

# COMMUNITY ON THE CORNER

## AN EXAMINATION OF THE SOMERSET HOUSE

By: Nooreen Haider

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs  
in partial fulfilment of requirements of the degree of

### MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

in  
Architecture

Carleton University  
Ottawa, Ontario  
© 2016 Nooreen Haider

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

I would like to take a moment to thank a few special people in my life.

My mother for supporting me, and father for being my driver, my sister Sabina and brother Mo for all their help & love, and my brother Ali for always being my life support!

To the constant friends in my life for being there, and listening to me rant.

And finally to my husband Faraz, without whom I would not have been able to get through a single day of the last two years... and without whom my thesis would have been riddled in errors.

Nine years ago, half of the Somerset House building was demolished, leaving a physical and metaphorical hole in the city. Constructed over a century ago, the building was intended to serve as a showpiece of the surrounding neighbourhood and city, a fact which makes its current dilapidated state that much more unfortunate. The location of the Somerset House, at the corner of Bank Street and Somerset Street, also happens to be the heart of the Ottawa Centretown community. The heritage value of building, a cultural and entertainment fixture for decades, arguably saved it from total demolition, but is likely also the reason it has been so difficult to restore this fading landmark to its former prominence.

The Somerset House has a strong tangible and intangible heritage value while its community represents an authentic mosaic of people and architectural typologies. When designing for our urban centres, it is important to recognize that  
 “Our downtowns provide space for public

life. While residents live, work, and shop in different neighbourhoods, the downtown is a shared physical reality with the presumed shared right to use that space, irrespective of income,”<sup>1</sup> as outlined by Carol D. Barrett in *A Conversation About Who’s In? Who’s Out? And Who Answers Those Questions When Planning for and Designing the Downtown*. Taking all these elements into account, the objective thesis is to determine:

**How can the development of a historic building increase its heritage value, while simultaneously contributing to the enhancement of the community to which it belongs?**

The central focus of the research will tackle issues of heritage, context, and community. The Somerset House will act as the vehicle used to analyze this subject matter.

1. Barrett, Carol D. “A Conversation About Who’s In? Who’s Out? And Who Answers Those Questions When Planning for and Designing the Downtown.” *Ethics, Design and Planning of the Built Environment*(2013): 24. Web.

## TABLE OF CONTENT:

Figure List	5		
The Man/Building	7		
Introduction	8		
<b>CHAPTER 1: HERITAGE</b>		<b>9</b>	
Heritage Value	9		
Early History	10		
Contemporary History	13		
Intangible Heritage	16		
Character Defining Elements	21		
Importance of Site	26		
<b>CHAPTER 2: IMMEDIATE CONTEXT</b>		<b>30</b>	
Evolution of the Corner	31		
Streetscapes	32		
Bank and Somerset Corners	35		
Bank Street Figure Ground	37		
Corner Typology	38		
<b>CHAPTER 3: INTERSECTION OF PEOPLE &amp; THE CITY</b>			<b>40</b>
Census	42		
Centretown Map	44		
Districts	45		
Services	46		
Heritage	47		
Transit	48		
Green Space	49		
Parking	51		
Arts	54		
<b>CHAPTER 4: PROGRAM AND PRECEDENCE</b>			<b>60</b>
Program	62		
Precedence	66		
Site Plan	68		
<b>CHAPTER 5: PROJECT</b>			<b>69</b>
<b>CHAPTER 6: BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>			<b>92</b>

## FIGURE LIST:

1. City of Ottawa, Canada West [1860] Association of Canadian Maps Libraries and Archives. Ottawa Canada KIA ON3.
2. Canadian Cities: Birds Eye Views. Ottawa [1876] Published in 1999 by The Association of Canadian Maps Libraries and Archives. Ottawa Canada KIA ON3.
3. Canadian Cities: Birds Eye Views. Ottawa [1893] Published in 2004 by The Association of Canadian Maps Libraries and Archives. Ottawa Canada KIA ON3.
4. - 7. <http://urbbsite.blogspot.ca/2012/10/the-haunted-hotel-somerset-ritz.html>
8. City of Ottawa: Department of Planning and Development Community Planning Branch [2003]
9. Retrieved from Google Earth [2014]
10. <http://urbbsite.blogspot.ca/2012/10/the-haunted-hotel-somerset-ritz.html>
11. Google Maps. (2015). Retrieved from <https://www.google.ca/maps/@45.4153902,-75.6963618,3a,82.9y,119.65h,99.56t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sBqllB2afLRCTFZAYhzhX-gI2e0l7i3312i8i6656?hl=en-CA>
12. PrimeCorp Commercial Realty Inc. [<http://www.primecorp.ca/PDF/002/summary.pdf>]
13. - 16. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/partial-demolition-begins-on-somerset-house-1.645678>
17. <http://www.activism.com/pics/eCA/5048f5e34a9f7.jpg>
18. - 21. <http://ottawamillieuia/2015/10/27/the-life-and-death-of-somerset-house/>
21. "The House They Called Home." The House They Called Home. CanWest MediaWorks Publications Inc., 9 Dec. 2007. Web. 9 Sept. 2015.
22. Composition of Google Street View Images.
23. - 24. <http://farm5.static.flickr.com/4104/508541298@37dbale94.jpg>
25. - 30. Photo by author: February 12, 2016
31. - 32. <http://urbbsite.blogspot.ca/2012/10/the-haunted-hotel-somerset-ritz.html>
33. Graphic by author, produced according to Simon Thurley, Into the future. Our strategy for 2005-2010. In: Conservation Bulletin [English Heritage], 2005 (49)
34. Lynch, Kevin. The Image of the City. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1960. 47-48. <http://www.upp.cn/english/view/Dlannng/article/302737.html>
35. - 38. Composition of Google Street View Images.
39. Google Maps. (2015). Retrieved from <https://www.google.ca/maps/@45.415412,-75.6963797,3a,75y,202.67h,96.12t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sZWCm-gRrQAg-OfqZkLF-Gw!2e0l7i3312i8i6656?hl=en>
40. Google Maps. (2015). Retrieved from <https://www.google.ca/maps/@45.415412,-75.6963797,3a,75y,289.03h,96.58t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sZWCm-gRrQAg-OfqZkLF-Gw!2e0l7i3312i8i6656?hl=en>
41. Google Maps. (2015). Retrieved from <https://www.google.ca/maps/@45.415412,-75.6963797,3a,75y,14.88h,99.74t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sZWCm-gRrQAg-OfqZkLF-Gw!2e0l7i3312i8i6656?hl=en>
42. Google Maps. (2015). Retrieved from <https://www.google.ca/maps/@45.415412,-75.6963797,3a,75y,106.17h,99.68t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sZWCm-gRrQAg-OfqZkLF-Gw!2e0l7i3312i8i6656?hl=en>
43. Google Maps. (2015). Retrieved from <https://www.google.ca/maps/@45.4125374,-75.693879,3a,88.8y,116.26h,94.22t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sZ6w4UZCjH2moo39ai-dEw!2e0l7i3312i8i6656?hl=en>
44. Google Maps. (2015). Retrieved from [https://www.google.ca/maps/@45.4123904,-75.6937548,3a,75y,240.41h,114.93t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sGlxidqWxxWuLEWkI\\_ggJgl2e0l7i3312i8i6656?hl=en](https://www.google.ca/maps/@45.4123904,-75.6937548,3a,75y,240.41h,114.93t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sGlxidqWxxWuLEWkI_ggJgl2e0l7i3312i8i6656?hl=en)
45. Google Maps. (2015). Retrieved from <https://www.google.ca/maps/@45.414924,-75.6959652,3a,75y,42.35h,103.57t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sVM6y5ij56kVlhy864f-dOAl2e0l7i3312i8i6656?hl=en>
46. Google Maps. (2015). Retrieved from <https://www.google.ca/maps/@45.4137233,-75.694915,3a,75y,27.19h,97.79t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sW8mf9To5dXVzc5juW-MCEBQl2e0l7i3312i8i6656?hl=en>
47. Google Maps. (2015). Retrieved from <https://www.google.ca/maps/@45.4115344,-75.6932106,3a,75y,30.86h,100.87t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sdi9h5OPV8OG8Ar9i2RtQl2e0l7i3312i8i6656?hl=en>
48. Google Maps. (2015). Retrieved from <https://www.google.ca/maps/@45.4111334,-75.6929831,3a,75y,116.23h,93.17t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sOIOlAyF62rKzw7w5l-1sOaw!2e0l7i3312i8i6656?hl=en>
49. Created by Author
50. Google Maps. (2015). Retrieved from <https://www.google.ca/maps/@45.4179087,-75.6985969,3a,75y,30.907h,98.28t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sJhXmaDHRlOvYlB-Mj-7dAl2e0l7i3312i8i6656?hl=en>
51. Google Maps. (2015). Retrieved from <https://www.google.ca/maps/@45.4160551,-75.6969167,3a,75y,200.78h,90.49t/data=!3m7!1e1!3m5!1sCsDgPwVhU4jphnCMETOA!2e0!5s20150401T000000!7i3312i8i6656?hl=en>
52. Google Maps. (2015). Retrieved from <https://www.google.ca/maps/@45.4166244,-75.6974331,3a,75y,0.87h,93.16t/data=!3m7!1e1!3m5!1steJbzO3jZk7CRjps-7F!pg!2e0!5s20140701T000000!7i3312i8i6656?hl=en>
53. Google Maps. (2015). Retrieved from <https://www.google.ca/maps/@45.4160517,-75.6969138,3a,75y,110.62h,91.7t/data=!3m7!1e1!3m5!1sZcy95XYKqZpMeTSKgWnkk!2e0!5s20150501T000000!7i3312i8i6656?hl=en>
54. - 62. Created by Author
63. The Pope House: 275 MacLaren [<http://www.waymarking.com>]
64. Birkett Castle: 306 Metcalf Street [<http://www.nationaltrustcanada.ca/visit-discover/find-historic-places/historic-sites-canada/ontario/birkett-castle>]
65. St. Patrick's Basilica: 220 Kent [<http://static.panoramio.com/photos/large/59093905.jpg>]
66. Hollywood Parade 103-113 James [<http://www.knitnut.net/page/133/>]
67. Created by Author
68. <http://www.ottawadalhouse.ca/20100501archive.html>
69. Created by Author

70. Google Maps. (2014). Retrieved from <https://www.google.ca/maps/place/Nanny+Goat+Hill+Community+Garden/@45.4092011,-75.7060432,873a,20y,41.41t/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x4cce045194d75f87:0xc7e41a-0db038a391!8m2!3d45.4153259!4d-75.7072504>
71. Google Maps. (2014). Retrieved from <https://www.google.ca/maps/@45.4145902,-75.7026017,3a,75y,357.55h,82.4t/data=!3m7!1e1!3m5!1s1aAub8HtJyP7RNem5U0wQQ!2e0!5s2014080!1T000000!7!3312!8!6656>
72. Google Maps. (2014). Retrieved from <https://www.google.ca/maps/place/The+Centretown+Community+Garden+Project/@45.4151273,-75.7018851,3a,60y,65.93h,85.6t/data=!3m1!1e1!3m4!1saNHwXRNabgB-IPi-Z0iaBw!2e0!7!3312!8!6656!4m5!3m4!1s0x4cce0452ef2f-0dd7:0xal0f3bf537ac818d!8m2!3d45.4151054!4d-75.7016938!6m1!1e1>
73. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DundonaldPark#/media/File:DundonaldPark.JPG>
74. Google Maps. (2014). Retrieved from <https://www.google.ca/maps/@45.4081042,-75.7037963,3a,75y,44.74h,88.02t/data=!3m1!1s-5dlpoEiSxX9gKTBNT969Kw!2e0!7!3312!8!6656>
75. <http://2bp.blogspot.com/-uNQvafkDv0Q/U4vQrQG-bI/AAAAAAAAAfkl/Yh9iboZcgOM/s!600/park.jpg>
76. Google Maps. (2014). Retrieved from <https://www.google.ca/maps/@45.4081797,-75.6972144,3a,75y,318.21h,90.88t/data=!3m1!1e1!3m4!1sYUhAAAgNAB0880bi-HwXVBA!2e0!7!3312!8!6656!6m1!1e1>
77. Google Maps. (2015). Retrieved from <https://www.google.ca/maps/@45.4091886,-75.6886392,448a,20y,41.52t/data=!3m1!1e3>
- 78 - 79. Created by Author
80. William James Topley/Library and Archives Canada/PA-042686
- 81 - 83. <http://4bp.blogspot.com/u2WcNSWdWE8/Sixk9X-gR-fl/AAAAAAAAACKl/XkpiMZCMgc/sl600-h/rialto.jpg>
84. <http://www.centretownbuzz.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/newottawaural-002.jpg>
85. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/trans-gender-women-colour-mural-vandalize-1.3241389>
86. <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10204313847360500&set=a.1446985028806.58022.1658603250&type=3&theater>
- 87 - 89. Created by Author
90. - Photo Credit: Richard Powers [<http://www.dwell.com/post/article/5-modern-live-work-spaces-artists#2>]
91. Photo Credit: Michael Burns [<http://public47.com/work/commercial/greggs-cycle/>]
92. [<http://public47.com/work/commercial/greggs-cycle/>]
93. Photo Credit: Cast Architecture [<http://www.castarchitecture.com/public/rainier-beach-urban-farm/nwbdt7qbm-2g3y9nx6buesqnlvgkmtel>]
94. Photo Credit: Cast Architecture [<http://www.castarchitecture.com/public/rainier-beach-urban-farm/nwbdt7qbm-2g3y9nx6buesqnlvgkmtel>]
95. Photo Credit: Cast Architecture [<http://www.castarchitecture.com/public/rainier-beach-urban-farm/nwbdt7qbm-2g3y9nx6buesqnlvgkmtel>]
96. Shinjuku Gardens [source: [archdaily.com](http://archdaily.com)]
97. Shinjuku Gardens [source: [archdaily.com](http://archdaily.com)]
98. California Parking Garage [source: <http://inhabitat.com>]
99. California Parking Garage [source: <http://inhabitat.com>]
100. Philadelphia Storm Water Tree Trench [source: <http://www.phillywatersheds.org/>]
101. Portland Oregon Street Planters [source: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/44407>]
102. City of San Francisco's Pavement to Parks [<https://calpolya201.wordpress.com/2012/11/11/reclaiming-public-space/>]
103. Ant Hill Playground, Bianca Habib [[http://www.play-scapes.com/play-design/contemporary-design/bianca-habib-2009/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=bianca-habib-2009](http://www.play-scapes.com/play-design/contemporary-design/bianca-habib-2009/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=bianca-habib-2009)]
104. The New York Restoration Project [<http://tinyhousedarling.tumblr.com/post/83814404023/onceuponawild-flower-landscape-a-design-the>]
105. Munich courtyard. [<http://divisare.com/pro-jects/198351-el-ch-landschaftsarchitekten-urbanstrasse-111>]
106. Created by Author
107. <https://pinballmedics.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/glow5-1-390x259.jpg>
108. <http://theyellowsparrow.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Jim-Campbell-Scattered-Lights-1-1024x681.jpg>
109. <http://media.architecturaldigest.com/photos/55e78c3acd709ad62e8fef5b/master/pass/dam-images-celebrity-homes-2014-bette-midler-gardens-bette-midler-ny-restoration-project-10-after-los-amigos-community-garden.jpg>
110. <http://36.media.tumblr.com/8e8d-3f076f09e0aee901343884adec756/tumblr/rjrd8pKSRyl-s5eudo2280.jpg>
111. <http://urbsite.blogspot.ca/2012/10/the-haunted-hotel-somerset-ritz.html>
112. <http://farm5.static.flickr.com/4104/508541298@37d-bale94.jpg>
113. [https://c3.staticflickr.com/3/2182/2340089396\\_1cc-35cd0a.jpg](https://c3.staticflickr.com/3/2182/2340089396_1cc-35cd0a.jpg)
114. Created by Author



## THE MAN / THE BUILDING

*The homeless man is sitting on the corner, sitting still watching as the city passes him by. People not noticing that they are adjusting their path and gaze to walk around him, to not look at him. It seems like he has always been there, just as he is now, worse for wear in old clothes with holes that seem like they might crumble at the touch. But if someone was to truly see him, they'd see how he once did have a life, he was once a part of the city that is now passing him by. But he has no voice to scream to them all that he could still be something to someone. He could still be great.*

*The man/building still screams that "there is still life in these old bones!" That there is still time for him to be that something to someone, that he could still be great! Yet no one hears his cries. The days become years and the man sits still on his corner, waiting for help, watching the city go by.*

*The primary question this thesis seeks to answer is*

**How can the development of a historic building increase its heritage value, while simultaneously contributing to the enhancement of the community to which it belongs?**

*This question will be addressed in two main parts - heritage value and community development.*

*Chapter 1 will focus on the heritage value of the Somerset House and contains a comprehensive review of the building's history, character-defining elements, and intangible heritage.*

*Chapter 2 includes an examination of the Somerset House along a progressively increasing scale but while remaining within the building's*

*immediate context of its surrounding block and streets. This chapter acts as a bridge between the two primary parts of the thesis.*

*Chapter 3 addresses the second half of the thesis question, community development. Specifically, it examines the current state of the community surrounding the Somerset House through a series of mapping studies, followed by an assessment of various features which may prove to be beneficial to these neighborhoods.*

*Chapter 4 includes a series of precedence studies on the Somerset House, and*

*Chapter 5 contains a detailed outline of the thesis design proposal.*

## HERITAGE VALUE

The Somerset House has been a part of Ottawa's Centretown district for over a hundred years. However, does that alone mean it has heritage value? The City of Ottawa has labeled the area surrounding Somerset House as a heritage district [see fig. 60], but has not gone as far as classifying the building as a heritage designated property. Buildings within the heritage district are evaluated on a four-tier scale: Group 1: Highly significant heritage Resource; Group 2: Building of heritage significance; Group 3: Significance as part of wider grouping or streetscape; and, Group 4: Little or no heritage significance. The City has determined that the Somerset House building does meet the highest level within the scale

(Group 1),<sup>2</sup>

Modern heritage conservation principals have many guidelines that outline the qualities, procedures, and definitions for heritage designated properties. The value of the Somerset House will be examined through four key documents. The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historical Places in Canada will be used as the main source, and UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, The Burra Charter, and The Nara Document, will be referenced as supplementary documents.

The Standards and Guidelines' defines

Heritage Value as:

***The aesthetic, historic, scientific, cultural, social or spiritual importance or significance for past, present and future generations. The heritage value of an historic place is embodied in its character-defining materials, forms, location, spatial configurations, uses and cultural associations or meanings.***<sup>3</sup>

This broad definition lists several qualities that will serve as the framework for assessing the heritage value of the Somerset House.



2. Kalman, Harold. *The Evaluation of Historic Buildings*. Ottawa: Environment Canada Parks Canada, 1980 29.

3. *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada: A Federal, Provincial and Territorial Collaboration*. 2nd ed. Ottawa: Parks Canada, 2010. Web.

HISTORY OF THE SOMERSET HOUSE

To gain a better account of its historical significance, a conventional account of the timeline of the Somerset House follows.

EARLY HISTORY OF THE SOMERSET HOUSE

In the 1890's, Ottawa was primarily an industrial mill town and was still in the initial stages of adjusting with its designation as the nation's capital. Even during its infancy, the Centretown district was a vital component of the city's fabric. Through the study of historical maps, it becomes evident that the site of Bank and Somerset was always viewed as an integral part of Ottawa, even when the city limits were substantially smaller than present-day boundaries [see Figures 1 & 2]. In the early 1900's, the street car was the main mode of

public transportation, and again from early maps [see Figure 3], it can be seen that the Bank and Somerset corner had at least two streetcar routes. As the city's limits expanded, so did Centretown's increasing importance to Ottawa's history and development.

