The “Playground” Project
by

Benjamin Mark Thomas, B.A.S., M.Arch.

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of
the degree of

Master of Architecture

School of Architecture
Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
September 20, 2005

©2005 Benjamin Thomas

*Benjamin Mark Thomas
Masters Thesis (Professional)*

*School of Architecture, Carleton University
August 31, 2005*

Abstract

This thesis is an exploration of Architecture through the realization of *play* as both an idea and an act. The *play* concept is articulated through the discussion of various writers and theorists, while the act of *play* occurs directly through the author's own engagement, which was further enlightened by a specific child study. These investigations informed an Architectural proposition of the park "playground" project in its program and design process. The thesis further questions the role of *play* in the greater sphere of Architecture in its development and as a final product of design. It ultimately determines that play does have a role in Architecture, but that this role is apparent only at particular moments and points.

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank my parents first, Ray and Faye Thomas, whom over the last six years have been so supportive in my education, have had the utmost patience and always pushed me to reach higher.

Professor Cazabon, for his insight and allowing me a year of freedom to explore.

The School of Architecture; its Faculty, Sessional Instructors, the Students and the building itself for having great impact on how I see the world.

Robert Froom and all the members of CSV Architects Inc. for their ongoing support.

Donyah Farhat and Chanda Tannis for their time and technical assistance.

Dino Di Sano and Raquel Nahas for their help and particular insight.

“G”, for his inspiration and collaboration on this project.

And finally my Lord Christ... for everything.

Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
List of Illustrations	vii
 <i>Introduction</i>	 1
<i>Chapter 1 – Play Concepts</i>	3
1.1. <i>Introduction</i>	4
1.2. <i>Play as Fundamental</i>	4
1.3. <i>Play (Rational or Irrational?)</i>	6
1.4. <i>Defining Play and Where it Takes Us</i>	8
1.5. <i>The “Playground”</i>	9
1.6. <i>Playing and Making</i>	11
1.7. <i>Conclusion of Chapter 1</i>	12
 <i>Chapter 2 - Project and Site Selection</i>	 14
2.1. <i>The “Playground” Project</i>	16
2.2. <i>The Site and its Current Development Context</i>	19
2.3. <i>The Park as a System of Parts</i>	30
2.4. <i>La Villette Park as the Creative Model</i>	30
2.5. <i>Case for Science and Technology Museum as Element of “Playground”</i>	30
2.6. <i>Case for Science and Technology Museum for the Bayview / Somerset Site</i>	35
 <i>Chapter 3 – “The Client”</i>	 37
3.1. <i>Introduction of “the Client”</i>	39
3.2. <i>The Client’s General State of Affairs</i>	39
3.3. <i>The Client’s Mind with Regards to Play</i>	40
3.4. <i>The Client’s Situation with Regards to Scale</i>	42
3.5. <i>The Client and Consultant’s Situation with Regard to “Flexible” and “Formal” Play</i>	45
3.6. <i>Conclusion of Chapter 3</i>	50
 <i>Chapter 4 - Play and the Design Process</i>	 51
4.1. <i>The Client as Guide</i>	52
4.2. <i>Her shining string spins a symphonic global catastrophe.</i>	66
4.3. <i>Your busted hamster blares at an embarrassing balloon.</i>	69
4.4. <i>The disgusting puppet dances a sculptured handrail.</i>	78

Table of Contents (continued)

<i>Chapter 5 – “A Walk in the Park”</i>	79
5.1. <i>Arrival by Foot Paths</i>	85
5.2. <i>Arrival by Boat Paths</i>	105
5.3. <i>Arrival by Car</i>	106
5.4. <i>Arrival by Train</i>	107
<i>Conclusion</i>	109
Works Cited	114
Bibliography	115

List of Illustrations

Fig. 1. Tender for Stipulated Exchange Contract, from author 15.

Fig. 2a. Urban Master Plan- Development Context, Significant Buildings and Structures, from City of Ottawa. “Bayview / Somerset Area Secondary Study.” City of Ottawa- Public Consultation.

<http://ottawa.ca/public_consult/bayview/concept/summary/images/Dev_Context_and_Significant_Buildings.jpg> (15 December 2004) 20.

Fig. 2b. Urban Master Plan- Heritage, from City of Ottawa. “Bayview / Somerset Area Secondary Study.” City of Ottawa- Public Consultation.

<http://ottawa.ca/public_consult/bayview/concept/summary/images/Heritage.jpg> (15 December 2004) 20.

Fig. 3a. Proposed Development for LeBreton Flats Site, from National Capital Commission. “Development Projects- LeBreton Flats- From Shore to the Core.” National Capital Commission: Parks, Heritage, and Development.

<http://www.canadacapital.gc.ca/corporate/parks_heritage/development_projects/lebreton/site_map_updates/index_e.asp> (27 December 2004) 21.

Fig. 3b. Site Photograph, 2003 Orthophoto from National Capital Commission. Carleton University Library- Geographic Information System. (September 2004) 21.

Fig. 3c. Proposed Development for Bayview Site, from City of Ottawa. “Bayview / Somerset Area Secondary Study.” City of Ottawa- Public Consultation.

<http://ottawa.ca/public_consult/bayview/concept/images/figure3_en.jpg> (11 Jan 2005) 21.

Fig. 4. Urban Master Plan (Expected Future Context), montage from Ben Thomas 24.

Fig. 5a. Area Ownership Map, from City of Ottawa. “Bayview / Somerset Area Secondary Study.” City of Ottawa- Public Consultation.

<http://ottawa.ca/public_consult/images/bg_existing_lg.jpg> (15 December 2004) 26.

Fig. 5b. Urban Master Plan- Zoning, from City of Ottawa. “Bayview / Somerset Area Secondary Study.” City of Ottawa- Public Consultation.

<http://ottawa.ca/public_consult/bayview/concept/summary/images/Current_OP_and_Zoning.jpg> (15 December 2004) 26.

List of Illustrations (continued)

Fig. 5c. Existing Barriers, Views, Constraints and Opportunities, from City of Ottawa. "Bayview / Somerset Area Secondary Study." City of Ottawa- Public Consultation.

<http://ottawa.ca/public_consult/bayview/concept/summary/images/BVCO.jpg >
(15 December 2004) 27.

Fig. 5d. Park Boundary Plan: Existing Conditions, 2003 Orthophoto from National Capital Commission. Carleton University Library- Geographic Information System. (September 2004) 27.

Fig. 6a. Park Site- Existing Topography, Autocad Drawing from City of Ottawa. Carleton University Library- Geographic Information System. (September 2004) 28.

Fig. 6b. Looking North-West, photograph from author, (September 2004) 28.

Fig. 6c. Looking South, photograph from author, (September 2004) 28.

Fig. 6d. Looking East, photograph from author, (September 2004) 28.

Fig. 6e. Looking South, photograph from author, (September 2004) 28.

Fig. 6f. Looking South, photograph from author, (September 2004) 28.

Fig. 6g. Looking North, photograph from author, (September 2004) 28.

Fig. 6h. Looking East, photograph from author, (September 2004) 28.

Fig. 7a. Park Site- Existing Infrastructure, Autocad Drawing from City of Ottawa. Carleton University Library- Geographic Information System. (September 2004) 29.

Fig. 7b. Looking North, photograph from author, (September 2004) 29.

Fig. 7c. Looking North, photograph from author, (September 2004) 29.

Fig. 7d. Looking North, photograph from author, (September 2004) 29.

Fig. 7e. Looking South, photograph from author, (September 2004) 29.

Fig. 7f. Looking West, photograph from author, (September 2004) 29.

Fig. 7g. Looking North, photograph from author, (September 2004) 29.

List of Illustrations (continued)

- Fig. 7h. Looking South, photograph from author, (September 2004) 29.
- Fig. 7i. Looking North, photograph from author, (September 2004) 29.
- Fig. 7j. La Villette- Bicycle Wheel, Photograph from Insecula.com,
<<http://insecula.com/salle/MS02453.html>> , 32.
- Fig. 7k. La Villette- Hand Bar and Wheel Photograph from Insecula.com,
<<http://insecula.com/salle/MS02453.html>> , 32.
- Fig. 7l. La Villette- Follies
- Fig. 8. Science and Technology Museum Proposal, Digital Model from author, 33.
- Fig. 9. Detail Drawing of “Client” In Action, drawing from author, 38.
- Fig. 10. Scale Differential, image from author, 44.
- Fig. 11. Process, image from author, 53.
- Fig. 12. Process Image, “plan” drawing from author, 54.
- Fig. 13. Process Image, “section” drawing from author, 54.
- Fig. 14. Process Image, hand rendered “plan” drawing from author, 55.
- Fig. 15. Process Image, hand rendered “section” drawing from author, 55.
- Fig. 16. Process, sketch model from author, 56.
- Fig. 17. Process Model, sketch model from author, 57.
- Fig. 18. Process, sketch model and details from author, 58.
- Fig. 19. Process into Building Elevation, images from author, 59.
- Fig. 20. Process Elevation Detail 1, drawing from author, 60.
- Fig. 21. Process Elevation Detail 2, drawing from author, 61.
- Fig. 22. Process Elevation Detail 3, drawing from author, 62.

List of Illustrations (continued)

- Fig. 23. Process, concept model and detail views from author, 63.
- Fig. 24. Process, concept model into building form from author, 64.
- Fig. 25. Process Sketch Model, physical model in intermediary stage from author, 65.
- Fig. 26. Process, image from author, 67.
- Fig. 27. Play with Sand, photographs from author, 68.
- Fig. 28. Process, drawing from study subject, model from author, 70.
- Fig. 29. Process model, from author, 71.
- Fig. 30. Process model, from author, 71.
- Fig. 31. Process model, from author, 72.
- Fig. 31b. Process model, from author, 72.
- Fig. 32. The terrific water jumps an elevating painting, from author, 73.
- Fig. 33. Architectural Concept, digital model from author, 74.
- Fig. 34a. Client Drawings- Set 1, from study subject, 75.
- Fig. 34b. Client Drawings- Set 2, from study subject, 75.
- Fig. 34c. Client Drawings- Set 3, from study subject, 75.
- Fig. 35. Process (Site), drawings from study subject, collage from author, 76.
- Fig. 36. Process (Site), drawings from study subject, collage from author, 77.
- Fig. 37. Park Site Plan, drawing from author, 80.
- Fig. 38. Park Site- Ariel Perspective, drawing from author, 81.
- Fig. 39. Final Model- Plan View, model from author, 82.
- Fig. 40. Final Model- Birds-Eye Perspective, from author, 82.
- Fig. 41. Final Model- Birds-Eye Perspective from West, from author, 83.

