

Symbols, Sentinels and Reading Rooms

Cultivating Literacies of Place in
Central Industrial, Saskatoon

by Kevin Ryan Complido

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Figure 0.01 Looking northeast towards Robin Hood Flour Mill, Central Industrial, Saskatoon. October 25th, 2019, 5:41 pm.

Abstract

The historic Central Industrial district of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, is a light industrial site housing the City's public works operations, and the once expansive CPR freight yards. It currently faces proposals of all scales brought on by the viability of its centrally-located, 'underutilized' land. Critically, an essential, overlooked narrative is at risk of fictionalization: the site as witness and record of the city's industrial history.

The purpose of this thesis is to promote a perspective of architectural evolution centred on *heritage interpretation* and its spatial representations, driven by matters of values, identity, and local history.

This work suggests novel site analysis methodologies based on frameworks borrowed from storytelling, semiotics, and photography, working towards the design and development of '*Symbols, Sentinels and Reading Rooms*' for the site. Findings and approaches orbit around

ongoing, timely proposals for a new public library and architecture school, imagining conservation and its representations as facilitators of a public's sense of a 'co-created' place.

As an exploratory project, the work argues that *heritage conservation*, in practices of design and planning, is an overlooked force in its capacity to foster and sustain relationships with the public. 'Cultivating Literacies of Place' strives to make Central Industrial's spirit of place known—the site's atemporal stories, visual language, and the interpretation of heritage.

Keywords

Heritage Interpretation ◦ Co-creation ◦ Visual Identity ◦ Industrial Landscapes ◦ Emblems ◦ Stewardship ◦ Local History ◦ Archival Photos ◦ Place Branding ◦ Narratology ◦ Graphic Design

For mom, dad, Saskatoon.

To Liane; Mariana, Susan; Christie, Emily, Alice, Scott, Brendan; Kate, Jake, Jaybee, Leon; Colin, Jae, Terri, Ed; Julie, Jan; Jurek, Rebecca, Phuong-Trâm, Sheryl, Jerry, Shaun, Elise; Laurie, Mario, ERA, CIMS and the NSERC CREATE Heritage Engineering program; Ken, Jeff, CoS, SPL, JDB, SAVA; Mendelsund, Vit, Harmon, Calvino, Saint-Exupéry, Hawley, Ehman, Green, Martin, Tuan; Zotero, algorithms, archival photos; and countless others.

I feel an immense amount of gratitude and great deal of luck to have crossed and travelled paths with you all.

Thank you, sincerely.

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Adapted and retrieved from Parks Canada, *Standards
and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in
Canada: A Federal, Provincial and Territorial Collaboration*.
Ottawa: Parks Canada, 2010. [https://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/
item?id=R62-343-2010-eng&op=pdf&app=Library](https://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/item?id=R62-343-2010-eng&op=pdf&app=Library).

Appendix B, p. 196 —

Central Industrial — The Nara Grid

Adapted from Balen, Koenraad van. "The Nara Grid: An
Evaluation Scheme Based on the Nara Document on
Authenticity." *APT Bulletin: The Journal of Preservation
Technology* 39, no. 2/3 (2008): 39–45.

Appendix C, p. 197 —

Precedent: McEwan School of Architecture, Sudbury
Precedent: Halifax Central Library
**Precedent: Patkau Architects' 2005 Libraries, Winnipeg
and Montreal**
Precedent: Guthrie Theatre, Minneapolis
Precedent: Modern U, Ottawa

Appendix D, p. 208 —

**Select pages from Perkins + Will's North Downtown Master
Plan (2014), for the City of Saskatoon.**

Retrieved from Perkins + Will. "Highlights - Draft North
Downtown Master Plan." Presentation PDF. North Downtown
Master Plan. Saskatoon: City of Saskatoon, May 2014.
[https://www.saskatoon.ca/sites/default/files/documents/
corporate-performance/environmental-corporate-initiatives/
community-environmental-programs/presentation_-_
highlights_draft_north_downtown_master_plan.pdf](https://www.saskatoon.ca/sites/default/files/documents/corporate-performance/environmental-corporate-initiatives/community-environmental-programs/presentation_-_highlights_draft_north_downtown_master_plan.pdf).

Appendix E, p. 211 —

**Various maps of Saskatoon and the Central Industrial Site
(labelled accordingly).**

Assembled in QGIS. Base map retrieved from Google Maps.
Mapping layers from City of Saskatoon, Open Data Catalogue
(<http://opendata-saskatoon.cloudapp.net/>); CoS Heritage
Register ([https://www.saskatoon.ca/community-culture-
heritage/heritage-properties-programs/heritage-register](https://www.saskatoon.ca/community-culture-heritage/heritage-properties-programs/heritage-register)).

" The famous gallerist Arne Glimcher tells this story about the artist Agnes Martin: Glimcher says that once his 11-year-old granddaughter Isobel was visiting Martin.

The little girl was holding onto a rose clipped from a bush outside Martin's house.

And Agnes Martin took the rose and said to the girl,

'Is this rose really beautiful?' And Isobel said yes.

And then Agnes Martin hid the rose behind her back and said,

'Is the rose still beautiful?'

"Yes," said Isobel.

And then Agnes Martin said,

'You see, Isobel. Beauty is in your mind, not in the rose.' "

Agnes Martin in John Green's *The Anthropocene Reviewed*,
episode *Works of Art by Agnes Martin and Hiroyuki Doi* ¹

Symbols, Sentinels & Reading Rooms

Cultivating Literacies of Place in Central Industrial, Saskatoon



Figure 0.02 Aerial Photograph, Central Industrial, Saskatoon, 1982.



Figure 0.03 Collaged proposal, adapted from Perkins + Will's rendered perspective in North Downtown Master Plan, City of Saskatoon, 2014.

Preface

In its sincerest of motivations, this thesis is a work of self-examination and reflection.

This preface describes two foundational experiences to acquaint you with the ambitions of the following, broader **research question**. Can thoughtful heritage interpretation create better stewards for the conservation of the built environment?

1. —

In 2016, I was on the Winnipeg Architecture Foundation's walking tour of *Broadway Modern*.² Our stop was the Worker's Compensation Board building (WCB). We just moved into an apartment on the same street, and in the past, we would pick up my partner's mom from there, so it was a familiar sight. The tour leader highlighted this newly introduced building detail (Figure 0.04) resulting from the attentive renovation work done to this historically significant building.³⁴

The stainless steel strip allowed them to change the composition of the building's now thickened outside layers, but retain the existing panels. These strips were the only distinct indication work had been done at all. This floored me. I was so excited.

That night I looked up the project and learned that heritage 'was a thing,' so to speak. It made sense of so many feelings I had comparing Winnipeg to my hometown of Saskatoon. Winnipeg's charms, its urban character, my design education there. Heritage! The Exchange District! That's what's so distinctive! The walking tour resonated with me as it gave voice to my interests in work that was incremental, quiet, and layered into broader contexts. My appreciation grew from understanding that the steel strip represented something more. The legibility of the moment helped me to better understand that place.

A **research objective** of this thesis is to investigate existing heritage

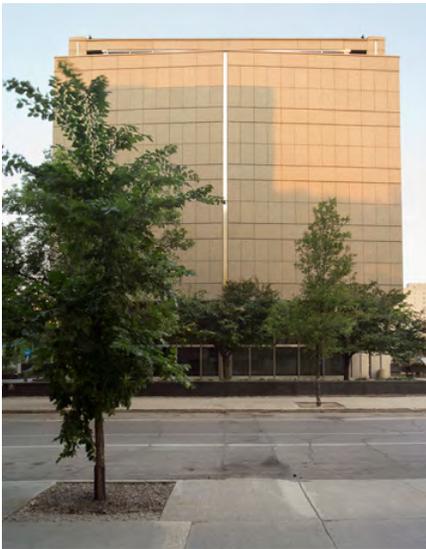


Figure 0.04 Workers Compensation Board building in Winnipeg. The stainless steel band at centre signals recent renovation work.

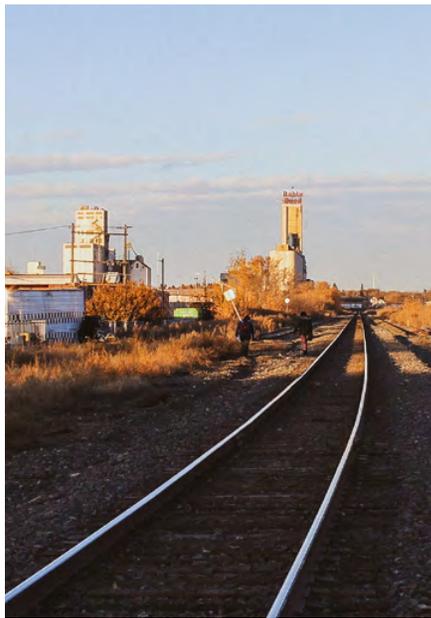


Figure 0.05 A view down Central Industrial's still operational rail line.

conservation **methodologies** (Sections 01.2, 02.3) to suggest novel ways to enhance the *co-creation*⁵ of a place—sites where the occupant formulates and adopts the site as meaningful. A series of strategies will be outlined for the Central Industrial site of Saskatoon (Figure 0.05), to explore new **practices** in the discussion, representation, and interpretation of places with historical significance. One of the design components of this work, *The Reading Rooms*, looks to make the seemingly unremarkable site conversant with the user, reinforcing an identity for the site.

2.

—
The second underpinning is from the lessons learned as co-editor for my alma mater's student publication, *Warehouse Journal* (Volume 23)⁶. The work involved the curation of over 100 voluntarily submitted student portfolios, to create a yearly record of the school's work.

The first lesson comes in considering the nature of the book as a collection of work. Like architecture itself, the book is the result of several perspectives coming together. You might say that architecture is rarely about architecture, as it only represents a whole that's greater than the sum of its parts, but is itself hollow without its pieces. Each collaborator may not practice 'architecture,' but as part of a collection, it becomes easy to see any tangential work as being architectural. From imaginings of the future to reflections on experience, all are meaningful questions of the relationships in space. The platform to share these collectively made us, as co-editors, see just how non-architectural architecture really can be.

The higher value this thesis hopes to provide is a case study for architects to re-imagine the influence they have in shaping understandings of place. The architect might agree that context, representation, and narrative are all essential considerations of the design process. But, **methodologies** used by those practitioners in

heritage conservation, graphic communication, and narratology often play a less decisive role in establishing those considerations. There is a risk then of relegating those crucial aspects to things which merely justify design decisions, overlooking the formative role they can play in shaping identity—which this thesis explores. I hold that when architecture is less concerned with the architecture itself, that its processes are more participatory, the designs more interpretable, and their sensitivities are more contextually-rich.

A chief aim of the work is to understand Central Industrial through **cross-disciplinary theoretical frameworks**, that are then made architectural, as opposed to the application of architectural theory onto the site. Notable **key texts** draw from significant figures in the fields of narratology, with literature professor Joseph Campbell (introduced in Section 01.1), visual representation, with graphic designer Peter Mendelsund (Section 01.4), and in photographic expression with landscape architect Anne Whiston Spirn (Section 03.2).

Another lesson of Warehouse is concerning uniqueness. With so many projects, there are the inevitable and natural similarities that arise from projects originating from a similar design brief or point of inspiration. But from project to project, department to department, the decision-making in a portfolio never reflected the same image twice. They always varied in what was deemed valuable and how they wanted it to communicate.

Mendelsund discusses the experience of reading fiction as a relationship between *the reader* and *the text*.⁷ Notably, the author is absent. A writer may provide the point of origin, and does their best to disclose (or deliberately obscure) that message to the reader, but has little control over their understanding of it. The reader interprets the text, draws their own conclusions, projects their own experiences, etc. This is a vital **premise** of the thesis, and grounds all of the **theoretical contexts, findings, and applications**.

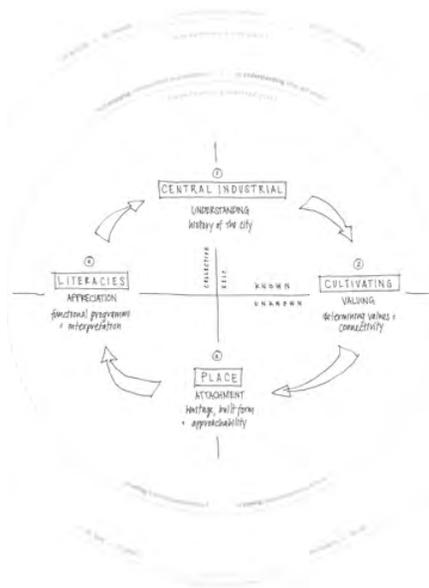


Figure 0.06 A consolidated diagram of cross-disciplinary theories. Introduced in Part 01.

The last lesson is related: the book has a duty to the reader. We saw our principal *role* as editors as curating the work of the students. However, our *responsibility*, we felt, was to design a book, where the strength of a project was secondary to how it communicated within the collection. The decision-making I am reminded of is the difficulty of pruning down, removing fascinating process-work, and eliminating projects still when they did not distill well to one page. Experimental projects needed to be couched within a more conventional context to maintain impact.

Our control was in the expectations we could condition, the order information unfolded, when/ what to reveal, and the messages signalled to the reader through the book design and editorial choices. Tone setting. Juxtaposing. Suggestiveness.

The **structure** of the thesis and the designs presented rely on the notion that an idea can be revisited, and that images and symbols

help to access those. Symbols can become reoccurring motifs. Images draw upon themes that can be newly understood when presented in different contexts.

To conclude, I will reframe the preface's initial question as a **thesis statement** that I ultimately hope to demonstrate.

Can thoughtful heritage interpretation create better stewards for the conservation of the built environment?

In conservation lies innate considerations of a site's values and interpretive qualities. This thesis' methodologies will demonstrate heritage's capacity to identify and shape more co-created relations between people and places.

The following section, *Overview*, serves as a broad, independently functioning survey of the

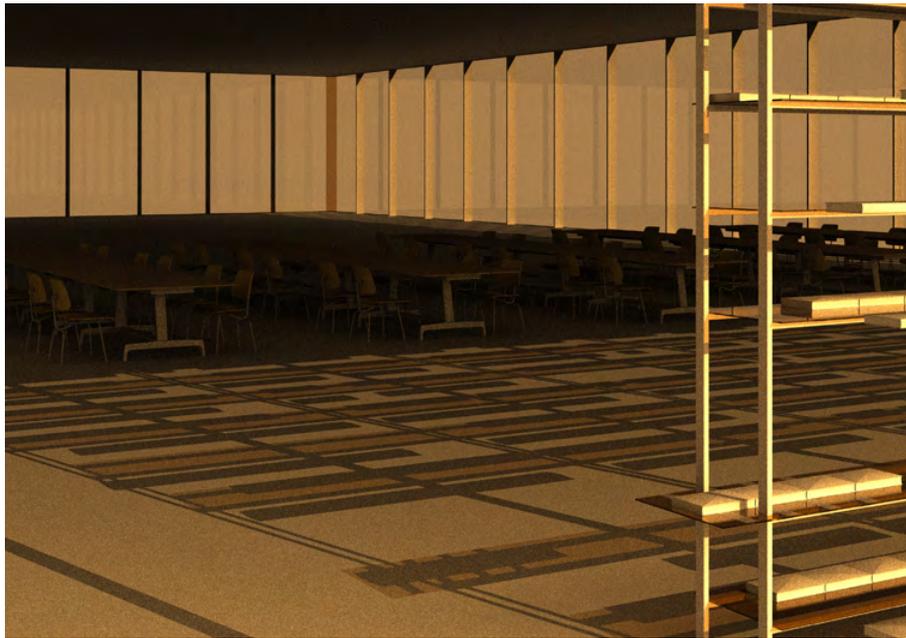


Figure 0.07 *An early reading room study model.*

work through a careful, systematic look at the components of the thesis title.

The subtitle, *Cultivating Literacies of Place*, concerns the end-user's sensitivity to recognizing patterns of understanding in the landscape. The main title, *Symbols, Sentinels, and Reading Rooms*, relates to the designer and their responsibility for public outreach (Figure 0.07). The chosen site, *Central Industrial, Saskatoon*, reflects my revisitation of a familiar place.

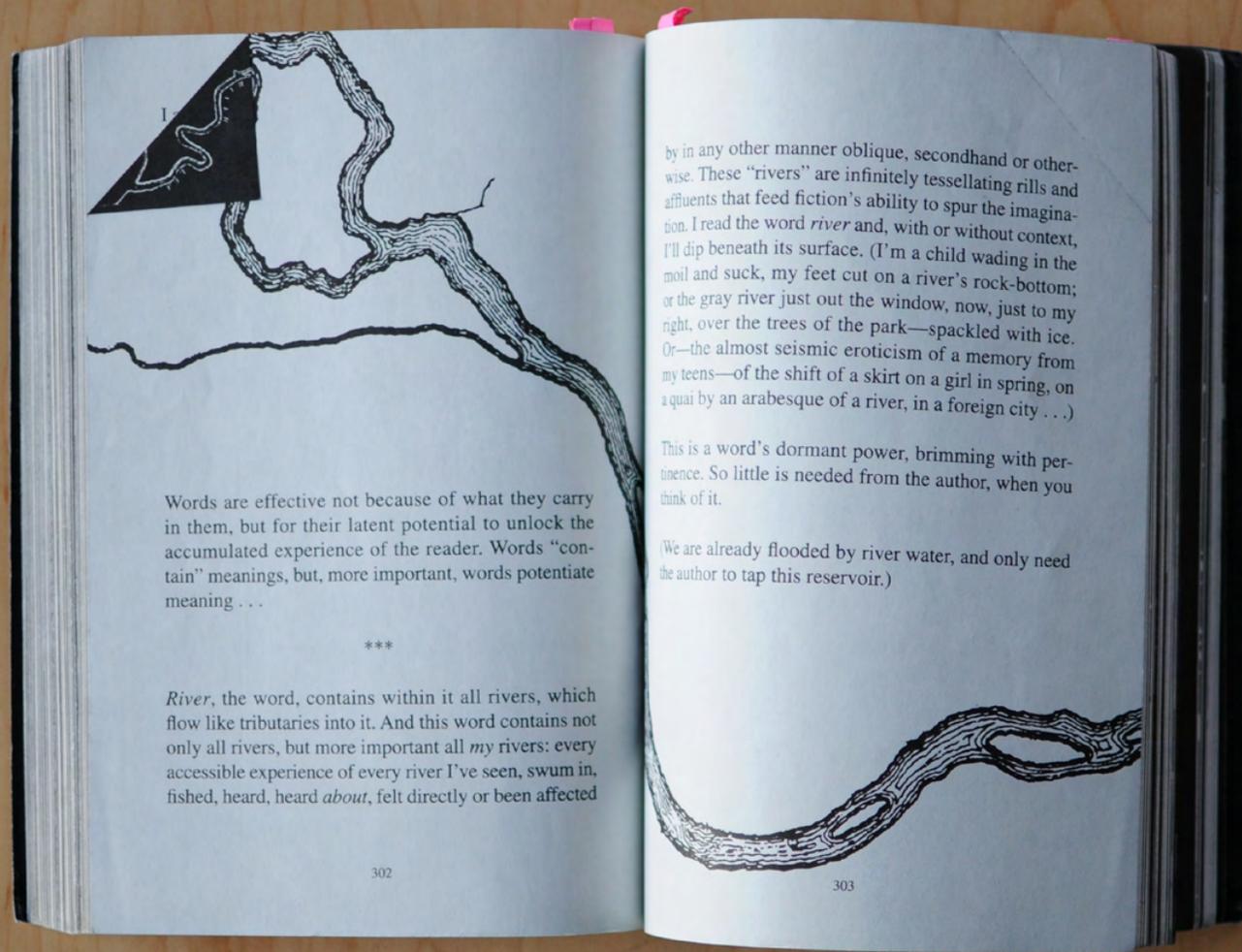
Through this work, I wish to offer a text that resonates with you, the reader and unlocks the same possibilities of a walking tour.

Thank you for your time and interest, and I hope you like what you read.

—



Figure 0.08 Downtown Saskatoon, focused on the railyards. (a) 1927, (b) 2017.
Southern boundary of Central Industrial over time highlighted in yellow.



Words are effective not because of what they carry in them, but for their latent potential to unlock the accumulated experience of the reader. Words “contain” meanings, but, more important, words potentiate meaning . . .

River, the word, contains within it all rivers, which flow like tributaries into it. And this word contains not only all rivers, but more important all *my* rivers: every accessible experience of every river I’ve seen, swum in, fished, heard, heard *about*, felt directly or been affected

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by in any other manner oblique, secondhand or otherwise. These “rivers” are infinitely tessellating rills and affluents that feed fiction’s ability to spur the imagination. I read the word *river* and, with or without context, I’ll dip beneath its surface. (I’m a child wading in the moil and suck, my feet cut on a river’s rock-bottom; or the gray river just out the window, now, just to my right, over the trees of the park—spackled with ice. Or—the almost seismic eroticism of a memory from my teens—of the shift of a skirt on a girl in spring, on a quai by an arabesque of a river, in a foreign city . . .)

This is a word’s dormant power, brimming with pertinence. So little is needed from the author, when you think of it.

(We are already flooded by river water, and only need the author to tap this reservoir.)

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Figure 0.09 Peter Mendelsund, in *What We See When We Read*.

Introduction — Overview

To begin, I will explain the project, here, as an assemblage of parts that make up this work's title — *Symbols, Sentinels and Reading Rooms: Cultivating Literacies of Place in Central Industrial*.

This introductory overview hopes to serve as a condensed, less theory-heavy version of the research. Here, each titular keyword will be broken down to describe their individual motivations and role in concert with everything else.

Symbols —

"Symbols, Sentinels and Reading Rooms" are the terms I will use throughout to refer to the design outcomes of the thesis. They are the primary

agents and actors in the environment, or in other words, what the public would see or experience as the result of design processes.

Key to the direction of the thesis is the assertion that symbols often serve as stand-ins for concepts and values—their significance is as the visible embodiments of our principles. Notably, in this work, symbols are examined both figuratively as ideas and literally as visual prompts. These are civic landmarks, iconography, glyphs, wheat as a shorthand for agriculture, etc. (exemplary in Figure 0.10, Figure 0.11). As visible forms, they assist the mind as vessels for information, facilitating the attachment of meanings to peoples, places, and things.

“What we are looking at when we read are words, made up of letterforms, but we are trained to see past them—to look at what the words and letterforms point toward. **Words are like arrows—they are something, and they also point toward something.**”

Peter Mendelsund
in “Signifiers,” *What We See When We Read*, 322.

We frequently imagine our cities in terms of the symbols relevant to the discussion. Mendelsund writes: “[w]ords are like arrows—they are something, and they also *point toward something*.”⁸ Words and symbols share that same quality of forming the linguistic basis for our

ability to understand a message. Critical to the explorations of this thesis are the latent, potential meanings we can retrieve when offered a cue.

The basic understanding that symbols "*point*," helps to ground what is argued as heritage interpretation's effectiveness to be an agent of public engagement and outreach in matters of conservation. Advocated here is the value of a heritage-centred approach in re-imagining public places, which offers users an environment that wishes to engage in dialogue with them.

A crucial shift is in seeing that designers, as decision-makers for space, must be made more sensitive to how their representational decisions interface with the public's perception of a place. More pointedly, design decisions communicate. If the idea of space becomes attached to an image or symbol, the interpretive potential and persistence of those images become critical components in the imagining of that place. When symbols are identified, developed and recognizable, they

become indispensable devices for communication and representation. This thesis book will make heavy use of these functions, to more consequentially consider the role of a symbol's presence, both in the physical and graphic landscapes, in interpretative spaces.

In developing outcomes and findings for my stated position, this research will establish an emblem for Saskatoon's Central Industrial site. The emblem (Figure 0.10) is presented as an abstract icon, which in later sections of the thesis, I intend to instill with significance. Graphically, the emblem's function exists between established techniques in the traditions of heraldry, flags⁹ and corporate logos. Graphic design and heritage conservation share many overlaps, both working to identify values, and how best to move them forward into a design. Characterization frameworks such as Parks Canada's *The Standards & Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* (2010)¹⁰ and the *Nara Grid*,¹¹ a methodology based on 1994's *Nara Document on Authenticity*¹² offer

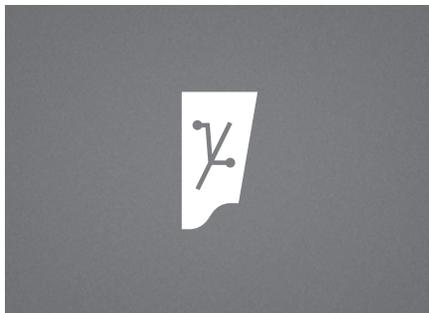


Figure 0.10 Proposed emblem for Central Industrial, a process outlined in the thesis document.

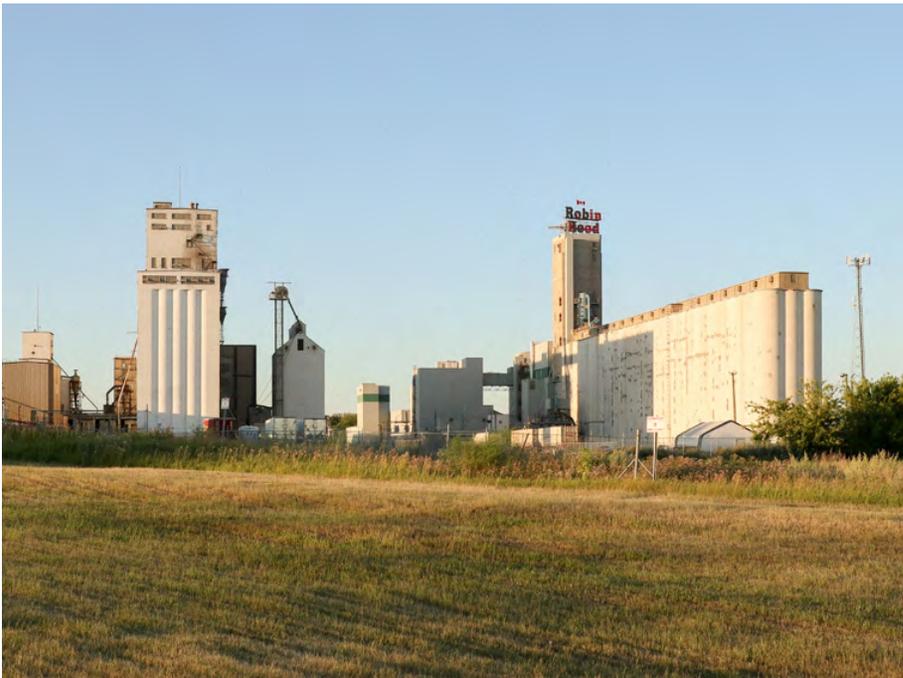


Figure 0.11 *Robin Hood Mill. A defining landmark of Central Industrial.*

theoretical grounding. My view is that a critical consideration of a site's symbolic representations helps to communicate and advocate for that site's character.

Further theoretical grounding in the main body of text will look to semiotics and the relationship between sign, signifier, and signified. Works like Venturi, Scott Brown, and Izenour's *Learning from Las Vegas* (1982)¹³ discuss the presence of symbols in the environment and their spatial consequences. Another book, designer Peter Mendelsund's *What We See When We Read* (2014),¹⁴ looks at the act of reading as a collaborative venture between reader and text. His book provides insights into his own practices, gleaned lessons in re-interpreting source material as book covers made to invite readers.



Figure 0.12 *Rendered perspective, North Downtown Master Plan, Perkins + Will for City of Saskatoon. 2014.*



Figure 0.13 *John Deere Building. c. 1912. The building has been donated by the City of Saskatoon for use as a School of Architecture for the University of Saskatchewan.*

Sentinels —

If *Symbols* help to inform the character of a place, then *Sentinels* provides the experiences which populate the ideas. Strictly speaking as design components in this case study, *Sentinels* refers to the public, civic institutions of an area. More explicitly still, this thesis revolves around two proposed civic institutions and the spaces around them: the province's first university-level school of architecture, and the Saskatoon Public Library's (SPL) new central branch¹⁵—reflecting actual, relatively recent proposals which will be imagined as setting roots in the study site.

Central Industrial is just north of the downtown core, a large plot long underpopulated since the gradual vacation of its historic freight yards. The city commissioned the North Downtown Master Plan (NDMP) in 2014 for the larger area around the thesis design proposal site (Figure 0.12). As the city's mostly modern-era civic institutions mature, they contemplate relocation. Central Industrial is

often suggested for new construction, with the city's Police Headquarters in 2014 being the first significant example.

Ongoing plans for the public library have suggested a new structure, leaving empty their current 1966 home across from City Hall. There are currently no active plans for the architecture school, with no updates having reached the public. However, they still have the rights to an old warehouse building donated¹⁶ by the City of Saskatoon (CoS, or City) (Figure 0.13).

There is an incredible potential for both these institutions, as agents of storytelling and stewards of the built environment, to lend an essential atmosphere of critical engagement to the site. The library provides the crucial *social infrastructures* championed by sociologist Eric Klinenberg¹⁷ while serving as a repository for local history. Close by, the expressive discourses the architecture school offers help us to imagine the possibilities for a site

rich with possible exchanges between the city, its stories, and its people.

The sociocultural contributions of these plans to Central Industrial provide the backbone for the proposed scheme. However, this is not an attempt to design the solutions for these spaces. Instead, it focuses on ideas which—for lack of better conventional terminology—should be seen as defining feature spaces for these institutions. Importantly, I argue for the need for concerted efforts that go beyond a building's isolated design.

Central Industrial serves as a critical intermediary within Saskatoon. This site serves as a witness and record of the city's evolution, heritage, and historic values (Figure 0.14). Equipped with the right set of eyes, the area becomes a looking glass, where the public can contemplate its meanings, and engage it in discussion—a site of critical examination and interpretation. These efforts hope for a spirit of the area founded on ideas of education, local

history, culture, storytelling, and the potentialities of architectural experimentation.

Reading Rooms —

Reading Rooms constitute the direct attempts of the thesis to create architectural spaces. They represent a design component that relies heavily on the theoretical groundings of the rest of the document but perhaps works the most independent of everything else. Their spaces are not abstract, but their meanings are more so, as it is within these spaces where room for interpretation is imagined to be most potent and activated.

The term is borrowed from the reading room of a library, but its usage in this case study is not to suggest the same function as one. Instead, 'reading' concerns a state of awareness, or, a place where *legibility* is *cultivated*. In this book, there is a very deliberate aim that 'reading' be understood



Figure 0.14 City of Saskatoon's official flag. Features: sprig of berries representing city's namesake; coat of arms, with the motto 'Commerce, Industry, Education'; gold and green the provincial colours; and seven yellow stripes for the city's seven (historic) districts. Adopted in 1952.

as being much more than the comprehension of a message, but one's interpretation of that message. The 'Room' refers less simply to a location constrained by walls, but space—be it an actual room, an entrance, or a path—where these readings occur.

This thesis will outline five so-called Reading Rooms, introduced in Figure 0.15. Reading from the top-down: each Reading Room figure is numbered, then its title refers to a specific type of programmed space, with their location within the scheme described beneath. The symbol below abstractly represents a characteristic of the Room. It serves as its symbol, a graphic shorthand, but more critically, it indicates grouping. Some ideas of *Symbols* are at work here already. Bestowing each Room with an icon of a common graphic language suggests similarity and independence. For example, if you were to stand in the Local History Room and from afar see figures for the Assembly Rooms or the Café, identifying those symbols suggests their association as parts of

a set. Finally, the bars labelled 'node type' and 'vector type' make reference to what type of 'Room' it is. Nodes are places of pause and rest, where a user's presence and position are key to interpreting a message of the site, whereas vectors infer direction and interpretation within these Rooms is experiential, and conclusions are more suggestive.

To end, a critical component of the Reading Rooms is their location and surrounding context, as they are designed to be intimately connected to place and to each other. The purpose in these rooms as an invention is to serve as a device to make clear that place, as representations of peoples and histories, warrants the accommodation for different perspectives, contexts, and interpretations—the balance lies in how they are engaged in dialogues.

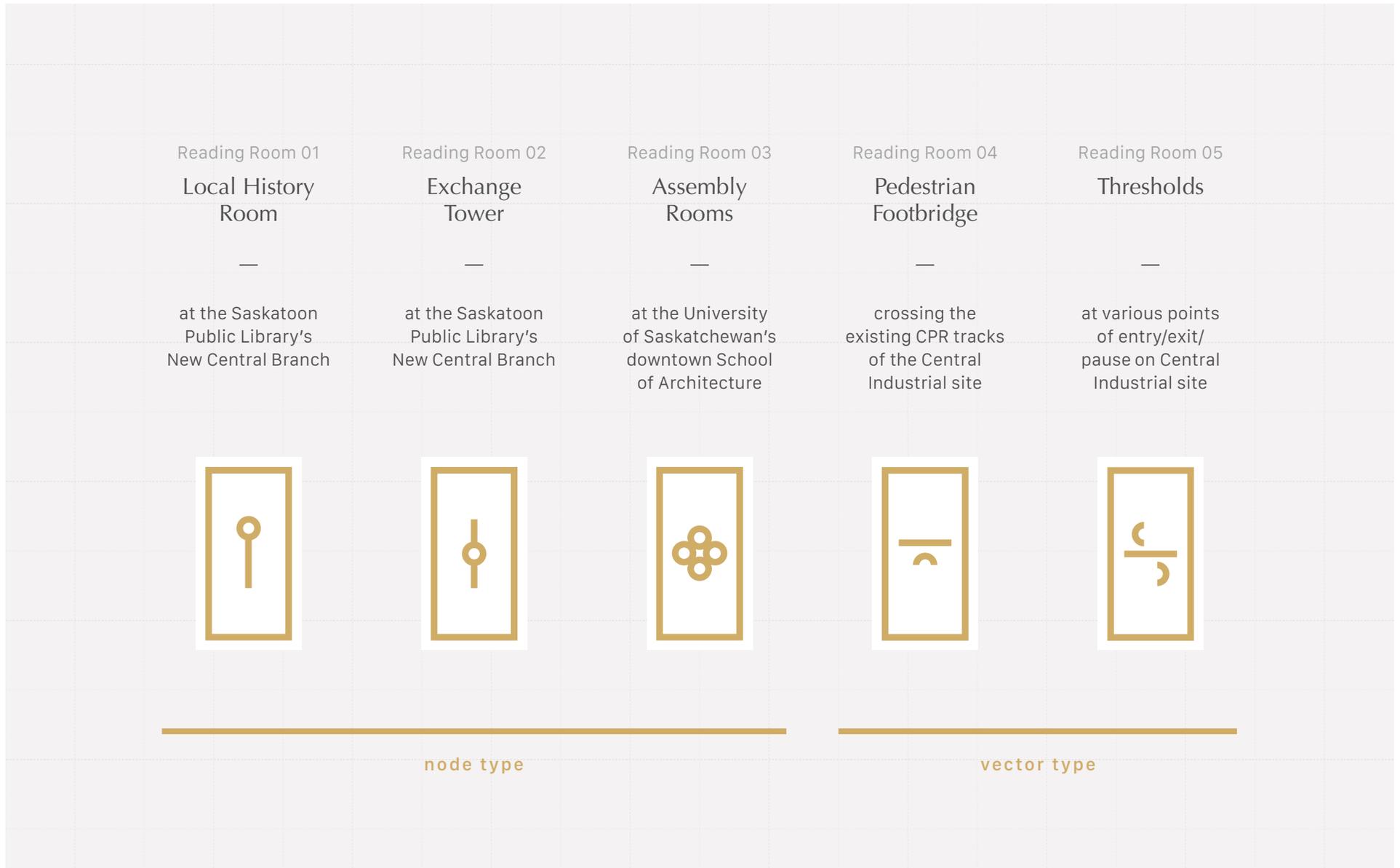


Figure 0.15 The five Reading Room icons. A shared graphic language communicates these glyphs as related to the Central Yards emblem, but stand as their own distinct set.

Cultivating —

The subtitle '*Cultivating Literacies of Place*' refers to the methods and techniques that inform the project's design approach. By making heritage characterization visible, inviting interpretation, and fostering dialogues, the thesis hopes to offer ways to make the site's intangible qualities legible in the environment.

'*Cultivate*' alludes to the agricultural connotations of Saskatchewan as the "breadbasket of Canada." The verb recalls notions of processing: to "prepare and use (land) for growing crops; to improve and render fertile by husbandry; to till."¹⁸ This is a relationship between one's development and the land. The Central Industrial site itself is a document of the city's history. Contained are vestiges of the Canadian Pacific Rail's former downtown freight yards and its tracks, where the large silos of the Robin Hood Flour Mill remain.

The process-based undertones of *cultivating* also recall ideas of reciprocities, and cycles.

There is an understanding here of changes, growth and the ability to repeat. There is an idea in narratology championed by Joseph Campbell called the monomyth that suggests that there is a standard, almost predictable underlying structure to stories.¹⁹ Notably, it is the circular, cyclical pattern given that the 'hero' changes by crossing a threshold between the known and unknown worlds, to change. This simple idea of seeing one's growth as a loop or cycle provides a useful framework to begin to see something like the historical ideas in heritage, as something that is instead framed for its potential to be cultivated *with*, rather than *from*.

What is at risk is that future development neglects planning for the uniqueness of this site as an active record of the city's heritage. Public space should engage the public critically, in ways where no other spot in Saskatoon has or can. The city already contains vibrant parks, neighbourhoods,

“Modern libraries are spaces for inspiring discovery, creativity, innovation, and where digital, cultural and social literacies can develop.

These [democratic spaces] serve as pivotal components of community innovation and downtown revitalization strategies.”

Saskatoon Public Library

in *Saskatoon New Central Library Business Case: Summary Report*, 5.

and public facilities. But the opportunity here to have a designed environment that can be characteristically civic, and steeped in historical significance should not be disregarded. Central Industrial could be a model for public space where one can grow the city’s history and potentials.

Literacies —

Cultivating and literacies go hand-in-hand, and form parts two and three of this thesis. *Literacies* evoke acts of reading, whose usage will come to be understood as that of written form and visual language. By cultivating a way of understanding subject matter, the user is conditioned in their ability to read cues, motifs, and symbols in physical and visual landscapes.

The SPL’s Central Library business case documents states:

Modern libraries are spaces for inspiring discovery, creativity, innovation, and where digital, cultural and social literacies can develop.²⁰

SPL’s wish for a more multi-faceted space voices a desire for the library to shed itself from the association as a building solely for books. Imagined for Central Industrial is a site that helps facilitate its own readings—the Symbols, Sentinels, and Reading Rooms enable those capacities.

Campbell’s cyclical structure, as a manner of cultivation, allows us to recognize heritage in a more recursive light. The local history room, a common staple of municipal libraries, is a space where understandings of the city and the public are stored, but more importantly, are the atemporal lessons and resonant themes which the reader leaves with. The stories of our past help in the understandings of our present, and we revisit these over time as reminders. Thinking of history,

or, in turn, heritage, as having a cyclical rather than linear relationship to our personal monomyths, allows us to recognize patterns to learn from them.

Parks Canada's *Standards and Guidelines* outline the Conservation Decision-Making Process for places of significance simply: understand, plan, and intervene.²¹ An obvious but valuable point in that process is that there is something to be understood. As heritage guidelines, the decision-making necessitates an ability to recognize the values or character-defining elements of a place. By cultivating those literacies through design, the spaces become conversant and welcome a user's revisitiation in pursuit of interpretation. The site becomes a resolute but evolving mirror with which we can re-evaluate personal progress and shared identity.

Place —

My view is that meaningful, evocative public spaces are those where the site and the user are in dialogue. I chose to learn more about heritage conservation to get better at developing those discussions—only learning that there's much more to learn. Nevertheless, understanding the discipline's base code of conduct makes you more sensitive to your accountability being a steward to the site's character. One peculiar consideration is in what ways a building exists both as a record of time, and a result of it. The work here will make extensive use of historical photos for their performance of the same kind of an alternate reality—one where the then-and-now of a photo juxtaposition helps us to understand other readings of place, as seen in Figure 0.08's site evolution, and Figure 0.20's demonstration of a demolished building.

Related theoretical backgrounds here are the works of local author Amy Jo Ehman

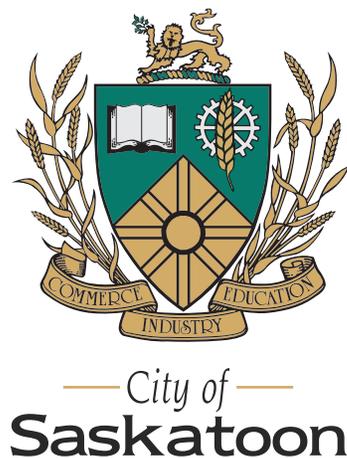


Figure 0.16 The City of Saskatoon's current, official coat of arms, adopted in 1948.

(mainly, her *Saskatoon: A History in Words and Pictures*, [2017]²²), and Professor Anne Whiston Spirn (principally, her 2007 lecture series on photography²³), who use archival photos as points of inquiry and evaluation. Their discussions center around the significance of photographs as ways of investigating, documenting, and representing characteristics of a site. Ehman uses archival pictures of the city to recount specific tales. Spirn's interests are in the camera as an investigative instrument relating the body, composition, and site. Lastly are personal meditations on archival photos: offerings of past points of time, the capacity of their captions and presentation for the suggestion, and their printed forms as a medium for collage and process.

As of this writing, I live in Ottawa, and before this, I was in Winnipeg for my undergraduate studies. Every few months, I go back home to Saskatoon. My sense of time and the reminders of my growth are measured in the looping cycles of each return. This has felt especially true since focusing on

Central Industrial, to which I previously had no genuine connection. However, it was always in the background. Every revisit strengthens the desire and confidence that it could be a meaningful contribution to the city. It could be a public space unlike any other in Saskatoon, where the idea of 'recreation' is centred less on activity and entertainment, but on acts of *re-creation*, an area for introspection, education, and interpretation. Reflecting on the work so far reinforces the site as one rich with possibility as a vibrant, articulate space, where the library and architecture school together can make and tell stories about the city.

Central Industrial —

An undercurrent of the thesis is a discussion on values, which will be explored more fully in the main text. A presumption in this work—that symbols often represent values—informs a vital premise on the core values of Saskatoon. The City's coat of arms (shown in the earlier Figure

0.16), adopted officially in 1942, states Saskatoon's principal values as commerce, industry and education. These three words so completely embody and chronicle the study site. Here they present fitting conditions to engage in discourses of the evolution of the city and its values today—a conversation that starts with the name 'Central Industrial' itself.

A name change is proposed, which accompanies the emblem-creation exercise of earlier mention. This represents a significant step both in shifting the perception of the area and changing the tone of its discourses. The newly minted 'Central Yards' (Figure 0.17, chronicled in Section 02.5, and 03.1) reflects a change rooted in the history of the area's usage as rail freight and public works yards. The name maintains familiar ties to its historic role as a hub, while the shift to 'Yards' signals a move away from the designations of industrial utility, towards the allusions of place in land, gardens, and play. This represents a meaningful step both in shifting the perception of the area and changing the tone

of its discourses to one that places more focus on the values of exchange and growth.

In closing —

Historically, the grain elevator has had long associations as the icon of the Canadian prairies, the production of agriculture, associations with the railway, and as an architectural typology praised by Le Corbusier.²⁴ These structures are sometimes referred to as *sentinels* for the striking way that they dot the prairie landscape, solitarily standing guard, watching over the area as local landmarks.

As a symbol of Saskatchewan, the "breadbasket of Canada,"²⁵ these industrial structures are monumental both in head and heart, physical and mental markers of place. Perched at the top of the Central Industrial site, the still operational Robin Hood Flour Mill (Figure 0.11) stands tall. With its neon red Robin Hood signage, it is a distinct



Figure 0.17 *Proposed emblem, with new name of Central Yards, a process outlined in the thesis document.*

presence in the evening sky. The folkloric hero's name is visible at times from the far borders of the city. It is a subtle but constant reminder: of the histories that have unfolded, as an enduring concrete structure; of metaphor and the virtues of community, as a neon beacon; and of the paradoxes of space and place that give the site its character.

The more significant motivation of this work is to imagine a way of practicing architecture that first and foremost considers the dialogue it has with the public and the site. For public buildings, it means best trying to grasp the representative character of the building outside of its parcel

lot. For projects on a site like this, it means understanding that the interpretation of a site's qualities should inform a design scheme, rather than be relegated to a plaque. A project should be composing rather than creating, continually finding ways for ideas to converse. For my project here, I explore what it means to discover the qualities of an unfamiliar site and find ways to make them feel visible. To cultivate literacies of place is to make the elements and shapes known, still recognizing that they will wait for the future readers to find patterns, form groups and employ their language.

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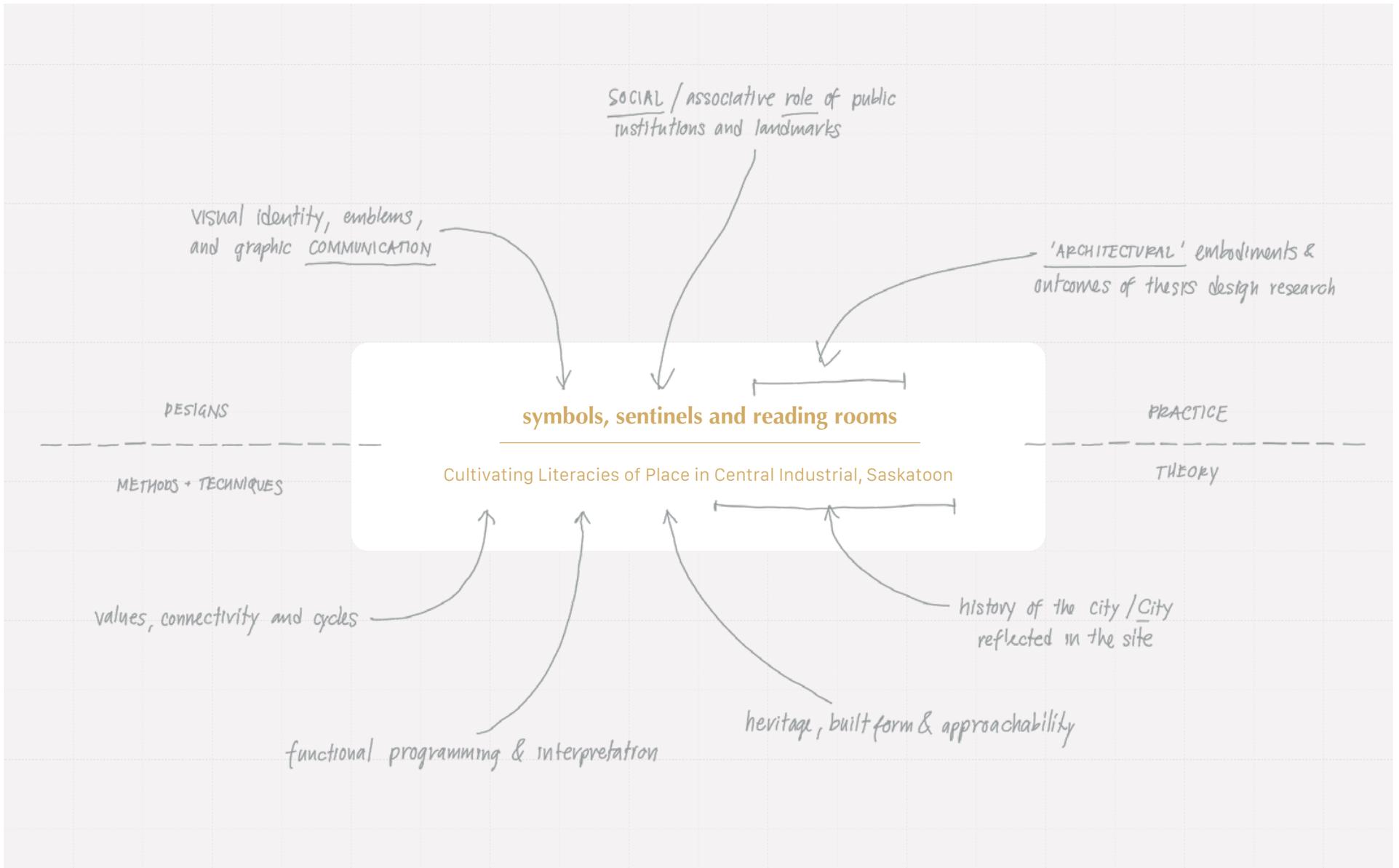


Figure 0.18 Thesis goals and themes, as broken down by titular components.

