-value for inhabitants.⁴¹ in these spaces, rather they begin to make The earlier concept of The Right to the social connections. This is where the blurring City can be seen as a political vision to between exchange-value and use-value begin combat the urban disadvantages of abstract to take place. space, such as displacement, exclusion and

peripheralization, through the production of Today, a mandatory levy on commercial social space.42 properties within the BIA boundary funds minor local improvements for the neighbourhood.⁴⁶ Most of the properties along the commercial These are projects that are decided by the corridor of St. Clair Avenue are regulated neighbourhood's BIA Board, composed of a by a Business Improvement Area (BIA). small core of influential individuals who are The BIA may be characterized as abstract not deeply embedded in the social spaces of spacemakers, as their primary goals are the commercial street.⁴⁷ to "promote economic development and promote these areas as safe, vibrant places Through the history of St. Clair Avenue and to do business, unique destinations for its presence of new immigrant groups, the tourists and focal points for neighbourhood publicly owned spaces along this corridor activity."43 It is a strategy implemented in continue to act as pillars in the community for the 1980s to replicate the mall's strategy for social interaction.

The Street as a Third Place



Although the BIA within these communities is coincidentally an actor in contributing to the community spaces for building social capital, these institutions may play a more significant role and contribution to the community.

Besides its physical transformation over the years, St. Clair has been a threshold and place for occasion. Acting as a location for celebration, parades, and processions for various communities. The street along with its buildings and open spaces hold historic value, as well as contemporary relevance, as a progression from the past to the commercialism that has come to be the fate and future of St. Clair Avenue.

Left to Right: Fig. 20 - 1924: St. Clair Ave and Oakwood Ave, Streetcar opening inauguration. Fig. 21 - 1982: St. Clair Ave and Dufferin St, Celebrations for 1982 World Cup Finals Fig. 22 - 2019: St. Clair Ave and Arlington Ave, *Salsa on St. Clair* Festival

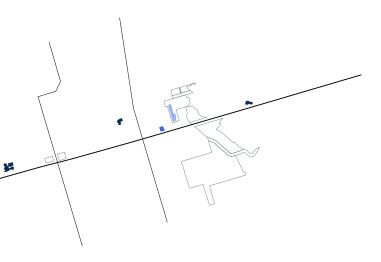


ST. CLAIR AVENUE: PUBLIC SPACES

The institutionalized public spaces make up ~25 % of ground level uses fronting St. Clair Avenue.

- **S**





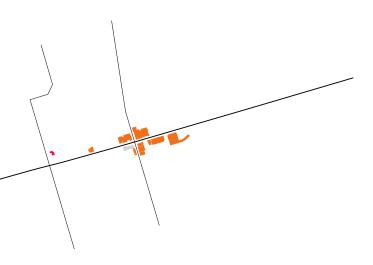
- food (restaurant, market)
- retail (clothing, houseware, textile)
- arts + culture (gallery, theatre, dance+ art studio)
- () arts + cultural group spaces closed down in the last 5 years

ST. CLAIR AVENUE: THIRD PLACES

The 'third places' including restaurants, retail, and theatres etc, make up ~50% of properties fronting the avenue.



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THIRD PLACE: CONSIGLIO'S KITCHENWARE

As Ray Oldenburg said,

Where the means and facilities for relaxation and leisure are not publicly shared, they become the objects of private ownership and consumption. Most needed are those 'third places' which lend a public balance to the increased privatization of home life.48

This image is taken from the interior of a local St. Clair small business. Opening in the late 60s, this Kitchenware store catered to the large Italian immigrant population at the time. It was not only a place for shopping, however it transformed itself into a venue hosting events for the community, such as a yearly tomato contest, as pictured. Once the population dwindled, the company moved online in the early 2000s and the building is now on the real estate market for sale. I found the story of the kitchenware store's history interesting, as it is one of the many pillars in the community whose presence has disappeared. I began to question,

Where do individuals socialize in the urban fabric beyond the domestic setting if these spaces are disappearing?

Fig. 25 - 1980s+1990s: Crowds would gather at Consiglio's Kitchenware Store for their annual Great Tomato Hunt contest



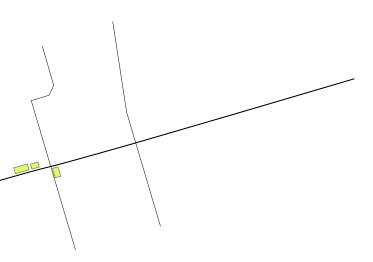
O vacant property

area currently under redevelopment

ST. CLAIR AVENUE: RESIDUAL SPACES

The kitchenware store is not the only space along the corridor that is currently in transition. Many pillars of the community such as restaurants, boutique shops, galleries, have closed, or continue to close. Either selling their properties to make way for mixed-use development, or closing their businesses due to the realities of the pandemic. As a result, Properties for lease or sale, vacant properties and areas currently under redevelopment make up 25% of properties fronting St. Clair. Assuming the third places of St. Clair, which make up 50% of the street, continue to close, means there will be a continuous influx of these residual spaces.





CHAPTER 03: APPROPRIATING THE CITY 3.1 PUBLIC, PRIVATE AND COMMUNITY SPACE

Many individuals believe there are two types Distinguishing Public Life from Community of social relationships: Private life and Public Life is critical as they operate at very different life.49 Mistaking Community Life for Public scales and densities, each having different Life by Michael Brill explains how spatially purposes and customs, and each requiring defined social relationships are experienced different physical environments.⁵³ in three basic forms – Public life, Private Life

and Community Life. My interests lie within the threshold space that serves as a mediator between Public Private Life is experienced with family and and Private Life, through the interaction, close friends, a social relation that is left open exchange and engagement of its inhabitants. to scrutiny because its locations are few and This threshold space is explained by Brill as often privately held, like the home.⁵⁰ Community Life.

Public Life is experienced with the occasional I will be analyzing the residual spaces of company of a diversity of strangers, of whom St. Clair Avenue as areas of opportunity for we know little more than we see, not all of *Community Life*. These areas are currently them projecting personas comfortable to underused and not serving the community engage, in locations all may use, many of to their full potential, therefore this project them publicly held for the common good, like is to explore how they can be transformed the square and street, and many privately held architecturally and programmatically, using a common pleasure and commerce, like the temporal framework. night club and the mall.⁵¹

Community Life is spent among neighbors, nodding acquaintances, shopkeepers, local resident police, fire, mail and town official. Its varied locales are ones that are known and frequented, a mix of both semi-pubic and semi-private space, like the neighbourhood café.52

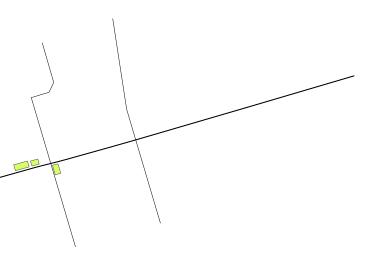


O vacant property

area currently under redevelopment

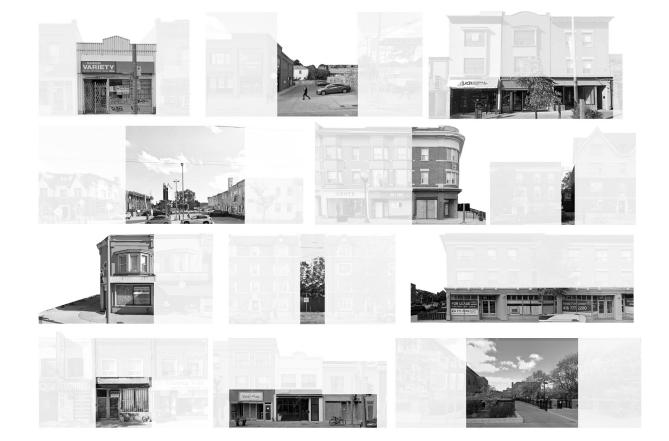
Fig. 27 - St. Clair Avenue's Residual Spaces: Focus Area





RESIDUAL SPACES: AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

The highlighted area seen above will be the focus area for further investigation.



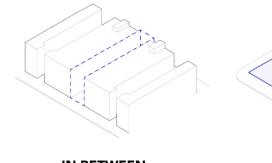
3.2 SITES OF EXPLORATION

This catalogue of residual spaces illustrates the variety of them located along the street, varying in scale, typology and condition.

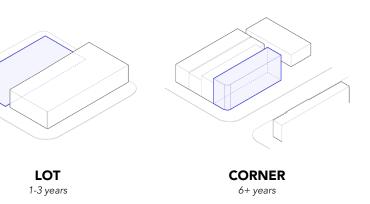
Of this catalogue, 3 sites will be explored in the context of their urban condition and programmatic potential.

Fig. 28 - Residual Spaces Catalogue



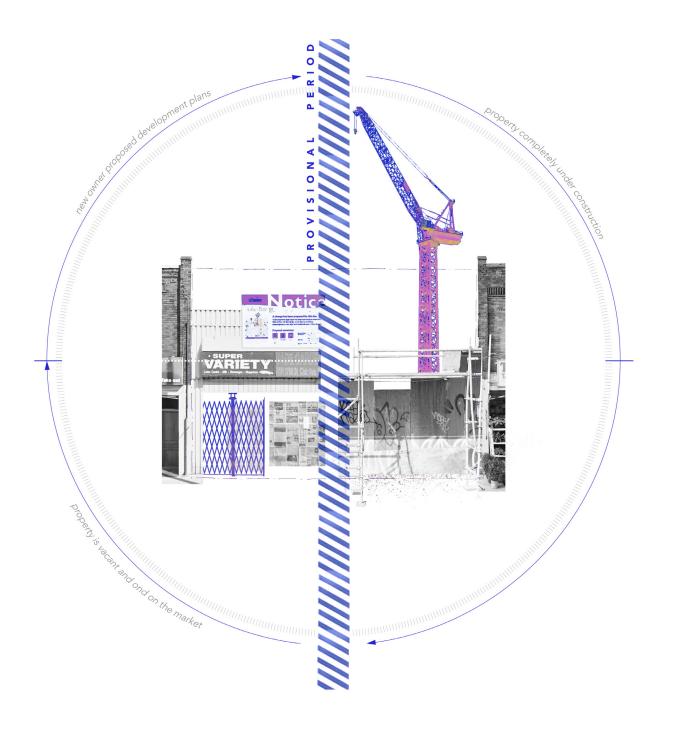


IN-BETWEEN 6 months



The sites of exploration are both physical and typological in an urban context. The 3 sites are, the *In-between*, the *Lot* and the *Corner* conditions.

