

Where Does the Flower Bloom?: Designing for Brampton's Multicultural Identity

by

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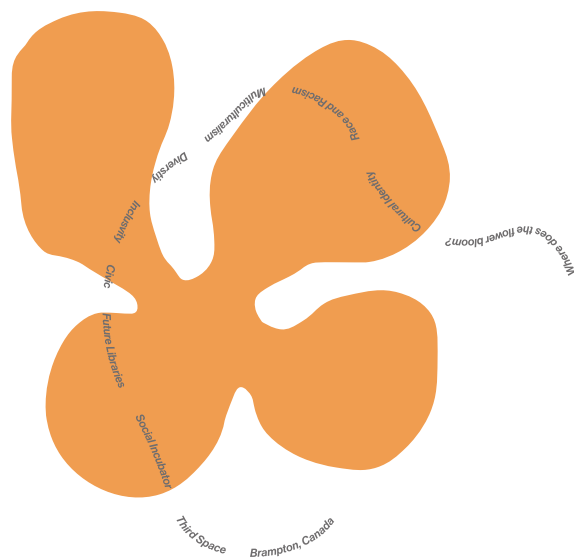
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“When a flower doesn’t bloom you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower.”

Keywords

Brampton, Canada, Cultural, Diversity, Library, Multiculturalism, Public Space

Abstract

Canada's representation as a "cultural mosaic" purportedly welcomes and celebrates diversity, yet in reality, whiteness continues to be privileged. Many cultural groups are not given access to spaces, amenities, and opportunities to practice their traditions and express their culture, leaving them vulnerable to loss of cultural identity. In Brampton, Ontario, three-quarters of the residents are global majority citizens, which makes the city a particularly revealing case for exploring the exclusion and racism that manifest in urban policy decisions and the use of public spaces. This thesis focuses on the expanded program of a public Library + Civic complex to support residents of all cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. The proposed intervention of a library facility as a community hub provides a space for all people to access free learning and training opportunities within a space of representation and civic participation that offers an environment for socialization, collaboration, and community engagement.

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Figure 0.1 Mosaic Mural located in Downtown Sudbury

Introduction

As globalization, often defined as the “increased interconnectedness and interdependence of social, cultural and economic phenomena” across borders, occurs, its impact leads to the hybridization of identities.¹ While globalization in Canada has facilitated the exchange of ideas, cultural differences, values or goods, its effects on cultural homogenization often parallel its rise.² Canada is often referred to as a “world mosaic” to distinguish its celebration of cultural identities, multicultural policies and values, from the United States of America’s process of cultural assimilation, known as a “melting pot.”³ The mosaic metaphor suggests that cultural groups within Canada can be encouraged to maintain their distinctive identity within a larger multicultural society. However, this process of assimilation that Canada seeks to distance itself from is paradoxically present in the language it uses to describe its multicultural population. The term “visible minority” as a demographic category, raises questions about how certain

1 Diana Crane, “Cultural Globalization: 2001–10,” *Sociopedia*, (2011), <https://sociopedia.isaportal.org/resources/resource/cultural-globalization-200110/>.

2 Kenneth J. Goldstein “From Assumptions of Scarcity to the Facts of Fragmentation,” in *How Canadians Communicate Media, Globalization, and Identity*. David Taras et al., (University of Calgary Press, 2007), 3 ; Triranjana Raj, “Cultural Recognition in the Age of Globalization,” *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 73, no. 4 (2012) 469 , <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41858865.570>.

3 Howard Palmer, “Mosaic versus Melting Pot?: Immigration and Ethnicity in Canada and the United States,” *International Journal* 31, no. 3 (1976), <https://doi.org/10.2307/40201356>, 488, <https://doi.org/10.2307/40201356>.

groups and nationalities are categorized under one umbrella. For instance, the use of physical features as a means of identification has homogenized and marginalized certain groups, as does the metaphor of the melting pot. The United Nations committee on racial discrimination has stated that the Canadian government's continued use of the term "visible minority" homogenizes the experience for people of colour. Its lack of accuracy in representing various ethnic groups creates more barriers and issues to addressing socio-economic gaps.⁴

Discourses on "minority status," race and discrimination have often cited that cognitive shortcuts such as racial stereotypes based on specific physical characteristics stigmatize people of colour or immigrants.⁵ These ideas are often deeply internalized and isolate those who do not fit the category of the perceived dominant society, which is usually determined by whiteness. Appearance has been linked with unconsciously triggering specific and often negative associations of a person or group.⁶ The issue of race and identity for the global majority population of Canada is an ongoing issue that is evident within numerous communities. Brampton, is an example of a Canadian city with a very high (over 73%) global majority population, within which 234 different ethnicities are represented, and over 52% of the city's residents are immigrants.⁷ However, due to its high South Asian population, the city's name is often transformed into racial slurs such as "Browntown," "Bramladesh," and "Singhdale".⁸ In addition, due to the lack of cultural representation in public

4 United Nations, "Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination," Eightieth session (13 February – 9 March 2012), General Assembly, Official Records. Sixty-seventh session, Supplement No. 18 (A/67/18), 9, <https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/docs/A.67.18%20English.pdf>.

5 Miri Song, "Rethinking Minority Status and 'Visibility,'" *Comparative Migration Studies* 8, no. 1 (March 2020), 3, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-019-0162-2>.

6 Ibid., 2.

7 City of Brampton, "Census Profile: Immigration & Ethnocultural Diversity," *Brampton GeoHub*, accessed October 19, 2022, <https://geohub.brampton.ca/pages/profile-diversity>.

8 Noreen Ahmed-Ullah, "How Brampton, a Town in Suburban Ontario, Was Dubbed a Ghetto," *The Globe and Mail*, June 3, 2016, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/brampton-a-story-of-political-importance-power-and-ethnic-enclaves/article30273820/>.

services and amenities for non-mainstream activities, festivals such as Diwali and Garba or sporting events such as Kabaddi and Cricket often take place in underused parking lots or streets.⁹ Appropriation of such areas has often led to discussions of banning such festivities as they are perceived as disturbing surrounding residents. If the identity of the majority of Brampton's residents continues to be framed by negative stereotypes, and the social needs of these cultural groups are continually met by lack of interest and attention (if not hostility at times) from the city, Brampton's multicultural identity will not be able to bloom, and its citizens will not be able to thrive. From a psychological standpoint, the impact of globalization is having an increasing effect on cultural identity, in that it is primarily through the contact we have with other cultures that we begin to become more conscious of our own cultural identity.¹⁰ However, this is not only limited to individual cultural identities but also relates to the importance of social identity theory which focuses on the relationship between cultural identity and self-esteem.¹¹ This has direct relevance to the ways Brampton's multicultural residents are supported or not in valuing their cultural backgrounds, which play a vital role in the community's identity and its positive growth.

A Public Library is one architectural program that can mediate between cultural identity and socialization while being a freely accessible, non-commercial place that welcomes people from all walks of life. Brampton currently has only eight public libraries to serve its population of almost 700,000, which on average would be 85,000 users per library in comparison to Canada's ten most populated cities, where the average library serves

9 Janiece Campbell, "It sounded like a war zone, Peel Diwali celebrations spark calls to ban residential fireworks — or at least enforce the rules," *Toronto Star*, October 27, 2022, <https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2022/10/27/it-sounded-like-a-war-zone-peel-diwali-celebrations-spark-calls-to-ban-residential-fireworks-or-at-least-enforce-the-rules.html>.

10 Anfu Yan, "Cultural Identity in the Perspective of Psychology," *Journal of Psychological Research* 1, no. 1 (2018), 25, <https://doi.org/10.30564/jpr.v1i1.200>.

11 *Ibid.*, 26.

36,000 users as seen in figure 3.6.¹² As Brampton's population currently has the second-highest growth rate in Canada, this will see a further increase and demand for its current library infrastructure.¹³ The city's current "Library Facilities Master Plan" acknowledges this issue and proposes the construction of eight more branches.¹⁴ Although this is a positive and encouraging sign of development, it only scratches the surface of the library's role in our communities. Brampton's Library Master Plan needs to go further to address the importance of libraries in the digital age and the expanded spectrum of programs that can better contribute to and engage users.

The Public Library has evolved from a building housing a collection of books and resources to a place of engagement and participation: it is a free resource for the community and acts as a social incubator for residents. In *Palaces for the People*, Eric Klineberg argues that libraries should not be treated as a public amenity but as a social infrastructure that provides a space for social participation¹⁵ This change in the library's purpose in our communities has often been associated with the term "Third place," coined by sociologist Ray Oldenburg in the book *The Great Good Place*.¹⁶ A third place or casual meeting space anchors us in our community, creates social and creative interaction and establishes a sense of belonging for its residents. In recent years, the library's role has come into question as resources become increasingly digital and its purpose as a repository of books tends towards obsolescence. This thesis challenges this idea by insisting on the library's ongoing importance as

12 Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Ltd and Perkins & Will, "Brampton Library, Library Facilities Master Plan," January 2022, ii, https://issuu.com/bramlib/docs/brampton_library_fmp_final.

13 City of Brampton, "Census Profile: Population and Dwelling," *Brampton GeoHub*, accessed October 19, 2022, <https://geohub.brampton.ca/pages/profile-pop-dwelling>.

14 Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Ltd and Perkins & Will, "Brampton Library, Library Facilities Master Plan," January 2022, 79, https://issuu.com/bramlib/docs/brampton_library_fmp_final

15 Eric Klineberg, *Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life* (New York: Broadway Books, 2019), 32.

16 Ray Oldenburg, *The Great Good Place: Cafés, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons, and Other Hangouts at the Heart of a Community* (Philadelphia: Da Capo Press, 2005). 18.

a place to support its users in developing skills and to challenge the idea that and in offering a range of opportunities for learning, such as by playing an instrument, learning-by-making or actively participating in group workshops.

To explore the potential of a public library in the context of Brampton, part of the research methodology of this thesis entailed empirical analysis of Brampton's eight libraries coupled with analytical mapping and diagramming to better understand the existing programmatic offerings and spatial arrangements. This research was complemented by secondary source readings on the history of public libraries and analyzing precedents of contemporary libraries that encourage learning through participation and collaboration, which in turn helped develop objectives for the design proposal. Demographic research into Canada's and Brampton's multicultural profile, a critical assessment of established turns of phrase, and analysis of the city's current master planning documents and coverage of urban tensions around multiculturalism in news media, provided important insights with which to hone the ambitions of the thesis. The theoretical framework and methodology of this thesis were also directed by multidisciplinary research into social and cultural identity, and the notion of third space.

The design proposal for a new library and civic complex in Brampton operates at two scales. At a schematic macro scale, it will be an urban intervention proposing an alternative vision for the future of retail plazas in Brampton, which have tended to perpetuate low-rise urban sprawl. Instead, the thesis offers a vision for densification of the retail plaza block by introducing mixed-use housing and engaging public space. On a micro scale, the thesis proposes the design of Brampton's ninth library with associated urban public space, located in one of Brampton's many underserved and mid-income neighbourhoods with a high percentage of global majority citizens.

Chapter 1 begins by examining the history of immigration in Canada and its discriminatory policies and acts based on socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, religion or nationality that excluded or restricted certain groups from entering the country. The chapter explores some of the implications of privileging whiteness in Canadian society, and critically discusses the term “visible minority” and the statistical realities of majority versus minority global populations. This is then used to support the case of studying the city of Brampton, whose identity has been increasingly shaped by racial stereotypes due to its dense immigrant population.

Chapter 2 focuses on the history of settlements in Brampton and how the theory of spatial assimilation in Toronto and its suburbs led to an influx of new immigrants in this area. It outlines through a few examples how Brampton's changing identity has yet to be represented in its public services and amenities, leading to citizens' appropriation of other underutilized spaces. The city's failure to acknowledge its changing demographics has created a sense of exclusion and marginalization for its residents. Its impact on their cultural and social identity is further examined under the thesis's theoretical framework. This inquiry into developing and maintaining one's identity is further analyzed through spatial inclusivity that promotes collaboration and participation for Brampton's residents. These findings result in the programming of a public library and civic complex that can support and foster a sense of belonging through participation and collaboration among community members.

Chapter 3 analyzes the history of public libraries and their role in society, which has changed mainly through industrialization and the introduction of digital technologies. While the programs and resources often changed, its purpose has remained as a place of self-development. The chapter further examines each of Brampton's eight libraries by studying their programming, spatial qualities, site, usage patterns, collections and user demographics to identify where the libraries are meeting the community's needs and

areas where improvements could be made. Precedents that successfully demonstrate their purpose as civic institutions are analyzed to understand the design features that best support their different user groups' successful engagement with the spaces and with each other, in order to hone the design objectives and strategies for the proposed intervention.

Chapter 4 addresses the question: How can the programming of a Library+Civic complex celebrate and support its multicultural residents? While the previous chapter critiques Brampton's "Library Facilities Master Plan," which fails to acknowledge the issues that persist in the city today, this chapter addresses the selection, rationale and analysis of the site for a proposed ninth library. The proposal for this new library and civic space that invites and engages users from all walks of life folds into it, a master planning vision for the redevelopment and densification of a retail plaza in Brampton's Springbrook neighbourhood, in order to begin to address timely, problematic issues of urban sprawl, unaffordable housing, vehicular-oriented building typologies, and lack of truly public space.

The future of the public library as a social incubator can help foster programs that support Brampton's multicultural residents. While globalization and the emergence of hybridity of cultures continues to increase, it is important for architecture and urban design to offer programs and services that are supportive of the diverse needs and experiences of its residents. The celebration of cultural diversity is needed for the people of Brampton to express themselves and be able to let the future generations have an opportunity to do so as well.



[the land]

1

Chapter 1

Canada, a World Mosaic?

This chapter primarily focuses on the policies and acts that made Canada a multicultural nation. It examines how these policies were used to selectively discourage immigrants that were deemed not “ideal” for white Canada and the role this played in establishing racial prejudice and discrimination. The later section of the chapter discusses how stereotypes are reinforced through the language used today to represent its multicultural population.

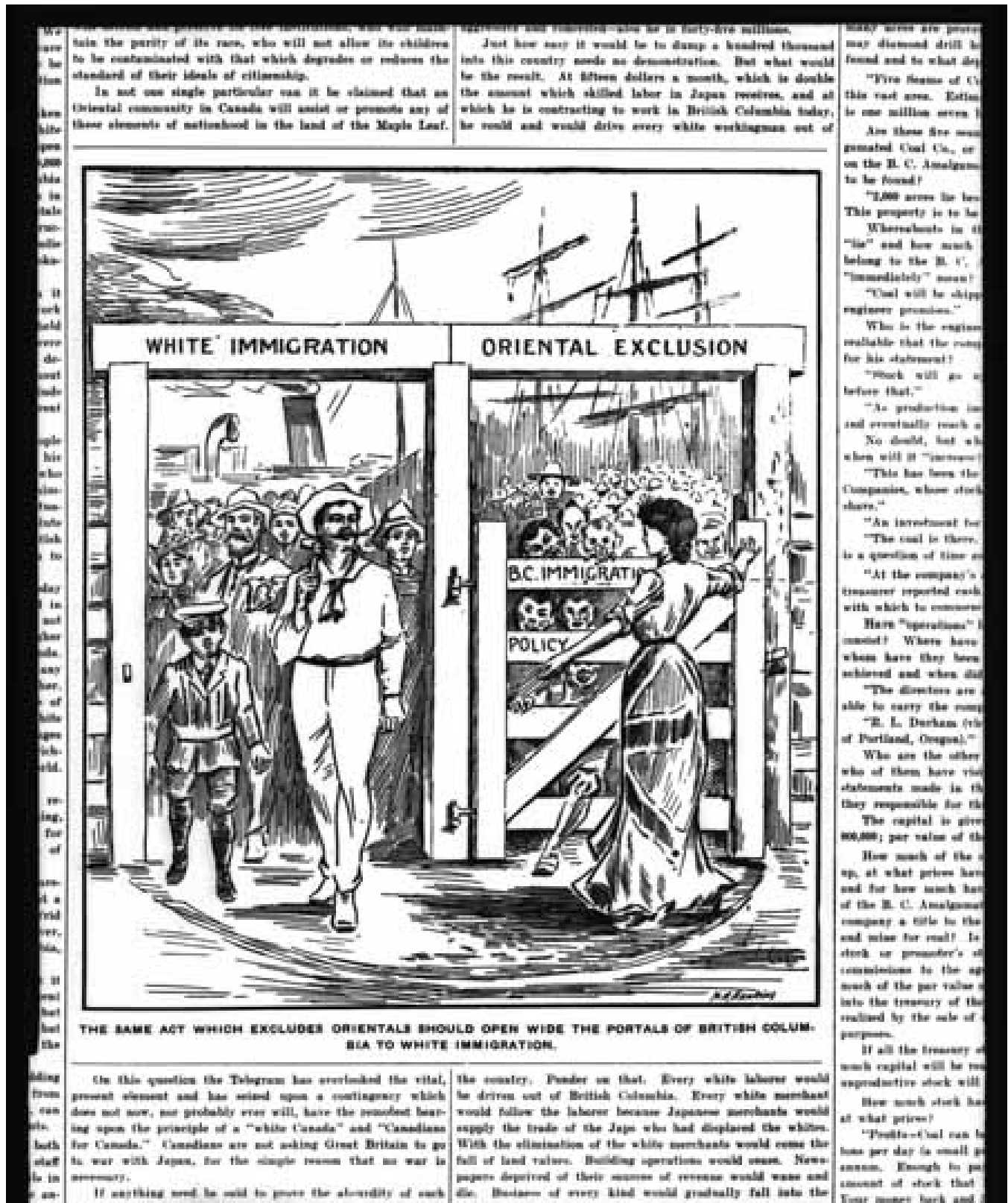


Figure 1.0 Discriminatory cartoon targeting East Asian Immigrant

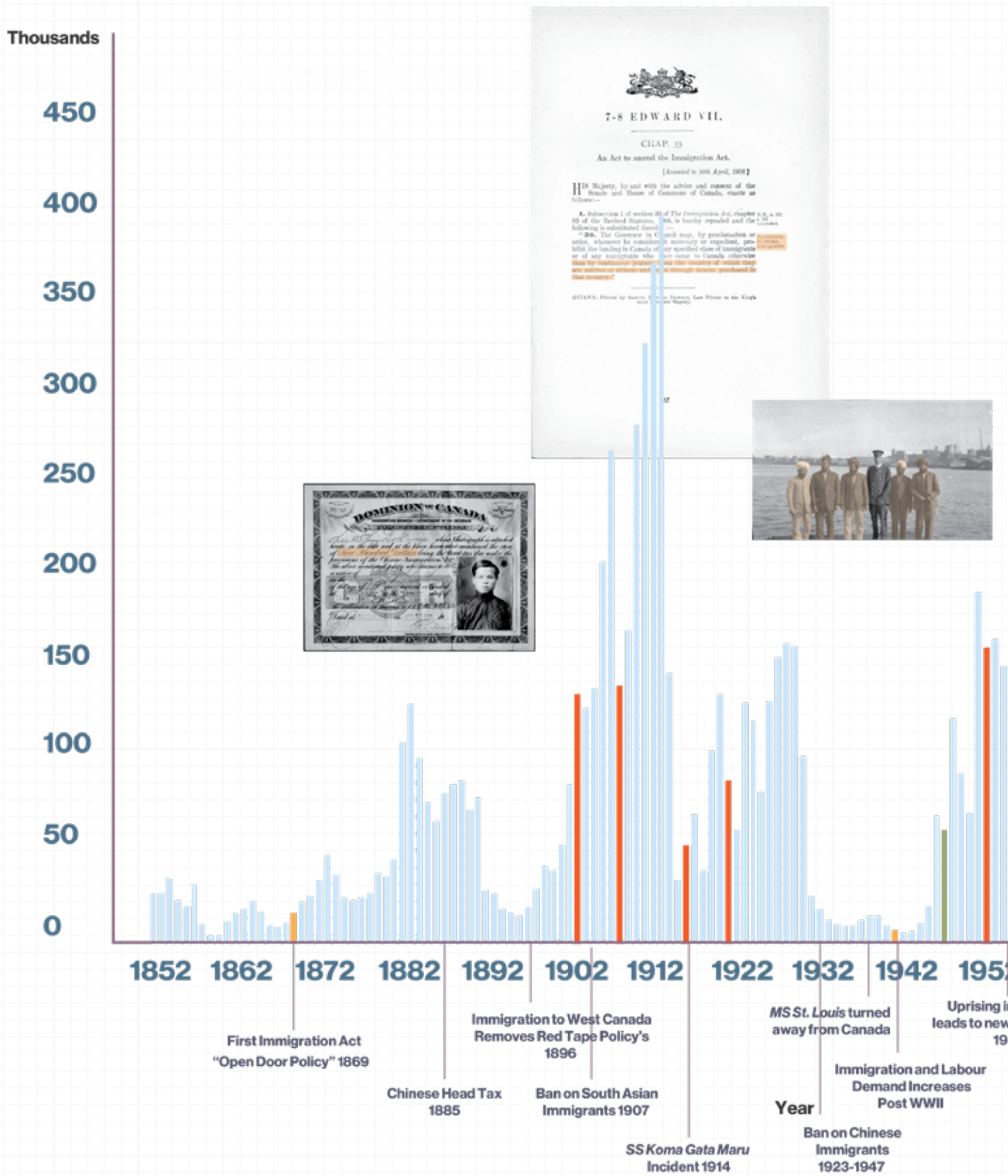
1.1 Immigration and Policy Making in Canada

To understand Canada's multicultural identity that is well-established today, it is important to examine the history and process that led to immigration by a diverse range of ethnic groups. For millennia prior to the arrival of French and English colonial settlers, Indigenous communities inhabited the territory that is today referred to as the country of Canada. The early presence of European colonial settlements dates back to the 17th and 18th centuries, during which the fur trade had become the lucrative alternative industry to fishing.¹⁷ As the colonial population steadily increased, the "Indian Act" was introduced in 1876, which gave the colonial government power and authority when dealing with the identity of Indigenous communities, political structures, education systems and cultural practices.¹⁸ However, establishing a hierarchical structure negatively affected the freedom and rights of Indigenous communities who were forced to assimilate, losing connection to their culture, traditions and beliefs. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Europeans were faced with a range of challenges that led many of them to seek new opportunities in Canada. Famine and economic hardship were

¹⁷ Harold Troper, "Immigration to Canada," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, last edited October 26, 2022, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/immigration>.

¹⁸ Zach Parrott, "Indian Act," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, last edited September 23, 2022, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/indian-act#:~:text=The%20Indian%20Act%20is%20th>.

Where Does the Flower Bloom?: Designing for Brampton's Multicultural Identity



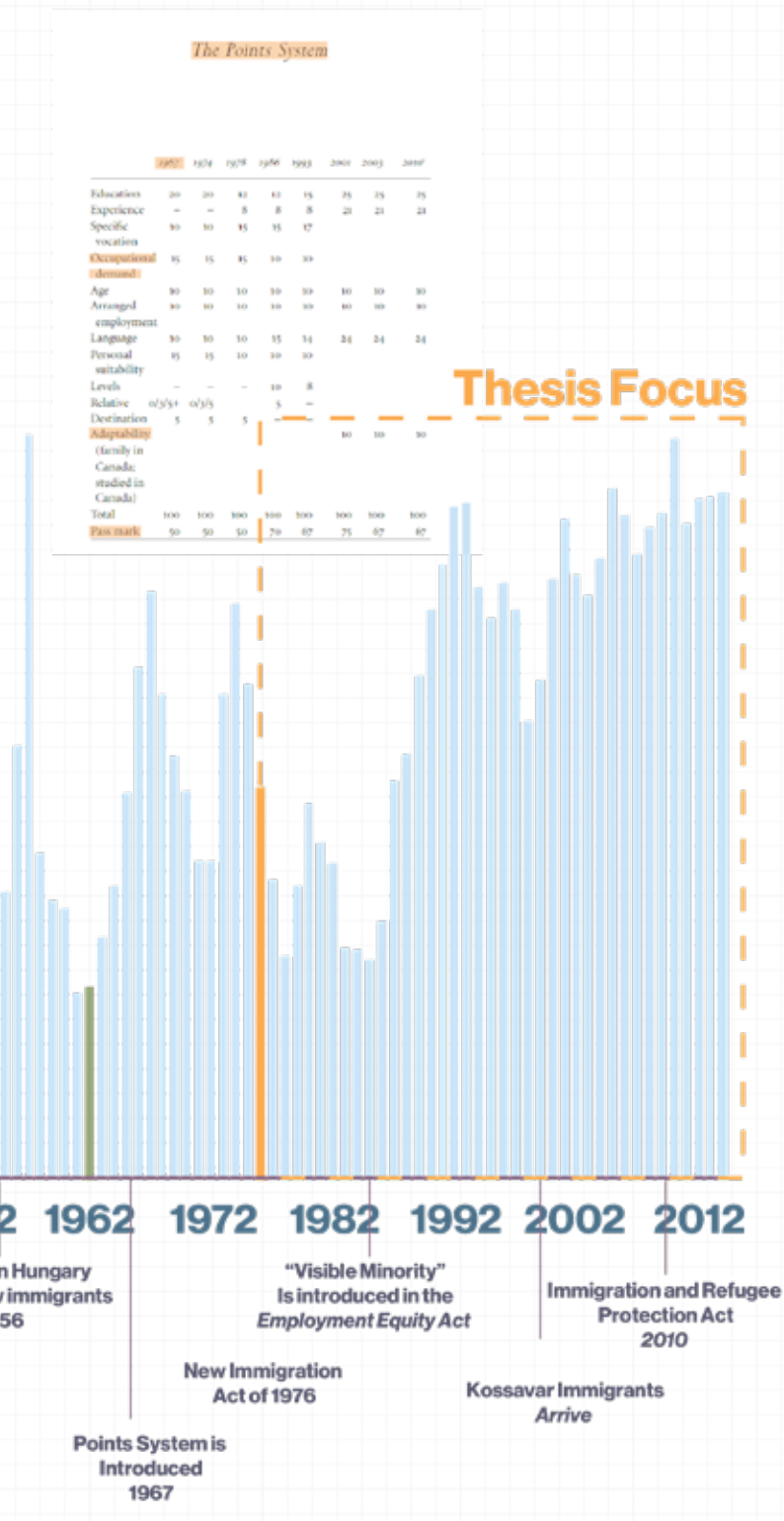


Figure 1.1 Timelines of Canada's Immigration Policies

common in many parts of Europe, while political unrest and wars disrupted lives and displaced families.¹⁹ Canada offered a safe and promising alternative, with its lands, growing economy, and welcoming immigration policies.²⁰ As a result, millions of Europeans made the difficult journey to Canada, where they hoped to start a new life and build a better future for themselves and their families. This rise in immigration became a concern for the Canadian government leading to the introduction of new immigration laws aimed at limiting the number of immigrants from certain regions and prioritizing those whom they deemed had “desirable skills” and “selective backgrounds”.²¹ The Canadian government was generally accepting of immigration during periods of labor shortages when it actively encouraged skilled workers from a broadened category to come and expand towards the west.²² The migrants were otherwise considered to be not ideal candidates due to their presumed inferior race or ethnicity that was deemed not desirable as part of a Canadian identity.²³ This is just one example of the government’s (mis) treatment of immigrants for its own benefit. The controlled and selective process of accepting immigrants based on race and ethnicity through the late 1800s and into the 1900s introduced laws and acts such as the Chinese Head Tax (1885) where Chinese immigrants were required to pay fifty dollars (equivalent to \$1,534.59 in 2022) for entry and was later changed to one hundred dollars (equivalent to \$3,069.19 in 2022), and then five hundred dollars (equivalent to \$15,345.93 in 2022) as means of discouraging them.²⁴ However, the implementation of the Chinese Head Tax was not successful in

19 Ninette Kelley and Michael J. Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 35.

20 Ibid., 111-112.

21 K. W. Taylor “Racism in Canadian Immigration Policy.,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 23, no. 1 (1991), 8.

22 Troper, “Immigration to Canada,” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/immigration>.

23 Ibid.

24 Arlene Chan, “Chinese Head Tax,” in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, last edited June 3, 2020, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/chinese-head-tax-in-canada>. ; “Inflation Rate between 1885-2023,” CPI Inflation Calculator, accessed February 28, 2023, <https://www.in2013dollars.com/us/inflation/1885?amount=50>.

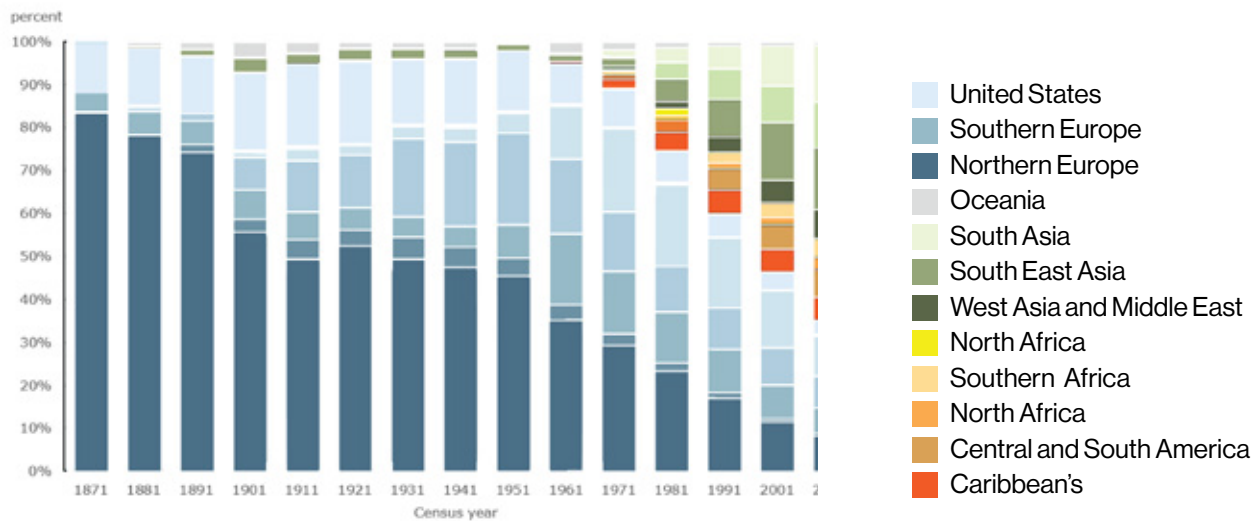


Figure 1.2 Change in Immigration Demographics of Canada

discouraging immigration, which raised concerns among the politicians and media who popularized the phrase “White Canada Forever” in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in support of the reintroduction of restrictive immigration policies.²⁵ The slogan was based on the racist idea that Canada should remain a predominantly white country and that non-white immigrants should be excluded. The government later implemented the Chinese Immigration Act (1923) banning all Chinese immigrants for the next 24 years.²⁶ The SS Komagata Maru, which was carrying mainly South Asian passengers, and the MS St. Louis, which was carrying Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany, were also denied access on the grounds of their racial or ethnic background and were sent back where they came from.²⁷ These incidents are a handful of examples where the government’s use of discrimination was used to deny immigration for people who were not considered ideal. Racial discrimination as part of the country’s immigration policy was dropped in 1967 to introduce a point system.²⁸

25 W. Peter Ward, *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy toward Orientals in British Columbia*, Montreal: McGill Queen’s University Press, 2002), 64.

26 Troper, “Immigration to Canada,” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.

27 Hugh J. M., *The Voyage of the Komagata Maru: The Sikh Challenge to Canada’s Colour Bar, Expanded and Fully Revised Edition* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014). ; Eli Yarhi, “Ms St. Louis,” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, June 23, 2022, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/ms-st-louis>.

28 Gerald Dirks, “Immigration Policy in Canada.” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, October 23, 2020, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/immigration-policy>.

1.2 Immigration Act and “Visible Minority”

Through the Immigration Act of 1976, the most liberal policy yet, the country promoted diversity, social, demographics and non-discrimination for the first time. This change of attitude and perception of diversity and non-discriminatory ideals was due in part to the country actively encouraging immigration as a means of building its economy and increasing its population. Government policies shifted towards a more inclusive approach, with the elimination of discriminatory laws and the introduction of new programs to support immigrants, such as language training and job placement services.²⁹ Canadians began to recognize the benefits of diversity, including the contributions of immigrants to the country's cultural, economic and social fabric. This led to an influx of immigrants from Asia, Africa, South America, Europe and the Caribbean (see figure. 1.2) who had settled around urban centers such as Vancouver and Toronto.³⁰ The Immigration Act of 1976 replaced previous discriminatory policies with a more inclusive system that emphasized the principle of non-discrimination based on race, ethnicity, or nationality. The Act eliminated racial and ethnic barriers to immigration, and instead focused on skills and education as the primary criteria for selecting immigrants. The Act also introduced a points-based system that evaluated applicants based on factors such as education, language skills, and work experience. This system aimed to attract skilled workers and professionals from all over the world, regardless of their country of origin or their ethnicity. This shift towards celebrating the country's diversity and multiculturalism also led to the introduction of the Employment Equity act in 1986, which promoted equality in the workplace for the disadvantaged, amongst whom

29 Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy*, 397.

30 Government of Canada, Statistics Canada, "150 Years of Immigration in Canada," last modified May 17, 2018, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-630-x/11-630-x2016006-eng.htm>.



Figure 1.3 Parliament Hill

“ The Employment Equity Act defines **visible minorities as ‘persons, other than **Aboriginal peoples**, who are **non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.**’ Categories in the visible minority variable include **South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean, Japanese, Visible minority, n.i.e.** (‘n.i.e.’ means ‘not included elsewhere’),...”**

were women, Indigenous people, and members of the global majority. This was the first instance where the government used the term 'visible minority' as a euphemism for its non-white immigrants and residents.³¹ Although the term was introduced with the intention of recognizing and addressing the experiences of people who faced discrimination based on their race, ethnicity, or national origin (see figure 1.4), it focuses on physical appearance and reinforces the idea of a white norm. This seemingly polite turn of phrase relies on "visible" features, primarily skin colour as a means of distinguishing the members of the population deemed to constitute the majority from those considered part of the minority and both mixes the identities of those who are represented by the umbrella term, and inadvertently invites racial stereotypes.³² Its continued use as a demographic category is still present in the Canadian Census to collect data on representation in the country. It is also often used in the discussion of race, ethnicity, diversity in Canada and in the context of employment, education and social policies. The term 'visible minority' has sub-categories designating large geographical areas (e.g., South Asian or East Asian), skin colour (e.g., Black) that group people from all over the world, and nationalities (e.g., Chinese). This mix of categories and criteria problematically merges different cultures under one umbrella category. In 2012, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination stated that the term's lack of accuracy and role in homogenizing the experience of the people it represents will become a problematic issue.³³ Criticism may be leveled due to the fact that the eclectic categories used to denote 'visible minorities' have little in common, and whereas some groups might be more vulnerable than others, they are often grouped together for use in census, statistics and policies.³⁴

31 Government of Canada, Statistics Canada, "Visible Minority of Person," last modified November 1, 2021, <https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Var.pl?Function=DEC&Id=45152>.