List of Illustrations (continued)

- Fig. 42. Final Model- Birds-Eye Perspective from North, from author, 83.
- Fig. 43. Sectional Drawing, from author, 84.
- Fig. 44. Museum East Elevation with Noon Shadow on June 21st, from author, 84.
- Fig. 45. Museum North Elevation with 7pm Shadow on June 21st, from author, 84.
- Fig. 46. Museum South Elevation with 1:45pm Shadow on June 21st, from author, 84.
- Fig. 47. Orientation Plan, drawing from author, 85.
- Fig. 48. View from City Centre Parking Lot Looking Towards Somerset Bridge, collage from author, 86.
- Fig. 49. Vertical Shaft Concepts, model from author, 86.
- Fig. 50. Orientation Plan, drawing from author, 87.
- Fig. 51. Birds-Eye Perspective Sketch from South, 88.
- Fig. 52. Activity in the Court Plaza, photograph from Philip Guo, "People Photo Gallery Search" <http://web.mit.edu/pgbovine/www/new-galleries/search_engine.htm>, 89.
- Fig. 53. Orientation Plan, drawing from author, 90.
- Fig. 54. Forest Inhabitation, montage from author, 90.
- Fig. 55. Jacks indecisive thing captures the conflicted instigator, montage from author, 91.
- Fig. 56. Orientation Plan, drawing from author, 91.
- Fig. 56b. Open Field, photograph from Philip Guo, "People Photo Gallery Search" <http://web.mit.edu/pgbovine/www/new-galleries/search_engine.htm>, 91.
- Fig. 57. Site Centre- Ariel View from South., model from author, 92.
- Fig. 58. Perspective Looking Down into Site Centre, drawing from author, 92.
- Fig. 59. Orientation Plan, drawing from author, 93.
- Fig. 60. North Entrance, drawing from author, 93.

List of Illustrations (continued)

- Fig. 61. Views of Park's Small Water Channel, model from author, 93.
- Fig. 61b. View Approaching Marine Technology Entrance, collage from author, 94.
- Fig. 62. Views of Park's Lake and Marine Technology Entrance, model from author, 94.
- Fig. 63. Process- Sketch Model of Carved Landscape area, model from author, 95.
- Fig. 64. Views of Carved Landscape Area, model from author, 96.
- Fig. 65. The boring orchid permeates in clockwise performance, drawing from author, 97.
- Fig. 66. The Chinese undertaker topples a sonic triangle, drawing from author, 97.
- Fig. 67. Perspective of Pool Area above the Cave, collage from author, 98.
- Fig. 68. View just Outside of Cave Entry, from author, 99.
- Fig. 69. View Outside of Cave Entry, from author, 99.
- Fig. 70. View Inside Cave, from author, 100.
- Fig. 71. Orientation Plan, drawing from author, 100.
- Fig. 72. O-train exit and Locomotive Collection, model from author, 101.
- Fig. 73. Sand Pit, collage from author, 102.
- Fig. 74. Orientation Plan, drawing from author, 102.
- Fig. 75. Amphitheatre Concept, from author, 103.
- Fig. 76. Ariel View Looking Down on Museum's Exterior Bridge, drawing from author, 103.
- Fig. 77. View of Site from Atop Light House, model from author, 104.
- Fig. 78. View Approaching Light House from Water, model from author, 104.
- Fig. 79. Ariel View of Light House, model from author, 104.
- Fig. 80. Orientation Plan, drawing from author, 105.

List of Illustrations (continued)

Fig. 81. Snow Play, photograph from Philip Guo, “People Photo Gallery Search”
<http://web.mit.edu/pgbovine/www/new-galleries/search_engine.htm>, 106.

Fig. 82. Sectional Drawing, from author, 107.

Fig. 83. Orientation Plan, drawing from author, 108.

Fig. 84. Shuttle Connection, digital model from author, 108.

Introduction.

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate Architecture through the concept of *play* as a complex phenomenon. This exploration of *play* as both idea and act elaborates on an architectural process that leads to the creation of a spatial environment that accommodates *play as act* (program) and *play as process* of architectural delineation. This approach to *play* results in a conceptualization of Architecture that further emphasizes the creative quality found in conventional thought and design process. While the consideration of *play* in the process of architectural ideation is arguably a logical and sensible notion, there is however, another form, namely the child's *play*, which appears to be of a different nature and captures that unmistakable quality of "pure *playfulness*". It is in this type of *play*, through the eyes of a child, that I have acquired some genuine impressions. These impressions were documented from observations of the 'child at *play*', that were later translated and converted into spatial studies. These in turn were developed during the design process in order to approximate an architectural containment or framing for the act of *playing*. Whether this Architecture, which will be manifested from *play (process)*, is in turn a successful space for *play (program)* execution, (an Architecture from *play* for *playing*) will be argued when discussing the resulting architectural program.

In my investigative studies of *play*, I determined that its essence is not captured through literary means alone. There is only so much analysis of *play* used to inform the thesis, which is why it was pivotal and necessary to engage in the experience of *playing* as well. Through this exploration of both act and interpretation, I have been able to manifest an architectural project and text.

During this *play-design* development process, there arose a concern to impart practical solutions as part of the architectural proposition. The struggle between creative freedom and the functional necessities of the built form in Architecture is a certainty that must always be addressed. The *playfulness* that spawned and sought to be carried into the architecture, eventually, for the sake of necessity, reached a point of rationality (to successfully accommodate mediation between human body and built entity). The reconciliation of this struggle is how a '*playful Architect*' defines himself as both artist and creator of environments.

1.1. Introduction

To appreciate the pivotal aspects of *play* that are part of its primary foundation, one must acknowledge its conceptual complexity. This involves the examination of specific terms (words) surrounding play and more importantly how they relate to one another. In the denotation of *play*'s expression in written format, one realizes the expression ultimately becomes reduced to words and phrases of the aesthetic realm (e.g. a feeling of pleasure / excitement, senses of joy etc.) Since every person has experienced *play* in their lifetime, the use of aesthetics in the exposition allows readers the opportunity to relate such literary expressions to their own personal experiences. Certainly not all of the terminology surrounding *play* is of this nature; in the case of non-aesthetics, such terms include game, contest, playground, temporal-spatial-boundaries etc. What is discovered early on is that all of these terms are not exclusive to themselves but rely on each other in an interconnected manner. This approach to understanding play, that is, as an amalgamation of or umbrella for other terms (i.e. games, contest, ritual, performance, etc.) derives itself from Huizinga's¹ attitude towards the idea. Other writers make stronger separations / distinctions between such words (i.e. not all are considered or are necessarily entirely connected to "play" as such).

1.2. Play as Fundamental

Play is a fundamental aspect of life that is taken for granted on a regular basis by its participants; it goes unnoticed as a deeply rooted and complex phenomenon. *Play* is so much a part of one's being that it naturally becomes unquestioned. In his foreword,

¹ Johan Huizinga, Homo Ludens: A study of the Play-Element in Culture. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1950).

Huizinga discusses the two primary aspects of the human situation (they are Man the Thinker, and Man the Maker). He continues on this line of thought to state:

There is a third function, however, applicable to both human and animal life, and is just as important as reasoning and making- namely, *playing*. We find no reason to abandon the notion of *play* as a distinct and highly important factor in the world's life and doings. (ix)

This declaration sets the importance of *play* beyond what is typically thought of it; in part because, as mentioned, its presence has generally been taken for granted throughout the ages.

The magnitude of this theme cannot be denied as it is an apparent function, and even a necessity of society. Perhaps one may exclaim that *play* arises out of culture, due to the fact each has their own types of *play* (or games) which are unique, diverse and passed down through tradition. Such factors are indeed critical in defining and even creating specific kinds of *play*, however these are, ultimately, not essentially different. The necessary elements that constitute all of them (e.g. chance, tension, resolution, etc.) and the benefits that are delivered to the partakers of play (joy, delight, experience of "fun", etc.) are common. All games regardless of culture or time period share such fundamental aspects. Beyond this, life generally positions itself such that it compels *play*'s involvement, and this condition is what drives *play*'s initial creative diversification. "*Play* is older than culture, for culture always presupposes human society, and animals have not waited for man to teach them their *playing*" (Huizinga, 1). This notion is further examined later in the text when discussing play variation, including the learned versus inherent forms of it.

Certainly *play*, in its totality, must belong to something that is fundamentally absolute about us, an inherent aspect of an order that governs our collective reality. People are not taught how to have "fun" nor learn to do so. It is deepened in the structure of nature,

to the extent that it branches past human existence to other kinds of life. As pointed out by Huizinga,

The very existence of *play* continually confirms the supra-logical nature of the human situation. Since the reality of *play* extends beyond the sphere of human life it cannot have its foundations in any rational nexus, because this would limit it to mankind. Animals *play*, so they must be more than merely mechanical things. We *play* and know that we *play*, so we must be more than merely rational beings, for *play* is irrational. (3, 4)

As one realizes that *play* is not some task needed to sustain life (that it is not primordially essential)- we are not obligated to partake in it. However, because we do it regardless, in such light it appears as irrational behaviour. One does not require *play* for survival (unlike reasoning or working), but then we would need to question the value of that survival, for without *play* one would live a miserable existence.

The tiny book jumps a spongy cat.

Architects log: August 26th, 2004.

"If you want me to do this for you, I have to get something in return. No one ever said life was a free ride you know..."

1.3. Play (Rational or Irrational?)

Huizinga's previous reference should not imply that *play* is always an absurd act without implication, although much of it, especially the children's type, often appears as such. In Huizinga's passage, *play* refers to how it positions itself as part of the human circumstance, alongside very rational entities such as reasoning in thought or working for progress. This combination of characteristics is inherent to the human being and is a complexity that set us apart as a species (Huizinga). The rational aspects of the person appear to have more aim towards a specific intention or objective, whereas *play*'s purpose (outside of its event) is not usually realized by its partakers before, after, or in the moment of engagement.

The distinction between “subjective” and “objective” may itself be partly an artifact of the sundering of work and *play*. For “work” is held to be the realm of the rational adaptation of means to ends, of “objectivity,” while “*play*” is thought of as divorced from this essentially “objective” realm, and, in so far as it is its inverse, it is “subjective,” free from external constraints, where any and every combination of variable can be “*played*” with. (Turner 34)

Turner acknowledges the “means to ends” function of work, and implies that in *play* there is a “freedom from external constraints”. The only common, implicit desire for *play* is in the sake of *playing*, that is, because it is an enjoyable endeavor. This is the dogma of acceptance- validation does not go beyond it; “The *fun* of *playing* resists all analysis, all logical interpretation. As a concept, it cannot be reduced to any other mental category” (Huizinga, 3). This factor is pivotal in defining what we are as “beings”, which only further exemplifies *play*’s criticality when we question the meaning of our existence. In quoting Huizinga, Breton States:

‘play affirms in a permanent way and in the highest sense the supralogical character of our human situation in the cosmos.’ He concludes with the necessity of ‘seeing in poetry mankind’s realization of a ludic requirement within the community’. It is clear that to shut oneself off from game-playing, or at least from the play of the imagination as adult discipline prescribes it, is to undermine the best of one’s own humanity. (Brotchie, 138)

The acceptance of *play* as something we simply desire to engage in limits us to grasping its true value. The acknowledgment that *play* is primal equates it with other essential aspects of life such as thinking, communication, etc. The acknowledgment implies a greater reason or purpose for *play* because it connects us to a key aspect of our reality;

It is a significant function- that is to say, there is some sense to it. In *play* something is “at *play*” which transcends the immediate needs of life and imparts meaning to the action. (Huizinga, 1)

Therefore, any *play* act can be either rational or irrational depending on its perceived “type”. For example, the game of Chess as a form of play is highly rational (because of its strategic / objective based qualities and precise structuring) whereas playing ludicrously (such as making incongruous sounds or movements to be laughable) comes off as absurd and completely irrational. Both of these “types” are constantly prevalent in our playing. The purpose of *play*, however, when compared to other fundamental human functional capacities appears as irrational, or something that is not necessary.

1.4. Defining Play and Where it Takes Us

Architects log: September 7th, 2004.

As the sun began to trickle down behind the trees the boy rose, thinking it was time to turn back. Without unpacking his treasures, we decided to continue our travels further, just for a little while longer.