Each of these provisional interventions are structured around a temporal framework in which they operate.



3.3 TEMPORAL FRAMEWORK

This temporal framework is referred to as the Provisional Period. Whether enveloped in for lease signs or awaiting redevelopment, there is a period where these spaces are left abandoned - stripped of material and human activity.

I am interested in this fragment of time, as I begin to explore them as spaces of appropriation for the St. Clair community.

Fig. 31 - Provisional Period Cycle



FRAMEWORK TIMELINE

More specifically, this time refers to the period between a property being for sale and ultimately sold. Or, the time between developers submitting redevelopment plans, and the moment they receive approval. This time period is known to take anywhere from 6 months to 6 years or more. All the while, the property is rezoned from commercial to recreational use welcoming provisional interventions. At the same time, property taxes are reduced, resulting in a cost saving for the developer and ultimately generating a lower cost per unit for the future buyer.

Fig. 32 - Provisional Period Framework

Space is turned over back to the developer who is ready to proceed with the plans.

With the cost savings, the developer can keep their costs down, generating a lower cost per unit for the future buyer.



3.4 FINDING MATERIAL EXPRESSION

Providing the community with an opportunity to build social capital and appropriate their spaces is central to the provisional interventions.

How might these provisional spaces find a material expression?

Fig. 33 - Existing Site Condition no.1 Fig. 34 - Existing Site Condition no.2

3.5 PRECEDENTS

The following section presents precedents referenced throughout the research and design phases of the project. The precedents range from architecture to urban design, and from permanent to temporary interventions.

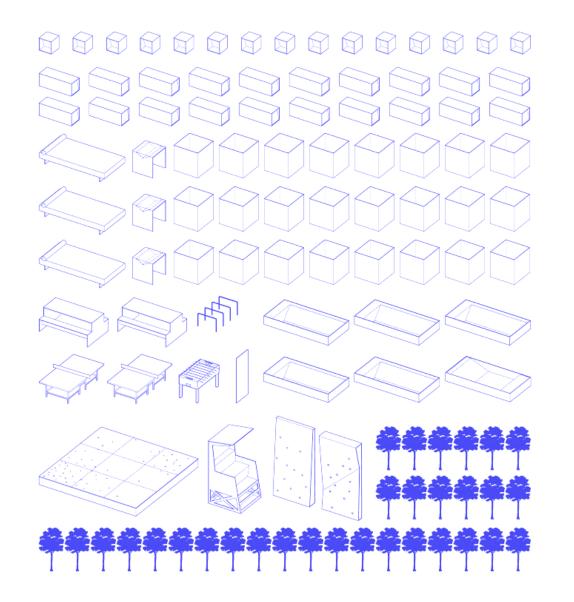


GRANBY WINTER GARDENS

Year:	2019
Location:	Granby, Liverpool
Practice:	Assemble & Granby Four Streets CLT Collaboration
Status:	Built & Operational

Spanning across two abandoned structures in The Granby Winter Garden is a communitya Victorian terrace, the Granby Winter Garden owned space located in the heart of the transforms a typically private space into a Granby neighbourhood, a place abandoned by the council and left to decay. Having endured focus for neighbourhood activity.⁵⁶ As found, the floors of the homes had collapsed, offering decades of insufficient assistance from a grand triple height space in the centre of government authorities, the neighbourhood the building. Since community gardening slated as a "Zone of Opportunity", meaning it and creative action has been the foundation would be cleared and redeveloped.⁵⁴ Residents took control of their street by organizing for a positive change in the neighbourhood, a communal indoor garden is located in the guerrilla gardening, a street market, and centre of the space. established a plan for a Community Land Trust (CLT). With the involvement of Assemble The new social spaces also houses an Studio, a multi-disciplinary collective based in unexpected indoor communal garden, a London who work across architecture, design meeting and events space for workshops, and and art, the community was able to have its an artist-in-residence space equipped with a own place.55 bedroom, kitchen and accessible bathroom. The Granby Winter Garden is a space residents of the neighbourhood can "actively celebrate and support collective culture long-term." 57

Fig. 35 - Granby Winter Garden Interior View



HOLDING PATTERN

Year:	June 19 - September 26, 2011
Location:	Queens, NYC
Practice:	Interboro Partners - Young Architects Program 201
Status:	Temporary Exhibition

100 pieces of furniture were built, this included As part of the Young Architect's Program an eclectic collection of benches, picnic an initiative that invites architects to create tables, rock-climbing wall, ping-pong tables, a temporary environment in the MoMA PS1 a sandbox, and other items that had been courtyard located in Queens, NYC, Interboro Partners designed and constructed an requested by the MoMA PS1's neighbours.⁶⁰ These pieces were constructed using 3 toolsinstallation for the summer of 2011. Their chop box, table saw and a drill press, and approach to the design was to address what were easily assembled using glue and finishing it means to recycle, and how to strengthen connections between a large, powerful nails.⁶¹ One of the few requirements issued by the client (MoMA PS1) was a shading device. institution, like MoMA PS1, and its neighbours.⁵⁸ Interboro's approach to this requirement was to design a column-free, lightweight structure Using their interviews with the neighbourhood of ropes and retractable sails- strung from the institutions, Interboro discovered how to MoMA PS1's walls. combine the needs of these local institutions,

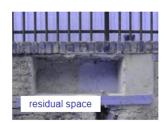
Using their interviews with the neighbourhood institutions, Interboro discovered how to combine the needs of these local institutions, with those of MoMA PS1, ultimately using the courtyard as the holding pattern for these new elements. The installation included a catalogue of objects and trees, aggregated according to their material properties in a Rec Room, a Tree Room and a Mirror Room.⁵⁹

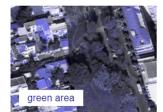
Fig. 36 - Holding Pattern Catalogue of Built Objects

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At the premise of Interboro's installation was their logic around where the trees and furniture would be cast away to following this two month exhibition. I believe they addressed this strategically by incorporating local institutions from the design phase. Ultimately, this installation was not only confined to the MoMA PS1's courtyard, rather it address the larger community of Queens, giving these objects and furniture a future home and more life beyond the exhibition.







Urban vacuum Rome - M. V - Pigneto Area: 100-1000m ²

Empty to fill Rome - M. V - Pigneto Area: 0-50m 2

green area

Contractory Uncultivated Green Rome - M. III - Vigne Nuove

building (part)

Villa Certosa Rome - M. V - Pigneto Area: 800m 2



Impasse Rome - M. V - Pigneto Area: 0-50m 2



Urban Lab Rome - M. III - Val Melaina



Area: 0-50m²

A Corner of Space Rome - M. V - Pigneto Serpentara offices Rome - M. III - Serpentara Area: 3000 m²



Testaccio Tower Rome - M. I - Testaccio

CITY-HOUND

Year:	2014
Location:	Rome, Italy
Practice:	T-Spoon
Status:	Operational

Today, social media has become the threshold between public and private space, creating its

own community. Itself has infiltrated our spaces and has become its own third place. City-Hound is a social network for the temporary transformation of underused urban spaces by T-Spoon.⁶² This open and adaptable platform connects the owners of spaces, with people who are in search of a space to realize an idea or a project. Specifically located in Rome, Italy, City-Hound responds to the needs of contemporary citizens who need a space to realize a project ranging in scale and urban condition.63 This initiative is very interesting as it targets both the owners of underused spaces, and the citizens who may benefit from these spaces.

Ultimately giving a platform for the city's inhabitants to advantage of the economic, social and spatial resources present on site.

http://www.tspoon.org/cityhound/

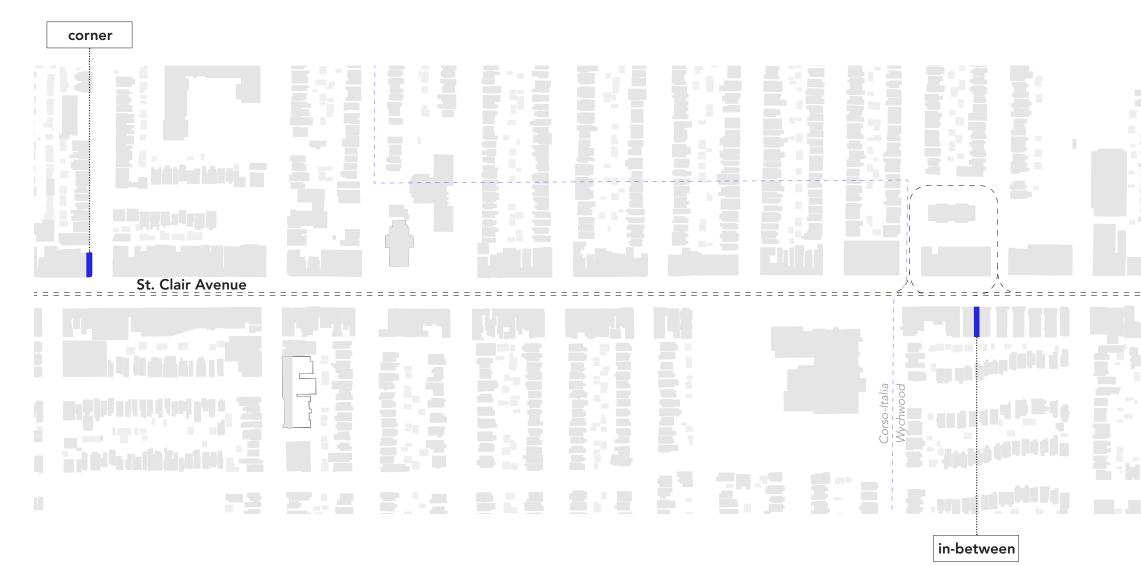
Fig. 37 - City-Hound Website

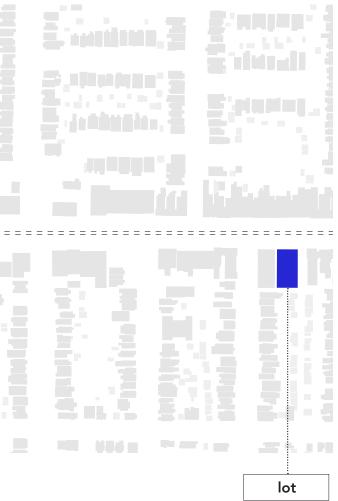
CHAPTER 04: THE DESIGN PROJECT

The following section presents the design project, established along the St. Clair Avenue corridor, and responds to the initial statement of intent.

