Quelus Spiritual Retreat Centre

by

Josephine Wiens

B.E.D., The University of Manitoba, 2000

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE (MLA)
in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Department of Landscape Architecture)

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard.

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

October 2004

© Josephine Wiens, 2004
In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Josephine Wiens
Name of Author (please print)

08/01/2004
Date (dd/mm/yyyy)

Queens Spiritual Retreat Centre: a model for an interfaith retreat centre
Title of Thesis

MLA
Degree:

2004
Year:

Landscaping Architecture
Department of

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, BC Canada
Abstract

Growing up in a small community in south-eastern Manitoba has had a great deal of influence in my life. I grew up surrounded by religion, accepting it, questioning it, examining it and exploring it. Through life experiences, especially travel, I have been open to many ideas and feel they all have merit and need to be treated with respect. The opportunity to explore spirituality in the landscape is an idea that has interested me for years. How people find meaning in the landscape and how the landscape is given meaning is fascinating to me, thus the idea of a retreat centre seemed to be the coming together of these two concepts and a way of answering the initial question.

This design thesis begins with a background of the goals of interfaith dialogue. It leads into a discussion of the spirituality of the site on Galiano Island. The program is outlined and the design project is detailed. The retreat centre design includes a plan for the larger trail system of the site and the connections that are made from it, an overall site plan for the centre, a detailed site plan of the Main Centre and central axis, including sections, and detailed drawings of the program areas. These sections and detailed drawings include the waterfront, the orchard and garden terraces, the entry plaza, the spiritual area, and the accommodations. Each aspect of the design references the overall goal and objectives developed for the project.
Table of Contents

Abstract ii
Table of Contents iii
List of Figures iv
Introduction 1
Project Goal 2
Project Objectives 2
Theoretical Orientation 2
Project Background 2
Case Study Examination- Camp Squeah 6
Site Precedents
  Hollyhock 13
  IslandWood 14
An Examination of the Site 17
  Site Context 17
  Environment 18
  Geology 20
  Climate 20
  Flora and Fauna 20
  History 21
  Site 21
  Distinct Places 23
  Conclusion 25
Program 26
  Structure 26
  Types of Activities 27
  Facilities 27
  Special Programs 28
The Project 29
  Entry 29
  Parking 30
  Director’s Home 30
  Entry Plaza 32
  Main Centre- Dining Hall, Studios, Lounge, Library 32
  Garden Terrace 33
  Orchard 37
  Amphitheatre and Open Space 39
  Barbeque Shelter and Outdoor Kitchen 39
  Boardwalk 39
  Axes 41
  Lodging 41
  Spiritual Area 43
  Recreation Area 45
  Utility Area 47
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>Camp Squeah fire pit and picnic area</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>Squeah Lodge</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3</td>
<td>Squeah Lodge interior</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4</td>
<td>Typical cabin</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5</td>
<td>Camp Squeah layout</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6</td>
<td>The Gulf Islands</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7</td>
<td>Galiano lot map</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8</td>
<td>Galiano landscape classification map</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9</td>
<td>Galiano Island</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 10</td>
<td>North Galiano map</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 11</td>
<td>Site- shoreline</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 12</td>
<td>Site- overlooking the spit</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 13</td>
<td>rock patterns</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 14</td>
<td>The dark woods</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 15</td>
<td>The alder woods</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 16</td>
<td>The arbutus woods</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 17</td>
<td>Overall Site and Trail Map</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 18</td>
<td>Site Plan</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 19</td>
<td>Plaza Section</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 20</td>
<td>Site Section</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 21</td>
<td>Building connection Section</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 22</td>
<td>Detail Plan</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 23</td>
<td>Detail Section</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 24</td>
<td>Axonometric stair and irrigation detail</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 25</td>
<td>Garden and Orchard Sections</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 26</td>
<td>Orchard Cluster</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 27</td>
<td>Treehouse Cluster</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 28</td>
<td>Oceanside Cluster</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 29</td>
<td>Hermitage</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 30</td>
<td>Axonometric of Sanctuary and Maze</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 31</td>
<td>Gravel Spit Section</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 32</td>
<td>Fire Circle Details</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Historical Timeline Diagram 22
Quelus Spiritual Retreat Centre

A model for an interfaith retreat centre

Introduction

As western society is becoming more aware of the diversity of traditions, backgrounds and faiths through globalization, sensitivity is needed toward these everyday differences. An interfaith space is needed where people can gather, learn and worship while not feeling threatened or disrespected in any way. Designing a retreat centre that is open to all faiths can help foster relations that do not exist when people worship as separate units. Through this common space people will be able to share and learn with others in a way that expands their own sense of what is sacred and spiritual.

(http://www.uri.org/designcomp/program.doc)

A retreat centre is a place where people come to deal with or are able to get back to a basic understanding of the world. A project such as a retreat centre needs to be a place where people are able to seek answers to the question of what does it mean to be human. Douglas Davies, contributor to the series 'Themes in Religious Studies', writes that "Religion has been one of humanity's longest standing processes of encountering the environment in an attempt to understand it." (Davies in Holm 1994, 6). In the past religion has had the purpose of aiding survival and safety and also reflecting a wonder and curiosity basic to human nature. Religion can be a process of discovery (Davies in Holm 1994, 6). The sense of discovery is the goal of the design of the retreat centre. Since answers are found in a myriad of ways, the centre is set up to facilitate exploration through many different means. It is about revealing or fostering an expanded sense of the world, whether personally or globally.

While this is an optimistic project, indeed utopic in some ways, I feel places like retreat centres need to exist in the world in order for people to be able to make steps for creating a better world in which to live. The belief that Gandhi expressed was that we must be the change that we wish to see in the world. Places of optimism allow people to dream about what may be and allow for renewal and regeneration to encourage people already working toward a better future. While the world's religions may never be in harmony and the extremes may never meet, a non-polemical place where people may learn together and share what they find relevant in their religion and in their lives can help to build understanding between many different backgrounds. As Oscar Wilde once wrote, "I don't want to live in a world without utopia".
Project Goal

The goal of this project is to create a retreat centre that will support the exploration of spirituality in many religions, faiths and beliefs. The retreat centre will be a place that fosters personal and spiritual growth; a place where people may learn about peace, justice and healing for the earth and all living beings.

Project Objectives

1. To create a model for an interfaith retreat centre.
2. To create an environment that fosters peace and harmony between religions by creating a cohesive, unified site plan.
3. To provide spaces that facilitate different methods of worship, responding to the needs of religions while still keeping it a space where all feel comfortable.
4. To provide areas that meet the needs of a single person or as a group of faith followers.

Theoretical Orientation

The question that began me thinking this and that forms the underpinning of the project is "is a genuine interfaith space possible?" My viewpoint is that as our social and physical space changes, new issues arise which need to be addressed in order to create a better world. With this project I hope to be able to create spaces that push the boundaries of conventional spaces and not only respond to issues but provide a possible solution to them. Landscape architecture should be a way of healing our environments whether physically, socially, ecologically, economically or spiritually. This project is one that exemplifies such a belief.

Project Background

In order to understand the importance of an interfaith retreat centre, the first question that needs to be answered is what is the importance of understanding the World’s Worldviews? According to Ninian Smart, author of the overview *The World’s Religions*, there are three reasons why the study of the world’s religions and ideologies is important. The first reason is that religion has played a part in the world since the start of civilization, showing how people have experimented in living. The societies of Egypt, Greece, the Indus valley and Maya are a part of our human heritage. Second, is that in order to be able to understand the various cultures of today’s world, we need to be able to learn about the worldview’s that underlie them. To be able to understand the Middle East, one must know something of Islam. Thirdly, as individuals seeking to establish our own worldviews and beliefs, we get a fuller perspective by knowing something about other philosophies and ideologies (Smart 1998, 10). While I believe these reasons are all valid, there is another reason why the study of religion and ideology is important. This fourth reason is because due to ignorance, religion has been used as a weapon. Knowledge and understanding would take away its potency and render it powerless for evil uses.
Religion is not often the main cause of conflict, but frequently it is a contributing factor. Hans Kueng is quoted as saying that “the ‘most fanatical and cruellest political struggles are those that have been coloured, inspired and legitimized by religion’” (in Smock 2002, 3). There are new hostilities every day that are led in the name of religion. One option is to dismiss religion due to its misuse and the hurt and harm that people have caused with religion as their justification. This option takes the power out of it, both for evil and for good. Another option is to recognize that there may still be some value in religion left and work towards understanding and moderating instead of a blanket hatred or antipathy. It means also breaking down the idea of religious totalitarianism and opting for a more pluralist view. Pluralistic in the sense that one believes that a person’s faith can still grow without claiming that one’s religion has the exclusive truth. Interfaith conferences and dialogue attempt to make peace and disarm some of the beliefs that help to fuel the conflict between religions. (Smock 2002, 4)

In a study of interfaith dialogue, one writer has looked at it as functioning in three ways: the practical- as a collaborative way to help humanity, the depth- the spiritual dimension as people try to experience and understand other’s religion and ideology from within and the cognitive- where people seek to understand the truth (Smock 2002, 6). Smock also believes that there are three elements necessary for achieving possible change in dialogue. These three elements are 1) New thinking through new information and analysis. The change that this leads to can be considered as a change in the mind. The way that this element is incorporated in the design for the retreat centre is through the spiritual meeting hall that is built specifically for religious discussion and worship. New information is gained through speaking with others of various backgrounds. A second way information is gained is through the library and resource room set up to aid spiritual inquiry. 2) Positive emotional experience through safe and trusting relationships. This element can be considered a change in the heart. Relationships are encouraged through the way the cabin clusters have been set up. Each cluster is designed to have its own identity with common outdoor areas. Sharing a room or a unit demands some interaction, regardless how small, that can be the initial step in beginning a relationship. 3) Working together on concrete tasks or actions. This can be considered a change through the hand (Smock 2002, 17). Gardening is an activity that is meant to bring people together through action. People work a few hours together each day in the garden and the orchard and are able to see the result of their efforts through the place that is created and foods that they eat. The harvest festival at the end of the year is a celebration of the work that was done to produce the yield. These elements have been helpful in carrying out the objective of creating an environment that fosters peace and harmony between religions.

It is these three changes that I have considered as I have designed the program for the retreat centre. How can these changes be facilitated is a question that has helped as I have explored what would make an interfaith centre different from any other hotel, convention centre, or religious camp. Oriented to one ideology religious camps are set up as a way to encourage and strengthen the attendee’s beliefs. These camps do get at the basic questions of humanity and do so in a setting that encourages exploration, but do it from one perspective. Interfaith conferences, while set up to discuss many different systems of belief, often do so from a hotel conference room, a convention centre, or a theatre, all places that are multi-purpose and not created as specifically sacred.
Some of the foundations for dialogue are based around the idea of justice, reconciliation, forgiveness, truth and conflict transformation and peacebuilding (Cilliers in Smock 2002, 50). These values and principles have also shaped the way that I have thought about the space of the retreat centre. Creating a retreat centre as a place for all faiths and as a place where interfaith dialogue can take place can be a way to explore spirituality in a natural, relaxed setting. A place where the outdoor environment can be used as a levelling agent that common meaning can be generated from. Instead of a conference room, a place that is especially created for interfaith interaction can bring more out than a sterile, multi-purpose space.

