HOME away from home

by

ATENA MIRSHAHI

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Carleton University
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Atena Mirshahi

ABSTRACT

Affordable housing has been the topic for many projects, resulting in numerous proposed solutions for supporting low-income families as well as refugees in need. This project proposes a new way of looking at the problem. It offers new solutions that can make a difference in people's lives in the shortest time. Fast paced independence and integration of newcomers is the main goal of this new solution; however, creating opportunities and building support is not exclusive of other social groups. This project's determination is to introduce a hub that can improve refugees' quality of life by considering factors that can contribute to their mental and physical health. The aim is to provide refugees with a real sense of belonging in dignified homes, and to build a strong sense of self-confidence for a faster independence and contribution in the community as new Canadians. The project's design will benefit developers, retailers, all residents of any income or social group (including refugees, of course), seniors, visitors, and our neighborhoods and communities in general; in short, this is not a design or a space for exclusion, but a proposal to address affordable housing problems.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PROLOGUE

Canada has been my new home for eight years now. New challenges are always part of any adaptation process to a new place. Certainly, these challenges are greater when the new home is in a new country.

Like other newcomers, I had to learn about Canadian culture and improve my language skills in order to integrate well into society. Finding a job in order to tackle the financial difficulties of such a bumpy road was not an easy task, especially when I did not have any prior experience in Canada. On top of all that, is the emotional journey that the newcomer has to take, which includes not only the sense of being far from your family, but the sense of not being accepted at some stages along the way. For me, this manifested itself when I tried to continue my education. The evaluation of my previous education certificates and degree did not work in my favor, and for that reason, I had to take and pass many courses prior to being able to focus on the subject that I intended to devote myself to through higher education. Although this journey was challenging and hard, I enjoyed and appreciated every moment that I spent in this beautiful country because of the sense of security and stability that it gave me, a feeling that I had never felt back home.

I was only one year old when the war between Iran and Iraq began in 1980. The war created a major economic crisis as the country faced a revolution a year prior to that in 1979. My father was in the army and we were affected by the war directly. My dad had to be in the combat zone; most of the times, my mother was alone taking care of me and my siblings. I will never forget how we had to hide under a staircase during Iraq's missile strikes, since it was the only structurally safe place in the house. Sometimes we had to stay there for hours and most of the time we would fall sleep before it was safe to go back to the main areas of the house. Saddam's aircrafts were targeting cities and civilians, from the border cities all the way to the

capital, Tehran. When the airstrikes on Tehran intensified, we had to leave our home and move in with my uncle who was living in a city in North West region of the country. His home was out of reach of the airstrikes. We were among the lucky ones who had relatives to live with in a safe zone and did not need to go to camps organized by the government or hosted by other Iranian families who were living in safer areas. Although my uncle made sure that we felt welcomed at home, it was still a very difficult situation for a child to be in. There was a sense not belonging, to the new school and among the people around me. I missed my dad, my friends, my school, and my home. It was hard to comprehend the concept of war as a child, but I experienced it well enough to know what children of war were going through. The war ended after eight years in 1988 and we were fortunate to be able to return home. Our house was safe but the memories of war and the bitterness of displacement are carried with me even now. I aim to use those memories as learning experiences in my thesis. I share a sense of compassion and empathy with those who never get a chance to go back home and those who have no choice but to make their home away from home.

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"LIGHT IS MEANINGFUL ONLY IN
RELATION TO DARKNESS, AND
TRUTH PRESUPPOSES ERROR. IT
IS THESE MINGLED OPPOSITES
WHICH PEOPLE OUR LIFE, WHICH
MAKE IT PUNGENT, INTOXICATING.
WE ONLY EXIST IN TERMS OF THIS
CONFLICT, IN THE ZONE WHERE
BLACK AND WHITE CLASH."

LOUIS ARAGON

INTRODUCTION

The above image is my interpretation of the refugee crisis in the form of a three dimensional drawing. Through the use of mixed media like pen, thread, needles, light and shadows, I've shown the clash of interests, policies, and religious beliefs that I consider as different forms of economic and ideological apparatuses. Clashes of apparatuses in a region create conflict that results in multiple civil and insurgent wars. The drawing signifies the refugee crisis that is currently happening around the world, predominantly in the Middle East, as a result of such conflicts. In the drawing, red lines indicate the major chaos and clashes that have generated wars over the past decade, e.g. war in Syria, Iraq or Ukraine. The black and white pencil lines display smaller scale conflicts that we encounter in our everyday lives. All of the lines are connected to each other either directly or indirectly. This shows the contagiousness of these conflicts. Once chaos is born, it affects everyone. The conflict travels from one point to the next, and no one is excluded. People desperately try crossing the dark phase to reach the light; but even there, the shadows of conflicts are present. There are shadows that are created by the red strings (i.e. displacements resulting from major conflicts), and these are moved around with the changing directions of light (i.e. the hope for stability and peace).

The dependency upon hope and peace shows how conflicts are unpredictable. As examples of these conflicts, we can point to any of the condemned terrorist attacks on civilians that have been claimed to be undertaken in retaliation to the interference and invasion by Western countries in the affairs of other states. The war in the Middle East may not have directly affected Western societies but it has indirectly impacted our lives.

Italian Philosopher Giorgio Agamben notes in his essay, "*What is contemporary?*" that every era is dark. He states that it is important to understand the darkness since it is nothing but the light that is getting further from us at high speed.¹ Only if we comprehend this darkness are we able to see the existing light. It is a waste of time trying to find the light that never arrives; it is like trying to reach the time that is ahead of us. The thick red line that separates light and darkness in the drawing indicates the *contemporary*, filling the gap. This rupture among light and darkness, democracy and dictatorship, political/economic interests and creation of wars, religious extremism and disrupting peace, etc. are all characteristics of the present time. In order to see the light (i.e. peace, stability and humanism), we need to understand the darkness and the apparatuses behind these conflicts.

Politics, economics, technology, religion, and power are some of the major factors that trigger conflicts and chaos in the contemporary world. We inhabit an era in which the sources, parties, and apparatuses behind all these conflicts cannot or do not want to reach a common ground and prevent one of the world's major problems: the displacement of people that

occurs as a result of wars. Then, what can be done? What can architects offer in response to chaos and conflict, in order to ease the severest of calamities?

Of course, as architects, we have no control over what triggers these conflicts but we could dream or act as activists to find solutions to improve the quality of life of people. The problems of refugees are complicated and it is impossible to have one perfect solution for such a complex crisis. Some of these solutions and proposed ideas may be idealistic. Yet, this is the first step to improve the situation.

This thesis explores the feasibility of creating a sense of 'home' that can ease, teach, merge and give hope to refugees. This study focuses on how to design a complex response to the immediate needs of refugees, with or without legal status in Ottawa-Gatineau. This compound will be a central hub bringing together a combination of transitional housing, social housing, and essential services under one development plan to ease access to all existing services for refugees while considering all other social, economic, and developmental factors in mind and practice. In order to further facilitate the integration of newcomers, a proposal is made to design housing that embraces mixed-income communities within the mixed-use environment. The integration of marketable housing in this project will be an advantageous move based on the research logic and findings of mixed-income integration, presuming Canadian seniors as more attractive customers for the marketable units, especially when housing falls from the category of being affordable.

Therefore, the design will consider accessibility and suitability issues of the design across the whole project. The idea of co-residency of seniors and refugees in the same compound suggests that there will be fewer obstacles for the integration of refugees into the society. One of the reason that support such suggestion is that seniors usually look for company and have more time to engage in social gatherings, group activities, and voluntary work. This would provide the immigrant community with the opportunity to learn or improve their knowledge of the language while being immersed in the new culture through social interaction. Even more, non-market/affordable housing can attract all members of the community; however, the need of those requiring more attention and care (i.e. refugees and seniors), is the focus of this study. I will explore and examine issues and statistics concerning these two groups in detail in order to understand what makes housing in the compound more interesting and desirable.