Providing the community with an opportunity to appropriate their city's spaces is central to the project. Each intervention is to act as a catalyst for interaction between neighbours and strangers, and ultimately become a destination within their community.

The following section will identify the three sites of exploration, and their architectural and programmatic resolution.

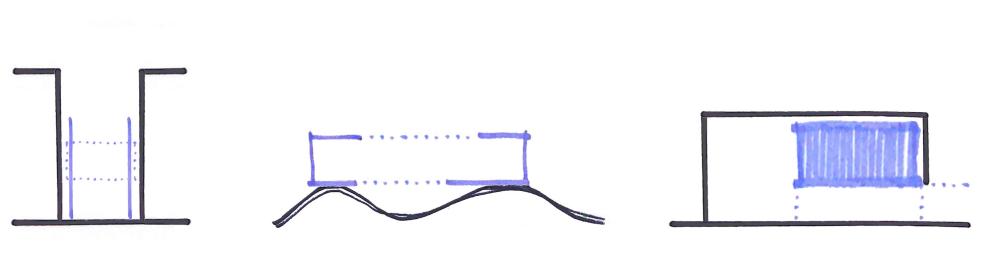




THE SITES

The three sites of exploration are located within the boundaries of the Corso-Italia and Wychwood neighbourhoods along St. Clair Avenue.

4.1 THE PROVISIONAL INTERVENTIONS



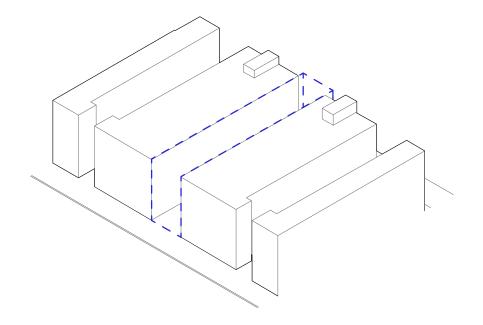
IN-BETWEEN

LOT

CORNER

Fig. 39 - Provisional Interventions' Parti Drawings

These three provisional installations are intended to provide a catalyst that engages with the public realm, providing both a shelter and destination to the community. Each site responds to these notions uniquely, while maintaining a constant architectural element hovering above its occupants. In addition, the premise of these spaces is to promote ownership for the community through various strategies.



4.2 IN-BETWEEN

This site is working within the boundaries of a pedestrian laneway. Simply put, it is the space between two parti walls. The temporal framework this intervention is working within is on a seasonal bases, lasting for 6 months.



Fig. 40 - In-between Site Condition

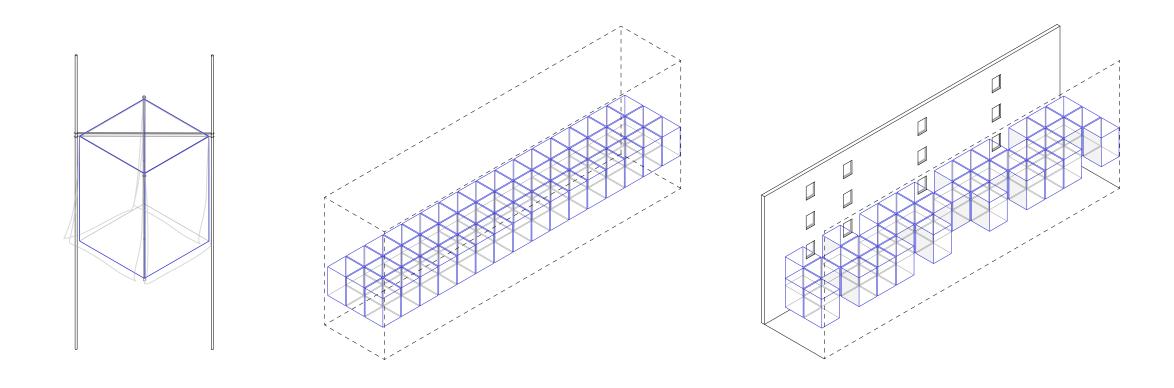


Fig. 41 - In-between Site Logic

SITE LOGIC

Constructed by a series of small dimensioned columns, cables and translucent fabric constructed like a box-kite, the floating volume is offset from the neighbouring buildings. The kite is repeated throughout the site and removed when it intersects a window.

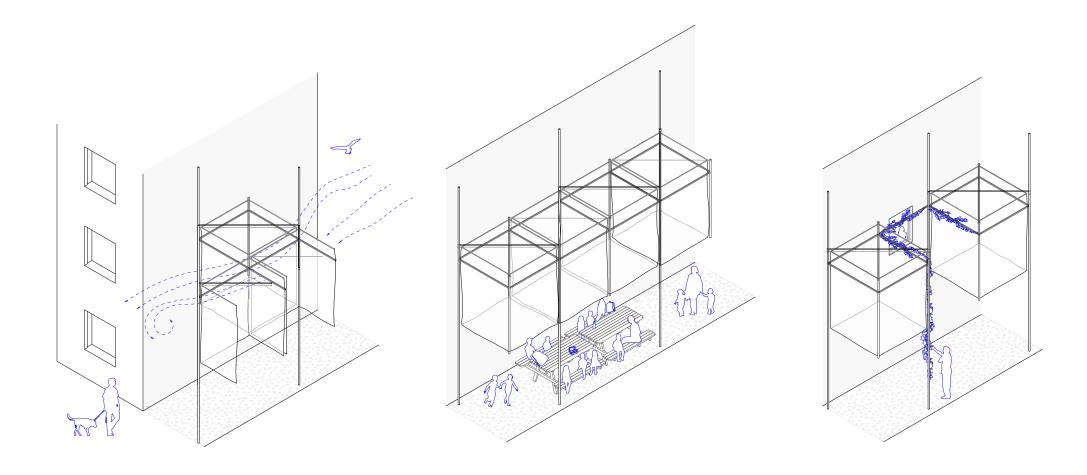


Fig. 42 - In-between Community Engagement

INTERVENTION ENGAGEMENT

The fluttering form is meant to engage with the community of St. Clair. Acting as a filter and protection from the elements. It is a space that can be arranged and appropriated by its users on the ground plane, catering to their needs. Also, the structure engages with the neighboring individuals, giving them ownership of the upper portion of the volume.

