

DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY GATHERING PLACES
THROUGH SOCIALLY DRIVEN DESIGN STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

As cultural diversity continues to increase in U.S. urban centers, and indeed throughout the country, it becomes imperative to promote social dialogue between different cultural groups. Varying levels of social interaction, from simply seeing, to intimate conversation, can increase our familiarity and acceptance of cultural difference and lead to the creation of communities with a greater sense of togetherness and a vibrancy of place. This thesis explores the social qualities of urban park space and questions how socially driven design strategies can be used to develop inclusive community gathering spaces as a means of fostering awareness and acceptance of cultural difference. This thesis has developed a unique Social Space Organizational Model based on literature review findings relative to multi-cultural urban park and social space development. The model serves as a foundational framework for the creation of social spaces that function to accommodate cultural group preferences and encourage collective experiences while maintaining a social cohesiveness between park spaces. To do so, the model incorporates three distinct social space types including territories (personal space for independent use), polychromic or collective space (space for multiple and collective activities), and social anchors (activities or amenities of value to multiple groups that encourage community gathering and social engagement). The relation between these social space types, contextual influences and community based cultural group preferences is essential in creating an inclusive social gathering place that is valued by the community. Case studies of urban parks designed for use as social gathering places were analyzed against the model. Literature review findings on the social and character development of social spaces were also explored in the case studies to identify design elements that improve the sociability and experiential quality of social spaces. Ultimately these findings led to the creation of a socially inclusive, socially cohesive neighborhood park design. The design engages multiple community groups by accommodating cultural and social preferences in spatially diverse and flexible park spaces that provide opportunity for individual cultural expression as well as collective social experiences.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

As cultural diversity continues to increase in U.S. urban centers, and indeed throughout the country, it becomes increasingly important to promote interaction between people of different backgrounds. Many forms of interaction, from simply seeing, to intimate conversation can increase our familiarity and acceptance of cultural differences. In addition, a greater understanding of these differences can lead to communities with a strong sense of togetherness and a vibrancy of local place. As a means of achieving this outcome, this thesis identifies ways in which urban park spaces can promote social interaction between different cultural groups and how these methods can then be used to develop a community gathering place that is welcoming to all. This thesis has developed a unique Social Space Organizational Model based on literature review findings relative to multi-cultural urban park and social space development. The model serves as a foundational framework for the creation of a collection of social spaces that function to accommodate the diverse ways in which different cultural groups use urban park spaces, as well as to provide opportunities for shared experiences that encourage community gathering and interaction between groups. Additionally, the model suggests an interconnectivity of various park spaces that promote a unified social experience throughout the park. Case studies of urban parks designed for use as social gathering places were analyzed against the model. Literature review findings on character qualities associated with social spaces as valued by multiple cultural groups were also explored in the case studies to identify design elements that encourage social interaction and foster positive experiences. Ultimately, these findings led to the creation of a neighborhood social gathering place that is welcoming to many different cultural groups and encouraging of community gathering and togetherness. The design engages multiple community groups by creating a park that is accommodative to a range of needs and uses as valued by different groups. Additionally, the design incorporates a diverse range of social opportunities and experiences that maintain flexibility in their ability to provide for individual as well as community based social experiences.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Formally established by immigrants, the U.S. continues to become increasingly diverse, as technology has connected the world, bringing immigrants from across the globe in search of a better life. The resulting cultural diversity provides a unique opportunity for residents of diverse communities to broaden their world view by becoming more familiar with the people and cultures that may differ from our own personal identities. While the home is often a source of refuge and freedom where cultural values and traditions are freely expressed between family and friends, public space has the potential to facilitate cultural exchange between unfamiliar groups. Public parks in particular provide a unique opportunity for this exchange as they are highly valued across cultural groups. In the urban environment, in which diversity is most prevalent, public parks become increasingly valued for their social, physical and mental health benefits.

Urban park projects provide an opportunity for communities and designers to create spaces that foster both individual cultural expression: spaces where family and friends can gather to build and maintain social and cultural ties; and community collectiveness: spaces of shared experience that nurture social and cultural exchange. This thesis explores the social qualities of urban park space and questions how socially driven design strategies can be used to develop inclusive community gathering spaces as a means of fostering awareness and acceptance of cultural difference.

This thesis reviews literature on urban gathering places used by multi-cultural communities as a means of identifying the spatial and character qualities that foster social connections between groups. The result of this research has led to the development of a Social Space Organizational Model (SSOM). The model incorporates three distinct social space types including territories (personal space for independent use), polychromic or collective space (space for multiple and collective activities), and social anchors (activities or amenities of value that encourage community gathering). The relation between these social space types, contextual influences and community based cultural group preferences is essential in creating an inclusive social gathering place.

Case study investigations of two urban parks developed around ideas of social gathering space explore the spatial organization and relationships between the three social space types of the SSOM. Findings reveal the organization and spatial proximity of the social spaces, as represented in the SSOM, to be important in developing a socially cohesive park space. The case studies also identify design elements that contribute to increased sociability and character development relative to their social space type.

Findings from the literature review on the social implications of neighborhood parks were then used to locate and propose the redesign of an existing park to foster stronger social connections between park users. An existing conditions and use analysis of the proposed park, and demographic information about the community was used to determine social and activity preferences that would be of value to multiple community groups and appropriate to the scale and context of the site. The incorporation of these preferences were then spatially organized and aligned within the site based on the framework of the SSOM and relative to the context of the site. Resulting activity spaces were developed to achieve a diversity and flexibility of social and character settings capable of accommodating multiple user group preferences. The identification, exploration and application of spatial design and programming for promoting social interaction between multi-cultural groups ultimately results in a set of best practices for the creation of an inclusive social gathering place.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

CULTURAL REPRESENTATION IN URBAN PARK DESIGN

THE VALUE OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Acknowledging and addressing cultural diversity in urban neighborhood park development is important for the social benefits cultural awareness can provide. Designing for a diversity of people can also bring qualitative enrichment to the neighborhood park experience.

A park that serves a culturally diverse community has the opportunity to break down social barriers by developing familiar relations between disparate groups. Breaking down these barriers begins to build qualities of “community,” developing a sense of place and belonging for all residents. As Catherine Ward Thompson has noted, “there are few other places in modern society where there is a possibility for strangers to interact, regardless of background, financial status, ethnicity, etc. (p.66, 2002). “Public places offer opportunities for people to share space with others in an undemanding way...They are also places where people from different backgrounds can participate in the same activities, observe each other and learn about different ways of life” (Ka’zmierczak, p.32, 2013).

Additionally, a culturally enriched neighborhood park becomes more vibrant through the cultural expressions and social interactions of community groups. To develop this vibrancy, form and programming of the park space should be cultivated from a needs perspective of multiple cultural groups as opposed to just that of a singular predominant culture.

THE “SALAD BOWL” APPROACH

Many urban parks in the United States, particularly those of the 19th and early 20th century, are strongly rooted in the garden and park design of European heritage, a clear representation of the predominant culture of the time. While some of these parks may retain historical and aesthetic value, many suffer from an outdated aesthetic expression, resonating little with non-White visitors.

Thompson refers to these parks as “melting pots”, where individual cultural groups are required to adapt or alter their preferred experiences to fit in to a park representative of a culture that differs from their own. As such, Thompson has suggested that, “instead of the park as ‘melting pot’, we need the ‘salad bowl,’ where different cultures can find individual expression” (p.60, 2002). Individual expression is achieved by designing (form and programming) with user-based values and experiential preferences in mind to create spaces that are accomodative to cultural use preferences. “Accomodating the differences in the ways social class and ethnic groups use and value public sites is essential to making decisions that sustain cultural and social diversity” (Low, p.10, 2013)

Additionally, common values can be found between cultural groups that facilitate the creation of spaces that nurture social interaction. It is the combination of both independent spaces for cultural expression and collective spaces for social interaction that create successful community gathering spaces. Project for Public Spaces has found (through the work of Setha Low, et al., 2005) that “a ‘successful’ multicultural environment is one where various group’s sense of comfort is combined with good physical design to create an atmosphere that can nurture many preferences; a place that fosters social interaction while simultaneously creating distinct ‘spaces’ where individual cultures can be emphasized and celebrated.”

CULTURALLY INCLUSIVE URBAN PARK DEVELOPMENT

Contemporary park planning and design practices have alleviated some of the social and active constraints imposed by parks from earlier time periods. This has been achieved through performing underlying research into community demographics and projections, conducting community outreach to better understand social and cultural values, and designing with physical park space and community connectivity in mind. The resulting contemporary park space is often more spatially and programmatically diverse than its predecessors. Cultural expression is derived less from the use of cultural symbols or styling, but more through the active expression of the cultural groups that inhabit flexible spaces designed to accommodate their preferences.

DESIGNING WITH THE COMMUNITY IN MIND

Every community has of a unique composition of residents from a variety of cultural backgrounds, social classes, ages, and gender. Identifying a community's demographics is an important first step in developing an urban neighborhood park that will be inclusive to all members of the community. In many instances, it may be beneficial to perform community outreach to devise a set of park space preferences that can project more clearly the needs of community groups. "Park providers should give some thought to the type of park activities and programming which better suit the needs of different user groups in the community and the design settings which can better accommodate them" (Loukaitou-Sideris, p.110-111, 1995). Involving a diverse representation of the community in all stages of the park planning process will provide design results that are more accommodative to the diverse needs of the community (Shuib, et al., p.315, 2015).

However there is a balance that must be found in attempting to tailor park spaces to individual group preferences versus the potential for groups to feel excluded. These potential constraints can be avoided however by carefully assessing the use of cultural cues and symbols in the design, as these have the potential to both include and exclude particular user groups (Rishbeth, p.359, 2001). Additional considerations include identifying and designing around qualities and amenities that are valued by all groups, and maintaining flexibility in park spaces to accommodate various social and use preferences.

ADAPTING TO CHANGES IN SOCIETY AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Also to be considered is the evolution of the park through time in relation to societal changes. In her study on Ethno-cultural Representation in the Urban Landscape, Clare Rishbeth (2004) points out, that the "ethnic mix, particularly of urban areas, is complex and in a continual state of flux. Each generation has different characteristics, and chooses how to focus and report ethnic differences, based on common understandings of the significance of specific ethnic groups at that point in time" (p.311). Changing values and ideals of ethnic groups as well as actual demographic changes within a community can lead to changes in social, functional and programmatic needs within the park space.

These natural changes, and the desire to develop a park inclusive of many cultural groups, supports the need for a flexible park space that maximizes choice in regards to social interaction and programmatic uses. Finding common ground in the types of spaces and experiences provided also increases the capability of the park adapt to changes in society.

IDENTIFYING SPATIAL CONDITIONS THAT SUPPORT CULTURAL EXPRESSION AND EXCHANGE

This research has found that accommodating park space preferences and the cultural values of user groups can help ensure people feel a sense of belonging and representation in the park. Also, feelings of representation is aided by providing independent spaces for individual cultural expression. Ultimately, feelings of representation lead to higher levels of park usage, increasing the likelihood for social interaction between different groups where use and activity preferences overlap. Additionally, incorporating a range of uses as well as elements that encourage people to come together increases the flexibility and adaptability of the space relative to societal changes (PPS, 2017).

The research of Setha Low (et al., 2005), Chuo Li (2014), the non-profit: Project for Public Spaces (2017), and Albert J. Rutledge (1991), among others, has led to the identification of three overarching spatial types representative of three primary social conditions. These social conditions aim to provide, spatially, flexible spaces for cultural expression as well as multi-cultural interaction. The three social space types and the relationships between them create a web of social conditions that lay the foundation for developing flexible social spaces and experiences that can create a more culturally inclusive urban park. The three social space types include:

1. Territories
2. Polychromic Space
3. Social Anchors

The work of Setha Low (et al.) provides an overview of the spatial types and their relationships, as well as a baseline understanding of the social implications of each spatial type. Chuo Li's study provides an increased focus on the character of spaces and how particular social and character qualities can be developed that aid in creating a sense of place. Project for Public Spaces identifies qualities associated with successful active public spaces. Additionally, work by Albert J. Rutledge's provides a detailed insight into the design of social settings and the resulting affects on sociability.

The Public Space Research Group provides an example of the importance of these spatial typologies and the relationships between them. Researchers (Setha Low, et al., 2005) have found that "the successful integration of multiple communities and cultures in one public space was created through the creation of separate territories, each connected to a centralized space where groups meet and intermingle with each other." Territories provide the opportunity for individualism and cultural expression, while diversity is achieved through the creation of communal spaces (polychromic space), perhaps enhanced through the particular placing of amenities, landmarks, or various special features (social anchor)."

To be noted, references to the three spatial types identified range in specificity between the authors. As such, these spatial types and their resulting qualities have been derived both from specific references as well as similar language on spatial qualities associated with each type. "Territory" and "polychromic space" are terms that have been utilized by particular authors in this literature review. "Polychromic space" is much less commonly used as a standard descriptor, where "territory" is a more standardized term in relative studies. Though the scale of the spatial association for the term "territory" varies greatly, the definition of the term remains highly similar. In this study, the term "social anchor" is unique, though numerous authors do refer to "anchors" in reference to the pull of particular elements such as trees or seating to encourage inhabitation of a space.

TERRITORIES

Fundamental to the creation of multi-cultural urban parks is the establishment of territories; spaces that “promote social tolerance and cultural integration at the level of the site” (Low, et al., p.126, 2005). Karin Peters, in her study of multi-ethnicity in urban parks, has found that “almost all respondents spend most of their leisure time with people of their own ethnic groups” (p.427, 2010). In a similar finding, Loukaituo-Sideris finds that “different social groups typically coexist...but they do not tend to mix. They rather keep their own spatial...territories” (p.99, 1995). By accommodating independent group needs, territories support cultural expression, creating a comfortable, personal space for independent use. This personalization of space fosters the creation of a sense of place “where people’s identities are affirmed and where people feel they can use the space without feeling conspicuous or looked down upon by people of different cultural groups” (PPS, 2017).

Rutledge’s work calls to attention the importance of territories as crucial to the development of multi-cultural gathering spaces not only from the perspective of park activation, but also the perspective of minimizing conflict between groups. Rutledge highlights the findings of John Lyle who suggests that site portions (territories) be tailored to particular user groups based on “characteristic qualities of setting or situation that can be identified as particular attractors” of each group. Lyle goes on to suggest the creation of visible boundary lines around each “collection of qualities” as an additional attractor of use, but also for the “sense of security” it provides. The strategic placement of territory spaces can then be used to reduce anxiety and potential conflict (p.120-121, 1985).

The successful incorporation of territory space relies on a number of factors including: providing multiple spaces with diverse characteristics that provide choice and accommodate multiple groups simultaneously; creating flexible spaces that can adapt to group sizes and activity preferences; and providing physical or perceived boundaries that provide a sense of comfort and security.

As aforementioned, the spatial scale for the associated term “territory” often varies among authors and the particular case study being examined. For example, Low (et al., 2005) often uses the term to describe a large space in a large urban park such as the beach bays at Coney Island, where each beach bay serves as an independent space for a community of a particular group. Alternatively, Chuo Li’s work refers to territories as small nooks, corners, and the like, that provide independent space for individuals or small groups. This thesis refers to “territory” on a scale more in line with Chuo Li, relative to the scale of the investigation and application of findings in promotion of social interaction at the scale of the neighborhood park.

As such, primary characteristics of territories and their relationships have been defined as follows:

- Effective territory creation relies on the development of physical or perceived boundaries.
- “Corners, groups of plant, large trees or small tables provide an ‘anchor,’ which defines a territory for small groups to gather and conduct activities” (Li, p.250, 2014)
- Territories should work as an extension or boundary to polychromic space (collective space) whenever possible, encouraging consistent social dialogue between social spaces.
- Territories should connect to collective space with minimal boundary between them.
- Territories often utilize substantial boundary on non-social edges to create intimacy and seclusion of the space.
- Territories internal to collective space are typically limited in scale to the use of a small group (e.g. bench; table and chairs), as opposed to a larger perimeter territory that may be used by multiple groups.

POLYCHROMIC SPACE

Polychromic space develops familiarity between residents by providing collective space that is accommodating to activities, groups size, and social distancing preferences as valued by multiple community groups. It is a space where the community can gather and multiple activities can play out simultaneously. Polychromic space provides the primary community gathering space.

The concept of “polychromic space” is attributed to the work of anthropologist Edward Hall (1959), who “examined the different spatial standards for disparate cultural groups in terms of appropriate distances for interpersonal contact and privacy” (Li, p.250, 2014). Hall’s standards for “Interpersonal Distance Zones” (Rutledge, p114, 1991) are used in this study to determine the flexibility of social spaces found in the coming case studies. Findings which ultimately transfer to support the creation of flexible social spaces within the final park design.

While Hall’s term “polychromic space” is used by Chuo Li, as well as in this study, terminology for this spatial condition is often more loosely defined as common space, gathering space, or simply flexible space. For this thesis, “collective space” will often be used where appropriate as a more identifiable descriptor of the spatial social condition.

In Chuo Li’s study of urban three Chinatown parks, she finds the central plaza (polychromic) space functions to accommodate multiple activities while providing valued people watching space. (p.250, 2014) As Peters states, “not all exchange has to take place through practical activities. Far from a passive activity, people-watching provides a flow of information about a person’s fellow citizens—who they are, what they are doing, and what they look like.” (p.430, 2010)” In support of these functions, Li suggests the creation of adjoining territory space through the use “corners, groups of plants, large trees or small tables” that provide independent spaces for multiple groups (p.250, 2014).

In Li’s study, polychromic space also functions as a “transitional space” for people traversing the park. Li highlights the requisite qualities of polychromic space as providing “intimate and flexible outdoor settings with a variety of seating and ‘anchor’ spaces” that foster “casual contact and multiple activities among park users” (p.250, 2014).

Primary characteristics of collective space and its relationships include:

- Primary pedestrian corridors lead into polychromic space.
- Collective spaces should be abutting in most instances. This increases opportunity for community gathering and events.
- Collective space should be immediately adjacent to active site boundaries.
- Non-social spaces (e.g. mass plantings) should be minimized within the collective space so as not to create substantial social divisions.

SOCIAL ANCHOR

The social anchor is an activity or amenity that is highly valued by multiple groups that prompts community gathering and social interaction. In her study on Social Interactions in Public Parks, Karin Peters (et al., 2010) refers to this activity or amenity as an “external stimulus” that “can provide a linkage between strangers that leads to social interaction” (p.94). “Moreover, the association of social activities with increased frequency and length of visits...confirms that those parks that afford the possibility for visitors to become involved in pleasurable activities with others are likely to be visited to a greater extent” (Ka’zmiernczak, p.42, 2013).

As part of their “Strategies for Achieving Great Parks,” PPS suggests the creation of attractions and destinations throughout the park” (PPS, 2017). “A great example of this is Coney Island in Brooklyn, where the presence of food and entertainment along the boardwalk effectively draws a diverse crowd into a common space where vibrancy and spontaneous interaction characterize the social landscape.” This example in particular of gathering around food, highlights an activity commonly valued across cultural groups that serves as a social anchor. While Coney Island exhibits qualities associated more with a theme park, the same ideas can be applied to parks more commonly associated with the urban neighborhood park.

Additional examples of social anchors may include food trucks, cafes, playgrounds, splash fountains, or in the winter months, ice skating. Activities or amenities tailored toward children in communities where children and families are present, are particularly effective in facilitating social interaction. These spaces not only provide valuable social interaction for children, but also initiate interaction between parents and guardians who often view children as “ice-breakers” (Ka’zmiernczak, p.33, 2013).

While this study focuses on more permanent park space amenities or features identified as “social anchors,” more temporary engagements such as farmer’s markets, festivals, or other community events provide similar opportunities for social cohesion between groups.

The following characteristics described are relative to the social anchor selection process and the physical location of the anchor to both support, and be supported by surrounding social spaces.

- The social anchor(s) chosen should be evaluated based on community group preferences.
- The social anchor chosen should be supported by the local context.
- The social anchor should be aesthetically and functionally appropriate relative to the scale of the park and the character of the surrounding context.
- The social anchor should be located near the primary pedestrian corridor.
- The social anchor should function to activate surrounding social spaces.

FORM MAKING WITHIN SPATIAL TYPES TO PROMOTE SOCIABILITY

The work of Rutledge, while less specific in nature to the particular form and function of the aforementioned social space types, none the less provides a detailed assessment of spatial qualities that encourage social interaction. Interpreted through the work of the other authors and the SSOM, Rutledge's findings provide a deeper level of insight into the making of social spaces. The scale of Rutledge's (1991) insights vary from particular design forms to more general rules of social engagement, but his psychologically based insights illustrate more purposeful intent to space making. For instance:

- "People tend to gravitate to corners or to places which otherwise have visible boundary lines" (p.110).
- "Orient idling accommodations (people watching) toward the action" (p.20).
- Provide "'safe spots'...places within view of the action, yet far enough away to comfort those who would be unsettled if they were in the midst of the scene (p.21).
- "Identify probable people concentrations and insert seating facilities nearby" (p.22).
- Typically, conversationalists assume a kitty-corner orientation toward each other" (p.110).
- "Edges, whether they be corners or simply minor landmarks provide a perceived sense of control" (p.127).
- "Seating accommodations which are placed in recessed areas are demonstrably more populate than those which merely float along a path. (P.128)"

Findings from Rutledge and the other authors, in combination with the SSOM, provide valuable tools for investigating the sociability of urban parks through their form and character.

THE SOCIAL SPACE ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL

Research findings from the identification of social space types have led to the develop the Social Space Organizational Model (SSOM). The SSOM (Figure 1) compiles the literature review authors' insights on the spatial form, spatial relationships, and contextual influences of each social space into a graphic representation. This model provides a visual tool to help guide the investigation of case study parks relative to their capacity to function as places of cultural expression and exchange.

In addition to providing guidance to this thesis investigation, the SSOM is also intended to be a tool for future designers to use in the development and analysis of socially inclusive park spaces. The SSOM is inteded to be a foundational framework upon which community based social and experiential design qualities can be developed in connection with site and contextual influences.

TYPICAL SPATIAL ORGANIZATION OF SOCIAL SPACE TYPES AND SUPPORTING ELEMENTS DEVELOPED TO PROMOTE SOCIAL INTERACTION BETWEEN MULTIPLE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL GROUPS

SOCIAL SPACE TYPES AND SUPPORTING ELEMENTS

TERRITORIES PROVIDE INDEPENDENT SPACES OR PLACES THAT PROMOTE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INDIVIDUALISM. EFFECTIVE TERRITORY CREATION RELIES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF PHYSICAL OR PERCEIVED BOUNDARIES AND THE UTILIZATION OF DIVERSE SPACES (SPATIALLY AND EXPERIENTIALLY) THAT RESPONDS TO COMMUNITY GROUPS’ SOCIAL PREFERENCES.

POLYCHROMIC SPACE DEVELOPS FAMILIARITY BETWEEN COMMUNITY MEMBERS BY PROVIDING **COLLECTIVE SPACE** THAT IS ACCOMMODATING TO SOCIAL ACTIVITIES, GROUP SIZE, AND SOCIAL DISTANCING PREFERENCES AS VALUED BY COMMUNITY GROUPS. INCREASED SOCIAL ACTIVITY AND INTERACTION BETWEEN GROUPS CAN THEN BE FACILITATED THROUGH THE INCORPORATION OF A SOCIAL ANCHOR OF VALUE TO THE COMMUNITY.

SOCIAL ANCHORS FACILITATE COMMUNITY GATHERING AND SOCIAL INTERACTION BETWEEN UNFAMILIAR SOCIAL AND CULTURAL GROUPS BY PROVIDING ACTIVITIES AND AMENITIES THAT ARE VALUED BY MOST GROUPS. SOCIAL ANCHORS SHOULD BE SELECTED BASED ON THEIR VALUE TO THE PARTICULAR COMMUNITY AND THE SUPPORTING SURROUNDING CONTEXT.

VISUAL ANCHORS CONTRIBUTE TO THE FOLLOWING: ACTIVATION OF PARK SPACES BY PROVIDING VISUAL INTEREST; TERRITORY CREATION BY DEFINING A SINGULAR SOCIAL SPACE PLACE; SOCIAL ORGANIZATION (SOCIAL DISTANCING) THROUGH THE SPACING OF VISUAL ANCHORS WITHIN A SINGULAR SPACE OR THROUGHOUT THE PARK.

SPATIAL BOUNDARIES CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEFINITION AND CHARACTER OF SOCIAL SPACES, PARTICULARLY IN REGARDS TO TERRITORY DEVELOPMENT. IN GENERAL PRACTICE, SPATIAL BOUNDARIES ARE OFTEN USED FOR SCREENING UNWANTED VISUAL AND AUDIBLE DISTRACTIONS AND/OR FOR SUPPORTING THE CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT OF A GIVEN AREA.

CRITICAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SOCIAL SPACE TYPES

TERRITORIES SHOULD WORK AS AN EXTENSION OR BOUNDARY TO COLLECTIVE SPACE WHENEVER POSSIBLE, ENCOURAGING CONSISTENT SOCIAL DIALOGUE BETWEEN SOCIAL SPACES. TERRITORIES MAY BE INCORPORATED INTO COLLECTIVE SPACE.

COLLECTIVE SPACES (MULTIPLES) SHOULD BE ABUTTING IN MOST INSTANCES, THIS INCREASES OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMUNITY GATHERING AND EVENTS. NON-PEDESTRIAN SPACE SHOULD BE MINIMIZED WITHIN THE COLLECTIVE SPACE SO AS NOT TO CREATE SUBSTANTIAL SOCIAL DIVISIONS.

PRIMARY COLLECTIVE SPACES SHOULD BE IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO ACTIVE SITE BOUNDARIES AND PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN CORRIDORS SHOULD CONNECT WITH THESE SPACES.