Are there common elements running through religions and spirituality that can be used as a base? What are the common elements or experiences that religions share that can be built upon? In a study of worship, Jean Holm writes that: “Every religion engages in a wide variety of endeavours, including serious study of philosophy and theology, ritual activity in sacred places at special times and charitable acts of service and kindness. Each religion varies in the emphasis it places on these endeavors.” (Davies in Holm 1994, 1) Worship behaviour in religion is an important part of the study of religion because it is where ‘cumulative experience’ meets ‘faith’. Cumulative tradition meaning the doctrines, customs, rituals acts and contexts that have grown out of the history of a religion. Faith is meant as the individual and personal awareness of the truths of that religion’s traditions.

“From the perspective of the history of religions, worship describes patterns of human behaviour, expressing what people believe to be the most important aspects of life. In worship the meaning of life, death and the universe crystallizes out in prayers and other devotional activities.” (Davies in Holm 1994, 3)

A look at sacred spaces was also necessary in understanding what the retreat centre was to be about. There are a few concepts about sacred places that are important. Sacred space can be looked as three different types. These types are naturally sacred spaces, socially sacred spaces and historically sacred spaces (Davies in Holm 1994, 2). Naturally sacred spaces are places that reach between or provide a link between this world and a larger reality. These can be rocks, mountains, rivers, lakes, caves or other geographic features. Some religions focus on worship together as a group or a unit and thus the places that they deem as sacred are the gathering places, the churches, temples or synagogues. The historically sacred can be either naturally or socially sacred places that have remained sacred over years.

One of the main questions that I was seeking to answer is how is spiritual meaning found. Ninian Smart in his overview of religion called ‘The World’s Religions’ writes that spiritual meaning is found in three ways: in worship of a transcendent Being, in relationship with others and in unity with nature (Smart 1998,12). These were three dimensions that also played a role in shaping the space that was designed to be the retreat centre. I considered how these three ways of finding meaning were manifested throughout the site, allowing people from various beliefs and religions to have a place where they may explore and discover the most opportunistic way possible. With regard to the worship of a transcendent being, I purposely stayed away from overtly symbolical religious gestures. As soon as one symbol is used, the others are excluded and this is not meant to be a place of exclusion or of one religion over another. People are free to bring what they feel they need to worship their supreme being, but there are no set
places for worship of certain beings. Symbolism is deliberately stayed away from as well, due to once again, the exclusion factor. In spite of the lack of symbolism, I did not want the place to become aseptic or a non-person's land. Sterility was avoided by using a rich palette of materials and textures. Buildings are designed to take advantage of views and take in much natural light. The built structures also are situated within the landscape in a way that fits them within it, creating places that are linked to the land. This linking to the land gives the centre something to create meaning from.
Camp Squeah
Case Study Examination

Location: #4-27915 Trans-Canada Hwy, 16 km north of Hope, British Columbia, in the Fraser Canyon
Size: 150 acres/66 hectares
Client: Mennonite Church British Columbia
Designer: no main designer; Main Lodge was designed by Rusty Reimer
Description: Camp Squeah functions as a Christian children's summer camp, an outdoor education facility and retreat and conference centre

In my experience and from information gathered, camps and retreat centres are viewed by most people as exceptionally positive places; places that are fun, relaxing, healing, educational and restorative. Why is camp such a desirable place to go for many people? What is it about the idea of retreat that makes it so appealing? Is it the place itself or is it the fact that one is out of the daily routine of life for a while? There are a number of things that I hope to learn from this case study- namely what makes a successful camp? Through looking at Camp Squeah as a case study examination I hope to learn how a camp operates both theoretically and practically. I also hope to learn about the motivations and goals that underlie the camp as well as explore development of the camp through the years.

Project Background and History
Camp Squeah derived its name from Mount Squeah located across the river from the camp. There are a few definitions of the word Squeah in the various Salish dialects. These meanings include “waterfall”, “rapids” or “a place to stay away from”. The chosen interpretation by the camp refers to a “place of refuge”. Whichever translation, Mount Squeah stood as a geographic signifier to the original First Nations inhabitants. During the Gold Rush the property became an unloading area for prospectors who came up the Fraser River. Adjacent to Camp Squeah was a town called the Emory Creek Co-op. At one time the town supported a population of 15,000 people but with the coming of the railroad, the town died. Allegedly the first owners of the property were two Scotsmen who claimed it when the government gave up land from a Native reservation to squatters. The discovery of nickel in 1930 by Carl Zofka, a defector from the Buffalo Bill Circus hiding out in the mountains behind the property, lead to the development of the first nickel mine in British Columbia. This finding prompted the building of stables on the property to house the many horses that were required by the mine. Many of the trails still in use by the camp are allegedly created by these pack horses. Later owners wished the property to be turned into a non-commercial park, though due to illness this did not happen. Instead the park was geared to attracting American tourists and given the name “Lincoln Park”. Looking for a possible site for a children's camp Menno H. Epp, along with a delegation, decided on the property. Purchased in 1960 by the British Columbia Mennonite Youth Organization the camp was dedicated in 1962. In 1967 the camp

Figure 1- Fire pit and picnic area
was turned over to the Conference of United Mennonite Churches of BC, now called the Mennonite Church British Columbia. (http://www.campsqueah.bc.ca/who.story002.html, 2003)

**Context**
Surrounded by mountains and thick forest, bounded by a river and a major highway lies Camp Squeah. The area known as the Fraser River Canyon houses "a place of renewal, learning, play and retreat" (http://www.campsqueah.bc.ca/whoarewe002.html, 2003). Once only used as a summer camp for children the camp is now open year round as a retreat centre and used by many diverse groups. While the summer camp program has a Christian focus, the centre is not exclusive to Christian groups. The camp does offer set programs but it is open to groups wishing to book their own retreats and conferences, allowing them the freedom to set their own agenda. The camp is easily accessed by a major, well-maintained highway and lies approximately two hours east of Vancouver.

**Theoretical Underpinnings**
The initial goal of the camp was "a place where children could learn about God in a natural setting" (http://www.campsqueah.bc.ca/who.story002.html, 2003). The view was that the secluded forest area was a way of preaching to children in a place that would capture their attention more fully. As the camp has expanded and developed, views have changed as well. There is the sense now that a child is a gift that the camp has for a week and what the camp can learn from the child is as important as what the camp can teach (Rudy Kehler, 2003). The balance of input and output is shifting more evenly. On the retreat centre level the belief is that while it important to be an active and contributing member of society, sometimes it is necessary to withdraw for a while (http://www.campsqueah.bc.ca/home002.html, 2003). Camp Squeah is intended as a place where this retreat and renewal can happen. As a place that is out of the pace of daily life it can be a place of community building, helping foster relationships through an alternate setting. The goal of the camp expressed by the current camp director Rudy Kehler is that Camp Squeah is meant to be an "expression of what we recognize in our religion". This religion is one based on a commitment to finding peaceful solutions to conflict, community building and non-resistance. As Camp Squeah's website states "In response to God who loves us and calls us, Camp Squeah provides a Place of Refuge in a natural setting where people of all ages can build relationships, grow and be nurtured" (http://www.campsqueah.bc.ca/home002.html, 2003).

**Role of Landscape Architect(s)**
There has been no one designer of the site as buildings have been added as necessary throughout the years as the camp has expanded. There also does not appear to be one overall site plan. Buildings seem to be placed where they seemed best suited at the time. The main Lodge, the central focus of the camp, was built between 1974-1976 by the architect Russell Reimer.

Figure 2- Squeah Lodge
**Management and Maintenance**

As a church run facility, a camp committee makes the decisions affecting the camp. This committee then reports to the executive committee of the Mennonite Church British Columbia. It is the camp committee that establishes the goals and sets the vision for the camp. Within the camp committee is a strategic planning committee who look at the long range vision for the camp for the next fifty years. The camp director who works at the camp itself oversees the daily functioning and reports to the committee. The camp has five full time employees, three of whom reside at the camp. One of the full time employees is a maintenance person. Maintenance is a huge time requirement of the camp and done in scheduled cycles as a preventative measure.

**Design/Development Process**

The early developmental stages of the camp included a work camp in 1962, which involved contributing efforts from Mennonites across North America. The camp developed and grew to the point where, in 1967, the parent body of the BCMYO, namely the Conference of the United Mennonite Churches of BC, now Mennonite Church British Columbia, assumed responsibility for the camp (http://www.campsqueah.bc.ca/who.story002.html, 2003). When the camp opened in 1962, it only operated seasonally and closed for the winter months. By the 1970’s the camp developed and began to be used all year round. The completion of the Main Lodge in 1976 allowed the camp to expand its programming.

Once, and sometimes still viewed as the little church camp that relies on the church for its support, Camp Squeah is growing. More diverse groups are getting involved and the focus and purpose of the camp is broadening. In the beginning the camp relied heavily on churches for the construction and maintenance of its buildings. The cabins, smaller lodge and archery range were all built by volunteers. Volunteer labour, once exclusively from churches, now comes from other organizations as well, such as the United Way. The program of the camp has been expanding into the community as well. Working with local groups such as Restorative Justice for the reconciliation between young offenders and society is one such activity. As the idea of adventure based counselling and therapy is becoming more popular the camp now hosts programs in schools focused on team building through group-initiative tasks. During the year schools also use the camp as a place to learn outdoor education. The programs have also expanded from church retreats to include the restorative justice group, drumming workshops and decorative arts. Sustainability is also becoming important to the camp and exploration of local economic activities such as silvaculture is explored. This activity has the potential of working with the forestry industry as a partnership in raising awareness between both people and industry on current forestry practices (Kehler, 2003).

**Community Involvement**

Since the camp is considered church property and as such does not pay property tax, the board feels it must be relevant to the community in other ways. The director is required to be part of the volunteer fire fighting squad, in this case he is the fire chief. If local groups choose to have their meetings at the camp they are offered reduced rates. Hiring locally has become important as well as choosing local stores to provide daily needs. Becoming involved socially is another goal and the camp has hosted a barbeque
at a local triathlon. Another example of becoming more open to the community is of the maintenance position. Currently there exists one permanent full time position and the opportunity for another half to full time position. Instead of filling the position with someone from the Mennonite church the camp has opted to keep the position open and fill it as opportunities arise. Working with youth through the Katimivik program is one way of filling the position and leaving it for those in serious need of short term employment is another way of providing for those needs in the community that are not always overt (Kehler, 2003).