In the late 1800's, the city's industrial companies were starting to move out of Centretown, while other businesses and residents were moving into the area. During this period, before the construction of the Somerset House, another building appeared to be located on the Bank and Somerset corner [see Figure 4]. The Crosby Company acquired the property from a mill owner, Daniel O'Connor Jr., and by 1896, they had built and opened

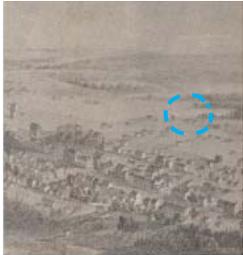


FIGURE 1: 1860



FIGURE 2: 1867

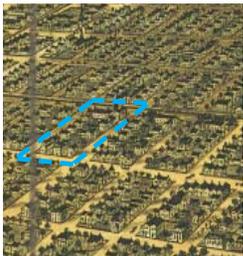


FIGURE 3: 1893

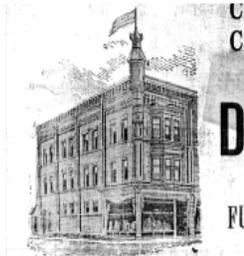


FIGURE 4: 1896



FIGURE 5: 1902



FIGURE 6: 1936



FIGURE 7: 1979



FIGURE 8:



FIGURE 9: 2008



FIGURE 10:



FIGURE 11: 2015



FIGURE 12: FUTURE PROPOSAL

a new dry goods store on the site. The three storey building was constructed in the then-popular commercial Queen Anne style, like many other developments in the area at the time. Soon after in 1902, there was an addition built on Somerset Street, a four storey lodging house that became known as the Somerset House [see Figure 5].

Over the years, there have been many alterations that have changed the makeup of the ground level of the Somerset House, beginning in 1936 when the building had its first makeover. Crosby's store was sold and transformed into an art deco inspired Ritz Hotel [see Figure 6]. This alteration changed the threshold between the building and the

Bank Street façade, limiting the transparency between the two spaces. Some of the structure's original elements were covered up. A second renovation to the Ritz Hotel led to the development of the basement to include a lounge, as well as the replacement of one set of bay windows, due to issues with encroachment, with a set of modern flat windows. The outline of the original bay window can still be seen on the front façade [see Figure 6].

The Ritz hotel had an active life from the 1940's to the 1960's, so much so that even after the hotel was gone the name prevailed for many years. It was also the Ritz hotel that established the building's lasting legacy as

4 & 5. "How Somerset House Transformed from the Grande Dame of Bank Street to a Blight on the Neighbourhood." Ottawa Magazine. N.p., Sept. 2011. Web. 11 Oct. 2015.  
 6. "UPDATE: Duke of Somerset Shutting down." Archives. Great River Media Inc., 27 Oct. 2004. Web. 36 Sept. 2015.

a marker of entertainment on Bank Street, which housed several other popular hotels and theaters before the masses eventually flocked to Elgin Street and the Byward Market. According to an article that originally appeared in the September 2011 issue of Ottawa Magazine:

***“Bank Street was the hub of Ottawa’s social scene, and the grandson and namesake of Edgar Mitchell remembers it well. “I grew up in the Ritz Hotel,” says Edgar Mitchell. “It was packed every afternoon, every night. Bank Street was so alive back then. It was the place everybody came.”<sup>4</sup>***

In the late 1970’s, the corner of Bank and Somerset once again experienced significant change with the opening of a jazz club in

the basement of the building. The hotel also closed and two pubs took its place, The Duke of Somerset and the Locksmith Tavern, which “combined, had higher daily beer sales than any other single-address drinking establishment in the city, with the exception of Scotiabank Place on a Senators game night.”<sup>5</sup> Yet the high sales did not last, and according to the previous owner, Edgar Mitchell, the City of Ottawa’s ban on indoor smoking by-law was the catalyst for the fall of the Duke of Somerset.<sup>6</sup>

## CONTEMPORARY HISTORY OF THE SOMERSET HOUSE



FIGURE 13



FIGURE 13



FIGURE 14

In 2005, the Somerset House was sold to Tony Sherbeasi of TKS Holdings. The new owner had plans to renovate and revitalize the building as a retail and business centre. The plans drawn by architect Derick Crane show the reinstating of the lost bay windows and the completion of the damaged turret. The Ground floor in the 2006 plan also showed a much more open façade on Bank Street [see Figure 12]. However, before the renovations had a chance to begin they were brought to a halt. As the story goes, in 2006 when work was being done in the basement of the Somerset House, a structural column was accidentally knocked down trapping a construction worker for several hours. Ultimately the worker was rescued unharmed, but the incident marked the beginning of a series of

unfortunate events.<sup>7</sup>

The City determined that the building was unsafe and should be demolished, but after consultations with the project engineer, John Cooke, it was determined that only the rear 1902 edition would need to be demolished while the remainder of the building and the Somerset facade could be preserved. The Bank and Somerset intersection was closed for a week while the work took place. The design was eventually readjusted by architect Derick Crane to accommodate the new conditions. After the demolition, the owner and the City became entrenched in legal battles over which party was accountable for the cost and reason for the demolition, as well as other issues,

7. Willing, Jon. "Good News' Finally Comes to Somerset House." Ottawa Sun. Canoe Sun Media, 10 Oct. 2013. Web. 26 Sept. 2015.

8. "The House They Called Home." The House They Called Home. CanWest MediaWorks Publications Inc., 9 Dec. 2007. Web. 9 Sept. 2015.

including encroachment fees and police monitoring costs. This fight continued for years, with intermediate resolutions which ultimately never amounted to action. Throughout this time, the Somerset House was left vacant and subject to further deterioration.

The latest resolution occurred in October 2014, following a legal settlement between the owner and the City, whereby the City approved the most recent plans for construction.<sup>8</sup> Although both parties had renewed hopes for the development of the site, at the time of writing, at least another year has lapsed with no construction at the site. In contrast to previous delays, this time, there is no obvious issue hindering development of the property, although the cost of construction has been identified as a potential concern. The only noticeable step taken since the 2014 resolution, has been the change of project architect from Derek Crain to Barry Hobin.

*“[T]he image of the ruin tells us what is true in every image: that it bears witness to the enigmatic relation between death and survival, loss and life, destruction and preservation, mourning and memory.”<sup>9</sup>*

*Cadava, Eduardo  
Lapsus Imaginis: The Image in Ruins*



FIGURE 15



FIGURE 16



FIGURE 17



FIGURE 18

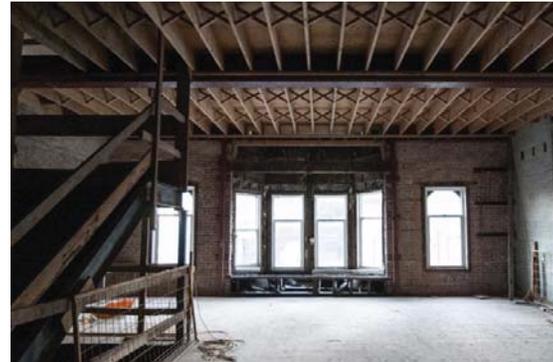


FIGURE 19



FIGURE 20

9. Cadava, Eduardo. "Lapsus Imaginis: The Image in Ruins". October 96 (2001): 35-60. Web.

## INTANGIBLE HERITAGE

History, after over a hundred years of existence, is an inevitable by-product of the passing of time. Not, to discount its importance, but as the Standards and Guidelines indicate, heritage value of historical places is also cultural and or social and “embodied in its character-defining ... use, cultural associations and meanings.”<sup>10</sup> These qualities are collectively referred to as intangible characters. With respect to the Somerset House, the intangible characters are observed in the peoples’ memories of the space. The Somerset House has served the Centretown community for years, and people have developed a deep connection to the space over time, largely rooted in the memories they have of themselves, families and friends at the building. These memories

## MEMORIES

have had a greater lasting impact due to the building’s social gathering value, which would not be the case if the building largely operated as a retail or housing establishment over its lifespan. The pubs, jazz club, restaurants, and lounge at the Somerset House were all programs that continue to have a strong cultural association as a primary means of external social gathering spaces with residents of Centretown, Ottawa and across Canada. The interest in the development of the Somerset House is not just about its architectural or historical merit, but also about the community’s intangible connection to the building. Whereas traditional heritage conservation failed to consider the significance of the intangible, more

contemporary studies place greater emphasis on evaluating the potential impact of intangible qualities on cultural heritage. In regards to the Somerset House, the intangible cultural heritage is rooted in the stories and memories the community has of the space. The importance of the collective memory of the Somerset House and the detailing of the building’s bay window, for example, are not to be outdone by one another, but rather work as complementing elements to propel their unique histories.

In 2003, UNESCO produced a document for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, which discusses “the invaluable role of intangible cultural heritage as a factor in

10. Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada: A Federal, Provincial and Territorial Collaboration. 2nd ed. Ottawa: Parks Canada, 2010. Web.

11. The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Rep. Paris: UNESCO, 2003.

bringing human beings closer together and ensuring exchange and understanding among them.”

In contrast to traditional architectural heritage, it is harder to evaluate the merits and potential impacts of intangible cultural heritage, as it is not a physical element one can describe. The UNESCO document defines intangible cultural heritage as part of the following domains:<sup>11</sup>

- Oral traditions and expressions
- Performing Arts
- Social practices, rituals and Festival events
- Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe
- Traditional craftsmanship.

One way to measure the community’s intangible connection to the Somerset House is to review the scale of media coverage of the building over time. Throughout the last 9 years, there have been numerous reports and articles regarding the status of the building, including:

#### SELECTED LIST OF ARTICLES:

- 2007: The House They Called Home: Somerset House in Centretown is one of Ottawa’s fine historic buildings <sup>12</sup>
- 2010: Controversy Surrounds Redevelopment of Somerset House <sup>13</sup>
- 2011: Architect Blames City’s Permit Process For Lengthy Delays In Rebuilding Somerset House <sup>14</sup>
- 2010: The Abuse and Neglect of Somerset House <sup>15</sup>
- 2012: How Somerset House Transformed From the Grande Dame of Bank Street to a Blight On The Neighbourhood <sup>16</sup>

2012: Residents Petition City to Deal with Somerset House <sup>17</sup>

2013: Somerset House Renovation Plan Passed By Heritage Committee <sup>18</sup>

2013: ‘Good News’ Finally Comes To Somerset House <sup>19</sup>

2014: Somerset House Owner Says He’ll Revive the Duke Restaurant <sup>20</sup>

2015: Somerset House Owner Aims for 2016 Finish, But With No Duke <sup>21</sup>

Although not all articles deal with the intangible merits of the building, it can be seen from the titles alone that the interests in the preservation of the Somerset House are not necessarily linked to its ruin or legal issues, but the longing to restore the site to its former prominence.

With an increasing number of residents publicly voicing competing opinions on the

12. “The House They Called Home: Somerset House in Centretown Is One of Ottawa’s Fine Historic Buildings.” Editorial. *The Ottawa Citizen* [Ottawa] 9 Dec. 2007: n. pag. CarWest MediaWorks Publications Inc. Web.

13. Schnurr, Joanne. “Controversy Surrounds Redevelopment of Somerset House.” *CTV News Ottawa*. CTV, Ottawa, Ontario, 12 Oct. 2010. CTV News. Web. 01 Jan. 2016.

14. Spears, Tom. “Architect Blames City’s Permit Process For Lengthy Delays In Rebuilding Somerset House.” *Ottawa Citizen* [Ottawa] 18 Jan. 2011: n. pag. Print.

15. Williams, Dwight. “The Abuse and Neglect of Somerset House - Spacing Ottawa.” Editorial. *Spacing Ottawa* 28 Oct. 2010: n. pag. *Spacing Ottawa*. 28 Oct. 2010. Web. 15 Oct. 2016.

16. How Somerset House Transformed from the Grande Dame of Bank Street to a Blight on the Neighbourhood | *Ottawa Magazine*.” Editorial. *OTTAWA* 22 Oct. 2012: n. pag. *Ottawa Magazine*. 22 Oct. 2012. Web. 29 Sept. 2016.

17. <http://www.centretownbuzz.com/2013/01/18/somerset-house-saga-appears-almost-over/>

18. “Somerset House Renovation Plan Passed by Heritage Committee.” *CBC News*. CBC, Ottawa, Ontario, 10 Oct. 2013. Television.

19. Willing, Jon. “‘Good News’ Finally Comes to Somerset House.” Editorial. *Ottawa Sun* 10 Oct. 2013: n. pag. *Ottawa Sun*. Canoe Sun Media

20. Mueller, Laura. “Somerset House Owner Says He’ll Revive the Duke Restaurant.” Editorial. *Ottawa Community News*. Metroland Media Group LTD., 29 Apr. 2014. Web.

21. Willing, Jon. “Somerset House Owner Aims for 2016 Finish, but with No Duke.” Editorial. *Ottawa Sun* 30 June 2015: n. pag. *Ottawa Sun*. Canoe Sun Media. Web.

22. Pierre Nora, *Representations*, No. 26, Special Issue: *Memory and Counter-Memory* (Spring, 1989), pp. 18- University of California Press Stable

development of the Somerset House, Jeff Morrison, a former Director of the Canadian Construction Association, went so far as to pledge resolution of the issue during his candidacy to become Councillor of Somerset Ward 14 during the 2014 municipal elections in Ottawa. How to explain this level of interest in the Somerset House? Perhaps it is due to the building's heritage value, or the ongoing drama surrounding its development, or even the amount of time the building has stood in a state of flux. However, just as likely is that the building is so intrinsically linked to many peoples' positive memories of the space, memories that help these individuals connect to something greater than themselves.

*“there are as many memories as there*

*are groups, that memory is by nature multiple and yet specific; collective, plural, and yet individual. History, on the other hand, belongs to everyone and to no one, whence its claim to universal authority. Memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects; history binds itself strictly to temporal continuities, to progressions and to relations between things. Memory is absolute, while history can only conceive the relative.”*<sup>22</sup>

Pierre Nora, *Memory and Counter-Memory*

When examining peoples' memories of the Somerset House, it is important to recall that they may not have always been completely positive or of a polished state. It is of greater importance to remember that these memories were real and that these individuals were drawn to a place that made them feel

welcome like no one place did. The Somerset House has always been part of a community. Its programs have always served its people, perhaps not in a selfless manner, but has served them nonetheless. People seem to remember that the Somerset House, if nothing else, was a place of gathering.

*“jazz lounge that lasted for a couple of years. «It never made any money, but there was a lot of good music,» he says.” ...»It was a Canadian tavern, but there was entertainment and always full food service,»... «The sense of hospitality, of being a publican, of running a place where people socialized and interacted in their community -- we're losing it,» Edgar Mitchell*  
*“Here, one could find country and western and classic rock performers and, later, karaoke...for decades gave*



FIGURE 21

Former Owner Edgar Mitchell, and new owner Toni Shabarsi

***British soccer and rugby fans a second home at the Duke of Somerset pub”***

December 9, 2007: The Ottawa Citizen. The House They Called Home: Somerset House in Centretown is one of Ottawa's fine historic buildings

*“From the early 90s its cellar bar was known as the Duke of Somerset pub, and it was the home of boisterous and well-remembered “Celtic Sunday” music sessions. After the 1998 World Cup “The Duke” became the unofficial headquarters of the UK expat community who gathered to watch satellite broadcasts of English soccer matches; for a big qualifying match it was standing room only.”*

Dwight Williams - The Abuse and Neglect of Somerset House: October 28, 2010

*“I shop, live, work, exercise, and play near Somerset House almost every day,” stated Morrison. “To see this beautiful building deteriorate for so long, and for the community to have to*

*endure this lack of vision or leadership for five years is deplorable.”*

Jeff Morrison: Centretown Buzz October 19, 2012

*“I had my first public appearance at the Duke with 3 guys and a drummer...I also played a few tunes with them on the final night the duke was open. I’ll always remember walking by there and seeing people playing music in the window, that place was epic and I’d like to see it re open.”* Keefer Green

*“I worked in the adjacent building for 20 years and actually watched the building collapse. Office space in the upper floors would be MILES better than the hookers that used to hang out the windows yelling to patrons every day.”*

Debbie Steeves

*“I remember when low in low income people lived here. Future home of rich*

*people living in condos.”*

*“My father worked there for 25 years...If it can be saved then hopefully it can be turned into something everyone could enjoy. He passed away many years ago ... I am all for keeping this Heritage Building in our Capital!! That just my opinion as his daughter.”*

Lorraine Laviolette

The mix of the hotel, apartments, pub, and lounge are all uses that bring people together. To greatly alter the program of the Somerset House to something much more individualistic would be a disservice to the collective memory shared by the community. Regarding the use of a place of cultural significance, the 2013 Burra Charter states that “a place should have a compatible use” and “should

respect associations and meetings and where appropriate should provide for continuation of activities and practices which contribute to the cultural significance of the place.”<sup>23</sup>

23. The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013.

## CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS

Returning to the Standards and Guidelines definition of heritage value, the document states that “The heritage value of a historic place is embodied in its character-defining materials, [and] forms.” This is commonly known as character-defining elements.

Bank Street’s Centretown district has a strong characteristic turn of the century brick commercial and residential construction. The Somerset House is unique in that it combines many character-defining elements of the surrounding building style. Although Ottawa still has some examples of commercial Queen Ann revival style buildings from the late 1890’s-early 1900’s, few still retain the architectural elements that can be found on the Somerset House. The building as described in the Ottawa Citizen:

***“Somerset House is one of those buildings that architects and planners call “fabric buildings.” It defines the street, marks the corner and tells you which is the main street and which is the cross street, by the size, placement and form of its windows and doors. This type, not style, of building is the ideal of much planning and zoning. It embodies the New Urbanism goals of street-making, mixed-use and ground-oriented retail with offices or apartments above.”<sup>24</sup>***

December 9, 2007: The Ottawa Citizen: The House They Called Home

24. “The House They Called Home: Somerset House in Centretown Is One of Ottawa’s Fine Historic Buildings.” Editorial. The Ottawa Citizen [Ottawa] 9 Dec. 2007: n. pag. CanWest MediaWorks Publications Inc. Web.



FIGURE 22

1. Somerset House is a three-story building, however, it has a larger ceiling height than most other three-story buildings on the street. This condition creates a larger scale and proportion of the Somerset House, and as a result produces a stronger Street presence.



FIGURE 23

2. Bay windows of the 1900s era are not commonly present in commercial buildings on Bank Street. There is one example of a bay window at the corner of Bank and Gladstone, but again, it is residential and does not have the same scale and presence of that of the Somerset House's original bay window.

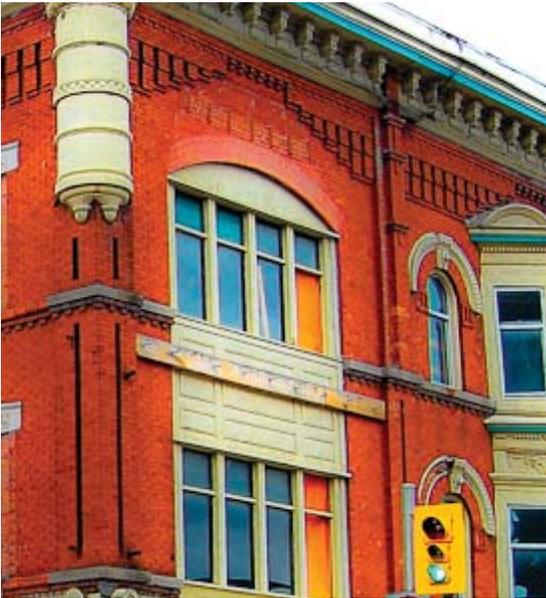


FIGURE 24



FIGURE 25



FIGURE 26



FIGURE 27



FIGURE 28

3. The brick detailing can be seen on both sides of the Somerset House. The brick detailing is a common element of the commercial Queen Anne style, and speaks to the craftsmanship of the time. This brick detailing also provides greater dimension and character to the building.

4. Continuing with craftsmanship, the molding details found on the Somerset House are impressive, to say the least. The Somerset Street facade has a mix of lentils with different designs on several windows. One can, in fact, find the heads of lions on the keystones of the arch windows on the Banks Street facade, and detailed imagery on the bay windows as well as other filigree on the moldings throughout. This level of ornamentation is not seen often in the Centretown district.



FIGURE 29

5. The crown molding detail adds distinction to the Somerset House. Again, this architectural detail is a feature of the commercial Queen Anne style, and can be seen in other buildings on Bank Street. The crown molding on top of the Somerset House, however, is larger in scale than most other buildings on Bank Street and gives distinction to the building.