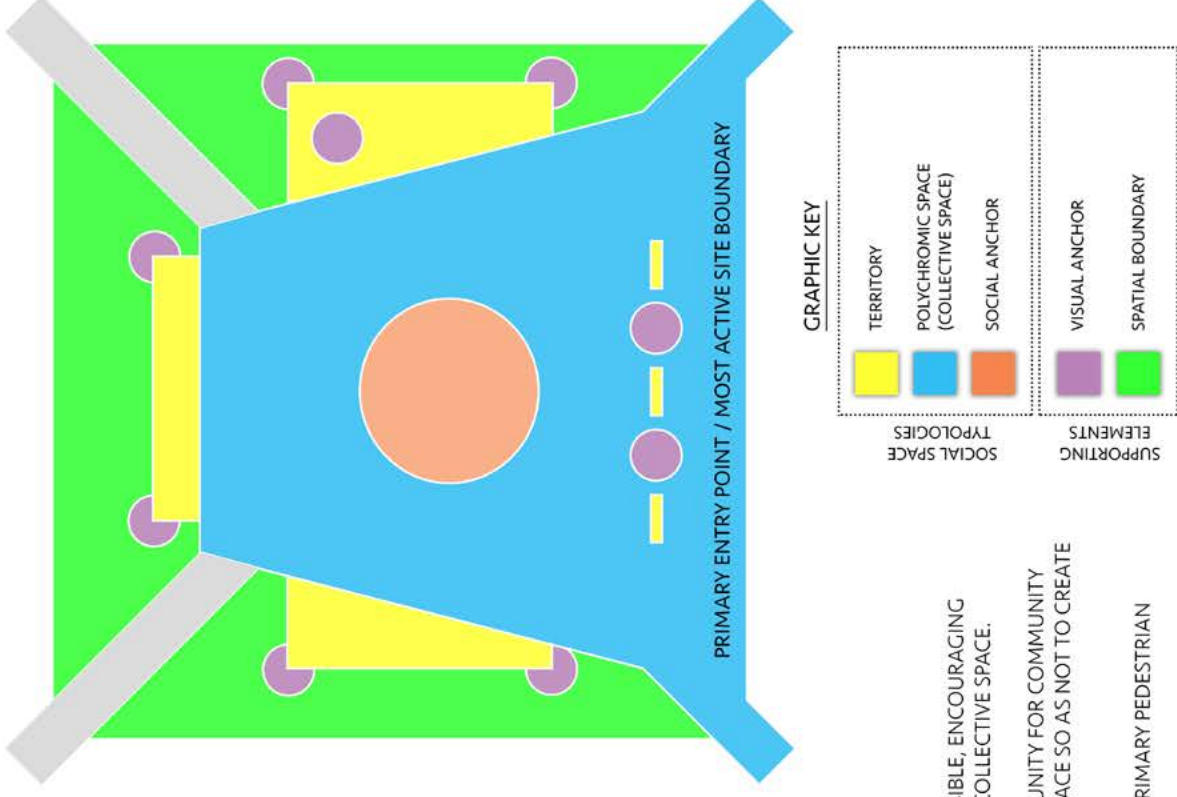


Figure 1 - The Social Space Organizational Model: Typical spatial organization of social space types and supporting elements developed to promote social interaction between multiple social and cultural groups.

CHAPTER 3: CASE STUDIES

INTRODUCTION

The following case studies include two urban neighborhood parks in the District of Columbia: Canal Park by OLIN, and Pershing Park by M. Paul Friedberg + Partners. These parks were chosen for their primary functions as social gathering spaces as well as their neighborhood park qualities relative to spatial scale and contextual influence. Individually, the parks function to serve two very different populations through the employment of two substantially different design strategies, one which aligns substantially to SSOM, and one which does not. These contrasting approaches dramatically affect the use and sociability of each park.

The case study investigations identify the three social space types of the SSOM, and how the relationships between them in application affect their ability to either support both their independent functions as well as their abilities to facilitate social interaction. The case studies also look into the experiential and character qualities of social space types to reveal details of design development (such as spatial form and material quality) that support the desired qualities associated with each social space type as identified in the literature review. Three elements of design were investigated for their influence on the social and character quality of spaces. These elements include: seating, pathways and plantings.

Seating is perhaps most fundamental in promoting social interaction as the form, placement, and relationships between seating areas and additional social spaces is a direct contributor to park space activation, duration of use, addressing social preferences, and developing opportunities for social interaction.

Pathways affect the sociability of park spaces through a number of factors including their spatial organization of how they connect or divide social spaces and how they draw people in or deter them from particular areas. The form and materiality of pathways also affect their social capacity. Pathway width for example can either include or exclude social groupings and preferred uses, while materiality changes can support pedestrian movement or encourage pause.

Plantings are critical to the sociability of park spaces and the development of particular character attributes relative to the three social space types. While providing shade is one of the more fundamental qualities of value in promoting activation of park spaces, plantings also have the potential to create rooms, encourage movement, and visually anchor social spaces.

CANAL PARK

Designed by the Philadelphia based landscape architecture firm OLIN, Canal Park is a neighborhood social gathering place inspired by the former Washington Canal along which it sits. Completed in 2012, this Washington, DC park evokes its waterfront history through linear rain gardens and its barge inspired pavilions. The park is a showcase for sustainable design practices and an economic stimulus for the surrounding community (OLIN).

In addition to its design intent as a neighborhood social gathering place, Canal Park has been selected for investigation because it contains each of the three social space types and therefore allows for testing of the SSOM and relative findings from the literature review. Canal Park also utilizes a diversity of spatial and character conditions to promote flexible use and social interaction. This diversity of space allows for the investigation of the three design elements and how these elements are utilized to support various uses and social qualities in their respective spaces.

SOCIAL SPACE OVERVIEW

Comprised of three rectilinear block spaces, Canal Park offers a range of experiences for a number of user groups. The southern block (Figure 2) is comprised of a large plaza that serves as the primary social gathering place. Most successful to the social activation of the park space is the incorporation of a number of social anchors that provide year round engagement. An on-site restaurant and bar serves to support park space and adjacent activities, providing a draw for people coming off the nearby Metro rail stop and a meeting place or hang out for people going to events at nearby Nationals Park. Food trucks provide inexpensive lunch options for adjacent government and corporate offices to the north and south, as well as park users. A splash fountain in the warmer months, and an ice rink in the winter creates a year round draw, not only for local residents but also for the greater DC area. The southern block also includes an intimate territory space that allows one to easily move between more public and more private social settings. The territory spaces of the southern and central block also create a park space division that contributes to the perceived maintenance of the highly social qualities of the southern block, even if the remainder of the park is less activated. The vertical division of spaces concentrates the social experience.



Figure 2 - Canal Park: Primary Social Gathering Place. The primary social gathering place of the southern block activated by multiple social anchors.

The central block (Figure 3) offers a more secluded experience designed around children's play. The space offers two separate play lawns that accommodate a range of play intensities. The smaller lawn, part of a secluded territory offers an opportunity for more passive play and interaction with sculptural work by David Hess. The larger lawn provides opportunity for more active play and family gathering. Sharing a seating area with the larger lawn, a skim fountain creates a more subdued water play experience appropriate to the nature of this section of the park. Two of the more overarching successful design strategies associated with this central block space are as follows. The collective space of the larger lawn and the small plaza, in addition to the territory, have minimal physical barriers along their abutting edges encouraging freedom of movement between the spaces in support of the children's play experience. Perhaps most successful about this section of the park is the substantial vegetated boundary around the perimeter that creates a safe, internal play space for children.

The safety of the space not only allows children to play and interact freely, but it allows parents or guardians have greater freedom in their own social opportunities. In addition to providing a safe play space, this vegetated boundary also helps create comfortable perimeter seating territories for people watching.

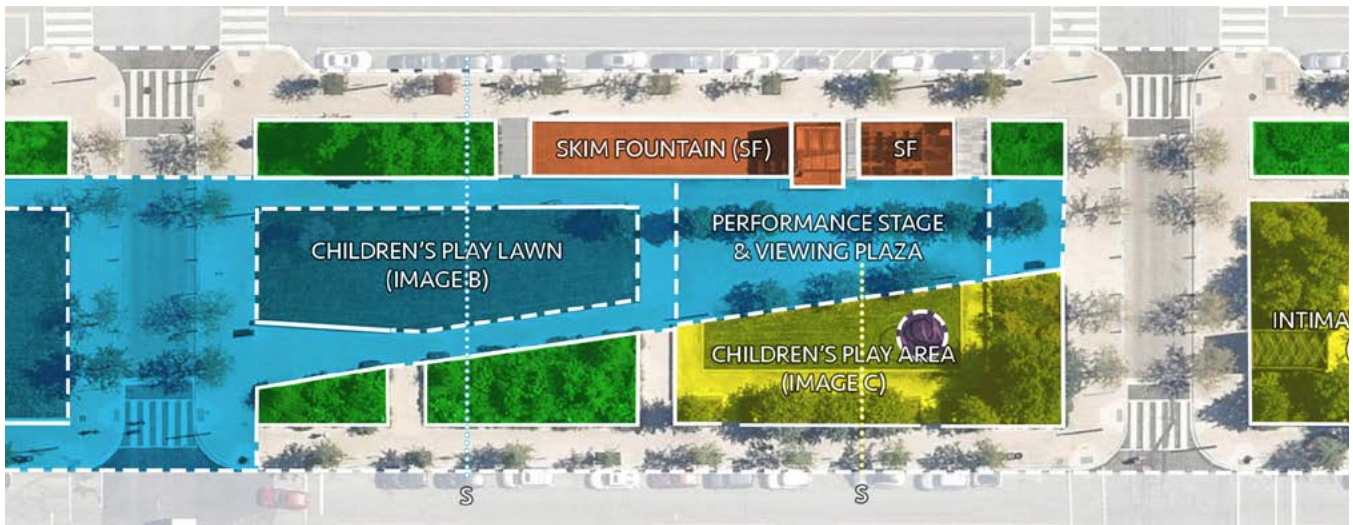


Figure 3 - Canal Park: Children's Play Space. The collective, secluded children's play areas of the central block.

The northern block (Figure 4), designed to accommodate large community gatherings around events such as festivals and films, on a daily basis, is designed largely as a play space for dogs and their owners. The lessening of social activation from the southern to the northern block spaces accommodates this particular activity (dog play) largely by minimizing the potential for conflict between dogs and dog owners and other user groups. The expansive lawn space, anchored by additional work form David Hess, also accommodates physically active free play, ball play, Frisbee, and the like.



Figure 4 - Canal Park: Community Event Space. The northern block supports large community events and daily dog walkers.

SOCIAL SPACE ORGANIZATION FINDINGS

The overall organization of Canal Park (Figure 5) is congruent with that of the SSOM. Canal Park locates territories on the perimeter of collective space. Collective space is activated by social anchors. Additionally, the primary gathering space of the southern block (Figure 2) is in direct connection with the most active site boundary. The organizational method of providing a social anchor bounded by collective space with perimeter territory spaces is the foundation for the interrelation of spaces that create social gathering places.

Collective space makes up the majority of the park space, combining areas of multiple functions. The open space connections in the central and northern block in particular provide visual connections throughout the park. The two collective spaces accommodate different types of events such as markets (pave) and films (lawn).

The use of five social anchors (splash fountain, restaurant and bar, food trucks, skim fountain and ice rink), four of which are located in the southern block, contribute considerably to the activation of the park throughout the year, and throughout each day. It should be noted the area benefits from considerable contextual influences that help support each social anchor function.

As larger distinct areas of secluded activity for particular groups (small children's play lawn) or spaces tailored to individuals or couples (benches), territories are consistently located on the perimeter of collective spaces, providing people watching opportunities into more active spaces.

SOCIAL SPACE RELATIONSHIP FINDINGS

The social space relationships study (Figure 6) examined the boundary conditions between internal and external park spaces to discover methods of maximizing the social connections between spaces. While each condition identified below has particular nuanced affects on socialization, the following overview of the findings provides a list of overarching design guidelines.

The intensity or density of the boundary is directly related to the level of desired intimacy or safety in a space and the desired social connectedness of internal or external spaces. Intimacy or safety = intensive boundary; high social connectivity = open boundary.

Intensive boundaries are utilized on the perimeter of the site to maintain the social and experiential quality and connectivity of the internal park space. Intensive boundaries do not divide the collective social space.

Benches in collective space provide a boundary to individual social spaces while also creating social connectivity by providing seating to both areas sharing the boundary. Canal Park makes particular emphasis of this by customizing linear bench forms (seating angles) to accommodate each side's particular use.

Pedestrian transitions, particularly across grade changes, and across the two vehicular connector roads, are designed to maximize ease of access and movement between spaces by providing minimal slopes, low rises on steps, or the even grade crossing of the vehicular roads (influences pedestrian and driver behavior).



Figure 5 - Canal Park: Site Organization of Social Spaces. Spatial organization of the three social space types show a design strategy based on concentrating social activities largely independently to the parks three distinct blocks.

SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF INTERNAL & EXTERNAL SOCIAL SPACE BOUNDARIES (INVESTIGATION OF SOCIAL SPACE RELATIONSHIPS) CANAL PARK, WASHINGTON, D.C.

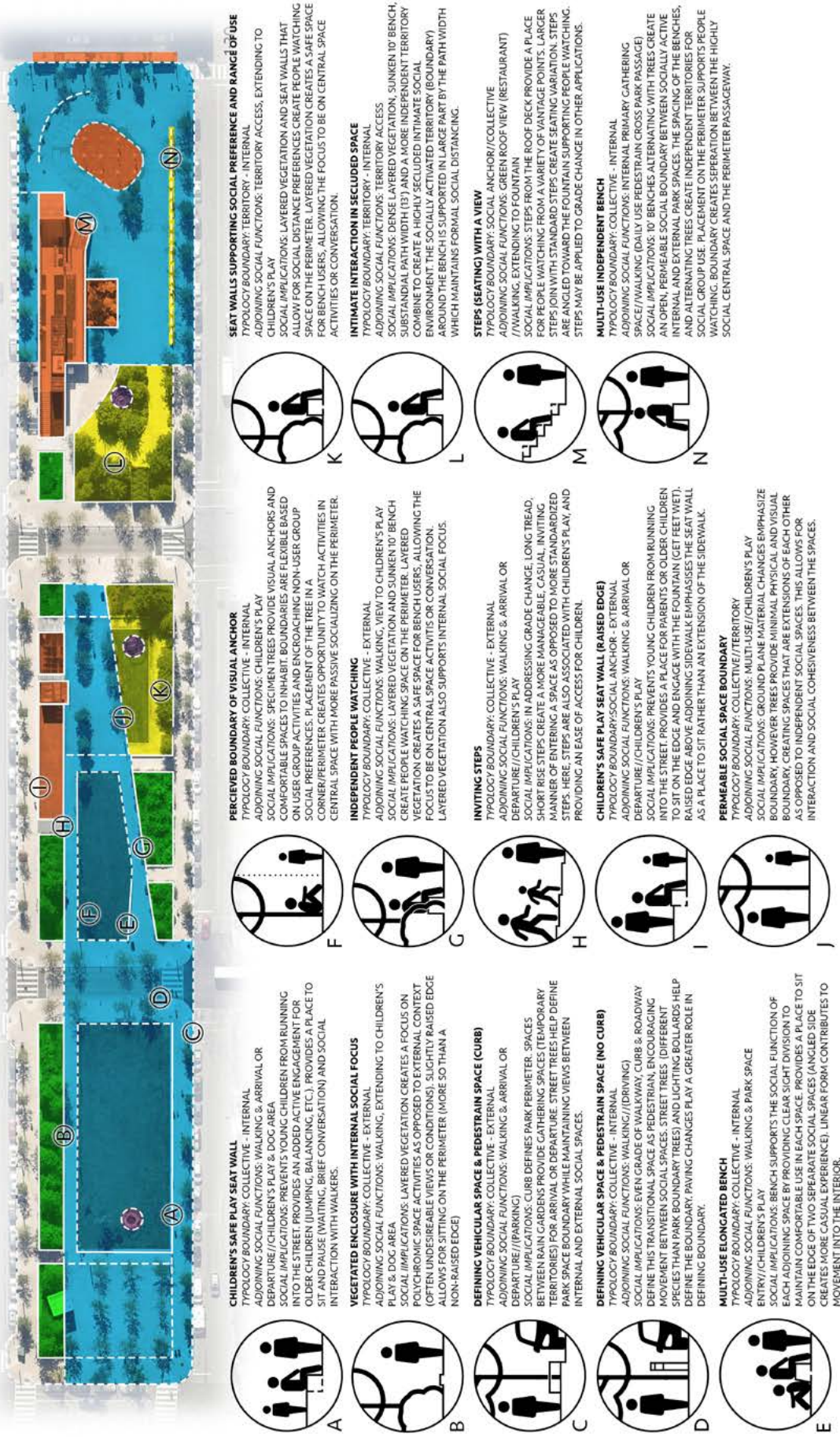


Figure 6 - Canal Park: Investigation of Social Space Relationships. Social functions of internal and external social space boundaries are investigated for their potential to increase social cohesion between spaces, improve accessibility and use, and facilitate social interaction.

SOCIAL AND CHARACTER ANALYSIS FINDINGS

Each social space type was broken down into three elements that contribute to the social and character qualities of the spaces: seating, pathways and plantings. The elements were investigated largely through their form, material and setting to determine their social capacity and experiential qualities. While each condition identified below has particular nuanced affects on socialization, the following overview of the findings provides a list of overarching design guidelines.

SEATING

Corner benches create an optimal condition for intimate conversation. The corner bench is ideal for larger territories where focus is more on individual expression and less on the collective social experience (Figure 7).

Benches with back rests are utilized along straight bench sections where people watching as opposed to conversation is more the focus (Figures 7 & 8).

Long linear benches allow for social distancing between users to be chosen by the users. These are often utilized in areas where their function is supported in additional ways such as directing pedestrian movement or supporting multiple social space functions (Figures 7, 8 & 9).

Movable chairs and tables support a range of social preferences, from distancing to grouping, to the accommodation of activities supported by tables such as eating or playing cards. The range of flexibility maximizes the comfort level of user groups by allowing them the choose the interaction level of the social experience (Figure 9)

PATHWAYS

The material quality of the ground plane is used to support the particular use and desired character of each space. For example, crushed stone suggests a relaxed pace or a place of pause (Figure 7) and hardscape (pavers) and its patterns (through scale, form, and arrangement) suggest varying movements through the space (Figure 8).

Pathways are wider and less defined in the primary collective plaza space of the southern block encouraging a roaming experience (Figure 9). Pathways throughout less social areas of more defined activity are designed with hard edges for more linear movement and to create boundaries for independent spatial activities (Figure 8).

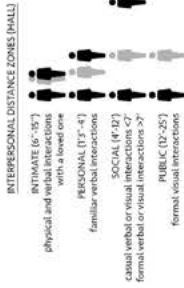
PLANTINGS

Dense, low hanging, wide forming vegetation (often ornamentals) are often utilized in large territory areas to create a secluded room quality that provides a quality of intimacy (Figure 7).

Canopy trees are often planted with substantial breaks center-on-center both on perimeter edges and collective spaces The trees provide shade for established seating and walking areas but also support social connectivity both internally and externally to the site (Figure 9).

Rows or grids of canopy trees are often utilized in conjunction with seating elements supporting the creation of small territories, often within collective space (Figure 7).

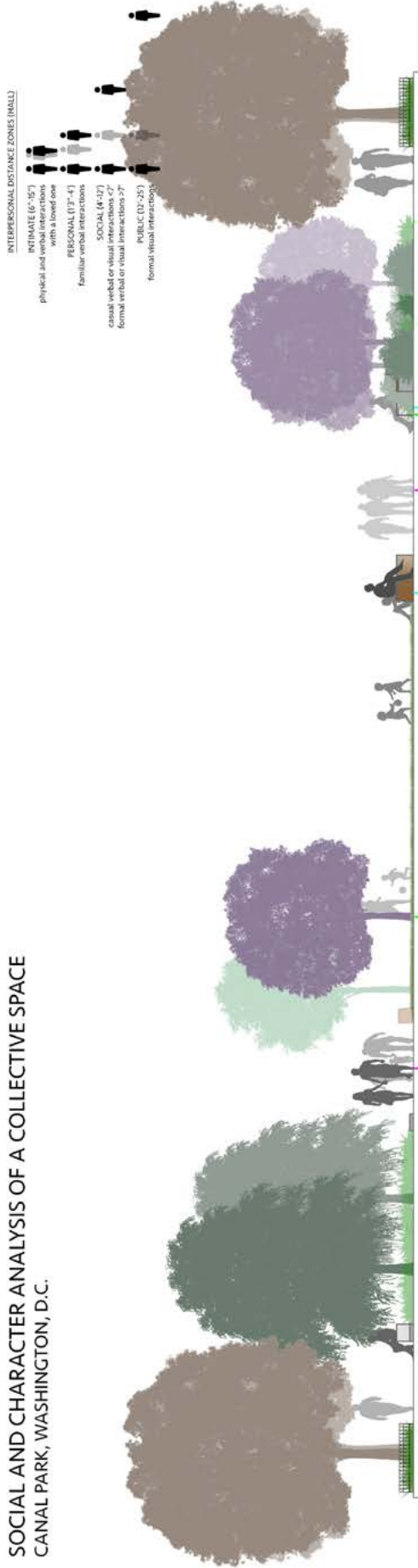
SOCIAL AND CHARACTER ANALYSIS OF A TERRITORY CANAL PARK, WASHINGTON, D.C.



SEATING	PERSONAL TERRITORY	RELAXED VIEWING	STROLLING GROUND (8' PATH)	THRESHOLD (5'5" PATH)	TERRITORY DEFINITION	PLANTINGS	SECLUDED SPACE
<p>Typical Group: Single, Couple</p> <p>Typical Interaction: Engage, Watch</p> <p>Maximum IDZ: Personal</p> <p>Social Influence: L-shape creates personal territory Kitty-corner ideal for conversation Provides comfortable support space Contributes to territory definition</p> <p>Material Character: Wood: warming, softening, inviting Concrete: solidity emphasizes territory</p> <p>Element Setting: Garden, Open</p>	<p>Typical Group: Max Family/Friend</p> <p>Typical Interaction: Watch, Engage</p> <p>Maximum IDZ: Public</p> <p>Social Influence: Relaxed, casual seating extends use Allows preferred social distancing High back contributes territory definition Contributes to intimate support space Contributes to intimate secluded space</p> <p>Material Character: Wood: warming, softening, inviting Concrete: solidity emphasizes territory</p> <p>Element Setting: Garden, Open</p>	<p>Typical Group: Max Family/Friend</p> <p>Typical Interaction: Mingle/Engage</p> <p>Maximum IDZ: Casual Social</p> <p>Social Influence: Interior path promotes casual engagement L-path leading to seating encourages pause Even edge encourages lawn engagement</p> <p>Material Character: Crushed Stone: meditative, strolling, pause</p> <p>Element Setting: Garden, Open</p>	<p>Typical Group: Max Family/Friend</p> <p>Typical Interaction: Engage</p> <p>Maximum IDZ: Personal</p> <p>Social Influence: Width prescribes verbal encounters Threshold aligned with visual anchor Vegetated "doorway" adds to threshold definition Material change adds to threshold definition</p> <p>Material Character: Raised edge cautions Crushed Stone: signals entry into territory Linear Pavers: against the grain, special</p> <p>Element Setting: Garden</p>	<p>Typical Group: In Support</p> <p>Typical Interaction: In Support</p> <p>Maximum IDZ: In Support</p> <p>Social Influence: Tree alignment adds territory definition Canopy adds fourth "wall" to room Opens maintains views in and out Opens allows movement in and out</p> <p>Material Character: Crushed Stone: use range, maintains edge</p> <p>Element Setting: Open</p>	<p>Typical Group: Max Family/Friend</p> <p>Typical Interaction: Watch, Engage</p> <p>Maximum IDZ: Public</p> <p>Social Influence: Vegetated "walls" contribute to boundary Focus on internal social activities Low overhead canopy heightens intimacy Canopy (shade) enables extended use Vegetation reduces external disturbance Provides increased safety and privacy</p> <p>Material Character: Garden: visual anchor, safety and privacy</p> <p>Element Setting: Garden</p>		

Figure 7 - Canal Park: Social and Character Analysis of a Territory. The analysis highlights three elements of design that affect the sociability and character development of the associated space.

SOCIAL AND CHARACTER ANALYSIS OF A COLLECTIVE SPACE CANAL PARK, WASHINGTON, D.C.



SCALE: 1/4" = 10"



SEATING	PATHWAYS	PLANTINGS
<p>MULTI-USE BENCH</p> <p>Typical Group: Family/Friend Typical Interaction: Engage, Mingle Maximum IDZ: Public Social Influence: Provides place of pause on path side Provides casual lounging on lawn side Contributes to territory definition Contributes to entry definition Allows preferred social distancing Material Character: Wood: warming, softening, inviting Element Setting: Open</p>	<p>WALKING TOUR (8' PATH)</p> <p>Typical Group: Single Typical Interaction: Watch, Mingle Maximum IDZ: Casual Social Social Influence: Casual walking along park length Paving pattern encourages movement Even edge encourages engagement Raised edge cautions Hard linear edges emphasize movement Vegetation encourages internal focus Material Character: Linear Paver: suggests movement, heads up Element Setting: Natural, Open</p>	<p>"THAT'S MY TREE"</p> <p>Typical Group: Couple, Family/Friend Typical Interaction: Engage Maximum IDZ: Personal Social Influence: Specimen tree creates territory definition Edge placement emphasizes territory Canopy (shade) enables extended use Lawn: casual lounging, territory support Material Character: Open Element Setting: Open</p>
<p>ENGAGED VIEWING</p> <p>Typical Group: Single, Couple Typical Interaction: Watch Maximum IDZ: Casual Social Social Influence: Relaxed, casual seating extends use Allows for casual social distancing Provides place for people watching Sunken bench increases safety and privacy Vegetated "wall" encourages internal focus Material Character: Wood: warming, softening, inviting Element Setting: Open, Garden</p>	<p>WELCOME CENTER</p> <p>Typical Group: Couple, Family/Friend Typical Interaction: Mingle Maximum IDZ: Public > Casual Social Social Influence: Bounded "funneling" encourages entry Narrows to "gateway" opening to internal Formal to casual social condition passage Provides sweeping views of spatial activities Material Character: Angled Paver: suggests engagement, heads up Element Setting: Open, Garden</p>	<p>SOCIAL SCREEN</p> <p>Typical Group: In Support Typical Interaction: In Support Maximum IDZ: In Support Social Influence: Provides visual anchor Encourages focus on internal social activities Vegetation reduces external disturbance Provides increased safety and privacy Provides separation of social spaces Material Character: Garden: visual anchor, safety and privacy Element Setting: Garden</p>

Figure 8 - Canal Park: Social and Character Analysis of a Collective Space. The analysis highlights three elements of design that affect the sociability and character development of the associated space.

SOCIAL AND CHARACTER ANALYSIS OF A SOCIALLY ANCHORED SPACE CANAL PARK, WASHINGTON, D.C.