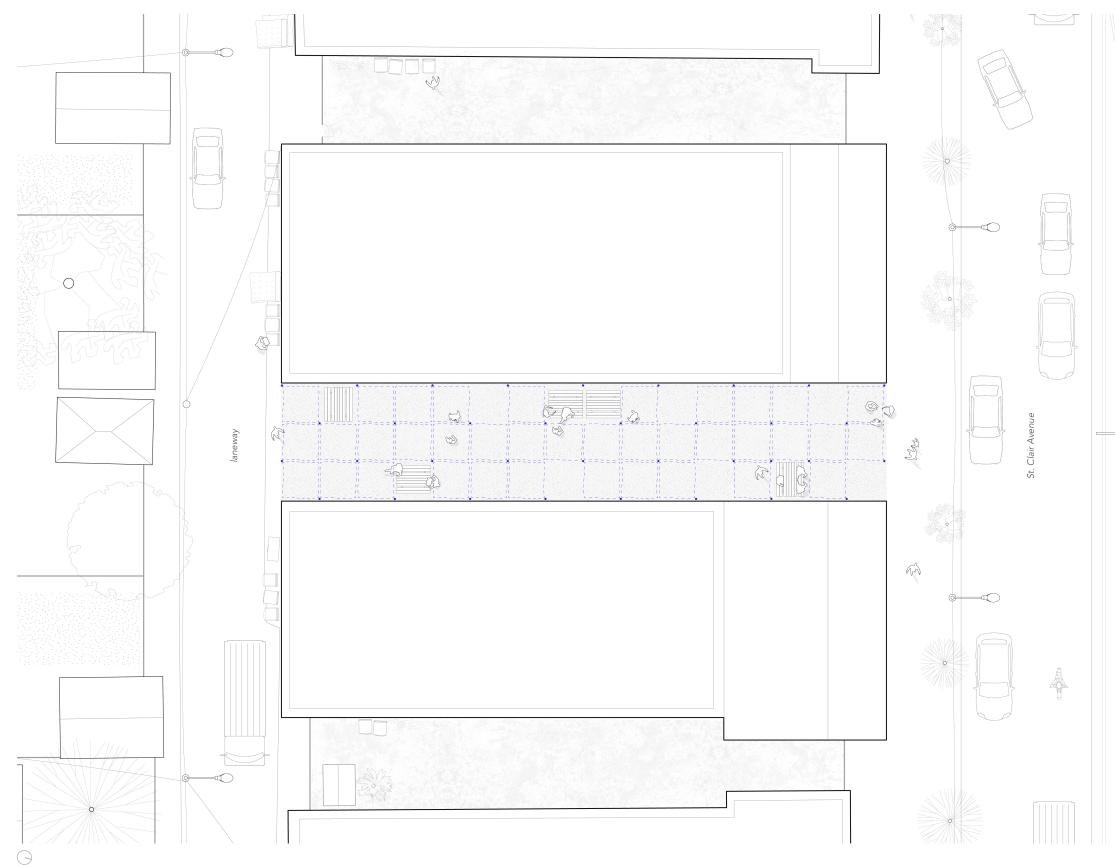
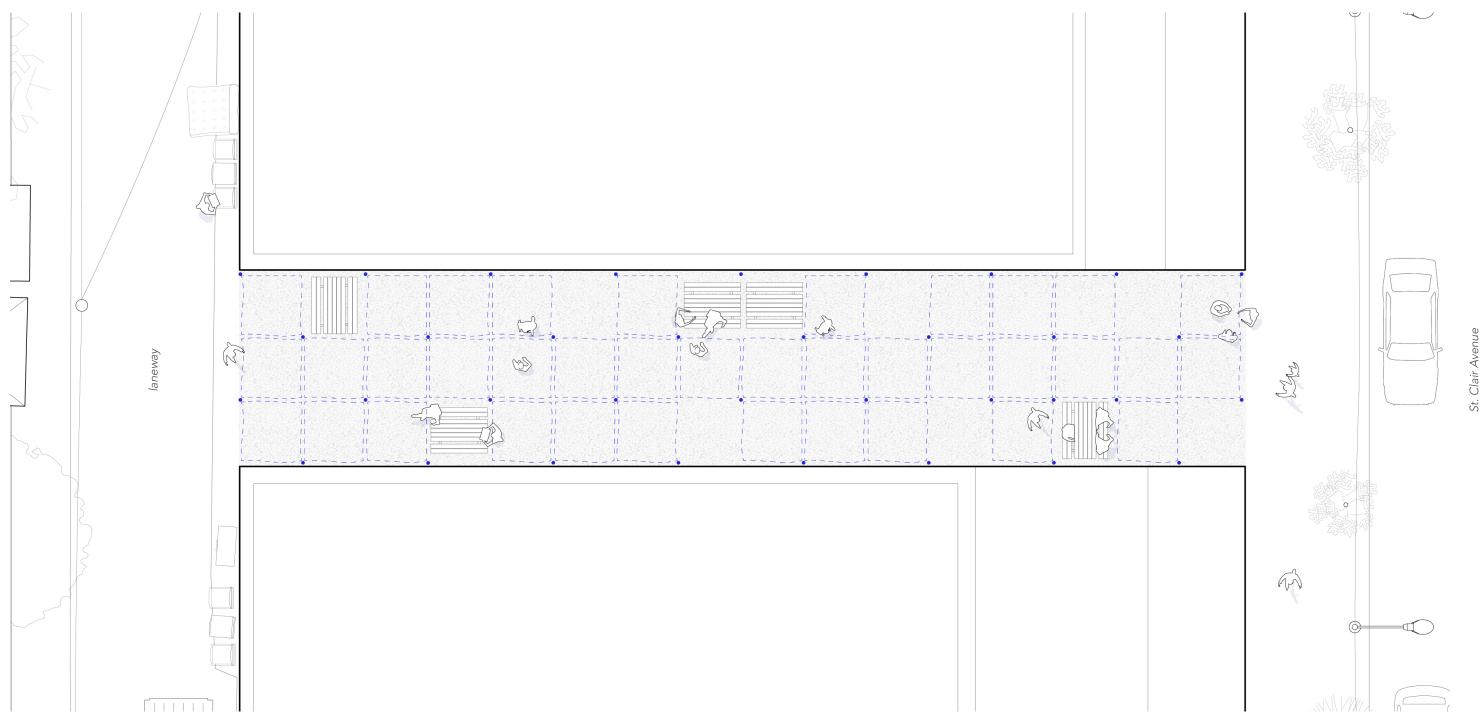


Fig. 43 - In-between Context Plan

STREET LEVEL PLAN

Located on the south side of St. Clair Avenue, the In-between space is an urban threshold along the corridor.

Transforming the space from once a fenced and unkept private area, the *in-between* becomes a place for individuals to traverse from St. Clair to the residential laneway, or is a place of destination, and interaction between individuals.



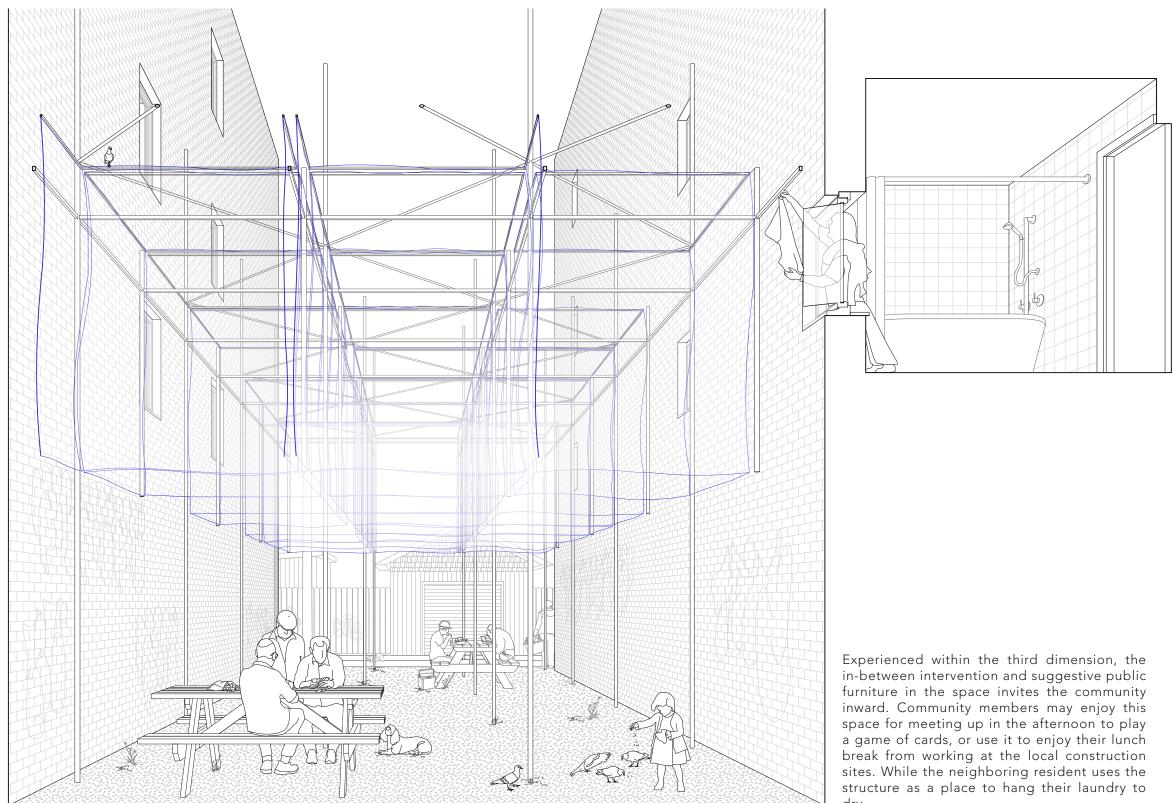


Fig. 45 - In-between Section Perspective

dry.





Here, the *in-between* space is experienced in solitude, as a place of transition from the busy street to the residential laneway. The furniture invites the individual to take a pause and have a seat.

Fig. 46 - In-between: Sunday Afternoon

Fig. 47 - In-between: Block Party

At night, the space becomes a beacon within its urban context. Here, the space is transformed to host a block party for young adults.



Fig. 48 - In-between: Children's Birthday Party

The *in-between* is to invite individuals of all communities to occupy and engage with the space to fit their needs. Here, the in-between is transformed to host a children's birthday party, where decorations are hung from the structure, and picnic tables are arranged to create a larger seating area. Each community finds their unique way of engaging with the space.

4.3 LOT

The urban condition of this site is currently a flat, vacant property fronting St. Clair Avenue.

This site will be explored in the time period of 1-3 years.