It is imperative to acknowledge the greater purpose of *play* and that there is a far greater understanding for it. Defining *play* is a more difficult challenge. As already mentioned, *play* is not so much something to be explained as it is to be experienced. While the written language is limited to embracing the qualities or essence of *play*, Huizinga convincingly summates the concept into a single phrase. The definition serves as a respectable grounding for any layperson attempting to elucidate the concept. Huizinga’s summation is as follows:

Play is a voluntary activity or occupation executed within certain fixed limits of time and place, according to rules freely accepted but absolutely binding, having its aim in itself and accompanied by a feeling of tension, joy and the consciousness that it is “different” from “ordinary life”. (28)

The lure of it all is in our ability to use *play* to “free” ourselves from the “real” world, if only for a little while. The freedom exists in the escapement of outside

obligations, in the suspension of that same outer world, and in the rapture, as though it is a dream, into those indescribable moments of bliss. This could be what makes *play* a constant factor prevalent in our lives and societies. While *play* in many ways “transports” its users to another immersive space, in most cases it does not completely neglect the other “host” world (commonly called “reality”). In many ways, *play* partially and indirectly fulfills “a dream thousands of years old: of transcending the physical world, fully alive, at will, to dwell in some beyond- to be empowered or enlightened there, alone or with others, and to return” (Benedikt 131). One can say as people are *playing* they exist in some “beyond” because of the “suspension” of real life until the game *playing* is over.

1.5. The “Playground”

It is in the act of *playing* that one directly assimilates into often hidden or unnoticed spatial conditions. These temporal-spatial-boundaries that are created are critical for the execution of the act, providing an essentially limited framework and definitive order necessary for displacing the *players* (both mentally and physically) into the boundaries own unique space(s). These spaces of *play*, or “playgrounds”, exist on a number of levels. While there are seemingly endless variations on “playground” types, Huizinga further recognizes that *playing* (in all its forms- ritual, contest, theatre, etc.) requires a marking out of space to create a separation from “ordinary life”.

All *play* moves and has its being within a playground marked off either materially or ideally, deliberately or as a matter of course. Just as there is no formal difference between *play* and ritual, so the “consecrated spot” cannot be formally distinguished from the playground. The arena, the card-table, the magic circle, the temple, the stage, the screen, the tennis court, the court of justice, etc., are all in form and function *play*-grounds, i.e. forbidden spots, isolated, hedged round, hallowed,

within which special rules obtain. All are temporary worlds within the ordinary world, dedicated to the performance of an act apart. (Huizinga, 10)

The notion of “boundary” composes a great deal of the “playground” concept. The “special rules” that exist as part of it are vital in setting the kind of order necessary to constitute the *playing*. The “playground” should not always be taken literally as an actual or physical place (a tangible playground in a park for instance, although it is one). As stated by Huizinga, in many cases it is a highly abstract space that is creatable anywhere, at any given time.

The “playground” concept has the potential to place itself on a wide scale of variance. The various boundaries that constitute it assume both temporal and fixed spatial conditions. Due to this richness in flexibility, the ideas that pertain to it would have potential for a multiplicity of spatial precincts that allows for the interpretation of Architectural investigation. The design project tests this “playground” idea on a number of levels to see if there is sufficient evidence to justify the relationship between *play* and Architecture.

The “playground” is an essential characteristic that makes up any game because it is fundamentally common to all kinds of *playing*. We must assert that the term “playground” is non-independent of *play*, for “all *play* has its being within a playground”. The elements of the “playground” and its rules are two of many other determinants (i.e. tradition, tension, culture, etc.) that can vary considerably in degree to form an endless array of *game-playing* variations. The boundaries and limits of *play* is often the “playground” itself. As the element that frames and creates order for *play*, the playground is vivacious for only the duration of the game, otherwise it is void or vanishes all together.

1.6. *Playing and Making*

Given the temporal nature of *play*, is it possible for it to even exist in a built artifact or in its making? Huizinga is clear on this issue:

The very fact that “plastic” arts are bound to matter (and the limitations of form inherent in it), is enough to forbid them absolutely free *play* and deny them that flight into the ethereal spaces...

The architect, the sculptor, the painter, draughtsman, ceramist and decorative artist in general all fix a certain aesthetic impulse in matter by means of diligent and painstaking labour. Their work has duration and is visible at any moment. The emotional effect or operation of their art is not, as in music, dependent on a special kind of performance by others or by the artists themselves... The absence of any public *action* within which the work of plastic art comes to life and is enjoyed would seem to leave no room for the *play*-factor...

The artist has to work like a craftsman, serious and intent, always testing and correcting himself. His inspiration may be free and vehement when he “conceives”, but in its execution it is always subjected to the skill and proficiency of the forming hand. (166)

Therefore, according to Huizinga, it is possible for *play* to exist in the conception, in the act of spawning a designed artifact, but in the implementation from conception to an articulated and resolved thing, any *play* aspect becomes lost. This definitely would not allow play to exist in the made thing itself.

If the *play*-element is to all appearances lacking in the execution of a work of art, in the contemplation and enjoyment of it there is no scope for it whatever. For where there is no visible action there can be no *play*.

Admitting that this quality of handicraft, of industry, even of strenuousness in the work of plastic art obstructs the *play*-factor, we find that this condition is further intensified by the very nature of the thing, which is determined to a large extent by its practical purpose-and this is in no way dependent on aesthetic impulse. The man who is commissioned to make something is faced with a serious and responsible task: any idea of *play* is out of place. He has to build an edifice- a temple or dwelling- worthy of its function in ritual or fit for human use. Or he has to make a vessel, a garment, an image, each which may have to correspond to the idea it renders symbolically or in imitation. (166, 7)

At the same time however:

Despite this fundamental difference it is possible to find traces of the *play*-factor in the plastic arts...

An almost instinctive, spontaneous need to decorate things cannot, indeed, be denied; and it may conveniently be called a *play*-function. It is known to everybody who, pencil in hand, has ever had to attend a tedious board meeting. Heedlessly, barely conscious of what we are doing, we *play* with lines and planes, curves and masses, and from this abstracted doodling emerge fantastic arabesques, strange animal or human forms. It cannot be doubted that it is a *play*-function akin to the child's *playing* in the first years of its life, when the higher structure of organized *play* is as yet undeveloped...

Of course, when we contemplate certain examples we find it hard indeed to suppress the idea of a *play* of fancy, the *playful* creativity of mind or hand. All such creative works are bound to suggest *play* as the growing-point of art, but they do no more than suggest it. (167, 8)

Although Architecture is arguably a non-static piece of work (animated through light transformations and events that take place within it) ultimately the building itself has no real evident displays of movement or sequence of movements other than the people who flow through it. The people provide the apparent visible activity to the building and not the combination of materials that composes the structural edifice or the spaces it provides. *Play* cannot exist in the Architecture itself, but it may suggest a *playful* approach to its design as well as frame or encourage *play* activity from its dwellers.

1.7. Conclusion of Chapter 1

The enormous lampshade kills the spinach can.

To reiterate the main points of discussion, as critical reviewers we must heighten our awareness of *play* in terms of importance, avoiding its reduction to common misconceptions (being non-seriousness, merely pastime or distraction). Furthermore,

defining *play* in language is limiting; for it can only serve as a clarification device in the study. Grasping *play* best comes to fore through the experience of it.

When we *play*, we assimilate ourselves into temporal-spatial conditions in both the “real” or host world and the created “playground”. Therefore, to be engaged in *play* is to be in association with dynamic spaces on multiple levels (of the mind and of the physical).

Play can exist in design only in the stage of the artist’s active conception, which can occur in various stages of development wherever the opportunity exists to do so. There is an oscillation between *play* and work (execution of task) in art and design. The image or suggestion of *play* can retain itself in the final product, where the observer may continue in a *playful* engagement with artists or architects project. The observer *playfully* interacts with/moves through the image planes through mind's eye, structured by the work of art itself. This is very apparent in the works of the Surrealists where *play* was so integral to the development of the project and *play*’s retention in the final state (notable examples include Max Ernst, Duchamps, Robert Tingly, Man Ray, and other Surrealists). There is the potential to use architecture to encourage *play* activity.

Finally, we have further established that there is an inherent quality of *play*- that it is a fundamental aspect of human existence. The early stages of life most express this fundamentality. This will be the key focus in chapter three.

Chapter 2 – Project and Site Selection

BEN THOMAS ARCHITECT INC.
TENDER FOR
STIPULATED EXCHANGE CONTRACT

Tender for "Playground" project; the conversion of the Bayview / Somerset Area into a park.

To: Mr. G (Commissioner)

Sir,

1. Having carefully examined the site of the proposed work and all conditions affecting such,

I, THE UNDERSIGNED, hereby offer to design everything required, to perform expeditiously and complete in a satisfactory manner the work for the exchange of

A sloppy comforter that destroys a fast table saw.
2. The Work will be substantially performed within 12 months from the date of notification of award of contract.
3. I understand and agree that the Commissioner may order changes to the work in the form of additions or deletions in accordance with the General Conditions he portrayed.

SIGNATURE OF TENDERER

Firm Name: Ben Thomas Architect Inc.

Address: 422 Billings Ave. Ottawa, Ont.

Postal Code: K1H 5L6

Signing Officer

Fig. 1. Tender for Stipulated Exchange Contract.

2.1. The “Playground” Project

The architectural ‘commission’ for the thesis is a park that will entail both interior and exterior spaces of interaction. A large-scale recreational park allows sufficient flexibility for the manifestation of our ‘*play process*’ intervention while at the same time providing an environment that encourages it. The site is the “container” for our *play*, a “sandbox” for the manifestations or artifacts that arise out of the creative process that further provide opportunity for interpretive *play* spaces. The vision for the final project is a place for *play* generated from it- not to determine what the *play* shall be, but to create the environment or rather, provide the opportunity for that *play* to occur.

Some *play* phenomenon has a flexibility of its own. Due to this flexibility, the entirety of the park denies the necessity for all of its spaces being designed components for some specific purpose or function end to end. Many of the built forms are of a suggestive nature, intended to be open for adaptive-reuse, where inhabitants have the opportunity to engage and appropriate an architectural element for their own desired purpose. The “playground” exists and flourishes through this kind of interpretation and interaction of its dwellers, by the very fact that there is no definite script placed into the spatial or programmatic scenario.

The idea of identifying something (such as an object, space, person, etc.), imagining it as something besides what it is or what it is intended for, and essentially employing it as the imagined “thing” is at the essence of *play*. This notion of adaptive re-use is at the heart of the topic of study / investigation, for “*play* is based on the manipulation of certain images, on a certain imagination of reality (i.e. its conversion into images)” (Huizinga, 4). In this imagination,

The child is *making an image* of something different, something more beautiful, or more sublime, or more dangerous than what he usually is. The child is quite literally “beside himself” with delight, transported beyond himself to such an extent that he almost believes he actually is such and such a thing, without, however, wholly losing consciousness of “ordinary reality”. (Huizinga, 13-14)

The “making of an image” is applicable not only to the child’s self, but also to the things and places where his “transport” occurs for they are all contained as parts of one imaginary “playground”. To set the environment to engage the mind and body directly or indirectly, the architect allows *play* to happen on its own because the children inevitably find their way to do so.