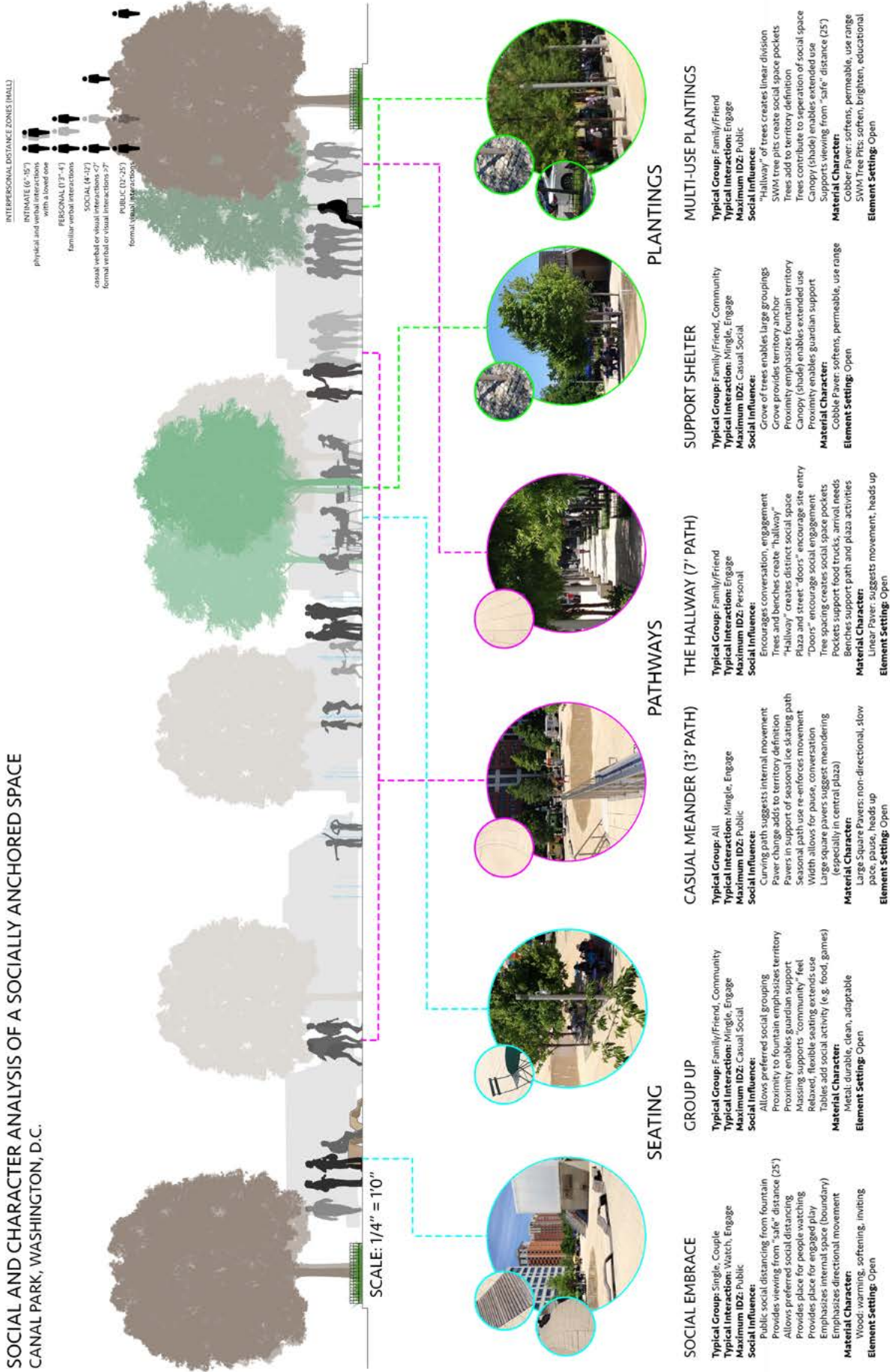


Figure 9 - Canal Park: Social and Character Analysis of a Socially Anchored Space. The analysis highlights three elements of design that affect the sociability and character development of the associated space.

PRIMARY FINDINGS

PRIMARY FINDINGS RELATED TO SOCIAL SPACE TYPE

The following findings highlight the overall design strategies from Canal Park that work to promote social activation and interaction within and between social space types. The findings reflect the basic principles of the SSOM and reveal valuable insights into the connectivity of both internal and external park spaces that supports increased levels of social activation and interaction.

Utilizes multiple social anchors based on two primary drivers of social gathering that are valued by most groups: children's play features (fountains) and food (restaurant and food trucks). The social anchors, five in total, also provide year round activation.

Concentrates social anchors and therefore social activity in one section of the park to maintain a lively social atmosphere that supports social interaction.

Adjoins social and active spaces that are complementary to each other to promote interaction between the spaces. For example, the skim fountain for children is adjacent to the children's play lawn. The play lawn is adjacent to individual benches for people watching. While each adjoining space provides cross boundary value to each particular user group, particularly in the instance of the two children's play spaces, the types of spaces, the lawn in particular, is also used as a social distancing mechanism between people watching space and children's play space. This provides a necessary level of comfort for users of each particular area.

Minimizes the use of visual or physical barriers between spaces to maintain collective (polychromic) space, social connectivity, and to encourage expanded use (largely within each park section).

The intensity of boundaries between social spaces as well as internal and external park space (from simple changes in the patterns of like paving, to dense vertical vegetation), are largely related to three factors: safety, social connectivity, and contextual influences.

PRIMARY FINDINGS RELATED TO SOCIAL AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

The following findings from Canal Park reveal the necessity to tailor park space elements to particular social space types, and desired social conditions and area functions. Primary findings of element form and social setting are congruent with basic principles for developing social settings as identified in the literature review.

Utilizes seating forms that support the particular social functions of each spatial type. For example, corner, conversational benches in territories where the focus is on the individual groups. Linear benches bound collective space where focus is on social interaction between multiple groups. Flexible seating near the splash fountain for family and friend groups to develop organically and for desired social preferences to be played out.

Flexibility in seating that accommodates preferred social distancing and grouping is provided in three ways: elongated seating forms, movable seating, and seating in abundance.

Pathway materials (crushed stone, pavers, brick) *and patterns* (directional or non-directional) *are utilized to support specific functions and spatial qualities.* For example, crushed stone is utilized interior to the children's play section of the park and in the two shaded plazas to suggest a more casual pace and to soften the character of the space.

The density of plantings and the habits of trees create favorable social and character qualities in support of their related social space type. For example, canopy shade trees are generally used in collective spaces and on perimeter spaces where social connectedness and site entry is desirable. Wide habit, low hanging ornamental trees are used in territory spaces to increase qualities of intimacy.

PERSHING PARK

Designed by M. Paul Friedberg + Partners and completed in 1981, Pershing Park, named for General John J. Pershing, is a multi-tiered park that functions largely as a secluded social gathering space for local government workers and visitors to the National Mall. Situated south of the adjacent Intercontinental Willard Hotel, the park is otherwise bounded by high volumes of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The park has been extracted from this condition through elevation changes that create an internal oasis feel. Recent alterations to the park include revised plantings by Oehme van Sweden & Associates, and the replacement of Paley Park style movable seating with static tables and benches. These alterations have both added to (former) and detracted from (later) the favorable social qualities associated with the park space. Now in a more derelict state, the park is slated to become the new site for the National World War I Memorial. Regardless of its condition the park still functions largely as it has though notably receives less use.

As mentioned, activation of the park comes largely from local government workers who utilize the plaza space with tables and benches for socializing and eating lunch. Additional users are visitors who may come across the park while visiting sites around DC, as well as guests, workers, or others associated with The Willard. Given the lack of residential area surrounding the park, the park does not serve as a community neighborhood park in the manner of Canal Park, but the study still reveals important insights into the sociability of spaces.

While the context influences of Pershing Park produce a specific set of user groups, in particular, local workers and tourists, the park's function as a social gathering place nonetheless provides valuable insights and analysis into the three social space types of the SSOM that can be found here. Additionally, Pershing Park utilizes a palette of spatial and character qualities that vary greatly from Canal Park. This allows for analysis of a diverse set of spaces that provides further insight into how social space types function independently, in combination, and how the three elements of design influence the sociability of each.

SOCIAL SPACE OVERVIEW

Pershing Park is comprised largely of two distinct social settings with substantially different levels of social engagement and experiential qualities. As opposed to Canal Park, where social space types are often abutting and encouraging movement between the spaces, Pershing Park is largely opposite. A large pool creates a social divide between the two park halves, and extensive grade change and physical distancing between socially active spaces breaks up social connections.

When in operation, in the winter months, the park would be socially transformed, as the pool would become an ice rink, creating a social bridge between the two distinct settings. Drained, the pool functions minimally in this capacity today as children and teens at times use the space for engaging in free play activities. Historically and currently, the drained pool is also used to extend the collective space for community and special events.

The southwest half of the park (Figure 10) is broken up into two types of territories. Ringed benches provide highly defined territory spaces capable of accommodating large friend groups in an intimate social setting. These spaces are nearly completely extracted from social interaction with additional park spaces by their placement on top of the berm that separates the busy streets from the internal park space.

Step steps with divisions of built-in planter boxes create numerous additional territories around the fountain. While visual connections are created across the pool to the more socially active gathering spaces of the plazas, the distance across the pool, the enclosure of the plants and planter boxes, and the elevation of the steps, creates a highly secluded social environment for individuals, couples, or small groups.



Figure 10 - Pershing Park: The Social Space Divide. The central fountain pool creates a social divide that breaks the park into two distinct social settings; one provides largely territory spaces while the other is largely collective space.

The northeast half of the park (Figure 10), and in particular its sunken plaza, receives far greater use as a social gathering space. The ability of the space to accommodate its lunchtime user group with a safe, contextually extracted setting, providing necessary amenities such as tables, chairs and shade, is part of what makes this particular social space successful.

Largely classified as a collective space, the northeast half of the park also features a large entry plaza used for community events and gathering, and a memorial space to General Pershing. While collective spaces are abutting, as has been mentioned, providing opportunity for large community gatherings and events, their spatial divisions through elevation and distancing are too great for the social development of the space.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle to creating social space cohesion is the lack of successful social anchors in the space. When in operation, the café joining the collective spaces likely functioned fairly successfully as a social anchor, activating surrounding spaces and creating social connections between the spaces. In addition, perhaps greater success of the memorial could have increased its function as a social anchor.

SOCIAL SPACE ORGANIZATION FINDINGS

The overall organization of Pershing Park (Figure 11) is largely dissimilar to that of the SSOM though some attributes of the parks' design do correlate. For example, the active site boundary is in direct relation with collective space and the once operational cafe did serve as a social anchor to activate the surrounding collective space. Overall however, the park lacks critical social space connections. The majority of territories lack connection to collective space and therefore minimal social interaction and activation occurs between the spaces. Collective space receives minimal support by outdated or ineffective social anchors. Additional findings below highlight the inadequacies of the design to support social cohesion between varying park spaces.

While collective space makes up the majority of social space, the primary gathering space is largely confined to the lower collective space. The space is activated through its experiential quality and the amenities it provides (seating and tables under shade). The lack of a successful social anchor and numerous spatial divides have created collective spaces that feel socially separate from each other.

The social anchors no longer function to activate the park or their surrounding spaces. The cafe was likely more affective when the park was fully operational. The memorial struggles as a social anchor due to its inability to draw in mass visitors and new interest. This can be attributed to its seclusion, derived from the desired quality of the park space, and its distance from the National Mall. An additional lack of residential space around the park creates a space that is activated by largely repeat users: workers of nearby government organizations.

While territories throughout the park accommodate a range of uses, the territories provided, except for those found within collective space, provide minimal social connectivity between social spaces. This can be attributed to the social division created by the pool, and the double stacking of territories in the south west portion of the park. In essence, the stepped territories create an additional social division that further separates the outer group territories from the collective space.

SOCIAL SPACE RELATIONSHIP FINDINGS

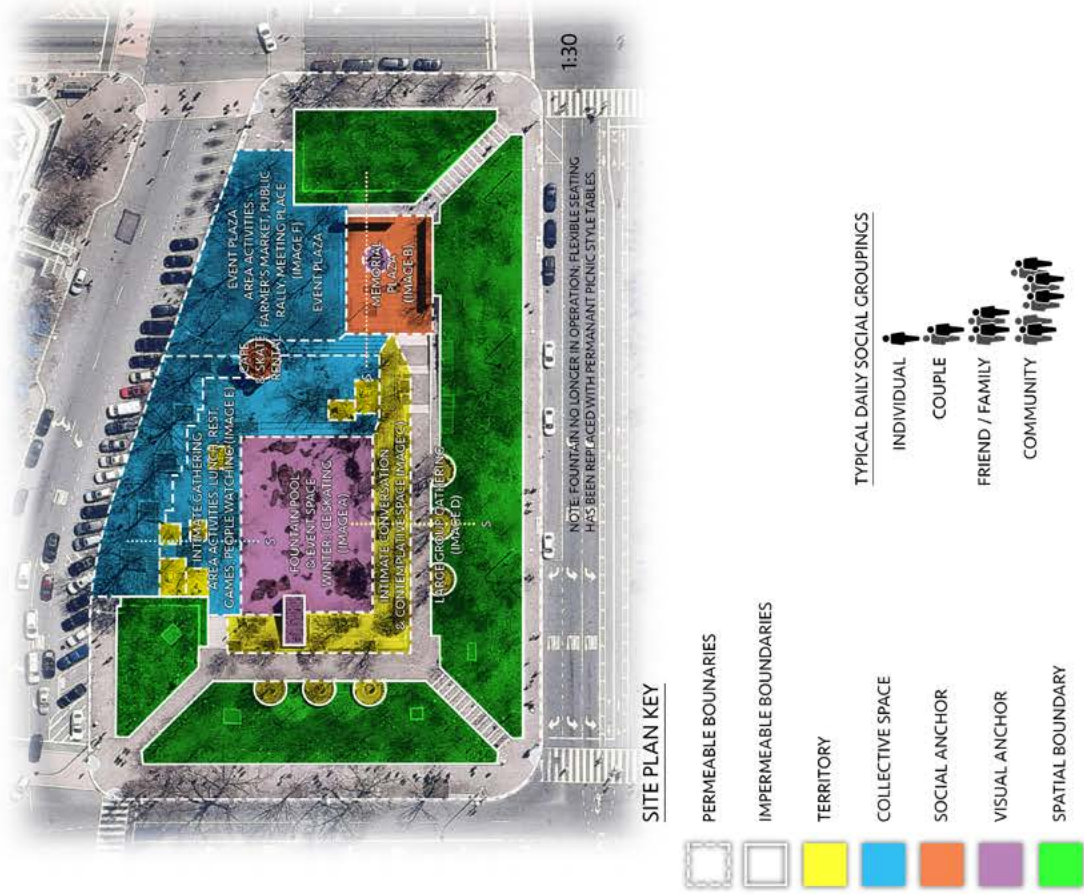
The social space relationships study (Figure 12) examined the boundary conditions between internal and external park spaces to discover methods of maximizing the social connections between spaces. While each condition identified below has particular nuanced affects on socialization, the following overview of the findings provides a list of overarching design guidelines.

Steps are often utilized as boundaries or transitions between spaces to address the required grade change on the site. Low rise, elongated tread steps are used in areas intended to maximize movement, while more standard steps are used for spatial containment or territory creation.

The park space boundaries on the whole function successfully as per their social space function and the experiential quality desired, with intensive boundaries (through width, height and canopy) creating a safe, secluded space for southwest territories, and an open boundary to the north, providing an inviting view into the primary gathering space from the most active side of the park.

Grouped plantings (perennials, grasses, and ornamentals) in contained growth areas, are typically used to create territory boundaries for seating areas and to provide a visual anchor for social grouping. The intensity of the planting differs from non-territory spaces where canopy trees are used (entry plaza) to create a more fluid, transitional social space.

SITE ORGANIZATION OF SOCIAL SPACE TYPES PERSHING PARK, WASHINGTON, D.C.



CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES: CALMING, CONTEMPLATIVE LARGE POOL CREATES SUBSTANTIAL DIVISION OF PARK SPACE INTO MORE PROMINANT VS. MORE SECLUDED SOCIAL SPACES.



CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES: PLANTER BOXES, DENSE VEGETATION AND STEPS CREATE SECLUDED TERRITORIES FOR CONTEMPLATION OR INTIMATE CONVERSATION.



CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES: ORNAMENTAL PLANTINGS AND SUGGESTED PATHWAY CREATES SPATIAL DIVISION. WITH PAST FLEXIBLE SEATING, SPACES COULD ADAPT TO GROUP SIZES.



CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES: MEMORIAL PLAZA AFFORDS VIEWS ACROSS THROUGHOUT THE PARK (CHOICE OF ENGAGEMENT). MEMORIAL CREATES A DRAW FOR NON-LOCALS.



CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES: LARGE CIRCULAR SEATING FROM CREATES CONTAINED TERRITORY FOR LARGE GROUPS. LOCATION PROVIDES PARK VIEWS, SOCIAL SEPERATION.



CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES: HIGH CANOPY PROVIDES VALUED SHADE FOR COMMUNITY EVENTS AND GATHERINGS, BOTH FORMAL AND INFORMAL.

Figure 11 - Pershing Park: Site Organization of Social Spaces. Spatial organization of the three social space types shows a lack of social cohesion and spatial organization that minimizes the potential for inter-spatial social support.

SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF INTERNAL & EXTERNAL SOCIAL SPACE BOUNDARIES (INVESTIGATION OF SOCIAL SPACE RELATIONSHIPS) PERSHING PARK, WASHINGTON, D.C.



1:30

NOTE: FOUNTAIN NO LONGER IN OPERATION; FLEXIBLE SEATING HAS BEEN REPLACED WITH PERMANENT PICNIC STYLE TABLES.



SUGGESTIVE USE BOUNDARY
 TYPOLOGY BOUNDARY: SPATIAL BOUNDARY - INTERNAL
 ADJOINING SOCIAL FUNCTIONS: MULTI-USE PLAZA
 SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS: WALL (~6') MAINTAINS AN INTERNAL SOCIAL FOCUS, BLOCKING EXTERIOR VIEWS, HOWEVER TALL WALLS MAY ALSO BLOCK VIEWS TO INTERIOR SPACES, THE WALL CREATES A STANDING SPACE ALONG ITS LENGTH.



STANDING ROOM ONLY
 TYPOLOGY BOUNDARY: COLLECTIVE - INTERNAL
 ADJOINING SOCIAL FUNCTIONS: MULTI-USE PLAZA
 SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS: PROVIDES PERIMETER SEATING AND SUPPORT FOR ENTRY PLAZA ACTIVITIES. LAYERED VEGETATION CREATES A SAFE SPACE FOR BENCH-USERS, ALLOWING THE FOCUS TO BE ON CENTRAL SPACE ACTIVITIES OR CONVERSATION.



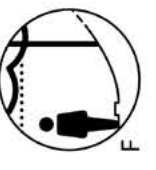
BOUNDARY THROUGH VISUAL ANCHOR AND NEGATIVE SPACE
 TYPOLOGY BOUNDARY: COLLECTIVE - INTERIOR
 ADJOINING SOCIAL FUNCTIONS: MULTI-USE//PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN CORRIDOR
 SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS: GROUPED ORNAMENTALS AND PERENNIAL GRASSES CREATE VISUAL ANCHORS FOR SEATING AREAS. ORGANIZATION OF THESE GROUPINGS AND FIXED TABLES CREATE A NEGATIVE SPACE OR VOID THAT SUGGESTS PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT.



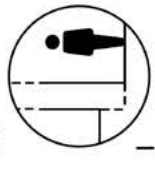
INTERNAL VIEWS
 TYPOLOGY BOUNDARY: TERRITORY - EXTERNAL
 ADJOINING SOCIAL FUNCTIONS: WALKING//CONTEMPLATION, CONVERSATION, PEOPLE WATCHING
 SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS: RAISED PATHWAY ALLOWS FOR VIEWS THROUGHOUT THE PARK. PLANTINGS CREATE SPATIAL SEPARATION BY PUTTING OUT INTO THE PATHWAY. THIS ALSO CREATES AN ENTRY POINT FOR TERRITORY SUB-SPACES.



EXCLUSIVE SECLUDED SPACE
 TYPOLOGY BOUNDARY: TERRITORY//SPATIAL BOUNDARY
 ADJOINING SOCIAL FUNCTIONS: WALKING//INDEPENDENT GROUP SOCIALIZING
 SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS: CIRCULAR LINEAR BENCH CREATES A HIGHLY DEFINED TERRITORY FOR INDEPENDENT GROUPS TO SOCIALIZE. ITS POSITION ON THE "BERM" PROVIDES VIEWS TO DISTANT SOCIAL SPACES. THE TREES ON THE SOUTHERN BERM BLOCK OUT EXTERIOR VIEWS AND SUPPORT AN INTERNAL SOCIAL FOCUS.



PARK SPACE BOUNDARY
 TYPOLOGY BOUNDARY: SPATIAL BOUNDARY - EXTERNAL
 ADJOINING SOCIAL FUNCTIONS: EXTERNAL PEDESTRIAN
 SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS: BERM RISES ON HIGHEST SIDE TO ~8'. COMBINED WITH TREE PLANTINGS ON THE SLOPE THIS CREATES A VISUAL AND AUDIBLE SEPARATION BETWEEN EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL PARK SPACE ON THREE SIDES. THE RAISED EDGE ACTS AS A DETERRENT TO ENTERING THE "SPATIAL BOUNDARY".



INVITING STEPS
 TYPOLOGY BOUNDARY: COLLECTIVE - INTERNAL
 ADJOINING SOCIAL FUNCTIONS: MULTI-USE//TEMPORARY GATHERING SPACE, ENTRY SPACE
 SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS: IN ADDRESSING GRADE CHANGE, LONG TREAD, SHORT RISE STEPS CREATE A MORE MANAGEABLE, CASUAL, INVITING MANNER OF ENTERING A SPACE AS OPPOSED TO MORE STANDARDIZED STEPS. SIMILAR STEPS ARE USED THROUGHOUT THE PARK TO JOIN MULTIPLE SOCIAL SPACES.



GATEWAY TO INTERNAL PARK SPACE
 TYPOLOGY BOUNDARY: SOCIAL ANCHOR//SPATIAL BOUNDARY
 ADJOINING SOCIAL FUNCTIONS: ENTRY SPACE, TEMPORARY GATHERING, (MEMORIAL VISITORS)
 SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS: HIGH (~10') MEMORIAL WALLS CREATE CLEAR DEFINITION OF THE INTERNAL PARK SPACE BOUNDARY AND BLOCK EXTERNAL VIEWS, CREATING A FOCUS ON INTERNAL SOCIAL SPACES. WALLS ALSO WORK TO ADDRESS GRADE CHANGE IN THIS INSTANCE. TWO WALLS AT 90 DEGREES CREATE A GATEWAY AT PARK ENTRANCE.



SEAT WALLS PROVIDE PERIMETER SEATING TO ENTRY PLAZA
 TYPOLOGY BOUNDARY: COLLECTIVE - EXTERNAL
 ADJOINING SOCIAL FUNCTIONS: TEMPORARY GATHERING SPACE, ENTRY SPACE
 SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS: PROVIDES PERIMETER SEATING AND SUPPORT FOR ENTRY PLAZA ACTIVITIES. LAYERED VEGETATION CREATES A SAFE SPACE FOR BENCH-USERS, ALLOWING THE FOCUS TO BE ON CENTRAL SPACE ACTIVITIES OR CONVERSATION.

ACCESSIBLE PERIMETER TREE BOUNDARY
 TYPOLOGY BOUNDARY: COLLECTIVE - EXTERNAL
 ADJOINING SOCIAL FUNCTIONS: WALKING//PARKING
 SOCIAL FINDINGS: TREES INSET FROM THE CURB PROVIDE A VISUAL ANCHOR AND A PLACE FOR PAUSE (STANDING, LEANING), MAKING THE TREE ACCESSIBLE BY COVERING THE PLANTER BED SUPPORTS THE SOCIAL FUNCTIONS SURROUNDING.

Figure 12 - Pershing Park: Investigation of Social Space Relationships. Social functions of internal and external social space boundaries are investigated for their potential to increase social cohesion between spaces, improve accessibility and use, and facilitate social interaction.

SOCIAL AND CHARACTER ANALYSIS FINDINGS

Each social space type was broken down into three elements that contribute to the social and character qualities of the spaces: seating, pathways and plantings. The elements were investigated largely through their form, material and setting to determine their social capacity and the experiential qualities they provide. While each condition identified below has particular nuanced affects on socialization, the following overview of the findings provides a list of overarching design guidelines.

SEATING

Steps accomodating seating allow for preferred social distancing both along their length and vertically. In the instance of the territory, the secluded location of the steps and the plantings create an intimate space for contemplation or conversation. Located adjacent to a collective space or social anchor however, the unidirectional form may create a valued people watching location (Figures 13 & 15).

The form of the seating provided per social space is directly related to the associated function of the space. For example, linear benches are used at entry locations both to provide a place of pause or rest, and to direct movement into more socially active areas. Fixed tables with seating (once movable) are provided in spaces for social grouping and gathering. As movable seating and tables, organic arrangements would result in a meandering experience as opposed to a more defined flow (Figures 14 & 15).

PATHWAYS

As with Canal Park, the material quality of the ground plane is used to support the particular use and desired character of each space. Pershing Park uses a variety of pavers of varying scale, texture, and intricacy to support the social quality and function of the space. In general, large, smooth pavers in simple patterns are used in more open spaces of movement, while smaller, more textured, more intricately patterned pavers are used in gathering spaces (Figures 13, 14 & 15).

Pathways through Pershing Park are generally on average roughly 25% larger than those in Canal Park, but the typical social space associations remain the same: narrower pathways relative to less active spaces and territory spaces, and wider pathways in primary gathering spaces and around social anchors (Figures 13, 14 & 15).

Pathways are less defined and non-linear in collective space, relying on a combination of elements such as seating and plantings to suggest movement and to support places of pause and gathering (Figure 14).

PLANTINGS

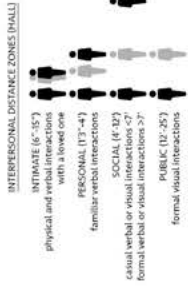
Substantial areas of sloped lawn and small canopy trees are used on the perimeter of the park to support the experiential quality of the park space, blocking views and traffic noise from busy surrounding streets (Figure 13).

Dense, low canopy planting clusters (perennials, grasses, ornamentals) in contained growth areas are used in territory creation to both provide visual anchors and to create separation between territory sub-spaces. The plantings types support the intimate, secluded quality of territories (Figure 13 & 12).

Canopy trees are often planted with substantial breaks center-on-center on the northern boundary and the entry plaza. The trees support social connectivity both internally and externally to the site by maintaining a permeable boundary while providing shade (Figures 14 & 15).

Impenetrable plantings (dense thicket-like ground cover) are used behind seat walls and high fall areas to provide safety in regards to both the comfort level of the user (increased comfort and safety = increased use), and the potential fall risk of a high wall (Figure 15).

SOCIAL AND CHARACTER ANALYSIS OF A TERRITORY PERSHING PARK, WASHINGTON, D.C.



SEATING

EXTRACTED TERRITORY
Typical Group: Single, Group
Typical Interaction: Watch
Maximum IDZ: Formal, Social
Social Influence: Circular form creates maximum boundary. Large size accommodates formal distancing. Large size accommodates large groups. Limited social connections to context.
Material Character: Metal Mesh; air flow, cool in summer
Element Setting: Canopy/Open, Open

INTIMATE CONVERSATION
Typical Group: Single, Couple
Typical Interaction: Watch
Maximum IDZ: Formal, Social
Social Influence: Steps limit social group size. Length of steps allows preferred distancing. Alternating territories create "safe" spaces. Limited social connections to context.
Material Character: Granite; cool in summer, cold in winter
Element Setting: Canopy/Garden, Open

PATHWAYS

PEDESTRIAN BYPASS (10' PATH)
Typical Group: Single, Couple
Typical Interaction: Watch
Maximum IDZ: Casual, Social
Social Influence: Extracted from interior social spaces. Raised internal edge enforces movement. Raised internal edge deters non-path entry.
Material Character: Square Pavers; continued from internal park. Granite Edges; provides cohesiveness with DC.
Element Setting: Garden, Open

TERRITORY ACCESS (10' PATH)
Typical Group: Single, Couple
Typical Interaction: Watch
Maximum IDZ: Casual, Social
Social Influence: Raised walk provides internal views. Planter box spaces support territory/entry. Provides ease of entry/exit to territories. Raised outside edge deters lawn entry. Even inner edge encourages territory entry.
Material Character: Square Pavers; suggests non-linear movement. Granite edge; helps to define territories.
Element Setting: Canopy, Canopy/Garden

INTERNAL OASIS CREATION
Typical Group: In Support
Typical Interaction: In Support
Maximum IDZ: In Support
Social Influence: Offset small canopy trees create buffer (Berm adds to sense of internal oasis). Tree rings deter leaning on trees. Lawn; maintained by use deterred.
Material Character: Soil/Mulch; Deters sitting under trees.
Element Setting: Canopy/Open

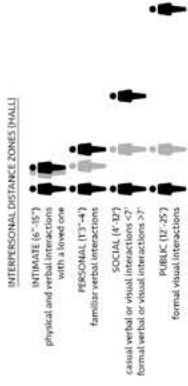
PLANTINGS

TERRITORY ANCHOR
Typical Group: In Support
Typical Interaction: In Support
Maximum IDZ: Public
Social Influence: Low overhead canopy heightens intimacy. Canopy (shade) enables extended use. Provides increased safety and privacy. Helps to define territory sub-spaces.
Material Character: Garden Pockets; Provide visual anchors.
Element Setting: Open, Open

NOTE: Illustrations by Ryan O'Connell, 10/20/16/18/2018. Images sourced from the World War I Centennial Commission, Pershing Park Photo Study.