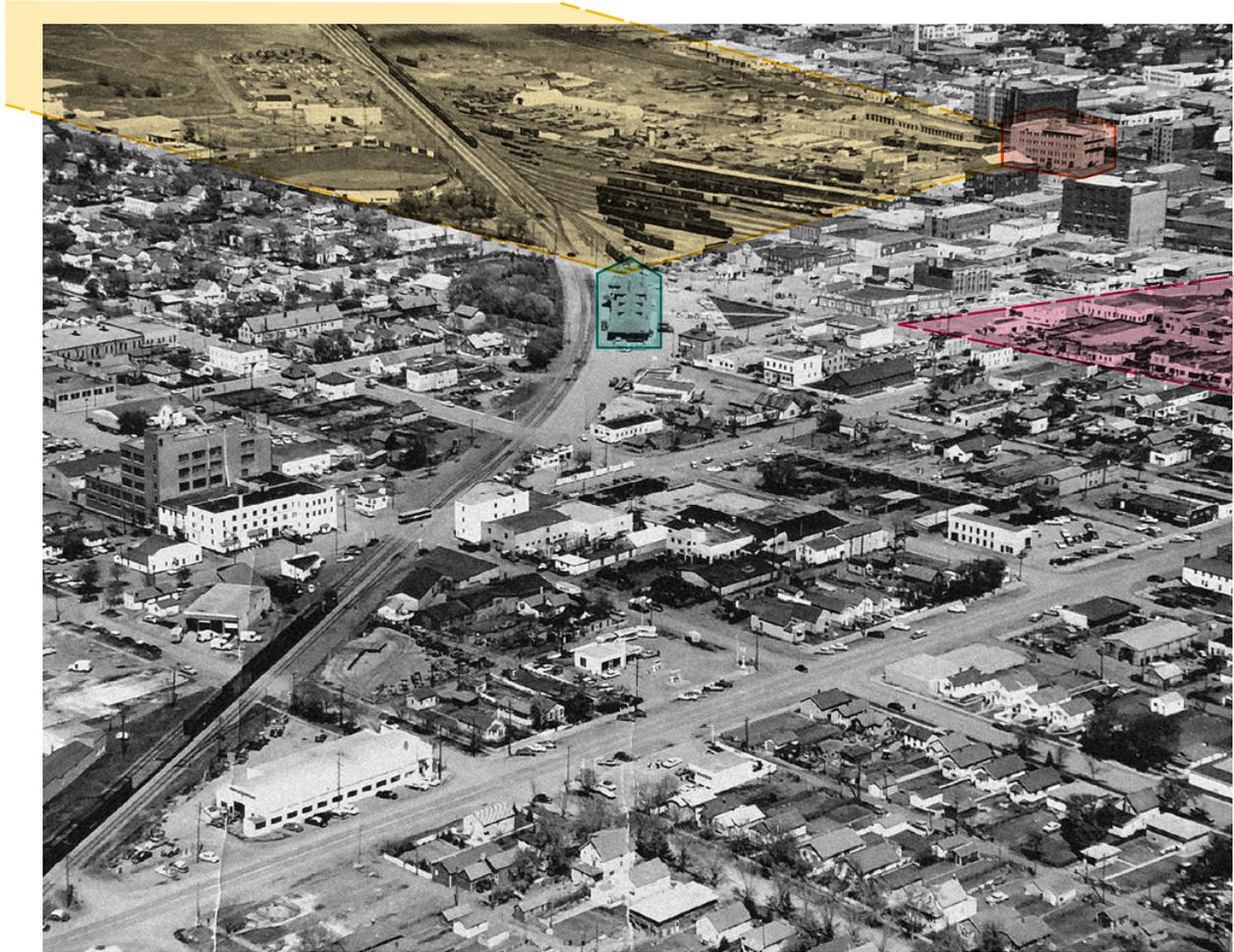


Figure 0.19 1958 aerial photograph, looking at southern point of Central Industrial.

Southern portion of CPR freight yards (Central Industrial). John Deere Building. Northern tip of CNR freight yards. CPR Train Station.



Figure 0.20 "Workers starting to dismantle old City Hall (former King Edward School). Newer City Hall in background." 1956.



Figure 0.21 "Mayor Sidney Buckwold making a presentation of a jar of Saskatoon Berries to Queen Elizabeth with Prince Philip looking on, in front of City Hall." 1959.

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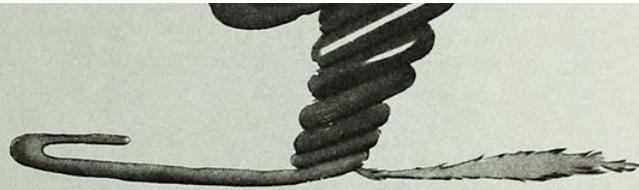


Figure 1.01 *Saskatoon fields, outside the airport, 8:20 pm, July 17, 2020.*
Symbols of Saskatchewan: green, gold, and skies; agriculture, distribution, and industry.



Figure 1.02 Looking south at CNR freight yards southern point. QLLS Bridge, river, and former footbridge in frame. c. 1913.

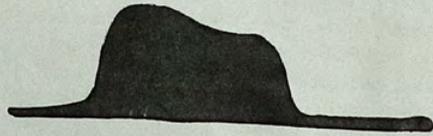
This scene is mostly non-existent today. The site of the CNR freight yards is now home to Midtown Plaza, the city's downtown shopping centre, which would take the majority of this frame. The QLLS Bridge is currently the Idylwyld Freeway, and the Remail Modern Art Gallery would be visible just left of it.



Once when I was six years old I saw a magnificent picture in a book, called *True Stories from Nature*, about the primeval forest. It was a picture of a boa constrictor in the act of swallowing an animal. Here is a copy of the drawing.

In the book it said : "Boa constrictors swallow their prey whole, without chewing it. After that they are not able to move, and they sleep through the six months that they need for digestion."

I pondered deeply, then, over the adventures of the jungle. And after some work with a coloured pencil I succeeded in making my first drawing. My Drawing Number One. It looked like this



I showed my masterpiece to the grown-ups, and asked them whether the drawing frightened them.

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Figure 1.03 'Drawings Number One, and Two' in Antoine de Saint-Exupery's *The Little Prince*.

But they answered : "Frighten ? Why should any one be frightened by a hat ?"

My drawing was not a picture of a hat. It was a picture of a boa constrictor digesting an elephant. But since the grown-ups were not able to understand it, I made another drawing : I drew the inside of the boa constrictor, so that the grown-ups could see it clearly. They always need to have things explained. My Drawing Number Two looked like this :



The grown-ups' response, this time, was to advise me to lay aside my drawings of boa constrictors, whether from the inside or the outside, and devote myself instead to geography, history, arithmetic and grammar. That is why, at the age of six, I gave up what might have been a magnificent career as a painter. I had been disheartened by the failure of my Drawing Number One and my Drawing Number Two. Grown-ups never understand anything by themselves, and it is tiresome for children to be always and forever explaining things to them.

So then I chose another profession, and learned to pilot aeroplanes. I have flown a little over all parts of the world ; and it is true that geography has been very useful to me. At a glance I can distinguish China from Arizona. If one gets lost in the night, such knowledge is valuable.

In the course of this life I have had a great many encounters with a great many people who have been concerned with matters of consequence. I have lived a great deal among

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Understandings

A look at cross-disciplinary sensitivities, fundamental theoretical frameworks, and an argument for an interpretation-led view of expressing place.

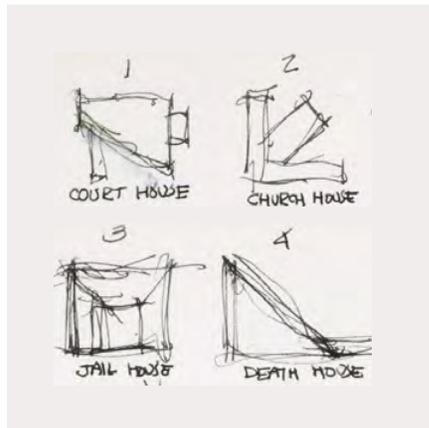


Figure 1.04 Drawings in Hejduk's Hanover Mosque

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*¹ begins with a story about a drawing (Figure 1.03). Famously, the illustration is of a boa constrictor eating an elephant. The narrator is disheartened when he has to create a second explanatory drawing for all the adults that mistook the first drawing for a hat. They dismiss this drawing as well.

Van den Bergh (1992) makes a parable of this moment to introduce the "mysterious theatre"² in the work of architect and educator, John Hejduk (Figure 1.04). He describes Hejduk as:

"concerned with poetic order and the intensity [of] images, with which the *deepening of encounter* is to be preferred to the ease of recognition and method [...] force and fascination [...] make us *reassess* the object, the thing."³

This idea of the deepening of encounter and reassessment is central to the thesis' aim of exploring ways of developing force and fascination. For van den Bergh and Saint-Exupéry, a notice is paid to the futile nature of comprehension, instead of asking us to focus on the intrigue of a thing's explanation. Why is it that the narrator presents the hat as a frightening object? What makes each of Hejduk's drawings in Figure 1.04 correspond to their labels?

This thesis (shortened as *Symbols & Sentinels*, or S&S henceforth) is less of a proposal and more of a reconceptualization in the understandings of making place. Like Saint-Exupéry's hat, the work represents a case for the challenging of definitions and surrender to the imagination. Here, questions of storytelling, identity and expression lead the spirit of discussion. Up ahead are structures of narratology, the lens in which heritage looks at the past, symbols in the built environment, and the undercurrent of interpretation tying all these together.

01.1 Recurrence and Story Structures —

There is a rich history, especially in architectural education, to use cinema as a way of exploring the discipline of architecture. In an ArchDaily article by Romullo Baratto, arguably targeted to be accessible by a more enthusiast-level audience, Baratto outlines longstanding parallels the architectural field makes with film's sensibilities of mise-en-scène, cinematography, set design and urban space⁴.

But an aspect of cinema often less called upon in the analogy is a meaningful focus on narrative. It has become a common trope of architects to see their work as being about 'narratives' and 'stories.'⁵ Yet, as quick as designers are to explain their work as such in marketing, should there not be more efforts made to have storytelling methodologies be more integral parts of communicating the design process?

Joseph Campbell, an influential figure in literature, mythology and philosophy, popularized an idea in narratology known as the *Monomyth* or *The Hero's Journey*. He argues that in a vast number of universal folkloric tales can be boiled down to a simple narrative pattern (Figure 1.05). A crucial point is the concept of a journey (or story) not having a beginning and an end, but seen as a cycle: "the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation—initiation—return."⁶ The sequence is recurrent, and sees each reoccurrence as being principally about progress and change through our confrontations with "unfamiliar yet strangely intimate forces."⁷

Contemporary screenwriter Dan Harmon offers a template directly inspired by Campbell's work.⁸ Figure 1.06 outlines Harmon's *Story Circle*.⁹ It works primarily as a simplified form of the Monomyth, but what is indispensable for explanation here is the comprehension of its structure and language and its utility as a framework. Harmon's circle, like Campbell's, shows

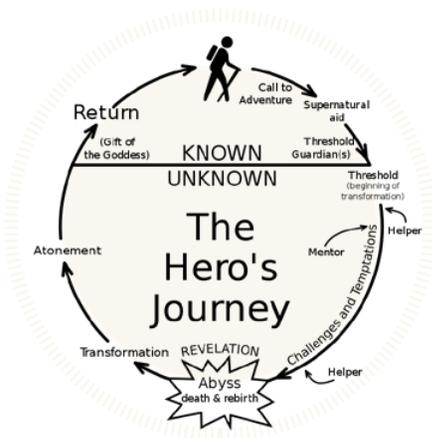


Figure 1.05 Campbell's "The Hero's Journey"

“A character is in a zone of comfort. But they want something. They enter an unfamiliar situation. Adapt to it. Get what they wanted. Pay a heavy price for it. Then return to their familiar situation. Having changed.”

Dan Harmon
in “Story Structure 101.”

a dividing line, which notably sees the cycle as two halves, with the journey ‘crossing the threshold’ that it creates. Harmon clarifies these thresholds as the contrasting examples between life and death; conscious and unconscious understanding; and, order and chaos. He continues, “the human mind and the communities we create, marches to the same, very specific beat” and that “when you play in that rhythm, [a story] resonates.”¹⁰ The resonance of a narrative might lie in our ability to make identifiable the patterns of these thresholds and tensions in personal journeys. Put succinctly by Harmon, in the longer accompanying quote at left on the page: characters compelled

to action face the unfamiliar, so that they may return, changed.¹¹

Where there are compelling applications of Campbell and Harmon’s narrative framework is in bringing it back to architectural discourse. In matters where heritage is a crucial component, it is critical to see the negotiation of culture or history as something which recurs.

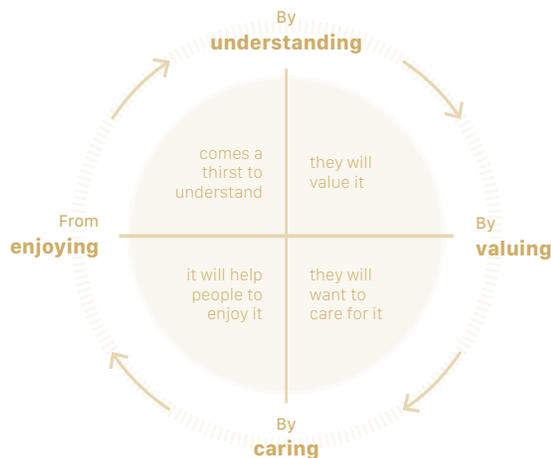
How we experience space has transformative consequences in our appreciation and connection with a place. Being attuned to the significance or heritage of a site offers Campbell’s “unfamiliar yet strangely intimate”¹² quality of understanding. Places become more resonant when we’re able to recognize, either on our or through the aid of design, those qualities in that place which allow us to re-familiarize.



Figure 1.06 Harmon's Story Circle

01.2 Heritage and Interpretation —

Transitioning from narratology's foundational ideas and the Story Circle is a comparable illustration found with architectural historian, then (2005) English Heritage CEO, Simon Thurley's Heritage Cycle (Figure 1.07).¹³ The apparent similarities allow us to more easily see the parallels argued here for a narratological-based approach to talking about a place.



The idea that action results in the circumstance, and that that might roll into itself is not new. But viewing these relationships as a diagram that must cross a kind of threshold, thoughtfully considers the significance of ensuring *understanding*, and by virtue, being aware. A new importance Thurley brings forward, however, is an internalized view of the cycle, rather than the omniscient leanings of the previous two, as the heritage cycle aims not necessarily for growth through adversity, but stewardship—in our case, for places.

A consolidated diagram is presented in Figure 1.10 to more forwardly address the foundational theories applicability as a structural framework to the themes of this thesis. This template will make a reappearance, later on, striving to provide a filter and structure to consider the relationship between one's understandings as an experience that's enriched through the mirror that heritage/place offers.

The avenue of heritage I'll draw focus to in this work is *interpretation*, for the particular emphasis on site/user reciprocities it brings. A pioneering figure in 'heritage interpretation' was Freeman Tilden and his work for the US National Parks Service. He posited that "interpretation is not instruction, but provocation,"¹⁴ (1957) a statement that insinuates the vital role of the user in bringing agency to interpretation. Attributed to Tilden is a set of six principles of interpretation, where the provided quote originates. 'Heritage interpretation,' as a discipline, is more traditionally associated with manners of relaying information

like a plaque, guided tour, or museum exhibit, for example. But it is the spirit in the aims of his principles that are compelling. I draw attention to one other point: "Information, as such, is not Interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information."¹⁵

A commonality in Tilden's understandings circles back Van den Bergh's perception of Hejduk, and *The Little Prince*. There is a reverence and understanding that the presentation of information is distinct from learning—for an idea or theme to be resonant, it must be viewed as reciprocity, a relationship—there must be room allowed for one's interpretation.

"The chief aim of Interpretation is not instruction, but provocation."

Freeman Tilden
in 'Principles of Interpretation,' *Interpreting Our Heritage*, 9.

01.3 Values and Expression —

An exchange that I find myself returning to is one made by my advisor, Susan Ross.¹⁶ A few years ago after having presented work in a graduate seminar whose positions precursor the aims of this sub-section.¹⁷ The comment addressed her work in heritage conservation, and her husband, a graphic designer, in which they both practiced and taught in their respective fields. She noted that discussions of commonalities in their work would often eventually end up as a discussion on *values*. Personally, as someone who feels firmly situated between the two disciplines, the weight of the word *values* has come to be an essential anchor in seeing the consequence and intersectionality of the two.

Graphic design is, of course, visual and aesthetic, but its usage in this thesis disputes that it is as much about the embodiment of values, and signalling of the ideals it wants to attract. The

branch of 'visual identity' lends more specifics and utility here. It will be encouraged over the more commonly used terms 'brand' or 'brand identity' to deemphasize their more marketing (and at worst, superficial) connotations.¹⁸ A thoughtful visual identity considers how an organization, idea, movement, etc. chooses to represent themselves visually as a cohesive entity, through considerations like logo or type choice, promotional material, or voice. In other words, special attention is paid to an entity's expression as the public face for their work and values.

A seminal influence of this work is Peter Mendelsund's *What We See When We Read* (Figure 1.08).¹⁹ Drawing on his experiences as a book cover designer, the book offers wisdoms in the "special relationship that exists between the writer and the reader."²⁰ For Mendelsund, a book is not simply read, but engaged—the author offers meanings, but each reader decides what is meaningful based on what they see is significant or resonant. The many facets of reading that *What We See* explores

compliment Tilden's interpretive principles. After all, by vocation, Mendelsund's task is to both interpret and design for interpretation.

A book cover must be all at once an honest representation of the work, attract or provide intrigue on a shelf, and be a resonant enough image to hold meaning and lasting impact to readers. Whereas Tilden may be ensuring the resonance of an experience, Mendelsund builds towards the resonance of an image, a design. Their shared interests lie in the values forwarded by the place/text and the possibilities for meaning in their expressions. Mendelsund will reappear throughout, for its usefulness in transforming the aims of heritage and interpretation into more workably semiotic terms: the relationships between object, subject, and sign.



Figure 1.08 Excerpts of Mendelsund's *What We See When We Read*.

A richly illustrated book, the experience of reading the meditative texts is heightened by the images Mendelsund is conjuring up. For many points, he will show, rather than tell, a work that as much about graphic communication as it is reading.

01.4 Synthesis: Co-creation and re-interpreting Architecture —

The cross-disciplinary survey of understandings here serves to lay the groundwork for an interpretation-led view of communicating the characteristics of a place. Each theory contributes to valuable discussions in the expressiveness of space. As frameworks, they help inform speculative methodologies for a site's capacity to connect and communicate. A related, valuable perspective is on what Mendelsund calls *co-creation*:

"There is no such thing in art [and reading] as the naïve reception of imagery [...] we make choices—we have agency. When we want to co-create, we read. We want to participate; and we want ownership [...] Good books *incite* us to imagine—to fill in an author's suggestions. [...] We desire the fluidity and vagary that books grant us when we imagine their content."²¹

Found at the intersection of all the mentioned references is co-creation. As a thesis work, co-creation and its related views of interpretations, are a defining premise that hopes to advance discourses of a conservation-centred sensitivity in architecture. Designers are inherently accountable to the ways the public 'read' their environments, the same way that good books and their authors *incite us to imagine*.

The thesis hypothesizes that Central Industrial, which for many is an unremarkable site, provides an ideal case study for the investigations of architectural co-creation. In developing the so-called *Symbols, Sentinels, and Reading Rooms*, the designs aim to shift perceptions of the site's value, expressing the resonances of its makings as a reflection of the city and its change over time.

It is for this reason that plans for an architecture school and local library are at the center of the work. The discourses of local history found in the library, and the creative energies of the school

could be critical advocates for expressing the value of the site. Heritage interpretation, as a co-creative act aided by meditations on the site's symbols, aim to make users identify with the site, and the city at large.

In elementary school, we learned about the narrative structure or the similar three-act structure that stories have a beginning, middle and end.²² The motivations for a cyclical perspective of story are that it views story more literally centred around the experience of the user. The integrated interpretation cycle of Figure 1.10 outlines similar motivations, as it focuses discussions of Central Industrial's architecture and space, as a journey of continual learning. If architecture is the subject of a circle, then it re-interprets its narrative function not to be the place where stories happen, but the place where understandings are facilitated. In this lens, narratives, experiences, revisitation, etc. of the site are not separate linear trajectories, but ones that are continuously crossing

thresholds of known/unknown, and self/collective understandings.

Mendelsund notes our desire that the “fluidity and vagary” that filling in the “author’s suggestions” provide. Existing heritage methodologies were followed to help characterize the site, and will be outlined in future sections. A desire of this work is that heritage work to operate more suggestively, co-creatively, and in turn, encourage the recurrent model. As an example, the Nara Grid²³ framework was followed (*Appendix B*) and offered illuminating ways of analyzing site, understanding it from more varied perspectives. A step further was to visually reinterpret these findings, informing a visual reporting of the results (Figure 2.17), and the development of an emblem for the site (Figure 2.21). The emblem provides a sign or *symbol* that, in mind and out in the world, can signal the site, encapsulate projected meanings, and convey its characteristics and values.

The chart that bookends this section as Figure 1.11 served as an early strategic roadmap for the thesis’ objectives. It starts with the research questions of conservation through public appreciation, heritage interpretation, and co-creation. It is then broken down into themes of the work (which correspond with quadrants of earlier cycles and book sections) and filtered through a web of explorations that attempt to group/connect aims (shown as icons) and a partial list of related keywords.

Conclusion: Understandings —

Returning to *The Little Prince*, the narrator soon after meets the prince, who asks for a drawing of a sheep. The narrator, growing impatient that the prince didn’t like his sheep drawings, offered an illustration of a box, and “threw out an explanation with it:

“This is only his box. The sheep you asked for is inside.’

I was very surprised to see a light break over the face of my young judge: ‘That is exactly the way I wanted it! Do you think that this sheep will have to have a great deal of grass?’²⁴

The prince and the narrator reach an understanding when the drawing becomes an act of co-creation. Restating van den Bergh once more, “the deepening of encounter [...the] force and fascination [...] make us reassess the object.” He continues, “[p]oetry only appears after the meeting.”²⁵ Unlike the literal depictions of sheep, the box drawing and its explanation is an invitation for interpretation, which allows the prince reciprocity.

Campbell, Harmon and Thurley show us that our journeys, and how we become aware of our desires for growth and understanding follow the rhythms of our experience: we become aware of our

comforts through discomfort; in understanding place, we come to value and cherish it. Tilden and Mendelsund show us that information and interpretation are not alike: provocation and suggestion are potent agents in feeling affiliated with place.

Design can help to make us aware of the character and patterns in our places. Thoughtful interpretation can help make us participants of those processes. Part 02 of this thesis looks at how to ‘*Cultivate*’ our legibility of signs and story arcs.

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Figure 1.09 *Defunct rail line on Central Industrial site.
City yards and Robin Hood Flour Mill in distance.*

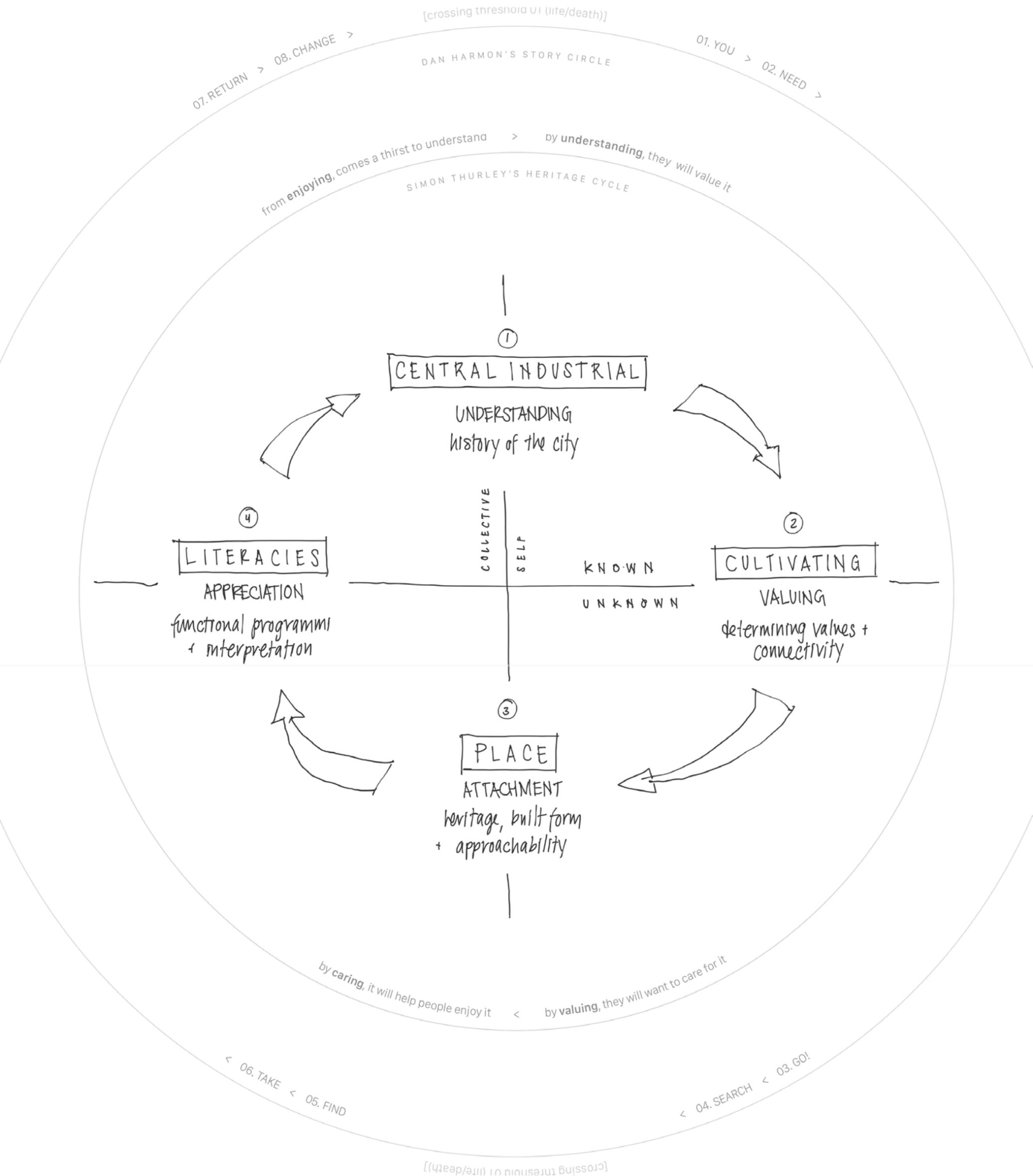


Figure 1.10 Proposed, integrated interpretation circle.

THESIS

CONSERVATION through PUBLIC APPRECIATION, HERITAGE INTERPRETATION and SELF-IDENTIFICATION



THEMES

①
CENTRAL INDUSTRIAL
UNDERSTANDING
history of the city

②
CULTIVATING
VALUING
determining values +
connectivity

③
PLACE
ATTACHMENT
heritage, built form
+ approachability

④
LITERACIES
APPRECIATION
functional programming
+ interpretation



EXPLORATIONS

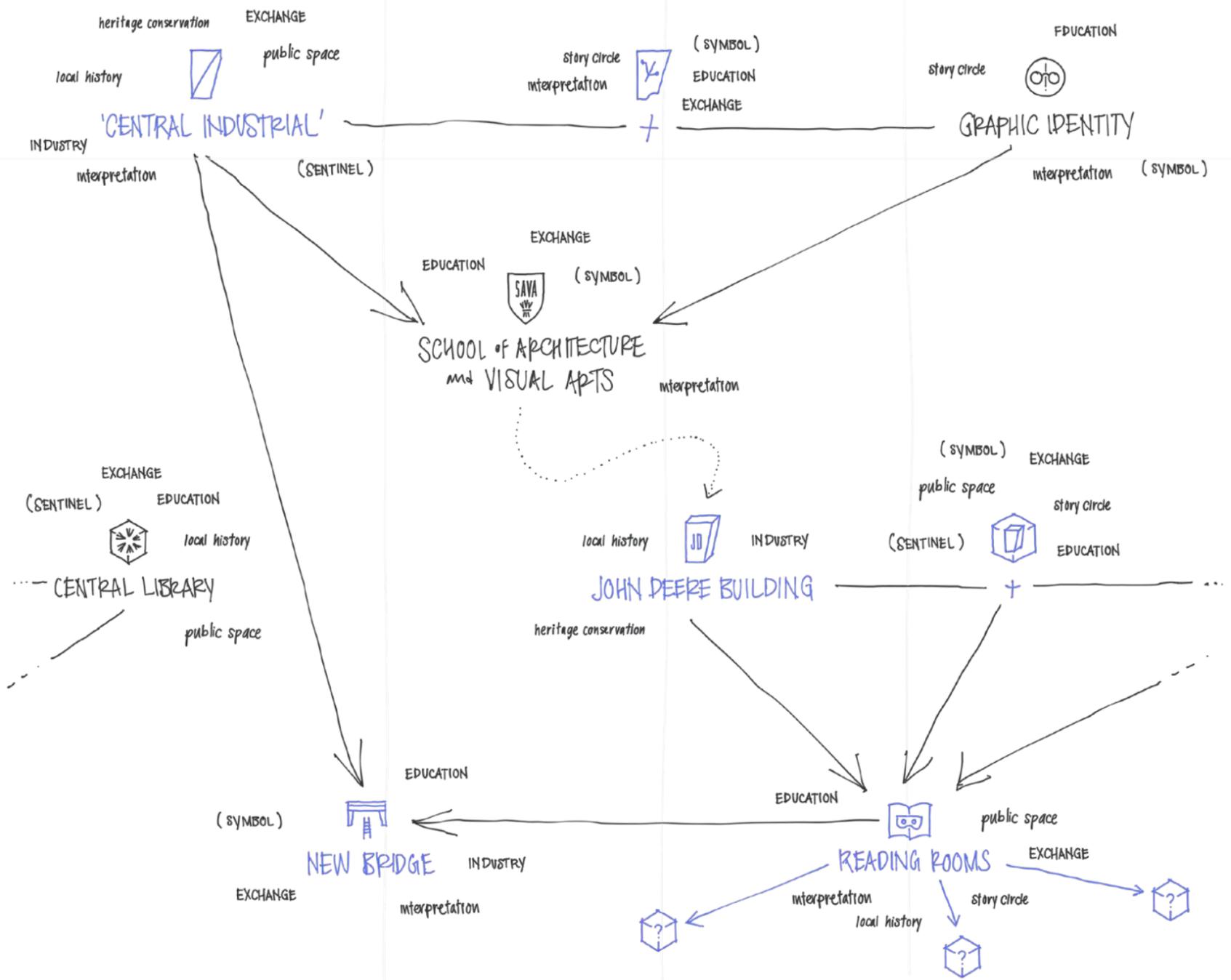


Figure 1.11 Thesis structure diagram

Part 01 Endnotes —

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Figure 2.01 *Fields somewhere over the prairies. 9:29 am, September 2, 2019.*



Figure 2.02 Saskatchewan, on Highway 11 outside of Aylesbury. 11:32 am, April 24, 2012.

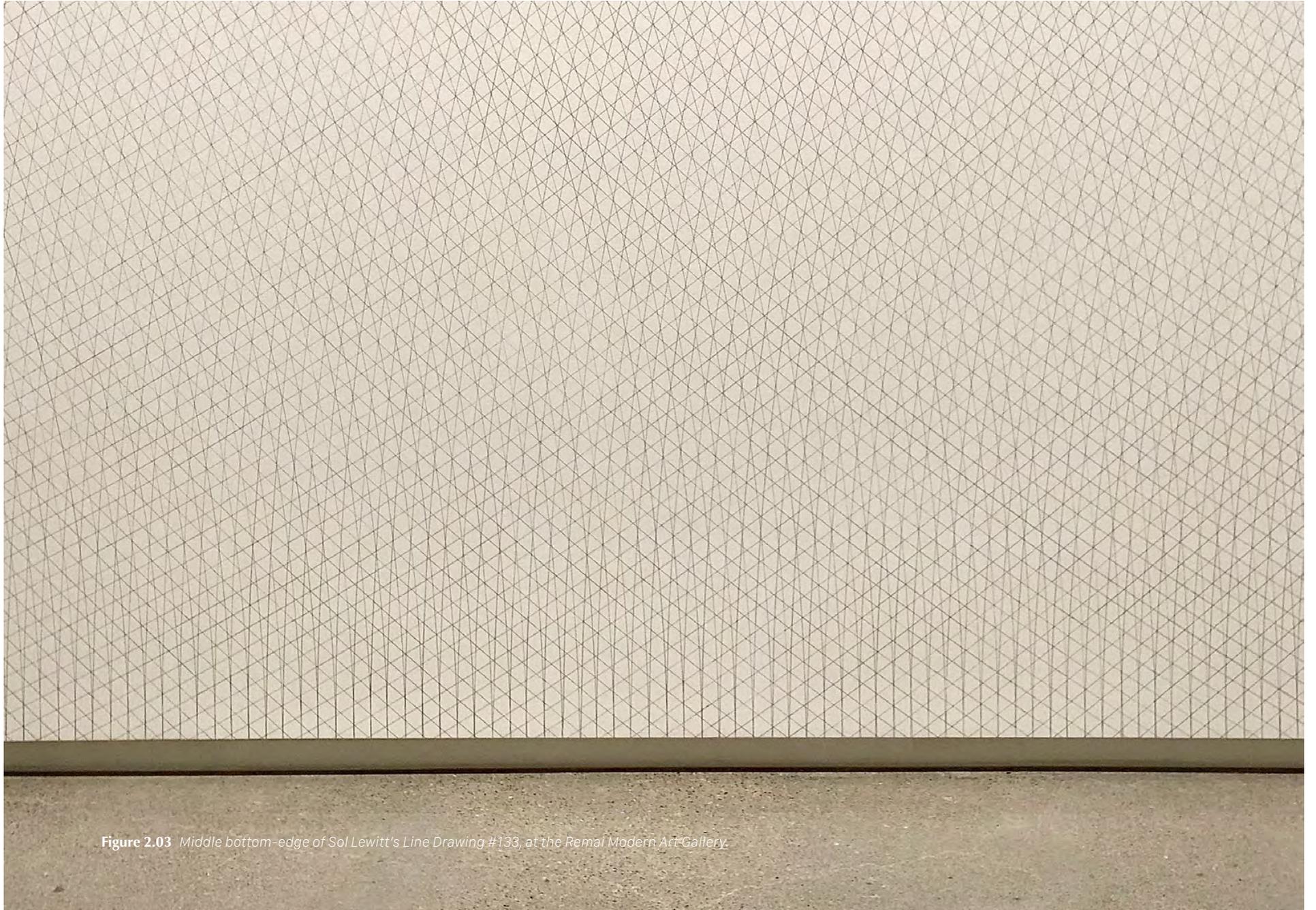


Figure 2.03 Middle bottom-edge of Sol Lewitt's Line Drawing #133, at the Remai Modern Art Gallery.

Part 02

Cultivating

On applying the lenses of co-creation and cultivation to ways of analyzing sites, looking at the city, and the communication of values through symbols.



Figure 2.04 Corner detail of Sol LeWitt's Wall Drawing #133.

In January of 2020, I visited the Remai Modern Art Gallery in Saskatoon and stumbled across Sol LeWitt's *Wall Drawing #133 (Arcs from Four Corners)*, seen in Figure 2.03.¹ It is a work that is explicitly not carried out by LeWitt. He only produces a certificate and set of instructions, and it's the right to those that a museum acquires when wanting to show the piece.² *Drawing #133* requires that a draftsman draw increasingly concentric arcs that radiate from the four corners of a wall out to its perimeter (Figure 2.04).³ If the work is shown elsewhere, by nature, the piece changes:

When a site is identified, lines are drawn connecting each architectural feature of the wall to the other features on the same surface. The drawing is structured by the architecture but also serves to articulate it, rendering the texture, size, shape and fixtures of the wall visible to the spectator.⁴

To my mind, there are three critical readings of the work. The first two are the stated nature of its creation and site-specificity. The last is that contemplating the work is a reflective and exploratory exercise, as the piece invites discussion and leaves the topics open. In other words, the work is co-created, sensitive to context, and invites interpretation.

Part 02 will look at how readings like these and others inform ways of learning about a site, cultivating meaning towards an understanding of a place. Section 02.1 will preface the research by situating my position towards the subject. 02.2 will describe the site through its relationship with the city. 02.3 establishes guiding conservation frameworks in helping to locate perspectives of the site, led by heritage evaluation strategies. 02.4 discusses the themes and values embedded in the city's representations, and finally, 02.5 will look at how all discussions work towards cultivating an understanding of place, and the makings of symbols.

An acknowledgement before continuing: there are inherent biases in re-understanding my hometown critically. The fieldwork, histories, analysis, other perspectives, etc., will mainly reflect my views and opinions. The work offered here in no way attempts to provide an authorizing or historically and factually definitive view of the site. It will draw attention to ways of looking at the site, in non-exhaustively researched ways that risk being surface-level, complete with shortcomings and flaws. Still, with the sincerest of intentions, I present this work as an incomplete picture, in hopes to offer the work not as dismissive, or selective, but a reflection of the qualities which I've perceived, good and bad, to discuss those which I haven't.

02.1 Situating —

The earliest efforts of the research were grounded in reviewing the city's recorded history since establishment, in on the ground fieldwork, and in

visits to the local archives. Specifically of Central Industrial, I have no meaningful relationship with its boundaries that pre-date this thesis. However, it has come to be a symbol for many of my feelings about the city.

Having been a resident and architecture student of Winnipeg, and later studying heritage conservation in Ottawa, these two perspectives deeply filter how I have come to see Saskatoon. As I have been away from Saskatoon for so long, my now more mature understanding of the city primarily comes from having fostered an appreciation of it from lessons learned afar. The perspective reflects both inside and outside influences and shines a light on a similar view that the significance of Central Industrial is less about its own qualities.

Academic Ray Lucas, in his book *Research Methods for Architecture*, foregrounds the discussion on the objectivity of viewpoints by asking where a researcher places themselves

concerning the *etic* and the *emic*.⁵ Defined by linguist Kenneth Pike, they represent two ways of viewing the study of architecture's operations: "The etic account is from the point of view of an observer who is outside the culture or activity in question, whereas the emic account is produced from within a culture."⁶ Figure 2.05 presents a useful diagram, modified to self-report this thesis' two oppositions. The tone is emic: embedded and personalized. But, the analysis and representations aim to be more etic: a distanced assessment, general in view, for broader applicability.

city's *etic* and *emic* portrayals of itself. This characterization provides a contextual framework for understanding a reading of Saskatoon (centred around dominant, thematic narratives), additionally situating points of critique that will be expanded on.

A resident reading this would find that little of the base subject matter is new. The manner that the topics unfold, however, aims to offer a fresh perspective that recontextualizes an understanding of their surroundings. For me, knowing that the cues of the city could be read has made it conversant in new, surprising ways, and I hope to share that same feeling that Central Industrial serves to facilitate those conversations.

02.2 Saskatoon —

In describing Saskatoon here, a characterization of the city that revolves around its names, symbols, and narratives in tourism marketing is favoured. Foregrounding these forms of civic identity establishes discussions around the

Saskatoon, early on

In 1882, the Temperance Colonization Society of Toronto (TCS) went out west in search of a location to set up an agricultural and social utopia.⁷ Dedicated to "the ideals of the Temperance Movement, a philosophy which blamed alcohol

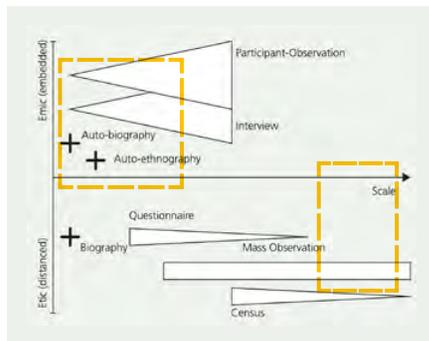


Figure 2.05 An illustration of the *etic* and *emic* viewpoints, per Lucas. Yellow indicates thesis position within matrix.



Figure 2.06 "Map of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta : showing the number of quarter-sections available for homestead entry in each township, also the pre-emption and purchased homestead area as defined by the Dominion Lands Act, 1908." (4th ed., 1915).

for most of the ills that beset society," they went out to flee the evils of alcohol.⁸ The Canadian government allocated them large blocks of land, as part of the Dominion Lands Act, to establish settler colonies and farms on the prairies (Figure 2.06).⁹

Soon after their arrival, Chief Whitecap of the Dakota (Sioux), whose community was established a few years prior nearby (Moose Woods, present-day Whitecap Dakota First Nation), counselled on a site for establishment.¹⁰ A location was suggested with low lying banks that could accommodate a ferry and a future bridge, across the river from what is now Victoria Park.¹¹ John Lake, leader of the TCS, was soon informed that the government had already designated that plot.¹² They settled on an adjacent plot up the river, located in what is now known as Nutana.¹³

Saskatoon, a reading

From this point, my summary of the city's ensuing development will narrow in narrative to focus on the influence of three activities related to the



Figure 2.07 *Broadway Bridge, framing railway hotel, the Bessborough. Photo: Lorenzo Apostol.*



Figure 2.08 *Bessborough postcard, taken from its primary, downtown facing facade. ca. 1935. Image: SPL.*

City of Saskatoon's official crest: agriculture, transport/rail, and education.

An essential point of departure is local author Amy Jo Ehman's *Saskatoon: A History in Words and Pictures*, which associates the stories of built works, events, and people to the city's evolution.¹⁴ Notably, she uses the construction of the city's bridges—historically tied to the three industries—to discuss the values and circumstances that gave way to their production.

Ehman's reading of the city does not present a history of Saskatoon, but rather, stories anchored to a time and place helped with archival photographs. The exposition method contributes nicely to a sense of co-creation in sharing narratives of the city, emphasizing the inherent themes in ways that encourage seeing relationships. Distanced from strictly historical sequences, the stories (or photos) can be seen in terms of their value for resonance. Ehman's perspective is further explored in Section 03.2

of this thesis, focusing on her visual take on the city's history.

A timeline created by Saskatchewan conservation architect Bernard Flaman helpfully situates a chronology of significant architectural works throughout the province.¹⁵ Complimenting this is Figure 2.09, which shows iconic structures around Saskatoon. Other photo sets that offer thematic portraits of the city are provided in Figure 2.16 (Central Industrial), and Figure 2.22 (signs/symbols of the city), presented to convey some impressions of the subject areas.

Saskatoon, today (and the river)

Tourism Saskatoon describes the city as "a thriving city graced with the vibrant beauty of nature. Divided by the winding South Saskatchewan River, a series of bridges join Saskatoon's east and west face."¹⁶ The focus on the river and the bridges are quintessential Saskatoon (Figure 2.10). The river, its banks, and a bridge are standard subjects for postcards and similar media (Figure 2.07). The next

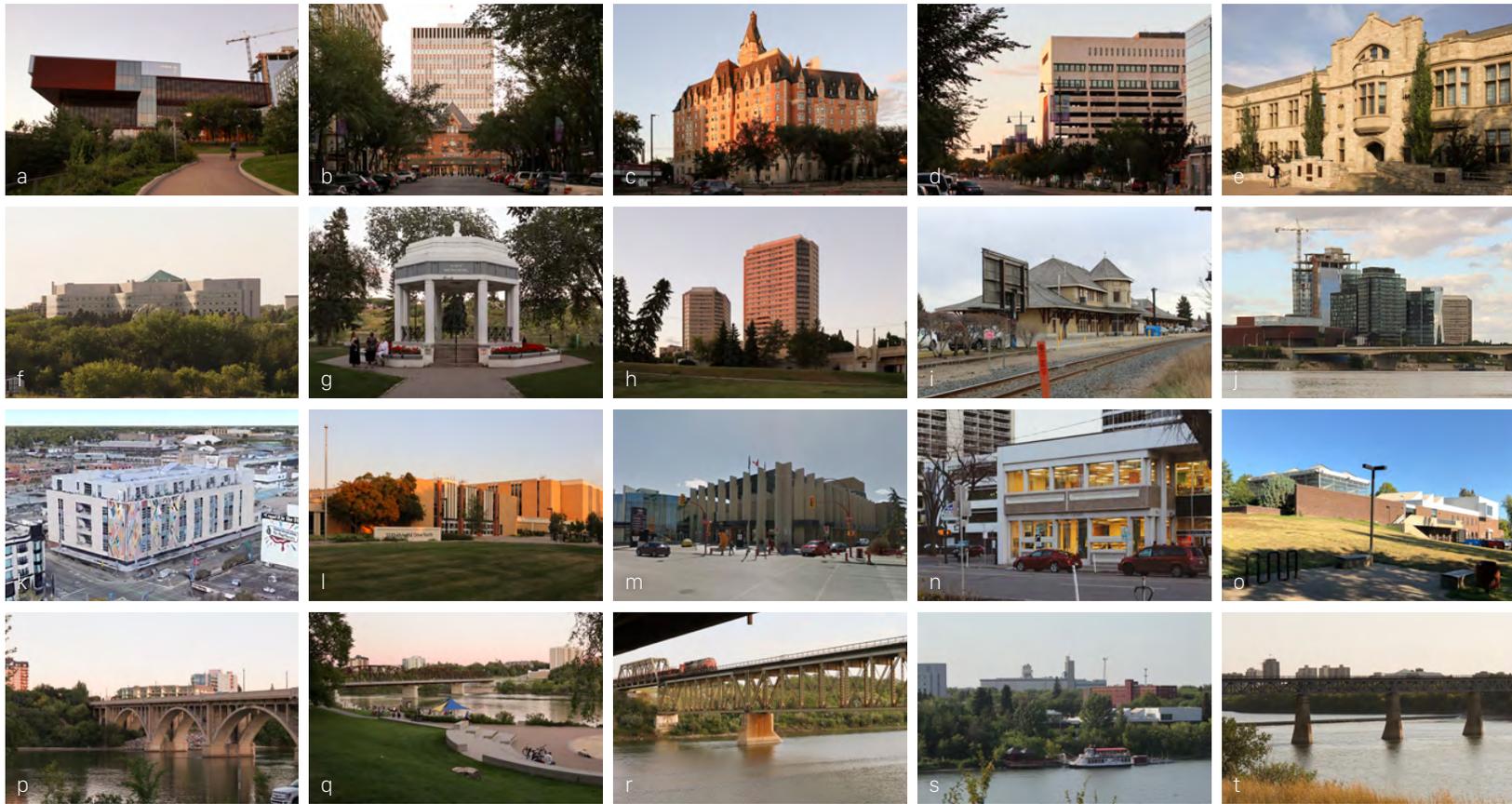


Figure 2.09 Characterizing Saskatoon: Landmarks

Labels for each of the images is identified in the List of Illustrations.

The landmarks shown reflect structures/places in the city that the average citizen would likely be able to identify either the name and/or location of the image by sight alone (preference given to buildings that do not require signage [see Figure 2.22] or other contextual clues, like location).

Three themes are identified here, organized by row: a-j, representing the most iconic structures; k-o, other noteworthy works of modernism; p-t, bridges, public space and scenery related to the river.



Figure 2.10 *Aerial perspective of Saskatoon, 2018.*
Photo: Himadry Singh

staple, easily the most recognizable architectural landmark of the city, is the Bessborough Hotel (opened 1935, Figure 2.08), the Canadian National Railway's chateau-style grand railway hotel.¹⁷ The newest defining landmark is another riverside project, the Rемаi Modern art gallery (opened in 2017),¹⁸ situated within River Landing, "Saskatchewan's premier destination centre! [sic],"¹⁹ a beloved riverfront park.

These elements, as symbols of the city, place strong (often singular) emphasis on features related to the "vibrant beauty of nature" and the river to signify Saskatoon. But, I argue, represent a viewpoint that is reductive of critical narratives of the city's development, in fact often trivializing the contexts of essential character-defining features of the city's identity.

As an example, the present-day sites of Midtown Plaza, the Idylwyld Freeway, the Farmer's Market, and River Landing share no seemingly obvious relationship aside from their proximity. History



Figure 2.11 Street character of downtown Saskatoon. The photos are taken at the same location, looking at opposite sides, showing the axial link between the former rail hotel, the Bessborough, and the former CNR rail station, now, Midtown Plaza.

reveals that the mall was a railway station, the freeway the city's first bridge which serviced it, and River Landing (and market) housed a plant that powered the city. Today's main indication of this history is the shared axis between the Bessborough and Midtown Plaza, but even the mall is a rebuilt imitation. River Landing's efforts to make the past evident are in the relatively small generating station,²⁰ which remains unoccupied, and an interpretation plan whose proposals were almost wholly disregarded.²¹

Taking *Tourism Saskatoon's* writeup as what might be appealing about the city shows a disproportionate emphasis on recreation centred around the river as representing what is charming about the city. I argue that as a dominantly upheld perspective, it has come at the expense of many other more interpretive narratives of the city, notably, those related to agriculture, transport, and education, themes very much waiting to be activated in the Central Industrial site.

Saskatoon, also known as

The name *Saskatoon* has derived from the Cree word 'Mis-Sask-quah-toomina,' a locally abundant berry, while *Saskatchewan* is Cree for swift-flowing water.²² Names are a significant form of symbolism, as their selection and bestowal reflect facets of identity. Ehman recounts a possible story by John Lake: "While lying in my tent one Sunday afternoon, one of the chain bearers brought me a handful of beautiful red [*sic*: they are purple] berries, I asked him the name."²³ Saskatoon, as a name, is founded on ideas of land, food, and exchange (Figure 0.21, in which the mayor of the time offers a gift of saskatoon berry jam to Queen Elizabeth II).

The following are common nicknames for Saskatoon,²⁴ presented for their elucidation of other aspects of the city.