FIGURE 30

6. Another special characteristic that also defines the corner, as well as the building, is the turret. It is missing its crowning hat, which was reinstalled in the 1940s, but was lost again years later. The Somerset House is again one of the only buildings on Bank Street that has a turret as a marker. There is again another example on the building at the corner of Bank and Flora, however it is a much more modest version compared to that of the Somerset House.

***“[T]he image of the ruin tells us what is true in every image: that it bears witness to the enigmatic relation between death and survival, loss and life, destruction and preservation, mourning and memory.”<sup>25</sup>***

*Cadava, Eduardo - Lapsus Imaginis: The Image in Ruins*

25. Cadava, Eduardo. “Lapsus Imaginis”: The Image in Ruins”. October 96 (2001): 35-60. Web.



FIGURE 31



FIGURE 32

7. One inconspicuous yet important character-defining element of the Somerset House is the columns that marks the corner of Bank and Somerset Streets. The column has been made to blend into the wood framing on the facade around it, but upon closer inspection, one can find markers of its date and authenticity. This column as described in the 1987 thesis titled, *The Exterior Use of Decorative Ironwork in Ottawa Architecture during the Latter Half of the Nineteenth Century*:

*“[T]he Baldwin Ironworks ... company also made architectural castings. Evidence of their architectural work still exists today in the form of a cast iron column built into a facade. The column, visible downtown, at the corner of Bank and Somerset streets, is very plain and non-descript, and is covered over by layers of paint. The only real proof of its provenance is the trademark at the bottom which reads Baldwin & Company.”<sup>26</sup>*

Unfortunately, most of the interior of the Somerset House has been lost. What does remain are a few structural steel columns that are original to the building and give character to the space.

All of these exterior elements add to the character-defining elements of the building, as well as to the fabric of Centretown’s historical architectural merit. As the Somerset House lies within the heritage conservation district, maintaining buildings of such historical and heritage value allows for a stronger character definition for the building as well as the surrounding area.

26. Volesky, Nancy P. *The Exterior Use of Decorative Ironwork in Ottawa Architecture during the Latter Half of the Nineteenth Century*. Thesis. Carleton University, Ottawa, 1987.

## IMPORTANCE OF SITE

There are many characters and frameworks that define value for heritage properties. The Somerset House clearly meets these markers. The city has also designated the area as a heritage conservation district, and the property as high level heritage value property.

Somerset House has a unique blend of features that make it a perfect vessel for a community-centric program type. Developing the site, while maintaining its important historical features, would not only respond to architectural and heritage value concerns, but also serve the community by resurrecting an important public institution. The Somerset House has a long and varied

history. For all the services it has provided, including a dry goods store, jazz bar, hotel, apartments, pub, the Somerset House has served the surrounding community as a non-glamorous social gathering space. Without the pretension that surrounds other neighbourhoods in the city's social spaces, Centretown caters to a population that is seldom otherwise considered.

But perhaps one of the more relevant considerations in the development of the Somerset House is the location, happily situated at the corner of the Bank and Somerset Streets intersection, both vital main street arteries for Centretown. The Bank Street artery graduates from the northern

section of corporations and government offices to retail and entertainment in the center. Somerset Street intersects Bank Street at this transition between work and play. Somerset Street, in its Centretown location, is a well-mixed use of residential and retail and restaurants. The East block of Somerset House, after Bank Street, has a distinct character with a noticeable change in pavers on the sidewalk, light posts, and vegetation. The area is known as Somerset Village, and has been appropriated as a space for the LGBTQ community. The intersection of these two main arteries, of Bank and Somerset Streets, blend a large variety of people. The neighbourhood itself has a unique blend of population subsets (low-income and social

housing residents mixed with professionals, yuppies, hipsters, homeless), all who can be seen intersecting at the corner of Bank and Somerset Streets.

The importance of the site location can also be seen in the events that occur on this corner. Within the year, the intersection will find itself barricaded to allow for festivals, parades, and organized runs. As mentioned, the Somerset Village is a designated sub-neighbourhood of Centretown, but along with that comes the Bank Street BIA also part of the Bank and Somerset corner as well as a large retail area, and a main circulation artery for several transportation types, as seen in chapter 3 in more detail.

The Somerset House is well located within established pre-existing communities, is a heritage property, with strong connections and investment from the community. Having these conditions so harmoniously intersect is rare on its own, with the addition of the possibility to develop this corner property is a valuable opportunity that should not be squandered.

After examining the history, memory, and value of the Somerset House, it is clear that it is both a strong heritage property and possesses strong intangible community association. Given the opportunity to develop a heritage property, choosing a community centric program will be in keeping with its per-established uses, and elevate both the program and heritage value of the building. The addition to the community of a heritage property would increase the intangible value of the area by creating and adding to the collective memory in a degree that would not be possible with a standard development. Community programs allow for a greater range of occupants to participate in the space. The collective memory of the space is in turn disseminated to a wider population,

thereby strengthening the collective aspect of memory. This program would also be keeping with the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage that "recognizes that communities, in particular indigenous communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals, play an important role in the production, safeguarding, maintenance and Recreation of the intangible cultural heritage, thus helping to enrich cultural diversity and human creativity."<sup>27</sup>

In 2005, Simon Thurley developed a cycle of heritage [see Fig.33]<sup>28</sup>. When applying Thurley's cycle to the Somerset House, it becomes clear that the building's understanding and value are clearly recognized by the Centretown

27. The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Rep. Paris: UNESCO, 2003.

28. Simon Thurley, Into the future. Our strategy for 2005-2010. In: Conservation Bulletin [English Heritage], 2005 (49)

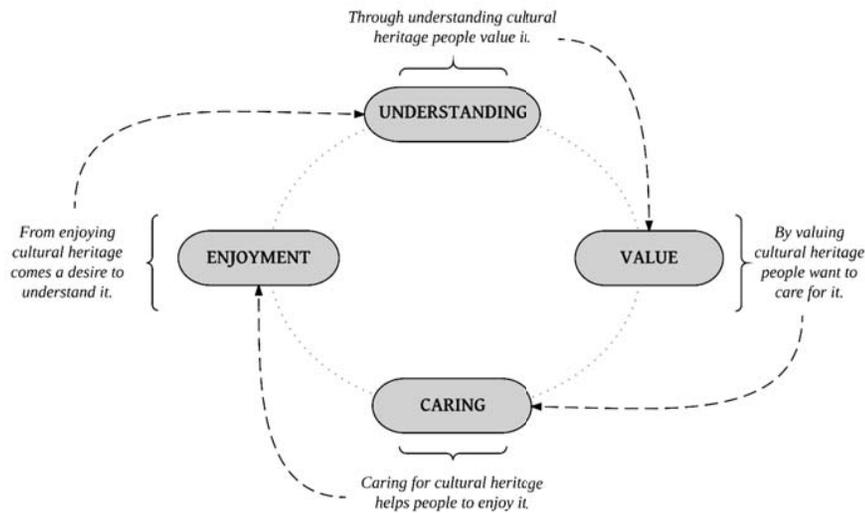


FIGURE 33

community. But due to its current state of ruin, there is essentially a break in Thurley's cycle, as the building has been absent of care for a significant time. Simply developing the building would be a productive first step towards its rehabilitation. Establishing the proposed community centric program in a strongly rooted heritage property like the Somerset House would likely multiply residents' perceived value of the building, strengthen their enjoyment of the property, and motivate them to care for its maintenance over the long term.

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the Somerset House in greater detail and within its immediate environment, including the surrounding block and adjacent streets. The purpose of this exploration is to gain a better understanding of the local context and architectural typologies, in order to create a sensitive approach to the development of the property. The chapter also focuses on the corner condition of the Somerset House, an important architectural feature which not only represents the intersection of two streets, but more importantly the intersection of the city itself and the people that define it.

Kevin Lynch in 'The Image of the City' describes five elements of a city. 1. Paths:

"the channels along which the observer customarily, occasionally, or potentially move" in this chapter the main path is Bank Street 2. Edges "the boundaries between two phases...shores, railroad cuts, edges of development" this elements is not explored singularity but rather defines the boundaries of zones. 3. Districts "sections of the city, conceived of as having two-dimensional extent" within in chapter 2 this is considered as the Bank Street precedence study, but is more appropriately examined in Chapter three. 4. Nodes "points, the strategic spots in the city into which an observer can't enter" among of things a node can be considered a street corner and is the element that will be inspected within the chapter. 5. Landmarks

"are another type of point-reference...simply defined physical object: building, sing, store, or mountain" which in the case of this thesis is the Somerset House.<sup>29</sup>

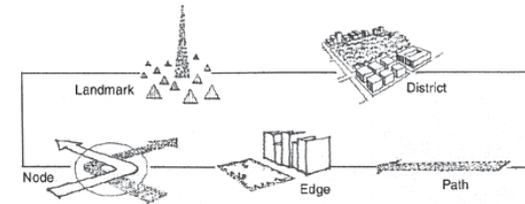
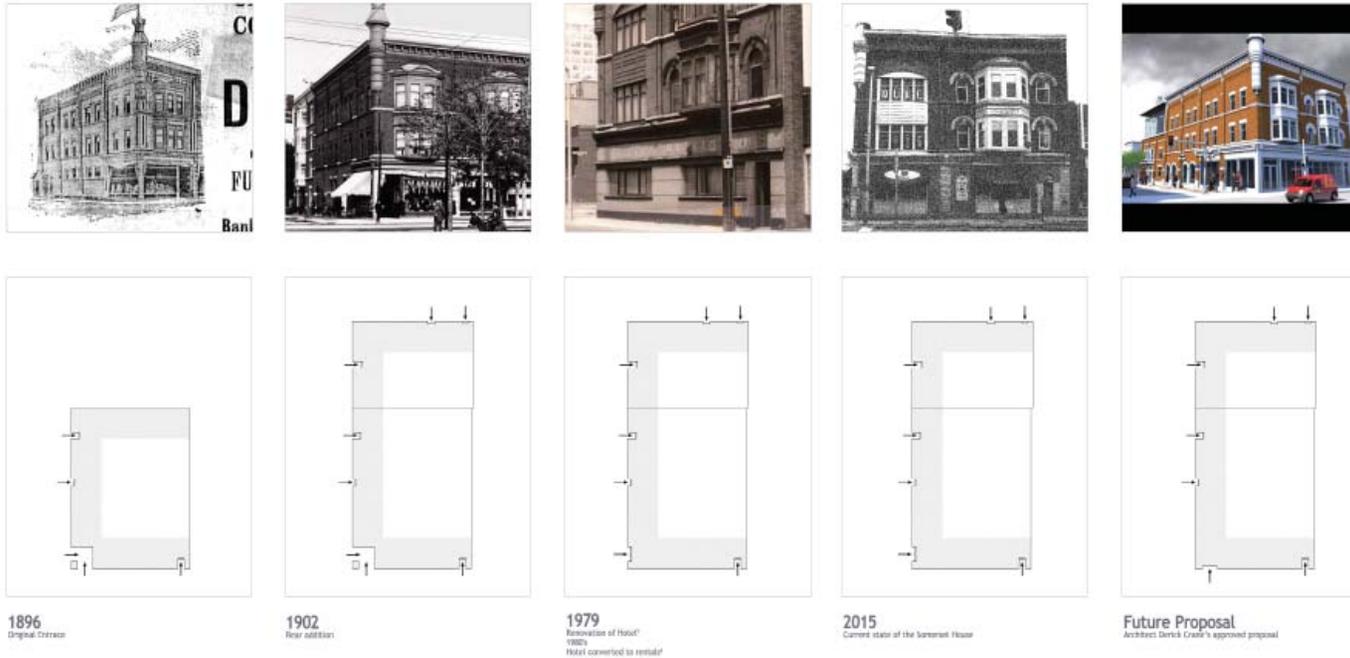


FIGURE 34

Lynch, Kevin. *The Image of the City*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1960. 47-48.  
<http://www.upp.cn/english/view/Dlanning/article/302737.html>

29. Lynch, Kevin. *The Image of the City*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1960. 47-48.

## EVOLUTION OF THE CORNER



As shown in the diagram above, the entrance condition of the Somerset House, especially around the corner, has evolved over the years. As is the case with many heritage conservation projects, one of the main questions is which time in history one should revert to when dealing with a historical renovation? For most of its recent history (between the 1930s and the 1990s), the building has not had an entrance on Bank Street that leads to the ground floor program. There is a small single door entrance at the edge of the Bank Street facade, however, it has traditionally led straight up a staircase to the second story of the building. There is potential for an attractive condition at this site, especially if the program is more open to the community. If the use is more community oriented and the corner condition allows for ease of entry and a welcoming threshold, the building could be that much more central to the residents of the community.

## STREETSCAPES

The block upon which the Somerset House resides has four distinct Streetscapes. The block can be seen as a micro representation of the city itself.



BANK STREET

FIGURE 35

## BANK STREET: Retail

Predominantly three-storey medium scale commercial buildings from the early 1900's, (except a 1960's two-story infill). The ground floor is retail with business offices on the upper floors. The Bank Street portion of the block works well, as it is well lit, has generous sidewalk space, a reasonable amount of transparency between interior and exterior on the ground level, and a program that works well with the community.



SOMERSET STREET

FIGURE 36

#### SOMERSET STREET: Heritage

Character heritage homes dominate the Somerset streetscape. All of the heritage homes have been converted into businesses that help activate the street. This section of Somerset Street between Bank and O'Connor is also significant from an architectural perspective. This block has been intentionally treated with unique features such as character light posts, brick inlaid sidewalks, and strategic tree planting, giving the area distinction. The small scale buildings, road conditions, and visibility of Somerset Street make for a walkable and approachable artery. There is however still room for improvement, as the parking both in the Somerset House block and the adjacent block contribute to some of the automotive traffic and congestion of the street. The O'Connor Street corner is anchored with the Ukrainian embassy while the Bank Street end has the ruin of the Somerset House.



O'CONNOR STREET

FIGURE 37

## O'CONNOR STREET

The O'Connor streetscape is comprised of two dominant masses, a brick four-story apartment building, and the stucco and glazing three-story Ukrainian embassy. The solidity of these two buildings signifies private ownership, without the intention of welcoming others. The lack of step back is so abrupt that it makes engagement with the buildings uncomfortable for the pedestrians.



MACLAREN STREET

FIGURE 38

## MACLAREN

Maclaren Street is primarily comprised of residential apartment units, with a mix of low-rise brick apartments and high rise concrete towers. The Maclaren portion of the block was once like Somerset Street, made up of detached small scale homes, however after the city's push for more densification in the 1960's, they were replaced with two high-rise apartment buildings. This change removed program from the ground level resulting in a deactivated street.

## BANK AND SOMERSET CORNERS

The intersection of Bank and Somerset Streets has four distinctive building corners, each with unique characteristics. The South Bank and West Somerset corner has the historic Bank of Montreal building. All of the entrances to the historic building have been closed off, and the windows boarded. The original entrance was on the chamfered corner of the block, however after the addition of the grocery store, the entrance moved to either side of the building. The corner condition, which includes a few steps up to the original entry, became a prime location for not only loitering, but a space of social gathering for those without a space of their own.

The North Bank and West Somerset corner is the location of a coffee shop (the Second Cup). The entrance is a square inset off of both streets. As it is a busy intersection, the inset corner allows for access into the building without crowding the pedestrians waiting at the crosswalk on either direction. It is a smaller scale building relative to other structures around Bank Street.

The North Bank and East Somerset corner holds a four-story mixed-use building. The ground floor is commercial while the top three floors serve as office space. This corner has a restaurant on the ground floor (Gabriel

pizza) with a seasonal side patio on the Somerset Street side. Like the perpendicular corner of the Bank of Montreal/grocery store, there is no entrance on the physical corner but rather on either side of the building.

Finally, the South Bank and East Somerset corner is the location of the Somerset House. In its current condition, there is no entrance as the building is unoccupied and boarded up. The following page depicts the evolution of the entrances as well as the new proposal.



FIGURE 39  
SOUTH BANK & WEST SOMERSET



FIGURE 40  
NORTH BANK & WEST SOMERSET



FIGURE 41  
NORTH BANK & EAST SOMERSET



FIGURE 42  
SOUTH BANK & EAST SOMERSET



FRANK ST CORNER



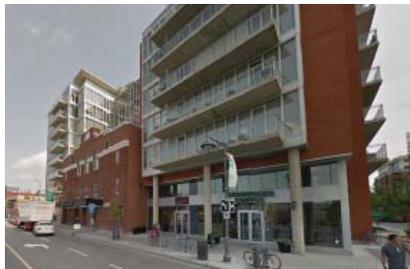
BETWEEN GLADSTONE & FLORENCE



BETWEEN SOMERSET & MACLAREN



LEWIS ST CORNER



MCLEOD CORNER



BETWEEN MCLEOD & ARGYLE

FIGURES 43-48 (starting at top left)

## BANK STREET PRECEDENCE

The examination of the block is important as it provide a clearer picture of the mix of architecture and people that would immediately correlate to the new proposal at the Somerset House. However, the examination must extend to at least the main artery linked to the building, as travel does not occur within concentric blocks, but rather along arteries, in this case, Bank Street. The street transitions from a business district in the north to an active retail space in the center, and as one travels south towards the highway the area becomes less dense and deactivated. This change in activations occurs for a variety of reasons, partially because of the quality of retail and the dead zone under the highway, but also likely due to a progressive increase in vacancies, deteriorating lots, and a break in the urban fabric. The core of Centretown's Bank Street does however have an array of quality early buildings from the 1900's as well as contemporary buildings, a mixture which brings character and diversity to the street.

BANK STREET FIGURE GROUND

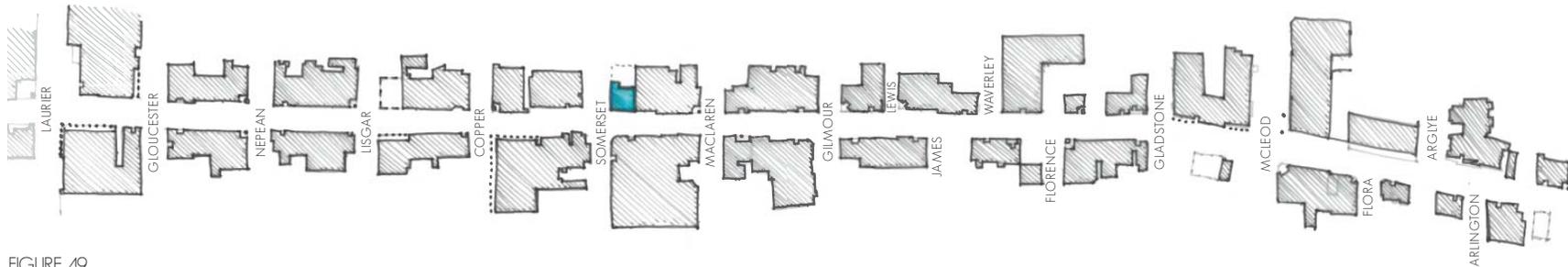


FIGURE 49  
BANK STREET

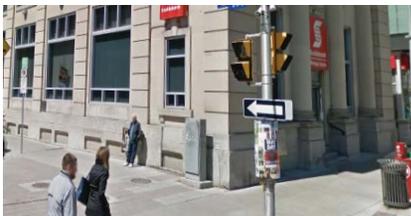


FIGURE 50  
BANK & GLOUCESTER



FIGURE 51  
BANK & COPPER



FIGURE 52  
BANK & LISGAR



FIGURE 53  
BANK & COPPER

This figure-ground drawing is of a substantial portion of Bank Street. The main focus of this exercise was to examine the prevailing corner typologies present within the area. Not all entrances are shown in this diagram however the corner entrances are marked. This exercise is the basis for determining the dominant corner typology which is examined below.

## CORNER TYPOLOGY

## SOLID CORNER

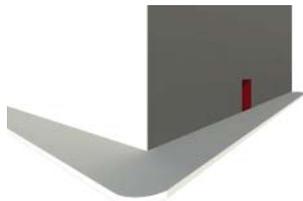


FIGURE 54

*Example: Bank & Gloucester*

The solid corner building does not have an entrance near the corner condition. The entrance is typically off of the main street (Bank Street in this instance), but the corner itself is solid on both streets. In his book *Form, Space, and Order*, Francis D. Ching states that this condition emphasizes the volume and the form of the building.<sup>30</sup> With two solid facades, the corner is not active as people distribute along the rest of the street.