Figure 13 - Pershing Park: Social and Character Analysis of a Territory. The analysis highlights three elements of design that affect the sociability and character development of the associated space.

SOCIAL AND CHARACTER ANALYSIS OF A COLLECTIVE SPACE PERSHING PARK, WASHINGTON, D.C.



SEATING

SPATIALLY ANCHORED

Typical Group: Couple, Group
Typical Interaction: Engage
Maximum IDZ: Casual Social
Social Influence:
 Replaces moveable seating
 Reduces flexibility of social conditions
 Placement supports territory definition
 Support suggested pedestrian flow
Material Character:
 Exposed Aggregate: cool in summer, durable
Element Setting: Open/Canopy

INVITING WAITING SPACE

Typical Group: Single, Couple, Group
Typical Interaction: Mingle
Maximum IDZ: Casual Social
Social Influence:
 Seating juts out into path encouraging use
 Form creates territory for pause, watching
 Perpendicular to path, encouraging entry
 Provides waiting space for adjacent hotel
Material Character:
 Granite: cool in summer, durable
Element Setting: Canopy, Open

PATHWAYS

SUGGESTED MEANDERING II

Typical Group: All
Typical Interaction: Mingle
Maximum IDZ: Formal Social
Social Influence:
 Placement of plants, seating suggests flow
 Paving increases character quality, softens
 Minimum 13' encourages meandering
Material Character:
 Fan Pavers: non-directional, character detail
 Granite Edge: defines spaces, site cohesion
Element Setting: Canopy, Open

SOCIAL GATEWAYS (10' PATH)

Typical Group: All
Typical Interaction: Mingle
Maximum IDZ: Formal Social
Social Influence:
 Permeable perimeter encourages entry
 Seating along edge encourages pause
 Seating provides ample areas of pause
Material Character:
 Square Pavers: non-directional, social scale
 Granite edge: provides cohesiveness with DC
Element Setting: Canopy, Open

CHARACTER SUPPORT

Typical Group: In Support
Typical Interaction: In Support
Maximum IDZ: In Support
Social Influence:
 Multi-trunk ornamentals soften character
 Density of greenery adds to oasis quality
 Density of greenery adds areas of shade
 Substantial plaza plantings create territories
Material Character:
 Grasses and perennials: character appropriate
Element Setting: Canopy, Open

PLANTINGS

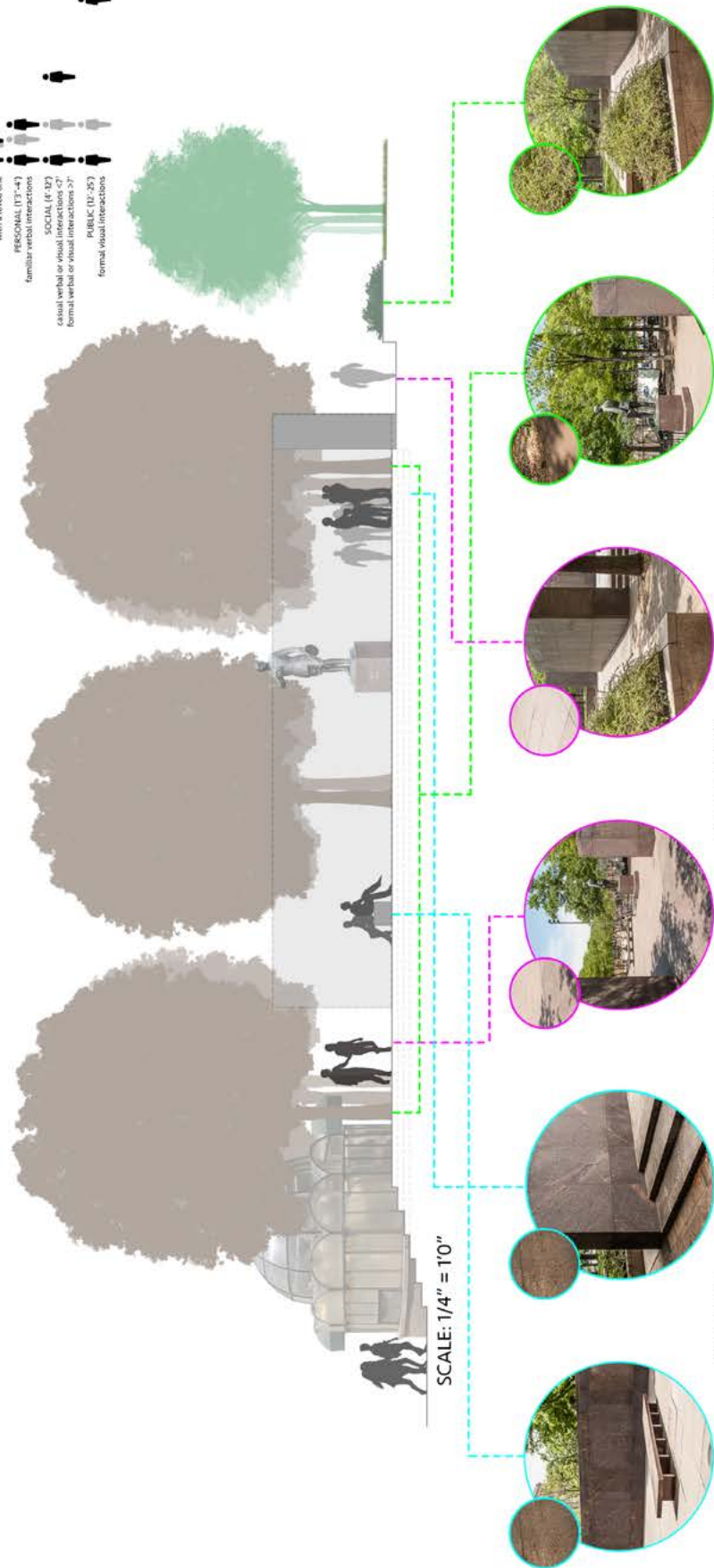
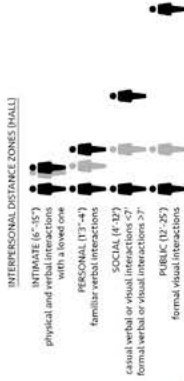
INVITING VIEWS

Typical Group: In Support
Typical Interaction: In Support
Maximum IDZ: In Support
Social Influence:
 Established canopy creates permeable edge
 High canopy provides extensive views
 Establishes interior vs. exterior boundary
Material Character:
 Grasses and perennials: discourages access
Element Setting: Open, Canopy/Garden Pockets

NOTE: Illustrations by Ryan Cooper, 10/20/16/18/2018
 Images sourced from the World War I Centennial Commission,
 Pershing Park Photo Study

Figure 14 - Pershing Park: Social and Character Analysis of a Collective Space. The analysis highlights three elements of design that affect the sociability and character development of the associated space.

SOCIAL AND CHARACTER ANALYSIS OF A SOCIALLY ANCHORED SPACE PERSHING PARK, WASHINGTON, D.C.



SEATING	PATHWAYS	PLANTINGS
<p>BENCH DIRECTING USE</p> <p>Typical Group: Single, Group Typical Interaction: Mingle Maximum IDZ: Formal, Social Social Influence: Location of bench suggests pause Location of bench directs pedestrian flow Meant for temporary use Width allow for use from both sides</p> <p>Material Character: Granite; cool in the summer Element Setting: Open</p>	<p>IF SEATING IS REQUIRED</p> <p>Typical Group: Single, Group Typical Interaction: Mingle Maximum IDZ: Public Social Influence: Occasionally used due to lack of seating Long tread primarily encourages flow Memorial wall provides back rest Edge of anchor under canopy creates a draw</p> <p>Material Character: Granite; rough texture provides grip Element Setting: Canopy, Open</p>	<p>SAFE SPACE BARRIER</p> <p>Typical Group: In Support Typical Interaction: In Support Maximum IDZ: In Support Social Influence: Thicket style plantings discourage access Creates barrier to drop off to ramp Creates privacy and safety use for seat-wall Plant selection also deters positive use</p> <p>Material Character: Thicket Plantings; impenetrable, deter use Element Setting: Canopy, Canopy/Open</p>
<p>SUGGESTED MEANDERING</p> <p>Typical Group: Couple, Group Typical Interaction: Mingle Maximum IDZ: Public Social Influence: Monument elements suggest movement Monument elements suggest pause Granite color change creates spatial boundary Walls of monument create an entry gateway Elevation and openness provides views</p> <p>Material Character: Large Square Pavers; non-directional, meander Element Setting: Canopy, Open</p>	<p>HIDDEN ADA ACCESS (6' PATH)</p> <p>Typical Group: Single Typical Interaction: Watch Maximum IDZ: Personal Social Influence: Width and location suggest specialization Limited interaction during temporary use Setting arises questions of safety Short, highly directional, no pause</p> <p>Material Character: Large Square Pavers; provide ease of access Element Setting: Canopy/Garden, Wall</p>	<p>INVITING GROVE</p> <p>Typical Group: Group, Community Typical Interaction: Mingle Maximum IDZ: Public Social Influence: Established canopy trees provide respite Size creates valued open space underneath Trees invite use from sunny memorial space Shade activates social anchors stepped edge Accessible gravel tree rings do no prohibit use</p> <p>Material Character: Large Square Pavers; of monumental scale Square Pavers; creates more intimate quality Gravel; allows access Element Setting: Canopy/Open</p>

NOTE: Illustrations by Ryan Owens, 10/20/16/18/2018
Images sourced from the World War I Centennial Commission,
Pershing Park Photo Study

Figure 15 - Canal Park: Social and Character Analysis of a Socially Anchored Space. The analysis highlights three elements of design that affect the sociability and character development of the associated space.

PRIMARY FINDINGS

PRIMARY FINDINGS RELATED TO SOCIAL SPACE TYPE

The following findings highlight the successes, but largely the overall challenges Pershing Park faces in promoting social activation and interaction within and between social space types. None-the-less, valuable insights have been made into the connectivity, or lack thereof, of both internal and external park spaces that either promote or hinder social activation and interaction.

Visual and physical barriers create a disconnect between many social spaces. These social barriers are created from extensive grade changes, vegetation, and a lack of social space organization that supports social interaction and a collective social experience.

The lack of functioning social anchors limits the current day potential of the park to draw in users and sustain a communal social atmosphere. The cafe, when functioning, likely provided a draw for local workers on their lunch break. The ice skating rink likely helped activate the park in the winter months by drawing in visitors to the area as well as guests of the nearby Willard Hotel.

The lack of social anchors, significant gaps between social spaces, and the changes in elevation create collective spaces that feel largely disjointed.

Diverse and plentiful territories provide valued spaces for individual expression at the preference of the user, however they are largely separated from collective spaces by the substantial cross park divide created by the pool. The division minimizes the potential for social activation and social cohesion between park spaces.

The intensity of boundaries between social spaces as well as internal and external park space (from simple changes in the patterns of like paving, to dense vertical vegetation), are largely related to three factors: safety, social connectivity, and contextual influences.

PRIMARY FINDINGS RELATED TO SOCIAL AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

The following findings from Pershing Park similarly reveal the necessity to tailor park space elements to particular social space types, desired social conditions, and area functions. While primary findings of element form and social setting often utilize basic principles for developing social settings as identified in the literature review, some differences in element use, particularly relative to the findings of Canal Park, such as seating forms and pathway materials, reveal various social constraints.

Generally utilized seating forms that support the particular social functions of each spatial type. For example, horseshoe seating creates containment and boundary in group territories and focusing social interaction internally to the territory. Once movable seating in the primary gathering space provided flexibility for social preferences to be played out. Replaced by fixed tables and benches, the area is still heavily used during business hours, largely to do with the generous spacing of the seating and comfortable quality of the space. Linear seating on the northern edge creates an interactive social condition on this most active edge of the park, however the steep steps adjoining may be a deterrent to users moving further into the park.

Pathways address grade change by utilizing elongated, low rise steps in contrast to the more standardized steps used for seating. The elongated steps provide ease of access throughout the park, encouraging use.

Ground plane materials throughout the park largely utilize small, uneven pavers. While these pavers add to valued small space qualities, their use in more high volume pedestrian areas of movement leads to a heads down approach (for safety) as opposed to being engaged with surrounding users.

Utilizes canopy trees on the active site boundary to maintain an openness and ease of movement into the park. Utilizes low hanging ornamentals in territory spaces to increase qualities of intimacy.

CONCLUSION

The two case study parks provide valuable insights into the making of highly active social neighborhood gathering spaces. Investigating parks with different levels of sociability and varying spatial organizations highlighted the importance of developing socially and spatially cohesive social spaces anchored by amenities of common value.

The analysis on the organization of social space types and the relationships between them revealed the importance of maximizing the interconnectedness of social spaces. While the organizational analysis clarifies the overarching method of spatial organization, the analysis of the boundaries between these spaces leads to an understanding of how spaces become socially stitched together to maximize the individual value and quality of each space but also their collective strength.

Also of importance is the creation of social spaces that provide opportunity of choice, creating spaces that accommodate a range of individual social preferences and qualities of experience. The analyses of these social and experiential qualities also provide a set of tools. While overarching findings exist such as the importance of movable seating that allows for preferred social grouping and distancing; the material quality of the pathways in encouraging movement or pause, or the density and spacing of plantings in encouraging interaction between spaces, it is the adapted application of these elements in the design in response to the creation of social spaces and their relationships that is most crucial.

In conclusion, the case studies demonstrate that the three social space types function most effectively in promoting social interaction and qualities of togetherness when they work together as a collection of spaces, centrally activated by the social anchor, as opposed to being divided into wholly independent park spaces.

Additionally, the three landscape elements studied are essential to the development of social interaction and the experiential qualities within each social space. Perhaps most important to the elements, is their placement and use in each of the spatial social typologies relative to the desired social and use function of the space. The tailoring of elements to each particular spatial condition is crucial to the support of the independent space as well as its capacity to develop social cohesion between social spaces.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN OBJECTIVES FOR A SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

Developing neighborhood gathering places that provide opportunity for individual cultural expression as well as collective multi-cultural social experiences relies on the creation of spaces that users will feel welcome and comfortable in; spaces that develop a user's sense of representation and sense of place. In order to do this, the literature review has highlighted is the necessity to provide three types of distinct social spaces: territory, collective space, and social anchor. As highlighted in the literature review and tested in the case studies, the scale, placement, and relationships developed within and between these spaces is critical to the development of social activation, interaction, and cohesion between the park spaces. Insights from the literature review on spatial and social character development of the independent spaces along with relative findings from the literature review highlight the need to tailor these spaces with landscape elements that are accommodative to specific social and use patterns. It is also important that the space provide flexibility for social and use preferences. The following design objectives provide a foundational approach to achieving this outcome. Details of site development will draw upon the collection of findings as highlighted throughout this work.

- Create a park that accommodates and improves the sociability of everyday activities such as dog walking, hanging out, waiting for the bus, etc.
- Provide territory, collective, and social anchor spaces that collectively promote social cohesion of the park and flexibility of social engagement and use on the level of the site.
- Provide a diverse range of social experiences that are flexible enough to accommodate multiple groups' social preferences.
- Provide a space for the community to gather together around activities or community events to develop familiarity and solidarity between groups.
- Create social continuity in the park by adjoining experiences that are favorable to multiple groups.
- Minimize conditions in which park spaces are largely socially separated, for example by impeding visual connections or creating large inaccessible gaps between spaces.
- Utilize the strength of the social anchor to influence the sociability of the spaces around it.
- Limit excess space that may end up going unused by identifying activities and social preferences of user groups that are likely to use them and scale them appropriately.

CHAPTER 5: SITE SELECTION & ANALYSIS

THE URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD PARK: THE IMPORTANCE OF PROXIMITY AND SCALE

While the research leading to the development of the SSOM highlighted the importance of creating a park that anyone can feel welcome in, creating a diverse range of spaces and experiences both for individual expression as well as shared experiences, just as important to park activation and the development of social exchange is the development of an urban neighborhood park experience. Research by Karin Peters (2010), Catherine Ward Thompson (2002), and Chuo Li (2014) call to attention three requisite characteristics of the neighborhood park:

- Close proximity to the neighborhood
- Connected to the daily activities of local residents
- Scaled to promote social exchange

It is commonly understood among urban park researchers that regular use will only occur if the park is within a 3-5 minute walking distance of one's place of residence or work (Thompson, p.61, 2002). Also, the particular placement of the park within the community can easily affect use rates. The park should be central to the community and easily accessible from most, if not all side. Additionally, siting the park near transit stops and areas of existing high pedestrian volumes will aid in creating a park that becomes part of the daily experience for local residences. These existing uses as well as additional routine activities (such as dog walking) that may yet be accommodated, should be supported per their necessary function, but more importantly, should be designed from a perspective of facilitating social exchange (Li, 2014; Thompson, 2002; Peters, 2010).

The scale of the park and subsequent park spaces should also be scaled to promote social exchange and community togetherness (Peters, 2010). This can be done by limiting the size of park spaces per the amount of use they are likely to receive (size of the community) as well as scaling spaces per activities that will be accommodated for. Creating park spaces that limit excessive space minimizes the potential for social voids and divisions, and maximizes opportunities for social exchange. The creation of appropriately scaled, tightly knit spaces also supports the development of character qualities valued for increasing sociability.

The creation of these character qualities derives not only from the scale of spaces and their placement as per the SSOM in the context of the site, but also the use of material elements that support the desired social and character quality outcomes.

SITE SELECTION CRITERIA

In selecting a site, the literature and case studies reviewed highlight the importance of focusing the search on a space to be developed as a “neighborhood” park. As the thesis aims to develop multi-cultural social spaces, locations that exhibit diversity are also prioritized. Site selection criteria associated with the multi-cultural neighborhood park includes:

- The proposed park should be located in an area that exhibits high levels of racial diversity and a range of incomes.
- The proposed park should be located in an area of high public transportation use. This reveals a need for local activities and programs for urban city dwellers from all social and racial backgrounds. This also ensures high volumes of pedestrians moving between neighborhoods and transit stops.
- The proposed park should be integrated into the daily routine of residents, first by ensuring its close proximity (within 3-5 minute walk) to residences, but also through its placement along known pedestrian passageways and confluences.
- The proposed park should have multiple potential entry points that provide ease of access from varying locations from within the community. The park should be central to the community providing access from all sides, as opposed to tucked into a corner of a community where access may be limited, both physically and geographically.

SITE SELECTION

The site selection process first began with the narrowing of the site selection area within the District of Columbia. Demographic information (2010 US Census) was used to identify an area within the city that exhibited a diverse racial makeup, a range of incomes, as well as high levels of transportation use. Results were further narrowed by locating highly diverse adjoining neighborhoods with high pedestrian volumes that offered potential space for a central community gathering place. The selected site: Rabaut Park, sits at the intersection of Columbia Rd. and 16th St. Central to the surrounding neighborhoods, the park currently functions as social space, public transportation stop, and a transitional space for residents moving between neighborhoods, retail centers, entertainment and dining venues, and transportation stops (Figures 17, 18 & 19).

The site selection process performed for this thesis is not intended to single out Rabaut Park as the only potential site for the creation of an inclusive neighborhood social gathering place. There are undoubtedly other sites within DC as well as the surrounding region that would meet the site selection criteria. However, through the narrowing of the search area as outlined above, Rabaut Park was clearly identifiable as a highly viable option upon which to further this investigation.

SITE SELECTION - DIVERSITY IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



Figure 16 - Site Selection: Diversity in the District of Columbia. The investigation explores the racial diversity, per capita income and rates of public transportation use to determine a site for development of a neighborhood park in a diverse community.

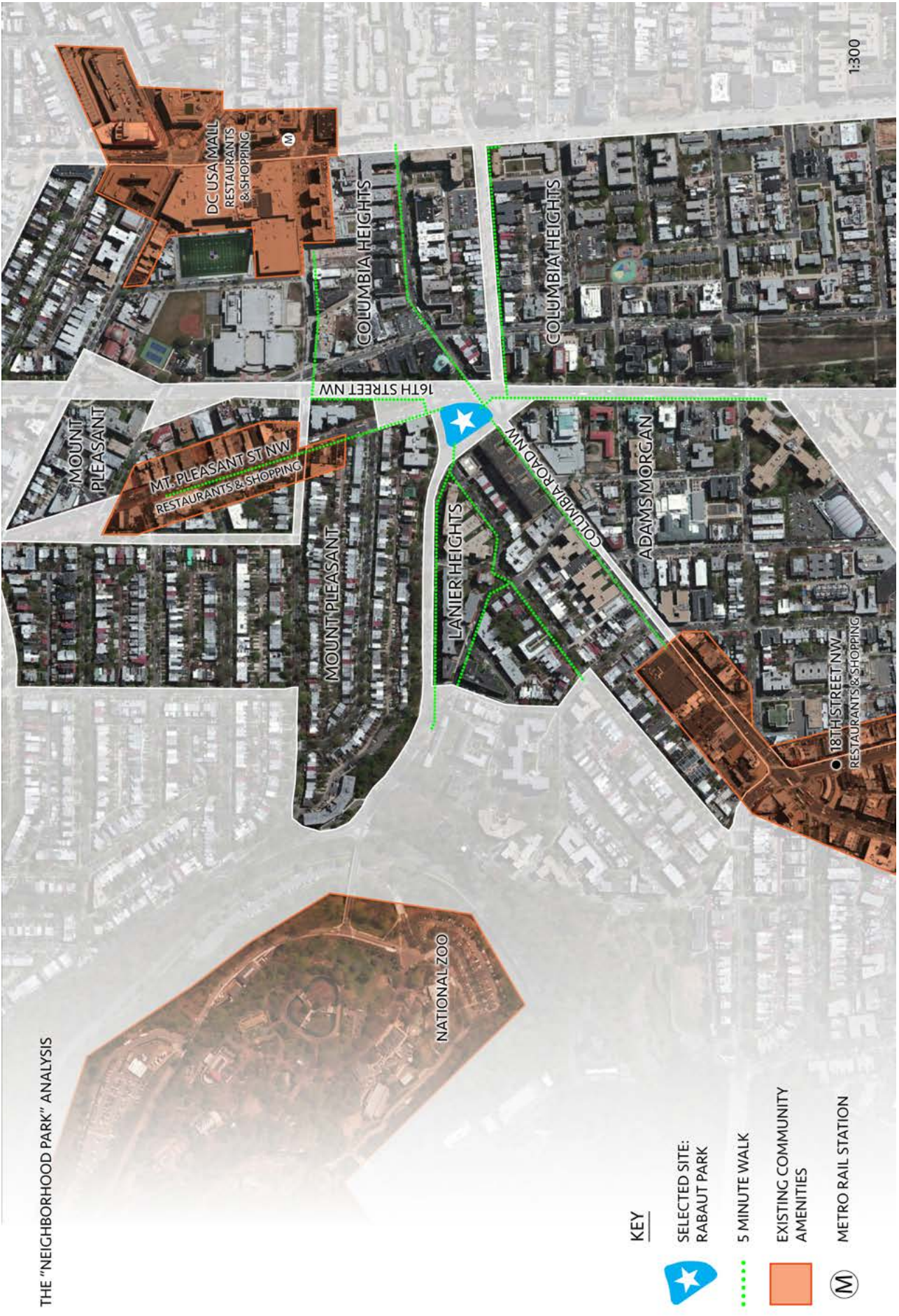


Figure 17 - The "Neighborhood Park" Analysis. The analysis reveals the highly residential makeup of the community and the walkability of the community relative to the site: Rabaut Park in Lanier Heights, District of Columbia.

CONTEXTUAL AND SITE INFLUENCES AFFECTING EXISTING USE AND POTENTIAL ACTIVATION

The intersection of 16th Street and Columbia Road gives this site prominence in a city of important landmarks. It is supported in this cause by its neighboring churches that dominate the three corners of the intersection. These churches not only support the character of the area but are also local landmarks that may be drawn upon to create community connections in design development.

While the intersection and its surroundings add to the prominence of the park, it also creates a number of constraints. The most evident is users from the Columbia Heights neighborhood having to cross seven lanes of traffic along Columbia Road to get into the park space. While cross walks are established, emphasizing the crossing area as a pedestrian space relative to vehicular space may raise awareness of motorists and increase comfort levels of pedestrians making the crossing.

An additional constraint created by the major intersection is relative to the safety and enjoyment of the park space. Providing separation between the major interchange and, at minimum, areas for children in the park space, will be necessary in maximizing the safety, enjoyment, and sociability of the space.

From the perspective of activation, the site is situated along a primary pedestrian corridor accommodating users moving between neighborhoods, amenities, or transit stop both off and on site. Additionally the site neighbors multiple high-rise residential spaces and can serve as part of the daily routine for dog walkers, commuters, or simply as an outdoor living room.

Minimal community amenities near to the site are both an opportunity and a constraint (Figure 18). The constraint being a lack of retail, restaurant, or commercial businesses such as in Canal Park, that play a major role in the activation of that space. Sundays however would likely see the park highly activated with local church-goers streaming through the site and nearby spaces throughout the morning and early afternoon hours. The opportunity however lies in this constraint. The lack of these external amenities has the potential to strengthen the future park space as a central hub of social activity and a true neighborhood gathering space receiving the vast majority of its use from local residents.



Figure 18 - Contextual Influences. Closer examination of the site and surrounding context reveals the high density residential makeup of the community, the site as a high volume pedestrian corridor, local landmarks comprised of multiple churches, and the challenge presented by an adjacent high volume traffic corridor.

ANALYSIS OF RABAUT PARK

EXISTING SOCIAL SPACE ORGANIZATION

Rabaut Park differs largely from the case studies and the social space organization model in a number of ways that are detrimental to its ability to function as a social gathering place (Figure 19). Primary findings reveal deficiencies in each of the three social space types. Collective spaces are wholly divided as opposed to adjoining each other in creating a larger community gathering space. Territories are plentiful, but interspersed throughout the park with minimal relations between other social spaces. The lack of a social anchor, particularly in a park with minimal activation except through its function as a pedestrian corridor, limits opportunities for social engagement in the space and does not create a symbiotic relationship between other social space types.