**Facilities**

The current facilities can support retreats and conferences of 200 people comfortably. With smaller groups the camp can accommodate two retreats simultaneously without the groups interfering with one another. Hosting two groups at one time is possible because of the way the lodging is set up. One group uses the Main Lodge as their dining, lodging, meeting and indoor recreation space while the other uses the cabins for lodging and smaller lodge for the other purposes. The smaller lodge, called Edelweiss Hall, is surrounded by the cabins, thus for these uses there is no interference because there is little site movement. Since the camp is used for children’s and youth camp programs in summer, retreats and conferences are held during the spring, fall and winter where weather may limit outdoor use time. For outdoor space there may be potential interference but often the nature and agenda’s of the retreats keep them on different schedules of activities.
Squeah Lodge- Main floor- Kitchen, Dining area, Assembly area (+/-200 people), wood stove
   Mezzanine- Camp Office
   Second Floor- Sleeping quarters (50 people), Washrooms with showers, Lounge/Gathering Space, wood stove
   Third Floor- Games room- ping pong, foosball, pool, shuffleboard

Edelweiss Hall- Kitchen, Gathering Space (40 people), wood stove

Cabins- 8 duplex style cabins (8 people per side) (146 people total)
   1 singled sided cabin (8 people)
   1 3-room cabin with washroom
   1 double-sided cabin with washroom (1-2 people per side)
   -winterized

Out-trip Inn- gathering area for out-trips, eating facilities, washrooms
RV/Tenting area- 6 full, 12 partial hook-ups
Program Office- used for running summer programs
Prayer Chapel
Playground area
Swimming Pool- outdoor, solar heated, May – September
Outdoor BBQ- sheltered
Fire pit
Canteen
Outdoor Chapel
Gymnasium- 3 season- basketball, volleyball, floor hockey and climbing wall
Playing Field- baseball diamond, horseshoe pits, sand volleyball court
Archery Range
Staff Residences- 3
Maintenance Area
Wood Shed
Hiking Trails
Picnic Tables
Benches- open or sheltered

Activities
Instructor Required:

Canoeing
Climbing Wall
Swimming Pool
Group Initiative Tasks

Instructor Optional:

Archery
Camp-Outs
Hiking
Orienteering
Logging/Sawmill/Silvaculture Tour
Crafts- woodworking, papermaking, soapstone carving
Sports- baseball, volleyball, basketball, floor hockey, horseshoes
Games- ping-pong, pool, foosball, shuffleboard, outdoor chess

**User Reflections**

"Apart from experiencing the now legendary 'Squeah Hospitality' which makes Camp Squeah home away from home for me, I was greatly enriched by the uniquely close-knit fellowship, which characterized the workshop. How inspiring to reflect on this experience vis-à-vis the projected goal of the retreat, and know that the objectives were met - for it was a weekend of deeply edifying interactions and organic relationship building, with potential for a great future! To paraphrase an African saying, "a seed of futuristc relationships has been planted, which will grow into a plant/tree whose leaves and fruits will nourish, strengthen and heal...""

Osahon Chris Eigbike (http://www.campsqueah.bc.ca/news003.html, 2003)

"Forty years ago this month (August 2002), I had my first camp experience as an 8 year old at Camp Squeah, during its first year of operation in 1962. I still remember that week quite well - it was an all girls week. We slept in a big, musty cabin with rickety metal bunk beds on straw filled mattresses. It was a fun-filled week of activities; crafts, hiking, swimming in the old pool... lining up for meals under the maple tree that still stands in front of Edelweiss and singing around the campfire. That tree seemed so huge back then. It's still one of my favorite trees here at Squeah... And here I am 40 years after being a camper, still enjoying the mountains, trees, the stillness, the bustling in the kitchen, and serving guests and campers. I have just completed my 8th summer, feeling awesomely blessed to be a part of this community."


**Future Issues/Plans and Criticisms**

The largest issue facing the camp right now is it's siting. A recent geological technology survey found that the current cabins and Edelweiss Lodge are too near the mountain slope and are in danger of rockslides in the event of an earthquake. The question is how to handle this finding. What it implies is a major rearranging of the camp's facilities.

Another issue is the lack of an overall plan. As such, the camp lacks unity and careful planning that could provide a more thoughtful and sensitive design. One gets a definite sense of the functionality of the camp but misses out on the subtleties the landscape could provide. For example, it is the area immediately adjacent the cabin washrooms that offers the only view of Mount Squeah, the camp's namesake. Besides the washrooms, there is nothing special at that point so the view becomes no more than a passing glance. Places to pause, places for a few people or individual spaces have not been a part of the plan and are needed. There has been much focus on large group activities that small gathering spaces are just now being created. These spaces, deliberately planned, could enhance the experience to include a greater range. With the strategic planning committee's goal of not wishing to make decisions that limit future potential, a current and future development plan will be necessary. Sustainability needs to be taken into account at this planning scale as well so it becomes more than talk and a smart coffee choice.
Accessibility is also an issue as most facilities are not wheelchair accessible. The camp is also only minimally used by the elderly. These are two user groups that should be considered.

**Conclusion**

The question that the case study examination intended to answer was what makes a successful camp or retreat centre. What stands out about Camp Squeah is that it has the ability and willingness to change and grow as needed. Both its physical and theoretical structure have undergone many changes and the camp seems to have benefited from it. The retreat environment is a unique one that is enticing to many people and through the study of it more questions have been brought up. One of the main questions of my thesis is how landscape can facilitate better relations between human beings and the earth. Camp Squeah is a well-functioning retreat centre in a beautiful environment. Even through a lack of landscape planning and design people are drawn to that place and have wonderful experiences there. Thus what more can thoughtful planning and design bring to a retreat centre? What is it about the retreat environment that is unique and how can this be expanded upon? How can getting out of the ordinary help facilitate better relations between people and their environments? These questions are ones that I have attempted to answer in the design of the Quelus Retreat Centre.
Site Precedents

Hollyhock Educational Retreat Centre

"Hollyhock exists to inspire, nourish and care for people who are working to make the world a better place." (Hollyhock catalogue 2004, i)

Founded in 1982 as a place that was dedicated to “holidays that heal”, Hollyhock became the first restorative educational retreat centre of its kind in Canada. Currently Hollyhock considers itself an “intentional centre for cultivation of human consciousness, well-being, and social impact” who’s “business is based on finding ways to enliven, deepen, and inspire a better dimension of human existence” (http://www.hollyhock.ca/about.html, 2001). “Hollyhock is a place for individuals and groups to come together to promote vision, renewal, strategy, skill building, team building, well-being, and social change.” (http://www.hollyhock.ca/about.html, 2001)

Located on Cortes Island, one of the northern Gulf Islands, the centre occupies a 44 acre (19.4 hectare) property, with 700 feet of oceanfront. Surrounding the centre is 100 acres set as a greenbelt, providing a buffer for the centre and preserving forest land for visitors and residents of the island to enjoy. Hollyhock is owned and operated by thirty shareholders/co-stewards. With a core staff of twelve, and a seasonal staff of seventy-five, Hollyhock is open eight months of the year with an average attendance of 70 guests a week, or 2400 a season. Hollyhock offers over 70 programs in a wide range of disciplines and formats. (Hollyhock press release, 2003)

Some of the programs offered include:
Meditation retreats
Personal development and healing
Family and youth
Professional development
Business and leadership seminars
Spiritual development
Gardening, outdoors/nature
Body disciplines
Creative expression: writing, visual arts, music

The program formats include:
Workshops, conferences, retreats
4-6 week work/study programs
Kayaking and wilderness adventures
Meditation retreats
Holiday retreats

Facilities:
Main Lodge, with ocean front dining room
One-acre, French intensive, bio-dynamic garden
Four meeting spaces
Library
Hot tubs overlooking the ocean
Sanctuary
Massage and healing arts studio
Hollyhock giftshop

Accommodation:
37 rooms for up to 80 guests, plus tenting grounds
rooms available on the beach, in the forest and the orchard
options:
- single, with shared or private bath
- double occupancy with shared or private bath
- multi with shared or private bath
- dorms with bunks (3-6 people/room)
- tenting

The precedent of Hollyhock has been influential to my project in a number of ways. The variety and breadth of programming the centre provides is quite inspiring and had me envisioning more possibilities than I originally had in mind such as music, drumming and dance. The extensive programming is what seems to be at the heart of the centre. While the setting is important to the idea of retreat, the centre is not built around the site especially. The programming seems to take precedent and the site serves as a beautiful backdrop to these activities. The site is important in creating and bringing out the essence of creativity and inspiration, however it does not seem like there is direct interaction with the site. The landscape takes on a passive role. One can kayak and soak in the hot tubs overlooking the ocean, but for the most part activities are relegated to meeting halls rather than having places in the landscape for them. The focus is on being away and the opportunities that provides. What I have taken from this use of the landscape is the siting of the accommodations. The centre makes use of different landscape types such as the oceanfront, forest and orchard as settings for providing inspiration and relaxation. Choice is offered as to which landscape type the visitor deems most beneficial to their experience. This siting takes into account that different landscape types create different experiences for people which has become one of the ideas important in my project. What I also appreciate about the accommodations is that a variety of types are available from private rooms to dorms to camping, allowing for a flexibility of lodging experience and cost, helping to reach a wider range of clientele. Through its use of variety Hollyhock has expanded the possibilities of what a retreat centre can offer in programming, accommodations and passive use of the landscape.

IslandWood: A School in the Woods

“Our mission is to inspire environmental and community stewardship by providing hands-on learning that link science, technology and the arts in a natural setting.” (IslandWood press release, 2003)

Founded in 1998 with the vision of creating the “most ambitious outdoor learning centre”, IslandWood is located on 255 acres on Bainbridge Island in Washington State (IslandWood press release, 2003). The goal of IslandWood is to foster a deeper understanding of the relationships between biological and cultural diversity in both children and adults and how their actions can made a difference in the world. With discovery-based learning and outdoor field experiences as its primary focus, IslandWood
seeks to reach all children by appealing to different learning styles and interests. Programs integrate scientific inquiry, technology, and the arts. The organization seeks to serve as a model for energy conservation and community living and uses sustainably designed facilities to do so from. Governed by a Board of Directors, the Bainbridge Island-based organization is supported through program fees and tuition, as well as charitable donations. Adjacent the property is a twenty acre marine estuary that is protected parkland and hosts diverse marine life.


**Program formats include:**
Four-day school overnight program- primarily elementary school students
Graduate program- in partnership with the University of Washington IslandWood offers study in education
Community programs- weekend and summer seminars and workshops for children, adults and families
Educational Conferences- the centre allows its facilities to be rented out for educational and non-profit conferences

**Facilities:**
Main centre:
- Great Hall
- Administration Building
- Welcome Centre
Dining Hall
Art Studio
Learning Studio
Friendship Circle- amphitheatre style covered fire pit
Sleeping Lodges
Technology Lab
Private Dining Room/Boardroom
Nursery
Outdoor Facilities-
  - Floating movable raft- located on pond
  - Bird blind- located in cat-tail marsh
  - Treehouse- located overlooking bog
  - Canopy tower- located in second growth forest
  - 190 foot suspension bridge- located across ravine
Five miles of trails

**Accommodation:**
Three lodges hold 39 people as single occupancy or 104 as shared occupancy, all with private bathroom facilities. Lodges are designed with a school classroom in mind. Each lodge holds a class of 32 students and four chaperones with a common gathering area and fireplace. The lodges separate the genders by floors so girls and boys are kept separate. Rooms have two bunk beds with one double fold-down bed.

