

The Cloud Factory: A Surrealist Rehabilitation of the
Downtown Ottawa Public Library and Tower

by

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Abstract

In 2019, the spread of Covid-19 caused public spaces in cities around the world to close. Office towers evacuated and workers had to adapt to a new home-based way of working. As a result of this rapid change, most office towers in Ottawa are currently empty, and in some cases, unlikely to serve anytime soon, since many large corporations are now considering keeping their employees at home because this model would seem to be cost effective. This major change in mentality and style of employment management has raised new social and financial questions. On one hand, the demand for affordable housing has become a problem; the cost of housing is growing exponentially while availability continues to decrease. On the other, office management companies and building owners are worried about the fate of their empty floor plates. This thesis imagines a solution that would benefit both parties. Surrealism guides the design of a re-imagined tower in which private dwelling and shared communal uses layer themselves upon the office program and soon-to-be-vacated Ottawa Public Library. An intertwined program opens new doors for dwelling in the core and stimulates downtown life.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	<i>ii</i>
Acknowledgments.....	<i>iii</i>
List of Illustrations.....	<i>vi</i>
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: The Site and the Problem At Hand	3
1.1 Location of the site	3
1.2 The original building, 1905	4
1.3 The current library	9
1.4 An Architectural Challenge	14
Chapter 2: A Surrealist Novel As Inspiration	16
2.1 <i>Froth on the Daydream</i> by Boris Vian	16
2.2 Beginnings: Speculative Model and Drawing.....	20
2.3 Understanding Current Users of the Ottawa Public Library	22
2.4 Surrealism and the sense of community	27
Chapter 3: The Architectural Proposition for a Re-Imagined Library and Tower.....	30
3.1 Ground Floor.....	34
3.2 The Ground Floor (Exterior).....	41
3.3 The Second Floor	44
3.4 The Third Floor.....	50
3.5 Basement Levels	53
3.6 The residential tower and offices	57
Conclusion.....	63

Appendix: Additional Renderings 64

Bibliography..... 79

List of Illustrations

Figure 1: Site analysis of the Public library of Ottawa.....	3
Figure 2: Fire insurance map used in the late 19 th and early 20 th century	5
Figure 3: The original Carnegie library in Ottawa.....	5
Figure 4: “Modified T” Floorplan of the Ottawa Library by Lewis Horwood.....	6
Figure 5: Fire insurance map used in the late 19 th and early 20 th century and nearby locations	8
Figure 6: Digital rendering – Axonometric view of the current library	11
Figure 7: Stained glass depicting a Sybil – Salvaged from the original Carnegie library	12
Figure 8: Digital axonometric rendering of the current library	13
Figure 9: Artistic representation of the notion of dream in the context of the library	19
Figure 10: Physical model of the Pianocktail	21
Figure 11: Perspective drawing of the laundromat	24
Figure 12: Section of the laundromat and shower area.....	25
Figure 13: Hand drawing of the corner façade, intersection of Laurier Avenue and Metcalfe Street.....	30
Figure 14: Preliminary drawing of the new building.....	31
Figure 15: Perspective view of the North/West façade of the new building	32
Figure 16: Perspective view of the South/West façade showing residential units and balconies	33
Figure 17: Sketch of the barndoors located on Metcalfe street, allowing direct access into the building	35
Figure 18: View of the communal “Community Cloud” from the street	37

Figure 19: Interior view of the “Community Cloud”, track, and rolling chair clusters (Second floor)	38
Figure 20: View of the “rolling chair clusters” and track (Second floor).....	38
Figure 21: Entrance to the ground floor Library.....	40
Figure 22: View of the bathhouse from outside (Metcalfe Street)	42
Figure 23: Facade of the residential units and balconies	43
Figure 24: Facade of the residential units merging with the office facade.....	43
Figure 25: Perspective view of the communal kitchen (Second floor).....	45
Figure 26: Hand drawing of the kitchen (Second floor).....	46
Figure 27: Perspective view of the kitchen and dining area (Second floor).....	46
Figure 28: View of a third floor reading porch overlooking Metcalfe Street.....	47
Figure 29: View of the reading porches from through exterior along Laurier Avenue....	48
Figure 30: Hand drawing of the Oscar Peterson Hall (Third floor).....	50
Figure 31: The Oscar Peterson Hall, view from the seating area (Third floor).....	51
Figure 32: View of the Oscar Peterson Hall from the other side of the mezzanine (Third floor)	52
Figure 33: View of the Oscar Peterson Hall from outside showing raised roof.....	52
Figure 34: Initial view of the bathhouse when entering the room (basement)	54
Figure 35: Section showing the baths and the light tunnels leading to the baths	55
Figure 36: View from inside on of the baths	55
Figure 37: Perspective view of the bathhouse and the cloud system (basement).....	56
Figure 38: Hand drawing of the flower system in action.....	58
Figure 39: View of the vertical greenhouse.....	59

Figure 40: Daily flower delivery to each apartment via the balconies	59
Figure 41: North/West elevation of the building showing the vertical greenhouse	60
Figure 42: Elevation of the South/West facade showing the balconies.....	61
Figure 43: View of the balconies on the South/West facade	62
Figure 44: Ground level	64
Figure 45: Second level	65
Figure 46: Third level	65
Figure 47: Basement level	66
Figure 48: Typical parking layout (basement level).....	66
Figure 49: Cross section of the building facing North/East.....	67
Figure 50: Cross section of the building facing North/East (2).....	67
Figure 51: Cross section of the building facing South/West	68
Figure 52: Cross section of the building facing South/East.....	68

Introduction

At this moment in time, the many downtown office buildings of Canada's capital beg to be reinvented. The recent pandemic has profoundly redefined the meaning of Ottawa's downtown office buildings and central business district. If civil servants do not fill them daily as in the past, what is the destiny of these office towers? This thesis contemplates this question in both general and specific terms. The redesign of one of Ottawa's downtown buildings will provide a lens to consider anew the meaning of the City and urban life, and to rethink street-level and vertical spaces. A primary question concerns design thinking considerations on how to make decisions on the design for the reconfiguration of an existing office building. What will be the design methodology? How to make choices about program, about mixed uses, and even, about "style"? Ottawa is defined by its role as the seat of the federal government and nexus of civil servant activity. Ottawa's impulses to be an inventive and creative city are often overshadowed by its broader obligations as a Federal Capital, and its destiny to be a city that must represent the Nation. Because it hosts so many federal offices and agencies, its downtown is formal and polite. To contrast with the city's conservatism, this thesis turns to surrealism as a working method for guiding a renovation of an Ottawa office building. Surrealism, from the French *sur-réalisme*, or, "on top of" realism, was a philosophical and artistic movement that grew out of France and André Breton's Surrealist Manifesto of 1924. Breton and the surrealists believed that there existed a highly important but neglected reality that could be attained through poetic thinking and associations, and by activating the realm of dream. Surrealists also used psychic automatism to help bypass preconceived ideas and suppress conscious thinking to open the door to new discoveries. Such techniques can also be used when designing buildings.¹ Thinking "over" realism

¹ Thomas Mical, *Surrealism and Architecture* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 228.

could aid in critiquing the destructive forces of daily life (that had recently expressed themselves in the First World War). By turning to surrealism as an inspiration for architecture, this thesis hopes to bring new, expanded life, to Ottawa's downtown.

The following document is organized in three chapters. The first chapter describes the history and context of the Ottawa Public Library main branch site and building, delving into its Carnegie origins, and mapping the progressive architectural stages that have led to today's building. The second chapter presents a surrealist novel that serves as inspiration for the design that culminates this thesis, specifically, Boris Vian's *Froth on the Daydream* of 1947. Surrealist theories are here also presented. Finally, the third chapter describes the thesis' proposition for a rehabilitation-reuse of the existing library and office tower designed by George Bemi in 1973 that now stands at the corner of Metcalfe Street and Laurier Avenue. The proposition will ask questions regarding new approaches to architectural design, and more generally, will imagine new possibilities for older buildings in Ottawa's downtown.

Chapter 1: The Site and the Problem At Hand

1.1 Location of the site

The Ottawa Public Library is an institution located in the downtown core of the city of Ottawa, more precisely, at 120 Metcalfe Street. The building is surrounded by office towers, government institutions and public businesses such as restaurants, groceries, small shops and bars. The site is easily accessible by public transportation (bus and train), is bike-friendly, and features numerous parking options for cars.

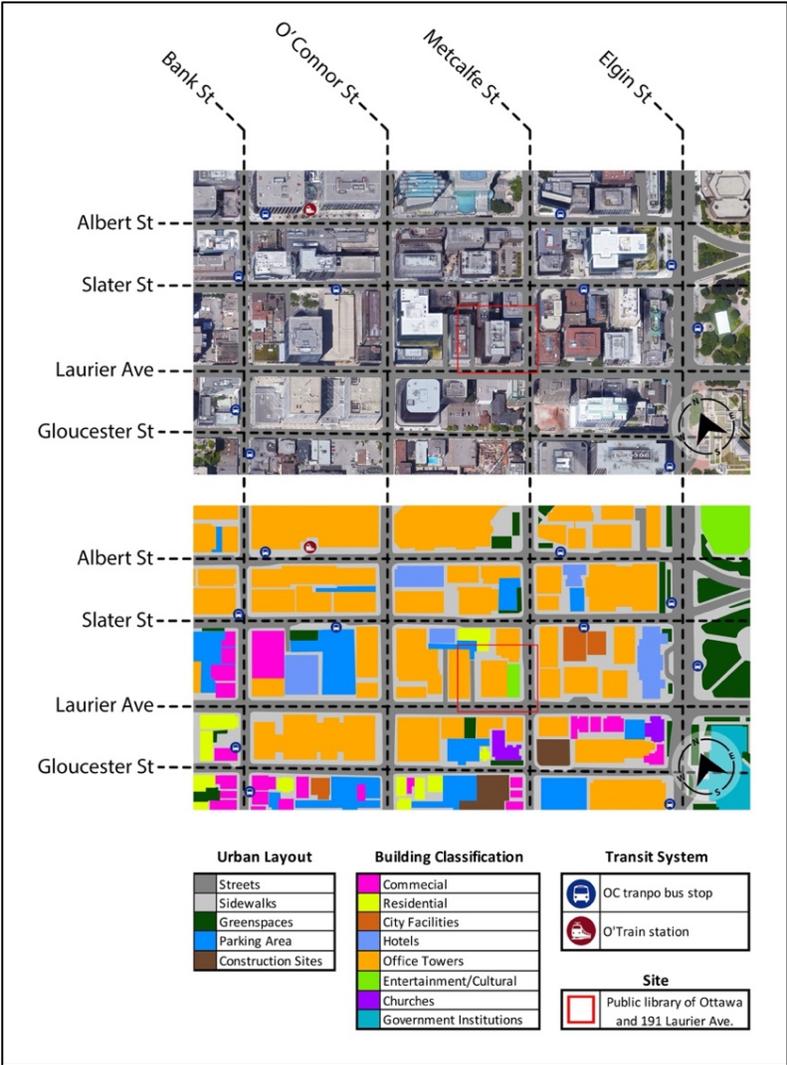


Figure 1: Site analysis of the Public library of Ottawa

1.2 The original building, 1905

The original library building that once stood on the lot at the corner of Laurier Avenue and Metcalfe Street was funded in 1901 by visionary philanthropist Andrew Carnegie,² a Scottish-American industrialist who had made his fortune in the American steel industry during the late 19th century.³ Through a generous grant program, Carnegie funded the construction of 2509 public libraries across the world, including 125 in Canada.⁴ The construction of the Ottawa Public Library was an important addition to the city since it was the first free public library to open in the region.⁵ The original building was designed by Architect Edgar Lewis Horwood in a neo-classical style featuring a pale ivory Indiana limestone façade accentuated by Corinthian columns, large arched windows facing the reading rooms and a heavy cornice.⁶ The library is clearly visible on Ottawa’s historic “Fire Insurance Maps,” maps which were created for insurance purposes and that constitute valuable accounts of buildings and uses in the late 19th and early 20th century in Ottawa.⁷

² Urbsite Blogspot, “Unforgotten Ottawa: The Carnegie Library,” accessed in November 2021, <http://urbsite.blogspot.com/2012/09/unforgotten-ottawa-carnegie-library.html>.

³ Ontario Association of Architects, “Blaaag detail - Carnegie libraries,” accessed in December 2021, <https://oaa.on.ca/whats-on/blaag/blaag-detail/Carnegie-Libraries>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Urbsite Blogspot, “Unforgotten Ottawa: The Carnegie Library.”

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Library and Archive Canada (LAC), “Insurance Plan of the City of Ottawa, Ontario,” Sheet 36.

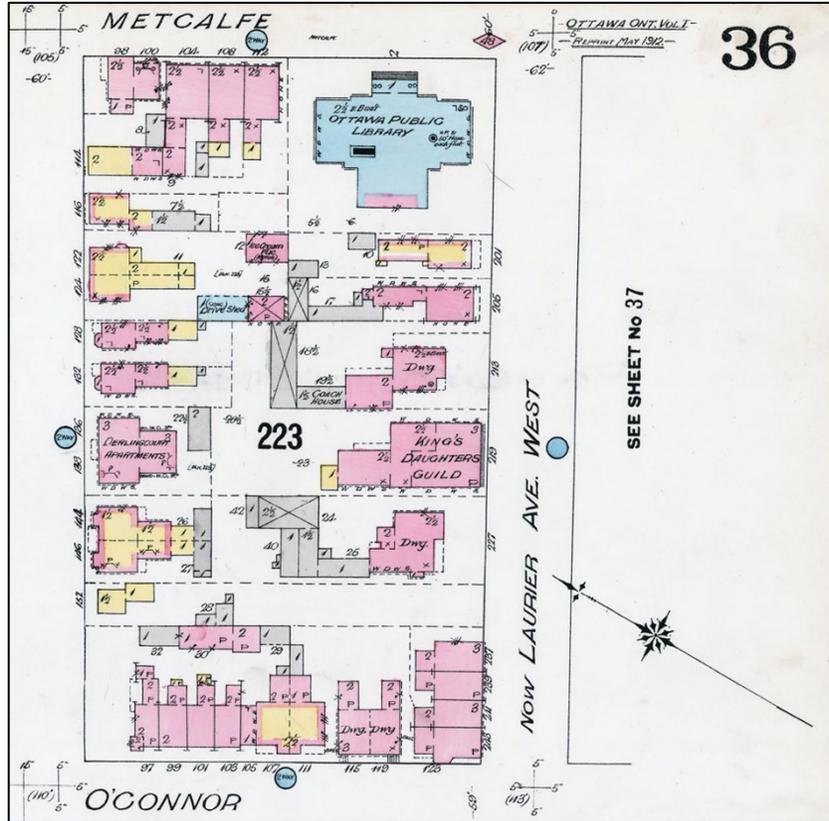


Figure 2: Fire insurance map used in the late 19th and early 20th century

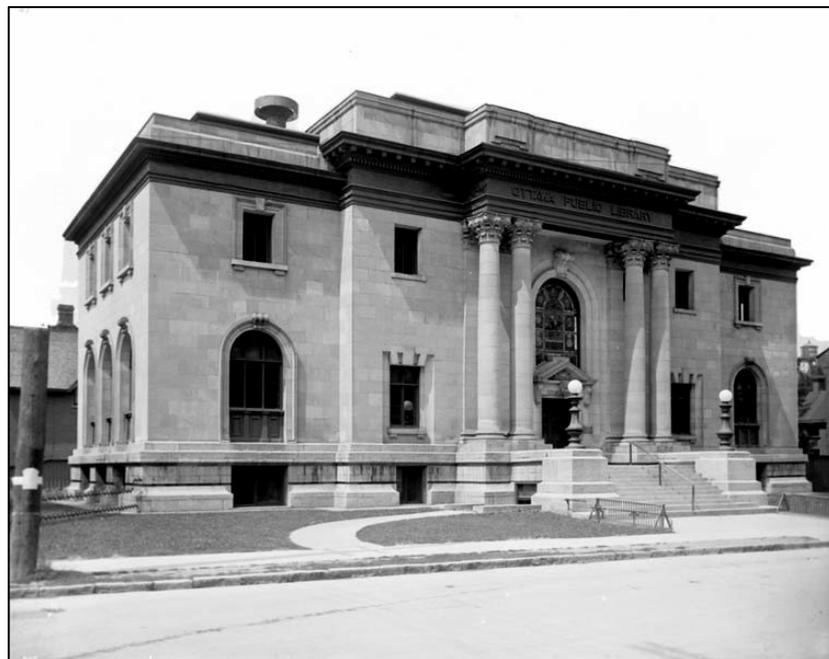


Figure 3: The original Carnegie library in Ottawa

In order to give a celebratory and noble impression to the library building despite its modest footprint, architect Lewis Horwood opted for a Beaux-Arts design characterized by symmetry, classical detailing and ornamentations reminiscent of Greek temples.⁸ The floorplans were inspired by a “modified T” plan that organized secluded areas and rooms in each of three masses. In the original building, one mass held the book stacks while the other two contained reading areas for children and adults respectively. The construction of the library was finalized and opened to the public in 1906.

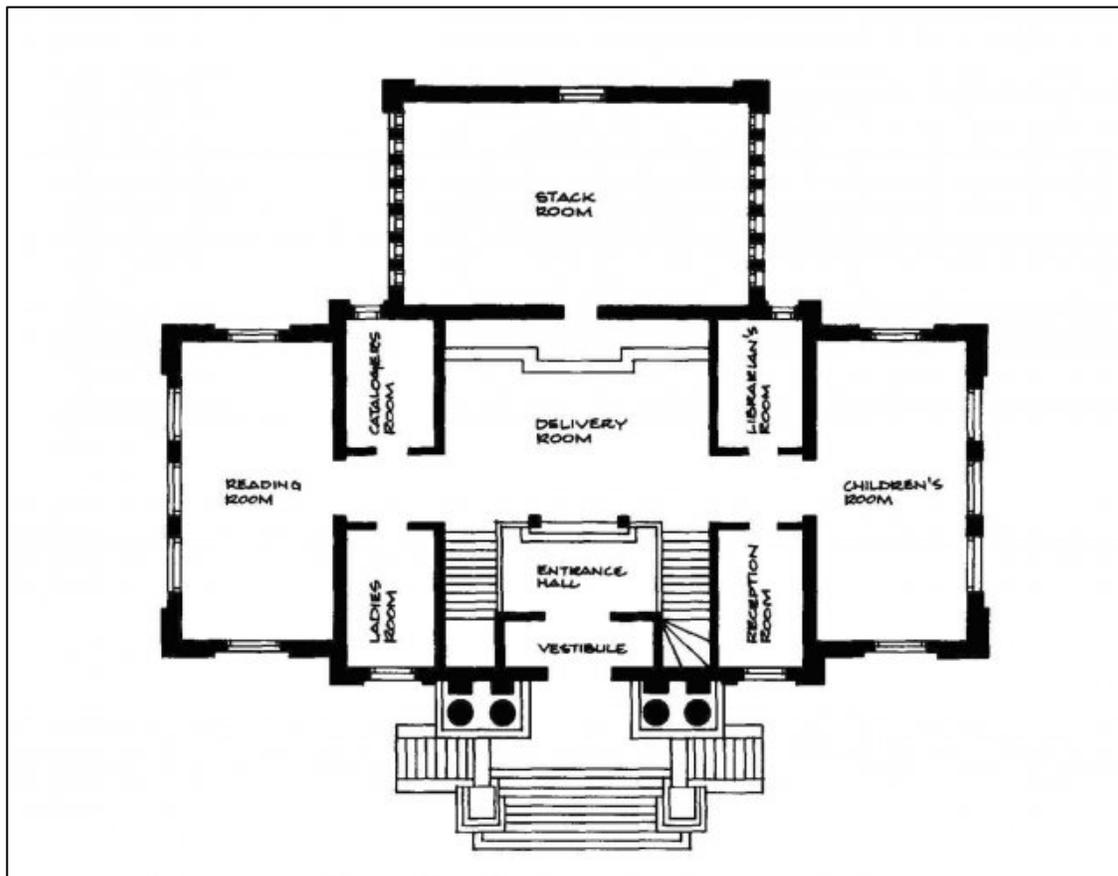


Figure 4: “Modified T” Floorplan of the Ottawa Library by Lewis Horwood

⁸ Ontario Association of Architects, “Bloag detail - Carnegie libraries.”