Figure 19 - Rabaut Park: Site Organization of Social Spaces. The analysis reveals a lack of social anchor and a piecemeal organization of collective space.

EXISTING USER GROUPS

Existing park uses are derived from two site visits, one in the summer of 2015, and one in the spring of 2016, as well as street view imagery from Google Maps.

Primary park uses focus on socializing and hanging out within racial groups organized by age and gender. The predominant group is middle age Black men who gather in large friend groups near the northern entry. The second largest group is made up of middle age Latino men who often socialize in pairs along the seat wall in the lower section of the park facing westward. Individuals or pairs often sit on benches to the west along the outer most edge of the internal park space. These users are typically middle age to older men. High school age teen and young adult Latino men typically hung out at the southern and western entry. Users of the primary passageway and the sidewalk along 16th St. were more representative of the diverse makeup of the community.

Particular user groups in limited numbers in the park space include women, children, and Whites and Asians. This is likely in part due to limitations of the design to accommodate a range of activities, the monotony of spatial and character qualities, and the culture of the park that has developed in time.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS (2010 U.S. CENSUS FINDINGS)

RACIAL DIVERSITY

While the community represented is majority White at near 55%, Black and Latino residents contribute near even numbers to make up over 40% of the population. Though Black residents have consistently made up the majority of the population since the 1950s, recent surveys have shown significant increases in Whites as the gentrification practices and the draw of the urban lifestyle is creating a renewed interest for long time suburbanites. While the percentage of Black residents in the community is lower than the near 51% of Black residents in all of DC in 2010, a doubling of the Latino population, and a 24% increase in the Asian population creates a more ethnically diverse community.

PER CAPITA INCOME

Per capita incomes range largely between adjacent neighborhoods surrounding the site. This is due in large part to ethnic majority of each individual neighborhood, but the relative diversity of each neighborhood does show a range of income levels within racial groups. By in large, income levels stay consistent across ethnic groups with the following exceptions: Whites have a higher (near double) lower income threshold, and Blacks have a lower (near a third) upper income threshold.

AGE

Perhaps the most prominent age group is young adults among Whites. The community is also seeing a burgeoning of new families, as children under 5 make up nearly half of the population under 14 years of age. This is due in large part to the increases in the young adult White population, but also the cultural norms of larger families among Blacks and Latinos.

GENDER

Particularly telling about the gender findings is the high number of women to men among Black teens and young adults. This is likely due in large part to a large portion of female Black students attending nearby Howard University, but this number may also be influenced by additional social factors within the community. An additional finding is relative to the fluctuation of women to men across age groups in the Asian community, which given the minimal statistical information, may be an anomaly, but it may also be due to particular cultural factors.

PROMINENT DEMOGRAPHIC FINDINGS - IDENTIFYING STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT USER GROUPS

White	55% of the overall population 5 years old or less - 27% of all children under 14 years of age 68% of all young adults 20-29 years old
Black	1.16 children per family household* (White - 0.65; Asian - 0.81) 76% - female run households** 30% marriage rate*** (White - 78%; Asian - 94%) 56% of all teens ages 15-19 years old. 85% of Black 18-19 year olds are female 71% of Black 20-29 year olds are female 43% of all Seniors age 65 or older 18% of households have grandchildren in the home (potential indicator of multi-generational child raising)****
Asian	<5% of the overall population (24% higher than the D.C. average) Teens ages 15-19 make up <1% of the Asian population 72% of Asian 20-29 year olds are female
Latino	1.25 children per family household* (White - 0.65; Asian - 0.81) 50% marriage rate*** (White - 78%; Asian - 94%) 28% of all teens ages 15-19 years old. 28% of Latino 20-29 year olds are female 13% of households have grandchildren in the home (potential indicator of multi-generational child raising).

* "Family household" refers to at least two members related by birth, marriage or adoption and is not a direct quantifier of how many children are in a family. For example, a couple may simply be married without children, however they are averaged into the "children per family household" ratio. The intent is to show a significant statistical difference between families of different races.

** All other races on average show a male run household rate slightly higher than that of female run households.

*** This suggests a higher child to parent ratio given likely higher rates of single parent homes.

**** Compared to 3% for both Whites and Asians.

CHAPTER 6: DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

CHILDREN'S PLAY AND THE SUPPORTING GATHERING PLACE

Demographics for the community surrounding Rabaut Park reveal a strong presence of young families in the community; a trend that is likely to continue as the community gets younger due in large part to nearby gentrification projects.

The literature shows that children's play spaces are valued by multiple user groups, and watching children play is one of the most valued park activities. Additionally, children's play spaces have proven to be successful generators of social gathering and exchange between cultural groups. Designing for children also provides diversity of age and gender, as children will likely come to the park with a guardian which may be a parent, an older sibling, a grandparent, or a care giver.

Focusing on children's play also provides a valuable resource for lower income single parent or family households, particularly those with higher child to parent ratios who likely do not have the means to venture outside the community or pay for activities and programs.

Additional social activities commonly preferred by multiple ethnic groups are strongly affiliated with simply hanging out, relaxing, and socializing with friends and family. Providing a diverse range of social conditions and experiential qualities based on the social space organizational model, that provide flexibility in group size and social distancing, can begin to accommodate these more generalized preferences by providing choice of engagement particular to any user group on any given day.

Given the resulting flexibility and diversity of social spaces, needs associated with age, existing uses, and daily functions can then be used to develop appropriate social space relationships, maximizing the social interconnectedness of spaces and minimizing potential conflicts.

FINAL DESIGN OBJECTIVES

- Provide a flexible social gathering place for adults that accommodates existing park uses by providing space for multiple groups to develop preferred social groupings and distancing.
- Embrace the park's existing use of a primary pedestrian corridor by adjoining high use social gathering spaces to it, particularly the social anchor.
- Maintain an open active site boundary to maximize pedestrian flow into park social spaces, particularly those of high use.
- Improve the social quality of park bus stop locations by creating more socially engaging situations while still maintaining providing flexibility for social preferences.
- Provide a splash fountain to serve as the social anchor. The fountain serves as a social anchor not only for families, but it also provides a highly valued visual anchor for non-family users.
- Connect the fountain spatially within the park in a manner that promotes the use and sociability of adjoined spaces. Vice-versa, locate the fountain near to areas of high pedestrian volume to maximize the potential for social exchange.
- Provide a lawn space that is flexible enough to accommodate a range of use preferences from children's free play to community events.
- Provide independent territory spaces that are accommodating to a range of social groupings. Provide opportunities for intimate conversation as well as people watching. Provide territory spaces that are cohesive with polychromic space to support social interaction between the spaces.
- Provide a diverse set of plantings that support social character, social grouping, and social distancing patterns relative to their social space type, adjacent spaces, and contextual influences.

INITIAL DESIGN CONCEPT ANALYSIS & SITING THE SOCIAL ANCHOR

Findings from the initial design concept (Figure 21) highlight three primary challenges that influenced the social quality of the design moving forward:

The splash fountain, while highly visible, is too close to the road creating issues of safety around children's play. Children's play spaces that aren't deemed safe by parents limits the social engagement of children as well as parents. In this condition, children are not free to play extensively with other children, and parents are too involved in watching their children that their ability to socialize with other parents is greatly diminished.

From a spatial organization perspective, the social anchor, being located on the perimeter of the site in a highly active pedestrian space, does not provide space sufficient for developing social spaces to hang out around the fountain, limiting the development of social connectivity outward from the social anchor.

The initial design also lacks a diversity of spaces and character that are necessary for ensuring the flexibility of the park space to adapt to multiple uses, and its capacity to accommodate the numerous community groups for which the park is intended.

As a result of this analysis, siting of the social anchor becomes most important in the development of the design. Combining the lessons learned about social anchor development from the literature review and case studies with the found qualities of the site, maximizes the potential of the social anchor to have high levels of social function. Additional social space associations can then be developed throughout the site that both support and are supported by their neighboring spaces.

The sketches to the right (Figure 20) show the development of the revised concept from top to bottom as general rules of social anchor development (connection to primary pedestrian space; surrounding social support) and site and anchor specific findings (maximizing safety for children; addressing grade changes) begin to form a central social organization around which a range of diverse social spaces can be developed.

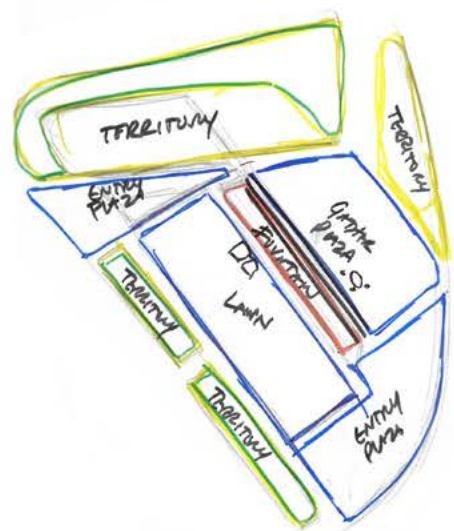
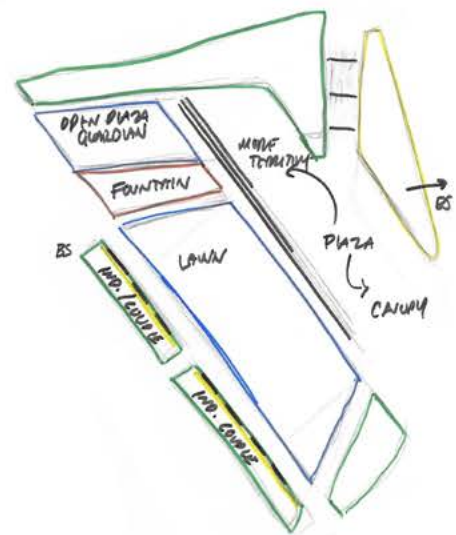
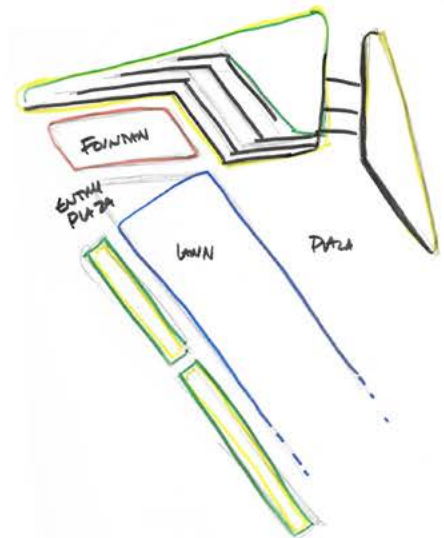
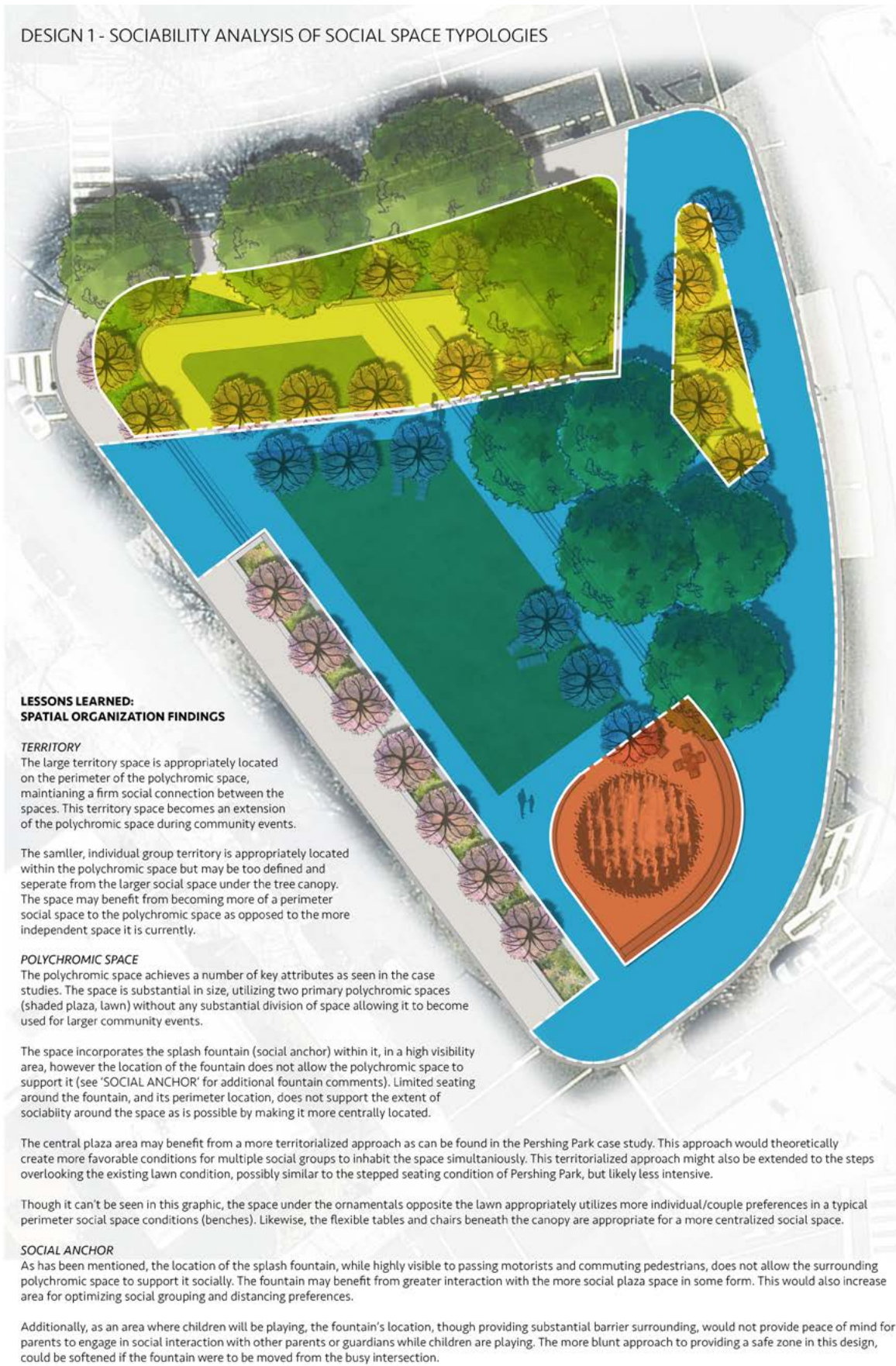


Figure 20 - Siting the Social Anchor. The sketches show the development of park spaces relative to the SSOM and contextual influences.

DESIGN 1 - SOCIABILITY ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL SPACE TYPOLOGIES



LESSONS LEARNED: SPATIAL ORGANIZATION FINDINGS

TERRITORY

The large territory space is appropriately located on the perimeter of the polychromic space, maintaining a firm social connection between the spaces. This territory space becomes an extension of the polychromic space during community events.

The smaller, individual group territory is appropriately located within the polychromic space but may be too defined and separate from the larger social space under the tree canopy. The space may benefit from becoming more of a perimeter social space to the polychromic space as opposed to the more independent space it is currently.

POLYCHROMIC SPACE

The polychromic space achieves a number of key attributes as seen in the case studies. The space is substantial in size, utilizing two primary polychromic spaces (shaded plaza, lawn) without any substantial division of space allowing it to become used for larger community events.

The space incorporates the splash fountain (social anchor) within it, in a high visibility area, however the location of the fountain does not allow the polychromic space to support it (see 'SOCIAL ANCHOR' for additional fountain comments). Limited seating around the fountain, and its perimeter location, does not support the extent of sociability around the space as is possible by making it more centrally located.

The central plaza area may benefit from a more territorialized approach as can be found in the Pershing Park case study. This approach would theoretically create more favorable conditions for multiple social groups to inhabit the space simultaneously. This territorialized approach might also be extended to the steps overlooking the existing lawn condition, possibly similar to the stepped seating condition of Pershing Park, but likely less intensive.

Though it can't be seen in this graphic, the space under the ornamentals opposite the lawn appropriately utilizes more individual/couple preferences in a typical perimeter social space conditions (benches). Likewise, the flexible tables and chairs beneath the canopy are appropriate for a more centralized social space.

SOCIAL ANCHOR

As has been mentioned, the location of the splash fountain, while highly visible to passing motorists and commuting pedestrians, does not allow the surrounding polychromic space to support it socially. The fountain may benefit from greater interaction with the more social plaza space in some form. This would also increase area for optimizing social grouping and distancing preferences.

Additionally, as an area where children will be playing, the fountain's location, though providing substantial barrier surrounding, would not provide peace of mind for parents to engage in social interaction with other parents or guardians while children are playing. The more blunt approach to providing a safe zone in this design, could be softened if the fountain were to be moved from the busy intersection.

Figure 21 - Initial Design Concept: Lessons Learned. The initial concept analysis reveals issues of safety and activation surrounding the splash fountain (social anchor) and a lack of diversity in social space and character development.

CHAPTER 7: FINAL DESIGN & ANALYSIS

FINAL DESIGN PROPOSAL PLAN: THE NEIGHBORHOOD GATHERING PLACE

The final park design (Figures 22 & 23) creates a safe, comfortable, intimate community gathering space for hanging out, playing, and socializing. Anchored by children's play, the park strives to be flexible in use and diverse in character, where people from all walks of life feel as though they belong, and that they are part of the community.

The highlight of the park is the central splash fountain. The fountain and play lawn combine to create a safe children's play space. This is achieved by dropping the level of the play space down from the busy surrounding streets and high volumes of people moving through the park. Here, families can gather and interact freely. Parents can be relatively worry free about children potentially straying into traffic or getting lost in a crowd. Multiple seating areas around the splash fountain provide seating options for a range of users from large family groups to those simply passing by wanting to take a moment and watch the action. The relationship between the splash fountain and the primary pedestrian passageway highlights the intentions of the park, creating a zone of interaction between a diverse range of people.

The children's play space however is not intended just for families and those with children. For example, the lawn can also accommodate sun bathing, picnics, or a game of catch. It can accommodate dog walkers and dog play. It can be used for community organized activities such as exercise classes or showing films. The entirety of the open space can further be used for larger community events such as farmers markets or festivals.

The park also provides substantial gathering space for people without children. The observation terrace in particular provides a large open space under high shade, with movable tables and chairs where individuals or groups could relax, socialize, play cards, or simply people watch. This terraced space not only separates it from the active children's play space, but provides views throughout the park making it ideal for relaxing and watching the action.

Spaces for more secluded contemplation, relaxation, or conversation are provided by the western terraces. The terraces provide views across the children's play space up to the primary pedestrian passageway. The terraces' connection with the play lawn allows users to expand their activities into the play space.

The secluded lawn space enables a more passive social experience. While the secluded lawn maintains a strong visual connection with the play lawn, the break created by the pathway leading towards the fountain overlook limits more active play. The resulting space is therefore more accommodating to, for example, small children playing, a small exercises group, or people watchers. The secluded lawn also expands the capabilities of the park to accommodate community events.

The park also feature two main entry plazas connected by the primary pedestrian passageway and the bus stop area to the east. This combined open space running the length of the eastern boundary creates a comfortable, largely shaded space with enticing views. The space allows people to move freely from the highly pedestrian oriented eastern edge of the park into the central gathering space.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD GATHERING PLACE

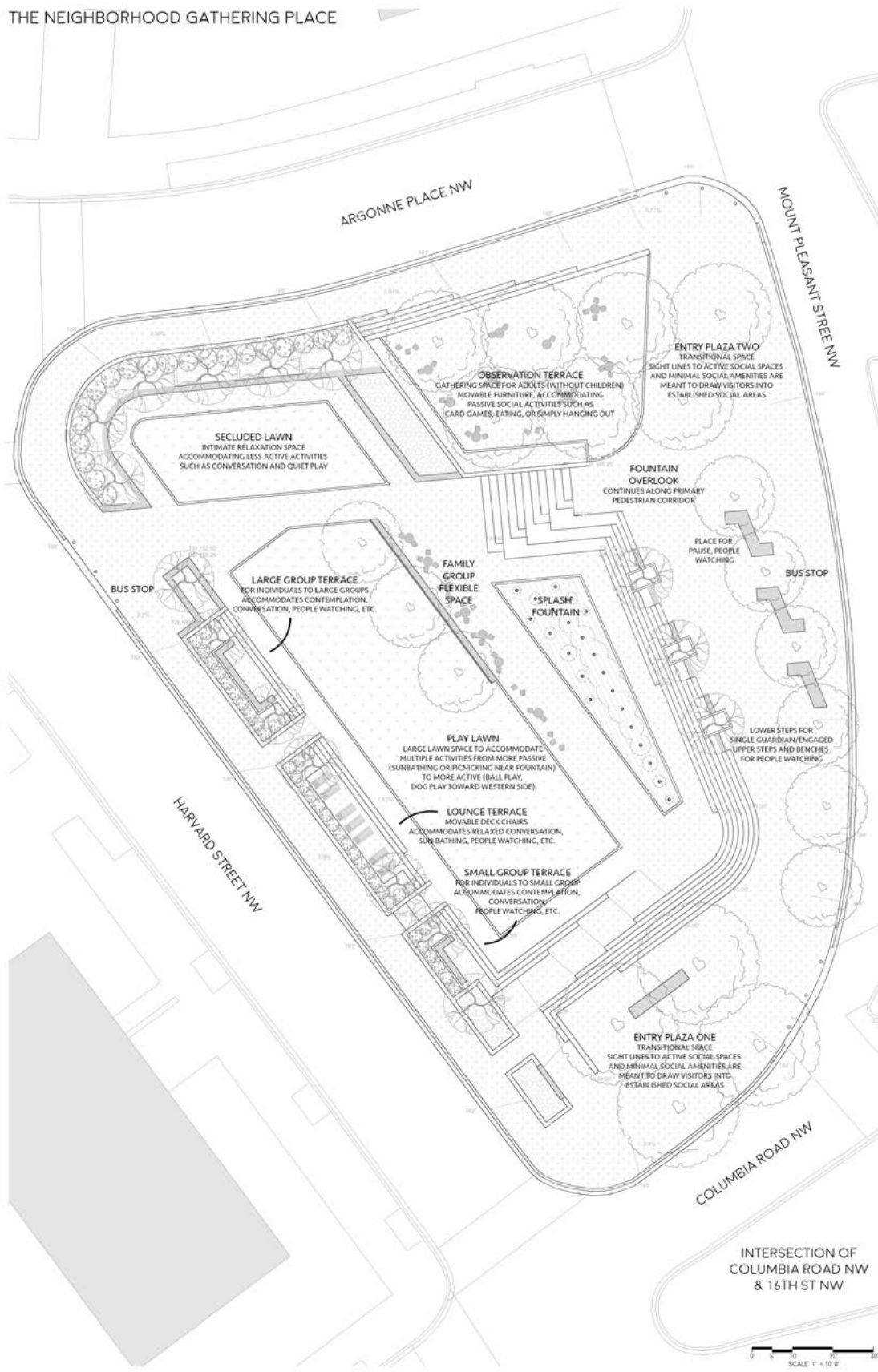


Figure 22 - Final Design Proposal Plan: The Neighborhood Gathering Place.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD GATHERING PLACE



Figure 23 - Illustrated Plan: The Neighborhood Gathering Place. The rendered plan illustrates the centrality of the social anchor to support a diverse selection of surrounding social spaces.

SOCIAL SPACE ORGANIZATION IMPLEMENTATION

The design incorporates two distinct collective spaces separated by a stepped boundary that functions to create social continuity between the spaces (Figure 24). The division of collective space supports each space's primary function: a safe play space (lower), and a pedestrian corridor (upper). While the collective space is divided, the anchor serves as a link between the spaces, activating the stepped boundary (territory) both from below (parents/guardians) and from above (passerby, people watchers). While the collective space can be used in its entirety for larger community events such as festivals, the spaces can also be used separately for smaller events such as group exercise or movies on the lawn, and farmer's markets in the upper hardscaped space.

As mentioned, the social anchor (splash fountain) functions to link the collective spaces, but its location also creates a central social focus. The surrounding collective spaces and territories are being activated by the anchor while also providing support for the anchor through the range of experiences they offer. This give and take could be thought of as a social symbiotic relationship.

As a splash fountain was chosen to provide the social anchor, the fountain's central location and the development of the spaces around it in creating a safe play space is key to both the anchor and the park's success.

Territories throughout the park space are most notable for their diversity of character and the range of social experiences they offer. Larger, more intimate territory spaces are appropriately located on the perimeter of collective space. While open to collective space, their heavily vegetated boundaries provide the intimacy, security, and separation desired for individual expression. Smaller, internal collective space territories utilize visual anchors and vertical stepping to create territory definition as opposed to dense boundaries. This method minimizes social divisions within collective space while providing a sense of place (a claimable spot for independent socializing within the larger social experience).

The overall organization of the site works in accord with social space organization model to create a socially cohesive gathering space. The model, derived from the literature review and case studies, provided the framework for a park design that is representative of the site and the community.

SOCIAL SPACE RELATIONSHIP APPLICATIONS

Boundary conditions from the case studies have been applied largely to support the function of the associated social space type, as well as create social connectivity and continuity between spaces (Figure 24).

Most notable about the boundary types selected is their application in support of territory development. As mentioned in the previous section, boundaries with more dense vegetation are utilized on the perimeter of the larger territories, while more visual anchor type boundaries are used internally.

Stepped boundaries are also widely used to support the internal seclusion desired for the children's play space. These boundary types are also used for enhancing views of the social anchor space, providing territory definition, providing flexibility in levels of social engagement, and supporting ease of movement between collective spaces.