What I have learned from this precedent is using the environment as a way of teaching. Small moves in the landscape can open up the site in ways that offer new experiences and create learning landscapes. The natural environment is used in an active way as an outdoor learning facility through science and technology. The outdoor facilities such as
the bird blind and the floating classroom are good examples of creating deliberate actions in the landscape for a specific intention. IslandWood has kept its focus throughout, as a learning centre for children. This focus can be seen through its sleeping arrangements in particular. Yet in spite of this aim it is also adaptable enough to facilitate other options, like retreats and conferences for adults. The strength of the centre lies in its intentional use of the landscape and keeping to its specific focus, not trying to be everything for everyone.
An Examination of the Site

There are many types of landscapes and even more ways of analyzing those landscapes. The type of landscape that is important for a retreat centre is a spiritual landscape. A spiritual landscape is able to reveal a deeper sense of reality and provides its users/viewers with expanded sense of the world, whether personal or global. Since the goal of the project is to create a space for the exploration of spiritual meaning in all faiths and beliefs, using the landscape to access this larger consciousness is critical in creating a spiritual centre that is a meaningful and relevant place. The intention of this examination is to provide a description of the space in relation to the spirituality of the site. The analysis will discuss the spirituality of the site in terms of the larger scale area in general and continue through the smaller scale of the site in detail, including a historical perspective.

Site Context
General
The site is located on an island in the Straight of Georgia in south-western British Columbia. The experience of the retreat centre can be seen to begin as the attendee leaves his or her place of dwelling. The action of arrival and departure sets up the experience for the visitor and needs to be brought out. Since the journey to the site is important an island was chosen to enhance this characteristic. Islands and the crossing of water are significant both physically and symbolically.

An island is symbolic in and of itself. "The idea of an island- a finite world, enclosed, magical- is a seductive metaphor for the imagination. The apparition of an island is a powerful magnet for the eye. Islands are targets for conquest, mental or visual. They are romantic and picturesque. " ..."An island is a fictional place, a place of the imagination, and as such, a paradigm for the picturesque." (Solomon 1988, 69) Since the idea of an interfaith centre is retreat, the island is ideal in setting up the mind for the interfaith experience. What will occur, what relationships will be formed, what discoveries will be found are not limited by set expectations. Working to entice and engage the imagination from the start is important.

Figure 6- The Gulf Islands- Galiano Island shown in red
"Some islands become real cities rather than imaginary retreats. Because of their proximity to the mainland or distance from it, because of their history or despite it, because of their position on the trade routes, harbors, water supply, weather, vegetation, geological configuration, or because it willed it, they are centres of the world." (Solomon 1988, 70)

The history of the island points to the island being a centre for the native Stohlo people. Its placement in the Straight of Georgia makes the waters around Galiano a rich marine environment. Archaeology points to the island being used for thousands of years and includes signs of trade. There exists a phenomenon called "nesomania", or the island mystique, which people get attached to. It is the feeling of being insulated, protected and self-sufficient that being and living on an island provides- a feeling of being at the centre of the world (Sweet 1988, 51).

The idea of the island being a centre is another important concept relating to the development of the retreat centre. The retreat is called a centre for a reason. People need to feel as if they are in a place they are meant to be at. Especially when dealing with a sensitive issue like religion, people need to feel as if they are anchored, that they are not at the fringes or made to feel uncomfortable. Patrons need to feel grounded and having a strong centre does that. "To plant or build on an island is to alter a rock in the water into a magical or menacing illusion of somewhere that is not just a rock in the water." (Solomon 1988, 72) The camp is made to have strong axis points for this purpose of anchoring.

Crossing water slows the journey down as one must relinquish control of individual time to the larger ferry system. Slowing down time comes into play as people can cross at certain designated times only. Water works as both the carrier and the barrier (Sweet 1988, 51). Crossing water also works to heighten the sense of being away. An island is a place set apart, unless one has access to a boat, a special trip must be made. No set paths exist, and the passage is at the mercy of the weather. Sailings have been known to be cancelled due to the size of the waves, in which case water is the barrier. The increased sensorial experience that one gains from being on a boat also serves to augment the journey. The rocking of the boat, the smell and feel of the moist air, and the visual experience of watching land fade off into the distance play a part in separating the experience. The crossing of water is also spiritually significant. In Christianity walking on water and calming the storm are significant events relating to Jesus' life. Crossing water also has allusions to crossing to the Other Shore. This shore is the shore of eternal life, of life with God in paradise. Traditional Celtic religion also used islands as holy places, thus the crossing of water was a part of the pilgrimage.

**Environment**

Galiano Island is the site for the retreat centre. Galiano belongs to a group of islands known as the Gulf Islands. Galiano is not a heavily populated island, approximately 1,000 residents, nor one with quite as many visitors as the other islands. Galiano Island is a long, narrow island, about twenty-five kilometres long and averages two kilometres wide. At its widest it is five kilometres. Its shape and size makes Galiano a unique island. What is most important about it is that it is at a scale where the larger processes and systems that connect the island to the world can be seen. The revealing of the function and structure of the environment plays a major role in being able to locate the place within larger events in time and space and see how they link together. The aspect
of revealing is an important part in creating a spiritual landscape and Galiano is able to show this at a variety of scales.

The island has a large amount of parkland, more than other Gulf Islands, which lends it a natural feel. The amount of existing parkland and trails allows for the possibility of making connections between the retreat centre and the rest of the island, linking it to a possible greenway.

The length and position of Galiano Island place it as the first land mass that the flow of the emptying Fraser River encounters. Because of the narrow channels on either end of the island, the island acts as a barrier and strong currents are created. These currents in turn churn up the cooler water from below to create a nutrient rich marine environment that fosters abundant marine life. This action also results in the water being warmer on the eastern side of the island than the western side. The knowledge of the larger movement of water plays with the notion of the dialect of active and passive. What seems to be still and steady is actually quite dynamic. These powerful currents can be seen especially well at Dionisio Park at the northern tip of the island. Dialectics can be valuable in understanding and revealing the spirituality of the landscape due to their condition of opposites- one helping to define the other-expanding the spectrum of experience.
Geology
Geologically the island is made up of sedimentary rock. Originally a granite mountain created through heat and volcanic action it was worn down by erosion to gravel, sand and silt. Under heat and pressure these particles formed conglomerate, sandstone and shale, which is what the island is primarily made up of. Glaciation was the major event that has shaped the structure of the island to what it is today. The ground was compressed under the tremendous pressure of the glacier and as it moved in a southeast direction. As it retreated it gouged deep valleys, set the islands and created the long, linear patterns characteristic of the island. These patterns are seen in the soil and vegetation analysis. Since the Straight of Georgia was a flood plain, water filled in the lower regions, leaving only the mountain tops which are now the Gulf Islands. The movement of the tectonic plates below caused the western side of the island to rise up while the eastern side stayed down, creating long, gentle slopes on the eastern side and steep, layered, banks on the west.

Climate
Galiano Island falls into the climatic category of 'cool Mediterranean'. It is a relatively dry climate type with an average annual rainfall of only eighty centimetres, most of which falls between October and March. Drought conditions often occur from June to September, drying all streams and necessitating fire bans (Benger in Sweet 1988, 107). There are many frost free days, creating a good climate for growing a large variety of plants. The climate also allows for the facilities to be used year round, maximizing its use by visitors.

Flora and Fauna
Douglas Fir and Western Red Cedar dominate the island. Amidst these trees are also found some Maple and Arbutus. Due to much logging there are large areas of Red Alder seeking to regenerate the clear cut land. The invasive Scotch Broom has also located itself on the island and can be seen in disturbed areas, particularly along roadsides and former logging trails. Salal and Sword Fern are the dominant groundcover. (Benger in Sweet 1988, 109)

The geology and the climate of Galiano combine to create unusual conditions that allow plants and plant communities to grow that do not occur elsewhere in Canada. Some of the plant species include the Calypso Orchid, the Blue Camas and varieties of moss and lichens (Galiano Conservancy Society, 2003). The uniqueness of these species serve to highlight the importance of sensitive ecosystems. Knowledge of these species and their function within the larger systems increase awareness of the scales of the living environment. A change of focus from the large coniferous trees to the tiny, fragile lichen and moss communities opens up another world of fascination (Galiano Conservancy Society, 2003).

The waters around the island are rich in marine life due to the currents. Seals and sea lions often appear in winter along with pods of killer whales. As for land mammals, there are many deer, raccoons, mink, otter and squirrel. Many birds abound but some of the
notable ones include the bald eagle, turkey vulture, red-tailed hawk and great-horned owl (Benger in Sweet 1988, 109). What is important about the flora and fauna is that it allows the visitors to be surrounded by living things, to see other life forms in their natural habitat and gain an understanding of ecology and the natural environment.

**History**

Historically the island has been used for thousands of years as the summer camp for Stohlo native bands who called the place Quelus, a place of serenity. Middens, layers of shell and bone, can be found on many of the beaches (see historical timeline). Exploration in the late 1700's brought Spanish explorers, who along with mapping added to the study of anthropology. Drawings have shown an artistic view of what native life was like at the time of the arrival of the European explorers. The exploration has lent itself to many place names- Galiano Island and Dionisio Point being named after the explorer Dionsio Alcala Galiano. Settlement in the late 1800's brought a variety of settlers, British, Portuguese, Japanese, who established the early industry of the island such as canneries, salteries, fishing, charcoal production and forestry. The forestry activity continued until the 1980's when favour suddenly turned against MacMillan Bloedel, the company with the largest forestry practice on the island. Due to much protest MacMillan Bloedel sold off their holdings, clear-cutting much of the land first. Land use issues still pervade today as disputes continue over development, especially on the north side of the island. Politics are heavily involved as sides are divided between conservation and development. Land owners, hoping to influence policy change, built a road to connect the provincial park to the rest of the island in return to be able to build homes have not been allowed to due to current zoning. As a result the road was gated and remains closed, cutting off vehicular access to the northern tip. Historically the island has been a place of retreat and peace. At present, due to past logging practices and disputes, the site requires some healing in order to become a sacred place once again. Thus, the notion of healing can be seen as an important one in developing the concept of the retreat centre.

**Site**

The site of the retreat centre is located near the north-eastern tip of Galiano Island adjacent to the Ecological Reserve and along the way to Dionisio Point Provincial Park. Both of these areas provide opportunities to make connections to. As the site is adjacent to the ecological reserve, it can offer it protection against the threat of possible encroaching development. Much of the site will remain forested providing a natural buffer on one side. The provincial park is a beautiful place so a link to it would be a great asset to the retreat centre. An island long trail along the ridge or spine of the island to which the centre could connect to would benefit both residents and visitors of the centre. These existing aspects allow such features as a retreat centre to be able not only to fit into the context but add to it as well.