In 1911, Andrew Carnegie's secretary James Betram (who also administered the grant program) established guidelines for the libraries. Since the original library in Ottawa preceded the guidelines on the design of libraries, it did not comply with the recommendations applied to later libraries.⁹ The recommendations suggested in Betram's "Notes on library Buildings" included such requirements as rectangularity for the overall building; that the library be only one story and that it should include a basement; that it should be held in a single large room subdivided by bookcases; that its basement should be four feet below grade and that its ceiling heights should be nine feet for the basement and twelve for the ground floor; that it should be fenestrated with rear and side windows placed seven feet from the floor to allow for continuous wall shelving."¹⁰ The notes also suggested that the basement might contain a subordinate lecture hall. Ottawa's Carnegie Library's small size and the fact that it did not comply with these recommendations led to its demise. In the years following construction, the library would have difficulty adapting itself to the new needs of the public. The building came to be considered inefficient. In the late 1960's, additional concerns were raised about the structure: cracks and structural failures deemed to be consequences of the loads applied on the structure by the large collection of books were discovered, raising concerns about public safety.¹¹ The accumulation of concerns lead the Library Board to decide to rebuild the library in 1969.¹²

⁹ Ontario Association of Architects, "Blooag detail - Carnegie libraries."

¹⁰ Beckman, Black, and Langmead, *The Best Gift: A Record of the Carnegie Libraries in Ontario* (Toronto, Ontario: Dundurn Press, 1984), 114.

¹¹ Urbsite Blogspot, "Unforgotten Ottawa: The Carnegie Library."

¹² Urbsite Blogspot, "George Bemis's public library: Is it really a brute?," accessed in November 2021, <http://urbsite.blogspot.com/2014/07/george-bemis-public-library-is-it.html>.

Before turning to the design of the replacement library, it is useful to look at the early twentieth century Fire Insurance Maps (figure 5), to understand the original library’s urban and social context. As the maps show, the lot and library were surrounded by a rich urban fabric that included Turkish Baths, two theatres and a brewery (The Carling Brewing and Malting Company). Rekindling this early richness of program and social life, and the sense of urbanity that the maps allude to, is a goal of this thesis proposition.

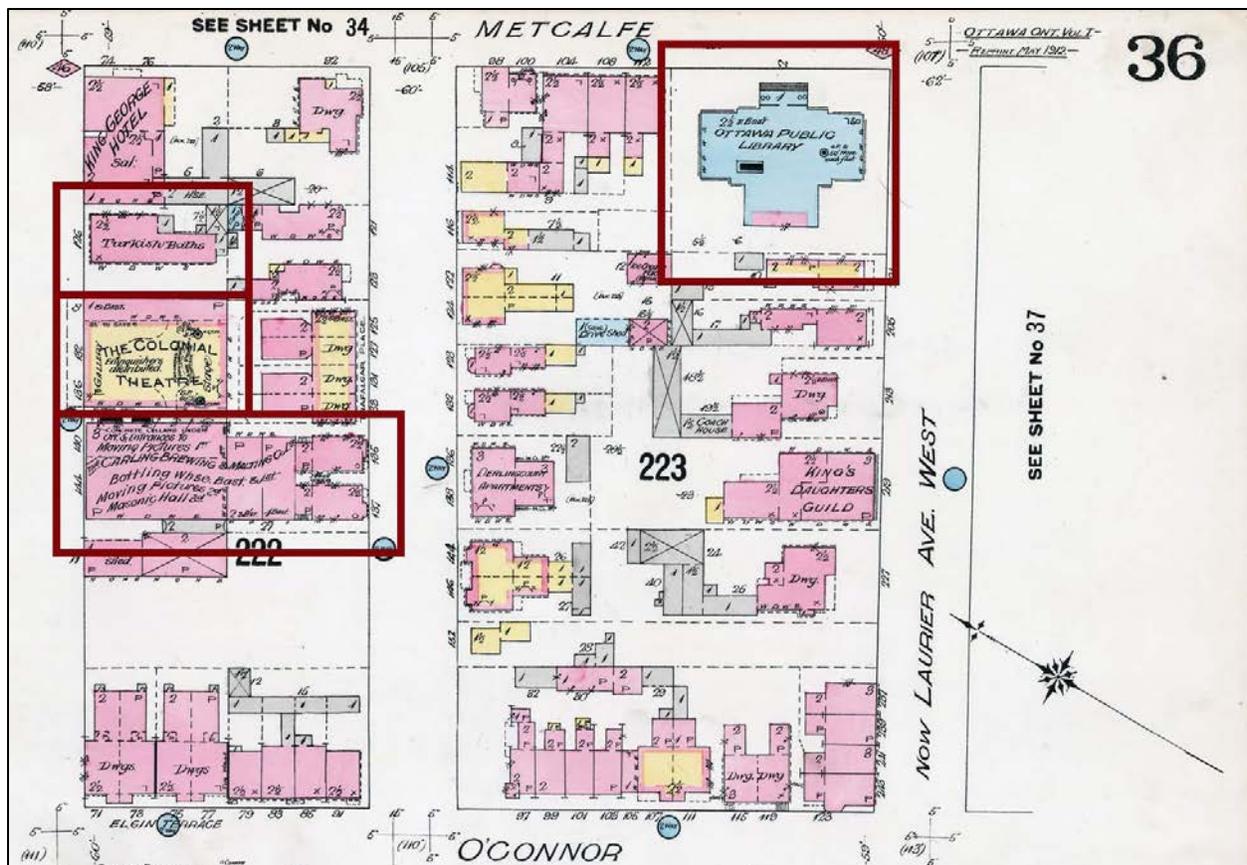


Figure 5: Fire insurance map used in the late 19th and early 20th century and nearby locations

1.3 The current library

As a replacement for a small historic library to which the public was attached, the new library project would understandably have to offer the most modern features and conveniences. The new building would thus offer a sturdier structure able to support the heavy load of the books and equipment, much increased square footage, a developed underground level to even include 175 parking spaces, and fewer windows to protect the collection from UV damage.¹³ The project was conducted by architect George Bemi (1925 -) in collaboration with the City of Ottawa.¹⁴ For the design of the new library, Bemi opted for a modern brutalist building that would combine the library with an office tower named the Sir. Richard Scott Tower. The office tower, meant to be rented by the private sector made it possible to sell air rights to help fund the project.¹⁵



Figure 6: Digital rendering of the North/West and South/West façade of the current library

¹³ Urbsite Blogspot, “George Bemi's public library: Is it really a brute?”

See also

Adcock, Edward P, Marie-Thérèse Varlamoff, and Virginie Kremp. “Atmospheric and Particulate Pollution,” *IFLA Principles for the Care and Handling of Library Material*, (1998), 27–28.

¹⁴ Urbsite Blogspot, “George Bemi's public library: Is it really a brute?”

¹⁵ Urbsite Blogspot, “Unforgotten Ottawa: The Carnegie Library.”

Thick ribbed textured “corduroy” concrete walls and precisely molded precast concrete panels dictate the façade’s language.¹⁶ Small windows positioned in unobvious places for the first viewer accentuate the composition. The architecture at the corner of Metcalfe Street and Laurier Avenue presents quite a powerful sculptural form: a solid cubic mass with subtractive windows cantilevered above a glazed ground floor. Artworks hang above each of the entrances, one on Laurier Avenue, one on Metcalfe Street. The artwork *Man’s Learning* by Victor Tolgsey of Ottawa is a striking orange cast-aluminum medallion over the Laurier Avenue entrance measuring eight feet in diameter. The façade follows an axis of symmetry that is reflected in the interior structure and arrangement on a 45-degree plan. The waffled slabs spanning the library floors are supported by the concrete façade and a 22’- 6” column grid.

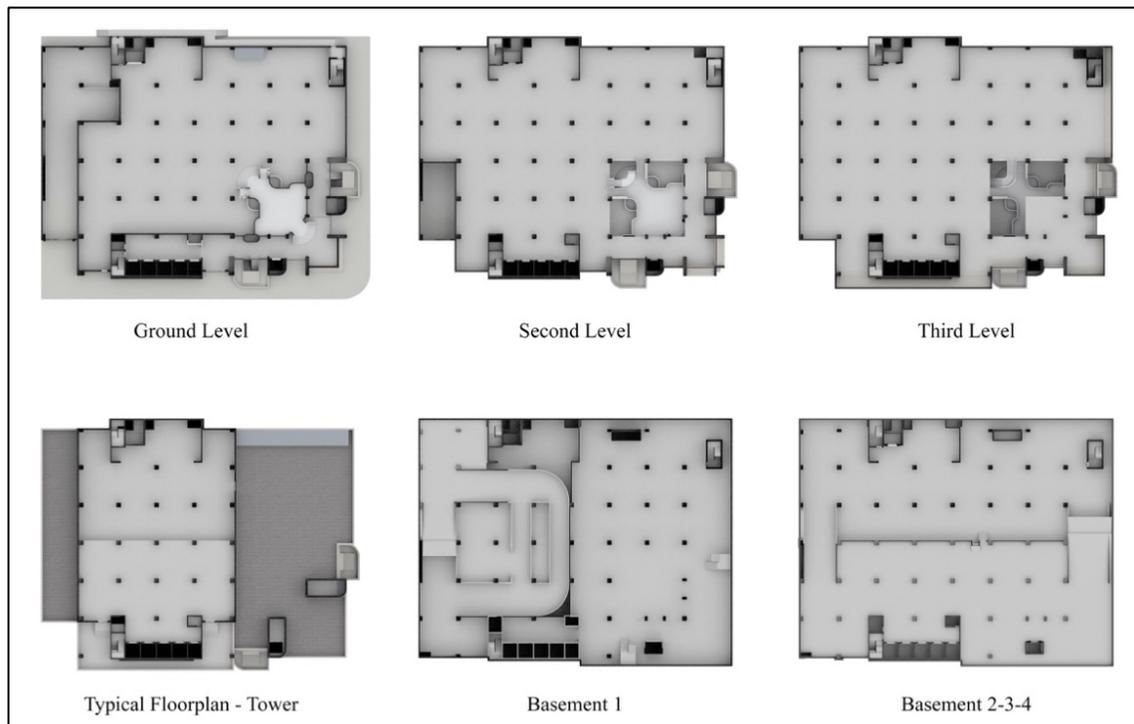


Figure 7: Floorplans of the current library

¹⁶ Urbsite Blogspot, “George Bemi's public library: Is it really a brute?”

The Library interior features a celebrated staircase that follows the axis of symmetry of the building through a large opening in the floorplates. As described in 1974 in the *Ottawa Journal*, “[...] the library does not stop at the front door. The whole interior is an invitation to stay [...]”¹⁷ The Sir Richard Scott Building (the tower) features a simpler sixteen story modern design structured by nine inch flat concrete slabs supported by a grid of columns and two concrete support walls at both ends. The tower is clad with a generic curtain wall with non-operable windows.

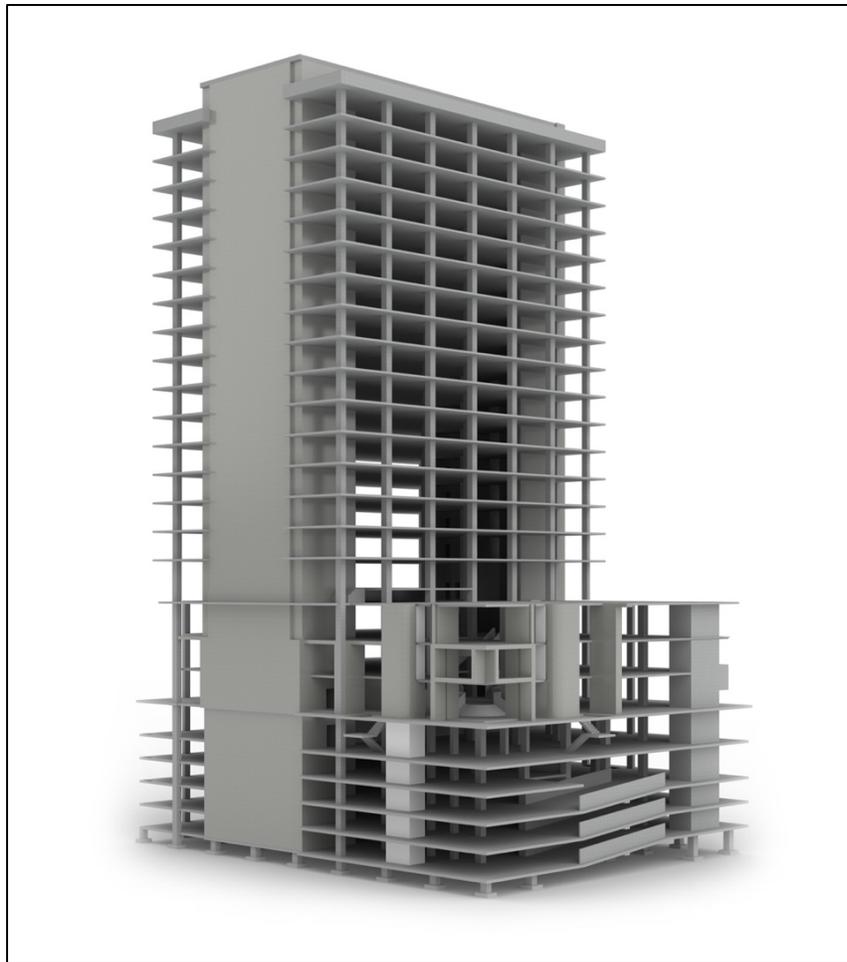


Figure 6: Digital rendering – Axonometric view of the current library

¹⁷ “Hail the New Library,” *Ottawa Journal*, January 11, 1974, 6, accessed in February 2022, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/46010523/?terms=new&match=3>.

A few artefacts were salvaged and reused in the new design to commemorate the original Carnegie library. A stained glass window depicting a Sybil surrounded by prominent contributors to English literature such as Charles Dickens, William Shakespeare, and Archibald Lampman, was installed in the lobby into a backlit frame, and animates the main atrium.¹⁸ Other references such as the color of the cladding, reminiscent of the Carnegie Library by Edgar Horwood, can be traced to the pale ivory limestone façade of the original building.¹⁹ The construction of the new Ottawa Public Library was completed on December 20th, 1973, and the library opened to the public on May 9th, 1974, under the supervision of the then Mayor of Ottawa Pierre Benoit.²⁰



Figure 7: Stained glass depicting a Sybil – Salvaged from the original Carnegie library

¹⁸ Urbsite Blogspot, “Unforgotten Ottawa: The Carnegie Library.”

¹⁹ Urbsite Blogspot, “George Bemi’s public library: Is it really a brute?”

²⁰ Ibid.



Figure 8: Digital axonometric rendering of the current library

1.4 An Architectural Challenge

This thesis, which takes on the challenge of repurposing the Ottawa Public Library and Sir. Richard Scott Tower, correlates with the project for the construction of the new Ottawa Public Library in collaboration with Library and Archives Canada, set to be completed in 2026.²¹ The new Public Library, to be named *Ādisōke*, will be located at 555 Albert Street.²² Its projected 216,000 square feet will provide access to a multitude of community and learning services.²³ When the Main branch of the Ottawa Public Library (OPL) moves into its new home, the building on Metcalfe Street will be vacant. This proposition reconfigures the office tower into a combined and residential tower, and reconfigures the library into a mixed-use public building that includes a branch library, a bath-house, a café and brewery, and a jazz concert hall. The following text explains the program choices and inspiration.

In 2019, as a result of a global pandemic, Ottawa’s public spaces were abruptly closed, office towers were evacuated, and workers sent home. This unprecedented event caused by the rapid spread of Covid 19 has radically transformed downtown Ottawa. Today, over two years into the pandemic, most office towers in Ottawa remain empty, and are unlikely to be filled anytime soon. What is more, many banks, corporations, and federal agencies are considering keeping their employees at home or offering choices to their employees in the future, because this model would seem to be cost effective over time. This major change in mentality and business management raises new social and financial issues. On one hand, the demand and availability of affordable

²¹ Ottawa Public Library - Library and Archives Canada Joint Facility, “About,” accessed on November 16, 2021. <https://inspire555.ca/library-archives-building/>.

²² Ottawa Public Library - Library and Archives Canada Joint Facility, “Spaces,” accessed on November 10, 2021. <https://inspire555.ca/library-archives-spaces/>.

²³ Ottawa Public Library - Library and Archives Canada Joint Facility, “About.”

housing has become an issue: the cost of housing is growing exponentially while availability keeps decreasing. On the other hand, office management companies are worried about the fate of their empty office towers. This thesis imagines a solution that would benefit both parties. As for how to reimagine the vacant floor plates and the inherent opportunities they offer, perhaps here too a radical change of approach is called for. The thesis turns to a work of surrealist literature to guide the design of a re-imagined Sir. Richard Scott Tower, in the search for unconventional architectural thoughts.

Chapter 2: A Surrealist Novel As Inspiration

2.1 *Froth on the Daydream* by Boris Vian

The inspiration behind the design proposal suggested in this thesis reflects the narrative of the surrealist novel *Froth on the Daydream* by Boris Vian, written in 1947. The book in question describes the journey of Colin, a twenty-two-year-old, self-indulgent aristocrat living in Paris in the search for love. Colin lives in a surrealist environment influenced by his tastes in Jazz music and philosophy. His best-friend “Chick” plays an important role in the book because of his addiction to the literature of “Jean Sol Partre” (a reference to the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre). Chick’s addiction to philosophy can be argued as a metaphor to a drug addiction, as Boris Vian often uses surrealist metaphors to depict what he considers ugly in a beautiful and playful way. In some ways, the entire universe in which Colin lives is a lie created to satisfy his own ego.

Chick’s addiction to “philosophy” contributes to the deterioration of Colin’s wealth and environment. One day, tired of hearing Colin complaining about being single, Chick introduces Colin to Chloé at a party. When Colin and Chloé meet, it is an instant crush, and the two of them become inseparable. They later marry, and during the honeymoon, Chloé becomes very ill. After a visit to the doctor, they discover that she has a water lily growing in her lung (a metaphor for lung cancer or tuberculosis depending on the analysis).

As the story progresses, Colin becomes obsessed about different ways to offer help and save Chloé from the fate of death. To prolong the life of his loved one, Colin dedicates all his energy and monetary resources to pay for expensive “surrealist” treatments to save Chloé or at least prolong her life for as long as he can afford to pay for treatments.

The “surrealist” treatments and medications used in the novel are very expensive, but they involve the happiness of Chloé. The prescriptions include special flowers, advanced progressive treatments involving happiness, music and literature, and finally, all sort of surrealist interventions in the environment surrounding Chloé. The medication prescribed by the doctor eventually begin to work, and Chloé slowly recovers, however, the water lilies keep coming back every time they interrupt the treatments. The improvements in Chloé’s health during treatments help Colin find happiness again even though he knows that Chloe will eventually die.

Colin’s main struggle is financial, as he is depleting his monetary resources to remain happy. In some ways, while his friend “Chick” struggles with an addiction to philosophy, Colin also has an addiction to the love he feels for Chloé; he can’t live without her. After a few months, Colin runs out of money and starts seeking employment. Having been an aristocrat for his whole life, he has no education or formal training to allow him to apply for high paying jobs. He is now part of the working class. While he used to look from high above upon the world, he now struggles to make a living. As he gets poorer, sadder, and less enthusiastic about life, his apartment starts to shrink, and Chloé’s condition worsens.

One day, after not being able to pay for Chloé’s treatments, she quietly passes away. Colin is left with nothing; his apartment continues to shrink, and his life degrades faster than he can recover. Chloé’s funerals are tragic. Having lost his social status and now unable to afford a proper service, Chloé’s body is discarded disrespectfully into a public burial ground. During her funeral, a mouse living in Colin’s apartment from the start of the story observes the scene; the mouse asks a cat nearby if she could place her head in his jaw, to commit suicide (in the same way a guillotine would operate). This final reference to death suggests that Colin committed suicide after Chloé’s funerals.