## ARCADE

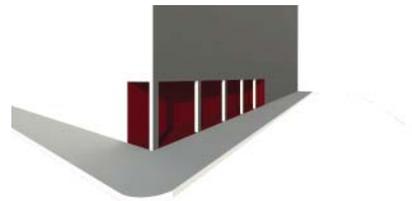


FIGURE 55

*Example: Bank & Copper*

Along Bank Street, one can find many examples of the arcade corner condition. This condition does break the solidity of the form, allowing for the sidewalk to bleed into the building. However, since there is still a solid wall behind the Arcade Plaza, the interior of the building does not necessarily expand into the exterior. The entrance threshold remains distinct. This secondary sidewalk of the arcade does allow for fluidity of traffic between the building and sidewalk.

## CORNER COLUMN



FIGURE 56

*Example: Bank & Lisgar*

In this condition, the corner is delineated with a column, however the entrances are inside on both sides of the street. According to Ching, this condition deteriorates the volume of the form.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, it allows for the interior space to leak outward. This break of volume at the corner softens the entrance approach while also giving a sense of approach and arrival before crossing the threshold. This condition seems to work best when the corner is at an intersection of two main streets.

## SET IN COLUMN

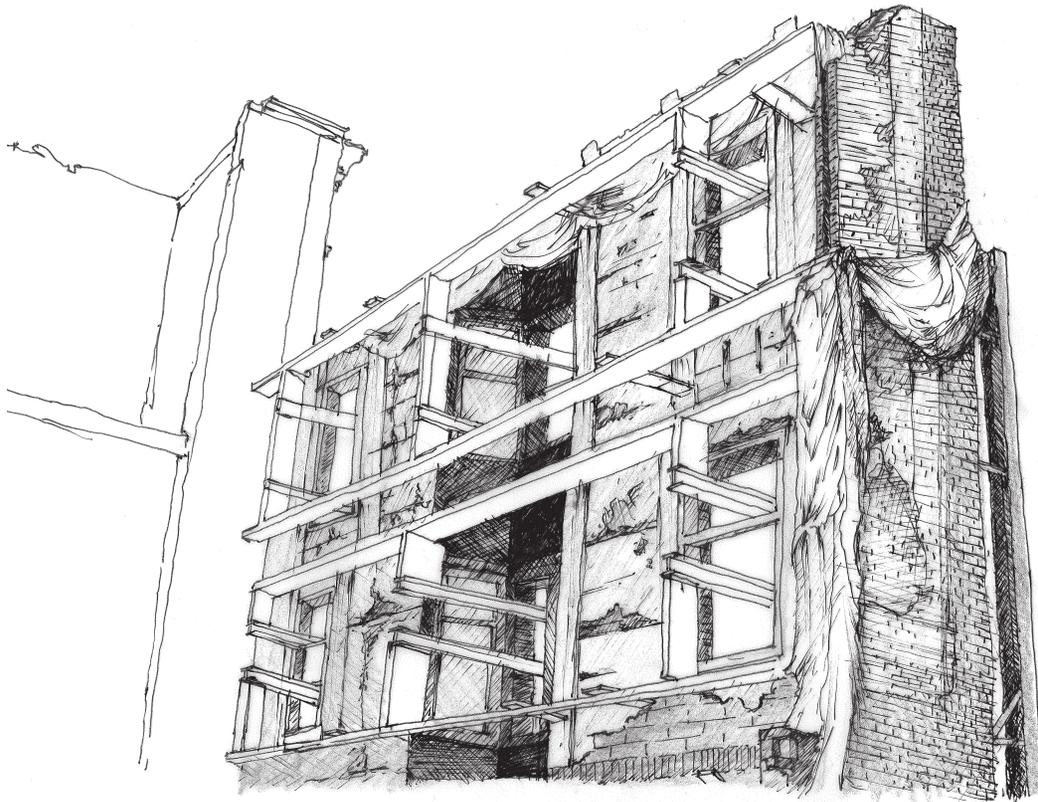


FIGURE 57

*Example: Bank & Copper*

In this condition, the corner is still marked with a column, however there is a solid wall typically attached to the secondary street facade, pushing the entrance directly beside the column. According to Ching, the separate and distinct defining feature of the column reinforces the corner condition, yet weakens the definition of the volume.<sup>32</sup> Along Bank Street, the typical material of the solid wall attached to the corner is glass. With a glazed wall next to the column, this condition is similar to the corner column condition in its visibility within the space upon approach. Even though there is a transparency within the facade itself, it still reinforces volume through the barrier of entry.

30, 31 & 32: Ching, Francis. *Architecture: Form, Space, and Order*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2007. Print.



Heritage buildings play a vital role in a community's architectural, cultural and aesthetic history. As development pressures increase in our cities, the adaptation of heritage buildings presents a significant challenge in finding innovative solutions and creative designs to such structures while retaining their heritage value and providing for the community. By examining the Somerset House as a standalone structure and focusing on its unique details and features, we are able to gain an appreciation of its prominence. Extending the examination to the building's adjacent streets and surrounding neighbourhoods allows for a better understanding of local typologies. Incorporating the specific and broader contextual investigation in the design proposal will respond to heritage sensitivities of both the building and the district.

In many ways, Centretown is one of those authentic character neighbourhoods, perhaps not as glamorous as its adjacent communities, such as the Glebe or the downtown market area, but rather an area with a true inclusive down-to-earth feel. Centretown houses a broad range of residents from different socioeconomic backgrounds, as can be seen in the census diagram. There is also a variety of housing types from affordable units to condos, small row housing, and large detached homes. The variety of housing types also produces a range of architectural styles, giving an authentic character to the streets in a non-homogeneous manner. Centretown also includes distinct zones of identity, as seen on

page 25 in the districts map. However, these zones naturally bleed into one another and are not exclusive to any one building program type throughout.

Centretown also does a good job of making its main arteries walkable and connected. Like the districts, each main artery has a distinctive character. Somerset Street has many smaller scale restaurants and stores mixed with residential buildings. Bank Street is comprised primarily retail mixed with a decent amount of locally-owned well-acclaimed restaurants. Elgin Street (aka The Sens Mile) is recognized for its pubs and as a popular nightly destination for those not interested in the pretension present in the bars and clubs

of the downtown market area.

Centretown is seldom considered a business hub, yet as interpreted from the 2011 census,<sup>33</sup> the largest group of residents walk to work, suggesting that they do not have to have travel a far distance and are likely employed within the area. The mix of retail and office spaces reflect a wide range of employment opportunities.

Considering the importance of Centretown, there are spaces within this area that can and should be improved, some of which will be addressed in the future design proposal and others that have been highlighted in the urban consideration section. If nothing else,

Centretown should be considered as one of those places in the downtown core that does not discriminate. Sometimes looked down on, it provides lifestyles and spaces for everyone, a characteristic well worth preserving.

Returning to the primary thesis question: How can the development of a historic building increase its heritage value, while simultaneously contributing to the enhancement of the community to which it belongs? Determining how best to contribute to the development of the community through the Somerset House requires an in-depth examination of what the community has and verses what it needs.

33. Statistics Canada. 2012. Ottawa, Ontario (Code 3506008) and Ottawa, Ontario (Code 3506) (table). Census Profile. 2011 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE. Ottawa. Released October 24, 2012. <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed September 25, 2015).

CENSUS (*refer to infographic on following page*)

Understanding the diverse communities of Centretown requires several modes of examination.

On a macro level, the 2011 Census (most current census available) gives the general overview of the population. According to the census, the average Centretown resident is single, white, English-speaking, between the ages of 20 to 39, resides on their own in a 1962 to 1980s 5+ story apartment building, and walks to work. While the census provides a breadth of informative data, it lays out a sterile snapshot of the area at a specific point in time without accounting for the nuances of the population. It is important to interpret this information within the context of

wider demographic and socio-economic trends, to ensure a meaningful civic development that responds to current and future needs. For example, solely designing for a generalized demographic (i.e., white, single, male) would fail to account for the existing diversity within the community and act as a disincentive to attracting greater diversity moving forward. On the other hand, completely ignoring this census data would alienate a large percentage of the present day population. The ideal objective lies in striking an appropriate balance between fulfilling the existing majorities' needs and accounting for the concerns of less well represented groups, while also implementing planning decisions which will accommodate an evolving set of community needs over the medium and long term.

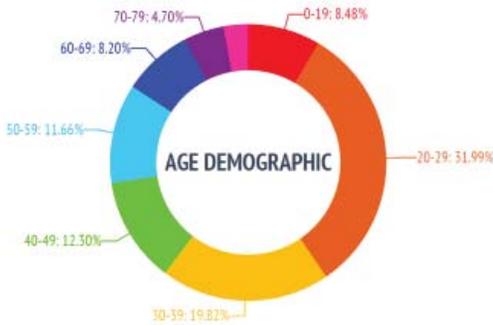
N-Gloucester  
E-Cantler  
S-HWY 417  
W-Kent

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?lang=eng&geo1=CTB&geo2=CTB&geo3=CTB&geo4=CTB&geo5=CTB&geo6=CTB&geo7=CTB&geo8=CTB&geo9=CTB&geo10=CTB&geo11=CTB&geo12=CTB&geo13=CTB&geo14=CTB&geo15=CTB&geo16=CTB&geo17=CTB&geo18=CTB&geo19=CTB&geo20=CTB&geo21=CTB&geo22=CTB&geo23=CTB&geo24=CTB&geo25=CTB&geo26=CTB&geo27=CTB&geo28=CTB&geo29=CTB&geo30=CTB&geo31=CTB&geo32=CTB&geo33=CTB&geo34=CTB&geo35=CTB&geo36=CTB&geo37=CTB&geo38=CTB&geo39=CTB&geo40=CTB&geo41=CTB&geo42=CTB&geo43=CTB&geo44=CTB&geo45=CTB&geo46=CTB&geo47=CTB&geo48=CTB&geo49=CTB&geo50=CTB&geo51=CTB&geo52=CTB&geo53=CTB&geo54=CTB&geo55=CTB&geo56=CTB&geo57=CTB&geo58=CTB&geo59=CTB&geo60=CTB&geo61=CTB&geo62=CTB&geo63=CTB&geo64=CTB&geo65=CTB&geo66=CTB&geo67=CTB&geo68=CTB&geo69=CTB&geo70=CTB&geo71=CTB&geo72=CTB&geo73=CTB&geo74=CTB&geo75=CTB&geo76=CTB&geo77=CTB&geo78=CTB&geo79=CTB&geo80=CTB&geo81=CTB&geo82=CTB&geo83=CTB&geo84=CTB&geo85=CTB&geo86=CTB&geo87=CTB&geo88=CTB&geo89=CTB&geo90=CTB&geo91=CTB&geo92=CTB&geo93=CTB&geo94=CTB&geo95=CTB&geo96=CTB&geo97=CTB&geo98=CTB&geo99=CTB&geo100=CTB&lang=eng>

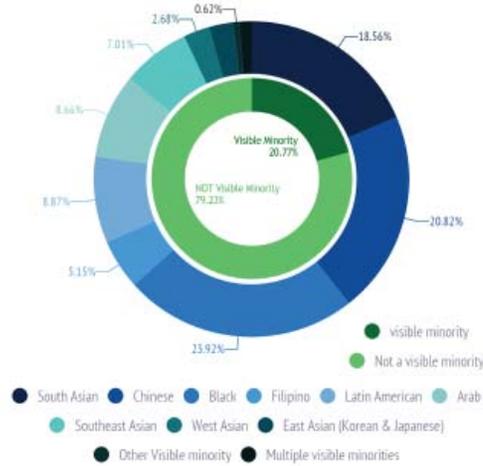
# 2011 CENSUS INFORMATION

## Neighborhood Events:

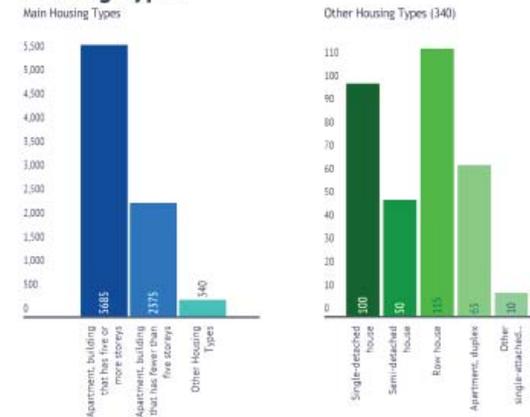
- Ottawa Capital Pride
- Glo Fair
- Bank Street B.L.A.
- Village Movie Night
- Movies in the Park (Dundonald)
- EPIC Walk
- Zombie Walk
- Heart Healthy Fun Run



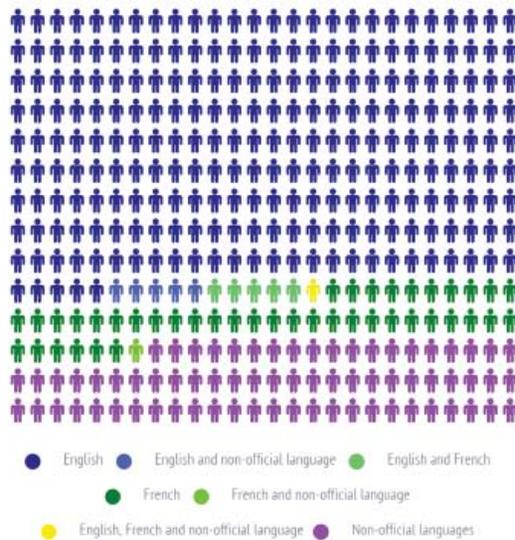
## Racial Demographic



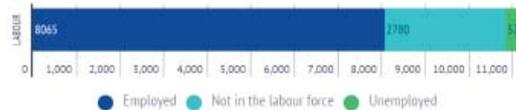
## Housing Types



## Languages Spoken



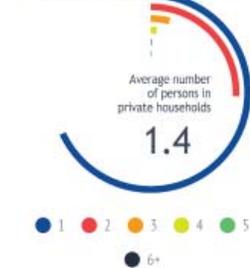
## Labour Force



## Mode of Transportation



## Number of persons in households



## Age of House

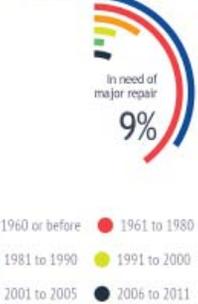


FIGURE 58

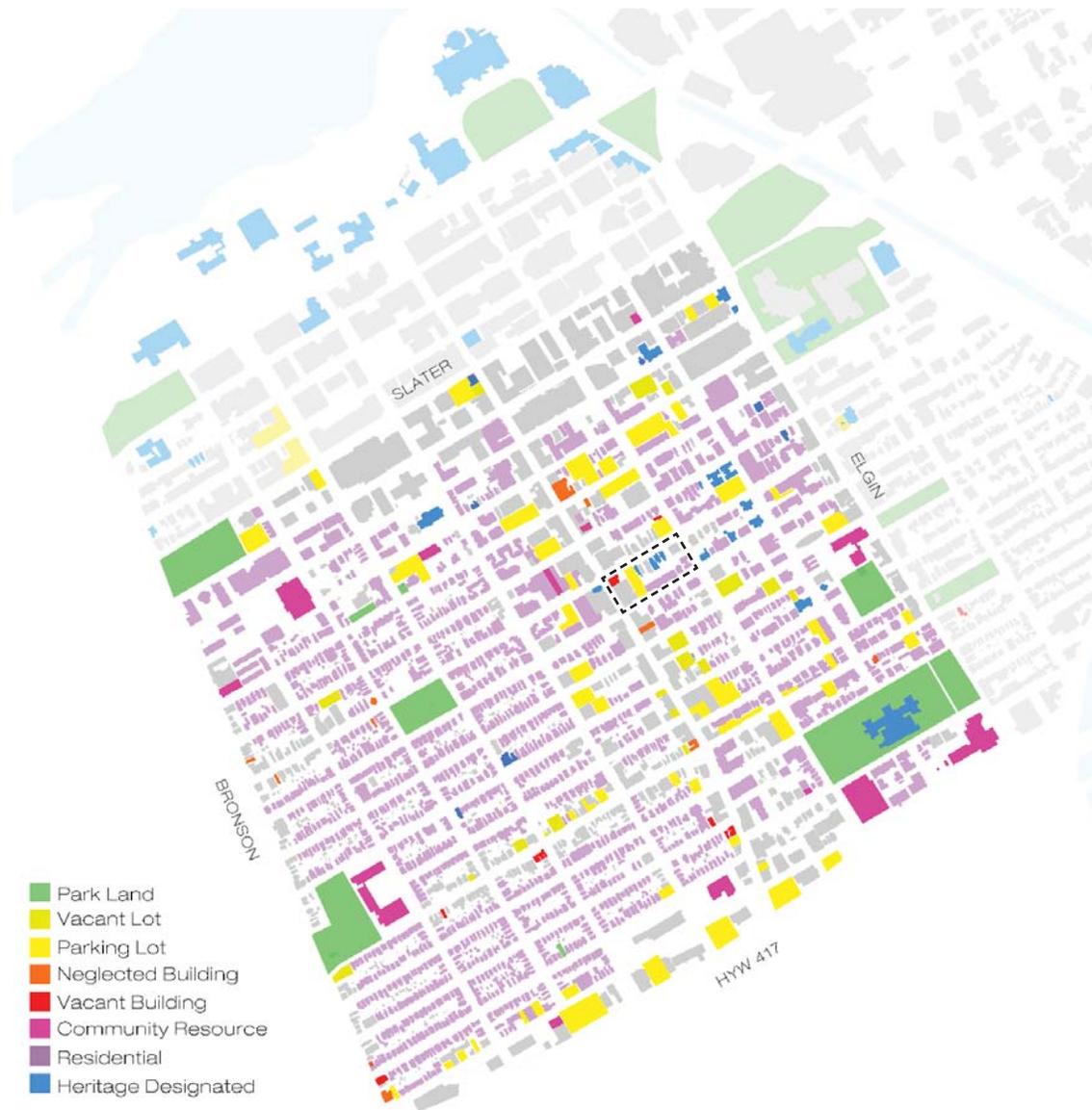


FIGURE 59

The following exercise entailed the analysis of Centretown through a series of maps, extracting key elements to understand them in greater detail. The first map [see Fig. 59] is a general overview showing the diversity and distribution of programs and typology.

## DISTRICTS MAP

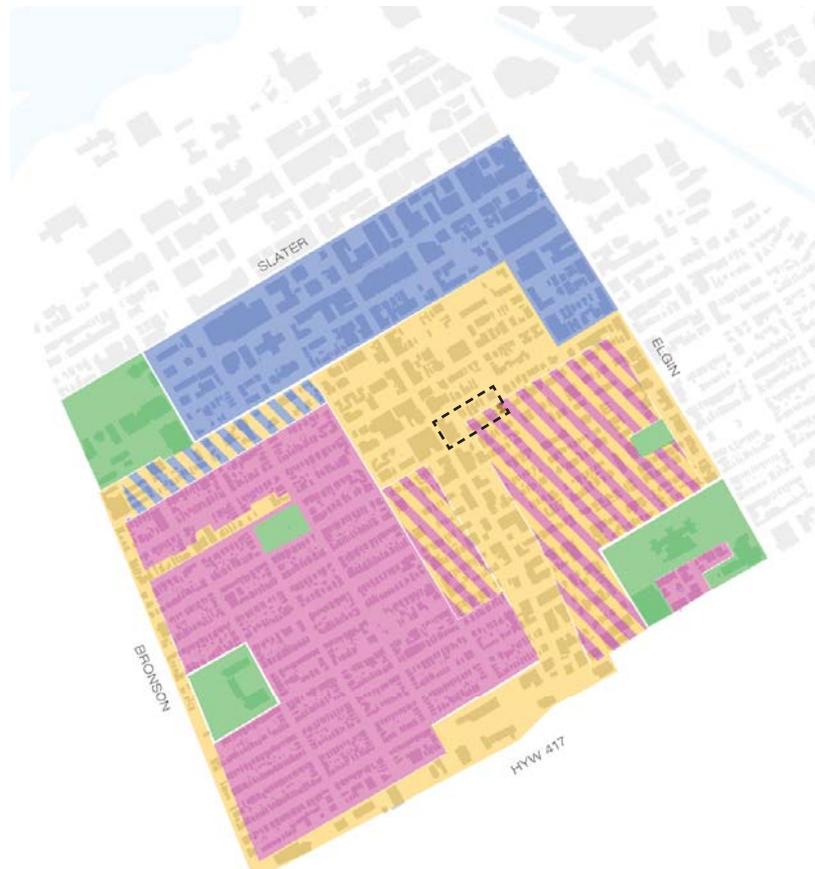


FIGURE 60

- Community Space
- Commercial Zone
- Business District
- Residential Area

Through an analysis of community maps, the cluster of programs and building types show zones within the area. There are four main districts in Ottawa's Centretown neighbourhood, each of which gives identity to their zones while providing the neighbourhood as a whole with well distributed diversity. The business zone is comprised of larger firms and offices, such as federal government departments and large corporate offices, but not necessarily service-based businesses, such as those with storefronts. The prime building typology in this area is a high-rise tower built after 1960.