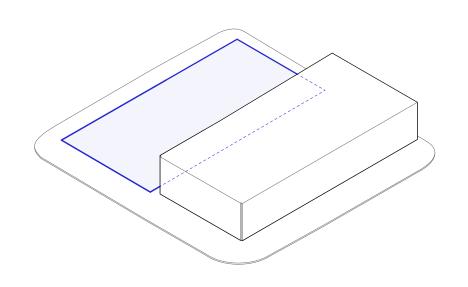
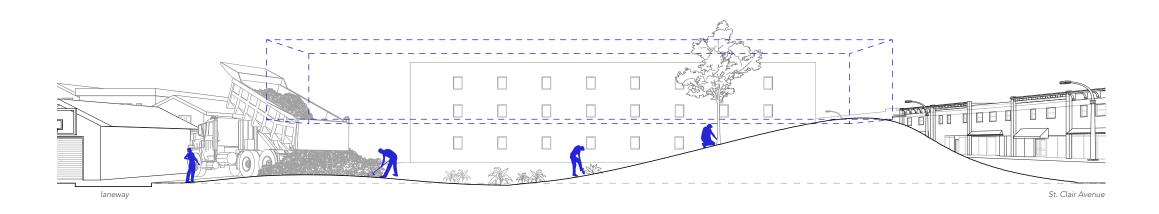
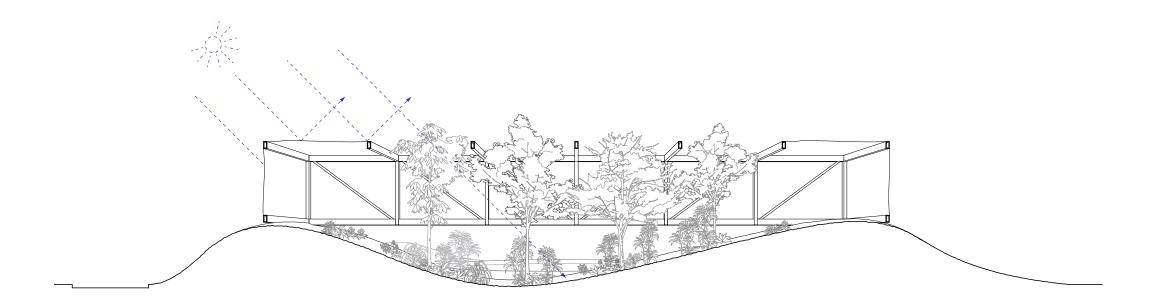


Fig. 49 - Lot Site Condition

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1-3 years





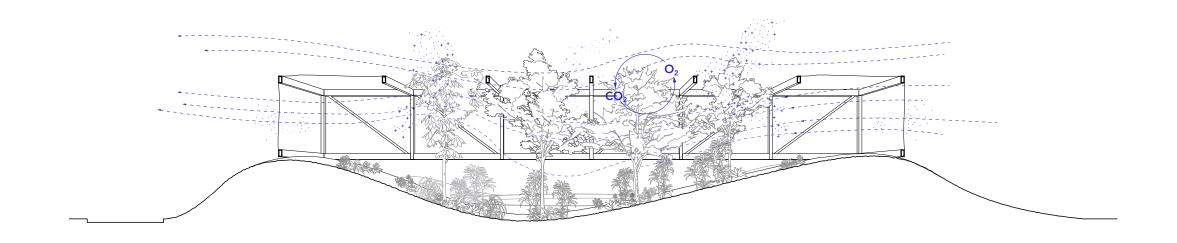
Top to Bottom Fig. 50 - *Lot:* City vs. Wild Fig. 51 - *Lot:* Protection

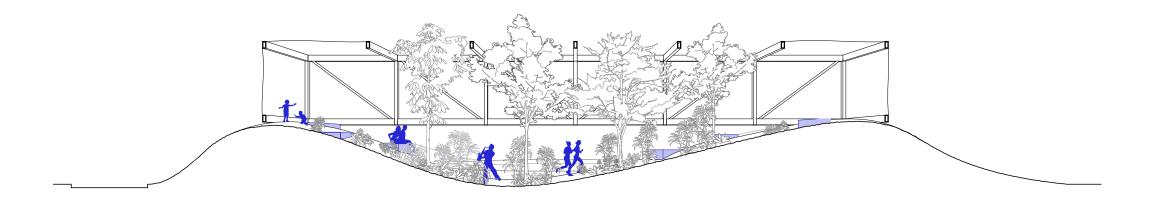
SITE LOGIC

The conception of this site began with thinking about how this flat, mundane plane of asphalt could be transformed into a space for people, wildlife and vegetation – a symbiotic space unusually seen within the city block.

The site would be built up from rubble and earth excavated from the surrounding active construction sites. The ground is built up and hosts the floating volume, while the new ground plane becomes a space for at risk vegetation to be transplanted to.

The volume is constructed of steel rectangular extrusions and is wrapped with sheets of polypropylene, a material commonly used for erosion control. Here, the volume becomes an element of protection for the vegetation and its occupants.



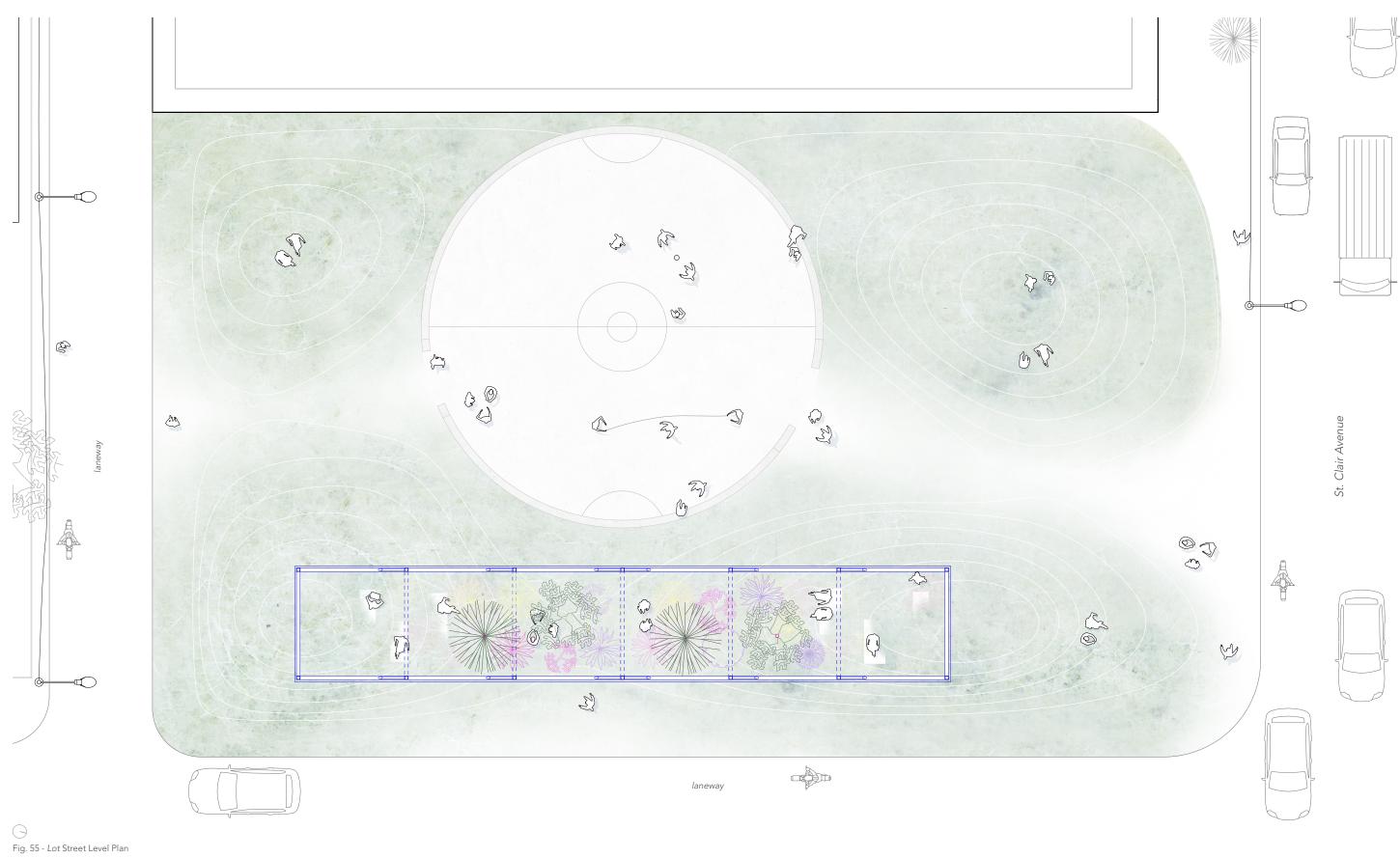


Top to Bottom Fig. 52 - *Lot:* Microclimate Fig. 53 - *Lot*: Interaction The volume also acts as a filtration device, filtering pollution, and sound from the active street. The structure and vegetation establish a microclimate, creating a comfortable space for the community and wildlife to occupy.

Ultimately, the volume becomes a place for interaction. Seating is integrated into the landscape and invites the community to sit and enjoy the space.



The topography invites individuals from St. Clair Ave, and the neighbouring residential street, to enter and interact with the site through its diffused entries, creating a subtle transition between the city's hardscape, and the *lot* site's softscape.