The way this novel inspired this thesis proposition relates to the surrealistic attempts used in the book to make life easier and more playful. There is something universal about Colin's quest and Chloe's illness. The once stable civil-servant downtown of Ottawa is in a state of profound uncertainty and change, and in need of joyful signs of life. Vian's surrealistic narrative and the imagined objects for healing Chloé can be transposed into architectural interventions to make the library a space of intrigue and strong emotion. In some ways, it is implied that the downtown core is currently sick, like Chloé and that the renovation of the Ottawa Public Library is a surrealist treatment to bring the city back to its natural state, and bring people together once again.

The following drawing is an interpretation of *Froth on the Daydream* and it will serve to inspire architectural gestures upon the Library further on in this thesis. The drawing interprets several passages in Vian's book and intermixes them with the stained-glass window from the original library. Here, the drawing shows the Sybil playing a song on the piano accompanied by a string sextet playing on the soundboard. The piano is connected to a wire system to move the hammers located below, to keep Chloe's heart alive. The drawing includes the flowers that helped Chloé's health. These create a sense of peacefulness and calm. The open grand piano allows music to be heard from everywhere in the space created. On the lower part of the drawing, near the trombone, the flowers are "amplified" to grow bigger. The quiet vibrations of the music mixed with Chloe's heartbeat resonate in the sound chamber of the piano located on the bottom right.

To translate the drawing into architectural interventions, the thesis draws from other unconventional architectural works, in particular, "an-architect" Gordon Matta Clark's cuts into existing buildings about to be demolished in New York and Paris.

2.2 Beginnings: Speculative Model and Drawing

The above drawing is a first attempt to develop a surrealist system that has the potential to overcome rationalism and to support an oneiric approach to the city of Ottawa. Renovating the existing building according to surrealist and oneiric inspiration promises to lead to new discoveries and ideas, things that are much needed at this time. From a music hall located on the top floor to a quiet resonance chamber located on the lowest floor, and a sophisticated mechanical system linking them: here is a new idea for the OPL Main branch and tower. According to this drawing the lowest level would be dark (and in this sense, “anti-modern”). As architectural historian Thomas Mical argues in his book *Surrealism and Architecture*, surrealism proposes surprises and unexpected events in contrast to modernist buildings in which forms and uses exist in a sterile and predictable relationship.²⁴ The design here relies on surrealist contradictions. One of them is to fold homeless populations and wealthier income earners together. As in Vian’s novel, social status can change (it did for Colin) and social overlaps are productive.

²⁴ Mical, *Surrealism and Architecture*, 31.



Figure 10: Physical model of the Pianocktail

The “pianocktail” is a surrealist object taken from Vian’s novel. In the latter, this curious instrument was built by Colin to create custom drinks using a variety of ingredients, spirits, and liquors, based on the notes, the rhythm and the mood of the jazz songs played on the instrument. The purpose of this object was to allow the protagonist to internalize the music to stimulate other senses than hearing, to experience another level of contemplation of the music. A small model of the instrument was built as part of this thesis process to help understand the concept evoked in the novel.

2.3 Understanding Current Users of the Ottawa Public Library

Several visits to the Library at different times and intervals helped this thesis to identify four primary categories of users of the Library: the homeless community, the elderly, the student community, and the immigrant community. Additional research was done to understand the needs of these primary users. The design of the renovation, which this thesis names “Cloud Factory” in reference to Vian’s novel, strives to take all these community needs, habits, and uses, into consideration. The idea of “Cloud” is a reference to the idea of the unexpected world of dreaming and of the duality between the real world and the world of the imagination. The “Cloud Factory” is designed to be a place featuring unexpected and unconventional architectural interventions to make the visitors feel and understand the narrative of the building, specifically, the journey from ordinary life to Colin and Chloe’s world, where music dictates the mood of a space, where cloud capsule float around to effortlessly allow the visitors to discover and enjoy a building designed to be fun.

2.3.1 The homeless community

The Ottawa Public Library plays an important role with the homeless community of Ottawa and contributes to their survival. Studies have shown that public libraries are often used as daytime shelters as they provide a space where homeless people feel protected.²⁵ Public libraries are also welcoming spaces for the homeless community as they allow them to stay for extended periods of time while offering access to amenities such as washroom facilities, power outlets to charge

²⁵ Rybka, Adam, and Anna Brudnicka, “Architecture in the Process of Social Inclusion of Homeless.” *E3S Web of Conferences* 49 (August 13, 2018): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/20184900093>.

See also

McLane, Yelena. “Stacks as Shelters: Library Lessons on Designing for Homelessness.” *Homelessness and the Built Environment* (January 16, 2020): 149, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429279027-8>.

electronic equipment, WIFI and printing (social benefits paperwork for example). They also allow them to build social networks, and, all without the stigma that is associated with using such amenities at for-profit businesses.²⁶ The role of public libraries in homeless communities reinforces the principle of communal safety.

Rybka, Adam, and Anna Brudnicka's study "Architecture in the Process of Social Inclusion of Homeless" noted that the presence of security or law enforcement officers in libraries is reassuring to members of the homeless community. Respondents to their surveys listed it as one of the main factors that helped them feel safe, and, for those with addictions, helped them avoid consuming drugs or alcohol during their visit.²⁷ The most common layout of libraries also offers two types of seating areas: seating that is open to everyone's view and seating that is more concealed and discreet. Both have advantages and disadvantages. Some homeless visitors find the library to be intimidating and fear rejection and getting evicted from the property; some feel the need to hide their bags and belongings, and feel more comfortable in more hidden seating areas.²⁸ Other homeless patrons feel more comfortable in the library. They often identify themselves as library users (because it is considered more socially acceptable in the social environment we live in), and to them, the library is a well appreciated contrast to the disorder that is associated with living in the streets.²⁹ The survey noted that those users were more engaged with the staff and community; that they often read books and newspapers; and that they used the services offered.³⁰

²⁶ McLane, Yelena. "Stacks as Shelters: Library Lessons on Designing for Homelessness," 147.

²⁷ Ibid, 147.

²⁸ Ibid, 149.

²⁹ Ibid, 147.

³⁰ Ibid, 149.

For this project to be successful, it is important to take both types of interactions into account and understand that however welcoming the building is, some people will still feel intimidated.

The proposal for this project takes into consideration the needs of the homeless community of Ottawa and develops a bathing facility in the lower level. The program proposes both a discrete sanitary block with private shower pods, lavatories and toilets, and a more luxurious bathhouses for a broader population. Plenty of lockers are also available. The homeless community can lock their belongings there during a visit in the facility. Above the sanitary block is a laundry room where persons will have access to washers, dryers, and ironing equipment. Nearby, shelves provide surfaces to store and organize clothing donations from the public.

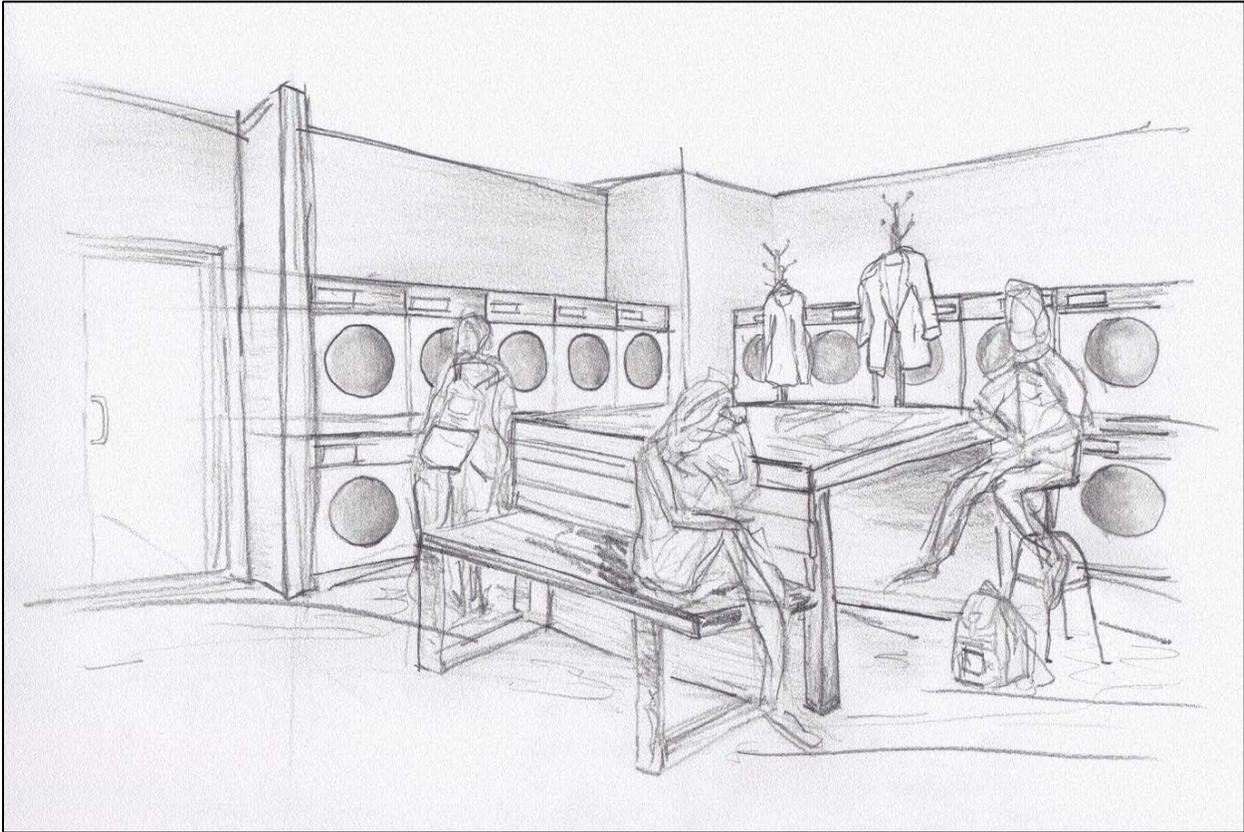


Figure 11: Perspective drawing of the laundromat



Figure 12: Section of the laundromat and shower area

Studies have proven that experimental programs, training, education, and volunteering, are the only way out of homelessness.³¹ Following this principle, this thesis proposition includes another intervention geared to the homeless community: a coffee brewery located on the second floor. There, one could participate in workshops or social programs to develop social and working skills, and even work in the brewery and earn a small income. Participants can add this work experience to their resume, which is a good thing for future employment searches.³² By creating a sense of belonging to a collaborative environment and relatedly, of personal gratification, inclusion and support, the coffee brewery could benefit the homeless community in many ways.³³

³¹ Rybka, Adam, and Anna Brudnicka, “Architecture in the Process of Social Inclusion of Homeless,” 8.

³² McLane, Yelena. “Stacks as Shelters: Library Lessons on Designing for Homelessness,” 152.

³³ Rybka, Adam, and Anna Brudnicka, “Architecture in the Process of Social Inclusion of Homeless,” 3.

2.3.2 The elderly and the library

The elderly community visits the library of Ottawa during the day, mostly to pass time, socialize and learn. Due to ageing, the elderly community is more prone to health decline, difficulties adapting to changes in the environment, and social isolation³⁴. Just as it mixes income groups, the renovated Library and Tower accommodates contrasting age groups: the young and the old. The ageing community of Ottawa is an especially interesting presence in a surrealist program because retirement years and old age are, for many, a time to rekindle creative interests and passions that were put aside during working years. Old age can be a time of “sur-realism” – a time when the impulses of unconventional life sometimes replace the unrelenting demands of work life. Relying on research in gerontology – a field of research specialized in the biological, psychological and social aspect of ageing – this thesis proposes spaces for seniors.³⁵ The notion of integration in the community instead of isolation is key. Integration can vastly improve the quality of the social life of the elderly and promote active ageing.³⁶ Some of the factors to consider in order to facilitate the integration of the elderly community include privacy, social interactions, clear direction symbology, security, disability design familiarity and relaxation areas.

³⁴ Chen Kezhen, “*Sustainable Design For The Elderly: Senior Housing Design Guidelines*” (Thesis, University of Florida, 2017): 11, <https://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00061651/00001>.

³⁵ Omarjee Jameel, “*Care For The Elderly Through Meaningful Architecture: A Proposed Intergenerational Mixed-Use Development.*” (Thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2014): 6, <http://hdl.handle.net/10413/11489>.

³⁶ Ibid, 20 – 28.

2.3.3 The student community

The student community visits the library often during the day as it provides them with a quiet space, free from the distractions they might experience at home, at their school, university or college, or at other spaces commonly used for study such as coffeeshops. Students use the library for study and take advantage of its WIFI to work on assignments and research projects. The proposition imagines public spaces in which the student community could participate that would trigger their creativity and safeguard them from falling into the predictable paths of passive screen entertainment and or consumerism.

2.3.4 The immigrant community

The two main reasons why the immigrant community uses the library is to access social services, computers, and employment documentation, and, for those not yet familiar with the two official languages of Canada, to consult English and French literature to improve their language proficiency. This proposition includes a space dedicated to support in job searching and language learning. Specifically, a small branch library and job center will be housed on the ground floor. The proposition envisions spaces that would welcome immigrants' traditions to create a surrealist space of mixity including sounds and smells from distant homelands.

2.4 Surrealism and the sense of community

Surrealism comes to life when brought to bear on practical realities of quotidian life. We thus turn here to an objective study produced by a research team at the School of Community and Regional Planning at the University of British Columbia in 2012. Titled "Happy City," the project, which is discoverable through a website, examines community life and makes recommendations

on the sorts of spaces that support happiness.³⁷ In this thesis proposition, *Happy City* inspires the interventions realized on the ground floor of the existing building. One of the study's conclusions is that people are more likely to connect with each other and develop a sense of trust if the space is designed to be welcoming to all age groups and backgrounds.³⁸ This thesis proposition is interested in integrating and mixing population groups. Its program seeks to satisfy the complex needs of the people currently using the library and those of potential visitors of the future. The idea is to expand horizons and offer a complex experience sensitive to everyone's needs.³⁹ From surrealism, the shared space of dream is emphasized. In the proposition, titled "Cloud Factory" after Vian's novel, are numerous communal spaces for daydreaming and even for sleep.

To achieve a complex sense of community inside the building, it is important to offer different types of spaces including private, semi-private, and public.⁴⁰ This thesis uses the following spaces and principles to guide the re-allocation of space in the existing Library and Tower:

- Private spaces: Quiet areas where a person can temporarily extract themselves from the public realm, and where social interactions are not anticipated. Sometimes people need to retreat for a brief moment of reflection. A private reading pod is an example of such space.

³⁷ Rios, P., Montgomery, C., Friedler, L., Dominguez, O., Kanyuk, J., & Adsit-Morris, C. (n.d.). Social Wellbeing and Sociability in Multi-family Housing Design. *Happy City*, <https://happycities.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/HappyHomesReport.pdf>.

³⁸ Ibid, 2.

³⁹ María-Elia Gutiérrez-Mozo, José Parra-Martínez, and Ana Gilsanz-Díaz, "Extending the Architecture of Collective Housing: Towards Common Worlds of Care," *Buildings* 11, no. 4 (April 15, 2021): 9, <https://doi.org/10.3390/buildings11040166>.

⁴⁰ Rios, Montgomery, Friedler, Dominguez, Kanyuk, and Adsit-Morris, "Social Wellbeing and Sociability in Multi-family Housing Design," 2.

- Semi-private spaces: Areas where people interact in small groups ideally not exceeding a dozen people.⁴¹ A semi-private space allows people to work and socialize and have exchanges regarding interests they might all have in common. Workshop areas and thematic rooms such as yoga studios are examples of semi-private spaces.
- Public spaces: Areas open to everyone located in proximity to the entrances and street. In those areas, people are surrounded by others and have the freedom to interact with whomever they want. They are designed to encourage people “bumping” into each other to stimulate interactions and strengthen the sense of community as a whole. These areas are easily accessed, more open, and less secluded. These spaces express a desire to impact people whether they are social or not. A lonely person might not feel alone if they can experience social contact and interactions throughout the day: humans are social beings, and their level of happiness is impacted by the quality and amount of interactions with others.⁴² Finally, the implementation of nature in the main public areas will be important. Nature and vegetation add to a sense of security and wellbeing. Many studies have shown that plants and green walls have health benefits, help visitors relax, and improve happiness and productivity.⁴³

⁴¹ Rios, Montgomery, Friedler, Dominguez, Kanyuk, and Adsit-Morris, “Social Wellbeing and Sociability in Multi-family Housing Design,” 18.

⁴² Lee Chao Qun, “*A Place between Architecture and Happiness: Urban Design for Joy and Well-Being.*” (MArch Thesis, University of Strathclyde, 2017): 13, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325170198_A_Place_in_between_Architecture_and_Happiness.

⁴³ Rios, Montgomery, Friedler, Dominguez, Kanyuk, and Adsit-Morris, “Social Wellbeing and Sociability in Multi-family Housing Design,” 3.

See also

Chao Qun, “*A Place between Architecture and Happiness: Urban Design for Joy and Well-Being.*”13.

Chapter 3:

The Architectural Proposition for a Re-Imagined Library and Tower

Chapter 3 describes the architectural proposition for modifications to the Ottawa Public Library and Tower. In this chapter, before each description of the architectural interventions, quotes from Boris Vian's *Froth on the Daydream* appear. These are not explained or analysed as their poetic link to the architecture is implicit.