With little or no preparation, children are experts at making *play* happen with limited “materials” available. Sandra Russ discusses the notion of improvisation and adaptive-re-use with regards to *play*. She states:

Play provides the opportunity to explore new combinations of ideas and to develop new associations for old objects. The object transformations that occur in *play* develop the capacity to see old objects in new ways. Kogan (1983) also suggested that children’s *play* behaviour involves a search for alternate modes of relating to the object, a process similar to searching for alternate uses for objects in divergent thinking tasks... (34)

Divergent thinking is thinking that goes off in different directions and involves a free-ranging scanning of memories and associations. This scanning is necessary for disparate elements to be pulled together in new ways- resulting in a creative product. What does this free flow of associations look like? Improvisations illustrate this kind of free-associative flow of material...

Psychoanalytic theorists agree that early *play* is an important determinant of creativity. (21)

The job of the Architect is therefore not to determine what the *play* shall be, but to provide the environment that will foster the *player’s* creativity. Some design elements by necessity will determine functional aspects, while others are open to this *playful* interpretation. Today there is weak emphasis on the issue of a successful *play* environment

design. Over emphasis on safety towards children's play environments has unfortunately crippled the play areas / spaces creativity in design and originality. This not only inhibits children at play through hindrance of unique opportunities, but also negates part of their growth process. "By robbing children of the slightest of small dangers means they will be totally unprepared when they are exposed to greater ones or won't know how to avoid them" (Senda 4). Furthermore:

The children have lost their opportunities to show their true genius because of lacking *play* environments. That is why I must exclaim the precondition that children must be given an environment where they can display this genius. (Senda, 3)

Despite children's uncanny ability to turn any space into a "playground", some places have greater potential; or rather provide more opportunities than others. Regardless of their ability, this explains why children still desire to escape to certain destinations and spaces, as there are areas that draw them to further exercising this creative (*play*) potential.

There does seem to be cases, especially in those of the child, where the spaces have certain qualities that are dynamic that naturally engage the player. (Subject: *G*- section 3.1.) Indeed, *G*'s favorite space in the home is the "weight room". It is not a coincidence the room contains several objects, distinct forms and projections that continually alter the space layout. It is a non-static place, that is, every time he returns something is out of place from the last visit. This creates excitement and delight for the "client" as the room is in constant transformation. Perhaps more importantly, the projections and shifts of the machinery give him opportunities to duck under, squeeze between, and alter conditions (i.e. pushing and pulling on the machines functions, shifting the settings, etc). The condensed gym space is dynamic in its formal qualities as well in its alteration, and ability for movement (disposition). Therefore, the dynamism of the space entices *G*'s engagement- to play in it.

Children's potential or ability for *play* does not replace their need for creatively designed environments that encourage it; rather such environments further challenge this significant capability.

2.2. The Site and its Current Development Context

The greater site area is the vast territory currently surrounded by the three major communities of Mechanicsville, Hintonburg, and Somerset Heights. In accordance with current development proposals, Ottawa anticipates two new neighboring communities from the LeBreton Flats and Bayview Yards that will give shape and have considerable impact on the region (Fig. 2a-3c). While these two areas are in different stages of progress, the construction resurgence is expected to overshadow the historic lands providing a considerable increase in both population and building densification.

Fig. 2a: Urban Master Plan- Development Context, Significant Buildings and Structures

Fig. 2b: Urban Master Plan- Heritage

*Urban Master Plan-
Expected Development (massing) of
Neighbouring Communities*

Fig. 3a: Proposed Development for LeBreton Flats site from NCC

*Probable future Residential Development Area
(Zoning suggests High-Rise Apartments)*

Fig. 3b: Site Photograph

*Fig. 3c: Proposed Development
for Bayview site from City of Ottawa*

*LeBreton Flats-
Phase 3 Development Area
(Scheme not yet proposed)*

For LeBreton Flats the National Capital Commission (NCC) plans for forty five thousand residential units as indicated (Fig. 2a). Office and retail space will also be included to provide a completely self-sustaining neighborhood. Similarly, for the Bayview site, the City of Ottawa has a proposal for approximately 1,700 residential units and 3,200 square meters retail space. As part of the Bayview proposal, plans for the location of a major Civic Facility is located at the south end along the transitway (Fig. 3c). The content of the Civic Building is yet to be determined, but it will contain mixed-use functional programming with residential units located above. Both the Bayview and LeBreton plans share a common building type configuration of mid to high-rise apartment complexes, many of which will face inner courtyards and will have retail at grade.² This overwhelming insurgence in capital real estate planning for the region compelled a strong concern in the Thesis to preserve the more innocent potential uses of the area and to re-designate a large zone of land back to *play*.

The consideration to allow banal residential development plans to take part of the creative endeavor (as well as the historic area) is twofold. First, the homogeneity of the new developments will provide a stark contrast to the new park's built diversification. One is (perhaps subconsciously) further compelled to exit such an ordinary environment, of the Bayview and LeBreton sites, on a more frequent basis in order to experience a drastically different composed one of the park. Secondly, if large parkland is to be located here, there needs to be a considerable surge in population and community growth nearby, which the proposals undoubtedly accommodates. Although the plans need not be so ordinary, the

² City of Ottawa, "Bayview / Somerset Area Secondary Study," City of Ottawa- PublicConsultation, 22 March 2005
<http://ottawa.ca/public_consult/bayview/index_en.shtml>.

National Capital Commission, "Development Projects- LeBreton Flats- From Shore to the Core," National Capital Commission: Parks, Heritage, and Development, 22 March 2005
<http://www.canadacapital.gc.ca/corporate/parks_heritage/development_projects/lebreton/index_e.asp>

focus of the project is on the park itself, which may indirectly benefit from having these “usual” neighborhoods surrounding it. Even the absolutely most beautiful and well-organized park is unsuccessful if there are no people using it. Ultimately, the park requires people in it to make it lively, vibrant, and thrive. A good example that relates to this issue is Central Park in New York City. Its success is in a large part due to the fact that it is completely surrounded by intensely populated built densification.

The assumption is that the NCC will eventually pursue continued building development westward from the Flats with a similar vocabulary of fabric (Phase 3 development, see Fig. 3b). Fig. 4 (next page) demonstrates how this context will likely appear over time.

Fig. 4: Urban Master Plan (Expected Future Context)
Park Boundary Determined by Future City Fabric

The park site can now be foreseen to accommodate the several individual communities that surround it (both new and old) while bridging together different social classes to a common destination place. Furthermore, because the site will be the major public transit intersection, many people from outer districts will be passing through its spaces. It is important to note here that the City plans to re-align the transitway slightly south of where it is now while creating an East-West line for the O-Train to run along parallel to it. While this obviously creates further division (already posed by Scott and the

transitway) between the North and South, the design will address the problem by creating connections and essentially bringing the park under, over, and through the infrastructure (discussed later).

All such factors will ensure the parkland will be a well-utilized and vibrant public area. Considering these real world forces (at this master planning stage only) has provided a boundary for the park (Fig. 5d), which is where the process intervention and *play* activity will happen.

...he arose quickly from my loosened grasp to flee into the study for a hidden haven, as though to make sure he was protected from the wrath of my frustration. I was compelled to wait a few minutes outside the door without making the smallest of sounds... just to get an opportunity to capture him and resolve our unsettle contract dispute.

Fig. 5a: Area Ownership Map

Fig. 5b: Urban Master Plan- Zoning

Fig. 5c: Existing Barriers, Views, Constraints and Opportunities

Fig. 5d: Park Boundary Plan: Existing Conditions

Fig. 6b: Looking North-West

Fig. 6h: Looking East

Fig. 6g: Looking North

Fig. 6c: Looking South

Fig. 6d: Looking East

Fig. 6e: Looking South

Fig. 6a: Park Site- Existing Topography

Fig. 6f: Looking South

Fig 7b:

Fig 7c:

Fig 7d:

Fig 7e:

Fig 7f:

Fig 7g:

Fig 7h:

Fig. 7a: Park Site- Existing Infrastructure

Fig 7i:

Can the killing television travel to the adjoining monkey?

Architect's log: Oct. 10th, 2004.

With his hands up on the window, palms fully pressed against the glass, I could clearly see he wanted to escape the boredom of the living room to go outside...

2.3. *The Park as a System of Parts*

The park at large is a compilation of separate programs and “structures” of various kinds (as mentioned- some are determined with function, others are not), which are re-interpreted into the sites’ existing fabric. Both the specific and indefinite programmatic elements / built entities are intended to ‘frame’ *playing* through the projection and inhabitation of their exterior, as well as interior spaces (some more spatial than others).

As a mixture of several functional entities, the park brings about leisure time patterns and *play* activity to societies faced with more and more urbanization and densification. The entities that make up the park include *elements of nature* (land, water, plants, etc.); *use areas* (game courts, roads, walkways, yards, etc.); *major structures* (buildings); *minor structures* (fences, sitting areas, signs, etc.); *people* and *animals* (Rutledge, 14). The amalgamation of these groups, articulated in a meaningful way, make the park a distinct and unique setting.

2.4. *La Villette Park as the Creative Model*

Some parks in existence have a strong emphasis on unique and creative design. One such park, La Villette in Paris, serves as a prime example of how a *playful* design approach can manifest a “playground” on multiple levels. “Bernard Tschumi organized the park around a triple system of points, lines and surfaces. The Points are the follies, the lines are

the walkways, and the surfaces are the prairie spaces (areas of relaxation and enjoyment)”.³ While the design approach is different than the one used in this thesis, many parallels can be drawn between the two projects.

La Villette uses a similar mixture of programming as the Bayview-Somerset project. As stated in section 2.5., the thesis project includes the Science and Technology Museum as a major component of the park. La Villette contains its own Science and Technology building, La Cite des Sciences et de L’industrie, as a prime feature and attraction. The importance of such a particular inclusion of program in both these “playground” projects is discussed in the following section. Added to this feature, La Villette employs *play* related programming, including spaces for music (the Conservatoire de Paris, the Cite de la Musique, the Zenith) and theatre (International Theatre of French Language, The Paris-Villette Theatre). More important than this however, concerning our topic, is the suggestion of *play* in La Villette’s design and composition that successfully brings about unscripted activity.

A small example demonstrates such a design move by burying a massive bicycle wheel into an otherwise ordinary green space. The wheel not only serves as a conceptual artifact in the field that demands curiosity, but can be re-appropriated to serve as a soccer net, a thing for children to climb on, or simply an awning to provide shade for the resting person.

³ Parc La Villette, *A Century of Architectural Creation*, 18 Sept. 2005
<http://www.villette.com/us/mainqvd_us.asp?presentation/architec_us.htm>.

Fig. 7j. La Villette- Bicycle Wheel

Fig. 7k. La Villette- Bicycle Hand Bar and Wheel

The follies located in Tschumi's project are another example of a unique design approach. Each folly contains one or several implied functions but collectively they serve as part of a system of navigation for La Villette. The follies burst with bright red color, each characterized by its function with slight differences in shape and space within a shared architectural vocabulary. Some do not have a function at all, leaving them open to interpretation, for possible future renovation and adaptive-reuse. They provide visitors with a series of reference points while giving the park an overall identity.

Fig. 7l. La Villette- Follies

La Villette is a realization of what is possible for a recreational landscape development for a major city. While the site conditions are much different from the Bayview-Somerset zone of investigation, many items of interest consider Tschumi's park

when addressing the thesis design. Such items include the treatment of water-pedestrian interaction, walkway systems, lines of axis/direction, re-adaptation of objects in landscape, treatment of encounters between natural and built entities, experience of discovery in visitor inhabitation (such as framing or revealing specific points of view), and of course, *play* areas and “adventure playgrounds”.

2.5. Case for Science and Technology Museum as Element of “Playground”

Fig. 8. Science and Technology Museum Proposal.