32 United Nations, "Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination," Eightieth session (13 February – 9 March 2012), General Assembly, Official Records. Sixty-seventh session, Supplement No. 18 (A/67/18), 9, <https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/docs/A.67.18%20English.pdf>.

33 Ibid.

34 Jack Jedwab, "Visible Minority, Race and Racialization in Canada and The United States: Challenging Concepts and Measurements," *Canadian Issues* (2019): 37-38.

Visible minority population

Total - Visible minority for the population in private households - 25% sample data [95](#)

Total visible minority population 96	Geographical subregion
South Asian 97	Nationality
Chinese	Skin Colour
Black	Language and Demonym
Filipino	Cultural Region
Latin American	Ethnicity
Arab	Geographical subregion
Southeast Asian 98	Geographical subregion
West Asian 99	Ethnicity /Language
Korean	Nationality/Language
Japanese	
Visible minority, n.i.e. 100	
Multiple visible minorities 101	

Figure 1.4 “Visible Minority” Categories

The process of classifying who is a ‘visible minority’ according to Statistics Canada has its own discrepancies that begins to highlight how Canada as “world mosaic” is becoming a “melting pot”. Dr. Jack Jedwab, a Canadian historian, author and professor at Concordia University who has researched immigration, ethnic minorities, issues of migration and multiculturalism, published a journal article titled, “Visible Minority, Race and Racialization in Canada and the United States,” which examines where this issue stems from. The author highlights how a respondent who selects “Black” and “White” is

categorized as “Black”, whereas a respondent who selects “West Asian” and “White” is categorized as “not a visible minority” by Statistics Canada.³⁵ These variations and the fact that some may not be “visually” identifiable based on the description fails to capture the complexity and diversity of the people it is meant to represent. The term obscures differences and instead reinforces stereotypes about certain groups. Canada, however, has continued to use the term in policies, statistics and census-based documents. Individuals or communities that do fall under the very broad and problematic category of ‘visible minority’, ironically make up more than 80% of the world’s population. This raises the pressing question of who really is the minority, and exposes white colonial prejudice in the country by perpetuating the idea that white people are the majority and the norm, and have the power to define and label others. As the discourse on representation and its terminology develops, an alternative term, ‘global majority’ is being foregrounded by anti-racist scholars such as professor and activist Gus John³⁶ and author Rosemary M. Campbell-Stephens through her book, *Educational Leadership and the Global Majority (Decolonising Narratives)*.³⁷ Discourses on “minority status,” race and discrimination have often cited that cognitive shortcuts such as racial stereotypes based on specific physical characteristics stigmatize people of color or immigrants.³⁸ These ideas are often deeply internalized and diverge from those who do not fit the category of society which is usually determined by whiteness.³⁹ Appearance has been linked with unconsciously triggering specific and often negative associations of a person or group.

35 Ibid., 39-40.

36 Gus John, “The Problems of the White Ethnic Majority’ Revisited: A Personal, Theological and Political Review,” *Practical Theology* 15, no. 1-2 (February 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073x.2021.2023950>, 31.

37 Rosemary M. Campbell-Stephens, *Educational Leadership and the Global Majority: Decolonising Narratives* (Cham: Springer International Publishing AG, 2021).

38 Miri Song, “Rethinking Minority Status and ‘Visibility,’” *Comparative Migration Studies* 8, no. 1 (March 2020), 3, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-019-0162-2>.

39 Ibid., 2.

Within Canada, the provinces of British Columbia and Ontario have the highest population of global majority residents compared to the rest of the country (see figure 1.5). Cities such as Vancouver, Richmond, Toronto, Markham and Brampton are also known as majority-minority areas as they have a higher population of so-called “visible minorities,” which make up the majority of the population density. The city of Brampton, Ontario, is one of many suburbs in the Greater Toronto Area that has seen its identity shift through the increase of its immigrant population. Hence, Brampton provides an excellent example of a site to study for this thesis as it offers a unique exploration of issues related to change of identity through the lens of its

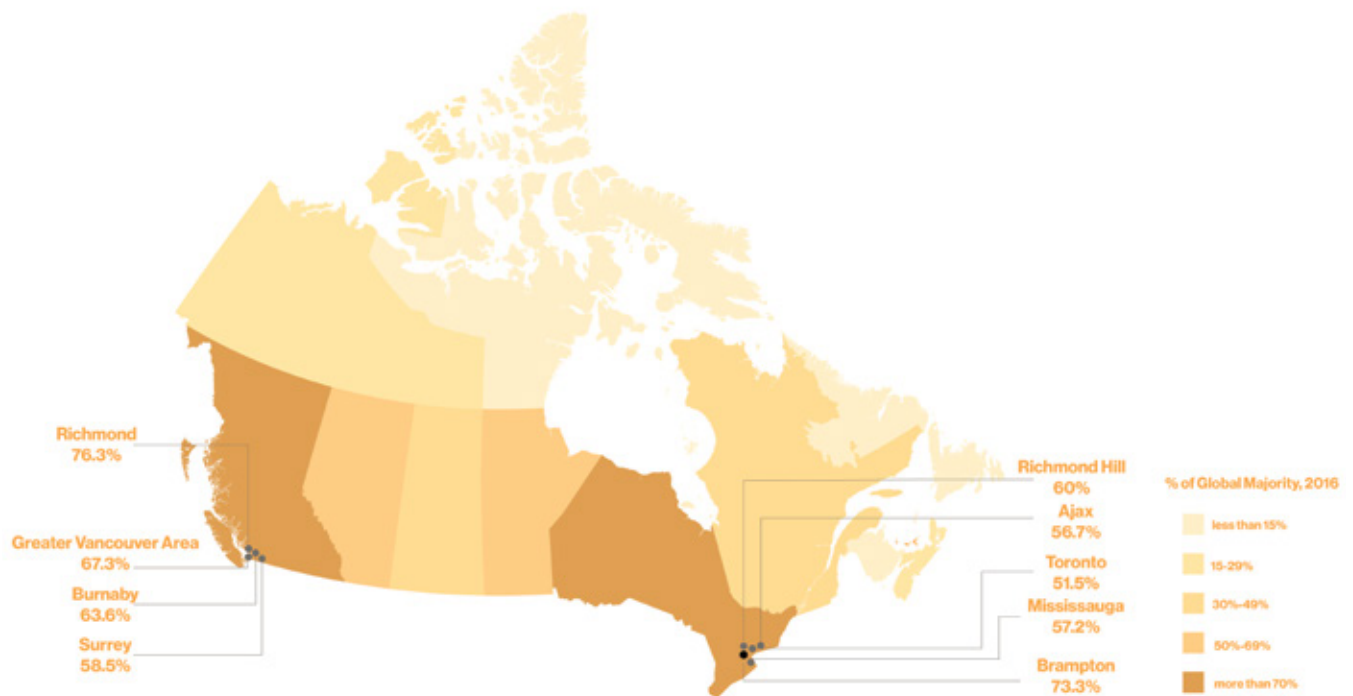


Figure 1.5 Map of Global Majority Communities in Canada

immigrant population. The city's changing demographics in recent years have created a shift in its existing and new residents, and as a result, tensions arise in the development of individual and collective identities.⁴⁰ This shift offers an opportunity to explore if and how the city has responded to its changing demographics and the effects of stereotypes often projected onto global majority citizens. Brampton has a higher population of global majority citizens and is home to more than 234 different ethnicities.⁴¹ In recent years, the city has become the home for a more significant percentage of South Asian immigrants and with this has come stereotypes and prejudice about Brampton's changing identity.⁴² In addition, Toronto, which has become the center of workplace opportunities for many immigrants, has higher living expenses and housing costs, forcing migrations within the city and towards suburbs such as Brampton, Mississauga and Markham.⁴³

Tracking the pattern of immigration in and around the Greater Toronto Area (see figure 1.7) reveals how "ethnic" neighbourhoods, over time, begin to develop and grow in density. As asserted through the Chicago School perspective, the theory of spatial assimilation examines the process of immigrant assimilation and its patterns in residential developments.⁴⁴ It suggests that as immigrants begin to succeed socioeconomically, they move out of their "enclave," similar to the plant world and will replace others. This

40 San Grewal, "Brampton Suffers Identity Crisis as Newcomers Swell City's Population," *Toronto Star*, May 25, 2013, https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2013/05/24/brampton_suffers_identity_crisis_as_newcomers_swell_citys_population.html.

41 City of Brampton, "Census Profile: Immigration & Ethnocultural Diversity," *Brampton GeoHub*, accessed October 19, 2022, <https://geohub.brampton.ca/pages/profile-diversity>.

42 Noreen Ahmed-Ullah, "How Brampton, a Town in Suburban Ontario, Was Dubbed a Ghetto," *The Globe and Mail*, June 3, 2016, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/brampton-a-story-of-political-importance-power-and-ethnic-enclaves/article30273820/>.

43 Ibid.

44 Richard D. Alba and John R. Logan, "Variations on Two Themes: Racial and Ethnic Patterns in the Attainment of Suburban Residence," *Demography* 28, no. 3 (January 1991), 432, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2061466>.



Figure 1.6 Brampton, Canada

sociological theory also positions how ethnic neighbourhoods with a higher density of global majority residents or new immigrants offer affordable housing, have resources that pertain to them and have a sense of “cultural comfort.”⁴⁵ Host cities have often been at the lower end of the socioeconomic ladder and hence lack economic and civic resources that would otherwise be present in a community.⁴⁶ A study on spatial assimilation in Canada’s global majority communities highlighted how the increasing density of immigration in a city results in relationships and interactions with “own-group” neighbours and creates a disconnect between the existing residents and new immigrants.⁴⁷ This has become a topic of discussion amongst Brampton residents, who have expressed concerns about the development of ethnic enclaves within the city and have called for more community-building initiatives. These residents believe that the concentration of certain ethnic groups has started to create an isolating social and cultural divide that limits interaction with other groups.⁴⁸ Overall, Brampton provides a compelling case study for exploring issues of changing identities, diversity, inclusion and representation in a rapidly changing community.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 433.

⁴⁶ Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton, “Spatial Assimilation as a Socioeconomic Outcome,” *American Sociological Review* 50, no. 1 (Feb 1985): 94, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2095343>.

⁴⁷ Feng Hou, “Spatial Assimilation of Racial Minorities in Canada’s Immigrant Gateway Cities,” *Urban Studies* 43, no. 7 (2006): 1205, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980600711993>.

⁴⁸ Grewal, “Brampton Suffers Identity Crisis as Newcomers Swell City’s Population,” *Toronto Star*, May 24, 2013,

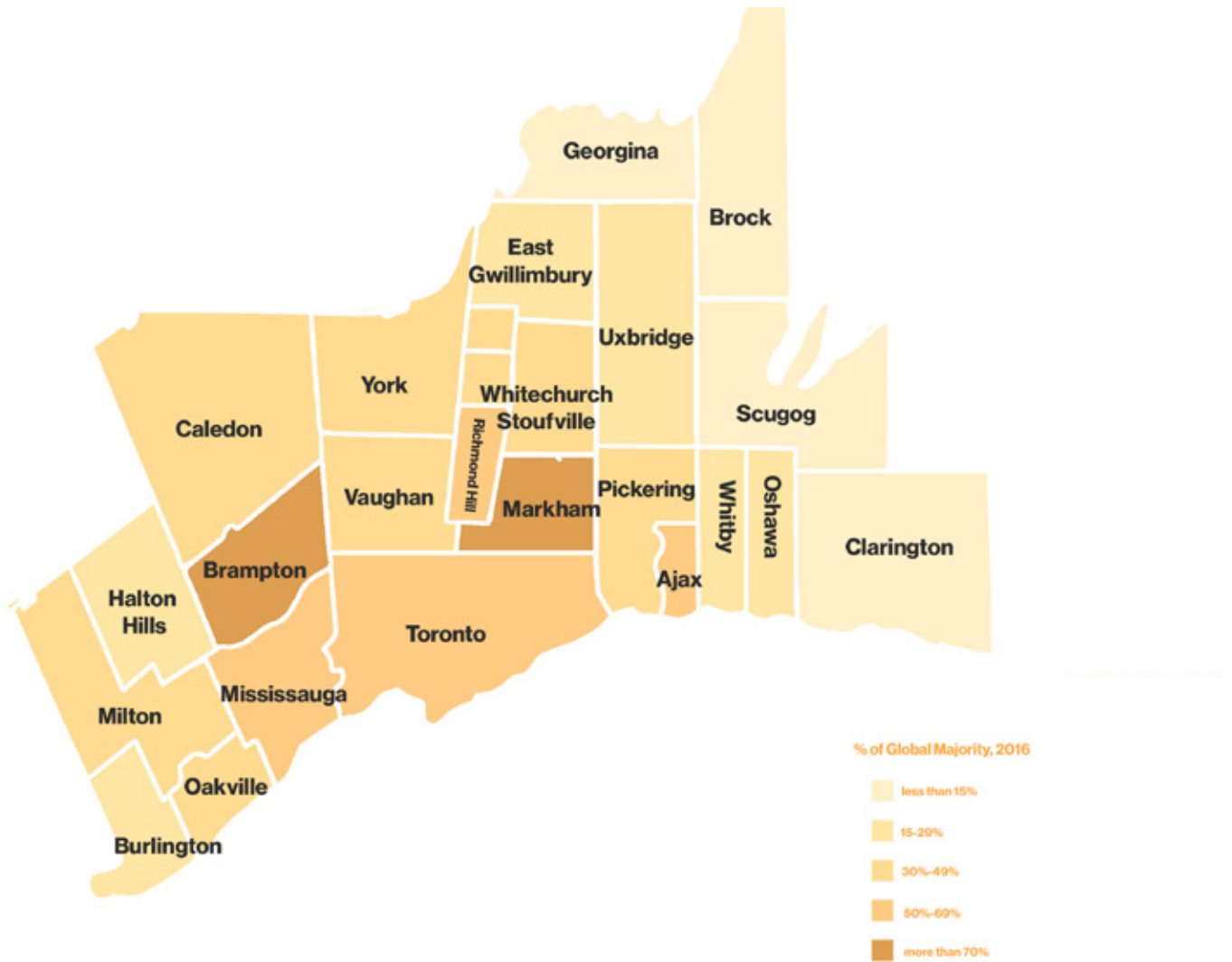


Figure 1.7 Greater Toronto Area's global majority population density

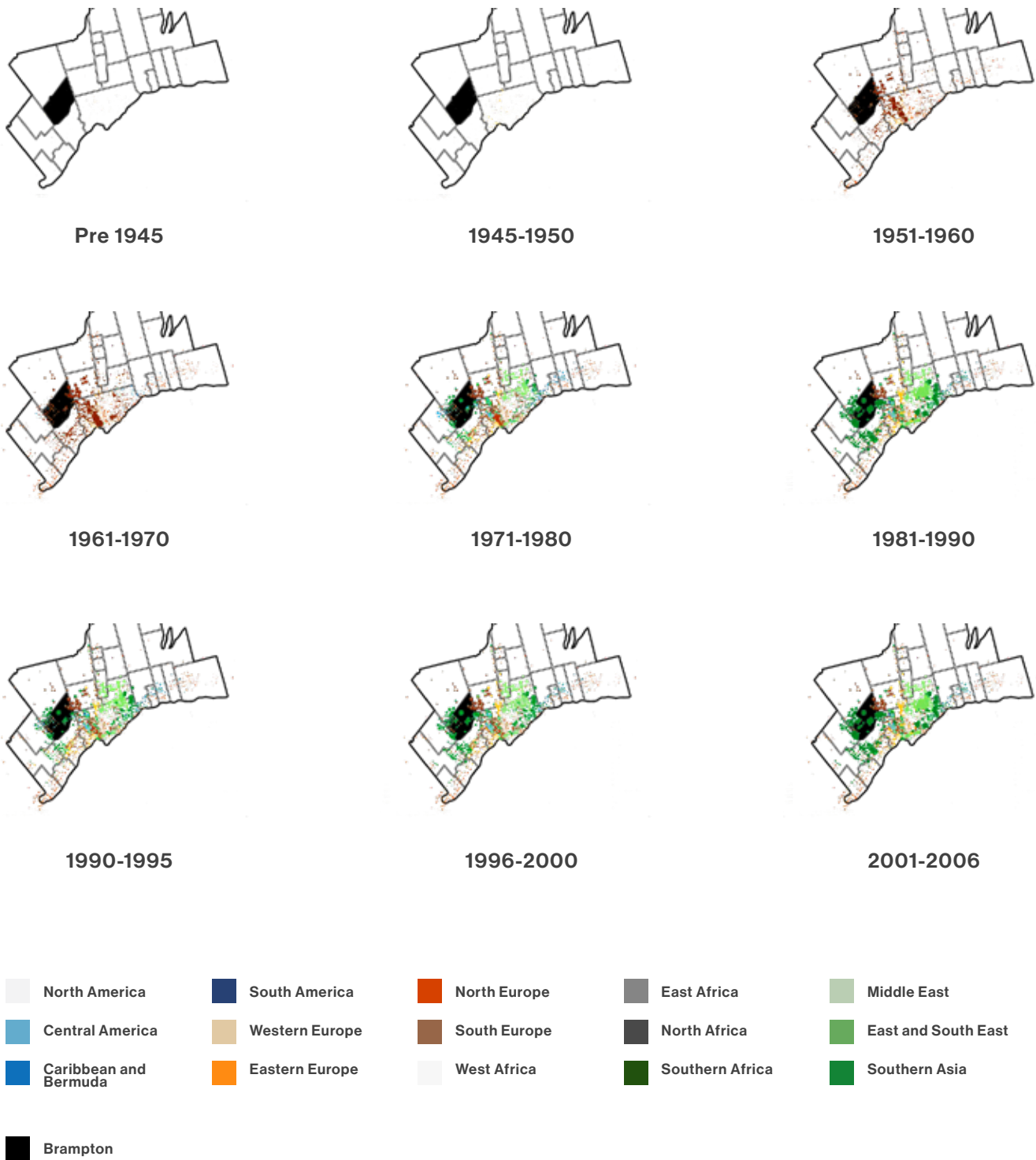


Figure 1.8 Mapping Immigration Patterns in Greater Toronto Area



[the soil]

2

Chapter 2

Brampton: Case Study of a Global Majority Community

The chapter examines the history of Brampton and its changing identity through the influx of South Asian immigrants. It focuses on how despite the growing diversity of residents within the city, as within Canada, many public services and amenities fall short of responding to the needs of their users. The impact of exclusion and marginalization is further studied by understanding how specific spaces are appropriated by necessity and how the community's identity in media and society has fallen into racial stereotypes.



Figure 2.0 Collage of Bramptons Urban Fabric Through History

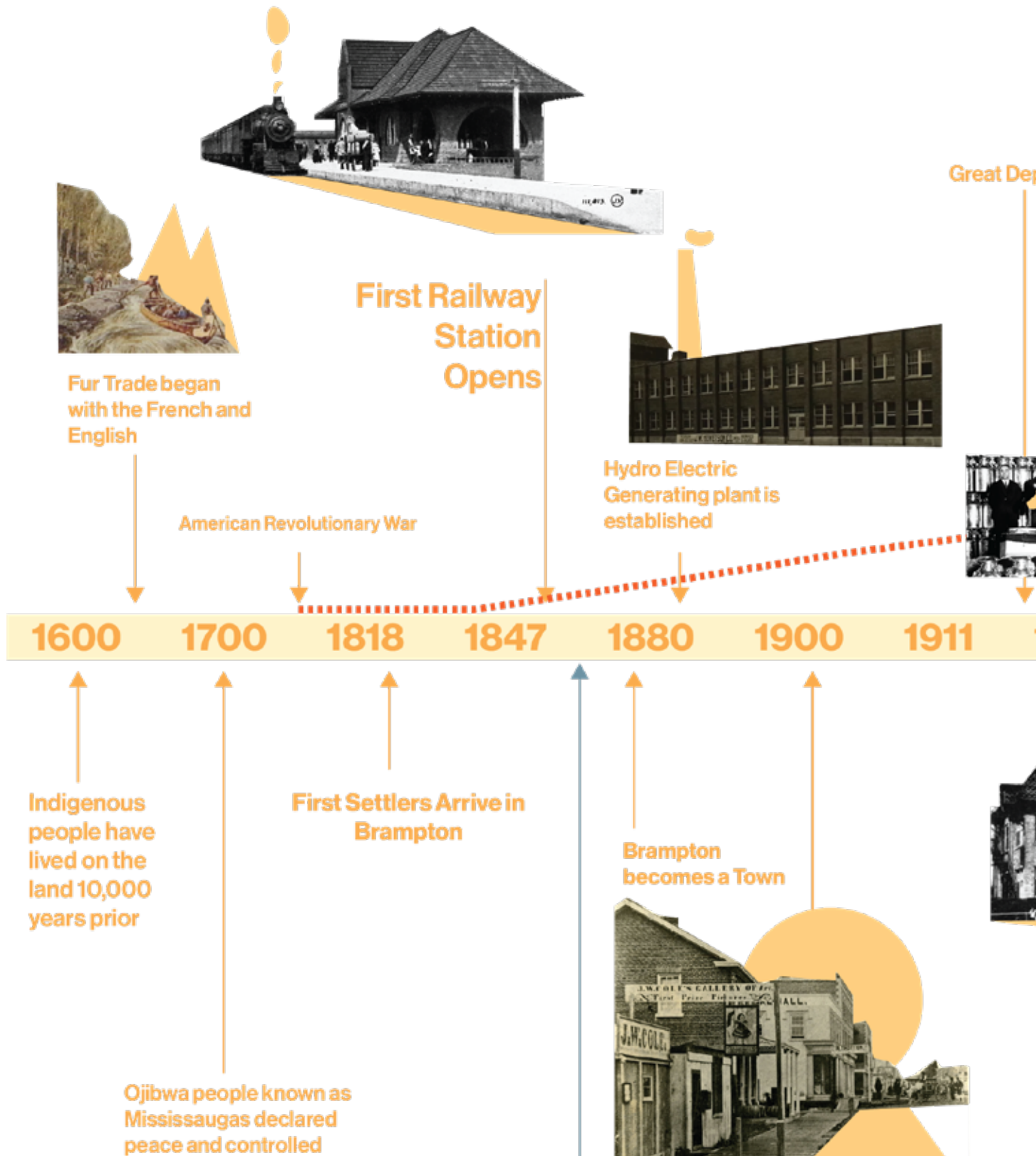
2.1 History and Origins of Brampton

To understand the issues that persist with Brampton's current identity as home to many South Asian immigrants it is crucial to examine its history and development. The land called Brampton today was long inhabited by Indigenous people, who lived, fished, hunted and farmed on the land before European settlements.⁴⁹ In 1818 an agreement between the Mississaugas of the Credit and the British government led to the Ajetance Purchase or Treaty 19, which handed over the land to the latter in exchange for monetary funds.⁵⁰ As part of the treaty, 648,000 acres of land, primarily in present-day Brampton and Milton, was ceded from the Chippewa to the Crown in exchange for \$544.10 of goods paid annually. The decision that forced the Mississaugas of the Credit to move away was primarily due to an influx of settlers who had uprooted forests, the decline of salmon due to the mills and the declining population due to diseases brought from Europe.⁵¹ Early

49 Nick Moreau, "Brampton" *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, last edited November 28, 2022, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/brampton>

50 Government of Canada, Indigenous and Northern Affairs, "Treaty Texts - Upper Canada Land Surrenders," <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1370372152585/1581293792285#ucls17>.

51 Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, "Ajetance Treaty, No. 19 (1818)," accessed March 1, 2023, <https://mncfn.ca/ajetance-treaty-no-19-1818/>.



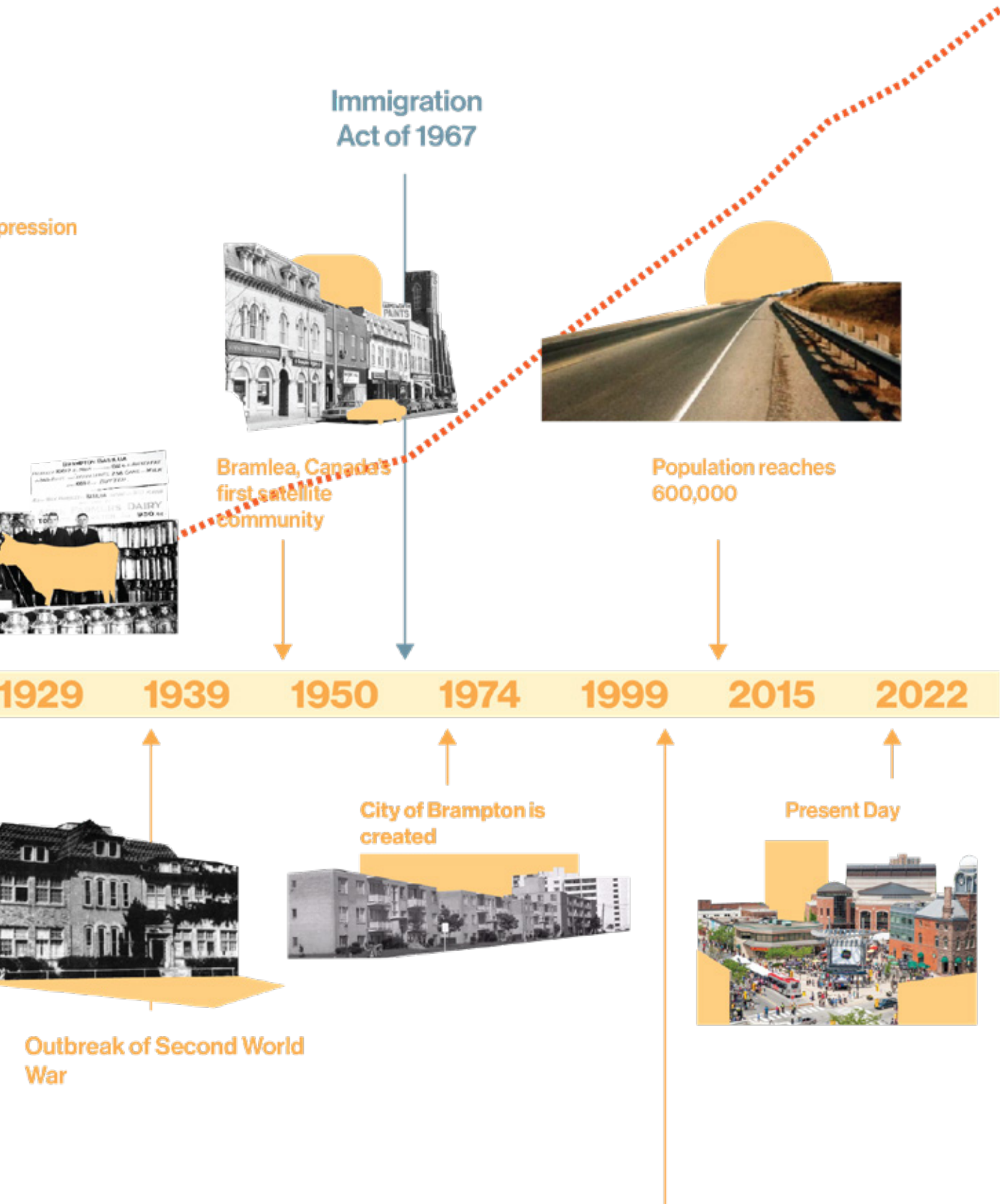


Figure 2.1 Timeline of Brampton's History

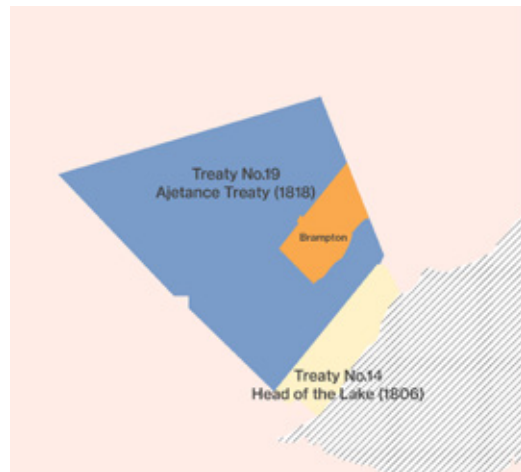


Figure 2.2 Municipal boundaries established by the Ajetance Treaty, no 19 (1818)

European settlers had arrived in and around Brampton during the late 1700s due to the fur trade but were only partially established. It was only during 1820 that settlements in Brampton started to increase, leading to it becoming a township.⁵² The town's population continued to increase steadily, leading to the development of a train station in 1856, which expanded the city's economic growth along with factories and energy plants.⁵³ As the Canadian government's immigration policies changed during the 20th century, Toronto saw an increase in its population. This provoked a rise in housing costs and forced new immigrants or migrants to relocate toward the outskirts of the city. As the cities of Vaughan and Etobicoke still had higher than average housing prices, new immigrants moved primarily towards Mississauga and Brampton, which at the time were slightly more affordable.⁵⁴ As this trend continues, more South Asian immigrants find it comfortable to live around those of similar ethnic backgrounds, and hence Brampton's population continues to rise.⁵⁵

⁵² Moreau, "Brampton," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*

⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁴ Ahmed-Ullah, "How Brampton, a Town in Suburban Ontario, Was Dubbed a Ghetto," *The Globe and Mail*, June 3, 2016, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/brampton-a-story-of-political-importance-power-and-ethnic-enclaves/article30273820/>.

⁵⁵ Virpal Kataure and Margaret Walton-Roberts, "The Housing Preferences and Location Choices of Second-Generation South Asians Living in Ethnic Enclaves," *South Asian Diaspora* 5, no. 1 (2013): 58, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19438192.2013.722385>.

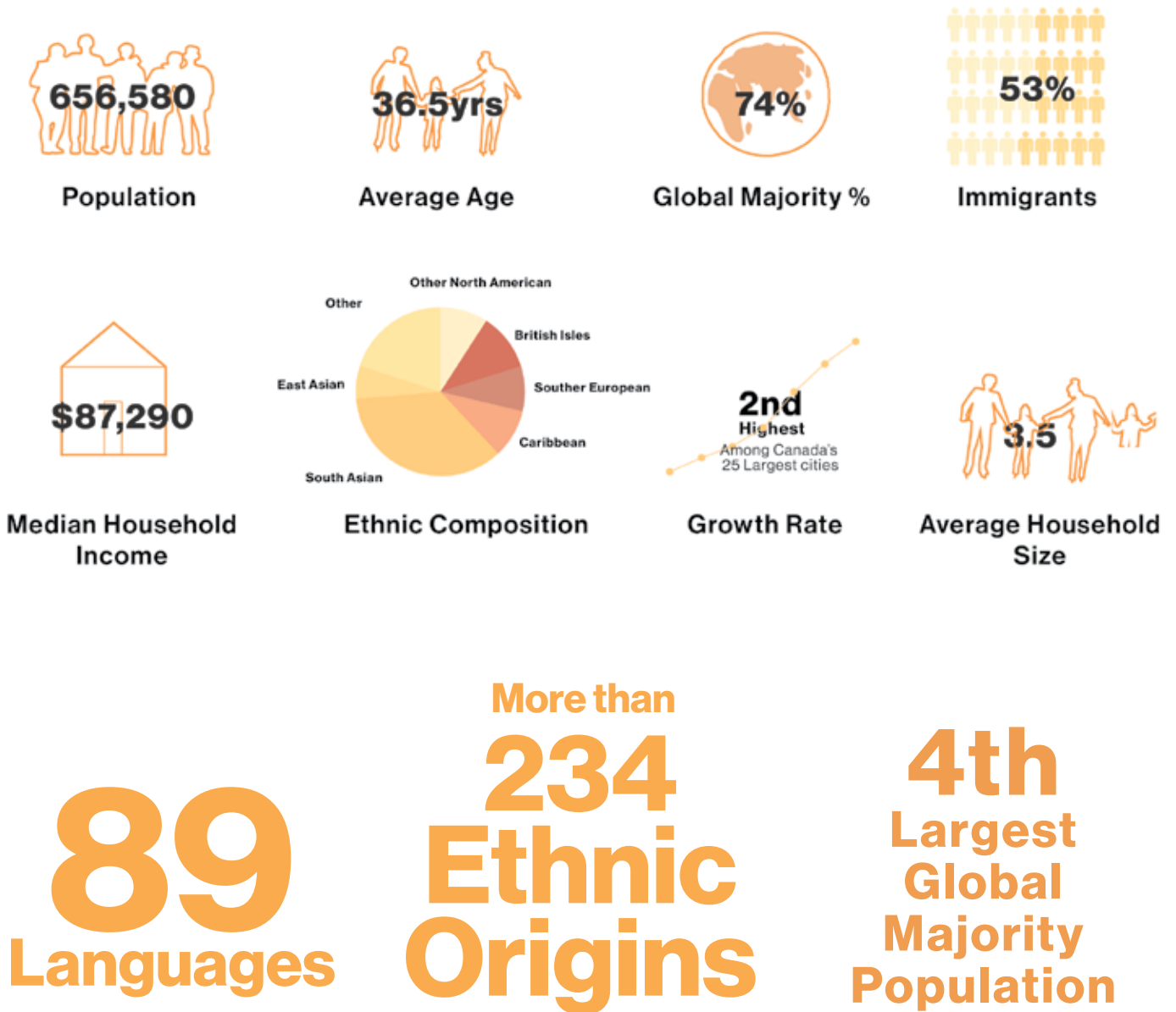


Figure 2.3 Brampton's Demographic and Socioeconomic Character

The need for a unified identity within the city led to the development of the “flower strategy” in 1999 to celebrate and promote Brampton's past history of floral industries, which have been an important part of the city's economy and cultural identity for over a century.⁵⁶ Today, however, Brampton's identity is most prominently represented by its diverse, multicultural residents. Brampton's current population is estimated to be around 690,000⁵⁷ and its multicultural diversity is apparent through the city's demographics, where immigrants comprise 53% of its population, 73% of the city's overall population are members of the global majority, and there are over 234 ethnic origins with more than 89 languages spoken in the city (see figure 2.3).⁵⁸ Brampton also has the second-highest growth rate amongst Canada's 25 largest cities and the youngest average age among the top 10 most populated cities in Canada.⁵⁹ The young population in Brampton has both benefits and challenges. On the one hand, it means that there is a vibrant and dynamic community with a lot of energy and enthusiasm. On the other hand, a young population can also put a strain on public services and infrastructure, as more resources are needed to support a growing number of families and children. The high demand for affordable housing and other services can also make it difficult for families to access the resources they need. Brampton's youthful population is a key factor in the city's continued growth and development that will shape its future.