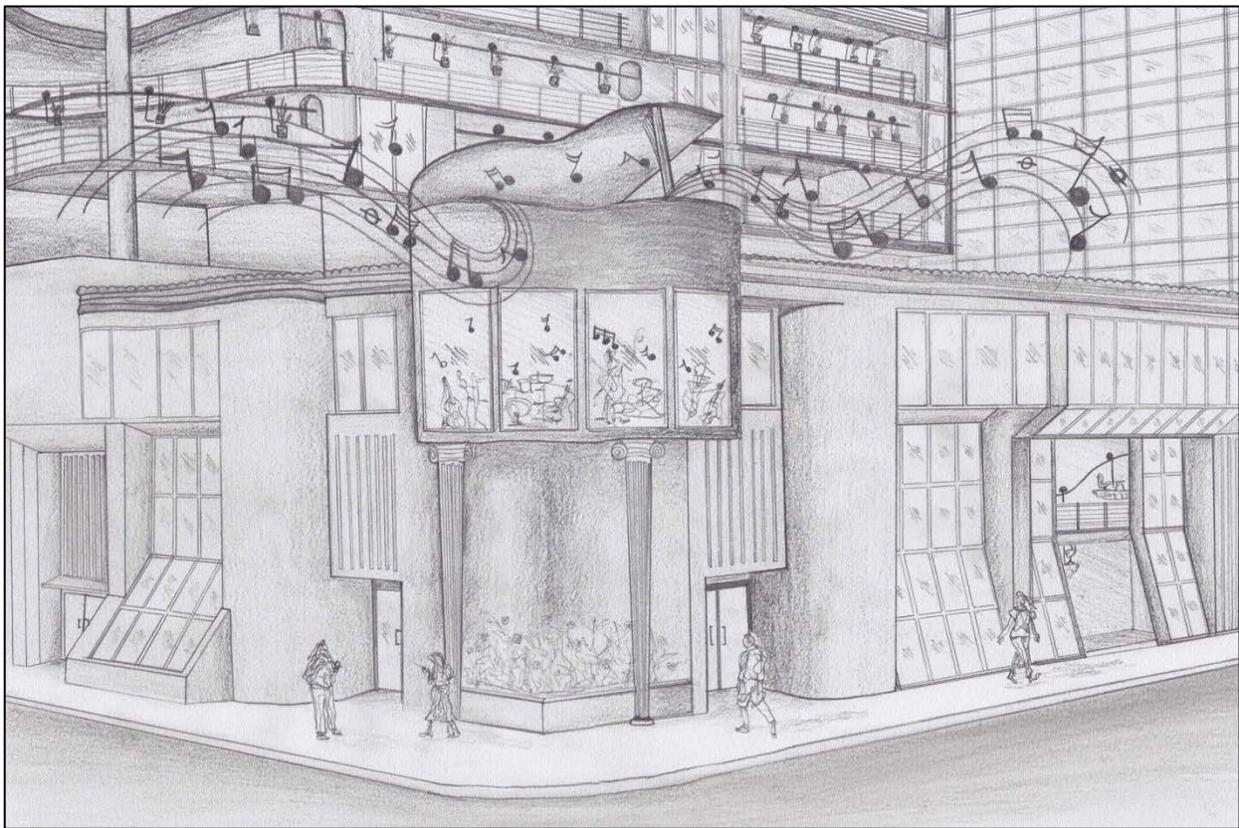


Figure 13: Hand drawing of the corner façade, intersection of Laurier Avenue and Metcalfe Street

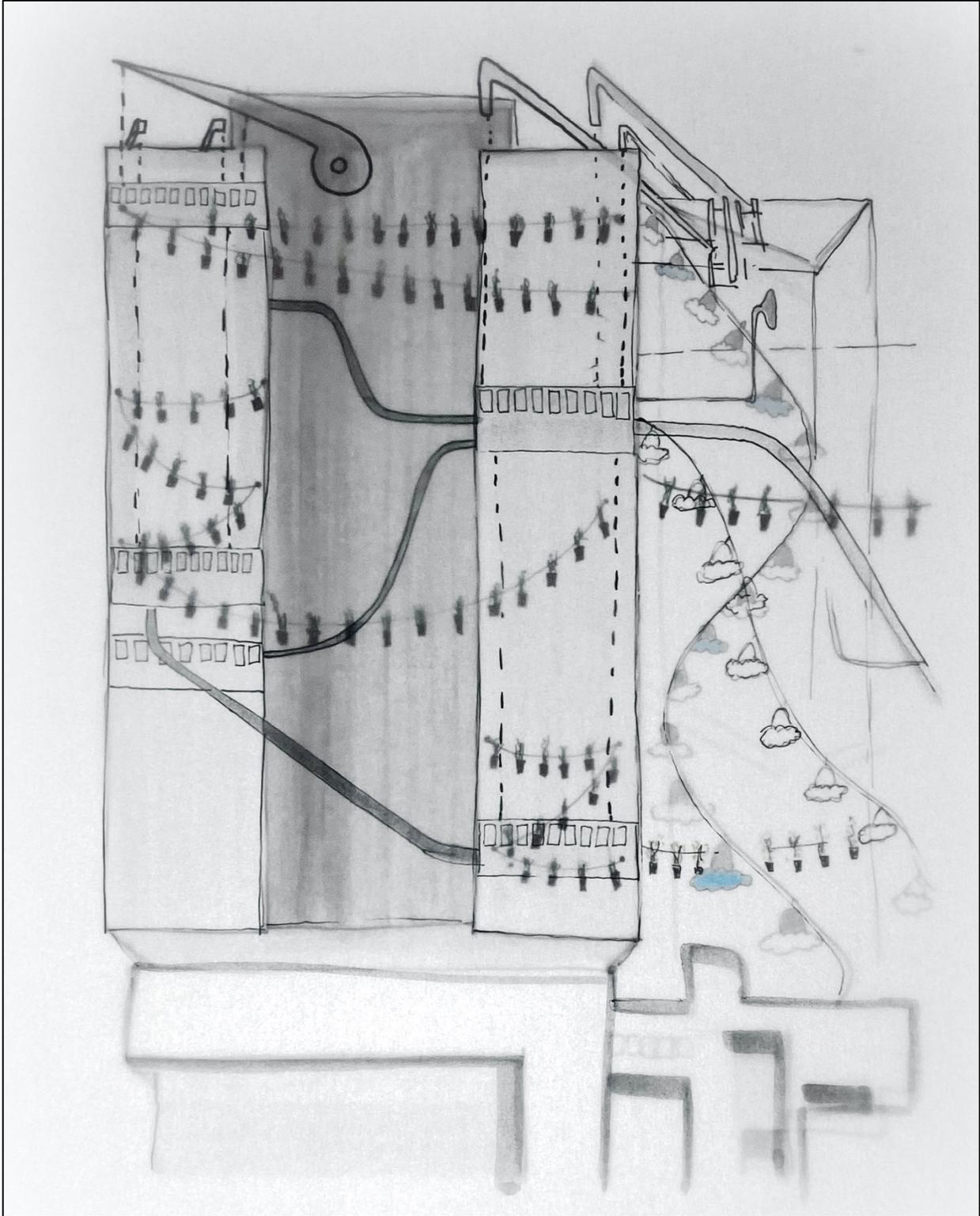


Figure 14: Preliminary drawing of the new building



Figure 15: Perspective view of the North/West façade of the new building



Figure 16: Perspective view of the South/West façade showing residential units and balconies

3.1 Ground Floor

3.1.1 The new entrances

His footsteps crunched over the gravel path, and he went up the two steps. The glazed door gave way as he pushed it and he disappeared inside the building.⁴⁴

The two original main entrances to the library located on Laurier Avenue and Metcalfe Street respectively remain unchanged. Keeping the original stairs in the entrance foyer intact is convenient and supports continuity of use and habits. In addition to the two main entrances, another one will be added to the Laurier Avenue façade. The new entrance will provide direct access to the residential lobby and elevators for the residents of the Tower. Additionally, an entrance located in the main lobby will provide direct access to the sanitary block for the homeless community, making extended hours easy to manage. The showers could be used after the *Cloud Factory* is closed to the public. On Metcalfe Street, beyond the entrance foyer, a façade that, weather permitting, can be opened to the street during operating hours by rolling large glass barn doors, blurring the street-library boundary. Passersby can easily access ground floor events and “float in” from the sidewalk. This idea of opening the building directly to the street is meant to reinforce the feeling of community in the neighborhood and to open opportunities for surprising moments of encounter which can inspire and totally transform a person’s day, and maybe even, life.

⁴⁴ Boris Vian, *Froth on the Daydream* (London: Rapp & Carroll Ltd, 1967), 89.



Figure 17: Sketch of the barndoors located on Metcalfe street, allowing direct access into the building

3.1.2 The “Community Cloud”

They started walking, letting the first pavement they came across guide their steps. A little pink cloud came down from the air and drew up close beside them.

'I'm going your way,' it winked.

'Let's step on then,' said Colin.

And the cloud wrapped itself round them. Inside the cloud it was warm, and it smelt of candy-floss and cinnamon.

'Nobody can see us anymore!...' said Colin. 'But we can still see everything that is going on!...' ⁴⁵

The “communal social space” called “Community Cloud” in this project, is a two-story celebrated space where connections between the building and the street are heightened. On the ground floor, the Community Cloud houses a café. The latter is a surrealistic interpretation of the modern café; the space is designed to allow people to socialize and interact with each other. As stated above, to make this possible, part of the glazed façade facing Metcalfe Street opens directly to the sidewalk to invite people in. Surrealist-inspired architecture inside the space helps stimulate a sense of curiosity and of the unexpected. For example, the café’s tables and chairs are suspended on a ceiling track and these move around the space slowly to stimulate spontaneous interaction between patrons, regardless of age or background. This kinetic system of rolling chairs on tracks passes through a large opening where café patron-passengers are afforded glimpses of other programs, such as the bathhouse, and changing views of the city. Café patrons are passengers on a delightful journey.

⁴⁵ Vian, *Froth on the Daydream*, 51.

Another surrealist intervention is the coffee delivery system comprised of a complex multidirectional system of coffee-conveying pipes through the building. The main pump is situated in the counter of the brewery, next to the large coffee holding tank. People located in different rooms including the apartments are served fresh coffee at given times of the day and night. The Community Cloud also extends to the coffee brewery (located on the second floor) as part of the journey of the rolling chairs. The brewery is run by as a social program to help those in need to make a little income while gaining professional skills and experience. The integration of this program is designed to make this public space open to people of every background without feeling the stigmas sometime associated with private for-profit businesses, such as using a facility for the amenities without purchasing any goods or services. Mixing and overlaps pull humans out of reality to the much more creative realm of “surrealist” associations. Indeed, the space of mixity is healing.



Figure 18: View of the communal “Community Cloud” from the street

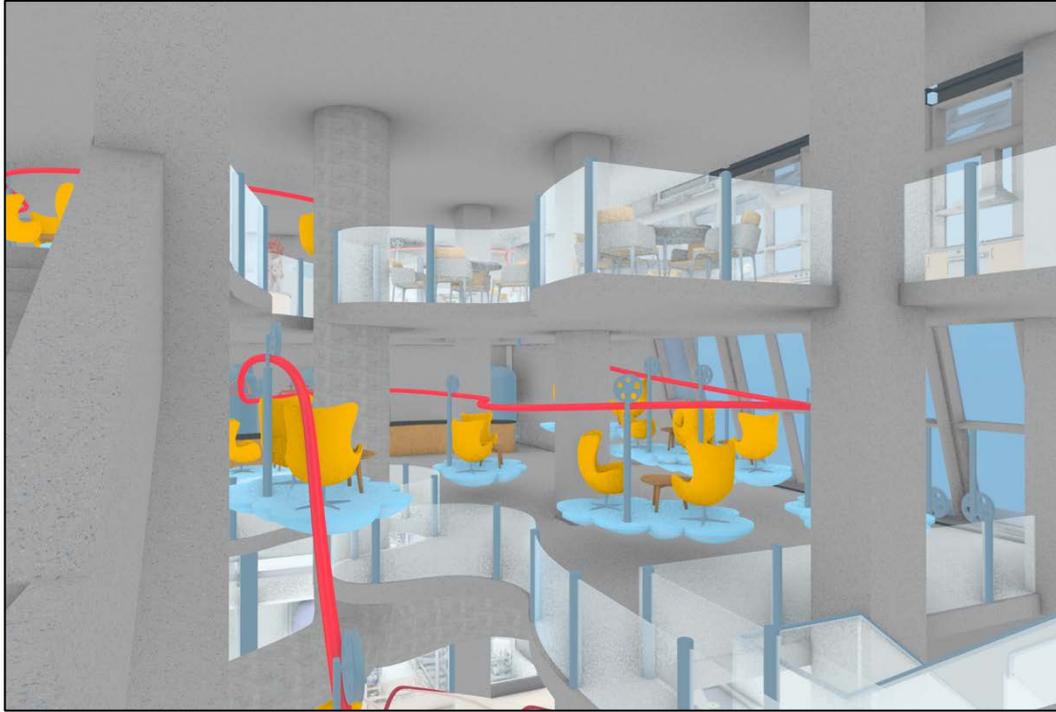


Figure 19: Interior view of the “Community Cloud”, track, and rolling chair clusters (Second floor)



Figure 20: View of the “rolling chair clusters” and track (Second floor)

3.1.3 The library and the botanical garden

There was a bookshop on the way and Chick stopped to look in the window. In the very center of the display a copy of Heartre's Mildew, bound in purple Morocco embossed with the arms of the Countess de Mauvoir, sparkled like a precious jewel.

'Oh!' said Chick. 'Just look at that!...'⁴⁶

Near the central core of the building, a large space is allocated to a library to respect the heritage of the site. Here, habitual visitors will find some of the literary resources from the current library. This space is meant to be semi-private to create an environment suitable for studying in small groups and sharing ideas. A botanical garden surrounds this library and helps the visitors feel relaxed while creating spatial separation and absorbing some of the noise coming from the Community Cloud.

The library lighting is also taken into consideration. Since the library is located in the core of the building, natural light will be a challenge. A series of light tunnels situated on the roof of the building distribute light on the various other floors all the way to the ground floor. Artificial light installations will supplement natural lighting while protecting the book collection from damaging UV rays.⁴⁷ The temperature and tone of the artificial lighting in this section of the building are designed to be controlled according to the time of the day and mood of the space. The properties of light have an impact on psychological reactions and physiological well-being, and can impact our emotional sensibility to produce a perception that instantly gives meaning to a

⁴⁶ Vian, *Froth on the Daydream*, 71.

⁴⁷ Adcock, Varlamoff, and Kremp. "Atmospheric and Particulate Pollution," 27–28.

place in a building.⁴⁸ The way we perceive light's properties is through color tones; while cool tones such as slightly blue lighting can have a sedative effect on the body and mind, warm tones such as slightly orange lighting can be stimulating.⁴⁹ The design pays special attention to the balance between natural and artificial light in this part of the building.



Figure 21: Entrance to the ground floor Library

⁴⁸ Jameel, “*Care For The Elderly Through Meaningful Architecture: A Proposed Intergenerational Mixed-Use Development*,” 30 and 34.

See also

Guopeng Li, “The Dynamics of Architectural Form: Space, Emotion and Memory.” *Art and Design Review* 07, no. 04 (October 20, 2019): 200, <https://doi.org/10.4236/ad.2019.74016>.

⁴⁹ Jameel, “*Care For The Elderly Through Meaningful Architecture: A Proposed Intergenerational Mixed-Use Development*,” 76.

3.2 The Ground Floor (Exterior)

3.2.1 A bicycle garage and bicycle renting station

Outside the building, near the underground parking entrance on Laurier Avenue, a bicycle garage allows residents, visitors and people working nearby, to store their bicycles inside the building safely during the day. The bicycle hangar is protected and open to all in hope of inciting commuters to use car alternatives around this area of the downtown. The proposition also locates a bicycle rental area catering to those who don't own a bicycle or to visitors of the building looking to go on a bicycle adventure in Ottawa.

3.2.2 The new façade

The façade of the readapted building is inspired by the original design by George Bemi with additional elements of surprise taken from the novel *Froth on the Daydream*. Such elements include the addition of ribbed concrete panels on the first level of the façade to enhance the verticality of the building, curved concrete panels along the façade on the second and third level to make the building feel more playful and less austere in appearance, and additional windows to allow more daylight into the building and to offer a glimpse of the life of the building to the people walking by. The design seeks to express the new celebrated programs on the building façades. For example, two Corinthian columns supporting a large piano-shaped extrusion at the corner of Laurier Avenue and Metcalfe Street highlight the Oscar Peterson Hall located on the third level. The latter, a concert space, will be discussed further on in this thesis. The large barn doors, described above, are another example. Finally, the reading porches are visible at night through large windows on the second and third floor, along both Laurier Avenue and Metcalfe Street.



Figure 22: View of the bathhouse from outside (Metcalfe Street)

The tower's formerly continuous glass curtain wall now possesses variations. While the curtain wall remains intact in zones where there are offices, it has been drastically modified in areas that have been changed into residential apartments. The residential floor sections are wrapped with a new skin consisting of curved precast concrete panels and large glazed panels. The former curtain wall is now more varied with windows and balconies generated by pulling the exterior wall inward following a curved line. To create the illusion of movement on the façade, the placement of the curved precast concrete panels and glazing panels is randomized. This design decision was meant to emphasize the area of the balconies depending on the type of residential unit, and preserve the illusion of verticality of the tower, by not having balconies protruding from the façade.

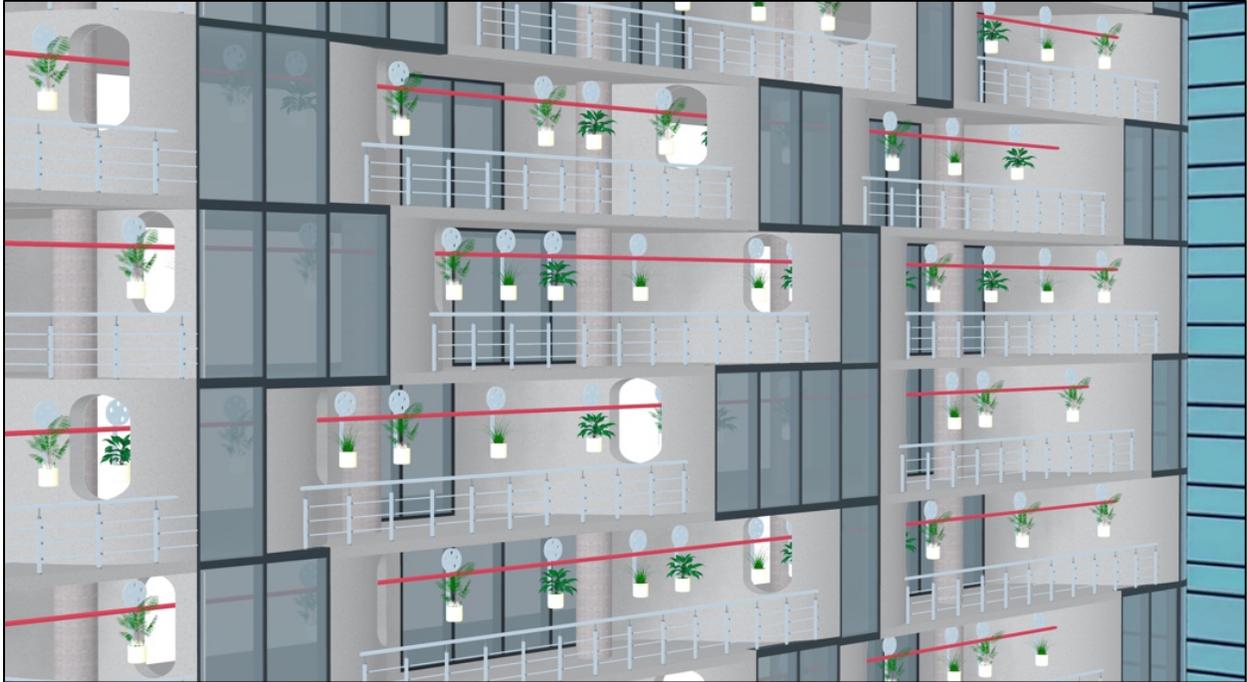


Figure 23: Facade of the residential units and balconies



Figure 24: Facade of the residential units merging with the office facade

3.3 The Second Floor

3.3.1 The coffee brewery

Waiters from the cafés ran round him in circles to keep themselves warm.

A boy and a girl were kissing in a doorway.⁵⁰

The Community Cloud continues to the Second floor: a coffee brewery extends the coffeeshop and communal space on the ground floor to a mezzanine on the second level. The brewery is meant to be private and only accessible to the workers employed via the social program of the building, however, its installations and equipment are displayed to the public. The space is visible from Metcalfe Street and the interior. The coffee brewing equipment located in that Second Floor space is connected to the complex system of pipes designed to distribute coffee across the building all the way to the residential units and office suites located in the Sir. Richard Scott Tower.

⁵⁰ Vian, *Froth on the Daydream*, 38.

3.3.2 The communal kitchen

'It would be fatal to open the cooker now,' warned Nicolas.

'By the introduction of air with a less rich water content than that already in the over, desiccation would almost certainly take place.'

'I'd rather,' said Chick, 'have the pleasure of seeing it for the first time on the table.'⁵¹

Adjacent to the coffee brewery is a community kitchen where people are invited to cook for themselves and others. The space is designed to be easily adapted to different uses, whether by volunteers or community workers to host cooking workshops for youth or to prepare meals for the homeless community with food donations from the public, or by residents and workers of the tower who may wish to cook for themselves while being surrounded by friends and family, by new Canadians and immigrants who may wish to cook large meals in the context of cultural events and gatherings, or others.



Figure 25: Perspective view of the communal kitchen (Second floor)

⁵¹ Vian, *Froth on the Daydream*, 14.