Many parallels draw together the ideas surrounding *play* and the manner in which the Science and Technology museum operates as an established institution. The museum itself is much about discovery- where one recognizes or formulates their own relationships and understandings of technological and scientific phenomena. This has led to many of its exhibitions promoting a very interactive and “hands-on” approach. Children learn about science and technology through the experience of the museum. It provides opportunities for them to explore things on their own while staging scenarios to allow such experience to

occur. Not only the exhibitions themselves, but also the museum as a physical composition of parts, a place of discovery, is analogous to how *play* is about discovery.

The museum is constantly in a state of transition, it is never static. The strong temporal nature of its operation suggests yet another significant parallel to *play*. Aside from the permanent collection of artifacts housed in the complex there is considerable emphasis on temporary expositions that bestow “life” to the museum. The museum has nine curatorial sections. These include: 1- Telecommunications, 2- Land Transport, Domestic Technology, Mining and Forestry, Marine Technology, Computers, Physical Sciences, Space (Galaxy), and Photography / Graphic Arts. Temporary attractions include artifacts borrowed from outside public and private collections. Various outside groups (i.e. the Jaguar club, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, etc.) volunteer to put on other events. The beauty of these provisional attractions is that they can be set up in the most unlikely of places (hallways or corridors, on an outside stage or pavilion, in a corner of the museum, an open lawn or yard in the park, etc.) It is in such moments and places that the museum is most interesting. Architectural form can emphasize such flexibility for this multi-use functionality (hence, we return to our *play* concept of adaptive re-use). This does not only apply to the museum building, for the “built artifacts” of the park including the expansive open areas of the site very much accommodate and become an extension of the museums constantly changing expositions. They become places the museum takes advantage of for special events, demonstration areas, and stages for any particular event or production it may put on.

Perhaps to compete with fast-paced media such as movies, television, etc., the museum is constantly infusing its building with temporary exhibitions that become

attractions to the “attention deficit” population providing a rejuvenating experience (i.e. always new and non-static). Often these infusions take place in the “nooks and crannies” of the building (both interior and exterior) so that the journey or experience to discover the “installations” is as much about *play* as the display and interactivity of the science and technology itself.

2.6. Case for Science and Technology Museum for the Bayview / Somerset Site

Having made associations between *play* and the museum, there are other reasons why the museum is the choice as the major structure to anchor the site. Presently, with the surge of public interest in national institutions, the museum is looking for a new home and has considered relocating from its current St. Laurent site. Because of the enormous costs associated with relocating the steam locomotive collection, and the limited options for the relocation, the Bayview site is the ideal option. It is only via rail tracks that the Steam Locomotives can be displaced. This presents the proposed site as a lucrative destination, not only due to existing rail infrastructure to transport the locomotives, but also because it is the former rail yard of the city. The displacement of the artifacts will reunite the collection back to the history of the area (see Fig. 2b), adding another layer of depth to the project and further reviving the site.

Much of the exhibition spaces need to be in controlled areas (in terms of lighting, acoustics, climatic conditions, etc.) This provides the opportunity to “bury” much of the permanent collection into the difficult to inhabit spaces, which exist under and between the existing transitway and Scott Street (Fig. 7f). The remaining structure of the museum could extend from these points, while opening up to the exterior, serving the park by other means.

The museum as a built artifact becomes a critical zone of passage through the North and South regions of the park (the roof of the building potentially becoming topography, extending vertically as a raised landscape for the park). The museum becomes the creatively built solution to link the North and South sections of the site.

Having the museum located at the Bayview / Somerset site fulfils the need for a final destination point for the O-train traveler. Currently, the gap between the Transitway and Scott street is the final stop on the rail's line and provides no sense of arrival for the public transit user. To place the museum at this critical juncture, with the overlap functionality of a transit hub (servicing both train and bus) emphasizes the notion of arrival and makes it an exciting one.

The Science and Technology Museum has always been particularly successful in attracting the child population due to its strong ties to *play* making it an allocated space for learning and play. Parents will enjoy accommodating their children to the site because of the numerous other aspects that appeal to their category. Such things include the park's natural and relaxed setting, the educational aspects of the museum, and many others. The museum's inclusion into the park design project creates an ideal union between the two entities, together forming a greater "playground", in which the *play process* will also assist in its making.

A failing tooth reveals a free thumbnail.

Architects log: November 17th, 2004.

"Well, I cannot converse just yet," he replied, "but it will be better if we both make it."

Chapter 3 – "The Client"

Fig. 9. Detail Drawing of "Client" In Action.

3.1. Introduction of “the Client”

It is appropriate at this point to introduce another resource that has been fundamental to the thesis study. As an instrumental component of the research, I have extensively observed and documented both the personality and *play* patterns of a child at the age of two and a half years. The intent of employing this particular study is threefold; firstly, to better understand why the child is consumed and *plays* to the capacity which he does; secondly, to evaluate the kind of space the boy requires to *play*; thirdly, to use the boy as an instrument in the creative process of design. As I refer to our “client” subject (we shall present him simply as ‘G’), the realization of his involvement presents a distinctive aspect of *play*, providing a valuable resource of inspiration as well as critical insight to the thesis conceptualization (revealed in the following chapter).

3.2. The Client’s General State of Affairs

It did not take long to recognize that the child is at a stage in his life where the only action that did not require a kind of tuition was the act of *playing* (other than the purely biological bodily functions such as eating or sleeping). Other than his ability to recognize immediate family members, and to demonstrate genuine affection towards them, he really did not know, or do, anything else but *play*, for it is his primary pre-occupation. The constant physical exertion, the persistent invention and manipulation (uses) for objects is testament to this. For him, although it is still obviously enjoyable, *playing* actually emerges as a labour intensive activity. *G’s play* appears as an occupation for it is the primary thing that concerns his current state of existence and his everyday activity. “For a child, playing

must be his or her business. Children must think seriously about how to play and how to make it fun” (Senda 1).

Why is *G* always *playing*? Is it because he has a life that is not yet constrained with the “rational” aspects of the human condition as pointed out by Huizinga? Such things are slowly making their way into his affairs as he learns to verbalize, obey rules given by his parents, and eat “properly”, all according to specific instructions of conduct. In all the observations of *G*, his overwhelming desire to *play* superseded any other necessities to the point where they are distractions that took away from his *playing* (and thus his freedom). Such unwanted things caused him major nuisance and often sent him into fits of rage; a clear indication of protest against what was perceived to be his assimilation into a conventionalized state of self. In a world which is not yet fully realized, it appeared from the observations that the instilling of this conformity is viewed by the child as imposed and hindering of his fun.

3.3. The Client’s Mind with Regards to Play

It is in these early stages when *G*’s consciousness of himself is revealed, primarily through a personal and limited internal experience. This experience is not the fullness of his reality. The reality that exists for him now (his own interpersonal actuality) does not have any regard for the previously mentioned regulations or conventions. The evolution of his integration into an implicit and shared co-existence where accountability exists is eventually inescapable not only due to society’s mentoring, but also because of the biologically predetermined situation (which is the growth in the child’s capacity to perceive

beyond his current fantastic view of the world). Merleau-Ponty best outlines these ideas when he states:

Certainly after three years a neutral or objective ground is set up between the child and the other; a “lived distance” divides them. There is no longer that dizzying proximity of others which made possible certain disorders, certain hallucinations, as well as transitivity. (154)

The reason for these various confusions or hallucinations is due to a lack of cognitive flexibility- a term often used in developmental psychology. It refers to “the ability to consider simultaneously multiple conflicting representations of an object or event at the same time- critical for cognitive development and executive functioning” (Jacques and Zelazo 2). It is around the third year when the child starts to develop this flexibility towards his own self as well as others, and it is usually mastered by the age of five (also known as “the three to five year shift”).

...It was an awkward little cough because I could not find the words to answer him. For the first time in two years his eyes had passed over me as though he had discovered something new...

Until this point, however, *G* is ignorant, although not completely, of his body (in its entirety), as it relates to the world and to others. It is likely this perceptual lacking of self-consciousness, and the sort of continuous hallucinatory experience, is what allows him to be the truly frolic person, with a fully “free” and unrestricted approach. This is not to say that the boy withdraws his association from the inherent *play* qualities as he gets older, (he never will), but in his transformation towards adulthood there is a movement away from his current (and constant) behavioral circumstance (Huizinga would state he rises to adopt higher levels of *play* complexity). The circumstance is one where *G* has a unique relationship with his *play* qualities- access comes naturally, uninhibitedly, is automatic and

completely lithesome. As the alteration fully transpires in his growth process, something becomes lost; the prominence of his intangible connection to engage *play* freely, on the purest level, diminishes as lucidness develops over time:

At around three years the child stops lending his body and even his thoughts to others. He stops confusing himself with the situation or the role in which he may find himself engaged. He adopts a proper perspective or viewpoint of his own- or rather he understands that, whatever the diversity of situations or roles, he is *someone* above and beyond these different situations and roles. (Merleau-Ponty 152)

The understanding of self beyond the “roles” one is engaged in causes a kind of apprehension towards all actions because the perception of accountability positions itself as part of the mindset. The notion that the young mind of the client is unable to decipher the various roles and scenarios at any given point in time, incapable of considering multiple perspectives (outside of his own) of a single given situation, not having a full consciousness of self or accountability, may in fact be the secret to his genius of *play*. This lacking of cognitive flexibility, while likely being a far less sophisticated condition of lived experience, can be more of an advantage on a number of levels. For what else can account for *G*’s uncanny ability for inventiveness of *play*, which undoubtedly makes him a genius of it. Mitsuru Senda very much acknowledges this position when he states, “The child can invent *play* in any place at any given time and will turn any possible situation into a playground” (4).

3.4. *The Client’s Situation with Regards to Scale*

G’s actual physical size also has a measure of effect on his fantastic perception of the world, as things appear larger, conceivably more dramatic, and out of scale in relation

to his body. If one squats and begins to dwell in various spaces at an eye level of about eighty-five centimeters, one can begin to place oneself at *G*'s scale of understanding (see Fig. 10). If one further imagines their body (including limbs such as arms, legs, hands, etc.) reduced to such a scale, everything changes as space expands. Ceilings are higher, doors have a wider swing, walking distances require more steps, escalating stairs entail more effort and one is in a predicament where the entire built environment is out of scale in relation to their body - the world is out of scale. This physical condition undoubtedly contributes to "the distortions" of perception already present in the mind of *G*.

Fig. 10. Scale Differential.

3.5. *The Client and Consultant's Situation with Regard to "Flexible" and "Formal" Play*

The Thesis thus far has established *G*'s unique situation with regards to *play*, that it is far different from the adult's position. I quickly became aware that I am not able to *play* in the likeness of freedom with which *G plays*; while *G* is unable at this point to *play* in the likeness that I do. This leads to the observation that there exists two forms of *play*: the first being the pure, (flexible or unrestricted) *play* we so often find in children, the second is the more complex, formal (or rules based) type attributed to the mature mind. Dissected through observation and further reinforced through reference material, we have recognized that the function of *G's playing* is an essential attribute that comprises his being. For the adult there is a completely different case, as many other factors occupy such a mind. The adult has a sense of social responsibility and most often distances himself or herself from *play* until the appropriate circumstance presents itself. There are apprehensions caused by the awareness of constant and definite outcomes and / or consequences associated to every action taken that directly ascribes to themselves. When the opportunity arises for the adult, *play* usually appears in a more developed form. Due to the presence of these apprehensions, *play* works within the more logically structured system of the adult mind; it does not exhibit the innocent virtues of the child's play. This does not exclude it from being genuine, for such *play*, can be highly structured in games and contests (but this is not the focus of the discussion). Formal *play* very much draws upon many of the same issues, including a transport to a temporal space, or to a fantastic situation, despite the perceived absence of some of the carefree richness abundantly found in the child form.