While the city does acknowledge its diversity through its website by showcasing festivals, cultural events and residents, many public services and

56 Dale O'Hara, *Brampton: The Flower City Story* (Brampton, Ontario: City of Brampton, 2012), <https://www.brampton.ca/EN/residents/digital/Brampton-The-Flower-City-Story/Brampton-The-Flower-City-Story/E3AB10A9ED2FFEA9B1662DAE50180612/2012-0131.pdf>

57 City of Brampton, “Census Profile: Population and Dwelling,” *Brampton GeoHub*, accessed October 19, 2022, <https://geohub.brampton.ca/pages/profile-pop-dwelling>

58 City of Brampton, “Census Profile: Immigration & Ethnocultural Diversity,” *Brampton GeoHub*, accessed October 19, 2022, <https://geohub.brampton.ca/pages/profile-diversity>

59 City of Brampton, “Census Profile: Population and Dwelling.”

amenities such as spaces for recreation or public gathering, are not designed for and/or do not respond to their diverse residents. Festivities such as Diwali and Garba that take place outside have often required residents to use underutilized vehicular-oriented spaces such as streets, driveways and empty parking lots to participate and socialize (see figures 2.4 and 2.5).⁶⁰ Due to a lack of cricket fields, residents have also started to appropriate the parking spaces of retail plazas as their fields during the night (see figure 2.6).⁶¹



Figure 2.4 Festivities on the driveway and streets of Brampton

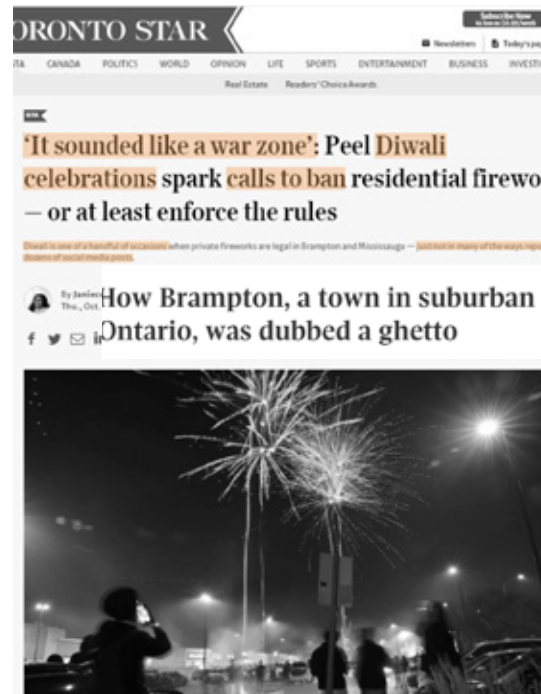


Figure 2.5 Article on Diwali celebrations in Brampton

60 Ahmed-Ullah, "How Brampton, a Town in Suburban Ontario, Was Dubbed a Ghetto," *The Globe and Mail*, June 3, 2016; Sonali Mistry (@sonalimistry7), "Celebrating Navratri By Doing Street Garba!," *TikTok*, October, 2, 2022, <https://www.tiktok.com/@sonalimistry7/video/7149936924218641670?lang=en>

61 Ahmar Khan, "Cricket Lovers in GTA Spend Late Nights Playing Matches in Commercial Parking Lots - Toronto," *Global News*, August 26, 2022, <https://globalnews.ca/news/9088692/cricket-lovers-gta-late-nights-matches-parking-lots/>.

As the residents continue to adopt underutilized spaces for their cultural and recreational practices, other residents object to this and, in a recent instance, called for the ban on Diwali celebrations in retail plazas due to excessive noise.⁶² By contrast, fireworks celebrations are permitted on Victoria Day, Canada Day, and New Year's Day and affect citizens whether they celebrate these holidays or not. While the city often praises its multicultural identity, it fails to recognize the needs of its multicultural residents and offer programs and services that are responsive to their unique needs and experiences. This can create a sense of exclusion and marginalization among these communities, further increasing their challenges in maintaining their cultural and social identity.



Figure 2.6 Residents playing Cricket in parking lots

62 Janiece Campbell, "It sounded like a war zone, Peel Diwali celebrations spark calls to ban residential fireworks or at least enforce the rules," *Toronto Star*, October 27, 2022, <https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2022/10/27/it-sounded-like-a-war-zone-peel-diwali-celebrations-spark-calls-to-ban-residential-fireworks-or-at-least-enforce-the-rules.html>.



Figure 2.7 Immigration Flyer targeting Sikhs in Brampton

2.2 Impact on Cultural and Social Identity

In more recent years, Brampton's identity as a South Asian community has brought with it negative appellations. These include: "Browntown", a combination of the color brown associated with South Asian skin tone and the word Brampton; "Bramladesh", a combination of Brampton and the South Asian country of Bangladesh; and "Singhdale", a combination of the Brampton suburb Springdale and the last name Singh, which is common within the city's Punjabi community.⁶³ The impact of such racial slurs in Brampton are common and these connotations are commonly known to others who are not even from the city or from the province of Ontario. To identify that Brampton is a white community plagued with diversity and resembles a community in India, positions white people as the norm and South Asians as the problem. The negative impact of such racial stereotypes on the identity (social and cultural) of its residents is immense. In 2014, anti-immigration flyers handed out in Brampton by Immigration Watch Canada, targeted the Sikh community through the discussion of the city's changing identity. More specifically, it implied that Brampton's existing "white community" has been pushed out by the Sikh community and asked if this is really what people want. The Sikh community of Brampton led by activist Gurmeet Singh has expressed that, "They are targeting the Sikh community at this time, but they will now be targeting other groups. They can be targeting anyone coming from anywhere. This is a hate crime."⁶⁴ PPosters such as those shown in figure 2.7, reveal examples of how cognitive shortcuts such as racial stereotypes based on specific physical characteristics stigmatize people of color and immigrants. The importance of identity to the individual and their community

63 Ahmed-Ullah, "How Brampton, a Town in Suburban Ontario, Was Dubbed a Ghetto."

64 Laurent Bastien Corbeil, "'Racist' Brampton flyer broke no laws, police say," *Toronto Star*, May 8, 2014, https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2014/05/08/racist_brampton_flyer_broke_no_laws_police_say.html.

has become increasingly important in light of the process of globalization.⁶⁵ d their community has become increasingly important in light of the process of globalization. As discussed earlier, Canada's identity of a so-called cultural mosaic comes into question with its history and ongoing reliance on vocabulary that encourages racial prejudice. As Brampton suffers from its negative image, it is important to examine the impact this has on its residents' cultural and social identity.

Cultural identity plays an essential role in an individual's identity and is directly related to one's self-perception. This perception is often associated with one's ethnicity, religion, social class, nationality, language, traditional attire, food etc. which are then linked to a larger community or group that an individual identifies with.⁶⁶ This can, however, change based on a person's personal experiences such as a change of location, the language(s) they learn, or their age.⁶⁷ For many immigrants, adapting to their new environment often requires them to change or shift away from their current cultural identity and towards their surroundings. This is often the case when they find that their present identity or cultural attributes conflict with the norm. For the city of Brampton, this becomes a pressing ongoing issue as the lack of acknowledgment through culturally reflective spaces continues to be denied. Cultural identity plays a crucial role in people's self-image and the groups with which they relate and connect.⁶⁸ When programs such as cultural festivals are discouraged, or the city is perceived negatively in relation to a particular ethnic group residents will begin to distance themselves from the groups they once associated with. Having clarity about one's cultural identity

65 Arnett Jensen, Lene, et al., "Globalization and Cultural Identity," in *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*, ed. Seth J. Schwartz, et al. (New York: Springer Science+Business Media, 2011), 288.

66 Esther Osborne and Roxane de la Sablonnière, "Understanding My Culture Means Understanding Myself: The Function of Cultural Identity Clarity for Personal Identity Clarity and Personal Psychological Well-Being," *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 44, no. 4 (2014): 437, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jtsb.12061>.

67 *Ibid.*, 437.

68 *Ibid.*, 440.





Figure 2.8 Collage of Brampton's multicultural Identity

is linked with reducing conceptual uncertainty.⁶⁹ Otherwise, Canada's identity would shift towards the melting pot term association with the United States of America. The metaphor of the melting pot suggests that different cultures in the United States of America often go through a process of assimilation into one big cultural group.⁷⁰ The relationship between cultural identity and learning has also been discussed in the fields of psychology to examine how cultural identity can integrate into education to support the students. Students who found themselves in a scenario where the environment was culturally inclusive were provided with motivation and confidence in learning.⁷¹ One particular school district in Alberta studied how the school system can help improve Filipino immigrant families and their children's relationship with their culture and in the process of learning.⁷² Through this, they conducted workshops with the families and students to develop a system where the teachers could begin understanding how students can learn better and what support systems are needed.⁷³

Social identity theory examines how an individual or individuals organize(s) identity meanings in social situations and responds to its relevant feedback. It is where personal and social identities intertwine.⁷⁴ The theory examines what circumstances cause an individual to think of themselves as an individual or as a group/community member. Henri Tajfel, a social psychologist whose work in prejudice and social identity theory, examined how people develop

69 Ibid., 440.

70 Daniel R. Meister, *The Racial Mosaic: A Pre-History of Canadian Multiculturalism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021), 145.

71 Arzu Sosyal Altugan, "The Relationship between Cultural Identity and Learning," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 186 (2015): 1160, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.04.161>.

72 Gregory M Tweedie, Anja Dressler, and Cora-Leah Schmitt, "Supporting Reconnecting Immigrant Families with English Language Learners in Rural Schools: An Exploratory Study of Filipino Arrivals to Alberta," *Journal of Belonging, Identity, Language, and Diversity* 2, no. 2 (2018).

73 Ibid.

74 Michael A. Hogg and Dominic Abrams, *Intergroup Relations: Essential Readings* (Philadelphia, PA: Psychology Press, 2001), 102.

their sense of identity. His research led to the initial development of studies in the early 1970s on how cognitive factors allowed them to understand how people interpret their position in different social contexts, how that affects their perception of others (stereotyping), and what influences them.⁷⁵

Social identity theory was developed to explain how individuals create and define their place in society. If the global majority of Brampton, in this case, or an individual who considers themselves a part of the global majority can alter how they identify based on their stereotypes, it would allow them to be part of a larger group. They determine their value through this process. Social identity is linked with self-esteem (see figure 2.9)⁷⁶ and when cultural activities or means of participation among certain people are hindered, self-esteem, social identity and cultural identity are impacted.

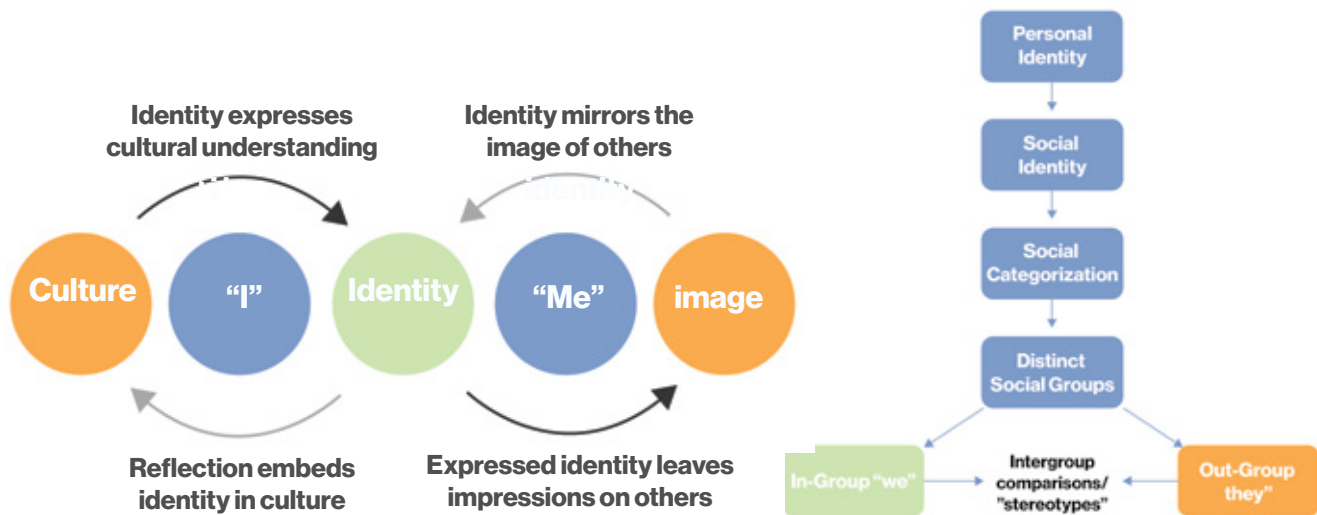


Figure 2.9 Cultural and Social Identity Diagram

⁷⁵ Ibid., 102.

⁷⁶ Dominic Abrams and Michael A. Hogg, *Social Identity Theory: Constructive and Critical Advances* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), 53

This has become significantly challenging for the South Asian residents of Brampton as many public and recreational amenities the city provides fail to address multicultural communities. This has been the case for festivals such as Diwali, Garba or recreationally for sports such as cricket or kabaddi, which often requires the resident to informally appropriate other spaces that they are at times chased out of. This change in identity and use of spaces in Brampton has also led to derogatory connotations for the city. News reports that outline “Diwali sounds like a war zone” become problematic in highlighting a specific group and blaming them as the issue. This lack of culturally reflective spaces and the language used to highlight them would encourage individuals to look away from their social group and, in ways, abandon their traditions, values, customs and beliefs towards what the news media has established as the norm of society.⁷⁷

The influence of the built environment on its users has long been part of discourses in the field of architecture. Architecture can provide a medium that allows users to express, act, and manifest ideas through interaction with others. It can develop a “social environment” by shaping the physical environment or be appropriated to be programmed to be one.⁷⁸ This thesis, however, focuses on how architecture can facilitate and support social and cultural development in Brampton. Cultural evolutionary theory, a theoretical framework that examines the development and passing down of cultural practices, beliefs and knowledge to other generations,⁷⁹ becomes integral in understanding how the lack of culturally reflective spaces can prevent its spread. These ideas can transmit through various mediums of social learning, such as imitating, observing or communicating. These ideas can transmit through various mediums of social learning, such as imitating, observing or

77 Janiece Campbell, “It sounded like a war zone, Peel Diwali celebrations spark calls to ban residential fire works or at least enforce the rules,” *Toronto Star*, October 27, 2022.

78 Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Intentions in Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press, 1997), 17.

79 Nicole Creanza, Oren Kolodny, and Marcus W. Feldman, “Cultural Evolutionary Theory: How Culture Evolves and Why It Matters,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 114, no. 30 (2017): 7782, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1620732114>.

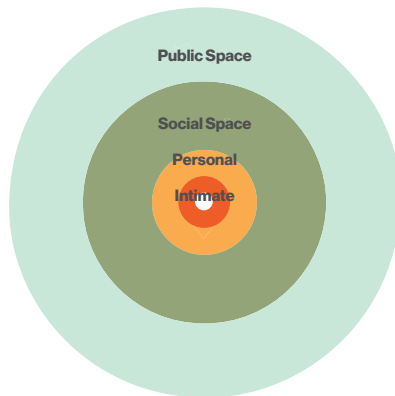


Figure 2.10 Social Theory of Space



Figure 2.11 Right to the City Illustration

communicating. These cultural traits that become easier to learn or remember are the ones that are successfully passed down through generations and lead to the continuation of cultural traditions. The study also outlines the main differences between biological and cultural traits wherein social constructs influence the latter. The social theory of space divulges into the relationship between these social constructs and the built environment, revealing how these physical spaces are transformed and shaped by social processes shaping how we interact and behave in space. Therefore, built environments can “shape the dispositions constituting social identity.”⁸⁰ Public spaces and programs like parks or libraries encourage social interaction and participation. Still, more importantly, this can influence how people use and interact with the space and promote or discourage certain types of social behaviour informed by societal norms. For example, the construct of power relations and their role in the social theory of space can report how planning decisions such as the placement of libraries which will be discussed later in this thesis, or the programs offered in a park can reflect the interests and priorities of a small community or pressure society itself can exclude or marginalize certain groups.

80 John Archer, “Social Theory of Space: Architecture and the Production of Self, Culture, and Society,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 64, no. 4 (January 2005): 431, <https://doi.org/10.2307/25068197>.

Edward Soja's work on radical spatial consciousness encourages new strategies among political organizations and activists to work for greater social justice and equality and to fight against the most oppressive forces in the world today.⁸¹ Spatial justice, in his definition, is "the fair and equitable distribution in the space of socially valued resources and opportunities to use them."⁸² The inclusion of space for the public or through the phrase "right to the city" proposed by French Marxist philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre in the book *Le Droit à la Ville [The Right to the City]*, examines how capitalism and rapid urban development have neglected the people that shape them and is instead informed by those in power. Lefebvre argues that users of urban spaces should have the right to access the urban milieu, public services and amenities such as transportation, leisure, and housing, but that inclusive and democratic urban development policies should drive these spaces.⁸³ This would encourage a diverse range of users and groups to highlight how they intend and occupy spaces to inform decision-making often led by the city.

A healthy and engaging public space for Brampton's multicultural users is essential in creating interactions between the residents and allowing them to express themselves and their differences. This would not only support their sociocultural development but also inform them of the practices and beliefs of others around them. The decline of public spaces that are non-commercial, democratic and non-discriminatory is apparent in how the term public space has been redefined. This decline can be credited to a few ongoing issues on how public spaces are designed and programmed to be used. The increased dependency on vehicular transportation has separated and taken over community spaces from its residents, the control of how

81 Felipe Hernández, *Bhabha for Architects* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 97.

82 Ibid., 97.

83 Mark Purcell, "Possible Worlds: Henri Lefebvre and the Right to the City," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 36, no. 1 (2014): 142

often and for what purpose a space can be used has limited or prevented its occupancy and flexibility, and reprogramming of public spaces has been discouraged by creating fixed infrastructure.⁸⁴ Public libraries, however, have established themselves as a place that is for everyone, providing a low-stress environment that is non-commercial, interactive, sociable and provides resources and amenities for personal development. While the role of the public library has started to shift in the digital age, its role as a catalyst for cultural and social exchange continues to thrive through its resources and programs such as making or through group workshops.⁸⁵ Libraries as a medium for public space can begin to redefine how one can develop their social and cultural identities through its use and its public realm. Public libraries have also been associated with “Third Space” to define their place and role in society.⁸⁶ In *The Great Good Place*, Ray Oldenburg coined the term third place. The author outlines that the first place we spend our time is home, the second place is work, and the third place is where people exchange ideas and thoughts, build relationships, relax and do what they like.⁸⁷ As libraries change and adapt, this thesis focuses on how their role as a third space can help support Brampton’s multicultural community. Libraries can play an essential role in promoting social and cultural exchange that has currently been restricted through the city’s neglect in creating culturally-accommodating spaces. The mood of the third space should be playful. It should have a grounded profile so that it does appear to be out of scale for its user, while also acting as a leveler that does not discriminate based on gender, beliefs, socio-economic status, or age. This thesis also recognizes libraries’ importance for community building and social interaction.

84 Reid Ewing and Robert Cervero, “Travel and the Built Environment: A Meta-Analysis,” *Journal of the American Planning Association* 76, no. 3 (2010): 271

85 Joyce Sternheim and Rob Bruijnzeels, *Imagination and Participation: Next Step in Public Library Architecture* (Rotterdam: nai010 Publishers, 2022), 16-17.

86 Aat Vos, *How to Create a Relevant Public Space: Third Places for All* (Rotterdam: Nai010 Publishers, 2017), 14.

87 Ray Oldenburg, *The Great Good Place: Cafés, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons, and Other Hangouts at the Heart of a Community* (Philadelphia: Da Capo Press, 2005), 22.



[planting the seed]

3

Chapter 3

Public Library as a Social Incubator

This chapter examines the history and role of libraries in our society and how their purpose and responsibilities have changed. It also dissects each of Brampton's existing eight libraries to understand the spatial conditions, programs offered and their role in their respective neighbourhoods. Case study analyses of three libraries that value social engagement and participation are also conducted to highlight how architects have challenged and addressed the inclusion and flexibility of programs within the buildings. This chapter then supports the design intentions and interventions of this thesis.

3.1 Evolution and Changing Role of Public Libraries

The history of libraries has followed humans' pursuit of developing a physical mode of communication, which became written records to preserve information and memory.⁸⁸ The written artifacts were preserved on clay tablets, papyrus or vellum (sheep skin), which required a suitable environment to preserve them carefully.⁸⁹ As a result, the early libraries developed to organize, document and store these artifacts. While the history of libraries transformed through the ancient period into the Middle Ages, where it was commonly associated with the monasteries, and then with the development of universities and subscription libraries, it has for a significant portion of its history been a private institution that was for the wealthy and elite. Access to such libraries was limited, and books in monastic, university and subscription libraries were often chained to the shelf, preventing the books from being checked out, stolen or moved (see figure 3.0).⁹⁰

However, this thesis will focus on public libraries open to the general public, which, in their early history in Canada, were funded by philanthropists such as Andrew Carnegie and in more recent years by the government through taxes. While libraries have seen a shift in their use and purpose in the digital age, their role as a place that provides resources for knowledge and self-development is still central to their mandate.

88 Elmer D. Johnson, *History of Libraries in the Western World* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2000), 7

89 Stuart Murray, *The Library: An Illustrated History* (New York, NY: Skyhorns Pub, 2019), 12

90 David Allan, "'The Advantages of Literature': The Subscription Library in Georgian Britain," in *The Meaning of the Library: A Cultural History*, ed. Alice Crawford (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), 108.



Figure 3.0 Chained books in the Hereford Cathedral Library

The growth and development of the public library during the mid-1800s have often been linked to three factors: an increase in the production of books due to industrialization; progress in education/literacy; and the importance of developing technology.⁹¹ The 1850 Public Libraries act introduced in Britain was when the role of libraries shifted from a private collection towards a sign of a developed community with civic and cultural pride.⁹² Hence the number of public libraries that were funded by taxes began to rise. However, its identity as a resource for the public changed when Andrew Carnegie, an American businessman and philanthropist, saw how educating the public could benefit the industrial, economic and social growth of cities and, ultimately, the nation.⁹³ Another perspective on the growth of the public library is credited to the theory of social conditions, which suggests that the importance of libraries was a result of multiple social forces, such as political

⁹¹ Elmer D. Johnson, *History of Libraries in the Western World* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2000), 6

⁹² Alistair Black, Simon Pepper, and Kaye Bagshaw, *Books, Buildings and Social Engineering: Early Public Libraries in Britain from Past to Present* (London: Routledge, 2017), 29.

⁹³ J Jeffrey Brison, *Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Canada: American Philanthropy and the Arts and Letters in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), 50.

conditions, economic growth, and support of social activities.⁹⁴ Social control theory, however, outlines that the increased desire for public libraries resulted from the elite trying to educate and control the masses.⁹⁵ Its role in society is to keep the so-called lower class under the observation of the so-called upper class. Although I cannot entirely agree with the latter, in Great Britain, two policies, the Committee of Public Libraries Act in 1847, and the Education Act of 1870, were introduced to increase literacy which led to an increased demand for public libraries. As a result, the number of cities with public libraries rose from 75 in 1877 to over 300 in 1900.⁹⁶ This was soon followed in the United States of America, where the increase in libraries has been linked with positive factors such as gaining wealth from its natural resources which led to an increase in philanthropy and government funding for public libraries as a way to promote education and social progress. An increase in population, the industrialization of the country that required information/resources for its workers to access, and lastly its democratic principles to allow all citizens to have access to a free flow of information.⁹⁷ The United States saw the construction of its first public library supported by taxes in Peterborough, New Hampshire, in 1833. Soon after, libraries in Boston, New York and other cities were founded, partly funded by Carnegie's grants. In Canada, the Ontario Free Libraries Act of 1882 was authorized to increase the number of public libraries using taxes. In the same year, New Brunswick also established its first public library. The increase in development was due in part to the established Mechanics Institutes, which allowed them to become public libraries, along with Andrew Carnegie's philanthropy that built 125 libraries between 1901 and 1917.⁹⁸

94 Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2020), 175

95 Thomas Augst, "Introduction: American Libraries and Agencies of Culture," *AMSJ American Studies*, 42, no.3 (Fall 2001): 8, <https://journals.ku.edu/amerstud/article/view/3067>.

96 Johnson, *History of Libraries in the Western World*, 201.

97 *Ibid.*, 224.

98 *Ibid.*, 268.



Figure 3.1 Interior of Peterborough Town Library

Public libraries had expanded into most of Canada's provinces by the 1920s; however, 40% of the population still needed access.⁹⁹ The expansion of public libraries in comparison to private and subscription libraries is also in part due to the continued development of the role of such a building or space. In its earliest application, it was an archive and collection that could preserve the contents within a smaller community of members. With the technological advancements of the printing press and the reproduction of books that became available to the public, libraries became a "warehouse of books." Its more established role in society as a social incubator began after the effects of the Great Depression had riddled communities with unemployment, low revenues and a lack of commercial activity.¹⁰⁰ Libraries at that time allowed residents to educate, socialize and learn while being provided with the democratic freedom of unbiased information. As the user group of libraries shifted from the wealthy elite or the educated towards the underprivileged who did not have access or amenities to learn, its programs and resources too adapted to provide sufficient opportunities for self-development. The 21st century brought with it even more mediums and resources to consume all of

⁹⁹ Ibid., 270.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 271.

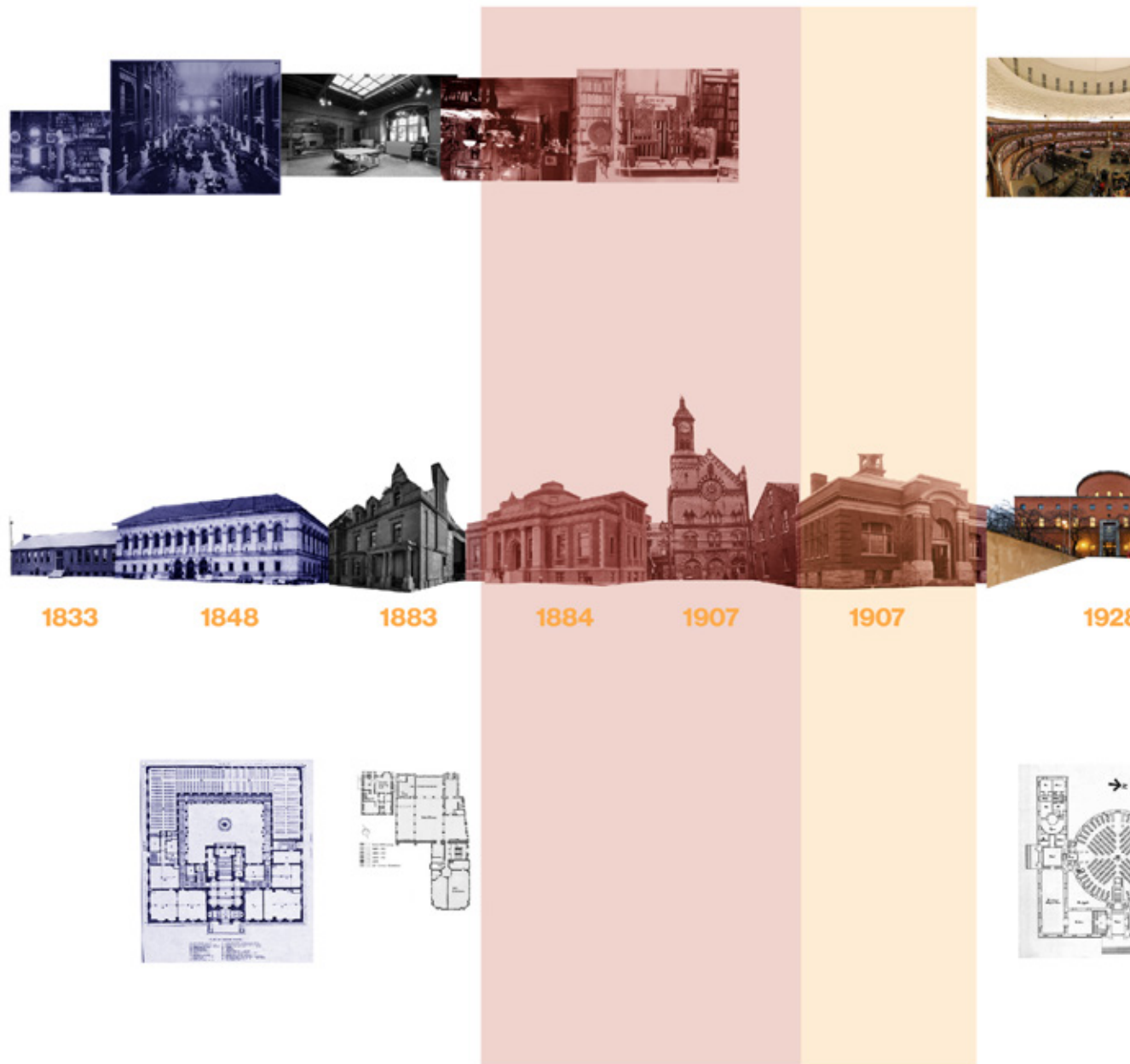


Figure 3.2 Timeline of Public Libraries

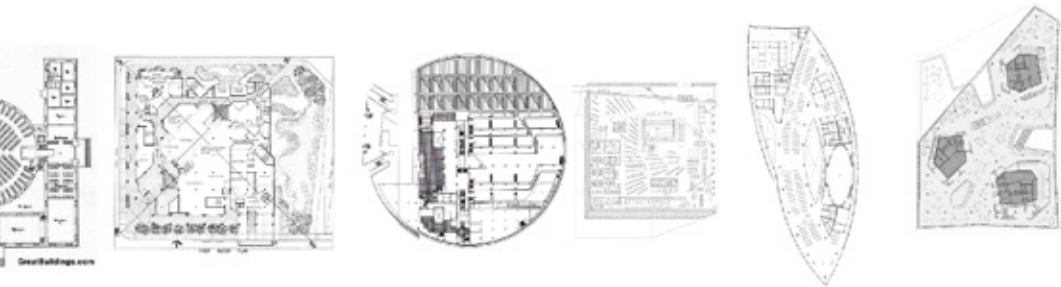




Figure 3.3 Main Atrium space in the Oodi Helsinki Central library

the information that exists with the introduction of the digital library.¹⁰¹ With the increasing availability of the internet, the way we consume information changed. While some did (and still do) not have internet access, libraries began offering computers to access digital collections or for private use.

Digital libraries have reduced the need for physical resources within libraries, which raises the question of the need and role of the 21st-century library. While the differences among scholars, architects, city planners etc., on the discourse of libraries' future continue to develop, their importance as a social incubator in our communities becomes a common theme. In his book *Palaces for People*, Eric Klineberg argues that libraries should not be treated as an amenity but as part of the city's social infrastructure.¹⁰² For example, unconventional programs such as tea time were introduced at a Library in New York, and participation between elders of different ethnicities began to emerge, making it a regular schedule.¹⁰³ This space plays a pivotal role when we engage in our community; it creates social and creative interaction and

¹⁰¹ Michael Lesk, *Understanding Digital Libraries* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2005), 17.

¹⁰² Eric Klineberg, *Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life* (New York: Broadway Books, 2019), 32.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 38.



Figure 3.4 Oodi Helsinki Central Wlibrary's reading space

establishes a sense of belonging. Programs such as cafes, restaurants, civic spaces, recreation centers and libraries are all examples of third places. The library, however, is the only free democratic institution where its users are not discriminated against based on gender, socio-economic status, race, ethnicity or age. A study was conducted on behalf of the Norwegian Research Council by Public Libraries Arenas for Citizenship (PLACE), to understand the library's role as a meeting place and whom it serves.¹⁰⁴ The study found that, "It is a place where people accidentally run into neighbors and friends, but it is also a place where a substantial proportion report being accidentally engaged in conversations with strangers." The study also outlines that a significant portion of respondents reported that they had been exposed to the plurality of the community and learned about otherness. It allowed them to interact with a highly diverse ethnic, cultural, social, and generational group based on activities and programming done consciously through the library organizers.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Svanhild Aabø and Ragnar Audunson, "Use of Library Space and the Library as Place," *Library & Information Science Research* 34, no. 2 (2012): 141, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2011.06.002>.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 141.

While libraries have maintained their reputation as a resource and collection, digitization and how one accesses these mediums has stagnated its model. The digital divide has disrupted who can access these new modes of resources, but the availability of information also brings into question the role of libraries.¹⁰⁶ How information is processed, stored and provided has allowed users to interact with the library virtually. While public programs such as community/ recreation centers or art galleries typically require the user to interact physically with the space, the library too has evolved to include programs such as makers spaces, renting skates or musical instruments, among others. Its changing identity must develop how we interact and exchange information in its new context.



Figure 3.5 Library Facility Master-Plan Document cover

¹⁰⁶ Joyce Sternheim and Rob Bruijnzeels, *Imagination and Participation: Next Step in Public Library Architecture* (Rotterdam: nai010 Publishers, 2022), 12-13.

For example, the percentage of seating has always represented spatial requirements and programming and how many bookshelves are present within the boundaries of the library.¹⁰⁷ To reimagine a new library that fosters curiosity and collaboration, it is first necessary to understand what the current libraries provide and to examine other libraries that have successfully demonstrated this change. Design principles/strategies are derived through this analysis to reimagine Brampton's ninth library.

3.2 Brampton's Eight Libraries

Around 1858, Brampton's first library was part of a Mechanics Institute, which at the time was a center where working men could voluntarily seek resources for self-improvement through education.¹⁰⁸ As part of the Mechanics Institute, it offered several different means of education including lectures, libraries, and reading rooms. Its first public library, however, opened up a few decades later in 1887, closer to Downtown Brampton, and books were not available to be checked out. Andrew Carnegie's grants allowed the construction of a new public library in 1907, which was located in the heart of present-day Downtown Brampton.¹⁰⁹ That building was used as a library until 1974, after which it was preserved as a heritage building that is now used by the city of Brampton. At present, Brampton has eight library branches serving its population of over 700,000 residents. To understand how many people are served on average by one library, a drawing comparing data from the populations of Canada's ten largest cities and the number of libraries within each city is consolidated in Figure 3.6. Through this comparison, it becomes apparent that in the nine other cities, one library serves 37,000 residents on

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 12-13.

¹⁰⁸ Chad Gaffield, "Mechanics' Institutes," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/mechanics-institutes>.