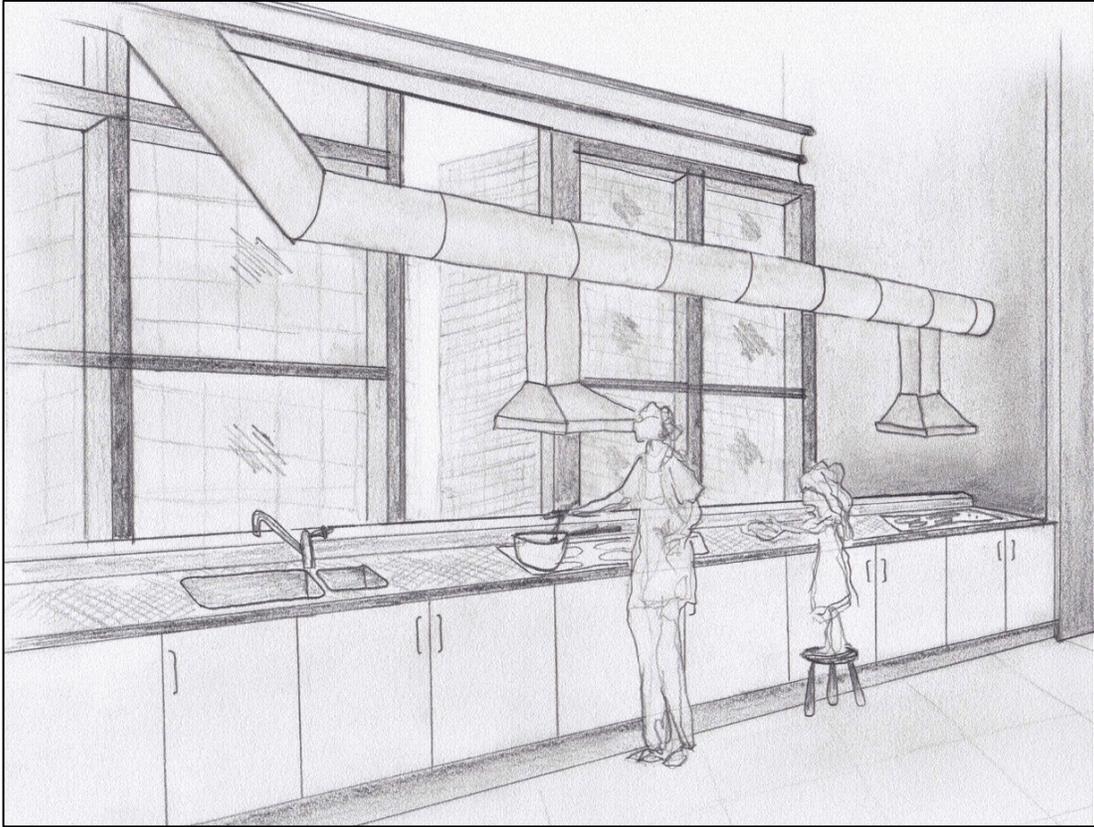


Figure 26: Hand drawing of the kitchen (Second floor)



Figure 27: Perspective view of the kitchen and dining area (Second floor)

3.3.3 The relaxation porches

Located along the second and third level façade, facing Laurier Avenue and Metcalfe Street are relaxation porches where library users can sit and read quietly in a private setting free of distractions. The relaxation porches, measuring 2300mm x 3100mm and 2300mm x 5800mm can seat respectively 2 and 4 people and are visible from the outside, especially at night. There, library users can be transported to a different space, to meditate or read a novel. The use of plants and sound absorbing materials in that space will decrease stress factors. The porches are designed to encourage falling asleep and dreaming. Some of the porches, located on the third level are also physically elevated and separated from the floorplate to make the space feel more private. The curving of the façade that wrap the porches is meant to help people feel relaxed while they read, daydream, and fall asleep.



Figure 28: View of a third floor reading porch overlooking Metcalfe Street

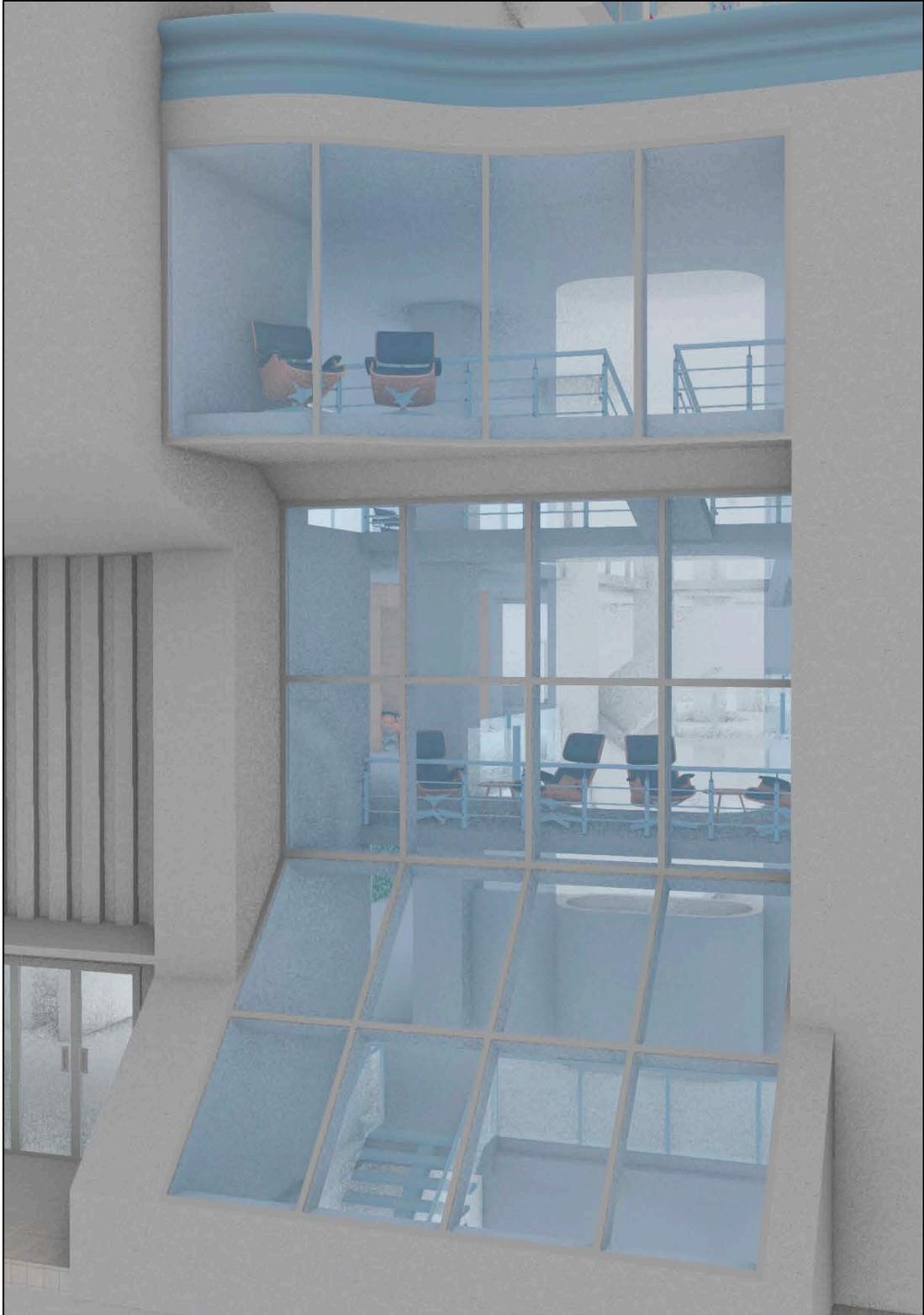


Figure 29: View of the reading porches from through exterior along Laurier Avenue

3.3.4 The yoga and dance studio

The yoga and dance studios are located in the back of the building, along the north-east portions of the floorplates. These two spaces are open to the community, but they can easily be closed so that residents of the tower can use them as venues for private events. The dance studio occupies a space that opens onto a wellness center/exercise room located on a mezzanine on the floor above. The yoga studio is a separate space. Located between the two studios are changing rooms with showers, for the convenience of the users.

3.3.5 The computer and employment center

A computer room (for studying and employment opportunity research) extends the ground floor library to the second level. As part of the building's social mission, amenities and resources are available to the general public but their second-floor location provides a sense of privacy. Each workstation in that room is equipped with the necessary hardware to run online meetings for job interviews to keep up with the changes in employment practices of recent times.

3.4 The Third Floor

3.4.1 The Oscar Peterson Hall

There was something unhealthy in the way Johnny Hodges played. Something inexplicable, yet perfectly sensual. Sensuality in its purest state, quite separate from anything physical.

The corners of the room softened and curved with the music. Colin and Chloé were now lying in the center of a sphere.

'What was that?' asked Chloé.

'It was The Mood to be Wooed,' said Colin.⁵²

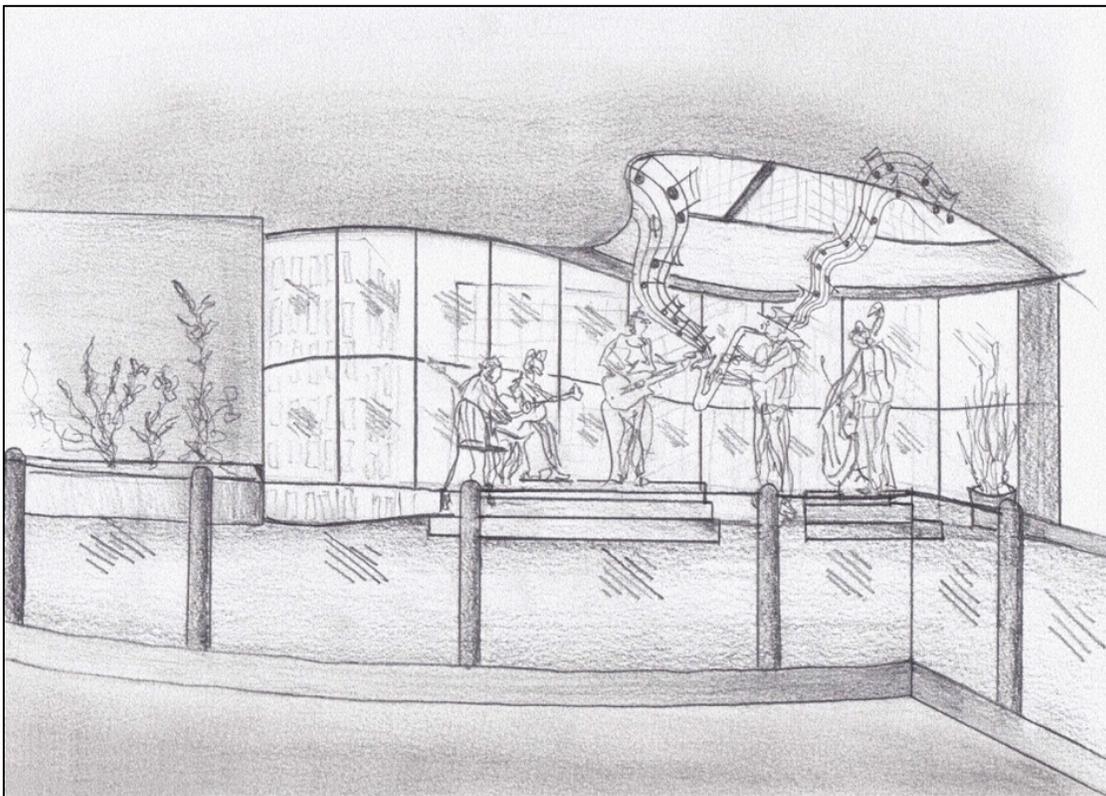


Figure 30: Hand drawing of the Oscar Peterson Hall (Third floor)

⁵² Vian, *Froth on the Daydream*, 112.

The Oscar Peterson Hall is an important celebrated public space in the building. Inspired by Vian’s novel (Chick was a passionate follower of jazz music), this intervention is designed to act as the heart of the building. The thesis chooses the name of a great Canadian jazz pianist, Oscar Peterson, to bridge Vian’s novel and the Ottawa site. Conceived as a surrealist intervention (which is inspired by the drawing in Figure 9), the hall is connected to air ducts that traverse the building, carrying sound through them, and bringing surprising sonic depth to spatial experiences. As a place for music, the Oscar Peterson Hall is a locum for special moments. The design envisions a variety of automated musical instrument playing music according to the “mood” of the building, in the same manner the Pianocktail is used in *Froth on the Daydream* to make the protagonists feel the music on another level, with different senses. The ceiling and roof of the hall can be raised as the lid of a grand piano, to share the music with Ottawa’s downtown streets and passersby, near the *Cloud Factory*. The instruments are also connected to a vast network of steel cables going through the floorplates to activate sound-making systems according to the beat and movements of the piece being played. The Oscar Peterson Hall is meant to act as the heart of the building, recalling the role music occupies in the novel. As in *Froth on the Daydream*, music is intended to bring life to the building and entertain its visitors.



Figure 31: The Oscar Peterson Hall, view from the seating area (Third floor)



Figure 32: View of the Oscar Peterson Hall from the other side of the mezzanine (Third floor)

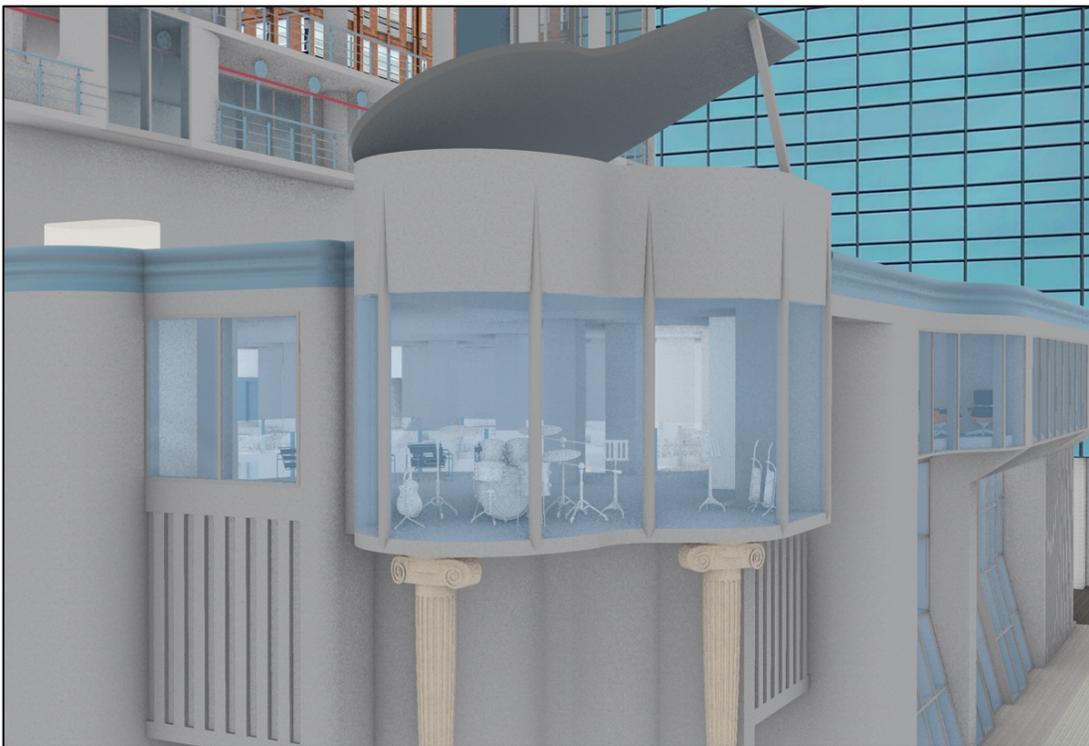


Figure 33: View of the Oscar Peterson Hall from outside showing raised roof

3.5 Basement Levels

3.5.1 The bathhouse

An enormous silence spread out around them, and the major part of the rest of the world faded into insignificance.

But, as they might have expected, the record came to an end. Then, and only then, did Colin come down to earth and notice that the ceiling was made of transparent Perspex and that the people upstairs were looking down at them. A wide border of water-irises sealed off the bottoms of the walls, and variously colored vapors were escaping here and there through specially made openings in the ceiling. He also noticed that his friend Isis was standing in front of him with some refreshments on an onyx tray.⁵³

A bathhouse is located on two levels below grade. The baths are public and designed for deep relaxation and thinking. The room in which the baths are allocated has a double ceiling height. The room and its pool basins are designed with a geometry that aim to amplify and reflect the sound of the water circulating in the baths and various basins. The aim of this geometry is to help masking undesirable and stress educing sounds including that of other people’s conversations, which makes this space all the more oneiric, and enhance the natural and calming sound of running water.⁵⁴

⁵³ Vian, *Froth on the Daydream*, 43-44.

⁵⁴ Charles Spence, “Senses of Place: Architectural Design for the Multisensory Mind,” *Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications* 5, no. 1 (2020): 8, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41235-020-00243-4>.

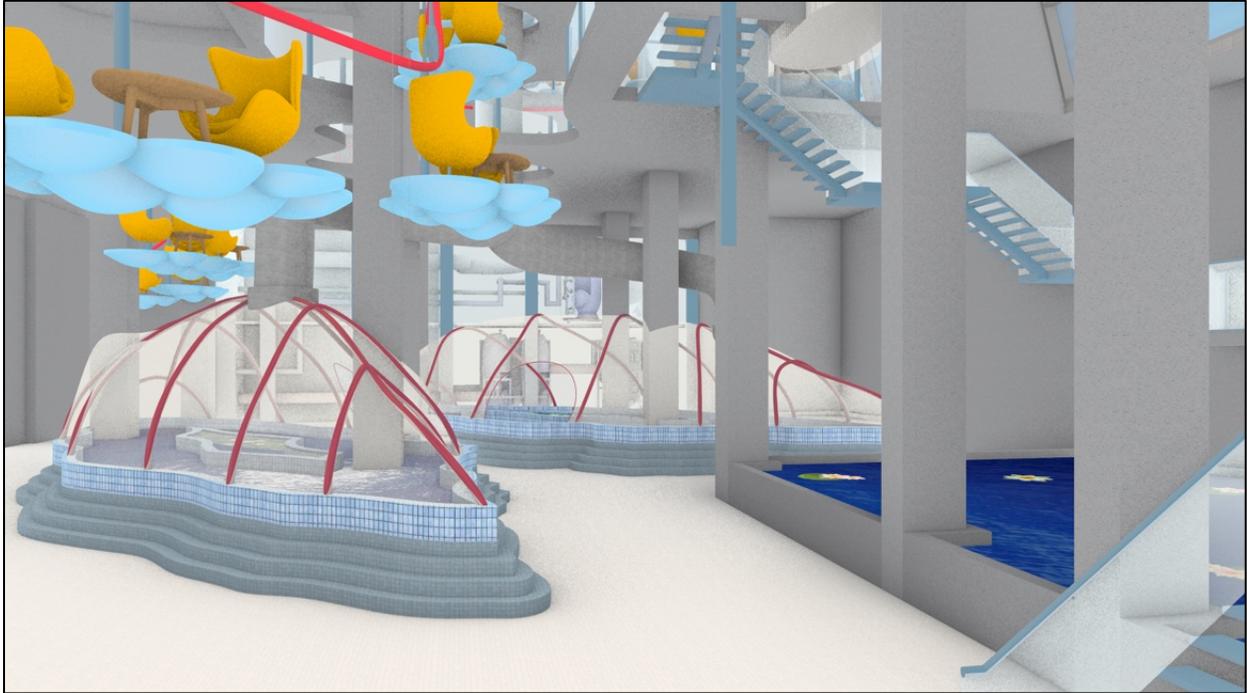


Figure 34: Initial view of the bathhouse when entering the room (basement)

The shape of the baths reflects the narrative of the building, inspired by the novel *Froth on the Daydream*. Specifically, the unusual forms of the baths which can be traced to the biomorphic shapes regularly found in the work of surrealist artists such as Joan Miro and Hans Arp, in this context, the forms of the baths symbolize Chloé's lungs.⁵⁵ The design imagines water ponds filled with flowers and water lilies. The bathhouse metaphorically represents the lungs of the building. The main source of natural light is from the main light tunnel of the building. In the same way the trachea separates in two canals to reach each lung, the latter halves into two sections to reach each bath. Other than the natural light coming from the tunnel, the bathhouse is very dark. The baths embody the idea of relaxation and time for oneself, but also, of death.

⁵⁵ Micah S Lipscomb, "*Landscapes Of Revelation: An Inquiry Into Surrealism In The Landscape.*" (Thesis, University of Georgia, 2003), 34. https://getd.libs.uga.edu/pdfs/lipscomb_micah_s_200305_mla.pdf.

Steel cables coming from the Oscar Peterson Hall reach the baths to activate a wave generator that will create a quiet flow of water set to the melody played in the Hall. The steel cables will also quietly transmit the resonance of the music all the way to the bathhouse.