This project will engage newcomers with the existing community, and promote a socially balanced environment while supporting the livelihood of the neighborhood. Designed spaces with multiple identities and characteristics are more accommodating and inviting to all social groups. These spaces are less fixed, which makes them more adaptable to all sorts of events and purposes. There will also be indoor services that are accessible both to the public and residents. Services such as studios, which can support local artists, are a great way of involving the community and refugees together. Some studios can be multi-functional, used for activities like yoga classes, arts and craft activities, or any other type of community involvements. They can be the meeting point and space at which residents and/or the general public can exchange their skills and

cultures. There will also be some office spaces to support and facilitate all of the services that the complex offers to the residence and communities.

REFUGEES IN CANADA

Newcomers have to face many complications in order to adjust to their new home. Housing and shelter is one of the top obstacles that refugees have to face from the time of their arrival. Typically, refugees have to stay in transitional housing such as hotels, motels, or other types of temporary options during the first few weeks of their arrival. Refugees often have large families and are frequently in multi-generational family structures. This makes the task of looking for permanent accommodation even more problematic as they receive a very limited budget from the government or their private sponsors and only for a limited time. The humanitarian aspects of the refugee problem are unquestionably complex. They require a thoughtful process to find practical and sensible solutions for the refugees' reception and care at the early stage of their arrival in Canada.

While there is no clear agreement concerning what constitutes poverty in Canada, according to anti-poverty groups, most refugees coming to Canada will fall below the poverty line. Using after tax income rates, the poverty designation has been calculated at a total income of below \$34,742 per year for a couple with two children.² According to Nancy Chan, a communications adviser in the immigration department, recent Syrian refugees have received up to a maximum of \$25,000 per family for a year, which includes "...a onetime start up payment to assist the refugees in establishing a household in Canada, as well as monthly income support to help them get through their first year in the country."³ These statistics highlight the necessity of increasing the overall availability of affordable housing alongside all other housing developments, in order

to help not only newcomers, but also a vast number of other social groups (e.g. single parents, low income families, and first nation communities who consistently struggle with poor housing conditions).

CANADIAN SENIORS

In 2006, there were 103,620 seniors in Ottawa, which entails an increase of 16% since 2001.⁴ By 2031, the number will increase to more than double to 230,576.⁵ Life expectancy has expanded for seniors and the baby boomer generation, who have had a major impact on the Canadian economy and housing market over the past several decades and are now joining the senior population. As a result, there is an increasing demand for housing that meets the needs of the elderly population. In fact, the City of Ottawa has drafted an “Older Adult Plan” to increase opportunities for housing for seniors.⁶ Despite the fact that the average income of seniors in Ottawa in 2006 was \$39,729, which is the highest in Ontario, seniors still feel the economic pressure.⁷

According to The Canadian Association of Gerontology, it is difficult for seniors to “Age in place.” This requires universal design spaces that are suitable for those with reduced mobility and poor vision.⁸ For many seniors who live on fixed income, making modifications to their property in order to meet a universal design that can help and meet their age requirements is not affordable; it simply does not make sense to stay in a big house with all its maintenance needs while they could use the spare money from downsizing on something else. Needless to say, this is the reason why most often seniors are obliged to move or downsize despite having a property that is already paid off. This is where small, low maintenance affordable housing with universal design can be a good alternative for Canadian seniors.

REFUGEES AND SENIORS: POSSIBLE INTERACTIONS

Seniors usually appreciate socializing outside their own age group when possible, and usually enjoy the age-gap friendship with younger generations. Seniors are more likely to spare some time and give advice to newcomers since they have wider vision and more patience to listen to others. They are also more likely to invest time in voluntary work. They can also be mentors to refugee children, a role that offers the senior a sense of purpose and accomplishment, particularly for those who do not have children or family close to them or at all. In other cases, if the refugee's family can act as paid or unpaid care givers, it can reduce the sense of dependency upon seniors' family members or on government resources; and could provide an opportunity to work for refugees to help them on their way to financial independence. This will also help newcomers merge into their new culture and society in a shorter time. In the long run, it will save tax payer's money since it brings refugees to financial independency status. In addition, since the local community and volunteers are involved, some programs also save on financial resources.

In order to evaluate the recommendations of this research, it is necessary to examine the interactions and possible influences that different social and cultural communities without necessarily similar financial status could have on each other's lives, and on their neighborhoods as a whole. The idea of mixed affordable housing could be more beneficial for all parties if built on a smaller scale and widely spread throughout the city. For example, considering seniors and their preferences, the spread

of multiple compounds in different neighborhoods will give seniors a chance to stay in the same neighborhoods they loved to live in for years. It will also help to balance all neighborhoods around the city with different income levels instead of having all refugee families clustered in one location. This scattering will prevent the potential tag of refugee housing or immigrant areas in one particular neighborhood.

In order to build a community which encourages the interaction of different social groups, there will be a need to create spaces that engage occupants. For example, certain workshops could be run by seniors in order to share and exchange skills and organize events that can be useful for cultural exchanges. Knowing that the most important part of any integration into a new community is learning the language, there is a need to emphasize the importance of socialization, which can provide a far more enjoyable and magical setting for learning a new language than the traditional classroom setting.

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THESIS QUESTIONS

There are some questions that need to be answered in order to consider the practicality of the proposed plan for this project.

- *Is it possible to use the city's unused land to make housing/structures more affordable and provide diversity in residential neighborhood?*
- *Do different locations provide immensely different experiences of early settlement and home-making?*
- *Do the physical aspects of housing and neighborhoods impact notions of safety, welcoming, and belonging?*

Some other questions that form the backbone of this research are:

- *Can architectural design ease or heal refugees' trauma and reduce anxiety? In this case, how can a house be a good starting point of aspiration and encouragement to a brighter future?*
- *Can housing give refugees enough comfort and stability for a faster integration into society?*
- *What would be the ideal ratio of non-market based housing to market based housing in such a compound in order to have an engaged community without taking the tag of social housing to the compound or neighborhood?*
- *How can we provide a better environment for arriving refugees that encourages learning and integration while at the same time doing this in a sustainable way?*

01

KNOWLEDGE ON
REFUGEES AND
IMMIGRATION

GLOBAL SITUATION

As the conflict in the Middle East grows, the civil war in Syria rages, and other crises around the world continue, the refugee number increases rapidly. Based on the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) report, there are currently a shocking 65.3 million forcibly displaced people worldwide due to domestic violence, war, and natural disasters.⁹ The refugee population reached 21.3 million and the number of stateless people reached 10 million by the end of 2015. According to the 1951 Refugee Convention, signed by 144 state parties and amended by the 1967 Protocol, a refugee is differentiated from displaced and stateless persons.¹⁰ In this document, a refugee is defined as:

A person who is outside his/her country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion; and is unable or unwilling to avail himself/herself of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution.

Refugees often stay in camps or other types of temporary accommodations while in asylum in a host country, until with the help of UNHCR, another country

Figure 1: Where refugees come from, Data from UNHCR 2016

Figure 2: Facts and Figures about Refugees, Data from UNHCR 2016

Where the world's displaced people are being hosted

5.3 million
worldwide displaced people

Top hosting countries

agrees to admit them as permanent settlers. The approved (i.e. screened and accepted) refugees will receive permanent residency status at the point of arrival; however, refugees who can reach and apply inside Canada and claim permanent residency might face loads of paperwork and a long duration of time before they can be considered as permanent residents.

The aforementioned statistics highlight the necessity of a more efficient humanitarian solution. Architects can play a fundamental role in constructing this solution. Yet, prior to getting involved in that discussion, we need to understand where Canada stands on the issue of immigration and the refugee crisis; and for that reason, the next section will briefly review the history of immigration in Canada.