POW City This abbreviation for potash, oil, and wheat references the primary industrial resources

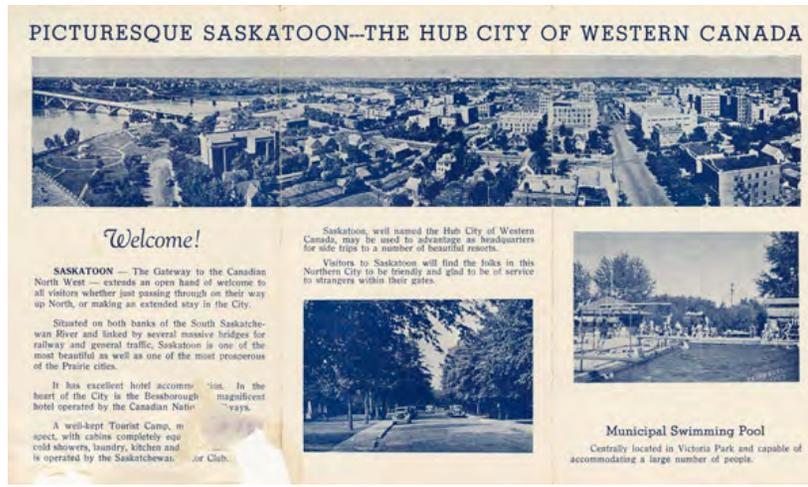
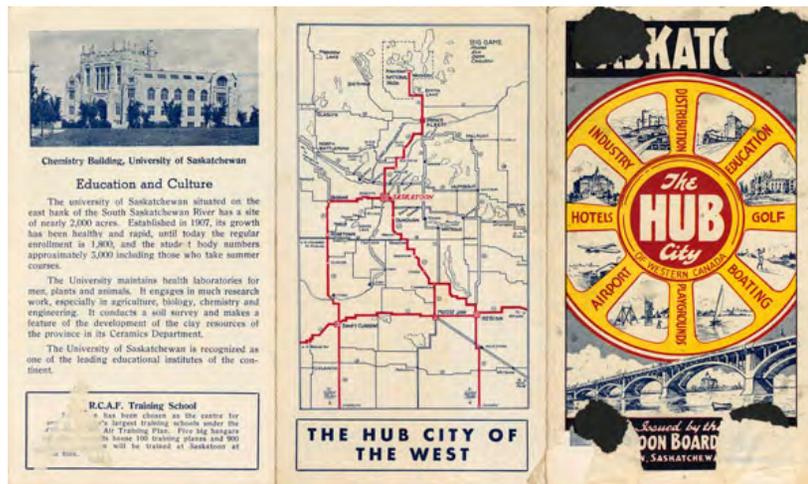


Figure 2.12 "Saskatoon, The Hub City of Western Canada," pamphlet published by the Saskatoon Board of Trade, ca. 1940.

that drive Saskatoon's economy.²⁵ Also related is 'Hub City.' (Figure 2.12)

Hub City Historically, the geographically central location of the city has made it an important distribution centre. This is evidenced in the many rail lines (and their bridges) which meet in Saskatoon, radiating like spokes from a hub.

The City of Bridges This is named for the city's many bridges that cross the South Saskatchewan River. Bridges play an essential role in the development of Saskatoon from the early days of establishment, and railway companies have connected communities on either side of the river.²⁶

Paris of the Prairies Probably the most commonly used in travel articles, though its source, meaning and intention are tough to pinpoint. The moniker sometimes appears with reference to its "artful bridges."²⁷ Other justifications are its romantic,

picturesque qualities of the downtown²⁸ or its arts scene.²⁹

The last of the list is markedly more aspirational and expresses the criticism present in upholding the city's beauty as *the* dominant value. Other nicknames are more precise, more tangible, and unique to Saskatoon's character and values, and do not define success in comparison to elsewhere.

These nicknames characterize and are embodiments of the city. As reflections of Saskatoon's identity, there are clear themes that run throughout: agriculture and resources, industry and the city; and, centrality and facilitating exchange.

02.3 Central Industrial and Heritage —

A wedge-shaped plot and a diagonally-crossing, functioning rail line characterize Central Industrial. East of the tracks, the area is mostly municipally-

owned (Figure 2.14), giving way to its more common name as the 'city yards.'³⁰ The sizable presence of the tracks perpetuates a perception of the site as being utilitarian and unremarkable. The structures are mainly of the light-industrial variety, the majority of which are storage or workshops and closed to the public.

Yet, Central Industrial should be treated as a heritage site, as its seeming mundaneness masks its significance. A conservation-led approach to communicating its obscured character and values would help reinforce its importance as a witness to the city's development, and potential for experiences as a uniquely-layered public space.

The following are three conservation-based frameworks used to evaluate the site for its historic significance. Parks Canada's *Standards and Guidelines*,³¹ the *Nara Grid*,³² and the direction of a *Statement of Significance*.³³ Applying these frameworks of understanding helps to



Figure 2.13 Present day River Landing Spray Park, one of many attractions of the site. Visible beyond is the concession stand, the river, and Idywyld Bridge (former location of the city's first bridge).

substantiate Central Industrial as a site needing conservation.

Standards and Guidelines

The 2010 *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (S&G)* is an essential document in guiding decision-making processes “that will give historic places new life while protecting their heritage value.”³⁴ Its *Standards* outline principles to approaching conservation work, while the *Guidelines* then take those by adapting them to different contextual conditions. Two such examples of relevant Standards for our purposes are: “[c]onserve changes to an *historic place* that, over time, have become *character-defining elements* in their own right;”³⁵ and “[r]ecognize each *historic place* as a physical record of its time, place and use.”³⁶

As a tool for evaluating Central Industrial, a fundamental notion the S&G offers is in offering classifications for how historic places can be seen. It was determined that Central Industrial more

closely resembles a ‘Cultural Landscape,’ and by looking at the subsections for that viewpoint, the site could be filtered through a host of sensitivities that may pertain to the site, as seen in Figure 2.15 and further elaborated upon in *Appendix A*, which identifies character-defining features of Central Industrial. The guidelines foreground the importance of spatial and visual relationships in being essential components to the site’s worth. It implies that a place itself may not readily appear significant, but this in no way means that it is not meaningful—a crucial point in seeing Central Industrial as a facilitator for conversations *about* the city, as will be discussed.

Nara Grid

The *Nara Document on Authenticity* (1994) acknowledged the need to “challenge conventional thinking in the conservation field” to “broad[en] our horizons” concerning cultural and heritage diversity.³⁷ The document marked a significant shift in conceptualizing heritage towards more expanded understandings of the relativity



Figure 2.14 Site plan sign located at the King St and Manitoba Ave entrance. Note: plan has oriented top as south, and only shows roughly the south-western quarter of the overall Central Industrial site.

4.1 Guidelines for Cultural Landscapes and Heritage Districts

- evidence of land use
- land patterns
- spatial organization
- visual relationships
- circulation
- ecological features
- vegetation
- landforms
- water features
- built features

Figure 2.15 A listing of relevant subsections within the Parks Canada's Guidelines for Cultural Landscapes.

A detailed evaluation using these considerations for Central Industrial can be found on Appendix A.

and diversity of values. Van Balen outlines a methodology directly derived from it, the *Nara Grid*, which is a kind of checklist of considerations used to help one gain a richer understanding of the authenticity and values of a site.³⁸

Re-formatted for the page layout as Table 2.01, the *Nara* framework's format is a literal grid that lists various *dimensions* (top row) and *aspects* (left column) identified in the *Nara Document*. At each intersection on the chart, the documentation and analysis of the site should be assessed for its applicability against the intersection's pairing, then filled. In doing so, a more layered understanding of place emerges by considering the different angles of viewing it.

For Central Industrial, one example is in considering the intersection of 'Historic' and 'Form and Design.' Overlooked was the purpose of the plot-shape itself, and by acknowledging its historical origins, it became clear that its orthogonal qualities corresponded with the Dominion Land Survey (Figure 2.06).³⁹

Consequentially, this spoke to broader ideas of grids within the city, the shape of the province, and more significant political implications.

Appendix B provides a completed version of the *Nara Grid* for Central Industrial.

Statements of Significance

The aim of *Part 02: Cultivating* is to outline ways, existing and proposed, of examining and understanding site. However, the more crucial exploration is in suggesting new means of conveying and disseminating the values-based knowledge.

Writing a Statement of Significance (SOS) is an essential part of formally documenting and recognizing historical places, serving as a "succinct way of expressing heritage value [...] communicated in an effective and consistent manner that bridges the differences between jurisdictions."⁴⁰ If the *Nara Grid* helps to inform the bigger picture, a SOS aims to express the findings, thus providing the basis of decision-making for the

		Dimensions			
		Artistic	Historic	Social	Scientific
Aspects	Form and Design				
	Materials and Substance				
	Use and Function				
	Tradition, Techniques, and Workmanship				
	Location and Setting				
	Spirit and Feeling				

Table 2.01 "The Nara Grid Based on the Nara Document on Authenticity," adapted from Van Balen.

S&G. In this thesis, the Nara Grid proved invaluable in understanding the site more complexly within its broader contexts, while the S&G helped to identify where those traces were visible.

A SOS is composed of three sections: the Description of Historic Place, the Heritage Value, and the Character-Defining Elements (CDE).⁴¹ Critical for our immediate purposes is knowing that the CDEs sets out "the key features that must be conserved in order for the place to continue to have value,"⁴² and that and SOS is a *written* form of communication. With this in mind, take into consideration the following excerpt:

The challenge in writing the Character-defining Elements section is to achieve a balance between being too specific and being too general. Rather than listing all elements, the Character-defining Elements section should *point readers towards* where value is embodied.⁴³

Fittingly, as quoted earlier, Mendelsund also wrote of the capacity for words to *point*. Illustrations, and the interpretations that they provide for, can be all at once specific, general and *pointed*. A SOS represents the complex processes of researching a site and formulating a summary of the findings. The resultant words *point*, because they stand to represent "where value is embodied"—an essential notion as we move to consider novel ways of expressing and disseminating those results.

02.4 Emblems and Motifs —

On the topic of heraldic emblems, the office to the governor general of Canada describes them as having "existed for centuries [remaining] a modern way of communicating," past, present and future ideas, serving to "identify a person or an organization in a simple and elegant way."⁴⁴ A common component of heraldic emblems is the scroll usually found near the bottom that

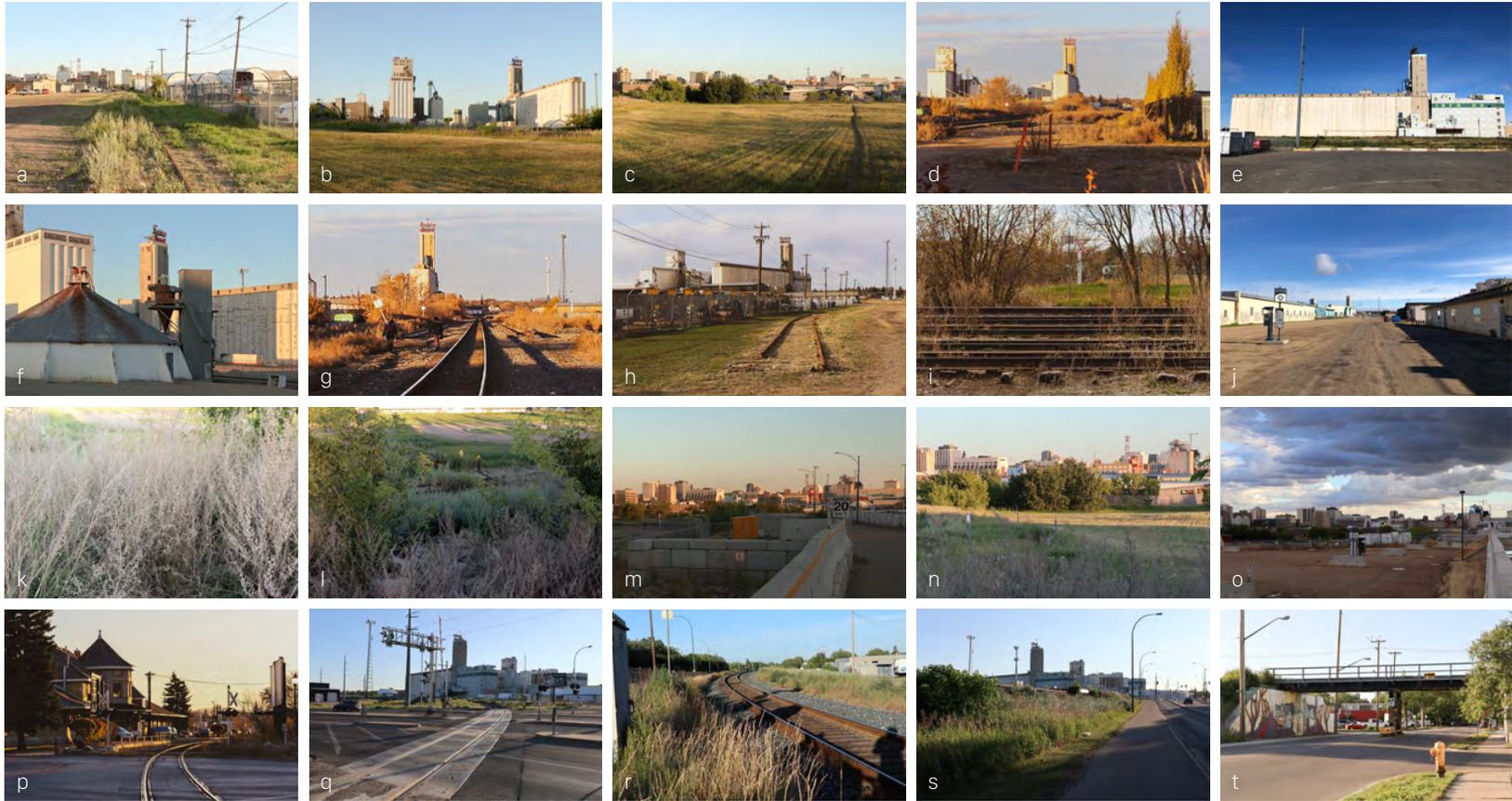
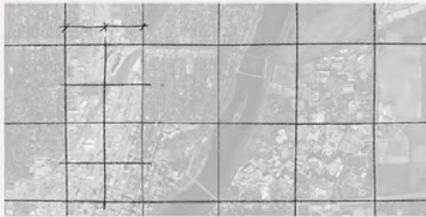


Figure 2.16 *Characterizing Central Industrial.*

Images of various scenes within the site. Some common themes to note: vegetation, tracks/trains, CoS functions.

Photos a-o, were taken within Central Industrial's boundaries; p-t, taken outside, following the tracks southwest towards the CP Station (p), and northeast along the tracks towards the Train Bridge.



land patterns + spatial organization + land use
(bounded by quarter-section plots)



circulation + land patterns
(mixed-use boundary)



circulation + spatial organization
(diagonal rail lines parallel to downtown grid)



spatial organization + visual relationships



vegetation + ecological features



circulation + land use
(historically industrial, city yards)



built features + land use
(warehouse district)



circulation + land patterns + built features
(rail, and CPR Station)



built features
(Robin Hood Flour Mill + Sign)

Figure 2.17 Select Central Industrial character defining elements, presented and interpreted visually. The captions correspond to insights gleaned from the heritage evaluation frameworks (expanded in full in Appendix A and Appendix B).

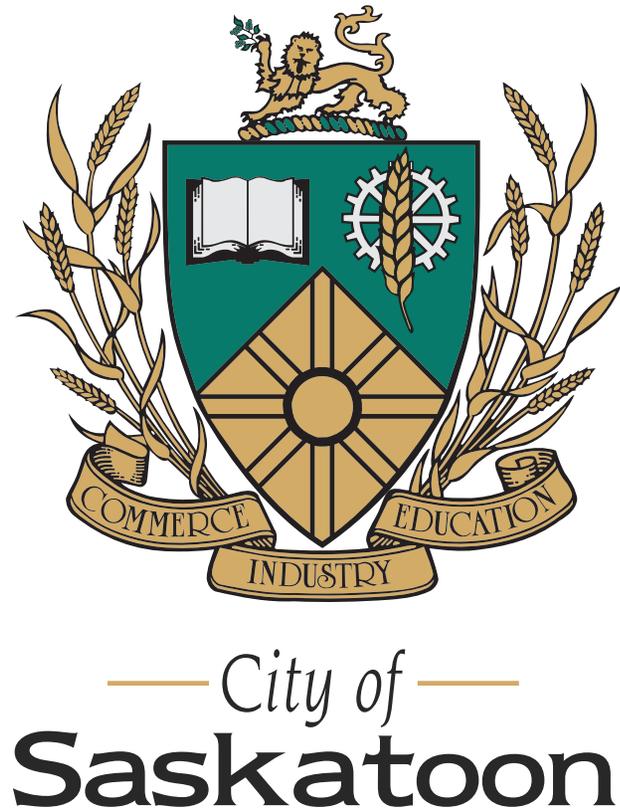


Figure 2.18 City of Saskatoon Official Crest.

contains the *motto*, a collection of words that often communicate a group's motivations or exhortations.

The official Saskatoon Coat of Arms (Figure 2.18), adopted in 1948, graphically communicates the city's motto, which has "since its earliest days been known as the center of *commerce, education and industry*."⁴⁵ These three words identified early in the city's development, serve as pillars of Saskatoon's values and disposition and echo the themes present in the city's many nicknames, described earlier. The rest of the coat of arms is richly situated in an identity itself, borrowing many of the same components (colour scheme, lion, and wheat) from the provincial flag and coat of arms, communicating the shared *motifs* between city and province.

An essential aspect of symbols is that they represent something else and that they are recognizable. The more extended quote provided in Figure 2.19, taken from a guide to

Themes are the main ideas of a work of literature. They represent the meaning or question behind the series of events that make up the narrative.

Motifs are recurring elements that point to these themes. In other words, motif is a tool used to craft theme. While themes are abstract and conceptual, motifs are tangible and concrete.

A **symbol** is an object that represents something else. A red rose can represent romance. A crown may represent power. A gold coin represents wealth. A dove represents peace. And a snake, depending on its use, can represent either poison or fertility.

Motifs are often symbols.

The famous green light across the water in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* is both a symbol — representing what Gatsby desires but can never fully reach — and a motif, reappearing at multiple key moments in the novel.

MasterClass.com. "Writing 101: What is a Motif?"

Figure 2.19 *On themes, motifs, and symbols.*

screenwriting,⁴⁶ explains the differences and overlaps between themes, motifs, and symbols. A symbol that operates as a motif becomes critical in communicating messages or themes. Heraldry, like the CoS coat of arms, is a helpful emblem in seeing the intersection between symbols, the city, and the meanings in between.

In the built and visual environments, when we notice patterns, we recognize their symbols, and the ways they are meant to signify something else. As Mendelsund writes, "[w]ords [like symbols] are effective not because of what they carry in them, but for their latent potential to unlock the accumulated experience of the reader. Words 'contain' meanings, but, more important, words potentiate meaning."⁴⁷

This thesis takes careful consideration of the ability for graphic representation to be an indispensable visual communication tool. When work is presented with a consistent and discernable graphic language, it becomes easier to

notice patterns within the message. The strategic use of symbols can make them persistent reminders, their understanding becoming more vibrant with each experience. Where we begin to see this in action is in Figure 2.20, where on the right-half, the earlier visual findings of Figure 2.17 make a reappearance, recontextualizing the characteristic elements and informing the design of an emblem.

02.5 Synthesis: Symbols —

Growing up, Saskatoon's Midtown Plaza, represented experiences with family, friends, and the downtown. But since learning of its history and heritage value, I better understand it as a place that reflects and ties it to the development of the city. Central Industrial, echoes many of the same points. Its value as a site is intimately linked with its capacity to tell stories of the city.

An objective of the thesis was to create an emblem for the Central Industrial site. Synthesizing the work so far is the emblem for what will now be referred to as Central Yards (Figure 2.20). It will be used as a recognizable symbol to represent the aims of the thesis, and the aspirations for the Central Industrial site. As a process-informed work, the emblem builds from the principles of the site identified the earlier heritage characterizations. Embedded within the symbol are meanings rooted in the three pillars of the city (industry, commerce, exchange), which will be explained in greater detail in Section 03.1, situated alongside discussions on literacies and interpretation.

Conclusion: 'Cultivating' —

Acknowledging that a symbol works as a motif helps us to "accumulate experience,"⁴⁸ or, *cultivate* meaning. Part 02 has built towards providing the necessary contexts that inform a refined



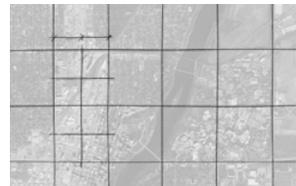
existing 1 mile grid section



existing outline of Central Industrial



existing rail lines



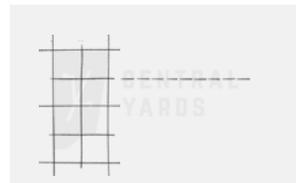
sections and quarter-sections as underlying city/site topology



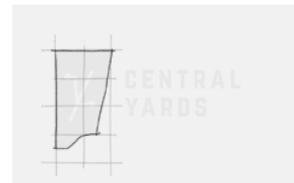
accentuating s-curve, recalling City of Saskatoon logo



accentuating distinct diagonal rail line of site



site topology used as logo's grid construction



fitting shape to grid, establishing more recognizable shape



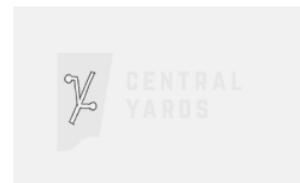
line with nodes, intersecting at rail line, implying change



renaming district; typography suggestive of industrial character



holding shape (or 'shield') derived from geography



abstracted symbol representing values and interpretations of site

Figure 2.20 Proposed emblem for the site, now renamed Central Yards.

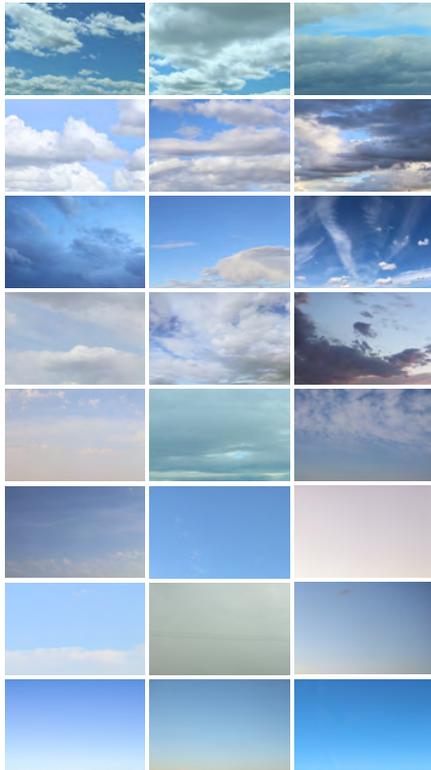


Figure 2.21 Various Saskatchewan skies, 2019–2020.
 A LeWitt inspired meditation/exercise that offers a counterpoint to drawing and groundedness, emphasizing the sky and its variations.

understanding of the city and the site. With this thesis, I look to explore the anchoring effect of symbols in designed environments. Saskatoon, personally, is a symbol of my development. I recognize the ways it has informed me as a person, and see how my understanding of it has changed over time. The definition of the city in my mind stays the same, but its meanings evolve as I do.

What I enjoy about LeWitt's *Wall Drawing #133* is that it embodies 'cultivation.' At a symbolic and aesthetic level, it reminds me of the clichéd idea of Saskatchewan. The piece's vast pattern overtakes the expanse of the backdrop, the way lines sprout

from the edges (Figure 2.03), and the drawing's raked arcs are reminiscent of crops and wheat sheaves. Metaphorically, the work needs to be prepared and grown, a result of the labour of many hands. As a viewer, my readings can be fed into the work and yield its crops.

In the next section, *Literacies*, I look to more directly view Central Industrial as a site with which meaning can be nurtured, for arguably the last traces of industry and agriculture in the heart of the city.

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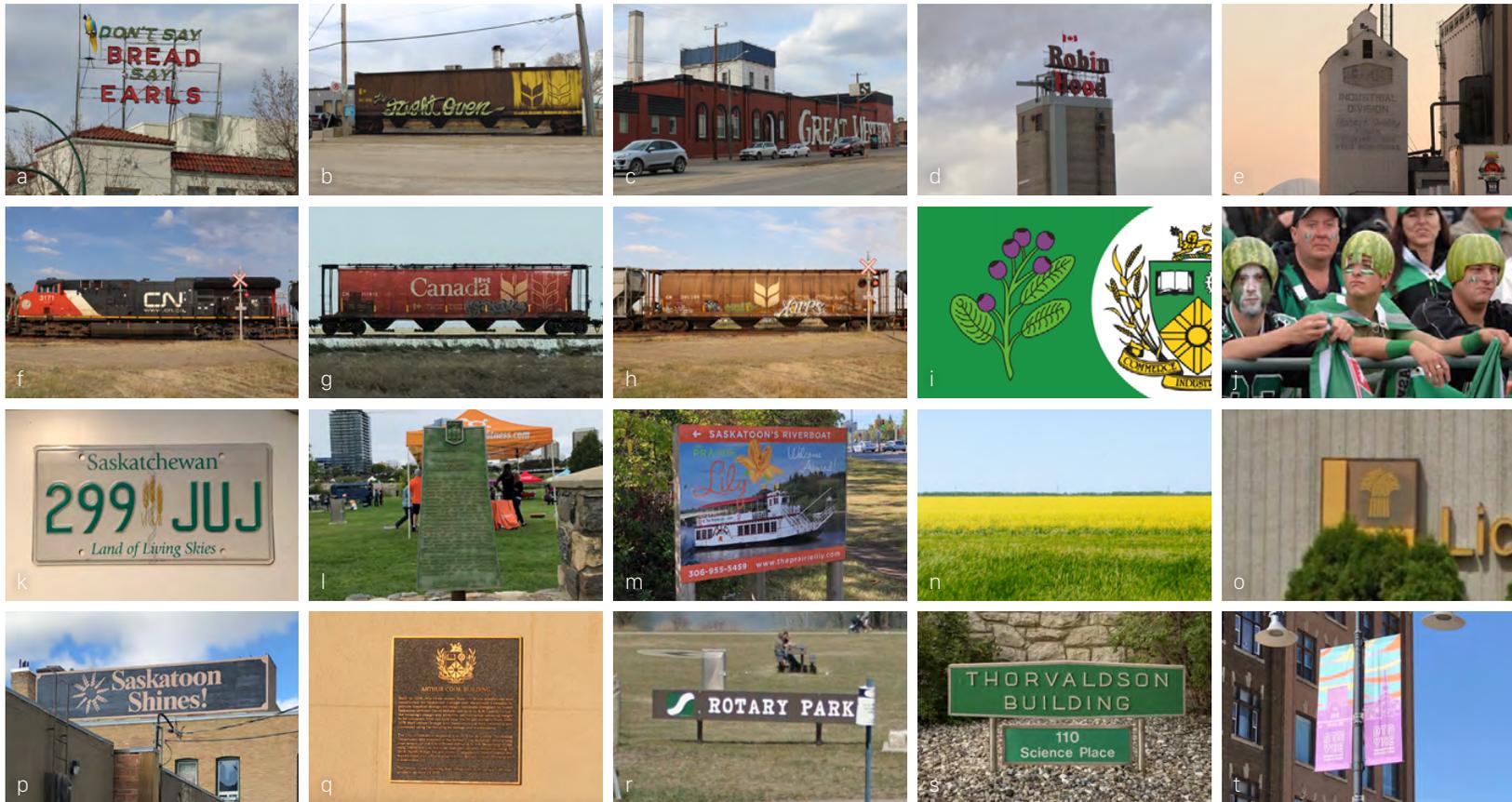


Figure 2.22 Characterizing Saskatoon: Signs and Symbols

Labels for each of the images is identified in the List of Illustrations.

The selection shown reflect symbols, signs, and motifs that the average citizen would be able to identify. Emphasizing signage and labelling, shown here are persistent parts of the city's (and Saskatchewan's) visual environment, whether they be associated with real places, or prevalent throughout in their symbolic application (the Saskatchewan wheat sheaf being a notable example).

Three themes are identified here, organized by row, in no particular order: a-e, representing distinctive symbols found near Central Industrial; and the rest other noteworthy symbols that exist in Saskatoon, depicting provincial symbols (k-o), and local symbols on signage (p-t).

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Figure 3.01 Surveying grid lines as roads. Fields just outside of Saskatoon. 1:14 pm, August 30, 2019.



Figure 3.02 Looking west along the tracks towards the CPR Station. October 25, 2019.

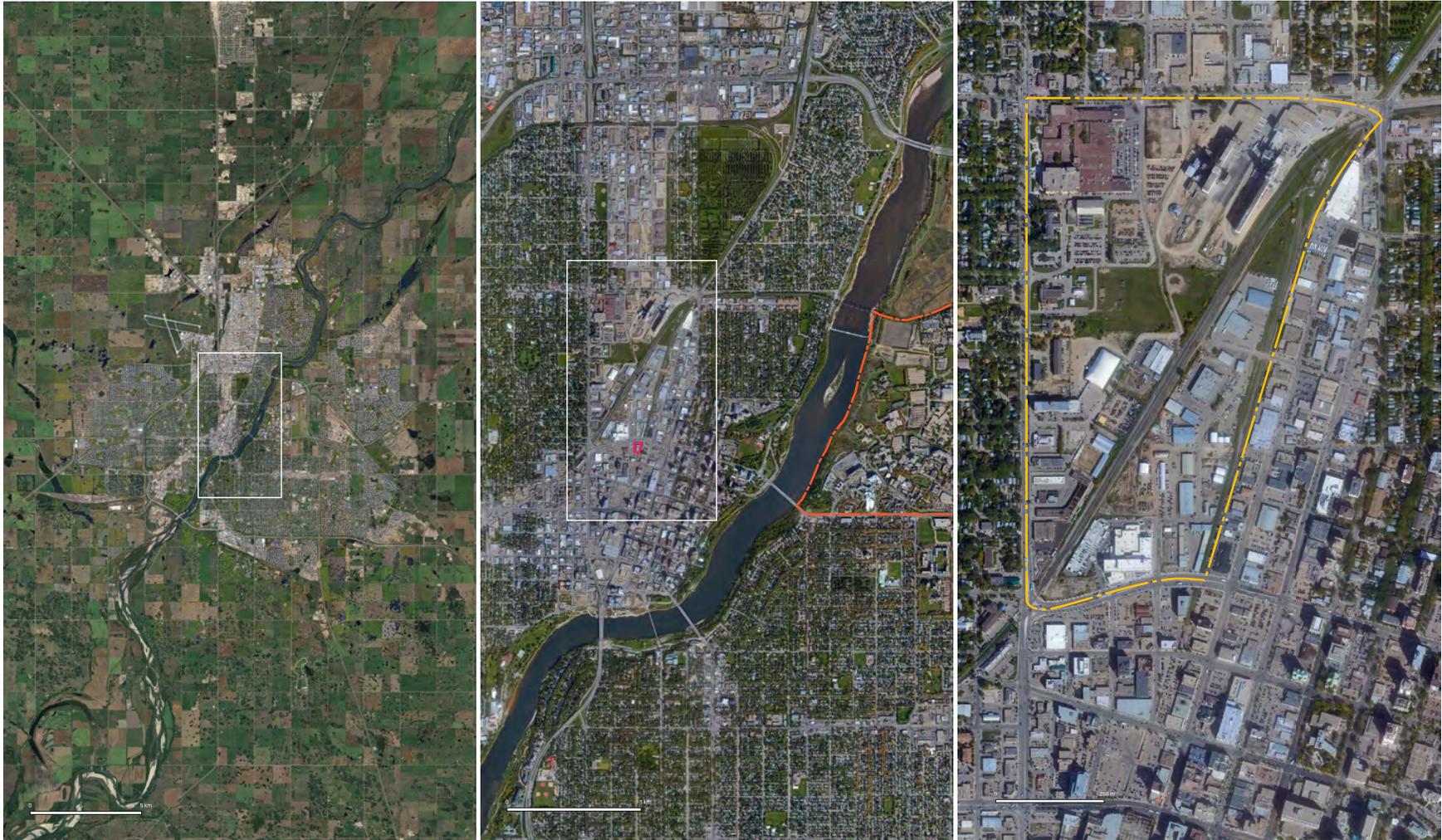


Figure 3.03 Saskatoon at three scales: (a) city. (b) core. (c) Central Industrial.

John Deere Building. University of Saskatchewan Main Campus. Central Industrial official boundaries.
Full size, annotated versions of (b) and (c) provided at larger scale in Appendix D.

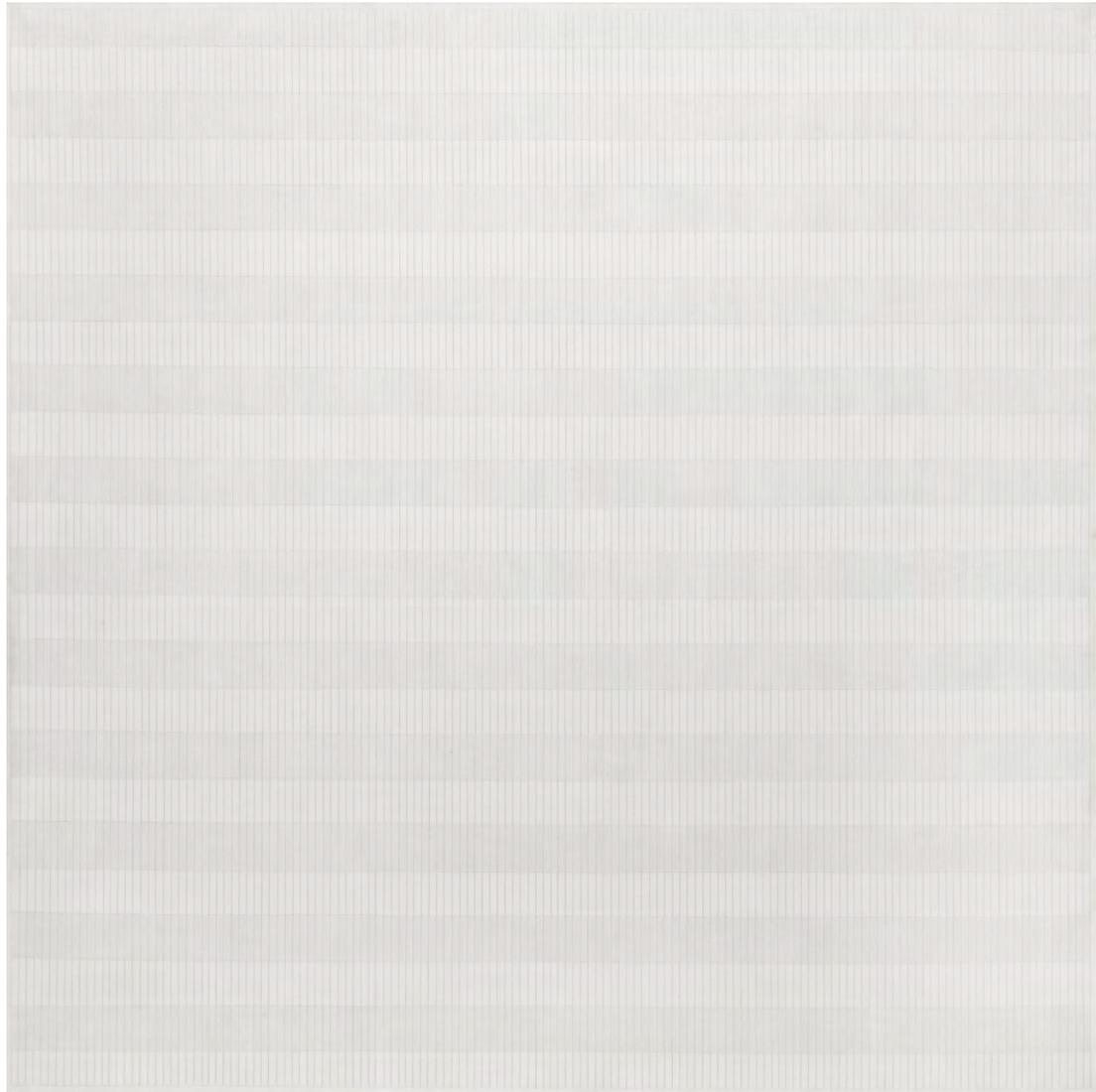


Figure 3.04 Agnes Martin's "The Tree,"
1964. 6' x 6' oil and pencil on canvas.
(a) detail, and (b) in full.

Literacies

On using Central Industrial as a way of reading the city, guided by the presence of public institutions, and informed by ideas of reading images and place.

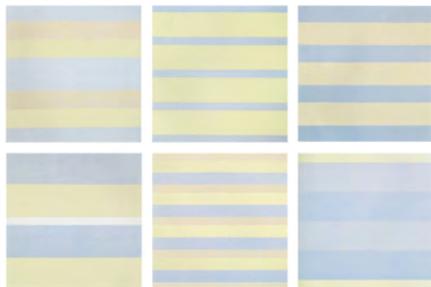


Figure 3.05 Agnes Martin's *With My Back to the World*. Six panels, each 5'x5'.

A key influence on Sol LeWitt's wall drawings is Saskatchewan-born abstract/minimalist painter Agnes Martin.¹ Speaking of her 1963 painting, *The Tree* (Figure 3.04) Martin recounts, "I happened to be thinking of the innocence of trees, and then this grid came into my mind, and I thought it represented innocence."²

The MoMA notes that even to label her an abstractionist, or a minimalist, is not wholly accurate, as "her practice was tethered to spirituality."³ There is a quality in her work that shows sensibility to how a piece can feel lived in, inhabited and felt. The discipline of her rules and grids provide structure and constraint that allow expression to be foregrounded. The intentionality of her hand, the balanced relationships of proportion and scale, and her works' titles all contributing to capture a feeling.

The grid is a dominant motif in this thesis' work. As a symbol, it takes on many forms, visible and

invisible, speaking to different themes of Central Industrial, providing ways of being able to read Saskatoon. Knowing the contextual themes that symbols engage with help us to become literate in the ways the site creates dialogues with its users.

Importantly, and as is intentional for the remainder of the writing, is that a discussion of grids is not a glorification of them. For example, the previously discussed *Dominion Lands Act and Survey (Section 02.2 — 'Saskatoon, early on')* is problematic as a tool of colonization. Nevertheless, because its presence is persistent, this thesis hopes to neither critique nor praise it, instead offering how to recognize that influence in the environment to in order to facilitate conversations about it.

As Part 03 discusses readings, this part is tasked with setting up the designs. Functionally, it acts to bridge, translating Part 01's framing and Part 02's contexts towards Part 04's positions on place, and

the design presented in the conclusion. Put forth here are pieces which will be introduced, to be resolved later. In narrative terms, setup and payoff.

Part 03 unfolds in four parts. Section 03.1 will look at discussing Central Industrial/Yards as a way of understanding civic identity. 03.2 discusses techniques in photography, image-making and methods in seeing the city. 03.3 dives into relevant current events, existing proposals and aspirations of Central Industrial. And 03.4 will discuss *Sentinals*, the institutions, spirits, strategies, and insights that watch over the land, leading into the designs of Parts 04 and 05.

smaller portion east of the tracks within Central Industrial (Figure 2.14), though colloquially, it can refer to the area at large. The 'Central Yards' of this thesis refers to the imagined future of the current Central Industrial site.

To better understand my position on Central Industrial, it is best to see the site as a mirror of its surroundings. Objectively, the site lacks magnificence. All that remains today is ordinary. But, as a study in contrasts and the intangible, what is clear is that the site uniquely embodies the historic civic identity of Saskatoon. Three points help to illustrate this: grids, lines, and shape.

Grids

The Land Dominion Survey, as recounted in Part 02, has influenced much of the city's formal establishment (Figure 3.06). The grid and its sections and quarter-sections cast their outline on Central Industrial, visible in its top-most boundary



Figure 3.06 *Cropped map of the city, 1911. Development pattern highlight the influence of the rail on skewing downtown's grid.*

03.1 Identities and Central Industrial —

First, a clarification on naming and boundaries. Officially, as of December 2019, 'Central Industrial' refers to the City's official outline⁴ recreated in Figure 3.03c. The 'City Yards' are recognized as a

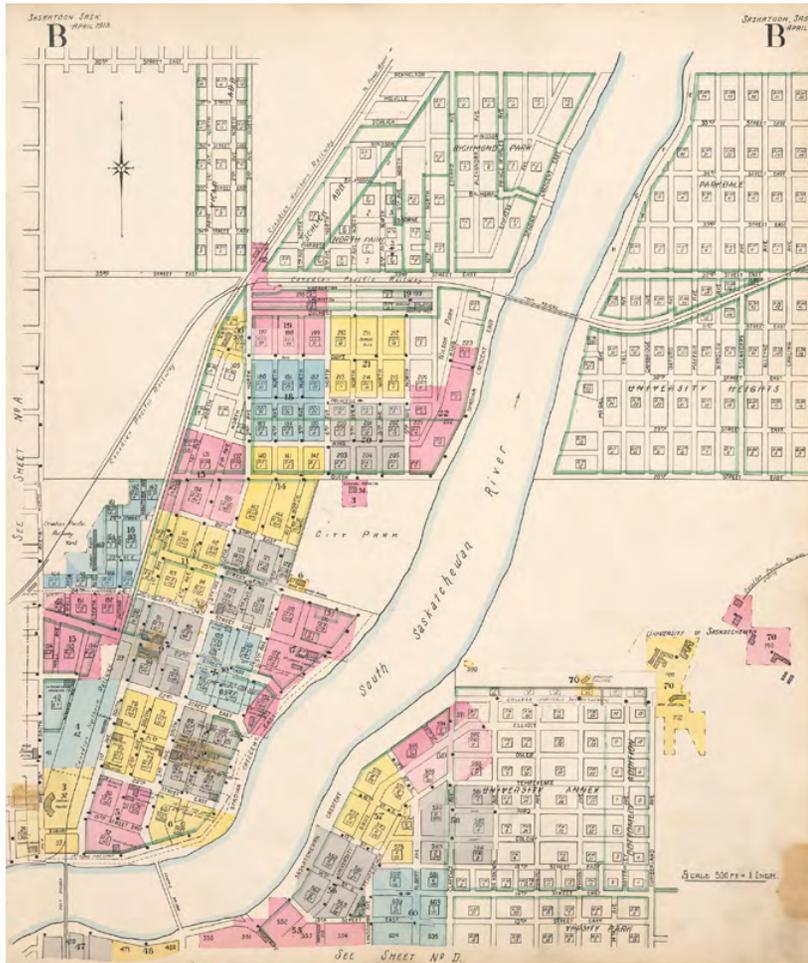


Figure 3.07 Saskatoon 1913 Fire Insurance Plan. Central Industrial's former freight lines are available in 1923 versions of the plans accessible at the City Archives.

measuring half a mile, and its sides falling orthogonally within the regular grid of the city.

The boundaries of Saskatchewan itself follow the logic of these lines, its rectangular shape tied to the allocations of the Dominion Lands Act, and the lines of latitude and longitude. These boundaries are deeply linked to surveying: "Saskatchewan has the distinction of being the only Canadian province for which no borders correspond to physical geographic features."⁵ Central Industrial, and Saskatchewan, are places where its very definitions are humanmade and composed, land which has been divided and assigned, where meaning has been filled in and attributed more than inferred.

Lines

Historically, the city's downtown comprised of two rail yards (Figure 0.08 shows a historical aerial photo), the CN rail yards to the south now occupied by Midtown Plaza; and the CP yards to the north, present-day Central Industrial. Both have a

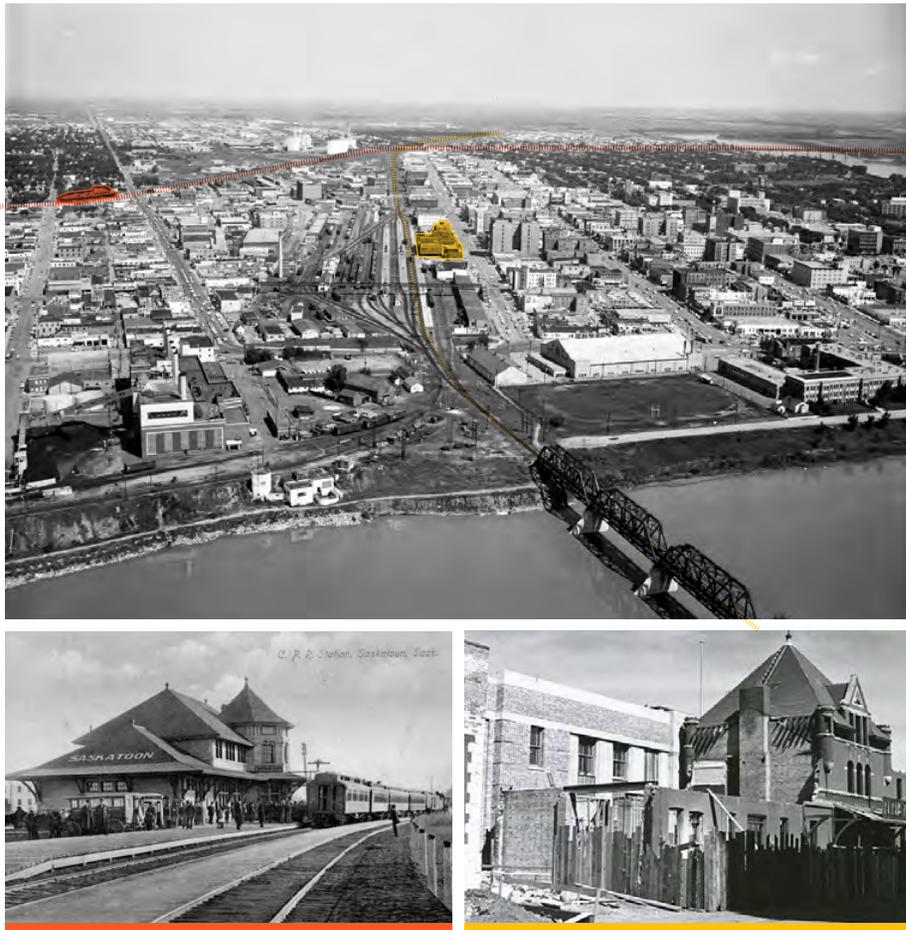


Figure 3.08 (a) Aerial view of Saskatoon, east looking west, 1965. Survey grids are apparent from the above looking beyond. (b) CPR Train Station, ca. 1911, indicated in orange. (c) Former CNR Train Station, in 1938, indicated in yellow, being deconstructed as its modernist replacement is build behind.

corresponding train station (Figure 3.08), but, only the CP Station (Figure 3.08b [then], Figure 3.02 [now]) is authentic, sitting alongside an original rail line that still crosses diagonally through Central Industrial, and the city. Midtown, by contrast, is a re-creation of a facade, the third(/fourth) iteration of building on that site, and is no longer sided by tracks (Figure 3.08). Further, recalling Saskatoon's nicknames, the lines have meaningful discussions with the city as a distribution centre, and Central Industrial the hub.

Shape and Character

The shape of Central Industrial results directly from grids and lines. More importantly, is that its boundaries serve as a threshold, each side mediating a different zoning type, an area richly surrounded by heritage properties (*Appendix E*).⁶ In recent development plans, the district has also been called North Downtown,⁷ in contrast to South Downtown, or what has since grown to be River Landing. South downtown once knew the history of immigration,⁸ significant early

buildings,⁹ and rail, but today relatively no traces of these pasts remain,¹⁰ with River Landing now almost fully occupied. Central Industrial still can facilitate those conversations with the evidence which remains.

The aim of cultivating literacies, as a design exercise, is to develop ways to make reading the city an act of constant re-interpretation and co-creation. 'Re' and 'co' are important modifiers, as Central Industrial is already an established presence, and a critical aspect of seeing the site as a meaningful space lies in re-contextualizing the public's understanding of it as a mirror of the city. To do so through architecture alone would be a difficult task. Hence, a primary thesis objective was to create an emblem for the site, to capture and symbolize Central Industrial's identity and potentials as an evolution of historic place (Figure 3.09).