Figure 10- North Galiano map
Historical Timeline

- **Pre settlement**
- **1790's** Exploration
- **1850's** Settlement & Development
- **1980's** Controversy
- **Present**
Distinct Places
There are distinct areas within the site that have characteristics that can be expanded upon in order to bring out the spirituality latent in them. The reason why I chose this particular site is because of the gravel spit. I found this landscape feature to be a very revealing place. Mircea Eliade in *The Sacred and the Profane* writes that:

"Man becomes aware of the sacred because it manifests itself, shows itself, as something wholly different from the profane... we are confronted by the same mysterious act- the manifestation of something of a wholly different order, a reality that does not belong to our world, in objects that are an integral part of our natural "profane" world. (Eliade 1957, 11)

"The sacred tree, the sacred stone are not adored as stone or tree; they are worshipped precisely because they are *hierophanies*, because they show something that is no longer stone or tree but *sacred*, the *ganz andere*. "(or 'wholly other'). (Eliade 1957, 12)

The line of the rocks as they move from the shoreline to the sea created for me a place of beauty; a place that was created distinctly for that particular spot. A gravel spit allows one to walk out to the natural rock breakwater. The meeting of the land and sea, as well as the features themselves, the rock breakwater, the patterns that have been carved into them and the two pools that they create combine to make this place a *hierophany*, a place that is "other".

The spit forms two tide pools that show the changing nature of the tides. Time takes on the quality of following the natural cycles instead of being marked by seconds and hours. The tides change the place both daily and seasonally. In winter the tides are too high and cover the rocks with slippery seaweed that make them unsafe for people to climb and walk on. In summer however, the tide is lower which allows the rocks dry off and be used to walk or sunbathe on. The summer tide also creates a naturally warmed swimming area as the late afternoon tide rolls over the sun warmed rocks. The tidal pools are distinct from one another. The one pool is small and can empty out completely during low tide to fill to the shoreline at high tide. This pool allows for examination of the marine life, a micro-marine ecosystem left to be explored. The second pool is open to the ocean on one side, bordered by the shore, the gravel

![Figure 11- The site- showing the rocky shoreline](image1)

![Figure 12- The site- overlooking the gravel spit with the North Shore mountains in the distance](image2)
spit and rocks on the other three sides. Protected by the natural rock buffer, this pool becomes a sheltered cove that accords opportunities to safely access the water for sport or necessity. At high winter tide, the gravel spit is almost completely covered by water, yet a narrow strip of land still allows one to access the rocks. This widening and narrowing of the spit creates an unpredictability and ever-changing environment that offers changing experiences to its visitors.

From this side of the island the views to the mainland are fairly clear. The views back to Vancouver shape the experience by providing a mirror effect. One sees where one has most likely come from which offers a sense of the dialectic here and away. This orientation helps to situate one within the site, creating a sense of centeredness that is important in discovery and exploration. Seeing where one came from, or the urban environment that many of us live in, offers a sense of being able to view it from a distance. Often a different viewpoint helps to gain a different perspective that is helpful to overcoming mental barriers and finding solutions to the daily problems that one faces. A shift in perspective is sometimes all that is needed to solve a problem. From the point of the spit one can see the extent of the island both north and south. This long view also helps to centre one within relation of the island. The view of the length of the island also helps to reinforce that even though the island is small it is remains large in human scale.

At the tip one also views the eroded patterns that are created by the tides on the rocks that are beautiful in their forms. Looking at the fractal-like patterns gives a sense of the ordered chaos, or the chaotic order that is the world.

"At the most basic level, stone is the fabric of the earth, and as such is a symbol of the everlasting. The anthropomorphic view of the world sees stones and rocks as the bones of Mother Earth. They are the fundamental structure that supports all other aspects of physical existence and contains traces of earlier earthly life-forms. This is the outer reflection of our inner fabric, for the bones inside our bodies determine the human physical form. They are the components of the physical body that endure the longest after the spirit has departed. Within the human psyche, stone signifies the eternal substance of existence, at a level deeper than the ego-consciousness. When we touch a stone, we commune with this eternal substance, and we feel that the virtues present in the stone are transferred to us." (Pennick 1996, 39)

While this view of the sacredness of rocks is taken from Celtic tradition, similar beliefs can be seen in the Aborigines of Australia with Ayer’s Rock, or the rocks of the Japanese and Chinese gardens.

Three distinct areas of vegetation are also important in creating the spirituality of the site. These areas are the dark woods, the alder woods and the arbutus grove. The dark woods have a mysterious, reflective feeling to them. They are a quiet place where one would come to contemplate. The alder woods in contrast are a bright, white, more open area with a feeling of freshness, transition and rejuvenation. The alder trees are the trees to start the growing process again by returning nitrogen lost by clear cutting to the
soil. The alder can be looked at as a healing tree, healing the ground with the nutrients needed to enable other trees and vegetation to grow again. The arbutus woods create a golden red light that takes one away to another place. Stepping in to the arbutus grove the mood and feeling changes completely due to the quality of the light. All three of these areas play off each other and are important in defining and building on the spirituality inherent in the site.

The woods as a whole can be seen as a symbol of "the untamed, wild part of the human soul; it is the archetype of wildness" (Pennick, 1996, 24). The forest exists as a place that is left to grow according to the principles of nature without artificial intervention. These wild woods can be a place where the deep unconscious is allowed to come out and be accessed. While the forest of the site has been harvested, the regeneration that is occurring, while not such a direct, deep connection to the psyche, is a symbol of the healing that can occur if given the chance to. Healing, especially with the topic of interfaith, is an important one, and the alder grove is a good symbol of this. There can be a reconnection even if the connection has been lost before.

**Conclusion**

Galiano Island and the site chosen in particular offer a landscape that is able to help fulfill the goal of creating a place where people may explore spiritual meaning in all faiths and beliefs. Through the scale, history, environment and the dialectics it provides there are many aspects through which the spirituality of the site is revealed. The specific characteristics of the site further reveal how the sacredness of the landscape can show itself in the smallest details like the erosion patterns of the rocks. These features, both large and small, are important in understanding the spiritualness of the site and how it can be fostered to lead to the final product of creating a meaningful and relevant spiritual retreat centre.
Program

Structure
The functioning of the retreat centre falls under the umbrella organization of the United Religious Initiative. The inception of the URI resulted from an invitation to host an interfaith service to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the UN Charter in San Francisco in 1995. The vision developed from the invitation with Bishop William Swing as the leader to 1996 when the URI hosted a global summit to share the vision of creating peace among religions so as to be able to work for the global good. The URI signed a charter in 2000 which clearly articulates their position on peacebuilding through the grassroots level. The charter begins: "We, people of diverse religions, spiritual expressions and indigenous traditions throughout the world, hereby establish the United Religions Initiative to promote enduring, daily interfaith cooperation, to end religiously motivated violence and to create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings." (Smock 2002, 115)

The URI seeks to work at a grassroots level. Guided by the charter, the URI is organized as a global network of Cooperation Circles that are free to organize themselves at any scale and around any issue provided they are consistent with the charter. The vision for the retreat centre is that it would operate as one of these Cooperation Circles. The Cooperation Circle would be made up of a diverse group of people who see the running and operating of the interfaith retreat centre as a means of carrying out the charter into a lived reality. This group would act as a Board of Directors or Co-Stewards. There would be a director of the retreat centre on site who sees to the day to day running of the camp, but who also has a say in the long term planning and goals of the centre. There would need to be administrative and maintenance help which could be hired from the local community.

The retreat centre is designed to accommodate up to fifty people for overnight stays. During the day, the centre can accommodate up to one hundred. The number of fifty people is chosen because it is not an overwhelming amount of people. It is enough to be able to be familiar with everyone by the end of a weekend. The character of the island was also taken into consideration as a large retreat centre, accommodating up to two hundred people may be too much for the island to sustain.

The program that the camp set out is not focused only on interfaith dialogue because as some scholars of international relations and religion believe, when dialogue is confined to talk and conversation, little is accomplished. Words communicated in dialogue can be powerfully supplemented by deeds and symbols aimed at transforming relationships (Smock 2002, 131). Thus the approach taken is to provide a balance of a range of activities from work, to recreation, to study, to artistic expression, to worship, and to daily activities such as eating and sleeping. Bringing in a range of activities increases the chance of people being able to meet on different grounds and establish relationships through various activities. The facilities of the camp are set up in such a way as to facilitate the building of these relationships. The cabins are arranged in clusters such that it establishes an identity for the people that are staying in those particular rooms. Staying together requires an interaction that is more personal. Sharing a room requires that there be interaction on a basic level that comes with sharing a common space. This type of intimacy may lead to change in the heart,
learning about people on a more personal, intimate level. The visitors of the camp are required to work for a few hours a day as a way to keep down the cost of the stay. Also working together for a common purpose is a way of establishing a change in the hand, one of the three areas necessary in establishing effective interfaith relationships. There are places for large group activities, small group activities and personal activities.

**Types of Activities:**

*(including rough space required)*

- Earth Studio: pottery, carving, sculpture - 80 m²
- Art Studio: drawing, painting, watercolour, calligraphy - 70 m²
- Movement Studio: yoga, tai chi, dance, music - 110 m²
- Outdoor Kitchen: canning, preserving, ethnic cooking traditions, earth oven-bread baking - 50 m²
- Volleyball - 2 courts - 128 m² each
- Soccer - 1800 m²
- Kayaking
- Hiking - 400 m = 5 minute walk
- Mountain Biking
- Swimming
- Gardening - 1800 m²
- Group Initiative Tasks - 50-2000 m²
- Sauna - 60 m²
- Conferences - 120 m²
- Meetings - 9-120 m²
- Study - 1-4 m² per person
- Games - pool table - approx. 145 x 254 cm, foosball - 135 x 76 cm
- Research

**Facilities:**

- Director's Home
- Main Lodge - Main level - Kitchen, Dining Room, Lounge, Washrooms, Fireplace
  - Lower level - Library/Resource Room, Artist in Residence Residence, cool Storage
- Studio Building - Main level - Art Studio, Movement Studio
  - Lower level - Pottery Studio
- Garden
- Orchard
- Outdoor Amphitheatre - up to 100 people

- Lodging - cluster 1-2 buildings with washrooms
  - Treehouse cluster - 4 buildings with washrooms
  - Oceanside Cluster - 4 buildings with washrooms
  - Hermitage - 1 building - outhouse, cedar bathhouse
- Lodging Lounge - kitchenette, lounge area, games, washrooms with showers
- Camp Sites - 4
- Spiritual Gathering Centre - 50 people, fireplace
- Labyrinth
- Fire Circle - up to 12 people
Sauna
Boardwalk
Outdoor BBQ and picnic area
Outdoor Kitchen
Soccer/Volleyball field
Hiking trails
Greenhouse
Maintenance shed
Parking
Treehouse table
Kayak racks and launch
Amphitheatre on the hill
Orchard hut
Well
Entry Plaza
Overlook meeting area

Special Programs
The retreat centre hosts its own events as well as being open to rental groups and outside conferences. One of the special features of the camp is the end of the retreat procession up the hill to the amphitheatre. The procession up the hill sets up a ritual, or symbolic journey that each visitor to the camp makes at the end of the visit; something to look forward to. By this action, it sets up the camp to establish its own ritual events. “Rituals present elements of the nature of the anima loci (place-soul) in human terms...The important result of these place-related ceremonies is that the participants will go home afterwards carrying new levels of consciousness.” (Pennick 1996, 15)

Other special programs include the celebration of World Religions Day which occurs annually on the third Sunday in January. Special festivals like the Harvest Festival in fall celebrate the work that was done to produce the food of the garden and orchard. Participants in the retreats throughout the year are invited back to see benefits of their labour. A community supper is part of the celebration. The retreat centre will hold its own events like conferences based on values such as Peace, Reconciliation and Justice. Students of religion, conflict resolution, psychology and sociology are encouraged to take part as part of their course of study.
The Project

Figure 17- Overall Site and Trail Map

Entry

From the arrival on the island people get to the centre by a twenty-five minute drive that takes them nearly the length of the island. The road that one takes along the eastern side of the island cuts through the previously logged sections of the former MacMillan Bloedel holdings. The site is one of the former holdings through which this road cuts. The entrance of the site has been moved further to the northeast than its present location. The move up the road is to take advantage of the change in forest stage growth. Shifting the entrance places it in a section of forest that is older and denser than the most recently harvested stand which it currently is situated in. This change is fairly distinct and happens also as the road takes a small curve, serving to heighten the change in vegetation. Since the vegetation is more mature and thicker it cocoons the road more, creating a tighter enclosure around the road. This closing in creates a natural point at which a temporal change takes place. Placing the entrance here serves to take advantage of the change and works with it to encourage a slowing down in time. The entrance is one’s first impression so it needs to be a place that is distinct and provide an introduction of what is to come.
From a functional point of view the entrance needed to be moved due to the steep grade of the existing drive. Taking into consideration the increase in the volume of traffic and emergency vehicle access, a gentler slope, although longer, is a safer option. The introduction to the centre does not need to be one of alarm, although some people may find the grade appealing to drive.