HISTORY OF IMMIGRATION IN CANADA

Canada has built a reputation over the years for being a vastly multicultural country. It is also known as an open-minded peace-keeping nation.¹¹ Canada values freedom and equality, respects cultural differences, freedom of religion, and freedom of speech.¹² Canada's policy is based on its democratic values and laws. These laws reflect the basic needs for human wellbeing. From the time when the first Canadians began to shape our identity as a country, Canadian immigration policy has changed significantly. Prior to the 1940s, immigrants who would fit the immigration criteria were mostly Anglophones. After 1945, Canada increasingly moved toward multiculturalism. After the 1970's, the refugee policy was progressively developed and its humanitarian components become more important in immigration policy.¹³ According to the Immigration Act from the 1970's, some of the key objectives of immigration have been:

b) To enrich and strengthen the cultural and social fabric of Canada, taking into account the federal and bilingual character of Canada" . [...] "f) To ensure that any person who seeks admission to Canada in either a permanent or temporary basis is subject to standards of admission that do not discriminate on grounds of race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, age or sex.¹⁴

The above mentioned objectives of immigration policy amplify Canada's historical stance on the acceptance of new peoples without preference of culture or discrimination of other races, religions, nationalities, etc. The current stance of Canada in response to humanitarian crisis relief could not be any different from its past, since this is what Canadians believe and have proved to be in recent years according to the UNHCR records.

Figure 3: Where Canada host refugees from, Data from UNHCR 2016

CANADA'S POSITION

Canada has been ranked second in the world by UNHCR in accepting and assisting refugees with their resettlement. History shows that Canada has always been one of the most suitable destinations to arrive and live. Canada has admitted over 1.2 million refugees since the end of the Second World War.¹⁵ Canada has responded well in most of the past international crises; for example, almost 37,500 Hungarians arrived in 1956–57, and nearly 69,000 “boat people” from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos settled in Canada between 1975 and 1980.¹⁶ Yet, there has been some criticism over Canada’s position prior to the Second World War,¹⁷ when Canada showed a lack of responsibility by admitting only 5,000 Jewish refugees in 1930’s.¹⁸ Still, Canada’s practice and reputation of being one of the world’s most peaceful nations is indisputable.

Last year, Canada resettled approximately 37,402 refugees by the end of December 2016.¹⁹ Knowing this, we ask, did Canada take enough refugees in 2016? Could Canada do more for its part to ease the world’s current refugee crisis?

There are two main aspects to these questions: the humanitarian and the economic. Considering the humanitarian aspect of the Syrian refugee crisis, when comparing Canada with some other countries with similar economic status like Germany and Switzerland, one may argue that Canada did not take enough refugees per capita; our land, population and economy is fairly comparable with Germany. On the other hand, there has been some controversy and opposition against Germany’s decision of admitting a large number of refugees to the country, which bloomed after explicit anti-immigration strategies

under the new US administration. The new US position in the aftermath of Germany's contribution, two very important poles of Western economy and power, have jeopardized and will slow down other countries' contribution on the immigration issue. Canada's policy seems to be unaffected by all this, and one main reason could be its need for immigration.

From an economic point of view, there is no doubt that Canada needs more immigration every year. Although other channels of immigration, like skilled worker programs, might create less financial burden to the government in the short run, we should not underestimate the economic contribution and the workforce that refugees can offer to the society.

OTTAWA, ONTARIO

Ottawa has a population of 870,250. It is a family oriented city and it is not crowded. Some surveys show that Ottawa performs well in quality of life. Ottawa has new and old communities, and is surrounded by a large and varied countryside. Ottawa's unique 203.5 square kilometers of crescent green belt and river and its strictly controlled real estate development creates and offers a variety of activities for families to enjoy. Ottawa is considered a multi-cultural city since one in six of Ottawa's population is a visible minority, and about one in five people were born in countries other than Canada.²⁰ Healthcare in Ottawa is of high quality. It may be difficult to get a family doctor when you first arrive, but the walk-in medical clinics are reasonably accessible.

A large crowd of people, mostly men and children, is shown in a grayscale, high-contrast photograph. The image is grainy and has a somber tone. Overlaid on the image is a red dotted outline that follows the geographical shape of Syria. The text is centered within the lower half of the image, within the area covered by the red outline.

1900
SYRIAN REFUGEES ARRIVED
IN OTTAWA BY THE END
OF 2016.

Figure 5: City of Ottawa Map, where Syrian refugees are located

History shows that the city of Ottawa has great potential to accept more refugees. Since November 4, 2015, the city has welcomed 1,516 Syrian refugees. Out of this number, 1,121 are sponsored by the Canadian government, 220 are sponsored by private groups, and 175 were privately sponsored through the blended visa office referral program, under which the government and sponsors split the cost for the refugees' first year in Canada.²¹

This map shows the 2016 locations of Syrian refugee welcoming centers (red marks), the locations where resettlement programs are based (Orange marks), and where the service providers (blue marks) are located in the city.²² The density of the blue marks at the core of the map/city suggests a preferable location for refugee resettlement programs and/or housing to be closer to the center of the city.

LEGEND

- Communities welcoming Syrian refugees
- Resettlement Assistance Program communities
- Service Provider Organizations

ENDNOTES

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OTTAWA ECONOMY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Ottawa's population is growing rapidly. Studies show an increase of 7.9% since 2001.²³ This growth rate is faster than Ontario's rate of 6.2% and Canada's rate of 4.8%.²⁴ The total population of the greater Ottawa-Gatineau area is 1,282,500 and Ottawa approximately holds two-thirds of this number.

Ottawa has been attractive to middle-class families and individuals since the mid-seventies.²⁵ However, with rising real-estate prices, this reality is changing intensely. In the 2015 CMHC report, the average rent in the city of Ottawa ranged from \$780 to \$800 for a bachelor apartment, \$970 to \$1,070 for a one-bedroom apartment, and \$1,170 to \$1,140 for a two-bedroom apartment.²⁶ According to the Ottawa Real Estate Board, the average sale price of a residential property sold in the Ottawa area was \$405,320 in November 2016, an increase of 6.5% since November 2015.²⁷ The average sale price for a condominium property was \$277,650, an increase of 1% since November 2015. Based on the city of Ottawa report, the average home price in Ottawa has been increasing.²⁸ In 2013, the average price for a new single family detached dwelling was \$510,000, an increase of 26.8% over the past decade.²⁹

OTTAWA ECONOMY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The 2003 Official Plan has projected that employment and population/housing unit densities will grow in some areas in Ottawa in the next 20 years. The City and many residents would like and hope to preserve the Greenbelt. Therefore, the pressure for intensification within the urban core, and with respect to the Greenbelt boundary, is expected to be very high as the city grows in the next five years.³⁰ According to the City, policy five “identifies the City of Ottawa’s target for residential intensification, being 38% in 2012-2016, 40% in 2017-2021, 42% in 2022-2026 and 44% in 2027-2031.”³¹ The City Affordable Housing Unit works with both private and not-for-profit organizations on the development of affordable housing programs.³² The Ottawa Action program envisions and plans to create an opportunity for developers, architects, and all other involved parties in housing, that are well designed and well managed, to build on a scale that ensures integration within existing neighborhoods in an effort to advance the objectives of the City’s Ten Year Housing and Homelessness Plan. This idea creates opportunities for mixed-income housing meant to benefit diverse groups such as seniors who are willing to downsize, multi-generational and extended families, young couples looking for starter homes, and refugee families looking to rent affordable housing.³³ In fact, the City is considering bundling fee relief and capital grants and in some cases, even using its own land.³⁴

The idea of mixed-income housing dates back to the 1960s and 1970s. As Jane Jacobs mentions in her book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, there is a strong connection between density and diversity.³⁵ With the city of Ottawa’s mandate

to increase density within the city's core as well as in the suburbs, what comes to mind is whether smaller scale design is the answer. A few other questions follow this thought: *Does city owned land offer new possibilities for developing more sustainable and practical communities within existing neighborhoods? Going further, can the insertion of these particular two groups also create more interesting neighborhoods?*

OTTAWA SOCIAL HOUSING

Affordable housing is always the main struggle for low-income families and no city or country is exempt from this struggle to some extent. Even without considering refugee housing, Ottawa is in need of more affordable housing. Although this project's focus is on refugee housing and proposing plans for their transition and integration in the society, affordable housing will remain one of the main aspects of this project when it comes to the permanent settlement and independence of these newcomers.