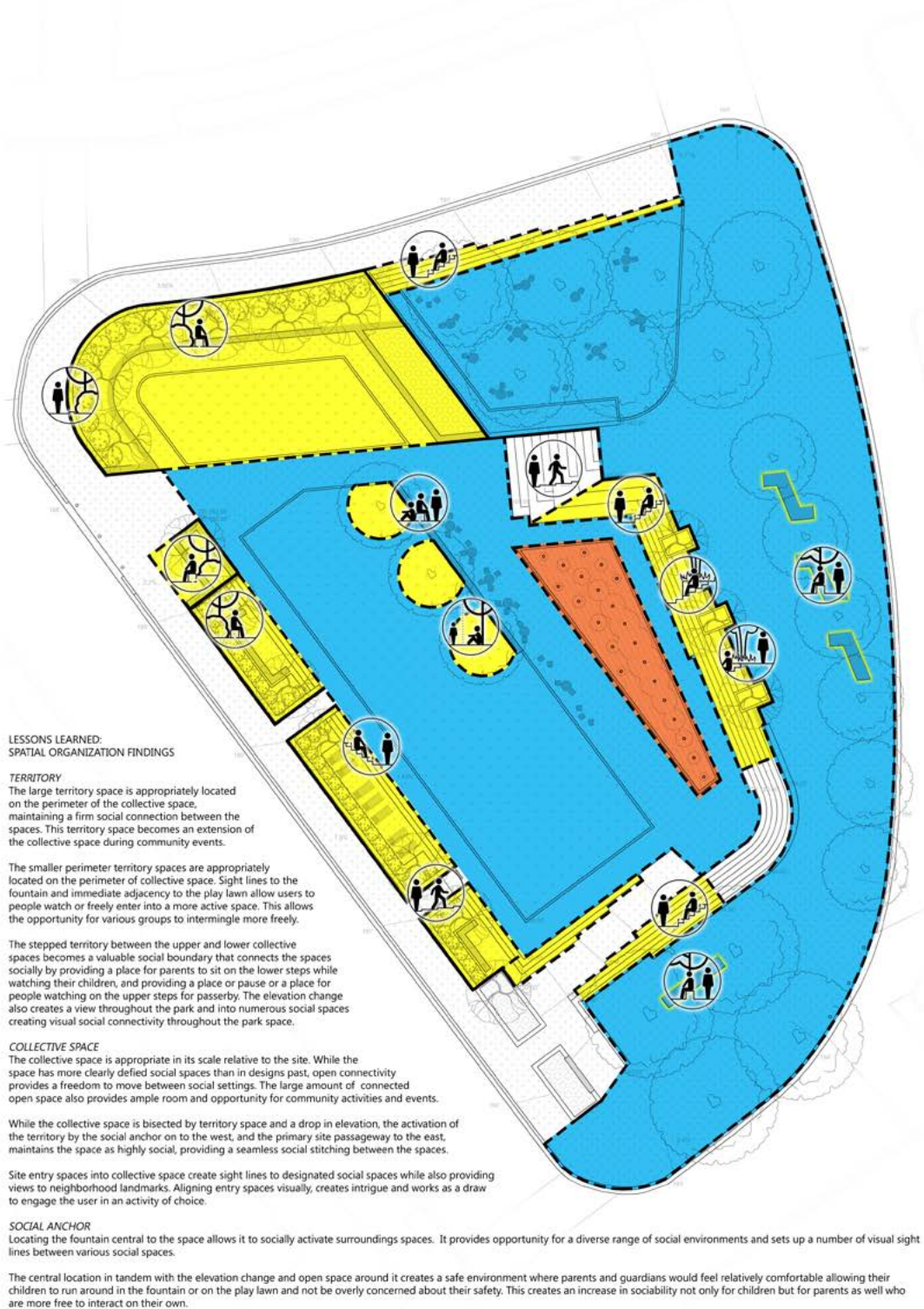


Figure 24 - The Neighborhood Gathering Place: Sociability Analysis of Social Space Types. The analysis shows the application of boundary types from the case studies to support functions associated with independent spatial types and social space relationships.

DESIGN RESPONSE TO THE CONTEXTUAL SETTING

The “Contextual Influences” drawing was revisited with the new park applied in place of Rabaut Park to analyze how opportunities and constraints relative to site context influenced the park design (Figure 25). The following findings highlight the importance of maintaining an open active site boundary and maximizing community connectivity.

Maintaining open space on the active site boundary encourages pedestrians to enter at any point as opposed to only at the corners of the site.

Placement of the primary pedestrian corridor closer to the most active site boundary creates a more lively open plaza space, and a more immediate connection to primary gathering spaces.

The open plaza edge also provides views into the park for passing motorists, establishing awareness of the park space and its functions.

While the densely planted active site boundary of Rabaut Park is designed to reduce the negative visual and audible impacts of the busy intersection, the new design utilizes a stepped boundary to the lower collective space. This gesture achieves similar affect in reducing external disturbances and creates a socially active “buffer”, as opposed to a traditional planted buffer that may create social division.

Views out of the park to local landmarks, predominantly from primary gathering spaces, are utilized as visual anchors, adding to the character of the space and adding to a sense of place. The design aims to utilize landmark views from multiple social spaces. Views to local landmarks will change in some instances as plantings mature, however as a visual connection may diminish from one space, it open up for another.

The issue of high traffic volume on 16th Street creating a potential constraint to users from the eastern neighborhood of Columbia Heights is addressed through the addition of a stamped asphalt crosswalk. In this instance, a more intensive pedestrian intervention, such as Canal Park’s raised streets, would not be feasible based on the importance of 16th Street as a primary thoroughfare.

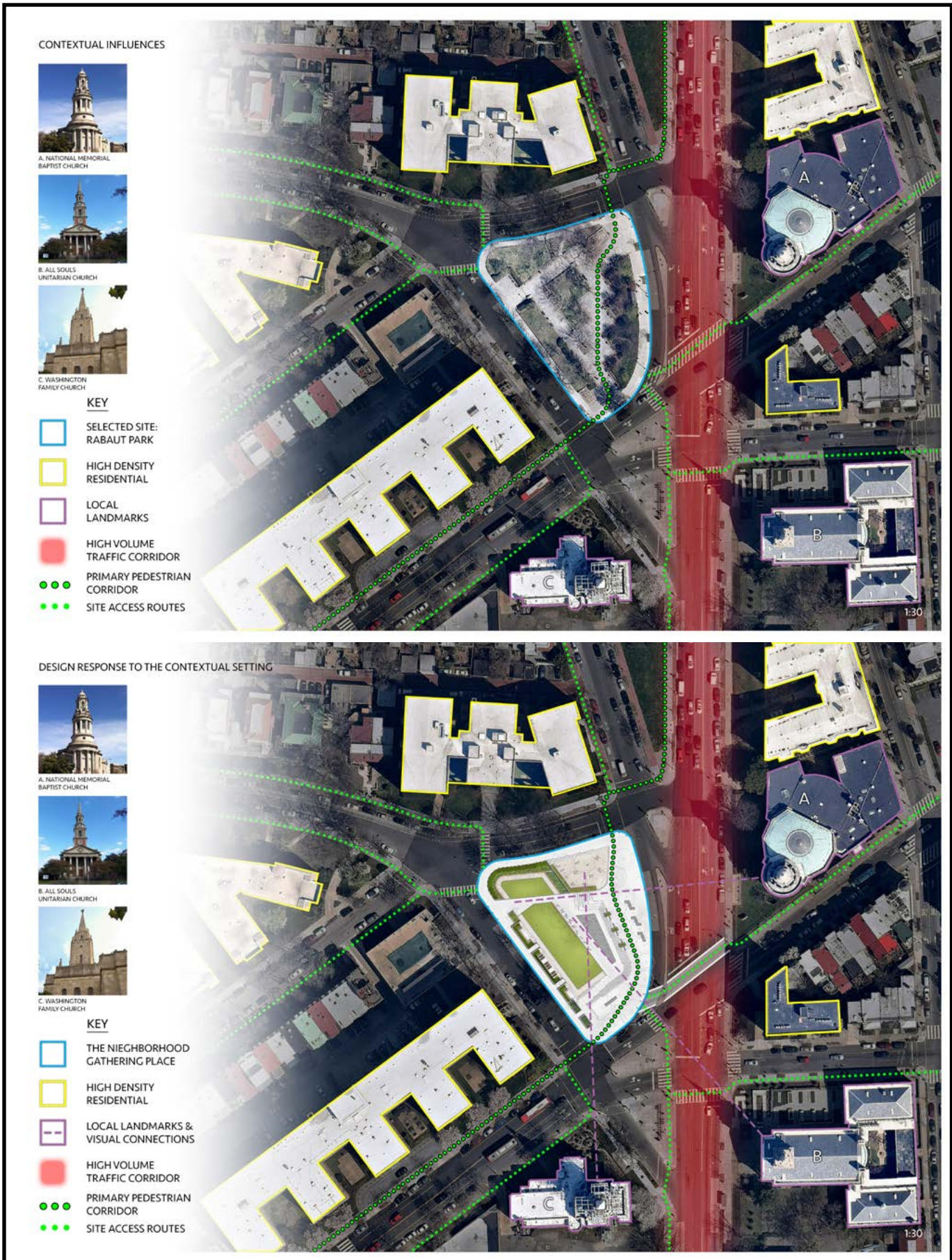


Figure 25 - Design Response to the Contextual Setting. Shown is the increased sociability of the primary pedestrian corridor, established views to local landmarks, and crosswalk improvements increase safety and improve accessibility.

CENTRAL SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Employing a central social space organizational method anchored by the splash fountain addresses the issues raised by the initial concept analysis and allows for further development of social space relationships.

Three significant design gestures were made to further the social quality and connectivity of spaces in support of central social space organization. The interventions also revealed a number of supporting findings.

Design Gesture and Intention (Figure 26):

Increase the angle of the stepped fountain boundary to increase visual connectivity between the observational terrace, the fountain area, and the park as a whole.

Supporting Findings:

A potential social dead zone is removed by aligning the fountain boundary steps to the primary passageway. This design move purges excessive space allocated to the primary passageway and creates greater social cohesion between the fountain space and the passageway.

The alignment also opens up the gathering space around the fountain to incorporate a range of seating options and social conditions.

Design Gesture and Intention (Figure 27):

Take advantage of site grade change by incorporating steps to create a safe play space for the fountain and to provide seating on its perimeter. The freedom children are given to play and the lessening of parental responsibilities increases social interaction.

Supporting Findings:

The substantial stepped boundary supports the social function of each adjacent space, providing seating for parents or guardians below, and seating, a place of pause, or people watching for people moving along the primary passageway.

The elevation change provides sweeping visual connections from the upper collective space. The reduction of external visual and social disturbances heightens the internal social focus and creates a more comfortable internal park space, promoting a relaxed social experience.

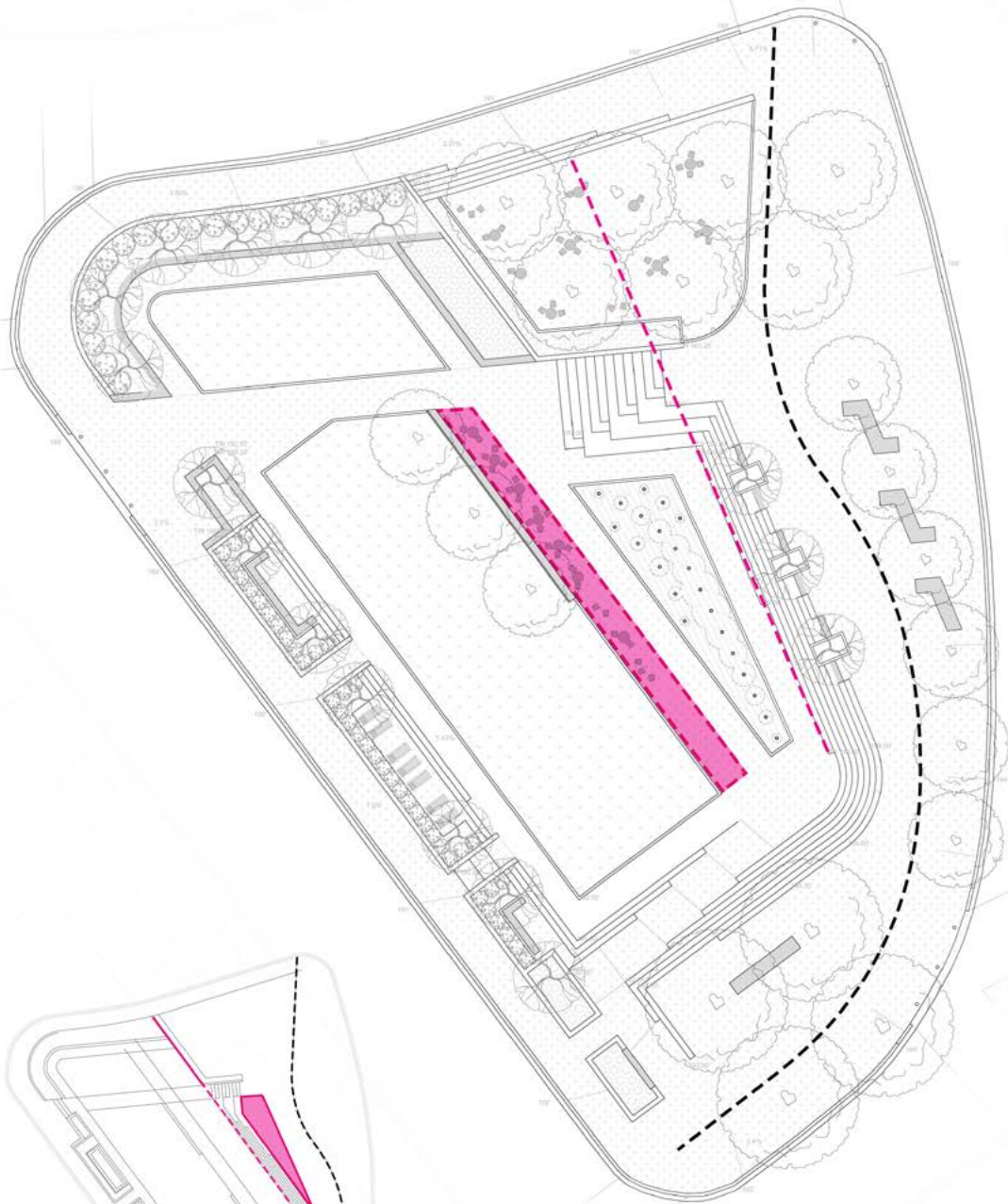
Design Gesture and Intention (Figure 28):

Create visual connections between social spaces internal to the site, and utilize external landmarks as visual anchors and character support.

Supporting Findings:

Perimeter spaces with limited internal visual connection can still be socially connected if located near to the primary passageway.

Utilize boundary elements that function socially to serve both the internal and externally focused spaces.



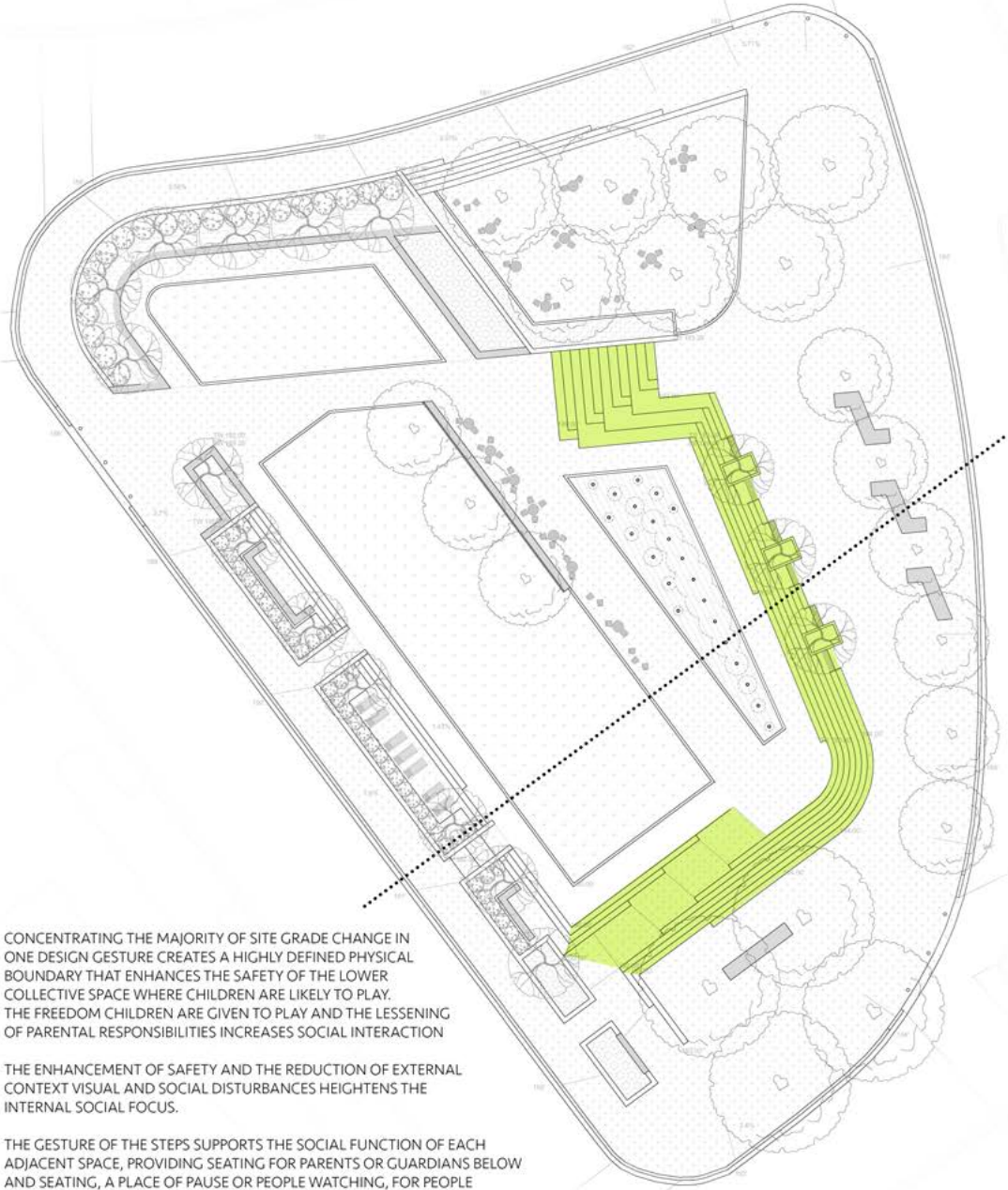
ANGLING THE STEPPED FOUNTAIN BOUNDARY INTO THE UPPER LEVEL COLLECTIVE SPACE OPENS UP VISUAL SOCIAL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE UPPER AND LOWER COLLECTIVE SPACES.

THE ALIGNMENT HELPS ACTIVATE THE EASTERN PORTION OF THE SITE BY ALIGNING WITH PRIMARY SITE PASSAGE.

THE ALIGNMENT ALSO OPENS UP THE LOWER COLLECTIVE SPACE TO INCORPORATE A MORE ACCESSIBLE, FLEXIBLE GUARDIAN SPACE.

Figure 26 - Aligning Adjoining Social Spaces for Maximum Sociability. The drawing reveals the scaling and form making of the splash fountain area to improve sociability between spaces and minimize social dead zones.

UTILIZING GRADE CHANGE TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THE SOCIAL EXPERIENCE



CONCENTRATING THE MAJORITY OF SITE GRADE CHANGE IN ONE DESIGN GESTURE CREATES A HIGHLY DEFINED PHYSICAL BOUNDARY THAT ENHANCES THE SAFETY OF THE LOWER COLLECTIVE SPACE WHERE CHILDREN ARE LIKELY TO PLAY. THE FREEDOM CHILDREN ARE GIVEN TO PLAY AND THE LESSENING OF PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES INCREASES SOCIAL INTERACTION

THE ENHANCEMENT OF SAFETY AND THE REDUCTION OF EXTERNAL CONTEXT VISUAL AND SOCIAL DISTURBANCES HEIGHTENS THE INTERNAL SOCIAL FOCUS.

THE GESTURE OF THE STEPS SUPPORTS THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF EACH ADJACENT SPACE, PROVIDING SEATING FOR PARENTS OR GUARDIANS BELOW AND SEATING, A PLACE OF PAUSE OR PEOPLE WATCHING, FOR PEOPLE MOVING ALONG THE PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN CORRIDOR. THE ELEVATION CHANGE ALSO PROVIDES SWEEPING VISUAL CONNECTIONS FROM THE UPPER COLLECTIVE SPACE.



Figure 27 - Utilizing Grade Change To Improve the Quality of the Social Experience. The incorporation of the stepped boundary increases safety for children’s play in the lower collective space while providing views from raised social spaces.

INTERNAL SOCIAL SPACE SIGHT LINE CONNECTIONS & VIEWS TO EXTERNAL LANDMARKS

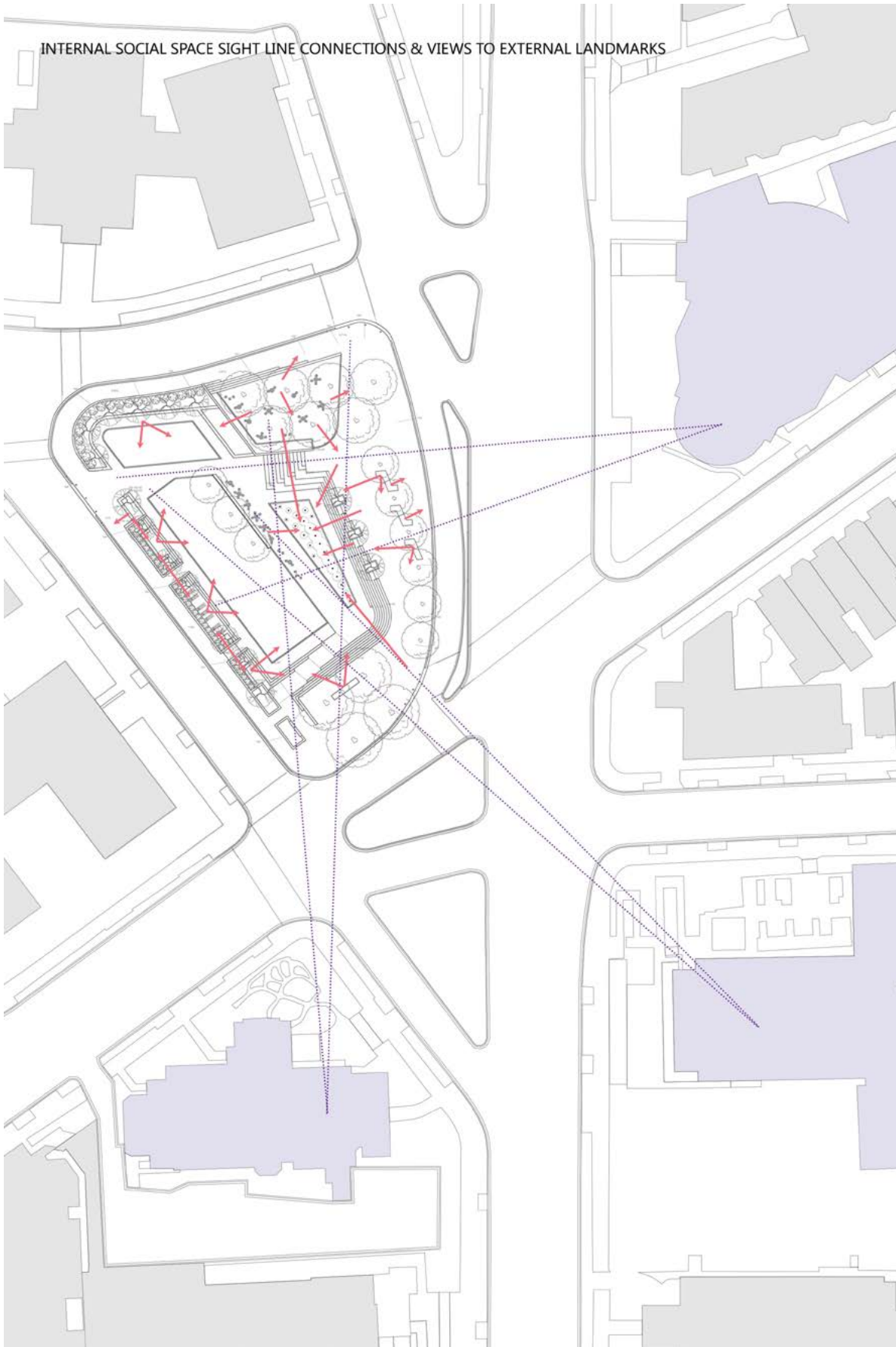


Figure 28 - Internal and External Sight Line Connections. Shown are the sight line connections internal to the park space that illustrates the “internal social organization” of the site. Additional connections are made to local landmarks.

SOCIAL AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

The development of the social and character qualities associated with different park spaces is based upon the social and character analysis of the two case study parks. The design also reflects research findings from authors such as Li, Hall, and Rutledge, whose insights on form and setting in support of socialization, guided the case study investigation.

Similar to the case study analysis, selections of the three social space types were broken down into three elements that contribute to the social and character qualities of the spaces: seating, pathways and plantings. Particular elements from the case study analyses have been tailored to support the social and character qualities beneficial to the particular function of each space and the overarching design objectives as identified in Chapter 5. While the case study findings focused on extracting qualities associated with the three elements, this analysis will highlight overarching spatial type qualities and how the elements contribute to each.

Plant species for each spatial type are highlighted in Figures 32-34. Plant diversity is important for increasing the overall diversity of spaces and for developing spatial type characteristics as appropriate to their function and their location within the overall park space.

TERRITORY

One of the primary objectives of this design is to provide a range of diverse experiences both for individual expression as well as collective experiences. Territories throughout the park have been designed to accommodate a range of preferences including social distance and group size, the character quality of the space, and proximity to highly active spaces. The territories depicted in Figure 29 (p.?), the "large group territory" and the "secluded lawn," are designed to provide secluded and intimate social space for individuals up to small community groups.

Dense spatial boundary plantings with a low overhead canopy create walls and a ceiling that provide "rooms" for groups to gather independently. The secluded quality of the rooms creates a welcoming, extended stay environment that provides internal comforts while maintaining visual connection with the park's more active collective spaces. Seating is elongated and corner seating is provided, particularly in the smaller "large group territory," to provide flexibility of use relative to social distancing and social grouping preferences. Facing "L" seating corners provide formal social distancing between them to allow for multiple individuals or groups to inhabit the territory while maintaining a sense of seclusion and privacy. Pathways adjacent and leading into the territories utilize crushed stone and smaller path widths to emphasize a slower, more relaxed pace. Steps on the edge of the "large group territory" provide additional seating options, add to territory definition, and encourage interaction with the adjoining collective space activities.

COLLECTIVE SPACE

The park features two collective spaces. In large part, the spaces serve two very distinct functions. The upper collective space on the active site boundary is largely an area of movement and activity, of coming and going, where people are entering the park or passing through going about their daily routine. The lower collective space, a more relaxed space extracted from the park's more hectic context, functions as the primary neighborhood gathering space and a safe play space for children.

The collective space analysis presented in Figure 30 depicts the upper collective space including the “observation terrace.” The lower collective space is depicted in the social anchor analysis.

The upper collective space is designed to address three primary existing park functions from the perspective of increased sociability. The three park functions include a primary pedestrian corridor, a social gathering place suited to adults, and a bus stop. Plantings in the upper collective space are limited to canopy trees which provide desired shade, but also maintain a permeable quality to this most active boundary of the site. The openness of the trees and ground plane from the site boundary to the “fountain overlook” and the “observation terrace” encourages entry into the site, and movement into park spaces designed for increased social interaction and park space engagement. These open areas of high pedestrian volume utilize large pavers that minimize the need to be cautious of potential trip hazards and other obstacles allowing for a heads up, engaged social experience.

Seating between the entry plazas is limited to three “Z” benches designed for dual use from both sides. One side provides people watching opportunities while the other provides a waiting area for bus riders. The form of the benches including their width, length, and their conversational corners are designed to support comfortable inhabitation from each side and to promote interaction with both people passing by as well as other bench users. Trees between each of the benches provide definition to each separate bench territory and help anchor each bench corner. Seating at the top of the stepped territory between the collective spaces is designed to encourage passerby to take a moment of pause and engage with the activity surrounding the splash fountain.