The drive way is a narrow, gravel drive designed to be one car width wide with enough room to pass another vehicle by both moving to the sides. The medium growth forest tightly bounds the drive. This hemming in serves to function as a way that creates the entrance as a place apart, a place within nature. Just before one is lead to the parking lot, a row of nut trees flank each side of the drive. This ordered pattern serves to acknowledge that this place has been intentional designed, but designed within the existing landscape.

**Parking**
The driveway feeds into the parking lot with thirty-three stalls. The parking lot is made of gravel to create a permeable surface. Two handicapped spots exist. The parking lot is cut into the hill at a gentle slope, yet retaining walls are needed at both ends of the lot. Smaller nut trees are planted throughout the parking lot, shading cars and also acting as an unconventional orchard. In total, there are forty-eight parking spots including three disabled stalls. The remaining stalls are accessed as the driveway continues further into the site. The driveway turns after the first parking lot to make use of the existing logging road which cuts diagonally across the site. This part of the driveway provides vehicular access to the functions at the lower elevations such as the sleeping units. Emergency access is allowed through the centre of the site to be able to access as much of the site as possible, especially the waterfront. Parking in this case is provided along the road, lessening the impact another parking lot would have. Fifteen spots are available, including one disabled and a turn around point for drop off. Emergency and service vehicles can continue from the turn around point to get into the centre of the site.

With the ferry service from Vancouver arriving twice a day, an option for the camp is to provide pick up service from the harbour. This service cuts down on vehicle use to and from the site and also allows people to save money on the ferry fare. People may prefer to drive, feeling that they have an escape, a way of leaving or a sense of autonomy. Driving together sets up a common experience for the participants with everyone arriving at the same time in the same vehicle.

**Director's Home**
The home of the director is designed to be part of the retreat centre. Living on the site itself allows the director to know what is happening and creates a more intimate contact with the site. This closeness affords the director an increased understanding about the structure and function of the retreat centre on a day-to-day basis. The director's home is situated across the road from the Main Centre. This placement allows the director to supervise the on-goings of the site, the comings and goings. Being placed on the opposite side of the road with not a lot of other activity, the director is offered some privacy to be able to have his/her own space.
Site Plan
QUELUS Spiritual Retreat Centre
Entry Plaza

From the upper parking lot a pathway carries people through a gourd archway. The agricultural theme is quite prevalent and this theme is carried through to the entrance as well. While an arbour would set up the arrival experience for the outdoor entry plaza a gourd archway is a slight twist on the arbour. The idea of adding a few surprise turns throughout seeks to surprise people and play with their expectations of the experience. The gourd archway opens up to the outdoor entry plaza space. This space is a semi-circle retaining wall out of sandstone with benches set in the sides of it. The central area holds a sundial with a compass that orients people right away in the site, since proper orientation is important in some religions. This piece is meant to be an art piece done by a local artist or artist in residence. Crushed limestone is used primarily as the material for the walkways and the plaza, providing a permeable surface that is still easy to navigate.

Main Centre
Dining Hall, Studios, Lounge, Library
The entry plaza leads to the main built structures of the camp. These buildings are divided by the walkway axis. A second arbour is set up to link the buildings together. This arbour is holds kiwi, a tropical fruit, another plant that is out of the ordinary, playing with expectation once again. The larger building at the southwest holds the dining room, kitchen, washrooms and lounge on one floor, and beneath that accommodation for the artist in residence, a library and study area and cool storage for the fruits and vegetables grown at the centre. The building is eighteen metres by eighteen metres large. The dining room typically is designed to hold fifty people but can be expanded into the lounge area to accommodate one hundred people. The lounge area also acts as an art gallery space to exhibit some of the work done by the participants, past and present. The library/study room holds books and articles related to religious discussion, meant as a resource to the people who wish to do some more reflection and research. This space also offers computers terminals with Internet access. Small groups may use this area if as a place to hold meetings engaging in study of specific religious topics or texts. Off of
the kitchen there lies a kitchen garden for herbs and vegetables commonly used by the kitchen. There is ground access at both levels as the building is set into the slope, making use of the sloping site. A large deck surrounds three sides of the building, providing spaces for morning coffee, afternoon tea or evening snack. Typically it is two metres wide, which is enough room for a chair and pedestrian access. At the southeast side, a larger three metre wide space is provided to allow for groups of people to sit together in the outside air. A roof overhang covers most of the deck, making it accessible even during the rainy months of winter. The building has many windows, providing an overview of the site, increasing the connection between the inside and out. There is a large service door at ground level to the storage area for loading and unloading the fruits and vegetables from the trucks or trailers grown by the centre.

The second building houses the studios. It is twelve metres by eighteen metres large. The main floor holds the Movement and Sky studios. The movement studio is for such things as tai chi, meditation, yoga, and dance and has large windows that look out over the site. There is also a deck which faces south-east that is large enough for a small group of people to exercise together on. The Sky studio, or art studio is for activities such as drawing, painting, watercolour and calligraphy. The studio opens on to a ground level outdoor patio space surrounding by interesting and unique plantings meant to inspire creativity. This patio is meant to be an outdoor workspace. Pottery, rock carving and sculpture take place in the Earth studio. It lies beneath the movement studio setting it close to the earth to tie in the connection between the earthen materials such as clay and the ground. The mugs that the centre uses are all individually created by the users of the retreat centre. A deck surrounds three sides of the building as well providing plenty of space for artistic expression. The decks on each building move from ground level to the second level, tying them together as the elevation changes. There is a three metre elevation change between the length of the buildings.

Between the buildings runs a series of stairs with a planting strip down the centre. As the stairs descend they lead to a level area connecting to the terraced garden and orchard. This area holds the well that provides the water for the orchard fruit trees. The idea of a well is sacred, a water source is often related to the source of life. A water channel is carried through the stairs of the terraces until the orchard area where barriers channel it to the appropriate trees. Remaining water is carried to a reflecting pool at the bottom of the terraces.

**Garden Terrace**

The concept for the garden is one that follows the use of a formal garden as a defining element in its organization. The garden has been a symbol throughout time of paradise, of a place away from the present both in time and space. The Garden of Eden is important in Christian belief as the place where life on earth first began, where God created the world. Gardens in Islamic tradition represent paradise, a taste of what is to come in the afterlife with God. Gardens were a refreshing reprieve from the hot climate. Chinese and Japanese traditions used gardens as a place of meditation and contemplation through which they could achieve enlightenment, showing the garden as a place of worship. Gardens also have an agrarian background, producing food,
Figure 22- Detail Plan of Main Centre, Garden, Orchard, Open Space and Boardwalk of Retreat Centre
sustenance, for a family, providing for the most basic of needs. Thus they are functional and symbolic, meeting needs physical, psychological and spiritual.

While the site is supposed to be a place for providing space for reflection and communing with nature, the formal garden is a very human-made, intentional landscape. "The formal garden is as man-made as its juxtaposing architecture. It is the work of our hands, an artificial homeland. God and Adam were gardeners." (Solomon 1988, 58) Thus working in the garden becomes an act of creation, working along with the creator, bringing people nearer to the Supreme Being, or the giver of life. In a spiritual and psychological sense, "the garden of reason is an orderly representation of paradise. Xenophon’s (ca. 400 B.C.) description of a pleasure garden notes "The beauty of the trees, the accuracy of the spacing, the straightness of the angles, and the multitude of the sweet scents." (Solomon 1988, 58)

Jeff Cox writes how the garden provides a way to view the world:

"In a garden, physical work, mental reasoning, and spiritual appreciation are synthesized. This synthesis is prerequisite to partnership with Nature. It's startling to realize that we have a mind for each of the three phases of reality.

The physical effort of garden labor requires the cooperation of the instinctual mind that we inherited from our animal progenitors.
A higher, rational mind lays out the garden for beauty and production, and reasons out the meanings of the garden.

A third, even higher, spiritual mind comprehends the values of the garden. Here whole systems are seen to operate for the best interests of all involved. Ecological principles emerge. This is the perspective from which we see the context and consequences of our actions." (Cox in Francis 1990, 25)

This quote illustrates how the garden functions on three different levels simultaneously to be both functional and symbolic.

The Villa Lante in Italy in particular has provided a strong influence on the formal arrangement of the retreat centre. Here the garden takes precedent over the buildings as they step aside to allow the landscape, the terraced gardens to come forth through the centre. Water ties the terraces together, forming the central axis in varying forms. Barbara Solomon writes about Villa Lante as a series of dialectics:

"The villa is a place where opposites come together:

The garden of reason + The wilderness stageset
permanence change
growth decay
love of the artificial love of the primitive
technology arcadia
hedonism righteousness
a fascination with building a fascination with planting
to enjoy to impress
the grotto in the ballroom the salon in the forest
reality fantasy"
The quote here shows how the garden can be a series of opposites coming together to create a fuller meaning than something that is defined only by itself. Contrast produces a wider meaning. The dialect of good and evil is a prevalent one in some religions and spirituality and seeing how the spectrum of opposites works in a physical sense helps to expand meaning.

Gardens serve to bring people together. The community building aspects of gardening can be seen in neighbourhoods across North America. Not only do neighbourhood gardens help connect people, they also help empower people to keep working for change, instilling hope and a spirit of optimism for a better future (Severson in Francis 1990, 85).