Ottawa's affordable housing situation is below average. A large portion of the population of Ottawa relies on affordable housing despite the fact that the city's household income ranks second after Calgary. Currently, social housing is operated and funded by the City's Housing Services branch. There are about 22,500 social housing units. Rental rates for those in receipt of rent-geared-to-income (RGI) assistance are typically set according to the renter's income, with households paying

no more than 30% of their income towards rent.³⁶ Currently, there are 51 independent non-profit housing organizations that operate social housing across the city and the demand for social housing is much greater than the supply.³⁷ At this point, there are approximately 10,000 households on the centralized waiting list for social housing which makes the wait times for social housing up to five years or more in Ottawa.³⁸ Based on the 2014 Census Canada Data, the graphic below shows the median total income, by family type in the city of Ottawa.³⁹

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees identifies three types of 'durable solutions' to protect refugees: voluntary resettlement to the country of origin after the crisis is over, local integration in the country of asylum, or resettlement to a third country.⁴⁰ Many studies have focused on durable solutions, but those solutions are not as straightforward or as simple as one would hope. Resettlement includes much more than simply moving 25,000 refugees away from the conflict in their homeland and into Canada. However, there is a more limited dialogue on integration, successful resettlement, and the challenge

HOME PURCHASE PRICES

- In Ottawa, the average house price, in 2012, was **\$352,610.**
- Yearly Required income to own a house in Ottawa is **\$74 000.**

Data from CMHC April 2013

\$ 102 020
ALL FAMILIES TYPES
AVERAGE INCOME

\$ 111 410
COUPLE FAMILIES
TWO INCOMES

\$ 49 840
LONE- PARENT FAMILIES
SINGLE INCOME

\$ 29 900
NOT IN CENSUS FAMILY
SINGLE INCOME - NO CHILDREN

\$ 25 000
REFUGEE FAMILIES
SINGLE INCOME

of re-creating home in a context such as Canada. When we compare low-income families in Ottawa with the fund that a refugee family receives, we can identify that many refugees will find themselves economically burdened and marginalized when it comes to making a new home here. This is in addition to the social and cultural challenges that have to be faced in a new country.

Usually a refugee's government assisted fund ends after a year or two and this creates a huge stress for families. Often these newcomers' language skills are not good enough to work full time and they have to continue with their schooling. On the other hand, for those who become qualified for municipal funding and assistance, they join the rest of the low-income families for which the aid is not enough. This highlights the importance and necessity of providing more social and affordable housing in the city of Ottawa and creating a more sustainable network that expedites refugee integration into the community.

HOUSING CONTINUUM - 2006

Sources: CMHC, OREB, OCHBA, City of Ottawa

Nasr Chamma, a licensed architect (Lebanon 2012), the founder of LESS-The Lab of Emergency and Sustainable Settlements, and a Former Board Member of Architecture for Refugees, has had a remarkable experience in the area of refugee camp design and is an expert in Emergency Architecture. He has been a member of various humanitarian organizations and NGOs, including UNHCR-Jordan, where he focused his research and projects on Syrian refugee camps. He also studied and analyzed the living conditions of other refugee camps in Lebanon, Turkey, France, Netherlands, Germany, while currently working with 'Urban Refugees' in Ottawa, Canada.

During my meeting with Chamma,⁴¹ he raised his concerns about jobs opportunities and supporting refugees in order to be more independent. He believes that providing accommodation for refugees or financially assisting them for only a short period is not a sustainable method. He pointed out the importance of evaluating refugees' previous professions and skills, and providing suitable language and other vocational classes based on that evaluation in order to speed up the process of their independency. For instance, a truck driver does not require high level of language proficiency to start working and generating income; this could be made possible with some basic language training needed for driving license credentials and some assistance to find the job. Another example would be a carpenter who might just need some basic communication skills and some introduction to safety codes and regulations to start a job. Demanding the same language training for everyone may slow down the independence process. As days go by, refugees may lose confidence in themselves and in what they used to do and sometimes those jobs might seem entirely unreachable.

In order to speed up the process of settlement, independence, integration, and contribution in society, the concepts of asylum seeker and immigration need to be understood in terms of a carrier and/or arrival of knowledge, skills and cultures, rather than as a burden on society. All parties who are involved in this process are responsible for planning accordingly in order to fulfill the ultimate goal of the process. As for the architects' role, they need to design spaces that provide networking opportunities and promote interaction with the rest of the community.

This will encourage social and cultural exchanges between Canadians and those who are becoming Canadian in the near future. Based on Chamma's recent interviews with arriving refugees (Syrian newcomers) in Ottawa, he believes most of them prefer to start working right away rather than receive financial assistance from the government; in other words, all they really need is to have a job where they can support their family with dignity. These stories all acknowledge Chamma's view towards refugee identity and his definition of the refugee in its simplest formulation. Here, I include Chamma's post on 'Architecture for Refugees' Facebook page:

International Definition: "Refugees are victims of war who had to flee their countries due to a conflict, violence, persecution, discrimination or disorder. They are defined and protected in international law, and must not be expelled or returned to situations where their life and freedom are at risk... They are provided with services such as water, food, shelter, (basic) healthcare and (basic) education [...]"

My definition—[Article 00]: "Most of refugees are skilled people who used to run businesses and have professions, some of them have high education, spectacular qualifications and talents. They do have a wide history and a rich culture as well as they used to live with full dignity and freedom, where they felt belonging and had the leadership of their lives. Being called 'Refugees' doesn't mean they have to be dependent on humanitarian aid and "donors' mercy." It doesn't mean they could be told what to do or how or where to live. It doesn't mean we can design their lives and decide their future!

Refugees do not need our mercy! But rather they need to have the space and opportunity to continue what they used to do prior the war; to do what they know! The policies and 'complex resettlement processes' of hosting governments (including developed countries) are not helping refugees but doubling their crisis, wasting their time and making them forget about their desired future.

I personally do see refugees as educated people, as students, as doctors, architects, construction workers, farmers, carpenters, bakers, bankers, hairdressers, etc. I see them as skilled humans with unique stories and backgrounds, not numbers. Today, we have to see every single refugee out of the 23.1 million refugees worldwide as a skilled worker and the refugee groups as working forces that can boost economies and change countries' situations, mainly the developing ones. Today we have to think of refugees as an opportunity and must help them be in the right place where they can perform at their best."

Jan 28, 2017

ENDNOTES

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³⁵ Jacobs, J. (1961). *The death and life of great American cities*. New York: Random House.

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³⁸ Ibid.

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⁴⁰ DURABLE SOLUTIONS. (2005). Retrieved December 19, 2016, from <http://www.unhcr.org/4371fa4f2.pdf>

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03

DESIGN
CONSIDERATIONS

This research will examine a few topics in order to find architectural solutions for the design of appropriate housing for newcomers and seniors. The studied topics are:

- Cultural and Generational Issues
- Environmental Psychology
- Universal Design

CULTURAL AND GENERATIONAL ISSUES

The effects of culture on the design of housing and how it can improve the quality of life of refugees is the subject of discussion in this section. All cultures have established sets of beliefs that constitute the core values and moral laws for the people who belong to that particular culture. Culture influences the way we live and the way we perceive the environment around us. Culture touches every aspect of our lives, the way we eat, sleep, live and behave, and the relationships we have with one another. Cultural influences play a vital role in housing design and it is important to keep this in consideration as one of the main aspects of this project. For example, most Syrian refugees are Muslims; in their culture and religion, women need more privacy since their body and hair cannot be exposed to other non-related men. This will make it difficult for families who have to share a home with other families. In some cultures, grandparents live with their children and their families; this will make the size of their families larger and therefore it is not possible to accommodate them all in one small unit. In some cases, these families have to be separated in different homes, and that makes it very difficult for parents who simultaneously take care of their elderly parents and their children. These anxieties and the lack of peace of mind that results can have a negative impact on mental health and environmental psychology. The concept of housing design for two groups with different requirements highlights a few interesting questions that this study could ask: *What are the common norms in different cultures? How can diversity contribute to the architectural form and furthermore, is it possible to create space that has multi-functional proposes based on different cultures?*

ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

The effect of environmental psychology on design is another subject that needs to be considered. For this purpose, it is important to understand how environmental psychology can influence refugees' health status. In this project, the focus of environmental psychology is to find a way to ease pain, heal, and help refugees overcome the negative psychological effects of difficulties and dark memories.