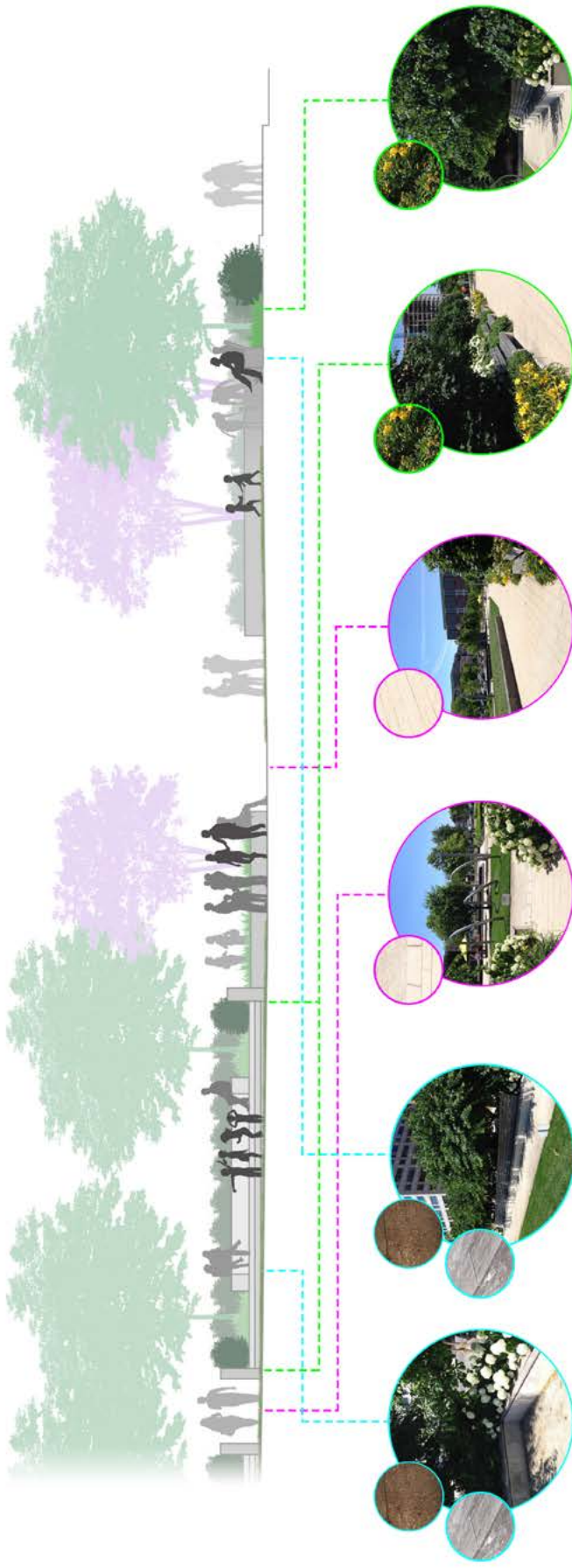
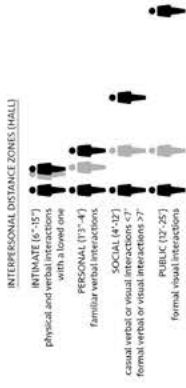
Contrasting this space of movement is the “observation terrace.” American Elms spread to a wide canopy above a crushed stone plaza that features movable garden style (Bryant Park) tables and chairs. As the name suggests, the space utilizes its prominence (height) to create visual connections throughout the whole of the park. The character of the space presents a more passive, relaxed, highly social experience where passerby can stop in for a moment's rest, friends can meet, or groups can meet around various social activities. The flexibility of the seating allows for a diverse range of social groupings and distancing. The provision of tables increases opportunities for varied uses.

SOCIAL ANCHOR

The social and character development of the splash fountain is most vital relative to the central social organization of the park. Activation of this space is crucial to the successful activation of the park as a whole and the potential of the space to function to facilitate social interaction between groups. As shown in Figure 31, the splash fountain is central to the park, working to activate and socially engage the surrounding collective spaces and outlying territories.

Plantings around the splash fountain are limited to shade trees, largely to maintain the openness of the collective space and to provide much sought after shade for parents and guardians of the children playing in the fountain. Seating is diverse and plentiful, often providing multiple functions in service of adjoining spaces. Movable tables and chairs, in combination with an elongated seating form to the left of the fountain (Figure 23) provide a comfortable space for parents with strollers, backpacks, etc. to gather and place their belongings. The stepped territory seating to the right provides more informal seating for single parents of older children, or those more engaged in play with their children around the fountain. Pathway widths are extended between the fountain and the play lawn to accommodate ease of movement through the space, the organic gathering of small groups, and to allow for parents to engage with young children along the perimeter of the fountain.

SOCIAL AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT OF A TERRITORY THE NEIGHBORHOOD GATHERING PLACE, WASHINGTON, D.C.



SEATING

PERSONAL TERRITORY

Typical Group: Single, Couple
Typical Interaction: Watch, Mingle
Maximum IDZ: Personal
Social Influence: L-shape creates personal territory. Kitty-corner ideal for conversation. Provides intimate space. Contributes to territory definition.
Material Character: Wood: warming, softening, inviting. Granite: solidly emphasizes territory.
Element Setting: Garden, Open

RELAXED VIEWING

Typical Group: Family/Friend
Typical Interaction: Watch, Engage
Maximum IDZ: Public
Social Influence: Relaxed, casual seating extends use. Allows preferred social distancing. High back contributes territory definition. Contributes to intimacy of space. Relaxed viewing of park activities.
Material Character: Wood: warming, softening, inviting. Granite: solidly emphasizes territory.
Element Setting: Garden, Open

THRESHOLD (5' 5" PATH)

Typical Group: Max Family/Friend
Typical Interaction: Engage
Maximum IDZ: Personal
Social Influence: Width prescribes verbal encounters. Threshold aligned with visual anchor. Vegetated "doorway" adds to threshold. Material change adds to threshold definition. Same pavers from site boundary pathway to threshold pathways encourages entry.
Material Character: Crushed Stone: signals entry into territory. Linear Pavers (Granite): same as external path.
Element Setting: Garden

PATHWAYS

WELCOME CENTER

Typical Group: Couple, Family/Friend
Typical Interaction: Mingle
Maximum IDZ: Public > Casual
Social Influence: Bounded "funneling" encourages entry. Narrows to "gateway" opening to internal. Formal to casual social condition passage. Provides sweeping views of spatial activities.
Material Character: Linear Pavers (Granite). Encourages entry.
Element Setting: Open, Garden

SOCIAL SCREEN

Typical Group: In Support
Typical Interaction: In Support
Maximum IDZ: In Support
Social Influence: Provides visual anchor. Provides intimacy of territory. Encourages internal park space focus. Provides increased safety and privacy.
Material Character: Garden: visual anchor, safety and privacy.
Element Setting: Garden

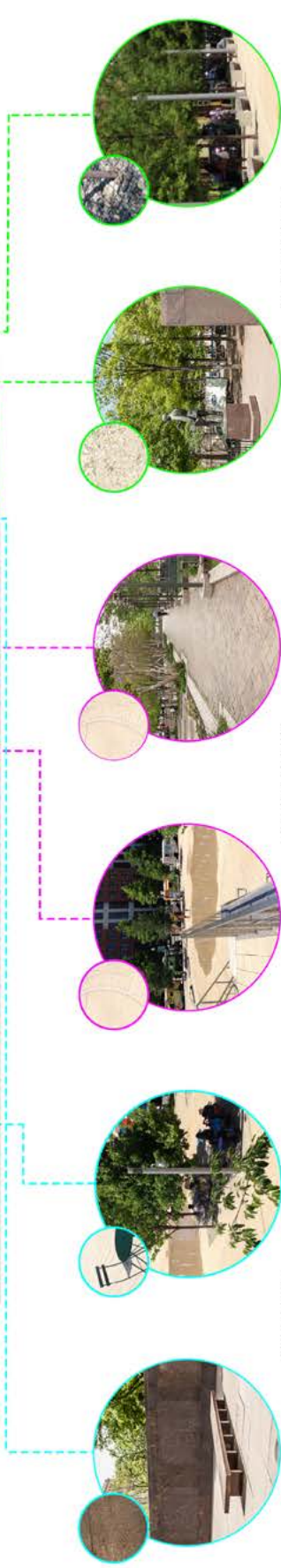
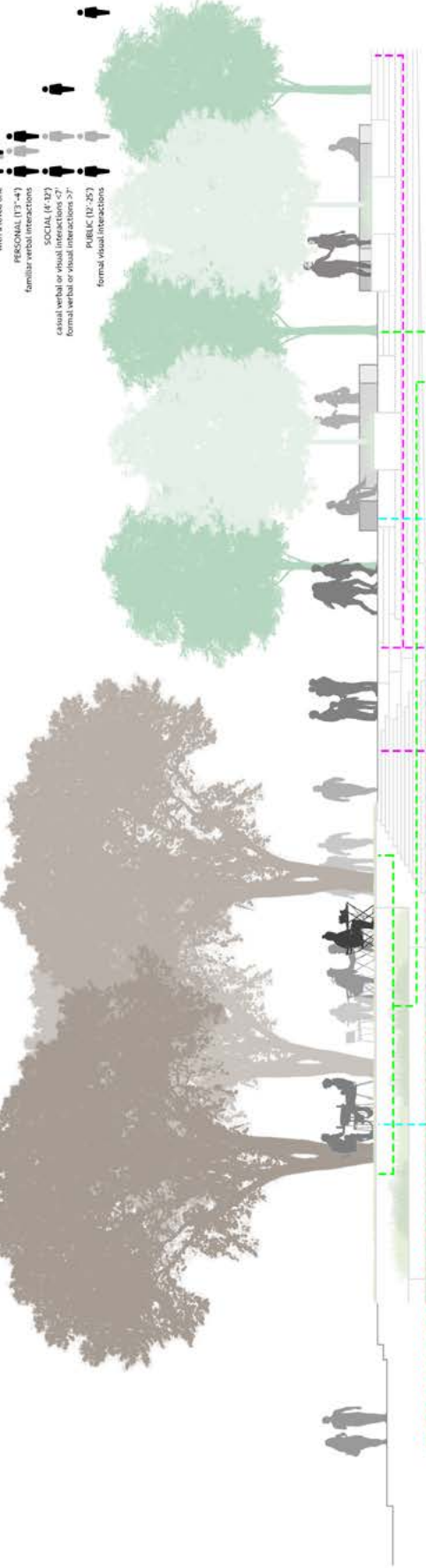
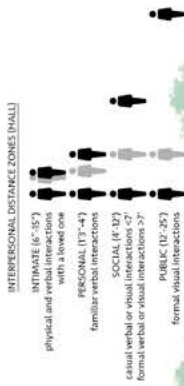
PLANTINGS

SECLUDED SPACE

Typical Group: In Support
Typical Interaction: In Support
Maximum IDZ: In Support
Social Influence: Contributes to territory definition. Focus on internal social activities. Low overhead canopy heightens intimacy. Canopy (shade) enables extended use. Vegetation reduces external disturbance. Provides increased safety and privacy.
Material Character: Garden: visual anchor, safety and privacy.
Element Setting: Garden

Figure 29 - Social and Character Development of a Territory. The analysis highlights the development of social spaces inspired by the case study investigations of the three elements of social space design relative to social space type.

SOCIAL AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT OF A COLLECTIVE SPACE THE NIEGHBORHOOD GATHERING PLACE, WASHINGTON, D.C.



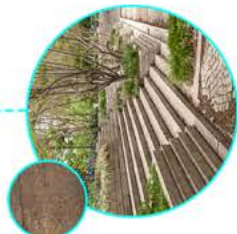
Element	Typical Group	Typical Interaction	Maximum IDZ	Social Influence	Material Character	Element Setting
BENCH DIRECTING USE	Single, Couple	Mingle	Casual Social	Location of bench suggests pause Location of bench directs pedestrian flow "L" of bench creates conversational corner Meant for temporary use (bus stop, watch) Width allows for use from both sides	Granite: cool in the summer	Open
SEATING	Family/Friend, Community	Mingle, Engage	Public	Allows preferred social grouping Allows preferred social distancing Massing supports "community" gathering Relaxed, flexible seating extends use Tables add social activity (e.g. food, games)	Metal: durable, clean	Open
CASUAL MEANDER	All	Mingle, Engage	Public	Width allows for pause, conversation Large square pavers suggest meandering Same material edging on primary pathway supports territory along "Territory Access"	Large Square Pavers: non-directional, slow pace, pause, heads up	Open
PATHWAYS	All	Watch, Mingle, Engage	Casual Social	Raised walk provides internal views Planter box spaces support territory/entry Change to Large Square Pavers with edging: non-directional, slow pace, pause, heads up	Canopy	
INVITING GROVE	In Support	In Support	In Support	Canopy trees provide respite Height supports collective open space Shade enables extended use Crushed stone suggests slow, relaxed pace	Crushed Stone: provides casual, relaxed quality	Canopy
MULTI-USE PLANTINGS	In Support	In Support	In Support	"Hallway" of trees creates linear division Trees add to territory definition Trees contribute to separation of social space Shade enables extended use	Cobble Paver: softens, permeable, use range	Open

Figure 30 - Social and Character Development of a Collective Space. The analysis highlights the development of social spaces inspired by the case study investigations of the three elements of social space design relative to social space type.

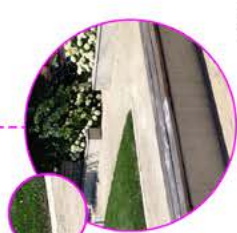
SOCIAL AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT OF A SOCIALLY ANCHORED SPACE THE NEIGHBORHOOD GATHERING PLACE, WASHINGTON, D.C.



MULTI-USE BENCH
Typical Group: Family/Friend
Typical Interaction: Engage, Mingle
Maximum IDZ: Public
Social Influence: Provides boundary for family seating. Provides casual lounging on lawn side. Contributes to territory definition. Allows preferred social distancing.
Material Character: Wood, warming, softening, inviting.
Element Setting: Open



INTIMATE CONVERSATION
Typical Group: Single, Couple, Family/Friend
Typical Interaction: Watch, Mingle
Maximum IDZ: Public
Social Influence: Length of steps allows preferred distancing. Upper planter divisions create territories. Creates connection between collective spaces. Provides boundary for safe play.
Material Character: Granite: cool in summer, cold in winter.
Element Setting: Canopy/Garden, Open



STROLLING GROUND (6' PATH)
Typical Group: Single, Couple
Typical Interaction: Watch
Maximum IDZ: Personal
Social Influence: 2' narrower supports secluded territories. Crushed stone encourages slow pace. Even edge encourages lawn engagement.
Material Character: Crushed Stone: meditative, strolling, pause.
Element Setting: Garden, Open



EASY TRANSITION
Typical Group: Max Family/Friend
Typical Interaction: Mingle
Maximum IDZ: Social Casual
Social Influence: Long tread primarily encourages flow. Low rise provides ease of access. Increases heads up interaction. Connection to seating encourages pause.
Material Character: Granite: rough texture provides grip.
Element Setting: Open



SUPPORT SHELTER
Typical Group: Max Community
Typical Interaction: Mingle, Engage
Maximum IDZ: Casual Social
Social Influence: Line of trees enables large groupings. Supports territory creation on lawn side. Proximity emphasizes fountain territory. Canopy (shade) enables extended use. Proximity enables guardian support.
Material Character: Lawn: Casual lounging, territory support.
Element Setting: Open



TERRITORY ANCHOR
Typical Group: In Support
Typical Interaction: In Support
Maximum IDZ: Public
Social Influence: Overhead canopy heightens intimacy. Canopy (shade) enables extended use. Provides territory support to fountain. Helps to define territory sub-spaces.
Material Character: Garden Pockets: Provide visual anchors.
Element Setting: Open

PLANTINGS

Figure 31 - Social and Character Development of a Socially Anchored Space. The analysis highlights the development of social spaces inspired by the case study investigations of the three elements of social space design relative to social space type.

SOCIAL AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT OF A TERRITORY: PLANTINGS
 THE NEIGHBORHOOD GATHERING PLACE, WASHINGTON, D.C.

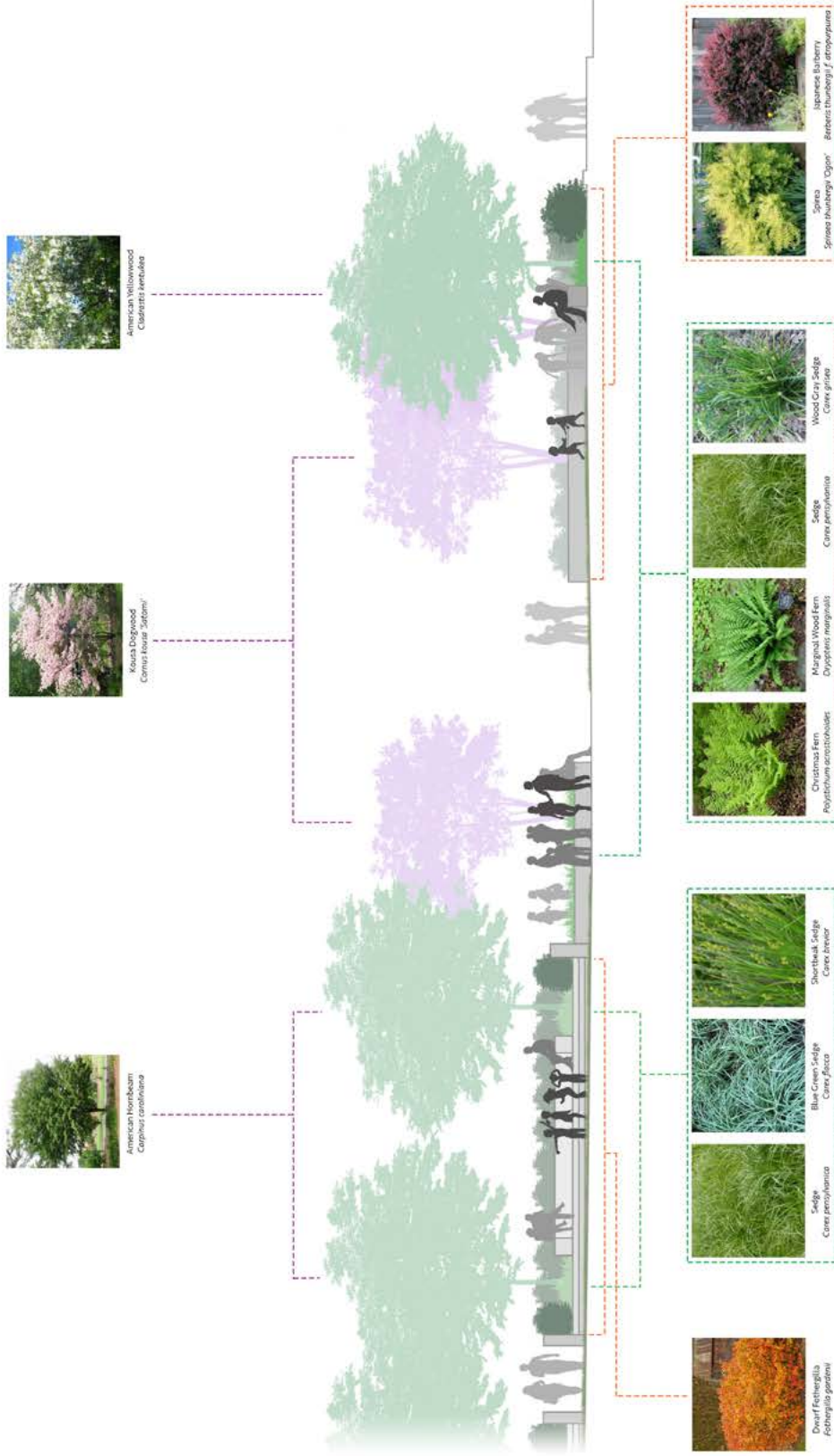


Figure 32 - Territory Plantings. Planting chosen support the primary characteristics of territory space including boundary establishment and feelings of seclusion and intimacy. Multiple species of trees, shrubs and ground covers are used to add diversity to the spaces.

SOCIAL AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT OF A SOCIALLY ANCHORED SPACE: PLANTINGS
 THE NEIGHBORHOOD GATHERING PLACE, WASHINGTON, D.C.

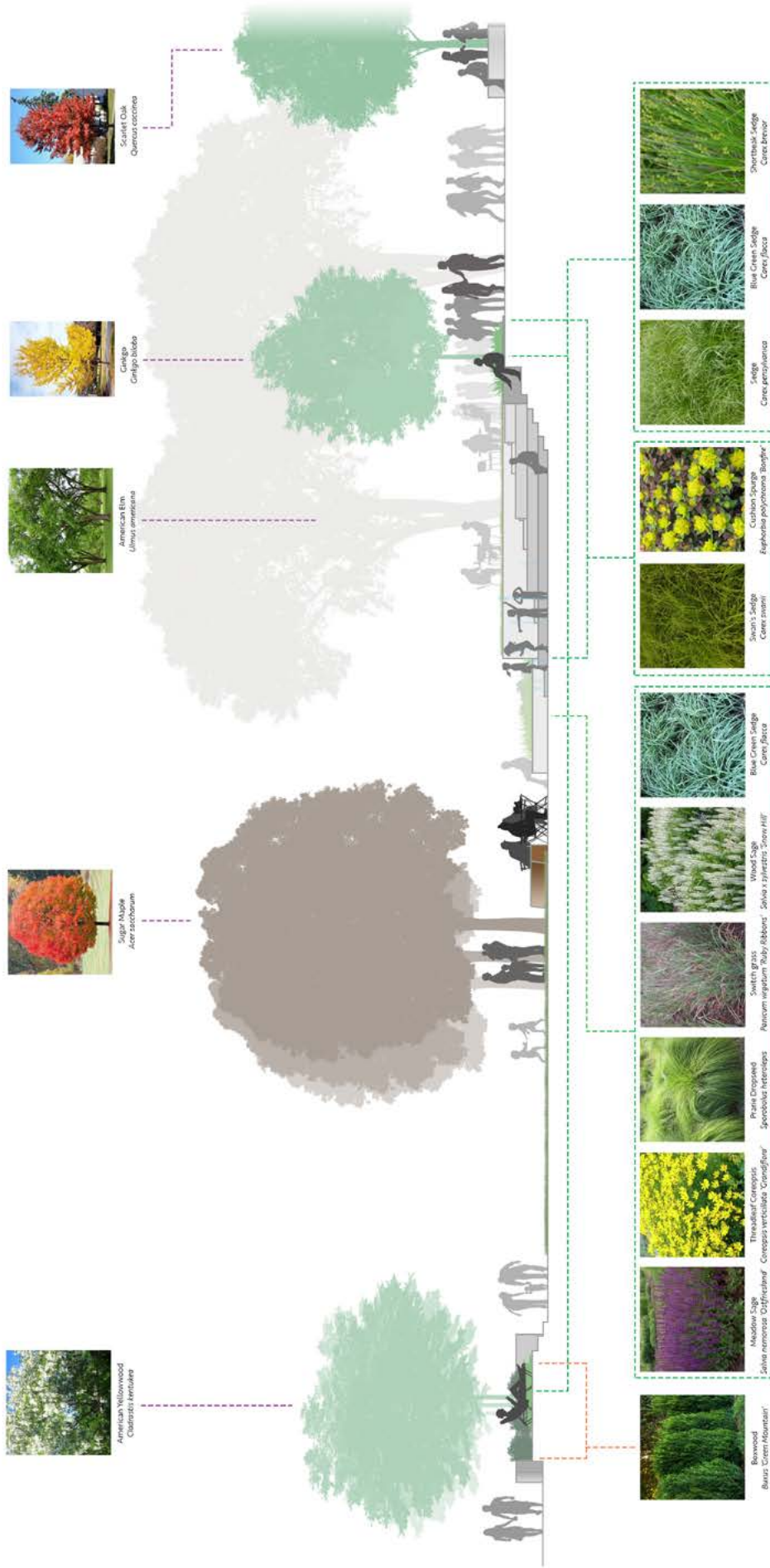


Figure 34 - Social Anchor Plantings. The drawing shows plantings associated with the splash fountain, primary used to provide shade and visually anchor the adjacent parental space. Cross park social spaces are represented here to illustrate a the overall social experience.

USER-BASED SOCIABILITY ANALYSIS

Two distinct age-based user-groups have been selected for analysis of how their particular needs have been addressed in the design. The analysis highlights the importance of both accommodating user needs as well as addressing how various groups interact with each other. The latter having the intention to minimize potential conflict, but also to find areas of social connectivity. The two groups selected include high school age teenagers, and parents and guardians of young children. Teenagers were selected because more so than any other age group, they may present a significant challenge to the overall social quality of the park space if they are not provided appropriate space for social gathering and teenage expression. Parents and guardians were selected because their enjoyment of the park, largely based on the safety, comfort, and security provided around children's play space, greatly affects the use level of the park.

SOCIABILITY ANALYSIS OF HIGH SCHOOL AGE TEENAGERS (Figure 35)

Objective: Develop territories for multiple teen groups that provide opportunity for individual teen groups to come together, while ensuring opportunity or inter-group interaction and interaction between other community groups.

Group Trait: Teenagers prefer the periphery of parks where they can find a greater sense of freedom of expression.

Design Intention: Providing spaces on the periphery that maintain sight line connections with other social spaces within the park increases sociability between community groups.

Group Trait: Teenagers are territorial and maintain strong connections to established social groups.

Design Intention: Providing multiple territories for teenage groups to temporarily "own" simultaneously reduces the potential for conflict between teenage groups and other user groups. Providing a number of entry and exit points will also aid in reducing potential conflict. Additionally, providing connections to collective spaces creates an opportunity for varying teenage groups to come together and socialize around a common interest.

Group Trait: Teenagers may often be in actual or perceived social conflict with other user groups, in particular young children and families, and older users.

Design Intention: Distancing, or providing verbal social barriers between conflicting groups, helps reduce potential conflict. Ensuring non-teenage community groups are not required to pass through a social territory for teenagers, and vice versa, is an example of a method to help reduce potential conflict.

SOCIABILITY ANALYSIS OF PARENTS AND GUARDIANS OR YOUNG CHILDREN (Figure 36)

Objective: Ensure children have a safe place to play and that parents feel comfortable and secure, allowing children and parents to engage more freely in social interaction.

Group Trait: Parents desire to remain from within a few steps to within verbal interaction distance.

Design Intention: Provide ample seating in varied settings around play space boundaries that give parents options for levels of supervision and social experiences.

Group Trait: Parents often arrive with strollers, backpacks, and the like.

Design Intention: Ensure ease of access to valued park social spaces. Provide space to store and secure personal belongings.

Group Trait: Parents of this age group will likely stay in the park space for a longer duration of time due to the effort of preparation.

Design Intention: Ensure a comfortable resting place for parents by providing shade and a range of social experiences. Provide a place for parents and children to share in a meal or snack, or to engage in a brought activity.

SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE SPLASH FOUNTAIN (Figure 37)

An analysis of the splash fountain is conducted to reveal the operation of the fountain (intensity of spray for different ages) in relation to the associated parent and guardian space. The analysis also reveals the social connectivity between the splash fountain and play lawn.

SOCIABILITY ANALYSIS OF HIGH SCHOOL AGE TEENAGERS

DESIGN OBJECTIVE

DEVELOP TERRITORIES FOR MULTIPLE TEEN GROUPS THAT PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY FOR INDIVIDUAL TEEN GROUPS TO COME TOGETHER, WHILE ENSURING OPPORTUNITY FOR INTER-GROUP INTERACTION AND INTERACTION BETWEEN OTHER COMMUNITY GROUPS.