The garden is a major part of the site. This garden is 1800 square meters and can produce enough vegetables for the retreat centre. As there would likely still be a surplus, the extra vegetables could be used in a Harvest festival put on by the centre or given away or traded to local residents. The garden is set up in such a way that the vegetables needing frequent light irrigation are grown nearest the water source while the vegetables that require less frequent but heavier watering are grown farther away. The garden holds different types of vegetables and fruits from around the world. Some of the structures used to support plants are also made to be climbed upon, getting children and others more involved in the garden. The terrace walls themselves are at a forty centimetres height so that they may become places to sit as well. The garden circulation is such that there is one main one metre wide walkway against the terrace, the place that would receive the least amount of sunlight. This path is of the crushed limestone of the other paths. The garden is divided into sections, four on each garden side, eight per level. The paths between these sections are sixty centimetres wide, still enough for a wheelbarrow. These paths are made of bark mulch which is fed into the ground at the end of the year and added fresh in spring, providing nutrients for the garden, aiding in water retention and providing a quiet, soft waterway, different from the crunch of the gravel. The main axis cuts through the garden at a six metre width with a one metre ramp on one side. This ramp is steep and not meant to be the disabled access, but merely as an aid to move baggage and wheelbarrows up or down. The main ramps occur on the sides of the garden, breaking out from the terraces to form V's that tie it into the surrounding slope. The garden on the southeast side has been opened up so that the sun angles do not shade the garden from the existing forest. The northwest side of the garden has the forest growing near to it, where the ramps reach the edge of the coniferous forest.

A fence surrounds both the garden and the orchard since there is a large deer population on the island. The fence is not visible on the northwest side as it sits in the forest behind the first few meters of trees. The fence on the other side becomes an artistic element to the centre. It is runs along the end of the ramp at which point the mown grass meets the grass left to grow wild each year. This fence is composed of metal rods that are fastened to the ground and allowed to sway as the wind moves them. At the end of each rod is a small solar panel which lights up the ends of the rods at night.
The second material that the fences are made up of is the same chain link mesh that the gabion retaining walls are made from. This chain mesh holds rocks indigenous to the area within its links to create patterns of light while still providing a transparent screen. Working in the garden provides the hands on experience of working with nature, the fence is made to bring out the subtler elements of nature in a way that gives them new expression.

The terrace retaining walls are primarily made up of gabions. The feature walls at the ends and the wall separating the garden from the orchard are built from the layered sandstone that is native to the island. The gabion walls have a small sandstone section where pieces are pulled out in such a way that they can act as hand holds in place of a rail. A similar idea occurs in the sandstone wall but the pieces are larger and made out of granite, which occur in small deposits throughout the island. These projecting pieces have small sections of lighting around them to focus light on the texture of the sandstone. The gabions are lit from within to provide a warm glow on to the steps and to highlight the shape of the rocks. These terraces gradually taper out and start to blend with the hill. They are on each side, 30 meters in length and create a terrace level of 5 meters in width. Each terraced level is 0.9 meters in height, but the walls vary in height. There are ten terraces in total. The garden occupies six of the terraces while the orchard occupies four. The lowest terrace wall is a sandstone wall that is made up of pieces that have been carved by the users of the centre. Patrons are encouraged to express their feelings of the experience in either word or visual form to create a wall of individually carved pieces. The gates at both the top and bottom of the terraced retaining walls are metal pieces that have been especially created for the centre. These gates are made out of copper and corten steel, materials that develop a patina as they age, showing a sense of time.

**Orchard**

A variety of fruit trees make up the orchard. Twelve trees per side, at a spacing of five meters on centre. The trees are a variety of fruit trees and are arranged according to how they flower. The earliest to blossom are the cherry trees which are on the first level, moving down to the plum trees, the peach trees and the latest flowering trees, the apple and pear trees following those. The orchard has its own irrigation by a system of water channels. Each tree sits in a water well of a 20 cm depth. The orchard is graded so the water flows freely down either side. The walkway being the high point. The water pours in the water well until it reaches saturation point at which the water is then carried to the

---

Figure 23- Section from Open Space Retaining Wall to Lodge, featuring Terrace Wall details (Section B-B)
next tree until the same thing happens. Barriers are lifted to allow the water to flow to each subsequent level. This follows the precedent of the Court of the Oranges in Spain. The channels are made out of metal which contrast to the natural materials of the earth and grass. In order to provide an organic garden and orchard, the trees are underplanted with companion plants such as garlic and onions which help to keep insects and bugs away. The remaining area is mown grass.

Figure 24- Axonometric drawing showing stair and irrigation detail

At the second level, one tree is removed to create a small covered gathering space for one to six people. It is made out of gabions, similar to the retaining walls, to let the light through while providing a sheltered gathering spot in the middle of the orchard. The purpose of this hut is to create a special place amidst the orchard, or sacred grove as taken from ancient Greek mythology, that is rooted in the spirit of the place. The water
channel runs through the hut at ground level. The terraces in the orchard are only raised 20 centimetres above ground level to provide as open a view between the terraces as possible.

**Amphitheatre and Open Space**

After the last terrace the ground slopes down to meet the level area. The pear trees move down the hill as well, lessening the edge of the orchard and encircle the large gathering/amphitheatre space. Seating terraces are cut into the hill and fade out to the trees. Two ramps on either side complete the form of a semicircle. This amphitheatre seats one hundred people. A reflecting pool ends the watercourse. This calm pool is devised to contrast the waves of the ocean that are by now visible and audible to the user. The ground area is now level and can be used to stage events for the patrons of the camp and host larger events for the surrounding community. The area can also be used as a recreation space, with there being room for two volleyball courts or a small soccer field. This level area, created as a logging road, is framed by a slightly curving convex stone retaining wall. The wall provides a natural area at which to pause and view the ocean from. The wall is built such that a wide wood cap is turned at an angle to allow people to lean over the edge to face the water or to lean against as spectators to the soccer or volleyball matches. The retaining wall overlooks a natural gully that is full of sword ferns. The retaining wall still allows drainage to reach the gully as the field is graded to drain to the centre point and cuts through the wall to create a small water fall/feature. This feature is only active during the winter while summer is so dry. The purpose of this space is as place where people can gather and interact as a group. As a group, whether playing sports or listening to a speaker, a common activity brings people together helping to create cohesion.

**Barbeque Shelter and Outdoor Kitchen**

The retaining wall is carried to the Barbeque shelter and Outdoor Kitchen area, helping to shape the open space. This shelter offers the opportunity to eat out of doors while having a view of the ocean and the spit. There is an outdoor patio space and grassy area where picnics can take place if one would rather sit in the sunshine on the ground. The kitchen offers opportunities for cooking classes while being situated within the landscape. Some of the features that the kitchen offer include an earthen oven and grill over the fire for cooking. The positioning of the building is such that a direct view is provided to the spit, this direction happens to correspond with the easterly orientation. The grassy area, the outdoor patio or the covered shelter all provide opportunities from which to make use of the easterly orientation.

**Boardwalk**

A boardwalk continues the axis to the ocean. The boardwalk is a stepped wooden walkway covered in the same pattern of metal grating as made up the bridges over the water channel for access. The boardwalk ends in an overlook above the rocky shore, jutting out beyond the tree line. The ocean and sky are left to carry the axis into infinity. There is one larger space to stand and enjoy the view, yet if one wishes to be alone, or with only one or two other people, one may step off the axis down to a platform that is hidden from the main view. This provides an area from which to contemplate or just sit and read a book while looking over the ocean and enjoy the sun.
Figure 25. Section through Garden (Section D-D) showing Amphitheatre and Pool (Section G-G)

QUELUS Sections
Axes
Two strong axes make up the defining order of the site. One axis cuts through the garden, orchard and splits the main building of the retreat centre into two. A well with a water channel cuts down the centre of the axis, also providing irrigation for the fruit trees of the orchard. The axis cuts vertically through the site leading to the water, beginning at the parking lot. It is at a 90 degree angle to the shore. The axis also follows the forest cut line of the MacMillan Bloedel company. The result of the cut creates two distinct forest types, the formally cut area is now primarily alder and maple while the area adjacent has medium growth coniferous trees, cedar and fir. This split creates two distinct areas on either side of the garden.

The second axis cuts horizontally across the site at a steady level elevation, once again a result of the earlier forestry practice. The point at which these axes cross provide the centre for retreat centre. On the left side, the axis leads into the spiritual area. The right side leads to the private area of the lodging for people staying at the camp. Either side of this axis fades into the surrounding forest.

A functional diagram of the retreat centre shows certain main areas consisting of the main centre, agricultural, recreational, lodging, spiritual and utility areas.

Lodging
Accommodations for the visitors are designed to be in their own designated area, creating a space for the overnight guests that is separate from the rest of the camp activities. One of the main considerations was the siting of the cabins. The cabins needed to be located in areas that were significant in terms of the rest of the camp and also to the cabins themselves. The cabins are designed to be in clusters, each cluster having its own identity by its placement and by the number and type of occupants it is intended to house. All the cabins have been placed within the zone where one has a sense of water, whether through sight or sound. What is typical of all the cabins is that large deck space is provided, allowing indoor and outdoor space. The cabins are also designed to bring nature inside, using it in alternative ways. For example a sink is created out of a rock. Window seats are provided to be able to enjoy the surroundings in an indoor setting. As much natural material is used as possible both for the ecological considerations and the environmental enhancement. The goal of the clusters is also social as people from different cultures are grouped together, the characteristics of the cabins providing an identity, a starting place from which to create commonalities and differences. The rooms are primarily shared, furthering the goal of interaction.

The first cluster is the orchard cluster. These cabins are meant to be wheelchair accessible and each room holds two to four people. There are two main cabins which face each other, having three rooms in each. These cabins act as a gateway between the central open space and the more private area of the cabin clusters.

Figure 26- Section illustrating the Orchard Cluster
The second cluster is the treehouse cluster. These cabins are built in a treehouse style, being raised four to five meters off the ground. Each cabin holds four to six people. Four people on the main floor in bunk bed style and two or more people above in the loft. This type of accommodation would be suited to school groups, or families that wanted to stay together, or people not minding sharing accommodations with a small group. There is a group of four treehouses linked by stepped platforms. The treehouses have a central skylight designed to enhance the sense of being in the trees as one can stare up into the tree branches.

The third cluster is the ocean cluster. These cabins are located further back from the other ones. Designed for people wishing to be more solitary, these cabins hold one to two people. As the name suggests this cabin cluster looks directly on the ocean and has large decks for sitting or resting in the hammocks provided.

The final type of accommodation is the hermitage. This cabin is designed as a place for an extended stay, a place of get-away. It is for people wishing for a longer type of retreat than normally offered, for such people as professors on sabbatical or researchers and writers needing a quiet place to write. It is designed for one, possibly two people. It is a self-sufficient cabin with an outhouse and cedar bathhouse located adjacent to the cabin. Small cooking facilities are provided, allowing the occupant the choice whether to join the group or not. Located on the ocean, a trail connects this cabin to the others. The trail does go by the hermitage which is to keep the cabin somewhat linked to the rest of the camp.

Three camp sites are also provided, serving as an alternative to cabin-style accommodation. The sites are located within the cabin setting, and take advantage of
the ocean. Camping provides the option of a discounted stay for those for whom money is tight but do not want to miss out on the experience.

A lounge area is provided in a central location for the lodging guests. This building houses a small kitchenette, and lounge and game area. It also contains showers and washroom facilities for the guests that are camping. This area can be accessed twenty-four hours a day.