Should one carve a sharp distinction between these two kinds of *play*, and question the validity of regarding them as separate entities altogether? Are these two in fact part of

one category in which there is a gradual transition zone of separation? Huizinga suggests that although there is drastic contrast in appearance between primitive and sophisticated forms of *play*, both contain the same essential attributes. Specifically:

Play is transmitted, it becomes tradition. It can be repeated at any time, whether it is “child’s *play*” or a game of chess, or at fixed intervals like a mystery. In its faculty of repetition lies one of the most essential qualities of *play*. It holds good not only of *play* as a whole but also of its inner structure. In nearly all the higher forms of *play* the elements of repetition and alternation (as in the refrain), are like the warp and woof of a fabric. (Huizinga 10)

According to Huizinga, all the terminology surrounding *play* contains deeply interconnected associations. For example, the ideas behind the terms of *play* and game are inseparable. Although the game (or contest) is distinguishable as a highly structured order in which *playing* occurs, the two entities are not be able to exist independently. Their elements subsist as entwined and fluid, for the game can arise out of *play* just as *play* arises out of the game. If, in truth, there is no formal distinction between the two states then we are to accept that there is a line of progression of sophisticated development.

Iona and Peter Opie, authors of *Children’s Games in Street and Playground*, take the counter approach, making a more clear distinction between the two forms by expressing them as *play* and games, with the implication that games are the higher developed form. In such a case, the question lies in where and when the separation occurs between the terms, if there is to be one at all.

From their own studies, the Opies state: “*Play* is unrestricted, while games have rules. *Play* may merely be the enactment of a dream, but in each game there is a contest” (2). When referring specifically to children’s games, “they are more akin to ceremonies

than competitions. In these games children gain the reassurance that comes with repetition and the feeling of fellowship that comes from doing the same as everyone else” (Opie, 2).

There are many parallels that can be drawn from both Huizinga’s and the Opies’ approaches to the theory. In Huizinga’s document, the repetition aspect is critical when engaging in any kind of *playing*, likewise in the Opie text. The repetition identification reveals itself in sports and, to a lesser degree, in ceremonial dance. Nevertheless, the kind of purity, already discussed in the child’s variety of *play* has repetition often evolving from the *playing* itself. When engaging *G*, for example, often the factor of repetition is what keeps the playing alive. If I tap him on the shoulder without any forewarning and proceed to run away, he will immediately chase me and attempt to tap me back (as in a game of tag). This sequence will continue to repeat itself, originally due to the single playful tap. The differences, therefore, lie in the type of framework that orders the repetition in the two forms of *playing*.

Despite the Opie position of a formal distinction between *play* and games, it is not my perception that *G*’s *play* is completely unrestricted. There is, of course, the undeniable freedom that exists for him while doing so, and in his ability to engage it continuously. While the *play* itself is “freedom from reality”, aspects found in *G*’s *playing* patterns remain overshadowed by a sort of inherent regulation unknown to him. The “rules” of *play* still exist; they are simply less defined and loose.

G’s *play* could never be truly unrestricted because of the boundaries that are set in place outside of his own mind or in the physical setting where his *play* occurs. These boundaries, in a sense, are the same as the “rules” mentioned by Opie on games, there must be complete willingness by all to abide by them or else the *play* cannot reign (even if he is

unaware of them while engaged). Homo Ludens clarifies the consequences of the common occurrences of *play* disruption (of its order):

As soon as the rules are transgressed the whole *play*-world collapses. The game is over because the spell is broken and “real” life gets going again. The “spoil-sport” shatters the *play* world itself by revealing the relativity and fragility of it. He robs *play* of its *illusion*- a pregnant word which means literally “in *play*” (from *inlusio*, *illudere* or *inludere*). Therefore, he must be cast out, for he threatens the existence of the *play*-community. (11)

In *G*’s case, most often the “spoil-sport” is in fact the society that exists outside of his “occupation”, the world that he has not yet fully grasped because of his age. What he does understand, and continually confronts is the interference of that society, which imposes its order on him in an effort to program his mind to function properly within it. It serves as a constant reminder that there are other things beyond his scope- beyond his “*play*-world”, which is continually shrinking in prominence. Therefore, the perceived freedom and virtue revealed in *G*’s actions lies in his ignorance of the conformist environment or social order, allowing for the continual existence in his own “playgrounds”.

The temporary boundaries that make up all “playgrounds” are one way of providing its rules and limits (although they may be un-declared). Once the violation of the “playground” occurs, *play* must end. A familiar example that we constantly see and hear about in the elementary schoolyard environment is the classic “*play* fight” between two young boys. The *play* turns “real”, due to the escalation in the *player*’s desire to “win” the challenge. The “turning real” occurs when one of the *players* is brought out of the *play* space boundary because of the excessive physical discomfort he has encountered at a specific point in time during the act of *playing*. The boy weeps, and instantly pulls out because he is injured. While the “*play* fight” fully appears unrestricted in all sense of

observation, we now understand that the slightest disruption of its delicate order causes it to break down.

I have witnessed this on an even more primitive level in an example of the two-year-old *G* and his female counterpart of the same age (whom we shall name *J*). The event suggests a parallel occurrence. In this scenario, *G* and *J* are not in a wrestling match of any kind but rather engaged in un-confrontational dance duo to a melody emitted from a stereo. They hold hands and move in a “ring-around-the rosy” fashion. There is no contest whatsoever in this pure act of *play*, nor is one child trying to outperform the other. However, the overexcited *G*, perhaps because of his naturally exuberant personality, or simply because he has become apathetic with the pace of his partner, increases his rotational speed in the dance. *J*, clearly unprepared for the sudden occurrence, falls to the floor. In a matter of seconds, the croaking sounds of joy from *J* instantly become cries of grief because of the over-zealous *G*. Once again, the *play* world is shattered and the child’s guardian rebukes him for being too rough with his partner.

We conclude that primitive and mature *play* could be referred to as flexible versus formal (as one or the other) but with the consideration that they are interrelated where there is a progression in definition of structure and sophistication. Since all game-*playing* share common characteristics, (such as rules or boundaries, repetitions and traditions, etc.) it is an issue of subjective consideration when one decides on a label to place on type. The key in deciphering any specific kind of *play*, therefore, is to perceive each one’s respective ordered framework as a degree in variation (whether it is highly defined or not).

The previous argument demonstrates the complexity of defining or allocating issues in *play* variation between users. If we return to *G*’s *play* example, we can see that the

“unconstrained” nature of the act still operates within certain limits. Any form of primitive *play*, such as the examples already discussed, although appearing completely free-form; still operate with restrictions from the natural realities from which *play* extends.

3.6. Conclusion of Chapter 3

A brother sings a slimy cocoon.

Architect's log: December 12th, 2005.

I think he's finally getting where I'm coming from. He told me yesterday on the phone "I have to pause and recover myself before deciding to shake people's hands with ruffled feathers. I'm sure I'll find a way to use them in the ____."

Having responded to studies regarding the *play* phenomenon, and studies concerning the child-client, the question remains how these can begin to inform an architectural project that accommodates the complexities mentioned (in both a design process and the built functionality of the site). One is prompted to ask if there is a need for architecture at all, for it has already been established that *play* creates its own dynamic spatial conditions, and because of this, does not necessarily require a kind “special” place in which to occur. The design project and its process is the part of our investigation that questions if there is, or even can be a relationship between *play* and Architecture. The attempt was to create an environment for *play*, as well as use it as the primary vehicle in design- this will be the focus of the next chapter.

The taped refrigerator spits a beautiful tri-cycle.

Certain information pertaining to this section is restricted and disclosed in another document. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

- The “Playground” Project Authority.

Chapter 4 - Play and the Design Process

4.1. The Client as Guide

The recognition of *G*'s unique condition regarding *play* made him the catalyst and inspiration for the project. In the simplest of terms, he was able to conjure unique ways of *playing* that would not be considered typical of most others and this made him a resource in tackling the challenge of this architectural *play* / architecture for *play*. The make-believe scenario of the client-Architect relationship (yet another form of “playground”) involves interpretation of his *play* as new conditions for architectural intentions or moments. In re-interpreting the client's actions, the consultant-Architect in turn fulfills his own *playing* in the creative process through various experiments and explorations.

Architects log: Jan 2nd, 2005.

Architects log: Jan 11th, 2005.

The demands put forth to bring these things together may be out of the scope of reasonability. And yet he manages to do it again.

“Look, look, look!!!” he cried, “The springy scooter moves a delicious horse.”

And then it rolled.

Fig. 11. Process.

Fig. 12. Process Image.

Fig. 13. Process Image.

Fig. 14. Process Image.

Fig. 15. Process Image.

Fig. 16. Process.

Fig. 17. Process Model.

Fig. 18. Process.

Fig. 19. Process into Building Elevation.

Fig. 20. Process Elevation Detail 1.

Fig. 21. Process Elevation Detail 2.

Fig. 22. Process Elevation Detail 3.

Fig. 23. Process.

Fig. 24. Process.

Fig. 25. Process Sketch Model.

4.2. Her shining string spins a symphonic global catastrophe.

The thesis was considered as are all architectural projects: a collaboration between multiple parties, a contract between client and Architect. *G* presents “guidelines” that offer any number of directions; it is in their ambiguity where the creative *playing*, with their variables, becomes the approach in manipulating and articulating ideas regarding site, space, event, and program. The “directives”, however unclear they may be, provide a framework for the creative process of the architect. This kind of framework, provided by clients, is usually present in all building commissions; however, this one is especially unique because the means of communication in the relationship is, by necessity, based in the realm of the non-verbal.

A cunning parachute bites the disruptive football.
Architects log: September 18th, 2004.
 He stretched out with tool in hand and began to demonstrate
 what it was he was talking about. The rough motions and the
 edges of the tool obviously meant he was cutting into something.
 That was fine and dandy but I had no idea he actually wanted
 to keep the remnant of the damn thing.

Fig. 26. Process.

Fig. 27. Play With Sand.

4.3. Your busted hamster blares at an embarrassing balloon.

The scenario leaves the Architect with a circumstance where everything involves a greater subjective reading; one that is to be “*played with*” to achieve or suggest some means to an end. It has already been established from chapter 3 that, through *play*, *G* is best able to communicate his messages. Given this state and the several degrees of separation that exist when attempting to communicate with him, *playing* becomes one of, if not the primary means of understanding in the relationship, the channel with which to transcend the communication gap. Whatever is derived from *G*’s *play* may be the closest way of obtaining a kind of genuine impression of *play*, a “snapshot” of the act(s).

A dodgy fingernail crawls a sweet map.

Architect’s log, Oct. 14th, 2004:

Halfway through the last meeting he grabbed the pen out of my hand and began to draw what he wanted to himself. In a controlled manner I sternly and solemnly addressed him: “G, none of what you are doing makes sense, what am I going to do with this?”

“You’re the architect, you figure it out!” came the answer back...

Fig. 28. Process.

..."You're not drawing the site!" I yelled. "You're just moving that pen around anywhere like it's some toy." "Then again" I thought, "I don't think I would be able to draw lines like that." So I told him "Fine, I'll take them." And when he left I started to build what he drew. It was only then my eyes opened up to the possibilities...