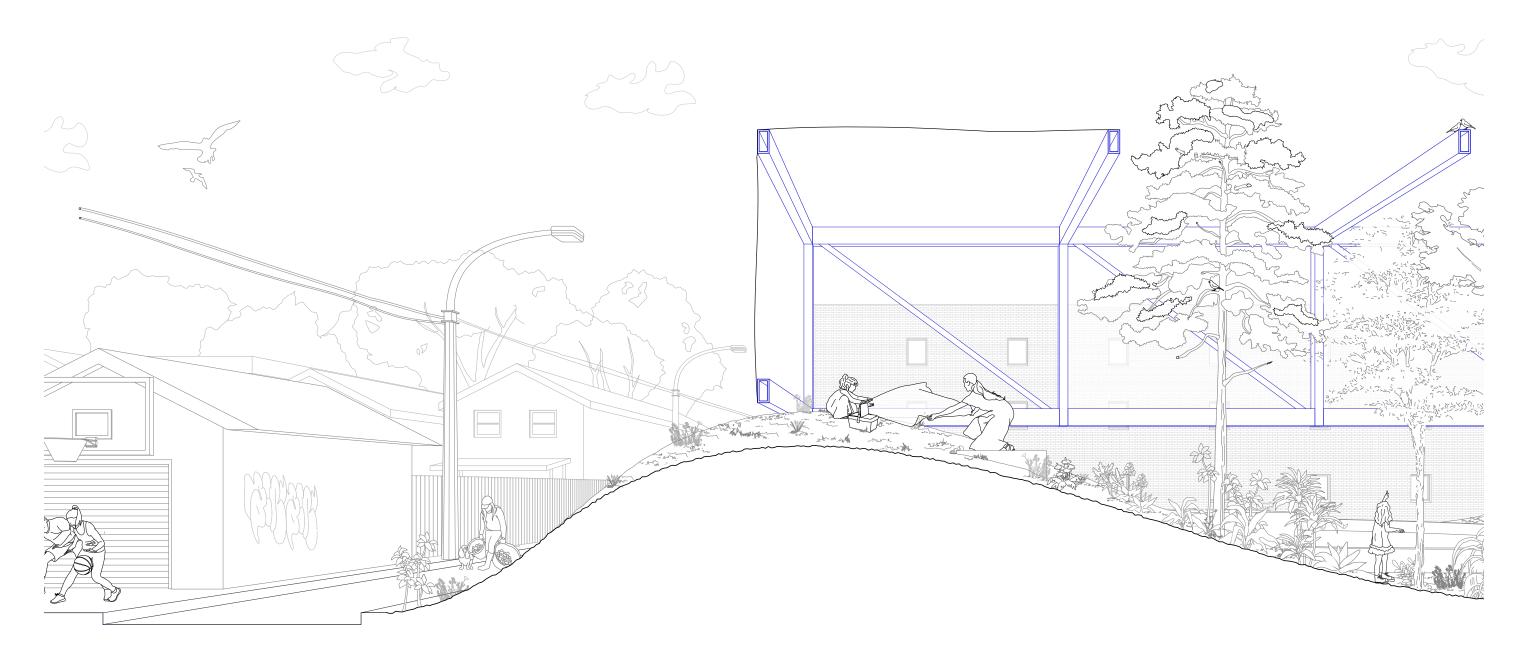


Fig. 56 - Lot Section Perspective

The polypropylene material wraps the perimeter of the structure, as its netting is denser in the centre, and becomes thinner at the structure's ends, providing sufficient visibility to the peaks of the topography. These corners are also sheltered by the material on top, providing additional protection for its occupants.



Fig. 57 - *Lot:* A Summer Day

SUMMER

Here, the hovering volume is open to above and frames the vegetation below. Community gardening clubs, and local residents take care of the garden in the summer heat.

The play area adjacent is bound by a concrete curb, providing children with a space to place their belongings on, or have a seat and take a break from playing a game of soccer.



Fig. 58 - *Lot:* An Autumn Evening

AUTUMN

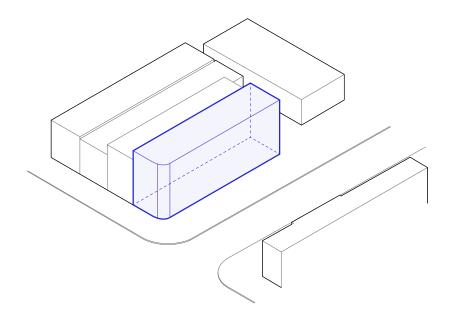
Central to the project is the temporal framework. As this site is operating within the 1-3 year time period, thinking of how this space operates throughout each season experienced in Toronto is vital to its success for the community. In the fall, the colorful trees brighten up the muted coloured structure, and the play space is transformed into a water retention pond, collecting the runoff water from the landscape and reducing the risk of flooding.



Fig. 59 - *Lot:* A Winter Afternoon

WINTER

In the winter season, the vegetation is sparse, however the site is fully activated by the community. Children are skating on a rink formed within the circular curb and adults bring supplies to build a bonfire. Here we see how the community embraces the *lot* and the winter season to their full potential.



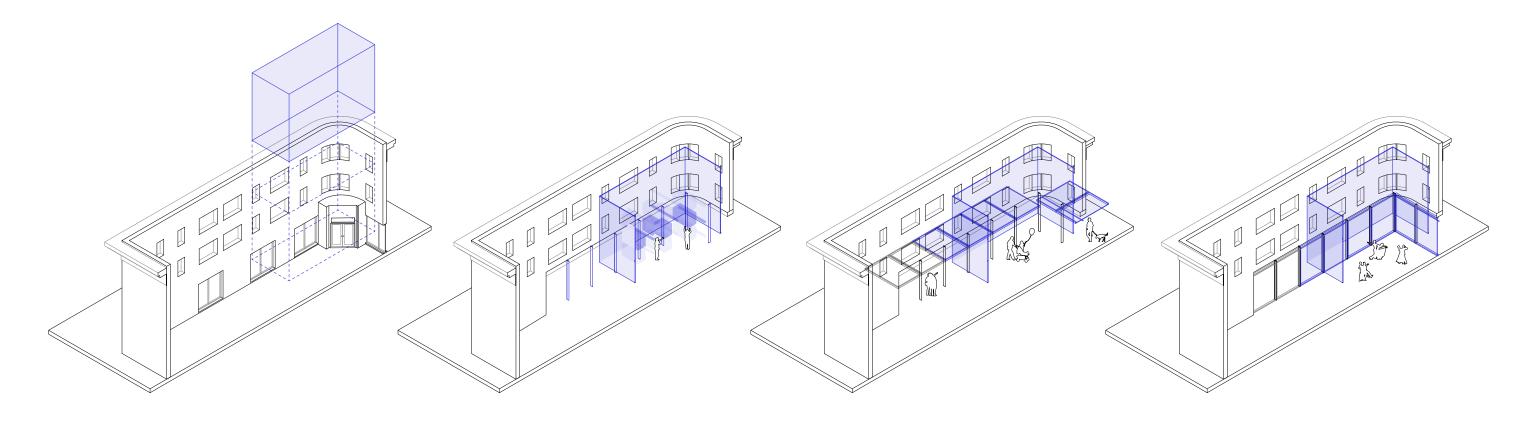
4.4 CORNER

The final provisional intervention is the Corner. The urban condition of this site is an existing 3 storey building currently boarded up and awaiting city approval for redevelopment.

The time between building permit submission and approval is unknown and most times can take years. Thus, this site will be explored in the time period of lasting 6 years or more.

6+ years

Fig. 60 - Corner Site Condition



Volume Inserted

Dynamic Storage Device

Open: Horizontal Connection

SITE LOGIC

Originally used as a retail space on the ground level, with 2 storeys of residential units above, this provisional intervention is explored as a new volume inserted into the building's existing fabric. The new volume becomes a dynamic storage device, housing elements that can move vertically in the space depending on the time of day and use.

Fig. 61 - Corner Site Logic

Closed: Vertical Space

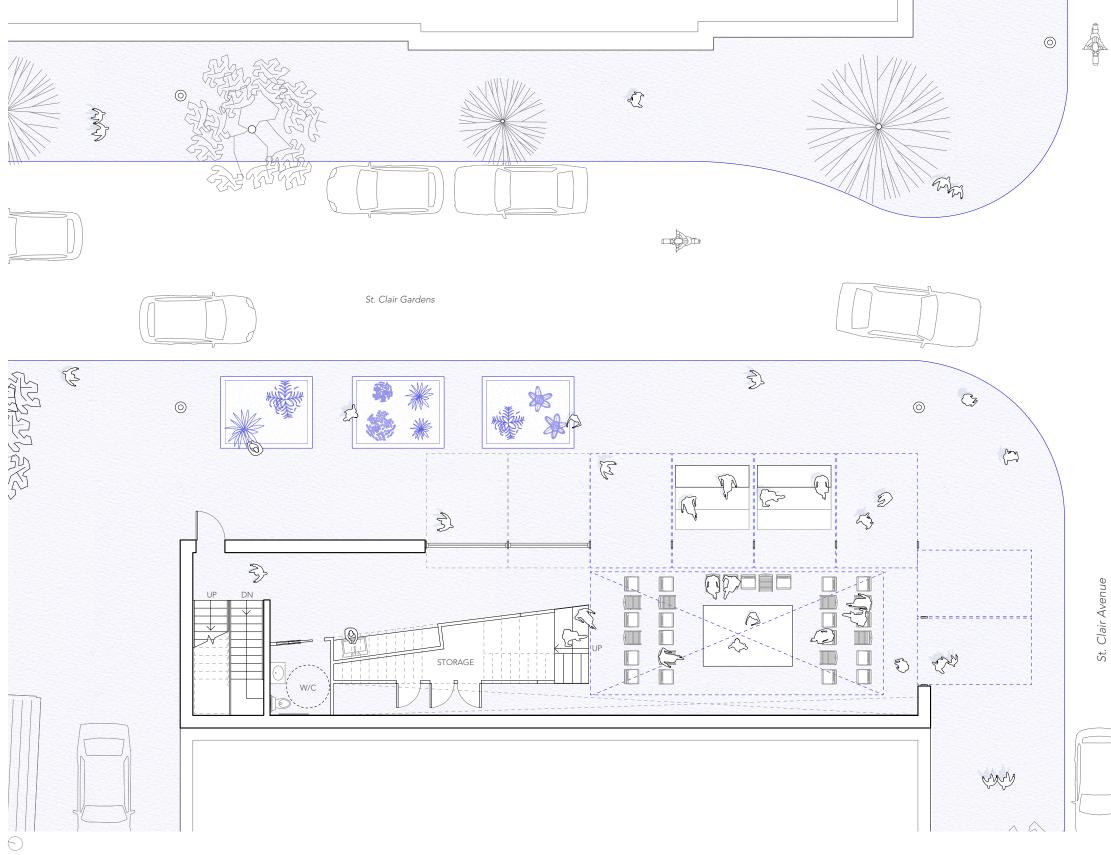


Fig. 62 - Corner Street Level Plan

STREET LEVEL

The building's location is a threshold itself, between the bustling commercial corridor, and the quieter, more intimate residential street. The ground plane of the building is a continuation of the city. A large stair is inserted acting as circulation and additional seating, while the volume and doors hang above the occupants, welcoming the city life into the building.