As previously mentioned, refugees experience emotional states of anxiety and trauma during their displacement and relocation to a new country. They lose their home and everything they had and worked hard for. They lose their sense of belonging and the comfort of their home. Some of them lose their family members during the process of escape and displacement. Some have to witness tragedies that are impossible to confront in a normal situation. These bitter, hostile memories, difficult conditions, and the challenges ahead will have negative psychological effects on them. Some of these experiences will have long term and sometimes even lifelong affects. Parents and guardians experience even more distress as they have to fight for their children's comfort and future. The majority will suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Recent quantitative research shows that there is a direct relation between refugee camp experience and mental suffering.⁴² It is also evident that the more stress refugees have in the camp, the higher the risk that they suffer from psychological stress.⁴³ Homes are important to give us comfort but engaging with the community is also important. Thus, creating an environment that helps them face their anxiety and encourages them to be involved with the rest of the community is essential. It is necessary to recognize what constitutes an appropriate design in order to minimize these health risks.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN

A large portion of refugee populations are disabled. Studies estimate that about seven to ten percent of the refugee population is considered as disabled.⁴⁴ The majority of disabilities happen during the displacement process and some become disabled during their time at the camps. Universal design will have a huge impact on the design of refugee housing as well as senior housing.

Figure 6

The key point here is to create places where all groups can belong. This concept does not apply only to the design of a building, but is also very important to the design of our cities. As Avi Friedman mentions, building is just one aspect of having a comfortable place to live. The relationship of the building with other surrounding buildings and with the surrounding environment is also important in order to make a space comfortable.⁴⁵

ENDNOTES

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⁴⁴ Mirza, M. (2011). Disability and Humanitarianism in Refugee Camps: the case for a travelling supranational disability praxis. *Third World Quarterly*, 32(8), 1527-1536.

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Figure 7

Figure 8

Figure 9

WOODWARD'S REDEVELOPMENT BY GREGORY HENRIQUEZ

The redevelopment project of Woodward's and its neighborhood, in the Gastown area of Vancouver, is a great example of the force of the urbanization process via collective investments and the power of human resources. It is also a perfect example of how people and community engagement can contribute to the social production of a renewed space, changing the circumstances and environment of a neighborhood. After the fall of Woodward's department store in 1993, the space remained vacant for eleven years. The building was taken over by squatters, and called "Woodward's squat." Since this store was playing a crucial role in the social life of residents, its fall caused area deterioration, such that the neighborhood struggled with a variety of social problems like drug abuse, homelessness, and unemployment.

There were a few attempts to recover the area through different redevelopment plans, but they did not work. What helped the success of Woodward's latest redevelopment project in 2005 was the power of special relationships brought to the project by architect Gregory Henriquez and his team. But, the key to the success of this project was the power of dialogue between architects, developers, and the community groups who came together and understood the neighborhood's social needs.⁴⁶ The development included office spaces to bring the work force to the area. They

included a grocery store, followed by a drugstore to revitalize the economic force. The project also included a university in the design process to bring the energy and power of younger people to the area, which could, in turn, bring the area to life 24 hours/7 days a week.⁴⁷

The Woodward's redevelopment project is a mixed-use, mixed-income, four tower development with a shared podium and public realm. By providing a wide range of uses, the redevelopment project helped reestablish the area as an important destination and a desirable place to live while also serving the needs of the poor and disenfranchised.⁴⁸ The project included a communal area to invite other visitors and it became the drive behind the purchase of market based housing in the complex. Eighty percent of the project was supported by the market based housing section. The complex incorporated approximately 530 marketable housing units, 125 singles non-marketable housing units, and 75 non-marketable family housing units that run in conjunction with the Portland Hotel Society, developed by Ian Gillespie.⁴⁹ When the presale started in 2006, the units sold in matter of hours. In any redevelopment project, urban renewal is a challenge when balanced demographics is one of the aims of the project. As expected by the planners, the success of the project accelerated the growth of the area.

The site is designed around a main atrium open to the public. Above the entrance, there is a huge piece of art representing the Gastown riots of 1971, which marks the history of the site and Woodward's squats. Art is a common language shared

between different social classes and it was a smart way to bond and blend people of different statuses. Henriquez says: "Buildings are like a fossil and fossils don't tell stories. However, the poetry is able to tell a story over time and will be interpreted and become significant over time." ⁵⁰

Figure 10: The interior of Woodward's Building.

ISS OF BC WELCOME HOUSE CENTRE

BY GREGORY HENRIQUEZ

Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia (ISS of BC), Henriquez Partners Architects, and Terra Housing worked together and developed a 58,000 square foot facility for centralized services to immigrants and refugees with or without legal status in one complex in Metro Vancouver, the first of its kind in the world.⁵¹ The complex is very close to one of the main train stations, the Commercial-Broadway SkyTrain, and has great access to all major bus routes. This will allow refugees and immigrants to have convenient access to the city and downtown center. It also means that the facility is fairly accessible for those refugees and immigrants that are living outside of the complex.

The “Welcome House Centre” is a regional service hub bringing together a unique combination of short-term and longer-term transitional housing and targeted services in one location to streamline access to care.⁵² Having all services under one roof, it has made the transitional process less daunting for immigrants to meet their needs. The Gold LEED facility has eighteen housing units and up to 138 beds through modular bed and unit arrangements, which can be reconfigured to create socially responsive housing. There is also a community kitchen, a primary health care clinic, a multilingual trauma support and treatment center, a law clinic, a Vancity Credit Union banking kiosk, and employment assistance resources. English language classes for adults are taught within seven classrooms and a computer lab. In addition, a youth drop-in and resource space, child minding spaces (including an outdoor playground and family area), a food bank, a second hand clothing room,

Figure 11: ISSofBC Welcome Centre

and a rooftop garden are also included in the complex. The space also has multiple meeting rooms and designated office areas for ISS of BC staff and multilingual settlement support staff which also includes settlement, employment, and volunteering services.

What is more inspiring and interesting about this successful project is that, according to Chris Friesen, some of those who liaised for the New Welcome House and a number of construction workers who worked on the project were previously refugees themselves, and were directly assisted by the organization's existing Welcome House at 530 Drake Street in downtown Vancouver.⁵³ For instance, one of the construction workers arrived in Vancouver with his family after fleeing Myanmar in September 2007. Today, these former refugees are all productive members of Canadian society.

Figure 12

Figure 13

STARTBLOK RIEKERHAVEN

BY DE KEY HOUSING ORGANIZATION

Startblok is a prefabricated housing block in Amsterdam, Netherlands, developed by Socius Wonen and the municipality of Amsterdam housing organization, De Key, at Riekerhaven, a former sports-ground.⁵⁵ This project offers a unique approach to accommodating two different types of young groups, ages between 18 and 28. The first group consists of young refugees from around the world with approved status, and the second one is a group of youngsters from Netherlands looking for affordable housing who are also willing to be actively involved with the refugee group. Being open-minded, accepting diversity, and the ability to get involved with people from different backgrounds, cultures and ethnicities were some of the factors for selecting youths for the second group. The life in Startblok's multi-cultural housing became so interesting that the number of applications from young Dutch groups grew to three times the number that the organization could offer.

This housing project offers 565 modular housing units with low-priced rent. There are 463 private studios and 102 private rooms in multi-person apartments. The studios are about 23 square meters and have their own kitchens and bathrooms. Each floor has a communal living space for social activities. There are two large green outdoor areas in the complex.⁵⁶

The Startblok is managed by its own residents. Almost 10% of tenants are involved in keeping the project running.⁵⁷ The complex has two managers from each living group and they are responsible for ensuring that everyone is comfortable, safe,

Figure 14: STARTBLOK RIEKERHAVEN, Court Yard

and also following the house rules to make the living environment pleasant. The group managers receive small monthly salaries which make the house sustainable and self-managed. There are also five social managers amongst the tenants. They take care of the social and various other activities as well as day-to-day operations, while also supporting the group managers to make sure the residents comply with hygiene, safety, and housing rules.⁵⁸ Basically, their main goal is to bond residents in the common cause of caring for their living environment.