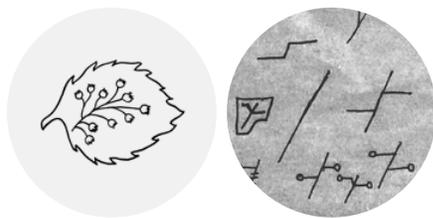


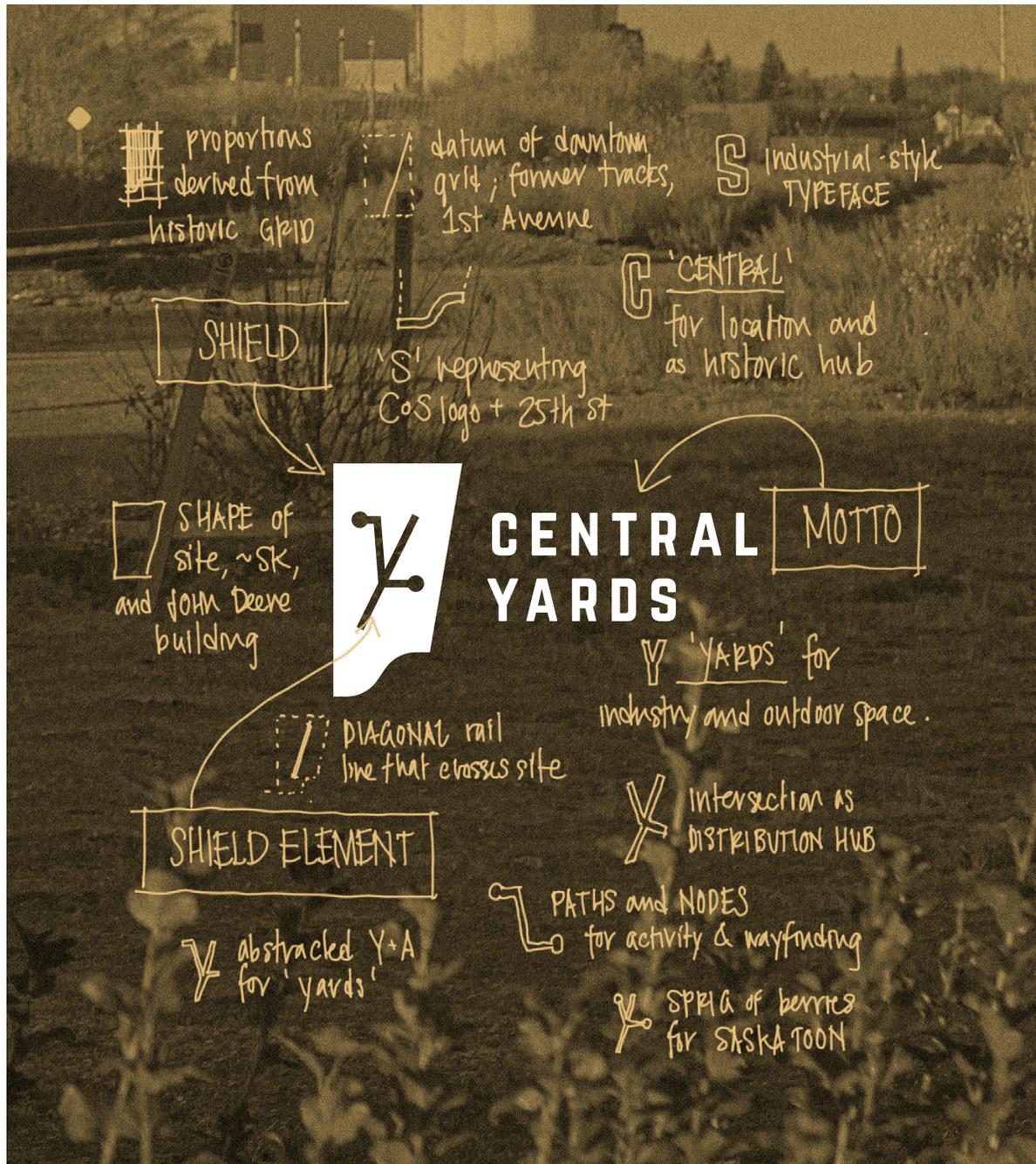
Figure 3.09

Early thinking about symbols. (a)
"[Illustration] used [as] Saskatoon's first seal."
(b) Abstractions/process sketches.

The Central Yards Emblem

The processes of characterizing sites have many parallels with the operations of creating a symbol. This is because, at their core, they deal with the formation of an identity. Graphically, Central Yards' emblem is rooted in character-defining features of the site, at once expressing heritage and place. Conceptually, it endeavours to identify with the three pillars of the City's coat of arms, signalling Central Yards as a site that can embody those values of education, industry, and commerce/exchange.

As an identifier, the design strives more towards the simpler designs of "[t]he Japanese *mon*, or *monshō*, [...] very definitely an heraldic symbol, having many parallels in its use with the armorial bearings of Europe."¹¹ As a symbol, a key differentiator of *mon* and crests or coat of arms, is that they are much simpler pictorial illustrations (glyphs), closer to that of something we might recognize as a logo.



'Central Yards' (Motto) The name, as a motto, signals a tonal shift in perceiving the site in a less industrially-centred way. It alludes to its location, and role as a hub, suggestive of the area as the city's shared public yards.

Wedge (Shield) The shield stylizes the site's distinct boundaries, one where its proportions and shape are richly meaningful, and featuring it prominently helps as a wayfinding device that makes the stories and navigating the area familiar.

Sprig (Shield Element) The shield element is an abstract symbol, equal parts stylized 'Y,' sprig of berries, path or bridge crossing the diagonal tracks, or any other number of interpretations.

← **Figure 3.10**
Central Yards emblem breakdown and interpretations.

As an expression of the design process, this illustration alludes to the many ways of reading the emblem, with the handwritten/sketched annotations conveying interpretation as a processual/thinking act in contrast to the constructed Central Yards emblem.

"... to see is the linguistic root of *idea*. For me, it is the seed. Noticing something makes me see something I hadn't seen. Helps me discover what [can only be seen from another point of view], and that prompts me to question, seek answers, and find connections among what is seemingly unrelated [...]"

Seeing is a creative act."

Anne Whiston Spirn
in 'To See is the Root of Idea'

03.2 Images and Local History —

The focus of this section concerns the 'image,' defined here as "[a]n artificial *imitation or representation* of something, especially of a person,"¹² and its relationship to symbols and reading. The Central Yards emblem represents a critical step in breaking down Central Industrial as a site loaded with the association, to an idea. As a glyph, Central Yards' mode of "imitation or representation" is to be a symbol that invites interpretation, an important distinction from other ways of representing the site, like through photography.

Mendelsund offers a contrast in how prose and film present story differently, emphasizing that the camera changes our relationships to an object (like through a close-up), but in novels, quoting Italo Calvino, "[t]he distance between language and image is always the same."¹³ Consider some of the ways Central Industrial has been depicted

so far. The site has been imagined as photographs (Figure 2.09), as an iconic building (Robin Hood Mill), as its features (Figure 2.17), its lessons (as a "mirror to its surroundings"), the implications of its name, etc. All these are forms of representing images of the site but are less concerned with its historical narrative to communicate the significance of its value. For Mendelsund, the experience of reading is highly associative and inviting of interpretation, so that "when [we read] a novel or story, the contents—places, people, things—of the drama recede and are supplanted by *significance* [...] We are ever gauging these significances in texts, and much of what we 'see' when we read is this 'significance.'"¹⁴

Image is Idea: Seeing and Photography

Professor Anne Whiston Spirn organized *Sensing Place*, a 2007 lecture series that explores photography "as a disciplined way of seeing," a tool of inquiry.¹⁵ For her talk within the series, she opens, "to see is the linguistic root of *idea*."¹⁶

Spirn, like Mendelsund, sees the image (words) as devices of association, translation and interpretation. A photograph does not merely show, but it tells, and for a photographer like Spirn, understands that perspective, composition, pulling focus, etc., affect the photo's reading, "produces insight—a condensed telling [...] bringing features into dialogue."¹⁷

Photography is an instrument for both investigation and expression, and as a practice of getting to know a site, it helps to bridge what it is we see, with what we do or could know. As an image, a site photo represents an interpretation of a place, and the ability to recognize the image as a reading, to be literate in the ways it is communicative, helps us to identify the significance of the place.

The thesis engages Spirn's idea of seeing, making for moments where interpretations of the site are activated and encouraged. Considering orientation, framing, geography, light, etc. spaces

within the design intends to guide us to see, so that we may then understand how it becomes the root of an *idea*.

Image as Place: Local History

A branch within photographic analysis, the archival image, is helpful both as a source "to read the past and a way to interpret and convey history."¹⁸

As a site we know, an archival image of a location that is familiar reinforces its sense of place and significance. We can tell what the image is by sight. An archival image that is dissimilar to our reality gives us pause, and we look for features and exposition to help us make sense of the content. In Spirn's words, when we are looking, we try to *notice*, and we become more inquisitive.

As a collection of narrated archival images, the experience of reading Amy Jo Ehman's *History in Words and Pictures* captures the essence of seeing and noticing.¹⁹ As a former resident, my reading of a story was a constant exercise in looking for what features within the photo



Figure 3.11 Annotated pages in Ehman's book, 'Saskatoon.' (a) former rail station, now Midtown Plaza, left. (b) seeing evolution of Nutana school.



Figure 3.12 Graphic design and local identity
 (a) Sweatshirt design by Hardpressed,
 reproducing a Saskatchewan highway road
 sign. (b) Postcard design by Forest and Waves,
 showing Saskatoon's river, bridges, and
 architecture.

anchored my contemporary experiences (Figure 3.11). And when an image seemed not to reveal enough, I looked to understand further by looking into the Saskatoon Public Library's Local History collections.

A parallel project to the thesis took the form of a booklet created for a concurrent winter-term course on architecture and film, where meditations on the content (visual and conceptual) were made experiential, exploring the relationships between theme, photo and place.²⁰ The exercise will make a re-appearance in the later Section 05, where it will be situated alongside a specific aspect of the design proposal.

As far as lessons learned from Ehman, a select few takeaways are given here, which address and inform the discussions of the next Section 03.3 on Existing Proposals.

The bridges are an essential part of the city's history: "From its early days, the residents of

Saskatoon wanted a bridge across their river, and [...] each bridge has its own story. So, it seems fitting to base each section of this little history on the bridge that fits the times."²¹

In the 1950s and 60s, the "optimistic atmosphere" of the city's booming growth and the "modern urban era" drastically altered the downtown landscape away from industry,²² where, in 1964 "Saskatoon became the first city in Canada to move the railway out of the city centre."²³

And finally, that the University of Saskatchewan was a significant factor in the growth of a city, where commenting on the character of Saskatoonians, Walter Murray, the University's first President noted to his wife: "The people here are very kind. Frank, free and devoid of any nonsense. They have big ideas and risk everything."²⁴

Image Study: Bridge Poster

A current trend at the intersection of graphic design and civic pride is the wearing of and display

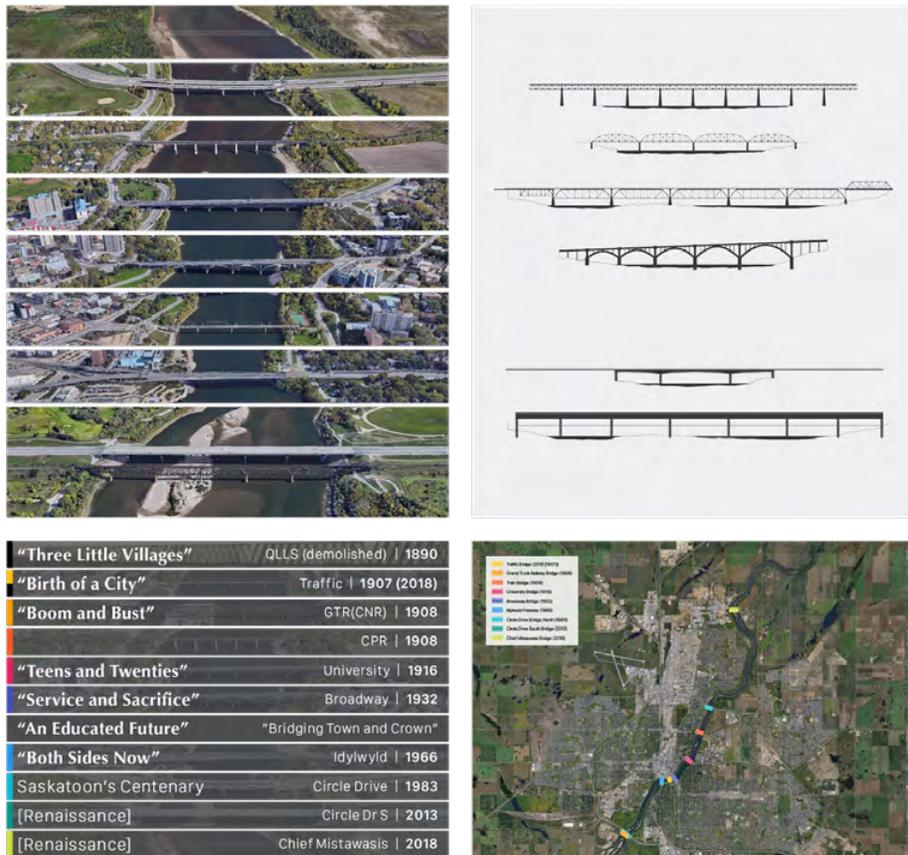


Figure 3.13 Four studies in researching/creating a bridge poster. Each differs in attempts to visually express how to negotiate factors to consider: geography/location, style and type of bridge, relation to Ehman's narrative, how it touches the riverbank.

(a) Google Maps screenshots of each bridge in order of north to south. (b) early partial attempt to abstract each bridge to style. (c) relating each bridge to Ehman's chapter titles and narrative. (d) identifying each bridge relative to the city.

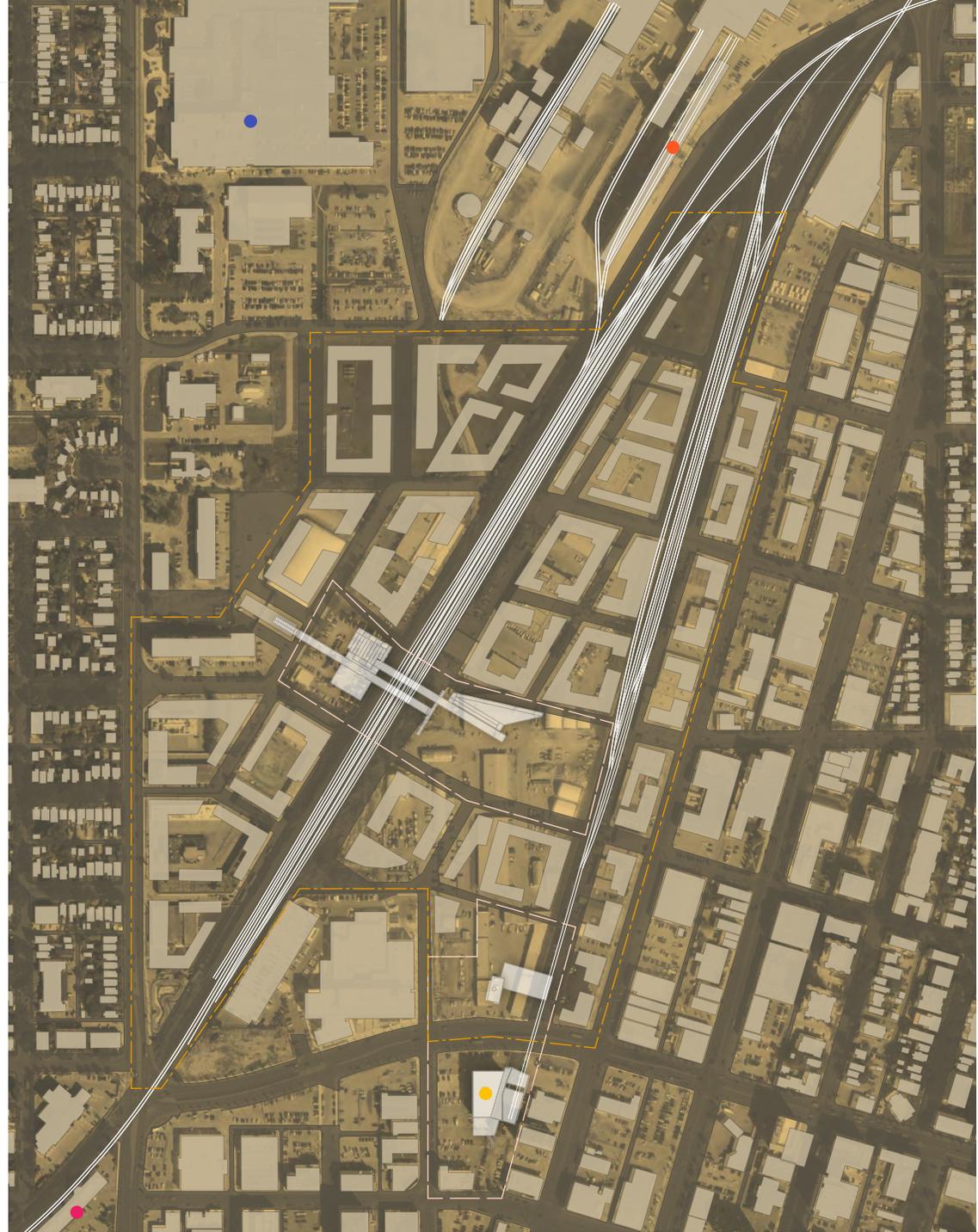
of local identity in the home and on the body. The work of Saskatoon's *Hardpressed Print Studio*²⁵ covers many of the torsos of the city (Figure 3.12a). Meanwhile, the '*Remai Modern Saskatoon Card*'²⁶ is sold at the gallery's gift shop (Figure 3.12b). The former cycles through a variety of regional themes, sayings, and symbols, while the latter identifies some key landmarks that make it distinctly Saskatoon: the river, the bridges, and iconic buildings.

Some early studies of the thesis work (Figure 3.13) involved the creation of an informational poster centred around Saskatoon's bridges, based on Ehman's book. It was intended to design a graphic that would be informative, aesthetic, and evocative, with the reasoning that a poster might serve as a natural access point for the public to begin engaging with the city within their home. These early studies would eventually give way to a final design, detailed later in Section 03.4.

Figure 3.14 Central Yards Schematic Site Plan

The site plan presents the Central Industrial as overlapped layers. A satellite photo of the site as of 2018 can be seen as the base layer. The NDMP city blocks and building massing are shown overlaid. The train tracks of the site are emphasized, and the design proposal is ghosted in. This map will be features extensively in the latter design half of this book.

- John Deere Building
- Robin Hood Flour Mill
- CPR Station
- Saskatchewan Polytechnic
- Pavement
- Building massing
- Reading Rooms
- Main scope of North Downtown Master Plan changes to site
- Area of deviation in the thesis scheme from the NDMP



More powerful than the image itself is how it invites one to see, read, notice, and remember. Central Yards is a site rich in imagery, symbols of the city waiting to be set into dialogue by the critical discourses that the designed and programmed environment can set in motion.

03.3 Existing Proposals —

The thesis is a response to existing proposals, using these to establish the work within an air of current events. Situating the design scheme within existing conversations about the city and the site begins the work in a practicality that grounds it in a realm of possibility. But more important is that the existing proposals provide contexts that inform the desires conversations of the city today. This is important to keep in mind, as the thesis attempts not to propose the 'best' design for library or architecture school, but instead concentrates its efforts on how conservation of place can be

achieved through the considered design of select interpretive spaces. Buildings, it is argued, are secondary to the meanings and potentials that space and volume can come to represent.

A map that helps to situate existing and thesis proposals is provided as Figure 3.14. The text of this section will introduce existing plans, then in response, outline a strategy for incorporating it into the thesis designs.

Saskatoon Public Library's 'New Central Library'

In 2016 the Saskatoon Public Library (SPL) released a *Strategic Plan*²⁷ which put into motion the necessary steps to making the long-desired flagship branch for the city. In another document, citing building code, accessibility and functional deficiencies, among building age and other factors, the SPL stated their wish to construct a new building to replace their modernist 1966 Frances Morrison central branch, located across from City Hall (Figure 3.15).²⁸ As of November 2019, City Council approved \$67.5 million in borrowing



Figure 3.15 *Frances Morrison Library, constructed and photographed in 1966, home of the current downtown central branch for Saskatoon Public Library.*

for a new library, and as of April 2020 (well into the development of the thesis), a site had been identified as the future location (the next block over from the John Deere Building), giving a new library the green light.²⁹

Thesis Strategy In line with SPL's wishes for new construction, a central library is proposed in the thesis scheme to be located within Central Yards. This decision is founded on a firm belief that the library would be a valuable asset to the area (already echoed by the location announced, only two blocks away). As an important civic institution, the library's guidance will anchor storytelling and local history as a presence that signals to see the area as committed to personal development and community relations. Pivotal to the larger design scheme is that the library will 'share' facilities with the proposed School of Architecture, creating a small campus setting between buildings.

The University of Saskatchewan's 'School of Architecture and Visual Arts'

In *Canadian Architect's* 2019 'State of the Nation: Saskatchewan', Elsa Lam writes in part of the absence of a university-level school of architecture in Saskatchewan, a province with "relatively few [(110)] architects."³⁰ She states that local architects and designers see what an architecture school could do to foster and boost the design culture within the province,³¹ for a population with an already vibrant arts scene.³²

The University of Saskatchewan (UofS) has supported an architecture school since 2008, having hired Ryerson University's Colin Ripley in 2015 as project director for the initiative.³³ Notably, the City of Saskatoon has also shown support by donating the 1910 John Deere Building (Figure 3.23) for purposes of an architecture school in 2010.³⁴ The cost of renovations as of 2016 was reported at an estimated \$18 million.³⁵ The University has adopted it in its plans, signalling a pledge for the school's downtown location,



Figure 3.16 Renderings of two separate student proposals from Ryerson University for the U of S School of Architecture.

(a) the John Deere Building, re-clad. (b) interior of the building, with minimal intervention, where the entire floor has become a studio space. The original building is of nail-laminated timber (NLT) construction.



Figure 3.17 Proposed Site Plan from Perkins + Will's North Downtown Master Plan, 2014.

immediately south of Central Industrial in the warehouse district, away from the U of S' main campus across the river (Figure 3.03b). Although efforts have produced a symposium,³⁶ open houses,³⁷ undergraduate design studio projects (Figure 3.16),³⁸ and a UofS Senate presentation (2018) reflecting a program and name change to the *School of Architecture and Visual Arts*³⁹—the process has since “stalled out, and a timeline for reviving it isn't clear.”⁴⁰

Thesis Strategy The plans for SAVA are imagined to be back on track. The adjustment to include 'Visual Arts' as part of the educational mandate will be adopted and will see the school reflect some of the same objectives of this thesis. It would specialize as a school of visual communication and graphic representation, with a heritage conservation department that would make use of the local history resources of the library, and the building's location within the historic warehouse district. Housed within the John Deere Building, a sizeable addition is proposed

to complement having shared-use facilities with the Central Library. The adaptive re-use facility would be another contribution to the growing number of warehouse building renovations in the city, but only one of the select few which could be readily publicly accessed.⁴¹ As two public institutions together, a reciprocal relationship where the library offers stories of Saskatoon and community programming, and SAVA, in-turn, provides opportunities for the students to engage the library's offerings through their designs and interpretations for the public.

City of Saskatoon's 'North Downtown Master Plan'

As stated, Central Industrial also takes on the name North Downtown, more commonly used in circles where urban planning and development considerations for the site to be a blank slate. The City of Saskatoon has already undertaken a broad initiative in proposing a future for the site, in the form of Perkins + Will's 2014 *North Downtown Master Plan* (Figure 3.17).⁴² Select pages of the

proposal are provided as *Appendix D*, covering strategies related to the land bridge, rail park, and the development as a whole.

The first of the NDMP's "Big Ideas"⁴³ is to 'Reconnect the City,' where they propose a vast land bridge/'central park' that would span the tracks connecting east and west halves of the site Figure 3.18. The next idea is to 'Reviv[e] the old rail line as a Greenway,'⁴⁴ referencing the defunct CN rail line, which used to run alongside the John Deere Building. The iconic Robin Hood Mill, still operational today and in the foreseeable initial years of their scheme, they flag as a vital asset in a longer-term strategy for infill development.⁴⁵

The NDMP is another proposal whose status is (publicly) unknown. As of July 2020, the plan's CoS webpage has been hidden from public view.⁴⁶ *Appendix E* provides a map of Central Industrial with outlines of the NDMP's massing overlaid, as well as other notable features of the site, such as

nearby heritage buildings, and exact locations of rail lines.

Thesis Strategy NDMP's overall plan towards mixed-use within the site will be adopted in principle, with exceptions. Those are the strategies related to the land bridge (which I have previously written about, taking issue with its distracting monumentality),⁴⁷ and the city blocks identified in Figure 3.14 relating to the thesis' campus of buildings. These moves signal that the urban planning strategies of the NDMP are seen as valuable proposals for the city, but where the thesis would like to focus more sensitivity towards is the interpretive potential of Central Industrial. The location of the small campus created by the library and the school would function as moderators, transitioning Central Yards into the downtown core. As for the Robin Hood Mill, while the thesis will not propose specific *physical* conservation strategies, it will be conserved and revered as an essential landmark—a symbol that signals the area's themes and sense of place. It



Figure 3.18 Aerial Perspective Drawing from Perkins + Will's North Downtown Master Plan, 2014..

will stand as an industrial edifice recalling matters of agriculture, and shine its neon sign, spelling out the values and virtues of storytelling in Robin Hood.

Summary

What makes now an exciting time for Central Industrial is that it is rich with opportunity, in a city among the fastest growing in Canada. Of most significant consequence is that the public institutions currently looking to the future understand the vital role they play in shaping the Saskatoon's character. Central Industrial is a natural choice of location for any of those major decisions for its development potential.

Plans for a school, library, and bridge are already realities, and so the intention of the thesis in moving these forward is not in making a case that some graduate student could propose better solutions. Instead, the aims are to focus on how to create specific, more carefully studied spaces

within the contexts and frameworks of those conversations.

Central Yards values poetry over prose, questions over answers, the intangible over the tangible, and recollection over memory. For these reasons the designs must be tethered in reality, but distanced enough to allow imagination to roam. The ideal intent of the project is for the reader to see the spaces and the existing proposals for them, and want for designs to express that they are in dialogue with them and their community.

03.4 Synthesis: Sentinels (and Studies) —

Sociologist Eric Klinenberg, in his 2018 *Palaces for the People*, discusses what he calls *Social Infrastructure*, "the physical places and organizations that shape the way people interact."⁴⁸ Spatially, these are the "public institutions," which we might call libraries, schools, parks, and even sidewalks, community gardens,



Figure 3.19

City of Saskatoon's First Coat of Arms. Stone carving mounted at corner of 4th Ave and 23rd St.

An excerpt of the plaque below reads, "Saskatoon's earliest coat of arms appeared above the main entrance of the original police station. It depicts a train to show the city's importance as a commercial centre, books and a pen for its key educational role, and flour mills and wheat for its valuable farming industry."

and commercial establishments like cafes and bookstores.⁴⁹ Social infrastructures are essential to a community, whether the designs reflect that significance or not. Within the thesis, they take on the form of *sentinels*, symbols in form and function like that of the Robin Hood Mill, watching over the community.

Sentinels

The campus created between the two institutions of the Central Library and the SAVA serves as two fundamental sentinels for Central Yards. The presence they both play establishes an atmosphere for the area steeped in values of reading, creation, and interpretation—functioning as institutions that symbolically advocate for the public to engage critically with the city.

At the heart of Central Yards' values are three historic aspects based on the City's motto:

Education, Industry, and Exchange. Notably, *exchange* replaces *commerce*, an essential shift in signifying Saskatoon's role as a hub and

signalling *exchange* as the more expressive root of the original. *Industry*, while not reflected in a word change, is treated similarly, emphasizing industriousness alongside the strong influence of industry on the area.

Lightly introduced in Figure 1.11, glyphs were part of a concept map for the thesis' structure. In Figure 3.22, they are shown and defined together, each glyph corresponding to an aim of the design scheme, forming a strategy the designs proposals venture to address. Organizing these are the influence of three leading institutions, the sentinels of the project, representing a pillar of Saskatoon's values.

The library, representing exchange.

The school, representing education.

And the site, representing industry.

Studies

Some smaller exercises done throughout the year helped to structure and organize aspects of

the research, shown here to demonstrate various processes in the way the work evolved. Their focus on different aspects of the site serve as interpretations, methods of reading and working with the site.

GIS Short for 'geographic information system,' GIS is a mapping tool that provided a crucial way of organizing information and understanding the city. As a complex site, it was determined early that the use of QGIS, a GIS program, would be invaluable in producing insights about the site in a layered, geo-located way, and help to manage to work in consistent scales. These maps have already appeared throughout the document, serving as the basis of any map-related illustrations. Several other maps are provided in *Appendix E*.

Grid and Map Tiles When the significance of the grid became clear for the site, I sought to manifest the idea physically, in consideration of how the work could be presented. This yielded the grid board in Figure 3.20, which has been

used to display information during thesis reviews, and a surface for model making at scale. Often accompanying the grid board were map tiles, which could be swapped out to the desired scale of working (Figure 3.20). The board will be a consistent background character in the designs to follow.

Bridge Poster, redux The earlier bridge poster study from Section 03.2 gave way to considering and seeing the site through a lens of the past. For me, when thinking about history through this approach of deeply considering a photo, it changed how I valued the site as a place of history to be upheld and conserved. The crucial step of tying place to a photograph in a disciplined way meant considering how it read, and how it spoke.

The 'final' version can be seen in Figure 3.24. It was determined that through the various iterations, that an illustrative style felt that it over aestheticized the bridges as objects, and took away from their sense of place. A photo-based

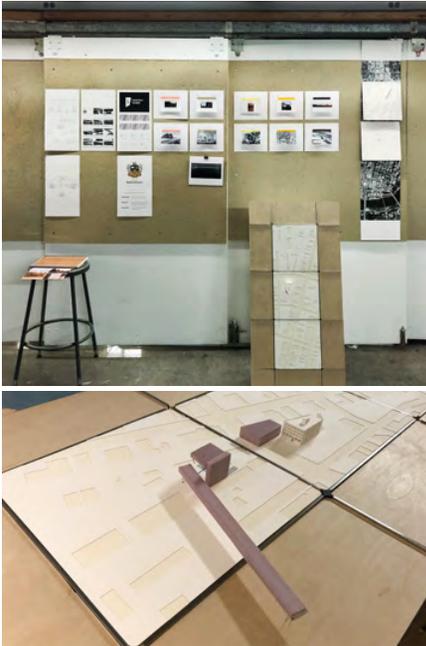


Figure 3.20 *Grid Board, an interpretation of the site, served as a table and presentation board to workshop ideas of the thesis. (a) Colloquium 3 pin-up. (b) Process massing.*

approach was then chosen, where an evocative archival image would be presented alongside a contemporary text. Together they intend to create a dialogue/tension in reading the image as past and present. Feeling that the photos were not reading well as a set, the river was removed from the pictures to pull focus to the different ways the city surrounds the bridges. Thinking intently about archival images ties it to many of the thesis' components.

As an early study, the lessons learned in designing the bridge poster informed an approach to representing the thesis work for the *Reading Rooms* through photograph analysis. This exercise is explained in greater detail in Section 04.

Conclusion: 'Literacies' —

The works of Agnes Martin are lessons in legibility, as readings sensitive to qualities of imagined places. Her artistic expressions, line, balance,

colour, texture, etc. are like words, strung together through the language of her canvas, communicating an idea. I believe author John Green put it best:

"I find it interesting that Martin chose rectangles for so many of her paintings, because they are so common in the human parts of the Anthropocene and so rare in the natural parts [...] it's very clear that Martin is not trying to paint a tree. She is painting the innocence of a tree. She's not trying to paint a rose, but the beauty of a rose."⁵⁰

Martin's best-known works are almost exclusively on square canvasses. In a sense, the rigid order and restraint allow the work to focus on the purity of expression in expectation and association. As viewers, we are put in a state of seeing, reading that which we have been confronted. The only exposition, her titles, serve as a prompt to move us to consider how the work communicates the intended message.

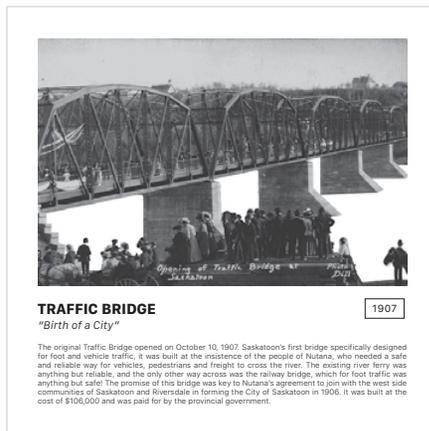


Figure 3.21 Bridge poster (portion). Full version in Figure 3.24.

In one of their key documents, SPL states, “[m]odern libraries are spaces for inspiring discovery, creativity, innovation, and where digital, cultural and social *literacies* can develop.”⁵¹ That *literacy* is identified as a form of competency, and not strictly reading, and writing is a crucial perspective. It values the more fundamental ability of knowing.

As the next part, *Place*, will show, our ability to read into space, to know that we have become literate in the ways the site endeavours to challenge and

communicate with us, help us to see spaces as places of significance.

The proposal for Central Yards is one that offers a reading of the city. The designs developed for the scheme are expressions, guided by the influence of public institutions that teach the public how to look, and see, to become literate in local history, the languages of our surroundings, seeing patterns in the environment.

—



Define Central Industrial's Sense of Place —

Propose name change to signal shift + root sense of place to city values.



Propose an Emblem for Central Yards —

Create an emblem to help guide associative values of site



Establish visual ways of thinking (conservation, symbols) —

Determine values and conservation approach of the site, expressing visually.



Establish SAVA Programming + Arch. Perspective —

Guide direction of curriculum/disciplinary position to architecture.



Harmonize Library and Central Industrial —

Position Library as an institution guiding character of site narratives.



Determine Conservation Approach for John Deere Building —

Guide direction of conservation strategy, and function of bldg additions.



Establish Campus around School and Library —

Find synergies between the two institutions to re-inforce co-operative view.



Propose Alternative Bridge Design —

Explore potential value for interpretation + function as Reading Room.



Design Reading Rooms —

Express thesis research/positions as spaces for public interpretation.

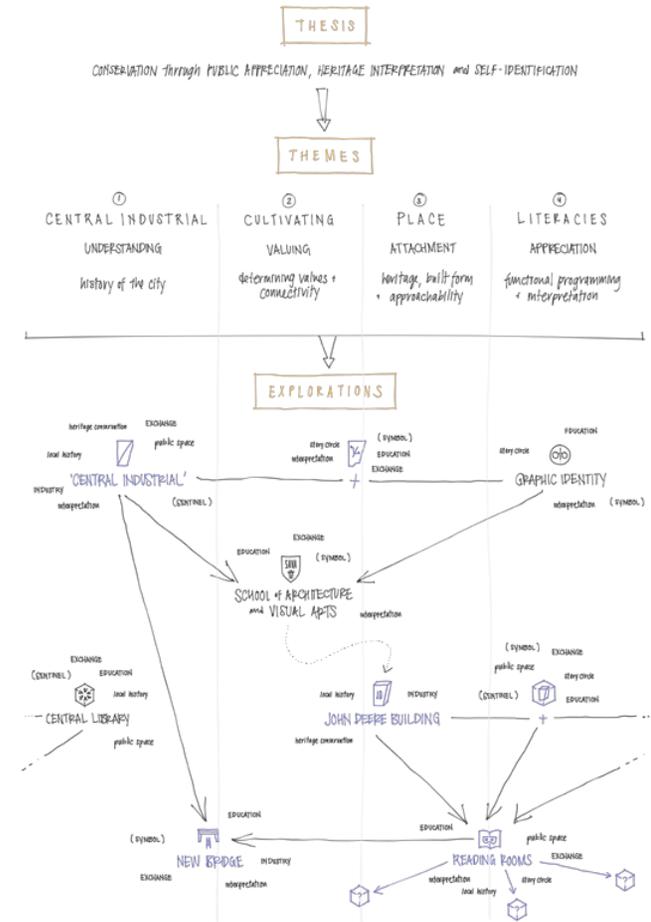


Figure 3.22 Summary of thesis project aims, derived from thesis structure diagram (at right, introduced in Figure 1.11).



Figure 3.23 *Characterizing the John Deere Building*

Documenting the building from the exterior. Note: open space around it, general state of brickwork, modifications to window openings over time, and variety of windows and coverings.

**SASKATOON
THROUGH BRIDGES AND LOCAL HISTORY**
AS OF 2019



"Lorem Ipsum"

Historical period, per Amy Jo Ehman's "Saskatoon: A History in Words and Pictures"
Historical text from City of Saskatoon's "The History of Our Bridges"



QLLS BRIDGE (ORIGINAL)
"Three Little Villages"

1890



TRAFFIC BRIDGE
"Birth of a City"

1907

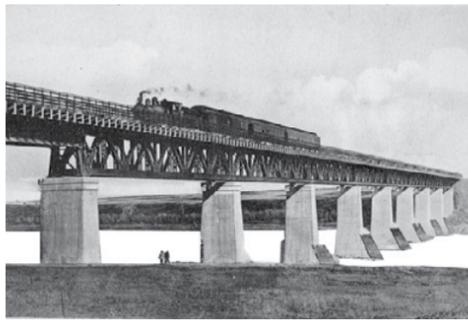
The original Traffic Bridge opened on October 10, 1907. Saskatoon's first bridge specifically designed for foot and vehicle traffic, it was built at the insistence of the people of Nutana, who needed a safe and reliable way for vehicles, pedestrians and freight to cross the river. The existing river ferry was anything but reliable, and the only other way across was the railway bridge, which for foot traffic was anything but safe! The promise of this bridge was key to Nutana's agreement to join with the west side communities of Saskatoon and Riversdale in forming the City of Saskatoon in 1906. It was built at the cost of \$106,000 and was paid for by the provincial government.



GRAND TRUNK BRIDGE
"Boom and Bust"

1907

This steel trestle bridge was completed in March of 1908 as part of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway that connected Winnipeg and Edmonton. It was the third major railway line to run through Saskatoon and helped assure the city's position as the primary wholesale-retail distribution centre for central Saskatchewan. In 1923 the bridge became part of the Canadian National Railway.



C.P.R. BRIDGE
"Boom and Bust"

1908

This high steel trestle bridge opened on June 15, 1908. It is part of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) trunk line between Winnipeg and Edmonton. This was the second major rail line routed through Saskatoon. Located on what was then the north edge of the city, the bridge linked the CPR's divisional yards at Sutherland with its station in downtown Saskatoon. It replaced a temporary wooden trestle bridge that had been constructed at the same location one year earlier.



UNIVERSITY BRIDGE
"Teens and Twenties"

1916

The University Bridge officially opened on November 15, 1916. A notable feature of its design is the descending size of its arches, which were described as "like a stone skipping across water". It was built to link Sutherland and the University of Saskatchewan with the central part of the city across the river. Begun in 1913, construction of the bridge was delayed when the original contractor went bankrupt. It was completed by the provincial government with the City of Saskatoon paying one-third of the \$520,000 cost. Although a double line of streetcar track was laid over the University Bridge when it was built, it was never used and the rails were removed in 1947.



BROADWAY BRIDGE
"Service and Sacrifice"

1932

The Broadway Bridge was designed by engineers from the University of Saskatchewan, and was built by the City in partnership with the federal and provincial governments as a "make work project" during the Great Depression. It was finished in just 11 months, opening on November 11, 1932. A total of 1,593 men worked around the clock to build it. In 1933, the streetcar lines of the Saskatoon Municipal Railway were re-routed so as to cross the river on the Broadway Bridge rather than on the much-narrower Traffic Bridge as they had originally done.



IDYLWYLD FREEWAY
"Both Sides Now"

1966

The Senator Sidney L. Buckwold Bridge officially opened on October 28, 1966. Originally named for the Idylwyld Freeway—of which it forms a part—the bridge was re-named in 2001 in honour of Sid Buckwold, who was Mayor of Saskatoon when it was built. It is located on the site of Saskatoon's first bridge, the Qu'Appelle, Long Lake and Saskatchewan railway bridge that was originally built in 1890 as part of the line connecting Regina and Prince Albert. The railway bridge was demolished in 1964 as part of the rail line relocation project that cleared the way for the Idylwyld Freeway and the downtown Midtown Plaza development.



CIRCLE DRIVE (NORTH)
"..."

1983

This steel girder bridge was officially opened on July 1st, 1983 as part of Saskatoon's "Circle Drive" bypass system. It links the city's newer northern areas with the south and east side, allowing traffic to bypass downtown. It was originally four lanes wide with an opening down the centre where two or more lanes might be added in the future. In 2006 a bridge expansion project began that would convert the outer pedestrian walkways to traffic lanes, and build a pedestrian walkway down the centre. The project was finished in 2007.



GORDIE HOWE BRIDGE (CIRCLE S)
"..."

2013

Officially open to drivers on July 31, 2013 the new Circle Drive South Bridge is a six-lane bridge that includes five new interchanges, pedestrian and cyclist facilities and ten kilometres of freeway/express from Clarence Avenue to Clancy Drive. While still relatively new, the City anticipates about 30,000 vehicles per day will use the bridge when Saskatoon reaches a population of 250,000. One of the primary benefits is the shorter commuting distances for traffic and a 35% reduction in traffic using the Idylwyld Bridge at afternoon rush hour.



CHIEF MISTAWASIS
"..."

2018

Chief Mistawasis Bridge opened on October 2, 2018 and is one of two that was built under the Bridging to Tomorrow Project. It connects the North Industrial area with neighbourhoods on Saskatoon's east side. The Chief Mistawasis Bridge is expected to accommodate 14,600 to 21,700 vehicles per day and 40,000 per day when the city's population hits 300,000. The bridge features a two-metre-wide bike-way on the north side and a 3.5-metre multi-use pathway on the south side at the same level as the roadway. The bridge will be operated and maintained by Graham Commuter Partners for three decades.



TRAFFIC BRIDGE (RECONSTRUCTED)
"..."

2018

The new Traffic Bridge opened on October 2, 2018. It looks similar to the old bridge, but is slightly wider and taller to accommodate wider traffic lanes, wider pathways on both sides, and overhead clearance for emergency vehicles. The new Traffic Bridge includes two 3.7 m wide traffic lanes and two 3.0 m multi-use pathways. There is also direct pathway connections to Rotary Park. Average traffic volumes are estimated to approach 11,000 vehicles per day, with capacity to accommodate over 20,000 vehicles per day.

Figure 3.24 An [incomplete] proposal for an interpretive poster recounting the city's history through its bridges. Drawing on Ehman's A History in Words and Pictures, an 18 x 24 poster using archival imagery, Ehman's titles, and the City's official write-ups.

Excerpted from thesis body text: It was determined that through the various iterations, that an illustrative style felt that it over aestheticized the bridges as objects, and took away from their sense of place. A photo-based approach was then chosen, where an evocative archival image would be presented alongside a contemporary text. Together they intend to create a dialogue/tension in reading the image as past and present. Feeling that the photos were not reading well as a set, the river was removed from the pictures to pull focus to the different ways the city surrounds the bridges.

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Downtown Railyards
1927



Central Industrial (southern edge)
1967

Figure 4.01 Industrial presence downtown. (a) Downtown Railyards, 1927, including the corner CN rail yards at current Midtown Plaza site. (b) Central Industrial (cropped), 1967.



Figure 4.02 *Vegetation at Central Industrial around railroad switch and track. 9:13 pm, August 4, 2020.*



Figure 4.03 John Deere Building, west facade. City crest mounted above window. 8:44 pm, August 4, 2020.



Figure 4.04 Robin Hood Mill (Ardent Mills Saskatoon Mill and Mix Facility), looking northeast. 9:23 pm, August 4, 2020.



Figure 4.05 Looking towards downtown. 9:20 pm, August 4, 2020. John Deere Building, and Midtown Plaza tower in distance.

Place

On Central Yards' sense of place, 'Reading Rooms' as design prompts/propositions, ways of seeing helped by precedents, and closing thoughts leading into presenting designs.

Central Yards, as a site, sees its value for the city as a public space that speaks to Saskatoon's heritage. Since the North Downtown Master Plan's publication, plans have yet to be adopted.¹ More recently, Central Industrial has been suggested as a site for the city's new arena, tapped for its spaciousness, potential for parking, and accommodation of traffic.² An arena is, notably, not included in the NDMP, and the suggestion reflects the way Central Industrial is often viewed as an area of possibility, rather than an area of *opportunity*.

A crucial shift in perspective for the site that is needed is in seeing it not merely as space, but *place*—a site with agency and character. The tone of existing proposals so often frame development in terms of how their plans bring or add value to the site, but rarely is there any focus (at least in how the site is marketed, which speaks volumes in itself) on how the site itself has benefits that should be thoughtfully considered and served. In part due to its status and perception as an

industrial site, Central Industrial seemingly has none of the appeals like another former freight yard site like Winnipeg's *The Forks* with its riverside location and industrial freight buildings. Central Industrial is landlocked, and its stock of quality industrial buildings are in the Warehouse District, just south of the site.

Yet, it is the very qualities which make the Central Industrial site arguably unappealing or mundane, which lend the area its character-defining features. While it is landlocked, it is richly embedded within the city. While it has little building stock of its own, it is *surrounded* by landmark structures, and has vantages of the city unlike any other site (Figure 4.05).

The opportunities of the site are in seeing it as a public space which *facilitates* connections. Its values are ones echoed by the city's crest. Its stories are ones of the city's evolution. It provides a foil to many discourses of the city. It sees the city, and the city sees it. Its (perception) that it

lacks 'character' makes it common ground—not yet full with meaning and association—but very capable and ready to be so.

Because the site is so seemingly mundane, at face value it lacks sense of place. But, it is its invisibility, and its intangible qualities which make the site rich. Central Yards sets out to make these understandings known.

Part 04 prefaces the design work of the proposals, with emphasis on what 'sense of place' refers to in the thesis, explored in Section 04.1. The next section, 04.2, will look at a diverse set of built and installed works, precedents from architecture to works of graphic design and interpretation. Lastly, 04.3 closes with a synthesis on the work so far working towards the development of 'Reading Rooms' for the Central Yards, prefacing their presentation in the conclusion of the book.

04.1 Sense of Place and Cultivating Understanding —

At its core, the thesis is a conservation project, but rather than buildings, it preserves values, stories, and character. The designs of the thesis are a recognition that *symbols* provide important vessels for the communication of ideas, and that *sentinels* serve as important actors in lending animation and character to the site. The designs of the thesis rely on these two important premises, as the design's successes as an interpretive space demand the public's attention—the sentinels create the circumstances, and the symbols point towards the meanings.

By establishing them within the cityscape, they become cornerstones that come to represent and foster understandings of the site. Together, their constant presence helps to give shape to an identity for Central Yards, one rooted in the site's expressions as a place representing civic and historic significance.

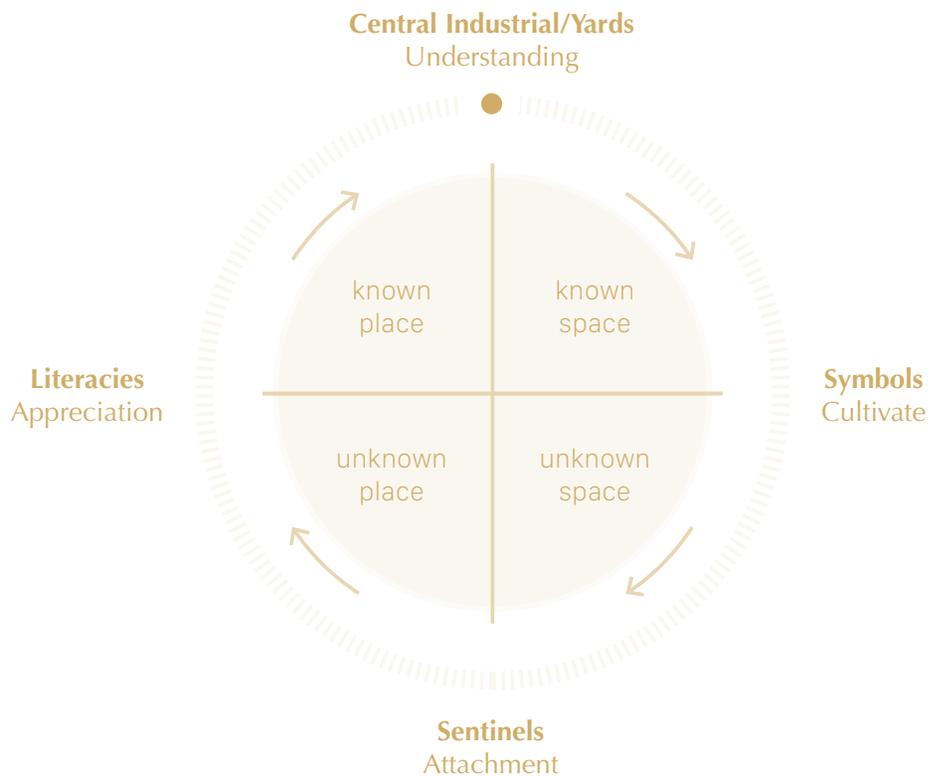


Figure 4.06 The story circle is broken down to two dichotomies, and re-interpreted from earlier circular diagrams. A known place comes first from understanding unknown space, then the cycle repeats. We are 'propelled' by our dialects.

In its present state, a site such as Central Industrial will likely always be seen for the promise of development possibility it brings. As an arguably key heritage site for the city, it is imperative that its invisible qualities be made known, in order to combat the perception it has as a blank slate, a vestige, a site devoid of any character beyond its light-industrial uses.

Klinenberg says that “[i]t’s long been understood that social cohesion develops through repeated human interaction and joint participation in shared projects.”³ The site must be seen as ‘shared project,’ for its significance in representing Saskatoon. What *Cultivating Literacies* show is that appreciation is borne out of our (the public’s) continual nurturing of exchanges. Our relationship to a site is enriched by our repeat participation. *Symbols and Sentinels* direct the courses of our understandings and conversations towards shaping a place’s identity.



Figure 4.07 Robin Hood Mill and the Ardent Mills Mill and Mix Facility.