**Spiritual Area**
The spiritual area is at the opposite end of the lodging area. This area consists of a main meeting building for holding talks or as a place where faiths can worship. The building is located at a significant spot, a spot that I had noted from the first visit was a special place. From this location there are views to and from the spit. This spiritual area where the beliefs come together in the most face-to-face manner has the potential to be a wonderful experience that opens up new perspectives to the visitors of the retreat centre. However since it is the place where the most dialogue and discussion take place, it also has the potential to be the most volatile. It is for these reasons that this building is placed at such a significant spot, giving it a sacred siting to help people attain a spiritual frame of mind, one that is willing to transcend petty and personal differences and look to larger perspectives.

![Sanctuary and Maze](image)

*Figure 30- Axonometric drawing showing the Sanctuary and Maze*

The walk to the building is also meant to encourage the right mental state. Long, linear planting strips are used as a reminder of the great glaciation that occurred and are indicative of the shape of the island. These planting strips combine to create a maze, where one is slowly led into it and then must find their way to the building entrance. The entrance and exit of the building are on separate courses to illustrate that the path moves on and does not remain the same. The maze is not meant so much for puzzlement as for setting up a right frame of mind. Wooden dividers set the course.
These barriers can be moved, bringing in the element of time and the concept of things ever changing. The planting strips, which are a meter in width, are made up of plants for the senses, lavender and sweetbox for scent, grasses for characteristics like catching wind and light and year round appeal. Boxwood and yew are used in places where a strong visual screen is required. The labyrinth works in such a way that one finds oneself slowly channelled into it as one walks toward the building. The planting becomes increasingly dense and tall as one makes one's way to the building. One must travel around the building in order to enter it. The maze is surrounded by birch trees and white undergrowth planting such as galium and lily of the valley to give a pure, white sense, equated with optimism. White, the absence of colour, or absence of preconceptions.

Labyrinths have been used in many parts of the world since ancient times as a symbol of a spiritual journey. As one moves slowly to the centre and back out again one is set to ponder the cycles of life. The repetition of the movement aids the mind in its preparation for a state of mind that is open for spiritual experiences. Although the terms maze and labyrinth can be used interchangeably, in a strict sense, a labyrinth implies a single path and ritual aspects while a maze tends to suggest a puzzle. Labyrinths have been found in Egypt, Greece, India, Afghanistan, Scandinavia, Britain, and Arizona (Fisher and Gerster 1990, 12). Whether or not labyrinths developed in these places independently or not, there was something about them that captured the imagination and interest of people across time and culture. Throughout time labyrinths have served as a place of retreat and protection, as a way of initiation by ritual procession, as a journey—both physical and spiritual, as a symbol of the cycle of life, with parallels being able to be drawn to reincarnation as well. Labyrinths figure in creation myths and in many ancient myths of Greek and Roman civilization, such as the labyrinth of the Minotaur on Crete. Labyrinths have also been used to draw on spiritual or magical powers such as fertility, prosperity and safety on a journey. Lastly, labyrinths and mazes especially are used as a means of fun, amusement and puzzlement (Fisher and Gerster 1990, 16-55). The richness of the labyrinth’s history and the experiential qualities it offers is a reason why I chose it to play a significant role in setting up the spiritual gathering experience.

Since discussions may not go as well as planned, a five minute cooling off walk has been created and begins and ends at the north and south side of the maze. This walk, the Serenity Loop, is meant as a time to clear one’s head, collect one’s thoughts and gain a sense of calmness. If this walk is not enough time, the trail breaks off to another that leads to the orchard hut where discussion between two to six people can take place. The five minute calming loop leads into the half hour Philosopher’s Walk around the retreat centre if a longer time is needed to gain perspective.

A single Oak tree is planted at the gateway between the central recreational area and the corridor to the spiritual area.

"Among archetypal images, the Sacred Tree is one of the most widely know symbols on Earth. There are few cultures in which the Sacred Tree does not figure: as an image of the cosmos, as a dwelling place of gods or spirits, as a medium of prophecy and knowledge, and as an agent of metamorphoses when the tree is transformed into human or divine form or when it bears a divine or human image as its fruit or flowers". (Christopher and Tricia McDowell, The Sanctuary Garden 1998, in http://www.gardendigest.com/trees.htm, 1999)
Although forest surrounds much of the site, setting a tree aside to be appreciated on its own may lead to a greater appreciation of the whole of the forest. The single tree can be seen as a powerful symbol of a cosmic axis. It mediates between the upper and lower worlds. Its root system anchors it within the underworld of the earth, its trunk and branches are set in the present, tangible world while its branches reach up to the sky and the highest heavens (Pennick, 1996, 21). The tree also paralleis human life as it is a product of its genetic code which determines its type, shape and characteristics. However within that code, they are also subjected to the prevailing influences of their environment. The general characteristics remain the same, there are infinite variations on the same theme (Pennick 1996, 21). The Tree of Life symbol is common throughout many cultures. Nigel Pennick writes that “It symbolizes the Great Mother, the nurturer of growth who carries and sustains all life.” (Pennick 1996, 23) The tree can also symbolize Enlightenment as in Buddhist belief where Siddhartha Gautama attained enlightenment sitting under the Bodhi tree. “Trees provide a focal point for meditation, enlightenment, guidance and inspiration.” (http://www.gardendigest.com/trees.htm, 1999)

The Oak tree was chosen in particular because of its latent spiritual characteristics. “The Oak is more than a tree. It is a sacred arboreal being that stands longer than humankind and is part of our collective history.” (Leong and Loughlin 2003, 396)

Small personal areas are also created as a part of the spiritual nature of the retreat center. There are a few of these spots located throughout the site. These areas have not been particularly developed to the extent that the other features of the site have been. The purpose of these areas is for personal reflection, whether that is for prayer, meditation or quiet solitude. One of these areas occurs just off the shoreline trail to the south of the spit. There is a small clearing where a rock has been placed, surrounded by wildflowers. The rock has been carved slightly to allow for a comfortable seat. The area seems like it has developed naturally, yet with a slight human touch. There is the element of surprise at discovering the area for oneself and also the sense of communalness as one realizes that one is not alone in the discovery. This area has an overlook of the spit and the mainland, including the North Shore islands.

A second area of reflection is on the natural rock wall that makes up the spit. These rocks can only be climbed on in summer so this area is accessible seasonally only. This spot is located as one walks along the rocks in a northward direction. About halfway to end of the rocks, at high tide, one may come across an area in a hollowed out section of the rocks that has been comfortably shaped to fit a human body. One is able to look back to camp, yet while sitting is not completely exposed to those on the shore. There are not signs that this is a meditation spot except that it seems inviting to sit and enjoy the rock’s warmth and bask in the sun, being separate from the others at the camp.

Recreation Area
The recreation area centres around two areas, the spit and the open field. The open space area can be used for a number of activities including having enough room for two volleyball courts and one small soccer field. The amphitheatre seating and retaining wall can be used as places to watch and cheer from. This space can also be used to accommodate the adventure based counselling and group initiative tasks. It can also be a place to toss around a frisbee or ball.
The spit offers other recreational activities such as kayaking, swimming and exploring. The sheltered beach area creates a great opportunity from which to launch a kayak. Due to the line of rocks, even a windy day would offer shelter. The tide in summer in such that when the tide is out during the day, the sun heats the gravel rocks that make up the beach. As the tide rolls in later in the day, the rocks heat the water creating a warm pool in which to swim. The rocks offer a great place to explore. A ridge of rocks makes up the shoreline and one can walk in the open along the water's edge. This is an activity one can only do in summer, as in winter the rocks are covered in seaweed that renders them far too slippery and dangerous to walk on. The eroded patterns create interesting forms that are great to explore.

A sauna is provided at the water's edge which offers the visitors a place to relax their bodies after a long hike or paddle. At high tide the sauna sits half a meter above the water, allowing people the opportunity to cool off in the ocean. The sauna is situated such that it provides great views of the rock ridge and spit and also looks out over the channel to the British Columbian mainland. Kayak racks make use of the building being built into the side of the building lessening the number of structures on the beach.

A fire circle is created on the spit. It is designed to seat around twelve people. It is built into the spit in such a way that the ground is level and crushed limestone inside the fire circle but the beach gravel slopes up on the other
sides. This slope allows the opportunity for people as they sit to sift through, examine and collect rocks as many people do on beaches. The fire circle is made up of the same material as the terraces, sandstone covered with bent wood. The fire pit is a cast iron dish with patterns etched into it that glow in the firelight. Being a contained fire pit lessens the chance of fire yet water is kept on hand as fire danger is a common threat.

A line of black rocks move out to sea from the spit through the tidal pool, serving to mark the tide level.

A final major feature of the recreational area is the large Big-Leaf Maple tree that stands on the shoreline. Due to its wide branching structure it creates a perfect opportunity for a small treehouse type structure. In this case the structure becomes a place for two bench seats and a table. This creates the opportunity to have a cool drink and sit and chat or sit and write under the shade of the tree. The trees canopy is such that one has a small glimpse of the shore line but mostly one is completely encircled and hidden by the large leaves of the Maple. In winter, the view is open to the sea and provides a place to sit above the gravel shore.

Hiking is also a major activity of the camp. Hiking trails range from a half hour walk around the camp to trails that could take a few hours. The retreat centre will make connections to the Provincial Park, the Ecological Reserve and the Bodega Ridge trail. There will be a joint initiative with the land owners to provide both a shoreline trail and a ridge trail that will link the retreat centre and the island to the park. These trails are also mountain bike compatible.

One of the main hiking trails is the Arbutus Ridge Trail. This trail leads up to the fifty seat amphitheatre built at the top of the hill. The circular amphitheatre is situated such that it has an overlook view of the shoreline and the larger landscape and takes advantage of the solar orientation, being able to view the setting sun as well as the rising sun. The walk through the arbutus grove is a walk the sets up the outlook as someplace special. The quality of light that the arbutus trees emote is warm and golden, contrasting with the darkness of the coniferous forest.

**Utility Area**
Due to the amount of upkeep that is needed to maintain a place like a retreat centre an area is needed for the tools and equipment. The utility area consists of a garage/ shop area for the storage of the tractor and a place where fixing things can take place. Beside it is the compost and garbage area. This area is moved into the edge of the forest creating a place that is sheltered from direct view and does not distract from the garden area. A shed is provided in the garden terrace itself to allow for easy access to garden tools. A greenhouse is built on the open area at the top of the garden terrace taking advantage of the light and the view over the terraces. In winter in particular one can work in the greenhouse while overlooking the sight and imagine what it might be like full of life. Since the compost is at the top of the terrace, there is also a compost at the end of the garden terrace on the opposite side for convenience.
References


Pennick, Nigel. Celtic Sacred Spaces. Thames and Hudson, Great Britain: 1996.


http://www.gov.on.ca/OMAFRA/english/crops/facts/info_irrigation.htm

http://www.hollyhock.bc.ca/

http://www.islandwood.org/default.asp

http://www.campsqueah.bc.ca/home002.html
  http://www.campsqueah.bc.ca/who.story002.html
  http://www.campsqueah.bc.ca/who.environment002.html

http://www.gardendigest.com/trees.htm, 1999

Kehler, Rudy. Personal interview. 18 October 2003.