This complex created 'The Buddy Project' for those who have the same interests, dreams, and hobbies; they can exchange their knowledge and skills and support each other to reach their goals no matter where they come from. Starblock is not just about affordable housing for youths; this project aims to create a solid foundation for all younger generations to prepare their future in diverse and multi-cultural communities.⁵⁹

Figure 15

Figure 16

ENDNOTES

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⁵⁶ Startblok Riekerhaven Amsterdam | Building a Future together. (n.d.). Retrieved March 21, 2017, from <http://www.startblok.amsterdam/en/>

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

05

UNDERSTANDING
THE LOCAL CONTEXT

In order to make all the services fairly accessible to newcomers, finding an appropriate site is crucial. The site should be located in a place with enough activities in the neighborhood to give residents the opportunity to socialize, engage, and be entertained. Safety and accessibility to public transport are two main factors to be considered since it may take a few years before most newcomers can own a vehicle. The chosen site should have room for growth and density to eliminate the chance of becoming an isolated imbalanced demographic area in the future.

Figure 17: What make the place great?

SITE

Bayview Yards is situated at the Nation's Capital, Ottawa. The site is adjacent to the Hintonburg-Mechanicsville neighborhood just west of the city's downtown center area, between Lebreton Flat and the Tunney's Pasture governmental complex. From the North, Bayview Yards is attached to the Ottawa River Parkway, OC Transpo's Transitway to the South, Bayview road to the West, and the CP railway to the East.

For many years, Bayview Yards has been recognized as a brownfield site because of different types of industrial and municipal activities in the area, e.g. a portion of this site was used by the City for snow dumping.⁶⁰ The site has great potential to grow because of its greenery and proximity to the Ottawa River. In the City's Official Plan, the site is considered a "Mixed-Use Center" and will be part of the City Council's "Smart Growth Vision" plan.⁶¹ The site could easily accommodate several mixed-use buildings while still preserving the existing Public Works building.

EXISTING BAYVIEW BUILDING

LEBRETON FLATS

MECHANICSVILLE

Bayview Yards

Bayview
Station

LaRoche
Park

Tom Brown
Arena

HINTONBURG

Tunnney's
Pasture

1991

1999

2005

Figure 18: Aerial map from Geoottawa

2008

2011

2014

HISTORY AND HERITAGE DESIGNATION AND CONSERVATION

The City Works Building #4 (7 Bayview St.) was constructed from 1941 to 1947 on the landfill from the former Nepean Bay.⁶² During this period, the building was used as a warehouse and machinery storage facilities, repair shops, and offices. Although the City Work Yards hosted many buildings in this era, most of these buildings have since been demolished.⁶³

In 2015, the No.7 Bayview Yard building was designated as a heritage site; in 2016, the City of Ottawa invested almost \$30 million on an adaptive re-use of this building as an innovation center. The Innovation Centre is ground-breaking, the first hub of its kind in the Ottawa Region. A central point for job creation, this one-stop business acceleration shop serves as basecamp for some of Ottawa's greatest homegrown technology talent, capabilities, and companies.⁶⁴

The innovation center is a great asset to this project as refugees could use the resources and network that it offers.

Figure 22: The Prince of Wales Railway Bridge

TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

This neighborhood is in walking or cycling distance of many governmental services, recreation sites, and the downtown core. This will make the commute affordable for its residents and increases the chance of local employment opportunities. The site also has easy access to different OC Transpo bus routes and the O-train station. The Bay view station is also part of the City's new east-west Light Rail Train project and is expected to be completed by 2018.⁶⁵ The site has easy access to the main commercial center on Wellington Street West, where residents can shop or dine. The farmers' market at Parkdale is also nearby, where residents can have access to fresh food and produce from May to November.⁶⁶

Figure 23: Future Bayview Station

Figure 24: Waterfront Bicycle Pathway

OVERVIEW OF LEBRETON FLATS DEVELOPMENTS

LeBreton Flats is located in the same neighborhood as the project's site, Bayview yards. The future of LeBreton Flats will have a direct impact on the future of the neighborhood.

In 2004, Claridge began development of a section of LeBreton Flats east of Booth Street; and have since built two mid-rise condo buildings and some townhouses. The original plan was to build 850 homes and Claridge proposed to build 197 affordable rental units by 2020. Since then, Claridge has built around 500 units.⁶⁷

LeBreton is undergoing major transformations and receiving a lot of attention from different developers and other parties. On January 9th, 2017, the Claridge Development proposed four new towers ranging from 25 to 55 stories for East LeBreton Flats.⁶⁸ The development group asked the City and the National Capital Commission (NCC) to alter the current zoning (which only allows a maximum of ten stories) and the official planning to allow taller buildings, and to create an aqueduct park. The Claridge official stated that the new plan calls for retailers on site, grocery stores, and 1,650 residential units.⁶⁹

CLARIDGE DEVELOPMENT
NEW TOWERS PROPOSAL

Figure 25

The Claridge Development is just one portion of this massive redevelopment project that will eventually transform LeBreton Flats. Another development is being conducted by RendezVous Group, who won the proposals for the area west of Booth Street and started negotiations with the NCC. This group envisions developing their plan in three phases, including a hockey arena, a public library, retailers, offices, and 4,400 residential units.

These developments will attract all kinds of different people, businesses, and opportunities to the area and Bayview Yards. The new settlements in LeBreton Flats and the surrounding area will create more job opportunities and diversity in the neighborhood.

RENDEZVOUS GROUP PROPOSAL

Figure 26

DEMOGRAPHICS

HINTONBURG-MECHANICSVILLE NEIGHBOURHOOD

GENDER

MARITAL STATUS

AGE DISTRIBUTION

OWNERSHIP

BUILDING TYPE

IMMIGRATION STATUS

546

Total population in
Bayview's
neighbourhood

\$64,556

Average Household
Income

ENDNOTES

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⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² The Innovation Centre at Bayview Yards. (n.d.). Retrieved March 17, 2017, from <http://www.thebayview-yards.com/#welcome-to-ICBY>

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⁶⁵ Jacques, C., Kemp, J., Schramm, K., & Shrubsole, M. (2015, February 15). Adaptive Re-use of 7 Bayview Road. Retrieved March 22, 2017, from <http://creativeneighbourhoods.ca/reports>

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⁶⁷ Chianello, J. (2017, January 09). Plans to double homes on eastern part of LeBreton Flats to be unveiled tonight. Retrieved January 09, 2017, from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/claridge-lebreton-flats-new-development-1.3921496>

⁶⁸ Ibid

⁶⁹ Ibid.

DESIGN SOLUTIONS AND STRATEGY

The concept is to create arrival and departure points for refugees where they can heal, live, learn, exchange culture, and improve their language skills as well as work until they gain confidence and build the tools to become independent.

This complex will be a regional service hub bringing together a combination of transitional housing and essential services under one roof to ease access to all existing services through a mixed-use site. As indicated in the 'case study' chapters, the ISS of BC Welcome Centre in Vancouver is one of the first kinds of this type of services in Canada. What is unique about this thesis is to create a sustainable community within the existing community in order to speed up the integration process through designing spaces that create opportunities for more social interactions with other groups. The design will promote a gradual community involvement, a therapeutic process that does not resemble any institution and functions without adding any labels to the building or the neighborhood.

HOW?

Upon arriving, refugees will be accommodated in the temporary housing units that are flexible in design and can be alternated depending on family size. The designated first stage of housing is for four to eight weeks. This time will allow officials and volunteers to complete the necessary paper work. Within the same complex, there will be a medical center that can help them with initial needs and cares, and possibly registration for the healthcare system.

Learn the language with Canadian people

Neighbours will help you to get to know Canadian customs and culture

Everyone have their privacy

In case any further healthcare treatment is required, they can be referred to hospitals and other medical facilities in the city. Having a medical center on site will reduce the newcomers' transitional anxiety and put at ease those affected by language barrier trauma.