Fig. 29. Process Model.

Fig. 30. Process Model.

Fig. 31. Process Model.

Fig. 31b. Process Model.

The terrific water jumps an elevating painting.

Fig. 32.

Fig. 33. Architectural Concept.

The wasteful finger ring cripples a sore tongue.

Architect's log, April 30th, 2005:

In the morning he had, while I was away from my desk, left me yet another set of drawings. As I peered through them I couldn't help thinking: "They're not even to scale..."

Fig. 34a: Client Drawings- Set 1

Fig. 34b: Client Drawings- Set 2

Fig. 34c: Client Drawings- Set 3

Fig. 35. Process (Site).

Fig.36. Process (Site).

4.4. The disgusting puppet dances a sculptured handrail.

The witnessed events, when broken down into parts, can serve as a re-adaptation of other aspects of the project. The event can be a way of planning or looking at the inhabitant's experiential journey through the Architectural environment (as a progression of occurrences). Example:

The effort required to raise a cart. ...leading to...	As possibly:	Effort to climb a hill or set of stairs. ...leading to...
The carts seemingly smooth and linear progression along the platform. ...leading to...	As possibly:	A walk through a narrow but pleasantly darkened tunnel. ...leading to...
The cart crashing off the edge of the platform.	As possibly:	The climax of an anticipated, yet somewhat unpredictable chaotic event. (i.e. at the end / exit of the tunnel one arrives at an explosion of space and built form).

In a similar manner to Bernard Tschumi's Manhattan Transcripts,

The photograph's internal logic suggests that it can function in varied ways. It first acts as a metaphor for the architectural program, by referring to events or to people. Second, it can be read independently, for the photographs all possess their own autonomy, independent of the drawings juxtaposed to them. Third, the events' allegorical content can powerfully disturb the neutral logic of the game's successive moves, introducing a purely subjective reading. Finally, it can be deconstructed and reorganized in a variety of ways, suggesting the idea of hybrid activities. (Illustrated Index XXVII)

Despite that *G's play* moment is lost in specific time and space, the isolated event is retained in the memory of the observer, and in the more explicit video recording of the boy's movement and gesticulation. Both allow opportunity for a visual "reading" and in turn a condition for creating the observer's own "playground" through making and imagination.

Fig. 37. Park Site Plan.

Fig. 38. Park Site- Ariel Perspective.

Fig. 39. Final Model- Plan View.

Fig. 40. Final Model- Birds-Eye Perspective.

Fig. 41. Final Model- Birds-Eye Perspective from West.

Fig. 42. Final Model- Birds-Eye Perspective from North.

Fig. 43. Sectional Drawing.

Fig. 44. Museum East Elevation with Noon Shadow on June 21st. Fig. 45. Museum North Elevation with 7pm Shadow on June 21st. Fig. 46. Museum South Elevation with 1:45pm Shadow on June 21st.

5.1. Arrival by Foot Paths

Most people who visit the park from Somerset Heights would arrive on foot, via a direct access from Somerset Street. Here a unique bridge has been provided that functions as a way to descend onto the City Centre ramp while providing a special threshold and passage announcing a transition into a new world or environment. The City Centre, renovated as a multi-level market facility, accommodates shops, grocery stores, restaurants, cafés, a video arcade and the existing and very popular “Orange Monkey” billiards hall.

Fig. 47. Orientation Plan.

Fig. 48. View from City Centre Parking Lot Looking Towards Somerset Bridge.

The City Centre ramp and upper platform serve as access to the 2nd level shops while also providing vertical shafts to the tenants at grade level. Some of these shafts have a similar quality to the Somerset entrance passage in that they have a fantastic look and feel that is not common anywhere else in the city- from these it becomes clear that one has entered the “Playground”.

Fig. 49. Vertical Shaft Concepts.

Walking along either the upper or lower platforms running parallel to the market, one has a view onto the park's Mini Golf Area, which is slightly sunken into the landscape and articulated with its own "micro topography". At certain points in the zone, Putters have views of the market, catching glimpses of activities and people moving throughout.

Architects log: June 25th, 2005.

The kind of stick that had given order to G was being taken home while walking along one of the broad streets that abutted the hillside. It was a sunny morning when he did not once lift that stick from dragging, tracing patterns on the ground. Exceptions were only made when it was time to wack a rock or piece of garbage we would encounter on the journey...

Further along the market ramp, one arrives at its crossroads; A right turn leads to the ramp's descent into the City Centre's parking lot, while the left turn continues along the elevated plane pointing towards the park's most identifiable element- the Science and Technology's light-house tower.

The clever truck crunches the indifferent path.

Architects log: August 22nd, 2005.

First he wanted to go this way, then he wanted to go that way...does he know at all what or where he wants to go? Aha! The most efficient route is not as important as all the different ways of getting there... because he could and wanted to go in all those different directions (it even says so in the drawing).

Fig. 50. Orientation Plan.

Fig. 51. Birds-Eye Perspective Sketch from South.

The ramp's junction is adjacent to the only residential tower located inside the park, which is the converted office tower of the City Centre complex. The junction also provides another vertical shaft to grade. One descends the shaft onto the park's court plaza, which denotes a major circulation intersection. The plaza extends from the City Centre market, and accommodates sitting areas, outdoor chess tables, and busker's performing areas. Residents and tenants of the building can use the plaza to host outdoor parties and gatherings.

Fig. 52. Activity in the Court Plaza.

A pathway, extending southwest from the plaza, connects the eastern side of the park to the Tom Brown Arena. Fortuitously, this circulation route resurrects old Wellington street to non-vehicular traffic. An old street sign is reinstated on the path to remind park-goers of its past. From this vantage point and to the southeast of the path the mildly sunken mini-golf zone can be seen. Screening, provided by a treed bench and platform allows passers-by to glimpse extended views beyond.

Fig. 53. Orientation Plan.

The new Wellington Path cuts through the park's forest, which has its own language of circulation comprising of pathways and clearings. If one decides to enter the forest from the Wellington path, they can venture off to discover hidden places with the potential to inscribe or build artifacts within it.

Fig. 54. Forest Inhabitation.

Fig. 55. Jacks indecisive thing captures the conflicted instigator.

Arriving at the other side of Wellington, one can see the Tom Brown Arena where hockey, curling, and shuffleboard games are played indoors. Just outside of the arena, relaxed games such as lawn bowling (bocci), and horseshoes are played.

Starting from the Market Plaza again, one can continue northwest on grade towards the centre of the site through an open green space. This vast space allows users to picnic by a tree, lie down on the grass, or jog along the main pathway that leads to the museum.

Fig. 56. Orientation Plan.

Fig. 56b. Open Field

Passing under the Scott Street bridge, one begins a journey through an extended threshold to the North Section of the park. In this transition space, one encounters the ever-increasing presence of the Museum's architecture as it guides them to the other side. One can also stop at this threshold and go inside the Museum's main entrance and foyer.

Fig. 57. Site Centre- Ariel View from South.

Fig. 58. Perspective Looking Down into Site Centre.

Just north of the building is a carved section of the landscape. In this area one encounters a channel of water that wraps around the entire North side. Canoes and other small boats can use the channel to glide into the museum and partake of the building's Marine Technology section.

His transparent shower curtain screams a downright nasty toaster.

Architects log: March 11th, 2005.

Why must bath time always be a pain I wondered. "Please stop pushing the soap bar back and forth under the tap's flowing water and start cleaning yourself before I cancel the whole thing."

"..."

Fig. 59. Orientation Plan.

Fig. 60. North Entrance.

Fig. 61. Views of Park's Small Water Channel.

Fig. 61b. View Approaching Marine Technology Entrance.

Fig. 62. Views of Park's Lake and Marine Technology Entrance.

Fig. 63. Process- Sketch Model of Carved Landscape area.

Fig. 64. Views of Carved Landscape Area.

The carved landscape holds many other surprises. Many of the pavilions and follies are located in this area and, much like the Somerset bridge entrance, are designed in a playful and organic way. These artifacts are artistic creations that effectively transfigure a typical space. During the day, the artifacts are curious forms that demand attention while at night they are lit up and appear mysterious and fantastical. The park as a whole is transformed by its lights. The light of day creates a sober and elegant environment, while the moon and artificial night lamps make it seductive and magical. Hence, the park appears to have its own kind of *play*; a life-cycle accentuated by the diurnal and nocturnal changes.

There is also a cave, where one descends and realizes they are under a pool of flowing water as they look up at it through glass.

Fig. 65. The boring orchid permeates in clockwise performance.

The pool is equipped with randomly activated fountain jets. On hot summer days, children will enjoy cooling off by playing in the pool or by random sprays coming from the fountain.

Fig. 66. The Chinese undertaker topples a sonic triangle.

Fig. 67. Perspective of Pool Area above the Cave.

The cave below is not only a space of hiding or refuge, but also contains a tunnel passage that leads back to the museum or alternatively, up to the carved landscape area. The carved landscape area as a whole is designed such that its movement patterns are circular, allowing children to continually encounter each other in their *playing*.

Fig. 68. View just Outside of Cave Entry.

Fig. 69. View Outside of Cave Entry.

Fig. 70. View Inside Cave.

West of the carved landscape is a part of the museum's steam locomotive collection, which is located outside on the Bayview site's old train tracks.

Fig. 71. Orientation Plan.

The centre track was recently refurbished and is now occupied by the O-train, light-rail operation. The stationary artifact locomotives frame views of the O-train as it emerges

from the museum's East wing. As is presently the case with the Museum of Science and Technology, the locomotives as objects in the landscape are accessible to children who enjoy *playing* on and around them. For this reason, the locomotives are surrounded by a sand pit play area that can also serve as a cushion for climbing children should they fall.

Fig. 72. O-train exit and Locomotive Collection.

Children and adults alike can access an elevated platform located atop one of the locomotives that extends back into the museum, leading to the remainder of the extensive Land Transport collection.

Fig. 73. Sand Pit.

Starting back again at the City Centre Market (at the intersection above the court plaza) one can take an elevated pedestrian bridge that leads to the Light House Tower. Walkers using the bridge, pass by and look down onto events in the park's Amphitheatre on the left or people *playing* in enclosed game courts on the right.

Fig. 74. Orientation Plan.

Fig. 75. Amphitheatre Concept.

Fig. 76. Ariel View Looking Down on Museum's Exterior Bridge.

Walking across Scott Street, one arrives at the light tower. The base swoops around and reaches past the transit-way to make a pedestrian connection back to the museum. Of course many will make their way up to the tower's highest point in order to look across the park and beyond. They will be able to observe the boats coming in from the river to the park's lake and docking area located near the base of the tower.

Fig. 77. View of Site from Atop Light House.

Fig. 78. View Approaching Light House from Water.

Fig. 79. Ariel View of Light House.

5.2. *Arrival by Boat Paths*

"...the soap floats you smelly bracelet that listens to the long brick mortar!!"

Fig. 80. Orientation Plan.

Some visitors will arrive at the park from the Ottawa River, entering the park's wide canal and passing lakefront properties, where residents overlook the canal from their balconies or boat docks. Further, boats make their way towards the lake, passing under the transitway to the marina services. The great and final destination, however, is reached at the light tower where boats dock and people get back on land to discover the park and museum. Once again, from this point smaller boats can access the secondary smaller water channel and enter the museum through the Marine Technology section. In Winter, the Lake becomes an Ice Skating rink.

Fig. 81. Snow Play.