The commercial zone is primarily retail and service spaces, such as shops, restaurants convenience stores and service providers. The offices that are located in the area tend to be smaller companies in the upper levels of mixed-use buildings. The building typology is mid-rise buildings from a mix of eras.

These two zones are most closely linked and bleed into one another.

The residential zone is self-explanatory, but unlike suburban areas, is sprinkled with other building uses throughout. The building typology is a mix of high and low rise apartments, and two to three storey single family homes.

The community zone is in reference to space that is open to, or designed for the public. The uses of this zone ranges from parks, two schools, and museums. A detailed examination is provided on page 37 on the services maps.

SERVICES MAPS

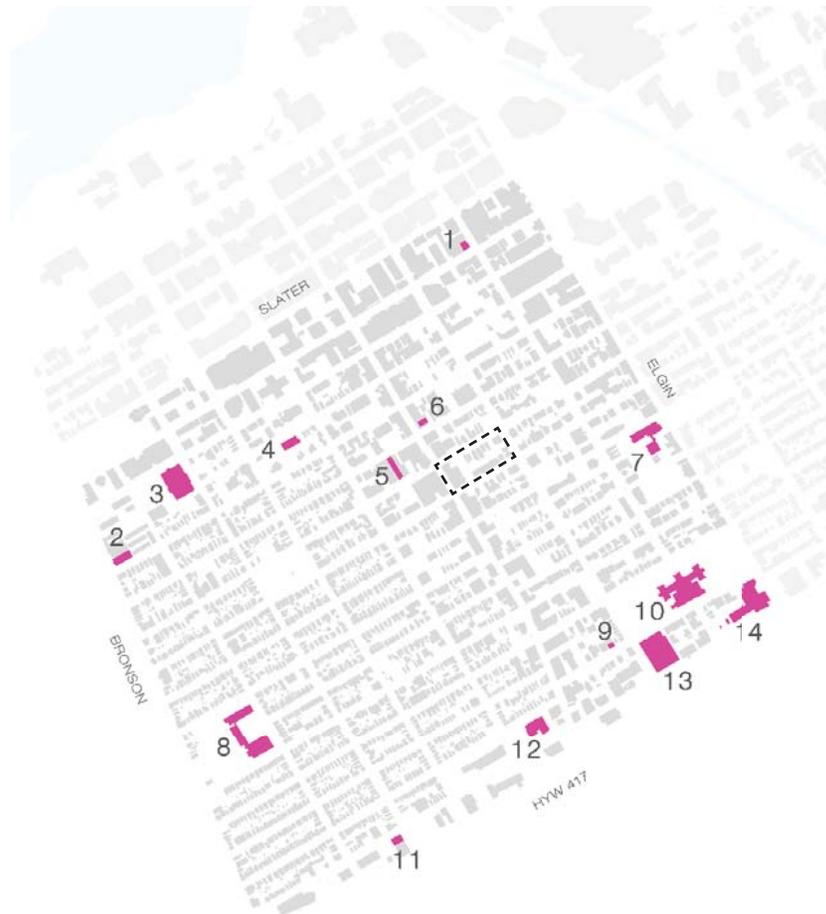


FIGURE 61

There are some important public services available in the Centretown area, such as community health clinics, a police station, and schools. Most of the services are placed on the periphery of the area. When considering the population size of Centretown, it becomes apparent that the available civic services do not seem to correlate proportionately, thereby creating a shortfall for residents. The majority of services shown on the map are public and private schools.

- 1 Ottawa Public Library Main Branch
- 2 The Bronson Centre
- 3 Centennial Public School
- 4 St. Patrick's Adult School
- 5 Centretown Community Health Centre
- 6 Bruce House
- 7 Elgin Street Public School & Jack Purcell Community Centre
- 8 McNabb Community Centre
- 9 Catholic Centre for Immigrants
- 10 Museum of Nature
- 11 Canadian Red Cross
- 12 Glashan Public School
- 13 Taggart Family YMCA-YWCA
- 14 Ottawa Police Station

HERITAGE MAP

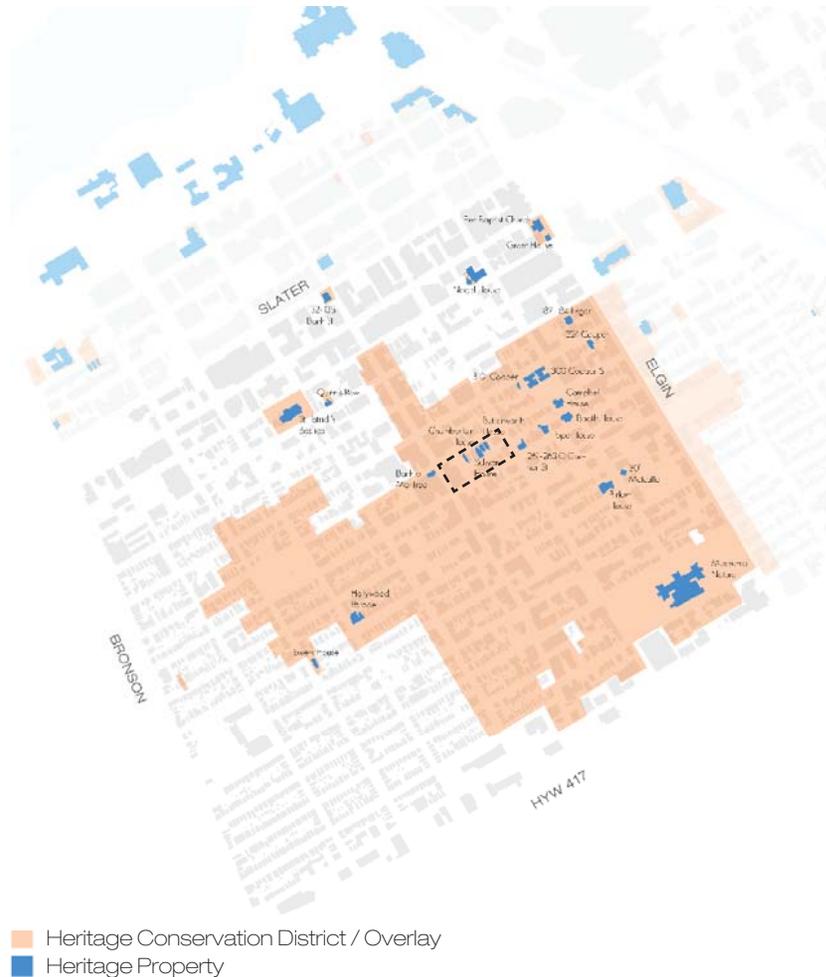


FIGURE 62

34. Kalman, Harold. *The Evaluation of Historic Buildings*. Ottawa: Environment Canada Parks Canada, 1980 29.

The heritage maps indicate the difference between heritage designated properties in Centretown and the heritage conservation district. The heritage overlay was an initiative set forth by the city in 1997 to establish a wide spread heritage district, acknowledging the character and value of the area and establishing a framework to effectively govern development moving forward. Each building in the heritage conservation district is classified via the City’s “Guide to Evaluating Heritage Buildings and Areas.” There are four classifications group- (1) Highly Significant Heritage Resource; (2) Building of Heritage Significance; (3) Significance as part of wider grouping or streetscape; and, (4) little or no heritage significance.<sup>34</sup> The Somerset House is classified in group 1.

EXAMPLES OF WELL PRESERVED CENTRETOWN HERITAGE PROPERTIES:



FIGURE 63



FIGURE 64



FIGURE 65



FIGURE 66

TRANSIT MAP



FIGURE 67

Centretown has a good mix of main arteries and secondary streets. Public transit travels mainly along the main arteries of the Slater Street, Bronson Avenue, Somerset Street, Gladstone Street, Bank Street, and Elgin Street bracket. The expansion of the public transit system is set to occur in 2018 with the addition of a light rail system, with the expectation of creating a better-connected city. Four new light rail stations are set to be located on the north boundary of Centretown, close enough for area residents to consider this mode of transportation as a viable commuting option. In addition, the introduction of the light rail system will likely reduce the need to maintain the current level of parking in the area. Another gradual shift occurring within the city is the development of greater accommodation for cyclists. Currently, Laurier Street is the only street in the area with a designated bike lane, however by 2018, there is a proposal to create a new bike pass along O'Connor Street. Although this represents a positive step in facilitating greater access for bikers in the downtown core, a larger scale reorganization of several streets would provide a better connected network with the necessary security to promote cycling as a legitimate mass mode of transportation.



FIGURE 68: Future Bike Path Proposal on Somerset Street

## GREEN SPACE

Centretown has some well used green spaces, but others lack imagination. Green spaces are essential for any community. According to Kardan et al., in *Neighbourhood green space and health in a large urban center*

***“[H]aving 10 more trees in a city block, on average, improves health perception in ways comparable to an increase in annual personal income of \$10,000 and moving to a neighbourhood with \$10,000 higher median income or being 7 years younger. We also find that having 11 more trees in a city block, on average, decreases cardio-metabolic conditions in ways comparable to an increase in annual personal income of \$20,000 and moving to a neighbourhood with \$20,000 higher median income or***

***being 1.4 years younger.”<sup>35</sup>***

Green spaces help to counter the adverse effects of population, improve air quality, and also provide beauty and shade for residents. Beyond these obvious benefits, parks and green spaces in an urban setting also act as the point of relief from the volumetric mass of the build forms, and serve as an alternative path of travel and informal social gathering space. Of the parks currently in Centretown, some are very well used, including McNabb Park which recently underwent a renovation to include well-defined paths, lighting, entrance features, and most significantly, a large skate park. The changes have made the park highly active and a great addition to the city. Conversely, the Lisgar Park, while

situated in an excellent location, is rarely used by local residents due to its lack of program. It is important to note that the program does not need to be limited to significant architectural moves, like the McNabb skate park, but can be as simple as seating, lighting, and strategic planning. Green spaces like these are vital to a well-designed city as they allow connectivity with the community and different types of street activation. Centretown could benefit from a strategic evaluation of ways to improve the use of its existing green spaces and potential merits in creating additional green spaces on a variety of scales.

35. Kardan, Omid, Peter Gozdyra, Bratislav Mistic, Faisal Moola, lyle J. Palmer, Tomás Paus, and Marc G. Berman. "Neighborhood Greenspace and Health in a Large Urban Center." Nature.com. Nature Publishing Group, 9 July 2015. Web. 22 Dec. 2015.

GREEN SPACE MAP



FIGURE 69



CENTRETOWN PARK IMAGES

FIGURES 70 - 77 [starting at top left]

PARK#	PARK NAME	ACTIVITY LEVEL*
1	Nanny Goat Community Garden & Grounds	2
2	Lisgar Parkette	1
3	Centretown Community Garden	2
4	Dundonald Park	4
5	McNabb Park	4
6	Jack Purcell Park	4
7	Arlington Park	2
8	Museum of Nature Grounds	1

\* ACTIVITY LEVEL: SCALE 1-4 (1-Not Active to 4-Highly Active)

PARKING MAP

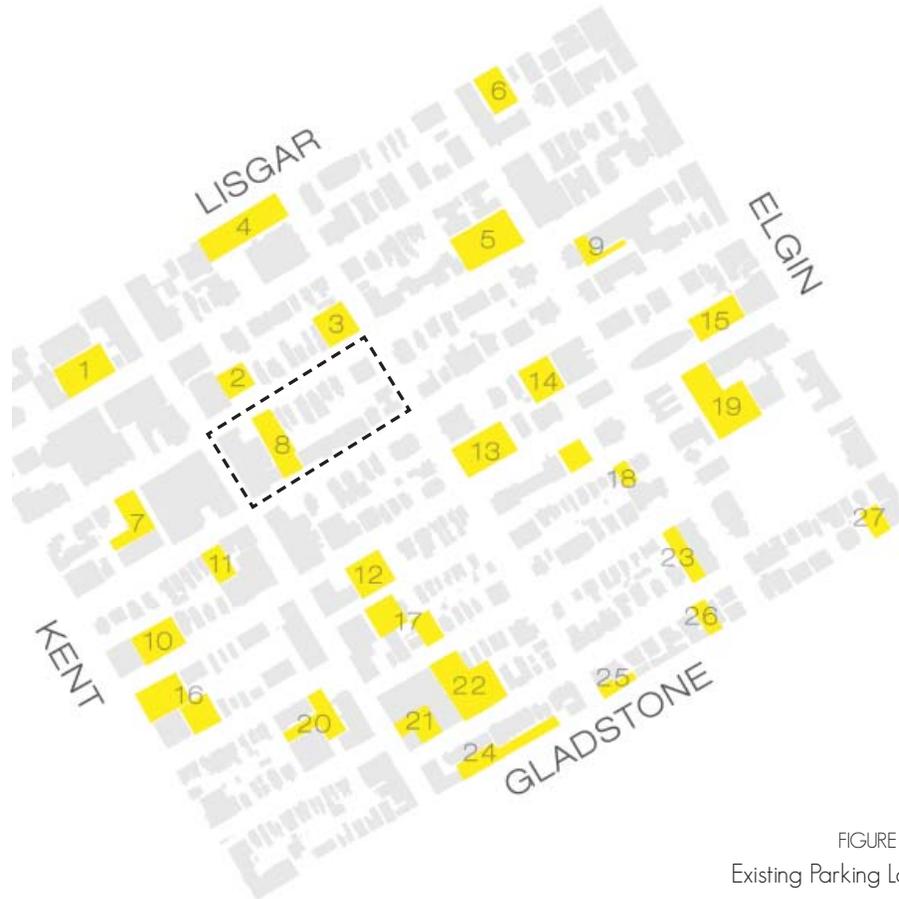


FIGURE 78  
Existing Parking Lots

PARKING MATRIX

LOT #	ADDRESS	# OF SPACES	NOTES
1	Lisgar & Kent	53	
2	Lisgar & O'Connor	65	
3	Lisgar & Elgin	39	
4	Somerset & O'Connor	59	
5	Somerset & Metcalf	65	
6	Somerset between Bank & Kent	10	10 flat lot + underground
7	Somerset & Bank	93	73 flat + 23 apartment
8	Somerset & Metcalf	47	
9	Kent & Gilmore	53	
10	Gilmore & O'Connor	100	
11	Maclaren & Metcalf	76	
12	Metcalf & Gilmore	98	30 behind Public Alliance Building
13	Kent & Gilmore	123	
14	Bank & Gilmore	40	
15	Bank between Waverly & Lewis	50	
16	Gilmore & Metcalf	40	
17	Lewis & Metcalf	18	Only for 296 Metcalf
18	Metcalf & Gilmore	30	Only for Elementary School
19	Bank & Frank	36	
20	Waverley between Bank & O'Connor	60	
21	Waverly & Metcalf	50	10 flat + 40 apartment 2 story
22	Bank & Gladstone	36	25 enter @ Gladstone 11 enter @ Bank
23	O'Connor & Gladstone	16	
24	Frank & Metcalf	26	23 flat lot + covered garage
25	Gladstone & Elgin	10	
TOTAL # OF SPACES		1293	

## PARKING / PARK MAP

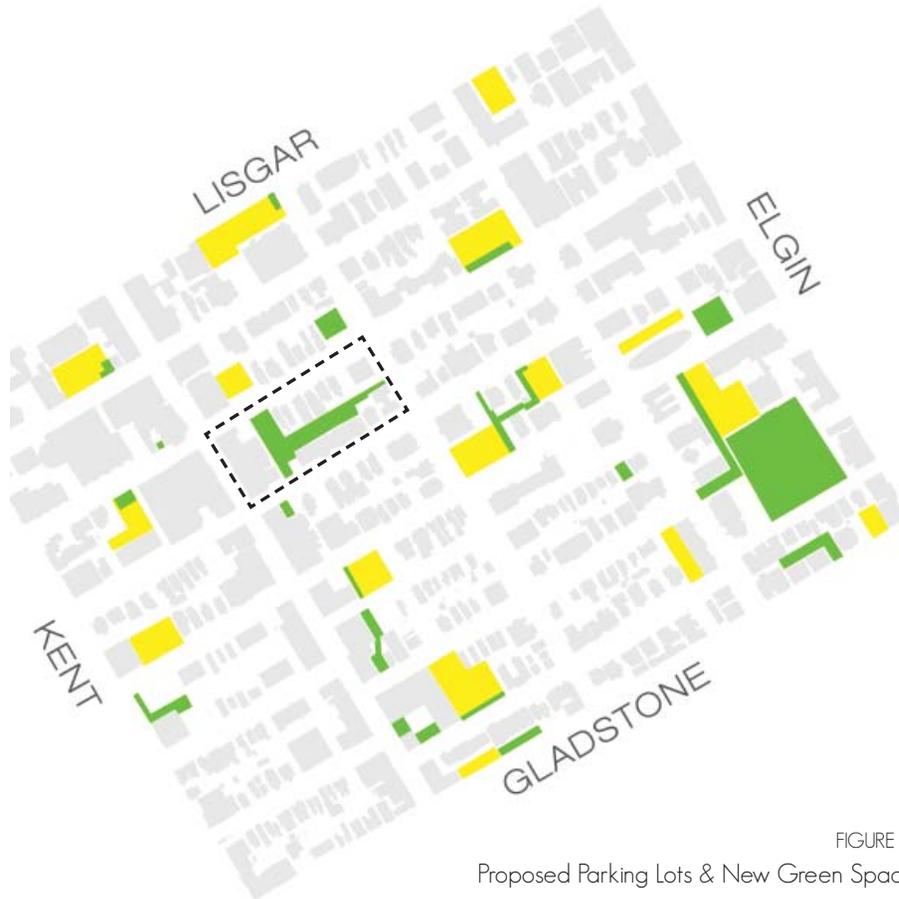


FIGURE 79  
Proposed Parking Lots & New Green Spaces

The priority given to parking in the area is overwhelming, as can be seen when examining the main Centretown map on page 35. There are a few key factors that make this disproportional scale of parking troublesome. Parking lots break the urban fabric and are spaces of social inactivity, even if active as a parking lot. They are highly susceptible to large scale development that may not align with the existing architectural fabric of the surrounding neighbourhood. Parking lots also have large footprints of non-porous ground material, making for a significant amount of runoff travelling directly into the city services. Finally, maintaining a significant amount of parking lots acts as a signal to the community that personal automotive transportation is prioritized above other more environmentally-friendly forms of transport.

This project proposes a relocation of some of the existing plant parking lots and a conversion of several flat lot parking lots into multi-story structures. Three key strategies will be actioned to implement this proposal:

1. Converting flat lot parking lots into multistory structures in key locations.
2. Relocating parking off of Bank Street onto O'Connor and Metcalf Streets in order to solidify the urban fabric of Bank Street and Elgin Street with built forms and spaces that are of value to the community. The strategy also includes converting O'Connor and Metcalfe Streets into two-way streets to facilitate a better flow of traffic within the area.
3. Implementing a greening parking policy, system to deal with run-off and adding vegetation along the street fronts. The multi-story arcades would be treated with a green facade especially when facing a main street. The impact of the green facades is less about a mass change in the environmental condition but rather about projecting the ideology of sustainable living as a priority for the city.