“There’s a simple reason for the grain elevators, as there is for everything, but the forces behind the reason, the reason for the reason, is the land and the sky. There is too much sky out there, for one thing, too much horizontal, too many lines without stops, so that the exclamation, the perpendicular had come. [It’s] not a question of vanity. It’s a problem of being. Of knowing you are there.”

Wright Morris

quoted in Yi-Fu Tuan’s *Space and Place*, 108–110.

Calling back to Campbell and Harmon (Section 01.1), a story will resonate when it marches to the rhythms of the crossing of thresholds. In his book *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1977), human geographer Yi-Fu Tuan offers a similar reading of the rhythms of opposing forces in this way: “Place is security and space is freedom: we are attached to the one and are longing for the other.”⁴ Like Campbell and Harmon (Section 01.1), for Tuan, “existential dialectics propel people,” compelling us towards competing experiences, always aware of what is, and what is not. In his chapter on *Architectural Space and Awareness*, he quotes a novelist’s description of symbols in the prairie town, “there’s a simple reason for the grain elevators” he opens, they are dramatic monuments not simply because of their stature, but as representational symbols that respond to the flatness and horizontality of the prairies. If the plains represent expansiveness and freedom, the elevator is resonant in that it symbolizes restraint and stability.

Echoed by the folktale that sits atop of Central Yards' mill, Robin Hood's taking and giving reminds us that the site's sense of place is one engaged in dialogues—five of which are explored in the design of the Reading Rooms that help to articulate the site's character. Past and present. Order and entropy. Harvest and exchange. Land and sky. Space and place.

04.2 Precedents —

Because architecture, in a fundamental sense, is all built the same way, only applied in different manners and contexts, architecture is “built upon the idea of *precedents*, and the close examination of earlier works.”⁵ Highlighted here are a number of projects that help to ground the proposals in established works, in order to compare and contrast in their ways of planning, designing, and representation.

Guide: How to Read

Precedents are presented here in a way that ties a reading of the project to insights of the thesis. Notably are the heading names (understanding, valuing, attachment, appreciation), which are taken from the integrated interpretation circle from Figure 1.11 & Figure 4.06 (terminology derived from Thurley, with reference to Harmon's story circle).

Each project will use the four keywords as a framework. Projects will be examined for how each addresses the interpretation cycle, with special attention to how projects speak to ideas of understanding identity and place.

Understanding You. Need. (Site)

Beginning as a point of establishment and comfort. What are some of the aspects of the project that respond to, or attempt to create their own context? As a lesson, how does the project relate to thesis design?

Valuing Go. Search. (Cultivating)

Moving from the familiar into the unfamiliar. What are the aims of the project, and how does the design serve as a commentary on the identified contexts? What are its resonant themes relative to 'crossing the threshold'?

Attachment Find. Take. (Place)

Seeing the role of one's self as a part of the collective. How do the precedent's aims address the public and the idea of repeat experience, and what does it wish to contribute? What makes the project resonant?

Appreciation Return. Change. (Literacies)

Having the ability to read, know and learn. As a design in the built environment, how does its presence enhance the sense of place or place identity?

Precedent Projects

The projects outlined here were chosen for their variety, looking within and beyond architecture,

with each having their own ability to speak to a different component of the thesis' objectives.

Appendix C presents the projects in longer form. Two key precedents will be expanded upon as Figure 4.08 and Figure 4.09 here, as they afford necessary commentary on design strategies and decision-making for Central Yards.

The introductory texts below are copied from the precedent's dedicated page(s) in the appendix (where citations can also be found), but are grouped here for the convenience of reading them as a whole.

McEwan School of Architecture, Sudbury The SAVA presentation makes reference to the new School of Architecture opened at Laurentian in 2013 as a contemporary point of reference. There are a surprising amount of similarities in site conditions to Central Industrial, but whereas Laurentian's curriculum focuses on design-build,



Figure 4.08 *The McEwan School of Architecture at Laurentian University (Sudbury, ON).*

Understanding: *Very similar site conditions, most recent Arch school in Canada.*
Valuing: *Laurentian's program objectives is a response to its socio-cultural and geographic contexts; SAVA should be appropriate to own contexts.* **Attachment:** *McEwan is located away from the main campus, viewing itself as valuable asset to community.*
Appreciation: *The identity of the school's programming is reflected in the building design.*

Saskatchewan's will concern interpretation, representation and heritage.

Halifax Central Library Like SAVA, SPL similarly references another contemporary project. The publicly available marketing material seems to make heavy use of the Halifax library, and while its seen as a successful project, I suggest that contextually, setting sights towards other libraries over emphasizes what a library is programmatically, but neglects how contextual sensitivities may play a more important role in the project's resonance.

BAnQ Grande Bibliothèque (Montréal) and Millenium Library Addition (Winnipeg) As a compliment to the Halifax Central Library, I offer Patkau Architects' concurrent designs for Winnipeg's Millennium Library addition and Montréal's La Grande Bibliothèque as closer contextually. Focus will be drawn to each library's public study/reading areas, expressive circulation

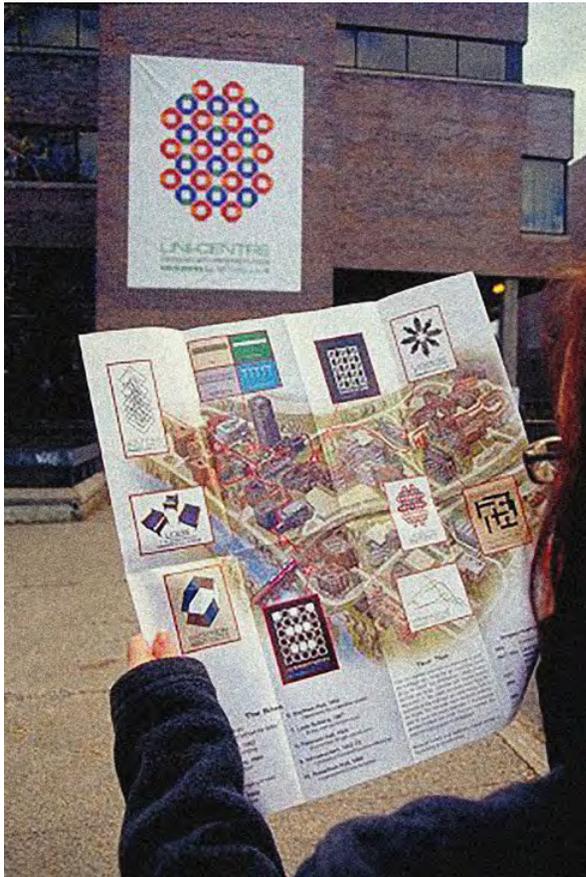


Figure 4.09 *Modern U (Carleton University, Ottawa).*

Understanding: Uses symbols to bestow identity and help in wayfinding. **Valuing:** Seeing buildings as separate but grouped conversations about a topic (modernist campuses).

Attachment: Enriches sense of place, knowing how pieces contribute to whole.

Appreciation: Knowledge becomes associated with experience of place after each revisit.

spaces, and the way each interfaces with the public realm and the surrounding cityscape.

Guthrie Theatre, Minneapolis Jean Nouvel's *Guthrie Theatre* is a project I visited during my undergraduate degree and is striking in its many peculiarities. Importantly is that it exists in similar site contexts as Central Industrial, and being a project related to theatre, is uniquely expressive in its interpretation and translation of the city. Of note is its employment of framing/staging devices, and the 'Endless Bridge' a sort of cantilevered observation deck.

Modern U The trickiest aspect in the thesis project to convey is the function of graphic design, symbols, and emblems in the environment, as their strategic use in physical space makes wayfinding intuitive, but talking about it abstractly, difficult. Adrian Göllner's work for Carleton University', *Modern U*, demonstrates how 2D design in 3-dimensional space can be meaningfully tied to interpretation, education, and identity.

04.3 Synthesis: Reading Rooms —

The 'Reading Rooms' are the thesis' architectural proposal. The overall scope of what Central Industrial entails has been vast. While this thesis could venture to propose plans for Central Industrial, the programming for the library, or the spaces for the architecture school, I instead choose to focus on specific spaces of each, and how they can be in concert. Where I believe this project can focus energy and bring value to the discussions of Central Industrial's future, is in taking a position that the site is heritage, and thus in need of disciplined conservation.

As this thesis has shown, the steps towards this lie in identifying what about the site makes it unique and resonant. An emblem for Central Yards served as a critical step in this direction. But as an architectural project, what now remains is to see how the research is made spatial. These are the Reading Rooms.

They are a focussed series of spaces that express the site's sense of place, its heritage, its meanings. What is proposed is not what should (or even *could*, in some cases) be constructed. Instead, they are the manifestations of moments and communicative design strategies for Central Yards.

Photo Pairing Study

Bookending this Part 04 are a series of five photo-based studies that help to represent select themes and ideas for the work (Figure 4.12 through Figure 4.16). These represent the interpretive intentions for five spaces, the Reading Rooms.

Featured prominently is a photo pairing, an exercise that helped to meditate on the thesis research. Depicted are the end results of a process where many different images, themes, programmatic spaces, real locations were mixed and matched until the composition felt resolved, all the pieces in dialogue with one another harmoniously.

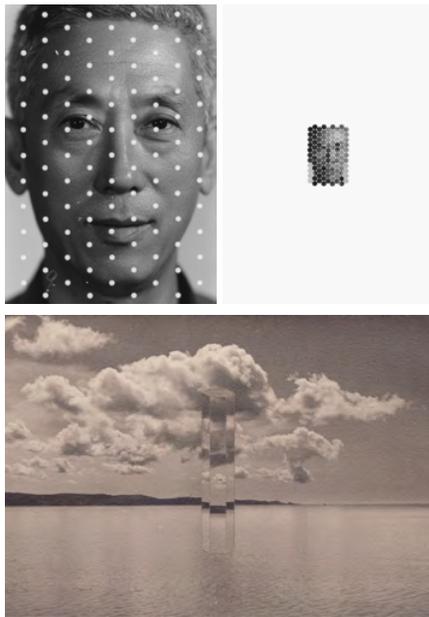


Figure 4.10 Works by Kensuke Koike. (a) 'No More, No Less' (n.d.) (b) 'Fortress' (2013).

A key influence on the study is the artist Kensuke Koike, whose work largely makes use of found antique photos which are then playfully transformed with some small alteration.⁶ His series 'Single Image Processing' operates with the rule of 'nothing added, nothing removed,'⁷ to present surprising, often insightful re-interpretations of the original photograph (Figure 4.10). Koike's work exemplifies ideas echoed here regarding the use of old photographs, seeing, and looking at them through a lens of interpretation. There is a restraint in the process that differs from the practices of collage or assemblage in that the piece consciously neither adds or removes. In a sense, they are exercises in adaptive re-use.

The main focus of the study is the pairing of two images, one archival and one contemporary. Each pair revolves around sets of elements, outlined in Table 4.01: a relation to the Central Yards emblem; a programmatic space; a historic caption; a set of characteristics; a theme and operation; proportion; and a glyph. The elements represent or

express goals for the Reading Room design, with a focus on design and its interpretive potential. These studies, the result of a process of trial, error, curation and planning, inform a guiding foundation for the design of the Reading Rooms, which will be presented in full in the conclusion.

The exercise serves to synthesize the lessons learned in the thesis, presenting them minimally as pieces that prompt. With the earlier bridge poster study, a key moment was in the realization of how removing the river from the photographs served as an invitation, a simple alteration that prompted interpretation and an attentiveness. This pairing exercise became a way of critically examining themes and ideas in a visual, consequential way, informing a methodology for planning how the scheme as a whole could be cohesive, reinforcing each other. Images inform and embody ways of seeing, and the proposed designs, in this medium, serve as important first steps in inviting the reader into a mindset of re-interpretation and exploration of what is familiar.

As *Reading Rooms*, these spaces represent essential aspects of the site, and viewed as a set, work to demonstrate Central Industrial as a richly meaningful place, through the strategies of interpretation presented in Central Yards.

Conclusion: 'Place' —

What 'place' means for Central Yards is that expresses itself as a site of engagements. Central Industrial, on its own, is richly meaningful, but demands a certain attention in order to see that it is trying to communicate. An understanding of the site's sense of place begins with an understanding of Tuan's 'attachment' or 'longing'. The identity of Central Industrial today is one of other people's projections, where the site makes room for the imaginings of one's desires, much like the conversations it currently faces of arenas, and any sort of large development.

But where Central Industrial is arguably at its best, is when it operates as a mirror, a site of contrasts, contradictions, and dialogues. When these contrasts are engaged, the site communicates. Industry on the site are the long reaches of flat rail lines, contrasted with the verticality of the Robin Hood Mill. Exchange is the way the site represents and symbolizes being a central hub. Education is at the heart of how the site can be used to tell stories of the city's development.

The design scheme of Central Yards recognizes that sense of place must be fostered. Appreciation needs to be earned. The Photo Exercise (and in turn, the Reading Rooms) reflect efforts in ensuring that the themes, and how they are engaged are consequential—essential parts of the design—not afterthoughts placed in leftover spaces. Returning to Tilden, the aim of the design is not instruction, but provocation. The history and definitions of Central Industrial are secondary to the meanings in understanding place that they help to facilitate.



Reading Rooms

Photo Pairing Exercise

Figure 4.11 Process work: establishing design themes through photographic juxtaposition, alteration, and assigning of topics.



	Reading Room 01	Reading Room 02	Reading Room 03	Reading Room 04	Reading Room 05
Glyph					
Emblem Part	CENTRAL		YARDS		
Name/Program	Local History Room	Exchange Tower	Assembly Rooms	Pedestrian Bridge	Thresholds
Location	at the Saskatoon Public Library's New Central Branch		at the University of Saskatchewan's downtown School of Architecture	crossing the existing CPR tracks of the Central Industrial site	at various points of entry/exit/pause on Central Industrial site
Type	nodes			vectors	
Main Value	Industry	Exchange	Education	Outward	Inward
Themes	stories of the city: heritage, history and traces	hub city: distribution, processing and resources	assemblies: education, order and gathering	other: plural, passage and horizons	self: patterns, images and migration
Operation / Alteration	shadows (heritage)	recontextualization (orientation)	drawing (grids)	contrast (planes)	reflection (absence)
Proportion					

Table 4.01 Reading Room Element Organization

A version of this table helped to situate the different themes, elements, etc. of the research. The Central Yards emblem was broken down into five components. Each was assigned a corresponding room/space through a trial and error process that balanced other considerations, the end result seen here. The themes/commentary about the site to be discussed was matched with the most suitable interpretive space.

Early Seed and Feed Ltd. in downtown Saskatoon
January 1971



The Early Seed and Feed Ltd. store and elevator viewed from Idylwyld Drive in winter. The CN Tower and part (Dominion store) of the Midtown Plaza shopping mall are in the right background.

Figure 4.12 pair 01 — shadows (heritage)

CENTRAL

Local History Room
New Saskatoon Central Library



stories of the city: heritage, history and traces



Reading Room 01 — Local History Room

Mayor Sidney Buckwold and Queen Elizabeth
July 1959



Mayor Sidney Buckwold making a presentation of a jar of Saskatoon Berries to Queen Elizabeth with Prince Philip looking on, in front of City Hall.

Figure 4.13 pair 02 — recontextualization (orientation)



Exchange Tower
retail space at New Central Library



hub city: resources, processing and distribution



Reading Room 02 — Exchange Tower

1927 Aerial Photographs - Flight Line [X]
1927

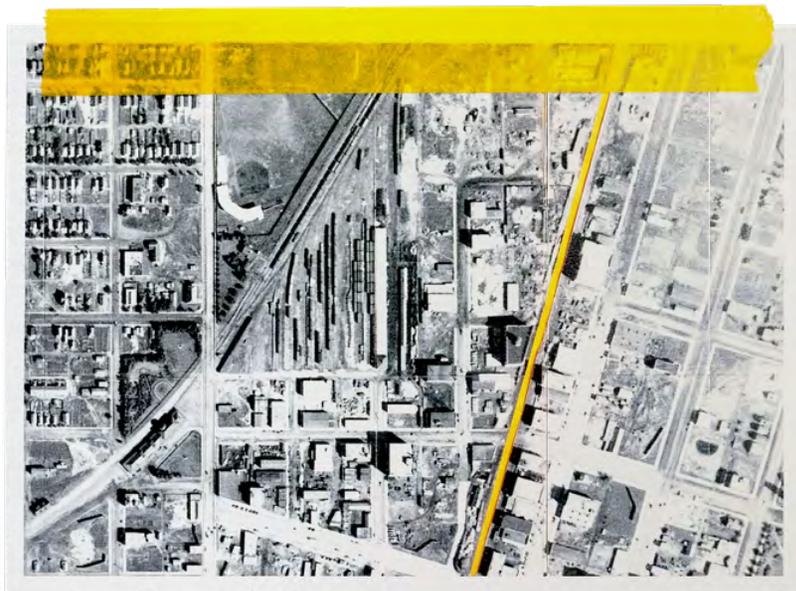


Figure 4.14 pair 03 — drawing (grids)

YARDS

Assembly Rooms
University of Saskatchewan School of Architecture and Visual Arts

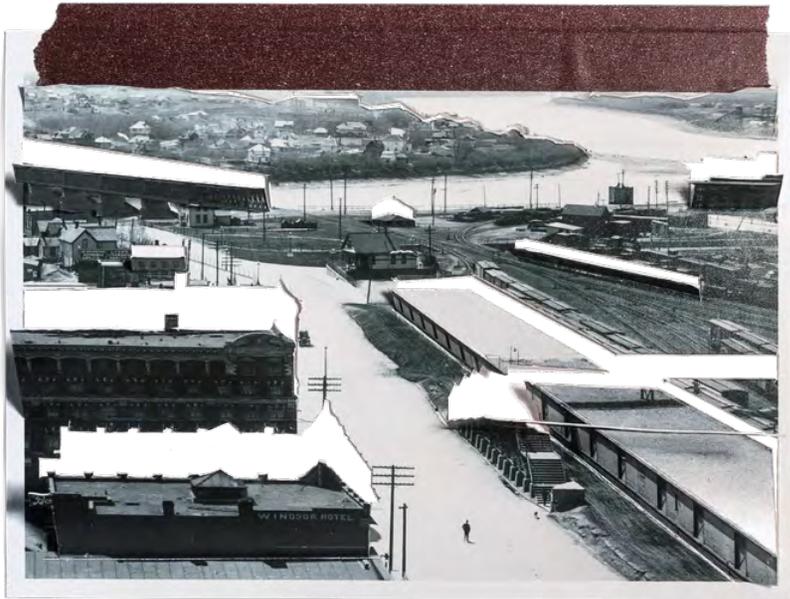


assemblies: education, order, and connections



Reading Room 03 — Assembly Rooms

Bird's-eye view of 1st Avenue South
ca. 1913



Bird's-eye view of 1st Avenue (above Windsor Hotel) showing downtown rail yards and overhead footbridge, CNR bridge, river, and part of Nutana east of bridge. Sign on building at 19th says "Lyon's steam bath parlours" and "Cooperative Automobile Supply Co."

Figure 4.15 pair 04 — contrast (planes)

L

Pedestrian Bridge
Central Yards



other: plural, passage and horizons

Reading Room 04 — Pedestrian Bridge

Exterior long shot of northern end of CPR station on Idylwyld
ca. 1911

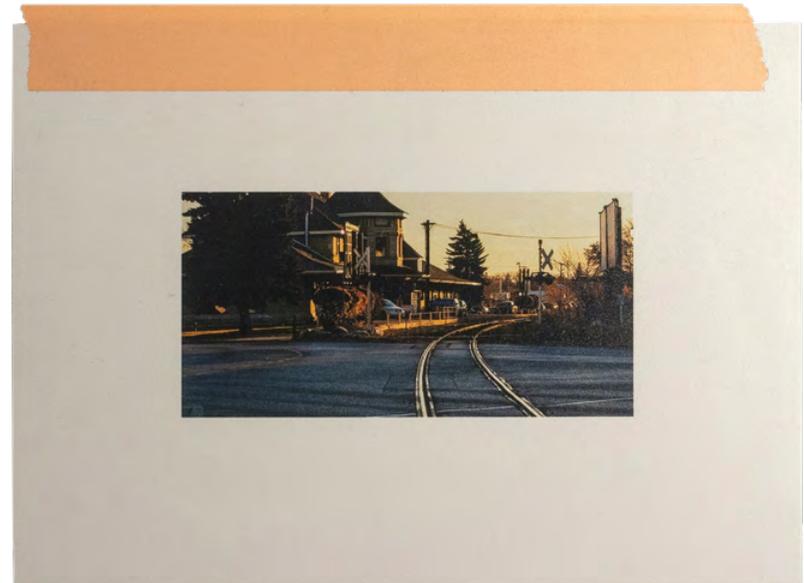


North end of CPR station on Idylwyld (then Avenue A) with passengers and horse-drawn taxi (livery), notably one from the King Edward Hotel.

Figure 4.16 pair 05 — reflection (absence)

/

Thresholds, Entrances, and Exits
various throughout



seld: patterns, images and migration

⌋

Reading Room 05 — Thresholds

Part 04 Endnotes —

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6. Kensuke Koike, "Kensuke Koike (@kensukekoike) on Instagram • 880 Photos and Videos," Instagram, accessed March 31, 2020, <https://www.instagram.com/kensukekoike/>.
7. Koike Kensuke, Nothing Added, Nothing Removed, interview by Cat Lachowskyj, accessed July 29, 2020, <https://www.lensculture.com/articles/kensuke-koike-nothing-added-nothing-removed>.



Figure 5.01 *Central Industrial fields, looking towards downtown. 9:09 pm, August 4, 2020.*



Figure 5.02 Former CNR rail line, now abandoned, looking south towards axis to John Deere Building and former CNR Station beyond, 8:34 pm, August 4, 2020.



Figure 5.03 John Deere Building, with Midtown Plaza Tower in the distance.

The tower sits at the former CNR Station site, an axis which, while decipherable here, was once more unmistakably delineated by the rail which ran from site to site. The axis lends the building the angle of its characteristic trapezoidal, flat-iron shape.

Conclusion — Central Yards

The remainder of the book will outline the designs of the Reading Rooms for Central Yards. This conclusion serves to bookend the research, less a conclusion but a summary of everything so far prefacing the presentation of design. It parallels the introduction, similarly breaking down the words of the title, with new understandings.

Central Industrial, as a witness to the city's industrial past, offers an environment with which stories of local history are made visible in the landscape. Under the leadership of the central library and the design school, it is within these intersections of program and site that I explore the capacities for design and heritage interpretation to facilitate provocative encounters of space and place.

Cultivating —

Saskatoon's deep agricultural ties are an essential part of its historic identity. To *cultivate* within the reading rooms is both an act, and thematic.

As an act, to cultivate is to prepare, and within the thesis, it refers the acts of recollection and memory—to know, and to nurture over time.

Story structure, co-creation, and the discussed manners of seeing and understanding feed into the ways we view our relationship with place as a reciprocity. Our connections to place are built on our associations and interpretations.

As a theme, to cultivate is tied to the character of the city within the prairies. Agriculture is part of the identity of the city. The Café/Retail Reading Room best captures this, a monumental structure in dialogue with the monumental Robin Hood Flour Mill. This space is rooted in themes at the heart of Saskatoon's agricultural character: the industriousness of a study space, the nourishment

of breaking bread, and the choreography of processes that allow the space to operate.

Literacies —

The thesis research is deeply steeped in the ideas and experiences of reading, as words on a page, and ways of looking at artwork or places. Books, photography, and the importance of seeing, all contribute to expand our definition of *literacies*, in the context of a library and education, centring instead on the more fundamental ability of knowing.

Spirn's assertion that to see is the root of idea lives in the Reading Rooms' designs of using the interpretive spaces they provide to better understand the themes of the city, and the traces they find themselves as in Central Yards. The Reading Rooms create space for reading and seeing one's environment in a new light, in order to see space as place by finding the ways the

site resonates. The supporting branches of the research, Symbols and Sentinels, are steadfast overseers, signalling the values of interpretation and recurrence as constant presences of the site.

Place —

Central Industrial has been stated as a mirror to the city. Our understanding of the site relies upon that which we see reflected back to us. Its sense of place is of dialogues and paradoxes, a site of significance not for what is visible, but what it can illuminate. Tuan's notions of longing for what we do not know propel us to rarely desire stasis—we will always be made curious by entropy. Our desire for security will always oscillate with our desire for freedom.

Central Industrial is defined by its opposites. It is manmade, whereas River Landing is natural. It is industrial, whereas the CN yards are now a shopping mall. While the site is difficult to define,

it makes it all the more engaging, becoming a facilitating medium for critical discussion. Reading Room 05, on Thresholds is ever mindful of opportunities for participation, where the various entries and exits of the site are considered for power in creating moments of reflection. The collaboration between the library and the architecture school will continually provide the subject matter to see these conversations engage with the public, ever working to see space as a way to understand one's self.

Central Industrial —

Central Industrial has now become Central Yards. Marking an important shift in direction for the site, it signals the intentions for the site's meanings to be conserved, but its disposition to be reconsidered in the society of today. The names bestowed on our places, like the many nicknames of Saskatoon, are reflections of the many facets that make it up. And so, to formalize

an understanding of the site to be one that rings more true to the fundamental themes of exchange and shared space.

As a smaller neighbourhood within Saskatoon, Central Industrial serves as a reinterpretation of the historic values of the city, echoed in the city's crest. The site now moving forward into its next evolution, will reflect new, broader sets of values lead by the proposals for the site: education and creation captured with the architecture school; exchange and growth nurtured by the library; industry and history captured by the site.

Symbols —

Symbols, as a component of the main title for the work, reflects its significance as a designed product. A central claim of the thesis is that symbols, whether as glyphs, or noteworthy landmarks, are able to more easily serve as communicators of values. This nature is because

of the enduring effect they have in our processes of recollection and association. A thoughtfully considered symbol, it is argued, encourages co-creation and interpretation—the symbol can adapt to whatever the user’s understandings are.

The Reading Rooms reflect an effort to consider often secondary methodologies like visual identity or graphic design, to be more consequential dimensions in the design and dissemination of a project. Processes like these involve the exploration of, and definition of values, and are linked to methodologies in heritage conservation. To consider the symbolic resonance of a design or place is to preserve and signal important aspects of the site, directing us to readings and interpretations of the site.

Sentinels —

More important than symbols themselves is that they represent something larger. If symbols are ways of expressive the site, then sentinels are ways of directing the values that they speak towards. The library and the school, together, anchor the atmosphere of critical engagement imagined for Central Yards. Imagined together, the campus that they form is an essential part of ensuring that the values they signify watch over and influence attitudes of examination and experimentation of the site’s narratives.

The city, and the prairies have had long histories of building sentinels, the grain elevators that dot the endless fields of Saskatchewan. Central Industrial has its own structure, the Robin Hood Flour Mill, the area’s primary symbol, and sentinel. The Reading Rooms, and the various spaces that they propose are all mindful of the industrial legacies of the site.

Reading Rooms —

The earlier photo exercise, as basis for the Reading Room designs, helped to tackle and organize the themes, motifs, symbols, elements, and actions involved in ensuring the rooms are seen in harmony, each amplifying the experience of the other. At the centre of these efforts is a firm position that through our past, we understand our present, evidenced in the manner of looking to archival photos as representations of little histories. The themes we identify in those pasts we notice in part because of the resonances they have with us today.

The Reading Rooms are spaces of interpretive potential, manifestations of the values of the site, designed to be provocative moments of engagement between the public and place.

In this final part of the thesis book, the design unfolds to uncover imaginings for the site that open the door to discussion.

Room 01, the Local History Room, will examine the space of a library's *actual* reading room to provide commentary on the site's history. Room 02, the Café/Retail Tower, as the design scheme's most public indoor space, will look at the resultant spaces in considering intersections of agriculture and exchange. Room 03, the Assembly Rooms, will explore the architecture school's expressions of 'assembly,' in spatial practices of gathering and making. Room 04, the Pedestrian Bridge, tackles the question of what a bridge (for interpretation) for the area should look like, in dialogue with the city's history of bridges. And finally Room 05, Thresholds, Entrances and Exits, looks to smaller moments of reflection and pause, expanding on ideas of 'crossing the threshold,' to see how the simple act of entering and leaving spaces serve as checkpoints for our returns.



CENTRAL
YARDS

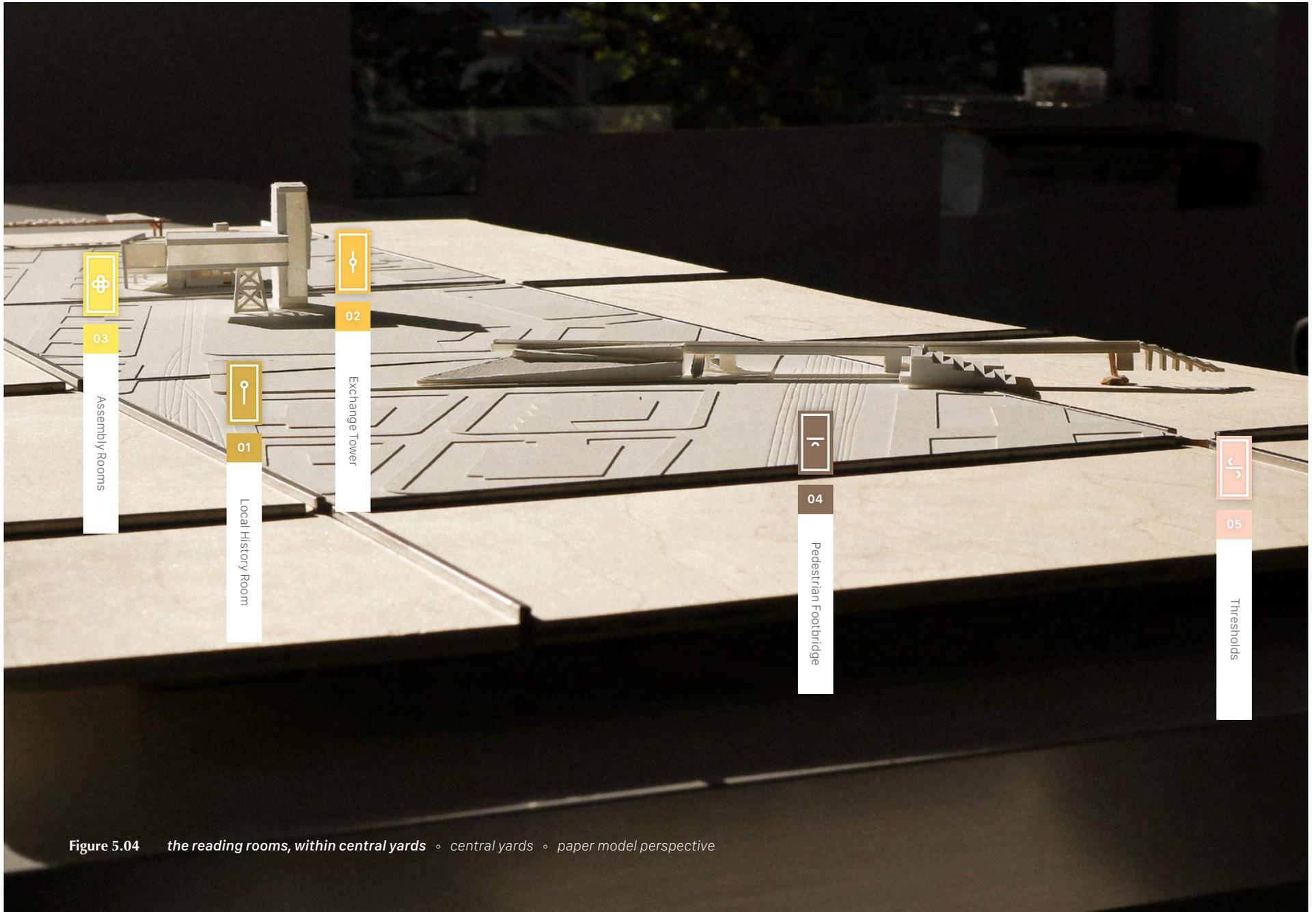
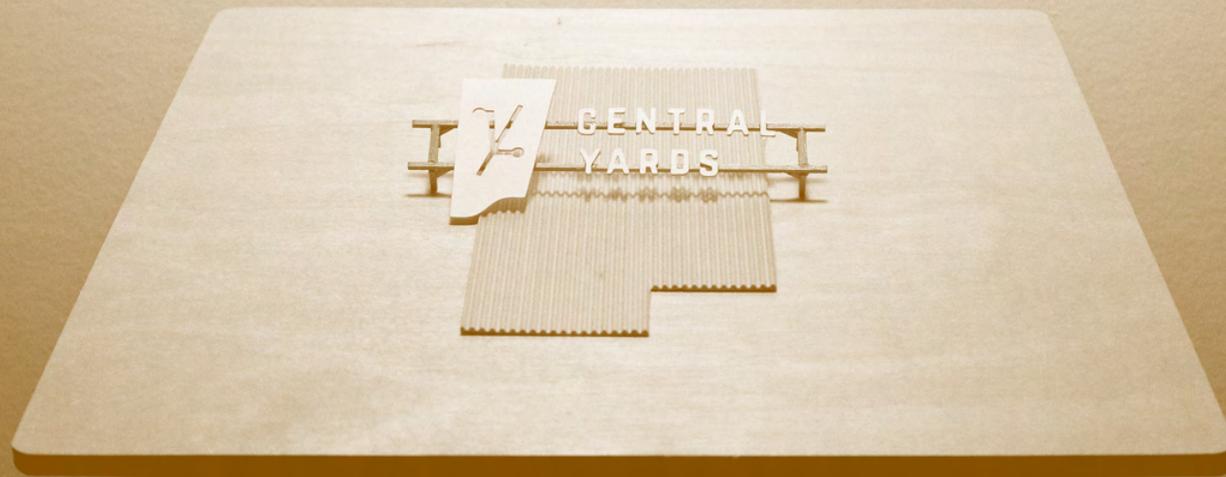
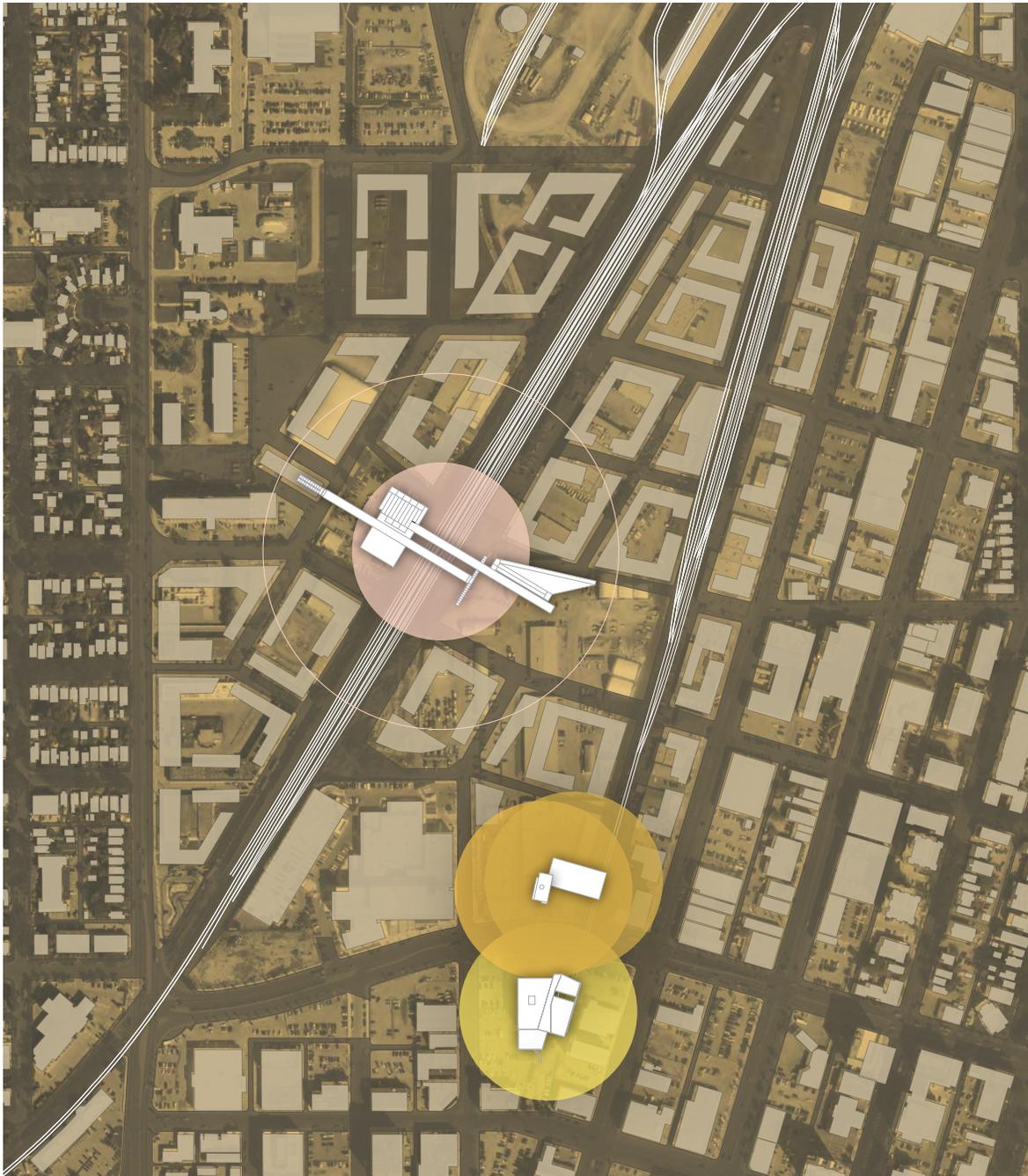


Figure 5.04 the reading rooms, within central yards ◦ central yards ◦ paper model perspective



Central Yards

Site Design



Central Yards

Site Design

of Central Industrial, Saskatoon

The overall site strategy for Central Yards is one that forges an identity of civic space for interpretation. The bulk of the Reading Rooms are strategically positioned to be able to facilitate dialogues between what can be read from the site's designs and communications.

More fundamentally, the site strategy considers its adjacent communities, highly varied in zoning and programming, with each side of the Central Industrial border mediating outside and in. A key premise of the designs is that the NDMP will be adopted for all areas except for the ones identified here.

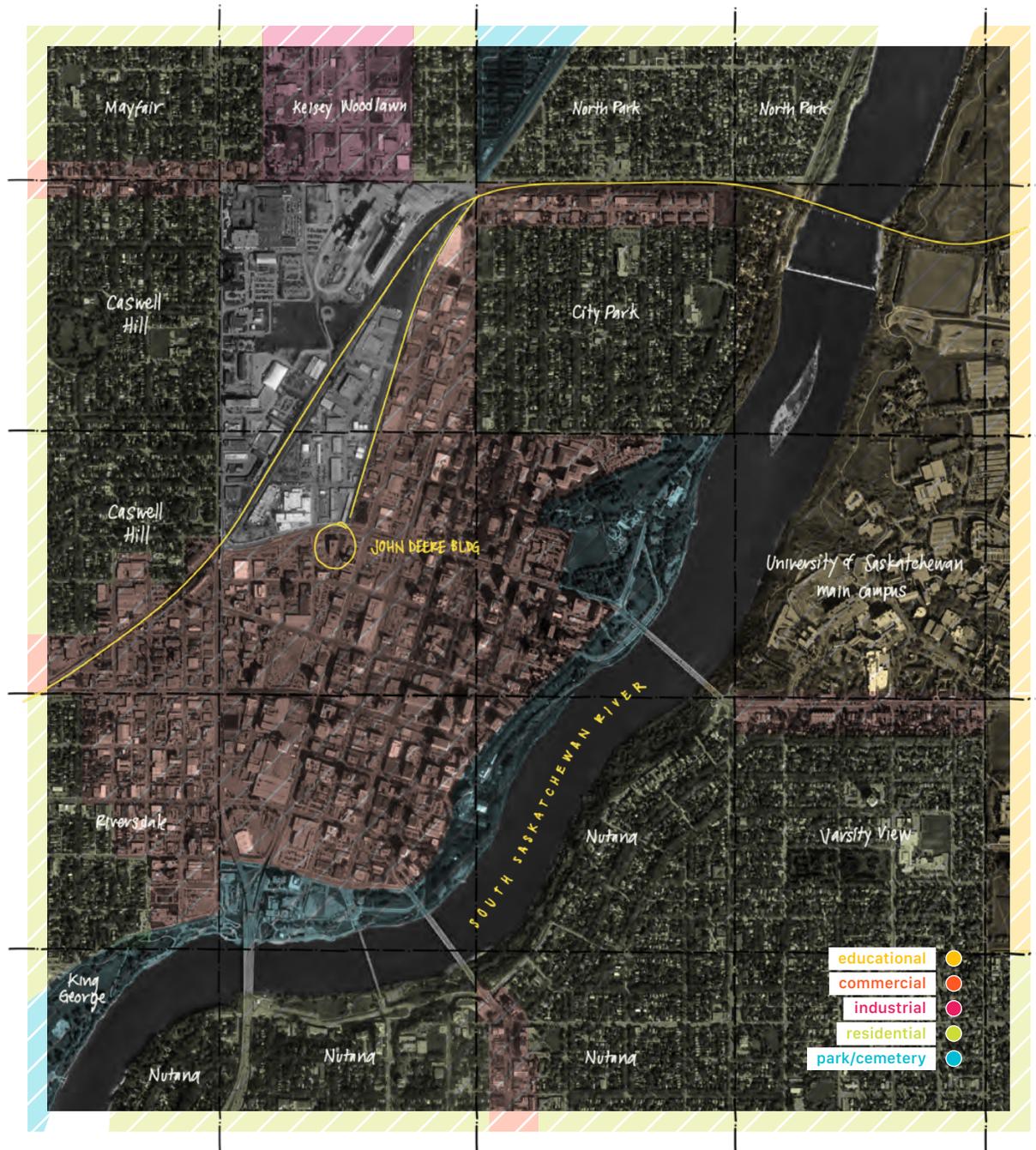


Figure 5.05 central industrial, downtown saskatoon, and surroundings • central yards • annotated map

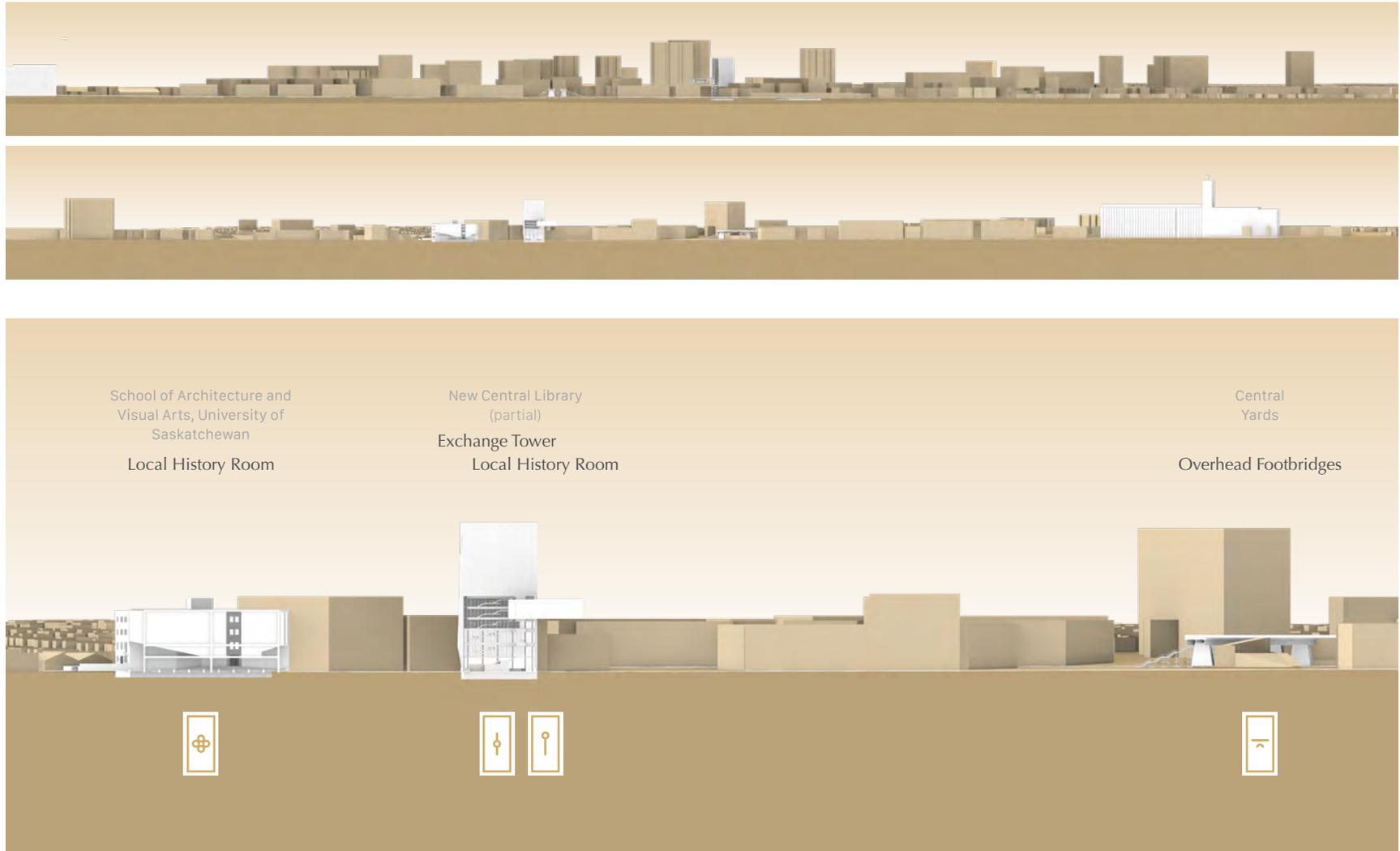


Figure 5.06 site sections ◦ central yards ◦ (a) along CPR tracks looking east; (b) along CNR tracks looking west; (c) detail, along CNR tracks looking west.