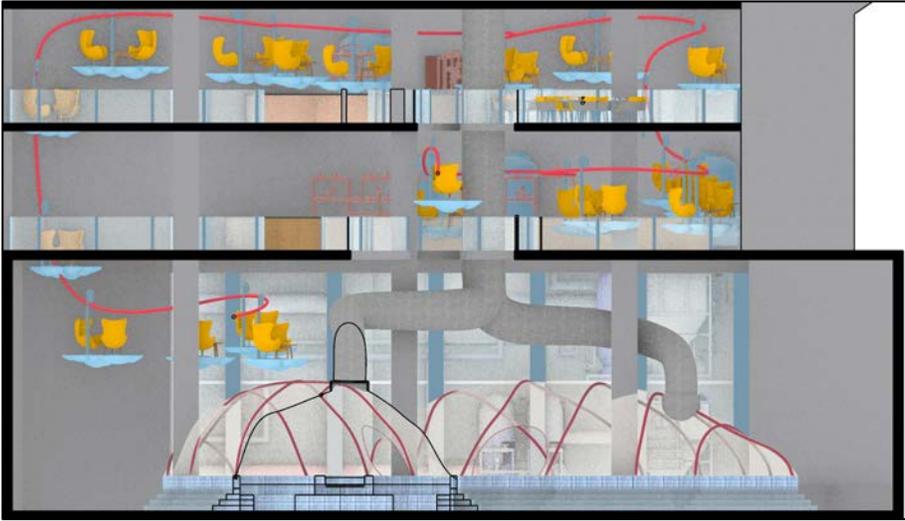


Figure 35: Section showing the baths and the light tunnels leading to the baths

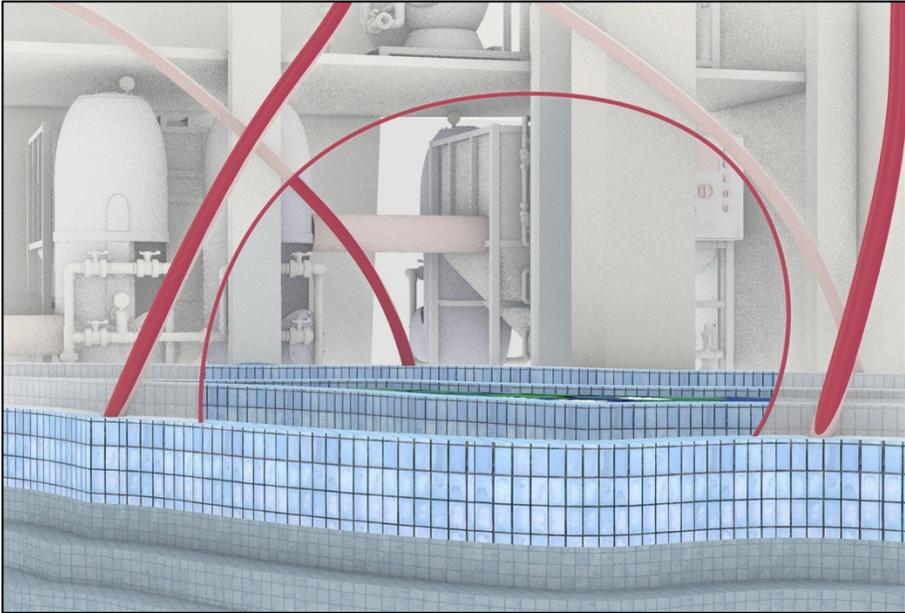


Figure 36: View from inside on of the baths

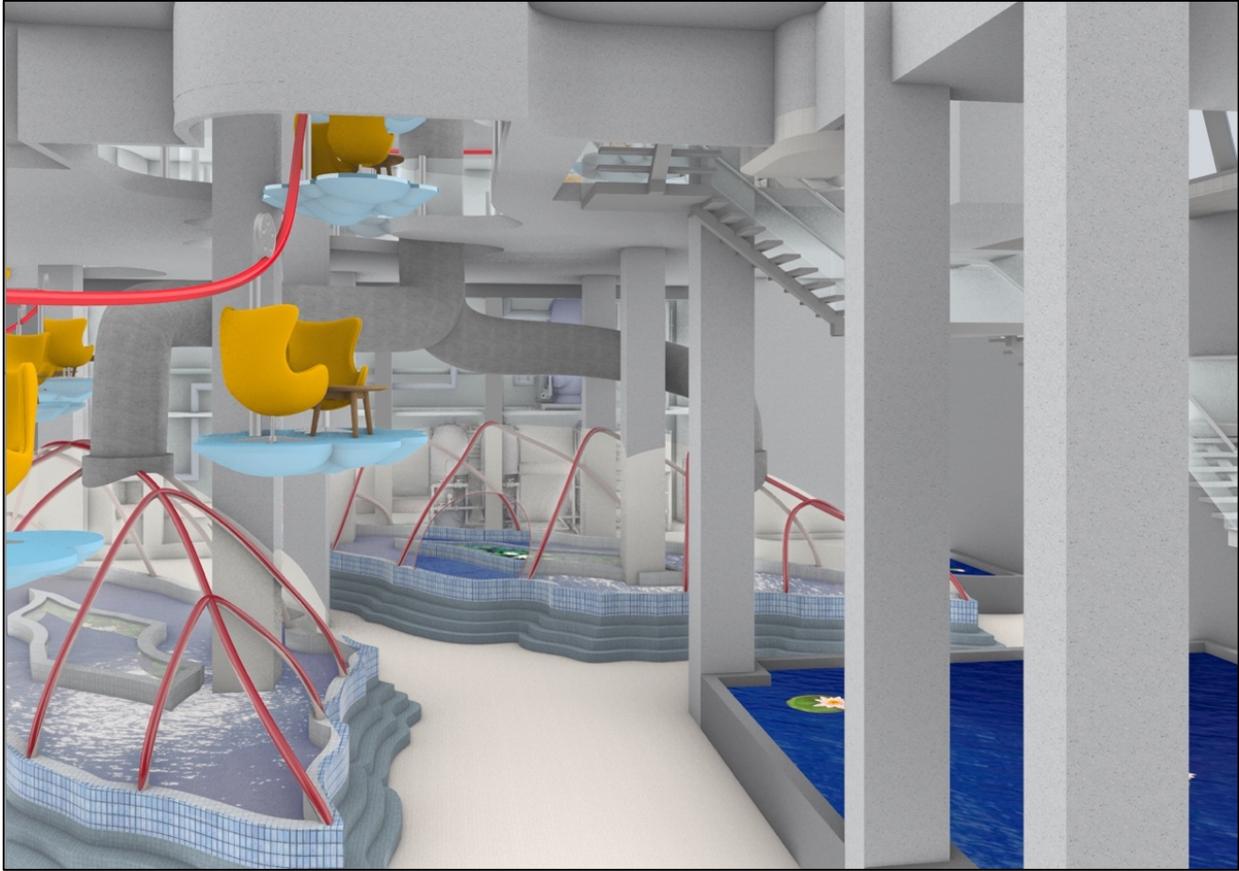


Figure 37: Perspective view of the bathhouse and the cloud system (basement)

3.6 The residential tower and offices

The renovated tower would include offices and housing units. The thesis proposition imagines an intertwining of office floors and residential floors with interesting overlaps and common spaces. The architectural proposition described in the following images focuses on the housing, especially on common balconies and on a flower delivery system that all units would enjoy. The proposition envisions a mix of studio or “bachelor” apartments as well as two and three-bedroom apartments. The renovated office layouts would be for a future exploration.

3.6.1 The flower system

*'I want our room to be full of white flowers – lilies, gladioli, roses and everything else that is white – and, right in the middle, an enormous bunch of red roses.'*⁵⁶

A flower delivery system inspired by Colin’s daily routine of offering flowers to Chloé is attached to the curtain wall of the tower. The system is designed to perform a full cycle of flower deliveries around the building on a daily basis, allowing the residents to enjoy new flowers every day, while also providing a source of excitement for the children living in the building. The flower system works with a motorized track and a set pulleys. The flowers pots rotate along the building at a slow rate to eventually stop at the vertical greenhouse, located on the Laurier Avenue façade to get a replenishment of water and daylight before embarking on another cycle.

⁵⁶ Vian, *Froth on the Daydream*, 61.

The flower system carries potted plants around all facades before delivering them to a given apartment with the use of small openings in the curtain wall. The purpose of this system is to allow all of the plants to receive light, regardless of the façade they are facing or the position of the sun, useful due to the proximity of the tower to other large buildings.

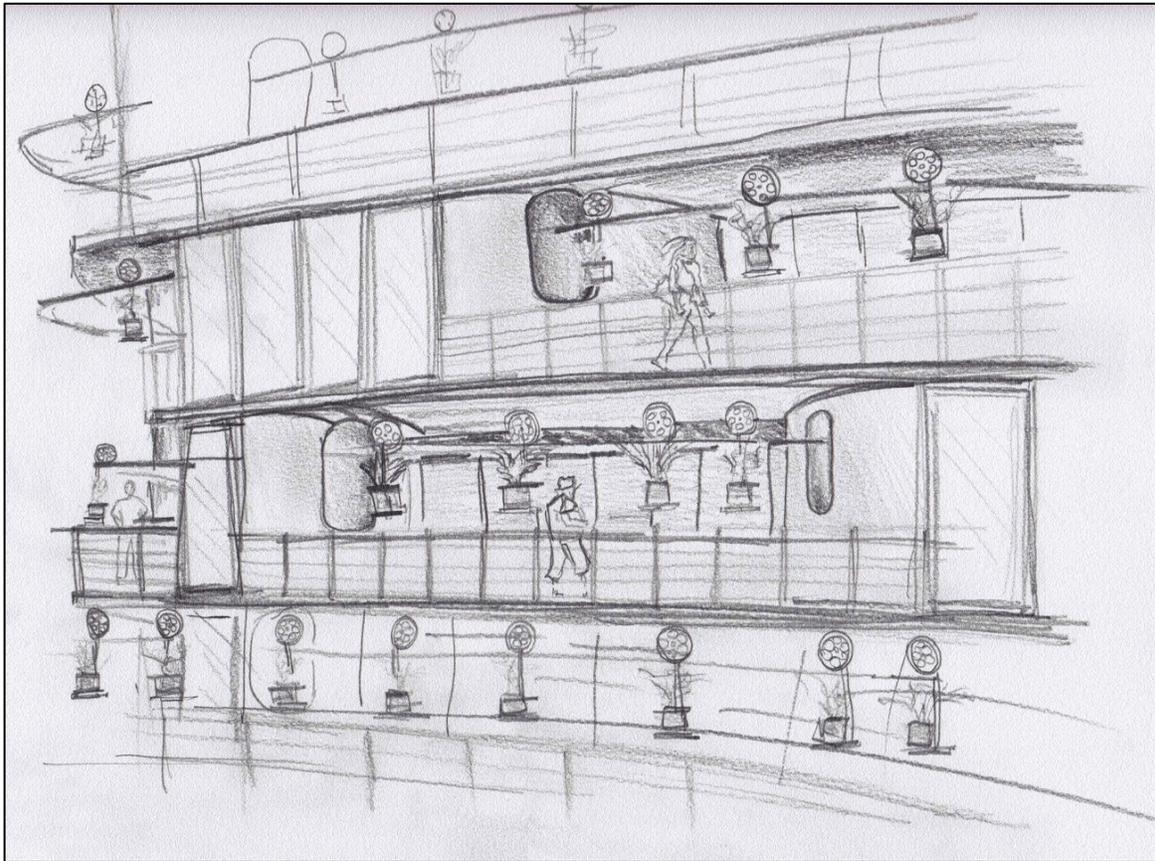


Figure 38: Hand drawing of the flower system in action

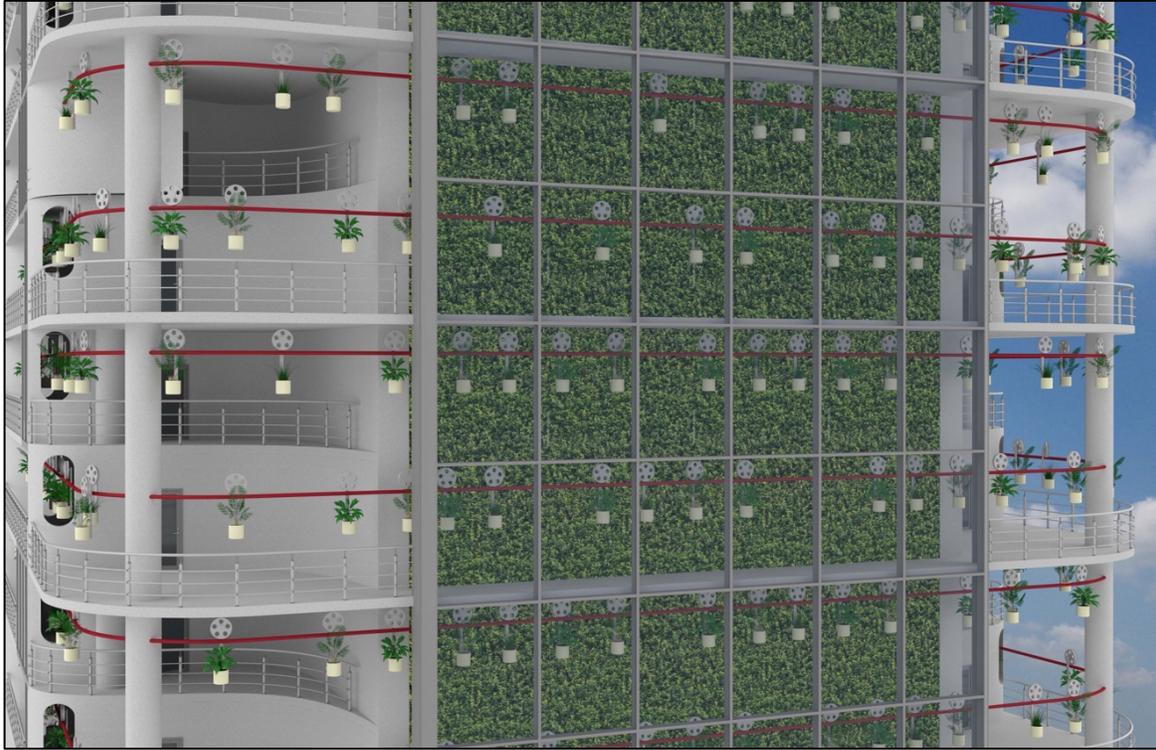


Figure 39: View of the vertical greenhouse



Figure 40: Daily flower delivery to each apartment via the balconies



Figure 41: North/West elevation of the building showing the vertical greenhouse

3.6.2 The communal balconies

The balconies located on the residential portion of the tower are meant to stimulate the sense of community for dwellers. Each balcony covers a large area and connects with other balconies via staircases. Furthermore, on both corners of the North/West façade, on both sides of the vertical greenhouse, are communal balconies accessible to all residents.

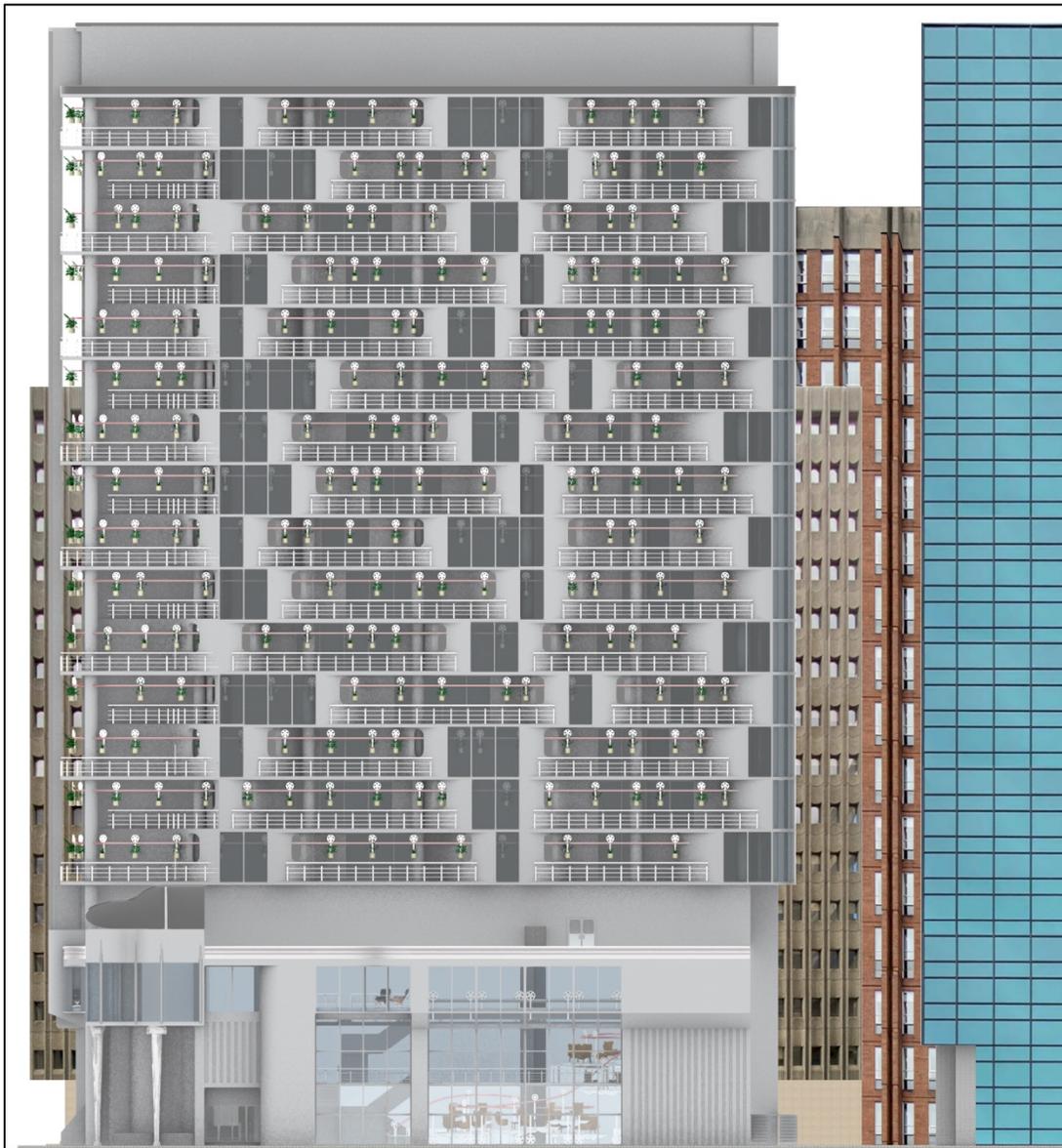


Figure 42: Elevation of the South/West facade showing the balconies

The use of communal balconies is meant to encourage chance encounter and help create friendships for the tower's residents, including the children. The communal balconies also interact directly with the vertical greenhouse, giving the residents access to communal gardens and gardening equipment in that area.



Figure 43: View of the balconies on the South/West facade

Conclusion

In this proposal to reimagine the building at the corner of Metcalfe Street and Laurier Avenue, private dwelling and shared communal uses layer themselves upon a traditional office building and soon-to-be-vacated Main branch of the Ottawa Public Library. An intertwined program inspired by the French novel *Froth on the Daydream* by Boris Vian opens new doors for dwelling in Ottawa's core and stimulates downtown life. The result of this research is a proposal for a surrealist-inspired repurposed building to meet the needs of the community and provide housing options in the downtown core of Ottawa. More generally, this thesis suggests an alternative approach to other downtown renovations at this sensitive time of redefinition and reinvention of urban life. The exploration of imaginative narrative content for the design of ordinary buildings promises to bring richness to our urban environments and to both the private and public life of the citizens of this City. The architectural modifications to the building designed by George Bemi in 1973, from apertures into the concrete buildings to additions of new programs and related narrative architectural forms, aim at elevating the imagination and the senses. Beyond proposing a more welcoming street presence, the renovated building reconfigures the interior at street level and on the floors immediately related to street level, to offer an array of sensual experiences including auditory and olfactory ones. The inclusion of every-day programs such as a laundromat and job center, and of playful and oneiric spaces such as a café in which chairs roll on tracks above the foyer and a concert hall that opens onto the street – reiterates the idea that waking life and dream belong together. Following surrealist philosophy, the associations of programs that do not normally belong together bring depth and vitality to social interactions and meetings.