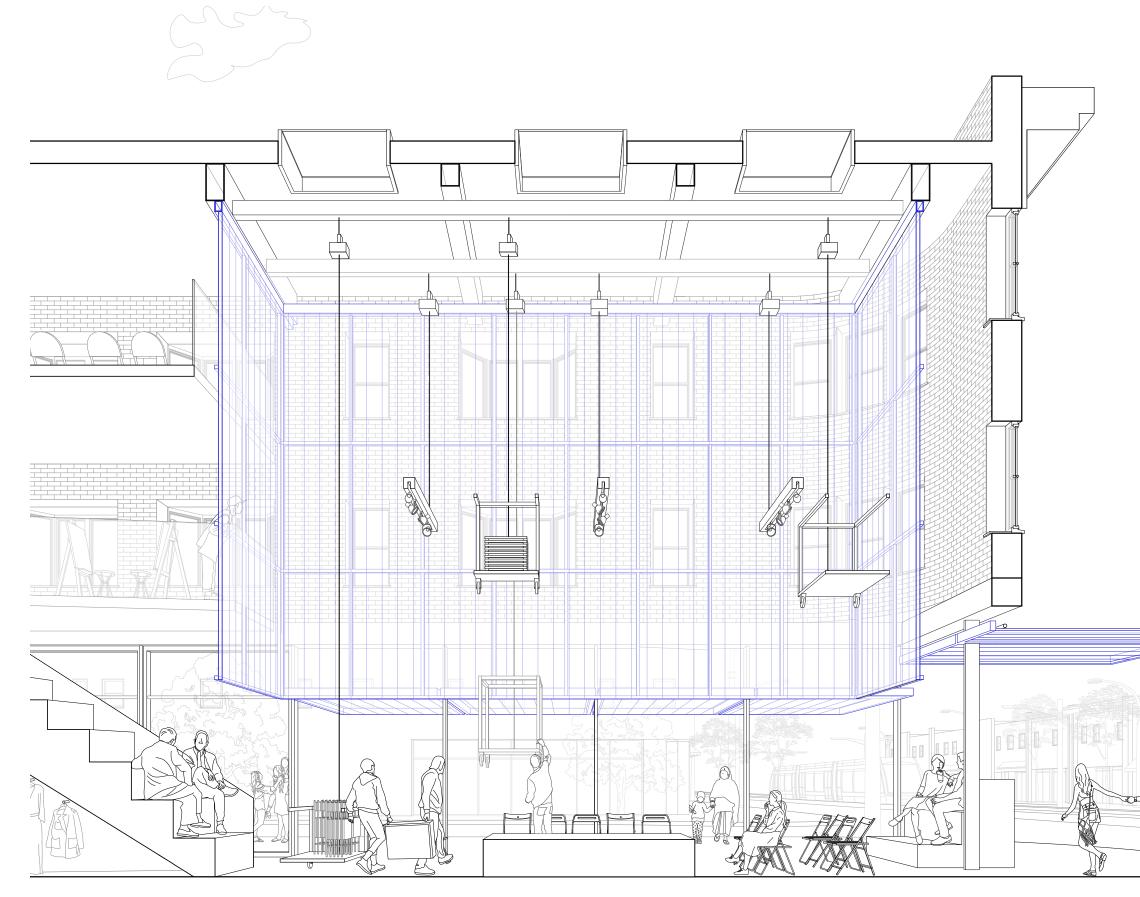
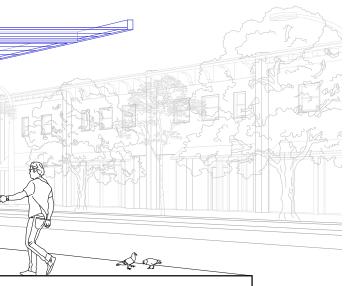


Fig. 63 - Corner Section Perspective



The hovering volume is composed of polycarbonate sheets hanging from a steel framing system. This new, light material is disentangled from the building's original structure, and contrasts the existing brick walls.

In this instance, the doors are swung open, chairs are taken from the storage compartments and set up in the space as a neighbourhood meeting is about to take place. Individuals effortlessly enter the space from St. Clair Avenue and the side street. Adjacent to the volume, the upper floor levels may hazily see the activity happening below.



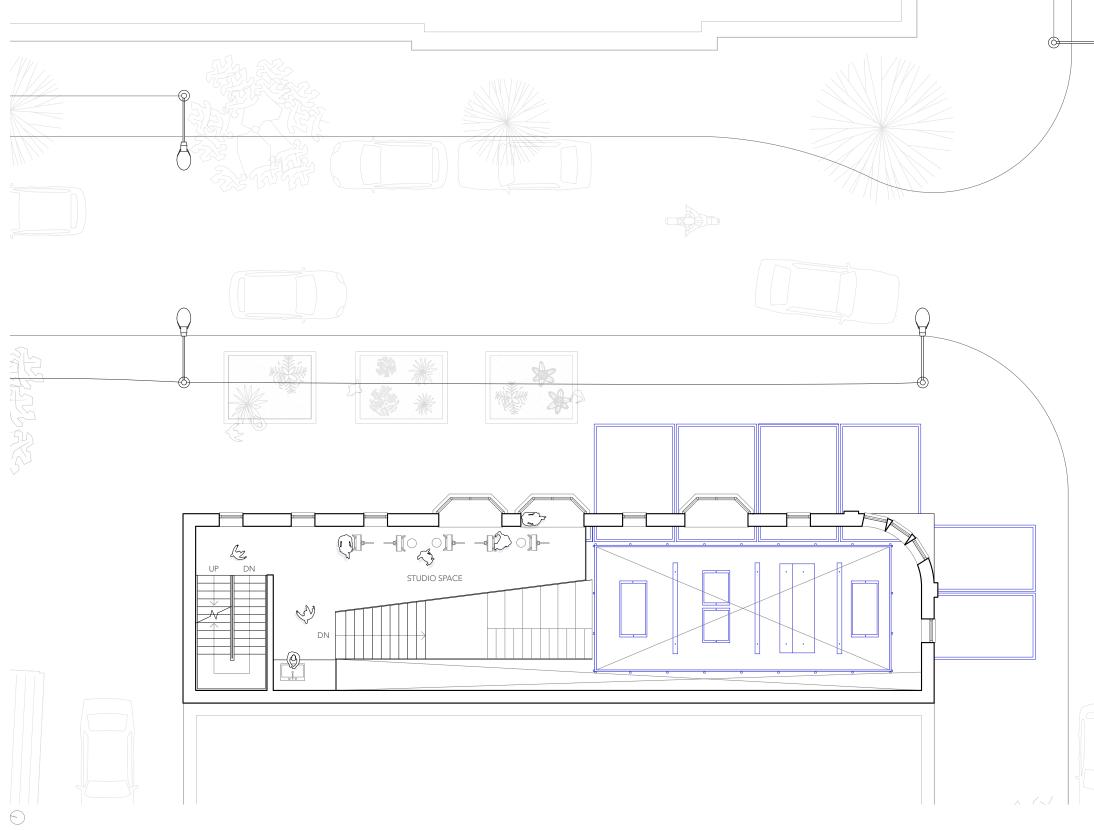
St. Clair Avenue



Fig. 64 - Corner: Open Door Condition

OPEN CONDITION

When the doors are open, the interior and exterior become one. The space becomes an invitation to the community to gather and take part in its activities. Here the community has set up a seed collection and exchange program, where individuals can share gardening and food growing tips, and children learn gardening fundamentals from the elderly.



UPPER LEVEL

The upper levels are adapted to host a variety of community events, like painting and pottery workshops, or even chess tournaments. The volume is seen to pierce the floor slab and hang in the open space below.

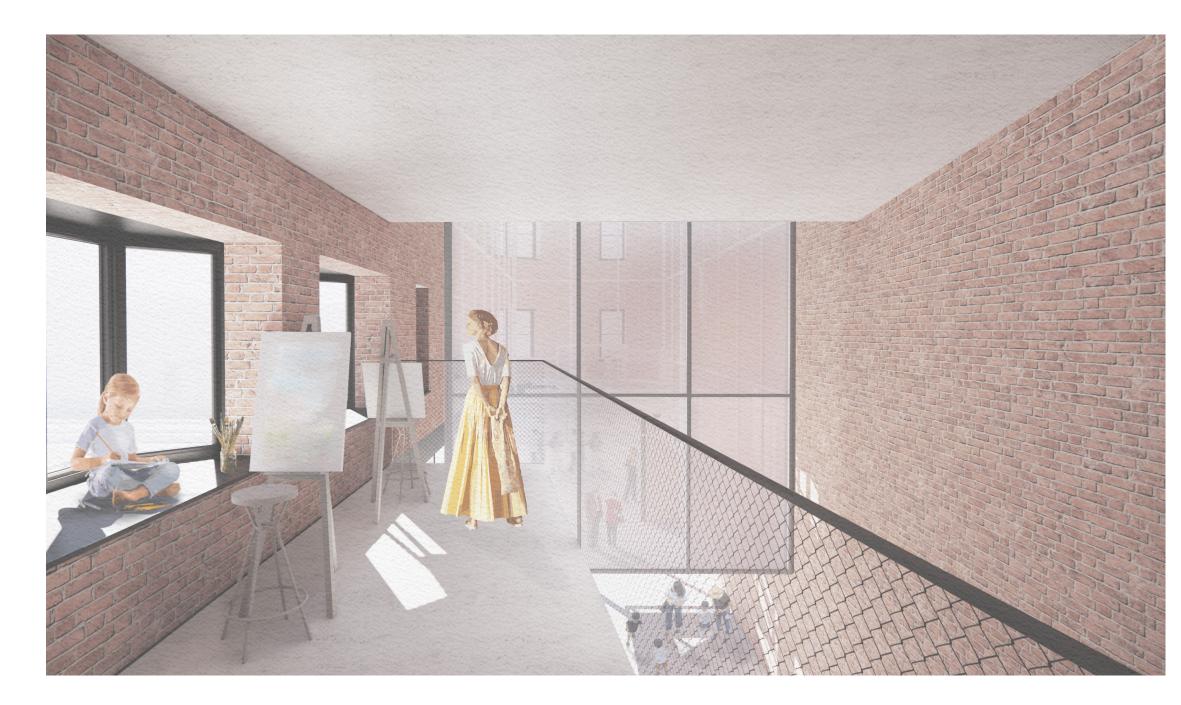


Fig. 66 - Corner: Upper Studio Space

UPPER LEVEL STUDIO

The volume is floating beyond. Its semitransparent properties blur the activities of the ground plane, however silhouettes of the occupants provide a sense of comfort to those on the levels above - as though their community is always present with them.