Reading Room 01
Local History Room



Reading Room 02
Exchange Tower



Reading Room 03
Assembly Rooms



Reading Room 04
Overhead Footbridges



Reading Room 05
Thresholds

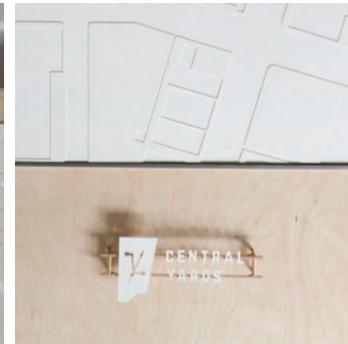


Figure 5.07 the reading rooms • paper 1:1000 models

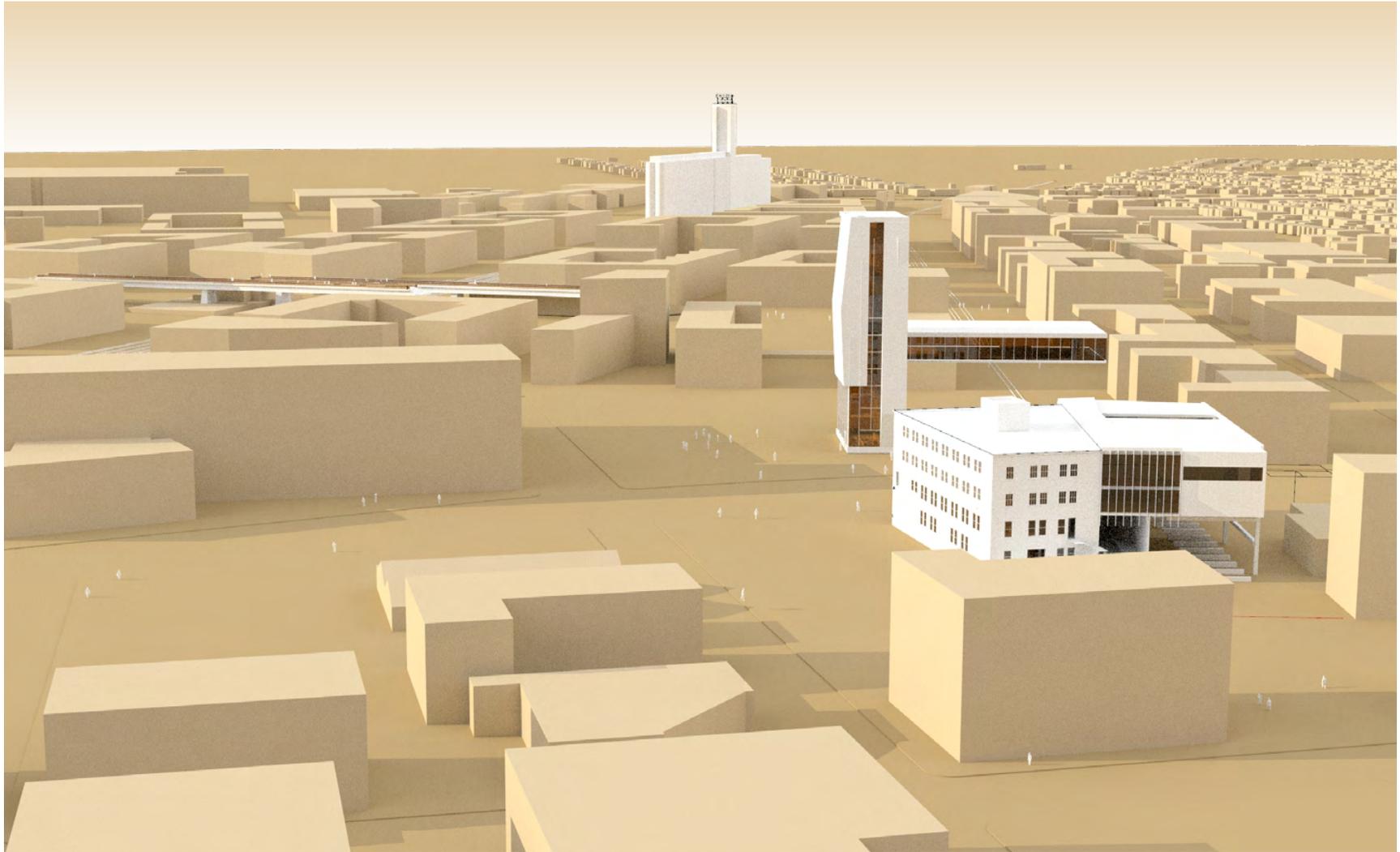


Figure 5.08 *on the ground* • *central yards* • *rendered perspective*

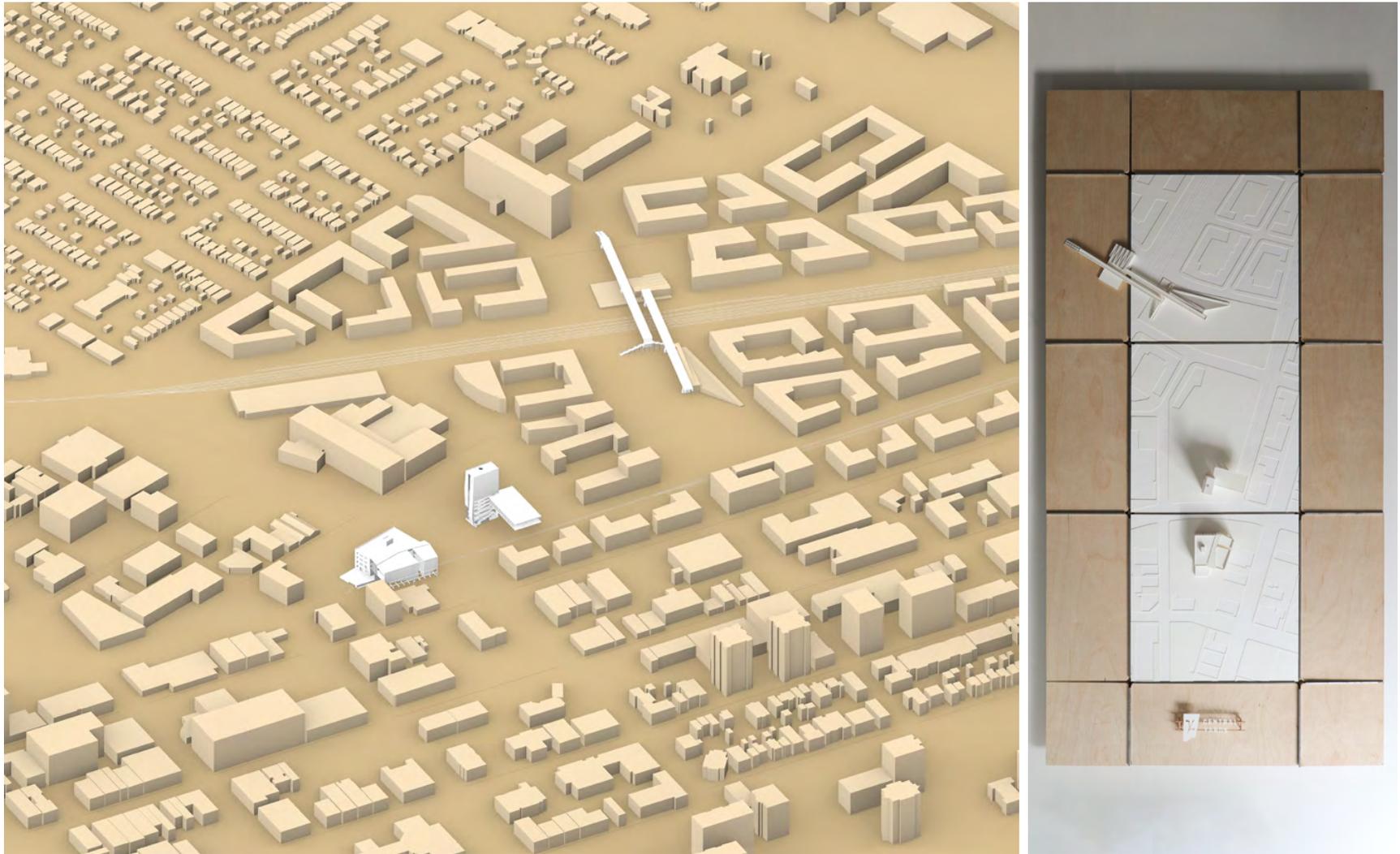
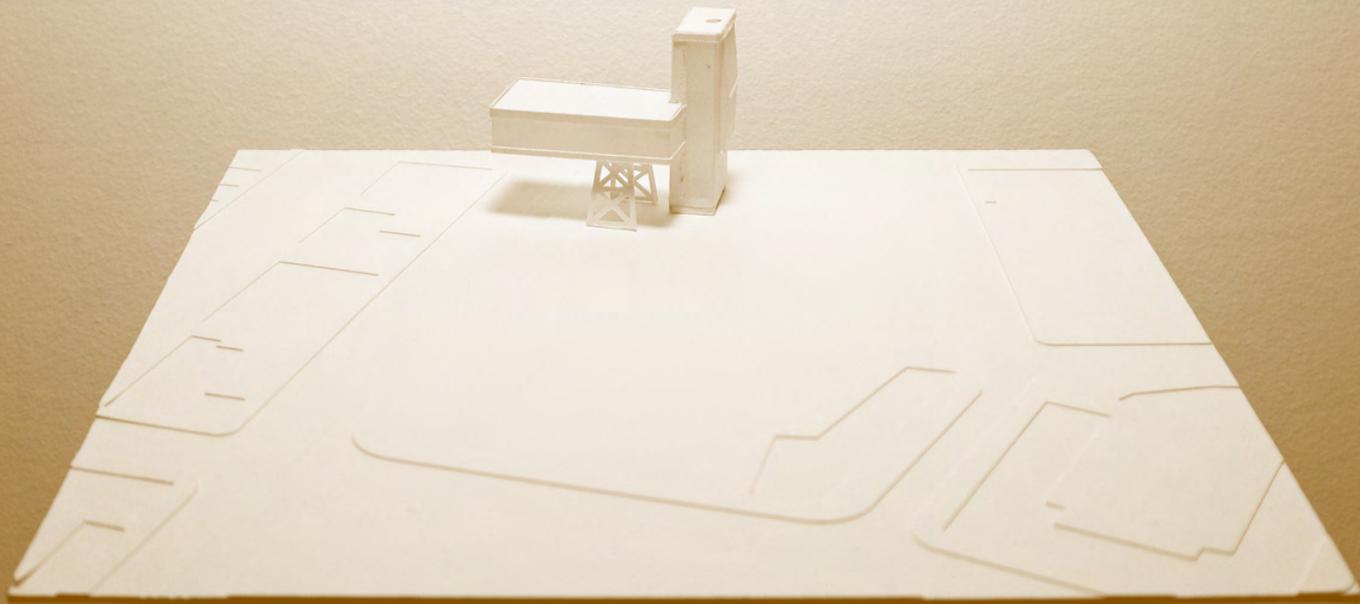
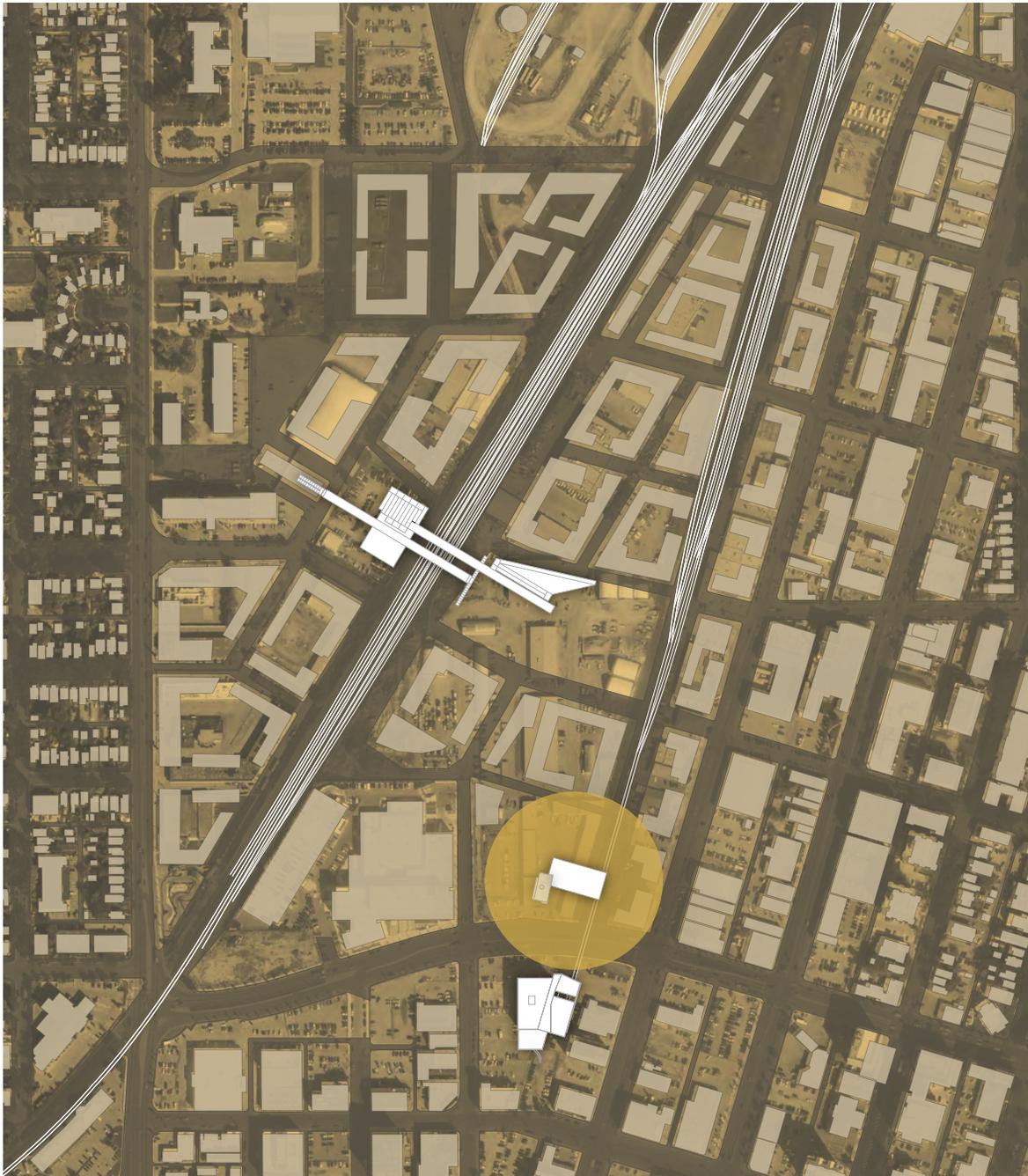


Figure 5.09 from above ◦ central yards ◦ (a) rendered axonometric, from SE; (b) paper models on grid board



Reading Room 01

Local History Room



Reading Room 01

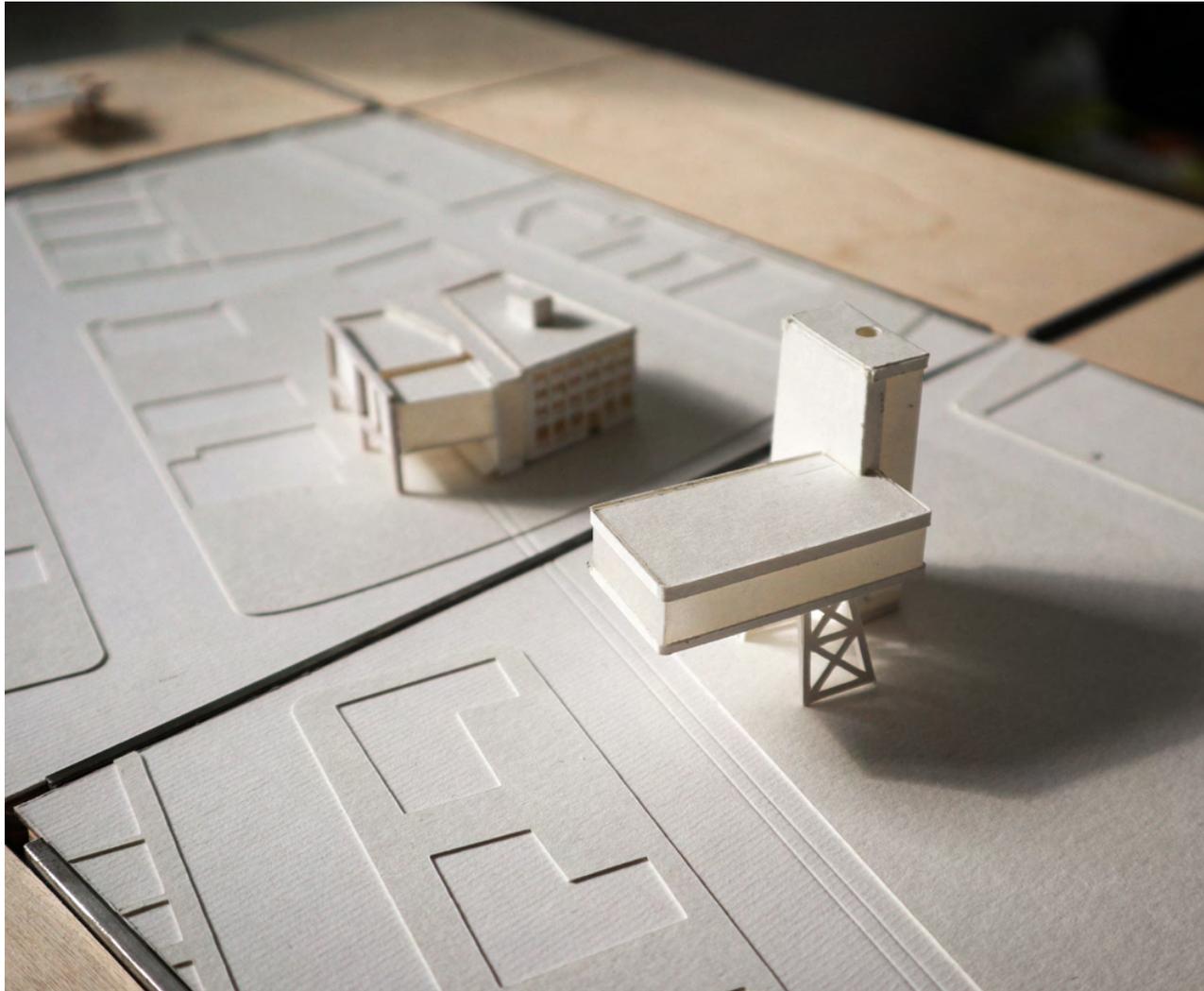
Local History Room



*Upper floor, cantilevering above defunct tracks
Central Branch, Saskatoon Public Library*

The Local History Room of this library operates as traditional rooms of the same name do. But a defining feature is an unconventional bookcase evocative of this exact location's past and present, drawing chiefly on interpreting ideas of vessels.

Books are laid flat on custom-built steel and glass shelves. As the sun moves, the shadows it casts animate the space, where on the floor, the intentions of the books' strange arrangement are revealed. They appear on paired parallel rails like freight cars in a rail yard, only now containers of cargo are the vessels of information books provide.



As a space within the library, this room reinforces the library as a place for public engagement with heritage, be that with the architectural fabric of the area or the stories and recorded histories that typically occupy the namesake of this room often found in local libraries.

The orientation of the Reading Room considers the solar path in best optimizing shadows throughout the day, and year.

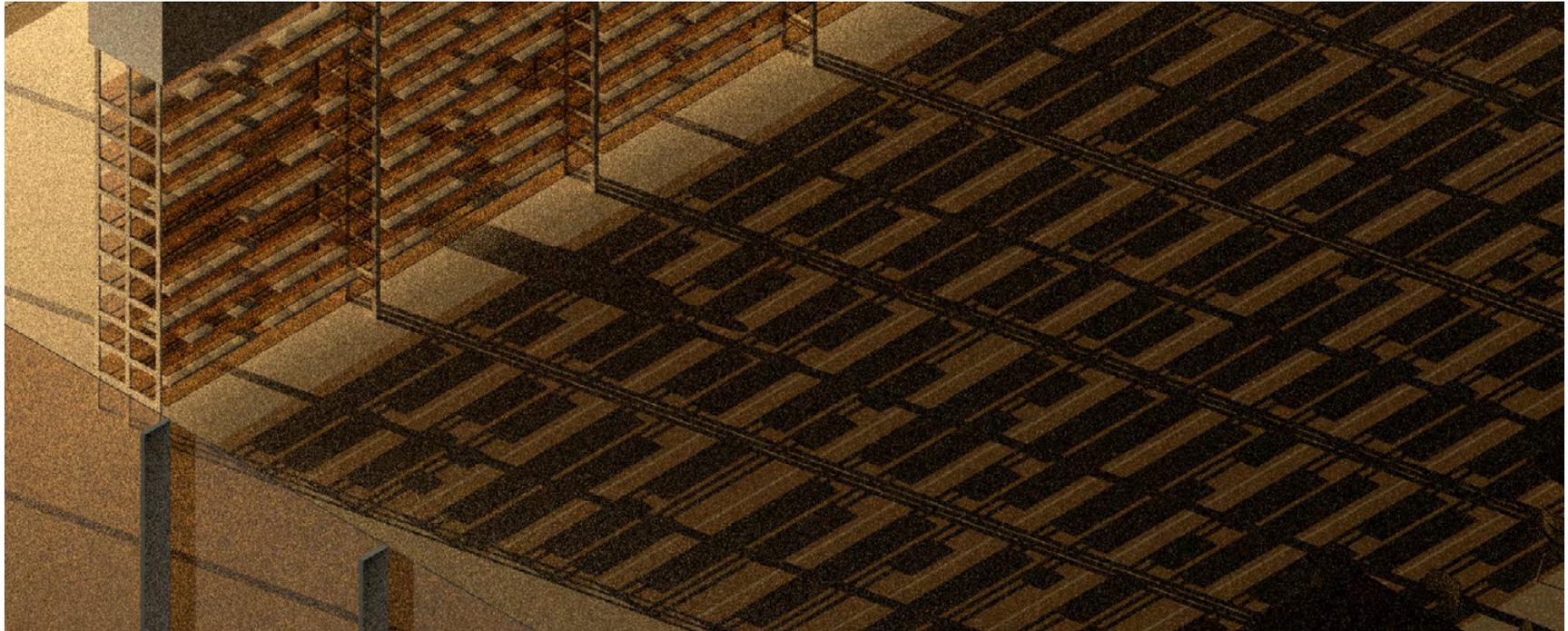
Its location high above the defunct rail lines, draws attention to this important axis and its interpretive significance for the design scheme, site, and city.

Figure 5.10 *industry: heritage, history and traces* ◦ 01. the local history room ◦ paper model perspective



The key feature of the room is an unusual bookcase, seen on the right, which floats the former CNR tracks below the elevated volume of this room. A series of glass shelves hold books which lay flat but don't seem out of the ordinary, until the sun animates the room, casting shadows within the space.

Figure 5.11 *bookshelves and stories of the city* ◦ 01. the local history room ◦ rendered interior perspective



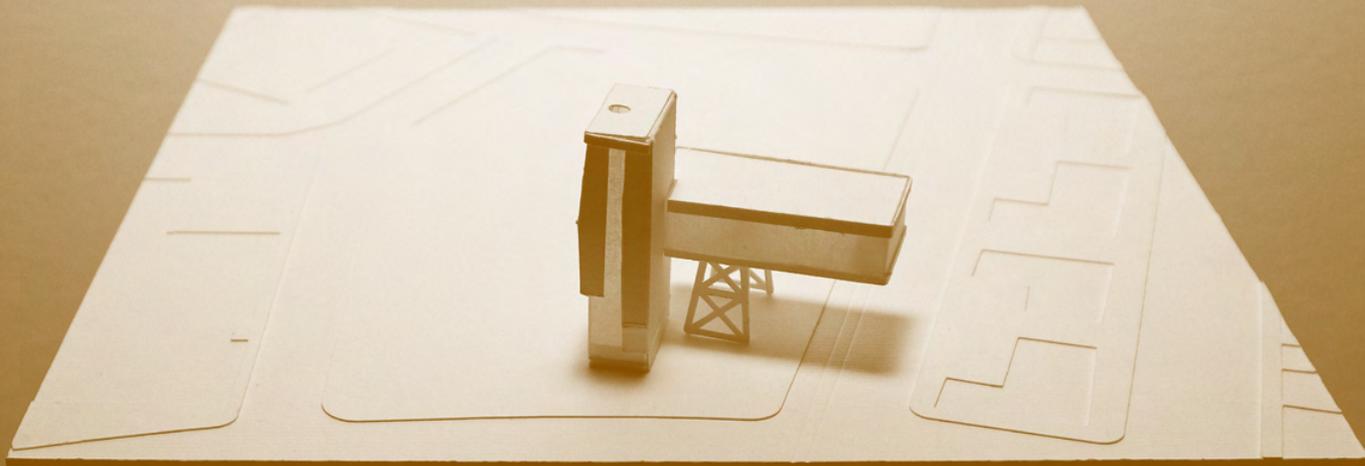
The shadows evoke the imagery of train cars on rail lines, evoking the site's past. Books, as vessels, become train car vessels, each filled with content, taken on and off the shelves.

Figure 5.12 vessels ◦ 01. the local history room ◦ rendered interior axonometric

Like heritage, shadows convey that what is in front of us isn't possible without a source, and to know histories is to illuminate understandings of the present.

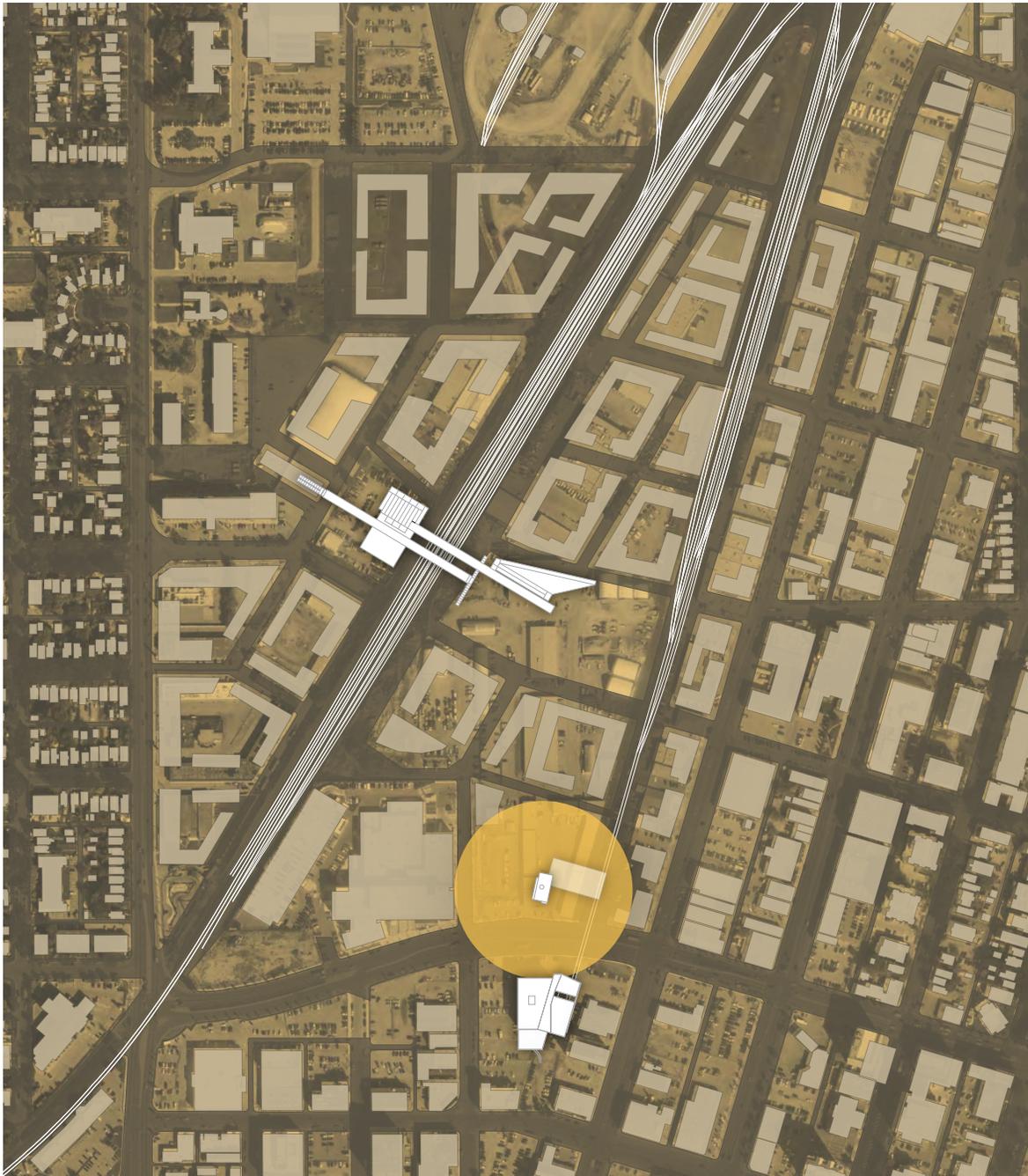


Figure 5.13 *on shadows and heritage* ◦ 01. the local history room ◦ rendered interior axonometric



Reading Room 02

Exchange Tower



Reading Room 02

Exchanges (Café + Retail)



*Ground floor, with exterior access
Central Branch, Saskatoon Public Library*

This wing of the library is an ample, primarily vertical space illuminating notions of movement and exchange active in its dialogue with the Robin Hood Mill.

These are conversations in resources, production and development brought on by its programmatic function as an all-day café, bookstore, and study space that's independently run outside of the library's business hours. Waiting for your pastry order your eye wanders to the movement of elevators, Robin Hood framed just beyond, and the staircase of preoccupied patrons lining the silo-like space.

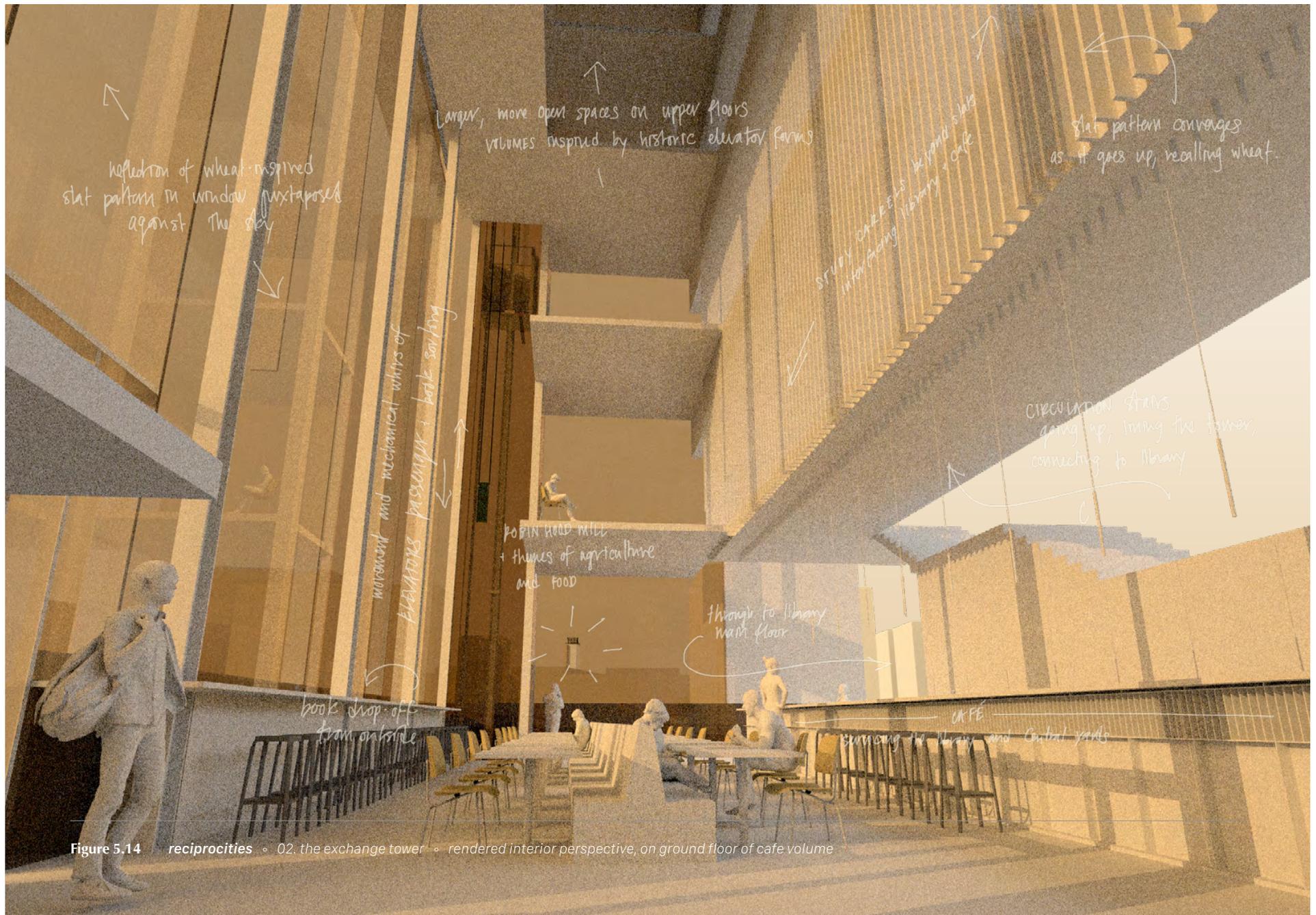


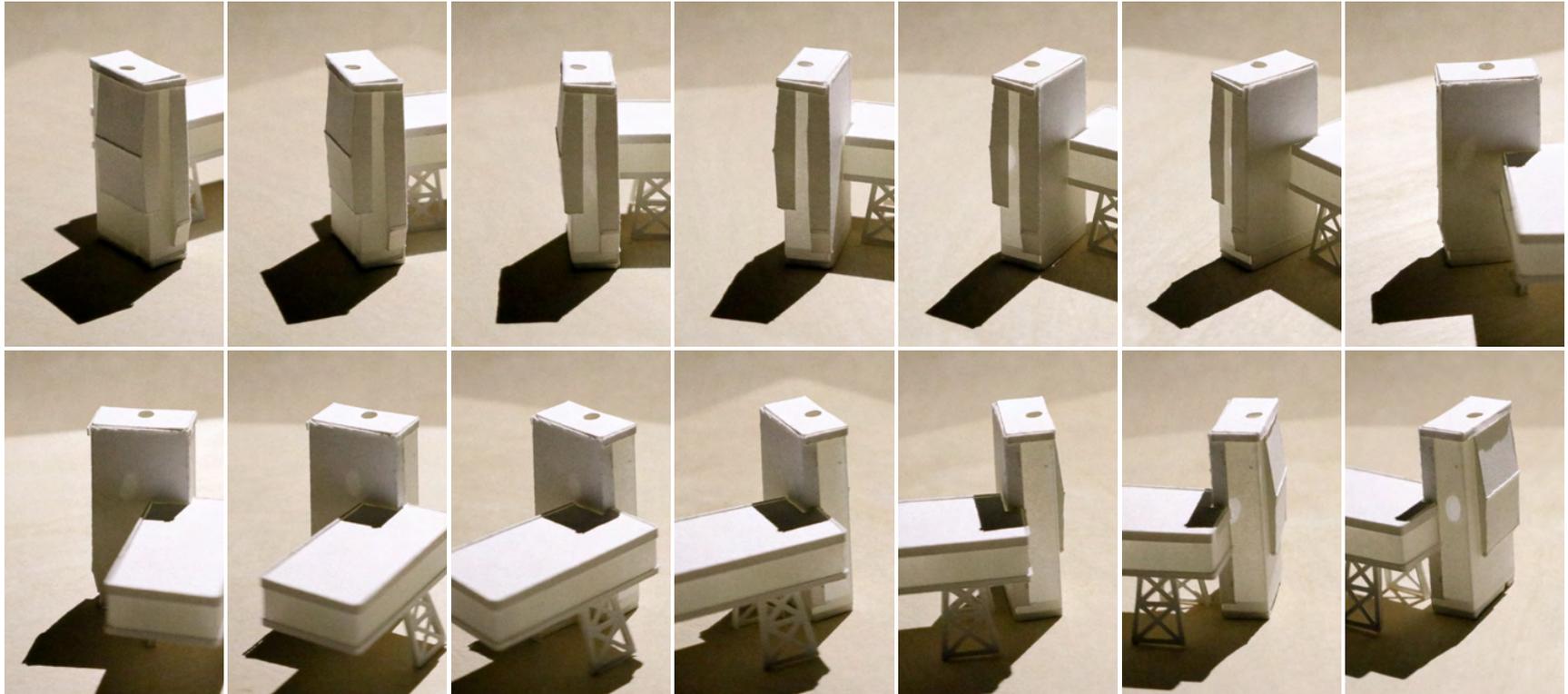
Figure 5.14 reciprocities • 02. the exchange tower • rendered interior perspective, on ground floor of cafe volume

The Exchange Tower reinterprets the monumental forms of the grain elevators, a nod explicit in its orientation towards Robin Hood.

Cultivation and exchange are themes that tie the province's agricultural pasts, and in the library here are reinterpreted as spaces of circulation, movement, give and take.

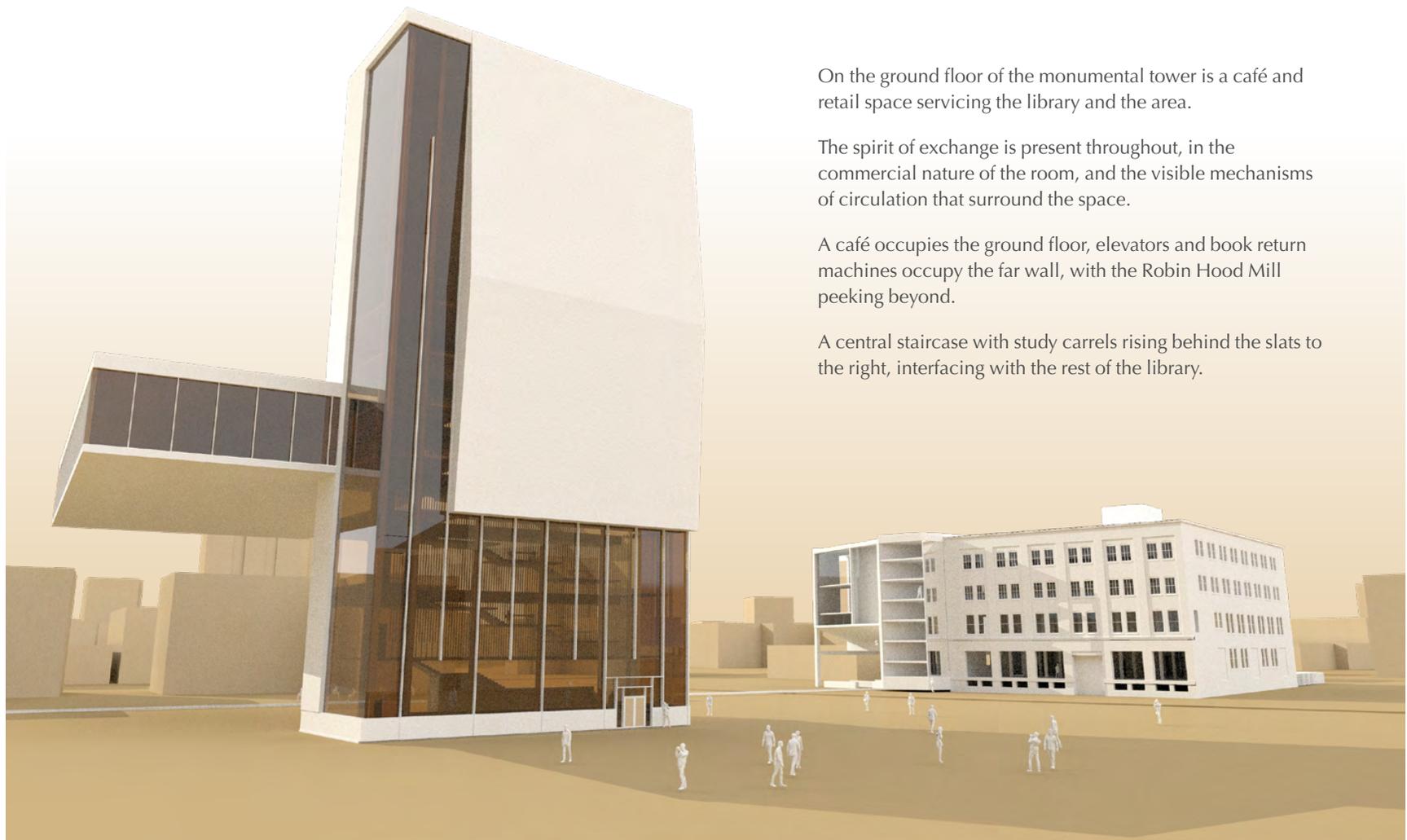


Figure 5.15 *recontextualization and cultivation* ◦ 02. the exchange tower ◦ (a) rendered axonometric perspective, (b) cutaway section perspective



A skylight animates the cavernous interior volumes of the upper floors, a counterpoint to the Local History Room's take on shadows.

Figure 5.16 *animating processes* ◦ 02. the exchange tower ◦ paper model study



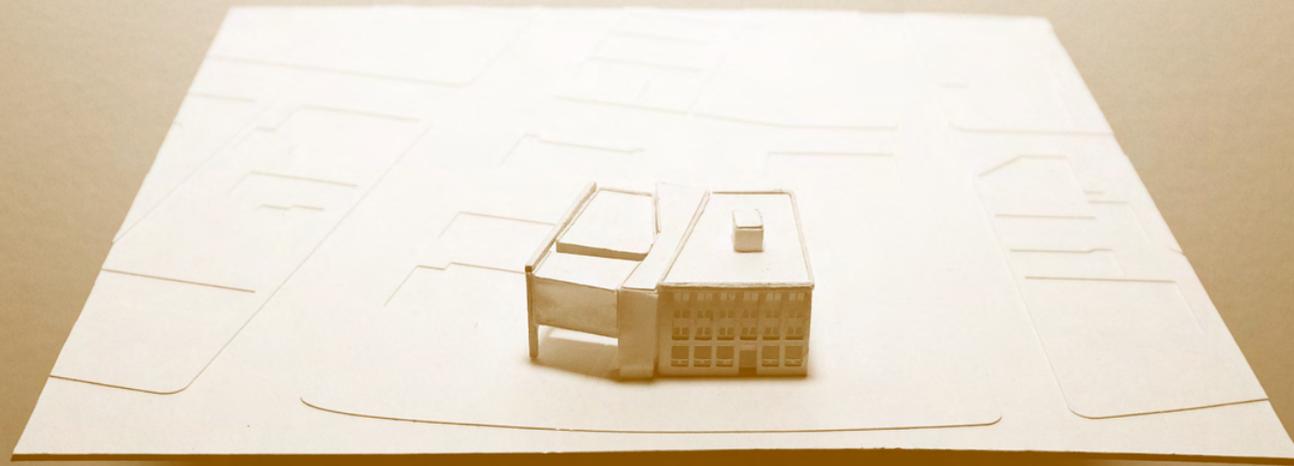
On the ground floor of the monumental tower is a café and retail space servicing the library and the area.

The spirit of exchange is present throughout, in the commercial nature of the room, and the visible mechanisms of circulation that surround the space.

A café occupies the ground floor, elevators and book return machines occupy the far wall, with the Robin Hood Mill peeking beyond.

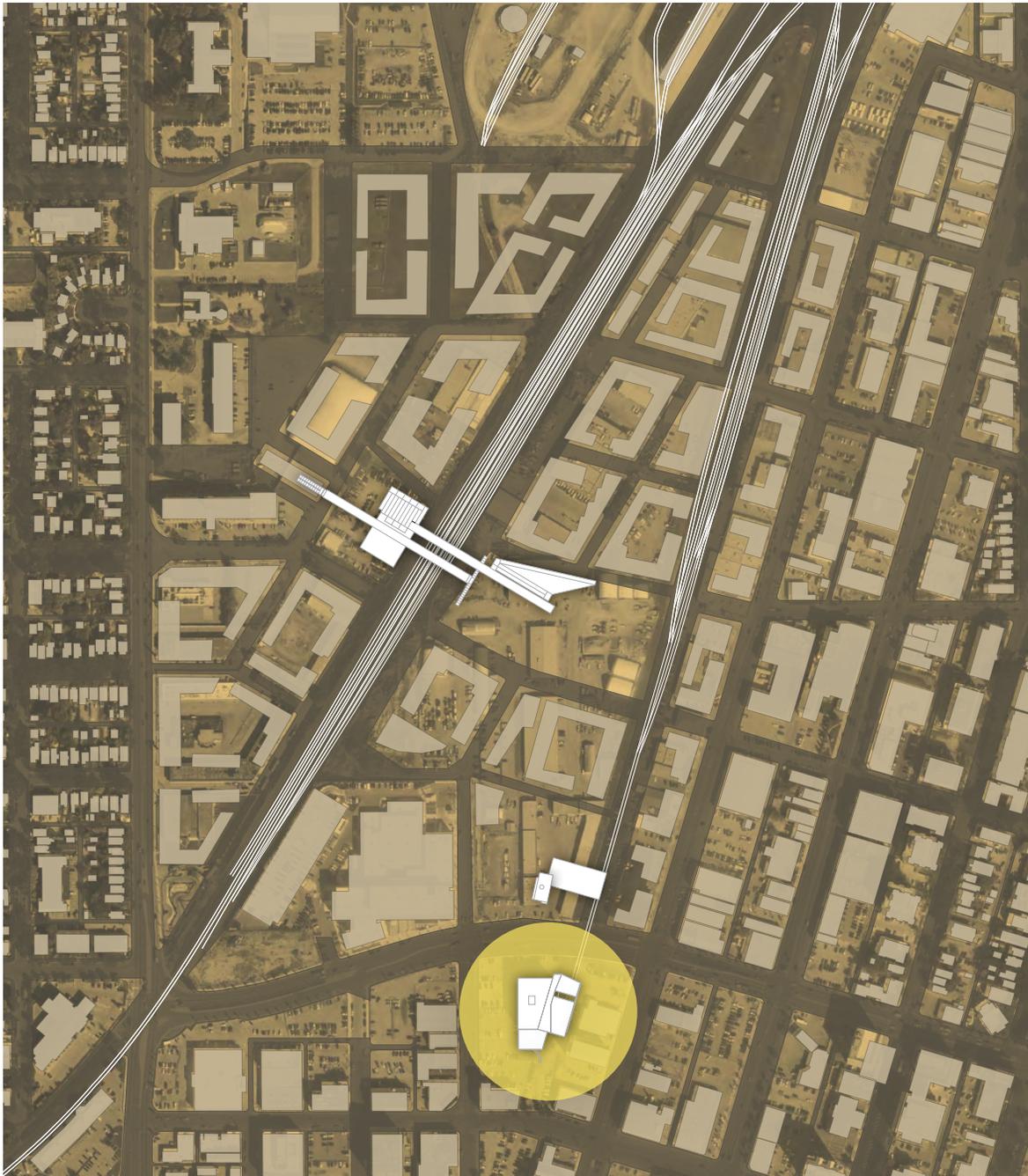
A central staircase with study carrels rising behind the slats to the right, interfacing with the rest of the library.

Figure 5.17 *a hub: distribution, processing, and resources* ◦ 02. the exchange tower ◦ rendered perspective



Reading Room 03

Assembly Room



Reading Room 03

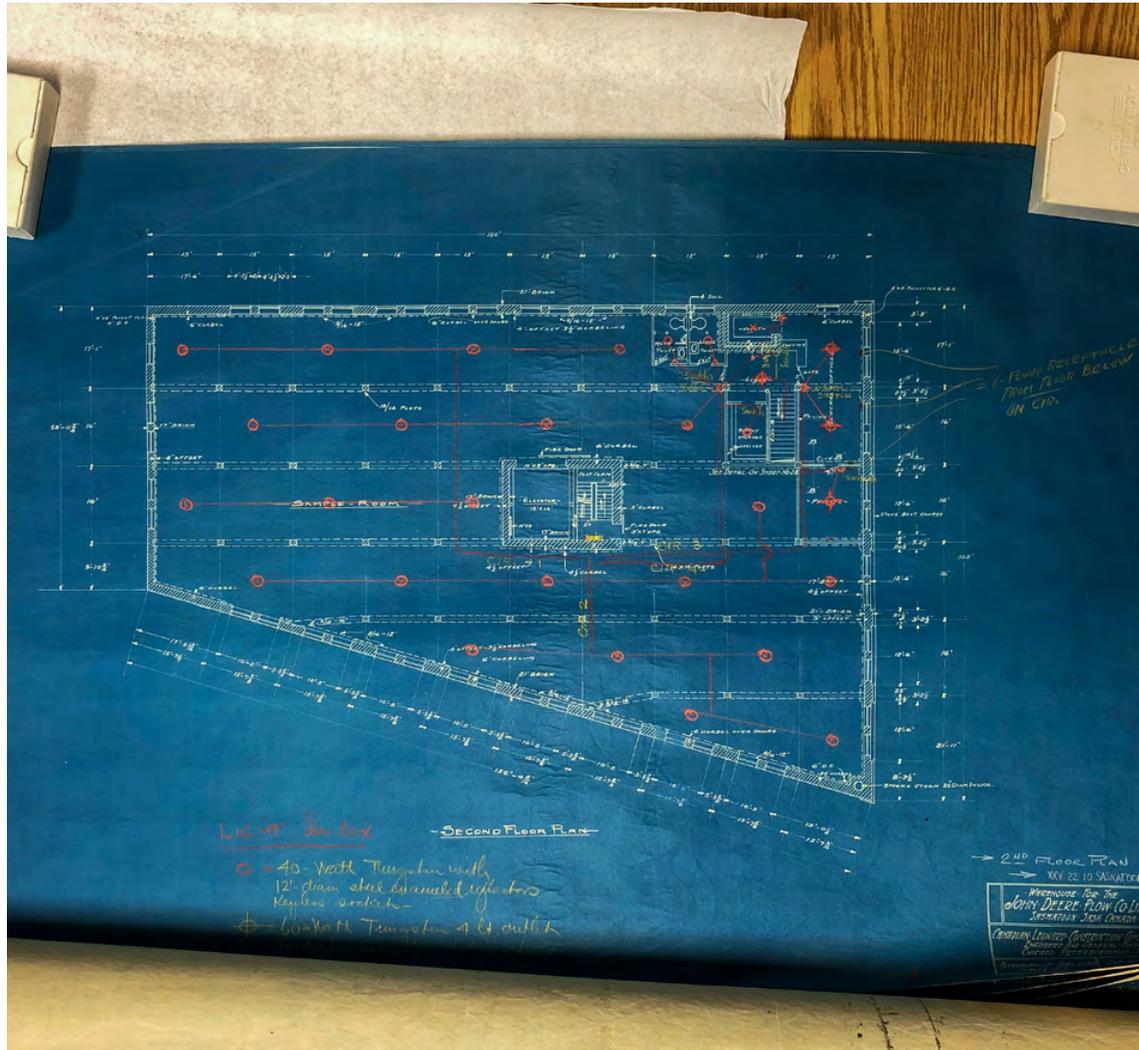
Assembly Rooms



*School of Architecture and Visual Arts (SAVA)
John Deere Building, University of Saskatchewan*

Assembly here is interpreted as the two main ways of making and gathering. The John Deere Building will be adaptively reused as the SAVA, with studios and smaller spaces occupying most of the floors. Along the flat-ironed east face of the building, a significant addition is attached, which houses 'the assembly rooms.'

The addition serves to create three main spaces: a lecture/theatre hall, a quasi-courtyard workshop assembly space, and meeting/breakout spaces. This volume serves as the public-half of SAVA and aims for architectural outreach.



The School of Architecture and Visual Arts makes extensive use of the John Deere Building, gifted by the City. The warehouse offers several contrasts in considering the school as an extension of the University of Saskatchewan.

The brick, heavy timber, and NLT construction differs from the main campus's characteristic Tyndall and limestones. Its downtown location signals the important message that architectural education should occur within the urban fabric.