During this temporary settlement period, new residents will be evaluated based on language proficiency level and the existing experience they gained from previous occupations and professions in their home country. These evaluations will help planners to understand what type and level of language training newcomers need and/or whether they can start working immediately. There will be allocated spaces for training and classrooms for English/French language learners on site.

Live with people who are open-minded, wiser and willing to assist you.

Live where everyone else lives, close to jobs, schools, shops etc.

Have a safe, cosy environment and full of love where you can start your new life in Canada.

The design will accommodate small branches of existing refugee organizations in the city of Ottawa like the Catholic Centre for Immigrants, Matthew House Ottawa, and Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization (OCIS). These on-site branches will create opportunities for those organizations to make their network stronger through exchanging ideas and resources within the same complex. Having offices and multiple meeting spaces will help employees, volunteers, and newcomers to share their experiences, knowledge, and skills.

During the second stage of their settlement, which features more permanent accommodations (1-2 years), newcomers will be accommodated in mixed-income residential units to create opportunities for social interaction. A portion of these units will be affordable market based housing, mainly targeting seniors, while some will be non-market based social housing units for refugees, seniors, single parents, and other low income families.

Based on the city of Ottawa's official and secondary plans, the city aims to transform Bayview Road to a main street. Currently, this neighborhood is lacking in retail stores and businesses. In response to community requests, grocery stores, restaurants and cafes, community gardens, and playgrounds are part of the plan for this project. As part of the community involvement plan, all businesses in the complex will be required to hire a suitable percentage of their staff from the newcomers.

Bayview courtyard is a unique site and the goals of this project are to respect the exiting fabric of the neighborhood, its

history, its nature, and the beautiful surroundings. This project is about regenerating a community as well as rejuvenating the connection between the community and nature; thus, providing suitable accessibility that connects the site to the water front and the surrounding nature physically and visually is on the agenda. The site will also be accessible from all sides through pedestrian-only streets. There will be underground parking spaces to encourage visitors, yet only in limited numbers in order to promote public transportation for the majority of residents. There will be dedicated bicycle storage as well as a few bicycle parking spaces around the complex.

As Tania Concko stated at the Carleton University Forum Lecture Series in 2012-2013, building high is not always the answer to achieve high density.⁷⁰ Architects and urban planners should always pay attention to the relation of vertical volumes with their surroundings. Concko believes that to achieve intensification we do not need to build tall. We can achieve our goal of intensification by creating a series of compact and collective spaces. This is what my project intends to achieve.

Most often, high rise buildings are not welcoming and friendly. Since the number of occupants is larger, residents can easily avoid each other and there is less interaction within the complex. This is something that my project aims to avoid while designing spaces that can maximize interactions among people. The challenge is how to provide all of the above programs with the appropriate density without designing too high.

Another important factor that needs to be kept in mind throughout the planning process of this complex is the significance of the commercial and/or marketable amenities and housing. For instance, there should be an adequate number of market based housing units and commercial spaces in the project in order to finance the rest of the non-market based housing units which make the project possible. Another financial support for this project could be the 2017 Federal budget for the City of Ottawa, which promises for a higher allowance for affordable housing in Ottawa. Beginning on March 22nd, 2017, the government intends to spend \$202 million over eleven years to make surplus federal lands and buildings available to housing providers at low or no cost to develop affordable housing as part of the new national strategy.⁷¹ The Bayview site is one of the surplus lands owned by the City of Ottawa and this can be an investment asset for the City's contribution on the development project when dealing with other parties and developers.

DESIGN PROCESS

CENTRALISED
COMMUNITY

DECENTRALISED
COMMUNITY

DISTRIBUTED
COMMUNITY

EXPLORING CIRCULATIONS

MULTI-FUNCTIONAL SPACES

EXPLORING
PUBLIC PATH-
WAYS AND AC-
CESS TO THE
COMPOUND

EXPLORING PUBLIC PATHWAYS, SIDEWALKS, BICYCLE LANES

These diagrams are showing how low-profile, i.e. grounded, structural designs spreading across the land while keeping lively green spaces among them.

CIRCULATION

- Car Routes - - - - -
- Bicycle Routes - - - - -

COMPLEX CONNECTIONS

PEDESTRIAN
PATH ONLY

LANDSCAPE

HOUSING
NETWORK

PUBLIC INFORMATION &
SUPPORT SERVICES

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES &
NETWORKING

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

HOME

Job

LANGUAGE
Education

SOCIAL
RELATIONS

INTEGRATION!

SCHEMATIC SECTION

MULTI-FUNCTIONAL SPACES

OUTSIDE IN AND INSIDE OUT STRATEGY

The openness of the spaces creates an inviting environment for non-residents, visitors, shoppers and all those who are driving/passing by the neighborhood. Despite that, green rooftops and some residential courtyards and lower-traffic spaces gives the residents the privacy they might need.

Different forms of connections have been considered among all buildings and spaces in order to maximize social interactions and accessibility for all residents to all areas of the compound.

This image is a view to commercial spaces and retail stores along with walkways and cyclist lanes that connects the waterfront area to the neighborhood and all its potentials.

Yoga rooms, art studios and other activity rooms have open space designs to be more welcoming and inviting to the public and residents.

Multi-purposes outdoor structures are considered for all kind of outdoor activities, e.g. local market, exhibitions, group dance classes, festivals, celebrations etc.

This image shows the highest density of residential buildings which are also the highest vertical density in this compound. Green rooftops, also visible in this view, create private areas accessible only to residents.

This image shows the community garden which is open to community as well as residents.

SITE MODEL

CONCLUSION

This thesis began with the idea of designing affordable housing for refugees. As the research developed, the complexity of refugee problems became more evident and profound. The conventional view of architecture has changed drastically in the past century. The art of architecture goes beyond creating buildings that amaze us with their technology, aesthetic, or functionality. Architects design buildings that can touch souls, give greater joys and comfort to their occupants' lives, and in some cases, heal their pain and motivate them in their journey. It is the architect's responsibility to create places that communicate with the human spirit and affect and develop the condition in which people react to their life experiences. These places are crucial and more important when it comes to vulnerable members of a society who require care to recover from a trauma or stress that haunts them.

There is no perfect and concrete solution for the refugee crisis. There are many factors involved in the success of this kind of project. It requires the power of collective investment, strategic architectural planning, and a joint agreement among several parties. Although in most projects, budgetary aspects are considered the driving force, this type of project shows that the involvement of community and inter-relational dialogue is an equally significant force for success. For example, Woodward's Redevelopment can be taken as a role model for any major project, e.g. architectural, social etc., as one can clearly witness the power of collaboration and collective, positive, and forward thinking between different groups and officials.

Home away from home could be one proposal for refugees among other great ones that exist for the newcomers to integrate into their new communities. *Home away from home* proposes to create a space filled with porosity and spatial connections suggesting human relations, interactions, and opportunities for everyone, especially helping and supporting refugees to more quickly acquire independence and make their contributions to the well-being of the society to which they now belong as Canadian residents.⁷² As Spiro Kostof poignantly states, any building has a cause and architecture 'is a social act.'⁷³ Therefore, when one designs for a specific community, one must act sensibly so that the design will not look or feel anything like a space for exclusion. Architecture is not and cannot be a treatment, but it can most significantly become part of a healing process, i.e. easing distress while paving the road to a fast and healthy integration.