¹⁰⁹ "Brampton Library," *Academic Dictionaries and Encyclopedias*, accessed December 22, 2022, <https://en-academic.com/dic.nsf/enwiki/1101684>

average. In Brampton however, one library serves around 86,500 residents, which is more than double the norm. As the city continues to see significant growth, projected to rise to 850,000 residents in the next ten years,¹¹⁰ the need for more libraries that offer programs catering to Brampton's diverse population becomes increasingly important.

In response, the city has acknowledged its lack of investments in libraries and in 2022, released the "Brampton Library Facilities Master Plan," which is intended to be treated as a "blueprint" that guides the city in its future library developments.¹¹¹ While the document is a positive and encouraging sign of the city's interest in developing new library facilities, acknowledging the library's changing role in our community, and providing services at various scales, it fails to outline what makes the future of libraries successful for the multicultural residents of Brampton. Its guiding principles are: to be aligned with the future vision of Brampton; to keep pace with Brampton's population growth; to supporting its communities; and to offer an inclusive space of personal development and space of creativity/incubation, which demonstrate a positive reinforcement that the city intends on addressing its current issues.¹¹² However, the Master Plan primarily focuses on how much space should be allotted to building new facilities and where they should be located with the expansion of Brampton's housing development. The location of the libraries in the document is driven by economic, housing and commercial growth. This can be understood through its placement of two district branches and one neighbourhood branch in communities yet to be developed (see figure 3.7).



29,300



43,000

¹¹⁰ City of Brampton, "Census Profile: Population and Dwelling," *Brampton GeoHub*, accessed October 19, 2022, <https://geohub.brampton.ca/pages/profile-pop-dwelling>

¹¹¹ Monteith-Brown Planning Consultants Ltd and Perkins & Will, "Brampton Library, Library Facilities Master Plan," January 2022, i. https://issuu.com/bramlib/docs/brampton_library_fmp_final

¹¹² *Ibid.*, ii.



Figure 3.6 Library comparison between Canada’s 10 largest cities

On Average 1 Library serves 37,000 Residents
In Brampton 1 Library Serves 86,230 Residents

One of the libraries (Four Corners) is to be replaced by a more extensive central library in Downtown Brampton. The other four are smaller neighbourhood branches spread across the city to fill its gaps. The Master Plan also fails to address what new programs and spatial conditions should be included in these libraries to better support and represent its already underserved multicultural communities. Planning to build new libraries in communities that are not yet developed and providing smaller branches to the already pressing demand is a failure to truly acknowledge the underlying issues. As the future of the library's role continues to shift to facilitate different methods of self-development, it is first essential to understand the clinics, programs, spaces, and resources needed to support its multicultural residents. In this process, Brampton's eight existing libraries are examined to highlight what is currently being offered to residents and what could be incorporated into a design that celebrates the diversity of its population and fosters a sense of belonging in the community.

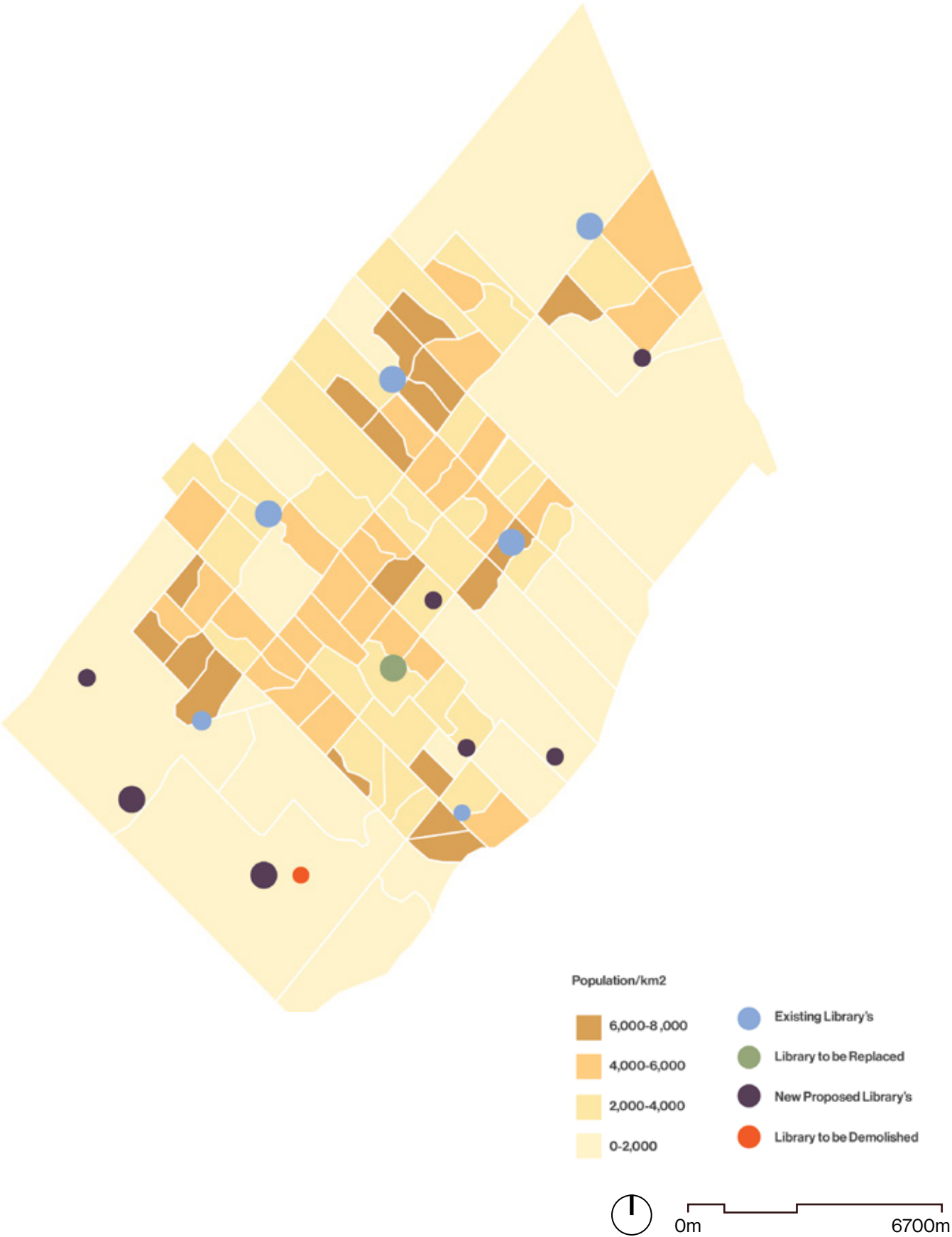


Figure 3.7 Map of Brampton's population density in comparison to existing and proposed libraries



Figure 3.8 Four Corners Library entrance

Four Corners Branch

Downtown Brampton, Brampton, Ontario

Architect: N/A

Year: 1973

Gross Area: 7.236 sqm

Number of Floors: Two

Total Visits: 239,097

Major Renovation: 2011

- Library
- Residential

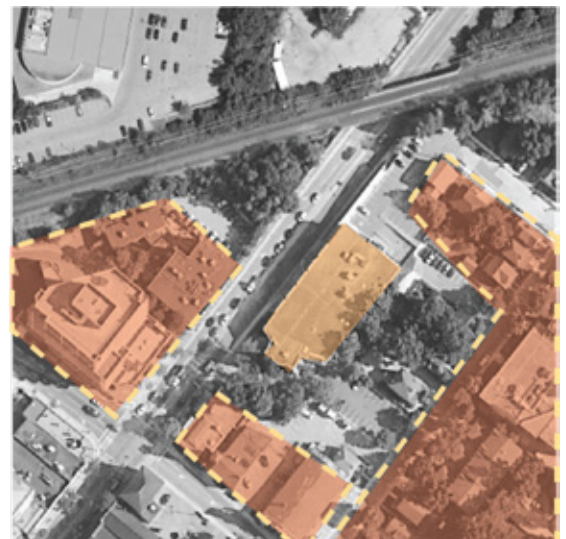


Figure 3.9 Four Corners Branch Site

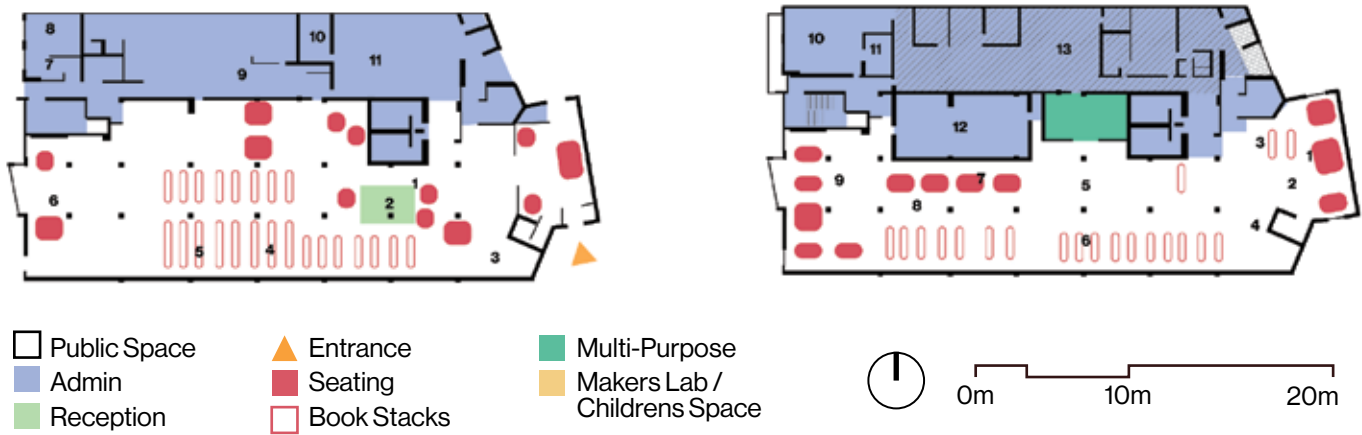


Figure 3.10 Library Plans

The Four Corners branch is a two-storey library considered the central library located in Downtown Brampton. This stand-alone building succeeded the existing Carnegie Library in the 1970s and now houses the administrative offices for the city's network of libraries on its second floor. This branch offers the second-fewest programs and is limited to one multi-purpose room. Should the city discuss engaging a central library, this branch would be closed within the library masterplan.¹¹³ Over 110,500 people currently reside in the library's surrounding 3 km catchment area, with an average age of 39 years and average household income of \$80,900 which is the lowest in comparison to the other branches.¹¹⁴

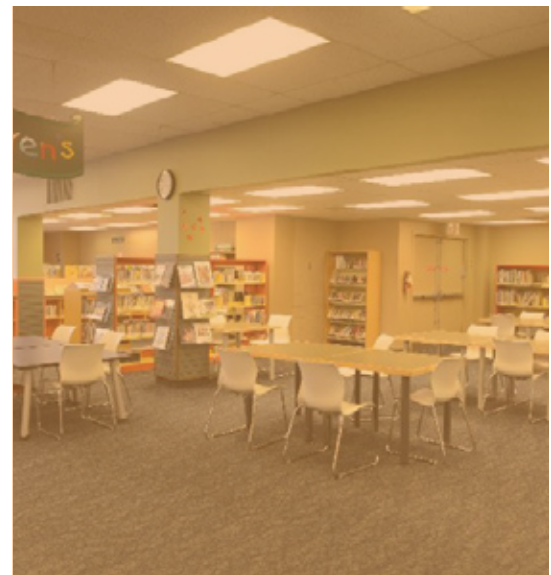


Figure 3.11 Branch Interior

¹¹³ Monteith-Brown Planning Consultants Ltd and Perkins & Will, "Brampton Library, Library Facilities Master Plan," January 2022, 60. https://issuu.com/bramlib/docs/brampton_library_fmp_final

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 59



Figure 3.12 Library Main Entrance

Chinguacousy Branch

Bramalea, Brampton, Ontario

Architect: ward99 Architects

Year: 1982

Gross Area: 4,490 sqm

Number of Floors: Two

Total Visits: 464,171

Major Renovation: 2017

- Library
- Civic Center



Figure 3.13 Branch Site

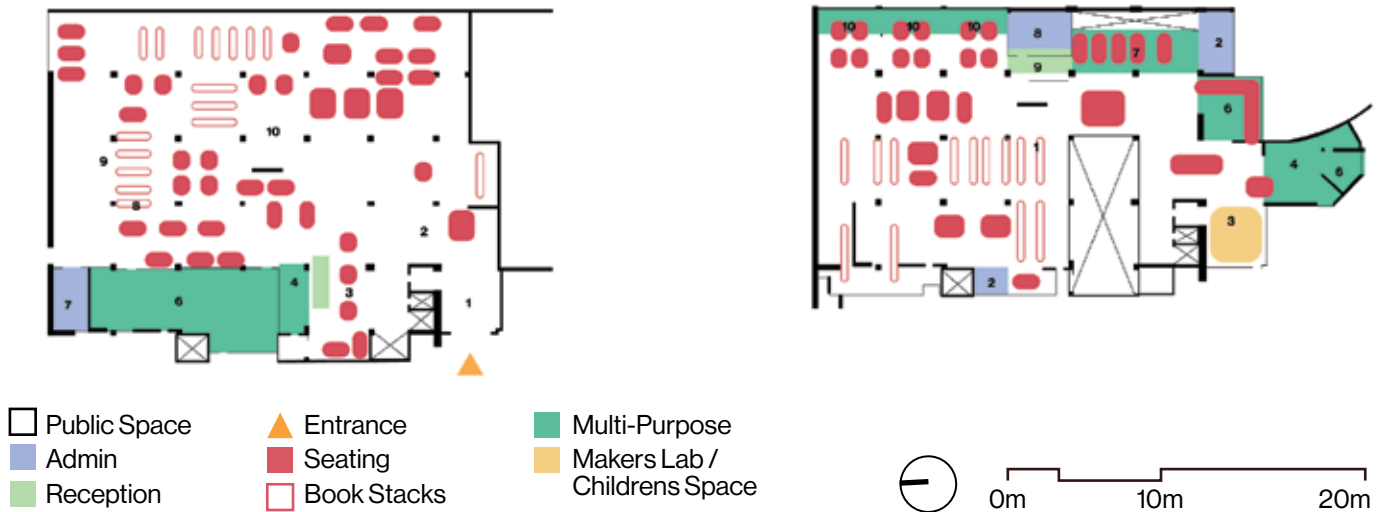


Figure 3.14 Library Plans

The Chinguacousy branch is a two-storey library that is part of a civic center complex located in the Bramalea neighborhood of Brampton. The civic center includes programs such as social services, religious community services and the Lester B. Pearson theater. It is part of a larger complex comprising Bramalea City center mall, recreation, retail and entertainment services. This branch is considered the busiest and includes programs such as a maker space, recording studio and multi-purpose spaces.¹¹⁵ In its surrounding 3 km catchment area, over 90,000 people currently reside with an average age of 39 years and an average household income of \$81,250, which is the second lowest in comparison to the other branches.¹¹⁶

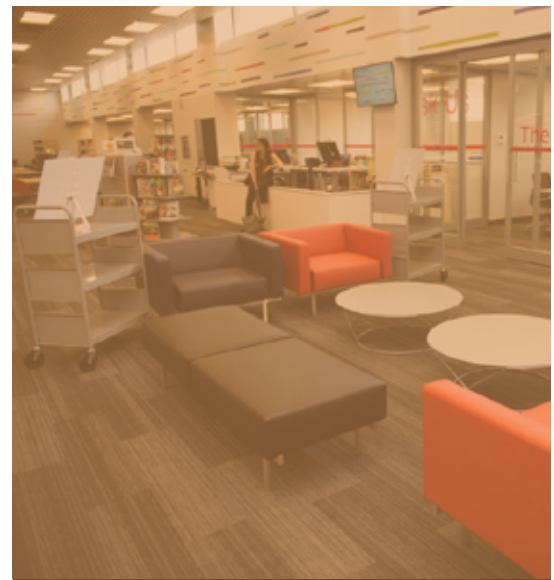


Figure 3.15 Branch Interior

¹¹⁵ Monteith-Brown Planning Consultants Ltd and Perkins & Will, "Brampton Library, Library Facilities Master Plan," January 2022, 52. https://issuu.com/bramlib/docs/brampton_library_fmp_final

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 52.



Figure 3.16 Library entrance

Cyril Clark Branch

Heartlake, Brampton, Ontario

Architect: N/A

Year: 1973

Gross Area: 2,355 sqm

Number of Floors: One

Total Visits: 214,354

Major Renovation: 2010

- Library
- Residential
- Rec Center



Figure 3.17 Branch Site

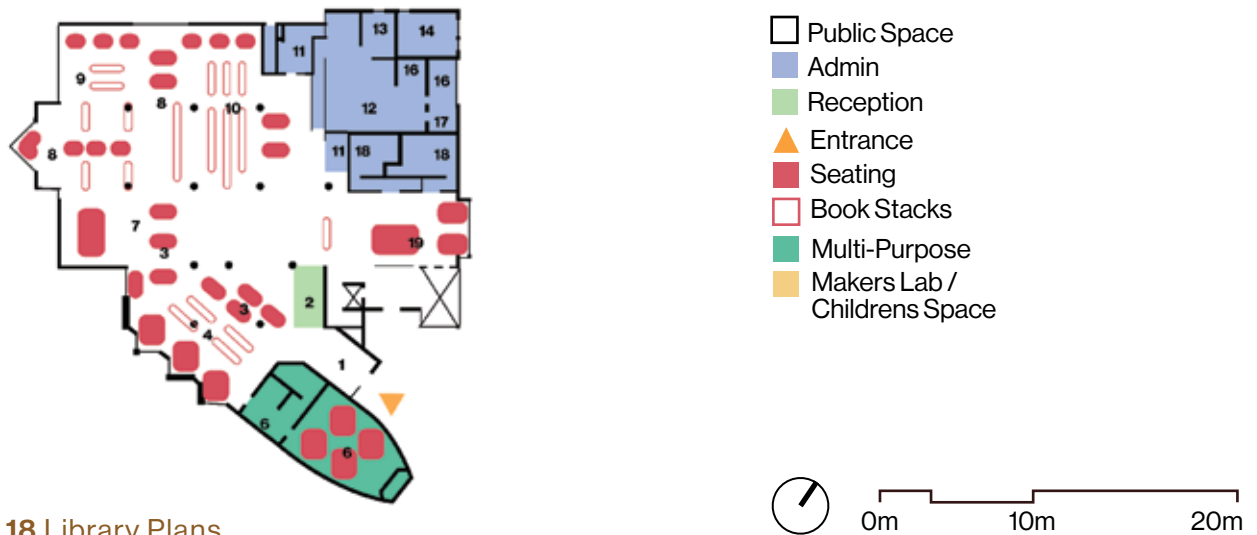


Figure 3.18 Library Plans

The Cyril Clark branch is a stand-alone library located in the Heartlake neighborhood and is part of a civic campus that includes a recreation center. This branch has the highest number of books and DVDs borrowed but has among the lowest number of visitations or computer sessions as it lacks public workstations that are present in other libraries.¹¹⁷ Cyril Clark has also seen recent renovations aimed at creating a comfortable environment for its users. In its surrounding 3 km catchment area, over 92,000 people currently reside with an average age of 37 years and an average household income of \$108,000.¹¹⁸

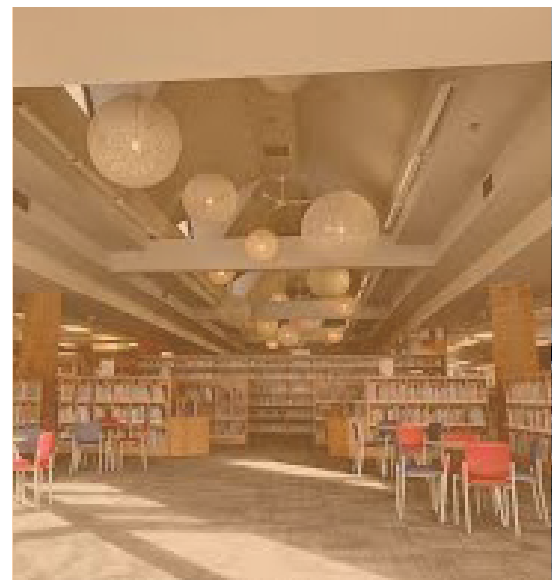


Figure 3.19 Branch Interior

117 Monteith-Brown Planning Consultants Ltd and Perkins & Will, "Brampton Library, Library Facilities Master Plan," January 2022, 56. https://issuu.com/bramlib/docs/brampton_library_fmp_final

118 Ibid., 56.



Figure 3.20 Library entrance

South Fletchers Branch

Ray Lawson, Brampton, Ontario

Architect: TBD Architects

Year: 1997

Gross Area: 1,185 sqm

Number of Floors: One

Total Visits: 299,389

- Library
- Rec Center



Figure 3.21 Branch Site



Figure 3.22 Library Plans

The South Fletchers branch is part of a multi-purpose community center that includes a gymnasium, four ice hockey rinks, aquatics, fitness center and auditorium. In addition, the library is close to the Sheridan College Davis Campus. However, the library does not have multi-program spaces. Its open layout allows for change or accommodating other programs, such as kids' reading/play space and also has a dedicated desk for immigration services. Within its catchment area of 3 km, the community's population is over 104,500 residents with an average age of 36 years and the average household income is \$93,000.¹¹⁹

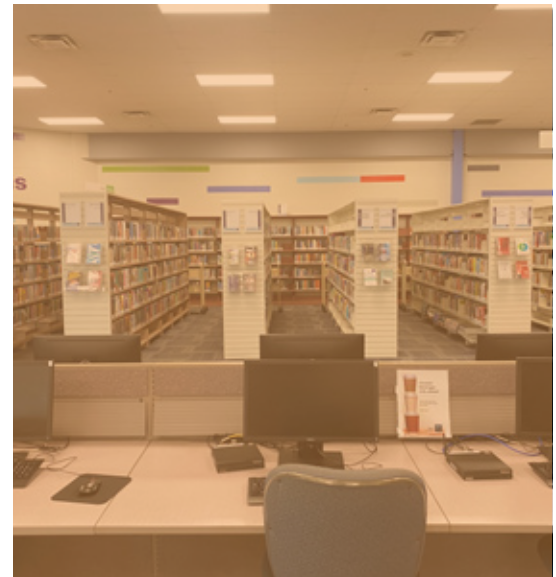


Figure 3.23 Branch Interior

119 Monteith-Brown Planning Consultants Ltd and Perkins & Will, "Brampton Library, Library Facilities Master Plan," January 2022, 69. https://issuu.com/bramlib/docs/brampton_library_fmp_final



Figure 3.24 Library entrance

Mount Pleasant Branch

Mount Pleasant Village, Brampton, Ontario

Architect: MC Architects

Year: 2011

Gross Area: 1,550 sqm

Number of Floors: Two

Total Visits: 418,731

- Library
- School



Figure 3.25 Branch Site



Figure 3.26 Library Plans

The Mount Pleasant Village branch is a two-story library connected to a historic train station and an elementary school. This library is the second most visited branch in the city and continues to see a significant increase in usage. As part of the library Master Plan, this branch is to see additions of makerspace and additional programming for the students at the adjacent school. In its surrounding 3 km catchment area, over 101,500 people currently reside with an average age of 33.6 years which makes it the youngest serving branch. The average household income in the catchment area is \$111,250.¹²⁰



Figure 3.27 Branch Interior

120 Monteith-Brown Planning Consultants Ltd and Perkins & Will, "Brampton Library, Library Facilities Master Plan," January 2022, 66. https://issuu.com/bramlib/docs/brampton_library_fmp_final



Figure 3.28 Library entrance

Gore Meadows Branch

Gore Meadows Brampton, Ontario

Architect: N/A

Year: 1973

Gross Area: 2,973 sqm

Number of Floors: One

Total Visits: 388,227

- Library
- Rec Center



Figure 3.29 Branch Site

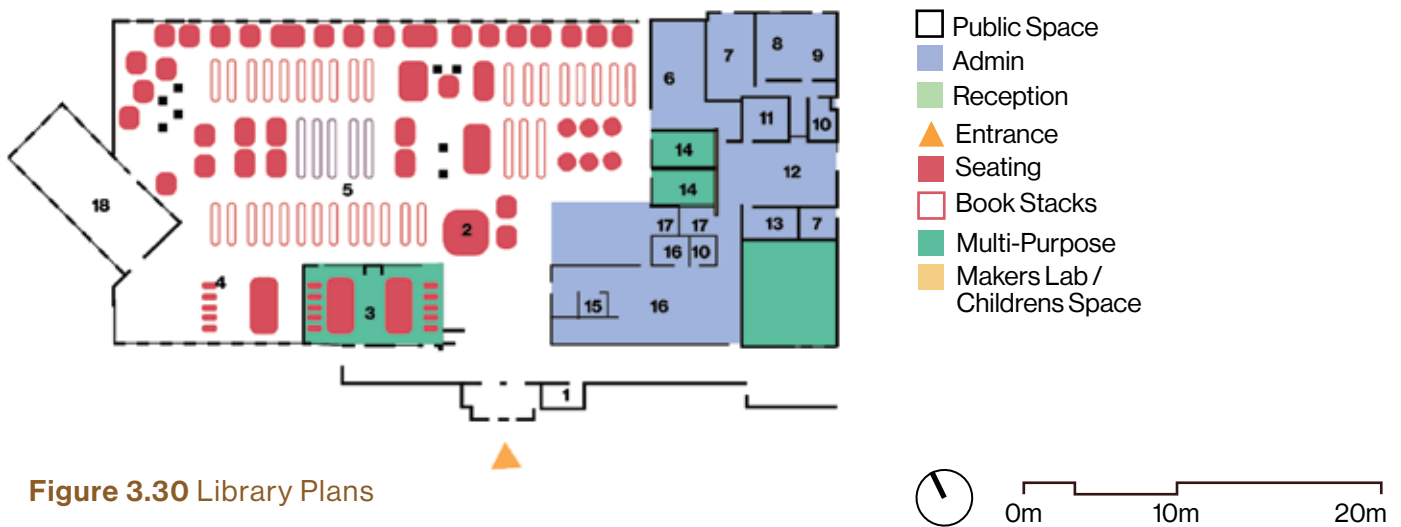


Figure 3.30 Library Plans

The Gore Meadows branch is located in the northeast corner of Brampton and is part of a multi-use community center. The community center includes programs such as an aquatics pool, gymnasium, fitness center, outdoor ice rink and playground. As the current neighborhood continues to develop, this branch is predicted to see more traffic and current renovations include a makerspace and an additional multi-purpose room. In its surrounding 3 km catchment area, over 56,600 people currently reside with an average age of 34.7 years and average household income of \$116,300 which is about 18% over the city’s average.¹²¹

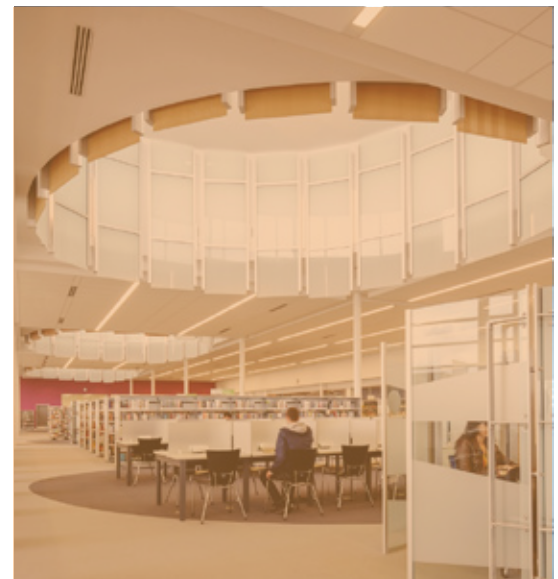


Figure 3.31 Branch Interior

121 Monteith-Brown Planning Consultants Ltd and Perkins & Will, “Brampton Library, Library Facilities Master Plan,” January 2022, 63. https://issuu.com/bramlib/docs/brampton_library_fmp_final



Figure 3.32 Library entrance

Springdale Branch

Ray Lawson, Brampton, Ontario

Architect: RDH Architects

Year: 2018

Gross Area: 2,323 sqm

Number of Floors: One

Total Visits: 296,517

Library
Commercial



Figure 3.33 Branch Site

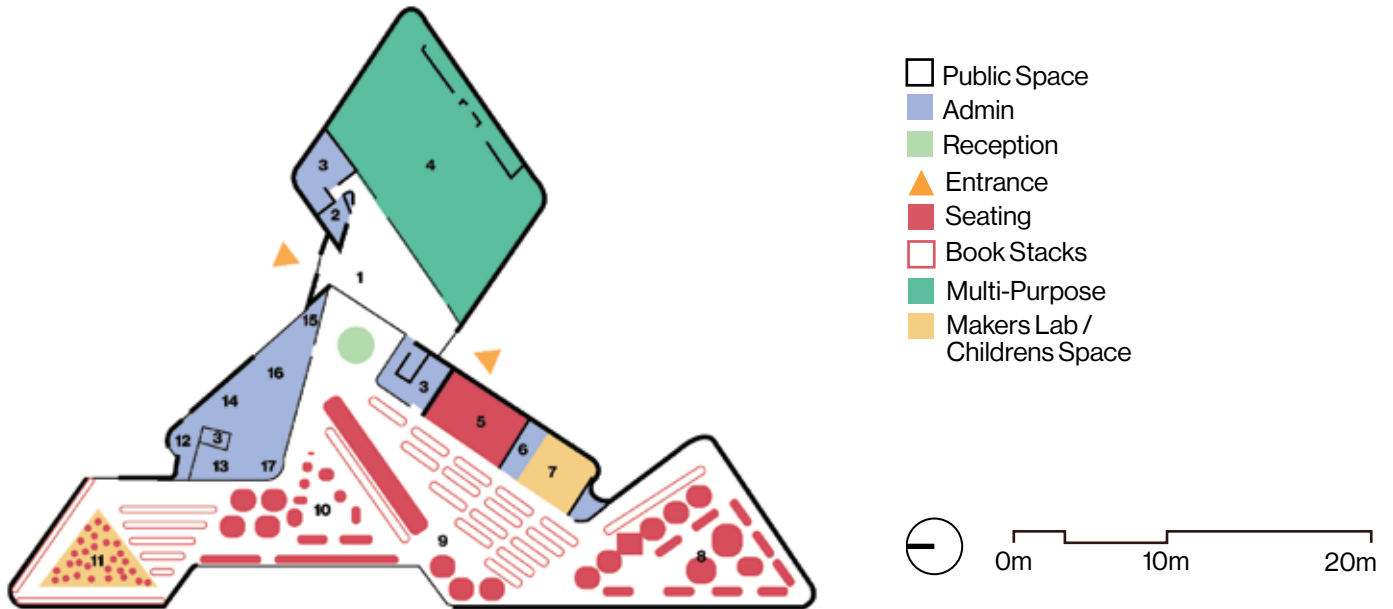


Figure 3.34 Library Plans

The Springdale branch is located within the Springdale neighborhood and is a stand-alone library with an outdoor playground. The library was designed by RDH Architects and opened in 2018 as an “award winning design with sustainable building principles” and is part of a retail complex. The library’s programs include a dedicated children’s space, maker space and two multi-purpose rooms which make up around 16% of the overall footprint. The surrounding 3 km catchment area has one of the highest growth rates of 19% with an estimated 124,000 residents.¹²² The median age is 35.4 years and the household income is just over \$102,000.¹²³

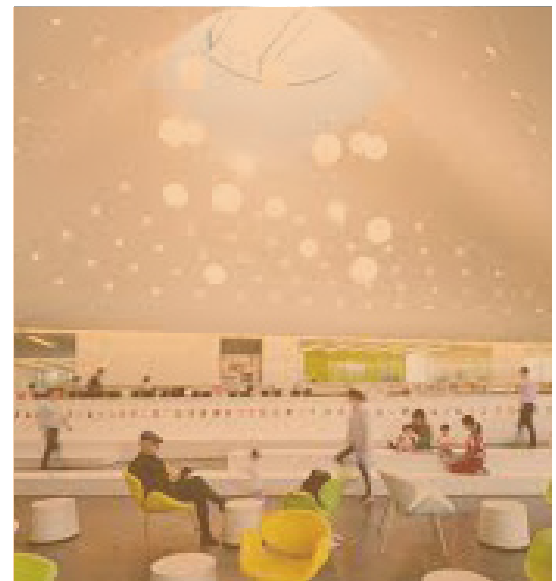


Figure 3.35 Branch Interior

¹²² Monteith-Brown Planning Consultants Ltd and Perkins & Will, “Brampton Library, Library Facilities Master Plan,” January 2022, 74. https://issuu.com/bramlib/docs/brampton_library_fmp_final

¹²³ Ibid., 74.



Figure 3.36 Library entrance

South West Branch

Huttonville, Brampton, Ontario

Architect: ward99 Architects

Year: 2020

Gross Area: 557 sqm

Number of Floors: One

Total Visits: n/a

- Library
- Residential
- Commercial

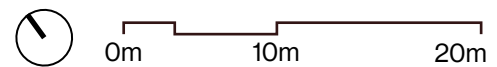


Figure 3.37 Branch Site



- Public Space
- Admin
- Reception
- Entrance
- Seating
- Book Stacks
- Multi-Purpose
- Makers Lab / Childrens Space

Figure 3.38 Library Plan



The South West branch, located in the Huttonville neighborhood, is part of the city’s interim branch in a retail plaza. It is a temporary branch to serve the new community that is still developing and growing. The current population of its 3 km catchment area is estimated at 39,000 residents in 2020 with a median age of 35 years and an average household income of 127,000, which is the highest in the city.¹²⁴ The library’s appearance and scale correlate to its surrounding plaza, where it was designed to fit in as a neighborhood service and accommodates children’s programs and play space. Within the library Master Plan, this library is slated to close down for a larger district-oriented one.