Figure 5.18 education: orders and gathering ◦ 03. the assembly rooms ◦ blueprints: John Deere Building second floor plan

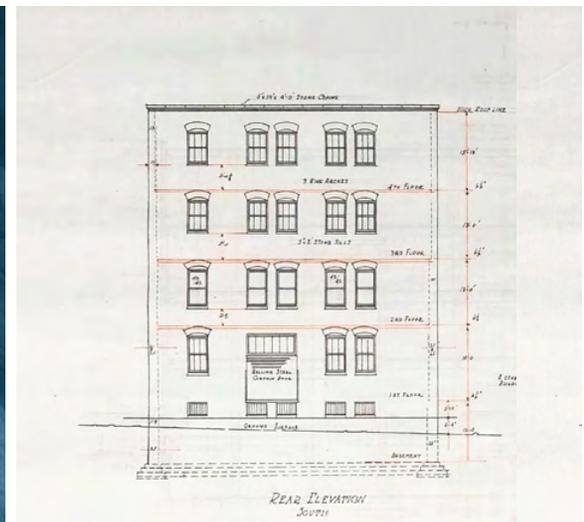
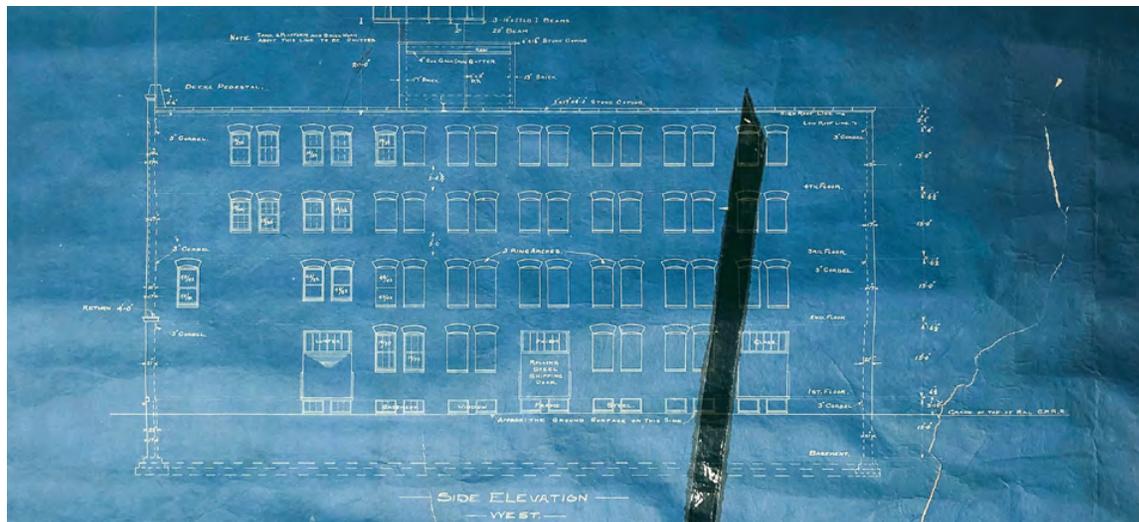
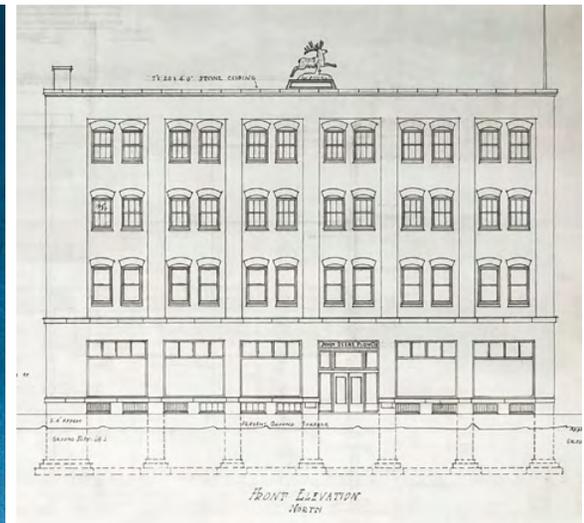
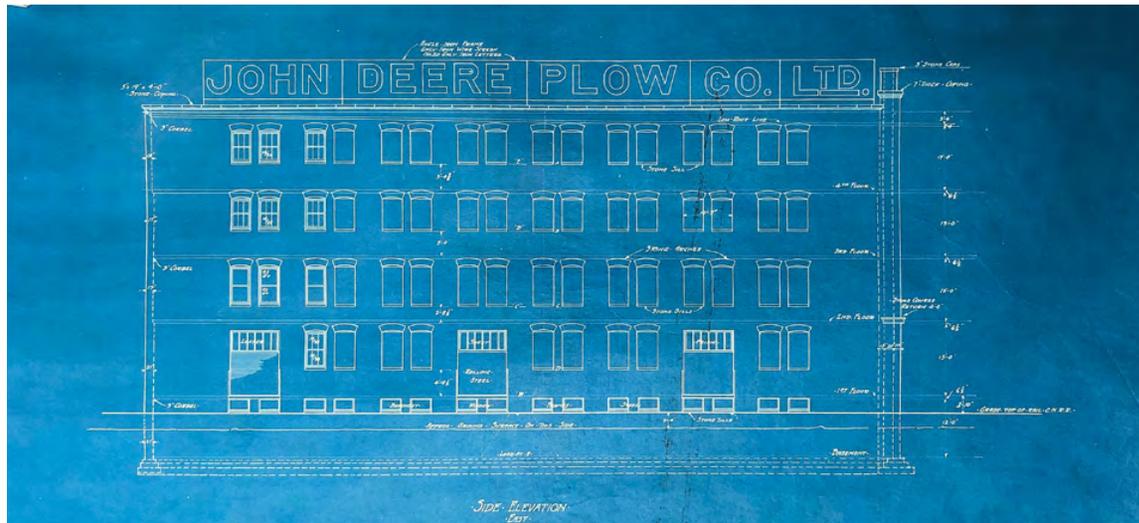


Figure 5.19 the John Deere Building ◦ 03. the assembly rooms ◦ blueprints: exterior elevations

the John Deere Building's flatiron shape communicates its orientation relative to the former CN tracks



This room engages the grid and drawing as forms of constructions. For the John Deere Building, the city's grids both lend it its shape, converging the cardinal grid of the city, and the off-axis grid of the downtown, which radiates from the former CN line.

Saskatchewan Wheat Pool logo on grain elevator adjacent to Robin Hood Flour Mill



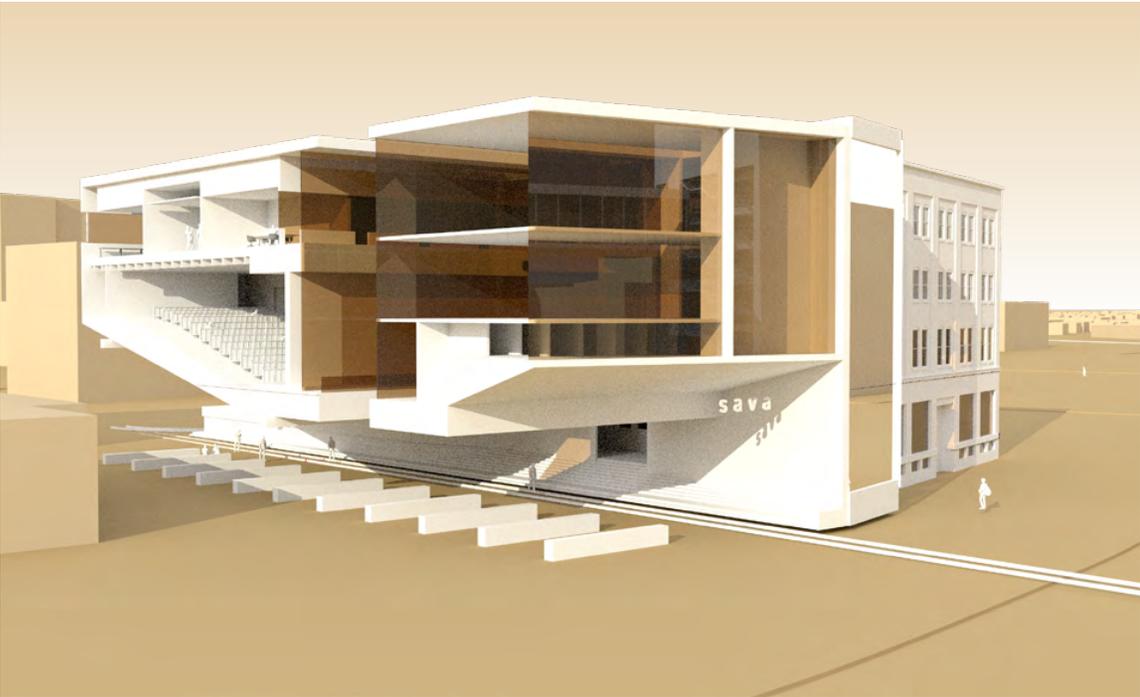
signage outside of the University of Saskatchewan's main campus buildings



Another form, the stretched hexagon, is a ubiquitous Saskatchewan shape once found on a vast number of grain elevators across the province, which reoccurs in the University's building signage.

Figure 5.20 on grids and drawing ◦ 03. the assembly rooms ◦ references: (a) the city's grids; (b) stretched hexagon shape

In the spirit of the area's industrial roots in manufacturing, this reading room addresses 'assembly.' In one dimension, it concerns the act of making.



The original building houses the design studios on the upper floors and workshops on the ground floor. A large addition, known as the 'assembly rooms,' is named after the spaces traditionally found adjacent workshops. These public-facing spaces spill out of the shops, witnessed by the library and users of Central Yards.

Figure 5.21 assembly as making and the SAVA ◦ 03. the assembly rooms ◦ (a&b) historical references, (c) rendered perspective [assembly room east elevation is cutaway]

The other meaning of 'assembly,' rooted in gathering, is embodied by SAVA's addition, a large volume floating above the CN tracks.

The primary work itself houses a lecture hall and labs. At the same time, the interior and exterior spaces around it and between the original building provide meeting spaces.

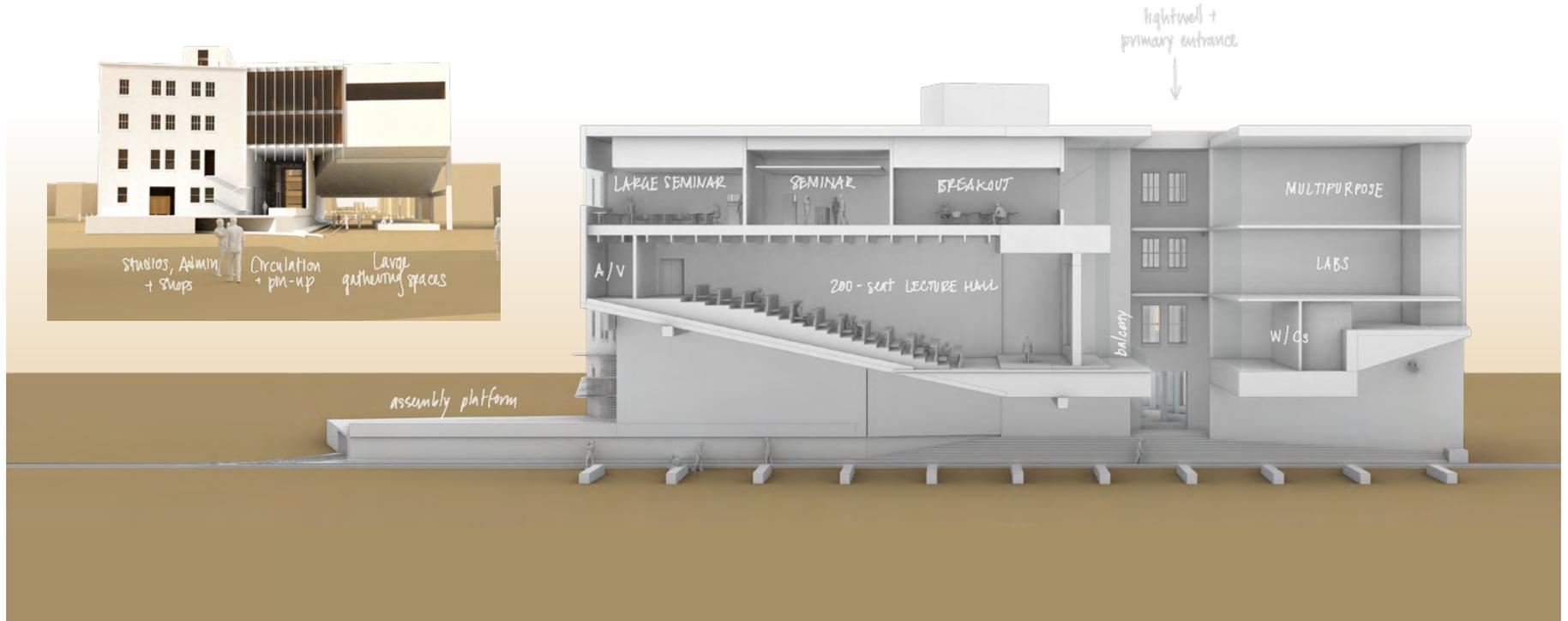


Figure 5.22 assembly as gathering ◦ 03. the assembly rooms ◦ (a) rendered exterior perspective, (b) rendered cutaway section perspective

The SAVA's disciplinary specialization centers around visual representation, heritage studies, and architecture.

As a program, it is spiritually linked to the New Central Library, both gesturing to each other, on opposite sides of the street, united by the CN line. The library provides stories of the city, and the school facilitates representations of these conversations with the public.

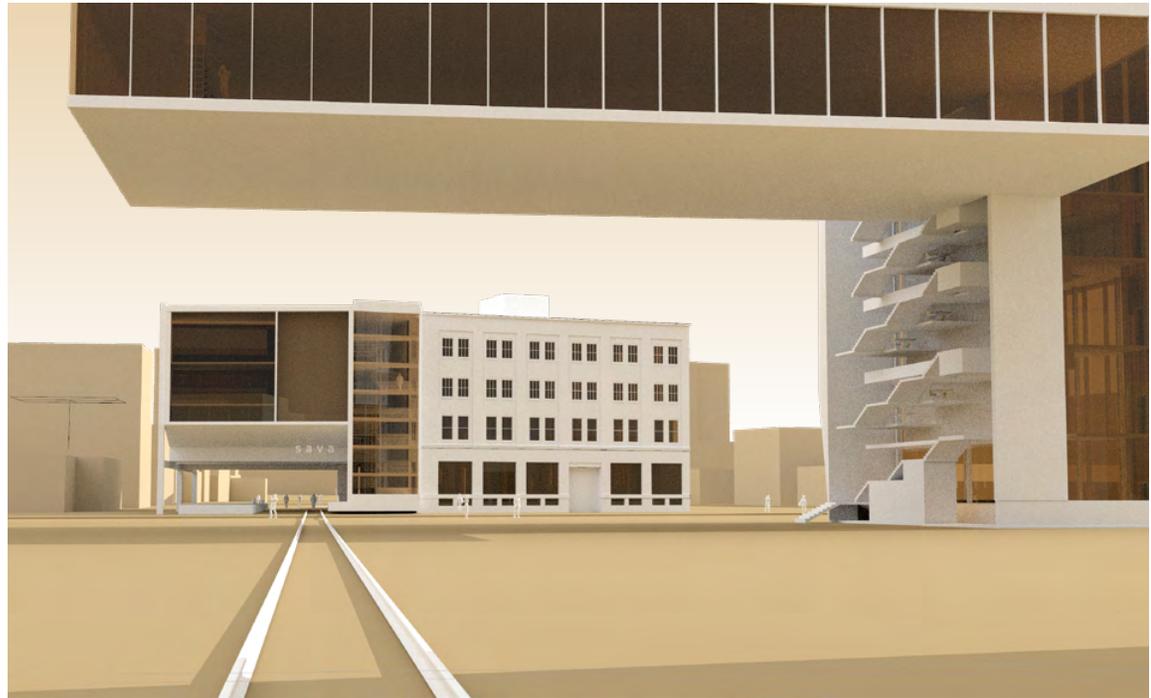
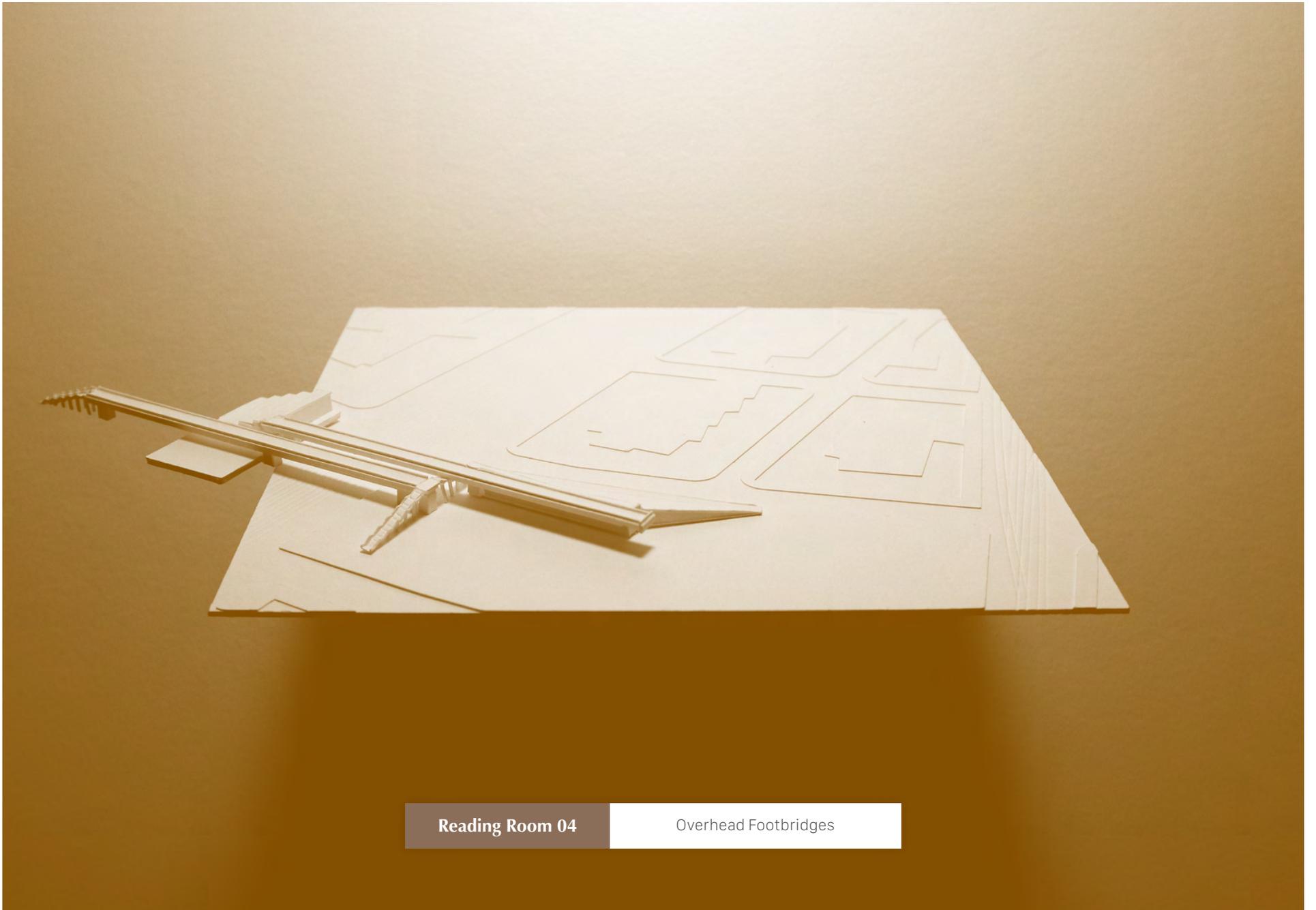
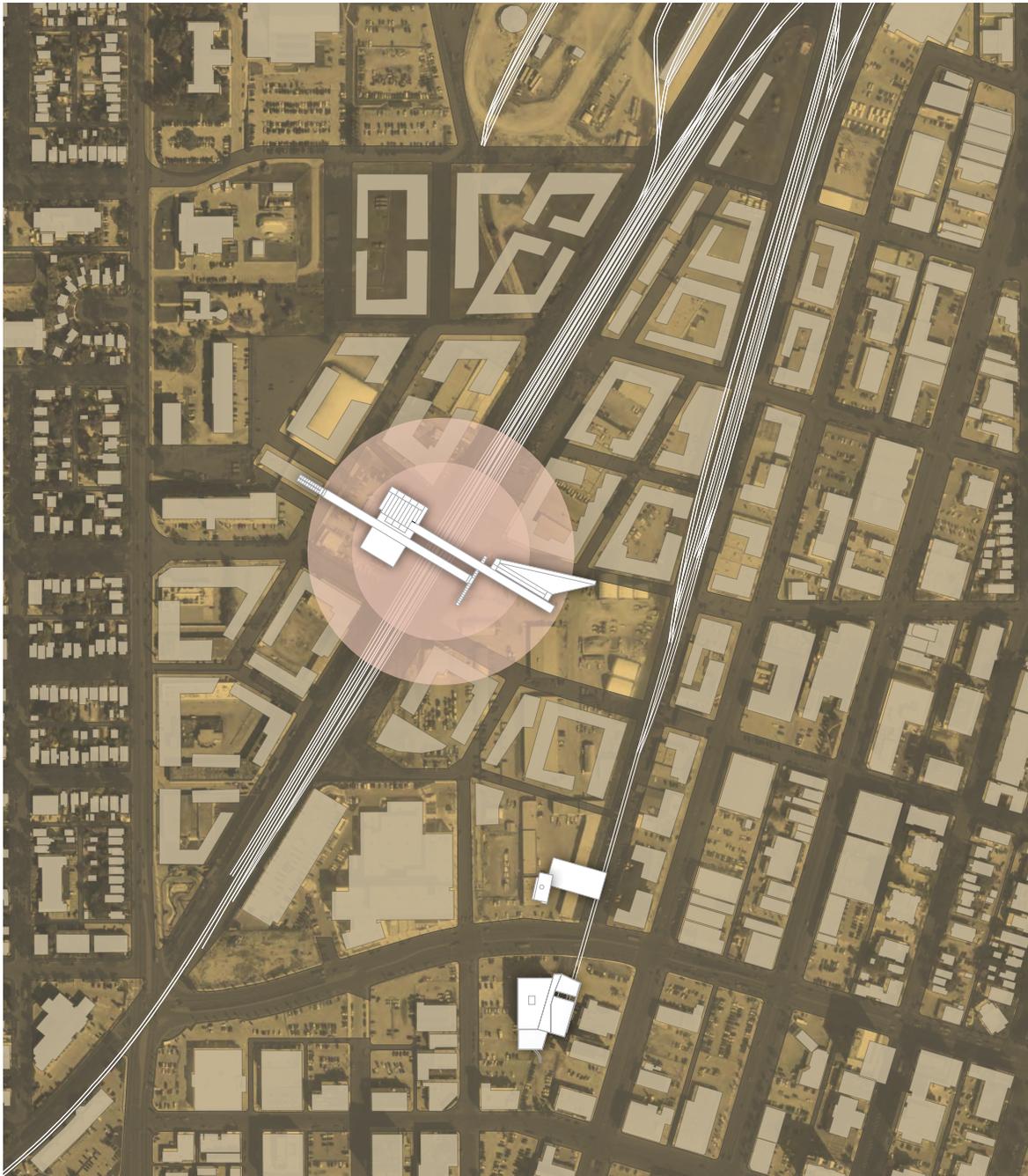


Figure 5.23 *The School of Architecture and Visual Arts and The Central Library* ◦ 03. the assembly rooms ◦ rendered perspective, along the former CN tracks, looking south



Reading Room 04

Overhead Footbridges



Reading Room 04

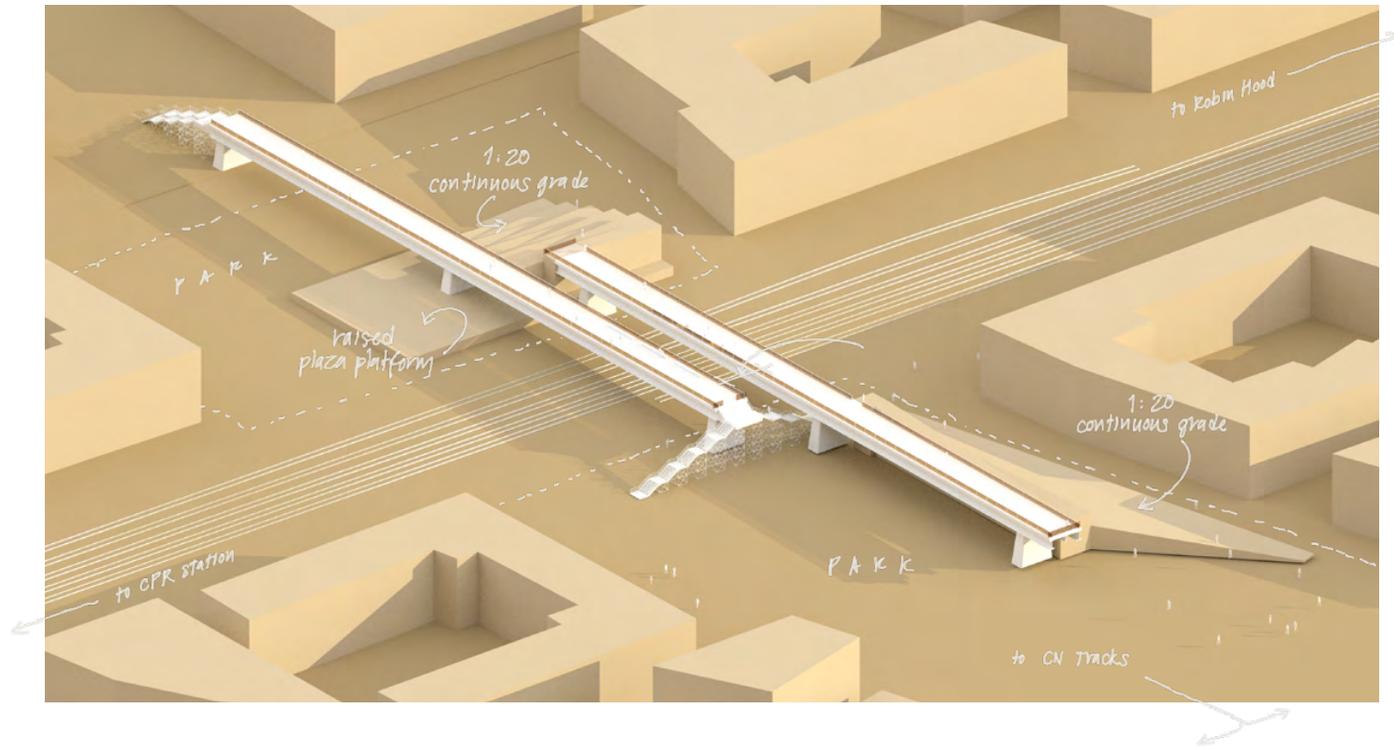
Overhead Footbridges

*spanning over the CPR tracks
of Central Yards*

The footbridge represents a tonal shift in rethinking Central Industrial's relationship to industry, and the ground plane. As the main bridge that crosses over the rail tracks, it is one piece of a broader strategy of elevated walkways for the area, bringing new meaning to Saskatoon's moniker of The City of Bridges.

Past structures directly inspire the footbridge design. For Central Industrial, the construction of this new crossing represents a shift of thinking from the monumental land bridge initially proposed for the site. Instead, the vision here is in seeing one path as the culmination of interconnected ones.

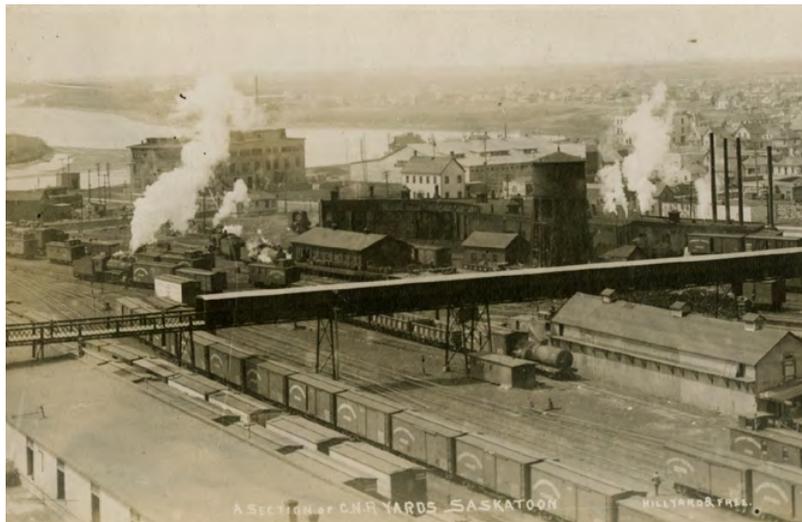
The North Downtown Master Plan's land bridge is proposed as two pedestrian footbridges and discusses plurality.



Whereas the land bridge imagined the space above the rail lines as recreational space, favoured in this scheme is clarity in knowing one is crossing the tracks.

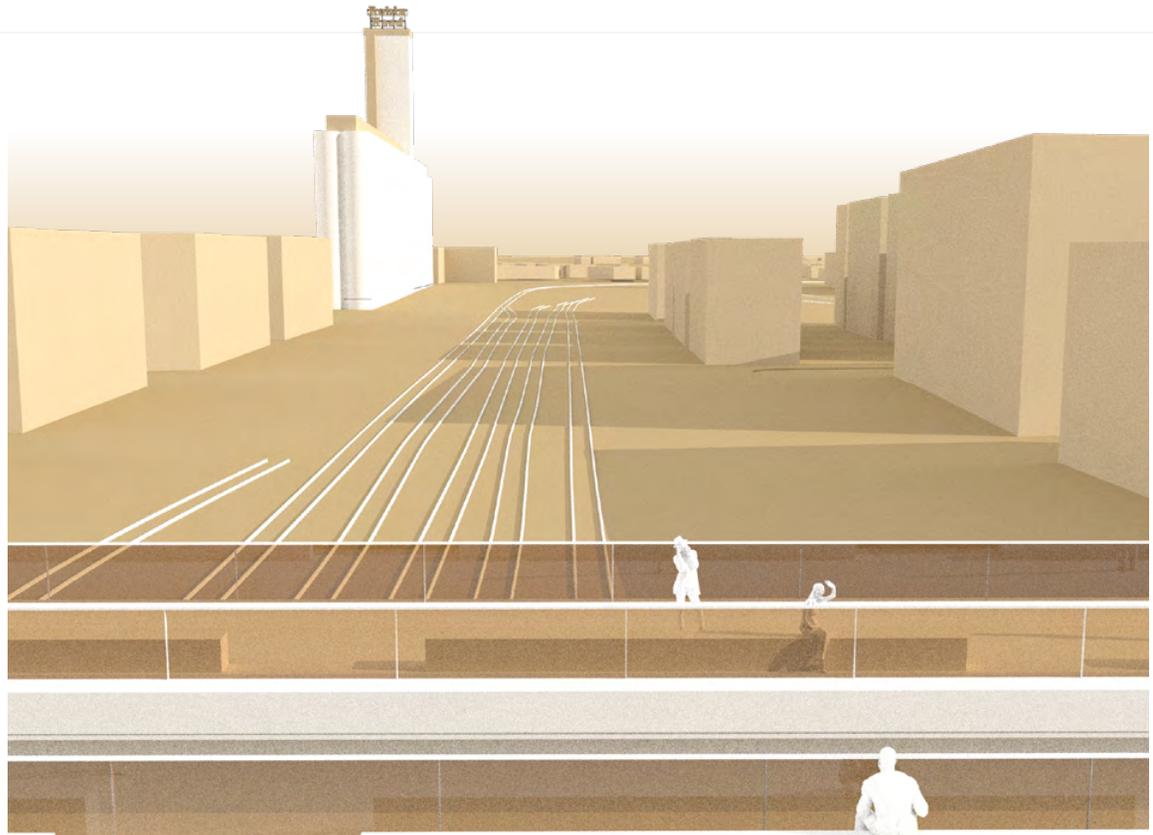
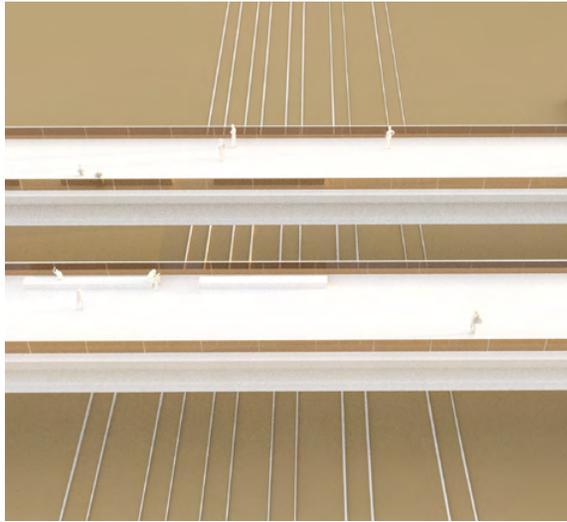
Figure 5.24 outward: on plurality, contrast and planes ◦ 04. overhead footbridges ◦ rendered axonometric

The bridges recall a long-demolished footbridge which once crossed over the CNR/Midtown freight yards.



The southern bridge lifts from the ground plane in a similar manner to the former bridge, contrasting the north bridge's inclines that rise from the park's landscape.

Figure 5.25 *past and present passages* ◦ 04. overhead footbridges ◦ references: the former CNR overhead footbridge



The tracks run beneath each path, looking towards the Robin Hood Mill beyond, or the CPR train station the other way.



Figure 5.26 *contrast as distance* ◦ 04. overhead footbridges ◦ rendered perspectives

The two bridges travel in parallel but never meet, each accessed differently, but discuss the same conversations. The distance created by the two bridges draws focus on what is between, and what is beyond, what is expected, and what is different.

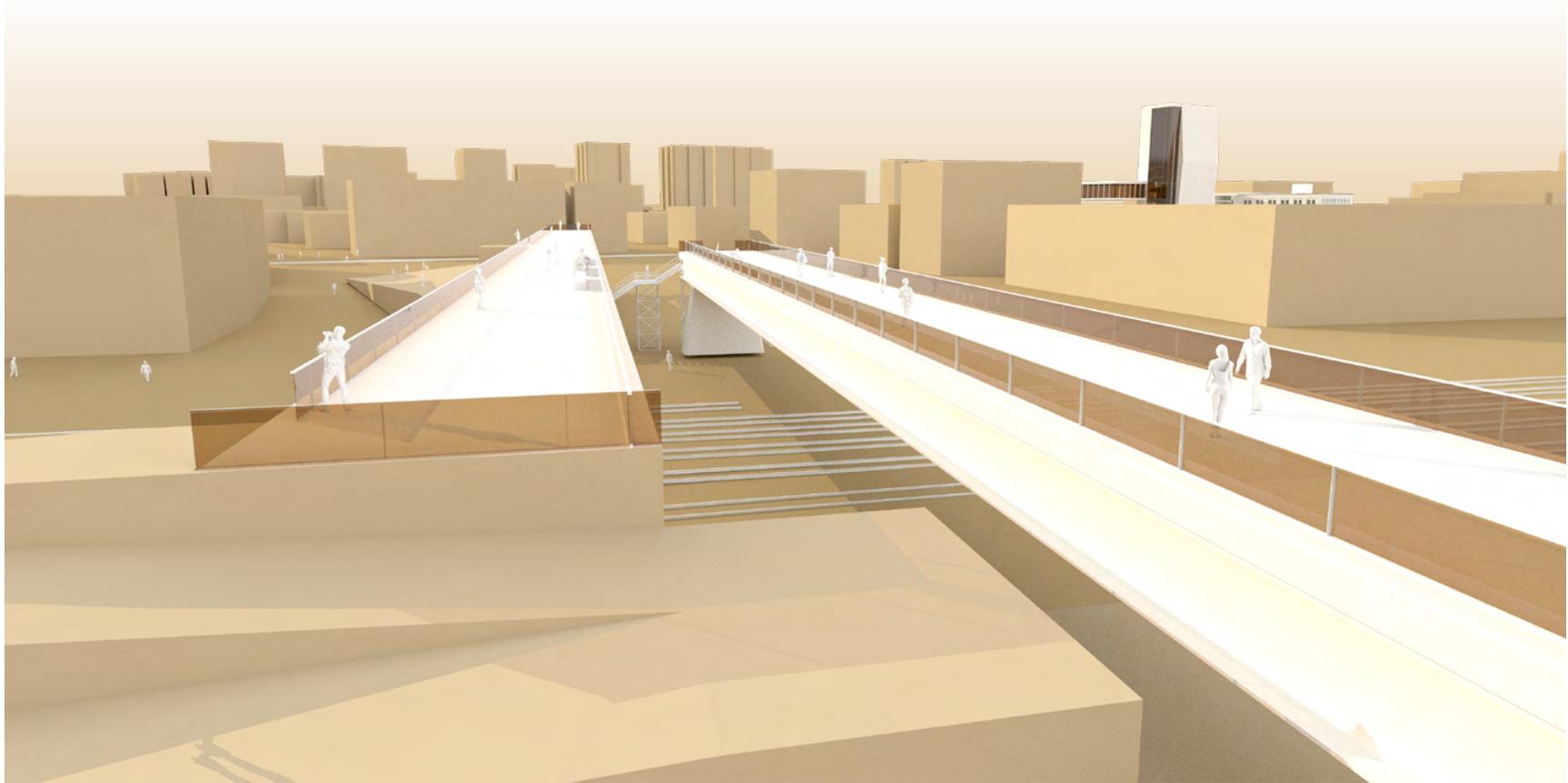
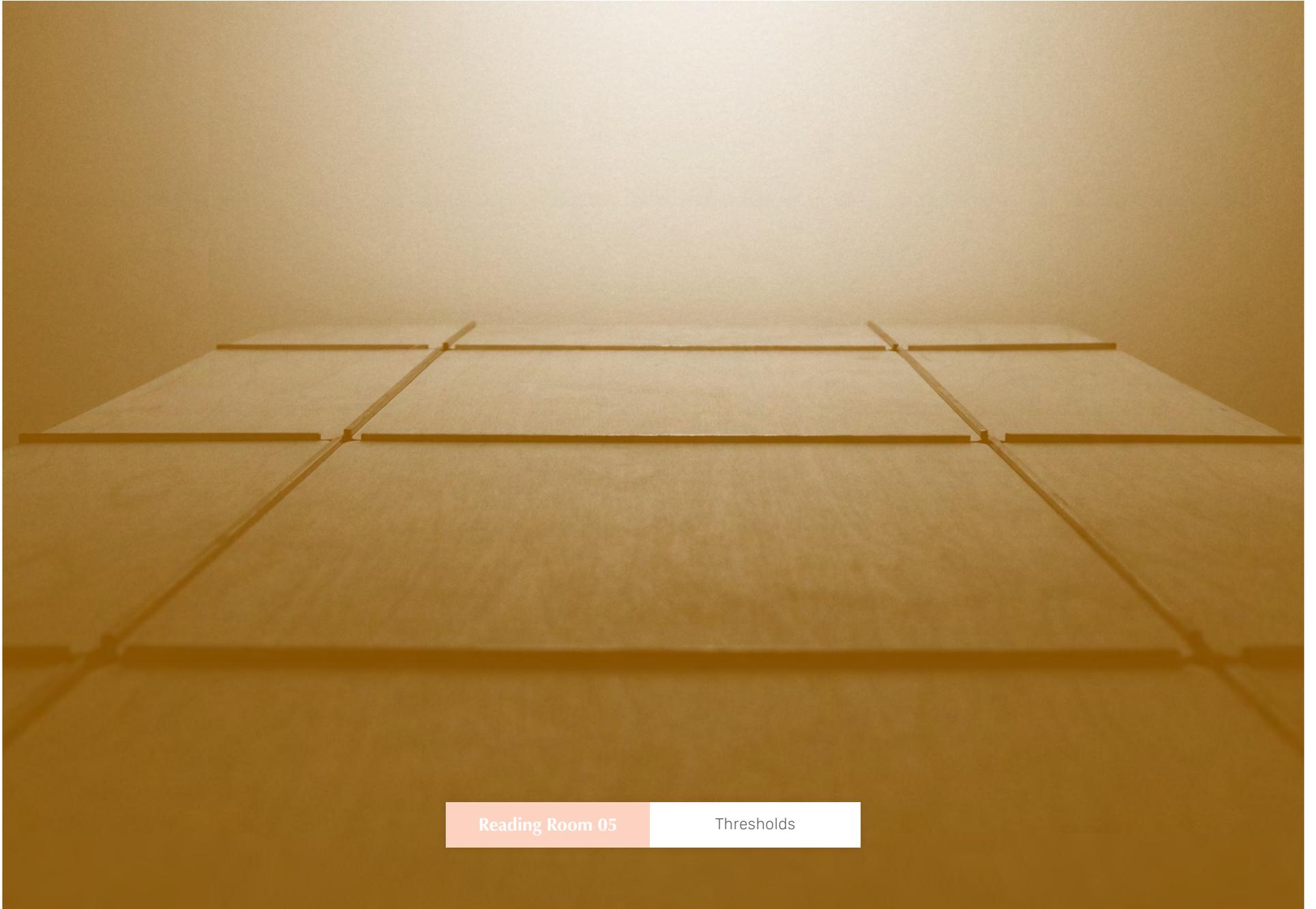
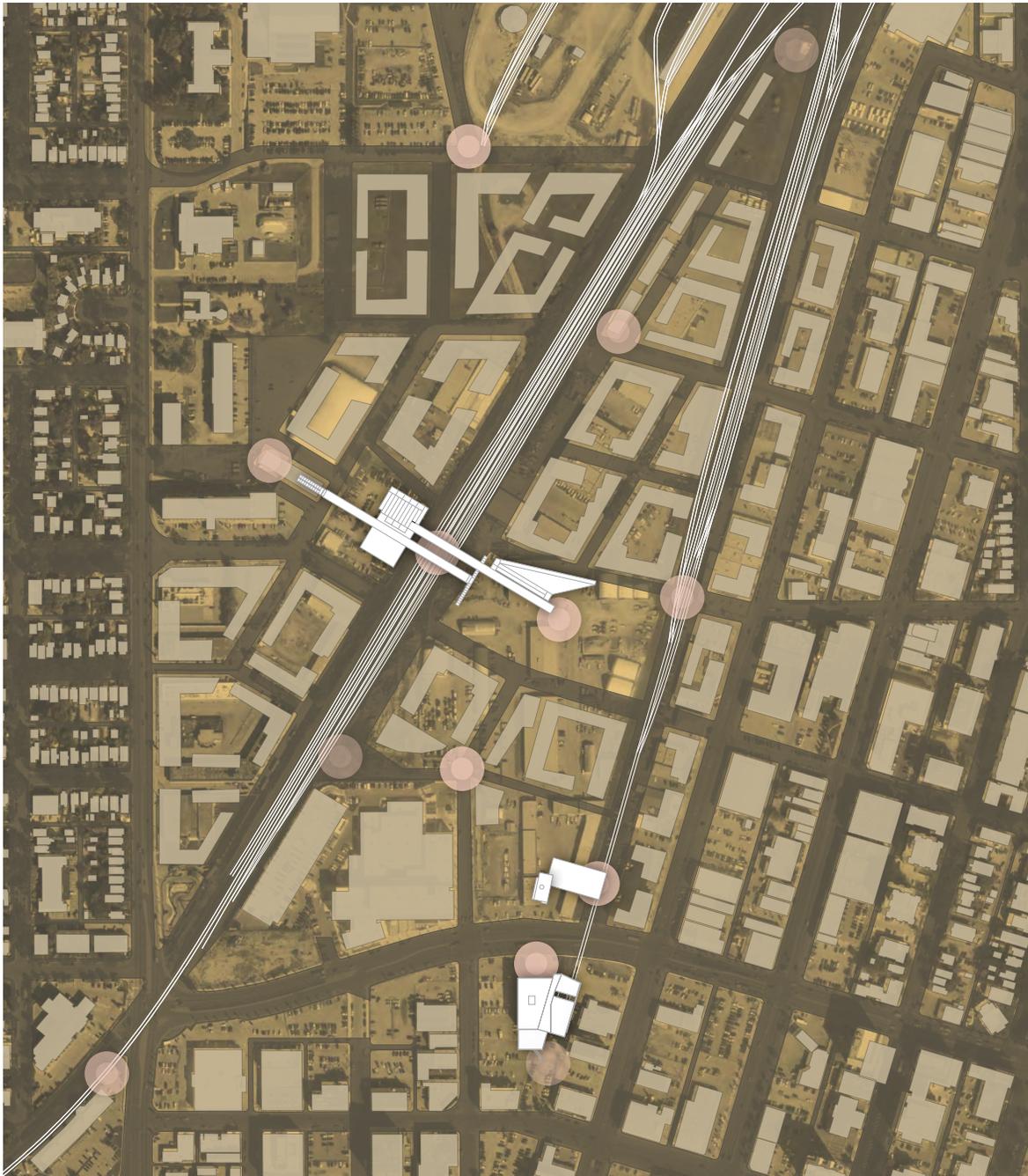


Figure 5.27 *contrast as others* ◦ 04. overhead footbridges ◦ rendered perspective



Reading Room 05

Thresholds



Reading Room 05

Thresholds

*at various points across
Central Yards*



Thresholds refer to the general approach of considering moments of entry, exit, lookout, etc. as moments for consideration and interpretation. Vast and varied, these micro-moments would draw attention to stories or critical points of reference, and our relationships to them.

The spaces evoked here use images (literal and figurative) and spatial awareness etc. to offer a point of reflection to the user. An installed photo might explain a track that leads to nowhere. An entry point might prompt discussions of migration. One's image in a mirror might be a reminder of growing up.

The final reading room has no proposed design.

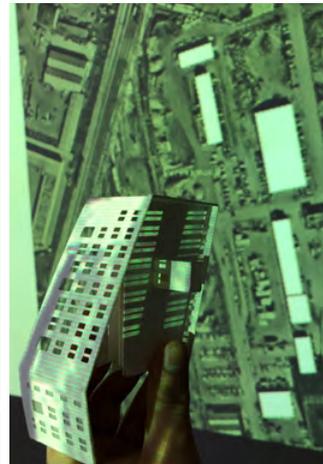
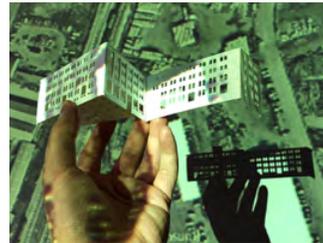
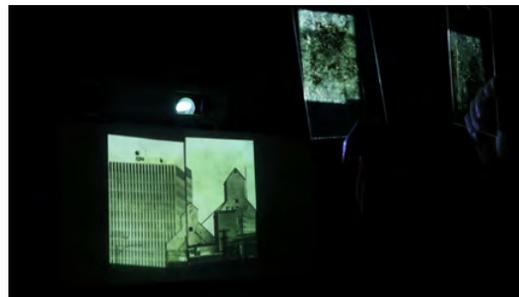
Instead, it is addressed here as personal reflections on the thesis itself, and the capacities of threshold spaces, like entrances, exits, and spaces between, to facilitate dialogue.



The core value of this Reading Room is ‘Inwards.’ Like its conceptual pair, the footbridges, as a vector-type room, this room considers one’s path of travel.

When I first started the thesis, I hoped a particular theme—movement, trains and industry—could discuss the broader meanings of journeys and the individual’s development. The area’s history of rail, in my mind, meant Central Industrial could take on topics of settlement and migration. In looking at all of the historic photos of train stations and people arriving, I thought, “Okay. Immigration. Transportation. The station parallels an airport. Centre of the city. Architectural heritage. Personal heritage. I can make that link.”

However, no proposal ended up feeling right. Still, I think many of the smaller moments of the thesis, like the photo pairings, or the analysis and creation of symbols, are forged in the same spirit of seeing beyond to look within.



A companion project, *'Motion Pictures,'* explored filmic techniques through the projected image and its spatial presence.

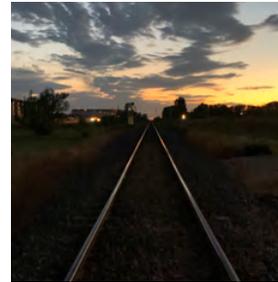
Threshold spaces have the potential to focus on smaller conversations with the site, moments where images, reflectivity, visibility, and position could all work towards informing one's interpretations of place.

Figure 5.29 reflections as self and absence ◦ 05. thresholds ◦ photos taken from graduate architecture+film course final project, 'motion pictures' (citation in bibliography)

Photos occupy the spaces between—the subject and object, the camera and the eye, inside and outside, past and present. Images help us to see, revisit, and reinterpret.