Appendix: Additional Renderings

The following pages contain images produced for this thesis including plans, sections and perspective views extracted from a Rhino model realized in the frame of this research (the fruit of over 400 hours of work), based on structural data found in the original plans of the building. Also included in the appendix is a hand drawing produced at a very early stage of development in this thesis that captures the spirit and feeling of the project from a more conceptual point of view.

Floor Plans

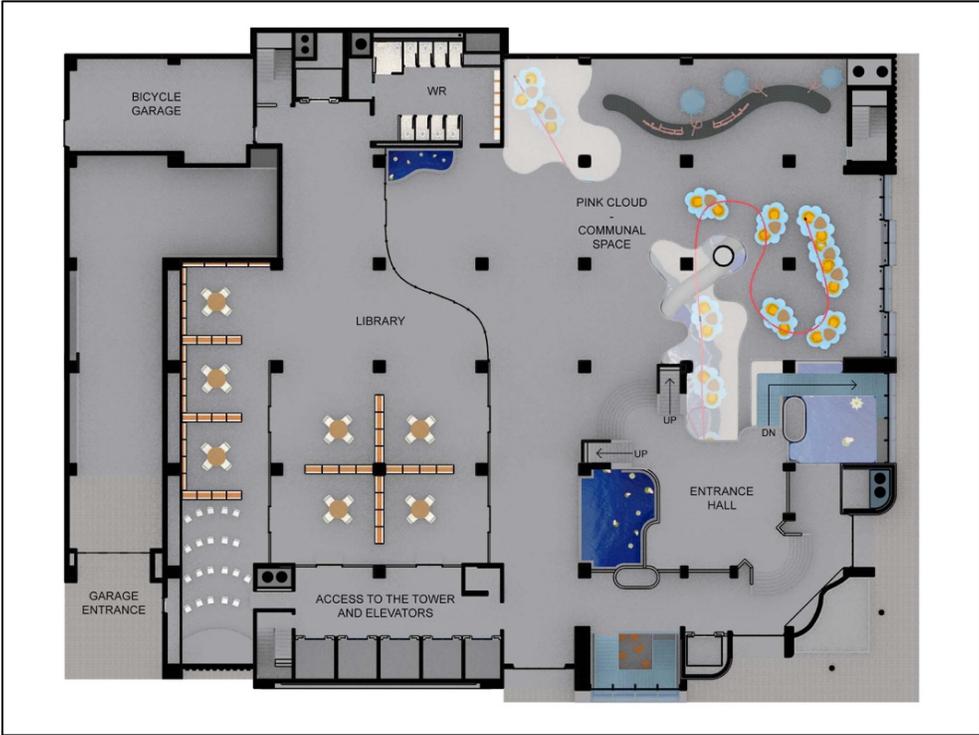


Figure 44: Ground level

Floor Plans (continued)

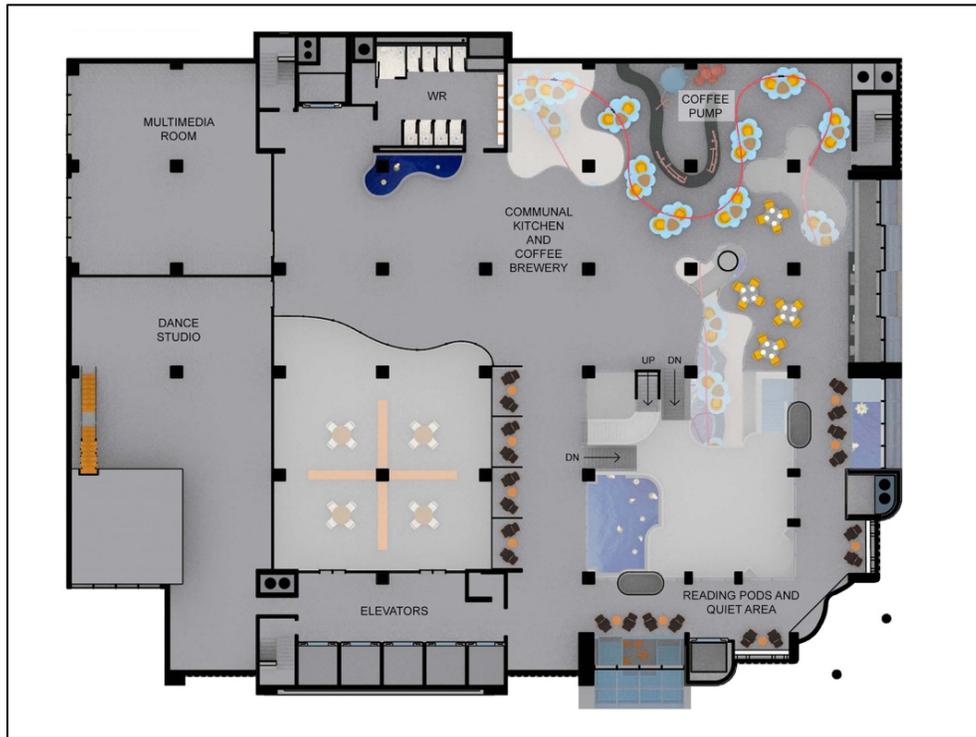


Figure 45: Second level



Figure 46: Third level

Floor Plans (continued)

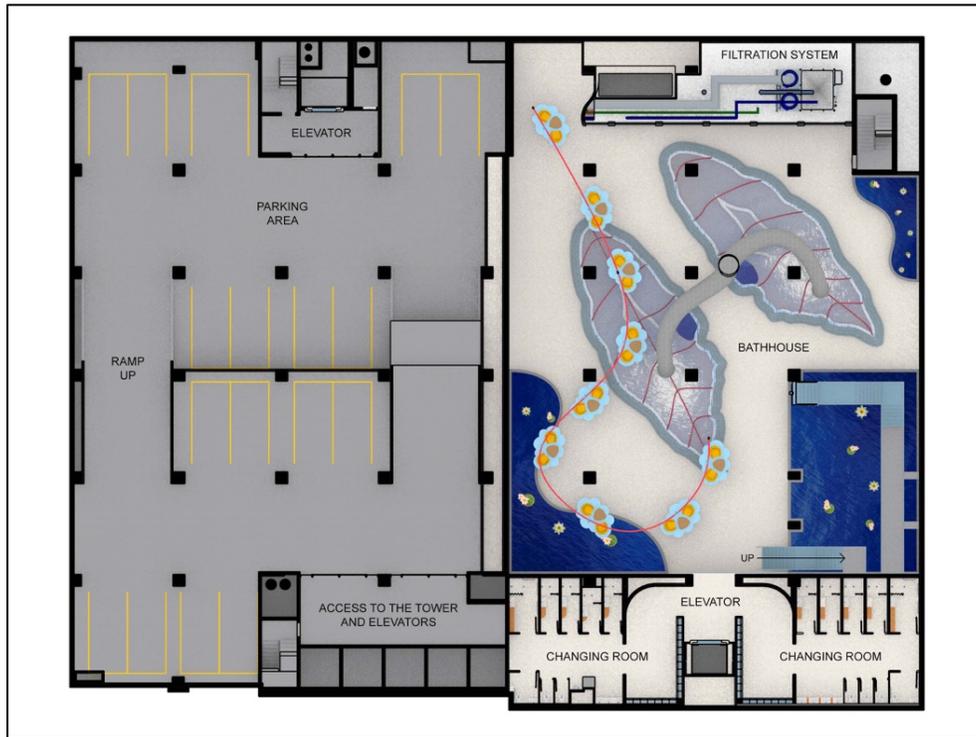


Figure 47: Basement level

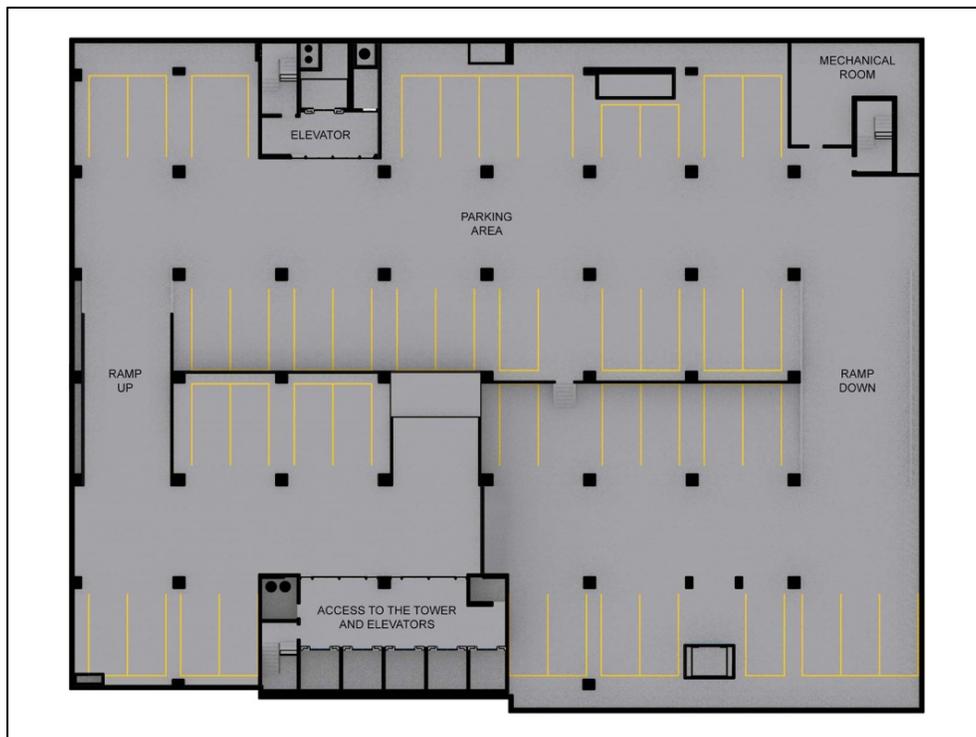


Figure 48: Typical parking layout (basement level)

Sections



Figure 49: Cross section of the building facing North/East



Figure 50: Cross section of the building facing North/East (2)

Sections (continued)



Figure 51: Cross section of the building facing South/West

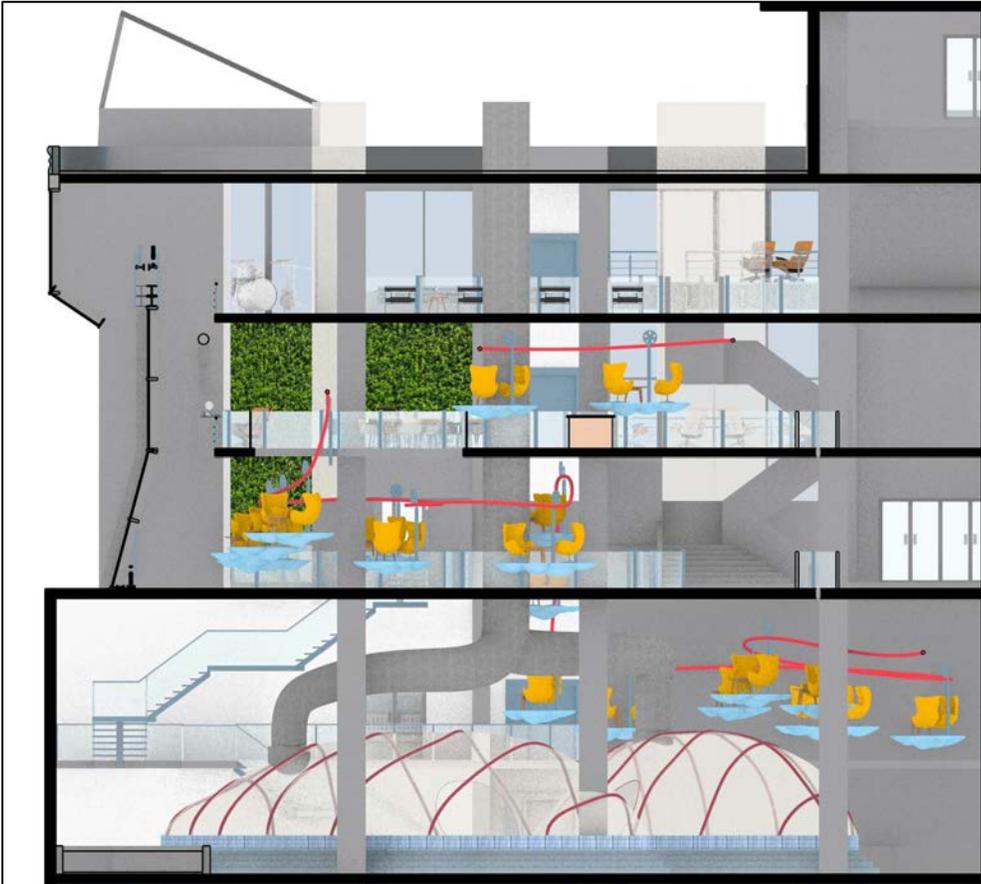
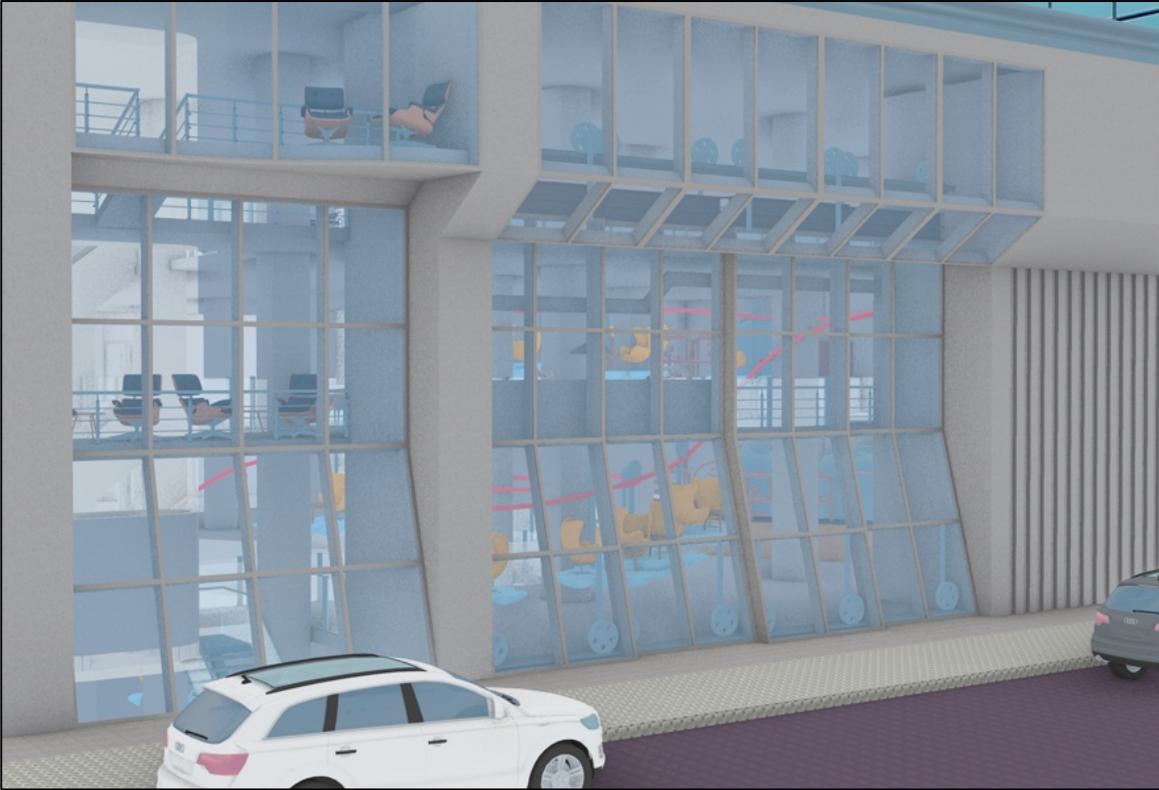


Figure 52: Cross section of the building facing South/East

Perspective views from Metcalfe Street



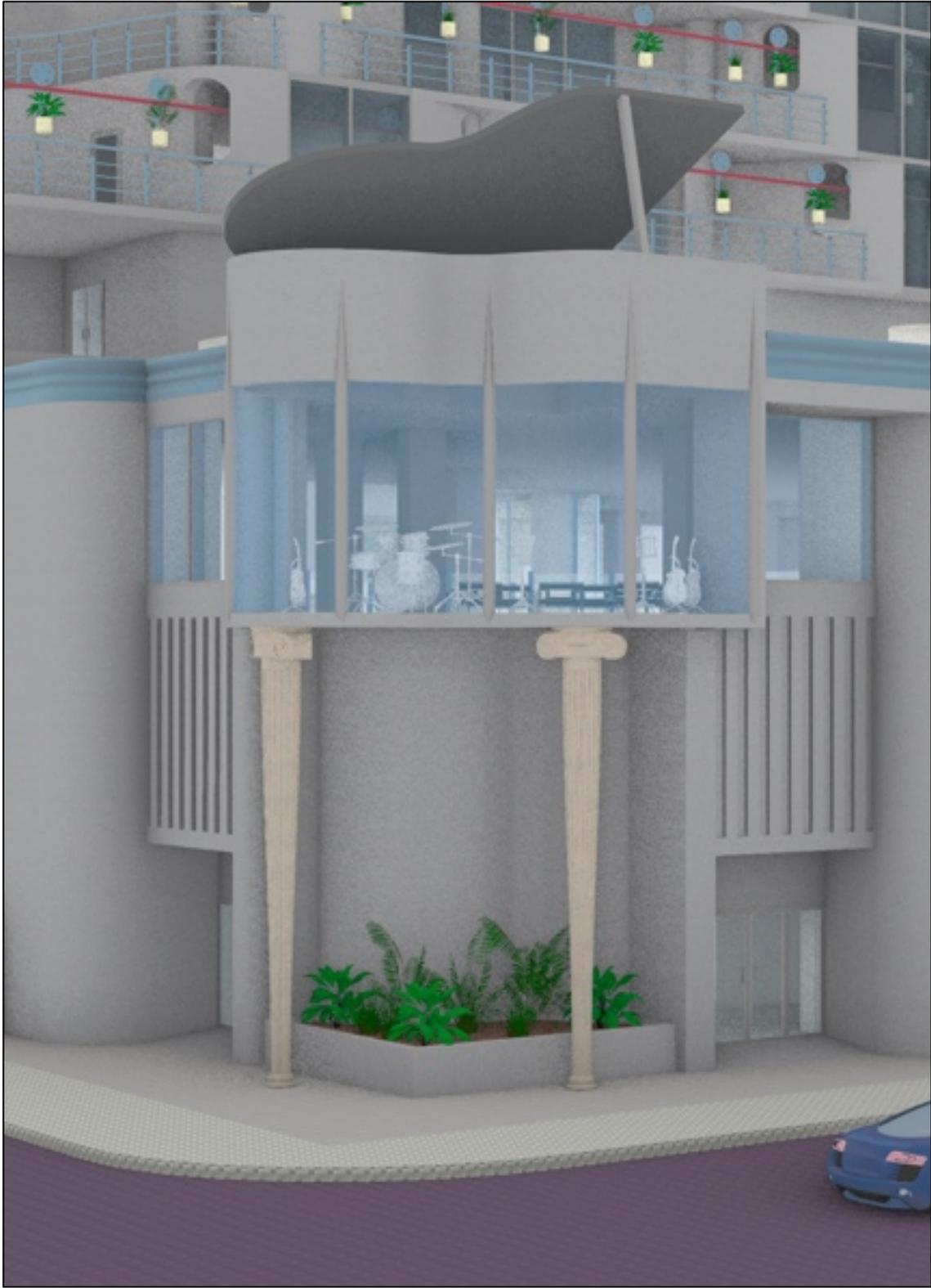
Perspective views from Metcalfe Street (continued)