Figure 3.39 Branch Interior

124 Monteith-Brown Planning Consultants Ltd and Perkins & Will, "Brampton Library, Library Facilities Master Plan," January 2022, 72. https://issuu.com/bramlib/docs/brampton_library_fmp_final

Library Analysis

In the preliminary study of Brampton's eight libraries, it was apparent that each branch has its unique relationship with its surroundings. While some are connected to community centers, others are part of a civic center or retail plaza. The Four Corners library, which is considered the central library, currently has the lowest number of visits per square meter, part of which may owe to its location which is isolated from its neighbors by a major roadway, in addition to its lack of parking and lack of programs. It is also interesting to observe that most of the libraries within the city are part of either an existing urban center or a developing one, such as the Gore Meadows branch, Springdale, Chinguacousy, South Fletchers, Cyril Clark and the South West branch. An analysis of space allotted for administration, multi-purpose, maker space/children's space and public space in the libraries after their renovations determined that, on average, 1.1% of the gross area is assigned for children's/maker space and 10.6% is assigned for a multi-purpose room. The current allocation of alternative learning and self-development resources are undervalued. As the shift with the digitization of the library continues to take place, it is imperative to understand what programs are needed not only for the residents of Brampton but also to create collaborative and socially engaging spaces that cultivate opportunities to discover each individual's social and cultural identity. Discourse on critical pedagogy uses this as a base to analyze the nature of learning and deconstruct the hierarchy of command that is currently being established.¹²⁵ However, self-guided learning methods such as making, speaking, listening, collaborating, engaging or watching, open up interpretation, autonomy and self-developed paths that inform the individual to form their own understanding.¹²⁶ This is also important for the residents of Brampton, where cultural diversity can often lead to misinterpretation of others through stereotypes established by the

¹²⁵ Michael Bentley, Stephen C. Fleury, and Jim Garrison, "Critical Constructivism for Teaching and Learning in a Democratic Society," *Journal of Thought* 42, no. 3-4 (2007): 9, <https://doi.org/10.2307/jthought.42.3-4.9>.

¹²⁶ Ibid

media. As the library becomes the place of self-exploration/development, its significance as an open source of knowledge will become more apparent and can challenge narrow notions of learning through other programs that could be oriented towards food, music, fabrication labs or tea time.

On Average 1.1% is assigned for Children's/ Makers Space

On Average 10.6% is assigned for Multi-Purpose Space

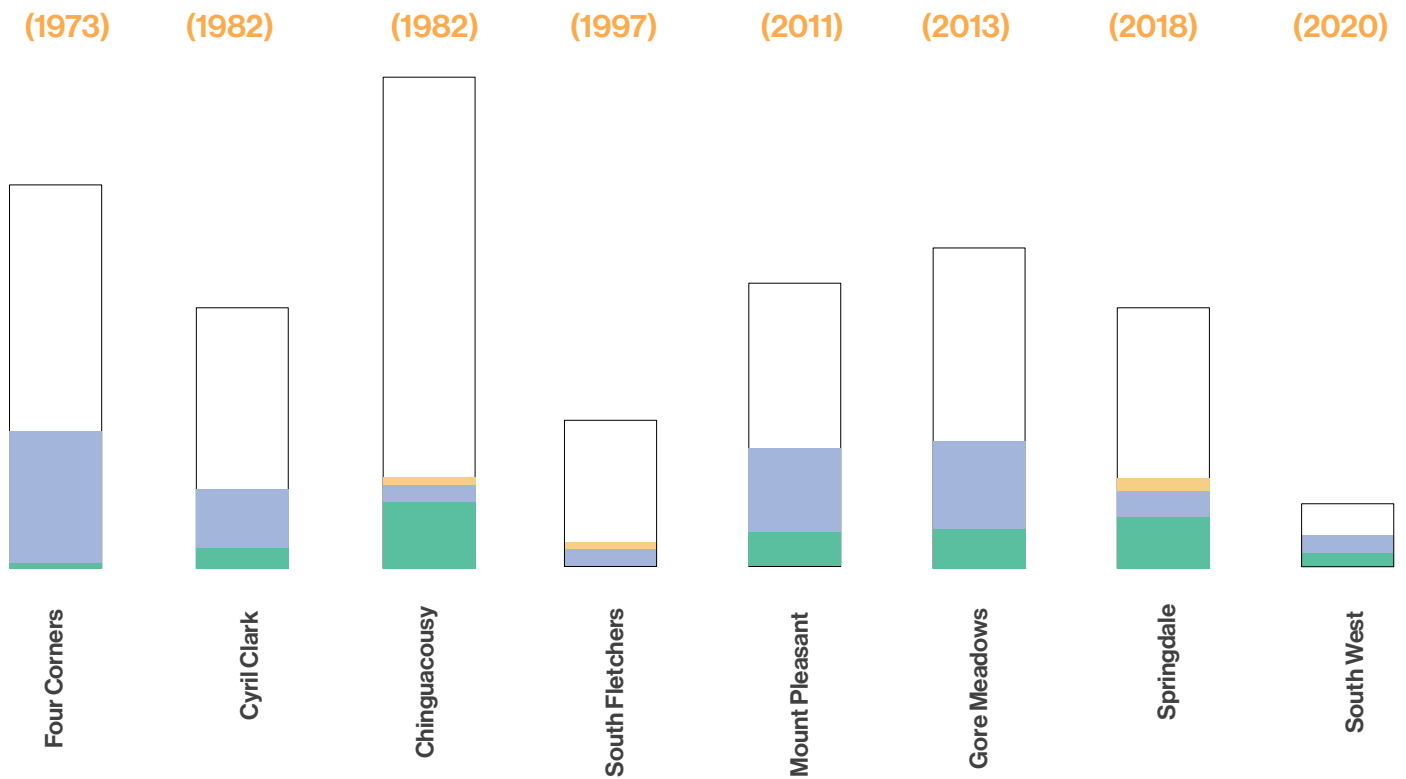


Figure 3.40 Library spatial analysis diagram

3.3 Libraries as a Third Space: Case Studies

Social spaces as a means of engagement with the community can be found in many successful 21st-century libraries, which demonstrate the relationship between the space and how they support the needs of their users. In this process, three library precedents that foster collaboration and participation are studied to identify strategies that can be implemented to create a similar cultural engagement in the design of Brampton's ninth library. Each of the libraries examined has unique a spatial approach: they prioritize certain aspects of the library using colour/furniture/material. An analysis of the overlaps and similarities will help identify what makes these libraries successful as social hubs, laying the groundwork for this thesis's design development.



Figure 3.41 Exterior of Calgary Central Library

Calgary Central Library

Downtown Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Architect: Snøhetta

Year: 2018

Gross Area: 22,296 sqm

Number of Floors: Five

The Calgary Central Library, designed by Snøhetta, is located at the heart of Downtown Calgary. It has challenging site conditions such as the site's irregular shape, proximity to major roads and pedestrian traffic, and a light rail transit line that cuts through part of the site.¹²⁷ To address these site constraints, the library's design has a cut in the building to allow the light rail

¹²⁷ Snøhetta, "Calgary's New Central Library," accessed February 8, 2023, <https://snohetta.com/project/407-calgary39s-new-central-library>.



Figure 3.42 Library Floor 2 Plan

train to pass through with a stop at the library.¹²⁸ The main entrance incorporates stairs as seating under a canopy for leisure or refuge for passersby. The central core of the building acts as a social and circulation hub as it has a staircase that winds to all levels. Interior-focused programs within the library are spread across four floors, offering different environments such as quiet reading areas, a children’s nook, collaborative workspaces, and maker spaces. The library’s plan highlights the overlap and mix of group and private rooms that intermingle along the bookshelves. In contrast, specific programmed areas are located on the other side of the library. This allows for loud and quiet spaces to exist on the same floor but without the disturbance and distraction that would otherwise exist.

¹²⁸ Snøhetta, “Calgary’s New Central Library,” accessed February 8, 2023, <https://snohetta.com/project/407-calgary39s-new-central-library>.

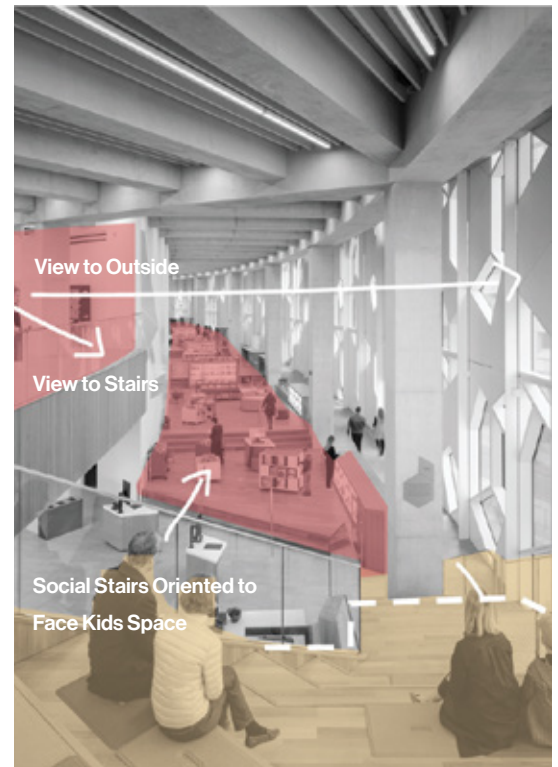


Figure 3.43 Interior Staircase View

The design also uses colour and material to highlight programs, such as wood in the central atrium and floors to highlight means of circulation and the white concrete/tile to highlight reading and learning areas. The use of furniture also dictates where large collaborative spaces exist compared to smaller intimate environments. For example, the children’s room includes an open reading nook with furniture that can be moved to the preference of its user and enclosed spaces that encourage play and discovery. Overall, the design of the Calgary Central Library considers its complex urban conditions and enhances them with the functionality of the building but also highlights its importance of allowing two alternative programs to exist within the same space without compromising its purpose.



Figure 3.44 Childrens Play Space

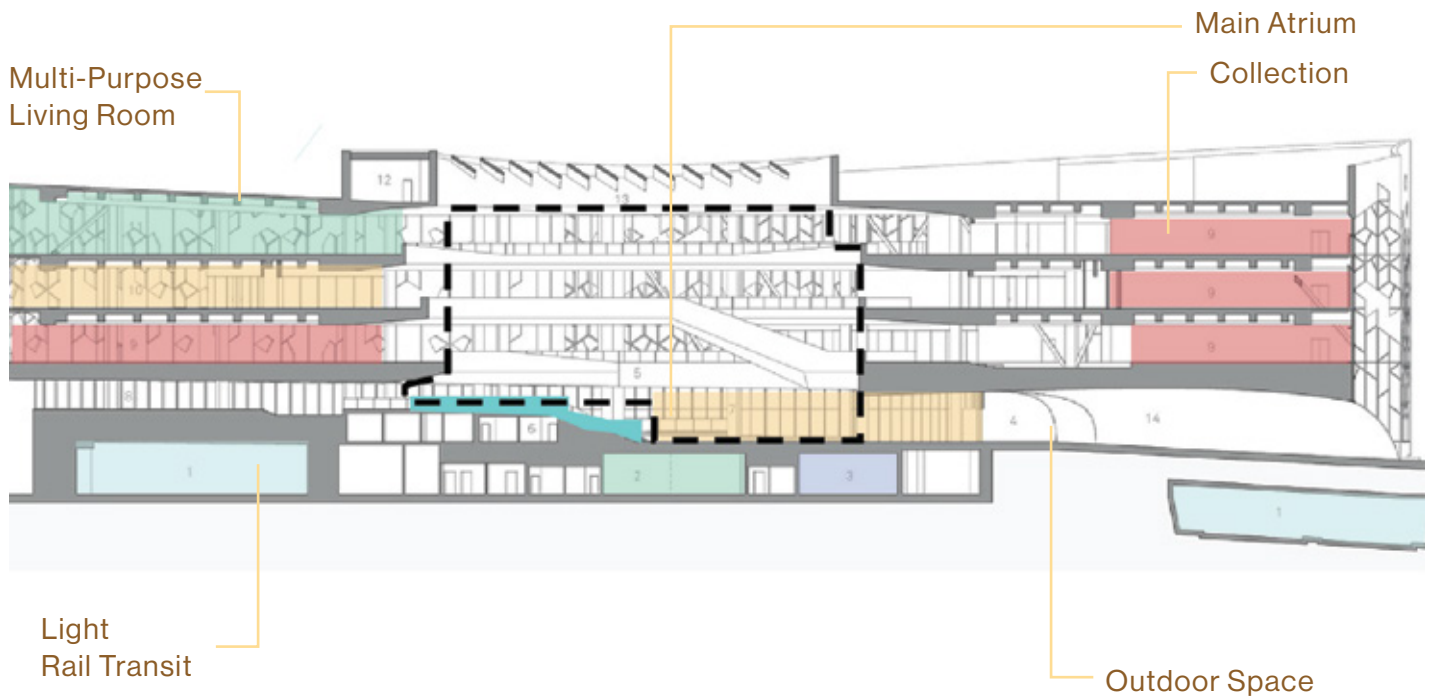


Figure 3.45 Library Section and Programming



Figure 3.46 Exterior of the Media Library

Media Library

Thionville, France

Architect: Dominique Coulon & associés

Year: 2016

Gross Area: 4,590 sqm

Number of Floors: One

The Media library, designed by architects Dominique Coulon and associates in Thionville, France, is an exemplary example of a library that embodies itself as a third place.¹²⁹ In its neighbouring context, the library exists as a cultural and social hub with multi-faceted programs for its users. The library has

¹²⁹ "Media Library [Third-Place]," Dominique Coulon & associés, accessed February 8, 2023, <https://coulon-architecte.fr/projet/558/thionville>.

incorporated commercial and retail programs such as a restaurant and cafe that support interior spaces and connects them to the neighbourhood context. Within the library, however, are smaller “bubbles” containing specific programs or elements such as a storytelling area, music/instrument room, video games, pottery workshop and courtyards.¹³⁰ These “bubbles” act as moments of refuge that, although present at the center and central parts of the library, are often closed in and sheltered, which offer moments of escape from the otherwise open and collective spaces.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

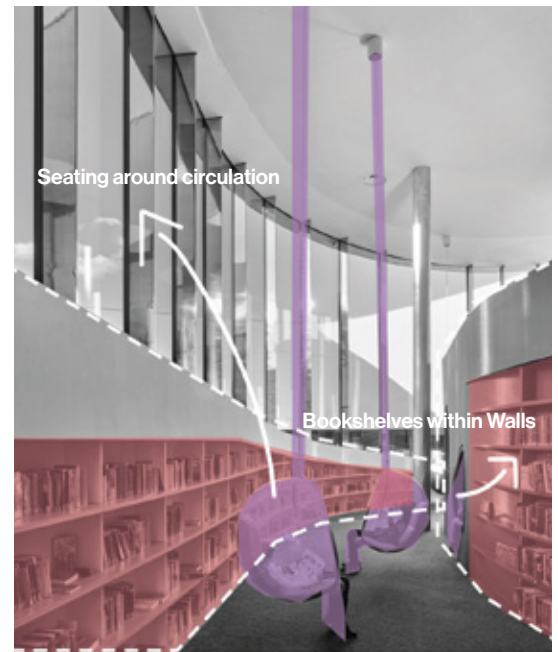


Figure 3.48 Refuged reading spaces

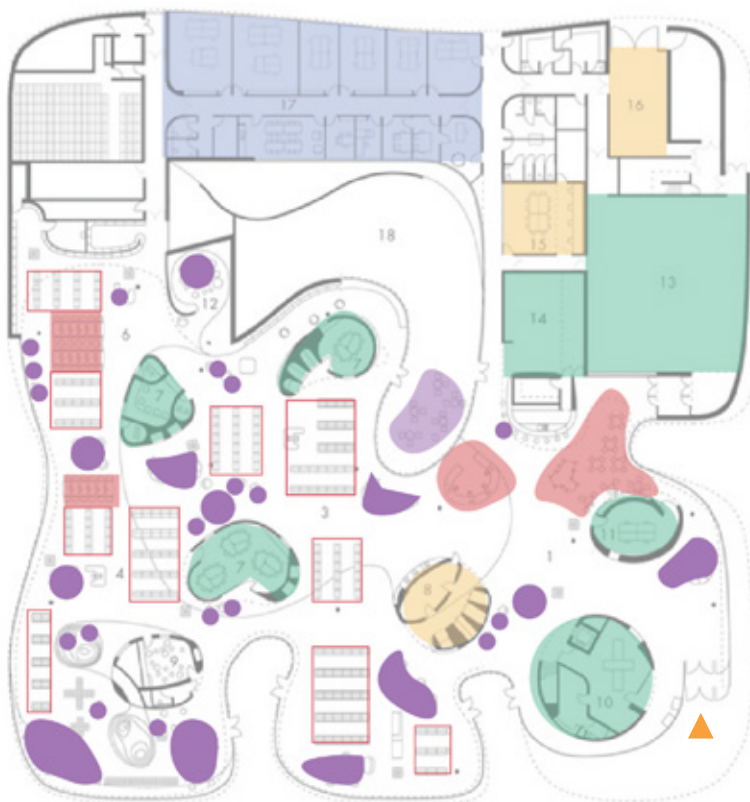


Figure 3.47 Plan of the Library and spatial programming

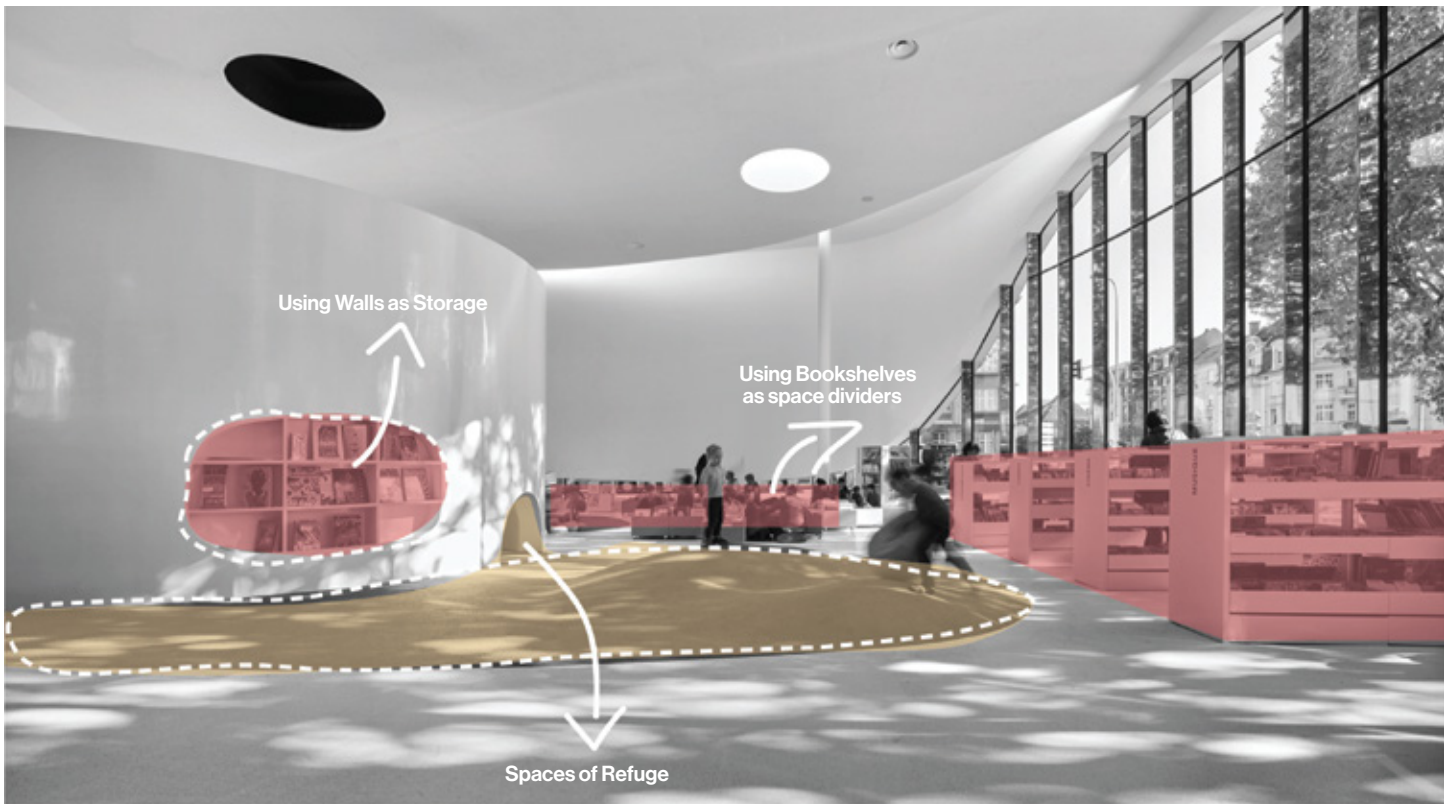


Figure 3.49 Children's Play space

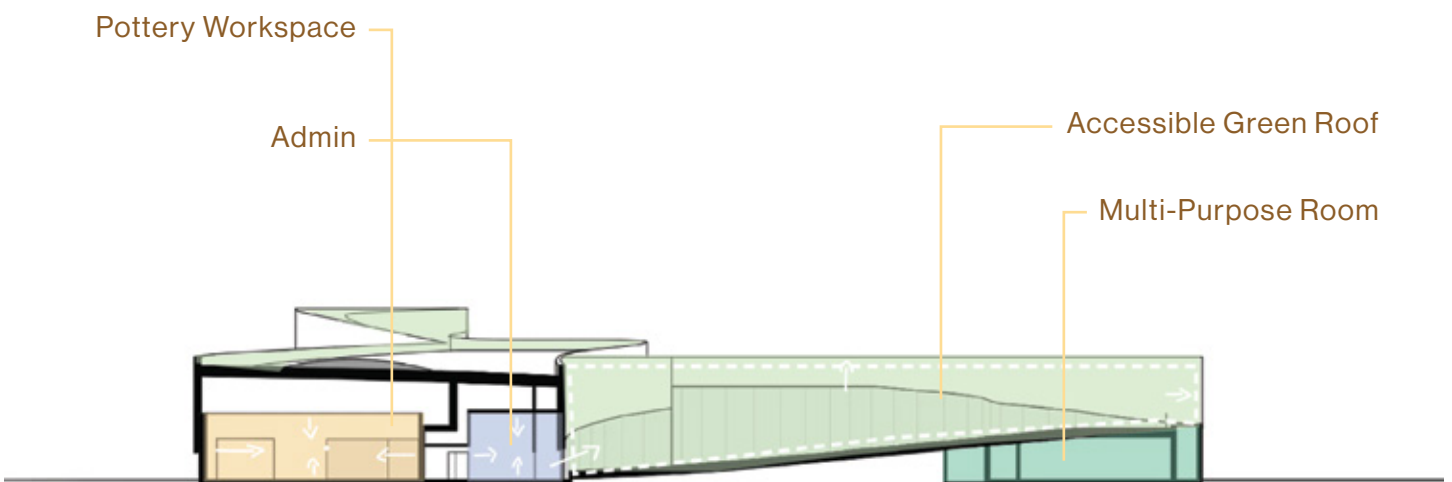


Figure 3.50 Section of Library and Green Roof

Using colour to highlight programs and areas of social participation creates visual cues for its users. In contrast, its tactile nature helps support its programming, such as carpet or rubber flooring for spaces that see movement for children or act as play spaces. White space for the bookshelves, walls, floors, and roof separates itself from the programs within it. The library's organic plan allows for fluid movement, enabling crevices to develop, treated as outdoor or indoor courtyards. The green roof slopes down to the ground plane to encourage users to explore and program it. The result of such interventions is that the library becomes a place where functions are not defined, and the ones are highly contrasted with materials, acoustics and lighting. They both exist simultaneously as different worlds under one roof.



Figure 3.51 Interior work spaces

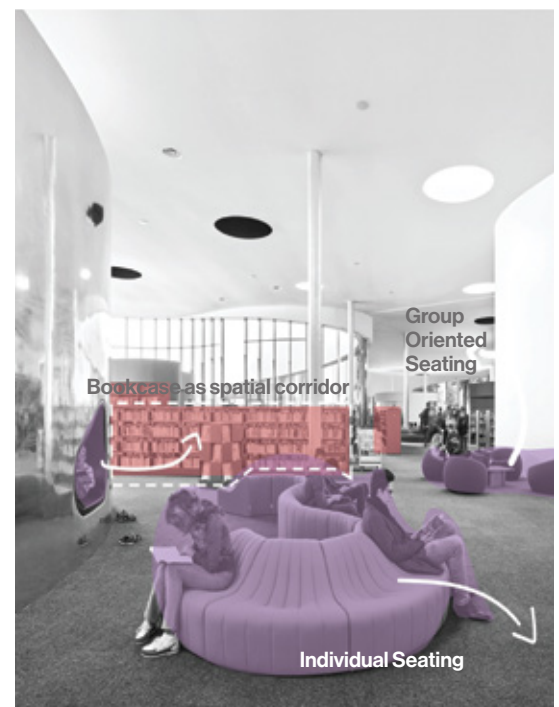


Figure 3.52 Flexible furniture and colour used to program the space



Figure 3.53 External of the Dokk1 Library

Dokk1 Library

Aarhus, Denmark

Architect: Schmidt Hammer Lassen Architects

Year: 2015

Gross Area: 17,600 sqm

Number of Floors: Four

The Dokk1 library/cultural center located in Aarhus, Denmark was designed by Schmidt Hammer Lassen and is a wonderful example of the library's role as an indoor and outdoor civic space. The library features a larger outdoor public square that connects it to the surrounding city, which it engages through its use for locals or visitors. As discussed with the previous two case studies, the interior of the library also includes a cafe, makerspace, music recording studio

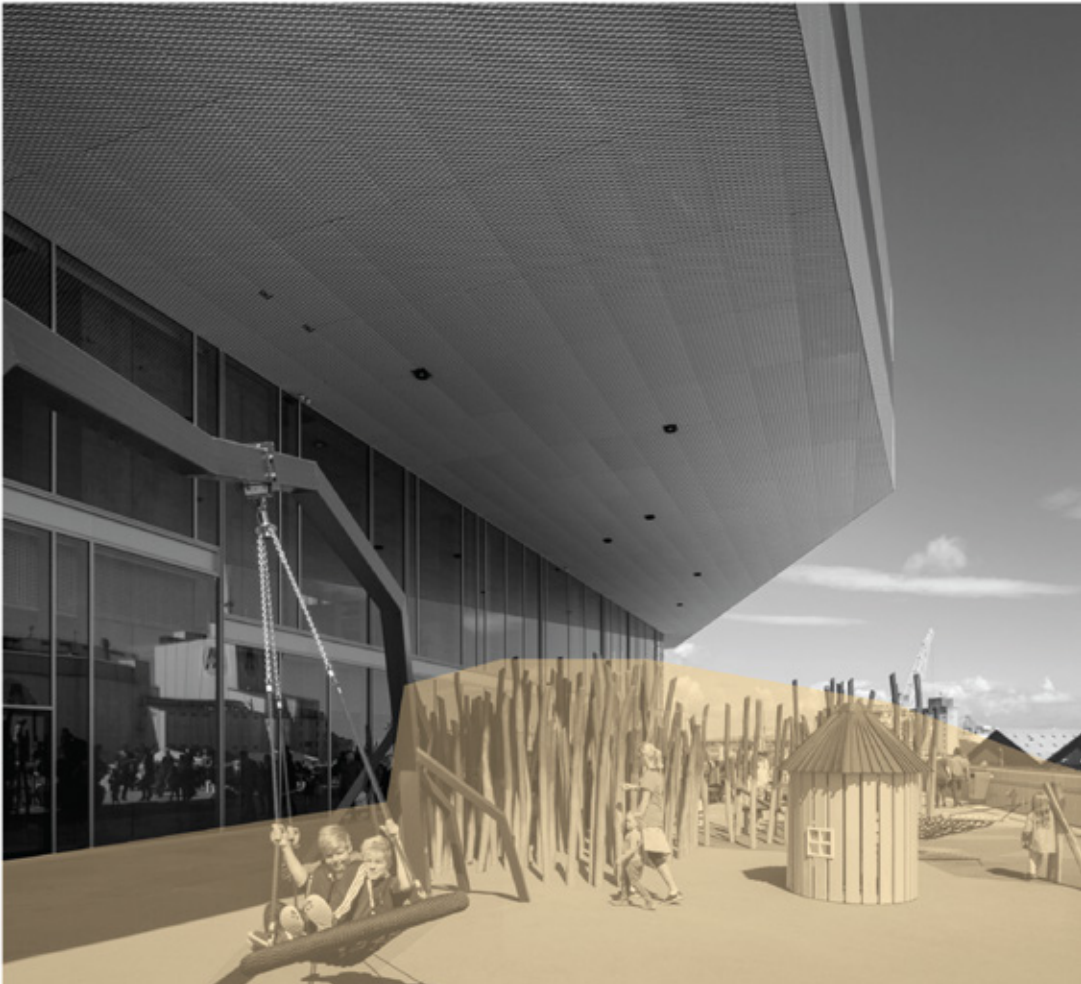


Figure 3.55 Exterior Children's Play Space

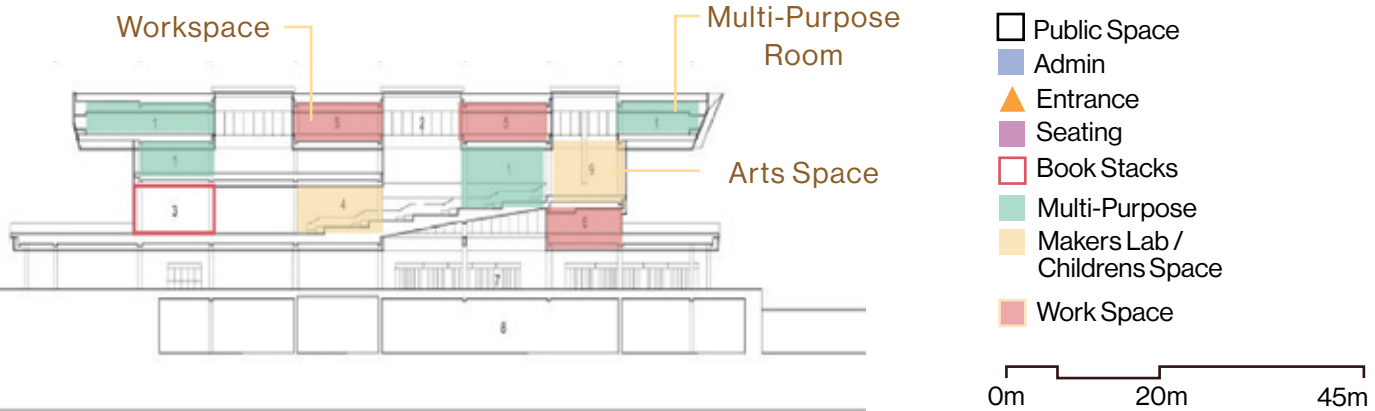


Figure 3.54 Section of the library and its spatial programming



Figure 3.56 Interior Multi-Purpose Hall

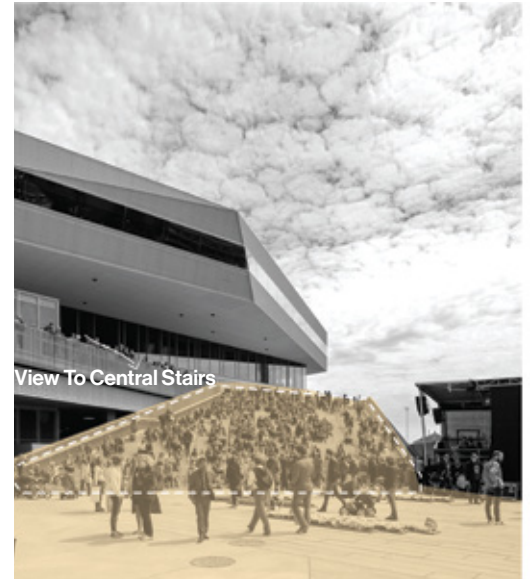


Figure 3.57 External Civic Space

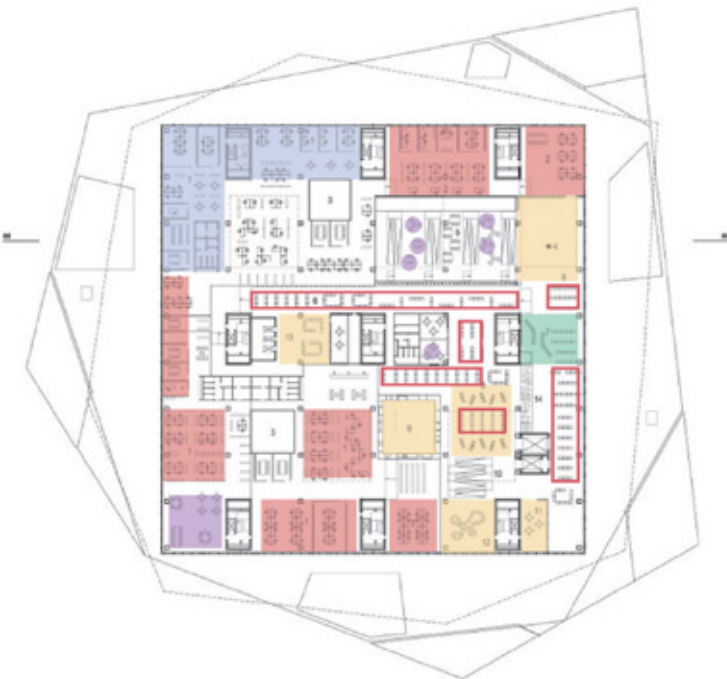


Figure 3.58 Plan

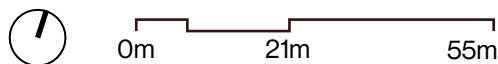


Figure 3.59 Interior view

and learning spaces.¹³¹ It also has outdoor play spaces and seating that overlook the square and provides for a different environment of learning and participation. The interior is open, flexible, and inviting with spaces designed to support learning, socializing and creativity. Its flexibility and adaptability allow for different programs to take place in any of the library's spaces.¹³² Material is used to contrast the purpose of spaces or their function. The building itself is mainly concrete, contrasted by the tactile and textile nature of its furnishings such as chairs and tables made from wood and furniture containing fabrics. Colour is used to designate programs of specific spaces or to highlight their purpose such as black bookshelves in a light concrete room, green walls to highlight library sections that contain books, and red furnishings in leisure and lounge spaces.

Lessons Learned

While each of the libraries' designs has unique spatial and urban conditions, it is essential to highlight that they embody the library's role as a civic and cultural space. The Calgary Central Library in Canada, the Media Library in France, and the Dokk1 Library in Denmark, are all designed to accommodate a variety of programs and activities, including reading areas, collaborative workspaces, cafes, maker spaces, and play areas. The designs also consider the site's conditions and use materials, colours, and furniture to highlight different programs and create a sense of place. Dokk 1 and the Calgary Central Library have public transportation integrated within the building's design that allows for increased accessibility to the site. Incorporating public transit into the design of Brampton's ninth library will serve new immigrants or residents of the surrounding communities who require access to public

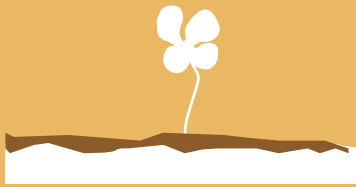
¹³¹ Schmidt Hammer Lassen Architects, "Dokk1, Aarhus, Denmark," <https://www.shl.dk/dokk1/>.

¹³² Ibid.