5.3. *Arrival by Car*

There are four parking areas located on the perimeter of the park grounds accommodating people who arrive by car. The largest lot is at the City Centre. This lot will serve those who wish to engage the City Centre Market building as well as others who's destination is the adjacent tennis courts or Amphitheatre. Regardless of the person's purpose, the City Centre lot is accessible off of Champagne Street, which is connected to Scott Street. This provides clear and easy access for drivers. The other, smaller lots, are located on the other side of the market, at the Tom Brown Arena, and the Civic Building. People who plan on using only a specific aspect of the site's vast features, such as the mini-golf, museum, or Tom Brown Arena, can access the appropriate parking lots to do so.

5.4. Arrival by Train

Fig. 82. Sectional Drawing.

In this proposed reconfiguration, as the train approaches Somerset it begins to descend into the ground. Moments later the train stops within the museum allowing people to exit and board before it continues on its journey to Gatineau - Hull. In order to accentuate the dynamics of the site and its numerous movement systems, the transfer terminals are exposed and overlapping within the museums multi-level foyer. The foyer has several routes of access that lead to the various sections of the complex and to the outside, into the park.

The exit in the museum's foyer positions the visitor at the center point of the entire site. Because many visitors will be arriving by train from outlying neighbourhoods, the site's centre, which includes the museums main foyer, is likely to be the area with the largest trajectory of movement and circulatory activity spilling outward in all directions.

Fig. 83. Orientation Plan.

Fig. 84. Shuttle Connection.

One way to get to the museum's east wing is to go up to the top level of the foyer and access a high-tech shuttle that runs along the transit way to the east foyer adjacent to the Light House Tower. One may decide to walk instead, as the shuttle bridge accommodates pedestrians by a parallel exterior catwalk. Once again in the secondary foyer, there are many access routes that lead inside, to the museum exhibition areas, and outside to the structure's roofscape for more fantastic views of the park. Outside, one makes their way down to the north section of the park, passing over and around the building's sculpted architectural form while encountering some of the museum's unique exterior features (used as part of the exhibition program).

Conclusion

"So what do you think?" I asked with a bit of unease.

"It'll do," he answered, "It's like Annabel's creative underarm cooking the unspoken argument..."

The question regarding a *playful* design process towards the implementation of an architectural space for the act of *playing* is one that was summated by the Park-“playground” project itself. While there are other methodologies that could have provided creative solutions to the architectural design, accommodating the functional issues and predicaments in the general scope of building projects, it is now difficult to ascertain how *play*, in some form or another, is not present in the creation of successful works of Architecture. This is in reference to the analysis discussed in Chapter 1, in particular the notions of playing and making with its interconnected association to creativity and invention, that is the “growing-point” in art or design (Huzinga 168). Realizing this, the Surrealists employed play directly by using techniques to spark their own respective creative activity. As mentioned by Breton, “We were looking to (the playing of games) primarily for entertainment, and for those rewarding discoveries it yielded in relation to knowledge (regarding art) that came only later” (Brotchie 137).

The “Playground” project, as it was stated in the thesis, was informed by several key components, which included the research of other thinkers and writers regarding *play* concepts, the abundant source of *play* discovered in the active child, the “requirements” for architectural space and program, and finally the ability of “the Architect” to *play* by intention and/or by process. It was through this specific approach to *play* that the “Architect” was able to emphasize the imaginative potential that is available for release in the subjective design process. Through this means, the “Architect’s” imagination took license to implement alternate and exciting possibilities that were derived from a purely *playful* process of conceptualization and action. These implementations mediated between

the rational aspects of the design in order not to lose sight of the working necessities required of a potentially feasible architectural proposition.

Of course, the question arises as to how the “Architect”, in the end, *played*. By learning from, having assistance of, and working in association with a master *player*, which is “the client”, the “Architect” was able to *play* in a similar manner (while already having an established intuition towards *playing*). This was achieved by drawing associations from *G*’s *play* moments, from adaptive re-use of his visual impressions (photographs, video recordings, drawings, etc.), from interpreting the one-on-one interactive engagements with him, and ultimately exploring these “materials” as alternate possibilities in an Architectural context through transformation / improvisation. The method that was employed in the design process had no set formula or criteria in which it could be measured, which is why it has been left in an interpretive state of representation in this document. The process engaged *play* in the manner of a child who *plays*- where the games rules and boundaries are vaguely defined. The majority of time dedicated to the thesis took place in this experimental or “conceiving” stage of development because this is where the *play* experience was most prominent. In retrospect, the move from the stage of conception to the stage of architectural resolution caused apprehension due to the sense that *playful* activity was lost; but such a move had to occur.

Furthermore, the “Architect” *played* an honest make-believe scenario where the “client” had specific needs for a project. The “Architect” had to provide the only kind of spaces that the “Client” demanded- spaces and places to *play*. The make-believe scenario holds true to conventions of an architectural commission, where the client has certain

directions and instructions that the Architect must subjectively interpret, and respond to, within the given parameters.

It had been made clear that at the heart of *play* is the temporal-spatial condition; the fact that it is an event which has a beginning, an end, and a dissipation. Huizinga is adamant that *play* cannot exist in a static condition and must involve movement, as well as visible and mental action. This is not to say that Architecture does not have transformative capability, such as its response to light (by absorbing, reflecting, shadow, etc.), but these subtleties do not pervade the absolute permanence architecture ultimately suggests. If *play* truly exists only in such activity, it can therefore thrive in the process of architectural creation but not in the execution or final product itself. The “Playground” project is therefore a “snapshot”, a suggestion of *play*, much like the impressions left from *G*’s activity. The strength in the architecture however, and a significant function of the Park, is that it frames spaces that encourage, entice and compel *play* activity- for some places are better “playgrounds” than others.

The irony of the design situation is that the dynamic spaces, forms, etc., that arose out of the *playing* were, and always are, effectively inherent in it and therefore the architecture need not require such vibrancy to provide a kind of *play* experience. The spaces that are created in *play* (which are undoubtedly dynamic) and the places where play happens, (unless the *play* expressively demands it), do not rely on each other. Children can

have just as much fun chasing after each other in an open field- a pure form of *play* where a built entity is not required. This suggests that *play* is indeed anti-architectural, for the *play* can be brought out of nothingness. The “Architect” has created a park of desire for the child, while fully acknowledging that those same children (because of what they are and their limitless potential as *play* geniuses) could be equally satisfied *playing* with something else or in another place.

Yet one cannot deny the child’s desire to escape to certain spaces, certain destinations, to alter and manipulate unique objects and materials, each having certain qualities of form and space that either suggest *play*, have *play* capability or entice their *playing* participation. The “Playground” project that certainly suggests a *playful* approach, derived from *play* events, ideas, and actions would engage any child’s imagination further directing them towards *playing*. This was the result of the thesis regarding *play*’s relationship to objects, spatial environments and architecture.

“Have a fun time!” I exclaimed with relief.

The big grin returned when he said, “You know me... I always do... haha!”

“Yes you will” I replied... “Yes we will”.

Works Cited

- Benedikt, Michael. "Cyberspace: Some Proposals." Cyberspace: First Steps. Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1991.
- Brotchie, Alastair. Surrealist Games. Ed. Mel Gooding. Boston: Shambhala Redstone Editions, 2001.
- Huizinga, Johan. Homo Ludens: A study of the Play-Element in Culture. Boston: Beacon Press, 1950.
- Jacques, Sophie and Zelazo, Philip David. "On the Possible Roots of Cognitive Flexibility." The Development of Social Understanding and Communication. Ed. B. Homer and C. Tamis-Lemonda. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates (in press), 2005.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. "The Child's Relations with Others." The Primacy of Perception: And Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History and Politics. Trans. William Cobb. Ed. James M. Edie et al. Northwestern University Press, 1964. 97-155.
- Opie, Iona et al. Children's Games in Street and Playground. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969.
- Parc La Villette. A Century of Architectural Creation. 18 Sept. 2005
<http://www.villette.com/us/mainqvd_us.asp?presentation/architec_us.htm>.
- Russ, Sandra W. Affect and Creativity: The Role of Affect and Play in the Creative Process. Hove and London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1993.
- Rutledge, Albert J. Anatomy of a Park: The Essentials of Recreation Area Planning and Design. Ed. William G. Salo. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1971.
- Senda, Mitsuru. Design of Children's Play Environments. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1992.
- Turner, Victor. From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play. New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982.
- Tschumi, Bernard. The Manhattan Transcripts. London: Academy Editions, 1994.

Bibliography

- Benedikt, Michael. "Cyberspace: Some Proposals." Cyberspace: First Steps. Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1991.
- Brazil. Dir. Terry Gilliam. Universal Home Entertainment, 1985.
- Brotchie, Alastair. Surrealist Games. Ed. Mel Gooding. Boston: Shambhala Redstone Editions, 2001.
- City of Ottawa. "Bayview / Somerset Area Secondary Study." City of Ottawa- Public Consultation. 22 March 2005
<http://ottawa.ca/public_consult/bayview/index_en.shtml>.
- Gebauer, Gunter, et al. Mimesis: Culture, Art, Society. Trans. Don Reneau. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995. 1-7.
- Huizinga, Johan. Homo Ludens: A study of the Play-Element in Culture. Boston: Beacon Press, 1950.
- Jacques, Sophie and Zelazo, Philip David. "On the Possible Roots of Cognitive Flexibility." The Development of Social Understanding and Communication. Ed. B. Homer and C. Tamis-LeMonda. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates (in press), 2005.
- Latz and Partner. "Landscape Park Duisburg-North." Projects / Competitions. 18 Sept. 2005 <<http://www.latzundpartner.de/L3/eng/e-4-du.htm#Water>>.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. "The Child's Relations with Others." The Primacy of Perception: And Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History and Politics. Trans. William Cobb. Ed. James M. Edie et al. Northwestern University Press, 1964. 97-155.
- MIG Communications. Play for All Guidelines : Planning, Design, and Management of Outdoor Play Settings for All Children. 2nd ed. Ed. Robin C. Moore et al. Berkeley: MIG Communications, 1992.
- National Capital Commission. "Development Projects- LeBreton Flats- From Shore to the Core." National Capital Commission: Parks, Heritage, and Development. 22 March 2005
<http://www.canadascapital.gc.ca/corporate/parks_heritage/development_projects/lebreton/index_e.asp>
- Northfork. Screenplay by Mark and Michael Polish. Dir. Michael Polish. Perf. James Woods, Nick Nolte, et al. Paramount Classics, 2003.

Opie, Iona et al. Children's Games in Street and Playground. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969.

Parc La Villette. A Century of Architectural Creation. 18 Sept. 2005
<http://www.villette.com/us/mainqvd_us.asp?presentation/architec_us.htm>.

Russ, Sandra W. Affect and Creativity: The Role of Affect and Play in the Creative Process. Hove and London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1993.

Rutledge, Albert J. Anatomy of a Park: The Essentials of Recreation Area Planning and Design. Ed. William G. Salo. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1971.

Sadler, Simon. The Situationist City. Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1998. 105-155.

Senda, Mitsuru. Design of Children's Play Environments. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1992.

Tafuri, Manfredo. Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development. Trans. Barbara L. La Penta. Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1976.

Tafuri, Manfredo. The Sphere and the Labyrinth. Trans. Pellegrino d'Acierno and Robert Connolly. Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1987. 25-54.

The Adventures of Baron Munchausen. Dir. Terry Gilliam. RCA / Columbia Pictures Home Video, 1988.

Turner, Victor. From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play. New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982.

Tschumi, Bernard. The Manhattan Transcripts. London: Academy Editions, 1994.