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APPENDICES

WHERE REFUGEE GO TO

1. Turkey	2,541,352	63. Libya	9,305	83. Czech Rep.	3,644
2. Pakistan	1,561,162	64. Malawi	9,019	84. Costa Rica	3,616
3. Lebanon	1,070,854	65. Guinea	8,839	85. Armenia	3,319
4. Iran	979,437	66. Brazil	8,707	86. Ukraine	3,273
5. Ethiopia	736,086	67. Guinea-Bissau	8,684	87. Argentina	3,207
6. Jordan	664,118	68. Somalia	8,081	88. Mexico	2,923
7. Kenya	553,912	69. Gambia	7,854	89. Romania	2,598
8. Uganda	477,187	70. Central African Rep.	7,330	90. Eritrea	2,549
9. Dem. Rep. of the Congo	383,095	71. Malta	7,075	91. Japan	2,474
10. Chad	369,540	72. Cyprus	7,067	92. Panama	2,322
11. Cameroon	327,121	73. Zimbabwe	6,950	93. Botswana	2,130
12. Germany	316,115	74. Bosnia and Herzegovina	6,798	94. Côte d'Ivoire	1,980
13. Russia	314,506	75. Venezuela	6,694	95. Tajikistan	1,969
14. Sudan	309,639	76. Ireland	6,125	96. Chile	1,849
15. China	301,052	77. Indonesia	5,957	97. Belarus	1,809
16. Iraq	277,701	78. Spain	5,798	98. Montenegro	1,771
17. United States of America	273,202	79. Mozambique	5,622	99. Namibia	1,737
18. France	273,126	80. Papua New Guinea	4,929	100. Peru	1,488
19. Afghanistan	237,069	81. Hungary	4,393	101. North Korea	1,463
20. Yemen	267,173	82. Morocco	3,908		
21. South Sudan	263,016				
22. Egypt	212,500				
23. Tanzania	211,845				
24. India	201,381				
25. Sweden	169,520				
26. Rwanda	144,737				
27. Canada	135,888				
28. Niger	124,721				
29. United Kingdom	123,067				
30. South Africa	121,645				
31. Italy	118,047				
32. Algeria	94,182	46. Belgium	35,314		
33. Malaysia	94,030	47. Burkina Faso	34,017		
34. Netherlands	88,536	48. Nepal	32,667		
35. Switzerland	73,336	49. Bangladesh	31,958		
36. Austria	72,216	50. Denmark	27,326		
37. Thailand	55,145	51. Zambia	26,447		
38. Burundi	53,363	52. Togo	21,953		
39. Ecuador	53,191	53. Syria	21,113		
40. Mauritania	51,394	54. Djibouti	19,365		
41. Norway	50,389	55. Greece	18,489		
42. Congo, Republic of	44,955	56. Ghana	17,406		
43. Australia	36,917	57. Bulgaria	16,557		
44. Liberia	36,505	58. Mali	15,917		
45. Serbia and Kosovo	35,332	59. Angola	15,555		
		60. Senegal	14,392		
		61. Poland	14,065		
		62. Finland	12,703		

Figure 26: 2016 refugee statistics from the UNHCR

WHERE REFUGEE COME FROM

0 1000 10000 100000 1000000 5000000

1. Syria	4,850,792
2. Afghanistan	2,662,954
3. Somalia	1,123,022

4. South Sudan	778,629	11. Burundi	292,764
5. Sudan	622,463	12. Rwanda	286,366
6. Dem. Rep. of the Congo	541,291	13. Pakistan	277,344
7. Central African Rep.	471,104	14. Iraq	261,107
8. Eritrea	379,766	15. China	212,911
9. Ukraine	321,014	16. Myanmar	198,685
10. Viet Nam	313,155	17. Mali	154,211
		18. Nigeria	152,136
		19. Sri Lanka	121,435

20. Palestinian	97,973	36. Botswana	18,748
21. Colombia	90,836	37. Egypt	17,930
22. Western Sahara	90,541	38. Bhutan	17,720
23. Ethiopia	85,834	39. Guinea	17,005
24. Iran	84,949	40. Yemen	15,896
25. Côte d'Ivoire	71,105	41. Tibetan	15,071
26. Russia	67,050	42. Chad	14,940
27. Turkey	59,559	43. Congo, Republic of	14,781
28. Serbia and Kosovo	38,273	44. El Salvador	14,778
29. Haiti	34,774	45. Cambodia	12,799
30. Mauritania	34,664	46. Bangladesh	12,172
31. Croatia	33,451	47. Angola	11,869
32. Ghana	22,978	48. Mexico	11,333
33. Zimbabwe	21,344	49. Armenia	11,218
34. Senegal	21,280	50. Cameroon	10,581
35. Bosnia and Herzegovina	18,748	51. Albania	10,421
		52. Guatemala	10,284

53. Liberia	9,987	79. Mongolia	2,199
54. India	9,881	80. Burkina Faso	2,148
55. Azerbaijan	9,712	81. Jamaica	1,868
56. Indonesia	9,261	82. Jordan	1,841
57. Nepal	8,865	83. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	1,823
58. Togo	8,785	84. Macedonia	1,776
59. Gambia	8,491	85. Morocco	1,771
60. Kenya	7,905	86. Romania	1,735
61. Venezuela	7,456	87. Tunisia	1,568
62. Lao People's Dem. Rep.	7,363	88. Namibia	1,476
63. Honduras	6,844	89. Nicaragua	1,476
64. Georgia	6,498	90. Guinea-Bissau	1,471
65. Uganda	6,316	91. Hungary	1,443
66. Tanzania	6,221	92. Niger	1,390
67. Libya	6,085	93. Poland	1,297
68. Cuba	5,862	94. Czech Rep.	1,285
69. Sierra Leone	4,895	95. Bulgaria	1,269
70. United States of America	4,832	96. North Korea	1,103
71. Lebanon	4,369	97. Kuwait	1,085
72. Uzbekistan	4,205	98. Djibouti	1,069
73. Belarus	4,124	99. Saint Lucia	1,011
74. Peru	3,599	100. Ecuador	1,010
75. Algeria	3,490		
76. Kyrgyzstan	2,502		
77. Moldova	2,289		
78. Kazakhstan	2,267		

Figure 27: 2016 refugee statistics from the UNHCR

WHERE REFUGEE COME M IN CANADA

1.	Syria	30,862	16.	Burundi	2,074
2.	Colombia	13,666	17.	Ethiopia	2,047
3.	China	11,415	18.	Turkey	1,991
4.	Haiti	8,807	19.	Iraq	1,892
5.	Sri Lanka	8,807	20.	Eritrea	1,811
6.	Pakistan	7,207	21.	Rwanda	1,620
7.	Mexico	6,414	22.	Cuba	1,512
8.	United State of America	4,573	23.	El Salvador	1,403
9.	Nigeria	4,502	24.	Ukraine	1,314
10.	India	3,712	25.	Nepal	1,304
11.	DR. Congo	3,316	26.	Albania	1,243
12.	Afghanistan	2,890	27.	Russia	1,178
13.	Iran	2,639	28.	Bangladesh	1,112
14.	Somalia	2'531	29.	Cameroon	1,103
15.	Zimbabwe	2,368	30.	Peru	1,080

Figure 28: 2016 refugee statistics, Canada, UNHCR

PRELIMINARY DESIGN PHASE I

Initial plan: At early stages, this project tended to focus on affordable and modular housings in a mix-communities residential area.

Site: LeBreton Flats. Creating a dynamic community seemed to be a challenge considering the location and history of the area, i.e. being left out for years as a contaminated area.

Why change: As the project's plan developed, a need for expansion of the programs and built area came to light. The initial selected land did not have the potential of expansion that was required. Also, war museum, located across LeBreton flats, could be a constant reminder of war for refugees who were supposed to be residing in these housings. This was an additional reason for moving the location of the site.

LYON

20 MIN

10 MIN

LIBRARY AND
ARCHIVES

SAINT VINCENT
HOSPITAL

DOMINICAN
UNIVERSITY

PIMIS

WAR MUSEUM

Site Lot Line:
14190 SQM.
46555 SQFT.

LeBreton Flats
Development

LRT Stations

250m & 500m
Diameters Walk

PRELIMINARY DESIGN PHASE II

Site: Bayview Courtyard.

Revised plan: The idea of a compound involving different programs came to existence at this stage. This plan was following the structural shape of the existing historical building, i.e. the Invocation Center; and that consideration limited the connectivity of the structures. Connection to the waterfront was not considered at this stage.

Change: The site remained unchanged, however the program and approaches to a more organic design that merges with the surrounding area shaped. The idea of a connected spatial design with spaces encourages social interaction was started forming and developing; and this changed the approach and process toward the third stage where this project stands now.