Figure 3.60 Collage of key elements noted from precedents

resources and who should not be discouraged from using the library due to its location or means of access. Bus stops on the current site can be incorporated into the design to create sheltered waiting areas and share a language of supporting each other. Furniture and bookshelves in the library should be adaptable to different postures or at a scale where they can be moved and placed wherever the user desires. While playgrounds and a civic square flourish in the Dokk1 Library's outdoor space, the Calgary Central Library creates a moment of refuge for its downtown commuters. The Media Library encourages exploration and play in its outdoor space by creating a landscape that starts from the ground level and slopes onto the building's accessible green roof. The Media Library encourages children and adults to make their environment suit their needs using moveable seating. They also provide moments of refuge in alcoves, hanging swing chairs, sunken floor areas for children's group reading and indoor/outdoor courtyards, creating a unique experience for each user. All three libraries promote social interaction and engagement while accommodating individual needs for quiet and private spaces. Additionally, they all incorporate outdoor spaces that connect the library to the surrounding community and encourage its use as a gathering place. This is very important for this thesis' design, which intends to foster spaces of collaboration and participation within the library to facilitate engagement between its community members. When the library becomes a space where one can learn by playing an instrument, painting, learning a language or through making, it encourages its community members to develop their cultural and social identity.



[the bloom]

4

Chapter 4

Design

This chapter presents the design interventions concluded from the research of Brampton's existing libraries and case studies conducted on the three libraries discussed in the previous chapter. The first section focuses on site selection, site analysis, existing urban conditions and the need to diversify retail plazas by reducing parking and increasing public spaces. The second section expands on the programming of a library and its surrounding civic complex. The final section is the thesis' design response to the question: **How can the programming of a Library+Civic complex celebrate and support its multicultural residents?** This is developed through the transformation of a low-density retail plaza into a library and outdoor civic complex functioning as a social hub for both the mixed-use housing on the site and the larger community.



Figure 4.0 Site Image

4.1 Site

The City of Brampton's Library Facilities Master Plan identifies several potential sites for new libraries, but these sites were not relevant to the current issues faced by the community. It is clear that amongst Canada's ten largest cities by population, Brampton has the fewest library branches, lowest gross floor area and least library space per capita.¹³³ The pressing demand from its increasing population is an issue faced today that will only increase in the future. While the city aims to invest libraries in new housing developments that have some of the least population density and highest income (see figure 4.1), this thesis focuses on one of many currently underserved sites.

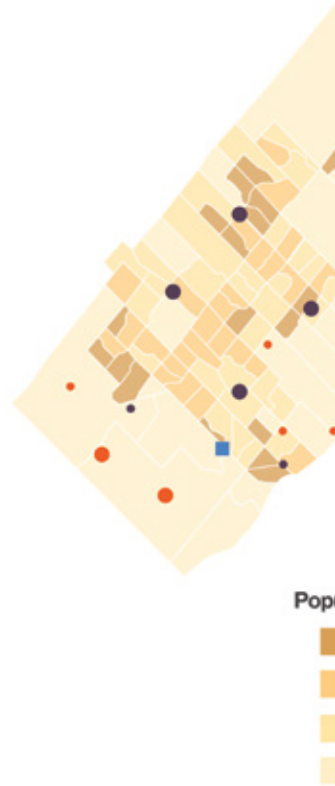
¹³³ Monteith-Brown Planning Consultants Ltd and Perkins & Will, "Brampton Library, Library Facilities Master Plan," January 2022, 5. https://issuu.com/bramlib/docs/brampton_library_fmp_final

The site selection was based on several factors, including the need for a library in areas that did not have one in neighbouring communities, higher population density, lower income, and a higher percentage of global majority residents. This approach is intended to ensure that the library would be located in a community where it would be most needed and accessible to those who could benefit the most from its services. In this process, the site was narrowed down to the Springbrook community, located southwest of the city in proximity to Teramoto Park, David Suzuki Secondary School, Flower City Campus and an Ontario Correctional Facility. Located on the southeast corner of the intersection of Chinguacousy Road and Queen Street West is a retail plaza that has a bank, pharmacy, grocery store and smaller businesses. The low-mid income neighbourhood has a global majority population of over 75.9%, and its population density is one of the highest in the city at around 6,000-8,000 per square kilometre.¹³⁴ However, the neighbouring community that borders the south of the site has seen a population change of over 400% from 4,624 in 2011 to 23,401 residents in 2016.¹³⁵ This increase is the most significant change in the city's population density. Therefore, it is essential to address such communities that are currently and will continue to be underserved if the city does not shift its focus to the current issues that its residents face.

The site's existing space allocation is occupied by building programs that cover around 28% of it. Over 65% of the site consists of parking spaces, which, like many retail plazas, can be appropriated for festivals such as Diwali. This underutilized vehicular oriented space can be repurposed for a much-

¹³⁴ City of Brampton, "Census Profile: Income," Brampton GeoHub, accessed October 19, 2022, <https://geohub.brampton.ca/pages/profile-income> ; City of Brampton, "Census Profile: Population and Dwelling," Brampton GeoHub, accessed October 19, 2022, <https://geohub.brampton.ca/pages/profile-pop-dwelling> ; City of Brampton, "Census Profile: Immigration & Ethnocultural Diversity," Brampton GeoHub, accessed October 19, 2022, <https://geohub.brampton.ca/pages/profile-diversity>

¹³⁵ City of Brampton, "Census Profile: Population and Dwelling."



Average Age
35.5yrs

20.4%
Increase
in Population
Density

Over 75%
of the
Population is
global majority

Average
House
Hold Income
is

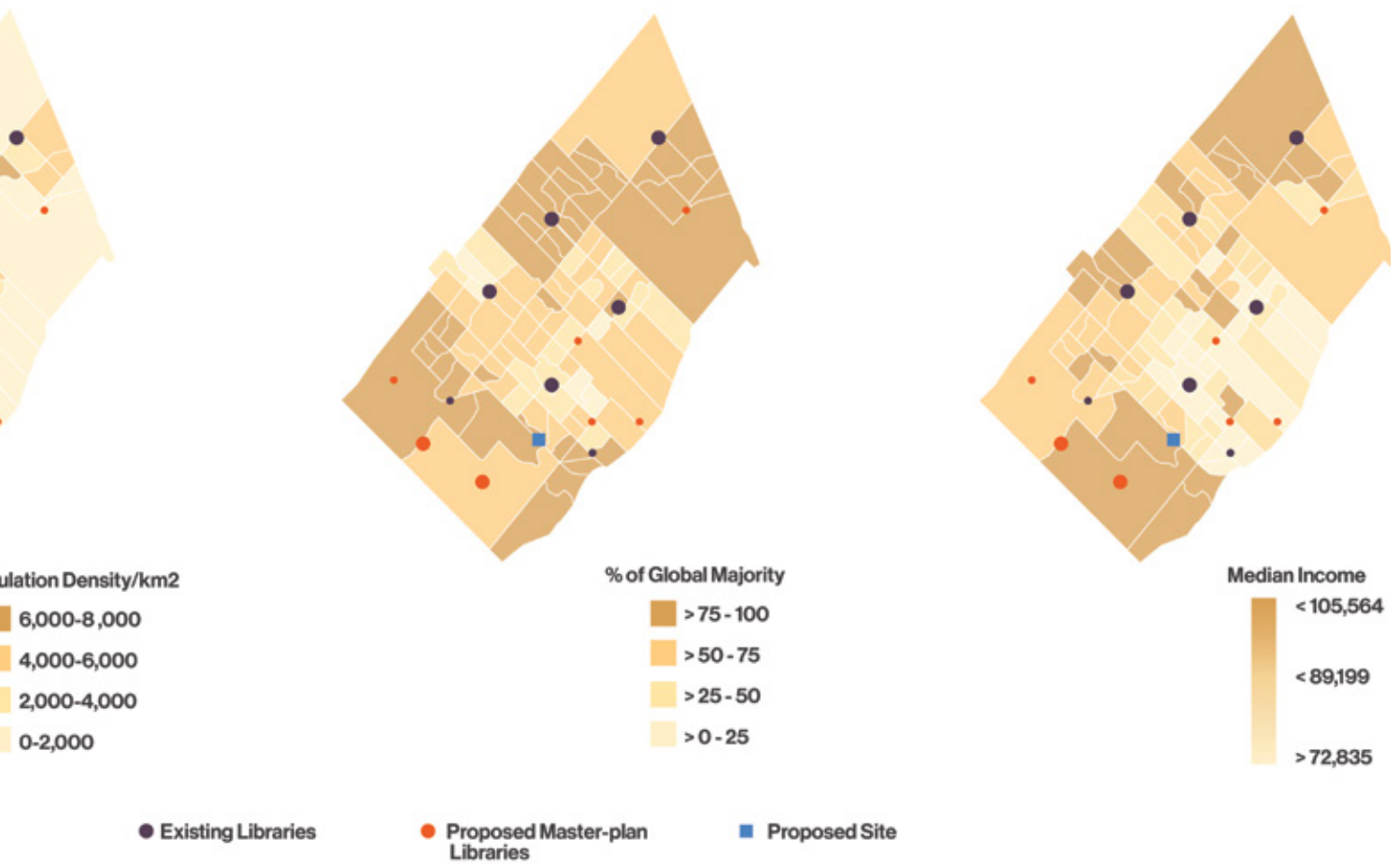
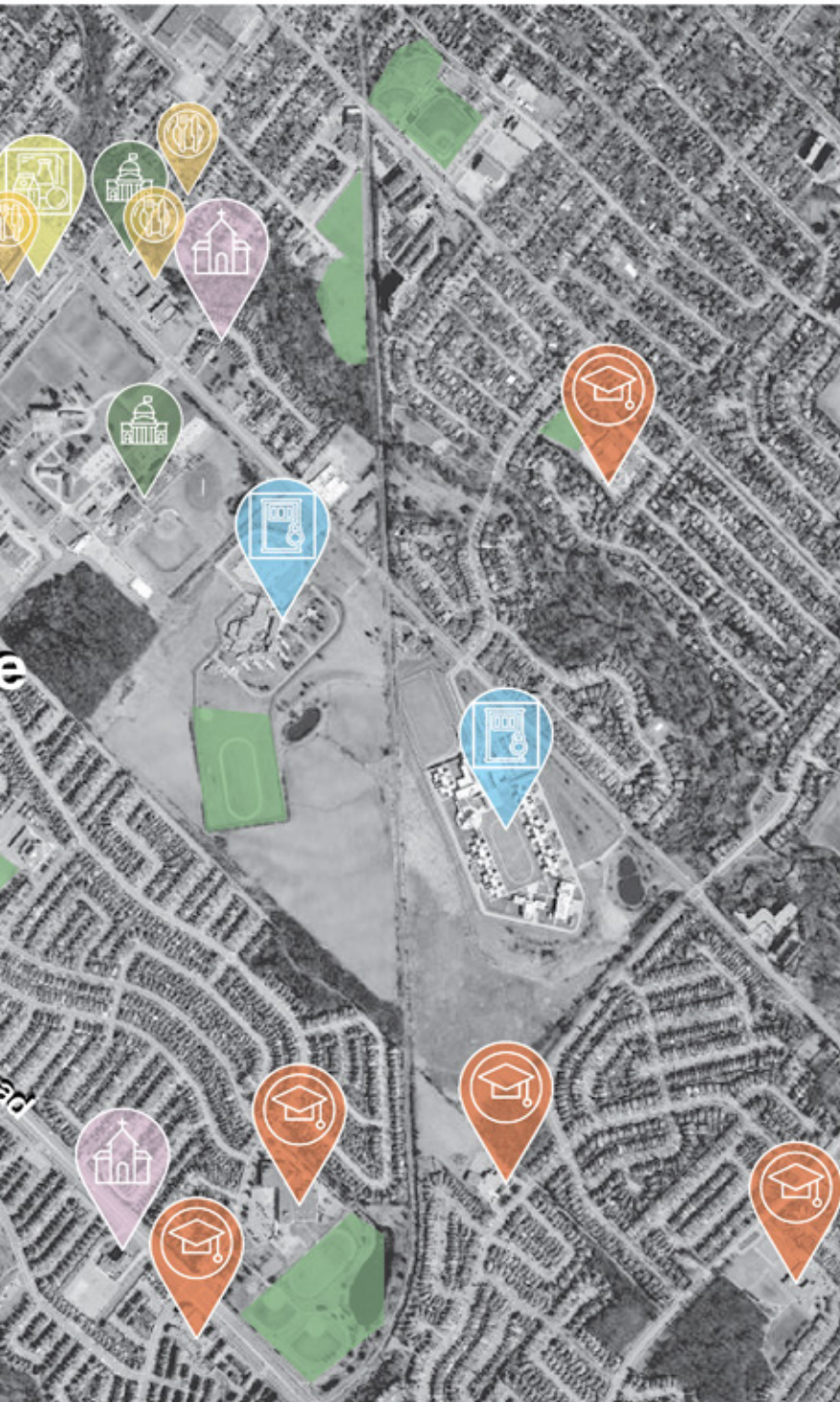


Figure 4.1 Site selection studies



Figure 4.2 Key Context



Legend

- Site
- 🎓 Schools
- 🕌 Recreation Center
- 🛒 Grocery Stores
- 🕌 Religious Centers
- 📖 Correctional Facility
- 🏛️ Government Services
- 🍴 Restaraunts
- Green Space
- Train Tracks

🕒 Scale 1: 18,000





Figure 4.3 Site Photograph from the intersection (Library Placement in at the xisting TD Bank)

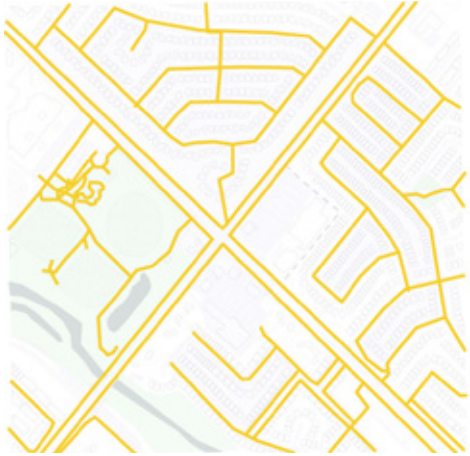


Figure 4.4 Site Photograph from North East

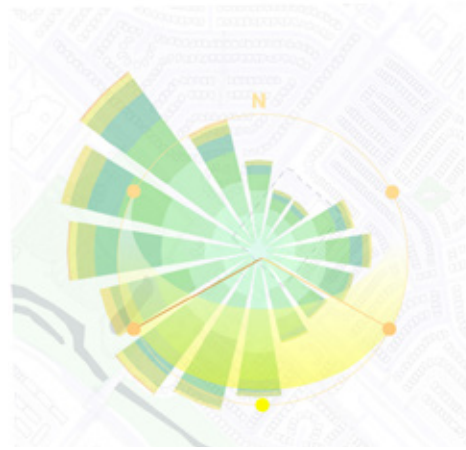
needed community resource by placing the library and civic complex in this location. The site is also easily accessible by public transportation through the presence of two bus stops on site and for vehicular or pedestrian traffic of its nearby community. Repurposing the area to become a social catalyst and an example for the city of how it needs to diversify its infrastructure is done through the redevelopment of mixed-use housing on site. An outdoor civic complex adaptable to different climatic conditions and programs is integral to this thesis.



Figure 4.5 Existing Site Programs



Pedestrian Access



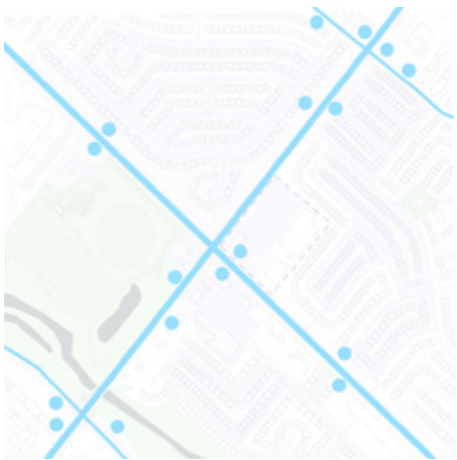
Sun Path and Wind



Vehicular Access



Vegetation



Public Transit Access



Program Context

Figure 4.6 Site Analysis

4.2 Programing a Social Hub

Concept

The placement of the library and the plaza's programs play an essential role in interacting with the existing urban fabric and the environment. Firstly, for the library to have a prominent position and to establish itself as part of the community, it is placed at the corner in proximity to the intersection of Chinguacousy Road and Queen Street West. This becomes important as the library is now clearly visible, but it also becomes more accessible for pedestrians who converge from the surrounding communities. Placing the library at the intersection also connects it to the existing public transportation services as it now touches two bus stops which would encourage its community members to find the ease of access to or from the library, while the library also acts as a moment of refuge from the weather. Secondly, the placement of the library at the intersection also creates a visual connection between the interior programs of the library and its services to those passing by or driving through the community. This will encourage users to get a glimpse of the programs and services that are available, enticing them to enter and explore the space. Finally, the transparency and openness of the library by having two entrances, one at the intersection and one from within the plaza, creates an inviting space that will allow its community members to engage with it as a public space that is designed for them. The library's location at the intersection can help to mitigate significantly stronger and colder northwestern winds from affecting the outdoor civic space. Additionally, the library's covered entrances and cantilevers will provide a place of refuge or shelter for passersby or commuters accessing public transportation. By providing protection from the elements and also allowing the civic space to become exposed to the warm southern sun, the library's programming will encourage more people to use the space throughout the year.

The site selected for this thesis was intentional in utilizing an underutilized and underserved retail plaza that provides a sea of parking, similar to those that many residents of Brampton have been appropriating, and converting it into an urban and civic square designed for the people. By repurposing a site that is already being used in an informal manner by the community, the design of this thesis responds to the needs of its residents while also providing a space that encourages civic engagement and community building. Additionally, it challenges the city in how it designates and allocates space as the development of urban sprawl continues to take place. In doing so, the language of these so called “plazas” is rethought through redeveloping the programs and the density they support. By introducing mixed-use housing with retail/commercial amenities on the ground plane surrounding a library and a civic square, the design challenges the traditional notion of a plaza as a purely commercial or retail space that is characterized primarily by parking.

The new programming creates a dynamic and multifunctional environment that can better serve the needs of the community and its future. The introduction of these public programs also challenges the conventional notion of a plaza as a place to visit briefly and encourages a more extended and integrated experience of urban life. Housing in Brampton is becoming increasingly unaffordable and low in availability, which increasingly burdens its residents.¹³⁶ On the diagonally opposite (northwest) corner of the busy intersection that the library intervention faces, the plot of land is currently being assessed for a 15-storey residential tower, indicating that densification within Brampton is taking place. However, this type of development has not necessarily been the most appropriate approach to densification in the city. High-rise towers such as the one being proposed can often be disconnected from their surrounding environment, lack community spaces, and feature limited access to green space.

136 Virpal Kataure and Margaret Walton-Roberts, “The Housing Preferences and Location Choices of Second-Generation South Asians Living in Ethnic Enclaves,” *South Asian Diaspora* 5, no. 1 (2013): 58, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19438192.2013.722385>.



Site Image



Placement of Library



Existing Site



Sun Study



Re-Development

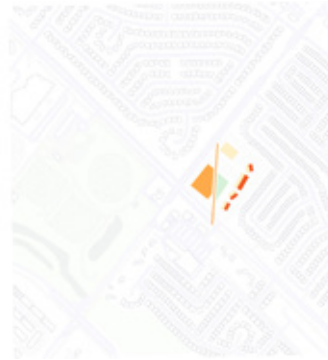


Wind Study

Figure 4.7 Concept design development



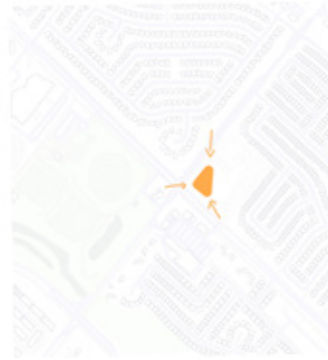
Programs in relation to climate



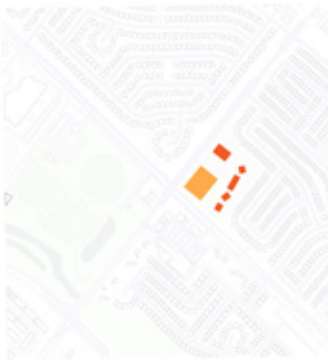
Allocating space for Civic Square



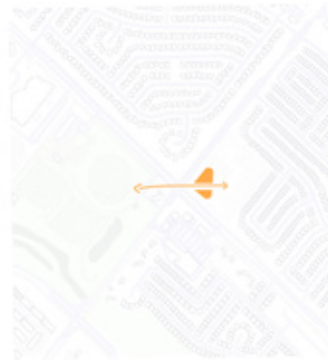
Programs on Site



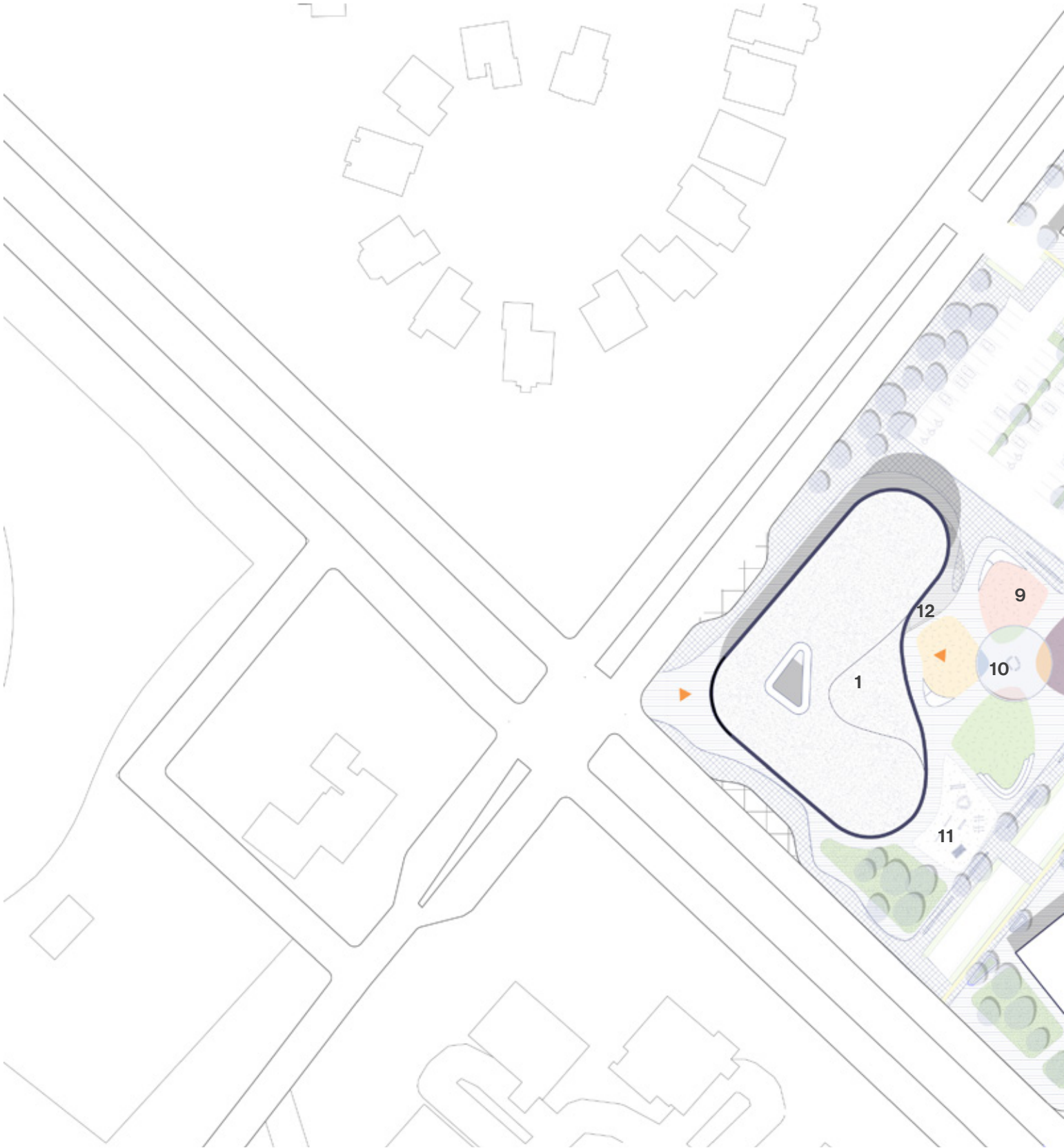
Way points for Library



Housing and Library Placement



Entrances on the Intersection and Civic Square



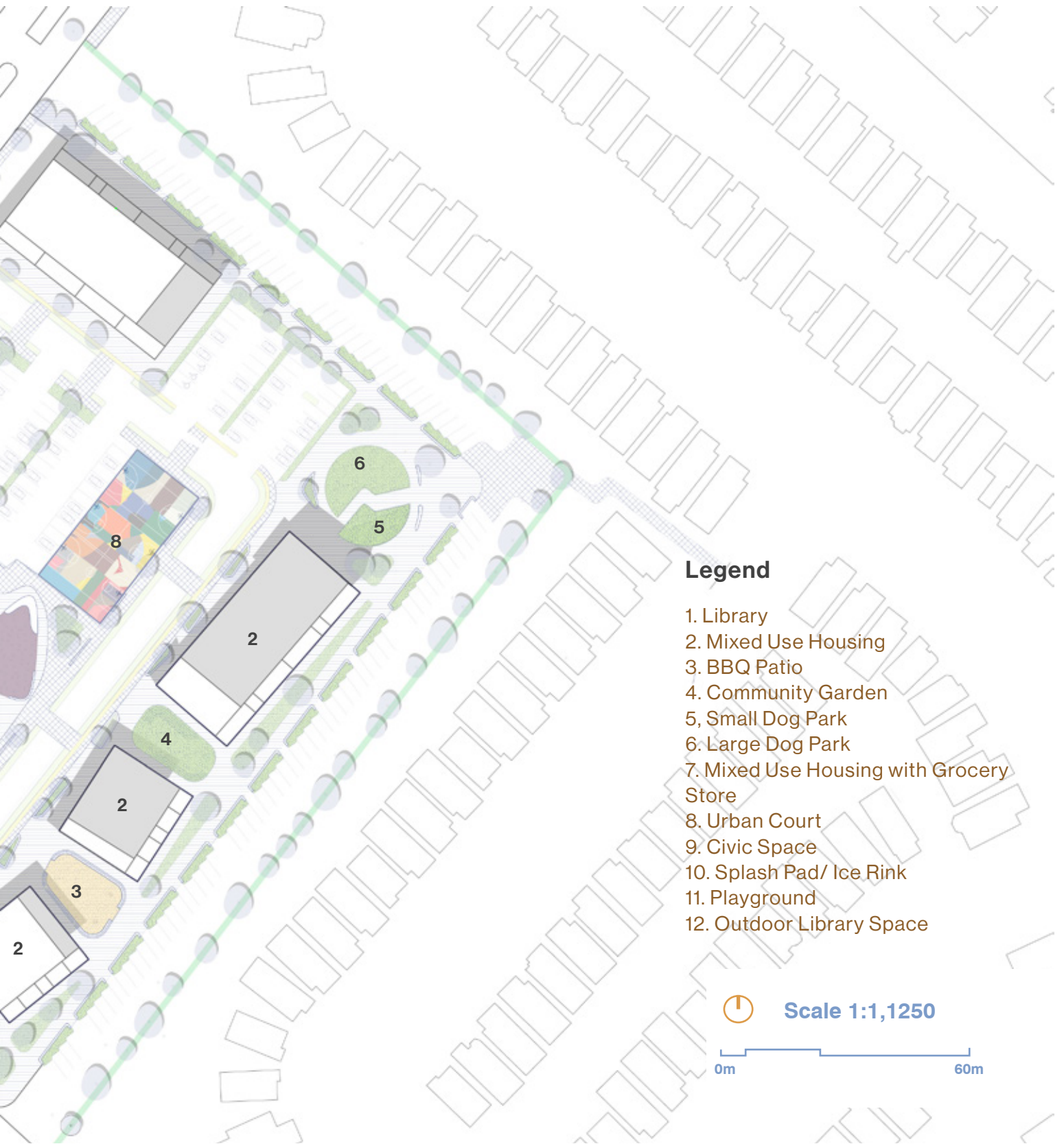


Figure 4.8 Re-developed Site Plan

By contrast, the design proposed in this thesis aims to create a more integrated and community-oriented approach to densification, with mixed-use programming that includes residential units, community spaces, and public amenities. By focusing on community-building and sustainability, the design seeks to address the housing crisis in Brampton while also creating a more livable and inclusive city.

Civic Space

The programming of the civic space has been designed to accommodate a variety of activities and events while also providing dedicated spaces for specific uses. This would allow these activities to occur simultaneously, often at different speeds and relations. The open layout surrounding the splash pad/skating rink that is bordered by the seating, allows for multifaceted programs such as community festivals, gatherings, markets, and cultural events. In addition, the space includes a playground for children and an urban court for recreational purposes. It was essential to ensure that the design of the urban court provided ample space for various recreational programs, from yoga and dance classes to outdoor movie screenings and cultural events. The allocated above-ground parking space in relation to the civic space can also serve the civic space when needed to host larger gatherings or for vendors in food trucks.



Figure 4.9 Urban design interventions to increase pedestrian and bike traffic

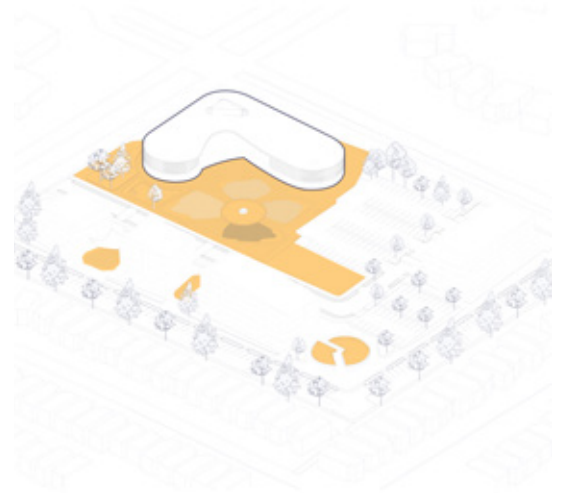


Figure 4.10 Civic space in front of the Library and public amenities in between the mixed use housing

Library

The library is programmed as a social hub that offers a wide range of activities and resources catering to Brampton's multicultural communities and a diverse range of interests and needs. As such, the library becomes a place of exchange and an inclusive space that encourages representation and expression through its programs, which include a makerspace/digital fabrication lab where people can build their own projects and learn with handheld tools, materials, 3D printers, or laser cutters. There's also a pottery studio that includes workshops on clay works, an audio recording studio for editing music and podcasts, a children's corner offering an open and flexible space for learning and exploring, and a multi-purpose space for community events, workshops, lectures, dance classes, or art exhibitions. Some of the furniture can be moved around by users to create their own social environments, making them feel comfortable, while other furniture arrangements provide refuge in alcoves and nooks of the library. The social stair in the library is a key design feature that encourages social collaboration and interaction among users, and its relationship to the exhibition space in front of it allows for seating and discussions to take place for certain events.

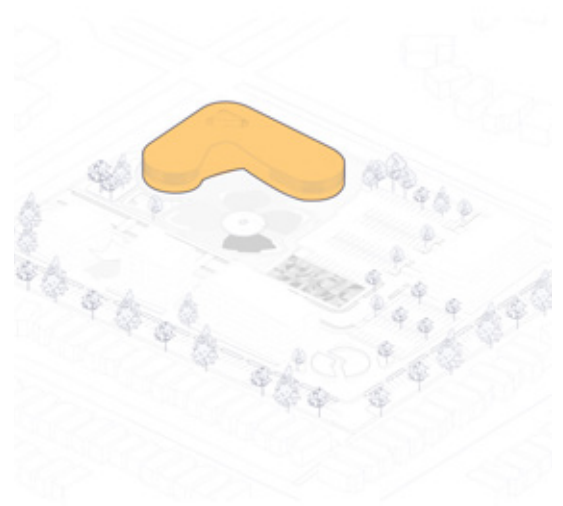


Figure 4.11 Highlighted programming of the library

Mixed Use Housing

The proposed mixed-use housing development blocks on the site aim to cater to a diverse demographic by offering various tenure types, such as rental units and condos, to provide flexibility for people with different housing needs and preferences. These include studio units, loft units with four bedrooms, and 4-bedroom units. With commercial/retail programs on the ground floor, these blocks will serve as a hub of activity and convenience. Programmed between the building blocks are outdoor amenities to serve its residents and the community, with a bbq patio deck, a community garden, and a dog park. In addition, the residents of these housing blocks have their own parking spaces and one-way lanes for circulation located at the back of the units to separate their access from that of the general public. The decision to have the parking above grade rather than underground was intentional, allowing these spaces to be easily appropriated for other functions. This contrasts underground parking lots that are not only expensive and perceived as unwelcoming, but often difficult to repurpose, making them less versatile and stagnant. However, the amenities for the residents are more expansive than these, as the rest of the civic space offers various recreational and public amenities including the library.