These spaces are small moments of looking. To consider the capacity of what is in between to express the exchanges they balance:

the rhythmic intervals of light and shadow



capturing the sky in the ground

a dialogue created by a window

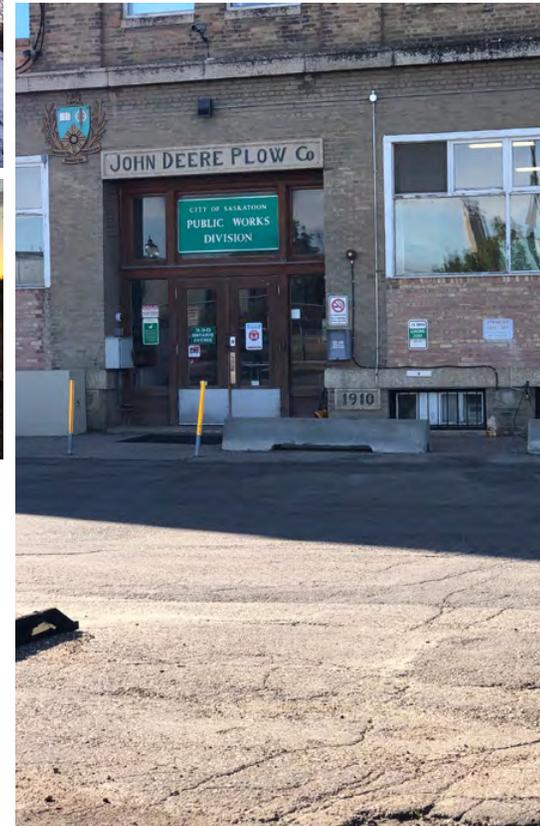


Figure 5.30 snapshots and the in between ◦ 05. thresholds ◦ some scenes of Saskatoon

This final room, thresholds, seeks to illuminate the exchanges of seeing, of noticing, and of reading.

It hopes that moments of a simpler scale, like a connection to an archival photo, the mindfulness of passing through a gate, or the reflection of a darkened window, allows us to do just that—to reflect. To be aware. And to consider our relationships with what is around us.



Figure 5.31 *reflections as patterns and seeing* ◦ 05. thresholds ◦ a reflection through the glass, preparing thesis defence backdrop

Afterword

In reflecting over the year's work, for me, what differentiates space from place is its ability to be conversant and resonant. Architecture is best when it is participatory and revelatory.

It has been ten years since moving away from Saskatoon to learn about the built environment and only three years since starting to supplement that through the study of conservation. Likely for these reasons, I gravitate towards the library and the architecture school as agents in expressing understandings of the city.

As a product of local analysis, this thesis wishes for this vital moment in Central Industrial's history to be an opportunity to critically examine how the built environment expresses the accounts of the city and its people—here. Yes, the site is not conventionally charming. Yes, the rail lines have been mostly pulled up. Yes, the site could probably accommodate a stadium. But to neglect to design for and amplify the site's existing assets and character is to overlook Central Industrial's ability

to meaningfully call attention to discussions that allow Saskatonians to discover connections to their city's stories and heritage.

As a broader body of research, this thesis hopes to have illustrated that places are resonant when the user, in some way, identifies with the site, co-authoring meaning. Symbols, such as the Central Yards emblem, serve as vessels to help us to cultivate knowledge. Sentinels, or social infrastructures like the library, serve to facilitate experiences that give meaning to space. We become attached—stewards of a site as we learn to appreciate how space becomes *ours*, nurturing a new understanding of our relationship to place. Connections to place are cultivated over time. Interpretations of place, expressed here as the Reading Rooms—function as coordinated waypoints where design, public encounters, and a statement of the site's significance meet.

Post-defense, and reflections —

After deciding to extend the time working on this thesis over the summer term, it was defended virtually on a Wednesday morning, September 9th, 2020. The circumstances brought on by COVID-19 allowed me to spend the final months of the thesis working in (and defending from) Saskatoon. This document's writing, particularly in the latter half of explaining designs, would have been of a much different tone had it been written in Ottawa.

I had not previously considered the strangeness of designing from afar.

In July, when I found myself in Saskatoon, the designs were mostly fully-formed. Walking the site with (fully)-realized imaginings of what and where the spaces would be emphasized the scheme and the site's differences. This was for the better.

For example, the two vector Reading Rooms, the Footbridges and Thresholds, were less

conceptually entwined. Much of the discussions addressing distance/closeness came from being in the city. The choice to leave *Thresholds* without a 'design' developed from the frequent pauses for photographs during bike rides. Realized were that certain qualities of the site could only ever be engaged by explicitly calibrating an installation's response to the immediate surroundings. So instead, the book's design, particularly in the latter half, became a way to discuss and evoke the ideas. To force the initial treatment would be unsatisfying as an expression on paper without one's lived-in understanding of place.

That might be one of the year's most important lessons and an admitted shortcoming of the work's proposals. Interpretation is fundamentally tied to experience, and at best, approaches and methodologies in this realm enrich understanding but need the user's necessary agency. I still maintain that Central Industrial can be a site of rich critical engagement—but that opinion comes from a second-generation immigrant's

perspective distanced from the history of the city's early histories. My capacity to identify, 'define,' and design for a place I do not know is upheld by the (for lack of better words) freedom facilitated by my detachment. At the very least is that I see my responsibility as an environmental designer with a seriousness, wishing to make the interpretation of heritage more accessible by parsing through the familiar territories in thematic overlaps and the public's relationships.

A topic that arose out of the thesis defence asked who the work is for. As I have been thinking of that question, a quote from an article I read early on but only revisited lately comes to mind. Archaeologist Neil Silberman says:

"[P]ublic interpretation can be an activity where all [the complex ideations of socio-cultural life, and] distinct modes of cognition

are encouraged to be openly expressed and reveal themselves to each other, each enriching all the others with unexpected understandings and insights about the significance and value of heritage. [... I would suggest that we look] to consider heritage interpretation to be a profoundly important *public activity*."¹

The thesis' original research question was: *can thoughtful heritage interpretation create better stewards for the conservation of the built environment?* That question is truthfully framed rhetorically and presented as if my thesis would answer it affirmatively, but I believe now that the answer is actually *no*. There is an essential word that Silberman uses that I know now that I have underestimated—*activity*. Heritage interpretation is not a topic or a discipline but an *act*. It requires active engagement on all sides—the site, the

1 Neil A. Silberman, "Heritage Interpretation as Public Discourse Towards a New Paradigm," in *Understanding Heritage*, ed. Marie-Theres Albert, Roland Bernecker, and Britta Rudolff (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 7, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110308389.21>.

community, its designers—to want, expect, and make better places.

For the citizen, this thesis asks for your participation in interpreting the city. For the architect, it asks that you listen to the site and the stories told of it. For designers and decision-makers, generally, it asks that you look for common overlaps of your processes.

For me, what this thesis has demonstrated is that theory and practice must always be working alongside one another. Where I see room for future development of this work is in informing ways that seek not to create richer spaces, but to recognize the richness first. Only then can we hope to be better stewards of our environments: to be more in touch with how sites reflect understandings of it, and us.

In matters of interpretation, ideas require action, and to be engaged requires activity, and so, I will continue to practice.

—



Abbreviations

CLT

cross-laminated timber

CNR

Canadian National Railway

CPR

Canadian Pacific Railway

CoS

City of Saskatoon (municipal government)

GTP

Grand Trunk Pacific

P+W

Perkins + Will

QLLS

Qu'appelle, Long Lake and Saskatchewan (bridge)

SAVA

School of Architecture and Visual Arts

SOS

statement of significance

SPL

Saskatoon Public Library

UofS

University of Saskatchewan

Glossary

Co-creation

A relationship between a work and a reader/user that is sensitive to the reader's agency in interpretation, or the reception of the work. Borrowed from Peter Mendelsund.

Emblems

A distinctive insignia that represents a people, ideals, etc. Not dissimilar to a logo, but different in that an emblem arises from values which are to be communicated, as opposed to a logo which typically places stronger emphasis on aesthetic, marketing, or communicative functions.

Graphic Design

In the broadest senses, the use of graphic or visual language to communicate a message. Encompasses the preferred sub-disciplinary aspect in this text of, visual identity.

Glyph

A simple, abstract figure, mark, etc. that is elemental in its purposes of simply facilitating language and

communication. Can become a *symbol*, or *emblem*, when meaning is attached to it.

Heritage Interpretation

From Silberman's 'Heritage Interpretation as Public Discourse': "the constellation of *communicative techniques* that attempt to convey the public values, significance, and meanings of a heritage site, object, or tradition—is central to understanding the wider characteristics of heritage itself." (p.1, emphasis added)

Local History

The histories and stories of a place that centers around a local community's people and surroundings.

Narratology

The study of narrative structures and story structures.

Place Branding

The visual identity (preferred term) of a structure,

site, or place that is crafted to represent that location in visual mediums, often for marketing purposes.

Stewardship

The fostered responsibility to care for a place, based on a feeling of connection or duty.

Symbol

1. An illustration or a *glyph*, that represents values of a thing, or people, and serves as a communication of those ideas. Or,
2. A thing (often in this text, a built form) that similarly serves as a representational device to the previous definition.

Visual Identity

Distinct from place branding, a visual identity is more closely tied to the techniques and processes of the visual communication and representation of a place. Different from the associations of branding and logos as serving strictly superficial aesthetic and marketing functions.

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Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada — Central Industrial

4.1. GUIDELINES FOR CULTURAL LANDSCAPES, INCLUDING HERITAGE DISTRICTS

	Standards and Guidelines Text	Connection to site/context
4.1.1 Evidence of Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “the features that express or support a past or continuing land use [identified in an SoS]. In the context of these guidelines, land use refers to the human use of the natural environment.” • Includes: activities that significantly or lightly modify aspects of the natural environment into a built environment: fields, pastures, settlements, or land for hunting, trapping, maple syrup harvesting, or fishing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rail and the city’s settlement: Establishment of the rail as an essential early part of the city’s history as having shaped the city’s geography, and to an extent, it’s location as a settlement. • Impact on the city’s growth: Development surrounding the city affected by the city’s growth as a result of industry, commerce, and in turn education.
4.1.3 Land Patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “overall arrangement and interrelationship of the larger-scale aspects of a cultural landscape, whether natural of human-made” • “Historic aerial photography and maps are important tools” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Industrial’s Shape and Spirit: Characterized by the diagonal rail line that splits through the site, and site’s boundaries as dismantled rail yards. • Central Industrial and City: Many of the city’s major arteries are influenced by or are direct consequences of the emanating laying of rail lines and yards. • City and Nation: The railway and it’s role in connecting the city to the nation’s network of lines. • Bridge placement: Connecting both sides of the river through bridges, especially early on, as heavily influenced by rail needs. • 1 mile section: The land’s general adherence to the Dominion Land Survey’s division of Western Canada into a grid of 1 square mile ‘sections.’ CI’s northern boundary is the length of a section, and adherence to the grid echoes the provinces own shape as adhering to the land survey’s sections.
1.1.4 Spatial Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spatial organization refers here to the arrangement of spaces in a cultural landscape.” • “Because buildings and their landscapes were often designed together, it is important to understand and respect their relationships.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diagonals formed by rail lines: The organization and deviation from the city’s N/S grid resultant from the diagonal placement of lines along the site. Surrounding developments emanated in parallel or as a consequence of these lines. • Downtown’s wedge: The rail lines influence on the establishment of Idylwyld and 1st Ave give downtown it’s characteristic wedge-shaped organization. The converging lines meet at the Idylwyld Freeway (former axis of the city’s first bridge). • Idylwyld Drive: Formerly Avenue A, the street follows a N/S section gridline, and forms a strong east-west boundary condition between residential Caswell Hill, and CI’s commercial/retail side. This historically traces the strong line between city’s early residential, and downtown industrial. • Contrasts and relationships with character of surrounding neighbourhoods: Clockwise from the north, the site is bordered by: Kelsey-Woodlawn industrial park (north); historic Woodlawn Cemetary (northeast); North Park residential (northeast); mixed-use neighbourhood City Park (east, and includes Kinsmen Park, City Hospital, former Mendel Art Gallery); downtown (southeast); former railyards turned downtown (south); mixed-use neighbourhood Riversdale (southwest); and strongly residential Caswell Hill and Mayfair (west). • Central Industrial’s Shape and Spirit (4.1.3) • 1 mile section (4.1.3)

<p>4.1.5 Visual Relationships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “pertain to the visual relationships between an observer and a landscape or landscape feature (a viewscape) or between the relative dimensions of landscape features (scale).” • “A viewscape can include scenes, panoramas, vistas, visual axes and sight lines [...] or chief organizing feature.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robin Hood Sign: The situation of the red [neon] Robin Hood sign atop of the grain elevator on site is a local landmark observable from great distances, particularly at night. Conversely, the sign sits at a major vantagepoint overseeing the rest of the city, as the tallest structure within the vicinity. • Sparse land development: As city yards, the lands are relatively underdeveloped considering its surroundings. This lends a fairly open landscape of light industrial use buildings. • Bridge views: The bridges resulting from the rail create unique viewpoints for the city, as evidenced in the CPR Train Bridge’s pedestrian walkway. • Views along rail lines: The views along the main track, and relative low amounts of adjacent development provide the longest unobstructed view downtown. • Diagonals formed by rail lines (4.1.4)
<p>4.1.6 Circulation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Circulation refers to individual elements that facilitate or direct movement and travel” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dominant industrial presence downtown: Pre-1960s, when both CPR and CNR yards were in use, the yards dominated the character and circulation patterns of the downtown, and served the lack of through-crossings were a bottleneck to circulation. Dating back to 1927, 23rd Street is the sole street to have not been majorly altered which still crosses the wedge today. The former footbridge over the CNR yards roughly follows 20th Street today. • CI circulation patterns: Strongly vehicular traffic and bus routes characterize movement around the perimeter. Pedestrian movement through center of site strongly discouraged. • CI Circulation pockets: Pockets of internalized patterns dotted throughout: Industrial flour mill (north); Saskatchewan Polytechnic School (northeast); Harry Bailey Aquatic Centre (northeast); Municipal yards (east/south); industrial park (east); Police Headquarters (south); Hotels (west). • Rail and the city’s settlement (4.1.1) • Idylwyld Drive (4.1.4) • Diagonals formed by rail lines (4.1.4)
<p>1.1.7 Ecological Features</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “an ecological feature is a natural element, such as a marsh, a pond or a stand of trees, which can be part of a larger ecosystem.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of ecological features: the dominant industrial character and barren character of the area over time. • Contrasts and relationships with character of surrounding neighbourhoods (4.1.4) • Sparse land development (4.1.5)
<p>4.1.8 Vegetation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In defining as CDE, consider: “growth habit, including juvenile or mature form; leaf and bloom; colour and texture; bark; bloom periods; fruit; fragrance; and context.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light vegetation along rail lines: Shrubs and clearings characterize spaces immediately adjacent to rail lines. • Lack of ecological features (4.1.7)
<p>4.1.9 Landforms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “the shape of the Earth’s surface at a particular place [...] When describing a particular landform, whether natural or built, it is important to consider shape, slope, dimensions and geological material” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flatness of CI’s topography: Character of the area is very flat, aside from built structures. The topography likely to have played a role in the area’s selection as historic rail yards, either in relative flatness, or potential. • 1 mile section (4.1.3) • Sparse land development (4.1.5)
<p>4.1.10 Water Features</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Water features can include constructed elements, such as canals, ponds, reflecting pools and fountains as well as natural elements, such as lakes, rivers and streams. Their role may be functional or aesthetic, or a combination of both.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No water features on site • Proximity to the river • Lack of ecological features (4.1.7)

1.1.11 Built Features

• “Built features can include archaeological remains; residential, commercial and institutional buildings; structures, such as dams or bridges; and caribou fences. A building may play a role as a character-defining element in a cultural landscape [...] Modern cultural landscapes, such as campuses and plazas [designed as a cohesive whole [...]] Interpretive panels and directional signs are often added”

- Cultural Landscape
- Robin Hood Mill
- Robin Hood Sign
- CPR rail lines
- Saskatchewan Polytechnic Institute (Campus)
- Harry Bailey Aquatic Centre
- City Yards
- Relationship to Warehouse District and downtown
- Saskatoon Police Headquarters
- **Former built features:** Relocated CPR tracks (now, CoS Public Works yards); Relocated CNR tracks (now, Midtown Plaza site and surroundings); Baseball diamond (now, office buildings)
- **On Register of Historic Places**
 - **Within current CI boundary:** Robin Hood Mill; Normal School (Holding Bylaw); Sgt Hugh Cairns VC Armoury
 - **Within two blocks of CI boundary:** Next of Kin Memorial Avenue (NHS); Larkin House (designated); Great Western Brewing Company; Granite Curling Club; John Deere Warehouse; Tees and Persse Building; Arthur Cook Building (designated); Buckwold Building; Rumely Warehouse (Holding Bylaw); Mackenzie Thayer Warehouse; Fairbanks Morse Warehouse; Sterling Home ; Heinze Institute ; Furnishing's/DeFehr's ; Hudson's Bay Building; Fairbanks Morse Warehouse (designated); Canadian Pacific Railway Station (NHS); Grace Gospel Hall; St. Vincent of Lerins Orthodox Church; Caswell School.

Nara Grid — Central Industrial

	Artistic	Historic	Social	Scientific
Form and Design	Area characterized by no dominant building style , apart from the City Yard structures on site, which are economical, light industrial building types. A rare industrial landscape within the city core, actively in-use.	Site's boundaries and axes are tangible remnants of the city's rail/industrial past and explain downtown's off-axis grid relative to the cardinaly-oriented network of the rest of Saskatoon.	The openness of the area serves as an overflow space for development , servicing the functional requirements of adjacent neighbourhoods .	The layout of the site and situation of tracks as tied to transportation routes , relationship to the river, bridges , and general city planning .
Materials and Substance	Buildings display a mix of historic industrial (grain elevator, warehouses) and educational (Kelsey, Normal School, Armoury) building typologies and styles.	Building forms and materials are an [tame] evolution of former industrial uses and speak to the city's remaining industrial warehouse buildings .	The industrial character and economy of building stock provide cheap spaces for modest retail and commercial functions.	Remaining historic structures evidence the city's industrial heritage and building techniques — building technologies of concrete, masonry, historic timber, and modest sheds.
Use and Function	The industrial character of the site and buildings offer an industrial aesthetic . Warehouse/shed building stock lends itself easily to economical spaces .	The site arguably contains last vestiges of an industrial past that is still ' authentic ' in its continual in-situ activity through to today.	Historically industrial rail yards, today the site shows slow evolution of city's programmatic needs . North Downtown is the last large centrally-located ' undeveloped ' tract of land in the town.	Existing functioning and defunct rail lines reflect early 20th-century industrial technology and reliance/situation of surrounding businesses to former function (e.g., warehouse district; brewery; grain elevator).
Tradition, Techniques, and Workmanship	The modesty of land and robust , the commonness of building stock could facilitate spaces for artistic experimentation and production .	Building stock and function recall the city (and province's) long association as an agricultural centre .	Interpretive opportunities to connect with past themes of agriculture, industry, and immigration tied to the history of the city's railway heritage.	Industries of agriculture and transportation evidenced in the railway and its evolution.
Location and Setting	Low-rise structures and openness of the landscape provide strong sightlines to the rest of the city. Conversely, the Robin Hood mills sign is a prominent landmark set in the sky visible from afar .	Historically, the rail yards created a long-time boundary and bottleneck (low number of streets crossed the CPR and CNR yards) to the downtown coming from the west. The evolution of both yards speak to the mid-century push of North American cities to move railyards out of the core .	A number of different neighbourhood functions bound the site and is a transition zone : mixed-use commercial and residential (east); downtown central business district (south); residential (west); industrial park and cemetery (north).	Location of tracks within the area and their in/outgoing routes are tied economics, trade and distribution outside of the city. Urban studies could be investigated as to their long-term effects on the city's planning and compared with other similar municipalities.
Spirit and Feeling	Active rail line and related nearby historic buildings pose opportunities for site animation and interpretation of history.	Recalls an age tied to historic agricultural, transport, and rail industry . Grid and character of downtown a byproduct of inner-city presence.	While the actual city yards are closed to the public , its presence and industrial park character have enabled retail and commercial uses.	As a relative blank-slate, development of the area could serve as an incubator for businesses, educational uses , etc. Already there are seeds in Kelsey Campus, adaptive re-use projects, Architecture School, etc.



Precedent: New Canadian Architecture School
McEwan School of Architecture

LGA Architectural Partners
 Laurentian University, Sudbury, 2018

The SAVA Senate presentation sites the facilities of the new School of Architecture opened at Laurentian in 2013 as a contemporary point of reference.¹ There are a surprising amount of similarities in site conditions to Central Industrial, but whereas Laurentian's curriculum focuses on design-build,² Saskatchewan's will concern interpretation, representation and heritage.

Understanding Like the John Deere Building, McEwan is directly adjacent to Sudbury's centrally-located CP tracks (Figure C-01c), and involves adaptive re-use of industrial-related buildings. As the first new Canadian architecture school in 40

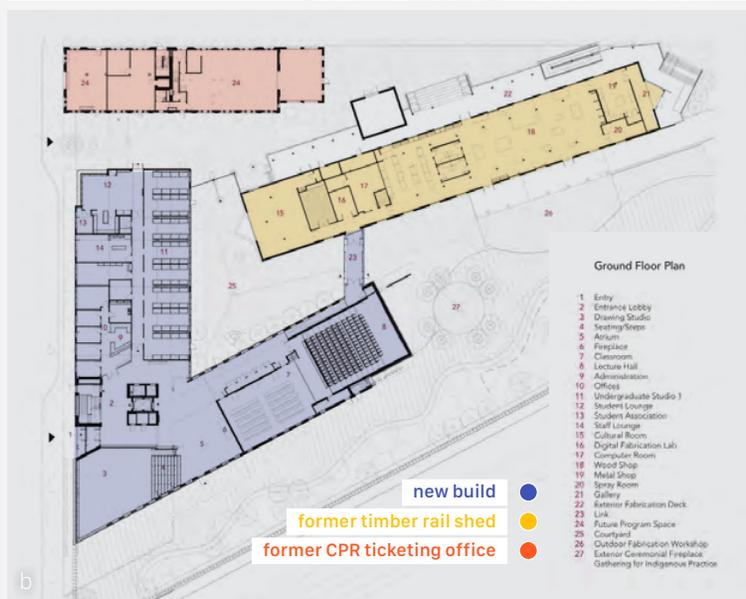


Figure C-01



Figure C-02

years,³ a school for Saskatoon would naturally look to Laurentian for lessons in what new conversations Saskatchewan's school could bring to the discipline.

Valuing Laurentian's program was designed to "realize a school that would be responsive to this place," one reflecting the remoteness of its location, its tri-cultural English, French and Indigenous communities, a focus on sustainability and building, and as a stimulus for downtown Sudbury (Figure C-01a: the sunken 'crit pit' allows street-level pedestrians to witness goings-on).⁴ The school emphasizes its "northern"⁵ identity, and focus on the tectonic dimensions of architecture. SAVA, as a counterpoint reflected in 'Visual Arts,' could highlight the representational dimensions.

Attachment McEwan is similarly situated away from the main campus, and the Architecture School sees itself as its own campus, designed

like a nucleus with its four huddled buildings, and functioning as one, contributing to the vibrancy of the area. It's two repurposed industrial buildings house its fabrication lab (Figure C-02b is in the former rail shed), and an eventual "resource to the community as an architectural storefront."⁶ SAVA echoes many of the same ambitions in interfacing with the community, though its relationship with Central Yards and the Library will encourage making to be responsive to the city.

Appreciation As a design, the McEwan School reflects the principles of its programming. As an industrial adaptive re-use project, the project demonstrates techniques in integrating old and new, working with Sudbury's built fabric (Figure Figure C-01). The extensive use of cross-laminated timber throughout lends a cohesive material palette that gives the school its own identity, and reflects wood as a principal historic building material.⁷



Figure C-03

Appendix C

Precedent: Canadian Library
Halifax Central Library

Schmidt Hammer Lassen
 Halifax, Nova Scotia, 2014

Like SAVA, SPL similarly references another contemporary project. The publicly available communications material seems to make heavy use of the Halifax library,⁹ and while its seen as a successful project,¹⁰ I suggest that contextually, setting sights towards other libraries over emphasizes what a library is programmatically, overlooks how contextual sensitivities may play a more important role in the project's resonance.

Understanding The much-celebrated Halifax library is often praised for its status as a community gathering hub, and its 'Halifax Living Room' that cantilevers as the top floor of the building.¹¹ For



Figure C-04

SPL's new library, Halifax's is a natural role model as a successful modern, civic space. KPMG's business case cites, "the opening of the new central library was the pivotal point when the new Halifax announced itself."¹²

Valuing But, an important lesson in moving forward with design, is to what themes and values Saskatoon's library speaks to. Halifax's library sits on a historic axis, which orients the top floor of the building,¹³ one of many axes that informs the shape of the library (Figure C-03a&b).¹⁴ There is a vital relationship between the 'Living Room' and the city, and a simple replication of that space (arguably suggested by how Figure C-04a is found in SPL materials) may set an expectation that does not resonate locally.

Attachment Morten Schmidt makes note of Halifax's library as being tied to maritime heritage,

the historic neighbourhoods which surround the site, and how the design responds to these.¹⁵ The building's massing interprets the city. Saskatoon must similarly focus on the role context plays in having a building that feels that it is *of* the city, reflecting its values and character.

Appreciation The Halifax Central Library value as a precedent is in seeing how its design is expressive of, and responsive to its context. The relationship a building establishes with the city, and vice versa must not be overlooked as a critical opportunity. The values at the heart of libraries must be reflected in the design's capacity to not only be a great, democratizing public space but to also share in the public's knowledge and stories.



Precedent: Architecture (Spatial & Social)

Patkau Architects' 2005 Libraries

Winnipeg Millenium Library Addition, 2005

La Grande Bibliotheque, Montreal, 2005

As a compliment to the Halifax Central Library, I offer Patkau Architects' concurrent designs for Winnipeg's Millennium Library addition¹⁶ and Montreal's La Grande Bibliothèque du Québec¹⁷ as closer contextually. Focus will be drawn to each library's public study/reading areas, expressive circulation spaces, and the way each interfaces with the public realm and the surrounding cityscape.

It should be noted that the remaining precedents are examples which I have personal connections to and have chosen, whereas the previous two have been cited in planning documents.

Figure C-05

Appendix C



Figure C-06

Understanding Both libraries were designed and constructed around the same time, and are similar in their sensibilities towards the public's inhabitation of the spaces. Formally, the circulation spaces of these two projects, I argue, center around the circulation of information and the individual as their commentary on what lends dynamism to the library. Reading Room 02 of the thesis, the Exchange Tower, draws influence from similar ideas of circulation and space.

Valuing Focus will be drawn to the central staircases of Halifax, Winnipeg, and Montreal's libraries. The Halifax Library's grand staircase is a monumental feature, visually dominating the space of the image (Figure C-03d). Patkau's stairs, by contrast, are simply planes that facilitate travel, with Winnipeg's design being more about the study carrels that branch off to the side (Figure C-05b and C-06a), and Montreal's design is about the visible movement of people (and elevator cars) in the large atrium space (Figure C-05d). Patkau's libraries emphasize the social nature of circulation spaces in their approach.

Attachment In a scheme for Central Yards, I see the Patkau schemes as lending nicely into the design of the Exchange Tower Reading Room. Its identity can be tied to ideas of circulation and exchange—values rooted in the agricultural and industrial character of the site. The Robin Hood Flour Mill serves as a potent counterpoint to a design, as the monument's name is literary, and as a kind of elevator, can be interpreted in modern contexts of what an elevator and its mechanisms mean for a library.

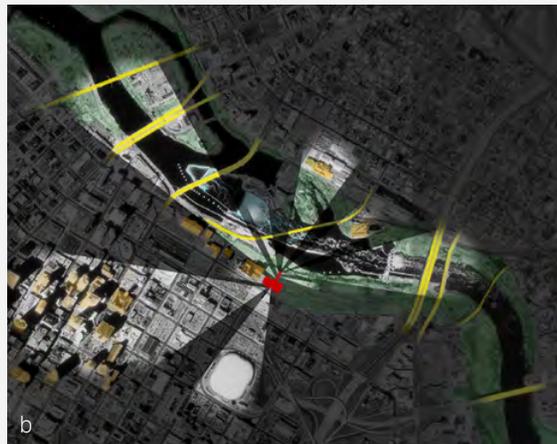
Appreciation In a scheme for Central Yards, I see the Patkau schemes as lending nicely into the design of the Exchange Tower Reading Room. Its identity can be tied to ideas of circulation and exchange—values rooted in the agricultural and industrial character of the site. The Robin Hood Flour Mill serves as a potent counterpoint to a design, as the monument's name is literary, and as a kind of elevator, can be interpreted in modern contexts of what an elevator and its mechanisms mean for a library.



Precedent: Site Interpretation in Architecture

Guthrie Theatre

Jean Nouvel
Minneapolis, 2006



Jean Nouvel's *Guthrie Theatre*¹⁸ is perhaps the least recognizable as a project that informs the thesis, but it finds itself on this list for good reason. I visited the project in my undergraduate degree, and the project is striking in its many peculiarities. Importantly is that it exists in similar site symbolic site conditions as Central Industrial, and being a project related to theatre, is uniquely expressive in its interpretation and translation of the city.

Understanding What makes this project interesting to me as a point of reference is what it makes of the intersections of its program, a performing arts theatre, and its surrounding

Figure C-07

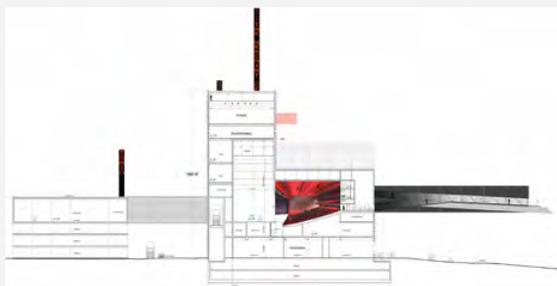
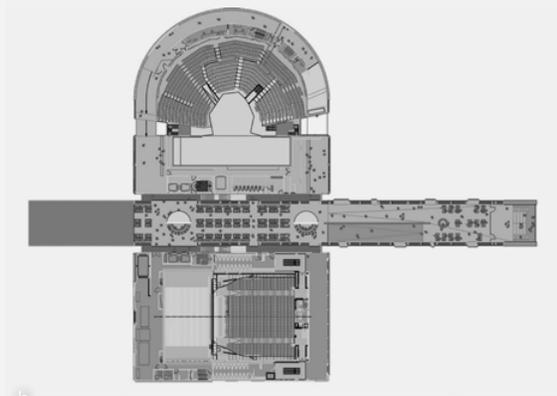


Figure C-08

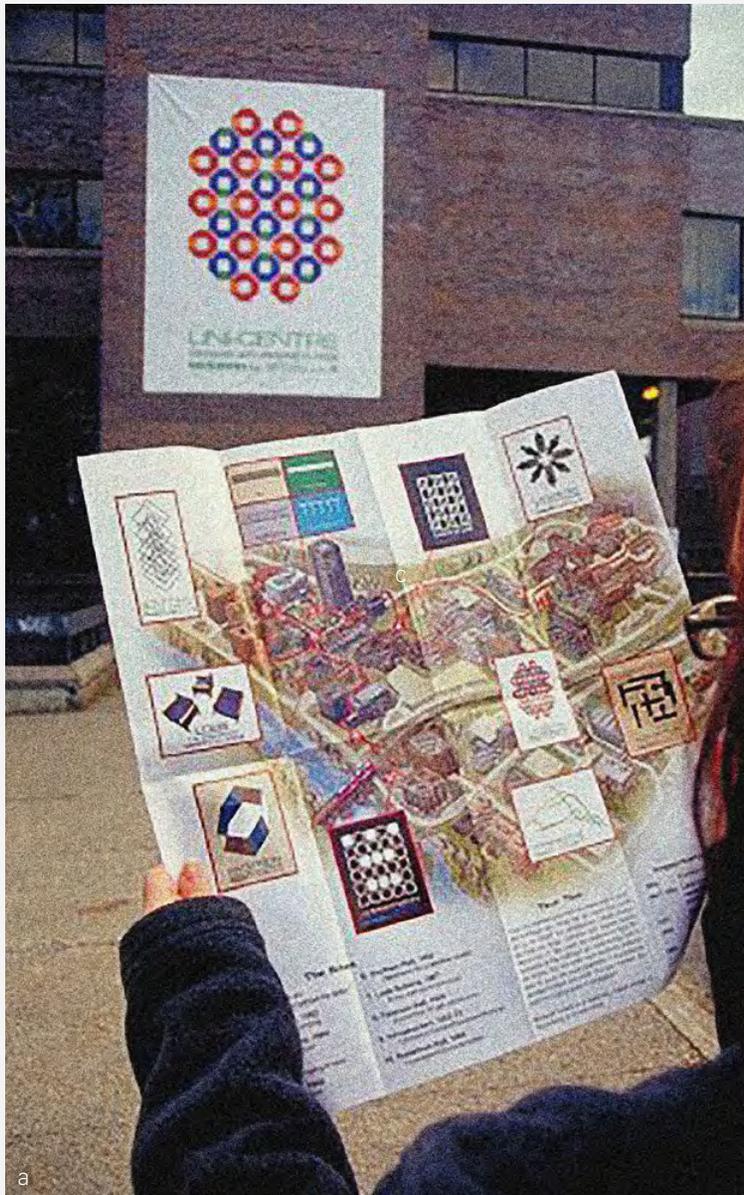
context. There are similar characteristics of the site that share overlap with Central Industrial, and as a precedent, there is a value in seeing what the intersections of the library and architecture school mean for a site with similar industrial functions and legacies.

Valuing The building's identity advances the question of what architecture can say of the city, and the programmatic influence of the theatre naturally lends to ideas of performance, viewing, framing, and sightlines. Within the confines of the building, it sees the city in an almost theatrical way. This is perhaps most expressed in the dramatic cantilever of the building, which propels the occupant out into the city (Figure C-07d, Figure C-08c). Simple framing techniques (Figure C-07c & C-07e) dramatizes one's perspective of the city, so that it might be viewed in a new light.

Attachment As a model of what architecture can do to advance one's attachment to place, I imagine that a local, prior to having the Guthrie built, might have been familiar with the site. But,

through the way Nouvel's design reinterprets and plays with the assets of the city, I imagine that a local's relationship with their city would change. The new filter of interpretation offered by the theatre recontextualizes one's understanding of that place. This is further amplified by the juxtapositions present in the scheme's relationship to the site, putting old/new, industry/theatre, and viewers/viewing into dialogue.

Appreciation Approaching Central Yards, Nouvel's Guthrie provides a departure point to start to imagine how a building can elevate the perceived stature of the buildings around it. The school and the library of the scheme already provide intriguing dimensions about how to view the city. If their architectural spaces could convey the sense of wonder or critical engagement that the scheme hopes to comment on, the spaces could be important facilitators of the public's imagination.



Precedent: Graphic Design

Modern U

Adrian Gollner
Carleton University

The trickiest aspect in the thesis project to convey is the role of graphic design, symbols, and emblems, as there is an essential relationship they play in making wayfinding a little more intuitive. Adrian Gollner's work for Carleton University, *Modern U*¹⁹, negotiates the tricky aspects of, fundamentally, 2D design in 3-dimensional space that is meaningfully tied to interpretation, education, and identity.

Understanding The most significant takeaway of the work is its attempts to define value as a graphic symbol. Gollner says of his work, that the progressive ideas of Carleton University's modern campus design were sought to be "conveyed

Figure C-09

Appendix C



Figure C-10

to a contemporary audience through a path of ten large graphics that were set against the architecture and infrastructure of the institution.” As a concept that the thesis design borrows from, Modern U highlights the efficacies of a graphic design-centred secondary layer of meaning that can augment one’s understanding of the Carleton campus (Figure C-09a).

Valuing The aims of the project are direct in that the visible outcomes, the graphics, show a clear relationship between the image and the subject. In drawing inspiration from each of the buildings’ functions, forms, and histories, each of the marks highlights an implicit idea found in each of the buildings. The Mackenzie graphic (Figure C-10a) is clearly derived from the distinctive window pattern, while the Lanark residence represents the value of relationships and interconnectedness (Figure C-10b). Graphics, when clearly designed as a set can communicate difference and similarity, drawing attention to how to read the collection cohesively.

Attachment The graphics, as devices help to draw attention to their landmarks, as well as give them an identity through a tangible or intangible characteristic feature. The map on Figure C-09a draws attention to these graphics as ways of understanding an organization of the campus through the discussions latent in the symbols’ designs. In the thesis design, a graphic system such as this can help to draw attention to certain features so that a user, when imagining specific sites, might think of the site as a place, and as a personal memory.

Appreciation This layer of information enriches the sense of place of the campus, using the symbols and their communication of the site as the result of modern ideas in campus design, that can then be meaningfully attached to one’s understanding of the sites. As one grows to know the campus, the idea of what that symbol speaks to can help guide one’s imagining of that place.

Precedent Endnotes —

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3. ArchDaily, "McEwen School of Architecture / LGA Architectural Partners," *ArchDaily* (blog), June 3, 2018, <https://www.archdaily.com/892818/mcewen-school-of-architecture-lga-architectural-partners>.
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8. Halifax Public Libraries, "Halifax Central Library," Halifax Central Library - Home, accessed July 31, 2020, <http://halifaxcentrallibrary.ca/>.
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13. Architect Morten Schmidt is quoted "The historical axis between the Halifax Citadel and the Halifax Harbour, crossing right through the library site, is reflected in the orientation of the top floor of the building containing the Halifax Living Room, hereby providing not only a unique view but also an understanding of the city's historical heritage," in "Halifax Central Library Features Stacked Glass Boxes," *Dezeen*, December 15, 2014, <https://www.dezeen.com/2014/12/15/halifax-central-library-schmidt-hammer-lassen-architects-fowler-bauld-mitchell-stacked-glass-boxes/>.
14. Halifax Public Libraries, "Halifax Central Library - Final Public Consultation" (Powerpoint Presentation, Halifax, November 14, 2012), 33–44, http://halifaxcentrallibrary.ca/assets/central-library/pdfs/Halifax_Central_Library_-_Final_Public_Consultation.pdf.
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17. Patkau Architects, "La Grande Bibliothèque Du Québec," Patkau Architects, accessed July 31, 2020, <https://patkau.ca/projects/gbq/>.
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19. Carleton University Art Gallery, *Modern U: A Self-Guided Walking Tour of Carleton University by Adrian Göllner* (Ottawa: Carleton University Art Gallery, 2003); Adrian Göllner, *Modern U*, 2003, 2003, Carleton University; Adrian Göllner, "Modern U, 2003," Artist's Website, accessed September 28, 2020, <https://adriangollner.ca/content/?p=146>; PLEPUC, "Modern U - Adrian Gollner," *Présences du littéraire dans l'espace public canadien*, accessed September 28, 2020, <http://plepuc.org/en/artwork/modern-u>; Göllner, *Adrian Göllner*.

Images for McEwen School of Architecture retrieved from: <https://www.archdaily.com/892818/mcewen-school-of-architecture-lga-architectural-partners>

Images for Halifax Central Library retrieved from: http://halifaxcentrallibrary.ca/assets/central-library/pdfs/Halifax_Central_Library_-_Final_Public_Consultation.pdf, <https://www.archdaily.com/577039/new-halifax-central-library-schmidt-hammer-lassen>, https://saskatooncentrallibrary.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/NCL_Report_for-release.pdf.

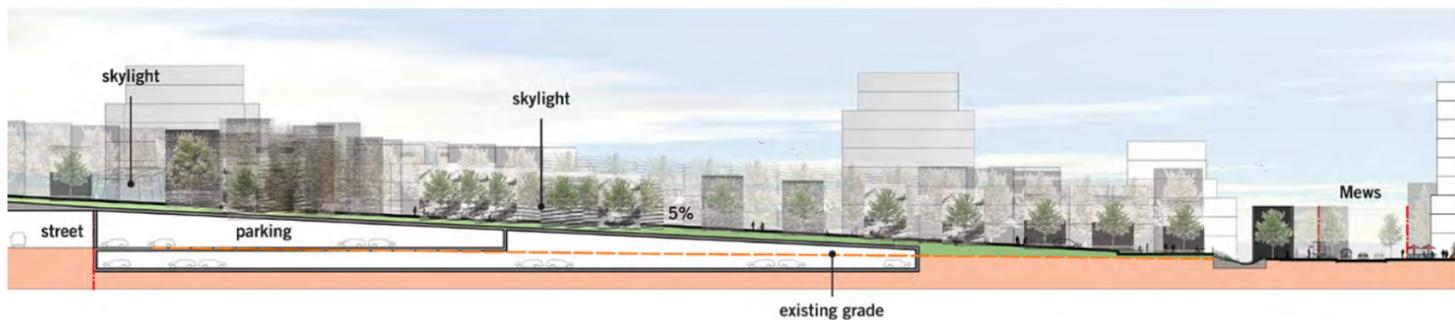
Images for Patkau Architects' 2005 Libraries taken by author, and retrieved from: <https://patkau.ca/projects/winnipeg-library/>, <https://patkau.ca/projects/gbq/>.

Images for Guthrie Theatre retrieved from: <http://www.jeannouvel.com/en/projects/theatre-guthrie/>, and <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/miranda/la-et-cam-jean-nouvel-guthrie-theater-minneapolis-20150531-htlstory.htm>.

Images for Modern U retrieved from: <http://plepuc.org/en/artwork/modern-u>, <https://adriangollner.ca/content/?p=146>, <http://cuag.carleton.ca/online/modernu/>.

Reviving the old rail line as a Greenway

One path, multiple activities, dog park, play areas, community gardens.



PERKINS
+ WILL

Group2

buinc

GENIVAR

perkins

PWL

City of
Saskatoon

City of Saskatoon North Downtown Master Plan

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

1 | DISTRICT ENERGY*

- Connect all buildings to the District Energy System.
- Provide energy and heating with low Greenhouse Gas emissions.

*Ongoing coordination with Energy Consultant.



2 | GREEN BUILDINGS

- Establish minimum sustainable performance goals in design and construction.
- Employ passive approaches to sustainable building (e.g., high performance walls and windows.)

3 | STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

- Create a variety of water conveyance and temporary storage features that provide on-site 24 hour capacity for a 100-year storm event.



4 | ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

- Create a network of walking, cycling, and running routes that make it easy to be active all year round.



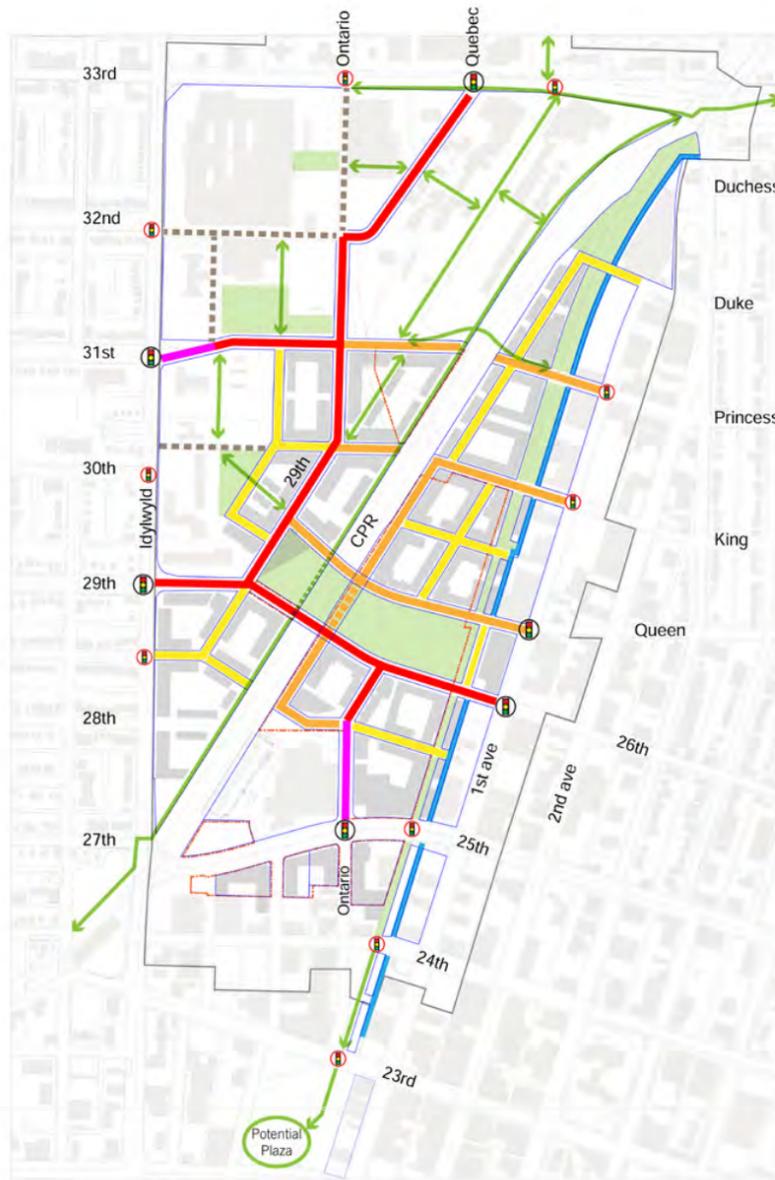
5 | URBAN AGRICULTURE

- Create zones of community gardens at the Rail Greenway, flanking the CPR corridor and on the Landbridge Park.



City of Saskatoon North Downtown Master Plan

A FAMILY OF COMPLETE STREETS

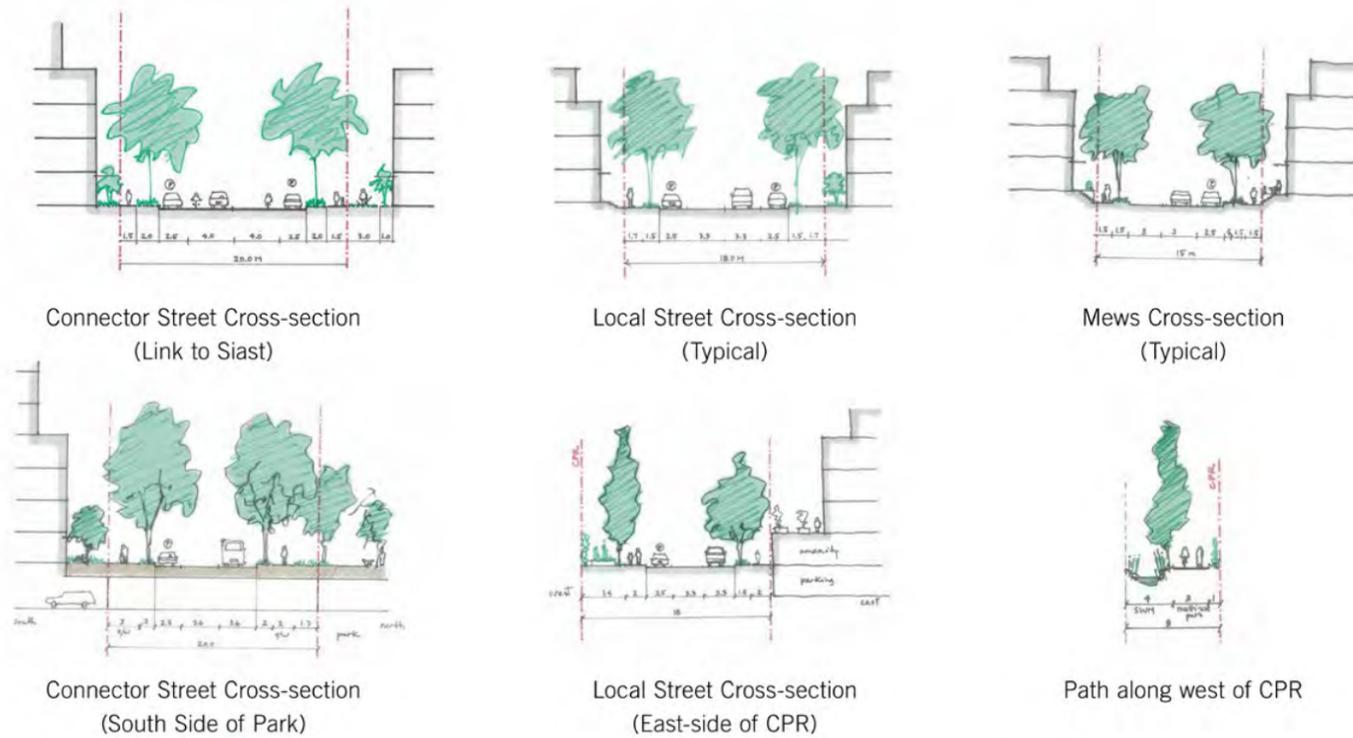


STREET NETWORK

- Queen and 26th Street bridge over rail tracks
- Streets designed for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles

Legend

- Study Area Boundary
 - - - City-Owned Land
 - Existing Building
 - New Open Space
 - New Property Line
 - New Underground Parking
 - Potential Bike/Pedestrian Connection
- FAMILY OF STREETS**
- Existing Connector Street (+20m ROW)
 - Connector Street (20m ROW)
 - Local Street (18m ROW)
 - Mews (15m ROW)
 - Lane (6m ROW)
 - Privately-owned, Publicly Accessible Street
- Signalized Intersection
 - Pedestrian Signal
- Note: Dashed line indicates a street below the land bridge



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Group2

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City of Saskatoon

City of Saskatoon North Downtown Master Plan



City of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
2017



1:150000







Manitoba

25th

Ontario

1st

24th

Site Surrounding John Deere Building
2017

0 50 m

1:1500