## ARTS



FIGURE 80: 1910 Family Theatre Queen, near Bank Street



FIGURE 81: Rialto Theatre, Bank Street &amp; Florence Street



FIGURE 82: 1930 Imperial Theatre, at 323 Bank St. between McLaren and Gilmore



FIGURE 83: 1938 Capitol Theatre, at Bank near Albert

The arts are a unifying mode of expression, bringing people together to share in a collective experience in a common space. When developing a community, the arts are vital to fostering engagement. Culture creates jobs, vibrant neighbourhoods, helps to attract and retain an educated workforce and directly contributes to the economy. Cultural activity strengthens communities, helps to revitalize older, industrial neighbourhoods and can appeal to all residents, including children, families, youth, and seniors, as well as those residents established for generations or newcomers to the city. One key contributor to a city's cultural activity is the establishment of theatre space.

Theatre spaces activate the area, particularly in the evening, in a non-threatening and inclusive manner. Beginning in the early 1900s, until 2013 Centretown was home to at least one operational movie theatre. From 1931 to 1955, the Bank Street portion of Centretown had four running theatres. Today, all of Centretown's theatre buildings have been demolished, with the exception of Barrymores [see Fig. 82]. Located at 323 Bank Street, this building operated as the Imperial Theatre from 1914 to 1955, and was subsequently reopened under the Barrymores name in 1978, as a night club and concert venue. The last theatre on the Bank Street portion of Centretown was The Phoenix, owned and operated by Cineplex

from 1980 to 1991 at 314 Bank Street, home of the former Rialto Theatre [see Fig. 81] (1931-1979). This location has since been converted to a parking lot.

With the closing of the last downtown multiplex theatre at the World Exchange Plaza (45 O'Connor Street), the closest theatres for Centretown residents are located further down in the Rideau Street district or much further down Bank Street in the Glebe neighbourhood.

Centretown could also benefit from a diversification of its performing arts spaces. Currently there are five performing arts spaces within a two km radius of the

Somerset House, including Music and Beyond (500 meters), Bronson Court (1.1 km), the National Arts Centre (1.7 km), Ottawa Ballet School (1.9 km), and the Arts Court (2.2 km). An additional three facilities are located within a four km radius. Some of these spaces, such as the National Arts Centre, operate at a scale that is not comparable to what would be possible at a revitalized Somerset House. This gross variation in scale present a unique opportunity, as Somerset House could serve as a smaller scale performing arts space aimed at fostering the discipline among aspiring performers.

The discipline of the arts is generally broken down into performing and visual



FIGURE 84:

arts. Currently, Centretown has an urban arts presence with several murals on building facades, and events such as art markets and in particular, The Glow Fair, a marquee event which produces large scale interactive all along Bank Street. The shoring at the Somerset House has actually been part of the Glow Fair festivities. In 2014, Glow Fair participants were encouraged to “paint their vision for the neighbourhood” on a grid of streets painted on the boards facing the parking lot at the Somerset House.<sup>36</sup> [See Fig. 84] The event successfully engaged the community with both the site and each other.

In 2015, as part of Ottawa’s Pride celebrations, the Somerset House’s Somerset Street side

boards were painted with a mural dedicated to raising awareness of violence against black transgender women (also as a part of the global #blacklivesmatter movement). The location of the mural was ideal as the Somerset House is within the LGBTQ district, and a high traffic site. Unfortunately, two months later the mural was vandalized with the words “ALL LIVES MATTER, NO DOUBLE STANDARDS, YOU’VE BEEN WARNED.” A new mural was once again painted, this time a bit more abstract but still clearly marked with the “black lives matter” statement. It too was vandalized. With the help of local businesses and the Somerset Councillor, funds were raised to commission the original artist to repaint the mural at the McNabb Community Centre (180

36. Gelbard, Sarah. “UrbSanity: Publicizing Public Art.” Editorial. Centretown Buzz [Ottawa] 18 Jan. 2014: n. pag. 18 Jan. 2014. Web. 20 Mar. 2016.

37. McCooey, Paula. “Defaced Mural Being Repainted at New Home.” Editorial. Ottawa Citizen 25 Nov. 2015: n. pag. Ottawa Citizen. Postmedia Network Inc., 25 Nov. 2015. Web. 30 Nov. 2015.



FIGURE 85: Mural before vandalism



FIGURE 86: Vandalize mural

Percy Street).<sup>37</sup>

Coincidentally the original back facade of the building (facing the parking lot) also had a mural depicting early 10th century people interacting on the street. A partial edge of the mural is visible on the ruin edge of the Somerset House.

These series of community murals, for better or worse, are now also a part of the Somerset House's history and collective memory. To honour and respect this use, the design proposal will have a designated wall within the courtyard for legal graffiti or community art. These walls will be like the boards currently on the Somerset House. They

will be informal community space where issues can be expressed creatively. Considering the design proposal's aim as a social connector, the choice of a community mural space is ideal as it is not only the creator of the mural who claims ownership of the work, but all those who connect to the visual on the subject matter.

This causal informal arts venue will be contrasted with a more formal live/work studio on the Maclaren Street edge of the courtyard space.

Centretown is best defined by its diversity; its mosaic of people, cultures, and languages that coexist throughout well-connected communities and neighbourhoods. From an architectural perspective, the area holds significant promise. Although home to many vacant and deteriorating buildings, many of these structures are housed at strategic locations and possess detailing and construction elements that serve as an important reminder of the area's storied past as a hub of the Ottawa entertainment and cultural scene and hold the potential to respond to the various community service gaps that exist. The Somerset House is one such heritage property that best captures both the opportunities and challenges that come with architectural rehabilitation and community need.

Through this analysis, it has become apparent that a significant shortfall exists in several key community service elements, while other services are in oversupply (e.g., parks versus parking). There is also a lack of community unifying services throughout the Centretown community (e.g., public theatres), and such existing services not ideally located relative to population centres. The intent of the following design project is to address these issues through the development of the Somerset House, while respecting the positive qualities and existing sensitivities of the area.

The population analysis and mapping exercise provides a better understanding of what Centretown possesses in terms of civic resources, and makes apparent other areas which are in need. One key resource that

Centretown does currently have, and which is slated to be moved outside of the downtown core, is the Main Branch of the Ottawa Public Library. There are so many significant resources the library provides in addition to books, magazines, and periodicals. It serves as a space for community groups and others to gather without costs or time limits. The loss of this valuable resource will have a profound effect on the community.

Centretown has a large variety of well-occupied coffee shops. The coffee shop is a primary social gathering space, especially during daytime hours. There are three main types of coffee shop patrons - (1) take out patrons; (2) those individuals who are meeting others in a social manner; and, (3) individuals working or reading alone, but clearly not

in need of silence. Having alternative types of working spaces incorporated in a new Somerset House program could better meet the needs of this demographic, by bringing together like minded people and increasing their connectivity and productivity.

Centretown is widely considered to be a walkable area of the city. There are sidewalks on most roads, as well as offices, stores, and amenities all within a reasonable walking distance from homes and in close proximity of each other. Being considered a walkable area should, however, have greater requirements than sidewalks and points of interest. As explored in the park and parking section, the streets need additional green spaces, places for rest, and paths

off the busy roads. The superfluous parking spaces throughout the area represent ideal locations for such green spaces, and have the potential of addressing two issues in one action.

Centretown and its neighbouring communities have a respectable variety of arts facilities; however the area lacks designated space for small scale and grass-roots arts services. Bringing a cultural element to the project would be in keeping with the Somerset House's previous and current use. In addition, both the performing and visual arts can be great generators of community building.

The last element Centretown is in need of is greater connectivity. With a diverse city

fabric comprised of several unique elements, a better-connected neighbourhood would increase overall productivity and value. A well-connected Centretown would not only allow programs to feed off of one another, but also create a positive downstream impact of connecting resources and businesses to the community.

Placing community programming in a heritage building builds upon the existing heritage value. Architecturally, community-centric use should be included in a welcoming space. Heritage buildings like the Somerset House, are ideal vessels as the community already has an established association with the building, removing any physical or invisible barrier of entry.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY

The ideal sensitive manner for determining program that is reflective of the community includes input from community members. The significance of outreach is vast, however it is not just in the information gathered, but perhaps more importantly allows the community members to have their voices heard and gain a vested interest in the development of the property.

Considering the importance of community involvement, the intent was to conduct a survey, the results of which would factor into the programmatic decision making process. However due to the requirements of Carleton University's Ethic Committee's requirement, and the timeline of the thesis, the survey was unable

to be completed in the necessary manner.

The intent was to place a QR code on the building, that when scanned via a smart device, would direct the participant to the online survey. The survey would also be distributed via social media.

There were two main reasons for the e-survey: 1. It would reach an audience outside of those physically near the Somerset House, but those who may have once used the building, and to examine the differences of response between those inside and outside of Centretown. The QR code that would have been posted on the building would be a means to engage with the residents on a continual basis. In any community



Example of poster placed on Somerset House

outreach attempt there is an inherent bias of results, considering certain demographics are not likely to participate, an attempt would have been made to personally reach out to these groups with the acknowledgment that it may prove difficult.



QR Code

FIGURE 87

PROPOSED SURVEY

**SURVEY: [www.somerset-house.com]**

Would you rather the Somerset House be replaced with a functioning building so we can move forward and have the corner reactivated, OR Do you think we should keep the building because of its historic and heritage value (even though it might be vacant even longer)?

*Replace with new building, to reactivate the corner.  
Keep, even though it may be vacant even longer.*

What kind of program/services to you think Centertown is lacking and that the Somerset House could provide?

*Restaurant, Coffee Shop, Pub  
Offices, Work Space (Collaborative), Retail Space  
Community Centre, Housing  
Gallery, Theater, Other*

Do you consider yourself part of the Centertown community?

Do you have any memories of the Somerset House from when it was operational?

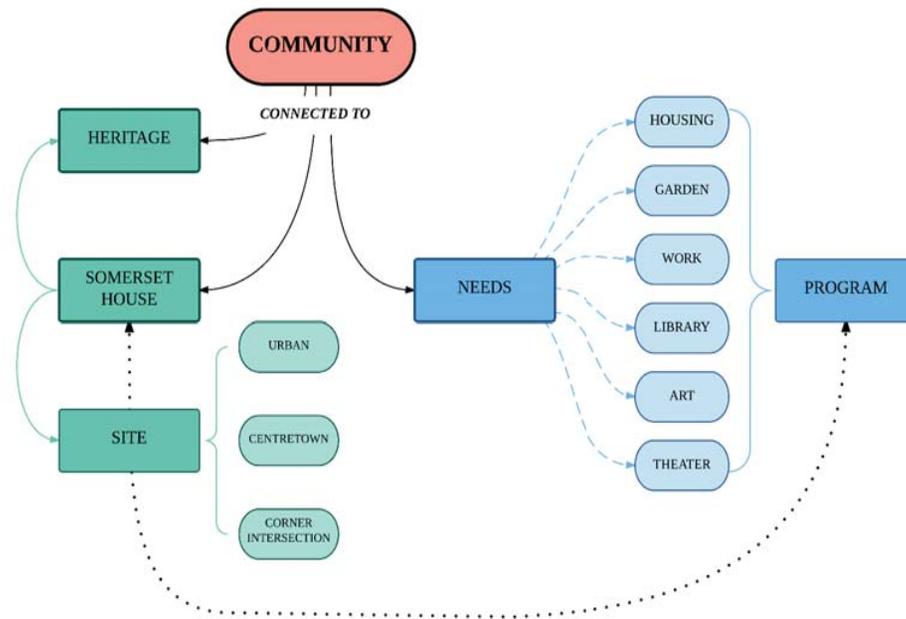


FIGURE 88

## PROGRAM

When the Somerset House was left vacant, and the watering hole closed, the community that used the space suddenly found themselves without a place to go. In determining the new program for this important building, the findings of Chapters 1-3 have been taken into account.

The site of the Somerset House is a culmination of the central elements of the building, site, and heritage value. As previously determined, Somerset House's heritage value connects the community to the building. To strengthen this relationship, the program seeks to address the needs of the public in one culminating space. The potential success of this community-centric program is not only possible because of the aforementioned heritage value, and need for community-centric planning, but also due the building's corner site at the intersection of two main arteries within an established and authentic neighbourhood.

## PROGRAM OUTLINE

Seven key programmatic features have been identified as best responding to the needs of the community and physical requirements of the space, while recognizing the importance of developing the Somerset House in line with its historical precedence as an entertainment centre.

1. The parking lots both behind the apartments (on Maclaren Street) and behind the Somerset House will be converted into a courtyard and green space. The proposal for the Somerset House is to have a community learning kitchen, with produce coming straight from a community garden in the green space behind the building. The Somerset heritage homes and the apartments will have direct access the

courtyard space and adjoining green space. The green space will also have a visual and programmatic connection to secondary uses (i.e., a proposed live/work studio on McLaren Street, and a proposed expansion of the workshop linked to the existing bike shop on the corner Bank and Maclaren Streets).

2. The courtyard will also serve as the venue for a legal graffiti area, where the art produced in the designated area can be removed and displayed in more formal art galleries across the city. The outdoor art space will be an inclusive democratic area where artists can work on this informal art form without judgment.

3. The project also aims to have the ground floor of the Somerset House converted to a public access space. The proposal calls for the creation of an outpost for the Ottawa Central Library as a minor consolation for the loss of the main branch. This outpost would not house a collection, but rather be a place where one could order, pick up, and drop off items, and would focus on providing some of the resource spaces that will ultimately be lost with the departure of the main branch.

4. As an extension of the community services of the library outpost and the outdoor garden space, the ground floor will have a community kitchen. The kitchen can hold teaching seminars for all demographics, and the food produced could also be sold in

the building. Additionally, the gardens crops could be used as a supplemental source of produce.

5. A shared workspace would respond to the needs of many of the 'coffee shop office workers' while also providing them with a broader range of services (conference rooms, private spaces, extended stays, P.O. box services, print stations, etc.) and connecting them to one another.

6. A small theater on the upper level will provide night time activation and be a shared space between the community and other small theater companies in Ottawa. This program feature is a traditional and

structured arts program, in contrast to the more informal outdoor art space.

7. The final programmatic element is the inclusion of a few affordable single-occupancy housing units, connected to but yet separated from the main communal portion of the Somerset House.

The purpose of having multiple programs in one space is to attract a mix of people culminating in one space. The Somerset House project will act a microcosm of the city, containing several elements traditionally found scattered throughout the entire city all in one corner. This incubator space will both power and be powered by the community.

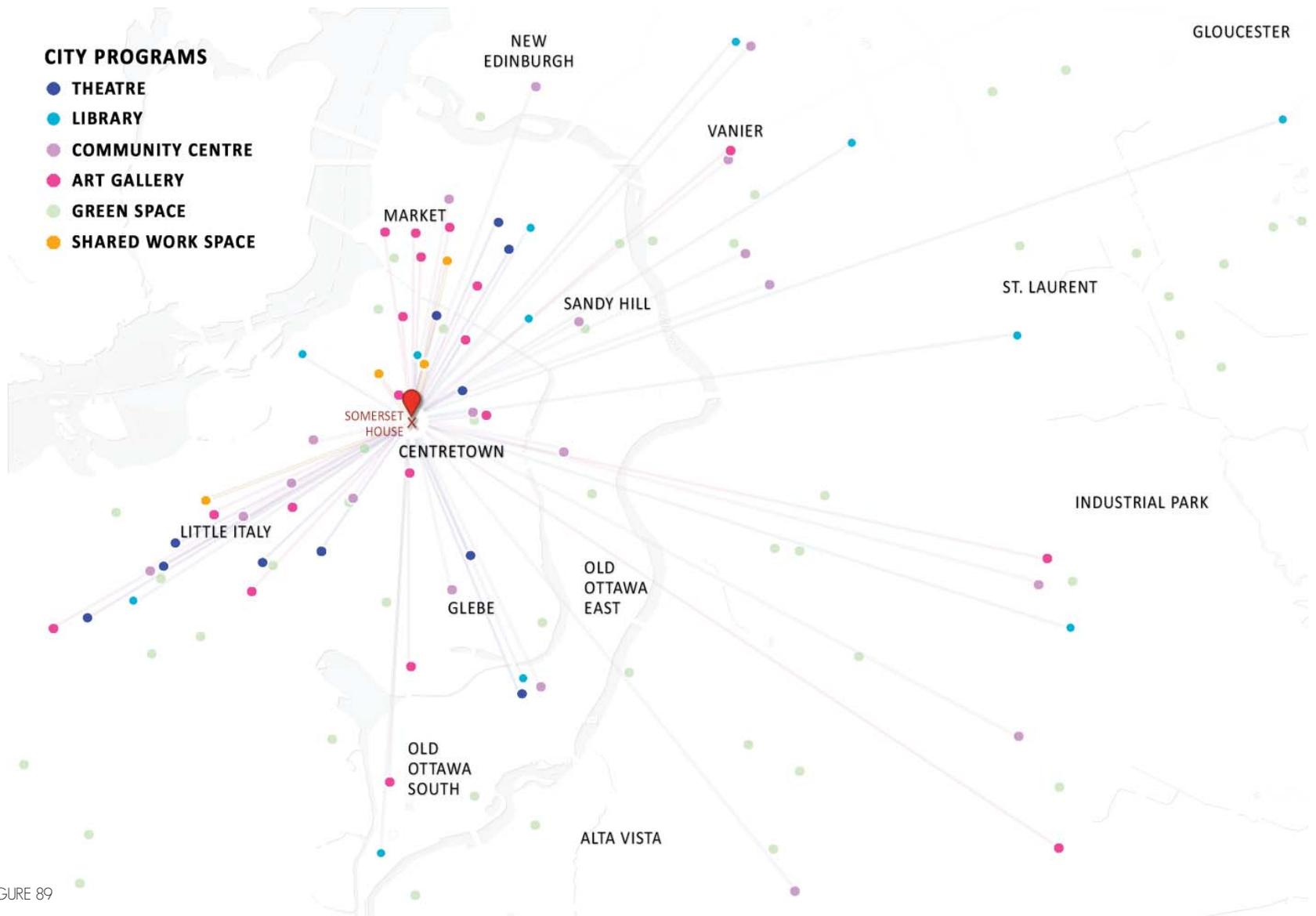


FIGURE 89

PROGRAM PRECEDENCE



LIVE / WORK STUDIO IN NEW ZEALAND FIGURE 90

These programmatic precedences are focused on the use with in the Somerset House block, but not located within the building.

Figure 82, shows a highly transparent live/work studio that itself becomes a gallery



GREGG'S BELLEVUE CYCLE

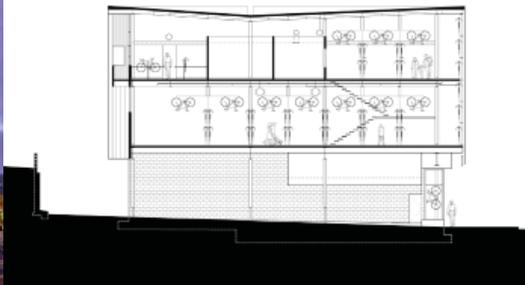


FIGURE 91-92

Figures 83-84, Gregg's Bellevue Cycle,, is similar to the live/work studio, in that the interior space becomes an exterior gallery. Similar strategies could be implemented in the Bike Shop at the MacLaren and Bank streets corner of the block.



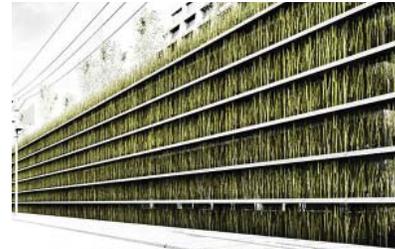
RAINIER BEACH URBAN FARM PROPOSAL

FIGURE 93-95

Figures 85-87 show an interesting example of an urban farm, the scale of this project is larger then the proposed garden space in the Somerset House courtyard, however the landscape scheme is useful as an organizational tool

The first set are potential green parking strategies, while the second set is of small to medium park like spaces that could be designed as in-fill projects. Both set of studies can be implemented on the larger urban scale,

PARKING PRECEDENCE



FIGURES 96-101

URBAN INFILL PRECEDENCE



FIGURES 102-105

PROGRAMMATIC SITE PLAN



LEGEND

- 1. Somerset House
- 2. Proposed garden / park space
- 3. Proposed workshop
- 4. Proposed live/work studio
- 5. Courtyard space

FIGURE 106



DESIGN GUIDELINES - LANDSCAPE



FIGURE 107

LARGE GATHERING AREA

Centretown has many street festivals and gatherings, Having a large open area could provide a venue, that is not currently available in Centretown, for these types of events.