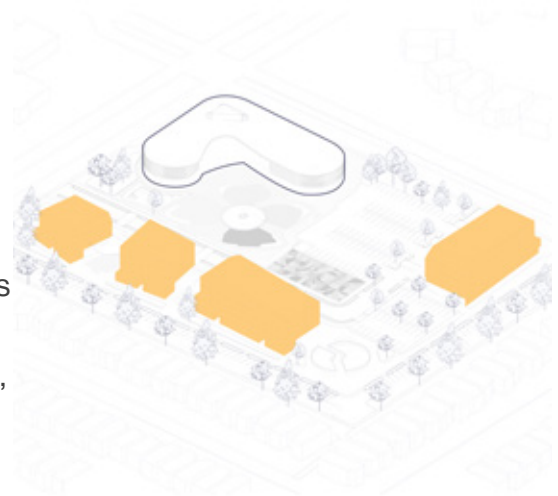


Figure 4.12 Highlighted programming of the mixed use housing blocks

Legend

- Commercial/ Retail
- Studio Apartment
- Residential Circulation
- Three Bedroom Apartment

Scale 1: 400





Figure 4.13 Mixed Use Housing Ground Plan

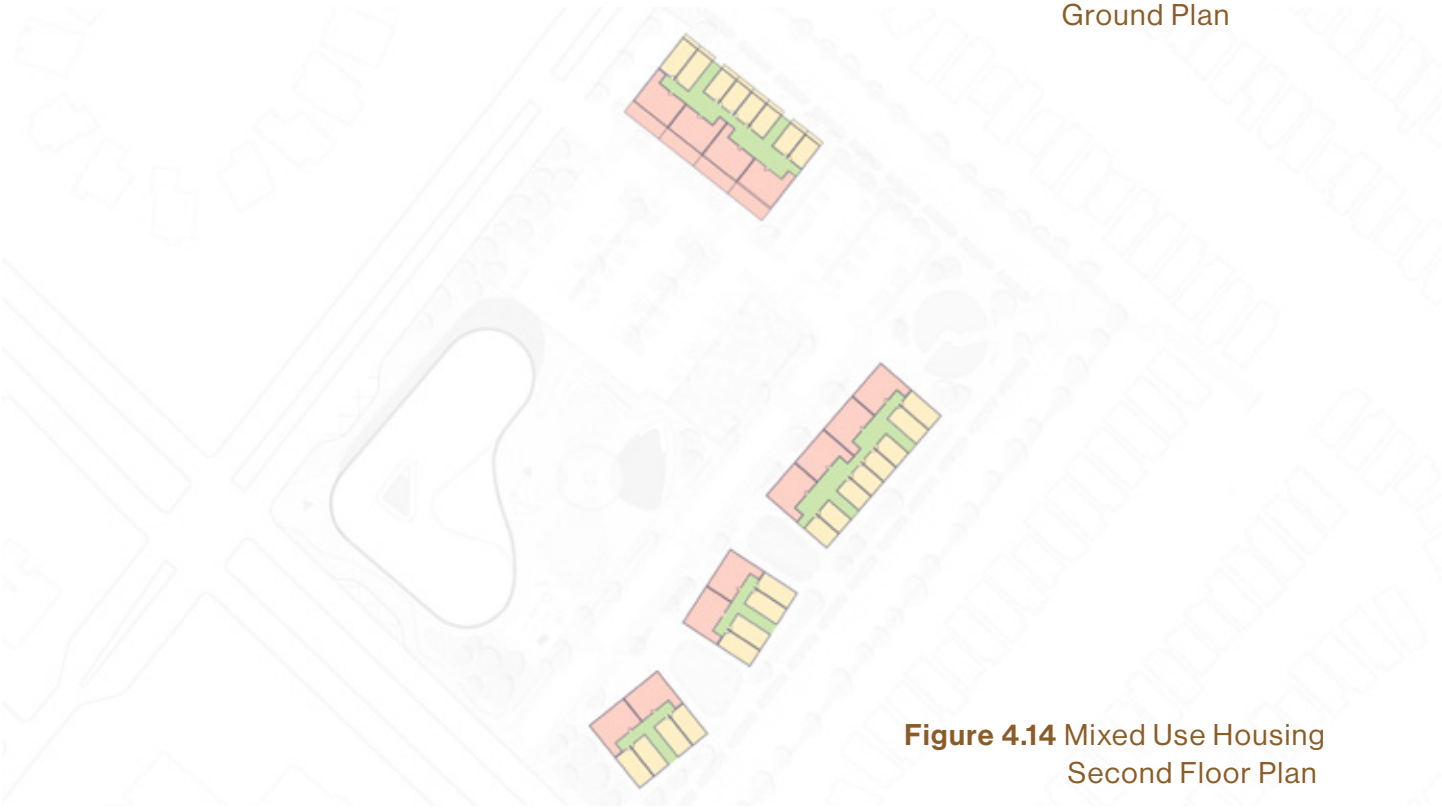


Figure 4.14 Mixed Use Housing Second Floor Plan



Figure 4.15 Residential Circulation

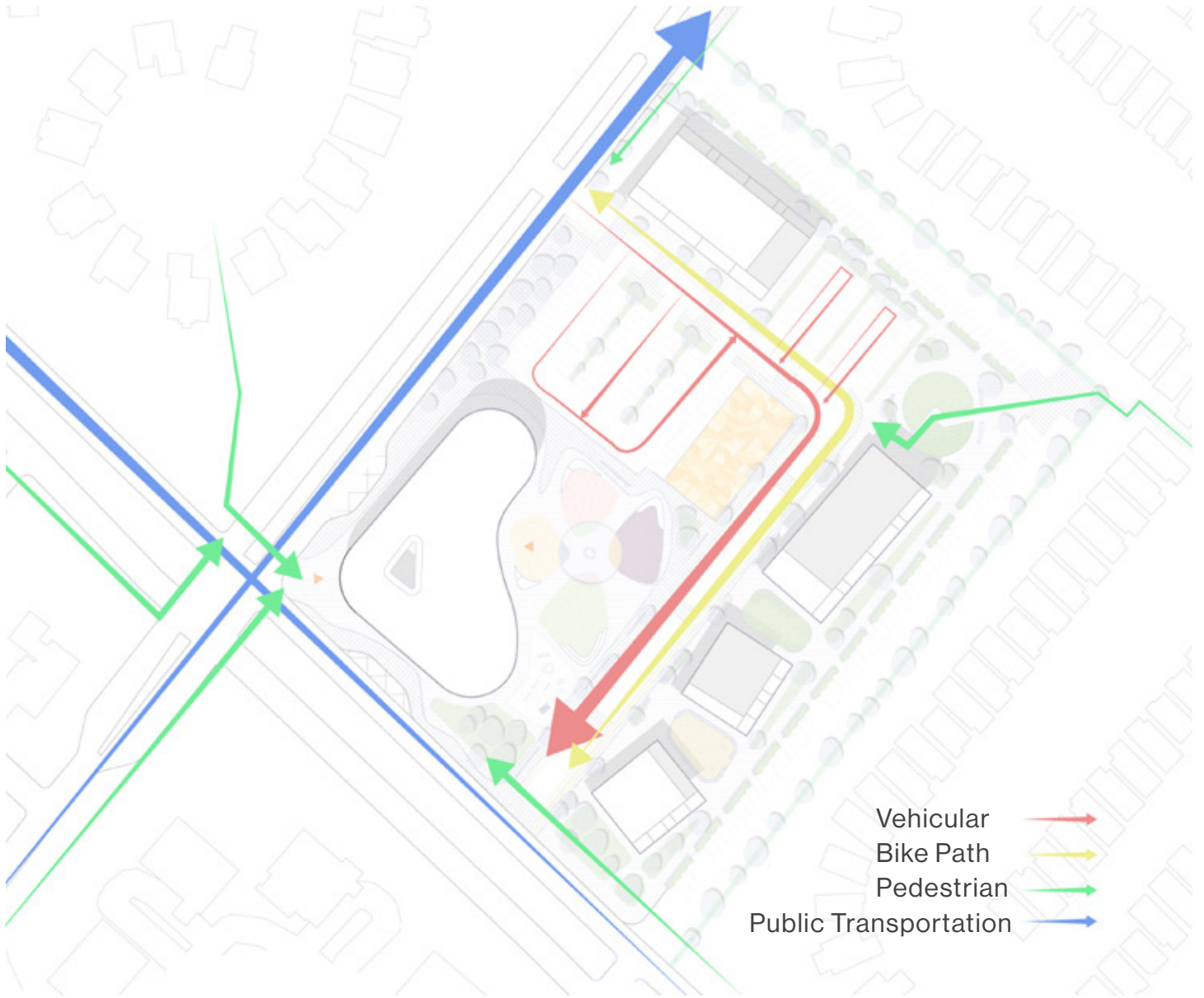


Figure 4.16 Public Circulation

4.3 Designing Brampton's Ninth Library

The final design of the library+civic complex aims to create a space where citizens of the city feel comfortable expressing themselves and their cultures. To increase its connection to the surrounding communities, urban design interventions such as pathways located at the southeast corner of the site into the residential neighborhood allow foot traffic to access the spaces, while a bike path separated from a one-way street through the site allows for safe cycling beside vehicular access. Vegetation and benches are used at the edge of the civic space to separate it space from vehicular traffic and to create a transparent enclosed space that can become part of a larger function. The ultimate design of the building and its internal programs are reflected in the form of the library and its entrances, creating a semi-enclosed civic square supported by the library's café that can expand outdoors, and its commercial facility that also faces the square to provide ice skates during the winter, or to store equipment that will be used for small pop-up markets or winter activities. The arching roof at the entrance of the library+civic complex not only provides shelter but also creates a welcoming and communal gathering space for the community to engage in various activities and events.



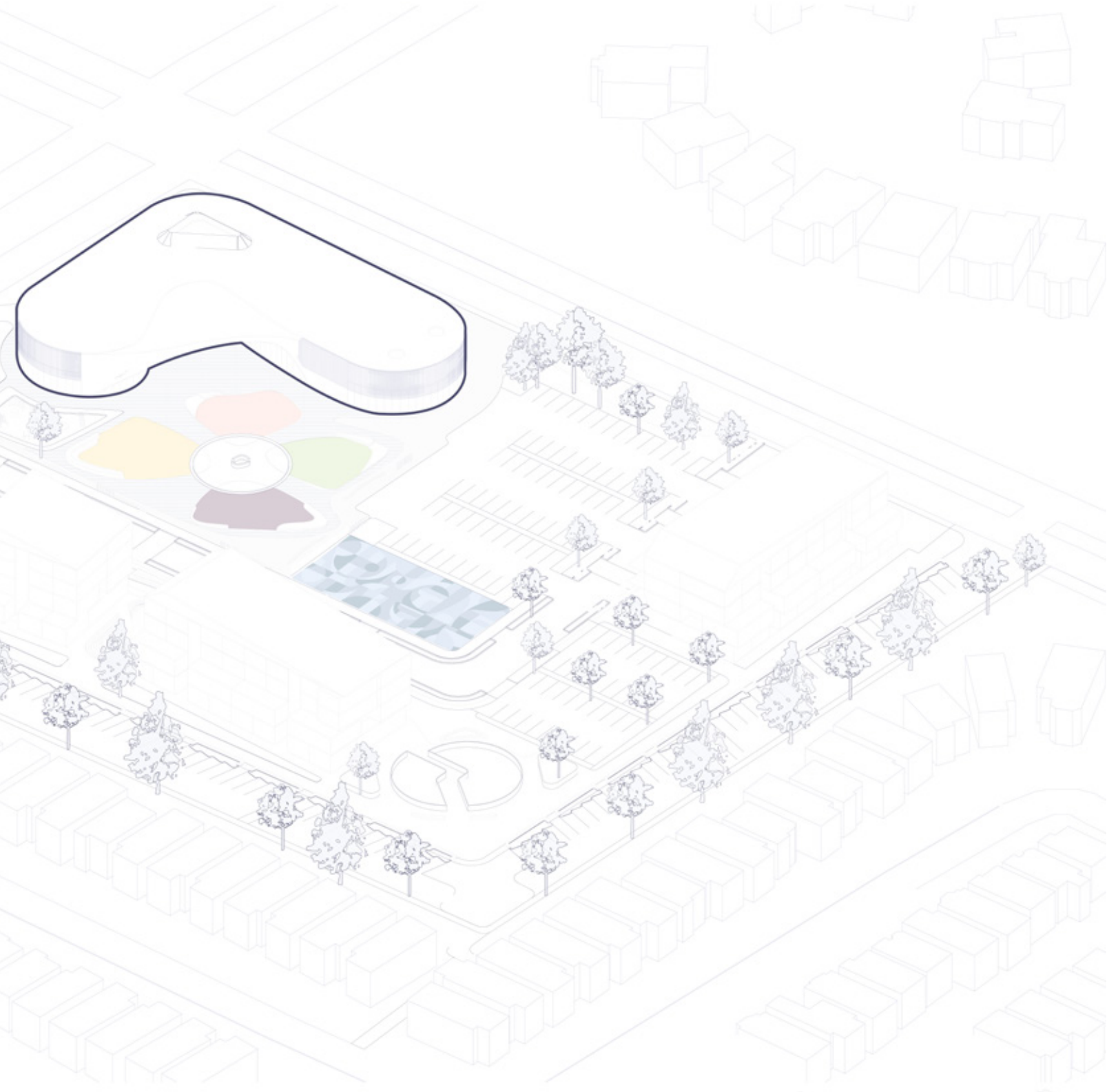
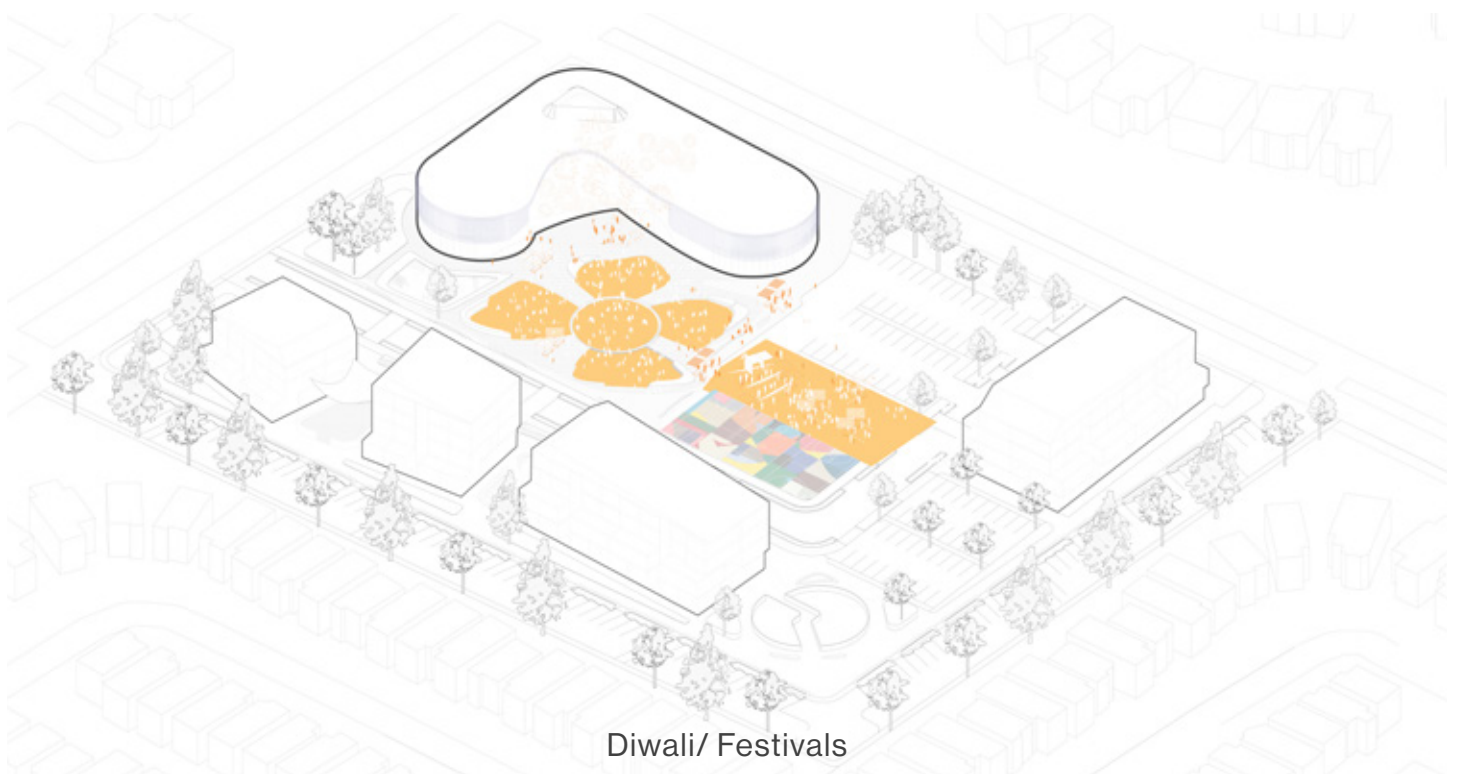


Figure 4.17 Axonometric view of the re-developed Plaza



Diwali/ Festivals



Pop-up Markets

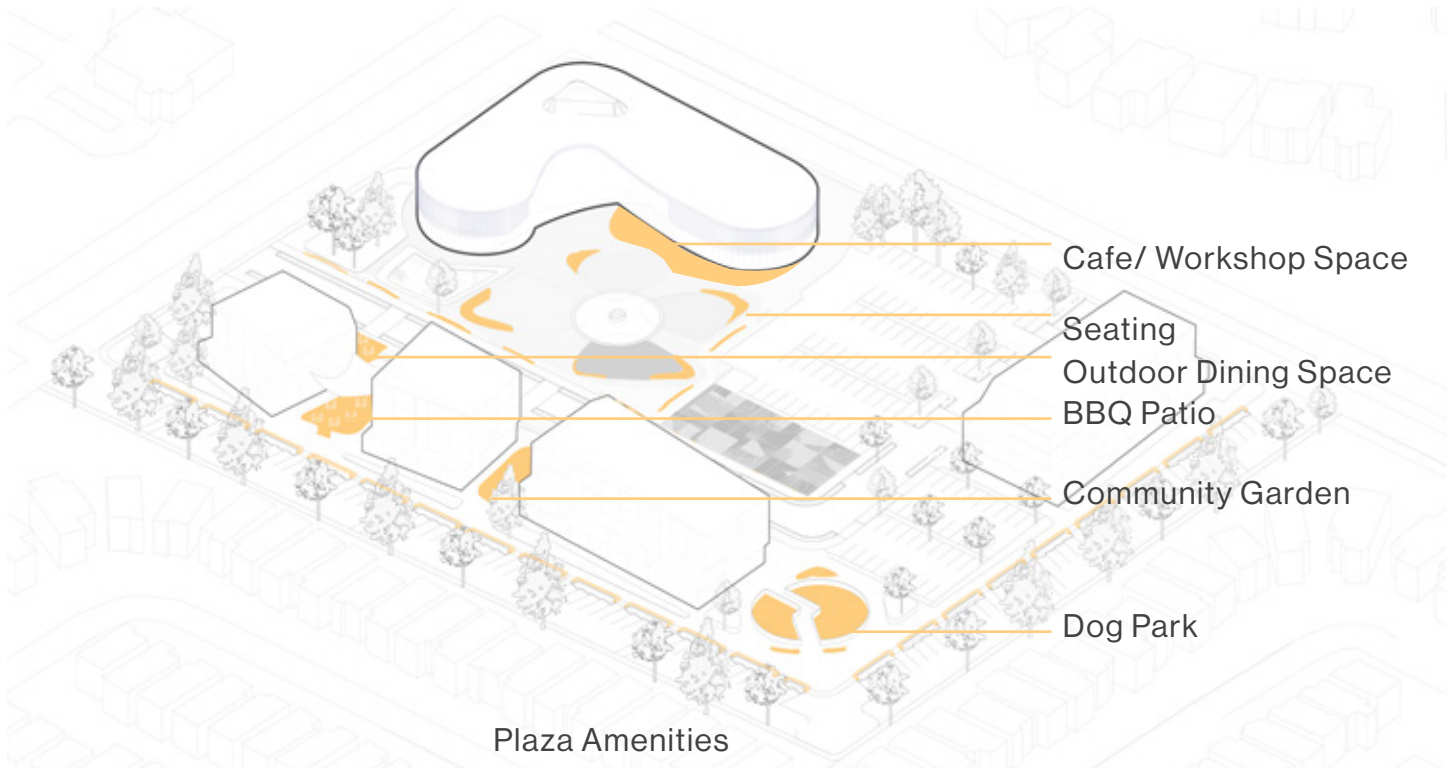
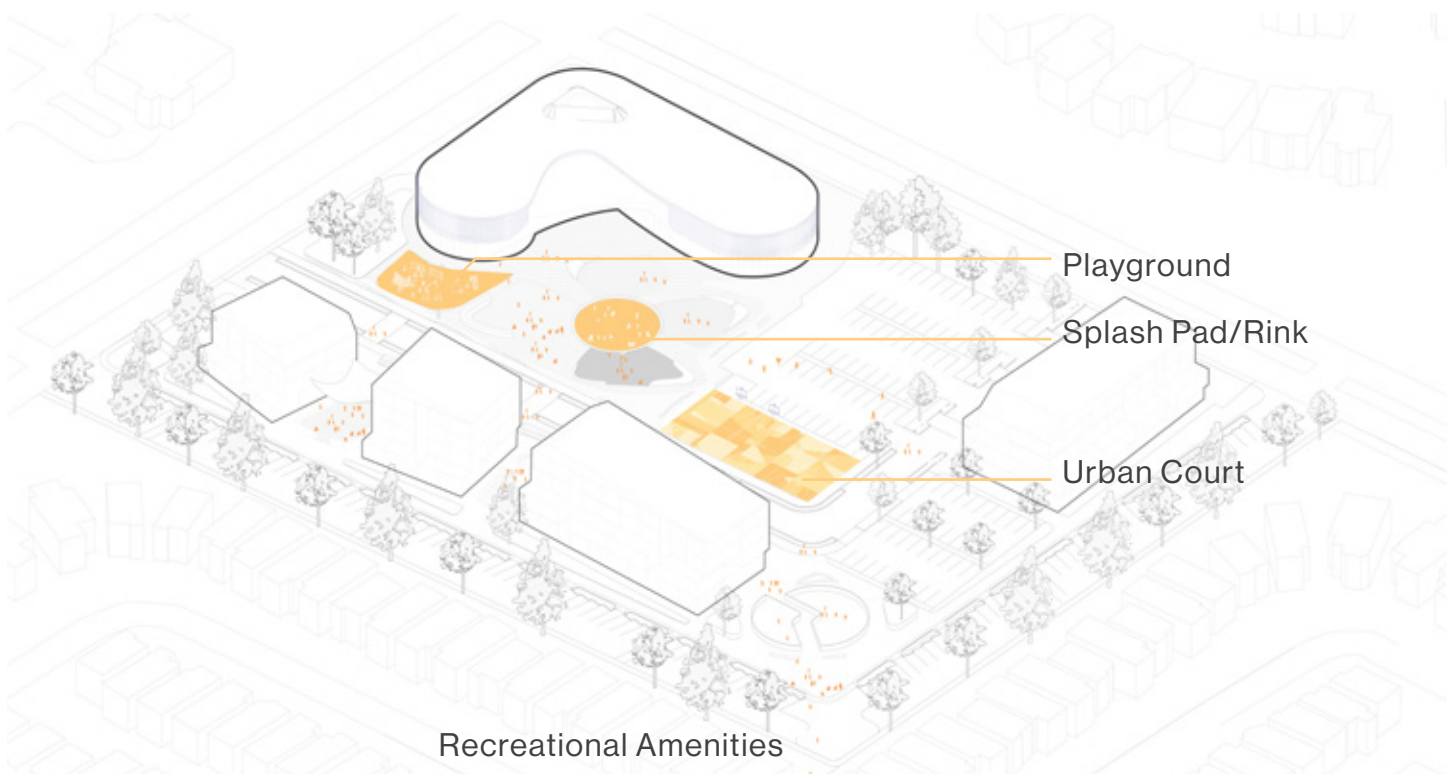


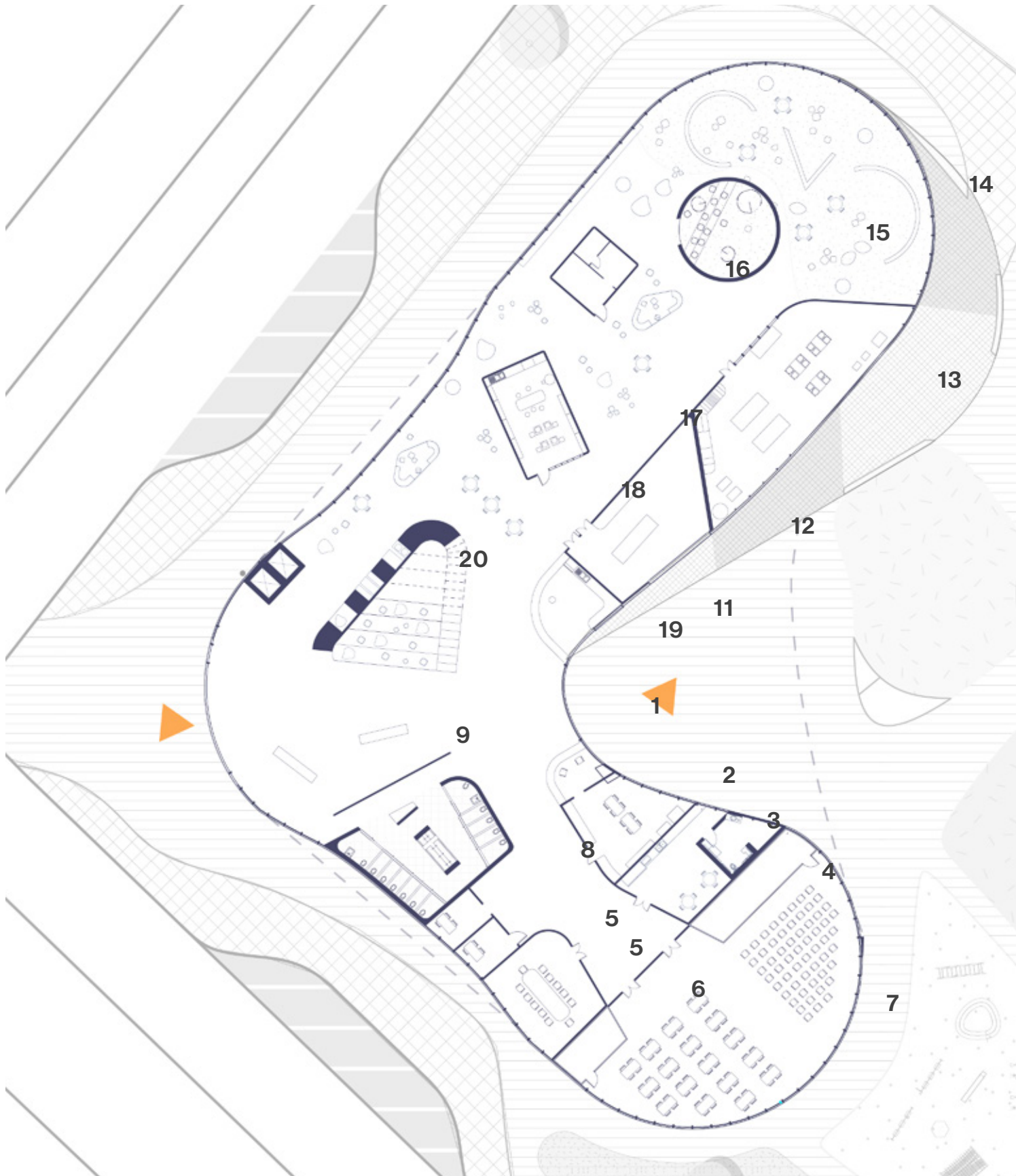
Figure 4.18 Civic Space Program Axonometric

Ground Plan

The internal programs of the library provide a range of support services and resources to its larger community and its adjacent plaza. While the ground plane of the library focuses on its relationship to the outside and hence is louder, the second floor is to be designed as a semi-quiet to quiet space for reading, learning and studying. The central atrium and social stairs are also crucial in bringing together the building through a focal point (see figure 4.26). The social stairs connect the user to the two floors but can also become a leisure spot for anyone trying to charge their phone or to have a seat to shelter from the weather. For new immigrants or the city's residents, the library can offer language classes in multipurpose spaces, clinics for filing taxes or applying for citizenship, or providing technology to access the internet. While some of Brampton's libraries have a desk designated for new residents, this library is intended to have dedicated space for public services close to the administrative programs. The library's multipurpose rooms allow for various activities such as festivals, weddings, workshops, town meetings, etc., but they can also spill into the central atrium and onto the social stairs in the process. Additionally, the process of learning and making is celebrated through the programming of a workshop for pottery, woodworking or an art studio (see figure 4.29). The adjacent maker space/digital lab and audio/visual rooms also encourage community members to collaborate through making or by having an opportunity to play or listen to music. These spaces are designed to facilitate participation and social interaction to further strengthen the community members' relationship with each other (figure 4.23). A designated children's nook offers a play pit, reading spaces, books and workshop space designed for mobility and rearrangement. This would allow the children to reconfigure their environments while facilitating group activities such as reading, making, or as a temporary daycare for anyone seeking public services within the building.

Second Floor Plan

The second floor of the library is a hub of activity and learning, with a diverse range of resources and spaces for studying, reading, and exploring. The workspaces are designed to be versatile and can be easily programmed for learning or group workshops, providing library users with opportunities to collaborate in or study independently. Moreover, the second floor also offers a range of different scales of spaces and levels of privacy, from open areas for group collaboration to private alcoves for individual study. For young adults, the second floor is programmed with a dedicated teen space, designed to be a environment for casual reading, studying, and socializing (see figure 4.21). The computer lab on this floor is equipped with a plotter and printer room, and a group learning space where users can take advantage of training opportunities on topics like filing taxes or building resumes. A high table with seating located along the opening in the floor plate of the second floor offers a view of the different programs on the ground floor, while also providing a space for individual work (see figure 4.25). The second floor also has a range of seating options, to allow the users to find an environment that suits their needs and the program that is intended on taking place



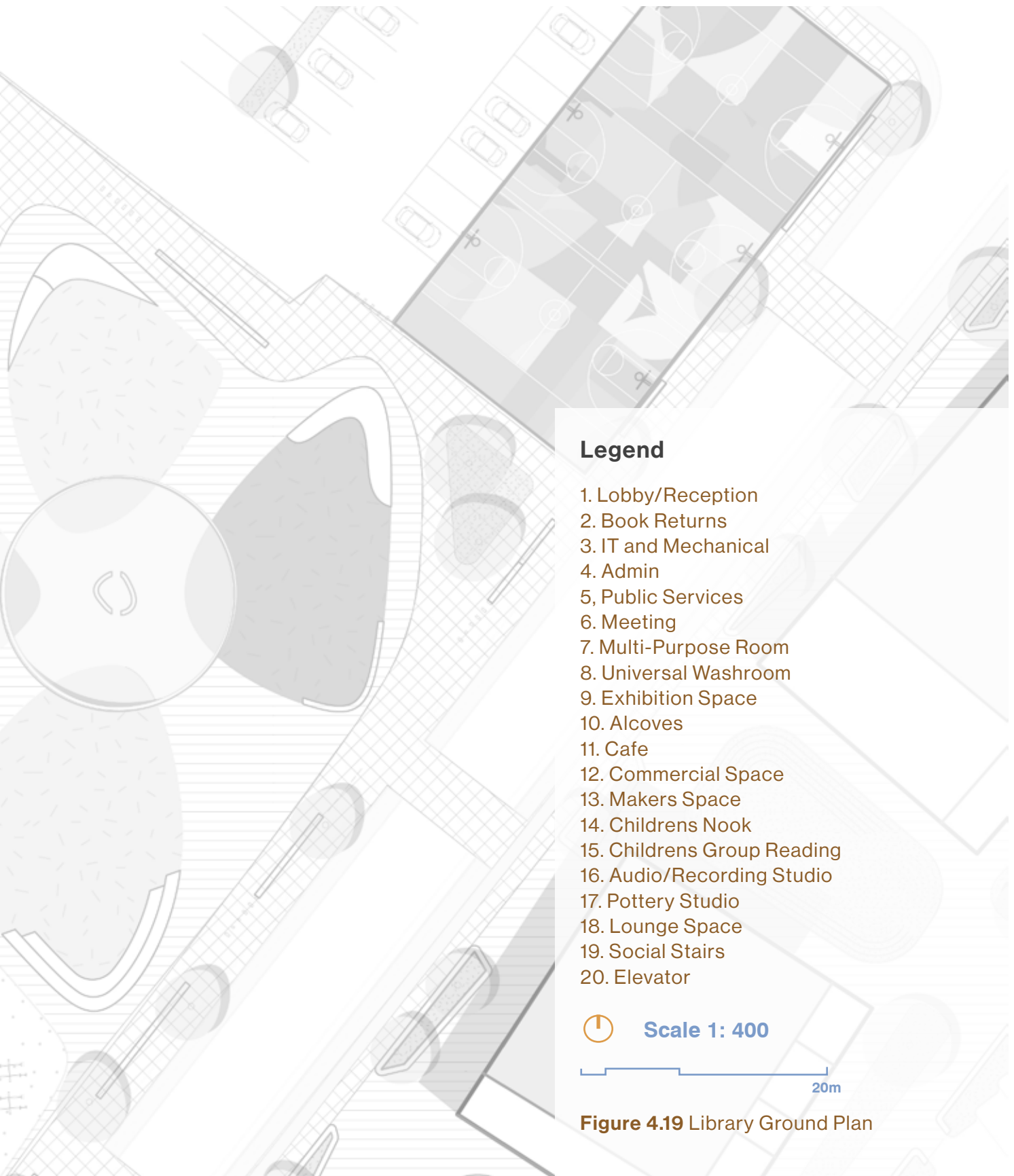
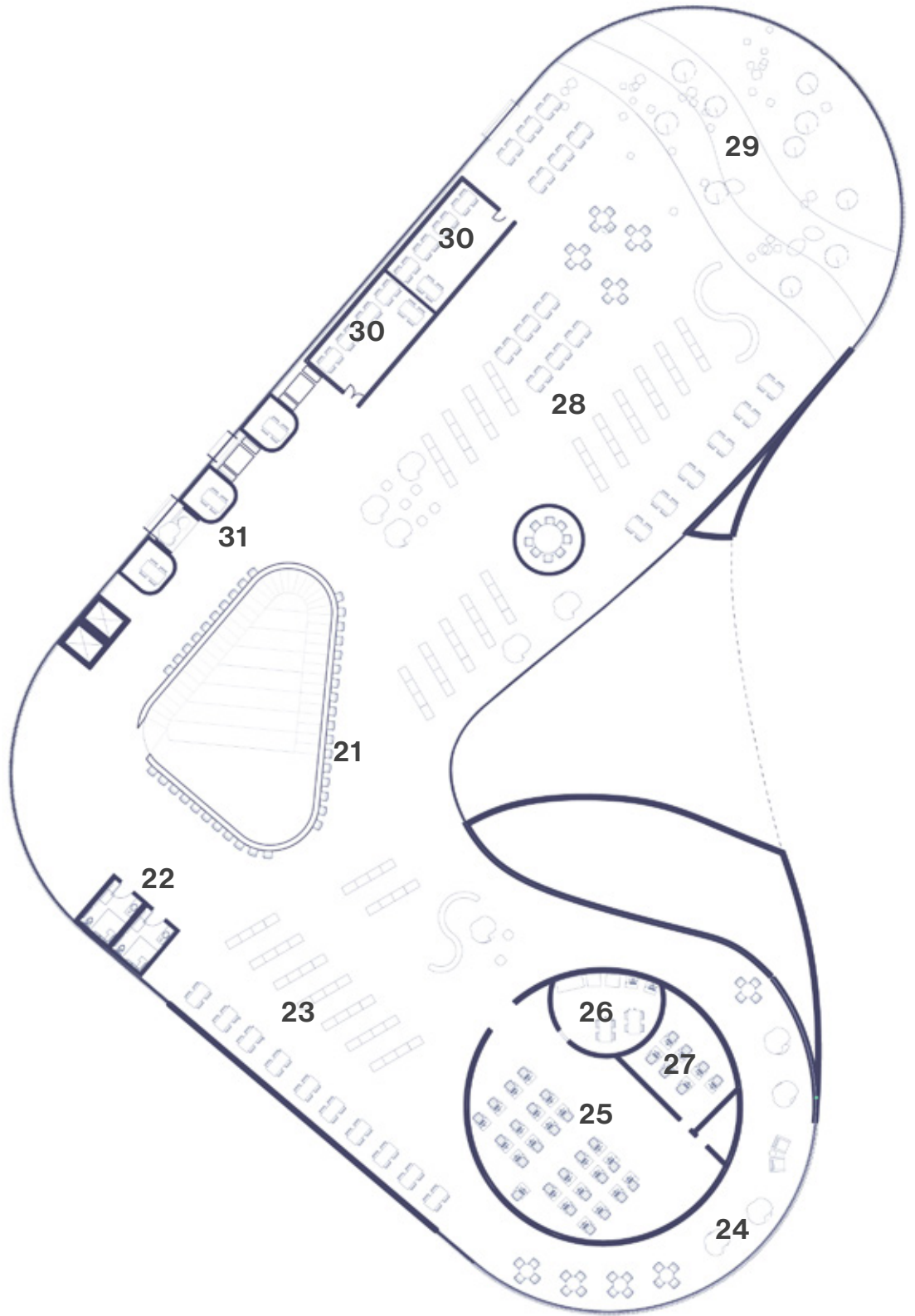