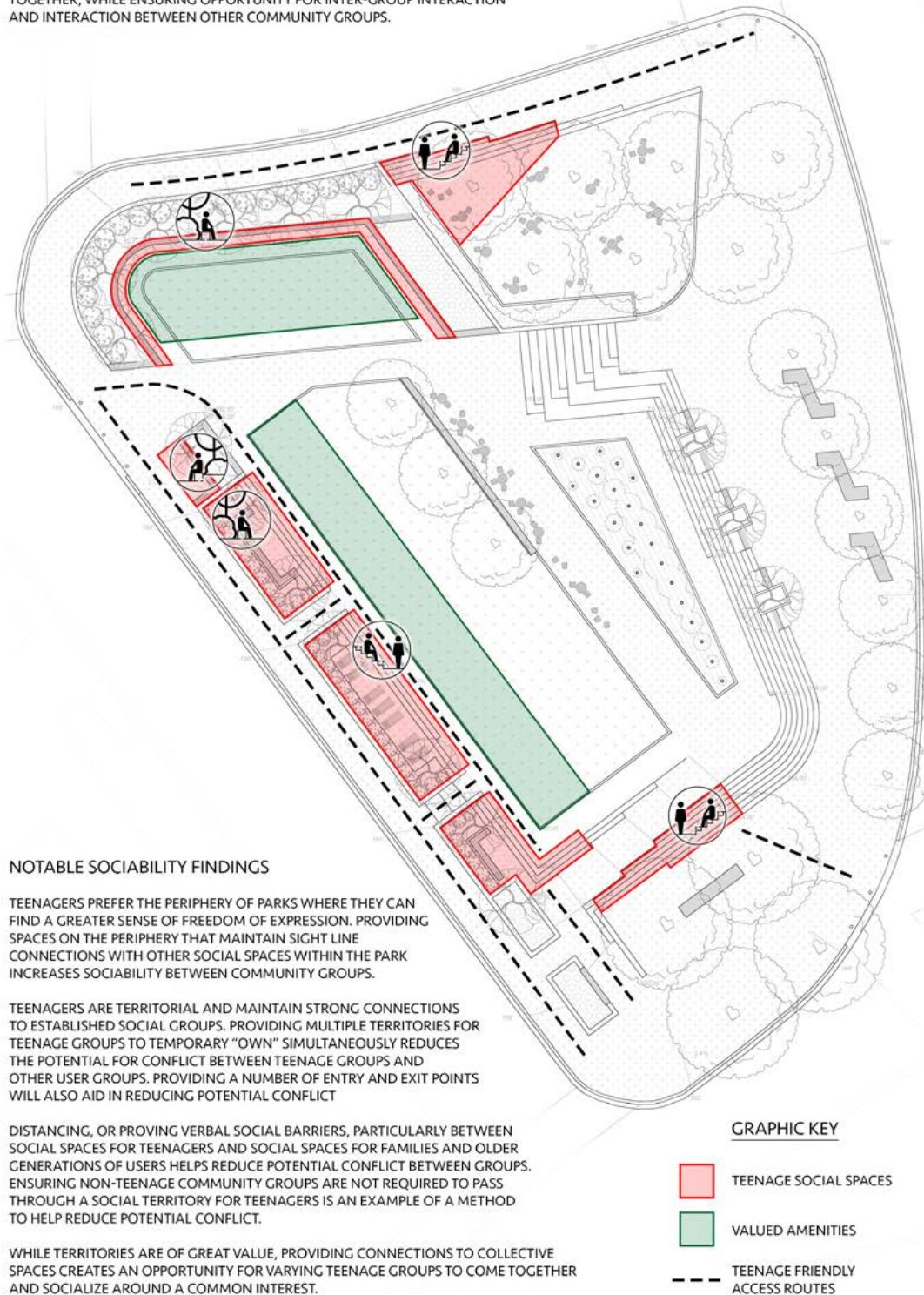
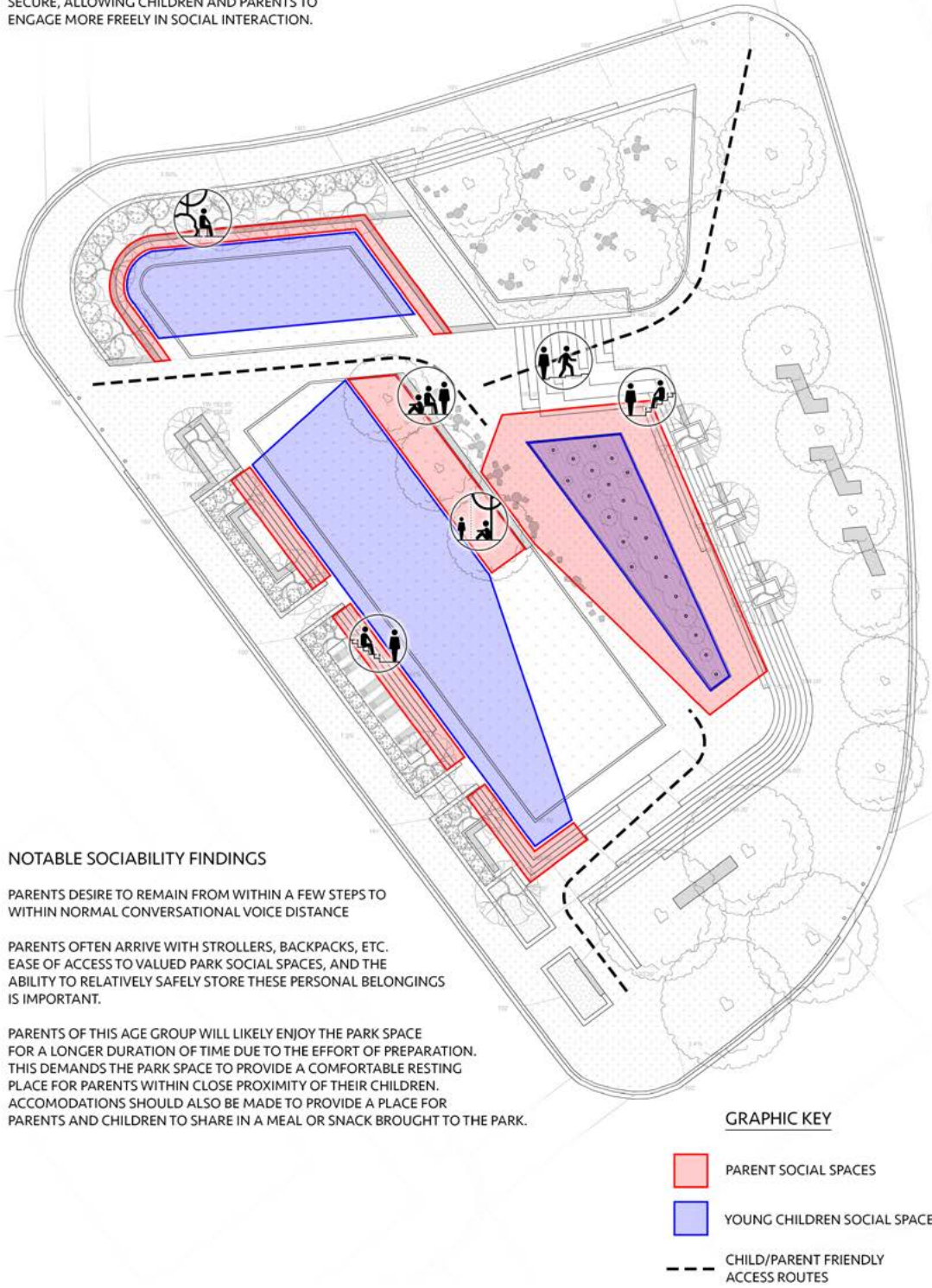


Figure 35 - Sociability Analysis of High School Teenagers. The drawing illustrates the accommodation of social and use preferences for high school teenagers.

SOCIABILITY ANALYSIS OF PARENTS AND GUARDIANS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

DESIGN OBJECTIVE

ENSURE CHILDREN HAVE A SAFE PLACE TO PLAY AND THAT PARENTS FEEL COMFORTABLE AND SECURE, ALLOWING CHILDREN AND PARENTS TO ENGAGE MORE FREELY IN SOCIAL INTERACTION.



NOTABLE SOCIABILITY FINDINGS

PARENTS DESIRE TO REMAIN FROM WITHIN A FEW STEPS TO WITHIN NORMAL CONVERSATIONAL VOICE DISTANCE

PARENTS OFTEN ARRIVE WITH STROLLERS, BACKPACKS, ETC. EASE OF ACCESS TO VALUED PARK SOCIAL SPACES, AND THE ABILITY TO RELATIVELY SAFELY STORE THESE PERSONAL BELONGINGS IS IMPORTANT.

PARENTS OF THIS AGE GROUP WILL LIKELY ENJOY THE PARK SPACE FOR A LONGER DURATION OF TIME DUE TO THE EFFORT OF PREPARATION. THIS DEMANDS THE PARK SPACE TO PROVIDE A COMFORTABLE RESTING PLACE FOR PARENTS WITHIN CLOSE PROXIMITY OF THEIR CHILDREN. ACCOMMODATIONS SHOULD ALSO BE MADE TO PROVIDE A PLACE FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN TO SHARE IN A MEAL OR SNACK BROUGHT TO THE PARK.

GRAPHIC KEY

- PARENT SOCIAL SPACES
- YOUNG CHILDREN SOCIAL SPACES
- CHILD/PARENT FRIENDLY ACCESS ROUTES

Figure 36 - Sociability Analysis of Parents and Guardians of Young Children. The drawing illustrates the accommodation of social and use preferences for parents and guardians of young children.

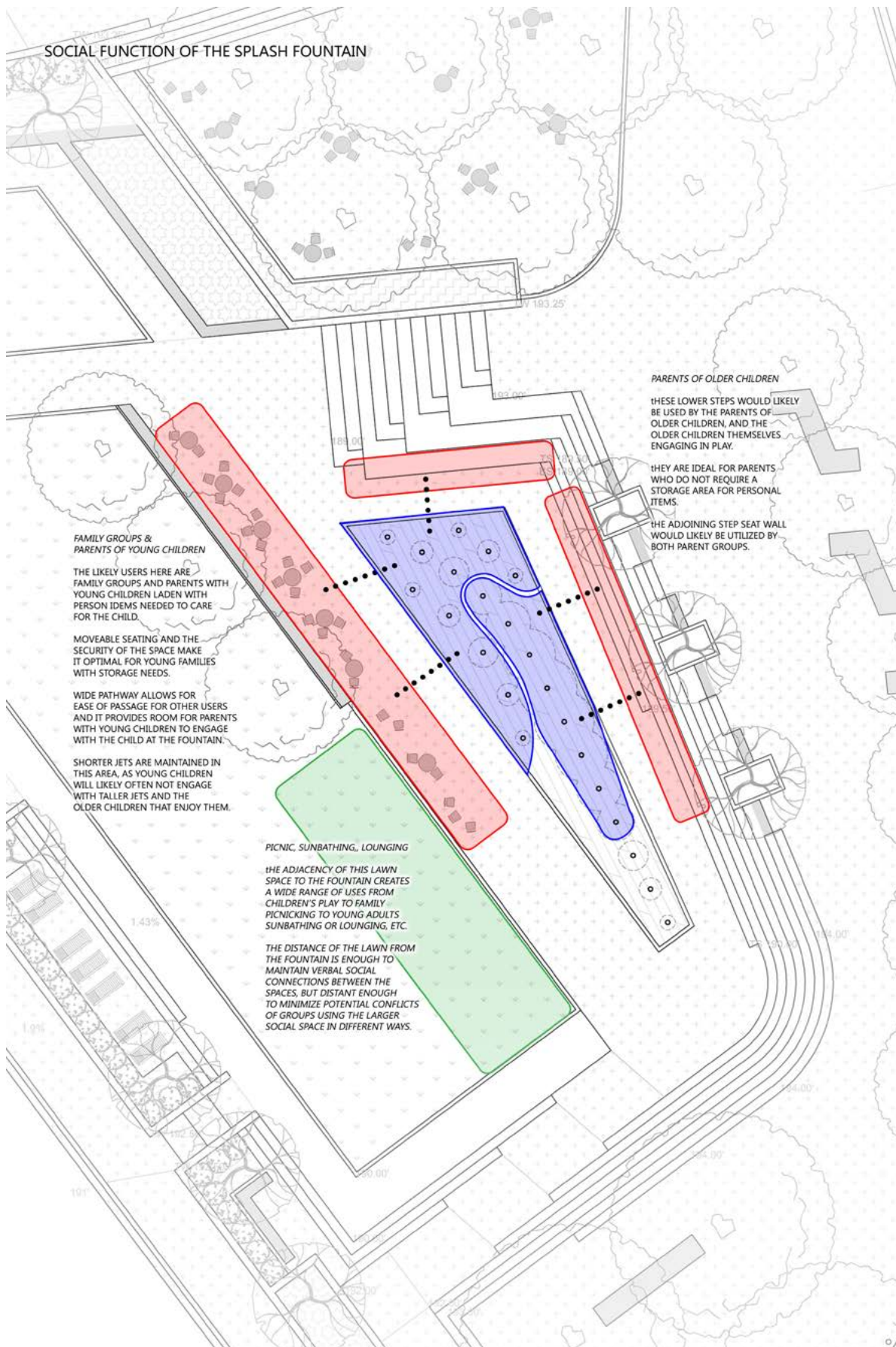


Figure 37 - Social Functions of the Splash Fountain. The drawing illustrates the accommodation of group preferences influential to the fountain design. It illustrates the function of the fountain relative to the surrounding social spaces.

ANALYSIS OF THE DESIGN

OVERALL APPLICATION

The goal of creating a socially inclusive neighborhood park space has been achieved by providing a diverse range of social spaces that provide opportunity for individual expression as well as social exchange between multiple groups (Figure 38). This is foundationally based on the successful incorporation of the three social space types as identified in the literature review: territory, collective space, and social anchor. These spaces are designed to accommodate a range of social and use preferences by incorporating a number of design strategies, largely drawn from the case studies, that maximize flexibility of social grouping, social distancing, and use preferences. Investigations into community demographics and existing use patterns provided inspiration for the creation of park spaces that provide daily social engagement for local residents, as well as spaces of common interest, where multiple community groups build social connections and community togetherness.

Though particularly less relevant to the ultimate findings on the development of social interaction between multiple user groups through these design principles, the appropriate siting of the park should also be noted for its role in the daily activation of the park space.

CHALLENGES TO THE DESIGN

Unlike Canal Park, and to a lesser extent Pershing Park, which are situated in more mixed use development settings, the area surrounding the proposed park is substantially limited to residential development. Religious and cultural institutions nearby do provide various forms of community support, but for this purpose, contribute minimally to the social activation of the site. This created a challenge in which opportunities for implementing a range of social anchors were limited, particularly relative to those that rely upon economic drivers. For example, Canal Park receives a substantial portion of its visitation from employees of the government and corporate offices immediately adjacent to the park. These visitors are largely responsible for sustaining Canal Park's food-based social anchors during the work week, including the daily food trucks and the onsite restaurant. While the highly residential surrounding of the proposed park presents this challenge, it also creates a special opportunity for developing strong community relations in a park space that would benefit from being almost entirely locals only.

An additional challenge to design development included the spatially appropriate incorporation of social spaces as per use. While overall, the park spaces appear tailored fairly well to their social and use application, some minor tweaks could be made. For instance, if additional width could be found for the western territory (including the large group terrace, lounge terrace and the small group terrace), this might enable a slightly larger area for accommodating various group sizes, as well as providing slightly more space for social distancing between the territories and the polychromatic space. Perhaps more important however, additional width could provide more space for plantings behind the territories to increase a user's sense of safety and seclusion.

Alternatively, too much space may have been provided for the primary pedestrian corridor and adjoining bus stop area. The pathway between these spaces is likely too wide by approximately 5', relative to similar pathway width allocations as found in the case studies. The important consideration in any alteration would be to maintain "central social organization" of the space.



Figure 38 - The Neighborhood Gathering Place. The illustrative plan shows the neighborhood park and the immediate points of connection to the surrounding community it serves. The plan also shows the prominence of the location contrasting with the intimately designed cohesive gathering spaces of the overall design. Numbers on the plan correspond to the 3D rendered images in the following section.

FINAL ANALYSIS

In order to better understand the implications of the design strategies used in the creation of this design, 3D rendered images of the proposed park (Figures 39-43) will be analyzed through the design objectives of Chapter 4. This analysis illustrate the strategies used to achieve the creation of a socially inclusive neighborhood park.

- Create a park that accommodates and improves the sociability of everyday activities such as dog walking, hanging out, waiting for the bus, etc.

Improving the sociability of everyday activities has been achieved by creating park spaces that are socially cohesive with one another by creating a “central social focus” anchored by the splash fountain. Additionally, typical daily activities (commuting, adult socializing) are concentrated along the primary pedestrian corridor adjacent to the splash fountain to retain high levels of sociability. (Figures 41-43). Particular uses such as dog walking or dog play is accommodated for through appropriate social distancing as a means of reducing potential conflict. For example, Figure 39 shows the “play lawn,” and the “secluded lawn” in the foreground. Each of these spaces provide substantial distance from the primary pedestrian corridor (high use area, particularly in the morning hours) and adjoining fountain space for engaging in dog play or dog walking. Additionally, the territories and territory steps provide spaces for owners to relax and congregate if desired. Entry and exit into the lawn space is also plentiful along this boundary reducing potential conflict between dog owners and non-dog owners in more high volume areas.



Figure 39 - View Across the lower Collective Space. The image shows the social connectivity and associated flexibility of the splash fountain, play lawn and western territories.

- Provide territory, collective, and social anchor spaces that collectively promote social cohesion of the park and flexibility of social engagement and use on the level of the site.

As with the first objective, providing social cohesion has been achieved by creating a “central social focus.” This includes the creation of the splash fountain, as well as minimizing social and physical division between park spaces and maintaining open sight lines between spaces.

Flexibility of social engagement and use on the level of the site is provided by maximizing continuous open collective space that can be used for a variety of activities and events. This is also achieved by providing two different ground plane materials within each collective space (paver/gravel vs. lawn) that can accommodate a greater range of activities (e.g. upper collective space can be used for farmer’s markets, and the lower collective space can be used for movie nights). (Figure 43)

- Provide a diverse range of social experiences that are flexible enough to accommodate multiple groups’ social preferences.

This is achieved by providing diversity through the three social space types. Social preferences are substantially accounted for by providing multiple seating options, movable seating options, or select grouping and distancing. Seating types are provided relative to social space types and likely uses (Figures 40, 41 & 43).



Figure 40 - View To the Splash Fountain and Observation Terrace. The image shows the social connectivity of the observation terrace, fountain overlook/pedestrian corridor and the splash fountain. Also show is the use of moveable seating and tables to support social and use preferences in of the primary gathering spaces.

- Provide a space for the community to gather together around activities or community events to develop familiarity and solidarity between groups.

The design provides space for community events by maximizing continuous open collective space. Additionally, the “central social organization” of the site allows for each social space, particularly territory spaces, to become an extension of the larger space (Figure 41).

- Create social continuity in the park by adjoining experiences that are favorable to multiple groups.

An example of this can be found in the Figure 39. The play lawn is a flexible space capable of accommodating multiple uses. It can be an extension of play for the splash fountain or vice versa. It can accommodate different use preferences of different siblings, maintaining a safe central area that all family members can enjoy. The play lawn could also be an extension of territories where groups spill out to sunbathe or engage in an activity close to their territory.

- Minimize conditions in which park spaces are largely socially separated, for example by impeding visual connections or creating large inaccessible gaps between spaces.

This has been achieved by minimizing plantings outside of shade trees within the interior social space of the park. This has also been achieved by minimizing the use of uninhabitable space between social spaces (Figure 39).



Figure 41 - View Across the Splash Fountain from the Pedestrian Corridor. The image shows the social connectivity of the pedestrian corridor with the splash fountain and lower collective spaces. Views across the park from the pedestrian corridor create a lure to engage with the numerous social spaces of the lower collective space and territories.

- Utilize the strength of the social anchor to influence the sociability of the spaces around it.

The design successfully achieves this objective through using three strategies: placement of the splash fountain adjacent to the primary pedestrian corridor; centrally locating the fountain activate spaces around it and be the visual focus of the park, and by adjoining valued social qualities, experiences and uses to it (Figure 41).

- Limit excess space that may end up going unused by identifying activities and social preferences of user groups that are likely to use them and scale them appropriately.

This first part of this objective has been achieved by identifying the social and use preferences of the community, finding common value among these preferences, and providing diversity and flexibility within social space types that accommodate particulars of these preferences. Scaling them appropriately was achieved largely through case study findings and the particulars of potential use associated with each space. For example, the splash fountain and its surrounding space is based the spatial requirements of parents of young children with strollers, backpacks, etc.; parents coming alone with an older child; and parents interacting in the fountain space with toddlers (Figure 37).



Figure 42 - View of the Bus Stop, Pedestrian Corridor and Stepped Territory Connection. The image shows the social connectivity between the bus stop location and the lower collective spaces. The particular form and placement of the bus stop seating supports social distancing preferences while encouraging social engagement with others.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

As cultural diversity continues to increase in U.S. urban centers, and indeed throughout the country, it becomes imperative to promote social dialogue between different cultural groups. Varying level of social interaction, from simply seeing, to intimate conversation, can increase our familiarity and acceptance of cultural difference and lead to the creation of communities with a greater sense of togetherness and a vibrancy of place. Urban park spaces, and in particular, neighborhood parks, can set the stage for developing social interaction between disparate groups by developing park spaces that provide opportunity for individual cultural expression as well as collective social engagement. Additionally, providing social spaces that are accommodative to the cultural values and social preferences of community groups will help develop a sense of place and cultural representation amongst independent groups.

This thesis suggests that a neighborhood park space that promotes social interaction between disparate groups relies on the development of socially cohesive social spaces of three types: territories that provide individual cultural expression, polychromic space that is flexible in use, and social anchors, amenities of value to multiple cultural groups that can serve to bring people together. The organization of these spaces is particularly important. As such, this thesis has developed a Social Space Organizational Model (Figure 44) that serves as a foundational framework for the creation of social spaces that function to accommodate cultural group preferences and encourage collective experiences while maintaining a social cohesiveness between park spaces.



Figure 43 - View Into and Beyond the Observation Terrace To the lower Collective Space. The image shows the higher elevation of the observation terrace designed as a social gathering place without children. Views throughout the park and immediate adjacency to the primary entry plaza support the social function and social connectivity of the space.

Of additional importance is the appropriate social and character development of each space to support social and use functions particular to each spatial type that are accommodative to the preferences of local community groups. This thesis has found that investigations into community demographics and patterns of preferred use can supply vital information for the appropriation of particular spatial types, amenities, and park space qualities that are inviting to multiple community groups. Additionally, the incorporation of flexible use spaces and design elements such as seating, and the development of a diverse range of spaces, can go a long way to address potential inadequacies of the design in addressing particular preferences of cultural groups. This flexibility and adaptability also increases the park's capacity to adapt to cultural and social changes in the community.

In light of the above findings, an additional consideration of future designers may be to encourage community participation in the park planning process. A participatory planning process could lead to the identification of park programs, amenities and qualities that may be preferred by particular groups. Limitations to the scale of this project limited an ability to do community surveys or similar studies within the community itself. Additional information on park preferences could have been helpful in creating minor improvements that could deepen one's feelings of representation, belonging, or desire to engage with others.

Ultimately, the hope is that the methods and strategies developed through this thesis can be used as a foundational framework for the development of socially inclusive neighborhood parks that will help to develop and strengthen the social bonds of diverse communities.

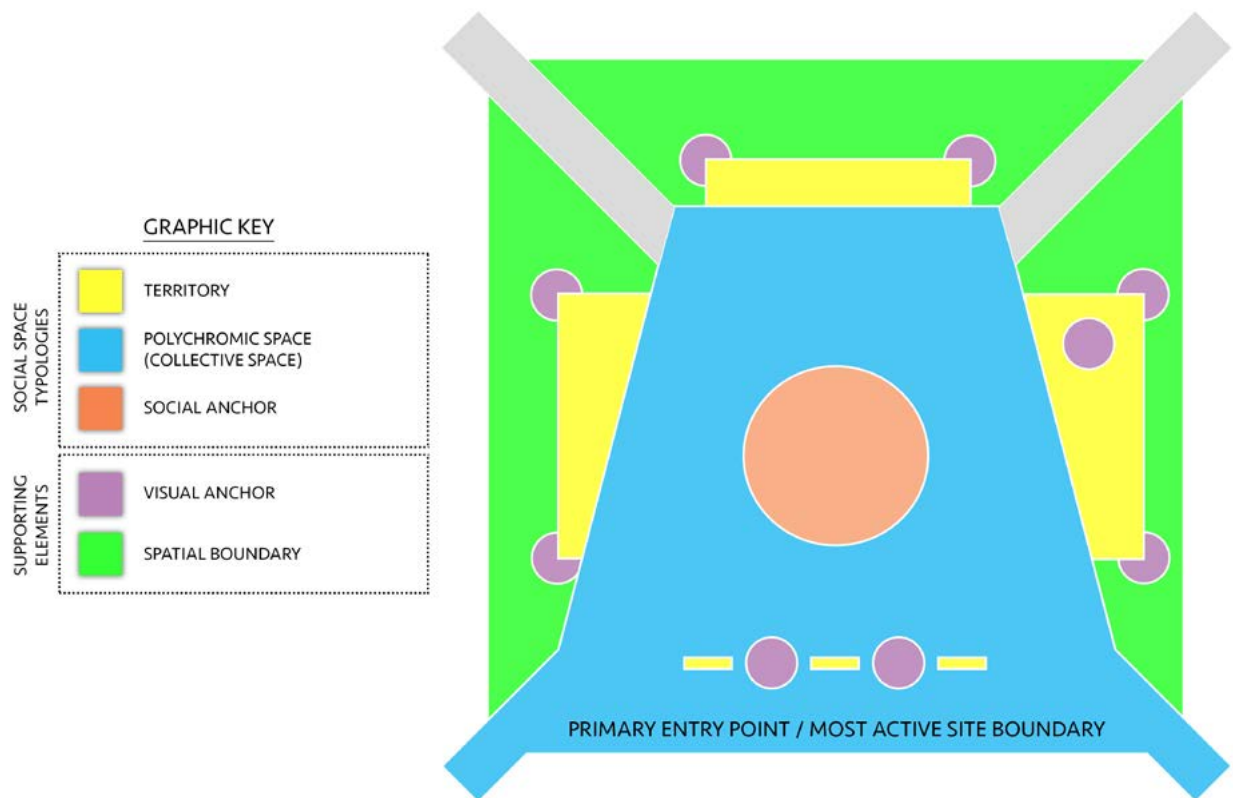


Figure 44 - The Social Space Organizational Model. The model is intended to be a foundational framework upon which community based social and experiential design qualities can be developed in connection with site and contextual influences.

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