FIGURE 108

INSTALLATION SPACE

An area for a semi-permeate installation would bring a more formal art form to the courtyard, and be a focal area.



FIGURE 109

COMMUNITY GARDEN

The community garden would be another element that could link to other gardens in the area and provide supplies for the community kitchen to be programmed in the building.



FIGURE 110

SEATING

Seating areas would link to the building program and provide a means for members of the community to freely and well occupy and use the space.

LANDSCAPE SITE PLAN





DESIGN GUIDELINES - HERITAGE



RESTORATION

FIGURE 111

Restore key elements that have been removed from original building. The two main features are, the turret top and North bay window.

*RESTORATION: "The action or process of accurately revealing, recovering or representing the state of a historic place or of an individual component, as it appeared at a particular period in its history, while protecting its heritage value."*

*REHABILITATION: "The action or process of making possible a continuing or compatible contemporary use of a historic place or an individual component, while protecting its heritage value."*

*PRESERVATION: "The action or process of protecting, maintaining, and/or stabilizing the existing materials, form, and integrity of a historic place or of an individual component, while protecting its heritage value."*

*Definitions according to Standards & Guidelines - For the Conservation of Historical Places in Canada*



REHABILITATION

FIGURE 112

The original three story Somerset House is in need of serious rehabilitation particularly with reference to the windows, brick, and mechanical ventilation.



PRESERVATION / ANTISCAPE

FIGURE 113

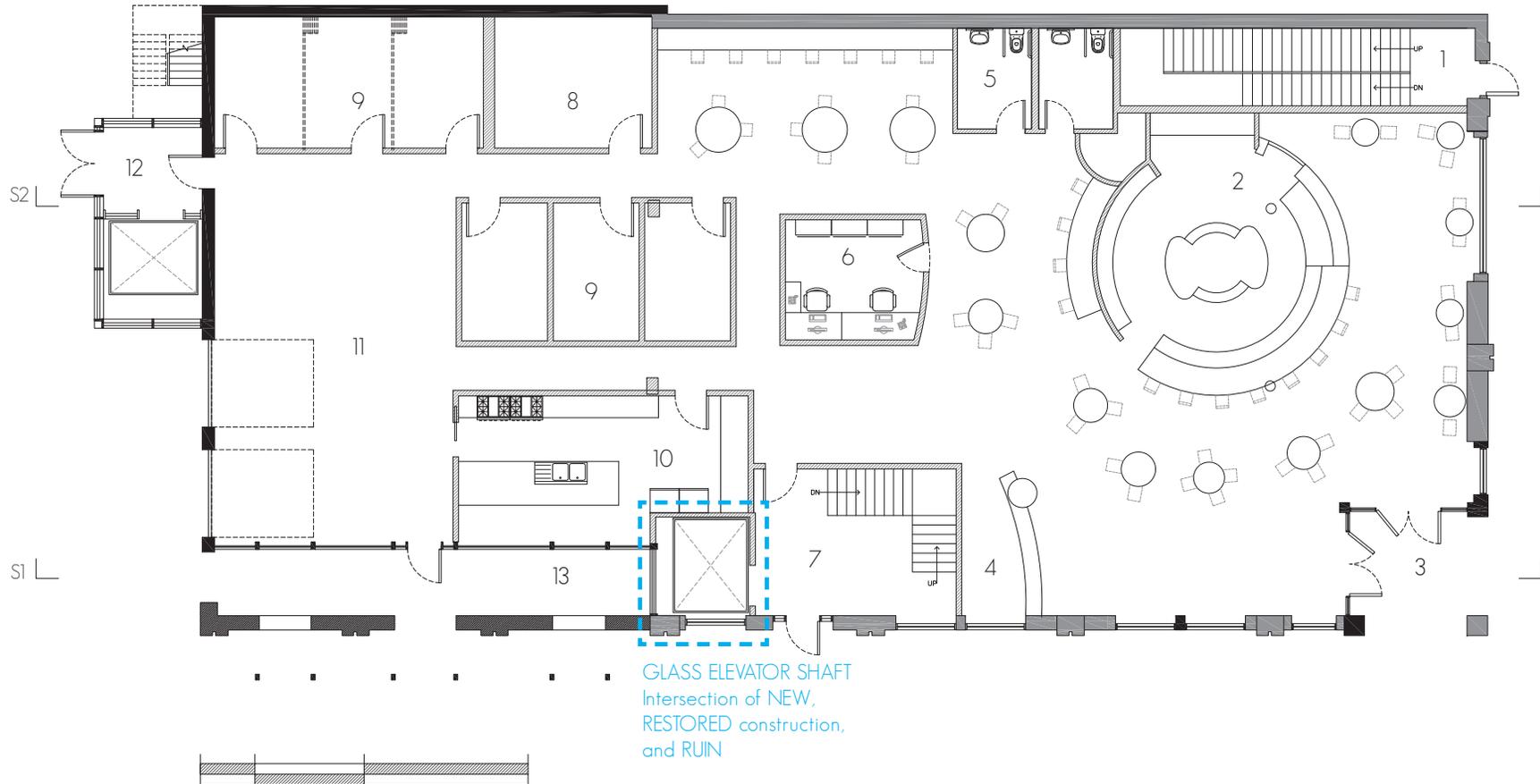
Although the goal is for the entirety of the building to be preserved, in regards to design, the preservation, will be in line with anti-scrape ideology and will be in reference to the ruin of the four story portion of the Somerset House, and the scaffolding that has been present for almost 10 years



ADDITION / NEW

FIGURE 114

Additions and new construction are not a true heritage principles, however they are often associated with heritage projects. The design will include new construction within the interior, and more prominently the four story back portion will be entirely new. The addition will bring more program to the space, and allow for housing to still be a part of the building.



PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

- |                         |                   |                       |                          |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Bank Street Entrance | 5. Bathrooms      | 9. Resource Rooms     | 12. Residential Entrance |
| 2. Coffee Shop          | 6. Library Office | 10. Community Kitchen | 13. Interior Courtyard   |
| 3. Main Entrance        | 7. Somerset Lobby | 11. Pop Up Shop       |                          |
| 4. Library Desk         | 8. Gaming Room    | / Restaurant Space    |                          |

- New Construction Exterior
- Existing Exterior Restored/Rehabilitated
- Ruin Preserved
- New Interior

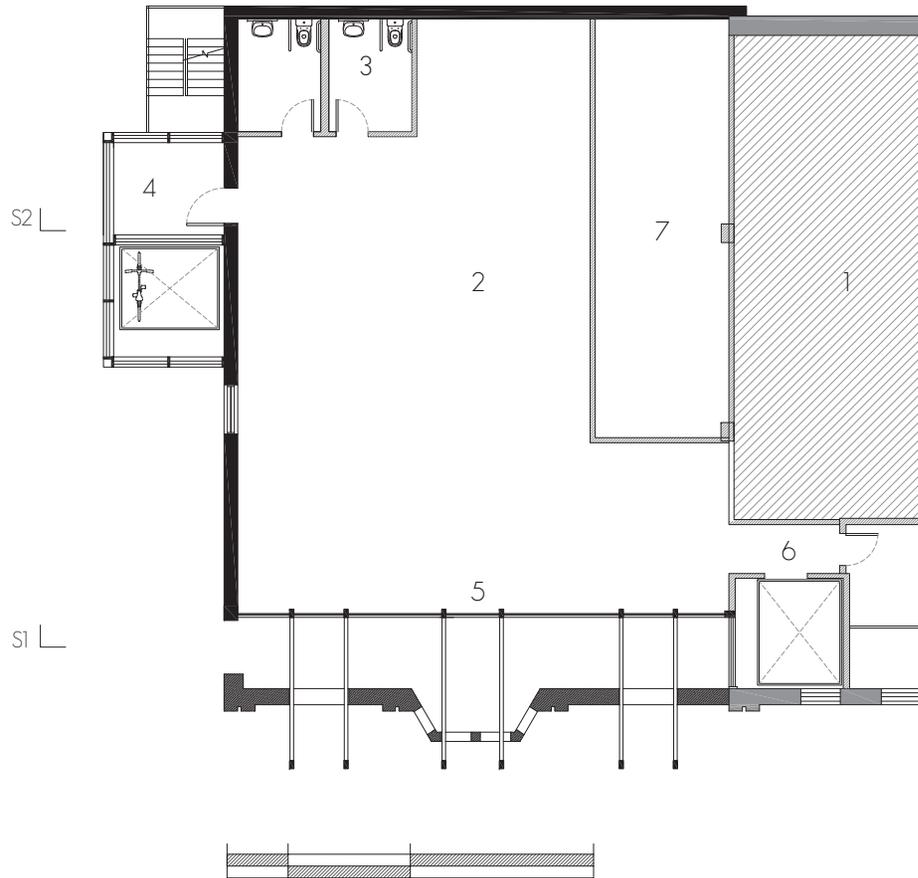




PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

- |                    |                   |                         |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Open Work Space | 5. Bathrooms      | 9. Private Offices      |
| 2. Open to Below   | 6. Meeting Room   | 10. Open / Flex Offices |
| 3. Communal Bench  | 7. Reception      | 11. Kitchen / Eat-in    |
| 4. Lockers         | 8. Elevator Lobby | 12. Balcony             |

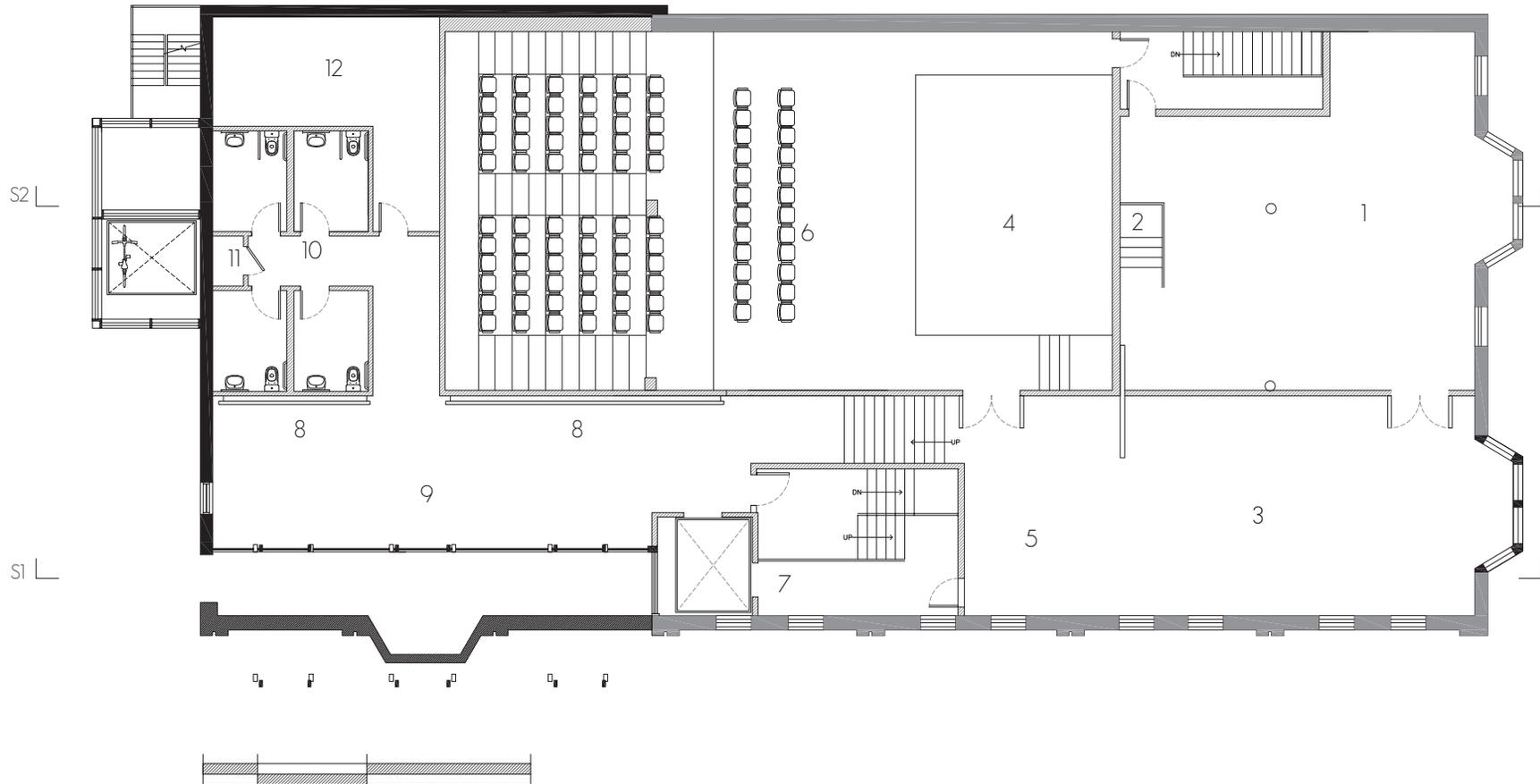
- New Construction Exterior
- Existing Exterior Restored/Rehabilitated
- Ruin Preserved
- New Interior



PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

- 1. Floor Above
- 2. Lease Space
- 3. Washrooms
- 4. Balcony
- 5. Display Hallway
- 6. Elevator Lobby
- 7. Storage Space

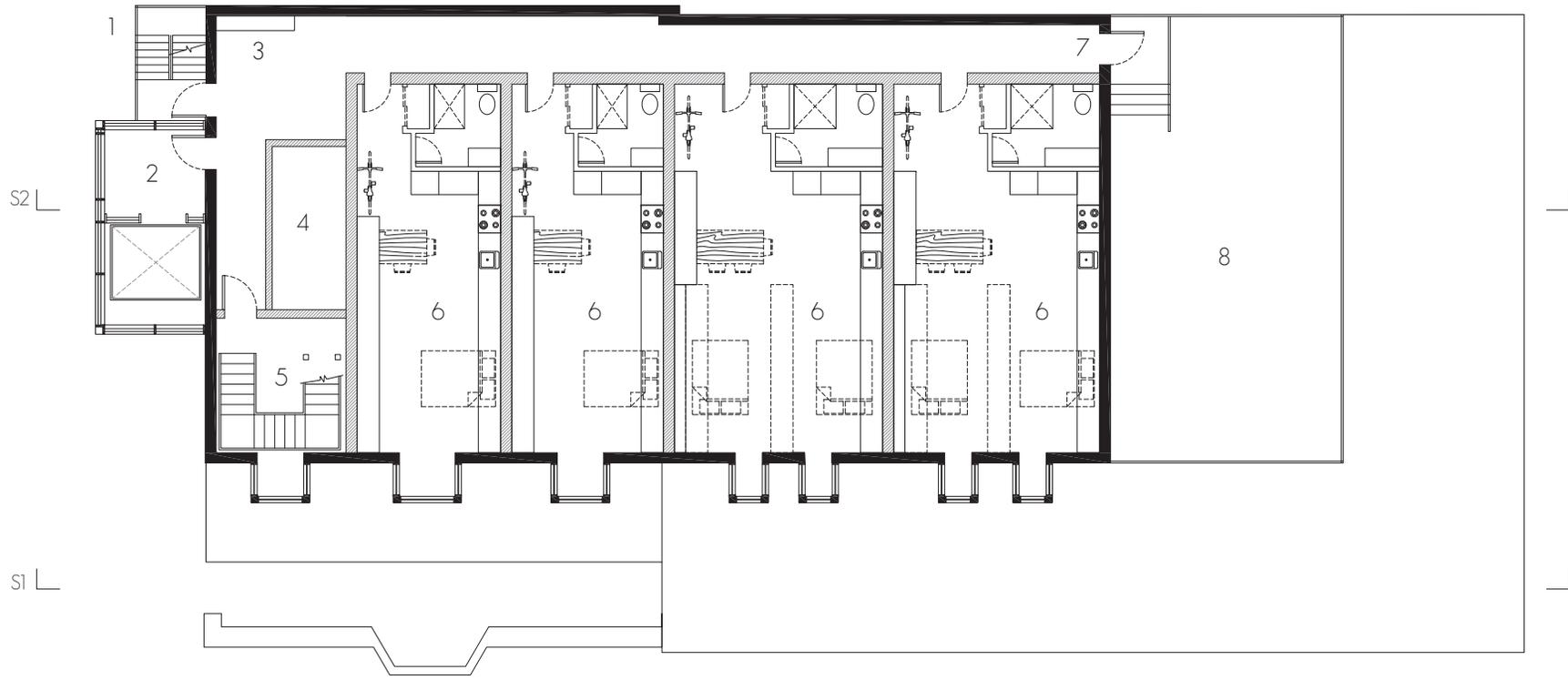
- New Construction Exterior
- Existing Exterior Restored/Rehabilitated
- Ruin Preserved
- New Interior



PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

- |                                 |                   |                |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. Back Stage / Rehearsal Space | 5. Lower Lobby    | 9. Upper Lobby |
| 2. Stage Access                 | 6. Theater        | 10. Bathrooms  |
| 3. Studio Space                 | 7. Elevator Lobby | 11. Closet     |
| 4. Stage                        | 8. Media Walls    | 12. AV Room    |

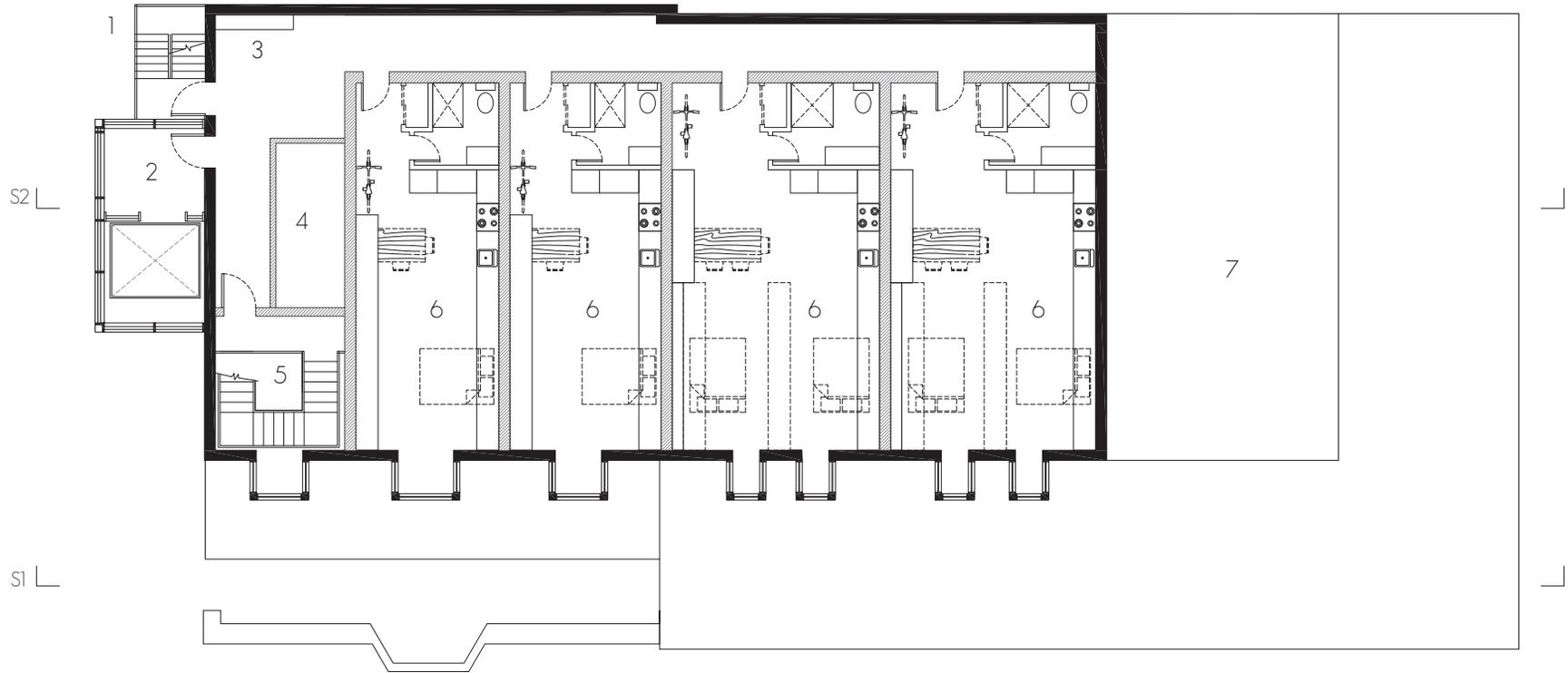
- New Construction Exterior
- Existing Exterior Restored/Rehabilitated
- Ruin Preserved
- New Interior



PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

- |                      |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Fire Escape Stair | 5. Stairwell        |
| 2. Elevator Lobby    | 6. Residential Unit |
| 3. Mailboxes         | 7. Roof Access      |
| 4. Mech Room         | 8. Roof Terrace     |

- New Construction Exterior Addition
- Existing Exterior Restored/Rehabilitated
- Ruin Preserved
- New Interior



PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

- |                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Fire Escape Stair | 5. Stairwell          |
| 2. Elevator Lobby    | 6. Residential Unit   |
| 3. Mailboxes         | 7. Roof Terrace Below |
| 4. Mech Room         |                       |

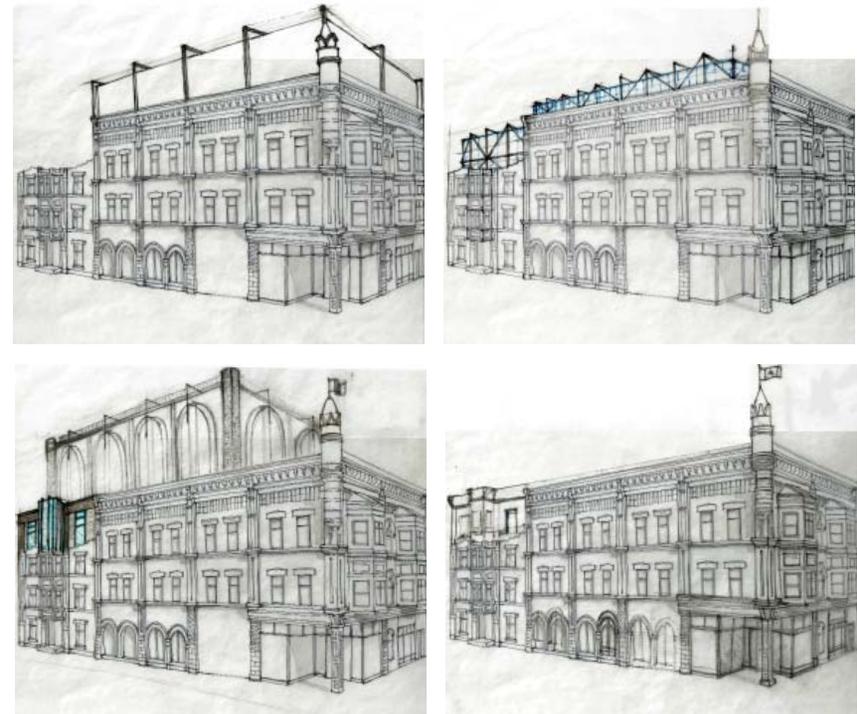
-  New Construction Exterior Addition
-  Existing Exterior Restored/Rehabilitated
-  Ruin Preserved
-  New Interior

DESIGN GUIDELINES - ARCHITECTURAL



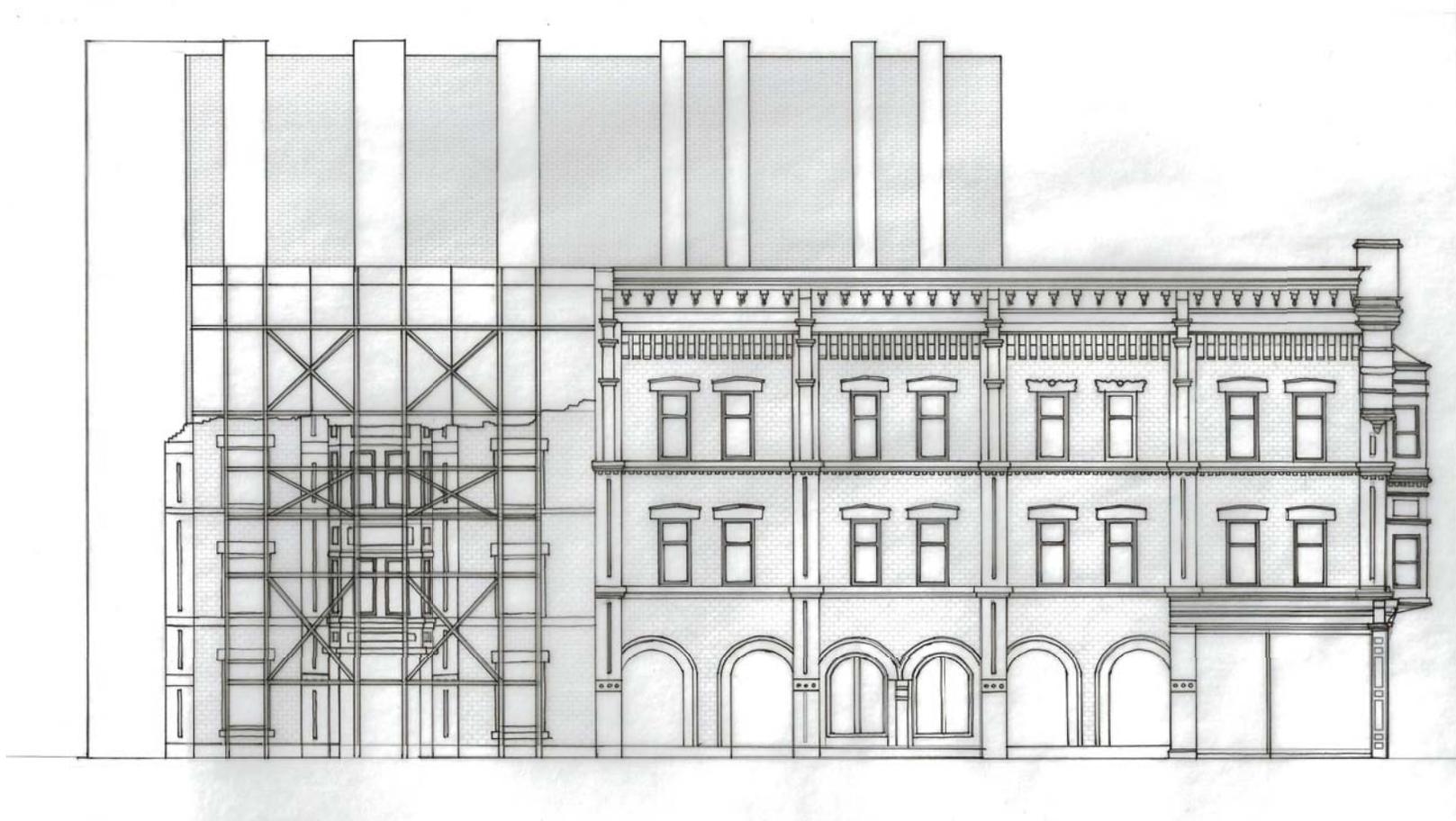
MATERIAL Existing vs. New

As is the case with massing and pattern, the material selection must be both complementary and distinct. The existing Somerset House is primary brick, with injections of glass and plaster and tin molding. The addition will use brick and glass in a contemporary manner without plaster or tin, as the later two materials spoke more to the 1900's ornamentation.

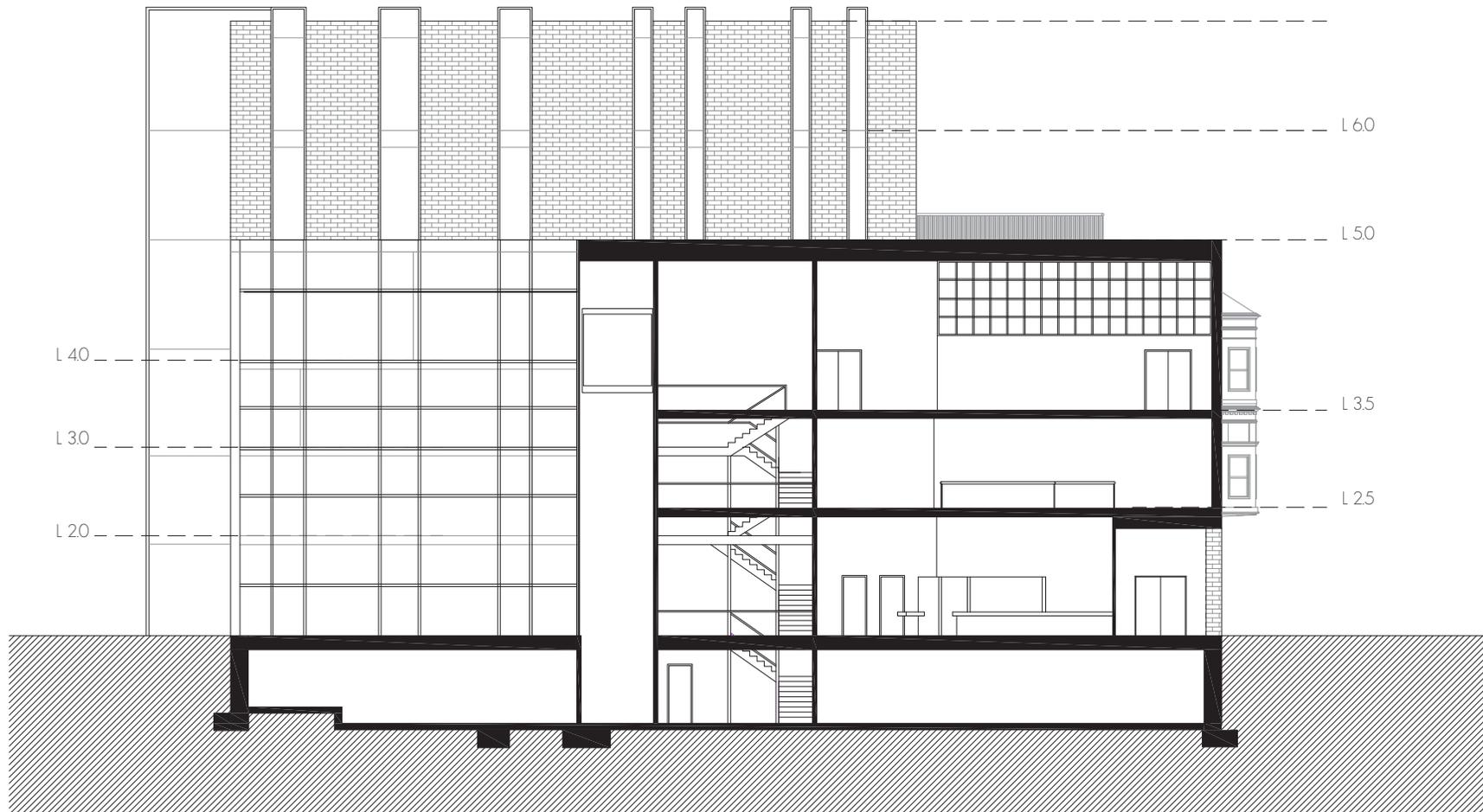


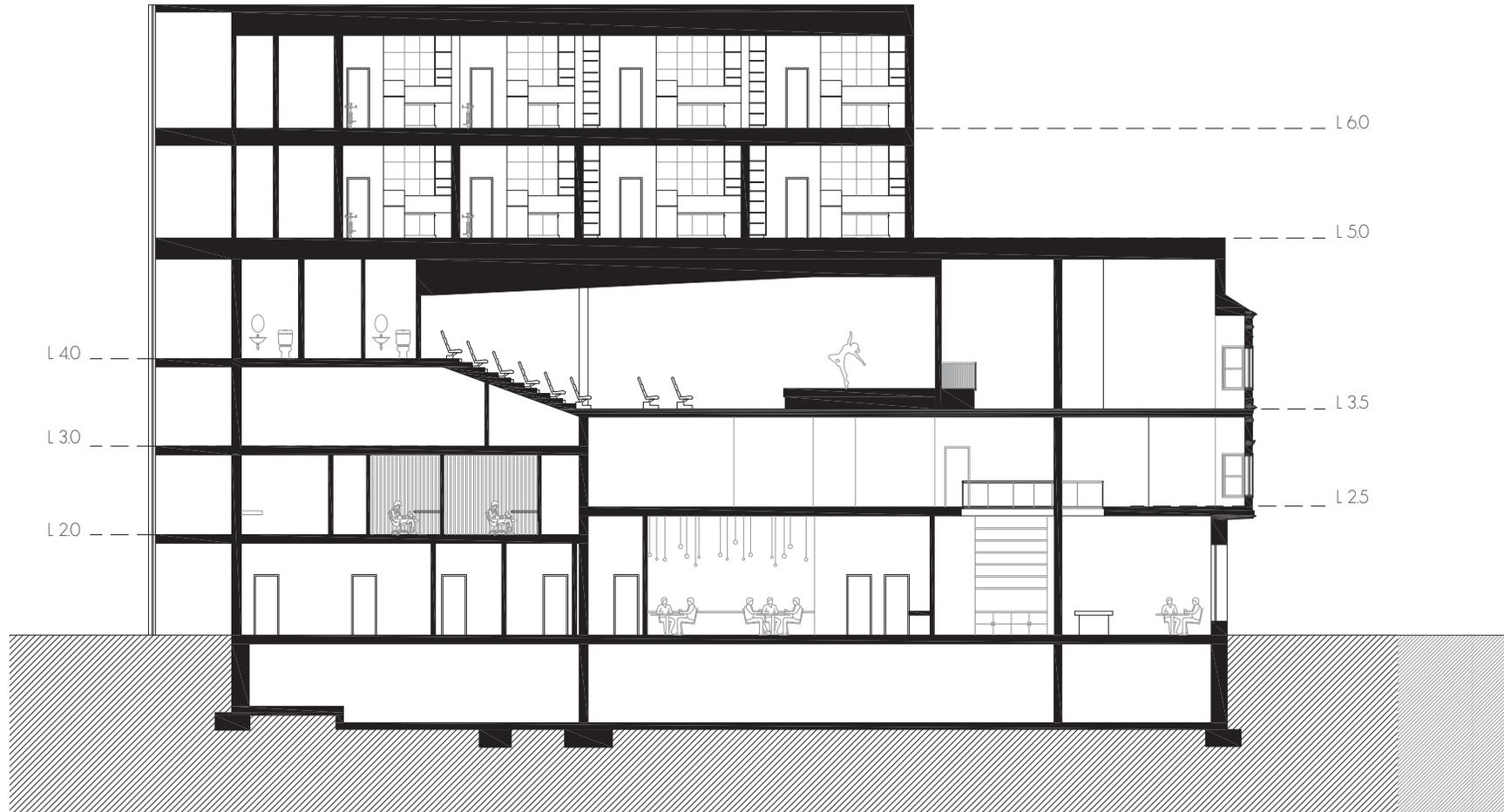
MASSING & PATTERN

The massing and pattern of the new construction shall be in proportion to the existing building, while simultaneously being both distinct and not overpowering.





















- Barrett, Carol D. "A Conversation About Who's In? Who's Out? And Who Answers Those Questions When Planning for and Designing the Downtown." *Ethics, Design and Planning of the Built Environment* (2013): 23-43. Web.
- Cadava, Eduardo. "'lapsus Imaginis': The Image in Ruins". *October* 96 (2001): 35-60. Web.
- Ching, Francis. *Architecture: Form, Space, and Order*. Hoboken, N.J: John Wiley & Sons, 2007. Print.
- Ching, Francis. *Architecture: Form, Space, and Order*. Hoboken, N.J: John Wiley & Sons, 2007. Print.
- Ching, Francis. *Architecture: Form, Space, and Order*. Hoboken, N.J: John Wiley & Sons, 2007. Print.
- "FROM THE ARCHIVES: How Somerset House Transformed from the Grande Dame of Bank Street to a Blight on the Neighbourhood | Ottawa Magazine." Editorial. *OTTAWA* 22 Oct. 2012: n. pag. *Ottawa Magazine*. 22 Oct. 2012. Web. 29 Sept. 2016.
- Gelbard, Sarah. "UrbSanity: Publicizing Public Art." Editorial. *Centretown Buzz [Ottawa]* 18 Jan. 2014: n. pag. 18 Jan. 2014. Web. 20 Mar. 2016.
- "How Somerset House Transformed from the Grande Dame of Bank Street to a Blight on the Neighbourhood." *Ottawa Magazine*. N.p., Sept. 2011. Web. 11 Oct. 2015.
- Kalman, Harold. *The Evaluation of Historic Buildings*. Ottawa: Environment Canada Parks Canada, 1980 29.
- Kardan, Omid, Peter Gozdyra, Bratislav Misic, Faisal Moola, Lyle J. Palmer, Tomáš Paus, and Marc G. Berman. "Neighborhood Greenspace and Health in a Large Urban Center." *Nature.com*. Nature Publishing Group, 9 July 2015. Web. 22 Dec. 2015.
- Lynch, Kevin. *The Image of the City*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1960. 47-48.

- McCooney, Paula. "Defaced Mural Being Repainted at New Home." Editorial. *Ottawa Citizen* 25 Nov. 2015: n. pag. *Ottawa Citizen*. Postmedia Network Inc., 25 Nov. 2015. Web. 30 Nov. 2015.
- Mueller, Laura. "Somerset House Owner Says He'll Revive the Duke Restaurant." Editorial. *Ottawa Community News*. Metroland Media Group LTD., 29 Apr. 2014. Web.
- Pierre Nora, *Representations*, No. 26, Special Issue: *Memory and Counter-Memory* (Spring, 1989), pp. 18- University of California Press Stable
- Schnurr, Joanne. "Controversy Surrounds Redevelopment of Somerset House." *CTV News Ottawa*. CTV. Ottawa, Ontario, 12 Oct. 2010. *CTV News*. Web. 01 Jan. 2016.
- Simon Thurley, *Into the future. Our strategy for 2005-2010*. In: *Conservation Bulletin [English Heritage]*, 2005 (49)
- "Somerset House Renovation Plan Passed by Heritage Committee." *CBC News*. CBC. Ottawa, Ontario, 10 Oct. 2013. Television.
- Spears, Tom. "Architect Blames City's Permit Process For Lengthy Delays In Rebuilding Somerset House." *Ottawa Citizen [Ottawa]* 18 Jan. 2011: n. pag. Print.
- Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada: A Federal, Provincial and Territorial Collaboration*. 2nd ed. Ottawa: Parks Canada, 2010. Web.
- Statistics Canada. 2012. Ottawa, Ontario (Code 3506008) and Ottawa, Ontario (Code 3506) (table). *Census Profile. 2011 Census*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE. Ottawa. Released October 24, 2012.
- <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed September 25, 2015).

- The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013
- The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Rep. Paris: UNESCO, 2003.
- "The House They Called Home." The House They Called Home. CarWest MediaWorks Publications Inc., 9 Dec. 2007. Web. 9 Sept. 2015.
- "The House They Called Home: Somerset House in Centretown Is One of Ottawa's Fine Historic Buildings." Editorial. The Ottawa Citizen [Ottawa] 9 Dec. 2007: n. pag. CarWest MediaWorks Publications Inc. Web.
- "UPDATE: Duke of Somerset Shutting down." Archives. Great River Media Inc., 27 Oct. 2004. Web. 36 Sept. 2015.
- Volesky, Nancy P. The Exterior Use of Decorative Ironwork in Ottawa Architecture during the Latter Half of the Nineteenth Century. Thesis. Carleton University, Ottawa, 1987.
- Williams, Dwight. "The Abuse and Neglect of Somerset House - Spacing Ottawa." Editorial. Spacing Ottawa 28 Oct. 2010: n. pag. Spacing Ottawa. 28 Oct. 2010. Web. 15 Oct. 2016.
- Willing, Jon. "'Good News' Finally Comes to Somerset House." Editorial. Ottawa Sun 10 Oct. 2013: n. pag. Ottawa Sun. Canoe Sun Media
- Willing, Jon. "'Good News' Finally Comes to Somerset House." Ottawa Sun. Canoe Sun Media, 10 Oct. 2013. Web. 26 Sept. 2015.
- Willing, Jon. "Somerset House Owner Aims for 2016 Finish, but with No Duke." Editorial. Ottawa Sun 30 June 2015: n. pag. Ottawa Sun. Canoe Sun Media. Web.