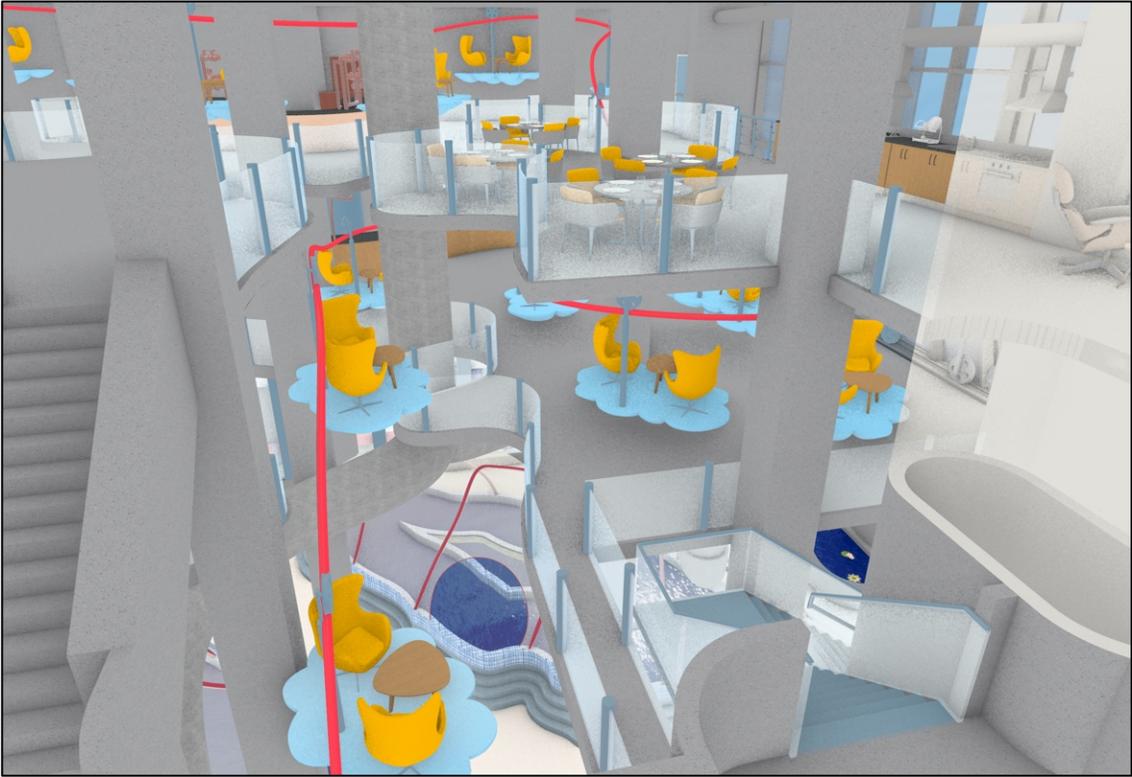
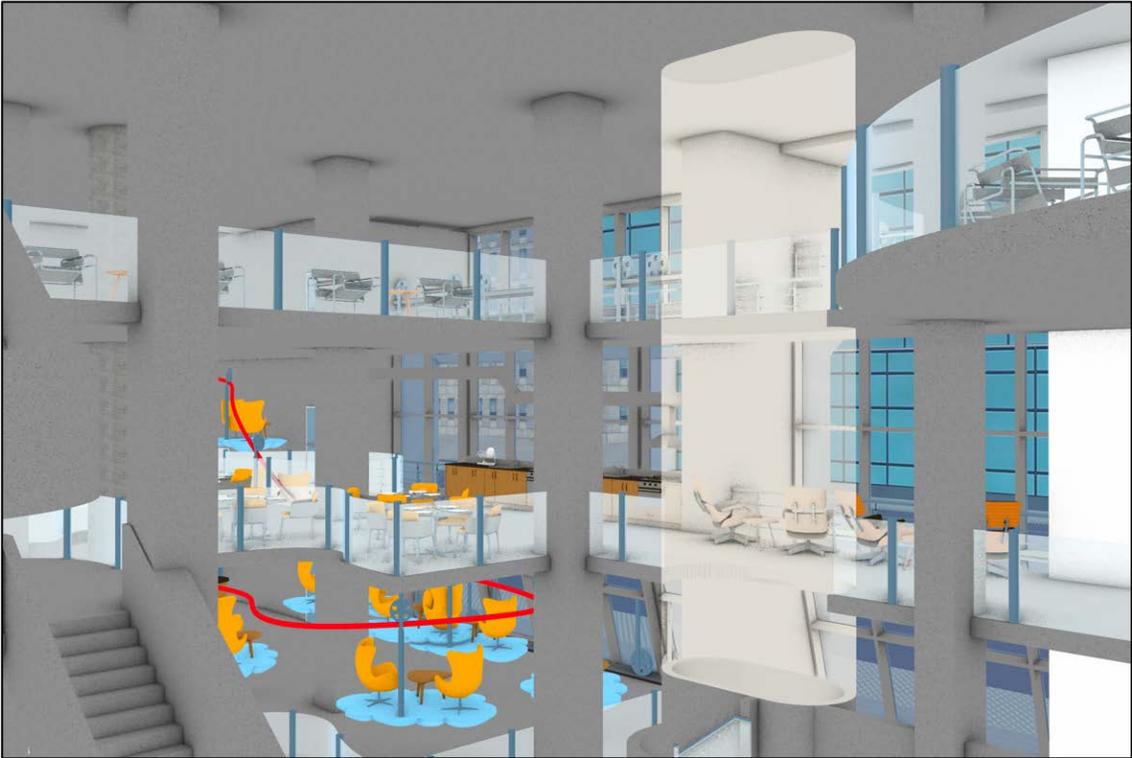
Perspective views from Laurier Avenue



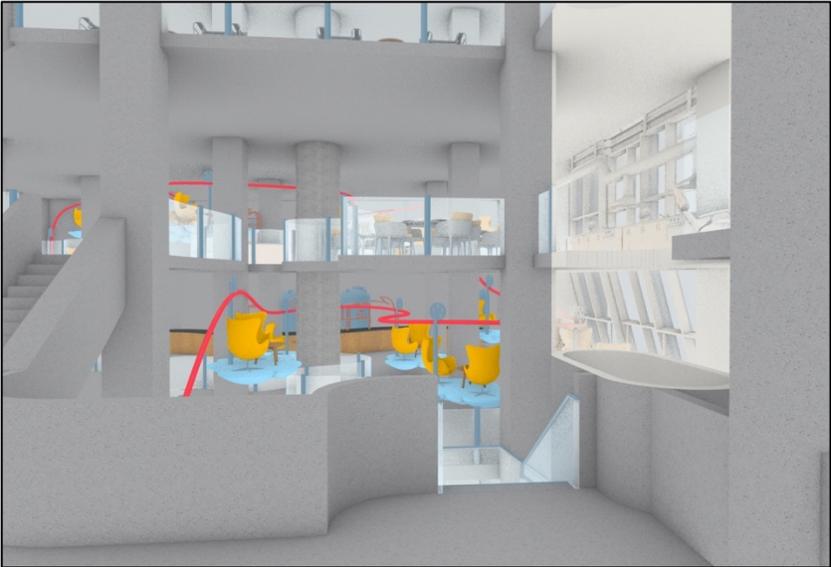
Perspective views from the corner of Laurier Avenue and Metcalfe Street



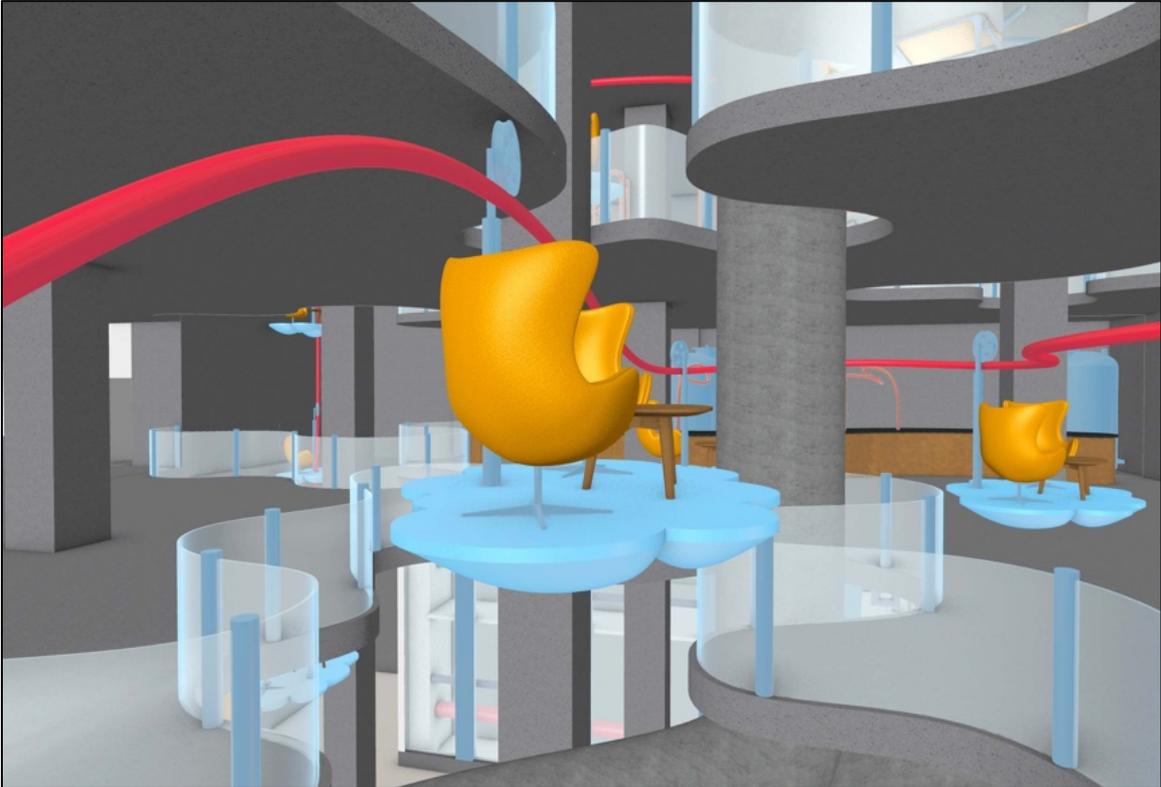
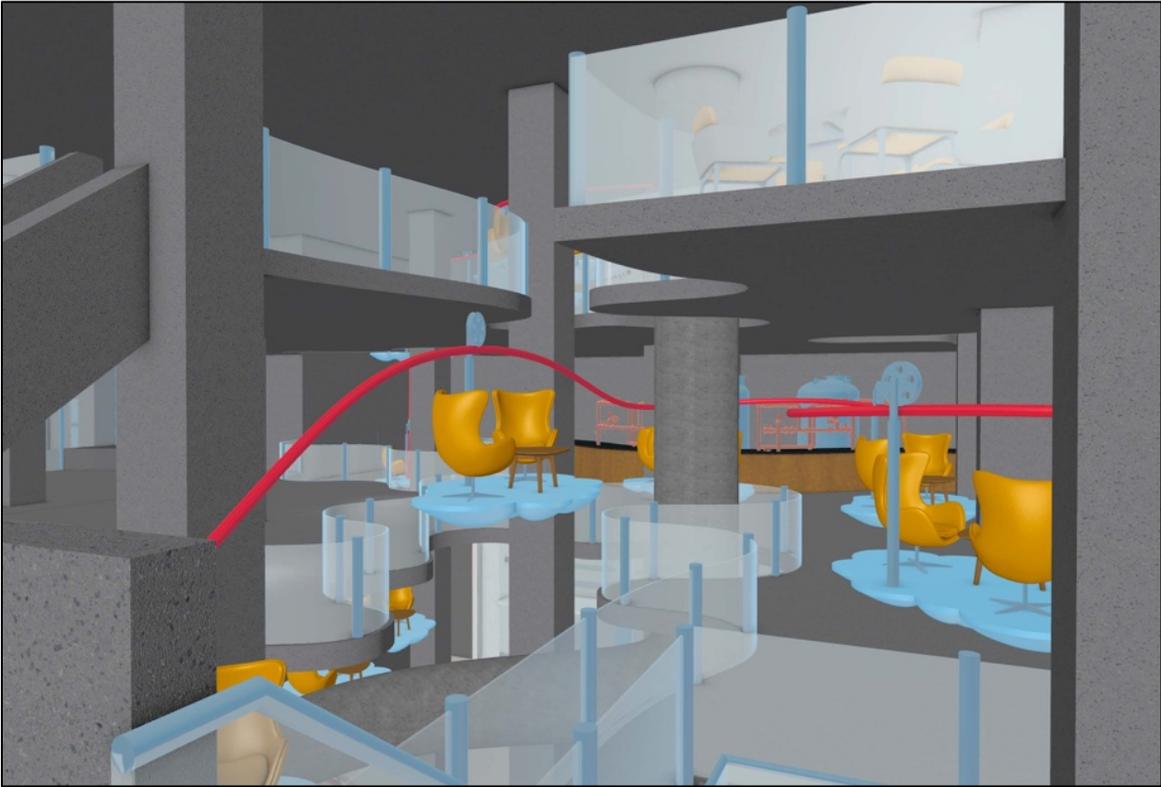
Interior views of the Entrance Foyer



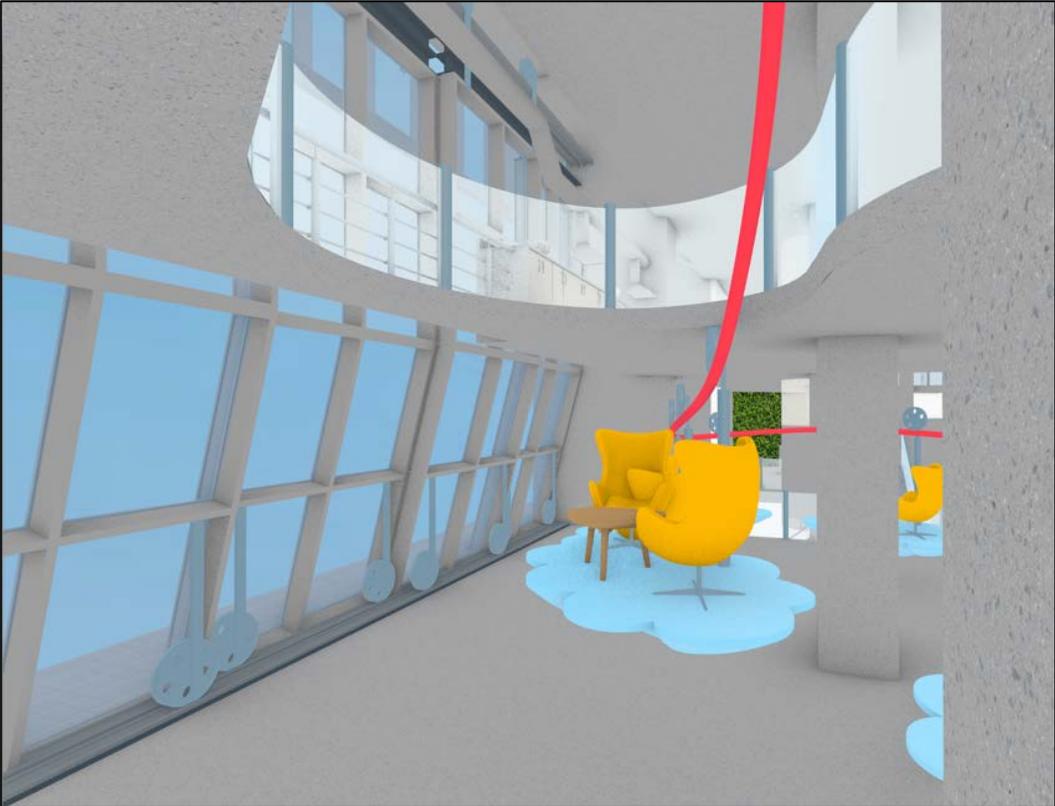
Views of Communal Kitchen (second floor)



The Community Cloud Café (showing chairs suspended on track)



The Community Cloud Café (continued)



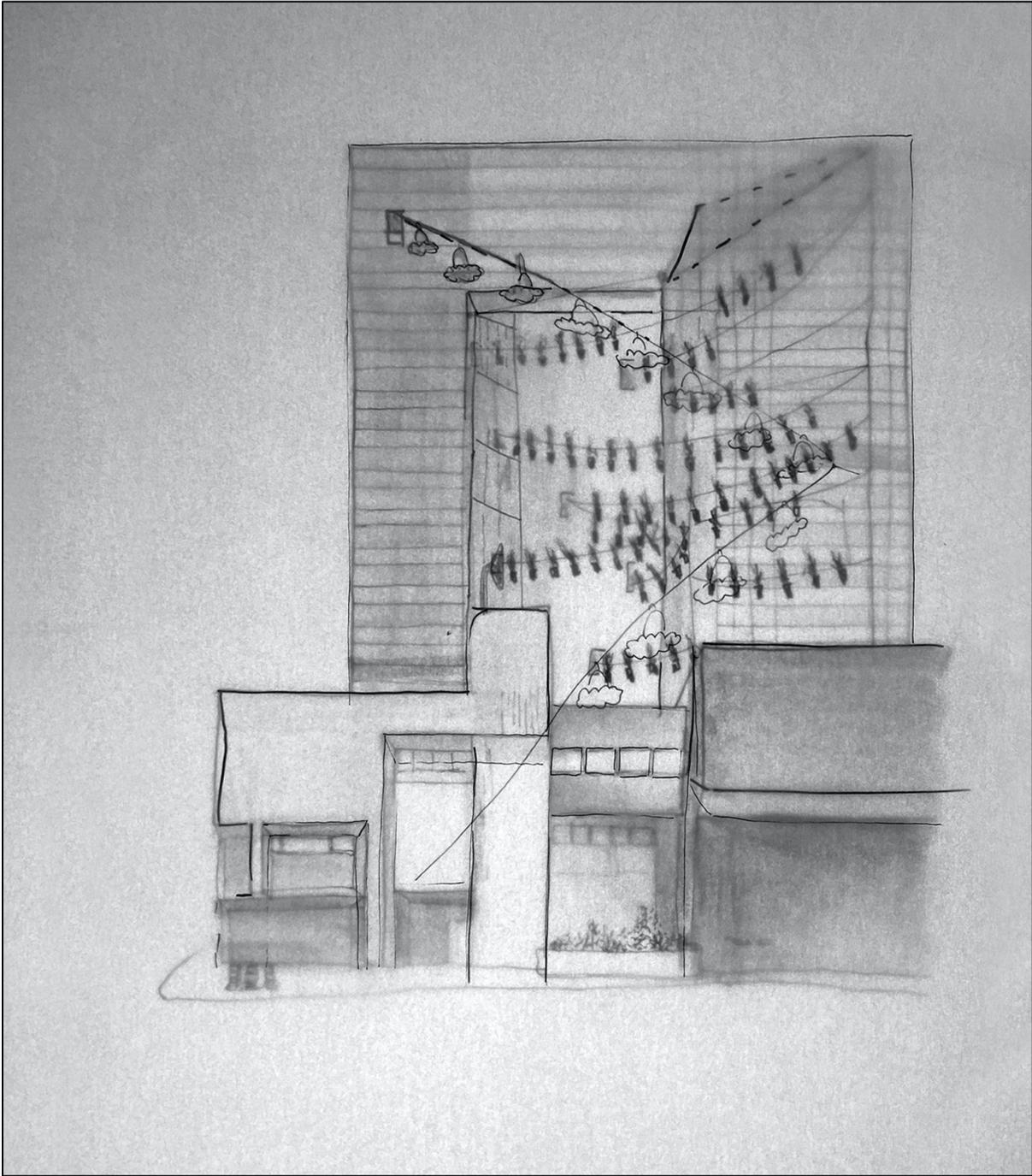
Entrance Experience from Laurier Avenue



Private Reading Porches Seen from the Library



An Early Inspirational Drawing



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Image references:

Figure 3: <http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-Ci5s73GXX2o/UF-1iG-AqxI/AAAAAAAAAH-E/-cKugjowsqQ/s1600/a023297.jpg>

Figure 4: https://oaa.on.ca/OAA/Assets/Images/uploads/Carnegie_13.jpg

Figure 7: http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-TbcuQzb59vM/UF-2weuBY2I/AAAAAAAAAH_c/UiQWMD8U2iY/s1600/903px-Ottawa_Public_Library_.jpg