Fig. 67 - Corner: Evening Performance

EVENING PERFORMANCE

At night, the volume radiates a hue with the use of backlighting, and is a second beacon for the St. Clair community. Pedestrians can catch a glimpse inside while on their walk home from the streetcar, or while out for an evening stroll.

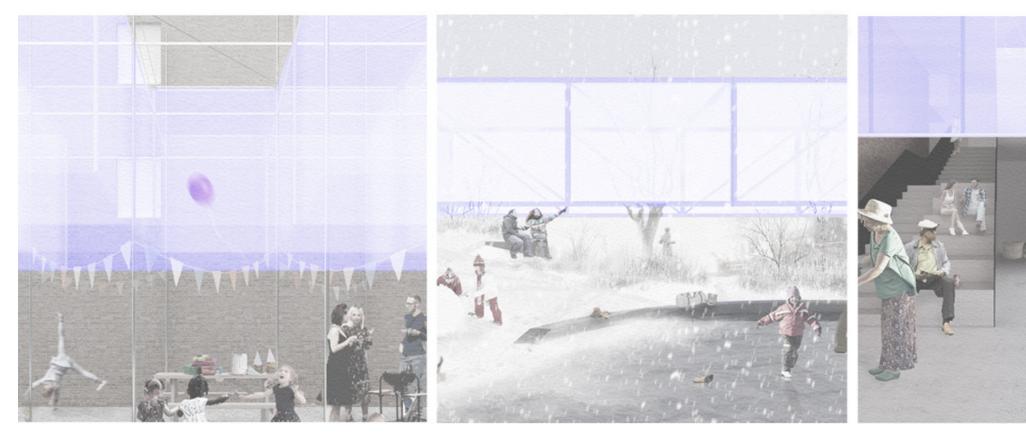
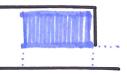






Fig. 68 - The Provisional Interventions





CONCLUSION

Overall, this project asserts that these transitional spaces in the city will persist, and due to that, we must interrogate them through the lens of community building that attracts a certain type of temporality and program. These spaces are resilient and responsive.

What I have shown you today with 3 interventions, is simply an indication of how important, constructive and powerful remediation of these spaces can be and ultimately, its potential to be applied as a general urban strategy in the future.

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NOTES

¹Veronica Ng and Jia Pey Lim, "Tracing Liminality: A Multidisciplinary Spatial Construct," Journal of Engineering and Architecture: 76, doi:10.15640/jea.v6n1a8 ²Arnold Van Gennep, Monika B. Vizedom, and Gabrielle L. Caffee, "The Rites of Passage," 1961, vii, doi:10.7208/chicago/9780226027180.001.0001 ³ Ibid, 18. ⁴ Ronald L. Grimes, "Victor Turners Social Drama and T. S. Eliots Ritual Drama," Anthropologica 27, no. 1/2 (1985): 82, doi:10.2307/25605177 ⁵Victor Turner, The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure (Ithaca (N.Y.): Cornell University Press, 1977), 3 ⁶ Ibid. ⁷ Bjørn Thomassen, "The Uses and Meaning of Liminality," *International Political Anthropology* 2, no. 1, 14, accessed 2009. ⁸ "Threshold." Merriam-Webster. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/threshold. ⁹Lay James Gibson and Sharon James Zukin, "Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World," Geographical Review 83, no. 2 (1993): 269, doi:10.2307/215268) ¹⁰ Georges Teyssot, A Topology of Everyday Constellations (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013), 87-88. ¹¹ Patrizio M. Martinelli, "Inside The Façade: The Inhabited Space Between Domestic and Urban Realms," Journal of Interior Design 45, no. 2 (2019), 55, doi:10.1111/joid.12163 ¹² Barbara B. Brown, John R. Burton, and Anne L. Sweaney, "Neighbors, Households, and Front Porches," Environment and Behavior 30, no. 5 (1998), 594, doi:10.1177/001391659803000501) ¹³ Jan Gehl, Life between Buildings: Using Public Space (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2011), 14. ¹⁴ Ibid, 17. ¹⁵Leila Mahmoudi Farahani and David Beynon, "Third Places and Their Contribution to the Street Life," Rethinking Third Places, 2019, 197, doi:10.4337/9781786433916.00019 ¹⁶ Ibid. ¹⁷ Ibid. ¹⁸ Nancy Byers and Barbara Myrvold, St. Clair West in Pictures: A History of the Communities of Carlton, Davenport, Earlscourt and Oakwood (Toronto: Toronto Public Library, 2008), 7. ¹⁹ Ibid. ²⁰ Ibid. ²¹ Ibid. ²² Ibid, 46. ²³ Michael Buzzelli, "From Little Britain to Little Italy: An Urban Ethnic Landscape Study in Toronto," Journal of Historical Geography 27, no. 4 (2001), 596, doi:10.1006/jhge.2001.0355 ²⁴ Ibid. ²⁵ Nancy Byers and Barbara Myrvold, St. Clair West in Pictures: A History of the Communities of Carlton, Davenport, Earlscourt and Oakwood (Toronto: Toronto Public Library, 2008), 46. ²⁶ Ibid. ²⁷ Ibid. ²⁸Jordan Stanger-Ross, Staying Italian: Urban Change and Ethnic Life in Postwar Toronto and Philadelphia (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 30. ²⁹ Nancy Byers and Barbara Myrvold, St. Clair West in Pictures: A History of the Communities of Carlton, Davenport, Earlscourt and Oakwood (Toronto: Toronto Public Library, 2008), 117. ³⁰ Shawn Micallef, "Maybe Toronto Isn't so Uptight after All," The Toronto Star, June 08, 2018, \ https:// www.thestar.com/opinion/star-columnists/2018/06/08/maybe-toronto-isnt-so-uptight-after-all.html

³¹ Nancy Byers and Barbara Myrvold, St. Clair West in Pictures: A History of the Communities of Carlton, Davenport, Earlscourt and Oakwood (Toronto: Toronto Public Library, 2008), 120. ³² Ibid. ³³ "Corso Italia-Davenport Neighbourhood Profile." Wellbeing Toronto. 2016. Corso Italia-Davenport ³⁴ Ibid. ³⁵ Ibid. ³⁶ Ibid. ³⁷ Tess Kalinowski, "St. Clair Right-of-way: A Rite of Passage for a Gentrifying Avenue?" Thestar.com, March 20, 2012, https://www.thestar.com/news/city_hall/2012/03/20/st_clair_rightofway_a_rite_of passage_for_a_gentrifying avenue.html ³⁸ Canada, Toronto Central LHIN, Central West Toronto Community - Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis Report, 2014, 14. ³⁹ David Harvey, "The Right to the City," New Left Review, September/October 2008, doi:10.4324/9781315260211-20) 40 Ibid ⁴¹ Matthew Thompson, "LIFE in a ZOO," City 21, no. 2 (2017): 106, doi:10.1080/13604813.2017.1353327 ⁴² Ibid. ⁴³Tess Kalinowski, "St. Clair Right-of-way: A Rite of Passage for a Gentrifying Avenue?" Thestar.com, March 20, 2012, https://www.thestar.com/news/city_hall/2012/03/20/st_clair_rightofway_a_rite_of_ passage for a gentrifying avenue.html) ⁴⁴ Ibid. ⁴⁵ Ibid, 161. ⁴⁶ Ibid, 141. 47 Ibid, 163. ⁴⁸ "Ray Oldenburg," Project for Public Spaces, 2008, https://www.pps.org/article/roldenburg ⁴⁹ Michael Brill, "Mistaking Community Life for Public Life," Places, (2001), 50. ⁵⁰ Ibid. ⁵¹ Ibid. ⁵² Ibid. ⁵³ Ibid. ⁵⁴ Matthew Thompson, "LIFE in a ZOO," City 21, no. 2 (2017) 105, doi:10.1080/13604813.2017.1353327 ⁵⁵ "Granby Winter Garden," Assemble, accessed November 11, 2020, https://assemblestudio.co.uk/ projects/granby-winter-gardens ⁵⁶ Ibid. ⁵⁷ Ibid. ⁵⁸ MoMA, "YAP at MoMA PS1: "Holding Pattern" by Interboro Partners," July 02, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GKbC8oLdtTo&ab channel=TheMuseumofModernArt ⁵⁹ "Holding Pattern," Interboro, 2011, http://www.interboropartners.com/projects/holding-pattern 60 Ibid. ⁶¹ MoMA, "YAP at MoMA PS1: "Holding Pattern" by Interboro Partners," July 02, 2011, https://www.voutube.com/watch?v=GKbC8oLdtTo&ab_channel=TheMuseumofModernArt ⁶² "CITY-HOUND," T SPOON, 2014, https://www.tspoon.org/project/city-hound/ ⁶³ Ibid.

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