Figure 4.19 Library Ground Plan



Legend

- 21. Work Station
- 22. Washrooms
- 23. Adult Collections
- 24. Lounge Reading Space
- 25. Computer Lab
- 26. Printing Services
- 27. Digital Lab
- 28. Young Adults Collection
- 29. Young Adults Reading Space
- 30. Quiet Work Zones
- 31. Alcoves



Scale 1: 400



Figure 4.20 Library Second Floor Plan



Figure 4.21 Young Adults Space

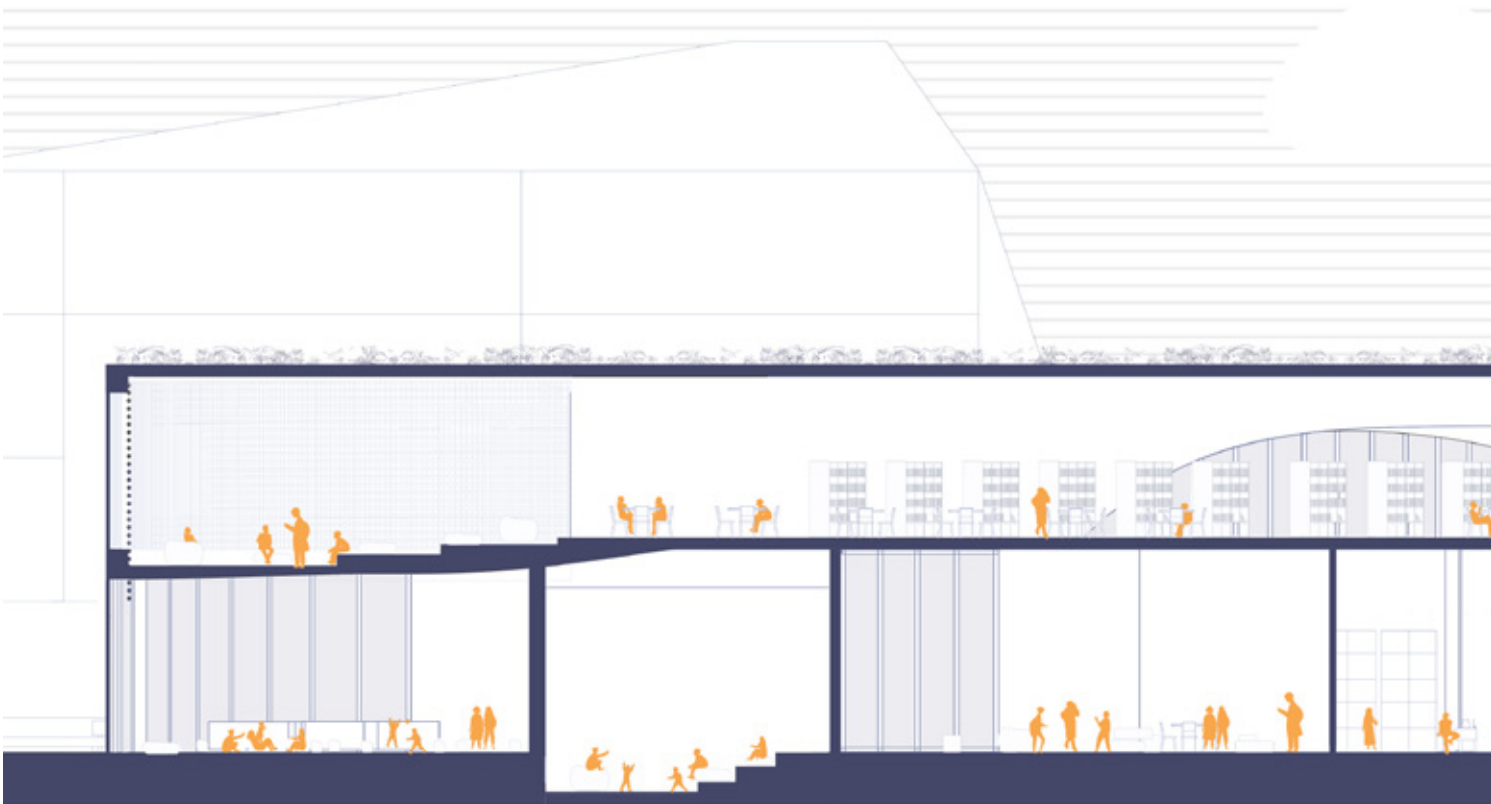
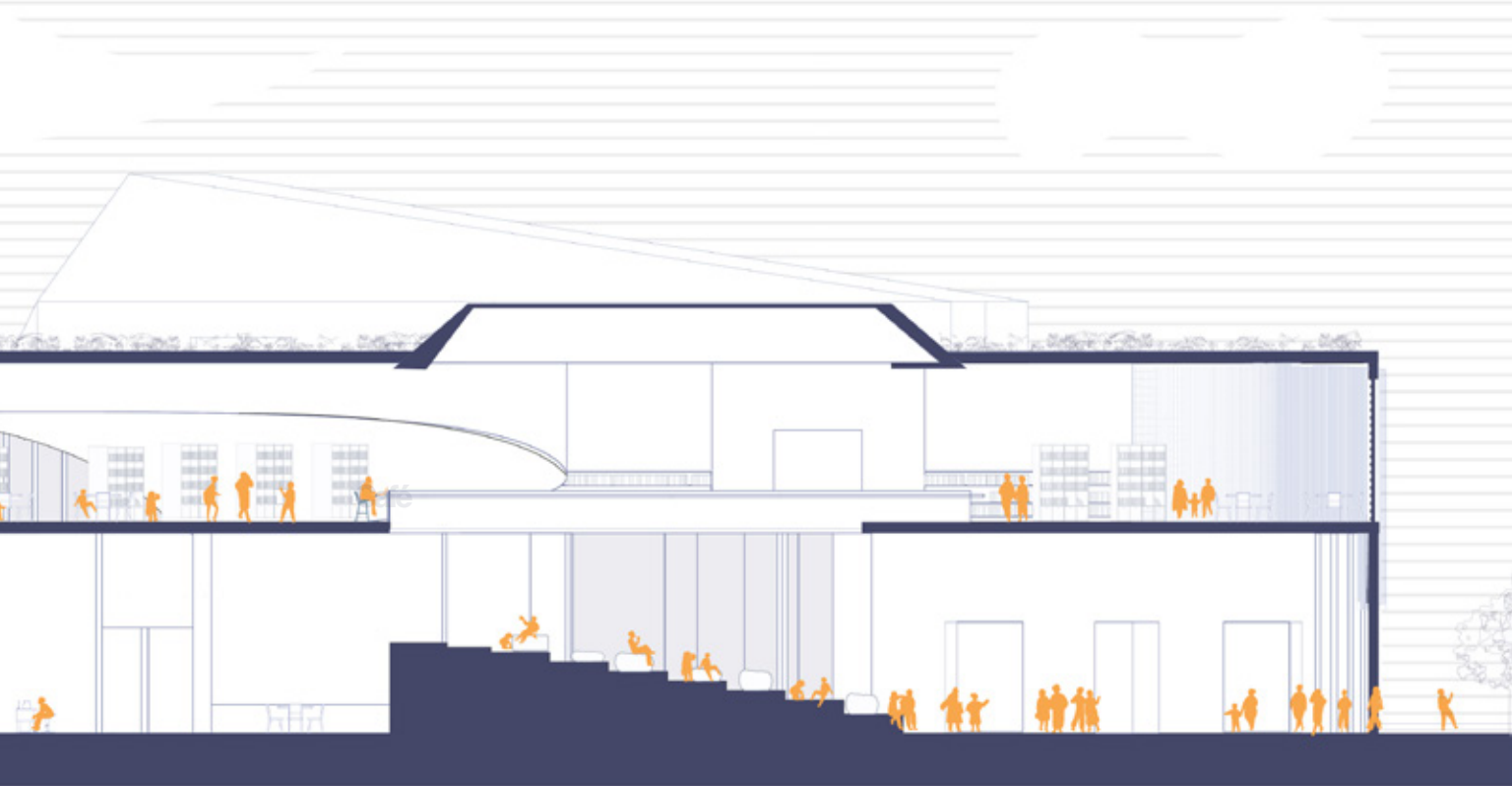
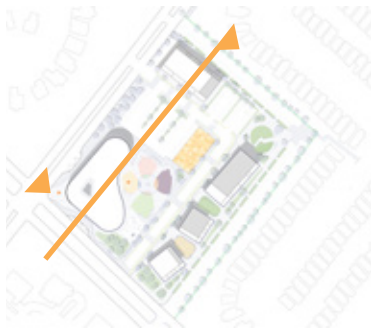


Figure 4.22 Library Section AA



Scale 1: 250



Young Adults

Group Reading

Workshop Rooms



Level 1

Children's Corner

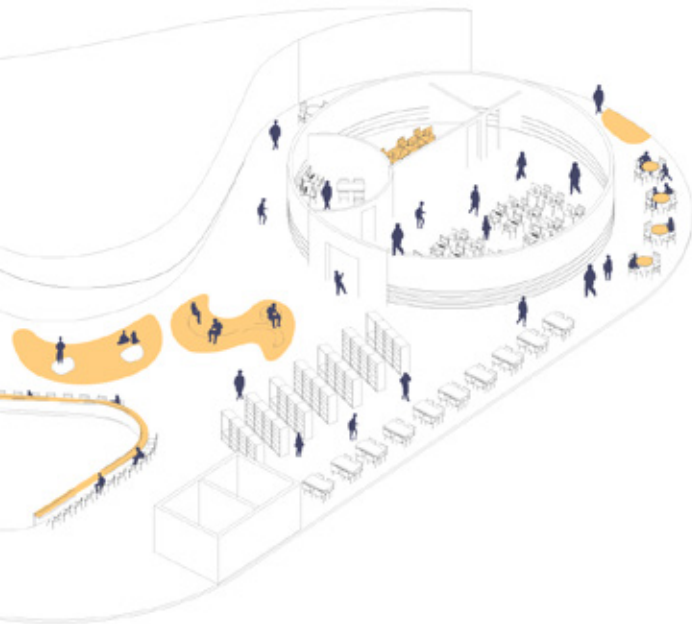
Pottery

Lounge

Alcoves



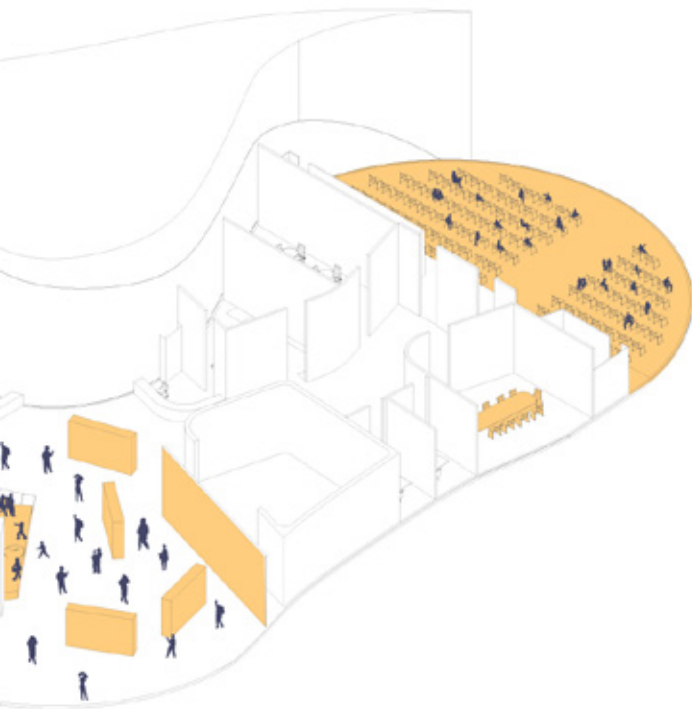
Level 2



Level 2

Lounge Space

Group Training Room



Level 1

Makers Space

Multi-Purpose Room

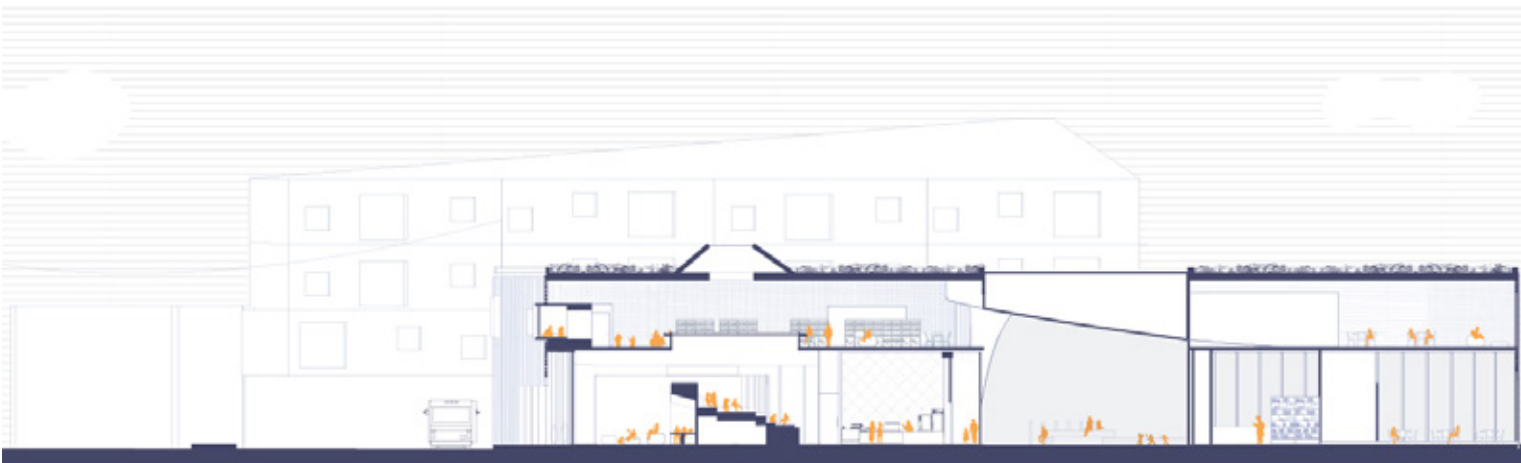
Social Stairs

Exhibition Space

Figure 4.23 Collaborative/Social Spaces in the Library

Roof

The roof design for this library includes a skylight that allows daylight to penetrate the second-floor reading space around the stairs, and provides lighting to the main atrium on the ground floor that features a social staircase, exhibition space, and a café. The roof design also incorporates a permeable green roof of sedums, which serves multiple functions. The sedums are known for being a hardy plant species that can withstand harsh winter conditions and require minimal maintenance, making them an ideal choice for the climatic conditions of Southern Ontario. The green roof also provides insulation, reducing heat loss from the building during the winter months and lowering energy costs. Moreover, the green roof increases carbon sequestration, which helps to mitigate the library's carbon footprint. The permeability of the roof allows for rainwater collection, which can be used in the washrooms within the building or to irrigate the surrounding vegetation on-site.



Facade

The library's facade consists of a fixed wooden louvre system intended to provide the users with a sense of warmth and protection from the external environment. The louvre system is more significant on the second floor and extends down to the ground floor, providing a degree of privacy for the library's internal programs such as administrative spaces, washrooms, and private spaces. At the same time, the louvres allow natural light to penetrate the interior spaces, reducing the need for artificial lighting during the daytime.

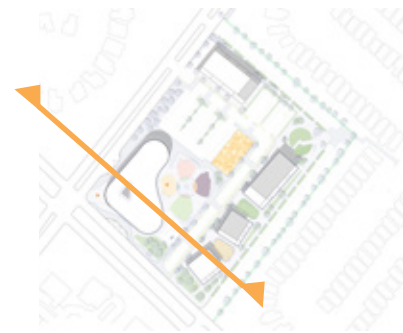


Figure 4.24 Library Section BB





Figure 4.25 Second Floor Adult Collections Render





Figure 4.26 Exhibition Space and Social Stairs

The permeability of the facade also provides a visual connection between the exterior and interior of the library, enabling passersby to catch glimpses of the activities and spaces inside the building. This transparency will encourage users to gain a better understanding of what Brampton's ninth library has to offer, and its internal programs can motivate users to explore it. However, panels between the louvres are placed intentionally at the reading spaces on the second floor to prevent shadows from being cast onto the workspace. In the design of the library, color is used as a means of wayfinding and signage but also as a means of programming a space. This is done through assigning specific colors to furniture and or wall accents (see figures 4.25 and 4.26). The use of colour as a decolonial tool also celebrates multiculturalism in Brampton, echoing the ideas presented in the book *Chromophobia* by David



Batchelor. The author highlights how the use of color is a decolonial tool in that it challenges the traditional Western conception of color as inferior to other design elements, which highlights the legacy of colonialism and Eurocentrism in design.¹³⁷ The library's interior features a diverse range of colors that reflect the cultural diversity of the community it serves, creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all users.

¹³⁷ David Batchelor, *Chromophobia* (London, England: Reaktion, 2013), 29.



Figure 4.27 Library Elevation



Figure 4.28 Pottery Studio



Figure 4.29 Children's Space and Makers Space



Figure 4.30 Alcoves Under Stair





Figure 4.31 Active Civic Space with Splash Pad





Figure 4.32 Active Civic Space with Ice Rink





Figure 4.33 Active Civic Space during a festival





Figure 4.34 Night Render from the intersection

Conclusion

It has become evident that the significance of preserving cultural and social identity in an increasingly globalized world cannot be overstated. Despite Canada's insistence on its "cultural mosaic" ideology, the reality of Brampton, among many other multicultural cities, reveals that a persistent dominance of whiteness and exclusion of diversity still exists in the design of "public spaces" that do not reflect the "public." This has not only created a sense of exclusion and marginalization among the residents of Brampton, but it has also increased their challenges in maintaining their cultural and social identity.

Brampton's cultural and ethnic diversity continues to grow at a significant pace. The city, in its approach, must also adapt to designing public spaces to accommodate the varying needs and preferences of its multicultural residents. This includes creating spaces that are adaptable, multi-functional, and culturally sensitive, ensuring that the city's public environments are truly representative of its dynamic and expanding cultural mosaic.

While this thesis focuses on the evolving role of a library as a social incubator to encourage social collaboration, exchange, and representation for its residents, it also challenges the design of existing underutilized retail plazas and advocates for a dynamic, multi-functional environment that can be programmed for citizen appropriation and to serve the diverse needs of the community. In identifying the current role and programming of libraries within Brampton, it is apparent that there is an awareness that the city has

not adequately maintained the growth of its library facilities in pace with the increasing population. However, its failure in understanding the potential of a library, and in particular, who the library is for, overshadows its current approach.

Much like the many residents of Brampton who have had to appropriate and search for a place where they can express themselves with their communities and find a sense of belonging, architecture and urban policy decisions play a crucial role in shaping such environments. Our role as architects, designers, urban planners, educators, or students can vastly impact the process of designing and manifesting spaces that truly reflect and resonate with the people they serve. However, the success of these spaces is only possible through the process of collaboration and participation with the current residents who use these amenities.

Through the design of a library and civic space that celebrates its citizens and encourages the continuation of the dialogue of togetherness, I hope that this thesis can begin to empower the residents of Brampton to continue advocating for public spaces that are reflective of their diverse community. By shedding light on the importance of inclusive design and the evolving role of libraries as vital community hubs, this work aims to encourage meaningful dialogue and spark action towards creating environments that truly cater to the unique needs and aspirations of Brampton's citizens. Ultimately, this thesis seeks to contribute to the ongoing efforts to build a more equitable and vibrant city for all.

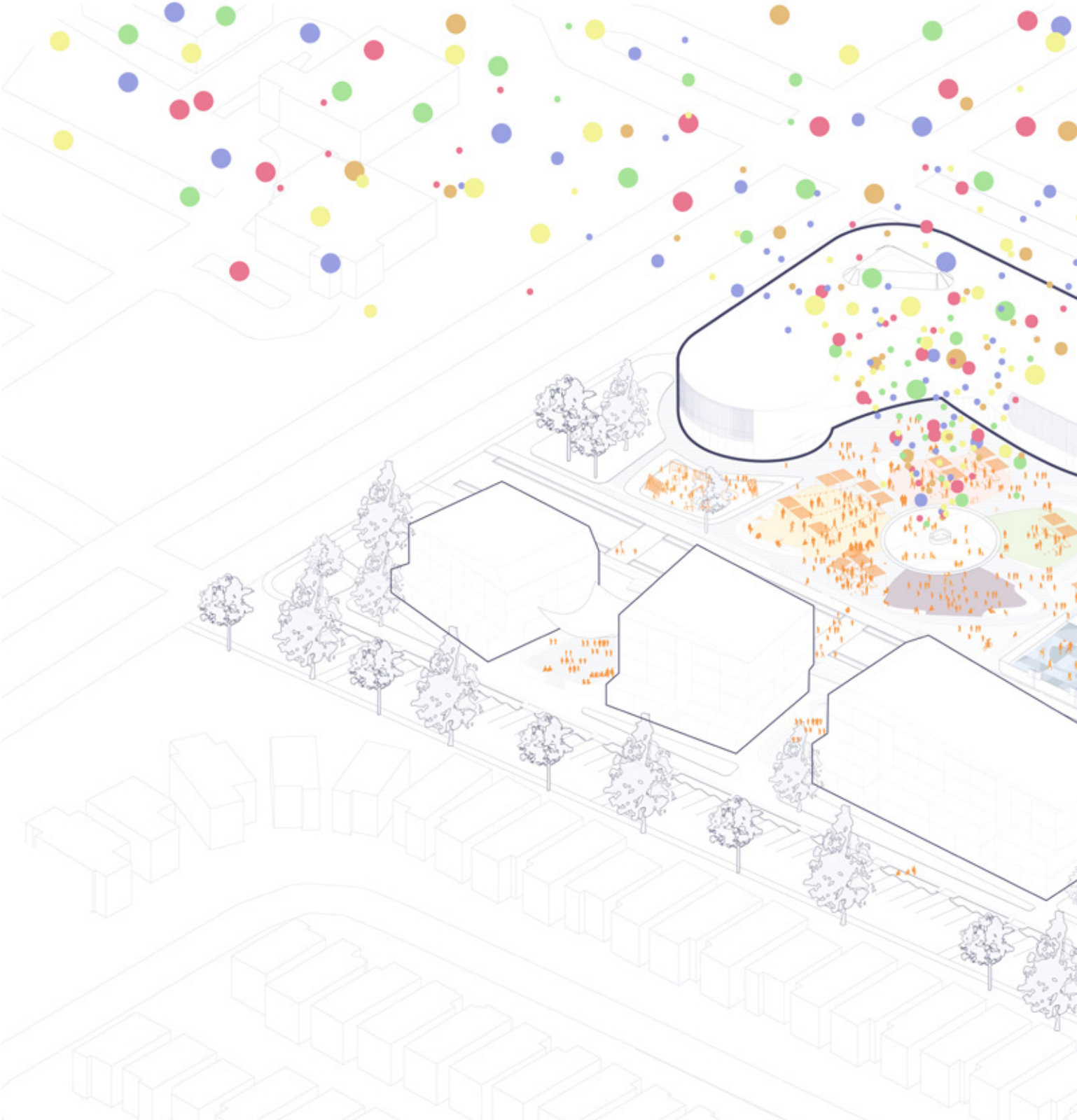
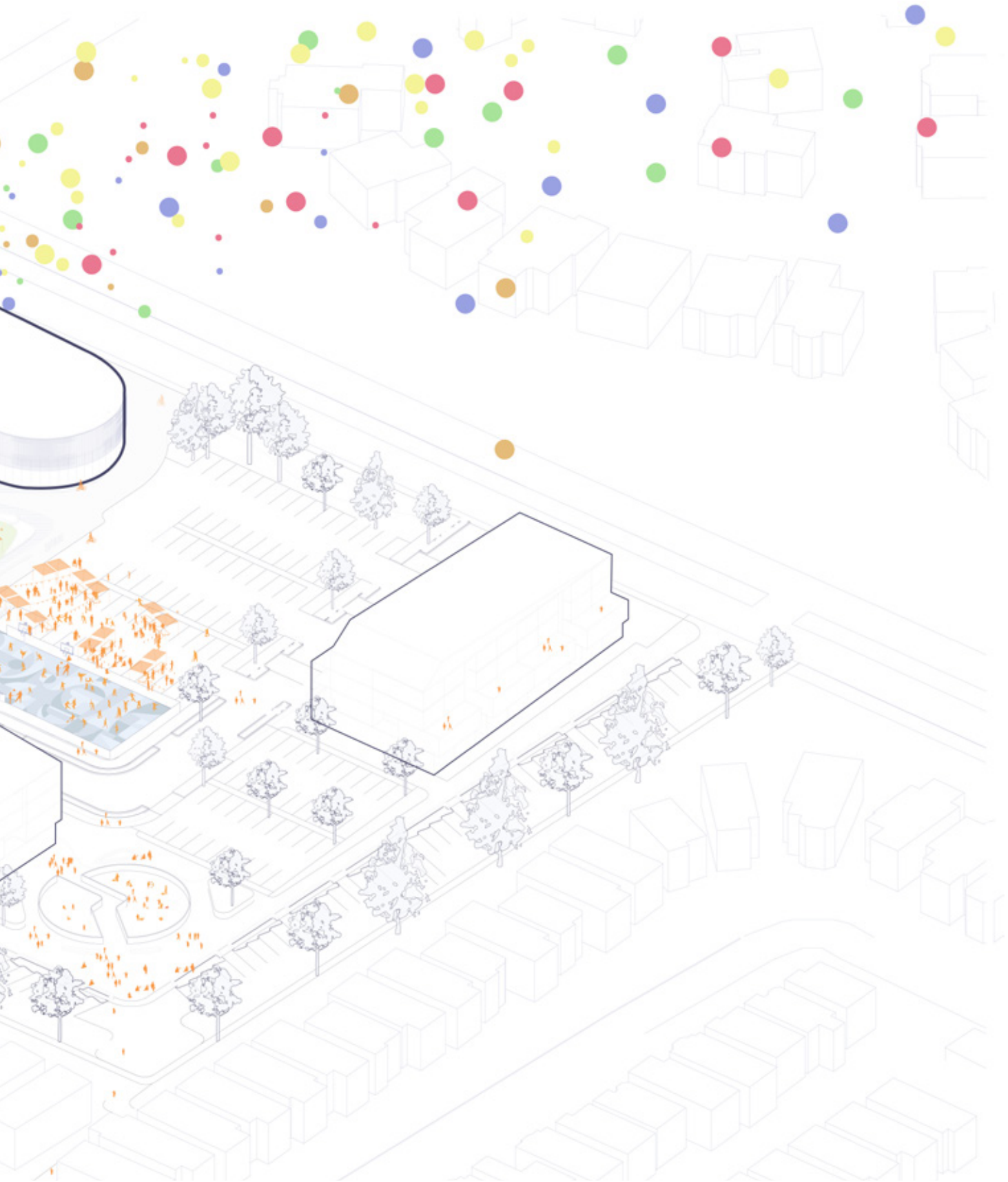


Figure 5.0 The Bloom



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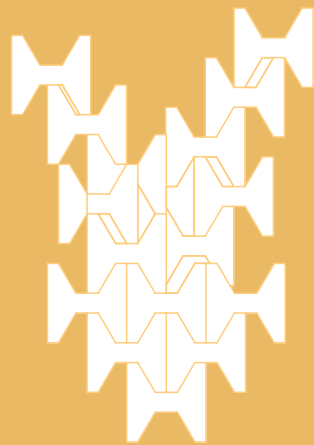
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Appendix A

The Bloom

By exploring the future of libraries in the digital age, this thesis argues for a library that focuses on the exchange of ideas, resources, conversations, thoughts, beliefs, and skills. The artifact created to condense the core ideas of the thesis, is designed as a game intended to encourage learning through participation, socialization, exchange, and collaboration. The metaphor of the seed, which is one block, and the bloom, which is the end product of placing the blocks together, is imagined to prompt users to have informal conversations within the space of the library. Growing the bloom through the building process will also allow users within the library to collaborate and develop skills such as teamwork, communication, sharing ideas, and decision-making, and leading a cooperative effort. The use of color to create a mosaic and the variabilities of the structure allow for greater creative expression and challenge that forces one to problem-solve and think ahead through its configurations. As interactions between different demographics decline in cities such as Brampton, where ethnic neighborhoods go through



Figure 6.0 The bloom (artifact) in action

the process of spatial assimilation, their relationship with people of other cultures is reduced. Hence, the creative engagement with The Bloom becomes an activity that transcends language and cultural barriers for Brampton's diverse residents, who can come together and share their unique experiences and perspectives through the activity, which would help create a space of cultural exchange and understanding.

The construction of the blocks started from gluing three one-inch clear pine trims together and cutting them to blocks of 40mm x 40mm. The blocks were then placed on a jig and passed through a table saw at an angle and rotated on each face until all sides had a V cut in them. The blocks were then put on another jig and sent through a dado stack blade on each face, which trimmed away the center of the block. They were then individually sanded and painted one of seven colors before being coated with mineral oil to protect them. The box, in contrast to the vibrant blocks, is constructed out of a series of monochromatic quarter-sawn white oak plywood that is banded with white oak wood.

The final object is a deceptively simple box containing a world of possibilities that serves as a tray onto which people can come together to assemble multi-coloured blocks into endless configurations.

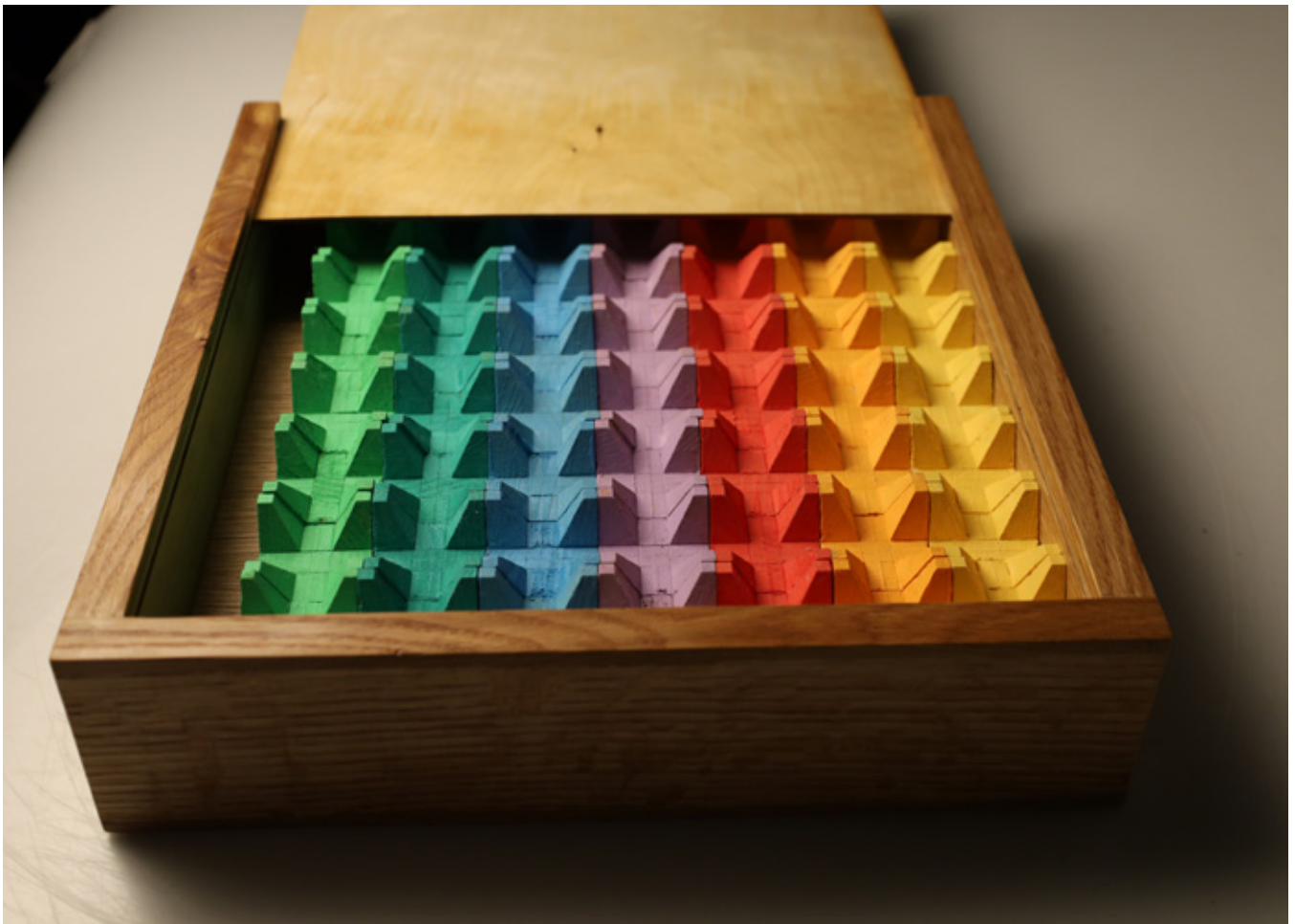


Figure 6.1 Artifact Box



Figure 6.2 Sliding lid provides ease of access and acts as a base